Aaron Shohet:

ETV also offers new techniques to the classroom teacher such as this French language film which features interesting puppetry.
CONTRIBUTORS' NOTES

Margaret Mullins: Listen to the voice of the Spirit.

Monica Tate: “In passing also, I would like to say that the first time Adam had a chance he laid the blame on woman.”
--Nancy Astor

Loretta Sharp: “Let us talk easily, as of ordinary things.”
N. Scott Momaday in The Man Made of Words

Amy Stupka: “...”

Norman Wheeler: “How do I know what color her hair is? I float among lonely animals, longing for the red spider who is God.”
from The Lights in the Hallway by James Wright

Gretchen Billmaier: “We cannot tear out a single page of our life, but we can throw the whole book in the fire.”
--George Sand

Juan Nunez: At any moment every car passed a cigarette and cold hands floating up to a face dark in the night and turned into the distance where some feathery light tracing edges made them possible.
for Mar. '82

Lindsay Ahl: The Ku Klux Klan are after whites too.

Bonnie Nevel: Never again.

Deirdre Kovac: “I could really see going crazy.”
“Let's not worry about it.”
Casey & James Simon

The Red Wheelbarrow

editor: Aaron Shohet
"Oh, no, no, no, no" said Lawrence waving her back down, "I was just curious if you wanted to dance with me. And now I know."

He watched all the boys who were doing a dance called "The Twist," thrashing and churning their bee hinds, dancing as if they were frantically trying to wipe their asses on trees.

He would show them dancing.

He jumped into the middle of the crowd, wearing his Foreman & Clark shirt buttoned to the top, and his Hush Puppies with the leather tassels in front. A circle of clapping people formed around him. He flapped his knees together and shook his finger in the air.

He saw a girl he distantly recognized. Her hair was tied back in a pony tail, her breasts hung from her sweater like beautiful, precarious, heavy raindrops. She smiled at him. She obviously wanted Lawrence Malcom. Suddenly, he had to go to the bathroom.

He saw Hyman Lerbert go in the men's room door. Larry remembered that whenever he had to use the stalls in the bathroom at school, Hyman would peek over the top and watch Larry shit.

Larry went inside. Hyman was in the stall, his pants rolled down to his ankles. Larry terrorized him by pelting him with balls of wet toilet paper and then he turned the lights out on him when he left. Hyman Lerbert would not let Lawrence be ignored by time.

On the way back Larry passed the dance D.J.'s record booth. The door was slightly ajar. He walked inside. The room seemed surprisingly convoluted for a record booth; it was full of knobs and computers and switches and T.V. screens with the faces of the people on the dance floor in them. He recognized his mother, he had always been afraid, of her as a child. Right now she was happily running back and forth between the many different knobs and switches that lined the room, fiddling with them, and by doing so making the dancers jump around the dance floor.

She looked like a slap-happy old woman trying to play a thousand tiny slot machines simultaneously. She was so excited adjusting her switches and controls, that she didn't see her son come in.

"Ma, what's going on?"

She turned around and looked ashamed and embarrassed. She cancelled a lever and the dancers slowly crumpled to the floor, like spastics falling through thick jelly.

"It was a present," she said, explaining. She moved a
Juan Nunez

SOMETIMES THERE ARE BLANK PAGES

in a book, and I turn for them
alone, crossing over the wintry space,
a young boy dropping and spreading over
and over, leaving a stutter of angels on that page

of field slouching up against the sky the birds
never reach, and there is the river
pulling its slow self forward, the cold sun
broken on the back of the crawler;

I want to drown, to cast myself
into that river unafraid and let it pull
me by the wrists heavy like some dead log
one passes awash on harsh shores in winter,

and it does not matter that I am young,
or that my windskirted face is burning,
burning: I am as young boy only—
because I am not different, but shine,

ready to piece the sun and carry it home,
cradle it in my hands: smooth rocks
I gather, shells I turn white as the book
I read when the house is warm

"Because it's your wish."
"It is?" said Lawrence, who couldn't remember what his
most favorite wish was, but was pretty sure that this wasn't it.
"Um-hum, that's what it ways on the purchase order."
He asked her who the purchase order was from.
"They don't tell me diddily. I'm just an apprentice fate,
I only do this part time. I used to be a soul singer."
"Oh," said Lawrence.

Lawrence didn't have much of a memory of his highschool dances.
Most of the girls thought he had breath like sour milk. It wasn't
really Lawrence's fault, it was just that one day he woke up with
stale morning breath and no matter how hard he brushed it never
went away.
"Close your eyes," said the fate.

When he opened them he was floating in a thick black vacuum,
populated by lots of little old men in robes, sitting on the edges
of giant hour glasses, dangling their feet off into space. Some
of the old men looked up at Lawrence as he passed by.
"Don't open your eyes so soon or you'll be trapped in time
forever!" Warned one, catching his eye.

"Candy-ass white folks," said the fate.

When he opened them again he was in the Gymnasium of his old
high-school. He stood there in the doorway for a few minutes
watching the pulsing lights, listening to the throbbing music. He
wondered what a disco would look like to a deaf person, and decided
it would appear to be a roomful of retarded people being electrocuted
through the floor.

He could see Kathryn Eva dancing with a boy. She liked to
smile at one boy while she danced with another. She smiled at
Lawrence. She had straight blond hair and a mole above her lip.
He thought she looked like a Nazi nurse.

He saw Meg Mueller sitting alone on a chair against the wall.
She had red hair. All his life he had wanted to tell her she looked
like she like to eat embryos for breakfast. Whenever the teacher
asked a question, she always raised her hand first, she said 'present'
instead of 'here' during roll call. She had been voted most likely
to devour her own young. She never danced, but was always enviously
eying the dancers from her folding chair against the wall.

Lawrence approached her.
"Excuse me miss, would you care to dance?"
"Sure!" she said enthusiastically, eagerly getting out of her
chair.
paper in Larry's bathroom. She had come to grant him a wish. She was drunk.

"Who the heck are you? And if you'll pardon my French," said Lawrence while loosening his collar in the doorway, "What the Hell are you doing in my bathroom?"

"Baklavah and Feta cheese!" said the fate, who was trying to sound mysterious and impressive even though she was extremely drunk. She wasn't really a fate, but the spirit of a Black woman named Flouride McQueen. She was sitting in for a friend. She knew very little greek.

"What is it you want?"

"No sugar-pie, it's what it is that you want." Lawrence picked up the nearest possible weapon which was a roll of toilet paper. He had read a story once about some women who could let themselves into your house through the sewers, tie you down, make you have sex with them, and then charge you for it afterwards.

He held his toilet paper like brass knuckles.

"I won't let you do it to me!"

"Do what sugar?" said the fate.

"Tie me down and rape me. Then charge me for it afterwards."

This made the fate laugh. She let loose a tremendous rippling fart, which made her laugh all the harder because she was so drunk.

Lawrence flustered. He thought this was all part of the plan.

"Relax honey, I'm one of the three fates. I go around granting wishes to people who have been ignored by time."

"No such animal," said Lawrence, shaking his head, dismissing her with curt little waves of his hand.

"Look, I'll prove it to you," she said. She was too drunk to levitate anything, but she was still able to make the toilet flush all by itself three times.

"...Gee I guess you really are," said Lawrence, when it was all over. He was depressed, confused, he dropped his toilet paper.

"Heyyy...cheer up Mr. Malcom. Today is your lucky day."

"It is?" said Lawrence.

"That's right because today you get your most favorite wish; you get to go back to one of your highschool dances in 1965. And all your classmates will be there and you'll appear 17 to them."

Lawrence was beginning to understand. He had seen something like this once on The Wonderful World of Disney.

"Why a dance?"
Gretchen Billmaier

THURSDAY MASS

That morning we had read the Good Samaritan in religion. It was a Catholic school called Immaculate Conception and I was in the fourth grade. We always went to mass on Thursday afternoons. I hated to sit in the straight backed pews, my wool plaid uniform itching, and listen to Father Schmidt give mass. This morning it annoyed me even more. I had learned my lesson in class and saw no point in listening to a stuffy priest for an hour. I should have been out collecting money for starving orphans in Asia or working in a slum to help the people there.

With reluctance, I fell into the line as Sister Marilyn marched to class across the parking lot to the church. I dragged my way to the back of the line and scuffed my black shoes in the gravel. I was the last one in the class to enter the church, and Sister Marilyn glowered at me for procrastinating. I dipped my finger in the Holy Water and crossed myself, smiling at her meekly.

The pews filled quietly as the students filed in. The fourth graders sat farthest back on the right side of the church. In front of us sat the second, third and first graders. We were the oldest and sat still, proud of the example we set for the younger students who always squirmed.

The organ music began as I bent my knee toward the crucifix above the altar and crossed myself again. I sat in the last row on the end. Behind me, the pews were empty except for an ancient nun two rows back of me. I loved sitting on the end. It meant I could lean against the side board and curl up. Sister Marilyn couldn't see me from the other end of the pew and I could fidget while Father Schmidt prattled on. I loved, too, the wood; the lacquer blackened with age and the top worn smooth from fingers that had rested when kneeling to the cross. The wood smelled bitter from the lacquer, but I loved the odor. To this day, the smell of old lacquer brings back memories of the high ceilinged church with wrought iron chandeliers swaying gently and the wooden cross with the body of the dying Jesus. I always hoped that if ever in the midst of such pain, I could look as serene.

The mass began and dragged, as I knew it would. My shirt

Aaron Shohet

LAWRENCE MALCOM

Lawrence Malcom felt like shit. Even the fates felt sorry for him. They felt sorry for him because he was lonely and thirty two, and had thick spidery beings working their way across his eyes because he had spent most of his life staying up late, studying irrelevant things. He was a library of useless knowledge now. Tonight, he was reading a book about beehives.

He had no job. His mother was wealthy and strange and sent him a check every month.

He had had very few friends in highschool. At lunchtime whenever he'd get up from the table to get a glass of milk, he was always afraid that someone sitting next to him would try to dump salt in his soup. Sometimes he carried his soupbowl with him when he went to get milk.

He spent a lot of his time thinking about a girl that he had liked in the eighth grade. He wondered whether she might have liked him too; she lent him pencils and said hi to him in the halls for the past two years. She gave him two hundred dollars in cash, which was a month's worth of hallway hellos, and told him to look the other way when he saw her coming.

He was thinking about this girl now, wondering if she really might have liked him, when he heard a strange fuzzy buzzing sound from his bathroom. "What is this strange fuzzy buzzing sound I hear coming from my bathroom?" said Lawrence, who after living alone for ten years had recently started talking to himself.

It was a fate. She was wearing a toga. She was fat and black which is an uncommon thing for a three thousand year old Greek goddess to be. She was humming on a comb wrapped in tissue
Bonnie Nevel

ODE TO A PRUNE

Prunes are realistic about themselves. They know they are not pretty, that their black skins have the texture of a tarred road on an August afternoon. Their humble appearance, like an old woman who has had eleven children, is nothing like their adolescent counterpart, the plum.

But come closer, and see how the prune's skin shines in the sunlight: the muted shades of purples, browns, reds. And when you recognize the high quality and inbred grace of this unassuming fruit and taste the flesh, you will not be disappointed. The tongue will sing with flavor. The pit is the color of a white wine, the bouquet light and semi-dry. This regal fruit deserves all the respect of a visiting matriarch. Serve it only with your best china and crystal. Before eating the prune, be sure to offer it something in return, like a prayer, a song, or the name of your first-born son.

itched. The large floor fans did nothing to cool the church. I traced the grain on the wood. Perhaps some other student had sat here after a lesson and left a sign. I thought of the nun behind me. She had been repeating her rosary when I came in. I peeked at her over the pew. She smiled up at Father Schmidt, nodding often at his words--he was giving the homily now--her face enfolded in wrinkles. The crow's feet at the corners of her eyes strutted lazily across the top of her cheekbones and dissolved into the folds that became her cheeks. Her habit framed her face. The only color came from the sparkle of her blue eyes which would not be hidden even by age. I loved her as she rocked back and forth, hugging herself like a child, engrossed in the priest's words. I loved her and planned how I would get up from the pew when Father said, "Let us return the blessing of peace," and go to her. I would take her frail white hands in mine, look into her eyes and say, "God bless you, sister." She would smile and answer warmly, "Bless you, my child," and her eyes would cloud at the kindness of this small child. Then I would squeeze her hand, sharing our secret.

I thought about this through mass, and the ritualistic kneeling, sitting, standing blurred as I went over the episode, adding details every time I played it through in my mind. Then Father's voice cut through my thoughts, and he said, "Let us give thanks to the Lord in the words he taught us." The congregation mumbled the Lord's Prayer. My palms sweated. I curled them in my skirt, unconsciously repeating the words of the 'Our Father'.

Afterwards, when Father Schmidt invited us to share a sign of peace, I left the pew, forgetting to bow to the cross. The nun fingered her rosary, eyes closed, because no one was near her. I went to the pew in front of her and stood half a moment before she realized someone was there. Then she opened her eyes and focused on me, as if she just traveled a long distance and couldn't quite place herself. I stretched out my hand and stammered, "Peace be with you." Her hand was small and brown and she shook it firmly. Then she looked at me expectantly. I mumbled an assent and withdrew my hand, then stumbled back to my row and kneeled in the pew, hiding my burning face in my folded hands.

Mary Gallagher, who sat next to me, asked, "Why did you do that?"

I answered, "I don't know," and waited for the priest to finish the mass so I could go back to the classroom.
The guard looks up at my footsteps, then back to his magazine. What’s left from the old ones stays safe in glass cases. They knew what they were about: an Apache waiting the words of his guardian spirit while he fashioned owl feathers in his warrior cap, the Eskimo twining a basket of wild rye.

They had no word for art, these shapers of hemp, tendon, hide, and furry parts, but Ojibwa women bit thin birchbark to see the marks their teeth could make. And the Sauk painted designs no eye would find in the inner folds of a rawhide box.

Everything’s a circle, the dream, the out-of-doors, the spirit world.

A Navaho fasted, then coiled three crosses for Spider Woman in each basket. The thunderbird on a Pawnee drum still scatters painted swallows to the wind. Plains Indians fixed dead birds to leather shields. The Zuni carved Ahayuta from trees struck by lightning. And the Iroquois fed tobacco to their trees before the last slash separating carved masks from live basswood.

In the teepees in a circle, women pulled porcupine quills wet and flat between their teeth to make the wolf in buckskin leggings, the star in a bandoleer bag.
Muscateel. Scratching the poison ivy that was spreading between my fingers, I bid Val a quick and torrid farewell, wondering if I'd ever get anymore of those German hugs. I soon found out.

Karl, I don't want to see you anymore. You're going away to Spain and I'm too scared of getting attached to you. That's just the way I am, I can't help it. And you don't want to get attached to anything, do you? Thanks one hell of a lot for giving me poison ivy, too, chump.

So she was gone, that fast, right through my fingers. The note was inevitable, though, I should have expected something like it since I was leaving in a week anyway. I felt a hollow space inside, and tried to fill it with a laugh. When she scrubs around down there, she thinks of me.

Lester was leaving the next day, so he came up to see us with a bottle. He appeared to have a head start on it. Pouring us two-finger shots in styrofoam cups, and four fingers worth in his glass, he smiled and looked us over.

"Say sump'n b'fo we eat?"
"Go ahead, Lester, say somethin."
"O.K." Sloshing the whiskey around, gazing up at his drink held high, he says, "This stuff jist like gettin' education. It don't teach you nothin', jist like dem teachas don'. But when you drink som o'dis, you be the meanest sonuvabitch aroun'. Any time I cud git long wid my daddy wuz when he had some o'dis in 'em. Outside he just mean. But inside, ya see, he wuz a goooooood man! Down she goes!"

The next day Hank and I took Lester to the bus station in Saginaw. He was bound for Tampa with a thermos of coffee and two packs of smokes. When the bus pulled in, he said goodbye and offered us one last story. He looked back and forth between us as he told it, smiling, but not blinking.

"One time wuz a monkey on dis boat, he wuz a pet o' the crew. Well sho nuff one day dey sprang a leak, n'da boat wuz sinkin' straight down. Dat monkey wuz smart, see, so he got right up on top o' the mast. Purty soon all dat's wuz dat monkey and one guy on the mast stickin' outta de water. So the guy looked up at 'em and said 'Goodbye, little Monkey,' and dat monkey jist looked down at him a' laughin' and said, 'Brother, I'm gonna fly away.'" And Lester climbed into the bus.

Use the language of a shaman:

- **Say breath and mean**: pot, steam, antelope, stream
- **Say breath and mean**: rabbit breathed back
- **Say breath and mean**: shaman song
- **Say breath and mean**: man breathing near
- **Say breath and mean**: sickness breathed to the blue sky
- **Say breath and mean**: doctor's fan
- **Say breath and mean**: doctor's fan breathed back
- **Say breath and mean**: man breathed back to the blue sky
- **Say breath and mean**: man breathed back to the blue sky
- **Say breath and mean**: shaman song
- **Say breath and mean**: breath
- **Say breath and mean**: breath
- **Say breath and mean**: breath

They had no word for art, the Indians who required their young to marry outside the tribe. Though undesigned, designs were traded in such exchange. And in wars and wanderings. The used what they saw, wove the American flag in Sioux dresses, Navaho blankets.

Next to a necklace of bevelled hawk and eagle feathers rests a doctor's fan. Someone teased three nervelines, pink in white beads, and then bound brown feathers in rawhide to brush sickness away. Oh, to touch such celebration of health, this Cheyenne fan, its leather strands a catch of gold and scarlet feathers. My fingers jump from the cold glass when the guard joins me. "Not many Indians now," he says, "only one Arapahoe left, and he lives in Texas."
Once the world was quiet and the people were lonely, until one day when a small boy, who was especially lonely, walked out into a large field where a tree lived. He sat down at the base of the tree and leaned against her large trunk. As he sat there with a blade of grass in his mouth and his bent knees tucked under his circling arms, he thought he heard the tree say something. The little boy sprang to his feet excitedly and asked, "Did you say something to me, tree?" The tree didn't answer, so the little boy said to himself, "I probably just imagined that the tree said something. She didn't use words, that's for sure.

The boy went home and told no one about the tree, but he remembered her, and one day, he returned to her. This time he sat there patiently, for many hours thinking that if he just listened quietly, if she really spoke, he would be sure to hear. And the tree did speak. Not in words but in the noise made by some of her limbs rubbing together. The small branches in the top of the tree seemed to be swirling a greeting, and a branch that hung from one of the big limbs knocked against the tree trunk as if to say, "How are you, how are you, how are you?" The boy was pleased with the sounds and wasn't lonely any more. As he sat there listening, he noticed that the wind was blowing and that there was another sound coming from the tree: A thin light hum that sounded the way a sweet plum felt on his tongue.

A very lonely old man appeared his voice interrupted the sweet hum, "What are you doing?"

"Listening to this tree," the boy answered. The old man, having had many of his own, knew about children and their imaginat ions. But after a few moments had passed, the old man asked, "What is she saying?" The little boy couldn't explain it so the old man went home.

The little boy was very sad that he had not been able to share his discovery with the old man. Yet the little boy came to understand that the tree spoke to him.

A contented laugh breaks out of me. "Ain't nothin I can add to that."

So occasionally I wasn't sleeping at the farm. Out by the fire, Lester would gaze at me with a teasing smile, devilry in his eyes, and say, "Hank, what's dis boy Karl bin gittin? Lookee dat big smile 'n his beard."

"He's gettin what he wants," Hank reports. "Ain't pickin worth a DAMN anymore."

"Somebody around here's gotta be taken care of," I say, "it ain't just a bilge pump down there, you know."

"Mine's bin jist dat a long time now," Lester laughs. "I bin married three times, tho'. Had thut-teen; no jist a minute, fif-teen; well, sump'm like dat numba a young. Don' live wid no wife no mo."

"Why not?"

"Well, y'see, sooner o' later dey git 'n yo blood. Den, when dey do sump'n bayud t' one a yo kids, o' t you, like lie, then you cud jist kill 'em. You git so mad you wanna kill 'em. Dat's when iz time to go, when dey git'n yo blood."

"But don't they follow you around in your head?" asks Hank.

"Well, no, no," says Lester, fingers pressed to his brow in deep thought, "iz like dis here. One time I's pickin in New Yoke, 'n there wuz dis robin dat sang by the tree I's picken. Dis wuz back when people yusta whissle, so I whissled back 'n foth with 'em One day dis robin made a sound in his thoite, like 'nnyngnng' dat I couldn't make, so then on he made dis sound ta cut off my whisslin an earilatin me. When dem apples wuz picken, I went to Florida ta pick avrangies. One day dis floss a robins comes into the awchud, an dis one robin come right ova ta my tree. By God, I thawt I reconized em, cuz he whissled dat same way, 'n made dis sound 'n his thoite I cudn't make. He stayed aroun earilatin me fo three days!"

"You think he followed you there?" Hank asked.

"No, no, we jist kinda run inta each other." Hank and I roared, while Lester even allowed a smile. Then he looked at me. "So you watchet, Karl, cuz you neva know what you gonna run inta anytime." He poked my ribs. "Look like you got YOlick goin', tho!"

The last day of tree-picking, with one week left of picking up windfalls for cider, three drunken friends showed themselves at the farm. Hank was there, and drove them to Val's, where I was unwinding from the long harvest of fruit. It was 2:30 a.m. They scolded me about such indulgences, pointed out the power in 'the red spider,' (an image from a poem by James Wright), and furthermore lured me into their night-long debauchery with some warm
"Yea, but dat don' always work," he says, head waggin.
"Sometimes 'z jist blind luck." Hank and I trade smiles. Lester always seems to have a plan B. "Sometimes the devil aroun, gotta be. Frinstans, you see a fly comin strate fo yo eye, an you move quick to one side. . . . dat damn fly turns too, n' gits right n'd eye enna way. O'else you kick a stone, dat stone hit a limm an come right back in yo eye. It's jist too damn PERFick, dem times, jist too PERFick! Gotta be the devil."

We agree, as Lester looks curiously at our smiles. "Thing you gotta do'z git yo lick workin. You got yo lick, dem crates full up quick, apples come right into yo hand like ain't nuttin holdin em up. Man kin pick mo in two ahrs wid his lick goin den he kin all day widdout. If I don't git it damn quick, may'z well gwone home fer a nip."

"Let me know if you do," I tell him.

Why the third week of picking arrived, I noticed that my mind was quick to stray into day-dreams. The hands picked automatically while the imagination flew with the honking V's of Canadian geese in autumn's grey sky. Hunters plugged away at squirrels in nearby woods, corn was giving in stiffly to the harvesters as pheasants scattered, and the time with Val invaded the mind's drifting through natural signs all around me. Riding one night, late, to scout her up, I saw a train pass under the old wooden bridge. Pheasants scattered, and the tillie with Val invaded the mind's territory. "Now there was something to be enjoyed when alone or' to be shared with others. The world was no longer quiet and the people were no longer lonely.

"God, I wish I was goin. I gotta stay here and wait on those damn old people. They go 'Schprecken-zee-Doytsch, like they're Pretty exciting, huh?"

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The little boy held the branches in the same position that they had been in while connected to the tree and rubbed them together the same way that the tree had done for him. The old man then heard what the boy heard and he became happy. "Why, I haven't felt this way since I played with my friends when I was just a boy." So the little boy rubbed the branches together faster and was happy to be making the old man happy.

Then the boy realized that the sky was getting dark, and he knew that meant the rain would soon fall. To the old man he said, "I will come back tomorrow and will wait for you if you want to join me."

The next morning when the little boy woke up, the rain was still falling down. But he had told the man that he would be returning that day, and wanted to go despite the rain. He left the house wearing a big coat that would keep him warm and dry.

When the little boy arrived at the tree, the old man was already there and was making the smooth swish, swish sound with two branches. The little boy said nothing but just listened to the old man. The rain was falling down all around them, making a soft pitter-patter that made the swish of the branches sound all the more pleasing.

The wind started to blow, and the high humming sounded again. The little boy and the old man both listened and smiled, and the boy held the branches in the same position that they had been in while connected to the tree and rubbed them together the same way that the man had done for him. The old man then heard what the boy heard and he became happy. "Why, I haven't felt this way since I played with my friends when I was just a boy." So the little boy rubbed the branches together faster and was happy to be making the old man happy.

After that, the old man and the little boy met at the tree every day where they would play and listen to one another and to the tree. Sometimes one of them would bring along another friend to listen. With time, many people enjoyed listening and playing the trees. In the cold of winter, some of the people who had learned how to play the trees, brought things into their houses where it was warm. And instead of the pitter-patter of the rain, there was the plunk, plunk, of hail, or the hiss and crackle of a burning fire, of the silence of snow to add to what they named music.

Now there was something to be enjoyed when alone or to be shared with others. The world was no longer quiet and the people were no longer lonely.
Lindsay Ahl

BROKEN SACRIFICES

Her glass holds veins of ice
she twirls while she chants
to the mirror in the bathroom she shares
with Ashata who won't look at her naked.
Her carpet is suspicious in its thickness
and she catwalks around hunting
for the amethyst that will improve her sleep

Ashata is a taxi cab driver and will notice
that everyone has veins in their faces intent
on not looking at the back of her head
while she drives by their destinations
blind to their offerings.

They are blue and very little
sacrifices that bleed in cut valleys
at the sound of her voice.
Clay curves as she tried to explain
arms up and twisting
she's crying on a cliff.
She wants to fall
only to make Ashata sorry.

Ashata will notice the deep hollows in canyons, arms
eyes and see
how she will never love
the lake, the blue.

A little blush behind the freckles, a round-cheeked pinkness like
the skin of a Golden Delicious, fetching on the bough. "I get out
of work at 10:30," she said. "C'mon over." Pulling with forced
nonchalance on my beer, I invited her to join us.

Karl,
C'mon in. I'll be home shortly. Put on a record
if you want. There's a beer in the fridge. If there's
anything else you want, go ahead and take it. Be here soon.

Val

I had to smile. There was plenty more I wanted. Inside, I
found mostly John Denver records and put one on. The flavor of
the apartment fit the town and the girl. Happy German folks, I
thought, plenty of beer drinkers, many who spoke only broken
English. With names like Schultz, Schwartz, Zender, Echenswiler.
Here was the Famous Bavarian Inn, where Val waited tables, dressed
as a cute little fraulein. I noticed a loaf of local Sauerkraut
Rye bread lying on the table. I found a can of Busch and opened
it. There was a curious magic here, something that pulled at the
corners of my mouth. I figured I had better be careful.

Hank and I got so we spent more time around Lester's fire
each morning. His stories tickled us, even the third and fourth
time around. Wise with years, yet fidgety as a boy, what he believed
was just the reasoning out of what his eyes took in.
"Look aroun," he said one morning. "See all liss stuff growin
up all aroun. Know why dat is?" eyes peering at Hank, then me.
"What makes that?" I ask.
"Gravity," Lester replies, with complete assurance. Hank laughs,
and I echo it. Lester looks hard at both of us, hands on his knees,
back parallel to the ground. "Hell yes," he says, "Ev'n dem rocks grow." More amazed laughter. "Rocks grow!?"
"Hell yes. Ya see, come winter time, the groun gits big wid
frost, pushin' dem rocks up. Seen it many a time. N'den come Sprang,
dat frost melts n' the groun go back down, leavin the rock pushed up. Well, dat space lef unna there gotta fill up wid somp'm don' it? Sho nuff, dat rock growed where you can't see it. Been growin
b'fo enya us wuz bone."

It makes so much sense we can't argue. Hank tries to change
the subject. "Gettin good pickin lately, Lester?"
"No, no, bayud pickin."
"Haven't you been prayin for good trees?"
"Tryin' to. Prayed fo' good pickin' t'day, big ahples, low limbs." (The word coming out Ah-plies, like a preacher saying 'God', a round sound.) "A wip fo' the cold?" He hands a pint of Seagram's VO across the fire.

"Good medicine," I say, after a hot gulp. Lester's eyes twinkle from under the sweatshirt hood, his lips pulled back in a grin showing the one remaining tooth, right in the middle. Hank drinks again. Lester's comin' on with a story.

"Nutt'n like we usta git down 'n Geoma," he says, "from ole Elmo's still. Hay back in the woods it wuz, two-three mile from any road. Yu'd take yo' jug, anytime, day o'night, it wuz aways goin.'

"Wit' nobody around?" Hank asked, returning the pint. Lester tips it up, then sighs wide-mouthed, shudders once, and resumes.

"You neva saw nobody nowhere... jist fill yo' jug outa the tap n' put fitty cens n' the tin cup an walk away."

"You mean everybody payed?"

"You didn pay, you got the thirty-ought-six bullet n' the back. Man in a tree somewhere, you neva see'dem. Everybody payed."

And he'd laugh, and we'd laugh, exchange a look, and kick sticks into the fire. The pint tucked away, Lester would fit his gloves on, saying "Les' pick dem Ahples!"

Two weeks into the harvest, back strong, hands roughed-up, thumbs split and bleeding from a thousand apple stems, I sat with Hank and friend George in the Vassar Liquor Bar, sipping Stroh's beer. George was gulping 'em down, telling about the fight he'd heard the previous night. His mother and step-father were edgy, like everyone else, with the approach of winter.

"It's her third husband," he was saying. "My dad died of a stroke when I was five. Mom re-married, and he drowned before a year was up."

"Christ," said Hank, "rough road."

"Yea, then she married Al. He's alright, but doesn't like the rest o' the family. . . can't keep 'em straight. Hell, I've got at least thirty close relatives, all told. Three sisters named Judy. If you don't think Thanksgiving's confusing," he chuckled. At Hank's bidding, we all drank heartily to our bachelorhood. As I was getting another round of beers, Val walked in. She was a short, slim blond with lots of teeth in her smile and hazel eyes, hardly open. Talkative, sometimes loud, she still had some cheerleader left in her from high school. I didn't mind.

"Fraulein," I greeted, "wanta drink some Tequila with me tomarrow night? Hank's going to a poker game."

She cocked her head, smiling with the eyes and teeth. "O.K."
Monica Tate

THE WALL FELL DOWN

And the wall fell down. A poster tumbled on my head. In the bed below I felt the smothering piece of paper and dreamt of dirt thrown upon my body in large shovels. I awoke. Bob Dylan lay on top of me.

"Sue!" I screamed, but she wasn't there. Across my bed, the large window. Moonlight streamed through casting white shadows on my made bed, brown boxes addressed to her mother placed where she should have been. I slept again and Sue floated through the air, she took my hand.

"I want to show you the devil," she smiled, but I turned away. "Why, is he better than everybody thinks?" I tried to joke, but my dreams are never funny.

"We'll see," she answered.

He floated and she spoke into a void of sleep. Music hummed over our actions. I awoke to the clock radio. The moon had scattered to bits of dawn. The window stared blankly at me, the new clean, bright window. Through it, I saw the tops of bare trees.

The music continued. I wasn't going to get out of bed. It began to storm outside. I watched the rain fall in big droplets every so often, then the drops became smaller and more frequent. The old window used to rattle with the wind and rain, but this new one was firm, like a wall. I wondered if it was firm enough to stop Sue's lunging body from moving through it. Yes, it was like a wall now and not just a piece of glass. It seemed impossible that this window could be shattered into cutting pieces as clear and small as the raindrops. This glass would remain where it was and not on the ground, not for me to look down upon, horrified.

"I'm going to jump through that window, soon," she told me two days ago. I looked at her, but only for a moment, returning to a book.

"It's so big," she marveled.

"Yea."

"I'm going to be a virgin when I die," Sue persisted.

"No you're not." I responded, not even bothering to look up that time.

"Oh yes I am."

There was a silence for a while then I left the room.

"She's driving me crazy," I confided to a friend, "she's so

Norman Wheeler

PICKIN' APPLES (OR PARADISE LEFT)

The first day is always the hardest. Strapping the bucket over the shoulders, picking fast but laying the apples in gently, hands always moving, mind floating with the clouds. The ladder is heaviest that day, the bottom rung rapping against shins the most painful, and the repetition most tedious: fill bucket, walk to crate, empty, back to tree, up ladder, down with full bucket, repeat.

And the need for consolation, that day, is acute. Hank's voice, calling "Break" most welcome. Hank was my college sidekick and is now a working and travelling companion. It is his father's farm we are picking. Hank is big, solid, good natured, and capable of incredible amounts of physical labor. In fact, he's damn tireless. "Just keep thinkin' Spain, Spain," he tells me, rubbing his shins. "Every two crates, a dollar; every two dollars, a day in that hot sun with 'cerveza muy frio' and brown dimpled Senoritas rubbin' the oil on."

"Yea, let's rob a bank and go, tomorrow," I mumble, "cause my palms feign this practice, and dream, instead, of small smooth knees."

"Quit talkin' like that," he scolds, "we've just started. You know the first day's always the longest."

It got easier. Best was the morning walk out to the orchard with a stomach full of eggs and taters, the frost tap-tapping on fallen leaves as the sun came up, to join Lester by his fire. He would be rubbing his old black hands over the flames, hands that squeezed fruit for most of his 63 years. He was small in frame, and lean as a cat 'n the water. His knees were always bent, as was his back, yet he shuffled and shifted around constantly as he stood. He never sat down. His round face, a white pencil-thin mustache on his lip, was brightened with eyes that shone with both wisdom and childish delight. Lester's quick smile infected anyone around.

"Hey Hank, hey Karl... nice moanin'."

"Yea, Lester, keepin' warm?"
out the kitchen window into the garden,

She hums with the radio, the clock strikes twelve.

She puts the cat out,
descends the basement stairs.

She goes to the work-table
and clears it of rope and spades.

She spreads the paper
and folds each into a white flower,

with the children's cries.

And so on.

"I can't live with her any longer."

Everyone sympathized. But she wasn't weird! I guess I
could never really leave her. We had the same taste in music
and jokes, they say that's what makes a good roommate.

There would be times she'd come into the room, slamming
the door behind her. The air causing papers on her desk to fall.

"You know Les," she'd say, "I think you're the only person
in this damned school I like."

"There are a lot of people you like."

"Well if I did—now I don't. I only like you." I'd watch
her grab the papers from the floor, slam them on her desk and
plop into her chair. "People are shits," she'd proclaim, grabbing
a pen and proceed to scribble endless circles on her homework.

"Things will get better," I tried to comfort her, "looks like
it can't go anywhere but up."

Another poster fell off the block wall. A small one. It
was Sue's picture of Baryshnikov. I forgot to pack it. I rubbed
my eyes, feeling the skin fold under my fingers. I had to stop
thinking about Sue. The rain beat to the rhythm of a song. I
should have gone to the funeral. Her mother visited school. I
spent the whole day in the boy's bathroom, trying to hide from her.
I knew she'd ask me a lot of questions about how Sue was before
she died and what made her do such a terrible thing. She'd talk
of things like how the mortician had the worst time making Sue's
body presentable. It cost her more money than even her husband's
death.

"And she was still so young," her mother would wail into a
handkerchief. "I should have never let her go to school away
from home. I shouldn't of even had children in the first place,
or gotten married. Oh Leslie, Leslie," she'd grab me at this point.
"Don't let your life be full of regrets. Promise me."

"No. I won't ever," I'd assure her. I suppose that would
be the only thing I could do and even then she'd continue to cry.

But I avoided that and only one boy found me in the bathroom,
crouched inside the last stall. He only gave me a look like he
understood because I was her roommate.

"I wonder it you're not just a tad bit crazy." Sue'd day
if she saw me in the bathroom. I know that's what she'd say
because she said it to me before.

"Why?" I had asked her.

"Because of all the nightmares you keep having. Last night
you woke me at two in the morning, screaming.

"You started talking about somebody's head. And I asked
what about the head. 'Her head! Oh my God it's her head!'
you kept yelling until you fell asleep. But I didn't get to
bed until six."

"Why?" I laughed.

"It seemed like everywhere I looked I saw just a head.
A fat man was grasping it by its hair. I kept on seeing a head.
There were noises in the room."

"Sue it was only a dream." I stopped laughing.

"But it was there. I swear it was. So I looked at the clock
because it was the only light in the room. And I watched the
numbers change."

"Now back to more great music," the radio interrupted my
thoughts. I moaned because the music wasn't great, it gave me
a headache. The rain continued to drone.

I had to turn the radio off, it belonged to Sue, like
the poster. They were the only things left of her.

I missed her. I missed her as I got out of bed to go to the
radio. I missed her as I changed my direction and ran towards
the window, running like Sue had done. Like I had watched
her run for the other window when I looked up from that book.
I heard her scream. And I thrust forward like Sue had done.
And the wall fell down.
Deirdre Kovac

AFTER THE CROWD

We were the only ones in the room. She couldn't stay in one place at the same time and said "I don't know. Sometimes I just remember that this is my life. Right now. My life. And I should want it. I keep giving myself away to no one in particular. Everyone will use me but no one will use me up."

When we were in the elevator and going up she pushed all the buttons for floors below hers, the ninth, because "What if it doesn't stop when I can't see it." Her apartment was white with black ceilings. Those on the first floor looked the same and were cheaper. "Who jumps from the first floor."

We had been waiting together to face the crowd that gathered overnight and was waiting for her. They wore peach pant-suits and plaid hats. They muttered among themselves, took polaroids of the number on her door and the orange hall carpeting, made frequent trips to the coffee machine, and studied each others' shoes.

We had been waiting together in her bedroom for six hours. Then she just stopped laughing and walked to the door; stood in the frame while the crowd took more pictures. "Do you still love me?" They said "Yes, Divine." and she sent them home.

Back in the room she tried to be sorry: "I know they hate me, but still keep saying yes. Do you hate me?" She gave me tap water from the cup of her white palms and didn't ask again.
Juan Nunez

GRANDMOTHER'S NIGHTGOWN

Then I take the box filled with her gown
and run my hands over its shifting whiteness,
skimming the surface as if it were water.

Only in morning before I'm here,
or in night before I sleep does she gather herself,
pulling away from that box like a slow breath

And she walks

the measure of her step the rolling rise
and dip of my eyes in their strange sea.
I know she still kneels with her basket
under the tree behind her house,
collecting fallen pears with the forced grasp
of one hand, the other holding her
red coat tight around her shoulders
faint as the wind running the length of her hair.

She feeds the pears to the lost dogs
living under the house, dropping them, one by one,
through a hole in the floor of the porch,
and she waits to hear those dogs scramble.
I know they still drink
from the soft cup of her palms promising rain
from the buckets along the sides of the house,
her breath cool as the earth when she bends close.

Once, I saw her walk

with those lost dogs to the clothesline
where she opened the pins, all her clothes
falling to the grass except this gown. She stood back
to watch it catch the air, lifting and spreading
and lifting again.
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Curt Rideout

GRANDMOTHER LOOKS

out the kitchen window into the garden,
watches the children dance in the sun.
She hums with the radio, the clock strikes twelve.
She dips the last dish into hot water,
and puts it, glistening white, into its row.
She puts the cat out,
descends the basement stairs.
She goes to the work-table
and clears it of rope and spades.
She spreads the paper
cut the night before across the smooth wood,
and folds each into a white flower,
the basement's soft light humming
with the children's cries.

20

13
The Wall Fell Down

And the wall fell down. A poster tumbled on my head. In the bed below I felt the smothering piece of paper and dreamt of dirt thrown upon my body in large shovels. I awoke. Bob Dylan lay on top of me.

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"Oh yes I am."

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Pickin' Apples (Or Paradise Left)

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She cocked her head, smiling with the eyes and teeth. "O.K."
Lindsay Ahl

BROKEN SACRIFICES

Her glass holds veins of ice
she twirls while she chants
to the mirror in the bathroom she shares
with Ashata who won't look at her naked.
Her carpet is suspicious in it's thickness
and she catwalks around hunting
for the amethyst that will improve her sleep

Ashata is a taxi cab driver and will notice
that everyone has veins in their faces intent
on not looking at the back of her head
while she drives by their destinations
blind to their offerings.

They are blue and very little
sacrifices that bleed in cut valleys
at the sound of her voice.
Clay curves as she tried to explain
arms up and twisting
she's crying on a cliff.
She wants to fall
only to make Ashata sorry.

Ashata will notice the deep hollows in canyons, arms
eyes and see
how she will never love
the lake, the blue.

A little blush behind the freckles, a round-cheeked pinkness like
the skin of a Golden Delicious, fetching on the bough. "I get out
of work at 10:30," she said. "C'mon over." Pulling with forced
nonchalance on my beer, I invited her to join us.

Karl,
C'mon in. I'll be home shortly. Put on a record
if you want. There's a beer in the fridge. If there's
anything else you want, go ahead and take it. Be here soon.

Val
I had to smile. There was plenty more I wanted. Inside, I
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"What makes that?" I ask.
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More amazed laughter. "Rocks grow!?"
"Hell yes. Ya see, come winter time, the groun gits big wid
frost, pushin' dem rocks up. Seen it many a time. N'den come Sprang,
dat frost melts n' the groun go back down, leavin the rock pushed up.
Well, dat space lef unna there gotta fill up wid somp'm don' it?
Sho nuff, dat rock growed where you can't see it. Been growin
b'fo enya us wuz bone."
It makes so much sense we can't argue. Hank tries to change
the subject. "Gettin good pickin lately, Lester?"
"No, no, bayud pickin."
"Haven't you been prayin for good trees?"
"Yea, but dat don' always work," he says, head waggin. "Sometimes 'z jist blind luck." Hank and I trade smiles. Lester always seems to have a plan B. "Sometimes the devil around, gotta he. Frinstans you see a fly comin strate fo yo eye, an you move quick to one side... dat damn fly turns too, n' gits right n'd eye enna way. O'else you kick a stone, dat stone hit a limm an come right back in yo eye. It's jist too damn PERFick, dem times, jist too PERFick! Gotta be the devil."

We agree, as Lester looks curiously at our smiles. "Thing you gotta do'z git yo lick workin. You got yo lick, dem crates full up quick, apples come right into yo hand like ain't nuttin holdin em up. Man kin pick mo in two ahrs wid his lick goin den he kin all day widdout. If I don't git it damn quick, may'z well gwone home fer a nip."

"Let me know if you do," I tell him.

By the time the third week of picking arrived, I noticed that my mind was quick to stray into day-dreams. The hands picked automatically while the imagination flew with the honking V's of Canadian geese in autumn's grey sky. Hunters plugged away at squirrels in nearby woods, corn was giving in stiffly to the harvesters as pheasants scattered, and the time with Val invaded the mind's drifting through natural signs all around me. Riding one night, late, to scout her up, I saw a train pass under the old wooden bridge. Loud I thought the spirit of Sigmund Freud. I stalked on toward her lair. Her country care was becoming a need.

"You're going to Spain when the apples are done?" she asked one night, her bare arm resting on my chest. "Pretty exciting, huh?"

"No, man, just tired a workin is all." I say, giving her a little squeeze. "Aw, you and your little sayings. Tell me more."

"O.K., how's this... best advice my father ever gave me: 'Watch out for women who take too seriously what is poked in fun!' She pulls my beard with a laugh.

"Man, you know you got it made. Head full o'dreams, belly full o'beer, and a naked lady layin beside you. You're a fat cat, boy."
Once the world was quiet and the people were lonely, until one day when a small boy, who was especially lonely, walked out into a large field where a tree lived. He sat down at the base of the tree and leaned against her large trunk. As he sat there with a blade of grass in his mouth and his bent knees tucked under his circling arms, he thought he heard the tree say something.

The little boy sprang to his feet excitedly and asked, "Did you say something to me, tree?" The tree didn't answer, so the little boy said to himself, "I probably just imagined that the tree said something. She didn't use words, that's for sure."

The boy went home and told no one about the tree, but he remembered her, and one day, he returned to her. This time he sat there patiently, for many hours thinking that if he just listened quietly, if she really spoke, he would be sure to hear.

And the tree did speak. Not in words but in the noise made by some of her limbs rubbing together. The small branches in the top of the tree seemed to be swirling a greeting, and a branch that hung from one of the big limbs knocked against the tree trunk as if to say, "How are you, how are you, how are you?" The boy was pleased with the sounds and wasn't lonely anymore.

As he sat there listening, he noticed that the wind was blowing and that there was another sound coming from the tree: A thin light hum that sounded the way a sweet plum felt on his tongue.

A very lonely old man appeared, his voice interrupted the sweet hum, "What are you doing?"

"Listening to this tree," the boy answered. The old man, having had many of his own, knew about children and their imaginations. But after a few moments had passed, the old man asked, "What is she saying?" The little boy couldn't explain it so the old man went home.

The little boy was very sad that he had not been able to share his discovery with the old man. Yet the little boy came to a contented laugh breaks out of me. "Ain't nothin I can add to that."

So occasionally I wasn't sleeping at the farm. Out by the fire, Lester would gaze at me with a teasing smile, devilry in his eyes, and say, "Hank, what's dis boy Karl bin gittin'? Lookee dat big smile 'n his beard."

"He's gettin' what he wants," Hank reports. "Ain't pickin' worth a DAMN anymore."

"Somebody around here's gotta be taken care of," I say, "it ain't just a bilge pump down there, you know."

"Mine's bin jist dat a long time now," Lester laughs. "I bin married three times, tho'. Had thut-teen; no jist a minute, fif-teen; well, sump'm like dat numa a young. Don' live wid no wife no mo."

"Why not?"

"Well, y'ee, sooner o' later dey gitt 'n yo blood. Den, when dey do sump'm bayud t' one a yo kids, o' t' you, like lie, then you cud jist kill 'em. You gitt so mad you wanna kill 'em. Dat's when iz time to go, when dey gitt'nyo blood."

"But don't they follow you around in your head?" asks Hank.

"No, no, no," says Lester, fingers pressed to his brow in deep thought, "It's like dis here. One time I's pickin in New Yoke, 'n there wuz dis robin dat sang by the tree I's pickin. Dis wuz back when people yusta whissle, so I whissled back 'n foth with 'em. One day dis robin made a sou'n in his thote, like 'nynynyn' dat I couldn't make, so then on he made dat sou'n ta cut off my whisslin an earitat me. When dem apples wuz picked, I went to Flawda to pick awrngees. One day dis flock a robins comes inta the awchud, an dis one robin come right ova ta my tree. By God, I thawt I reconized 'em, cuz he whissled dat same way, 'n made dat sou'n 'n his thote I cudn't make. He stayed aroun earitatin me fo three days!"

"You think he followed you there?" Hank asked.

"No, no, we jist kinda run inta each other."

Hank and I roared, while Lester even allowed a smile. Then he looked at me. "So you watchet, Karl, cuz you neva know what you gonna run inta anytime." He poked my ribs. "Look 1ike you got YO 1ick gain, tho!"

The last day of tree-picking, with one week left of picking up windfalls for cider, three drunken friends showed themselves at the farm. Hank was there, and drove them to Val's, where I was unwinding from the long harvest of fruit. It was 2:30 a.m. They scolded me about such indulgences, pointed out the power in 'the red spider,' (an image from a poem by James Wright), and furthermore lured me into their night-long debauchery with some warm
Scratching the poison ivy that was spreading between my fingers, I bid Val a quick and torrid farewell, wondering if I'd ever get anymore of those German hugs. I soon found out.

Karl,

I don't want to see you anymore. You're going away to Spain and I'm too scared of getting attached to you. That's just the way I am, I can't help it. And you don't want to get attached to anything, do you? Thanks one hell of a lot for giving me poison ivy, too, chump.

So she was gone, that fast, right through my fingers. The note was inevitable, though, I should have expected something like it since I was leaving in a week anyway. I felt a hollow space inside, and tried to fill it with a laugh. When she scratches around down there, she thinks of me.

Lester was leaving the next day, so he came up to see us with a bottle. He appeared to have a head start on it. Pouring us two-finger shots in styrofoam cups, and four fingers worth in his glass, he smiled and looked us over.

"Say sump'n b'fo we eat?"

"Go ahead, Lester, say somethin."

"O.K." Sloshing the whiskey around, gazing up at his drink held high, he says, "This stuff jist like gettin' an education. It don't teach you nothin', jist like dem teachas don't. But whatevs inside a'you, dis bringz it out. If you mean inside, n'you drink some o'dis, you be the meanest sonovabitch aroun'." Ony time I cud git long wid my daddy wuz when he had some o'dis in 'em. Outside he wuz mean, nut inside, ya see, he wuz a good man! Down she goes!"

The next day Hank and I took Lester to the bus station in Saginaw. He was bound for Tampa with a thermos of coffee and two packs of smokes. When the bus pulled in, he said goodbye and offered us one last story. He looked back and forth between us as he told it, smiling, but not blinking.

"One time wuz a monkey on dis boat, he wuz a pet o'the crew. Well sho nuff one day day sprang a leak, n'da boat wuz sinkin straight down. Dat monkey wuz smart, see, so he got right up on top o'the mast. Party soon all dat wuz wuz dat monkey and one guy on the mast stickin' outta the water. So the guy looked up at 'em and said 'Goodbye, little Monkey,' and dat monkey jist looked down at him a'laughin and said, 'Brother, I'm gonna fly away.'" And Lester climbed into the bus.

They had no word for art, the Indians who required their young to marry outside the tribe. Though undesigned, designs were traded in such exchange. And in wars and wanderings. The used what they saw, wove the American flag in Sioux dresses, Navaho blankets. Next to a necklace of bevelled hawk and eagle feathers rests a doctor's fan. Someone teased three nervelines, pink in white beads, and then bound brown feathers in rawhide to brush sickness away. Oh, to touch such celebration of health, this Cheyenne fan, its leather strands a catch of gold and scarlet feathers. My fingers jump from the cold glass when the guard joins me. "Not many Indians now," he says, "only one Arapahoe left, and he lives in Texas."

Use the language of a shaman:

Say breath and mean rain
Say breath and mean sky grey with rain
Say breath and mean the stream
Say breath and mean the stream that rises
Say breath and mean the stream that rises white
Say breath and mean the antelope at the stream
Say breath and mean the man breathing near
Say breath and mean the antelope breathed back
Say breath and mean antelope breathed back to the blue sky

Use the language of a shaman:

Say breath and mean pot, stream, antelope, stream
Say breath and mean rabbit breathed back
Say breath and mean shaman song
Say breath and mean man breathing near
Say breath and mean doctor's fan
Say breath and mean fan breathed back
Say breath and mean fan breathed back to the blue sky
Say breath and mean man breathing near
Say breath and mean antelope breathed back to the blue sky
Say breath and mean shaman song
Say breath and mean breath
Say breath and mean breath
Say breath and mean breath
The guard looks up at my footsteps, then back to his magazine. What's left from the old ones stays safe in glass cases. They knew what they were about: an Apache waiting the words of his guardian spirit while he fashioned owl feathers in his warrior cap, the Eskimo twining a basket of wild rye.

They had no word for art, these shapers of hemp, tendon, hide, and furry parts, but Ojibwa women bit thin birchbark to see the marks their teeth could make. And the Sauk painted designs no eye would find in the inner folds of a rawhide box.

Everything's a circle, the dream, the out-of-doors, the spirit world.

A Navaho fasted, then coiled three crosses for Spider Woman in each basket. The thunderbird on a Pawnee drum still scatters painted swallows to the wind. Plains Indians fixed dead birds to leather shields. The Zuni carved Ahayuta from trees struck by lightning. And the Iroquois fed tobacco to their trees before the last slash separating carved masks from live basswood.

In the teepees in a circle, women pulled porcupine quills wet and flat between their teeth to make the wolf in buckskin leggings, the star in a bandoleer bag.
Bonnie Nevel

ODE TO A PRUNE

Prunes are realistic about themselves. They know they are not pretty, that their black skins have the texture of a tarred road on an August afternoon. Their humble appearance, like an old woman who has had eleven children, is nothing like their adolescent counterpart, the plum. But come closer, and see how the prune's skin shines in the sunlight: the muted shades of purples, browns, reds. And when you recognize the high quality and inbred grace of this unassuming fruit and taste the flesh, you will not be disappointed. The tongue will sing with flavor. The pit is the color of a white wine, the bouquet light and semi-dry. This regal fruit deserves all the respect of a visiting matriarch. Serve it only with your best china and crystal. Before eating the prune, be sure to offer it something in return, like a prayer, or a song, or the name of your first-born son.

itched. The large floor fans did nothing to cool the church. I traced the grain on the wood. Perhaps some other student had sat here after a lesson and left a sign. I thought of the nun behind me. She had been repeating her rosary when I came in. I peeked at her over the pew. She smiled up at Father Schmidt, nodding often at his words--he was giving the homily now--her face enfolded in wrinkles. The crow's feet at the corners of her eyes strutted lazily across the top of her cheekbones and dissolved into the folds that became her cheeks. Her habit framed her face. The only color came from the sparkle of her blue eyes which would not be hidden even by age. I loved her as she rocked back and forth, hugging herself like a child, engrossed in the priest's words. I loved her and planned how I would get up from the pew when Father said, "Let us return the blessing of peace," and go to her. I would take her frail white hands in mine, look into her eyes and say, "God bless you, sister." She would smile and answer warmly, "Bless you, my child," and her eyes would cloud at the kindness of this small child. Then I would squeeze her hand, sharing our secret. I thought about this through mass, and the ritualistic kneeling, sitting, standing blurred as I went over the episode, adding details every time I played it through in my mind. Then Father's voice cut through my thoughts, and he said, "Let us give thanks to the Lord in the words he taught us." The congregation mumbled the Lord's Prayer. My palms sweated. I curled them in my skirt, unconsciously repeating the words of the 'Our Father'. Afterwards, when Father Schmidt invited us to share a sign of peace, I left the pew, forgetting to bow to the cross. The nun fingered her rosary, eyes closed, because no one was near her. I went to the pew in front of her and stood half a moment before she realized someone was there. Then she opened her eyes and focused on me, as if she just traveled a long distance and couldn't quite place herself. I stretched out my hand and stammered, "Peace be with you." Her hand was small and brown and she shook mine firmly. Then she looked at me expectantly. I mumbled an assent and withdrew my hand, then stumbled back to my row and knelted in the pew, hiding my burning face in my folded hands. I sat down and scrunched in the corner trying to dissolve into the dust that had settled in the cracks over the years. I pulled my skirt over my knees. Mary Gallagher, who sat next to me, asked, "Why did you do that?"

I answered, "I don't know," and waited for the priest to finish the mass so I could go back to the classroom.
THURSDAY MASS

That morning we had read the Good Samaritan in religion. It was a Catholic school called Immaculate Conception and I was in the fourth grade. We always went to mass on Thursday afternoons. I hated to sit in the straight backed pews, my wool plaid uniform itching, and listen to Father Schmidt give mass. This morning it annoyed me even more. I had learned my lesson in class and saw no point in listening to a stuffy priest for an hour. I should have been out collecting money for starving orphans in Asia or working in a slum to help the people there.

With reluctance, I fell into the line as Sister Marilyn marched to class across the parking lot to the church. I dragged my way to the back of the line and scuffed my black shoes in the gravel. I was the last one in the class to enter the church, and Sister Marilyn glovered at me for procrastinating. I dipped my finger in the Holy Water and crossed myself, smiling at her meekly.

The pews filled quietly as the students filed in. The fourth graders sat farthest back on the right side of the church. In front of us sat the second, third and first graders. We were the oldest and sat still, proud of the example we set for the younger students who always squirmed.

The organ music began as I bent my knee toward the crucifix above the altar and crossed myself again. I sat in the last row on the end. Behind me, the pews were empty except for an ancient nun two rows back of me. I loved sitting on the end. It meant I could lean against the side board and curl up. Sister Marilyn couldn't see me from the other end of the pew and I could fidget while Father Schmidt prattled on. I loved, too, the wood; the lacquer blackened with age and the top worn smooth from fingers that had rested when kneeling to the cross. The wood smelled bitter from the lacquer, but I loved the odor. To this day, the smell of old lacquer brings back memories of the high ceilinged church with wrought iron chandeliers swaying gently and the wooden cross with the body of the dying Jesus. I always hoped that if ever in the midst of such pain, I could look as serene.

The mass began and dragged, as I knew it would. My shirt

Lawrence Malcom felt like shit. Even the fates felt sorry for him. They felt sorry for him because he was lonely and thirty two, and had thick spiderly beings working their way across his eyes because he had spent most of his life staying up late, studying irrelevant things. He was a library of useless knowledge now. Tonight, he was reading a book about beehives.

He had no job. His mother was wealthy and strange and sent him a check every month.

He had had very few friends in highschool. At lunchtime whenever he'd get up from the table to get a glass of milk, he was always afraid that someone sitting next to him would try to dump salt in his soup. Sometimes he carried his soupbowl with him when he went to get milk.

He spent a lot of his time thinking about a girl that he had liked in the eighth grade. He wondered whether she might have liked him too; she lent him pencils and said hi to him in the halls for the past two years. She gave him two hundred dollars in cash, which was a month's worth of hallway hellos, and told him to look the other way when he saw her coming.

He was thinking about this girl now, wondering if she really might have liked him, when he heard a strange fuzzy buzzing sound from his bathroom. "What is this strange fuzzy buzzing sound I hear coming from my bathroom?" said Lawrence, who after living alone for ten years had recently started talking to himself.

It was a fate. She was wearing a toga. She was fat and black which is an uncommon thing for a three thousand year old Greek goddess to be. She was humming on a comb wrapped in tissue
paper in Larry's bathroom. She had come to grant him a wish. She was drunk.

"Who the heck are you? And if you'll pardon my French," said Lawrence while loosening his collar in the doorway, "What the Hell are you doing in my bathroom?"

"Baklava and feta cheese!" said the fate, who was trying to sound mysterious and impressive even though she was extremely drunk. She wasn't really a fate, but the spirit of a Black woman named Flouride McQueen. She was sitting in for a friend. She knew very little Greek.

"What is it you want?"

"No sugar-pie, it's what it is that you want." Lawrence picked up the nearest possible weapon which was a roll of toilet paper. He had read a story once about some women who could let themselves into your house through the sewers, tie you down, make you have sex with them, and then charge you for it afterwards.

He held his toilet paper like brass knuckles.

"I won't let you do it to me!"

"Do what sugar?" said the fate.

"Tie me down and rape me. Then charge me for it afterwards."

This made the fate laugh. She let loose a tremendous rippling fart, which made her laugh all the harder because she was so drunk.

Lawrence flustered. He thought this was all part of the plan.

"Relax honey, I'm one of the three fates. I go around granting wishes to people who have been ignored by time."

"No such animal," said Lawrence, shaking his head, dismissing her with curt little waves of his hand.

"Look, I'll prove it to you," she said. She was too drunk to levitate anything, but she was still able to make the toilet flush all by itself three times.

"...Gee I guess you really are," said Lawrence, when it was all over. He was depressed, confused, he dropped his toilet paper.

"Heyy...cheer up Mr. Malcom. Today is your lucky day."

"It is?" said Lawrence.

"That's right because today you get your most favorite wish; you get to go back to one of your highschool dances in 1965. And all your classmates will be there and you'll appear 17 to them."

Lawrence was beginning to understand. He had seen something like this once on The Wonderful World of Disney.

"Why a dance?"

Margaret Mullins

WAITING IN THE RAIN

My shoulders steam. Drops fall in pools below the pines, thin scoops in the ground, slivers of moon. Beyond, wet gray pavement sheens, a shark. Cars slide by, tires spraying gutter water. I want to push my feet through puddles, stomp my soles. A car stops: a landing duck, its breast splitting water. I squeeze the handle, drops on the window slide. My eyes spit at mother: a rain drop fingers my back.
Juan Nunez

SOMETIMES THERE ARE BLANK PAGES

in a book, and I turn for them
alone, crossing over the wintry space,
a young boy dropping and spreading over
and over, leaving a stutter of angels on that page

of field slouching up against the sky the birds
never reach, and there is the river
pulling its slow self forward, the cold sun
broken on the back of the crawler;

I want to drown, to cast myself
into that river unafraid and let it pull
me by the wrists heavy like some dead log
one passes awash on harsh shores in winter,

and it does not matter that I am young,
or that my windskirted face is burning,
burning: I am as young boy only—
because I am not different, but shine,

ready to piece the sun and carry it home,
cradle it in my hands: smooth rocks
I gather, shells I turn white as the book
I read when the house is warm

"Because it's your wish."
"It is?" said Lawrence, who couldn't remember what his
most favorite wish was, but was pretty sure that this wasn't it.
"Um-hum, that's what it says on the purchase order."
He asked her who the purchase order was from.
"They don't tell me diddily. I'm just an apprentice fate,
I only do this part time. I used to be a soul singer."
"Oh," said Lawrence.

Lawrence didn't have much of a memory of his highschool dances.
Most of the girls thought he had breath like sour milk. It wasn't
really Lawrence's fault, it was just that one day he woke up with
stale morning breath and no matter how hard he brushed it never
went away.

"Close your eyes," said the fate.

When he opened them he was floating in a thick black vacuum,
populated by lots of little old men in robes, sitting on the edges
of giant hour glasses, dangling their feet off into space. Some
of the old men looked up at Lawrence as he passed by.

"Don't open your eyes so soon or you'll be trapped in time
forever!" Warned one, catching his eye.

"Sorry," said Lawrence.

"Candy-ass white folks," said the fate.

When he opened them again he was in the Gymnasium of his old
high-school. He stood there in the doorway for a few minutes watch-
ing the pulsing lights, listening to the throbbing music. He
wondered what a disco would look like to a deaf person, and decided
it would appear to be a roomful of retarded people being electrocuted
through the floor.

He could see Kathryn Eva dancing with a boy. She liked to
smile at one boy while she danced with another. She smiled at
Lawrence. She had straight blond hair and a mole above her lip.
He thought she looked like a Nazi nurse.

He saw Meg Mueller sitting alone on a chair against the wall.
She had red hair. All his life he had wanted to tell her she looked
like she like to eat embryos for breakfast. Whenever the teacher
asked a question, she always raised her hand first, she said "present"
instead of "here" during roll call. She had been voted most likely
to devour her own young. She never danced, but was always enviously
eying the dancers from her folding chair against the wall.

Lawrence approached her.

"Excuse me miss, would you care to dance?"
"Sure!" she said enthusiastically, eagerly getting out of her
chair.
"Oh, no, no, no, no" said Lawrence waving her back down, "I was just curious if you wanted to dance with me. And now I know."

He watched all the boys who were doing a dance called "The Twist," thrashing and churnin their bee hinds, dancing as if they were frantically trying to wipe their asses on trees.

He would show them dancing.

He jumped into the middle of the crowd, wearing his Foreman & Clark shirt buttoned to the top, and his Hush Puppies with the leather tassels in front. A circle of clapping people formed around him. He flapped his knees together and shook his finger in the air.

He saw a girl he distantly recognized. Her hair was tied back in a pony tail, her breasts hung from her sweater like beautiful, precarious, heavy raindrops. She smiled at him. She obviously wanted Lawrence Malcom. Suddenly, he had to go to the bathroom.

Larry ran into the men's room door. Larry remembered that whenever he had to use the stalls in the bathroom at school, Hyman would peek over the top and watch Larry shit.

Larry went inside. Hyman was in the stall, his pants rolled down to his ankles. Larry terrorized him by pelting him with balls of wet toilet paper and then he turned the lights out on him when he left. Hyman Lerbert would not let Lawrence be ignored by time.

On the way back Larry passed the dance D.J.'s record booth. The door was slightly ajar. He walked inside. The room seemed surprisingly convoluted for a record booth; it was full of knobs and computers and switches and T.V. screens with the faces of the people on the dance floor in them. He recognized his mother, he had always been afraid of her as a child. Right now she was happily running back and forth between the many different knobs and switches that lined the room, fiddling with them, and by doing so making the dancers jump around the dance floor.

She looked like a slap-happy old woman trying to play a thousand tiny slot machines simultaneously. She was so excited adjusting her switches and controls, that she didn't see her son come in.

"Ma, what's going on?"

She turned around and looked ashamed and embarrassed. She cancelled a lever and the dancers slowly crumpled to the floor, like spastics falling through thick jelly.

"It was a present," she said, explaining. She moved a
lever experimentally. "Look, I can make the pretty girl do the splits. Or how about that Hyman putz--I never did like his mother. Look I can make him dance on his head." She demonstrated. She turned another lever, then another, then another. Pretty soon she was engrossed.

"Now you go out there and have a good time!" Lawrence walked outside and saw that the Magic dancehall was really a bowling alley whose basement you could rent out on weekends for parties. He sat down on a curb. Lawrence Malcom felt like shit.
CONTRIBUTORS’ NOTES

Margaret Mullins: Listen to the voice of the Spirit.

Monica Tate: "In passing also, I would like to say that the first time Adam had a chance he laid the blame on woman."
--Nancy Astor

Loretta Sharp: "Let us talk easily, as of ordinary things."
N. Scott Momaday in The Man Made of Words

Amy Stupka: "...

Norman Wheeler: "How do I know what color her hair is? I float among lonely animals, longing
For the red spider who is God."
from The Lights in the Hallway
by James Wright

Gretchen Billmaier: "We cannot tear out a single page of our life, but we can throw the whole book in the fire."
--George Sand

Juan Nunez: At any moment every car passed a cigarette and cold hands floating up to a face dark in the night and turned into the distance where some feathery light tracing edges made them possible.
for Mar. '82

Lindsay Ahl: The Ku Klux Klan are after whites too.

Bonnie Nevel: Never again.

Deirdre Kovac: "I could really see going crazy."
"Let's not worry about it."
Casey & James Simon

The Red Wheelbarrow

editor: Aaron Shohet

INTERLOCHEN ARTS ACADEMY
INTERLOCHEN, MICHIGAN 49643
Aaron Shohet:

ETV also offers new techniques to the classroom teacher such as this French language film which features interesting puppets.