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I COULD  
STRANGLE  
the WIND

From a poem by Charles Echols  
Manning Correctional Institution

## An Anthology of Prison Poetry

Edited by Dale Alan Bailes

Produced by the South Carolina Arts Commission

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

It was some of the most interesting time I have spent in my twelve years as a teacher, and sometimes the most painful. At times I left the prison classroom thoroughly depressed; once I stood watching the inmates as they struggled to put their feelings into words, to put form to their experience, and felt the most pure feeling of love that I have ever known.

The up and down feeling persisted during the eighteen weeks I worked. It is best expressed in this note I made for a report during week six:

Whew. I cannot get used to the roller-coaster way this prison workshop works. I get a good class session, 8 to 9 students; they write some strong stuff. Then half of them don't show up the next time. I don't know if it is resistance to intimacy, which is natural enough in this place, or if it is just lack of interest. They come and go; I keep a core of 4 at the men's prison and 3 at WCC who attend every class and write poems both in and out of class. By now classes have ranged from 10 students to 2 students on given nights at the institutions. Given this inconsistency of "student body" I feel I am getting some very good writing from these people.

The writing I got from these people is represented by the selections in this anthology. This writing came from a "school" that was very well described by a teen-aged inmate: "In this place you need eyes in the back of your head. Of course if you had them, someone would poke them out."

It was a privilege for me to teach these people something about writing, something about putting the pieces of yourself together through using words. It was a time of healing as well as a time of creativity. Perhaps, through the works in this anthology, that creativity and that healing will continue for us as well as for others.

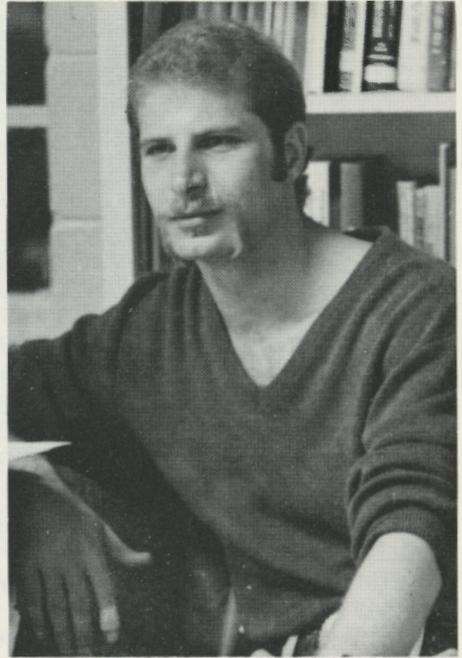
**DALE ALAN BAILES**, Editor  
Columbia, South Carolina  
August 1983

## FIRESIDE CHATS

Glome-plop! Glome-plop!  
The full moon pie faced  
on the lake  
rim-crick, rim-crick  
fall grasses, damp borders  
basements rim-click plome plop  
ribit.

Sudden flickers, firelight  
a hiss in too green wood  
Now sand pits  
not tree stumps.  
Equinox ribit  
summer glome-plop

Birds nest large a nip in air  
buds Budded



**John G. Drake**  
Manning

## SUM OF INTERIOR ANGLES

My grandfather's craft is just like mine  
Grandpa used to tamp his pipe out  
on the roof of the jeep  
Grandmother's spirit was broken by his death.

Mother's always immaculate  
as was her house  
seeing her poodles, on their time  
prancing; neat white diapers  
cut for feminine tails.

When my father's parents  
moved from NY city to Florida  
they chopped their furniture up  
kept from those who were less fortunate  
too lazy to work or not members of their  
personal church.

My father's anger is just like mine.  
If you take him more than forty miles  
from a telephone, he falls asleep.

When three I was on a beach in Greece  
I walked over the rocky beach and under water.  
No one told me I was supposed to  
Float.

## TOPOGRAPHIC MAP TO A HANGOVER

We could go together  
Party till the streets run yellow  
the sky pink.  
Our heads just slow enough to catch  
dawn's first feeble rays.

## IN TIMES OF NEED

In times of need  
days like this  
what is peace of mind?

Winds that won't support  
the wings of birds  
thunderheads deep  
like laden oil tankers,  
riding high in the sky.

Beach front forests idly  
shuffle and hide their roots quickly  
like sea-birds perched atop  
beach front hotels flocking together  
breaking in the storm.

One wonders if there is not more  
somewhere else a place sheltered

## rites of passage

Born one day into Capricorn  
abandoned by Sagittarius  
I never knew who I was until my  
Rites of Passage  
Listening to thunder planets collide  
becoming moons,  
children fragments of parenthood.

As hard as I try I fail  
to succeed in defeat  
like my Planets before me  
Rites of Passage not forgiveness  
when I am as transparent  
as natural lakes there is nothing inside  
Hands and feet left behind, laid aside  
I think; stupid body how did I ever  
allow you to capture me.  
Only one day ahead of the hunter  
goes the passage of the Hunted.

Echoes of night; beer  
burps, a breath of fresh air please  
you say in honor of the speech  
I made after drinking a boot filled  
to the ears.  
Oh how dark beer makes me belch and  
boot leather makes best foam  
among friends.

## UNTITLED

Mama good night  
the principle called today  
Good night mama  
He said you cut school  
Mama good night  
You've been in the woods  
with those boys, again.  
Have you been smoking?  
Good night Mama.  
Have you been drinking?  
Mama good night.  
I saw Freddie's mother at  
the mall today  
Good night Mama  
She said you strangled the cat  
Mama good night  
Are you listening to me  
Huh?  
Why don't you listen  
Yes Ma'am  
It's past your bed time  
Yes ma'am  
Good night Mama  
Good night John



**Ruth Billy Bailey**  
WCC

### **UNMAILED LETTER**

Hi there,  
That's how most of my letters start  
Will you please stop  
the pain is unbearable  
like a rusty knife being twisted into your gut  
You say lots of things  
But never do any of them  
Sometimes you are soft  
like the fur of a kitten curled lazily  
on my lap  
But those times are few and far between  
This is just to inform you that  
my pain is over  
for I shall catch you unaware  
as the kitten was,  
curled on my lap,  
and strangle you also.

### **LOVE POEM**

What is this thing called Love?  
"The imagination between two fools,"  
my mom once said.  
"Something sent from heaven  
to worry the hell out of you."  
That's what my dad told me.  
I think love is not something  
you fall into,  
but something you grow.  
I only have one problem,  
I can't seem to get my  
seeds planted.

## TO TALK TO YOU

The words  
I want to say  
fall crashing  
to the floor,  
scurrying into corners  
seeking shadows  
hiding from your gaze.

## IT COULD HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT

On the bedside table  
A brand-new copy of  
National Geographic  
With pages of  
untold knowledge  
is  
much like me  
unread-  
as of yet.

Night falls about us  
like the purple silk gown  
being slipped from my shoulders.

And you,  
you try to act like a grizzly  
but really  
you're as tame and gentle  
as the small brown teddy bear  
sitting slumped on the dresser  
With your sky blue eyes  
And hands as gentle  
as a mother's touch.

We lie together like spoons  
soon sleep comes.

It could have been different  
But I'm glad it wasn't.

## GET OFF MY CLOUD

The cabin nestled neatly  
between the ice covered lake,  
and the Blue Ridge Mountains.  
My hiding place.  
Curled cozily on the couch,  
I watch, as the Christmas tree  
standing sternly in the corner  
blinks out some type of secret message.  
The snow falling ever so silently  
outside, sends a chill up my spine  
just thinking about it.  
I smile as the fire crackling crazily  
in the soot covered fireplace  
warms me down to my very soul.  
An uncorked bottle of  
fine French champagne awaits.  
Will you join me?

## IT'S HARD

It's hard  
to say,  
"I love you"  
on paper.  
To paint  
the brightest  
emotions  
with a  
piece of  
cold lead.  
And confine  
it  
to a piece  
of paper  
eight-and-a-half  
by  
eleven inches  
Will you  
take my  
word for  
it?



**Anna Kate Herlong**

WCC

## **PAINT BY NUMBER AT SIX PM**

Staring clearly into the hazy trees,  
as green as fur is soft;  
like the brushing of the silkiest maiden hair.  
They sway with the wind, performing truth;  
a pattern assuring me that life's  
not passing me by.

Olive green lures, and runs through me  
like a mountain stream.  
As familiar as the deepest water flowing;  
as pure and refreshing.

More green filling...like that—  
Dark green bushes in contrast with  
the almost lime green clover;  
likening to a colorful and illuminated shadow,  
lighting up my own soul.

The caressing stroke of sky blue  
is a change as brightening as  
Easter egg dye to a plain egg.

And the colors of the sun.  
Blue-green and red, purple, pink and yellow,  
as flavorful as a blended lollipop and its swirling colors.

All these fade again to another beckoning blue.  
Then purple is painted over with black,  
like a light turning off.

The natural colors of day have left me satisfied  
as I easily withdraw into night.

**POEM UPON A  
ST. PATRICK'S DAY  
BALLOON**

To capture a moment  
and watch it sail away,  
only to become as a speck of dust in the wind  
to where it reaches unseen.

I give you my life  
for you to hold onto,  
the very air that I breath,  
and you unclench  
as to destroy the force that keeps me alive.

You burst the bounds that warmed me  
and set me free  
to a cold, lonely wind.  
Every breath I took was for you,  
bounded in love for only you,  
now I'm just one more lonely breath  
in a million.

**UNTITLED POEM**

Windows Windows Windows Windows  
Windows all over the place.  
Like living in a glass house,  
looking out my window to overpopulation,  
where no one really cares.  
They're within their own.  
The pains of windows.  
Close the curtain.  
I feel the blind.  
Close the window so I may be alone.  
I don't care either.

You can see right through me.  
Is there no privacy?  
Close the window  
and let me be alone.  
Quit throwing bricks and busting me.  
Yes, keep your distance. You got my attention,  
but leave me alone.

I'm not your peeping tom,  
you're none of my business.  
You're like a storm beating against my pains.  
How I long for a gentle rain.

## **DON'T BE ONE OF THESE "LADIES"**

Child, please, don't you try it.  
I'm tellin' ya now, lock-up action  
is not where it's at,  
and I KNOW das right!  
I am too through.

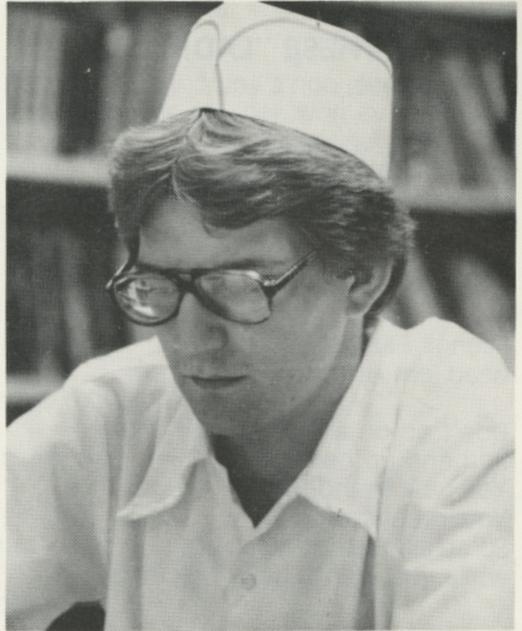
Just ain't no reason  
so give it up, baby.  
It's  
File in....File out....  
head 'em up & move 'em out.

Don't go on a field day of crime  
and end up here.  
You'll be branded.  
You'll feel stranded.  
So straighten up your act  
while you (don't) have the time.

## **I'M A FISH**

I'm a fish.  
I can be fooled into getting hooked onto  
what I believe to be what I need  
to survive. I am taken out of my  
boundaries of life in the water to be  
with some crafty fisherman, and I  
cannot breath.  
You turn me upside down and show me  
the sky and all around you, but I  
cannot live here. My friends are  
strung along here with me too, and you're  
hurting us.  
You could put on your armour to be  
with me underwater and still survive  
(very intelligent) but I am helpless now.  
Why did you have to fake me out with  
all your deceit that I didn't understand?  
I don't need your guidance for  
my nourishment, so don't throw me  
all those lines.  
I can manage on my own. A glimpse  
of your world is enough for me.  
Let me be.  
Throw me back where I belong, scars and all.  
Your world is beautiful, but I do not belong.

POEM UPON A  
ST. PATRICK'S DAY  
SALOON



**THE DARK STREETLIGHT**

The little dirt road  
to the barn in the woods  
is long and dark  
when the streetlight is out.

The vampires, werewolves, witches  
hunchbacks, ghosts and other  
scary spooky unknown creatures  
are near the barn  
when the streetlight is out.

A giant spider? No only a  
large clump of grass.  
Something moved over there.  
I saw a vampire change into a bat  
when the streetlight was out.

Galloping, galloping, galloping  
the headless horseman  
chases you while your  
heart races with fear  
when the streetlight is out.

Two large red glowing eyes,  
werewolf's eyes? I need my father  
he will kill all the monsters  
when the streetlight is out!

**Jeffrey K. Conklin**  
Manning

## JAIL JARGON

### INSIDE

cracking on you  
drop a dime  
getting an "A"  
being hip  
kicking out  
shooting bad  
slot machine  
tunnel  
box  
stag  
cell block  
kicking back  
buck  
house  
short  
me and you  
case quarter  
shank  
chow  
count  
rat  
coming out of your head  
brown shirt  
white shirt  
sack  
"Z"  
run a line  
drop a line  
fire you up  
tree top  
homeboy  
ward  
shipped  
leather room  
rap  
aisle bunk  
visit  
shakedown  
busting up

### OUTSIDE

asking a question  
a phone call  
more privileges  
understanding  
paying money  
broke  
giving a lot (money, time)  
hallway  
radio  
don't work  
solitary confinement  
relaxing  
homemade alcohol  
where you sleep  
last half of cigarette  
sharing  
a 25¢ piece  
a knife or weapon  
mealtime  
to be counted  
to tell on someone  
cussing etc.  
regular correctional officer  
supervising officer  
\$5 worth of pot  
ounce of pot  
tell a lie  
write a letter  
fighting  
top bed  
someone from home city  
living quarters (60 people)  
sent to another institution  
crafts room  
talk  
middle bunk  
someone comes to see you  
search of goods  
hurting someone

## FIG FEELINGS

Do you remember back in 1966 when you went to grandma's house and sat in the old creaky rocking chair, that sat on the red Persian rug?

Can you still smell the steam coming from the bottom-blackened pressure cooker, the figs that grandma used to make, those light brown melt-in-your-mouth with hot buttered toast in the early morning figs?

How about on Saturday nights with the late movies and a glass of milk, cold sometimes icy, Big Fig Newtons that bubble as air escapes from being dunked in a glass of wet milk?

Do you still see the bright yellow cannister set on the kitchen cabinet, the big one says COOKIES, filled with figs? Funny though I never was a good cookie thief.

Best of all is sharing a fig cookie with the lady you love without taking it out of your mouth, or tenderly teasing her without giving in, maybe trying to eat-em all?





**Ronnie Wood**  
Manning

### **REMINISCING WITH FIGS**

Sitting in the glistening steel swing  
Under the magnolia tree that  
stood as tall as a sky scraper  
Hung heavy with huge aromatic blossoms  
that blended sweetly with cherry tobacco  
Watching the dog leap in the bird bath after  
the last fig newton butt.  
Spilling coke in my crotch while the  
swing squeaked like a fallen bird.

### **QUEST FOR MANHOOD**

I feel the power of Boa's strength.  
My stomach cramping as the emotions stir.  
I'm leaving as a boy,  
To soon become a man.  
By yourself you will survive  
Fate of knowledge would soon be shown.  
Boa's quickness is my only teacher  
Family heritage is all I have.  
I must be brave from this day on  
Death is a brave man's handicap.  
As I leave into the jungle followed only by  
the sweet array of Witch Doctor's brew.

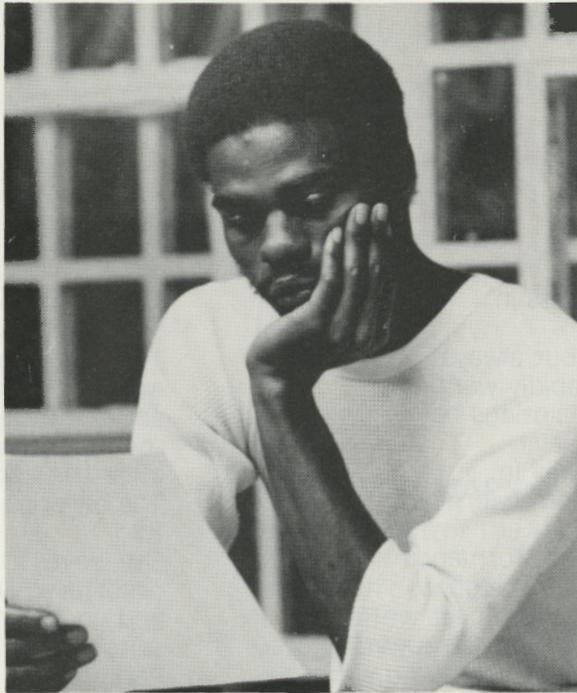
## UNTITLED POEM

Looking out to see what was looking in.  
Backdoor windows always attract me,  
possessing my thoughts were little childish ideas.  
Is it out back?  
Remembering to hurry and look,  
before it gets away  
Only to find the smell of honeysuckles  
lingering in the murky, dusky air.

## THE GOAT MAN

The distant ringing of goat bells  
In the still crisp night air  
Hooves snapping on the red packed clay.  
I almost see it,  
As I get closer my heart starts quaking.  
I smell the goats, just can't make out the shadows.  
Is that a pipe  
He's lighting it,  
Then as he blows out the match all disappears.





**Charles Echols**  
Manning

### **A POEM FOR (Enuyer)**

I could strangle the wind  
for flowing gently  
through your hair  
I could put out the sun  
for daring to lay  
its hands upon you  
I could drown all  
Raindrops for beating  
so much on your skin  
I could harness all  
space that envelops  
every step that you  
take. I could burn  
the time that caresses  
you as you live.

# Pamela Turner

WCC

## POEM

Russian Princess in  
rose clothes.  
Bliss comes but always  
leaves her rapidly wanting.  
In Gauguin paintings he  
says "see no evil."  
She sits anyway in  
raspberry rooms worn-out  
by Titles.  
A command performance  
approaches like a stalking  
Tigress.  
Her ballet shoes await hungrily  
in the garden of wings.  
Impatient fluttering  
before the drapery parts  
in heavy tones of  
velvetness.  
In the audience there  
are expectant pearls and  
their swine  
listening to the strains  
of the symphony.  
They are waiting to  
catch a glimpse of  
Their "Giselle."  
In the wings she ties  
the pink ribbons of her  
destiny.  
Between sounds of  
cello strings that ring  
of deep night and  
a deadly dance.  
The music a bloodline  
of scripture and holiness  
There is no sin for  
ballerinas  
Fallen angels of the  
stage light.

Kisses and roses  
Kisses and roses  
The glory and the bows  
and the lovers  
and the grueling hours  
spent in front of mirrors  
after the applause.  
The ballerina dons her  
fur.  
She leaves in a  
chauffered limousine  
and goes to the somber  
suite with a Central  
Park view.  
Perfumed air, vanity  
vanity.  
Oneness and the loneliness.  
The critics voices in  
morning papers will reveal  
Truth.  
As the princess ballerina  
sleeps at the Plaza Hotel  
Her dreams carry her,  
defecting into the  
decades.  
A plane to Moscow  
will soon  
carry her back to  
never never land  
where she will be no  
more or no less  
and there will be no  
fame or glory  
or royalty,  
or the oneness of  
a Central Park view  
from the Plaza Hotel.

## IN THE REGATTA

Start  
my jib sheet  
let out the double-reef in my main.  
Come into the wind  
so I can be close-hauled  
at a good 20 knots.  
I love being heeled over from  
my bow to my transom  
in your dark water  
Chesapeake.  
Throw up my spinnaker,  
so when I round my mark  
I'll be running with the wind.  
For I feel aerodynamic  
as hell today and I want  
to take you, golden trophy.

## POEM FOR MARION

You came out of the shower  
your hair wet  
and I didn't recognize you anymore.  
It took a few solid moments  
before my words came.  
A humble prayer was all it  
took to replace the golden rod  
I placed my hands  
in yours. Forgiveness,  
it snuck into place somehow.  
Flew into the reserved opera box.  
Black pants become you  
Darlink.  
The next time I saw you  
your hair was wet again.  
(Showers are habitual  
like sacraments in church.)  
You came through the  
door of a cottage.  
Being near  
Being separated  
To meet again  
Straight pathways  
With lights aguiding  
Winged angels follow you  
wherever you go  
angels like your smile  
and they think fine wet hair  
is alluring  
like a baptism.



**Eugene Ferguson**

Dutchman

## **THE DREAM THAT PUT ME HERE**

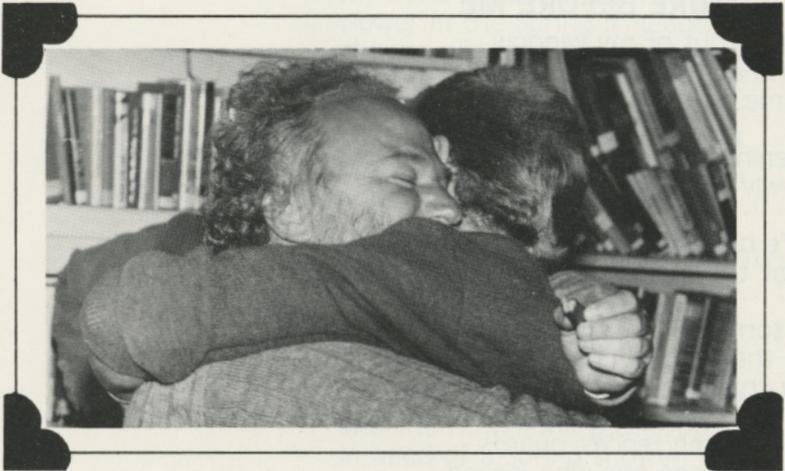
I cherish a vision that at one time I was a dream or a good and noble thought that someone wanted to become a reality, the sperm that fertilized the egg in which I slept like the oak in the acorn was conceived in the heat of passion love and desire, in that order to crystalize this dream. And from that, like the bird waits in the egg, I awaited in the belly of my carrier until the darkness therein became an outer light, the iron rust smell became freshly scented air, the taste of salty flesh became the taste of sweet warm breast milk, the liquid stickyness that surrounded me became the touch of firm velvet soft skin and at that very moment in the highest vision of any soul an awakening angel stirred, thus from the dream that was the seedling of reality, put me here on earth to dwell.

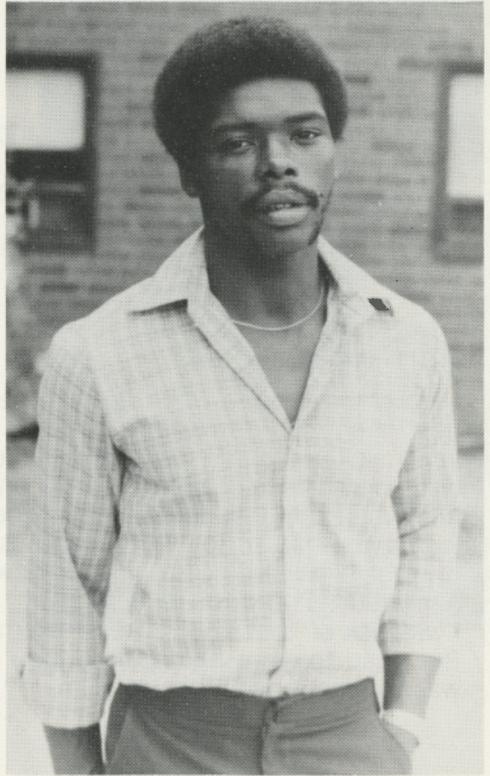
## ODDS ARE EVEN AT TIMES

I met a little "Elf Man" once,  
down where the lillies blow.  
I asked him why he was so small and  
why he did not grow.  
He slightly frowned and with his eyes  
he looked me through and through.  
He said: "I am as big for me, my friend,  
As you are big for you."

## BAD MEMORY

I remember a time when doing time was  
hell, when my body was strong and I didn't  
lie so well, I was in a place where the  
walls were made of stone so cold and gray  
and when the boss came around these are the  
words you had to say, Boss Man Boss Man  
on that big white horse I don't know your  
name but I know you're Boss,  
I was sick of that and more of them,  
But I had to smile because my job  
was to please, who? I guess him.





**Jimmie Wilson**  
Dutchman

## **MY FUTURE BEFORE ME**

Looking out of my window  
as a child not knowing what lies ahead  
for me.

Listening to talk that began moving the mind.  
I slowly drift away to this life.

A life of running, a life of bars,  
I took this life to play with like a toy.

I'm sorry now but it's too late  
and the window I used to look out  
as a child no longer frames my face.

Instead I see fences, guards  
and everyone else who looked  
out their window as a child.

## **PANTHER**

I am a panther, a fearless hunter  
out looking for a hardy meal.

Running through the night  
like a reindeer in the forest.

Claws as sharp as the barber razor  
and jaws as powerful as the human mind.

I rip your flesh, till I've gotten my share  
leaving behind the leftovers for the scavengers  
who roam there.

I have no mercy with the instinct  
to kill.  
A walk of a hunter, the King of the land.

## **HIDDEN EXPRESSING**

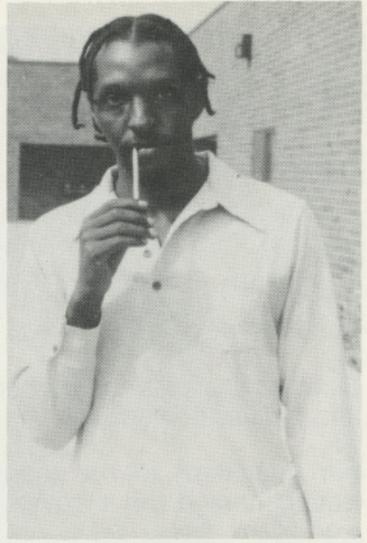
She was like sunshine that heats  
the day, mostly alone everytime I  
saw her.

My mind began to bloom like a  
flower in the Spring it needed a  
shower of love to enjoy the world.

The warmth of her body I felt  
even though we never touched  
my shyness began to flood me  
when I wanted to speak.

My eyes held the reflection of my love  
like a face on the water  
but the shyness would wrinkle  
when I wanted to give.

She would never guess the love I have  
and the flower will wither up  
in need of a Spring shower.



**Terry Duckett**  
Perry

## THE ROOT WORKER

A red rag wrapped around her head,  
A toothless mouth, a tongue just as red  
A coal black face, dusty and withered  
Small snake-eyes recessed in her skull.  
Smelling like burnt wood, and mildew,  
Something old, something dead.

Living in our midst, yet alien to us  
Wielding a power, unknowable to us.  
Power -- benevolent sometimes, malevolent sometimes.  
Try to keep her pleased, our parents said  
She'll work a root on you  
She can help you, too.

She never died, in the mortal sense  
She just wasn't there one day  
She was called, I guess  
Away.

## UPON A FLORAL COOKIE BOX

It's beauty is exquisite, evoking memories of  
beautiful women and lofty dreams --  
lost dreams, lost women  
women I loved and lost  
dreams I pursued and balked.

Things with deceptive veneers  
but empty inside  
old and worn and lifeless inside.

Women who had already been loved too much  
dreams already pursued too much.  
Futile things, fickle things  
things that are no longer there when you need most.

## **ONCE I WAS A FIREBUG**

I lurked quietly at a burning place  
--Denying the urge no longer--  
Reflected in the flames was a pyrophile's face  
Assuaging an inner hunger.

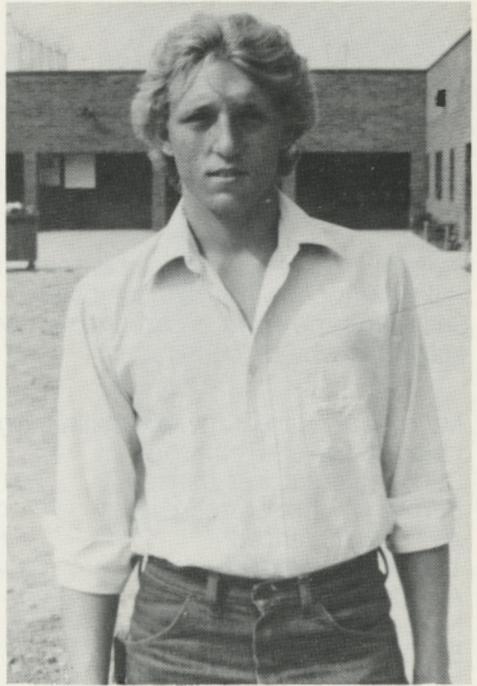
Suddenly there was a blaze within the blaze  
--Like the boom in a furnace blast--  
Snatching me from a daze into a deeper daze  
Making my heart beat fast;

My nostrils flared, my adrenalin surged  
I blared, my soul emerged.  
Dangling creatures danced  
Before my fire-crazed eyes  
As I stood tranced  
There where beauty lies.  
A flickering flame  
Naked and fair  
Exhaled my name  
Into the air.  
Wondrous warm arms embraced me tightly  
Fiery fingers caressed me,  
Torrid tongues licked me lightly  
As the hovering heat possessed me.

Fire was the fuel that kindled me  
Sustaining me from within,  
When the fire roared, my spirit soared  
And my best was then.  
But when the fire ended  
My soul descended.  
My spirit lagged and my body sagged  
Limp and lifeless, like a wet rag.  
Now desperately needing an encore  
I was no better off than before.

## **THE VISITOR**

Insanity is a singing bird  
That sails upon my windowsill  
And chirps suggestively to me.  
Sometimes I chirp, too  
--Though not as melodiously as she--  
Until I tire of her flirting ways  
And shoo my delusion away.



## **DYING CHILD'S PARENTS\***

**William Tim Culbertson  
Perry**

**Why do we not let it die then**  
can we stand by and watch it suffer  
like a bird with a broken wing  
tell me, is there nothing we can do?

**Stop at the bedside and do nothing**  
we are also helpless  
as a rose in a desert  
we stand with watery eyes

**As that feeble hand reaches toward us**  
with quiet smooth lines  
the pain in our hearts  
is like the sting of a sweet smelling honeybee

**Like a man who has missed the last train**  
we are but people in the rain  
with minds so blank of medicine and cure  
we stand and watch with pain to endure.

\*first lines from a four line stanza of "The Little Deaths" by Kathleen Wiegner printed in **Hanging Loose**

## BURIED ALIVE

Thirty years ago  
as yesterdays go by  
a young and beautiful girl  
like a flower under snow  
was buried alive

The doctors said "dead"  
at two unnoticed, life giving  
heart beats a minute  
was it a new death  
or was it an old one

Were they to know any different  
it was unheard of to them  
they ship her to the others now  
they will try to find a cause  
if there is one to find

Her naked body was laid  
upon a marble slab  
like a hog ready for a butcher  
she awaits the touch  
of a cold bladed knife  
she's left now, for the others

An hour later  
a man walks through a door  
dead tired on his feet  
as he approaches the body  
on which he shall perform his job  
he says, "Ah, the last one of the day"

He has raised the scapel  
and it glimmers in the light  
as a windshield does in a car  
on a desert highway  
heading for the setting sun

The light lowers now  
and the chest cavity open  
the cut goes deeper  
and time goes by

A hand is placed inside  
another hand follows  
with a tightly gripped scapel  
to take samples of organs  
to help find a cause  
if there is one to find

As he goes on placing  
tiny pieces of organs  
in little glass jars  
he finally comes to the heart

He puts his hand  
around its lovely shape  
his grip is tight  
and his scapel hand  
is shaking rapidly

What's this?  
But it just can't be!  
Was that a heart beat?  
or was it just a nerve

He doesn't know  
and he will never  
because it was the last  
of so many unnoticed  
life giving beats  
now we know how  
she was buried alive

## SITTING ON A POLE

Sitting on a pole  
looking at the people  
looking at me  
wondering about the people  
wondering about me

Thinking, 24 hours gone  
34 more to go  
Crowds of people here  
Crowds of people coming  
sitting alone  
up on my pole.

Some of those people  
think I'm crazy as hell  
But I think they're crazy  
for going out of their way  
to see something odd in life  
when odd things happen everyday.

I'm sitting on this pole  
to break the world's record  
for high pole sitting.  
But they are just looking  
and that is not important  
not even to them

this is important to me  
and we know what that is  
sitting on a pole.

## TRASH CAN ANNIE

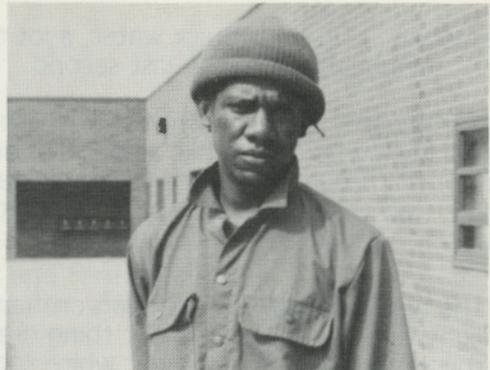
The small town of Anderson  
had a lady well known  
rumor has it that she  
knows where every little trash can lies.

I never met her personally  
but they say  
she has one cat eye that's blue  
and one owl's eye that's black  
some say  
the dirt in her ears  
grows baby carrots in the spring.

My brother met her once and  
said "She came from the dump."  
My father said, "She is just senile."  
But for one who lives where she lies  
I say she needs help and is helpless  
as a kitten on a limb.  
I once saw her from a distance  
bent inside a can  
to come up later  
with her dinner in her hand.

## LISTEN

In her bed     you  
can hear  
frogs  
crickets  
bats  
sugar bears     and  
people  
whisper



## ONE LONE CRACK IN THE GROUND

(If you have someone...love them)

Clarence Hines  
Perry

Lonely

One single bright red brick sitting in the middle of a shining field  
of bright green grass.

Lonely

A single roach with one eye missing dragging a small crumb and the  
man in the next cell just hung himself.

Lonely

Calling the operator on the phone, just to hear a female voice for 14  
seconds or should I stall for more time.

Lonely

Clear colored stones     from my tiny hole I see one icicle and a  
lot of water also     a man with one lone arm.

**Moja** (one)

**Mosi** (one)

**Yek** (one)

**Sato** (one)

**Mo-isa** (one)

**One** (one)

Solo (alone)

Lonely is one     but if I held it, could I touch the lightness of  
this one winged butterfly and me     hanging sadly down amid the coldness  
of this poem     moon in the water,  
falling now to earth, now dancing while low tide lookers and one black  
spot of sand,  
in a bucket of white glass.

Dark and well at dawn, alone     and simply not being able to see the  
happiness of a jump or one lone bell that makes many sounds (not being  
lonely in the fact that there are many sounds to make a bell ring)  
One junkie against the wall (even he is not lonely because he has his  
habit to keep him company),

And lonely in clear quick water, a jot of breeze and at last my  
life being spared at the last second by the words of another.

Indiscriminate lonely, when rain obliterated the river and one reed  
stood. My love is gone while a near nightingale sings and my heart just  
cannot fit through the more than one steel bars. While chanting at the  
alter no one to guard my back and me feeling naked and cast into  
mist blanketed water.  
water.

All the world is cold, me being an orphan eating in the cold winter  
twilight, and the moon poor thing crescent. I see and feel no fury even  
at these trampers of the clear white snow.

Lonely Even if we met now, you would not want to know me my hair is  
grey and my wrinkled face is always covered with lonely.  
Perhaps a song out there with the lone red brick me un-  
frequented isolated WHY?

## **NO CASH NO PERSONAL CHECKS**

I fell  
and  
upon traveling across the rivers of forgetfulness  
and fire seeing  
a flock of black sparrows from the north land  
fly away  
from the valley of fear past the branch of red May under  
which they go  
gathering the flowers of death  
and in turn  
learning the heat greater than the sun,  
I came to the door of hell It had a sign that stated  
In View Of Recent Robberies  
ONLY MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

## IT ALL RETURNS

A body in the wire  
bloated and moaning from rot and fermenting cells  
mud so red it stained your skin a perfume of death that  
stifles the coarse air from your lungs  
and  
heat that penetrates the very spark of life.

The chatter of a strange tongue  
but  
if you try you can isolate a sound that was yours from birth.

IT and T, Ford, Nixon feed and grain and  
imported  
Hondas whose colors vary from blue to green to yellow FD and C  
in some cases the couriers of high velocity death

A too green to be green jungle, mildew, leeches  
and insects that are somehow evolutionary mutations  
the smell of cordite and burning human flesh,  
Baked beans a Saigon street walker, "Come here darling good  
time cheap"  
and on reflection, 1500 lbs of orange with black stripes that  
snatched my friend a trail of vermillion

Too hot cokes and the clinging grease of C rations  
to walk this road of unending rain and desolation  
and seeing a color T.V. Ha and opium  
war in living color  
a journey of never ending to forget a lobotomy  
and me  
waking  
soaked through and through  
from the emissions of pores  
bitter memories  
a 24 hour a day hum of in-coming and out-going  
nature perverted

it  
all  
returns  
to  
the  
land

## DREAM

It teaches love tricks all night long  
to the stars and planets,  
this beauty  
while birds sing in the trees  
and a clever man builds a city  
the crow sits perched upon the oak.

Great winds push the calm night  
and still a platinum cloud sleeps  
for her pleasure while a hundred white  
mares stood in the stone...a storm is  
brewing.

A pond in before time stillness  
sleeps in the distance  
a lonely rose blooms,  
Still  
Many a summer is dead and buried.

That patient spider  
noiseless...by a person caught  
although it is not plainly visible to  
the eye. Did those feet in ancient  
times  
travel woodland ways?

Would I be sleeping  
dreaming...a flight  
of birds  
in clear sky  
and the mute and  
shrouded dead  
whose tuneful and well  
measured song  
bends sweet in mountain  
woods or waste.

Me building a hut in  
the realm of Human Habitation  
a tomb  
among  
green shades  
as I lay dreaming.

## AGAIN

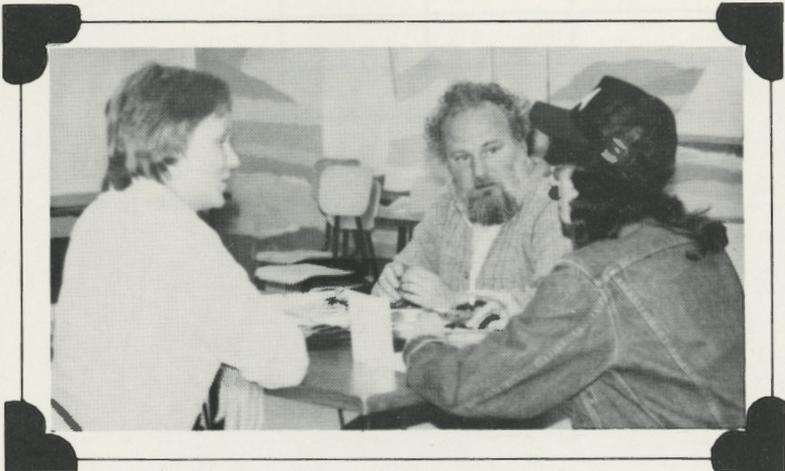
Find I  
love you somewhere  
in  
teeth and eyes  
chew it  
But  
do not hurt, I  
want you so  
much so  
little. Words can't  
say everything I love  
you  
again.

## FACELESS BEAUTY

An opening window,  
a beautiful woman looks out    day  
and night  
wet eyes.    The  
prettiest women    of the world  
are dancing while  
the others are overcome with drinking.

Us riding through the country  
together,  
you have beautiful legs  
you do not need to drink    elegant singer.

The shadow of a leaf falls on your breast,  
Dance???  
You close your eyes  
and dream    a young man's hand  
is opening your  
robe.





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