

# REVIEWS

## The Locust Post

by Richard James

*The Locust Post*, a new semesterly of poetry published by the UNC-A Literature and Language Department, has just been launched from University Heights with little splash or fanfare, but I suspect with the cracking of at least one bottle of champagne. Vol. 1, No. 1 is now reality, and we may hope that the root here planted will flourish in our pastoral soil. Locust is a hardy wood, and posts cut from it often sprout leaves.

New poetry publications normally begin with some grand manifesto of aims and intentions, but that is entirely lacking here. I am left to conjecture and surmise; but evidently *The Locust Post*, bearing the departmental imprimature, emulates the university quarterlies and journals rather than the typical student-run college literary

magazine. Actually it falls somewhere in between; most of the poetry is no better than routinely appeared in the old *Images* of years gone by nor that to be found in a thousand similar publications. On the other hand, bad and incompetent poems have been carefully excluded, and there are some bright spots which give hope that *The Locust Post* may eventually rival the better of the little poetry magazines and regional poetry journals.

### "Locust is a hardy wood, and posts cut from it often sprout leaves"

spare, and precise, but after admiring its ingenuity and deriving the cerebral pleasure of contemplating its craft, one can find little more in it. Modern literature has regaled us to plenitude with emptiness, meaninglessness, and futility, in which there is small emotional satisfaction to be had; the spirit craves more. Still, this is a skillful, effective and mature poem, and perhaps its arousal of the reader's inner thirst is deliberate.

My personal favorites of the poems in this issue are the two right in back by Priscilla Eichelberger. They both deal with nature red in tooth and claw as it impinges on the everyday domestic setting in the form of stalking cats and the corpses of their prey. The language ritualizes these little murders and connects them with more universal concerns of mortality and compassion. These are complete poems; coherent, well-formed, and whole, presenting concrete situations from a sympathetic point of view and making us care in a human way about things we ignore everyday. The language is controlled, tight, self-possessed, without excess, expressive and vivid, yet retaining a conversational air. The poet remembers her audience; she is telling us a story, and we hear her voice, and listen. They are poems written with humanity and finding meaning in events; they are worthy of our attention. They prove that we do not need to seek extravagant subjects for poetry; the subjects are present at the kitchen stoop or in the backyard. All the poet needs is eyes to see, tongue to speak, heart to feel.

The poetry of *The Locust Post* is drawn mostly from the UNC-A population and poetry-workshop alumni. If it aims, as I hope, to some significance beyond these hallowed halls, I would recommend that it widen its circle quickly. The editors should not merely select from the material that happens across the desk, but should pursue a more aggressive policy of solicitation and acquisition. They should reach out to many of the non-famous but fine poets who lurk in the community. There are a number of talented poets in the area, some too discouraged to send poems anywhere, who have wonderful collections squirreled away. *The Locust Post* could gain immeasurably by seeking

out such people and encouraging them. The editors could also extend their reach to the other colleges in our area. By drawing on such larger reserves of talent, *The Locust Post* could achieve a quality beyond other publications which have a wider base and greater resources under them.

In any case, we wish *The Locust Post* good speed. It has had a healthy birth and a valid christening, and its hopeful beginnings deserve support.

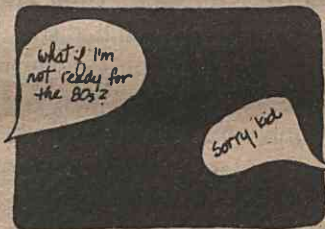


## High Tea Café POSTCARD SHOW

The Second Annual High Tea Regulars Octal artists' postcards

"Are You Ready for the Eighties?" February 12 - March 15 deadline for entries February 16 4x6" or 6x4" format

High Tea Café 231 Wall Street Asheville, NC



For the second year, the High Tea Café has invited its "friends and regulars" to submit creative variations on the theme of the humble postcard. The idea for the postcard show was initiated by Ann Bach, who, while studying art in New York, saw a display entitled "Art As Postcards" at the Cooper Hewitt Museum, a division of the Smithsonian. The purpose of the Cooper Hewitt show was to give artists in all mediums—not just visual—an outlet for expression, and the postcard theme was chosen for its universal familiarity. The show included submissions by artists as diverse as poet Jonathan Williams and dancer Martha Graham.

In the spirit of the Cooper Hewitt show, the High Tea show offers the work of a varied group of artists: photographers, writers, dancers, musicians, and actors. The show is filled with delightful surprises on the topic of the 80's: poetry, soft-sculpture and wood carving are among the imaginative entries. Works by regionally-known visual artists like Jean Wall Penland, Edith Gunn and UNC-A graduate Ron Meisner are also featured.

The Café is open Tuesday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Stop by for lunch and have a look at this provocatively unique show.

## Old Times:



Julie Gillum is a not-too-welcome visitor from Sheri Groce's past in "Old Times," Harold Pinter's unusual drama playing at Theatre UNC-Asheville, Thursday through Saturday, Feb. 28-March 1 at 8:30 p.m., with a Saturday matinee at 2:30 p.m. A special low-price preview for UNC-A students, faculty, and staff will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 27 at 8:30 p.m. Box office for sales and reservations is open from 1:00-4:00 p.m. weekdays. Reservations are recommended.

by Pam Whitmire

Theatre UNC-A's current production turns the proverbial triangle into a three way street. The attraction among two women and one man transcends traditional heterosexuality through innuendo rather than fact.

Harold Pinter's *Old Times* is a memory play. Deeley, a film-maker, and his wife Kate, are awaiting the arrival of Kate's old friend Anna. He is curious and she is quiescent about the past. Anna stands dormant at the edge of the stage until her first speech which begins a cycle of memories from twenty years ago.

The script is terse, the dialogue spare. Arnold Wengrow's strong direction releases the psychic tension, which Pinter undoubtedly intended. The play depends more on silence and the character's physical demeanour than on conversation and stage business. For example, while Anna discusses with Deeley an alleged affair of Kate's, the audience must watch Kate's facial expressions to determine whether event truly occurred.

And with Julie Gillum's powerful Anna, it is indeed difficult to watch anything but *her*. Her sinuous feline attitude depicts confidence and an imagined control of the situation. She caresses Kate and encourages Deeley's sensuous recollections of a woman who may or may not have been Anna.

However, Kate is the pivotal character here. Sherri Groce's subtle changes of expression define for us the true relationships among the threesome. She quietly manipulates Deeley and Anna into a power struggle for her attention. She obviously enjoys her control over the other two even as she pretends to ignore them.

Deeley is surely distressed by the sexual overtones of the women's past relationship. There is a smooth sensuous quality to both women, and Deeley sporadically attempts to break the bond between them by boisterously drawing attention to himself. Al Myers, as Deeley, provides a rough contrast to the sleekness of the women.

The set, designed by Paul Sweeny, and the costumes are obviously upper class. The genteel appearance of these people is betrayed by their immersion in a basic sexuality that knows no social delineation. And this is the thrust of Pinter's drama; there is a fine line between what is real and what is imagined, while there is a chasm between what is said and what is meant.