

# The Gateway Literary Supplement

Pull-out section

## A note from the editor

by Mike Spindloe

Welcome to *The Gateway* 1989 literary supplement, featuring all the winners from our annual literary contest. Unlike the literary pages which have been featured in the paper throughout the year, I had nothing to do with the selection of the materials you'll find to enjoy herein. My role was purely organizational and administrative until the winning entries were returned by the judges.

There were approximately 40 short

stories, 80 short poems and 30 long poems submitted this year. This represents a significant decline from the number of poets who entered last year, and I can only hope it's because all those people have found lucrative publishing contracts and thus have no need of entering contests to get their work into print.

I'd like to extend a special round of congratulations to all the winners, and two in particular. First, Carl Leggo, who swept the first prizes in both poetry categories and who was also a double winner last

year (with a short poem and a short story). There must be a few people hoping he graduates soon so someone else can win! However, the entries were judged anonymously as usual, and by a completely different set of judges than last year. I believe Mr. Leggo's repeated success speaks volumes about his talent as a writer. Second, to Neil Scotten, who won first prize in the short story category and also kept me supplied with a steady stream of intriguing and entertaining short stories for the literary page all year. Here, again, is an example of someone practising his craft and succeeding at it.

A number of thank yous are called for, so here goes: U of A President Myer Horowitz for his donation of prize money

for the contestants and honourariums for the judges; the judges themselves: Bonnie Bishop (short poems), Fred Wah (long poems) and Mary Howes (short stories). All of these people volunteered their time (the honourariums were my idea — some of these people are starving artists, too).

Thanks also to Joanne Elliott for a whole bunch of great illustrations, both herein and throughout the year, and to Randal Smathers for layout assistance.

Finally, thanks to all the people who entered. Although I only had time to read a few of the entries other than the winning ones, I was impressed by the general quality of the work. Keep on writing...

## Judges comments — Short poems

by Bonnie Bishop

"Poetry is incorrigibly particular..."

The poet's eye sees more than 'the sky is blue'. Further, poetry is not an ability to write a litany of description and adjectives either.

What distinguishes the three winning poems in the short poem category is the success with which the writers were able to deal with a particular and not over-extending/reducing the poem into generalities. To my mind it was also clear that these writers read other poets. As with the other disciplines poetry warrants respect and part of that respect is appreciation and study of the art. It really doesn't matter

whether or not you agree with modern or traditional poetry because it's all in the way you read it. Though they are important parts, you have to be able to dig deeper than rhyme, cadence and content to get to the tone of a poem. It's an ironic feature of poetry because on reading a poem it's the most obvious element and yet to write it, tone is the most difficult to achieve. It's too easy for tone to become melodramatic, self-pitying, judgmental — I could do on listing other weak evocations of the failed poem but I won't. All I really want to say here is that these poems stood out for me because they were able to see the traps and pitfalls and transcend them and thus stand in the doorway of poetry. Congratulations!

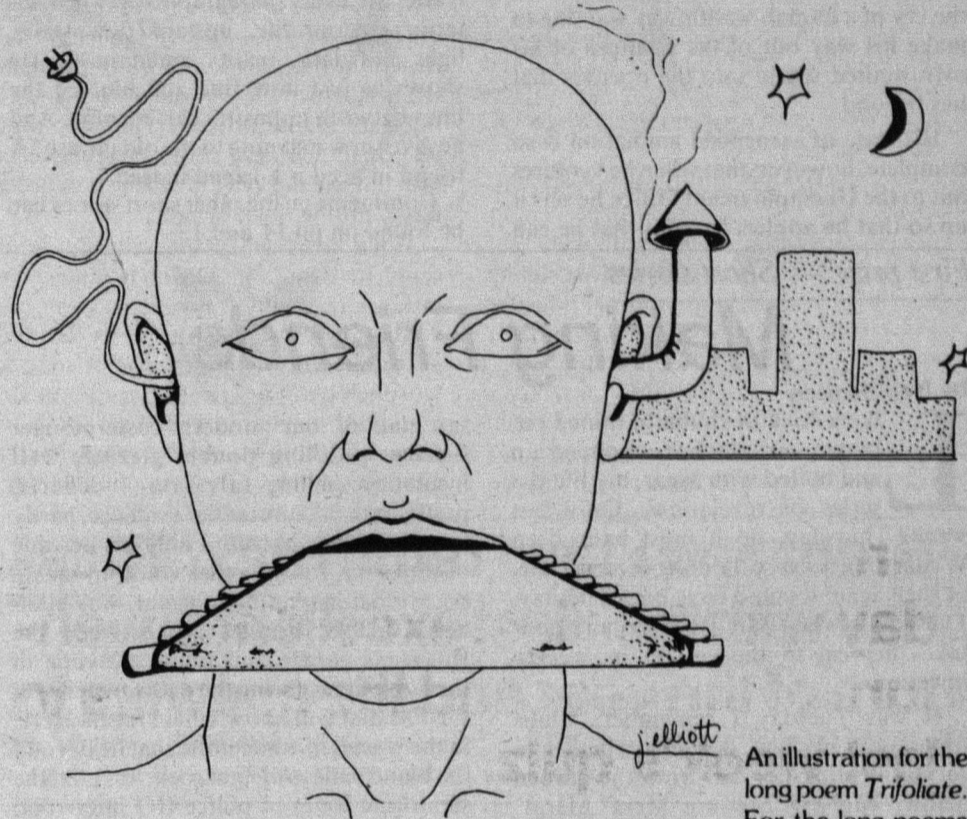
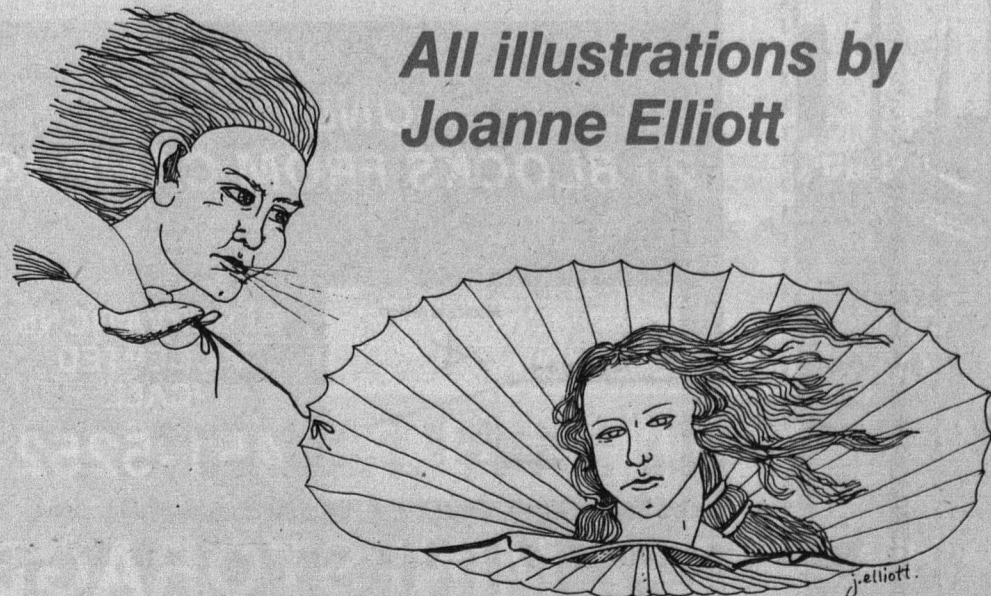
### First prize — Short poems

## A Coffin and a Chevy

by Carl Leggo

My father bought the '53 Chevy  
(maroon and new), drove my brother and me  
out of the city along the Trans Canada Highway  
to cut a Christmas tree, parked on the shoulder,  
left my brother and me, sank into the snow  
like quicksand, (my brother, only four, laughing)  
before he was swallowed by the trees like darkness  
and I was laughing at my brother laughing  
and my father waved a hand, his mouth a tight line  
and my brother jumped up and down in the back seat  
while I pretended to drive away (for help)  
but went nowhere and my father didn't come back,  
my brother full of fear, no longer laughing,  
and the air was thick with chewy toffee,  
my father gone, my brother going crazy,  
so I grabbed the ice scraper and jabbed holes  
in the maroon velvet over me like the inside  
of a coffin, no escape, and my father returned,  
creature from the snow lagoon, bearing a tree,  
a wide grin where the line had been,  
and the car was a car, not a coffin,  
my father was alive, my brother was laughing,  
and my father looked at the neat triangular flags  
hanging from the ceiling of his new Chevy,  
said nothing, drove back to the city  
in a Chevy once more a coffin

### All illustrations by Joanne Elliott



An illustration for the long poem *Trifoliate*. For the long poems see pp 15-16.

### Second prize — Short poems

## Laws of Planetary Motion

by Yin Lin

The great astronomer upon his chair  
Considers entropy, and in the strain  
Of fanged quadratics teeming in his brain  
He hears the light of morning brush the square,  
Extinguishes the light upon the stair  
And, going out into the greying rain,  
He lifts his head and wonders yet again  
How thin the chains of gravity we bear.

Beneath the shattered shadow of the sky  
We search the constellations for a face,  
Sit waiting for the darkness to reply,  
Enclosed within our turning hemispheres  
And trapped in the infinity of space  
And bound upon the circles of the years.

### Third prize — Short poems

## Boyle St.

by Lisa Eisenbeis

watch the wind blow  
leaves run away

deep into corners  
stranded on curbside  
caught in girls hair

where they are  
pushed  
removed

or  
cut away  
so as not to be seen