

Spring 1992

Beyond Memos: A Journal of the UMF Faculty, Volume 4, Number2, Spring 1992

University of Maine at Farmington

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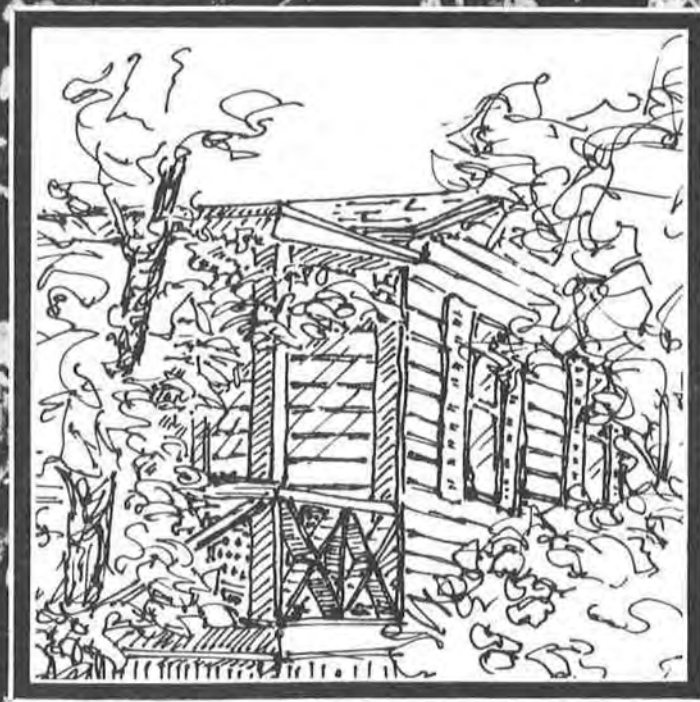


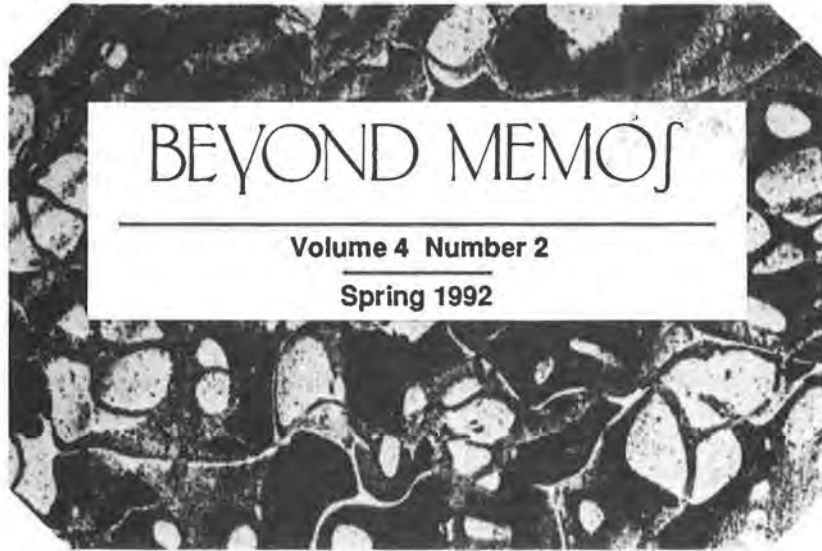
BEYOND MEMOS

A Journal of the UMF Faculty

Volume 4 Number 2

Spring 1992





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CONTENTS

Shoes	NORMA JOHNSEN	3
Anger	JUDITH BRADSHAW BROWN	4
Izaak Walton Does His Best, Considering	ALICE BLOOM	7
Father grieving	DOUG RAWLINGS	8
If You Arrive at This Place	JEANET SUAREZ	9
August	PATRICIA O'DONNELL	11
Spring 1991	KATHLEEN BEAUBIEN	12
Luxury	MARGARET GOULD WESCOTT	12
Thomas L.F. Hubler	JAY S. HOAR	13
Impressive Little Grown-Ups	JAY S. HOAR	15
Five improvisations in primary colors	LEE SHARKEY	17
Oz	BILL ROORBACH	18
Drawings		
	JUDITH BRADSHAW BROWN	3, 7, 9
	ALICE BLOOM	6
	MAGGY ANDERSON	10-11
	PAULA WIDMER	16
	DEAN BENNETT	19

BEYOND MEMOS is meant to be just that—a forum where UMF faculty can share ideas and creative work that go beyond the day-to-day campus routine of teaching, advising, committees, and memos. We welcome submission of anything of general interest: poems, stories, essays, drawings, photographs, interviews, humorous pieces, etc. Send materials, inquiries, and comments to Philip Carlsen, Editor, BEYOND MEMOS, University of Maine at Farmington, Farmington, ME 04938.

Shoes

WHEN YOU are at the bottom, you notice shoes. Ann has been near the bottom for years. Now that the kids have left home, there's more time and money, but that's only luck, an accident. Life is hard for most people, but Ann thinks women are at the bottom of any pile. Whoever piles it, we're at the bottom, she tells her husband Jim. He's a high school teacher. He nods, turns the hot dogs in the pan (not for her, she's a vegetarian). He's heard it all, and he stopped arguing years ago. He knows she's right.

She is walking down the hall toward an aide waving to her from a doorway. Past the patients' rooms, tiny scraps of lives. When she catches a glimpse of herself passing by the mirror on an open bathroom door, she thinks she looks Oriental—small, yellow, opaque, the sort of middle-aged woman no one looks at twice. She walks lightly and quickly down the corridor. She wears Chinese shoes, absolutely flat, thin-soled, black, with a strap across the instep. Third-world shoes, she thinks. She likes her feet to feel the surfaces she walks on. Shoes, she thinks, tell the truth. Truth is her obsession, these days. She once thought she could change the system; now she just tries to understand it. Lately, she feels like a guerrilla, or maybe a spy, gathering information behind enemy lines. So she notices shoes. Pumps with sharp, hard points like pistols; determined Cuban heels; uncommitted hushpuppies, committed Birkenstocks; friendly Nikes, tennies, flip-flops; aggressive shiny patents; stiff wingtips. She sees them all. The shoes her nursing home patients wear are the saddest: jelly shoes, for feet that never leave the wheelchairs.

As she walks, she points it out again to Jim. He's often in her mind, her audience of one, nodding. It could be us on the street,

or in jail, or in that wheelchair or underneath that cardboard box, she tells him. We're just lucky. Yes, he says, parking the van. She wouldn't be surprised to see her own face, or Jim's or Becky's or Peter's or Mary's, looking up at her from deep inside the hood, on the nights they take sandwiches and coffee to the people who live up under the bridge. It's that close, she tells him. He sighs. Just recently she has realized that the people in Augusta, in Washington, are in power because they like power. The thought chills her.

Her face doesn't show these thoughts, though. Ann scares some people because her expression is so controlled—pleasant, polite, but noncommittal.

It's not the face she learned at home or at school. She remembers the strain of her old face, arranging it in front of the mirror, making it look right. But what for? It took her a long time to figure that one out. Now when she comes across those pictures of herself she's likely to wonder, Who's that girl? Why is she smiling?

"Miz Ellis," the aide begins, a large brown woman in running shoes. "Miz Beasley's son is really mad. He's yellin at me because her teeth are out."

Ann pats the woman's arm. "I'll talk to him," she says. She has learned to handle bullies, and, in fact, she enjoys dealing with them. She no longer argues. She sees herself as like those Oriental self-defense masters, silently and deftly deflecting the opponent's blows back to himself. She has dealt with Mrs. Beasley's son or his equivalent many times. He's probably Ann's age, mid-fifties, but his stomach spills over his belt, and his face is red. He wears tight golf shirts with logos on the pockets, and his pants have multiple wrinkles like diagonal sunbursts up his groin. Women peer up at him from their wheelchairs like



little spiders as he stalks down the corridor in cordovan wingtips.

His mother wants to die. Ann knows this, without being told. Many of their people do. She can tell by the eyes, something deep in the back. Ann wants to put her hand on their heads and slide it down to close their eyes, "OK," she wants to say, "Leave." In the world as she would order it, people who wanted to die would be helped to die, people who wanted to live would be helped to live, and so on. It would be that simple.

Mrs. Beasley says the teeth hurt; she doesn't want to eat or go down the hall to lunch or activities. She wants to sink back and let gravity take her. Ann can see her melting, a bit of ice slowly spreading and flattening into the grass. The hall is dim. Ann is walking on green and brown tiles with a mottled pattern that reminds her of an overgrown

pasture or a pile of dead leaves. As she walks, Ann thinks about placing her hands on the ground, working her fingertips through the thatch and feeling the chill, the stillness. She likes this dark, rather shabby corridor. At sunrise and sunset, light from the windows at either end throws a surprising nimbus around the dark silhouettes of old women leaning on their walkers and the aides and nurses threading their way around them.

As Ann passes the rooms, each with the foot of a bed and a television set visible through the doorway, she catches glimpses of another world, glaring, neon, improbable. The president, his square handsome face a bright pink, moves his hands in a commanding gesture, close up, neatly framed. Frames always lie, Ann thinks. They don't want you to see *what else*. Jim raises his eyebrows. The next room is tuned to the same station—they

Anger

There's a cricket trapped somewhere
in the high school wall, away from grass
and whatever crickets need to live.
It chirps constantly
and louder every day. I think
if it doesn't die of hunger, it will
explode against its fate, a million
cricket pieces filling the halls,
as students pass, oblivious,
from Algebra to English.

These angry boys, they come to me,
their mothers' one-too-many. I never
found the cricket. Silence
simply came one day.

He'd come sometimes, rage tamped
like sawdust and nitroglycerine
in a cardboard tube. A hypochondriac,
he'd itch, pick, worry a new song daily,
maybe learn to read
a little. One day he ignited, left
for good. No good reason. Broke
the window in my classroom door. Slam.
A hundred shards left glinting.

—JUDITH BRADSHAW BROWN

all are—and a newscaster with fluffy hair moves his mouth.

Then it's the president again, swinging a golf club. He wears the same golf shirt as Mr. Beasley, with some kind of insignia on the pocket, but his body is trim. Because he plays games, Ann knows she should be reassured. Or perhaps this is a fill in, a stunt man, who knows? She stops to watch. The camera takes a tricky shot, from ground level, showing the trajectory of a white ball disappearing into the blue. As the camera lingers at the president's feet, Ann can see he wears heavy brown shoes with cleats that dig into the grass. A sinister bit of truth, she thinks. But in the next frame he is standing beside a white-haired woman, holding her by the arm as if she might run away. Why are they always holding *on*? she asks Jim. Why that grin, that clutching? What do they want her to mean? Jim shrugs. She moves on, and steps into the next room.

"Mr. Beasley." She puts out her hand. "I'm Ann Ellis, the charge nurse today. Can I help you?" Standing, Mr. Beasley keeps his newspaper folded open in one hand. He comes in frequently to read the paper, as Ann sees it. Old Mrs. Beasley wears a stiff-looking pink blouse, as if she were going somewhere, but she sprawls back on the bed with her swollen fingers on the urine bag beside her. Someone has tied a ribbon in what is left of her hair and rubbed a dot of blusher on each cheek, but her face has folded, her jaw almost touching her nose.

Mr. Beasley shakes Ann's hand reluctantly, quickly. His jaw protrudes. She can see he is determined not to be sidetracked, but her friendliness is genuine. She does feel a kind of sympathy for this man. She knows he is trapped also, in his rumpled red flesh. She could peacefully coexist, if he could. She knows he is afraid, and she understands he wants his mother to live forever. Ann has met him before, many times. He thinks because he wants something, it should happen. He begins, "Why isn't she wearing her teeth?" gaining in volume as he goes. He has paid a lot of money for those teeth. Is it too much to ask to have someone in this place see to it that his mother puts her teeth in in the morning?

Ann listens expectantly, pleasantly. She hears: make her want to live, do something, fix this. At one time she would have tried to explain that his mother could, must, make her own choices. In another life, she used to argue. She remembers the meetings, the marches, the speeches, the letters, the fights, the old van, the bumperstickers, "Pro Choice," "Another Mother for Peace." She remem-

bers the streets, Becky in the stroller, Peter and Mary one on each side holding signs. She remembers the hearings, the briefcases, the business suits with lizard loafers, with cowboy boots. She should have noticed what the shoes were saying. Now that she knows, she plays a deeper game. "You're absolutely right," she exclaims when he has finished, without an edge in her heart or her voice. "Your mother should be wearing her teeth. Thank you for bringing this to my attention." His face crumples. She imagines the child inside, tearing at the package. She sees him wondering, was this what I wanted? Will this make me happy? She will make sure his mother is ready for him the next day and then the next, and by the end of the week he will have forgotten; he will be forcing his will somewhere else. Ann turns away from him and touches Mrs. Beasley's shoulder lightly, smooths the edge of the sheet. Mr. Beasley returns to his paper, coughing and rattling the pages. Ann knows she has won this skirmish. Mrs. Beasley sucks in her lips and melts against the pillow.

But nothing changes. The little victories are never enough. When Ann walks back down the hall, she feels a familiar heat under her ribs. Cut off at the knees, the grinning president waves from a helicopter. It doesn't matter whether he's coming or going—all that matters is the happy picture. Behind him the white-haired old woman smiles, waiting. The heat in Ann's body circles from heart to lungs to stomach to throat. It feels like a trail of fire revolving faster and faster, and she knows she will explode if it does not coalesce and move out of her body in a lethal arrow, a bullet, a rocket. She stops in a doorway and faces the television. From the center of her chest to the temple of the grinning president is only a heartbeat.

He crumples and pitches backward, somersaulting heels over head, revealing on the underside of his shoes the jagged hidden cleats like snarling, angry teeth. Then a woman in blue sneakers grabs the microphone. At long last, the revolution!

Ann has this vision often. As she looks down the hallway toward the setting sun, she imagines an army of middle-aged women marching in Chinese shoes. She sees them pass through the bright light of the window and march over the housetops and on to the fields and mountains beyond. Their feet feel the rocks and the cold, but their soft shoes touch and leave without a mark.

Ann turns away. She feels ashamed of her violence. She tells Jim, There's no other way. There just isn't. He nods, yes.

—NORMA JOHNSEN



Self portrait
by

[Signature]

1992

Izaak Walton Does His Best, Considering

a review of *Summers With Juliet* by Bill Roorbach

IT'S A LUCKY THING for the future of American hunting and fishing literature that Mr. Bill Roorbach and his wife have moved to Maine. Maybe now Bill will have a chance to learn what serious sporting life is all about. Bill's new book of sketches of fishing is very nice and I recommend it to any reader interested in the sport. It contains some very good descriptions of fish, tackle, gear, his truck, and so forth, as well as very interesting stories of the people he meets along the way. Hopefully, however, now that he resides in Maine where men are good old boys and women are wimmen and know when they're not wanted and let the guys go off for some much-deserved fun racing pick-ups across thin ice or chasing small racoons with large hounds, our author will obtain a more clear focus on any future endeavor on his part as a sports writer.

What I mean is I think we'd agree that any book is best when it pretty much sticks to one subject, in this case fishing. The story is a simple one. It relates Bill's attempts to get away for some peace and quiet with his rod, on the rivers, streams, lakes, oceans and ponds of our great country. This could be a great book! He tells the reader of persisting in this attempt for eight long years.

However, during all this period of time, his then girl-friend, "Juliet," insists on tagging along. The problem here is that not only is she a woman, she doesn't even fish herself; but goes to college, takes art classes, reads books, and travels around in Europe. And, comes from a large city. Needless to say, she doesn't know the first thing about camping. So Bill'll say "hey honey, I'm thinkin' o' goin' fishin' w/my buddies this weekend," and she'll say "like, dude, over my dead body." Which, no Maine man would put up with for a minute.

Nevertheless, our author keeps trying to get away from it all and, on the side, do a spot of writing. The result is a poignant record of a man's attempt to escape civilization like so much else time-honored American writing. Except this one is post-modern.

For example, many readers and reviewers, nation-wide, have compared this book to Thoreau, calling it "Thoreau in love." But though he lived

near a pond and also wrote things, I for one can't recall any mention of Thoreau trying to go fishing with a woman along, so my sense is that these reviewers are incorrect. Actually, it would not be amiss to say that Bill's book, if it has to be compared, could be called "Ahab in love," especially in those sections where the prose reaches transcendental intensity, such as in the memorable and storm-tossed scenes of fishing in New York City's Central Park's wading pool.

Well, back to my main point. The mistake the reviewers make in comparing (or contrasting) this book to Thoreau, who, as I say, never went fishing with a woman at all, is nothing compared to the mistake our author makes in taking a female along in the first place. As shown by the text, women will get bored by the whole thing, plus will need to find a pay phone, use the ladies room, eat a cheeseburger, go to a movie, wash their clothes, do some shopping, and will ask to borrow your new truck.

Plus women do not, as a general rule, like warm Lite of any brand. They go "gaaa" when asked to bait a hook with a night-crawler. And they make fun of your buddies. They think male-bonding is funny. Worst of all, they will want to "talk," especially about your "relationship," a subject which will inevitably rock the boat and scare the fish.

In conclusion, "love" can be very distracting both to an author and to the reader. Just as we are about to hear which fly he will choose, Bill is forced to drop the subject and describe kissing or something. Nevertheless, for a first try, the book "reads well" and contains a few good tips. All in all, it is worth your while.

—ALICE BLOOM



Father grieving

Midnight
the house sleeps
your son in bed
pissed at you
for what you've done
not done
said
not said
for who you aren't
for who you are
for who knows what

So you head
to the john
look in the mirror
snatch a towel
bury your face
cloak gasping tears
muffle the howl
of inadequacy

You finish
climb the stairs
to bed
your wife offers you
her back
you lie there
supine
unforgiven

You drift off
having once again
protected the silence
of your house
sleeping

—DOUG RAWLINGS

If You Arrive at This Place

I WILL TELL YOU as I was told. You will hear noise from the beginning to the end. There are roads and streets but you will hardly notice the difference. You will see bunches of people. Life and death everywhere. Elegant figures going to work. Don't worry, they are not ghosts. Under those hats and opulent suits, there are human beings. At least that's what I have been told.

They will enter into big buildings and a moving box will throw them over their corresponding desks. For 8 hours, they will drink coffee, talk over the telephone, gossip, and work. Because, believe it or not, they work.

Out of the buildings, life keeps going on. People will move to their usual corners: the newspaper, the lottery ticket and the candy seller will show their toothless smiles hundreds of times to say "thank you."

A lazy sun will be shining at noon. It will be repeating its routine as it has done century by century. You will look at it and when looking down again, your drunk eyes will see everything deformed as a reflection on water. For a second, the statues will dance in front of you, fat people will be thinner and the earth will be rounder than ever.

As always, the beggars will be loving their day. Itch. They feel something itching in their bodies, perhaps the same pang of conscience that itches the whole place. A thirsty dog runs behind its tongue and a woman shouts guttural sounds.

If you don't belong to this place and you are not warned, you will miss a group of birds playing on a basement; a bunch of girls with a red smile between their legs; old women nosing at life behind their windows; an old cat closing its eyes like a scolded child; the pink cheeks of a girl on a bicycle. A maiden woman writes letters to the one she never forgot and the doves knock the time on the doors of the old cathedral.

But the night will come and the city will assault you. Your map will become useless. This city is like an old baby in a state of coma. Friday afternoon and people don't know what to do with time. Where to close it? Where to confine it? Clandestine lovers try to find a nest for the love memory.

The streets vendors start a war that hits your eyes: words and objects with magic powers and

attributes. The wanderers and the thieves are the real owners of the place. They are the only ones who know it by heart. Even its name is new: they have baptized it again in their secret code of grimaces and silence. They hide the city secrets behind a heavy iron curtain.

You will not be the only stranger. We will all be a part of the orchestra. Musical notes will die slowly in an old guitar. A trumpet echo will escape from the cafe for selected people. A chorus of dogs will sing to the moon. You will walk and your breath will be the only cane for your shivering legs.

A gang of street boys eat eagerly. I know you also saw the movie in which Chaplin eats his shoe and every tack is a delicious chicken bone, and the sholaces the most exquisite Italian spaghetti. Any similarity is just a coincidence, like in the movies.

If your last name is not "Alias" and your name a scarf in your cheek, don't expect any respect. The gays will cross the street with their geisha's feet. Your feet will frequently step on shadows. A tossing body will emerge from a newspaper mountain.



I have told you as I was told. Don't worry if you arrive at this place. You have been appointed to be a judge: take it or leave it. You will be incredibly happy or endlessly sad. You will find your best enemy or your worst friend. You may use two words: fascinating or depressing. There will be no points in the middle.

The wind will blow love songs and pain whispers. Somebody will dance under the rain music. People like puppets will try to undo their own threads. Don't intend to do anything because nothing will change. I was born here, I grew up here and I certainly know that it's just the hallucination of a place that feeds its memories.

—JEANET SUAREZ



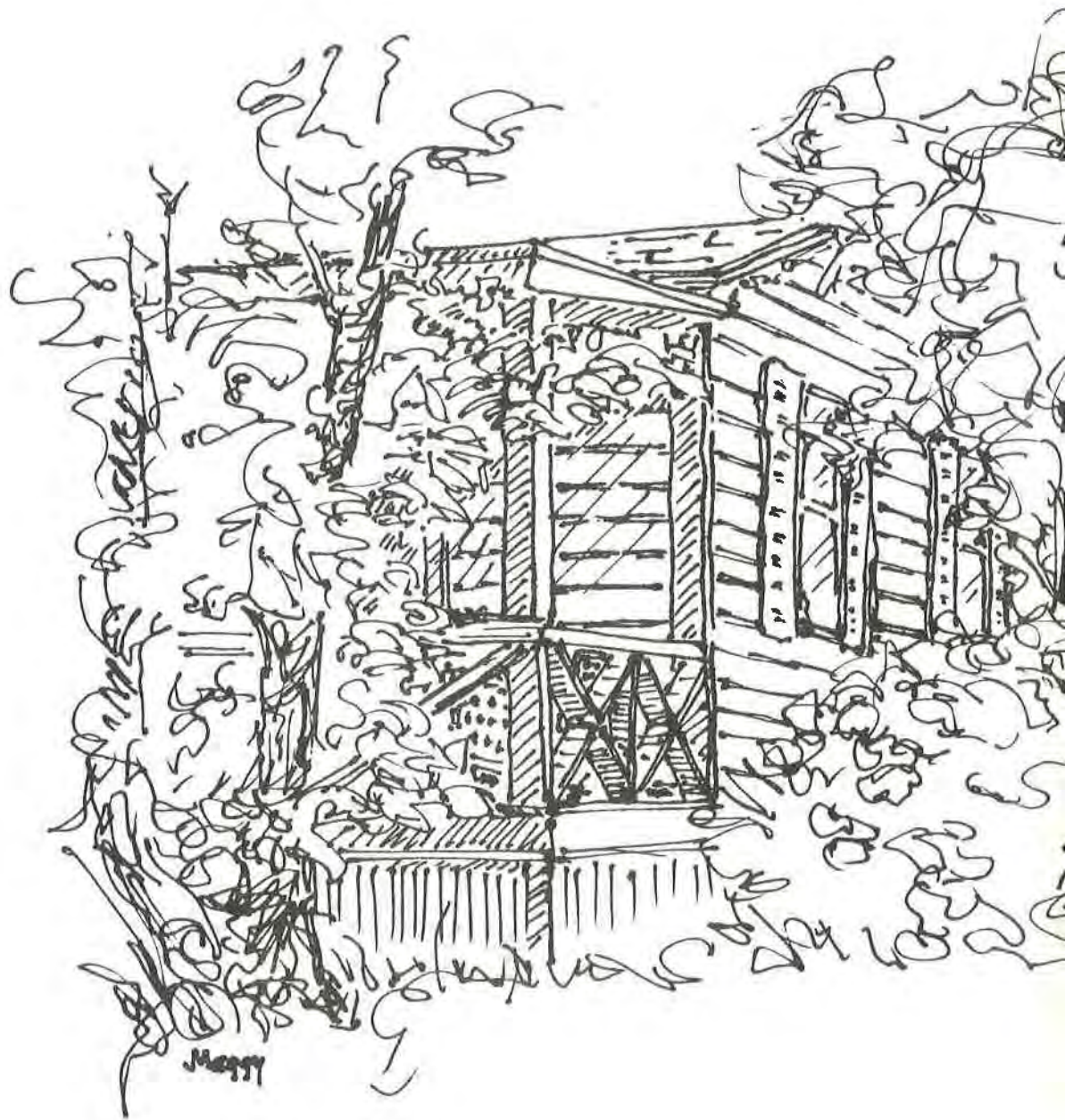
August

I hear my mother growl.
In the mirror through the crack
in the door I see her,
her yellow nightgown rising up
like Walker Hill.
Her hair fuzzes out around her.
Daddy's there too,
afraid
in his flannel shirt.

She yells then.
The sound rises into a high whine
like my skateboard, wheeling
down the drive.
Cuts off sharp.
Figures move in front of the mirror,
block her from my sight.

After a while she calls us in,
me and my sister, and
her voice is soft.
But she's not crying.
She's smiling like the sun come out, and
hanging from her chest—
attached to her, you see,
like Velcro—is a
little pink thing,
beat up-looking
like the dog.

—PATRICIA O'DONNELL





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—PATRICIA O'DONNELL

Spring 1991

Limp with longing
weak from coughing
in the grip of my spring cold

I am undone by a downy new leaf,
the painted trillium,
a patch of white violets.

Aching with desire,
stung by the rich smell of cow manure,
I dissolve into a reverie of wants.

Unravelling by the dappled light,
softened by the mourning dove's coo,
sustained by the robin's trill,
I plod home and
admire the brave tulip
displaying its dark center.

—KATHLEEN BEAUBIEN

Luxury

Luxury is buying all the Granny Smith apples I want
And eating pitted prunes.
Luxury is living in a place where the wind doesn't hurt my face
And the grass feels warm under my bare feet at midnight.
Luxury is losing myself in the story of a novel,
And crying in remembrance of forgotten moments of my real life.
Luxury is taking time for a lavender bath,
When the efficiency of a shower tugs at my sense of responsibility.
Luxury is having the newspaper brought to my bedroom,
And revealing just enough hands to warmly hold on.
Luxury is the feel of silk next to my back,
And the whisper of velvet next to my thigh.
Luxury is having my back rubbed until I fall asleep,
And not getting up to blow out the candle.
Luxury is listening to someone's truth telling,
As it ignites a gleam of excitement and understanding in me.

—MARGARET GOULD WESCOTT

Thomas L.F. Hubler

October 9, 1851 - March 21, 1913

Excerpted from *Youngest Soldierboys of America's
Saddest War & Other Essays* (1992)

THOMAS L.F. HUBLER probably was "the youngest soldier in the Union Army" when, claiming to be fourteen, he volunteered at Warsaw, Indiana, his hometown. The date was April 19, 1861. Of all the youngest who served during the next four years in the Union Army, it is most probable that Tommy Hubler was the earliest or the first of his extraordinary breed. That May 7th at age 9 years 7 months Tommy enlisted for one year and on May 19, 1862, he re-enlisted for three years, thus serving the entire war in this same regiment—the 12th Indiana Infantry, mostly in Company A, though both Companies E and H were fond of claiming him. "It is thought that he beat the first 'long roll' of the great civil war."¹ He was, then, at this early point in the War of the Sixties, quite likely *the youngest in the blue uniform*.

Tommy was born at Fort Wayne, Indiana, the son of Henry Hubler, whose parents were Henry Hubler, Sr., and Barbara Edres, and whose grandparents were Jacob and Margaret Hubler and John Edres—all of Centre County, Pennsylvania.² With his brothers John L., David, and Reuben, Henry (Jr.) had lived a short time [c. 1848-53] in Ashland County, Ohio. Tommy was but two when his folks moved to Warsaw, where, in the next seven years, he did much of his growing up. His father had been a lumber dealer and a leader in the Pennsylvania Militia prior to the Mexican War, of which he was a veteran. Hence, by the spring of 1861, Henry Hubler's military experience easily recommended him to officer status so that right away he became Captain Hubler. Also, Henry's sister Jemima's husband was Lt. Reub(en) Williams, a promising young newspaperman, had been among the earliest to answer Lincoln's first call for three-month volunteers. It is conjectured Tommy's mother, Mary A., knowing her husband (Capt. Henry, later Major) was in poor health, sacrificed her son in the belief his father needed him. Too, she shared a common belief: that a show of strength and three months' time would convince the South to give up its secession.

The Warsaw ladies presented their Company with a silken flag inscribed in gold letters KOS-

CIUSKO GUARDS upon its departure for Indianapolis. Tommy's military career was that of the 12th Indiana—training at Evansville, then off to Baltimore, to Sandy Hook, Maryland, July 28th; duty at Harpers Ferry, Williamsport and Sharpsburg until March 1862; advance on Winchester, Mar. 1-12; skirmish at Stephenson's Station; operations in the Shenandoah till April; duty at Warrenton Junction; reconnoissance to Rappahannock Rr. with skirmish at that Crossing, Apr. 18; march to D.C.; muster out May 14, 1862, on expiration of duty.³ Drummer Boy Tommy Hubler, "one of the most expert drummers in the Army of the Potomac," according to historians of the 12th Indiana, saw much heavy battle action, particularly during his second enlistment while serving in the Army of Kentucky and in the Army of the Tennessee. We can be sure that Tommy personally mourned the loss of his Hoosier friends among the 12th's 100 men who were killed or the 195 who died of diseases during and after bloody contests at Holly Springs, Miss.; Siege of Vicksburg and of Jackson; he lived the heavy truths of the Chattanooga - Ringgold campaign, the Battle-siege of Atlanta; Jonesboro, Bentonville, the Bennett House Surrender-finale. The little percussionist lent cadence to the 12th Indiana's jubilant, precisioned paces up Pennsylvania Avenue with Sherman's Army on its Grand Review of May 24, 1865³—the day he saw more fellow blue-clads than ever before or since. Early in 1865, Tommy's Uncle Reub Williams received a brevet Brigadier-Generalship at the request of President Lincoln; Tommy, at this time, became Gen. Williams' aide.

Returning home to Warsaw, Indiana, Tommy Hubler easily, willingly came under the tutelage of Reub Williams, now editor/publisher of *The Northern Indianian* [today—1991—*The Warsaw Times-Union*, still operated by Williams' grandson Michael, son of "Ted" Williams, who ran the paper for years]. Young Thomas Hubler (He almost never used his two middle initials), by the early fall of 1865 a seasoned veteran not yet fourteen, began to learn the printer's trade. As he advanced in his teens he picked up the finer points of newspapering

and acquired a variety of journalistic skills that included writing—a flair for nonfiction. One suspects his indebtedness to Reub Williams was lifelong. Meanwhile he had lost his father, Major Hubler, who died Nov. 18, 1865, a casualty to the strains and exposures of his Civil War duties.

On Dec. 17, 1869, Tommy married Frederick Aspinall's daughter Sarah F. "Sadie" Aspinall, whose folks lived in Goshen, Indiana. They would have three children; while one died a child, Lena E. grew to young womanhood, and Thomas Junior survived his father. For several years Tommy was foreman of the composing room at *The Northern Indianian*. About 1885, he moved his family and home to Milwaukee, where he accepted a position in a large printery. Then, about 1890, he relocated in Chicago, where for some twenty years he was employed by Donnelly & Company and by Rand, McNally & Company. Tommy originally had joined Henry Chipman Post 442, G.A.R., in Warsaw. Wherever he moved to, he kept up his active presence as a Grand Army comrade and did always enjoy popularity, especially beloved for being "so much younger than the rest of us." Tommy died in Chicago at his 5847 Prairie Avenue home where his funeral service was held. Among his many mourners were his son, his widow, and three sisters—Mrs. Reub Williams, of Warsaw; Mrs. Michael Cline, of Cleveland, Ohio; and Mrs. Sarah Taylor, of Sexton, Missouri. He was conveyed by the Pennsylvania Railroad to Warsaw, where his fellow charter members of Chipman Post met him and took charge of his burial at Oakwood Cemetery that Easter Sunday.⁴ In 1883 it was generally supposed that Tommy might likely someday become the last survivor of the great Union Armies, that he might live to beat their last tattoo.

Whatever may be said, few others, if any, among all the youngest patriots in "The Boys' War," served the *entire* war or had so lengthy a tour of wartime service in the War of the Sixties as did this magnificent Drummer Boy Hubler. . . . the pride of the Twelfth Indiana Infantry. .

On Memorial Day 1978, the Kosciusko County Historical Society dedicated a newly installed bronze plaque on Tommy's gravesite in Warsaw's Oakwood Cemetery—the result of a feature story by Ruth Thayer Kain and Virginia Scott Miner, whose poem "For Tommy Hubler" was read followed by a seven-gun salute. Her elegy opens this way—

In battle you would hear such sounds
As surely no boy should hear—the screams
Of desperately wounded men.
The horses' frantic neighing, and
The rain of bullets, then artillery's
Great crash and thud. And there was mud
Knee-deep at times, and winter cold
Gnawing at bones. Your treble, though,
Lifted at campfires as the men,
Longing for home, sang out their hearts.

And though the mystery haunts us still—
How in the world your mother let
You go, still off you went, tall, slim,
A ten-year-old, beside your father.
Tommy Hubler, you kept the faith
You pledged the Union. There were men—
More than we like to say—deserted:
Not you, Tommy Hubler—no,
You were a boy who was a man—
A man in courage and in soul.
Your drum the company's heartbeat,
You faced death. . .⁵

NOTES

1. "The Youngest Drummer Boy," *Warsaw Daily Times*, Sept. 24, 1883.
2. Thomas Stephen Neel's letter to the Kosciusko County Historical Society from New London, Ohio, Sept. 1, 1983.
3. *Dyer's Compendium of the War of the Rebellion*, Vol. III, pp.1122-3.
4. "Thomas Hubler Passes Away," *Warsaw Daily Times*, Mar. 22, 1913, p. 1.
5. "Society to Honor Youngest Soldier," *Times-Union*, Warsaw, Ind, May 27, 1978, p. 19.;

My particular appreciation goes to Doris L. Camden, of Warsaw, Ind., for her supportive researches and genealogical "trench work."

—JAY S. HOAR

Impressive Little Grown-Ups

Drummer, mascot, marker,¹ monkey,²
Little Boy Gray, Little Boy Blue,
Little Girl Nurse of either hue,
Just what did you do in our sad fray?

Was it Uncle Jeff's urgent call? Or Uncle Abe's?
Did you carry a message? Play a tune? Act the spy?
Stand guard? Mark time? Were you foe or ally?
Yours were billets suitable for babes?

Weren't you *really* older
Could glory-hunger so smoulder?
Your few years seem unfair.
Were grown men all *that* rare?
Your service *was* based on need?
Why—you could barely read!

Tender Soprano, all too willing,
You, Cherub Face, on aching feet,
What hateful, hurtful, haunting sights
Stole your peaceful slumber, nights?

Regimented Innocence martially schooled,
Beardless brave youngster partially fooled,
We honor you—the fledgling Fair,
The faithful Forgotten. We honor you!

—JAY HOAR

1. The soldier who forms the pivot of a wheeling column, or marks the direction of an alignment.

2. A powder monkey (esp. 19th century): a youth aboard a warship among whose duties was carrying powder bags from the powder magazine to the gun crews beside cannon on the gundecks.



Five improvisations in primary colors

O the black-barked forests where
a dark-eyed woman's torso
can ride the wild-eyed pony,
playing its flanks for a piano,
her white hands studded with red.
The face says little,
moonscape
cradled on a yellow ruff.
The great green wagon waits
to be wheeled away.
But a blood red disc
swallows the horizon
where a comet burns toward her head,
a sword of fire waits to be drawn.



There are plants in the window
but the window's barred to stars.
The hand-held mirror's blaring;
The body lacks a head,
it's swallowed several;
grey tiny faces
smile from its mottled bulk.
It may wrap itself
on its chair in a fringed blanket;
it may tap a granite foot
to the tune
of rest in peace, rest in peace.



These faces are pink as pigs
except the one that's jaundiced
and stares through topaz lenses,
whose nose is a green wedge,
whose lips have blurted
too many inconsistencies
so twist down and up the cheek.
The rest, may be, will come to this,
their eyes stop puzzling
hurt or reflecting nausea,
evasions die in their depths,
their jaws stop rattling
and their skin creasing

in long black lines from bridge to jowl.
Then the face floats off the skull,
with hair for antennae,
with no teeth to chew no food
back of closed red lips set
loose in space like a painted mustache.



A louvered window.
You can unwrap the skin
so front and back are side by side
and look inside
the tattoos on its chest:
a line of cars and trucks
against white light of day,
a line of earth, thick brown;
green stripes are furrowed field.
Windows and railings,
mud huts and the palace,
the caskets—abut
blazing gold and black.
A flock of black fingers
spreads through cobalt.
The eye
that floats nearby
parts night's curtain.



Come spring, the snow will melt
and fill the glacial lake
above the pine forest
to overflowing. Then will begin
the spill we call the river,
that washes the fertile plain
birds and fish follow,
smooth-headed, sleek-bodied,
striped and wriggling,
to the source.
Branches reach
into the sea
where a forked black root
spins
in bottomless water.

—LEE SHARKEY

Oz

Over the rainbow back in Needham
where the rainbow was the creek behind the house,
the creek we were not allowed
to cross under any circumstances

But we did
and we'd hike through the woods
—over the rainbow—having adventures,
you nine me five

Remember the traps we dug, Hodge?
we'd break bottles and line miniature pits with shards of glass
then cover them over with grass and twigs,
traps straight from Tarzan movies

We never caught anything in them
though Mr. Hess stepped in one that time
and just kept going like it was nothing,
just a regular hole

And the time back there in the woods
you stepped into the bee's nest
yellowjackets in the ground
a hundred of them a thousand of them

A million swarming up your pants leg
and pulling themselves inside-out stinging.
You puffed up like a bisquit in the oven
so Mom had to cut your pants off

I was disappointed that the bees ignored me.

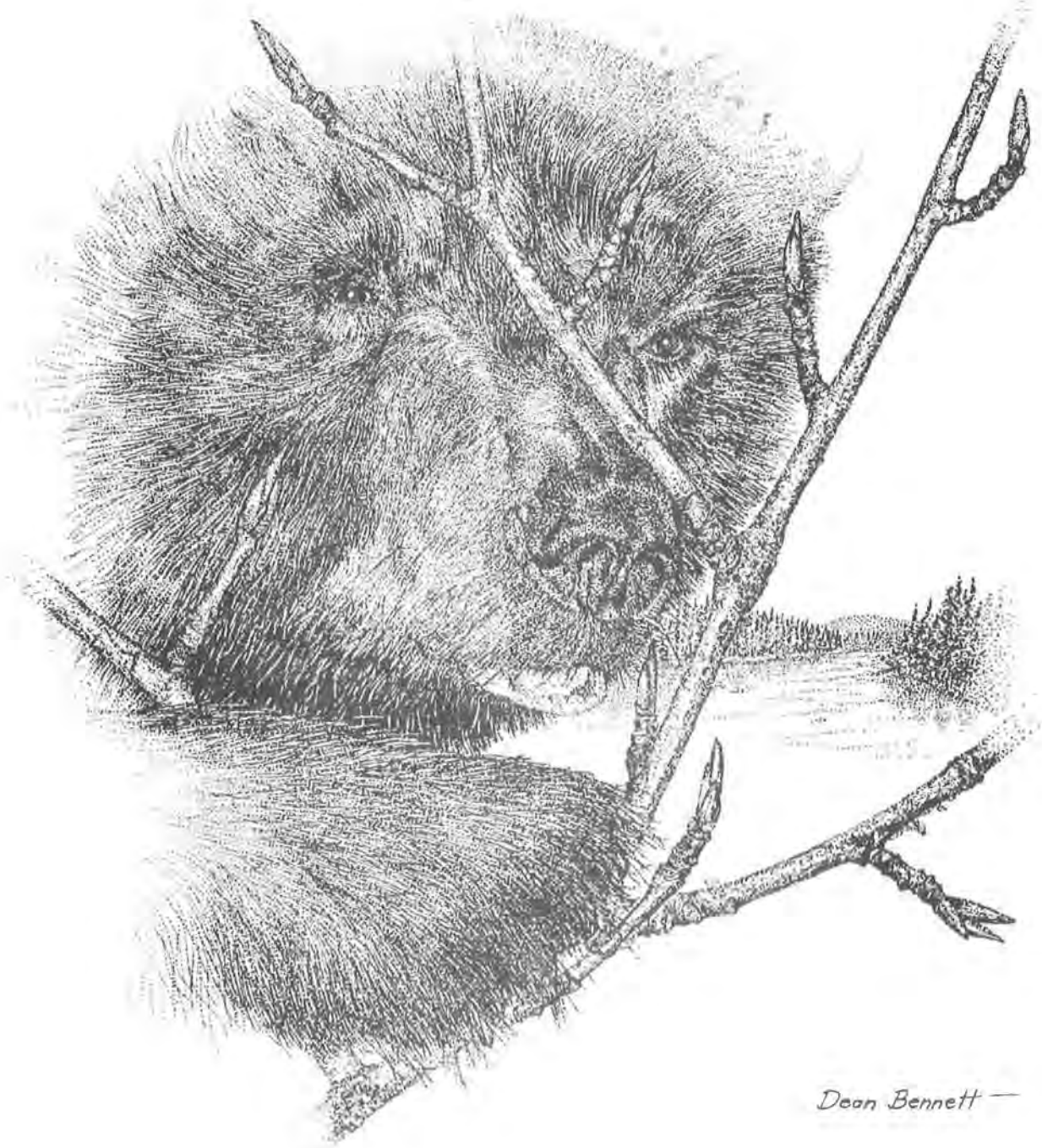
But not even bees could end over the rainbow
over the rainbow ended when we met
Ralph Anderson back there at the big rocks
and the two of you bigger boys stripped me and stole my clothes

You left me to get home on my own.
God the strategy I used not to get you in trouble
sneaking back naked through the forest to the creek
leaping it

Creeping to the yard
then streaking to the garage
climbing the trellis to our window
falling to the carpet dead

But Mom was in our room, Bro, I didn't have to say a word.

—BILL ROORBACH



BLACK BEAR AND BALSAM POPLAR
Allagash Wilderness Waterway

In spring along the lower Allagash River, Black Bear, *Ursus americanus*, are known to seek out the large, fragrant, resinous buds of the balsam poplar, *Populus balsamifera*. Sometimes called Balm-of-Gilead by loggers, horticulturalists use that name for the hybrid, *X. Populus gileadensis*.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ALICE BLOOM teaches English Literature in the Department of Humanities and is, at present, two-thirds of the way through writing a comic/New England/feminist/murder/mystery novel, set in a small (anonymous) Maine village. Meantime, she lives and writes in Mt. Vernon.

JUDITH BRADSHAW BROWN is Supervisor of practicum students in SAD #9. She teaches one course each semester at UMF, and taught English at Mt. Blue High School for 15 years.

JAY S. HOAR, Professor of English here for the past 50 semesters, in "off" hours often generates biographical essays in support of his Advanced Composition and Freshman Writing courses. His present offerings are excerpted from an epic prose elegy that has recently come into focus for him—*Youngest Soldierboys of America's Saddest War*.

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BILL ROORBACH is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Humanities. His *Summers with Juliet* was recently published by the Houghton Mifflin Co.

LEE SHARKEY has recently been seen carrying a copy of *Long Night Ahead*, a just-published collection she edited of poems and art by mental health consumers, around the Humanities Department, showing it off to people like a new baby.

JEANET SUAREZ, a native of Colombia, is the Spanish Assistant at UMF. She will enter the graduate program in Romance Languages at the University of Oregon this fall.

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PAULA WIDMER, a veteran of life, has been teaching art education and drawing at UMF for a decade. When she's not globe-trotting, she lives in Farmington. Sometimes, she grabs an opportunity to create a drawing or two.



