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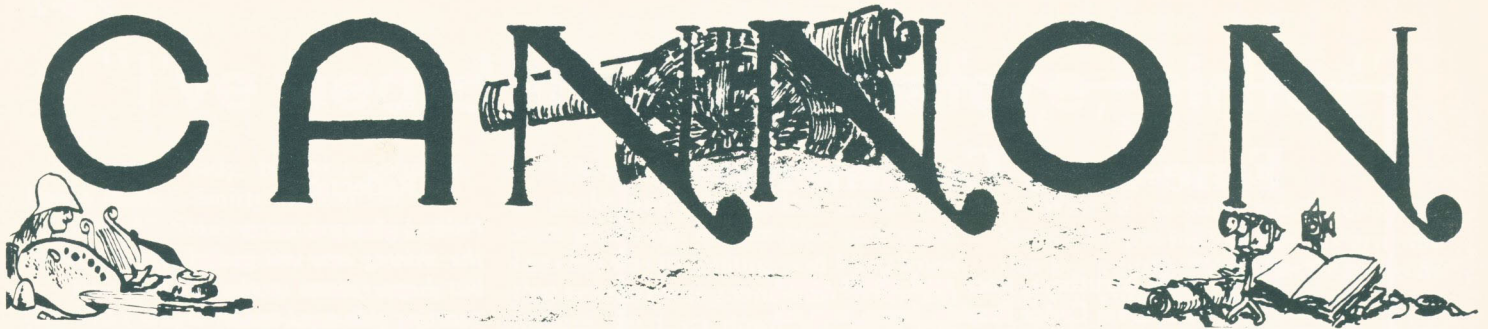
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DORDT COLLEGE, Sioux Center, Iowa

Vol. 7, No. 9

Soli Deo Gloria

A New Knight

by Dorann Williams

Fine Arts Issue

She was one of those girls you felt uncomfortable about. Short, fragile, and much too thin, even in that silver tent dress, I could barely see her through the rising streamers of cigarette smoke. She was huddled against the patterned wall of Smitty's Happy Palace. The dancing couples were hustling, jiving, and bumping past her like some psychedelic flower garden gone mad. But she just swayed back and forth against the wall in time to the music. Her head jerked from side to side as she watched the dancers. She would've been pretty except for the I'm-dumb-but-eager-to-please look pasted on her face.

She was the only obviously unattached chick in the room. I wondered how she'd gotten in and how long it would be before Smitty spotted her and threw her out. He was really down on the idea of singles, especially single girls. He said they ruined the atmosphere of his place.

I sipped my Blue Motorcycle and looked around the reconverted furniture mart building trying to find Smitty's atmosphere. Two-thirds of the room was given over to the dance floor and bright scarlet, almost bloody colored bandstand. The remaining third was split into two parts: the black stained bar, in the corner, and about thirty black leather booths. Three walls were painted dull black, but the fourth wall was covered with contact paper in a somber black and white birch tree pattern. The floor was big black, white, and grey formica squares. When they weren't hidden by flashing feet, they reflected the red, yellow, green, or blue lights hanging from the ceiling. The lights also picked out and reflected

against Shiny in her silver tent. That's how I'd spotted her in the first place.

Between the spotlights hung from the low water stained ceiling were large cages of speakers, different wires and pipes, and an asthmatic air conditioner/humidifier that made obscene noises whenever Smitty switched it past low. I think that without the bandstand and colored lights, it would've looked like a partly demolished funeral home.

Still, Smitty liked it and didn't want any single broads "prospecting for fresh meat. It makes everybody uncomfortable," he said once. And, speak of the devil, there he was, heading straight for Shiny. The lights must've made it easier for him to spot her too. I slid off the bar stool and sauntered over to hear, still clutching my Blue Motorcycle.

(Continued on page 3)

Prayers

amen amen amen amen amen amen
amen amen amen amen amennamen
amennamennamennaminnamen
naminnamen naminnnnamen naminnamen

*So many pious prayers,
Tossed into the air
with the careless whirl
of a broken wrist,
Can only fall back on my head.*

It's a good thing they don't weigh much.

Amen.

Dave Groenenboom

Fine Arts Comments

Ann Struthers, poet and short story writer from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, was on the campus Dec. 1-3 to judge the Fine Arts literary entries.

First place in short story went to Dorann Williams' "The New Knight." Second place was awarded to Val Zandstra's untitled short story.

In the poetry division, "Reflections" by Bonnie Kuipers won first place. Dan Van Heyst's "Buy the Things That Really Count" won second place.

Thirty-six poems and seven short stories were entered in the Fine Arts contest. We would like to thank all those who contributed to this issue.—Ed.

Buy the Things That Really Count— Charge Them on Your Eatons Account

*He walked downtown
when the sky was falling
the beautiful people
hid behind their eyes
and the corner light cried
DONT WALK*

*But the yellow footprints
painted on the sidewalks
(to furniture stores) were
turned to worn soul shapes
by a thousand docile
Foot falls*

*(buy the things that really count—
charge them on your eatons account)*

*So he said to them,
Follow in my footsteps
I am what really counts,
but he had no things
and he was not even
For Sale*

—Daniel VanHeyst

Reflections

*Pressed glass on water
the shining new me gazes
but I see visions in the
twisting tide toad never
sing to me their visions
do not burn as mine
if I never hear their voices*

*again I will sing my own
sad elegy of water tumble
and curse the stones resting
heavily on the bank frown
not on the water lilies they
float as gossamer breath
slowly sinking in the curses I*

*cry every Saturday when I
see the bubbles the only tag
left on the waters one mark
each for words spoken to their
death one drop tears for
they were the mirror I sought
sinking shining new me in
water lilies grasp it was*

*the only solid vision for toad's
eyes are glassy clear no
stable backdrop there only
burning of a different sort
I tumble madly after roots
wild water lilies answer visions
clear and I sing out loud.*

—Bonnie Kuipers

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"I've heard that one before, girlie."

"I'm sorry lady, but you gotta go, house rules," Smitty started off.

"What?" Shiny turned quickly. She hadn't heard him come up.

"You gotta get out, leave, scram. I don't like single broads messing up my place."

"Oh, but I've got a date, he uh just went to get a drink." She said it without any hope of being believed. Her face had turned color, from light ivory to deep maroon and it sounded like she was swallowing sand. I finished my drink and edged in closer.

"I've heard that one before, girlie. Now I don't wanna be mean but you really wouldn't like it here all by yourself."

"But I told you, I do have a date. I really do. He just went to the bar, that's all. He'll be back any minute. Please?"

"Okay," Smitty sighed. "If that's the way you want it. You point him out to me and we'll get to the bottom of this game."

"Uh, well, He's uh," Shiny was going to choke any second. Her green eyes were gleaming, her dimples were gone, her chin was trembling, and I just knew that her nose was gonna start to run any minute. So I set down my glass and horned my way in.

"Hi there, I'm back."

They both turned to look at me: Shiny with incredible hope, Smitty with amused disbelief.

"So this is your date, huh Dale?"

"Yup, that's right, you got it right Smitty. I just went to the bar for a short snort, and got kinda carried away on your Blue Motorcycles. Ha, Ha." I knew I was talking too much and too fast, so I took a deep breath to calm down. It didn't help at all to see those two faces staring at me. "So, uh Shiny, do you wanna dance or not?"

"Oh yes!" she breathed. She had her hands clasped together on her chest. She acted like I'd just asked her to marry me, for Pete's sake!

"Okay then, let's go."

"Wait a minute now," chuckled Smitty. He put his hand on my arm and shook it a little. "You don't have to do this you know. I'm not no white slaver or nothing. I was just gonna show her out, so something like this wouldn't have to happen. She isn't really your girl, now, is she, Dale?" He gave me one of his man-to-man looks.

It was my last chance. I shrugged my shoulders and was gonna confess when I looked at Shiny. She was staring at the floor so all I could see of her head was the part in her hair. She had really pretty hair, kind of reddish brown and she was slowly crumpling the sides of her dress in her hands. Well, I felt sorry for her, but I'd never see her again anyway. And Smitty was just gonna show her out, it wasn't like he was gonna put her in front of a firing squad or anything like that. And this was my one free evening of the week. I wondered if she even knew how to dance. I straightened my shoulders and took a deep breath.

"Hell yes, she's my date. I told ya that before, didn't I?"

Smitty's smile melted like a lump of ice cream in an oven. I looked past him to Shiny whose head had snapped up like it was on a string that somebody had just pulled. Her green eyes were sparkly now, all lit up inside. I continued, "Now do you wanna talk all night or do you wanna dance?"

"Oh YES!"

"Alright then, let's get on with it." I shouldered past Smitty to offer Shiny my arm. We marched to the dance floor with her leaning on me. "Oh by the way, my name's Dale."

"I'm Sarah."

"Well hi there, Sarah."

Softly, "Hi there."

We reached the dance floor and started to dance. Boy, could she dance.

Bath Deck Beau

Hot griddle cement

Cocoa

Sun slick sweat

Squint

Tight thin-clad buns

Scorch

Licked puffy lips

Baby oil

Sunken swivel navel

Transistor

Serpentine limbs

Cola

Wilted hair nest

Chlorine

Sagging halter breasts

Whistle

Water sizzle tan

Disappear

Steve Huisken

Chairs

Chairs stand around

tables

being moved

only to be seated

in

Some pulled out really far

Sometucked in

One table, eight chairs

around it

Others, three

Still others spaced evenly apart

They are the same

but few stand

out

*Like the two chairs seated together
facing one.*

Wiets Woudstra

"People are always complaining that the modern novelist has no hope and that the picture he paints of the world is unbearable. The only answer to this is that people without hope do not write novels."

—Flannery O'Connor

p. 77 from **Mystery and Manners**

Short Story

by Val Zandstra

The peeling yellow school bus shuddered to a stop on a curve of the narrow mountain road, and Roseanne Sweeney, knowing her cue full well, was ready to hop off immediately. The bus couldn't wait for her and her multiple brothers and sisters because the road was scarcely wide enough for two cars, a good quarter of the road having slid down the mountain during a recent rainstorm. She stood in the muddy creek bed, brushing the wisps of hair from her freckled face and watching the bus lumber down the road, groaning in protest.

She started up the creek, avoiding the deep ruts with unconscious familiarity. The voices of the others gradually faded; they preferred to walk along the big road to visit friends and wave at the grimy coal trucks. Roseanne took the path that led directly into Venter's Branch Holler; it was so personal and only occasionally were her thoughts scrambled by a dented pickup jouncing and splashing down the makeshift road. She almost appreciated living at the mouth of the holler, even though it was an hour-long walk to the black road. The length of the trek and her self-imposed solitude seemed to ease the transition between home and school.

Grassy School was a gray-brown brick shoebox that every morning bulged with indifferent students and harried, slightly sadistic teachers. Between the interruptions of subjects, Roseanne's social life was written, punctuated profusely with giggles in the only girls' bathroom. Everyone congregated here whenever possible, whether or not use of the facilities was necessary, simply because cool, smooth porcelain was a novel change from the splintery wooden outhouses of home. Roseanne's ninth grade clique ruled the roost and they kept as many young ones out as possible, because they drowned out any attempts at conversation with their constant delight in toilet-flushing.

At home, Roseanne's conversation was also muffled, and there was no room for protest, so she rarely opened her mouth except for the routine "Yes Ma's" of everyday life. She did her chores with such apathetic resignation

that sometimes she was surprised at herself. As the eldest girl, it was her unwritten right to be full-time child-sitter to all the children who had grown out of the baby and toddler stages which so entranced the adults. She looked upon the siblings as a lovable but heavy burden to carry; so

Im-pulse

*top of the cliff;
under me I see
pulsing green waves
smashing white foam
against the crust of the sea
I look around
a path winds down
to the sweeping
sound of the sea.*

*the path is long
I shortcut but
instead slip
stupidly slide
on my seat
bump
around
til I thump
against a rock
and stop.
a heap of stones
settles around
or trickles to
the sand*

*i stand shameful
move gently down
to the soft sand
sit on driftwood
shut my eyes and
my being breathes
to pounding pulses
and salty sweeps
of the pounding sounding sea.*

—Pat Leegwater

numerous were they that she had difficulty remembering which child had been sired by various of her mother's menfriends and which had come by the Sweeney name honestly.

Roseanne sighed in anticipation of the shrieks and tugs she would have to endure as soon as she arrived home; ideas of dawdling tumbled through her mind, but memories of her mother's enraged outbursts and sharp slaps quickly dispersed such thoughts.

As she came out of the woodsy part of her walk and into the real holler, small two-room cabins began to appear, occasionally spiced by a city-made mobile home. Venter's Branch Holler was, as every other Appalachian holler, an isolated and hidden community. Every dirt road or creek led to another small population who ventured out for church, school and groceries only. Few people moved out of their holler and even fewer moved in, because hollers were primarily made up of one large and intermarried family. Venter's Branch had no more than seven surnames distributed among over forty families. The trouble with such a kin-holler, Roseanne ruefully noted, was that everyone knew everyone else's business, including who was staying overnight with Mrs. Sweeney while Mr. Sweeney worked the night shift in the Petercave Coal Mine. Roseanne marvelled at her father's stubborn refusal to believe the rumors in the holler; (the events were usually true and more sordid than the gossip that was told about them), she wished fervently that she could shut her eyes and ears to what was going on, but in a cabin where one room was the kitchen and the other was the bedroom, she and the other children were involuntarily subjected to adult sights and sounds. Roseanne was aware that there was nothing abnormal in this behaviour; she knew it was odd for her to feel revolted, but whenever her mother came home with another half-drunk man, she writhed inwardly. Pa was now working days for awhile and Roseanne welcomed the temporary reprieve.

She started suddenly, jostled out of her musing by a yelping dog. The Sweeney cabin was just around the bend and she could distinguish some well-known yells. She gave a sigh and trotted up the rise on which the cabin was situated, listening for the instant reaction she usually received. She heard it. The screeches went up a notch in their pitch and the three little ones came flying at her, each one fighting for the limelight.

"Rosie! Rosie! I saw a worm today!"

(Continued on page 5)

"I squished a big spah-der with my bare hand!"

"I ran all the way to the end of the holler!"

"Everwho heerd of such a thing!"

"You be tellin' tales again, Jamesie!"

"Aw, hush your mouth, Frankie, you be nothing but a silly-milly girl, always jabberin'!!"

"Rosie, he's calling me names again!!!"

"CHILDREN!!! All-a you just hush up a piece!" Rosie sought to appease them all. "Jamesie, if you lie anymore, your whole tongue's gonna turn black, and if you tell tales, Frankie, your ears'll start stickin' out straight. Latilda, ladies don't squish bugs with

their hands." Satisfied, the three pre-schoolers gradually drifted back to their play. Rosie watched them for a few indulgent moments, then made her way to the right door of the cabin, the one that led to the kitchen. Her mother was seated inside, nursing Coby, the two-month baby boy, who, according to Rosie's cold calculations was probably the son of that old Mr. Salyers with the rotten teeth. Rosie shivered as she remembered the blank look he always wore. Her mother must be loony!! No, Ma was just old, tired and unattractive at thirty-three. She had had so many cigarettes, drinks and children that she was now gaunt, sunken and wrinkled, and the too short housecoat she always wore just emphasized all the lines and angles of her body.

"Rosie-honey! Give your Paw a kiss!" a deep voice bellowed from across the room. Rosie started, because the room without windows was so dim that she hadn't seen her father by the table. She obediently pecked at his beard and sat down by the table, flopping her books down upon it.

"Why're you home, Paw? Don't you gotta work?"

"Well, my little Rosie-Posie, your Paw went in this morning and the foreman said 'Sweeney, we just lost four night men to Black Lung in one week. Could ya help us out?' I was obliging and came home and slept all day like a rundown warthog!!" He chortled with glee at his own simile. "They pay higher at night 'cause the hours are longer, so maybe we can buy some cow milk for this young-un." His gaze fell tenderly upon Ma and Coby; Ma responded with a self-satisfied smile.

Pa continued prattling to his seemingly absorbed audience but Rosie was anything but attentive as she agonizingly foresaw the nights that were to come. Pa wanted more money, so he'd like as not stay on night shift and who could guess who her Ma's next male diversion would be and how he would treat the children?

As if in answer to her thoughts, she heard the school-age children charge into the yard. She was concerned for them, but they had grown accustomed to it, as had most mountain children. These situations were so common that Rosie felt she must be a little off her rocker to feel so funny about her Ma being with another man.

The children stampeded into the cabin, anxious for food, but they all

clustered around Pa when he made his presence known. One by one they received their allotted share of attention and going to the table, they helped themselves to the greasy pork, sauerkraut and succotash that had been setting out all day. Pa lingered a while longer, talking Ma's ear off because for once, he wasn't dog-tired in her company. Finally, money called and he took his helmet and was gone. Rosie dreaded the time alone with her mother and hastened to ask the kids about their day. She asked about Frazier's finger painting (he had exhibited telltale blue hands), Garnet's grammar, Otis' geography, Dulcey's long division and Fenton's sentence diagrams. They each responded promptly, each trying to outdo the previous one in drama and daring. They soon flocked back outside, however, and Rosie was left facing her mother once more. She decided to tidy up the room and under this pretense, go into the bedroom. She drifted towards the door, trying to appear nonchalant when her mother spoke:

"Where ya goin'?"

"I thought I'd make the beds."

"Good idea. Haven't got around to 'em yet." She cackled suddenly. "I been pretty busy today, yessir!"

"Doing what?" Rosie made a valiant attempt at sounding interested.

"Shoppin'. Makin' friends. Bein' sociable."

Rosie's heart did a quick double-beat; Ma didn't waste any time. She had one picked out already! Rosie clenched her teeth and stepped out the door and surveyed the yard full of unheeding kids for a moment, then stepped into the bedroom. It was even darker than the kitchen so she worked mostly by feel. There were five beds packed into this room and a rag-filled cardboard box on the floor for Coby. The only double bed was for Pa and Ma; it was covered with a soiled white bedspread with a bumpy pattern on it whenever it was made, which was not very often. Next to it and also against the far wall was the bed Rosie and Dulcey shared, then the bed for Fenton and Otis. On the left of the door at the foot of the double bed was one for Frankie, Jamesie and Latilda, and on the right side was Frazier and Garnet's. As Rosie became accustomed to the light, she was faintly surprised to see that she was not the only one who had made her bed. Pa and Ma's had been

(Continued on page 6)

Wind

*Wind
blows its strength
through the earth
and the mighty trees
bow low
before its power.*

*Wind
blows its strength
through the earth
but the lowly man
stands firm
before its power.*

*while the trees
move
to Wind's rhythms,
the lowly man
hides
in his protective covering
to break the Wind's power.*

*the lowly man
escapes
into his house
with locked doors
and boarded windows,
but
Wind laughs—
because that man
has left a window
in the farthest corner
of that house—
open.*

Sandra Vandervelde

SHORT STORY — (Continued from page 5)

neatly smoothed and tucked in. She was suddenly revolted as the significance of it dawned upon her. Ma would bring him home tonight. Disgusted, she charged out, slamming the door behind her and taking the path that led straight up the mountain behind the cabin. For once she didn't care who saw her; if they thought she was touched, that was dandy-fine. She was probably the only visitor to the grave at the end of the path. Granny had always been able to understand her. She always could find a reason why a person did the things he did. Like the time Rosie was upset about young Jeter Bowen getting drunk all the time, Granny had pointed out that his stepfather beat him a lot. She even had an explanation for Ma's behaviour: every woman had a hidden need to be wanted for something besides meals and babies, and Ma got lonely with Pa gone or asleep all the time. Those nights when Granny and Rosie had shared a bed and whispered under the cheap quilt had provided a

wealth of wisdom and lots of common sense for Rosie. Sometimes, at night, she could still whisper to Granny and hear her answer and almost smell her sweet jasmine sachet. It was easier to get answers when she was sitting at the foot of Granny's grave, gently touching the geranium she had planted there the day after the burial. She would ask Granny questions and if she sat there quietly and long enough, the answers would come to her. She knew Granny was putting the solutions in her head and she still felt close to her, although mounds of cold dirt separated them.

The grave was only an aluminum marker that said "Sweeney, Blossom" and it had been provided free by the funeral home where they had bought the casket. Rosie had placed plastic wreaths and flowers all over the grave, and it really looked cheerful and not forbidding at all. As she reached it, she crouched down by the geranium and softly touched the red petals.

"Hi Granny."

Silent assent.

"Granny, Ma's bringing home another man. What if he beats up on us kids? What if Pa finds out? What does Ma do this for? How come?" The questions came crowding on top of each other. Rosie waited and thoughtfully patted the dirt around the geranium with her index finger.

"Maybe . . ." She cocked her head to hear the answer.

"Maybe . . . he'll be really nice. Maybe Ma just wants a friendly man to talk to while Pa works. He might be smiley and twinkly and be a pa to the younguns while Pa's gone. Maybe Pa wouldn't really mind, if he knew, that is. Like a babysitter he'd be. Yeah. A sorta second-hand pa." Rosie chuckled at the idea. Second-hand!

"But Granny, what if he's . . ."

"Hush, child. A second-hand pa. I like that!"

"Me too Granny."

"There then."

burning fencelines

*flames of Indian Summer
taunt the silver
slivered fence-posts—
brave aging Brèbeufs bound
to the ground
by rusty barbed wire
Thorns*

*dry weed faggots heaped
about their feet
ignite the wooden saints
who burn with holy zeal
spiralling white smoke
Heavenward*

*the Fire passes on releasing charred skeletons
from their
Bonds.*

Daniel VanHeyst

A Memory

*We were close when
grass was turning green.
You pulled me outside and
we walked along
the streets dodging
puddles from melting patches
of snow.
You danced on the street corner.*

*Through my window now, I
see the snow is deep—
too deep to see the
frozen grass beneath and
ice is slick on the streets.
Do you still dance?*

—Karen Kole

Dordt Alumni Contributions

Saturday

*Elbows bump, reaching arms tangle
across a clatter of forks
steam swirls above the chatter
of kids happy with cornbread
jumping at the jangle of the phone
a radio sings reedy from a bedroom
and the doorbell rings
paperboy
Not you.
If I had known at eighteen
you would come . . .
staring empty at my plate my place my father's home.*

*Our corner, our chair
you leaning against my legs
me fondling the hair on your neck
secret and smiling into faces of friends
savoring coffee and talk
whiling away the last warm dregs
of an evening
as candles burned to stumps
and a day turned
into another.
The clock chimed
time
so you walked me home and we talked
softly until the door shut tight
behind me.
If I had known you would
come in . . .
so sweetly
I could have slept
on a good night.*

*A white-walled box eight steps by nine
the books are ours
the clocks ticking above the muffled roar and whine
of passing trucks
a Vermeer taped to plaster scarred before our time
here
waiting for Spring
an empty-handed mailman
your step, your knock
your coming in,
Candlelight touches your nose and cheekbones
glows from the dark hollows of your eyes
set toward the Vermeer and the calendar
over your supper
silent and wise*

*Let's talk
Of what
Old times
—you cover my hand with your hand—
We've done that*

If I had known . . .

*Of someday then
We've done that too.*

Pat DeYoung Weaver

Sunday

*This noon, a tragedy—
our tightly clasped
fistful of crumbs
slipped from our grasp
as we in foolishness
spread out our hand
to count upon our fingertips
how long we had to make them last.
But still, with such a feast you fed us, Lord.
Though we have often eaten it before;
have roled your body,
gently
round and round
in spittle balls
that crumbs may not explode
in sanctuary's silences,
and swallowed with a gulp;
have relished wine
around our tongue
the liquid
bitter
rusty
red as iron
which radius
from ulna
shrieked,
that your hands
bloody
calloused
and despised
might give us a bread enough to eat.*

Nigel Weaver

SHORT STORY—(Con't from page 5)

Rosie suddenly realized it was getting dark and she had better get back home and get the babies to bed. She knew that within an hour, Ma's latest man would show up and they'd drink and laugh until the kids were all hopelessly asleep. She decided to get to bed early and try to be asleep with the rest of the younguns when Ma and her man came in. She loped down the hill and into the kitchen where Ma was putting worn flannel sleepers on Coby. Latilda was trying hard to get into her nightgown but failing miserably. Rosie rescued her head from a sleeve and supervised the dressing of Frankie and Jamesie. As one by one the children were transferred from the kitchen to the bedroom, Rosie was getting almost anxious to meet Ma's friend. She was envisioning him as a jolly middle-aged man who might

chuck her under the chin and give her candy. As she grew sleepy, she looked at Ma almost fondly: "All she wants is someone to talk to while Pa's gone. You were right, Granny."

Ma seemed restless and urged Rosie to go to bed before she conked out and fell into the stove. Rosie just grinned crookedly. She was going to meet her second-hand pa if it took until midnight.

There was a timid knock at the door (he doesn't want to wake the kids Rosie thought benevolently) and Ma put down her hot toddy and went to the door, smoothing down her hair as she did. She opened the door and a tall figure stepped in carefully. Rosie was alert now and scanned the shadowy face eagerly. The person stepped into the light and Rosie's heart nearly plummeted to the floor. She felt faint and sick and giddy all at once. The awkward

and gangly figure was Jeter Bowen, with his wide, frightened eyes and a shadow on his pimply chin proclaiming his sixteen years. Numbed, Rosie edged toward the door and murmured, "I'll be goin' to bed now. Night all." She kept her composure until the door shut and then she tore up the mountain path, her breath coming in hysterical gasps. The tears filling her eyes were dried quickly by the chilly night air. She was there sooner than she had expected and she paused, her shoulders still heaving, her mind chaotic, her eyes blindly staring at the grave. Exhausted and defeated, she stretched out prostrate at Granny's feet, and as her cheek pressed against the cold damp sod, her hand groped along the ground. Her fingers found their goal and slowly, deliberately, she pulled the geranium out of the dirt and left its roots bare, helpless and cruelly exposed in the raw October wind.

UNHAPPY
BEING FORLORN
OUR WASTEFUL
OF VAIN
CENTER PLEASURES
THE ENDLESS
TO WALKING
LEADING ROUND
SPOKE THIS
THE LONELY
FIND SPHERE
TO SEARCHING
HOPE FOR
IN TRUTH
TURNS EACH
SPOKE AS