

# Westwinds

A

## Literary Review



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University of Hawaii - West Oahu

1991

# **Westwinds**

**A**

## **Literary Review**

Volume Six

**Be through my lips to unawakened earth**

**The trumpet of a prophecy! O, Wind,  
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?**

**Percy Bysshe Shelley  
Ode to the West Wind**

**University of Hawaii - West Oahu**

**1991**

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## Editor's Comment:

This is the first issue of the *Westwinds: A Literary Review*, not to be confused with the previously titled *Westwinds Magazine*. The staff felt an alteration was needed--a little intuitive tailoring. The process was not, however, a mystical endeavor. On the contrary, the new style appeared like an unknown universe in the stratosphere beyond the Milky Way. My only chart for this literary Universe came from the most recent Nobel laureate in poetry, Octavio Paz:

To me a poet represents not only a region but a Universe.

Much of what has materialized in the past months became a Universe for *Westwinds*. The poet Paz is a poein (craftsman) of the heart and Universe, as are many of our contributors. *The Westwinds'* writers are a radiating ball of energy, balanced by a revolving sphere (editors), all blown through time by a universal force connecting the tattered ends of the literary Universe: the monetary donations of West Oahu's friends. Now that you know the Universe as I see it, the need to share one last quote of Octavio Paz hovers over me.

We are all born alone, there is need for human communication, and a poet writes about the human condition.

I consider the *Westwinds: A Literary Review* a success, if it does nothing else but allow our students to express themselves.

A. A. Mul Holland



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## The Fall

Wes sat squirming in front of the Disciplinary Review Board. He faced a one day suspension for the first time in his career. Other officers he knew were suspended for brutality and mistreatment of prisoners. He did not know of anyone being suspended for wearing a pocket knife on his police belt. When the Sergeant instructed him to take the knife off his belt he thought he was joking. After all, he had worn the knife for five years and had grown accustomed to having it. Besides, it looked good. He recalled the many times he used the knife during his tour of duty. There were always mangoes to peel and fingernails to clean.

So he took a stand and refused to stop wearing it, regardless of the General Order prohibiting its use. The Major rose from his chair and declared the Board's decision. Due to his excellent record, the punishment would be a written reprimand. Wes smiled because he would not be losing a day's pay.

When Wes reported to work that night, the Sergeant was off and Wes decided to keep the knife on his belt. He did not receive any calls for an hour. Then the dispatcher sent him to Ala Moana Park to check for public drinking. Wes and his partner drove there, and in the darkness found a group of juveniles drinking Budweisers near the concession. He walked towards them as the other officer checked the rear of the building. One of the juveniles got up and staggered toward him. He recognized the teenager as one of the players on his

football team. The boy tripped and fell forward, reaching out for him. Wes grabbed him as they fell to the ground. The knife flipped out of his belt and the boy quickly picked it up as he stood.

As Wes lay there, shots rang out. The boy fell to his knees, dropping the knife. Wes' partner ran to him, gun drawn. "Are you alright?" he shouted.

## End of Life

I saw a canary, yellow  
Swinging on his plastic perch  
Squawking, speaking  
Yelling  
Uncomfortable in his steel cage  
His home  
Started acting strange  
Squawking, crying  
Aching in his belly  
Beak open, heavy breathing  
Panting  
Got that look in his eyes  
Death, fear  
Turned on the light  
Canary hit the bottom  
Hard as a stone  
It's alright though  
I don't like birds.

## Gas Warfare

Ft. Ord, California, 1963, basic training: we are in the chemical warfare phase--gas. We attend the lectures in the morning. After lunch we go to the gas training range. It is a patch of sand and gravel, about one hundred meters square. Two-foot high sandbag rings are spaced out in the area. One man foxholes about five feet deep are spaced at regular intervals.

In small groups we crawl through the range, the first time through with machine-gun fire overhead...not too bad. Second time is with machine-gun fire and tear gas. We crawl, masked. The gas mask inhibits breathing. We gulp for air, our lungs ache.

The sandbag rings are filled with explosives, harmless when detonated, but the noise startles and the violent force can lift you off the ground. The one-man foxholes contain white-helmeted range safety officers hollering, "Keep your butts down. Grandma crawls faster!" It takes about fifteen minutes to crawl through; the harassment never stops. One particular second lieutenant earns our hate.

After dark, we make our last pass with machine-gun fire and gas. Same story: bone-tired, dirty, aching lungs, gasping, harassment from safety officers. The white helmets are fluorescent and glow in the dark. I hear our favorite lieutenant bellowing. Then under the cover of darkness, a recruit bellows back. Then I hear a ping. Then a long crescendo of pings. They are stoning him! Ping. Downed by friendly fire. War is hell.

## The Frog

Jessica watched as the doctors connected her patient to life-support machines. She flashed back to her first encounter with Mrs. Bryant.

She had been twelve years old. Mrs. Bryant taught science and everyone hated her, including Jessica. The dragon lady, they called her, because of the endless amount of cigarettes she smoked in one class period. On this day Jessica had stayed after school to talk to Mrs. Bryant. The dragon lady had assigned each member of the class a frog to dissect. Jessica refused to do it.

"What reason do you have for not completing your assignment, Miss Courtney?" demanded Mrs. Bryant.

Jessica gulped, "I couldn't."

"Is that all you have to say for yourself? I'm afraid you must do better than that if you expect to pass this course."

"I don't like to see anything suffer."

"But, young lady," the dragon lady responded as she lit another cigarette, "the frogs are already dead."

"I just couldn't do it," Jessica sobbed. "I couldn't cut my frog open."

"Well, I'm afraid you will receive an F for this assignment and your parents will be notified. It's a shame. I had high hopes for you. Your performance to this point in the semester has been nearly perfect," Mrs. Bryant replied. "If you don't like to see things suffer, do something about it."



Jessica raced home that day and ran up the steps to her room. Her cat, Casper, laid on the bed. "I couldn't hurt that frog," she cried. The next day she went to school and performed her dissection.

That had been fifteen years ago. Jessica remembered Mrs. Bryant's challenge and attended nursing school after graduation. She later worked at a hospital in Boston and had returned to West Virginia a year ago to work at a nursing home ten miles from her hometown.

Mrs. Bryant was one of the first people Jessica saw upon her return. On her way home from work she ran into Mrs. Bryant at the supermarket.

"I see you took my challenge seriously. Good for you. I'm sure you are a good nurse."

Six months later, the nursing home where Jessica worked admitted Mrs. Bryant as a terminal patient. Her beloved cigarettes were killing her--lung cancer.

As the doctors hooked her up to the respirator, Jessica heard Mrs. Bryant's last words, "Please let me die with dignity. I don't want to be a burden to anyone."

Jessica knew what she had to do.

## The Homeless

Homeless people  
wandering souls  
looks of despair.  
What has happened  
my lost child?  
What happened to  
equal opportunity,  
to the brotherhood of man?  
Have we become blind  
to our society?  
Or is this our just reward?

## War Is

The people who support the Persian Gulf War  
Are teary eyed over loved ones afar.  
They say, "Support the President and the military"  
And "Remove Saddam" for he is so quite contrary.  
"Free Kuwait" for they suffer more by far.

Can't you see fighting men put to the test?  
Patriotic are we, to denounce all protest.  
Division of the nation should never be.  
The challenge for us is to fight to be free.  
Stop the peace marches and give it a rest.

Say No! We really shouldn't go.  
War is wrong, don't fight the foe.  
Can't you see more love is what's needed,  
Securing more oil makes more blood flow.

War in the Gulf should not be our intention.  
The conflict is an Arab creation.  
All you war mongers who shout the battle cry  
Throw down your weapons and give peace a try.  
We shouldn't be involved in Arab attrition.

All those for peace and all those for war  
Align the streets in front of every store.  
Narrowed views and strong beliefs in their hearts  
They feel they are right and that's the start.  
A sudden shove, shout, and squeal from a store,

The crowd disperses to see an injured child.  
She rights herself and appears so mild  
Although in pain she spews out a loud shout,  
"Hear me for I will tell what it's about,  
In every war the victim is the child."

War is the empty, cold, hungry stares.  
It causes orphans to have nightmares,  
Flattened dwellings abound all about.  
Destruction, fire and confusing shouts.  
It's brutality that nothing can compare.

Shrieking sirens and bombs from the air  
It causes pain and so much despair.  
There is no hope amongst the rubble,  
No food, no home, and much more trouble.  
How can this happen if everyone cares?

The little child left in quiet piety  
As people stood around in perplexity.  
New caring eyes searched all about  
To see if anyone would protest or shout.  
There all around a reflection of tranquility.

Soon everyone was hugging and laughing  
The sound of joy was very resounding.  
Soon they gathered to meet in earnest  
To discuss what action to suggest.  
A suitable plan from hearts of caring.

Twenty-five academicians from each country  
To learn cultures of foreign communities.  
These are the ones to be the delegates  
People with no political motives to negate.  
A model of fairness in making policy.

Twenty-five academians from each country  
To learn cultures of foreign communities.  
These are the ones to be the delegates  
People with no political motives to negate.  
A model of fairness in making policy.

This educated elite will stop all wars  
Through understanding of everyone in store.  
They will make moral justice come true  
Not just for the many but also the few.  
Rejoice in peace so we all will share.

There will always be wondrous bliss  
True justice for the world populace.  
Lest we forget and it would conclude  
With Armageddon as the final prelude.  
And finally this reminder, War Is...

# One Voice

## I

### The Voice of a Slave Child

I am only one voice, a small one at that,  
longing for a big voice to join in  
or even a small ear to hear  
the silent torture of voices so near.

They whisper in silence  
among the shadowed night.

They are heard by the mice and rats that crawl by.

If you listen, you can hear  
the silent screams of terror  
and the drops of tears  
falling in the silent blackness  
on the underground path.

Here no one cries, "Free at last!"

## II

### The Crack in the World

There is a crack in the earth that no one sees  
It's not in the sky, the grass, nor the trees.  
You don't know it's there unless you fall through.  
None who fall through can climb out,  
Except through heaven's help, death, or apparition.  
" 'Ain't no pit like the one below the crack in th  
world."

Even rats, bugs and insects crawl down  
The crack with fear and dread.  
They know where the slime and scum collect.  
The mud in that sewer is more filthy than mud  
anywhere else.  
This is the sewer beyond the crack of the world.

Here, might is right, power means death,  
Long, slow, tormented and cruel,  
Because it takes place deep beyond  
The crack in the world.  
Many people are trapped down here.  
It is where sludge, guns and Satan hide.  
No one feels; no one dares to cry.  
One could dehydrate, then one could die.  
There are many children dying  
In this death trap of the world.  
Rotting, crying and pleading  
At the end of the pit of the world.  
"Help me. Please get me out.  
I WANT TO LIVE!"

### III

#### At the End of the Crack in the World

Follow me down through the sewer pipe.  
Tall, rectangular, spiral, metal staircase,  
Rusted with holes.  
Come through its crumbling, jagged edges,  
Beneath the crack in the world.  
This is the world of the slave child.

Here the smoke smothers and chokes  
The last breaths of life from our souls.  
Here the boozers, losers and filth all rot.  
Here the rats, sewer and water bugs  
Crawl, run, cringe and binge.

Follow me into the pit  
At the end of the crack in the world.  
So finally we arrive.  
Welcome to the world of the slave child.  
My name is Chrissy, or so I am called.  
To my right is Trixie, to my left is Maxie.  
There are many of us.  
We are of all races, colors, ages and creeds  
Now we are just advertisements,  
For sale in a sleaze magazine.

We are children trapped in the night,  
Slaves who never see light.  
Stupidity is brave.  
The smart children become slaves.



There is only one way out.  
It takes a free one, like you,  
To talk and to tell others  
To break us loose  
From the adults who abuse  
And the free ones who accuse.

Now we enter the back room  
In the deepest part of the pit.  
Deep in the shadows, look and you will see  
The rotting of children from within.  
Look more deeply and you will see  
A child being sold.  
Who collects the fee?

A stranger, you say?  
Not usually.  
A family member:  
Father, mother, uncle or friend sells,  
Tracy, Nancy, Mary, Bob, Jason...  
The list never ends.

The names of the trade thrashed into them,  
With straps and chains that  
Weren't meant for humans.  
Trixie, Trudy, Honey and Pop,  
Slaves to the customer they were sold to  
For twenty bucks!  
(A man who spits and stinks of some S.T.D.)

The deed is now finally complete.  
That act of endless shame,  
The invasion, the attack,  
The humiliating guilt and loathing.  
Self-abhorring pain has only begun  
To take its seemingly ever clenching grip.

The masters take, push, and force:  
Drugs, satanism, incest, rape,  
Pregnancy, still-birth,  
Sacrifice and murder  
In hideous ceremonies.  
This is the world of satanic  
Child pornography.  
This is the reality of the world  
Of the slave children.

Depressing, it is,  
But there is still hope.  
Now you know.  
It can happen to any child.  
Knowledge and caring  
Will one day free  
The slave child. I am free!

## Factory

"You there! I say, you over there...Sam Hags. Send that one back. It's no good. Got a defect. The leg's on backwards."

"Yes, sir," the worker yelled back over the hum of the machinery. The foreman surveyed his part of the operation with pride. Not one defect had gone through unnoticed. It was a perfect operation. First came the planning stage where everything was mapped out and standardized, other than basic features which varied so the bosses could tell who each person was.

He chuckled. At least we'll never have to worry about telling twins apart, he thought. When I was young that got to be a real mix up at times, especially at school. Maybe this was a good thing. He'd revolted against the idea at first. Inhumane, that's what it was. But gradually they'd made everyone realize it was the only way. It would work out even better actually because no one would have to worry about overpopulation anymore. They'd produce just as many people as necessary. The government had set quotas, standards too, so every person produced in this shop had genius IQs. Another shop made the workers and so on.

It was a necessity anyway, he thought, after they dropped that bomb and killed half the population of the world; the gasses started attacking the other half and pretty soon everyone was sterile. It was a real shock to the women when they found out they couldn't have

babies anymore. It's a good thing our scientists came up with this idea or we'd all be gone before long.

Growing parts then putting them all together...sounded simple enough, but they sure made a lot of mistakes at the beginning. Guess practice makes perfect. He chuckled again.

"Hey, what's going on down there? Get them moving into electrolysis." Gotta watch these people every minute, he thought. At least when all the new people come out we won't have these problems. Society will run smoother than it ever has before.

Like a procession of dead bodies, thought Will, as he peered at the line from behind a partition in one corner of the huge room. And to think I was one of them once. They must not have inspected me properly when I went by. Even the computers didn't notice. And now, when they find out I'm missing, they'll all be searching.

He dropped to his knees. They hadn't noticed him gone yet. If he could just get out now before they found him out. It was his only chance. But the guards...he'd never get past them and all the alarm systems. Everyone was given thorough tests before they were allowed to leave the building just to make sure they were human. All the others were sent to another laboratory for conditioning. It was tight, too tight, but there must be a way.

Afterward, after they had given him life, they'd found out he wasn't right. There had been a mistake; the doctors had left out the pain-sensing cells in both his arms and hands. Such a little thing, but enough to destroy him. They'd have to take him apart again and take back the life they had given him and start all over. It wasn't right and Will wasn't going to let it happen.

But not here. There was no way he could make his escape from here. Just fifteen minutes before he had left his confinement cell through the air shaft. It was

cramped...but a way...maybe a way. He crawled back into the narrow opening, closing the vent behind him very carefully.

The shaft was like a big tree, branches in every direction. Will inched along, hot and uncomfortable. There it was! Light up ahead. He tried to hurry. Daylight...it must be daylight. His hopes rose, then he reached the opening and his heart sank. Dotted below him like dozens of hot springs were the vats of acid. The destructive baths where the unused and deformed parts were consumed like so many scraps of paper. He wanted to cry, but just then he noticed someone on the ground pointing in the direction of the shaft. They'd spotted him! Fighting his tight container he scurried backwards until he found a fork in the shaft.

The heat was almost unbearable now, and his heart was racing. Surely they had found him missing and the search was on. Now there were noises behind him. They were in the shaft, closing in. He had to get away. Another opening ahead. He scrapped and clawed toward it. He had made it. He was free!

When the nurses came that night to bring Charles Farrell his dinner, she found him lying dead in the air shaft. His head and arm hanging out of the opening and his eyes wide open. She called for the attendants who quickly removed his body. The relatives were notified, and the funeral was held on the grounds of Glenhaven Home a week later.

Charles Farrell had been in the sanitorium for five years and the doctors had given no hope for his recovery. His wife sighed with relief. The heavy burden had finally been lifted.

## Spouse Abuse

*Cindy ran to the phone to call for help. Her husband of six years pulled the phone out of her hands and smashed it over her head. Reeling, she crawled to the bedroom to get to the phone there. Again he followed and again the phone was shattered across her head. The beating only stopped when their six-year-old daughter appeared at the bedroom door with a packed diaper bag and pleaded, "Let's please go to Nana's."*

*"Get out of here," he growled at Cindy. She took her two children and fled.*

Domestic violence is a major social problem that leads to serious injuries and death. For the past two years in Hawaii, 23 women were killed by husbands or lovers, according to the Hawaii State Committee on Family Violence. Honolulu Police Department figures show that currently 200 cases of spouse abuse are reported each week.

Some estimates indicate that 50 to 60 percent of all marriages will have at least one episode of domestic violence, explains Meda Chesney-Lind, a University of Hawaii associate professor of Women's Studies. "It's absolutely essential that we begin to take it much more seriously than we have in the past," she says.

According to Laura Crites, Director of the Family Peace Center, spouse abuse laws are changing slowly. Only a few years ago, Hawaii repealed the marital rape exemption which provided for prosecution of rape only

outside the marital relationship. Crites also mentioned a repealed law which gave a man the right to 'take' a woman without her consent if they had had sex within the previous 60 days.

Arrests of batterers have increased from three a week in 1987 to nearly three a day in 1989. Dennis Dunn, Director of Honolulu's Victim/Witness Kokua Services, talked about the new police department policy which requires officers to make an arrest if there is any evidence of injury and if they are aware of who caused the injury.

That policy has also created some problems when a woman defends herself, says Crites. "If he has any scratches, they'll arrest her too for the same charge. They're getting around the intended law (which was) to arrest the dominant abuser."

*Their marriage was falling apart, but she was pregnant. They sat together on the bed discussing a possible abortion. All of a sudden he started choking her. She couldn't even scream. Somehow she got off the bed and tried to run. He grabbed her by the feet and pulled her to the floor.*

*Just then their two-year-old daughter ran in screaming. The woman watched in horror as he picked up the child and threw her across the room. Adrenalin surged through her body. She started kicking and hitting him, and when he fell back, she grabbed her child and ran. He followed her to her mother's apartment, breaking down the glass security door, but fled before the police arrived.*

According to Chesney-Lind, a recent Minneapolis study indicated that actually arresting the batterer was dramatically more effective in reducing further abuse than just taking the man out to cool-off, which had been the accepted policy previously.

Psychologist Richard Kappenberg explains that the couple is on an emotional roller coaster. "The abuse, then typically the make-up or honeymoon period where

they're committed to each other and they're going to overcome this. Then very quickly they're back in the same cycle." He adds that once they're in that cycle, the wife often feels she did something to deserve the beating.

*The woman and her husband were arguing in the parking lot when he started beating her with his fists. She fell to the ground unconscious. When she awoke in the hospital, the police officer was there with his open notebook. "Do you want to press charges?" he asked. "No," she replied. "How can I? He's my husband."*

A victim does not have to press charges for the police to make an arrest, according to Dunn. "Even if the victims call saying they don't want to press charges, we will proceed as long as we have enough evidence to make a case. This takes the pressure and responsibility off the victim. When they understand they will be subpoenaed to come to court anyway, they usually show up. If we can get testimonies, the cases are fairly successful, and if convicted, the batterer faces two days in jail and mandatory counseling."

Ken is a former batterer who started abusing women when he was 13. "If I screamed and yelled at a woman and I didn't get the response I wanted--for them to listen, or stop doing what they were doing, or do what I wanted--I would hit. I knew that worked."

Chesney-Lind explains, "It's not an issue of anger; it's an issue of power and control. These men are in control. They don't hit in public or at work. We have to make it not okay to hit in the household."

*Marla had fallen asleep on the living room floor trying to wait up for her husband who had complained that she wasn't being a good wife if she wasn't waiting up for him when he arrived home late, as he usually did. "Don't you care?" he would say. This time she awoke abruptly and in pain. He was kicking her in the ribs.*



Crites discusses the profile of a batterer: He grew up in a violent home where he saw his father beat his mother, or he was beaten himself. He typically has low self-esteem. He is unsure of his masculinity and feels that he can reinforce that by being in charge and controlling someone else. And he typically has an explosive personality.

Chesney-Lind adds, "If your boyfriend is hitting the furniture or destroying your property, that's a message to you that he's potentially going to be violent. You should pay very close attention to extreme possessiveness and jealousy."

*"We'd be riding in the car," says Helen, "when he would slap me for no reason. I'd say, 'What's that for?' He'd say, 'I saw you looking at that guy in the other car.'"*

*"One night I didn't fix dinner. He was furious. I took the two kids and ran into the living room. He went to punch me, but I ducked and he broke the window. He wouldn't go to the hospital for stitches. When his friends came over he said I did that to him. See what women do to you. They get you angry; they drive you crazy. They know just what to do to drive you crazy."*

"If they (the women) didn't do anything wrong, I would find something wrong," says Ken. "All the time I used physical violence, I thought it was justifiable. Today, I know it was wrong. I can't change the world around me, but I can change myself."

Ken advises abused women to have the batterer arrested. If convicted, he can be ordered to report to Komo Mai Counseling Center (where Ken received counseling). Women are sometimes ordered to Maluhia O'Wahine. Both are support and counseling groups with the Family Peace Center, which is partially funded by, and works in close cooperation with, the Family Court of the First Circuit. Anyone in need of help can call the

24-hour hotline number (841-0822) at the Shelter for Victims of Family Violence.

*Seven-year-old Linda stood frozen watching a scene she saw or heard several times a month: Daddy beating mommy with his belt. Her mother cowered on the floor, not uttering a word until she saw her chance and reached for the phone. Her husband grabbed it and started to strangle her with the cord. Linda ran from the house to a neighbor's screaming, "Daddy's killing mommy. Call the police." The neighbors wanted to close their eyes and not see.*

Why do women stay in an abusive relationship? According to Crites, one of the major reasons is because of the children: They are attached to their father, they need both parents, the mother can't provide for them economically, or she feels she will lose them if she leaves. And there's hope. If she works at it, maybe he'll change.

*"When it's the bad times, you think of all the good times. It'll happen again. It'll come back; the feelings have to come back. It never did--it got worse."*

*"But when he was sorry for what he'd done, he'd make up like no other. He said he'd never do it again. He'd take me out to dinner, to a movie, or dancing. He won't even get jealous. We'd come home and make love, but the next morning it's like he doesn't know me. It's like 'I made up for it, so there. I paid my dues.'"*

*"He told me that if I ever left him, I would be embarrassing him. He would find me, kill me, and put my body parts all over the island."*

Sometimes spouse abuse can lead to violence with a different result, as dramatized in the movie "The Burning Bed." Based on a true story, it's about an abused wife who murders her husband when she sees no other way to stop the violence. In the last decade, two abused women in Hawaii have been tried for murder; one was

women in Hawaii have been tried for murder; one was acquitted, the other was found guilty.

*When Linda was 12, her father turned his anger toward her. Linda describes what happened when, at the dinner table one evening, he accused her of smoking because one of her friends had been caught smoking. "With all the bottled-up hate I had for him, I sassed him--'So what,' I said. He was livid. His face started turning red. He jumped up and pulled me by the hair. I fell to the ground and he dragged me (by the hair) away from the dining table to my room. There, he threw me up against the wall and slapped, slapped, slapped. I guess you'd say he slapped me silly. I was screaming the whole time. My mom tried to rescue me. She started hitting him. He swung his arm back and sent her flying across the room, knocking her unconscious."*

*The violence continued. Linda started running away and each time her father hired a private detective to bring her back. "My mother left my father finally because of me," she says. "I was running away and putting myself in so much danger. She couldn't leave for herself."*

Linda's story doesn't end there. Of her three marriages, she suffered serious physical abuse in one and a constant barrage of verbal and psychological abuse in another. "My self-esteem got lower and lower as the marriage went on," she admitted. "I really started to believe what he said."

Crites plans a major community outreach effort to begin working with Hawaii's ethnic cultural leaders to prevent spouse abuse. She feels that cultural attitudes exist in Hawaii that prevent some women from asking for help.

*"When I left my husband, my family was all against me. My sister said, 'All couples get into fights. Marriage is supposed to last forever.' She had a good husband; he only shook her once in a while and slapped her across the arm for saying something."*

As with any social problem, a quick-fix solution simply doesn't exist, but Crites and others feel that progress has been made since Thomas Fuller wrote in 1732, "A woman, a spaniel and a walnut tree,/ The more they're beaten, the better they be."

# Nothing

Swept like a windless leaf  
Foam on an empty sea,  
An abyss of nothingness to dwell in  
And you have me.

Fall to a depth beyond knowing,  
Life in a void, in a shell.  
To have the seasons dry up one by one,  
To be in this emptiness--Hell!

A feeling of anger, a feeling of hate,  
Of madness, of lust, of desire.  
A tortuous trap in the fields of the soul,  
A mind so wretched in the fire.

Then back to the nothing  
The heart knows so well.  
Tears that won't fall, and lips that won't sing,  
Not a sound from the depths of this hell!

The stars fade into the morning.  
A cloud drifts away beyond my sight.  
The dream that is there and yet not,  
And in the darkness of the day, not one light.

The rainbow stretches for the sun  
When the cloud no longer cries,  
But can reach so far, then drops;  
Fading forever into the endless reaches of the skies.

It's time to pick up the pieces,  
Start all over again.  
Find an unbroken chord of your heart,  
Then wonder and wait for the 'when.'

## The Unknown

Does not the whistling wind  
Bring to mind  
Thoughts of hidden ghosts and kind?  
Monsters large and maidens fair  
Caught within the dungeon air?  
Headless men and witches too  
Stirring up their evil brew?  
Casting spells to win their way;  
"Abra cadabra"..."Shezamm" they say.  
Evil deeds and horrors told.  
On young minds they form a mold  
For future deeds and stories too  
Of wickedness and spells anew.  
Like trees we shake  
And hide with fright  
From the horrors of the night.  
We strain to listen, now in fear  
And dreaded silence--all we hear!  
If we shrink from all unknown  
Where then can the seeds be sown?  
The seeds of life, I mean to say,  
If they should die...  
We pass away.

# Fording the River

How we skipped along the path,  
Our bundles light, with the breezy contentment we felt.  
Hidden from the burning rays of the sun,  
By soft shades of green and brown.

How can we ford this wide gushing river?  
The water trickling over our toes  
Then our ankles,  
Not reaching our knees.  
Step slowly, very cautiously,  
Over the rough pebbles of the river bed.  
We'll let our feet rest on the carpet of river grass  
Like an enchanted mermaid's hair,  
Or long green fingers.

Step very carefully and see the small fish scatter.  
Go quickly where the current runs fast,  
Then alight on the soft brown earth  
Of the opposite bank,  
The conquering wanderers.

Watch the sunlight filter through the trees  
And play patterns on the wooded ground,  
A world of green and brown.

We're children playing in an enchanted garden  
Flying like birds to every tree top  
And swooping low between the branches.  
Now the night hunters stalk their prey  
Through the jungle.  
We're alive, we're living.

But now it's time to fall onto the gentle earth  
And rest.



## Green Eyes

Lying next to his sleeping face, she thought of the years she had spent loving him. A lifetime of laughter and tears, celebrations and struggles had passed between them, and still his green eyes mesmerized her. Memories rippled through her mind and she wrapped herself in their velvet comfort.

Closing her eyes, she was at a barbecue in her backyard on a sunny Fourth of July afternoon, and he was asking to sit down next to her. When their eyes met, an emotional comet surged through her trailing a burst of excitement that sparked and tickled every nerve of her being. Fifteen years of maturity shattered and she felt everything with the intensity of being sixteen again. Her heart was pounding with the rhythm and echo of a pile driver and the air suddenly felt too solid to breathe. Catching herself in a daze, an embarrassed but inviting smile spread over her face, and he sat down.

She opened her eyes thinking that the energy flushing through her must have awakened him, but his peaceful face was unchanged. Studying its kindness, she drifted to thoughts of him with their sons. Memories gathered of them playing together and the love they openly showed each other. She realized how rare it was for a man to balance strong principles with sympathy and humor and silently thanked him for letting the little boy in himself peek through when they needed him most. She wondered if he knew how much she cherished

the tenderness he wasn't afraid to show and the understanding he wasn't too proud to give.

Hearing her sigh, he slowly opened his eyes. For a moment her gaze held him. Then the darkness in her face dawned on him and he drew her into his arms. As the light of January 16, 1991 filled the room, the future's possibilities filled his mind. While praying for peace, he thought of the things he needed to do before he left. Images of tax papers, car parts, broken hinges, and talks with the boys whirled through his mind. Suddenly a jagged breath left his body and he felt at peace. One thought resounded: they are safe.

# Muse

Dear muse, be with me  
When tomorrow I sit,  
But tonight let me sleep  
Without your sweet fit.  
In the morning, bring forth  
All you've played in the night,  
Granting me then, your deep,  
    open sight.  
I'll write every word with  
The birth of day,  
But now give me leave  
To sleep and to pray.

# The Reason

Children look upon this time of year  
as dreams come true  
for presents are near.

Most adults are concerned with the other side,  
like the hustle and bustle  
of the Christmas tide.

But it appears to me that something is lost,  
one thing so valuable,  
yet so little the cost.

A long time ago, though some question the date,  
marks the birth of a child  
which we too celebrate.

Best we fill our hearts, not our stockings,  
with love  
and give thanks to the Lord,  
who waits patiently above.

For when He returns, let Him leave no one behind,  
since we all have in our nature  
the ability to be kind.

So on Christmas day and all through  
the season,  
Peace in our hearts is renewed,  
For Jesus was and still is--the reason.

## I'm PBS, You're MTV

My dear little brother, you are such a strange child. You stand there in a Cro-Magnon man stance attempting to insult me with beast-like grunts. I often wonder at times like this if Mom and Dad adopted you. If they did, it would explain your apish behavior in clearer terms. Look at us. We are so completely different (thank God). The only thing we possibly share in common, besides our last name, is the view from the dirty window in the living room. As we stand here bickering and hurling trite insults at each other, I am forced to question whether you are even on the same evolutionary level as I am. It is just that there is no possible way you are from the same flesh as me. Off the top of my head, I can easily name three things that separate you from me: your obsession with exercising, your addiction to sports, and your choice of entertainment. These three points alone prove you are really not my brother.

To begin with, let's talk about exercising. I will be the first to admit (and I know you will be the first to agree) that I am not a disciple of fitness. I hate to sweat. I find glistening (as I prefer to call it) unbecoming. My definition of a good workout is creating a beehive on one of my mannequins. You'd be surprised, little brother, to discover the muscles involved in teasing and hairspraying a wig eight inches high. You, on the other hand, are obsessed with exercising. You inflict needless pain and strain on your chiseled body. You lift your dumbbells religiously and effortlessly run ten miles

a day. Your biceps bulge out of your Hanes T-shirt like a balloon with too much helium. Big deal. You have pathetically devoted your life to perfecting your physique. Don't feel too conceited. Your massive pectorals don't intimidate me. I am not threatened by the taut stomach you proudly display. As you hunch over your weight bench mindlessly raising your dumbbells, I raise my Kool Ultra Deluxe Light cigarette to my lips and swear that my parents found you on their doorstep.

Furthermore, your addiction to sports makes me question your lineage. Sure I like sports. In fact, my favorite sport is shopping at Liberty House on the first day of the Safari Sale. Do you realize the effort involved in finding a Giorgio Armani 100% silk shirt with tortoise shell buttons? Now that takes stamina, determination, and willpower. Yes, I know you play football every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. And I know you play basketball at the park on Tuesdays and Thursdays. I know you were a star athlete in school. So what? I am reminded of your addiction to sports everyday as you recite trivial sports facts to me, like who batted in the most touchdowns or who holds the field goal record in baseball, or is it tennis? I don't care. You may be able to shoot a football from half-court. You may know every detail *Sports Illustrated* ever published over the past ten years. Who cares? Can you apply sequins and applique to a floor-length gown? Can you tell the difference between a real Louis Vuitton bag and an impostor Louis Vuitton? I didn't think so. Are you sure we are related?

Above all, your choice of entertainment really makes me wonder if we are from the same flesh. I converse with you about Mozart, Chopin, and Vivaldi and you think I am talking about different types of transmission fluids. I attend fashion shows to marvel at the construction of the garments and the silhouettes of the fabrics. You accompany me to ogle the "chicks" and eat the

complimentary pupus. Once I took you to see a production of *Hamlet* and you deemed it boring. Boring? How barbaric. I'm PBS and Masterpiece Theatre; you're MTV and Headbanger's Ball. I sit crossed-legged in my bedroom, inhaling incense, and meditating to Somalian folk music while you're in the next room uttering grunts like a prehistoric beast as you watch World Championship Wrestling. You spend countless hours listening to meaningless lyrics and droning music. Your idea of a night on the town is driving up and down Kuhio Avenue, yelling obscenities from your truck. And you call my evenings at the theatre "a waste of time."

The nerve! Can I see your birth certificate, young man? Ouch! Stop punching me, you mammoth beast! I was only joking. Sure, we have our differences, but did you really believe me when I suggested you may have been adopted? You know what a joker I am. You **know** we're related. Take a look at your eyes. They slant slightly more on the left side, like mine. Look at your crooked index finger. Now look at mine. The resemblance is frightening, isn't it? We may not watch the same television programs, little brother, but one look at our noses with their high bridges and flared nostrils is enough proof to convince anyone that we are definitely brothers. Hey, look out the window in the living room. It's stopped raining and dirt has been washed away. We can finally see outside. It's a beautiful day. Why don't we go outside and stare at the clouds. We can spend the rest of the afternoon daydreaming together like we used to when we were kids. But can you do me a favor before you go outside? Let me out of this headlock. You're messing up my hair.

# Dying Rainbow

A rainbow melts  
into my tears  
drenched of colors  
replaced by fears.  
She dies so slow  
without the pain  
no one sees her  
except the rain.  
The sun has gone  
too far away  
to erase the pain  
she's felt today.  
Her arch now breaks  
without a sound  
the rainbow fades  
into the ground.



# The Flowers

Once  
i squeezed the flowers  
much too tight  
and they died.

i held onto it so  
because  
it was the only thing  
that could never hurt me.

(or so i thought.)

but it did.  
and now  
i let the flowers grow  
wild and free  
because i know.

# Once I Loved

Once i loved...  
i brought lilac flowers  
for you to see  
but you laughed at me  
and said i was a fool  
for loving their beauty.

Once i loved...  
but now nevermore.  
you took away  
my childhood dreams  
and forever i have  
nothing  
in a world so lonely  
without love.

## Ella Myrtle Ball

My grandmother was the most remarkable person I have ever known. She earned the respect and admiration of everyone she met. Grandma was a slender, 5'9" woman with striking features. Her complexion was flawless and her eyes were strong and loving.

As children, my brother and I anxiously endured the six hour drive to visit Grandma in Sheridan, Wyoming. We plowed through winter blizzards on treacherous roads to spend the holidays with her. Before the car even stopped, we were running to the door to give her a hug. She returned it with a stronger squeeze. She greeted both of us with her favorite nicknames: Susan-baby and Danny-boy. No one else could call us those names without making us angry. An unspoken rule stated that we sit for ten minutes and simply enjoy each other's company. It was unthinkable to run past Grandma to the toys or our magic banks. Grandma was not wealthy, but she had a small vase for both of us that was always full of pennies when we arrived. We were allowed to go to the corner market and buy penny candy, but grandma said we had to leave a few pennies as seed money in our vases.

Grandma dressed like a lady, wearing a crisply pressed house dress, a girdle with stockings, and formal house slippers. She considered it improper to ever wear pants. She kept her apartment tidy and clean. I can't remember a morning that Grandma didn't have a bowl of cereal with half-and-half, toast with jelly, and juice

for breakfast. Her dinners were simple, yet delicious. We enjoyed fresh vegetables in season. She made a salad of finely sliced lettuce, diced tomatoes, and green peppers with French dressing. I remember tender roast beef most often as our meat. We felt humbled eating these delicious dinners because Grandma couldn't afford to eat so richly when she was alone.

Grandma's house was on Main Street and heavy traffic passed by during all hours. At night we went to bed with the windows open and listened to the hum of traffic until we drifted off to sleep.

Grandma was especially fond of her yard and flowers. She manicured her jungle, as the backyard was called. We often picked crabapples from her tree to see who could take a bite without puckering. She had flowering bushes of peonies beside the garage and climbing roses covering the back fence. Green, leafy vines grew everywhere: in the pine trees, over the fence and up the sides of the house.

Although these are my memories of Ella Ball, I know her life was not always so tranquil. She was born in Custer County, Nebraska on January 6, 1894, one of eight children. After completing her education, she became a school teacher. In October of 1912, she married a professional baseball player, Irwin Fred Poffenberger. Six years later, Irwin passed away during the flu epidemic of 1918. He left Ella with two small children, Ilene, five and Willy, two. After Fred's death, Ella opened a boarding house and took in ironing and mending to help provide for the family.

In 1920, at the age of twenty-six, Ella moved to Wyoming and filed for a homestead. She built a small tar paper shack on her property. This was a difficult time for Grandma. She took a job as a waitress at the only cafe in Walcott, a nearby town. The dry land produced only sagebrush and rattlesnakes. She had no

transportation and water had to be carried a mile from Walcott back to the homestead.

While working at the cafe, Grandma met Ray Clinton Ball. Ray worked for the Wyoming Highway Department. He was marking many of the trails that later would become main routes through the wilderness. Ray and Ella were married in March of 1922 in Cheyenne and soon after, Grandma started her second family with the birth of John Ball, in Rawlins, Wyoming. They moved several more times until finally settling in Sheridan, Wyoming. My mother, Joanne, was born there in 1932. In 1940, Grandma's second husband died of kidney failure. She then bought an apartment house and rented out rooms. Later she took a job at the most prominent department store in town.

Ella was well respected and had a following of customers who asked for her by name. One of her regular customers was an Native American Indian who lived in Montana. Mrs. Yellowtail was wealthy, had a large family, and bought massive amounts of merchandise during her yearly visits. She insisted that Grandma take her through every department in the store to assist her shopping. One day Mrs. Yellowtail walked straight through the store to Grandma's department. She had two chickens, with their feet sticking out of brown paper bags as a gift of her appreciation for "Ball," as she called Ella. The family had a delicious feast that evening. Grandma worked in the department store until she was in her late seventies.

In 1963, Ella Ball's son, Johnny, died of cirrhosis of the liver. Everyone loved John and his death was difficult for the entire family. It affected Grandma in a way only a parent who has lost a child can understand. She kept her grieving to herself, but I still remember the saddened look on her face.

Although I only knew Grandma during the last quarter of her life, she has influenced me tremendously. She is a reminder that I have a good heritage; not of money or power, but of endurance, pride in one another, and love. Especially love. Grandma gave unselfishly and continually of herself. All those she touched received constant affection. She never hesitated a moment in deciding if something was right or wrong. She was well-founded in her Christian beliefs and was a pillar for those around her.

Grandma lived alone in the apartment house until she fell and broke her hip in 1984. She spent the last four years of her life in a nursing home. She always hoped to return to her home but was never able to fully recover. It was heartbreaking to watch her slowly fade away.

Grandma died on October 24, 1988. She was ninety-four years old and weighed only seventy pounds. At her funeral the minister gave the analogy of a rough rock being tumbled and broken by the elements. The end result is a brilliantly polished stone. The tribulations Grandma experienced in life made her a diamond, the most magnificent of all gems. When I visited Grandma two weeks before her death, she still recognized me and was still able to squeeze my hand harder than I could hers.

# Rain Woman

Yesterday I had the oddest desire. I woke up with it, out of a deep sleep. I awoke to the sound of the rain dripping from the roof of the house to the top of the shed; tiny pings of metallic rain. I listened more closely in hopes of hearing the distant and uniformed patter of steady rainfall. In the quiet of the morning I heard it, falling on the leaves of the plumeria trees outside my bedroom window. I threw off my covers and went to my window; the one that dissolves the walls around me, the one that opens outward freeing me from the constraints of glass and screen. Sometimes I imagine the window as a door, opening wide to an elegant veranda, affording me a panoramic view of the harbor, but then I remember that it is only a window.

As I stood looking out, the rain falling on the silent world around me, my desire grew stronger. I wanted to climb out the window onto the lanai roof and stand, the rain misting my hair without soaking in, dampening my nightgown without soaking through. I wanted to stand there in the rain until the water ran from my hair to my nose to my chin, down my neck, soaking my nightgown till it clung to the nakedness beneath--rivers of water running down my ankles and off my toes. I wanted to be completely immersed in the rain.

Instead, I sat on the edge of the window, dangling my feet in the run-off from the roof above me, watching the harbor change with the intensity of the rain. The water moved like huge sheets of tin, blown horizontal by

an invisible wind, the rain and fog creating mesmerizing mirages before my eyes.

The rest of the day was more typical. I caught up on my reading, pattered around the house. I ate a simple lunch and enjoyed a quiet dinner. By the time Ben came home I had the children in bed, the dishes cleared away and the table prepared for making sandwiches. I placed two long rows of bread on the table. Ben mayonnaised one row of bread while I spread mustard on the other. We repeated the steps with ham and cheese, then matched each of the halves with their mate and carefully stacked them back in the bread bags. We continued making sandwiches until we had six bags lining the bottom of the refrigerator next to the hard-boiled eggs, apples and oranges. I filled three empty milk jugs with juice, then retired to my bedroom for the night.

I sat on the bed with my pillow propped up against the headboard, listening to the rain, staring at the pattern in the quilt until I heard footsteps coming up the stairs. I hadn't turned a page in my book. The rain was still pouring down, speaking to me in that monotonous tone, inviting me to come out, be a part of it, be absorbed by it, become one with it.

After Ben finally settled into a slow snore, I tip-toed to my window. I needed to open it and talk to the rain face to face. In the darkness of the night it looked very much as it had before, the harbor still shifting with the forces of the wind, rain and fog, the current flowing, moving, disappearing and reappearing as that calm, smooth piece of tin. In the darkness, the view was no longer one-dimensional. Now it was alive with shadows and grays and blacks.

I looked at the roof beneath the window, again wanting to feel the coarse shingles under my feet, the rain showering over my body. I sat on the window ledge wondering what strange creatures the night releases,



what dark elements the rain and the blackness bring together. I asked Ben if he wanted to come out in the rain with me, but he grunted and mumbled something about my decency. I said I was decent, but I decided not to go out. The uncertainties of the night held me on the window sill. The rain turned cold and the drainage from the roof sent shivers up my spine. I climbed down from the window and snuggled back into bed, gently warming my feet against Ben's legs.

We awoke in the morning to the sounds of creaking stairs and quiet whispers. I checked the window for a weather report, pleased to see the gray clouds dropping a light drizzle. I prepared the children for their stay with the sitter, remembering what Sheila had said of the dangers of the park. A woman had been stabbed a week earlier, and we were only allowed to continue our outreach if a male accompanied us on each mission. After a light breakfast, I quickly showered, pulled my wet hair into a ponytail and loaded the car. We took the children to the sitter and headed for A'ala Park. As I turned the corner onto King Street, I noticed the familiar blue Caravan in my rear view mirror. Sheila climbed out of her car and unloaded a child's red wagon. We carried our bags to the wagon, and I introduced Ben to Sheila.

"Ben, I'd like you to meet Sheila, director of the mental health follow-up group at the medical center. Sheila, this is my husband, Ben." Sheila and Ben exchanged greetings while Sheila busied herself at the van.

"I'm sorry the weather isn't cooperating. It hasn't rained like this for months."

"Oh, a little rain never hurt anybody! I'm ready whenever you are."

We followed Sheila's lead, carrying the juice, blankets and day-old doughnuts while she pulled the overflowing wagon to a picnic table on the concert stage.

Rows of blankets lying side by side lined the rear of the stage with spatters of shopping carts and grocery bags randomly parked among them. The food line assembled quickly, with each pair of hands taking two, sometimes three sandwiches at a time. The hard-boiled eggs disappeared before Sheila could hide one for Jerry, her toothless friend.

I saw the twins from the previous week and gave them half a bag of sandwiches to save for dinner. The mirrored nine-year-olds bounced across the park to another concert shell, like hermit crabs finding comfort in the abandoned homes of their predators. Their mother asked if we had any blankets, but she had arrived in the right line at the wrong time. She asked us if we could bring some next week, but I avoided any remark of commitment. Sheila warned us not to make promises to people who can't believe in them.

A little girl, about four years old, sat on a park bench on the lawn, holding a doll a priest had given her the week before. I remembered her face when he handed it to her, so cynical, so frightened that he would ask for it back. She took it and held it close to her, never taking her eyes from the priest, caressing its tangled hair. Today, she cautiously approached the food line, arriving at the table just in time for the last cake doughnut, with no icing or glaze. All the chocolate doughnuts, the cinnamon twists and the donuts with rainbow sprinkles had been consumed by the adults.

After everyone had gone through the line, we packed the wagon and headed north. We walked three blocks before we were eagerly greeted by a dozen or so familiar faces that recognized Sheila. A petite painted lady came to us with a bright smile repeating, "mahalo, mahalo," over and over again as she bowed her head in appreciation. When she walked away I noticed her dress open in the back, no teeth on the zipper strong enough

to lock out the stares. As she faded out of sight, a man on crutches came into view. Sheila spotted him across the street and shouted, "Tim!" After a brief embrace, Tim took two sandwiches and a glass of juice but seemed anxious to share some news.

"Sheila, what do you think of my new leg?" He proudly pulled up his tattered pant leg to reveal a tennis shoe neatly tied over the mannequin-like plastic of his foot. Sheila smiled with shared pride and said, "It's beautiful, Tim, just beautiful!" I nodded in agreement.

By now the rain had changed from a light mist to a drizzle to a steady downpour. Pulling the half-empty wagon through the quiet streets, we strolled past the empty boutique shops. My gaze wandered from the well-dressed mannequins in the windows to an overflowing shopping cart blocking a dark doorway. Grocery bags stuffed with blankets, clothing, empty peanut butter jars and moldy bread filled the cart. A dark figure lay on the ground behind the cart, bundled in the shadows of the shop. Sheila approached the cart, signaling us to pass and wait at the corner.

"Mrs. Brown...Mrs. Brown," Sheila whispered softly. "I'm leaving two sandwiches right here in your grocery cart." She tucked them into a bag next to a torn shoe. Mrs. Brown began to stir. She sat up, somewhat delirious at first, then slowly focused her gaze on Sheila. She pulled herself to her feet, balancing against the wall. As if something suddenly awoke inside here, Mrs. Brown grabbed the sandwiches and threw them at Sheila, shouting, "Leave me alone! I'm not mental! You want to know who's mental? That guy over there...", pointing at a businessman entering the doorway to his kingdom. "He's more mental than I am. Why don't you go pick on him?" Sheila quickly apologized, talking soft and steady while helping Mrs. Brown settle back into the shadow of the dark doorway.

Sheila met us at the corner, a forced smile on her face. We were somewhere in Chinatown, heading back toward the park. Three sandwiches and four apples lay in the bottom of the wagon, but we continued to look for someone to give the food to. A white limousine taxi turned the corner in front of us, splashing a puddle at our feet. We walked along the street, dodging the run-off from the store-front canopies.

We came to a canal bordering the park, stopping a moment to look at the muddy water pouring in from a side culvert, leaving an oily tinge on top of the stream below. The rain woke the sleeping sediment, trash and debris that rested on the bottom of the canal. Sheila told of the many clients she had fished out of the stream after they fell off the edge of the canal wall--either too drunk or too high or a victim of an over-aggressive neighbor.

"Last Friday, the police were here fishing out something someone thought was human intestines," said Sheila.

"Did you ever find out if they really were or not?" asked Ben.

"No. I never heard."

Back at the park we gave the last sandwiches and apples to the people still gathered on the stage. While we loaded the wagon back into Sheila's van Ben said, "Sheila, I'm impressed with how well you handled those people. It must be hard to do it every week."

"Oh, you get used to it after awhile. Thanks for coming. You two go home and get dried off. You look terrible." We all laughed, suddenly aware of our dripping hair and clothes. We said our good-byes, laughed again at each other's sippy appearance and headed home on the freeway.

The drive home was quiet. I concentrated on the cars floating in the spray of the mist in front of me. I

touched Ben's shirt sleeve. He had also been drenched by the rain. It was good to be home. The kids raced through the door to the refrigerator. We left our shoes at the front door and went upstairs to dry off. As I walked past the closed window, Ben asked me if I hadn't gone out and danced naked in the rain the night before. He laughed and said that he should tell Sheila who was really mental. I smiled, but I didn't say a word.

# Eden

High upon the throne I sit,  
Great riches at my feet.  
Servants bow, politely down,  
Then quietly retreat.

The grand doors open, golden-brass,  
The guards stand straight and tall.  
Four boxes, each a cubit large  
Are marched in from the hall.

A squire stands tall before me now,  
The boxes in a row.  
His empty eyes reflecting back  
A deep and dark hollow.

The eyes will mine not meet, not once,  
So far away they stare.  
This I ponder as I wonder  
Just what each box will spare.

A crier calls from far above  
The window of the sun.  
He tells me that it's twelve o'clock  
And that my time has come.

The squire rolls out a lengthy scroll,  
To start his message new,  
Of what lies here before the queen  
That she must now review.

The squire's speech begins direct:  
"M'lady of the throne,  
Four boxes here before you come,  
Rewards for ambition shown.

You've come so far, m'ladyness,  
So far from peasantland  
And now, you see, each box can be  
A mighty treasure grand.

First, m'lady, you must decide  
Just what to sacrifice.  
One by one the boxes will tell  
Exactly their own price.

Could number one be diamond jewels?  
A treasure chest of gold?  
Or will a map of distant shores  
Be what this box doth hold?

Or number two may hold a prize  
Of more than milk and honey.  
Perhaps a land where trees grow tall,  
Not bearing fruit, but money.

Yet number three your dream might keep,  
The dream you've never told.  
The one you know your happiness  
Could there within it hold.

But number four might be the one,  
The one you know for sure  
Contains not dreams or gold assets,  
But wisdom, wise and pure.

And so your highness, what's your choice?  
Remember dear, the one  
That's all alone is yours to keep  
When your final choice is done."

I contemplated all he'd said.  
I thought it through and through.  
I asked if he could not afford  
Just one more tiny clue.

"Can I ask, my squire faithful,  
Why is it I must choose?  
Or can I walk away from this,  
Not knowing what I lose?"

"That, again, my highest maiden,  
Is your decision still.  
No information I can give  
That void of choice could fill."

I looked up at the crier's perch  
Above the window sill,  
Hoping for a nod or glance  
To guide my wandering will.

Not an eye did the crier bat,  
Nor guard, nor even squire.  
And so I looked within myself  
For some eternal fire.

"Number two, I want to open.  
I want to see inside.  
Why is it that you make me choose  
From secrets that you hide?"



The squire said naught, but went before  
The box with number two.  
And as it rose, right there before  
My eyes, my heritage grew.

"Come back!" I cried, but all in vain.  
My parents had disappeared.  
There before me three large cubes  
Stood waiting while I feared.

With parents gone, I asked myself,  
What more could there be?  
The ones I'd loved I sacrificed  
And all for naught, for me.

Again I asked, "Why must I choose?  
This game is no delight.  
I want to walk away, dear sir;  
Why must I live this fight?"

The squire said naught, again he stood,  
Eyes cold as stone at night.  
He looked not at but through me now,  
My shadow in the light.

"Alright," I said, "I'll play your game.  
Box three, then I will take."  
Before me stood a handsome prince  
Pacing upon a lake.

He slowly sank, the lake then dried,  
Again my heart did pound.  
And at the throne the empty eyes  
Glared up from all around.

"Stop!" I cried. The eyes stood still.  
No image did they yield.  
Just emptiness and loneliness  
From hollow empty fields.

My anger rose, I quietly spoke,  
"The fourth one I will take."  
And number four at once was gone,  
I thought it a mistake.

There in a crib wrapped warm and safe,  
A babe of flesh did lie.  
As it slept, a swell of slat  
Formed deep within my eye.

I said but naught, I could not move.  
No gold or silver spent  
Could ever more replace the loss  
This emptiness had lent.

I closed my eyes, I would not look.  
I sank down in the throne.  
The squire whispered, "Wait, m'dear,  
One more must now be shown."

I waited, silent, eyes compressed,  
Until a breath was new.  
My eyes then slowly opened  
As the sunlight happened through.

I looked around, the box was gone,  
The last one of the four.  
Also the squires, guards and crier,  
Even the gold-brass door.

Around me grew great trees and shrubs,  
Long vines and floral hues.  
The sound of water flowing near,  
This scene was now my clue.

I must have slept, I told myself,  
For surely I did roam.  
I reached a branch, an apple picked,  
Then headed for my home.

## **Consummated Love**

You are the sea  
meeting the shore  
sweeping me out  
pushing me back  
licking my face  
making me laugh

One moment of peace  
a smile, a hug  
a quiet conversation  
acknowledging love  
a meeting of eyes  
we now understand

You are the sea  
I am the shore  
We are the sand

# Interview with Dr. Roland Stiller

Everyone has a story to tell. Quite often the most memorable are those in which the journeyman departs on a quest for the unknown. Luke did it in Star Wars, Jonah did it in the Bible and Huckleberry Finn did it in American Literature.

Dr. Roland Stiller, professor of economics and business administration at UH West Oahu, has a story to tell... a modern day journey which he shared with us at *Westwinds*.

**Ww: Tell us about your escape from East Germany.**

**RS:** When my family and I escaped from East Germany in 1956, I was in my early teens. Unquestionably, the escape was a very difficult decision for my parents to make. My dad was sixty years of age at the time; mother was fifty-six. At this age it was difficult to leave behind property, friends and relatives to go into an uncertain future. Above all, we ran the risk of getting caught and punished while trying to escape. We were very fortunate to make it out. Many individuals and families were not so fortunate.

After we arrived in West Germany, we stayed for about six months in a refugee camp sharing one large room with about sixty people. It was there that our mother passed away. She died of a heart attack. The World War II, plus post-war experiences in communist East Germany, the stress of planning and executing our

escape and the happiness of having succeeded were just too much for her to cope with. She passed away a happy woman, deprived of property and familiar surrounding but in the knowledge that her family was assured of political, religious and economic freedom.

**Ww: What motivated your father to escape?**

**RS:** Following World War II, a communist regime was installed by the Soviets in East Germany. East Germany became officially a "workers' and farmers' state" with no room for what was called the "bourgeois class." Our father had been blacklisted for his anti-government activities and he came to realize that for the benefit of a better future and his own personal safety he had to leave East Germany.

**Ww: How many children were in your family?**

**RS:** We were six children, all boys, but we were the three youngest that escaped with our parents. The two oldest, after their release from allied POW camps, had opted to stay in West Germany. My third oldest brother, Frank, was actively involved in the popular uprising against the communist regime in East Germany in June 1953 and had to escape after its failure.

Our other brother is two years older than we are. I say "we" because I have a twin brother, Ekkehard. He also was a professor here at UH-West Oahu in business administration, and some of the students affectionately referred to our college while he was here as, "The German School of Business in the Pacific." He went to Luxembourg in 1988, initially for a one year sabbatical to do research and teach at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, which has a European Studies Center in Luxembourg. At this time, he offered to take my two oldest boys with him for the year. In the meantime, he has become the executive director of the European campus

and the boys are still there attending school. My wife is on a leave from her job to be with the children in Luxembourg.

**Ww: Why did you become an economist?**

**RS:** As small children growing up in East Germany, we already could sense the flaws, injustice and inefficiencies that derive from communist, centrally planned economies. Not only does this economic system lead to gross inefficiencies and resource misallocations and an absolute neglect of the natural environment, but it completely ignores and is insensitive to consumer wants and preferences. The only thing that this type of economic system has plenty of is nothing--of this it has an abundance.

Coming to West Germany, which was guided by the principles of free market economies and was in the midst of what then was called the economic miracle characterized by progressive and sustained economic growth, we thought we had come to heaven. For the first time in our life, we saw stores filled with an abundance of high quality consumer goods. It really was insignificant for us that we had scarcely any money to buy anything. It was good enough for us to see the large variety of consumer goods offered, for we understood that through hard work we ultimately could share in the wealth of consumer goods and enjoy the freedom and comforts of political democracy. It was almost a natural thing for us to choose economics and business as a career, for we had learned firsthand to appreciate the dynamics, efficiency and relative fairness deriving from free market economies.

**Ww: What was your reaction when you first heard that the Wall had fallen?"**

**RS:** While nobody had expected it, I being a German, was most delighted and elated at the falling of the Wall. In fact, I remember when it happened on November 9. Given that there were eleven hours time difference, I was just on my way to the office when I heard on the radio that the Wall was opened and I couldn't believe it. I thought somebody had made a bad joke, particularly since I had been in Europe just ten days prior to that, and I had no idea that this would happen so quickly. So, half an hour later when I heard it again, I knew it actually had happened. The response was disbelief followed by immense happiness. But it took three or four days before it really penetrated.

**Ww: Being an economist, how would you assess the changing situation of Europe and the united Germany?**

**RS:** I was very fortunate to have been granted a sabbatical leave for the Spring 1990. I went to Luxembourg to be with my family, but also to get a firsthand look at the economic and political changes that are taking place. I wanted to look at the economic impact of the unification of Germany on Germany, as well as on the common market, of which Germany had already become the most important member.

I spent a lot of time looking at issues pertaining to the united German economy. How does the unification of Germany effect the German economy with respect to unemployment, economic growth, inflation rates, interest rates, the issues of balance of payments, trade, and exchange rates? Basically, my brother and I came to the conclusion that the unification of Germany was very costly to the West Germans, who are basically subsidizing the restructuring of the East German economy which has been run into the ground. It is now upon the West

West German taxpayer as well as the private sector to infuse sufficient capital and skills into the East German economy. It is not only that the capital base had eroded in East Germany, but also attitudes have eroded. Why?

In this type of political and economic system that the Eastern Europeans experienced, incentives were basically non-existent. No matter how little you did, everybody was paid more or less the same low wages. So the name of the game was to do as little as you could get away with, without upsetting your superiors. There was no pressure whatsoever to increase production, except for the pressure exerted by the Central Planning Committees. Because of the continuous fear that the central planning authority would increase the production requirements, it was always in the interest of the workers to produce less than they were capable of.

This was the situation that existed in East Germany and Eastern Europe. The unification of Germany is not sufficient to make labor competitive. We concluded in our research, that it may require three to five years to bring about equalization in productivity between the two labor sectors in East and West Germany and that this process is going to be quite costly. By and large, most of those costs are going to be born by the Germans rather than the rest of the community.

**Ww: Did you get a chance to visit your home when you went back to East Germany?**

**RS:** One of the highlights of my stay there was when, during the Easter vacation, we could, after thirty-four years being away from home, drive into East Germany, our home. We would not have gone back had the system not changed, for we had no desire to go back to an oppressed, communist system. So it was absolutely impossible to describe the feeling when we could cross the border into the East, without any documentation,



knowing that not only could we cross the border but we crossed basically into a free country.

When we planned our trip, we really didn't know what to expect. Would it be a sentimental trip, where the tears flow and emotions overtake you? I think that's what we expected. For thirty-four years we were emotionally hurt by the separation of Germany and the fact that part of Germany, our home, was oppressed. Yet very much to our surprise, this did not turn into an emotional trip at all. Emotion was overridden by our gratefulness for the courage of our parents to take the risk and make the sacrifices to leave everything behind --property, friends, family.

Second, we felt a great happiness that Germany was united and that sixteen million East Germans, most of whom wanted freedom could actually experience it.

Thirdly, we felt some bitterness. Bitterness in the sense that East German communism was a system which was bankrupt, not only economically, but also morally and philosophically. Witness the thievery, the abuse of power, the state security agencies, the cheating, and the lying to the population that had taken place. That such a system, never wanted by the people, was able to intimidate, scare, and frighten sixteen million people--not an hour a day, not a day in a lifetime--but twenty-four hours a day, every day of a life, obviously gave rise to a tremendous amount of bitterness. There was even a feeling of guilt--guilt that we had had it so good, so many opportunities, so many good experiences for the last thirty-four years, when our brothers and sisters had been deprived of the same.

**Ww: Why did the Wall come down so unexpectedly?**

**RS:** What made it possible? Being a religious person, obviously I think it's God's will that it happened. But on a practical level, people in East Europe just wanted to

be free. I think we can never underestimate the role America played in bringing about not only the unification of Germany, but the simultaneous collapse of the communist systems in the other Eastern European countries--Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria or Romania.

But what made this collapse of the Eastern European communist systems possible? Almost immediately the credit goes to Gorbachev and his policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. This encouraged nationalist and democratic movements in Eastern Europe. Unfortunately, one forgets the role that the Americans played in the events that have taken place in Europe. Most of the credit goes to Gorbachev and individuals like Lech Walesa, and they deserve considerable credit because it took considerable courage to stand up and speak out against oppressive systems. But the American willingness and to encourage and defend democratic principles in Europe and elsewhere also contributed. If one wanted to identify individuals, Reagan deserves a lot of credit for the democratization of Eastern Europe and hopefully the Soviet Union. It was, I think, the American resolve to be second to none in military power, and to pay for it, that forced Gorbachev to realize that it was impossible for the inefficient Soviet system to compete and in the Soviet interest to relax tensions and reduce cold war spending.

**Ww:** Maybe this would be a good time to equate this with what is going on in the Middle East and Kuwait. Are we doing the same thing here?

**RS:** I think there is a major difference. Previously, military spending was primarily under the umbrella of defending the principle of democracy and prevent the expansion of communism.

I think the situation in Kuwait is very different. It is not to defend democracy, because there was no democracy in Kuwait. One has to speculate, obviously, what it could be. Officially we say it is to prevent potential aggressors from getting away with it. Saddam Hussein is an aggressor with devilish intentions and potential and has to be stopped. However, there always is the suspicion that the ultimate motive for our involvement is to assure a supply of oil, which is a perfectly legitimate reason, but obviously a very different philosophy.

**Ww: So you feel the Americans deserve recognition for the unification in Germany?**

**RS:** One really has to give a tremendous amount of credit for the relaxation of tensions in Europe to the Americans. On German unity day on the third of October, 1989, I mentioned to my classes that I would be very pleased if they would go home to their parents or spouses and communicate to them how grateful I, as a German, am for the sacrifice their parents made to make it possible for Germany to unite.

**Ww: Do you think the young people in America realize the sacrifice that was made?**

**RS:** Whether the young people in America realize it is not as important as whether the young people in Europe, particularly in Germany, appreciate the sacrifice that was made. One can only hope that they do. Many Germans do remember the sacrifices the Americans made. Every German knows about the Marshal Plan and the Berlin airlift. In fact, Germans know much more about it because they were more touched by it than the Americans.

Germany which was basically on the front line facing Communism, now has the potential to become the bridgehead, between the traditionally opposing camps of

communist Eastern Europe and democratic free enterprise Western countries. That is a pivotal role for Germany to play. It is refreshing to see the West Germans as the first ones to go out and give official as well as private economic aid to their adversary, the Soviet Union. It's kind of sad that the peace dividend--meaning less defense spending with more funds available for social spending--that this peace dividend can not immediately be paid because of the uncertainty in the Middle East. This obviously puts a damper on the euphoria of 1990.

So to look at the situation, fantastic things have taken place in Europe. We can only hope the benefits come not only in Europe, but everywhere.

## One Small Step Into Infinity

Will you stand there buried?  
Don't let it be  
your fiberglass tombstone.  
Make it  
your launching pad tongue.  
Just jump  
to the moon,  
or sun,  
or clouds,  
or yourself,  
or whatever you see  
in that aqua canvas,  
tile framed window,  
silent body.  
And send flying  
pieces of the moon,  
sun,  
clouds,  
and you to the edge  
where timid folk  
only dangle their toes.

# Fish Story

Do not be fooled into thinking  
that he is the apparition  
of the old man of the sea--  
he is just a weather-whipped boy.

I help him unwind the stiff,  
salty ropes from the dock's rusty cleat.  
They could have been made from the tangles  
missing from his sparse skull.

And the boat's dry, cracked planks  
are as good as any mirror  
my friend could look into.  
Mermaids would not love him.

He curses at the outboard engine  
until it curses back louder  
with gasoline breath.  
I'm not allowed to go.

I swear I could hear the buzzing  
fishing lines, even though  
I could barely see his boat  
from the low, rocky shore.

I wonder at his early return  
until I see the big gash in his cheek  
and the twenty pound ulua  
in the bottom of his boat.

"Ho! Dis buggah no like give up!"  
He grins at me and I laugh  
and tell him that I won't either.  
"Tomorrow," I said, "I'm going with you."

## **Bodies of Motion**

After a weekend on the ocean  
I wash the salt from my body  
and lump what's left into bed.

What's left is motion.  
The soul of the sea possessing  
my soul through cardinal memory.

I lie on my back, drained and still  
as the room spins and the bed reels  
and I tumble hard to the floor.

The ocean lets me go  
after the night is through  
but you, your motions  
toss me to the floor still.

## Locked In

The Leeward Community College Library is a wonderful place to find the peace and quiet to really concentrate on the task at hand. The far-eastern corner on the upper level provides such a sanctuary. It was over a year ago when I found recluse in such a spot one evening.

Now, I must admit, I have been known to become so engrossed in a task as to not hear a telephone ring on the same desk where I'm working. On this particular night, however, I was alerted by a very loud voice announcing, "The library will be closing in twenty minutes." It was repeated again and my response was positive as I thought to myself, "Great! I think I can finish in twenty minutes."

Engrossed in my work again, it seemed like a flash when I heard, "The library will be closing in five minutes." Finished or not, it was time to start cleaning up the mess of books and papers spread in front of me. I dutifully began putting my things in order. Just as I had completed a nice neat stack, the loudspeaker blared, "The library is now closed." Immediately the lights went out. I waited for them to come on again so I could safely exit the building but there was dead silence. Other libraries that I have frequented use this lights-out policy to get your attention, but the blackout period lasted longer than I expected.

It soon became apparent that there was the distinct possibility that I was alone in this building as I hollered,



"Lights, lights, lights!" to no avail. I felt for all my belongings, wondering what it must be like to be blind.

To make my way out without a glimmer of light, I felt my way around the perimeter of the large room till I reached the stairs. Thank goodness for laws that require stair wells to be lit. There was no problem negotiating the stairs.

At last on the ground floor, I rushed to the front doors but found them locked. There was no way to open them. Then I thought of calling someone on the phone, but the phones were all locked up too!

After a thorough search for alternative escape routes, I thought of what it would be like to spend the night in the library. I decided to make a run for it through the emergency exit despite the posted warnings of alarms. I mentally prepared myself for a very loud sound. The brief thought of being trapped between two doors didn't stop me. I raced through both doors--to the surprise of some young people hanging around the telephone booth just outside. Startled, they began scrambling as if a bomb scare or a robbery was in process. I quickly went after them to allay their fears. They looked at me in amazement and disbelief.

I went looking for the security people before I found myself arrested. I asked them if they could hear the alarm that went off in the library. Apparently they were totally unaware of it. I had expected the police to arrive any second, but when I told the security guards of my dilemma they just laughed and said they'd attend to it. I sighed as I headed for my car in the desolate parking lot.

Since that incident I find myself leaving the library at the five minute warning and I haven't been locked in a library since. However, I was locked in Kawaiaha'o Church one night after their Christmas concert, but that's another story.

# The Breathing Earth

Sirens buried deeply, down trenches,  
cavities of basil brown earth  
I breathe a breath of hand-cupped air.

Exhale--inhale, feel the air wash through you  
then bend back to softly engulf you  
you swell, swell, then exhale till  
your every root is sunk deeply in her.

In the ballooned earth, I feel  
the pause of breath, my eyes pause,  
they breathe also, two as one.

I breathe, life leaves, then is retrieved,  
to be blessed by the breath of my flesh;  
flesh of my earth, glowing globe of breaths  
behold to fold me with you,  
I become with you, one magical breath.

## A Review of "Lolita"

I was a young girl when *Lolita* first came to Mexico and my English was not what it is today. For a self help project I read whatever books in English I could get my hands on, mostly cheap, easy to read books like *Peyton Place*.

Among the sensational books that came my way was Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* (the book is still on a shelf at my home in Mexico). I guess Nabokov, a Russian writer, chose to write about incest (with a nymphet, yet) in order to make a lot of money. Sensational books, after clearing the first obstacles and profiting from the ensuing publicity, seem to become best sellers.

In any case, I read *Lolita*. That Nabokov was writing in English (and good English at that) impressed me not one bit. It probably didn't occur to me at the time that English was his second or third language. After all, many Americans have strange sounding names. The beauty of the language with which Humbert expresses his love for Lolita was lost on me; so too were his suggestive descriptions of her physical charms.

I realize now that Humbert and Lolita had to crisscross the country in order to avoid detection. The precise recounting of the numerous classy or tawdry hotels, motels, and courts where they stayed got to be a bit much for me at times. The tourist traps and other forms of entertainment so graphically and humorously depicted seemed like so much air, maybe because pop culture was foreign to me. At the time, my knowledge

of motels was limited to Shirley Courts, the only motel in Mexico City where American tourists used to stay. There were, and still are, some shady places on the edge of town that were used by questionable couples to engage in illicit sex. Nice girls didn't talk about such things, were not even supposed to know that such places existed, and were to know even less about the unsavory activities associated with them.

Maybe it was precisely this repression that made me enjoy sensational novels, whatever the quality of writing. If the descriptions of driving around the country and stopping at gas stations to use the restrooms left me cold, such was not the case with the love scenes which were even more titillating because of their vagueness. By today's standards, of course, such scenes would be considered mild, but when I was young a mere allusion to sexual activity sent my mind reeling and left me weak.

This long preamble is to say that whatever I think of *Lolita* now, and however much I like or dislike the book or the attitudes of the characters, I am still influenced by the attitude and the prejudices of the girl who read the book and saw the film over thirty years ago.

And so I return to my original question: Is *Lolita* a dirty book? Yes and no, depending on who is doing the talking. For the young Magda, *Lolita* was a revelation, and because she was made to feel guilty about reading the book, the answer is yes.

When we are children everything is black and white, but as we grow older we discover that there are many shades of gray in between. Now that I am older, I think *Lolita* is a dirty book not because Humbert is in love with Lolita and not because he seduces her, but because Lolita is 12 years old. *Lolita* is a dirty book because Humbert plots his marriage to Charlotte, Lolita's mother, in order to live close to Lolita with the hope

of becoming her sugar daddy, not her father. He accomplishes this after Charlotte's death.

Furthermore, *Lolita* should also be cataloged as an immoral book because in our society incest is not only illegal, but immoral. Humbert's image is further tarnished because he enjoys the relationship immensely, in spite of qualms caused mainly by fears of getting caught and by Lolita's reluctance to cooperate at times. Incest goes on, but this doesn't make it any more acceptable to our society. *Lolita* is an immoral book because in the two years or so that Humbert and Lolita lived together, Lolita is a sex slave and an abused child. It doesn't matter how much Humbert may have loved her or how many things he bought her.

Finally, *Lolita* could also be considered immoral because Humbert is made to appear as a hero when he decides to kill Clare Quilty because of Clare's affair with Lolita. Humbert may have felt justified. He keeps telling the readers that he loved Lolita, but the manner in which he chose to kill Clare was dreadfully cruel. What makes it even worse is that the whole, drawn-out scene is supposed to be comical.

The book, which is beautifully written, gave me a chance to look back on my youth and reassess my values. It is, perhaps, a comic masterpiece, but if so, it is not my kind of humor.

## Misguided Misogynists

Last year a rap group named 2 Live Crew produced an album entitled "As Nasty As They Wanna Be." Its sexually graphic lyrics are so offensive that it was declared obscene in June 1990 by a federal judge in Florida. The group appealed the ruling and is now (as of October 1990) in court again, where evidence must be shown "beyond a reasonable doubt" whether or not the album is obscene.

Obscenity was defined by the Supreme Court in the 1973 case of *Miller vs. California*. Obscenity was legally defined based on a three-part judicial standard: 1) the material must be patently offensive; 2) the material must lack serious artistic, political or scientific value; and, 3) the material must be found to appeal to the prurient interests of an average person in the community. If the 2 Live Crew album is judged obscene, each of the four rappers could be imprisoned for a year and fined one thousand dollars.

Those who defend 2 Live Crew are abusing the First Amendment protection as license to rationalize a dance album that demeans women by venting contempt and brutal sexual domination upon them. Some say the album is entertaining and funny, and that people are entitled to their opinions. But this indifference reminds me of a group of young men who went on a "wilding" rampage in Central Park last April putting their feelings into action. They thought it was fun to attack a lone woman jogger. They entertained themselves by acting

out ideas they might have gotten from the lyrics recorded by 2 Live Crew or other misogynist groups. It brings to mind the circumstances in Ancient Rome when there was a despised segment of the population that was routinely thrown to the lions for entertainment and sport.

I certainly believe in freedom of speech, but often thought becomes substance. A person whose mind is filled with thoughts of violence may develop a mind-set that is easily triggered to destructive acts, especially if these thoughts are rationalized to be a cultural norm.

"As Nasty As They Wanna Be" should be judged obscene. As art, it does not mirror the African American culture. It certainly is not inspiring, and it leaves nothing to the imagination. In fact, I have heard it described as "mental pollution." Gutter language should be left in the gutters. It disturbs me to know that it has become a national best seller, with more than 1.7 million copies sold. The guttersnipes have become the Pied Pipers of a young, vulnerable and indiscriminate segment of the population.

To defend this album is an assault on the dignity of women, an insult to the public in general and an offense to African Americans in particular. People should not mistake the degradation of a certain segment of the population as entertainment, whether they be women, Christians, Blacks or Jews. To do so would be to take a giant step backward in the human struggle for equality.

## Rebuttal to Sheila Lee's "Misguided Misogynist"

Writers Note: The year was 1990, and our society and all its laws, human rights, and philosophies were being questioned again. The Bill of Rights and the Constitution define our society as a free state--a land where one can question anyone: Black, White, Mormon, Moslem, rich or poor, literate or illiterate. No one is above the law, or above another human being. These laws enable us to maintain freedom for all, not just for financially wealthy Anglo males. And if, as some suggest, we limit the speech of those who offend us, who decides what offends us? I have begun to ponder over what other rights I may be allowed to wield. If a stranger calls me a "nigger," do I have the right to blow his head off? No, and neither does he if I call him "white trash." The fact that we can survive under such circumstances is how we benefit from our freedom. If I have the right to silence him because I don't like what he said, then he also has the same right. I do not care for the visions of an America that comes with limiting freedom of speech.

If you finish my short piece, please think about how your life would change if someone, anyone, in power could tell you what you could and could not say. That is how life would be if we limit the freedom of the characters of my poetry/play, the deceased artist James Mapplethorpe and the Rappers of the group 2 Live Crew.



Part One  
In This Corner!

Ladies and Gentlemen: Welcome to your main event of 1990, a 15-round artistic trial, a battle royal of obscene proportions. Now to introduce the fighters, our master of scaremony, the aging Senator from our Confederate South, the honorable Baron Von Jesse Helmkenstein.

"Good evening, yaw'll. Now I wants to get to the dirty stuff real quick. In the colored trunks, with a gold tooth tied to his left shoe. This here boy, made of inflammatory material, spread-eagled in the black corner. The vulgar-verbal spout from the state below our grand old South, as nasty as he can try to be. The one I refer to as the rapper full of crap and a member of the rude, snide and still-alive-crew gym. The unanimous, unavoidable black-attacker. The underground son of oratory babble. Ladies and Gentlemen, I miss--give you Luther Cannibal Stinks, I mean Sphinx."

The crowd of white, immobile moral majority stands. They all either look like Dan Quayle or are wearing plastic Al Jolson Halloween masks to scare Luther and his soon-to-be-tried crew. Luther, in his corner, looks like a caged animal as he ducks the bottles of Billy beer that are being thrown from the front row. A large ball of maple popcorn screams through the ring's ropes, smacking Luther's manager Lewd Boof A'Lou on the forehead. The champ's corner looks confused. Suddenly the crowd quiets.

"In this corner yaw'll illustrious members of the crowd, I give you the next champion of the sexual underworld. The man of lightness, composure, and the flashbulb mentality of a photographic exhibitor, wearing virgin wool trunks with a silver chalice for between rounds refreshments. The Ut-oh from Soho, the gaybow. The pungent plunger of masculinely physical lovers, the

master of bodily disruption, the most disgusting, unsettling undisputed Queen of the lights out heavy-light weights. The one, the lonely...Jake the (septic snake) LaApple Thorpe."

A hush comes over the crowd, all you can hear is Luther swearing at the camera lights of the television crews.

"Tonight's referee and judge for this year's rectal-speckled spectacle. The once upon a marbled palace of virtue and pure wine, the supremely smarter, Supreme Court Justice, wearing that Nouveau Fly tie, here on a weekend bye, from the heights of way up yonder. The Honorable William Orville (orville?) Douglas."

A tremendous wave of hecklers fling visible plates of "boooos" that nip at his honor's cloud-tattered robe. His aura quietly over-throws the simpletons, lifting them off their primal beer coated toes and places them respectively in the (scalper bought) rows. The Judge brings the two men to the center of the ring.

"Snake/Sphinx. I want an honest, truthful, no sneaky plots or hidden peep shots fight. This must be a true expression of human ability in the arts. Our freedom rests in your mouth Sphinx, and your lens Snake. Now touch whatever won't make the church ladies in row 96 cringe or start a moral riot. Come out shouting with fire in your eyes. May the freedom of all...win."

## Part Two The Censorship Duel

Ring! aling a'ling ah-ding. The crowd stands. The fighters move in a counterclockwise manner, tracing the movements of tasteless champion offenders of old. Luther begins to hip and hop, then Jake starts to bob and deceive. The fighters mix it up, lots of grunts and moans echo from the spectators enjoying the savagery

of the combat. When they brake, Luther pulls a microphone from his trunks and begins to rap.

"Yeah Boy!"

Then Jake reaches back toward the canvas and pulls a Camera from the back of his trunks. The bell rings. The fighters refuse to stop, the judge sends them to their corners. Jake begins taking snapshots of the crowd, who are now in a frenzy at the damage the fighters have done to each other. He is snapping mixed montages of cleavages and crotches. Luther, uninterested in Jake, is now standing on the ropes, his lips flapping 120 mph, his words muffled by his own flesh.

"I was born with a plan, placed a girly in my hand, I was the bread and she was the JAM."

The crowd begins to boo both men. It is a hellish boo, filling the sky with a filthy film that begins to rumble above the canvas. The platform begins to shake. First Luther slips then Jake falls, the crowd rushes over the ropes. "Get a rope," a man with a hood-shaped head hollers from the back of the crowd. "Oh yes, let's tar and feather them!" A woman with a Swastika-bouffant hair style huffs.

It is a brawl. The judge unbuttons his robe and begins swinging his mallet in earnest. All three are in a fight for their rights. The crowd swarms the ring. Only fist, feet and a fountain of artistic blood can be discerned among the pile of tumbling bodies. Until this point, the announcer has sat quietly enjoying the turmoil. But now he has a real fight to talk about, as the three men begin to lay waste to the mob.

"Ladies and Gentleman, I'll tell it like it is. The ring is a scene of historical proportions. Sphinx, LaApple, and the Judge are liberally pummeling the crowd. The valiant moral majority members are falling by the 100s. The scene is filled with floating sexual profanity."

After the final wave of moral masses is repelled toward the exit, there are only two members of the crowd left in the ring; the hood-head man and the Swastika-hairdo woman. They are frozen in the front row by Jake's camera flash-flashing, and Luther's hypnotically sexual slang. The music stops and the picture taking is dropped. The remaining zealots flee from the ring. What little of a fight that had been is over. The Judge and Luther stand atop the moral bodies that have been left, while Jake takes their picture.

The fight, being broadcast on Pay-Per-View, is a disaster for fight fans, but the MTV crowd loves it. The network executives rush into the court.

"Hey somebody has to fight, now! or we'll sue."

"Don't be no fool," raps Luther. "This weren't no fight for public view, this here was a fight for civil rights."

"Yeah," says Jake, who then snaps a picture of the Executives.

Tap...Tap...Tap! The Judge raps his mallet. "Order in my court, you fellahs are in contempt. Now get your damn Pay-Per-View asses out of here. The fight is over and don't you forget that. You can't put the rights of free speech up for view at a price that only the very exclusive can afford."

Rap-Snap-Tap for now the fight is over. Vocal Freedom survives a little drained, but not permanently stained. These folks may be bruised and our emotional sense of beauty and ethics a little tainted, but they have, by their actions, strengthened our system and questioned its limits. The silhouette of all that gives our country its freedom, its life, remains.

## The Importance of History

I have wandered away from the tour guide  
To seek my own point of view;  
To photograph the wind lightly playing  
Across the empty vastness of stone.  
The wind lifts away the curtain  
Bringing visions of another time,  
Yet another warm spring morn  
When it played cool across the brows of the doomed  
Lifting to touch frenzied Romans  
Excitedly crying for blood...  
And I remember that which is always forgotten,  
Entrenched in this world as we are;  
Human existence is often a painful one  
And transcending the pain is the goal.

## Mother's Blues

Green and purples  
Reds in all hues  
Finger-painting child  
Mother's blues

# Fatal Misconceptions

I remember the panic that paralyzed,  
The thick red blood  
Oozing through my sister's brown hair.  
Worst was the terror of knowing  
They would have to kill me  
As I had killed her.

Patty and I weren't supposed to be playing  
Around the farm machinery,  
Especially the grain auger.  
It was my fault.  
I didn't mean to open the safety catch;  
It just came open.  
The huge machine came crashing down.  
Patty was dead; I had killed her.

The panic, like her blood, oozed  
Deeper into my soul and I fled to survive.  
I ran to the only haven I knew,  
The hay loft where mother cats hid their kittens.  
In the smallest corner I hid.  
Squeezing my body back into the prickly hay,  
I waited for my executioners to find me  
As I knew they must.

The light of day pulled away from me,  
Darkness crept closer and closer still.  
Why don't they come?  
Do it now, kill me now.

Too dark to see whose arms picked me up,  
I knew my turn had come but cried not.  
I had killed the spirit within,  
There was nothing left to fear.

## Other Realities

I have dreamt I have gone into labor,  
Convulsing on the cold kitchen floor.  
The bloodied baby emerges screaming  
And I pass into a warmer world.

In this world I am silently beseeching  
The cold empty heavens above,  
To carry me through these endless days of waiting.  
For the child I have borne wasn't screaming  
And it was I who was covered in blood.

Though the trials of this life are much too painful  
In passive perseverance  
I live on.

# Former Close Friends

Gliding her silver BMW neatly into the parking stall, Pat gave herself a reassuring smile as she touched up her lipstick. She walked briskly toward the restaurant where she had agreed to meet Hope Scott. Hope and Tony Scott had been constant companions of Pat and Steve since their early dating days, but Pat's last encounter with Hope had not been a pleasant one.

"Mrs. Townes, how nice to see you. Your table will be ready in a moment," smiled the hostess.

"Thank you Jean. I'm meeting a lady today so I'll be waiting in the lounge." As Pat turned toward the lounge, a short blonde woman sprang forward.

"Pat...Pat, how wonderful to see you."

Darn, thought Pat, I wanted to be sitting elegantly sipping wine when she first saw me.

"Hope, how are you?" Pat dispatched a compulsory kiss and stepped back out of Hope's embrace.

"You're looking well. Shall we order a glass of wine?" You're being a first class bitch, Pat scolded herself as they stepped into the lounge.

"Cabernet Sauvignon, please. And you Hope?"

"Oh, just white wine for me," Hope said uneasily.

They were seated and Pat leaned back and sipped her wine. Listening to Hope tell of Tony's business, Pat examined her former close friend. Hope had always had a pale loveliness but was now looking washed out. My God, she's getting jowls, Pat thought. I wonder if blondes lose their skin tone sooner than brunettes?



Pat told Hope about her new husband, Ben, and their travels together. They exchanged child rearing stories.

"...but when he came home using the, you know, "F" word, well I was just beside myself. I didn't know whether to laugh or cry." Hope was leaning forward, her eyes earnestly searching Pat's.

Pat laughed and waved for another glass of wine. She had forgotten Hope's Catholic school upbringing and, upon remembering, could imagine Hope's horror at the thought of a cursing son.

Memories of two young women pretending to be grown-up crept into Pat's thoughts. Hope was the glamorous one who threw great parties. Pat had admired her so much in those days. Pat had been the camper, the buddy that the guys loved to take fishing. Tom-boy turned executive. Pat heard herself sigh.

"I envied you...," Hope began as she rearranged her utensils.

Startled, Pat looked up from her salad, "Envious of what?"

"Well, Tony always said I needed to take lessons from you on fishing. I don't know, you made camping look so easy. You never worried about your hair or the dirt. And I was so insecure. Now here you are...you really look terrific."

Pat smiled a little sadly, "Thank you. Just a late bloomer." She paused, organizing her thoughts. "I've never enjoyed competitions and I wasn't competing with you or anyone else. I was just doing what I enjoyed." Pat shrugged her shoulders and finished her last sip of wine. "I really needed friends after Steve died and when you accused me of trying to steal Tony from you..."

Hope broke in: "That's why I had to come and see you. Tony kept talking about you and I got so jealous. I've been sorry ever since." Hope reached across the

table to clutch Pat's hand that was still holding the empty wine glass, "Please forgive me."

Pat carefully withdrew her hand and dabbed at the corners of her mouth with her napkin. The waitress began to clear their table. "This is all so silly," Pat began once the waitress had gone. "Did I tell you Ben and I are planning a trip to New Zealand? He'd really rather be in Bali or Pago Pago but you know how I love camping..."

Later as Pat inserted her key into her BMW she noticed a long scratch across the shiny silver-gray side of her car. Seating herself heavily behind the wheel she automatically locked the doors before allowing the first hot tears to slide down her cheeks.

# Peace, War and Motherhood

5:45 a.m.

Standing at the kitchen counter smashing ants. These ants are larger than most...black and fast. They necessitate a quickening of the reflexes. I shift my bare left foot off the cold tiles and stand on my right foot which is toasty warm in its blue fuzzy bootie...wonder where the other slipper is? Load up the lunch kits, frozen juice on the bottom, tiny little apples (for tiny little appetites), half a sandwich, some carrot sticks, and a granola bar. Write "I heart U" on the funny cocktail napkins, pour some decaf, and wake up the troops.

6:45 a.m.

"Would you just sit down and eat!" I recognize the exasperation in my voice, no wonder Bob has wandered towards the TV.

"How come Daddy gets to watch TV? You said we can't watch it in the morning...Mom!"

"Never mind Daddy. Eat!" I turn to grab the passing head of my nine-year-old. "Did you study your spelling?" I ask as I brush the tangle of brown and gold curls into a pony tail. No answer. "Malia, what are you going to do about your homework?"

"Hey, I do okay on the tests, so what's the big deal?"

7:45 a.m.

Pulling into the Leeward campus parking lot. I ought to park farther away and get some exercise but I convince myself it might rain.

I pause before turning off the car, listening to the latest war updates. I still can't believe we are at war. I think we, as if I am a part of this mess. I don't belong in a warring nation.

8:45 a.m.

"Mohenjo-Daro was an extremely well-planned city and there is archaeological evidence that they had a uniform system of weights and measures. Their buildings were of bricks of uniform size. Also they had rather sophisticated technology in that..."

I write "India, 1000 B.C." in my notebook and wonder what will be left of this world a thousand years from now.

9:45 a.m.

I've triple parked at the Girl Scout office making a new personal best; I've blocked in four vehicles. Ah, the power!

Up the stairs to the wall of metal boxes holding an amazing variety of proficiency badges and patches. I need 14 technology, 14 communication, 1 first aid, 1 helping my community, 10 signs of the world...

"Looks like you have a lot of girls...", bubbles a hopeful voice. Short streaked blond hair, straight out of *Better Homes and Gardens*, bet she's from Hawaii Kai. "I have a junior troop in Koko Head. Well, actually we're just starting up. Did you have a meeting with the girls' parents first?"

10:45 a.m.

I hurry past the endless glittering diamonds on display. I'm getting impatient with our throw-away society. Lenscrafters won't repair the glasses I bought from them a year and a half ago and two jewelry stores have told me they don't do repairs in their stores.

"Couldn't you just put a spot of solder on this edge so I can get by till next week when I'll have more time?" I am asking an over-dressed young woman sitting behind the glass counter. She didn't bother to stand when I came in.

"We don't do glasses," she states flatly.

"So you do repairs here but you won't help me. Is that what I'm hearing?"

She spreads her long red fake finger nails across the glass, admiring them. "It is our policy not to work on prescription glasses." She speaks slowly as if I should read her lips.

"Well thank you so much for all your help," I sneer sarcastically before stomping away from her sparkling palace. She wears too many rings.

11:45 a.m.

Five students sit around the metal table in the West Oahu corner of the library. Four of us are trying to read. Others come in and, with only a hint of guilt, I join in the benignly sarcastic snips about this class or that.

12:45 p.m.

"So write that down; objective correlative. That's what literature is all about...connections. Through literature we gain insight into a better understanding of human behavior. Why do people do the things they do?"

God only knows. I can't figure out why I do half the things I do. How am I supposed to know Emily's

motives? Besides, she's been long dead and I've got a way to go.

1:45 p.m.

A fellow 'mature' student is telling me she has already written her first paper for this class. She asks if I have decided on my topic for the final paper. I haven't finished last Tuesday's reading assignment or decided what to feed my family tonight! I'm not sure if I'm impressed or annoyed. She reminds me of my mother.

2:45 p.m.

The voices in the back seat have risen to screams: "She pinched me!"

"Tell her to stop it Mom! And don't stare at me!"

"Lindsey, stay away from your sister. If you must sit in the back then lie down! Malia, I know she bugs you but it is not okay to hit her; use your words! Brianne, please turn around!"

Brianne continues to monitor the action from the front seat. "Brianne! Everyone QUIET!"

Everyone pouts through the first traffic signal and over the bridge. Once we hit the pineapple fields their voices get louder. The pineapple fields glisten under the afternoon sun from the oil they have sprayed to keep the poisons longer on the long spike leaves.

3:45 p.m.

"Nicole, I appreciate your phoning but you were supposed to get all this information to me by yesterday. I've been warning everyone since November that we had to have a deadline. I've already bought all the patches. I'm sorry, but you'll have to get these last three at a later awards ceremony." This is my third reprimand in less than an hour. I wonder if I'm allowing my own girls too many second chances, too many empty warnings?

4:45 p.m.

"Your hair looks great, thick and shiny." My twenty-eight-year-old neighbor has cancer and is recuperating from the chemotherapy assault; after seven months her hair is finally growing back in. My twelve-year-old cousin has just died of leukemia. I don't tell her.

"So did you get the results?" she asks. "Did they get anything in the aspiration?" Carol sits across from me full of concern as her chubby one-and-a-half-year-old daughter dashes to the sprawl of toys left over from last week's visit.

"No," I say with a smile as I pour wine for me, orange juice for her. "They didn't get anything and I'm not worried. I've had other lumps removed and so far they've all been benign."

"Why don't you go to a specialist?"

She is gently pleading with me not to follow her footsteps. I know this and appreciate her concern but refuse to get paranoid; I don't have the time.

5:45 p.m.

"Malia, sit down right now and do that math! Which problem are you on?" My fingers are pruned in the hot soapy water. I'm trying to get last night's dishes out of the way so I can mess up more tonight. I step over Lindsey sprawled in front of the refrigerator, sloppily slapping down rows of M's.

"Honey, if you went a bit slower your work would be neater." She ignores me, finishes her row, and jumps up.

"Homework's all done," she says with a Cheshire-cat grin.

From the dining room: "Mom, what's six-times-seven? Mom? Mom, is six-times-seven forty-two?"

"Yes. Lindsey get back here and pick up these papers."

"Mom, if I move the one over can I add it to the four?"

"What?" I grab a towel and head for the table.

6:45 p.m.

"You will not throw up, now eat every carrot!" Lindsey tries to push her legs into my lap and pouts.

"Save the grisly stuff for my cats," Malia reaches over to my plate.

"Then save the bones for Noel," Lindsey yells back.

"Get your hands out of my food, and Lindsey, you don't have to yell." There is a brief silence around the table.

"They bombed Israel," Bob adds soberly.

"Want some decaf?" I reply.

7:45 p.m.

Sitting in the dimly lit parking lot I try to find a radio station that is not reporting the war. There is so little traffic at night that it takes me twenty minutes less to get here. I wait in the car for a space closer to the building to open up. The moon is a sliver, lying like an empty cradle in the black night sky.

8:45 p.m.

"Frank was really in a rut. Then in comes Rita full of energy..."

We are discussing what we like about Educating Rita. I want to say I like it because it's funny and I need some humor in my life. I want to say it's sad and that human nature at its best is pathetic. But I don't.

If I can handle the prospect of having cancer, why can't I handle living in a state of war?



9:45 p.m.

God, it's black out. For a moment I can't tell where I am. A brief flash of panic alone on this black highway, its white line is barely visible, muted by the red dirt.

10:45 p.m.

Bob and I are comfortably settled on the kids futon in front of the TV watching ice skating competitions. It's so beautiful to watch them glide, seemingly without effort.

"Why do they call it a double axle?" Bob asks me. He thinks I know these things because I grew up skating.

We talk about what has happened with me at school and what he has had to deal with at work, without taking our eyes off the flowing bodies on the screen... perfect score...10's all across.

## Friendship

It took awhile...  
I'm here to say  
your patience helped me  
all the way.  
My trust was there  
right from the start.  
Through passing time  
you touched my heart.  
You opened my eyes  
that I may see  
a path of adventure  
just waiting for me.  
You steadied my steps  
in this world of wonder.  
My grateful heart  
took time to ponder.  
Even to earth  
you helped my hands  
to work, through calm  
and growing plans.  
From you, of friendship  
I did learn  
a gift of value,  
no more to yearn.  
Into my memory  
these happenings sealed  
my aching heart  
at last is healed!

## Dead Center

At first, golf was only a shield protecting me against the cold of my mother's death. Joel, my stepfather, wouldn't admit she was going to die and didn't make any plans for her cremation. Instead, he spent the last weeks of her hospital stay rearranging the furniture and cleaning the house in ways that would please her. He wanted the couch where she could see the mango trees swaying in the wind and the orchids blooming in the garden. She never made it home.

Joel's obsession finally got to be more than I could take. One morning, while he was rearranging the groceries in the kitchen cabinets, I escaped to the garage where the previous week's chaos was brought to a complete stop. An old bicycle, a tent, a washtub, rolls of chicken-wire fence, and water hoses hung neatly from long nails. In the corner sat a corroded set of golf clubs, which I kicked so hard the contents of the blue vinyl bag spilled across the floor. I picked up an iron, stood in the center of the garage and swung the club as hard as I could over and over again. My follow-through barely missed the bug light suspended from a wooden beam. Swinging the club I seemed to cool down by degrees until the process became regular, like the beating of my own heart.

My mother finally died on the first of September, two days before my birthday. Joel allowed my mother's body to be cremated, and we scattered her ashes in the orchid garden in the front yard. After her death, I

devoted more time to golf. Joel was working late at the sugar plantation office, so I'd race home from school in Waimea, take the clubs out from under my bed and sail out the front door to the golf course. Hole 10 of the Kuahelani golf course sat on the opposite side of our back fence. Joel never returned home from work in time to discover what I was up to.

Joel had a bad reputation among the golfers who played the country club course in our back yard. Living on Hoonani Street had poisoned him. Our windows that looked out on No. 10 had short life spans. Almost every week a hacker would slice his drive. The ball would careen off our cement lanai and, as if guided by radar, home in on one of our windows. There was a crash, and a Titleist or Maxfli would dribble across the carpet, sometimes coming to rest at Joel's feet. He'd glare at the thing, then storm out the front door for a face-off with the culprit.

In the spring my friends from school rode their bicycles past our yard, flocking to the golf course, which was open to them on weekdays after school. I wanted to join them, but I didn't think there was much point asking permission from a man who considered golf one of the great American diseases. There was no choice but to pull myself out of bed when the sky had barely turned yellow over the mountaintops. I'd hoist the golf bag over my shoulder, holding the cold steel clubs so they wouldn't rattle, and sneak down the stairs.

I returned from the golf course one morning and found Joel already up. He looked startled when I came through the door with my clubs. "So you're a golfer, eh?" His voice had a hard ring to it, and there was a queer twitch to his bushy eyebrows. The chair he pulled out from the table for me squeaked against the linoleum. I scratched an imaginary itch behind my ear. "Can't you say something?"

"I was afraid to tell you," I said.

"Well, there's no need to be a damn sneak. I don't care if you play golf. Just don't be one of those jerks out there with half their damn clothes off, cussing and throwing their clubs and pissing on trees. If I ever catch you being anything but a gentleman, I'll throw those clubs away, and that'll be that. Hear?"

So, Joel was setting me free. From then on I gave up the early morning skulking and all that tiptoeing down the stairs. Spring and summer opened up like a broad fairway inviting endless golf shots. I emptied my savings account to pay for a junior golf league membership.

In the summertime, when dusk finally chased the golfers off their course, Joel and I jumped the fence and practiced short irons, moving up from the 7-iron, to 8, to 9, to a full wedge...arching the ball up into the glow of the sunset.

Without Mom, Joel and I continued to have supper once a week at Anita's Diner. Anita made pies from the mangoes off the five trees that shaded the back of the diner, and she often insisted on Joel taking a freshly baked pie home with him. Every time we ate at the diner, he'd leave a crisp dollar bill under his plate for her. Somehow she knew about my golf obsession. Maybe it was because my left hand was pale white from wearing a glove.

One evening when I was washing up the supper dishes, Joel called me into the living room and told me to sit down on the couch.

"Wait right here," he said. He went to the closet and fished around behind some of Mom's clothes until he found what he was looking for. It was a Koa-shafted putter with a brass blade.

"This is from Anita. Before her husband passed away it was his. She wanted me to give this to you. It's probably 50 or 60 years old and very valuable. I

wouldn't use it except when you can be sure it won't be lost or stolen."

"Don't worry," I said, and walked quietly out the door. As I sat on the front-porch steps, trailing my fingers over the tiny nicks and dents of the putter's head, I remembered my mother sitting here. The lap of her skirt was overflowing with green beans from the garden, and she was snapping them into pieces. She then dropped them into a metal bowl like the one Anita had given to Joel.

I had the putter with me when I walked into Anita's place the next morning. She was serving Mr. Ramos another cup of coffee.

"Well, I see that Joel gave you my present," she said. "It's a great gift, Mrs. Kalahiki. Thank you."

Later that afternoon I walked to the golf course and went farther than I usually do. I strolled along toward the 11th fairway and to the edge of the pond at the bottom of the slopes. It was secluded by trees from the street and the sun gleamed through the branches on the doglegged water hole. I'd played No. 11 more times than I could count. I knew every roll from every part of that green. I stood at the trimmed eastern edge of the pond for a few minutes. Finally, without really thinking much about it, I threw the old putter into the water.

Joel would be at his office until late in the afternoon. So I took my bike from the garage and peddled up to West Lock---something Joel had forbidden me to do---and pedaled fast. Anita's home was two miles outside of town. I hadn't decided exactly what I wanted to do once I got there.

When I arrived, I pulled myself up onto a gnarled tree branch and stayed there for a long time. What would happen to Mom's ashes in our garden? Would we leave them behind for the new tenants of our house on Hoonani Street? I picked ripe mangoes and lobbed

them against the side of Anita's white house. I could only imagine them as blood stains.

Dark clouds were huddling behind Anita's house, so I decided to ride back home. I pedaled hard for more than an hour before the first heavy drops plummeted down on me, stinging my face. Joel's 1985 silver-blue Honda Accord was in front of our garage when I turned onto the concrete driveway. As quietly as I could I opened the front door and went inside, leaving my wet shoes in the entryway. There was no sign of Joel. I presumed he was in the kitchen fixing hamburgers. I tiptoed up the stairs, past Joel's bedroom. He was sitting on the edge of the bed, staring across the room toward the bureau, on which sat a framed picture of Mom.

"Where in the hell have you been?" he asked when he finally noticed me.

"I went for a bike ride," I said.

"You might have left some message to that effect," he said.

I told him I was sorry, and he said I'd better get cleaned up for dinner. We ate our hamburgers in silence. Just as I was about to clear the dinner dishes from the table, Joel picked up a butter knife and peered at his reflection in the stainless-steel blade.

"You're worried about something, aren't you?"

"I don't know," I said.

"Well, I know...and I can tell you what it is."

I wouldn't let him say. I ran up the stairs, but before I could get up to my room Joel had filled the only avenue of escape, the arched kitchen doorway. When I tried to push by he grabbed my shirt sleeve. His voice was shaking when he spoke: "Kenny, you have everything upside down. I'm not leaving this house, not with your mother's remains in the flower garden. And Anita's not giving up her home either. Anything else you can figure out for yourself. You're a big boy now." He took

his hand from my chest and let me go. My eyes were wet and my body felt weak. It was long after the last house lights had been turned off when I finally fell into a deep sleep, and my mind was clean when I woke up.

I walked out the back door toward the golf course and the distant pond. I had my swimming mask and a yellow towel with me. The air felt cool in my lungs. At the western edge of the pond the water was shallow. I took off my clothes on the tee at No. 11 and glided headfirst into the water. I took a deep breath so I could dive through the barely illuminated water to the murky bottom. Within a few minutes I'd located several dozen golf balls knocked into the drink by some of the club's worst golfers. For 15 minutes I searched the murk for the putter, but there wasn't much hope of finding it among the empty cans and dead branches. I surfaced one more time, swam a few yards further out and went down again. I'd just about used up my lungs full of air when I saw it, its shaft vertical like a reed. Although my chest was near bursting, I clutched the putter and swam toward the pale light above me. I swam to the shallows and climbed up the bank to dry off. Without bothering to put my clothes on, I grabbed a Titleist from the pocket of my jeans and walked toward the 11th green.

I placed the ball at the fringe of the green, leaving myself a difficult 50-footer to win the Open. I analyzed the putting surface to detect its personality. I rubbed my hand over the grass, feeling its texture. I picked up the tiny debris lining the path to the hole. Anchoring my bare feet firmly, I stroked the ball. I could read the print as my putt moved with the rise and fall of the green. As the ball painted its dark green trail on the dew-covered putting surface, the gallery came to life. Their voices formed a chorus. "Get legs, baby. Roll home, baby." The putt had been struck perfectly. The ball was destined to fall for me, dead center.



# A Simple American Girl

The world is always changing. New inventions change work and play. New homes and new babies change families. New fads and fashions change the way we look. And American girls change as they grow up.

My mother-in-law, Anne Maimon, can recall wearing fashionable fur hats and carrying fur muffs while tramping through the snow, and ice skating through New York's Central Park in the early 1900's. America was changing faster than ever. Telephones carried news across the nation in no time. Speedy new automobiles zipped past horse-drawn carriages on city streets and country roads. Fast ships and trains brought everything imaginable to stores and homes across the land. Many people moved from farms and small towns to busy, bustling cities that were growing up across America. Moving to New York City was a big change for Anne, but some things stayed the same--like the quiet winter afternoons she spent beside a blazing fire with her four sisters. She recalls happy times sipping hot cocoa with them while cutting their favorite paper dolls and drawing silhouette portraits of each other.

My mother, on the other hand, grew up in a totally different environment half way across the world. World War II was the hot item of the day and it changed my mother's life. As the fighting came to an end, America's home front returned to normal. Materials that had been scarce became more plentiful, and stores began to fill up with things for people to buy. Women didn't have to work at wartime jobs and soldiers began coming home.

Mom couldn't imagine a happier change than to see them back home again.

Mom wore hand-me-downs during these difficult times. Toys were scarce because factories didn't make many toys during World War II, so she made her own puzzles to share with her five sisters and two brothers. Mom recalls believing that servicewomen were glamorous, so she dressed her paper dolls in uniforms. When Mom started getting new cotton jumpers and rubber boots to play in, she knew that times would be changing for the better.

Times were hard when I was growing up. Lessons of any kind were too frivolous for the little extra my parents had after buying groceries to feed their five kids and three nephews. Every afternoon after school, I swept and mopped the floors of our small three bedroom home. I also washed my father's lunch can after he arrived home from a nine-hour workday in the sugar cane fields of West Kauai. On weekends I helped my Mom wash and iron clothes for single Filipino men and emptied the trash and dusted while Mom laboriously swept and mopped the medical dispensary. Frolicking in the waves or climbing trees to play house were my idea of a fun time. Elvis Presley and The Monkeys stole my heart. Hand-me-downs were a fact of life; polyester and corduroy jumpsuits were worth waiting for.

Today, young American girls express a completely different set of values. In my view, they're spoiled rotten. If one kid has orange hair, others will drag their Moms to the beauty salon so they can look ridiculous too. Or if I give my teenage daughters five dollars for their weekly allowance, they cry child abuse.

My daughters don't know the value of money nor what it means to make sacrifices for the family. If a friend is going to Disneyland, they want to go too. They

don't even realize it will cost approximately \$80,000 to send each of them to college in a few years.

Their chores seem to be limited to cleaning their own rooms, but only when martial law is declared. Loud music rocks our home and when they're not gossiping for hours on the phone, MTV fills their time. Florescent colors light up their wardrobe; hair spray and gels are an absolute must. Sometimes when I look at my girls I can't help but shake my head and wonder what ever happened to the simple American girl.

# My Patriotic Friend

For the past 10 years I have watched Ben Cruz ghost-write eloquent speeches for needy state legislators, eat plate lunches with fellow Filipino Democrats like Joshua Aagsalud and Lt. Governor Benjamin Cayetano, talk shop with his union boss, Russell Okata, excite Filipinos into voting with his homemade videos and radio broadcasts, create ties for local firms wanting to do business in the Philippines, drool over visiting beauty contestants at the State Capitol, pacify angry lobbyists, smoke two packs of cigarettes while drafting bills and resolutions till dawn, and swear at the end of each legislative session that it would be his last. Ben Cruz is the consummate political animal. He is also my friend.

Ben would have a difficult time deciding which he prefers--bikini watching on a sunny day at the beach or the clamor of a state Democratic convention. As much as he has tried to create a balance between the two, politics has always managed to overwhelm his personal life, as revealed by his three divorces. Ben would more likely forget a wife's birthday than a political function.

Political intrigue is his life-blood. His antenna is always fine-tuned to gossip and news to spread among his network of friends. He would rather maneuver behind closed doors than stand in the limelight.

Over the past several years he has made several unpublicized trips to the Philippines, first to assist President Aquino rewrite the constitution for her new government, and more recently, to improve the management infrastructure of that country's economy. In my

opinion, as a naturalized American, Ben has personally achieved more good through his knowledge and understanding of the political process than most native-born Americans.

Although Ben's work at home and abroad goes largely unnoticed, he finds contentment knowing that his life has already made a difference. It's a goal that many people never achieve during their lifetime. I'm proud to call Ben Cruz my friend.

## **A Pen...A Clean Sheet of Paper**

There they are on my desk...a pen and a clean sheet of paper...inanimate objects, most commonplace until I bring them to life. Soon the ink will flow and my thoughts will stare up at me from the once empty page. I am the master. My hand controls the pen and what it writes is the product of my imagination.

When I am in a humorous mood I can feel the pen glide with delight. I write humor quite well you know. Once, when my mood was serious, Homer was my topic. Sad may be my mood when I write tragic thoughts. I find many inspirations, although sometimes I reach into my imagination and find it barren.

When the pen and paper come alive, I reign over them, the characters and the action. When the pen remains motionless and the paper lies empty, I have told no story. My thoughts remain locked inside of me. The pen is still on the desk, the paper is still clean.

Now, new ideas are flowing through my mind. I reach for the pen and paper. Finally, pen, paper, thoughts, and imagination come alive...I am a writer.

## No More Roses

I set my needlework aside and listened intently. Certain I heard a noise outside, I decided to investigate. I slowly walked toward the dark kitchen. From the window above the sink, I was able to see the entire backyard, well lit by a full moon on that cool April night. Silently, I raised one slat of the drawn Venetian blind and peeked out. I saw a man's arm. He stood so close to the window I could see nothing but his arm. If the window had been opened, I could have heard him breathing, and he could have heard my heart pounding. Fear raced through me and I jumped back from the window as though I had suffered an electric shock. I tried not to panic.

With my husband, a sailor, deployed to the Mediterranean Sea, I alone had to protect our baby daughter. After checking all the door and window locks, I looked in on Lisa, then called for help. I phoned two neighbors but no one answered so I called the police.

Knowing the police were on the way calmed me, so I dared to peek through the kitchen blinds again. He was gone. Frantically, I tried to think of where and how he could break in. But before panic could set in, the police arrived.

The officer identified himself clearly, but I looked through the peephole before opening the door just to be sure. Officer Burton, who was holding a red rose, took my statement, and assured me that his partner was searching the yard. Then he explained who had been lurking outside my window.

Gary, a 20-year-old man from a distinguished Virginia family, had a telephone book size police record. He was a Peeping Tom, and the arm I saw belonged to him. Gary always left a red rose at the front door of the house of every woman he watched.

Although he had never harmed anyone, Gary had harassed women throughout Norfolk since the age of fifteen. His pattern was always the same. He roamed a neighborhood, peered through windows at women, switched neighborhoods frequently to elude police, and always left a red rose.

Officer Burton told me that this was not just a case of a pervert getting his kicks. According to Gary's family and his psychiatrist, his strange behavior began immediately after his girlfriend was killed in a car accident. Apparently the loss jolted Gary so deeply, his personality changed. He had never been in trouble before the accident, but afterward became an obscene phone caller, then graduated to peeping soon after. Although Gary had been under psychiatric care for three years, caught by police and jailed many times, he continued to watch women and to leave roses.

I saw Officer Burton two weeks later at the A & P store. We talked for a few minutes and I learned how Gary's story ended. Gary had been killed three nights earlier. He had broken into his first home and committed his first rape. The woman managed to reach her pistol and fired point blank.

I walked out of the store slowly, shaken. I felt sad, some people's lives are so tragic, but I also felt relieved and grateful that my incident with Gary had been so minor. I was lucky.



## Private Drum Song

You challenge me, you scare me, you excite me;  
You grace me with your empowered,  
Devoted love for music.

As your drums sing  
My heart shifts and flutters.  
I travel to native lands  
Where people bare their souls  
And embrace each other  
In rhythm with one another,  
Unafraid and all revealing.

As your body dances  
My drums play to your private song.

When you consume your drums with your entire being  
You invoke and feed my soul  
When you lose yourself in the vibrations  
They travel into the center of my instrument.

Those vibrations become ours,  
And I become embodied in your aura;  
Your circle of dance and rhythm,  
Your private drum song.

# Midday Love Song

In the tenderness of the moment  
I gently touch your face  
You smile  
Your eyes mirror my soul.

Each kiss  
Each stroke of your love  
Sends me to another dimension  
My passion soars, my love ignites  
As you continue to enthrall  
My inner being...

You reveal my nature  
My depth, my intensity  
My passion in our union  
Through your need  
To embrace and engulf  
Our connection  
Our immersion with ourselves  
In each other's love song.

Midday love song  
Where are you taking me  
Do you know  
Where we are going  
Is this forever  
Is this real  
Or is love only flashes  
In the memory of life?

Midday love song  
I've heard your voice before  
You were living in my dreams  
Now I am awakened  
By your hungry throbbing in my heart.

Midday love song  
Stay with me  
Do not fade  
In the quick sand  
Of my fears  
I want to know the  
Truth  
Of an eternal love with you.

## Shadows of Love

I awoke to an eternal sky  
And a mammoth star-apple tree.  
Her leaves softly sway and  
Crackle with the wind's gentleness.  
My senses come alive  
I look, for the first time  
I experience the sharpness of her colors  
I notice the various shadows  
In between each unique leaf,  
And I lay wondering if you could ever be  
As real as the green leaves  
That brighten my late morning window.

# Unity with Diversity

I was gifted with the challenge of being the second eldest of five. My mother was a single parent and worked two jobs until I was twelve. In spite of her hard work, we were always in the lower-middle income bracket. I learned very early about the necessity of team work, being responsible, and being sensitive to the needs of others. I learned early about integrity, the importance of each human being, and the necessity to fight the exploitation of the less fortunate.

My mother never lied to her children, allowed open communication, and always fought for justice and equality and for what she needed and deserved. She even took the time, energy, and sometimes money to help others in spite of her own struggles. She understood their hardships because of her own. Mother was, and is, a "tough cookie," as she sometimes calls herself. I had a strong and dedicated role model.

Given her example, I was destined to become independent, expressive, and involved with the needs of the community. In more ways than one, I followed my mother's path. I worked in my community, attempting to help people as individuals or as members of a group.

Shortly after moving to Wai'anae, I contacted the Wai'anae Women's Support Group. I knew that one's emotional and sometimes physical survival depended on support from the community, if one had no other support system. I had none. I needed to connect with women who had problems, experiences and needs similar to mine. I knew that being a low-income, single

parent with all its responsibilities was going to swallow me up if I insisted on being the Super Woman, caring for everyone else's needs except my own.

In the women's support group, I found I could express my concerns and experiences in an understanding environment. If I needed resource information or a caring ear, I received them.

One of the most significant blessings the women's support group gave me was deciding to help sponsor a trip to Puerto Rico. I was fortunate to be chosen by the vice president of the Puerto Rican Society in Hawai'i to accompany the "Boricuas Hawayanos" (Puerto Rican Hawai'ians), a musical variety show with Hawai'ian and Puerto Rican music, to Puerto Rico on a historical cultural exchange from Hawai'i.

The trip was a heart-warming and personally empowering one despite the strenuous schedule of touring most of Puerto Rico for three weeks and attending receptions and parties sponsored by the mayor of each town after each performance.

For the first time in my life, I felt more culturally centered. I didn't realize I was 100% Latin. (I am of Spanish, Portuguese, and Puerto Rican descent.) Raised in Hawai'i, I always felt different--as if something was wrong with me. Since the Puerto Rican trip, I now understand what Latin culture is and how much of a Latin I am, emotionally and musically.

I learned from the trip that Hawai'i, lacking a strong Latin culture, may be the reason why I always felt I didn't fit in any particular cultural group while growing up here, although, spiritually I felt close to Hawaiian culture.

The two most powerful things I brought back from Puerto Rico were a sense of personal cultural identity (a sense of belonging) and my official declaration of becoming a Bahai.

I felt blessed and fortunate to be culturally multifaceted. I deeply respect the Hawaiian culture. I have traveled and lived on the Mainland and learned a lot about life there. And now I have visited the land of my origins for the first time, bringing back a part of me I never recognized or understood before.

I feel centered in regards to who I am. For the first time in my life I have put all the parts of me together. I finally belong because I know that all the different parts of me are good. I belong, no matter where I am. Whether I am coming from my experiences on the Mainland, my understanding and acceptance of the various cultures in Hawai'i, or whether I am being my very emotional and expressive Latin self, all of me is acceptable to me.

# The Shaman Poet Speaks of the Child Who Remains Within

[Inspired by Matthew Fox's "Coming of the Cosmic Christ."]

The power of alchemy  
exists within me  
with my Lapis Lazuli (marvelous stone).  
I transform words  
with the Prima Materia  
into heartfelt spiritual treasures.

\*

Will the child that remains in you  
for these moments  
set in the void, your imaginatio,  
and look me in the eyes?

\* \*

See the mercuis  
bubble up  
from my beating heart.

\* \* \*

This elixir's red and white sparkle  
brings to me  
treasures hard to attain;  
it is the vast knowledge of the heart  
that I've obtained.

\* \* \* \*

I am before you  
as he, but he is you  
and you are she  
and so am I.

\* \* \*

I will faintly prescribe  
the words which redeem  
the spiritual serpent  
of the mystical flame of eros  
and the rituals of amour for you.

\* \*

These words from the inner dialogue  
blind and connect us  
to the cosmological garden  
we know as life.

\*

I dream that I am true  
and eclectically connect in you  
those listless words  
and bring back to life  
the fantasies held  
creased and folded  
deeply asleep in you.

\* \*

One drink of my elixir  
will return you  
to the experience of the playful child  
that remains  
to this day, this moment  
in you.

\* \* \*

Ignite your mercuis  
and look again into my eyes;  
see the flame of compassion  
burning strong.



\* \* \* \*

Try and bend the metal  
in your body;  
allow the words  
to streak through you,  
jolt you to an Imitatio of Christi.  
Feel the Christian mysticism.

\* \* \*

Look, see  
you have been redeemed.  
Hear your little one's laughter  
vibrating you back to life  
and know  
the child remains in you.

\* \*

I am the speaker  
of words that heal  
the internal alchemy  
to heal the heart.

\*

I am a Shaman Poet.

# Hale to West Oahu

\*In the autumn, the sun still flourishes for us,  
in the winter, the rain gives us youthful wain,  
then the spring does much the same, and the summer  
brings forth a heartfelt frame of the seasons in our  
domain\*

In this moment, this life, this sweet West Oahu,  
I Hail my alma mater to be!  
Won't you give a yell to  
allow the succulent taste  
of knowledge to melt,  
flow through your eyes  
to the edge of your tongue  
then down, to wrap around and around,  
around your tickled heart?

Hale to West Oahu,  
the Occidental Oxford of Hawaii.

Hale to the faculty and staff,  
Mother Hubbard  
had a more plentiful cupboard.

\*A lean look at our mentors\*  
In my zest to learn what's at the end  
of my educational quest,  
I've met an Occidental scholar or four,  
and seen them dance, jitterbug and strut;  
give physical animation to reasoning and the senses.

Take my inner-tube like mind, patch its holes,  
pump and puff until a shape, a form of thoughts  
has filled my body's head.

Steady now, don't let me be  
too lightheaded about teachers!  
After all, who needs those collar wearing  
grade screechers? Who needs them?  
They seem to me to be always expounding,  
attempting to be profound.  
It's a continual verbal floundering, and for once  
in their moment-to-spoken-moment existence,  
their words speak louder than our actions.

Only the happy, haphazard wizard's apprentice  
of Walt Disney's *Fantasia* can strike our human chord,  
resounding in a symphony of learned joy,  
better than our Occidental Oahu scholars  
who, with the thunder of God's history  
dash, slash and make us rehash  
our illusion, with a Red(Bic)Wand.  
Only a Navaho shaman could smoke the clouds  
with clearer letters.  
Re-Write Re-Write Re-Write REEE-Wriiiiiite!

**\*And now\***

I ask you to glare; no better just you stare  
at your teacher's left, then right,  
then in the eyes and behold this being,  
in your human likeness,  
this withering winter beast smiling at you  
from behind his anointed cap and gown  
and see how their potion has fizzled and faded  
as your papers have been regraded  
and see how your eternal grade  
of personal devotion to excellence has been reborn.

\*So I say\*

Step out, away from your four to ten year caste  
of the undergraduate, hang your tassel  
along the proud line of your neck  
and answer my question.  
Who needs teachers?

\*Now on to the Occidental student body\*

In the fields of educational folly  
we students bloom by the thousands.  
How few withstand the summer's blistering sun blast  
is a sound thought to reflect on.  
How many of us remain?  
And of those that do, there is still the withering winter.

But we students, attached to knowledge for life,  
we return, we bloom the lotus petal of intelligence,  
take to our breast and brain,  
every castoff sunray, dim, bright or faded,  
and reach, streak past our fellow humans  
on the path to the farthest star, the deepest universe,  
in pursuit of our true self.

\*I say Hale to the Occidental Oxford of West Oahu\*  
Hale thee and me. (Re-Write)  
Hale to Thee and Thou.

# Children at Play

We were six when first we met and enjoying one of those playgrounds that are placed frequently like islands of pleasure throughout one's childhood. The trees and ponds of my playground were filled with pigeons, tame geese, and ducks. All the splendor of my youth in a city woods.

"Choo-chew-chooo! Choo-choo-choo-choo." I was engineer, conductor, baggage man, porter, and passenger on the Red Steam Express, Engine Number Nine. The Red-Express lived in the sand box next to the giant swings that often swung the neat little kids upside down.

"All aboard! All aboard!" I hollered down through the engine smoke to the passengers in line to board my train. "Last call...all those that's heading to fun land, all aboard!"

"Wait! Wait for me," said a voice breaking through the smoke. "I want to ride along with you."

I slowed the mighty engine; you could hear the metal cooling. I then leaned from the train and lent my hand to the small white figure in overalls with a head of red, rice-bowl cut hair.

"Ticket? Ticket? Got your ticket, mister?"

"Here you go," said the little fellow as he handed me a gold scrap of paper.

"How far you're going?" I asked as I handed him his stub. The paper seemed a lot brighter in his hand than in mine.

"Oh, I'm going to about nine or ten, then I'm gone."

"Whoa'...whatta'yah mean gone? Nine or ten?" I asked while the train slowly pulled away from the sand box. "I asked how far you were going. What does nine or ten have to do with where you're going?"

"I only want to live my childhood then I'm gone, on to the next life."

"Whoa! You're going to have to get off my train with that kind of talk. Want to scare the other kids, or what? Besides, how you going to get there? Can't just leave, you know."

"I'm going to give it up, leave my body, die like when a rain cloud just gives up its rain and disappears."

"Next stop is your stop!" I hollered as I pulled the giant train alongside the merry-go-round.

\*

When I reached my 21st year I grew my 21st ring from the center of my heart, like a deeply rooted tree does. I accepted a job as a day care and after school teacher. I had been at my job for nine months when a new student entered my life. I was in the school's kitchen preparing the after school snack when I heard the doorbell ring. First I heard the voice of a firm and knowing parent. Then I heard the school director talking about forms and rules. In-between all that chatter I heard something else. It was the sound of shoes clicking, the heels cracking into each other, again and again and again. I went back to slicing apples and had almost sliced through the last of the apples when I heard a soft voice reaching over my shoulder.

"Hi! I'm Emily. You must be Amos."

"Hello there Emily, and yep, I'm Amos. You must be the new girl."

In the passing months Emily and I became friends. She was a lover of art, could draw and paint for hours. Each picture was completely new and different from the last one. She was a kind little girl, but you never asked

her what it was she was drawing. She would give you the look of the dead-eye if you did; the kind of look you got from a person whose toes you just stepped on real hard, crushing their corns.

The dead-eye look. I never got that look. Though once I did ask her, "Emily, are you going to be an artist when you've finished growing up?"

"You silly do-do. I'm not growing up. I'm leaving after eight or nine. I only want to draw and paint. After you hit ten, they don't want you to paint, draw, or laugh. All they say is, "Study, Study, STUDY! I'm not going on beyond nine!"

I sat next to Emily, drawing on a small piece of recycled zerox paper, creating stick people...teenagers playing a game of basketball under a rainbow. I kept thinking of Emily and my little train pal and how much their words sounded the same.

I left the drawing, painting, and the day care shortly before Emily's ninth birthday. I don't know if she grew to nine, ten or eleven rings. I'm not even sure that I wanted her to.

\*

I was on a narrow road that reaches up and down through the Texas hill country, returning home after a day of work cutting fields of hay. I saw two rattlers and a bloated armadillo baked in its tracks as I cut through miles and miles of the golden land. I was driving real fast. My youngest son Jeb, who was in the back seat, yelled with the wind gushing through his lungs, "Faster, faster, faster!" He liked the feel of gravity as it pushed him deep into his seat as the car careened along the highway.

"Jeb! How's football practice? You're almost ten. Pretty soon you'll be able to play in the big leagues. I can see you now, son. Junior high, high school, on to college and then the Big Time."

"Fine."

"Fine? Is that all you can say? You're almost ten years old, boy. Soon you'll be a man. What are you going to say then, huh, Jeb?"

"I ain't never gonna be a man...ain't gonna see ten neither. I'm gonna play till I'm nine years, eleven months and thirty days. Then I'm gone. Gonna go someplace...somewhere else...be a kid again. I don't want to be a man, daddy. Don't want to live past ten."

"Shut your mouth...you and your June-bug talk. You're going to be a man whether you like it or not!"

It was actually a year ago that Jeb and I had that talk. He's dead now; died in a Pee-Wee all-star football game, eleven months and thirty days back. His body slowly sank into the grass and fell out from under his uniform. His heart stopped in the end zone. I saw it all from the heaven yard line.

Something happened, but I don't exactly have it right in my thoughts yet. It hasn't been long enough.

In the end zone, hanging on the goal post like monkeys on a forked tree free of leaves, was my pal from the train, Emily the painter, and my son Jeb. They were swinging in the end zone, floating off the ground, smiling, laughing, and tickling each other in the funny spot under their arm.

I snapped back into focus when Jeb's mother had fainted; I had to catch her and drop him. I haven't seen my son or the other kids again. Probably never will.

I tried to force the thought on my soul that the little folks were just visitors in my life; that is, until Jeb died. Now I think they all had something in common. Perhaps they shared the same soul. Maybe some kids just don't want to leave the joys of childhood for what we grown folks have created.



## The Ridge

I grew up in a tiny section of southwestern Pennsylvania called Nubbins Ridge. Legend has it that the first settlers' corn crop produced only small ears, or nubbins, and gave the ridge its name. My ancestors were immigrants from Ireland and Scotland. They came to the area in the 1800s seeking work in the surrounding coal mines and coke ovens. When I was a kid, the population was two hundred. This included my maternal and paternal grandparents, aunts, uncles and lots of cousins. Some of my relatives spent their entire lives there.

I spent the first four years of my life in a two-room house: one upstairs, one down. We had an outdoor toilet and drew water from my grandmother's well next door. Our family of six then moved to a three room house on the opposite side of the ridge. My earliest memory of that house is how big it felt. Still, we had no indoor bathroom. A pump brought running water into the kitchen. Sleeping quarters were tight. My older brother slept on a couch in the living room. My sister and I shared a single bed while my parents and younger brother slept in a double bed in the bedroom. During the coldest part of the winter, we moved our beds into the living room, blocked off the rest of the house and slept around the heatrola to keep warm. In the summer we were free to explore the surrounding woods and roam without restrictions.

We dammed the widest part of the creek to form a swimming hole. Since polio was a frightening disease in

the '50s, we were careful to skim the sewage from the water. Fortunately, no one ever got sick. The dirt roads were oiled in the summer to keep the dust down. The wells dried up during extremely hot months and we had to ration water. We took a bath in a galvanized tub once a week, but washed our feet every night before bed.

The milkman came twice a week and gave us rides in his open van. Sometimes he passed around pieces of dry ice; we pretended they were cigarettes. The men had nicknames like Pip, Doobie, Chinny and Goose. They played poker and drank on the baseball diamond every Friday night. We searched for lost change on Saturday mornings.

My grandmother was a wonderful gossip with a penchant for spreading the latest happenings, true or not. She and her cronies, Nan and Bess, had the telephone lines buzzing constantly. A few neighbors raised their own cows, pigs and chickens for food. My aversion for meat is directly traceable to seeing these animals slaughtered.

It was a fun place to be a kid. It became an embarrassment for me as a teenager. Some of my high school friends belonged to the country club and lived in places like Belmont Circle. I wasn't proud of being a country girl. I left at nineteen and spent several years escaping what I thought I should be ashamed of. My parents and brother still live on the ridge. The roads are paved, the city put in sewer lines and most everyone has cable television. Much has changed. Most of the older folks have died and their kids have moved away. I don't know many of the new neighbors. When I go back now it looks different. I know I, like the ridge, have changed, but it still feels like home.

## Heart's Companion

Love's sweet compassion touches my spirit  
Change me, feel me, and guide me,  
My senses yearn for your offspring.

To smell your fragrant aroma,  
To taste your unique nectar,  
To hear your magnetic voice.

My body shivers and trembles for your stroke,  
My heart runs wild in anticipation,  
Sweat trickles in my palm at each encounter.

Your presence in my life makes me sing,  
I feel the joy of your closeness,  
How could I have lived neglected for so long?

We meet and encounter in a myriad of forms,  
The thrill of a secret forbidden rendezvous,  
The suppleness of a passionate kiss.

I am not complete without you,  
I can never be the same again,  
Your magic and power have altered my soul.

Your many forms have sustained humanity,  
From a family's bond and a lover's obsession,  
To a friend's smile and a cherished moment.

No matter where you go or what you become,  
You will always be my companion,  
Through the good times and bad, my support.

You have power to create and destroy,  
But by your grace we have prospered,  
Thank you, for your gift and the way I feel.

Give to others your destiny and desire,  
Lead them to eternity with your power,  
Grant humanity your wondrous presence.

Teach us compassion and show us your patience,  
And for all eternity you shall never be lost.  
Love's sweet companion has taken my heart,  
Everything is again, fresh and new...

# Cloak of Depression

Cinders of ash fall from a black sky,  
Cold winds blow that sting the eye.  
Strange noises echo in the darkness,  
Grasps of the lost in the still harshness.  
Tepid waters cry of sadness and destruction,  
Death clings to the shores screaming eruption.  
Watch from the edge as a lonely world dies,  
Nature's corpse screams silent cries.  
Our mistakes creep up on us like a horrible fate,  
We speak of solutions but it's already too late.  
Look to our world, our great Earth Mother,  
Whisper, hug, and kiss our cherished lover.  
Pray to Father God and ask for the wisdom,  
So we will learn, teach, and sing of freedom.  
Our Mother supports us and our Father guides us,  
The failure in our mission has broken their trust.  
We run in terror ignoring our future,  
Nature and weakness of the human creature.  
Look, listen, work, and strive,  
Our time is running, don't lose the drive.  
To save our species we must protect our environment,  
We don't own this planet we only borrow it.  
Take control and stop the spiraling trend,  
Or we will witness our final end.

# Eternal Quest

Love, where have you gone, infatuation's desire?  
Spread your wings of unquenchable fire.  
I have yearned for you, searched for you, passed you by,  
Can't you hear and feel my hungry cry?  
You bless and change those that you touch,  
Why have I missed your passionate clutch?  
I have wandered the world in search of you,  
Probing and looking without a clue.  
You grace humanity without any prejudice,  
But I, as yet, haven't experienced your kiss.  
Nations fall and people die for a chance to taste,  
The sweetness and flavor of your purest chaste.  
Humanity saddens and sinks at your trials,  
We rejoice and celebrate each of your smiles.  
Where do I go to feel your embrace?  
What must I do to cultivate your grace?  
I've looked long and hard, nation to nation,  
Feeling, tasting your would-be salvation.  
But alas I have looked in the wrong place,  
Love has been staring me right in my face.  
Love dwells in a simple and familiar home,  
We miss and ignore it, a tragic syndrome.  
Perhaps if we stopped acting and feeling so smart,  
We would see that love lives right in our hearts.  
Pray to God, where true love first began,  
And he will show you that love is around you,  
In your fellow man...

# Stranger in the Desert

The sand was swirling and dancing like a devil as the summer storm approached. The evening sun struggled to shine its last ray before the darkness took control. Cracks in the parched earth screamed out for the precious water that the heavens held so dear.

As I walked, I admired the beauty and power of nature's creation. Being in the outdoors creates a special unity with Mother Earth that I miss in today's technological world. It's funny that I depend so much on technology, the ultimate irony, Henry Ford's broken marvel machine sitting on an empty road, while I walk in the middle of the New Mexico desert. I hate depending on other things in my life; maybe this is a blessing in disguise, a chance for me to think. At least I don't have to walk too far; the sign back on the road said Las Cruces was only seven miles. I should be in town by dinner time.

It's strange, but I've never really looked at the world around me, the sky above, or the ground below. I'm so damn busy all of the time, I almost feel like I'm lost in a vortex. If only there was something I could do. It's frightening because I feel like I'm losing control of myself and reality itself.

Even the old standbys don't seem to offer answers any more. Home is distant, work is boring and church is empty. My traditional crutches are broken and I'm lying on the ground helpless, dying and alone. At least I have this time to myself. I'll be late to the presentation meeting with Susan but she won't care, I suppose.

She does what she wants and could care less about the rest of the world. Bitch!

It doesn't do any good to complain or cry in my beer like some drunk version of a drug store cowboy. Damn, it's cold. Of course I don't have a jacket. Who would guess I'd be walking around out here; almost need goggles just to see through the blowing sand. Looks like this storm isn't going to stop any time soon. I'd better find some shelter for a little while till it blows over.

"Hello? Are you okay?" I jumped up and tried to focus in on the strange voice. I'd found a little out-cropping in the nearby cliffs. I must have fallen asleep waiting for the storm to pass.

"Who are you? What time is it?" I asked.

The stranger eyed me curiously. "Does it matter what time it is?" he said.

"Sure it does," I replied. "I'm in the middle of this damn desert, late for a meeting with my boss, and talking with god only knows who."

"Yes, God knows."

"What?"

"Never mind."

I thought to myself, what does this guy want; where did he come from?

"You needed help and I came. You're troubled and I'm here."

"How did you know what I was thinking?"

"That's not important. What matters is that I am here." I noticed that the storm died and the desert fell silent.

"Who are you?" I asked again.

"I am your past and your future, your friend and your brother."

"What the hell does that mean?"



"It means everything and yet nothing." This guy is definitely missing a few marbles, I thought. "Let me tell you a story," the stranger said. "Have you ever looked at the night sky and noticed the stars?"

"Sure."

"The stars seem bright and constant, yet when studied closely, you would discover that their light pulsates and the colors fluctuate. They seem to be stronger at one point and weaker at another. All the stars do this; not just one, but all. They are individual yet share a common quality. They are never alone. There are always companions that share a common existence. Alone they would be dead and meaningless, but together they light the night sky and stir the souls of mankind."

"That's an interesting story," I said. "But what does that have to do with anything?"

"Life is like those stars. Life pulsates with brightness and darkness, with strength and weaknesses. The colors of our lives change with our experiences and feelings. Like the stars, you are never alone. You have all of humanity that shares your pain and confusion. No one is unique in this aspect. Each person is an individual, yet shares one common truth. Everyone must suffer confusion, pain and fear. It is an eternal trait. Alone, a person is dead and lifeless, but with others, that same person shines bright and overcomes all things that seem impossible. That light that shines is stronger than any other in creation. This is my Father's gift."

I was confused, yet peacefully satisfied by what the stranger had said. I looked into his eyes and experienced a sense of forgiveness and love that I had never encountered before.

"Who is your father?" I said, knowing the answer already.

"You know him well. That's all that matters."

Again I asked him, "Who are you?"

"I am like you and also unlike you. I am the one you call and the one that answers." I knew that I'd never get a straight answer from this man. But it didn't matter anymore. Why? I don't know. But I knew it was no longer important.

The inside of the car grew warm and bright. The windows were rolled up and the morning sun was piercing through with an evil vengeance. I felt confused and disoriented. I wasn't sure what was happening or what I was doing parked on the side of the road. I looked at myself in the mirror. God, I looked like hell. I turned on the ignition and the car started without any problem.

As I drove I noticed a lot of sand on the road. There must have been a storm last night, though I didn't remember it. I was thinking what a wonderful morning it was. I had this strong feeling that things were going to be okay, no matter how bad I might perceive them to be.

Driving through the desert, it seemed that I was alone, but I knew that I wasn't. I could be a stranger in the desert and not be alone. Stranger? Something about that word bothered me. I had this wierd feeling that I would never look at the night sky in the same way again. I realized that I was crying, not out of sadness, but from a deep, pure and wonderful joy.

# Momma It's OK

"Christ! I don't know how much longer I can take this, Jim. If I have to look at anymore blood, or see another person die, I'm gonna lose it."

"Jack, it's the fourteen hour shift talking. You'll be okay. Let's go to Maggie's, have a couple of drinks, some dinner and you'll start to feel better."

Jim Paterson had wanted to be a paramedic ever since he was a kid. He still remembered the day he passed his boards and his dream had finally become a reality. It wasn't more than a week later that he was assigned to the trauma center at St. Stephen's Memorial Hospital. St. Stephen's was an old hospital in the middle of the Irish sector of town. Jim's friends told him he had it made. St. Stephen's had a reputation for being the dead zone. Jim soon discovered how wrong reputations could be.

"Shit Jack! Would you hurry up! I wanna get to Maggie's before it fills up."

"Alright, alright. Let me put everything into my locker, then we can go."

"You wanna drive or walk?"

"Let's walk. It'll do us some good. Besides, I don't want to try and find parking. That's always a bitch."

Maggie's had been a local favorite for years. Most of the people who worked at St. Stephen's, as well as Memorial General across town, used Maggie's as a place to unwind. The added bonus that friends were always there was comforting. The familiar warmth of Maggie's somehow had a narcotic effect on its patrons. The

people went in tired, frustrated and lethargic, but left happy and stress free in a sort of delusionary utopia.

Jim and Jack were walking the couple of blocks to Maggie's. They had known each other only eight months, but they managed in that short time to build a special bond...a bond created by sharing similar experiences in a good part of their day-to-day lives and maintained by the genuine respect they had for each other. The two men talked as they strolled.

"Jack, I really am tired. All the things that have happened in the last couple of months...I don't know. I feel like if I don't do something soon I'm gonna lose my goddamn mind."

Jack looked into Jim's piercing blue eyes and could see a lot of pain and sadness caused by his recent divorce and his mother's death. He wanted to help, but he wasn't sure what he could do.

"Jim, you just need some time off. You've been through hell and back in the last couple of months. Talk to Steve Burke tomorrow. Tell him how you feel and that you need some time off. With the shortage of paramedics in this town, we can't afford to lose the ones we have, especially when they're good."

Jim thought for a moment. "I suppose you're right. I don't know. It just seems that with everything falling apart in my life, it's just too damn hard to be responsible for other lives when I can't even control my own. Wait, I know what you're going to say. We just do our best and sometimes we fail and sometimes we succeed. But Jack, sometimes doesn't this whole thing just get to you? I mean really bug the shit out of you?"

"Sure it does, pal. There are days I'm so pissed off or screwed up that I feel like I belong in County General. But you know what?"

"What?" Jim whispered hesitantly.

"For every life that I lose, I save a lot more. For me, that makes all of the stress and anger seem worth it. It's a matter of perspective. When it gets too hard, channel all of the anger and depression in a way that does you good instead of harming you. I think your biggest problem is that your support system has crumbled. But you can rebuild it. Start over. I'll be here to help you if you want it. After all, isn't that what friends are for?"

"Thanks," Jim said quietly. "I guess I need time to think and sort out things. I'll let you know when I'm ready. I do want your help. Thanks."

"Sure. Anytime buddy, anytime."

The two men finished the walk to Maggie's, both smiling silently.

"Hi, boys. How's business in the dead zone?"

"Alright, Shelly," Jack responded cheerfully. "How's things here?"

"Good, real good."

Shelly was one of those waitresses that seemed to work at one place for a lifetime. Maggie's was her life and she loved the people, but more importantly, she was a friendly face in a faceless world.

The two men ordered a couple of drinks and their dinner. They sat at the table laughing and for the time being, putting aside their troubles.

"Jack, I'm gonna take your advice. I think I'll take a week off and go up to Maine. Mom always wanted to see Maine one last time before she died. So I think I'll go up there for myself and for Mom...try to put things in order."

"Now you have the right idea, Jim. I know just the place for you to stay. You'll love..."

"Help me! Please...someone help me!"

Jim looked up to see a woman who had come into the pub frantic and screaming for help. She looked terrified. Jim and Jack walked over to the woman and

tried to calm her down. They were working on an instinctual level, something they had learned to do long ago. Jim reached out to calm the woman, if that were possible.

"Calm down. Tell me what happened."

The woman's voice broke as she frantically spoke. "My...my daughter. She...ah, she fell. God, please help her!" The woman's voice trailed off in her tears and sobbing.

Without hesitation the two men ran out into the street unprepared for the travesty that lay on the ground. The child apparently had fallen off a balcony above the street, no telling how high. Her crushed and bleeding form lay motionless on the hot asphalt. Jim ran up to the girl to evaluate the situation. Her vital signs were weak and fading fast. From visual inspection the child had suffered several compound fractures, contusions, and probably substantial internal injuries. Jim knew that there was nothing that could be done except make the little girl as comfortable as possible. Surprisingly, she was conscious and seemed to be suffering very little.

"Momma, momma, where are you? I can't see you."

"I'm here sweetheart. It's okay darling. You'll be fine." As these words came out of the mother's mouth, deep down she knew it was a lie.

"It's okay momma, it's okay. I see daddy. He's here to help. Please don't cry momma, I'm okay."

The woman was holding her daughter in her arms as she died, but she was comforted that her baby was not suffering anymore. Scenes like this always tore Jack apart. He was the typical tough guy on the outside, but inside he was as soft as a kitten. He hadn't learned how to reconcile those two parts of himself.

"Momma, it's okay, it's okay momma," Jim muttered helplessly as he laid on the ground like an infant in its mother's womb.

"Jim, buddy, are you okay? What's wrong?"

"Momma, it's okay. Don't cry, momma."

Jack knew that all he could do for his friend was hold him and be there for him in his anguish.

Three months later, Jack was in the locker room at St. Stephen's waiting for Jim to come in. Jim had taken some time off so he could rest and get his problems taken care of, but today he was due back and Jack couldn't wait. He wasn't sure if the Jim that was returning would be the same one that he knew three months ago.

Jim walked in with a Cheshire grin on his face, looking better than he had in a long time, probably since his mom died.

"Jack, it's great to see ya! Ready to hit the road and get to work?"

"Sure am, buddy," Jack answered in a puzzled tone. "How are you? Are you sure you're ready?"

"Yea, I'm sure. You know when that little girl died a couple of months ago, it brought out a lot of emotions that I was ignoring. It was good for me, Jack. Damn it was good! I feel free for the first time since I can remember. I've hit bottom, and now the only way is up. I can't wait to get started, but I'm gonna need a friend to help."

"I'm here for you, pal. Anytime you need me."

"You don't know how much I wanted to hear just those words," smiled Jim.

"One last thing, Jim. What about working here? Do you really want to continue? I mean, as much as we need paramedics here in the dead zone, your sanity is more important."

"Oh, I'm staying. For the time being, anyway. I want to help others. I want to give myself to people who need me. It makes me feel good and it helps folks who need it. Besides, mom always wanted me to be a doctor. This is as good a place as any to start. So whatta ya say? Ready to hit the road?"

"Sure am, Jimbo. Sure am," Jack said with a warm and content smile.



## Rowboat

Defiant though willing to learn  
No one can tell you where not to go  
Sooner or later and by turn  
Tasting things the way you know

Crawling at first to taste the water  
Admonitions stop you at the shore  
Dipped hands and toes quiver  
One more element to explore

Both oars firmly in hand  
Practicing in tandem  
Acquiring skill for the day when  
You can steer at random

Fast-paced rowing gets nowhere  
Losing an oar in the process  
Two oars were then a largesse  
Now you bring the one oar to bear

In the water is a mirror  
Reflecting if you look  
All the mistakes and errors  
The wasted energy ennui took

Even made in strife  
Soon enough a course  
A smooth passing not late in life  
Hoping not for the worst

Beset by eddies all share  
Belaying pins on the side  
Ropes can be fastened there  
That helping hands can guide

Passengers are taken on  
Somewhere along the way  
Heading for the sunrise  
Living from day to day

Just over the horizon  
Dreams before have gone  
When being made alone  
Tomorrow is wont to come

Held together by desires and wishes  
Launched in haste, crafts founder  
On the shoals, rent to pieces  
And just as surely, they go under

A trail we want to leave behind  
For wayward travellers to follow  
Perhaps erased by a scheming mind  
Or taken away by a tomorrow?

The journey is not the same  
We are pawns, it's just a game  
Luck brings us to safe harbor  
And not the fruits of our labor.

# Weeds and Butterflies

I tried to grow corn  
In my garden out there  
But those damn noxious weeds,  
They're everywhere.  
I cleared a small area  
And tried with broccoli.  
I watered and fertilized  
I wasn't very lucky.  
Butterflies laid eggs  
On the leaves nice and green.  
They've destroyed the cabbage as well.  
Are those seedlings?  
It's hard to tell because  
The ever-present pesky weeds  
Also grow there.  
With nature's help, I won't be beat.  
Those irritating weeds are going to die  
In the summer's heat.  
So then I asked myself why not  
Let the garden go literally to pot?  
Chancy at best.  
The specter, the biggest of dragonflies  
Mr. Policeman, riding the skies  
Put that foolish idea to rest.

## The Enduring Dead

The eternal silence of the grave,  
Tell me, can this be death?  
Is this our reward for...  
Unforgivable trespasses,  
Things left undone?  
Things we ought not have done,  
Supplications unheard?  
This is not the promised,  
Not even Hell.  
It is the Punch Line  
Of a cosmic joke.  
Incomprehensible darkness?  
Repose without company  
Deceits of the world unresolved,  
Envy, hatred, malice, passion stilled?  
I cannot see them in the darkness.  
All those Christians, Jews, Hindus,  
Moslems, Infidels, Heretics and Saints.  
Reaching out, extolling,  
Extirpating all others.  
Now, all silenced, invisible.  
At last alike.  
Dead.

# Rape O' the Chin Hair

*Dedicated to Dr. Dan Boylan*

No dire offense caused this noble act.  
Sharp razor to his chin--then to hack  
Away at that long grown facial hair  
To scrape away and leave a face so bare,  
As bare as any newborn babies butt.  
Who would suggest this? Some academic nut?  
What cataclysmic reason could there be--  
Pestilence, plague, scourge, or World War Three?  
No! Not some, not any, nor all of the above  
Not fame, shame, duty, sex, or even love.  
None of these pressed the pundit into shearing,  
To whisk away each whisker without fearing,  
The unkind comments of peers and those he tutored  
Both, whom as a class, might well be neutered.  
A similitude castration which seemingly would suit  
The too tight-fisted to tithe or contribute.  
The vanity of image he sacrificed, tonsorially,  
In dead of night so we bequeathers might not see  
His long unused septic-pencil dexterously applied  
To stem the minimal but bloody flowing tide.  
Oh yes indeed, he did look kind of funny,  
And proved once more--anything for money.  
Anything, if the cause be good and mildly sane.  
Yet t'wasn't long before he hopped a plane  
And flew east, five-thousand miles or so,  
To rest, relax, and let that damn beard grow.  
The question--as he visits friends and kin  
Does hair grow faster, back in Michigan?

## Imagine

Imagine that...  
We live in a world  
without any whales,  
there won't be splashes  
from mighty tails.  
No soaring eagles  
in the evening sky,  
No tiny eaglets  
struggling to fly.  
Pleasant seas  
without playful porpoise,  
Who's to blame  
for all of this?...Us!  
In the mountains  
not a single grizzly bear,  
his ponderous steps  
won't fill the air.  
Cookies going unbaked,  
no children around.  
No laughing, no running,  
not even a sound.  
One by one,  
the lights go out.  
It is the extinction of life,  
without a doubt.

# Last Night

Last night

I was raped in my body,  
Torn of my clothes and pride,  
Left huddled and hurt.

Last night

I was raped in my mind,  
Stripped of feeling and dignity,  
Left crumpled and ashamed.

Last night

I was raped in my soul,  
Shredding trust and compassion,  
Left weeping on the floor.

# Haiku I

Hawaii postman.

No sleet, no snow; sunshine, beach.  
Hard going to work.

## Silver Tears

Surrounded by a totally  
impenetrable darkness,  
I perceive a flash of light  
that burns all existence  
and transport my being to a green garden.  
In your last embrace,  
I heard quiet winds blow;  
A pallid sunshine fell 'round.  
Birds sang, very softly,  
as if in pain  
for a lost love.  
Silver tears fall.  
Lilac hearts beat.  
I weep, again and again.

## Haiku II

Mighty dog guards all.  
Wicked, leaping, fierce spectra,  
Children's soft puppy.



## To Men--As We Age

I discovered a sweetness  
in an old letter,  
penned with sincerity  
by a youthful lover.  
What has happened?  
In past years we loved  
and had dreams.  
Now we are at war.  
Did *you* never write  
a love note to a girl-woman?  
Have you forgotten how to feel?  
Growing older has changed us.  
Fighting to survive  
has hardened us.  
The hurt still hurts,  
the tenderness  
we have locked away.

## Haiku III

Mirror be gentle.  
Do not let my anger mar  
My soul's reflection.

# Hide Awhile

If I listen to the music,  
let it infiltrate every pore,  
I might be able to cope.

If I get into a movie,  
let romanticism wash over me,  
I'll have plenty of hope.

If I get into myself,  
Hide away and simply dream,  
I'll be okay for awhile.

## Walking On Past

Time seems to pass by slower,  
When I see you walking on past  
And your looks filled with such apprehension,  
As though this time might just be my last.  
So I'm left in a state of confusion,  
With the words that I should-shouldn't say  
Cause I know when I call out your name,  
You will only be driven away.

Though you say that I bring you such pleasure  
Of the sort you've been hoping to find,  
The feelings you dream of receiving  
May be real but they're certainly not mine.  
So I'll leave you alone as you've asked me,  
Though the wall between us brings you tears,  
Cause you want me, don't want me, then want me.  
Being loved is the thing you most fear.

## The Dead Tree

We lived out in the sticks. Stubby round hills covered with yellow grass surrounded our trailer. Oak trees mixed with a few pines dotted the hills. Our place had tall willowy pines with long needles that resembled dirty green pipe-cleaners. The pines you found higher up in the mountains smelled better, but they had short, poky pine needles that hurt your bare feet. Our needles were spongy soft and they didn't hurt. I liked to listen to the pine trees whisper. I thought if you listened hard you could hear them tell their secrets.

We had inherited ten of the most ancient horses I had ever seen. Their backbones stuck up and their ribs were imprinted on their dark hides. Some of them still came running down from the hills in the morning for a drink of water. Their nostrils showing red and their tails up, they were unaware of their decrepit condition. The majority came down from the hills slowly, dragging their hooves in the red dust, heads hanging low. They were very much aware of their condition.

One day I sat on the ground watching them come up to drink. Some daintily touched the water and sipped quietly while others thrust their muzzles in deep and gulped, occasionally snorting bubbles. My pony waited patiently in the back of the pack for his turn at the trough.

I got up slowly and dusted off my pants, picked up the halter and climbed through the barbed wire. I motioned for my pony to come. He ignored me and

moved behind another horse, thinking that I wouldn't see him. I looked closely at the horse, pretending I hadn't seen my pony move; it looked glassy-eyed and a bit unsteady.

Some of the old horses used to come up to me, wanting their faces scratched. They blew softly in my hands. The glassy-eyed horse took a wobbling step toward me, swaying on its bony legs. My pony, realizing his cover had moved, darted behind a black horse. Suddenly, in slow motion, the old horse fell over in a cloud of red dust. He lay there, his groans sounding strained. The other horses scattered. From a safe distance they pricked their ears at their fallen companion and snorted. I forgot about getting my pony. I knew it was time for the dead tree.

We dragged all the dead animals that were too big to bury to the dead tree. They made an awful sound as we pulled them across the road. This horse was no exception; it sounded as if wet leather were being dragged across the pavement. Soon its hair was scraped off and a wide trail of blood led to the green gate which opened to the dead tree.

Vultures lived in the top branches of the dead tree, the biggest pine tree on the place. If you stood directly under it, it looked like a hairy tooth-pick tree. It stood all alone; a single huge tombstone. If we got there early the smell wasn't too bad, but the longer we sat out in the sun, the greater the stench became. The smell of a dead horse baking in the late afternoon sun lingered heavy in the air.

My brother and I crouched behind the buckeye bushes and waited for the vultures to swoop. They had faithfully cleaned up any animal that we had laid to rest at the base of the dead tree. They stood at least as tall as our Doberman. My brother and I were not going anywhere near them. They gave us the creeps.

We threw buckeyes at the vultures while they fed. They squawked and flew up to the closest branches of the dead tree. After awhile they caught on to our trick and only jumped if we hit them. The flies grew thick and we could hear them from where my brother and I hid. I waited until the vultures and the coyotes had done their work. It didn't take them long. I couldn't wait to see the bones.

I went back a week later. The smell wasn't as bad. If the wind was blowing, you would hardly notice it. Now two vultures sat on the upper branches of the dead tree. The scavengers had scattered the skeleton. The sun had done its work; the bones were baked white. I poked through some of the less interesting bones with a stick until I found what I was looking for. I stared at the skull. Horses are ugly. They have big teeth, some as big as my thumb.

I poked around some more. I threw my stick up at the vultures, but they were unconcerned. I hadn't even come close. I propped the skull up against the base of the dead tree so that it stared at anyone coming up the path. Maybe it would scare my brother. I smiled, waved at a fly and trotted home.

# The Hunt

Baying of the hounds  
fill the dawn.  
Master of the hunt  
sounds his horn.  
The hunt is on.  
Hooves pounding  
on the turf.  
Called to the singing  
of the hounds  
after the small fox.  
Through the brush,  
over the wall.  
Thundering horses.  
All the hounds  
crash through the stream.  
Little fox is lagging  
his lazy feet;  
the hounds sing eagerly.  
The fox is slow  
going up the hill.  
The hounds catch him  
near the crest.  
They bay gleefully.  
Hooves pound on the turf.  
Master of the hunt  
sounds his horn;  
the hounds, the horsemen,  
all return home.  
Near the crest of the hill, a fox.

## An Interview on Dreams

Mr. Michael Hewitt, an instructor at University of Hawaii at West Oahu, was interviewed on the topic of dreams and their reemergence as a method of personal growth and integration. Mr. Hewitt has a B.A. in Psychology and Masters degrees in Psychology and Sociology.

**Ww: Why do you feel that dreams have had, and still do have such a powerful influence on authors and their literature?**

**M.H.** I believe that dreams are expressions of life; they are powerful because they condense the psychological expressions of a person and allow him to experience the impact of life as an experience. Dreams are a method with which a person can get in touch with intrinsic feelings and identify them as dynamic aspects of who they are. It is a way of doing innerwork. Artistic expression gets in touch with inner conflict, often revealing personal values. Dreams produce workable products; they are often archetypal--like *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* or *Frankenstein*. Dreams reflect universal types of struggles. Readers are moved in like fashion as they encounter similar confrontations and struggles on the road of life.

**Ww: Dreamwork has recently resurfaced and become more popular again. How is society viewing the importance and validity of dreams?**

**M.H.** Although dreams have become more available to people as a field of study, society still has many



prejudices against things that are not scientific, i.e., the subjective. It is a difficult project to discover who we are, and often people identify with superficial definitions of themselves and turn away from what lies in the depths of the human psyche. Working with dreams, however, is a real experience--not physical, but psychological. The significance of dream interpretation is that a person can truly observe him or herself. Their dreams reflect where they are in their lives and their responses to the experience of life.

Using their own dreams as methods for people to get in tune with their inner selves is still not a widely accepted or legitimate way to gain self-knowledge. Slowly, progress is being made to eliminate the mysterious and impenetrable aura surrounding dreamwork. Scientific discoveries in the phenomena of dreams and a growing awareness of the importance of dreams in the general public has made dreamwork more acceptable. Dreamwork is often arduous; you must find your own answers; be guided, but not manipulated. Some people are ambivalent about dreamwork because it can be frightening to confront your shadow, your repressed feelings. This is why some people are attracted to more flexible and painless forms of self discovery--like astrology. There is no search or discovery; you are told what you want to hear. Dreams act as good therapists, questioning the unconscious self and discovering areas where we have less understanding and control and then identifying them.

**Ww: What are your perspectives on the origin of creativity? Could it be a source in the unconscious where dreams also dwell or a result of external factors?**

**M.H.** Creativity is the foundation of imagination. Dreams are a by-product of creativity. The unconscious is like a spring, a natural capacity of an individual's psyche to be creative--it is a dance between life's

experiences and how that person relates to them. Dreams are results of the unconscious and the unconscious is intrinsically intelligent. An instinct thrives in all of us to recognize and attempt to realize our potentials. Self-actualization is an awareness of our capabilities and integrating them successfully into our live.

The experiences in a dream are numinous events. They are not theoretical or an intellectual exercise--they compose the true meanings of life and experience, often beyond our comprehension. We as a people observe similar experiential facets of life. The centers of our personalities are found in the collective unconscious, a part of each of us that is universally shared and interconnected. And the collective unconscious represents the psychological experience of God, an eternal living experience.

**Ww:** Dream interpretation was and is a popular means for writers to explore the diversity of their thoughts. The enigmatic world of dreams is full of imagery; it is like a metaphorical language that is not integrated into our civilized and systemized society. The dream form is a widely used technique of writing, often going and unacknowledged as reflections of human behavior and human fantasy. *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Wizard of Oz* were both written as dreams and the stories are familiar to most people. We readily accept talking lions and flying monkeys because we have witnessed such peculiar events in our own dreams. Whether writer or reader, we all stop to partake at the pool of imagination coloring the world of dreams.

# Hell Redefined

What is beyond death's door? Do we find a silver lining in the traditional lofts among the clouds of heaven, or do we descend into the fiery pits of a roaring hell? Jean-Paul Sartre presents a new dimension in the possibilities of what lies beyond our demise. In his play, *No Exit*, Sartre aberrantly leads us into a wretchedness more terrifying than any hell we have imagined. His hell is not a fire and brimstone dungeon with little red fork-tailed devils running about; his hell is other people.

Ironically, most people would not think it to be too hellish to spend eternity in the company of others. Most of us dislike being alone and go to great lengths to avoid our solitary company. It is precisely this social conditioning that Sartre satirizes. He sets his scene in a small room full of Second Empire furniture. The three unfortunate souls that inhabit the room initially grope for some understanding of their seemingly strange sentence to hell. They cannot believe that this is the hell that society warned them about. The characters are diverse but their guilt is equivalent.

First, there is Garcin, the only man in the room who vainly tries to vindicate himself of charges of cowardice from his earthbound peers. He admits to being selfish and cold-hearted in life, but vehemently denies the frailty of his masculinity.

Next is Inez, a seething vulgar woman who sadistically chewed up people's lives and spits them out. She is remorseless and indifferent to her new station. Finally, Estelle, the most pathetic of the three, is

Finally, Estelle, the most pathetic of the three, is a fleshless pampered ornament who is completely blind to her guilt. Her moral distinctions were limited to her external world; she had no human values except those supplicating her immediate desires.

The three are selected to "live" together in eternity. What they do not realize, at first, is that hell is not the place they inhabit. There are no torture machines or burning fires. Their hell is a contamination within each of them that festers and grows as they battle each other's crimes against humanity.

Estelle continues her superficial ways even in hell. She discovers to her dismay that not only does the color of her dress not match any of the furniture, but there are no mirrors. Never again will she gaze upon herself, but must rely upon her two companions to be her eyes, to describe herself. Garcin realizes that these two women must be convinced of his innocence, for it is necessary that at least one person sympathizes and supports his indignation and self-righteousness. And Inez, who is only too conscious of her own wretchedness, knows she endured a hell while living. Her need is to possess Estelle, to own something beautiful that can console her inadequacies of individuality and humanness.

What is so painfully ironic is that they continue their miserable and malignant behavior even in hell, where they are forced to acknowledge their shame. Only now their weaknesses and hatreds are not absorbed by humanity, but are contained in their cell in hell's hotel. Their accusations reverberate within their room and rebound back onto them, their impotencies echoing back in their faces and driving them crazy. To their consternation they realize that they will never be able to escape the cruel mocking sight of one another. There is no cool soothing darkness to hide their open faces, no sleep to

extinguish the constant reality that they are their own tormentors. Sartre makes the final joke for all of us. He extracts the inhumanities and evils within ourselves and derisively exposes them to our sightless eyes.

Hell is not some tangible place or thing; hell lurks within each of us, an ugliness that we poison each other with. Sartre creates a hell where we must be eternally intimate with the immoralities and shame of our prejudices and malice, for in this hell there is No Exit.

## A Premonition

A child in a pink dress and a lovely hat squirmed in anticipation of riding the red trolley to Honolulu. Her hand entwined in her father's hand as they boarded a trolley and seated themselves. She squealed with delight as the breeze caressed her cheeks. Alighting from the trolley, a gust of wind ripped the little girl's hat from her head, sent it spiralling toward the departing trolley, and lodged itself on the engine in back. The little girl cried for the hat and her father chased the trolley to its next stop. He retrieved the hat, and when he saw it was soiled with grease, he promised her a new one.

Pleasant memories of childhood have a way of invading one's dreams from time to time. Now a teenager, she dreams of that thrilling trip on the trolley. However, before she completes her dream, she awakens as if someone had called her. She looks toward her mother and she appears to be sleeping soundly. Checking the clock on her dresser, she sees that it's 2:15 in the morning. Several attempts to continue her dream are futile--she peers through the window and observes the branches of the avocado trees swaying wildly against the dark, moonless night. The wind howls and the windows rattle.

With sleep impossible, she gets out of bed and checks her brother's room. As expected, he is sound asleep. She wanders aimlessly into the living room and sees the faint outline of her father's shrine in the corner.

She decides to go back to bed, but for an unexplainable reason feels compelled to open the front door.

A horrible sight fills her vision--the outdoor furo is on fire. In 1932, homes are built with an outdoor furo and heated with firewood. Every day her mother pours water over the firewood after everyone finishes their baths. Tonight, however, the strong wind rekindles the flame, resulting in the furo catching fire. The flame crackles eerily and stretches toward the car, which is parked several feet away. She fears the gasoline will catch on fire and both their car and home will be in danger.

She dashes into her brother's room and shakes him awake, frantically explaining the danger. Her brother quickly zips into his trousers and races outdoors. Her mother hears the disturbance and joins them. Her brother quickly hooks the hose to the faucet and starts shooting water on the fire while her mother rapidly fills a bucket with water to do the same. She helps her mother and brother by filling the spare buckets with water. Thirty minutes later, exhausted and dirty, they see the last smoldering flame under control. The furo is a total loss, but the home and car are unscathed.

When her mother and brother ask what made her open the door, she replies, "I don't know, but I just had to--something made me do it." With that reply, she snuggles back into bed. As sleep releases her from the occurrences of the night, she continues her dream.

## I'll Six You Nine

You've got the place?  
I've got the time.  
Use a telephone dime  
I'll six you nine.

The body's in heaven,  
The mind's benign.  
Everything's fine when  
I six you nine.

A little food and  
A lot of wine.  
Do a turn in kind  
And six me nine.

Don't do yourself  
You may go blind.  
An excuse to get you  
To six me nine.



# Hunger

Millions out there starving.  
Bitter lemons, grapes of wrath.  
Will there never be an end to  
The bloated--bellied, deadly path.

Gluttons are uniting  
With the rest too weak to cling.  
Mothers keep on hoping  
The clock ticks on...the buzzer rings.

Pompous shirts give pennies  
While the hungry give their lives.  
Food sitting, rotting  
They can't afford to buy; they die.

Painful groans grow silent;  
Arid deserts invading throats.  
Kings live in grand castles,  
A peasant's agony lives in the moat.

Boards are nailed shut  
Little coffins being closed.  
Some are blind, refuse to look  
Others just turn up their nose.

Who is crying for the children?  
Will tears come down as acid rain  
If it's not our problem, does it mean  
We can't be blamed?

# Easy Come...Easy Go

How fragile is the flesh,  
That callouses caress,  
Tongues touching, tickling,  
Mounds of taut muscles press

Eyes under empty lids,  
Hungry hands are holding,  
Sweat seeping satin sheets,  
Tangles legs unfolding.

Shadows cover secrets.  
The pleasure covers pain,  
Besides those in question,  
Another see is lain.

Pulses pushing passion  
And taunting tenderness.  
Bad blood in the bowels,  
Veins vent the vile virus.

No names need be mentioned,  
No numbers are exchanged,  
Each going separate ways,  
No other date arranged.

Could have been prevented,  
To all I do bequeath,  
Do it clean, do it safe,  
Saving shrouds, plastic sheaths.

Tear ducts drain the dying.  
Unsaving drugs are built,  
Monogrammed legacies,  
A new AIDS victim's quilt.

Though they say, "Can't be me!"  
Numbers grow still steeper,  
Every year thousands more,  
Meet the grimmest reaper.

# Silly Love Songs

Heard my daddy singing to my mommy  
Old-fashioned silly love songs.  
They disappeared quick, at least from his lips,  
Until someone else came along.

Now my daddy sings to someone else  
The same old-fashioned love songs.  
"Till death do us part," he says again,  
To another he now belongs.

Today my boyfriend sings to me  
New-fangled silly love songs.  
Can't quite believe him. Can you blame me?  
Am I non-trusting? Am I wrong?

People change but what remains  
Are the sounds of so-called love songs.  
If you believe, pray for reprieve.  
I've heard the same crap all along.

Hear the widow weeping to the tune  
Of new grief-stricken love songs.  
One way or another, someone will leave.  
To yourself you must be strong.

Whether the gain be flesh or finance  
You'll always hear such love songs.  
But, hey, can't you play another  
Somebody-done-somebody-wrong song?

## Jump for Joy

She wondered how long it would take her body to hit the rocky bottom. She paused, closed her eyes, and imagined. She shuddered, picturing her hands grasping at the nothingness of space. She was not quite sure of her vision, whether she was trying to crawl back up or grabbing for the bottom, trying to get it over with. The thought of changing her mind halfway down made her skin crawl. Wet, sleek hair swatted her pouting features. She would have to get drunk first. The foggy embankment had to wait.

How did it happen? She heard another American accent with a Southern drawl. But this one was different from hers, there was a lightness about it, an inner happiness emitted, even through the eyes. There's a certain fellowship that develops with a stranger in a foreign country when you can tell they are from the same part of the world as yourself. So how then do some people choose to go Down Under for the thrill of a lifetime, while she went down to end a lifetime of misery? How fine is the line between eating shrimp on the barbie with gorgeous Aussie men and eating the remains of one's fingernails while perched at the edge of a sheer, heartless cliff alone? All alone.

The one, the only thing that she took pride in was in sparing her family the pain of knowing the truth. It wasn't their fault. They would get a call or a telegram of a freak accident. Sad, yes. Tragic, yes. But blameless.

Why in God's name was this stranger still giggling? Why wouldn't she just shut up? Babbling about

kangaroos and Vegemite, wearing coats in what is summertime back home, and imitating the Australian accent poorly every chance she got. Blah, blah, blah.

With five days left paid on her Sydney Tourist Hotel room, she figured if she was going to kill herself she might as well get her money's worth. The stranger's giggle echoed through her mind. Adjacent to the hotel cafe with the undefined meat pie special stood a stand of brochures--Koala Basin. Yes, that was it. With a slight shrug of the shoulders she decided. It wasn't like she had anything else to do.

Still confused at the foreign coinage, she managed to purchase three bags of kangaroo food at fifteen cents a pop. She posed for a picture with a koala and sent it home. Yes, that would be a lovely gesture to her unsuspecting family. The ranger placed the koala on her chest. The fuzzy face looked up at her, claws gorged her ribs. The eyes she looked into were a reflection of her own. Clinging, scared, and unsure, the koala, unlike herself, still held on. The snags on her sweater proved that.

Maybe she, too, could hold on. With four days of free rent left she decided to find out. Cockleshells looming above gave her the willies. The strangeness of the place opened her eyes. There was in this world something larger, more powerful than she. The weight of the world eased off her shoulders and faded into oblivion. Her slouch faded.

Her eyes blinked repeatedly in disbelief. A few days, a stranger's drawl, and a koala made all the difference in the world, at least in her world. The wind swept by her again. It wasn't the cold, penetrating wind that it once had been, but a refreshing, reawakening breeze. The cocked yellow feathers atop the head of a cockatoo calmly beckoned her to the edge once more.

She was happy. Catching herself in a giggle, her face blanched at the subjectivity of the term. Oh well, she was happy. She didn't care why and wasn't going to question it.

The sun-dried rocky bank crumbled suddenly beneath her feet. The cockatoo balked and her question was answered. Her hands grasped in vain at the nothingness of space aside the sheer wall of granite. The hollow scream was interrupted by jutting rocks which pierced her lungs. Sudden silence carried the mortal into immortality. A splash of white water gently kissed her farewell.

The upper left hand corner was branded the American Consulate. The postmark was Sydney, Australia. It began, "Dear Mr. and Mrs. White. We regret to inform you of the sudden, unfortunate freak accident which claimed the life of your daughter..."

## A Splash Pond

During my "hana-butta" years I spent my best childhood hours in a splash pond created by a brook cascading from an old concrete pipe. At the age of five, everything looked larger or more dangerous than it was. This splash pond seemed huge, deep and dangerous. In reality, it was about six-by-ten feet wide, two feet deep and filled with rocks, silt, twigs, and leaves. Moanalua Road was four lanes wide with the pipe a gaping two-and-a-half feet wide. The waterfall seemed a tall torrent, but was actually only three feet high without much running water.

The brook trickled around Moanalua Gardens then crossed under Moanalua Road through the concrete pipe. Before it continued to the ocean, the water flowing from the pipe fell into the splash pond, a low spot of its own making. Unless muddied by some kid upstream, the water ran cold and clear all the way from the mountains. Sometimes leaves floated by, falling from trees or blown in by the wind. Cool, gentle breezes made the pond seem colder getting out than getting in.

A large tree overlooked the pond and sheltered us from the rain. I don't know now what kind of tree it was, and as a kid I didn't care. My parents came to picnic under the tree, but my two older brothers and I came to play in the pond. They sat above; we played below.

Before allowing my brothers and me in, my parents first checked the pond for broken glass, large branches



or pieces of metal. After getting the OK, we jumped in, trying to land in the deep middle. We tried to miss rocks and twigs, but often mom needed to band-aid a scrape soon after we jumped in.

My brothers and I liked to splash water at each other or sit in the waterfall enjoying the feel and sounds. We sometimes hunted crayfish, those elusive creatures of claws, legs, and tails. Usually they hid or went downstream before we thought about catching them. It didn't matter. We kept the crayfish we caught in a bottle to look at, returning them to the brook before we left.

My brothers and I would play in the water for awhile, climb out chilled to the bone, begging mom for a warm towel to dry ourselves with. We would sit in a patch of sunshine warming ourselves while eating a sandwich from the picnic bag. After eating and the mandatory wait imposed by all parents for some unknown reason, back we'd go into the water till it was time to leave.

I loved the splash pond, but it's gone now. Concrete and asphalt now cover the pond. Only the tree still stands between the six lanes of Moanalua Road going to town. At least I still have my memories of these fun-filled hours as a kid.

## **Contributors' Biographies:**

**Roy Fredrick Bodnar:** Born in Hana, Maui, Roy is a History major. His hobby is ham-radioing.

**Cinda Browne:** Born in Virginia, Cinda writes to recapture fond memories and thoughts.

**Robert Alan Clark:** From Goffstown, New Hampshire, Robert writes to make a difference in the world. His emotions strike a spark that overwhelms him into expressing himself in writing.

**Linda Marie Craft:** She writes to express various dimensions of her life and soul. She is a Political Science major and wishes to dedicate her writing to the cause of world peace.

**Jennifer Crites:** Born in England, Jennifer loves Hawaii and has lived here for 17 years. She is pursuing a bachelor's degree in Business. Jennifer considers writing an exciting and decisive means of communication.

**Roxanne Ernest:** Married with two children, Roxanne considers herself as a blind fugitive on her way to Kansas. She loves the feelings she gets when she writes well.

**David Furtado:** Born in Nanakuli, David is an overdressed and underpaid window dresser who swears by his gel and hair spray. He is a Business Administration and Economics major.

Susan Grant: A Wyoming native, Sue has been a Navy wife for 12 years and has two sons, Andy and Jon. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in English, she hopes to continue her education at the University of Rhode Island. She feels that we journey through life not to find any right answers, but to eliminate the wrong.

Don E. Jenhero: A Fort Bragg, California native, Don is majoring in Psychology. Perplexed by the nature of human character, he writes to discover the unconscious emotions of life. He believes that the noble thought is always the sincere thought.

Magda Lamm: Born in Mexico City, she has lived in Hawaii for 22 years. Majoring in English, she believes strongly in the axiom *carpe diem* (seize the day).

Sheila Lee: A Business Administration major, Sheila is thrilled by her first publication in *Westwinds*.

Agnes M. Leinau: As West Oahu's token canadian, Agnes has lived in Hawaii for 14 years, the last 12 in Pupukea, where she and her husband has raised (just for fun) chickens, rabbits, and two daughters. As an English major scheduled to graduate in December 1991, she will be remembered for her subtle cynicism that never seems to hit its mark.

Gail MacDowell: A Navy wife of 21 years, Gail was born in Cambridge, MA. She is aspiring towards a degree in American Studies. She believes that writing is a good way to express your total being.

Virginia M. Maimon: After obtaining her bachelor's degrees in Political Science and Psychology, her graduate studies will be in Educational Psychology. She sees her writing as an expression of her fears, her hopes, and her dreams. Her publication in *Westwinds Magazine*, 1990, "Never Again," recounts her Jewish husband's visit to Dachau, West Germany.

Marcelle A. Mendez: A Honolulu native, Marcelle writes to express her inner being while searching to become a whole and healthy person. She is pursuing a degree in Pacific Studies.

A.a. MulHolland: As an English major, his true loves are writing poetry and teaching the art of basketball excellence. He is married to J.k. and has two daughters, Amia and Shaun.

Oliver Pratt: A citizen of both France and the USA, Oliver is in the process of becoming a priest in the Catholic Church. He writes to relieve his anxieties and reflect on his successes in life.

J. R. Sagaysay: A History major, he hopes to become a teacher. He has previously been published in Leeward Community College's *Harvest*.

Frank Sammis: A native of Brooklyn, New York, he writes because "They make me." Frank plans never to graduate and advises avoiding anything strenuous, physical or intellectual. "Never run when you can walk, or walk when you can ride & don't volunteer for anything."

Karen Scott: Born in Washington, D.C., Karen insists she writes because she can't sing. An English major, her interests lie in reading science fiction and hiking.

Tracy E. Switzer: As a promising literary writer, Tracey plans to graduate in Asian Studies. He writes to feel the ambiance and the elegance of life. He has been published in Leeward Community College's *Harvest*.

Glendora Tant: As an English major, she spent only one year at West O'ahu. She loves horses.

Leah G. Tewksbury: A Vermont native, Leah is a student of life, trying to fit all the pieces of the great puzzle together. As an English major, Leah finds the world of literature a fascinating place to explore.

Kathryn M. Tokushima: An Asian Studies major, Kathryn says this is her maiden voyage in the stream of literary publication.

Andrea Wells: She writes because it's a constructive way to deal with what ticks her off. A Justice Administration major, she believes that it is important to pause in the pursuit of happiness and just be happy.

Charles Wong: A Psychology major, Charles is a program assistant at the Leeward Career Studying Program. He plans to continue his education at Manoa.

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