

1990

There is a sense of anger and increased racial tension. The piece by Amanda Hannah depicts the intense fissure between the white and black communities which is magnified in her poem as Amanda tells of whites who try to take her freedom from her. Most of the poems from this year display a sense of aggression and a sad state of human existence and the crash of the society that surrounds people. Karen Donnelly shows the impact of physical aggression by describing a terrifying rape incident. The problems of the woman are magnified in this issue. A work by Susan Rubinsky is a poem describing the ugly aspects of abortion. She gives the aborted fetus an identity by describing its eyes.

Selected Works:

One Warm evening by Karen Donnelly

(She would have had beautiful eyes) you said by Susan Rubinsky

To be black in this white world by Amanda Hannah.

Heeding mother's warning by Karen Jastermsky

ONE WARM EVENING

by Karen Donnelly

stepping through her door
a sharp shove
right between the shoulder blades,
she fell, groceries crashing,
eggs smashed, sugar spilled.
Weight was on her.
Paralyzed, she listened
to a voice she knew,
 Don't move

A scarf, rubbed in raw egg and grit
gagged her eyes.
Her elbows whacked on white and black
floor as he flipped her.
Fingernails reached eyes. He smacked her,
ripped her
blouse.

The found
cracked empty
bits of shell

She could not remember if she screamed.

(she would have had beautiful eyes) you said

by Susan Rubinsky

driving along in fog the only
light is of whiteness, the clouds
descended on me. in fog hollows

boulders lining this road bulge out,
immediate and thumping. inside a tiny heart beats.
still unborn
she hollows out my womb
waiting for this wide
dark ocean to burst. muffled undercurrents
carry her movements, Morse-coded
shivers pierce spine vertebrae, retina. cold fog
blankets sharp headlight. the breathing
begins. rock belly now not
so smooth. the breathing begins. blood
warm stones, rocks, pebbles, burst.
the nurse holds my hand.
white M.D. shoves stainless
steel into my cervix, soft door
forced open. ovaries pinch
as she is sucked into tornado
tubes, her tiny hands
fingernails scratch
into walls, flesh. his hand slides
over my breast to check if my heart
has died.

TO BE BLACK IN THIS WHITE WORLD

by Amonda Hannah

To be Black?

To be Black.

To be Black!

To be Black in this white world.

Nigga boy, Nigga girl

Negro son, Negro daughter

Black male, Black female

African-American man, African-American woman-

So I took my Nigga

Negro

Black

African-American self, to that white table, put my hand down and asked, politely, (Can I have my freedom?) He snatched my freedom from me, and gave no reply. I stepped back, then (snapped!), and yelled in a loud tone (Can I have my freedom?) This Time He folded his arms tight with my freedom and looked away, as if I didn't exist. So I stomped, snapped and raced to that table and put my hand down; NO I DID NOT ASK, I took my freedom and walked toward the door. I turned around and said thank you, before I slammed that damn door as hard as I could.

HEEDING MOTHER S WARNING

by Karen Jastermsky

Mother never warned
me about your kind
the ones who barefoot
march and carry pregnant
banners down Pennsylvania
Avenue.

Neither did she warn
me about my kind
the wallflower reader
not the bloomed writer.

When I hid Adrienne
Rich & Radclyffe
Hall & Sylvia
Plath & Anne
Sexton under my mat
tress, it wasn't books
that I was hiding
but the women themselves.

Their slumber party poked
my high school body
& whispered through pillows
that nightmares are dreams
in disguise.

When I bled for the first
time I blamed myself
for keeping their mouths
shut like trapdoors.

Now with hand on hip
you stand before me
my modern Eve, dangling
the apple. I want to grab
it & run with it
& hide with it
& even eat its seeds
the seeds of life
the seeds of death.

Mother always warned me that one is judged
by the company one keeps.

1990 Staff

Naomi Ayala

Allan Brandt
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Karen Donnelly
Jeannine Ervin
Richard Fencil
Amonda Hannah
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Dan Hott
Karen jastermsky
Gerry Kelsall
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Alex Shaumyan
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Aggie Vesgo
Mike Waelter
John Zuccardy

1991

This year's work deals with a diverse field of subjects. There really is no common thread holding them together. Joan B. Bernstein introduces the topic of crack into poetry for the first time in *Folio* in her poem about a crack baby and its addicted mother. The topic of crack has finally entered the lives of SCSU's students who see what it is doing on the streets and the voracity of the inner city streets and gangs is now being described in poetry. Thurman Matthiesen describes a frank and graphic account of the brutality on the gang streets. Again, the division of white and black is present. The necessity to be cool is described as being essential. Finally, remembering your homeland has now evolved into a second generation discussion of how and when grandparents came over from Europe. Susan Rubinsky's poem talks about a person's grandmother coming to America and the life she lived before that. In earlier issues, many people remembered the immigration to America first hand. This is a commentary on the type of students now enrolling in the university.

Selected Works:

Brother s hangin' out by Thurman Matthiesen

Rock-a-bye-mama by Joan B. Bernstein.

How could God resist- for my grandmother, Marian Smith by Susan Rubinsky

Song of Fire Anonymous

BROTHER'S HANGIN OUT

by Thurman Matthiesen

I smoke, choke, tell a good joke,
Pray -- Say, did someone call me a man today?
I eat, red meat, hangin out on the mean street.
run, gun, shootin people is a whole lotta fun,
I think -- I think, I drink, people say I stink.
Shiny gold, sneakers -- day old, forgot how many children I sold,
I am a man. College? Sham! In jail is the good ham.
Bullshit talkin , pimp walkin , the future ain' t worth stalkin .
I? Learnin ? Vermin! I got plenty to sperm in.
Women, swimmin , deep in my pants, ain' t I winnin ?
I m lookin good, know I should, be on my way to Hollywood.
Drivin a new car, goin real far, someday soon I ll be a star.
Nigger, with an itchy trigger, motherfuckin right my dick is bigger.
Bitches, sew my stitches, gun shots, put my brothers in ditches.
I m a rover. Love her? Nah, I m just tryin to get over.
I love smack, I get wacked, on my cereal, I put crack.
Basketball, is my call, fancy clothes is my all.
I am, blood red, whiteys should all be dead.
Black, shootin ourselves in the back, all for a Big Mac.
My history, ain' t of me, step on my sneakers, I ll make you bleed.
Fuck our past, no longer bein last.
I got a brain. Use it? Nah, rather go insane.
I am a man -- Say, you forgot to call me nigger today.

ROCK-A-BYE-MAMA

by Joan B. Bernstein

I ache
for soon-to-be-foster
mother cradles cracked
boy-baby sucking pacifier, curled
lashes shelter vacant eyes nurse
bloused bosom close and comforting
her fingers whisper tenderness
on fragile backbone zig-zagged.

I remember
yesterdays of birth
and death, no hard drugs infusing
veins spread to baby s dreams
or sealed the souls of
rock and rollers.

I want
to rock this mother
in my emptied arms while
she hums a lullaby
he will never hear

HOW COULD GOD RESIST -- FOR MY GRANDMOTHER MARIAN SMITH

by Susan Rubinsky

Seven days, their eyes open
like newborn kittens. Tigress
and tiger, they eat leftovers with pink
tipped tongues from cereal bowls
or from great grandmother s forbidden

china she carried all the way from Bohemia
to Ellis Island. Tapestry satcheled,
they left eastern Europe, her only companions,
and arrived luminous and translucent
as moons unscathed. Celestial blue

and silver lined edges, a guiding force,
the stars knew the way and lined
grandmother s, and now my, china closet.
Last week she turned eighty and told
Father Cleary just how she managed

to have all her children twelve years
apart and how it wasn t abstinence
that kept her from attending the most
recent anti-choice rally. I think of her

worshipping a god whose church

has done him wrong. She tells me
again of her birth. 1910 and two months
premature, her mother placed her
behind the wood burning stove in a shoe
box the size of the oldest sibling s

shoes. Eleven children in less
than that many years. The doctor
came two days later, surprised that she,
as tiny as a kitten, had not died
yet. She tells me later

that, like cats, the women
in our family all have nine lives.

SONG OF FIRE

Anonymous

In his hands that sickle-sun
axe of summer, flails the wheat as barren.
His eyes avert to see her stamp,
tossing armfuls into song's bright grain.

The thresher, does she sing to him
that incessant pageantry of human wheat;
her drunken feet, splayed with chaff,
his eyes to golden on the granary floor?

What rage of gnats has bled his ear?
What sensual rain has turned him from this work?
Beetles warring in the straw; evil at evil trembling.

What word or image can extract from song
the beautiful kernel of his sad humanity?
Perhaps the thresher's song of fire will remind him.

1991 Staff

Michelle Allaire
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1992

Again, there is no apparent focus of themes written in this year's journal. Few of the pieces are indicative of concerns of the time, but those that are indicative clearly describe this era of the 90's which is rebounding from the "Me" generation of the 80's. Ed O'Connell describes his mother's death in a unique manner. A powerful piece by Judy Nacca is a poem that seems to be describing a first hand account of a war funeral. The assumption made in reading the poem is that the war was the Persian Gulf War. It is interesting because now, the war doesn't have much impact on the majority of the people in the US because it was so brief and so limited in scope. However, for a few people who lost loved ones it did have an impact on daily life that will never be erased. A poem that expresses strong alienation is by Peter Golanski who describes the present decay in contemporary society and disgust the author has for this time.

Selected Works:

Answer For Eleanor by Stephen Christofor.

The other hand of life by Ed O'Connell

Memorials of Stone by Judy Nacca.

The new times by Peter Golanski.

ANSWER FOR ELEANOR

by Stephen Cristofor

"Dear...not one tear will rise for this...

A little while hence

No regret

Will stir for a remembered kiss-

--F. Scott Fitzgerald, This Side of Paradise

They are parted now, our lips
that once kissed, parted
forever, as would well know
the Baptist.

But this fate is worse,
for John knows
only sweet wonderings of blackness
while your spirit still haunts
my white thoughts,
and where his pain has faded
mine lives.
For as the evening wind picks up
and stirs embers to flame,
so you drift into my thoughts
like a rainy day during summer,
leaving me to ache like an old wound.

The departed days
have not brought sweet destruction,
for with all their strength

they cannot enter the chambers
of the mind -
and though the wind comes
pushing out gray clouds,
and the day colors,
it is of little comfort.
The sun has no lasting magic over injury
and the wind will turn again.

Lips once kissed are forever kissed,
but during the days of rain I wonder:
is there cure for the moments gone
or is the only escape as that of dear John?

THE OTHER HAND OF LIFE

by Ed O' Connell

My mother's final request
was for a balloon which surprised
everybody but me.
She wheezed it full of life against
my father's better judgment.
"There, she said, or rather
the nurse told me she said,
"There's a breath of mine to keep
around a while.

A while ago she told me a story
about a man with three phones.
"It doesn't matter which kind, which color
or how much it cost, she responded.
That wasn't the point.
His wife had picked up the second
and dialed the third, just before
a tumor finished eating
its way through her lungs.
The first was just a phone like any other.

This man, she said, used to sit up late
every night, laughing along with the ringing
phone, at the clever way his wife had cheated
the other hand of life.

And sometimes now in dreams I see
my mother's surprising
balloon. Livid with breath
that still presses against its fragile walls.
It's in my hand and it smells just
like a balloon. I am writing
this very poem, squeaking my pen along

the rubber. When I let go it rises
according to that certain logic
which dictates, that in dreams
all balloons must rise.

Expanding and escaping through
the atmosphere, expanding and
escaping until the pressure gets to be too much.
The logic of physics demands its sacrifice,
and my mother's balloon bursts
with some ancient and particular sigh.

MEMORIALS OF STONE

by Judy Nacca

I remember the weight
of late winter, heavy on
my six year old
shoulders. No wind to lift
away what was not
said. Instead, silence clung
to our gelid bodies, in layers
of clothes guarding

us from the stone
chill. Arlington National
Cemetery, aisles of white
crosses, doves frozen
in their spring
to flight. To a six
year old girl, the words war
death and honor dissolve
as fast as snowflakes

in a palm. Pressed
by vertigo under Washington
Monument, the bone white
finger puncturing
sky, I didn't know I
would exchange you
for a flag folded

ceremoniously, tailored
taut as a soldier, or a name
etched in black marble
each glyph, a window
where inside, I ask you why
over and over
as hail ticks the glass
like minutes.

THE NEW TIMES

by Peter Golanski

i'm laughing in the acid rain
as negative space encroaches,
fringed, blackening edges --
tremors across the plane,
the rain insane,
tremors mainly on the plane
and i'm laughing in the acid rain
vanilla ice cream coated minds; pull forward, withdraw,
and hide away, to the retro-fit, maxiwear style days,
pompadours and ducks asses -- belligerent shades of red
poodle saddle shoes, in the age of howard hughe's super-
industrial space-age tit-lifter bra -- the world quakes
in ecstasy at the altogether too beautiful innocence: gang
fight innocence, finger poppin silk jackets, dancing
young toughs, the west side story image flickers roughly
at the back of the president s mind:
navy days documentaries of glorious world war memories,
ferociously coveting those times, those days of no self-
doubt and youthful immortality; simon sez: take four decades
back -- i like ike, our boys in korea, and the heroes of
sac, and yes, america has a responsibility
i'm laughing in the acid rain
the thoughts strain, reforming reformation and the last
heartbeat moment on the news; red fire halo, the corona
of dick cheney s head; i have seen the backward future,
connecting image to image, CNN piped in 24 hours, the rusted
terminals scattered permanently all over the land
i'm laughing in the acid rain
finally leaving the doorstep, walking into the street,
kicking last week s yellowed papers into the gutter, the
names on the page in stasis; correlation with the rest,
throughout the archives, knowledge sandwiched in template
stacks, i'm fabricating my name over and over -- recreation,
reconstitution, my pieces fitting together over and over
-- a large guffaw booms out from the audience
and i'm laughing in the acid rain
laughing at you, and you, and you, and me
at the lists of tides, eclipses and quantified natural
events and disasters
laughing in the rain
weak-kneed hysteria
the film stutters and burns
the lights flare into half-life
the audience stands
i'm laughing at you, and you, and you, and me
popcorn boxes litter the floor

we've only seen the newsreel
with wet feet
laughing, in the acid rain.

1992 Staff

Ray Blum
Kristen Bock
Cynthia Cloutier
Heather Corrigan
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Dylan Fahey
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1993

There is return to a plain and straightforward style of poetry and writing in this year's *Folio*. The topics covered are not as confrontational and do not question the values in society as much as the work in past years. However, the poems are very well written and soothing. Perhaps, the artists are trying to find an inner peace through their writing. A particularly moving piece is by Rick Feola. Instead of loss of a father, Rick describes a childhood where his father was a stranger. The work introduces the powerful impact that divorce has on lives of children and explores a topic of great concern nationally which is the lack of support given to children by absent fathers.

Selected Work:

exposure by Cynthia Conrad

Stranger by Rick Feola.

Stained from suckering tomatoes by Heather Corrigan.

exposure

by Cynthia Conrad

Street lamps are no amulet
against hovering night
their light spins thickets
of shadows across the earth.
I falter and warmth falls away,
peeling naked the wraps of confidence.

Aware of the trees, of the dark, kneeling sky,
of the rushing hush of black, I stride
stiff as a doll.
The keys spiked between my fingers
are not blades.

He slips like breath
around buildings, rustles
still as a breeze
behind hedges;
swishes of movement,
ear-tuned but sourceless.
rip tight
drawstring muscles. My arms pump,
feet ache with impact, but
I do not run.

Lingering, shifting
beyond dim circles of light,
crawling under pavement,
camouflaged in air,
he moves beneath my shadow,
in gravity disguised.

Eyes brand my back, breath

hot and claustrophobic, I
freeze,
anchored,
glare-blind, head
scrambling, heart seized

while the desert of the night spools out
vast beneath my feet.

STRANGER

by Rick Feola

No early morning fishing trips, no
rise at the crack
of dawn glass pond orange
fire light moments.

I d try to conjure
a single memory of passage, but
afraid I d be empty
like those thin weed
the garden or dig a hole
conversations you used
on me then

how will I know when
to reel in, I can t even bait
a hook. At least show me
where to start, with
the boat I mean
I might want to take
my son fishing.

STAINED FROM SUCKERING TOMATOES

by Heather Corrigan

I stare at my hands
etched with acid that
has caked coal black
on my skin and eaten
away the pearl polish
on my nails. my hands
are my father s hands,
the color of motor oil
from the daily grind of
gas pumps and windshield
washing. As a child
I believed he was born
with skin darker than

mine, his fingers such
a ruddy clay.

later my palms chafed sore
scoured with bleach and
a heavy bristle brush
I know that the stains
are gone. Still I soak
them again, fearing the
plant's dark acid will
seep into deep grooves
in my hand to endure.

1993 Staff

M. Barroso
Adam Bashaw
Frank Bentrewicz
Sharon Cappetta
Cynthia Conrad
Tracy Deer
Rick Feola
Rick Feola
John Flaherty
Todd Fowler
M. Horosky
Kimberlee Kowalski
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Mark LeStrange
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Elisabeth Shalit
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Raquel Valente
Diane Vambaca
Carmen Willenbring
Tracey Williams
Cynthia Wolfe
Michael Zablan

1994

Much of the work is stylistically like the previous years in the 90's. Topics continue to be similar since the use of drugs, angst, and disappointment are being expressed throughout the issue. A poem by Mary Rivers depicts disappointment and anger directed toward her father and it is presented in a sophisticated and mature manner. An immensely powerful poem by Steve Herz is a fascinating poem about how a man finally feels relief from child abuse when his father passes away. Steve Herz won the 1994 Daniel Varoian Poetry Prize from the New England Poetry Club and had a chapbook of his poetry published in 1996 by the New School in New York City. His poems have also appeared in numerous journals such as the *Hollins' Critic*. However, unlike previous years, the poetry expresses the anger very eloquently and powerfully. A piece by Dave Sanford explores the random acts of violence committed by individuals who are filled with anger. His piece explores the increasing number of people in society, particularly in the 90s, who have just snapped and performed horrible acts such as the bombing in Oklahoma of the killing of all the Irish school children. A poem by Seth C. London-Osborne is less personal and is a powerful piece describing the dead beat drug users of society and their lack of loyalty to one another. The poetry for the most part has become very refined in technique and the growing size of the journal indicates that more and more people are submitting to *Folio*. It follows that with intense competition for publication, the general quality of the work would also improve.

Selected Work:

Devil dogs of amphibious number 8 by Dave Sanford.

Taxis Honking in the rain by Mary Rivers.

To all my friends gone west... by Seth C. London-Osborne.

First Dirt by Steve Herz.

DEVIL DOGS OF AMPHIBIOUS SQUADRON 8

by Dave Sanford

--And Caesar's Spirit, ranging for revenge,
With Hate by his side come hot from hell,
Shall in these confines with a monarch's voice
Cry Havoc! and let slip the dogs of war.

--William Shakespeare

Julius Caesar, 3.1.75-78

Death is Navy blue
and it is a steel gator capable
of Sikorsky flight with rotary
wings chopping the still air
and its hollow gut stuffed
with painted reapers and modern
scythes of M-14s and Bowie knives.

Death is charcoal black
and woolen capped scampering
like psychotic mice through
a marshy rice paddy against
a moonless sky. Slowly

surrounding a camp of two-
legged animals, these mice
deform to Bengal savagery
with the scent of fresh life
and the taste of blood, sweet
delicious blood, coursing as eight-
inch steel claws shred the hide
and Asian bodies drop limp
in a frothy crimson stew.

Death is rusty red
and thickly caked as decaying
caplets ferment on cammies
and skin. Huey blades beat
a staccato cadence as Satan
slouches to sea with his
carnivorous battalion in
victorious defeat.

Death is happy yellow
and right next door on ten
days leave. The hands which
snapped thirteen necks plays
catch with your son in the yard;
the arms which crushed thirty-
two skulls will tonight
hold your daughter.

TAXIS HONKING IN THE RAIN

by Mary Rivers

The moon glows copper
in the pocket of night,
the television flashing pictures
of MacNeil/Lehrer.

Like you r careful fingernails,
the lawn is cut every week
with every shingle in place,
every room vacuumed and dusted.

Your belt holds in your stomach,
your whiskey burning in your glass
and through your pores
as I watch you take codeine
from the hall in the mirror
of the bathroom.

At the dinner table,
your blue eyes watch me too closely

through your harsh black glasses
as you suck the meat through
the faulty bridge of your teeth,
your words scraping and scrapping
against Mother's face
like a twig hitting against
the kitchen window.

Your father was the drunk
I never heard about
and your family mined copper
somewhere in Michigan
as the rain ran down
off the skyscrapers.

Around your office
where you sit alone
in your own business,
the world turning in the clouds
above the traffic clawing,
a shadow lurches on the wall
and knuckles in your throat
in the late afternoon,
the taxis honking in the rain.

TO ALL MY FRIENDS GONE WEST...

By Seth C. London-Osborne

I dreamt you up again,
Last night I knitted
You and me into a cashmere wind
We shipped up streets and
Down back alleys,
Tapping on panes, banging
The shutters, Throat-moaning
And thumping on closed doors.

And I woke up naked,
Standing on an empty side street
My thumb stuck up
to the pre-dawn sky.

The last time I saw you
You gave me your starry-eyed,
Slobbering baby grunt of a mulatto boy.
I held the package in my blood-shot arms,
Close to a reckless
Speeding heart
And watched you dace away
You flew the distance
hovered, dipped, disappeared,

And circled back once more
To snatch back your young,
Before taking the long Western trail
Dance right out of my life.

I suppose Kerouac and the cattle
And the vane itch
In the crook of your arms,
Always moving through your veins
kept you moving,
Snorting up trains
In a high speed chase
To out run the dry season
And maybe, rustle up another drugstore.

I don't know what I miss more-
the raspy lipped words about Jesus
And Jews that crawled like locusts
From your twitching tobacco
Pouched junk-cowboy mouth,
Or just our shared syringe,
The powdered pink pills
And freshly stapled shut wax bags.

You told me you would write,
As soon as you got settled.
I never got the letter...

You streaked me with your wicked
Cock-hard grin, said,
You'd take your little glove-box
Babe
And conquer the last glitter-sham
Rock&Roll frontier with your Mustang Sally...

Surprised to see it all so settled?
Where's the earthquake, the splitting
fault you promised me?

I heard you took your Neo-Nazi
Commi-coked-up punk ass
To San Diego
For a factory union job
With Workman's comp. and a pension plan
A pregnant wife, A beer belly

And a swimming pool next to barbecue grill
In the backyard.
Don't tell me, you still an anarchist.
An anti-christ?

Or did you pack up your combat
Boots, leather, chains, and pins,
Did you shove it all in the back
Of some closet along with all
The toy smurfs and micronauts?
Or do you still catch yourself,
In the mirror with a Sid
Viscous snarl, and quick Keith
Richards nod?

** * **

Unexpected, one by one,
All but one,
They arrive at my door.
Finger's fluttering like
Powdered gypsy moth wings.
They stagger out stories
Of strange and circuitous
Paths, Keyed up from Mexico,
Or roundabout from the Kibbutz
In Israel. Their blood wired
with Bank-cock dope, Columbian
Yellow rock coke, eyes fused
Open with reservation's peyote.
They have flattened eyeballs
full of miles of silk-worm and mummy dust.
And dandruff tears on the tips
Their tongues.
They linger, looking for the lung
Or liver they tore out and left behind.

My Dad came out of the West.
Out of one of those falling down
Factory-ghost towns in the brittle
Tumble weed, and dried-out husk
Of the earth.

I would have told you.
Stay here and dream with me.
If you had asked.

FIRST DIRT

by Steve Herz

I am here, squeezed between
black umbrellas and dots
of yarmulkes, for you father
I am here, pinning you
against the ice box again
breaking your ribs
striking back again
and you never
touching me again
and you never
touching me again
and I never
touching you until
today reaching my
fingers into your coffin
running my hand
over the brown liver
marks on your forehead
so many liver marks
father, why am I here
here, in Rosehill
without a rose
for your grave
without understanding
the rabbi chanting
the prayer for
the dead, my dead
but is it my prayer
this Kaddish for you
for you, father

I cannot doven, I can not
rock back and forth
in prayer, I can not cry
as I cried when your
belt buckle beat into
my body, my half-naked
body bleeding as you
cradled me in your tight
grip of knees pressing
pressing, my ears
burning, still burning
with my five six seven
eight nine ten-year old
screams still screaming
through the years
that are finally over
today, on this day

I am here, Chicago
here, father
here, with no barmitzva
shoveling the first dirt
over your grave
wearing your bald spot
for a yarmulke
your yahrzeit candle
unlit, unlit.

1994 Staff

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1995

The work selected for the journal this year does not display as much anger as some of the work in previous years. The poetry and fiction continues to be very sophisticated and inspiring. A sort of new-wave, upscale poetry is introduced for the first time this year as seen in the poem by David Hodges. Unlike the work in many of the past years, a type of romanticism has reentered the literary scene again and is represented in the work by David Hodges whose poem returns to references to classical romanticism and fond memories of a bygone era and person. Drugs and references to their effect on contemporary life are prevalent. There appear to be a number of references to “the rebound of heroine,” a term used to describe a number of contemporary film. A poem by Lisa Cowell makes the reader understand why it is so hard to get out of the streets and how a person can go from a poor inner city child to a drug using adolescent in a series of very easy steps. A poem by Jennifer Boulette is surprisingly the first mention of AIDS in the journal. Also, the HIV in this poem is not associated with sex at all. This comments on the failure of society to recognize AIDS as a serious problem.

Selected Work:

Oil can deaths by Lisa L. Cowell.

HIV by Jennifer Boulette.

Laurie Anderson: 13 Streets of poverty by David Hodges

Splitting Firewood for winter by David Hodges.

OIL CAN DEATHS

by Lisa L. Cowell

Boys like this but bigger, drunk
stole my bike once --
my fault mother said,
leaving it to rust
in the rain on a Saturday night.
Daddy fixed that screaming
wheel with a dirty oil can.

I m with them now, stolen signs --
High Street, High Acres, heroin Drive
strung out with posters
on the wall like that while they sit
in a circle calling me
their little Stoner Chick
as I sit crying through
my knees on the bed
with a cigarette and smeared lipstick.

Eyes reddened: no sleep.
Too much pot and acid
wince at me.
While I die like this,
the dosage is offered.
A real fix, oil can
and I m a god-damned tin-man-woman.

A squirt here and dirty
for a while but now a smooth ride

in my arm
blood that used to race
from the ride over leaves
through yellow autumn on a red bike --
Just this! And wind and laughter
until I started to rust on the lawn.

HIV

by Jennifer Boulette

I gathered his middle-aged bones
Within the folds of the hospital
Gown that had been hanging
Next to the small wooden crucifix

That bore the weight of confessions
Of many who died behind that door
My tentative fingertips touched him
Under his frail arms and supported

His shuffle of tired brown slippers
Across the hard wooden floor to
The kitchen; past the bathroom
Smelling of bleach and the laundry

Room freshly supplied with sterile gloves
This man's rasping breath quickened
Now as we approached the window
Together, inhaling slowly

He shook my fingertips touch
From his warm skin and straightened
His shoulders back, standing tall
Pale palm to the cool window

Glass where outside yellow
Daffodils defied Winter's
Last suffocating snow
His shoulders lowered again as quickly

As they'd just been lifted and the weight
Of his slow dying
Crumpled him like wasted paper
Few words upon it, to the tile at my feet

Laurie Anderson: 13 Streets of Poverty

by David Hodges

Got-my-finger-stuck-in-a-light-socket hair, but only if you
are Laurie Anderson and have been wearing it that way
for so long that at this point it is the you-ness of you.
-The New Yorker, The Talk of the Town Nov. 22, 1993

With your shock hair you take over the classroom
to teach me and all my parts we are here
but they are unruly
the poet part the business-suited part
the silent part the wild part
all say Look at me! Look at me!
only I pay attention
as you perform your first lesson
language is a virus
you write it on the board
with neon red
while Bill Burroughs growls
from outer space
via tape sampled spliced and synthesized sonic
while speakers shriek
it s a shipwreck it s a job
let s explore this concept Laurie
bring along Lou Reed for that leather look
let s go along the 13 streets of poverty
I ll go jumping out of my money skin and
into my word skin in SoHo by 6 cold galleries
you can clomp in your lug-sole shoes
tread like snow tires
Let s get sonic seizures from subway synch-ups
you could touch me with a jump start
in the hart plexus,
we could follow the show to
the Venus channel where the snakes
glow bright inside their bone conduits.
Let s ride the snakes up the long curving beach
bring along Lou
Bring Bill Burroughs holographic sample
redundant reverb
forget the hair, let s explode our Selves
to the 3rd and 5th lifetimes.

SPLITTING FIREWOOD FOR WINTER

by David Hodges

Here are his work gloves, the mold of his hands still formed
in the sweat-stained leather. Remember him shirtless
in November, his gloved hands hefting the iron maul,
the swing of his muscled arms, the rip as the logs split.

See him pull oak from the woods in his heavy cart
and stack staggered rows near the kitchen shed,
how still in gloves to carry kindling and the logs
he kneels to feed the fire on the granite hearth.

Like his allotted strength, the woodpile has been consumed,
all gray remains are swept down the ashpit,
four winters' cold lies heaped on the firedogs.

This is the way God cut him down-
Life like log fragments wrenched from his core-
Ringing iron blows on steel wedges.

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