Notes on Contributors:

Doug Stanton: "How's this for a short bio?"

Clovis O. Price: "A Truth-Blessed are the planners and the dreamers - engineers of their own destinies. Yes, to our philosophers, artisans, wise men and fools we owe a debt which we seldom reconcile with our own idea of a debt. For it is in their blood that runs the life-prolonging water of progress."

Terry Spanke: "If anyone is interested he or she can contact me in person, by appointment, please."

David Lloyd Whited: "Ex lumber mill worker/ ex commercial fisherman/ ex roofer's apprentice/ ex husband ex officio/ ex program director of Y.M.C.A./ ex mathematician/ ex crummy driver/ ex logger/ ex student of Southern Oregon College/ ex student of Bowling Green State University/ ex farmer/ ex roofer/ ex schoolteacher/ ex jock
i remain My Poem or Myself

Rosalie Matchett: Rosy-of-the-rosepatch -
finger in her eye
got a tiny bee bite -
it sure 'nough made her cry.
My biography by Brooke Cushman

John Jackson: "Charity is the art of making two-wheeled vehicles."

Hal Neth: He is a mystery still.

Jeannette Flick: "Tokomiko is running again, but he hasn't won yet."

Amy Pattullo: Amy comes from south of here, where the lizards smile back. Her forehead is legend.

Eric Schneider: "Typing is a drag. Typing is a drag. Typing is a drag. Typing is a drag. Typing is a drag. Typing is a drag."

David Perk: Most people end up yelling at Perk: "What, you weird egg? Young fry of treachery!"

David Bowman: Pork is hounding me for this. I'm sitting in my room and it's 190 degrees outside and I have hayfever and Scott Mason is playing his stereo too zoddamn loud and the soap opera just fizzleout... but to quote Kenneth Patchen, "Think enough and you won't know anything."
"I love fruit," she says, "and fruit can come from anywhere." To prove her point a banana with a little sail travels across the river. She takes it out of the water and peels back the skin.

The mailman brings her a letter. Inside the envelope: Strawberries & honey.

"Sometimes friends send me fruit and other times I make it myself." She finishes her words as tangerines tumble from her mouth and hover around her forehead. A breeze rolls out of the trees, blowing the fruit over the river.

"Let's find more fruit," and in the bushes is a wheelbarrow of peaches with little moustaches. She gathers what she can hold in her arms and throws them into the river. Laughing, she wades in and grabs a bobbing peach, bites down hard.

"I myself am like fruit," and she pulls off her dress. With her wet breasts, red tongue, her arms stretched over her head, she becomes a whole orchard ready for picking.
The darksider is silent. Clutching the woman's body to him, he runs a hand up through her hair. Wet darkness, it flows through his fingers. He kisses her. Slowly, like the blind rising from sleep, her arms slide to his shoulders. He draws his mouth away. For an instant he looks at her, then lets go. She is dropping away, cutting the water as cleanly as a knife. Gone. He lowers his arms.

M. appears at his side. Her face seems streaked and aged. She gestures with one white hand. "Pay."

He moves away from the pool, brushing one hand dry on his leg. He nods assent. M. is silent, watching his finger trace a ring around each eye. His hand drops over his nose; he stares at her, flexing his fingers.

Then his hand darts and he doubles over twisting in on himself. The sound of his fingers slipping and pulling. His lungs reaching for air. His hands churn desperately, prying at his face. He spits blood from having bitten through his lip. Then, arched on the ground a scorpion dying in fire, there is a parting of tiny muscles, of veins and arteries; of the optic nerve. His scream echoes from the walls until his straining lungs are empty.

Then the socket is full again; overflowing the blood bursts from behind his clenched eyelids. In a moment it is pouring off his chalky face into the hair of his shoulder and chest.

He hands her his eye. A pulp of white and green, it slides staring into her dry palm. Her white fingers close around it like the legs of a spider that has never seen light. He rises from the ground.

She puts her fist to her mouth, her tongue running lightly over the knuckles. Naked, he stumbles from the pit. Racing through the white grass, the blood comes from behind his hand like water from behind a stone. It is night.
Doug Stanton

THE LONG WALK OUT

"Well boy, eggs, toast, bacon?"

"Uh, no eggs, please."

"What, no eggs?!"

"Uh yes, no eggs, please. Bacon, toast-fine. Do you have any cereal? Corn Flakes?"

"Yah. Fine with me. Hey Ratchet, do you have any cereal? Corn Flakes?"

"Sure do, top shelf," said Ratchet, walking into the kitchen with a face full of A&P shaving cream. He looked at me, "No eggs?"

"Uh, yes. No eggs, please. Bacon and toast are fine."

Ratchet turned and started walking back into the bathroom. "Eat a lot," he said, closing the john door behind him.

"Uhnuh," I said.

Kip reached up to the shelf. Half of his belly sprawled out onto the counter. He was short. He was fat, but didn't mind. "Keeps me warm," he says. He had burned his Weight Watcher's menu the night he had finally lost the last pound of the many pounds he had to lose before his wife would let him go to Florida.

"You've done it," said his wife with pink curlers in her hair. "You've reached your goal~"

"Yah, yah," said Kip.

"Yug, yug," gurgled his belly.

And two months later, with blue curlers in her hair: "You've done it, clod. You've gained back your forty pounds!"

"Yah, yah," said Kip.
David Perk

DARKSIDER

Dark birds rise from white grass. The sun is low. He squints, gliding along close to the ground. He knows what will happen. The horizon is red. The birds vanish into the sun. He feels a lightness in his forearms; the scars on his thick neck are pale.

The rock shoots from the ground, a pile of stone shelves set at an angle, spotted with trees. He looks warily into the branches. Entering the cool shadow he blinks and smiles. His ears flick as breeze sweeps them. Water falls, somewhere underground.

"Darksider."

He snarls. Flexes the short fingers of powerful, thick hands.

"This way, darksider. Follow me and choose."

He glides after her, around the corner of the rock. M. is standing, letting the breeze carry her black robes over the edge of the pit. Then she is gone, and he follows her down. It is black but for the light from a narrow pool. M. stands next to it, her hands and face hanging in the air. He is naked. The muscles in his chest grow tight.

M. bends to the pool as though to drink. With her hands she takes water to her mouth; then lets it out. The wet sound of the return echoes from the distant walls. The ripples move across the water, and far beneath there is stirring in the shadows. The bodies of the dead come loose from the darkness and rise. Turning slowly in the water they nudge each other and tremble. Their hair billows around their lolling heads. They slow and halt their calm ascent a short distance from the surface.

Her long fingers brush the air above the water. "Raise one and claim it."

Her smile brings a growl to the back of his throat. She fades back and is gone as his eyes roam the pool. He runs his hands up his sides through the short hair on his ribs. There is

"Yug, yug," gurgled his belly.

His wife will make him go back to Weight Watcher's this fall and he hates it, trudging off every week in his orange Volkswagen to the meetings. He says fat people bother him. He sucked his belly in and sat the cereal down on the formica. I got up and pulled a bowl and a "7-11 Slurpy Glass." that had the picture of Captain Kelp on the front of it, and a spoon out from under pans that were piled up on the drainboard. Kippe began cracking eggs in one hand. Farm eggs. Each egg dropped to the griddle. Its yellow eyes staring straight into the ceiling, flailing in the bubbles of grease. Kippe picked up his spatula and flipped grease across the yolks. He had been a cook in the Army during the Big One: WW II. But he had no tattoos. Only a scar where a big, hot, full-of-hot-air grease bubble had attacked while he was still in the states. He turned the exhaust fan on over the stove and set the spatula down. And now, thirty-five years later, while still in the states, another bubble attacked him.

"Damn," he yelled.

"Good Corn Flakes," I said.

"What?"

I sucked on the metal spoon and made an obnoxious noise. "Nothing...nothing."

He wiped the grease from his cheek and picked up his spatula all in the same motion, very quickly. "I'll be ready for the next one," he said.

"Good Corn Flakes." And I sucked hard on the spoon and made another, louder, obnoxious noise.

Kip looked around the room, then at me, and I pulled the spoon out of my mouth.

Kip put Ratchet's plate and fork on the table. "This is your first time, isn't it?" he said, stroking his cheek with the back of his hand.

Ratchet walked out of the bathroom with a shiny face. "My eggs ready yet?"
"They are," said Kip, and he fished them from the griddle, all five, and laid them on Ratchet's plate. Kip looked at me, "You still want bacon? Ratchet doesn't like it."

I looked at Ratchet. I shook a "No, Thank-You."

Kip put some toast into the two-holer toaster. Ratchet looked at me with a mouth of egg. "Your first time for deer, isn't it?" Kip took some juice from the 'frig and turned off the fan.

"Yah," I said.

The muffler rattled as we moved further down the road. It was tied to the back fender with a piece of haywire and wheezed whenever we sped up.

"No snow," said Ratchet. It was odd not to have snow during November in Reed City. We could use it. It would help in the tracking. The car's side windows were painted a cotton dress white with frost and looked brittle. "No snow, a lot of cold," said Ratchet again.

"Yep," I said. The muffler began its asthmatic wheeze.

"Whose gun you using?" asked Ratchet.

"Granpa's old one. 32-40 Winchester," I said.

"Good gun," said Ratchet.

"Yah, real fine starting-out gun," said Kip from the side of his mouth. His face was coarse as burlap. He hadn't shaved, and a piece of egg hung to his chin. His eyes watched the road as he pressed a little harder on the gas. The muffler's asthmatic wheeze grew louder. We quickly passed a tall house that hid its foundation in dead grapevines. A light was on upstairs, but a yellowed window shade caught the light before it could shoot out into the yard. I could see the shadow of dog ears, cast on the shade by the light. The car jerked to the left and then to the right. "Damn," said Kip.

I reeled around. "Another bubble attack?" I asked, and smiled slowly.

---

Eric Schneider

WESTINGHOUSE CORP.: SWITCHGEAR AND CERAMICS

I

In East Pittsburgh, "Switchgear Division" lies, fifteen buildings dumped like children's blocks in a valley. The sky rests atop the ridges and over the Westinghouse Bridge where three men were entombed forever in 1930. At night, they stand in the cold concrete, screaming for help from passing headlights. This week the W in the overhead sign is burned out, estinghouse. Through broken windows tight beam lights spill white sucked up by the black floor, and men flicker in/out of sight.

II

Forty-five miles southeast, Derry leans against Chestnut Ridge with "Ceramics Division" radiating from its feet. Clean dust drifts out open windows and men cast white shadows on white machines. A smaller bridge arches autos over rusting railroad tracks. Smoke-blackened train cars sing to three aluminum buildings and a marching unit on a nearby practice field. On hot days, the air ripples around the town. Ice cream dries in patches under children's feet as they hop across streets.

III

Every night at five, two whistles blow. In East Pittsburgh, people stream through parking lots to cars, and in Derry, men carrying lunch boxes walk over grass fields to home.
On the couch, with your arms round your legs, your chin on your knees, you feel your throat taut like in the prettiest picture of your mother. The man stranger sits down and kisses your neck, though he’s never seen the picture. You remember a frowning mother, so you turn his head away; but when you remember that the girl in the photograph held a cigarette you bare your neck.

The stranger nuzzles in your hair. You think Mine’s like father’s but mine is long. And then your fever ebbs. A delta fans open and through the channels of your huddled body, your own big water body runs.

"Damn kid, damn rabbit," mumbled Kip.

I looked out and could see the cause of the violent jerk to the left, then to the right. A rabbit, the color of muslin and the size of a small dog, was leaping across the field to the left of us. "We almost hit it, didn't we?" I asked.

"Damn near," said Kip. The car finally stopped its wheezing.

"Almost," said Ratchet. It seemed funny to me. Ironic. I ran my fingers down the leather case. I could feel the barrel. Yes, it seemed ironic.

"Lots of little bunnies—lotta dumb bunnies," said Ratchet. The three of us laughed.

Kip turned off onto a two-track that weaved in and out of oaks and maples. I rolled down the window, and the frost grated down inside the door. "Nice morning," I said.

The stranger nuzzles in your hair. You think Mine’s like father’s but mine is long. And then your fever ebbs. A delta fans open and through the channels of your huddled body, your own big water body runs.
Ratchet and Kip who were heading out for their own spot, and Dad asked me if I had everything. I told him I did, although I didn't know what he meant. He said good, because I was going to need it. And then he smiled.

And we walked and walked and walked. Everything in the woods is amplified. The twigs snap easier when you're trying to be quiet, and the leaves are louder. We walked about two miles before we stopped and parked it on wet stumps that were wrinkled and burnt out. Dad and I whispered back and forth for a few minutes about where to aim. But I already knew where to aim. I had read up on it in "Sports Afield." But I didn't tell Dad that. Our talk finally trailed off into silence. I got comfortable and decided that I'd done my part. Now the deer would have to do his.

The trees clacked together below the hill in front of us. Dad and I craned our necks to see the source of noise, but we couldn't find it. We finally decided that the only way to see what was down there was to take a very quick look. I followed Dad. We held our guns in a very ready way and started walking. Then, suddenly, the noise left as quickly as it had come. It moved along the base of the hill and then up onto a small ridge. That was when I saw that it was a button-buck. It moved down into a gully and then became just a sound again. And then was finally gone. The wind smelled like wet canvas and blew my hair out of my face into thin bundles. "Almost," I thought, and I wiped a thin film of oil off the barrel with my fingers. The long gun barrel shook like an old finger. "There should be a few more, come a little later," said Dad.

"Good," I said and wiped my fingers on the stump. The breeze began blowing harder and shook the trees at the tops.

We sat for a few more hours: nothing happened. Guns went off every couple of minutes. I sat on my shriveled stump, the log that is, and started thinking of all the short stories that I should write. A story about lumberjacks would do, I thought. There would be three lumberjacks, big brutes, that ran around and cussed, drank beer and chopped on trees. I realized that the woods is the best place to think, besides the back-seat of a car.

Amy Pattullo

HEREDITY

Stiff on the couch in a room full of strangers, you dream you die and your gravestone says A Girl. You wake in fever and swing your arm in a backstroke, hoping to arc a sheet of skin that will show the strangers a delta of your father's webbed toes. You hope it will fan your fever down, but still the strangers can't pronounce your name, so you open your blouse. A man walks over and squeezes your breasts and you press his hands: "You recognize my mother's shape, or sister's?" He grins and lays on you. You push him to the floor.

In the bathroom, you sit cross-legged on the counter and look in the mirror, see your father hoeing your eyebrows thick, your mother chopping, paring down your nose. Blood spills, or your mother is planting tulips under your cheeks.

Every day you see that. Today you see your father walk around to your temple and sit inside on the spiral staircase. Below the step where in '68 he nailed newspapers of moratorium, he tacks an impressionist painting and plants a garden.

Your mother is sitting, knitting a muffler, stuffing it in your ears at the same time you're pulling it out. She thinks by now you're safe. You nod your head to rock her.
You've lived with me
Ever since I can remember.
You look beautiful,
Wrapping that white gown
Around your body
Like a small girl playing
Grown-up. Every day

I walk by you
And touch your cold glass face.
And when we sleep together
I want to rip the white
Silk from your skin.
But in the morning you are still
With me drinking coffee
And staring out the window
Watching birds
In the back yard.

Eleven-thirty and the tall trees have let the sun go. The deer that made all the noise below the hill got his, all right. He is strapped across the hood of a blue station wagon, cruising down U.S.-31. Blood dries in the little cracks of its tongue, curled to the side of the small mouth. Inside the car, the man smiles to himself and changes the radio station. He tunes into WKIL and listens to Lyn Anderson sing about coal mines. The radio pops and cracks during the refrain. Her drawl is thick. The man whistles loudly and the deer listens intently, its head cocked to one side, lying on the left shoulder. It has nothing better to do. Its black nose is beginning to dry now, and so are its eyes that stare into the windshield, straight at the man.

Dad shifts his weight on the stump and looks at his watch. "You hungry?" He moves again on the stump. "Kippie should be dishing up his famous venison chile," he says, and then laughs.

I chip a hunk of bark off the log and look down the hill. "Yah," I say and we start the long walk out. When we get there, Kippie asks where we've been. "Hunting," I tell him.
Ain't it true  
Big Mama  
all us got some  
like hot apple cider  
 coloured like  
fresh-poured beer  
like a river's greeny waters  
puts out cigarettes  
in musty hotel Johns  
Ain't it true  
Big Mama  
Melon seeds gits swole  
in cold muddy dirt  
fo' they gits fat and big?  
Softened by brown muddy water.  
That only bed bugs know  
what the old folks do  
but will the bed bugs talk  
if we wash our ears  
in a soft kind of whisper  
till the mornin' comes?  
Whas' dat in ma throat  
like a sour bit' of apple  
wit' a fish bone in it  
and will it bust one day  
like an over-ripened grape  
on a twisting vine  
But won't the bed bugs lie too?

On Willie Meisterstrasse's first day  
at Sunshine Park,  
Takomiko kicked  
through the cyclone fence  
and exploded  
like a cornered weasel,  
and pulled  
against his wired leg,  
tearing flesh in strings  
till bone showed through red.  
Willie Meisterstrasse walked  
between angry hooves,  
spoke German  
till the horse's ears flickered upward,  
followed the hissing ess-tsett's;  
and Takomiko stood  
while they cut the fence  
to free bones  
and tendons  
and grated flesh.  
Takomiko's hooves  
purpled the vet.  
Willie Meisterstrasse took the needle,  
had his wrist cracked  
by a racing plate,  
spoke German to the horse,  
and sutured red strands  
into a leg again.
Hal Neth

THE GLEANERS
(from a painting by Francois Millet)

Three women stoop in the foreground,
their backs are bent
and crack as they reach to pick
the stalks of dead plants
from an earth as brown as the skin
under their eyes,
as dry as the spotted skin
on the backs of their hands.
They clutch aprons that try to fly
in the wind,
their feet touch the earth
through burlap shoes.
Under the clouds
across the flat dustiness of the field
hay is being tied
and the dust on the backs of the horses
is being curried into clouds
that shine in the dying light of the afternoon.

CANZONO TO A
SATURDAY NIGHT TRAIN

Cigarette butt is crushed
tie shops are closed
turnstyles yawn the last fools
into the streets.
Like a painter with only
one colour
shop window renders faces in black.
But the train crawls on
on rusty wheels
down-town Chicago turns in its
sleep
buildings and shoe-shops
sleep away the soot and breath
of crowds.
Is there no fool around?
Pictures of somebodies and nobodies
ride wagon loads of wind.
Streets unconcerned as to
whether they are massaged in
spit or tobacco.
Saturday is above
a black face leering through a
shattered looking glass.
And slowly the ashes
put themselves out.
Terry Spanke

SEAGULL WITH A BROKEN WING

Tonight
he feels the need to leave
the ground, to escape these limits
to end this walk
along the sand. His wing
drags behind him. All night
standing by the water’s edge he stares
into the sky, waiting
as if to swallow the stars
like small fish. If he swims
he does it in circles
in front of the calloused lighthouse.
He eats what bait the fishermen leave
on the stone steps. And walking the seawall
where the waves slam back
on themselves, he opens one wing
like a sail that holds no air.

John Jackson

POEM FOR PUMPKINS AND FINNEGAN

I remember October when we went
for the perfect pumpkin. It was your
idea, and we rode on bikes, like thin horses.
The shed stood with plastic sails
tearing from brown nails, arched frame
like a prairie schooner, next to Hummond’s fruit stand.

Inside were the pumpkins, like orange
wineskins, smooth. The prices showed like
vintages, and you wiped off dry mud to sample each.

I saw the same orange, but you saw too much
yellow. And when you found the roundest one,
the orangest one, the best one, it cost two dollars
and we poked in pockets, like restaurant
goers, but only had a dollar twenty. So you hid
your Bordeaux behind a paint-scabbed square of plywood,

and went back for more money. When you returned
you found another dollar in your pocket. It had
been there all along. We bought your prize,
comfortable and round, and
walked it back, on the seat of my bike.
David Lloyd Whited

MFMC 162 between the lakes

i tell you i tell you
there are squirrels in my house
grinning bushytailed rats
see here where they gnawed
the wall and there--over there
the windowsill i can't
sleep and the walls are thin
orange grinning teeth
bead black eyes in the ceiling
making noises scratching
and there are squirrels always
there away from the traps
from the traps stay away
and the crows in the woods
ey know dark feathers slicing
air saving green pork chops
weeks without eating
twentyseven pounds of green
pork chops
so i was feeding all the dogs
keeping out of the house
went over to the hotel
with my blanket and these crows
unwrapped the clear cloth
from the pig meat pig meat
heart beat heart beat picked
away all day
and gathered the bones together
in the walls there are squirrels
there are squirrels skittering
in the walls orange teeth and
bead eyes carefully wrapped
them with the ants and returned
them politely and there was a man
with a shotgun waiting by the door
i would not have it does not do
anymore there are squirrels
in the bourbon clicking teeth
"Folks, let's pray. The food is served," Lisa's father announced to everyone.

Henery bowed his head but he kept his eyes open and looked down at the table's legs. Their funny round curves looked as if they were laughing at Henery. It scared him. It reminded him of the black joker in Lisa's pack of cards. Yuck, he thought, we're having chocolate cake for dessert. Lisa's mother loves it. Oh, she makes me mad; eat on the floor like other cats. I'm different, don't they see I'm different!

There was a piece of chicken on his plate, and a bowl of milk at the side. He was hungry. He wanted to start eating the meat. This prayer is a long one, he thought. He could not understand why he had to listen to it. He could never understand them. Who was god anyway? Could he be Lisa's bed, Puss 'n Boots, the Egyptian cats, maybe himself? After all, he was the only talking cat in the world.

Lisa nudged Henery. "You can eat now, but behave," she whispered in his ear. Henery quickly picked up his fork and shoved chicken in his mouth, then started lapping up the milk when his mouth was still full of chicken. He didn't care if they got mad at him, he just didn't care. Chicken, milk, chicken, milk, he munched!

"Lisa, don't let that cat eat so fast," Lisa's mother said.

"Henery stop it!" Lisa said.

"How does he understand you, dear?" Lisa's granny asked.

"Henery, eat properly," Lisa's mother said.

"Henery!" Lisa shouted.

Henery looked up. They all looked like black crows screeching, "Henery, Henery, Henery, Henery." The walls shouted back at him, "Henery, stop it, stop it, stop it, stop it." He jumped off his chair and dashed into the sitting room and under the big yellow sofa. It was dark under there. It was a safe place, a cat place.
"Darn it Lisa, you know I hate eating with your grandparents and mother together. They talk like crows. Crows are unpleasant!"

"Henery, for me, please."

"Oh, all right; I'll come, darn it!"

Lisa walked into the dining room holding Henery in her arms. The dining room was big. The curtains were always closed; they made the room dark but so alive. He felt the big oak table laughing/teasing him—the musty corners of the room mocking him.

Lisa put Henery down in his chair. There was a telephone book on top of it, so he could reach the large oak table. She sat down beside him. They both folded their paws/hands on the placemats and waited to be served.

"How that cat can sit at a table and eat is beyond me. I think we should start training Henery to eat on the floor like all other cats do," Lisa's mother said while dishing out the hot peas and potatoes.

"MOTHER!" Lisa said.

"It couldn't be good for him," Lisa's father said, agreeing with his wife.

"I think he adds to our little luncheon. His face is so entertaining and he sits so straight and still just like a Chinese statue," Lisa's granny said, then smiled at Henery.

"Dear, you mean Egyptian statue. It's in Egypt where they worship cats. They only worship cows in China," Lisa's grandfather said to Lisa's grandmother.

"No, dear, the American Indians worshipped cows; it wasn't in China," Lisa's granny said to Lisa's grandfather.

"They really worship cows in Egypt?" Lisa said.

"Yes, dear, they do," Lisa's grandfather said.

"No, dear, I don't think so. I really think it's in China," Lisa's grandmother said.
"I don't know, but you better get off that bed now, or she will be mad~"

Rosalie Matchett

BREAKFAST

Henery was sound sound asleep under the dark covers of Lisa's bed. His soft fur back pressed against the warm curves of her body until he had almost pushed her on the floor.

"Get up, Henery," Lisa whispered, and then got out of bed. She went over to the window and pulled the curtains apart, so her flannel pajamas would soak in the new morning heat of the sun which was just touching the top of the apple tree at the back of her yard.

"Henery, it's so sunny today," Lisa said, quite loudly.

"Oh no," the cat moaned. "Lisa, it's still early. Why do you have to screech like a cock-a-doodle-doodler?" He stretched and dug his claws into her white white sheets until he felt tight with new energy.

"Henery, you complain if I don't wake you up," Lisa said, then went over to her closet and pulled out a new dress. Henery was jealous that Lisa could change her clothes; he always felt he should be able to change his fur. He was sick of his brown hair. Lisa said it reminded her of her mother's mink coat; Henery thought it was more like melted milk chocolate. He hated milk chocolate; it always clung to his stomach—like porridge. Which was the second worst thing in the world he hated. The best thing in the world was fish breakfast.

"Lisa, I'm hungry."

"Okay, Henery, I'll get you breakfast."

Henery jumped off the bed and ran downstairs to the kitchen. Lisa followed behind him tiptoeing so no one would be awakened. The kitchen was Henery's favorite room. He found it especially pleasant in the morning because it was on the east side of the house, and there was a huge bay window looking out into the back yard. The sun always shone through the window and made hot spots on the floor. Henery went to his favorite morning hot spot by the cupboard with his Puss 'n Boots cat food and cat candy treats. He purr-purred, rub-rubbed his back

tired of her nerves. Why shouldn't I sleep on your bed?"

"I don't know, but you better get off that bed now, or she will be mad!"

"I don't care if she gets mad," he said, as he snuggled down into the soft wooly-wool blanket. Lisa pulled her dress and socks on, then ran downstairs to help her mother.

Beds are good cat places, Henery thought. He soon fell asleep dreaming Puss 'n Boots, fish, Puss 'n Boots, talks, snore, talks, something new, talks, snore, Puss 'n Boots.

LUNCH PRAYER

Henery hoped Lisa would not come up and get him for lunch. He didn't like sitting at a big dining room table with a napkin tucked in his fur and his paws folded on a placemat. He hated waiting for everyone to be served so he could eat. He could never talk—only listen to Lisa's grandmother chatter-chatter like a squirrel. He was tired of pretending that he was just a normal cat. Henery knew that he could become a millionaire if he just told a producer he was a talking cat. Then he could live in a huge mansion. Then he would not have to worry about Lisa's mother or her parties. "I wonder why Lisa doesn't trade her mother in for a new one," he thought.

"Henery, Henery, come on downstairs, everyone is waiting for you," Lisa said as she walked in the door.

"I'm not going to lunch today...too tired."

"Henery please. We are having chicken."

"No, I don't want to go."

"Please."
"Lisa, is that you in the kitchen?" Lisa's mother shouted from the top of the stairs.

"Yes, mom, I'm feeding Henery."

"Did he come and wake you up?"

"No, he slept on my bed last night." Lisa walked out of the kitchen to talk to her mother.

Henery sat quietly finishing his meal. He was frightened of Lisa's mother. She yelled a lot. Lisa said it was because she was nervous. Henery thought it was probably because she got so tired from all her parties. He didn't like the parties; there were always so many people shoving and spilling things on him.

"Lisa, how many times have I told you not to let that cat sleep in your bed."

"But mom~"

"Dear, furry animals are dirty—they don't take baths."

"But he licks himself."

"Oh Lisa, that doesn't make him clean. Where is he now? Henery, come here!" Lisa's mother shouted.

Henery quickly dashed out the back door. Lisa and her mother walked into the kitchen.

"He must have left. Maybe he knew we were talking about him," Lisa said, laughing.

"Sometimes I wonder if he can understand us," Lisa's mother said smiling. Then she started taking eggs and bacon out of the refrigerator. "Go up to your room and put a dress on for granny and grandpa. They're coming for lunch. Then come down and help me get breakfast."

Lisa ran up to her room. Henery was sitting on the window ledge. She opened the window for him. He jumped on to the bed then said, "I'm—against the metal handles of the cupboard.

"Your mother doesn't give me any food unless I purr for her," Henery said.

"She doesn't know you're different from other cats."

"And I don't want to pretend I'm not different."

"You can't do anything about it; anyway, you don't pretend you're different," Lisa said pushing Henery away and opening the cupboard. She took out a can of Puss 'n Boots fish food with ten different vitamins and real hunks of fish. Henery jumped up on his chair and put his front paws on the kitchen table, ready to eat. Lisa put the bowl of cat food on the table and got Henery a paper napkin.

"You'll like this. It's a new kind of fish dish. It says on the label 'there are real hunks of fish inside'."

"I'm thrilled," Henery said with his mouth full and then went on. "Maybe I'll have to do something about it."

"About what?" Lisa said.

"About being different," Henery said.

"But, Henery, you do act different. Not all cats sit at a table and eat!"

"But I can't talk around your mother."

"Henery, if you started talking to my mother, she would be..."

"She would be proud, and not treat me so rotten."

"She doesn't treat you rotten; she loves you. It's just that she gets nervous easily when she's around you."
LET'S TAP DANCE OUR WAY DOWN TO RIO DE JANEIRO...*27

if he recites one more chapter from "ON THE ROAD" I'm quitting!!
LET'S TAP DANCE OUR WAY DOWN TO RIO DE JANEIRO...*27

if he recites one more chapter from "ON THE ROAD" I'm quitting!!
"Lisa, is that you in the kitchen?" Lisa's mother shouted from the top of the stairs.

"Yes, mom, I'm feeding Henery."

"Did he come and wake you up?"

"No, he slept on my bed last night." Lisa walked out of the kitchen to talk to her mother.

Henery sat quietly finishing his meal. He was frightened of Lisa's mother. She yelled a lot. Lisa said it was because she was nervous. Henery thought it was probably because she got so tired from all her parties. He didn't like the parties; there were always so many people shoving and spilling things on him.

"Lisa, how many times have I told you not to let that cat sleep in your bed."

"But mom~"

"Dear, furry animals are dirty—they don't take baths."

"But he licks himself."

"Oh Lisa, that doesn't make him clean. Where is he now? Henery, come here!" Lisa's mother shouted.

Henery quickly dashed out the back door. Lisa and her mother walked into the kitchen.

"He must have left. Maybe he knew we were talking about him," Lisa said, laughing.

"Sometimes I wonder if he can understand us," Lisa's mother said smiling. Then she started taking eggs and bacon out of the refrigerator. "Go up to your room and put a dress on for granny and grandpa. They're coming for lunch. Then come down and help me get breakfast."

Lisa ran up to her room. Henery was sitting on the window ledge. She opened the window for him. He jumped on to the bed then said, "I'm against the metal handles of the cupboard.

"Your mother doesn't give me any food unless I purr for her," Henery said.

"She doesn't know you're different from other cats."

"And I don't want to pretend I'm not different."

"You can't do anything about it; anyway, you don't pretend you're different," Lisa said pushing Henery away and opening the cupboard. She took out a can of Puss 'n Boots fish food with ten different vitamins and real hunks of fish. Henery jumped up on his chair and put his front paws on the kitchen table, ready to eat. Lisa put the bowl of cat food on the table and got Henery a paper napkin.

"You'll like this. It's a new kind of fish dish. It says on the label 'there are real hunks of fish inside'."

"I'm thrilled," Henery said with his mouth full and then went on. "Maybe I'll have to do something about it."

"About what?" Lisa said.

"About being different," Henery said.

"But, Henery, you do act different. Not all cats sit at a table and eat!"

"But I can't talk around your mother."

"Henery, if you started talking to my mother, she would be..."

"She would be proud, and not treat me so rotten."

"She doesn't treat you rotten; she loves you. It's just that she gets nervous easily when she's around you."
Rosalie Matchett

BREAKFAST

Henery was sound sound asleep under the dark covers of Lisa's bed. His soft fur back pressed against the warm curves of her body until he had almost pushed her on the floor.

"Get up, Henery," Lisa whispered, and then got out of bed. She went over to the window and pulled the curtains apart, so her flannel pajamas would soak in the new morning heat of the sun which was just touching the top of the apple tree at the back of her yard.

"Henery, it's so sunny today," Lisa said, quite loudly.

"Oh no," the cat moaned. "Lisa, it's still early. Why do you have to screech like a cock-a-doodle-doodler?" He stretched and dug his claws into her white white sheets until he felt tight with new energy.

"Henery, you complain if I don't wake you up," Lisa said, then went over to her closet and pulled out a new dress. Henery was jealous that Lisa could change her clothes; he always felt he should be able to change his fur. He was sick of his brown hair. Lisa said it reminded her of her mother's mink coat; Henery thought it was more like melted milk chocolate. He hated milk chocolate; it always clung to his stomach--like porridge. Which was the second worst thing in the world he hated. The best thing in the world was fish breakfast.

"Lisa, I'm hungry."

"Okay, Henery, I'll get you breakfast."

Henery jumped off the bed and ran downstairs to the kitchen. Lisa followed behind him tiptoeing so no one would be awakened. The kitchen was Henery's favorite room. He found it especially pleasant in the morning because it was on the east side of the house, and there was a huge bay window looking out into the back yard. The sun always shone through the window and made hot spots on the floor. Henery went to his favorite morning hot spot by the cupboard with his Puss 'n Boots cat food and cat candy treats. He purr-purred, rub-rubbed his back
tired of her nerves. Why shouldn't I sleep on your bed?"

"I don't know, but you better get off that bed now, or she will be mad!"

"I don't care if she gets mad," he said, as he snuggled down into the soft wooly-wool blanket. Lisa pulled her dress and socks on, then ran downstairs to help her mother.

Beds are good cat places, Henery thought. He soon fell asleep dreaming Puss 'n Boots, fish, Puss 'n Boots, talks, snore, talks, something new, talks, snore, Puss 'n Boots.

LUNCH PRAYER

Henery hoped Lisa would not come up and get him for lunch. He didn't like sitting at a big dining room table with a napkin tucked in his fur and his paws folded on a placemat. He hated waiting for everyone to be served so he could eat. He could never talk--only listen to Lisa's grandmother chatter-chatter like a squirrel. He was tired of pretending that he was just a normal cat. Henery knew that he could become a millionaire if he just told a producer he was a talking cat. Then he could live in a huge mansion. Then he would not have to worry about Lisa's mother or her parties. "I wonder why Lisa doesn't trade her mother in for a new one," he thought.

"Henery, Henery, come on downstairs, everyone is waiting for you," Lisa said as she walked in the door.

"I'm not going to lunch today...too tired."

"Henery please. We are having chicken."

"No, I don't want to go."

"Please."
"Darn it Lisa, you know I hate eating with your grandparents and mother together. They talk like crows. Crows are unpleasant!"

"Henery, for me, please."

"Oh, all right; I'll come, darn it!"

Lisa walked into the dining room holding Henery in her arms. The dining room was big. The curtains were always closed; they made the room dark but so alive. He felt the big oak table laughing/teasing him—the musty corners of the room mocking him.

Lisa put Henery down in his chair. There was a telephone book on top of it, so he could reach the large oak table. She sat down beside him. They both folded their paws/hands on the placemats and waited to be served.

"Now that cat can sit at a table and eat is beyond me. I think we should start training Henery to eat on the floor like all other cats do," Lisa's mother said while dishing out the hot peas and potatoes.

"MOTHER!" Lisa said.

"It couldn't be good for him," Lisa's father said, agreeing with his wife.

"I think he adds to our little luncheon. His face is so entertaining and he sits so straight and still just like a Chinese statue," Lisa's granny said, then smiled at Henery.

"Dear, you mean Egyptian statue. It's in Egypt where they worship cats. They only worship cows in China," Lisa's grandfather said to Lisa's grandmother.

"No, dear, the American Indians worshipped cows; it wasn't in China," Lisa's granny said to Lisa's grandfather.

"They really worship cows in Egypt?" Lisa said.

"Yes, dear, they do," Lisa's grandfather said.

"No, dear, I don't think so. I really think it's in China," Lisa's grandmother said.
"Folks, let's pray. The food is served," Lisa's father announced to everyone.

Henery bowed his head but he kept his eyes open and looked down at the table's legs. Their funny round curves looked as if they were laughing at Henery. It scared him. It reminded him of the black joker in Lisa's pack of cards. Yuck, he thought, we're having chocolate cake for dessert. Lisa's mother loves it. Oh, she makes me mad; eat on the floor like other cats. I'm different, don't they see I'm different?

There was a piece of chicken on his plate, and a bowl of milk at the side. He was hungry. He wanted to start eating the meat. This prayer is a long one, he thought. He could not understand why he had to listen to it. He could never understand them. Who was god anyway? Could he be Lisa's bed, Puss 'n Boots, the Egyptian cats, maybe himself? After all, he was the only talking cat in the world.

Lisa nudged Henery. "You can eat now, but behave," she whispered in his ear. Henery quickly picked up his fork and shoved chicken in his mouth, then started lapping up the milk when his mouth was still full of chicken. He didn't care if they got mad at him, he just didn't care. Chicken, milk, chicken, milk, he munched.

"Lisa, don't let that cat eat so fast," Lisa's mother said.

"Henery stop it!" Lisa said.

"How does he understand you, dear?" Lisa's granny asked.

"Henery, eat properly," Lisa's mother said.

"Henery!" Lisa shouted.

Henery looked up. They all looked like black crows screeching, "Henery, Henery, Henery, Henery." The walls shouted back at him, "Henery, stop it, stop it, stop it, stop it." He jumped off his chair and dashed into the sitting room and under the big yellow sofa. It was dark under there. It was a safe place, a cat place.
David Lloyd Whited

MFMC 162 between the lakes

i tell you i tell you
there are squirrels in my house
grinning bushytailed rats
see here where they gnawed
the wall and there—over there
the windowsill i can't
sleep and the walls are thin
orange grinning teeth
bead black eyes in the ceiling
making noises scratching
and there are squirrels always
there away from the traps
from the traps stay away
and the crows in the woods
they know dark feathers slicing
air saving green pork chops
weeks without eating
twentyseven pounds of green
pork chops
so i was feeding all the dogs
keeping out of the house
went over to the hotel
with my blanket and these crows
unwrapped the clear cloth
from the pig meat pig meat
heart beat heart beat picked
away all day
and gathered the bones together
in the walls there are squirrels
there are squirrels skittering
in the walls orange teeth and
bead eyes carefully wrapped
them with the ants and returned
them politely and there was a man
with a shotgun waiting by the door
i would not have it does not do
anymore there are squirrels
in the bourbon clicking teeth
Terry Spanke

SEAGULL WITH A BROKEN WING

Tonight
he feels the need to leave
the ground, to escape these limits
to end this walk
along the sand. His wing
drags behind him. All night
standing by the water's edge he stares
into the sky, waiting
as if to swallow the stars
like small fish. If he swims
he does it in circles
in front of the calloused lighthouse.
He eats what bait the fishermen leave
on the stone steps. And walking the seawall
where the waves slam back
on themselves, he opens one wing
like a sail that holds no air.

John Jackson

POEM FOR PUMPKINS AND FINNEGAN

I remember October when we went
for the perfect pumpkin. It was your
idea, and we rode on bikes, like thin horses.
The shed stood with plastic sails
tearing from brown nails, arched frame
like a prairie schooner, next to Hummond's fruit stand.
Inside were the pumpkins, like orange
wineskins, smooth. The prices showed like
vintages, and you wiped off dry mud to sample each.
I saw the same orange, but you saw too much
yellow. And when you found the roundest one,
the orangest one, the best one, it cost two dollars
and we poked in pockets, like restaurant
goers, but only had a dollar twenty. So you hid
your Bordeaux behind a paint-scabbed square of plywood,
and went back for more money. When you returned
you found another dollar in your pocket. It had
been there all along. We bought your prize,
comfortable and round, and
walked it back, on the seat of my bike.
THE GLEANERS
(from a painting by Francois Millet)

Three women stoop in the foreground,
their backs are bent
and crack as they reach to pick
the stalks of dead plants
from an earth as brown as the skin
under their eyes,
as dry as the spotted skin
on the backs of their hands.
They clutch aprons that try to fly
in the wind,
their feet touch the earth
through burlap shoes.
Under the clouds
across the flat dustiness of the field
hay is being tied
and the dust on the backs of the horses
is being curried into clouds
that shine in the dying light of the afternoon.

CANZONO TO A
SATURDAY NIGHT TRAIN

Cigarette butt is crushed
tie shops are closed
turnstyles yawn the last fools
into the streets.
Like a painter with only
one colour
shop window renders faces in black.
But the train crawls on
on rusty wheels
down-town Chicago turns in its
sleep
buildings and shoe-shops
sleep away the soot and breath
of crowds.
Is there no fool around?
Pictures of somebodies and nobodies
ride wagon loads of wind.
Streets unconcerned as to
whether they are massaged in
spit or tobacco.
Saturday is above
a black face leering through a
shattered looking glass.
And slowly the ashes
put themselves out.
Clovis Price, Jr.

SOUR APPLE
BITE

Ain't it true
Big Mama
all us got some
like hot apple cider
coloured like
fresh-poured beer
like a river's greeny waters
puts out cigarettes
  in musty hotel Johns

Ain't it true
Big Mama
Melon seeds gits swole
  in cold muddy dirt
  fo' they gits fat and big?
Softened by brown muddy water.
That only bed bugs know
  what the old folks do
but will the bed bugs talk
if we wash our ears
  in a soft kind of whisper
  till the mornin' comes?
Whas' dat in ma throat
  like a sour bit' of apple
  wit' a fish bone in it
and will it bust one day
  like an over-ripened grape
  on a twisting vine
But won't the bed bugs lie too?

Jeannette M. Flick

WILLIE MEISTERSTRASSE

On Willie Meisterstrasse's first day
at Sunshine Park,
Takomiko kicked
through the cyclone fence
and exploded
like a cornered weasel,
and pulled
against his wired leg,
tearing flesh in strings
till bone showed through red.

Willie Meisterstrasse walked
between angry hooves,
spoke German
till the horse's ears flickered upward,
followed the hissing ess-tsett's;
and Takomiko stood
while they cut the fence
to free bones
and tendons
and grated flesh.

Takomiko's hooves
pursed the vet.
Willie Meisterstrasse took the needle,
had his wrist cracked
by a racing plate,
spoke German to the horse,
and sutured red strands
into a leg again.
Rosalie Matchett

OLD PHOTOGRAPHS

You’ve lived with me
Ever since I can remember.
You look beautiful,
Wrapping that white gown
Around your body
Like a small girl playing
Grown-up. Every day
I walk by you
And touch your cold glass face.
And when we sleep together
I want to rip the white
Silk from your skin.
But in the morning you are still
With me drinking coffee
And staring out the window
Watching birds
In the back yard.

Eleven-thirty and the tall trees have let the sun go. The deer that made all the noise below the hill got his, all right. He is strapped across the hood of a blue station wagon, cruising down U.S.-31. Blood dries in the little cracks of its tongue, curled to the side of the small mouth. Inside the car, the man smiles to himself and changes the radio station. He tunes into WKIL and listens to Lyn Anderson sing about coal mines. The radio pops and cracks during the refrain. Her drawl is thick. The man whistles loudly and the deer listens intently, its head cocked to one side, lying on the left shoulder. It has nothing better to do. Its black nose is beginning to dry now, and so are its eyes that stare into the windshield, straight at the man.

Dad shifts his weight on the stump and looks at his watch. "You hungry?" He moves again on the stump. "Kippie should be dishing up his famous venison chile," he says, and then laughs.

I chip a hunk of bark off the log and look down the hill. "Yah," I say and we start the long walk out. When we get there, Kippie asks where we’ve been. "Hunting," I tell him.
Ratchet and Kip who were heading out for their own spot, and Dad asked me if I had everything. I told him I did, although I didn't know what he meant. He said good, because I was going to need it. And then he smiled.

And we walked and walked and walked. Everything in the woods is amplified. The twigs snap easier when you're trying to be quiet, and the leaves are louder. We walked about two miles before we stopped and parked it on wet stumps that were wrinkled and burnt out. Dad and I whispered back and forth for a few minutes about where to aim. But I already knew where to aim. I had read up on it in "Sports Afield." But I didn't tell Dad that. Our talk finally trailed off into silence. I got comfortable and decided that I'd done my part. Now the deer would have to do his.

The trees clacked together below the hill in front of us. Dad and I craned our necks to see the source of noise, but we couldn't find it. We finally decided that the only way to see what was down there was to take a very quick look. I followed Dad. We held our guns in a very ready way and started walking. Then, suddenly, the noise left as quickly as it had come. It moved along the base of the hill and then up onto a small ridge. That was when I saw that it was a button-buck. It moved down into a gully and then became just a sound again. And then was finally gone. The wind smelled like wet canvas and blew my hair out of my face into thin bundles. "Almost," I thought, and I wiped a thin film of oil off the barrel with my fingers. The long gun barrel shook like an old finger. "There should be a few more, come a little later," said Dad.

"Good," I said and wiped my fingers on the stump. The breeze began blowing harder and shook the trees at the tops.

We sat for a few more hours: nothing happened. Guns went off every couple of minutes. I sat on my shriveled stump, the log that is, and started thinking of all the short stories that I should write. A story about lumberjacks would do, I thought. There would be three lumberjacks, big brutes, that ran around and cussed, drank beer and chopped on trees. I realized that the woods is the best place to think, besides the back-seat of a car.

Amy Pattullo

HEREDITY

Stiff on the couch in a room full of strangers, you dream you die and your gravestone says A Girl. You wake in fever and swing your arm in a backstroke, hoping to arc a sheet of skin that will show the strangers a delta of your father's webbed toes. You hope it will fan your fever down, but still the strangers can't pronounce your name, so you open your blouse. A man walks over and squeezes your breasts and you press his hands: "You recognize my mother's shape, or sister's?" He grins and lays on you. You push him to the floor.

In the bathroom, you sit cross-legged on the counter and look in the mirror, see your father hoeing your eyebrows thick, your mother chopping, paring down your nose. Blood spills, or your mother is planting tulips under your cheeks. Every day you see that.

Today you see your father walk around to your temple and sit inside on the spiral staircase. Below the step where in '68 he nailed newspapers of moratorium, he tacks an impressionist painting and plants a garden.

Your mother is sitting, knitting a muffler, stuffing it in your ears at the same time you're pulling it out. She thinks by now you're safe. You nod your head to rock her.
"Damn kid, damn rabbit," mumbled Kip.

I looked out and could see the cause of the violent jerk to the left, then to the right. A rabbit, the color of muslin and the size of a small dog, was leaping across the field to the left of us.

"We almost hit it, didn't we?" I asked.

"Damn near," said Kip. The car finally stopped its wheezing.

"Almost," said Ratchet. It seemed funny to me. Ironic. I ran my fingers down the leather case. I could feel the barrel. Yes, it seemed ironic.

"Lots of little bunnies—lotta dumb bunnies," said Ratchet. The three of us laughed.

Kip turned off onto a two-track that weaved in and out of oaks and maples. I rolled down the window, and the frost grated down inside the door. "Nice morning," I said.

The stranger nuzzles in your hair. You think Mine's like father's but mine is long. And then your fever ebbs. A delta fans open and through the channels of your huddled body, your own big water body runs.

After they had pretty well chewed the fat, I loaded my gun. There was really nothing to it, only that it felt heavier after the five bullets were lodged in the chamber. We said good-bye to

On the couch, with your arms round your legs, your chin on your knees, you feel your throat taut like in the prettiest picture of your mother. The man stranger sits down and kisses your neck, though he's never seen the picture. You remember a frowning mother, so you turn his head away; but when you remember that the girl in the photograph held a cigarette you bare your neck.

The stranger nuzzles in your hair. You think Mine's like father's but mine is long. And then your fever ebbs. A delta fans open and through the channels of your huddled body, your own big water body runs.
"They are," said Kip, and he fished them from the griddle, all five, and laid them on Ratchet's plate. Kip looked at me, "You still want bacon? Ratchet doesn't like it."

I looked at Ratchet. I shook a "No, Thank-You."

Kip put some toast into the two-holer toaster. Ratchet looked at me with a mouth of egg. "Your first time for deer, isn't it?" Kip took some juice from the 'frig and turned off the fan. "Yah," I said.

The muffler rattled as we moved further down the road. It was tied to the back fender with a piece of haywire and wheezed whenever we sped up. "No snow," said Ratchet. It was odd not to have snow during November in Reed City. We could use it. It would help in the tracking. The car's side windows were painted a cotton dress white with frost and looked brittle. "No snow, a lot of cold," said Ratchet again. "Yep," I said. The muffler began its asthmatic wheeze.

"Whose gun you using?" asked Ratchet.

"Granpa's old one. 32-40 Winchester," I said.

"Good gun," said Ratchet.

"Yah, real fine starting-out gun," said Kip from the side of his mouth. His face was coarse as burlap. He hadn't shaved, and a piece of egg hung to his chin. His eyes watched the road as he pressed a little harder on the gas. The muffler's asthmatic wheeze grew louder. We quickly passed a tall house that hid its foundation in dead grapevines. A light was on upstairs, but a yellowed window shade caught the light before it could shoot out into the yard. I could see the shadow of dog ears, cast on the shade by the light. The car jerked to the left and then to the right. "Damn," said Kip.

I reeled around. "Another bubble attack?" I asked, and smiled slowly.

---

Eric Schneider
WESTINGHOUSE CORP.: SWITCHGEAR AND CERAMICS

I

In East Pittsburgh, "Switchgear Division" lies, fifteen buildings dumped like children's blocks in a valley. The sky rests atop the ridges and over the Westinghouse Bridge where three men were entombed forever in 1930. At night, they stand in the cold concrete, screaming for help from passing headlights. This week the W in the overhead sign is burned out, estinghouse. Through broken windows tight beam lights spill white sucked up by the black floor, and men flicker in/out of sight.

II

Forty-five miles southeast, Derry leans against Chestnut Ridge with "Ceramics Division" radiating from its feet. Clean dust drifts out open windows and men cast white shadows on white machines. A smaller bridge arches autos over rusting railroad tracks. Smoke-blackened train cars sing to three aluminum buildings and a marching unit on a nearby practice field. On hot days, the air ripples around the town. Ice cream dries in patches under children's feet as they hop across streets.

III

Every night at five, two whistles blow. In East Pittsburgh, people stream through parking lots to cars, and in Derry, men carrying lunch boxes walk over grass fields to home.
David Perk

DARKSIDER

Dark birds rise from white grass. The sun is low. He squints, gliding along close to the ground. He knows what will happen. The horizon is red. The birds vanish into the sun. He feels a lightness in his forearms; the scars on his thick neck are pale.

The rock shoots from the ground, a pile of stone shelves set at an angle, spotted with trees. He looks warily into the branches. Entering the cool shadow he blinks and smiles. His ears flick as breeze sweeps them. Water falls, somewhere underground.

"Darksider."

He snarls. Flexes the short fingers of powerful, thick hands.

"This way, darksider. Follow me and choose."

He glides after her, around the corner of the rock. M. is standing, letting the breeze carry her black robes over the edge of the pit. Then she is gone, and he follows her down. It is black but for the light from a narrow pool. M. stands next to it, her hands and face hanging in the air. He is naked. The muscles in his chest grow tight.

M. bends to the pool as though to drink. With her hands she takes water to her mouth; then lets it out. The wet sound of the return echoes from the distant walls. The ripples move across the water, and far beneath there is stirring in the shadows. The bodies of the dead come loose from the darkness and rise. Turning slowly in the water, they nudge each other and tremble. Their hair billows around their lolling heads. They slow and halt their calm ascent a short distance from the surface.

Her long fingers brush the air above the water. "Raise one and claim it."

"Yug, yug," gurgled his belly.

His wife will make him go back to Weight Watcher's this fall and he hates it, trudging off every week in his orange Volkswagen to the meetings. He says fat people bother him. He sucked his belly in and sat the cereal down on the formica. I got up and pulled a bowl and a "7-11 Slurpy Glass," that had the picture of Captain Kelp on the front of it, and a spoon out from under pans that were piled up on the drainboard. Kippie began cracking eggs in one hand. Farm eggs. Each egg dropped to the griddle. Its yellow eyes staring straight into the ceiling, flailing in the bubbles of grease. Kippie picked up his spatula and flipped grease across the yolks. He had been a cook in the Army during the Big One: WW II. But he had no tattoos. Only a scar where a big, hot, full-of-hot-air grease bubble had attacked while he was still in the states. He turned the exhaust fan on over the stove and set the spatula down. And now, thirty-five years later, while still in the states, another bubble attacked him.

"Damn," he yelled.

"Good Corn Flakes," I said.

"What?"

I sucked on the metal spoon and made an obnoxious noise. "Nothing...nothing."

He wiped the grease from his cheek and picked up his spatula all in the same motion, very quickly. "I'll be ready for the next one," he said.

"Good Corn Flakes." And I sucked hard on the spoon and made another, louder, obnoxious noise.

Kip looked around the room, then at me, and I pulled the spoon out of my mouth.

Kip put Ratchet's plate and fork on the table. "This is your first time, isn't it?" he said, stroking his cheek with the back of his hand.

Ratchet walked out of the bathroom with a shiny face. "My eggs ready yet?"
Doug Stanton

THE LONG WALK OUT

"Well boy, eggs, toast, bacon?"

"Uh, no eggs, please."

"What, no eggs?"

"Uh yes, no eggs, please. Bacon, toast-fine. Do you have any cereal? Corn Flakes?"

"Yah. Fine with me. Hey Ratchet, do you have any cereal? Corn Flakes?"

"Sure do, top shelf," said Ratchet, walking into the kitchen with a face full of A&P shaving cream. He looked at me, "No eggs?"

"Uh, yes. No eggs, please. Bacon and toast are fine."

Ratchet turned and started walking back into the bathroom. "Eat a lot," he said, closing the john door behind him.

"Uhunh," I said.

Kip reached up to the shelf. Half of his belly sprawled out onto the counter. He was short. He was fat, but didn't mind. "Keeps me warm," he says. He had burned his Weight Watcher's menu the night he had finally lost the last pound of the many pounds he had to lose before his wife would let him go to Florida.

"You've done it," said his wife with pink curlers in her hair. "You've reached your goal!"

"Yah, yah," said Kip.

"Yug, yug," gurgled his belly.

And two months later, with blue curlers in her hair: "You've done it, clod. You've gained back your forty pounds!"

"Yah, yah," said Kip.

a soft down on the scarred leather of his chest that slides down into thicker darkness. M.'s soft laughter rolls from the dark.

Straddling the narrow pool, he reaches down and probes at a body; it is deeper than that. Taking a breath he plunges arm and head into the water. Pulling the body to the surface, fingers curled around the chin, he gets to both feet, bent double over the water. Straightening his back, his hands seize the head and an armpit; muscles roll on his shoulders.

This is the one that I want.

It is a woman with long black hair. Water empty from her mouth and nose. She is pale. He laughs, hears nothing from the darkness.

Did you hear me? This is the one I want.

He shakes the body of the woman. At the ends of her dangling arms, her fingers dance on the surface of the water. Rivulets run off his arms, channels down his back. He raises the body another foot.

Did you hear me?

"Yes."

He roars with laughter, tossing the water from his head.

"Yes. I hear you."

Still he laughs. In the darkness rock falls.

"I hear you!"

He quiets until there is only a rumble of pleasure in his throat. His eyes gleam under his heavy forehead.

"Laugh when you have met my price," she whispers.
The darksider is silent. Clutching the woman’s body to him, he runs a hand up through her hair. Wet darkness, it flows through his fingers. He kisses her. Slowly, like the blind rising from sleep, her arms slide to his shoulders. He draws his mouth away. For an instant he looks at her, then lets go. She is dropping away, cutting the water as cleanly as a knife. Gone. He lowers his arms.

M. appears at his side. Her face seems streaked and aged. She gestures with one white hand. "Pay."

He moves away from the pool, brushing one hand dry on his leg. He nods assent. M. is silent, watching his finger trace a ring around each eye. His hand drops over his nose; he stares at her, flexing his fingers.

Then his hand darts and he doubles over twisting in on himself. The sound of his fingers slipping and pulling. His lungs reaching for air. His hands churn desperately, prying at his face. He spits blood from having bitten through his lip. Then, arched on the ground a scorpion dying in fire, there is a parting of tiny muscles, of veins and arteries; of the optic nerve. His scream echoes from the walls until his straining lungs are empty.

Then the socket is full again; overflowing the blood bursts from behind his clenched eyelids. In a moment it is pouring off his chalky face into the hair of his shoulder and chest.

He hands her his eye. A pulp of white and green, it slides staring into her dry palm. Her white fingers close around it like the legs of a spider that has never seen light. He rises from the ground.

She puts her fist to her mouth, her tongue running lightly over the knuckles. Naked, he stumbles from the pit. Racing through the white grass, the blood comes from behind his hand like water from behind a stone. It is night.
FRUIT

"I love fruit," she says, "and fruit can come from anywhere."
To prove her point
a banana with a little sail
travels across the river.
She takes it out of the water
and peels back the skin.
The mailman brings her a letter.
Inside the envelope:
Strawberries & honey.

"Sometimes friends send me fruit
and other times I make it myself."
She finishes her words
as tangerines tumble from her mouth
and hover around her forehead.
A breeze rolls out of the trees,
blowing the fruit over the river.

"Let's find more fruit," and
in the bushes is
a wheelbarrow of peaches
with little moustaches.
She gathers what she can hold
in her arms and throws
them into the river.
Laughing, she wades in
and grabs a bobbing peach,
bites down hard.

"I myself am like fruit," and
she pulls off her dress.
With her wet breasts, red tongue,
her arms stretched over her head,
she becomes a whole orchard
ready for picking.
Notes on Contributors:

Doug Stanton: "How's this for a short bio?"

Clovis O. Price: "A Truth—Blessed are the planners and the dreamers—engineers of their own destinies. Yes, to our philosophers, artisans, wise men and fools we owe a debt which we seldom reconcile with our own idea of a debt. For it is in their blood that runs the life-prolonging water of progress."

Terry Spanke: "If anyone is interested he or she can contact me in person, by appointment, please."

David Lloyd Whited: "Ex lumber mill worker/ex commercial fisherman/ex roofer's apprentice/ex husband ex officio/ex program director of Y.M.C.A./ex mathematician/ex crummy driver/ex logger/ex student of Southern Oregon College/ex student of Bowling Green State University/ex farmer/ex roofer/ex schoolteacher/ex jock

i remain My Poem or Myself

Rosalie Matchett: Rosy-of-the-rosepatch—finger in her eyegot a tiny bee bite—it sure 'nough made her cry.

My biography by Brooke Cushman

John Jackson: "Charity is the art of making two-wheeled vehicles."

Hal Neth: He is a mystery still.

Jeannette Flick: "Tokomiko is running again, but he hasn't won yet."

Amy Pattullo: Amy comes from south of here, where the lizards smile back. Her forehead is legend.

Eric Schneider: "Typing is a drag. Typing is a drag. Typing is a drag. Typing is a drag. Typing is a drag.

David Perk: Most people end up yelling at Perk: "What, you weird egg? Young fry of treachery!"

David Bowman: Pork is hounding me for this. I'm sitting in my room and it's 190 degrees outside and I have hayfever and Scott Mason is playing his stereo too zoddamn loud and the soap opera just fizzleed out.. but to quote Kenneth Patchen, "Think enough and you won't know anything."