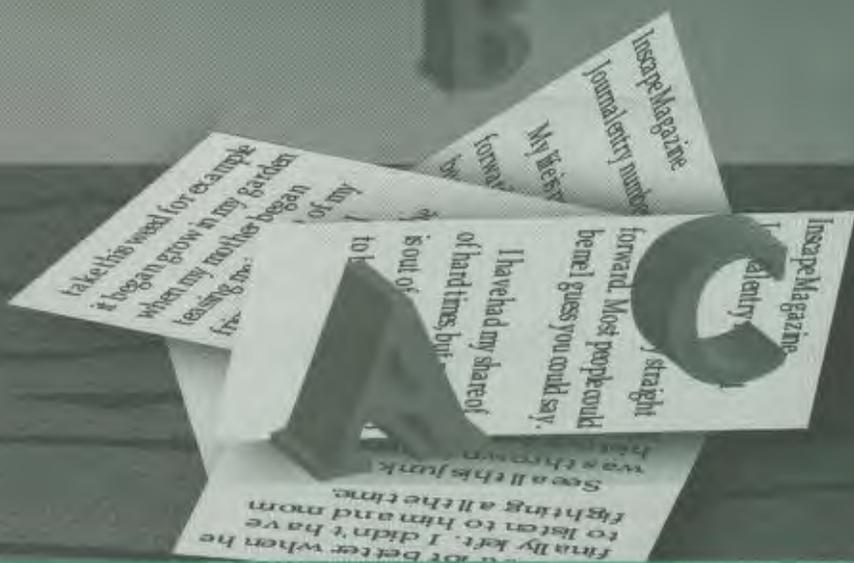


# INSCAPE

Visual & Literary Arts Magazine

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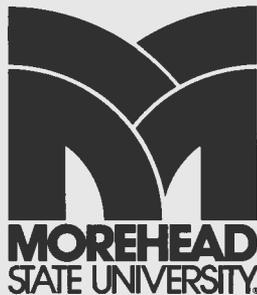
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Volume XLVIII Spring 1998

# ***INSCAPE***

**Spring 1998**



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# ***INSCAPE***

**Spring 1998**

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# Carl Albright

## A School Is Hard To Find And Easy To Lose

A school is hard to find  
and easy to lose  
and once losing it  
is hard to re-enter.

Great art

With  
Universal Meaning.  
Blooms  
in the shadow  
of the artists  
Who were transformed  
out of men  
thru a school.

So

to find a school  
look for fine art  
newly created by artists  
who were born men  
but found a school  
and were then transformed

But remember

A school is hard to find  
and easy to lose.

## That Spring

After the air war,  
During the ground war,

### THAT SPRING

We knew  
    we did  
    some harm,

We hoped  
    we'd done  
    some good.

### THAT SPRING

Talking too loud — drinking too much  
Around Fort Altus — Air Force Base  
Back in Oklahoma

### THAT SPRING

During the ground war  
After the air war

### THAT SPRING

### THAT SPRING

## Ken Casper

### Nine Of Trumps

Man without failures  
Fool without education  
Education for the wise  
Laughter for other fools.  
In a tree I roll,  
Swinging from the top  
The spices that add  
The words that subtract.  
Hard winds speak,  
Soft flakes snow each other,  
Stop in every branch,

A touch of blood, from your heart, is all I need  
to feel, to awaken in my veins Creation's spark  
Then I awoke and saw you sleeping soundly  
And entwined my arm around you.

## Just Friends

Just friends  
These two words she whispers  
Formed with perfect lips  
And my world stops  
My mind loops around  
The phrase  
Just friends

Just friends  
The very phrase  
Shivered my spine  
Sits in my stomach like lead  
It's a perfect roommate  
For my heart  
Just friends

Just friends  
Is it really not meant to sting?  
A piece of cotton over a bayonet  
Going in my gut  
It's morphine for a slit throat  
That evil phrase  
Just friends

Just friends  
Listen to the implication  
"I like you," it says  
"But you physically repulse me"  
"You're too much like a little brother"  
"You're a troll, but we're still—"  
Just friends

Just friends  
She gives a homecoming queen smile

A touch of blood, from your heart, is all I need  
to feel, to awaken in my veins Creation's spark  
Then I awoke and saw you sleeping soundly  
And entwined my arm around you.

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Just friends  
She gives a homecoming queen smile

But her eyes, darting, betray her  
She thinks I'll hurt her somehow  
But I'm too hurt  
Dying inside because we're  
Just friends

Just friends  
She waits for an answer  
My mouth finds a smile somehow  
I say "sure" I think  
She says a little goodbye  
And we part  
Just friends

### **Ode To A Self-Destructive Artist**

I need a fix today  
Something to chase away my pains,  
Tear down my blocks  
And give me the key to the magic carpet  
Something warm  
Something fuzzy  
Something cool  
Something buzzing  
Something that lets me get with the chicks  
They wouldn't know good stuff if it bit them  
On their asses that shake just so  
Take them all home with me  
For some humpin'  
And some bumpin'  
For some creakin'  
And some freakin'  
By the time they travelled my bridge and paid my toll  
They forget they lost their virginity to me  
But I still need the mana of heaven  
Mixed with the spore of the lotus fruit  
For my head  
For my soul  
For my mind  
For my art  
The stuff that goes into my arms like a thunderbolt

And blasts my parents phone calls into a dark hole  
No more begging me, snuffles in the receiver, to come home  
Listening how they're destroying my scene  
Telling me to get a job  
Get a God  
Get a life  
Get a soul  
I just need the stuff, that's all  
The horse that travels in my trackmarks  
That banishes the demons of rent and pain  
And invites the ones who let me write my Goth poems  
Just need the sweet stuff  
Sweet drugs  
Sweet sex  
Sweet numbness  
Sweet nothing  
Just need something to take my out of the shithole  
I live in because it's full of needles and bills  
My rent's due this month  
But it all went to my kingdom  
And I'm king of cool  
King of art  
King of illusion  
King of Nothing  
I just need...

## Kim Hayner

### Untitled

today i was thinking about the changes in me when suddenly i was pushed into a chair so began the filmstrip of my youth my thoughts my quirks my schemes oh it must have been the napoleaness that dictated the who in me but now i drift into the fog of rainfall its polluted sense of purity dripping down on what? health concerns while waco burns crinkled aluminum aspirations with no place for them to be what do i do about all of this anyway i press and press but my eyelids just won't stay shut when i've said too many angry things you know mother is a pretty smart lady why do i fear of giving up the flower to a short lived runaway passion and when did this become more of gathering up toys just when i think i'm rambling i think i've stumbled upon my core.

### Window Seat

Apocalyptic orange  
A crescent moon,  
sang its song  
of pending doom  
until the mere moment —  
Night became day,  
Sunshine split it,  
to the Devil's dismay  
And so came running  
Flowers and Stars  
Chanting their beauty  
to Venus and Mars.  
Surrounded by satellites  
with envious eyes  
beheld blossoms,  
their dancing,  
from heavenly skies.

# Karly Dawn Higgins

## Dots

Writing letters of words  
a thought behind  
the current,  
will cramp your hand  
and eyes,  
where then you'll be  
two thoughts behind  
the pen.  
Perhaps I must find  
the right pen  
that connects  
to the dots in my mind,  
then writing words  
with letters  
can occur before  
they are thought  
to be written.

## Not Today

Not today  
will I die, not today.  
It isn't my time.  
Two seconds drove  
me out of the way  
the space that the tree,  
tall and wide,  
would crash into,  
as freely as I drove  
through it.  
And freely I drove to the grandmother  
with leaves crashing  
onto the pavement  
along the way.  
I fly through her door  
with fear and wonder

at my existence,  
paying attention  
to every moment, move, sound.  
My story spills out on her lap  
staining the purple pants,  
and she give me a rare look,  
eyes full and gray,  
and my Nanny said  
like it hurt:  
“Someone is a watchin’ out fer you”

## **Lori McAlister**

### **I Remember**

I remember the song they sang  
My innocence, lying there,  
torn sandals in the sand.

A rose,  
happiness in its petals,  
deceived me.  
A smile,  
soft on your lips,  
lured me.

I remember crying,  
torn sandals in the sand.

### **Lunar Eclipse**

He devours me  
As the sun devours the moon.  
He envelops me  
And burns away the light.  
Still when he slides away,  
I ache for his return.  
I cannot shine, cold and desolate,  
Without his heat to warm me.  
Though I am bound to another,  
I am a piece of you.

## **Karen M. Telford**

### **Monday I Told Amber**

“Would you mind if we prayed for you?  
They say we have a Red Phone.  
I don’t know what your belief system is...”

“It doesn’t matter...what matters is  
that you believe.”

I climbed the stairs and Karen said  
“Why is your hand purple?”

My right hand writes as instructed  
while the last fingers of my left hand hurt.

Mitch has strep throat  
from Wednesday? the paranoid whines  
and calculates incubation periods

How that makes the tears burn  
Now the damn sick sweat again  
How thin the tissue of my bravery  
How deep the pity of my self  
How I pity her  
trapped in here  
when I can leave  
but won’t

How I wish I could have  
2 damn good days in a row.

# David Vallance

## Paradise

Enter into the night,  
A party.  
A festive time of the year.  
The warm bright room offers  
A stark contrast  
To the outerworld,  
Dreary and blanketed with snow.  
The pain still shows through  
The emptiness of your eyes  
And the paleness of your skin.  
You try to smile,  
But the smile just  
Comes out all wrong,  
And you look away again.  
Never to look back again.  
You feel lost,  
Cold,  
And tired,  
Like the old yellow dog  
That followed you around the streets  
Looking for the same love  
As you,  
Yet you didn't know.  
Overwhelmed by the pain,  
You dig deep into you pockets  
To find the cure.  
You dig,  
But all that emerges  
Is a small white coin  
With pink dots.  
You place it in your mouth  
And swallow,  
Hoping it was the pill that  
Makes you smaller so you  
Could slip through  
The cracks of reality  
And escape unfazed by

The overwhelming joy of the room.  
It was bigger than you thought  
And sends you gasping for air.  
Flailing like a man on fire,  
Swinging your arms around  
For a drink of water,

Anything,

You collapse.

Down,  
Lying on the ground with  
The last second of thought,  
You combine with nature.  
Your mind drifts like a piece  
Of wood upon a tranquil pond,  
And then gets thrashed by  
The wake of a shark's fin as it  
Feeds on your heart.  
Your eyes sink to the depth of  
Solitude and dankness,  
And all grows dark within  
The watery grave.

Your ears perk up for a second  
As outside you hear  
The smash,

Clatter,

Crunch of metal

And the whimpering of three desolate souls.  
The yellow grungy dog lies upon  
The curb with a broken neck  
And ruptured guts.  
A small stream of blood  
Trickles from its mouth  
And down into the sewer  
With the young boy's alligator  
That was flushed before its time.  
A ragged bum sniffs as  
His sole companion is gone,  
And then huddles back  
In the doorway with only his

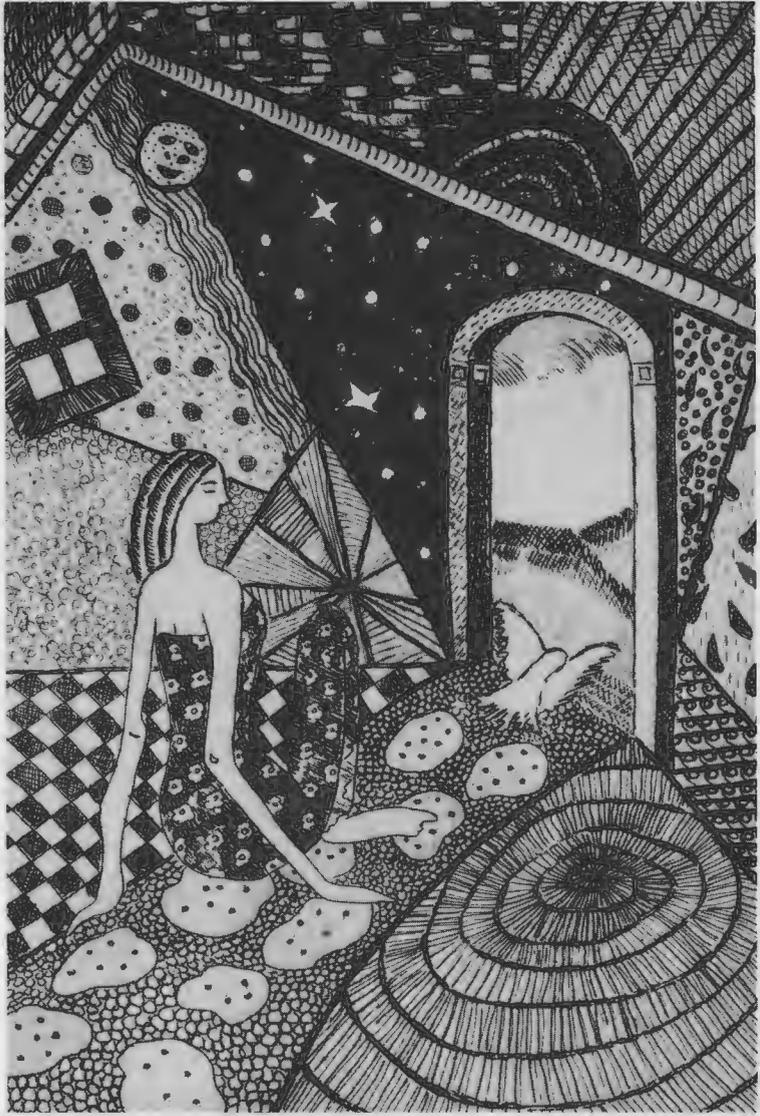
Newspaper blanket  
To keep him warm as the night  
Grows unnaturally colder when  
Solitude arrives.  
The French-Canadian Brooklyn  
Cab driver steps from his  
Checkered death machine,  
Meter still running,  
Peers over his protruding gut  
At the bloody fender  
And impacted grill.

Standing on the withered grass,  
Eyes resting among oysters like  
Regurgitated pearls,  
Mind rocking about on  
The once calm pond,  
And your soul becoming one  
With a cloud in the vast  
Blue beyond.  
Your thumbprint swirls like  
A dust storm over the Sahara of  
A cat's litterbox and brings  
The broken dog to your feet.  
You reach down to pick up  
The crumpled mass and  
Your arms become  
Tree roots searching  
For nourishment and  
A life-giving force.  
They worm through the dog's  
Rotting corpse and fuse  
your bodies into one being.  
Peacefully as a new whole,  
You solemnly make your way  
To the benign immensity of  
Unstained light called  
Paradise.

*[Poetry by David Vallance continued on page 25]*



*Casbah*, Anita Carney (lithograph on toned paper)



*Wings*, Deborah Griffith (line etching)



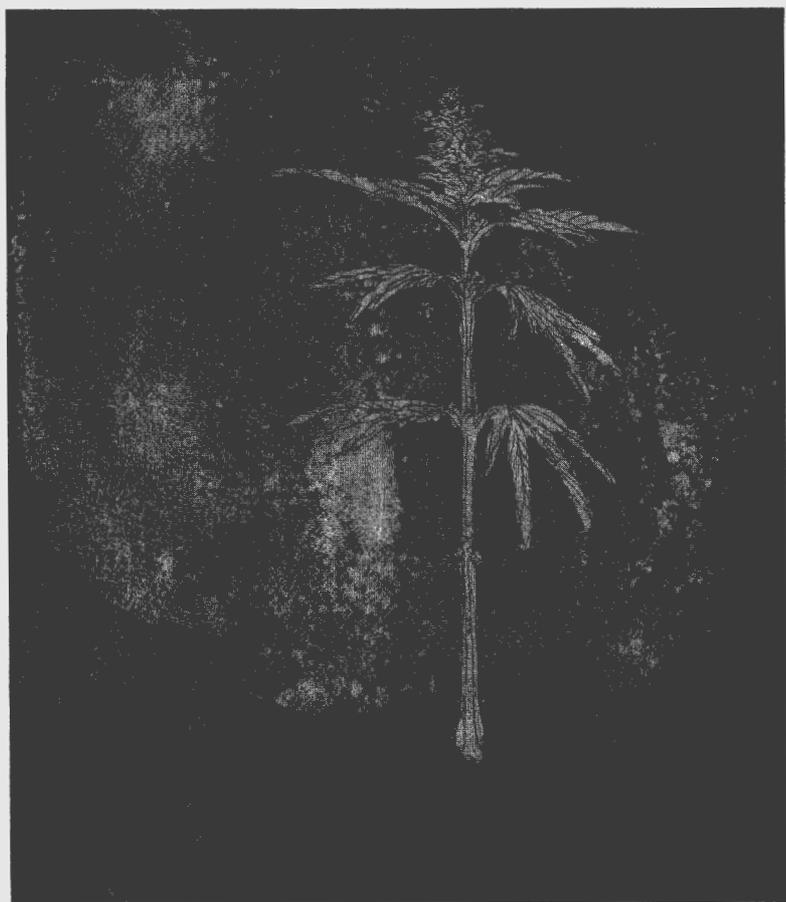
*Up To Here And Drowning*, Ben Haney (lithograph)



*Untitled*, Robbie Hay (charcoal on paper)



*Untitled*, Geraldine Lewis-Wireman (intaglio print)



*Legacy*, Jamie Roberts (copper plate etching)



*Overdrawn*, Karen M. Telford (ink)



*Stimpee*, Carole B. Wright (black and white photography)

[Continued from page 16]

## The Last Emperor

You keep entering a life  
Which you never left,  
Coming in every so often  
When you feel it time to guide me.  
Oh saint,  
Friend of God for the Egyptians.  
Filled with baraka,  
And karamat,  
Though that is kept  
A secret found only after death.  
And I have found yours.  
What you carried with you  
On your back,  
The secret of life.  
The truth of death.  
“It is cold in Pittsburgh,”  
So you flock south with nature,  
With wild swans coming  
To rest in an Autumn pond.  
You look at me and  
Told me to live.  
You are the voice that  
Speaks to me in my dreams.  
You come back to me in my times  
That I need help the most.  
Bless you oh saint,  
For Tut died much earlier.

# Lorie Zientara

## If By The Stars

If by the stars  
    you  
        watch  
            and wait  
And I stand  
    by the  
        garden  
            gate  
If shadowed  
    by  
        the moon  
            we are  
With not  
    a spoken  
        word  
            to jar  
The lovely  
    sentinels  
        of  
            grace  
Would time  
    stand still  
        upon  
            this place  
And keep us  
    here  
        forever more  
In total  
    abstinence  
        from war?  
I wonder:  
    would it be  
        too much  
To venture  
    one familiar  
        touch...

Just a hand to  
hand or  
lip to lip  
To venture  
one  
last parting  
sip  
turn away  
and go  
Could I then  
And never want  
for you  
at all  
And peaceful be  
at parting so?  
I hope  
that  
I will  
never know

**Nathan Hunter**  
(High School Submission)

**Computers In Motion**

Considering all of my choices from which I have to choose  
Operating with only my hands and my eyes  
Muttering to myself while at **home** "Must I have so few?"  
Putting in my choices for the game  
Understanding the **control** I have  
Time is passing by so I put on my lucky **caps**  
**Entering** the back of space and **altering** time  
**Running** from **deletion** as I am  
**Shifting** in my seat

I must take a break and get myself a **Tab**  
Noticing my score, I see I need some **help**

Mom comes in and I ask her, "Will you **search** for my book?"  
On a certain page the **layout** shows me how to **escape**  
The **graphics** in this book use **arrows** to show the **keys**  
In the last part of the game I see that it is totally not the same  
On my mission to **save** the world  
None of the aliens get me in the **end!**

**Burroughs In The Boulderado**  
**Bar In Boulder, Colorado**  
by **Carl Albright**

William Burroughs, my old friend and teacher at Naropa Buddhist Institute, died somewhere around August 2nd, probably at that house he bought in Lawrence, Kansas. Norman Mailer had written that Burroughs was probably the only living author possibly possessed of genius. The first time I ran into Burroughs was in the bar of the Boulderado Hotel in downtown Boulder, Colorado. Hell, I can't remember the year, those 1960s and 70s are all jammed together for me. I had flown into Denver from Lexington and was met by two three-piece suits who drove me the eighty miles through the mountains to downtown Boulder. They didn't talk. Gave me the keys to an office in the oldest business building in the prosperous college town and told me the president of their club would be by in the morning.

I was working for the Corporation then, the A.C.M.E. Circus

Operating Company, running the advance of an indoor stage show for kids that used local sponsors like Lions or Optimists and very strong advance promotion. The show made money, and my income was very, very good. I never thought it would stop. I'd call a number down in Florida and ask for the man by his last name. He had a proper Harvard accent and a proper English name. He would give me a town and a couple of names and phone numbers. I'd go into the town, work a couple of weeks, and leave with a couple of grand. It was a good life, being on the road. It is gone though, at least for me. Yes, easy money. Will easy money come again now? When the easy money is flowing fast and easy you don't think the opportunity boat will keep stopping for you and one day you get off in a strange port and after a few years you notice the opportunity boat just doesn't stop as much now. You notice that your dark beard and blond hair have faded to white and gray. Yeah, easy money. Will easy money flow again?

I checked the prices on the motels and they were all too high and too far out; so, I checked into the downtown hotel, the Boulderado. It was a crumbox. Nineteen dollars a night. I could have rented a room like it with a sink, a straight hardwood chair, a squeaky spring bed in any other town in the country back then for that much a week. You know Burroughs must have liked that place. I later learned he stayed there all the time when he was lecturing at Naropa Buddhist Institute, which was right across the street from my office. Naropa is a fully accredited college now. It is the home of the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poets with the poetry department run by a woman that New Yorker Magazine considers the greatest living poet. Naropa was started by a Tibetan Buddhist named Chogyam Trumgpa who said, "We must create a structure which allows real communication. There has to be real communication, and someone has to start it. If no one begins, nothing will happen." The Beat Generation writers like Allen Ginsberg, Paul Bowles, Jack Kerouac, Neal Cassady and the granddaddy of all the beats, William Burroughs, truly created real communication.

I had no idea Burroughs was in Boulder. I was sitting in the bar of the Boulderado Hotel in the middle of a Sunday afternoon. It was dark and quiet. The jukebox was off, and there was this tall, thin, sinister looking old guy, who looked like he was from somewhere on the other side of death, sitting at a table alone. He was drinking something tall with alcohol in it. I had watched the bartender pour it, and I thought to myself, "that guy looks a little bit like William Burroughs, the author of Junky and Naked Lunch. He wasn't drinking as fast as me. Hardly anybody did back then, and after a couple more double bourbons in apple cider, I realized it was the grandfather of all the beats, William Burroughs. I became happy and pleased because Burroughs was using alcohol, the lush, the booze...like me, which meant he had finally knocked the monkey off his back and climbed down

from the deadly white horse, heroin. I knew addicts didn't drink when they were using. I later learned from a great valuable book, *The Job*, composed of interviews with Burroughs, that he attributed getting off heroin to a treatment with aphomorphine by a Dr. Dent in England. I also knew he had done the clearing procedures of Scientology, which I had been involved in the experiments to produce in the 1950s. I figured the clearing processes were the key as the only people I have known to get off hard drugs and stay were Scientology clears.

When I went into Naropa Institute in a couple of days to recruit some personnel, I noted Burroughs was lecturing there to an evening class of only graduate students, M.A.s and Ph.D.s, part of a summer graduate student lecture series; so, I put on my best Yale accent and Ph.D. mockup and told the registrar I was a Harvard class of 58, but didn't need credits for the class. Burroughs was a Harvard graduate. So I decided to follow the advice of Yeshua the Messiah (the person generally known as Jesus) in the Gnostic scriptures from the NAG Hamadi library and "buy some knowledge so I could give it away." I paid the tuition to the bald Buddhist registrar, and after he had my money stashed in his cash drawer he told me the class was a bit over-sold, with three times as many people signed up to attend as there were seats. May God and my guardian angel protect me from good Buddhists, good Christians and especially good Scientologists; for some love to do evil in the name of good.

It was crowded, standing room only, with some squeezed out into the courtyard, a lot of beards and thin rich girls with beads and long, straight hair. I remember Burroughs said he got most of his plots, characters, and some dialogue straight out of his dreams, which he wrote down just as soon as he awoke. He mentioned he had done a type of training as a psychic that I had also done. It was developed by Jose Silva of Cedar Avenue in Larado, Texas, and it had helped his creativity. He considered Conrad, Rimbaud, Genet, Becket, Saint-John Perse (who I have never heard of), Kafka, Joyce, Graham Green, and that very unusual and talented married couple Jane and Paul Bowles, as at the top of the mountain for writers. He said Hemingway killed himself when he saw he was not quite strong enough to make it to the top.

From the journal Burroughs kept, it is clear he was thinking a lot of death, and that his ideas on what the experience would be like were very different from what society tends to believe. He had certainly written enough about death.

The *Western Lands* weaves the main character through the various levels of the afterlife based on the ideas from *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*. Timothy Leary had talked via phone with Burroughs on the day Leary died and said, "Death. Why not?" And Allen Ginsberg had told

Burroughs that when he got the two months to live notice from his doctor, "I thought I would be terrified, but I'm exhilarated." He viewed his exit as the beginning of a great adventure. The last entry into his journal-diary was on Friday, August 1st, 1997. It said "Love? What is it? Most natural pain-killer. What there is! Love." William Burroughs, born Feb. 5, 1914, St. Louis, died August 2, 1997.

## **Sacred Saturdays**

**by Donna Stump**

Hot, burning fire surrounded my bed. The whole room smothered me. "Help me!" I screamed, but the smoke choked out the words. My heart raced in fright. The fire leapt onto my bed, trying to swallow up my covers and eventually me.

Standing in the corner, I thought I recognized an old man wearing a brown suit and carrying a Bible. I motioned for him to help, but he just stood there saying the same words that he said every Sunday. "Hell, children. You will burn in hell! God is a vengeful god. He will not save you after you're gone." With a wave of his hand, my mother's preacher, an old regular Baptist, was gone, leaving me to burn. I woke in a sweat, thinking about my nightmare.

Continually, the same sort of dream haunted me, asleep or awake. It was hard for a 10-year-old to have a firm concept of religion, especially when my father was Native American and my mother was a hard-core Baptist of German descent. My mother's preacher made it even harder for me to choose when he leaned down into my face every Sunday with his whiskey smelling breath, telling me I was going to hell. Like him, other members of the church considered me a bad seed for even considering to love nature like I loved God. Whenever they could, they whispered things like, "Heathen, devil's child, or pagan" behind my mother's back.

I did not know what to do. My world seemed to burn like my dreams. I had no control over anything except the knowledge that my father loved me enough to introduce me to the world of the love of nature, while my mother threw me into one of hate, "fire and brimstone." The only time that I had any true peace was on Saturdays.

That Saturday, roosters crowed me out of my bed and straight into action. Already awake, I hopped onto the cool hardwood floor anticipating my one true day off school. Saturday, this day of all days, was sacred. Monday through Friday school and homework kept me busy. Sundays I had to go to my mom's church and listen to the stuffy old guy from my nightmares try to scare me into his religion and then invite me back for evening services. Saturday was my day. Yes, it felt good!

No need to put on any clothes. Preparing for Saturday, I had already put on what I was going to wear the night before. My mom would get mad if she knew about my clothes. That did not stop me, though. Secretly I hoped that before long, I could wear her out instead of the other way around.

Sneaking to the bathroom to relieve myself, I closed the door ever so gently, hoping she was still asleep. So far so good. As quick and quiet as possible, I ran a toothbrush over my teeth, because Mom would check later to see if it was wet. Then she would check to see if my hair was combed out, but not on Saturday.

In the kitchen, Little Debbie snack cakes and two cans of Pepsi waited on the table for me. A note from Daddy saying: "Be careful. Have fun Sweetheart. I love you." rested beside them. He never signed it. He did not have to. We had the same routine worked out for years. Before he went to work, he would pack my lunch and close Mom's bedroom door so she would not hear either of us leave.

The mountain behind our house was tough to climb, but Cherokee blood raged bright enough in my veins to allow me to do it. My father had taught me how to walk just as his ancestors did centuries ago. On Saturdays in the past, Daddy went with me, teaching my how to climb without disturbing my surroundings. Then his hours changed at the company. That left me to travel alone, but I always felt as if he was still walking silently beside me.

The steep incline began right behind our garden fence. Up, up, I went, digging my worn hiking boots into the dew-kissed ground. I did not want to fall. That would make too much noise and disturb the tree-covered mountain that allowed me to climb it.

My father had taught me that the quieter I walked the more the forest would respect me. Eventually it would become my friend. I had waited long for that day to come. I loved to listen and learn the way of the woods. If only it would teach me what my father had said I would have to learn on my own. I did not know what that was; yet still, I yearned for it.

All I heard was silence. As an impatient child I would ask, "Why won't the mountain say anything, Daddy?" He would just squeeze my hand a little tighter and tell me that someday, 'when my heart spoke to it, the mountain would gladly answer' me back.

I began to walk with my ears open, hearing more than I could see with my eyes. I blessed the mountain for keeping me company. Then the mountain blessed me right back. Cardinal babes that I had never seen, just woke up for their morning meal. Up in the heaven that they called home, I heard a faint "chirp, chirp," while they waited for a good worm to wiggle its way into their tummies.

Through their sounds and others, I could envision the old world full of life. Colors smiled to me through all of their vibrant browns and greens. Joy called out to me in the silence, making me realize that nothing was quiet there.

Sounds came to me from the squirrels that jumped from tree to tree quicker than any human eye could see. The rustling leaves without a wind whispered their presence as an occasional branch fell to the waiting earth below. I felt a tinge of magic when a squirrel got brave enough to come out of his tree to talk to me. He chattered some sort of squirrel talk that I could not decipher, but I still understood. It was as if he was saying, "Welcome, welcome, but do not take these woods for granted. This is my home, too."

Trees told their own stories after the squirrel scampered back up to his hiding spot in the leaves. Signs of bad winds playing on their limbs shouted out to me. Rubbing marks from a male deer stained one tree, while lightning burns scarred another. Yet through all of this torture, they lived on to tell their tales. The elements could not stop their desire to live. I wondered what could.

"Only man can," I thought I heard the squirrel whisper to me from the trees.

I could feel the sun tickling my back. Soon it would be noon. Soon I would reach my destination. Then I could rest and really listen to the world of the woods, like my father's people taught him to do.

I saw it. Almost to my spot, I was hit by a sense of accomplishment. The top of the mountain was what most people wanted to reach. Yet, along the way, they miss the beauty nature really intended for them to see. The top was not where I wanted to be. I wanted to reach my own secret place almost at the top, but not quite. Still, I had to beat the sun to it or my trip would not mean anything.

Shaded by the mountain's peak, nature's own womb lay hidden from the rest of the world. Only at noon, when the sun was directly over the top of the whole mountain, did the darkness leave that spot. Exposed, its black rocks gleamed in a spiritual beauty that could not be found in a church. There I was always closest to God.

Racing the sun, I got there just in time.

Slowly the sun's rays approached the womb. Up, up the light climbed to reveal the only two huge rocks on the mountain. They stood taller than two grown-ups, just an arm's length apart from each other. In the middle of them, a smooth rock shining as equally bright, joined the two making them one in the light. There was where I longed to be.

I ran to my Mecca.

Between the two stones, I eased down as the sun stood above, watching me. We all were one. Even my man-made lunch seemed to fit into

the cradling embrace of the mountain, of Mother Earth, of God. Our spirits communed with one another, letting the world that belonged to my mother die in Nature's gentle grasp. She was an Anglo living in a gray, dreary world. There were no different shades of gray that she called color in that moment. The color of life existed only there, inside the embrace of the black rocks. There I was at peace.

\* \* \*

Seven years ago my father died. My mother sold our home and the mountain that went with it.

It pained me to leave the place that I felt safest, most at home with God. All of my life I felt torn between two worlds, the Native American and my mother's. My father grew up struggling with the same issues, but he always clung to Nature as being the true God. I never knew which one was right, still don't. All I know is that I felt whole there and no where else. There the nightmares stopped.

Last year, I traveled back home on a Saturday. I wanted to climb the mountain desperately. I wanted to feel whole again. I missed my father, and I missed the mountain that he had introduced me to.

I got all the way to our old driveway. I expected some change, but not what actually met me there. The road was still gravel, but a gate replaced the open entrance. A guard dressed in gray with a hat pulled down hiding his eyes stopped me.

He said something like, "Sorry Miss, you don't have clearance."

Clearance! I had to have permission to be close to nature, to myself. I was horrified when I glanced up at what used to be my sovereign ground. No trees were left standing. The last of them were being cleared out by logging trucks as I stood there just staring.

The mountain lay bleeding.

Each time a truck passed by carrying a part of the mountain's soul, a piece of me was shattered. My heart quivered in anguish while glancing at the destruction. Coal, its core, lay expose to nothing but the air. The sky was cloudy, as if the sun no longer wanted to shine in its direction anymore. It was as if Nature no longer lived there, nothing did. Neither did God.

The two huge black stones that embraced me were the giveaway that coal was there. The guard seemed to laugh at me. Of course he thought it was all right. He was getting paid. Instead of partaking in Nature's love, he and the coal company were just taking and taking.

Nature burns. Her spirit is still there in every burning piece of coal. She burns in my heart as I search for the perfect religion. She burns for man, but is anyone other than me burning for her? I search for that answer in the woods behind my new home. There are no huge black rocks there to

take my nightmares away. However, there are trees and there is life sprouting everywhere. Sometimes it speaks to me, saying it is sorry for the loss of the other mountain. I can only nod and hope that I can be whole again by communing with a forest that still hears the screams of her murdered sisters.

## **The Visit To Auschwitz**

**by Mary Krochmalny**

Driving along the narrow Polish version of a highway, I sit next to the driver, Jurek (YURH-ick), gazing at the stacks of hay clumped vertically in an hourglass fashion rather than the traditional American rectangle. It is my second visit to Poland. I'm in Poland visiting my own family, traveling and learning more about my culture. This summer, I am tutoring a young businessman, Jurek. While I tutor Jurek, he takes me to different places in Poland. One of the places I requested is Auschwitz, for I had not seen it the previous summer. That is our bargain: I tutor, he drives and shows me the country — and even sometimes makes fun of how my English is becoming rusty after only one month in Poland.

Listening to the popular Polish rock/pop station, I watch stacks of hay go by waiting for Jurek to begin his usual joke session.

"How does a Russian drink his tea?"

"I don't know, how?"

"He puts two tea bags in his mouth and then pours the hot water!"

Forcing a smile to appear on my face, I look at Jurek and mutter, "In my country they tell Polish jokes."

"Are you serious?" asks Jurek in total shock.

"Of course," I reply. "Any person with any ethnic heritage is subject to malicious jokes."

"I'm sorry, I don't understand what you say."

I look at Jurek and smile. I have forgotten that although his English is fairly good, he still struggles from time to time.

Jurek continues, "I do think that Polish people are seen as, what is the word? Not liking Jewish people. Is it so?"

"What do you mean?" I begin to wonder about Jurek's statement because it seems to me that anti-Semitism is worldwide.

Jurek sighs in frustration. I can tell he has something of great importance and opinion to convey to me, but his lack of English hinders this desire. The car reaches to a stop at the foot of train tracks. I know this will be a long wait, for the gates are lowered to prevent crossing ten minutes prior to the passing of the train. Jurek turns off the ignition of the car, opens the door to allow some sort of breeze to cool us from the plaguing July sun

and continues his explanation.

“I think, or, the Polish people think this because we...um...the movie Schindler’s List.”

“That was a good movie.”

“No. No. No. Why is it that all Americans say that? Think how shows the Polish person! We are seen as evil, Jew haters, and helping the Nazis in the death camps. You did not see this?”

“Jew haters! What gave you such an idea?” My mind is trying to replay the movie while Jurek preaches about only God knows what. I do believe he knows that I’m not listening to him, but he still persists.

“OK, Mary, I will give example. A girl yells ‘good-bye Jew’ as train full of Jews are going to Auschwitz. Do you remember? And, example: at death camp a Polish man is seen helping a German soldier. They did not tell that he was forced to do so.”

“Wait a minute. You are getting carried away. First of all, when I watched the movie, I was only a junior in high school. I didn’t even think about where the concentration camps were. It never occurred to me that this took place in Poland. The girl yelling at the train had no nationality to me. In fact, my friends who watched with me didn’t say, ‘Oh look at that evil Polish girl! They really must hate the Jewish.’ I bet you, that most Americans thought the girl was German!”

“But you, Mary. How could you forget that this took place in Poland?”

Echoing Jurek’s sentence, the train whistle blows as the iron wheels scrape, schlank, and glide over the tracks. Jurek closes his door and starts the car up. He looks at me with the train of passengers moving quickly from our view. “Mary, this is your homeland. Do you remember what your grandparents have taught you? You love Poland. You embrace it. But, no, you do not remember? A Pole is a Pole. No matter how long she has been away. A Pole does not forget.”

Gazing out the window as the gates are lifted, I begin to feel ashamed. I had forgotten. I had forgotten that during war my cousins were tortured, bombed, and killed. I had forgotten that they were sent away.

“You know Mary, not just Jews died in death camps. If the Germans didn’t kill us on the street, they would send us to death camp. They tried to kill us Poles, too.”

“Yes, yes, yes, I know Jurek. Jews, Poles, Gypsies, homosexuals, intellectuals, even the Russians who drank their tea without the teacups. I now it all. We studied. We saw films. We analyzed it. We took tests on it. We wrote papers on it.”

“But you have never seen it. You’ve never felt it.”

Knowing what is to come, a silence fills the car. I am going to see it in a matter of a few hours.

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Arbeit macht frei. Arbeit macht frei. Arbeit macht frei.

Ich weiss nicht. Nie rozumiem. I don't understand. No matter if I read the informational sign in German, Polish, or English, I don't understand. How could I? Such terror lays before me. Such history that they say 'must not be forgotten,' but how we want to forget. I have never seen anything like this. Never felt the terror I'm feeling now. I have felt the sorrow of the aftermath of my friends being shot on the streets, but this sorrow is quite different. I struggle to understand.

With Jurek in the distance arranging for a private tour guide for just the two of us, I find myself at the foot of the famous entrance with the words "Arbeit macht frei" (Work makes us free) carved in strong iron. Curiously looking around, I notice the many walks of life that seem to be gathered in this place. I see Jewish people, German, American, Russian, even Japanese, all gathered here from across the globe. All of them have come to see this place where the fires of hell once burned.

The entrance is intimidating, but not nearly as intimidating as the barbed, highly electrically charged wire that barricades this death camp. The wire is gazing upon me. I can feel its sharp wire around me, piercing my skin, sending electric bolts through my body, welcoming me to where hell once was. My eyes must move away from the wire. I cannot look at it anymore; so, my eyes fall to the earth. I stand where once a line formed of martyrs and saints. My shoes crunch the dirt and stones. How brown this place is. The buildings are made of brownish brick. The passageway between the buildings on the right and the buildings on the left is filled with brown dirt and stones. It seems so dusty. When I gaze down at my feet, I wonder if it is dust I see on my shoe, or the ashes of some martyr. I wonder how much human flesh I have kicked up and have disturbed from its eternal slumber. This is a dusty place. It is quiet now, and dusty, very brown.

"There you are. I would like to introduce you to our guide, Staszek (STAH-shick)."

"It is nice to meet you. My name is Mary."

"Very pleased to meet you, Miss. Now ladies, lady and gentleman, if you please look right, please, you will see..."

This is where my attention fails. I hear every word that he is saying. I see this man, Staszek. He is in his upper 70's, I assume. He is a thin man, not too tall. Amazingly he has all of his teeth, or close to it. His English is impressive; yet, I notice he has this tour memorized and finds it hard to speak to Jurek and I when he is used to a large group. But, his

passion is telling this story so it will never happen again. He lived through World War II. He survived, when most of Poland did not.

“I knew a man,” begins Staszek as he looks up at the entrance to Auschwitz, “who was about seventeen. He was a Jew. Yet, keep in mind, not only Jew was sent to Auschwitz. But he was a Jew. The camp had just opened, and at that time it was not as large as how Allies found it at the end of the War. He was sent out of the camp to work. He had himself a girl, and he planned to escape with her. One day they went out of the camp to work. She disguised herself to look as a man. They did escape. This was difficult to do, but the camp was not at the time big, and it was less guarded. But they had a hard time escaping. After several days, they found a near-by family, a Catholic family, who took care of them. Which was, as you know, very dangerous. This man is still alive today. He and his wife were two of the few people to escape Auschwitz. Now ladies...lady and gentleman, let us enter the camp.”

Now is the dreaded time. I must enter the camp. I must walk under those iron letters. I must walk where the barbed wire separates into a clearing. I must enter and prepare myself for all I had seen in all of those documentaries, in all the history books I had to read, in all of the interviews I had seen of former prisoners. It all becomes real when I walk through the gate. It is amazing how big the camp actually is. I knew that Auschwitz was the largest death camp, but the movies, the documentaries, never give an accurate view of how big this camp really is. I can look straight ahead and see a long aisle of dirt and stones. It is an eternity until the end. And this is but one row. Staszek keeps pointing and describing. He leads us into blocks. Some blocks were used as offices. Others for where the prisoners were kept. Staszek points at the rooms roped off, some prisoners slept piled up on the floor with a simple mat, basically, one on top of another. Others slept four in a sort of bunk with hay laid upon the cold stone. Pictures line the walls with gruesome details of the horror that occurred. Slowly, I begin to feel weak. My lungs tighten up. No air is there for me to breathe. The pictures start spinning. The gray walls are now speckled with colors circling, and dots zoom towards me at light speed. I only feel one sensation, that of sweat beginning to run down my body.

“Jurek,” I whisper tugging on his sleeve trying to maintain my balance. Staszek continues his speech and I feel rude for interrupting. “Jurek, I can’t breathe. I need to go outside.”

Jurek looks at me and tries to keep me balanced. “Did you bring your inhaler?”

“Yes, but I need air.”

Staszek continues to describe things, and I decide to flee for the

exit. But which way? I was on the second floor; now I'm on floor one, but so many rooms. Where am I? The skeleton body pictures begin to leap off the wall, spinning with colors and mixing with the stripe uniforms. They try to tackle me. Yet, I see the exit and as my vision becomes blackened, I almost fall on the cement steps conveniently constructed for visitors and give up. I sit on the steps allowing the subtle breeze to cool me.

The sun is hotter than what I had expected. I always saw those documentaries of concentration camps when it must have been the heart of winter. Everyone looked cold and frozen. I had always forgotten about summer. The stench must have been awful in the summer. Burning flesh, dead bodies rotting in open graves, and the dying all combining into one grotesque aroma.

Many people pass by me now. My vision is restored, my breathing better. I see a German couple walking with somber expressions on their faces. Americans pass by me slowly. I wonder if they know I'm American. Do they think I'm Polish? Perhaps, they think I'm Jewish. If so, they are wrong. I'm just a Catholic, Polish-American. Maybe they think I'm distressed by what I have seen. Maybe they are amazed at the green leaves on the trees in front of these blocks. The green gives such a life in the midst of all the browns.

I beg your pardon, are you well?"

Looking up, I see Jurek looking down at me with a concerned look. "I'm better now. I'm ready to move on."

Staszek helps me to my feet and offers me a breath saver. "Take one of these. The rooms have no air and are dry. These save me, and help me do these tours."

Taking the breath saver, I continue to the next block.

"Ladies and gentlemen...lady and gentleman," Staszek corrects himself. I can tell that he is trying so hard and finds it hard to adjust to a group of only two individuals. "If you look please here, you will see a map of all the major cities that had people in this camp. If you look please, you will see even Rome."

"Jurek! Take a picture of this!" This map begins to jump out at me. Unlike the barbed wire that tried to strangle me, this map seems to embrace me. My expression changes. My eyes fall to the floor. My hands begin to shake as I reach out to one city, Inowroclaw, the city where my family had come from. Instantly I remember my grandmother telling me that some of my relatives did die in Auschwitz. How many, I do not know. Yet, now, I feel all of them embrace me. With this embrace, I swear that I can feel some of their sorrow. I had forgotten them. But they had found me. I am now silenced like many of the visitors that I had seen walk past me.

"That is where my family is from," I said nervously pointing to the

word “Inowroclaw” on the map.

Jurek is speechless. Staszek simply nods his head, and we begin to move on, on to the rooms where I begin to see my cousins’ hair lumped up into great piles behind the glass. I see gas canisters, Cyclone B gas laying empty now. I see the suit cases that my cousins brought with them.

“Lady and gentleman, over here we have what is called ‘death block yard.’ To your left, Block 11. In this block the Nazis had the gas chambers and the hunger cells. On the right, Block 10, where the Nazis would perform scientific experiments. Over there, against that wall with all the flowers, is where prisoners would be gunned down. Many of these gunned down here were Poles.”

My eyes close upon hearing this. This is the gruesome part of the tour. The screams grow louder. The gunshots deafen me. I see my cousins being gunned down. Now a candle lies upon their blood. Staszek waves us on, and I know what is next. We enter Block 11, and I feel death.

There is eeriness about Block 11. I feel uneasy entering it. Now, I am standing in the gas chamber. Looking up, I see where the gas shot out. Looking around I see how big this room is. I am standing on the cement where there was death. I am listening to Staszek tell me how my cousins died within this gas chamber. The hunger cells are to come next. How they look like a dungeon! Descending down the steps, I feel like I have made my way into a torture chamber — which, in reality, I have done. No windows, no life. The crematoriums are silent now; yet, still intimidating. No freedom until they died — Jews, Catholics, Poles, Gypsies, intellectuals, Russians, homosexuals. The list goes on. They all died down here. Maybe my cousins did also. Maybe I have died in Block 11. This is the end of only one row of the Auschwitz death camp.

On the car ride back, Jurek and I silent. As we leave Oswiecim and Auschwitz, I follow the train tracks, now silent. I see the young girl in Schindler’s List yelling “Good-bye Jew!” My body is numb, frozen with the horror I have just seen. I wonder how many more family members I would have to visit on this trip if some had not perished in the death camp.

“Hey Jurek, what happened when the Jew, the Catholic, the Polack, the Jap, the Russian, the Mick, and the Chink decided to play golf?”

“What?” asked Jurek quite confused.

“Nothing, nothing at all,” I reply quietly, as we turn away from the train tracks, wondering if hatred could still exist in anyone’s heart after visiting Auschwitz.

A black and white photograph of a quill pen resting in a small, dark inkwell. The inkwell has a white band around its middle with the word "INK" printed in bold, black, serif capital letters. The quill is positioned diagonally, with its tip in the inkwell and its feathered end extending upwards and to the right. The inkwell sits on a dark, textured surface that has some faint, wavy lines drawn on it. The background is a light, textured wall. The overall composition is simple and focused on the writing instrument.

INK