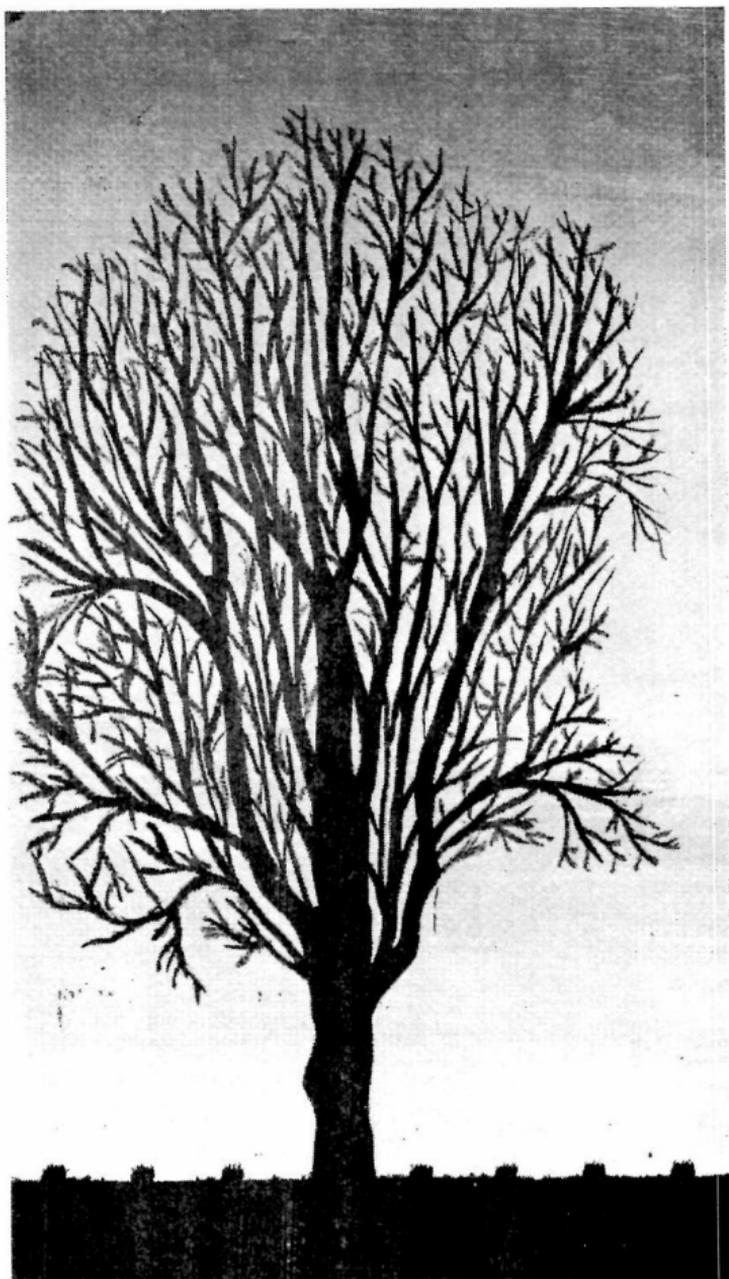


**ONE ARMED  
FLYER**

**Annette Hayn**





*No End, p. 64*

**ONE ARMED  
FLYER**

**Annette Hayn**

**THE POET'S PRESS**

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## INTRODUCTION

Our people have a variety of ways of leaving us. Our children grow up, our parents age, loved ones die. But in an ironic and certainly poignant sense, the presence of those lost grows stronger in their absence. This is because the fact of their passing changes our total feel for things, and their fixed presence seldom does that.

In the poems in *One Armed Flyer*, Annette Hayn speaks of a world in which loss is central. It is a world that extends only so far as her own life extends, but it is rendered universal through the clarity of the poet's vision.

The central force of these poems lies in their quiet attempt to understand and express the changes that loss causes. The result is a book of poems, painful, touching, and exact, that speaks to a basic human need. For the readers of Annette Hayn's poems, loss is a kind of gain.

*Toby Olson*  
Philadelphia  
1-13-76

*...wither and fall to the ground  
and rot and be drawn up  
into a flower again...*

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS  
*from*  
*Paterson, Book 2*

**ONE ARMED  
FLYER**

*IN MEMORIAM*  
*Gerald A. Hayn*

PART ONE

*A Windy Day*



## MEDLEY

In April  
take any tree  
loaded with buds  
the sun  
shines on Melinda  
run over  
people walk in  
and out of their houses  
in a hurry  
the tulips open, wills  
are read.

## SOMEWHERE ELSE

*His spirits  
seem to be high*  
the old man smiles.  
Families  
of prisoners of war  
are interviewed.  
You had no family

when you came home  
the end of World War II.  
A second cousin  
with white carpeting  
made you take off your shoes.  
You bit your nails

My hair was naturally straight  
when I was small  
I had a crush  
on an opera singer  
was painted in a velvet dress

Our daughter  
teeth and hair straightened  
ears pierced  
loves herself  
never wears dresses

You married me  
my hair turned curly.  
You stopped biting your nails.  
We are a family  
smiling  
in the photo.

## NIGHT

He hobbles  
through the schoolyard  
in rain. The flag  
droops. Dirty water  
shadowy in holes  
where last year's trees  
have died.  
Beer cans float  
newspaper matches soot.  
Engraved  
above doorways the names  
of cities and girls...

Venice Regina Helen

## LULLABY

*(for my mother)*

Sun patterns on the wall.  
The cat relaxes  
in the fruit bowl.

When I was small  
you took me skiing every year  
remember?  
in love with speed  
and reckless  
younger than my father  
who watched us from a deck chair  
in the sun  
and has not aged since then.

You have.  
When you are dead  
I'll have you back again  
the way you were.

## UNLIKELY MARRIAGE

In the dusty dollhouse  
John Ashbery and Emily Dickinson  
man and wife  
have been asleep for years  
with their six children  
(one is lost)  
that won't grow up  
assorted dogs and cats  
a wooden mouse and artificial flowers

In their colonial bed  
turned to each other  
they look uncomfortable.  
Picasso prints are pasted on the walls

(The real John Ashbery  
with a moustache  
may not like  
Dickinson's life style;  
but here they are. They have no choice)

After an interlude  
of climbing ladders and being hugged  
they wait  
he in a flannel suit  
she with long hair  
their arms outstretched

for the next generation.  
A glass of plastic beer  
on the red kitchen table  
and manuscripts.

## DEBBIE

We never really talk  
running out of light  
out of prayer

a yellow ford arrives  
(she cannot talk about it)  
under the oak  
the rain accumulates  
not falling down  
all week

*don't hang around*  
*on the roofs of cars—*  
*turn off the T. V. —*  
*speak*  
she says nothing

when her father died  
one day brings home  
a man-sized bear named Steve  
with paper eyes

at ten o'clock do you know  
where your children are?

## DELILAH

1

Delilah at thirteen  
danced through the moonlit desert  
next to her camel

2

was cast as Samson's mistress  
to betray him.

3

She didn't want to hear  
the secret, argued with him  
not to tell

*My mother saw an angel once—*

*Let's not talk politics.*

She used to like to braid  
his hair shone in the sun.

4

It's all a matter of whose side you're on.  
There are no villains.  
When Judith took a lover she cut off his head  
is still applauded for it  
but Delilah—

5

attracted to the challenge  
a breathlessness  
she wished —  
despite the foxes  
tied tail to tail  
with firewood between them —  
to be his wife.

6

So here she was —  
Samson away on business —  
alone a lot in the hot tent  
despised the Philistinian lords  
kept pestering her  
especially Lakashka  
the chief of spies.

7

She talked in her sleep.

8

Then came  
his sudden helplessness (a lack  
of confidence can do that)

There was an angel  
somewhere and a god  
Delilah couldn't see them.

9

Many deaths.  
She died  
when his eyes died.  
For him it became  
another way of seeing  
her.

10

It was the Philistinian lord who gave the orders.  
It was after all her guilt.  
It was the wind  
listening.  
It was after he was blinded, he began  
to notice

Delilah stumbling through the shadows  
of words and stones  
eyelashes without eyes for generations

11

Delilah forced to dance  
among the priestesses  
for Dagon, the god of war.

Samson was led in by the angel  
in the form of a small boy  
*The pillar Samson, lean against the pillar.*  
The temple fell on top of them  
and many others.

12

The stage is dark Delilah  
are you there?

13

Temples are what we erect  
for ourselves.

Samson and Delilah  
(that sounds nice)  
Samson and Delilah at the foot  
of their temple

between the telling of the secret  
and the cutting of the hair

for that hour

## IN APRIL

(for Mary Ferrari)

It snowed today, a fragile snow.  
I wanted it to stay, but it had melted  
almost upon touch lying in little patches  
among leaves. *Why can't you make his meals  
a little more exciting?* card-playing  
chamber music wives. And I discovered  
a whole new way of seeing images,  
the shades of shadows, laughing at myself.  
Castle under the elms, we wanted it to be,  
that kept us busy finding paths and things.  
Debbie and Judy became saliva sisters  
touching tongues. The snow's all melted now  
to be involved. I see a sparrow, and Debbie  
coming home in boots. He's talking  
to that other one in our tree.

## HALF WAY

Who am I angry at

when I wake up  
an empty sky?  
October used to be

my favorite month  
unpredictably red  
and windy.  
Now I do things half way

tired  
of being saved  
by everyone;  
the Christian Science  
carpet man  
with orange sneakers on

That little oak we planted  
last to turn color  
I am reluctant

to get up today  
can't make our bed  
(shadows are everywhere)  
the cat sleeps on it.

## RACE TRACK

Candy wrappers float.  
A truck rolls by to even out the turf.  
Clouds pass  
all around you  
people climb on benches  
scream their heads off  
you stay seated  
read a book.

Jockeys  
daring as their horses  
one a girl  
purple and red  
jokes  
with the outrider by her side.

Here  
for the first time  
you're bored, won't bet.  
Dollars gallop by,  
more horses  
our daughter  
growing up to be one.

## THE WAY YOU ARE

I wanted to grow up the way you are  
But now you're old. I'm leaving you behind  
In a pink nursing home tied to a chair.

What's left of you can only shake and stare.  
You bite the nurse and push my hand.  
I wanted to grow up the way you are.

I loved your gentleness and lack of fear  
But what I loved I cannot find  
In a pink nursing home tied to a chair.

Helpless I mourned your many deaths before  
The final one. You used to understand  
I wanted to grow up the way you are.

No one converses any more.  
Each patient fights his private fiend  
In a pink nursing home tied to a chair.

The silence in this day-room is bizarre.  
You are alone, abandoned at the end  
In a pink nursing home tied to a chair.  
I wanted to grow up the way you are.

## CHAMBER MUSIC

While they play string quartets  
their wives play cards. Jill  
also likes to paint and buy antiques.  
Her son quit school and grew a beard  
in Greenwich Village. A daughter  
recently eloped. Rose has a neat house and  
a perfect hairdo. Her children have  
engagement parties.

## NIGHT TRAIN

Many trains. she sat  
next to her mother.  
stories raced past, storms  
paper boats  
and always somewhere to be  
claimed, a light.

They said they too  
used to be small  
like her, the threatened giants  
trudging by  
a station light.

Blue trains, new Nazi trains  
in all directions.  
she slept on the way to Munich  
safe on a wooden bench  
in the circle of light.

## GINNA AND JAMES

They both were in your class.  
Ginna hardly talks.  
James' father stabbed his mother.  
You promised to take them to the beach.

I come along. The sun  
shines on abandoned  
tenements, some newly planted  
trees and Ginna

gets into our car.  
Two men confront us  
with their knives — *gimme*  
*your pocketbook* — their faces  
blank. one knife  
is curved.

If I do nothing  
they may go away

but you  
cry out blood  
from above the eye flows down your face —  
and Ginna pretty in her blue and red —  
your blood on my dress

while four blocks further up

you are not up to James  
in his swimsuit  
in the street.



## A SPOOKY POEM

hanging  
between  
white  
houses  
a  
clothes-line  
    of  
black  
clothes

## NEW YEAR'S EVE

darkness  
shuts out rain  
but not the wind  
inside houses  
later on  
at midnight  
when the ball falls down  
we get kissed  
then sleep all day

## THREE SEASONS

### 1 TEMPORARY

Drops  
on the window pane  
and moist green leaves  
but it's  
October, a hurricane  
further south; wind  
blows the weekly  
radio program  
to the floor. On my lap  
our illegal  
kitten purrs. We  
have not been  
evicted yet.

2  
THE VERDICT

He cuts a window in your chest  
looks in

while in the waiting room  
the walls are white.  
Only the clock moves.  
A girl relaxes, reads a magazine  
all others look afraid.  
A woman seems familiar  
another claims to know me  
wears a wig.  
One by one  
they disappear into adjoining rooms.  
The relaxed girl screams.  
Three smiling secretaries  
go to lunch. I keep running  
to the bathroom.  
At last your doctor comes:  
We'll have to wait

and you lie there  
near a closed window.

3  
AFTER

Sparrows carry on  
as usual  
as if the storm had never happened  
nor your illness

but the oak is floundering  
without supports.  
Instead of holding it up  
two pillars, half broken  
lean against it  
heavily.

No one to pull them out  
or hammer them back in.  
No one to cut the wire.

4  
GET WELL

The city at your feet through a hospital window  
how white everything is  
to go to sleep in

give me a pencil and a lamp  
live in this fairy tale

I carry  
a Catholic medal  
good luck charm.  
We need all the help we can get.

5  
IN THE SAME ROOM

Most flowers  
die  
I water them  
and feed you ice cream  
twice a day  
to get you well  
in the same room  
for you to see  
yellow chrysanthemums  
and make you smile  
in a white pot  
in earth  
your skin is peeling  
on the water mattress  
you cannot walk  
need oxygen  
grow thin and fretful  
die  
while yellow  
in full bloom  
chrysanthemums --

6  
TO BE CONTINUED

The scenery keeps changing  
all night long;  
they're only dreams.  
How pleasant  
not to take things  
seriously.

but in the morning  
beds are closed.  
I am no longer safe.

Time now  
to face the mirror  
while tree trunks stay the same  
and mailmen come.

## A WINDY DAY

A new apartment  
cemetery plot  
and nursing home,  
a yellow sign.  
My mother walks inside

trusting me  
for the last time.  
At the cemetery plot  
yellow-skinned  
with your best tie  
in a wooden box  
I'm glad for  
yellow flowers. Wind  
blows them over  
during the prayer  
we're in the midst  
of wedding plans again.

They take out  
stock certificates  
to pay for this  
playing monopoly  
on the living room floor  
the wedding guests

have been invited late  
because of the funeral  
she refuses to eat  
tugs furiously  
at her restraints  
you died

I'll be alone  
at our daughter's wedding  
in a yellow gown.

## PART TWO

*No End*



## INDIAN SUMMER

abloom  
among orange footsteps  
no one notices

one red  
rose  
the police  
chop down branches  
to make room

at night  
in uniform  
more light  
no rose  
one telephone

rings among fallen leaves  
they overpower  
the window blocked  
each other  
bent over  
such wind

if I had a lover  
I'd meet him  
at the corner  
where the rose was  
unobserved.

## CURTIS STREET

They write a play  
in Harlem  
Byron Broderick's sixth graders  
about the meanest

people in the world  
on Curtis Street  
a growing wind.  
Tom threatens  
to beat up Kevin  
if he accepts the lead  
which Raymond cannot learn.  
Raymond as Freddie  
climbs down into the sewer  
to find some money.  
Kevin hides.

The wind is inside now.  
Scripts fly away.  
Mr. Broderick's absent  
on jury duty  
during the Curtis Street scene  
Curtis in tears  
George drops out  
everyone wants  
to pull the curtain.  
Morris wears a funny hat.

— Simon, suspended  
won't be in the play;  
he dumped a waste basket  
over the teacher's head.  
Gerard started the fire —

The lights flash on and off  
Jeanie can't stop laughing.  
Curtis is pleased  
to be a person  
on the street named after him.  
The street gets renovated.  
Here comes

Bloodface  
takes off his mask  
turns into the announcer.  
The torn curtain  
opens, the wind  
never stops.  
They come out like eagles  
dancing.

## DUET

It pours all day  
as always  
I want to sleep or write  
but ought to clean  
look for a job  
do exercises.  
The blue jay on a bare  
tree keeps screaming —  
I do nothing —  
disappears  
in the dark  
behind the roof.

## DISAPPEARANCE

ransom notes, runaways  
for centuries the hidden  
princess

she came to meet the car  
every evening

can't see  
over the overgrown garden moon

a woman pulls  
out violets that spread, hardly ever  
bloom only a tiny blue. open your eyes

for the first time  
in weeks cool air  
but nothing clears, the lamp unlit  
behind the tree with the missing branch.  
what makes cats move on

people too. they used to complain sometimes  
before they knew they wouldn't know  
one day....

## THE ONE ARMED FLYER

she hardly ever talked  
about the one armed flyer  
she was in love with  
once

grounded  
by a much older husband  
then the illness, was it anger  
that killed her.

all her life—

the cat jumps on the wall  
to charge a shadow  
— she planned  
to take me mountain climbing

when I was grown —  
all morning

nothing happens  
only one letter  
in the mail, the sun

through blinds  
what if mother and the one armed flyer —  
the cat snores softly on the orange bedspread

— she hated to slow down

## BENEFIT PERFORMANCE

but the piano solo  
has not yet taken place;

what a coming and going among birds.  
Each year the trees  
repeat themselves:  
    nests, wigs and lipstick.

We're nervous backstage.  
The pianist  
plays a love song  
during the rape scene.  
Patrons haven't come.

The stage is dark.  
The prompter is confused.  
A chord is lost  
and yet the singers sing.  
Then the stage manager brings on the phone

which is supposed to ring  
this moment +

no one wants to be the one  
who closes curtains.

Patients  
wheel themselves out

## WHERE YOU ARE

These love poems  
irrelevant  
I can't persuade you to

sit next to me  
in the dream.  
High intensity

lamps  
shut out the stars  
but there are frequent birds  
where you are  
among evergreen

I gave away your suits  
You're growing young

The soft wind of your  
voice today  
on another level  
rocks me to sleep.

## HEAT WAVE

too tired  
to open your eyes  
ever again  
over the phone  
polite at first  
to the sex maniac  
thinking he's someone else  
the mother-in-law  
wants to drown the cat  
to whom the postcard is addressed  
instead of her  
Nathaniel's friend is shot  
while you stay home  
white in the heat  
begonias bloom

## SETTING THE WORLD RIGHT

Three pairs of eyes  
look up  
to the half open  
window behind the maple  
where the professor  
prepares his lessons  
in accounting  
All morning, worried  
he removed  
cocoon from evergreens  
till his arms hurt  
in the dry wind  
descending now  
as from some private heaven  
that one can count on —  
to feed the strays.

## THE MOON AND NORMAN

Why doesn't he come in  
someone  
in the corduroy jacket  
Gerry used to wear  
passes the window

Disappearing moon  
From playing tennis  
almost every evening  
among bare branches  
Norman dozes off  
wakes up to go to bed

It's turning grey  
the moon invisible  
at Gerry's funeral  
where Norman spoke  
yet something

lit the sky. He still lives  
around the corner  
Upstairs the moon  
changing constantly  
won't change at all.

## GARDENING

I hate to cut  
more lower branches

once on top. You overslept  
failed to feed the cat  
...supposed to teach you  
responsibility.

Why couldn't you  
have skipped thirteen.

Too hot  
late October leaves  
won't fall. Your cat  
throws the cactus

down. Your teacher calls  
because you won't  
stop giggling. Sylvan who studied forestry  
hands me his pruning shears and says:  
*do it yourself*

## SURPRISE VISIT

evening August  
rain-filled clouds  
wanting to be  
involved  
    or to absolve  
herself feeling  
unloved she drops  
in on artistic friends  
on top of stairs  
in the middle  
of a baseball game  
apologizing  
the friend  
in the armchair  
falls asleep  
his wife deep  
in a book  
six many-legged  
cockroaches  
or maybe spiders  
get away  
the night  
damp and invisible  
unsolved —

## **SIEGFRIED**

*[for Toby Olson]*

We would fight it  
instead of one another  
take fencing lessons  
know what to do

behind doors  
of the Walhalla  
of the city  
if you were real

and that dragon was real  
the one you slew

how straightforward we'd be.

## ICE

on the roof  
and light blue air.  
I wish my thinking were as clear.  
Two starlings sitting still

## ENTER

The fence is up  
across the street. By now  
most people hardly notice  
go to work. Every evening  
dogs walk along its base  
and on the other side  
rabbits multiply.

Now that you're gone  
everyone urges me to learn to drive;  
a strip of woods at sixty miles an hour  
inaccessible. It starts to rain.

Leaves fly in all directions.  
The blue car parks  
next to the fence  
joined by the yellow car.  
A man gets out.  
He carries artificial daisies.

A dog tries to get in

I see myself, us as we used to be  
through the fence  
our so-called forest;  
Bobby built a tree house,  
named everything...

## INDOOR CAT

The cat has never seen  
snow before—the longer  
you live the more  
people you see  
die—only your smile  
in the photo.  
He is an indoor cat.

## THE WEB

(for Jacqueline)

A few raindrops are caught  
among the bugs,  
the sky reflected in them.

Unable to look  
or look away  
at last I recognize  
the enemy in eyes that do exist  
and he does not believe a word I say  
and says: *what do you want?*

Wingless, eight-legged  
secretive a spider,  
that's how he seemed  
climbing up close behind  
that woman on the stairs  
into his upstairs office.  
That day I saw his faces in the mirror  
and fascinated by some helplessness—  
One does not play around  
with such a thing.

A web is a network of delicate threads



## ANDRÉ

He called  
about the scenery  
how to make it sexy:  
—a mattress made of fur  
soft purple drapes  
behind the oval bed  
a mirrored wall—  
André is fifteen,  
his world full of visions  
on the other side of the laundry  
in Manhattan  
he mans the flower stand  
and writes this play  
about this virgin  
prostitute.

## SWITZERLAND

Old men carry hay on their  
backs for cows with  
bells on. I'd ski  
forever if it were not

for you on top of the  
Jungfrau. Your pockets are full  
of flowers. Butterflies  
swept up to die. It tires me.

## THE COMEBACK OF NATALIE

After two abortions  
two divorces and a mastectomy  
she sits in her hotel room  
writing poetry,  
pain in an arm  
a leg...

Her stepmother  
steals stock  
out of her room, plans  
for the funeral  
and at the hospital  
everyone waits

The tumors are still there  
but Natalie is back

She's learned to walk again.  
She wears a new, blond wig  
to the museum.

## A STORY

At night the room  
has a yellow glow  
(I love that child)  
but now it's morning  
rain comes in  
the branches won't be bare  
much longer

                    little Desiree  
who acted in the play  
lives in an institution  
now

    on stage  
(this is true)  
I have to tell a story  
to an imaginary  
little girl  
named Desiree  
in a red dress...

## ONCE UPON A TIME

on our first date  
during *Spellbound*  
in your old fashioned coat  
prewar from Germany  
while Gregory Peck  
sped through the snow  
you said—  
*don't look at the screen*  
*look at me, next to you.*

## NO END

I can sit forever watching it  
through the window  
I cannot move.  
It cannot move either.  
Wind moves  
branches; this moment  
leaves  
the spaces in between  
each seems to have a purpose.

Lower down  
(but I don't look there now)  
on the concrete  
a man wants to chop it down  
because the birds  
mess his chevrolet

and higher up  
yet at the level of my eyes  
there is no end—  
*shall I have three yews  
planted on your grave?*

Footsteps recede.  
It starts to turn  
yellow. The tree  
fills my whole vision.