THE POETRIE GALLERIE

MARY BOWSER

They paid her no mind, no attention at all
To them she was less than a fly on the wall.
A slim black girl, Mary Bowser her name
A union spy, not for money or fame,
But because she wanted her people free
Loosed from the bonds of slavery.

How her heart leaped within when Miss Van Lee said:
"Mary, I ask you something with dread.
"To be victorious in this strife
"The Union needs ears as keen as a knife
"In the midst of Confederates to hear what they say
"And report it to General Grant each day."

"Whatever you ask," Mary said, "I will do
"For more than my life I owe to you.
"I shall never forget that you set me free
"Making a person out of me.
"Then you sent me North to go to school.
"'Education,' you said, 'is a powerful tool.'"

So Mary was placed at the rebels' headquarters
To work as a waitress, and as she took orders,
To listen with care to all that was said
And keep graphic details straight in her head.
The Confederates wondered how all that they planned
Seemed known to the Yankees well beforehand.

But they never thought once who undid every plot
Was the girl who served dinner, nice and hot.
For they paid her no mind, no attention at all.
To them she was less than a fly on the wall.
In much later years Mary told with great glee
How important a fly on the wall can be.

VIOLET G. HAYWOOD
Washington, D.C.

THE AGED WOMAN

The woman was old, ragged and gray
and bent with the chill of the winter's day
The streets were wet with recent snow;
the woman's feet were aged and slow

She stood at the crossing and waited long
alone, uncared for amid the throng.
Of human beings who passed her by
non headed the glance of her anxious eye.

Now down the street with laughter and shout
glad in the freedom of school let out
came the boys like a flock of sheep
hailing the snow piled white and deep.

One young lad paused beside her and whispered low
I'll help you across, if you wish to go
So her aged arm on his strong young arm she placed and so without hurt or harm he guided her trembling feel along.

Now back again to his friends he went
his young heart happy and well content.
She is somebody's mother boys you know
for all she is old, poor and slow

And somebody's mother bowed low her head
in her home that night and the prayer she said was
God be kind to that noble boy who is somebody's son, pride and joy.

SGT. MARK A. BROWN
Baltimore, MD.

YOUR SONG

There is music in life to live by
There are melodies in mind to behold.
There are dances in body to try
There are rhythms . . . rhyming in your soul.
There are lyrics . . . tuned with laughter
There are up-beats in your downs
You'll hear symphonies as you dare to gather
the smiles most rather frown.
And as you begin to surrender
to life's music and it's inspiring sounds.
Sing . . . and in rhythm remember . . .
You're a composer and life's . . . a song!

BYRON JOHN FITZGERALD

MY STRUGGLE

As I sit here in this prison jail,
trying to exit myself from this hell.
Each day I struggle for freedom . . .

Time is getting harder every day.
As I grow older and my world turns gray.
Each day I struggle for freedom. . .

I made up my mind and my heart,
that one day from this prison I will depart.
Each day I struggle for freedom. . .

I have big dreams that I know will work,
but society disagrees and will not accept.
Each day I struggle for freedom . . .

I was 16 years ald when I began doing this time,
I have educated myself from the world of crime.
Each day I struggle for freedom . . .

If they only would give me a chance, I was very young, but they gave me a Bible and
said "you'll learn."
Each day I struggle for freedom . . .

They told me to hold on to God's amazing grace,
As I spend the rest of my life in this place.
Each day I struggle for freedom . . .

Once again, another day is gone
Once again, I struggle to make it home.

RODNEY WAYNE MACON

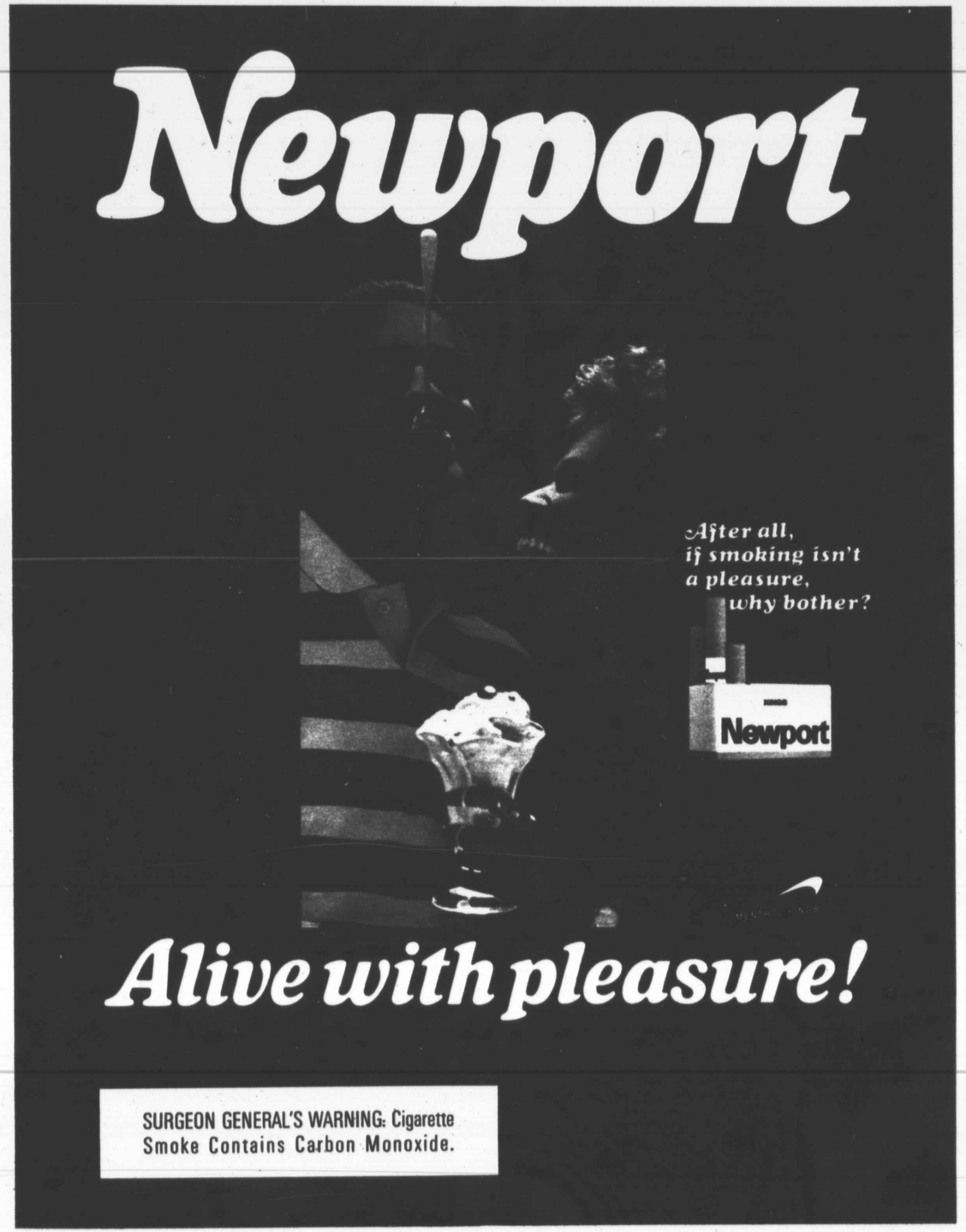
MESSAGE IN STONE

Hardly a thought occupied my mind
As I walked down a path unknown
When a tablet appeared, of the strangest design
With a message carved in the stone
Closer I came, still the words were not clear
I had lost the light of the day
I lit up a match, and held it up near
And found the inscription to say
Envy the man who erases all doubt
That he will surely succeed
Pity the man whose time has run out
And hope he's the last of his breed

GREGORY EUGENE HAYNIE
Baltimore, MD

A TOO SOON TOO BAD RELATIONSHIP

We started out with a burst of energy ready
to go the distance
But now that we have spent time together
there is some resistance
Not the kind that makes you stay away
But the kind that allows you to mi s a day
A day to myself and one granted to you
To sit back and try and see if I can miss you
It's not your normal test of time
But it's a test hoping to find
Find out now instead of later
That my feelings for you will never grow greater
It's not that I don't care or that I'm afraid to love
it's because I intend to be "ME" and no one else I can try to sub
So let's just leave it as it is with no harsh feelings and still have friendship
And let us both try not to get into another
"A TOO SOON TOO BAD RELATIONSHIP"

MICHAEL JEROME MASSEY
Petersburg, VA.

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