

# Rhapsody

## "Student"

In the dark I'm turning pages  
silhouetted by the light  
but it's only passing stages  
that has kept me up all night.

As the dawn cracks like a lightbulb  
in the mirror of my mind  
I get on to information  
and leave sanity behind.

And I've tried to make connections  
with every passing train  
but it's lost between the shuffle  
in the cartwheel of my brain.

"Gorbachev, Mubarak,  
Parlez-Vous Francais?  
Is over-crowding negative  
and should it be that way?"

"The electron will re-energize  
but only under these conditions:  
There is no cure for AIDS as yet,  
but some are in remission."

"Please check your pulse  
then run a mile  
this must be the solution.  
Remember not to over-kill  
make this your resolution."

So much to learn  
so little time  
and what was that he said?  
I tried to keep the static down  
As thoughts churned in my head:

"The product of extremes (AD)  
is equal to the means (bc)  
We lost our soul to Vietnam  
in 1963."

"Below the main aorta  
lies the pulmonary vein  
and environmental studies  
show increasing acid rain."

"The Far-East situation is entirely  
out of hand  
Is war the fatal answer  
as Iraq blows up Iran?"

I wasn't past the final draft  
when someone pulled the line  
I barely made it to home base  
and into over-time.

Turn up the volume  
another round!  
Would someone spike my drink?  
I need some time to think (I said),  
I need some time to think.

I conclude that my survival,  
(as my pen runs out of ink)  
Should be placed upon Endangered List  
but not quite yet Extinct.

For what is life—the knowledge gained,  
is worth each tribulation—  
The silhouette of man is viewed  
by his determination.

by Carol Harrington

## "Warriors"

The bell has just blown for lunch, and everybody is settling down to eat. The opening day of the deer hunting season is this weekend and everyone is in anticipation of getting the big buck. Everyone, that is, except Sally, the only female in an all male crew, and she is being increasingly irritated by all the talk of hunting. "Kill, kill, kill. That's all men think about," she says. The remark is made that, "That's not all we think about, most of us have kids." At this point Sally leaves muttering something about a "stupid jerk."

"Do you hunt," someone asks me. "No, not anymore," I reply. He goes on to state that he will always hunt because he loves it, and further interjects, that it is the greatest sport on earth. People who don't hunt don't know what fun they're missing.

I realize at this point that the deer has never been asked how it likes the "fun" and "sport" of deer hunting. A bullet ripping flesh and shattering bones as it impacts and enters a living body, is fun? To track down and kill something that has never done you harm, and to use a weapon that fires a projectile three times faster than the victim can run while its only means of defense is running — is a sport?

My thoughts are broken by another's voice. The voice belongs to a very religious black man in his late twenties, saying he could not take the life of anything because God gave life to everything, and everything has a right to life; therefore, he could never be a hunter. I take offense to his statements because they seem to be directed to me. Regaining my composure, I explain that not everyone is a hunter, but everyone is a warrior.

Everyone will do whatever is necessary to survive or protect their offspring, whether it be eating bugs, snakes, and grasses, right down to taking a human life. Survival will take priority over everything, including religion.

My comments brought a very hasty rebuttal of, "No way will I ever take a human life." I suggest that the man has just gotten home from work to find a stranger with his arm around his wife, and a knife to her throat. He is convinced that the stranger is going to kill his wife and child. He has one chance to save them — pick up the loaded .38 laying on the desk, and blow his brains out. "Now, what will you do?" I asked.

The bell blew to return to work and everyone hustled to their work areas. About an hour had passed and I was checking on a problem when I heard, "Mr. Smith." "Yes," I replied. "I be a warrior," he says. "We are all warriors, and some are hunters," I replied.

No matter what activities we may enjoy, or what status we may achieve in life, we are all "Warriors" first.

by Joe A. Smith

## "Christmas Carol"

This night before Christmas finds  
Most children dreaming of toys and treats

But Jimmy and Carol, hope, not dream  
Of a blanket and bread with cheese for a feast.

No mice to stir, they have long since starved  
No stockings to hang, no fire to glow.

Jimmy and Carol huddle together for warmth  
Soon fall asleep and the candle burns low.

Through their street level window they might have seen  
Perhaps Santa, his sleigh, and his eight reindeer.

A box, not a pack, he holds in his arms  
Imagining the joy he brings, fills his eyes with tears.

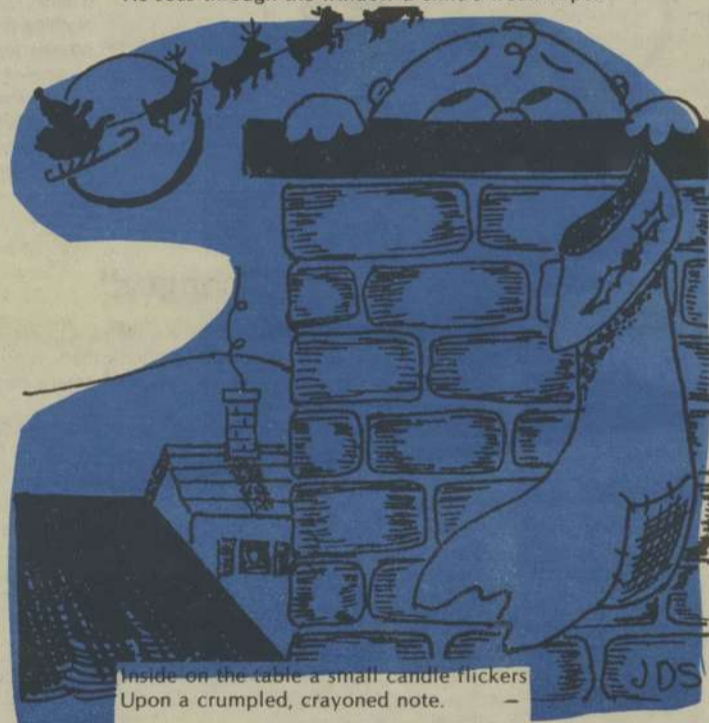
A concerned citizen, not Santa  
A hatchback Toyota, not a sleigh.

With knowledge that pride is dear  
He knows to come only when Mom is away.

Crunch, crunch, his boots make in the snow  
As they carry him, not down a chimney, but to the door.

He raises his mitten clad hand to knock  
When he gets an idea that makes his heart soar.

Dim though the light, in that barren room  
He sees through the window a child's weak hope.



Inside on the table a small candle flickers  
Upon a crumpled, crayoned note.

It began, Dear Santa, I know you didn't forget  
Last year you just didn't know that we moved.

I would like mittens, but my brother needs more  
A scarf for the cold Santa, thank you.

P.S., it continued: Mom says you aren't real  
But I still believe. Love Carol.

Quietly he set the box down on the step  
Took out a pen and began to scrawl.

Carol, I'm sorry if these don't fit  
But my elves ordered the wrong size.

A scarf for your brother, a coat for Mom  
To make her believe; a twinkle in his eye.

And, of course, these mittens, I guessed on the color.  
Oh, please find a use

For the turkey, rolls, and dessert, sent by Mrs. Claus,  
Because I can just barely fit in my suit.

Now he wore only a shirt, slacks, and shoes  
But the warmth he felt inside blocked out the cold.

He ended the letter, Be good, Love Santa  
Most of all — Merry Christmas, Carol.

by Julia Singer

