

Spring 1977

The Yellow Magazine

Grand Valley State College. Thomas Jefferson College

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THE YELLOW MAGAZINE

spring 1977

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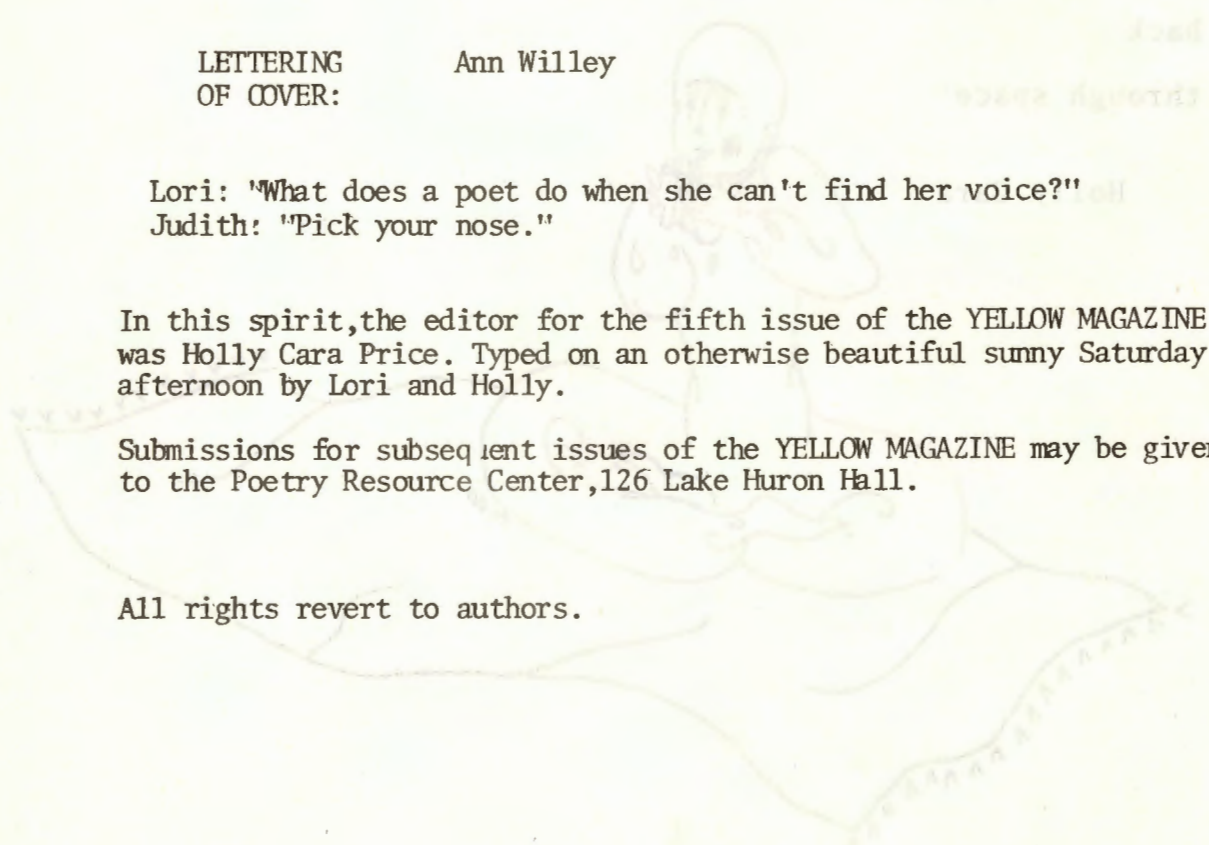
LETTERING OF COVER: Ann Willey

Lori: "What does a poet do when she can't find her voice?"
Judith: "Pick your nose."

In this spirit, the editor for the fifth issue of the YELLOW MAGAZINE was Holly Cara Price. Typed on an otherwise beautiful sunny Saturday afternoon by Lori and Holly.

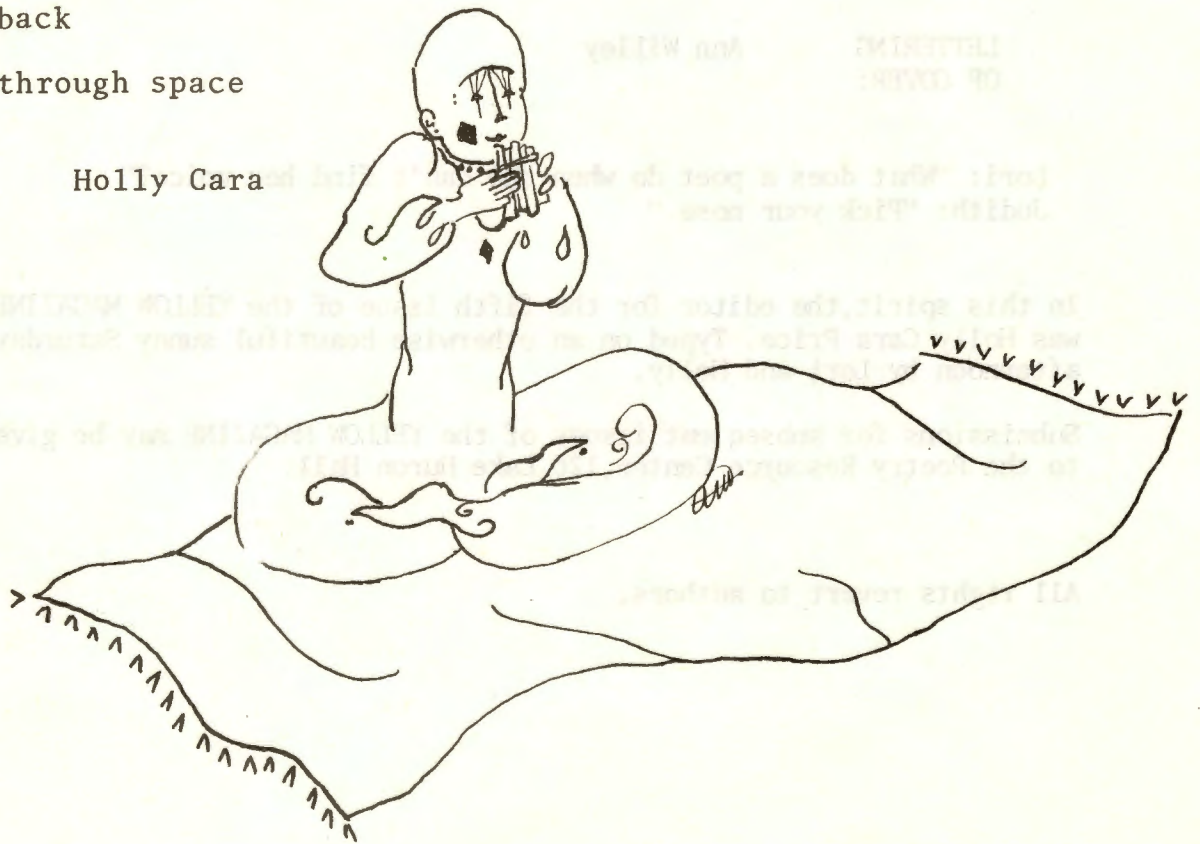
Submissions for subsequent issues of the YELLOW MAGAZINE may be given to the Poetry Resource Center, 126 Lake Huron Hall.

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ochre light
soft throated hum
full moon
silver stand
saxophone
echoing echoing
tone of gold
back through space
back
through space

Holly Cara



Feast Day is Fashioned After the Goddess

Plum is a home for walnut
before entering my mouth
Tummy is a home for plum
your hands a home for my tummy
my embrace, a home for your hands
your hands are walnuts

Any day is feast day
if you allow yourself to taste
carrot loves radish
loves salt
gets married, settles in salad

Feast day things really start to click
drinking wine mother kisses father
discovers the real use of mashed potatoes
smear them on the body
fall over laughing
feast day makes the rest of the week
seem naive

On Feast day all taboos are lifted
the buddha approaches
stuffed ham with a smile
all his friends are here
if he dies tonight,
it will be alright

Erica Helm

Reflections

Sitting in that maple of unknown years
pondering our climb, the distance to go.
In the rustle and flap of driven air, I think
of bird droppings, almost feel the warm jell
against my scalp, so scan the upper levels of green.

On the highway reflected images revolve
on the window. Through houses and mailboxes
roadside blurs. My hand is on the glass.
It is walnut, from sun, from blood. Hair
sprouts from pores and bends at my touch.
Off the bus I gaze at horizon, then walk
toward leavings of architects.

Confident males strut by. They hold supple women
of various shades with soulful words. These women's
breasts, full of air, of fire, sway high above
my face.

My father's eyes struggle to shine and his skin
trembles to rise along the chin firmly, to reflect
light. He is worn of ambitions. But his woman still
stands with him, her back straight, her commands
heeded. Some nights I appear in their dreams, draped
in black.

Of ourselves we fill pages, fill museums,
all gathering dust. In carpeted libraries poets
confess our passions. I feel shame for us and applaud.
After readings I am troubled, the clack of my step
ripples to nothing.

The soul is a subterranean spring. I feel it bubble
through ribs, downhill into valleys.
"Never drill for it," I whisper, begin to believe.

The flesh of that maple was black.
I broke dry bark from the bole. Slipping from my
fingers, it fell between leaves and vanished.

Daryl J. Murphy

laying with you by the river
between coarse diamonds, drop pearls, & sapphires
we built in a out of light
telling named stories
of our grandmothers & mothers
gazing at the humid stars
wanting to stay here

I am the doe
swift in field or forest
I see you stalking silently
in search of me, your prey
And knowing you
the goddess, the huntress
I lay down at your feet.

Ellen Smith

you know
small round circles
I target
in your sweet smiling hair
we do not see first places
we barely kiss
the first waves
over the flowing river
like one continuous stream
III
you get up & dress
in the cool damp air
your hair is thick
stone & diamonds
I shiver
not with the cold
with the eternal loneliness
we were like a thin veil
IV
keeping silent stories in the forest
needles & bear paws & things
you hide your mouth from me
but this early morning
I see your smile
& understand

Moon in Taurus Our First Night

I.

laying with you by the river
between coarse blankets, damp earth, & misquitoes
we drift in & out of light

sleep.

telling naked stories

of our grandfathers & mothers
gazing at the humid stars

wanting to slip down
the muddy blue bank
of sky

& drift

paper rafts

on the water.

we fit together

like the lips of smooth river clams.

II.

mourning doves begin long low cooing
light filters thru golden green leaves
we stretch

in our new soft skin

you stroke

small round circles

i tangle

in your sweet smelling hair

we do not explore the softest places
we barely kiss

& the mist moves

over the flowing river

like one continuous breath.

III.

you get up & dress

in the cool damp air

your curls thicken

alone in blankets

i shiver

not with the cold

with the eternal loneliness

we wear like a thin shell.

IV.

weeping willows stutter in the breeze
meadowlarks begin bright singing

you hide your mouth from me

but this early morning

i see your smile

& understand.

Ann Evelyn

and so where is my land?
if my ancestres come from many lands
if the place where i was born belongs to this one
and that one, a patchwork
it does not belong with a people
and who are my people?
those ones with whom i share my life
where is our land?
yet, here and there:
an ancient cistern time flows
down the mesa with the wind towards
my birth
a newborn field growing ripe and wild with life,
life!
woman i love there with me
woman i love walk with me,
she does
where is our land?
yet here and there:
a rosebush shares my name
a hawk catching my soul for awhile
beneath her wings
and so where is my land?
if my ancestres come from many lands
where is that place where i stand in
silence
where my movement become the still,
turning pirouette of the earth's?
i have heard my name called
there was no sound
we reach sun hrough earth,
we do
woman i love dance with me
where, where is our land?

Suzette Corbit

The ReUnited Sisters

Once a long time ago a young and attractive princess took leave of her senses and so wandered from the castle into the dark woods on the edge of her father's domain. Far, far into the forest she went, paying no heed to the pairs of glowing eyes watching her from under bushes and around trees. She also did not seem to notice the murmur of wild beasts about her, for with straight back and head up she marched deeper and deeper into darkness.

I cannot say if it were the moon or some strange virus, but a peasant girl also taking leave of her senses chanced to wander into this very glade on this very day. And as if by magic or pure coincidence, they met face to face in the exact center of the gigantic wood.

All the wild animals looked on, for they were most curious about the sight. The two girls were approaching each other—each believing they were approaching a mirror. Their looks were so strikingly the same, neither doubted for a moment it was anything but their own image. At the same time their hands lifted to touch the amazing mirror in the wood, and at the instant they touched, the enchantment was broken. The two girls, amazed by the find, began dancing with utter jubilation. What a friend each had found! Even the beasts were touched by their joy and joined the celebration by dancing and bringing food from their homes. So in the very middle of this magical wood, two sisters and a host of exotic animals feasted on sweet fruits, rare nuts, golden honey and fresh baked breads. There had been no such party since anyone could remember.

The animals asked the sisters to live in the woods. They could hardly refuse, nor did they have and wish to. They sang songs with the birds, took rides on lions' backs, played games with rabbits, grew gardens and made everyone as happy as larks. With life like this, time passed all too quickly and the girls grew into young wimmin, both lovely and strong. Their likeness became even greater. By sight it was near to impossible to know the difference. Even the animals were sometimes fooled.

The animals, in one of their many conferences, agreed it best that the two sisters be on their way to journey into the human world and choose their place. Sad to lose their dearest friends, they still thought it was fair to let them choose the life they preferred. With sad eyes they told their plan to the two wimmin, who became excited at the prospect of travel and new adventures. They set off the following day, but only after an all-night celebration of their new lives. They kissed their friends good-bye and took off into the woods. Carrying light packs and quick directions to the nearest kingdom, they set off.

Needless to say it was quite a sight to see two beautiful wimmin walking toward the palace—two identical looking wimmin. The word passed as quickly as they could travel, so when they arrived at the castle, the king was waiting with breathless anticipation. He nearly fainted when he

saw them coming. His long lost daughter had returned! But which was his daughter?? He invited them to dine with him that evening. Questions, he thought, would point to the one. Dinner was pleasant enough for the sisters, chatting about many subjects and each equally answering the king's questions. You see, in the years the two had spent together, they had shared their pasts together many times. There were no questions the King could ask to one that both could not answer. The King was certainly vexed!! He wanted to know his "right" daughter so that she could marry the prescribed prince and carry on after his death.

The sisters were quite sensitive and asked the King why he was so sad looking. He had barely touched his dinner. "I am so confused, my dears, you see, long ago my daughter was taken by a spell and wandered off--never to be found. I feared she was eaten by savage beasts. I have been heart broken ever since. But now suddenly you appear in the exact likeness of my only daughter--but two of you are before me. I do not know who is my rightful heiress and who is the imposter."

"Neither of us are imposters, dear King father. For we are both quite real and alive. We do not wish for inheritance now, so we will be on our way to see the world. We will return after you and we've grown wiser. Good-bye. Thank you for your hospitality."

The sisters were gone. The King began to pine!

"I lost my beloved daughter and when two returned I was not double glad, but twice as sad. What a fool am I."

Time went slowly for the King. He was getting older by the minute and spent more and more time sleeping. He knew his time was drawing near--and yet the sisters had not returned.

But sure as they had promised, the sisters returned, more lovely and strong than before. The King rejoiced at their presence and made the time to plan and attend a giant feast. The reception warmed the hearts of the wimmen and they were glad. When the feast had ended, the three found time to be alone to talk.

"We have travelled the world thrice times, dear father, and have learned many things."

"Do you want to rule this land, fair ladies?" the King asked earnestly.

"Yes, King, we do. We will rule together as a kind yet firm force."

And the King, who had grown wiser in his time, relaxed and smiled knowing his realm was in the best of hands.

And the prince? He became good friends with the new Queens and lived under their rule as a faithful subject.

by Mary Ellen Melville

how i crouched
how i huddled
breath so quiet they
could not hear me
in their magic circle
i could never get inside
so i listened
i listened
they whispered and giggled
my heart tore easily
like rice paper
i could not let them know
still i crouched in flannel
they spoke of me
my breath quickened
they spoke of me

Holly Cara

Wedding at Spencer Grange Hall

Tonight
 the sharp cousin,
 the bride lovely,
 the gap in her teeth,
 the baggy-pants uncle,
 the cornmeal on the floor,
 the slick-haired gents,
 the blathering three-quarter time,
 the old women together,
 the whisper of shoes,
 the keg,
 the plastic cups,
 the young husbands outside,
 the toking up,
 the slutty talk,
 the supple young wives,
 the greasy skin,
 the floor-length polyester,
 the perched parents,
 the folding chairs along the wall,
 the friends of friends etc. etc.,
 and I, who am a cockroach,
 celebrate
 the sliver of moon,
 the cold, April night,
 the darkness for a mile to the nearest neighbor.

Lyle Perry

WOMAN OUT OF BLOOM

(I)

You seek a voice for the affliction
cloistered in your bones. The echoes
of brittle grass laugh drily
chafed by the wind.

From the street
blurred faces
are swept across your window
and recede into blue bruises of snow.
The light loses its grasp
upon the wrists of birches.

You pose before the mirror
daub your face with rouge and oils
until, like polished metal, it gleams.

While the dust that clogs your reflection
rustles into the curtains,
where it gathers
filled with the static of waiting.

(II)

A traveller in a storm
you grasp the frayed neck of your coat
and try to close yourself
into a fist, to feel nothing.

Your tracks are buried in rubble of leaves
torn like the fingers of gloves.
Strong clouds scar the sky,
sweep distant birds
like spots into your eyes
running with color.

You wait for the lull that doesn't come,
wait for the arms of grace
to wrap a shawl across your shoulders
slouched with frost.
You wait for a cool respite
and tired of waiting
loosen your hand
and scatter
into the wind
traces of yourself.

(III)

Before dawn the light stretches like the spine
of a supple cat.
It draws the silhouette of a chair,
a mirror, a bed.

Light hovers
near the ceiling
making a realm of gold
under your eyes
before you open
and go to the window
trembling with a confusion of tongues.

Framed there:
dull edges of ice blur into rivulets
and recede into the grass. At the timberline
birches, tipped with pines, sway naked
aching for spring.

Rumors in your skin whisper of a new season.

Martin Koosed

Self Portrait #2
Jeff Wills

(11)

before dawn the light stretches like the spine
of a supple cat.
It draws the silhouette of a chair,
a mirror, a bed.
Light hovers
near the ceiling
making a resin of gold
under your eyes
before you open
and go to the window
trembling with a confusion of tongues.

framed there:
the edges of the air into vortices
into the grass. At the lightning
birds opened with wings, they asked
in a whisper of a new season.

Wycin Kossob



MEN POETS

Sometimes people scream at you in the streets
and want to know about your soft voice

then you get mad, and they want to stop you
from shouting so loud like that, and in the middle

of the street. Sometimes there's nothing you can do
but beat your head down out in the stars that

shine so hard on the cornfields. You got a voice,
now use it. That's all there is to it.

Sure the world is not ready yet to hear it
it's overripe, like a fig, filled with wasps and

voices. Women rub their breasts together, and
talk about fruit. The world buzzes with this talk.

Nobody want to hear about trees and sun. Mountains.
They're not real interested when you write a new poem.

Of course if you get up there you can always publish
your poems in the New Yorker.

Mark Seeley

Anonymous, Untitled

Lovely woman, you are my fantasy self.

Clear and clean and shining, you pass.

My mouth opens, I stare.

At home in your body -

I stumble and turn.

Speaking bright truth -

I stammer and stall.

Like a small sister I watch you,

Round-eyed and trying to learn.

Oh, you walk in beauty, like the full moon

striding in glory across a sky that belongs

to you alone;

And you are showing me the way

To my own heavens.

Sharon Bush

Behind Susan Julien

Sitting
behind your back
like death or
chivalry in big brothers;
the 'I poem' staring
thru the fabric--
skin beating
still
beating smooth
as steel refined into soft rhythm
and shing
as the barret behind your head.

Covered or
carved in slow curls
as cigarette smoke
falling
down your back,
your hair--
over the rhythm,
the skin and fabric,
ignores the silence and the spine.

Jeff Wills

HALF A DOZEN IN APRIL

Trillium in the ravines
again--my old heart
skips a beat.

New dandelion greens
form a mandala to one
standing, looking.

White shoe in the ravine
fooled me into thinking
"trillium."

Two book bags
at the ravine bottom--
where do those lovers lie?

White petals shake
from branches as I pass,
cover me like a bride.

Incense in the hot room:
not sweeter than the white
bush blooming at the window.

Barbara O'Mary

Rains I Have Known

I.
still childing i
saw hurricanes
the sky was dark
like night but different
the wind was angry
and howled
hurling rain against the ground

II.
in the country, rain
turned days inside out
i wore my poncho
to the longhouse
to sing harmonies
with my sisters and brothers
while it rained
and changed the roads to mud

III.
on drab mornings when
i took the bus to school
clutching dreams and books both
i welcomed rain
i loved the fog and mist
shrouding the day
making it even
more unreal

IV.
out of my window
the summer i fell in love
with thunderstorms
o grey sky
aching sky
the tree o t back nodding
under the pelting rain
i watched for hours

V.
now i love the moments before:
the yellow sky tinged with slate
the moving moments
drenched in magic
before storms
of noise and light
and the relief of rain

Holly Cara

Walking the streets of a foreign city

Her skirt is falling off
the wind blows open her jacket
a leg a breast exposed
she clutches at the material
reminds herself to buy safety pins
and buttons her jacket to the neck
though it is 75 degrees out

She takes side-streets
during day light hours
cuts across parking lots
to avoid myriad eyes on main streets
at night she stays inside

She thinks of the man who
first showed her the streets of this foreign city
wished that she had him
by her side
but remembered that he
always walked too fast
and scolded her for looking
in the eyes of strangers

Now when she sees him
after their break
passing on the street occasionally
he looks at her with hungry
lustful eyes
like the others
the strangers

Lori Eason

As I drive up behind,
I expect you to turn around with your thumb
out,
as your clothing,
color of peach ice cream
billowing with a private breeze
against your mocha skin
taps a dream that rolls around
in the back of my mind
about living in a South of dust and white churches,
Alabama
Mississippi
of people drifting through the dust in search
of a shade tree
after Sunday dinners of chicken and bisquits with
gravy.

Barbara Roade

Migration

That silver-blue
black topped impala
revved
motor boat songs.
streaming
the steaming liquid black roads
northern bound,
breaking bonds.
And I listened to that music
fell into that river,
entranced by the reflections
in front,
behind
say good-bye to last night's dreams
and I never think about
what I'll dream tomorrow.
Marge glides too
stronger
on that water than I do.
My black river
pours into her warm pool,
so deep
who knows?
where it begins
to run again?
Her eyes open,
brown and warm
like the warm goddess belly.
We were night!
electric lights!
and stars,
reflections,
that river!
But then she closed those eyes
treading maybe
bigger waters,
and while I steered
the sun came up
drying the darkness.
And what I way
was flat farmland
and Little Caesar icons
that spelled out
the destination:
Michigan

But I drove on.
Marge opened those
eyes
and we'd read
Lake songs,
sister poems,
blood poems,
circles,
and tales of gypsies
flying, feet touching the ground,
one to the other we'd read,
just so we'd know
this place we were going
this destination:
this Michigan.
And the road dried
burned my eyes
what had got no sleep
but still had to touch
this tomorrow already dream.
But what was that?
on the side of the road,
That dream I left behind?!
my wet-eyed mama
hand resting softly
on that strong belly
I'd just kissed good-bye.
And now all that's clear
is my voice calling
like some waked up child
thru strange darkness
weepy and longing
for that ocean,
that belly.

Linda Heaney

So many artists in America. I
Hear them gargle poems to cool vernal
rains. Shiny slick maples to hunch,
concealed by dripping yellow clusters,
on swaying boughs. They distort CB reception.

Some wield nylon brushes, rush the door
and splatter walls. Acrylic women, nude,
with twisted faces.

Two in my kitchen pirouette on the table,
their tights electric blue and pink. "We
create!" they snarl. They smear honey
on the counter. Smash both cooling loaves
of golden bread.

Daryl J. Murphy

