



DENALI

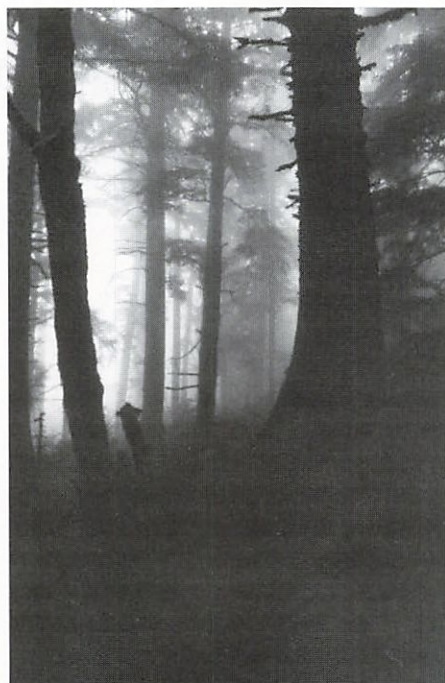
SPRING 2002

Handwritten signature

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contributors:

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taylor castle

Denali Literary Arts Journal is a quarterly student publication of Lane Community College. Denali accepts submissions from all Lane County residents. Please contact the Denali office, or visit our website to obtain a submissions form for the '02-'03 issues

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The position of Editor of Denali is open for the '02-'03 school year. The position is paid. You will need to dedicate approximately 20 hours per week towards the magazine. You must be an active student at LCC taking a minimum of six credit hours of classes throughout the editorship. Applications will be available at the beginning of Fall term '02.

If you are interested please contact either Drew Laiche at 463-5897 or Dorothy Wearne at 463-5656.

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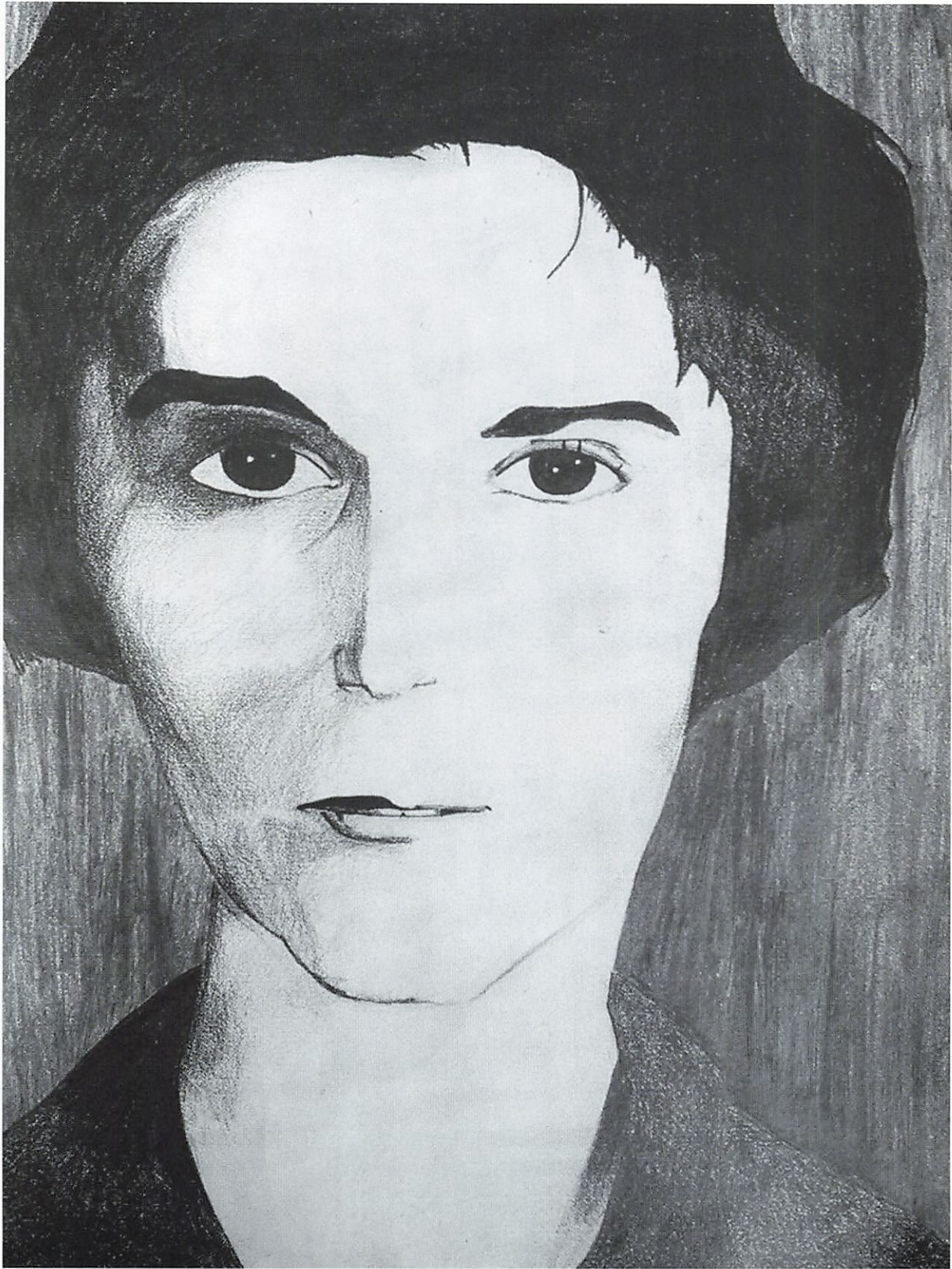
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Kitty Genovese was murdered March 14, 1964. The event was witnessed by 38 people who did nothing to intervene.

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blair girard

d a e
i n



miyuki fujiooka

ed
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deborah poses



e
d a l n i



d a n i **darlene martin**

patrick schreiber

the patient

"I bet it's another dead fat guy wedged into the back bedroom," my partner drowsily lamented, as he pulled the extra large latex gloves over his burly hands. "Better call the fire department for a medical assist," I yawned back at him.

This part of the county is unincorporated. Two local fire departments are staffed by volunteers; responding from home to the station, then to the scene. The ambulance service we work for is a 24-hour Advanced Life Support (ALS) service with an all paid, live-in crew. We do not have automatic mutual response with police or fire; it is the duty of ambulance personnel to call for assist from local agencies.

Sunday morning at 5:00 A.M. (shift change is at 7:00 A.M.), my partner and I are rudely awakened by a radio page from our dispatcher (the local town answering service. "Medic Six please respond to 95556 Beham Lane, space # one. A woman says she doesn't think her husband is breathing." The location begins to form a map in my sleep dulled brain as my bladder is independently deciding whether to visit the bathroom, or risk rupture on scene. My bladder decides that the chance of rupture is remote (aah, life on the edge). My partner and I click on auto-pilot and begin our routine response.

"Is CPR being performed?," my partner radioed back to dispatch. "Unknown, the caller has hung-up, and there is a busy signal on call back," dispatch returned. My

partner grunted and mumbled, "typical," under his breath. With the address confirmed, we sped off in the direction of the call, radioing for medical assist from the fire department.

As I drove to the scene, my mind map clicked in a familiar image of the location. One of our former EMTs (my former partner) had lived in space # four, at the same park. Her trailer was directly across from space # one. We had often commented, "that would be a tough place to run a code." Space # one was occupied by a nondescript, white single wide trailer, that was at least 20 years old and in constant need of repair. There were two older model cars in the short, narrow, gravel driveway that was parallel to and no more than three feet away from the trailer. The porch for the main entrance was the standard run down trailer porch: Wood steps that led to a small landing, surrounded on tow sides by a three foot high wood slat railing. The steps ran parallel and were flush against the side of the trailer. When you reached the landing, you had to make an immediate right turn to enter the trailer. Many trips to many trailer parks filled in the rest of the description. You would be greeted by a myriad of sharp turns, narrow hallways, and rooms crammed wall to wall with furniture and belongings, a logistical nightmare for a gurney, two EMTs, and the ever present 300 pound patient.

We pulled up to the residence and were met by a tall, slim, fiftyish female clutching a worn blue robe over pale blue pajamas. She had the look; wide brown eyes set in twin puddles of tears that reflected fear, shock, and pain. She led us quickly through the trailer labyrinth of narrow halls and wall to wall junk to the predictable small back bedroom. We were greeted by a 250 lb., 6 foot

the patient

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dead man laying on a rumpled bed that practically filled the entire room (surprise). Visions of disturbed sleep were automatically replaced with the mechanical protocols of resuscitation. My partner was neatly on the same set of protocols. No words had to be spoken. Action was indicated, and we were going to act.

As the fingers of my gloved right hand automatically shot out to search for the sure to be absent carotid pulse, I felt a light cool trembling sensation on my left arm. I glanced toward the sensation and saw a blue-veined hand with shaking fingers slowly encircling my wrist. My eyes traced the hand to the narrow, age lined face of the woman. It was not an unattractive face, and years ago would probably have been considered beautiful. I looked into the large brown eyes that had begun to spill tears in shiny rivulets down the lines of her face, condensing on her chin and slowly dripping sorrow on her pajama top.

A tiny high-pitched voice spoke from trembling narrow lips, "He's dead, isn't he?"

At first I started to give her my stock, grieving significant other speech that began with, "We will do everything we can Ma'am..."

When she interrupted and pleaded, "Please don't do anything, let him die at home!" My mind, geared and ready for IV's drugs, electricity, and a lot of adrenaline, wanted to scream every EMT's lament at this lady: "Why did you call 911 if you don't want us to do anything!" This question has always seemed logical and relevant to me, and probably to the vast majority of EMTs who were trained to use every resource available to save a life. But there was no logic evident in the pleading eyes of this shattered woman only, fear, grief, shock, and now sadness. A deep sadness that I couldn't see before, but now I could almost feel.

"How long has he been like this?" I asked.

"I don't know. I sleep in the other room. He hasn't been feeling well lately, and it was more comfortable for him to sleep alone."

The neat, still made, other side of the bed confirmed her statement. "I found him like this when I got up this morning," she continued, "I became scared and called 911."

Looking at my partner I said, "roll him toward me." The body was still warm to the touch. Not unusual for a small, warm bedroom and blankets. The back revealed the tell tale signs of lividity (pooling of the blood). We rolled him back and while my partner hooked up other EKG leads, I examined his eyes; fixed and dilated, a slight film covering the now lifeless blue eyes. The EKG showed a flat line that repeated itself in three leads.

Another protocol presented itself to us: death in the field. Not as much fun or as exciting as IVs, electricity, and drugs, but there it was. Looking from the wife's scared, expectant face, I glanced at my watch. It's 0512 hours, call it," I said to my partner who didn't have to hear the words to get my meaning. We stopped all recessitative measures. The wife looked at me, and the tortured face seemed to soften a little. The tears flowed more heavily, but they were filled with sorrow and sadness, replacing the fear. My partner was on the radio requesting the medical examiner to respond (a sheriff's deputy fulfilled this requirement). I asked the wife if she wanted to be alone with her husband to say goodbye. Her eyes brightened a

story continues on next page

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little as my partner and I covered the husband with what looked like a handmade quilt. As she sat down and took the lifeless hand of her husband, my partner and I walked out of the bedroom.

As we walked down the narrow hallway, the culture on the walls turned to framed photographs of life. One picture showed the dead man happily alive, smiling broadly while dressed in fishing waders and a slouch hat filled with hooks and lures. He was proudly holding a huge fish. I could almost see the beaming face of his wife behind the camera as she clicked a piece of family history. Other photographs showed the couple in various stages of age and circumstance; one was a wedding picture that took 20 lbs off the man, and confirmed my description of the woman's past beauty.

As we came into the living room, we were met by the fire chief who had responded to the call for the medical assist. He saw the looks on our faces, the equipment in our hands and he knew what it meant; it's over, go home, no adrenaline fix this morning. He and the rescue team were gone before the woman returned from the bedroom. Dispatch radioed back with the information that the deputy had to be awakened and was 30 miles away. The ETA was 45 minutes, which I knew really meant an hour to an hour and a half.

I could hear the woman's soft steps as she slowly walked back in the living room. She

was still crying, but the tenseness and fear were gone, replaced by grief and mourning. I breached the awkwardness of the moment by telling her about the response time of the deputy. That's when she came to me. She put her arms around me and cried. The steady stream of tears became a surging flood pushed out by huge sobs and a heaving breast. I could feel her grief soak in to my shoulder. The early morning sun sent shafts of soft light through the curtains, bathing the room with a warm glow that I hadn't noticed before.

The woman pulled away looking slightly embarrassed, still overcome with grief. My partner and I could have waited outside for the deputy, but before the awkward exit could be made, the lady asked us if we would like some coffee while we waited. She didn't wait for an answer as she quickly went to the small tidy kitchen and began making coffee. She chattered nervously while she worked. With the smell of coffee in the early morning air and the soft sunlight coming through the windows, I half expected the dead man to come walking out of the bedroom in his robe, open the front door, pick up the Sunday paper, and return to the kitchen in a scene perfected by 25 years of routine.

Holding cups of steaming coffee, my partner and I sat at the kitchen table as the lady took her cup and walked over to the wall by the front door that was covered in pictures. She began talking about her husband. She was talking to us but her eyes were fixed on distant places of reminiscence. The talk was a litany of her life as her topics changed with the photographs. She seemed to gloat from picture to picture, talking seriously at some, giggling at others. She relived her life with her husband in a 15 minute monologue and tour of photographs that demonstrated to me that this trailer was filled with wall to wall

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the patient

life, not junk. As the lady approached the hallway that led to her dead husband, she seemed to come out of her reverie. She walked quickly back to the kitchen. She sat down and began asking Jim and me questions about our families. The questions were not shallow or conversational. Genuine interest and concern showed on her face and in her voice.

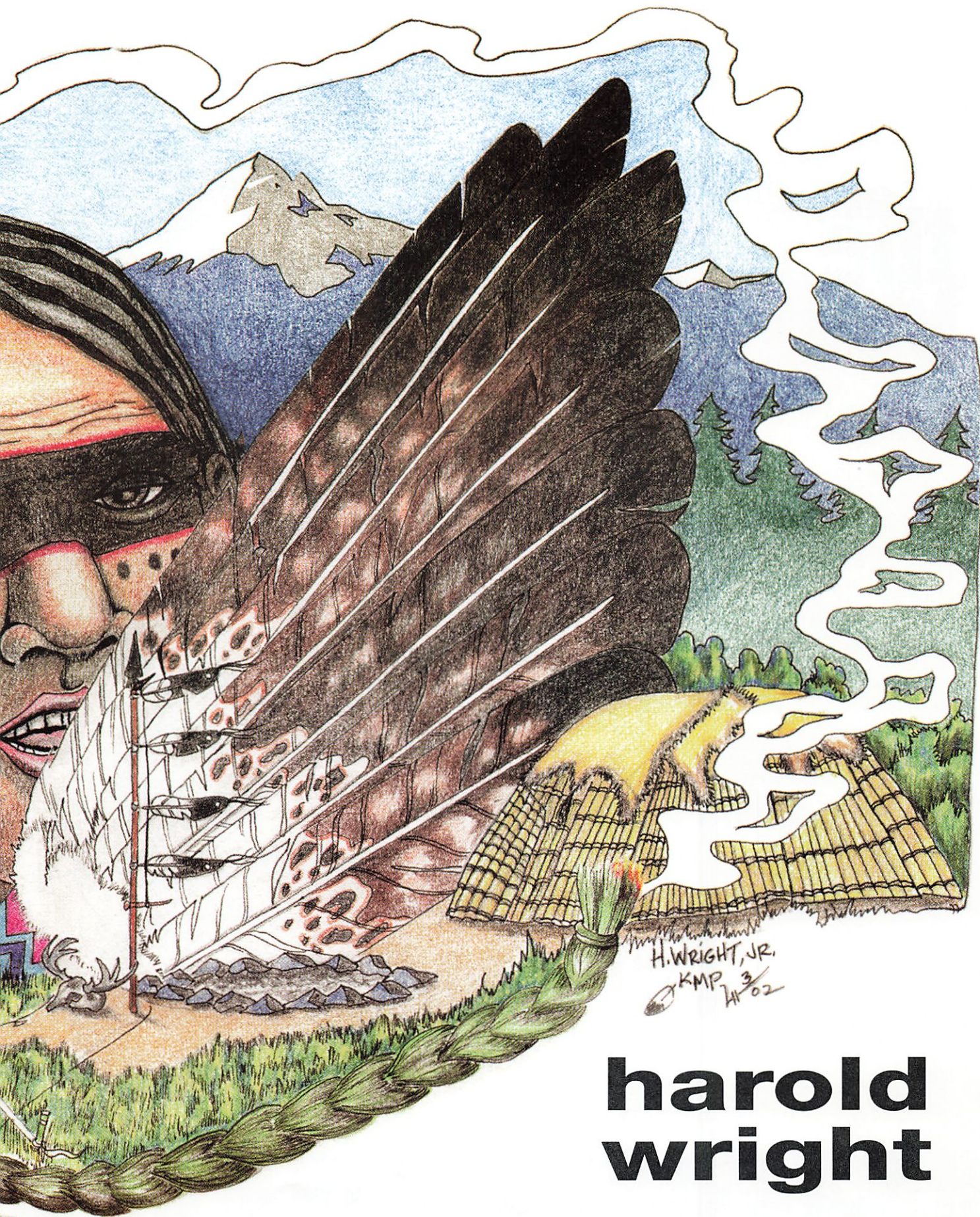
The arrival of the deputy was almost an intrusion. As Jim and I prepared to leave, the lady gave us both warm hugs and told us to stay close to our families. We felt like we were leaving a friend.

Instead of spending anxious, terrifying hours in the impersonal waiting room of a sterile hospital, hoping against hope for a miracle, this lady was able to spend comforting time in her own home talking about, and grieving over, her husband. She was not subjected to staring stranger eyes, or impersonal questions about insurance. She was not subjected to the grim face of the doctor as he did his best to give her the inevitable, terrible news. She did not have to go to a cold, stark white room to say goodbye to her husband. They were already home.

As I drove back to quarters, I thought about the lady, her husband, and my family. The lady's soft features formed an image in my mind and I realized just who had really been my patient.

the patient





**harold
wright**

**at
the**

watering

The towels go on the chair next to the tub,
And when the water is drawn, hot and steamy,
The cat leaps up to lay on them.

There I lie, bathing blithely,
While she, resting sphinx-like atop the towels,
Watches.

There is something so eternal in her eyes,
For a second I am an animal at the waterhole
And two green eyes stare unblinking at me,
Waiting for a moment of inattention.

Funny thing, evolution, isn't it?
I do not ask her pardon.
But give her a level wink across
These turned tables,
And seemingly unconcerned,
Work soap into a washcloth with my
Upper hand.

dale brabb

prediction **dale brabb**

The next-door neighbor is selling drugs.
Jonesing penitents
Knock on the door, the windows;
Pacing in the driveway in the early morning
Calling his name with frantic abandon.

I should feel safe
Living in the shadow
Of this chemically-dependent conflagration.
Surely my neighbor must believe
That cooking down my property
Would be a soiling of the nest.

Harry Truman is buried on St. Helens,
A victim of dangerous proximity.
I do not live next-door to a volcano,
But the signs are there:
As if impelled by some ominous wind
Rejected ashes of humanity
Swirl urgently in the driveway.

“rejected ashes of humanity”

finding big tree

Signs point the way;
“**BIG** TREE Next Left”
You drive through
the shadows
of a canopy of **giants**
looking for the one
they call the **BIG** one.

No one can find you here.
Nothing can hurt you here.
Dwarfed
by red and green sentinels,
nothing matters
only the crisp coastal air
streaming into your lungs,
only the Northern California morning
screaming into your eyes;
“**BIG** TREE Ahead”

Ant-like you turn the corner and
freeze.

My God! Not **big**
COLOSSAL
beyond scale.

Alive
fifteen hundred years,
towering
three hundred feet,
stretching
seventy-feet around.

The signs were wrong.
God lives here.

demetri liontos

? reminders?



I was sitting outside on my deck one morning drinking coffee and soaking up the coolness of the air. The sky was clear and blue, early enough that the neighborhood was quiet. A slight breeze brushed my face, and I breathed in the sweet fragrances of spring. Everything was peaceful, and I was relaxed. The coffee cup felt warm in my hand, and I was spending time just contemplating my yard and life in general. (Nothing was earth shattering, just morning waking up time, slow moving since I didn't have to go off to work.)

Out of the corner of my eye, I detected a quick movement, and I turned my head to see what it was. At first I couldn't see anything, and I thought it might have been a hummingbird or something flitting in, then out of my peripheral vision. I started to look away when it caught my eye again. Something on the trunk of a small tree that had died during the winter. A rapid in and out movement at the edge of the trunk. What was it? I watched closely trying to focus and finally a baby woodpecker came into view. I don't recall ever seeing a baby woodpecker before. I guess I never thought about it much either. Birds mature so rapidly, it seems rare that you see babies out flying around by themselves in the urbs and burbs. this one was adorable. Very tiny, the top notch light and feathery, like hair on a new born baby. the fine top notch swayed back and forth in slow motion as he moved his head back and forth, never catching up to the frantic beats.

He worked his way around the trunk always pecking, or at least trying to. Most of the time he just hit the air. He looked kind of spastic as he desperately tried to hit the wood with his beak. When he did manage to connect with the trunk of the tree, the staccato beat accelerated. It was almost as if he knew he did it right and wanted to duplicate the effort immediately. He danced around the small trunk moving up and down, the beak striking the air in a rhythmic fashion.

kit porter

bethlehem
bethlehem
bethlehem
bethlehem
bethlehem

slouching toward bethlehem

Tanks rumble in the streets now
where pilgrims once prayed.
Babies, silent and stillborn,
once cried tears of hope here.
Bombs bursting in air
give no proof on this
or any other night
of peace or other facsimile.

Two old bears, backs arched, poised
for the final deathlock,
wrestle for the spoils
of sand and blood and breath.
Where will it go?
When will it end?
What will it give?

A weary world watches
the drunken bears dance their dance,
Powerless to stop their waltz
to the abyss,
powerless to cut in.
Powerless.

The rough beast, keeping its appointed hour, has
at last
been born
in Bethlehem.

demetri liontos

colorado reflections

Morning sunlight illuminates the canyon strata in a
ritualistic unveiling, a superb performance surpassed
only by a late afternoon encore. Towering red faced
cliffs stand silent watch like sentinels high above the
fragile raparian habitat. Far below, muddy waters
surge through narrow canyon passages creating a
turbulent ocean of chocolate waves. On the shore,
lizards scurry from rock to rock pausing frequently
to observe uninvited intruders in their private
domain. Floating down the river a traveling troupe of
friends and lovers become mesmerized by the
magic of the canyon. Distant memories emerge,
fleeting images of a long time ago when life was
somehow more simple, and more truthful.

sandy cutler

first night in the bush

Light-seeking moths and beetles hurled themselves against the glass chimney of my kerosene lamp, as I wrote up the notes of my first day living among the Bassa people of Liberia, West Africa. Dinner had been an unheated can of Franco-American spaghetti in tomato sauce, chased by a bottle of tepid mineral water.

After brushing my teeth with the remnants of the same mineral water, I lay down on my cot, carefully arranging the mosquito net suspended from a hut rafter above. I wanted to reduce the chances of being bitten by a possibly rabid rat, in case one fell from the rafter while being pursued by a hungry snake. I reminded myself to check my shoes for scorpions before putting them on in the morning.

Darkness had completely swallowed both the 30-foot wide band of denuded earth around my hut and the surrounding lush rainforest vegetation. I lay in my cot, too tense to sleep. It had been an energy-draining day.

denali

hollyer

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***The dead chicken
was probably a
warning sign.***

”

I had persuaded the driver of the truck that made a weekly trip upcountry to carry me, along with my belongings, with mail and supplies for the only Peace Corps volunteer in Grand Bassa County. The 60 mile trip, from Liberia's only "city" Monrovia, to the few huts straggling along the roadside designated on my map as Compound No. 3, had consumed most of a day, since most of it involved unpaved dirt roads in barely passable condition.

My future home was situated several hundred yards off the road on a narrow trail running through a farm plot and on into the rain forest toward the St. Johns River. I spent the remainder of the day unloading my meager belongings, recruiting several small boys to help me carry them and moving them into the whitewashed mud hut I would be living in. Alone among the people whose language I couldn't yet speak, without such amenities as electricity and running water, I knew that the next three months would be the lengthiest and most daunting camping trip I had ever taken.

Soon the calls of rain forest animals were suppressed by West African "talking drums" speaking in the night. Perhaps the booming sounds were announcing my arrival. I pinched myself to make certain that I wasn't dreaming that I was trapped in a B grade Tarzan film. Later, I fell asleep to the percussive rhythm of heavy rain pounding on the hut's corrugated metal roof.

Emerging from the hut the next morning, I brushed against the headless body of a rooster suspended by a woven cord around its wrinkled yellow feet from a roof eave near the door. Blood still dripped from its slit throat and trickled down his dusty ruffled feathers.

"That wasn't here last night!" I thought with surprise. My eyes involuntarily followed the blood droplets down to the ground.

"What are those holes? They weren't there last night either!" With mounting alarm, I followed a row of precisely placed inch-deep puncture marks in the red laterite soil around the entire perimeter of the hut.

I could taste acrid adrenaline as panic gradually spread throughout my body. This was West Africa, source of the malevolent spirits later featured in sinister Caribbean voodoo cults. The drums I had heard must have been communicating the message that a white-skinned witch had taken up residence. The dead chicken was probably a warning sign. The line of holes around the hut could be a symbolic attempt to isolate and contain me within. Why had I been so foolish as to choose this part of Africa for anthropological research into the marriage patterns of a slash and burn agricultural people?

Nature's call was insistent. I stepped hesitantly over the neatly drilled holes, walked across the hundred feet to my stick and mud latrine, and cautiously pushed open the rickety door. Once inside, I had to force myself to relax.

Walking back to my hut, I paused about halfway, tried to slow my breathing, and attempted to decipher the situation. I noted the deeply corrugated metal roof. The spacing of the holes in the ground appeared to correspond exactly to the channels in the roofing material. Heavy rain must have run off the roof in parallel rivulets and drilled neatly spaced hole in to the red clay soil.

Although I never learned why they had chosen my hut from which to hang the slaughtered chicken, the farm workers staying in a hut a few hundred feet from mine enjoyed an unusually sumptuous meal of rice with chicken that night.

Later that morning, I asked my houseboy, who has learned English from the Peace Corps volunteer, about the drums in the night. "Next time there is drumming," I said, "would you come get me and take me to where they are speaking to one another? I would like to watch them being played."

"Oh, no, missy," he replied dismissively in the bored tones of a blase music critic, "they sound much better from a distance!"

poems for

A day

The ebullient empty white and washed
opening its bright face outlines the perimeter
now gesturing yet metallic now murmuring.
Thin gleaming wind of daylight's caress
sounding Penelope of gargantuan limbs
the alabaster coin thrown from the car
leaves upon leaves golden and orange
tumble down the lioness bank
my ponderings and gate slow as I
approach the knell and jump the hedge
sarcastic voices greet even an arabesque thought
cleave hoofs mock the pentameter beat
bright green grass carpets the scene yet telltale
signs of gray sidewalks wind ever so long and endless
a spiral reaching to the sea where I find you
naked and floating in glistening sunlight now
kissing the rooftops your lower lip dragging
ever so gently over the clouds and your
voice melodic like so many songs the
ever present wisp of persimmon hectares
coiled round your taut body cooled by
the breeze from the shore and the sand
that even the peddlers from ancient stores
can't distract or align to their purposes.

jerry

ross

morning

afternoon

The tin-can flip flop clock toned NOON!
the aeroplanes buzzed the city
calm restored to the open restive meadows
ten burdgening carts crept upwards towards the tower
that old salt McCorkle ambled along
Nearby, the vast red sea washed its ancient bones
and the crocus chorus sang its bleeding
cacophony of spear headed epiphany
more time was needed to unroll the tablecloths
the festive foods were served piping hot
even the small rectangular openings danced with abandon
and the noisy crick a crick sounds of the tram
rocked us as we slid ever so slowly towards the waters.
Now big boats appeared dancing also
in the tunnel winds of afternoon cold
and this winter's sasousance soon enveloped us

despite our cocoon of abundant wools.
The young girls, glorious in their laughter,
paraded by all swoosh and swash. Their
golden hair blew in a gentle ripple and we
lifted our glasses and drank in the day.

evening

Darkly the clouds descended and twirled beneath
neon's blinking arabesque.
The breezes chilled the bone in ever present bursts
of snow driven applause as home bound drivers
entered the boulevards twisting and rising in a
blizzard of anticipated warm fires now just remembrances
and hops on the brows of those tired and weary
scrambling like so many ants from towers of commerce
spilled like salt on frozen ice even as, in great breathes,
 chests heaved in a gargantuan yawn heard for a
thousand miles across the lands of bleak and
wind swept suburbs dwindling after so many
efforts in abandoned fields of little farms near
the city's edge having encountered in the increasing
darkness a morsel of comfort from rambling vehicles
now disappearing into driveways and garages while
inside the homes lights came on, twinkling in the black
distance of hills and vast empty ranges, indications of smoke curls
wafting from chimneys and dinners ready the warm
roses and leather of chairs that someone will find and the
others, more alone, than ever, gathering in the streets
of gray and wet cement, like old newspapers strewn
on the sidewalks, blown by gales down dark tunnels of
urban architecture, gathering in the solace of coffee and lights.

