

## Wilderness House Literary Review 19/3

*Bruce J. Berger*  
**Summer 1968**

Drifted into basement, party above,  
we loved to hide our love, pushed aside the  
spider webs, sat backs to wall, tongue to tongue,  
you pulled skirt to show tiger-striped panties and  
laughed to quote Alan Ginsberg's poem aptly  
named "Song." In the center of the flesh we  
ached to spark the cellar darkness with our  
love, going to go directly without  
passing jail, dancing sounds creaking into  
our space, the dampness beginning to chill,  
we shivered wondering if this time  
would be the last, because two kids can't  
measure the future, if there is one after  
Sirhan Sirhan, after James Earl Ray.  
We unzip the night, slide fingers to heat,  
try hard to push aside the darkness  
cementing our young lives with sticky glue;  
we hear creaking wood steps as someone comes.

**Loving Grandparents**

A crazy-tilted leg leans over the abyss, the edge of bed, on which our lumbering bodies fight for position, blankets askew, clothes half-dropped half-folded half-forgotten, memories long ago faded into dust motes and dreams, swept into efficient vacuum cleaners, we emptied our lives with them, grocery lists, parents' nights at school, car-pools, soccer Sundays, and birthday parties, interminable business trips, trials of stamina, patience, and prayers for luck. We knock heads heading haphazardly for the same small volume of space and laugh, humor the only way to go, hand-in-hand with failure. Maybe the bodies could replicate those famous feats of love whose fragments drift in our secret thoughts, but the will has waned; or maybe the will is still as charged as ever, but our bodies are already on their penultimate laps, needing to conserve. How good it would be to eke it out to the next grandchild's graduation; how good it would be to dance with our grandchildren at their weddings. Let us gradually ease ourselves to our separate sides where we can sleep in peace and let subside that quick beating of our hearts we thought might be passion renewed but is probably an aneurysm ready to pop. And so let us forget by tomorrow morning that we even tried.