"The Moon is more useful than the Sun, since it shines during the night when light is needed; while the Sun is of little use during the daytime, when there is light anyway."
-Kozma Prutkov
Great Lake Review

Spring 1986

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Tim Metallo

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Paul Benson

EDITORS
Glenn Sioves
Stephen Maurillo
Briana Clements
Kristin Avery
Geri Pace
Linda VanNocker

TREASURER
James Jerome

FACULTY ADVISORS
Leigh Wilson
Lewis Turco

Published once a semester, The Great Lake Review seeks to promote the arts at Oswego State University by publishing the finest examples of graduate and undergraduate work in poetry, fiction, drama, nonfiction, photography, and visual art. The Great Lake Review is staffed entirely by student volunteers who, despite their diverse backgrounds, share a commitment to support the creative arts. The Great Lake Review is funded by the Student Association of Oswego State University.

* * * * * * *

Copyright 1986. All rights revert to authors and artists.
GREAT LAKE REVIEW

Spring, 1986
Volume XXII

Carolyn St. George  The Relentless Rejuvenation of Laurence Miller  5
Linda Van Nocker  Lunatic Fringe  10
Nick Lisi  Photo Untitled  11
Paul Benson  In The Corner  12
Hal Merceau  I Love America  16
Nick Lisi  Photo Untitled  17
Carol Foley  Untitled poem  18
Nancy Anderson  The Burning  19
Charlotte Arcadi  Photo Untitled  20
Renee A. Carrese  Morning, to Whom it May Concern  21
Charlotte Arcadi  Photo Untitled  22
Charlotte Arcadi  Photo Untitled  23
Nancy Anderson  "The Rose's Sense"  24
Stephen Maurillo  Photo Untitled  25
Geri Pace  Anxiety Attacks  26
Kristin E. Avery  Itinerary  28
The Relentless Rejuvenation of Laurence Miller

Laurence opens his eyes and smiles.

"Margaret?" he says softly. She isn't in bed beside him; she's not in the kitchen or anywhere for that matter.

I'd best get up," Laurence mumbles. Glancing at the calendar he notices a fine embroidered frame. Margaret made it, one year — a long time ago. "Damn, that's some frame," Laurence says, squinting his eyes.

A large grey cat with bulging eyes marches into the bedroom. The cat looks overstuffed and it wobbles as it walks.

"Let me see, Captain," Laurence says to the cat. "Today is?" He pauses for a moment, but when he realizes what day it is, he sits up straight and stiff like he's listening for a recurring noise.

"No wonder Margaret's out already." Laurence wraps his gangly arms around Captain and talks to the fluffy beast like a child. "Today's August seventeenth, nineteen hundred and thirty-five. I could never forget Margaret Ann's birthday. Captain," Lawrence states, "I can't believe that I almost forgot my wife's birthday." The cat leaps away
from Laurence. With a thump he lands on an easy chair. There he nests
himself in a pile of Laurence's workshirts.

Each year Margaret rises early — six, sometimes five a.m. She walks
nearly four miles to a town called Eden and buys something special for
the occasion. It's supposed to be a Birthday present for herself, but most
every year it's the same, some new fishing items for Laurence. Over the
years Margaret has purchased a fishing rod, a reel, and lures for herself.
One time, she even came home with some of that fancy twine — the
kind fish can't see.

Some years ago, Laurence heard that Clara Fitch mocked Margaret
for buying "Men's toys." Laurence remembers being slightly embar­
rassed but now he's proud of his wife for telling that ugly Clara Fitch
off. Margaret told Clara that some wives love their husbands more than
powder and pantyhose.

He wonders what she will bring home this year.

"Maybe," he tells Captain, who's stretching out across the length of
the chair, "maybe she'll bring me some new specks. I can't find mine
anywhere. Did you see my specks, Captain?" he asks. "You're getting so
fat; you probably ate them while me and ma weren't looking." The cat
just sits still, staring at him as if he is crazy — the way cats always do.

Laurence climbs out of bed and takes several shuffle Steps across the
room. He extends his right arm straight Out from his body and leans
with an open hand against a pale, tan colored wall. He slides his left
finger across the days on a calendar; it hangs, sort of crooked, from a
nail on that same pale wall. Squinting his eyes again he says, "Saturday,
August seventeenth, nineteen hundred and thirty-five. Then, his face
freezes for an instant; something seems wrong. The house is too quiet.
Suddenly Laurence feels lost. He panics. Where is his son, Willy?

In the past, Willy, a rather frail child with glasses, climbed into bed
beside his father. Then, around eight a.m. they got up, ate, and spent the
remaining hours just being men. He and Willy and their shadows a few
steps behind, wandered down near the pond, chewing tobacco and
fishing mostly.

Now, in sort of a sad way, Laurence remembers his little boy. Willy,
he concludes grows faster each year. Laurence knows that Willy hates
shopping. He thinks it strange, or maybe even funny, that he didn't hear
Willy being dragged off to town with Margaret this morning.

"Maybe later," he kids himself. "I'll clean my ears." Laurence takes a
deep breath and yawns as he returns to his bed; he eases his body down
on to the mattress.

He stands and quickly sits back down. Laurence is dizzy; he tries
again, this time a little slower. Using the bed post to steady himself,
Laurence struggles with an old pair of jeans. He glances at Captain
who's now sleeping in the center of his shirts. The shirts are faded or
torn; they rest lifelessly under and around the bed-side chair as well.
The shirts are just past his reach, so he decides not to wear a shirt at all.
It's a warm morning, why bother? he reasons. He stands for a moment,
then walks across the creaky wooden floor to Willy's room. A smile
purses his wrinkled lips as he opens the boy's bedroom door. The room
feels excessively dark so he makes his way to the window and, with a
burst of energy, flings the curtain back. Dust between his fingers feels
rough and dry. While grumbling about his wife's neglected duties, he
notices that everything else is in place; the furniture and the neatly made
bed appear almost ready for a guest. Laurence stops complaining about
the dust and decides that Margaret has a wonderful way with arrange­
ments. Each little toy truck is placed upon a shelf, the shelf he and Willy
built one year—a while back. Laurence sits on the wooden frame of
Willy's bed. His hand reaches over and lands on a stuffed bear. As he
purchases his wrinkled lips as he opens the boy's bedroom door. The room
feels excessively dark so he makes his way to the window and, with a
burst of energy, flings the curtain back. Dust between his fingers feels
rough and dry. While grumbling about his wife's neglected duties, he
notices that everything else is in place; the furniture and the neatly made
bed appear almost ready for a guest. Laurence stops complaining about
the dust and decides that Margaret has a wonderful way with arrange­
ments. Each little toy truck is placed upon a shelf, the shelf he and Willy
built one year—a while back. Laurence sits on the wooden frame of
Willy's bed. His hand reaches over and lands on a stuffed bear. As he
pulls the toy across the bed, some of the gritty filler spills out and leaves
a trail. When he notices he pauses in the silence, then slides the bear
back near the top of the bed.

Laurence thinks about his wife now. He wants to do something really
special, something different this year. He decides that Margaret
deserves a party. Laurence inches off the bed frame. His leg is numb
from sitting on the hard, wooden frame of the bed and he rubs the back
of this thigh while walking down the hall towards the kitchen. He sits
on a metal kitchen chair, again with a thump, then grabs at a pencil and
small piece of brownish paper. He writes:

"Margaret's Party"
1. take out garbage
2. go to store
   Sugar
   Butter
   Candles
3. invite Ed & Family.

Laurence has to look around the house for candles. They always had
candles in the past, but he can't remember where Margaret put them.
Darn her, he thinks. Sometimes she puts things away so good you never
find them.

Margaret doesn't drink but Laurence has some whiskey out back in
the shed. Ed likes a drink now and again too, he reasons. They can sneak
out back later when the girls get busy doing whatever girls do. Laurence forms a plan in his mind. He and Ed can tell their wives that they're going outdoors for "some fresh air." Laurence smacks his lips and chuckles about the divine necessity men have for fresh air. He can't wait; eating and drinking are among his favorite vices.

It's a long walk to the store in Hamburg, but Laurence doesn't want to run into Margaret; she's in Eden, the closer of the two towns. Everything will be spoiled if Margaret sees Laurence in town. So Laurence goes east to Hamburg. This way, nothing can go wrong.

Small beads of sweat make Laurence's forehead shine in the morning sun. He wishes for something to drink and comforts himself with thoughts of the party. He imagines the taste of sweet cake and the sting of cool alcohol upon his lips. The illusion creates a savory flavor in his mouth. Laurence walks on and on for what seems like forever in the now blazing sun. Laurence's hair is thin and the sun burns his sensitive skin. He wipes his gleaming forehead on his arm. All of the muscles in his body ache and his joints swell like those of an old man.

"I wish I had my cap," he says. The cap is almost a fishing hat. It has a large white Bass embroidered on it. He smiles remembering when Margaret made it, years ago.

On the way home from the store Laurence stops at Ed Bartoo's old place. No one is home because no one lives there anymore.

"My God," Laurence says aloud. "This place looks like hell." He places the sack of groceries down on the chipped cement steps.

"Hello, Mr. Miller," a little, rough voice says from behind. Laurence turns around and sees a child, eight or nine years old. The boy holds a beebee gun; it's pressed tightly against his small shoulder.

"Hold on a minute there, little man. Point that barrel to the ground, now!" Laurence says with authority.

"There ain't no beebees in it, Mr. Miller," the boy retorts. "That don't matter! Where's your pop?" Laurence asks.

"My dad and grandpop are looking for wood back at the '01' barn. Don't tell," the boy adds quickly.

"I'm not Frankie; I'm Stephen."

"You're playing games son. Now stop talking out your nose," Laurence demands.

"My dad is Frank and my grandpa's Ed," the boy says with a confused grin. Laurence ignores the child and looks across the billowing fields of hay.

"Ok, Frankie, I have to get back to the house because it's getting late and Mrs. Miller will be home soon. You tell your dad to drop over to the house tonight for some cake and maybe a smoke."

"You mean my grandpa," Stephen says, as if Laurence had been joking with him all along. For a moment, Laurence stops talking. He leans his head back and gathers his thoughts while scanning the sky above. The boy's mouth is slightly open. Laurence stands like an ancient tower, he seems to crown the broken concrete steps. He looks at the brown shopping sack then shakes his head lightly.

"Be a good boy Frankie. Go tell him. Don't forget. I can't go out back myself because Margaret, Mrs. Miller, is probably home by now. Do you understand?"

Stephen stares at Laurence. He nods. "Yes, I guess so." Laurence watches the boy, marching off at first, then just wandering along a course bound for the distant barn.

Laurence lights the stove and places the cake on the middle rack. He sits at the table and daydreams. Margaret usually prepares the food. Today, however, Laurence does the cooking almost instinctively; it's as if he does it every day and has for years.

Laurence nods off at the kitchen table for nearly an hour. When he wakes, he's not sure where he is. Wondering what smells, he takes a peek in the oven — the cake. Slowly he removes the brown pan from the oven and places it on the counter.

"Glasses?" he says. He goes through the kitchen cupboards, several times forgetting what he's looking for. Laurence opens the refrigerator for some juice. Low and behold, in a neat pile, on the right side of the top shelf are some brand new razor blades. Laurence stands against the open door thinking. How could he not remember putting the blades there — so as no one would take them. Feeling the stubble on his face, Laurence reaches in for the blades. He stands up straight then closes the door. He notices a large bulletin board and walks closer and closer to it. The words blend together in a whisper as he reads them.

"August seventeenth, nineteen hundred and eighty-five." Laurence returns to his chair and sits again. His head drops and he weeps for a while. Laurence knows that time is running out. Soon, he and Margaret will be together. The clock appears fuzzy and he squints his eyes, as he has done so many times before. "Four o'clock" he says. When he stands Laurence wishes he could find his glasses but he feels so tired. He sits at the table again, then stands. Dizziness overpowers him so he sits again. He wants his glasses. Where is Margaret. Again he stands.

Carolyn St. George
Lunatic Fringe

For my company now
I converse with sterile
walls and dripping tubes and
occasionally the
vacant body of the
woman in the next bed.

In return, my children,
according to their law,
come weekly bearing
offerings of guilt to lay
on the soiled white
altar of my bed.

And sometimes, by the cold
cress of the moonlight
that falls through the window,
I slip into the
lunacy of dreams,
content in my knowledge
that the sins of the mother
shall be visited
upon her children.

Linda Van Nocker
In The Corner

We left the Volkswagen in a parking lot on the San Diego side of the border and walked across the bridge to the taxi stand. A couple of dollars worth of cab later we were in downtown Tijuana. It was mid-July and about ninety degrees. We got out into the midst of the souvenir shops, beggars, street bands and the hoards of tourists. Chris scratched a three day beard, adjusted his granny glasses and scanned the store fronts up and down the street. I knew what he was looking for and helped him. His expression resembled alertness. I focused in on the direction of his concentrating bloodshot eyes.

"Two o'clock Benny," he said. I saw the Miller cantina sign on the other side of the street. We stepped off the curb into the snail-paced Tijuana traffic. A mean sun blazed overhead onto the littered pavement, broken sidewalks and brightly painted buildings. Music from street bands played from all directions. Plopped down on the sidewalk with her children was an obese woman dressed in widow black. Next to her sat a begging pot with a few coins in it. We side-stepped her into a doorway and down a short flight of stairs into the sanctuary of "Cousin Rickies Cantina".

We sat down and Chris rubbed his hands together and yelled for the waiter.

"Margarita's my man! We drove three thousand miles for Tijuanan Margaritas." He rubbed his hands together again and grinned at the waiter. We were both pretty scruffy. We'd been on the road for the last three weeks on the heels of the American Dream. So far, all we'd found were bars like these, generic malls and fast food burger stands. The land changed in the States, the people and their artifacts didn't.

"Doubles; heavy on the salt," I said. The waiter, a little gay looking guy, flitted away and fired off some Spanish to the bartender. Fatigue and aching muscles coupled with a fast fading methadrine buzz made the light and sound off the street a distortion of white noise. I pulled out a fresh pack of Newports, peeled off the wrapping and tapped out two cigarettes, taking one for myself and handing one to Chris.

"Benny, check out that dance floor." Consciousness gathered itself in my head constituting a self-cognizing awareness. I looked around the bar. Slowly revolving ceiling fans cut the hot air. The jukebox came to life piping out country-Mexican cowboy ballads. Dust and smoke combined in patterns found only in destitute bars like these. The booth we were sitting in was on the same wall the bar was on. In the very back of the bar the ceiling rose exposing the second floor apartments. In front of the lighted stairway was a hardwood dance floor lit by a single spot. Above the stairs, pink lights seeped through the curtained second floor window that looked down into the bar.

I took a long pull on my Newport and let the effects of the mentholated smoke penetrate deep. I felt panicked and exhausted. I knew Chris was wired, but he never showed it. We watched a skinny Mexican guy in jeans and a worn cowboy shirt rush in past us, disappearing up the back stairs. The waiter came back with our drinks. The florescent green fluid half filled the finger bowl sized champagne glasses that were rimmed with a thick layer of salt. Both of us sat up in our seats and let him place the life saving margarita's on the table. We reached for and took our glasses in hand, I toasted.

"To Mexico old man, 'bout fucking time." We drank deeply. We had been on the road three weeks now. I was eighteen and Chris was twenty one. He could buy us booze in any state, which he did. We'd planned on being gone for the entire summer. We'd brought with us two months worth of drugs that we'd pretty much consumed already. So far it had been one continuous party. We did take a break in the New Mexican Mountains to dry out in a canyon for a couple days. Since then it had been all road work.

The ice cold fluid quenched cotton dry tissue as it made its way to my stomach. Jimmy Buffet started singing Margaritaville in my head. The tequila dissipated out from my stomach lining and into my bloodstream. The alcohol brought stamina as it reacted with my chemistry coercing frazzled neurons to calm their erratic firing.

Chris set his glass down, and looked behind me uneasily. Before I could say anything two over-weight Mexican harlots shuffled in front of our table. "Margarita's my man! We drove three thousand miles for Tijuanan Margaritas." He rubbed his hands together again and grinned at the waiter. We were both pretty scruffy. We'd been on the road for the last three weeks on the heels of the American Dream. So far, all we'd found were bars like these, generic malls and fast food burger stands. The land changed in the States, the people and their artifacts didn't.

"Doubles; heavy on the salt," I said. The waiter, a little gay looking guy, flitted away and fired off some Spanish to the bartender. Fatigue and aching muscles coupled with a fast fading methadrine buzz made the light and sound off the street a distortion of white noise. I pulled out a fresh pack of Newports, peeled off the wrapping and tapped out two cigarettes, taking one for myself and handing one to Chris.

"Benny, check out that dance floor." Consciousness gathered itself in my head constituting a self-cognizing awareness. I looked around the bar. Slowly revolving ceiling fans cut the hot air. The jukebox came to life piping out country-Mexican cowboy ballads. Dust and smoke combined in patterns found only in destitute bars like these. The booth we were sitting in was on the same wall the bar was on. In the very back of the bar the ceiling rose exposing the second floor apartments. In front of the lighted stairway was a hardwood dance floor lit by a single spot. Above the stairs, pink lights seeped through the curtained second floor window that looked down into the bar.

I took a long pull on my Newport and let the effects of the mentholated smoke penetrate deep. I felt panicked and exhausted. I knew Chris was wired, but he never showed it. We watched a skinny Mexican guy in jeans and a worn cowboy shirt rush in past us, disappearing up the back stairs. The waiter came back with our drinks. The florescent green fluid half filled the finger bowl sized champagne glasses that were rimmed with a thick layer of salt. Both of us sat up in our seats and let him place the life saving margarita's on the table. We reached for and took our glasses in hand, I toasted.

"To Mexico old man, 'bout fucking time." We drank deeply. We had been on the road three weeks now. I was eighteen and Chris was twenty one. He could buy us booze in any state, which he did. We'd planned on being gone for the entire summer. We'd brought with us two months worth of drugs that we'd pretty much consumed already. So far it had been one continuous party. We did take a break in the New Mexican Mountains to dry out in a canyon for a couple days. Since then it had been all road work.

The ice cold fluid quenched cotton dry tissue as it made its way to my stomach. Jimmy Buffet started singing Margaritaville in my head. The tequila dissipated out from my stomach lining and into my bloodstream. The alcohol brought stamina as it reacted with my chemistry coercing frazzled neurons to calm their erratic firing.

Chris set his glass down, and looked behind me uneasily. Before I could say anything two over-weight Mexican harlots shuffled in front of our table. "Jesus Christ," I thought to myself, "Whores."

The first had herself draped in a huge tent-like floral pattern dress. She had long black hair that she twisted in her fingers making tiny waving motions. Her companion had on a tight exotic costume consisting of plastic spangled strings connected to a scant detachable vest. The kind strippers wear. It wrapped her so tightly her small breasts were pushed awkwardly upward. The older, heavier of the two addressed us thick with accent.

"You like to buy us two girls a drink?" I looked over at Chris. He was smiling and eyeing the tall shoe polish black wig the spangled dancer was wearing. In the moment it would have taken me to respond they had taken seats next to us. In another moment the waiter was there with two huge shots of tequila with water chasers for the ladies. A quick introduction ensued. Both their names were Maria.
"Where you handsome young men from?" asked my bigger Maria, who sat down next to me blocking my way out. She slapped me on the shoulder, a real friendly gesture. Then she dropped her hand and gently began stroking the inside of my thigh. Chris sat there with a stoned expression of mild surprise. His pupils were dilated. I quickly wondered if he'd eaten the last of the acid. He noticed me and grinned.

"New York," I said. Chris's Maria grinned along with Chris. She had on the longest eyelashes I had ever seen. Her skin was heavily powdered making her face and bosom unnaturally white. She looked like the mixture of a twenties western and a cheap porno flick. I finished my drink.

"Ah! You're from NEW YORK eh!" my Maria said rubbing the inside of my leg a little harder. I was sure she was old enough to be my mother, and she was sure to weigh in at two hundred pounds. Her eyebrows were thin pencil lines drawn upon flattened brow ridges. The rest of her round face was unpowdered, exposing laugh wrinkles that stretched from her big eyes to her big dimples. "Lots of people in New York huh? Big town. I bet you guys have a good time there huh?" Then reached up and pinched my cheek. "You're cute," she says. She leaned back and laughed, eyes closed, her face angled towards the ceiling, shaking the booth.

Chris started talking to his Maria who was smoking one of my Newports stuck in a long thin cigarette holder. Where she carried it I don't know. She kicked off her high heels and shuffled out onto the dance floor. My Maria conned me out of a pocket's worth of change to play in the juke box. She inched her mass out of the booth, bumped across the room at me and continued. "Come on, we go over and I make you smile." Adrenalin released into my bloodstream, my heart rate sped up. I looked over towards the dark corner of the bar. "We have a good time." My heart slowly rose to my throat. She was smiling and staring directly into my eyes. I thought about how much money I had. I looked at Chris, then at the table, then at Maria. I didn't want to do it. But I felt I'd be insulting her if I turned her down. She looked at me with a curious expression waiting for my response.

"I really don't think so. You see we didn't know that this was a...a place like this," I said. Chris laughed and both Marias cracked big smiles. I assumed I looked horror stricken. The blood dropped out of my face and head and I started to feel like fainting. Fatigue twisted my thinking apparatus, my sinuses popped, my ears balanced their pressure with sea level. The tempo of the music changed, the sequined dancer stepped up her pace.

I realized Chris wasn't serious about his mod cohort with the eyelashes either. I started to say something. I had an awesome feeling mortality. "Listen Maria.....Maria," addressing Chris's date. "We just came into the first bar we could find. We didn't really know that this was a..."

"A Cat House!" my Maria said, making clawing motions with her fingers she "Hissed" at me. I snapped back in my seat. The three of them cackled. I took a deep pull on my Margarita.

"And now you saying that you don't like Maria and me. Not good enough for you eh?" Then speaking to her friend, "Maria, I think we should make these handsome men ours no matter what they say. What do you think?"

"We don't have any money," I lied, and laughed out loud. The girls got the message so fast it made my head spin. They got up.

"Well it was nice meeting you New York. Thanks for the drinks." My Maria said, she bent over and pinched my cheek till I thought it was bleeding. "Next time you come down, you come and see me New York, but bring lots of money."

I promised her I would and slumped back into my seat. The waiter and bartender looked at us like we were faggots or something. I got up and paid the eight dollar tab, walked back and sat down across from Chris. He laughed. "Well Benny, we almost bought the farm on that one."

"Literally man," I said. I downed my drink. We got up and walked out into the heat and madness. On the wall just outside the door was a mural of a nude woman covering herself with a towel. I guess whorehouses are allowed to advertise in Mexico. "I'm going to start to reading the signs before going into these places. Let's get to the nice side of town."

Chris just smiled, his photogrey lenses darkening fast in the searing sun. "Next time we'll make sure we get to choose our own." And we walked down the street looking for better bars.

Paul Benson
I Love America...

I like to go driving in my father's car
I like to go drinking in some sleazy bar
I like it when chicks let me get really far
I love America

I hate waitin' round for my Dad's welfare check
I hate those French speakers way up in Quebec
I hate TV now that they've cancelled Star Trek
But...
I love America

I love when I get a C minus in math
I hate when my mother makes me take a bath
It isn't my fault that I'm a psychopath
'Cause...
I love America

I love gorgeous girls with the sun in their hair
I love hanging out when I haven't a care
I love a thick steak when it's medium rare
I love America

I didn't like having to fight the VC
I didn't like catching a dose of VD
I didn't like dying, my folks still loved me
But...

Hal Merceau

Nick Lisi 1986 photo "Untitled"
waiting for you
a signal in yellow
caution
a sign to slow down
drifting bathed in pallid light
sickly waiting for green
GO red
STOP.
scenes stay
the same different props people times
waiting yellow caution red
STOP. GO green yellow caution waiting...

Carol Foley

The Burning

Where will they find a word fit for the burning?
In a shock of ashen hair? Or in the churning Silt of charred bones rising thickly to rest upon their Tongues- a vestige in the death-infested air?
Where will they find a mouthing place (Between a space of clenched teeth And the stench of cooking flesh)
To push up that simple chant of pain?
Where will they find a curse for arms Whose harms have left them jealous of death's Arms, indestructable, clenching their children, Wrenching young eyes toward the sky, tracing The spectre of fear its cold breath can embed On such pink faces? What word replaces this?

Where will they find a new sound for the burning? Will it speak the rasp of crackled skin Caked black upon the bone? Or throw low Within ears like the drone of mothers' moans As they sway among the molten ruins? Will they find it haunched in rhythmic Rasps of breath, driven sane by vaporized tears And heat, like wasps' stings? Pressed in Wisps of thin shock within a waft of dry sod? What word replaces this? What if they deem it God?

Nancy Anderson
Morning,
To Whom It May Concern

Garrish rug,
Pale feet,
And once again
The slow motion
Acrobatics
Into the chrome
And porcelain nightmare.
And out again.
Face submerged in
The breakfast of champions,
The dog watches
The Today Show and I
Whine to be let out.

from Part II: the Lover.

Renee A. Carrose
The Rose's Sense

Who chants love's first faint Whisper? The chinook's gentle Fingertip prods the Center of the rose's furled Petals in morning's sallow Slumber. Why is love's Rising hint unheeded? The Livid chill of dusk Still clings deeply within the Rose's firm cleavage, sodden, Stifling its musk. When is love's bidding rejoined? The dawn's balm soothes raw Petals, conjuring hope in A cup of pink, waking lids.

Nancy C. Anderson
Anxiety Attacks

As I lay in bed at night, I watch the shapes move in front of my eyelids. The inside of my eyes are black, but sort of pink. Florescent pink spots move around in them. It’s sort of like a pink curtain, or sort of like the Northern lights over the lake. Then there’s figures that move across the pink curtain. They are all black. When I’m trying to go to sleep, I try to follow them across my eyelids. They always move left to right, never right to left. Sometimes they help me fall asleep, but most of the time they don’t. They move too fast. I can’t keep up with them. It gives me anxiety attacks to know that I can’t catch them. They don’t help me sleep.

I start to think of you and how much you hurt. I know I made you hurt. I know the feeling. You’re numb and...I push you out of my mind. You give me anxiety attacks.

I count the square tiles on the ceiling. They help me sleep sometimes. I try to find the one in the middle. There’s just enough light coming in the crack of the door. Light from the livingroom.

There’s nine going up and down, and nine going left to right, never right to left. I always find the middle one. There’s a piece of tape on it. It’s old and yellow. It’s been there a long time. Someone who used to live here put it there. Maybe they put it there to mark the middle tile, so they wouldn’t have to count them over every night to find the center. I still count them, just in case. I don’t think I could ever just look up at the middle tile. I have to count. It gives me anxiety attacks to not count; I could be wrong.

The thought of you crying creeps into my mind. I push you away. The thought of how miserable you are won’t leave. I start to cry when I think about being without you, but then I stop. I’m not crying for me; I’m crying for you. I roll over and watch him sleep. His mouth is open and he’s breathing deep. His nose is squished into the mattress. His pillow is on the floor. He throws it there in the middle of the night. He’ll roll over soon, with his back to me, but he’ll hold my hand or kiss me in his sleep. He loves me. I don’t have an anxiety attack.

I think about you sleeping in your bed. I used to sleep there; it gives me anxiety attacks. I still love you; it’s just a different kind of love. I’ll always love you in a way. You won’t live with that. I want you to be happy. Without me. I feel responsible for your happiness, for your life. It gives me anxiety attacks.

I roll over at the same time he does. He kisses my shoulder in his sleep first, then presses his back against me. He’s warm and feels good. I stare at the wall, lying on my side. I think about that beach I was once on. I try to feel the breeze and see the water. I didn’t have anxiety attacks. It was peaceful. I just didn’t think. But now, the wall is rough and cold when I put my hand on it. Then I put my hand on my head. I’m hot; I’m sweating. My shirt is damp so I push off one of the blankets to feel the cool air. I’m having an anxiety attack.

I wonder if you are awake, or if you’re alone. Is someone holding you? I try to put you out of my mind again, I think about him. He rolls over and lines my body with his. I love him. I don’t feel any anxiety.

Geri Pace
Itinerary

Richard and Virginia live together in Kinsey Corners in a rather square-shaped white house that has three bedrooms and one bath.

Virginia greets Richard at the front door every night at 5:15, takes off his coat, and massages his tired, sweaty feet.

Richard bowls on Thursdays, and Virginia watches with the other wives. They think she's lucky to be married to "Big Dick."

Richard has sex with Virginia every third night, plus Friday and Saturday, but never on Mondays during football season.

Virginia and Richard had a baby son just after their six month anniversary. They named him Richard Junior, but they called him Little Dickie.

When Richard and Virginia’s son, Dick, met Beverly, he married her. They had a son nine months after their first date.

Dick and Beverly live together in Kinsey Corners in a rather square-shaped blue house with two bedrooms and one and a half baths.

—from "The Anatomical Guide to Kinsey Corners"

Kristin E. Avery