



Cover by Edward L. Rondeau

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HELICON

The Cover

The griffin is a mythical animal, fabled to be the offspring of the lion and the eagle. As such the griffin symbolizes valor and magnanimity, strength and valor. The legend of the griffin had its origins in the Oriental period of Greek civilization centered in Asiatic Scythia. The griffin has had universal application and symbolic value in all of world literature.

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Latimer

Second Award Story

Latimer shuffled nonchalantly into the psychiatrist's office and sat down on the couch. Dr. Phillips looked up quickly as Latimer came in, a look of annoyance briefly crossing his soft round face. He did not relish this interview with Latimer. Dr. Phillips wore thick glasses that made his eyes look unnaturally large and watery.

"What's the matter, Doc?" Latimer was looking intently at the doctor.

"What do you mean," the doctor asked, surprised.

"You look upset, and a little weary, that's all. Your job getting you down?"

Doctor Phillips straightened himself in his chair.

"I'm the doctor here, Latimer, I'll do the analyzing."

"Sure thing, Doc. I'm the one who's locked up."

There was a long pause. Dr. Phillips seemed to be organizing his thoughts. Then he spoke.

"Latimer, you're being released. Tomorrow, the day after at the latest." There. He'd said it. Nothing like plunging right into it when you were dealing with these cases. Hit them fast and hard. Make them face facts."

Latimer's expression did not change.

"Why?"

"Why?" The anger suddenly grew in Dr. Phillips. "Goddamn it, Latimer, you're as sane as I am. I can't keep wasting the Army's money by keeping you here another day. You've got to face the fact that you must live with those people out there, and make a go of it."

"Is that an order, Doc? Ordering me to face things? Figure where

reason won't work on an insane man, direct orders will? Say it, Doc. Order me."

Dr. Phillips was trying hard to hang on to his patience. "First of all, Latimer, you're not insane. But if you insist, all right, I order you to leave this institution."

Latimer smiled. "Sounds funny, don't it, Doc? Ordering an insane man out of the looney bin? Take up your bed, and walk, is that it? Or your cross?"

"Quit playing games, Latimer. You are not insane." Dr. Phillips pronounced each word carefully, as if he were afraid that at any moment he would lose control of his tongue. "And you're being released, like it or not."

"Got to face it, huh? O.K."

"What . . . ?" Dr. Phillips looked bewildered behind his thick glasses. His eyes seemed to be swimming.

"I said O.K. Release me." Latimer looked smug, and suddenly very cunning.

"But . . . But . . ." You're losing control of this conversation, Dr. Phillips told himself. Watch it.

"Look, do you want me to go or not?" Latimer was pressing.

Dr. Phillips closed his eyes to keep them from wandering desperately around the room. Don't argue with him, he told himself. Don't let him drag this on forever. The worst is over. He said he'd go. Don't let him maneuver the conversation. Keep the upper hand. You've got to hang on to yourself.

When Dr. Phillips spoke again, it was in the soothing tones he had learned worked best with the patients.

"Latimer, I'm very glad you've decided to follow my advice. I'm glad you're leaving. It was a wise decision on your part. You're well, now, don't you see?"

"I never decided. You ordered me."

Dr. Phillips sighed. Be careful, he cautioned himself. Hang on.

"That's true, Latimer. But the important thing is that you're leaving."

"I fail to see the connection," Latimer said argumentatively.

"We'll talk later. Now there are these forms that have to be filled out." Dr. Phillips was suddenly all business as he shuffled the papers on his desk.

"Now Latimer, what do you intend to do when you get out of here?"

"I hadn't thought about it."

"Probably not, but now is the time to think about it. Will you go back home? Your discharge from the Army came through a few days ago, you know, so there won't be any reason to stay around here." Dr. Phillips' voice droned on in his professional monotone.

Latimer was looking vaguely out of the window, his eyes focused on some distant object that the doctor could not see from where he sat. Dr. Phillips suddenly realized that Latimer hadn't been listening to him at all.

"Latimer!"

As if he were somewhere underwater, Latimer slowly turned away from the window, his eyes still focused on some distant thing. A slight shiver seemed to run through him. Then, in a very small voice he answered.

"What?"

Oh no, thought Dr. Phillips. He's not going to pull that stunt again. Three times already, Latimer had evinced all the symptoms of schizophrenia when faced with the prospect of being released from the institution. He's faking, thought Dr. Phillips.



"Cut it out, Latimer. It won't work this time."

Latimer didn't answer, but his eyes slowly and deliberately focused on Dr. Phillips, and the look they gave him was a look of pure cunning and hate. It sent an involuntary shiver of fear through the doctor. Then the look became a normal one, and Dr. Phillips wondered if he had imagined the whole thing.

"All right," Latimer said simply.

"Again. What are you going to do when you get out?"

"I don't know for sure."

"Of course you don't. All I want is a general idea. Are you going to go home?"

"Can't."

"Why not?"

"Don't you know?"

"Latimer, let's not play guessing games." Dr. Phillips felt he was getting nowhere. "Look," he said, "Let's go through it one thing at a time. First, where are you going to go?"

"One place is as good as another,

I guess."

"Good. Then you'll go home?"

"I told you I couldn't do that."

"And I asked you why. I'd like an answer."

"So did Thomas Wolfe," Latimer answered vaguely. Then his voice took on a desperate quality. "This is my home! I live here! I *live* here!"

"That's ridiculous. You've been here much too short a time to be institutionalized. This is nothing but more of your unconvincing theatrics. Now, where are you going? I want a specific location."

Dr. Phillips felt himself on top of the situation again.

Latimer smiled suddenly at the doctor. It was an engaging, boyish smile. A disarming smile.

"Tell you what, Doc, I'll let you know where I'm headed, and what I'm going to do just as soon as you sign the release papers, O.K.?"

Dr. Phillips' eyes bulged out. He tried desperately to keep his voice in control.

"I'm afraid I have to know before your release papers can be drawn up. Army regulation, you understand. Standard procedure." The doctor was not quite successfully nonchalant.

"I know," Latimer spoke quietly but emphatically. "I didn't work in Personnel for three years without learning anything. You can't release me without knowing where I'm going."

Dr. Phillips was sweating. He made one last attempt at self control before giving up completely.

"So please . . . tell me where you're going."

"Crazy," Latimer answered, chuckling.

He left the office, then. Dr. Phillips was hunched over his desk, crying softly.



Reflections On The Death Of A Child

Two years larger now are the yellow pine.
Harsh pain has mellowed leaving inwrought sadness.
No longer cry out I to the Divine.
To beg or plead and ask, God, why, God, why?

Brown twisted grasses mark the cold March way,
Head lifted up I walk on pensively.
Seven he would have been this very day,
My son but for an hour of a summer's morn.

An angry gray astonishment of sky
Reveals a haze of light as on I trod.
See there! The damned stone tells where he lies.
Except for "Junior" it could serve as mine.

Not much pain. He left — he came — unaware.
My Joan found solace in the baby girl. And
For them I hold on and sincerely care,
For them attend the Mass but, Christ, it's hard.

William Babner

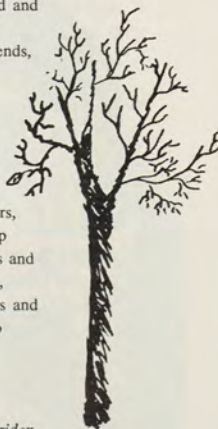
She culled the trinkets of living
 Together like pearls on a string;
 Sad wonder of childhood was hers
 And here were the beads of her prayers:
 I was the rainfall of doom she heard
 When they spattered across the floor
 And what she recovered in lieu of them
 Was disillusion, nothing more.

Virginia Bilotti

HELICON SECOND AWARD POEM

November is an afternoon.
 Old age amends his own backyard and
 sets aright its fall affairs,
 rakes the odds and orders up the ends,
 the leave things, the answers
 to April's promise of spring
 delivered dead upon arrival, a
 debris of withered windfall,
 his harvest of autumn cares.
 December is an evening.
 Old age drags out his dusty drawers,
 dusts them off and steams them up
 with hard irregular puffs and huffs and
 shines them with a faded laciness,
 smiles when the tarnish disappears and
 the face in the lustre of long ago
 smiles back a happy yesterday,
 while winter knocks, a
 welcome guest.

Earl Briden



Crosstown BMT

The girl descended into the subway entrance; the subterranean gloom swallowed and held her warmly. The dirt of the streets was duplicated on the spatum-flecked steps. "The human," thought the girl, "the world's filthiest animal." The lights, each in its own fortress, glowed wanly into the darkness, not illuminating, but only casting shadows.

Sliding by the platform, a train squealed to a stop, disgorging clerks, defecating housewives; thus having relieved itself, slid shut its steel sphincters to move away to another obscure station. The girl, sitting on a carved and initialed bench holding her abdomen absently, watched the newly-arrived wander out into the night cold, reluctantly leaving the warmth of their underground womb. "Womb," mused the girl, "when a womb becomes a tomb, the treacherous foetal deeps . . . my seaweed child, 'tis only the ebb of the tide." She waited, aching with despair.

Africa stalked by, two warrior-clerks, dark skinned, crisp haired.

"My momma din' raise no fool!"

"Listen, Baldwin says, 'It means something to be a Negro — we cannot escape from our origins, those origins that contain the key to all we may become.'"

"I don't go for that jungle jazz."

"That shows how little you know about your homeland. Doesn't your ignorance of your true name, not your slave name but your African names, your fathers, your family, your village, bother you?"

The girl began to mourn, to cry.

The warrior's voice was deeply resonant. Five hundred years ago he would have been a hunter, a graceful lion-lover-killer: courage and a spear.

"I'm telling you, the time is coming. The African in America can't continue to live in degradation. With revolutions all over the world, with guerrilla battle evolving into the most successful. . . ."

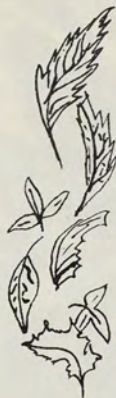
The roar of an incoming train filled the station, overpowering his voice for the moment.

Standing and walking toward the train, the girl paused to ask of a man leaning against a chewing-gum machine: "Is that the Crosstown BMT?" He pondered the question, reflecting, contemplating a gem just withdrawn from his nostril, which was held with obvious pride, replying at last, "It says it onna sign, don't it?"

She entered the current of crowd moving toward the door, jamming themselves into the mustard-coloured interior. At the door, a bloated woman blocked the entrance, stolidly knitting a Gargantuan garment, one sleeve of which hung down to the floor, a flaccid tentacle. Unable to advance past the misshapen woman, the girl stood, wincing at the flashing, flickering needles, as the doors closed in, jaw-like, on either side. She felt a moment of panic as they touched her, then, gently, the ingenious portcullis opened. The girl stepped away, grateful for the mechanical kindness. The train slithered off into the looming darkness. She watched it disappear and then looked at the trench before her, filled with mysteriously deadly wires and tar-grease blackness; a thought of voluntary death frightened her, she recoiled from the brink.

Turning, bewildered, she walked past the chewing-gum-machine-man, past the fierce-eyed Negro-colour of earth, colour of night-lost to everything, lamenting her loss. "Access to immortality . . . my slaughtered, butchered babe," sadly as she mounted the steps, thinking only of her own grief, immune to that of others. An icy wind sliced through her coat as she reached the surface, and as she stood, slowly dissolving.

Thomas Farley



Some where sunlight springs desire
from a handful of earth
and, sun-struck at noon,
where is your shadow?

Only an idol?

I have had many.

I did not want any.

Somewhere shouts subdue desire

Oh this is not death by fire!

Then I must bend too

And fold the wings of my soul

Around shadowless you.

I think I am too old to build anew.

Virginia Bilotti

Haiku

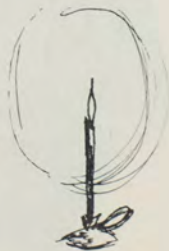
Spring: These petals drift serenely:
Don't they see the downstream
Rapids coming?

Summer: Two cigarettes in darkness
Glow briefly close, then die:
Lovers at night.

Autumn: Old beams protest their age:
Hear in Autumn how the house
Resents the cold.

Winter: Children at a funeral,
How sad: wet eyes mistrust
What they know not.

Raymond Lariviere





R. McDonald

J.I.: A One Act Play

Characters:

J.I.
Negro
Chorus

Scene:

Bare stage except for a tree. A Negro youth is tied to the tree. His arms are tied to the tree in horizontal fashion. Ropes are tied around him passing over his chest and waist and securing him to the tree by the ankles and wrists. The Negro is barefooted and clad only in a pair of soiled and very dirty white trousers. As the scene opens the Negro appears to be dead, but actually he has fainted. His head rests upon his chest. He is tied to the tree which is in the center of the stage. The stage is completely dark except for lighting upon the Negro and J.I. The Negro is completely in the light; also the tree. J.I., who is talking to the chorus, has only his face lighted. The rest of his body is in complete darkness. None of the chorus can be seen at any time in the play. The audience is allowed to hear their voices only. J.I. is off-center stage directly in line with the Negro as the scene opens. As the scene progresses, blood begins to flow from the wrists and ankles of the Negro where the ropes have been knotted.

Act One

Scene One:

Chorus: A man there is that's guilty they say.
A man there is that's guilty today.
A man there is that's guilty they say
Is a man that runs away.

J. I.: (Softly, shaking his head; he repeats his words and actions.)
I don't know that man.
I don't know that man.
I don't know that man.
I don't know that man.

Chorus: Is that man a friend?

J. I.: (Quickly and defensively)
No. No friend. He is no friend.

Chorus: Is that man a friend?

J. I.: (Angrily)
No!

Chorus: Who is that over there?

J. I.: (As if seeing the Negro for the first time; he turns and looks at him; he realizes that this is the man being talked about.)
He's my prisoner.

Chorus: What did he do?

J. I.: (Self-righteously)
He beat a man to death.

Chorus: How do you know he did this?

J. I.: (Evasively)
I just know. Leave me alone.

Chorus: How do you know?

J. I.: (Guardedly)
He told me.

Chorus: Who's he?

J. I.: (Suspiciously)
Some man, I don't know him.

Chorus: Where is he?

J. I.: (Lying)
I don't know.

Chorus: Why did he leave here? Why did he go? Where is he? Who is he?

J. I.: (Whining)
I don't know.

Chorus: Where is he Who is he?

J. I.: (Still whining)

He went to get help. He couldn't handle him alone. He went ~~for~~ help. I don't know where. I don't know. I told you. I don't know him. He give me 50 cents. He told me to stay here and watch him. I don't know him. I don't care. You leave me alone.

Chorus: A man that's guilty they say
Is a man that runs away.
Did . . .

J. I.: (Violently)
Shut your goddammed mouth!

Chorus: Did that man run away?

J. I.: (He turns his head and looks at the Negro; he realizes that the chorus is talking about him. He is relieved.)
Oh, him! That ain't no man there. He run, sure, he run like he was a possum and the smartest hound in the county was after him.

Chorus: He's a Negro.

J. I.: (Laughs)
Nigger, you mean. He's a nigger.

Chorus: Is that why you say he isn't a man?

J. I.: (Turns to left and mutters.)
Oh, God. Oh, for the love of God.

Chorus: God loves that man.

J. I.: (Swings back abruptly on his heels and glares.)
Who the hell are you? Why the hell don't you go away? That ain't no kind of joke. That's rotten.

Chorus: What do you mean?

J. I.: (Angrily)
You twisted my words.
(To himself in a whisper)
Yeah, that's what you did. You twisted my words.

(Continues yelling)

Who the hell are you, some of them frigging Freedom Riders?
(His whole body shakes with convulsive laughter.)

J. I.: (When there is no answer, he looks up. He is still laughing. The Negro is beginning to come out of his faint, but he is oblivious to him.)

Who the hell are you?

(J. I. steps forward putting his hand to his forehead peering all around.)

Hey, I'm talking to you. Where are you?

(J. I. takes one step forward and misses his footing. He catches himself looking around carefully.)

Thought you had me that time, huh. Did you hear me? Hey, you.

(When there isn't any answer, he shakes his fist and yells.)

You come back here, you hear. Who the hell do you think you are?

J. I.: (Listening; hears nothing; continues; getting braver as he goes along.)

That's what they were some of them goddammed Freedom Riders, maybe. Maybe (laughs) maybe they were some of them nigger lovers. Some of them no-good nigger lovers.

(He breaks into convulsive laughter.)

Negro: (Lifts head, licks lips, says weakly.)
Water.

J. I.: (Doesn't hear him; still laughing.)

Negro: (Stronger.)
Water.

J. I.: (Wipes his eyes)
Oh, God. Oh, for the love of God.

Negro: (Stronger.)
Water.

J. I.: (Turns his head slightly)

Eh, what's that?

(He steps forward, reaches inside a pocket, and pulls out a knife.

A clicking sound is heard.)

Now where are you?

Negro: (In pain and quite loudly.)
Water.

J. I.: (Turns and faces Negro, wiping face relieved)
Oh, Christ, it's only you. Shut up you lousy stinking nigger.

Negro: Water!

J. I.: (Moves toward him yelling)
Shut up, do you hear me. Shut up!

Negro: (mechanically)
Water.

J. I.: (He slugs him with his fist screaming.)
Shut up!
(Suddenly there is a loud clap of thunder. J. I. jumps and turns slightly facing audience; he drops his knife but picks it up quickly.)
Thunder. (Sighs in relief.)

Negro: Water.

J. I.: (Yells)
Can't you shut up, can't you? You shut up, you shut up, you hear.

Negro: (Repeats words)
Water.
Water.
Wa . . .

J. I.: (Breaks in and spits in the Negro's face.)
Here's some water. Now shut up!

Negro: (Lifts head, gazing into J. I.'s eyes.)
Water.

J. I.: (Takes a step forward, sticks knife into Negro.)
There, there, now you'll shut up.
(He steps back, pulling knife out; he looks down and sees the blood all over him; he drops the knife and tries to wipe the blood off.)
Goddammed sticking nigger blood.
(He looks at the Negro. Blood is coming from the knife wound and his hands and feet.)

Negro: Water.
(Negro dies.)

J. I.: (Yells)
Oh, for Christ sake. Ah, for the love of Christ. Shut up, do you hear me? Shut up. Shut up!
(A roll of thunder booms and J. I. jumps.)
Oh, Jesus! Oh, my God! I've got to get out of here. I've got to go.

Chorus: A man there is that's guilty they say . . .

J. I.: (Screams)
Oh, my God, what are you doing to me?
(He runs off stage left. The thunder booms.)

Chorus: A man there is that's guilty they say.
A man there is that's guilty today.
A man there is that's guilty they say
Is the man that runs away.

(The light on the Negro dims until only a silhouette of his body and the tree can be seen. The silhouette becomes the figure of a rough cross.)

CURTAIN

Millie Mae Wicklund

Revelation

One to me despised of many years
has met avenging fate. Oft before
I wished myself the doer,
the wielder of that worthy weapon.
My desires, fulfilled by another,
should gladden me no less. Yet, within,
a wave of guilt floods my soul.
The crime betrays itself to me in
rightful form. My brain,
stained with the sin of thought,
derives no cause for joy.
Thus, sit I, unhappy in my happiness.

Elaine Ledoux



Epitaph On Skid Row

. . . He seems to be the type of man who has enjoyed life to its fullest, but somehow outlived those who shared it with him. Now he feels the pangs of loneliness and tries to retain a grasp on the past. He sings of auld lang syne, but the cold loneliness creeps through again after a momentary release, and only the silence of the night remains. He must have been a sensitive man with many friends, for he speaks congenially with himself. He seems a kind old man who has seen his whole life shattered; not quickly or violently, but piece by piece like some old mosaic, suddenly feeling the wake of age. Still he clings to the old. Still he drinks to his friends and thinks of the many doors that once opened to him and now are barred. Still the cold truth creeps back and disperses his reverie.

For a time he with-draws from the loneliness and finds companionship with his jug, and the light of other days. The road ahead holds little for him, yet he must go, least he think too much of his loneliness . . .

Thomas Pezzullo

The Fourth "R" Is For Rune

First Award Story

"... and so they use a radar-like device to determine the depth of the ocean. Yes, Johnny?"

"Who wants to know how deep the ocean is?"

Mr. Wagstaff said, "Oceanographers" and knew the absurdity of his answer. The question-boy grimaced and slurred sideways in his seat. Another giggled at some outrageously funny high sign and Mr. Wagstaff hated the whole day. Especially this last class. He had not been in the mood to teach today, and classes had not gone well. He found it difficult to put into words, seventh grade words, any simple thought having to do with the lessons. He dangled between the ten dollar word and slang. His classes were disconcerted, or lost. O Lost. As Tom Wolfe had never been.

"Lost." He covered his mouth. No one had noticed and he continued not illogically, "Some ships have been lost and their hulls never recovered. People believe gulls hauled the hulls to their burial ground as a sort of shrine to their life-giver, the ships being garbage dispersers. Others believe it is because the ocean at that particular spot was bottomless. We all know this last statement to be false." "We do?", he thought. Why did he always have to make some ludicrous irretractable statement? Well, time for another Wagstaff theory. His mind exploded with a brilliant flash of hind-(in)sight.

"There is no bottomless ocean, which is to say, there is no ocean without a bottom. Because if there were, it must necessarily mean that the ocean waters continue on through the planet and out to the other side and this would mean either that the ocean would drain out of the bottom or the sphere would split for lack of a cohesive element. Water does not stick." Faintly astonished at his own intellect he turned to the board and drew an amazing diagram of the earth divided down the middle and filled like a sandwich cookie with chalk shavings, while from some bottom

orifice globbing drops escaped. These he labeled "Ocean." He turned to the class flushing victoriously and met not one pair of eyes. In a way he was grateful. He just might have met with a challenge. Today he could not have stood up to a challenge and he wrinkled his eyelids as he assigned homework.

He sat down at his desk. The chair was quite low, and he experienced the silly sensation that he was the child and his chin reached only to the top draw. He was peering over the edge and thankful for the books lined and book-ended across the front of his desk, compassionately inhibiting sight span. The students were passive today. He tried not to have to make a decision but nevertheless was questioning himself. Did he prefer the precocious, grasping, challenging student or these passive lions? Lions because they looked like every lion he had seen in a zoo. Golden, innocent, blank-faced and yawning. To be a teacher one has to give of himself just as much, if not more than, the artist. He stands in the arena with students. He must tear great strips of soul-flesh from himself to throw at the lions. But the lions aren't even hungry and so he watches his soul as it quivers in the dust while the lions pad gingerly around it.

But still ... he tried to think of the compensations. The biggest of these seemed to be the opportunity for igniting the spark of interest, to enflame a student with desire for knowledge. He tried to remember his own Inspiration Teachers in the grades. He could not even remember their faces and wondered whether it was because he had always been lost. O Lost, and never totally aware of the real world, or whether it was because he had gone to a Catholic school and the nuns never seemed to possess a *personal* personality or appearance. He could only remember one teacher. He could not recall her name nor could he remember her face, only the expression of her face when he had questioned a doctrine or article of faith or whatever it had been. He remembered his question. The nun had been elucidating the class as to the complete selflessness and magnanimity of Christ to have died for us all.

"Sister Mary could Christ have saved Himself if He wanted?"

"Why, of course. That is why His sacrifice is so wonderful!"

"Then His death was a form of suicide." It had not been a question but a flat statement and Sister Mary Nohame had gasped. But before she acknowledged her anger by smashing his ears, she had asked,

"Mr. Wagstaff, why would He have wanted to commit suicide?"

He had not known until he had gained years. He had finally figured it out. "... and His own received Him not." Christ committed suicide because He had been rejected by his peer group. It had been a self-indulgence in masochism and hence the most selfish of acts. Like eating worms.

His mind completed a circular route and he returned to his idea of teaching as soul selling. Yes, you certainly had to sell yourself, give of yourself, more than in any other profession. Except maybe prostitution. But in prostitution one only sells one's body. One's soul remains intact. One is still a whole person. Actually a woman could sell her body and to her it could be the least valuable thing she could give if the man could not touch her spirit. For a thing to be valuable it must involve sacrifice. For the woman, the giving of her body is not necessarily a sacrifice. Mr. Wagstaff thought of what he could do if he did not teach. He did know that if he were a woman he would become a prostitute. High class one. Probably a lucrative and possibly not unpleasurable occupation. But he was not a woman. He was a teacher. He would die diseased from inhalation and ingestion of chalk dust.

He reached very purposelessly for the dictionary. He snatched it from its catacomb and watched the other books writhe en masse like a convulsed frozen caterpillar. He examined the cover. It was blue, sort of cloth weaved and in paling yellow (counterfeiting gold) letters read, DICTIONARY. Little laurel leaves surrounded the word. He guessed they

were laurel leaves. But he never trusted and did not deem it impossible that the binder had cherished a private form of rebellion against Greek allusions by making them beet leaves. He shot machine-gun glances toward the vicinity where a sharp noise had originated. The students' eyes lied in innocence, and a boy continued combing his hair. It was a combing affair intricate to perform, fascinating to watch. Comb with right, smooth with left, pull curl down before forehead so it dangles nonchalantly. No. Too studiously aesthetic. Again. Right — comb, left — smooth. Pull down black gleamy lock, ruffle a bit. Ah! Look at comb. Wipe comb on arm sleeve. Pocket comb. Look around. Notice Mr. Wagstaff. Grin sheepishly, disarmingly. Loose grin. Fidget rather originally. Re-remove comb. Clean fingernails with the all-purpose instrument.

Mr. Wagstaff had almost grinned absently in return, but had caught himself. He examined the page before him. Runcinate . . . rundle . . . rundlet . . . run-down . . . rune . . . Rune! He loved runes! Roon, Rrooon. Wonderful. The word even sounds runic.

I roared a rune on rawberry hill.

Rune ruminations.

"Mister Wagstaff, may I go to lab?"

"What?"

"Lab?"

"Why?"

"Have to."

"Oh." Mr. Wagstaff made out a slip. He found it peculiar, very peculiar to read. It read, "Sam Salisbury to lavatory. 2:15" But he had made one S a Spencerian type and the other a simplified script, almost a printed S. On closer examination the two R's differed also. One was Palmer method, the other the type which looks like a slanting folding seat.

Now my esoteric graphologist, try to analyze this scrivener's scivelings. I suppose you would feel your way out of it by explaining it away as a manifestation of a split personality. With reluctance born of fascination, he gave the peculiar pass to Sam Salisbury. (Differing S's)

A sneaked glance at the clock caused him a mental sob. Ten more minutes. Ten more. He plucked a pencil from a glassful and wrote:

There was once a beautiful woman who wore her hair short, clipped harshly as a protest against dependence on beauty alone. Her hairdresser loved to cut her hair, he did so savagely, because he was tired to death of curls and vanity. Together they agreed and both were able in this manner to gratify their desire for the real, the pure, the true. It was not a common desire and thus, in the eyes of society, necessarily an un-normal one. Both were found guilty of perversion of their respective endowances of beauty and talent. In time the hairdresser began to demand more gratification of his need and by degrees on subsequent and sundry visits the beautiful woman found her hair cropped shorter and shorter. One day, in an orgasm of release from society's dictates, the hairdresser shaved the woman's skull. Upon completion of the operation the woman stared into the mirror, shrieked with ecstasy and rushed home to her society husband who resultantly shot her for a giant featherless ostrich. She leaked her blood moaning, "I died for beauty." The distraught hairdresser, learning of her fate, went berserk and in the fury of one hour shaved the heads of all the women he could overpower, which totaled seven. To this day he continues his ravings, ("I died for Truth,") in a sanitarium.

The bell rang and Mr. Wagstaff watched the class rumble out. The end of a day. He read over his fable and wondered what caused him to have days wherein he could not even grasp a pencil and manually write

Let $x \rightarrow -\infty$

Once upon a time there was a function of x who ate in a little π izza π lace at (1,1) Identity Avenue. With him was his inverse whom he married in $RxRx$. They had two children y' and y'' . These two children were born by the Δ process. Naturally, the delivery of y'' was much harder than y' 's.

Anyway, as the parents were listening to the music playing in the π izza π lace, they realized that their children would not be able to find the π izza π lace. They became quite worried. Hearing a great deal of activity outside the π izza π lace, they decided to investigate. y' and y'' were careening down Cartesian Plane in a negative direction which would ultimately bring them to the origin. The parents decided to separate and head off their children at the origin since this was the only place that they all could meet at.

The parents arrived at the origin in time to see y' try to inflect in an effort to avoid his speeding brother. In spite of y' 's efforts, the two brothers crashed headlong into each other at the origin. The parents severely scolded the two brothers and told them to stay at the origin since inflection would separate them forever.

Feeling that they had sufficiently scolded their children, the parents left them at the origin and went to the Θ atre at $(-1, -1)$ Identity Avenue. As soon as they had left, however, y' began inflecting at the origin. y' inflected so greatly that he pushed his brother down to $-\infty$ Drive. Realizing what he had done, y' found his tangent and escaped to $+\infty$ Drive.

Returning from the Θ atre, the parents tried to return to the origin to get back to their children but were unable to because of their natures. Before the inverse could do anything, her husband, the function of x , slipped down the $-\infty$ Drive also. This ruined her plans to reflect along Identity Avenue and end her separation from the function of x .

There are more than 8 million stories in $RxRx$, and this is one of them.

Michael Ranalli

Love Song: No More To Come

living in the yesterdays
and the todays of my un
self
(the rain
the rain the rain
ran rivers of rivers of rain)
i remember remember re mem ber
april falling like hair over love . . .

curling love around our fingertips
we pulled april into our eyes
deaf to the wind chasing each wisp
we tugged at each curl with a smile . . .

lust rained a river of love
whirled like fancy whistling down wind
shaking yellow leaves and old age
over life and you and i . . .

pushing the yellow leaves aside
we heard the wind
felt the rain
knew we had thought dandelion words with dead tongues
watched the puffs wither
and then combed april out of our eyes

only the sun
should burn away the crust of one's life.

Millie Mae Wicklund

A Rat Is To Trap

It is hot. It is a hot night and we are sitting on the front steps licking popsicles. You can see the lights from all the tenements up and down the street and if you squint your eyes they become mysterious lights. And if you allow it they will become like diamonds thrown into moss, half buried in soft, block moss. No. Not diamonds. More glittery. Brave rhinestones, perhaps. The popsicles trickle down our arms and licking the sweet syrup you can taste the salt of sweat, and dirt, and feel with your tongue the soft limp hairs on your arm. It is very hot.

There are many people on our street and sometimes I wish there were not so many. Sometimes I think about walking down to the wharves and getting on one of those steamers and sailing far away to India or somewhere. Far. But mama always warns us about the wharves. The wharves grow rats, she says. She says they are very big rats and have been known to kill grown men. I have never seen one of these wharf rats, although I imagine them to be just like the rat I saw in Mannie's cellar, only much larger and more fierce. So I never go by myself to the wharves. I only go with Pa when he is in a lonely mood and takes me there. Then we stand looking at the black water and after a while he stops holding my hand and he forgets I am there with him. He just looks out at the water and forgets I am there. I wait around some and then follow him home, but he walks by himself. This is not so much fun but I always go with him. I always want to try and see a rat.

Agnes is combing her hair. She is sitting on the top step and is combing very slowly and she looks very pretty. Agnes is my sister and everyone says to her, Agnes what beautiful hair you have. She is so vain about her hair. Agnes combs her hair and does not even care that I still have a half a popsicle left. I make very loud sucking noises but she does not notice. Soon Frank Stein comes by and he stops and watches Agnes with her combing. We call Frank Stein "Frankenstein". It is very clever,

don't you think? Frank Stein is rather ugly, after all. He is one of the neighborhood men who work on the wharves. I do not know which I have more terror of meeting at night down by the wharves, a wharf rat or Frank Stein. On this hot night I am not afraid because of my sister and the others on the steps with me and because of the mysterious lights and because you don't feel much afraid when it is a hot night. Hot nights make the neighborhood people friends because of the fact that we all come out in the air and sit upon the steps and talk. Frank Stein tries to talk to us. He says,

"Agnes, you have got beautiful hair indeed."

But no one answers and Agnes combs more slowly, like a great lady. Sammy and I are watching Frank Stein and Sammy giggles. Sammy says,

"Frankenstein. Frankenstein, have you got no house? Or is it that you sleep under the wharves with the wharf rats?"

But Frank Stein ignores Sammy. Sammy is acting like a little boy which he is not, although he is a full year younger than me. I give him a poke because he shouldn't tease Frank Stein with our mama right here knitting on a sock. She will say it is not polite. Sammy finishes his popsicle and examines his stick. No one talks now. We were talking until Frank Stein came by. That is, all of us except Agnes. She does not care to talk much with us. She thinks she is a great lady. Frank Stein says another thing.

"Mrs. Marandola, your daughter certainly has beautiful hair. Whose side of the family does she get it from?"

My mother sniffs and says, "Her Pa's," and everything is as before except that Agnes stops her combing and looks down at Frank Stein. He is a big man but she is on the top step and that is the reason why she looks down. She says,



"Is that all you can say, wharf man? I have got nice hair? Huh? Is that all?"

Mama says, "Hush, girl," but Agnes says, "Huh?" to Frank Stein one more time. She is very insolent. Frank Stein does not look too ugly when I am beside my mother. Perhaps it is the mysterious lights. Frank Stein says,

"I don't talk so good. What would you want me to say, Agnes Marandola?"

But Agnes stands up and she leans in a sulk against the door. Sammy bends back his popsicle stick and lets it fly. It hits Frank Stein on the cheek with a little plop sound and Frank looks surprised, almost like he's going to laugh only it is not a funny thing. He looks at Sammy and then he leaves us. He says,

"I don't know so much, but I know when I am not welcomed," and he goes off down the street. Mama sniffs and stretches her yarn and says to Agnes,

"Agnes, it's time you were being married." Agnes laughs, it is not a glad laugh, and asks what she is supposed to marry in this neighborhood. This is the beginning of a fight and I know one is coming because Agnes is always wanting us to move to a better place so she can meet some "decent boys with background." Sammy and I leave in a hurry and we can hear Agnes screeching about marrying a wharf rat and we walk down by Hanley's News to buy a licorice and who is in Hanley's News but Frank Stein. Only this time we do not tease him because three men are pointing at him and laughing. They say,

"Why don't you marry her, Frankie boy? Maybe she could teach you some manners, huh?", and they say,

"Nah. You can't teach an idiot nothing. Agnes knows that. Even Agnes could not teach Frankenstein manners."

They are saying these things and Sammy and I are excited. We think there will be a fight because Frank Stein is not a small man or a coward. But Frank Stein does not hear and he continues playing pin-ball until Sammy yells out, saucy sounding and rolling his eyes,

"Agnes, you have got beautiful hair indeed."

Frank Stein looks up now at Sammy and Sammy is very hysterical and laughing. The men all laugh too, and one asks me, is that what Frank Stein said? I nod my head, yes. They all laugh harder. Frank Stein looks white and he says tightly, almost without moving his lips,

"Shut your goddamn mouths, you bastards."

The men hoot and point their fingers and I grow more afraid and say to Sammy let's get out, so we run fast to the corner and wait only three minutes when the men rush out into the dark and I can see Frank Stein running and I know it is for his life because when wharf men fight it is to the death. They are running down the alley which leads to the wharves and their shoes make soft scary clicks on the black street and Sammy and I are running too only we don't know it. We are following them to the wharves. Not making one sound, we run on our toes and tell ourselves not to forget to breathe. I am not afraid now. I do not even think I have feelings at all. They reach the wharves and Frank Stein turns. We see his body against the sky and it is fearful. We cannot see his face, only his body, and it is very big and Frank Stein looks like God. But the men are three and they slam at him and we see them rolling their bodies around on the wood of the wharves making not one sound so we can hear the water slapping the boat bottoms. Sammy holds my hand very tight and our palms stick because of the popsicle syrup. It takes a long time but now two of them stop punching and stagger off a ways and they pick up the other and they walk away. We hear them breathing as we watch them walk by us. One is smiling.

We do not move for five minutes and the breezes from the water chill us, although it has been very hot and the breezes are weak. We do not know what to do and are afraid to look at Frank Stein. Sammy keeps saying let's go home, but I think maybe Frank Stein needs help. I drag Sammy two feet nearer to Frank Stein who is lying like a dead one. Suddenly Sammy says,

"That is not Frank Stein. That is a wharf rat."

I have a terrible fear and look again. The mound on the wharf is a gigantic rat and we turn and run and run until we cannot swallow and have knives burning in our sides. We are home and we collapse on the stairs. I am almost crying, so great has my fear been. Mama says,

"What's the matter with you two, huh?", and Sammy does not look at me. He says,

"We saw one. We saw a wharf rat. Biggest one in the whole world."

Norah Pollard



In Memoriam

I had worked for the Grimes for over seven years when Miss Amy Grimes took sick. I knew right soon she was pretty sick 'cause she got all white and skinny and stayed in bed a lot. Not like old Amy to be like that. She was always so lively, always doin' somethin'. Well, all of a sudden, there she was a-sleepin' and a-prayin' like she knew she was goin' to die. And Miss Elsie Grimes, why you just ain't never seen nothing like her. She moped around the house a-weepin' and a-cryin' and a-prayin'. I tell you I ain't never heard so much prayin' in my whole life, as I did in those two months.

'Course they was always holy, those two Grimes sisters. Went to church-sings every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday night. And teachin' Sunday School too. How Miss Amy kept on I'll never know. She knew she had some sick disease. I heard her tell Miss Elsie in the garden one day.

I was serving tea and I just couldn't help overhear. Wasn't like I was eavesdroppin' or nothin'. I remember it word for word 'cause I was so struck by Miss Amy's calm.

"Elsie, I haven't got too much longer for this world. The good Lord is going to take me soon," said Amy.

"Alleluia" said Elsie. "The ways of the Lord are best."

"I want you to carry through the Lord's will on earth, Elsie, after I'm gone," Amy said.

You know how they talk. Sort of high and mighty. Always so religious, those two. I don't know . . .

Well anyway, then Elsie said, "Of course I will Amy. Of course, I don't know much about money matters, but the good Lord will help me."

"Elsie, I think I should explain a few things about money to you, and not leave it all up to the good Lord," said Amy.

"Oh no! Oh no! no! Said Elsie.

She choked. She really did. She got so excited and almost frightened. 'Course Miss Amy had always takin' care of money matters. That and everythin' else. Elsie always just sort of agreed, never fought or disagreed with Miss Amy. I always thought it was 'cause she never understood what Miss Amy was doin' and much less cared. But Miss Elsie, why she got so excited, I just couldn't make myself leave. I just had to stay and see what was the matter. I ain't never, never in my whole life seen anybody so frightened.

Well, anyway, Miss Amy seemed 'though she didn't even notice that Miss Elsie was all excited. She just looked straight at her and said,

"It's the Lord's will that I will go. Heaven is all I've lived for and you too Elsie for that matter. Be happy with me, Elsie dear. Don't be afraid of what life holds for you. Life will only be a bit different. Why you'll still have choir practices, Sunday School teaching and the weeknight devotions. It won't be any different. That's why I wanted to talk to you about money and things. You should know, Elsie dear, so that you can carry out what I have started for us."

Well, then Elsie said, "It's the Lord's will that you must go, Amy. I suppose I'll have to learn sometime. Now might as well be the time. You've always been right, Amy. If you think it's best to tell me about money and such, I had just better listen."

And then they went and had a long talk. Oh, they talked about money and church gain' and such. And Elsie, she just sat there and listened and listened to Miss Amy. Miss Amy said that they weren't real rich but "comfortable" and "well off" and that Miss Elsie should take care of the house and money because when Miss Elsie died the house and all the money should go to the church. She thought the house would make a nice orphan's home with the garden and all. She kept sayin' somethin' about how happy she was she was dyin' and talkin' about God's will and such.

Well, anyways, Amy went on and told her just how to spend the

money. She told her twice to make one of those there wills and even told her the name of a lawyer fella' to call on. And all the time Miss Elsie didn't say nothin' but "Yes Amy. You're right, Amy" and, "Of course, Amy dear," in that snooty way she had a-talkin'. She even wrote a couple a things down on paper, but anyways she never said nothin' nor never made like she thought anything about it at all.

That's why I was so surprised at what happened. I noticed it right after Miss Amy died — Lord have mercy. Miss Elsie, why she was a new woman, and not so much the better for it at that. She went like she never heard a word Miss Amy said. Just like she never even knew Miss Amy. Miss Amy had always been sort of the boss, like Elsie didn't know nothin'. I thought for sure Elsie would be a-weepin' and a-cryin' after like she was before. I never saw her cry one bit after 'cept when others were around. At home I couldn't help but hear her and see her. She was always smilin' to herself and a-singin' — always singin', a happy tune at that. Not one of them church-goin' songs. Just like she had a secret all to herself and wasn't tellin' nobody nothin'.

She never even said a word about Jesus and God after. Right off she stopped goin' to church-sings and teachin' Sunday School. 'First she said she had a headache but I knew she ain't never had a headache before in her life bad enough to keep her away from church. After she just stopped makin' excuses.

And the way she talked. Miss Elsie never talked to nobody but Miss Amy and the ladies in the coffee clatche. All of a sudden she was talkin' to everybody. Anybody who would listen. Why one day, and just two days after Miss Amy had gone at that — Why you'll just never believe it.

I was in the library dustin' the books. Miss Elsie was in the parlor and I just couldn't help but overhear what happened. The postman came to the door and Miss Elsie talked to him. I know for sure 'cause I heard her with my own ears.

"Won't you come in for coffee?" she said.

Amy never let strangers in the house, let alone a postman. Amy always said classes shouldn't mix. She never spoke to strangers. Always told Elsie not to either. And I never before saw Elsie do it.

Well, like I started to say, I just couldn't help overhear the talkin' and all. The postman said he was sorry about Miss Amy. Nor Elsie made like she didn't hear him and started talkin' like she'd always knew him.

She said, and I heard it with my own ears, "I'm going to take a vacation soon. I think I'll go to either Florida or Bermuda."

She said she might stay there and sell the house if she liked the warm weather. I was so shocked, I mean after what Miss Amy said about the orphan's home and all.

And then the next day, sure as I'm sitting here in this chair, didn't she let me go. Imagine after all those years. Gave me two month's pay and told me to leave just as soon as I could pack. Two month's pay. I tell you Miss Amy would have rolled over in the grave.

I got the awful feelin' some evil spirit had taken hold of Miss Elsie. Like she was a witch or somethin'. Well I just packed and left as soon as I could.

About a week later, I happened to be walkin' by the place, and there sure as life wasn't there a For Sale sign in front of it. The house was all boarded up like it is now. It looked as though nobody never lived there.

Miss Elsie? Why she had gone. Disappeared. Nobody knows where for sure. Now I heard from my friend Clara who overheard Mr. Winterbloom say that Mr. Underhill's son saw her in Spain. Said she lived in one of them palace-castles and was wastin' all kinds of money collectin' pitchers — pitchers of ladies with no clothes on at that.

And now all this talk about them lawyers and such. I heard they say she shouldn't 'a-takin' all the money. They say there's a brother who says some is his.

I don't know though. I never paid much hold to gossipin'.

Kathryn Crowley



The Nature of Good and Evil

An Essay — Review of Herman Melville's *Billy Budd*

Billy Budd is often described as an allegory on the fall of man. Billy is said to play the part of Adam, who was innocent and happy "ere the urbane serpent wriggled himself into his company." Claggart is the Satan who provokes Billy to commit a crime, Billy being at the time defenseless except for his physical strength. And Captain Vere, "Starry Vere," is the one who condemns Billy to suffer for his crime as God condemned Adam.

Apart from this possible allegory on what Melville appears to consider an unjust condemnation of man by God, *Billy Budd* is also a large collection of comments, some direct and others symbolical, on the nature of good and evil. Many of these are no more than questions left unanswered. On the other hand, there are many broad and emphatic statements of opinion. Whether or not Melville actually believed in all that he wrote, whether he was being entirely serious or sometimes ironic, are questions which cannot be answered with complete certainty. Here there is merely an attempt to list some of those questions and opinions asked or stated (ironically or otherwise) in *Billy Budd*, and to present a personal viewpoint on them. Billy will be regarded not as Adam but as both a man and the force of good. Likewise, Claggart will be discussed as a man and as evil. Captain Vere will be judged as God and as man.

Early in the story, when the reader first meets Claggart, he is introduced to the Calvinistic concept of "natural depravity." Through Claggart, Melville declares the existence of an evil within man which man cannot control. Man is the victim of this evil; he is helpless against it and he cannot fight it. I find this concept invalid. Certainly there is evil in man. But there is also freedom to choose. Wherever man is governed by evil, I believe that he has *chosen* to be so governed. Man's life is filled with moral conflicts; always he must choose for himself.

Moreover, I feel that not only has man the ability to conquer evil within his own soul, but also he is under obligation to fight it as a force which exists all around him. Melville may or may not have agreed with that belief. He chose in *Billy Budd* to question it rather than to affirm or deny it. "Tell me," asks Captain Vere, "whether or not, occupying the position we do, private conscience should not yield to that imperial one formulated in the code under which alone we officially proceed?" In other words, does man have the right to oppose evil, or must he submit to it as a condition prearranged by God? Whether Melville intended it or not, the reader feels like shaking Captain Vere and shouting to him: "It is your conscience, Captain, which is God-given, not the unjust circumstances around you. Your private conscience is a part of your soul; in refusing to hear it, in casting it aside, you are rejecting part of your God-given soul. In crushing that which is divine in you, in destroying part of the only thing which gives you any dignity, you not only humiliate yourself, but you are doing *wrong*. In ignoring the dictates of your soul, you degrade the bond which makes you a child of God. You will be held responsible for what you do with your free will. You are here not to accept evil but to oppose it. You are not a toy of God but a soldier. In refusing to fight, you are taking the side of evil."

However, Captain Vere does take the side of evil. In his allegorical role, then, he shows God as a protector of evil. His ship, in fact, is designed particularly well for such protection. Immoral men are secure there because "once enlisted aboard a King's-Ship, they were as much in sanctuary as the transgressor of the Middle Ages harboring himself under the shadow of the altar." Evil, past and present, appears to find refuge in God. He sanctions it, insures its survival. I don't know why so many writers have placed God in such a role. Perhaps it is part of man's need to have a scapegoat. When something is wrong, there is a feeling that someone must be blamed. A negative force is always hard to accept. Nevertheless, the fact that God permits the existence of evil is not evidence

that He sends it, approves of it, or uses His power in its favor. Evil, in my opinion, is permitted to exist as a kind of test. In allowing it to govern his soul, man can fall away from God. On the other hand, in refusing to yield to it, man can achieve a spiritual victory and draw nearer to God. Evil gives him the opportunity to choose what he wants most, to exercise his free will. In denying man's ability to choose, Melville also denies the purpose of evil's existence. In addition, he sees God, the Creator of men with "natural depravity," as the source of this purposeless evil. It is not unlikely that he found this situation terribly unjust, and God worthy of blame for it.

If we may accept Claggart as the embodiment of evil, and Billy Budd as good, then pure evil, in Melville's opinion, is a very positive, powerful force. It is ultimately victorious — at least as far as outward physical appearances are concerned — over good. Whatever small position it is permitted to acquire in men's lives, it quickly increases its power and control. Claggart enters the navy as a "novice assigned to the least honorable section of the man-of-war's crew, embracing the drudgery," but in a short time, he rises to the significant position of master-at-arms. His subordinates, the ship's corporals, are compliant "almost to a degree inconsistent with entire moral volition." With the aid of his "underground," Claggart then can make his power felt "to the mysterious discomfort if nothing worse of any of the sea — commonalty." Moreover, we are informed that he is capable of "cool judgment, sagacious and sound."

Good, in contrast, is described as a rather weak force. Billy as good is destroyed. Although he is liked by all except Claggart, Billy has none of Claggart's power over his fellow-men. Captain Vere feels obliged to take Claggart's side, the members of the court yield, the Chaplain is indifferent to his death, and not one of the crew even protests his destruction. And he is stupid. We read that "such innocence as man is capable of does yet in a moral emergency not always sharpen the faculties or enlighten the will."

The power of evil has already been discussed. The strength of good, as a force in the world, appears to me somewhat as Melville sees it. Everywhere it is continuously being defeated. It is much less frequently a motivation for men's behavior than falsely conceived obligations, fear, apathy, greed. And it is often far removed from wisdom so that it is easily crushed by the more clever force of evil.

But despite its weakness as a force in the world, good, as explained by Melville, is a part of man which contains something of the divine. Billy is always described in religious terms. His face is called a "crucifixion to behold." His deed conveys "the divine judgment" and he is an "angel of God." There are probably very few who would deny the divine element in the force of good. God we know is all-good. And heaven is attained only through goodness. Evil, by contrast, has no place in God or the immortal life. And although Billy is outwardly, physically defeated by evil, false values, and fear, everyone on board knows that he has not been defeated spiritually, even as the early Christian martyrs and the Jewish victims of Hitler were not.

Not all of Melville's statements or questions concerning the nature of good and evil have been discussed here. Only a few of those he most emphasized have been presented along with a completely subjective analysis. The problem of defining or describing good and evil has never been solved to the complete satisfaction of mankind. Please note that the opinions expressed above represent not an attempt at solution, but merely the views of an inexperienced thinker.

Lynne Caldarone

ART SECTION

The Art Section is a new feature of the HELICON. The Editorial Staff decided in favor of such a section because of the great response to the request for pen and ink drawings and because of the quality of the work submitted. We feel that such work deserves recognition in the HELICON.



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p. pollard



R. Mc Donnell

