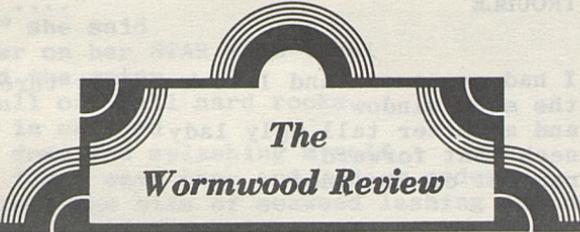


**WR:**







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LOUIS-FERDINAND DESTOUCHES

I have this photo of Céline.  
he is standing there  
in an overcoat.  
sometimes when things get  
more than unpleasant for  
me  
I look at Céline  
standing there  
looking the way he  
looks  
and then it doesn't  
seem so bad.

I suppose  
the day or night  
will arrive  
when the photo of Céline  
will no longer work  
for me.

that will be all right.  
one man can't be expected  
to justify hell  
forever.

-- Charles Bukowski

## TROUBLE

I had my camera and I took a shot through  
the shop window  
and a rather tall ugly lady  
neck bent forward  
ran out of the shop.

"what are you doing?"  
she asked,  
"what did you photograph?"

"I photographed the naked manikin,"  
I told her.

"I'd rather you didn't take any more  
photos," she said.

"all right," I said and I walked down  
the street with my camera  
with her staring after me.

I felt guilty and upset even though  
I had done nothing really  
improper.  
it usually happened to me  
at least once a day.

I turned, dropped to one knee  
focused, and photographed her.  
she waved her arms and screamed  
and I shot her again.

the trouble with these people is  
that their cities have never been  
bombed and their mothers have never  
been told to shut up.

## GETTING MY MONEY'S WORTH

the water was cold and filled with broken seaweed  
it looked strangely like little bits of broken shit  
and nobody went into the water  
and I told her,  
"I'm going in. we drove one hundred and seventy miles  
to get here and we are paying \$30 a night for a motel room  
with a shower stall built for people 4 feet tall. I'm

going in ...."  
"not me," she said.  
I left her on her STAR WARS towel  
I entered the water  
it was full of small hard rocks  
I walked in chilled  
reaching down and splashing myself.  
then the first wave came and I dove under  
I could feel the bits of seaweed lashing against me  
it had been a great hurricane  
the best of the year  
as I stood up, an unbroken mass of seaweed wound  
about me.  
I broke from the tendrils  
turned and waved to her on the shore  
beckoning --  
come on in, chickenshit ...  
I turned in time to dive under the new  
breaker  
then I swam for ten or fifteen yards  
parallel to the shore.  
I turned again and waved her in --  
come on, show some guts!  
she waved me off --  
go on, be an asshole! not me!  
I leaped high  
breaking through and over the next wave.  
Del Mar was a fine place  
even though the racetrack was unlucky for me.  
as I settled down upon the ocean bottom  
my left foot stepped upon something soft  
which appeared to be living matter.  
I leaped away  
falling backwards into the water  
and the next wave passed over me.  
I rolled over and was carried toward the shore.  
I got up and walked through the broken seaweed  
pulling my trunks up.  
I walked over the rocks and onto the shore  
then up on the sand.  
"you didn't stay very long," she said.  
"I stepped on something out there, it seemed  
alive. I got the fuck out."  
"dry off and lay down," she said.  
"I'm going to shower. I've got to make the first  
race."  
"o.k.," she said, "I'll see you about the 5th.  
I want to get some sun."

I walked back to the motel and got under the  
4-foot shower. what had I stepped on? a dead  
fish? an eel?

I got out and dried off, selected my short-sleeved blue shirt  
tan pants  
loafers ...  
green bikini underwear ...

the good life of the California sportsman.

## SLAUGHTER

the first seven rows were roped off for The Counsellors of Exceptional Children, the Airport Group, and the German Society.

it was a Saturday at the track and they were all talking at once, standing up, sitting down, waving, laughing.

when the winner of the first race came by, most of them leaped up and down screaming and some of them hugged each other.

it was difficult to believe that they all had the same winner.

I tried to pick the Exceptional Children people from the Airport people and the German people but they all looked very much alike, and as each race went by they became quieter and quieter, and some of them vanished.

by the last race only about one-ninth of them remained and they looked very tired and very sad and said nothing. they had learned something: losing one's money was very much like death and although the horses were very beautiful, it was easier being with the German people or with the Exceptional Children and to fly about the country at reduced rates.

the racetrack was finally nothing to jump up and down about and to scream and hug each other about. it got dark and it got cold and the wind came off the Sierra Madres, and as they put them into the gate for the last race, even a winner couldn't cure them now: the jocks hustle from the gate in various colors as the machines have shut down, taking the last bite, freezing the odds forever.

the favorites don't win enough  
the longshots don't win enough  
the medium prices don't win enough

next Saturday they'll bring in 3 new groups  
and rope them off.

THOSE

they sit down  
batten down  
talk  
move their arms  
they have nothing to  
do  
and since they have  
nothing to do  
they'd prefer to do it  
around you

I am astonished at the  
many people with  
nothing to do  
but batten down  
talk  
move their arms

they knock on doors  
like people with  
nothing to do

and when they talk  
their desperation is  
without agony  
it's more like a nervous  
affliction with  
nothing to do

sometimes I simply tell them  
to leave  
and they do  
and then I feel guilty  
as if I had misinterpreted  
their mission  
I feel that I have offended  
them

not so  
they return  
they always return  
each and every one of them  
they sit down

batten down  
talk  
move their arms

but I know  
that I am not the only one  
who suffers them

they go from one to another  
and when they go to another  
I get the one who has been to  
another  
and  
they sit down  
batten down  
talk  
move their arms.

-- Charles Bukowski

San Pedro CA

#### BAIT SHOP POSTCARD

Stopping to get worms at the bait shop on the way up, Dad showed him the funniest postcard that had some dumb lady trying to balance in a canoe with its bow lurching toward the camera because her rod was bent down to where the line was trying to reach right under the canoe's hull, practically through her legs, toward the other side, almost flipping the boat, over to where she couldn't see but the hook was snagged onto a fish with a head the size of a bathtub whose gaping, finely-toothed jaw was surging up from the lake about to take a giant chomp from her unsuspecting but sticking way, way out rear end.

"Just like your mom," Dad chuckled.

"What is?"

"Butt stuck way out."

"Oh," Tim said. "Is that fish real?"

But Dad pushed him to get back to the car because Mom was waiting.

## PLAYING DEAD

There was the time Todd 'shot' him and Tim had doubled up, groaning and thrashing, finally going limp, and with all their tickling and nudging they still couldn't get it to seem like he was breathing. Tim was tugged, face down, all the way to the creek. They held his head under -- for what was to him a delicious moment he hung there, mouth half filling with water, all eyes on his limpness -- finally he came out of it like a dog whose paw had been stepped on, the sixguns of his fingers blazing in all directions. The other four collapsed obediently in the water, floating face down for as long as they could. That day Tim had called the shots.

## RAPE

Tim perched under the bridge waiting to ambush the girls. From his girder he could see Todd and those guys. They were wading around looking for carp still. They'd pick out spots where some tree falling had caved the bank in, there would be a pool where the roots had come out, and the guys would surround it, some above on the bank and some in the water. Todd would sneak up first since the spear his dad got him had a blade on the end; he would sight along its shaft into the water and plunge the spear straight to the bottom; if it touched something he'd squeal; by then, though, they'd all be ramming their sticks down and hollering; rocks and mud would be breaking loose and drifting and streaking into the current; and Tim, above, would have his eyes on the brown stain as it moved along and blended in with the stream.

So far the guys hadn't speared a thing. John wanted them to come up with a huge, ugly, gasping, bulging carp they could heave to the bank so everyone could slash at it, let the bastard bleed and flop on the dirt until even they had a hard time looking at the remainders, then when the girls came, corner one of the homeliest and try shoving the thing down her dress. The whole idea was so gross nobody would have dared object. But so far they didn't have a fish.

-- Bill Marsh

Minneapolis MN

## DR. PEPPER

It was my idea to race. Jerry said, "Sure. Loser buys the Dr. Pepper." I stayed with him for a hundred yards. Then he pulled away. He got smaller and smaller. When he hit the hard road, I quit. Walked on in. He was already sitting on a stool with half a Dr. Pepper. When I reached for mine, it was a Pepsi. Sam said, "Sorry. We're all out of Dr. Pepper."

## CHARLES

Charles was very interested in chemistry. He had a lot of beakers and chemicals and test-tubes in his basement. On Saturday mornings, he'd do experiments. I'd go over and watch. He'd pour, mix and stir. I'd look at the shimmer of orange and red and yellow. I didn't have a clue to what he was doing. I went every Saturday.

## THE MOVIE

When I was eight, a girl named Amanda lived across the street. One Saturday we decided we wanted to go to the movies. I wanted to see Abbott and Costello. She wanted to see Astaire. We couldn't decide, so we flipped a coin. I won.

During Abbott and Costello's  
antics, she laughed and  
loved it, while I sulked  
down in my seat, guilty we  
hadn't gone to see Astaire.

#### THE BIGGEST KID

Barry was the biggest  
kid on our block. He  
never spoke to me. But  
one Tuesday after school,  
he came up to me with  
Jerry and Will. "I hear  
you got a Mickey Mantle."  
"Well, I don't know." "Oh,  
c'mon. Let's see the Mickey  
Mantle." "Well." "I'll  
give you a Marv Throneberry  
for it." "Well." I looked  
at Jerry. His eyes were  
hard and shiny as marbles.  
"OK." I handed Barry  
the Mantle. He handed me  
the Throneberry. He never  
spoke to me again.

-- Robert Swanson

Davis CA

#### TO THE POINT

i don't like poetry  
anymore than anyone else does  
it was a bore in school  
& for the most part  
it still is  
the sentimentality is gross  
& after 13 years  
i still don't know a damn thing  
about the technical aspect of it  
the only reason i chose this medium  
is for its merciful brevity

A STAND

There has been a Mr Poe  
found in the gutter

A couple with matching umbrellas  
has once again taken exception

A strident black bird lives  
past his death at 34

The Board likes to stress aggression  
it's always a third down situation

A Mr Swift was caught  
eating his own waste

Mushroom clouds & metal cocks flourish  
as symbols of personal evasion

A Mr Barrymore grew very tired  
& left it to self-parody

Devotion & Discipline were stressed  
it was a closed family

A Mr Bruce was our verbal American Balzac  
censored silenced & safely buried

There is nothing Romantic  
about having a little imagination

-- John Levin

Cambridge MA

white  
hands  
with  
handkerchiefs  
push  
at  
the doors  
of  
city hall

a soul  
of discreet-  
ness  
he suggests  
brucine  
in the  
evening  
wine

Hebron  
Nebraska  
leaving  
highway 81  
tires hum  
bricked  
streets

-- M. K. Book

Fairbury NE

## A NATURAL

Just as soon as I get  
a steel pin in my shoulder,  
and my teeth straightened,  
some contact lenses fitted,  
and my nose fixed  
I'm going to start capitalizing  
on my natural superiority

DARLING,

If you should ever decide to leave me  
I request that you give me two weeks notice  
so that I might have sufficient time  
to find a suitable replacement.

## MY MUSTACHE

I have a mustache.  
Not much of one though.  
Fact is,  
it's not much thicker  
than those I've seen on some  
Italian girls.

I get kidded about it  
all the time.  
Like I said,  
it's not the greatest.

I met a girl last summer,  
who was on vacation  
from some Greek island.

She had one that  
absolutely  
put mine to  
shame.

-- Eric Grow

Brea CA

## GIRLS WITH OLDER BROTHERS

You are waiting in the living room when he comes in with a sandwich as big as your French book. His name is Chico, he tattoos himself and has hit a teacher. "Whachuwant." "I, uh, want Wilma." Oh, God, he's never heard of a harmless ambiguous verb. Suddenly her folks come in, walking on their hind legs for a change. Jesus, not only can your dad not beat up her dad, he couldn't go two rounds with her mother. Chico says, "He wants our Wilma." You rise and back into the shelf holding Saint Bonzo, patron of the house. Chico is helping Dad make a fist when Wilma comes down and you flee together knowing that soon you may die from the beauty of her underwear but there is a 50-50 chance of going to Heaven, a place Chico could never find you in a million years.

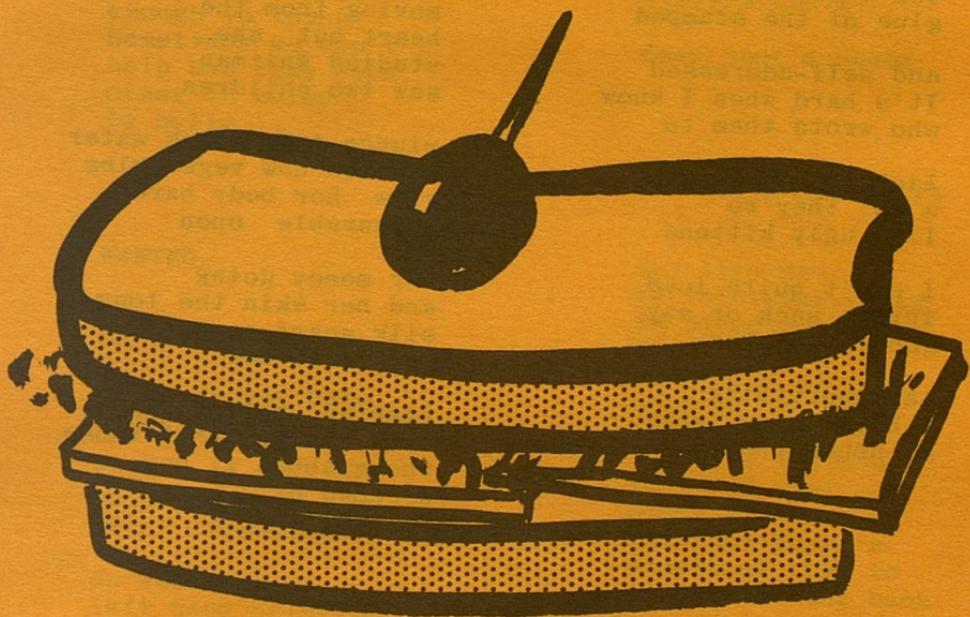
## YOU CAN NEVER TELL

Without a belt, you just don't feel dressed, but when you look in the closet the only one there smells. You put it on anyway and go for a brisk walk in the open air. "Smelly belt! Smelly belt!!" chant some Montessori children and the beautiful teacher in sandals holds her nose and laughs. You hope for better luck at the party but the stuck-up typist mumbles that there must be something rotten in the dip and staggers off. This bodes ill for the one you are really interested in, that dish in the long coat, but guys who drift over there soon turn away pale with rejection. So you're in the bathroom determined to make a good impression and just about to lather up from buckle to tip when she bursts in shouting "Dream Lover" and throws open her coat to reveal a pair of the skimpiest panties you ever saw held up by suspenders that stink to high heaven.

-- Ronald Koertge

South Pasadena CA

# SANDWICH



**lyn lifshin :**

EDITING POEMS FOR THE ANTHOLOGY

They fall against my  
house like cats lost  
in a bad storm wind

shoves them toward my  
bed and I reach out  
in the middle of the

night All of them  
are starved love me  
I half expect acid

if I taste them and  
who knows what on the  
glue of the stamped

and self-addressed  
It's hard when I know  
who wrote them to

lick the glue with  
a no: they're  
like ugly kittens

I can't quite load  
into a sack or say  
goodby to They

eat everything  
I have claw make  
my house theirs

ISADORA DUNCAN

If I could tell you  
what I mean I  
wouldn't have  
to dance

moving from the  
heart out she  
studied Whitman  
saw two children

plunge into black water  
studied how vegetables  
grow her body bared  
vulnerable open

her money going  
and her skin the long  
silk scarf caught  
her held her

tighter pulled her  
into a swirl that those  
who grabbed at her  
dreamed of

THERE IS NO SWEARING

in an Indian language  
the worst saying they have  
is you are a dog

and you bite  
the second worst

THE KOERTGE-LIFSHIN-LOCKLIN SANDWICH

: after a short note from Gerry Locklin  
and with one image stolen from him

It sounds like a  
ménage à trois  
it sounds delicious  
that we've all been  
together and we have  
on the sheets of  
how many magazine  
pages locked in  
position like  
trains back to  
back often close  
enough to touch  
Sometimes we can't  
help but take each  
other in belly  
to belly

DEER

The death of one  
feeds many coyotes  
  
the way people seem  
starved for a  
  
dead poet's poems

PAVAROTTI AND MEHTA

WANTED

Rance Lee Via

alias Johnny Dale  
Lanier bullet

scar ring finger  
bullet scar left  
wrist freckles

on shoulder  
left hand crippled  
from guns

may have a  
pony tail

may wear  
women's clothes

Not like men  
so thin everything  
is pared away  
but men with  
something you can  
hold on to who  
look as if they  
like the taste of  
food of what  
gives pleasure  
and that there's  
enough of them to  
give something back

THE JOURNAL

Like a tattoo done  
on your thigh at  
18 so when you're  
80 a piece of them  
can be touched

THE MAN WHO IS MARRIED TO SIAMESE TWINS JOINED AT THE SKULL

In our huge bed  
in an airview we  
look like a three  
pointed flower  
I rub my wife's  
neck with well  
trained fingers  
it's always sore  
from leaning over  
in chairs on trains  
walking thru the  
aisles of the  
A & P but  
we're happy the  
three of us Her  
sister shuts us out  
when I get to  
rutting loud in her  
then we all sing  
oh where oh where  
has my little  
dog gone in the  
shower and I  
bring them both  
hot chocolate  
We can lie on our  
backs with the  
tv swinging  
from the ceiling  
and laugh at the  
news Her sister  
threatens to  
run off and I kiss  
her soundly They  
think the same  
jokes are funny  
Sometimes when my  
wife is asleep I talk  
to her sister she  
can't imagine  
what it would be  
like to be separated  
have half of her  
self sliced  
away

FUZZ FROM MY BATHROBE

like pieces of me  
that I don't want  
anyone to see that  
collect in the

most obvious places  
The robe's one flaw  
one I thought I  
could teach it to

change signs that  
the robe owns the  
place like a cat  
spraying or like

pieces of hair  
that clot near  
the sink finger  
nail clippings

come a baby tooth  
in a bottle  
that was part of you  
reminding you

nothing stays

TUNNEL VISION MADONNA

won't turn around

MARRIAGE IS LIKE COLLECTING STAMPS -- SCOTTY WOOLF

You start off and then  
you keep looking for  
something rare trade  
off one for a more  
beautiful one you  
keep looking for the  
rare Ecuadorian blue  
Here are all the wed  
ding gowns they soak  
you now 35 dollars  
for blood tests You  
figure there's some  
thing better waiting  
up the line I can't  
remember number 6 I  
had a good divorce I  
keep files like stamps  
glued into place  
Kathy was 12 then I re  
remarried Sherri I  
think Paulette was  
14 When I got to 65  
I reached immunity I  
don't have to support  
them anymore social  
security and welfare  
It's like a game of  
chess Scott's tissue  
in the bathroom  
Christmas cards from  
President Johnson I  
was on the Church  
of the Air 17 was  
Ester she called me  
money and I called  
her honey Every  
night the angels come  
show me the way  
2 I married under a  
nother name when I  
was a fugitive from  
justice I'll marry  
the 21st a 17 year  
old angel on Ground  
Hog Day pinch me  
am I dreaming

THE CANDIDATE

is always on  
like a radio  
under your skin  
you can't turn  
off or switch  
stations bleating  
when you try to  
sleep drowning

out summer some  
one is selling  
and telling you  
lies some

one wants you  
to want him the  
candidate is  
that radio

plastic blood  
less with hard  
edges that could  
bruise you if

you bring it  
to your bed and  
he won't answer  
questions either

OVER REACTING MADONNA

bruises when some  
one comes into  
the room too fast

WITH ONE LOVE IT WAS THINGS THAT GROW THAT FLOWER  
UP LIKE CREAM IN THOSE OLD GLASS

bottles that I'll remember  
another by things we'd eat  
or didn't and I'm not the only  
one who'll remember him that  
way I saw letters from several  
he chewed and digested some  
times he'd eat to the point  
of pain Now I'm good with  
my teeth and tongue but I could  
never keep up with him those

huge bowls of antipasto in  
Buffalo when he didn't want to  
look up from his plate cannoles  
in Toledo cock sized stuffed  
with the sweetest cream huge bloody  
marys when I missed my plane  
on purpose to stay and eat  
praline ice cream lie  
on the blue spread he fed  
me margaritas his mouth still  
full of her black frizzy hair

chicken livers borscht in bed  
ropes of spaghetti to pull  
me in from the east until  
Chicago where there was no  
thing to eat he sneaked out  
for secret brunches and  
came back drunk while I  
scraped the filling from  
stale vanilla and strawberry  
waffle wafers knowing there  
was nothing there I could swallow

ONE STOP SHOP CONVENIENCE MADONNA

She's open any  
time of the night  
lets you in gets  
you out in minutes  
No frills but she  
has what you need

UNASSESSED MADONNA

becomes more expensive  
knowing her true value

LIKE DOGS LEFT OUT NEAR THE CRUMBLING ADOBES

old dogs people  
have dumped left  
out in the country  
The people soothe  
their minds with  
thoughts that the  
old dogs might  
catch a chicken  
and live My  
husband and I  
would walk around  
sunset the adobe  
rose in the last  
light rose and  
cantaloupe sand  
with the dogs  
howling the  
ones that still  
could My husband  
would put his  
arm around me  
tight tighter  
I don't know how  
people could be  
so cruel he said  
how heartless I  
was 30 then my  
hair smelled of  
piñon and I thot  
I'd gotten over  
things I was afraid  
of 20 years later  
and I could be  
those dogs I  
don't know where  
my next meal will  
come from a  
bandoned like  
those old sick  
dogs my junior  
league card in  
my wallet next  
to New Mexico  
foodstamps

MAKING POEMS AND MAKING MEN

When you haven't for  
a long time it's  
all you can think a  
bout part of you  
is dressed up and ready  
the other part wants  
to sleep in a daze  
It's scary each  
time you try it's  
a risk you don't  
know if someone  
will want what you've  
got if you're losing  
your technique  
Someone will always  
moan how you should  
take it more slow  
let each matter more  
seem as if it was  
the last one Some  
one else will say  
you tease never  
deliver If you  
don't make either  
you wouldn't have  
to worry about  
the mail or the phone

TODAY, WRITING ANY MORE POEMS

seems like someone  
manufacturing air  
conditioning for  
Alaska coins for a  
trip to the moon

FEBRUARY 7

the dark disease of  
Mt Vesuvius claims  
its 59th victim

A Norse penny is  
found off the  
coast of Maine

it goes to 38 below  
in Devil's Canyon  
North Dakota

blood dissolves in  
the clay near Spook  
Rock Road Photographs

you took of me  
flatten like a fossil  
The light dazes

as glass must have  
when the deer crashed  
thru the A & P

starved for water

#### POETRY READING BENEFIT

There are the ladies  
in navy blue suits  
who leave when some  
one says prick in  
a room where you can  
hear it It's 45°  
and there's cold  
cups of apple juice  
The Indian pulls  
a blanket close a  
round him There is  
always a long haired  
pale thin woman in  
a rose flowered dress  
who pulls her arms  
close around her  
would even under a

90° sun One poet  
listens for lines  
he can use and jots  
them down on a boot  
heel None of the  
poets have watches  
the mike hums and  
buzzes and splats  
like a vest of bees  
a giant stamps on  
There is more pain  
than there is apple  
juice The poet  
who talks about  
splitting wood and  
seeing his breath  
over a desolate  
frozen stream has  
written a thirty one  
part poem about  
this Someone  
listens sniffing  
patchouli for  
something to do She  
writes a dream down  
The poet who is  
building his body  
takes off his  
clothes and reads  
a poem about how  
people prefer  
wrestling matches  
to poetry readings  
and for the first  
time so far the  
audience under  
stands what's said

#### SOMETHING IN ME

like my handwriting  
becoming harder to  
read I don't know  
if it's to make you  
read more closely  
spend more time or  
so you can't

KRISTALLNACHT  
NOVEMBER 9-10 1938

6 in  
the morning the  
whole family in  
the hall in robes  
Vienna a chill moon  
over the courtyard  
where chopped up  
chairs fly thru  
the window as  
troopers singing  
the Merry Widow  
smash glass in the  
synagogue throw  
out pieces of the  
Torah pews Men in  
uniforms clapping  
each other on  
the back as if  
they were at  
a soccer game

THE WAY I WRITE

like a wild haired gypsy  
reaching in snakily dancing  
fast and leaving fast with  
the booty

No little feet bound  
in the Chinese fashion  
I'm barefoot run out  
at night to chase

what glows come back  
with chestnut tree spikes  
like porcupine quills  
all over

limp for days I write like  
a cat who leaps up higher  
than he can go and slams  
into stone goes

into shock paralyzed and  
then in three days hears  
birds on that same roof  
there's nothing that

will stop him from  
springing The way I  
write is like the way I  
read the newspaper

hungrily violently When  
I'm done no one doubts  
that someone else  
read it I

write the way I form the  
words letters like bird  
claws running thru the  
sand of a dream

verbs often slamming  
backwards but going  
uphill across  
the page

not always easy  
to read but worth it  
like odd glyphs on  
a leaf caught in stone

FOR AN ANTHOLOGY ON BEING  
FAT

Send only poems with  
very long fat lines  
nothing Creeley-like  
nothing skinny but  
what's full of  
chocolate and lamb  
chops that hiss  
Greasy pages will  
receive priority  
manuscripts bulging  
from envelopes they  
can't fit in

MEDICAL JOURNAL ADS FOR WOMEN'S TRANQUILIZERS

The woman as chair  
to be used sat on

"You can make her feel  
less anxiety" in large

letters over a woman  
jailed by brooms

With Mellaril she  
can't scream no why

would she want to she's  
a puppet pull her

Give her Vivactil she'll  
be vivacious again

won't make your office  
a merry-go-round of

imagined complaints If  
she's got the new

disease being single  
and 35 and psycho

neurotic just give  
her Valium

I THINK I UNDERSTAND  
A LITTLE OF THAT

At breakfast you  
say the mornings  
are better that  
after the stroke  
you learned to  
paint with your  
left hand but  
words come slow  
it's like wanting  
to say what you  
almost know to  
someone who can't  
quite hear you

THE FORTIES THE FIFTIES

hubba hubba  
pins and ankle  
bracelets brownies  
in my grandmother's  
house those sundays  
with the door closed  
to the den where  
gramp was listening  
to THE SHADOW  
before he'd follow  
me to the Campus  
Theater spying  
on my dates my  
clothes and I'd  
be told what Christian  
boys were after that  
I shouldn't wear my  
hair like a slut  
before cystitis  
vaginitis hepatitis  
before penis and  
all the other things  
that end in is

MUSEE CLUNY

red glove  
only one hole  
in the smallest  
finger the  
color still  
deep red

THINKING ABOUT ANNE SEXTON'S LETTER IN MS

Words like glass  
you see but can't  
touch what's behind  
them Renoir saying  
nothing he did was  
right If I'm not  
trying on clothes  
when I feel those  
wild ups and downs  
I'm writing letters  
7 a day to a friend  
Postcards like wild  
birds like the  
poems spit out pine  
burning too fast  
Words drugs like  
vodka you wrap up  
in flirt make  
love to an audience  
in red pajamas

THE LION TAMER'S WIFE: OR  
THIS IS YOUR LIFE

She is pale from never  
being in direct light  
so the tv cameras  
burn her eyes

One neighbor comes and  
remembers her as a child  
who loved kittens  
not a woman jealous of

cats The woman a priest  
will swear on NBC was  
a virgin untouched  
as the white skin her

husband flashes over  
the belted satin  
pants that hug  
over what she has almost

stopped remembering she  
misses An old woman in

a shawl stuns her like  
a leopard rearing hissing

and the druggist knows  
the pills she takes the  
dose that increases It's  
so long since she's been

touched The white teeth of  
relatives gleam like knives  
A woman who lent her a  
vibrator has flown in from

L.A. dangles the dildo  
for nationwide audiences  
The fat lady tells how she's  
heard her moaning There

are clowns her husband in  
street clothes made up to  
look like a German banker  
telling how he remembers be

ing inside and there are no  
tents to collapse and blur  
cameras no leopards to take  
back the attention she

thought for years she wanted

THE FEELING

like the smaller  
of two Canadian  
fishing boats  
colliding going  
down as fast as  
it takes to write  
this

SECOND DREAM OF FEBRUARY 23 1979

I go into a store where I  
don't even need anything with  
my sister and someone Murry  
I guess and we see a table  
of Eric's relatives  
leaving I'm genuinely  
glad to see them and go  
over All the women  
the aunts who've grown  
so old I can't tell one  
from the other won't talk  
to me Little Eric looks  
as he did at the tv  
studio and buttons his  
coat up I'm stunned  
by how mean they are  
to me as if I was  
the one who'd left  
Eric I go from  
one grey face to an  
other and am rebuffed  
rudely Only Donna who  
is tall and thin and blonde  
as I know she isn't  
comes up to me  
Rascha is wrinkled  
grey and fat her smiles  
aren't for me I feel  
as if an ice shove  
up out of Lake Menona  
has swallowed me

IT WAS LIKE

someone calling to  
say listen I told my  
doctor your symptoms  
and he immediately  
blurted out brain

tumor It was like  
hearing as you slip  
and slide on an ice  
rutted road that a  
Mustang 2 has one

of the highest  
dangerous accident  
rates on a street  
that gets worse  
and worse and

there's no place  
to turn around  
you are  
riding in one

UNEASE

like a hole in  
your sock inside  
boots it takes  
45 minutes to lace  
on a day wind  
blows people off  
cliffs and your  
gloves like two  
mad black birds  
plunge kamikaze  
pilots into the  
Hudson

OH YES

it was like the letter to a  
close friend of how you  
hope her mother is better  
arriving four days  
after she's ash

like an obscene phone  
caller who wakes you up at  
6 AM for twelve sundays  
doesn't call the 13th  
when the trap is  
fresh on the line

## FRAGMENTS OF DOCTORS

The doctor who was very ugly and asked me to take off my clothes, saying he was studying anatomy. Doctor death who had 4 wives die with no visible means of. The doctor who just said take an aspirin when something hurt so much I couldn't sleep. The doctor I imagined I'd marry with his dark eyes and nice family who took me to caves upstate and all the way to New Jersey where I was too shy to ask him to stop so I could pee, too cold to talk when I took the train to Buffalo. The doctor who said most times are safe times as he tried to get inside my crotch. Doctor who died young the doctor who told dirty stories who started something and stopped it like the beginning of this prose poem.

## IT NEVER ENDS IN REAL LIFE THE WAY IT ENDS IN THE MOVIES

so that they ride off  
in a sunset where even  
the cactus looks soft  
and filmy Instead  
she's making sandwiches

from spoiled jam  
remembering how on the  
last visit he broke  
the Steuben glass  
bud vase while putting

down capitalism His  
fingers spot the  
wall from last Friday  
just hours after the  
wall's been painted

It's what she's think  
ing in their last  
eleven minutes together  
tho she smiles And  
what to do with

the wood blisters  
crawling up the  
cherry boards after  
he said he'd open  
the damper after

the fire was  
started and birds  
of flame leaped  
out hot for the  
moon flapping a

gainst the ceiling  
and crashing down  
to make a layer of  
grey ash you can  
track the cat's

footprints in She  
is smiling and saying  
come back soon as  
she totals up the  
damages She thinks

she hears the blisters  
popping when he  
kisses her she half  
expects to lose  
some teeth

NEAR TROUBLESOME CREEK    SOUTHEASTERN KENTUCKY

The blue people  
something missing  
in their blood like  
a layer of fat be  
tween what is in  
side and outside  
Blue skin blue  
fingers wrists  
their cheeks pale  
blue of an oxford  
shirt The first  
blue person came  
from France married  
a woman near Trouble  
some Creek with  
the exact same traits  
their children  
married each other  
Blue cousins and  
uncles in old  
family bibles  
records of who was  
born who died  
and if they were  
blue A cheap  
pill changes the  
blue to pink turns  
urine blue One old  
man said he could  
see the blue  
running right  
out of him

OF COURSE MADONNA

goes along with  
keeps her mouth  
shut nods grins  
serves coffee  
serves your  
needs says of  
course but  
wants to get  
off course

MADONNA WHO WRITES  
TEN POEMS A DAY

as if the poems were  
vitamins she spits  
out instead of  
swallowing one poem  
gets the blue out  
of her calms like  
vitamin B another  
heals makes for  
good sex supposedly  
Others make bones  
and muscles  
stronger cure  
night blindness  
protect grow hair

DEPRESSION

like a small animal  
you can't pick up  
when it's light  
tunneling close to  
your side making a  
nest in the quilts  
and pillows so  
you wake up with  
warm fur blurring  
the light afraid  
to move If it  
sleeps you could  
use it as a pillow  
On the loose it  
claws the night  
is starved demands  
to be fed eats you

GAMES

get over the end  
zone score

get it thru the  
hoop hole surrounded

by a skirt  
a hole in one

shot all the  
way go with the

right stick slam  
it out of the ball

park don't let  
your fly

ball get caught

JULY 4 1980

In Georgia a Vietnamese  
family's playing  
baseball under statues  
of Confederate soldiers  
noodles roast chicken

We have a Vietnamese  
heart in an American  
body In Miami

2 sisters with kohl  
eyes giggle a  
man who can't  
speak English

smiles under a mustache  
that's a smile itself  
liberte liberte  
each day liberte  
each year liberte

BLACK SWEATER IN MAY

pulling the sun in close  
that other May  
the rose apple was  
almost startling

I'd slept alone in  
the west side of the  
house sloped  
ceiling across the bed  
not wanting to hear  
glass when a bottle  
slammed thru it

The sun warmer  
than hands it slid  
thru the last  
mounds of snow as the  
man who made me blush  
just sitting near me

was suddenly there I  
hadn't seen him walking  
toward where he'd  
touch my shoulder  
tell me the name for  
the tree I'd thought  
was dogwood pull

me toward his lit  
warm room that  
night when it was  
black and the grass  
was black wet a  
sweet smell I don't  
remember smelling  
since

LIKE SO MUCH THIS SUMMER

the lawn chair is  
collapsing slowly  
plastic strands the  
cat tore give away  
five years after  
the cat gave away

GOODBY YELLOW MAVERICK

the color of sun on the  
maple leaves october  
tulips pears and  
certain cherries Your  
smooth black vinyl  
smells a bit of musk  
cats that are living  
cats that are dead  
Thigh glyphs dissolve  
from that dark The  
next person you put  
your hips around tho  
may smell lilac blossom  
and quince that stayed  
in the window when I  
ran to Vermont my  
grandmother dying  
cold apples I filled  
the back seat with to  
take to Hudson and  
the rum that flooded  
the floor an inch deep  
it took us hours to notice

EVERYTHING STEAMING

ice starting to drip  
from the black walnuts  
white drifts up  
wraps the house

tips of branches  
icebergs float by  
the grey bedroom  
where last night's

wine soaks into  
the floor like  
blood under  
the puppies

BRISBEE

A neighbor says  
a quiet man  
lonely always  
alone nobody  
came I don't  
know how this  
could have  
happened

Arrowroot  
cookies on the  
floor torn  
blue pillow a  
twisted cloth  
strangling him

alone in a house  
of 12 cats  
especially hungry  
this morning

robbery was the apparent

5 people arrested  
more people than had  
ever visited him

MODEL HOME

Carpet you could  
drown the sound of  
someone being strangled  
in Antiques glow the  
toilet seats are sealed  
Empty wine in a rack  
No stains no dripping  
on enamel the phones  
match the walls and  
bedspreads but no  
thing is connected

-- Lyn Lifshin

Niskayuna NY

## MY AUNTS AND UNCLES

i was once so close to them  
that i have to be a long ways from them now.  
my mother was one of fourteen siblings  
from whom i was the only next generation.  
that may be, for better or worse,  
the central fact of my life.  
at a distance of three thousand miles,  
they are still wonderful to me,  
without the threat of tyranny,  
and i am less of a disgrace to them.

but those who survive are oh so old.  
my aunt pat is nearly ninety  
and down to eighty pounds.  
claire and terese and ann louise  
have all had cataracts.  
my sturdy, factotum uncles  
fear loneliness and crowds.

are those really all that are left?  
my god, those are all who are left.

one who is dead now once said  
and the rest subscribed to it,  
"they should have taken us out  
as we reached sixty-five  
and shot us."  
but they're of irish country stock,  
and everything dies before the heart.  
their very strength condemns them to slow deaths.

they wonder why i haven't been back in so long.  
there have been many reasons,  
but the only one right now  
is that i (who, irish in my fashion,  
drank away what little of their strength i once had)  
am afraid i will start crying  
and not stop.

## FATHERS AND SONS

my little boy says to me,  
"you wouldn't be mad at blake,  
if she'd said the same thing i did."

and i say, "i make every effort  
to be the same towards both of you."

and he says, "well, you don't succeed,"

and i feel myself starting to heat up,

and then something stops me,  
and i think about it,  
and i think about how hard i was  
on his half-brother, my first son,

and i say, "you may be right.  
i think it's because fathers, rightly or wrongly,  
feel more responsible for their sons becoming men  
than for their daughters becoming women.  
they can do a lot of things with and for their daughters,  
and they can love them and take pride in them  
and give them every encouragement,  
but they can't, especially by example,  
teach them how to become women.  
so when we fathers see weaknesses in our sons  
that are not our own,  
we are intolerant of them,  
and when we see our sons perpetuating  
our own weaknesses,  
then we could not feel sadder or more helpless,  
and we blame these feelings on our sons.  
i think you may be right;  
i'm sorry if i was unfair."

i realize this is the first time  
i have ever admitted to him  
that i was unfair

although i've never found it impossible  
to apologize to his sister,

and i sit there watching my son  
begin to become a man.

SHE DIDN'T LIKE US MUCH EVEN BEFORE THE AYATOLLAH

i go to the office on friday afternoon  
to pick up the mail  
and there in the campus paper  
is a report of kate millett's address  
on thursday afternoon.

i missed the presentation,  
as did most of the male student body,  
because it conflicted with the world series.

but i see where kate says she's not concerned  
with overthrowing just any old government,  
she wants to overthrow all of them,  
especially anything that smacks of  
what she refers to as "patriarchal government."

she has a few words on pornography too.  
what a disgrace it is that for three-and-a-half dollars,  
(i suspect the prices have risen)  
a man can watch  
the humiliation of a woman on film.

when the subject of civil liberties is raised,  
kate says that she is of course opposed to censorship,  
but that women have about had their fill of pornography  
and that they'll put an end to it  
by economic pressures.

she also says that women are fed up  
with being beaten and raped and robbed and exploited  
as they have been, by men, for centuries.

i'm hoping that my wife doesn't get wind  
of all kate has to say about us men  
or she may forbid me to borrow her car  
to drive to l.a. for my reading.

CLASS

"You got class all over you."

-- Count Mippipoulous

you know how things happen at the unlikeliest of times?  
well, i suppose that's why i was sitting  
in the bar on a tuesday evening  
with a comely young divorcee.  
i had forgotten that i had also told  
this married girl that i've been going out with  
that i might be in there,  
so here we are approaching the point of the conversation  
when the second girl comes walking in the door.

she came to the proverbial screeching halt  
and looked like she might be about to turn  
on the proverbial heel and depart  
but i saw her and went to her and said,  
"what are you drinking, the usual?  
join us at the table."

she did. and when i came back with the drink  
i found the two of them hitting it off famously.  
so, knowing that the married girl would have  
to go home to her husband soon, i didn't interrupt.

after i had eventually seen the married girl to the door  
and returned to the table,  
the divorcee said, "that girl is interested in you,"  
and i said, "nah, you're imagining things."

"the only thing i'm imagining," she said  
"and it's not imagination, is that you're a bullshitter,  
but let me tell you something -- if you're fucking  
that broad, you better keep fucking her,  
because that broad has class!"

the both of them  
had class all over them.

-- Gerald Locklin

Long Beach CA

MUTT!

i.

It shared my first apartment. It expected all the  
'rare bits' in return for protecting me. It got them.  
It had Its own name for me: so secret not even I could  
figure it out.

ii.

I've had It in bed with me. Always 'fixed.' Always  
a 'he.' He? It. Grew old many times and I would  
lose It. Then one day It would reappear emptyhanded  
at my door, but dressed, always dressed in a tuxedo.  
The neighbors would warn me, "there's a four-legged  
penguin waiting for you," when I came home. They  
never learned the routine (I never stayed in one  
apartment long enough), but one time an old lady  
gathered all Its turds from her front lawn and tried  
to sell them on the next street as 'rare dung.'

iii.

One day I saw It nearly run over in downtown L.A.:  
a wheel and It spun together momentarily, then split

apart. "Was that intimacy for you?" I asked. It hoisted a leg and peed on a Yellow Cab door, looking up at me as if to say, "I've seen you masturbate."

iv.

It may not have attracted the girls, but the fleas sure loved It. I was always dropping bombs on them but even so they would sometimes hop right out of my hair at work, landing in my best friend's coffee cup.

v.

And now I wonder about Its real (secret) name. Here are some final guesses:

Benjy Moogey Luxy Laxy Monocle Kilo Hashbin Yellow  
Peril Comrade Red White and Blueboy

SARAH KASSEM ZADEH

Sheilah's sister became an Iranian while Sheilah was driving up the Harbor Freeway. Sheilah's sister and her Iranian husband became punk rockers

while Sheilah was driving west on the Santa Monica Freeway. When Sheilah found all this out she wondered whether she should

drive up the San Diego Freeway.

PUNK BUTTONS

The sun in a cloud without my permission a drunkensnob in my doorway asking for a smoke 2 two men in the

courtyard fixing a car it's a Saturday Thursday Tuesday Saturday Monday ~~Sunday~~ (stet) Wednesday a month a night

without my permission black  
yellow pink people a walrus  
(John Lennon) in the lake a  
marijuana cigarette a Van  
Gogh a Long Beach a career  
a beautiful boy named Jamie  
a cartoon the Third World War  
Judas Jesus Esau without  
my permission polka-dots  
jade Robert drives to the  
Pandemonium tonight I go  
to Hollywood on the Pike the  
owner dies prayers oral sex  
without my permission 20 beds  
in a room a shot in the bum  
a black girl beating 4 white  
boys at 7-card stud me  
remembering the time I won  
an \$80 pot at Booeray when  
\$80 meant without my permission  
I give up go to hell  
cuss out all my friends they  
cuss back I love my uncle  
my sister her husband the  
German shepherd puppy at Mike's  
place without my permission I've got  
all these permits in my room for  
15 punk buttons a shot but no  
one wants to part with 15 punk buttons.

#### ONE MORE ROUND FOR HIROSHIMA

I've always wanted to do it with  
my mother. Fly to Australia,  
that is, with her in the baggage hold,  
and me in the first class with  
earphones on, listening to  
something quiet and undemanding.  
And, possibly, by the time the plane  
touches down in Sydney, she'll have  
been dropped on Hiroshima.

-- Nichola Manning

Long Beach CA

THE MOON IS DOWN

Nine moons	SIXTEEN PEONS
Nine platters	
Nine servings	Sixteen peons
Nine woolen salads	Sixteen dominions
Nine swallows	Sixteen divinities
Nine prisoners	Sixteen globes
Nine ladies in hell	The world is my idea
Nine present	Sixteen evidences
Nine marines	Sixteen certainties
	Sixteen triangles
NINE	Sixteen cubes
	Sixteen pyramids
Nine crowns	Sixteen dawnings
Nine kings	Sixteen sunsets
Nine clowns	Sixteen volcanoes
Nine golden coins	Sixteen explosions of the sun
Nine dominions	This is the world we live in
Nine boundaries	Sixteen faerie wands
Nine battles	
Nine battlestraps	
Nine celebrations	

FREE

I know of a pair of brown shoelaces  
I know of a pair of black shoelaces  
I know of a pair of brown shoes  
I know of a pair of black shoes  
I know of a brown crayon  
I know of a black crayon  
I know shoelather  
I know of the kind of shoelather that has seen the  
tanner first  
I know of the kind of shoelather that will set you free  
I know of a walkathon  
I know of the daylights  
I know of the sunshine on the sidewalks  
I know of the sidewalks all over town

-- Alfred Starr Hamilton

Montclair NJ

**ETUDE  
ETUDE  
ETUDE**

# JAKOS

-- R. Prost

Morton Grove IL

## LET IT SHINE

The guy who hides his light  
under a bushel ought to be told  
to let it shine. He won't push  
back the edge of darkness if  
he waits to be noticed. Let it shine,  
for god's sake, we need all the light  
we can get.

You know damn well the guy  
without a light nor even a bushel,  
would give his eye teeth for just  
a tiny candle. Then he might brag  
about it until you thought it was  
a torch. No objections from me,  
at least he'd have something  
worth a shout. And anyway,  
as the Master said to his Ass,  
It's all right to make the big noise  
if you have no close neighbors.

## SUBSCRIPTION TO SALVATION

What do you know,  
this fellow who just knocked  
on my door has a magazine  
full of recipes for salvation.  
I never knew if I was saved  
or not and it's a little late  
for me to start worrying now.  
He said I should be re-born  
but I don't know, we're  
getting along pretty well,  
paid the property taxes last week,  
had the old bus tuned up for winter.  
Just the Missus and me, the kids  
have all flown the coop. We have  
a highball before dinner, eat at  
the Club on Friday nights, watch  
football on Sunday pm -- I don't know  
what I want to be reborn as.  
I tried to make a little joke and said  
I'd probably be reborn as a garter snake  
and chase the girls out of  
the strawberry patch. But he

gave me a sour look and walked away.  
I'm sorry now I wasn't more polite  
and let him finish saving me.

-- James Hearst

Cedar Falls IA

#### COYOTE

Approaching Elm Hoist bridge down a hill so long  
& deep we could be entering hell a coyote runs  
ahead of the truck. It's a bright & wonderful  
morning. The coyote shines. He moves off the  
road & up the clay embankment, stops & looks at us.

We stop & look at him. During this short minute  
we discuss bounty, pelt price, beauty, whether or  
not he's holding up a hind leg. & my friend who's  
driving stopped. His younger brother would have  
pushed right on.

#### THE TUSKED BURROWERS

In the silt & marl bottoms the burrowing nymphs  
live a life unnoticed. Long-tusked dragons of a  
river's underworld, they create their own current  
with maribou gills. From where a man stands, fly  
rod in hand, the river is a wild refuge from an  
ex-wife who never calls. & only inches from his  
feet the long-tusked dragons are slowly breathing  
& flexing their jointed legs in a dance of great  
determination.

-- Rick Penn

High Bridge WI

The edition of this issue has been limited to 700 numbered copies, the first 50 being signed by Lyn Lifshin. The copy now in your hand is number: 640

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T H E   W O R M W O O D   R E V I E W :   8 5

INDEX	PAGES
M. K. Book.....	10
Charles Bukowski.....	1 - 6
Eric Grow.*.....	11
Alfred Starr Hamilton.....	35 - 36
James Hearst.....	38 - 39
Ronald Koertge.....	12
John Levin.....	9 - 10
Lyn Lifshin's Special Section:	
SANDWICH.....	13 - 28
Gerald Locklin.....	29 - 32
Nichola Manning.*.....	32 - 34
Bill Marsh.*.....	6 - 7
Rick Penn.*.....	39
Ronald Prost.....	36 - 37
Robert Swanson.*.....	8 - 9

\* First Appearance In Wormwood

P R I C E :   \$ 2 . 0 0

E D I T O R :   M A R V I N   M A L O N E