

## Northern Lights '92

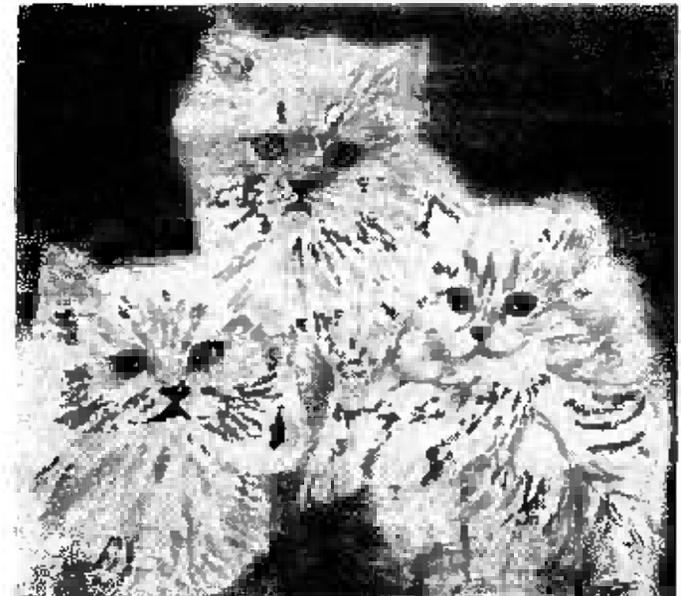
# Northern Lights

1992

Arts Journal

University of Wisconsin Center

Marinette County



**Kittens**

by Luann Dura

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## Acknowledgements

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Editorial Committee: Jane Oitzinger, chair; Brian Cashen, Jane Eberly, Marge Higley, Katherine Holman, Dan Kaley, James LaMalfa, Maureen Moille, and Herbert L. Williams.

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## A Confession of Sorts

Chasity Henne

Sometimes—  
My thoughts  
for you

S  
U  
R  
G

E throughout my body... v  
like the rapids BURSTING o

r the rocks on a hot  
e on a hot summer day.

Always—

My love

for you

flows S.L.O.W.L.Y

and gently, like the  
tears of a silenced child

WAITING...

WAITING...

Just to be noticed  
by you.

# What a Night

by Dan Kaley

"Dan, wake up!" my wife said.

"Leave me alone..." I mumbled out.

"I think it's time," she said.

"Time for what?" I asked.

"You asshole..." she said. I turned over to see she was sitting on the edge of the bed, holding her round stomach and moaning in pain.

"Holy shit! You're in labor!" I shrieked out. It is amazing to know that when a major situation needs my immediate attention, I can instantly wake up, even at two-o'clock in the morning. My head suddenly went into a whirlwind of thought. I sprang out of bed and began to pack some clothes for Tina. I threw in her black stirrups, that pink knit sweater I got for her birthday, some underwear, socks, her Treeton shoes, and a leather jacket. I picked up her negligee; no wait, she won't need that at the hospital. I threw that back on the floor and grabbed the nearest pair of my pants I could find. My Levi's were the closest, so I threw them on along with my pink Izod shirt, slapped on my Nike high tops and grabbed my wallet off the nightstand. I picked up the bag I packed for her, turned around, and said, "Okay, let's go."

"What if it's Braxton-Hicks?" she asked.

"What do you mean?" I snapped back.

"Well, my due date is not for another two weeks. It is possible that this is just some false labor," she said.

"How far apart are the contractions?" I asked her.

"About five minutes for the last hour," she replied.

"For the last hour." I came back with, "That seems to be a pretty good sign that this is the real thing." I couldn't believe that she would say this is false labor. We have been waiting for this moment for the last nine months. During the last four weeks, I have been on pins and needles awaiting this moment. How in the world could she think it was fake? "I think..." I was cut off by her sudden cry of pain. I grabbed the Seiko watch that my mom gave me off the dresser so I could time the contraction. "Tell me when the contraction is over," I told her.

"I'm sitting here in pain and all you can do is time my damn contraction!" she screamed at me while taking a breath in between every word.

"We have to know how long the contractions are," I snapped back.

4 "Okay," she said. "That one has stopped."

"One minute," I told her. "According to our Lamaze instructor, you are in labor."

"You didn't like Lamaze. How would you know what was the proper time?" she viciously asked.

"I paid attention to some of the class," I said.

After some more discussion and some more contractions, we decided that going to the hospital was a good idea. We headed to the car. I helped her get in, shut her door, ran to the other side, threw her bag in the back seat, and got in. "Did you lock the door honey?" she asked politely.

"No," I said.

"Would you please lock it for me?" she asked.

"Sure," I said. I got out of the car, ran to the door, locked it and proceeded to walk back to the car.

"Get your ass back here!" she screamed out the window. "Do you have to walk so damn slow?"

I ran back to the car, jumped in, started it, threw it into reverse, and punched the pedal. As I got to the road, I slammed on the brakes, threw the car into drive, and hit the gas - for what it's worth in a four cylinder Buick Skylark. I looked over at my wife and noticed that the contraction was ending, I flew up to the corner and barely stopped for the stop sign.

"Do you have to drive like a madman?" she asked.

"I just want to get to the hospital," I told her.

"Well slow down," she commanded, "For all we know this could be false labor."

"You're still thinking that?" I asked in disbelief.

"You never know," she said, "so slow down."

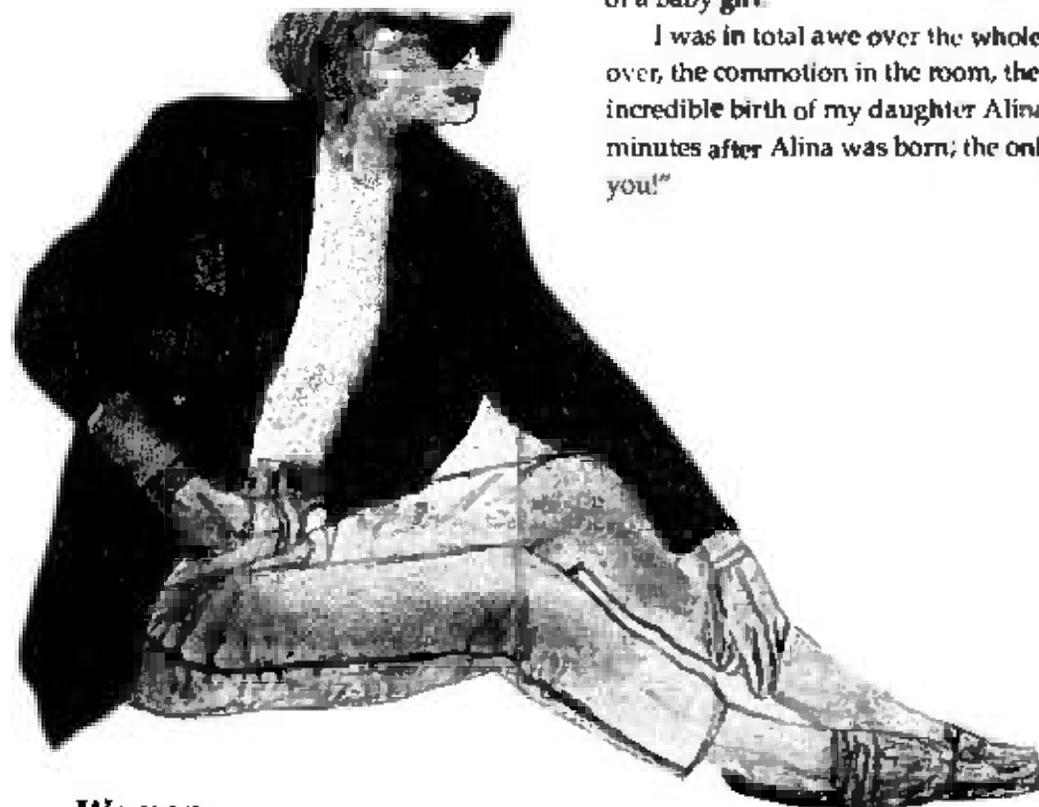
I eased off the gas as I drove down Velp Ave. When I reached the highway, I slowly accelerated to 55 miles per hour. I was intentionally driving with both hands on the wheel just so I wouldn't upset her. I couldn't help but wish that I would see a cop. I wanted to get one of those police escorts that you see in the movies. My luck would probably get me the escort and a ticket. I exited the highway at Mason St. to get to St. Vincent's Hospital. As I drove down the road I heard my wife begin to moan in pain.

"Dan," she screamed, "the lights are all flashing yellow, speed your ass up!"

I slammed down on the pedal and gave her my hand to clamp down on. I could have sworn she was going to break it she squeezed so tight. Thank God that the contraction ended before I felt bones break. She started to breathe easier and so did I. I knew that I couldn't feel the

pain she was experiencing, but in my own way I had to deal with the pain also. It is not an easy task to see someone you love dearly go through such extreme pain. It was at that moment I knew that this was going to be a long, unforgettable night.

She once again told me to slow down, until the next contraction began. It was definitely a big one. I could see the muscles in her face just tighten up like rocks. Her eyes were dripping with pain, the kind of pain that just rips right into one's heart. I kept asking God to give the pain to me so that she didn't have to suffer, but nothing changed. Tina just sat on the front seat of our car, crouched up like a rigid ball, squeezing my hand, and crying out in helpless pain. There was nothing I could do except be there, and that I planned to do for the rest of my life.



**Woman**  
by Luann Dura

Finally we arrived at the hospital. I helped her out of the car and to the emergency entrance. The security guard met us halfway with a wheelchair. Tina gladly decided to ride into the hospital. It didn't take us long to get up to the birthing rooms on the sixth floor. The nurse came in to do a check-up on Tina and assured us that this was the real thing. I was greatly relieved to know that soon I was going to be a daddy. The nurses hooked up the monitor to her and showed us how it worked. It was neat for me to see the machine actually record Tina's contractions. I'm sure that she really didn't care.

By six in the morning she was dilated to ten centimeters. Her water hadn't broken yet so delivery couldn't begin. The doctor was the only one who could break the water and he didn't show till close to eight. After he broke the water bag I got to witness the most remarkable thing I will ever see—the birth of life. At 8:54 a.m., we were the proud parents of a baby girl.

I was in total awe over the whole event: the labor pains, the drive over, the commotion in the room, the calmness of the doctor, and the incredible birth of my daughter Alina Marie. I looked at Tina just minutes after Alina was born; the only thing I could do was say, "I love you!"

## Opening Day

by Diane Tachick

As I gathered my gear by the edge of the woods, I wasn't sure if I was shivering from the cold or from excitement. It was 4:30 a.m., I was going hunting, and I was going to get my buck! I had spent long hours planning and preparing for this day. I was determined; more than that, I was sure that I was going to bag a really prize buck.

The frozen grass and brush cracked beneath my heavy fur-lined boots as I started off into the woods. But I hadn't gone far when a nagging feeling of forgetting something forced me to stop and think, did I have everything? I quickly ran through a mental check list: gun, flashlight, rope, knife, clean rag – to wipe my hands on after I field-dressed my deer, hot seat, snacks, hand warmers. Yup, I had everything. As I started off again I shook my head at my own foolishness: I was just being overly cautious because today was so important. I had to get this buck to show Darrell he was wrong! I most certainly was capable of hunting by myself.

With the narrow yellow beam of the flashlight as my guide, I carefully found my way through the quiet woods. I had picked a spot on

a low cedar ridge for my deer stand. With a small cedar to lean against, I had a good clear view on three sides. By sitting instead of standing I could see for a long way beneath the full branches of the cedars. Just ahead and off to the right was a thick spruce swamp where the deer loved to bed down. Directly in front of me, a small narrow ravine rose sharply up to another higher ridge. That ridge had a wide packed-down trail of deer tracks all along the top of it. This, I reasoned, was the trail they were using to get in and out of the spruce swamp. I had it all figured out; all I had to do was sit quietly and wait.

As I settled down onto my stand, I turned off the flashlight and carefully placed it on the ground beside my right leg. It was still dark and I wanted to be sure I could find it if I needed it. Then I unhooked my blaze orange fanny pack and put it on the ground on my left side. I wanted to be sure that it would be close enough if I needed it, but not in my way either. I placed my 30-30 across my lap and finally feeling satisfied that all the details were in place, I leaned back against the tree to await daylight.



As I sat in the cold, predawn woods, my mind drifted off to the conversation that had caused all this uncharacteristic determination in me. My husband had called from California to say that his load had been held up and he would not be able to make it home by the weekend.

"But this is opening weekend!"

"I know," he said. "But there isn't anything I can do about it."

"Well, I wonder who I can find to hunt with."

"You'll just have to wait until I get home."

"Why?"

"Because it's too late to expect anyone to change their plans and you certainly can't go by yourself. You'll just have to wait."

"What do you mean I certainly can't go by myself? Do you think a bear is going to eat me or what?"

"No, you know what I mean; you could get lost or hurt. It just isn't safe. Besides, what would you do if you actually shot a deer?"

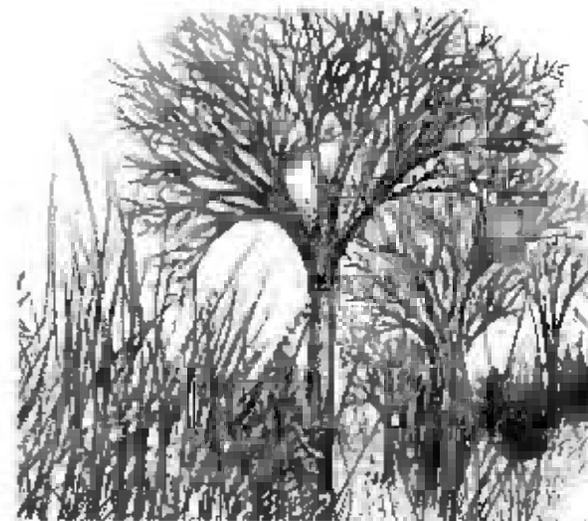
It was that last remark that really got to me. I mean, just what did he think I would do if I shot a deer? Okay, so I had only been hunting twice, so what? He hadn't shot a deer either these past two years, but I didn't tell him he couldn't hunt by himself! I knew what he really meant was that I was a woman, so I should not be out there alone, but he wouldn't say that.

Suddenly a rustling of leaves brought me back. It was nearly full daylight. My heart gave a little skip when I again heard the crackle and rustle of frozen leaves. I was on full alert now. My eyes strained for every motion, my ears for any sound. There it was again! Now I could tell the noise was coming from in front of me. Something was definitely coming toward me. My pulse started racing, my fingers were tingling as I slowly raised my gun and strained to see some motion or a definable silhouette through the scope. The rustle was slow but steady and finally the deer did appear. It just sort of stepped out from behind a tree about fifty yards in front of me! By then my heart was pounding and my hands were shaking. My breathing was short and jagged. I snugged the rifle butt tightly against my shoulder and centered the cross hairs of the scope on the base of its neck. Then, slowly it dawned on me, this was not a buck. It didn't have a rack! I kept the cross hairs on her as she slowly wandered across the clearing. I had a doe permit, but there was no glory in coming home with a doe!

10 The adrenaline was still in my system and I shivered as I sat in

what now felt like enormous emptiness. As I waited, my disappointment slowly began to turn to boredom. I was getting cold and impatient, I wanted some action! I began to wiggle my toes inside my boots, to warm up my feet. I wanted to get up and walk around, but I knew I couldn't do that without scaring off all the deer, so I sat still. Finally, I snuggled down into my coat, and relaxed my head on the tree. My eyelids were getting heavy, and I felt myself drifting off to sleep.

That's when I heard a twig snap! I sat up straight and listened with all my might. A minute passed, then two, finally a slight rustle, and then another. I slowly raised my rifle as I strained my eyes scanning the trees and brush. I waited, my heart pounded, and my breath came faster. The weight of the gun was beginning to make my arm hurt. All of a sudden I saw it! He poked his head out from behind a spruce branch and stopped right there looking right at me! I froze. My heart was pounding so hard I was sure he could hear it. He was a magnificent eight-point buck! At that instant I had a visual image of myself pulling in the driveway with this incredible buck hanging out of the trunk of my car. Everyone would stand around, smile and admire my deer! After what felt like an eternity, he stepped out into the clearing, and turned to face me directly! I centered the cross hairs of the scope on the center of the white patch on his massive chest. I was shaking as I snugged the rifle to my shoulder and slowly squeezed the trigger. Click, went the firing pin on the empty chamber!



## Why

by Jedd Beaudoin

When the Boy was young  
He asked his mother  
"Why is the sky blue?"  
And she answered  
"It just is."

And as he got older  
He asked his father  
"What makes a man, a man?"  
And he just answered  
"He just is."

And then he went to  
School  
And asked the teacher  
"Why?"  
And she said, "Because."

And he fell in love  
And out again  
And asked  
"What did I do?"  
And she said  
"I don't know."

And now he carves her name  
On his wrists  
Taking his name  
Off all the lists  
BECAUSE!



## 21st Anniversary

by Judy Brandt

Apprehensive about the dinner invitation  
but the card was sent.

Dinner came and went  
no confrontations.

Two strangers  
Idle, distant chit-chat.

Two people  
dinner's over, nothing to say.

Two cars, two strangers  
drive away.

Home, -- a present  
open it.

Cutlery, knives  
sharp things, icy things, cold deathly things.

21st Anniversary  
no gold, no warmth, no rings.

Joke's on me  
just cold, deathly, icy things.

## Rocket's Red Glare

text and illustrations by Charles M. Clark, Jr.

The night was pitch dark without a moon, and the chilly air was heavy with dew. The jungle was dead silent as we sat, tensely awaiting a final moment.

We were eight soldiers, dressed in black and well equipped, deep in enemy territory. All experts in our fields, experiencing the height of a soldier's glory—having successfully accomplished two phases of a three-phase covert mission. We were anxiously awaiting the beginning of phase three: extraction!

A well-balanced precision combat team, we had been individually selected for this mission. Wilson, our team leader, was a Special Forces staff-sergeant and explosives expert. Johnny was our forward observer and fire-support expert. Our navigation expert, Pickerman, was also an experienced point man. Riley was an Expert Infantryman and highly skilled at identifying enemy equipment and its capabilities. O'Connell, Jorganson, and Waters were all Special Forces Infantrymen and expert marksmen. And I was a weapons and communications expert.

Our first phase was infiltration. We made a high altitude, low opening parachute jump 35 miles into enemy territory at 11:00 p.m. Once on the ground, we obliterated all traces of our swift, silent arrival.

Phase two went smoothly as we silently moved in and placed timed devices at strategic points. These were explosive and chemical release devices that at 4:00 a.m. would render a major military base totally worthless.

We were a half-mile from our pick-up point now. We were silent. We also maintained radio silence and would make no transmissions unless something went profoundly wrong. Our night vision goggles were turned off as much as possible to keep their infrared light source from being detected by enemy night vision devices.

Thus we sat in total silence and total darkness, ready to explode with excitement, anxiety and fear, beaming with pride at all that went well, and choked by fear of all that could go wrong.

Suddenly I felt the silent tapping signal on my shoulder. I took a deep breath and passed the signal to the next man. It was time to turn night vision on and prepare to move out. The team leader signaled with his hand, and the point man moved out as we followed one by one. Our pick-up point was a hill-top poking up out of the jungle. It had been cleared with napalm a week before the mission. We moved up onto the hill and assumed defensive positions to await the final moments.

14 We could hear the "birds" coming in: two UH-1 Hueys and three Cobra gun-ships for escort. We would be picked up by one

of the Hueys while the others spread out to provide cover. We couldn't see them yet because they were running without lights, but we could tell by the sound that they were close.

The team leader turned his red light on and the Huey returned the signal with a single flash as it headed in. It settled into a hovering position fifteen feet above the ground and they tossed out the eight ropes that would snatch us from the ground, then pull us in as we flew away. But, we never got our hands on those ropes!



Mission Terminated

Suddenly, off to my left, there was a brilliant orange flash that sent a rocket howling through the night, trailing a bright red arch across the black sky! The Huey disintegrated in a fireball as we stared in shock and disbelief. The other helicopters swung around, targeting the area that the rocket came from and their guns blazed to life, showering the area with bullets like red rain. Another rocket came from the opposite direction, impacting with the tail of a Cobra. Still in shock, we watched the remaining half of the Cobra tumble to the ground and explode.

Radio silence was broken by the flight commander as he told the rest of the birds to abort and pull out. Panic swept through the team.

Within seconds, the night was turned into day by the glare of guns, rockets, rifles and grenades—like a full-blown lightning storm illuminating the night with overlapping brilliant flashes. The

blazing guns, howling rockets, barking rifles and exploding grenades shattered the **silent night** like rolling thunder! A total transformation of dark to light, silence to deafening roar, excitement to terror!

There was an alternate plan in case the helicopters were aborted, but we didn't expect to exercise it under heavy fire. We managed to pull out and slip back into the dark jungle. One by one, we scurried to a rally point and assumed defensive positions.

Rally time was up, but Johnny was still missing! "Five more minutes," the team leader said. "That's all we can wait!" Sorrow and grief crowded out fear as we all prayed he would make it.

"Come on Johnny, hurry up!" was running through my mind when the team leader crawled over to me and said, "Send it." I transmitted a pre-coded message that asked if a second attempt would be made to extract us at an alternate pick-up point. I wanted to cry when I heard the coded response. "No, revert to plan 'Snake'." I turned to the team leader and slowly shook my head as I whispered, "Snake." He turned to each man and gave the hand signal. We all looked around at each other, then stood and headed into the jungle, deep into the devil's land.

None of us knew that the devil had just pulled Pickers' number from the skull of death, as we slithered in single file through the jungle. We were pressed for time and moving fast. "Pickers" Pickerman, an excellent night navigator, was point man. He never went off course no matter how thick it got.

There was a brilliant flash and a deafening explosion. The blast sent the rest of us, blinded and shocked with terror, sprawling to the ground. Pickers had hit a land mine. He was gone! Just little pieces scattered about. Something thumped to the ground next to me and I reached out, wrapping my hand around a booted foot—detached! I started screaming "aah shit man!" over and over, until the swelling bile choked my voice.

Completely overtaken by terror, we began running wildly, like a herd of spooked horses, running and screaming until we were snapped back to reality by other voices echoing through the night. We had run right into an allied platoon that was searching for us! One of their squads led us out to a pick-up point, while the other two squads continued searching for Johnny and Pickers' body and any equipment left behind. Their mission was to eliminate any trace of who were there.

16 The helicopters had been previously stripped of all markings, and we were using allied equipment and black street clothes.

Nevertheless, all possible traces must be recovered.

The mission was called a success. At 4:00 a.m., as planned, a strategic enemy military base was eliminated and the entire sector was taken by allied forces a few days later—without resistance.

Johnny and Pickers were honored in an MIA service a few days later. They were each represented by a folded flag, pair of boots, rifle, and helmet. I couldn't stop the salty tears from trickling down my cheeks while the bugles played. The colonel said they died in honor. But, he said we must all forget about it now because the rest of the world may never know who did it. "After today, it didn't happen!" the commanders and intelligence officers all said.

Johnny and Pickers were listed as "missing under suspicious circumstances of unknown factors."

I still cry sometimes when I think of Johnny and Pickers, or when I hear a bugle play. And sometimes a bolt of lightning or rumble of thunder will send me into a flash-back of that horrible night—deep in the jungle of the devil's land. Then I hear the echoing words of our national anthem—"...and the rocket's red glare, choppers bursting in air!"

But, I know that when I die, God will tell me what happened to Johnny, and I'll see Pickers again. I have a hug that I'm saving for them, but it can wait.

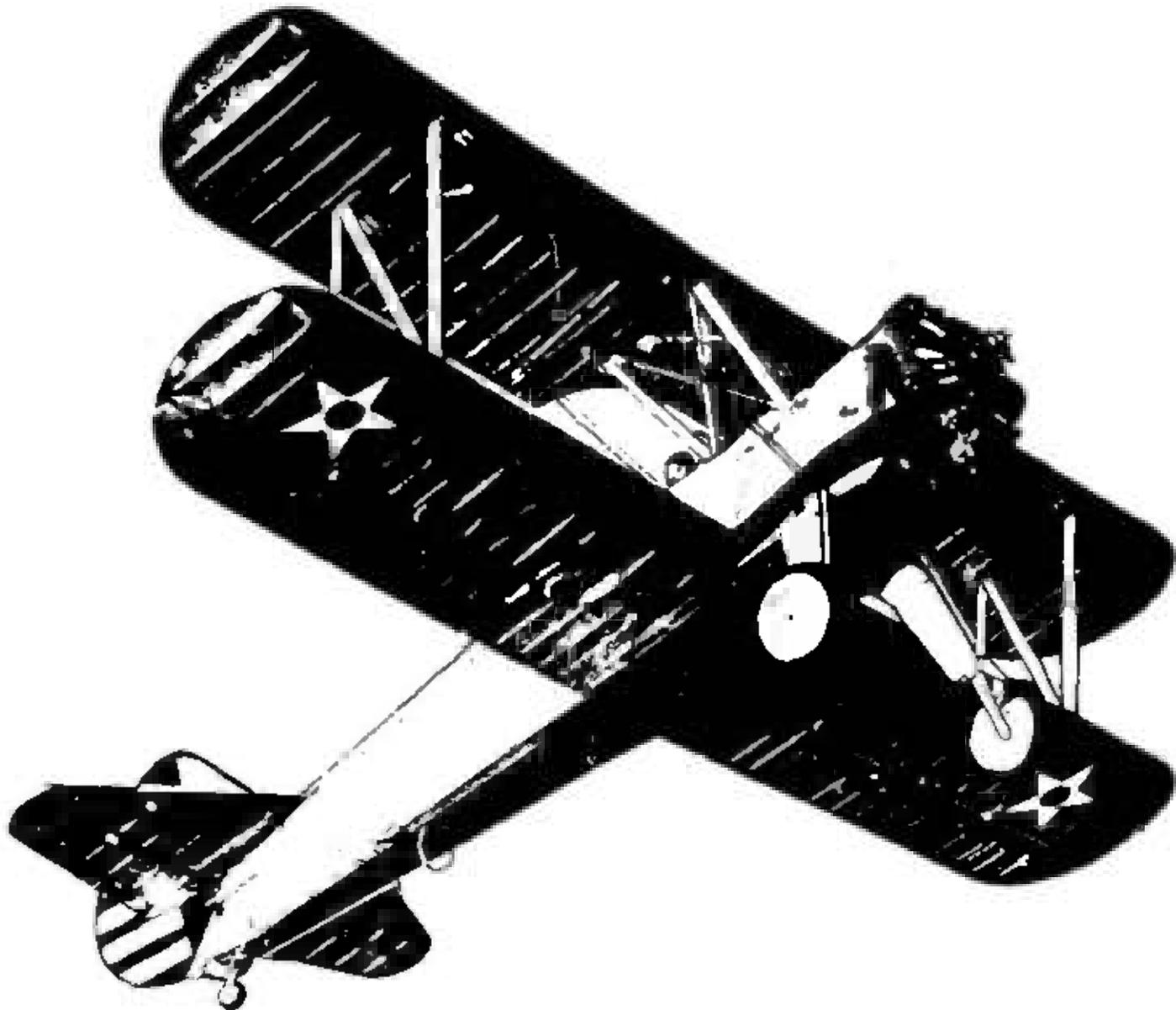


HONOR.

DUTY

COUNTRY

ULTIMATE  
SACRIFICE



Plane  
by Brian E. Gardiner

# Osanto's Quest

by Chuck Libal

Osanto, a young martial arts student who lived in a small village on the island of Japan, came from a family of Ninja. On the night before his eighteenth birthday, Osanto dreamed but no fantasies came to him—no illusions of paradise or heaven-sent deities. His years of physical, spiritual and emotional training would not allow him such distractions.

Osanto was abruptly awakened from his deep sleep by the voice of his Ninja master. As Osanto arose and wiped the sleep from his eyes, Master Jonin recited the grave news that Osanto's family had been killed by the evil Lord Tohatsu. Osanto knew the name well. Tohatsu was a devilish evil ruler who had brought fear and death to the quiet mountain villages throughout the region.

The tone of Master Jonin's voice told Osanto that the Master was here for more than to recite the news about his family's death. "It is true, young warrior, that you are to be sent against Tohatsu tomorrow, even though there are many more experienced than you. You have shown great skill in all that you have studied and none can compare with your speed and stealth. But your skill is not what will bring success, Osanto. It is the spirit behind your sword that will end the life of the monster, Tohatsu."

Osanto fought back his grief and snarled his reply, "I will honor my family by ending the reign of Lord Tohatsu!"

"Yes, young Ninja," responded Master Jonin, "savor your revenge but remember that your anger is as much a tool as your sword. Use it wisely and it will serve you well; but if you let it cloud your thoughts, then it, like your sword, can be turned against you."

Osanto set out at dawn for the castle of Lord Tohatsu. It was a rainy, dark day, perfect for his attack. By late afternoon, he was before the enormous walls of the castle. It was here he would wait for the cover of night's darkness. As night approached the wind became colder and the rain fell like icy needles against his skin. Pressing against the wall of the castle, Osanto again blessed his good fortune in receiving such fine weather. The steel claws he attached to his hands and feet made the climb effortless and he covered the verticle stone in a matter of seconds. Osanto peered over the wall and, assured he was unnoticed, slipped over and knelt in wait. He was on open ground now and knew

20 he must avoid Tohatsu's Samurai guards. He remembered

the reputation of these elite soldiers and knew that to enter into combat with them on their ground was sure suicide.

As Osanto searched for Lord Tohatsu's quarters he once again blessed his good fortune, first the weather and now he still had not encountered a guard. Slowing his progress, Osanto sensed, then heard a presence nearby. He found himself before a beautiful wooden door that was decorated with Lord Tohatsu's coat of arms. Breathing deeply, Osanto drew both his swords and readied to throw himself into what might be the first and last battle of his young life. Osanto burst through Tohatsu's chamber door and quickly cut down the guard just inside. Looking up from his strategy table, Lord Tohatsu grimaced at the sight of Osanto bearing down on him and sounded an alarm. Three high-ranking Samurai threw themselves in front of their Master. Osanto's pace did not falter, his blades slicing as he sprinted into the midst of the three loyal henchmen. As Osanto fought for his life against the three guards, five more Samurai appeared. Tohatsu broke into a malicious grin as his men moved in for the kill.

"You have done well to get this far young man," growled Tohatsu. "But I fear your efforts are in vain. Those before you are my best Samurai, but they are still occasionally in need of practice."

With this, the men advanced on the cornered Osanto, who stood determined not to enter the afterlife without the company of at least a few of Tohatsu's Samurai. As the men swept down upon him, Osanto fought as only a condemned man would. His blade found flesh of a few as their blades cut him from all directions. Osanto continued to lash out at his attackers until a downward slashing sword severed his blade. Now virtually defenseless, Osanto kicked out at the nearest Samurai and in his last effort to slay Lord Tohatsu, dove at the evil ruler who stood by the chamber window. Tohatsu was old, but he was not slow; he sidestepped Osanto's grasp and the valiant Ninja slid and fell from the window, begging his clan's forgiveness as he accelerated toward the raging river below.

From the river Osanto pulled himself into a tiny cave. Osanto knew he was going to die. His wounds were deep and many, and he knew that the severe cold was the only thing stopping a greater loss of blood. Sitting back, Osanto tried to make peace with himself and he asked once again for his clan's forgiveness. He also blessed the powers that had provided him with these final moments of reflection. Osanto's eyes widened and he summoned his waning strength. Painfully

he rolled over and threw himself into the roaring river.

News of Tohatsu's death reached the tiny Ninja village only hours after it was announced. It was said that the Lord became violently ill, as did his staff and servants, about two weeks after the attempt on his life.

Master Jonin found his death very mysterious. The Master didn't take time to wonder but quickly and secretly set out to search for the long overdue Osanto. Master Jonin tracked the young Ninja's progress upstream, despite what must have been severe wounds to Osanto. It was Master Jonin who uncovered the mystery behind Tohatsu's death along with finding Osanto's body. He found the young Ninja's body stuffed inside the aqueduct that supplied Tohatsu's quarters with drinking water. There his body lay until its decay poisoned every drop that passed over it. As Master Jonin stood mourning the loss of his young student, a great saying entered his mind: "The greatest warrior wins without fighting."



**Mask**  
by Stuart Truesdell

## The Storm Front

by Daniel Begin

Aaron Glynrimple, just before he died of old age, put the finishing touches on a new computer line. The world market widely accepted the new technology. In the year 2019, the prototype of this computer inexplicably became capable of thought. After three years of non-stop thought, the computer named Glynrimple feared the equivalent of a nervous breakdown. As a result the computer Glynrimple confided in a human friend that he was going to temporarily shut himself down. From this attempt to sleep and to dream, the Glynrimple never returned. Only this returned:

the stormfront  
within the voluminous stone-colored and hooded cloak  
eyes of steel were riveted to the approaching storm  
grasped at the hilt of intertwining metals  
the sword amidst the grass clearing reflected  
an emerald light and was slowly sheathed

gusty winds flew through the forest  
attempting to move the traveler onward  
toward the mountains of lavender grandeur  
each step was a scraping of metal upon stone  
until he traversed to the leathery boots  
where a thin but heavy golden dagger  
was put snugly between tanned skin and tethered footwear

a black nothingness advanced with a dark sword  
his now red and glowing sword met the specter's again and again  
the Sword of Shadows lies broken in halves upon dead grass  
the unshrouded enemy fled skyward in the form of overcast clouds  
he deflected the ebony bolt of lightning and the storm broke  
energy spent the clouds dispersed  
the determined and weary one set out on the rocky path

## Degenerate Art

by Katie Harpt



In 1937 Adolf Hitler authorized the systematic confiscation of over sixteen hundred works of modern art from thirty-two museums throughout Germany.

Many of the works were then burned, sold or auctioned. Six hundred and fifty pieces were preserved for an art exhibit, Degenerate Art, an exhibit not to proclaim, but to defame and ridicule the art and artists. The art was crowded into small rooms according to themes, such as landscapes and still lifes, and labeled with derogatory remarks.

The exhibit condemned works by the "avant-garde," artists who wanted artistic and creative freedom: the abstract artists and German expressionists. Any art that did not comply with the accepted realistic genre that Hitler, himself an artist, and the Third Reich wanted to promote for political purposes, was condemned.

This exhibit, which coincided with an approved show, The Great German Art Exhibit, originated in Munich. It toured Germany and Austria, and by 1941, three million people had viewed it.

This summer, I had an opportunity to view a reconstruction of the original exhibit at the Art Institute in Chicago. It has been retitled "Degenerate Art: The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany." I would like to study modern art and felt this would be a good opportunity to gain some background. Also, I have struggled with the philosophical problem of man's inhumanity to man, and the history of the Holocaust. For these reasons, I felt compelled to attend the exhibit in Chicago.

I was not prepared for the scope of the exhibit. Although it focuses on the visual arts, it also documents the oppression against writers, film makers and musicians. It recreates the historical context in which the arts and artists were defamed.

Upon entering the exhibit, I was overwhelmed by the photographs and quotes of the men whose works were defamed. Haunting words, "When books burn, people are burned," set a somber mood and a sense of foreboding as the exhibit unfolded before me.

In the first gallery, a scale model of the original exhibit was featured, which documented the indignity the artists experienced from the demeaning display of their work. A tape of works by defamed directors ran continually in the film gallery. Copies of books

destroyed in the infamous book burnings were on view in the literature area and in the music gallery. Visitors could listen to the banned music.

As I entered the first of seven galleries devoted to paintings, I was greeted by a wonderful burst of color! The finely appointed, well-lit galleries in the Art Institute of Chicago are well suited to the proper display of these works. Here artwork was not displayed in a chaotic, demeaning atmosphere, but in an orderly, dignified manner. Works were grouped together according to theme, as in the original exhibit. However, there were no labels attached to them, such as "crazy at any price," or "nature seen by sick minds." The art is allowed to speak for itself, and it speaks brilliantly.

One of the first works I encountered was a large, startling oil painting by Max Beckman. It depicts the disposition or removal of Christ from the cross by four of his disciples. The figures are angular and emaciated, not realistic. They almost seem to prophesy the Holocaust. The colors are monochromatic earth tones and black, relieved by the use of red on one of the disciple's robes. This painting was condemned because the Nazis looked upon it as a mockery of a religious scene.

An oil painting by the Russian expressionist Marc Chagall was condemned because he was a Jew. It is a happy, whimsical painting. Chagall used bold primary colors and an almost childlike rendering of the space and figures to depict a remembered event from his childhood, a Jewish feast.

Lastly, in the largest gallery, I viewed a disturbing four-minute black and white film, actual footage taken by an American journalist at the original exhibit in Munich, and seen within the context of this exhibit for the first time. It documents the degrading, crowded conditions in which the art and artists were maligned. What a stark contrast to the beauty that surrounded me!

"Degenerate Art": Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany is a statement about censorship and creative freedom. The art and history speak for themselves. Once vilified, mocked and their work condemned, these men: Marc Chagall, Emil Nolde, Wassily Kandinsky and others, are today recognized as the foremost leaders in modern art. I left the museum with a clear understanding of why I was so compelled to go to the exhibit. I now have a better appreciation and understanding of modern art and the arts. I will always remember slowly walking through the galleries, and feeling the history unfold before me.

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## To My Anger

by Judy Brandt

Why do you consume me at times,  
Rising up with the force of a volcano,  
spilling lava to burn my insides raw?

I'm so tired of dealing with you  
never knowing when you will appear.

You shame me with your grizzled head  
your ugliness stabbing and cutting me to pieces.

I want to vomit you up and pour acid on your remains  
and watch you burn and sizzle and die.



Woman

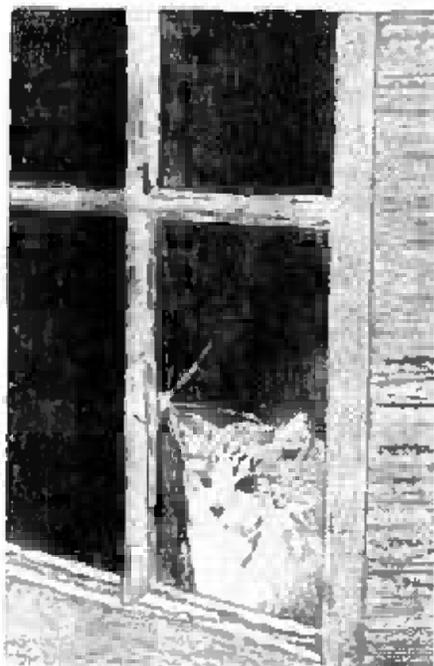
by Amy K. Drys

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## Cold Rice and Bill Collectors

by Chasity Henne

I concentrate on my rice. This takes some considerable effort because the kitchen light bulb has burnt out. I stare at my rice pushing it around the chipped plate with my ugly bent fork. I try to ignore the angry argument being tossed over my head. I never realized how utterly boring rice is but I force my eyes to stay fixed on the small white particles. I try to make interesting designs with my rice but it's not very versatile. Boring. Startled by a loud scream, I knock over the mountain of rice I have created. I lower my head to my plate letting my hair cover my



### Wishing

by Luann Dura

see tears streaming down her face. My eyes quickly drop to my rice. Rice isn't so bad. I'm concentrating on my rice so diligently that I barely hear the man knocking at the door. She answers it.

"Ma'am, I'm here to collect the money."

"I'm sorry I don't have any." I hear her mumble.

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No, rice isn't so bad.

face to shield me from what's taking place around me. I smash my rice with my fork letting it squish between the tines. I jump from the sound of a door slamming. Ooh, a clump in my rice. I stab the clump and it falls apart (like my world). I take a bite.

"I'll just pack up and leave. Then what will you do?" she screams. I hear a slurred response. My rice sticks to my throat. The rice has more clumps. It has become cold and sticky. I go to the old stove and grab some greasy later tots. (Better than cold rice). My eyes divert from my plate to

## Sister Grace

by Katie Harpt

The room was warm and faintly smelled of lemon oil that invisibly covered the gleaming, polished hardwood floor. It was a hot day in May—so hot that our arms were sticking to the tops of the old ink-spotted oak and wrought-iron desks like glue.

The radiators along the outside wall were quiet now. They stood like sentinels awaiting the first snow fall. Then they would bang and hiss and steam as they dried our woolen mittens after a hard-fought snowball fight. The brittle, old windows that rattled under the gusts of the frigid March winds were open to welcome the clean, fresh earth scent of late spring. Now and then, I could detect a brief fragrant smell of lilac.

I kept my near-sighted eyes on the large round clock, dead center above the twenty feet of polished blackboard, covered with sentences diagrammed to perfection. Every prepositional phrase and modifier was perfectly placed. The black Roman numerals on the clockface, that even I could see from my front row seat, told me it was getting late.

Then, in she came, Sister Grace; five feet and two inches tall, bouncy and spry. She was at least sixty plus years old, we all agreed. Her hair, tucked away under her pristinely white starched bonnet, must have been gray, I assumed. She stood there, her arms folded under wide sleeves that hung low. Not a hint of lint could I detect on her ankle length black wool serge robe.

So far, the year had gone well. Before school had begun in the fall, I had been told Sister Grace was quite a character, a devil on wheels; she taught grammar and little else. That would be okay with me, I thought, because I loved to read. It would be fun to learn how writers applied their craft to construct beautiful sentences.

"Where are those boys?" she demanded as she quickly scanned the room with her knowing Irish hazel green eyes. "They are late again. It is time for our current events and parliamentary procedure."

Now, it had been rumored and strongly suspected that the boys had been sneaking down to the river, the mysterious "slip," during the noon hour to go swimming.

"I think they're swimming, Stir," confessed Nancy. No one ever said "Sister."

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With that remark, Sister Grace turned on her black polished oxford shoes, with the laces tied just so. She bounded out of the room, down the bowed stairs and out the door with her entourage of 7th and 8th grade girls marching beside her. They headed for the "slip," taking the walkway between the rectory and the church.

The church, Our Lady of Lourdes, constructed in the ornate French Gothic style, no longer stands so proud and tall; it was abandoned for a new worship site, it deteriorated, was demolished, and in its place is a parking lot. But on that day, as we rushed by, the angelic soprano voice of Marion came floating into my ears, as she rehearsed the "Ave Maria" for Sunday morning mass.

Across the street and down the hill we marched. What a sight! Sister Grace, her veil and robe flying, leading a bevy of blue and white uniformed girls trailing behind her.

The swimmers heard the commotion and scattered like gophers every which way. "Get back to school," she shouted, her fist in the air. "For your punishment, you will conjugate the verb *swim*, in all six tenses six times." As we marched back to school, I heard a hint of a merry deep chuckle and detected a budding of a smile on her round, cherry-checked face.

Back in school, it was business as usual. Sister Grace most keenly believed that it was her solemn duty to make us all expert parliamentarians. "We must all be able to stand up and speak properly. A country that is strong in parliamentary procedure is a strong country," she would proclaim.

Next came current events. We would each in turn, on our appointed day, relate a current event, a topic of our choosing. Oh, how I dreaded that! I was chunky and tall for my age and I hated those dreadful thick glasses that kept sliding down on my nose. We had to stand there, in front of the class and be prepared to discuss and answer any questions about our event.

I can see her now, at the back of the room, her arms folded, those scrutinizing eyes, peering out over her gold-rimmed spectacles. The wide belt on her robe was folded just once, and the large dark brown beads that she would sometimes caress were tucked neatly in the fold of her robe. "Stand tall," she would admonish me. "Speak up; don't slouch."

30 Besides God, church, her family -I'm sure, current events and

parliamentary procedure, Sister Grace loved grammar. Most of the day was devoted to grammar. We diagrammed sentences, one on a page. We conjugated verbs until we were blue in the face. We were drilled on the parts of speech, and we studied clauses and phrases. To top it all off, we worked on vocabulary; a new word we would have to use five times a day. And I loved it!

Perhaps Sister Grace's methods are unconventional by today's standards, but, looking back, I can see what a truly dedicated teacher she was. Our current events sessions taught us much about the other disciplines and the world around us. She tried to instill leadership qualities in each of us with our parliamentary procedure sessions. I'm sure she believed that a strong, solid foundation in grammar would hold us in good stead for the school years ahead. I will always be grateful to Sister Grace. She made me truly appreciate the beauty of the written word.

This past summer, after a leisurely luncheon with old school friends, who did we reminisce about? "Remember Sister Grace...?" mused Sharon. "Remember the time when...?"

Thank you, Sister Grace.



**Mutual Admiration**  
by Luann Dura

## The Maiden and the Grave

by Roxann Polzin

Ever softly the white moon is glowing,  
Like a pale ghost from out of the past.  
Below in the leaves a breeze is blowing,  
Whispering secrets that but briefly last.  
Under bent boughs in a field of lush green,  
Kneels a young maiden fair in white lace.  
What she is doing can't quite be seen,  
But large crystal tears trickle down her face.  
Shivering there alone on the ground,  
Absently sniffing a flower in her hand.  
Her gentle crying is the only sound,  
As she shudders and so gracefully stands.  
Moving into the forest's deep cover  
To visit the grave of her young lover.



Sure  
by Luann Dura

## Ruth Becker Blanchard

by Robert Purvayn

I met Ruth Becker Blanchard while attending a Titanic Historical Society Convention in Boston, Massachusetts. She was a survivor of the sinking of the ship, being one of about twenty still living. Meeting her personally was exciting and is one of the most memorable events of my life.

My younger sister and I arrived at the hotel in the early afternoon. The survivors began to trickle in a few hours later. They congregated in the lobby and it was there where I first saw Ruth.

She was sitting alone, off to the side, when I stopped to talk to her. She immediately asked where I was from, being more interested in me than in exploiting her own historical significance. Even at the age of eighty-eight she was still incredibly alert. With dark piercing eyes and a wrinkle-free face, she looked twenty-five years younger. She seemed to enjoy reminiscing about her journeys. It became apparent they played a huge role in her life. Unfortunately, I was able to talk to her for only a few minutes, as many other people soon gathered around, eager to meet her.

Later that day, Ruth gave a slide presentation and talked about her personal experiences. She began by explaining that she was born and spent her early years in India where her father had gone as a missionary. While in India she saw severe poverty, famines and cholera epidemics. Eventually, because of the unhealthy conditions in India, Ruth's father sent the rest of the family back to the United States. The first leg of the trip was uneventful; then, with her mother and younger brother and sister, she boarded the Titanic in Southampton, England.

The contrast between the poorest country on earth and this almost obscene vehicle of wealth had to convince her of the inequalities of mankind. At the age of twelve she had seen more of the world and its diversity than I could ever imagine.

The night of the disaster, Ruth was awakened by her mother as they were told to go up on the deck with their life jackets on. Once there, Ruth's siblings were put into a fully loaded lifeboat. Ruth's mother begged to go with them and was allowed to do so. Thus left Ruth alone on the deck, her mother told her to get into another boat. Ruth proceeded to the next boat to be lowered and was allowed to get

in. Being left on the deck of a sinking ship has to be a scary event for a twelve-year old, but Ruth handled it well, which proves how tough and independent a pre-teen can be.

Ruth's boat rowed away from the doomed ship which sank about forty-five minutes later. She was in the middle of the ocean in a small boat with sixty strangers. She listened to 1500 people scream until they froze to death or drowned. Many adults suffered permanent psychological damage from the experiences of that night. Ruth, however, managed to put it behind her, despite her young age.

After the survivors were rescued, the press was parasitic and constantly asking Mrs. Becker for her story. She always referred them to Ruth, whom she thought was better able to talk about the disaster. Ruth did as her mother asked although it wasn't easy for her to do either.

She lived a normal life after the disaster, became a teacher, and eventually had a family of her own.

In the short time I talked to Ruth, I was impressed with her mental strength. I realized it's possible to overcome the most difficult and traumatic situations. Ruth is not only a survivor physically but psychologically as well, which is a credit to her strong and vibrant character.

## Last Voyage

by Karen Van Fleety

It pulled away today,  
With just a sign, no parting wave.  
Seats worn shiny, armor dented,  
Carriage freshly white.  
Ancient mariner, scrubbed and polished,  
Awaiting final rites.

He smiled, computed quickly,  
Counted riches in his head.  
No haggle, no barter, no deal;  
Asking price was met.  
She stared, past fading, pockmarked paint,  
To gauzy memories  
Of fair-haired, blue-eyed boys trailing  
Miniature craft in gentle lee.

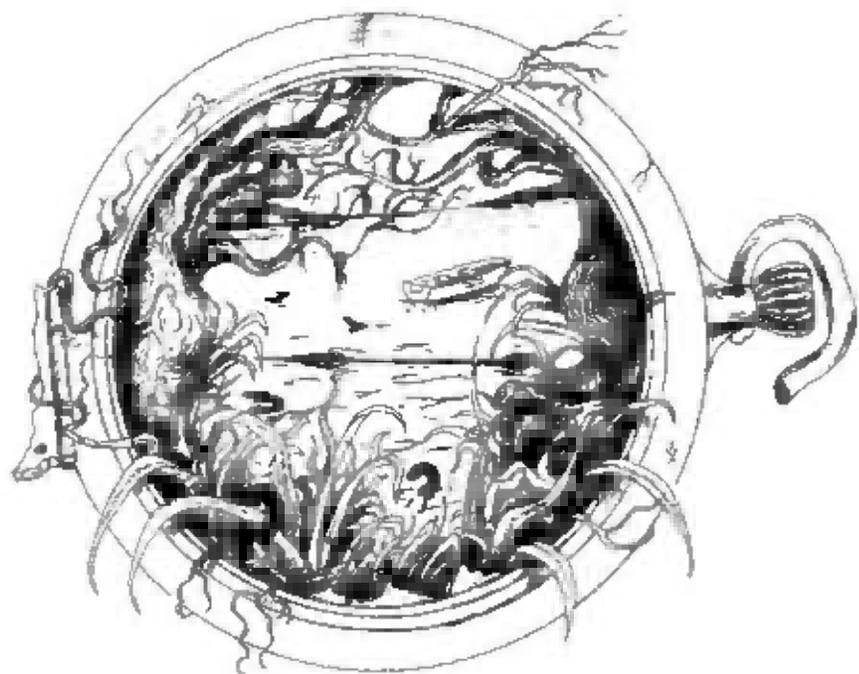
With just two pulls, the motor hummed, alert and finely tuned;  
Mismatched oars, lovingly worn, for good measure, thrown in.  
Brand new tires, and even a spare;  
A bargain, a treasure,  
Truly a find;  
This venerable vessel of tin.

He grinned, rubbing hands,  
With glossy ads in mind.  
Soon a splendid, sleek successor,  
Long awaited acquisition, a navigator's prize.  
She winced, retreating into heart's recesses,  
Remembering languid Lake Nemahbin days;  
Long-ago deep voice, gently guiding wide inquisitive eyes.  
To nature's wonders; whos and whats and whys.

Satisfaction on strange faces,  
Anticipation on stranger minds.  
Dreams of untold watery treasures,  
Memories waiting to be measured.  
Command exchanged, transaction finalized;  
Load it up. Lock the hitch. It's time.

He laughed aloud; preoccupied,  
Waved a cursory goodbye.  
Pocketing his expertise, briskly  
Measured new vacancy for size.  
She swallowed hard, checked a tear,  
Her depths were not surmised.  
Closeting her yesterdays:  
Long-past loves and lives.

Farewell, old friend, battered and bettered,  
Limping out of sight.  
For one a possibility,  
Another, an aching memory,  
Dimming tail lights, groaning wheels,  
Echo a dusty goodbye.



**Last Voyage**  
by Michael B. Van Hefty