

Issue #2, Summer 1994

Sometimes, against all odds, a pocket of ice or snow will survive the heat of summer. I remember finding one in an abandoned quarry where I played as a child. Back in the limestone recesses of a small cavity, called "Cool Cave," you could leave a soda, or a jar of lemonade, and be certain that it would be cold whenever you returned from playing Lone Ranger or Hopalong Cassidy in the humid shade of the catalpas.

Remembering my fascination with that outdoor refrigerator was one thing, writing it down took many years longer. Reading it back today reminds me what that experience meant to a boy in the fifties. What I discovered, stretching my hand between the dark rocks to touch the ice in the dripping stillness of the cave, was something deeper and more mysterious than listening to the "Big John and Sparky Show," watching Commando Cody serials, or reenacting the wars our fathers had come home from in undeveloped lots. It was something that books had brought me closer to than anything else. For once, I, myself, was an adventurer, like Tom Sawyer hiding in the cave by the Mississippi or the Count of Monte Cristo feeling the wall of his cell, dreaming of escape.

Increasingly today, our reading and writing is done by others, reporters and script writers, who help us digest the world and keep it at arm's length. Bloody wars unfold in two-minute stories. The tempo of adventure films is measured in exploding helicopters. The dialog of TV romance entrenches itself like ruts in an ancient road -- giving us lines without intimacy that are strangely useless in our daily lives. We see all, touch little. But lift a pencil, sit down at a typewriter, crack a book, read a poem, and things open, become intimate. We exercise -- hauling in the words, pushing them out, trying to make them ours. We work at a vital exchange with things, pressing the walls between what we are and what surrounds us.

As **Rosebud's** publisher John Lehman observed as he reviewed the summer issue's manuscripts: "What we read and write makes us more of what we are... It goes deeper in. It reaches farther out."

Choosing, this time, has been delightful and harrowing. In recent months, a plethora of poems, stories, and reminiscences (more good writing than two **Rosebuds** could ever publish) has poured into our mail slot. I have felt like a child selecting colored pebbles on a beach, choosing favored sets from a summer of millions. How do you select a few from many? What shape goes with what color? How big is the pocket in which you must carry them home? Tough questions all. Nevertheless, I think each piece we selected for this summer 1994 issue of **Rosebud** takes the reader a little deeper in, and farther out, touching more of the world on the way. We hope you agree. As **Rosebud** goes to press, we are already thinking of fall, while the mail piles up like a rich compost of autumn leaves. Manuscripts to go before we sleep. As Wisconsin poet Lorine Niedecker once observed: "No time off from this distillery."

Rod Clark, Editor