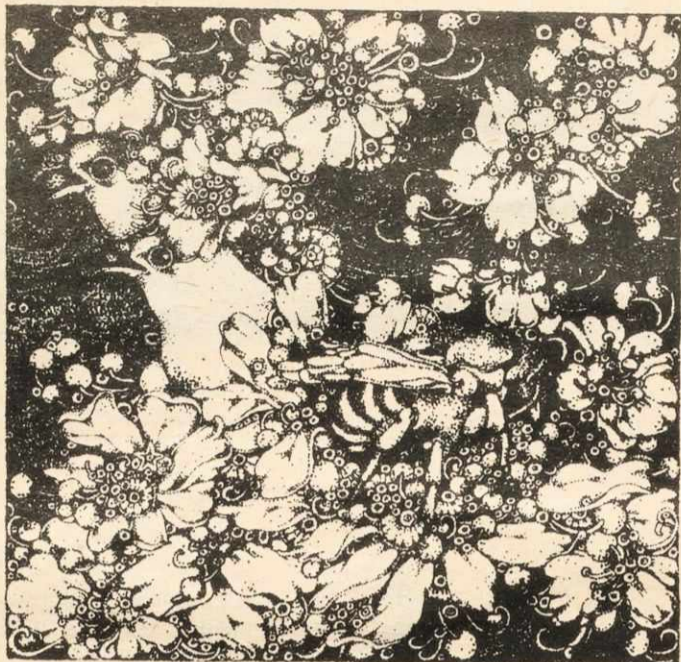


Arts prizes



First prize prose

Excerpt from "My Older Brother" by Glenn Walton, 1st prize (prose) in Dal Arts Society writing contest.

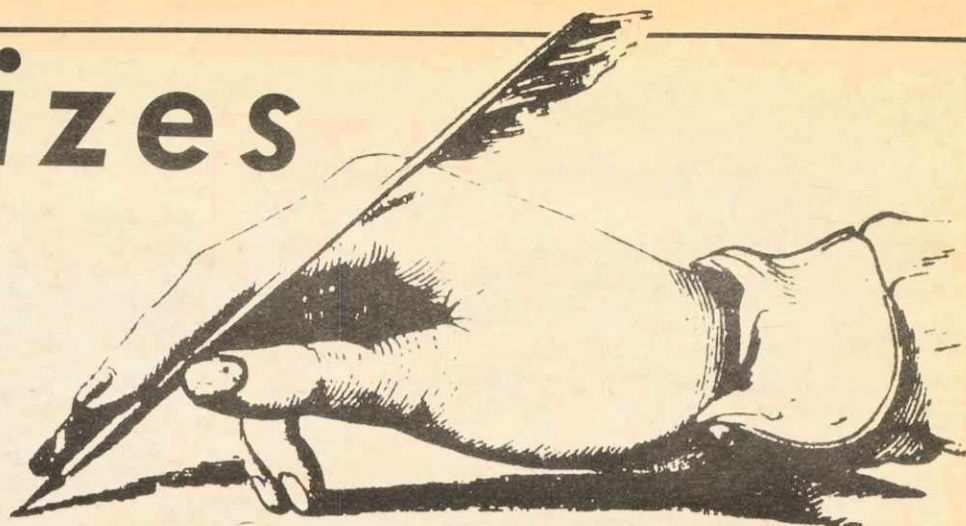
The shapes our lives would take were determined from an early age. My brother would be, if not president of the Ford Foundation, Olympic something-or-other, or perhaps Military Hero. I, excellent at school, had The Mind and would be an ambassador, or (not to forget money), a famous trial lawyer. As it is, non-conflicting notions. But, as it happened, the directions our drives took us were still determined by the narrow dictates of early life: at home by who could get in best with our parents, and at school by success at sports, and, unavoidably, with girls.

On the first count, fate was fickle, despite my natural advantage as a good-boy and my brother's flirting with the toughies, which distressed my mother. Favour, never permanent, preferred to float in one's direction and settle down around your head like some benevolent cloud, investing its object with halo-like sweetness, as the enemy was being sent to his room for sassing his mother. It never stayed long. The quirks of mothers are the staple of ethnic humour, and though we were strictly Anglo-Saxon, mothers everywhere are really the same, and the paths leading to their temples of approval fraught with danger. One false step, one unseen pothole, and in a flash one is transported back to the edge of the divine presence's circle of approval. "I told you not to walk across the kitchen floor because I just washed it and now you're tracking dirt all over it" or "Who left a half-eaten piece of toast on the sofa?" can be the signals of imminent demotion.

Thus, in our case, neither of us had the upper hand for long at home, despite concentrated attempts. Either it

was my brother's smoking or swearing (no doubt my non-smoker's status dates back to tactical considerations in those days), then the pendulum would swing back in my direction, and my neglect of household chores (usually after my brother had washed the kitchen floor and I had walked over it) We seized our advantage when we could—the more my brother smoked the more adamant and self-righteous about the subject I became. Arriving home with a pained expression, I would, upon enquiry, reluctantly relate what I had seen my own brother doing behind the school building and how ashamed I'd felt of him (and my association) of myself, just like when he swore out loud on the school bus and talked about girls the way he did. This always had the desired effect. My brother was summoned and asked to account for his behavior. Was this any way to show his gratitude for his upbringing? What had they (my parents) done to deserve this disgrace? I sat in my room and listened to every word.

My brother was not subtle. He would come right out with it at dinner, saying "Jeez, you don't do anything around here, do you? Whatsa matter with you anyway? You're as lazy as a Siamese cat in an armchair factory!" What he lacked in subtlety he more than made up for in colorful simile. Picked up no doubt at the filling station he worked at weekends to pay for the motorcycle he so desired. This job was a plus for his side, although the idea of a motorcycle pleased my mother not at all. My parents finally offered to go halves on a car, if he would work harder at school. My brother promptly shot to almost the top of his class, thus dispelling any notion that academics were too much for him. With the prize achieved, he later lost all interest in his studies and fell back to near-failing levels.



Dal Arts Society contest winners First prize poems

*How to tell my mother
That the room shrinks around us
When we make love
Until we are alone
And the others can't see us any more.*

*How to recount to my mother
The legends I read in your eyes
The tales of tenderness and betrayal
And the questing
The endless realizing of the dream.*

*How to remind my mother
of the heady scent of the fields
And bluffs of a prairie youth
The worst times
That were really the best.*

*How to laugh with my mother
And hear her laugh with me
When I remove the dust cover
Turn the recovered key
And open that old hope chest.*

My Generation

*My generation frightens me
We have not smelled the charnel smoke of war
Nor heard the drums
And heedless of these things
We pass through decades
Blank, unmoved somehow
A different kind of murderers*

Colin Sterling

*How to examine with Mother
The ageless lovely things
She stored there before my life began
And show her these
The very same—in my arms.*

Colin Sterling

Second prize prose

Excerpt from *William's Song* by David Sullivan, 2nd prize, prose.

"When you read this", he wrote, "I will be dead. Then you will know how much I hate you. Then you will have to leave me alone. I know how you watch me, study me. You are all in it together. All against me. I feel it in your voices, the softness, the caring, even when you try and sound innocent. Like the female that telephoned this morning, saying in her woman voice how my brother was bad, how he was asking for me. But I knew it was a trap. You were using his weakness to trap me. To make me one of you, just like you. And I was going to say no. I was going to stay inside. Then in my head I could hear you laughing among yourselves, thinking how I was afraid, all of you knowing where I lived, and knowing I was afraid. Then I thought how I would fix you, show you how smart you were. I would show you little Billy was no coward. I fought you with my fists, now I would fight you with something harder. I told the female I would come, sounding real concerned, you know, how you pretend, and I listened real close and I heard the surprise in her voice. If you only knew how I was going to fix you! How I was really going to fix you good! And then I laughed because I was so happy. After I hung up I laughed, O how I laughed! And no one even heard me. You didn't know.

Then I got the gun out of where I always keep it, and I pointed it and laughed, knowing how you would crouch and cower and whimper and beg me to not shoot you. And you would sweat for me, and you would know that I wasn't afraid. And so I went outside. I didn't even have to. And I caught a bus into the downtown. And if only you knew how I was laughing inside of me when I saw you all sitting there in neat little rows watching me because you didn't know how I was fed up. You all knew where I was going but you didn't know how I was laughing and how I even had to look out the side window I was laughing so hard. Then the driver looked over at me. He thought he would have a little fun. He said how it was warm out today, knowing how I hate the warm. I told him it was too cold to suit me, pretending like I really meant it. That shut him up. You should have seen the look on his face, knowing he was outsmarted. He didn't say anything after that. Then I felt in my pocket where the gun was. I turned it so it was pointing at him. He didn't even know. He just kept on driving, and as he did his cheeks jiggled. All the way I had to listen to them talking behind my back. They was all talking together, keeping their voices down, wondering about me. I kept quiet, letting them have their fun. Then I was glad when I got off the bus.

