

PIECEWORK

A Magazine of Poetry by Women



Spring 1988

Red Dirt Press, Inc., is the result of the vision of eight women who wanted to provide more publication opportunities for women. The publication of this magazine of women's poetry, aptly named PIECEWORK, which draws on all the images of women's work that is done "by the piece," is dedicated to all the women who write poetry, sometimes in spite of their lives and families.

PIECEWORK (ISSN: 0893-116X) is published four times a year. Subscriptions are \$12 per year for individuals, \$16 for libraries and institutions. A free copy of PIECEWORK will be furnished, on request, to the libraries of prisons and/or mental institutions. Single copy price is \$4. Address all correspondence to PIECEWORK, Red Dirt Press, Inc., P.O. Box 60693, Oklahoma City, OK 73146.

GIFT

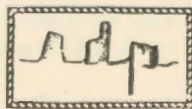
PIECWORK

A MAGAZINE OF POETRY BY WOMEN

SPRING 1988

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 3

Poetry Editors: Ann Carlton, Abigail Keegan
Typesetting and Layout: Marian Hulseay
Camera and Printing: Eloise Dycus, Martha Hayes
Distribution: Eloise Dycus



Published by Red Dirt Press, Inc.
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

©Copyright 1988 by Red Dirt Press, Inc.
No part of this publication may be
reproduced without written permission

UCO Women's Research & BGLTQ+ Center
100 N. University Dr
Edmond, OK 73034

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FEATURED ARTISTS - WINNERS OF COMPETITION

Adult Competition

First Place	
"Signature" by Clara Laster.....	4
Second Place	
"The Revised Edition" by MaryBeth Boynton-Pickney.....	5
Honorable Mention Poems	
"Scouting in America" by Karen Young Holt.....	6
"In Mirrors of Delicate Brooches" by Kathleen E. Hill.....	8
"Dear Mother," by Kathianne Osburn.....	10
"Hands" by Patricia Webb.....	12
"Daughter of the Desert" by Kathleen E. Hill.....	13
"Kim" by Patty Hankins.....	14

Student Competition

First Place	
"Matamoros, Mexico" by Jaylynn Bailey.....	16
Second Place	
"Ideas" by Kimberly Freed.....	17
Honorable Mention Poems	
"After Sliding into a Rock Bed in Stone Ridge Canyon" by Jaylynn Bailey.....	18
"Nucleus of Love" by Kimberly Freed.....	19
"Cat Lives" by Brooke Walden.....	20
"My Father's Hands" by Rachel Scheer.....	22
"Reality Search" by Julie Holliday.....	23
"Daddy's Little Girl" by Brooke Osburn.....	24
"Metamorphosis II" by Barbara Dell Wade.....	25
"Spirit Sister" by Mary Menges Myers.....	26
"Transcient" by J. Leigh Perry.....	27
"Perfectionist" by Sharon E. Martin.....	28

"The Old Tracker" by Barbara Dell Wade.....	28
"Mother Load" by Mary Crescenzo Simons.....	29
"On the Edge of Town" by Mary Crescenzo Simons.....	30
"And Meadowlarks, Amen" by Katherine Privett.....	32
"Once in awhile" by Marsha Greiner.....	32
"Formal Dinner" by Carol Hamilton.....	33
"Our World" by Carole Gossett.....	34
"The Fish" by Carol Hamilton.....	35
"Understanding the Social Structure of a Small Town" by Sharon E. Martin.....	36
"Silent Talk" by Crickett Goodsell.....	37
"In the Blue-Under Song" by Crickett Goodsell.....	38
"A Parody of Me, for Someone Who Doesn't Know" by Ruth Tobias.....	40
"Mindburst" by Ruth Dishman.....	41
"Talking Leaves" by Marlie McGovern.....	42
"Leaves" by Taj Johnson.....	43
"Brandon's Poem" by Brandon Wilson.....	43
"Dreaming" by Brooke Osburn.....	44
"The Song of a Bird" by Brooke Osburn.....	44

ABIGAIL KEEGAN: POET AND POETRY

(Cover photo by Marian Hulse)

- FEATURED ARTISTS -
WINNERS OF COMPETITION

FIRST PLACE
ADULT COMPETITION

SIGNATURE

The wind tossed angrily last night,
Blurred windows into crystals,
Frosted the streets with porcelain smoothness
Where night traffic crawled like shiny spiders.
I could hear nature breathing winter in
And autumn out,
Weaving to the wind's hard will.
And I burrowed deep last night
Under quilts of yellow dreams
Shutting out that sound of spilling mercury.

Now it is morning.
Day drops blue lights
Across my bed. Glass sounds
Pull me into the dawn
Where frozen feathers of trees
Shine like deep-cut stones of agate.
Snow is falling, slips through my fingers
Like glossy doves escaping.
The wind is quieter now,
Has become hoofs of horses in the sky
Trailing a chain of invisible stars
Leaving the skylight split
With the signature of winter.

--Clara Laster
Tulsa

**SECOND PLACE
ADULT COMPETITION**

THE REVISED EDITION

When you look at me
you'll see the
third printing
of the original publication
complete with revisions
additions
deletions
and already, at this reading,
I'm out-of-date.

--MaryBeth Boynton-Pickney
Norcross, Georgia

HONORABLE MENTIONS
ADULT COMPETITION

SCOUTING IN AMERICA

i.

the women squat on river banks,
their voices rising in lyrical chant
above the rough color of men's shirts

laughter lush as pots of honey
drowns the futile tasks
of the water women

stray tendrils connect them
they are life builders
and know it

ii.

troops of girls wear pink cheeks,
their badges strung on sashes
a fabric testament of acquired skill

homesickness nurtured in canvas tents
is healed by motto and choral song
old trails make way for tender feet

i watch
amused and sad

there is something in an attitude
that makes me want to pause,
dip my dry feet in warm rainwater

i stop to look in mid-sentence
and her eyes are purple lakes
i choose to swim in

this is the same bond,
more work than a pre-dawn dream,
stronger than fire-making

--Karen Young Holt
Oklahoma City

IN MIRRORS
OF DELICATE BROOCHES

My friend
How can I handpaint in simple strokes
The beauty of your soul
Reflected in every variety of brooch
That mirrors memories of the heart.

Day by day I've seen you
Out on the road
Four-wheeling gifts of caring
Into difficult neighborhoods,
Shrugging off impossibilities
With a special insight
That hinges your time
To others' needs.

I visualize you
Pulling your jacket close
Against cool winds off the Oregon bay,
Where you kicked sand high along the shoreline,
Trying to wash painful memories of early years
Out to sea.

Searching once more,
You've been blessed with a marriage
That's brought you happiness
Like a wonderful novel
Enclosing you in bathtubs of dreams.

I am intrigued by your creativity
Whether in silk scarves
Magically draped about your neck
Or pieces of oak
Shaped into wordworking wonders,
You have a unique touch.

You are known for your hospitality,
Gatherings that arc into roomfuls
Of cheerful chatter.

Within the cradle of your smile,
No one is a stranger.

Do you realize,
As you walk along broad paths
In the sunlight
You are creating an eternity
With unlimited credit.
Your legacy is filled with sequences
Of multicolored terraces you've built.
Hung with brilliant bouquets,
They linger like luminaries
Bicycling across my mind.

--Kathleen E. Hill
Broken Arrow

Dear Mother,

Why did I ask God for a surprise,
the day I got the call you had died--
suddenly--in the night, crawling
down the straight and narrow hall,
clutching your heart, your family
lining the walls, in frames?
I should have been more specific,
added the adjective GOOD, to my prayer.
The night before, I called home
to beg for the baby, the newest
member of the family, soon to be given away.
After I exhaust my plea to Dad,
he hands you the phone,
"Why do I want to talk to you?"
It's the last thing you hear me say.
Now, we are closer. I feel you
reading this letter over my shoulder,
even now, correcting my spelling.
Dear Mom, I never knew,
thank you for your paints,
the quilt you made for my bed,
my college degrees, birthday money in the mail,
the day you cried when I poured hot
green-bean juice on my hand,
the wedding dress you made
that I almost never wore, the nights
I watched you stay-up late
working on your projects, and all the times
you untangled my hair.

I'm sorry my neck wasn't long enough
to be a prima ballerina,
but thanks, anyway, for drives twice weekly
to class, and the Japanese Mat Theatre
made from popsickle sticks that gave me
my first blue ribbon, and thank you
for not leaving Daddy, panties
when I needed them, and chipped tuna
on toast when Daddy worked late.
On the day you died, before I got the news
I woke up crying, death looming
over my morning coffee and cigarette,
confused in my head like adoption.
This is the day you were going to clean-up
your hobby room, we did it for you,
calling in the Salvation Army.
Thank you for showing me, I, too, can
repair a clock, get up each morning
at four o'clock, go to work,
come home, clean, do laundry,
braid and tie ribbons in my daughter's hair,
knit a sweater, paint a picture, forget
a lover, make a Halloween costume,
bake a pie, tile a floor,
balance a check-book,
miss a big event to hold a sick child,
travel alone anywhere,
write a poem.

--Kathianne Osburn
Oklahoma City

HANDS

My father's mother was a nurse;
She believed in the laying on of hands.
She used her hands to rub my legs when they ached.
I remember her skillful hands, healing hands.

And her husband's hands were long and thin,
On longer arms that held a well-used book.
He raised his hands when he raised his voice
To give me Shakespeare's lines or a science lesson.

My mother's father had huge, red-brown hands,
The color of earth. They looked out of place indoors.
I touched his leather boots and hat band, and his leather hands;
His grip was strong and made me feel protected.

His wife had hands with painted fingernails,
And shiny stones on golden rings.
She held things in her hands with grace,
And held her hands as if she were a queen.

Now I have time to study my own hands.
Again I seem to be the infant girl in her crib,
Staring at my own hands moving in the light--
Mesmerized by their strange dance of power.

My hands are small; their lines remind me of a map.
They talk to me sometimes, asking funny questions.
I wonder at the healing, teaching, laboring, loving legacy they are,
And how the power gifts were passed to me.

--Patricia Webb
Oklahoma City

DAUGHTER OF THE DESERT

She was a Navajo girl
Sensing the wind's passion
As she moved through the desert.

Another life was with her there,
Adzaanlichii, Lady Red,
Daughter of the Desert,
Whose black hair, tinged with auburn
Glowed in the sunlight that beat daylong.

Stories native to the land spun
Like spider webs on her mind,
Tales of four worlds and a great flood
And of two brothers journeying on sunbeams
In search of their father Johano-ai, the Sun,
In his beautiful house of turquoise in the East.

This Navajo maiden
Born to reach the stars, remembers still
Traditions told in the dead of winter
In a language mingled with magic.

As she now speaks of her mother's prayers
Offered in the early dawn
To the East, South, West, North,
Like Sacraments to the Sun,
One can see her people,
Fiercely independent, without fear,
Sons of silence with arrows of lightning
Still tugging at the stars.

--Kathleen E. Hill
Broken Arrow

K I M

Kim
You were there--
In my nightmares and in
My dreams,
After the Fall
And when the night
Closed in--
Mostly silent,
Watching--
With troubles of your own
And full of some other
Kind of life.
We conversed
(as in Rimbaud)
With the sweetness
Of idiots.

But it was you
My daughter and my Friend,
Who looked across a distance--
 His servant,
Or trying to be,
Swimming upstream in a room full
Of art in progress,
Life in progress--
Gary's painting, his vision
 of the Holy City
Sherry's drawing, the
 Shepherd and the Lamb
The ink stained tissue drawings
Of the children.

It's strange to me
Even now,
The way things would suddenly
Lose their animation;
Nothing, suddenly,
Seeming possible--
The afternoon,
Early evening,
Night,
Shutting like a door.
This art
No longer in progress.
This project cancelled
Due to misery.

But there was always you,
With your slow turn
And the smile we waited for--
As faithful as the North Star.
And the darkness that
Would blank out your face
From time to time,
After making me nervous,
"Come ON, Kim,"
After causing me pain--
(The last thing, after all,
That I wanted, then,
Being advice from, as they say,
The Nazarene)

Healed me.

--Patty Hankins
Enid

FIRST PLACE
STUDENT COMPETITION

MATAMOROS , MEXICO

The cattle trails step into
the desert
begging ground. Cantinas hood
Gringos who
in stratus sun,
ash their thatched hair in beer.
This is the shovel-under country,
whose people graze the sidewalks
in search of the idol-fed American,
the tentative,
cheek-boned virgin.

The cupped hand
of a young thief is
more fearful in shirt pockets
than in confession.
In the month of August
when dust swallows children,
black and stiff,
he sees the limbs,
the armpits, the naked
choked feet of their bodies
subside
in a day.

--Jaylynn Bailey
Oklahoma City
John Marshall High School

SECOND PLACE
STUDENT COMPETITION

I D E A S

In the mind

skyscrapers are built
bridges are constructed
planes cross oceans
family crisis is solved
a day's work is done
a special gift is given
slow days pass faster

At night in dreams

the day's trials are forgotten
happy moments are replayed
stars are within reach
knights in shining armour await
famine is nonexistent
world peace prevails

In the mind

masterpieces are created
but never will be seen
unless one takes action and
risks failure to open new doors

to the future.

--Kimberly Freed
Okeene
Fairview High School

HONORABLE MENTIONS
STUDENT COMPETITION

AFTER SLIDING INTO A ROCK
BED IN STONE RIDGE CANYON

I skin the headbones of grubworms
like deadweed
on a grave, calves tucked under
knees red and peeled.
My fingers drag the skin
of granite and shadow
the cracked vein
to the ground like a holy man.
A hawk high on a ridge
is ripened
by the sun leaking
onto its bony wing,
and I am a child again.
Through the half healed trunk corpse
wounded by a cottonmouth
cocked, I step with the butt of my hand
on to a boulder,
rise and hang my body
black and blue.

--Jaylynn Bailey
Oklahoma City
John Marshall High School

NUCLEUS OF LOVE

When I grew up
It was huge,
 warm,
And full of laughter.

Where I played as a child
argued with my sister
and always resolved our disputes.

Where I have slept many nights,
 dark,
 quiet,
And awakened to see the beauty
 of the sunrise
 in the horizon.

Where I have shared many meals
With my family and friends
 knowing
 that they care.

Where I now see less often
 Teenage activities demand time
 with school,
 homework,
And finally coming here
 to sleep.

Where love is abundant
happiness abounds
and all is peaceful
 This is Home.

--Kimberly Freed
Okeene
Fairview High School

CAT LIVES

My cat is very curious,
But she is never serious.
She has claws like knives;
 She has nine lives.

Once when climbing a tree,
She got stuck when she tried to flee;
Scared as the cat was, she tried one of
 her nose dives.
Now she has eight lives.

When she met up with another like her,
Everything scattered, especially fur.
Although she tried with her last strive,
 She now has seven lives.

The cat was once in the car motor,
And she got caught in its rotor.
Even though her moves were like jives,
 She is down to six lives.

When the cat sleeps on the table,
Her mother strangles her with a cable.
So if she doesn't manage to survive,
 The cat has five lives.

When she is chased by bugs and bees,
She runs like pins in her knees.
They give my cat the hives.
 What's left is four lives.

My cat sheds fur all the time,
And the hairs flying around is a crime.
So if it's what she thrives,
 She'll be left with three lives.

The cat plays in the street;
When a car comes, she takes center seat.
If too fast an automobile drives,
She has only two lives.

When the cat is out on the prowl,
The things she sees and does are foul,
And they attack since she isn't a wife.
That's why she has one life.

With so many lives gone,
She has only until dawn;
For there's a limit on time for fun,
Until the number of lives is none.

--Brooke Walden
Muskogee
Muskogee High School

MY FATHER'S HANDS

His hands
Hands that are strong
And gentle
They lift me up
And twirl me 'round
Like a ballerina.

I feel safe and warm
In his big
Rough, worn hands

Hands that carefully
Painstakingly
Build
A doll house for me.

A cradle
For a tired doll
And a pop gun
For my brothers
Came from
His hands.

--Rachel Scheer
Edmond
Cimarron Middle School

REALITY SEARCH

I find reality
with a pen in my hand,
like an instrument that
helps me feel what I fear.

I find reality
and I write what I cannot say.
I run from assignments,
from having to do it right
because I write
what you want to read.

I find reality
on nights like tonight,
when words run
through my head and come
together as they flow
through my fingertips.

When I find reality
I will write for you,
for me.
My writing is a part of me,
a collaboration of thoughts
and feelings.

I cling to my reality.
always in fear of showing
it, sharing it.
I find reality
as my pen moves
without my knowledge
and my heart reads
what I write.

--Julie Holliday
Oklahoma City
John Marshall High School

DADDY'S LITTLE GIRL

Moonlight flows like a stream
into my fiery eyes. He had lied.
He said he's always be there, he said
he'd protect me. He failed
to do any of this. Whenever
I need him, he runs and hides.
Why? Doesn't he care about me anymore?
We drift apart as I grow older. I thought
it was just a temporary feeling. It would pass.

I guess it wasn't, 'cause Daddy's
little girl finds herself crying alone at night.
Shy and reluctant around him, as he is around her.
Does it have to be this way?
Daddy, I long to feel your embrace once more,
make you proud of me again.
I haven't changed, Father. Only grown older.
Surround me with love and security,
fill me with understanding and care.

Our once strong relationship
has been hidden, but not forgotten.
Help me find this lost love.
I know if an effort were made
our love could blossom once more.
Daddy, you created me, lead me
the way you used to.
I am not ready to let go.
Love me, Daddy, make me laugh.

--Brooke Osburn
Houston, Texas
Atascocita High School

METAMORPHOSIS II

I, for one, have laboured hours
giving birth to masterpieces,
filing form rejection slips,
and searching for my final copies
only to discover them behind a warm TV.

Seems as if they metamorphose
into needs of those who hold them:

In my pain I create outlets
through great stacks of dirty dishes,
over piles of musty clothes; then
my husband turns them over,
drawing plays to win a game.

The baby uses them to wipe
a guilty shoe that "got in mud"
and when it dries, the adolescent
forms a plane "dynamically perfected,"
dowerly observes its maiden nosedive
at the tube.

Sometimes...all too seldom...I will find
it lives again beside my flower
child's guitar, taking root and growing
into some symbolic needs-fulfillment.

Then I know no one on earth can pay me
what my poem's worth.

--Barbara Dell Wade
Wagoner

SPIRIT SISTER

for MB

You are at one
with the wind and the rain,
with the hills and
the flowing rivers.
All growing things
respond to your touch.

I have felt the power
of your hands that create
glazed earthen vessels
from which you pour libations
to the mother earth.

Though miles now
separate us,
I feel your presence.
Your spirit and mine
connecting with the universe.

--Mary Menges Myers
Oklahoma City

TRANSCIENT

In the empty corners,
Dust-balls lie crimped
Against the streaked wooden floor,
Hidden until now
By the rag-tag, bob-tail furniture;
Collections of a lifetime.

The walls stare blankly back;
Pale squares where the pictures hung,
The blotchy hide
Of some extinct beast.

Echoes form and bounce
From the abandoned rooms;
hints of laughter,
Faint sounds of old arguments
Flow through the musty air.

The last cardboard box
Has been carried out;
The cobwebs settle in the quiet
Of our retreat.

--J. Leigh Perry
Moore

PERFECTIONIST

She cuts exact squares
and triangles that fit to the sixteenth of an inch
from fabrics neatly stacked
according to color, print, shape.
Now she stitches quarter-inch seams
to form geometric patterns,
creates order from chaos,
quilts from bags of scraps.

--Sharon E. Martin
Cushing

THE OLD TRACKER

She rode into the kitchen,
dismounted,
and checked the ashes:
according to the fizz left
in his
uncapped Dr. Pepper.
"The Kid" had camped around 4:25.

--Barbara Dell Wade
Wagoner

MOTHER LOAD

for Terry Crescenzo

Melissa says that she is
a star,
that her dad is the moon
and I, the sun.

Down the stairs, in the basement
where the cat curls on the Whirlpool,
I fold warm laundry, sweet as the sun
that softened the roof on wash day.

Up again, after I Wisk and Shout
at persistent stains,
I work on lines unlike those
strung above tar beach,

the never ending ropes you neatly dressed
with wet, bleached cotton,
as I danced around spinnaker linens,
weaving counterpoint with the five story wind.

When we returned to those stenciled walls,
down the stairs to our walk-up,
where did you go between those heavy loads,
your empty basket and clothes pins on the chair?

Was there a planet you wanted to be,
besides the one Father and Grandma had in mind?
Let us go to the roof and take Melissa with us.
We still have time to give the galaxy your name.

--Mary Crescenzo Simons
Tulsa

ON THE EDGE OF TOWN

for David

I drove by your house the other day,
distracted by the new color,
the same hue of my rooms.
Drawn to all the autos
in back and out front,
the flag in the wind,
the mailbox script,
I thought about how different
your life has been from mine,
how there is a tranquility in lawn chairs
partnered on a porch,
their faded webbing
somehow comfortable in the sun.
You are not the classic drifter,
nor I, the model mom.
To reduce us to this
is to declare us strangers.
Does she know she bore a muse
in the winter of her life,
a potion for a poet
with ingredients from her bowl?
She must know you've never loved
anyone like me
and surely in your lifetime
never will again.
But that doesn't mean you'll join me,
all the more reason you won't.
I know I come
from across the tracks
and being a clerk/domestic
has never been my goal.

I'm not sure where the toothpicks go
when one layers out a cake,
but I understand what birth is,
I have a child of six.
Can you tell her what we share
has nothing to do with sit-coms
or even soaps in the afternoon?
Does she know we've kissed the night,
touching comets with our eyes?
When the mailbox fills with letters
with no return address
or the phone rings in deep darkness
does she worry that she'll lose you?
--it shall never be to me.
As I drive away, she waves
with sun in her hand.
Is this where you will live
when the family is gone?
With your cars and kids,
and the chair by the door?
When the sun casts its shadow,
will you wish it was different
and remember today?

--Mary Crescenzo Simons
Tulsa

AND MEADOWLARKS, AMEN

Flower-trees,
redbuds and dogwoods,
praise again
and fields of clover
leaf our trinities.
Tulip cups run over.
Drifts of sweet smoke lift
from censors lilacs swing.
April shouts
earth's great alleluia.
Meadows sing hosannahs
and meadowlarks, amen.

--Katherine Privett
Pawnee

Once in awhile
I stop to smile
And grin a big wide grin
To see the world
Thru which I hurl
My senses take it in

And once again
I take my pen
And write a few more lines
Of things I feel
And thoughts to steal
Myself a new design

--Marsha Greiner
Oklahoma City

FORMAL DINNER

Red napkins folded, erect
on crisp white, crystal,
silver shining, food
embellished with almond,
pimento, mushroom,
color to punctuate
our festive talk, words
measured to fill the room,
the minutes before
the program begins,
the vacuum screwed open,
tin key on track.

--Carol Hamilton
Midwest City

OUR WORLD

I said a bowl.
You said a ball.
As we lay side by side that day
we hung our heads off of
deep brown rocks---
planted by the lake
with sail boats
passing in their
soft racing way---
to look at the world
in an upside down manner.

We found we liked
the world that way.
It was new and bright
with a roundness we
felt a part of.
I called a bowl.
You called a ball.
As we lay side by side that day.

--Carole Gossett
Yukon

THE FISH

Major to minor the flesh,
Your iridescent trail
Slides through coral,
Pink and silver and silent
In sunlight pooled up
In shafts to spear
Your watery world
Which to me seems gloomy.
Those pillars of color
Hold up the roof of the sea
And I cannot
Walk on water,
Nor can you until Orpheus
Lifts you and your turn tail,
Lilt on surface,
Your bubble colors
Singing every modal
Reverence.

--Carol Hamilton
Midwest City

UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF A SMALL TOWN

Brown and lazy, the saline river defines
The boundaries between this town and its neighbors,
Just as prowess on the football field
Or wrestling mat marks male social boundaries.

High school's where the hierarchy begins.
The girls have yet to come into their own.
They are known by father and/or friends
And must follow their mothers' steps to importance.

Thus, the important women in this town
Aren't the bright ones who succeed.
Status goes, rather, to the wives
Of important men. Convention demands

She have a fur, no matter its age or hers,
That she be dressed in latest nondescript,
And frequently lunch at the country club with friends.
To be thin and pretty helps, but it isn't required.

If country club is showcase for the wife,
To make an appearance at the coffee shop downtown
Is de rigueur for the important spouse,
Driving up, no matter how short the distance.

For how else can a man be judged, but
By the pickup he drives? In this small town
The choice of beds is at least as important as
A man's profession. The shine on his truck,

Not the tilt of a brim, tells his fortune.
But it's the sharing of jokes, a bit off-color,
That brands a man as part of the fraternity,
As important as the women's gossip about an absent wife.

--Sharon E. Martin
Cushing

S I L E N T T A L K

It's not a laugh or a word;
It's the white whisperings of silence.
And securing the blanket down,
Long green fingers so firm and gentle
Connect top to bottom.

And those silent words fall gently
To my hair, my lips, my hands--
And we share white feelings,
One to one to another--
And no two are alike.

Then the silence slows to stand.
I watch
As the fingers reach out and stroke my soul.
A connection's made and we are one,
And our powder world smiles blue and bright.

--Crickett Goodsell
Oklahoma City

IN THE BLUE-UNDER SONG

Stripping the dirt,
I fall into a wet blue of sunny pools
That gloss and kiss the smooth stones
perfectly tuned to the ceaseless flow
Of directionless melody.

The pools thread me in their foamy weave,
Pulling me under with quiet groans,
Where my breath is caught in whirling tunes
of sweet control.
I reach a hand to grip the blue
And my fingers tremble at the touch
Of new familiarity that ferries me
through flowing dreams.

And I could fight to shallow depths
Where with callous custom I might stand
and drink the air.
But such a bitter cup would drown me
In the thick of human ferment.

And so I stretch to sip the stream
And add a fourth to square my three
As my soul bathes in waters too easy
For the concrete toils of geometric trends.

Till I drown to life.

And then I wake, as silently
The stream flows on--

Invisible,

Incomplete--

Wearily I uncurl myself from blue sleep
And stand dripping silver drops of memory.
The air dries me to the sudden chill,
And I drag my feet to stand on banks

of solid motion.

Till I hear a pool of deeper blue and slip--

Under a song.

--Crickett Goodsell
Oklahoma City

A PARODY OF ME,
FOR SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T KNOW

I am a Jewish girl,
as far as that takes me.
Which is far from breathing in oceans of gas and white fire
and the stars are my hats, not my armcuffs.
I am cinnamon hair and M and M eyes
melted in olive-oil skin,
or a study in camouflage and earthtones.
I'm often told I look angry but I don't see it.
Disbeliever,
stocky and insulated,
you can call me that one of iniquity
'cause I've decided not to answer you
or blacken my brows.
I am not sugar and spice, you see,
devoid of skin dishes of peaches and cream
and softly sweating pink tongues.
Instead, I blanket my body
with cool green grass,
pumping my head tree-top high
with air-music--
I was born from this, you see, like a popcorn kernel,
golden-smooth.
So, disbeliever, wonder no longer.

--Ruth Tobias
Norman

MINDBURST

Thoughts
images
ideas
trickle down narrow neurons
gather speed, power
feed with pulsing tributaries of emotion,
flow faster
pour over outcroppings of
jagged insecurities
form
tiny
waterfalls
of frothy reactions that
churn pools beneath them
lessen
lose impact
in the bigger, broader current
ever gathering power momentum
the flood surges and roars to
the edge of the brain
explodes in a powerful mindburst
of rainbow-hued visions
that pour over the mind's edge in
a
waterfall
of words
to form
a poem

--Ruth Dishman
Lawton

FOR OUR YOUNGER READERS

(EDITORS' NOTE: The following poems are the winners in a poetry contest at St. Joseph's Elementary School in Fayetteville, Arkansas. The fourth graders are taught by Catherine M. Donnell.)

TALKING LEAVES

Have you heard leaves clammering,
bickering, gossiping, chattering, or whispering?

When Fall's notebook falls open they are
the scratchy messages of winter's coming.

Camouflaged little tattletales flying
through the sky,
Shady little characters rattled
by the wind,

Escaping into the breeze.

My jawboning friends.

--Marlie McGovern
Fayetteville, AR

LEAVES

The leaves of Arkansas are nice,
like the streams of paradise.
The crispy sound of leaves clattering together
as the wind blows through them,
like pouring milk on Rice Krispies in the morning.
The brown colored leaves seem that winter is already here,
like the color of a deer,
so strong a stance and clean as a cloud.
Yes, leaves are very pretty,
So graceful as they fall to the ground.
Yet people don't think they are pretty at all.
Leaves can be dancers in the air.
No, not a single person can compare.

--Taj Johnson
Fayetteville, AR

BRANDON'S POEM

There is a shadow that stands by me,
every time I move, it is something to see.
When I squat down it gets small
and when I stand up, it gets tall.
It looks like a monster when I stand by a wall.

Although it's dark and quiet
and sometimes lurks behind,
a best friend to me, it would only be;
Because it's always mine.

--Brandon Wilson
Fayetteville, AR

DREAMING

As I look out the window
I stare at the moon
Lost in my thoughts,
Yet aware of the world.
Not knowing, not hearing
Feeling as if I'm in my own
Cage. I'm all alone
In myself as
The Moon disappears in the
Black clouds. I feel not
Aware of the coming--

--Brooke Osburn
Houston, Texas
Atascocita High School

THE SONG OF A BIRD

Perched on my branch not falling,
yet not steady. Swaying to the
beat of the leaves. Yet in different
time. Magically the wind changes
time changes beat
to match the song of the bird.

--Brooke Osburn
Houston, Texas
Atascocita High School



M 001 109 405

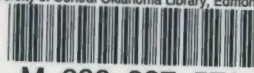
Red Dirt Press, Inc., a women-owned and women-operated publishing company, is seeking manuscripts by women writers. Novels, volumes of poetry and books of short stories will be accepted. Send your typed, double-spaced (except for poetry) manuscripts for consideration, along with a SASE, to Manuscripts, Red Dirt Press, Inc., P.O. Box 60693, Oklahoma City, OK 73146.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES: May 15 for Summer issue; August 15 for Fall issue; November 15 for Winter issue.

SUBMISSION POLICY: **PIECEWORK** accepts submissions of poetry by women, particularly from Oklahoma and the south central region. Payment is in one contributor's copy, with Red Dirt Press, Inc., retaining first rights only. Simultaneous submissions are acceptable, but please inform us of this. Submissions should be typed and accompanied by a brief biographical statement of the poet and a SASE. We will report within three months.

PIECEWORK is also accepting submissions of art work and photographs, especially seasonal to be used as covers for the quarterlies. Send black and white photographs or black ink line drawings to **PIECEWORK**, Red Dirt Press, Inc., P.O. Box 60693, Oklahoma City, OK 73146, by the submission dates listed above. Payment is in one contributor's copy. Please enclose a SASE.

2014.001.005WRC



M 000 997 571

PIECEWORK

SPRING 1988

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 3

"I salute **PIECEWORK** for publishing so many fine women poets in the region. So many new voices! It is one more proof that the best writers these days appear in the little magazines. Bravo to the editors and to the poets!"

May Sarton



\$12 per year
\$4 single issue

Red Dirt Press, Inc., P.O. Box 60693, Oklahoma City, OK 73146