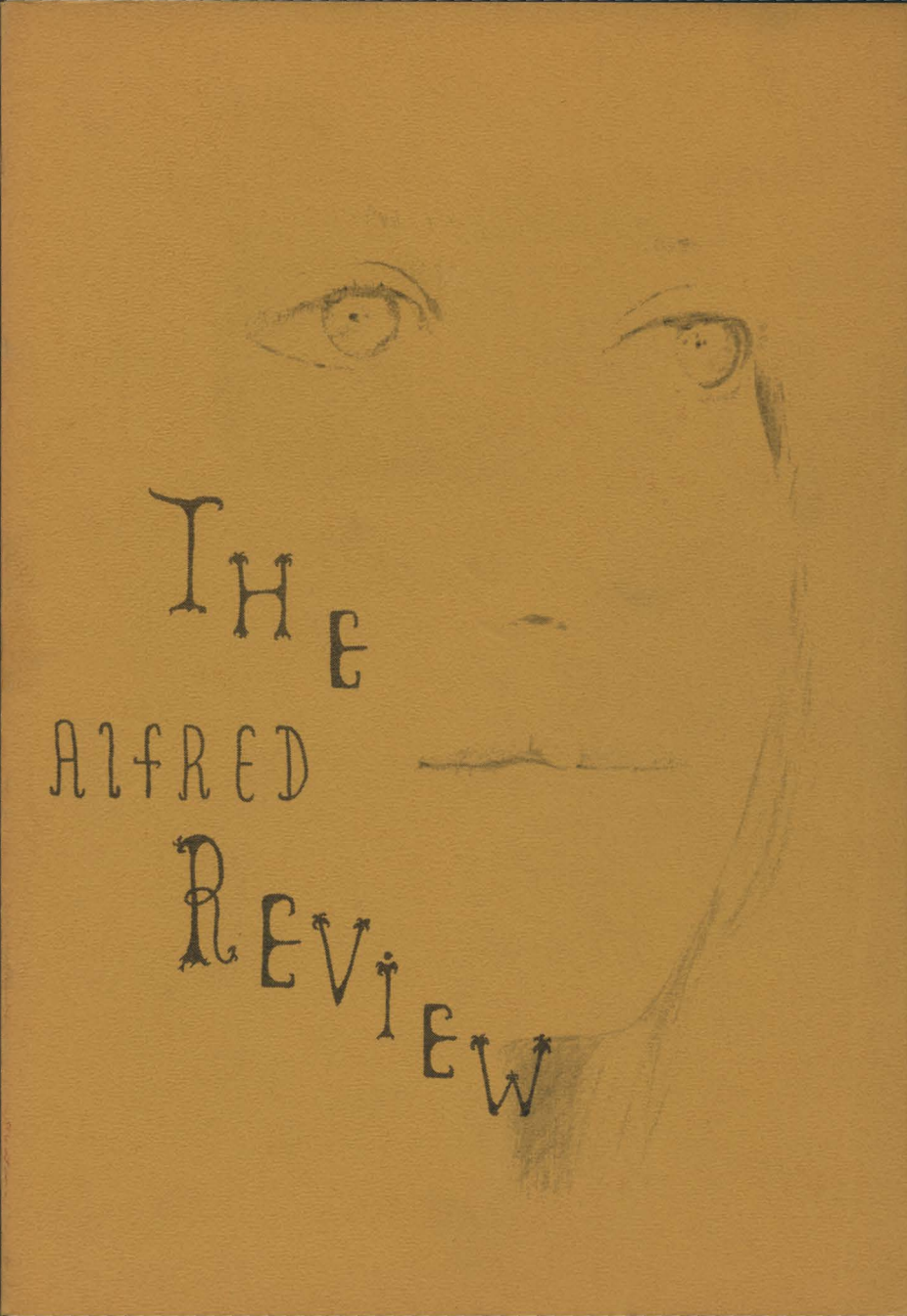

THE
ALFRED
REVIEW

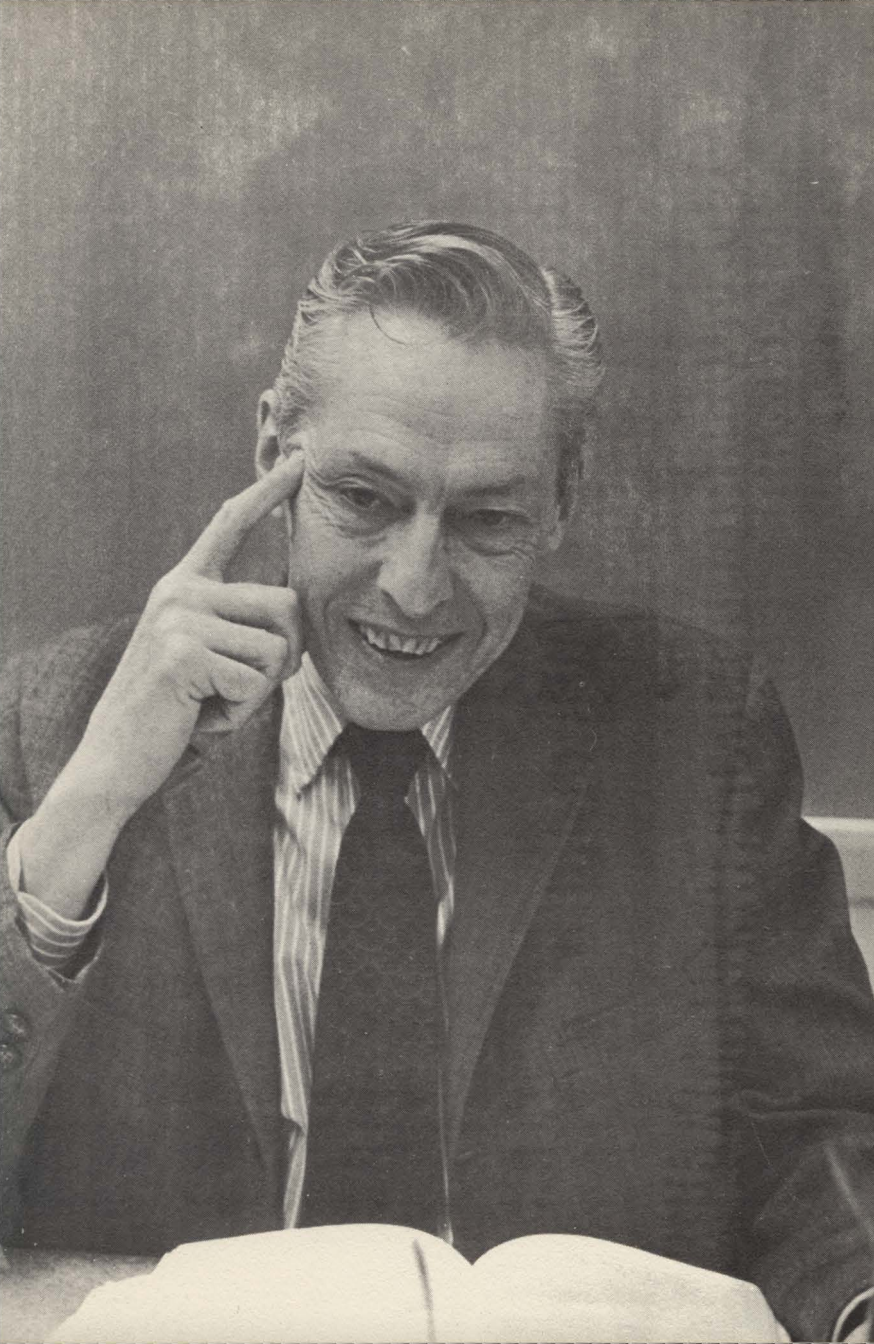
The Alfred Review

Alfred, New York

1971 · 1972

It has not been the custom of The Review to dedicate its issues. This year, however, Alfred University is to lose a warm and brilliant individual. The Review cannot let the retirement of Ernest B. Finch pass without expressing its gratitude to a very dedicated professor.

Dr. Finch, we thank you and appreciate the twenty-two years you have given Alfred University.



GRAPHOLOGY

The sober flourish above your lair
Encloses the spare ideogram of being
Shielding with smooth, unscalable walls
The precious self from the general stare.

Paying the easy coinage of cordiality,
The awkward, yet not graceless ceremony
Of smiles and how are you, then dispatched,
Unsmiling, intelligent eyes dart warily.

The moat is filled again,
"All's well!" cries the dragon.
Sea smells and sparks remain.

Frances Greenspan

THE CHURCH

The church behind
the foundry, next
to the tracks.

Sundays, trains
do not come by,
no one comes
to work.

The choir loft
is drafty,
cold comes up
through the floor.

The children wear
blue velvet robes
and sing the solemn
hymn.

Service
over, they step out
in the sun and see
the boxcars, women hanging up
the wash.
Home along
the rails
through sand and cinders
in polished shoes.

Ben Howard

WHEN YOU COME HOME

When you come home
and the worshipers
are thronging at your door
asking to be sacrificed
upon your blood-stained altar

I will not be there.

I'll watch from my window
and smile to myself
and pray some other time.

D. Fonda

CREEK MEMO

This town began burying
the center, the river

so, what if in the summer
it goes, leaving only, black
bottomed rock way stones in clay
remains—

Now it rushes in, glistening
the late afternoon snowing,
shrouding my dead
jotted brown November

my head, bared
trees, roots.

Narrowing in,
banks of combed grasses
long, coming, this stream
Kanakadea uncoils
moated beneath
the surface of
territory.

Roy Greenspan

FORKLIFT

Ash-fine crystal distant
snow in descent

Upon us in the loading yard
    Higher:

    in under the stone lintel
        the brick above stepped out

        against the grain of gravity
    my own face risen past reflection

    to a hole in the pane
the bird on the floor like a rock

    within
            Outside:

        perched hydraulically
        in service

        white
        cinders melt

        his black hole in my face

Roy Greenspan

WAR AND POETRY

For days now a robin in the apple tree
has been calling a tune between beak and belly
between melody and testy chirrup
a lyric but strident wake-me-up
insistent enough to make me note
her song is of need not by rote.
The matter is this: in the nest
are fledglings innocent of the best
patience of the house cat who waits
until redbreasted flesh celebrates
maturity and the confluence of fates.

The song of the bird the crouch of the cat
the alarm of the song the sprawl of that
sliteyed sphinx sure knowing
that time is on his side growing
meat for his spiked eyeteeth to crunch
feathers remaining a funeral bunch
of plumage covering a cenotaph
a remembered song its epitaph—
this war of nerves patterns the query:
does war go on for eternity,
what's song for, what's poetry?

coda

The song defines the problem.
The wisdom of the matter is that:
if you want the song not an emblem—
you'd do well to bell the cat.

M.H. Bernstein

THE BAPTISM

after Della Francesca

Jesus boy of Nazareth
I have waited here,
Come from the lone place
Where gulls never call
And the winds slide the earth
Beneath my feet,
Where bees leave only
A dry dusty honey
In the hollows of broken trees,
And the locust cackles.
Come stand sweet boy;
The water cools your feet
Before your journey
And washes a long gathered dust
From mine. Let me
Look for a moment in your eyes
While the sky is blue
And the birds' clatter is still.
I am almost ready.
I have come from the place
Where lepers meet in the morning
And blind men hunch in blankets
In the cold night.
I have brushed my hands
Against their clotted scabs
And touched my fingers
To their squinted eyes.
Remember this cool water.

And a dove descends.

Don Mager

NORMA ROSEN

photographics

emotions like a temp'st tost
high on the wings of indecision
mightily black in billows of fear
lost on the horizon of questions
winds of once love now lost
in sweepings of broken trust
petering to a gentle rain of tears
signaling release
peace like sunshine gathering
fallen pattern pieces
swirling to form a gentled man

Kathy Sharpe

"MOVING ONWARD"

I came upon you with spatula in hand and a bucketful of plaster. Spring had sprung and everyone said it was time to repair those winter cracks. I came to you with a bucket of plaster and my little toy spatula to help you with the work.

You told me to let the wall go its own way. I said: "Why?" I knew it was spring and time to reweave broken fibers. You told me it was spring and time to let those fibers of the season go their own way.

I was a little kid then; I hadn't even reached the years of urge. You were still alive then, very alive indeed, and working hard at eighty-one. I couldn't understand why my grey-haired gramps was going to be so lazy.

That was more than ten years ago and now there's a little one of our own running around the farm. He is very ordered and is always ready to put things in place. He's learning on his own, for sure, but sometimes I have to remind him: "It's spring and time to let the strand go its own way!"

David Barntman

WEIGHING WHAT YOU WANT

Days melt decisions into cottage cheese,
An upside down cake of my dreams.
From overstuffed chatter platters,
Come hungry unsatisfied needs.

Filling up on fat fried tongues,
Inhaling airs from hung up lungs,
It takes so little to dish it in,
So long to find where it's begun.

Like weight and wait,
The sun rose rose,
Spinning the wheel,
That it chose to know.

Janet R. Nordseth

THE POND AND FORMAL GARDEN

> "so ever since the day I covered my gold-friend
> With dark clods of earth, I have had to keep
> My thoughts to myself, and this despite my grief,
> Cut off from free kinsmen, so far away
> From my own dear country; for I left that land,
> Ploughed the icy waves with winter in my heart."
> "The Wanderer"

I could walk down to the pond on any day.
The view from the hill—
Clearly an overgrown garden
Of once exacting flower beds
Still visited by robins with their red
Throats, and blackbirds pecking with yellow bills—
Present the stairs, the boat house, now neglected in decay.

Once ladies in brocade and linen dresses,
Jewelled rainbows
Pinned to their hair, waiting
For their men to end men's talk,
Would stroll the garden-paths, watch peacocks stalk
Irridescent before their hens, the flowers close,
Look out to sunsets over the pond, beyond the sheltering bushes.

Perhaps the ancient woods were not cut back
And box and holly
Trees kept their green
Long through winter by the water's
Edge, where now the furrowed, stony earth,
Telling of autumn plowing after the sheen
Harvest of sugar beets, is gored and ground black.

The ground, perhaps, was terraced to the pond,
Canals draining
The excess water, visited
By swans, the flirting, shy moorhens
Nesting in the winter at the far end.
And bushy tailed foxes at dawn would slink,
Red against green leaves, and drink, and stalk the pheasants down.

The pond is almost bare in winter now
Except for slender
Stalks of matted rushes,
Sucking grass along the edges
Where field mice tunnel and hide. No swans;
But gulls I startle flap bent wings; the air,
Its many breezes, hold them well; they watch and circle low.

The wild ducks scare easier rise higher—
Forlorn cry
In solemnities of high air.
Like black shadows their wings beat
Against the winds. Moved by impuse, fear,
Never quite known, never forgotten, they fly
Not for joy, but need, with a vague idea where.

They migrate, as I have, into years
Passing over
The once formal garden.
Their ancestors must have seen a lone
Wanderer, crouched by the pond in storm, protector gone,
Or slinking back to the battleground to record the facts—
His friends' bodies with red slashes scored across their necks.

Barbara Feldman

NORELLE H.

photographics

COLLEGE TEACHER

I saw him monday
Walking slowly up a hill
A case in hand
Whose fill of words—precious—
Pulled his shoulder downward

His eyes were out of view
But I remember them
Thought-farmers
Scholar-bright
And tired
They kept the trail
Yet rested

There was no sun
But I could trace a shadow
Had it been night
There might have been a glow

He walked
To change of place
No business pace
A recess from his reading

I knew his mind was on another tack
Where friends and foes
Acting life
In pages at his side
Walked
Trails and avenues and stairs
Through days and nights
And years

Myron K. Sibley

Death was a jumbled Dag-
wood sandwich for you
a silver-bulleted Lone
Ranger Werewolf thing
to be eaten on Saturday
afternoon T.V., with a
sixpack to wash it
down during station breaks.

Then Blondie died.
A movie should have been made
of you on your drunken binge—
swallowing that hardroll, dry.

Timothy L. Brown

the gentled calico had seen it all
from her corner perch
she watched throughout time
tears in deep sorrow
laughter in maddened moments
unfulfilled expectations
she had been acquainted with desolation
now her aloneness is completed

savage ink blots on diary pages
ever approaching darkness
drawing illmannered shadows
dying embers in a once life bright room
cast a releasing gleam on the gun, now discarded

the calico moved across wide expanses
crying her sorrow
cautiously dipping her paw
in the life blood pool
staining the oakgolden floor on which i rest

Kathy Sharpe

snow's breath invades night
blighted blades of grass bow down
pausing: death awaits

Deborah A. Spinney
Timothy L. Brown

The bug creeps in,
fever soars.
Crawl to bed
crawl into bed
the aspirin and water gag.

Deborah A. Spinney
Timothy L. Brown

MECHANIC'S WIDOW

With the one before you,
I prayed
I was the car.
Your strong
but gentle body
held and handled me.

Now,
with you,
I subside beneath
soft metallic flesh,
trying to handle my
own body—
without screwing up
my motorives.

Janet R. Nordseth

AND MORE

. . . and if the rose were
Purer than it is and gave
Aroma I did not have to steal
To bathe my mind,
The rose would cease as
Rose.

An acorn, dumb as rock,
Slumbers in the cot of
Earth
And goes to bed with its
Cap on
To sleep through easy death,
A prelude to oak roots
That counter-grip the
Ground.

One day
The sway
Of random branches
Will sign the sky
As a buried spirit
Tips its cap.

Myron K. Sibley

Someone is playing music
Across the valley
At the other end of the breeze,
Familiar yet unheard;
And in this soft moment
When my own deaf strains take rest,
I sense a harmony
As if the wind were passing
Lightly over my heartstrings.

Herbert Marshall

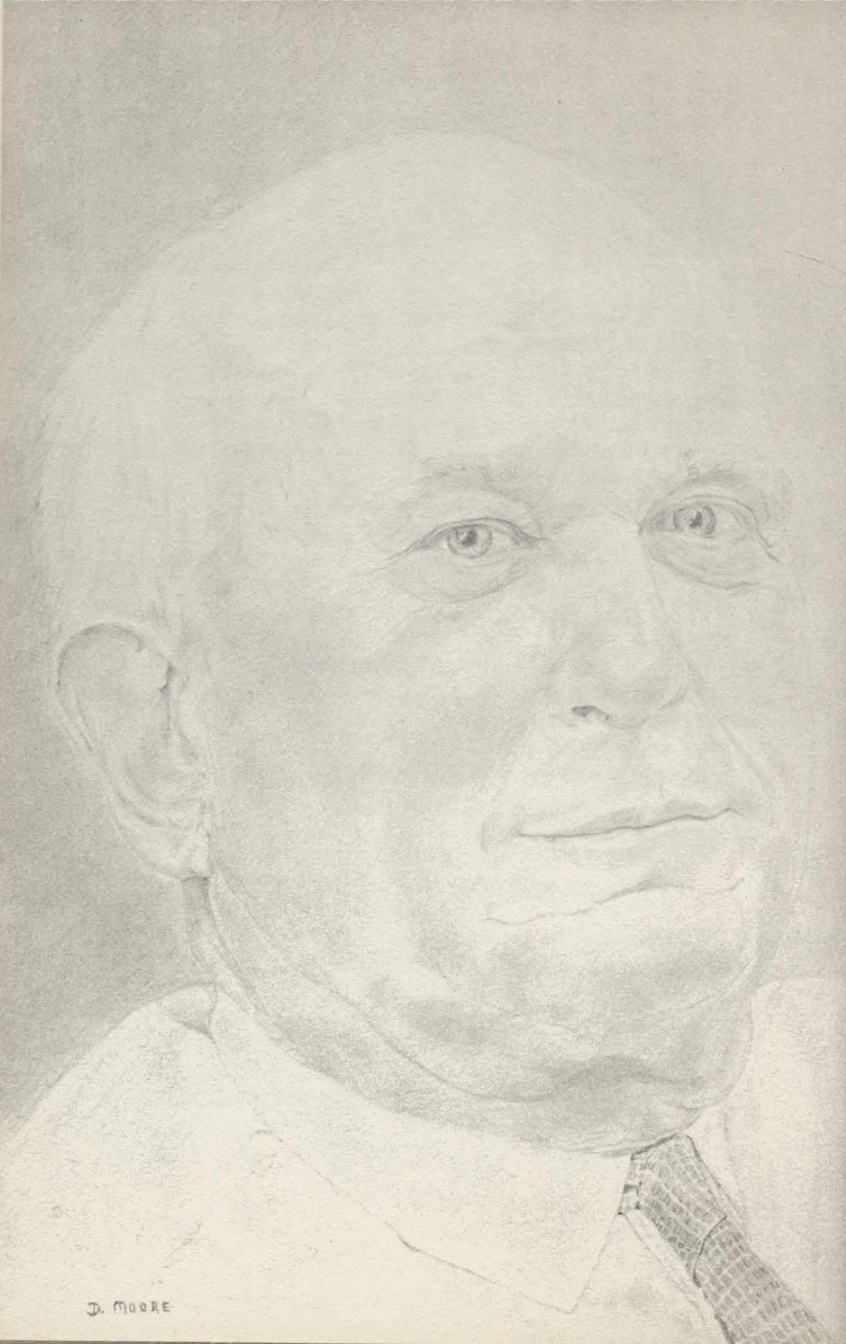
THE BARGES

The river swallows
everything, preferring men.
Each summer on the Mississippi
fishermen's skiffs and doctors' cruisers,
runabouts and houseboats pass
beneath the silver bridge that runs beside
a blackened trestle.
Skiers pass, in bold
procession, three abreast, as if they had
no sense of time, and lovers, young and old
row out in pleasure-boats
or an occasional
canoe. The barges, heaped with coal
the shape of sleeping camels, glide
through dark and tranquil
water. Nights, while still a child,
I heard their wailing

horns. The river swallows
fishermen and trappers, swimmers, even
children, cats and dogs. The brightly painted
buoys cannot disguise this. Every summer
stories of two-year-olds and four-
year-olds who jumped or stumbled off
a levee, slipped beneath
a barge, of daredevil swimmers whom the curre
dragged downstream, would make their way
to the family table.
And then a human flood,
carrying with it parts of boats
arms and legs of dolls
and underwater vines would carry me

away, a child of seven,
who could not swim . . . In the morning, things
looked bright again, the sun shone in
on my plaid bed, my rows of boats
with colored sails. The breakfast table, set
with oranges from Florida
and fresh milk, a mother's
feast, would hold me
fast—until, almost
by accident, I left my home
and wandered slowly down
to the shore. There I saw
a chunk of limestone growing
brighter as it wore
away, and saw two sailboats,
red and white, in the wake
of a steaming barge, unharmed.

Ben Howard


D. MOORE

in pencil / DEREK MOORE

MY TREE

A s, god.
n
t e n of
r v r
e a u
e e t
h e
m heralding the r
e e
l h
t t
s
h
i g
t u
s o
r
way th

this
is
a
d
e
a
d
tree.

Betsy Brown

A SEQUENCE OF THREE MOODS

I

Our Railroads Are Running Downhill

Things go piggyback
people don't rate
goods ride the tracks
I wish I were freight.

II

Why do leaves cross the street?

In summer chickens
cross the street.
In fall the leaves do.
Chickens are a riddle.
Leaves are a riddle too.

III

Because

I know
how vigils came to be
the saint to see
again
how visions are awaited
because seen
then
what dreams are for
because facts
when.

M.H. Bernstein

I have taken you in sight,
In heat of a long, long May;
I have caught you creatured from afar,
Bent willow-lithe,
Light-footed and barefoot in a leafy shadowdapple
Of the over-boughed stream—
Your song's girlish eddyings
One with the avid burblemurmuring of waters,
Cool-dark among the rootspreads,
On their way to sea.

You have wound your way beachward.
As I in the flow of the fiery afternoon;
And your wave, far seen, slow nighing
At my approach, near touched,
In coming
With swelling froth, soft lapt long
In sweet seething,
As we blend gently, waterlike,
In motion as the sea.

And as we late lay,
Ebbspent and furrytold on our backs,
Ambersanded under the rich, darkening, spring sky,
Newly starsown in sparkling lifelight,
I feel a welling in an earthard heart,
And am tidedrawn to the moon
In your dew-clear eyes.

Herbert Marshall

JUDY ON A CAROUSEL

Child
With shy spring smile,
Light brown hair,
Tossed like a puppy
in the air.
You reach gently,
like a shy rabbit
or a timid turtle,
Copper eyes questioning,
Palm as open as a wound,
I'm afraid for you.

CAT

Lean and taut as a wire
She stretches.
Muscles arching,
Tail a triumphant banner,
Fur burnished black.
Padding forward,
Intent as a spider eyeing its victim,
She springs.
Then
A sprite on four paws,
Dancing like a mobile
In the wind,
She chases milkweed fluff,
Like a child grasping for a runaway balloon.

Arlene Plevin

AFTER THE NOCTURNAL EMERGENCY DELIVERY OF AN OVERDUE TERM PAPER IN PHILOSOPHY (OH HORROR!

The pale child of your sorrows
and of our nightly wake,
its face severe
With the grim disputes
of ancient theology
and its sad cry—the grumblings
of man's social history.
Alas! No smile is crowning the pains
of your patient laboring,
no childish grace the infant's reward
of motherly love and paternal care.
'Tis strange:
The light of a maiden's mind
exploring the profound concepts of being . . .
How magnificent indeed, how awe-inspiring!
But,—forgive my trembling gaze,
don't mind the unasked question:

'where is the spring and the joy
which your dark eyes intended to envision
when probing into a life that is no more,
you leave aside so sternly
the innocent and accidental present,
the unwanted child
that is reborn to us
every time
we meet?'

Paul Kohler

ORANGE COUNTY GEORGIA

Sundays clutter the roads
with slowpokes going nowhere
all on the same street.
The one with all the white houses,
whose porches are a graveyard
for bicycles and lawn chairs,
whose insides are a morgue,
for lazy cobwebs stuck on
every radio playing country twang.
Greasy kitchen smells swim
outside and nauseate the neighbors,
who drove to Nowhere Center,
but got bored,
and had to leave early.

Janet R. Nordseth

THE MOMENTS OVERCOME

People estrange me from myself.
The wet cliffs, graced at this bitter time
lull me to come,
to walk through icy rains.

Oh, one of you Brontes—from
your sheep bleating, trickling moors—
Charlotte, come.
Explain to me this snaky passion.

Love? This harboring battle fear
which intellect cannot conquer
nor wisdom bear?
This walk I will not take

might loosen from me this ache,
gentle me past memory to some safe
and babbling stream
to sift out, rainsoaked and unchained.

But here in this prison house, flung
words brace, kicking sullen
not to be released
by some large rain or sea borne wind.

The enemy is within.
The sins are human
only, but unkindness whines
or crawling beneath the door

when people enter. Oh Bronte,
nature speaks, half satisfies;
but words are heart's—
nerves'—tongues, yet his words lie . . .

The enemy is myself!
The sea punches the sand as helpless roar
its force too primal
ever to refine its artless war.

Barbara Feldman

THE SONG OF A WANDERER

Waves slash a lonely shore
Driven into life by the misty winds of the North
As I walked along that deserted beach
I see a sparrow who seeks in vain shelter
From the cold merciless winds
In the leafless trees

Time has left my deadened mind
My numbed body can no longer feel the cold
The chilling cold, now a part of me

But I must go on
I must continue
Into the banks of fog
And into the oncoming night

The wind howls through the lonely trees
As the mist turns to snow
Covering my wet footprints in the sand
For a moment I imagine
I can yet feel the wind
And shiver in the cold
As I once could

I hide from the lights and voices
Of a nearby cottage
As I yet walk on into engulfing, lonely night
I now am a part of

Ahead I see rows of desolate trees
And rocks of marble and granite
And the names reaching towards eternity

I return to a grave . . .

Harry Hinchelwood

FLOWER CHILD

The flower child weeps
Beneath the weight of heavy hate
That pounds to pulp
The love
God spent in Christ
On child-man

Myron K. Sibley

even'time holds secrets, memories, and fears
of what has passed
and of that yet to come
there had been a time of almost spring
of laughter
running with the winds
of deep association

now i am plunged in despairs of searchings
i had found my purpose in living
death, for some, is an unusual calling
but for me, it was real
patterns of inreality made my being
the wholeness i'd sought

when Peter spoke his free words
darkness
my fears personified
my philosophical dreams of death
bursting like childrens bubbles

tears flowed
unstillable streams of blankness

Kathy Sharpe

pen and ink / unknown

WINTER NIGHT

Fire crackles log shackles
to the smoke, which freed,
flees, disappearing
in conspiracy with air.

Timothy L. Brown

EIGHTH

I walked to the door expecting to find you there,
But there was only the wind.
A car drove by—I could hear its tires screeching over
pavement you once walked.
That was when you came at morning to tell me you loved me,
At noon to let me know you had me in your thoughts,
At twilight to be with me and watch the sun decline the
hills beyond,
And to hold my hand kiss me and gently say in your own quiet
way—so assuring and warm—that the world can be ours.
Then it would be night when you would come and lie by me,
To hold me and tie all those ribbons of love.
But now I stand at the door expecting to find you there,
But there is darkness and I stand alone,
Knowing I still love you.

Deborah M. S. Ehman

I cup my hand to catch the rain
The drops feel cool to the soul of a searcher.
Bring life to the cleft leaf of the blossom
Deepen the mirth of a cascading pool
Cry upon the glistening stone
And carry to life some colours from the rainbow.

Deborah M. S. Ehman

A POEM FOR BOB

i

am

B-R-O-K-E-N

utterly O P E N

afraid he'd not see

the FLOWERshape in me . . . . . .

Norma Haas Rosen

FOG

The headlight beams climb down the road and press
Into my eyes. These tubes of light are stretched
In fog like old smoke stretched in a dead room,
And barking numbly knocks in a dead room.
They feel into the central pulse of eyes
Like fingers touching pain to pulse the tight
Numb ache. Blackest just after they pass.
I will nothing so much as less of this light.

Let trees, winter-stripped, rise above me,
Black and groaning and dead. And let them shadow
Me and spread like lace; I pass below.
Let trees and faint yard lights, the far-off barking
And the twisting fog that wraps about me—
Let these point where I am and where I'm going.

Don Mager

OUT PATIENT

A lilting wilting falls on the flowers
the day after they arrive, potted in pink foil.
The vigor of their demise dances rampant,
infesting their bedridden audience.
Tomorrow I will wake to the bed
the plant's fever emptied.

Timothy L. Brown

I'll never forget that fateful Friday
when we skied together across
the sunny-yellow afternoon.
I gave you a flashlight
to brighten your darkest days
and to guide you on starless nights.
I took you out.
We walked
and talked
but never understood
each other.

They were wonderful times and nothing more;
like tunes moving people on a dance floor.
Too long have I stood in the far corner;
not the still dead and not the black mourner.
Encircling shadows around me fall,
while I await some unknown angel's call.

Dick Butenas

PARENTHOOD

The heavens hurl wonder
At a man when
His child is born
And the wonder remains
Wonder
Though intelligence insists
The mystery be tamed
Harnessed to patterns of the
Practical

Untaught tongues assume command
And demand
Obedience to rules
Invented ways of making it
Through the sterile stairways
Of structured halls unlit by
Sun

Myron K. Sibley

FALLING APART

Gery poured another glass of sherry. When she gets excited, she warns her children to settle down. Her christmas tree lies in hibernation on the porch. It will be used and abused each year as the tradition goes. Nothing seems to be alive—no jokes, just toasts. The t.v. talks and talks itself sick. The phone vibrates the plastic wall brick.

The only real change in her house is a very slow one. Each day Tom, the cat, unravels a few more threads of the rug.

Janet R. Nordseth

A deafening roar heard
Over the din of city bustle—
All eyes up, all hearts fall
And each soul searches self;
Split-second recourse the life past led—
No time to repent nor to spend,
As hearts fell with sudden weight;
So each enigma thought as people
Perish to the noise,
And stillness reigns.

Deborah M. S. Ehman

and
You driving back a cold black
road while I
wonder if my plants are dying
of heat or cold.
This night the pale moon fades beneath
the hills,
and cripples all my questions of survival.
Clay beads and orange peels lie
on the floor
with memories and fingerprints
on the door
those hills rising out of nowhere,
curving and turning the
seasons around.
Directionless and dreamy-eyed,
I watch the night fall down,
to wake to burly clouds blowing
last night's thoughts around.
I'd hoped you'd stay,
but knew you wouldn't,
You're much too far removed,
from clay beads and orange peels
the hills,
pale moon and cold road
dream remains float about the room.

Janet R. Nordseth

HOLY WEEK 1968

Swaying palms filter fecund sounds
Where summer boils green in jungle
Moon on moon
Hiding innocence from fangs
Of leopard's. Naked man as black
As ground, with pliant mind,
Spear at ready, stalks his prey
For food and fun and tribal chant.

Trader, arm unsleeved and
White,
Pushes steeling fingers finding in the jungle-green
Black wrists to wrap in iron. Trail
Your way, man-as-beast, chained and dragged to hollow
Holds of skull and bones
Vessels sailing
West.

To cotton, cotton; cotton patterns
Gay in color, shielding whites
From weather,
Stave off sun.
Whip-lash patterns
On black backs,
Swollen scars spell out
"Slave."

Bend to labor! Bend to labor!

Sing to soothe the heart-deep sting: Swing,
Swing low, swing low
Ole Black Joe
To and fro
In rhythmed pain
From Jungle-green to
Memphis.

Mules have longer ears than horses
And wagons weep a sadder dirge than hearses.
Sad-eyed hybrids, haul the bier of
Silenced Martin! Mule hooves, pound
On ears until it hurts enough
To pulverize the ice
Of all caucasian
Malice!

Sing, O sing of Martin Luther King!
His ringing voice is quiet.
The bullet-fang that rang
His end sounds
'round a grieving earth.
Holy Jesus double crossed
Rise to bring
Martin Luther King,
His life lost,
The black man's
Easter!

Myron K. Sibley

NORMA ROSEN

photographics

A SHORT STORY

by Jeff Simmons

ALMA MATER

I was walking up the stairs and when I got to the third floor I was a little scared to see Dominick, the school janitor, sweeping. He looked up and, noticing my paranoia, smiled. "Aren't you supposed to be in class now?" he asked.

I was shaken up, and I clumsily searched through my pockets. "I've, uh, got my pass here, uh, someplace." I stammered.

He laughed. "You kids. You kids! I don't care if you cut classes." He lost his grin. "But you don't know what you're doing. These are the best years of your life. Your chance to get an education so you don't end up like me, pushing a broom." I was relieved. But my relief turned to self-anger for losing my cool. And at that moment I hated Dominick for trying to give me advice. I buried my hands in my pockets, aimed my eyes at the floor, and muttered "Thanks" as I walked by him. I cut the corner sharp and found the corridor empty. Everyone was in their classes. I walked

quietly down the hall and paused by room 311. That was where I was supposed to be; Mrs. Wertz's history class. I peered through the little window in the door and saw old Sally Wertz sitting on her desk preaching to a room full of sleepy students. I could not stand that woman. Her unthinking, "my country right or wrong" method of teaching American History had earned her the dislike of two generations of students. That was at least one thing that the children of our neighborhood had in common with their parents. Apparently her class room situations had not changed in forty years. I knew for a fact that the ritual of throwing her potted plants out the window was at least twenty years old. I had fulfilled the legacy myself for the past two years. I whispered my regards to Sally and then walked down the hall and into the boys' lav.

Ron Lutz was leaning against a sink, smoking a cigarette, and staring at the opposite wall. "Seven hundred forty-three and a half tiles. Three hundred and two white ones," he said. "Wonder how many in the whole john."

I was pleased at this chance to display my knowledge. "Seventeen hundred ninety-four if you count the ceiling."

He squinted to keep the smoke out of his eyes. "Smart boy." My showing off renewed his hostility toward me. Ron Lutz and I had never been particularly friendly. We had been in a lot of the same classes. While I'd always been able to get by, and even do well when I felt like it, Ron had usually done miserably. This fact accounted for our mutual disrespect. It was only in the third floor lavatory, where we both came to smoke, that we would tolerate each other. I asked him for a cigarette.

"Grub!" He gave it to me.

"Lutz, you been spending a lot of time in here. You get caught much more and you'll get screwed."

"You sound like them," he said, indicating the school which existed outside of this room. "That asshole Riggs gave me crap for cutting so much. Last week they said if I cut any more classes I couldn't use the metal shop. They nailed me this morning."

At that moment I really felt sorry for him. It occurred to me that the metal shop was about the only thing that our school had to offer Ron Lutz.

He sensed my sympathy and I thought he might have been affected. "Doesn't matter. My old man says I can drop out at the end of next month when I'm sixteen. Good to get out of this hole."

The conversation had made me rather uncomfortable and I began glancing around the room. It was mine and Ron's and our friends' part of the school. We all had a great affection for it and at the moment I felt that, for me, it had been more educational than the school's other facilities. The door swung open and Thomas walked in.

If there was anything, besides the third floor lavatory, that Ron Lutz and I had in common it was Thomas Poukardowsky. Thomas was a sort of symbol in our school. He was something that stuck in the school administration's craw and that they couldn't do anything about. He had the highest IQ in our class, yet he'd always done poorly because he just wouldn't bend to classroom standards. He was wild, strong, popular, and creative. And he was bitter. A year ago he had "borrowed" a school tape recorder and had been caught. The school told him that he had to go to a reformatory voluntarily or they would prosecute. He had spent six months in the reformatory, and then found out from a lawyer that the school had acted illegally. He was back now with a vengeance and treading the thin line that bordered on expulsion. And what made it even tougher for the administration was the fact that many of the school's teachers liked him very much. This was due to Thomas' intelligence, and to his ability to get along with people. Ron and I, as different as we were, were both in awe of Thomas. To Ron, Thomas was a tough, enjoyable, trouble starter. I was always impressed by his wit, and particularly by his ability to paint.

Thomas burst in with his usual spectacle. His entrance into a room was a little bit like a losing home team's first touchdown. "Afternoon, men. Glad to see you're holding down the fort. I just had a great idea. Ron, can I have a cigarette?" Ron didn't even grumble. "Ya see, first we get a master key to all the locks in the hall. Then, between classes we switch all the locks around . . . "

"Thomas," I said. "You had that idea months ago."

Thomas was quick on the uptake. "You didn't let me finish. What's the matter, don't you trust me?" He went on a three minute tangent about how I didn't trust him, and then continued. "We switch the locks around, yeah. Now we all know how cold this weather is, right?" I was getting impatient but Ron calmly listened, with absolute faith in Thomas' ability to raise havoc. "And then . . . we call a bomb scare!" I began laughing and Ron became totally enraptured with Thomas' genius. Ron was

probably the only one in the room that was taking the idea half way seriously. But the plan did seem beautiful and it would, at least, inspire us to some lesser feat of chaos. I knew that at least Thomas and I knew better and that it was all a joke, but there was something about the proposal that, with its irreverence toward order, struck a chord in all of us.

We all spun around when the door swung open and a small junior high student with glasses walked in. He looked confusedly at us and walked over to the urinal and set down his books. He seemed an intruder and none of us could help but to consider him in those terms. Wasn't this, after all, our private class room? Ron was noticeably hostile to the little scholar with his student pass, and I was afraid that he was going to pick on the kid. I think Thomas noticed this too, because he immediately took control of the situation. He walked over to the boy and said, "Well sir, thank you for bringing us your business. We run a fine clean establishment here and we aim to please." Thomas walked over to the sink, turned on the hot water, and grabbed a towel. The befuddled student flushed the toilet and walked over to the sink where Thomas waited and then handed him the towel. As the boy wandered out Thomas said, "Come again, sir."

We talked seriously for about two minutes, during which time Thomas found out about what had happened to Ron that morning. "Those bastards! Smoke really bothers them doesn't it? Well, I've come prepared." He reached into his pocket and produced an unopened pack of cigarettes. I was surprised that this didn't annoy Ron. Thomas tossed the pack to Ron who held it dutifully. Thomas then reached into his pocket and pulled out a small brown envelope. He emptied the envelope into his hand and we saw a small pile of pins. "Twenty of them." Thomas grinned, looked at the cigarettes, and then at the ceiling. Ron understood much more quickly than I did. Before I really understood what was going on, Ron was perched on Thomas' shoulders. Thomas was lighting cigarettes, sticking pin heads into the filters, and handing them up to Ron. Ron was sticking the pins into the ceiling, and the room was getting smoky already. I offered my assistance and Thomas gave me some cigarettes and pins. I was soon standing on a sink doing my bit for the cause, whatever that was. We all performed our tasks efficiently and joyfully. This was what I called school spirit.

"Thomas," I said, "Are we taking off when we're done?"

"We may as well. Really doesn't make any difference to me. I'd really like to see Cramer's face, though."

Thomas had a chance to see it. Just as Ron and I got back on the floor, in walked Cramer Riggs, our illustrious assistant principle. Thomas' expectations had been well founded. Riggs looked as if he had just chewed an aspirin. Riggs was a muscular, crater-faced man in his middle thirties. His looks were appropriate to his villainous role. He was the agent of discipline in our school and he must have done a good job because we hated his guts. He tried to wave the smoke away as he said, "You guys have really done it this time." I think that he was pleased to see that Thomas was involved. He said to Thomas, "This is one stunt that you're going to wish that you never pulled." Thomas just smiled, which confused Riggs and made him turn his attention to me. "And you . . . I'm truly surprised at."

Thomas grinned a little harder and said, "You're not supposed to end with a preposition."

Riggs ignored him and kept at me. "The editor of our literary magazine! Well, that may not last for long." That stung, but I tried to imitate Thomas' attitude. Riggs then started glaring at Ron, who was the kind of student that Riggs knew how to handle. He said nothing, but his arm shot suddenly out and grabbed the pack of cigarettes from Ron's pocket.

"Alright, Mr. Lutz, where did you get these?" Nothing was said. "None of you boys are eighteen. Where did you get the cigarettes?" There were no confessions so Riggs just crumpled the pack in his hand.

"Son of a bitch!" whispered Ron. Riggs' arm shot out for a second time as he slapped Ron hard. Ron was quite jarred, and all he did now was concentrate on his hatred. I watched Thomas tense up, and for a minute I thought he was going to try something stupid.

Riggs grabbed Ron by the shoulder, turned him around, and began walking him toward the door. I heard the faint ring of the bell which signified the end of classes. "Okay boys. Let's go down to the office."

As Riggs marched us through the door of **our** alma mater, Thomas placed his hand on my shoulder and said, "Ain't education wonderful."

The hallway was bulging with students that watched us and moved out of our way as we walked in front of Riggs' imposing figure. Mrs. Wertz stood in front of her doorway clucking her tongue and shaking her head as we passed her. Then I spotted Dominick, who watched us seriously. My head went up and I smiled at him as I passed him. From behind me I heard Riggs say, "Dominick, you want to go clean up that mess?" This bothered me but I wasn't quite sure why.

Ten minutes later I was sitting next to Thomas in the office. We occupied the center two seats in a long row of uncomfortable white chairs that faced the main desk. Teachers walked in and out getting papers from their mailboxes, and several middle-aged secretaries were typing very important forms that meant absolutely nothing to Thomas and I. Thomas seemed oblivious to the whole scene and was trying to get me excited about geodesic domes. I knew that he was a little more concerned than he would admit. He really didn't want to leave school, despite his hatred of the classroom situation. There were teachers at this high school, especially in the English and Art departments, that Thomas thought he might be learning from.

Thomas realized that I wasn't thrilled about geodesic domes. "Hey, that crap about the magazine isn't bothering you, is it?"

"Don't matter. They're censoring the hell out of it anyway."

His eyes lit up. "Why don't we start our own magazine. Show the school what its students really think about it."

"We'd get canned as soon as it was printed."

Thomas was quite cheerful. "So what. We know that'll happen sooner or later anyway. We may as well go out with style."

The door to Riggs' office opened and Riggs stood in the doorway as Lutz left. Ron paused and they stood looking at each other. They had nothing to say, and I think they were both looking forward to the day when they wouldn't have to put up with each other. Ron walked out into the hall and I saw him stop a girl and bum a cigarette from her. I knew where I'd be seeing Ron in a few minutes.

"Tom," said Riggs.

Thomas stood up, took two steps, turned to me, and indicated the office equipment. "You know, that photocopy machine would be a great place for a bomb." I thought that was the funniest thing I'd ever heard.

Last night I dreamed
I was an astronomer
watching you sleep
in motion star form.
Your hand was
in the western sky,
Your head high
in the north.
I did not understand
that night,
why you looked
so sadly at the
moon.

Janet R. Nordseth

BITTERSWEET

The flowers that I planted
last spring,
were not enough to make a garden.
Did not even raise an eye,
from your preoccupied head.

Nevertheless, this spring,
I will plant even less.
My years do not run,
between the moments you
happen to glance at me.

TO EARL

The black night
is filled with
silent screams of
loneliness;
of yearning for
the warmth of
soft skin and
kisses.
The pitch of
the sky is
a blanket for
thought,
which lies on
a bed of
depression:
hard like an
un-cut diamond,
rigid
as the body
of a frightened
virgin.
The black night
hides my tears
and smothers my
mourning;
leaving me in
jet-like terror
until the morning
arrives
with golden trumpets
of light from
the newly awakened
sun.

Georgia Sechrengost

VISITOR

Like some unnoticed furbearer
you managed to burrow into my life,
through and past the mound of
desert-dried thick hide I wore then.

Your new home suited you for a time;
soaking up the humid warmth of my
insulated rooms, you were content just
to hide from the parched light I, too, shunned.

Still, there was something you didn't like;
frustrated, I think, with fuzzy details,
you began to fuss about and dust—
my stagnant allergies began to boil.

Unlike others, you were silent as
the flashflood of my wrath washed you
away. I think that much water
was something new for you.

Timothy L. Brown

MONDAY AFTERNOON 5 O'CLOCK

Shrieking of a sudden
    to unimaginable distances
    on a sailing, farflung sky

Then I am back again
    held up by the wall
    to cup the warm of the sun with my face
    and feel its softsable lick
    and watch the violent red glow of my eyelids
    explode
    into orange-yellow-black-green

    sink into the wall
    drowse

    laughter-awake

    then mindwander some more
    not quite dream
    not quite sleep
    warm

And then the bells ring me so full that I have to
    open my face
    to see the blue
    and smile with the sun
    and smell the muddened earth
    and taste the spring

Susan V. Williams

THE GIFT

"First a warning, musical;
then an hour, irrevocable."
Virginia Woolfe

You used to dance your life out whole, innocent
Of his love. Your firm shape brazen; a continent
O willful seasons, but tempered daily
By a leaf, a book, a friend—a solo's symphony
You sang to me: Contain; Maintain.

You gave me quick paced walks, taught me laughter
At myself, and how to comb my tangled hair.
I taught you words I scarcely knew.
You peered at what I did not know
I was, and then withdrew. Softly, I said to you:
Remain; Refrain.

Drawn into his vibrant, beckoning lair
Which snared your need, revealed the pleasure
Of chase and catch and own to you.
And his jealousy stalked unkindly through
My shivering nest and whined at you: Blame her; Remain.

You, my loss, journey leagues with him,
Warming him like a doe's skin stitched and softened
Fine lap robe. Your guarding hunter, unable to rest,
Fondles you like a newly quivering pet.
But you, out foreign windows, do you forget? I am alone:
With no claim.

Your own loneness, does it still rise
Unseen, unguarded by me? It is a heavy prize.
Have you wrapped it careully, but secretively,
And put it away—your once dared dignit ?
Is he so vital to you once free? Now chained . . .
And tamed.

Your last gift, token of your travels,
Sits emptily upon my desk—a wine bottle.
You proffered carelessly, embarassed you were the giver.
What can illumine your gift? A candle? A tender flower?
The song you sang to me at a shimmering hour lies back;
No longer sustains

Barbara Feldman

Night's soft breeze
falls rustling trees
uncommon warmth
open winter in Alfred.

Colleen Conley

two families went on a hotdog day
the women wore clear mustard
bikinis
the children painted their faces
with ketchup
sweet pickled babies wrinkled their
eyes in the bright sun
while old men wrapped in
toasted buns slept.

Janet R. Nordseth

BERRIED TREASURE

There's a bus in the backyard
that I board occasionally.
It smells like Georgia inside—
peach snuff and red soil.
The tires are half up to their necks
in clay.
Car parts and coke caps
live here.
The bus runs on dream gas
past sinking gas stations,
somber pumps and pecan stands.
Stray dogs chase flies around
empty oil cans.
Some birds hold up in the hood of a
Ford wagon, berry stains on the bumper.
The whole back end is missing
past the soaked front seat that
drains rust rivers in the ground.

Janet R. Nordseth

ABSENCE

Dried out scrambled eggs left in the skillet
Are ghostly yellow, deformed faces. A thin
Trickle of water drips incessantly
From the tap into the dirty dishes
Stacked precariously—half filled with mouldy
Eggs and bacon fat, shimmering under
The water like reflected yellow moons.

The angry unshaded bulb sends its glare
Slap against the windows, the night outside,
Over the knife scarred table wet with soggy
Crumbs; a puddle on the table slithering
To the floor—two puddles and a stream—
Show where the rain leaks in. The cobweb corners
Spread their dark and musty, disused smell.

This is a tired child's waking dream—
The glare of light, a molesting sight which once
Was warm, a living disarray: or, older,
After the critical energy has left,
The shapeless fear took shape and forced an end,
The whelming empty weariness descends;
The aftermath, the spreading face of death.

Barbara Feldman

THE ALFRED REVIEW

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Robert P. Zurich

GRAPHICS EDITOR

Derek D. Moore

STAFF

Timothy L. Brown
Deborah A. Spinney
D. fonda
Randy Lee Ross
Janet R. Nordseth

FACULTY ADVISOR

Ben Howard