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Spring 1965

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FLAMINGO

SPRING 1965



Spring, 1965

Volume 49

The *Flamingo* is the Rollins College literary magazine
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Flamingo

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PREFACE

This is the FLAMINGO.

The works on these pages form a literary collage of original expression. Students, alumni, and faculty members are the contributors to a common goal: creativity of high merit.

The FLAMINGO shares this goal . . .

Contents

Just a Daisy, by Gloria Giles	6
Far Away Here, by Nona Gandelman	7
There is One Old Lady, by Scott Kass	7
Signpost, by Gigi Farragut	8
Dream's Year, by Margie Stevens	8
The Papier-Mache Boat, by J. E. Stein	9
Books, by Scott Kass	15
Alive, by Anne Hathaway	16
The Encounter, by Pamela Downs	16
City Boy, by Scott Kass	17
You and I Were Two, by G. Giles	17
Doves, Green Velvet, etc., by A. McCuskey	18
Counteraction, by Gloria Giles	22
Sorry Charlie, by Nona Gandelman	22
Robert's Rules of Order, by Scott Kass	23
The Passionate Player to His Partner, by G. Giles	23

Just a daisy
Mingling
 with the rest.
Living comfortably.
 Liked by most
 Hated by few
 Loved by some
 Known by all.
Smiling
 Laughing
 Crying
 for
 at
 with.
 So very gregarious
 So very popular
 So very sought after —
 — a little unhappy.

There was a hill
Rising above Daisy's meadow,
 But she never ventured
 from her plot.
Occasionally she looked
 toward
 the
 pulpit,
 (The Jack-in-the-Pulpit)
But Jack never lowered his gaze
 except once. . .
 and she looked,
 Searchingly
 Fearfully
 Longingly.

"Okay," said Jack,
"One chance will I give —
—But one chance only,
That you may live.
Come now — or never.
Make haste — or stay.
Come now and I'll tell you
Of lands, far away."

Daisy ran, almost falling,
Her petals held high,
She knew she was reaching
Beyond — even why.

She in love . . .
 . . . He in different
But she worked and he won.

GLORIA GILES

FAR AWAY HERE

Far away
were voices cryin
mumble where
I cannot

for I am young see
no old
not old
no young
no I am
I am

free

Snickers baby
no can tell
what is it
where the matter

be

yeah I will
look and fairly
listen but why
the hell shall
tickle

me

Far away
were voices cryin
throatly pain
and nightly

plea

far away
not here
but there
no where the voices
cry is

me

NONA GANDELMAN

There is one old lady
Who comes to church
Week after week
and
Sits in the same seat
In front of the pillar
With the same expression
On her taut face,
and
I think
She's dead.

SCOTT KASS

SIGNPOST

We must
As we walk forward
Look ahead
Straightening our path
With each step
Never seeing
The pattern behind
Except to know its faltering way
Seeking as we go an inner strength
To help us keep our eyes ahead
When other paths
May seem the way.

GIGI FARRAGUT

DR E A M S Y E A R

There is a time to live . . .

Yesterday . . .
Strains of Spring crossed our path
Sang their song of hope
Painted their picture
Of soft pastels.
Left us standing
 In the mirror
 Of rosy dreams . . .

Today . . .
The sun moves higher, faster
Burning her way
 Across
Our Summer sky.
Sending us scurrying
For a place away.
Leaving our flaming dreams
 Stranded
 On the sun-baked plains.

And tomorrow . . .
Tomorrow will drift into Autumn.
Then Winter
With her icy shadow
Will creep slowly by
Darkening Our Dreams
 With black
 Death.

There is a time to die . . .

MARCIE STEVENS

THE PAPIER-MACHÉ BOAT

by JONATHAN E. STEIN

Fridays were never crowded out at the country club, and you didn't have to dress up, so we went out there almost every week of that year, my senior year of high school. I remember that particular week had been hell — I had cut on Monday and sweated that, plus the daily pressure of going through every class unprepared, trying to stay one step ahead of the teacher, worrying, and using every mental trick of deduction and generality. And dinner at the club was lousy, as usual. You see, I never have gotten along with my parents, and only went out there to avoid trouble and argument. I had been feeling a new and delicious wave of bitter self-reliance and anti-sociality, probably brought on by the spring thaw. I was in a state of proud acquiescence; Harold Krebsian resolve. It was beautiful.

Well, after another silent dinner, eaten early, before the old place had more than a few other young families and old couples (all wearing their new short sleeves), we slid into the car, rolled the windows down, and drove home. I remember listening with reborn joy to the damp, comfortable rocket sound as we passed each car, especially the parked ones. It wasn't even twilight yet as we clicked freshly across the driveway to the back door; that click: a sound I still hadn't readjusted myself to since the cold weather had broken into conspicuously mellow mildness. Now don't get me wrong — I love the winter with the passion of the sometimes aching loner, but I love change more than anything, when it is due and dramatic. I could anticipate — I probably was anticipating at that moment — the rainy Saturdays of late spring when clouds would gather and heavy, scent-laden air would still itself in a way quite different from any other time, evoking sweet, tropical, Robinson Crusoe afternoons of intriguing ingenuity under darkening skies. . . . But all this was in early spring, and yes, the sky was showing a little pink now.

I climbed up the stairs, and on each landing and floor I opened every window. As I opened the door to my stairs I felt the breeze come down at me. My windows had been opened all week. I left the light off; the stairs were shadowy but fresh; the shadows were made from blue, late daylight. Then I got upstairs and plopped on my cool bed.

I rested there, feeling neither very tired nor at all energetic. I listened to birds echoing throughout the neighborhood, and to cars going up the bricked hill with that same rocket noise, starting low and quiet from the main street three blocks away, to their quiet roar, and fading drop in pitch. The Doppler effect.

Then I heard some kids shouting and laughing down the street. I went to the little window on that side and watched them come up the easy grade: one bicycle-rider, going so slow he had to keep twisting his front wheel back and forth to stay up; a little kid carrying the two bats, walking on the rider's street side; and a fat little guy with a red baseball cap on, on the sidewalk. A girl and a dog tagged along.

I went back and lay down. The room was only dark in the middle; the rest was grey, but far from depressing. It was liberating. It seemed like I was outside, or that my walls were non-existent — I felt completely at one with the nature outside, as if it continued right on through my room without even considering the walls. Don't ask me why. But the sounds had an awful lot to do with it. Did I say sound echoed before? It didn't. There was a magic audial resiliency which did not permit sounds to echo, fall dead, reverberate, or resound. I can't catch it; sounds could be uttered far away, and be immediate, but without any gloss or shine to them. And don't get the impression it was damp out. It was far from dry, but it wasn't wet.

At seven it finally began to darken, to shadow outside. I heard my door swing open at the foot of my stairs. I knew it was Ed.

"Mike?"

"Yah."

He climbed laboriously the creaky steps.

"What's up?"

"Nadunno."

"You talked to anybody?"

"Nobody to talk to."

"I guess that's true. You cut school again?" Ed went to a different school.

"Nyeah. I gotta start bein' careful."

"Well, — Christopher finally did it. He wrecked the car. Totalled it."

"Neow God. What happened? 'D'e get hurt?"

"Yeah, a little. I was just at the hospital with Mom and all the kids. He hurt his leg. I dunno . . . I guess it wasn't his fault, but the way he drives, it's really about time."

I rolled to the corner of my bed near the corner of the room with my mop and broom handle collection stacked, and grabbed a short stick, and with the same burst of energy did my return roll.

"Very nice," Ed said.

"Thank you," I said.

Ed went over to the big window on his side of the room and looked out. Then he sighed. "Well, you want to do anything?"

"I dunno. You know, it's warm again. I kind of feel like getting a couple of bottles of Manichewitz and some doughnuts or something and going up on that hill in the middle of Heights again — like last summer. It's really great out. Look. Not even dark yet."

"I know. I dunno. I don't feel like it."

"Well . . ." I brandished the bare handle like a sword, *touché*-ing the ceiling a few times, "um . . . you want to get something to eat."

"Yeah. We'll see who's at the Root Beer Stand."

I got up and we went outside.

"How about the Oak Briar? I could use a pitcher. Your car?"

"Yah," Ed said. "Oh — Conley got caught there last night, I meant to tell you. They're really cracking down like bastards."

The top was down. The tires made the rocket sound as they met the pavement, but the pitch didn't change. We drove slowly to the stand, watching front lawn sprinklers, and an occasional paper-reader out on his lawn chair. It was almost dark enough for us to use our lights. I don't know how they could read.

At the stand we pulled in beside Roth's G. T. O.

"Ah, man. Whaddayasay?"

"Ay, Lar. How's it hangin'?"

"O.K. You heard about Conley?"

"Yeah," Ed said. "F - - ken passed out in the cop's arms, I heard."

"Hnaw . . . 'In the cop's arms.' Naw. All he was *doin'* was *buyin'* it. Jesus. Ay, where'd you get that, March?"

"I dunno; that's what was goin' around McKinley. What happened?"

"I dunno, but I know he wasn't drunk. Wasn't even high."

"He's f - - ked up anyway," I said. "What're you guys doin' tonight?"

"I dunno. Probly play cards. I think Diatri's havin' a party, but it might be closed. I'm beat, man. Got up at six-thirty for work."

"You workin' now?"

"S - - t yeah — quit school. You know that."

"Well. I dunno. You want to do anything?"

"Ay, man, nothing to do."

"Guess so." We finished our cheeseburgers, etc., and left, heading north.

"Well, you want to go to Rabbi's? His parents are in Europe."

"I'm tired as s - t. Let's just go home. What's on T.V.?"

"I think *Citizen Kane*."

"Oh, great movie. *Great*."

"I know. But I've seen it fifty times."

"So what. I've got some brew. They'll be asleep. We'll make a pizza."

"Frozen?"

"I guess. You don't want to go all the way down town, do you?"

"Euch."

We got home (my house) and clicked across the now dark driveway.

"Wait," Ed hesitated. I stopped. "You know what? Let's build something." The birds had stopped, and the breeze was starting up through the trees.

"What?"

"Let's build something. Tomorrow. Saturday."

"What? What are you talking about?"

"I feel like building something."

"O. K., what? " I yawned out: "What do you want to build?"

"Who knows? What I really feel like — ah, you'll yuc."

"Well for Christ's sake what the f - k do you want to build? What? — 're you nuts?"

"No, God damn it. A tree house. How about that? Douglass just built a neat one."

"What? Douglass is twelve years old. Je-sus Christ. A tree house."

"Ay, cut this s - t, Mike. You know goddam well you'd love to make one — I mean a neat one, with levels and furniture — you know."

"Where the hell are we gonna build a tree house? Not here — they'd kill me."

"S - t. My old lady said Doug's was the last one. He kind of wrecked the lawn in that corner. What can we make?"

"What is this compulsion to make something? What're you, the craftsman?"

"No. I just feel like it, O. K.? You don't have to join in. Nobody's asking you."

"O. K., O. K. How about our idea last summer — just dig a hole? 'Course, where are we gonna dig a hole?"

"How 'bout a go-kart . . . a——"

"Ay, man, wait . . . I got it! A boat!"

"But there's no big lake around here."

"There's *no* lake around here. That's the beauty of it."

"Yes there is, Hopwood pond, that club——"

"All right, tough s - t — listen — I feel like building a huge boat. I remember, at camp when I was about ten I built the neatest model — it was wooden, about a foot long. Great. Only the counsellor really built it. But was it neat — sailed across the lake straight. Neat little thing. Aw God!" I had lost it somewhere.

"O. K.! — a big boat — but out of what? What do we use? What floats — wood . . ."

"Lead, son. Let's build it out of lead. A lead boat. It'll sink. Great. Totally useless!"

"Lead? Where you gonna get — aw jeez — com'mon ——"

"O.K. . . . Um . . . car — no wait . . . wait . . . um . . . s - t. I dunno. Cardboard . . . uh . . . pa—— I got it. Got it. Perfect. Great. Listen: (aw s - t!) . . . *papier maché*."

"*Papier-maché*."

"Yeah. *Papier-maché*. Cheap, easy, time consuming . . . and when it's

done we'll have a Viking party and launch it, full of fruit . . . and just watch it sink!"

"Yeah . . . yeah . . . All right!" Ed chimed in laughing. "Tomorrow. Tomorrow we go. O.K.?"

"Perfect. I can see it now——"

"Ah—don't spoil it. I'm going. Tomorrow. Nine."

"Ten."

"All right. Ten. See ya."

Ed got back into his car (which we had ended up leaning on). It was warm, hollow and dark, but there *still* persisted a ray of pink to the west. I put a record on and went to bed. The room was dark, and it still seemed like part of the outside.

II

The next day Ed and I laid down the plans and program that were to govern both of us for the next month. Our every moment and thought was spent in planning, in mixing flour and water, in chicken-wire shaping. We decided to work out in my driveway, and in the new garage when it showered. The expense was trifling; one trip to the hardware store and we were off.

The whole of my school and half of Ed's soon knew about it. Very funny. "You guys are really nuts!" Carol Phillips had laughed. "I knew it all the time!" But we were only getting started when the novelty wore off for the Great Unwashed.

For over four weeks we shaped layer after layer of wet strips on the growing hull. She was a little over ten feet long, three feet high, four feet wide at "midships." Visitors were welcome; portable radios were forbidden during the long hours of neat slopping. We shunned nautical terms; in two weeks we had our own term for every angle and gargoyle on her that common English wouldn't identify. Did I say gargoyle? No. She was simple, economic: ridiculous, in her functional design. Saturday after Saturday, with chain-saws buzzing through the whole neighborhood as our accompaniment, we worked with the zeal of . . . of two kids building a tree house. A perfect tree house.

And as time wore on (we had ceased, for the most part, to consider time and plans—they were for such as the Hannibal townfolk), everyone around us became more and more adverse to our actions. Kids, teachers, parents . . . by the end some were antagonistic, as if we had told a good dirty joke that had begun to irritate.

"Jealous," we mentioned. No, not really. I don't remember what we decided it was. We were talking less and less by the end. I remember how we had named her:

It was a Tuesday afternoon. We had both cut school, a dangerous policy so near the end. And I remember saying—"Ay Ed: you know we could really get screwed for this. Old Sparky could do it—write Wesleyan any minute. This cutting—I don't know. I know, the boat and all, but——"

"We're playing hookey," he said. From then on I never minded cutting school, or endangering my precious "future." Not in the least.

Then a car came down the hill, the noise of the tires coming to a premature drop in pitch. The chain-saw stopped just then, too, I remember. I heard some bird tweeting. She craned her head out of the window. "You get over here!"

"I'm really busy, mother. Drive in."

She backed up and drove in, jolting to a stop. She swung out of the car and came up to the bow of the boat. I could feel a humid, cool breeze; birds were singing. (The saw was still off.) I knew those Robinson Crusoe days were almost here. I even got a wisp of the smell of blossoms and chrysan-

themums. Ed kept working. I was supposed to be putting on any name I could think up.

"I want you home right now," she said.

"Sorry." Ed didn't look up. I decided not to pay attention.

"I need help. It's Pearle's day off. You can do this some other time. You spend your life over here. C'mon."

Ed kept working. We had been expecting an outbreak from some quarter some time. We kept on working.

"Edgar! I'm speaking to you. Now comon!" She was yelling. Ed didn't move. "Come *on!*" she shrieked, actually moving in on her son. She hit him on the neck and shoulders. Then she went away. We never talked about it. I know Ed was excited as hell, but he only said, later, "Have you got a name?" Did I say we named her? We never could.

III

Then one day we were done. We put everything away. We cleaned up. I called Bob, who had stopped by that afternoon and been re-interested by the finished product. The next night there was to be a launching party out at that little lake. I left it all to him. We were just to get the boat out there, ready to launch.

I had a silent, plate-clicking dinner with my parents, and traipsed upstairs. The sun had just gone down and dusk was bright and fluorescent — the whole neighborhood was a sort of huge, dead sound stage with a high, cloud-covered ceiling and indirect lighting. March climbed the narrow steps to my room and stood in the door listening to the birds through the wide opened, screenless windows. It was getting dark quickly. I closed my Hemingway and looked up.

"Well . . . Tomorrow's the day. I guess it's all set."

"Guess so," he said. He backed up on the window-seat cover for the old radiator. He reached outside. "You want to do anything?"

"Na. I don't know. I don't feel like anything much."

"I guess I'll go to bed. I'm tired as hell." And he started back out and down the stairs.

"Ed," I called.

He stopped. "Yeah?"

"Let's . . . go have a few beers. Take them up on the hill. It's nice as hell out."

"O. K. I got some. I'll cool it."

Pretty soon we got into our convertible. I accelerated a little too rapidly — it was the first time in a long time my parents had let me use it. The retracted top, and the warm, intimate glow of the evening made the "peeling out" a little embarrassing. No it didn't.

IV

Early the next morning we went down and picked up the two-wheeled trailer. We hooked it onto Ed's Bonneville and drove back to my house.

Slowly, carefully, we eased the car backwards through the driveway to the blocks cornering the ship. Then we put the two blocks under the two trailer wheels and eased the boat onto the trailer, up the rollers, and into the fastening slots. Then we began lashing, carefully and completely.

When we were done I said: "Do you want to take it out now? I mean, do you want to wait until tonight?"

"Let's eat lunch and then maybe take it out." But as we were eating lunch in our breakfast room, eating slowly and quietly, Ed all of a sudden looked up and said, "Let's go. Now. I want to get it out there now." We got up and drove the boat out to the lake.

When we got there the caretaker came out. He seemed irritated to have to come outside in the hot afternoon.

"What do you want?"

"We have to get in just for a while," I said.

"Well, are you members?"

"No. No, we brought the boat. The boat for tonight."

"The boat?" He screwed up his face.

"Yes, the boat," Ed said firmly.

"You boys coming to the party here? Tonight?"

"Yes. Could we leave this thing off?"

"What. Oh," he said, peering around the corner of his little reception-gate hut. "That. Yes, I guess."

We opened the gate and drove in slowly, keeping to where the boat would be protected. When we got to the little sandy beach we turned around and backed the trailer up fairly close to the water.

"Is the angle right?" I asked.

"I guess. Yes. You unhook it, and I'll drive forward."

It was done. Ed got out of the car and we both looked back at the boat, as I look back at the memory. It was resting on the trailer, bow pointed in the air towards the water. Then we started to get in the Bonneville. I stopped, half in the front seat. "You know, somebody might steal the trailer. One of us better stay and watch it."

"I know what you mean," Ed said. "Why don't you stay till six, and then I'll get ready and come out and you take the car in and get ready."

I agreed.

By eight o'clock most of the kids were there, dressed in their bermudas and with their dates. Ed and I began to circulate among the people we had seen so less and less of. Bob had organized the launch party into a gala affair, though we had him tone down the Viking part, and had him leave out the fruit part.

I remember one girl talking to me as the sun went down:

"This is sort of a welcoming back party." I filled my cup with beer.

"What do you mean?" I was interested. No I wasn't. I just wanted her to say it.

"I don't know. You and Ed here have been out of it for such a long time with this boat stuff! I mean it's all cool as hell!"

"I guess so."

I was doing O. K., and Ed seemed to be enjoying himself, but we both realized that in our haste and care in getting the boat out we had forgotten dates, prerequisites for our "welcoming back." We just wandered from group to group on the now crowded and darkening beach, always being greeted with "Whaddayasay, boat-builders!" and the ensuing friendly, happy conversation.

Every once in a while I felt a powerful impulse to look at the boat. Once I caught Ed doing the same. She was poised, unattended and growing into a more and more eerie sight against the sunset and darkening water.

"Launching Ceremonies" were scheduled for ten, and by a quarter of most of the kids were quite loaded. Ed hadn't had too much to drink, but I was feeling no pain; both of us knew the time was coming up, and through opposite ends of the noisy, bobbing and twisting crowd we sought Bob to remind him. We both came up on him at once —

"What?" he said. He was talking to Laura Browning. "What? Oh. Yes! The boat. Oh Jeez! The boat!" He spun around and shouted as loud as he could, with his slight slur: "Listen! The boat! Let's launch the boat!"

At that the crowd paused in its revelry for an instant, and then struck up a happy, laughing chant: "The boat! The boat!" And they paraded, singing and chanting, with Bob at their head, and Ed and me carefully to his right and left.

As the crowd got to the dark shadow it got quieter, and Bob got up on one of the big trailer tires and said:

"We are gathered here today . . . tonight — to launch the craft which has been worked on so hard. Umm——" He paused, breathing hard. "A boat was made to be launched, and tonight we launch it to watch this one sink! Ed and Mike have spent count——"

"All right!" There was a scream, and the humming, laughing crowd, and Bob, and the wind-blown trees were all quiet, all swaying uneasily back and forth.

"Let's — let's get on with it," Ed said slowly.

There was a moment of silence, and then Bob said quietly, "O. K." Then he produced from the upstretched hands of Laura a bottle of Roma champagne. "I have here," he began, regaining his former power with every word, "a sacred bottle of champagne. It will be with this that . . . whoever Ed and Mike choose will christen the a . . . the," he looked down, around the front of the bow, "the — I dunno — what? The *Joke*. Well, boys, who shall it be?"

Ed turned slowly around to look at me across the bow end and the kids. I reached up and got the bottle. I — just as I started to swing down the big thing Ed snapped, "No!" I stopped. I hadn't begun, really.

"I think," he began slowly, "I think we would all rather drink the champagne."

"Yes!" Art Whalen shouted from the stern side of the boat. "Give it here!" Somebody grabbed it from my hand and it was popped and passed around eagerly from person to person. Bob got down from the wheel. Everybody started blabbering again. Ed looked at me from under the bow. "Let's get it over with," he said.

"Yes, we'd better."

"Here." Ed handed me an opened penknife. "We'll never have time to untie all this."

We cut through the lashings as the kids swirled around us drinking and babbling louder and louder. When we were ready to unhook the final two rear clasps I looked back at Ed under her prow and said, "Are you sure you want to launch it? I mean, they'll never know the difference." That's how I remember it.

And Ed said, "I suppose we'd better. There's really no use for it." Then we let loose at the same time, and the hull, slick and smooth, wobbled awkwardly off the trailer and slid about ten feet out into the water. There was a brief gasp and cheer, and then the kids hurried over to the warm fire. The wind took the boat out about thirty yards, and we watched silently, standing alone beside the skeleton-like trailer, as the black form out on the inky water, both reflecting the fire and light, slowly became heavier and lower, and finally slipped away.

Then we turned around and walked back to the party for good.

J. E. S.

Books

Books, like woman-users,
Take what they want
from you
and tell you to go
back
To what you were,
But you can't,
I've tried.

SCOTT KASS

ALIVE

Better than
deciding you're in love
or finishing your term paper
or believing for the first time
that you are beautiful,
are the few suspended moments
lying in the hot sun
or watching the rain crashing down
or linking hands with someone
in silence, across the coffee cups
when you suddenly hear every sound
and feel the way the air really is
and see something — like your own hand maybe —
completely.
A drop of life
so snowflake unique and fragile
and so much your own
that you get surprising, silly, warm drops in your eyes.
Tears of gratitude.

ANNE HATHAWAY

The Encounter

My camel lunges, my litter too,
As I make way to Hareesh.
There to be destined for
King Harun al-Farraaj
Of the pure white beard.
I shall be his woman
Until he pleases to dismiss me.
This honor visits my tribe.
My father is even more revered,
And his loss repaid.

Coaxing aside the curtain,
I espy the Hareesh walls.
A horse and rider bear upon me
And all but graze my beast.
The mounted is scarce a man,
Just as I am scarce a woman.
One look and our eyes lock.
In those lustrous pools
I might find my image.
Only then do I note
His princely robe
Of the House of Farraj.

PAMELA DOWNS

City Boy

City boy, who has never baled hay,
Nor climbed a tree,
Nor eaten home-made peach ice-cream,
Nor swum in a pond and breathed blue-green air,
Tell them, city boy,
Tell them that telephone poles are your trees and that
Handball against Loew's is great fun even when you can't see the ball
In the dusk that sneaks up on you from behind.
Tell them also that carrying home groceries cross-town
On a January afternoon is not unlike milking cows.
City boy, tell them that the air in the city is not blue-green,
But brown and red with car fumes and wafts of frying fish,
And that no home-made ice-cream was ever like an Italian ice in July.

SCOTT KASS

You and I Were Two

You

who walked on steady ground
with spongy shoulders.
who talked with factual words
and careful pauses.
who thought of pretty days
with questioning clouds.
who loved by warmth of heart
and slow emotion.

and I

who walked on quickening sand
over hardening rock.
who talked with careless words
and short intermissions.
who thought of every vicissitude
with safe adjournment.
who loved with open heart
and uncorked emotion.

Were two

who walked with woven fingers
but unlocked hands.
who talked with loving words
but cruel meanings.
who thought of exquisite heights
but drifting moments.
who loved with well-meaning hearts
but false emotion.

GLORIA GILES

Doves, Green Helvet, Etc.

by ANDREW McCUSKEY

At eleven-thirty on the morning of July fourteenth, an unidentified woman died en route to Bellevue Hospital. She had been struck by a Fifth Avenue bus while crossing the same street at the Twenty-Sixth Street intersection. The New York City Department of Sanitation was called to remove refuse in the form of shattered bottles which evidently smashed when the unidentified woman fell. They were fortunately empty, and there was no accompanying garbage.

The decaying old woman rocked laboriously in the chair in front of the soot-laden window. The morning sun shone obliquely through the grey-green smudges, turning the morning-yellow city to lead, and silvering the flaking white sill with filth. She sat in violent contrast to the infrequent slashes of the new sun. Her years reverberated in every gesture. She wore an overly large, purple silk kimono, dusted with age and sprinkled with innumerable drops of cheap sherry. Her bleached yellow-white hair cascaded in abandoned threads across her worn, sunken red eyes and flowed in an oily spill across her shoulders. The monotonous motion of her rocking continued unbroken to the gentle scratch of a forgotten tune playing on the wind-up Phonola near her.

Around her were littered the remnants representing the sum total of her seventy-one years of existence. There were the dolls carefully preserved under several slightly shattered dressing mirrors, numerous boxes of remnant dress material, stacks of lovely, brilliantly colored, old Christmas wrappings. Her bed, which had remained unslept in for countless years, was swamped with a collection of crockery and her fantastic assemblage of Mexican costume jewelry. All in all, the visual effect of her quarters was Security.

At this particular moment, Miss Alicia Overton was engaged in terribly serious mental conflict. Today was Celia's birthday, and she had intended to go out to purchase something appropriate. Celia was, after all, her closest friend. Even after her brother had gone off for an extended rest at a pleasant home for the criminally insane, at a point when close friends almost ceased nodding, and enemies — indeed, there had been some for Miss Overton's had been the best contralto voice in the choir — clucked out poisonous reports, Celia had remained devoted. But this very morning, on her eighteenth birthday, Celia had refused her especially delicious breakfast of imported fish remnants and a birthday glass of sherry, preferring instead to wheeze the early morning away in the corner, occasionally licking her balding coat of orange fur with an indulgent tongue. It all served to annoy Miss Alicia greatly because it seemed imminently possible that she would be deprived of the chief highlight of her year. Celia was pouting, and now Miss Alicia was pouting, also.

It seemed so dreadfully avoidable. She played a puffy glance on Celia. She was sleeping! The lovely darling was curled up and asleep in the corner of Miss Alicia's old Traviata costume. It had been a minor part, but nevertheless, a well-received performance, she thought. Well, she might have chosen a more appropriate spot. No respect left for art anymore, observed Miss Alicia, sighing heavily. The nice needle-point piano cover on top of the trunks of beaded party dresses would have been more comfortable. It was handmade, close to the ceiling, and much, much warmer. Absurd, dear, dear cat.

Miss Overton had much earlier in the month conceived a fantastic surprise for Celia. She had intended to take her faithful pet out for a walk,

and then to the pet store farther down on the East Side in order to purchase some wildly exotic treat. She took Celia out once annually, and it was an event to be considered with fresh thought and ingenious planning each year. Miss Alicia sighed heavily. She felt like crying. She really did.

The only sound in the room came from the needle scratching dully at the end of the record. Miss Alicia laboriously rose from her rocking chair, grasping tightly at the curving arms, and lifted herself upward. After a final monumental effort she lurched forward and stood panting, weaving back and forth slightly as she regained her composure. She maneuvered her massive, decayed frame over to the old gramophone and replaced the needle at the beginning of the record. Shooting stubby, liver-dotted fingers through a mound of precious refuse — delightful bits of gaudy hair ribbon and left-over morsels from long forgotten meals — she gently extracted a nearly full bottle of sherry. She picked up an empty glass from the edge of the table. With one hand tenderly holding the bottle nestled under one voluminous breast, and pointing her glass with her other hand towards the rocking chair, she lumbered forward. She turned and, slowly easing down, forced herself into creaking repose.

She deftly uncorked the sherry and filled the glass to the brim. Now, this whole thing must be decided without further dawdling, she thought as she lifted the dark cherry-brown glass to her lips. If only Celia would creep over and give me just one tiny kiss — just a small, simple, uninvolved little kiss, she thought as she brought the glistening wet, clear glass away from her mouth down to her lap. She stared at Celia.

"My pretty pet still feeling all poopy? Woo, woo, woo, widdle pwetty — eeny, weeny, widdle, pwetty Celia feel poo-poo?"

Miss Celia returned her attention to her glass. She filled it. She lifted the dark cherry-brown glass to her lips.

"The precious, poo-poo kitty," she giggled as she brought the clear, glistening wet glass away from her mouth. It dropped from her relaxed hand into her lap. After a passing attempt to erase a growing red stain from her sleeve, she began to rise.

"No more poo-pooing today — naughty Celia." She reached a position approximating standing, still clutching the now seriously depleted sherry bottle. Miss Alicia pulled back her head and with great solemnity and consummate dignity announced, "Celia, we shall now exit. It is time" — her heart rushed — "for our trip."

She stumbled over to Celia and swept the old, sulking, orange cat into her arms. Humming softly to the tune of the record, she clasped the animal to her face and swayed vigorously.

"Mommy's going go put on Mommy's prettiest, best — no — *most*, best dressy. You like Mommy do that — Mommy put on her besty dressy, hmm?"

Miss Alicia clumsily kissed pretty Celia's paw as it raked past her face. She dropped Celia back onto her bed of costumes, and then, tilted back her head, sending the rich cherry-brown liquid racing to the neck of the bottle and beyond. Jesus, it's hot. I'll die in velvet — just absolutely die, she thought. She lowered the glistening wet, clear bottle from her lips and dropped it on the floor. Miss Alicia walked gingerly over to a mound of assorted finery heaped against the back wall, and delicately collapsed to her knees. Rivulets of sweat coursed down her neck and merged into a shiny stream which disappeared into her kimono between the cleavage of her mountainous breasts.

"Beauty, beauty," she trilled, "something beautiful, ravishing, and all me. Velvet and feathers for a singer!"

Digging furiously, Miss Alicia at last spotted her most brilliant dress and drew it with trembling fingers from the tangle of nearly magic gowns. Rising

slowly, she held the top of the dress up to her shoulders. It was dark green velvet with long pleats billowing from each side. A stuffed dove perched on one shoulder, draping a yellowed wing down under the bosom. With macabre grace, Miss Overton minced across the room. She pulled a few wet strands of hair from the corner of her mouth, and with little finger graciously upraised, swept a dangling mass of greasy white-gold behind one ear.

"Celia, do look at Mommy. Do I not look lovely? Am I not to be sensational wherein we go out?"

She tittered at her anticipated, fabulous grandeur.

"I and my cat, my tempting pretty — *we* will be admired by all who see."

She bent and lifted the soft luxuriant green to her face, inhaling deeply in delicious appreciation. Slowly her face flushed, and then, as she moved the just-fondled section close to her eyes, her quivering lips grew chalky. In measured staccato shrieks, Miss Overton said, "Celia . . . you . . . have . . . **PISSED ON MY GOWN!**" And, indeed, a large yellow stain completed the subtle elegance of Miss Alicia's most winning dress.

Shaking with rage, Miss Alicia loomed over Celia who was frozen into an arch on top of the costumes. As Miss Alicia drifted back to reality and an understanding of the strength of her accusation, she became aware of poor Celia's frightened state.

"Oh my — oh me, oh my, my — naughty Celia. Pretty girl made a bad nasty wee on Mommy's dress." Celia remained emotionless. "You're embarrassed. Mommy naughty. Mommy angry and say bad naughty. I'm sorry. Poo, poo, poo, poo widdle pretty? Yes?" She reached out and patted Celia's head as the cat relaxed into contentment with the apology.

Sighing in resignation, Miss Alicia shed her kimono. She crossed to the rocking chair, and with some effort found a pair of red-cotton anklets buried under the seat cushions. After getting them on, she strapped on her pair of old but still lovely platform heels. Just the right height for a woman of my age, she thought. Then, noting the stain briefly, she pulled on the dress, passing off the defect as, perhaps, only minor at that. Now dressed, she removed her makeup case from a kitchen cupboard on the floor. Arranging herself also on the floor in front of a portion of broken mirror, she painted on her favorite kind of pointed, cupid-bow lips. As a last bit of fetching glamour, she added four lively bracelets from her Mexican collection.

"Enchantment," she murmured, "sheer enchantment." Miss Alicia went to her gramophone and flicked it off with a flourish. Plunging her hands once more into the adjacent pile of ribbons and food, she removed another partially full bottle of sherry. Eyeing Celia coyly, she drained the bottle, carefully removing the excess from her lips with the underside of her wrist.

"Celia," she called, "Celia, lambie, we're ready. Mommy got pretty dress on and going to come over to get widdle Celie for trip. Here I come." Hunched over and jangling the bracelets in front of her for that come-hither effect, she tiptoed across the room to the cat. She picked Celia up and cooed into a bald spot on the ragged orange neck.

"Little baby, Mommy get Mommy's money, and we can go." Miss Alicia went to the white enamel makeup cupboard and picked up several dollars from a pile of loose bills. She jammed them perfunctorily down the front of her dress. She slipped some emergency coins into the top of one of her ankle socks. Stopping to pick up a load of empty bottles from beside her rocking chair, she opened the front door.

"Celia, we'll leave these silly old salad dressing bottles in the subway. Mustn't keep an untidy house for my little girl."

Clutching her cat tightly and supporting the large paper bag of bottles against her left hip, Miss Alicia Overton proudly waddled down the squalid staircase.

The subway station was hot and the large fans intended for cooling

circulated oven-temperature air that smelled of oil fumes and filthy cement. Miss Alicia stood in line at the token booth, blinking rapidly as her eyes became accustomed to the dimly lit underground platform. She purchased two tickets, glared in retort to the token changer's under-the-breath remark, and swept her bulk through the turnstiles.

Miss Alicia took up a post near a Dentyne gum machine to await the downtown local. Near her stood four youths in their early teens grimly dressed in gaudy, shiny sport shirts, tight fitting slacks, and cheap, carefully polished, zippered boots. Miss Alicia was quick to notice their obvious attention. She smiled at them, teasing a hip in their direction. They smirked.

"Celia, don't you dare look now — I said, not now — but, I *think* those young men are looking at us. It pays to dress, Celia — I have always said that. It pays to dress."

She flashed the group another smile. A small, pock-marked youth emitted a long, low, ugly-sounding slurping noise.

"Man, hang in on them low-swingin nips."

"Ah, joey, you wanna have that? Why don ya go ask da pretty chickie an see if she wanna ball with ya. She looks like ya mutha."

"Shat-up, sheet-haid. Yer mouth's too big."

"Let's asker what her cat does?"

The pock-marked youth drifted up to the proud, old woman and her dainty cat. He placed his hands arrogantly on his hips.

"Hi ya lady. Ya gotta wild cat. Swingin color. Ya own it all yerself?"

Miss Alicia laughed delightedly at the attention.

"Oh me — my, my, yes. Yes, indeed, I do. Oh, I do. This is sweet Celia."

She dropped her painted lips into Celia's right ear.

"Smile, darling," she whispered. "I think you're being fancied." She turned again to the boy. "We've been so close for ever so long."

Miss Alicia grunted as she bent to yank up her limp left sock.

"Isn't she pretty?" Miss Alicia pushed Celia's face up to her breast and wiped a glob of soft, grey matter from the cat's eye onto the edge of the dove wing on her chest.

"Isn't she the prettiest, most lovely sweetness," she cooed. "Oh goodness, how exciting. Admirers!"

The grating of the approaching train sounded a muffled shriek from the distance.

"Excuse me, young man, but we are on an errand," Miss Alicia giggled. "A birthday, you know." She winked.

The subway lights pierced the blackness of the tunnel. The remaining three boys moved closer to Miss Alicia, and her devoted admirer. As the train sped into view, one of the group darted forward and yelled.

"Do it Joey! Go ahead! Grab it an throw it!"

The short boy's arms abruptly thrust out and snatched Celia from Miss Alicia's hold. Raising the squalling cat above his head, his arms shot forward, catapulting the wailing ball of orange onto the tracks in front of the train. It passed swiftly over Celia, a car at a time, without excess jolting. The four boys ran laughing through the open doors of the stopped subway.

The ancient, curious woman stood paralyzed. The muscles in her forehead jerked spasmodically as a light mist clouded her eyes; a foamy mustache of spittle bubbled out around the pressed line of her lips as her jaw ground furiously, driving a piercing, wounded howl into the pit of her stomach. Then, her face relaxed, and she parted her lips, spilling a line of drool between the deep line of wrinkles near her chin. Miss Alicia Overton burped.

Turning, she lumbered across the platform, swung through the revolving exit doors, and careened up the stairs onto the sidewalk. She stood breathing heavily, her eyes revolving directionlessly in their sockets, registering none of

the city's familiar activity. She drew up the paper bag of empty sherry bottles close to her neck.

"We're going home now, dear," she purred. "We're going to go home. It's too hot today. I swear to God I'm going to die in this velvet. Absolutely. Maybe next summer will be cooler. Dear sweet-poo. Next birthday, for sure."

Miss Alicia wandered off the curb, and fell as one of her old, but still lovely heels caught in the grating of a storm sewer. The swift, chic Fifth Avenue bus rolled over her immediately. Miss Overton lay still, clutching the ripped bag of smashed bottles under her.

A. McC.

Counteraction

And
A life is saved —
By someone sentimental
Enough to bring a flower or
A word.

GLORIA GILES

SORRY CHARLIE

A cold wind
blows from
some where
and instead of going
around me
runs me thru

It goes on
its way but
leaves some of its
cold anger in
my belly
so that —

If a Great Beast
greater and nastier
than man even
looked at me
with slitted eyes
and slurping mouth —

If a Great Beast
ripped me open
to devour my
entrails for a dinner feast
He would get
Nothing but
tasty freeze.

NONA GANDELMAN

Robert's Rules of Order

Meeting called to order.
Question: does God exist?
Debate: Yes. No. Maybe so.
Motion: I make a move that God exists.
I second the motion.
All in favor say Aye.
Aye!
All opposed?
Nay!
Roll call.
Aye . . . Nay . . . Nay . . . Aye . . . Aye . . . Nay . . .
The ayes have it.
Resolved, God exists.
Meeting adjourned.

SCOTT KASS

The Passionate Player To His Partner

Come bid with me and be my trump,
And we will all th'opponents stump
With jacks and queens, kings and aces,
All those cards with the picture faces.

And we will sit upon each chair
And out trick the others, pair by pair.
With your weak No Trump, I'll jump to three
Without delay or shift of knee.

And I will make thee bids of seven
And with your twenty-six, I'll add eleven;
With occasional psychs, the right lead will fall
And all our "children," home, we'll call.

Your weak two diamonds, with little structure,
I'll raise to five, adding worthy luster.
With this bidding sequence, don't despair,
I've five quick tricks — we'll make our share.

And if you open with an honest heart
I'll give you a raise, if the deal looks smart.
Doubled and redoubled — it's still the same;
We'll finesse our losers, and win the game.

GLORIA GILES

