

1969

The Fat Giraffe, volume 1, number 6 (1969)

Fat Giraffe

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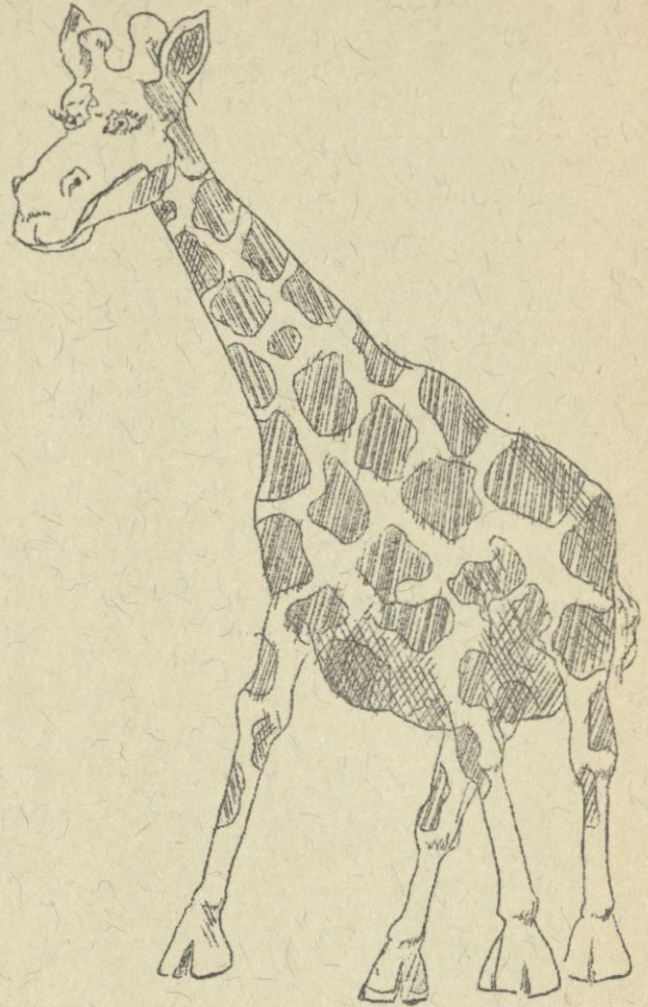
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THE FAT GIRAFFE

ONE
DIME



The Fat Giraffe is an independent, non-profit creative writing publication, issued twice per quarter by a group of students and faculty at Moorhead State College, Moorhead, Minnesota. Manuscripts (poetry, short stories, and short essays) may be submitted to any member of the editorial staff.

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NEW LONDON WATER CARNIVAL

Three down-home musicians
singing, "The Eden Valley Fox Hunt"
floating on a pine raft
near the bank of the Crow River.
Wide pelvised women
slice fresh bread and home-made liver sausage
for farmers in blue denim coveralls.
Like Neanderthal witches,
they whisper to one another
about an old man having an epileptic seizure.
The reflection of railroad flares
and brown-furrowed, Minnesota faces
on dark, algae-blooming water.

In Vietnam,
Buddhist monks in saffron robes
burn themselves
in hope of leaving the war behind.
In Biafra,
children fill hungry stomachs with dust
before sleep.

- Michael Moos

PASSING OF THE SUN

The light has gone
Past the ruins of the city,
Past the forest's twisted fingers
Gathered up to the sky.

Upon the mountain face
A tear of snow
Reflects the red horizon
Slowly bleeding.

- David Rudesill

COLD

All the trees have died and become skeletons,
 rows of skeletons along the streets
 with only their shadows growing
 over the cold-white snow.
 The silence gathers in the streetlamp
 while the cat shivers in the shelter
 of the window sill.
 The old man walking by
 licks the viscid thread of mucus
 from his upper lip.
 All the windows of the city
 are trying to outstare
 the cold eye of the moon.
 Here the night is like a cold, quiet storm.
 Here all dreams meet,
 dreams of young children,
 of old and young men and women,
 all dreaming of grey, wind-ripped coats
 hanging limp on the long bone-branches of trees,
 all gathered together around a dead fire
 on the barren plains of snow
 that stretch into the heavy darkness.
 And the frigid air,
 the cold that must possess everything,
 like an invisible needle,
 moves into the bone marrow of the fingertips
 and touches the corners of the eyes.
 Here, the long minutes are frozen
 into the eternity of rivers of ice.

- Dale Jacobson

Grass, Dylan, War, and Zen. . . .all fine
 words to head a verse, especially a really free
 verse. Which is to say, that is why these
 lines lack rhyme, and the title Sandra (after
 a raven-haired woman I have known) lies strangely
 in the body
 unlike an altogether proper title. Some may charge
 sophistry, or others sneer ego-trip, but
 closest are those who would tell an impressionable
 young woman she was inspiration to a poem.
 And that's not to mention her gypsy eyes.

- Kent Scheer

WITHOUT WORDS

In a greenhouse sitting,
We sleep long and naked.
The sun warming us
Through the mountain air,
Over the white river.

Waking,
I breathe slowly,
Casting my new eyes forth
On a line as thin as a girl's whisper,
A minnow of sunlight for bait,
Bitten by the wind,
Reeling in a supper of summer love.
The dust in the shining air
I inhale.

My mouth to yours,
Dust to dust.
Your body,
Waiting and resting,
Lying beside mine,
Dreaming.

We have come through fire
And the loss of green words
To this house of glass.
We are the only ones alive
Anywhere.

Suddenly
The river breaks into water.

And the silence is lovelier than a man can understand.

- Keith A. Heller

THE MASOCHIST

I explained to her (with illustrations) my clever phrase: Water is just water until you touch it. Real verbiage.

She told me of getting propositioned in a pizza pit. Of pursuing cars and screeching tires. Of a desperate note to a service station attendant. Of her escape.

I thought of marrying her, so that she wouldn't be lonely any longer.

- Kent Graves

THE MADONNA OF THE POTATO FIELDS

There is a wonder in
this God-forgotten land
where even rivers take
the hard way home
and nordic winds can snap
a brittle mind as easily
as heartless boys
at play with icicles. . . .

The story goes that
when the dreary spring
at last allows the fields
to crack and thaw,
a lonely figure rises
from the earth and stalks
the windrows up and down
and bangs her ancient armor
with a weary fist, aching for
the heft of Thor-forged steel.
But now, forsaken
to a world of curious rabbits
and a farmer's musing cow,
each spring her moans for
all the vikings born too late
convulse the harrowed ground,
and finally, in rage
she flings again the seeds
of reticence and scorn
into the northern air
and sinks beneath the earth
of those cold fields once more.

- Mark Vinz

REMEMBER ME

Now I am alone
 naked on Bank's Square
 thumbing my way to the fields of Elysium.
 Forgetting my goose-
 bumps along the banks
 of streaming silt,
 of onrushing sludge,
 I climb with Charon
 aboard the barge
 that will take us past the Styx
 and down
 the dying Mississippi.

Charon alone will not forget me.

- Dave Gustafson

SOUTH OF HAWLEY, MINNESOTA 1969

1.

August. Slender cloud streaks.
 Before making our evening camp,
 we pack a leather bag
 with fresh vegetables and red meat
 and wash the city's nervous film
 from our bodies
 in West Cormorant lake.

2.

Driving south on gravel roads.
 Mallards
 heavy from northern grain fields
 setting their wings
 above Cuba marsh.

3.

Bass fishermen. Corn fields.
 White farm houses with stained glass windows.
 I have lived for nineteen years
 in a farmland valley
 that was once the dark, clay floor
 of an ancient glacier lake.

- Michael Moos

WHILE WALKING MY DOG AT RIVERSIDE CEMETERY

Ancient ravens and
 Iron Jesus
 Above
 The silent city

Warm arms of the sun
 Clutch me
 (I have each moment)
 But the muskrat skull in my hand
 Frightens me

In the corner of my eye
 A quiet messenger
 The great mother of next moments
 Clad so nicely in snow robes and wind
 Did move naturally to the river
 (The ice must know about spring's fresh children)

Sparrows sing of January
 My dogs dance among the graves
 As I lie on my back
 And breathe

- Jim Fawbush

WHAT IS YOUR COLOR, MY LADY?

I was born in a scorching wheatfield
 in summer
 Bluebirds were strong, lacing overhead.

My mother was the wheat I laid in,
 My father was the ray from above,
 My woman was the weed nearby.

Black vultures hung listlessly, screening the sky,
 The dead grass took me away.

I died in a cold room in the city.

- Howard Samson