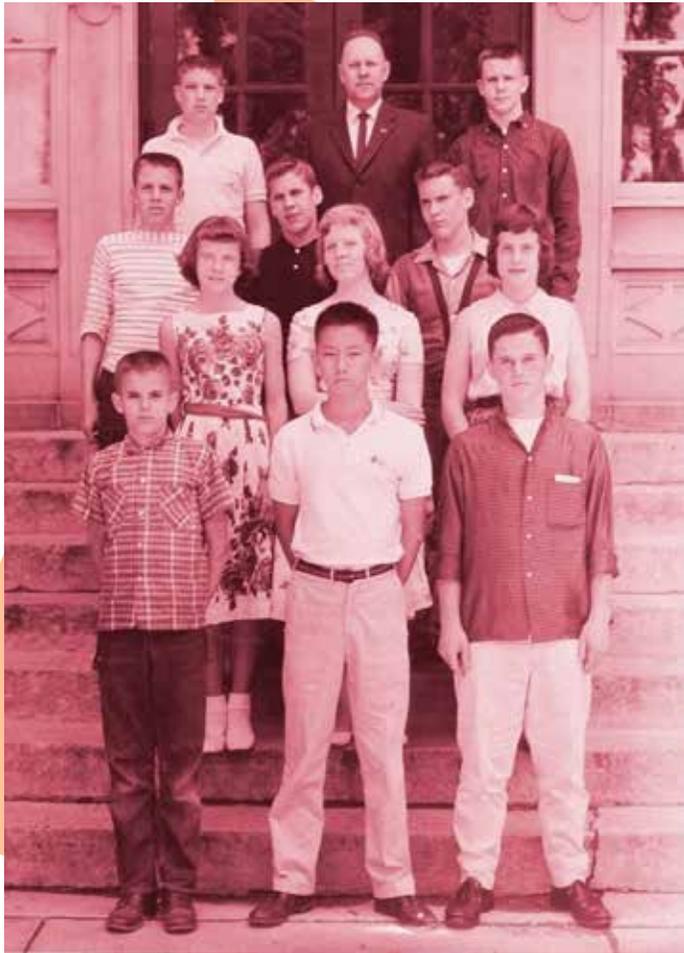




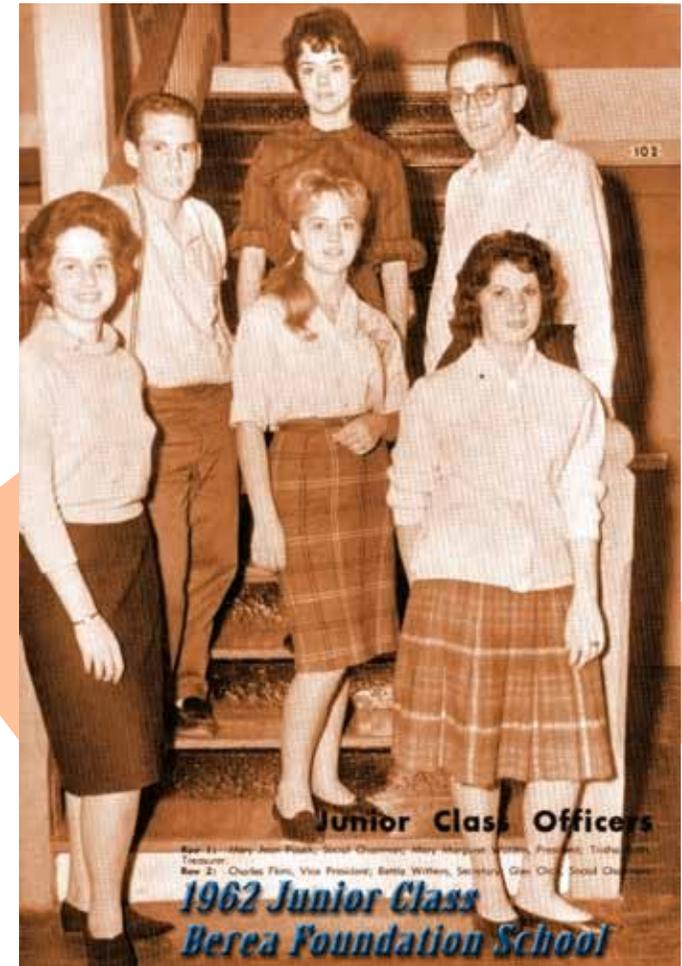
Caution:  
Poetry can be a dangerous  
matter  
uneasy the lines, can  
  
undo a hidden lifetime

**Poems selected from  
Scattering of dust: some favorite readings  
The Leaping-Stepper and other poems  
Above the Wind  
and unpublished manuscripts**



**Our Knapp Hall  
Eighth Grade Class**

~ Page 2 ~

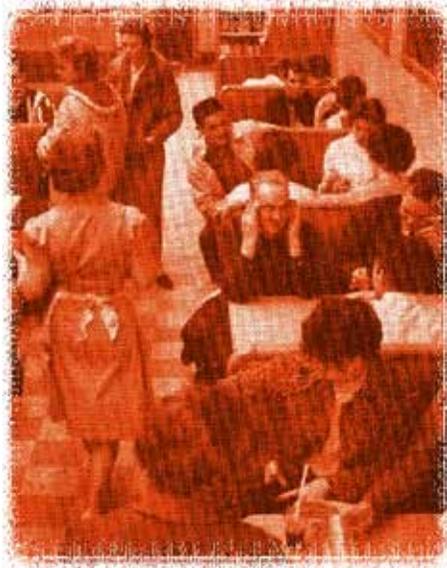


**Our Junior Class Officers -- the  
last year I lived at Berea**

~ Page 3 ~



**Stylized memories  
of Porter Moore's  
taken from the Chimes**



How memories, especially	in semi-dark twilight of
of faraway childhood	earth
dissolve into something	in this form clarity comes
else	shining down
a reordering, restructuring	as harvest moon our
of what was, of	hearts have ever
how we have become who	beaten steady to the same
we are today	gentle
ghosts of those persons	rhythm of stars circling
we once were	beyond our skies
are semi-opaque versions	Written following a
of visions	conversation with
who we were, who	Bruce Robertson in
we might have become yet	



September 2000

Falling into Jackson Street memory  
finding hidden in backyard oak familiar  
corn cob pipe, cherry blend, fresh  
as for our Scouting hikes across the bluegrass

thirty-six miles in two days once  
to Keeneland track along rows of straight white boards  
demarcation for thoroughbred lines

~ Page 6 ~

isn't usually the walking but the resting  
recalled, lighting up that pipe  
swapping little sins (we were not yet worn down in this  
world)

imagining perhaps being asleep in some other place  
and dreaming you guys and these summer breezes  
blowing down through miles of green woods

Was it ever real, any of it, even then?  
And where are we now, if not gone  
down onto solo pillows?

We will walk a lonesome road  
into the sky someday each by ourselves

as the savior did

wonder if in the hereafter  
we can be children again  
or live that awkward, perfect  
in-between when we were friends.

~ Page 7 ~

## The path

finding it again  
from places  
we promised never to go  
long ago  
behind the walls  
rose and wood, granite hills  
chalice of moon, scent of  
sandalwood  
discourse in dappled woods  
gypsy moths gathered around the light  
sure-footed for the ever to come

And here and now  
down in the valleys  
where the pale light  
comes slow dripping  
again, eyes wide  
to the shine, to the  
way  
we always knew

\*\*\*\*\*

Doubtful that this blasphemous journal excerpt comes  
out of our (shared) Foundation School Latin class  
experience (Per deos immortales!), but who knows?

Telling time off  
pissing off the gods  
“Quid deos immortales cognovisti?”  
And the reflections in our eyes  
are we blind  
to the life of the pond  
or centers of civilization  
northside Chicago  
Old Town  
or Haight-Ashbury in the ‘60s

when we spread our wings  
angels  
of the redwood grove  
flying high above the wind

what we cherished was the all  
to which poets yearn  
toward which science leans

perhaps it was on sand bar shores  
their spawn first filled the pail  
an ocean away from Appalachia  
where we hiked the cliffs  
and yelled "Per deos immortales!"

here, inside the hush,  
their songs emanate  
radiate  
through dancing limbs  
and shout out of eyes

\*\*\*\*\*

going to the easel  
spitting out poetry  
in acrylics  
symbols for words  
to be misunderstood

the canvas alone is pure

\*\*\*\*\*

~ Page 10 ~

not, i think therefore am  
but, i dream therefore am  
and if i dream the dance  
the dancer i become

\*\*\*\*\*

## Errand

Vortex  
crass pathway  
barely touching, crossing thin  
fleeting  
flimsiest excuse for pawn of lust

Gabriel was sent upon an errand  
never has returned  
years ago

Looking out ramshackle window  
debris strewn streets  
bodies piled high by henchmen rogues  
crematorium loads

~ Page 11 ~

Has not returned  
still waiting  
for a  
sign

The motorcycle engine revs  
shadow rider under leather  
comes  
for setting  
matters  
straight  
to pull the  
bullets  
out  
of  
guns

(For Dr. Roscoe "Rusty" Giffin)

\*\*\*\*\*

## Tiptoe

She walks on tiptoe border line  
Juliet in glowing eyes.  
No disguise could ever hide  
candle glaring through the night  
sung in round before first light.

She walks the tiptoe border line  
around and round tempting wine  
but never does she enter in  
no way inside to cheer her friend;  
though I dreamed I saw her smile.

If she never calls again  
old doors come crashing down  
to splinters gone for sure.  
No matter where the wind swirls flow;  
though I believe I saw her smile.

Three main acts of tragedy  
fill the corners of the stage  
where reckless arms collided once;  
now are only leaves that rustle  
in a hot and restless wind.

## Tethered Climber

(Epilogue)

Up so high the cottonwood sings  
her trunk the melody  
branches harmony wings

Back down on earth  
things are different there  
distinct lay of land  
of seasons, wounded chorus

Belay the line below the climb  
tied off to someone else's hands  
a gypsy's perhaps, see the tattoo  
wonder whether or not to trust  
lifeline tied off stretched taut

Climber of inward heights  
hanging on by subtle thread  
to source and root and mother of us all  
through one not known but hope is true  
tied off with knotted cord  
must not release until

the episode has ended  
and sky attained  
then will face  
whose hands have held  
the line  
(for Bruce and "Spider")

\*\*\*\*\*

Shadows pummel side of silver speeding train  
Rushing seasons past to metronome of railroad track  
No peace inside this ride  
Broken schemes  
The weather's been too long too bad  
Eyes are dull, are sad

Seated warm in a station house  
Somewhere along this line  
Refreshed, a fellow journeyer  
Ponders the joy  
Reward for insight —  
Weather for both having been the same

\*\*\*\*\*

He came awake singing in an alien language  
Words shimmering, expanding into galaxies  
Splayed across the bedroom wall  
Then imploding, contracting into tight spheres  
Before one final explosion sent them, broken stars,  
Out into space.

Where had he been in this dream  
This storm of sweet fury?  
Crawling from comfortable covers  
To greet another day:  
“Where,  
where am I?”

\*\*\*\*\*

I recall, years ago, a song  
Once we sang together  
I've forgotten the words  
But remember the melody  
Will remember the melody  
Beyond the horizons  
Beyond the old words  
That lost their meaning anyway

Symbols without substance  
Ghost forms holding vast emptiness  
But the tune carries the mathematics  
Of stars crossing, coursing  
Toward pulsars, centers of universes

\*\*\*\*\*

shout down a fear,  
a thousand more may come around

embrace the fear, a child,  
and grow upon its food

until you reach the ledge  
face a mirrored world

come to know you are  
the bright one  
immanuel

## Discovering joy and sadness

Joy and sadness as one:

joy is lover rushing to meet beloved  
in dance beyond secluded stream;  
sadness is lover returning  
taste of encounter  
a memory on the lips and tongue

Or twin planets orbiting, dancing  
about this dream of you and I

Heart rising, heart falling  
heart filled, heart empty  
is the same, our drum, beating  
cadence to stars crossing overhead

## An American mom

American mom loving child,  
loving pet

woman, mid thirties  
angry, shopping  
slams cat litter, cat food,

juice for her child --  
a little five-or-six year-old  
gal with wild flying hair  
just like the mom's, pretty -  
into the trunk

the girl hides  
crawling into back seat  
mom who loves the child, the pet  
so much buying them  
all this shit  
slams trunk lid  
after slamming in shit  
for her loved ones

slides into front seat  
slams the fucking door  
takes off quick  
from crowded parking lot  
at shopping mall

\*\*\*\*\*

## The Visit

I came down the coastal cemetery  
to see our headstones  
they were still there

Knelt down, pulled a few weeds  
alongside perennials were growing too, budding  
about to turn to flowers

Mamas and the Pappas were singin'  
California Dreamin'  
everywhere  
blasting upward from the earth,  
out of bushes  
out of trees

Paid my respects  
with due respect considering the season

Shadow crossed these sacred grounds, looked up  
squinting into sky  
at flights coming and going  
out over the ocean

Until it all turned crimson, I blinked  
and everything was gone  
again

Back in Toledo  
or is this Kansas?  
I struggle to know where ever I am

Only wanted to write to let you know  
I had been there  
visiting our resting places

(Any other hippies among my Berea classmates? )

\*\*\*\*\*

years the poetry  
failed

or was it  
the other way  
around

a failing  
to listen

\*\*\*\*\*

Self

Are you the  
you who  
wrote down  
these words,  
or the you  
who is  
reading them

and what's  
the difference

and afterwards  
who are  
you now

\*\*\*\*\*

“I’ve never had any friends  
like the ones I had when I was 12.  
Hell, does anybody?”  
(Stephen King,  
excerpt from  
*The Body.*)

\*\*\*\*\*

## We Knew

In those days we kicked up clouds of dust  
from the twisting string of road  
and ran behind wide red barns  
to hide from really big dust clouds  
the wind blew down our necks from far hills.

We were younger then but knew  
what it was all about -- the sky and fields  
and all the folks.

People were machines  
that worked the fields and the dung  
which made the beans grow tall and  
more than that -- they were the angels  
who lived in the sky  
when autumn was done.

\*\*\*\*\*

## The Woods

. . . spindly lookin' trees  
as if you could breathe too loud  
and knock `em down  
like paper matchsticks  
but there are so many . . .

a man could get lost  
inside them.

(Written on a Greyhound bus on the way to Berea, first  
visit back in 1965. )

\*\*\*\*\*

## Leaf to Petal

Leaf to petal, petal to leaf  
watch as the day wears on unfolding

closing and  
coming back together.

Nature  
owns a rhythm  
never pausing  
even at passionate  
words, or at the shame  
in our eyes.

No,  
she does not work like people do.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Uncle Kyle's Cabin

Up the dusty, scarce-used trail  
then ford the creek  
along raspberry fields

At the gate  
feeding wild ponies apples  
plucked from valley limbs

Down the wood fence line  
fire's on inside logcabin doors welcome mat  
trailing blue smoke into blue hills

North Carolina seems so far away

Some summer old Kyle will lead us again  
up the dusty trail

(Written about a summer vacation at Maggie Valley and  
staying in a cabin owned by Ernestine Upchurch's  
Uncle Kyle. )

## Woman of the Dulcimer

Appalachian roads  
unchanged for a hundred years:  
the rains falling from bluegray skies  
are the same ones  
that fell upon the mountains  
when we were children.

Destiny is piecemeal bone and severed flesh  
northward into fog of steel cities;  
or hanging upon deserted mountain paths;  
the life we knew is gone.

These bluegray rains are ours,  
but we are gone --  
some into day,  
others into  
night.

Sing again  
woman of the dulcimer.  
Dance one more round.  
Call back the daisy wraps  
wild rose buttons.

The sky folds backward  
below the edge of the Cumberlands  
every evening;  
it's just that  
we are no longer there  
to watch.

Sing again  
woman of the dulcimer.  
Dance one more round.  
Call back the daisy wraps  
wild rose buttons.

## Friends

Lonely rivers that never cross  
ivy grown apart  
never twined  
Separates wake in middle  
of the night  
hearing the call but  
no way to act upon it  
at all  
too shy for love  
too lonely for words  
their hearts won't mend

Broken, friends forever  
never consummating  
love  
they're too shy to  
ever admit  
feelings  
never spoken of  
carried  
to burying ground.

\*\*\*\*\*

~ Page 30 ~

## Walking Past a Vacant House

Idiot society  
chews `em up, spits `em out  
broken, scattered like dust in the wind, no  
not dust chunks

of gravel and granite  
discharged and  
propelled by forces  
not their own  
to destinations  
never intended in beginning  
ending up living lives  
not ever imagined in a million years  
under the veil before the altar  
swearing to God and  
everybody promises  
now unkept.

\*\*\*\*\*

~ Page 31 ~

## Winter's Pedestrian Watchers

The sky performs ritual of snow  
kicking it down in trough and basin  
pedestrians run, trying to kick it  
back to where it comes from.

Frost draws childlike circles on windowpane  
we sit on windowledge  
wishing to be down in the snow  
playing like we were  
cherry-faced donut and cocoa kids  
red mittens and earmuffs.

The morning's coming on, splashing  
in trough and basin, waiting  
for us to come on down  
from windowledge to play like kids.

When it's fully day and stars  
melt down like snow which melts  
to gutter drains, let's walk just walk  
kicking what's left of snow from streets  
back to wherever it comes from, and

gazing between steps  
into each other's  
eyes.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Berea

Ode to vincit qui patitur school, Protestant  
alma mater, mother  
of Jesus, where are you? Saw yellow  
banded-wing blackbirds mating  
(which one on top?) side of road, then  
from the sky out of nowhere  
seemed too cold, no fire  
couldn't tell  
(but don't people always get it confused)  
above, up high silver  
mirage flashed an instant like walking the  
Appalachian trail used to do  
the amphitheater Pilot Knob it was  
God beside me again  
Jesus, it was so good for awhile  
anyway

## A Land Never Seen Before

I walk upon a land  
I've never seen before:  
step lightly! for  
someone lives here  
someone is loved.

Sturdy fenceposts --  
a strong arm dug them where they stand.  
And rows of sweet corn -- who  
planted the seed in God's sight to grow?

I walk upon a land  
I've never seen before.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Back to the Cumberland Hills

I'm goin' back to my home in the hills,  
I'm goin' back to the ones I love.  
I'm goin' back to the Cumberland hills  
high above Kentucky, high above Kentucky.

And I'm leavin' the smoke of the city.  
I'm leavin' her lights behind.  
And I'm leavin' a broken heart  
in that city of broken dreams.

I'm goin' back to my home in the hills,  
I'm goin' back to the ones I love.  
I'm goin' back to the Cumberland hills  
high above Kentucky, high above Kentucky.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Travelin' Song

I'm travelin' down a lonesome road.  
I've been by this way before.  
I'll come by again.  
Love is like an eagle flyin' in the wind.  
And I'll be by this way again, my friend.

I'm goin' back to my home in the hills,  
I'm goin' back to the ones I love.  
I'm goin' back to the Cumberland hills  
high above Kentucky, high above Kentucky.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Heartache's All I Get for Lovin' You

I keep lookin' for a magic key to open up your heart.  
Are there words and rhymes to sing  
to show how much I care?  
And if they ever reach your ears  
would you like to sing along?  
No, heartache's all I get for lovin' you.

Like a thirstin' plant waits for the rain  
I've waited for your arms  
to wind around and hold me tight  
as in my dreams they've done.  
But every time we get together  
you vanish in the wind.  
And heartache's all I get for lovin' you.

Next time I really do believe  
you'll fall in love with me.  
We'll travel down Kentucky trails  
to see the wildflowers bloom  
then climb up Pilot Knob  
to see forever in the sky.  
No, heartache's all I get for lovin' you.  
(Another shattered dream . . . all she wrote! )

## Smoky Mountain Memory

The good times are gone.  
Good songs all sung.  
Nashville man took my girl  
away with a line.  
He'd put her voice on records,  
her name in neon signs.  
She'll never sing these love songs  
with me again.

She's my Smoky Mountain memory.  
My Smoky Mountain memory.  
In the Smoky Mountain rain I see  
her face again.  
In the Smoky Mountain rain I hear  
her voice again.

Although she is gone now  
to be a star  
maybe she'll see  
those bright lights go dark.  
Then she will come back  
into my arms  
and sing these mountain songs  
with me again.

## Blue Ridge Mountain Rain

In the Blue Ridge Mountain rain I see  
her long dark hair flowin' down.  
In the Blue Ridge Mountain rain I hear  
her sweet words of love one more time.

In the Blue Ridge Mountain rain I learned  
the lessons of love in her arms.  
But the Blue Ridge Mountains stole my dream,  
and I've been away a long time.

One night in the rain  
on a piny hill road  
she left this old world behind  
and a lover who'll never recover  
his heart he left behind  
in those hills.

\*\*\*\*\*

## I See Forever in Your Eyes

Our time together seems short  
yet somehow I see forever in your eyes.  
God has called us to be love  
for one another all our days.  
And though our time together seems so short  
I will always see forever in your eyes.

God's love is greater than the world's.  
It asks nothing for itself.  
It's patient, kind, and understanding,  
hates evil and loves the truth.  
His love will never fail us.

Once I thought love was a game,  
win or lose, play to a draw.  
To take away the gifts of someone else's heart.  
But love can never be love  
unless it's given away.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Where Have You Been

Where have you been and where are you goin', my  
friend

Have you been to London, have you seen the world  
Have you loved and cried your tears  
Have you seen the sunshine  
and walked in the rain . . .  
Or has life passed you by

\*\*\*\*\*

## Lines to Helen

Don't ask, "What ocean crossed? what  
deck lamp lit in the ocean night?"

I was so far that I knew no bounds;  
I was so far that I knew no growth;  
I was so far that I knew no God;  
I was so far that I knew no love,  
nor fire, nor feeling, nor touch, nor sentiment;  
outside the circle of conclusions and bounds,  
beyond even freedom, I was an unsacred thing

fallen into the bright which lured me  
to California and compelled me, a fool,  
into a nebulous hole --  
my own folly, no one else's.

There must be a million ships  
that sail this world around -- I look  
toward the sea and watch them come and go.  
Sometimes I recognize faces at the railings  
and recall passages made together.

I belong to the land now.  
So, sail on, ships.  
I turn my face toward the land of birth.

What happens when a man reaches the sun?  
His wings melt in the flame and  
he falls back to the dust of earth  
to breathe again.

(From a letter to Helen Hovey, who understood tragedy  
and joy. )

\*\*\*\*\*

Lord, help all who seek;  
all who seek rain into the roots.

I go from poem to poem  
like a blind man sometimes,  
like a fool sometimes.  
“Life drifts between a fool and a blind man  
until the end. “  
Yet I seek release  
from foolishness and blindness.

I repeat the prayer:  
Lord, help all who seek;  
all who seek rain into the roots.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Another Song

Another verse, another verse, another song.  
I came from boxcar fantasies and  
a woman’s willow-branch arms I never found waving  
for me.

The mountain is so  
still with a hush of meaning  
while I go over old journeys in my mind.

Such a song this morning. In the hush  
where birds’ mouths wait -- it is there . . .  
Come lie awake all the days of life and listen . . .  
another verse, another verse, another song.

\*\*\*\*\*

## A new year's song

The nighttime rider sang  
the song was pure but I do not believe  
I can do her justice by telling you of it  
the words were in an unknown language  
can say only the rhythm, rhyme and  
musical chords made me  
picture a birth  
when blankets of an old century are  
turned down a final night  
the infant cries out

I waited on a far hillside  
for her to come riding a pony  
the moon was round and brilliant  
calling down for children to come outside  
and dance

As hoofbeats, faint but steady, came  
from the east, a man's face constructed from smoke  
above firestones in the west  
even though my eyes were closed  
I saw him there laughing  
speaking in that same language

Looking down to his outstretched hands  
he cradled burning coals  
sparkling, I saw in them, deep inside,  
stars circling, galaxies  
again his laugh then  
he disappeared

The rider came on her gentle horse  
singing and I would share the song with you  
if I could

Please look out tonight and the next and next  
wait on hillsides of sleep  
she will come and sing into your soul  
the song you will know  
by the harmony that comes  
from out your own mouth  
without conscious thought at all

Dec. 1999

\*\*\*\*\*

## Veiled Under Work space

dreaming

the jobs

day upon day

layering life

into

little pastries

where are the

mechanics

of grand viewing

above the engines

and towers and

smoke

what tools

would you use

pliers and wire to

write down history

of the ages

or

lasso and chaps

for solving equations

tracking stars across

maybe taking

wrong tools

is a choice

for watery

workers

splashing against

shores we don't

really want

to breach

would cause too much

stir in the soul

would have to

admit

who we are

(Journal excerpt, October  
4, 2000)