

**"REFLECTIONS"
FROM NCCU
BY
MARY BOHANNON**

Two men lie in hospital beds, both suffering from a terminal illness. One man's bed faced the windows from which he could see more of the daylight. Each morning, the man whose bed was not facing the windows would inquire: as to what was going on the streets outside. The man nearest the window would give him a detailed report of the children swinging, their colorful lunch boxes and books, tightly strapped, as they skipped or ran to their respective schools. On rainy days, the man nearest the window would erase the sense of gloom by contending that the rain was like medicine sustaining all earth's greening foliage. On snowy days there were snowball battles. A little boy was combating a big boy. Inside the hospital, the conversation between the two men went something like this:

"Who's winning?"

"No one yet, but the little boy is trying."

"How is the little boy doing now?"

"Not so good. Oh, my he fell down."

"Who?"

"The little boy, but wait, he's up."

"Then he's still at it. Huh?"

"Yeah, he's still at it—and do you know, he won!"

"He did? How did he do it?"

"He ran away."

This type of conversation went on for months, until one morning the bed of the narrator was stripped. Sleeping pills had kept the listener

from being aware of his companion's passing during the night. When the listener awoke, he experienced the combined emotions that all of us do—sorrow and relief. He asked for the bed near the window. His request was granted.

When he got into the bed, he turned slowly towards the window. He closed his eyes and anticipated his anti-anticipation. Opening his eyes, he was faced with a square of brick walls—a bulwark.

—Mary Bohannon

ODE TO A GRANDMOTHER THIS IS FOR YOU:

ishes us,
With wisdom, strength and truth.

You are the eagle that feeds her greedy young
Saving them from starvation;
Like the eagle, you've borne your young,
To provide for nests of their own.

You are the roof that shelters us
The logs that burn in the fire warming us with love.

You are the rain that bursts forth to the ground,
In times of draught,
The sun shining thereafter,
Smiling on the earth when it is plentiful.

You are the scriptures by which we live . . .
Pattern our lives.

You are the lines on the

The contributors are members of the Creative Writing Class of North Carolina Central University, under the tutelage of Miss Mary Bohannon, whose talents she considers worth developing. The students range from the freshman level through the graduate level.

roads,
The signs on the highways that guide our lives;
We obey and still,
We sometimes take these for granted.

You are a sponge that absorbs our pain
As your own.

You are the light slatched desperately for sheer survival;
A vessel saving a drowning man,
From the perils of the angry sea.

You are bandages and ointments among the wounded,
Sharing all your healing and soothing powers.
You are perfume spraying the fragrance



From Black
By JOHN HUDGINS

Three weeks ago this writer talked about the tragedy of Black people shooting each other. Early Monday afternoon this pattern struck home again in another form of additional importance to us. There was a stabbing on our campus, the Black college of this community. A Brother stabbed a Sister on campus.

Here in the halls of learning where our leaders are supposed to come from, here where Black identity should be at its strongest, where Black progress should be foremost. What is happening? Let us ask why. The scene is most indicative; Two white first aid men bandaging up a sister. A brother sitting in the back of a police car. The white cops haul off the brother, and the white ambulance hauls off the sister. She will wind up paying the white hospital and be the white court system.

What has happened? I am sure most of us can remember when this kind of thing would never have happened on a Black college campus. What ye forget is that the thing that prevented this was Black identity, a sense of purpose in the Black community. At least a surface love for each other. What has happened at Central? First, most semblances of Blackness have been eliminated. There is no more student paper to encourage Black pride. The ranks of dedicated Black teachers have been wiped out. Today between 50 and 60% of Central's staff is non-Black. Of the few Black ones, many lack moral courage and as a result submissively concern themselves with maintaining their salaries. The entire administration is leaning over backward to impress the white people in Raleigh with consolidation. Nobody admits that NCCU is become white, white-washed, white-controlled. Nobody admits that what used to be a proud Black school is now a wishy-washy diploma mill. That students are back to trying to make more money when they graduate. That students are back to being jive, party goers, card players, fun lovers.

If we are at all concerned about this kind of situation in the streets and on our campuses we must begin to move. We have to demand that the few non-white teachers left start acting Black. We have to demand that the administration be about preparing committee Black leaders for our community. We have to demand that students begin to live up to their responsibility to the Black community.

I don't want a Negro who would cut a sister for any reason in my community, to teach, preach, or dig graves. There is no place for irresponsible Negroes in the Black community, there are too many already. There is no need for a school that perpetuates an atmosphere where this kind of thing can happen.

I am tired of reading and hearing about Black brutality to other Black people. I am tired of sisters shooting brothers. I am already tired of brothers cutting sisters.

This is our community, we must do something about it. The police are not going to stop it. White people as a whole could care less, we are doing them a favor if we brutalize each other. And it is becoming more and more clear that there are some Negroes who don't care either.

If we are not for ourselves then who in the hell are we for BLACK PEOPLE?

Of peace and tranquility. The fragrant smell of a rose petal. Amidst the stench of a sometimes foul life.

You are the clock on the wall ticking . . .
Time is nigh.

You are ageless and time stands motionless
On the crown of your head,
Which GRANDMOTHER,
Is YOU!

—Carolyn E. Green

ON GOING TO VIETNAM
(Before entry in the Army)
On the battlefield one does not think of country.
If there is purpose it is self-preservation.

To fight they wish, to fight I might
But just to preserve my life.
Not for country, not for wife
Do I undertake this strife,
But for Life.

Caught up in the turmoil of war
Are those who mean no harm.
To snuff out those innocent lives
Causes no major alarm.
But the conscience of the

soldier
May never forget this murder
And may emerge a wiser individual.

—Morris Barrier

RUSHING
Day I was born
No one cried,
Ignoring
The awful whispers
Of the discerning Hand.
Cry?
Weep.
Night I died
It rained,
Embers quenched,
Floating disembodied
Above time and space.
Regret?
Resolve.

—Toby Jones

DO YOU REMEMBER DARKNESS?
Do you remember darkness,
Shadows wandering about
your room
Like restless phantoms,
Your clock ticking patiently
In rhythm with an old man
Rocking in his chair,
The smoke of his pipe curling
into the dark air
Into the nothingness, into the gloom?
Do you remember a word?
Only the thumping of your heart
Confirming your existence.
You sat there still,
Haunted by the solemn glory
of Silence.

—Robert Graham

RARE QUALITY
Rise, rise rare quality:
Come live; Take leave;
Send loose impaled dreams;
Valued rarity, demurred
impulses.
Enkindle smoldered desires,
Flare embers; wax warm.
Rise, rise rare quality:
Infuse Me! Come Full.

—Rose Cox

LOVE SONG
When you're weary rest
Your head on my hand,
My fingers running thru
your hair,
A soothing balm of silence.
Let me envision
This heaven in my hand,
This bliss that's in my soul.

Close your eyes,
Together, we see the world's
Heart in each other.

Forum
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need;
Have faith, and a sister's
hearts will glow
For it is the mirror of King
and slave,
'Tis just what you are and
do;
Then give to the world the
best you have,
And the best will come
back to you.
Madeline Bridges

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