

ASTERisk

ASTERISK

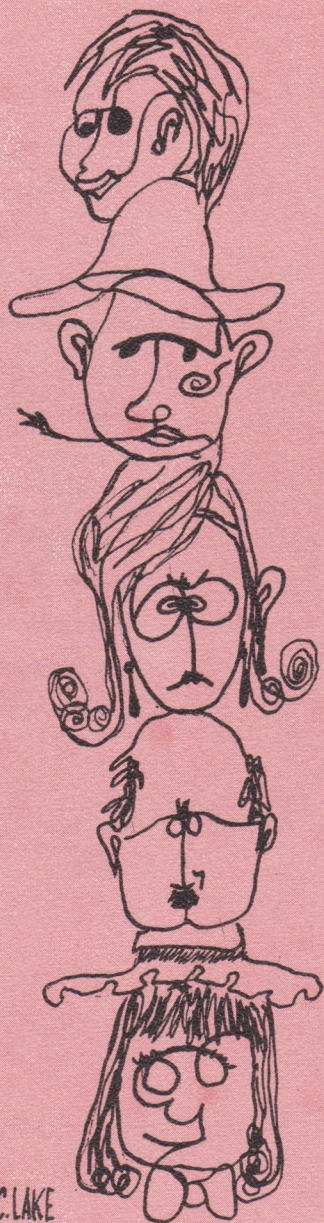
Foreword

An asterisk, by definition, calls attention to something of importance. We of the Literary Club are submitting to you, our readers, writings of students which we feel deserve special recognition and are indeed of great importance.

Our ideas for the divisions have been considered and carefully studied, resulting in the five categories of Life, Reason, Humor, Death, and Love, five of the most emotional and absorbing words, for writing purposes, of the English language.

"Our thought is the key which unlocks the doors of the world. There is something in us which corresponds to that which is around us, beneath us, and above us."

—Samuel McChord Crothers



Dedication

The publication of the **Asterisk** is another proud achievement for Lowrey High School students. Once again you have shown that you are a student body of many talents. I wish to congratulate all of you who have worked so hard to see this, our first literary magazine, become a reality.

I know this publication took many hours of your time; but I am sure that you will agree with me that it was well worth it, for here is something that all can be truly proud of.

JOHN P. ROMANOW

Principal

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Reason



The Wisdom of a Teabag

by Judi James

Last Wednesday I awoke in my normal state of morning stupor and stumbled into the kitchen to make a cup of tea. I fumbled in the tea cannister trying to latch onto a teabag. I caught one, plopped it into the cup, and sat down to enjoy my habitual morning pick-up. When I pried my eyes open enough to be able to see, I followed my customary habit of reading the saying on the back of the tea tag. These sayings are usually quite amusing and put me in a good mood to start the day. This teabag was not quite so funny. The tag stated, "People would be more concerned about radioactive fallout if it interfered with T.V. reception."

The more I thought about this little quotation, the more it disturbed me. The back of a tea tag summed up the philosophy

of a majority of America's people. People are concerned only with material pleasures; the things of importance are their own comforts. How many people bother to read about the latest developments in Viet Nam? My guess would be very few except those directly involved. As long as the war doesn't hinder the purchase of a new car or interfere with their trip to Bermuda next summer, people just aren't concerned.

Maybe this apathy is due to our increasing prosperity or striving for material possessions. Maybe it's due to the peril of nuclear holocaust hanging over our heads. Or maybe it's due to the fact that we're all spoiled by our riches and easy life. But for some reason the people of America just don't care.

Is Today's Music Really So Bad?

by Curtis Barron

Today is an age of criticism, especially of music. Teenage music is being constantly criticized by those who might set themselves up as relatively objective critics. The critics continually compare music of various periods of time and find that the music of "the old days" was far superior to the stuff they play on the radio today. In fact, when they deprecate today's music, they can find very little good in it. "It stinks."

Rubbish. Today's teenage music is every bit as good as any music ever created. Any criticism is unjustified, no matter how objectively it seems to be presented, simply because it is basically prejudiced. The critics have been raised on their own type of music, and it is a trait of humans that they revere the days of their youth. The music of the critics, when they were young, was different than ours, so they dislike our brand of music. If, in fact, the music of the critics is analyzed, it will be found that they didn't do any better than we have in the music category. So let's explore a bit.

In the early 1900's, jazz was just beginning to take hold down in New Orleans. That music of our grandparents and great-grandparents was delightful to its listeners—if a guy could take delight in six or seven trumpets knocking him out of his seat with one blast. Going to the 1920's, we observe another picture. Radio and the phonograph became extremely popular. The subjects for songs became tasteful. Such great standards as "Clap Hands—

Here Comes Charlie" and "Me and the Boyfriend" became the vogue. Such great, tasteful, mature songs they were—if they can be called songs.

Then came the crooners of the 30's. Rudy Vallee and Bing Crosby together must have really fortified the nation for the coming war with those morale building voices they had—voices that couldn't disturb a mouse on the far side of a hotel room.

Today, we have rock-n-roll with its "Leader of the Laundromat," "Sally Go Round the Roses," Elvis Presley, Conway Twitty, the Detergents, and the Beatles. When the past is explored though, one finds that little is really wrong with modern music that has not been drawn one way or another from the music of the past. Everything must have a foundation of some sort. When one looks at today's music, then one can see that a strong tower of worthwhile music can't be built on a trashpile of junky music either sung by singers with weak voices or played by instruments that are out of tune.

Actually, good music can come from any age or period, and no period can lay claim to being one of particular musical excellence. "And I Love Her" is just as good as "Red Roses For a Blue Lady," "White Christmas," or "When the Moon Comes Over the Mountain." All music has its good and weak points.

So let's not hear any complaints. Quit worshipping the sacred cow that is old music and seek good where it is, not where it was.

Personal Rights, A Privilege?

by Linda Fountaine

Have you ever felt hurt, spiteful, and angry against the world because of the outlook of your fellowman? Can you know the feeling of discrimination? Have you felt the feeling of being confused or inferior? How about the feeling of not being able to live as the natural citizen you are? Have you ever had the rights which are guaranteed you as a citizen taken away because of personal qualities or of being judged by the feeling and opinions of your fellowman?

No human being, because of his personal feelings or opinions, should have the right to treat another human being this way, against the created rights guaranteed him. No human being employed in a public site should have the right to force another human being to take his business elsewhere because he doesn't fit set qualifications made by the other person.

The public makes the laws, works the factories, builds the buildings, fights the wars, makes the occupations, and, most of all, makes up the public. One man is just as equal as another and should be given all the rights entitled to him without any hesitation, as long as he abides by them. Just as one person has the right to be publicly educated where he wants, so has the next person, without controversy. Although everyone has the right to his own opinions, persons should respect the feelings, rights and opinions of their fellowman, each being as equal as the next.

The feeling of being confused,

inferior, hurt, and spiteful can be felt in many problems, national and personal. Problems of civil rights, nationalities, religious controversy, physical or mental defects, and just plain everyday living occurrences are such problems. All these problems are based on feelings and opinions of persons who have no more rights than the people they are against. These feelings have been felt throughout a large part of the world's population today, yesterday, and probably tomorrow. Part of these problems, both home and abroad, should not be a problem, but an advancement in mankind toward a better world of understanding and co-operation.

Glory Without Work

by Mark MacFarlane

Honor, glory, and prestige are virtues which everyone would like to have. However, to seek and obtain these virtues without actually working for them is not only wrong, but it is a betrayal of the other people in any group who do work for them. In almost every club and organization, one will find these people who want the glory but not the work. These are the people who call themselves members and are ready to support the organization until some time and effort on their part is required. How, one might ask, do I know these things about people? The answer is from experience. When the chips are down, all one has to do is stand back and watch the size of the group dwindle as the glory seekers seek cover.

A Friend

by Toni Sudut

You make me sick! Just leave me alone! Mind your own business! Has someone ever said this to you? Maybe a person who you thought was a friend of yours? I bet it made you think twice about your friendship with this person and if it was that important to keep after being treated as you were.

Having friends means a lot to many people, but it is just as important to be a friend as it is to have one. A friendship can not depend on one person alone, two are needed.

There are many ways to show people that you would like to be a friend. You should always be pleasant, (even if you happen to be near a person you don't particularly care for) and carry on an interesting conversation to make the person feel more comfortable.

People are little puppies in that they need at least a little attention or else they feel hurt and rejected. They have no one to talk to and therefore keep things pretty much to themselves. These people tend to be shy and won't speak unless spoken to. But a conversation could mean a lot to this person. He needs someone to compliment him, listen to what he has to say, and take the time to find out just what type of a person he really is. It takes a special person to do this, and a friend is a special person.

There are a lot of ways to lose friends and keep others from wanting to be a friend. From what you see and hear about certain people, you would think they made a practice of this. Their specialty is spread-

ing false rumors, or any kind of rumors, around about a person. They don't care how the person will feel when this rumor gets back to him. They do not even care what the rumor is about or how ridiculous it may be, just as long as it is something to talk about, something to say.

Some people are phonies. You have to be especially careful of them. They could be compared to a person who would greet you with one hand and pick your pocket with the other. These people pretend to be your friend while they are really interested in you so that they can ride around in your new car, borrow your sweater for school, get you to help them with their homework every night, or even use you just to get closer to that adorable brother of yours. Some people even have the gall to use a person just to get to know another. You might be thinking, "Oh, nobody could be that rotten," but you would be surprised at the people who are this way, who have the nerve to use others.

Analyze yourself for a minute. Do you talk behind the backs of others? Are you usually a snotty, sarcastic person, and answer others only when you are good and ready to? Also, do you have a specialty of being rude and making catty remarks? People who are known to have these . . . uh . . . characteristics are known to have few friends. If you have these characteristics, chances are you have very few real friends.

Conversation In The Year 2000

by Curtis Baron

"Yes, I really had a great time as President. I ruined everything."

This was the voice of a worker sitting at his lunchroom table. He enjoyed talking with his three friends about current events and the past.

"Oh yeah. I was the Vice-president. I helped you do it."

"No, really. Back in 1984, it was really a wild time we had then, when I was elected. It wasn't half as bad. It was only a quarter."

"Can't you remember the time we were in school back in the 60's?" interrupted the third one. "Those were really the days, Why, I can remember when we even had . . . now what were those things . . . to ride in . . . some huge metal contraptions. What were they called?"

"Automobile, I think. I'm not too sure, but that's what I think they were." Here, the fourth one entered the conversation.

From here on the conversation worked in rotation, from the first speaker to the last.

1st: "Yeah, they were automobiles. Vulgarly, I think they were called autocars or cars for short."

2nd: "That's what they were. There was one model of a car that used to be very popular then. It's coming to me now—the Ford. They even had one called a Mustang. (a short crisp laugh). Who ever heard of an autocar looking like a horse."

3rd: "No, I think they were supposed to be fast like a race-horse. But really, those antiques could never go faster than 200 mph. I don't see how they weighed so much over thousand pounds. A thousand pounds is just right."

4th: "I looked at the same reference you did. That car didn't last long, did it? General Transportation, Inc. stopped making those old things when they bought the Ford Company out, back around '72 or '73."

"You know what they called General Transportation before it was General Trans? General Motors."

1st: "Huh. They couldn't call it that today. Our roadsters have no motors."

2nd: "Yeah. Air jets are so much more economical. It would be silly to call a company that makes no motors General Motors."

1st: "Let's see . . . where did they make those . . . cars they made?"

2nd: "Let me think a minute. (A slight pause) In Michigan. You know, that place that was blown up by some A-bombs because it was a menace to society, pouring all that filthy smoke out in the air and making all those useless cars. Yecch."

3rd: "But where were they made at?"

4th: "In . . . Dearborn . . . Dearborn Heights!"

1st: "No, silly one. Grosse Pointe. It had cleaner surroundings there"

2nd: "Mentioning 1965 made me think about some U.S. History I learned in school. They had lots troubles back then. Such a low standard of living, too."

3rd: "They had a lot of trouble with different races then. Selma, Philadelphia, New York, Atlanta, Little Rock. Somehow those names stick out in my head."

4th: "Yeah. That was before anyone applied the idea of fencing the races apart with a big wire fence, each group contented. Whoever thought that up was a smart one."

1st: "With them separated, they never again had to worry about being forced to live together."

2nd: "It's really the simplest things that help. I wonder why they never thought of that before?"

3rd: "They were stupid."

They were all silent for a while, then another thought came into their heads.

2nd: "It's a pretty corny way of getting into the subject, but what kind of foreign relations did they have? If I remember right they had a pretty nasty situation back then. How did it get the way it is now, so peaceful and all? Who figured out the solution to the whole problem?"

3rd: "The same genius who had the idea of fencing apart the races. He got together a commission to study the earth's resources. Then he assigned the earth's population a proportionate amount of coal, oil, and other such things. No fuss. Then they had fences built around each other's territory. If anyone trespassed on another country's territory that was it for him. He was vaporized."

4th: "Didn't any protest?"

3rd: "Tough luck for them. They got themselves into the situation, so they had no business having someone else get them out."

1st: "I don't guess they had many smart people back then. They didn't even have the brains to think of such simple solutions to problems."

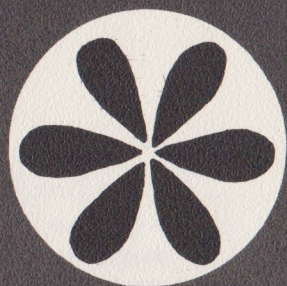
2nd: "They weren't too stupid, in one thing at least. They made good mechanical men back then."

3rd: (derisively) "Ah, your head must be slipping a gear. You're going haywire. I don't know what to think of you. Those crude things you call 'good'?"

2nd: "Oh, they were crude, all right. But they really made advances back there in 1965. They set us up good for making mechanical servants and such like things. They also began making mechanical workers."

The lunch bell rang, signaling the end of the lunch period. The quartet began to rise from their seats. Suddenly, they stopped rising and fell against the table. Number three answered two "Like . . ." Then they were all silent.

A custodian walked over to the quartet. He looked closely at them, then shook his head and mumbled to himself, "I wish they'd make new robots," he said as he turned the keys in their backs to rewind them.



HUMOR

Pretty Pink Flowers

by Ron Aitken

Pretty Pink Flowers Float On The Water;
What Do The Fish Think About It?
Machines Float Through Outer Space
What Do Stars Think About It?
January Is The First Month;
What Does December Think About It?
After All, It Is Before January.
They All Must Not Be Very Mad,
For They Would Have Said Something.
The Smith Brothers Have Beards;
What Do The Mrs. Smiths Think About It?
Teachers Are Ugly, Have A Lousy Personality,
Talk Through Their Hats And Think That
They're Better Than Anybody.
What Do The Mrs. Teachers Think About It?
Does This Mean That Fish Are Worried
About Falling Flowers?
Do Stars Think That Space Travel Will
Be Clogged?
Is December Going To Retaliate?
Are The Mrs. Smiths Going To Buy Scissors?
Are The Mrs. Teachers Going To Do It Solo?
Yes It Does.
What Do We Do?
We Pick The Flowers, And Put
Them In Outer Space.
We Take The Machines And
Give Them To Janruhairy.
We Take First Place And Give
It To The Smith Brothers.
We Take The Beards And Give Them
To Teachers.
We Take Personalities And Give
Them To Pretty Pink Flowers.
Pretty Pink Flowers With Personalities Float On The Water;
What Do Fish Think About It?

How To Write an Essay

by Tim Press

The hardest part of writing an essay is thinking of a topic. It must be chosen with great care. The student must remember the likes, dislikes, and prejudices of the teacher and write his paper accordingly. This is very important because it adds brownie points.

After the general topic is chosen, the writer must have a specific title. Original thought is not necessary here. A logical choice for a title is "Essay." It must be good because so many people use it. "My Pet Peeve" or "Something That Happened to Me" are also good choices. The title can sometimes be put on just before the paper is to be handed in, when the student finds out that he needs one.

The actual writing of the essay is simple. Midnight or one

o'clock in the morning are good times to do this. From past experience, I find that the best times to write an essay are on the bus coming to school and in homeroom.

Grammar is the least necessary part of any good essay. The writer needn't use good grammar because no one else does anyway. Commas, however, are an important part of grammar. About ten to fifteen extra commas per page is a good rule of thumb.

If it is at all possible one must hand the paper in two or three days late. Being fashionably late is a status symbol, and if you can get away with it, your entire purpose in writing the essay has been achieved; and you have put one over on the teacher.

Blink Blink

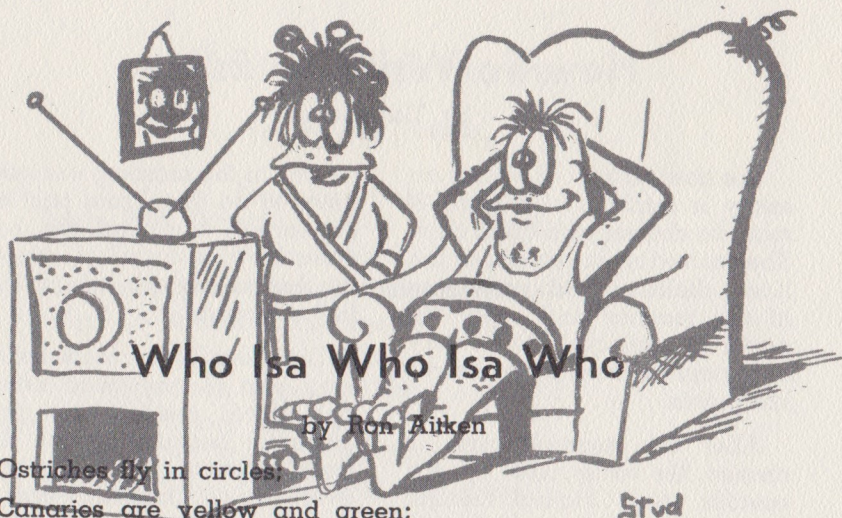
by Ron Aitken

Trees are green, so what!
Flowers are pretty, so what!
Girls are cute, some are
sweet, some kind.

I can do without all
three, so What!

The thing that's tough ———
Really bugs on the nerves
Is to go for a day without
Blinking
Your
Eyes.





Who Is Who Is Who

by Ron Aitken

Ostriches fly in circles;
Canaries are yellow and green;
California is next to the ocean.

So what's wrong if I mix peas

With my mashed potatoes?

Are non-con-form-ists really that blah?

I say it's the conformists that are

wrecking the world

So who gives a d--n if Castro's got an ugly beard,

Or who wonders why Krushchev doesn't get a wig?

. . . . It's those open-eyed, broadminded champagne drinkin'
conformists.

Give me the good life.

The men drink 6% beer, sit on their cans, watch

Television, smell to high heavens-skunks, pigs, etc.

Women have 20 lbs. of make-up, go to Vic Tanny's

To take off the 20 lbs., waste money, wear rollers in
Their hair, and smell like the Glade factory.

Are these people really non-conformists???

All of the people I know fit this description

Majority rule, ain't that cool,

They are the real conformists.

So to H-- with Castro's beard,

And the same with Krushchev's wig factory.

Down with the open-eyed, broad-minded
Champagne drinkin' non-conformists.

I'll mix peas with my mashed potatoes

If I want.

MELVIN

by Larry Kubicz

A five act farce-tragedy (written after a first reading of Macbeth).

CHARACTERS

GRETCHEN MELVIN'S AUNT
MELVIN A GANG SUB-LEADER IN NYC
BURFORD ANOTHER GANG SUB-LEADER
ENDOCLES A GANG MEMBER
HILDEGARDE MELVIN'S GIRLFRIEND
DEMOSTHENES THE BIG GANG LEADER
RINGO A MINOR GANG MEMBER
FRED DEMOSTHENES' "YES" MAN
DINK DEMOSTHENES' BROTHER
TWO HOODS
APPARITION
FRICKA SEIGMUND'S GIRLFRIEND
TWO MORE HOODS
KELP MELVIN'S HELPER
BURFORD'S GHOST
VOICE

*Any similarity between these characters and any person living or dead is due purely to the intent of the author.

ACT I

SCENE I

A pawn shop in the slums of New York. Gretchen is sitting in the middle of the one room shop.

GRETCHEN: Hello Mel, I've got some news for you.

MELVIN: You been hitting the bottle again?

BURFORD: Your aunt drink?

MELVIN: You know a better way to get it down? All right, what's the news? Make it quick, I left my cycle running outside.

GRETCHEN: You will become leader of the gang.

MELVIN: Billions of broads in the world and I get stuck with a wierdo for an aunt.

GRETCHEN: (To Burford) You are the brother of future gang leaders.

BURFORD: Maybe she's not drunk after all.

MELVIN: Yeah. She hits the needle every once in a while.

BURFORD: I mean she might be serious. Maybe you will become leader.

MELVIN: That sounds OK to me. I still say she's tanked. Let's split.

SCENE II

The streets of New York. Melvin and Burford are standing next to two large motorcycles.

ENDOCLES: Hear the news?

BURFORD: What is it?

ENDOCLES: (To Melvin) You were made head of the South Side. Demosthenes heard of the great job you did in the last rumble.

BURFORD: (To Melvin) You're on your way just like your aunt said.

MELVIN: I still say she was plastered.

SCENE III

East side gang's meeting place. Hildegard reading a note from Melvin.

HILDEGARDE: "Well Hil, they made me head of the South Side Gang. It looks like I'm really getting up in the world. My aunt (you know, the one who hits the bottle) predicted that I would become leader of the whole bit. What do you think about that? Be there in a little while." If he's supposed to be the boss, there's no harm in helping him along.

SCENE IV

The meeting place of the gang-leader. Demosthenes, Fred, and

Ringo are standing around talking.

DEMOSTHENES: I owe you two studs a lot, and I'm gonna make sure everyone gets what's coming to him. Mel, you get the South Side Gang.

DEMOSTHENES: And when I split the scene and head west, my brother, Dink, will take over the gangs.

BURFORD: Your aunt is really a swinger. You are practically the number one man right now. I wonder when my brothers will take over?

MELVIN: Knock it off, Burf. I think the old girl goofed this time.

BURFORD: Why?

MELVIN: Didn't you hear what Dem said about Dink? He's the new cheese, not me.

Burford thinks it over, then exits.

MELVIN: If I'm gonna become head man, I gotta find a way to get Dink out of the way.

MELVIN: Whatcha want?

DEMOSTHENES: I'm gonna make it over to your pad for the night. My old lady is burned in a bad way at me.

MELVIN: What for?

DEMOSTHENES: I came in stewed last night.

MELVIN: It's OK with me.

SCENE V

Melvin's pad. Just outside the door. Hildegarde meets Melvin.

HILDEGARDE: I read your note. Pretty Cool.

MELVIN: Yeah. Dink's supposed to be the new leader when Dem makes the scene in L.A.

HILDEGARDE: Rats!

MELVIN: By the way, Dem's coming to my pad tonight. His Ma's burned up at him.

HILDEGARDE: This looks like the break we've been waiting for. Why don't you just see that good old Dem leaves a little early?

MELVIN: How?

HILDEGARDE: Bump him off stupid! Fred goes with him wherever he goes, so you can blame it on him. Just give him a little ventilation in the mid-section.

MELVIN: You mean put him to the blade?

HILDEGARDE: You're not as dumb as you look.

MELVIN: I don't know if I want to go that far. Murder is a pretty tough rap to beat.

HILDEGARDE: Chicken! If you fink out on me this time, I never want to see you again. If that's all I mean to you, you can just forget the whole thing.

MELVIN: All right. I'll do it.

SCENE VI

Melvin's pad. Melvin, Demosthenes, and Fred are standing and talking in the living room.

MELVIN: Make yourselves at home.

DEMOSTHENES: (Putting feet on coffee table as he sits down.) Thanks.

MELVIN: Why don't you guys cut to the bedroom?

DEMOSTHENES: That sounds OK to me.

FRED: Yeah.

MELVIN: Good night.

DEMOSTHENES: (Goes to bedroom.) Goodnight.

FRED: (Follows.) Yeah.

HILDEGARDE: (As window opens.) You ready?

MELVIN: You sure are a bloodthirsty broad, aren't you?

HILDEGARDE: Here's your knife. (Hands Melvin a switch-blade.)

MELVIN: Thanks a lump.

HILDEGARDE: If you won't do it, I will.

MELVIN: Never mind. I'll do it. (Shuts window on Hildegard's hand. She screams and runs off.)

MELVIN: (Aside.) If I'm gonna do this, I'd better do it fast. I don't want anyone to walk in and klutz it up.

MELVIN: (Answers door. Sees Hildegard.) What do you want?

HILDEGARDE: I just wanna be here when you do it to make sure you don't fink out on me.

MELVIN: (Lets Hildegard in and closes the door.) OK. Sit down and shut up. (Walks to bedroom. Enters.)

HILDEGARDE: Did you do it?

MELVIN: (Sarcastically.) No. I just kissed him goodnight.

HILDEGARDE: What was that yell I heard?

MELVIN: I kicked the cat.

HILDEGARDE: Did you get Fred?

MELVIN: What does that have to do with it?

HILDEGARDE: You mean you didn't slice him? You idiot! Go right back in there and get him too. He could be a witness.

MELVIN: You can call me a chicken, but I'm not going back in there again.

HILDEGARDE: Give me the blade and I'll do it myself.
Melvin gives her the blade and she exits into the room.

SCENE VII

Demosthenes lies dying in the corner while Fred sleeps peacefully in the bed. A cat is near the door, cowering.

HILDEGARDE: The klutz is still sleeping. I'll knock him off right now. (Stabs Fred.)

DEMOSTHENES: Murderess! Oh! (Dies.)

FRED: Yeah! (Dies.)

ACT II

SCENE I

The meeting place of the gang. Seigmund has just been told of the death of Demosthenes. Enter Endocles and Burford.

BURFORD: Well, Dink, it looks like you're the big cheese around here. What are you going to do about Dem's kicking off?

DINK: I'm cutting out to Jersey. That's what I'm doing. You comin' Sig?

SEIGMUND: Sure. (Seigmund ushers the others out of the meeting place.) Why?

DINK: I think Mel's gonna try to get me just like he got Dem.

SEIGMUND: Agreed.

SCENE II

East Side meeting place. Melvin is alone.

MELVIN: This guy Burford is getting on my nerves. If I bumped off the big man so I could get up in the world, why should his brothers be the future leaders of the gang? I'm the one who risked everything to get rid of Dem. I won't let them take advantage of me like that. I guess I'll have to take care of the whole tribe.

HILDEGARDE: You look worried.

MELVIN: I'm gonna take care of that right away.

HILDEGARDE: What do you mean?

MELVIN: Never mind. I don't have to tell you everything I do. After all, I can think for myself.

HILDEGARDE: Is that so?

MELVIN: Yeah. Besides, I don't want you to worry.

HILDEGARDE: Look who's talkin'.

SCENE III

Melvin's house. Melvin and two hoods are talking.

MELVIN: You say Burford was muscling in on your territory, right?

FIRST HOOD: Right.

MELVIN: How would you like a chance to get even? Sounds pretty good, doesn't it?

BOTH HOODS: Yeah.

MELVIN: All you have to do is knock him off like I told you. I would do it myself, but Hildegard is his sister.

SECOND HOOD: It sounds OK to us. We figured on rolling him ourselves anyway.

SCENE IV

Melvin's house. He is holding a party to celebrate his becoming leader.

MELVIN: Take your places, peons. Your fearless leader is about to make the scene.

ALL: Let's hear it for Mel!

MELVIN: (Slightly drunk.) What the H-- is that? (Seeing Burford's ghost.)

HILDEGARDE:: What's with you? You some kind of fish?

MELVIN: It never fails. Every time I have a booze blast, that creep Burford shows up.

HILDEGARDE: (Whispers.) Burford's dead, you had him killed.

MELVIN: Oh. Yeah. (Turns a pale lavender.)

HILDEGARDE: All right everyone, split. This clod's tanked.

MELVIN: (Still drinking heavily.) hfckfjvjfyrmsnfhd.

SCENE V

Melvin re-visits his neurotic aunt. She is in the process of selling poison ivy as an arthritis cure.

MELVIN: Say broad, how about giving me the news on the coming events. What's in store for the cool one?

GRETCHEN: I'm due to have a kidney operation.

MELVIN: Not you stupid, me!

GRETCHEN: Oh. You want to hear it from me, or straight from the horse's mouth?

MELVIN Bring on the horse.

GRETCHEN: This takes kind of a ceremony. (Gives herself an injection in the left arm.)

OOOOOOOOOOOOH!

MELVIN: You're puttin' me on.

GRETCHEN:(Turns into a fungus-covered foot.) Ask Fern.

MELVIN: What's the future got in store for the cool one?

APPARITION: Gretchen's due for a kidney operation.

MELVIN: Not her, me.

APPARITION: Beware the Ides of March. (Pause.) Scratch that last one. Wrong play. Keep an eye on Seigmund.

MELVIN: Tell me more.

APPARITION: Let's not get hasty, boobla. I'm coming to the next part. No guy in this city can touch you.

MELVIN: Swell! What else?

APPARITION: Well, sweetie-pie pussycat, you won't fall till the club house comes to your pad.

MELVIN: Anything else?

APPARITION: Your guess is as good as mine. You can't get

blood out of a turnip.
Apparition disappears. Gretchen staggers out from behind the counter. Exit Melvin.

ACT III

Nuts to Act III! Every blasted play you pick up has an Act III.

ACT IV

SCENE I

Melvin's hoods come to murder Seigmund's girlfriend, Fricka.

FRICKA: Who's that?

FIRST HOOD: The happy little murderer, me.

SECOND HOOD: And the bluebird of happiness.

FRICKA: You're puttin' me on.

BOTH HOODS:(Stab Fricka.) Nope.

SCENE II

An obscure street corner in Jersey. Seigmund is talking to Dink.

ENDOCLES: Hey Sig. Mel had your woman sliced up.

SEIGMUND: Fricka? Dead?

ENDOCLES: No kiddin'.

SEIGMUND: This Melvin clod has got to go. Beat it En.

DINK: I'm sorry to hear about Fricka.

SEIGMUND: What say we go take care of this Melvin character?

DINK: Who'll take over after we get rid of him?

SEIGMUND: You, of course.

DINK: You don't understand. I'm no good. I'm a lecher.

SEIGMUND: Cool. What does "lecher" mean?

DINK: I'm always makin' it with the broads.

SEIGMUND: So what?

DINK: In additon to that, I drink, smoke, hit the needle, have a heart condition, have an IQ of 40, and have fits every once in a while. I also killed three cops.

SEIGMUND: Nobody's perfect.

DINK: I guess you're right. Let's get up a bunch of guys and give it to that creep, Mel.

SCENE III

The club house. Seigmund, Dink, and a large number are getting ready to mob Melvin's house.

DINK: There are a lot of guys over at Mel's place. How we gonna get through them?

SEIGMUND: Let's tear up the club house and use the boards as clubs.

DINK: Sounds like a good idea. (To the group.) All right you guys, start tearing up this joint. (To Seigmund.) Mel's sure gonna get his this time.

SCENE IV

Melvin's house. Melvin has just finished giving orders to two of his hoods offstage. Enter Kelp.

KELP: The gang's coming, and they're bringing the clubhouse with them.

MELVIN: That's all I need, a drunk helper.

KELP: I'm serious. Take a look for yourself.

MELVIN: (Looks out the window.) Wow! As much as I hate to say this, I think I'm going to throw up.

KELP: Get a hold on yourself. I have some more bad news.

MELVIN: What is it?

KELP: Hildegarde just died.

MELVIN: Well! The old girl finally kicked the bucket. It's about time the old nag quit the scene. I feel better already.

KELP: Should we prepare to fight off these clods.

MELVIN: Why don't you just go out and shoot marbles?

KELP: How will I recognize him?

MELVIN: Who?

KELP: Marbles.

MELVIN: (Kicks Kelp.) Get out of here!

Exit Kelp.

ENDOCLES: Where are you, Mel? I'm going to give it to you but **GOOD!**

MELVIN: I'm not here.

ENDOCLES: (Turns to leave.) Oh. (Turns back.) I think you're lying.

MELVIN: (Jumps out from under the sofa.) You callin' me a liar?

ENDOCLES: Yeah.

MELVIN: Those are fightin' words.

MELVIN: He was one of the boys in the city. Poor kid.

ENDOCLES: You have slain me!

MELVIN: Shut up. You're supposed to be dead. (Kicks Endocles.)

Seigmund's voice is heard from off stage.

SEIGMUND: Where are you, Melvin? I won't rest until I have your kidney on my blade!

MELVIN: (Yells back.) You won't like it. I have a kidney condition!

SEIGMUND: There you are!

MELVIN: Tell me about it.

SEIGMUND: I'm going to cut you to pieces!

MELVIN: Cool as forty bears.

SEIGMUND: I'm not kiddin'. I'll do it.

MELVIN: Wizard!

MELVIN: It's no use trying to kill me. My junkie aunt told me that none of the guys in the city could harm me.

SEIGMUND: Guess again pal. I've never told anyone this, but I'm a girl.

MELVIN: You gotta be kiddin'.

SEIGMUND: Nope. My parents always wanted a boy, so they named me Seigmund. I just never told anyone my real identity, and I played the part.

MELVIN: You must have been a riot on the beach.

SEIGMUND: You know what this means?

MELVIN: I'll bet you think just because you're a broad, you can kill me.

SEIGMUND: Right.

MELVIN: You know something?

SEIGMUND: What?

MELVIN: You've got a point there.

SEIGMUND: Why don't you give up?

MELVIN: Give up? I'll never give up! I'll fight you to the bitter end—of me.

SCENE V

Outside Melvin's house.

SEIGMUND: Look! Melvin is dead. (Holds up head. Sees it clearly for the first time. Retches.) Let's hear it for Dink!

ALL: Wizard!

VOICE IN REAR: Who's Dink? Never heard of him.

A C T V

SCENE I

Grechen's pawn shop. Burford's ghost is conversing with a slightly inebriated aunt.

GHOST: You played a real cool one on Melvin.

GRETCHEN: I sure did. It took real genius to lead Melvin on like that.

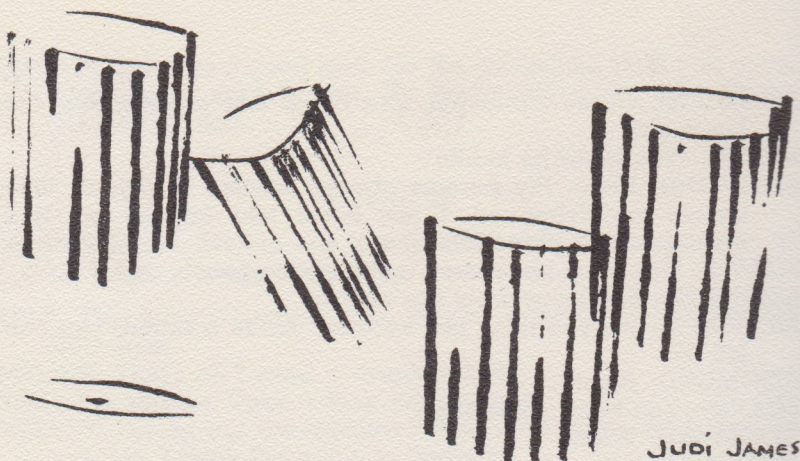
GHOST: Do you think you really taught him a lesson?

GRETCHEN: I wasn't trying to teach him any lesson.

GHOST: Then why did you lead him on like that?

GRETCHEN: I hated the miserable creep.

THE END



Ode To A Garbage Can

by Lynne Campbell

O' garbage can, thou beaut'ous sight,
Lining our streets and lanes.
If not for you, our garbage would spill
O'er into the streets and drains.

Your wondrous ways
Have saved our days from unpleasantries untold.
Your valiant lid,
A mighty shield,
The savior of the world.

Thou shining cylinder,
A shimmering star.
A beacon for all the weary world;
Your stately manner so proud and true,
O' garbage can
O' garbage can
We are truly proud of thee!