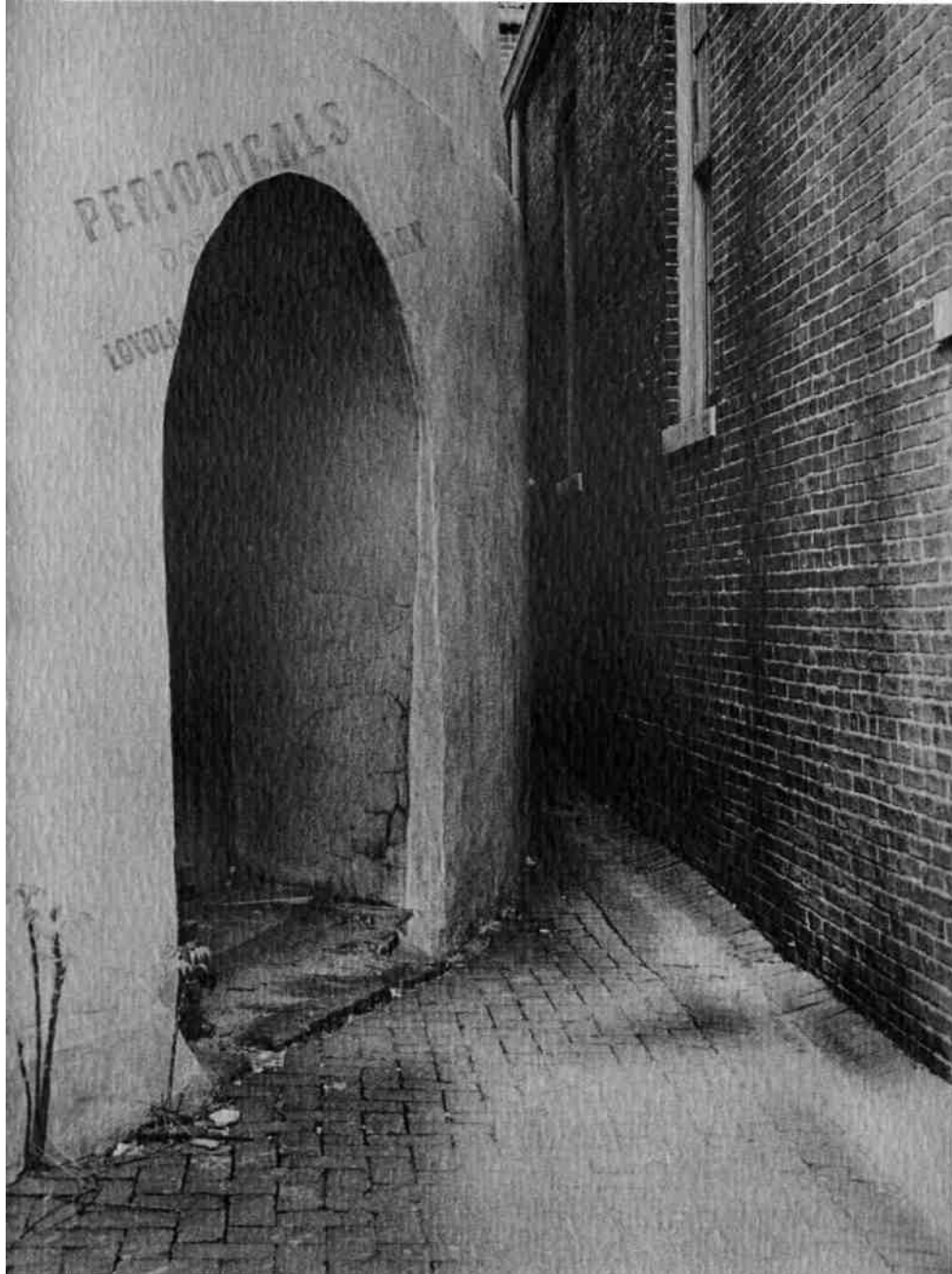




unicorn

unicorn

UNICORN is published quarterly by the students of Loyola College. Subscriptions are \$3 for one year; students and alumni, \$2 for one year.

All submissions must be accompanied by SASE, and all are eligible for cash prizes. Shorter fiction is preferred, and no more than five poems per submission. We ask that you also include a brief, biographical note.

Send all correspondence to:

The Editors
UNICORN
Loyola College
Baltimore, Md. 21210

Copyright 1975 by the editors.
All rights revert to the author.

Member of COSMEP and CCLM.

A Quarterly of Literature and Art

Fall, 1976

Loyola College of Baltimore

Vol. 6, No. 1

CONTENTS

THE COAL AT BLACK MOUNTAIN	
<i>poetry by Mike. Reis</i>	2
<i>artwork by Mary Jean Chyrek</i>	3
WHO	
<i>poetry by Ruth Moose</i>	4
THE FIRST THANKSGIVING	
<i>poetry by D. R. Belz</i>	5
SNAPSHOT	
<i>poetry by Jesse Glass, Jr.</i>	6
THE CLOWN TURNED	
<i>poetry by Jesse Glass, Jr.</i>	7
<i>artwork by Mary Jean Chyrek</i>	8
THE MAKING OF A LEAD SOLDIER	
<i>fiction by Beth Sweeney</i>	9
HORIZONS	
<i>poetry by Suzanne Marie Hobbs</i>	12
ESCAPING DOWN THE NJ PIKE	
<i>poetny by Phillip McCaffrey</i>	13
LESSONS	
<i>poetry by Lynne Dowell</i>	16
<i>artwork by Steve Saden</i>	17
THE FALL	
<i>poetry by Vicki Aversa</i>	18
ON A HILL IN WINTER	
<i>poetry by Paul Lake</i>	19
AN AUTUMN EVENING IN DUBLIN, 1745	
<i>fiction by D.R. Belz</i>	20
A LOST CHAPTER	
<i>fiction by D.R. Belz</i>	21
<i>artwork by Chuck Weiss</i>	22
EVENING IN A SMALL TOWN	
<i>poetny by William Meissner</i>	23
cover artwork by Faye Fisher	

The Coal at Black Mountain

"I will walk in God's presence
in the land of the living."

Psalm 116

When Lucifer walked
in the coal,
my brother Billy was on the main elevator.
A federal inspector told me.
Do you know how it feels
to have the godawful grief in your brain
go off?

I am going up to Wheeling.
I have got to get out of the methane.

--Michael Reis



Who

I am the child who walked over mornings
stepped on all the cracks
dipped my toes in dew
before the world rolled up.
I stole lilacs heavy with rain
tasted vines like a bee
made honey into a pie
and wore the mask of Halloween.
I lost by a single vote to the
daughter of May's queen
but won other wars with a clever cannon.

After I pidgeonholed my mind's
wandering,
I climbed a tree and bought the world.
My letters are under a rock
written in polkberry blood.

---Ruth Moose

The First Thanksgiving

The sun rises golden
On a bowl of white flowers on a slate table-top.
Cooking pits are dug with wooden shovels still green.
A pumpkin the size of a barrel is rolled up by three boys.
One woman has made forty pies.
The Indians have brought all the turkeys.
Bushels of corn, beans, and squash have arrived.
Bowls have been set out for a dinner.
The Indians like to eat on the ground.
The pumpkin is found to be wormy.
Someone spills a kettle of soup.
The grandfather's mouth organ is lost.
All of the babies start crying at once.
Some of the Indians get drunk and lie on the ground.
Shortly, it starts to rain.
Everyone runs to the hall for a prayer including the Indians.
Just then it begins to snow.
The moon rises early
A bowl of white flowers on a slate table-top.

---D. R. Belz

Snapshot

we walked
along the highway
spattered with the
dark pastels of
cinders rain &
gasoline

we looked like
murdered clowns
our colors were so
grim

---Jesse Glass, Jr.

the clown turned into
a wasp before I
could stop him

he stung me
& my arms swelled
with laughter

beads of greasepaint
trickled down my wrists.

---Jesse Glass, Jr.



The Making of a Lead Soldier

---Beth Sweeney

The little boy tiptoed into the kitchen, carefully placing his feet in the red squares of the checkered floor. His grandmother was bent over the stove; her body, encircled by an apron, seemed hunched and vulnerable in the harsh daylight. He could see the relaxed curve of her marked and wrinkled cheek and the wisps of white hair which had escaped her habitual bun. The little boy attacked suddenly and flung small arms tightly around the apron.

The grandmother stiffened. "Mercy, sugar!" she cried in her dry and husky voice. "You did surprise me!"

Still hugging her, the little boy slid under her small bent arm and stretched tall. "I'm almost as high as you are, Grandma!"

"Indeed you are. You're getting much too big. I want you to stay a nice little boy!" Her veined hand grasped a wooden spoon and began to stir with it. "You're my baby!" she added, briefly returning the hug with her free hand.

The little boy ducked back under her arm and walked stealthily to the jar on the kitchen counter. "I'm getting bigger every day," he continued, as he lifted the lid of the jar and stuck one hand inside, he turned to look at her out of the corner of his eyes; she had returned to the stove and he could see the handle of the wooden spoon moving beyond her shoulder. With military precision, his fingers seized two pieces of candy and silently replaced the lid.

He put one piece of candy into his mouth, began to suck on it, and patted his grandmother once more on the arm. "Can I play with the lead soldiers, Grandma?"

Her lips pursed absently and she kept her eyes on the slow stirring of the wooden spoon. "You know where they are."

The little boy went to the door in the kitchen which opened onto the back staircase. These stairs were creaky, dusty, and dark, and they led to the landing of the big staircase which rose from the front hall. On the lower steps of the back stairs his grandmother kept her rags and mops; a motley collection of cleaning powders and polishes was stored in a small cupboard. The little boy knelt on the bottom step and slowly drew out from under the cupboard a large, battered, tin box decorated with nail-like rivets.

"Thank you, Grandma." Carrying the box before him with as much solemnity as he could muster, the little boy marched through the dining room, across the hall, and into the big comfortable library, where he placed the box in what he judged to be the center of the shabby Oriental carpet.

This library was a wonderful room. The oak mantelpiece, across which a parade of elephants filed, was flanked on one side by a huge dresser barricaded with photographs, and on the other by a bookcase containing a dusty set of Tolstoy and various trophies won by the little boy's uncles when they were in school. In one corner of the room was his dead grandfather's chair: an enormous rocker made from stiff black leather. Across from the chair was a big horsehair sofa, burdened with ancient pillows that the little boy was not allowed to play with.

He knelt in front of the box, opened its clasp and then slowly raised the lid, holding his breath.

There they were.

Inside the box, and reflected in its shiny lid, was an entire army.

There were cannons standing on flat lead bases. There were men on horseback, men in carriages, and men on foot; there were soldiers who were walking, and soldiers who were standing still. The little boy gently took out the first soldier, who stood stiffly at attention in his indistinguishable lead uniform and carried a lead flag that bore no emblem. The little boy stood him up carefully on one side of the tin box. Then he found another soldier, cast from the same mold, and placed him on the other side.

He took out others, too: the lead drummers and the lead cavalrymen, each drummer beating the same drum, each cavalryman holding an identical gun. He lined them up on either side. Then he took out the infantry: those who marched alone, and those who marched in step with eleven other soldiers exactly like them-

solves; the right feet of these last strode forward together on the leaden bar which connected them, like a chain of paper dolls.

There were rows of flagbearers too, and rows of horses, and rows of men who did not carry guns but marched with the army anyway. The little boy placed them all in identical order on either side of the battered box, he stood up, tilted his head to one side, and surveyed the battlefield; with great care he stooped down and fixed a soldier who was slightly out of position. Then he walked into the dining room, opened a small door in the buffet, and took out a cooky tin with roses painted on it. The little boy carried it into the library, placed it beside the battered metal box, and opened it. The cooky tin was filled with beautiful marbles of all sizes and shades: some of them were a single solid color, while others were swirled like cream poured into coffee. The little boy, however, considered them only cursorily.

He counted the marbles up into two equal piles, one on either side of the tin box. These were the cannon balls. He squatted down behind one army, took careful aim, and threw the first cannon ball at the enemy soldiers, but it hit none of them; with the second throw he knocked down a whole row of lead soldiers who were riding their lead horses. He continued thus, happily absorbed, until his arsenal had been emptied and the opposing army was a shambles. Then he justly changed sides and flung cannon balls at his recent allies with equal violence. The little boy had only a few marbles left when he heard the uneven clicking of his grandmother's heels coming down the hall.

Her stout form appeared at the edge of the library door; one gnarled hand wiped itself on her apron as she spoke. "Come on now," she said. "Supper's ready and you're to help carry in the plates. I've already called your parents." Her eyes rested on his, upturned face, "Hurry up now, sugar." She turned, and the little boy could once more hear the clicking of her heels as they retraced their path back to the kitchen.

One by one the little boy dropped the marbles into the shiny interior of the cooky tin, where they made a sound like gunshots as they fell against each other. After he put the lid on the cooky tin the little boy stood up and with one sneakered foot kicked all the soldiers left standing until both armies had suffered complete defeat. Then he placed the soldiers, horses, and cannons in their battered tin box with careful reluctance and clasped the box shut with his earlier solemnity. Carrying the heavy box, head cocked like a general's, the little boy strode back to the kitchen. He could hardly wait to play with the lead soldiers again.

Horizons

The sky hangs so low
I could suck it through a straw
 if I chose,
and so thick
I could sip it from a spoon.

But I want back
my narrow sky, narrow
from the mountain's bite

and so thin
it would lift me,
 as I chose,

like a redwhite balloon
without a ballast.

---Suzanne Marie Hobbs

Escaping Down The NJ Pike

I

now you can sleep.
let your head lean back, now, and your eyes
close on the ceiling, you're balancing
yourself,
keeping the tip of your nose
above the water, the past--if you dream
you might be swimming backwards,
towards you don't know what in your dream,
swimming asleep
in dry water.

doze, then, you're that
tired; and i
am driving through your sleep.

II

after so many miles, speed
is only a murmur, the circular rhythm
line to wheel, of your breathing;
and later, the spinning purr
of your midnight dreaming.
after so many miles
i am part of your breathing:
dream me too, and both of us
some new place
we will be, when you waken.

III

the highway ribbon
feeds through the engine like tape,
monotonous, recording our steady
intention, splicing us
away. from mile to mile
we run this road like a zipper, closing
the distance behind us, and the past.
we are seaming this vacant august night
with the thread of our lives,
the line in the mirror
spinning whitely out behind us--
our singular wake
on this dry, macadam river.

IV

by south new jersey, the distance
is swelling, and pushing us:
we need the momentum, need
to be more than miles from here,
more than suns away
from this long thin night.
we will need to be safe in a circle,
a lover's ring, spun
from this white line around us
spun from the thread we are weaving together
this long thin night.

V

now you're resting: your head's
slipped off to the side, as if you wanted
to watch your dreams in the window,
midnight mirror...i can see
the strong and gentle line
of your cheek, in the small of the dark.

for a minute, i'm afraid
of you: watch, by glances, the surface
white of your skin, guess
the shape of your mouth, unconscious--
i'm afraid you'll slip
inwardly back and silent
away from me, into that water
alone.

you turn: your cheek
is more at peace than the summer moon;
you've closed your lips
like two young petals
kissing, in the small of the dark.

VI

by the time you wake
we'll be across the Susquehanna;
i will have waited
the longest hours of the night
for you, impatient for you
and to answer your sleepy question:
we are another hundred miles away
and that much nearer
ourselves.

---Phillip McCaffrey

Lessons

I was taught Latin by a woman of stern spine,
thick glasses and laced shoes,
of rules meticulously parsed.
Once as we stumbled through abicus cedrus, she said,
"As a young girl I was often ill."
 (Hair loosened? Bare footed? Flat chested?
 It seemed history older than Gaul.)
"There was a cedar tree beyond my window;
I amused myself watching the birds feed."

Strange how I've forgotten all her Latin
but often see, in a cushioned green cedar,
Miss Taylor's blood-red cardinals
picking the dusty blue berries.

---Lynne Dowell



the fall

alone

i sparrowed to the junk yard

to dump some summer wreckage before dawn:

cars roared at the entrance

pipes snaked after me

through the weeds

until

i reached the cavern of Lang's shed:

from its mouth

toothless gray men

scattered

like urchins

over contorted fenders

to help me

i sold my parts to them at a bargain

while rusty leaves twisted in the bitter wind

---vicki aversa

On a Hill in Winter

The mice danced loudly on the attic floor
A dance the blood taps out. The winter wind
Banged like a murderer on our back door;
The windows rattled at his frosty hand.
The baseboards took the brunt of his big foot;
The brute would crush us, mice beneath his boot.

We stripped to skin and made the bed springs squeak
Like a whole herd of mice, but naked love
Can not repel the frost once past its peak,
So under wool, like two hands in one glove,
We slipped on clothes. The patter overhead
Stopped suddenly, and we slept like the dead.

That house was no more shelter than a bed,
The bed no better shelter than a skin,
And skin was something that we had to shed
To put on love, and, oh, the blood was thin--
But, oh, the blood was warm when morning came.
We take our shelter where we find a flame.

---Paul Lake

A Lost Chapter of War and Peace, Crime and Punishment, or, August 1914

---D.R. Belz

I no longer regard solemnity as a means of
attaining truth; observation of life shows
one that solemn people are generally humbugs.

Bertrand Russell

As his assistant pulled the shroud up over the white-haired head, the coroner bent at his desk to write on the death certificate.

"Doctor Jonathan Swift," he said aloud, "'e's blessed that heaven took 'im at last, poor old fool."

The assistant nodded, staring at the body which pushed the shroud up here and there.

"Crazy as a bedbug, they say 'e was, straight from Bedlam's cells, but don't you believe it, boy. Were you an' me as sane as 'im. Just a little what you call your senile 'round the fringes, is all." The coroner scrawled his name on the paper.

"'e's growing," the assistant said.

"Hmmm?" the coroner said, his back to the operating table.

"Sir, 'e's growing."

"Ah yes, the deterioration of the gastric fluids causes, as is quite common in your poor old devils, enlargement of th' lower abdominal -- "

"'e's quite large now, sir, come see."

The coroner turned and abruptly sat down on his ink pot. The corpse had grown twice its size.

"Merciful Jesus!" the coroner said.

The body was visibly growing now, and the dolly supporting it began bending beneath its weight.

"Quick boy, fetch Doctor Snelling, I—" the coroner managed to say before being covered by a huge wrinkled earlobe.

The assistant ran down the hallway to the medical theatre just as the walls of the morgue began breaking down.

An unmistakeable post-mortem smirk was increasingly evident on the grey face as it parted the ceiling like a veil.

An Autumn Evening in Dublin, 1745

---D.R. Belz

The hoofbeats of the Cossack cavalry echoed across the plains and reverberated into a sky where clouds towed their great grey shadows beneath them like barge boatmen on the Volga.

Treshkovina Ludmilla Yoshenkov, known in childhood as Marina Ivanizmania, helped her husband, Pietro Garkov lift the railroad tie into place. The huge timer thundered against the frozen earth and echoed into the great grey sky to the clouds which rolled and thundered like siege cannons.

Meanwhile, eight million other peasants dropped timbers along the railroad bed and shook the dark brown earth that spread across the plain to the low horizon.

Treshkovina wiped the frozen sweat from her brow. Pietro Garkov breathed and his breath leapt up to the wide blue Russian heavens and across the grassy fields which rolled before the rails.

A small greyhaired man near the couple was heard to say, "Curse the Czar, curse the Cossacks, curse the ice desert." He could be heard to say this again and again at work on the rails and in his sleep back in the low brown barracks at the Kaminsk Junction, ninety miles to the south.

"Tovarisch Frederick, don't let them hear you!" Treshkovina would say.

The mounted Cossacks rattled their sabres on the steel cold air and their horses breathed a hot, wet mist down upon the peasants crowded before them.

A huge Cossack in a red and black woolen tunic grimaced. "Work faster or eat less." His was the voice of an impatient man. His impatience was born of a heart as cold as the ice desert.

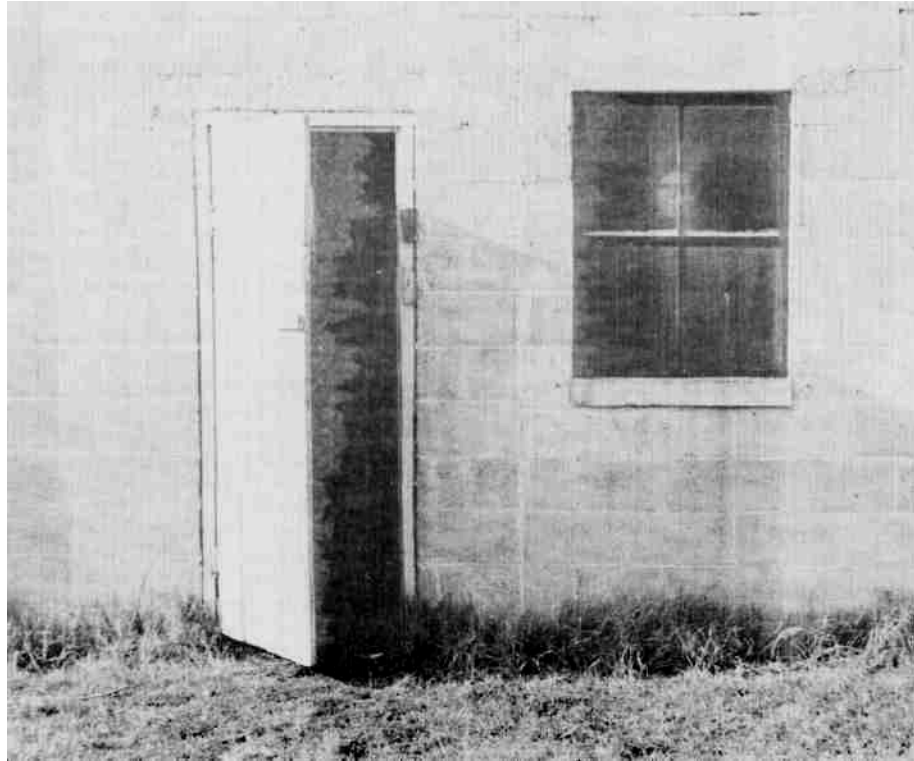
"Curse Cossacks," the small man said.

Pietro Garkov stepped up and spoke to the mounted man.

"Friend, what is the reason for the hurry? We have plenty of fat to last through this the coldest of Russian--" As quickly as these words tumbled from his mouth, something befell Pietro Garkov too disturbing to be thought.

"Whatever happened to him," the huge Cossack said, pursing his mustachioed mouth and glancing cautiously from side to side, "let it be a lesson to all of you."

As the others milled around her, Treshkovina Ludmilla tried to weep, but her tears froze and fell to the dark earth which spread out to the low grey horizon.



Evening in a Small Town

1. The boys in undershirts smoke cigarettes in the ditch
by the railroad tracks. The matted grass remembers
the best place to sit.
2. If I could stand, she thought,
in front of the bathroom screen,
will the lines show?
is anyone looking?
3. Pictures of naked ladies torn from magazines
do somersaults through the long weeds.
When the rain falls during the night,
their bodies will smudge into pulp.
4. Take off the rest of your nightgown
and listen to the june beetles thump
against the screen porch.
After the sun goes down, turn on
the lightbulb on the ceiling.
will the boys that slide by on bicycles
decide to circle around the block?
5. If the train storms past,
stand closer.
Pretend,
pretend it's an earthquake.

---William Meissner

CONTRIBUTORS

VICKI AVERSA *is an English/Creative Writing major at Loyola College.*

DAVE BELZ *is an English major at Loyola College.*

MARY JEAN CHYREK *is a student at the Maryland Institute College of Art.*

LYNN DOWELL *lives and writes in Towson.*

FAYE FISHER *is a graduate student in psychology at Loyola College.*

JESSE GLASS, JR. *is a student at Western Maryland College. He has been published in the Wisconsin Review, Hey Lady, and Aleph.*

SUZANNE MARIE HOBBS *has been published in the Texas Quarterly, Calvert, and Perspectives.*

PAUL LAKE *lives and teaches in Baltimore. His poems have been accepted by the Dekalb Literary Arts Journal, Antioch International Quarterly, Poet Lore, and Icarus.*

PHILLIP MC CAFFREY *is the coordinator of the Creative Writing Workshop at Loyola . The poem appearing in this issue of UNICORN is from his collection, Cold Frames, recently published by SAMISDAT press of California.*

WILLIAM MEISSNER *lives and writes in St. Cloud, Minn.*

RUTH MOOSE *lives and writes in North Carolina.*

MIKE REIS *is a History major at Loyola.*

STEVE SADEN *is a student at the Maryland Institute College of Art.*

BETH SWEENEY *won first prize for her fiction in this issue of UNICORN in Loyola's first annual high school contest.*

CHUCK WEISS *is a graduate of Loyola College.*

Editor-in-chief: Jack Holmes

Associate editors: Vicki Aversa
D.R. Belz
Mike Reis

Art editor: Elizabeth Cashour

Staff: Tim Burall
Tom Gamache
Mary Geis
Vicki Kendzierski
Leo Martinelli
John Rossman
Mike Schultz

Advisor: Dr. Phillip McCaffrey

The editors would like to thank
Mrs. Gen Rafferty of the English
Department, and Debbie Clark,
Janine Schertzer, and Bob Williams
of the GREYHOUND staff for their help.

