

children *churches* & daddies

April 22, 2004

ISSN# 1068-5154

children churches & daddies

the unreligious,
nonfamily-
oriented
literary
and art
magazine

Produced By

Scars Publications and Design

Editorial Offices

Children, Churches and Daddies, Scars Publications and Design
829 Brian Court, Gurnee, IL 60031-3155 USA

Internet

ccandd96@scars.tv

<http://scars.tv>

Publishers/Designers Of

Children, Churches and Daddies magazine, cc+d Ezines, The Burning mini poem books, God Eyes mini poem books, The Poetry Wall Calendar, The Poetry Box, The Poetry Sampler, Mom's Favorite Vase Newsletters, Reverberate Music Magazine, Down In The Dirt magazine, Freedom and Strength Press forum, plus assorted chapbooks and book, music, and poetry compact discs

Sponsors Of

past editions: Poetry Chapbook Contest, Poetry Book Contest, Prose Chapbook Contest, Prose Book Contest, Poetry Calendar Contest

current editions: Editor's Choice Award (writing and web sites), Poetry Datebooks and Wall Calendars, Collection Volumes

• **Children, Churches and Daddies** (founded 1993) has been written and researched by political groups and writers from the United States, Canada, England, India, Italy, Malta, Norway and Turkey. Features cover environmental, political and social issues (via news and philosophy) as well as fiction and poetry. **Children, Churches and Daddies** is the leading magazine for this combination of information, education and entertainment.

• **Children, Churches and Daddies** (ISSN 1068-5154) is published by **Scars Publications and Design**, 829 Brian Court, Gurnee, IL 60031-3155 USA; attn: Janet Kuypers. Contact us via snail-mail or e-mail (ccandd96@scars.tv) for magazine costs or collection book costs.

• To contributors: No racist, sexist or blatantly homophobic material. No originals; if mailed, include SASE & bio. Work sent on disks or through e-mail preferred. Previously published work accepted. Authors always retain rights to their own work; all the author grants us is permission to print their work. All magazine rights reserved. Reproduction of cc&d without publisher permission is forbidden. Copyright © 1993-2004 **Scars Publications and Design, Children, Churches and Daddies**, Janet Kuypers. All rights of pieces remain

toc

The Editor's Two Cents	2
art Mike Hovancek	3
Paul McDonald	
guest editorial	4
Jeff Moore	6
art Cheryl Townsend	6
Jennifer L. Low	7
Jon Petruschke	8
Michael Brownstein	9
art Mike Hovancek	9
Michael Ceraolo	10
Michael Ceraolo	14
art Cheryl Townsend	16
quotes	17
art Xanadu	18
art Stephen Mead	19
John Alan Douglas	20
art John Yotko	21
John Booker	22
art Cheryl Townsend	22
Marina Arturo	23
Gabriel Athens	24
art John Yotko	24
Mackenzie Silver	25
Aeon Logan	26
Darby D. Miller	27
art John Yotko	29
Jan Ball	30
Maureen Flannery	33
art Scars	2, 3, 12-16, 23, 25, 27, 30, 32, 35, 36

the editor's two cents

the freedom pendulum swings around the globe

To visit a friend and to see the amazing historical sights, we decided to take a trip to China. We looked back over our lives — we were raised knowing that we couldn't trade with China, that they were so violently Communistic that we would never be able to experience their culture or their history first-hand. So we stopped listening to AM talk radio, hearing about how the U.S. government could search flight records for potential terrorist activity, to head to the other side of the globe and see how the other side of the planet — and the other political side of the coin — functioned.

Now, I have to remind myself that I was seeing urban areas, Beijing and Shanghai, and that I was not witnessing the destitution of the rural expanses of China ... I have to remind myself of that because it was so much like the United States that I could forget. Corporate monoliths like Starbuck's and McDonald's were on every corner. People driving on the roads and on bicycles were more demonic than the city streets in the United States. Surrounded by skyscrapers and a ton of construction for the development of the city, the only thing that reminded me that I wasn't on an American street was the fact that no one anywhere spoke English. Other than seeing signs in the street written in Chinese and not English, it was amazingly comfortable to manage in Shanghai.



While taking a flight to Beijing, we read an English newspaper (the *Shanghai Daily*, March 9 2004), whose main headline was "Historic Progress Hailed in constitutional amendments." The draft amendment to China's constitution went over the inviolability of private property. The *Shanghai Daily* article even stated that "the constitutional amendment is also expected to enshrine human rights protection." I even kept this paper, so I could have written record of the expansion of rights given to the people of China. This story seemed to mark a remarkable time in history.

It was remarkable because I saw the inverse happening to us in the United States. I thought about John losing



unemployment benefits because the U.S. government saw (by searching flight records) that he flew to Puerto Rico, which is outside of the United States; in other words, a weekend trip cost John his unemployment benefits. I also heard that the U.S. government wanted to access anyone's hospital records to be able to search for people who had abortions.

The Patriot Act was passed six weeks after 9/11. We know now that it greatly changed the balance between liberty and security in this nation's framework. Now the Domestic Security Enhancement Act is a draft for the sweeping expansion of Anti-Terrorism Act — and one of the provisions in here (if I've got this right) is that the government could actually strip citizenship from someone if — for example, if you were found making what you thought was a legitimate contribution to some non profit organization. People can argue about the "favorability" of particular non-profit organizations (that some non profit organizations are fronts for terrorist groups).

All I know is that I see that we're walking on a slippery slope; once we've abandoned *some* rights, we can lose them all. And in China they are working to give their people *more* rights. It's amazing how the pendulum can swing from China's side of the globe to our own to change how everyone can look at the world.

Janet Kuypers
Editor-in-Chief



"China Script," by Mike Hovancek

guest editorial by Paul McDonald

the Janet Jackson Breast Controversy

A few days after Super Bowl 2004, Teri Carlin of Knoxville, Tennessee filed suit against CBS, MTV, Viacom, Janet Jackson and Justin Timberlake alleging damages suffered from the half-time show. Among other things, Ms. Carlin states that she and “...millions of others similarly situated were caused to suffer outrage, anger, embarrassment and ...serious injury...” as a result of Timberlake and Jackson’s performance. What made this lawsuit interesting was that Carlin was asking that this be a class action lawsuit. And included in the class action would be “...all American citizens who watched the Super Bowl half-time show...” So on behalf of all those who were seriously injured by Ms. Jackson’s wardrobe malfunction, Carlin was seeking an award based on the revenues generated by the Super Bowl, the Artists, and the Media Moguls, a figure estimated to be in the billions of dollars.

At first I thought this was ridiculous. Of course, I hadn’t seen the half-time show. I was sick in bed with the flu and asleep at the time. I only woke up long enough to see the Patriots pull it out in the final seconds. I caught a couple of film clips, complete with a strategically placed video smudge over the right side of Jackson’s thorax and wondered what the big deal was. The ensuing debacle reminded me of a Woody Allen movie that had a segment where a wild malevolent breast wreaked havoc across the countryside until Allen, brandishing a crucifix, corralled the giant hooter into a massive brassiere. And in a true horror-story ending, the sheriff of a nearby town warned that it wasn’t over yet because these things usually travel in pairs.

Like I said I thought this was all pretty ridiculous until I began to wonder what the powers that be at CBS were thinking when they asked MTV to produce the half-time show. I mean, hadn’t these guys even *seen* the MTV Video Awards? I then downloaded Carlin’s complaint from the Smoking Gun.com and realized that in going for class action status Ms.

Carlin had a busload of chutzpah working for her. She was hitting the media where it hurts, (publicity and the pocketbook) and she was going to get their attention the same way a few little known lawyers in Mississippi got the attention of the Tobacco Industry a few years ago.

I saw a few more replays of the half-time show and thought the whole thing was a major exercise in pretension and self-indulgence. In a way it reminded me of when some friends of mine and I saw the Rolling Stones on Saturday Night Live back in 1979. At one point the camera zoomed in on Mick Jagger who started licking Ron Wood's face. My friends and I groaned and some bolted from the room in disgust. It was a cheap and tawdry stunt but none of us thought to sue for damages. But what if we had? Hmmm...

Although the halftime show wasn't quite that repugnant, I still thought it was in pretty bad taste and I decided that if CBS, Viacom and MTV were dumb enough to set themselves up for a lawsuit like this, then, what the hell, maybe they deserved to have their coffers emptied.

So I decided I wanted in on it. I made plans to get a doctor's affidavit so I could petition the court to be part of the class action because, never having been breast fed as a child, the shock and awe of just hearing about Jackson's medallion bedecked nipple had triggered my "issues" of lack and poverty consciousness. The doctor would testify that I'm a man in deep psychological pain therefore seriously injured. The least CBS could do is pay off my Master Card.

Well, my dreams of becoming debt-free and being able to Tivo future Super Bowl half-time shows have been smashed. Neither will I see the likes of Janet Jackson, Justin Timberlake, Les Moonves (President of CBS) and the other Media Maggots running in terror while an Allegorical Woody Allenesque Tit the size of Minnesota closes in on all of them fast and furious. It seems that the following Tuesday, Carlin withdrew her lawsuit. Apparently she wants to see if the "remedial measures" taken by the networks succeed in preventing similar stunts.

But despite not getting in on the gravy train I have to admit I learned something. I mean, who would have thought you could sue someone -- for serious injury no less -- because of bad taste? Think of the millions you could make off Reality TV. Is this a great country or what?

*As of April 2004, this piece is also on line at 3ammagazine.com;
it was broadcast on WFPL-FM (Louisville, Kentucky) February, 2004.*

Made Serial Killer

Jeff Moore



*"3 Starfish,"
art by Cheryl Townsend*

I'm stoned. I'm baked I'm ready
To Kill me a rapist or abductors any day.
I'm white.
I'm male
I'm 5 foot 10 inches and 168 pounds.
I'm 23 years old.
I'm ready to be a serial killer today.
I'm ready to kill me 20 or 30
Rapists and abductors any day.
I'm stoned.
I'm high.
I'm drunk.
I'm flying.
Look at me, I'm the one.
Kill me now for what I've done.
I'm a white man with a split personality,
And a bad past.
I'm ready to get me a sick bastard today.
And bearing it myself, fuck praying.
Lay all those sick people to rest.
Serial Killer that's what the world made me today.
Just get rid of all the bad in the worst way.
The justice system must be stopped today.
I am a Made Serial Killer.
God I pray.

Her Last Song

For Barb and she knows why

Jennifer L Low

When fall hangs late and stubborn
in the trees,
the clouds giving themselves over
to a thick, sagging greyness,
a sorrow enters you
melting thick,
running slow and deliberate
through your blood making
you sloe-eyed and sleepy.

You close your eyes
remembering when all you knew
was your mama's nipples
feeding you the sweet milk
from swollen breasts,
the milk gathering caught
in the corners of your mouth
like silent teardrops,

and the stories she told
like songs that would sing
you into sweet slumber,
even though now you cannot sing.

Loneliness clouds your mind
the way a numbing drug
makes you fuzzy and almost incoherent,
till you are desensitized
and that's all you know,
all you want,
then nothing matters anymore.

Words mean nothing now,
they are only empty promises
spoken in vain,
falling heavy on deaf ears
as the weight of sorrow
that pushes you away

making you cry out for the song
that's in your soul,
as the wind blows your words away,
scattering them like dry leaves,
up, up, up,
until they float
like souls.

Dead Hours

Jon Petruschke

Addicts lumber
after the bars close
until dawn.
Recovering addicts
call these dead
hours.

What really is being
a contributing member
of society?
They work
toward their own
demise: hustling, tricking,
shooting, twitching, kicking,
living the hierarchy
of needs so top-heavy,
there's never motion
for promotion.
Staring at the sidewalk
for tiny rocks to smoke,
thinking they can't all
be pebbles.
Stiffening so the wind
doesn't drift their weeks
of unwashed stink
near a pedestrian.
Hungry enough to eat
dog-shit, long after
the first distinct acid trips,
and the junkie blur.
Long after the traffic lights
stop paying attention,

unwinding with red
and yellow blinking
for no one, especially not them.
In the dead hours
breaths are barely
there to draw.
Exhaust and air
so stagnant it breathes you.
The clatter of cages
rising from storefronts
still in the dark,
but soon the rushing
hours will begin,
without meaning,
around them.

Ourselves

Jon Petruschke

With my sexually
experimental friends,
it's too narrowing to call
them homo, bi, omnisexual.
Labels and lines catch our eyes,
but we don't end there.

1939: EVICTION DAY

Michael Brownstein

-- In 1939, New Madrid County, Missouri's plantation owners evicted both black and white tenant farmers and sharecroppers from land they had farmed for decades. The federal government had offered a check to help the workers. By evicting them, the plantation owners were able to take the money for themselves.

We planted cotton
and scarred our hands,
came home to make love
and fell asleep instead.
Greed is a wicked half-sister.
You filled your hands with it.
For a moment
color lost its importance.
I stand with others
holding my infant son,
every one of my possessions
along the highway
defining our misery.



"Chinatown Windshield," art by Mike Hovancek

American Canto XLII

Michael Ceraolo

Prior to the proliferation of prisons
many, many crimes were punished by death:

adultery and arson

blasphemy and burglary

rape and robbery

rebellion of slave against master,
to name just some of a long list,

though

some weren't punished by death until the third offense
(the original three-strikes-and-you're-out,
permanently)

In fact

there was an orgy of self-congratulation
when the list of crimes considered capital
was considerably shortened,
a perverse pride in punishing by death
only six crimes instead of sixty,
a badge of honor for enlightened America
when compared with barbaric Europe,

though

enlightenment wasn't the true motivation;
many 'reformers' felt the greater punishment,
by far,

was a long incarceration

And
the death penalty then meant death by hanging
Hanging was the pre-eminent spectator sport,
eclipsing even the evolving ball games,
and
was even a popular family activity,
in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries;
the condemned a celebrity of sorts,
“surrounded with a Vast Circle of people”
“more Numerous,
perhaps,
than Ever was gathered together before,
on any Occasion,
in this colony”
Parades and patriotic speeches
preceded the public executions,
with picnics afterward

And
salvation was hawked liked peanuts and Cracker Jack
Such sermonizing was not subtle,
to say the least:

“You are now to Dy”
“the Land where you now Live,
would be polluted,
if you should be spared from *Death*”
“the Gospel has been offered to you . . .
How shal you escape the forest Damnation,
if you regard not this offer of mercy”
roared one or more of the Mathers

The substance of the theocracy would soon subside,
and
the public spectacle would soon shift
to behind closed doors,
but
the ritual remains to this day





American Canto XIII

Michael Ceraolo

And the Anglos appeared on the shores of American

And they decreed:

There shall be no intoxicants other than God
(their god)

And
all other intoxicants would be strictly prohibited

And the adverb was absolutely appropriate,
for

from this day forward
the strictness

of the prohibition
would differ only in degree,
not in kind

And
the uniquely American disease,
that of making a moral issue out of a matter of style,
had its longest-lasting manifestation

And thus was born the War on Drugs:

“the flood of excessive drinking will drown Christianity”

the scarlet letter D
or the word
Drunkard

that habitual offenders were forced to wear



And
the first prohibition was tried in the colony of Georgia
from 1735 to 1743;

all the vices
later displayed nationwide were here:
bootlegging
bribery
and other varieties of organized crime,
which would be forgotten as they receded
into the myth-mists of history
(American amnesia?)

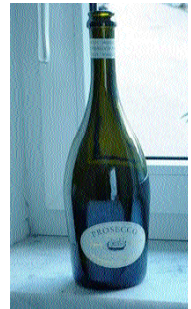


In the theocracies
of New England,
and elsewhere,
excessive drinking was deemed responsible for
“swearing, poverty,
and the distaste for religion”



And yet
the Founding Fathers fairly floated on a sea of whiskey
(as did the Founding Mothers and all other relatives)
A rebellion was even fought when a tax was imposed on distilled spirits
(Distillers had long been paying higher prices than millers for grain;
the trumping of economics over morals is also firmly
in the American grain)

And in the nineteenth century,
when actual consumption decreased,
the perception of a problem increased inversely,
and
prohibition again became possible



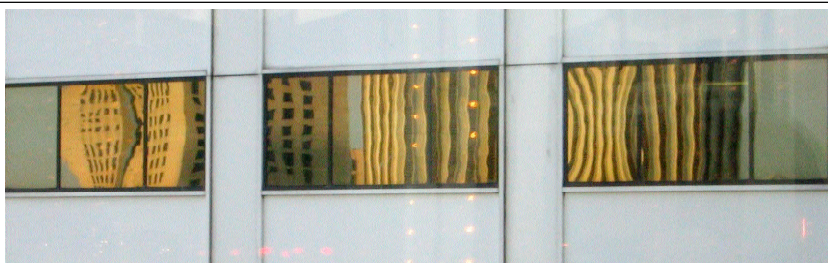
Maine in 1851

And the road to today was paved with the first good intention

And,
as Maine goes,
so goes the nation
(so the cliché goes):
a dozen or more states soon followed suit;
the state-by-state step
toward nationwide prohibition
slowly sauntered ahead
Demon Rum was put on the run



But the law of unintended consequences was still in effect:
as alcohol was increasingly banned,
patent medicines
(marvelously monikered,
because
they had little medicinal purpose
and
they were unpatented,
because then
the manufacturers would have to disclose
what was actually in them)
containing cocaine or opiates
rushed to fill the void
(But of course
it wasn't real Americans using those nostrums:
it was the Chinese with their opium
and the Negroes with their cocaine)



"3 Distortions," art by Cheryl Townsend

And so
a whole host of bugaboos came together
to litter the twentieth century with legislation,
laws too numerous to enumerate here
And with some laughable propaganda
(think Reefer Madness)
it was inevitable that a religion of drug use,
with its own apostles of pot
and heralds of hallucinogens,
would arise,
and give rise to equally false idols,
causing
the anti-drug Crusaders to redouble their mission,
preaching the gospel of punishment,
encouraging children to inform on their parents
in neo-Orwellian fashion,
trampling
common sense and the Constitution

AD NAUSEAM

*On 9-11-2001, two thirds of those polled in a national
survey said they would sacrifice personal freedom in
order to be "safe" from terrorism.*

(Source: Peter Jennings, ABC News)

*"Those who would sacrifice a little freedom for temporal
safety deserve neither to be safe or free."*

- Ben Franklin



art from Xanadu



Watchman, whom so ever goes
Through here
Must know the code
For the blue heart's riddle,
The amulet of the stained glass staff
Offering safe passage
To the noble and the lonely
Waking past our guardian's mask
In his knowing coyote gaze

“From the Sea of Myths,” art from Stephen Mead

A fall day in John Alan Douglas

This seaport of Vancouver sweats drugs
but the weather dear is autumnal cool
the gutters proudly belch leaves
pigeons buzz the sodden sidewalks
narrowly missing solid citizens
raindrops hold convention in clouds
another hockey season jump pump starts
giving myriad males something to do
another fashion season swings into inane cycle
giving all the air-headed females something -
animals: dogs cats ferrets even birds
are much smarter, they just 'be'.

This seaport of Vancouver attracts many
peoples from over the worlds
to sample and savour
all of the
above

even better if
you have credit
cards and
penthouse
suites!

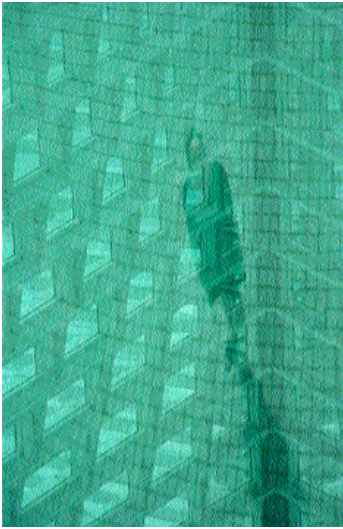
Epigram (2003 March)

John Alan Douglas

Animals are more existential than
humans. Thus and humans who spend
time around animals are more in the
moment than ones who do not.

May Day 1998

John Alan Douglas



*photographed from the
Milwaukee Art Museum,
art by John Yotko*

Workers of the world unite!
Brought together by greed
relating to the things you buy
and do not really need
:
all the computers so shiny
and obsolete the next week
:
all those shiny cars/SUV's/trucks
To pollute city and country side
:
all that internet junk to
brag about and gossip on
where you receive eek mail
and don't even know or care
(bosses&slumlords approve)
where it was from
:
all those fashionable rags
you rarely use
:
all those drugs and drinks
and smokes to bury selves
:
keep working

guys and girls!

CAUSE-MONGER'S DENOUEMENT

Tom Booker

“We dedicate ourselves . . .”
knowing little to what or to whom

Yet we pledge faith and loyalty
to ourselves, we suppose, and to noble thoughts

Vaguely sacred moments of common cause
resemble others of occasional note

Dissipate to slim remembrance
lie undisturbed, until next in the series

We clamber home, to each one's own
connecting briefly at replays

Anti-climactic, all of it seems
and any ideals sleep closely with dreams



“3 Stones,” art by Cheryl Townsend



Get Me Through My Life

Marina Arturo

there was a time tonight
when i thought you would come up to me
and act like you had never met me before

and well, i did not know what else to say
and so i did the same

it is strange to be in a place you have not been to before
because i think that when i see something familiar
and then see something different

it is at times like that
when i try to come up with stories in my head
to get me through the days and get me through my life

Enough So Far

by Gabriel Athens

I appreciate your honesty
I'm not used to honesty, you know
I'm used to people trying to screw me over
and I know I'm a girl
but I have to act like a guy sometimes
so that people don't try to make my life tougher

hasn't it been tough enough so far?

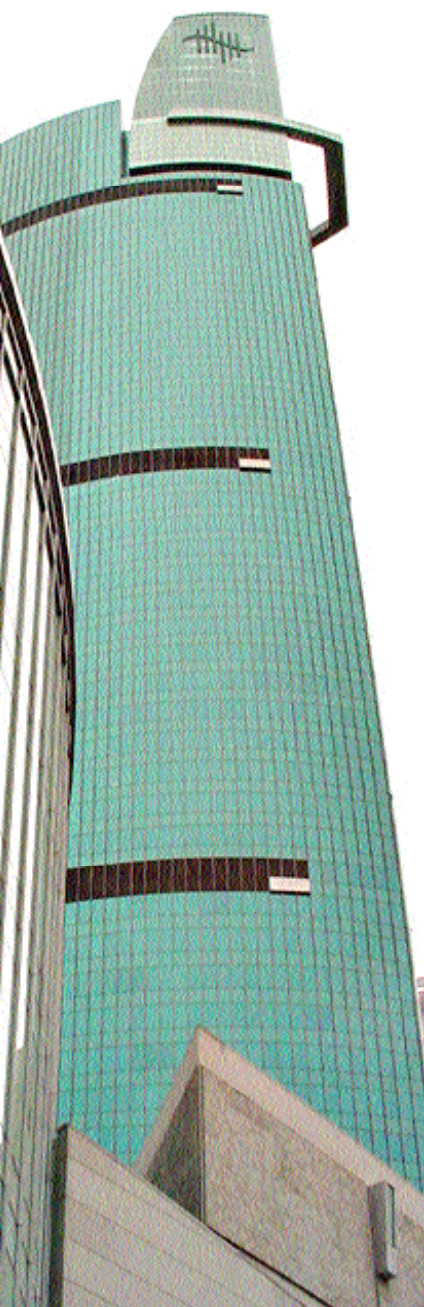
when you're so used to
not getting the truth from anyone
well, honesty is nice

I want to know if I should have hope
when you talk, you give me reason to have hope

and I don't know if I should
but now I'll take whatever I can get



art by John Yotko



A Select Few Things

Mackenzie Silver

I can only think of a few things
a select few things

I've wanted to know that you are
willing to give me that
that you feel it in the same way I do

I'm not going to tease you about this
and I'm not going to make a promise
I won't keep

everything I say is a promise to you

it's a promise to my life
it's a promise to my future

you better believe in the same things I do
I don't like getting my hopes up for nothing
So prove me wrong

Do That For Me Then

Aeon Logan

That's where the problems come from
The problems come from having ideas, having theories,
thinking they're the right ideas,
and then acting on those ideas
without checking your premises to
see if they were even the right ideas

I've done that

I thought that everything would fall into place
and everything would have a happy ending for me
I've discovered that after all of these years
those happy endings haven't come around
and that there is no reason to have hope

But people want someone to deliver flowers
to them, for no reason
People could say something
nice to you, out of the blue
or tell you they loved you
 I mean, you know they love you
 but it's nice to hear

I think men don't get that

I hate having to be the voice of reason, but here goes
sometimes you have to do nice things

I like nice things done for me
I want someone to call me when they said they would
I want someone to tell me I'm worth something

I've wanted that for years



Brave Soldiers

Darby D. Miller

I have seen the cry for mercy at the end,
Young men of all ages.
Trying their best to defend,
Bombs dropped all night.
We heard the blast of the white powder site.
Medevac's flew low to assist,
The men knew of the risk.
Remembering war is a nightmare,
They didn't know what was out there.
The soldiers heard the screams, crying and pain,
All the soldiers are proud of their American Flag.
The flag flew over them while our brave men fought till the end,
We didn't stop until our flag flew red, white and blue in the wind.

Copyright 2003

Cold Windy Nights

Darby D. Beattie

The air felt like a vacant lost wind
Wind is felt through my coat as I slept
Miracles of warmth I felt at intervals during the night
Homeless is a word that hurts when I remember the pain
No home, food, friends, just the lonely windy nights.
A lot of people drove by staring at the lonely cold sight.
Remembering the pain of empty nights hurts my heart.
I yearn for the friendship and love of days gone by, the
Wind howls like a coyote on the plains.
My clothing is dirty, not very much left to face the winds ahead.
I pray for a warm night somewhere down the highways.
The temperature has dropped to the teens and below my feet feel
Numb as I walk toward a light in the distance.
Coffee would taste good now, anything warm to survive the cold windy nights.
Homeless in the cold nights of winter, the chill rests within my spirit today.



art by John Yotko



Shelter Meals

Oct 18, 2003

Author: Darby Diana
Homeless Female Veteran

I stand with many others in a long line,
When I pick up my plastic bowls and spoon,
Thinking of the aromas of warm soup and bread from my childhood days.
The food smells so good but the memories of gone days are with me as I
Stand with many others in this long line. The children scatter quickly some
Can't eat anymore because their bodies are suffering from the cold,
The smiles are gone, looks of hunger stay in my mind. I notice their hair is
Uncombed and the dirt from the streets cover their clothes.
I try to smile and give my place in line, its part of the days race for the shelter
Meals.

The shelter folks try hard each day to feed the flock but more come in from
The street cold every day, hunger and lonely made me stand for my soup today.
Lunch and supper lines get longer cries of "I want more green beans is heard
Behind my back, soon the Shelter folks say no more green beans today, Sorry!
I know because I am homeless and hungry too.



Convent Memories in the Alps

Jan Ball

These Maria mountains are not my memories,
No Captain Von Trapp for me. I saw
Only paunchy old priests and gnarled gardeners
All those years in the convent.
I know what people think,
That there's a secret tunnel from
The convent to the rectory
But all I saw in the basement was
The laundry, old furniture and
A maze of water pipes covered in canvas
So they wouldn't leak steam from the furnace.



Return to Cloves and Cinnamon

Jan Ball

Pomegranates were never enough for you
so I bought mangoes and papayas
inverting the orange mango flesh
into a lattice of three-dimensional cubes
for your breakfast, squeezing limejuice on top,
but you complained when, piercing the fruit with your fork,
you squirted juice on your morning paper.

During the day, after you left for work,
I scooped papaya seeds like tiny eyes
and set them aside to tenderize the dinnerbeef.
Later, I filled the halves with the tenderized meat
then baked them in the oven at 350,
Caribbean style.

The aromatic fragrances clung to the living room walls
and glittered, condensed, on the brittle kitchen windows,
sparkling like contact lenses as the sun set.
I sat on the living room sofa waiting for you
to come home from work,
twiddling my hair, reading PEOPLE magazine.

Where are you now?
The somber moon rises yellow
in a bruised and purple sky,
and I sit alone with the fragrance
of cloves and cinnamon.





Undocumented

Maureen Tolman Flannery

They walk for days in the desert
beat down upon by the heat of a hostile sun
by the wants of a wife left behind,
by a child's disease
by the needs of a mother who feeds them all
and eats only at her own oversized heart.
The balls of their feet are one thick oozing blister.

And some of them die of sadness
huddled against each other
against the cold of a desert night,
their backs full of cactus spurs
as if each one were San Sebastian.

As they near the high fence
they fear the helicopter's search light,
the signs they cannot read.
They fear the stranger and the compatriot,
the night and the day,
the coyote they have paid a family's life savings
to keep them safe,
the guns of the border guards
and the thunder in their ears
of their own fragile hearts drumming
like tambores of the festival dancers back home.

Hope and hunger swirl into a tailwind
sweeping them north toward the border.
Desperation drives them over;
the INS sends them back much faster.

When it comes against the edge
which deed, I wonder,
should be the honored claim,
or should it be need?
And how many must die for a chance
at what those who have it
don't even want?
And what, then, is the bottom line,
and who has crossed it?

Exfoliation

Maureen Tolman Flannery

OK, so let's think about this one.
In this kind of city
there are thousands of us bums
with nowhere to go--and who knows
how many more housed low-lives
barely hangin in there, hangin out.
Now, each of us is sloughing off skin
like a bull snake, especially this winter
in these bitch-cold winds. You with me?
Think about it. Flaky parts of old guys
deposited near park benches;
every seven years whole hobos
floating out around train tacks.
Could be worse on the environment
than your slick-ass Volvos putting out exhaust
or tires leaving rubber along the road.
Making you sick, eh, thinking of all our DNA
cork-screwing through the air like seeds
floating around looking for earth to sprout in.
You must be breathing us in every day
through your little asthma inhalers.



Hey; it's not so bad. Look at it this way.
When old age winks back at you from that
gold framed looking glass,
where you think you sorry rich ass
is looking all fine in your Calvin Kleins
and things that set you up there above
the rest of us slob
start coming undone,
those Vassar children don't call back--
your Volvo develops an unexplained rattle--
the top grain cowhide bottom
drops out of your stock portfolio--
you start forgetting things
and clients won't return your calls
and its all a little shaky, aint it, bro.

That's when it might just be a comfort to know
about what I've just told you--
how you've prepared for this letting go
with your daily dose of the flaked off skin
of the homeless.

