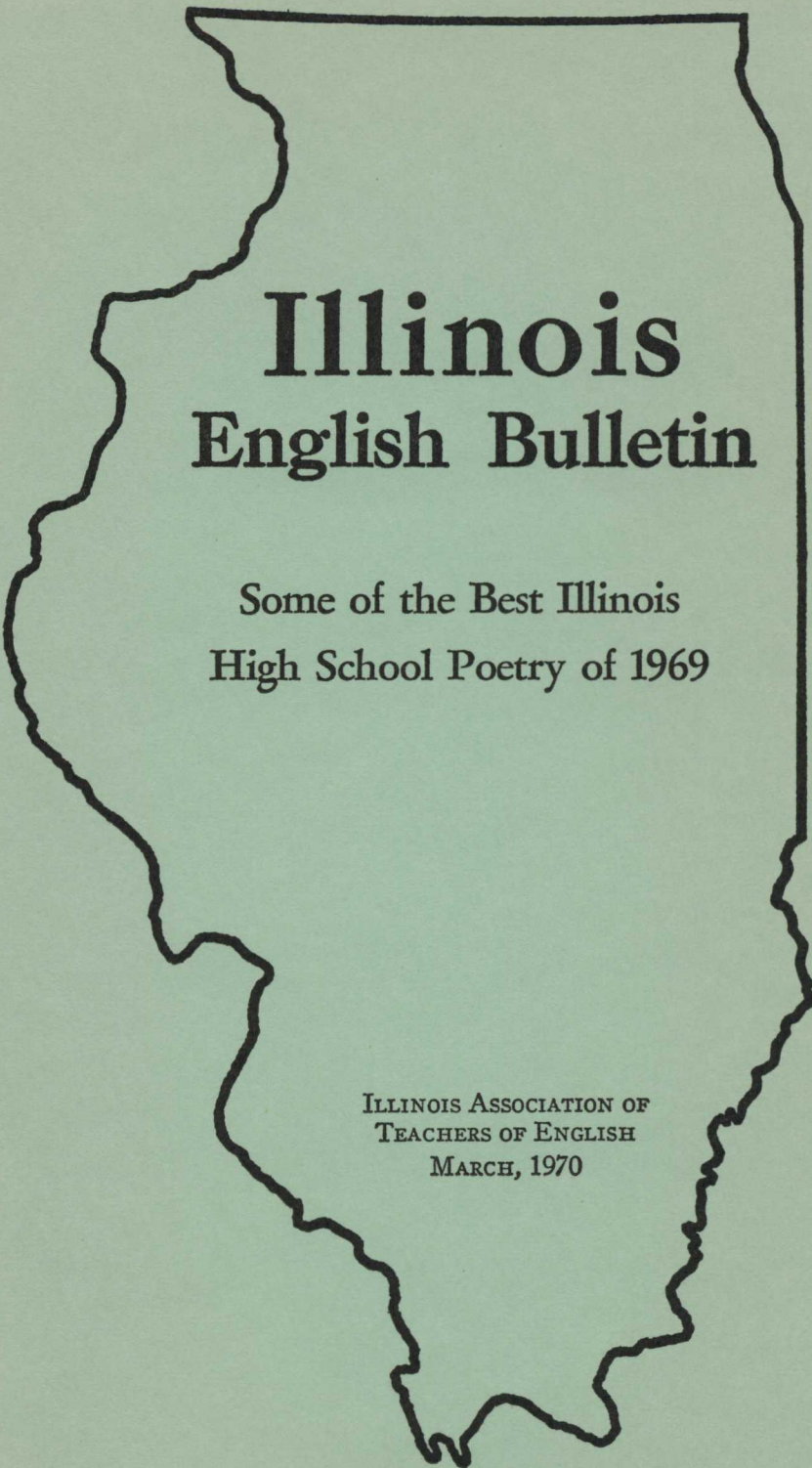




Illinois English Bulletin

Some of the Best Illinois
High School Poetry of 1969

ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF
TEACHERS OF ENGLISH
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Some of the Best Illinois High School Poetry of 1969

Selected by the Department of English of Loyola University in Chicago.

Judges: James D. Barry, Chairman; John Dolis; Raymond Griffith;
Harold Hild; Donna Holy; Matthew Ignoffo; Howard Warchol

All through the years the Illinois Association of Teachers of English has used a variety of devices to encourage excellence in student writing. Hours of time in district and state meetings have been devoted to this goal. Many articles on the teaching of exposition, description, and narration have appeared in the *Bulletin*. Since 1946, "Best Illinois High School Writing" has appeared in the *Illinois English Bulletin*, first in an issue containing both prose and poetry and then in two separate issues, one for each form. Teachers in the past have found these examples of student writing most helpful.

James D. Barry of Loyola, Chairman of the Judging Committee, in writing of this year's judging, has this to say of the work of the committee:

All of us enjoyed our work as judges, and we thank you for the opportunity of encountering these young minds. We have grown as a result of the experience; our critical eyes have been sharpened. Evaluating 636 poems is, of course, a labor. But this labor was pleasant, and we will remember young authors whose perceptions and techniques have artfully reflected social awareness and humanistic insight. We look forward to repeating this experience. If our being chosen depends on the flip of a coin, please follow the lead of the speaker in "Facade" (see below) and declare us the judges, that is, the winners. Our thanks to all who contributed.

The Illinois Association of Teachers of English is grateful to Dr. Barry and his associates for their discriminating work in choosing the poems printed in this *Bulletin*.

INTERSECTION

Thief time
inspecting,
rejecting
the Parade of Youth —
Somewhere before
I've been at this crossroad ceremony.

It must have been the train
moving, speeding, racing,
And the spiteful wind that
blew
my ticket
into
the mud.

It must have been the note
in the bottle from
Elysian Edens
or at least a
Diamond Island —
and the ink was
smeared.

Yet sleepwalker youth
keeps moving —
disturbing,
perturbing,
The restless night of age.

Together, they divide
My life into a jekyllhyde.

MARY BIRDSSELL, *twelfth*, Peoria Central High School
Emily E. Rice, teacher

SUNSET

The warm sand has a purple tint.
A frog hops across the beach
leaving little prints
in the sand. Near the lake,
reeds sway in the breeze.
Tiny sandpipers twitter as they toddle
along the shore. Small waves
ripple the edge of the water.
Bright reflections flicker in a stream
of sunlight on the lake. The sun,
a ball of golden fire, balances
upon the horizon. Brilliant sunbeams
pierce the pink and purple clouds.
Across the lake, a gull's call carries
in the quiet moments of sunset.

HELEN WISS, *eighth, Hauser Junior High School, Riverside*
Mabel Bergesen, *teacher*

WILD GRAPES

I sit on parchment grass
remembering green
Watching as the sun sinks with finality
Sending feeble wafts of yellow joy
over remnants of summer.
Royal globes shimmer under
peasant brown paper wrappings
The last wild grapes lingering sadly
on the vines.
Symbols of time
of disillusionment
Neglected as blessings often are;
Wild grapes will wither
and too be gone.

CINDY PEARSON, *eleventh, Lyons Township High School*
La Grange
Norma Jordan, *teacher*

AGE

Visiting, I see sitting at each green bench
Elderly women.
As I greet them, drawn mouths
Turn into warm smiles.
Jersey dresses droop over
Arthritic legs.
They continue sitting silently, gazing
Blankly.
Softly, the hum of the birds accompanied
By the tap of the canes, all seem to fit
A rhythm.

One by one, they fall into line, bent
Curvatures walk into the building.
Entering with them, the stale air
Sweeps up my nostrils.
One of them speaks to me briefly, her
Breath holding the same staleness
As the air.
Her boney hand, creased with wrinkles,
Clenches my shoulder firmly.
But still, throughout the building, an
Air of Stillness arises which never moves.

Leaving, I am seen as another noisy
Happy child, running among the winds,
Carrying a fresh smell
That all children possess
From Nature's kitchen.
Remembering when they used to be
One like me,
They glance at the soft, smooth skin
Which hasn't yet met age like theirs,
Thinking of the long life that is
Awaiting me, which they've already
Experienced.
Life is living.

CATHI KOEPKE, *eighth, Highland Junior High School,
Libertyville*
James McCauley, *teacher*

BALLOONS

Large and marvelous,
Dancing in the wind,
Gently tugging to escape
From the small chubby hand
That has it in its power,
The trusting innocence of the
 child . . .
 Then
The piercing pain of losing it;
As it dances up and up,
 The balloon
Seems so glad to be free,
Seems to be laughing at him,
Priding itself on having escaped.
 Suddenly
The hard lump in his throat
Pushes through, and the tears
Run down the disappointed cheeks.
 Then
Come the sympathetic words, and
Into the small hand is placed
A large ball of bubble gum.
 Now
The tear-stained cheeks are rosy,
And all is peaceful —
 'Til the next spring,
 and
the next balloon.

DEBBIE McARTHUR, *seventh, Hauser Junior High School,
Riverside*
Rudine Nolcox, teacher

HAIKU

A small brown inchworm
Works its way up a tree trunk
To cool green stillness.

MOLLY LUNDBERG, *eighth, Hauser Junior High School, Riverside*
Mabel Bergesen, teacher

I HAVE SEEN BLACK HANDS

I am black and I have seen black hands — millions
and millions of them.
Out of millions of bundles of wool and flannel,
tiny black fingers have reached restlessly and
hungrily for life.
Reached out for the black nipples on the black breasts
of black mothers.

I am black and I have seen black hands —
They grabbed guns and slung them on their shoulders
and marched and groped in trenches and fought and
killed and conquered nations who were customers
for the goods black hands had made.
And then the black hands held trembling at the factory
gates the dreaded lay-off slip.
That's what you really call black.
Black is not only the skin color — you are black in
heart and mind, just as black skin color.
I'm black in skin, heart, and mind. If you are really
for black, you must be black the same way.

VIVIAN FREEMAN, *ninth, Residential School for Girls, Chicago*
Marie A. Adams, teacher

HALLS

(as seen every passing period)

Passing
From class to class
Moving with the solid mass
Of bodies set into motion
By bells.

SUE DEGRAVE, *eleventh, Glenbrook South High School, Glenview*
Sandra Dumalski, teacher

MADISON ST. GANG

when i used to live
back on madison street
the two-hundred block gang
could have conquered the world
but just last week
i went down the sidewalks
that rang long ago
with the laughing footballs
of a dozen dancing boys
and i saw all new faces
and no one was there
of the ancient gang
that once could have taken the town.

in that once long ago
we did superman feats
in the trees and the backyards
of scowling old crones
who called the cops down
on our street football games
and front-porch poker till ten

and then i moved away
and the others did too
or they grew up and disappeared
into stucco brick and wood
and the gang crumbled
and faded into misty memories
with facts unsure and faces blurred
eight years slurred into one big romp
and i forget the bruises and spite

so when i walked past
i recalled only victories
and i never saw the gang
of little brothers noising around me
and they never saw me

SCOTT VANKOUGHNETT, *eleventh, Lyons Township High School,
La Grange*
Josephine Allen, teacher

SNOWBALLS

Whizzing by, landing everywhere are
Those small, cold, hard packed, pieces of snow; no matter how
 many you have, it still isn't enough.
And the stinging pain those small
Icy Balls Give!
Here it is true: it's more fun to
Give than receive.
But unfortunately others think the same,
So TOUGH LUCK, BUDDY!

CINDY TREEST, *seventh, Yorkville Junior High School*
Madeline Mead, teacher

SNAKE COURTSHIP

It was all right, at first,
at night.
Your face was inanimate
cold, luminescent,
we were snakes
Writhing, basking in the timeless evening heat
in burrow warmth.
Our lack of depth was expedient;
snakes have no choices.
But days came like forked sticks,
pinned, we were thrown into burlap sacks
marked shallow;
our fangs were pulled by a new tool
called "authenticity."
We listened and doubted,
as in the daytime, even the stars are in doubt.
When night came again
our slit eyes saw only small things
and skin shedding season has begun.

JAN KIERGAARD, *twelfth, DeKalb Senior High School*
Mary Penson, teacher

THE POEM SHRIKE

The poem-shrike is a vicious bird,
He chooses poems at whim.
His death grip locked on every word,
He tears them limb from limb.

He rips out meaning mercilessly,
From seemingly meaningless lines,
And, having done his perversity,
Leaves the empty carcass behind.

Strange the meaning the shrike extracts,
From a poem, his passive victim.
It's never the same that the poet puts in,
He changes the meaning to fit him.

ALFRED COREN, *twelfth*, Guilford High School, Rockford
Elizabeth Munson, teacher

UNANSWERABLE QUESTIONS

Questions that are never answered ;
Songs that are never sung ;
Prayers that are never prayed.
What is going to become of their hopes ?
They sit and try to improve the world with
Their talk ;
They claim there is hope for us,
But they produce nothing of that hope.
Instead they continue to talk,
To pray,
To sing,
And ask those unanswerable questions.

ANDRIA WILSON, *eleventh*, Richards Vocational High School,
Chicago
Willis C. Bisson, teacher

DEFOLIATION

And God said
let there be skin,
and there was skin,
and God saw the skin,
that it was good
for the economy.

No longer optional
on all
nineteen seventy models,
super thermal,
epidermal,
four-ply polyskin
comes fully equipped
with redeeming
social value,
and
is now
appearing nightly
all over
your local body,
leaving no
undefoliated figleaf
unturnd.

PAUL NELSON, *twelfth*, Lyons Township High School, La Grange
Josephine Allen, teacher

AN INJUSTICE BY SCIENCE

Once a basic element of a mystery story,
Once a perfect setting for despair,
Once a subject of great meditative compositions,
Now a health hazard —
The intrigue of fog
Destroyed by science.

DEBORAH McCLEARY, *tenth*, Guilford High School, Rockford
Patricia Carlson, teacher

UNDER THE CLOUD

in the
burning city
where unrest
flares
a poet
patiently
sits

in the
fields of war
where unrest
flares
the psuedo-soldier
who knows what he is
and cannot be what he is not
patiently
traces himself
in the sand
traces a poet
in the sand.

CALVIN CHURCHMAN, *ninth, Maine Township High School—
South, Park Ridge*
Pauline M. Yates, teacher

A HIGGEDLY PIGGEDLY POEM

Mumboing Jumboing
Poet Vachel Lindsay
Wrote about the natives
In the Jungle

Wrote about the evil
Gods of the Congo too,
Unsuspecting Vachel
Died poor — voo-dooed?

WANDA McNABB, *twelfth, Academy of Our Lady High School,
Peoria*
Sister Mary Elise, teacher

HORA

Incline your young ears
 People, I hear a parting of seas
 Through the sad sounding wind waltz
 Of evening breeze
 And night.
 Make a joyful noise, People, rejoice
 At ocean's rending. Rise
 To greet
 The wind
 With your night-lit faces bright.

People, sing aloud a song, ancient
 By three thousand years. Listen
 Now
 The wind.
 Let fly your feet to wind-
 Singing psaltery — moon music
 Of Astarte.
 Dance to David's lyre, People, sing.

DEBBIE TAYLOR, *twelfth, Lyons Township High School,
 La Grange*
Josephine Allen, teacher

REFLECTION

I picked up
 a dead weed
 it was fragile
 and looked of
 decay
 it stared
 back at me
 and saw
 the same.

LYNN PAULTER, *tenth, Gibault High School, Waterloo*
Sister Regina Siegfried, teacher

ONCE WE

One day
One me
One you
We played the game
touching, leaving, coming back together
like leaves floating on the river
together in the midst of many alone
laughing in the sunshine

finally we were together so long
the one me and the one you became the one we
we fused into one
and wrapped into a mass of sensual pleasure
we reached idealistic pleasure
and we knew love

and then when we were unaware of all around us
the so long became too long
and the warmth faded
into a habit
and we did not know one another
and we were again
one me and
one you.

BETSY MARSH, *twelfth*, DeKalb Senior High School
Mary Penson, teacher

CAESAR PRIMER

Here comes mighty Caesar.
Hail, Caesar, hail!
Tomorrow Caesar will be dead.
Some senators will stab him in the Forum;
Also in the duodenum, esophagus, and spleen.
A bad break for Julius,
But that's politics.

MARCUS GRIMES, *twelfth*, Guilford High School, Rockford
Patricia Davis, teacher

ON TO DEATH

A tapestry
with weft woven
 through
 warp
years and years
 black yarn over
 white yarn
 under
 white yarn
 was behind her
 as her
 background.

She sat at
the instrument
 wearing
black clothes
 but
her face glowed
 from
 light
 lighting
 face

and the composition.

Her fingers
 strive
 and play
scherzo, rondo
adagio, rubato
 and
 minor finale
Glow fades.

MELANIE SCHRAEMEYER, *eleventh, Laboratory School,*
Western Illinois University, Macomb
Beth Stiffler, teacher

DEMOLITION OF A GOD WHO NEVER WAS

Praises to a god on high
who eats caviar while human flesh
is ripped from weary bones.

Praises to an ever watching lord
who feasts his eyes on prostitution
in one-night stands.

Praises and all glory to a holy father
who gorges himself on human suffering
and agony of souls.

Praises to a worthless cardboard cutout
who exists among the clouds
and merely becomes
a soggy paper puddle
when the storms
of life
pass near him.

SALLY ARMSTRONG, *eleventh, Guilford High School, Rockford*
Jeanne Claeys, teacher

CIRCLES

I have filled in the spaces of the
o's and a's three times.
Three times my pencil has been
moved by boredom,
to blacken the whiteness,
to fill the emptiness.
Three times I have turned away
in disgust.
When the lead is worn down,
I will use my pen.

DENISE M. WALTHER, *tenth, Evanston Township High School*
Owen Hein, teacher

UTOPIA?

The stout pig stands on the street corner
 While his master leads him
 'Round the Mulberry Bush
 And the ambiguous clown presses
 The lock button opening
 The door to tomorrow for all
 Of those who couldn't see yesterday
 Goldilocks runs by while
 The Big Bad Wolf seduces
 Old Mother Hubbard
 Because doggie doesn't have his
 Seven course meal and
 Aunt Jemima chases the tiger
 'Round the tree to get
 Batter for tomorrow's pancakes,
 Yet one of them has time to
 Turn around and say
 "Hell, We know what we're doing!"

BRIAN MANN, *tenth, Evanston Township High School*
 Lina Spaulding, *teacher*

THE SEASONS

The leaves flutter down,
 Softly touching the dry soil.
 Summer is over.

Now winter is gone.
 It has left cold memories,
 To be forgotten.

Leaves and grass turn green.
 The sun shines more brightly, all
 Life awakes to spring.

I await summer
 To sit on the cool green grass,
 And think of autumn.

MERRIE KUDRNA, *eighth, Hauser Junior High School, Riverside*
 Mabel Bergesen, *teacher*

A DAY, AWAY!

The listless hanging branches
Drew me to them;
And fell over me,
Greeting me with a whispering poem.

The whistling wind
Was singing a song,
While the swaying trees
Danced to the rhythm of the wind.

The soft muddy ground
Felt like a carefree time;
When once I'd been running
Through a field of soft, green grass.

The busy hustle
Of the tree-fallen leaves
Reminded me of the hustling of people
In a city.

The slow lifeless swooping of the birds,
Gave me the same feeling as they had;
The fresh golden color of the harvested field
Caught my eye suddenly!

As I was walking down an endless trail,
The eerie quietness led me to know
I was in another world!
All of this was in the idle nature of my mind.

CHERYL A. WILSON, *seventh, Washington Junior High School*
Marion Nelson, *teacher*

NEAR THE WOOF RIVER

old animal and me
were bathing in bottles of fruit and wine
near the woof river,
when we became aware of a nearby village.
we were skulking towards the town and along the river,
around the cemetery;
there were more people in that bonehouse
than in the whole town!
an exciting town?
its major attraction was doing nothing;
a numb town.
more interesting than these people were
the antiques in their own stores.
they were like glazed sculptures placed here
for a joke.
a sign in the sky proclaimed "jone's fine clothes,"
the most exciting thing yet . . .

the woof river, aorta of the village, smiles;
it's amused by the people who live off its blood,
it knows it can turn off their life anytime.

it was too much for us,
so we ran-floated back to the outstretched
waiting arms of the woof river,
falling exhausted on the blue earth and
its pine needle bed . . .
the river enveloped us and wouldn't let us go,
old animal and me.

FRED SIMON, *tenth, Evanston Township High School*
Owen Hein, *teacher*

FACADE

Heads, and you'd stay.
 Tails, go, and, with you, take the sunshine.
 You tossed it high,
 and gravity dragged it back so slowly.
 Our hands tightened in anticipation,
 catching our breath at the clink of coin on concrete.
 I followed its rim rolling smooth and far,
 the glint of its falling face a gun in my eyes.
 I raced across the station floor to meet the stare of arrogant eagle
 wings.
 Grabbing, quick back into my pocket before you could see,
 and to your question I shouted HEADS,
 and our smiles gleamed brighter than any silver visage.

CAROL BRAUNSHAUSEN, *twelfth*, *Willowbrook High School*,
Villa Park
 Ralph J. Amelio, teacher

HONORABLE MENTION

- Berwyn, Morton West High School: "Dunes," by Kathy Steinbring (Mrs. Jimmie Morel)
- Edwardsville, Edwardsville High School: "On Peace," by Marcia Thomason (Margarette Warmbrodt)
- Evanston, Evanston Township High School: "Labyrinth," by Abigail Lavengood (Ann Hopkins); "Television and Speaking Your Mind Don't Mix," by Kate Schenck (Carl Hammer); "CTA died," by Denyse Bannan (Rebecca Tillapaugh)
- Glenview, Glenbrook South High School: "Ode to my Gypsophilia Plant," by Cathie Johns (Jane Britton)
- Joliet, Joliet Township High School, West Campus: "Destiny," by Charlotte Roberts (M. D. McClain)
- LaGrange, Lyons Township High School: "You're a Nice Place to Visit," by Ginger Lyon (Norma Jordan); "glimpse," by Cindy Pearson (Norma Jordan); "God's Failure," by Rob Kruse (Aldo Mungai)
- Mundelein, Mundelein High School: "Voices," by Jim Bauernsmith (Betty Coy); "Night of the Wind," by Stephen Anderson (Betty Coy)
- Rockford, Guilford High School: "brush of eyelash," by Karin Hardy (Patricia Davis); "Poem," by Barb Denker (Jeanne Claeys)
- Villa Park, Willowbrook High School: "Soliloquy," by Terry Patten (R. J. Amelio)
- Waukegan, Waukegan Township High School: "Strawberry Starfish," by James Ottery (Shadie Simon)

Midwest English Conference

The 1970 meeting of the Midwest English Conference will be held at the Student Center at Ball State University on May 1-2. Theme of the meeting will be "Linguistics in the Classroom."

Key speakers for the two-day meeting will be author Emily Kimbrough and Professor Ann Lefcourt of Hunter College, New York, who is also an author of elementary school reading textbooks.

Membership in the Midwest English Conference includes elementary, secondary, and college English teachers in Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin. All English language arts teachers are invited to attend.

Inquiries concerning attendance at the conference should be sent to Glenn Holder, Program Chairman, English Department, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana.

