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This magazine is made possible by funds provided by the Student Association of the State University of New York, College at Oswego.

GREAT LAKE REVIEW
Spring 1982
Volume XIV

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The Face

Each of us is pursued by a person, a face, visible sometimes,

the daughter of memory. She waits, this spectre, to surprise us in

the coffee shop, the white curved arm of the waitress, the seamless face of

the girl sleeping in the airport, the angled shoulders of the girl with

the umbrella waiting for the light to change. We may turn to find her

anywhere, the face with the knowing grin, stalking always, anchoring

our present with the shadow which lies behind us.

Robert O'Connor

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Prufrock

And since we noticed that his eyes focused on nothing, and his voice had that peculiar tone, one that implies he's seen the worst already, and because it wasn't easy listening — even so, we couldn't help but listen and begin to see the nothing that he saw although we knew it really wasn't anything.

But that we even bothered first to hear and try to understand that! Our fear became ambivalence, and we hung our heads, downcast our eyes, and sang a weary song that had no words or notes, but simply was, mechanically, remote.

Meridian

Running west of Paris, northeast of Sacramento; skipping south at Sherbrooke and north at Tallahassee; stretching between Newark and Nashville, climbing north of Charlotte, falling south at Cleveland; extending from Boston to Oklahoma City, east of Duluth and Omaha, slipping west of Richmond and passing from Wheeling to Clarksburg, Pike Fork to Center Point; between the playground and the waiting buses Raymona's running razzmatazz among the dogwood trees.

Clare Dean
The Mental Patient

There are rows of doors in the white corridor, all of the same color.
At the end of this hall is a window with a view where the wind blew through rows of trees all of them pines and the birds called as they flew at their will beyond the bars.

In the white corridor all is still then the cries of the ill come into the hall, where she stood by the window watching the birds cry from their asylum in rows of trees wishing she could set them free from the world inside the bars.

Anne Nutting

Night Moment

While I am resting, Moonlight forms grey shapes around The walls of my room: Winds move the moon inside clouds — In the darkness, darkness moves.

Roads

I drive alone — no off-white lamps light my lane. Only the double yellow lines, They bend and straighten and Slowly bend again. Clouds cover the sky, Hiding moon and stars. Soon it will rain. Tires humm under me as The dashboard’s glow throws Shadows against the windows. On the radio, a flute plays. The double yellow lines run endless Behind me as Grey blends to black.

J. P. Felitti
Freezer Burnt
or
A Frozen Asset

George Martin realized how much he hated his wife when she turned on the
clothes dryer with his pet chihuahua in it. The dog had a strange habit of
climbing into the machine. On this occasion, it happened to fall asleep in the
dryer just before Mrs. Martin threw a batch of clothes in it and slammed the
door. After its hour trip, George's pet resembled a pair of battered panty hose.
That was ten years ago and George still hated her.

The only reason George lived with his wife at the time was out of financial
necessity. He and his wife were senior citizens and had received social security
checks each month. Since George handled financial matters, his wife would
give her check to George.

The way George saw it, his wife owed him something for having to put up
with her as many years as he did. For this reason, he would make sure the
checks would benefit his own welfare. Blanch never saw her check. On the first
day of every month, George would leave the house in high spirits and tell his
wife he was going into town to the post office where he would pick up the
checks, go to the bank and cash them, and then pay some bills and buy some
groceries.

But this is not what George did. As soon as he picked up the checks, he
would go to Joe's Bar and Grill where he'd cash the checks and buy drinks for
himself and others. Then he would go home with a loaf of bread. The weeks
that followed, Blanch would notice her husband taking long walks. This is
when he would use up the remaining money by eating at fancy restaurants. He
didn't feel the least bit guilty knowing that as he was living high on the hog,
his wife was home eating boiled hot dogs and drinking Kool-aid.

Blanch died one day while peeling potatoes. George was disappointed. He
found her body leaning over in the kitchen sink. He examined the scene. There
was no apparent cause of death. As he viewed the six unpeeled potatoes,
George began to worry. He wondered how he could continue his fun with just
one check coming to him. He was all set to call the authorities to get rid of the
body when George had a brilliant idea. He asked himself why anyone had to
know about her death. He decided he would keep it a secret. The social security
department didn't ask many questions and it would take them a while to
discover that his wife was missing, if ever. Even if they did start to ask
questions, he could say she was taking a vacation or something.

The neighbors would be no problem. Blanch hardly ever had gotten out and
they would never miss her. Just in case, he decided to put her body in the
freezer. That way, if anyone began asking questions as to her whereabouts, he could rush her from the freezer, put her in bed, say she was sleeping and show her to the person questioning her existence.

George pulled his wife’s body from the sink and dragged it downstairs to the basement where the chest freezer was. It fit nicely.

Two weeks passed and things went smoothly. His wife got no phone calls or visitors. But George missed the pleasure of bossing his wife around. He didn’t have the feeling of power over someone anymore. For this reason, George answered an ad in the paper and obtained a collie as a pet. Without Blanch around he knew it couldn’t get locked in the dryer if it acquired the same habit of his late chihuahua. He felt his power return to him as he continually yelled at the dog, telling it that it was a lazy creature and its intelligence resembled a small paper clip.

On the first of every month, George made his way to the post office, anxious for the checks. He would peek into his box and feel relieved to see two envelopes. Then he would go to Joe’s Bar and Grill and celebrate with the checks. He’d stagger home at two a.m. where his dog usually met him at the door. George would spit in its face and feel good.

On a Sunday morning, George noticed a neighbor staring out of their window at his house. Paranoia gripped him. He thought the neighbors had begun asking questions about his wife. Terror struck as he envisioned neighbors visiting. He thought of a plan to calm suspicion.

He went down to the basement and opened the freezer. His wife’s body was well preserved, but not frozen solid. He dragged her out and pulled her upstairs. He then placed a chair in front of his living-room window facing the gaping neighbor and sat his wife’s body upon it. He propped her up with a board on back of the chair. He then tied a string around her hand and guided the string through a hook on the ceiling. He opened the curtain and yanked at the string causing his wife’s hand to move up and down. Anyone glancing a chance to taste some real food. My wonderful husband went out to dinner and bought some delicious steak and eggs.

George decided he would do this once every week. After five minutes, he snatched his wife from the window and placed her back into the freezer.

A few weeks later, George was surprised to find a letter in his mailbox addressed to his wife. He wondered who could have enough reason to write her. He opened the letter up and a check for fifty dollars greeted him. He read the enclosed letter:

Dear Blanch:

Did you receive my letter? I enjoyed yours and it just reaffirmed my love for you. I know it’s silly, me falling in love with you through your letters, but I sense a certain chemistry between us that can’t be denied.

George checked the return address. Homer was from Australia. “Ridiculous,” George said. “A pen-pal falling in love with my wife?”

George took the check to Joe’s Bar and Grill where Joe was more than happy to cash it for Blanch.

A few weeks later, George ran into financial difficulties. He had all the money needed to drink and eat but his bills began piling up. He did manage to pay the electric bill which was a month over due. However, the only reason he did that was to keep the freezer going. He suddenly thought of a brilliant way where he could get more money.

He found some of his wife’s old hand writing. He sat down with a bottle of bourbon and copied it closely. Once he mastered it, he wrote a letter to Homer from Blanch:

Dearest Homer:

Thank you for the fifty dollars. It was a life saver. It gave us a chance to taste some real food. My wonderful husband went out and bought some delicious steak and eggs. If it wasn’t for the fifty dollars, we would’ve had to hit the soup lines again.

Even the garbage man feels sorry for us. Instead of taking our garbage, (as if we had any) he leaves a bag once in a while.

The steak and eggs are just about gone. But don’t worry, George may get a paper-route soon. That should give us ten dollars a week.

I’m in a difficult position. I love you and George. But there’s no reason why I can’t have you both.

Write back soon you gorgeous hunk, Blanch.

Four weeks later, George received a hundred dollars in the mail. He bought lobster, one small can of dog food, paid a bill, and got drunk.

A month later, a knock on his door one sunny afternoon disturbed George as he was reading a newspaper. The sound of the door being hit gave life to the entire house. It was the first time a visitor had arrived since the passing of his
wife to the freezer. The paper fell out of George’s hand as he heard it. The knock was a call of danger. He ran down to the basement and locked the door behind him. The knock sounded twice more and stopped. George spent a long fifteen minutes in the basement with his wife.

That night, George had a nightmare. He dreamt that a mad group of undertakers were outside his house throwing potatoes at his door. They knocked the door down, marched into his house and went down to the basement where they fetched his wife. One of the undertakers tied George to a tree and left him there.

The next morning, George decided to slow his life down. He figured he was living too fast. He thought he had already lived life to its fullest so there was no reason why he shouldn’t enjoy life in his declining years. He thought he now had everything he could ask for: a nice home, comfortable surroundings, and an understanding wife.

A few weeks later when George picked up the checks, he made no trip to Joe’s Bar and Grill. Instead he paid his bills, went home and relaxed.

The next morning, George heard another knock on his door. Feeling as though he had nothing to hide, he went to answer it.

A smartly dressed man in his mid-thirties was at the door. “I confess,” he said in an Australian accent, “I love your wife.”

George immediately knew who the man was, but he couldn’t let it be known.

“Who are you?” he asked.

The foreigner related how Blanch had answered an ad in a magazine for an Australian pen-pal. “It was love at first letter,” he explained.

George was reasonable with Homer. He said he knew how much he must have loved his wife to travel so far, and said he deserved the opportunity to see her.

“Unfortunately,” he claimed, “my wife is very sick.”

The man lost his composure. “I must see her,” he demanded.

George paused. “Come back later,” he said. “I’ll tell her you came. Then she’ll be prepared.”

This seemed to satisfy the Australian. “I’ll be back tonight at nine,” he said.

George shut the door and went back inside. His spree was discovered. All he now had to do was to obtain his wife from the deep freeze, put her body in bed and let her thaw out.

As he worked at the task of getting his wife, George whistled. He looked back on the previous six months and was amused. As he dragged her up the basement stairs, he told his wife, “I knew you’d be good for something. I got six checks out of you and lived like a king.”

When he got upstairs, George placed her in bed and turned on the electric blanket. He finally conceded defeat. It was seven-thirty. She only had an hour and a half to unthaw.

Chris Brock

Insanity, Unlimited.

Wallace stubbed his toe on the (dog),
And cursing, kicked the (cat),
Who scratched Irene, his (wife),
Who screeching, yelled for the (grand-mother),
Who was still asleep, and woke the (baby),
Who of course began to cry for his (mother),
Thus worrying the nosy (neighbor),
Agnes, who yelled to the (postman),
Who, looking up, stepped on the (town-drunk),
Who was sleeping on the curb with a (prostitute).

This is a Substitutive Schematic prosody; the last words of each line are interchangeable throughout the poem.

Chris Williams

Chris Brock
Clinton Street Incident

I saw a woman on Clinton Street
shrieking at a crying child
who dragged its feet and struggled
and screamed and would not listen —
And so she left it
knelt down on the city sidewalk
and went on a ways . . .

(I was watching from the temple rooftop,
through the leafless branches
of an old dead oak)

The child, awkward, rises
and walks the long way, fawnlike
with cowering slowness and glassy eyes,
and hesitant stare at the temple steps
where she sits waiting, in a Woolworth’s dress
beside a paper bag of groceries.

She gets up, they walk
quiet for a few slow steps
(The child’s boot buckle loose
    and skittering across the concrete)
Until she speaks with loud, hard voice;
and again the child is lagging.

Russell Fox

Chant of Black Elk

This is the peace pipe we are passing
in the Flaming Rainbow Tepee. We sit
and smoke and think to save ourselves
from the greedy Wasichus of the east.
The sacred hoop must not be broken.

This is the peace pipe we are passing.
The truth will come from every puff.
We will hear voices in the clouds.
We will see stories in the stones.
We will touch lightning in the sky.

Scott Knap
Gottfried Goes to Harlem

Skating on his razor on the skating rink,
Gottfried suddenly turns, skating to the brink,
Skating his way up to the bar,
Orders a Havana cigar.
Skating and shaving is not much fun at all.
Gottfried skates his way outside to have a ball.
Oops! Slashes a dog diddling,
Pirouettes for chums in the pub.
5th and 30th, dices down the subway stairs,
Flies past the turnstiles, care not for wicked glares,
"Barrel-jumping!" he says to bait
Folks. "Bearded man on razor skates."
They shout, "why don’t you shave your face, your chin. Etch
Lines into your wrists." "But my legs will not stretch."
He says, "and my feet won’t behave."
Gottfried gets off. Unfriendly cave.
Slipping and sliding, slithering and gliding
To 125th Street. Gottfried wings
His way from the bar to Harlem.
Shaving and slaving to get home.
He sees some fellows, wants friends—cuts up his friends.
He skates his way up just to do his Schick and
Oh-oh, they want to cut HIM up!
Gottfried gives them his wallet, bup-
Bup, his tie, but-but, his gold shaving apron,
Yuck-yuck, his burial site at Arlington;
But when they ask for his Schick skates,
He turns, not a second too late.
Clinking and clanking, jumping and jittery,
With fright for this fight, no more chicanery,
No blathering or lathering.
Gottfried gets his razors shaving
That sidewalk. Street lights and dudes after Gottfried.
He skates and flies and skates and flies. Nobody
Will leave poor Gottfried just to be.
All he wants is just to be he.
He skates over dreams and beams and ghetto seams.
Gets home. There’s a knock on his door and it seems
They’ve followed Gottfried’s razor skates.
They’re on his trail. He knows. He waits.

Coffee Break at the Boulevard Mall

Alone and untethered for a time
by a few poems that I am reading in a book,
I am carried out past crowds of people
pushing through stores,
carting bags, boxes and packages home
to their suburban lives.
But the coffee, resting round in its cup,
is a muddy pool that’s been pelted
with spring rains, and is, for a moment, enough
to lift me beyond this scheme of things,
past lemon colored table tops
and the plastic spoons and easy treats
whisked fresh from the freezer and the grill.
The static voice of the counter girl
repeats the staggering orders of burgers,
fries and watered down soft-drinks,
and even I, who conjures a mountain stream
from a cold cup of coffee,
know this transcendence is only for a time
and less permanent than the endless supplies
of styrofoam cups and waxed glasses.
It is also less permanent than the pages
of the book I read with some desperate rush
to remember every line.
The references to woods and streams,
to stricken skies that turn
on the time-table of the universe,
will be turning still when my metaphor
slackens to dust, and much later still
when the pages crack and curl and yellow;
though not as deep as the hue of the tables,
nor as bright as the scooped seats
that will hold their color
long after I, and the metaphor, and the poems
of woods, fields, mountains and streams
have scattered to dust and drifted
above the high plastic palaces of the earth.

Jonathan Hazelton

Robert O'Connor
Eternal Abandon

Water moves in steady yet endless rhythms,
Rising, falling — following ordered cycles,
Leaving stains on fishermen’s idle vessels,
Resting on shorelines.

Seasons follow similar, timeless rhythms.
Winter freezes; rivers and streams turn glass-like,
Isolating fishermen’s idle vessels,
Frozen in shorelines.

Kurt Knight

Spring Morning

The boy was born at dawn in what
Mother calls the lamb of March.
I was left at home to watch the
Sunrise alone, to watch the driveway
Lined with crocus poking through the
Melting snow.

Debbie Sterrett

Department Store Dreams

White dreams
Of hospital white and green,
Of cold instruments and anesthesia,
Where cold hands try to hold hers.

Department store dreams
Of newborn pink and blue dreams come true,
Of fuzzy slippers and strollers,
Where every aisle contains part of the dream.

Ceiling dreams
Of ceiling tiles, sixteen squares to a panel,
That invite her eyes to distraction
From the sterile white that is real.

Department store dreams
Where every aisle is part of the dream,
Where nightmares die,
Where dolls cry,
Toys taken from a careless child.

Jean P. Taylor
Knudson

It was a cold and gray afternoon in autumn when he first saw Knudson following them home. “Who is that?” he asked Marcia. “Oh, that’s Knudson,” she said. She seemed unconcerned.

Knudson followed them from the train station, up Oak Street, across Silver Place, and settled behind a Douglas fir on James Ave. The fir stood in a lot across the street from their house. It was tall and towered over many of the houses in the neighborhood. Stanley opened the door for Marcia and they stepped inside their house. From the picture window that faced the street they saw Knudson climb the fir tree. He was clumsy and sometimes lost more than he gained, but finally he made it to the third level of branches. Knudson watched their house from the tree.

“Who is Knudson?” Stanley asked.

Marcia walked to the bar and poured herself a drink. “I knew Knudson in college,” she said. “We were friends.”

Stanley felt a pain in his stomach. “Were you lovers?” he asked.

“No,” she said, “certainly not. I didn’t even like Knudson much.”

“What’s his first name?” Stanley asked.

“I don’t remember,” she said. She tinkered with the ice in her drink. “Everyone always called him Knudson.”

“Great,” Stanley said, “just great. Why doesn’t he come in like your other college friends? Why does he follow us home and hide in a fir tree? Was Knudson crazy?”

Marcia turned on the television. There was snow over the screen and when she fixed the antennae it got worse.

“I’m going to call the police,” Stanley said. “We can’t have crazy men watching us from across the road.”

“I think you’re overreacting,” she said. “Fix yourself a drink and relax. In a little while he’ll probably go away.”

“We don’t know that,” Stanley said. “Normal people don’t watch your house from across the street. Is he ashamed of something? Is that why he won’t come down from the tree?”

“I don’t remember Knudson being crazy,” she said. “He didn’t do things like this in college.”

Marcia went into the kitchen while Stanley called the police. They promised to come right away. Stanley thought of making a drink, but wanted a clear head, so he decided against it. He went back to the picture window and stared back hard at Knudson. Then he thought that Knudson might have a gun so he stood away from the window. He wished his house didn’t have so many windows. He walked into the kitchen. “How long did you know Knudson was following us?” he asked.

“Since the train. I saw him there.” Marcia was at the table and had refilled her drink with gin.

Then Stanley remembered. He remembered a long face hiding behind a newspaper that had theatrically been propped up. He remembered Knudson hanging in the doorway of the train car. They had excused themselves to him as they exited. On Oak Street he had concealed himself behind a mailbox and on Silver had crouched behind a parked car. Knudson was crazy, he concluded. Crazy people, he thought, were to be avoided. Stanley felt badly for him.

He remembered where he had seen the long face of Knudson. He left Marcia at the table and hurried upstairs to their bedroom. He had begun searching through Marcia’s bureau drawers when he caught sight of himself in the mirror. His eyes were deep in their sockets and were heavily shot through with veins. Stanley thought he looked unwell. He pulled his hair back from his forehead and noticed an uncharacteristic blush over his eyes. He continued searching. The album was in the bottom drawer and when he stood up he felt a stab of pain in his back. From downstairs he heard the doorbell ring.

“Answer it,” he shouted. It rang again. He worried that Marcia might not have heard. Stanley ran downstairs, the album in hand, and opened the door for the policeman. The badge flashed in Stanley’s face, and for a moment he was blinded. The policeman looked tall in his blue suit and the gun seemed to have grown on his hip like a dark boil.

“Officer Calvin,” the policeman said. “I understand you have a prowler.”

“Not a prowler, Officer,” Stanley said, “it’s Knudson.”

“When was he here?” Calvin asked.

“He’s here right now. He’s up in that fir tree across the way and he’s watching us.” Stanley pointed at Knudson. Knudson waved.

“I have a picture of him right here,” Stanley said. He flipped through the pages of the album.

“I can see him fine,” said Calvin. “He’s the only one in the tree.”


“Has he trespassed on your property?” Officer Calvin asked.

“No, he followed us home from the train station. He hid behind a mailbox.”

“Has he assaulted you or your wife?”

“No. He just went in that fir tree and he’s been watching us ever since. What are you going to do?”

“I’m afraid nothing,” Officer Calvin said. “The only thing I could get him
for is trespassing and that complaint would have to be made by the people who own the lot or their authorized agents.’ He paused and sighed. ‘I could send a patrol car around every hour or so.’

Stanley felt defeated, and nodded wearily. He closed the door and went to the kitchen. Marcia had started dinner.

‘What do you know about Knudson?’ he asked. She was pushing a slab of butter around the frying pan. ‘Almost nothing, dear,’ she said. ‘You have the album. That’s about all.’

Stanley opened the album to Knudson’s photograph. In the picture he had a crew cut and was wearing red gym shorts. He was sitting between the pommels of a gymnastics horse. Next to Knudson was a picture of Marcia in college. She was dressed in her artist’s smock and was holding a large lump of clay in the air. Her hair was pulled back and her smile was tight, making her look severe.

Her hair was pulled back and her smile was tight, making her look severe. ‘Really, I don’t.’

‘I think for awhile he was,’ Marcia said, ‘but I don’t remember him being very good.’ She had gotten out hamburger meat and was shaping patties.

He turned over the back of the picture. There was nothing on it except a date — 1969, the year she graduated. It was written in blocky handwriting, not hers.

She turned to him, holding the spatula tightly in her hand. ‘Knudson asked me to marry him once.’

‘Why didn’t you tell me that before?’

‘I didn’t think it was important. After all, I refused him. Besides, I never wanted to talk about Knudson.’

‘It seems we have to,’ he said. ‘You and Knudson were lovers, weren’t you? You can tell me, Marcia. It happened a long time ago. I don’t mind. Really, I don’t.’

Marcia turned back to the stove. She bent her head and her hair spilled forward like a blonde veil. ‘Knudson and I weren’t lovers,’ she said. ‘But Knudson is attached to me. It’s not even explainable — or maybe it is and I just can’t talk about it.’

‘In the five years we’ve been married we’ve always been honest with each other,’ Stanley said. ‘There hasn’t been a day I’ve been dishonest with you. I’ve told you things I’ve never told anyone. Our past can’t follow us like this. For is trespassing and that complaint would have to be made by the people who own the lot or their authorized agents.’ He paused and sighed. ‘I could send a patrol car around every hour or so.’

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‘I’m going to talk to Knudson,’ he said. He got up, put on his jacket, and went outside. At the end of his property he saw a spade dug into the dirt. He picked it up and carried it across the street. Knudson watched him closely.

‘Knudson!’ he shouted. ‘Knudson, I want you to tell me something. I want you to tell me something. I don’t want you to tell me something.’

Knudson giggled. From below Stanley could see Knudson’s face. His hair was long and unruly, and he had a belly that sagged over the waist of his pants. Knudson didn’t have a jacket on, but he didn’t seem cold. His hands were large and seemed to wrap themselves around the tree limb like vines.

‘Knudson! I’m going to find out. Why did Marcia try to commit suicide?’

Knudson laughed again and Stanley swung the spade into the trunk of the fir. Knudson moved up a few branches and Stanley felt a rain of needles on his face. It had started drizzling outside, but under the fir, amidst all the brown needles on the ground, it was still dry. He swung the spade into the side of the fir again. It stuck this time and he used all his energy prying it loose. He felt weak and walked back across the street into his house. He heard Knudson screech like an owl and wondered why. When he got inside he leaned the spade against the closet. The house had a layer of smoke and when he went into the kitchen he saw Marcia had burnt two hamburger patties.

‘Did you hurt him?’ she asked.

Stanley sat down at the table and stared at his hands. They looked dirty and small. ‘Knudson didn’t say anything,’ he said. ‘How did Knudson save you? Did he grab you before you jumped?’

‘He just talked to me,’ she said. ‘That’s all he did was talk to me.’

‘What did he say?’ Stanley asked.

‘He asked me to marry him. Then I came down.’

‘But you didn’t marry him.’

‘That’s right. I didn’t.’

‘So why didn’t you jump?’

‘I should’ve. I should’ve jumped. Knudson was wrong.’ Marcia chewed her food mechanically.

‘Who IS Knudson?’ Stanley shouted. His scream echoed back in his ears. He stood up, uncertain, then sat down again in his chair. Marcia began crying.

Stanley considered. ‘We’ll go out and visit Knudson together. We can invite him in for a drink or a cup of tea.’

‘Knudson won’t come in,’ she said.

‘Oh, you know so much about Knudson?’ he asked. ‘If you know so much about Knudson then why is he sitting in that tree getting cold? Listen, if you
and Knudson ever cared for each other that’s in the past. It’s us now. Us. We’re together.” Stanley reached over and pulled Marcia’s hands into his own. They were wet from her tears and chilled him. “I don’t care if you never told me those things. I don’t even care if you and Knudson were lovers…”

“Once,” she said. She had stopped sobbing. “Once we were lovers. But that was all. Once was all.”

“I don’t care,” said Stanley. “Knudson’s a man who follows people home and sits in trees watching them from across the street. This is us.” He renewed his hold on her hand. “This is us, and we’re here in the middle of a warm kitchen and Knudson’s outside and can never hurt us.”

“We’ll go outside and speak to Knudson,” Marcia said.

“That seems best,” he said.

“I want to speak to him first,” Marcia said. “I won’t go outside unless I can speak to him alone first. Then we can talk to him together.”

Stanley was reluctant, but he agreed. He walked to the door with her.

“You stay inside,” she said. She grabbed him by the arms. “First tell me you love me,” she said. “Tell me.”

“I do,” Stanley said. He felt frightened and small as if the confrontation with Knudson had reduced him in stature. Marcia had stopped directly under the fir tree and was looking up at Knudson. Stanley watched her for a few minutes. She discovered the spade marks in the tree trunk and put her fingers and hand in them. They were sticky, oozing sap, and she cleaned her hand against her thigh. Stanley had his hands against the window and was fogging it with his breath. He thought of the losses in his life, the missed opportunities, the disappointing letters in the mail, the one-sided phone conversations. Somehow Marcia’s losses had been greater than his, and that lent her an aspect of character he neither knew nor possessed. He thought that Knudson, by his intrusion, had brought this to a head, and that in a way he could not define he was being robbed by this elusive figure. Marcia had maintained this corner of her life against him for a reason, he thought, and the reason was a failing of his own.

Marcia was holding onto the tree and seemed to be speaking urgently. He felt the need to go outside and confront Knudson, to understand. Perhaps Knudson was the one who had raped her? She had practically admitted this. He opened the door and raced across the street to where Marcia stood under the tree. Stanley kept an eye out for Knudson but he was nowhere to be seen. They went upstairs to the bathroom where Marcia took off her clothes, sponged the blood off him, and drew him a bath.

She undressed and got in the tub with him. From outside there were noises, and in the wind, a tree limb cracked. Marcia reached up and switched off the light. The night had fallen and they bathed together in darkness.
Tonight, unable to sleep, he stands
In the doorway of the back shed and listens
To the clanging of the metal roof, over
And over again, as the wind lifts it up
Then lets it down. And he can see in the light
Of the quarter moon that the wind comes out
Of the south southeast. He knows this a strange
Direction in February. That it is like a voice,
Like her voice, the one that came so unexpectedly
On a cold morning in January. For it was then
When her thoughts were somewhere between love
And death, that her first direct and measured
Words came. And he has tried to understand
That she did not intend to disturb, yet
She has disturbed. He shudders for a moment
As the wind picks up, then remembers he once
Stood on a hill, the January wind so cold and full
Of force, that it broke the gray clouds and the day
Became bright and clear. And across the valley
Among the forest hill, the heart-shaped field lay
Glistening in white. It was pure, a vision of
Solitude, inspirational, as the voice and words
He had long searched for entered the silence
Of his twenty-seven years. And now he turns back
Into the old farm house, where the woman and her years
Of thoughts are hours asleep, where there is
No wind.

Kathy Moriarty
The Abduction of Persephone

1.

Narcissus, many-headed, made her ache,
bend, smear her senses in the miracle
of earth and light, so when dark broke she slipped
like rain into the clutch of root — the grip
tightening, his arm circling her waist
closing locked. Betrayed, a wild cry escapes
the belly’s pit, the lunging desperate claw
for ledges. a shrill scratch silence gnaws
is swallowed as they fall. And soon she’s his.
He remembers there’s no plan: to progress
from here is difficult. Narcissus won
her with a fragrant grace: his work is done.

She is not breathless when they reach his den.
Neither does she care to see his kingdom.

The Abduction of Persephone

3.

She dreams again she sees her mother rise
from sleep — the full-curved cloudsoft nakedness
saunter from shaded hall to courtyard sun,
the long hair coaxing light to bathe her form
dwindling as she turns: bent crone, her voice
cracking, dry. Its breathless chill destroys
the wall of crawling vine. And then it burns
the air so thick and black she can’t discern
the figure coiled emitting rings of smoke.
She calls and calls. She rubs her eyes and chokes.
There’s only darkness where her mother’s lost.
She slaps the air and wakes up to her host
who stands above her. His eyes are coals
her dream’s ignited. Dreams are what he owns.

Suzanne Shane
Closing Statements

The house will be empty by tomorrow afternoon. The stove, icebox, and sump pump stay, as agreed. There may be a shovel or two in the shed, a few jars in the fruit-cellar. The flag in the hall closet was here when we moved in; there aren’t enough stars on it now.

We don’t know who the old woman in the gold frame in the attic is. The tax receipts belonged to a dentist who lived here in the twenties. The wall switch for the basement light is pesky; give it a good flick on the way downstairs.

And be sure to remove the key before you raise the garage door; we’ve snapped a pair of them that way. There’s an extra on the nail up over the ledge.

You have to double-lock the front door; otherwise, a good shoulder will pop her open. The combination storm windows are down cellar behind the oil tank. We always run some soap along the edges before installing them, but that’s up to you and your wife.

The bread man stops by on Wednesday. Mail comes to the side door at noon. Garbage pick-up is municipal and on Thursdays. The meter men get their readings outside.

Upstairs, the sink leaks if you fill it above the drain holes. The tub’s slow to empty, but will in time. The forced-air heat is good but dry; that’s why we have those pans of water on the registers. You could use gutters all around outside, and shades for the back bedrooms.

There’s a can of orange juice in the freezer and plenty of cleaning supplies in the top cupboard on the right. My son has the phone number of the place he has found for me. Please call if I can help.

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Mr. Masterson teaches at Rockland C.C. and is a widely published poet. He read his poems during Oswego’s Spring 1982 Writing Arts Festival.
Editorial Statement

I would like to express my gratitude to Writer's Guild members Kurt Knight and Jon Hazelton for their help with this issue, and to our advisor Dr. Penn for his editorial advice.

Due to problems in staffing earlier this semester, the magazine's existence next year is threatened; we took over with only three weeks to deadline, but we feel that this, what might be the last issue of The Great Lake Review, is something to be proud of.

Melora Turco, Editor-In-Chief