

LIKE LOVE ITSELF IN THIS RAVAGED REALITY, SICK IRONY.
APOCALYPSE IS HANDED OVER PLAYFULLY IN THESE PAGES.
A NEW GOTHIC LITERARY 'ZINE FEATURING STRANGE STORIES AND DARK POETRY

the darkness that enlightens Apocalypse Playground

ISSUE SIX

RAVAGE : VALENTINE'S 1997



PEOPLE TRAVERSE BORDERS BETWEEN WHAT'S REAL, AND THE TRUTH; PASSION AND REPETITION.
WHEN WE DROP FROM THOSE KNOWN DEFINITIONS
INTO OTHER REALITIES THAT ARE TWISTED OR SKEWED,
WE LEARN TO SEE FROM NEW ANGLES OR WE FALL.
THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF APOCALYPSE PLAYGROUND
DEMONSTRATES PASSION : A VARIATION OF A THEME.

Chains to a Dream World

Apocalypse Playground

IN OBLIVION...

Dylan Kinnett, *Editor*

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APOCALYPSE
PLAYGROUND
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Dedication:

Rasputin, may you find some higher shoulder to climb on

Mission Statement:

Apocalypse Playground is a 'literary'zine devoted to gothic art in all forms. Apocalypse Playground is anything that expresses the darker and more majestic side of this dream of a fleeting world.

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Spooky McBoo
Martinsburg, WV

Congratulations to everyone involved in the making of your entertaining Forum, especially to Dylan - who seems to be the Beast responsible for the Apocalypse. Loved the recipe for gelatin meat mold and can't wait to try it (as soon as I can find me a package of teenagers), the story By Miss Arborgast was cool - but I was hoping she would smash Elroy in the head with that stupid rock and kick both their asses. The review by St. Elyse for the witching hour was way off the mark. That particular book is a real struggle to read. If you really want to read Anne Rice at her best try the "sleeping beauty" chronicles. Now that's a story. You won't find it at your local used book store...

It seems Spooky had quite a lot to say about just about every single aspect of Apocalypse Playground, this is very much appreciated and I look forward to hearing break downs from other readers. Several of Spooky's comments were deleted, to save space and to keep me from stepping on anyone's toes. His comments, directed to (or at) the other staff members will be forwarded to them and dealt with accordingly. By the way, thanks Spooky, for sending the picture of Lady Liberty with your letter. She's cute.

Once again, it's time to make the addition of another playmate to the Apocalypse Playground, Rose Byrne is the new Assistant Editor of this publication. (kindly refrain from accidentally abbreviating her title and calling her the Ass. Editor) She would have written a letter on this very page, but felt she'd need a more ready audience so,

FABLE OF CONTENTS FEATURES

FRAME STORY

4

The story chosen to be presented from multiple perspectives as per the contest from the past several issues

Matthew

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Parks WEDDING JITTERS

What secret pains must be endured before love can reach official fruition? A story about the things a bride takes to heart.

By L.

White

Apologies for the lateness of this "Valenitnes" Issue. I do hope that the extra time spent on it shows through thanks for reading,

-Dylan

here it is the introduction to Rose. We like roses here, too bad it's too dark to see them.

Rose has chosen take over the "Immortal Words" quote page. (not included in this issue) If you have any quotes you'd like to see printed in the next, or subsequent issues of Apocalypse Playground, send them to Rose care of this 'zine and they will be promptly handed over to her loving care. Remember, the next issue wil have the central theme of anger and it's quotes should reflect this.

CHAINS TO A DREAM WORLD
IS STILL IN NEED OF HELP.
THIS PAGE IS WHERE LETTERS
TO THE EDITOR GO,
IF AND WHEN THEY HAPPEN.
GRANTED, ANYONE THAT PUTS
PEN TO PAPER
REALLY SHOULD BE SHOT.
BUT, I LIVE ON THE WILD SIDE OF LIFE,
I WRITE ON THESE PAGES.
CARE TO JOIN ME?
DON'T WORRY,
THE EDITOR DOESN'T BITE.
BUT, IF YOU THINK HE DOES,
SAY SO IN PRINT.

Welcome to the Apocalypse Playground, home to those most treasured of possessions; ideas. They come as broken angels you know. They are kept here in the hopes that when you come here to see them, together we can restore them to the fragmented spectacle they were when they first came to this hallowed ground. So in this presentation and your acceptance, humble reader, we will work together to make creatures of majesty.... Creatures of the night

Snuff that candle.
this wish is
f o r g o t t e n
lost like a memory.
Gone, that soul, gone.
Never, like a dream.
Dead, like a body.

So lovely reader, you've opened what you thought to be the normally dismal Apocalypse Playground and you've found an essay about love. Yes. That's it. He's finally cracked. It's time to mail Dylan to Guam. Never mind the postage- Get his florid ass out of here!!!

I was rummaging through things in my room. Past paperwork, clothes piles and textbooks strewn across my desk and dressers. To the darker spots. The places in my bedroom where memory hides: under my bed, the back of those dresser drawers. First, I found wooden swords, used to kill imaginary dragons during my first journey to Apocalypse Playgrounds. They were dusty and almost looked more new- more wooden- with disuse. neither one was Excalibur anymore, as they both had been before one replaced the other and other things replaced both of them. I found comic books, well cared for and placed in plastic covers. Their pages weren't as bright as they had been. Four colors that's all. And the heroes in them looked fake, removed from the mind set of belief. No one is ever the bravest of the bold, yet I remember how badly I longed to " strike fears in the hearts of men ". I remember how important the colors and swords had been and how they had influenced my dreams. But I never had a word for these things so I let them go.

I searched farther through the dust bunnies - I really should vacuum more often - to find still older beloved things. Perhaps I'd find something that was still a part of me, building blocks, plastic dinosaurs, a box of dead insects (why?), and an even larger collection of rocks (don't ask).

It's hard to believe that I found my first true love while digging through the junk under the furniture in my room. But nevertheless - there it was in a little box underneath the chemistry set and the deck of magic cards (again every time !). I'm sure you know how it is when you find true love - and that find is followed by the realization that you've lost your marbles, and life is crazy without this new found love. Well, I had found my marbles along with some broken action figures, but the marbles were the most important.

I was given the marbles during the first trip to the shopping mall that I can remember. The toy store had been guarded by a " life-size " inflatable Godzilla. (Ah, childhood in the 80's) He seemed to snarl out a happier grimace as a mommy helped her boy pick out his new marbles. They came in a green fish-net bag, long since torn to pieces. And their insides were swirled lime green and orange. A color combination that would make you snarl a happier

SO, I MARRIED A MZGAZINE ???

THE PARCHEMMENT IN YOUR HAND MARKS MY SIXTH VISIT TO THE APOCALYPSE PLAYGROUND. DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS ? (HMMM. BIMONTHLY PUBLICATION... SIX ISSUES... WHAT WOULD A 'ZINE DO WITH FLOWERS) FOR TWELVE MONTHS NOW, I'VE BEEN ALMOST MARRIED TO THIS DAMN THING. EVEN WHEN I'M NOT IN THE APOCALYPSE PLAYGROUND, WHEN I'M APART FROM IT'S PAGES, I CAN FEEL IT'S CALL. I SLEEP WITH IT SNORING IT'S PEOTRY INTO MY EARS. I CAN'T GO ANYWHERE WITHOUT FINDING IT'S PLAY THINGS SCATTERED EVERYWHERE, NO LONGER CONFINED TO THEIR PAPER BOUNDARIES, IT'S STORIES ARE EVERYWHERE. I RETURN, AS I ALWAYS DO, TO DANCE IN THE SHADOWS OR HEAR STRANGE LITERATURE FROM EVEN STRANGER CHARACTERS. AS IF THE CAUSTIC PARTS OF EVERYDAY LIFE WEREN'T ENOUGH, I'VE RETURNED TO THE APOCALYPSE PLAYGROUND. IT'S A LABOR OF LOVE FOR ME. I CAN ONLY HOPE THAT RETURNING HERE IS AS MUCH OF A LOVE FOR YOU.

grimace as well. I promise.

The marbles were played with and then forgotten like the rest of their dusty companions. But, unlike the chemistry set, it was the span of this play that caught my attention. They were gems stolen from the dragon. They were the jewels that heroes had to capture. They were the stones of power, they brought up the faces every time. They were dinosaur eggs. They were just a pile of ugly marbles, but I loved them.

Not the way I love chocolate or the circus; and I've never written cheesy sonnets to them (unless that's what this editorial is). Words mean nothing to glass and plastic, but I wanted to say "I love you" as I took the dust from them, because they are a part of me.

Dylan
let's get on to the literature shall we?

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT ON:

MATTHEW PARKS

MATTHEW PARKS IS THE APOCALYPSE PLAYGROUND ARTIST SPOTLIGHT AND CREATOR OF THE BEAUTIFUL STORY FEATURED HEREIN.

"where are you from - originally?"

'Buried Child' by Sam Shepard

Matthew Parks (no photo given) was raised in a small town (exact location unknown), went to school with the same people for 13 years and subsequently spent large amounts of his time by reading, writing and painting. He is now a student in his freshman year at Shepherd College, carrying a double major in English and secondary education with a minor in theater.

(STORIES)

DANCE OF DAMNED

White. The only color in the shadowed garden is white. Moonlight reflects off pale leaves and petals. Foxgloves moonflowers and trilliums silver leathery lambs-ear and thyme. Faeries play in thyme. Gray leaves that smell like futility: lacy and tumbling and densely covering the wooded stems. Faeries sleep in foxgloves. Tall spikes that the flowers grow on are the fay's steeples. They pierce the night. The trumpeted flowers are beds, and after a faerie's rest the two petals fall to the ground and rot. The plants fruit, the fruits ripe and wither and the seeds dry. If a mortal were to eat the seeds, the poison would kill their heart. Once the organ stopped beating their soul would fall victim of the unseele court. But the flowers would bloom again. The foxgloves would still be white.

Sweat and tears made the phone slippery and hard to grip. But the apartment was very cold. Dry air and the sticky sweet taste of peppermint candy cane lingering in his mouth made sentences awkward. They stumbled and seeped into the receiver and came out m arrogant and pitiful sentences in the earpiece, at the other end. And he couldn't think. He couldn't want this anymore and he couldn't know that the other boy wanted it but could never act on anything he felt. Anything that was real, as long as both of them were alive. He had plans for tonight. Plans that would solve the problem and let him be loved. His cold skin pined for a touch other than his own, other than ragged fringe on his velvet bedspread. The intoxicating softness of the green velvet had been enough for a while, because it had never really been velvet when he touched it. It was his love's skin, or hair, or wind or soft moss on a crisp February morning after all the January snow had melted. It had been cold winds that made him think of biting the back of the boy's shaved neck. Or under his chin. Or on his pale hairless stomach. His love was like a world child, hiding jaded knowledge behind innocent eyes. He was the corrupter, but Jamie would also be the one who would sacrifice himself to satisfy his own carnal pain. He would die in the end or fall into a punchbowl or an abyss or physical love. He would die for any sentence with the word love in it. He would die for caring from that boy.

All Jamie was getting now was vague conversation about music and too many words like "horrible" and "beauty" and "understand".

He couldn't stop crying and he drank all the tea he made from the seeds. Sadly he had stopped listening to what was being said, and broke down and pleaded for his friend to come over. The ear piece said the boy couldn't. Jamie whispered, between cries, into the receiver: "You have to. You have to read something and I can't bring it to you. You have to come see me. Can't you understand? Please. No. Please listen to me. No. Just, just come over." And the hopeless pleading finally broke the boy down, and he was on his way to the apartment. He could taste the chemicals from the seeds in his mouth. It was less than pleasing. Sort of a rotting, bitter green taste and he tried all he could do to cover it up by chomping candy canes. It didn't work, though. It didn't matter. Jamie threw the blankets off of his body. Wearing only chipped black nail polish and old oversized sweatpants, he walked to his closet. The cement floor stung, stark and frigid against his bare feet. It was an everyday reminder of the next to nothing price he paid for the one room basement apartment. Cement floor and cement walls were painted a sanitary white, molding an infectious yellow. He intentionally didn't look into the cracked mirror hanging beside his closet. He knew he looked bad, and didn't want to see himself for the last time wearing sweatpants. So he pulled them off and without bothering to find underwear put on the jeans that were laying on the floor. They were about five sizes too big for him, so he had to hold them up while looking for a belt. He found it on the floor, beside the black leather cord he always wore around his neck. He fastened both to himself, then looked in the mirror. His skin was cold pale, his face and back were peppered with light auburn freckles. He wiped the sleep from bloodshot, tear-dried eyes and ran his fingers through his hair, trying to form somewhat of a part. He closed his eyes, then his mouth and tried to smile. It was too cold for anyone to have to smile. And he realized he was trembling.

It would be twenty minutes before his guest would arrive, so he had time to get the letter written. He laid back down on the bed and took the pen and clipboard with white paper off a small table, propping it up against his knees. The cement wall he was leaning against was more cold on his naked back than the floor had been. There wasn't time to think about that. Now was a pomegranate tree. A massive gnarled bush where all that existed were six bitter seeds and a sweaty condensation in a cold room. All that existed were needing thoughts scrawled out on white paper. And a broken glass bottle: azure, translucent, and sharp-edged standing erect on the table. He wrote:

"Tell me what it is like to be loved unconditionally, and be scared of the person who loves you. I know that you will not accept everything I feel. I wonder if you can't or if you just won't. I hurt needles. I am so far away yet you are still in my dreams and I think that if I can't have anything physical when I'm alive, then I will solve that problem. But I want to know if you think I'm real. Am I real? Can I feel? Is there any reason left for me to live because I don't see beauty anymore. I don't feel the living or the living dead. Or let me fall away from reality? What if I could be with you? Wait. I can hope for nothingness and let you make advances when I'm colder. I'll fall submissive and that's what I want the most; you might kiss me or bite through the thin skin under my ear. I'll taste bitter, but I always knew you were at your best in sadness. I'll taste of emptiness and peppermint and vaguely of some green digitalis sting. I'll open my wrist and let you smear my blood over your lips, over your tongue. And the muscle in my back is too tough for you to put your blunt teeth through, but there is always more blue glass that is sharp and you can feel everything I felt in my dreams. I've had the opportunity in the alternate reality of my dreams - the ones we both know I live in more. I know you will sigh. You always do when things get rough, but just love me. Hold me like I dreamed I was held, and help me understand. Because I'm leaving. I know you are strong, but you hide it, you hide everything so much. We always talked about it, and I've had more than one dream where I fuck that cold dead girl until she's all ripped up and I said it felt like home. But you know neither of us had a real one. A home. Now is your chance to do one more thing, that will make you closer to whole. And good-bye. You were the first boy I ever really loved. I guess the last too. But the important thing is that you know I'm not just saying that. For what is more real than death for love? Eternally in sleep, eternally yours, love, Jamie."

There was a knock on the door at the same instant he dotted his i. Jamie knew the boy would let himself in; he always did. And he wouldn't knock again. So Jaime fumbled through the papers sitting on the table until he found the film canister. It held the rest of the foxglove seeds that he had gathered from some old woman's garden earlier that evening. He peeled the lid of the little bottle with his teeth and swallowed the rest of the contents. Then he

reached over the side of the bed for the bottle of vodka he'd hidden there. As the boy turned the knob and walked in, Jamie finished a long swig and sat the bottle down under the table. Out of the boy's view.

He turned to face the door, to face the one person he loved with every ounce of energy left in his body. It would soon be over for him. He met the boy's eyes, and started crying again. Then he looked down at the boy's left middle finger; there was the silver ring that the boy said he bought to give to someone that made him feel whole, or real or loved. Then Jamie shifted his gaze to the pictures on the wall opposite the bed. Pictures of faeries from calendars and new age magazines and paintings he had done and pencil sketches. Pages ripped from books in the library and pictures that his other acquaintances had drawn or painted or bought for him. He couldn't look at them long, so he shifted his eyes to the boy again and without saying anything handed him the clip board. The boy took it and started reading where he stood, without ever really entering the room. Jamie turned his back towards him, knowing the boy would be engrossed in the reading for a while. He picked up the broken glass bottle and sliced two delicate, clean cuts on both his wrists with the crystalline edge of the glass. For a moment the light caught in the blue, and it almost looked white. He thought he could see futility. But it took nearly every ounce of strength he had left to make the cuts, so he'd never be sure. He could feel his heart dying, literally stopping. He turned around and laid on the bed, looking at the boy again. He wanted to see the boy's expression when he finished reading the letter, but instead looked down at his skinny, bare chest. He tasted salt and peppermint, and brought one of his wrists to his mouth and kissed it. He tasted a coppery orange sweetness that might be love. Jamie laid his wrist down and closed his eyes; he never looked at the boy.

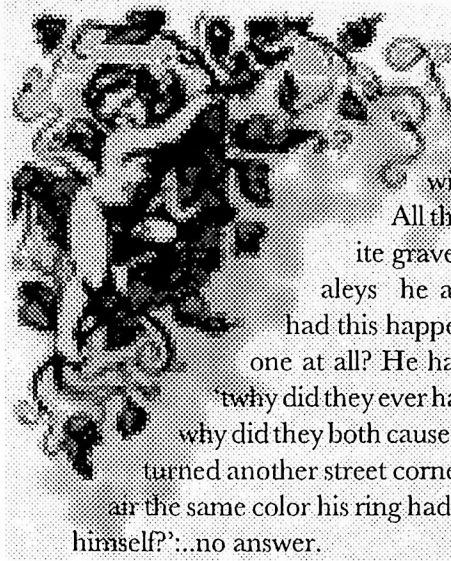
Less than a minute later, the boy raised his head from the clipboard full of drunken words and pain. He looked at Jamie. There were crimson blooms on the green velvet, but they didn't seem to be growing. He dropped the papers and hurriedly went over to the side of the bed. He looked down at Jamie's smooth chest, and gently placed his ear over the place where his heart should be. He heard nothing yet knew that four small barely bleeding cuts hadn't stopped his heart. He didn't know what to do and the room seemed colder than the February night outside. And it was spinning and if he could have listened there would have been a hundred thousand shrieks of goblins and faeries grabbing pieces of Jamie's soul and hobbling or flying back to their realm with it. If he could have been listening he would have heard the tiny shriek that came from his throat.

The boy's head hurt like all the blood in his body flooded his brain. But he wasn't crying. He wasn't the type. The boy lifted his head from Jamie rapidly cooling body, and laid down in the small twin bed with the person he had considered his best friend. He wondered if there could have been something more, but he would never let there be. He thought he wasn't that type. The words in the letter left him tumbling. Turning on his side, the boy supported his head on Jamie's shoulder and then kissed his neck, at the place under his ear. Sweat tasted salty, like tears, but the boy didn't know what else to do. He kissed him again, and then bite him gently and then pulled away. Blood stopped flowing from Jamie's wrists, but the boy lifted one to his mouth anyway and kissed it and then placed it where it had been before. He bent down to kiss Jamie on the lips. He knew they would become cold, and he could run his tongue on the dead boy's teeth. He would probably taste like peppermint; Jamie always was eating candy canes or peppermint sticks. The boy licked his lips and pressed them to Jamie's. He started working his tongue between the dry lips, and ran his hands down Jamie's chest, feeling his ribs and the fine hair on both sides of his stomach. But he stopped when his tongue reach Jamie's, when his hands made it to the edge of Jamie's oversized jeans. He sat up and realized that something tasted more salty than before. It was his own tears and he immediately got out of the bed, supporting himself against the cement wall with his left hand.

The boy happened to notice his ring and immediately took it off his middle finger. He lifted Jamie's left hand, and tried to slip it over his ring finger, but the dead boy's knuckle was too big. As he slid the ring off he noticed Jamie's fingernails were painted black, but the lacquer was severely chipped off. That meant, to the boy, that there had been a lot of thought put in this long destructive process. The silver felt out of place in the boy's hand, rather than on it. It wouldn't fit on the finger that he wanted to put it on. He ended up slipping it over the corpse's pinkie finger. Again, the boy didn't know what else to do. He stood up, and looked around the room for the last time. He took the letter off the clipboard, and walked over to the board where all Jamie's picture were. One watercolor that Jamie painted of a purple faerie sleeping in a tiny white flower on a tall stalk always had caught his eye. The boy reached up, and pulled the rusted thumbtack out of the wall. He took the picture with him and walked out of the cold apartment. The outside wind ruthlessly dried his tears, as he closed the door he had a thought: Jamie may be dead, but these flowers will always be alive. They will always be white.

THROUGH BLUE GLASS

- re-write by Dylan Kinnett



He slept a blue and metallic sleep that night. It was hot outside and the sky was orange, much much too hot for the end of winter. And altogether too red.

All the way home, through his favorite graveyards and through the darkest alleys he asked himself "WHY?!?!?" Why had this happened, to Jaimie, to him, to anyone at all? He had no answer, so he ran faster. Why did they ever have to have met in the first place; why did they both cause the downfall of their lives? He turned another street corner, his breath painting the night air the same color his ring had been. "Why had jaimie kidded himself?":...no answer.

"Why did he bother to come over, and read that insipid letter, 'a flair for the dramatic' what use did the boy have for friends that played the role of Martyrs, or lovers, What use had he for lovers as anything at all, especially male ones?"

no answer, he kept running. The streets were getting darker now, the orange glow was fading quickly. "Why had he gone there, and why, why, why had he kissed the fool?"

No answer — faster. The door to his house was locked, he had forgotten the key, He climbed in through the basement door, where the herbs are kept, the walls had turned blood red in his absence, and if he went long enough without blinking, there were no walls, just red. Again, he asked himself questions, "Why had he kissed him???" He ran straight toward, and through the rack holding bottles of dried herbs that crumbled after slapping the concrete floor.

Azure glass bottles screamed when they were smashed, the shards caught white light through a nearby window and turned purple. He crumpled a little under the weight of the shelf, too weak to get up, he slept a blue and metallic sleep. Some where upstairs, a television had been left on, a football game had been cancelled because of snow in Chicago... white.

He remembered the feeling of weightlessness, as if heavenly hands had carried him to a better place void of pain, bereft of poisons. The angels screamed for him, he specifically remembered that, in all their cobalt crimson glory. He remembered the long blank walls, the corridor of dream? He remembered wanting to be completely dead, so that he could give saliva to Jaimie in another manner. But he knew he couldn't be. He could see, he could hear, and as he drifted in and out of consciousness and tugged at the tubes that drained the death from him. As he remembered that Foxglove never grows to be red, until after you eat it.

The hospital had to prepare two beds that night, whereas before their occupants might have prepared one bed for themselves,

A thousand cries

and still I ask for you

there's a storm on the horizon

and still I ask for you

whilst worlds run screaming from rain.

Too many fears

and still I pray for tomorrow,

with water on the carpet

and blood on my mind

I'll know no end to this storming.

Still I scream

like a thousand wailing banshees

there are no tomorrows with you

Everything is left to kiss the rain.

There will be no tomorrow

and still I cry

for my raining days

gone - like our yesterdays.

And still the sky is crying for you.

The perfect waste of a day!
they just love each other away.
perfect waste of a mind, sit there, be kind
wallow in the fact that you can
drown in the fact that you do
tell them "don't do anything I won't"
oh, but they will.
they'll wallow in the fact that they can
and drown in the fact that they do
I mock their oceans of civility
as they walk away.
And they do what I would not

THEY LOVE EACH OTHER ALL DAY.

UNTITLED RE-WRITE
BY
ROSE BYRNE

"(You have to. You have to read something and I can't bring it to you. You have to come and I can't bring it to

you. You have to come and see me. Can't you understand? Please.No. Please listen to me. No. Just, just come over.)"

"Listening to this, hearing the hopelessness in his voice. I started to wonder...almost to worry, but not quite. And so I went over there, I read the letter that he handed me, and when I was finished,I knew ...I knew he was dead and that I was the greatest fool alive.

"Yes, Sir, I knew that he was homosexual. well...I had thought ...Was I? ... I would have been.

"I'm not sure I'm the one to talk to about this, I mean...Who should you talk to?...I don't know, I just...I just feel wierd. I miss him, I guess, that's all."

"I hasn't really hit yet."

"Sorry, what was your question? How did he die? Well, he didn't kill himself. I did. Because I couldn't see, because I was blind, God, and that ring, that stupid ring. All the time, right in front of me. And I never even saw. But that's not what you meant was it. No. He physicaly died by his own hand. I was the one who told him ... about the plant ... it was foxglove. Highly poisonous, very toxic, in other words ,it will kill you - a lot."

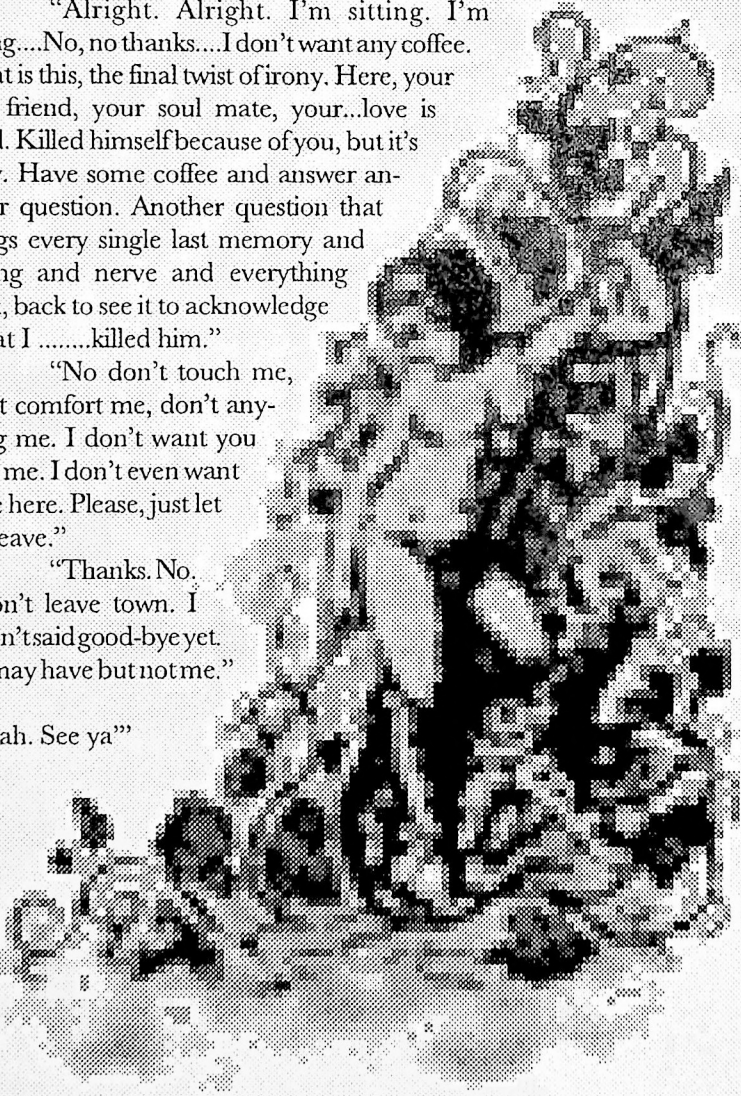
"Can I go now? Well, how many more questions can you have?"

"Alright. Alright. I'm sitting. I'm sitting....No, no thanks....I don't want any coffee. What is this, the final twist of irony. Here, your best friend, your soul mate, your...love is dead. Killed himself because of you, but it's okay. Have some coffee and answer another question. Another question that brings every single last memory and feeling and nerve and everything back, back to see it to acknowledge it that Ikilled him."

"No don't touch me, don't comfort me, don't anything me. I don't want you near me. I don't even want to be here. Please, just let me leave."

"Thanks. No. I won't leave town. I haven't said good-bye yet. He may have but not me."

"Yeah. See ya"



*He's downing two of them
the ones that love him
the ones that don't
-fists against the ground
the fall of a river
the flow of mountains
downing them both
cups of coffee and fists together
cannot, cannot,
cannot, cannot
no love nor hatred, he's downing
both of them
the ones that love him
the ones that don't
the ones that he loves
the ones he won't
those that know...
he's downing two of them -
fists against the ground*

*no one notices the labors of
love
no one sees either one
nor hears his fists
against the ground
or his screaming to the above
he's downing the both of them-*

OPEN YOUR EYES AND TELL ME WHAT YOU SEE
WHEN YOU LOOK, AS LOVERS DO, UPON ME.
I ASK BECAUSE I KNOW YOU WOULDN'T LIE
AND I'D LIKE TO KNOW HOW I LOOK TO YOU

YOU WOULD BUY ME THE WORLD
AND GIVE ME THE STARS
TELL ME WHAT YOU SEE,
I KNOW YOU WOULDN'T LIE

"CLOSE YOUR EYES AND STOP DREAMING"
WAS THE REPLY.

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT ON:

L.

WHITE

“Wedding Jitters” was composed by L.

White for the Valentine’s issue. And, even

though it was not chosen to become the

frame story it was decided that overlook-

ing this work was not an option. See for

yourself, could you even bring yourself to

think of butchering this tale, granted the

story chosen to be re-presented over and

over was not butchered but it had more

potential for, shall we say, temporal disturbance.

At any rate, “Wedding Jitters” is the

runner up for this issue, congratulations to

L. for a story too good to pass up.

WEDDING

JITTERS

- BY L. WHITE

I can feel my stomach clench as tight as a fist as I clasp on my mothers string of pearls and slip on my white dress. Wedding Jitters they call it I suppose. Jittery is right, after all this is for the rest of my life, or perhaps until we can’t tolerate each other anymore; five years down the road. Nothing is permanent any more. I can walk down The aisle, completely confident that I can get out of this any time if I want, and for a relatively low price. For we can buy a transient lifestyle, but sadly no one can insure permanence anymore. Unfortunately no insurance company offers that policy.

The veil is over my eyes now and I wonder if it will always be. Will I have to play blind to make peace? Do I pretend that I don’t see things like last night; the way he looked at her. It doesn’t matter, for I am the one who is going to stand beside him and say “I do”—not her, whoever she was.

Yes, I’m going to stand there and agree to eternity, however long that may be, and I’m going to be so happy, or so I’m told. Years to come, with my husband, our 2.5 children, and a back yard. I will be the envy of everyone, at least that’s what all my bridesmaids say as they stand in their blue dresses giggling and telling me that I’m going to be so happy.

It’s almost time. My hands are shaking and my mind is racing. They tell me that I look like a princess. I am a princess for the moment; a princess, a queen, and perhaps a drudge in the years to come. Will I become one of those wives that only live for dinners at the country clubs, or worse yet, wake up one day and realize that my only accomplishment in life was being married to Mr. Marcus the lawyer? I don’t know.

Do I know what it is that I am doing? Do I even know what forever—no I can’t comprehend that now. Do I really know what I am getting into, or did I just let the moment sweep me off my feet and brushh away any kind of grasp of reality as I once had? I don’t know, and it doesn’t really matter now. It’s a little late for second thoughts. I hear the organs playing; it’s time. I take my father’s arm in mine and I look at his face. I see tears of pride and joy. His little girl will be granted a life of contentment and security being Mrs. So and So.

Yes, daddy, put all of your fears aside for a moment, I’ll be just fine.

In winter,
 I was sent a valentine.
 It was a heart.
 The heart of a pig.
 The heart of a pig
 with a nail through it.
 On valentines, I walked
 through the graveyard
 on my way home. And
 my hands smelled of
 formaldehyde.
 The heart of a pig.
 The heart of a pig
 with a nail through it.
 In darkness, my bedroom rang.
 A sick head,
 the telephone,
 a lover.
 An answer through
 feverish
 delirium.
 "name your torture"
 The heart of a pig.
 The heart of a pig
 with a nail through it.
 "love " my loversaid before
 hanging up
 "love is my torture"
 The heart of a pig.
 the heart of a pig
 with a nail through it.
 I was sick so I said nothing to
 mylove in response.

At this time of night it always is. White, I mean. This world is seldom without the pure white luminescence of Faerie, the shadows and veils of mystery, of absolute and assured mischief. This is the place where the foxgloves grow, where the folk of the fields cultivate plants that would mean death to mortals, where the wee ones nurture your wildest nightmares and entertain your most forbidden desires. Things grow here which remain an eternal secret to the human creatures, those who would have their deepest wish granted only to regret its fulfillment. Few understand the ways of Faerie, and many forsake Them

Young Jamie dreamed only of love. He longed only for beauty and happiness and for the young man to return his love. But the Faerie folk knew better. They knew that the only thing Jamie really desired was the taste of his blood, the warm, coppery drips of life fluid down his throat, the dark secretive forces and powers flowing into his body and onto the velvet coverlet of his bed, staining the green material as if in tribute to the essence of the boy. They knew that he lived only to feed.

That is why, on that cold December day, they allowed themselves to be seen, the same ones, always - Lycia, Sparrow, and Flamina. Always the most faithful followers of her majesty, the three most adept at adopting the ways of mortals, of opening links and lifting veils. Flamina, as usual, led the way through the gnarled trees and thick, winding leaves, down the little-used path to the land of mortals. Jamie was sitting on a moss-encrusted stump, crying a little, looking as pathetic as always. Lycia crept up behind him. "You know of the foxglove young friend?" She grinned mischievously. "The very heart of Faerie is full of its magic and wonder. We know what it can do. We've seen it. Would you like to see?" She tilted her neck up high, searching the sky for something... something. THERE! She grasped the writhing butterfly in her bony, long-fingered hand. Out came her tongue, as she dribbled fiery liquid onto her outstretched palm. The struggling moth nudged at it, nuzzled it, and then to Jamie's bewilderment, began to burrow into Lycia's hand! She shrieked, then let go of the butterfly, who immediately began to attack a slithering worm and soon had completely drained the poor thing. The Faerie looked at her hand in surprise. "L.. I.. I'll bet you've never dreamed of such power.", she whispered in Jamie's ear. "I'll bet you've always wondered; hungered; longed for the taste of his blood. It's better than anything you know. Better than kissing, better than ice cream. It's even better than sex."

She was gone, she and her companions, who had gasped and hidden at the sight of the ravenous butterfly. Jamie looked around him in wonderment. He rubbed his eyes, and tried to shake off the feelings of nausea and sleep that had suddenly come over him. He felt as though he had just stumbled into another universe, the universe of his most unreal realities and terrifying nightmares. The stuff of dreams. Already he had forgotten of his strange encounter. He only knew he had to see the boy, and he had to get there fast, before he... before he... But what was it? He was distracted by the sight of a motionless butterfly by his feet. It looked odd, sort of reddish and glowing. He picked it up. He could almost feel the desperation emanating from the delicate creature, for as it lay dying in his palm, he had the feeling he knew how it felt and, strangely, that he envied it. He slipped the thing into his pocket and tried again to think just what it was he needed to see the boy about.

And then he saw it, a white flower just growing of its own volition, right in the middle of the forest floor, winding its way up among the leaves and branches, almost as if it was calling to him. It was so incongruous, standing solitaire in this forsaken place. Jamie felt sorry for it, drawn to it. He bent over and sniffed it. Strange. It smelled of carnivals and fortune tellers, of memories and nightmares, of blood and sacrifice. It smelled of summers and snows. It smelled of love. He ripped it out of the ground by its roots and slipped it into his pocket along with the dead butterfly. He needed to see the boy.

He arrived at his house, and called him. Come over. NOW. I must tell you something deadly important. He chuckled. Odd choice of words. And he began to notice a strange sensation in his leg, a curious tingling, as if he were being sucked on. There was a slight bulge in his pocket that had not been there before. Weird. He began to feel faintly hungry. He hoped the boy got there soon

IT'S TIMELESS WITH YOU AROUND,
OFTEN I SIT AND WAIT FOR SUNSET
BUT IT NEVER SETS IT YOUR EYES.

Do I radiate that beauty,
the way you say I do?
Do I smell like roses?

Could I forge the fabric of dreams
were you not dreaming?
Do I walk softly?

Would I read people and drink souls
were you not paperless and thirsty?
Does it pain on paper?

*Burn me brightly,
burn me loud
tear me away
from this crimson
endeavor.
Off thy hands from my
heart
cast me away into
cobalt oblivion.*

*so that these heated
dreams may burn me.*

for matthew

Fall into the abyss with me
Blind your eyes to the charcoal sky
Let us share our shadows
Bleed the pain away
We can travel through the deep forests
Hands bound, One silhouette
In the dying light of the sun
Drink deeply of the crimson
The dragon lies slain
Recount your fears in the palm of my hand
As I cast them away
Dandelion seeds to the wind

- ELIZABETH TINKER

*Would I lie to you
every day that does not end
weaving imperceptible truths
into lies in disguise?*

*Pretty things found in the dark.
turn on the lights
and they become strange, ugly*

We were waiting for silence to die,
patiently, by lamplight and without candles,
Just waiting for it to kick over
so we could go about our noisy lives
and hoping, the both of us, not to cry.
The heavens above us would do that soon
enough.

In the still blue quiet,
the peace before the storm
in spring, before the summer,
with warmth, before the fall.
We gave our everything, we gave our all,
into waiting for the silence to die.
Amidst smells of humid concrete
before the rain and sky
forever, in all directions, an orange sky,
we could hear the season's cry.

Was it killed by rainfall?
rainfall that then killed the calm before the
storm,
and wrought tension across our heavied eyes,
or was it the trainstop,
several hundred blocks away,
in some sick city, in some far away weary
world.

We were waiting for the silence to die
with lightning across the sky, trains in our
minds,
and tears in our eyes,
we spoke together, for a moment,
and then I went walking in the rain.
In the thick silver sound scape
the relief, becomes the storm
in the spring, before the summer
wet for a while, before the fall.
no longer waiting for silence to die.
I went walking in the rain.
The sound was all around me,
but I had nothing to say.

Away from you,
apart from expansive moments and open skies

Nothing comes of the stone candle
 this empty womb, nothing burns from it
 nothing woven in this frayed tapestry
 nothing left in this eternal travesty
 no feeling no failure
 not even triumph, or distress
 nothing comes from the stone candle
 it sleeps, where once it burned with prayer

look my lady, said he,
 can you see the trees from here?

certainly, said she
 for they are so much larger than we
 and ever so much more alive,
 and they never weep, as do you or I.

but soft, said he
 that one seems to have fallen,
 and that one seems to be weeping

I did not see that, said she.

the lordship sighed, ah that worries me
 for one so lovely as thee
 should gaze upon yonder fallen tree
 and see death. Nay, look it over. look
 there
 and see nothing, save the green
 of the hundred trees, that are not fallen
 and do not cry
 And her grace should dream dreams
 of trees, that never die,
 and stay forever fair.
 They die.
 trees die, my lady, as do you, as do I.

HOT HANDS, WET KISS
 STAY AWAY FROM THIS

HOT HANDS, WET KISS
 STAY AWAY FROM THIS

HOT HANDS, WET KISS
 STAY AWAY FROM THIS

HOT HANDS, WET KISS
 STAY AWAY FROM THIS

HOT HANDS, WET KISS
 FIND A WAY TO GET RID OF THIS

HOT HANDS, WET KISS
 SHALL WE GO NO FURTHER
 THAN THIS

BLUE EYES, THIS HEART
 IS THIS THE REASON
 FOR LOVE'S ART?

FOLDING, TURNING AND BURN-
 ING AGAIN

"I LOVE YOU",
 "I LOVE YOU",
 "I LOVE YOU"
 AND THEN

THE HOT HANDS' INFATUA-
 TIONENSUES FOR MOMENTS,
 THEN WEEKS AND DAYS

SOON, THOUGH THE FEELING
 LEAVES THE HOT HANDS
 AND WET KISSES

I am left to count the
 breaths between us,
 as I know not which will be
 the last.
 the first was hers, spent to
 say "I love you"
 Then I spent my breath for
 justice sake
 to say the same.
 Now my lungs have fallen
 silent
 and I count the breaths
 between us.

One for story, two for pain,
 three for children
 four eyes in the rain,
 five for sterling,
 six for jade,
 seven azure stage lights
 and the eight ways they
 fade,
 were nine breathless pup-
 pets
 in the backstage, both of us
 ten for the final breath
 between.

*Should have,
 could have
 loved to see
 the way the sun falls and sway with
 the wind
 into the things...
 Should have, could have embraced the
 matters of the heart
 seen the soul it brings...
 heard the blackbird's calls
 Should have,
 could have
 come closer to the evening bend of
 light, and life itself
 the way the sun falls
 into the bay,
 into the rain
 and on down
 to deeper things*

So this is the way the green summer ends

you know how it is
 the way things get green
 in light like that
 it's awful the way cats get
 the way cats get

I longed so much for
 just to see the world
 through your eyes
 it makes me heartsick
 As royalty

A world without the cuffling sunlight