

Spring 1973

# The Gyre, Volume VIII Number 1, Spring 1973

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GYRE

*Cover photo by  
Mary Ann Bentley*



# Contents

## Poetry

Barbara Kellum	<i>Unborn Poem</i>	4
Brenda Burchett	<i>Ballpark</i>	6
	<i>Park</i>	6
Barbara Kellum	<i>Little Funnies for a Sunny Sunday</i>	8
Debbi Smith	<i>Moth-Proof Mind</i>	10
Childrey Farber	<i>Enterprises of Non-Marriage and Wealth</i>	18
Debi Abernathy	<u><i>Mantis religiosa</i></u>	20

## Fiction

Barbara Kellum	<i>Notes From the Ground</i>	9
Cathy H. Skinner	<i>Broken</i>	13
Brenda Burchett	<i>Marriage Is Not Being Talked About</i>	23
Nancy Underwood	<i>We Find the Defendant . . .</i>	26

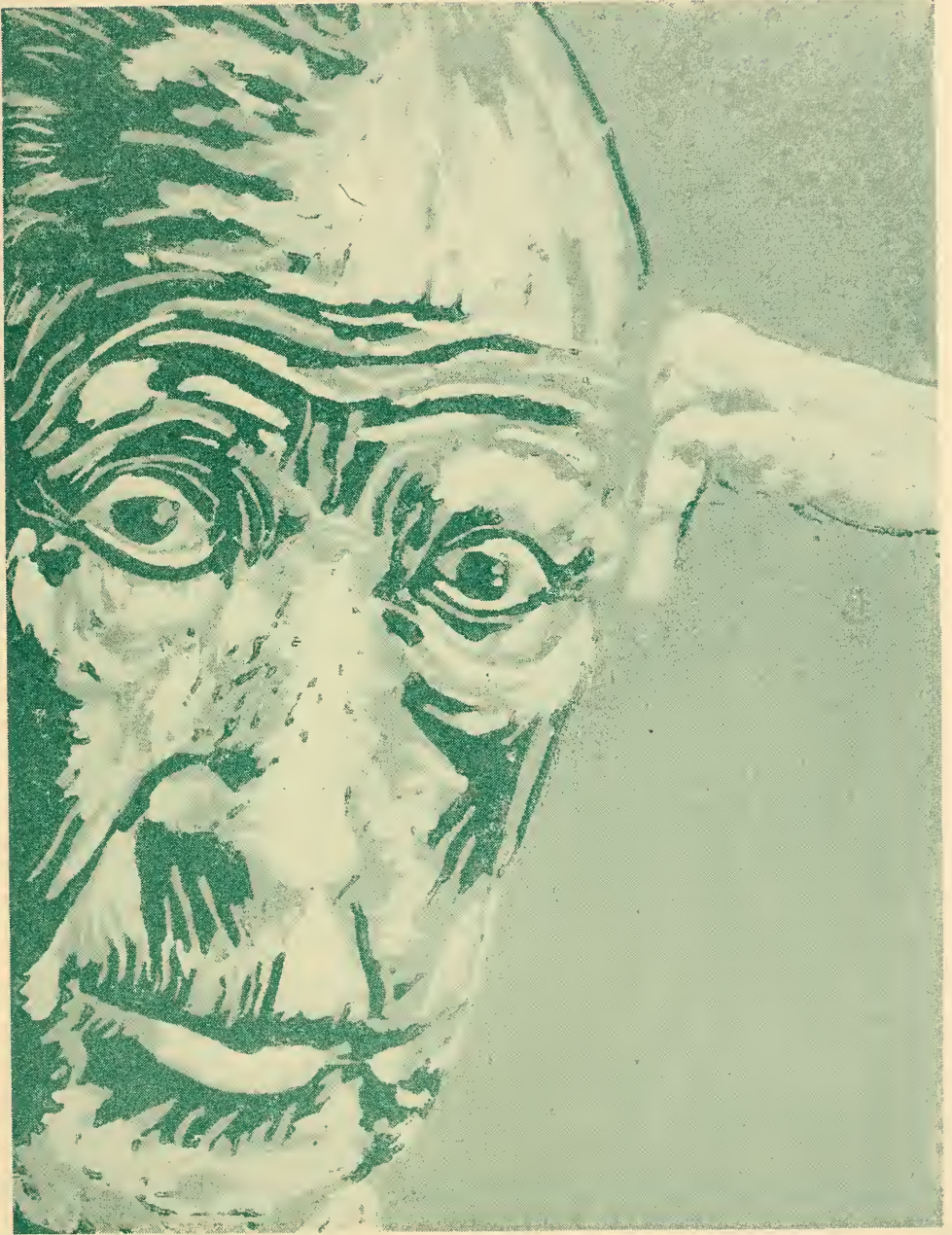
## Art

Debbie Wright	<i>Contemplation</i>	3
Danielle Leet		5
Mary Lynn Stahling		7
Childrey Farber		11
Debbie Carrington	<i>Frazier's Image</i>	12
Cathy Heinrich & Janice Patton		16
Sandra Taylor		17
JoAnne Cooksey		21
Childrey Farber		22

## Special Feature

Mark Strand	<i>Days</i>	30
Mark Strand		32





*"Contemplation"*

Debbie Wright

## UNBORN POEM

She's growing three inch scabs on her eyes.  
Nothing can pierce them, oh Jesus look.  
She used to want to be a poet:  
Burning burnt minds, she concluded.  
And the scabs are growing, brown.  
She'll scratch them off when she's 72.  
She'll gnaw them with her hard gums.  
Sitting in a straight backed pine planked chair  
Shawls tucked under her knees, on her round shoulders  
Patting children's heads with her soft padded hands  
She'll be a poet.





Danielle Leet



## TWO POEMS

by Brenda Burchett

### BALLPARK

*Tepid gusts blow empty popcorn bags  
Applauding sedately.  
I remember baseballs  
Floating framed by blue,  
Ash shattering to splinters,  
Insects and dust  
coating sweat-matted wool.*

*I circle the infield, scooting dirt.  
Slapping through tarp-covered outfield,  
I race to climb blank bleachers.  
Fluttering up the flagpole,  
I wait for salutes.*

### PARK

#### I

*Park benches stare like sentinels,  
Skeletons of sofas under fluorescent glare.  
Policemen's beacons ripple dark bushes  
Tense with vibrating whispers.*

#### II

*Wet grass steams like spinach.  
Sidewalks spark with heels and wheels.  
Leaves slither with a subtler sound;  
Snakes crawl where lovers lay.*



*Mary Lynn Stabling*

## Little Funnies For A Sunny Sunday

Admissions

Is this where you go to admit your sins?

*Can people commit themselves on Sundays?*

If the world were destroyed and we were hung in space  
would there be rainbows and sunsets  
would heaven be up and hell down?

The wind is blowing  
The sun is shining  
The sun is blowing  
The wind is shining  
It's been this way.

The last breath of every man is in the wind.  
Gasps sighs indifferent regularity

*My name is Jamey.*

*What's yours?*

*If it's Napoleon, you don't have to answer.*



## NOTES FROM THE GROUND

I can say to you that I'm falling, that the earth opened up and I'm falling inside her with no other sound but my screams and the molten air pushing me through its veins, but the statement lacks life and cannot move you. I can say that I'm T. S. Eliot, Dostoevsky, Christ; that I'm possessed by the vacuum of my consciousness and we fall clutching one another, but they will say "how trite - the statement has no bottom." They've told me I don't have the sense to live, that I'm an imaginary person, unconscious, and you won't remember any of these words.

I've felt the devil breathing beside me. I've felt Christ's hot blood running down my back. Christ's shadow hangs on every blackboard. I ask only to be human and I'm called a god. I die with the period of every sentence and all the words are maggots gnawing in my head. People have drained me. Spiders have siphoned my feelings and thoughts, scraped away the coat of flesh and left my bones dancing, clacking in the wind. My words clack, brittle and dry, I can't paint flesh on them. There's nothing I can give you. My face grows monstrous and huge with the greed of giving.

*Barbara Kellum*

## MOTH-PROOF MIND

I look into the corner of your eye  
I must be mad, for I can see my fingers there:  
Twisted and clawing  
Palsied and withered as if drawn  
From a week old grave.  
I weep but only the thought excretes.  
I miss the salt melting into my tongue.  
I miss the feeling of the feeling.

I want to breathe but cannot  
Break the rhythmical mechanical  
Beat, Beat  
That has been there for so many  
Inhales - - Exhales.

I follow my long glass tube  
To the last stage - - dissolution . . .  
Where I sit, enshrouded,  
And wait for time.



*Childrey Farber*





*FRAZIER'S IMAGE*

*Debbie Carrington*

## BROKEN

The sign on the inside of the bathroom door says that the rate per day for this room, room 106, for two people, is twenty-two dollars. But this is the off season. So it's twelve dollars. And my razor is still on the side of the bathtub. And our dirty clothes are in that bottom drawer. The coke and rum bottles are by the sink. And my hair brush is thrown on the floor by the bed. Yeah, well, I'm pretty sentimental. When you leave a motel you have to make sure that you don't leave anything behind. Things have you rubbed off on them. I'm usually sad even when I lose something bought in a new place. Because you bought it in a strange place and it gets to be familiar. Like a stuffed dolphin from Florida. My best friend's father worked as a clerk in a hotel and he brought things home. He gave Amy this lady's beige sweater. But I don't think she ever wore it. Once I left a favorite flower mosaic ring in the bathroom of the movie theater. Somebody's wearing it now. And I lost a pathetic, little change purse that had the face of a puppy on it.

At home I've collected old fur collars, broken ashtrays and yellow underwear. When Moma cleaned my drawers at home she always rooted junk out and threw it away. I hate to think of what disappeared. Once she threatened to throw my blue jean skirt away. She thought it was a real sight. But she only hid it away. That was at least one time she didn't make me lose anything.

Moma was a very busy and very efficient woman. She worked very hard for her Early American Maple Furniture. But the one thing that spoiled her living room was this old, brown wall-to-wall carpet. I guess we all complained about how dark it made the house and how the dog's icky piddle marks showed. So, they ripped it up and put down rust colored carpet. Fairly bright stuff. After that she was even more busy and more efficient trying to make her house like a picture. Trying to pick up the lint from my terry cloth robe.

I wasn't given many responsibilities. What really annoyed me a lot was how Moma pushed me away from where she was working in the kitchen. Punchy in-my-way pushes. You always-mess-up-my-house pushes. Moma and Daddy did everything.

Daddy did things quickly. He was in the Army and worked his way up from a buck private to a major. He did it by knowing exactly what to include and what to exclude. He built banks and used to talk about fantastic, progressive equipment and merging with small

town banks. He directed, cleared away and built. Ordering, fanning his hands in strong gestures. Newness gave them both a lift. Made them feel improved.

We owned a redwood lake cabin. Back on the road away from the shore. We bought it from a lady who let us have her little blue boat with the house. The blue boat would pull skiers but she used it to take her grandchildren around the lake. We got a bigger boat as soon as Daddy found out what size other people had to pull skiers.

We sold the redwood cabin after a few summers because Daddy wrangled around until he got a good deal on a waterfront lot. Then we built a larger cabin with more bedrooms, bathrooms and shag carpet. And we bought a patio boat after Daddy had watched a lot of others float theirs by.

They were impatient. Daddy would act furious and get so red and Moma got so nervous and after everything was done I suppose they got bored.

The new house and boat were beautiful but the old house and boat weren't given time. The maples in front of the redwood house got big. We missed them growing.

There was a certain way to make everything move on quiet and clean. Daddy didn't like snakes because he thought they brought death and were violent. He shot black snakes once. Because he just did.

\* \* \* \* \*

So I guess I like things because I kind of think they protect me and I should protect them. I'd like to get a chance to save a lot of stuff that people think mess them up or doesn't fit. New things are pretty and become old stuff soon but old, old things and unusual things are terrific. And sometimes wise. I used to talk to this big alexandrite ring of my Mother's. In bed. I wished for fame and security and happiness on it. And covers were nice too. I often pulled the quilt that my Grandmother made over my head. To keep me from my Grandfather's ghost. He came to live with us and died in this lawn chair after mowing the front lawn. Funny, the chair is still on the patio.

When I met Michael he helped me stay calm with Moma and Daddy. He told me I could do my life differently. He told me that I was capable and not crazy. There were many bad times at my house because I felt guilty about discarding so many old, useful things. Once after a household argument, Michael came over to find me sitting in the car, crying. I had a picture book about New Zealand



on my lap. New Zealand was a great place then. It had enormous glaciers millions of years old and I think it still had a wonderful, simple, and poetic culture. Stability. Michael and I talked many long, hard times on the front porch. And I finally came to believe that I was not evil.

But I still remember the rocking chair that had been around for about twenty years. Ever since Moma and Daddy had been married. I recall seeing a snapshot of them sitting in it. Moma on Daddy's lap. Laughing and sexy. Daddy sat in it and ate his supper there in the rec room. Slept there afterwards. His head pressed against the chair's shoulder.

The two of us were downstairs watching television when Michael flipped backwards in the chair. Knocking an underpiece out of joint and it was broken. But Michael didn't fix it then, although he said that it could be fixed. So, we let it go.

But when I came back the next weekend the rocking chair wasn't downstairs any more. Moma told me that the whole side of the chair had collapsed. I didn't see the chair after it fell apart. She told me they were going to take it away somewhere. I guess to the dump. I asked Moma to save it for Michael and I. Save it. I asked her many times. She promised that they would.

I think it was the next day and we were all sitting downstairs watching football. And I nudged Michael to tell them that we were really going to fix the rocking chair. But Daddy said they had put it in the back of the station wagon to take away.

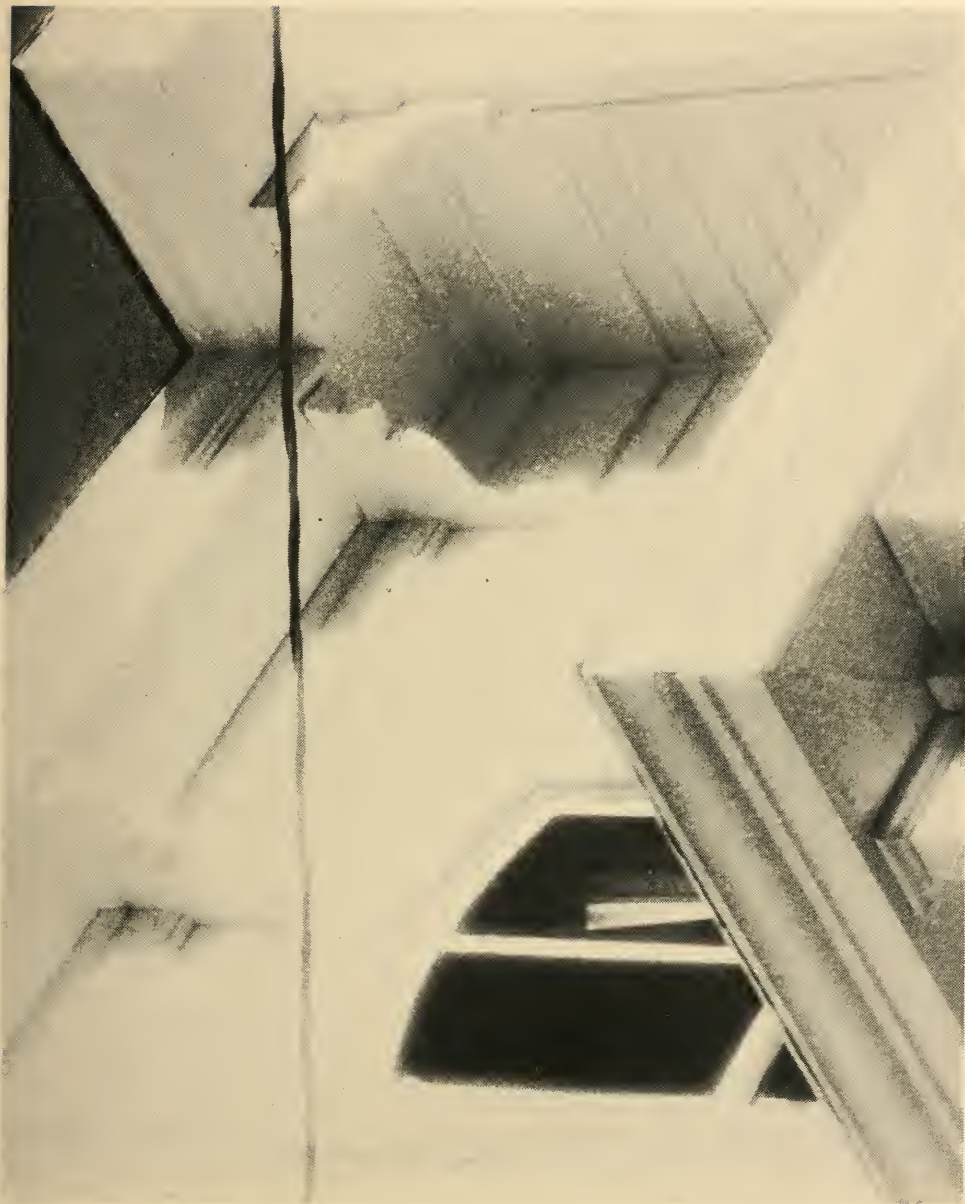
After Moma and Daddy had gone to bed Michael and I went outside to get the rocking chair out of the station wagon so that we could take it to Michael's house so he could fix it.

We found the rocking chair in the driveway by the car. Torn apart. Broken. Cold. And dead.



Left  
Cathy Heinrich

Center and Right  
Janice Patton



Sandra Taylor

ENTERPRISES OF NON-MARRIAGE  
AND WEALTH

*with Apologies to Diane Wakoski's  
"Green Bird"*

And you'll notice how good people are  
at giving advice and feeling great  
Well, Phil Eubank is just one of those

A very successful farmer Phil was.  
Successful enough never to suffer losses  
He had all he could want  
nice house, about 50 acres, good money

Until one year when Phil laid  
too much lime for his crops  
He didn't realize the extent  
til time came for the sale

He was sure that this year was just  
a dry season, slow maybe  
til his buyer insisted that  
he did something wrong.



This started him thinking

What's the problem

He took the loss out on income tax

No problem

Phil gave up farming and went

into counseling

a successful schizophrenic

complete with a TV in his office

He thought a lot about farming

and selling

and buyers

She was his faithful buyer

when he'd take his crops to DC

Now she's just

his faithful companion

and he could make her

any of the girls he wanted

on SUMMERBROOKE or THE WORLD'S ONE TURN

during his private lunch break

and only his counselees seemed to know.

## Mantis religiosa

Twelve stories up, Rapunzel  
hums and coils her hair.  
Tiger paws track the street below.

Funeral processions, avoiding daylight  
clutter, creep like automated slugs  
and shimmer under streetlights.

Truck drivers curse and shift  
to low, fumbling candy wrappers  
on the dash. Fumes and smoke  
exhaust the air, shrouding the ritual.

Among howling dogs insects rise,  
tuning their legs and wings.  
Mantis prophets kneel on Rapunzel's sill.

Whether they are harmless to man  
or not, she will never  
let down her hair.



*Joanne Cooksey*



*Childrey Farber*



## Marriage Is Not Being Talked About

Mabel's mother said it was a beautiful day for a wedding. Her father said it was too damned hot. Grandma said, "Happy the bride the sun shines on." Mabel herself privately agreed with her father, but she just sat smiling, as if her lipstick had frozen.

She smoothed her dress woodenly. It was pretty. Hardly satin and pearls, but then Mabel wasn't Queen Guinevere. That didn't make much difference, though. She wasn't marrying King Arthur. What did Harry do for a living, anyway? Something in a car factory.

Damn. Those steps on the stairs had to be her sister Flossie. Sweet sixteen, and oh, what a pest!

"Hey, Mabel!"

"What?"

"You gonna sit there all day like a dummy?"

"Yeah."

"Well, shoot! This is your wedding day, you know!"

"I know."

"If you don't hurry up, I'll marry him."

"Go ahead."

"You better come."

"I might if you leave me alone."

Mabel looked out the window. Mrs. Castle was coming up the walk, all gussied up. Echh. That was the only word for Mrs. Castle. Small wonder Mabel hated Sutton Street enough to get married.

Strange. A few years ago she had resolved to stay single forever. She wanted to be a Mysterious Woman of the World. That was before she turned twenty and decided that since she had never as much as seen a Mysterious Woman of the World she would never learn how to be one. All the women Mabel knew were wives. Except for Mandy Johnson, who was talked about. There wasn't much difference between being married and being talked about.

"Mabel, are you coming? Everybody's waiting."

"O.K. Flossie, I'm coming."

She got up with a sigh and began her slow descent of the stairs. Father was waiting, his arm held out. Mabel took a deep breath and stepped inside the crowded parlor. Too bad. She would have made a great Woman of the World.

"Mabel, where the hell's my car keys?"

Holding back a desire to tell Harry what she wished he would do with his car keys, Mabel opened her gummy eyes to the slate-gray August morning.

"All right, Harry, just a second."

"Well, haul it, Mabel, haul it!"

She followed his clamoring voice into the vestibule and fumbled on a shelf, upsetting the tacky china knick knacks that crowded it.

"Here."

"O.K. kid, see ya later."

She plodded back into the bedroom, wiping the sticky place on her cheekbone where Harry had kissed her. There was nothing to do but crawl under the sheet and go back to sleep. Outside, the Methodist chimes struck nine. Children threw tin cans at dogs in alleys. Mrs. Wayne in her fruit stand wiped her hands on her grubby apron. Old Charlie hunkered on the corner, fingering his pink cards that said, I AM A DEAF MUTE. PLEASE GIVE.

The doorbell rang rustily. Who was here this early? Flossie. She might have known.

"Hi. How's the girl?"

"Tired. Come in and sit down."

"Why are you so tired? Didn't get much sleep?" Flossie chuckled.

"Don't start that, Flossie."

"Still got those fairy princess airs."

"Thanks. I love you too."

"Mabel, when are you going to stop all that crap and get off your high horse? Even fairy princesses have to take off their evening gowns once in a while!"

"Damn it, Flossie! What did you take the bus all the way down here for?"

"To see you, what else. Why so touchy? Isn't marriage what you expected?"

"Hand me an apple."

"Answer my question first."

"Of course it's what I expected."

Silence. Flossie was grinning, waiting to explode the big Roman candle that was just behind her tongue.

"Mabel, you're turning red."

"Heat rash."

"Silly. You're embarrassed. Do you blush like that for Harry?"

That did it. Mabel got up and jerked the curtains open.

"Mind your business, Flossie."

"Ahh, Mabel, don't be so Victorian. Don't you have hormones under all those inhibitions?"

"Where'd you get that word?"

"Which one? Victorian, hormones, or inhibitions?"

"Either one."

"From Simon."

"Who is Simon?"

"Haven't you talked to Mom lately?"

"Flossie, talk sense."

"Simon, dear feather-headed sister, is the newest love in my young life. He has opened my eyes to reality and made me see the true meaning of existence."

"What does he do for a living?"

"What does it matter? I don't know and I don't care. All I know is that he's a divine madman and I love him."

"You're too young to love anybody."

"Oh, no. Simon says I'm very mature for sixteen."

"What does Mom have to say about all this? And Dad?"

"What do I care about them? They're proletarians."

"That's another word you got from your new boy friend, isn't it? You get carried away by every new thing that comes your way."

"Better than never getting carried away by anything, and that includes Harry."

"That's a matter of opinion. When are you getting married?"

"When Simon gets his divorce."

Nervous silence. Mabel's knee jerked convulsively and she leaped to her feet.

"Flossie! A married man . . . why, that's no better than . . ."

"Mandy Johnson? Darling, Mandy has it all over you any old day."

"My own sister!"

"Why, don't you go out and mess around a little on the side, Mabel. All married men are just looking . . ."

"SHUT UP!"

"Stop being so damned holier-than-thou, then!"

"Go on back and sleep with your - your fancy fellow!"

"You needn't think being married makes you so safe."

"GET OUT OF MY HOUSE!"

"I'm going. I don't see what you're so all-fired worked up about, though. After all, it's not your husband I'm . . ."

Mabel slammed the door, shutting out Flossie's voice. God, of all the people who might have . . . oh, Flossie could never do anything halfway right. She walked over to the window. As she closed the curtain she noticed it had begun to rain. Harry would be wet and cold when he came in tonight. She'd have to have a hot supper waiting. The thought of Harry made her turn from the window.

"Why don't you go out and mess around a little on the side, Mabel? All married men are just looking . . ." Looking? Looking for what? All married men? Harry? No. Never Harry.

"And you needn't think being married makes you so safe, either." Stupid. Mabel shrugged and plugged in the coffee pot. It was just a bunch of bull. Flossie just parroted everything that Simon character said.

"Harry."

"Can it wait till the commercial, honey?"

"No."

"Then get me a beer and come sit on my lap."

"I can't."

"Why not?"

"I haven't finished the dishes."

"Come on then. Out with it if it's so important."

"It's not important. Oh . . . just skip it."

"O. K."

Mabel looked at the back of his head for a moment, then turned and put the forks away.

*By Brenda Burchett*

## WE FIND THE DEFENDANT . . .

*Stefanie McGregor slowly walked across the courtroom, deliberately maintaining the awesome silence that had prevailed since she had begun her summation. She turned and moved past the jury box, looking each juror directly in the eye. Then she began to speak in that soft, sincere voice that had never lost a case.*

*"And so I ask you, as you decide the defendant's fate, to consider the evidence and to honestly determine whether this man, this boy, could strangle a man more than twice his size? I'm sure you will return with a verdict that conveys that honesty." She moved back to her table and reached over to squeeze the hand of her defendant, an eighteen-year-old kid who had probably never seen a courtroom until a month ago, who had no more killed his uncle than she had. He was completely terrified, but she was confident. Even more so as she watched the jury file out. Seven women and five men - that in itself was a bonus. Most men still think the courtroom is no place for a woman. Practice law - fine, but confine it to an office; draw up contracts, draft wills - but stay the hell out of the courtroom. Criminal law is a man's world. But she wasn't worried. These five had integrity. Her special appeal for honesty was for their benefit. They might not like a woman traipsing on their territory, but they couldn't knock a good case, and Anthony Jones was going to walk out of this courtroom a free man. She was even more certain of this fact when she watched the jury walk back in, but poor Tony was petrified.*

*"Will the defendant please rise and face the jury?"*

*She stood up with Tony. In a sense she was on trial too. She always felt that way. But if she lost this case, she may as well strip off her imaginary bars.*

*"Will the foreman please read the verdict."*

*"Your honor, we find the defendant -"*

*"Stef, I think I like the green better than the pink. Stef?"*

*Stefanie sighed. "Till human voices wake us, and we drown."*

*"What?"*

*Stefanie's eyes turned from the ceiling to her roommate. Karen was standing in the middle of the floor, the green crepe draped from her shoulder. "Nothing. What did you say?"*

*"I said I liked the green better than the pink. What do you think?"*

*"I don't care. Whatever you want."*

*Karen moved over to where Stefanie lay on her bed unmoving. "What's the matter?"*



Stefanie's eyes went back to the ceiling. "Nothing. Everything's fine."

"Like hell it is. Nothing's been fine since you and Wyn set the date. Christ, Stef, it's your wedding. You act as if it were your funeral."

"Just lay off, will you?"

"No, I won't. I can't." Karen put the fabric down and lit a cigarette. "Look, I just want to know what's going on. You're getting married in less than a month, Wyn's got a fantastic job in Tanganyika, and you're about as excited as a democrat. Just what gives?"

"Nothing, I tell you. Now just lay off."

Karen went back to her crepe.

Stefanie still lay motionless on the bed, her eyes closed. She didn't remember falling asleep, but it took her some minutes to answer the ringing phone.

"Hello."

"Stef, listen, I caught a ride in. Can you come pick me up?" It was Wyn. "Yes, where are you?"

"At the library. Can you come right away?"

"Yes."

"I love you."

"Yes."

It was Friday and the traffic was heavy, but she finally pulled up in front of the huge, old building. Wyn was waiting for her. He was in a great mood. "I've got strict instructions to take you home."

"Not now, not today?"

"Yes, my mother's frantic. Before I left, she said, 'Wynfield, my boy, I must see Stefanie right away. I don't see how I can possibly shorten the guest list again. You must bring Stefanie home.' So I'm taking you home or rather, you're taking me."

"I just don't think I can leave, besides I have -"

"It's nothing that can't wait, is it? We can't leave everything until the last minute. Mom really needs to see you. She feels she's making the supreme sacrifice by shortening her guest list."

"It seems like everyone's making some sort of sacrifice for this marriage."

"What?"

"Nothing."

"Now, you see, if you were Catholic," he teased, "we could have the wedding in the cathedral with no problems."

"No problems."

Wyn pulled the travel folders he had been accumulating since February from his coat. "I've made our reservations. I'm glad the

company is flying us to Africa. This trip alone is costing us a small fortune. Everything is skyrocketing."

"Yes, I know. It's the time of year. Everyone expects you to get married in June."

Stefanie made the left hand turn that led to the main campus. Wyn looked up from his folder.

"I thought you were taking me home."

"There's something I have to do first."

She parked beside the John Marshall building and got out of the car, taking with her a cardboard box from the back seat. Wyn was still engrossed in the folders. "I'll wait here, but don't be too long."

She walked into the big, forbidding building up the stone steps to the classroom. It wasn't actually a classroom, more like an office pool. It was empty, and she was glad. She didn't need to hear from them the accusations she had already been making to herself. She sat down at her desk and opened the stiff, wooden drawers. She began packing the files and papers and lawbooks she had collected the last few years. She had placed the last item in the box when she heard footsteps behind her. She turned to the kindly, old face of Dr. Martin, who was no longer able to practice, now devoting himself to his students.

"I see you're leaving us."

"Yes, I'm afraid so." Her father had been delighted when she had decided on a law degree and had immediately called John Martin. She'd been handed over from one patriarch to another. And now even to another one, Wyn.

"I gather you've decided to marry your young man."

"Yes."

"Well, perhaps you'll continue. We need all the young lawyers we can get."

"I doubt if there's a law school in Tanganyika."

"When you return then."

"Maybe. I don't know."

He placed a gnarled hand on her head. "Good luck, child. Give my regards to your father."

She sat alone for a long while. The sun was slowly falling when she became aware of Wyn.

"Stefanie." Her name echoed in the large, empty room. She didn't face him.

"Why am I going with you?"

He was going to laugh, but the sincerity of her tone cut him short. "Because you love me."

"I never said I loved you. You've always told me I loved you."

"You mean you don't love me?"

*"No, I don't mean that."*

*"Then you do love me. You either love me or you don't. There's nothing so difficult about that." It seemed very simple to him, but he had to be sure. "You do love me then?"*

*"Yes."*

*"Well, then, I don't see your point."*

*"No, you really don't, do you? Sometimes, Wyn, you have a bad habit of missing the point."*

*"But you love me anyway."*

*"Yes."*

*"Then I don't see any problem."*

*"There isn't one as long as you understand why I can't go with you."*

*"Well, I don't understand it. Damn it, if you loved me --"*

*"No, don't say it. I'm not going to get into one of those idiotic discussions with you. All we do is talk in circles. How do you work it out in that mathematical mind of yours anyway? Exactly which theorem do you use? What about A. If I loved you, I'd go with you. B. I don't want to go with you. Therefore, C. I don't love you. Is that your conclusion?"*

*"Why don't you just ask me not to go?"*

*She had never thought of that. The idea had never occurred to her. She looked up at him now, but said nothing.*

*"Why don't you say, 'Wyn, we're not going to Africa. We're staying here so I can go to law school. You're a bright boy; you can find another job.'"*

*She felt incredulous. "I couldn't do that. I couldn't ask you to give up what you've been wanting for so long."*

*"But isn't that what you think I'm doing to you? You have a perfect right to ask me - Women's Equal Rights Amendment, 1971. You, of all people, should know that."*

*She remained silent.*

*Wyn knelt beside her. His voice was very calm. "I'm taking you with me for two reasons - one, I love you, and two, I don't want you to be a lawyer. What's going to happen to you the first time they send some jerk you're defending up for life? Are you going to say, 'Well, screw that one' and forget it. No. You'll sit around and blame yourself and wonder what went wrong. I'm not going to let you do that to yourself."*

*"Then I don't have a choice."*

*"No, you don't have a choice."*

*Wyn watched Stefanie rise from her chair and walk to the door.*

*"Come on," she said, "I'm taking you home."*

*They walked out of the classroom, down the steps to the car. The brown cardboard box lay on the desk.*

*By Nancy Underwood*

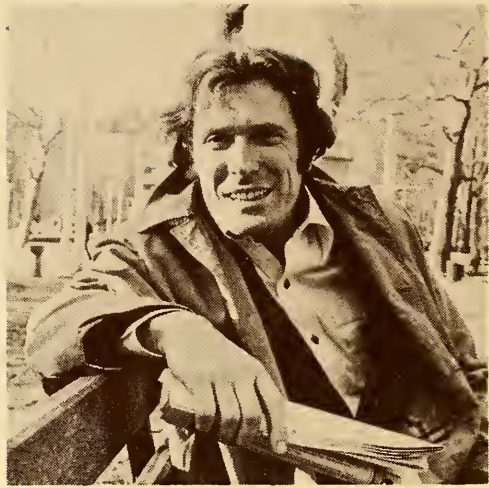
*DAYS*

I stand in a field  
behind the house,  
listing my faults.  
By sunset  
I have convinced  
even the least  
creature I care  
which way I go.  
I tell the world  
there is room for hope,  
for less than hope.  
As I recite,  
the sun sinks  
into the field,  
the days of my life  
come out of hiding:  
voices I cannot  
place, names  
I cannot find.  
And I am known  
in the brief light  
for what I am not.  
The past does not  
belong to me.  
I do not know  
why anything stays,  
why days in which  
I no longer appear  
come back, deep  
in cloud and filled



with fallen light,  
why they want  
to be lived in again,  
or why I rise  
in the wake of their passing,  
the last light  
closing around me.  
Day after day  
I stand in a field  
in the failing light,  
driven to speak.  
And I am spared  
the bleak terms  
of my remains:  
the past is blurred.  
My life goes on,  
caged in continual  
change, caught  
in the sway of loss.  
I have no claims  
upon the days  
passing from nowhere  
into nowhere.  
I have no cause  
to fear for my life.  
The sun is down.  
The field darkens.  
The night opens.

## *Mark Strand*



is highlighting this year's Literary Festival at Longwood. Born on April 11, 1934, in Summerside, Prince Edward Island, Canada, he received his B.A. from Antioch College, his B.F.A. from Yale, and his M.A. from the University of Iowa, where he taught for three years.

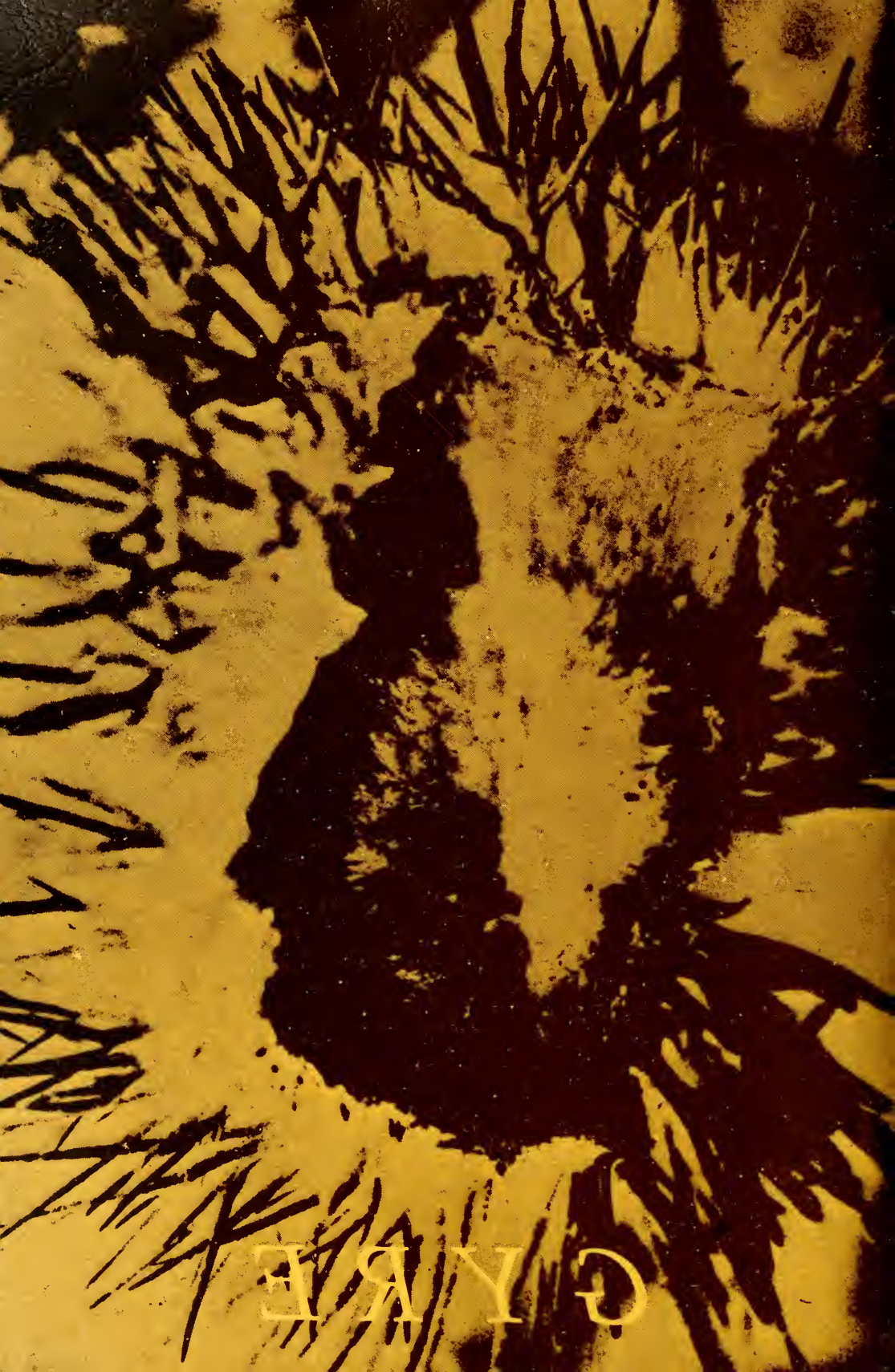
He now lives in New York and is a visiting lecturer at Yale University. In previous years he has taught as a Fulbright Lecturer at the University of Brazil at Rio de Janeiro, as a visiting professor at the University of Washington in Seattle, and as an Adjunct Professor at Columbia University.

He has translated literature from Portugal, Mexico, Spain, Argentina, Italy, and France. Besides editing two anthologies, *The Contemporary American Poets* and *The New Poetry of Mexico*, he has published three volumes of poetry: *Sleeping With One Eye Open*, *Reasons for Moving*, and *Darker*.

Harold Bloom comments: "Mark Strand dwells increasingly in a place apart from other contemporary poets, despite the affinities of his earlier work with makers as diverse as Roethke and Elizabeth Bishop. The irreality of Borges, though still near, is receding in *Darker*, as Strand opens himself more to his own vision. These poems instantly touch a universal anguish as no 'confessional' poems can, for Strand has the fortune of writing naturally and almost simply (though this must be supreme artifice) out of the involuntary near solipsism that always marks a central poetic imagination in America."

*Colophon: The text of this magazine was set by photocomposition in 8 point italic booktype, 9 point regular newstext, and 10 point regular, italic, and bold booktype. The paper is Hammermill tan, vellum sub. 70, with 85 lb. Gold Riegel Highlight Cover. Lithographed by The Farmville Herald.*

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