



The Bookpress Quarterly



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Wish List

Stewart O'Nan

It's a half-day pass and Miss Crawford says it's not a choice. It's part of the pre-release thing. They want you to do things with your kid again to get them ready. Miss Crawford says it won't be hard for me because I haven't been gone that long. I'd like to say to her, how do you know, going home in that Acura every day—you can see it from the window in the upstairs can, all gold and brand new—but I just nod and say okay because I get to see Teresa and I'm not going to mess it up over her.

I already got a present—a Pocahontas suitcase I bought at Toys R Us at lunch the other day. I asked Mr. Parkinson and he said he guessed it was okay if he walked me over. Mr. Parkinson's all right. We walked all the way across the lot, talking about when I get out.

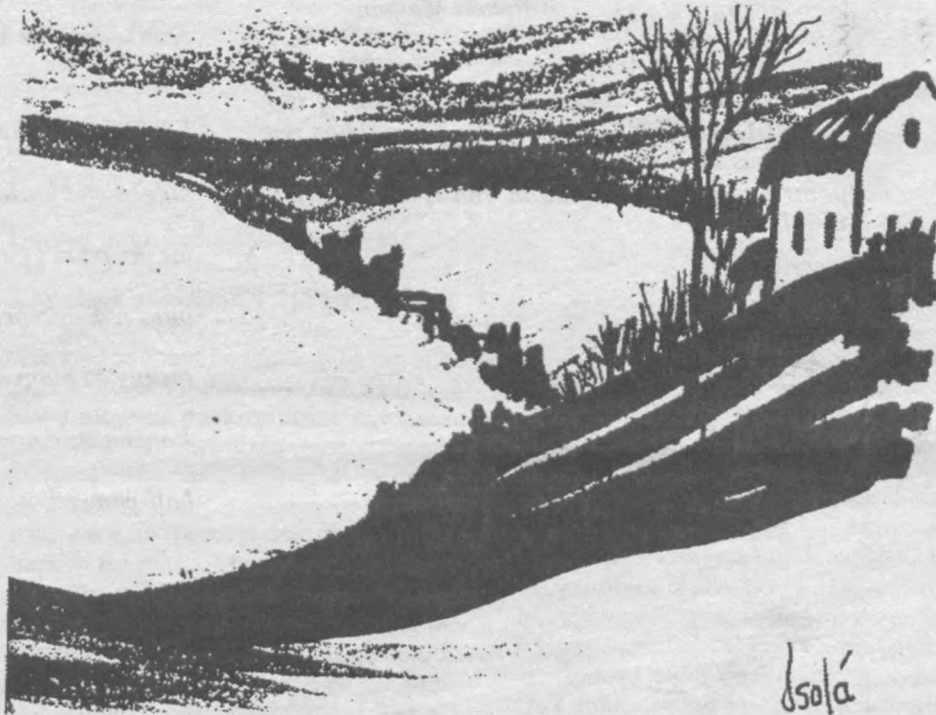
It was crowded because there were only a few days left. There was so much stuff, all the board games stacked up to the ceiling and all these moms with their kids, and there I was in my Wendy's uniform, even the dumb visor, and I felt like crap because here are all these moms with their shopping carts full of stuff, even some dads there with them, and all I've got is twenty bucks and I got pissed off at Jimmy again for getting me into all of this.

The kids, they were great, running up to stuff and yelling, "I want this! Mom, I want this!" There was even one little boy crying on the floor next to this Nerf missile launcher he wanted it so bad. His mom was like, no, just standing there waiting it out.

I wanted to get Teresa a Barbie, a nice one. I've been working hard but they don't even have to pay you minimum wage. I wanted to get one of the special ones—Pilgrim Barbie or Pioneer Barbie, Astronaut Barbie. I kept flipping the little price tags. Even the ones on sale were way too much. Mr. Parkinson said he'd pitch in but I couldn't let him. He walked with me up and down the rows like he was my dad. We walked past all the dolls in pink and the plastic horses and science kits, the fake food and Easy Bake ovens, and then in the Disney aisle I saw it.

I didn't even think it was weird for a kid—a suitcase. It was perfect because that's all I'd have when I get out, and if she had one, we could be like twins. We'd just get on a bus and go somewhere way the hell away from Jimmy, I don't know where, but I kind of saw the two of us standing there together with our suitcases, ready to go.

I've got it right here with me. I had it



gift-wrapped at the store. I look at it once in a while while I get dressed, check myself in the mirror. My hair's still wet cause the towels suck here and you're not allowed a dryer. I've got my good jeans on and my best sweater, the butterfly pin my aunt gave me. Everything's healed, the eyebrow's coming in thick again. By the time I get out no one will be able to tell.

It's almost twelve and I sit on my bunk next to her present and think of what I'll say to her.

I missed you.

Merry Christmas, baby.

Finally I give up. When I get there, I think, I'll know what to say.

Outside, someone pulls into the parking lot.

"Hey Margie," someone calls down the hall, "your taxi's here."

It's the regular van. Wanda's got me on the clipboard. She flashes her badge as we go through the gates.

"I didn't know you had a kid," she says, like she knows me or something.

There's a bunch of us on the van. Most I

know except this tall kid with a patch over one eye and bright orange fingernails. She looks like she's just started working, she's still got that baby fat under her chin, and I think that it really hasn't been that long since I was like that, it just seems that way. But then I think, is that a lie?

We go through New Britain and up Route 9 to 84 and into the city, the same way it takes me to work. There's only a few snowflakes over the road, and no traffic. All our breath is fogging up the windows. I've got my present on my lap. Everyone has one, but mine's easily the biggest. Everyone looks at it but no one says anything. The kid with the patch rubs a hole so she can see out. I wonder what her story is, and then I think maybe they're right, maybe it's better not to know.

Wanda turns off at Prospect, right where I used to work, and I'm like, oh no, I'm going to be first. She turns onto Flatbush by the VW dealer's, and I'm right. We go along the barbed wire fence and rumble over the tracks.

"Marguerite," she says from up front, like I might have gone somewhere on her.

"What?" I finally say.

"First off is first back on. You be outside and ready at five."

We cruise through the old neighborhood, past the same two dudes hanging out by the corner bodega's pay phone, the same doors boarded up, the same Chevys rusting on flat tires. My aunt's is just up the block but Wanda stops and lets me out at the corner so she can make the turn.

"Five," Wanda says, like it means something if I'm not there.

I get out and the cold jumps down my neck. The light drops and Wanda cuts the van left. It gets small, and all of a sudden I'm alone, only me and a few flakes sliding off the parked cars. It's like for a second I can do anything I want to, and I think, there, that's a present right there.

The block's empty. My aunt's half of the house is done up with blinking lights and a green wreath on the door with little red pinecones on it. I bet they have a tree with a star and everything. She's probably already been to church with Teresa. It hasn't really started snowing but she's already salted the steps. The trike she got for Teresa sits in one corner. I stand there a second trying to figure out what I want to say.

I love you.

I won't be long, I promise.

"Okay," I say, and straighten everything before I ring the bell, then clear my throat.

There's footsteps and the door opens. It's Mr. Curtis the landlord in a green jacket and tie. The Patriots are on really loud so he can hear them. I can smell the ham from here.

"Marguerite," he says, "Merry Christmas," and bows like a butler for me to come in, and there she is, right behind him on the floor by the tree, playing with something in this red plaid dress I've never seen with white puffy sleeves. She has her back to me and she's got pigtails. Even sitting down she looks bigger.

"Merry Christmas," I tell Mr. Curtis, and walk right by him.

The first thing I say is her name. It takes her a second to look up from what she's doing, and I see she's putting all her little gifts into this bag—this bright vinyl suitcase with Pocahontas on it.

She looks up and for a second it's like she doesn't know who I am, but that's not it, she just doesn't know what she's supposed to do. We're even, because now I don't know what to do with my

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Inside:

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Fear of Height

For high ladder work you climb to
confidence a rung at a time,
stopping first a foot or two up,
against electrocuting fear
concentrating on the task as
a rock climber will to secure
the next hold The accustomed work,
habits of labor, inspire, as
though scaffolding up in stages
of the familiar. Until later
you're thirty feet above the yard
and sure in the grip of balance,
tension of poise, in lofty reach
and accurate gestures that scare
those below. And you know one wrong
lean, one uncompensated turn,
one ungrammatical step, would be,
as precision roars through your arm,
both lethal and impossible.

—Robert Morgan

Bug Light

The color of the bug lamp is subtle,
not exactly purple nor pink,
neither lavender nor the blue of a police
call box. When I see the glow from back yards
and porches I think of St. Elmo's fire,
the corona effect thought by sailors
to show the holy body revealed in
a storm in the power of the sky pressed down
on mast and rigging with awful brightness.
But these bug lights glow quietly throughout
the countryside and night, erasing any
mosquito or curious moth, even bat,
that tries to taste the unnameable candescence.

—Robert Morgan

Robert Morgan is currently a professor of English at Cornell University. His poetry has won numerous awards. He has published eight books of poetry, two books of fiction and is working on a novel.



An Orchard's Last Weekend

Leafed dusty planets
tugged and hurled—apples heading
for the palm's curved surface. A friend
bites red, another offers her speckled gold,
tasting as plain as Wise Men sampling
frankincense and myrrh. She lets the red sphere drop
half-gnawed, its worth a quiet thud.

The sky bears its moon
hours early, rising,
and I envy the trees'
letting go of their fruit.
This last weekend for one-upping gravity
the orchard collects its stars—threes,
fours, hundreds of them.
How many apples tossed into daylight never returned?
Runaways to the universe.

Earthbound siblings
filling our bushels
we walk back to weigh in,
ungloved hands ache where the handles cut into fingers.
I let go a minute and the weight shifts.
Earth's axis makes a slight
adjustment for my laziness.

—Kirsten Wasson

Kirsten Wasson's poetry has appeared in *New York Quarterly*, *Manhattan Poetry Review*, *Kansas Quarterly*, and elsewhere. She lives in Ithaca and teaches at Hobart & William Smith Colleges in Geneva, New York.



The Bookpress Quarterly Statement of Purpose

The *Bookpress Quarterly* is a journal of fiction, poetry, essays, and artwork, published as a supplement to *The Bookpress*. It shares with *The Bookpress* the goals of encouraging literary community and conversation in upstate New York and showcasing that region's best writers and artists.

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Wish List

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suitcase, so I turn and hand it to Mr. Curtis, then bend down and give her a hug.

"Baby," I say, "oh, I missed you," and pull back so I can look at her. She's got Jimmy's big eyes and his tiny mouth. "Did you miss me?"

"Yes," she says, not sure.

"Are you having a good time with your Aunt Caroline?"

"Yes."

I hold her close, and by now my aunt hears us and comes in. She's just had her hair done so it's really red and she has her emerald earrings on but still she looks old around the mouth and I feel bad for putting all of this on her. She gives me a hug. I don't let go of Teresa

"You look good," I say.

"How are you?" she says, all worried like the one time she came to visit.

"Good," I say. "Clean."

"That's great," she says, "that's really good."

"Can I get you something to drink?" Mr. Curtis asks. "We've got some of that champagne without the kick."

"Just water's all right," I say

We sit down on the couch and my aunt asks Mr. Curtis to turn the Patriots down a little. I keep Teresa on my lap, but she's squirming, she wants to play with all of her new stuff, and I turn her loose.

"That's a good-sized box," my aunt says, pointing to it, and I tell her about the suitcase.

"Oh, that's terrible," she says. "I'm so sorry. If I had known."

"It's not your fault," I say.

"I'll take mine back," she says, and we argue over it a little, then I let her win.

"Whoa!" Mr. Curtis says, watching some guy on the Patriots catch a pass. I give my aunt a look and she just shrugs, meaning she knows he's not perfect.

A buzzer goes off back in the kitchen and she has to go to do the potatoes. I want to help but she says no.

"So," Mr. Curtis says when she's gone, "when is it you're coming back again?"

"March," I say, "if everything goes right."

"That's great," he says. "Your aunt's very proud of you, you know."

"I know," I say.

"And Teresa's a real darling, a really sweet kid."

"Thanks," I say. Somebody fumbles and he forgets he's talking to me. He turns the sound up to find out what's going on, and I go over to play with Teresa on the carpet. She's got all kinds of stuff—a bunch of colored markers, pogs, some Hershey's kisses in a little red fishnet stocking. She's watching a wind-up frog hopping around, doing flips. My aunt used to teach school, she knows the fun stuff. I didn't have time to check out the suitcase in the store, so I look it over. It's pretty nice.

"Hey," I say, "you know, I got you the exact same thing." She doesn't get it, so I go get the box and open it for her. She just looks at it. "Funny, huh? I should have asked Aunt Caroline before I went shopping."

"Aunt Caroline didn't gimme it," she says.

"Santa, I mean. I didn't check with Santa."

"It's not from Santa," she says, like I'm being silly.

"Who is it from?" I ask.

"It's from Daddy." Jesus, I think. Great. Why didn't my aunt tell me this? "Did Daddy bring it over?" I say, and I must be getting angry because she just nods. I put my hands over my face and breathe like they teach you in workshop. "When did he bring it over?"

"Yesterday. He ate dinner with us." It's just nuts. I sit there and watch her start playing with the frog again. It's just crazy. Mr. Curtis is talking to the TV

set, telling them to go for it. I get up and go through the dining room. The table's all set—big platters, the cranberry sauce already softening in a dish.

My aunt is at the sink, draining the potatoes in a colander. The steam comes up through her hair.

I grab her arm. "What the hell is with Jimmy coming to dinner last night?" I say. "You know goddamn well he's not allowed within five hundred yards of me or her."

"Jimmy wasn't here," she says, looking at me like I'm crazy. "I wouldn't let Jimmy near her you know that."

"Then why is she telling me he was here last night?"

"She's telling you *what*?" she says, and I have to put my hands over my face again before I explain.

"Okay," she says, "yeah, she's been doing that lately, talking about him like he's around. Mike says it's normal."

"I don't think it's normal," I say, and I think, Mike? Since when is Mr. Curtis Mike?

"Jimmy's her father," my aunt says. "It doesn't matter what he is, a child likes to have a father."

"What about me," I say. "does she talk that way about me?"

"No," she says. "Sometimes. Yes. What do you want me to say—she misses you. She wants you to be with her."

"I am going to be with her," I say. "It's not even four months."

"A year is a long time for a child."

"I know that. Do you think I'm stupid? Do you think I like being in there?"

Mr. Curtis looks in on us from the doorway. Like someone's called for him.

"Everything okay?" he says.

"Fine," I say, but he waits until my aunt says it too and then doesn't go away.

My aunt goes back to doing the potatoes, slopping them into a pot. "Twenty minutes," she says, and we clear out of the kitchen.

I go back to Teresa, Mr. Curtis goes back to the game. I look at her, trying to see what's different, why she's like this. She hums and grinds the frog along the carpet and sparks shoot out of its mouth. Maybe she's fine, I think. I do the same thing every night, imagining reading her a story, tucking her in. It's not much different.

"You've got to catch that ball," Mr. Curtis says, and looks to me for support. The Pats are winning. Like I care.

In the back of the house a cork pops. "Okay," my aunt calls from the dining room.

The ham's a big one with the skin cut into little squares with a clove in the middle of each one. Mr. Curtis carves. I cut Teresa's into bite-size pieces. She doesn't trust the cranberry sauce. My aunt stops the production to say grace, and then for a few minutes it's just eating.

It's so good compared to the crap I'm used to that I laugh and then I have to explain why.

"I'll take that as a compliment," my aunt says, and she really is proud of it.

The fake champagne tastes like diet ginger ale. Teresa's slow, playing with her silverware, and I have to spear a piece, feed her like a baby.

"Don't let her do that to you," my aunt says.

Mr. Curtis isn't going to get into it with us again. He's on thirds by the time Teresa's eaten enough.

And then there's mince pie and custard, and coffee after that, and presents. I keep checking the clock. I get a picture of me from Teresa with *MOM* on it, and I give her a kiss. My aunt gives me a pair of dark green bath towels. Mr. Curtis gets a sweater and, finally, a book on trains. Outside, the trees are dark. Back in the living room, the game has changed, the Raiders and someone. Teresa draws pictures on her new

tablet—the tree, me, her, Mr. Curtis. No Daddy.

All the coffee's getting to me, and I excuse myself. In the bathroom, I open the medicine cabinet just to see if she's cleaned it out. Nothing but razors and make-up, not even kid's aspirin. It's okay, I don't blame her.

It's the second quarter and dark out now. Across the street, blue and white lights are running around someone's porch.

"It's a quarter to five," my aunt reminds me.

She holds my gloves while I get my coat on. I say goodbye to Mr. Curtis first. I thank him—I don't know why.

"It won't be long," my aunt says, and her hair smells sweet like the ham.

"I know," I tell her.

"And you," I say, picking up Teresa, "I'll be back to see you very soon, so don't go forgetting your mom, okay? I miss you every day and I know you miss me too."

I don't even know what I'm saying, but I'm holding on to her, I'm not leaving till I have to. "Merry Christmas," I tell her, "I love you," and she says it back to me the way kids do, not really meaning it. When I put her down, she heads for the tree, but my aunt stops her, makes her watch me leave.

Outside, I want to believe she meant the "I love you" part but it's not true. They all wave from the door, and stay there till I'm halfway down the block. It's way colder out now, I can feel it through my jeans.

The van's waiting at the corner, sending out clouds of exhaust.

Wanda is pissed, but there's nothing she can do. She slides the side door closed and the light goes out, then gets in again and it flashes for an instant.

We're packed in there in our coats. As we slide under the streetlights you can make out faces. Behind me someone's crying. At first I'm afraid it might be me. No one looks though, we all pretend everything's fine. I think of what I'm going to say in Miss Crawford's workshop, what I learned that was valuable from this experience.

I learned that my kid is messed up and



it's all my fault.

I learned that I should be with Teresa and not in this fucking shithole. But I know I won't say that. I'll say something dumb like, I learned how important it is to make active choices for myself.

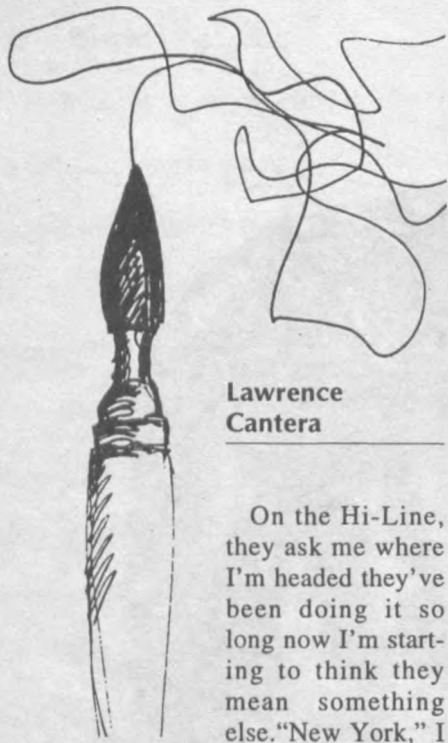
Wanda hits the on ramp and it's clear that whoever's crying is not going to stop. No one's going to look either. Both of those things make me mad.

So I do. I sneak a sideways look behind me, and right then the light hits her just perfect, and who is it but the kid with the patch. Oh Christ, I think. We're passing people, Wanda's trying to get us back on time, and the kid's just blubbering. I want to turn around and crack her a good one because it's just depressing the rest of us. Sure, she's a kid, but even a kid ought to know better. There's a time you've got to smarten up, and she's past it. That's what I'll tell Miss Crawford, I think. That's what I learned. Don't be stupid. Don't be a kid. Just cause you want something so bad doesn't mean you're gonna get it.

Stewart O'Nan has an MFA from Cornell. His novels are Snow Angels, The Names of the Dead, and, most recently, The Speed Queen. He lives in Avon Connecticut.



Out of State Plates



Lawrence
Cantera

On the Hi-Line, they ask me where I'm headed they've been doing it so long now I'm starting to think they mean something else. "New York," I say this year. Other years it's been California, Washington, Minnesota, Iowa, Delaware.

"You're headed home," they say with a quick look toward the front bumper of my truck. "From where?"

They're almost right. I'm on my way back from my latest three-month job to where I live. My wife is there. And good friends. And so are the want ads and the job interviews my disinterest can so easily sabotage even before those hearty introductory handshakes.

"Missoula." I don't say San Francisco where the job was. That would only make the reaction worse.

The delay while frugal Hi-Liners calculate the differences in mileage, gas money, tire tread, and pissed away resale value because of the route I've chosen can stretch out almost long enough to notice. "You're all the way up here? You take a wrong turn?"

"I like it up here."

"Pretty far off-track for just liking it."

I wonder, is it me or are these turns of phrase a part of the local dialect I haven't quite mastered?

"The interstate will save you time. It would have anyway."

On this trip, "up here" is Galata and despite my belief that time is for spending not saving, I'm not without doubt. The Hi-Line is the railroad built across Montana in the 1880s by James J. Hill to bring boxcar loads of Honyockers to the misfortunes of dry land farming; it's pressed tight against the belly of Canada, a straight line not connecting two points, 800 miles north of I-80, 200 miles north of I-90, the straighter, faster lines I might have chosen. Perhaps the people in Galata and everyone I'll meet in this new world of Kremfins and Harlems and Glasgows and Zurichs, names chosen by one of Mr. Hill's employees by stopping a spinning globe with a fingertip, are right. Take the interstate. Any interstate. Get on with your life a day or two, sometimes three days, sooner. But then I ought to be on an airplane anyway.

Galata is a dark clump of trees north of the tracks. It's after 9:30pm. I resist the urge to drive through town looking at the houses, the main street. To imagine an evening there. Instead, I pull off Highway 2 into the gravel lot lighted by the universal neon signs of traveler's aid — Miller, Pabst, Rainier. I'm stopping at Sully's on the recommendation of a Missoula friend who said the owner, if he's still alive, was worth meeting, a kind of walking, talking personification of the Hi-Line in the days when it was trying to swear off steam locomotives and sod houses.

But he's not still alive. The bartender tells me the place has changed hands a few times since then. His arms are blackened by the sun and he's got them tightly crossed in front of him as if he's con-

stantly cold, suffering withdrawal from daylight. I'm the only customer and I've interrupted his TV program from Lethbridge. He opens a Rainier for me. A visible shiver passes through him at touching the metal can before he puts it on the bar. Then he asks it.

"Where you headed?"

I try a different tack. "East," I say.

"North Dakota?" He's straining to see my license plates through the reflected neon covering the windows. "Minnesota?"

From Marias Pass to Bainville there's a common concern for my destination. I can't buy a cup of coffee or a tank of gas, or apparently a beer, without being asked. I'm considering having T-shirts made-up — "Yes, New York. Please don't rub it in." Whatever happened to talking about the weather? In the Eighties, they'd ask me where I was headed and all I had to say was, "It looks pretty dry around here," and everything was fine. People can talk about a drought all day long. Even to a foreigner.

"New York," I finally admit to the bartender.

"Long ways to be driving. Where you coming from?"

Trying to stop things where they are I say, "Cut Bank." It isn't really a lie; I drove through there earlier in the evening.

"Hey," he says, squinting at me from behind the smoke curling off the tip of his cigarette. "That's where I'm from. Who were you seeing there?"

"Just passing through," I say, knowing better than to make up a name and fighting my own shiver, this one of uncertain origin. Perhaps I've stumbled into a suspicious man with wife trouble, so I say, "On my way up from Missoula," to guide us both back to familiar territory.

"You sure take the long way around things," he says, sounding personally disappointed in me and again making me wonder if something else is meant. "The interstate would have saved you lots of time."

He shakes his head and stubs out his cigarette in the ashtray next to my elbow before walking back down the bar to his TV.

The truth is, being "up here" helps me slow down. I can name fifty towns along I-90 and I-94 in Montana that I've never driven through let alone had a meal in or spent ten minutes sitting under a tree in, although I've had a couple of hundred chances. Superior, Belgrade, Columbus, Forsyth, I don't know a thing about them. Even Wibaux. How can I have resisted a name like that? But on the Hi-Line, there aren't five towns where I've spent less than an hour, which I think is saying something in places the size of Rudyard — "596 Nice People — One 01' Sore Head."

I stop and see things. Like the Poplar Pride, a compact wonder of a Missouri river boat, smaller than some water skiing boats on Flathead Lake. The Sleeping Buffalo rocks where passing Indians still leave offerings of tobacco.

The ever-present Mr. James J. Hill's statue in Havre with its plaque featuring quotes like, "We are glad now and at all times, it has been our policy to try and hold up the hand of the man who is cultivating the land." We're glad too, Mr.

Hill. We, on the other hand, sit out of reach of the sprinklers in the Lions Park in Chester to eat a sandwich.

What better to get on with?

I try to find places where I can see as much of the land as possible. The shadows of volcanic islands that are the Sweetgrass Hills. Trains at work in the distance. The warm breeze off the wheat fields brings a smell like toast to my tailgate picnic far from the hard road. Binoculars in my lap. Near a stray prairie pot-hole with pelicans floating over the water like sail barges and not seeming to envy in the least their cousins hanging out at seashore resorts.

I'm fortunate to have started driving the Hi-Line years before 1989 when the folks at the Montana Historical Society compiled all the text of roadside markers into a book that costs ten dollars. It might have kept me from stopping along the way to read every marker from Marias



Pass to the North Dakota border. Those stops usually turned into half an hour of thinking and stretching legs. Wandering out into the fields or along creek bottoms, alternately gazing off to the horizon and examining the ground at my feet, hoping that a percussion cap or a piece of buckskin or an arrowhead or fossil or amulet might be hidden in the grass.

This feeling of slowness in time that comes over me on the Hi-Line is oddly viral, fermenting every hour I'm here. It encourages me to deviate from my route, to dip down to the Bears Paw and the Little Rockies, hop on up to Opheim and Medicine Lake to see what's what. Extending the trip a day longer than even I've come to expect. It's a powerful virus. Lately I've caught myself thinking that despite the wind chill, I'd like to have a reason to travel the Hi-Line in January. Or no reason at all.

The Hi-Line has been what it's been since 1887 when most of it was built as the Great Northern Railway by crews laying three miles of finished track a day. It's communities are more resilient, of steadier character, than those along the old Milwaukee Road/Northern Pacific right-of-way, a portion of which runs from Missoula to Livingston. "Hollywood Gulch" I heard a man outside Clyde's Room in Malta call that stretch of track. He's got a point. I don't expect

to see Ted Turner or Jane Fonda or Andi MacDowell or Glenn Close or Bruce Willis in Malta, this Malta not the other one, anytime soon, or later for that matter. There's just not much to interest Gulchers on the Hi-Line. Unless you count Vick's Lanes & Beer Parlor in Nashua. Besides, ten bucks for that book from the historical society is a deal. "Read all about it" without leaving the Adirondack chair. No need to actually drive those longer miles of two lane, to get out of the car, to stand in a spot where anything happened and still is.

The Hi-Line has become my preferred route across the state. You visit a place enough, spend enough time, and things start to find you there. Two years in a row at Fort Peck, in the same campsite (#9), on the bare ridge of West End campground, I was awakened with my three-season tent flattened into my face by a thunderstorm. Every season except summer on the Hi-Line, I guess. Last year, I met a man carrying a ten-foot wooden cross on his shoulder from Seattle to Boston; the late May blizzard at his back, he said, was helping him along on his pilgrimage. And farther back, on a golden October morning I shot my first sharptail north of Culbertson and the next spring buried the dog that pointed it up nearby. Farther back than that I saw these prairies for the first time and unable to take my eyes from the horizon realized how big the world could be.

Driving the Hi-Line does its part to keep me in touch with this place, if a state as big as Montana can be called a place at all. It's important for me to go slow since I'll be away awhile longer. I can afford the few extra days. And because most people can't or won't, I'm not worried that a crowd will rush up here to turn Galata or Malta into another star in the galaxy of Hollywood Gulch.

Although I'll admit to having some nervous moments about the trend of things after I noticed you can get a cappuccino, latte, espresso almost anywhere between Cut Bank and Culbertson. The little French guy at Espresso Madness in Wolf Point, complete with beret and pencil-thin mustache, blue and red shirt with those horizontal stripes, seems to me a particularly subversive character.

So it's not all paradise. There's espresso and there's the weather and there's little French guys. And some people who make odd choices. The Sleeping Buffalo rock isn't out on the prairie where he belongs; he's penned up in a dank three-sided shack next to the highway trying to do his sleeping with eighteen-wheelers rumbling by. The Poplar Pride is beached in the weeds behind a chain-link fence. And down the road from James J. Hill's statue, there's a shopping mall built on top of the Wahkpa Chu'gn Bison Kill. Your first view of this historic site is through the wire-rimmed diamonds of another chain link fence hard by the dumpsters and loading docks. I guess there wasn't another acre of flat land anywhere around Havre to build a shopping mall. But in the end I think the Hi-Line can take it. It's survived a world heavyweight championship fight and plenty of gambling without becoming Las Vegas,

Out of State Plates

Mr. Hill's salesmanship without becoming California, the Defense Department without becoming Rocky Flats or Hanford.

I raise my beer can off Sully's bar and jiggle it a bit to indicate I'm empty so the bartender will have to leave his TV show and we can patch things up between us.

"Good weather for the harvest," I say. "Lots of trucks heading to the elevators anyway."

"We got hailed out in June."

The weather still works. The bartender launches into how things aren't so good at all. This year's crop is high in protein and low in weight. Last year it was high in weight, low in protein, so you can't win. Without a pause he points toward Galata out the screen door at the end of the back hallway. "This place used to be on the other side of the tracks," he says, "on the old road." He tells me that after the new highway was built, they jacked up the "whole shooting match" and rolled it over the crossing, set it down next to the new road all in one piece, ready for business. They left the supper dishes set on the tables in the cafe and the liquor bottles on the back bar. "And they didn't break a damn single one of them," he says with no little bit of pride.

I can't help wondering if the former owner, the walking, talking personification of the Hi-Line was standing behind the bar polishing shot glasses with a towel the whole time they were rolling his shooting match across James J. Hill's railroad tracks.

I step out the door of Sully's into the gravel parking lot. The view to the south is nothing but wheat. I catch myself thinking ahead to Bainville, the first town inside Montana along the Hi-Line if you're heading west. The last if you're heading east. I'll stop for a few minutes in front of the beautiful square-belfryed First English Lutheran Church at the end of Clinton Street. Beautiful that is if you can ignore the aluminum siding. And I think you ought to since you aren't the one who had to paint all those clapboards after the wind and the sun went to work on them every year. The trip always ends there, in a rare Montana town with more churches than bars. Then I head south, detouring into North Dakota to the bridge over the Missouri

before hurrying back to stay inside Montana's border a while longer to Sidney and Glendive and finally the interstate.

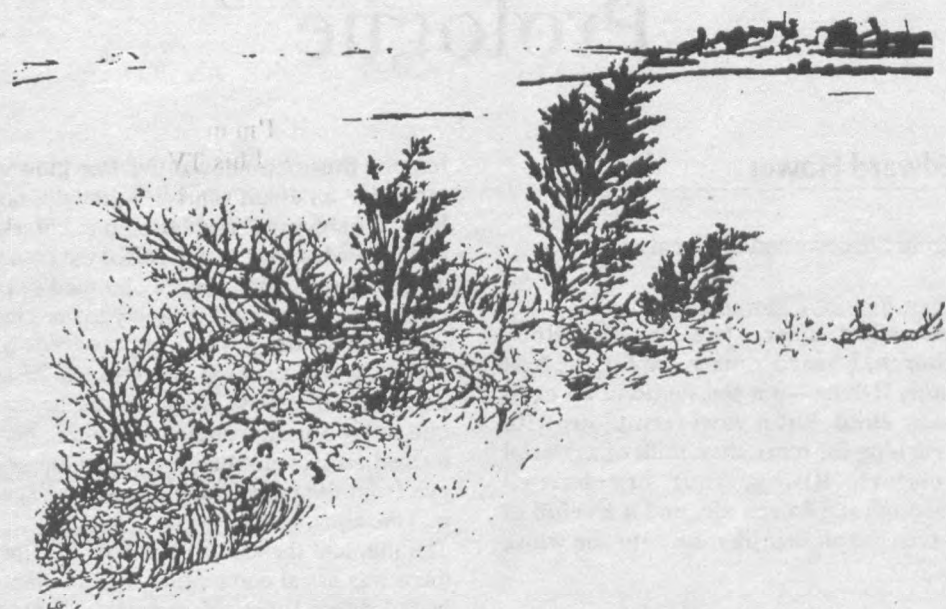
Once I hit the four-lane, I'll try to put the miles behind me as fast as they're willing. Try to fight the urge to turn around. To calculate the mileage and gas money and tire tread and resale value — and the time — it would cost me to spend a few more days where I'd rather be. I'll gas up at the bottom of exit ramps and eat while I'm driving. That night, AM radio will reach out from the Great Lakes and then the Atlantic Coast through the static of electrical storms to tell me where I'm headed.

The visible world is restricted to the reach of my headlights; the rest of it somewhere streaming past me. It's there at 80mph that the forgotten feeling overtakes me. The slow virus that made me immune to the memory of it is gone from my blood. The last trace disappearing near Medora.

The memory is this: Out-of-state plates. Folks on the Hi-Line glance at the front bumper of my truck and see someone from the east, from anywhere else. Not someone who came to Montana twenty-five years ago this month, did his seasons with the Forest Service thinning brush, marking timber, fighting fires, and has been trying to get back ever since. The strange thing is, this time they are right. I don't live here anymore. That's why Hi-Liners always ask their question. They are nothing if not polite and there isn't a lot you can ask someone who's just passing through. As much as I don't want it to be true, I am just passing through.

But Medora is a few days away yet. Right now the cool air of late summer, almost autumn, inevitably winter, is washing over me. There's a viral bloom in my blood. Where am I headed, I ask myself tonight. Back here, I answer. And if I can go slow enough, I'll stay.

Lawrence Cantera has lived in Ithaca, Montana, California, Delaware and Iowa. He currently lives in St. Paul, Minnesota, where he's president of a computer consulting firm, and is at work on a novel.



Loon Island Star

David Waren

These pieces are from The Loon Island Star, a homemade magazine based on the island my family has owned since the nineteen twenties when we were year-round residents of the lake Bonaparte area in Northern New York.

I began producing and sending the Star to my family as a newsletter assembled from my great grandmother's, grandmother's, and mothers North Country newspaper clippings and their entries in our camp log.

Josiah's Lamps

The Warrens can brag about having come to this continent in the person of the treasurer on the Mayflower, but if The Loon Island Star were a ship, it is our fore-uncle Josiah Warren born in 1798, who could be the figurehead. A musician, inventor, storekeeper, industrialist, writer, printer, publisher, multiple town-founder and political revolutionary, he is known in capsule histories as "the father of Philosophical anarchism." In his anarchistic way, he helped give birth to the industrial revolution in printing and at the same time organized private non-profit groups in humanitarian social reaction to it. He was a magazine of a man and I would(were he alive) invite him to join the Loon Island Star board of directors, if I weren't a sort of anarchist pretty much after his pattern, and if the Loon Island Star weren't itself a sovereign, one-man operation, without any governing board.

Like some of the rest of us, Josiah Warren was a short and stocky man with an ample forehead and blue eyes which could be described as either restless or shift. He lived in shifting circumstances, though he was a musician first and always. By the age of twenty-one he had already played a number of instruments in Boston bands, married, and moved to Cincinnati where he became an orchestra leader and music teacher.

In 1821 Josiah patented a lard-burning lamp(which was much cheaper to run than the tallow lamps currently in use), and soon afterward started a lamp factory. Josiah's factory succeeded, though success would never be a barrier to his quick changes for the sake of personal and philosophical development. After hearing a speech by the English philanthropist and industrialist Robert Owen, he moved with his family to the newly forming experimental community of New Harmony, Indiana where Owen had proposed to put into practice his theories of socialism and human improvement.

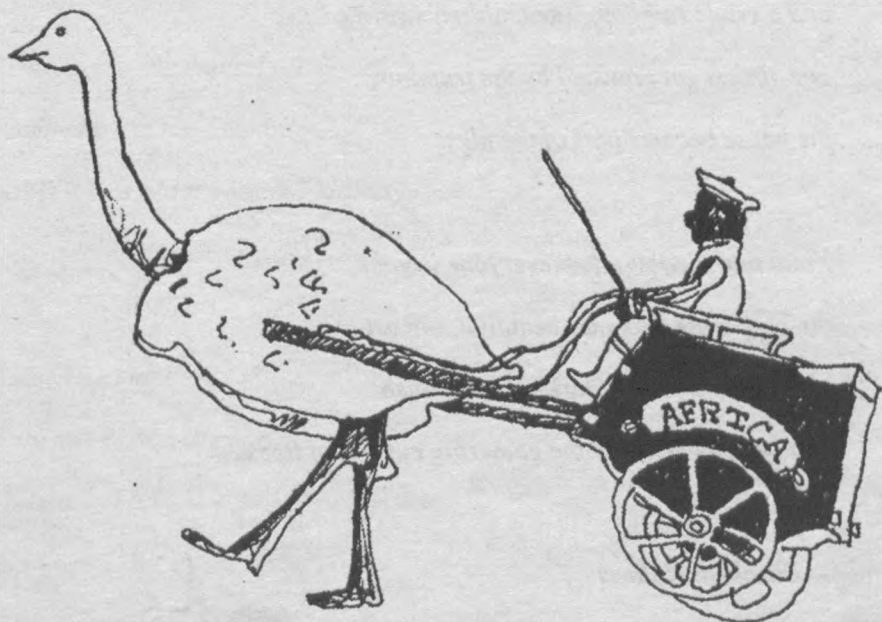
By Christmas of 1825 nearly a thousand people had gathered in New Harmony and cooperated long enough to draw up a constitution which provided

for absolute equality of property, labor, and opportunity. It also stated that the community should strive for complete freedom of speech and action. According to the thumbnail sketch in the anonymously authored Warren Family genealogy, Josiah Warren "was opposed to all forms of government" which presumably includes the one he was helping to devise at New Harmony, where he championed the most extreme individuality. Unsurprisingly, a state of the wrong sort of anarchy developed at New Harmony, and Josiah is credited in the family genealogy with responsibility for the failure of the experiment. However he and Owen himself apparently agreed that it was the communistic dampening of individual initiative which did the damage and Owen supported Josiah in later ventures which did quite well on the basis of this insight.

Josiah moved back to Cincinnati and started his first "equity store," where purchases were made with barter certificates granting the same credit for the same amount of labor. After two years Josiah's store broke even. He judged that to be success, since it was the goal, and it is not bad to my way of thinking, considering that most businesses fail in the first year and the rest cannot be expected to turn a profit before the third year.

His point made, Josiah moved on and in 1830 invented a high speed press, which he used briefly to spread information about prevention and cure during a Chicago cholera epidemic, but he never patented the invention, because the concept was so simple that someone else should have thought of it. The design was adopted and built by R. Hoe and Company in 1832, and by others soon after. Josiah next presented himself as The Peaceful Revolutionist, which is the name of the journal he started to publish in 1833. It was a supremely individual effort: Josiah made his own press, type(on the kitchen stove), and stereotype plates. He also did all the writing, composition, and press work. Though Josiah's magazine did not continue over a year, he published other journals later on, and numerous books, including one giving a new, mathematical system for musical notation.

Between 1837 and 1840 Josiah invented an improved press which fed a continuous roll of paper to a self-inking type-cylinder. Although the press was thought to be one of the most important developments in printing at that time, it was a large machine which required a number of men to operate, and the kind of extreme individualism Josiah championed would not be a job asset for any of those workers. After persistent sabotage by workmen, who may have been reading his tracts, and were worried about losing their jobs at the newspaper where the press had been installed, Josi-



Prologue

Edward Hower

From *Shadows and Elephants*

Kiev, Russia: 7 March 1831

Hovering above the ancient stone church, I heard your voice for the first time, Helena—not the sound of an ordinary child, but a yowl tremulous with yearning for more than milk or material comfort. Rising, your cry burned through the frozen air, and a treefull of ravens exploded like ink into the white sky.

I knew then that I'd found the child assigned to me. Entering the church, I searched the pews for her, wondering what such an eloquent infant might look like. The odors of incense and piety made my nostrils twitch. Black-robed priests scuttled by. A consumptive organ exhaled chords. Banks of candles gave off a yellow glare but no warmth.

Near the baptismal font stood gentlemen wearing frock coats, shiny boots, monocles, mustaches. Ladies in furs and bulky dresses shivered in the gloom. Child relatives, confined by tight Sunday outfits, whined and tormented their nurses. Several of these children spotted me and, smiling, ceased their fidgeting. Only they, of course, can see beings like me; to adults I'm invisible.

In previous incarnations, I'd had several names; now I was Morya, a swarthy, black-bearded, breathtakingly handsome man of wise middle years. My superiors among the Ascended Masters had sent me here from an assignment in India, thus I was still wearing a white turban, caftan, and camel-hide slippers. I could see how important an event Helena's christening was by the number of *diakka*, or astral beings, who had turned out to celebrate it—or perhaps to oppose it, I couldn't tell.

None were of my high rank. A gaggle of apprentice angels admired their reflections in the stained glass windows. Trolls and needle-nosed fairies played among the shadows that groped up the walls. And near the font stood a being whom I assumed at first was a *domovoy*, a hairy old man who lived behind the kitchen stove in the family's mansion. Ordinarily such beings are content with souring the milk and spitting in the soup, but this one looked as if he had a more drastic action in mind. Behind his whiskers, his eyes were strangely young and reckless.

Suddenly the voices around me hushed and all faces turned toward the center aisle of the church. First came a white-haired priest carrying a miter, then several boys swinging censers from their hands and filling the air with sticky plumes of smoke. And then—here, the gazes of many guests turned quizzical—the child herself, Helena, rode down the aisle. She was not gliding compliantly in the arms of her stout nurse—no, not at all; she was kicking and thrashing her limbs in red-faced exasperation. Many, like myself, had been expecting a mere babe, but various family illnesses had forced postponements of the christening, and the Helena we beheld was a plump, curly-headed, round-faced little girl of nearly two. I could tell from her determined struggling that she was already far too independent to allow anyone to carry her—especially to a destination she had not chosen herself.

What an adorable creature she was—to me, at least. What bright round blue eyes she had! But the poor child had been stuffed into a tight, frilly dress that I could tell constrained her beyond endurance. The nurse passed her to the white-haired priest, a sinewy old bird whose grip must have seemed to Helena even tighter than her clothing. She began to yowl again.

To my occultly trained ears, her shrieks were glorious melodies. They sliced through the organ's groans like bold scimitar strokes; they scratched wild calligraphy

into the frosted windows. Her face glowed red—like a radiant sunrise, I thought, not like “a baby pig,” as I heard one elderly countess whisper. I nearly cuffed the crone. The priest, his bony hand clamped over Helena's mouth, moved slowly toward the altar, where the glow from hundreds of flickering tapers caused the air to vibrate as if in a state of ecstasy. Then, as was the custom in the Russian church, the cleric performed an ancient ritual to cast out the evil eye from the consecrated place—he spat into the air.

The moment the saliva shot from his lips, there was astral commotion. Fairies stampeded down the aisle. Angels fluttered against the windows like trapped moths. A pair of trolls who'd been copulating behind a stack of hymnals fled through the nearest doorway. But the *domovoy*, shielding his eyes, held his ground.

To Helena, the priestly effluvia that splashed against her cheek must have felt like a spray of acid, so loud was her response. Her screams clawed at the cleric's face and caused the racks of candle flames to ripple like a golden wheat field blasted by a storm. Gasping for breath, the child stared forlornly about in search of someone to rescue her.

Did Helena notice his approach? Many debated this afterwards, but I myself believe that she didn't see him, intent as she was upon absorbing her audience's adoration. In any case, her candle continued to sway in the air. The priest backed into it. The flame took a big bite from the hem of his robe.

From the pews, the faces of the children grew animated as the pretty yellow blaze blew sideways, sharing its flames with other dark-robed men. Thrilling screams echoed everywhere. Adults scattered. Billows of smoke flapped in the air like gigantic black wings.

One of the youngest of the priests, perhaps unaware that his lower parts were smoking, snatched up Helena. Then, his eyes filling with panic, he tottered beside the font as the turmoil swirled around him. Helena pummeled his chest with her little fists, but he seemed too confused to notice.

I must state here that responsible Masters do not normally intervene directly in mortals' karma. But I couldn't just stand by and let my tiny damsel be roasted in the arms of that priest.

“Drop her, you fool!” I whispered into the man's ear.

He did. Splash! She landed on her bottom in the baptismal font.

Someone threw a cloak over the priest as he fell in flames to the floor. Children were yanked toward the door. Men barked orders. Women wailed and wept. The scent of scorched clerics wafted through the air. Sitting in the font, her plump legs kicking, Helena gurgled prettily. Eventually, when all the fires had been extinguished, another priest fished her out of the little stone tub.

As she rose dripping from the water, Helena reached out both hands and gave a little cry. A chuckle, some said later. An ominous cackle, the priest insisted—which explained his decision to abandon her christening.

But I knew the true meaning of the sound she'd made. It was merely a cry of recognition. She had seen my face for the first time. “I'm the Master Morya,” I told her.

She burred happily. I translated her question: “Are you to care for me? Always?”

“Always,” I replied.

And I did—from that day on, I was her guardian. It was a labor of love. And it was a task that would test the limits of my fabulous powers.

Edward Hower is the author of six books, including the novel Queen of the Silver Dollar, which will be published this fall, and the recently completed novel Shadows and Elephants.

A Farewell Picnic for Ann, Peter, and Vann, August 1996

Vann, age six, has made up a play,

and under his joyous direction the children

dash across the lawn waving sticks,

plastic cups, a fire chief's hat.

Ashley's long hair's afloat, Liam

tumbles and crows, Nick runs the fastest.

The uncomprehending parents applaud,

seeing the children against a backdrop

of massed purple and white althea,

behind it the tall hemlocks beginning

to blur with evening, and back of that,

in the next yard, a box elder hovering.

How lush it all is, and not one child

crying, even the baby in his sling chair

cooing. We glance over the tops

of houses, where evening is turning rose,

a color we swear we've never seen there.

“These are the great days,” Harry says,

a minute before it couldn't be said:

we fold the blankets and put away food,

calling the children. Above us hangs

a splendid silver maple, a tree

notoriously weak-wooded, vulnerable

to wind; but here it is, still,

swallowing the last of the light. A while ago

four of the men went off and came back

struggling under Vann's playhouse,

ours now. They set it down in front

of the deep hemlocks: spray-painted red,

yellow and blue polkadots on white,

and a crude rainbow. The children swarmed;

one almost got crowned by the trapdoor;

the house became part of the play.

From our window when everyone is gone,

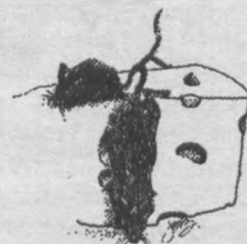
the playhouse becomes beautiful, almost

glowing in the near-dark—this childish

assertion, dwarfed by the gathering curtain of trees.

— Elizabeth Holmes

Liz Holmes grew up in Tennessee. She spent one year teaching in rural Kenya. She is the author of The Patience of the Cloud Photographer.



Translations

David Lunde

INVITATION TO LIU NINETEEN by Po Chu-yi (772-846 A.D.)

I have some unfiltered wine, "green-ant"

new

and a little red clay warming-stove.

Evening is falling, and the sky looks like

snow

Can you drink a cup with me, or no?

trans: David Lunde

SEEKING A HERMIT BUT NOT FINDING HIM by Chia Tao (779-849? A.D.)

Beneath the pines;

I asked his servant boy—

"The Master is gone,

out picking medicinal herbs.

He's somewhere in these mountains,

deep in the clouds,

but I couldn't say where."

(ca. 800)

ON HIS SAD DEPARTURE FROM CH'ANG-AN BY THE GATE OF GOLDEN LIGHT by Tu Fu (712-770 A.D.)

This is the way I came back before,

to the Emperor's territory;

barbarians were everywhere

in the western suburbs.

Until now I had not

regained my courage

*the souls driven from my body**

must not have returned.

Returning to the capital,

I rode close to the Emperor—

surely it was not his Sacred Majesty

who ordered my dismissal!

Judged incompetent,

daily more old and decrepit,

I rein in my horse

and gaze at the doors of the palace.

(758 A.D.)

*Reference to popular belief that a person had ten souls, seven animal and three spiritual, which could be driven from the body by a traumatic experience or severe illness. Rituals were performed to bring them back.

THE EIGHT FORMATIONS by Tu Fu (712-770 A.D.)

Your achievements overshadowed

those of any in the Three Kingdoms;

most famous of all was your design

for the Eight Formations.

Against the river's surge,

they stand solid, unmoving,

a monument to your lasting regret

at failing to swallow up Wu.

N.B.: The person addressed in this poem is Chu-ko Liang (181-234 A.D.), who was Chancellor of the kingdom of Shu during the reigns of its first two rulers. Tu Fu admires him as one of the greatest statesmen in Chinese history. The Eight Formations are groups of standing stones—some in the river—supposedly constructed by Chu-ko Liang to demonstrate his battle formations, but most likely they were raised by prehistoric peoples for much the same purposes as our stone circles in Europe. Wu was another ancient kingdom against which Shu waged an unsuccessful war.

THE CHANCELLOR OF SHU by Tu Fu (712—770 A.D.)

For the Chancellor's shrine,

where should one look?

On the outskirts of Ch'eng-tu

where cypresses grow thick.

On its steps emerald grass gleams,

keeping spring's color to itself;

screened by leaves a yellow oriole sings,

its lovely sound unheard.

Three imploring visits

yielded a plan for world order;

Two reigns he founded and assisted

showing his faithful heart.

He led the army out against Wei

but died himself before victory;

at the thought of it, men of valor

will always shed tears of pity.

[760]

N.B.: The Chancellor is Chu-ko Liang, who had earned a reputation for brilliance, but was living in retirement in his house on Sleeping Dragon hill at the time the "Three visits" were paid to him by Liu Pei. Liu was a soldier who considered himself the legitimate heir to the Empire of Han, and in his three visits he begged Chu-ko's help in regaining it. Chu-ko rejected him twice, but finally agreed on the third visit, having been persuaded of his sincerity and determination by his willingness to humble himself.

David Lunde received an MFA from University of Iowa writer's workshop in 1967 and is currently Professor of English /Director of Creative Writing at SUNY Fredonia. He has published two full length collections of poetry; Sludge Gulper 1 and Cal-



The Loon Island Star

continued from page 5

ah deconstructed and retrieved the press. Twenty-five years after Josiah took back the speed press, others re-invented it, or just stole the idea and took the credit.

Josiah turned once again to experiments with the more humane "equity stores" in the Midwest, which were succeeding and seeding the modern co-operative and grange movements. Then, in 1850, with encouragement and funds provided by Robert Owen, he moved back east and established the town of Modern Times, about forty miles from New York out on Long Island. Modern Times functioned well for more than ten years, though it might have become encumbered by the sort of eccentric characters it is said to have attracted. Perhaps to hide from fame, Modern Times later changed its name to Bretonwood or Brentwood, or something similar and equally forgettable.

Josiah himself outlasted Modern Times and at last he circled back to Massachusetts where, at home with friends from the old Modern Times days, he died several years later—a thoroughly rounded individual who long ago went where we are going and had been what we might become. The fact is that though he never actually set foot on Loon Island, he was probably the first Warren to travel completely around the island, Lake Bonaparte and the whole state of New York (albeit coming none too close) and although all relatives that far removed from our branch in the family tree are about as closely related to us as to Adam.

I myself have only recently begun to design primitive stone lamps. They use a paraffin oil which unfortunately costs ten times as much as lard. It may be time to bring back the lard lamp.

Mother Warren's Grasp

I remember Grandma Warren as she sat under her lamp-shade hat, her undershot jaw set like that of a lurking bass, her hands knuckles-up in her lap, a balled tissue in one of them.

She was so still and silent then that the flies in the room began to circle near; maybe they mistook her for a lamp, or for a dead body.

Suddenly her right hand shot out and snatched a fly right out of the air. She crushed the fly into the tissue in her other fist. Then she was still again.

A mighty fortress was Mother Warren. Her husband, Rev. Orson Lee Warren, had died of heart failure when Dad was twelve years old. The Sunday after O. Lee died, Mother Warren gave the sermon in their Baptist church. And, as I remember my father telling me she kept the pulpit through a month of Sundays, until a new pastor was found. Mama Dot, though, says that she is not sure whether Mother Warren preached several times.

Who knows what she said in that or those sermons? Did she snatch the devil out of the air and crush him right there? I imagine that she must have preached the Baptist priesthood of the believer, a doctrine—a program for individual sovereignty, useful in the straits where everyone is an island.

O. Lee's death left Mother Warren with Ernest, the youngest of three children, still at home. Without the parson's wages they were doubly poor, but she became a Baptist minister's assistant in Watertown and a librarian of the Carthage Free Library. Ernest was quick and skipped grades through high school. He was a favorite charitable cause for a few local

businessmen who had been members of the church or admirers of his father, as well as of his fierce mother. For many years the journalist, printer, paper salesman and author Charlie Brownell, who was always a sort of Uncle to Ernest, would take Mother Warren for automobile rides on Sunday afternoons, and some people thought that someday they would get married, but Mother Warren was too single-minded for that.

A Carthage lawyer, who was an alumnus of Hamilton College, encouraged Ernest to apply there and, when he was accepted, Mother Warren went to college right along with Ernest, whom I will call Dad from here on because, though he was only seventeen at the time, he had met my mother-to-be, who went off to Elmira College. While Dad waited on tables at the faculty club, Mother Warren cooked and kept house there in order to help pay for books, room, and board. If this heroic mothering was ever an embarrassment to Dad, I never heard about it.

When Dad went off to Cornell Law School on a special scholarship there for worthy and needy Hamiltonians, and Dorothy Failing, studying to be my mother and the next Mrs. Warren, came to Ithaca to get a graduate degree at Ithaca college, Grandmother Warren found a position as a housekeeper and companion for a rich boxmaker's widow over in McGraw, near where the Warrens had homesteaded and where she had been raised.

Until the orthodontist changed it many years ago, I had that same undershot jaw as Mother Warren, but I have never been able to catch flies like that. I suppose the talent lurks there deep in my being though, like the original fish from which we are all descended.

Loon Island, Beer Island, and the Silver Moon Tea Room

My Dad was not a traveling man. What traveling he did was mostly early in his life and always brought him back home.

When he was seventeen he went each Saturday the thirty or so miles from Carthage to Clayton in order to play trumpet with a band at the Silver Moon Tea Room. On Sundays in those same years he took the train up the line through Natural Bridge past Bonaparte to deliver the Sunday New York Times in the village of Cranberry Lake, which, was the end of the railroad line, was the source of the Times' paper pulp as well as being a summering place of wealthy New Yorkers. During his undergraduate college years Dad also traveled as a roustabout on the Chataqua culture-circus train, and ultimately, carrying a suitcase which I now use for Loon Island Star documents, he took the train to Ithaca and the Cornell Law school. In law school he earned nothing but A's. Nobody had ever done that before and at

graduation the dean asked my father to stay and join the faculty. But he did not accept the offer. That summer Dad went to Bonaparte and worked hauling ice, chopping wood, and piloting the shuttle to bring visitors to the restaurant on Rock Island which would come to be called Beer Island for many years, and will be called that for many years from now, though it has been a while since the restaurant operated there. Dad and Mom were engaged to be married that summer and Grandfather Failing had just bought Loon Island and was getting ready to build there.

Dad spent the nights on Loon Island in his sleeping bag without a tent, and on his days off he helped cutting brush on the site and hauling up rock for the fire-place.

Dad and Mom were married in her parents' house and the wedding reception was next door at Grandma at Grandpa Drury's house. Dad worked for law firms in Utica and Carthage, starting out during the Depression, serving subpoenas. Eventually he became a partner in the Carthage firm and we moved into the Drury house in Natural Bridge.

During those years and afterward Cornell continued to offer Dad a position on the law faculty, but he stayed up north until it came time for us children to start entering college. Then he accepted the offer, along with what would eventually amount to twenty years of free tuition for us children. We came back to Bonaparte for two months every summer.

Biting A Big One

Besides being known as "Uncle Ernie," by generations of the students he advised at the law school, Dad was at various times Dean of Students and Dean of Admissions. In the fifties, the whole university was presided over by Dean Malott, who, though he was officially president, was actually named Dean. Add to that the fact that Dad often advised us, as he must have urged his students, to do as we "deem prudent," so we Warren kids got the idea that there was a Cornell character called "Dean Prudent." That we never met this Dean Prudent meant little, since one could often see him tottering cautiously about the campus, and we wouldn't have expected him to go out of his usual way to come by our house.

The concept of Deem Prudence was Dad's all-purpose code of ethical, legal, and philosophical behavior, his doctrine of individual sovereignty, and his priesthood of the believer. But his apparent offering of Dean Prudence as a model was counter-balanced by the barrel-chested person of his friend Harrop Freeman. Har Freeman, also a professor at the law school, was an out-spoken political liberal, a fearless Quaker, a home-born world-traveler, a passionate pro-bono legal advocate of Indian land claims, a wild driver of sports cars, and a free-

wheeling counselor who no doubt often violated his own good council: a man who seems, from the reports of young women I have known, to have been as horny into his sixties as a year-old puppy, but an interesting and interested man, just as eager for the new experience as we Warrens were to get back home.

Har was less one for fishing than for skimming over or just dashing into the water when he visited us at Bonaparte but he did go fishing with us at least once, and it was probably due more to his aggressiveness than to mere luck that he managed on his first trip with Dad and me down to Mud Lake, to crank out a largemouth just about a half-inch longer than the biggest one I ever caught. I was about fifteen at the time.

We had given him a short plug-casting rod because there were the three of us in the boat and Dad wanted to lessen the chances of his grappling a hat or an ear.

Har plugged it right in there as if he were trying to skip the lure clear to Indian Lake. I cast far ahead of the boat and managed to haul in a sixteen-incher, which I landed without net by the approved thumb-in mouth hold. After a whiffle bass or two, but before we had been fishing another half-an-hour, Har hooked that bass and he didn't waste any time bringing it in, though it was well over five pounds.

He was determined to land his fish in the way I had demonstrated, and he had no problem getting his thumb in the big mouth, but the fish was not ready and he managed to get one of the treble hooks into Har's hand.

Naturally enough, Har tried to let go of the fish, but the Jitterbug didn't let go of Har, and the bass gave a couple of good shakes which set a couple more of the treble hooks into the meat of Har's Hand.

Har grabbed the bass with his other hand and finally got it into the boat and tried to pin it with his knee in order to get the hooks out, but they were both well hooked and the fish wouldn't stop flopping. When Dad offered to club the fish with the flash light, Har wouldn't let him.

Har struggled with the fish and the plug for a minute himself, a very grim minute. And then he just bent down and bit the poor fish in back of the head, right through the backbone. He took a piece right out of it. The bass shivered and quit. Har chewed and spit out the scales, but actually swallowed the flesh he had bitten off. I saw that and I am sure my mouth dropped open. I think he swallowed it on principle.

There were three hooks in Har, all the way in and out, so Dad cut the barbed points off and backed the hooks out.

Har didn't even want to go back then, but Dad insisted and Har finally deemed it prudent—said he guessed we had better finish eating the fish.

David Warren has an MFA from Cornell and has published two novels. For many years he has lived in Ithaca where he is a builder-contractor.

