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Great Lake Review

Front Cover by Marie Koltchak
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GREAT LAKE REVIEW

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Art

Marie Koltchak ... Weeping Willow, Connecticut
                  1981 photo .......... Front Cover
Patricia Flanagan ... 900 Mainstreet Photo .. Inside Back Cover
N. Jacobs .......... Marilyn gum bichromate print .......... 3
Seana Mangan ...... Lava linoleum cut ................. 14
Linda Hoo .......... Milkweed photo ..................... 16
Marie Koltchak ...... Mannequins Paris, France
                  1983 photo .................. 28
Linda Hoo .......... Distortion Shadow photo .............. 30
Patricia Flanagan ... Glimmerglass Trees photo ... Back Cover

Fiction

Elizabeth D. Gronosky The Wishing Tree ..................... 4
Thomas Prestopnik .. Chapter Ten from a novel in progress ... 18
Stephen Pyles ..... Accounting ......................... 32

Poetry

Walter Plaisted ...... The Workshop ....................... 36
Barbara Scott ...... Stifling a Child .................. 2
Tim Metallo ...... Brick ................................ 15
Maxine S. Petry ... Jimsonweed .......................... 17
Walter Plaisted ...... The Hut ......................... 25
Jonathan Hazelton ... Your Fortune as Read Through Your Eyes 26
Carol Shiffer ...... To Remember Nana .................. 29
Jonathan Hazelton ... Migration of A Suicide ............ 31
Stifling A Child

And this is the way to stifle a child's imagination by not only teaching her how to use the paints but telling her what to paint as well. And when she brings up her drawings of apples painted blue or green tell her she is blind to colors and to stick to natural hues. And this is the way to stifle a child's perceptions by making her think all trees are brown, all people peach colored, all water blue. And when she brings up her drawings of brown and yellow children playing tag tell her different races do not associate with one another so to refrain from childish notions. And this is the way to stifle a child's dreams by telling her art is the essence of life, the beauty of creation. And when she brings you her ideas of being an artist a painter tell her she will never make it and needs a practical occupation. And that is the way to stifle an artist.

Barbara Scott
The Wishing Tree
A Story for Children

The gnarled apple tree reached its twisted limbs up and out, beckoning visitors, yet standing sentinel for the forgotten orchard. There was power in the huge trunk, power that had grown through the centuries of life, nourished by the rich soil and tender care of a long dead farmer’s hands. No one could feel the strength now except the child hidden among the rounded leaves, munching on the golden fruit of the ancient tree.

Surrounded by a grove of red sumac and a huge field of blackberry bushes, the old orchard was cut off from the world. The apple trees choked on the intrusion, fighting for the precious sunlight that would keep them alive. Only the sentinel with golden fruit could hold off the encroachment with its enormous roots that twisted beneath the earth for a hundred yards. Sumac and blackberry kept a respectful distance from the powerful guardian of the orchard.

Amy sat high in the branches, wrapped in a red sweater to keep off the dampness like an exotic bird with fluffed up plumage. Her bare legs hugged the bough and her hands moved freely gathering the sweet fruit. Her tear-streaked face was the color of apple jelly—warm, golden, translucent—and her eyes were leaf green in the dimness of the orchard. She leaned back against the bough and felt the prickly security of the bark pressing into her. This was her tree, her world without brothers or fathers or schoolrooms. Here she could be alone with her thoughts, or just alone if she wanted.

In the crotch of the tree formed by the four extended limbs was a dirty knapsack, a sleeping bag, three books, and a box of camping supplies. Soot covered pans, popcorn popper, portable grill, and coffee pot crowded together in a jumble of aluminum. Amy wasn’t sure she would need them, but it wasn’t worth taking a chance. Her mother would never miss them just as she would never miss her middle child. Amy was sure of this.

She closed her eyes and made herself think about the house she had grown up in. The gray streaked boards reached with aching insecurity towards the sky. Her father always said one good storm would knock the damn place down, just as he said he’d paint it over vacation. Neither happened. The house remained with creaking floorboards and water stained walls, a familiar place with good memories. Amy loved the old farmhouse, but she wouldn’t go back. Not until Jamie went to college and left her in peace, and that would be years from now.

"Give me that dog!" he had screamed that morning. Tyranny was his middle name when their parents left.

Amy clutched the stuffed Dalmation close to her body. Jamie was five years older and a good ten inches taller. He had her cornered by the kitchen stove, pressing his advantage until she turned her back to him and huddled against the wall. She could feel his wild black eyes boring into her.

"Give me that dog!" he hissed again. This was more frightening for the control.

"No!" Amy cried, her face still to the wall. "He’s mine! I got him from school!"

"Oh, really?” he whispered, the sarcasm dripping acid from his words. "Since when do they have school in August?"

Amy turned in desperation. She didn’t know why he wanted the dog, but she wouldn’t give it up. She had her principles even if he didn’t.

"Mom said I could have it, Jamie. Like an early birthday present."

The boy’s eyes turned cold. His hopelessly tangled mass of greasy curls seemed poised as if waiting to strike. They reminded Amy of Medusa. "Since when did you, (he spat the word like a curse) "did you deserve a birthday present?"

"Ah, come on! Mom said I could have it." Amy was trapped between the heat of the stove and the heat of his stare. "I’ll tell Mom when she gets home!”

Jamie paused. If she was willing to break the code of silence and tattle, then he would have to take drastic measures. If Mom found out it would have to be worth it.

"Oh, all right you baby. Keep your stupid dog!” He turned in disgust and let Amy go. Then he darted up the stairs and into Amy’s bed room. From the kitchen she could hear the window open and Jamie laughing hysterically.

The August heat hit her like a sledge as she ran up the stairs to stop her brother. He had locked the door and she had to get a coat hanger to slip the latch. When she finally got the door open, she saw Jamie standing on her bed like a conquering warrior.
“My animals!” Amy screamed, going to the window. She looked down to the dusty ground two stories below and saw a pile of filthy stuffed animals staring up at her. Her whole life was tied up in that wretched heap; for months she had been working on a grand collection with her mother. Amy whimpered softly at the horror of what he had done. How could a thirteen year old be so mean?

“Oh, Amy!” he called softly from atop her bed. He held a faded blue flannel blanket with a bull fighter’s grace.

“No!” Amy felt her muscles freeze. Jamie laughed through his teeth.

“What will you do to stop me?”

“Please, I’ll do anything!” She threw herself at the bed. He was threatening her blanket, her one source of security in the frightening world of an eight year old. The nubby fabric seemed to cry out to her for help as if it knew what was about to happen. Amy lunged at her brother, kicking and screaming with wild strength. One landed squarely in his groin, sending him with an outrush of air into a heap on the bed. She grabbed the blanket and wrapped it around her tensed body. Calm flowed through her at the familiar touch, giving her the comfort she desperately needed.

Jamie was up again and on Amy with a fury. His fists pounded brutally with the force of his anger, pushing the younger child to the floor. Tears pooled in her eyes as she lay crumpled, letting him pummel her, hoping someone would stop him soon. Then he did stop and Amy was left with the pain and tears. He grabbed the blanket again and this time wrapped the corners around his fists and pulled until the weakened fabric tore.

“There!” her screamed, “now you have two blankies!” He threw the pieces on Amy’s body and stalked away.

Amy gathered the torn remnants to her body and sobbed. It wasn’t fair! It wasn’t right. Jamie came in and ripped her life to shreds and nothing happened to him. Her father would probably thank him for destroying her blanket. Her mother might punish him, but she, too, would secretly thank Jamie for making Amy grow up. They all said she was too old to have a blanket. They were wrong.

Anger soon replaced sorrow and forced her into action. After retrieving her animals from outside, she got out her school knapsack and packed the torn blanket, a pair of jeans, her sweater, two cans of tuna fish from the pantry, a can opener, and a two liter bottle of Coke. The load was heavy but manageable when she settled it on her shoulders. Next she went to the cellar, carefully so Jamie wouldn’t see her, and foraged in a closet where her family kept camping equipment. She put as much as she could carry into a cardboard box, then found an old sleeping bag. Adam, her little brother watched her pack and then followed her out the back door, sneaking like a cat burglar. He begged to run away with her, but Amy threatened to lock him in his room so he ran inside to play trucks. By mid-afternoon, with many stops along the way, Amy was settled into her camp two miles away from the rickety old farmhouse and her brothers.

Now that it was over, Amy seethed with indignation. He had no right to hurt her, no cause to rupture her little world. There was something very wrong with a boy who needed to hurt his little sister. It was time he learned a lesson.

She climbed a little higher through the branches to reach more apples, then settled amid the gently rustling leaves. A sense of peace spread through her as the scent of bark and rotting apples filled the air. The ancient tree cradled her small body and breathed content. Amy forgot her brother in the magic of the tree and hummed softly.

“Apple tree, apple tree./I’m up here, look at me.” She giggled at the nonsense — no one but the tree knew she was there. Insects buzzed and birds chattered softly, yet Amy knew she was the only person alive who knew where the orchard was.

She had discovered it last year when she had a science project and had to collect different leaves to make dyes. Tommy Patterson had gone with her, but he had moved away to live with his mother in Ohio. She was the only one who knew how to find the old apple tree. Amy liked to pretend it was the gateway to an enchanted orchard full of fairies who would only allow special people to enter. And since she was the only one...maybe she had magic powers too. At least she didn’t have to be afraid.

“I hate him,” she said suddenly, more to hear her own voice than anything else. “I hope a rock falls on him and squashes his brains out.”

The old tree heaved as if under a great burden, then settled back into complacency. Amy felt it through her bones and shivered with delight. She loved the thought of the tree carrying out her wishes.

“I hope he falls into the grain bin and suffocates.” She conjured up dreadful images of Jamie in the darkness of the corn silo, his mouth filled with grain, his limbs broken and twisted from the fall. Mice skittered across his face and into his pockets, eating grain and leaving droppings as calling cards. Amy savored the picture in her mind with the hatred only an eight-year-old can manage without burning up.

“I wish Daddy would come home and find me gone and beat him until he promises never to touch me again.” This was more realistic, closer to what she
Jamie lay sprawled in a corner, her father looming with menace over his bent form. The two inch thick belt with which the children were so familiar cracked fiercely, sending the boy into tremors of fear. Her father raised his arm high, then wallop ed Jamie across the backside so hard his jeans ripped. Again and again the man whipped the boy until blood poured from cuts left by the thick leather. This scene was too familiar, though, and Amy quickly moved on to another punishment.

"Maybe the dream monsters will come and eat him up." She knew that her brother wasn't bothered by the same monsters that filled her nights with terror, but she was sure they would work just the same. Great black slavering beasts with red eyes and pink mushy tongues made Jamie run into his room and slide under the bed where they couldn't get him. He whimpered with fear that was worse than it had been with the father because this was different: this was more terrifying than a leather belt. The dream monsters pursued relentless- lessly, their breath like dead animals, their bodies a twisted parody of an accident on the 6:00 news. One grabbed Jamie's legs, another pulled at his arm. Before he realized what was happening, they bit off his head and munch, munch until there was nothing left of her brother but a few scraps from his dirty tee-shirt.

The ancient apple tree shuddered from deep within its trunk to the very tips of the leaves. It may have been the strong wind that came up, but Amy was convinced that the tree was releasing its energy against her brother. Finally he would be punished for the years of tyranny. She wished she could see his face at the moment of retribution.

The air was pregnant with rain, a tangible, heavy presence which held the orchard captive. Tremendous force was concentrated in black clouds that rolled over the trees, blocking out the hazy sky. The sentinel tree grasped its fruit, refusing to let it become part of the large pile of decay under the boughs. A few yards away the smaller trees huddled in a conference of war, pitting their strength against the elements. Cortlands, Johnsons, and Macintosh swayed with the gusts of wind that sucked and pulled branches helpless in the face of the storm. As the first warm, heavy droplets fell, the leaves pulled closer together to protect the summer's fruit.

Amy crawled down from the great tree slowly, placing her feet carefully so as not to slip. The big raindrops crashed against her bare legs, making her shiver with the wetness. Quickly she untied the sleeping bag and climbed inside, pulling the books and knapsack into the dark warmth beside her. She zippered herself in and snuggled down into the crotch of the tree to wait out the storm.

It was almost dark when Amy awoke to the silence of the orchard. At first she was lost, confused, but she quickly realized where she was. Her neck ached from sitting for so long in a cramped position, her sleeping bag was soaked, and her stomach growled for supper. She foraged in the soggy box for matches, but there were none. Amy felt tears coming and wanted nothing more than a peanut butter sandwich.

Instead, she opened a can of tuna and drained the oil onto the ground. The strong fishy smell reminded her of Friday night supper (always fish) and the warm purr of the barn cats. She wanted to go home. Still, she knew it was impossible - they probably didn't even miss her yet. The large bottle of Coke called to her, a forbidden treat sure to make her feel better. She cracked the seal, then held the plastic bottle in both hands to support the weight and drank deeply. The carbonation bubbled up her nose making her sputter. Even the Coke was wrong that night.

"I thought I heard someone up here," a voice spoke softly like paste on construction paper.

Amy froze. No one knew where she was. No one. Maybe it was one of the fairies who was mad at her? She had read that fairies didn't like intruders.

"Just a little child in the wishing tree. I should have known." The voice seemed to be coming from everywhere. Fear made Amy hiccup. The voice laughed. "Too much soda, huh?"

"No," Amy whispered, trying to be brave. But it was very dark now and her voice shook. "I only had a little bit."

A figure moved out from behind the sumac coverage, stepping deftly over tree roots and rotten apples. Amy couldn't tell if it was a person or not, but she knew it was big.

"My name is Ariel," it said matter-of-factly. "You look cold. Do you want to come with me?" Amy pulled back. "I won't hurt you."

For a moment Amy hesitated. Ariel was the name of a fairie and she didn't know if she could trust it. Then she felt her wet sleeping bag and tasted the tinny fish in her mouth, then realized the dream monsters might be able to get her here. Things couldn't get much worse. She cautiously crawled out of the tree and took the extended hand. It felt like a normal hand, almost like her mother's, but she would wait and see. Fairies could be tricky like that.

Together they walked through the wet orchard, Amy stumbling now and then over roots or stones. Small animals skittered away in the darkness; Amy was glad there was someone older and bigger with her, even if it was a fairie. At the far side of the orchard they came to a grassy bank that formed a cliff.
Amy saw smoke pouring from the ground and knew that Ariel lived underground. That meant she was a troll. She tried to pull away, but Ariel held her firmly and whispered comfort.

"Don't be afraid. We're almost there. I've got some nice hot soup on the stove." Ariel alternately dragged and carried Amy down a slope and opened a door in the side of the bank. Light flooded out, blinding them momentarily, then they were inside with the smells of summertime bubbling on the stove.

Amy looked around in wonder at the cozy room. A kerosene lamp cast shadows on the walls of packed earth and tangled roots coated with lime. A bed made of gnarled apple wood stood in the corner covered with a bright patch-work quilt. A rough table and chair occupied the middle of the room; one place-setting of blue and gray stoneware lay neatly in front of the chair. From the ceiling hung a series of sticks tied with roots and ropes of dried fruit, braids of herbs and a tilted basket of flowers. Amy had never seen a house like this, yet she thought it was just right for Ariel. Her hostess (for it was a she) was standing next to a pot-bellied stove stirring a kettle of soup. Her hair was a soft brown that reflected gold in the light of the kerosene lamp. She was dressed in old jeans and a tee-shirt, not really like a fairie at all. Amy was beginning to have serious doubts about what was going on.

"Hungry?" Ariel asked, turning to smile warmly at the child. Amy nodded and thought to herself that Ariel was beautiful. Her eyes were honey brown and her face looked like a pixie’s. She placed a steaming bowl on the table and motioned Amy to sit down.

"Do all fairies have purple hands?" Amy asked before she sat.

Ariel paused, uncertain, then looked at her hands and laughed. "Only when they've been making blackberry jam." She pointed to a stack of jars hidden in the shadows next to the stove. "Now eat up."

"What is it?"

"Good for you," Ariel said firmly. Amy didn’t argue; she ate quickly, savoring the unusual flavor of the broth. She hoped it wasn’t a magic potion that would turn her into a rock. She had read about those, but Ariel didn’t look like the type to lure little girls to her house and then work evil spells.

"You have very pretty hair," Ariel said when Amy had finished.

"It’s mousey brown. Jamie says so." A hand went to the curls.

"Oh, I think mice are a pretty color, don’t you?" Ariel smiled dreamily and Amy felt happiness glow like the kerosene lamp in her throat. She nodded.

"What were you doing at the wishing tree?" Ariel asked. Amy was silent.

"Not many people know about it."

"It's nice," Amy whispered, afraid that Ariel was angry.

"Oh, yes, it is, but it is powerful, too." Ariel’s eyes sparkled with magic fire. Amy decided to tell her the truth.

"I ran away," she said simply.

"Why?"

"Because my brother...he did something awful. I had to run away. I just had to."

Ariel nodded in sympathy. "What happened?"

"He...he threw all my animals on the ground!"

"Oh, that's terrible!"

"And he did something worse." Amy was quiet for a moment, trying not to cry. "He tore my blanket. I know I'm too big, but he did it just to be mean. Not for a reason. Now it's all in pieces and —" She didn't finish. Ariel gave her a hug that unleashed her tears. The woman offered a comfort that was warm and earthy, totally unfamiliar but satisfying. Amy burrowed against her chest and felt the rise and fall of breathing. Ariel smelled of berries and mud and sweat; it was the right combination.

"Can it be fixed?" The words echoed from within Ariel’s chest. Amy shook her head. Then she remembered she had left the knapsack at the tree. "I left it there and it's getting all wet and it's gonna fall apart!" Desperation clutched at her with vise-like intensity. She had never spent a night without the nubby blue flannel blanket and she knew she couldn't.

"Don't worry," Ariel soothed. "I'll get it." She picked Amy up and carried her to the bed. "You lie here and I'll be right back." Amy barely had time to close her eyes before Ariel was back with all of her things. The blanket came out of the knapsack and was wrapped around Amy’s body.

"I hate to say this, but you're right. It can't be fixed." Ariel’s voice was very far away. "But maybe your mother can sew around the edges so it will last a little longer."

Amy nodded. Her lids felt so heavy she just wanted to curl up and go to sleep; it had been a rough day.

"Little girl...little girl!" A voice reached into her mind. "What is your name?"

"Amy," she whispered drowsily.

"Beloved," Ariel’s voice was honey in herb tea. "Don't go to sleep yet. Tell me what you said at the Wishing Tree."

Amy thought for a moment. The wishing tree? The magic apple tree maybe? That had to be it. "I wished Jamie was dead."

"Really?"

"He fell into the grain bin. Then the dream monsters got him."
Ariel's face puckered up. She had to make Amy see what she had done. "But it's magic, Amy. You can't wish things like that, not even when you pretend. It's wrong.

Amy sat up slowly. "No it's not. He deserves it." But when she said it she knew it wasn't true. No one deserved to be eaten by the beasts with mushy tongues. "Is it really a wishing tree?" She had to know.

Ariel's eyes held the child within an enchanted stare. "What do you think?" she asked.

"Does it work right away?" she asked.

"No," said the fairie slowly, "it takes a whole day for your wishes to come true."

"Are you sure?"

Ariel nodded. The child settled back against the quilt and closed her eyes.

"Can I make a wish against it?"

"I think so. I'm almost sure a good wish will out-weigh a bad one. Are you going to take care of it?"

"Mmmhmm."

"And are you going to go back home tomorrow?"

Amy hesitated. She wasn't so sure about that one. Still, she was tired and missed her own bed. "Okay. If you come with me."

Ariel hummed a little song, never saying yes or no, but it carried Amy off to sleep. The woman stood for awhile looking down at the child and wondering what she should do. If she hadn't corrected Amy's thoughts about the Wishing Tree, who knows what would have happened. Imagination and anger were a powerful combination. She smiled at the little girl and her blanket, wishing she had more company. Still, she would have to take her back tomorrow. Ariel moved the chair out into the summer darkness and sat listening to the night sounds as the embers in the pot-bellied stove died to ash.

When the sun leapt with golden fury over the horizon, Ariel shook Amy gently. "It's time to go," she breathed into the power-filled leaves. "Please make Jamie be all right. Please don't believe what I said about Daddy and the rock and the dream monsters. And make him be nice to me." She hoped it would all happen, especially the last part. Reaching up, she pulled a golden apple from its stem and ate it for luck. Then she climbed down and joined Ariel among the sumac.

The walk to the farmhouse took over an hour, but the two laughed and played tag in the fields to hurry the trip. The closer they came, the more frightened Amy became. Her father was sure to whip her for running away (as if that would help things) and her mother would radiate disappointment. Amy almost wanted to run back to the tree and Ariel's house.

In the harsh August sunlight she didn't look as mysterious, yet Amy believed she was a fairie. It didn't matter though; she was still a good person. There was even a jar of blackberry jam tucked away in the knapsack.

When Amy saw the graying boards of her house she began to run, slowly at first, but then gaining speed. Ariel continued walking, swinging a gnarled walking stick and whistling softly.

"Mom," Amy yelled from outside the house. "Mommy, I'm home."

The sound of chairs scraping and cries of surprise came from the kitchen. The door flew open and Amy's mother had her arms around her, smothering her. Her father mussed her hair and smiled, then noticed Ariel striding towards the house and went to meet her. Adam jumped up and down, wanting some of the attention, while Jamie sneered at Amy.

"I told you she'd be back," he said softly so no one could hit him for being a brat. Amy broke away from her mother and gave Jamie a hug. His surprise was tangible, but he gave in and hugged back.

Ariel stood with Amy's father a few yards away. She smiled for Amy's sake, then turned to walk away.

"Excuse me, miss," the father husked, "where did you find her?"

Ariel extended a hand. "I'm Ariel Maslow. I found Amy about two miles from here in the old Patterson orchard." The father registered a blank. "I'm a botanist, working there with the owner's permission. I'm studying the process of succession."

"Well, thanks," he nodded and turned back to his daughter. Ariel moved towards the fields, seeming to float as she walked.

"She's a fairie, Dad. I know she is."

"Of course she is," he said, patting Amy on the brown curls and winking at his wife over her head. They didn't turn in time to see a golden apple pop into her hand, nor did they see her wink out of existence before she reached the crest of the hill behind the graying house.

Elizabeth D. Gronosky
Brick (brick)

If I found a brick, do you
know what I would do with it?
I would:

carve an icon from it. wear it around my neck. give it away. use it to sharpen
my nails (emery bricks). throw it far and look for it. lick it. wash it. tame it.
disguise it as something else. lose it forever. lay it in the sun. leave it with my
friends for a week. leave it alone. show it to the mayor. sell it for a small
price. dissect it. find fault with it. or drop it. listening closely. answer it. bar-
gain with it. let it know who's boss. tell it of evolution. discover its heritage &
cry for its ancestors. heal it. tell it all of my sins (don't bring it to church—they
won't let you in). give it the last word.

Wait.

Being a language mason, I can
use my brick in another way:
I can be selfish and shabby
and build a wall around the end
of this poem so that you can't tell
how I'm going to

(Well, go on then—jump the wall, you know that there
is so much more that you can use these bricks for.
This is just the groundwork, the foundation.
Jump. You are infinite people, you who want to write.)
Jimsonweed

jimsonweed:
a coarse poisonous weed of the nightshade group sometimes grown for its large trumpet-shaped white and violet flowers.

*The Merriam Webster Dictionary*

flower like a flesh
trumpet, is known secretly as nightshade. face fresh, moist from new fall frost—
poisonous harlot slyly
woos, which will soon cost—
death quickly . . . sweetly . . .

*Maxine S. Petry*
The work revolves around Andrew and Eleanor Bailey and their children Margo, Patrick, and Morgan. The story focuses mainly on Andrew, who is facing middle age, and his son Patrick, who is confronting the trials of becoming a young adult.

Andrew’s struggle to find himself at this point in time has him wavering between the memories of his past and the realities of the present. He is confronted with the fact that he cannot be the individual of his earlier years, as well as the truth that his children are growing up. His daughter Margo is twenty-three, and his sons Patrick and Morgan, are eleven and six respectively.

Unlike his father, Patrick’s growth is more of a progression from a state of innocence to one of more experience. He begins to realize that he is not the main focus in life, and that he is just as important or unimportant as anyone else.

Several events in the story affect both Andrew and Patrick, though in different ways. One example concerns their neighbor Ted Davis, who is facing a possible layoff at the factory where he is employed. Ted must also cope with the pressures that develop because his wife Millie is hospitalized due to a heart ailment. Other characters that play a role in the novel include Sam and Gladys Lynch, who are also neighbors of the Baileys, and Ted and Millie Davis’ son, Russell.

The following week brought gray skies and heavy rains, the week after only the gray skies. The wind had picked up and a warm breeze blew round the clock through dusty streets. It was a Tuesday morning and Millie Davis was being buried.

Patrick sat at the kitchen table, his arms folded in front of him. He was dressed in brown pants and a white short-sleeved shirt. He had even put on a tie, though his mother had said it wasn’t necessary before she left for the funeral with her husband.

He was staring at the salt and pepper shakers, the silver napkin holder, and his blurred reflection in the table. The kitchen light was off for he preferred the dim outdoor light today. Through the curtained window facing the street, he could see Ted Davis’ home. The lawns were overgrown and the shrubbery needed to be trimmed.

Morgan poked his head through the doorway when he heard his father’s car turning around. He stood quietly till his parents entered the kitchen. He thought they looked tired. Andrew closed the door and Morgan listened for the click. He stepped into the room.

"Did they put Mrs. Davis under the ground yet?" he whispered.

"Morgan!" Patrick turned and scolded his brother with a stern look.

"That’s all right, Patrick." Eleanor walked over to Morgan. "Millie was taken to the cemetery awhile ago. She was buried and Ted is still with her now. We left some flowers there before we went home."

"Is she ever going to go back to her house?"

"No, Morgan. Millie’s with God now."

He thought for a moment. "Will she still be sick now? I don’t think he has hospitals up there."

Eleanor straightened out his collar and tucked in his shirt tail. "Millie won’t need a hospital anymore. When you go to heaven, God makes you better. I don’t think Millie will get sick ever again."

"I’ll bet Mr. Davis will be glad to hear that." He tried to smile.

"I think he will too," she said. Eleanor kissed his forehead then looked at Patrick. He was still at the table gazing out the window. "Do you still want to
go over to Ted's later? You don't have to if you don't want to."

"I want to," he replied halfheartedly.

"All right then. She turned to her husband. "I'm going to bring a few
things over now with Margo. Gladys will be there to help. Ted and Russell
won't be back for awhile."

"Margo's upstairs," Patrick said.

"Go get her for your mother," Andrew told him.

He left the room and Morgan started to follow. Eleanor called him. "Mor­
gan." He ran back. "You're going to behave at Mrs. Simpson's, aren't you?"

He nodded hid head. "That's good. Daddy will drive you there in a few
minutes."

She got a casserole from the refrigerator. Margo walked in at that moment,
wearign a blue dress.

"Oh, there you are. Ready?"

"Sure, Mom."

"Bye, Andrew." She kissed him on the cheek. "See you in awhile. Tell Mrs.
Simpson thanks again."

"All right." He opened the door for them. "Better get over there. I see
Gladys going down the walk."

They went across the street then Andrew shut the door. He flipped on the
kitchen light and sat down at the table. Morgan walked over, jumped on his
lap, and gave him a hug.

"What's this for?" he asked.

"You give Mom hugs to cheer her up when she's glum," Morgan explained.

"I thought you looked glum, too."

Andrew grinned. "Well you know what, Morgan?"

"What?"

"You're a pretty smart kid." He hugged his son. "Better get your jacket
now. It's windy outside. I'll drive you over to Mrs. Simpson's."

"Okay, Dad." Morgan rushed out of the room.

"Patrick!" Andrew called into the living room. "Are you going with us, or
are you waiting here till I get back?"

"I'll wait," he answered.

Soon Andrew Bailey was driving his son down Archer Street. Patrick
wandered back into the kitchen and turned the light off. He sat at the table
again, staring out the window across the street till his father returned.

Gladys arranged the silverware on the dining room table. It clattered and
echoed off the walls. The room was darkly paneled and small framed pictures
were hung all about. A walnut cabinet displayed a set of white china with
Japanese design in the corner. The light from the chandelier faded into the
yellow drapery.

Eleanor was hurrying back and forth between the dining room and the
kitchen, bringing out the food that Margo was preparing on trays. There
were plates of cheese and ham, and dark breads. A bouquet of wild flowers
scented the air.

"I still can't believe how Russell has changed," Gladys said as Eleanor
fussed over a set of wine glasses. "He used to be so friendly when he lived on
the street. He barely said ten words to me at the church."

"I was just as surprised, too." Eleanor added, "His mother dies and here he
just arrives the night before the funeral. And he leaves his wife and kids at
home."

"He's never visited all the times she was hospitalized. Millie was in and out
of Memorial about six times these two years." Gladys shook her head. "No
wonder Ted never talked about his son. Just thought he was being modest.
Well, there's always a bad apple."

A few cars pulled up in front of the house. Gladys peered out of the hall
window. "Norma and Bob are here. I think that's Lillian Fletcher's car behind
them. You know," she began as she walked back into the dining room,
"Lillian told me that Ted and Russell exchanged a few words in front of the
church this morning. She went there early to see Father Lawrence and saw the
two near the side entrance. Lil was going to talk to them but said they were
arguing about something. She didn't hear anything though."

"I don't doubt that they were."

"Eleanor looked up. Lillian's voice echoed in the kitchen. "Guess they'll all be here soon. I just hope Russell behaves himself
when he shows up."

It was noon when everyone arrived. Ted Davis and his son walked quietly
into the kitchen. Neither wore any expression. Patrick was in the room
among the adults, getting a soda from the refrigerator. He saw Ted enter and
thought his eyes looked glassy. Patrick turned his head when Ted looked in
his direction.

Russell was rather congenial that afternoon. Some were surprised when he
talked so highly of Millie. Others felt sorry for the young man and told him
that his parents had raised such a thoughtful boy.

Ted was quiet and ate little during the day, though Gladys noticed that his
scotch glass was never empty. For the most part though, he remained alone in his room, coming out occasionally to see how many of the guests had left.

When the cigar smoke had cleared and the plates were left with crumbs, most of the house emptied. The cars that lined both sides of Archer Street pulled away one by one, and the grayness of the afternoon deepened.

Patrick wandered outside with half a ham sandwich and some punch. Ronny Dover was sitting on the cement stairs in front with his younger brother, Tim.

"Hey, look at you, Patrick!" he shouted. "You're dressed up pretty snazzy today."

"Shut up, Ronny. How come you didn't go to the party? Saw your parents there."

"They didn't want me to go. Guess they figured I'd be a nuisance. How's the punch?"

Patrick handed him the styrofoam cup. "Not bad. You can finish it."

Ronny gulped it down and handed the empty cup to his brother. "Thanks, Patrick. Hey, what's it like in there? All gloomy and stuff, I bet."

"Not really. Everyone's just talking grownup things. And eating a lot. Except Mr. Davis. I think he's hiding out till everyone leaves."

"Bet he's got enough food to last him till winter. My mom baked about a thousand pies and made tons of salad. Hope she left some for us at home."

"My mom's still in there cleaning up. Dad just went back to pick up Morgan. He couldn't come."

Patrick looked back at the house. Lillian Fletcher was just leaving. "Well, I better go back in. Ma doesn't want me getting dirty. See you later, Ronny."

"Yeah, bye. Bring out some food if you come back," he called. "I'm hungry."

"Okay." He went back along the cement walk and passed Lillian. "Bye, ma'am," he said.

"You should be inside helping your mother like a good boy. I see that your sister is. Now good-bye."

Patrick thought that the ladies were more than capable of cleaning up, so decided to wander about the house and explore. The rooms smelled of coffee and stale smoke. The flowers on the dining room table had wilted.

He walked down one dim hallway in back of the house. Patrick had never been in this area before. Usually when he and his family were visiting, they would always stay in the kitchen and living room. Their visits had been fewer in the last year because of Millie's health.

A soft yellow light flowed out from a study at the end of the hall. Patrick peered inside and saw that it was empty. There was a desk piled with books and papers at one end. A closed door was off to its left. Patrick wasn't sure what room was on the other side. There was a window directly across from where he stood. He walked over to it and gazed out into the backyard. A willow tree was just outside, its branches flaying the window panes.

Patrick noticed a podium a few feet away. There was a large dictionary on the bottom shelf and a Bible on the top, opened to the first chapter of Psalms. A crucifix was on the wall directly above. He glanced at the print and the gilt edges of the pages. A marker was set between them. He began to read the first passage to himself.

Happy the man who follows not the counsel of the wicked, nor walks in the way of sinners, nor sits in the company of the insolent, But delights in the law of the LORD and meditates on his law day and night. He is like a tree planted near running water, That yeilds its fruit in due season, and whose leaves never fade. Whatever he does, prospers.

Patrick jerked his head up when he heard the muffle of voices coming from behind the door near the desk. He could distinguish Ted's voice and one other he determined to be Russell's. Patrick remained still and listened. Curiosity and fear rushed over him, but the former won out. The voices grew clearer as they rose in volume.

"Surprised you stayed as long as you did! In fact, if you want to know what really surprises me, young man..."

"I don't. And lower your voice. People are still..."

"I'll shout in my house! What really surprises me..."

"People are still in the kitchen!"

"What really surprises me is that you showed up at all! It would have probably killed me if you brought Linda and the kids!"

That was Ted's voice. Patrick was sure, though it sounded sluggish and slurred at times. Russell seemed rather weak in comparison.

"Two years your mother is in and out of a hospital, and where are you? Can't drag you away from your beach house. Good Lord, can't even keep track of you, moving all the time! What, you ashamed of this family?"

"Don't start in with that again. I called..."

"Twice!"
"And I sent you checks for Mom. All the time!"
A fist slammed against the wall. Ted's voice was quiet, but more harsh.
"And that was supposed to make things right? I burned every check your
guilty mind forced you to write."
"I never get any thanks, do I? Well I've had it. I just don't care any more.
Here, Ted, you finish this bottle!" There was a crash of glass on the floor. "I'm
getting out of here."
A door slammed and all was quiet. Patrick was shaking, afraid to move. He
started to walk back towards the hall when he heard Ted speak again in a
strangled voice.
"Just hope your kids don't turn out like you." He started to cough.
Patrick's heart pounded. He left the room and began to close the door. It
swung easily on its hinges. He pulled the handle too quickly and it slammed
shut. He stood paralyzed, afraid that Ted Davis had heard him.
Patrick hurried down the hall, the floor squeaking beneath the carpeting.
He held his breath when he heard the study door reopen. The yellow light
flowed and the broken figure of Ted Davis stepped out. He strained his eyes
to see down the dark hallway.
"Patrick." He craned his neck forward. "Patrick?"
Patrick Bailey bent his head and forced his feet to take the few extra steps to
get him around the corner and out of Ted's sight. He felt sorry for the man,
but couldn't face him. Not now. He ran outside to find Ronny Dover.
Ronny and his brother were playing tag on the side lawn of the house. They
were laughing as the afternoon waned. Patrick wiped his forehead and ran
over to them.
"What are you still doing here?" he demanded. "Your parents already left."
Ronny tackled his brother in the high grass. "No they didn't. They're down
there talking to some people by that car. We're going to wait for them."
"Well not here!"
"Says who? This ain't your house." Ronny was surprised to hear Patrick
yell at him.
"I said so! Mr. Davis is tired and doesn't want to hear you guys making
noise. Besides he isn't feeling well. Don't you know his wife's dead?" Patrick
thought he sounded foolish when he yelled. He glanced to see if anyone else
was watching him, then turned to Ronny. "Just go home," he whispered. He
left them and went inside to find his parents.

The Hut

My father and neighbor ran their young stock in
The same pasture during the summer. Each
April we'd meet and walk the fences, replacing
Old wire and posts, cutting away the branches
That had fallen during the winter. Our neighbor's son
And I usually played more than we worked. The spring
I was twelve years old we found a fallen tree
In woods close to the fence. We worked all morning
Bracing the trunk and cutting away the limbs
That were not needed. We wedged old sticks on top
And between the remaining branches till we'd built
A lattice which we covered with leaves. We planned
To camp there but never did. The following
Years we often stumbled across the clearing,
But for some reason we never stayed. My father
Said we were "growing into responsible
Adults." We last stopped in the clearing when I was
Seventeen. It was late at night and most
Of the leaves were gone, the bare skeleton shone
In the moon's pale light. The yellow glow of our lantern
Warmed the air and drew white winged moths from
Beneath brittle leaves. We didn't stay; we
Trailed a 'coon and heard our hound baying
In the distance.

Walter Plaisted

Thomas Prestopnik
Your Fortune as Read Through Your Eyes

"Can you see me having your baby,
living together in a big, old house
with dogs and cats and...?"

Hold still please. This is not going to be
as easy as peering into a curved sphere of crystal;
the kind those charlatans use which tell them
absolutely nothing except what their shady
reflections look like on a cold sheen of glass.
Don't move your head or blink your eyes: the
light that will splay there like a bright vision
may fracture and splinter any images that are
beginning to rise, like wreathing mist, to your eyes.
You are your own bright fortune, your own seer of
bliss or blight, fruitfulness of carnage, but I see,
rising like pine trees against a bleak sky, the
promise of a long unhurried life as strong and
green as the rooted trees, and, what's this? A love
as forceful and pliant as the sea, slow turner
and undulator of fragile weeds, caresser of small fish,
harsh, relentless wearer-down of stone. Is this
wisping up from your eyes alone, or is it the sheen
from my reflected eyes that mingles with your own?
Now I see lovers hand in hand, though sometimes
twining slow then furious on the sand at the edge
of—oh—I cannot tell, though I am certain it was
you and me, though you for certain I am sure, but
he was fuzzy as the shore appears to be at quite
some distance. Wait; I saw for certain, barely just
a fleeting glance, but it was me, older, though how
much wiser, who can say? Things are spinning up the
twisting darkness of your eyes—what a blaze of
color! What can this mean? It is as though a
rainbow expanded and then burst at the seam; a
positive sign I'm sure, but everything is still
spinning, spinning. Don't move your head. That's right,
much better. Ah, there we are:

a house enfolded in a labyrinth of trees, stout
and sturdy oaks with leaves that seem to murmur
with the wind, and you are on a nineteen century
style veranda beckoning for someone to come in,
and once again it's me with an armload of some
quartered sections of trees. What a furl of
smoke that old stone chimney makes that laces with
the tiniest tree twigs as though both were
exhaled from the same breath. Things have gone
fuzzy again; you must have blinked, and there is
that gray area of uncertainty again that seems to
cross the visions of all things, but that is to be
expected. I must be dreaming. I could've sworn I
saw three, no, wait a minute, four; four dogs
trotting and barking in a backyard full of flowers:
purple, pink and violet, azure and blue flowers that
furl in the distance towards a glittering stream, and
there, basking on a sun-slatted back porch, two cats
as sensually white as Queen Anne's Lace—wait, we're
spinning again, and yes, there you are again on the
front porch with a bundle of something in your arms.
It moved! A baby; I can see one small fist that seems
to blossom in the shadows of those giant trees. Wait,
don't blink, I've got to look again. It looks an awful
lot like you and a good amount like me and its
eyes are like two small flickering fires reflected in
a stream. Is it a boy or—drat—there's that grayness
again and, and—everything's gone. The only thing I
can see of course, is you, looking at me as you are,
but wait, what's this?—oh, a false start; just my
reflection in your eyes although it does seem to be a
bit too bright and seems to radiate. Well, that's all
I could see and it's quite open to different interpretations
as one would expect. That grayness has covered everything.
But tell me, if you were to try and read my eyes, what
is it that you would see? That's right. Look deep into
them; I promise not to blink. That's right; look deep—
Funny; I can still see my reflection in—oh, what a
magnificent blaze; your eyes just burst into rainbows!
To Remember Nana

This is a poem for Nana
whose laughter echoes down halls,
floating memories:
of Christmas cookies
and a warm, spicy-smelling kitchen;
of Pinochle games played for pennies
around the oak dining table;
of two little girls playing
movie star with Nana's green-painted
vanity and lampstand
with the cupboard on its post
which we used like a telephone
to call Alan Ladd and John Wayne;
of gifts given as bountifully
as food - a doll that wets,
and a velvet dress;
of caring, big hugs
which marked our going away
and our returning;
But most of all
perhaps this poem
is for Nana
whose arms tried
to crush away the desolation
when my baby died;
I write this for remembrance
and in the hope
that Nana lives again in me.

Carol Shiffer
Migration of a Suicide

"When someone dies we say that they are going South." - *Lame Dear*

I wonder if that Spring you thought of geese rising from Autumn marshes, great fanned wings bearing them up to escape a cold Winter.

Your hair, the authorities said, was splayed fan-like across your breasts like opened wings.

You would, if you could talk, remember in words the Fall we drove up North to watch the geese escape the flooded, stubbled fields they watered in.

The hoary ganders beat their wings against the brass, spangled marshes and strutted, hopped, and plumed the water as they rose to follow their cold squadrons home. You thought and said, "They have no love of Winter." Autumn gusts fouled your old coat and plucked it open where your fingers had kept it closed; it seemed to hover on either side of you like rusting tin wings in the Autumn sun.

Your eyes mirrored the swamps of gray, brackish water and brittle, moldering reeds. You said, in a voice that whisked your words like the rush of smooth feathers, "They fly from Summer's end to find an eternal Spring," and sludged your way across fields to the car. You sat so quiet on the ride back home and lifted your head only once to say you were "sick of Winter." Back then I thought they were only words about weather, about the season when the clearest streams freeze thick in frosted whirls and slow to a slight trickle; the blood of the earth's old death, and could not know you spoke of your own cold life between Springs.

Now I think of you this Spring of a year since you have left. Tired of Wintering, you opted for the way of geese seeking your eternal Spring and Summer, shook your cold Winter, and once, for all time, rose and headed South.

*by Jonathon Hazelton*
Accounting

For years Mark had wanted but one thing, to be a professional baseball player. From the time he was eight years old he worked hard every day towards that one goal. His dedication was always a source of bewilderment to his parents, but now all his diligence was about to pay off.

-- What is this?
--Oh, it's a story I'm writing, Mrs. W.
--You've got to be kidding me.
--No, I'm not kidding at all. It'll be a real heart warming tale filled with all the aspects that people want to read in a story.
--Oh, my dear boy, just when I was beginning to have faith in you.
--But people like to read stories where an underdog struggles, meets resistance, conflict, perseveres, and achieves his goal.
--Who cares about what they like to read about. I'm talking about things as they actually are. Haven't you ever read any of my books?
--Quite frankly, Mrs. W., I haven't been able to get past the first few pages of any of them. I don't really understand you.
--Of course you don't. That's why you write this plastic drivel.

Mark had not been drafted after college into the major leagues, but this did not let his dream die. After days of hanging around the spring training camp of the Seattle Pilots, and pestering the manager, he was finally about to get his chance. The manager, Chub Lemaster, at last gave into Mark's exuberance saying, "Kid, you's can step in at de end of da practice tomarra and show me what ya got."

Mark lay in his bed that night clutching his glove to his chest. He kept repeating what Chub Lemaster had said to him over and over again. His excitement kept him awake, but finally just after beginning to utter, "Kid, you's can step..." Mark finally fell asleep.

--Oh my word, I think I feel a serious stomach ailment coming on.
--You know, Mrs. W. I am beginning to be sorry I brought you here. You know I could easily have fantasized help from someone else.
--Yes, well you did pick me out of your little literary guide to authors, and believe me, you need work.
--Like what exactly?
--For one thing, you're not bringing anything important out into the story. What I mean is that no one is going to care about this sappy kid.
--You know, you don't talk like I imagined you would, hanging around with all those blues brothers people and all.
--That's Bloomsbury, and besides life isn't imagination, my dear boy. It's real and you should never forget that.
--So what should I put in it then?
--Put in his thoughts, his real thoughts. His real motivation for what he's doing.
--What motivation? He loves the game. I thought at least that was clear.
--That a lot of bull. There must be a ton of hidden reasons. Maybe it's glory, the money, all the women he can get when he becomes a pro athlete.
--What? I don't believe I'm hearing this. He's a simple clean cut guy, with no thoughts like that on his mind at all. Besides, it's just a story, Mrs. W.
--That is just my point, boy. Here is where you must learn. You must account for his feelings. You are the accountant of his thoughts. That's the great thing about being a writer. Don't tell me that it's just a story. What you've got to write about is what's really going on inside his head. Get into his thoughts and bring your readers along with you.
--All right, I guess I can try.

The next morning Mark awoke feeling more nervous than ever. Was this really what he wanted? Did he really love baseball that much? Could he put up with the cheap food, fast women, and being on the road all year long? "Yes," he said to himself in answer to all these questions. He loved the game so much that he was sure he would be able to withstand all of the evils of the game, all of the unsavory aspects that came with it. He would make sure he would not fall prey to them. As he dressed to go to the park, he felt more confident than ever.

--No, my dear. I'm afraid you still do not understand what I mean.
--What? I did what you told me to. I gave him that double vision thinking that
you were talking about.
--Yes, you did, but unless you're trying to show how naive he is, then I'm afraid you totally lost.
--All right then. I still don’t understand. In fact, I still don’t really understand something about you.
--Really? What’s that?
--Who is it that’s afraid of you, and why are they afraid of you?
--My dear boy, everyone’s afraid of me.
--But why?
--Because I expose them for what they are. I don’t allow them to wear that silly mask they always put on for other people.
--And that scares them?
--Doesn’t it scare you?
--Now that I look at it, there are pretty many situations in which I don’t particularly want my real feelings to show.
--There you have it.

Mark called a cab to take him to the ballpark. He wondered if the lady on the telephone looked as gruesome as she sounded. In his mind he pictured a woman who had left from underneath a bridge somewhere to fill in on the telephone that day. A female troll with horrible nasty warts on her nose encrusted with gleaming, oozing...

--Wait, wait. That’s not quite what I meant either.
--Well I tried to make his thoughts filled with the gruesome reality.
--I realize that this is even going to sound more confusing, but there is a point where revealing a person’s thoughts can turn fantasy on your part.
--You’re right, Mrs. W., I am confused. I mean, I had him go off on something just like you wanted me to.
--It was good for a start, but someone’s real thoughts wouldn’t get as gory as all that.
--I thought in writing I could do whatever I wanted.
--Not while I’m around, young man.
--Now you’re sounding like my mother.
--Never mind. Just try again.

As Mark reached the ballpark, his nervousness began to overwhelm him again. His palms sweat and his brow was filled with beads of perspiration. He began to think about his father’s philosophy of life. His father had always told him that a son should always try to end up in just a little better situation than his father. That way, after a series of generations, the family name would mean something. Even though you were not as successful as the generations to come, at least you were part of its building. Mark wondered if he was trying to make too big of a leap in his father’s long term plan. But Mark said, “No,” to himself. He wanted the fame, the cheap sex. He wanted to get women pregnant all over America, beat up drunken baseball fans in bars...

--Hold it again. It really is amazing how you can leap from something as somber as a father’s dream into a story about a thrill seeking maniac.
--I was trying a parallel. You know where one character has lots of people concerned about him but he’s only concerned with himself.
--His father wasn’t concerned with him. He was thinking about some weird plan for his future generation
--Why does it seem to me that you will never be satisfied with what I write?
--I just demand consistency is all.
--All right. Well here we go again.

Mark waited anxiously for the practice to come to an end so he could finally get his chance. He watched the players practice and how they acted. If he made the team, he wondered if he would act the way he did. He also watched the team managers and grounds crew. Mark thought to himself whether that would be how he would end up if he did not make the grade at the end of practice. Had they at one time tried out for the team, only to have a Chub Lemaster clone say to them “you can’t play ball, but you can mow the outfield grass for us.”

What of Lemaster? Why has he become the master? The process, Mark thought, must be a long one. How does anyone come to power in any situation. Is it that they are more intelligent than others? If a person’s intelligence was on the scale of the alphabet, and everyone had made it to level M, was Chub Lemaster and other leaders at the letter Q or R? As he watched Lemaster begin to pick his nose, Mark uttered to himself “No,” and thought that it must be luck or something like that.

--How’s that, Mrs. W.?
--Please, call me Virginia, dearie.
The Workshop

A faded red workshop —
Bulb for light—a man
Squints at lines marked on
A board.

His table-saw
Whines the board to strips
Which, glued and nailed, become
Potato crates.

Basswood
Is strong enough for crates,
Doesn't have many knots—
It's fairly water resistant, and
"Ain't much good for anything
Else."

Walter Plaisted