

Realities begin as visions in the minds of those who have never dreamed dreams without believing they could come true.

This issue of **Absolute** is dedicated to those who are brave enough to dream the dreams, and strong enough to believe they will come true.





- Artie Hicks

Ten years ago South Oklahoma City Junior College was a vision conceived by a few who dared to dream.

This handful of believers were moved by a commitment to knowledge, education and life-long learning, and by a challenge to provide a quality of life that could only be imagined.

And the believers treated the dream as they would any form of life that is just beginning, just as they would a seedling for an oak tree.

The seed was planted, and nurtured, and encouraged, and praised. And the small seedling became the mighty oak tree, just as the dream of a few became the reality of an accredited institution recognized for its commitments and challenges.

South Oklahoma City Junior College began — and will always remain — an institution incorporating those individuals who dare to believe, who dare to encourage, who dare to dream.

Donald L. Newport,
 President,
 South Oklahoma City Junior College

Reminiscences...

During the first year I taught here, people often wandered into the building with forlorn looks asking, "Where's the junior college?" Most thought we were a shopping mall.

Also at that time, my grandfather couldn't find where I worked: "I keep driving by, but there isn't anything there!" We were underground.

There was the year I taught spelling by sound next door to a class in disco dancing.

One year we were marching down the stairs in the graduation procession when the sleeve of Bob Todd's gown caught on the rail and caused a domino-effect faculty pile-up. There followed the challenge of continuing the march with straight faces. I couldn't meet the challenge.

One year I invented a game involving poker chips to teach a lesson about medical terminology. Warren Neal, then an instructional assistant, will never forgive me for making him paint innumerable poker chips red (to represent blood) instead of just purchasing more chips. In my performance evaluation that year, my manager said I sometimes tried too hard to save money.

There was the day I ran into the restroom for a moment's peace (it is called *rest*room!), and the secretary came in and called me to the phone.

I once went through the whole class period in Composition and Literature leading discussion and writing on the board, wondering why the class was giggling. After class, one student pointed out that my pants had been unzipped the whole time. A man showed up at my desk on a rainy Friday afternoon last month to say, "I know you don't remember me, but I had you for a phonics course in '73. I want you to know it was your encouragement that got me started. Now I'm an R.N., and when my patients come back to tell me that I made a difference it really means a lot. I've been thinking for a long time that I should find you and tell you that you really made a difference."

In October '72, one of my Oral & Written Composition students snapped at me, "I don't want to do all this writing and stuff. Just count me present and let me have my C, like at Oscar Rose." I said, "Fine. Go to Oscar Rose."

One Halloween I wore a gorilla suit and a tutu to work.

We purchased clocks for the classrooms used for the YES Program, to help the students improve their time management skills, and got dramatic results: within a few short weeks, they were changing the time on the clocks to shorten class time and allow more break time.

One summer, on the last day of the YES Program for teenagers, a student hid in the building until the buses left in the hope that the faculty member she had a crush on would have to take her home. And the following day, another student called in to give us the number where he was staying, "...just in case we needed him."

In the early lean years, our student numbers were so low we offered anything we could think of. I taught beginning ballet; Carolyn Rouillard was one of my students.

Surprised that their peers were uncomfortable in their open-space middle school, my children thought it was normal to be "spaced out": their mother worked at SOCJC.

Several years ago, I had heard that my institute might be rearranged when I came to work one morning and my office had been moved. It's a little disconcerting to start your day trying to find your desk.

There was a time (obviously years ago!) when students used to approach me and ask where they could find a faculty member.

— Kay Kamm

On The Ceiling

Bowl filled with water Reflecting the sunshine's Kaleidoscope patterns.

- Carol Swink

July Saturday

My child floats on her styrofoam. Boats zoom back and forth like the waves they make: self-contained.

I read Slothrop in my plastic lawn chair and look at boats; waves almost touch me (waves made by waterskiers and waterbugs).

Lake's surface shimmers like a gigantic puzzle reflecting clouds.

There is a point where sun and water meet, everything is that purplish-orange, water and sky are

Gray Afternoon

Filthy small boy, dog-child; A mixture of fresh rain smell and old, wet overcoat nastiness; Looking even more like a wooly bear than usual.

Stay in and warm this dreary day with me.

- Cecelia Yoder

5-7-5

White light, clidik, light firetail fox in the night sky Gray godlaugh eyes bright

Hands

Old hands are beautiful too. They show their character to you. For their family they have worked, And from their duty never shirked. They show a lifetime of toil, As they made a living from the soil, Or from an office or a store, They have been faithful evermore. Let not gloves hide their beauty: Let us guess about their duty, How they served their loved ones-Husband, daughters, and their sons.

> Gladys Inez Elder Mays (1898 - 1982)



House Haiku

White house, brilliant lights. The dead, stalking once again, Reliving past dreams.

— JoAnn Swink

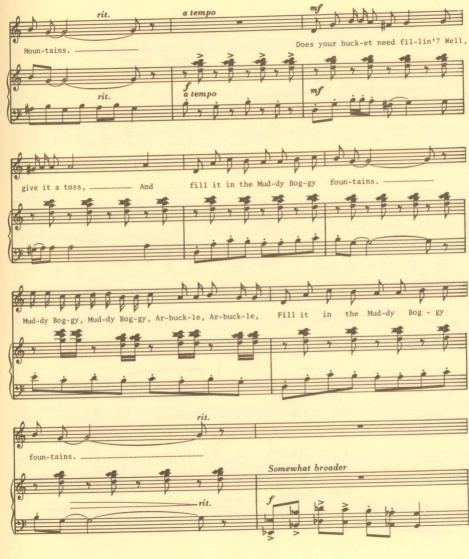
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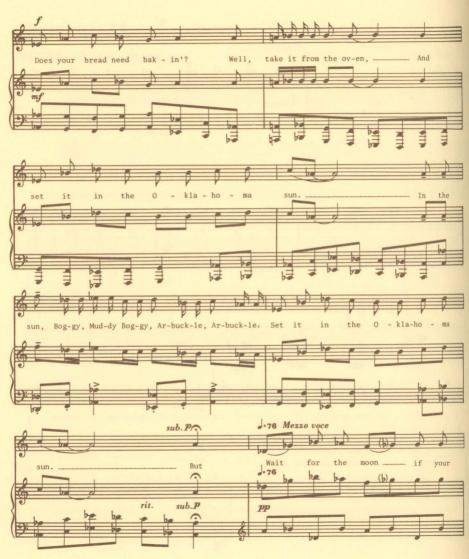


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The Violin

This is a love story about a lonely man and a beautiful violin.

It was the fourth quarter, two minutes to play, Notre Dame behind by two points and driving for a possible touchdown or field goal. Tony was glued to the T.V. Out of the corner of his eye he saw his wife Marie enter the den. What now? thought Tony.

"Tony," she said, "you have got to get that junk down from the attic. St. Joe's rummage sale starts next Saturday and we haven't taken a thing over to the church."

"Please, Marie," said Tony, "just let me finish this game in peace and I'll do whatever you want, but just go away for now."

"OK, but remember, you promised."

Notre Dame kicked a field goal and won the game by one point. Tony, like millions of other Notre Dame subway alumni, was overjoyed. In a great mood and whistling the Notre Dame victory march, Tony set off to unload the attic for the rummage sale.

Tony, forty nine, born in Philadelphia in 1931, had attended Boston College and graduated in 1953 with a degree in Electrical Engineering. Immediately he went to work for the local power company. In 1965 Tony's company acquired all of the assets of a small electronics firm in Phoenix, Arizona, and Tony was given the opportunity to move to the Southwest and become part of a new, growing industry. Tony, Marie, and their three children had moved to Phoenix in 1966.

Still humming the Notre Dame victory march, Tony tackled the job of gathering up the junk from the attic. Toys, dolls, crossword puzzles, games—all fell victim to Tony's eager hands. In the last pile of junk he spotted an old violin case. "Didn't remember an old violin case being in the attic; better open it up." Sure enough. A violin—the strings all broken, the bridge lying off to the side. Even the two bows had little horse hair remaining. Tony picked up the case, crawled down from the attic, and started hollering for Marie.

Marie, in the kitchen, heard Tony. "Have him working; better see what he wants." She rushed out to the garage to find Tony, standing on the attic ladder, holding an old violin case.

"Marie, where did this come from?"

Marie had to stop and think. Slowly she remembered. The violin had belonged to her brother, John. When she was a little girl, she remembered, her brother, ten years older than she, had taken the violin to his Saturday lesson. She also remembered the telegram in 1944: "The President of the United States regrets to inform you that your son John..." Her Italian-American parents, heartbroken, turned all their attention to Marie. When she married Tony in 1954, no wedding expense was spared. When little Tony came along two years later, Marie's parents had a new love. Then there were Joe and Linda. But in 1962, while on vacation in Florida, Marie's parents were killed in a head-on collision, hit by a drunk driving on the wrong side of the highway.

In a state of shock, Marie had gone through the motions of settling the estate. A few things she kept, but the house and furniture were sold. She did not remember keeping the violin, but it may have been a part of the few items picked up from the old house and saved, taken with them to Phoenix.

Now the violin brought back all of those memories. "Tony," she said, "give it to the church and bury the past."

"How much should it sell for at the rummage sale?" asked Tony.

"I don't know," she replied, "but it looks terrible. How about thirty-five dollars? Maybe someone could fix it up for their kid."

And so, all Saturday the violin sat on a table marked with a large thirty-five-dollar sign. People looked and backed off. "What a piece of junk! Why, even the case is falling apart. The nerve!"

Late that afternoon, Andy Benardello came into the building where the rummage sale was being held. Few people knew Andy. The few who did knew that he and his wife had moved from New York City to Phoenix two years before—for his wife's health. The doctors in New York had told Andy it might not help her arthritis, but it certainly would do no harm.

As a young man, Andy had studied violin and played in the second violin section of his college symphony. After completing college, he had started an insurance business. As the business grew, he had less and less time for music. In 1980, Andy sold his agency, and he and his wife made the move to Phoenix. The move seemed right at the time, but little by little he realized that old friends had been left behind; the days were long, and Andy had no special interests or activities to fill them. Deep depression was starting to take its toll. Andy filled some idle hours by making a few garage sales and, like today, even a church rummage sale here and there.

Andy passed among the various tables looking at the clocks, toasters, coffee pots, etc., for sale. Then he noticed the violin. He picked it up, placed it under his chin, and his heart suddenly skipped a beat. He then took the violin over to the window where the light was better. One close look, and Andy's hands were shaking. This was not just another violin. The color, the wood, the scroll work! He hurried back, placed the violin in the case, locked

it, and rushed over to the table by the door. He showed the lady the price sign, pulled three tens and a five from his wallet, and paid for the violin. As he went through the door, the lady taking the money remarked that old Andy must have a screw loose to pay thirty-five dollars for a piece of junk.

Marie had thought the violin she donated to the sale had belonged to her brother, but the violin had actually belonged to her father. His father, in turn, had been given the violin by his father, who came to this country from Italy in 1896. Left alone in 1895, after his parents had perished in the earthquake of '85, Gerioni Nicolini had had few worldly possessions, only the violin. Gerioni remembered his uncle's parting words as they stood on the Italian dock. "Gerioni," his uncle had said, "we have little money to give you, but you have the violin. No matter what you do in that great new country, never let the violin out of the family." So Gerioni came to Philadelphia, worked in a deli, saved his money, eventually bought his own deli, and married Marie's grandmother. True to his uncle's wishes, before he died he gave the violin to his son, Marie's father.

By the time Andy, the violin's new owner, reached his car in the church parking lot, he had calmed down. However, he did not remember much about the drive home because he was thinking so hard about the violin. What had he just bought? Maybe just another fiddle. No, that didn't add up. But what did he have, how to determine where to start? A million thoughts. Yes, that was it—first thing, look at the label inside the right sound hole.

Rushing into the house, Andy went looking for his wife and found her on the sun porch. Although her arthritis was still painful, she could now move about much better, even to the extent of taking short walks. Funny—if the mind is convinced about the change in climate, the body may follow.

"Look," said Andy. "Look what I just bought at the church rummage sale!" In a flash, Andy had opened the case and was showing Linda the worst-looking violin she had ever seen.

"Heavens, Andy, what has gotten into you?"

"No, no," said Andy, "look closer. Look at the color, the wood, the purfling, the scroll-work—don't you see?"

"All I see," said Linda, "is a fiddle with no bridge and broken strings. Why, even the bows are no good; look at the hair—it's all falling out."

"Let me get my flashlight," said Andy, "and we'll have a look at the label."

Back in a minute, Andy began to look. Yes, there was a label, too faded to read. Try as he might, Andy could only make out a few letters and numbers—not enough to make any judgement.

Andy was up the next morning at six. He could not remember when he had gotten up that early in Phoenix. But he had a lot to do.

First, get a good set of strings. Also a bow—could have one of the bows in the case rehaired, but people might start asking questions. Best just to buy a bow. (Andy, while not wealthy, was, as the saying goes, "well-fixed," so cost was no problem.) Next, to to the library. Check out some books. Then—Andy knew of a local violin shop that repaired and sold violins.

"Move, clock!" The shop did not open until nine; at eightthirty, Andy was in the car and on his way; had to wait a few minutes for the shop to open. When the nice lady unlocked the door, Andy rushed in.

- "The best set of violin strings you have!" said Andy.
- "Slow down," said the lady. "Where is your violin?"
- "Never mind," said Andy. "Just sell me your best strings."
- "We do not stock the best strings, since the majority of our business is with young students. The best we have are Eudoxa strings at \$32.90 a set."
 - "Fine. I'll take them. Also the best bow you have."
- "Now you're talking real money," said the lady. "The best we have is an old German bow at \$175.00."
 - "I'll take it," said Andy, and paid cash.

Next—to the main library. Andy checked the card index—Section 787.IW386G. He hurried to the section. The only relevant book he could find was *The Glory of the Violin* by Joseph Wechsberg—a good start. He checked the book out and hurried home.

Good heavens, it was already eleven o'clock—where had the morning gone? Slowly he strung the violin. Had to spit on the pegs to get them to hold. Finally, the job was done. Now for the bow. But he had forgotten to buy rosin, and the hair in the bow was new. Back in the car and back to the violin shop. Home in an hour. My, how time flies! Now, rosin the bow and try the violin.

Andy hadn't played in years, but could still tune by ear. Slowly, he pulled the bow across the open G string. His heart jumped—the deep beautiful tone! Up to the D string, then the A—beautiful! Now the E string—clear, thrilling! First position, still

clear. Moving up the E, second, third, fourth, fifth position. Still clear, beautiful. Andy was shaking all over. "Better slow down. Try something simple. A few finger exercises." No good—the years of no practice were evident. "Must start over. Back to the violin shop and buy some music. Simple at first until my fingers begin to respond." Back home, Andy looked at the clock in the hallway. Five o'clock! It couldn't be: he hadn't even had lunch, and Linda was talking about dinner!

After dinner, Andy started turning through the library book he had checked out that morning. Much to his surprise he found that there are fewer than a dozen experts in the world: that is, people qualified to appraise the make and age of a violin. Also he found that the label, in some cases, doesn't mean a thing. In the 1600-1700 time period, faking labels was commonplace. "No matter; turn to the section on Stradivari." Again, not easy: Antonio Stradivari, born sometime between 1644 and 1649 (the experts have never been able to pinpoint the exact year), made somewhere between 1,000 and 1,200 violins, plus many violas and cellos. But Stradivari was not the only famous violin maker in the Cremona, Italy, area. The father of the modern violin was believed to be Andrea Amati (1530? - 1611?). Andrea's sons Antonio (1550) -1638?) and Gerolamo (1556 - 1630) continued the work of their father and produced magnificent violins, violas, and violoncellos. The most famous member of the family was Gerolamo's son Nicolo (1596 -1684), whose model instrument was known as the grand Amati. His violin became famous in Italy and throughout Europe. His pupils included Antonio Stradivari and Andrea Guarnieri. As Andy read on, he found there were many other great violin makers Joseph Guarneri del Gesa (the most famous of the Guarneri family), Francesco Ruggieri, Carlo Bergonzi (a pupil of Stradivari), and the famous German maker, Jacob Stainer-to name a few.

Andy now realized that finding out exactly what he had bought at the rummage sale was not going to be easy.

Over the following months, Andy began a daily routine of four hours' practice in the morning, lunch, then research during the afternoon. He checked out every book the library system had on violins, haunted book stores, sent off for more information. Two books that Andy found in an old book store were Antonio Stradivari by W. H. Hill, published in New York in 1909, and The Violin and the Art of its Construction by A. Breshers, published in London in 1905.

In a short while, Andy had a lab in his basement, complete with measuring instruments and sound equipment, plus a few other violins he had picked up for study. Andy was very, very busy, but he found time to join a string quartet at the senior citizen's center. When the other members asked about his violin, Andy said it was just an old fiddle he had picked up somewhere along the line. The members thought it was strange that Andy would never let them hold his violin, much less play it. Another thing: the tone. Strange that "just an old fiddle" had such a full, rich tone. Sometimes when Andy played, the rest stopped and just listened. Andy had even received a letter from the Phoenix Symphony about a vacant chair in the violin section. If he could find the time—that was something to consider.

Month after month, Andy continued the research on his rummage-sale violin. He had collected additional books on varnishes, woods, violin construction, famous makers, and measurements. Some days he was convinced he had a Strad, other days he was not so sure. But did it really matter who had made the instrument? He had rediscovered his love of music, the joy of playing, a purpose in life.

a place far away, gathered to watch and listen. Antonio Stradivari, Nicolo Amati, Joseph Guarneri del Gesa, and Jacob Stainer.

And each morning, as Andy started his practice, four men, in

"He's still a little weak on the G string," said Antonio.

"I agree," replied Joseph, "but it's not the instrument." For they knew who had made Andy's violin.

- Herbert E. Brown

Scimeth

Of what use is your education, I ask, when computers store so efficiently? Just a collection of facts needed for a task? But the textbooks compile so competently. What then? How doth it benefit to spend this time in school? Why, to think, to reason, to make fit, to solve by logic and by rule. You see machines and books can only respond with those things we put therein, but the human mind can go beyond to explore places no man has been.

— F. James McGaha

Menelaus

I am a leader of men.
From salt-spray summers
To blood-blear winters
I have stood between my men and
Death.

I am not the least of my countrymen. My father's son is hailed the King of Men, And I am among the great in council. Others may be thicker in the chest, But I am fearsome of heart.

It was
I
Who seized the helm of
Pretty-faced Paris;
I
Dragged his battered flee

Dragged his battered flesh Across skull-hard sand. I had joyfully given blows born from Betrayal

weaned by Loneliness reared in Wrath.

His honey-looks did not help him;
When it came to manly strength,
His gentle speech failed him.
Had not the gods themselves
Destined
The Fall of Troy,
I
Would have slaked my
Hate that day.

Would have won for myself My captured mare.

I Am old.

T

Have survived

When battle-comrades fell to

Fate-driven shafts, Chest-rending crags, Blood-bathing wives Heart-shearing Pride.

I am an old man Whose memories Are shared Alone.

There are no old friends to laugh with

to cry with

There is only she

Who caused

marital strife martial strife

Death.

Haiku

Stardust sprinkling the cosmic magician sends a potion for love...

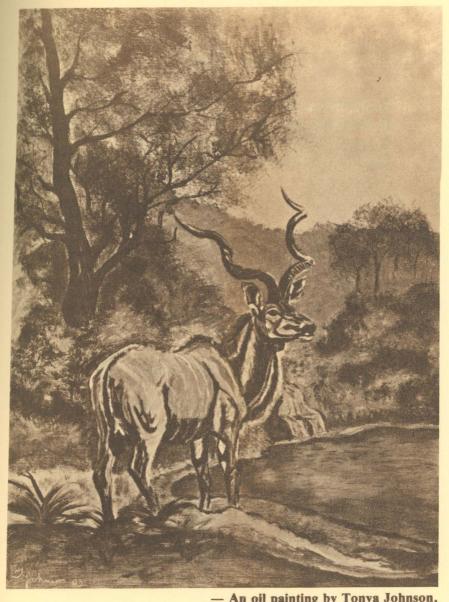
- Lee Mefford

Flagons and Apples: A Song Without Notes...

Slay me no dragons
Nor don garments fine,
But soothe me with melons
And grapes from the vine.
Stay me with flagons
Of mulberry wine
And please me with raisins
And apples that shine.

Come sit by the bowers
All banded with lace
Where sunlight and showers
Shall see your sweet face.
Stay me with flowers
In vases so rare....
Then kiss me...do, kiss me,
And tell me you care.

— Vida Mathey



 An oil painting by Tonya Johnson, photographed by Artie Hicks

First Love

A silent love steals softly through the night. It dares not whisper, dares not breathe a sigh. It gently curls itself around your heart But must be kept completely from your sight.

— Carol Swink

There are so few captivating things
Left in life to see,
That I often wonder why
I go on searching.

And yet, I doubt not That I should find you Some hidden night By my side.

- R. W. P.

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Silence
    sleeps at night
and ethereal people
    are awake
forever.
I was on the space shuttle
    sent to the moon
so when you look
    into the moon
notwithstanding time
    or whenever...
I am right there
looking
into
the
essence
         of
              those
                  big
                     dark
                       beautiful
                            eves
                                 of
                                     yours
         watching earth...
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- Rickke Green

Contingency

I beg you to read
The braille of my face
With your fingertips
I beg you with silence
Or sometimes with quiet hollow words
That coax ice crystals from your eyes

You would find me an interesting story
Wrinkles and lashes whispering to you
Of perpetual loneliness
Perpetual reaching out
A cycle that cuts more familiar
Than knife blade on flesh

You would hear poems
Too perfect for words
Reaching from my mouth
To prairie sky at dusk
When I pretend I am alone

Like the flavor of summer cherries Still heavy with sun warmth You could savor from my lips The power that comes from Being alive at twilight

As gray wolf watches moon I would watch you

watching me Become my own dream Forever free and indomitable



A Glance

A glance And it happened

A second look Eyes met Understanding dawned Smiles grew

A word And we knew

We talked Strangers Yet friends it was right

A laugh And it grew

A bond Sealing us together So alike Yet different

A parting A sadness

We left
And went our own ways

Reluctantly

Apart yet together

A letter! We still knew

Growing up
And maturing

The letters stopped
But not the understanding
A hope
And a conviction

The right things
Holding us together
Waiting for the right time

Ready now To understand

Fully.

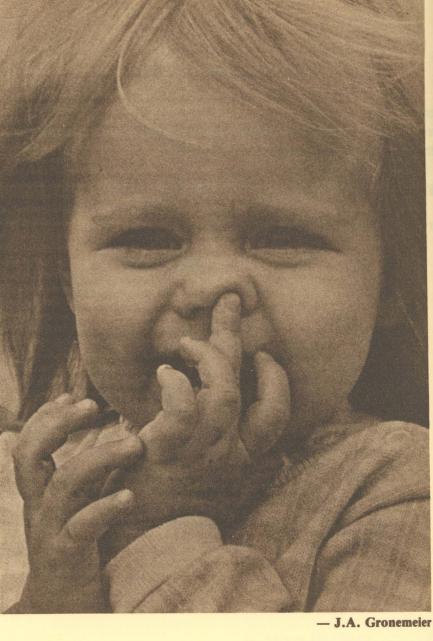
- Allison Jill Chody

Carlotta, Barbara, Beth

sister/mothers hovering, staying constant when the force of gravity deserted when light failed and reality moved away

fatigue-worn blanket-covered shoulders with maternal arms and tragic faces

your beauty was your gift of strength



No More Bravado

As we grow older, we lose courage and gain what we call wisdom. No more swan-dives into a hay-stack far below, no more trusting gravity. I climb no trees to the highest branchthe sky gets closer in time. Who are we that claim the world? Have we no vision, no hope? I remember moments of childhood's laughter when, once, there was no fear: it is a shadow in the eyes, permanent dusk on the horizon.

Daddy, where are you?
I can see your funny grin;
I can hear your hearty chuckle;
the twinkle in your eye makes me smile to myself,
but I can't find you.

I can still feel the sting of your hand on my face. I'll never forget Lecture #999, but you're not here.
Where are you, Daddy?

I couldn't wait to tell you about my "B" in biology. You knew I could do it.
You never had doubts that I could make it.
Please tell me again.
Daddy, I can't see you.
Just one more hug,
please, Daddy.

You made me strong.

Your pushed me to the limit.

Your touch was gentle;
your hands so strong
as you made the flowers grow
and the tomatoes thrive on your loving care.

Will they die too?

Please, Daddy, just one more flower, just one more season.

Daddy, you taught me about love.
You opened my eyes to the beauty of nature.
You helped nurture my mind.
You touched my heart in so many ways.
Here's one more tear for you, Daddy.
Please wipe it from my eye and tell me everything's OK.

Someday I'll see you again; I'll feel your touch: I'll see your smile: I'll hear your laugh. but where are you now, Daddy?

> — Annette Grill, 1982, in memory of her father...

On The Edge Of Self

cold stars pierce tired soul-body

chipped nights of sky cover naked blackjack

moon fire blazes red winter/red earth

iron gate blows cat music, like hurt

rocks push naked feet; sink wild flowers between brown toes

silence like bowls covers skin, and

home, like ice, totters on the edge of touch cracks over self...

- Karen Young Holt

Snow drifts down on our lady. Her journey, long. We wish her well

As she leaves us with a song.

— JoAnn Swink, lines dedicated to

Carrie Walker...

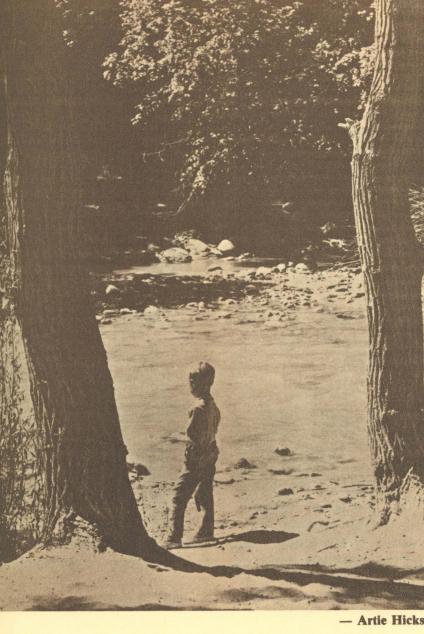
Drifting Away

One day I sat down
By the riverside and thought,
What is it I'm looking for?

I looked out at the sun
That was setting in the west,
And realized what it was.
I have seen many things
In my life which won't be forgotten,
But what is important?
In the future I see
What will happen with the world;
It is not full of happiness.

Someone take me away From this time of strife and pain, For life is giving, not taking.

— Cody Watkins (1962-1982)



Raku Pottery

Raku is an ancient Oriental firing technique which is excellent for contemporary potters wanting something unique, unrepeatable, to enhance their vessels. Each raku pot is unique because it is impossible to control the firing to the point of creating identical pots. When raku-fired, a vessel takes on individual characteristics according to its reaction to the glazes the potter has used on it and to the reduction and cooling steps in the raku process.

Using this method, clay pots or other vessels are first glazed and then placed inside a homely-looking kiln — a 55-gallon drum lined with fire brick.

The firing begins by carefully heating the kiln to 1800°, using kerosene or any other flamable substance the artist prefers. When the kiln has reached this high temperature, the glazes applied to the pots will melt. Once this has happened, tongs are used to remove the pots from the kiln while they are red hot. They are then placed in a reduction barrel containing dried leaves, newspapers, or sawdust. There the pots will burn the dry material, so a lid is placed over the barrel to smother the fire and to smoke the pots. Finally, the pots are cooled with water and dried.

The result is, in each case, an example of pottery made by utilizing an old technique which ensures an ever-new element of surprise due to the potter's deliberate surrender of complete control. At their best, raku pots are truly worthy of contemplation.



I Al lado de la charca

Para mí el fin de semana pasada fue una experiencia que nunca olvidaré. La fiesta española tenía mucho espíritu de familia. Todos estábamos juntos en una amistad que trascendió las fronteras de nuestras limitaciones. Casi toda la gente se divertió en un ambiente muy cristiano.

Despues de la fiesta algunos fuimos al Holiday Inn para bailar y charlar. Mientras caminábamos hasta el motel, me asultaron unos ideas que resultaron en el comienzo de una nueva resurrección. Charlando con "Mama" y los dos Jaimes, descubrí muchas cosas que antes no podía ni comprender ni aceptar.

Despues de muchas horas llegué a la casa de Sr. Jaime Lindsay en Pine City. La noche brillaba con las estrellas de felicidad y las brisas venteaban lentamente. La noche charlaba consigo misma por medio de sus animalitos e insectos. Cada una hablaba de la paz que topaba las colinas, el arroyo seco, y la charca. Mientras las brisas venteaban lentamente.

Personalidades llenas de energía humana discutían la vida en general y tambien los hechos del instituto. Cerca de las tres otras personas vinieron para compartir la conversación. Estábamos juntos y llenos de amor y felicidad, de paz y de ideas.

A las cuatro y medio empezó el milagro de la resurrección del dia—el amanecer. El negro de la noche oscura cambió a gris y el gris se convirtió a un azul palido. Pasaba una hora, la claridad de cielo se manifestó.

Los animales de la noche se callaron y los del día empezaron a saludarse unos a otros. Las brisas frescas hacian oscilar las cops a de los árboles.

Los pajaritos gritaban mientras subía la niebla de la charca. La naturaleza empezó a dar luz otra vez a un día. Yo sentí la paz, el amor, la libertad, y la amistad mientras que las brisas venteaban lentamente.

— July 23, 1968

II By the Pond's Edge

Last weekend for me was an experience that I shall never forget. The Spanish Feast was filled with a familial spirit. We were all joined together in a friendship that transcended the boundaries of our limitations. Almost everyone had a real good time in a very christian kind of atmosphere.

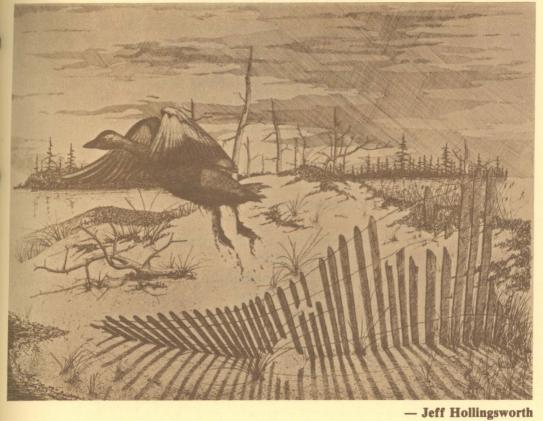
After the party several of us went to the Holiday Inn to dance and chat. While we were driving to the motel, I was struck by some ideas that resulted in the beginning of a new resurrection. Talking with "Mama" and the two James, I discovered many things which up to that time I had not been able to either understand or accept.

Several hours later I arrived at the home of Mr. James Lindsay in Pine City. The night shone brightly with happiness' stars and the breezes blew gently. The night chatted with itself through its animals and insects. Each one spoke of the peace which came across the hills, the dry stream bed, and the pond. Meanwhile the breezes blew gently.

Personalities filled with human energy were discussing life in general as well as the Institute's activities. Around three in the morning other people came to join in the conversation. We were together and filled with love and happiness, with peace and ideas.

At four-thirty, dawn, the miracle of the day's resurrection, started. Dark night's black changed to gray, and the gray gave way to pale blue. An hour passed; the sky was bright. The night animals quieted and those of the day began to greet one another. Fresh breezes moved the tops of the trees. The birds shouted while the mist rose from the pond. Nature again brought light to a new day. I felt peace, love, freedom, and friendship while the breezes were blowing gently.

Richard Rouillard,April 9, 1983



Letter To A Scientific Christian

Your eyes bleed desperation Unable to see till they believe Unable to believe till they see

Cigarette-scarred voice Jarred into prayer by fear

Clinging to hope Like morning glory to trellis Awaiting an imprecise Miracle of angels

You measure word and thought In rooms unlit by candle Experiment with illness of spirit That comes from too much Contemplation

Worship is a sin, dear friend, Taking the place Of all that went before Of all that follows Denying that infinity Flows in your every breath

Denying that something surges beyond The speed of light That something moves in this room of Spacelessness Something with eyes that know Knowing is not necessarily knowing Something that connects Memories and dreams And memories of a dream When the sun glows invisible And the rains fall forever up Through the crack between worlds

- Mary Ann Peters

Interdisciplinary

Before, Now, After. Philosophy, History, Religion. Question, Study, Answer.

"What was before Man?"
"Why does he exist?"
Questions the Philosopher.

"Where man stands now; How he advanced, beheld, and conquered. Study these clues," says the Historiographer.

"Who accepts the interpretation of that evidence, When faith is what Man is really After!" Answers the Father.

- Thomas L. Hedglen

One Day

In the beginning, I did not know that he existed. I was alone.

One day I heard my friends talking about him.

I said that I did not know him.

One of my friends invited me to go and meet him.

I had other things to do.

I saw him one day, standing there, beckoning to me. I turned and walked away.

I ran across his book in the library one day.

I wanted to know more.

I asked my friends what was it that he was trying to say. They explained it to me.

My friend again asked me to come and meet him.

This time I accepted.

I met this man and I talked to him.

I began to understand.

I now talk to him and read his book every day.

We are very close.

I now love him for what he has done for me.

He loves me no matter what I have done.

He is waiting to meet you.

Why don't you let me introduce you to him?

The Journey

Suddenly a strange glow appeared in the room as a vast whiteness dazzled my eyes. I tried to focus my vision on the walls which had started to shine as if encrusted with diamonds. I tried to extend my fingers to touch them in order to confirm what I saw, but found I was unable to move.

A voice nearby whispered and whimpered, and I knew it was my wife's. I tried to tell her that she'd be all right without me...not to cry, but to live...but most of all to walk out of this strange place, which we had thought was a hospital, because it was changing into something of a bewilderment. But I could neither speak nor turn my head in her direction. All I could do was stare at the blinding whiteness.

A face began to form near the surface of the bed and I watched it with a great degree of fascination. It was the face of a young girl in her late teens whose hair was golden with bright glints that out-glittered the diamond glow. And her eyes were like opals, a soft milky-white with bits of color sparkling in them. She smiled at me.

"I know who you are," I whispered to her, not even surprised that my voice had returned.

"Who an I?" Her voice was just as I had expected, gentle and soothing.

"Death. I always knew death was a beautiful woman."

"Then you were wrong." She continued to smile as she extended her hand toward mine. "Death is simply that—death."

"Funny, I was sure the only way a man could be lured to leave his life would be by the coaxing of someone very beautiful. Someone like you." I didn't dare touch her hand, afraid it would be cold, so she took my hand in hers, and before I could protest, a strange warmth began to flow through me.

"I'm your escort. If you wish to come."

"You mean I have a choice?"

"Of course."

"Well, if you're not death, where is it we're going?"

"On a journey." She was still smiling.

"You certainly don't believe in long explanations, do you?"

"I'm concerned only with being your escort."

Everything seemed to happen in slow-motion. Her voice never changed in pitch or volume, but continued on, gently, as if we had all the time in the world. Then I found out she could discern my thoughts!

"We do."

"Do what?" I had to make sure.

"Have all the time in the world. Time is of no value now."

"If I say I don't want to go....what happens then?"

"You may remain. But you must realize that your bonds of life will be most painful. Sorrow will surround you as all the ones you love turn from you."

- "Do you mean they will stop loving me?"
- "No. The love will appear to you as different...distasteful...as unwelcome as pity. Shall I show you what it will be?"

Her hand lifted from mine and in her palm I saw clouds swirling as a picture began to form. It was loathsome. I was completely paralyzed, suffering indignities of body, my life supported by tubes and machines.

"Stop! Please, don't show me anymore. That's not life—that's unbearable."

She closed her hand and the scene fled. She waited patiently.

- "I understand, now," I whispered. "But what about where we are to go?"
- "I can't show you anything about that. Only what it will be if you remain here."
 - "I think you mean I must take it on faith."
 - "Some have called it that, but there are other names."
 - "Is there any way I can comfort my wife? Or my children?"
 - "No. That is now for others to do."
- "Are you trying to tell me that if I stay I shall never leave this bed, nor speak, nor see?"
 - "Yes. It is as you were shown." She raised her hand.
 - I was so afraid she'd open it again that I had to stop her.

"Why do I get the feeling you have a stacked deck? You can show me my future here, but nothing about where we're going. Why?"

"I'm not allowed to."

"Afraid you'll be accused of bribery?" I was sure that wherever it was, it had to be better, but I couldn't stop trying to be flippant about the whole situation.

"We have no need of such things. This is only my first contact with you. It will take another. I'll return." Her face began fading away, and I saw the features of a raccoon slowly superimposed on it, as if upon film. I wanted to raise my hand to stop her, but there she was gone. I felt myself sink deep into a sleep I had never known.

When she returned, I heard her voice before I saw her. She was making a sort of comforting sound by clicking her tongue.

"Where have you been?"

"A small soul was caught in a trap."

I looked at her carefully and on her shoulder sat a raccoon, only it was white with a pale gray pattern. "He's beautiful. I've never seen one exactly like him. Must be some rare breed."

"No. He's the same as all the others. His stripes haven't completely faded away." She stroked the fur of the creature as it nestled against her face.

"Have you made your choice?"

"Yes."

"Fine." She extended her hand toward me once more, and as I touched it, I suddenly felt as if I was lifted upward on a blanket of air which firmly supported me; and as it tilted slowly, I felt my feet touch something soft.

She never spoke again. I followed her out of the room into endless space. I looked down at the toy cars below us with their tiny beams of light flickering in darkness, and far away I could hear the music from a merry-go-round fading into silence as we followed a blinding light that lured us on.

I had closed my eyes against this light, at first, but now it didn't seem to bother me. We walked to a great building that was so cool and white I was sure it must be constructed of marble. Inside, benches were carved into each side of a vast hallway where people sat. Oddly enough, each person looked like the one sitting next to him....or her. I couldn't tell how many races were there, whether they were rich or poor, or even their ages. And they all wore white robes. I thought of an old adage I had heard someplace..."All things are equal in the sight of God," and I wanted to ask her if we were there—in the sight of God, but she had walked down the great hall, away from me and the others, the raccoon still perched on her shoulder.

I sat down on the bench nearest me, but a man strolled toward me and motioned for me to move to the other side, so I did. I sat next to a young man who began to look familiar, and I was a bit worried about it. People all looking alike and then suddenly changing...raccoons fading out to white. It was getting wierd.

I watched the young man carefully to see if I really did know him. I tried to search the features of his face but it was difficult because he kept staring straight ahead, as if he were in a trance.

"Don't I know you?" I asked it softly. I didn't want to startle him.

He suddenly became attentive, as if he had been waiting for me to make the first approach. "Sure you do. We served in the army together. Remember Omaha Beach?"

"Sam! You haven't changed a bit! How did you manage to stay so young?" Then it hit me in the pit of my stomach. Sam Bedlow died June 6, 1944, when he was nineteen.

"Forget it, Guy." He could tell what I was thinking, too! "This must be your first time through."

I was stunned. "You mean that you've been here before?"

"Yeah. Twice."

I felt the chill start at the base of my neck and spread. Sam always was a kidder. "What do you mean—twice?" I grinned at him, waiting for the joke.

"The first time was in '44. You remember. I caught it that day. D-Day. Then I was aborted in '59, and I came back."

"What do you mean...aborted?" All I could visualize was a space shot that wasn't going right.

"Aborted." He had tears in his eyes. "Remember my telling you about the girl I dated in England? Remember how I talked her into getting an abortion? I shouldn't have, Guy. I wasn't here more than a couple of weeks before she came in. She was in an air raid."

It all rushed in on me! I looked around at all the sameness of the people sitting there, and I realized we were in a place of retribution! My God! All my sins came swimming back, flooding me with pain. No wonder my escort wouldn't tell me anything about this place! The fear left me and I felt cheated. It was a stacked deck, and she knew it!

"Don't, Guy. Don't fight it."

I looked at Sam, carefully....more attentively than I had ever looked at anyone before. There were a million questions I wanted to ask him when I realized he had his problems, too. "Can you talk about it?"

"Sure. First, that man who sent you over here took me into a room and started a projector, and the film was my whole life! I never knew before just what a brat I was...torturing toads, keeping butterflies and bugs in bottles, kicking dogs."

"They had all that on film?"

"Every bit of it! Man, there were things I'd forgotten, or else didn't have any awareness of when they happened. They don't even get upset if you lie! They expect it from most of us. It was explained to me as being pretty average—to try to lie."

"But those things you did. Sam, you were just a kid! Surely they take that into consideration."

"Oh, sure—they're fair. But that's where it starts...when we are kids. We begin by mistreating insects, then animals, and then go on into our adult lives getting worse."

"But kids don't know any better!"

"Don't they, Guy? When does it start getting violent? In grade school. Come on. We all bury the unwholesome things we do, or rationalize our behavior until we feel justified in whatever action we take. We side-step any responsibility for wrong-doings. Even as kids. But we know."

I thought about it...The schoolyard bullies. The bigger children who set upon the small ones. "So, after you were aborted, what happened?"

"Well, the second time I was born in a litter of poodles. Do you know the first thing a mother poodle teaches her young is to fight?" He shuddered.

"You're making this up." I hoped he was.

"I wish I was, Ol' Buddy. I lived as a poodle for five years. One day I was left in a car with the windows up, and the temperature hit four-hundred-and-sixty-degrees within minutes! It was a sweltering day in August, 1972. I was dead when my owners came back with their groceries. They hadn't meant to do it, of course. Just forgot to roll down some windows when they turned off the air conditioner." He stood up, ready to leave me, and I was on the verge of panic. I searched my brain for some way to keep him with me, and for the first time noticed the metal case in his hand. It was circular, like the ones that contain a huge roll of film.

"Sorry I can't stick around, Sport, but I have to put this film in the permanent files. Maybe I'll see you again. If not...well, good luck."

I watched him walk down the hall and disappear into some sort of chamber. I sat there as quietly as possible, trying not to attract any attention. A young girl sat down beside me; she seemed the same age as Sam. She kept looking at her fingers as if she had never seen them before. Finally she turned toward me. Her smile was a great deal like my escort's had been.

"Hello." I smiled back at her, hoping she'd talk, hoping to get my mind occupied with something other than myself.

"Hello. What's your name?"

"Guy. Guy Summers. What's yours?"

"I'm Lillian Denton." She looked around slowly, then back at me. "I was wondering if my momma was here, but Mister, I don't

know what happened. I don't remember! I was five years old, and my momma was at work...This man who lived with us was burning my fingers with a cigarette. He said if I screamed or cried, he'd burn me just that much more. I tried not to scream, and I couldn't help it. But, see—my fingers aren't burned."

"No, they're fine. You have beautiful fingers."

She seemed not to pay much attention to anything I said. She was too intent upon finding out how she had changed. "And I've grown up!"

"Well, I wouldn't say you were five anymore. More like eighteen."

The person on the other side of Lillian leaned forward. "Nineteen. Everyone here is nineteen. That age was selected because at nineteen we are old enough to reason and make our own decisions."

Lillian looked at him, and I suddenly knew she was wondering if he was the man who had burned her fingers. I was wondering the same thing until she asked, "Do you know my momma?"

"No, I don't. Perhaps she isn't here yet."

Another girl walked to us and stood in front of Lillian. Her eyes were opal-like, so I knew she was an escort. "Lillian?"

"Yes."

"You are to come with me, if you please."

"Are you my momma?"

"No, I'm not. You shall never have need of a mother again."

Lillian followed her down the hall, past the chamber Sam had entered, and through a huge doorway inscribed with three words: "Pure in Heart."

The man who had been sitting next to Lillian moved over closer to me. "She's lucky!"

I thought of the pain she had suffered and asked, "How come?"

"Because she's just been taken out of the recycle group."

I stared at him in disbelief, then felt him tune in on my thoughts.

"She was probably knocked unconscious. She doesn't remember how it happened. Perhaps she was choked, or strangled. Anyway, now she doesn't have to go back—ever."

"Do you?"

- "Yes." He looked away from me. "I've been back so many times—and still have many more lives ahead of me. I've been a deer, a fighting game cock...."
- "A what?" I couldn't believe anything that had happened, let alone what he was telling me.
- "I ran a place where we staged cock fights. I was a real sportsman. About the only thing I didn't do was hunt big game. Just destroyed a lot of little things. Defenseless, of course. Well, at least I've replaced most of them."
 - "I don't think I understand."

He turned toward me again. "Well, it's something like this...Life is very important here. Every life. For each one taken or terminated before its purpose has been realized...well, that life has to be replaced and permitted to reach whatever objective was set for it."

"Do you mean that for each life I took, I must go back? Live it? Maybe even suffer the ending I gave it?" My voice trembled.

"Something like that. Sometimes the ending you endure is worse."

"Does one have a choice?"

"Sure, no one is forced to do anything. After you see your life film, you'll be able to know where you want to begin."

I thought of the kittens I had tied into a sack and flung into a lake.

He put his arm on my shoulder, in an attempt to comfort me. "Don't worry, fellow. There is no one without sin. I drowned cats, too."

The projectionist reappeared and asked that I follow him. We entered a vast room which contained one seat before a giant screen. I sat down and watched my story begin. It all seemed so protected and innocent, at first. But not as I grew older. About eight or nine. I broke out into a cold sweat, already painfully aware of the next episodes that would flash before me. There they were—my stepping on a bird's eggs, the kittens' frantic struggle to escape. Dogs forced to ride in the bed of a truck and suffering concussions, broken bones, and death because I sped around corners. I could even hear my laughter. Seventeen years old, and I had laughed at their sliding and stumbling. I shut my eyes, trying to blot out the

film, but it was impossible. Next was the hunting trip that had ended in my violence.

Suddenly I was aware of every cruel act I had ever done. Sam was right! Kids know. The first time I went to the zoo I felt sorry for the animals in those stinking cages, but I got over it. I understood it was in man's power to put them there. Is that where it starts? As children we see man's inhumanity to all creatures and continue it? Copy it? Worse than that—cling to it! I was not an abused child, but I learned, early in life, it was a dog-eat-dog world, so I became a tiger! But there had been humanitarians among us....Why didn't we listen? I asked myself, where did the humanitarians come from? Was it from being recycled over and over until they had learned the truth?

And I watched on the screen my induction into the army, to serve in the Second World War, another war to "end war forever." What a joke! But the lessons I learned in the service gave me a career, a lifetime of dealing in death. I sold guns, munitions, rockets, an endless procession of instruments of mass murder that grew more and more sophisticated with time. All the countries I had armed with advanced methods of destruction!

Suddenly there was a long, blood-chilling scream that hung in the air.

The projectionist tapped me on the shoulder, "Don't be alarmed, Guy. We have all the time in the world. All the time you need. You'll see."

As he spoke I realized that the scream had been mine.

Reincarnation

In the relics of the Past
we find the dreams of the Future—
there are timeless secrets
waiting for discovery.

We cannot forsake

the cause of Destiny, cannot refuse our vision the Truth demands obedience.

How often we reject the reflections of Life's mirror

for the illusions
we imagine in the clouds!

We must return to Earth
with our dancing eyes
and remember the Sun
for its strength—
the sands rage through the desert
and our moment is at hand...

- Wanda Lea Brayton

Spring

While the cold wind scourges the plains, gusting like gales from Satan's great wings, you dream you could be insensible as bears curled in their mountain caves below the tree line, where a March snow falls like goose-down on the firs, and deer raise their heads when a bear breathes.

While the wind punishes the plains, you envy the small-scale life of lichens, grey against granite, ages above the tree line. But you still long for a turquoise sky and high meadows of snow melting to quicksilver mesh, the water's trembling music enough to arouse spring from sleep in the fissured rock, from the cleft in your heart.

- Helen Cullins Smith

Farewell In Spring (A Song)

Farther on and out beyond the road there lies

A different kind of light amid the trees...

Roses blooming somewhere for the one who is gone,
Evening's sweetness borne upon the breeze.

What unrest has prodded me to follow in your steps? Elegies resound within my mind.

Leaving would seem easy now but for the letting go—

Loosing gains and dreams that lay behind.

In time it may be your shadow will grow dim No longer bringing memory edged with pain; Someday upon coming here I'll think of you and smile Passing by the place where you are lain.

Restlessness returns to me, and life again inside, It is weary here with all so lately done; Nothing more to do or say lest I should falter now—Goodbye is all I have, then I'll be gone.

- Joan Marie Cowden

When there was no more to lose I followed the sun Long on a day of promise... Empty roads
Leading on forever.

Who knows what I saw there Standing alone on the mountain In the night?

2.

Again

Here Comes The Sun
to sing when Long Long

(So sad to sing when Long Long And mountains won't release me).

The dream preserved in crystal light Has passed Never to triumph in that way again.

3.

Someday I will return
With the light from the dream I held before
And leave Yer Blues behind
Forevermore.

