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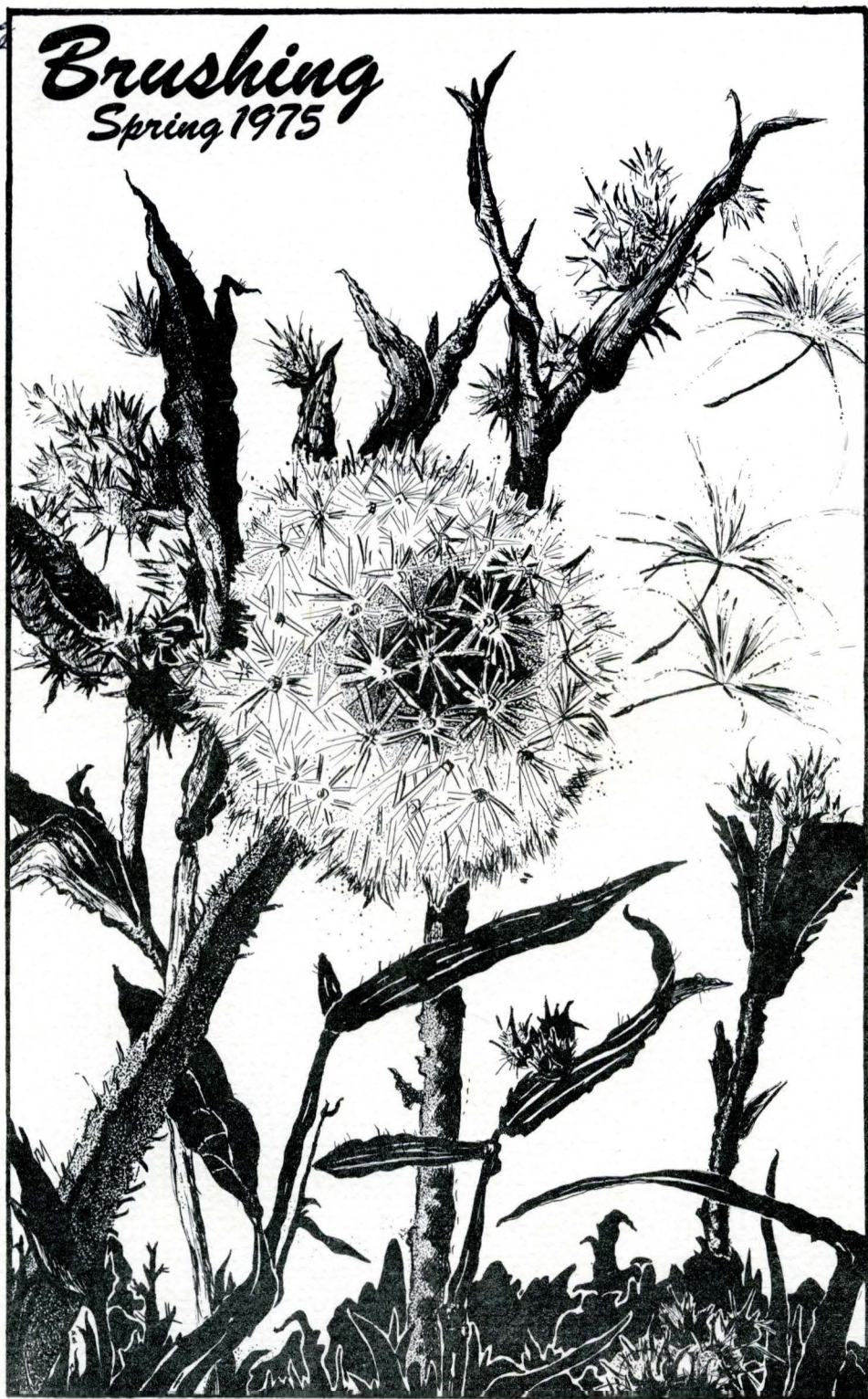
Rollins College Students, "Brushing, Spring, 1975, Vol. 4, No. 2" (1975). *Brushing - Historical*. 7.  
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# Brushing

Spring 1975



*Volume 4 No. 2*

*Brushing is published in the Fall and Spring by the Student Association and printed by Rollins College. Literary Submissions should be directed to: Brushing Editor, Box 1070. Manuscripts can not be returned unless accompanied by a self addressed envelope. Submission deadlines are October and February.*

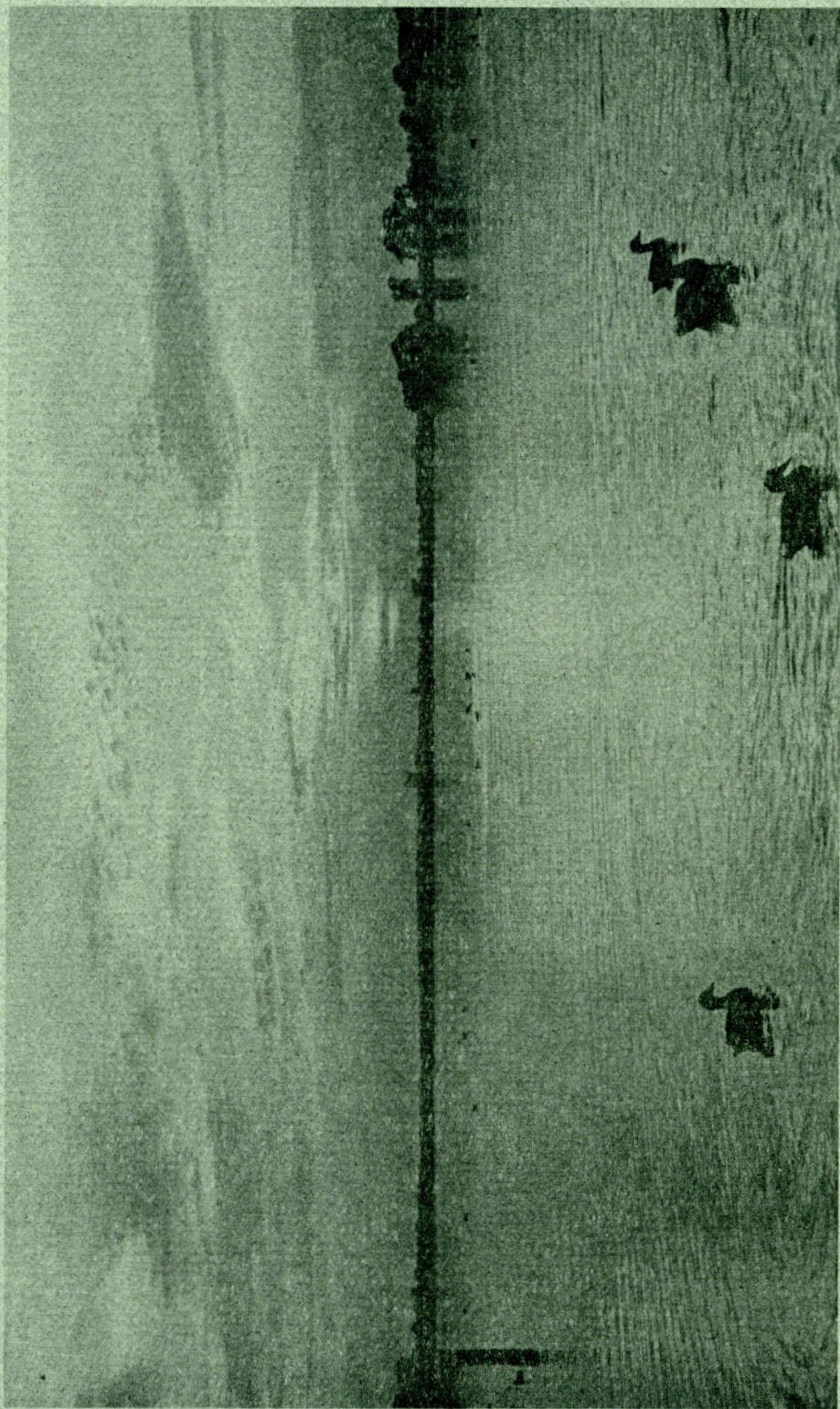
*Cover by Diane Spalding*



# Table of Contents

Randy Cone, <i>Photo</i> . . . . .	1
Pat Forte, <i>A Tribute to Philosophy</i> . . . . .	2
Alan Nordstrom, <i>UHF Broadcast</i> . . . . .	3
Jens Fog, <i>Untitled</i> . . . . .	4
Sue Gordon, <i>Off</i> . . . . .	4
Kim Gaw, <i>Photo</i> . . . . .	5
Alan Nordstrom, <i>Metamorphosis Through Art</i> . . . . .	6
Dane J. Neller, <i>The Leaden Wings of Icarus</i> . . . . .	7
Bob Escher, <i>Photo</i> . . . . .	8
Robert Lemon, <i>My Buddies, Time and Space</i> . . . . .	9
Bill Miller, <i>Untitled</i> . . . . .	10
Nancye Ausbon, <i>Poem For The Man With The Calico Cat</i> . . . . .	11
Diane Gay, <i>A Prologue</i> . . . . .	12
Jens Fog, <i>Untitled</i> . . . . .	14
John F. McCarthy, <i>If At First You Don't Succeed</i> . . . . .	15
Peter Draughon, <i>Photo</i> . . . . .	18
Barry Billets, <i>Poem To A Medical Student Friend</i> . . . . .	19
Nancye Ausbon, <i>Untitled</i> . . . . .	20
Steve Mutschler, <i>Bubbles And Glass</i> . . . . .	20
Linda Ochoa, <i>And</i> . . . . .	21
Skip Masland, <i>A Prayer</i> . . . . .	22
Barry Billets, <i>Pigeon Key At Night</i> . . . . .	23
Skip Masland, <i>The Elements</i> . . . . .	25
Contributors/Acknowledgements/Staff . . . . .	26





Randy Cone



# A Tribute to Philosophy

see the cracked  
    and broken image  
mirrored in the  
    crooked glass —  
there is a wicked  
    facet  
shown there  
in your darkened  
    soul  
flickering with light patterns  
    to achieve an ultimate  
angelic light  
becoming  
glowing obscurity  
as the crowd  
    of people  
    meets, clashing  
sometimes harmonious  
what lies  
    in the depths  
    of deep-set  
    eyes  
you ask the final  
    question:  
“who am i?”

**Pat Forte**

## UHF Broadcast

Moved more by metaphor than straight discourse,  
My errant mind imagined that the force  
That moves the universe made use of me  
To broadcast in another frequency  
Its sole eternal message of "I AM."  
It sent a pulse less like a telegram  
Than radio beam throughout the vasts of space,  
That striking my antenna charged me face  
A coil of circuits, change capacity,  
Demodulate and rectify in me,  
Through diodes, triodes, and other poetry,  
The induced voltage of eternity.  
At last, through thick resistance, came the Word,  
So audible that even atoms heard,  
Which said that though my soul-pulse may have erred,  
My circuitry was clear, and if I cared  
I might broadcast a message from my sponser—  
"I AM," I said. "WE ARE," came back the answer.

Alan Nordstrom



The plan to my house is  
Simple yet overt. Beneath  
The planted domes lie  
Acres of. . . nothing,  
The charmer is you  
complete and concrete.  
Emeshed in rosewood Apollo Belvedere  
Stands silent to all. I the lost  
Son and inheritor sympathize; the Generations  
Of Gods have left us alone to conquer  
This vast and empty palace.

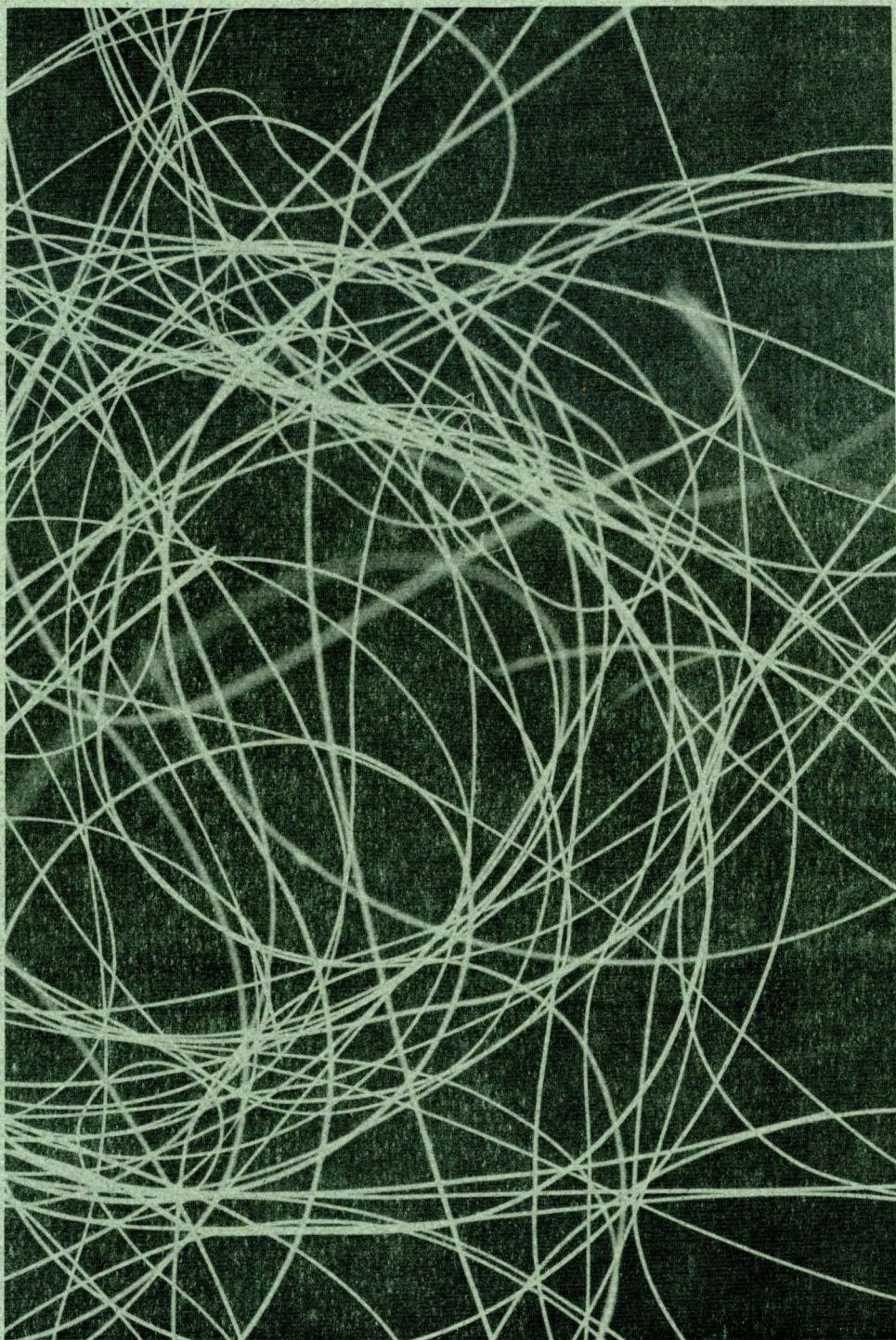
**Jens Fog**

## **Off**

Sitting with warmth  
Watching for the anticipated but unknown unveiling  
Clouds softly float by as do I -  
Off on the scarlet reflections painted dynamically  
across the sky  
and  
spinning in streaks and strands of gold  
I reflect and find . . .  
sailing upon icecubes  
proves nothing

**Sue Gordon**





*Darkroom Abstract*

Kim Gaw



# Metamorphosis Through Art

As I lay waking this morning just before dawn, I suddenly found my mind standing in Chartres Cathedral looking up awed at the ribbed vaults cresting a mile above my head. Wondrous! To think that men had crafted this glorious monument that still can captivate our breathless souls. Yet to stand so dwarfed by such architecture is still to stand exalted; for this the human spirit, kindred human hands have made. So many lives and talents crested in this marvel, conjoined to raise this masterpiece of worship. Who, standing tiny in the nave, but does not feel his spirit lift out of him, rush to fill the delicate, precipitous spaces shaped about him, fixing him, so small, like an astroid in this galaxy of air?

Yet it was not architecture only I thought of, lying in my bed, imagining Chartres. I thought of all the masterworks of mansoul in whose presence I can stand – the statues, glassworks, paintings, tapestries, and poems -- the “monuments of unaging intellect,” as Yeats named them, that, if we apprehend and join them, can carry us into the realms of gold. Rarely does this happen though! How often can we say we’ve been transported by an artwork and metamorphosed into something greater by relating our diurnal, gophering souls to something upright? “To stay our minds on and be staid.” Great art is like that star. All artful visions of man’s ingenious craft witness to something grander in us than superhighways, supermarkets, malls, split-levels, underpasses, inner-cities, stop-n-shops and MacDonald’s golden arch: Chartres Cathedral.

“So Daedalus flapped wings to guide his son.  
Far off, below them, some stray fisherman,  
Attention startled from his bending rod,  
Or a bland shepherd resting on his crook,  
Or a dazed farmer leaning on his plough,  
Glanced up to see the pair float through the sky,  
And, taking them for gods, stood still in wonder.”

—Ovid, METAMORPHOSES, Book VIII

**Alan Nordstrom**



# The Leaden Wings Of Icarus

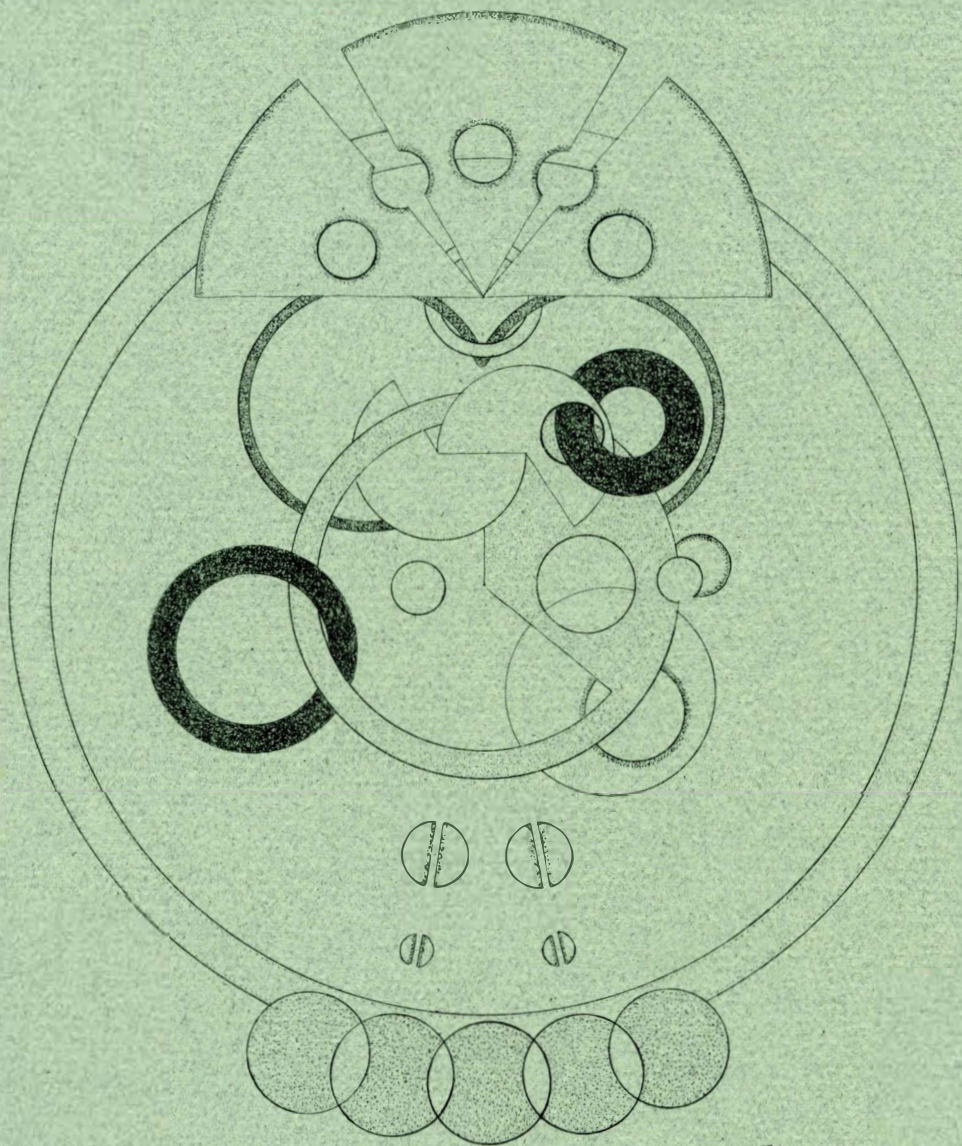
Dare to dive  
    deeper,  
Than taunt the sun  
Daedalus warned his  
Adventurous son.  
An alchemist wands  
Wax into wings,  
Yet painted  
    gold swans  
Fly slaves never kings.

Convention breeds lead  
Pencils not pens;  
Ideals unlead  
Soar high  
    deeper men.

Our sweeper clothed blue  
Fans whirling spark  
Mighty gold guru  
Disperser of dark.

Falling star  
    sailing  
Blazing the sky,  
Impatient young man  
A sailor must dive.

**Dane J. Neller**





# My Buddies, Time and Space

Each morning I must meet them  
And engage in conversation.  
“Hello” is always theirs.  
When small talk turns to debate  
Victory is their routine.  
The two faces smile on me,  
Condescend and patronize  
Childishly.

On occasion I chance  
To play my game  
But spill gray brains  
Over the street.  
Or sometimes I land in a strange room  
At the unappointed hour  
With stranger faces that laugh  
Because my watch is wrong.

As I leave though,  
My buddies meet me at the door  
And casually punch my shoulder  
Like school chums.  
They promise me anything  
At all  
Of theirs  
I want.

**Robert Lemon**

Steely spider  
moving as such  
with a cynical touch,  
his black filament  
across the floor.  
Stopping,  
he gazes at me  
with steel grey eyes,  
to large to imagine.  
Twisting and turning  
he leaves  
never caring.  
I turn and begin  
again to sing  
with the sparrow  
whose shadow  
dances on the floor.  
the marigolds play  
red rover, over and over  
then I rise to surmise  
why my foot has fallen asleep.  
maybe the chain is too tight.

**Bill Miller**



# Poem For The Man With The Calico Cat

Even before the music ends,  
    softly his cat treads from our nest;  
    through throbbing dark  
    waits at the door,  
Knowing that this time of going would come.

She lent to me a place in that odd rapport  
    and curling into corners,  
I knew him often  
    to spill himself onto me  
. . . the cat at our feet.

Sorceress,  
    Lulling me, foolish  
    into that realm, delicious —  
    unsuspecting of things harsher realized  
    in knowing too well.

Calico,  
    quietly mocking my distance  
    as stereophonic blues unleash me  
    tumbling. . . into guttural shades of melancholy.  
Even while he rocked me into soothing fever,  
I knew that this time of going would come.

Nancye Ausbon

# A Prologue

I decided one day, not long ago,  
That a voyage would be balm for my soul,  
So I hastened my step to an agency  
Where by planning such trips men earn a fee.  
"What luck!" said one, as he took my measure.  
"I have a group plan, a low-cost treasure.  
We sail from the tip of Miami's green shore  
And we'll tour the islands a month or more.  
We leave at dawn, to be early at sea,  
And we meet tonight for some revelry!"

Quickly decided, I packed right away,  
Found the motel, to the lounge made my way.  
Among those there met, I do not deceive,  
Were characters you just would not believe!  
Bless me if I seem a nosey old bird,  
(No doubt of my sort you've recently heard.)  
I'm never content to merely relax  
But hear, observe, gather nuggets of facts.  
Concerning this group there are quite a few.  
Some, by your leave, I will pass on to you.

First, a dear old man made me take notice.  
A soldier, he, retired under protest.  
He was a gentleman, bred in the bone  
And used to command; it told in his tone,  
Though he could speak softly, as he might choose,  
As one who knew well what it means to lose.  
For only strong hearts know true gentleness.  
The weak are the bullies, or so I guess.  
He dressed in moderation, knew his own style,  
Though out of uniform for quite awhile.  
He stood yet erect, a gleam in his eye,  
And healthy he looked, though I did not pry.

Standing idly by, neither crisp nor trim,  
Was this gen'ral's son, by the look of him.  
Not cut entirely from the old man's cloth,  
He appeared languid and nibbled by moth.  
No sharpness of manner, firmness of sound  
Betrayed that he felt himself on safe ground.



A young second lieutenant, leader of men,  
Yet hooded and soft, unnaturally thin.  
If his thoughts were lofty, his eyes took aim  
On each young lady he took for fair game.

Near the old gentleman, drink in her hand,  
Sat a lady of charm, known in her land  
For her many good deeds of charity  
And industry, of astounding degree.  
She was the head of so many good groups,  
Committees and boards and people-scout troupes,  
That ones head fairly swam to hear the score,  
Wondered, indeed, what she did it all for!  
For no one would guess that she, underneath,  
Was a simple farm girl, fresh from the heath.  
She tried ever so hard to play just the right game  
So her husband would not fail for her shame.

Over by the bar, feeling ill at ease,  
Stood a young fellow all elbows and knees.  
Nor have I seen one look so out of place.  
He looked like a turtle, ready to race.  
He clutched in one hand a briefcase and books.  
In the other a coke, in spite of strange looks.  
Whenever approached, he glanced right and left.  
Never have I seen a man so bereft.  
Obviously, his best company was gone,  
His paper and pen to write thoughts upon.  
If quiet reflection could be in style,  
He'd gladly renounce this timid exile.

Then standing apart, yet crowded upon,  
Was a tall, elegantly clad, woman.  
Sensuous even when she was at ease,  
Clearly the type who felt constrained to tease.  
She had the dissipated, sated glance  
Of one who knows what is best to enhance.  
Enhance then, she must, for the years she'd seen  
Had begun to dull the patented sheen  
A little toward brass, not sound anymore.

The count of her movies would tell the score  
If anyone cared, though this company gay  
Did not, which is why she was there, I say.

One more fellow, all but lost in the smoke,  
Was wearing a priest's collar, like a yoke.  
I say that not meaning collars are crude  
Except when worn with a suit that is rude,  
Such as gay colored check, or raucous tweed.  
The mix is not matched, it's meant to deceive.  
He was being a sport, all "relevant,"  
Callow and smooth, terribly dissonant,  
But full of love, it poured out every pore.  
One knew that his croon would open each door  
That he knocked on, his sound was so pretty,  
His favors so treasured, you see, God's pity.  
"Salvation's a snap, a good trip, you see,  
Deductable from your income tax fee!"

My host looked around and waved merrily.  
"It will be a blast!" said he. I agree.

**Diane Gay**

The smell of rubber  
But something more,  
A sense of smooth roundness  
Black not dull with small notches  
My child-hand grasped it in amazement.  
Riding a father's truck, the gear shift  
Rose like a long black flower.

**Jens Fog**



# If At First You Don't Succeed

The sun spread its radiant warmth over the High Meadow. Birds swooped in low graceful arcs, chirping merrily to one another. Yellow buttercups nodded their heads, as if in complete agreement with these musical conversations, in the gentle breeze. Young cumulus clouds, stark white in their youthful innocence, chased their shadows the length of the High Meadow.

At the southern end of the Meadow, where it starts its long run down to the Shire, a petite, lithe figure pirouetted to an attentive audience of brown rabbits. They sat back on their haunches in a wide circle, their very stillness giving critical approval to the fluid grace of the dancer. Xenette ended her dance with a curtsy to her audience and then seated herself on the grass clasping her knees with her hands. The rabbits remained upright on their haunches in silent tribute. A brightly colored humming bird darted into the circle and hovered in front of her face. She blew him a kiss which he carried off to plant on the nearest flower. A precocious cumulus drove his shadow over her in a mute accolade. Laughing, Xenette waved a golden arm in answer.

It was at that moment that she caught sight of the tree. It was quite tall and very full. A myriad of yellow dots flashed in the sunlight against the dark green background of the foliage. She continued her study as she rose to her feet, smoothed her short white tunic and adjusted the silver belt encircling her waist. The tree was off to one side, about a quarter of the way down the slope, just out of reach of the vanguard of a small woods marching down the rolling hillside.

A young man appeared from around the far side of the tree. Her curiosity heightened, Xenette started down the slope.

"Good afternoon," Xenette called. "I do not wish to interrupt your industrious labors, but that is the most magnificent tree I have ever seen."

The young man turned around at the sound of her voice, sloshed the remaining water in his goat skin on the ground and approached her slowly. "Aye, there's nothing like her that I've ever seen, but she is a very hard mistress."

He reached into a large wicker basket at his feet and took out a large yellow fruit, holding it in the palm of his hand for Xenette's inspection. "Here, dear lady, share this fey fruit with me, for I think you will find it to your liking." Drawing a small sheath knife, he cleanly cut the fruit in two and offered Xenette her choice of halves.

"Fair lady, you have arrived just in time to share with me the first fruits of my labors. The moon has waxed and waned many times while I have labored unceasingly for this moment. Now my fortune is made. I shall sell this wondrous fruit to all my neighbors, for once they have tasted it all other fruit will be pale and tasteless. I will have my purse full of coins, perhaps even a denarius or two. Come, fair lady, share my good fortune." And with that exhortation, he sucked gustily on his half of the fruit.

"By the Gemini," he exploded, "that is good. My poor untutored tongue knows no words to express its delicate flavor. Taste it, fair lady, and you'll agree."

Xenette began to laugh. It bubbled forth from her in an unrestrained musical cascade. Finally, regaining some measure of control, she said, "Oh pardon me, kind sir, but you looked so queer, your eyes all squinty and your mouth puckered so tightly closed, I just could not help myself. I am truly sorry, for a guest should laugh with host and not at him."



"Eyes squinty, mouth puckered, but this can not be. This is a fey fruit from a fey tree. The leprechaun himself promised it so. Please, fair lady, put your half to the test, and tell me true, for I am a brave man who has faced many dangers and I can look the truth straight in the eye."

Xenette raised the fruit to her lips and delicately explored the cut surface with her tongue. "If the truth be known, kind sir, this is a veritable giant among sour lemons. It surpasses all other lemons that I have tasted in tartness, as yonder towering pines dwarf a sapling. It is without peer in its sourness."

"No, it can't be true. The leprechaun promised me. Oh, all that back-breaking work. Is it to be for naught? Fair lady, I can not abide by what you have told me. I must have picked one that was not ripe. It's an easy thing to do, I'm not a farmer by trade." He reached into the basket, selecting the largest, yellowest lemon there, swiftly cut it and put it to the test.

Eyes squinted shut and mouth tightly pursed, he flung the lemon from him. "Oh, where is that leprechaun? Where is my sword, Soulsnatcher? Wouldn't I show him a fine trick or two. I would cut out his heart between one beat and the next. But for now, I will put an end to this foolishness."

He disappeared behind the rustic leanto that had been his home these past months and reappeared a moment later waving a heavy long sword. Uttering a fierce battle cry, he raced around the tree slashing at the lower branches. Soulsnatcher cut through the tough boughs as the bow of a long boat slices through the sea. Finally, when all the branches he could reach had been severed, he took a wide stance, gripped Soulsnatcher in both hands and swung an awesome stroke at the trunk. The magic tree stood upright for a long second and then it slowly toppled and crashed to the ground.

The young man slowly sank to the ground and sat there, head in his hands, elbows on his knees. "What a fool I am," he muttered. "I have bitten off my nose to spite my face. My great expectations have been dashed with one stroke of the sword."

"I'm afraid you would not have realized much wealth from it," Xenette informed him. "It seemed to be more of a curse than a blessing. I think you are much better off without it. Now you can do what you really want to do."

"You have a direct and gentle way with the truth, fair lady. It is most fortunate that you came my way this day." He glanced up at Xenette. "Pray be seated and listen to the foolish tale of a silly young man."

Xenette seated herself on the freshly cut stump and the young man swung around to face her.

"I'm a dragon slayer by trade. For many long years I apprenticed in the North Country. Then, in my third year as a Journeyman, I came south to test the mettle of the southern dragons, for it was in my mind to become the very best dragon slayer ever I had just crossed yonder fair meadow with the intent of spending the night in the Shire and inquiring about any troublesome dragons hereabout, when I caught sight of that treacherous leprechaun. He was under an oak tree, taking an afternoon nap. Now you know, I'm sure, that if you can lay hands on a leprechaun, and hold him fast, he will grant you three wishes. I crept up on him with great stealth, my heart pounding in my breast. In a few more heartbeats my wildest dreams would come true. Then I made a great leap for him, but as quick as I was, he was quicker. He slid through my outstretched arms and was behind the tree as quick as a wink. Round and round that oak tree we went the whole afternoon. Suddenly, he came to a halt and held up a wrinkled, sun-ripened hand.



‘Hold, my young gossoon. This is getting neither of us anywhere. We both have run pell-mell all this long hot afternoon and neither of us has gotten very far. You cannot grab hold of me and I, for my part, if the truth be known, cannot get away from you. A truce, then, is in order, or else we will fair run right through our suppers. You look like a bright lad. Now tell me, is not a boon in the hand worth three in the leprechaun? Let me give you a boon, of my own choosing, and we will go our merry ways. Why, the tale alone would be worth many a tankard of ale in yonder Shire.’

“To my lasting sorrow, I agreed with his pact,” the young man told Xenette.

“They are very crafty,” Xenette sympathized with him. “It is only when you lay hold of them with your own two hands and hold them tightly that they can be trusted at all, and, even then, I do think you must be most careful.”

“You are a fountain of wisdom, dear lady. Would that you had been here to counsel me that fateful afternoon. I never would have settled for half a loaf, but would have chased that leprechaun round that oak tree through supper and breakfast following, until I caught him.”

“I think you would have been far better off if you had turned on your heel, gone to the Shire as you had planned and inquired about dragons,” Xenette contradicted.

“Aye, there was that way out too, but the pact was made. That cunning leprechaun reached into his jerkin and pulled out a seed. ‘Take a look at your fortune,’ he said. ‘You’ll be the subject of many a minstrel’s lay. People will come from all over to see the magic tree that sprouts from this seed, which you, by your great strength of character, wrested from a leprechaun.’

“With that, he thrust the seed into the ground and jumped back as it immediately thrust a sprout up through the ground.

“One thing, my bucko, when the leaves curl you must water the tree or it will wither and die and your fortune with it.’

“And then he was gone. I stood watching my good fortune grow before my eyes until I noticed the leaves were curled. I spilled what water I had in my skin at its base and raced down to the brook for more water. And that is how I have spent my life these past months, fetching water for this cursed tree from sun up to sun down.”

Xenette rose from the stump, took his hands in hers. “Now it’s over. Come, I’ll walk with you to the Shire and you can get on with your dragon slaying.”

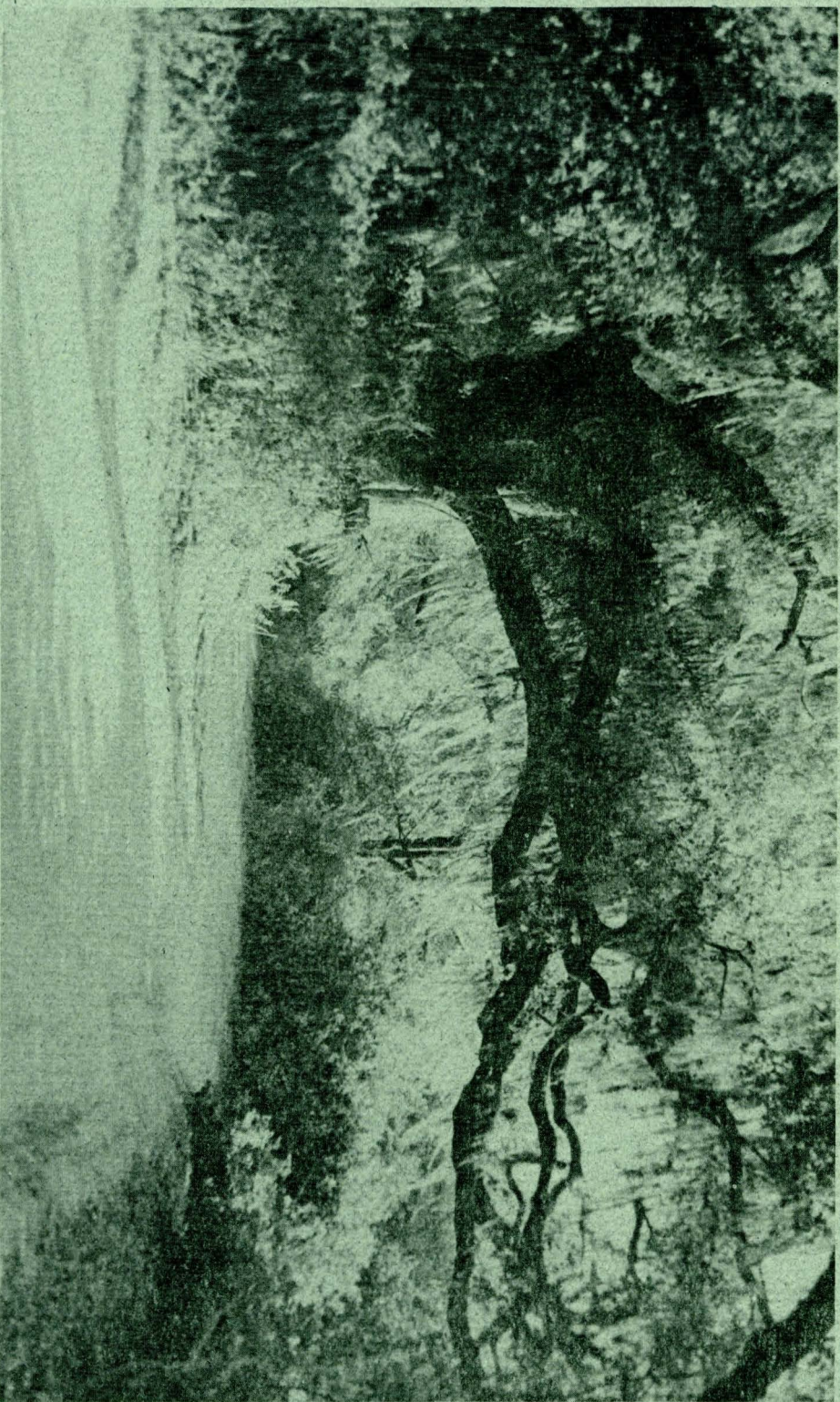
The young man looked into her eyes, a smile spreading across his face. “How can I ever thank you, dear lady.” Suddenly his gaze slipped from her face to the stump she had just vacated. Xenette turned to look and saw a green shoot springing up from the severed trunk. At its tip, there was a tiny leaf, curled tightly about itself.

“That’s the answer,” the young man shouted. “Now the fruit will be sweet.” He grabbed his goat skin and raced down hill to the brook.

“All it needed was a little light pruning,” he shouted over his shoulder.

**by John F. McCarthy**





Peter Draughon



## Poem To A Medical Student Friend

" Ὁ βίος βραχύς, ἡ δὲ τέχνη μακρὴ.  
ὁ δὲ καιρὸς ὀξύς, ἡ δὲ πείρα σφαλερή,  
ἡ δὲ κρίσις χαλεπὴ..."

—Hippocrates

-for M.P.K.

If we meet again in distant time,  
how will you care for me?  
Now there is little you can do  
except watch and learn from those  
with knowledge and skills  
greater than your own.  
Proudly you walk;  
the possibilities for knowledge  
and signs are great.  
But what will you do when swollen  
vessels and stiff joints turn my  
remnant thoughts into pain;  
when it becomes, by causes not  
totally understood, evident I  
will not surpass a destiny of  
those who have come before?  
You know I do not want to leave  
before the risks become apparent.  
How will you care for me if I am old ?

**Barry Billets**

... So I sit with you in the front seat  
of your polished Packard,  
discussing the vastness of the purple-black sky  
we are locked away from  
And funny that this is the moment you pick to love me  
When I'm preoccupied and pensive  
vacillating quietly, from an overwhelming  
sense of urgency. ... to semi-serenity  
Concentrating only on absorbing light emitted  
from a slipping star.

And it all reminds me of how long  
I've hung suspended like this  
distorted and twisted  
to avoid jagged pieces of summer  
which could rip and spoil this fine facade  
I'm braving  
My skin to fall away displaying naked, shivering bone.

Then you say it all reminds you  
Of how long you're going to live;  
to be 150, maybe  
and on late afternoons we'll bare ourselves  
to mountains made of wave,  
Boldly revealing aged scars and imperfections.

And I'm sliding down a ray of light to center,  
Guided by your star-polished fingers.

**Nancye Ausbon**

## **Bubbles And Glass**

Bubbles and Glass reflect a stare  
slumped, quiet. Alone. "The same again."  
Why don't you come over here?  
Have a drink on me.  
Your ears are dull and sight near-blind,  
I can't ---but the wall holds your mind.  
I've heard this is your Place, just as old,  
Yet your eyes reflect of years ago ---- a Home.  
Those wrinkles sing a sad song,  
a fantasy dances on your lips.



A glance around;  
    and back into that world.  
Wondering through an aging soul . . .  
You don't have to be so old.  
Or maybe I'm a fool,  
    to a man who's wise with age,  
Who sees the past, both Good and Bad  
    as what he is today.  
I'll be on that stool someday,  
    looking at the wall there.  
A laugh or two will strike my back/  
Bubbles and Glass reflect a stare.

**Steve Mutschler**

**And**

And  
who  
among  
you  
is worthy to set this  
stone at my head, re-  
flecting my name into  
the  
faces  
of in  
diff-  
erent  
pass-  
ers -  
by???

**Linda Ochoa**

## A Prayer

Sandy solitude brought nothing  
of comfort as the day  
ticked towards dusk;  
no joy in melting skies or white-  
capped waves. Paradise had left  
the tropics old and un-  
fulfilling in their sameness.

Unchanging, serenity fastbred  
stagnance and pleas  
for NEW LIFE to the  
waning sun: Wings on which to  
soar through imagination's  
realm of floating  
clouds and dreams;

To shatter the mortal mold and  
exist Forever in a  
kalidascope of lives;  
To discover the universe from  
amidst the starry-eyed void  
of eternity, absorbing  
the world with a thought.

**Skip Masland**



# Pigeon Key At Night

"Θάλαττα. Θάλαττα."

—Xenophon

The dimly lit pier  
penetrates patiently, deep  
into the warm swirling  
darkness. We are isolated  
from the familiar swaying  
of trees. It is difficult  
to tell from which  
direction the wind comes.  
Dissolved and diluted we sit  
down on the wormworn wood  
and mingle in the long contact  
between water and sky.  
There is no coldness here.  
To the wind we are  
the only barriers.  
It is the original sense of cold  
and the first glimpses of  
distant lights which have  
long since vanished. Yet  
we sniff and stare and wonder  
as though we have been the first.  
Schools of fish are attracted  
to our circular light and  
the sharks wait in the darker  
water. We stare at what we  
will never extinguish.

In silence the search  
for new forms quickens.  
The white blossoms are temporary  
presentations of the rising  
and falling darkness.  
I have seen the postcards  
and photographs that do not  
capture the thing my wooden  
notes planktonically seek.  
And now we stand. Only I  
remain when the surface returns.

**Barry Billets**



## The Elements

Sea awakes to the  
    first light, churns  
playfully in the dawn  
of Existence. Outward she  
    spreads, flowing over  
Land in every conceivable

course of mind; lapping  
    Air in ecstatic waves  
of ebullience. Forming  
Nature's Trinity in a  
    limitless province  
of power, They beget

the life-forces of  
    the universe:  
Land's wild blooms  
of vegetation nurtured  
    by Sea's sustenance/  
sustained by Air's breath.

## Skip Masland

# Contributors

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## Acknowledgements

Mrs. Ray Arnold, typesetter — Rollins College Print Shop

Dr. Erich Blossey, Department of Chemistry

Ms. Katie Curtin, Sandspur — Editor-In-Chief

Mrs. George Elkins, Supervisor — Rollins College Print Shop

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