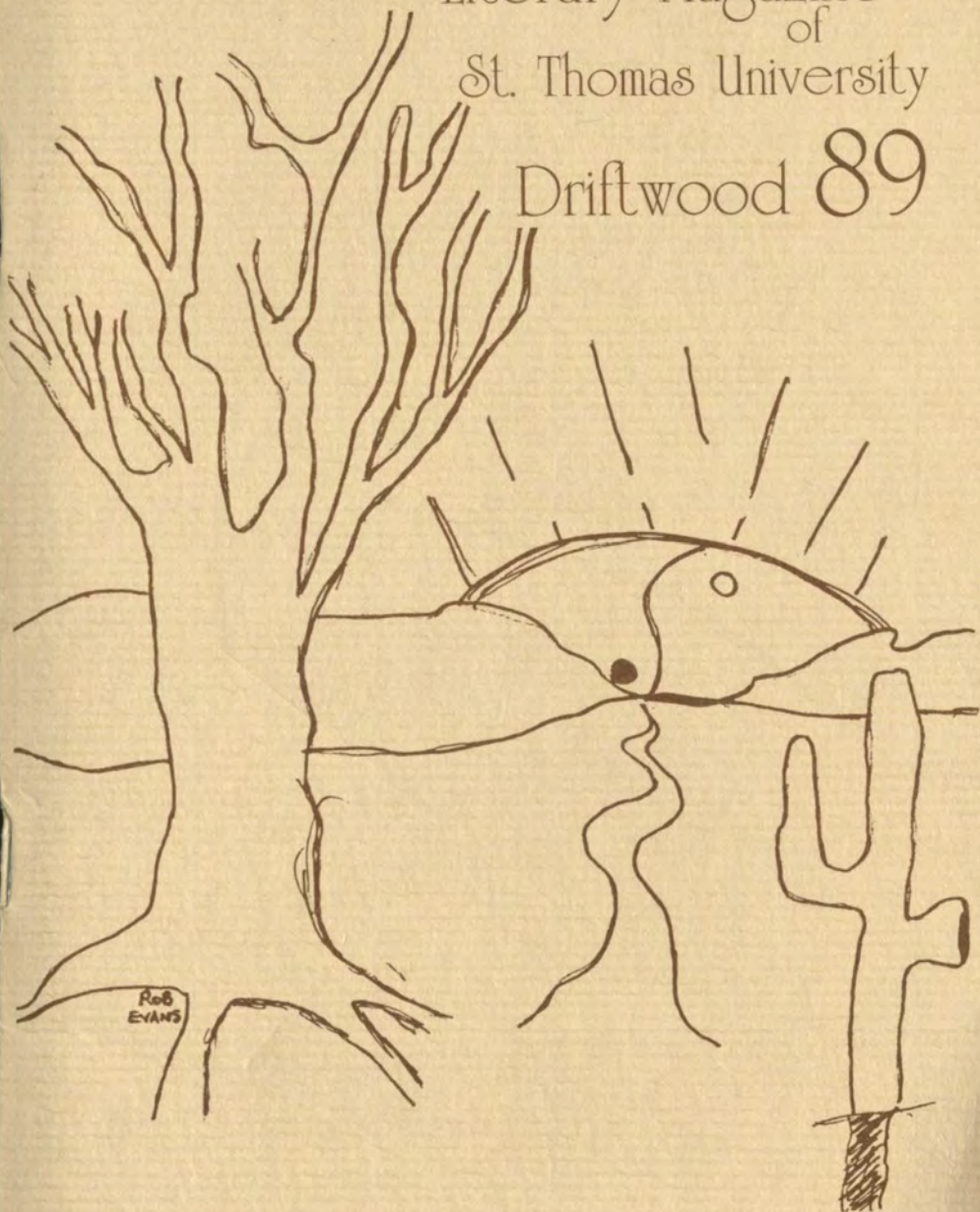


Literary Magazine
of
St. Thomas University

Driftwood 89



"To leap over the wall of self,
to look through another's eyes—
this is the valuable experience
which literature offers."

—X. J. Kennedy
Preface of Literature:
An Introduction to
Fictional Poetry
and Drama

"write one true sentence . . . "

—Ernest Hemingway

Dr. Philip Reckford,
Moderator
Michael F. X. Cassidy,
Editor

A Parenthetical Existence
or
a passive preposition is no condition

Behind
lean and mean
nice and clean
try and do
who are you Between
 come and go
 to and fro
 here and there
 what to wear Beyond
 come and gone
 sing and song
 yes and no
 where to go

Black faces wearing crowded masks meet
tragic contortionists standing
ineluctable among stagnant puddles

Morty Snore

Questions Asked

WHO AM I?

A QUESTION OFTEN ASKED

ALWAYS ANSWERED WITH

I AM A BLACK WOMAN

FULL OF PRIDE

FILLED WITH DREAMS

WHAT WILL I BECOME?

A QUESTION OFTEN THOUGHT OF

NEVER PONDERED OVER

FOR I KNOW BECAUSE I AM A BLACK WOMAN

FULL OF PRIDE

I WILL BECOME MORE THAN WHAT OTHERS ALLOW ME

AND NO LESS THAN WHAT MY HEART DESIRES

WHAT DOES MY HEART DESIRE?

THE ULTIMATE QUESTION

REQUIRING MORE THOUGHT

BUT BECAUSE I AM A BLACK WOMAN

FILLED WITH DREAMS

MY HEART DESIRES THE UNLIKABLE

FAME AND FORTUNE

T. Denise Jones

Black Man

A BLACK MAN

LIVING IN AMERICA

NOT KNOWING WHAT HE WANTS

OR HOW HE WILL ACQUIRE IT

NOT KNOWING WHAT HE FEELS

OR HOW HE WILL EXPRESS HIMSELF

ONLY KNOWING THAT HE HURTS

BECAUSE HE IS BLACK

FOR HE HAS SUFFERED MANY YEARS FOR HIS BLACKNESS

BARRIERS HAVE SURROUNDED HIM

DREAMS HAVE ELUDED HIM

LIFE HAS DENIED HIM THE PLEASURES OF LIVING

BUT IN SPITE OF ALL HE IS PROUD OF HIS BLACKNESS

T. Denise Jones

Solitude on December 2nd

no one hears
the kiss of the pistol,
just the shift
of energy in the air.

no one hears
the ascent of the soul,
just the pulse
of sirens as they pass.

no one hears
the thoughts of the widow,
just the echo
of tears in the shadows.

no one hears.

James O'Keefe

The Pendulum's Pass

A color clash of conflicting cultures starts
A full throttle fire fight that leaves
Two out of blood, one out of blue.

Skidmarks on our collective subconscious send
Sound volleys to rock the night, and
Shock Yard renegades with
TV tumors riding high,
Keep cadence with the
Pace of the pursuing sirens.

Screaming stab wounds shout
Glory stories of past wars won,
But the pumped up promises of revolution
Fade with the medicine of
The morning light.

And so the pendulum makes its pass, and
The unseen hand inverts the social hour glass.
So the sand drains . . .
And the pendulum swings . . .
And what was, will come again.
And what will come again, already has.

James O'Keefe

Glass Apple

Her desire's imbedded in the bosom of
a Glass Apple.

Stained knowledge buried within
polished impurity.

Tempting, teasing, but out of reach,
always out of reach.

Its mirrored surface reflects
my soul's beacon,

But denies,
always denies.

The light is false,
the fire cold.

A voice within whispers warnings;
Abandon the Glass Apple and
its seeds of stone.

The sheen of its skin misleads and
its seeds can only bring insanity.

No answers lie within,
you'll never know, never know.

The voice alludes to a
sad realization.

I must drop the Apple and
serve as

My own salvation.

James O'Keefe

The Bliss of Solitude

1

ALONE WITH MYSELF OH HOW GOOD IT FEELS!
SURROUNDED BY NATURE AS MY SPIRIT IT HEALS
THE SILENCE IS LOUD; I HAVE NOT A CARE
ALONE I PLAY A GAME OF SOLITAIRE.

2

ALONE BY THE LAKE AS THE SUN IT MIRRORS
ALONE I STAND JUST A SOLITARY FIGURE
I LET MY MIND WANDER AS FAR AS IT CAN
BEYOND EVERY MOUNTAIN, SEAS AND FAIRY-TALE LAND.

3

BEING ALONE BUT NOT LONELY TODAY
HAS LEFT ME WITH A THOUSAND WORDS TO SAY
WORDS OF SUCH WISDOM AND MAGNITUDE
THAT IS THE BLISS OF SOLITUDE!

Shattered Dreams

1

ONE MOMENT IN TIME IS ALL IT TAKES
FOR DREAMS TO FALL TO THE FLOOR AND BREAK
HELPLESS I STAND AND WATCH AS MY DREAMS
SHATTERS INTO A THOUSAND SMITHEREENS.
DREAMS OF LOVE, HOPE AND SUCCESS
NOW LIES ON THE FLOOR . . . OH WHAT A MESS!
BUT JUST AS WE REPLACE BROKEN CHINAWARE
SO MUST WE REPLACE THESE DREAMS THAT ARE DEAR

2

ONE MOMENT IN TIME IS ALL WE NEED
TO DREAM NEW DREAMS INDEED
BUT ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT THEY ARE NOT
UNBREAKABLE . . .
SO NEVER PUT THEM ON THE EDGE OF A TABLE
IN FACT, TO MAKE MY MEANING PLAIN
TRY NOT TO MAKE THEM FALL AGAIN
AND ONE DAY AMID PEACE AND TRANQUILITY
YOUR DREAMS WILL TURN INTO REALITY.

"Untitled"

Our birth was death in a land where the sun beat down
almost forever on shadows hiding underneath themselves
saving nothing from nothing

Our dance cried out in anguished silence tormented since
before its first step

we were baptized with coca-cola in the vaulted emptiness
of scorned prayers where votive candles had long ago been
snuffed out by nicotine stained fingers longing to forget
continent promises

we have misarticulated the howl of thou shalt and believed
our redemption consummated a virtue lost beyond the echoes of
the lion born of indifference and tested even greater still
in the almost forever of gilded dreams

we see our horizons through the indulgence of ephemeral images rather than
realizing a stagnant never setting sun
formed by a fragmented past lies our otherwise belief in a
saprophytic maiden

we were lost before we knew genteel despotism had been
accounted for straining our recovery in the contrapuntal
nightmares which ease the pain inside which the most
tolerable excuses are lost

This is not living this urgency of images in these our dog
days in this otherwise vacuous recourse arms do not hold
lips kiss loins expect

This is not living meting the other into an hour to think
otherdirected otherthings and otherchoices not made under
the blind eye of a ceramic brooding lost confidences
in the sweat of incense rising to a vagrants intent

we were lost before we knew we had a choice
lost but not not searching for a voice
not formed with empty sighs
with anger
no with pride

They taught us to die that day through broken sunlight
dancing a scattered dance on the altar of misfortune where
last chance stabs of hope resound within and without the
columns of harlequin saints porcelain face tattered women
knead squandering talents

Even now our lives are spent materially acclimatizing a
false sense of indecency
Even now every breath we take we take in death knowing we
have not risen above the thrill of indignity

Even now we improve on lines which will never be uttered
as we practice our emotional dry heaves

Even now the sun cannot find reason to rise on a day that never began
Hesitation between choice determines less of what we shall be
in the end

We are all fools captained on this ship by an even greater madness in the end

Anonymous

Freedom followed the bear that day
the eagles wings were broke
and the whales were set free to play
beyond

just ice nothing more
was shattered by the bruin
while eagles sitting on the shore
disregard the ruin

freedom fled from just ice
when battered by the bruin.

Anonymous

"Untitled"

your thoughts are my unconcern
sight is illusion between us
feelings are bent to be unfit
integrity sits on my shelf collecting dust
wisdom suffocates within my grasp

Anonymous

"These Men"

who are these men
these beyond men
these evanescent god men

These

kept to the way men
lived on no devil

Are

pepo men dried up
and drank from men

The Way

delivered reviled
shattered and kingdom men

Men

condemned to themselves
living above men

who are these men
these already died men
these never lived devil men

Anonymous

James Dean and You

The good are taken and the bad left to
wallow in their own demise.

Warned on a Greek isle
Bones of contention grind

Set afire in the last mile

Your beautiful and innocent smile

Safe was I, and you, caught in a burning bind

My love will never tire

As the tears roll by your funeral pyre.

M.F.X.C.

Tattered Overworked Denim

I slide them on dirty and comfortable
like my shell, second skin.

No shirt, fading leather jacket zipped.

Street lamps turn leaves to shadowy

howling ghosts lingering on the

stone carpet of the courtyard

of the monastery. Wind entertains

my nostrils mild and cleansed

by rushing through ferns and oaks

and beeches and baptized by the

fresh mountain streams of the Navacerradas.

Sky dark and inviting by the

formations of millions of fire spheres.

Smiling my heart is, how easy it is

to make a commitment, a decision

or plan to execute an action for some good.

Madrid to Rome

Glistening golden plains of being
glowing gracious hills enticing.

Steep swells of rapid rockland.

Divinely dwelling inhabitants
smiling sardonically.

Obstinate odors lingering languidly.

Boisterous beds of fields of flowers.

Dapper dandelions swaying southward
in the beautiful breezes!

M.F.X.C.

—Old weathered Negro with shining
mane lurches his luggage cart
through the airport pass, no baggage
on this thoroughfare, I leer from the
bar, the front left wheel of his cart
is wobbled and broken constantly changing
his direction like a Chevrolet in need
of alignment. His identity badge sways
back and forth and his left leg
drags across the new blue carpet. A
battle injury perhaps or maybe the
aftermath of years of abuse like the
wheel on his cart. Maybe he crushed it
on the train tracks saving a little girl
or maybe dropped an anvil on it in a
drunken stupor, could have happened while
fighting the North Vietnamese or North Koreans
or the Blue Coats, well probably somebody
from the North anyway. Last call rings
me to the gate perhaps on my
return I will ask him, but for now
I can simply call him Hero.

M.F.X.C.

The Beauty of a Rose

The beauty of a rose can be experienced from a distance,
And its fragrance can be smelled upon the breeze.
Though to know its beauty to fullest,
It must gathered up and held to nose and cheek.
But such knowledge only comes to those,
Willing to risk the hazard of its thorns.

Gerald C. Walsh

A Backward Look

Thinking back on times gone by,
The past relived within a shy,
The good times of "remember when,"
The pleasure of the "way back then."
Upon its sweetness are we fed,
Forgotten are the parts most dread.
Hidden deep within the mind,
To them is recollection blind.
But when discovery does persist,
We play the part of optimist.
Not a fight recalled hard fought,
Again to live them without thought.
But in fact their scars are born,
A thousand tiny deaths to mourn.
Similar are these days to those,
Each having their respective foes.
Each relative to time and place,
Each having circumstance to face.
When one day this now is past,
And upon new troubles cast,
These days will be the "way back when,"
And we will wish them here again.

Gerald C. Walsh

Match Stick Ships

On Spring rain roadside rivers,
Match stick ships the sail.
Down miniature white water rapids,
Sticking fast to sand bars.
Large lakes traversed,
Challengers and challenged,
Changing place a hundred times,
Amid jubilant cheers.
A race with no determined finish line.
The chase continues on and on,
As light of day permits,
And young sailors can stay warm and dry.
How many are the number of such ships that I have sailed?
And even now,
Engrossed in mid-life cares,
Spring rain roadside rivers beckon me,
To launch and sail a match stick ship once more.

Gerald C. Walsh

The Household Cat

Some thoughts about the household cat,
An independent cuss is that.
Not like the family dog who'll sit,
Or on your lap will try to fit.
The dog obeys the masters call,
The cat it seems can't hear at all.
The dog will let you pet a bit,
The cat just out of reach will sit.
The dog tries to communicate,
The cat treats you like real estate.
The cat when only in the mood,
Allows affectionate interlude.
The dog prefers to lie close by,
The cat, a place from which to spy.
With the dog we are in charge,
The cat's a renegade at large.
But in the nature of a cat,
Mysterious aristocrat,
Are found those admired traits,
With which it thoroughly fascinates.
We like to think that we control,
A grand illusion on the whole.
A case in point when thinking that,
The impertinence of the household cat.

Dreams of Spring

In the fall the dreams of Spring,
vanish with each leaf that falls.
The bleakness waning seasons bring,
apparent as the winter calls.
Upon the cheek a frozen tear,
an uneventful season seems.
And little time is left this year,
for remaining springtime dreams.
But over landscape scattered far,
successes dot this dreary scene.
For Fall and Winter cannot bar,
the always present evergreen.

Gerald C. Walsh

Embrace of Midnight Ocean

I want to walk,
between the waves.
Feel the cold fire
of Neptune's rage.
Strip to the skin,
the way I was born.
Step into the water,
hear Poseidon's horn.
Wade into the darkness,
disappear beneath the foam.
Pay homage to the Sea-king,
and kneel before his throne.

I want to wash away the guilt,
all of the pain.
To forget I have suffered,
forget my own name.
I want to drown in the water,
as I have drowned in confusion.
Find real strength,
to replace the illusion.
To see what is truth,
and be free of delusion.

Or maybe just die,
with water in my lungs.
While waves lick at me,
like a thousand tiny tongues.

Andrew Adair

The Elevator

The elevator thrusts upwards along the dark and
filthy shaft.
Below me are hidden deities pursue their deadly,
ancient craft.
Beneath me are forgotten gods tainted with mad lethargy.
Their minds made dull and slow after eons of ecstasy.
Cold winds rake my cheeks as I descend into the depths,
into silence only broken by my baited wheezing breaths.
With insane lust their twisted gnarled talons stretch
towards me.
Somehow they escaped the balance of the powers that
seem to be.
Only the elevator car stands between myself and
their lusty degenerate desires.
Within their eyes burn the damning, hellish and
blackening fires.
Someday with a creaky squeak and a deafening roar,
that elevator will take me down to the "killing floor."

Her Beauty's Bright Glaree

The feel of her flesh,
the scent of her hair,
the taste of her skin,
all of her beauty's bright glare . . .

The sun, the sand, the water,
all a garment the earth seems to wear.
Yet with it all one thing is missed,
the light from her beauty's bright glare.

With morning cloaked in light mist
and evening with its glamorous flair,
my soul cries inside to be kissed
by her beauty's bright glare.

I sink into a deep watery dream,
my eyes caught in a distant stare,
lost in her loving, soft eyes that gleam,
with the light from her beauty's bright glare.

My heart breaks and cracks with despair,
when I miss the one so fair.
Someday I return with a song and a prayer
back into the glow of her beauty's bright glare.

Andrew Adair

"Surely We're Not Ignorant of Earlier Disasters"

When the twin Gates of War are burst open
and the Temple of Janus can no longer hold
the fury of the world of darkness . . .
Darkness . . . dull grey helmets peering over tan sandbags,
eyes darting, lips clenched, and hearts
struggling within their breasts.
The sharp explosion of a shell shatters the solid cold fear.
He falls, a nameless boy from a small nameless
town in any part of the world.
The helmet falls from his head, not the shining
helm of Hektor nor that of Peleus' son Achilles,
but a dull grey lump of metal that can no longer
serve its purpose.
Shining shafts of bronze are replaced by angry
lead hornets that tear and maim.
Last breath escapes the youth's gaping mouth
and the atoms of his soul flee through his pores
and scatter into the smoke and black of the night.
Let us hope that we will never "remember even
these our adversities with pleasure."

Boy Of The Sky

He was a bird, strong and poised. He could
fly, really fly. He stood ready for flight. He could
feel the wind at his back. He gazed at the painted
sky of the desert, it was swimming around him. He
would fly with the clouds. With a feeling of ecstasy
he launched himself into the air. He was free, really
free. He soared for a moment, then crashed to the
sidewalk. His crumpled body lay in a pool of blood.
"The poor kid must'a thought he could fly," the police
officer said to his partner. "Goddam L.S.D."
The crowd dispersed as they covered the body. The
sirens drowned out the call of soaring birds.

Andrew Adair

The New Frost

Then, as it settles across the land,
it settles across my heart.
The late frost forms, a veil of white death.
The newly opened blossom wilts upon the stem.
Once proud and blazing with color
it had bloomed, stretching its pedals,
like a lover's reaching arms,
thrusting its message forth to the uncaring skies.
Now the cold leaps upon it,
like the frozen grip of the truth.
It browns and wilts, thrust in upon itself.
Once more my heart is covered
in the harsh stinging ice of loneliness.
She has taken me in with visions of early spring.
Only to leave me open and vulnerable
to the ravaging grip of the new frost.

The Heart Beneath The Armor

There was a time when he was strong,
his soul encased in cold.
He was distant and withdrawn,
just like a knight of old.
She saw tenderness beneath his shell of steel.
It was the softness of her beauty that made his
senses reel.
She reached out and she stirred him,
his soul still sheathed in ice.
For everything she gave him,
he knew there would be a price.
Yet he paid it willingly,
regardless of the cost.
Somewhere deep inside him
something warmed within the frost.
She peeled away his coldness,
and showed him what he'd missed,
and though she's never touched him,
it was as if his soul'd been kissed.
It was for her sake,
he'd won the battles he'd fought.
Little did he know
it was heartache that he'd bought.
Even with all the arms he seemed to garner,
her sword had pierced the heart beneath the armor.

Andrew Adair

Parting Shots

Saints die such agonizing deaths.
Peter crucified upside-down,
The blood from his spiked feet
Dropping oddly onto his chin and mouth
So that he feels like some messy boy at supper;
Lawrence roasted on the grill,
His life sizzling and popping away
As a gentle wind blows burnt fragments
Of his robe about the milling crowd;
The loving wife and mother of children,
The lump fairly having mastered her by now,
Her life largely one of tubes and blips
And ice chips that will not ease her thirst.

More favored the mobster when he dies.
Slouching comfortably at his favorite table,
safe from the heat of the kitchen,
Thirst soothed by chianti
From the valley of his youth,
He enjoys his last supper,
And thinks of barefoot boys
Playing hide-and-seek among trellised grapes.
The end for him is quick with no ordeal:
A sudden recognition of a figure entering,
Then the sense of keeling over is all—
It is finished during the rolling of the wine bottle
Over the black and white tile,
The screeching of the pushed-back chairs
Of the other diners.

There's the terrible cliché of the thing—
The photo on the front page of the morning paper
Of the bloody corpse
Littered with lettuce and garlic sticks,
But on the whole a death devoutly to be wished.

Richard Raleigh

The Young Republican

I am without feeling.
I travel in air conditioned comfort
Through third world countries in my new BMW.
It is as if I am in a movie theatre
And their wretched lives but images on a screen
As I gobble popcorn noisily.

In Mexico in August, for instance,
Gingerly working my way alongside the pilgrims
Who crowd the rocky road,
Arriving finally at the village church.
Whole families brush by my fine car.
I listen to Phil Collins on my stereo
Sip a gin and tonic from my thermos
and through tinted windows watch them pass.
I note their ancient Mayan faces,
Their half-naked children,
The agony of those who proceed on their knees.

I might as well
Be an alien from another world.
I lower my window
And their steaming planet tumbles in.

Richard Raleigh

crumbs
of your breath
in the cuff of the sleeves of my coat

Pinafores and Journeys

A girl thinks about the way fallen
icicles land on the window and
stares at the passing care, and
holds your hand tight;
as Lombardy poplars stand
tall.

A long breath running down
shadows and valleys, and she steps
as fine embroidery passing in
between long, cool summers
with the ease of a sunset
in the fields.

A mimosa branch:
letting the door of your back yard
wide open,
setting all the colors and frills
back on the shelf, and sipping
tea with the cat at 2 pm.

Elisabetta Maria Ferrero

Butterflies

I

There are days, like a skirt left open
blue and dark,
from the rummage of last night
but somehow these do not count, and butterflies

soon will fly away; but those in
between: always an echo,
a disposable cry to forecast how deep
the ground's seed has taken root.

II

Those
butterflies
surrender all vanities (even one's
story)

deep in the woods
the mist ties hands with the branches and
one breathes and
smiles and forgets about storytelling.

Elisabetta Maria Ferrero

Take Time

Run them to scout meetings
Dash to the ball games
Off to the dance lessons
Conferences at school.

Braces on their teeth
Designer clothes abound
Toys enough for many
What is missing?

Have you spent time
listening to what they say?
Do they really know
that you love them?

Step back away from
your cluttered life
and begin to hear
the children's cries.

Take time to read a
storybook, paint a picture.
Take time to hear
about their day.

Amid the rushing to and fro
They're growing very quickly
Beware, before long
you'll hear only echoes.

Cindy Bushaw

Thoughts of a freshman the first day on campus . . .

Freedom at last
No one tells me
What to do or
When to do it.

No more curfews
No more lectures
No more younger
siblings underfoot.

Parties late into
the night
Tanning at the pool
or on the beach.

Thoughts of a freshman after the first week of classes . . .

Four term papers
due in two months
Two presentations
due in three weeks.

Five midterms and
Five finals
So much research,
Too much studying.

Hardly anytime
for partying
No beach, no pool
Only school, school, school.

Thought of a senior after first day of classes ...

Here we go again
More books, more papers
No time for fun
No lying in the sun.

Can't make it through
another lecture
Don't know why I
continue to try.

Another semester of
endless classes
And not nearly
enough holidays.

Thoughts of a senior a week before graduation ...

No more tests
No more books
No more classrooms
No more notes.

Knew I could
make it
Never had
one doubt.

Graduation is
right in sight
Look out world
we're coming through.

Cindy Bushaw

Ashes, Ashes, We All Fall Down

The ... man walked out across the cold vacant asphalt. He stopped and he saw at his feet the pale chalk outline of a hop-scotch square. In his mind he could see the children leaping about in a strange pattern. The sun hung wreathed in clouds, caught in indecision about whether or not it should go down or return upwards. In its indecision it pushed a shroud of shadow over the playground that made objects turn and show the dark side of their existence. He turned towards the blank brick wall and remembered a game that was played against it with a tennis ball. His mind reached out for the name of that old game, but could not grasp it.

The policeman flicked the ashes off the end of cigar, like dead leaves off a tree, and walked towards the basketball court. He stood at the foul line and made a jump-shot with the imaginary ball. His eyes then caught the long scars of black that divided the court. They were two lines, curved and black. Black, so black they looked as if they burned there by the darkest fires of Hell. Their blackness stood out against the twilight, absorbing the light and the hopes and dreams of children and parents.

He then turned his eyes towards the school itself. It had changed little since the days when he had attended. It still possessed the cold exterior that was filled inside with warm memories. He looked at the doors, the doors that he had run through countless times as a child. Now they stood closed, as if mocking the comforting memories of his distant childhood.

He thought back to the simplicity of those days: of cookies and milk, of nap time, and of tiny chairs and coatrooms. The greatest battles of those days were over who got to read "The Cat In The Hat" first. The greatest trials came on Report Card Day. The hardest responsibilities to live up to were catching the bus and remembering your lunchbox.

All these memories were shattered when he looked out into the playground. When he looked at where they used to play "Ring Around the Rosie" and hop-scotch, tears came to his eyes. This time when he looked down at the chalk outline used for a children's game, he saw a second chalk outline next to it. It was the outline of a little girl. Beside it were two others just like it. The figures were twisted into grotesque, unnatural positions. They were the outlines of three little girls who had been struck by a car. The driver was a middle-aged alcoholic who had been on his lunch hour. He had lost control of his car while passing the school yard at recess. Tears flowed from the policeman's eyes when he remembered the rhyme's final words: "ashes, ashes, we all fall down."

Andrew Adair

ST. THOMAS
UNIVERSITY

St. Thomas of Villanova, 1487-1555

