

"Alvin Turner has high moments and low moments, but not in a progressive sequence. He takes life as it comes—cynical in one poem, sentimental in the next and thoroughly disgusted in the next. Most people experience life through contrasting emotions."

Kloefkorn said the reason there are more poets in Lincoln than short story writers or novelists is simply because fiction is harder to write than poetry.

"It's difficult to find sufficient details to flesh out a story," he said. "The fiction writer needs precise smells and voices, and that takes demanding legwork. You need to go back through old newspapers and dredge up detail of the time you're writing about."

"You need a basket of information from which to select details," Kloefkorn said. "Most of us, I suspect, aren't willing to do that. Also, there are more outlets for poetry. Everybody can't get into the slick magazines, and that leaves the little literary magazines which don't have



enough money or pages for many stories."

He said there's no advantage for a writer living in New York or San Francisco instead of Lincoln.

"Writing is a state of mind and if a guy believes he can't write in Lincoln then that's a condition of his mind, but it's not the geography that does it," Kloefkorn said.

He believes the midwest is producing its share of fine literary magazines, compared to other sections of the country. He listed *Prairie Schooner*, *South Dakota Review*, and the *Midwest Quarterly* (published in Pittsburgh, Kan.) as comparing favorably with the better southern literary magazines.

*Saltillo* magazine recently received a federal grant from the Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines (CCLM),

but it won't change the publication's quarterly format, according to general editor Jim Wilson.

"We're still going to be a quarterly," said Wilson, a graduate student in English. "But the grant will allow us to put more in each issue. Right now I'm not sure how much money the grant will give us." *Saltillo*, which features fiction and poetry by local writers and others as far from Lincoln as New York and Boston, will publish its fourth issue the end of January. Poetry by Ted Kooser and Leroy Scheele will be included.

"The quality of *Saltillo* has improved since our beginning a year ago," said Wilson, "because then we didn't know how to print well. We do all our own work and print on the Bluestem Press, which is owned by several people in the English department. Also, we're selling more subscriptions now and getting more donations."

Wilson said Bluestem is actually a club, and always looking for new members. It

costs \$15 initially and there is a \$3 monthly charge, which allows members to use the press to print personal material. He said students who are interested in joining should contact Bob Pierce in the English department, or himself.

Wilson agrees with Kloefkorn as to the reason there aren't any major fiction writers living in Lincoln.

"Poetry is just a lot easier," he said. "To be a good fiction writer you've got to write for years. After a certain point it's work instead of fun, and since it's not easy to publish fiction a lot of people get discouraged."

Wilson has written 2 novels himself, but he's only planning to send the last one, finished last fall, out for publication. It's called *All the Lost Generations* and he said he'll send it sometime before Christmas.

### Poem

I know what you are thinking you  
are thinking I am lucky so far  
I have gotten this far I am what  
one might call one of the lucky ones  
through four lines with nothing  
happening, the poem undeclared,  
the weather picture entirely ignored  
you are saying, see he is trying  
to make a poem without giving in  
to anything, no one getting kissed  
to death, no one failing, no  
gorilla escaping its cage to be  
hunted down, and see how far  
already I have come

and into the second stanza and  
you are still with me, perhaps there  
is some kinship between us you from  
your small town me from my small  
town you with your poems me with  
mine, and perhaps you are saying  
now it is beginning to dawn on  
you what sort of trickery this is

his poems disclose themselves gradually  
as dawn comes to the Plains States  
he has all but adopted, or that his  
love for words carries him off the  
page then back again, the real poem  
taking place somewhere else but is  
almost a kind of secret between him  
and the reader

how we encourage each other how we  
complement each other the poem my  
mirror when I turn to it and yours  
when you do

how we depend on it to discover the common  
ambition we keep from each other  
through the separate arguments of our  
daily lives. Must I say it did I  
come to say it here is there no other  
poem I can delay this to this that  
you must already know how I aspire  
to enter your life and alter it.  
Must you go on reading off the page  
back into your life and back into  
your own poems unchanged as I am  
through this, unredeemed?

Greg Kuzma



by Steve Kadel

As the snow fell softly outside his home in Crete Monday evening Greg Kuzma sat in the living room playing with his son Mark and daughter Jackie, and watching the pro football game on television.

"I usually don't watch football, but this is a particularly good game," he said. "Besides, the picture's clear tonight."

It has been said that Kuzma's long black hair, wire rim glasses and blue jeans give him the look of a hip graduate student, but in fact he is an English professor at UNL. He is also a poet.

He and his family moved from Lincoln to Crete in August, and live in a large, two story home near the edge of town. It's quiet in Crete anyway, and Kuzma's home sits well off the road on a sizeable section of land. There are many trees, bare now except for the snow piling in their branches.

Inside the house one of the first things a visitor notices are many colorful paintings done by friends and a framed print of Van Gogh's *Bedroom at Arles* at the bottom of the stairway.

Upstairs on a desk in the hallway, almost buried beneath other papers, is a letter that should make Greg Kuzma proud every time he reads it. The letter is from Viking Press in New York and discusses details of his book of poetry that will be published this spring.

"Most of the poems in the book are old ones I wrote between 1967 and 1970," he said. "They're about camping and fishing in the Adirondacks, and are the poems most people in Nebraska knew when I got here. I was called a nature poet then, but I haven't written many like them since."

Kuzma has published poems in the *New Yorker* and *Atlantic Monthly*, as well as a long list of smaller literary

magazines. In addition to teaching poetry writing classes at UNL, he edits and publishes *Pebble* and the Best Cellar Press pamphlet series.

But the Viking book will be his first publication by a commercial press. He expects the first printing to run 3000 copies.

"Your first book published by a commercial press should be a glorious thing," he said, "but I have almost an anticlimactic feeling about it all. Most New York publishers see everything as a commodity. At first it seemed all they were interested in was my health, so they might make some more money later on another book."

What sort of person is drawn to writing poetry?

"All poets are concerned with how each second of their life is different from the last and how sad it is that all these things are left behind," Kuzma said. "Also, they have an inclination to believe that things written down on paper are important."

Robert Bly, a Minnesota writer, is an important as any poet in America today, according to Kuzma.

"Bly stands for something important, which is listening to yourself—the inner man," he said. "He's against busyness and business."

Bly was very influential a few years ago by using solitude, silence and hearing himself talk, Kuzma said. It got poets thinking about the internal things as material.

"The San Francisco beat poetry of the fifties was talkie and outgoing, as is the poetry in New York," Kuzma said. "It's wordy, flabby poetry about walking down the street and meeting your friends for lunch."

"Bly's trying to do something with those big empty cornfields in Minnesota. He's got a farm there and a guest house behind his own home. A lot of people make pilgrimages there and he lets them stay and write," Kuzma said.

In 1968 Bly won the National Book Award for "The Light Around the Body," an anti-war and anti-administration work.

Kuzma's own writing productivity has been slowed lately, partly because of the time he has been spending on negotiations with Viking. But also, he said, he may have written so much poetry in the past years that he needs a rest or a new writing form.

"It's still an adventure to write poetry," he said, "but I feel I've already written a lot of the easy things out of my own experiences. I've exhausted poems about camping and fishing."

"I don't write as much as I used to because there has been interference lately from other interests. I've got a lot of energy that can't go into poems," he said, "so maybe I'll try painting or throwing pots."