

Somewhere between
the dream life predicted
in our high school yearbooks
and now, lies the Path
we actually walked:

This Path

A Silver Boomer Book

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Dedication

*to all the lantern holders and
trail markers who helped us
make our way*

*with particular appreciation
to the fellowship of
Abilene Writers Guild,
and in tribute to founder
Juanita Daniel Zachry,
April 6, 1917 - July 29, 2008*

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*We look back
on paths
we walked...*

Paths

Barbara B. Rollins

A hundred years of nights and days
since Robert Frost surveyed two paths,
while time careened through history's maze
and culture burst with heat that crazed
the china mores of the past.

A simple time, a wooded place,
within, without, choose this or that.
New England's order, peace and grace
mock Texas plains where rocks replace
leaf-covered ways with vast grass mat.

Nothing stands to block my way;
a hundred paths each step could birth.
I long for order – yea or nay —
as choices wail to have their say
and force a measure of their worth.

Would Frost concede the challenge worse
or scorn the shallow weight I give,
my literal reading of his verse?
I'll never know. We can't reverse
time's path but each the now will live.

business and commerce, so that their children can study literature and

Prodigal

Becky Haigler

Why do we not value
what is most abundant,
most needful? No tax on air?
No levy on sunshine?
My father's love was so free
I thought it worthless.

But when purchased pleasures failed
I sought the coin of his favor,
the currency of his covering.
So I came, muddy
and smelling of pigs' dung,
and my father embraced me.

Boundaries

Lynn Pinkerton

Keeping pace with the slow rhythm of hot, southern days, rivers of sweat meandered down my young, naïve body. It was on a day in August of 1965 that I trudged the walkway through tall sheltering pines to my next class. Marooned in a small college town in deep East Texas, days were filled with summer school classes, welcome trips to the local Dairy Queen, and cool nights with friends piled into my blue-and-white '55 Ford looking for boys and diversion at the town's only drive-in movie. It was the summer the Beach Boys happily crooned about "California Girls," while we slept soundly in unlocked dorm rooms. Little of importance existed outside this sphere of security and comfort.

My routine trip to class was sharply interrupted by a friend who excitedly announced that "Black Power" had "gone crazy" in California. He went on to explain that he had heard on the radio that wild bands of Negroes were burning down Los Angeles, and white people everywhere were worried their city would be next. I had never heard of a place called Watts and could not imagine what could upset people enough to burn down their own neighborhood. I mustered up a dutiful amount of shock and concern, made a mental note that I needed to buy new eyeliner and hurried off to class.

In the days to follow, fragments of the drama unfolding 1,500 miles away pricked the safety net of my small world. With one

ing the status quo." Robert Byrne ~§~ "To stand at the crossroads re-

TV set in the dorm living room, only three television networks, a pay phone down the hall, a city newspaper the size of a large greeting card, and local radio stations more captivated by the daily Farm Report than national news, outside information was slow to come.

It was the first time I remember hearing the word “riot.” The echo of Martin Luther King’s appeal for non-violence was drowned out on the streets of Watts by angry cries of “Burn, Baby, Burn.” Generations of simmering racial hopelessness and frustration boiled over into raging fires, looting, violence and bloodshed. Fourteen hundred National Guardsmen and fifteen hundred police finally restored a fragile peace. Dawn of the sixth day revealed that much of this segregated Los Angeles neighborhood lay stunned in still-smoking, charred, black rubble. Thirty-four people were dead, one thousand injured, four thousand arrested and \$35 million worth of damage had been inflicted on neighborhood homes, shops, cars and cafes.

Unfamiliar, distant reality poked at the boundaries of my cozy cocoon, as my middle-class white friends and I sat around the dorm eating popcorn, playing Beatles records and trying to sort it all out. For the most part, we were well-intentioned in our efforts to reach out and understand the despair and dreams of our far-away neighbors. But exams were coming up and there was also no Internet; no email, blogs, YouTube, i-reports; no cell phones or twenty-four-hour news sources. We remained an island surrounded by narcissistic collegiate life, disconnected from what was happening across town and across the country.

Looking back at the Sixties several decades later, I am astonished at how I rambled through college relatively unaware of the breaking news continuously happening around my country. While I grooved to the sounds of “Hang on, Sloopy” and flipped hopefully through *Bride’s Magazine*, humans left first-time footprints on the faraway moon, Timothy Leary

powered up the “psychedelic sixties,” the sexual revolution roared to life, women flung off their bras and aprons and demanded more from life, four hundred thousand tie-dyed hippies gathered on a rural New York farm for a legend-in-the-making called Woodstock, the anguish of the Vietnam War was shouted from flag-draped caskets and burning draft cards, Camelot was gunned down and The Great Society born.

I rode the white line right down the middle of this exciting, historic phenomenon of radical social and political revolution and did not know I had been there. Like the Watts summer rioters, I lived segregated and apart, isolated by invisible boundaries of youthful self interest and small-town myopia. Only later did the quiet riots of time and perspective bring my global village into sharper focus.

Predator of Forever

Carl L. Williams

Time is ever hungry and kills to eat,
mauling the hours and savaging the days,
swallowing whole the tender portions,
yet chewing slowly on the gristle,
licking up the seconds like the flow of blood,
consuming lives and dreams and memories,
while tracking the ages with ravenous intent,
devouring decades without mercy,
and feeding on eternity, insatiate.

ished person is a boring person.” Anna Quindlen ~§~ “Thy word is a

The Road

Lynn Pinkerton

Her fresh footsteps
innocently wiggle forward
gambling
on the imaginary road ahead.

Early days of
original promise
stretching
out in benevolent possibility.

Small hands
chase flickering fireflies
dodging
frozen moments in glass prisons.

Time topples into
pimples and proms
teetering
on fleeting feet of change.

Tender days
of budding vision
flaunting
virgin skin and saluting breasts.

lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.” Psalms 119:105 KJV

Birthdays repeat
like rapid-firing guns
drilling
holes in plans and plots.

Dimming dawn unfurls
billowing skirts
revealing
sagging sunsets and graying finales.

Undaunted, her wrinkled hopes
gobble up change, still
gambling
on the imaginary road ahead.

Silver Breeze

Ginny Greene

Watching that woman
wearing grey
around her temples
Looking back at an empty nest
throwing off shackles and
charging down a new road
Cheers to the woman
roaring past gray
and on beyond purple

*security**Becky Haigler*

crisp uniform, jacket
with official patches
tall, folded into
rolling desk chair
phone pressed to
lined face awkwardly
maybe a hunter, tanned
but not work-burned
thinning gray, neatly trimmed
brushy mustache, comfortable
no weapon, this job is
a bird nest on the ground