The Connecticut Writing Project offers opportunities for growth and professional development to teachers of writing in all disciplines who recognize the worth of using writing as a means of learning any subject matter. A program of The University of Connecticut Department of English, the Connecticut Writing Project is affiliated with the widely-acclaimed National Writing Project, which now has 166 sites in this country and abroad.

In the Project, experienced classroom teachers are trained as Teacher/Consultants in an intensive Summer Institute where they share their expertise and practice writing themselves. Then, during subsequent school years, they present workshops on composition theory and practical strategies for teaching writing to teachers in participating districts.

The approach has proven effective by generating widespread interest in good writing and by upgrading students' abilities as writers and learners. For further information about the Connecticut Writing Project and its programs, please write or call the director:

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INTRODUCTION

The sixth Connecticut Writing Project Summer Institute was held in Storrs from June 29 to July 24, 1987. The sixteen participants—elementary, secondary, and college teachers—were dynamic, dedicated professionals who joined together to learn more about the teaching of writing and more about themselves as writers. They accomplished these goals by studying and practicing writing intensively every day for four weeks.

During the four weeks of the Summer Institute, most mornings were spent discussing recent research on writing, arguing writing issues, and presenting workshops on aspects of the writing process and classroom applications. Guest speakers also addressed the Institute and focused on particular aspects of teaching and learning. Writing groups met during afternoon sessions. In groups of four the Summer Fellows critiqued and revised compositions in each of four modes of discourse: personal, narrative, analytical, and persuasive—and through the collaboration improved their understanding of the writing process.

The writings collected in this booklet represent each author's effort in one of these four modes. Pieces were chosen by the authors with the consultation of the other members of their groups.

The writings of this outstanding group of teachers demonstrate their creative talents. Many of the participants carried one topic through the four modes of discourse; others changed to new topics during the four weeks. Only by reading all four writings from each author can the depth of their involvement with the writing process be fully appreciated. These writings here, however, indicate the quality of their work and explain in part why we were inspired and enriched by working with the 1987 Summer Fellows. We thank them for these writings and for their participation during the summer.

--Ann Policelli and Ralph Wadsworth
Summer Institute Coordinators
I never knew about the sound of an accident. I had seen shattered glass, had seen spinning wheels, had even seen bodies covered with heavy white cloth, but no one had told me about the sound. It is not a crash, the kind that you hear on the television commercials warning you to wear seat belts, nor is it a shattering of glass, the kind that splinters when John Wayne throws the outlaw out of the bar. It is more like a dull, but loud, thud, the sound of the pounding on a large bass drum. After that there is silence. You lose your grip on the wheel; you can no longer control the car. Indeed, you can no longer control your arms. They fly off into space, hit the roof of the car, then flop down, heavy, inoperative, lifeless. You lose your sense of direction; the motion of the car becomes a metaphor for incoherence, because nothing makes sense or has order or definition. You spin. You can't stop. The forms outside of the windows, you know, are trees, or houses, or telephone poles, but they lose their shape and separate colors, and finally, it is easier, actually it is expedient, certainly it is psychologically advisable, to close your eyes and lean toward the revolving motion of the car.

When I opened my eyes, I could not see. My glasses were discovered much later by the ambulance driver. The car was no longer on the highway; instead, it was in the middle of a hay field, parts of fenders and one wheel spread over five lanes. The steering wheel, broken, hanging from a splintered column, was gripped in clenched hands. I heard an anxious voice, "Are you all right? Can you hear me? Can you move? We'll have you out in a jiffy. Wearing your seatbelt, luv. Living to tell the tale because of it, no doubt."

The sounds of the accident, there again. The muffled voice of the policeman, the grating of the car door as they tore it off the hinges so that I could be moved into the ambulance. The siren. The doctors, as they concentrated on tubes and blood and pulmonary monitors, discussing, too calmly I thought, this new accident victim, me, alive because I had been wearing my seat belt.

The injuries were painful, but minimal, so I had never bothered to intellectualize the experience, to translate emotion into words, certainly never to think of the reason why, even now, I buckle my seatbelt as mechanically as I close the door or turn the ignition key of my car. I had talked about this particular accident, of course, but I had always focused on the comic side. There were, in the midst
of panic and horror, several very ludicrous incidents. There always are.

Now I see the television commercials, the two slaughtered dummies talking; I read the highway signs inviting me, or admonishing me to wear my seat belt; I hear the uninitiated disclaiming the importance of seat belts, and I remember the sounds.

They sat close together, the two of them, on the old veranda swing. The summer night was cool, the sun rapidly setting, dipping behind the horizon like a heavy orange melon. It was a perfect night for confidences and gossip.

"Mildred?" The first woman addressed her thin, lanky friend.

The woman named Mildred pulled her shawl more tightly around her small body, against the night's chill. She turned to her companion. "Yes, Claire?"

"Have you heard a word from Betsy? I've not had a word in days now. Wonder what she's up to."

"These two weeks since Bert's death, I've only seen her once or twice," whispered Mildred. "It's not been easy, all those arrangements and details. Funny thing is, though, she took his passing better than I thought, fifty-eight years of marriage and all."

"Well, Mildred, I'll tell the truth. I'm not so surprised. I don't know that they were all so close," stated Claire, eyes suddenly gleaming like a cat's, and narrow, as if she hugged a secret to herself.

Mildred sprang up in her seat. She hissed accusingly, "What do you mean exactly, Claire?"

"Now, Mildred, calm down, the man was eighty-five, hardly running around. I didn't mean that." Claire knowingly eyed her companion and explained, "Bert was such a one for dictating, such a boss, but he never seemed to accomplish anything himself. He just gave orders. It was Betsy who was always there to pick up the pieces."

"Oh," said Mildred, as she sank back down again. "You mean that. Well, Betsy was so self-reliant after he kept messing up. Sometimes, I guess, I've kind of wondered why they ever got together to begin with. Why do you think they married each other?" she pondered.

Claire viewed her companion speculatively. "So you've wondered, too. She was attractive in her own way, back then, and only twenty years old when they met. He was good-looking, with lots of boyish charm. He was the kind that wins you over but never makes anything of himself."
Mildred sighed dreamily, as realization dawned slowly. "Yes, you're right, that beautiful, wonderful, bouncy feeling of first love. Now I remember. Who thought of the future, then? Love would take care of everything. It was like being wrapped in a warm cocoon." Mildred hugged herself, pulling her shawl closer around her, lost in quiet memory.

"O.K.," responded Claire. "I can see that, all right, but why did she stay with him all those years? You could see she really wasn't happy. He never made things easy for her. Rumors say he had money he never shared with her, kept in his own name; ended up paying his nursing home bills with it."

"Mildred bounced up like a ball. "What exactly did you expect her to do? You're getting to be a product of the eighties, I swear. She must have been a young wife when she realized his surface charm was all he had. Probably had one baby by then, too. Did you really think she'd leave him?"

She looked hard at Claire.

"Oh, Mildred, you've got a point, I know. Even if she knew she didn't love him, she was stuck. A woman alone with herself and the kids? Who would she turn to? Women just didn't leave then. None of our friends would have."

Claire frowned, biting her lip.

"It's more than that," snapped Mildred. "Was she supposed to divorce him? Nobody in Betsy's family ever divorced, nor ever dared to, not with that strong, hard-headed father of hers. She'd not have turned to him for help. Her mother wouldn't have been any good either. She believed in sticking it out once you'd made your choice, just like Betsy."

"Yes, that's it," sang Claire, "that's it!" She smiled, a sudden look of recognition and pride on her face, as if she had finished a challenging crossword puzzle. "Maybe she loved him, maybe she didn't. It doesn't matter. She chose to stay with him, with her marriage. She chose to stay because that's the way she was made; proud, strong, and always willing to pick up the pieces Bert left. She'd put them back together and rearrange them into a new pattern of her own making."

Mildred smiled. She, too, looked relieved. She really cared for Betsy and longed for a happy ending.

The sun had now fully set, the night air turned cold. Suddenly, as was her way, Claire dropped a bombshell. "Mildred, if she were a young wife today, do you still think she'd have stayed?"
police are looking for you in connection with his murder?
LG: Don't ask me to make sense of it. All I know is I tried
to do a good deed and now I have to justify it—as though
I'm some kind of criminal.
MB: Tell me about the good deed.
LG: Well I made a lunch for the old man and when—
MB: You what?
LG: I made a lunch for the old man. Is that so hard to
believe? After all everyone eats lunch—even the old man.
MB: Why lunch?
LG: Well that's when I was going to be in the Bronx—around
lunchtime.
MB: But why this old man? What was your motivation?
LG: Motivation? Why do I feel so defensive about this? I'm
not a criminal, you know. I saw someone being hurt, and I
wanted to do something about it.
MB: You saw Rudolph being hurt?
LG: Well maybe not hurt—but he was being threatened. I saw
him in Sol's doorway, and Sol was waving a broom around
and telling him to get up out of his doorway. Sol was being mean
to someone down on his luck.
MB: Oh, that. That's some of our street drama, here on the
Concourse. Almost every other night or so, Rudolph hangs out
in Sol's doorway. As you know it's recessed, and on windy
nights it's a pretty good shelter.
LG: You mean I didn't need to get all hot and bothered about
it?
MB: Hot and bothered?
LG: Yeah, I went into Sol's, demanding that he tell me about
the old guy, what he was doing to help him ... and so on.
MB: Gad, he must have gotten a charge out of that! Mainly he
tolerates Rudolph, putting on a show with the hopes that
eventually he'll go to a shelter.
LG: Well it sure was some kind of show. I was convinced that
Sol was about to inflict physical damage. Actually, sham or
not, it was verbal abuse.
MB: So what's next? You accosted Sol and then what? What did
you do?
LG: Accosted seems like a pretty strong word to me,
considering Sol's persona and mine. Well, anyway, I didn't
do anything that day—had a dentist appointment. All week
before my return visit, I tried to think of a way to help
him.
MB: So what did you decide?

LG: My first idea was to give him some money. But everyone
does that. I wanted to do something special for him.
MB: Why special for him?
LG: Well he had to feel like nothing—even before his
encounter with Sol. So, I thought, "What would I do to make
someone in my family feel special?" One of the ways is to
cook that person a particular treat. Ah ha! I had it. I
would make a meal for the old guy. It had to be lunch since
that was the only time I would be in the Bronx.
MB: You thought of Rudolph as someone in your family?
LG: Well I wanted just once that he would feel he was
important to someone. You make once sound offensive.
MB: Tell me about the good deed.
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before my return visit, I tried to think of a way to help
him.
MB: So what did you decide?
and left him a scrap of paper.

LG: You're not making me feel very good about this.

MB: Maybe if you could tell me more about why you felt compelled to react to Rudolph so personally.

LG: You keep coming back to that. What I was doing was one human being reaching out to another--maybe, for one time only, but isn't once better than not at all?

Maybe it would make a difference to him just for a few moments, but what's wrong with giving him a fleeting pleasure? I remember once waking up from a terrible automobile accident and seeing a nurse head toward me with a huge bouquet of roses. I couldn't believe they were for me. The card was signed "An unknown admirer." Someone cared. I later found out who it was. A relationship did not develop, but that didn't matter; the roses had done what was needed at the moment. From then on I started to improve. Why did I give Rudolph lunch? Because I couldn't give him roses!

MB: Wow! What a punchline. Hey, don't do a guilt trip on yourself. Rudolph probably didn't have much longer to live. I am sure the autopsy will reveal an irreversible physical condition due to age and exposure--but you did reverse something. He may have lost his life a few weeks earlier than otherwise, but he regained his soul--all through the little word "cares." Those were your roses!

LG: What do I do now?

MB: I know what I would do. I would go home and try to find that guy who sent the roses so many years ago.

So, Jim, what do you think? Next Valentine's Day I'd like to do a survey on the Concourse: Roast beef or roses, which would you send to show you care?
How Paul could talk! From the moment my small son discovered he could make words, there was no stopping him. He used his two-year-old vocal apparatus to let the world know he was among us and was to be reckoned with.

"Go go car, Mommy!" signaled that he wanted to go for a ride--anywhere.

"Watch de wedder, watch de wedder," summoned all to gather immediately in front of the TV to learn of the latest weather forecast.

"What spells this?" was a demand at age four to know what the word was.

And so it continued all through his early childhood and into his teenage years.

I blocked the doorway as he stood facing me, at the age of seventeen, informing me in no uncertain terms that he was going out that night. And furthermore he didn't care what I said about it being a school night and homework having to be finished.

I replied in kind, "You'll have to walk over me if you try to go out this door."

He made a move to pass by me; I moved to prevent his going. The folded ironing board against the wall crashed on top of him. Ginger ale bottles next to the door flew in all directions, as he struggled to keep his balance. Down he went, and the ironing board with him.

Silence ensued for a few moments.

Looking up at me from under the ironing board, he announced cheerily, "Hey, Ma, at least we're still communicating!"

---

We don't communicate anymore.

A brief bout with LSD during his senior year in college, followed by a drastic transformation into a schizophrenic type of existence, has made him a stranger to me. I look at him now. I say tentatively, "Hey, Paul, remember 'Go go car' and 'watch de wedder'? Remember 'Hey, Ma, at least we're still communicating'?"

He looks at me with glassy eyes. No answer comes.
The Final Days in June
by Mark Sullivan

Private John Roach of the 7th Cavalry searched frantically through his personal belongings looking for his pen. He wanted to write a letter home, and the time for his company departure was close. "Think, John, think," he said to himself. "Where did you use it last?" He remembered using it to write an entry in his journal about the crazy mixture of humanity in his company. He had observed people—from the professional to the criminal, from romantic youths looking for adventure to those eager to bury their deeds of the past, but now he wasn't interested in continuing with those thoughts. He wanted his pen! Suddenly, as he moved his bed roll, the pen fell to the ground. He picked it up and started a letter to his mother. He needed to tell her that his romantic notion of the West was silly. He needed to say that her words about being a man were right. He longed to tell her of his fears, but more than anything he simply wanted to tell her "Thank You" and "I love you," but those thoughts remained trapped in his head. He cursed not being able to place them on the paper. Frustrated, he folded the paper with the routine lines he had already written, placed it along with the pen in his saddle bag, swung the bag over his shoulder, and dashed out the door to join his company.

Lone Eagle had readied himself for the Sun Dance by fasting. This was a sacred ceremony. He prayed to the Great Spirit to give him a vision or dream, for the Sioux believed that those visions or dreams came true. He walked up to the large pole in the center of the ceremonial tipi and fastened sticks to the long ropes that hung from the top. He grasped the fastened sticks and pushed them into his chest as if pinning a medal to himself. He began to dance and gaze at the sun. While dancing, he blew air through a pipe made of an eagle wing feather. The sounds of the whistle, the chanting of the tribe, and the rhythmic beat of the drum filled the tipi. As Lone Eagle started to lean back, the sticks began to rip through his flesh. He blew harder into the pipe in an attempt to ease the pain. The pain increased as he leaned back even farther, and he began to see a vision of soldiers clad in blue and lying dead on the ground. All went silent and dark as he fainted—but the vision remained.

John arose long before the first rays of the sun appeared in the east. His carbine was checked, his revolver loaded, his saber was sharp. He carefully checked to make sure the letter was safe in his saddle bag. He hoped that no matter what happened, the letter would find its way home. Nervously he saddled his horse and did what all soldiers do best—he waited for orders...
The Decision
by Beverly Anthony

Dinner that evening was as relaxed as the tennis finals at Wimbledon. Ann and Becky volleyed their arguments across the table, while Jim served as referee. Unlike the tennis matches, nothing was resolved by the end of the meal.

The week went from bad to worse. First a skirmish developed because Ann refused to type a term paper for Becky. "You are totally irresponsible!" shouted Ann. "You do not ask me to type a paper at nine o'clock Tuesday night when it is due first period Wednesday morning."

"You always say you want to help me," growled Becky, "and then when I ask you to do something, you say no!" Next a battle developed on Thursday when Becky would not change her Iron Maiden T-shirt before going to her grandmother's house. By Friday the house resembled a full-fledged war zone.

As the hour of the party grew near on Saturday evening, emotions changed. Becky went from anger to desperation. She sat in her room and sobbed loudly. Apparently her tactics worked, as Ann, who had been strong all week, began to cave in. Jim's role switched from referee to devil's advocate.

"Jim, do you think I'm being unreasonable? It's just that I don't think that a nineteen year old is mature enough to chaperone a group of freshmen. Am I being too strict?" These were just a few of the questions Ann brought up as she tried to convince herself that she had made the right decision.

Everyone went to bed early that night, hoping that a good rest would help clear the air. After all, once the party was over Becky wouldn't stay angry, would she?

A slight frown flashed across Becky's face before she said, "Oh it's fine, Mom. All of the important kids at school are going, and Ellen's older sister is in charge."

Now it was Ann's turn to frown. "Ellen's older sister! What about her parents? Where will they be?"

"Don't worry," replied Becky quickly. "They are going to be away. But it's all right. Ellen's sister, Sandy, is an adult. She's nineteen."

The breeze seemed to have stopped and it was beginning to get uncomfortably warm in the kitchen. "Let's wait until Dad gets home, and we'll discuss this," Ann said as she set the meat to one side.

Becky glared. "I don't believe you, Mom. Can't you ever make a decision on your own? I bet I'm the only kid at Alden whose parents have a family conference for something as simple as permission to go to a party." The door slammed again as Becky headed outside. Ann could see her daughter's sullen face through the window as Becky sat on the patio scratching the dog's ears.

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The following morning at breakfast, the mood of the night before still hung in the air. "Let's get the news," said Jim walking toward the TV. Humming cheerfully, in an attempt to break the tension, he turned the knob.

The voice of the local newscaster filled the room. "A teenage party at the Hanover home last evening resulted in a tragic accident!"
The Boston Tea Party

Why The English Have Afternoon Tea

by Nicola Seed

Afternoon tea is a peculiarly English tradition. Where Italians have their siestas and Americans their fast food and power breakfasts, English have tea time. Between three and four every afternoon self-respecting English people take time out for tea. The time may be the same, but don't let that deceive you—the varieties of afternoon tea boggle the mind of the uninitiated. There is the Ritz, of course, as in waiter politely, as you try not to shift uneasily on your chair, hoping that your outfit passes inspection, and rather fearing that it doesn't. Then there are family teas in the garden in the summertime, an opportunity to chat to your relatives, sneeze because of the proximity of flowers, drink several cups of lukewarm tea, and read the Sunday Times, interrupted only by the clinking of china and the occasional "please pass the sugar." Winter afternoon teas are just as special—the thought of cradling the tea-cup in your numb hands, and eating hot buttery crumpets by the fireplace makes that long icy trudge home easier to stomach. Visitors to England might tell you about Devon cream teas, or describe the many elegant and "quaint" tearooms in towns like York or Bath. York is famous for having more tearooms per square mile than anywhere else in England. Having spent three years there, I am an expert in tearoom crawling, the alternative to pub hopping. (Interesting that English crawl while Americans hop, particularly so in light of the power-breakfast mentality that seems to characterize much of America.) There are tea times at work, an inferior variety, when employees sit in usually dingy lounges, sipping tea from a machine, and gossiping about their fellow-workers: "Oooooooohhh I never, she didn't . . . ." In the North people sometimes combine afternoon tea with an early dinner. And finally there is the expatriate's English tea, a tradition to which many cling desperately, despite local customs or weather—even in Kuala Lumpur tea occurs at some households between three and four.

Why is tea time such an essential English custom? Why do we have it? The answers, I suggest, are many.

While the English could never succumb to the indolent and time-consuming Mediterranean habit of siesta-ing, they, too, like to take life slowly once or twice in a while and preferably to do so in a companionable way. Tea provides the perfect opportunity to crawl, as it were, rather than hop. It's interesting how one can draw out tea time, so long as one uses a tea cosy. Whether the food is crumpets, muffins, cucumber sandwiches, or cake, it is always somewhat redolent of the nursery, and therefore reassuring. This combined with the conversational possibilities inherent in the ceremony help explain how the tradition began.

Apart from allowing people to slow down and to talk to each other, timing is an important factor in afternoon tea. Most people feel particularly lethargic and low around early- to mid-afternoon. It's often the time when we're most uninspired, most prone to stare out the window and feel sleepy, bored, and even hungry. A scientist might explain this in terms of low blood sugar and biorhythms. It is true that tea and scones have a remarkable way of bridging that gap between lunch and supper, of giving one enough energy to attend to what is important—talking with one's friends, for example.

As to why the English celebrate tea time, I'm not sure. Perhaps it has something to do with its ritualistic aspect. We like ceremony and are particularly fond of it when it is regular and dependable. The routine of warming the pot, getting out the china tea set, pouring the tea leaves, slicing the walnut cake, and taking out the plates can be a comfortably consistent one. Can't you just imagine London families calmly sitting down to tea during the Blitz in the Second World War? Tea is also conducive to talk, even to the confessional. People often seem to preface shocking revelations with "a nice cup of tea."

Why is it the English rather than the Americans who have tea though? (Americans don't even drink tea properly—some refuse to add milk!) Perhaps tea time is just one of those traditions which English people like to continue—it's certainly one of the more enjoyable ones. Perhaps it reminds us not only of the nursery, but it also conjures up happy, nostalgic visions of the Empire and "Upstairs, Downstairs." Perhaps we welcome the chance to unwind and socialize—having tea with someone is a wholly different kind of experience than going for a drink with them. Perhaps we have a particular predilection for cake and scones. Perhaps we're addicted to tannin. I think a large part of it, however, can be attributed to difference in national character—can you imagine a tearoom hop? It sounds like some type of extinct dance routine. And besides, Americans are too busy for such extravagances . . . they have more important things to do. So they drink instant coffee!
The Trapper
by Charles Ewers

The thick New England woods once began a mere step outside the garrison of Fort Deauxville. The perimeter of the fort, that which is still standing nearly a century after its last use in battle, is covered in a swirling mass of vines and creepers. Whole sections of the structure have fallen beneath the pull of the encroaching tangle of greenery.

The interior village is in deep decline and has been so for quite some time. At the close of the French and Indian War, it had reached its prosperous peak, a strategic supply point in the conflict. The Revolutionary War also brought an influx of traders and settlers along with the soldiers to the garrison. After the subsiding of the hostilities, the gradual spiral to oblivion commenced, bringing the settlement to its now sad state of disrepair. A score more years and Fort Deauxville will cease to be, enveloped in the verdant overgrowth of the consuming forest.

Let us take a look back from this point to a century in time ago, to the aging collection of buildings that was Fort Deauxville. The nineteenth century was not quite half-spent, and the grouping of cabins that constituted the village here gave the impression that there might be a living to be made. At the mouth of the path that ran from the main gate to the river was a canoe that obviously belonged to a trapper. A stack of cured beaver pelts weighed the front end securely ashore. That the trapper would leave such a commodity unguarded attested to the Fort's decline. Simply, he knew not another soul would journey by this point and covet his hard-earned bounty.

At this time the young trapper, James Brandon, having made his way to the interior of the Fort and leaned his musket against a house, was knocking on the door of the Sutter abode. A large man with a stern expression opened the door.

"If ye be a spirit, ye'd have a better chance. My daughter is with God, carried away by fever this Christmas past."

Young James was dumbfounded. He squeezed the small packet bound in the softest of cured leather tightly in his palm. Stunned, he whispered, "I am so sorry, Mr. Sutter. Forgive me."

"Good day, boy," said Sutter as he closed the door abruptly, the thump of which brought James to his senses. He turned before the cabin, shouldered his musket, and with heavy heart retraced his steps to his canoe.

"Who be that at the door, father?" said the comely young lady in the kitchen at the rear of the cabin. She was a handsome lass, the young side of twenty, a stream of auburn hair spilling from beneath her cap down her back. Her eyes were a rich earthy brown.

"It be nothing but a beggarly Indian, dear Angeline. I turned him away. One cannot give the layabouts anything unless one is willing to be deluged as by a locust swarm. He spoke of gathering firewood. I told him my back was strong and my hands quick and that if he did not depart in haste, I would use them on him."

"Father, you are too abrupt with people," chided the daughter with a gentility that made the remark one more of approbation than censure.

"Good day, Mr. Sutter," said young Brandon. The greeting brought no look of recognition to the chiseled stare of Mr. Sutter. "Do you remember me? It is I, James Brandon. Perhaps it is the beard. Winter in this great woods trapping leaves a man little concern with the niceties of civilization."

"I remember ye," was Sutter's reply. Brandon was distracted by his growing discomfort. He stumbled with his words. "Kind sir, it is Angie..."
separated from his hunting party. He warmed, then fed the suffering nobleman by his campfire. Then, two days later, he accompanied the unfortunate gentleman back to his party, who by this time had now despaired of his return. In an effusion of gratitude the Frenchman had forced a handful of gold coins upon him and this lovely, intricate chain of diminutive jewels. This was to be Angeline's.

Brandon, having thrown the wrapper aside, put the necklace about his throat. His thick fingers struggled with its minuteness, but he succeeded in fastening it. He placed his musket in the canoe and pushed off shore, heading out into the current that ran midstream. From there he paddled around the neck of land that projected into the river, and having passed that point, he turned his gaze back toward shore. He wished to make sure that he was unobserved.

Satisfied that there were no eyes upon him, Brandon removed his clothing, including his moccasins. Naked, except for the recent adornment, he took the heavy coiled length of rope that lay in the bottom of the canoe and, encircling himself over and over, secured it about his waist. He began to rock the canoe, gently at first, then with mounting ferocity, until the water spilled over the side, filling the hull with a great rush and tossing him into the frigid water.

Swimming away from the canoe, James turned several times to gaze back on the life he was leaving behind. The overturned canoe was nearly submerged, yet it still inched along with the current. If it did not become entangled in the flotsam of the tributary, it would join the river by nightfall.

James climbed ashore with a recklessness that was alarming. He seemed unaware of the stones that bruised his feet or the thickets that tore at his nakedness. His pace was marked by the deliberateness of one assured of his destination. Thirty paces into the wood, he paused at the foot of a giant oak at whose base was a small clearing the size of a pallet. It was here that he and his beloved Angeline had lain last fall before he left to earn his keep. True to his word he had returned for her, but cruel fate had prevented her from fulfilling their promise.

Brandon undid his rope cincture, and having done so, fashioned a loop, which he hurled over a staunch limb above. From this point his actions were quick, almost frenzied. The other end of the rope he secured about the tree trunk, leaving the noose a foot above his head. Leaping from the earth, he grasped the rope above the knot. Assured that the limb would support his weight, he placed his head in the noose and let go his grip. For a long moment his feet dangled in the air, scant inches above the forest floor. Then all was still.

Angeline often remembered the handsome trapper of ten summers past, but the thought brought more pain than consolation, so she quickly tried to drive it from her mind. She had given him her flower, and he had promised her the future.

Her father, Lord rest his immortal soul, had been right. "A young man's charm will only deceive the fair maiden too willing to believe." For all his stuffiness and Puritanical propriety, Angeline conceded that her father had possessed an ability to appraise the depth of the character in a man. He had seen her swept off her feet by the outdoorsman and had tried to protect her, but his efforts were for naught at first. Time had proven him wise. James Brandon had not returned for her as he swore he would.

The cabin itself was now oddly naked of artifact. A large locker and satchel were in the middle of the main room. Angeline was preparing to leave, for there was no reason to stay. Her father lay in the ground five years now, and the moribund town offered no future for a woman of thirty save lonely spinsterhood. She would take up the oft-extended invitation of her cousin in Boston to come experience the bustling life of the metropolis.

Angeline's anxiety about the upcoming coach ride to Boston inhibited her sleep. She had been up at the first rays of light and had double- and triple-checked her gear and the state in which she was leaving the cabin. The coach, which began its long journey at the Canadian border, would not arrive until midday. Several more hours must be consumed. Angeline decided one more walk around the Fort and its environs would be an appropriate adieu to the world she was abandoning.

She made a point to have a parting word with the souls she had not seen in the past two days and prayed briefly in the chapel, yet her anxiety still had the best of her. "Perhaps," she thought, "a walk to the stream's edge would relax me."

Once there, she knelt and gazed into the slow-moving water. Her image was no longer the face of an exuberant young lass but of a woman who has tasted sorrow. The two great men in her life had failed her. Her father, of course, could be forgiven. His passing was all in the natural turn of events. Sweet James, however, lied and turned love's nectar into wormwood.
Sweet James. Her thoughts returned to him again. Was it not far from here that they lay as man and wife? Angeline peered into the woods that abutted the pathway but could not distinguish the clearing where she gave him her soul. Where could that spot be? Then she remembered the great oak at whose base the clearing lay. Turning her gaze upward, she readily spied the canopy of limbs that distinguished her immediate quest.

The woods barred easy entry, but Angeline pressed on until she stood two paces from the oak. There was no apparent clearing; all was overgrown. Within her mind's eye, James Brandon's image became sharper. She was more uneasy; the stoicism she so adeptly maintained as a single woman on the frontier was deserting her. Responding to the impulse to move, Angeline, head down to observe the treacherous web of thicket and root at her feet, circled the tree.

The slight impact on her brow startled her. Looking up, her heart again leapt as she saw what was unmistakably a hangman's noose. Her urge to run was thwarted by the wall of greenery that prevented her retreat to the path. She stood frozen, her breath coming in gasps. Slowly, her composure returned, permitting her to survey the scene.

The limb from which the noose was strung curved gently toward the earth, as if it had been pulled there by a substantial weight, yet there was none to be seen. A feeling of dread seized her. Would she find a human form on the forest floor nearby? A brief visual survey assured her there was no corpse in proximity. Angeline decided she must abandon the woods.

Passing close to the noose, Angeline beheld a shimmer within the fiber. Closer inspection revealed, entwined in the filaments of hemp, the most beautiful gold filigree she had ever seen. Her nimble fingers gently parted the coarse rope and its alluring adherent. Angeline marveled at its weightlessness, delicacy, and beauty. Exposure, for who knows how long, to the elements had dimmed its luster, yet Angeline sensed its true worth. Smiling to herself, Angeline worked the minute clasps, which responded to her touch. Placing the slender band about her neck, Angeline bathed in the warm glow of satisfaction. Her life at this remote outpost was now complete. It had surrendered to her a parting gift. She would arrive in Boston a bejeweled princess.

The American Dream

by Mary Peraro

Pomp and circumstance filled the crisp spring day
They marched with pride side by side to the podium
One humbly,
One boldly,
A new beginning
Would they reach a common goal?
Two diverse paths taken
One steers toward
The high-powered business world
Always working
Using--intelligence, people, any means to gain
Money and power drives his calculating moves
Keep working--no time
For reflection,
For inner growth,
For living.
The alternative career-oriented path chosen carefully
Working to strive for perfection and fulfillment
Accepting challenges.
Searching for a balance
In living, sharing, learning.
Reunion crosses these paths.
They share.
Two lives,
One rich with power, money, and success,
One rich with people, sharing, self-actualization.
The American Dream?
Is in the eye of the beholder.
Forty
also by Mary Peraro

Turning forty is . . .
Midlife crisis overrated
Looking back--
How far we have traveled.
Standing tall.
Independence Day has come with
Freedom to think,
To speak,
To use life's experiences for growth and wisdom.
The body changes . . . but
The mind explodes
With the joy of uninhibited learning,
Discovering,
Observing,
Anticipating what the future holds.
Focusing on life's importance
We continue to fulfill
Our goals,
Our dreams,
It is a new beginning!
Celebrate!

To Say Good-bye
by Pat Drobiak

The call came while I was in class.

I could see his house out my classroom window. How could anything be wrong? I had passed that way this morning. There has to be a mistake. He was better. The doctor said he was.

I ran out the door, yelling to my next-door colleague to cover for me. As I got closer, I could see that there was something wrong. But nothing could have happened--he was better . . . the doctor said so.

Everyone was in the back yard--the police--people--on the deck--by the pool. I ran over. "Stop her--stop her!" someone yelled.

"No-no, I need to be here. Let me go--let me by. Where is he? He's my brother--He's mine!"

But they held me, they stopped me--but I saw. I saw those feet in those damn shoes with the rise in the heel so he would look taller--I saw--those feet sprawled so funny now.

They later told me that he had been there all night. They had called him from school and when there wasn't any answer, they called her and she had come and she had found him. She found him again!

How do I talk to her? Anger, despair, heartbreaking agony. "Are you satisfied? You're free!" I screamed. Her tear-stained face looked at me, begging, but he was gone and she was here--it's not fair!

The priest. I have to talk to the priest. "Father, he's not in hell, is he, Father?"

"No, my child, he was sick. He's resting now." Does that make me feel better? Does it take away the pain?

The anger comes, then the denial. He could not have done this to himself. Someone did this to him. "Find the murderer!"

I remember the morning when he came to me. "She's leaving," he said.
The enormity of it didn't hit me until I looked into his eyes, eyes that reflected the agony and hopelessness inside him. He died then, but how was I to know?

Anger rose within me. How could she? How could she leave him? What about the kids? Didn't she know that his whole life was his home and family? Didn't she realize what this would do to him? She had to know what a special person he was.

And he was special!

He was there when I woke on the day following my seventh birthday.

But were they trying to fool me? They knew how much I wanted him. I ran to the neighbor's house. She had just had her baby. Was her baby still there? Back and forth I ran, trying to catch them tricking me. But no, he was mine. My special birthday present. How proud I was, pushing my doll baby up the street in his carriage with Mama by my side.

He was loved. He was mine, but I was willing to share him. Mama, Auntie, and I---three mothers sharing our child.

He was a thoughtful boy, always eager to please, but even in his youth there always seemed to be something that evaded him, something that he couldn't quite reach.

He was short and that bothered him. He bought inserts for his shoes in order to appear taller. He admired the "jocks" in high school and tried to emulate them, but couldn't. But he was on the sidelines cheering them on.

It was at this time that he started to drink. Not every day or even every week, but enough to become a problem. He was not pleasant to be with during these times, but he made up for it on his many good days.

After a stint in the service and a try at construction, he decided that he wanted more out of life. He applied to and was accepted at the University of Louisiana. It was not the easiest of times, Mama was now a widow and there was no extra money, but he had the G.I. bill to help and he worked. He was never afraid of work.

It was in Louisiana that he met her.

They lived carefully. She graduated and got a teaching job. How proud we were when he graduated. He was the first in the family to receive a college degree.

Soon there was a baby daughter. He wanted her to have the roots that he had had, so they came home.

They grew. Each home and each accomplishment was better than the first. They had another daughter and settled to become the perfect family.

But things were happening. She filled out and became more attractive. He was drinking more. She was finding new friends. There was their love for the children, but it seemed that this was where their mutuality ended. He lived for his home; she wanted to grow.

Rumors began. "Wasn't that your sister-in-law with so-and-so last night?" "Is your brother having problems?"

Finally she told him. She wanted her freedom. She moved out, taking the kids with her. He became more and more despondent.

"Get a good lawyer."

"Don't you leave the house, that's desertion."

Advice came from everyone. But these were not the things he wanted to hear.

"You can get the kids," I told him. "You're the better parent." But he couldn't see a messy court battle. He didn't want to hurt his kids. He loved her and didn't want to take his kids away from her. "Fight," I yelled. "Fight."

He became more distant emotionally, yet physically he became closer. We talked. I don't know when I began to be afraid.

One night he called. He sounded different. We talked. He had been drinking. I told him that he had to think of the kids. He replied, "I'm tired. When am I going to be able to take care of myself?! I was uneasy, but I couldn't go to him at that moment, and he seemed to be okay when we said goodbye.

She found him in bed the next morning. He had taken sleeping pills and had cut his wrists. He had called her before he went to sleep. The cuts were only superficial, but he had tried. He was placed in intensive care. They wanted to admit him into a psychiatric hospital, but, "Oh, no, we'll take care of him. We'll make sure that he's safe."

She went to the wedding, Mama, Auntie, and I.

She was a very skinny girl, an Oriental with dark olive skin, but she loved him and he loved her.
He met with his psychiatrist regularly. He was doing great; the doctor said so! He had the kids regularly, and things seemed to be working out—until the time for the divorce came closer.

He came to me. I was in the classroom. The Chapter I Program had ended earlier in the week, and there were no students. I wondered why he wasn't in school, but he said that he had things to do. We talked. God, I can't remember about what. He left. I didn't say good-bye!

I learned later that he had gone to my husband, now I know, to say his good-bye. He cleaned his yard, took things to the dump, stopped, bought the gun, and went home. She found him the next morning, sitting by the pool, the dog lying by his side, a drink on the table, and his head gone.

Lord, I'm angry. Angry at whom, me, her, him? It's been seven years. Why did he take my baby doll away from me? Why couldn't I help? When will the pain go away? It hurts so much!

Why—When?

Rest in Peace, Little Brother. Be tired no more.
"Mommy. I have to tell you something."

"Penny. I have to go. I'll call you later."

"please," she said, putting down the receiver and leaving the telephone right there in the middle of the hallway as she continued to prod Katie back toward the bathroom sink. "Katie-dear. What . . . ."

"I tell you what, Katie: I don't even see this. I'm going to deal with George now. And then I'm going to call school to get a substitute because Penny is sick today and can't babysit so you can't go there, and Grammy is out of town so you can't go there either, and Mrs. Chase has 752 cousins from Peoria visiting her so you can't go there, but I'm not angry, and I'm not going to scream at you. I'm going to close the door very quietly. See? I'm not even going to slam it. And when I come back Poof! Magic! No more toothpaste."

"Mommy. Can I tell you . . . ?"

"I'm not upset. Really I'm not. I don't care. Hey, I don't even care if George eats his cereal. I don't even care if he never comes out from behind the blue chair again. He can live there. What do I care? I'm not going to work today anyway. I'll call school."

"Mommy, can . . . ."

"I have to go call school so they'll call a sub. I've got this whole thing under control. Where are my plans? Left brain, left brain. I'll go call now. It's early. Peggy will be at school, or Kathy. Mike won't even be in yet. One of them will just take care of everything. No problem. Everything'll be peachy-keen. I'm shutting the door very calmly now, see? Do take care of the toothpaste, Katie-dear."

"He can stay behind the blue chair forever," Josie went on as she closed the bathroom door and walked out into the living room. "He won't, of course. He can't even see this. I'm going to deal with George now. And then I'm going to call school to get a substitute because Penny is sick today and can't babysit so you can't go there, and Grammy is out of town so you can't go there either, and Mrs. Chase has 752 cousins from Peoria visiting her so you can't go there, but I'm not angry, and I'm not going to scream at you. I'm going to close the door very quietly. See? I'm not even going to slam it. And when I come back Poof! Magic! No more toothpaste."

"Mommy. Can I tell you . . . ?"

"Ask your brother how the weather is behind the blue chair today why don't you, dear?"
I Played the Game

by Cheryl Timion

Thank goodness I was the only one to see the tear as we wheeled Dad into the nursing home in his wheelchair. We were moving him into what we all knew would be his last home. Beyond the tear, he showed no emotion. My mind flashed back to the beach at Cape Cod. I could see Dad attacking the waves with his three teen-aged grandsons. None of us thought then that in ten short months he would be reduced to this.

Our first sign that anything was amiss occurred when we got back to Connecticut. Ty, our thirteen year old son, had asked Gramps to go for a bike ride. True to form, Dad had been eager for the outing, and in no time the two of them were ready with their bikes aimed down the driveway.

Dad had been an outstanding high school athlete and took much pride in his physical abilities. At sixty-one he still jogged every day come hell or high water, while traveling his sales territory or at home. But as Dad and Ty mounted their bikes, Dad was having difficulty balancing. He did manage to swing his leg over the center bar and get going, but he continued to wobble down the street, jerkily maintaining his balance. Something was wrong! But Dad acted as though he was thoroughly enjoying this outing with his grandson . . . so I played the game.

At the end of the week it was time for Mom and Dad to return to Iowa; their New England holiday had ended. Our son Tom and I rode back to the midwest with them. I was to get Tom settled into his first year of college. Dad was an excellent navigator. He had steered his way through several states as a salesman. On family vacations, to destinations unknown, we seldom made a wrong turn with Dad at the helm. But this time, in Chicago--familiar territory to Dad--we got lost. Something was wrong! But Dad acted not like a man who had just been on vacation. And . . . wasn't he limping just a bit? He sagged down in Mother's recliner. Something definitely was wrong! Should I play the game?

As Mother and I busied ourselves preparing dinner, I knew I had to say something to her. Mother appeared to be almost relieved when I asked if Dad was O.K., but we served the dinner. Dad was hungry and ate well.

On Sunday the Iowa relatives came, several from long distances, to welcome us back, to hear all about the trip, and to see how much Tom had grown since they'd last seen him. Dad strung up the volleyball net and got the teams organized. He was in the game, but he ran into people. We continually had to help him regain his balance before he plummeted to the ground after another attempt to volley the elusive ball. Something was wrong. Only the astute relatives were aware, but Dad was their host, their older brother and uncle, the one they looked up to . . . so I played the game.

I played the game the next day when I made up excuses so that Dad wouldn't go with us, as we had planned, to get Tom moved into his first dorm room on his yet-unseen college campus. Dad seemed crushed. We needed him, he said, to help lug the cartons and find the place. But he didn't insist. Something unexplainable was happening.

On Monday Dad was up early and bucked the traffic as he drove into the city to his office. We were back in the routine. Mom and I chatted incessantly between loads of laundry and checking the status of the garden produce we'd have to tend to.

It was good to be home. There'd be no parenting or wifely duties for me for a few days; Mom was planning to parade me to bridge luncheons, her prayer group and church circle. Dad would be leaving in the morning for his weekly three-day jaunt, working his sales territory.

But Dad came home from work looking drained and drawn, not like a man who had just been on vacation. And . . . wasn't he limping just a bit? He sagged down in Mother's recliner. Something definitely was wrong! Should I play the game?

As Mother and I busied ourselves preparing dinner, I knew I had to say something to her. Mother appeared to be almost relieved when I asked if Dad was O.K., but we served the dinner. Dad was hungry and ate well.

While we cleared the table and started doing the dishes, Dad changed his clothes and prepared to mow the lawn that had missed his attention while he was away. He got the mower started and began to make his diagonal path across the yard, but . . . he was limping and he wasn't leading the mower in a straight path. He kept pulling to the right. Something serious was wrong! I could not afford to play the game. What was it? Was he having a stroke? Had he had a mild stroke during the night?

For a moment these thoughts paralyzed me! But in an instant I realized that the game was over, I had to intervene! I had to get Dad separated from that mower before it was too late. Without waiting to get Mother's reaction, I slipped outdoors. It was a pitiful sight to see such a well-built former athlete dragging his right foot behind the
I caught up with him. I yelled over the drone of the mower that I would take a turn at mowing. He ignored me, so I yelled again, "Dad, let me mow for a while." I attempted to take over the mower, but Dad pushed me away and continued on his course.

More than my feelings were hurt. Dad was still a strong man. But I now realized that Dad was determined to play the game . . . with me.

He finished mowing that section of the lawn to make his point. When he came inside, Mother and I decided we must talk to him about our concerns. We told him that we knew something was not right with him and that we wanted him to see the doctor. We'd even take him right then if he'd let us. He listened but said he did not need a doctor. He needed a good night's rest.

He went to bed and the next morning looked somewhat rested. He left for his weekly sales trip. But I was worried. Mother, the eternal optimist, was hoping against hope that all was well, or at least better. And besides, I was there, and we had a social schedule to attend to.

As usual Dad called that night to let Mother know where he was. Wednesday night he did the same thing. Thursday afternoon I was to leave on the bus for the airport. Mom and I were tagging my luggage at the ticket counter when he came grinning up to surprise us. But this wasn't the well-groomed father I had known for over forty years. Huh had dribbled something on the lapel of his rather unkempt looking suit, and his tie was somehow out of whack. How could this be my Dad? He'd always looked so "spit and polished." And his walk was now even more lopsided.

We visited for a few minutes. My bus would soon arrive, but Dad kissed me good-bye and left before the bus came, said he had to leave to go home. Something was terribly wrong! But I smiled and waved; I played the game for him.

On the flight home I slept. I was exhausted; the game had taken its toll. At home I was greeted by a family who had existed on frozen pizzas and fast food. There were many loose ends for me to tie up and heaps of laundry for me to do. My loving and concerned husband was anxious to hear about my return to our home territory in the midwest.

I was home; at last I didn't have to play the game. Or did I? My Dad and my husband, Larry, had a very special relationship. Larry's face clouded over as I began to recount in vivid detail the alarming events of the past two weeks. So I decided I still had to play the game.

Later Mother called to say that a neighbor, a respected business man, had finally been able to convince Dad to let him take Dad to the emergency room at the hospital. Tests would be forthcoming.

It was a Saturday morning when I placed the call. Mother said that the doctor had just phoned to give them the test results. Dad had a brain tumor. Immediate surgery was called for.

I got there before the surgery and so did my two brothers. Though Dad was prepped for surgery, he had a strong grip and his mind was keen. We were all brave and we played the game.

After surgery the surgeon's prognosis was not what we had hoped. The tumor was malignant; he got all the malignant tissue that he could see, but he could not get it all.

Mother was so relieved; Dad had made it through the surgery! The surgeon's news did not daunt her. Dad was so happy to wake up and see us all again. I saw his only other tear. So we played the game.

Dad recovered for a while and went through radiation treatments. But just as the surgeon had predicted, he lived for only nine months after the surgery. I did not see him at his best. I did not see him again until he had declined to the point that he needed a wheelchair.

When Toby, our middle son, and I arrived for that last visit, Dad could not meet us at the door, which was his custom. Other people, of course, did, but they only impeded my path to Dad. His look of total dismay when I did get to him made me want to look away. He was ashamed for me to see him like this, for he was my father. So I played the game. What else could I give him?

I was the only one who saw his tear the day we wheeled him into the nursing home. Was the game up? I wanted to comfort him, hug him, and brush the tear away for him. I wanted to talk to him about what was ahead.

But he was my father. He had dignity and an up-bringing that had taught him to be strong at all costs. So I played the game to the end . . . I was his daughter.
Reflections

by Marcia Gendron

Look in the mirror.
What do you see?

Three years ago my therapist asked me to do this exercise. It was a difficult period in my life. I was sure my life was over. My husband had left me for his lawyer's secretary.

She was nineteen, young, professional, and carefree, not like me. I was thirty-two years old, the mother of his two children--busy with clean-up and household management. We had grown apart.

I knew nothing about business management, Borg-Warner, or electronics of the future. He knew nothing about nursery rhymes, kindergarten, or Tide and Downy's fresh clean scent. I guess he'd stopped caring long ago. He did a nice job hiding it, though, until Michelle came along.

Young and beautiful to his eyes, she was all that I was not. Her virgin body could still wear bikinis without stretch marks. She was tall and thin, and she could be an important asset to his firm. Her knowledge of business law could help him manage the company he'd started with a loan from my parents six years ago. I watched this company grow from a desk in our garage to a corporate office with five interstate retail stores. Michelle was impressed with its success. Michelle was also smart.

Aware that she could not be happy with a pot-bellied workaholic thirteen years her senior, she knew that at nineteen she did not want to settle down. Sure Dan could offer her trips to Hawaii or anywhere else, but Michelle refused.

Since then I've learned a lesson from Michelle, the girl I've never met. I'm a different person now but still the same in many ways. Nursery rhymes have been traded for knock-knock jokes, but I still relish Tide and Downy's clean fresh scent.

I look in the mirror now, and this is what I see:

I still need to do something with my hair, but I've accepted its baby-fine quality as uniquely my own. My veiny hard-working hands still have small short fingers. And I still like them and the things they can do.
The long winding road was familiar. Those lush green stately trees lining the road, each with its own sculptured identity, greeted me once again. I smiled as I felt an aura of relaxation. Another evening of escape to the world of Tanglewood was about to be mine.

Picnickers with their assorted supplies came into view as they emerged from various modes of transportation, their expressions making me realize that they, too, had once again been lured here by reasons similar to my own.

As our small group of friends set foot on the newly mowed lawn of this lovely estate, our task of finding the perfect spot began. Would sitting by the pond provide the best ambiance for the evening or would we feel more comfortable and cozy tucked in amongst several oversized trees that abutted the farther section of the lawn? Opting for the cozy atmosphere, we set our blanket down and began relieving our arms of their oversized burdens.

I could feel my relaxation intensifying as I began to absorb my surroundings—a candelabra complete with what appeared to be sterling silver place settings to my left, a few teenagers thankfully congregated a significant distance away, and to my right an elegant long table with a white linen tablecloth, napkins, and a centerpiece of fresh strawberries and pineapple.

Our own surroundings began to take on an elegant tone as we sipped on chilled cucumber soup garnished with fresh mint. Quiet conversation accompanied the beginning of our gourmet musical evening and I sat back and listened. Gazing at the skyline slowly turning to dusk, my thoughts began to drift to what the rest of the summer would bring; leisurely bike rides at the Cape Cod National Seashore and trips to our family cottage with long overdue visits on the porch overlooking Lake Winnipesaukee.

My daydreaming was brought back to reality by the sound of Gershwin tunes and the sound of a popping cork. A glass of crisp chardonnay was soon in hand and gourmet delights abounded in front of me: spinach and sausage stuffed chicken breasts, curried rice and artichoke salad, and homemade pretzels dipped in herbal mustard.

Slowly we ate, attempting to savor every carefully prepared bite, and slowly the sun continued its predictable evening ritual. The Gershwin tunes continued, and I sat back comfortably absorbing the sounds that can only come from that magnificent shell housing those famed orchestras: The Boston Pops and The Boston Symphony. Looking up at the evening, I observed the slightest fingernail moon peeking through thousands of stars. Lights placed unobtrusively created shadows on the paths and bushes surrounding us while a few high birches were silhouetted in the small distant pond. I felt part of another world.

Soon, however, my real world emerged again as I became aware of the orchestra's grand finale, "Stars and Stripes Forever," playing in the distance. And likewise our own gourmet finales was sitting in front of me: fresh strawberries with grand marnier.

As the orchestra, seemingly reluctantly, played its last tune, we, also reluctantly, began gathering our belongings and joined the hundreds of other musically and atmospherically satiated picnickers to begin the journey homeward.

I smiled as I slowly walked away because another treasured evening had been mine—an escape to the world of Tanglewood.
My father was a deli man. Actually my father owned what up until ten years ago would have been referred to as a supermarket, but next to today's Super Stop and Shop would look like a corner grocery store; no fancy bakery turning out spinach-filled croissants, no tortellini swimming in pesto sauce, no housewares, no outdoor patio furniture, no drugstore, not even the latest Danielle Steele novel.

My dad was the man who cut your steaks to the thickness you desired, or boned your roast, or ground you extra lean hamburger because your husband was on a low-fat diet. He knew when your husband had cataract surgery and offered you comforting words as your carriage rolled past the deli counter. He knew when your daughter had her first baby and took an interest in her because he remembered when you took her in the store when she was a baby. Remember the day he put his arm around you in the store when he learned that your husband had lost his job and whispered that you were to shop just the way you always did, pick up what you wanted, and he'd trust you until you got back on your feet? That was also around Thanksgiving, so he picked out an extra plump turkey because he knew you had three small children to feed who wouldn't understand an empty table during the holidays. You looked at him with tears in your eyes so filled with emotion that you couldn't speak, so you just squeezed his hand.

He had a mischievous side to him, too, and it usually centered on his customers and business. The Catholic school did a big business with my dad, and he grew to know and love many of the nuns. Often they would call him to bring some beer up to their living quarters, and they trusted him to be discreet. They must have loved him, too, because when my mother died, they named a classroom in her honor.

Times have changed since my dad put his arm around the woman in the store and told her to pick up groceries and not worry about the money. Now we have our plastic courtesy cards and our double coupons and even computerized cash registers that talk to us while the groceries go through the scanner. Yes, we have all these things now in the name of progress. But where is the deli man: the friend, the comforter, the confidant, the amateur psychologist that helped us through so many hard times and shared in our joys as well? And where is the trust that's gone out of our lives?
I guess when you're little everyone seems big, but my mother was more than just an adult to me. When I think now of all the people who helped to shape me into who I am, the whole litany centers on her. We weren't always close, for my first mothering came from my grandmother. And that led directly to an incident that sparked an unspoken understanding that grew between my mother and me.

We lived in Grandma's house—my father, mother, brother, and I. My father was the acknowledged male breadwinner, a respected teacher and citizen in that small town, but my grandmother was accorded a respect that put her beyond title or position, and she was the heart of the family from my four-year-old point of view. My father had his work, my mother had my new baby brother, and so my Grandma had me.

Grandma was a widow and had made her living for many years as a milliner. By the 1940s she still kept her shop on our little main street and added some dry goods and "ladies' garments" to the stock. Her store was a wonder to me with its big bevelled glass door, elaborately embossed tin ceiling, and its random assortment of merchandise scattered over tables and counters, or protected inside massive oak and glass cases. She kept hours Monday through Saturday on the same schedule as many other small businesses in our town, closing at noon for a lunch hour. The store, a livelihood for Grandma and a social center for her friends, became a nursery school for me where I reveled in freedom and in her favors, which I was sure, even then, were more frequent and more liberal than my mother would allow. But one morning when I found myself at home instead of with Grandma, I inadvertently gave my mother a chance to prove me wrong, a chance that became the starting point of a quiet and deeply supporting relationship.

There I sat on the front porch with my big Chow. He was my only playmate on the block. The dog's red fur ruff and his broad black nose sat beneath his big eyes. He seemed sad, too.

"Let's go, Pal. I know it's almost time for lunch. Mommy is getting the table ready. It's not far. We'll be able to see the traffic light from the corner, and the store is right across that street past Julia's flower shop. Won't Grandma be surprised to see us come to walk her home!"

The dog stood up as I left the top step and he followed me past the row houses on our street and up the hill toward the corner. No one was outside.

"Keeny is getting her lunch ready. So is Mrs. Koss. Mrs. Wise must be back in her kitchen too. Hurry up, it's almost lunch time."

I knew I was off on a real adventure when I realized that the dog had stopped and was sitting in front of Mrs. Wise's house—the last on our block.

"Come on, Pal. Okay, I'm going even if you're not. I'm big enough. I know the way. I'll watch all the stores until I get to the light."

He sat there. I turned and walked away, facing the bend that seemed to mark the point of no return, the point we were never allowed to pass alone. I felt very small against the big iron fence that bordered the street. There was no adult hand to hold this morning. But I knew where I was going and I knew how to get there, and wouldn't Grandma laugh when she saw me at her big glass door! I turned to wave at Pal. But I couldn't see him. While I'd been walking and looking at the design in the iron fence, I'd rounded the corner.

I darted across the road—no cars today—and headed straight down the tree-lined street toward the first block of stores. It was warm, and I'd been walking a long time now. My legs were tired. I hoped I hadn't made a mistake. How could I? I was sure I knew the way. But it had never seemed this long before.

I plodded on and finally knew I was aimed in the right direction as I passed the first store, The Glamour Shoppe. Yes, I was right! There was Jack, the Brockton man, standing up against his doorway as usual. I heard him chuckle as I went by. On past the drug store and the Bean Wagon with all its noise. It must be lunch time now. I could smell the soup and coffee. Ahead past the Journal office was the corner traffic light.

I stopped on the curb and looked back. Jack had disappeared inside. I looked at the light. Someone spoke.

"Go ahead, Karen. You can cross now."

I didn't answer. I must never talk to strangers. I darted across the street, painfully aware of my curls bouncing up and down. How did he know me? Was he watching
I felt small as they all stared down at me. Grandma was quiet and Daddy was mad. My mother waited for him to speak.

"Well, young lady, you've got a few things to learn about obedience. You've been told not to leave the block. While you were off being naughty, your mother was making a pie for dessert. You won't be having any. Maybe that will teach you what happens to little girls who disobey!"

My father's tone was serious, but I didn't understand. I stole a look at my mother. She knew I didn't like pie. She was so quiet. Was this her punishment, too?

"That's right, Karen," she finally said. "No pie for you." A little smile played around her mouth. I dropped my eyes. I hadn't been naughty. I'd been trying to grow up. She knew that—just as she knew I didn't like pie.