The winner of the Spring 1983 GLR Prize for fiction goes to Merle Haskins for his story "Au Dela", which appears in this issue.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE WINNER OF
THE 1983 ACADEMY OF AMERICAN POETS PRIZE
at the State University College at Oswego,
Sponsored by the Oswego Undergraduate Alumni Board

WINNER: Jonathan Hazelton, for his poem
"Elegy for a Neighbor Dying Before Dawn"

RUNNER-UP: Thomas Prestopnik, "Grasslands"

HONORABLE MENTIONS:
Thomas Prestopnik, "Night Life"
Christine L. Sweeney, "The Bullfight"
Steven Patrick Cornish, "Senses after Death"

Judges: Dr. Karen Elias-Button, Dr. John Knapp II

Front Cover: Trillium and Jack by Marlene S. Hamann
Back Cover: Untitled photo by Daphne Evanoff
"Ahead of the fleet
scouts searched out safe routes
of travel, to insure no indian
pirates lurked on the rough roads before
us. Our journey was slow.

"Somdeays only ten mile
was covered before the sun
sunk slowly beyond the westward horizon.
Under the stars we rested til dawn
opened our eyes.

"The fire was smoldering
when we woke, bellowing high
white smoke. It was a sorry
sight, the fire dying where we spent a
restless night."

Judi Phillips
Waiting

The old man woke up for the last time, knowing. He thought to awaken his friend, who slept in a chair next to the bed, but something told him that this would not be shared. He waited alone, then, while the room got greyer, and he remembered a time long ago: He had taken a canoe out on a black lake in a thick fog, very far from shore in a world of greyness, in which he was connected to nothing, where nothing past his body existed; not even the end of his paddle where it should have been dipping in the water and creating rings to lick at the side of the canoe, and out there, (he remembered), he had fallen asleep. While he slept (though he couldn’t have known it then, when it happened), a grey fish materialized out of the greyness and swam around his canoe in faster and faster circles, creating a powerful vortex which swirled, not in the black water he lay on, but in the grey fog which lay on him, and the water sucked up through the fog like an inverted cyclone. He was carried spinning through the fog on this mad wave, and the grey fish turned into a black crow which flapped its wings in a great spray of water and snatched him, a crying babe, out of the canoe. They flew through blind greyness, reached an open window, and went through it, pulling the fog with them, the crow dropping him and flying tightening circles, at the center of which whorled a heavy rope of fog that became thinner and thinner until it was a whirling silver thread slicing a blur, in which the crow spun--the crow--who swooped out the window, stretching the silver thread invisibly behind, leaving him, a boy, naked on the wooden floor in a beam of yellow sunlight, singing wordlessly to faint music from another room. He found a crayon on the floor, and began drawing on the wall, happily, never lifting the crayon, not making any thoughtful movement of his hand, just running along the endless white wall, leaving behind him a wild red line of mountains and rocks and sand. He came to a door, opened it, and was hungry. A hand took his and led him, gave him food, showed him how to eat, gave him clothes, rebuttooned when he did it wrong, showed him how until he did it right. Then another hand gave him a new crayon and showed him how to use it, and when he did that wrong, the hand slapped him until he did that right, too. This took a very long time, then another hand came into his, a girl’s, and it was softer and warmer than the others and did not teach him in the same way, because it needed learning too. Together, he and the girl went to a rented room, where they learned about happy, sweaty love that was like the wild red line plunging up and down the long white wall. They slept in a warm greyness, alone with each other, but after a while he was awakened by dreams of fire and the lonely sound of cars passing on the wet highway beyond the room. It was so late there was no hour to name it; it was just night. He got up and walked naked into the cool drizzle, following the wordless, faint music he had heard before. Finding an invisible silver thread, he held it with both hands, beginning to spin and spin until the thread turned to a dizzy grey fog spinning around him, pushing in on him, crushing him, lifting him into a silent world in which he was unconnected, where nothing past his own body existed. Yet he could not have known this as he lay asleep on the black lake long ago, but he remembered it now, as he lay in a cold white bed: Waiting, knowing, while his friend slept near him, waiting.

J.F. Smith

Elegy for a Neighbor Dying Before Dawn

I watched you coming home late on evenings that were edging towards dawn, and stood while you fumbled at your door-lock with hands that were eager for sleep.

Now you find the key that swings the door of your life open towards its long awaited sleep, and we arrive again, at the end of a drawnout evening, you stumbling on the brink of a new dawn, your body pulling you away from songs and dances that you never quite learned, from women whose eyes begged you to rise from your half-sleep and help them meet the morning.

Jonathan Hazelton

Runner-up

Grasslands

Muddied snow lazily Subsides on the aged Brown pasture, hastily enclosed By barbed wire on a Sweltering spring morning. He cursed it then, the job assigned By his father, and wished For snow upon the grass. Now at dusk with wizened hands, he Repairs a break upon The fence. Snow lashes. He Yearns in vain for those warmer days.

Thomas Prestopnik
I want to tell you a story, but maybe I should say that I need to tell you a story. It is a desire, a certain lust that can only be satisfied by the telling of a story. With it there is a motive...no, a consuming need to be thought of as someone who has lived so that you may see that there is a reason for living.

The problem is that all of my stories, as I work through them or start them or just...think about them, never do seem to have any reason for living in them.

But maybe you should judge them for yourself. After all, they are only stories that I tell.

The first story came to me after I heard one line of Wesli Court’s poetry. It was, "Last night I dreamed my father died again."* It was beautiful, I thought! There in that single line of ten syllables was a story to tell. I would write about a man who begins to tell you about the dreams that pester him like bad debts. The first time he begins to have the dreams he is young, dressed in mock lederhosen. As the man gets older the dreams come more frequently to him, and of late they come, not only in the night, but in the day.

I would tell you how the dreamer has worked to put himself above the social station of his father, how the son now works every day behind, nearly beneath, a rock maple desk, and hope that you might think of the king of Corinth and his duty to the stone. How hopeless he has it in Hades!

Then I would tell you of how the father spends his days drinking quarts of beer, and resting on a blue corduroy davenport that has bare patches in the wale on the arms where his shoes have worn it away, and how he wears a half-mesh cap with a machinery dealer’s emblem on it.

I would go on and on about how neither of them speaks at any length to the other, and trust that this would draw you to harbor a belief that I was telling you a story, not far from the truth, about myself. And near the end, like Court, I would be working the story around to a point where the narrator would say, "I died again last night, my father dreamed". The very same words would have closed the story that opened it, and if I have done the telling well, you would not even realize it until moments, hours...days later.

Now, I ask you, could that be a story to give you a reason for living?

No. I think not.

Then I might try to tell you a story of three boys who spent ten years together in school. They grew up together, and parted.

Two of the boys are brothers, only one year apart, but since the third grade they have gone through school together. The other boy is their D’Artagnan. I would unfold before you a story of their escapades: how the three grew away from each other; one of the brothers would join the service and make it his career; the other would stay in the village and work in a factory, marry early and have no children; the D’Artagnan would wear many faces and try many lives. The brothers would not know how he had helped them when they had needed help.

I would hope that this story would remind you of how you have been through the same thing; you would realize that old friends are different now, the old times are only old, and yesterday will not be able to comfort you any longer.

As before, if I have done well, you might have an inkling that the D’Artagnan was myself. You would say "How gallant, though not presented in such an obvious way as in most stories. This is more subtle."
But you need to stop and ask yourself, as I have done over and over and
over, "Does this story have something to say about life, living, and reason; is
it so important that it needs to be told?"

Yes? Just as I thought...In your heart of hearts it has no relevance of its
own.

Fleetingly I would consider telling you the story of Apostrophe Fred
(Alfred Ray-Cogins to people of a different generation) who believes that
Kerouac is still on the bus and on the road; who has a penchant for electric
orange juice, seeing telephone books as the rough copies of the great Ameri­
can novella; who has a desire to publish a thesis on the role of the pop-rivet in
the knowledge-conditioned world.

But the idea suddenly becomes too bizarre and I abandon it.

In a desperate move to satisfy me need, after already editing out the
previous stories; in a foolish move I would tell you a story that was not my
own. Oh, I would tell it in my own words, my style of telling, but the essence
of the story would be a fable tale from long ago.

I would relate a fable--about some primeval cave dwellers, their conception
of reality centered on observations of shadows, shadows that crossed the back
wall of the cave. What was causing the shadows was the true reality, toward
which they should have turned their attention, but they were too insecure to
do so, even though, after a bit, they realized that the shadows were not reality,
not the perfect world, but a distorted image of something in the perfect
world. And these cave dwellers would agonize in their minds about the fact
that there was something "out there" that they struggle to return to.

Somehow, in all of this I would bring up the point that there is a feeling of
au delà in all of us - that we all believe, or could believe, there is a perfect
world somewhere from which we came and to which we shall return, and that
this is the cause of all our déjà vu.

Hopefully, this would present the reason, like my own desire, to grasp
something. If not, then I have failed and not shown you what I hoped. You
would not see that I have lived, but only that I want to tell you a story.

Merle L. Haskins
Winner, GLR Spring '83 Fiction Prize

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West Side Hokku

1. 96th and Broadway
A vacant lot puts
Up weeds, then, tended, corn — now
Condominiums.

2. Game
Sidewalk dominoes —
West 94th Street — knives drawn —
Laughter — who moves next?

3. The Municipal Tree
Sycamore, bone white
Limbs of the Night Goddess, star-
Tricked flesh of the dead.

4. Our Selection
Imported labels
For home dining, or Night Train
For the evening out.

6. Venus Out on Broadway
Hookers say, "Go out?"
The morning star is out too,
Out and going out.

Brooks Haxton
TIRED OF THE EVERYDAY RUNAROUND? NEED TO GET AWAY FROM IT ALL? WELL NOW YOU TOO CAN SEE THE SITES OF BEAUTIFUL WAIKIKI BEACH AT AMAZINGLY LOW DISCOUNT PRICES. WAIKIKI BEACH WHERE LIVING BEGINS.

Alex put the advertisement out of his head, sighed, and continued listening to Ms. Bergison.

"And then I opened the window," she said, "but it seemed so far down. I couldn't do it."

"What were you feeling at the time?" Alex said, lighting a cigarette, finding difficulty in sounding as concerned as he knew he should be.

It's not as though Alex enjoys being a psychologist. As a kid he read how Marty Phillips' brother, who was a practicing psychologist at the time, hypnotized one of his patients to the point of seduction. Alex thought that was a pretty neat trick and wanted to learn to do the same. He didn't though, for in all the books of psychology that he went through, not once did he come across the "art of hypnosis." Sure, he read how no one could be hypnotized into doing anything they didn't want to do, (which led him to believe that the patient was seeing Marty's brother for reasons other than therapy), but that didn't help him now, already with a degree in psychology and still with the inability to hypnotize anyone, be it to the point of seduction or what have you. Discouraged, but not wanting to spend the time getting another degree, Alex thought that he would become a true humanist and commit himself to helping others. Once he landed a job at the clinic, however, he realized just how big a feat this act of charitable kindness was, especially when it came to people like Ms. Bergison.

Ms. Bergison, who is rather attractive and not much more neurotic than the next person, comes into the clinic every Tuesday saying how this time, for sure, she's going to jump out of her apartment window because the thought of having to live another day is, as she says, "absolutely hopeless." At first, Alex
took pity and treated her with the utmost seriousness, following theories which stemmed from Freud to Laing - he never could decide on one point of view. But after a few months or so, seeing how Ms. Bergison consistently came in every Tuesday of every week with the same problem, regardless of the advice he had given her the week before, Alex became bored. He would sit back in his chair, legs crossed over the desktop, chin down, and with sultry eyes he would stare up at Ms. Bergison and send mental messages to her, messages such as, "Ms. Bergison, your defenses are weakening," and, "Ms. Bergison, at the count of three you will slowly begin unbuttoning your blouse. One, two, three." This, however, proved futile, for Ms. Bergison soon began coming in with several layers of clothing and dark sunglasses. Now, for the past week, Alex had simply been staring into the street, occasionally giving a "Uh-huh," or a "Really?" to his patients while watching the people pass by, hoping to see the foreign lady.

"I think I'm really going to do it this time," Ms. Bergison said.

"Ms. Bergison. Really." Alex said.

"No. I really think I'm going to do it this time for sure."

"Ms. Bergison," Alex said, "you're not going to jump out of your apartment window; if you did, what would you do this time next week?"

"I tell you, I'm going to do it," she said, and walked out in a state Alex had never before seen her in.

Once Ms. Bergison left, Mr. Santos, who had been proctoring the area at the time, demanded Alex's presence in his office, immediately. Alex had only once before had the opportunity of being in Santos' office and that had been when he was first interviewed for the job, almost a year ago.

The first thing that hit Alex, the first that hits anyone walking into Santos' office, is his nameplate. It reads "Mr. Ralph P. Santos, Director, West Side Mental Health Clinic." All that on one plate. Santos has it situated on his desk just right so that the sun reflects off it, blinding everyone's attention to it. Alex took a seat and waited for Santos to begin.

"Is that the kind of counseling you give all your patients, Hunter?" Santos said.

"Mr. Santos?" Alex said.

"With Ms. Bergison! That kind of counseling is unjustifiable, Hunter. You got a problem with a patient, you come to me first. This is a place where people come expecting help, where people, troubled people, Hunter, are dependent upon us for sound advice."

Son of a bitch, Alex thought. It was coming. The same lecture he had received on his interview, stating how we here at the clinic have a moral, ethical, and compassionate obligation toward our patients which we must uphold at all times.

"Yes, Mr. Santos," Alex said. "I'm well aware of that."

"Well, then, what's the problem, Hunter?"

Alex's initial thoughts were to express his need for something other than the clinic. There had to be something more than the "troubled people", as Santos called them. He wasn't sure what that something else was, but he knew it had to exist. How could it not?

"I need a break, Mr. Santos," Alex said. "I need to get away for a while."

"Need to get away for a while?" Santos said. "You haven't even been here a year yet."

"I need a break," Alex insisted. "Just a week!"

When Alex wasn't granted the week's vacation, and was then told that his job was threatened if he were ever caught giving such unprofessional advice again, Alex felt as though he could stand up and tell Santos that he quit, that he didn't need him or the clinic. But all too soon, and fortunately for Alex, the thought of being jobless with what little savings he had seemed anything but beneficial.

Alex walked out of Santos' office fuming. If there had been something of his own in the clinic, something fragile like the globe of a lamp, it would certainly have been smashed. But there wasn't and, since it was near closing and Alex hadn't any more patients scheduled, he left the clinic for a walk, hoping all the while to meet the foreign lady.

There was something about the foreign lady, Alex knew. It was like the first time he saw her: it had been raining for days keeping the streets a constant black and the buildings a constant cold grey. People were rushing to their destinies, heads down, faces perplexed, and feet forever moving, trying to get out from under the wet as though it were too heavy a burden. Then, amid such dejection, he saw the foreign lady pass by with her umbrella held high against the rain and at a pace all her own, not giving in to the madness of the crowd flowing around her. Her face was calm and her lips were slightly parted with the corners turned up looking as though she, herself, had a pleasant thought going on in her mind, as though underneath her umbrella one didn't see the rain or the drab it brought with it, that underneath her umbrella one might see what he wanted to see.

This is how she appeared to Alex every time she passed by the clinic, and it amazed him, in a wonderful sense, how one could possibly possess such
qualities; the eternal smile inviting tranquility. Was attaining such qualities a secret though? The foreign lady was the only person Alex knew who seemed to possess them. Or is it something that's learned? Surely the foreign lady would know.

It was just about five o'clock, and the sidewalks began filling with those leaving work early. Alex - having gone several blocks, composing himself somewhat after his talk with Santos - knew that he'd have to turn back for the clinic. He turned and stopped. The foreign lady was behind him heading into Kowalski's Deli. Alex followed and managed to get there as she was paying for her purchase.

"$3.49. Your change, Miss," said the clerk.

"Thank you," the foreign lady said, smiling. "Central Park; Eighth Avenue, no?"

Alex stood, stupefied. What does one do when in the presence of an ideal? He wanted to reach out and put his hand on her shoulder, to touch her, but his arm wouldn't raise itself. He wanted to ask her how anyone could possibly appear as content as she did, how he, too, might appear so, but his lips never moved.

"That's right, lady," the clerk said. "Central Park West. Next!" Alex was next, but he hadn't heard the clerk. He was watching the foreign lady circle Central Park on a pad that already had the Empire State Building, Museum of Modern Art, and Harlem crossed off. He watched her leave.

"Yeah, I know she's a piece, Mac," the clerk said. "Whaddaya want?"

"Oh!" Alex said, looking at the clerk. "Uh, I'll just get a coffee."

Alex made it back to the clinic in time to beat Santos' wrath, and get his coat. By the time he made his way to the park was turning toward evening. The park lights were already glowing inside their glass globes, illuminating the paths narrow with overgrown greenery. Many of the musicians, artists, lovers and park strollers were heading out of the park toward home for dinner. Those who weren't sure where dinner was coming from, those who had things other than compasses in their pockets, remained in groups underneath the lights and park statues.

Alex started on the West Side and began walking along the many paths. He felt sure that the foreign lady was in the park still, and even more sure they would encounter each other. He moved farther into the park where the lights came less frequently and the presence of roaming groups was greater. But what had he to fear? His mind was solely on the foreign lady. He felt secure.

There was a smell of animal in the air, a stagnant and suffocating smell, which told Alex where he was. How great, he thought, her feeding the animals after closing. Moving quicker and closer to the zoo, Alex felt a hand stop him. He stood still in anticipated excitement. Could it be? he thought. But of course, who else could it be. He turned and saw two tall characters staring down at him. What could they possibly want? Alex thought. He still hadn't figured on his being alone in the park and the consequences that might result.

One of the two moved behind Alex while the other remained in front. Alex looked behind him to see what the other one was up to.

"Now what you wanna be looking at him for?" the one in front said, bringing Alex's attention to him. "We just wanna talk wit you for a minute, dat's all."

Alex couldn't believe what was happening. Where was the foreign lady? She was supposed to be here.

"Look," Alex said, "you don't understand. I'm supposed to meet somebody..."

The one in front signaled to the other with a flick of his head. Alex quickly turned behind him and saw a stick coming down on him. He felt his knees hit the pavement.

When Alex came to, he found himself under a tree in a patch of ivy. "Son of a bitch," he said.

He touched the side of his head that hurt most and could feel a thickness of dried blood. He lay there for a minute collecting himself before getting up on his feet, stumbling until he found his balance. His watch, wallet, and coat had been stolen, but he didn't blame the thieves, it was himself he blamed. What a fool he was, he thought, for going so far into the park alone. It wasn't until after he had gotten out of the park that he thought of the foreign lady. He blamed her, too, and for the first time, the thought of her smile irritated him.

Walking downtown toward his apartment, the sirens of police cars passed him and stopped two blocks away where a circle of people stood. When he reached the crowd, fighting his way through behind the police as though he were with them, he could see a body lying awkwardly on the pavement. It was Ms. Bergison. It was Ms. Bergison in a small pool of blood with her neck twisted. Alex looked up and could see the curtains of an open apartment window flutter like bird wings.

"Son of a bitch," Alex said. "SON OF A BITCH!"

Alex moved from the body. He was tired and felt drained. He moved slowly in the direction of his apartment. Was it his fault? He thought it had to be. How could he possibly go back to work? How could they possibly let him? He envisioned the foreign lady in his mind, her smile, her contentment, and from deep within, Alex felt a surge of hate begin to grow. Looking back at the circled crowd he saw the streetlights glowing, like lights on a runway lining up a plane about to take off to Paris, Bermuda, or Spain.
Misty Mountain

Monoprint

W. E. Demott
The Singer

The woman sings
the flamenco, alone at night.
The woman sings
behind the window, one hand clings
to the grill that limits her sight.
A caged canary without flight,
the woman sings.

The woman dreams
of the nights she sang for a wage.
The woman dreams
of her voice, once as strong as teams
of dancers, tattooing the stage
with their heels. Alone in her cage,
the woman dreams.

The woman smiles
when she hears people speak her name.
The woman smiles
because her appearance beguiles
and no one sees that she's the same
as "The Gypsy" who once had fame.
The woman smiles.

Christine Sweeney

The Making of Fields

A big metal washtub was changed into a stool
and placed under the tree an hour ago. It was
there where she sat with her work-blistered hands. It was
there where she sat, escaping the sun while five
women worked, together. She watched them hoe.

Five women lifting hoes above their heads, together.
Five hoes of wood and metal will turn the earth beneath
their feet, releasing the smells of the rain dampened soil.
Five women, five hoes, together will break the ground
to change African land into a field of rice.

Five women chanting beneath the sun yellowed sky
move together. One woman calls out in a well
rhythmed song. Five hoes come down. The four women's
voices, with hoes lifting up, reply. Five hoes come down.
They are working, chanting, and sweating together.

Barefoot they hoe. The fabric wrapped about their waists
is hitched above their knees. The reds, the greens and the blues
of the intertwined threads stand out against the black
of their skin and the browns of the soil. Fabric tied
about their heads moves with the women bent with their hoes.

One woman, with a calabash crooked in her arm,
steps away from the rest. She reaches inside the sun-
hollowed gourd for a handful of grain. A quick move of
her arm scatters golden rice seed across the earth
that is steamy from heat, to be turned by the hoes.

She sat on the overturned tub and watched them work.
Women with hoes, barefoot and bold, with the sun on
their backs. The grain, now scattered, has been covered
by soil. She listens to the five women chanting.
They are working, sweating and being together.

Jamie C. Rhein
Trouble Down Under

Jerry, a professional frisbee thrower, got up one morning, stretched before his living room window, and saw ten goats sprint across his lawn. He ran out his front door but the goats had gone. He checked with his neighbors but they said they didn’t see any goats.

Jerry lived in a large suburban area. There were no farms or zoos around of any sort to account for the goats. He thought that maybe they had escaped from a circus but couldn’t recall one being advertised in the area.

As he went back inside his house, Jerry heard strange noises coming from his cellar. Going to the top of the cellar stairs, he turned on the light which exposed several goats.

"How did you get down there?" Jerry yelled down to the animals as if he expected an answer. "Did you climb through the window?"

The window was the only possible way the goats could’ve gotten into Jerry’s basement. But it was a small window a human would’ve had trouble climbing through, let alone ten goats.

Jerry went down the stairs to see if he could find out how the goats had gotten into the cellar and prevent anything like it from happening again, but when he reached the last step, he was forced back up the stairs by the goats, who rushed him. The goats seemed to want the cellar for themselves.

Jerry went outdoors to see if he could find anything around his house that would explain how the goats had gotten in. He discovered a large hole in the foundation where his basement window was. It appeared that the goats had kicked the foundation around the window in to gain access to the cellar.

Jerry went back inside. As he thought of what to do with the goats, he could hear them banging on the water pipes. He called the exterminator to solve his goat problem. When the exterminator arrived, later in the day, he walked to the top of the stairs, turned on the light, and immediately turned it off again.

"I don’t do goats," he said and walked back out of the house.

After putting an ad in the paper that said ten goats had been found, Jerry called two Frisbee-throwing Friends over to his house in an effort to form a think-tank about the goat situation. He showed them his problem, and then they sat around the kitchen table and broke open a case of beer.

"Maybe we should go down there," Bill said.

"I tried that," Jerry said, "they’re violent goats."

The five tried it again, but as they reached the last stair, the goats rushed them. They sat back down at the table.

"What’re you going to do about the goat crap?" Sam asked.

"Nothing," Jerry said. "Maybe that’ll drive them out by itself."

"What if they come up the stairs and take over the rest of the house?" Bill asked. "It could be their game plan."

A hush came over the group. Jerry shuddered at the thought of waking up to a houseful of goats. He rushed from his garage and returned with a chain saw. Shortly afterwards, the group had a four-foot hole in the kitchen floor, through which they could observe the goats. They spent the entire night doing so.

When morning came, no one had moved from the hole.

"I’ll make breakfast," Jerry said.

"How about French toast?" Sam asked.

"Sounds good," Jerry said. He went to the refrigerator to grab the ingredients. "Here, throw this down," he said, pitching an egg to Sam.

Sam caught it gingerly, gave it a brief glance, and threw it into the cellar. A goat walked slowly over to it, gave it a longer glance, and then licked it off the floor.

"Amazing," Bill said.

Jerry finished making the French toast and set a huge platter of it near the goat observation hole. The three ate it with their hands and took turns drinking out of a large jug of orange juice as they examined the goats.

"I’m not going to practice today," Bill said through a muffled mouthful of French toast, "this is too much."

"Me neither," Sam said.

"I forgot all about it," Jerry said as he threw a piece of French toast into the cellar. "This doesn’t happen every day."

The goats scampered after the piece of French toast thrown down by Jerry. The others thought this was very amusing and threw down some as well. A few minutes later, they did it again, but this time they placed bets on which goat would reach a particular piece of toast first.

"I win," Bill said. "Did you see the way my goat pushed through the pack?"

"Make some more French toast," Sam told Jerry; "this is fun."

The phone rang. The three looked at each other and were reminded that
there was an outside world. Jerry walked up to the phone, ripped it off the
to the corners of the cellar. Not until Jerry had made some more
French toast did they come out again.

In the late afternoon, the switch was made to pancakes after Jerry ran out of
bread for French toast. The three were happy to accept this change of pace to
what they were throwing down, and the goats were more than happy to
accept the change in their diet.

That night, so they could get some sleep, the group took three hour shifts
in watching at the goat observation hole. Those who slept did so on the floor.

When morning came, Jerry excused himself from the hole and went to get
his mail which had been accumulating outside his door. He found a package
and brought it into the kitchen.

“What is it?” Bill asked.

“It’s from the coach,” Jerry said.

The attention of the goat watchers was momentarily diverted as Jerry
opened up the package. His coach was in Bermuda at an International frisbee
convention. He wrote that he was sending Jerry a new experimental frisbee
developed in Pakistan that was supposed to attract air currents.

Jerry threw the frisbee down into the hole. It glided down and hit a goat in
the head. The goat backed away, then came closer and sniffed the disk. The
group held its breath to concentrate on what the goat would do next, then the
doorbell rang.

Jerry yelled from his seat for whoever it was to come in. The milkman
walked into the kitchen.

“Look at this,” Sam said, pointing to the hole. “It’s great.”

The milkman gave the people an odd look, set down his milk and walked
over to the hole. He stood there staring at the sight for five minutes before
Jerry got him a chair.

“They look hungry,” he said, “I got some eggs in the truck. Go get them.”

Sam and Bill ran out of the house and returned quickly with five dozen
eggs, two cases of milk, and a brick of limburger cheese. They split it evenly
with the goats.

That night, as the milkman kept watch, he woke everyone as he saw
unusual activity in the cellar. One of the goats picked up the frisbee and threw
it to a nearby goat. That goat caught it, snapped its head, and threw the frisbee
to another goat. Soon, all the goats were awake and throwing the frisbee
around the cellar.

Jerry, his friends, and the milkman spent the rest of the night, and most of
their lives, sitting around the hole watching the goats throw the frisbee.

Chris Brock

Like Clockwork

the steady pulse, pulse, pulse
the insistent regular
the hand goes one thou
sand, two thousand, three thousand
a
reliable ticking
off the seconds, minutes, ho
urs
the days go passing by
and nobody notices
un
til

K. Checrallah

The crack in the windowpane was unnoticeable at first.
It was only an inch or so long
And no one could remember how it had gotten there — —
It just always was.
The crack began to spread further down the pane — —
So far that a gentle breeze could now make its way thru — —
But it wasn’t that bad.
Another radial branched off of the original crack
And a design began to form.
Abstract and indiscriminate — —
And no one really understood what it meant.
Some concentrics appeared between the radials
And the break was now definitely noticeable.
And someone talked of replacing the pane
But no one did.
There is a hole in the glass now.
The wind blows thru with much strength and gust
And it feels good.
Some complain about the hole,
Some complain about the wind.
But we love the broken windowpane — —
We love the coolness of the air — —
And we know how the crack began.

Karen Foley
Senses After Death

I've seen old men sitting, girls who are pretty, and jokes take shape before my eyes. Here, there is no shape. There is no space, no color. It's neither black nor white here.

I've heard the old men complaining, the girls laughing. I've heard all these jokes before. Here, I don't even hear the pulse of my blood in my veins. All echoes have died.

Bitter old men, sweet girls, and salty jokes. I've tasted many things, not just food. There's no food here. I'd rather have bitter old men, sweet girls, and the salty jokes.

I've smelled the old man's decay, and girl's perfume. And I've smelled out a punch line. What is the air like? But no wind stirs in my lungs. I can't breathe, thus I can't tell.

I've felt the weakness of old men, softness of girls, the coarseness of a bad joke. Now I am numb. I've lost touch and I can't feel. I can't move and I can't be moved.

Steven Patrick Cornish
What Happened to Yesterday

I remember the frog prince and all the king's horses and
When stepping on a crack meant Mom was
Going to have a bad accident
And stars were cool enough to put in my pocket.

I remember stepping through the looking glass with Alice
And the big man with a jolly grin
Who slowed down the noisy carousel
When I wanted to get off and run to Daddy.

And I can still recall the smell of fresh manure at
McCluskies' old farm, and wading in
The flooded streets in front of the house
After a rainstorm, then waiting for the rainbow.

I remember picking daisies in the back field every
Summer and I can still remember
The early morning birds' song that calmed
My fears after a restless night and sleepless dreams.

Now my busy plans make me deaf to their simple song and
I forget to follow Alice and
Daisies wilt and stars are far and hot.
The carousel man won't let me off anymore.

Lisa E. Baker

"Yeah Toots . . . we know."

He stands at the corner,
wailing on that cornet.
There's no hat at his feet.
"I don't want no bread," he says.
"I jus gotta blow, don't ya know?"

The punkers across the street
hear Toots cook as he
moves from Saint Louis Blues
to Maple Leaf Rag
to In the Mood.
He misses a note only when he wants to.
As the crowd arrives,
they punkers turn
away because
the only swing they know is in a backyard
and the only blues they know are colors
and the only rags they know are on their backs.

Toots wails and the crowd stays.
"When I was real young," he says,
"I used ta listen ta Papa Joe and Bix and Satch."
"Man, could those boys blow!"
"I try ta play like them, don't ya know?"

Kurt Knight
And unto them was born a son.

It came to pass that after his first month of life, the child's mother resumed work, for they were accustomed to the assets of two salaries. They were able to provide excellence among themselves and would not settle for less for the welfare of their child.

An organization existed which offered the service of a mechanical mother, and behold, they hired such a novelty, the best offered by the organization, to watch over the babe. It fed him and diapered him and cradled him to sleep...fed him and diapered him and cradled him to sleep. It did not bother the child once asleep.

As the months passed, the parents advanced in their positions and discovered that they arrived home later in the evening. Upon their arrival home, they found the child fast asleep. They dared not disturb him for an infant's sleep is necessary.

It so happened that along with the later evenings, the mother found less time to do the household chores. Their advanced positions brought them greater wealth and so, for a nominal charge, the organization reprogrammed the mechanical mother to assume the household chores in addition to caring for the babe.

The home was in order, the clothes clean, the meals prepared, and the babe taken care of.

As the babe grew during the first crucial year of his life he was washed, fed, and put to sleep. He was unable to initiate communication, grasp objects, and of utmost importance, he was unable to distinguish between trust and mistrust. The first year.
It came to pass that as the child grew, he slept less and less. Knowing not what to do, the mechanical mother fed him, diapered him, and when he wasn’t asleep, put him before the telecommunications system; a system once read about in the twentieth century.

It was a distinct system. A system of video disks and video cassettes, satellites and cables, mail and banking and telephone, all governed from a portable brown plastic control center. Before the child was the universe, eight feet wide.

As he sat before the telecommunications screen observing the colorful animated characters, the child’s attention was suddenly drawn to the brown plastic control center. It lay on the ground some distance before him. The sleek shape, the multitude of colored buttons, and the piercing little light intrigued him. He desired it.

The child discovered that by stretching his arms, the control center seemed closer. The child stretched and stretched, exerting so much energy that he fell before himself, face down on the ground. He gazed at the control center and stretched once again. As he stretched, his legs bent in toward his body and his feet pressed against the ground. Suddenly his body was thrust forward. This technique moved him closer and closer to the control center. He repeated his motions instinctively: stretch, bend legs in, press feet down, push. He continued this painstaking task until he arrived at the control center. He had learned to crawl.

Lying before the control center, the child was excited by its appearance. His tiny hand fell upon a green button. The cartoon character was suddenly transformed into a gruesome creature. The child gazed at the new image.

He moved and his hand hit another button. The ugly creature was transformed into a beautiful woman. The child was perplexed.

He moved once more and his hand hit yet another button. The beautiful woman became a fish. This electronic metamorphosis continued for quite some time. Every time the child’s hand hit one of the many buttons, the image on the screen changed: print to photograph to supermarket aisle to catalogue countless other components of humanity. The mechanical mother continued to do the housework.

The child came to understand that by pressing one of the buttons, he himself could alter the images on the screen. Thus, by doing so, the child made himself vulnerable to sports, cooking, mathematics, science, magic, laundry problems, policemen, bank statements, catalogue shopping, and countless other components of humanity. The mechanical mother continued to do the housework.

The child learned the concept of “reading.” A red button with the figure 2 upon it meant a lady who cooked. A blue button with the figure 5 upon it meant sports games. A green button with the figure 8–4 upon it meant rows and columns of numbers. As yet he did not understand that these rows and columns of numbers translated into his parents’ bank statements. Every button presented a new and exciting world. The second year.

One day, the child was viewing a game show. The screen seemed filled with flashing lights and smiles, people jumping, music, bells, buzzers.

The mechanical mother wheeled herself before the child and set his lunch before him. He had learned to eat solid foods from viewing the telecommunications system.

Suddenly, the child realized that his father was on the screen. The father was calling from his office just to bid his son a “hello.” The son had learned that the big brown button on the control center meant “no more,” and finding the man uninteresting, proceeded to push it. The father, thinking it cute, decided not to intervene.

One morning, the child was viewing a game show and, upon looking for the control center in its usual area, the child found it to be missing. He was lost and bewildered. From where he sat, he frantically searched the room for the control center. He looked to his left, to his right, above him...the control center was nowhere. He panicked. He had become attached to the control center.

In haste he spotted the cable which connected the control center to the screen. His eyes followed it and noticed that the cable disappeared upon a tall metal table. Unconsciously he crawled quickly toward the table. As he sat by the leg of the table, he tried to reach for the control center, this time stretching his arms up.

Seeing that his technique proved unsuccessful for the task, he sat there frustrated. He longed to possess the control center. Out of desperation, the boy grasped the upper portion of the table’s leg and pulled himself up. He had learned to stand. Balancing himself with one hand on the edge of the table, he grabbed for the control center with the other hand. He felt safe.

He saw something he had never seen before — the top of the metal table. Carefully arranged on it was a metal lamp of contemporary design, and in the far corner, opposite him, was a crystal unicorn. The unicorn caught the child’s eye. The child unconsciously loosened his grip of the control center and reached for the crystal figure. It was too far away.

By instinct, the child placed one foot before him while holding onto the edge of the table. His other foot naturally followed. He had learned to walk. The child reached the crystal unicorn and gazed at it in amazement; how detailed it was. The swirl of the horn. The gentle curve of its body. The defined muscles in its legs. It seemed out of place in his world.

He gently touched the crystal unicorn. It felt smooth and cold. Upon correlating that the unicorn’s horn resembled one of the buttons on the control center, the child pressed it and anxiously waited for something to appear on the screen. Nothing. He pressed it again; nothing happened. Seeing that it proved useless to him, he grew tired of the crystal unicorn. It did not perform for him.

He walked back to the control center and embraced it with his free hand. In the kitchen the mechanical mother ironed the laundry. The third year.
One day, as the mechanical mother tended the garden, the child observed a program of human behavior. He watched a strange man shower; his clothes lay on the bathroom floor. A woman crept into the bathroom and slowly removed the man's brown wallet from his pant's pocket. From behind the shower curtain, the man saw the woman stealing his wallet and shouted to her. She dropped the pants and ran with the wallet. The man jumped out from the shower stall, naked, and ran after the woman.

He seized her and demanded his wallet back. She snickered and refused. Struggling to break from his grip, the woman kicked the man between his legs. As he bent forward in pain, she bit his shoulders.

The woman ran into the kitchen, still holding on to the wallet. Once again the man chased her, and upon catching the woman, began slapping her. She dropped the wallet as she screamed and fought back.

On one of the walls in the kitchen hung a set of knives, descending in size. The man flung the woman against this wall, causing the knives to crash to the floor. The man approached the woman and, in anger, knocked her to the floor.

The child observed in awe as one of the knives pierced the woman's chest. The mechanical mother finished the garden chores, entered the house, and proceeded to prepare the child's lunch. The fourth year.

One afternoon, during the fifth year of the child's life, his mother returned home dressed in black. She had just come from her husband's funeral. She noticed her son watching colorful, comic animations on the telecommunications screen.

Thinking it disrespectful that he watch such humor on the day of his father's burial, she gingerly walked toward her son and took the brown control center away from him. The child let out a shriek.

As she placed the brown control center on the metal table, next to the unicorn, the child stood, ran toward his mother and seized her legs. Demanding that he release her, his mother pulled him away. He kicked her shin.

Surprised and annoyed by her son's behavior, she slapped him across his face, realizing afterwards what she had done. The child grabbed his mother's leg and bit it, causing it to bleed. As the woman wailed in pain, she snatched her son's hair and flung him to the ground. He stormed into the kitchen where the mechanical mother sliced vegetables for the evening meal. The child's mother lay on the couch and wept.

That night, as the child sat on the floor and watched more human behavior on the telecommunications system, he held the brown control center tightly in his lap. The mechanical mother vacuumed the room, accidently bumping into the arm which dangled from the couch. The fifth year.

Cosmo Formichelli

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