

on its side it lies, broken, unspoken,  
a token to health.

He does not know what to do in his  
loneliness, is a fan of Onan but  
worries about his spine (in high school  
he saw a boy collapse. The Coach  
discussed the crime and he stared at  
his guilty palm.)

He is not used to courting in the city,  
so he goes to pigeon-parks and birds  
drop on his knee while girls laugh at  
his brogans. Women snub him, beg off  
dates to wash their levis or spoon  
him in the halls but save it for a  
midnight crooner.

Not odd enough to be queer, not queer  
enough to be gay, he fights the freeways in  
the double dark. Spurned in the land of  
the eunuchs there is still no hope for him  
in Stallion Alley. What is there to do but  
write home:

Dear Ma,

This is some place. Lots of girls are after  
me here, but don't you worry about me this  
time! Say, you'd really like it out here.  
All the free orange juice you can drink!! I  
think I saw Duke Wayne in Hollywood, Ma, but  
he was wearing loafers. Ha. Ha. Must close for  
now as I have a lot to do.

Love, Your Son

XXXXXX

### Love Story

Truly Lovely's boyfriend comes tonight. Within  
the hour, to be timely. Assuming a pose she finds  
sectionally attractive, she weights on the bunk, a  
little heavy in the can.

Suddenly in the lightness it is he, the literary  
leader  
of unpaginated existence, Bruce Proust, Latin Lover.  
"Brucae," she cries in accents sweet and learned.

"America est pulchra, baby," Bruce rejoins her.  
"Amoo," she says, milking her accent for all it's worth.  
"Amass, amat," he answers. "What is there but heaps of it and a place to go down for the count?"

Unworthy I am, she ponders, of a mind like that. And up she jumps to elude Bruce's pentultimate Latin smile: cha-chagrin.

#### A U T H O R ' S   N O T E S   . . . .

I'm 27, and live in Pasadena. I'd like to think that I'm a good horse-player. I went to the Univ. of Ill. for my B.A. and to the Univ. of Ariz. for my M.A. I think I wrote my first poem at about age 24 or so, and in fact that first one just got picked up by Ting (a new mag fm. Venice, Calif -- first issue due in Jan. of '68). After that I didn't write anything for a while and then started writing crazy word things like John Lennon's. Nobody wanted them, so I quit for a while again. Then about a year ago I started writing quite a lot and just about Christmas time in 1966, Leon Spiro from the Sausalito-Belvedere Gazette picked up and published one of them. My other 30 or so acceptances have all come within 1967. I haven't been writing a whole lot lately. I don't know why I write at all, but I know it makes me nervous if I don't. I don't have any particular habits that are interesting and I'm not sure who influences me. I think Gerry Locklin, a poet who lives in Long Beach, is responsible for a lot of my energy. We met in Arizona when he was being published and I didn't know what being published was. We drink together and talk about everything but the life-of-the-artist bullshit and somehow we shore each other up. We both have good women to take care of us, too. I live in Pasadena and am a sort of recluse.

Poems published: Sausalito-Belvedere Gazette (1), Occident (1), and Western Humanities Review (1).  
Poems pending publication: Abyss (1), Bay Podium (2), Grande Ronde Review (3), Lung Socket, an anthology (1), Maelstrom (2), Ting (10), Trace (2), and, yes, Wormwood (10 - center section booklet).

-- Ronald B. Koertge

Pasadena, California