

the viper



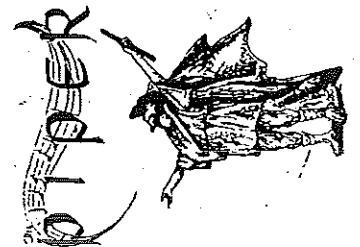
THE PIPER

**NEW MILFORD
HIGH SCHOOL**

JUNE 1986

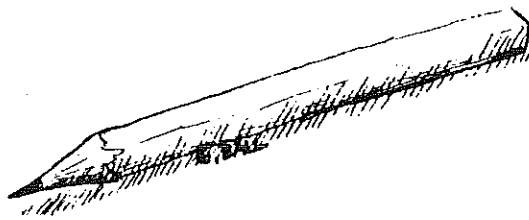
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DONE FOR GLORY

My papa was the best whaler in all of Newfoundland, and if you asked me how I knew, I should tell you that he told me so. Though I could not have been more than nine, I can remember that very day as if it had just happened.

It certainly was a dreary day, a day when the sun was covered by clouds as thick as whale blubber: a day when the rain fell like pellets of glass.

I stood on the decrepit dock of the tiny shipyard, watching Papa's clipper pull in, watching Papa's men haul the day's catch off the deck. There were many whales-gray ones, black ones, white ones-each covered with a thin film of its own oil and blood.

The whales frightened me, and I said to Papa, "Do you kill the whales

for food?"

Big, gray-haired Papa laughed and said, "Son, I do it for glory. I am the best whaler in Newfoundland, and the more whales I take from the sea, the more glory I get from the land."

I looked at Papa's whalebone necklace, the necklace he had worn for as long as I could remember.

"You stare at the necklace," Papa said. "I tell you; I wear it for good luck. The day I go sailing without this, you will know I will not come back."

The next morning seemed to come too early; it was that time between the darkness and the dawn. I went into our little kitchen. No Papa was there to hug me. The little wooden chairs were empty; the table wore no breakfast dress. Papa's piece of whalebone hung over the door.

Kristi Peterson /Second Place
Short Story