

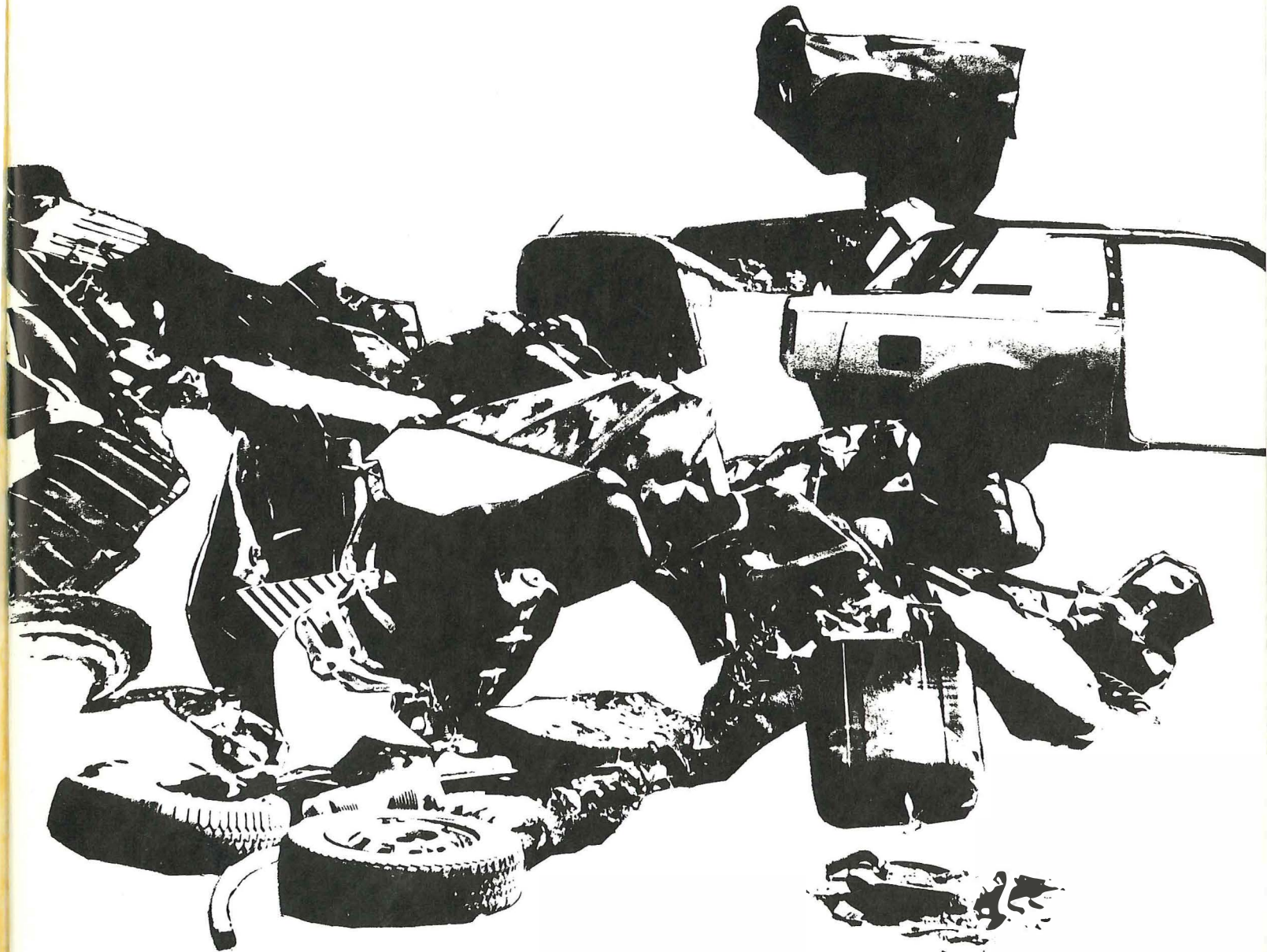
EREHWON1989



S I M P L E M A C H I N E S

EREHWON 1989

A Magazine of Creative Arts



SIMPLE MACHINES

Winston Churchill High School
11300 Gainsborough Road
Potomac, Maryland 20854

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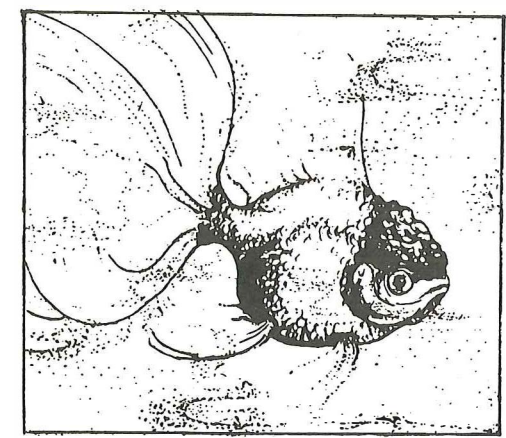
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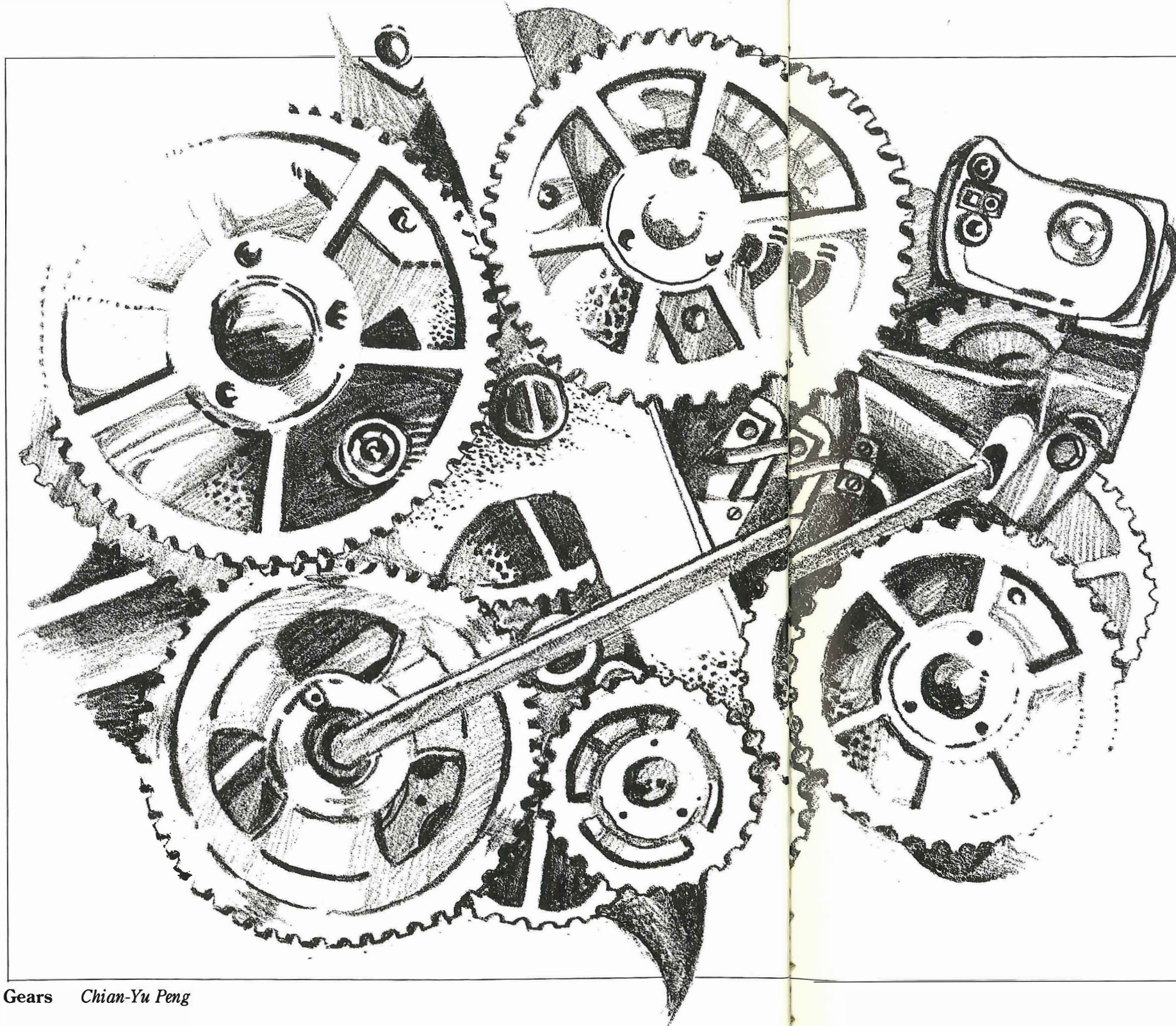
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"A phrase is born into this world both good and bad at the same time. The secret lies in a slight, an almost invisible twist. The lever should rest in your hand, getting warm, and you can only turn it once, not twice."

—Isaac Babel, *Guy de Maupassant*



Gears Chian-Yu Peng

Simple Machines

Every writer is an inventor, constructing his work from the building blocks of language. We begin with the same raw materials, just as inventors must start from the six simple machines. Creativity lies in joining these simple machines into functioning systems; the craft is in the arrangement.

The writer builds a machine to perform a specific function—to distill the unrefined power of experience into a form the reader can understand. The purpose of any machine is to transform a force into a more usable form. A writer magnifies his perceptions selectively to make his perspective accessible to the reader.

We live in a time when many people protest the proliferation of machines, claiming they dehumanize society. But it is part of our nature to build from simple tools, to harness outside forces for our own use. Can anything but a machine really be called human?



Salamanca *Eric Napoli*

Letter to a Friend

What's up, don?
 Haven't heard a word from you since
 Greetings from Amsterdam.
 Your deux-chevaux was broke, recall?
 Yeah, I've been on the road,
 squashing beetles in my VW.
 Kids fine, I don't run out of paper
 like I used to, remember?
 Nice to hear you're on the wagon.
 The first few months are hell.
 I always found grape juice helped.
 Bummer about Sancho
 (always knew something was...wrong w/him).
 Still fighting for the grace of cows?
 Send me your new address, pal-
 so bad that we lost touch after
 that golden age.
 Love to Miguel.

Deborah Wassertzug

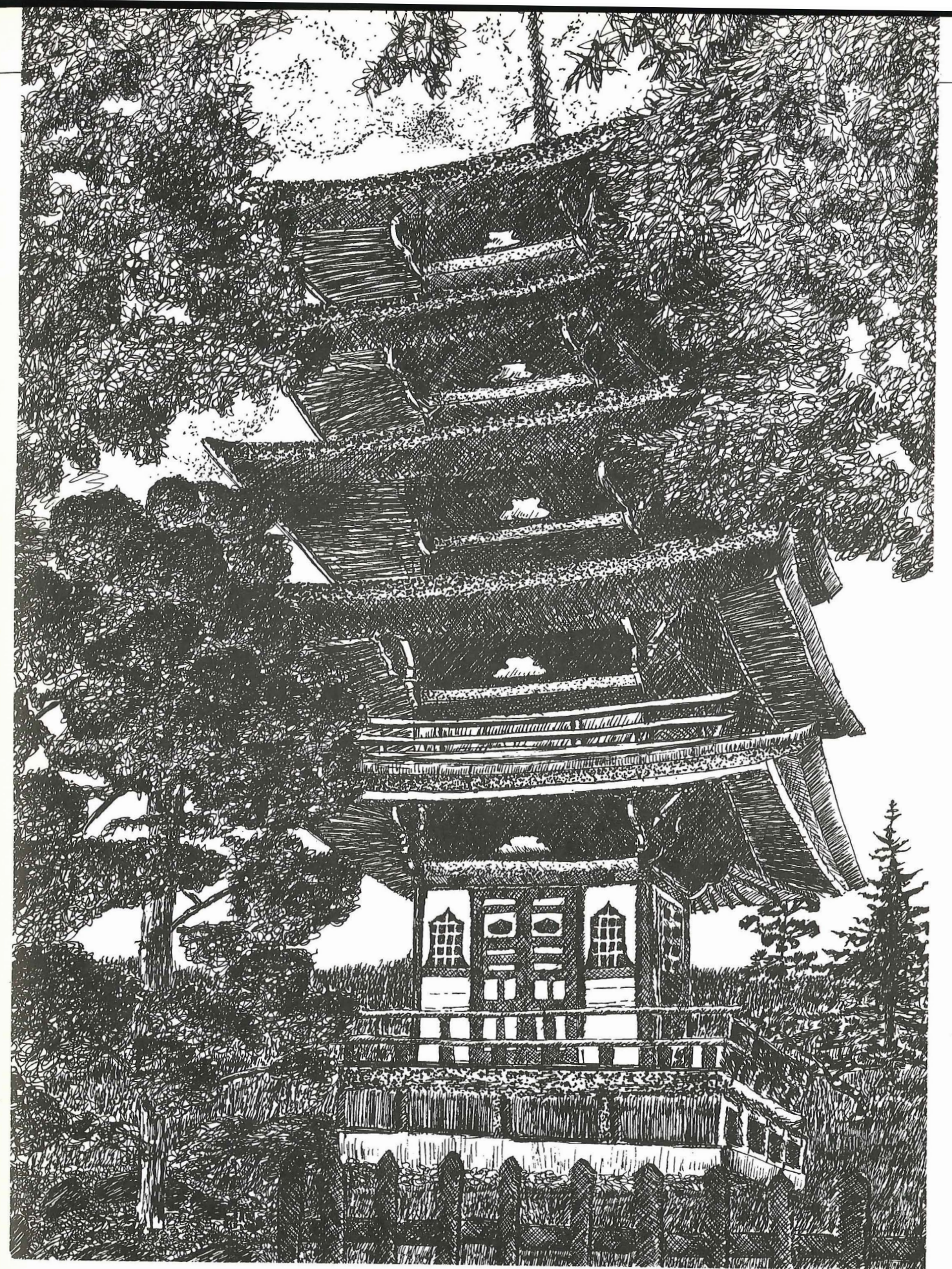
Folk Tales

When my mother speaks of China,
she speaks of a people sea
flowing down city streets
with schools of bicycles
that float to work,
to shops,
to temples
where they dry
by the heat of burning incense,
then bow and offer delicacies
to feed Buddha's moon face
so the tide will pull the family
home safely each night.

My father tells of
the farmer's holy Trinity,
the father, the son,
and the grandson,
together
living in one hut
bowing to plant rice
bowing to the Kunlun Mountains,
their stone Buddha
that has watched over them
since the first Year of the Dragon.
He tells me
these people measure time
by the depth of the hollow
in a stone,
worn by the drip
of rain from a leaf.
He talks about
the silken feel
of a water snake
whipped by its tail
like the snapping of a firecracker,
the bones crumbling
to a heap on the ground
for a game of dice.

So sometimes
I kneel in the shower
to imagine monsoon rains
irrigating the furrows
in my forehead
as steam rises like the mist
over wet macadam roads,
and sometimes
I ask my mother to sing
like the sweet voice of the wind
in a bamboo grove
harmonizing with
the love songs of crickets.

Michelle Shih



Pagoda Jennifer Schouten



USED TO LOOK SO GOOD

JILL HIMELFARB

It wasn't quite right and Jamie knew it. He could just about hear his kindergarten teacher warning him in the background that stealing is no good. He looked at Harry and wanted to tell him so.

But Harry wasn't looking at him. Harry was looking at the big red SALE sign in the window.

"It's a shame we're rippin' 'em off when the stuff's cheaper!" Harry said. "Can't wait until tomorrow, eh Jamie?"

Jamie knew he was serious. Too bad Harry was so stupid. He didn't realize that stuff's stuff and SALE or no sale, it didn't matter.

Jamie told Harry he had to go home and Harry said he was a chicken but Jamie walked away anyway.

He walked through the parking lot and imagined himself in the cars that he passed. He walked by an old Cadillac and he imagined that he was a grandfather and his four grandchildren were in the back seat begging him to go above the speed limit and to change the radio station to some cool music. That's what Jamie always said to his grandfather.

Jamie got to the corner and noticed a police car at the intersection. He imagined that he was in Mayberry and that he could be arrested for jaywalking. He crossed the street right outside the crosswalk and waited for the policeman to notice.

He got to the other side of the street and felt good.

Boy, he thought, I really have something to tell Harry now.

He walked in his house and found his mom. She was reading the paper—the ads section. He looked at her and the paper and said hi.

The other side of the paper had something on it about a Big Sale at K-Mart.

Jamie moved to the phone and waited.

It rang five minutes later. Grandma was late. She must've had a hair appointment tonight, Jamie thought.

"Hi dear. Everything all right?"

"Yes."

"Okay, just wanted to say hi," every night of every week of every month of every year.

"Yeah, hi Grandma."

"Talk to you later." Tomorrow at 7:30. "Bye."

Jamie hung up and went upstairs. He reached for his homework and decided not to do it but he left his book open in case his mom walked in the room or something.

It didn't take Jamie very long to fall asleep.

The next day after school Jamie met Harry at K-Mart. Harry had on jeans and a t-shirt and so did Jamie, but Harry's looked meaner. Something about the rips in the knees, Jamie thought.

He walked by an old Cadillac and he imagined that he was a grandfather and his four grandchildren were in the back seat begging him to go above the speed limit and to change the radio station to some cool music.

They walked in and the first thing Jamie noticed was the sterile light which seemed to splash everyone in K-Mart. It bothered Jamie, but no one else seemed to care.

"Attention K-Mart shoppers. Today is Thursday and our Thursday sale is on feminine protection in aisle 16."

From then on Harry laughed every time they passed a girl.

They got to the candy aisle and Harry walked slower.

"Here."

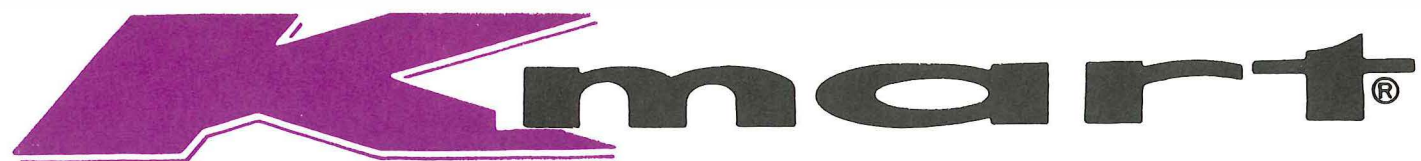
Jamie stood and watched Harry sway through the aisle. He felt like everyone was watching them but he kept moving. The candy looked pretty bad. In fact it looked awful and Jamie didn't want any of it but Harry put some in Jamie's pocket and walked to the other side of the aisle.

Jamie looked up and saw a round mirror. His face looked distorted and he wished he was in the Fun House because he wasn't having any fun at K-Mart.

It was time to leave. Jamie looked up while he was walking out of K-Mart.

When they got outside Harry was yelling about something being great but Jamie was still looking up. The sun was being squeezed through the clouds and it made lines at angles to the ground Jamie counted twelve of them. It looked to Jamie as if someone could take a giant scissor and cut them and the sky would fall.





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Relative Splendor

To the little girl at the ice cream stand
petting the puppy at her feet
a nickel is everything.
She smiles at the vendor

to the universe
watching her gaze
she is slight, small
eternal.

Candice Hwa

Indoor Cat

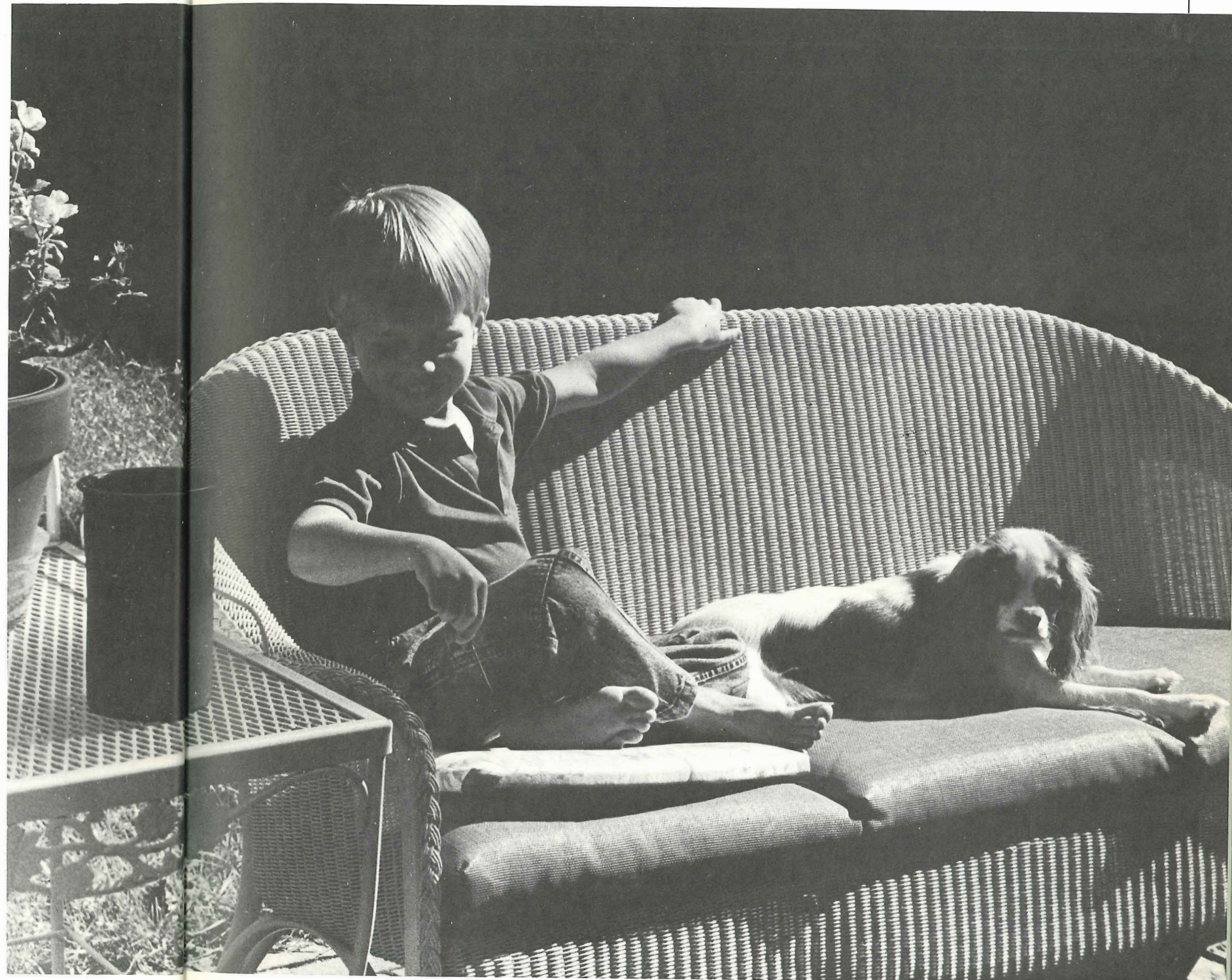
It appears
my victuals have fossilized
Be so kind as to
fetch fresh

My liontamer is not attentive

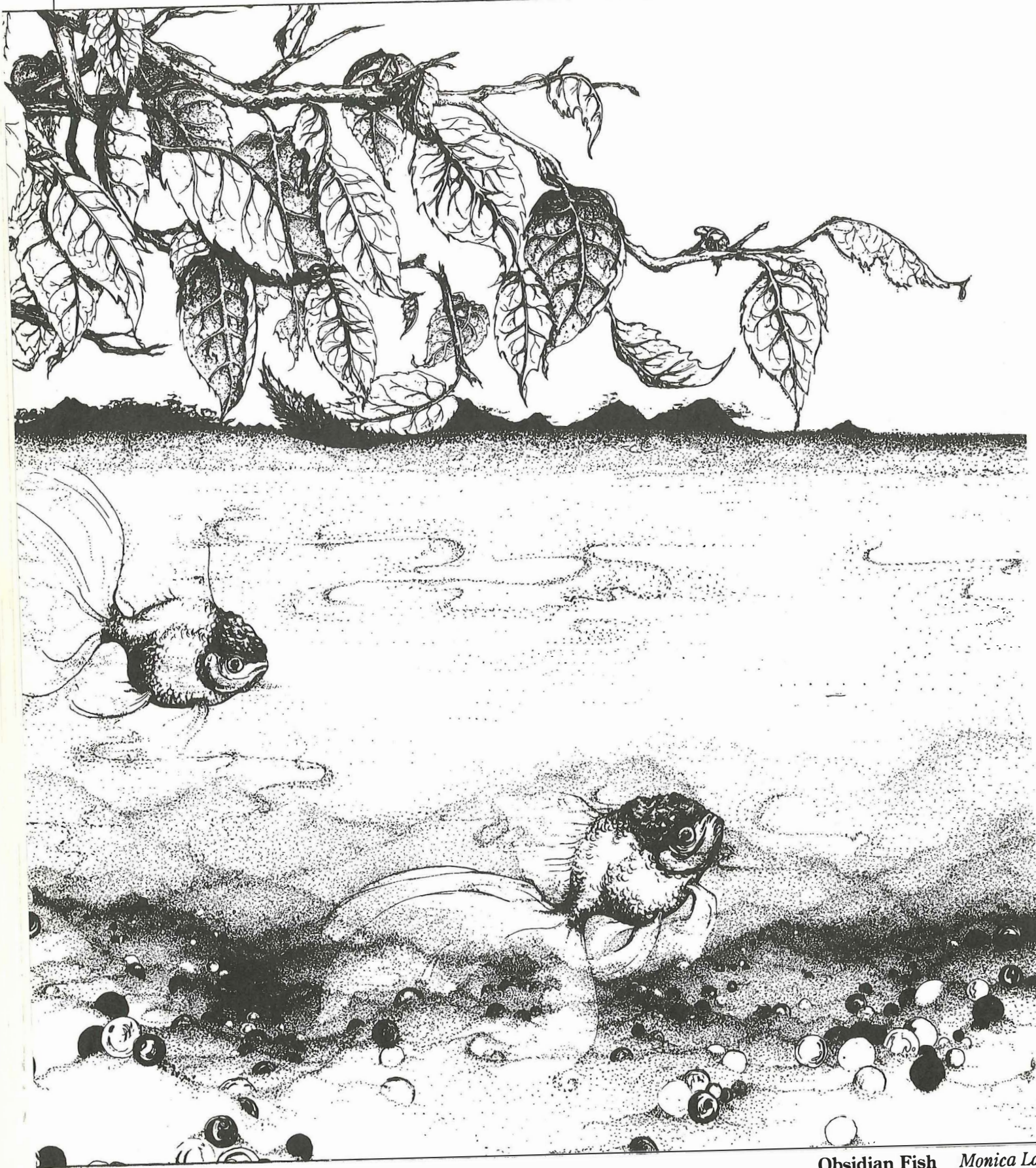
I throat my presence
and sharpen my wit on the upholstery
Tail twitch, pivot, yawn
A bit histrionic, perhaps,
but effective

I've got that liontamer now.

Jennifer White



Last Day in the Sun *Julie Phillips*



Obsidian Fish Monica Lam

Tomboy Creek

What? Me confess to you what makes
my toes tap and fingers fan or shall I say
makes my pupils do backbends to chance
your presence. No. I'd rather do
pirouettes to save my grace, balance forks
on my nose at the county fair until—

I watched two butterflies do their mating
dance and wondered how it would feel to fly,
then I remembered that I am afraid of heights
and decided it would be more fun to wade in
a creek searching for tadpoles.

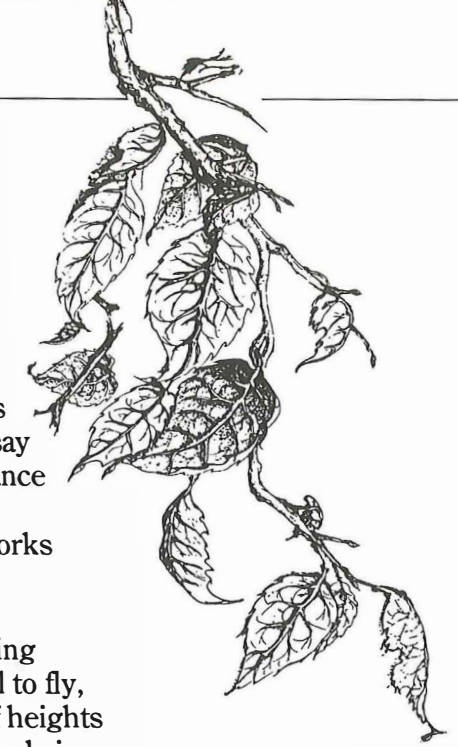
Berries seemed to grow all over that creek
I picked some blue ones and soon two became
a little more than three; until eyelashess
away I saw you blink and wished I didn't
have to get wet wading under a wooded sun.

Rachel Grose

All in One Eve

Did you want a Roman Beauty,
to trace the line of your chin,
burning whispers in the hollows
of your neck?
You accepted my eyes, my hair,
my arms never knowing the
other side of my sunshining
face.
To pick me red and take a bite
would render you speechless.

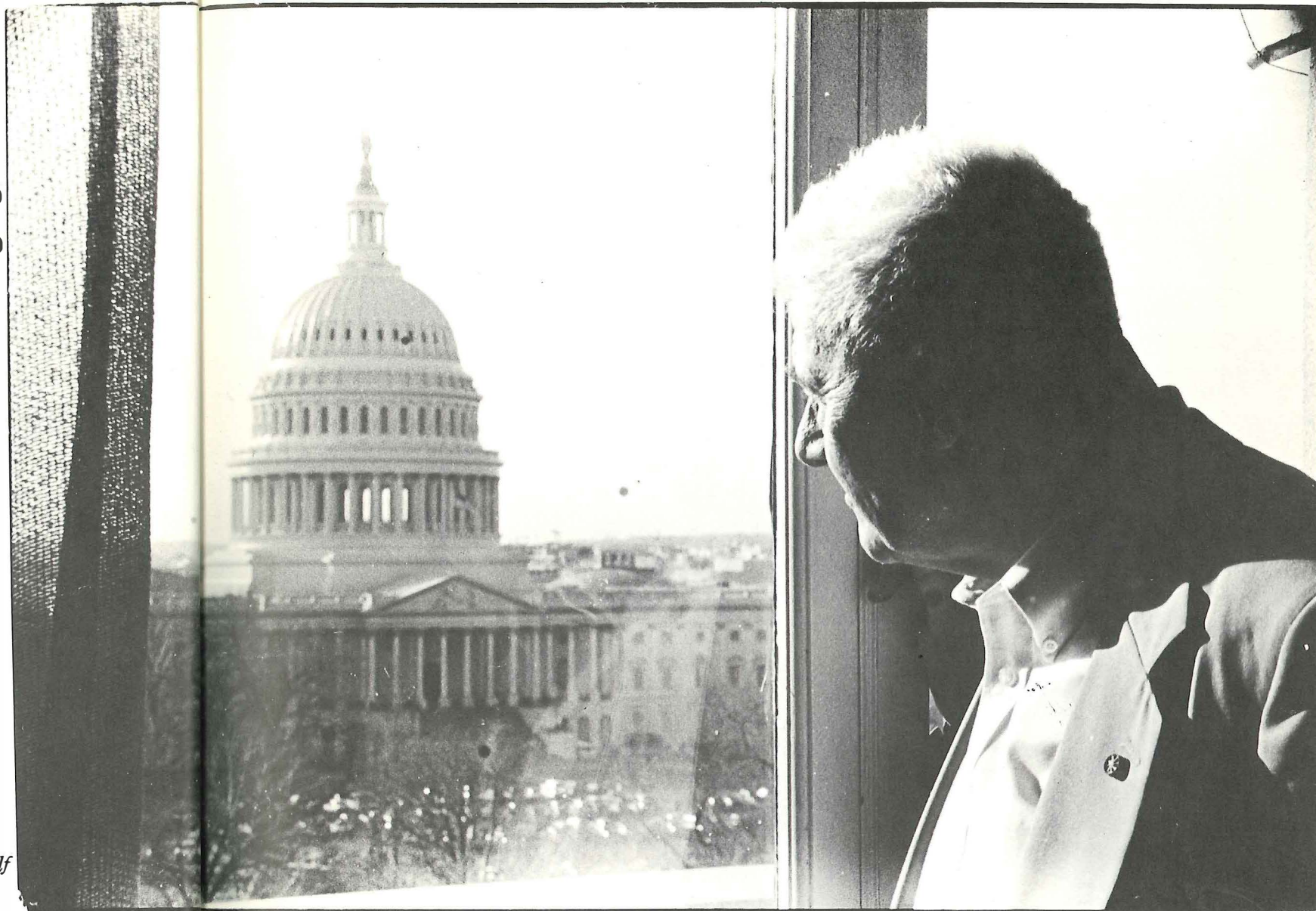
Vijai Nathan



THE NATION'S POET: A TALK WITH HOWARD NEMEROV

ANN BOERNER

Howard Nemerov Bryan Wolf



In the old pictures, he looks like nothing so much as a Harvard All-Ivy man: a good-looking guy with a clean shave and an almost-military buzz.

"In life," he said in an article accompanied by one of those pictures, "the serious and the funny are one."

Howard Nemerov, just 70 in March, still has that cocky All-Ivy grin. The premier American poet, now Poet Laureate, takes nothing so seriously as the business of being funny.

"Being Poet Laureate means I get to sit here and be interviewed." He crushes his cigarette in an ashtray and chuckles a little.

Nemerov was named Poet

Laureate in October and will hold the position previously filled by such great artists as Robert Penn Warren and Richard Wilbur until May. Meanwhile, he's having fun.

"I got to take a trip to Russia, and fortunately some people came and took care of me, or else—" he grins his grown-up-little boy grin—"Little Howie might have just sat down in the Moscow airport and wept."

Besides representing the United States abroad, the Poet Laureate is on call at home, to write a poem for any appropriate State occasion.

"I rather delight in seeing if I can write what people want," Nemerov says. "But of course, I don't always [do it]."

No, Nemerov usually writes what Nemerov wants.

"My responsibility as a poet is to me," he says, "to do my best." He looks serious.

Since he published his first book of poetry, *The Image and the Law*, in 1947, Nemerov has written 26 books, including three novels.

He flinches at those. "I committed novels in my youth." (Sounds like prison.) "You write from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm and drink far too much coffee."

The main problem, Nemerov says, is that he never really liked writing fiction. "To write a novel, you have to stay away from the poetic."

Nemerov refuses to define himself as a poet. "W. H. Auden

had a saying, 'You're a poet when you write a poem and for ten minutes after,' " he says, and his mouth twitches with the beginning of a laugh. "Being very vain and self-indulgent I allow myself an hour."

But those hours have produced more than twenty volumes of poetry, each earning more critical acclaim than the last. Nemerov's *Collected Works of 1978* won him a Pulitzer Prize.

He feels that his growth as a writer has been "slow—but I hope I have gotten better." He pulls an expression of mock anguish. "If somebody tells you you wrote your best book when you were 23 and you're 70..."

Nemerov's growth, the maturing of his work, is obvious in his

poetry, however, as works like *The Blue Swallows* move from the abstractions of the *Image* and the *Law* to more literal, tangible imagery.

"Looking back on that early poetry, I'd say the kid had a lot of talent," he says. "Too cute for his own good, though."

Nemerov has come to recognize that self-absorption is characteristic of young poets. He has taught English and writing workshops at Hamilton, Bennington, and Brandeis Colleges, and will return to his current position at Washington University in St. Louis when his term as Poet Laureate ends.

These writing workshops, he says, are invaluable to the students. "Everyone should have

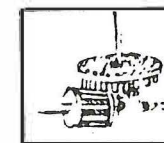
a chance; if he thinks he's got it, good."

He reminds his students, "Be patient, humorous with yourself, but not indulgent."

Never indulgent. There's no place for self-pity in Nemerov's philosophy, or for self-congratulation. He has achieved the highest honor a (living) poet can in America, and won countless awards for his writing.

But if there were an award named in honor of Howard Nemerov someday—he grins: the All-Ivy man, the All-American.

"I would want to win it."



Ground Wire

Son

I can feel you coming through my bone
driving your metal claws and teeth,
riding my skin down.
Those claws, those teeth,
as if in some late horror show,
part out my potency.

You pull my flesh away,
pare me piecemeal,
to build your social pillars up.

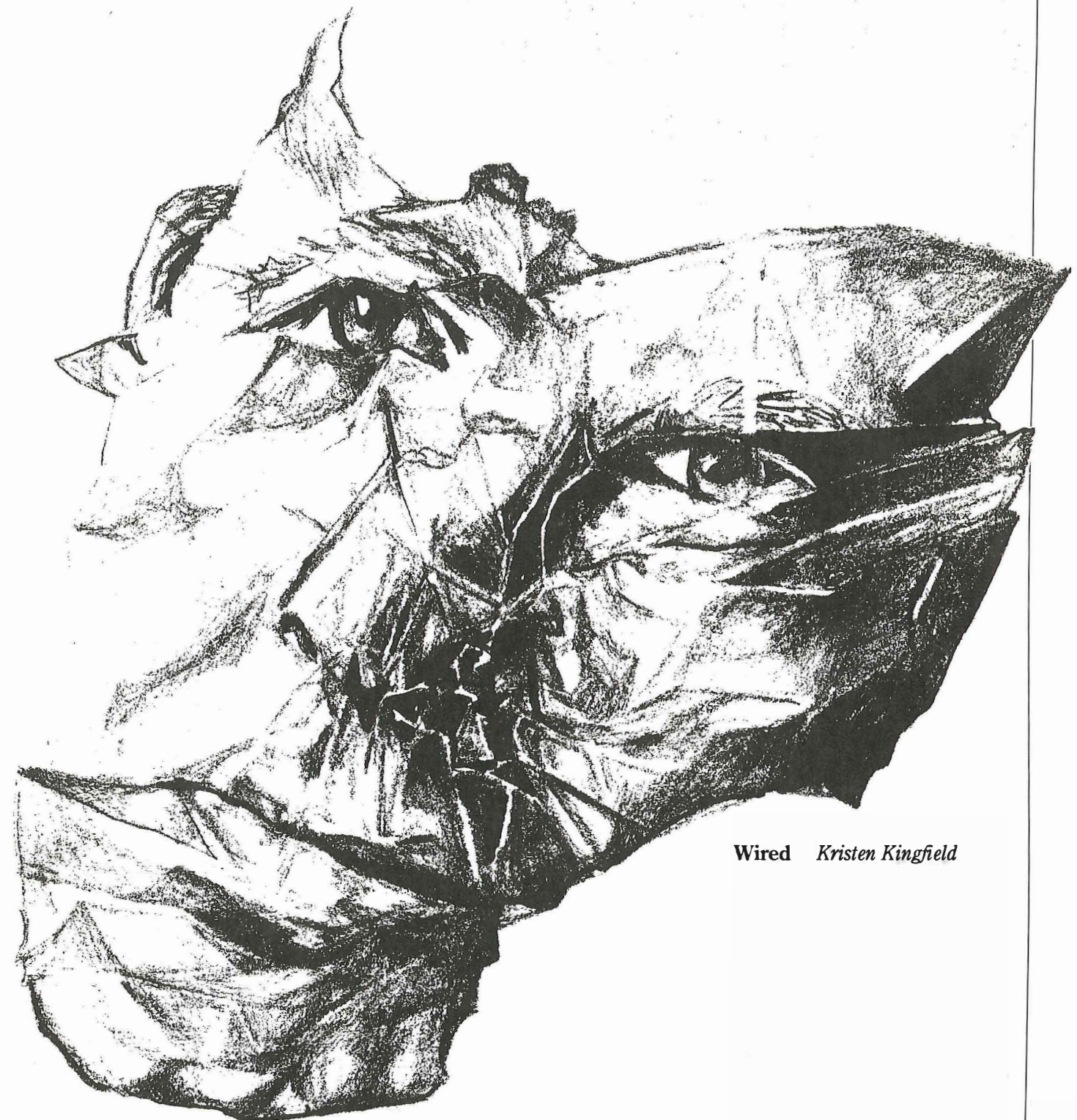
I made you from my mud,
charging your Promethean ganglia
in geothermal gusts.
Now you twist my sinews
for a spark.

I will allow it,
accept to be the sacrifice
whose ravages will flesh you out afresh,
jump-start your flagging power
with my torment.

The old chthonic magnetism
muscles in my veins,
shoves the fire along,
completes the circuit.

Abraham must offer up
his Isaac
and Jove, heave Daddy's gonads
to the foam
to fathom Venus.

Robin Suleiman



Wired *Kristen Kingfield*

LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING ABOUT BULK MAILING

HAL NIEDZVIECKI

I don't want to be here. I have three hundred papers to be bulk mailed at the post office. It has to be done and that's my job so I go. This is the first time. I follow the directions guessing wrong once and so get there with one wrong turn. There's always one. In my trunk are three big boxes of newspapers so I carry them in one by one.

I take out my instructions: What To Do At The Post Office Bulk Mailing Room. They aren't very long. They tell me to put the bundles of newspapers into sacks. Sacks. I look around for sacks but see none. Turning to the man at the counter I ask where I can find the sacks. Later I will discover his name is George.

"Sacks? Why? Dontcha have any? Don't you know yer already supposed to have them? Dontcha know anything? You know we give you the discount on one condition, that you follow the government rules and specs and you can't even find the sacks? They're right out there to the right." He points and turns away.

He had not yelled at me. Rather he had given this speech with an almost polished leer. Whispering it hoarsely. It reminded me of a homosexual vampire. So I got sacks. I put the bundles into the sacks. Three sacks, thirty-five bundles, eighteen papers elasticized together in each sack. It took about five minutes but I lingered outside, more anxious to avoid George than I was to finish up and go home. Finally after five more minutes I caught George glaring at me and strolled in, trying to have the air of one who frequents the Post Office Bulk Mailing Room.

I carried my three sacks to the desk. George's back was to me but he turned around as I clumped my bags onto the counter.

"So ya ready now?" He whispered cheerfully. I nodded. How was I to know? He took the first of my sacks and dumped it on the counter. I sighed. He took the second sack and dumped it on the counter. I looked at my watch pretending to be more important than him. He hefted the third sack and emptied it too on the fake plastic.

"Why did I put them in sacks if you're just gonna dump them out again?" Avoid questions should have been in my instructions. George looked up.

"Well I'll tell ya. If you've got four sacks or less its policy that we check every single bundle. If you've got six sacks or more, every bundle in some sacks, ten or more sacks and we'll check a lot a bundles in a couple of sacks. You oughtta know that coming in

here. Askin' for sacks. L t me tell ya sometin' 'bout bulk mailing." All this time George was slowly ripping open bundles of carefully sorted papers. And staring at me, to prove he didn't have to see what he was doing to do it.

"It's a fine art, you know? People make millions doing the job of mailing the ads and why? Because it's something that nobody else wants to do. Those mailing companies they supply a service, see? Like for instance, I got this cousin man, he makes

Looking around I realized it was just me, him, the formica. I could reach across and grab his pale neck. But then I caught myself, he knew what I was thinking.

millions just cleaning stone houses like brick and stuff because you know, he's got a system just like we got a system. It'll make your house look like new and nobody else is doing or wants to do that. Now look at that, a wrong zip code." George brandishes the offender as he mutters his accusation. Hell, this was like a million bucks to George. He opens his mouth to speak or whisper or whatever. I dig my nails into my palms.

"Goddamn I really thought I could count on you. Thought for once...just maybe..." He leans his face real close to mine. I can smell his coffee breath, see his post office face. "Thought once, I could be happy." George turns

away and mutters something as he does.

"Look...I'm...I'm so--"

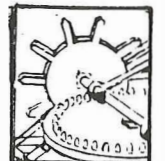
"Well now I'll have to look at each one." His smile had returned.

Fifteen minutes of destroying bundles and a constant degrading whisper, like a fan that buzzes and drives you out of your mind the first day but when someone turns it off, you wonder why everything is so quiet. Now George the intrepid mail man has a stack of papers all going to the same zip code-- apparently they should have all been in the same bundle. I'm shifting from foot to foot. Trying to show impatience. Suddenly George looks up at me.

"Thinking bad thoughts are ya?" He whispers at my nose. "Well look, it seems to me that if a person comes into a United States

bulk mailing institution he should expect to--say, what's your piece count?" I considered. What was a piece count? I told him I didn't have one. With a smirk he told me that if I didn't have a piece count he'd have to count every paper. And undo the staples. Looking around I realized it was just me, him, the formica. I could reach across and grab his pale neck. But then I caught myself, he knew what I was thinking.

"Look," I said. "If the company calls, tell them I quit." I walked quickly away and waited till I was out the door to look back. George's glower had turned to a smile as his bulk mailing eyes chalked up another victory on the postal casualty list.



Found In Search Of

A man
34, 5'10", 155
Spanish, non-smoker
sensitive, masters degree
with great buns
ISO
a real find
for acquaintance
must be
female, top 5%
alluring, classy
gentle in public
wild in bed
Interests: breathing, eating
sleeping
Other things.

Adam Apatoff

The Pheromone

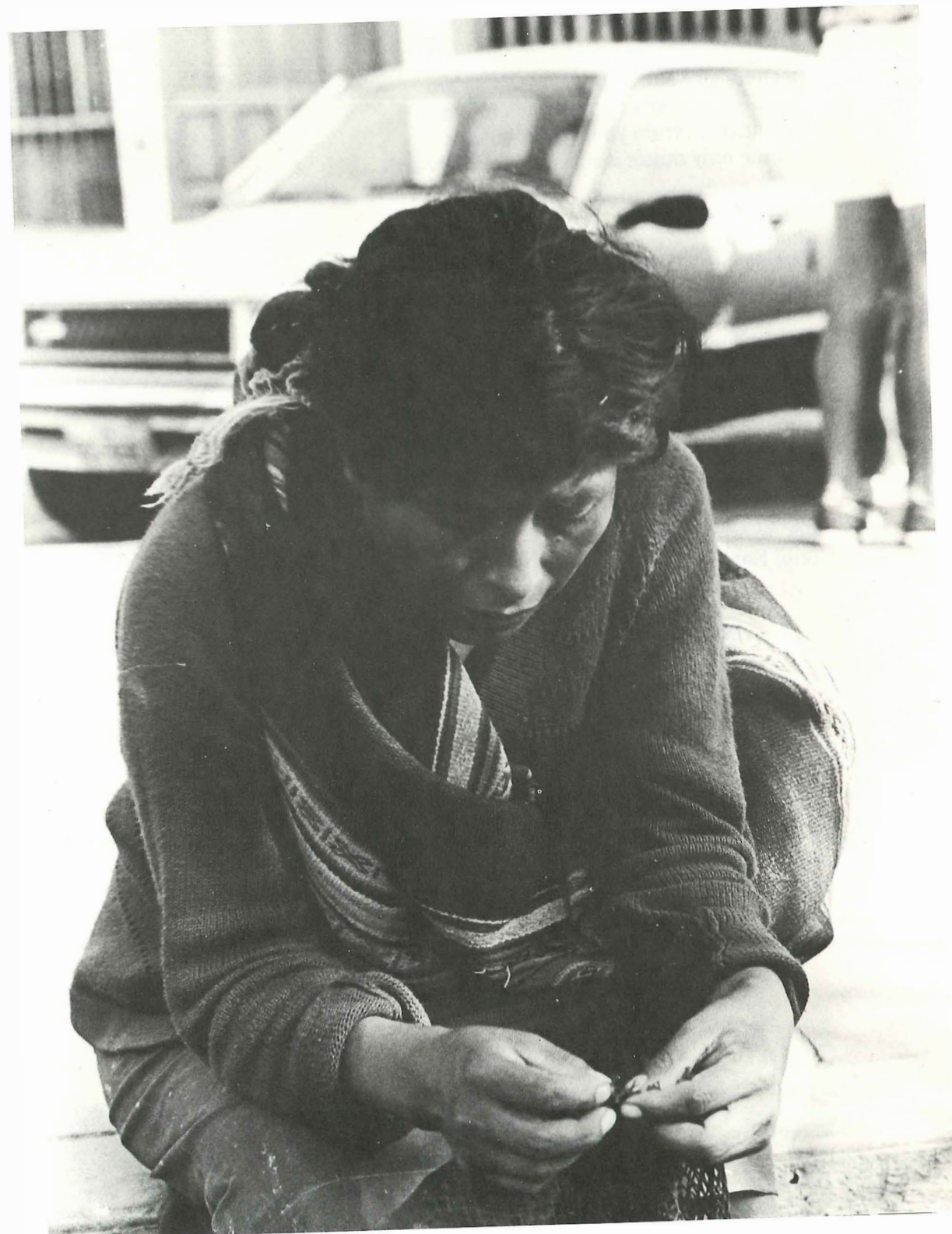
In chemistry she's Superglue
I guess that's why you're stuck to her
Her fingers strum your guitar strings
but the only music is nails on a chalkboard

You're the elevator
going up
She pushes all the right buttons
but won't get off on your floor

She builds up your blocks
You're the Silly Putty she stretches
The Play-doh she kneads
She pre-heats your oven, but doesn't bake

Her desk is a stage
You wait in the wings
her favorite prop
until English

Sara Cohen



Dispossessed/Lima, Peru Daniel Chang

True Americans

Throughout my cradle years
I heard the Americans
my mother's people,
their tribal lands now shrunken
to a head
where cliffs bleed slowly to the sea.
the old ways fade
she'd tell me ,
but still we keep the thinning fabric
holding by a few stout strands
as tough as love.

My mother died.
I made her journey home.

The tribe has set up shop.
A little girl with mud-streaked cheeks
draws pictures in the dirt.
Her mother peddles tomahawks and wampum
at half price.
The old sachem sits
on the porch of the store
in headdress and house-slippers
and a toothless grin,
his mana leached away
in photographs.
Things fade
he tells me.

The cliffs have been fenced off.

Robin Suleiman

On Being Catholic

Ever since baptism,
they have tried to be a
surrogate Father
wanting to raise me
as they think you would have.
But they forget
that You never left
and that
their crosses are a bit
too Bible-perfect
for me to take up.

Jennifer Krzyminski

ACCIDENT PRONE

CHARLIE BUCKHOLTZ

"And then there was the time when your uncle Eddie's chemistry set exploded and he caught on fire."

I remember hearing this story time and again as a child. My mother (Edward's younger sister) and grandparents used it as a bedtime staple. Accordingly, I grouped it with all of the other stock anecdotes: my mom taking Peetie for a walk (Peetie was a bird); my grandfather lulling his barking dog to sleep with calmly spoken obscenities. Recently, I was able to hear a more factual account of the tale and, having my own version of a traumatizing hospital experience, it becomes more of a nightmare than a bedtime story.

Like most fifth-graders in 1954, my uncle Edward had a chemistry set. One day while performing an experiment, he spilled alcohol on his shirt and got too close to a Bunsen burner. His shirt caught fire and lit up like a torch. Instead of ripping off the button-down shirt he was wearing, he unbuttoned each button separately and removed it. He was then rushed off to the hospital, in critical condition, where he stayed for three months with third degree burns which covered his back.

Six months ago an ambulance rushed me to the emergency shock trauma center at

Suburban Hospital when a van broadsided my Toyota in the middle of an intersection. The van crashed directly into the driver's-side door, and my seat whirled around so that it faced the back window. I instantly sustained multiple pelvic fractures and internal ruptures, contusions, etc. When the police arrived at the scene, an officer demanded that I show my driver's license and registration. I reached into the glove compartment, then into my wallet (which hung from the ignition), and handed them to him through the shattered window. Though I remember nothing from the scene of the accident, it seems clear that this 270 degree turn must have been excruciating. To spite him, I spilled my blood all over the two documents.

This show of shocked calm on the porch of the Grim Reaper is not the only similarity between my accident and my uncle's. We both ended up doing some serious time—in the hospital.

Doctor Miller was my uncle's doctor while he was in the hospital. He never actually entered the room unless it was of dire necessity. Every day he would stick his nose in the door and ask my uncle, "How ya doin'?" My uncle, in case I failed to mention, had third degree burns covering his back. After a while, Edward's uncle Mickey

started marking the point on the wall where Doctor Miller's nose would reach.

I spent six days in the Intensive Care Unit, heavily sedated on morphine. The day that I got out of intensive care, my doctors took me off the drug. For the first time since the accident I was able to think clearly, and the possibilities frightened me. What exactly had I done to myself? How long was I going to be in the hospital? Was I paralyzed? In the midst of this confusion Dr. Richardson, my orthopedic surgeon, walked into the room.

During the morphine-induced delirium, Dr. Richardson was my equivalent to Almighty God. He would dash into my room, cheerfully prod different parts of my pelvis and ask things like, "They treating you O.K. in here, sport?"

"Ack," I would respond, dripping an elastic thread of spittle onto my pillow, "Splurf."

So when Dr. Richardson walked into my new room and I was in a condition to ask intelligent questions, it made me a very happy invalid. I was ready with an opening question. "So Doc, what's wrong with me?"

"Well sport," he said, "you really did it this time. You broke your spine." As soon as I put my tongue back into my mouth and closed my jaw, I followed up with eloquently, "Oh, well, um, yu?"

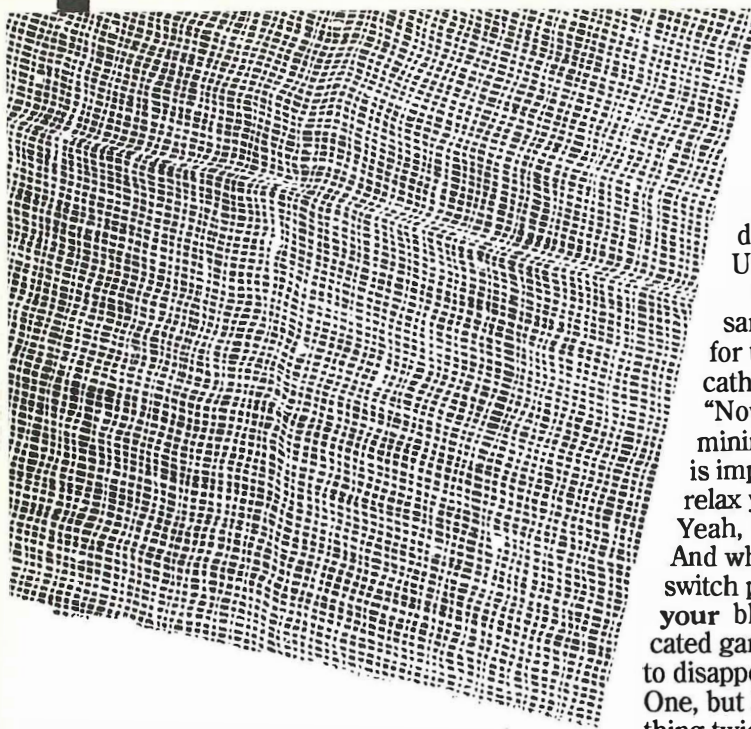
He would dash into my room, cheerfully prod different parts of my pelvis and ask things like, "They treating you O.K. in here, sport?"

"Ack," I would respond, dripping an elastic thread of spittle onto my pillow, "Splurf."

Well said, Chuck, very well said. Luckily my mother still had all of her wits about her. She grabbed him by the lapels and crystallized my thoughts, saying, "What the hell's that supposed to mean?! Hah?!"

The rest of my memory of Dr. Richardson is a big blur. He was constantly moving, usually towards the door. If I ever wanted to ask him a question, I would have to time its delivery so that he was still in the room when the words came out. I generally failed. For a week, my conversations with Dr. Richardson consisted of four syllables: "Um, Doctor Rich..." and he was out the door. Then we switched orthopedists.

The skin on my uncle's back was continually dying because of various infections which resulted from the burn damage. Every day he had to take a bath in which a nurse would scrape off all of the dead skin with a sandpaper-like substance and Duz Soap. "They used to have commercials for it," my grandmother recalls, "with the slogan 'Duz does wonders.'" The commercials did not mention Duz's usefulness in the removal of human flesh. My grandmother still associates the soap with Edward's agony. "I can't think of it without remembering having to sit in the waiting room and listen to the blood-curdling screams of my son."



depths of Satan's Dark Underworld."

Each nurse had the same down-home remedy for the helpless pain of catheterization.

"Now Charlie, in order to minimize the discomfort, it is important to completely relax your body. Got that?"

Yeah, okay, I got it.

And when we're done we get to switch places and I'll evacuate **your** bladder with the lubricated garden hose, right? Sorry to disappoint you, Oh Cheerful One, but I've already done this thing twice and that's obviously two more times than you have.

Completely relax your body. It sounds like such a simple task. But imagine being told not to writhe and squirm as someone who you don't know peels off each layer of skin, one by one, and says that's it's good for you.

I have been told by people very close to me that I am not the happy, carefree person that I used to be. I am not eternally depressed, but sometimes I can feel exactly what those people mean. I feel it somewhere deep in my chest.

It hides in the same place that I'm sure my parents felt it when they got a call telling them that their son had been in a car accident, but that it was against regulations to reveal his condition or even whether or not he was alive.

My grandmother must have felt that same hopeless void during the Duz scraping sessions. I'm sure that it surfaced when she heard her son's grinding screams but was not able to reach out, to kiss and make it all better.

And Uncle Edward—how can he ever remove his shirt without being winded by the...memory? It's more than just a memory. That feeling is my only basis for the comparison between myself and my uncle. That feeling is more than enough.

Completely relax your body. It sounds like such a simple task. But imagine being told not to writhe and squirm as someone who you don't know peels off each layer of skin, one by one, and says that's it's good for you.



The pelvic fractures that I sustained caused complications which rendered my bladder almost useless. It filled up but would not allow me to release urine. When that occurred it was time to utilize one of the most effective instruments of pain known to man: the catheter. The catheter is a long rubber tube. This seems harmless enough until a nurse inserts it into the tip of the urethra and pushes it through that extremely sensitive passageway until it penetrates the bladder. I was catheterized four times during my hospital stay.

The first time, I did not know what to expect. I asked the nurse who, I very clearly remember, wore a black cape and hood, "Is this going to hurt, or just be extremely embarrassing?" How innocent I was. How naive.

She responded, "It'll be a little uncomfortable, but that's all. Actually, it's easier with boys."

"You mean it doesn't hurt as much?" I asked hopefully.

"No, I mean it's easier for me. With boys it's a straight shot."

"Wonderful, I'm very glad to hear that," I said (to myself). "If this ordeal becomes at all too taxing for you, just let me know and I'll make every accommodation. Oh, and by the way, I hereby condemn you to spend all eternity smouldering in the fiery

To my little sister

Did you have blue eyes?
I've heard that all babies have blue eyes
I guess yours will always be blue then
unless they were brown

I could ask Mom
but then she'd say yes
and I'd give you blue eyes
that I stole off some distant relative
or a baby I saw in church
and maybe then I'd give you a little hair.
You must've had hair
but I don't remember it.

Mom always tells me the same story about you
how I asked to sing
Jesus Loves Me...
This I know
in eighteen years
I've come to believe that Mom's memory is mine
These great trees make windows for the sun.
I've mowed the grass.
And right in front of my red Keds
are these beautiful spring flowers.
I think they're lillies, but Mom's the botanist.
Was it spring?
I'll give you spring too.

There's one memory of you that's mine.
When I was three and we lived in the old house
I sat in the living room on the ugly green sofa
(Mom's covered it now - its flowery but still green)
and I held you.
I wasn't big enough to pick you up by myself
you just lay in my lap
and I cradled you with some unusually quiet arms
I don't remember smashing my favorite toy
because you arrived
and I don't remember singing
when you left

but I can feel the weight of your life in my three year old arms still.

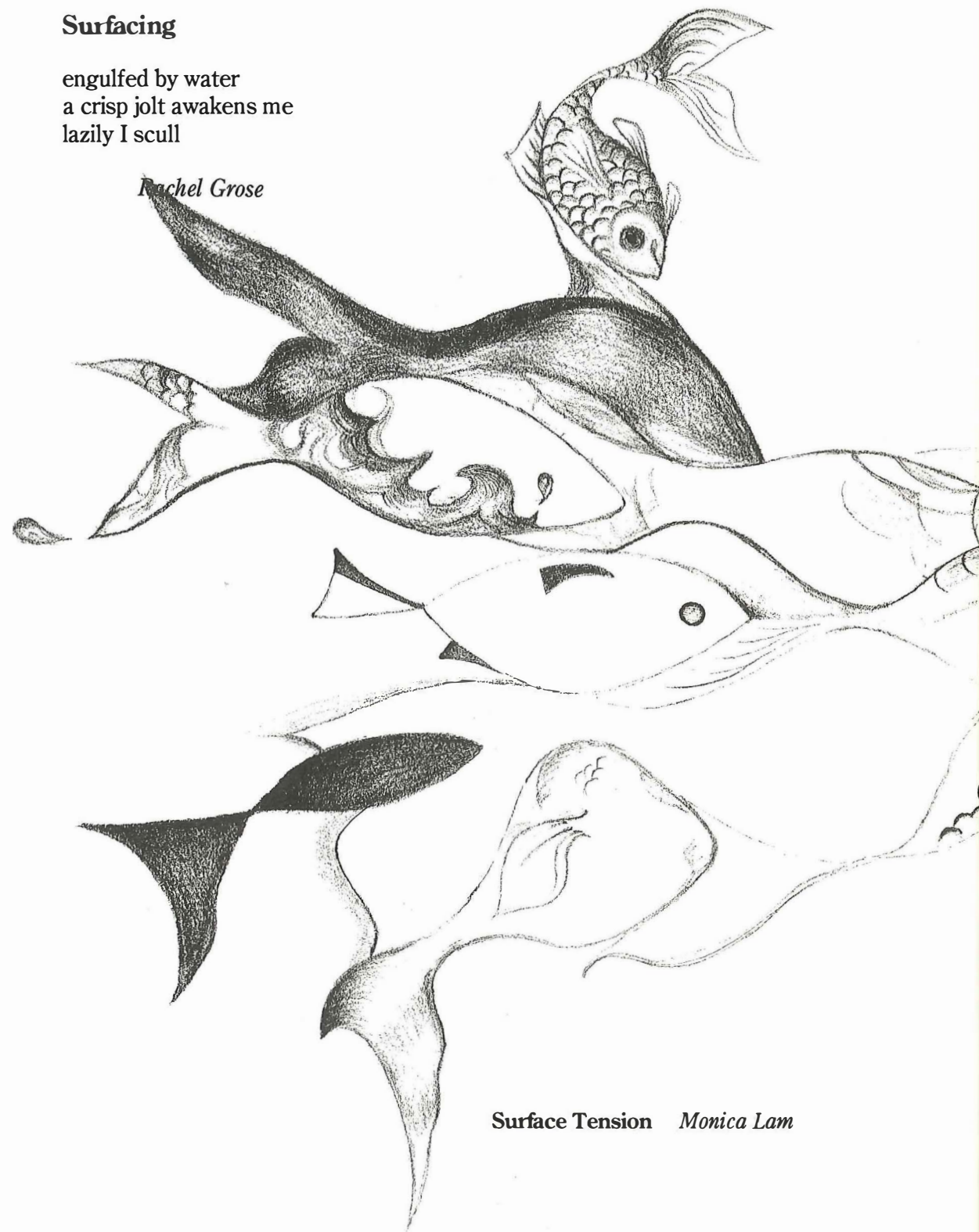
Heather Evans

Surfacing

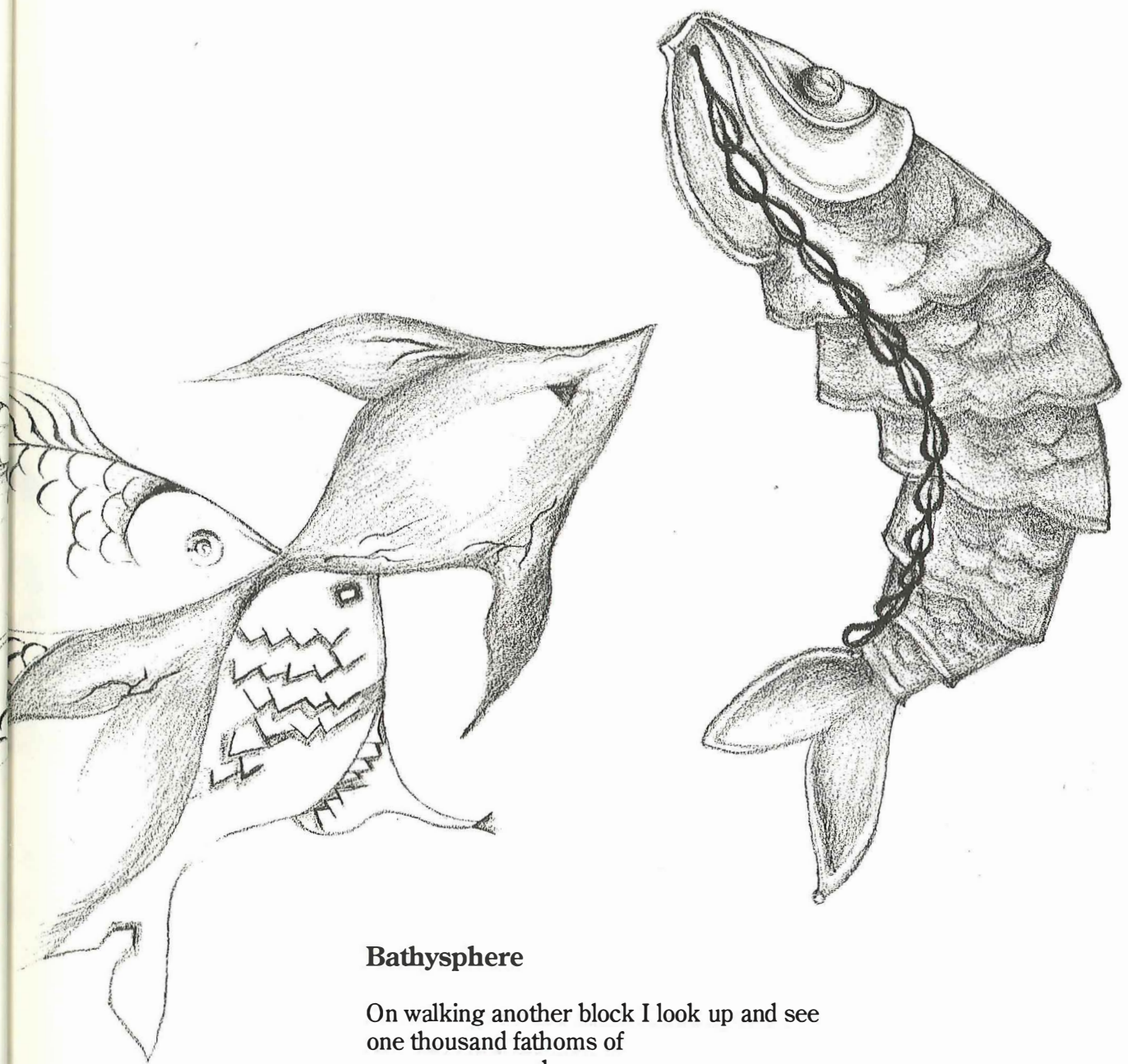
engulfed by water
a crisp jolt awakens me
lazily I scull

Rachel Grose

✱✱



Surface Tension *Monica Lam*



Bathysphere

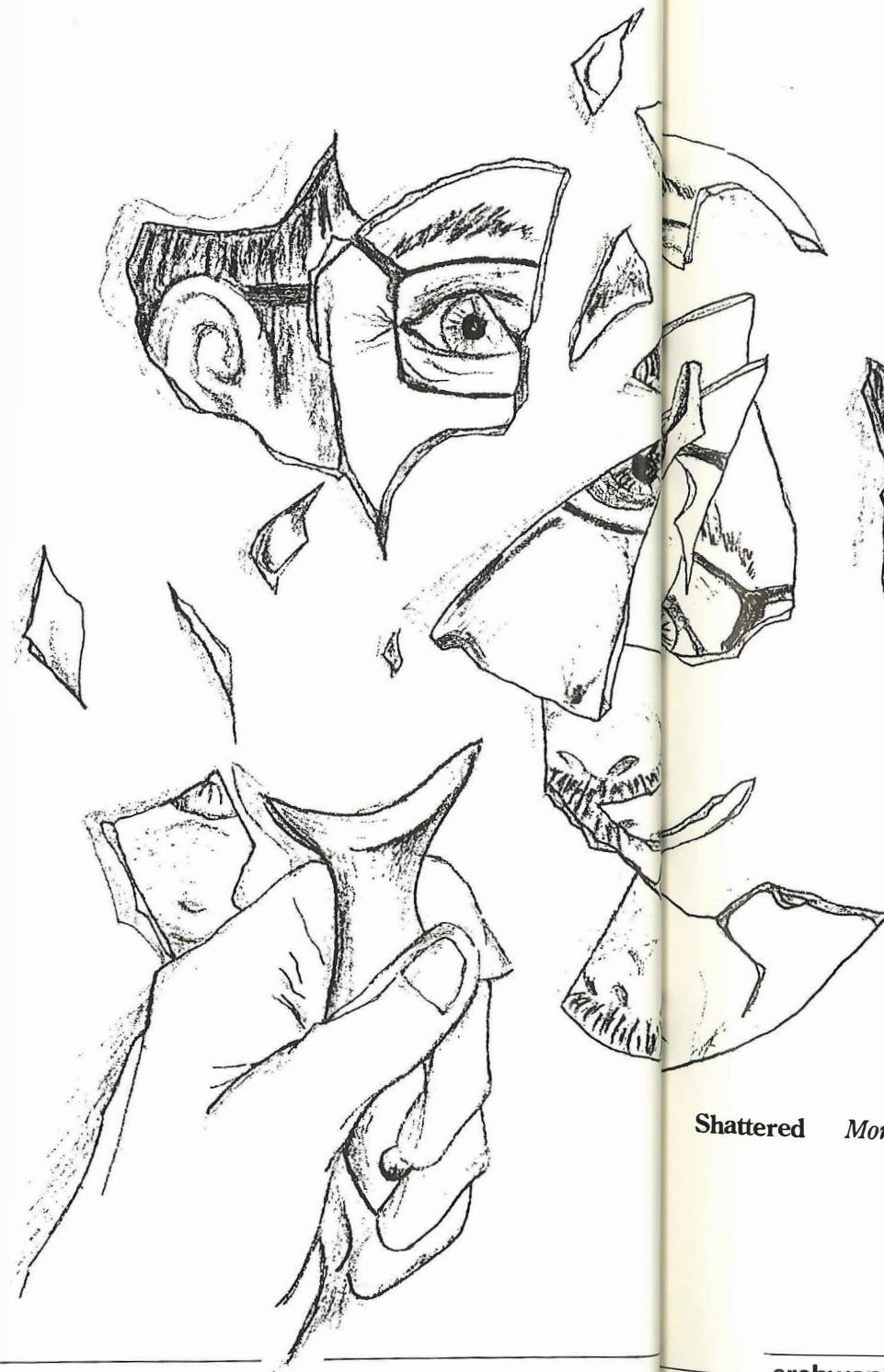
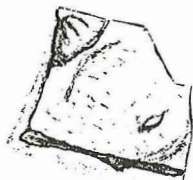
On walking another block I look up and see
one thousand fathoms of
green green murk
I'm being watched by brine shrimp
I'm being followed by lighted fish
Barnacles are sticking to my legs
Up on rooftops there's a party going on
They've never heard of Jacques Cousteau
They're dipping toes in that
green pool

Jordan Ellenberg

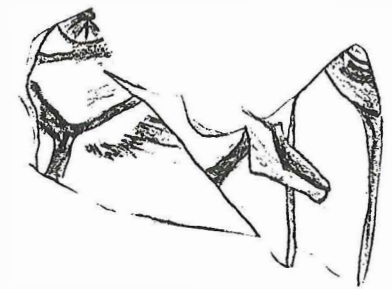
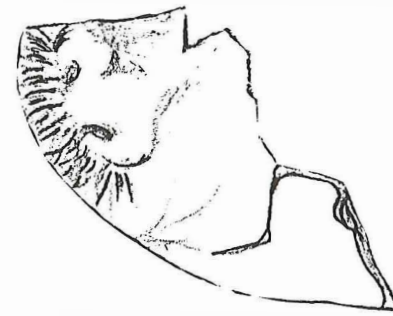
Sentence

We stop, park. He is not at all
out of gas. Not yet, so
He never dreamed he would say this but
I lose his voice
here he goes.
in the passing cars
and I know what he wants.
He wastes his time, his minutes and
the car is cold so
I ask him to turn on the heat and
he doesn't catch on.
I'm different, he says
something he wants to hold on to for
which is where I lose his voice again
and I think the heat would be sucking it up
but there isn't any
and I think it must be condensing
he wants something permanent
on the windows, the chilled humidity
that is his speech
something more meaningful than
warm wetness on cold glass
do I understand? and do I
but I only want the heat
and I only want it now.

Melissa Levine



Shattered *Monica Lam*



Psychoanalysis

Everybody tells me to cut
my hair.

They tell me that I use it like
a bushy veil
to duck behind
or as a defense mechanism
or maybe I have a
rare psychological complex
stemming from a tormented childhood.
It could be sexual
or emotional
or a lack of self-confidence
in my face
and facial features;
although possibly the density of the strands
symbolizes masochistic tendencies
and I need to shield my eyes
in order to keep from facing up
to the cruelty of the world
and my responsibilities as a modern woman.

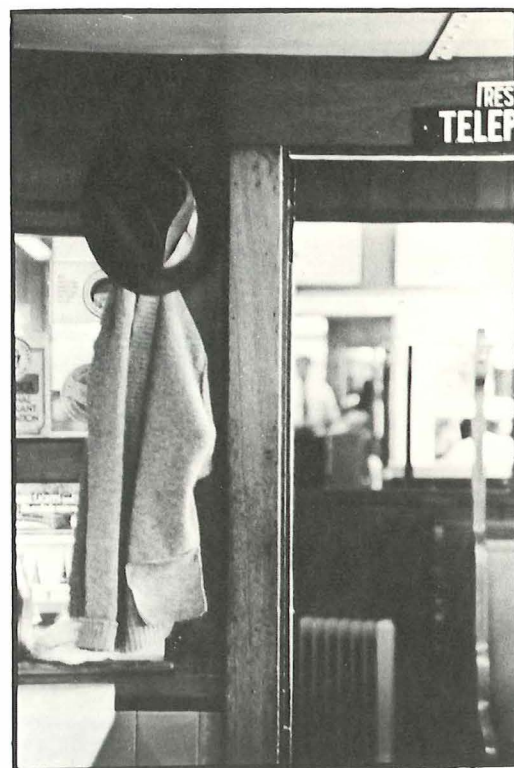
Then the new guy in back pipes up
that maybe I just didn't get around
to getting a haircut.

Some people are so shallow.

Jennifer Krzyminski

OPEN ALL NITE

KAREN SONDIK



Please come again." Luanne laid the check down on the table. Mr. Garrison paid the bill and followed his wife out the door.

Henry began to shake his head, "I thought we had a standard here, Luanne. I'll be damned if I'll stand for those kind of folk comin' in here!" Luanne kept quiet, rolling her eyes and turning away from Henry toward the dishes.

I slammed my hand down on the empty seat next to me. "Can you shut up?! You got no right talking to Luanne like that." Luanne raised her eyebrow telling me that I had broken one of the rules of her game. I grabbed my hat and headed for the door.

Luanne's Diner opened five years before my wife died. I used to take my wife to Luanne's every now and then for lunch or dinner. Since her death seven years ago, I eat almost all my meals there. I was never one for cooking, so I worked out a plan with Luanne that in exchange for handywork around the diner, she would give me some meals for free. The diner is nearly

my second home. Luanne jokes that she should charge me for rent.

Luanne gave me my own stool at the counter. Some of the stuffing is beginning to poke through the aqua vinyl, but it doesn't matter. I tell Luanne not to bother with mending it because if she did I might by accident sit in the wrong seat, and then, she'd forget who I am. "Oh don't be silly, Charlie," she says, "How can I forget a face like yours?"

She prides herself on making sure the diner looks spotless. I've never seen a smudge of grease on a table, or a single fingerprint on any of the front windows. In the window hangs the green neon sign that all of us, the regulars, chipped in to buy Luanne for her fortieth birthday. It reads, "Luanne's Diner—Open All Nite!"

Luanne treats everyone kindly. It's almost like some of us take the place of the children she doesn't have. There are five regulars, more or less. Six, if you count Henry who moved here about a year ago, but he usually sits by himself and doesn't talk or eat lunch with the rest of us. I'm the only one who also comes in for breakfast and dinner since the rest

of the guys have their own women at home.

Today, as usual, I had been the first one to arrive at Luanne's for breakfast. I had watched Luanne tie on her red and white striped apron as she got ready to cook her first batch of grits. I've noticed the seams on her apron are beginning to pull away from each other, and the stripes are widening at her waist. Luanne doesn't seem to mind, "A few extra layers on the outside, keeps the goods fresher on the inside," she says.

She lives in the white house behind the diner. "Don't you get lonely living alone?" I've asked many times, and each time she shakes her head so her bun begins to fall and laughs, "Me? Lonely? Charlie, eat your dinner, it cures people with crazy thoughts like that."

Dinner is the finest time at Luanne's. I always try to look especially nice at dinner time. I part my hair on the left side and grease it up, so that it doesn't get mussed. Luanne says that she can tell what time it is depending on what I'm wearing. She says, "It must be time to make the chicken because Charlie's decked out in his Sunday Best." I don't order Luanne's chicken every night, but it's my favorite.

Henry likes chicken for dinner too. Unlike me, he still doesn't understand what Luanne means when she talks about her game. Henry works for Dunster Saw Mills and never dresses too nicely. Faded blue overalls speckled with dirt hang on his bent, wiry frame. Luanne insists that he always wash up before she serves him, and after he leaves to go home, she scrubs his stool with ammonia to make sure no dirt is left.

He sits at the counter two seats away from me and just eats or reads the Daily. Luanne is the only one who talks to him. "How's everything at home, Henry?" she'll ask while she's wiping down the counter. "You look a little flushed. Everythin' okay?"

He never says much in return. Sometimes he'll say, "I'm doin' fine," but usually he just shrugs at her. Luanne never pries, but her usual washcloth swirls turn into short irregular strokes. "Don't mind him," I'll say. "He's not worth the trouble."

"Oh Charlie, you boys have got so much to learn. I feel like I've failed you."

"What do you mean? You aren't responsible for us." I don't like it when Luanne talks as if she was my mother.

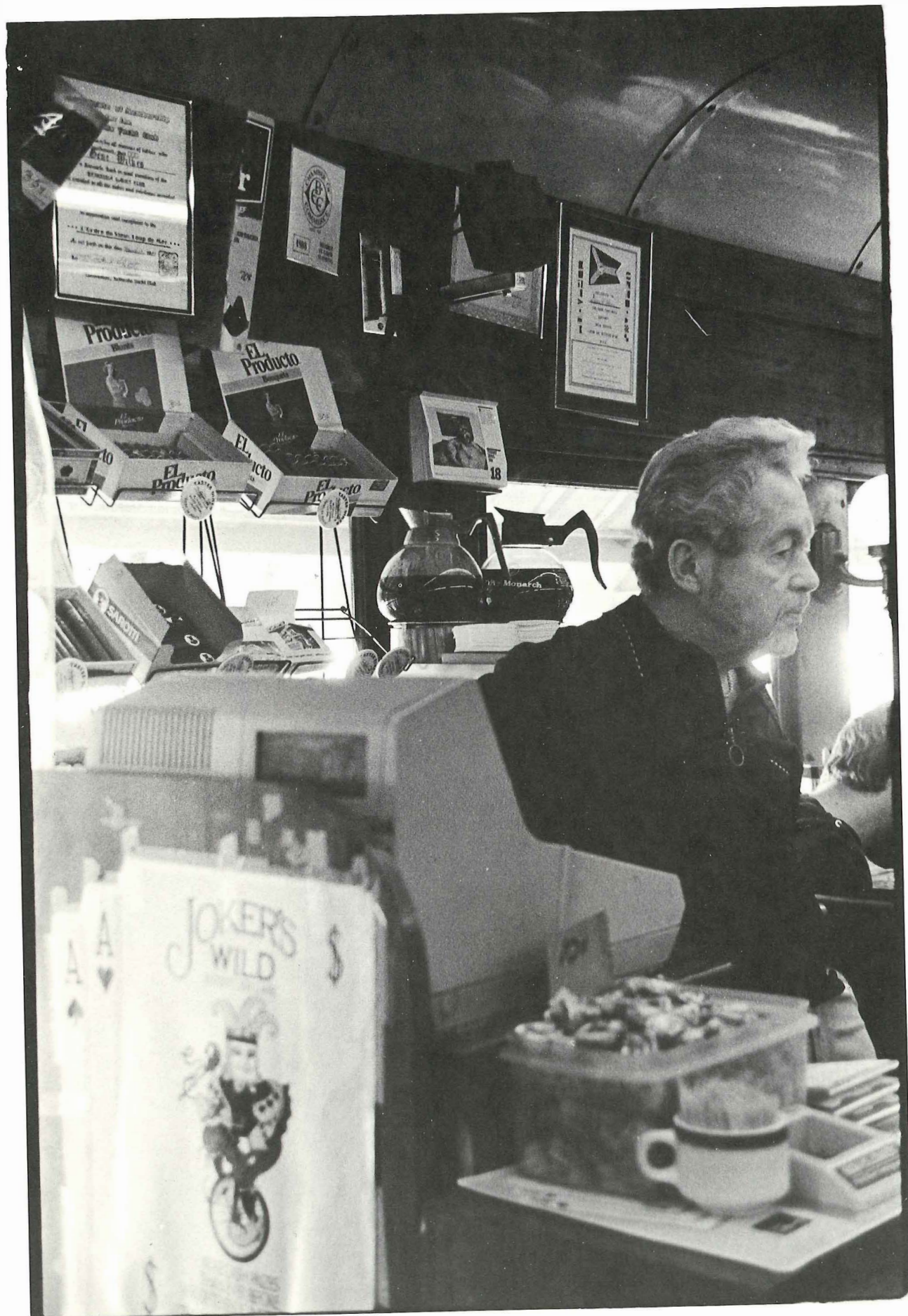
"If I wasn't here," Luanne explained, "You boys would be at each other's throats. You've got to learn to play like I do. You don't see me in any fights, do you?"

I didn't know what would be all right to say, according to Luanne, so I just shook my head.

The first time Luanne ever mentioned her game was in 1958. Two men drove up in a new blue Packard. All of us at the counter craned our necks to steal a look at that shiny metal. A few suitcases were strapped to the roof of the car. I guessed the men must have been on their way into the city. They swaggered into the diner dressed in gray pin-stripe suits like the ones rich folks wear to church. The first guy took off his hat and began to take off his jacket, but the other began to talk in a raised voice. Directing his words toward us at the counter, he said, "Hey, Jay, don't get so settled in. We only have a few minutes, and if we don't get service fast, we're leaving."

I wanted to go over and have it out with those slickers, but Luanne wouldn't hear of it. She sensed my anger and bee-lined over to their table cutting my path short. Clearing her throat and fiddling with the bow on the back of her apron like a schoolgirl she said, "Oh, good day, gentlemen. I'm so glad you could stop in."

Luanne never pries, but her usual washcloth swirls turn into short irregular strokes. "Don't mind him," I'll say. "He's not worth the trouble."



"I bet you're glad," said the one who had been shouting. He looked around to see if he had given anyone else a rise.

The other one chimed in, "You're probably hoping our car will drum up some business for this dump."

Luanne peered out the window. "Oh, is that YOUR car? Never seen one as beautiful as that."

"Why did you do that, Luanne?" I asked after the two men had left.

"You've got to learn to behave yourself, Charlie," she quipped and turned to the stove to flip burgers. Then, she walked to the soda fountain, all the while her lips pursed, and filled my glass. "Here's your cola," she banged the glass on the counter.

"Luanne," I half stood up from my stool to lean across the counter. "What's wrong?" I whispered.

Luanne turned back to the burgers, more interested in them, than in answering my question. The air rushed out of the seat as I sat back down, but as I sat, my elbow knocked the glass of cola to the floor.

Luanne turned suddenly when she heard the crash, "God punished you for wanting to start trouble with those city fellas," she said, and she stared at the glass for a split moment. Then she walked to the closet for a mop and, not missing a beat, she continued, "Who knows what you would have done to them if I wasn't here to stop you." She was shouting from the other end of the counter now, "I won't always be here, you know. You better learn to play right."

I think I know Luanne better than anyone else at the diner does. I can predict her actions just like a rooster can predict the dawn. It's like she lives by the rules in some kind of handbook, and there was nothing out of the ordinary about the way Luanne acted when the Garrisons came into the diner.

"You're not going to let those niggers in here! Are you, Luanne?"

"Henry, they came in for a decent meal and that's what I'm here to give them," Luanne answered.

Mr. and Mrs. Garrison walked to the table next to the front window, below the neon sign. As she walked by the counter, Mrs. Garrison waved to Luanne.

Luanne flashed a smile in return.

Luanne went to take their order. Henry banged his fist against the counter and began to mumble to himself.

On the way to the table, Luanne began to roll-up her sleeves. I recognized the sign of determination. She smiled, "I'm surprised to see you here on a Tuesday."

The Garrisons lived in the next town and usually stopped at Luanne's for Sunday brunch. "John and I thought it would be nice for a change," Mrs. Garrison replied and glanced at the menu.

"Well, I'm glad you came in. What can I get for you folks today?" They both ordered steak and potatoes, Tuesday's lunch special.

The Garrisons paid no attention to Henry. He was sitting at the counter running along the wall opposite the row of window tables. Henry never came to the diner on Sundays, and few blacks lived in our town. He banged his fist and grumbled. "They don't belong here," He kept saying.

The Garrisons finished their meal. "Will that be all?" Luanne began to clear the table.

Mrs. Garrison delicately wiped her mouth. "Thank you, Luanne. As always the food was delicious. You know I should take a few lessons from you."

Mr. Garrison added, "Maybe more than a few, honey."

Luanne laughed.

The minute they left the diner Henry started up again. Luanne just hopelessly turned her head. I could not stand to listen. "Can you shut up?" I screamed. Luanne suddenly stopped washing the counter.

"Charlie!" she began, but I left the diner before she had a chance to continue.

I had been looking to give Henry a good right hook. And, I didn't want to listen to Luanne tell me what I had done wrong. I was tired of her treating me like her own. She wanted me to live like her, to play her way.

Little beads of sweat began to trickle down my forehead. I had been thinking hard, and the sun was strong. I finally looked up from the sidewalk; I was back at Luanne's.

I could see Luanne through the window. She was preaching to Henry; I could tell by the way she was shaking her head that she was talking about her rules.

I opened the door. "And once you learn them, you'll never lose. You'll always be a success in life," Luanne was saying. She looked up from behind the counter, her eyes asked for an apology. I sat down at an empty table by the door.

"Aren't you gonna sit in your usual seat? That way you won't have to shout, so I can hear what you have to say," Luanne said.

"Luanne, the way I play, my rules say I can sit anywhere I damn well please."

Luanne picked up her washcloth and began to scrub the counter with short, quick strokes.



After-Image

I. Volume

The boy sits at the TV screen,
Daffy turned way up
to blot the wailing.
Still the duck talk
comes out scream,
duck bill mouthing
let me die.
The boy would like to thread
the cathode ectoplasm
that sends this Daffy to his room
and spin it to a string
around his wrist,
pull the scream up taught inside the tube,
and live within its silence

II. Contrast

He always thought the light inside
deceitful,
moving spritely,
too flickered for a fusion.
But now,
sitting lonely in this hooded room,
all light and scream
defunct,
he fancies that his mother's after-shape
fuses to the empty screen,
chiaroscuro,
like a Turin face
pressed upon the scrim they softly pulled
between herself
and him

III. Channels

Beyond the screen
she steps into the stream
hoping for insensibility,
to take the seed calmly between
her teeth,
switching to the deep
fast-moving channel
where nothing tugs her
but a phantom child
with biscuits for the dog
who's waiting in her way

IV. Vertical Hold

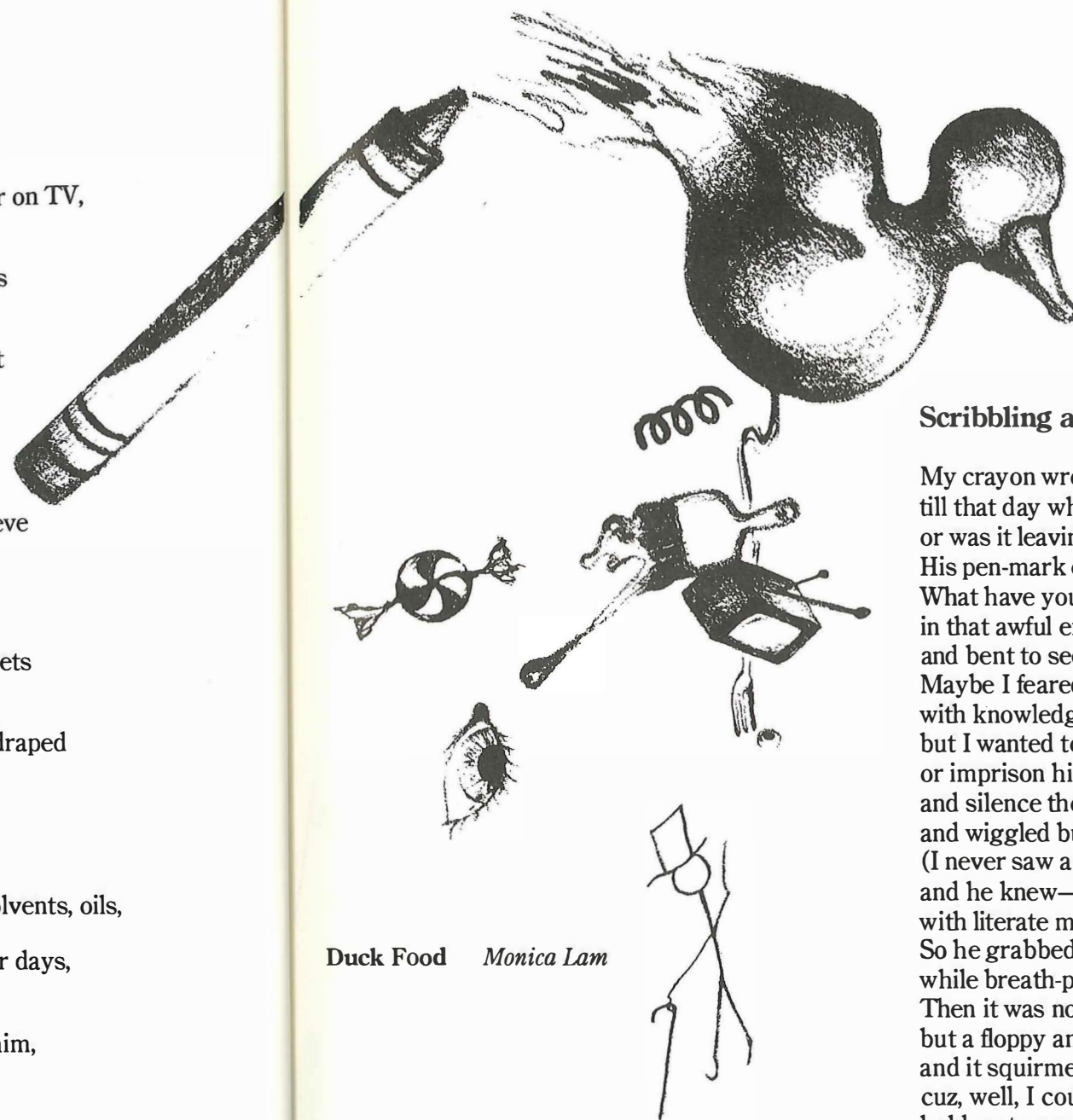
He stares in silence
dreaming he will see her on TV,
watch her
large as life
in supercolored episodes
where no one
dies in bed.
He wants her to step out
across the show
on solid legs,
fascia lata toned up
and in bloom,
to tell him
it was all just make-believe

V. Tint

The boy hears the buckets
clanking on the stairs.
The landlady is coming.
The room will soon be draped
in tarpaulin.
She will call to him
to take a brush
thick with color,
thick as tar,
pungent in its resins, solvents, oils,
and he will paint
the marks of wheelchair days,
embalm
food spills
the blood that formed him,
paint
screen white
shroud white
to blot the life
that still bleeds through.
Another coat
until the space is blank,
all ghosts
dissolved

He rises, shuts
the television off

Robin Suleiman



Duck Food Monica Lam

Scribbling and I

My crayon wrote on the wall
till that day when the animation came
or was it leaving?
His pen-mark eyes blinked, his watercolor smile bent.
What have you there, he asked of me
in that awful exuberant way the cartoons have
and bent to see my crayon.
Maybe I feared because they're so canny
with knowledge and grins that I'm jealous
but I wanted to wring him
or imprison him on a piece of paper
and silence those twitching bending lines that stretched
and wiggled but never broke
(I never saw a cartoon die)
and he knew—which is why he tried to fill my head
with literate mice and dancing stickmen
So he grabbed that crayon and breathed
while breath-puff lines swirled falsely
Then it was no longer a round crayon
but a floppy animated picture of one
and it squirmed, slid from my grasp
cuz, well, I couldn't—I didn't want to—
hold on to a crayon
that talked cleverer than I.
Instead I turned to graphs and ball-point pens.
And now it's years gone
and I like flat things now but they're
little black shapes all uniform
flattened into straight rows in straight columns
that say things in order, so predictably
And now I really abhor
red brights and talking pigs.

Monica Lam

To Salvador Dali, having just visited a museum where your work was not exhibited

I owe you a few things.

I.

A lust for Spanish men
for their eyes like glass eggs
in dark sockets, and for
the tweak of a greasy moustache
Yours was huge.

II.

A drawer fetish
(Although mine were never
as deep as yours)
If my shadows were darker
I would be the woman
I would let you open each drawer.

III.

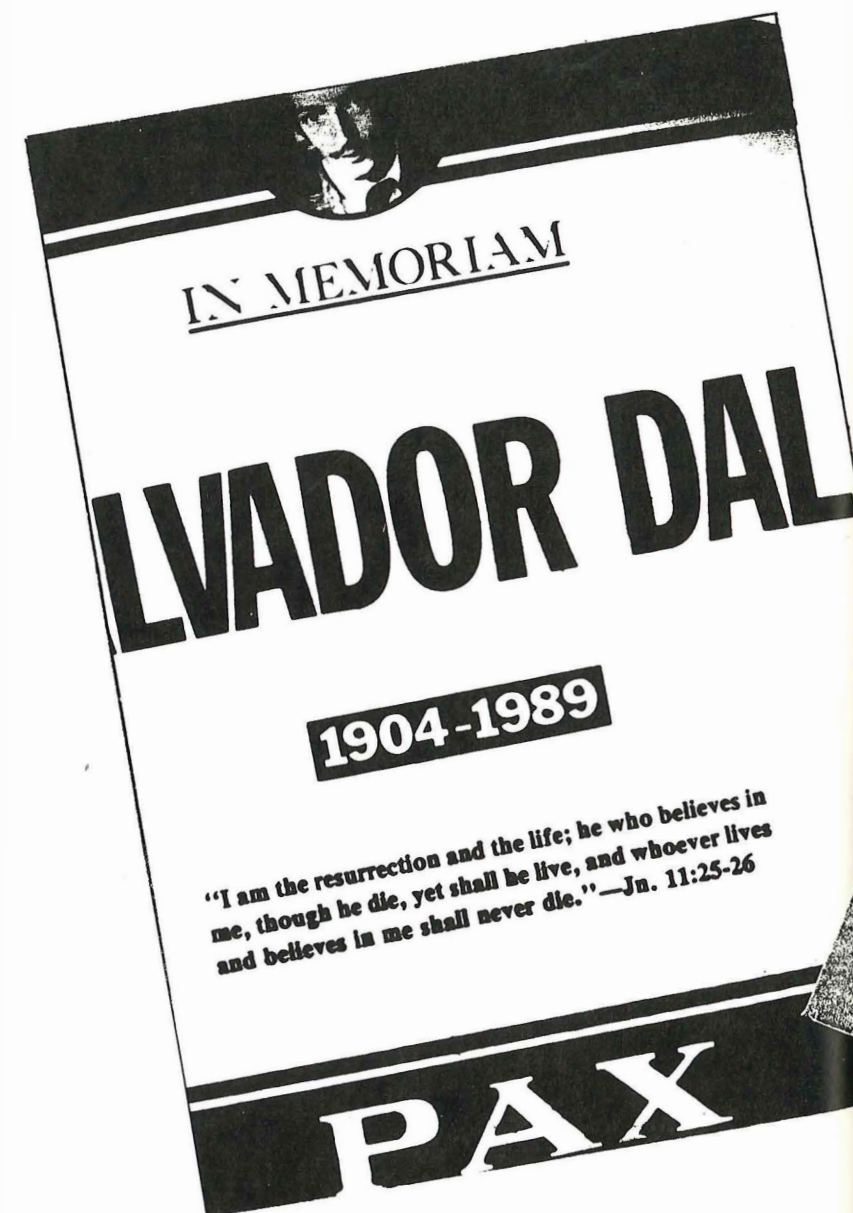
Elongation
My fingers are longer than before
And I have come to love
a substantial nose
When the man at the yard sale
wanted the stilts,
I would not sell them.

IV.

And at last, water.
Like a guest I offer you drink
for drink
for the first time I wet my fingers
and for the ocean you spilled
into my living room
Mostly, for the fire in your bed.
It was only your second death
Like everything else,
you did it to excess.

In a photograph
above my bed
you are eyes and moustache
larger than your whispers
from behind the museum walls.

Melissa Levine



Chameleon Cooking on Hot Pavement John Donahue

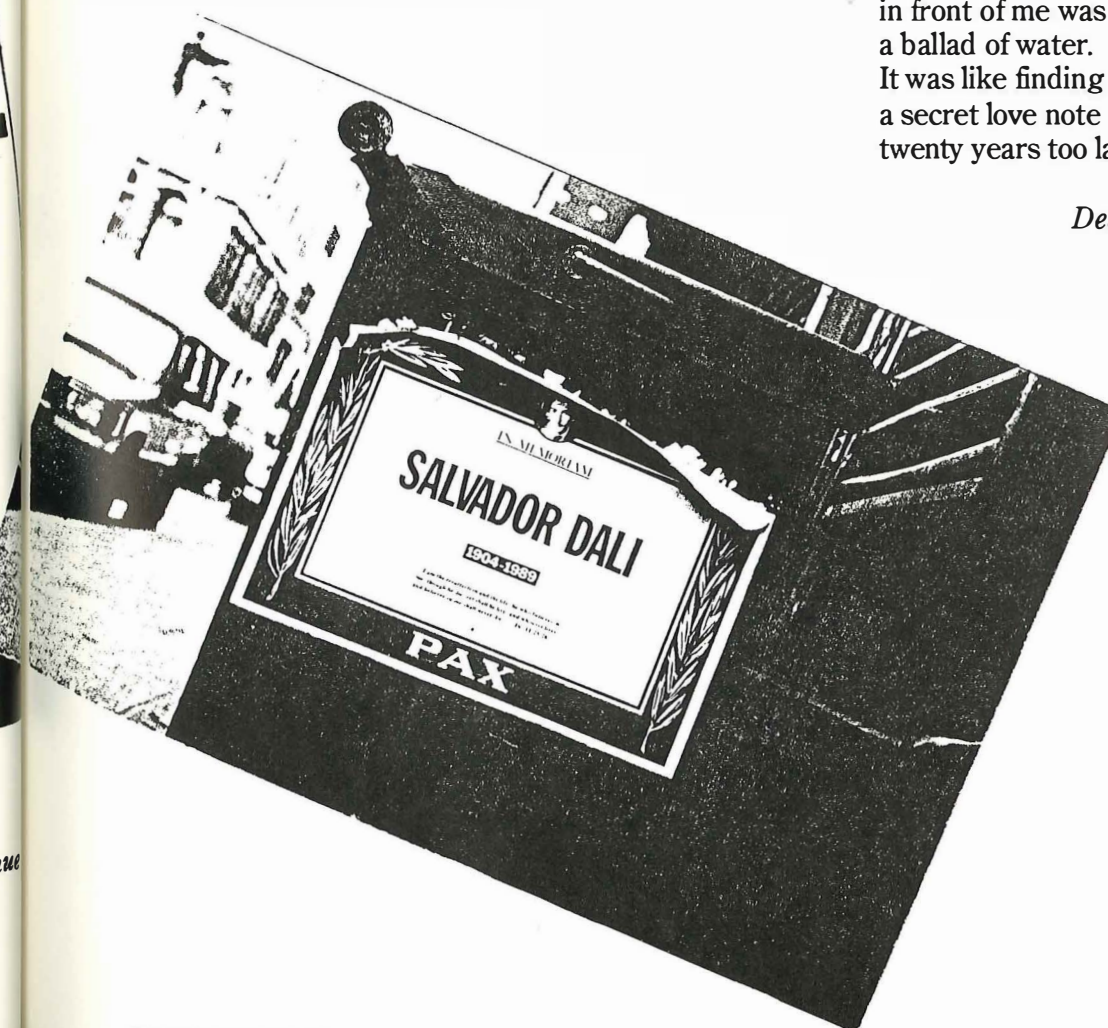
Sun Setting on the Seine (winter)

Somewhere in France,
there is an old shred
of a flannel shirt
that holds a dry ray
of sunlight,
paint wiped off his brush.
The rest of that sun,
the colder part,
is standing in a small musée
also somewhere in France.

Monet's face is that sun,
his arms are the boating Frenchmen,
his eyes are the green
streaks of houses.

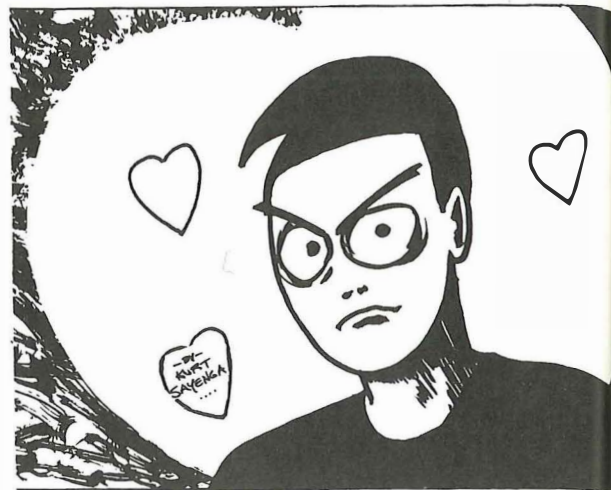
By the time I got to the painting,
my tourist legs were swollen, my hand
was tired of being held.
Smiling on the wall,
in front of me was
a ballad of water.
It was like finding
a secret love note
twenty years too late.

Deborah Wassertzug



LOOK OUT, BATMAN!! HERE COMES HYPERBOY!

ROY PERLIS



He ponders the meaning of life, talks about nuclear meltdowns and makes people's brains explode. Definitely not your average everyday superhero.

"What we're trying to do is take comics beyond what people think they can be, and push them more towards real life," explains Kurt Sayenga, Hyperboy's creator and the publisher of *Greed*, a local magazine which prints many such comics.

Sayenga began *Greed* two years ago "just out of boredom, I suppose." The first issue sold 500 copies; he expects the upcoming one to sell close to 10,000.

As for Hyperboy, "he incorporates all of my attitude problems. He's my angry side," Sayenga says. "And lately, he's been mostly miserable."

Hyperboy is one example of what may become the comic of the future. With names like Yummy Fur, Love and Rockets, and Flaming Carrot, such "alternative comics" address issues far

beyond good guys and bad guys. And they are not always easy to understand.

"This stuff mystifies a lot of people, but I think that's great," Sayenga says with a rare smile. "People deserve to be challenged."

"Cartooning just appeals to a completely different mindset," adds Peter Hayes, whose "Tunnel" strip appears regularly in *Greed*. "We all have it, but not everyone is willing to acknowledge their 'wacky' side."

Though they may be light reading, comics are not necessarily light thinking. The drooling 12-year-old Nintendo addict who enters the comic store clutching a quarter might be in for a surprise. Even if he can come up with the other \$2.25 to buy *Greed*.

"Our whole point is, you can have a brain and still like these things. People on the outside might not think that learned people could appreciate comics, but that's entirely wrong."

Hayes' strip features the mysterious Dr. Friend, also known as Tunnel Man, who lives in a postmodern Washington, D.C., where meat-filled meatburgers are the only food and the only television station shows meatburger commercials all day.

"It's bizarre and it doesn't always make sense, but I don't want to censor my ideas," Hayes says.

More than just the storylines in these comics have changed, however. These things look different. "The bottom line is that comics are fun to look at; call them a 'unique medium,'" Sayenga explains. Many of the illustrations appear simplistic, even surreal.

"We're seeing a lot of the crudely drawn artwork, not because the artists can't draw, but because that's the way they want it to look. You're telling a story in the simplest possible terms, so the art can be simple too."

Not that it has to be. Sayenga says a single Hyperboy strip takes at least two weeks to draw, and sometimes even longer. "Often I have to narrow my ideas down to the things I can draw," he adds.

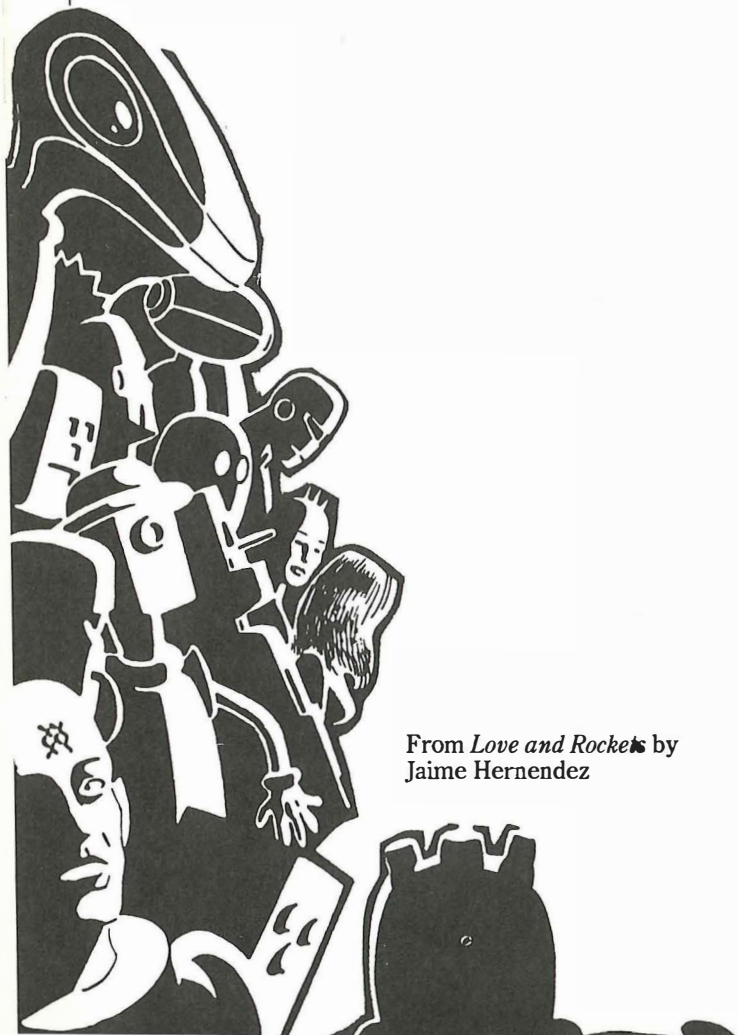
A growing number of comics are being done by trained artists. Hayes, a commercial artist, explains, "Comics are appealing because they are low art. They aren't trying to be magnificent; they're art for the masses."

"Every time I sit down to crank out Tunnel, I have to completely shift gears...I learn to draw again."

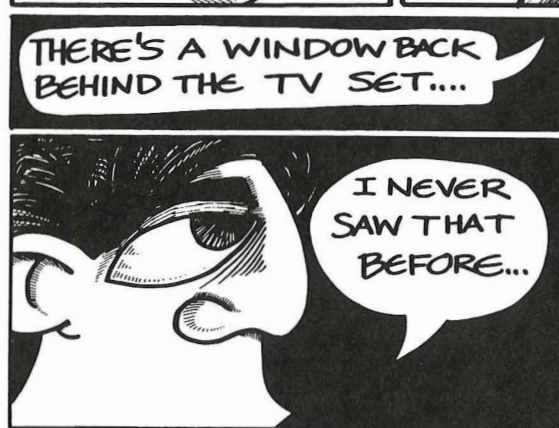
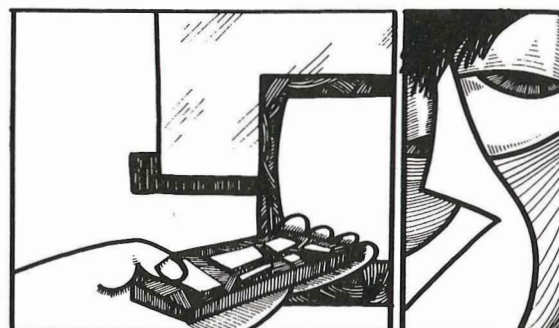
While many of the comics are entertaining, they have a deeper side as well. Sayenga grimaces at the suggestion that his comics

"What we're trying to do is take comics beyond what people think they can be, and push them more towards real life."

—Kurt Sayenga



From *Love and Rockets* by Jaime Hernandez

Bob Burnett from *Greed*

have a message, then flips through an old issue of *Greed*, stalling for time.

"I guess the messages in the best comics are the same as the messages in the best literature. We're talking about ways to live your life here."

He pauses again. "There are jokes, but all the jokes have edges to them."

The statements in Hayes' work are more straightforward; as a vegetarian, "I try to send messages about what I'm about," he says. By drawing a comic about a society that eats only meat, "I can put things in people's faces that they might take for granted."

Modern cartoonists are experimenting with both stories and artwork, but a basic comic principle has not changed: for a comic to be successful, it must combine attractive art with an interesting story. "Good comics should work like hands pressed together," Sayenga gestures and laughs. "With the skin melted."

Melting skin is more the domain of Steve Niles, who began publishing horror comics several years ago and recently completed a horror anthology entitled *Fly in My Eye*. The walls of his D.C. apartment are plastered with drawings of skulls, grotesque mutants, hands peeling the skin from faces. This stuff is enough for a year's worth of nightmares. "We're trying to get comics to a level where adults don't have to be embarrassed to read them," Steve explains, fingering the silver cross in his left earlobe. "There's a ton of comics out there for kids, and they can watch men in tights beat themselves up all they want, but there's not very much out there for adults."

But what kind of adults will pay \$9.95 for Niles' glossy book of gruesome drawings and stories? "I've gotten letters from accountants, housewives, and one lady who worked in a flower shop.

Horror appeals to everybody right now, because everybody's really scared. And when a society is scared, they like to walk into a situation and be scared." Niles' fascination with horror landed him in a psychiatrist's office at the age of seven, and in the following years he spent as much time watching horror movies as he did in school. He was seventeen when he moved to Washington, and now at age 23 he plans to make horror comics a part of his future as well.

Niles is careful to draw a distinction between his comics and movies like "Nightmare on Elm Street." "This isn't just gore for gore's sake. We put people in extraordinary situations, and see how they react."

As for determining what audiences will read and what they won't, "We don't even try," Niles says. "I do what I would want to see, and pray to God that there's someone else out there that would want to see it. And it's working!" He is particularly proud of the artwork in horror comics. Pointing to the pictures on the walls, he explains, "Illustration is so frowned on, because it's been labeled 'comic stuff.' But this is artwork!"

In the past, Niles says, comic artists tended to write storylines based only on what they wanted to draw—which usually included partially-clothed women. "Nude women were a big favorite, along with women being chased and women having their shirts ripped off."

"The sexism just got real old after a while," Niles laughs. "There are as many nude men in *Fly in My Eye* as there are nude women!"

As the stories have improved, so has the art—to the point where some comic artists have exhibited their works in galleries.

"And yes, it is art, and it is literature," Niles says emphatically, picking up a skull from his shelf and tossing it from hand to

hand. But he too is afraid of searching for a message in his work.

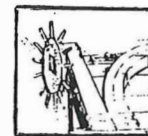
"I wouldn't want to have to analyze this stuff...you don't always need social impacts. I'm tired of hearing about 'the message.' Comics are nice to look at, and that should be enough."

He points to a particularly hideous drawing of a twisted face. "Well, maybe not nice. Let's just say interesting." Niles is excited about the future of comics in the United States. Such comics are far more popular in European countries and in Japan, where, he says, "more paper is used for comics than for toilet paper."

In fact, Japanese comic stores often have 'adult' sections, complete with texts on economics and medicine, all in comic book form.

"We're finally taking chances, taking one more step," Niles says. And while these comics may not be for everyone, "You don't get what you don't like. I don't read *Good Housekeeping*, but maybe if they had a few more comics like these, I would."

"I've seen some of the best artwork in the world done on notebooks, on the backs of napkins." He grins, showing as many teeth as the skull in his hand. "We're just putting it in books—and people are buying it!"



"I've gotten letters from accountants, housewives, and one lady who worked in a flower shop. Horror appeals to everybody right now, because everybody's really scared."

—Steve Niles

Flesh Tones

In the beginning
God created
the heavens
and the earth.
And then he created
stockings.
Eve's punishment
to be trapped in
beige
tan
or ecru.
Woe unto any man
who scorns
the woman's curse.
Let he who hath
been encased in
nylon
cast the first stone.

Michelle Shih



Haute Couture *Lauren McMullen*

Ear for Fashion (found in December's Elle)

Finery for this festive season
of baubles, bonbons,
precious pieces and pretty pebbles
make the everyday ornate, not ordinary.
Charmed by charms?
Riveted by ribbeters? Try frog-shaped jewelry!
Flaunt your festooned fingers!
Wear the tops in bottoms and heels to new heights.
Think mink: frosty faux furmidable "furs de resistance"
for the look of luxe.
But summer's coming around again
(only six more shopping months left)
with flowers, fruits, and resort blooms.
Yes, winter's snow whites
and compleat cashmere classics are history—
So steal the seaside spotlight
in the white heat of a stolen season.

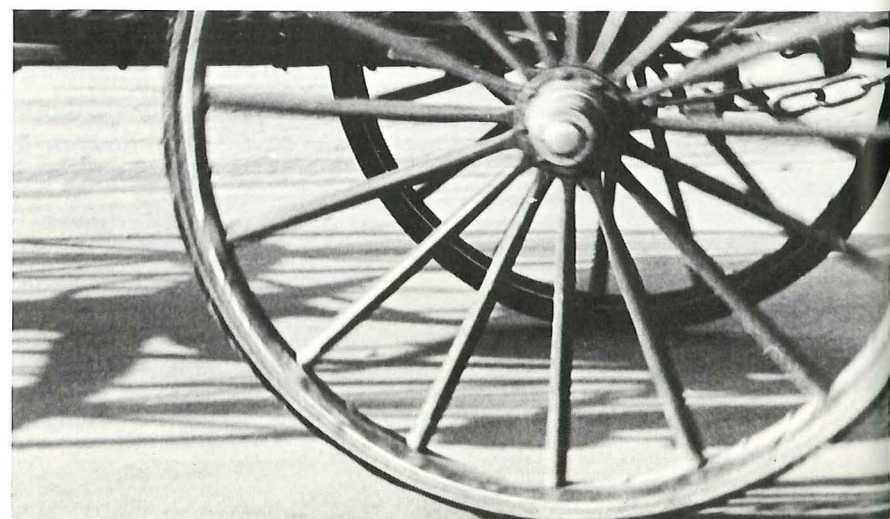
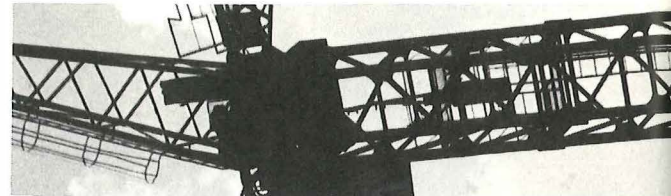
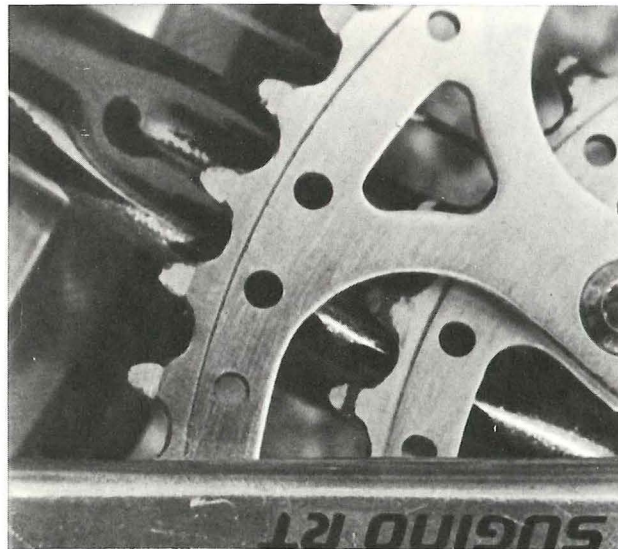
Christina Nunez

"Art, it seems to me, should simplify...finding what conventions of form and what detail one can do without and yet preserve the spirit of the whole... so that all that one has suppressed and cut away is there to the reader's consciousness as much as if it were in type on the page."

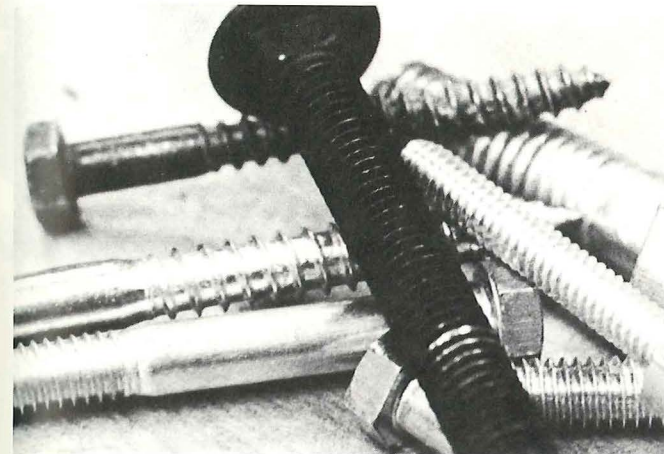
—Willa Cather, *On the Art of Fiction*

"The art of invention grows young with the things invented."

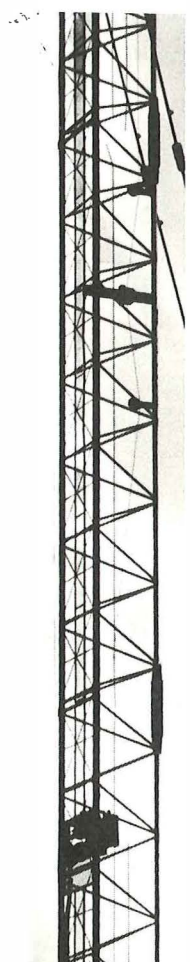
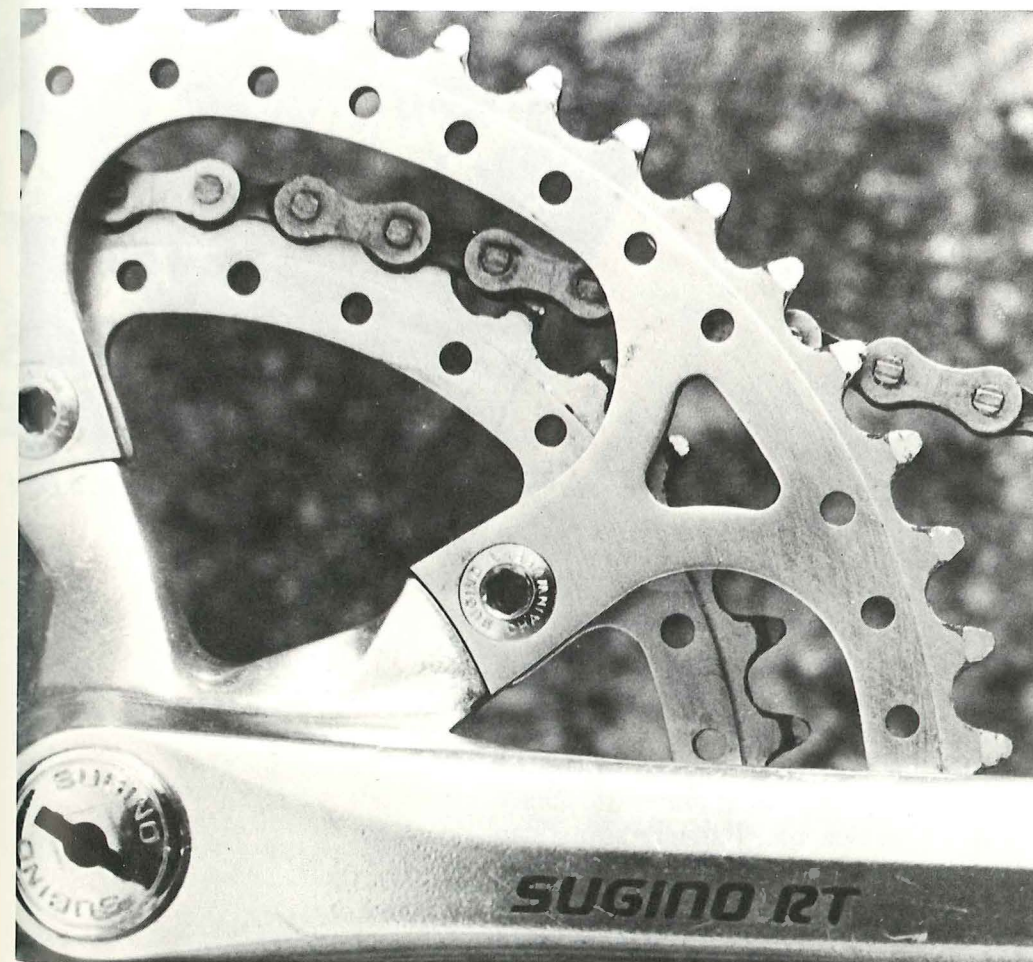
—Francis Bacon



Wheel Daniel Chang



Simple Machines Heather Evans



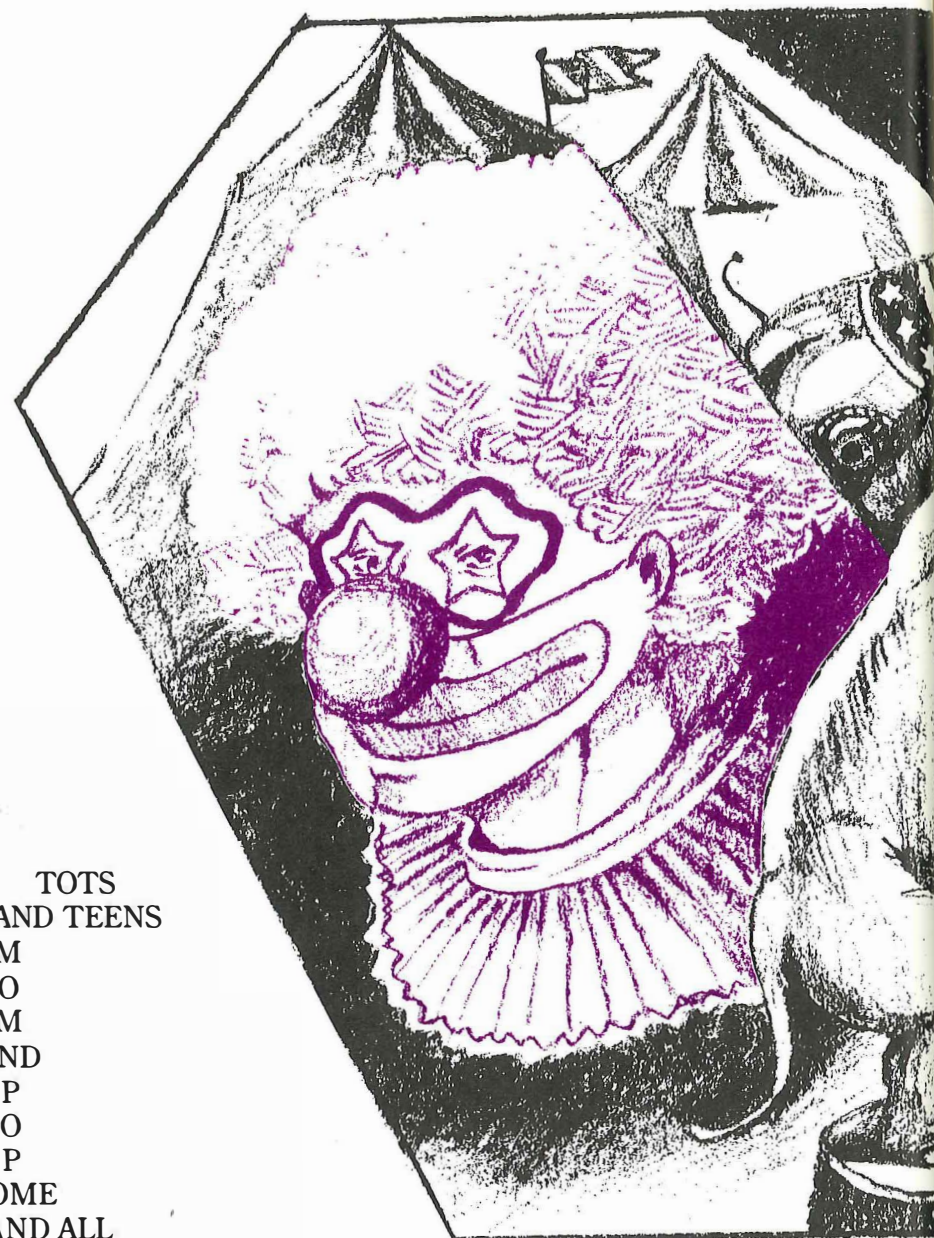
Left of the Big Top

TOTS
AND TEENS
M
O
M
AND
P
O
P
COME
ONE AND ALL
to the Greatest Show
around where little Junior
can see for himself that the text-

books twist the truth a bit (lie's a harsh word)

Who needs genes and DNA when there's Wanda The Bearded
Wonder and who said that money can't grow on trees—why, step inside
and you'll find that very cherry tree chopped by good 'ole George,
screaming his guilt by growing his portrait from every branch! Yessir,
you'll see Ted the Towering Inferno—a bit curious?—and Ten-chin
Tessie, the human donut. THEN for the grand finale, a CERTAIN
SOMEONE presumed dead and wearing blue suede shoes (no guess-
ing!), will croon his rendition of the "Star Spangled Banner," so just slap
down one quarter and sneak your peek at the world's finest treasure.

Karen Ginsberg



Three Rings Chian-Yu Peng



Kansas

So, witchie,
you told all your girlfriends
you were gonna make it
in the big town
at the end of the yellow road.
Well, now you're nothing
but a pair of red slippers
and a broom.
Should've thought about that
before you stepped under
my house.

Jordan Ellenberg

The Iguana Gallery

Come inside
the Iguana Gallery.
Walk through the
newest exhibit and
refer to
the information packet
for explanation:

*crumpled body
in a corner
circa 198.*

Push the button
on the wall
in a dark room.
As the screen
leaps to life,
sit back to watch
*a rape, in 5 minutes
or less.*

When the lights
go back on,
file out
to the right
up the slimy stairs
and please
watch your step.

Ann Boerner

IF ONLY MY MOTHER'S BLOND HAIR HAD BEEN NATURAL

MELISSA LEVINE

This morning it occurred to me that I don't know what color my mother's hair is. I was going to call her and ask her, but I felt there was a reason I shouldn't. Then I remembered she's dead. I wondered how long it takes hair to lose pigment, and if her hair still is whatever color it was or if it's white now anyway, or maybe even altogether gone. I made a list of the possibilities and attempted deductive reasoning. She did have black roots, there was that. So black was winning when the telephone rang.

The predictability makes the ring. It's so mechanical, so rhythmic—a technological wonder. I love the repetition. The vibrato is so charming. It's a problem, though. Too often I get caught up in the ring, and I forget to answer the phone. Which wouldn't be so much of a problem, only sometimes it's my mother at the end of the line.

I considered that it was my mother telephoning, frustrated. It wasn't black at all. I had it completely wrong. Although, if my telephone did indeed transcend the natural world, it could have been anyone. Possibly it was Hemingway, my dead frog. I wondered what the rates were for a telephone call to the dead. Probably the telephone company would charge me heavily, because that's what they always do.

The rain was dripping down the sides of my windows and it tickled. It spat on the panes and pelted the dirt beneath my tree. I was concerned that the paint on the window panes would run away with the rain. It would realize that, as far as being a liquid goes, there's more to it than just sticking to window panes. For raindrops the excitement never ends. After they fall and drip, fusing with other raindrops and birthing even more, there's the sewage system

to be dealt with.

I imagined my window paint leaving after an argument where I was reduced to my knees, imploring the paint to stay through the month until I could replace it. And I vowed that I would draw up a contract with the new paint. From now on there would be a two week termination notice.

Before it rained any longer, I left the apartment to buy back up paint. The rain fell on my nose. It wet my shoulders and slid under my feet. When I realized I was hydroplaning, I slowed and steered in the direction of the skid. I regained control, checked my front and rear views, and merged. I walked into a department store in the left-turn-only lane, and I went directly to the woman under the "Information" sign.

"Where is the paint department?" I asked her.

"We don't have a paint department."

"But this is a department store," I said.

"That is correct."

"So where is the paint department?"

"We don't have a paint department."

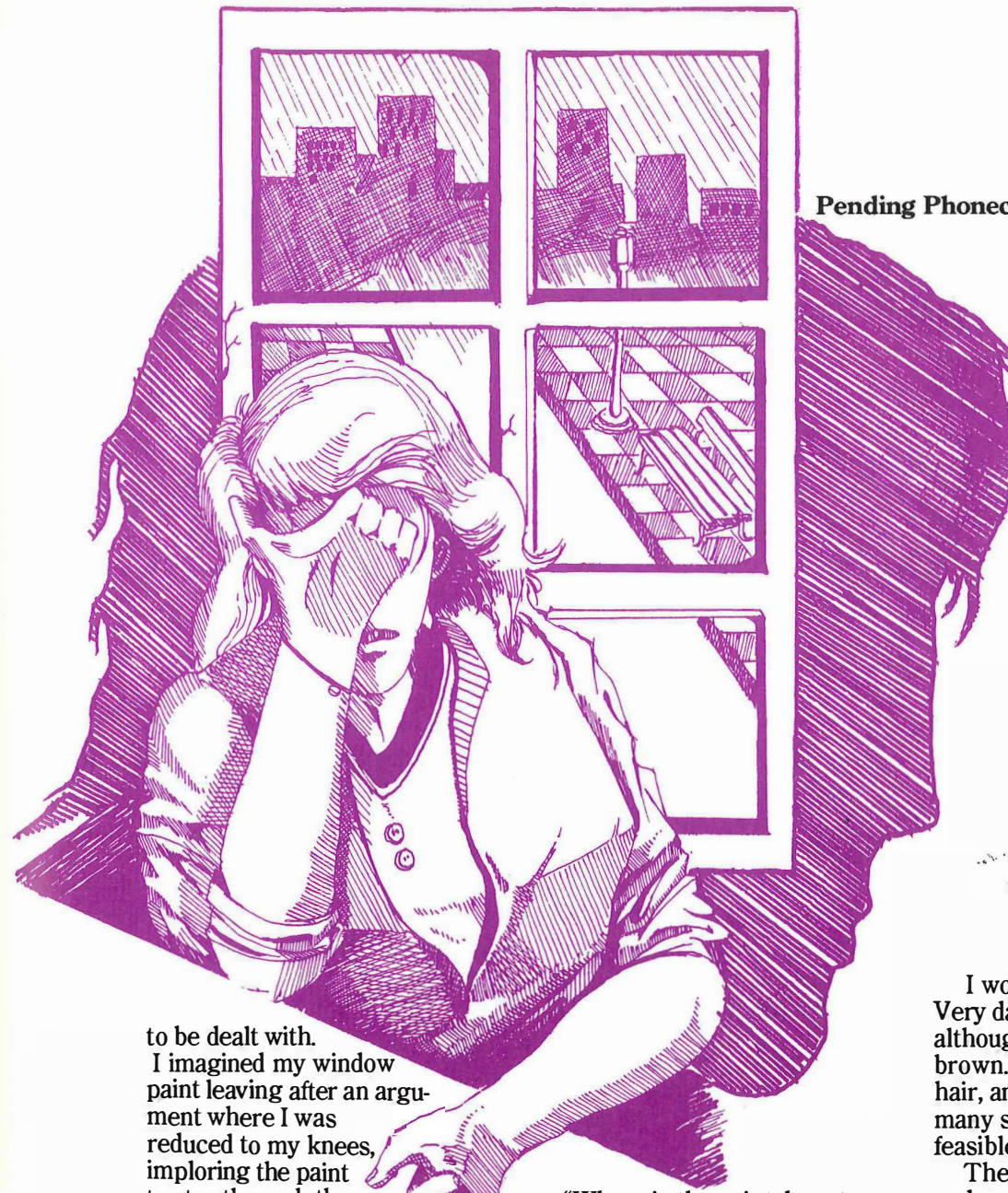
"Why not?" I asked her.

The woman looked at me and I fell silent. Her window paint had left her long ago, and she hadn't thought to put on back-up paint. She was touchy about her mistake, and frustrated.

"Look," I said. "It's okay. I'll go somewhere else."

I turned and left.

Pending Phonecall Chian-Yu Peng



The rain was dripping down the sides of my windows and it tickled. It spat on the panes and pelted the dirt beneath my tree.

I wondered if it wasn't brown. Very dark roots can appear black, although really they are dark brown. Most people have brown hair, anyway. And there are so many shades. Genetically, it was feasible.

The rain lapped at the curbs and snaked through the cracks in the sidewalk. The streets were cold and slow, blurred in the fog. People in raincoats moved along the sidewalks, their heads down to avoid the rain. The cinema lights shone on the corner, oblivious.

The movie had already started when I walked in.

"Don't worry, you haven't missed anything," the lady at the counter told me.

"On the contrary," I said, "I've missed the beginning of the movie."

I sat in the front row, feeling digestible. The theatre swallowed me like a pill. It was a foreign film, dubbed instead of subtitled. I wanted to know what

they were really saying, how the rhythm reflected the action, but the people who decide those things decided that it should be dubbed instead of subtitled. I thought the film was Scandinavian, because the people had blunt, blonde haircuts and perfect skin. Then a man with curly brown hair showed up. I tried to block him out but they gave him a lot of close up shots and I supposed he was something of a sex symbol. Sex symbol or not, I did not enjoy a full screen of his facial impurities.

Some time later an usher was tapping me on the shoulder.

"Miss, the movie's over." He was impatient.

"But I missed the beginning," I explained.

He paused. "I'm sorry, but that was the last show. We're closing. It's the middle of the night."

"I see," I said. "Do you always stop the movie in the middle of the night?"

"No," he said. "I mean, we didn't stop the movie. It was over."

I walked out of the theatre through the fire exit because the man told me to.

"It's against the rules, you know." I told him. He looked at me.

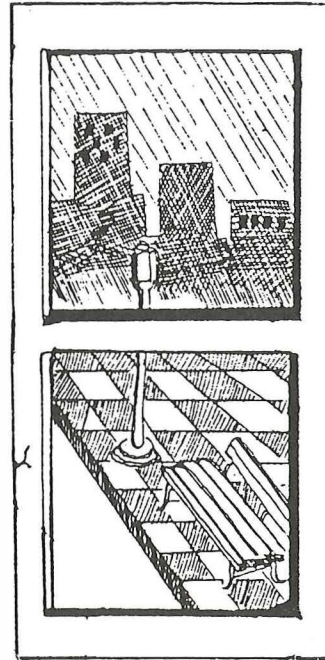
"To use the fire exit when there isn't a fire," I explained. "Fire exits are to be used only in the event of a fire."

"It's okay, Miss," he said. "This is an exception."

"Of course," I said. "This is an exception."

It was dark outside. The rain had stopped and the streets were swollen and hissing. I walked them slowly, looking for paint stores. A diner was open. I went in and sat at the counter.

"You wouldn't happen to have any paint?" I asked the woman behind the counter.



**There was a man
sitting next to me
at the counter.
He wore a thick
wool sweater, and
his fingers were
calloused and red.
He was bald.**

Her back slouched and her hair was suffocated with spray.

"Paint?" she asked. "That some kind of meat?"

"No," I explained. "Paint is what goes on window panes. If you're lucky, that is. You have to get the right kind."

"Duron or Pittsburgh?" she asked and heaved two cans on the counter.

"Oh, Duron," I said. "Definitely." I removed the lid and had a spoonful. It tasted like coffee. Apparently she had misunderstood.

"Cream, sugar?" she asked me.

"How about a mixer?" I asked, but she was gone. I supposed the coffee wouldn't work as far as my window panes went so I drank it.

It could have been some kind of red, I reasoned. Auburn or flame or something. It was distinctly possible. I pictured my mother with red hair. It was difficult to picture my mother at all.

There was a man sitting next to me at the counter. He wore a thick wool sweater, and his fingers were calloused and red. He was bald. He fumbled with the pull-back tab on his half-and-half. When he got it, he spilled half of it into the saucer. He looked up at me and smiled. I smiled at him.

"Would you mind if I asked you a question?" he said.

"Not at all," I said.

"What color was your mother's hair?"

I ran fast through the puddled streets, my eyes too blurred to read the the signs. I turned and weaved through traffic. The buildings were black shadows of each other, impossible to distinguish. I stopped somewhere to sit on a bench. It was wet and I felt the water soak my pants in parallel lines.



Admiring the Mad Scientists

I admire the mad scientist

The way he reaches up, dust trailing
to brush his wild hair from his
greased forehead while staring at a
bubbling green vial.

The way he drops a pink froth
to the floor and then follows it down
on his knees, howling as the moon and
mist drift through the grating.

Muttering and crying and going nowhere
the mad scientist has no false side
no filthy aspirations
he works at midnight, gets no grants
conducts no research.

And when you, you who just can't stand to see the dust settle on the scientific method, even here, give him a suit and balance, there's got to be balance you mutter, he rips off the sports coat dips the paisley tie in a bubbling black cauldron so that all that is left is the knot which you made slipping it around his neck like a medal, tightening it like a noose.

Yes, the mad scientist cackles at the zombies on
his black and white and for this, I admire
the mad scientist.

Hal Niedzviecki



Recessive Trait *Melissa Levine*

Culture

My moldy sweatsocks
breeding underneath My bed
become civilized

Jon Blum



Alsace January 1989 Janine Berg

Seven Cookie Treasure

Opportunity knocks but once;
trouble is more persistent
He who laughs at himself
never runs out of things to laugh at
A fool always finds a greater fool
to admire him
Be sincere—even when you don't mean it
Don't dwell on yesterdays
problems, just correct it
You will have a good day

Christine McGuinness

Found Justice

P claims permanent internal injuries
from consumption of spoiled canned corn
P has testified
(over objections with reference
to want of proof of causal connection)
that he suffered nausea
within five minutes
after consuming the food in question
was unable to eat solid foods for two weeks
and two years later is still suffering
intestinal disorders

P's wife has been allowed to testify
(over objections that the statement was
hearsay, self-serving, and
at best a statement of opinion)
that P stated
"The corn did it
I could tell it was the corn."

Jennifer White

Survival Kit for New Christians according to the Southern Baptist Convention

Welcome to God's family.
You are now a child of God!
Feed on God's word daily
now that you have
tasted the Lord
is good.
Breathe a prayer:
As you exhale, talk to God.
As you inhale, listen to God.
Who else do you know
that needs to have
this same experience?

Michelle Shih

DROWNING

HAL NIEDZVIECKI

We woke up early that morning, at the cottage on the lake in the sunshine. I was seven and my brother Orie was eight and a half and my Dad was a big guy who knew everything. I was excited. We were going fishing. Fishing to me was the embodiment of what a family should be doing at a cottage on a lake in the sunshine. Our socked feet padded through into Dad and Mom's room.

"Do it." I whispered urgently over my dad's snoring lump.

"Dad, hey Dad." My brother was always the cautious one.

"Umm wha? Who?" Dad responded, "Blehh snort."

"Fishing!" I urged, tapping my foot.

"Uh...yeah, fishing, get out. Might...wake...mom."

We ran out of the room to get everything ready. We had confidence that Dad would get up; after all, he always did.

On the beach the water lapped, my brother looked like a part of this scene, like a little god.

"You." Orie pointed. "Get the life-jackets." I scampered

not ran or trotted but scampered to follow his orders. One went around my neck, one went on my arm, and one was held to my chest with my elbow. On the way back I stubbed my toe. I knew I would. It was all right.

Now Dad was on the beach. Grizzly the way he had to be because I had no need for a father that wasn't.

"You boys get the boat in the water." We did. Orie claimed I dropped it on his knee but he was always the wimp of the family. Dad had the rods, the worms.

We got in and the sun rose. It was in my face as Dad began to row; for some reason I can't remember if we pushed off or not. Dad rowed sitting backward, a concept that I couldn't grasp. I didn't ask; I was watching the water go by, like watching the tops of clouds go by in an airplane but better because you can stick your hands out and touch and watch what you've done. Then I remembered my Gila monster.

At the time I had no idea exactly what a Gila monster was but I knew I had one. It was rubber. It was green. It was a Gila monster. I had clasped it in my hand determined that Gila (an affectionate name for a beauty of a monster) would fish too. So I unclasped

my hand and watched it straighten out the way rubber does. The black, deep, painted-on eyes looked fearsome. At least to me. My brother was always laughing at my Gila monster. He was always the jealous one of the family. I knew the time had come to see what this monster could really do. Could, I thought to myself on that summer's sunny day, it swim. I had no doubt that it could, for the Gila monster of my desire could swim and so too would this one. I placed it in the water and my belly button froze as I leaned over the edge of the boat. And my heart was filled with happiness. It floated.

For a minute he looked so noble in the sunlight that I forgot to keep my grasp on his tail. At the time I was in the right state of mind to appreciate the nobleness of a Gila monster. I let go and not the boat, not even the world, stopped as he shot away. But he was not yet out of my reach, I thought, who knows, I had been right before. Now the edge of the boat was crushing my testicles. Now the cold water was coursing over my head on a bright green summer's day.

"Blub," I said. I got no response. "Glub," I tried. I guess for a minute there I thought nobody loved me. I opened my eyes and saw nothing that I wanted to see. That happens to me every morning. I closed my

On the beach the water lapped, my brother looked like a part of this scene, like a little god.

eyes and felt something lifting me and I hung there, suspended over the water by my father's arm.

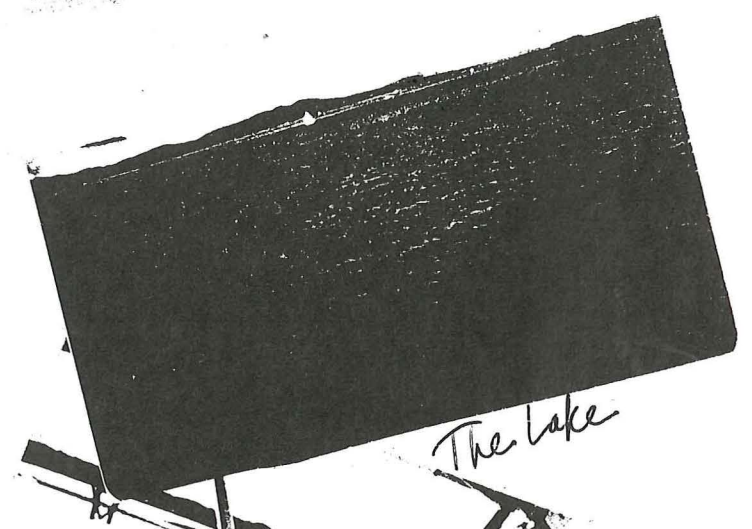
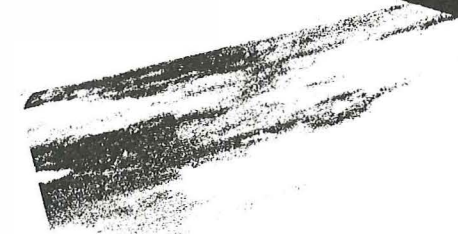
"Fish?" My brother sounded excited. I figured I'd open my eyes.

"Wha?" I asked. I don't think I was still hanging there over the green. Couldn't have been.

"Fish! Did you see any fish?" He was shaking a bit. I guess it really mattered at the time because I thought about it and wrinkled my dripping, tan, seven year old, maybe older at that point, face.

"Nah, couldn't have. Had my eyes shut."

For me, fishing was over and Gila was just a drowned hunk of rubber. For Dad, hey, he had rescued his son. Next to Gila he's the star of this story. For my brother, well, who knows? He was always the strange one of the family.





Sam Bryan Wolf

Don't Talk to Me About Love

Don't talk to me about love
 Laying your head on my shoulder
 sighing like a dog who can't find the bone
 blowing your wet breath on my neck. Don't tell
 me about moonlight or the walk on the beach
 goddamn the first kiss with its lingering sentiments
 because when I ask you about those stupid
 relationships, oh I know they're doomed from
 the beginning like an ant crushed and stuck
 to the pavement with its antennae still
 waving struggling to get up
 yeah he's going far. Then
 you can tell me. So
 don't talk to me
 about love,
 again.

Hal Niedzviecki

Latent

No one wonders if
 I am homosexual
 except my girlfriend

Kenneth Katz

Married Him For His Money

Early Morning Kiss.
 Bathroom Kiss.
 Shower Kiss.
 Sharing the Sink Kiss.
 Getting Dressed Kiss.
 Breakfast Kiss.
 Goodbye Kiss.
 Goodbye Again Kiss.

Took an hour off to be with you Kiss.
 Being with you Kiss.
 Goodbye till later Kiss.

Hello Kiss.
 How was your day Kiss.
 Changing Clothes Kiss.
 Before Dinner Kiss.
 Dinner Kiss.
 After Dinner Kiss.
 What should we do tonight Kiss.
 Watching TV Kiss.
 Changing Clothes Again Kiss.
 Brushing Teeth Kiss.
 Getting Into Bed Kiss.
 Goodnight Kiss.
 Lights Out Kiss.
 Kiss.

Deborah Wassertzug

Rain Dance

I snuggle back in my seat
turn my cheek, touch it to the
plaid headrest
the weather makes me feel
armored against the
slinging darts of rain

Streaks pattern my face
lines like scars fall on my hands,
my shoulder, just missing my heart.
God is crying, I used to say—
a child strapped in the back seat trying
to touch the drops with my fingertips
breathing storm clouds on the glass

The pattering continues
even the trees look melting, hazily sinking
faded green coats my land, the color of
a Christmas tree, stripped and vulnerable,
in January, February, March
the attached who can't bear to throw it away
won't use it to burn.

If you caught a raindrop, would it be
a diamond in your hands, or water
struggling to dwindle into oblivion?
I believe, I wonder if
each tries to
sparkle
furiously
before the end of the inevitable fall

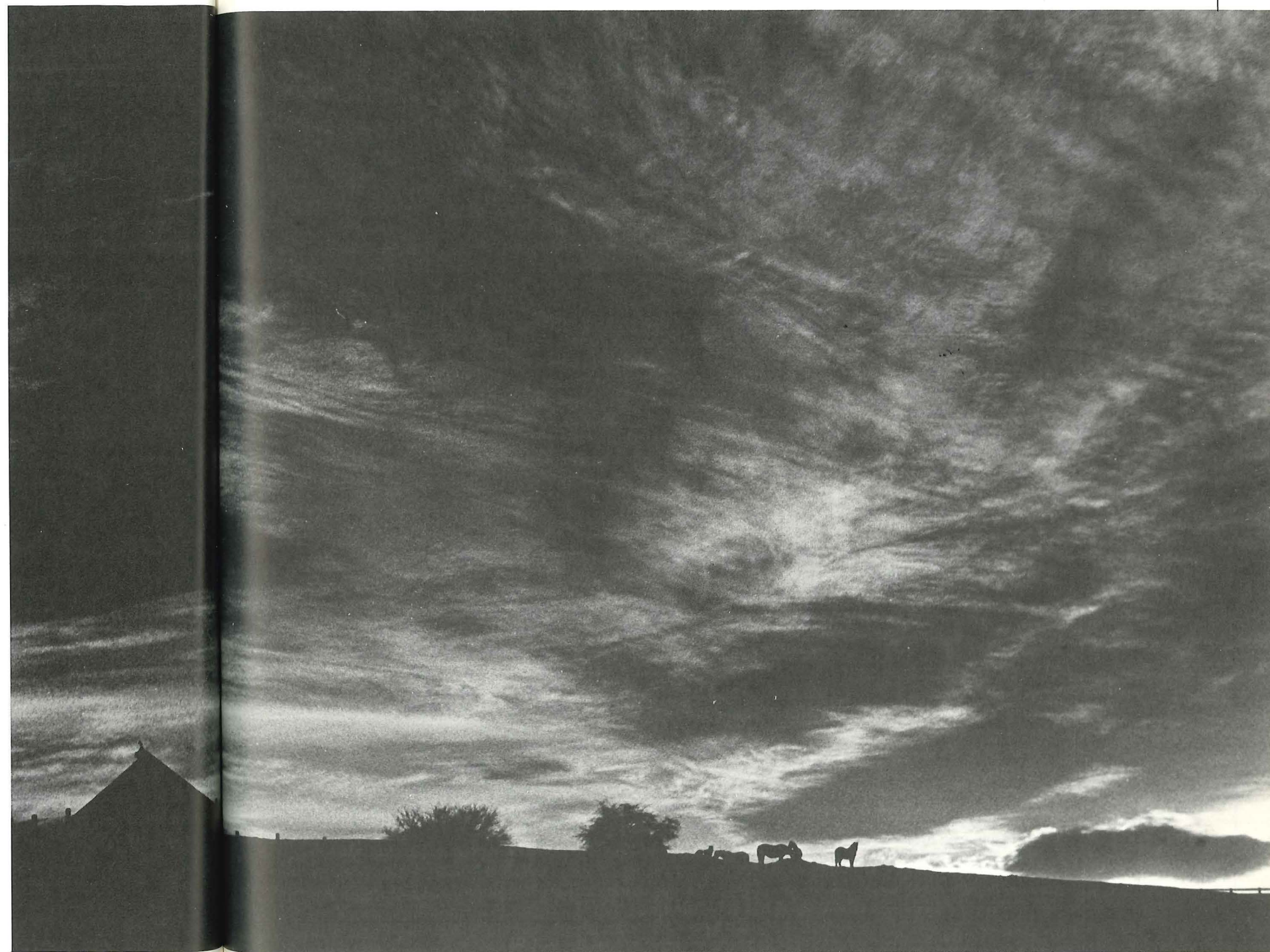
When rain brings life
wind follows, between land
and seas
What's not expected is
the rustle, the crack,
the howl.
How quickly the clouds
shoot across the sky
a hundred mph wide.
The torrent in winter
is a blessing the heat.
It's all in the timing.

When an airplane passes
over my vision's line,
I hear huge thunderheads
looming to the west
fast approaching
throwing daggers of lightning
and shattering mountains
with their roar.

At the mercy of my fear
to be trapped, alone, I
turn my head
slowly
and stare wide-eyed at the silver glitter
whizzing out of sight

still I, heart pounding,
am patrolled by fate, another's will,
and carry into a rebirth of tears.

Nicole Carson



Mackerel Sky Chris Bailey

POLITICS AND THE POET:

A CONVERSATION WITH E. ETHELBERT MILLER

DANIEL SHARFSTEIN

"The political artist wants to open people's minds, shake them to think and to be free."

E. Ethelbert Miller sits back in the chair of his Howard University office and smiles. He is soft-spoken, but his message is strong.

For the past twenty years, E. Ethelbert Miller has dedicated himself to political issues in Washington, D. C., and around the world in poetry and in action. "I am trying to target what I can be helpful in," says Miller. "At the same time, I am trying to do more—it is a responsibility. You reach a certain point in your career where if you're talking

about opening doors for people and things of that sort, you really have to go out there and do that."

Linking the literal world of politics and the creative world of poetry, he has helped connect political writers around the area to various causes through his network of contacts, while he has written substantive poetry himself.

And Miller is not a passive observer of world events. His involvement in political organizations has taken him around the world. He hopes to change the future world through literature and activism in the present. "We teach literature as if it is detached from our life and it's not. Once the reader begins to make connections to his or her life, then if you are the writer, you



realize the importance that you can have and the responsibility as a writer. I don't care if you are writing about flowers, because sooner or later you are going to deal with the ozone layer."

E. Ethelbert Miller came to Washington in 1968 as a freshman at Howard University. During one of the most turbulent times in American history, he made major decisions to work for a better African-American society as a poet. "I made a certain commitment during the 1960's. When you ask a Black person why they were writing, they were writing for the Black community. They were writing to raise consciousness, focus on certain issues, put forth certain images. I made that commitment back then. I still uphold that commitment."

Political awareness and action are keys to Miller's identity as a Black poet. "I have to see myself as a Black writer in the United States in 1989, and I think that just accepting that means that I accept certain literary politics—some of it being the politics of exclusion. At the same time, I feel that I am part of a tradition of African-American writers and African-American literature in which such themes as liberation

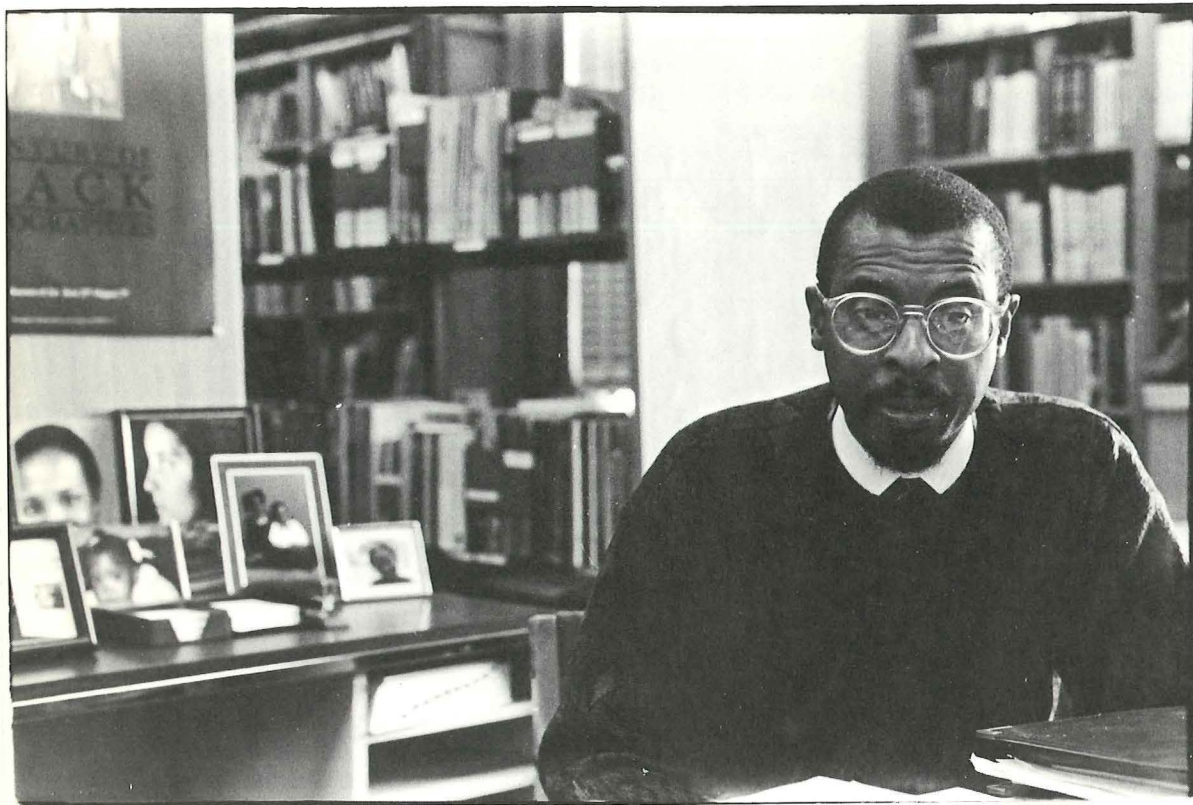
"I have to see myself as a Black writer in the United States in 1989, and I think that just accepting that means that I accept certain literary politics—some of it being the politics of exclusion."

and freedom are intrinsic to that body of literature." It is his responsibility as an African American writer to deal with issues which are prominent in the Black community as well as sensitive issues which people are afraid to discuss: homosexuality and AIDS, domestic violence, and child abuse.

Miller also wants to open doors to the Black community which have always been closed. Heavily committed to basic changes in America's education system and in the way people view education, he wants people to envision the African-American struggle as the struggle of a Third World nation. Teachers have to change their fundamental teaching philosophies. He believes that presently teachers too easily say, "Well, if I can just get three kids to read and write and go to college, that's it." No—it has to be turned around there. If there're thirty-five kids in the classroom, thirty have to make it."

Compulsory education in prisons and greater application of literature to everyday life also make up Miller's agenda. Students should see literature as a call to action and as a way to relate to their own problems. "The object is for people not to have a passive response anymore. In this day and age, we should be educating people to change and improve our society."

Miller believes that writers and artists are also teachers whose work "serves as a catalyst in terms of opening the [awareness]." One of Miller's own mentors includes



**"You discover
overseas...how
much you do
not know
about America.
You go to
South America,
and they want
to discuss
Faulkner."**

the actor Paul Robeson. He admires Robeson's embrace of African culture, his rise to prominence through the media, commitment to the working class, dedication to key political issues, and use of his talents to accomplish his goals. During the McCarthy Era, Robeson sacrificed his livelihood for his political beliefs. He stayed true to his principles while other artists were apologetic for their work and politics.

Because of his inner strength, Robeson has been a major influence of African-American artists for the past forty years. Miller, in this tradition, asks, "Where's the commitment?" And that's the thing I think writers will always struggle with...is your political commitment a fad, a trend? Or is it a life-long commitment, so that no matter where the issue is raised, you're there and people can count on you. And you're willing to risk your career [for the issue]."

Washington is an ideal base for E. Ethelbert Miller's work because it lends itself to politics and thus to political writing. There is a larger, better-informed audience for political poetry in Washington, and the people take a more active stance on major issues. "Washington is the type of city where you could walk down the street and bump into a demonstration." Also, there is a large number of people who have escaped from political injustice, living in Washington. "You begin to see people, particularly in the summer, with short sleeve shirts. You see people who have been tortured just like with a number of Asian-Americans, you can see who has suffered the impact of napalm. You can see that. And as a writer, walking down the street and taking in the environment, there are things to write about."

Political organizations often want speakers and poets for their rallies, so they turn to Miller.

The positions he holds in the literary community—as director of the Afro-American Resource Center at Howard, director of the Ascension Poetry reading series, and as board member of PEN/FAULKNER Foundation and of the Cultural Alliance of Greater Washington—have provided him with a vast network of contacts and writers. He refers groups to various writers, and he reads his own work at rallies.

He has written three volumes of poetry. The most recent collection of his work, *where are the love poems for dictators?*, centers around three major themes: civil rights, love and Central American politics.

His interest in Latin America grew out of his personal life and his political activities. With a Panamanian father, Miller was always connected to Latin American issues. He is the only one of his siblings who does not actually speak fluent Spanish.

He grew up in a Puerto Rican

neighborhood in New York City, and many of his friends are from Latin America. Because of his friends' direct involvement in the Latin American situation, he became very interested in the politics of the area. In the early 1980's, friends living in Nicaragua invited Miller to visit.

His experiences there gave him an appreciation of the culture and history of the country which he incorporated in his poetry. He went from writing functional poetry for demonstrations or reading unrelated poetry to writing much more substantive material. Also, he learned a lot about the United States. "I encourage political writers to travel, to go overseas. What you find is a much more intellectual climate. But the thing you discover overseas is how much you do not know about America. You go to South America, and they want to discuss Faulkner."

Experiencing things firsthand also allows Miller to open his mind and change his views. Seeing the problems affecting Nicaragua as well as abuses committed by the Nicaraguan government, he criticizes the United States' role in Central America as well as the Sandinistas' lack of freedom of thought and expression. "If you're a political writer and you support certain things...it's up to you to be critical." Travelling keeps him from becoming blind to the real issues or from becoming close-minded, which Miller believes is the worst path for a political writer. He says, "If these experiences make you a better person, then I think it makes you a better writer."

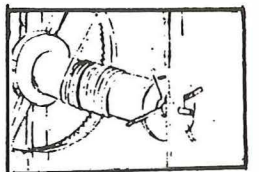
Miller finds that love is also an extension of political thought and expression. "We are always writing love poems. And when you look at those relationships, I learned a lot about family structures, the politics of relationships, the power in relationships."

He also writes about America and tries to bring his poetry through to the American audi-

ence. "Around the world, the major writers who almost become like national treasures are also writers that embody the mythology and history of their country. The problem with our country is that many of the political writers, their politics many times are against or in opposition to what the United States stands for." Lamenting that too many progressive writers are turned away from the country due to political differences, Miller wants to return to basic American culture and history. "The whole thing of America becomes the White House. So you are against policies, but you need to embrace the land. At least get back to that."

E. Ethelbert Miller has worked through his writing, his

jobs, and experiences towards the greater goals of continued freedom of expression and thought, improved education, and improved rights for all people. To a large extent, he has succeeded in arousing people to action, but there is still unfinished work. Until the injustices of the world are conquered, until "there are no more poems to be written," E. Ethelbert Miller will be hard at work. "It's tied in with what I see myself doing here at Howard, why I have put together over twenty years a fascinating network of information, culture, and politics. Writing just gets mixed in there."



**there is a place where
the sea goes when it is tired**

last week we marched to the square
to protest the shortage of food
we were women not politicians
we were mothers not communists
we were thousands not hundreds

it made no difference

bayonets and blood
they beat us
clubbed us
opened our stomachs
with knives

they told us

do not worry
about food

the dead do not starve

Summer's Fool

It was the sexiest moon I'd ever seen,
the kind that made bare arms shimmer silver
in the moon's breath, turned cotton sheets
to cool satin, stirred up something in an
old man while he blew smoke rings for
his lady's finger.
Kind of moon could make a girl
dizzy from her own caress and so sweet
she could kiss herself and feel loved.

Vijai Nathan

Citypanic *Melissa Levine*



Do Not Pass Go

I watched as you lined your crimson hotels along Boardwalk,
always Boardwalk, unsheathing money that multiplied when I
sneezed and you told me your houses sat empty, families away on
safari, whenever the taxman came. I nodded and studied my left foot,
untainted by the stealthy hand stuffing bills under the board but you
never went to jail, the community chest slipped you the bail while I
paved and re-paved the cardboard streets but when I paid one luxury
tax too many on rusted railroads and had to mortgage my slums, you
decided to visit.

Karen Ginsberg



Regrets Only

There's nothing sad about the last guest
leaving or the silence
because no one ever came,
but full bottles
and empty cups
that mean nothing
make sense
when invitations were never received
or sent;
for a party that never began
can never be
anything but over.

Sara Cohen



Cuckold

Falling sun,
when you slip away
the sky's hand
will not stay empty.
Watch him;
he'll embrace the moon
and risk her infidelity.
But don't turn back.
He might thank you.

Vicki Bajefsky

Synapse

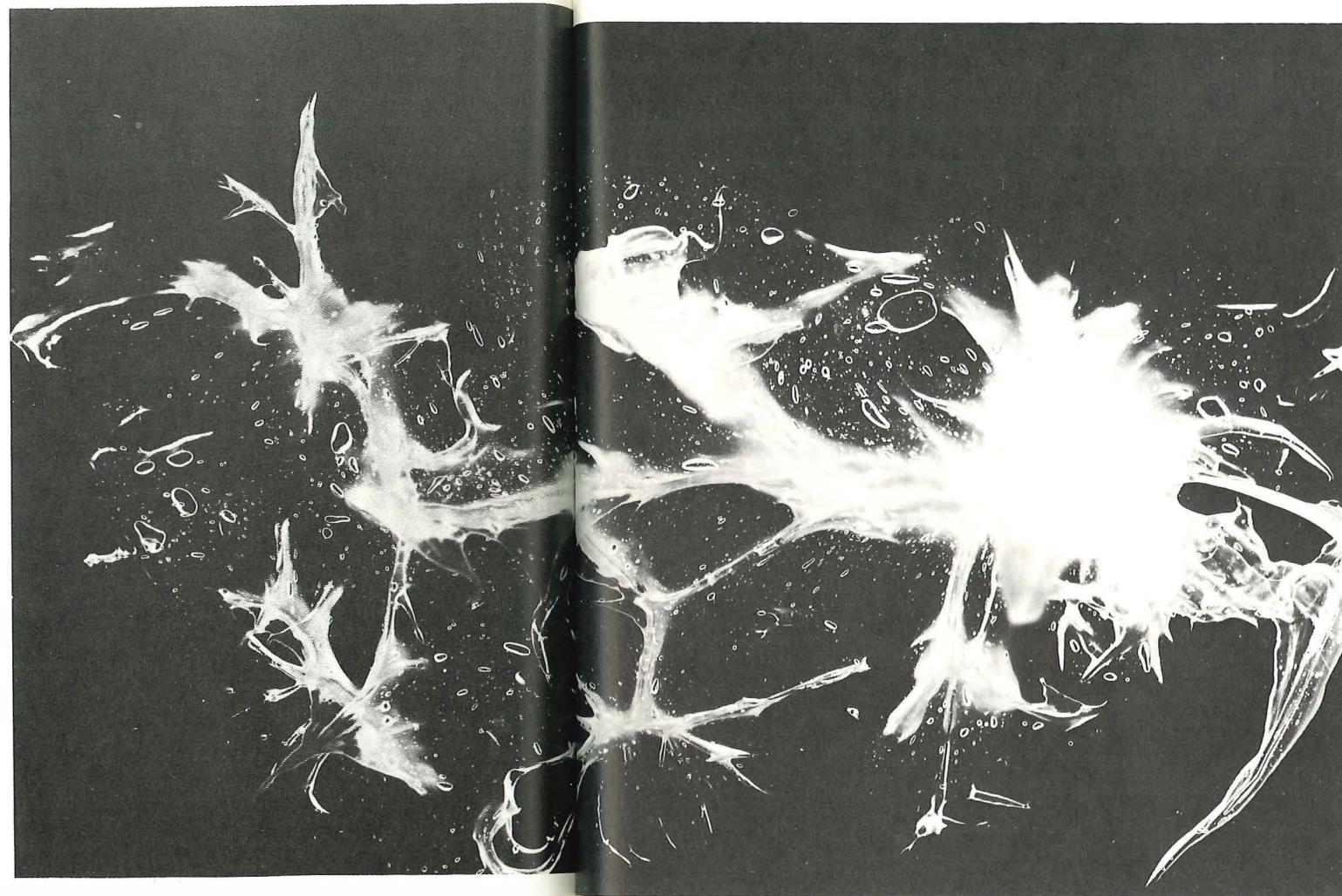
I know you're up there
like I know
that I have ten fingers
and a belly button.
Just sitting in my head
dormant
like a spent volcano

And I remember
the times
when people used to
ask me
what x stands for
and I could tell them that
x stands for...
a number
some number
maybe one?
They don't ask any more
and I wouldn't be able to tell them
if they did
because you'd refuse to answer

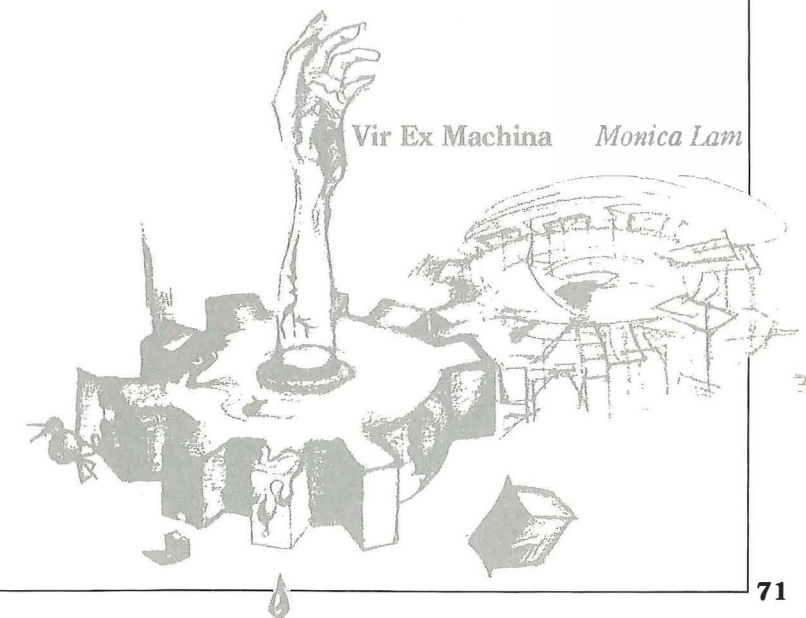
Instead you just
show me pictures of the
before times
and when I reach up
to grab a hopeful piece
you retract
like the grapes from
that guy in Ancient
in Ancient
in Ancient
times

But I know that you're there
absolutely positively
attached
but not hooked up
just kind of sitting there
like a TV with
no plugs
in a room that's
boarded up for good,
condemned.
playing pictures
of numbers
and long words
collecting grey dust

Charlie Buckholtz

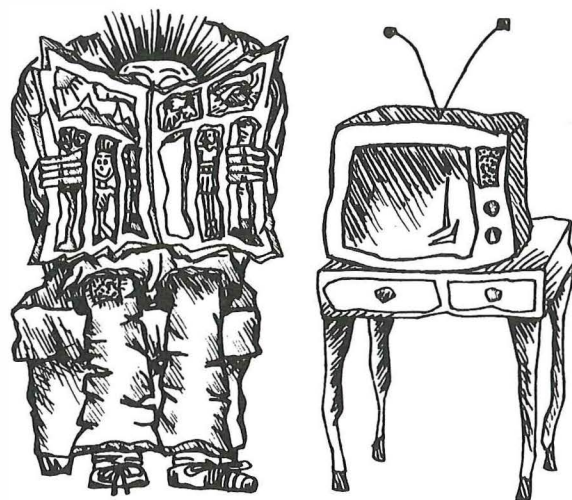


Impulse *Richard Kuo*



ARMPIT

RACHEL GROSE



Jersey Domestic Melissa Levine



Everyone hates New Jersey, or at least everyone says that they hate New Jersey.

I like New Jersey. It's a fun place. I remember once driving on the New Jersey Turnpike. There was nothing wrong with it. It was like any other turnpike. We stopped at a furniture factory. That is, Phil and me. We bought a big white sofa. We used it in the living room for years until the baby spit up all over it one time too many, and we realized that the sofa was no longer white.

That day the sun shone brightly. I woke up early and went for a run. I must have run far because by the time I got back both the baby and Phil were awake.

"The baby is hungry," Phil said.

"Feed it."

Who wants to feed the baby. Anyone? Goddamn baby. Can't do anything for itself. I fed the baby and put it back in the crib.



The phone rang and it was my mother.

"Did you start your spring cleaning yet?"

"No."

"You should start it soon, it's almost...." I removed the phone from my ear. Yap. Yap. Yap.

"Mom, uh, I have to go the baby is crying." (The baby is useful for something, I discovered.)

"Is she sick? You know when you were seven months old--"

"Mom, listen, I don't have time right now. I'll call you later. Bye."

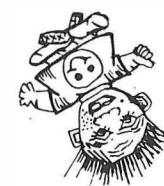
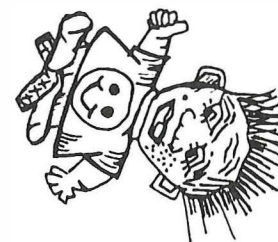
My mother. She could drive a crazy person crazy. Looking around the room I wondered what I should do. Maybe I should do some cleaning. The broom was beginning to collect dust.

"Wahhhhhhhhhhh."

The baby. What does it want now? She had peed. I was about to change the diaper, but there were none left, so I left the baby in the bathtub.

Our bathroom is really a nice room. It's all peach and silver. The latest. The shower curtain had little petunias on it. The floor is marble. Fake of course, but you really can't tell. The mirror is one hundred percent pure glass. I like the bathroom. The mirror reminded me that I had not showered.

I heard a noise from the bedroom. It sounded like singing. It was! I saw that Phil had neglected to turn off the clock radio. It was playing "Rock Around the Clock." I always liked that song. Looking around the room I noticed my old Dollie. Dollie was my favorite doll when I was little. Supposedly we played for hours together.



We bought a big white sofa. We used it in the living room for years until the baby spit up all over it one time too many, and we realized that the sofa was no longer white.

"Why do I have that old thing?" I muttered.

Well, I don't need it anymore. I picked up the doll and began to bludgeon it against the wall. It remained intact. I hit it harder. It still appeared fine. The room was now bright with sunlight.

"I hate this doll."

I noticed a pair of toenail scissors on the dresser. I stabbed the doll in the eye. No blood came out. I stabbed the doll all over her body, no blood.

"Wahhhhhhhhhhh."

That damn baby again. I entered the bathroom. It was in the tub where I left it. In the mirror I saw the scissors.

"Toby, are you home?" Phil called out.

"I'm up here."

Phil came up. "What is the baby doing in the bathtub?"

"There were no more diapers."

"I am home. Mr. Stimson was murdered."

"When's the funeral?"

"Tomorrow."

"Where?"

"Somewhere in New Jersey."

"Can we go? Maybe we could stop in a factory on the way home. We need a new sofa. I like New Jersey. You know we never go there anymore. When I die I want to be buried in New Jersey."





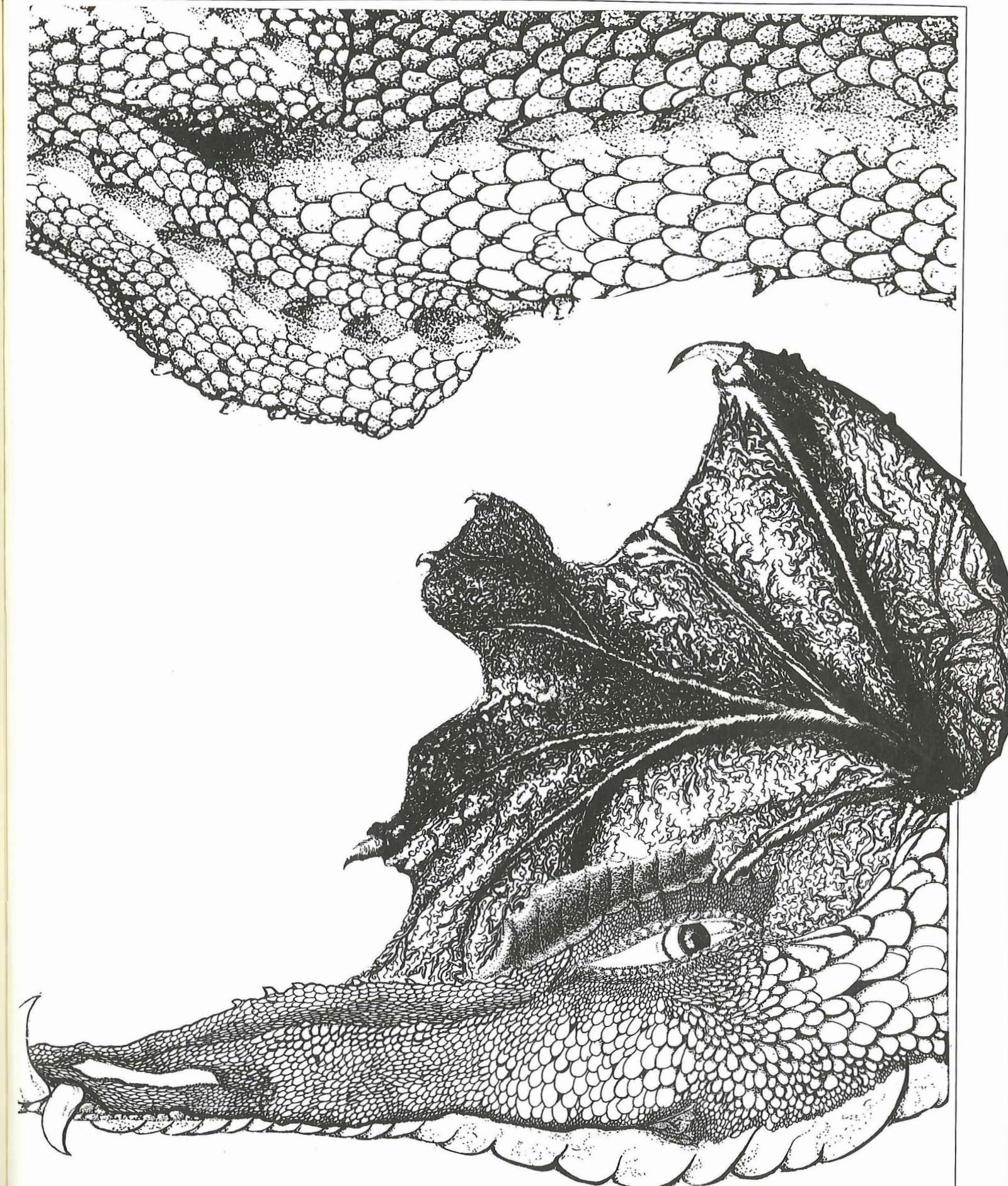
My Man is an Arboreal Lizard

You can tell it.
I know it's hard—
took me twenty years—
but you can tell it.
By the way his coarse skin ripples
and flaps when he's panicked
and by the way when
he moves a limb
he forgets the bone.
By the way when
he shuts his eyelids
he licks his lips quick
and by the way he runs the shower,
not getting in, but setting his head
crooked back on his shoulders
and grinning
while the steam soaks through.
By the way he's healthiest
in summer months
and how his whole body gasps
when you've got him mad.
How it swells up huge and
suddenly contracts, like a pin
popped through the skin.
When you get the chance,
run your fingers down the back
of his neck
and feel the protrusions.
And notice
if you have occasion
that he doesn't need limbs
to climb a tree
that he slides right up the bark.
And if you ever catch him
in a deep sleep
Listen to him breathe.
Listen to the short huffs
of breath
Each a minute apart.
My man is sly
He doesn't let on
what the truth is,
but you can tell it.

Melissa Levine



Slithy Toves *Sheila Horgan*

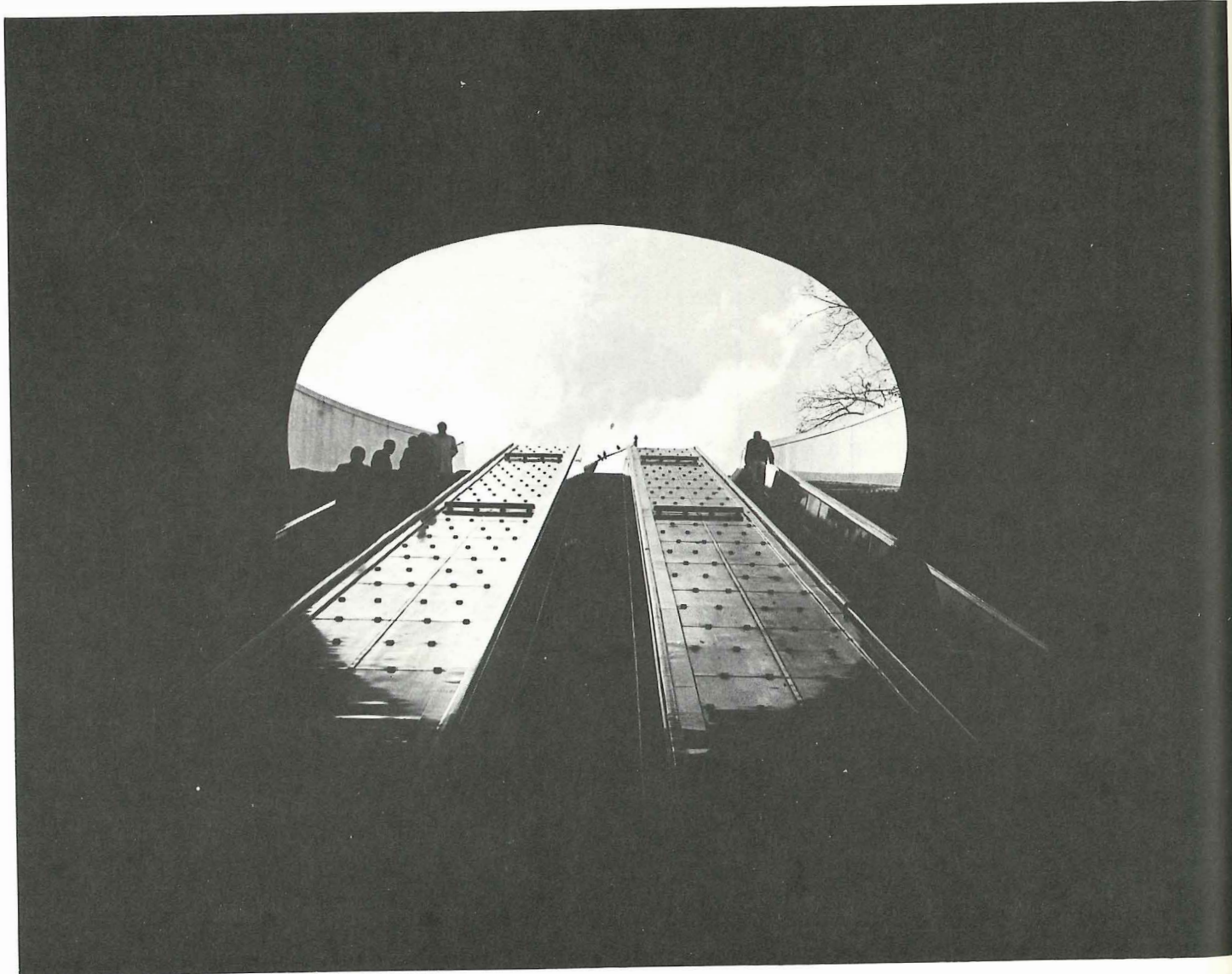


Mood Swing

Straight to swerve
in split whip
drought until swill
but still swelter
Moon-struck mind
names on lark
then picks other, sudden
For the moon-calf
can hide true will
with nimble shift
and his shroud
is his mind game

Jennifer White

Ascension *Daniel Chang*



Ode

Oh, what's the goddamn difference
between poetry and verse?
Oh, where's the bonny lass
who came to draw my bath?
Oh, if I only knew her name,
her face would be a lie.
Oh Ireland, oh Ireland,
I wish I knew ye better!

The anguish left unspoken,
the spirit of ten broken
men who'd die to save
their lasses,
brave bombs and poison gases,
endure another famine,
oh Ireland.
But this song remains umbilical,
the tone of it too lyrical,
and my sentiment too cynical
to make any sort of sense.
Oh Ireland, oh Ireland,
I wish I knew ye better!
As I sit amongst the slaughters
of the commissioner's daughters,
I think of all the poems
that have gone unsung before.
Won't you save me from the fate
of a life that ends too late?
Or make my face a mirror
for all the world to cry in
Or make my mouth an ocean
for stricken lads to die in.
But Ireland, oh Ireland,
don't make me rise too early.
And when this page has ended,
street urchins with bellies distended
will gather round my typewriter
and beg for half a pence.
I must stop this idle rambling,
for it does no good to no one
and nowhere shall you find me
or my poor unwanted soul.

Let fly a rash of anger:
come tell it in the manger.
Come cry it in the nave
of your Protestating churches.

Deborah Wassertzug

Capture the Flag

Again the children
are preparing for
crusade,

jeans and tee-shirts
hang from sink and shower
like old skin.
A sneaker gapes
behind the bathroom door.

Kids have always known these rules
and now go soft
in paint and camouflage,
assume a hide to hide in,
stalk the outer darkness
dressed to kill.

They argue in a blind
of withered leaves
of who and who not,
snap their caps
and laser guns.

I got you!
That's not fair!

as though the world still honored
Queensbury,
as though their teeth but chatter
with the cold
and they need only
put on other clothes
to lose the taste of blood.

Robin Suleiman



Sentinel *Jon Elsberg*

The Grandeur of Learning

Noise got up and walked out of the room when class began
Each second hammered out of our clock.

The teacher marionetted in front of us
pointing here and there
and a ventriloquist made her speak
She entertained us at first
until her voice
Cast a blanket of black magic over us;
we zombies were voracious and
our eyes rocked in our heads as we encircled our prey
and danced mournfully around her

We hungered for knowledge
So we feasted on her brains
We yearned to speak with an educated tongue
So we devoured her mouth
Her eyeballs melted like chocolate in our cheeks
and we saw eternity beckon
and when our frenzy ended, we,
nourished and plump,
Flossed our teeth with marionette strings.

Chris Yates

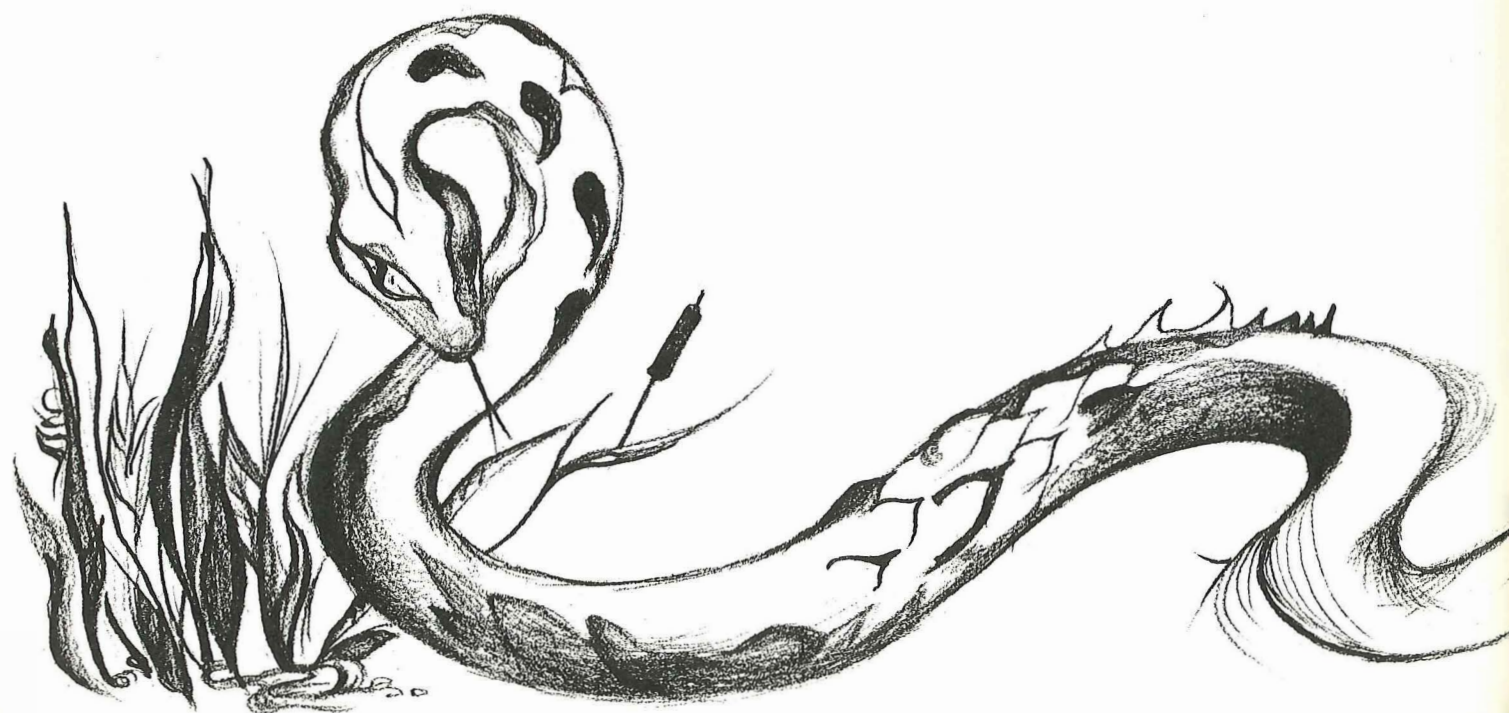
Scale

here, child
clutch the knots of gorse
wrestle nettles
higher, then
and heave your writhing body up the whirling crags of rock
arm, then arm
curl a limb into a white and cooling crack
then out again into a reeling sun
now pry your sinews over the stony rim
stand and breathe
the sky

Wendy Levitis

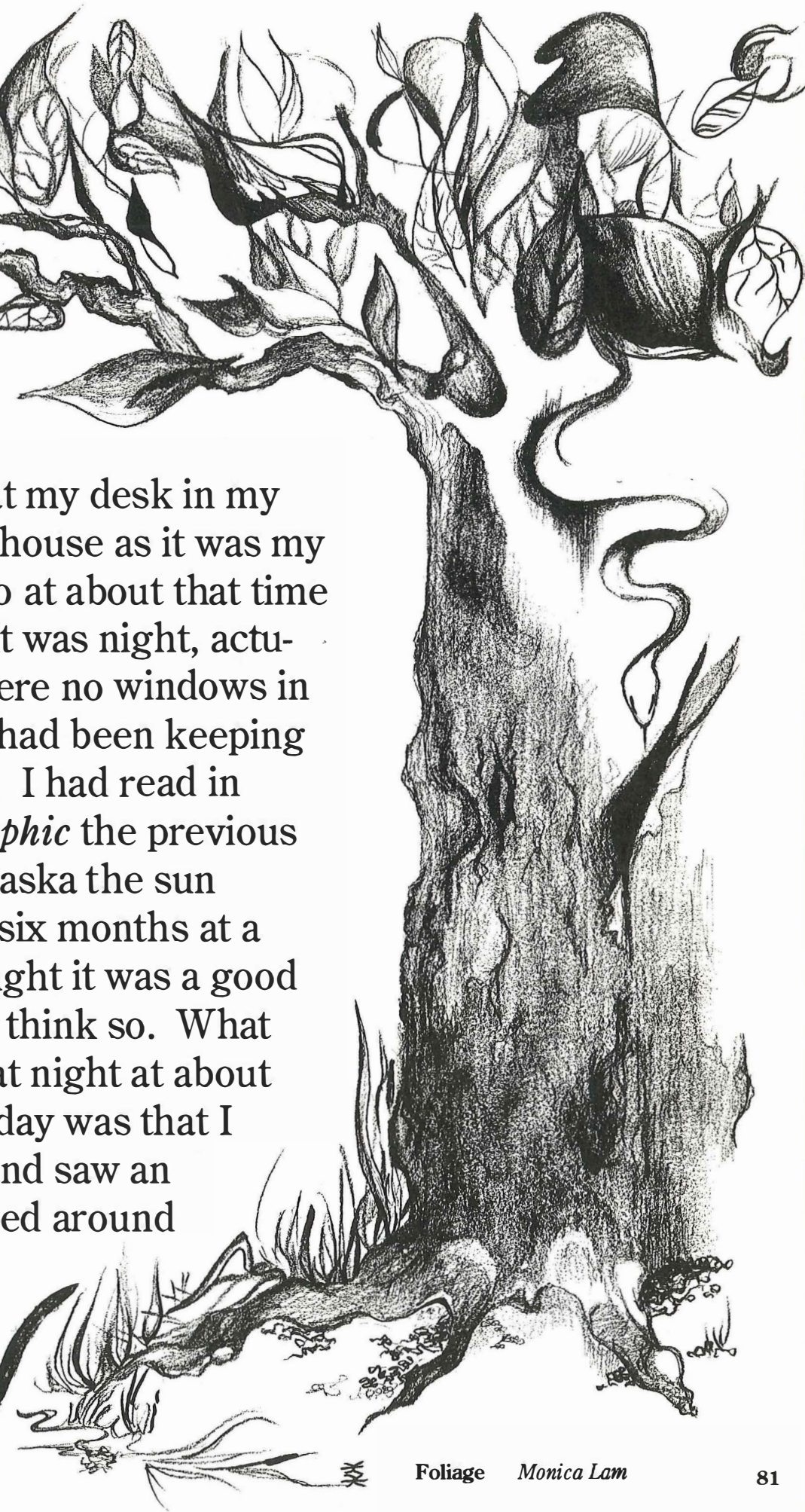
ANACONDA

JORDAN ELLENBERG

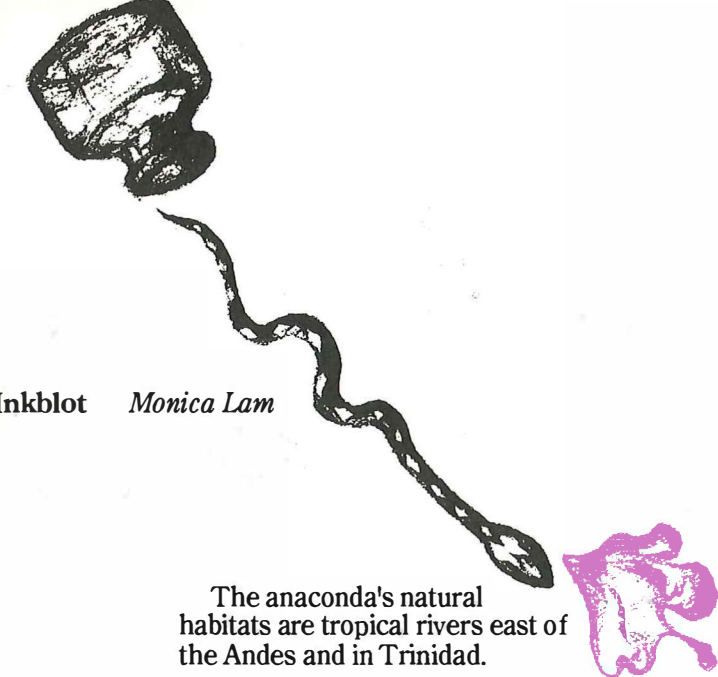


I was sitting at my desk in my room in my house as it was my custom to do at about that time of the day. It was night, actually, but there were no windows in that room and I had been keeping it lighted all day. I had read in *National Geographic* the previous month that in Alaska the sun shines for up to six months at a time. I had thought it was a good idea then. I still think so. What happened on that night at about that time of the day was that I turned around and saw an anaconda wrapped around my bookshelf.

erehwon1989



Foliage Monica Lam



The anaconda's natural habitats are tropical rivers east of the Andes and in Trinidad.

My house is not on a tropical river, so I knew that the anaconda was not in its natural habitat. From reading *National Geographic* I knew that natural habitat was very important to animals, especially anacondas. I decided to simulate a tropical river in Trinidad as best I could. I went downstairs and drew some warm water from the tap. It tasted a little greasy but I was sure that was all right. I brought the water back upstairs in a bucket and poured it over the anaconda. It moved slightly, dislodging a few novels. I made a few more trips and before long there was a sizable puddle beneath the bookcase. Very nice. The anaconda swished his tail through the water a few times and seemed somewhat more content. I noticed that volumes A-Barton, Lalo-Montpar, and Pewter-Richillieu of my encyclopedia were ruined. That was all right too. After all, four or five letters out of twenty-six was a small price to pay for a tropical river in one's bookcase. It was approaching the time of day when I went to bed, so I did.

Later I woke up. The anaconda looked unhappy, even though the river was holding up nicely. I thought about this for some time. Then I realized that the lights were still on their Alaska schedule. I turned the lights off and the anaconda

There was a picture of an anaconda wrapped around a South American. Some others were standing nearby, just watching. I imagined them very calm, especially the wrapped one, making small talk in South American, taking a siesta after it was all over.

immediately relaxed. I noticed that it seemed a little bigger than it did yesterday.

The next day I had to go out in the street to buy a baobab. Ordinarily I do not do this. Go out in the street, that is. Although, ordinarily, I do not buy a baobab either. In any case it was an unusual experience for me. However, it seemed to me that a baobab would be an appropriate item for a tropical river setting, and I understood that sacrifices had to be made in order to provide authenticity. So it was that I was in the street, and later in a store that advertised a wide variety of plants. The proprietor watched me, curious but distant, as though I were some kind of exotic orchid below glass.

"I'd like to buy a baobab," I said.

"A baobab?"

"Yes. Such as those found in tropical rivers east of the Andes and in Trinidad."

He trudged into the back room, hunched like a rat in a too-small hole. He came back a few minutes later with a stunted tree in an olive green pot. Greyish dirt was leaking from the sides. The tree was not nearly so impressive to my untrained eye as those featured in *National Geographic*. However, I could tell from my baobab checklist (which I had torn from the magazine the previous night) that it was authentic. I took the pot from the proprietor; he let go eagerly. I handed him a few deeply creased bills and left before he could say anything else. In the street people looked around me at traffic signs. I was glad when I arrived home and shut the door against the city.

I found that there was a residue of soil lining the floor of my room, only a thin dusting in most parts but thick enough near the bookcase to plant a baobab in. I took the tree out of the pot. It came with no resistance. As soon as I planted the baobab it looked much healthier. The anaconda

looked at me listlessly. There was moss growing from between the books on the shelf.

One night I woke up and thought I heard macaws screaming in my window.

Some days later the anaconda was far more vigorous than it had been on its arrival. It was nearly twice as long and the sluggishness in its eyes was gone. It had extended a loop of itself around the baobab, which was approaching in quality the pictures I had seen in the magazine. I was downstairs filling the bucket for the river when I realized that the baobab pot, being larger, would be more convenient. I went up to get it but I couldn't find it, which was strange as I hardly ever move anything once I've put it down. I was going to go finish with the bucket, but looking down at the river I realized that the water had begun to flow on its own, a sullen current from the hall to the wall under the window. That was good; it meant I didn't have to go downstairs anymore. I was tired of downstairs. It was like the street. It was like a foreign country where they spoke a language almost the same as our own.

The only thing I actually knew about anacondas was that they wrapped themselves around South Americans until they were dead. The South Americans, I mean. I had read about it in a *National Geographic* story some months ago. The South Americans didn't worry about it too much. You'd expect them to have an anaconda hotline, or something, to deal with it. They don't. There was a picture of an anaconda wrapped around a South American. Some others were standing nearby, just watching. I imagined them very calm, especially the wrapped one, making small talk in South American, taking a siesta after it was all over.

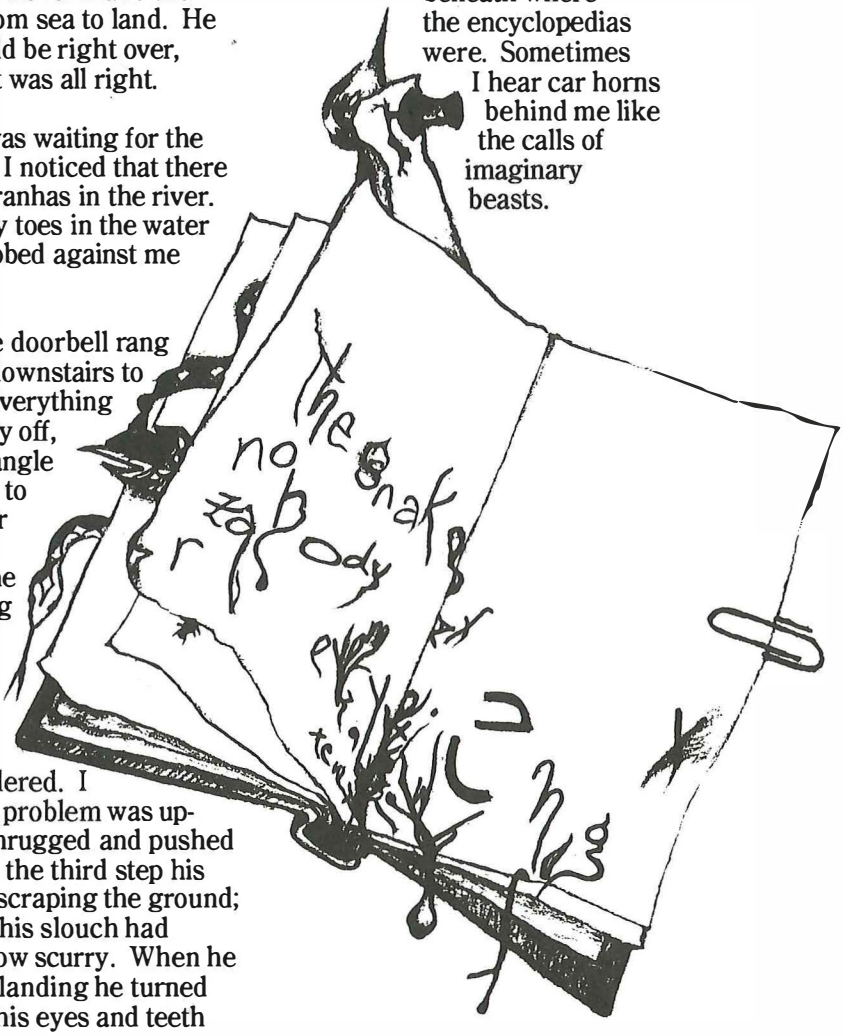
By the next day after that the baobab had spouted further. Its tendrils were wound around the books on the shelf, they had climbed the legs of the desk, they dipped listlessly into the river. I thought I felt one touch my ankle but when I looked down I saw only soil and floorboards. The tree was at least fifteen feet tall, although I didn't remember the room being that high. Just then I picked up the phone, which I had forgotten was there. The buttons were stubborn under my fingers but eventually there was ringing on the other end. The man from the plant store picked up the phone. I asked him to come over right away, if he could. I told him it was a baobab emergency. His voice through the phone sounded underwater, as though his forbears had never made the transition from sea to land. He said he would be right over, though, so it was all right.

While I was waiting for the baobab man I noticed that there were tiny piranhas in the river. I dangled my toes in the water and they rubbed against me like cats.

When the doorbell rang I had to go downstairs to answer it. Everything looked faintly off, every right angle transformed to ninety-one or eighty-nine degrees. The doorbell rang again and I opened the door. The baobab man awaited me, stoop-shouldered. I told him the problem was upstairs. He shrugged and pushed past me. By the third step his hands were scraping the ground; by the sixth his slouch had become a slow scurry. When he reached the landing he turned around and his eyes and teeth

were tiny and sharp. By the time he reached the top of the stairs his clothes had become fur, sweaty and matted. I gestured towards the door and he pawed it open without hesitation. The anaconda was very fast. The baobab man turned around once and to my delight I saw that his face was like that of a South American. The coils of the anaconda were like foliage growing thicker and thicker. At the end there was a flash of tooth.

Once I tried to make out the ceiling beyond the crown of the baobab but the branches were much too thick. Now I mostly sit on the outcropping that my desk is and look at the anaconda. Periodically I watch the baobab man, who bobs up and down peristaltically inside it, somewhere beneath where the encyclopedias were. Sometimes I hear car horns behind me like the calls of imaginary beasts.



On The Sixtieth Anniversary of the St. Valentines Day Massacre

Don't look it up.
If you want to know
ask me. I was there
squinting as though I had just come
from the movies
into that loud noon.
I was there to see them.
Eight men
with carnation badges
all shoulders and lapels
knocking at the door.

Ask me,
or you won't hear the breath of jazz as it opened.
Eight tipped brims
and later the staccato syncopation.
You won't scuffle closer to the doorway
to see the dancers.

Don't look it up;
you can't possibly see
the love
that was in their eyes.

Jordan Ellenberg

Aging

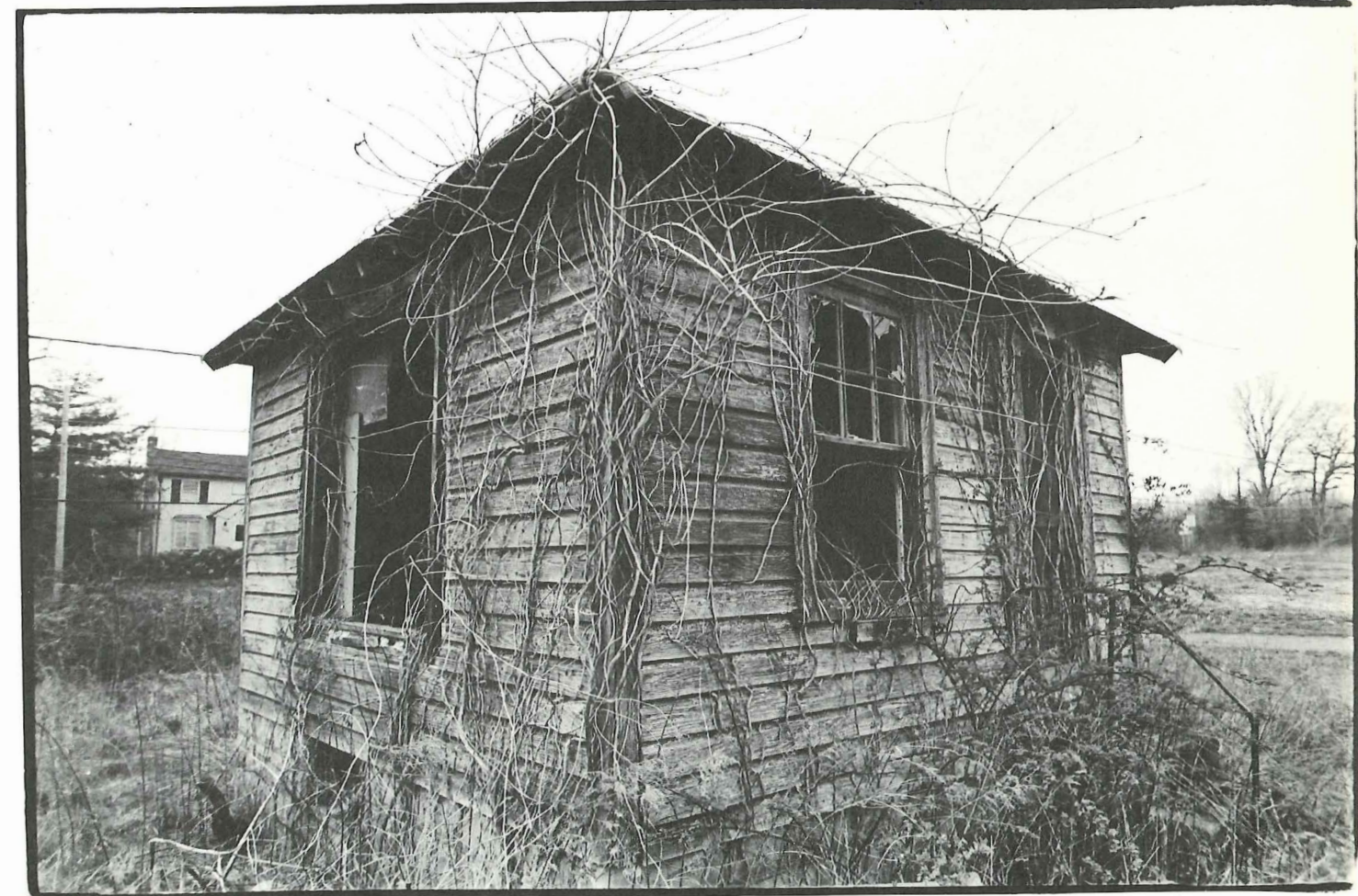
Two generations behind the times,
they argue over the trivial.
Worn out tires, useless to the country's machine,
kept in garages until their time is up.

You think of the past when my father was your son.
Then dream of the life you could have led.
You blot out the doctors, nurses, your husband.
Thinking only of me,
you let me fill your chest with treasures of youth.

Your mind is a terrible thing to save.
Slip into your wedding dress,
slip out of your mind,
pull the trigger.
It was over, anyway.

Daniel Lang

Strangled *Bryan Wolf*



I Can Never Find Orion in the Winter

He stands sentinel
by my window in August
when hot clouds muffle the sky.
The breeze breathes in
a hunter's scent
of earth and grass
and I can imagine
his studded sword-belt
pressed cold
against my skin.

But in December
stars crowd the sky,
and my neck aches
from the blows of frozen wind
and looking up too long.

Ann Boerner

Fallow Season

Hut stands still
over white-flaked ground
Earthtones seep through
thin snow
Dead bark strips from rooted tree
Drip slides down through gutter
as icicles shrink.
Warmth spreads
Kitchen pipes hum
and salt sloughs white off street.

Audra Small



Adam Apatoff('89) is the token Republican. He enjoys revolutions, vodka and humid weather. In another world he would be a huge mouth, but he means well. Contrary to popular belief, Adam does not wear a babushka when he's alone.

Chris Bailey ('91) fainted seconds after taking this photograph.

Vicki Bajefsky ('89) has nightmares that Peggy Pfeiffer will ask her to be the next ad manager for *Gargoyle*. Secretly, she wants to be the next Diane Wilkerson and spend a life of solitude with William Faulkner.

Janine Berg ('89) heard there were some great shots in those French back alleys, so she up and went there on assignment for *Erehwon*.

Jon Blum ('90) does not consider himself a poet. He is convinced there is a conspiracy to deny him credit as a Serious Writer by publishing his frivolous haikus.

Ann Boerner ('89) loves to interview sexist 70 year old poets. She aspires to become our nation's poet laureate (whatever that means) and to hire Bryan as her permanent chauffeur.

Chuck Buckholtz ('90) has struggled long and hard for little recognition. He gets his hair permed daily in anticipation of his soon-to-be love affair.

Nicole Carson ('89) was born in an ambulance on O Street, en route to Georgetown University Hospital. She was switched at the hospital and sold for 2000 drachmas to the head of the Greek Mafia, who was disguised as a math teacher.

Daniel Chang ('89), who is everything but African, will most likely return to Peru and join the Sendero Luminoso terrorist group after his parents spend a fortune on his American education.

Leonardo Da Vinci (d. 1519) enjoyed revolutionizing western civilization and Frisbee.

John Donahue ('90)—you may want to call him Don Johnahue, but don't.

Jordan Ellenberg ('89) had no social life until he discovered the Chinese Remainder Theorem. Now he's a debonair man-about-town and father of six. He is still overcoming the handicap of speaking only Pig Latin until age 14. Jordan's parents deny ever having children.

Jon Elsberg ('89) has seen the movie *Harold and Maude* 24 times. It figures.

Heather Evans ('89) is actually an incredibly sophisticated android constructed by extraterrestrials to destroy all life on Earth. She also enjoys tennis and stamp collecting.

Karen Ginsberg ('89) hopes to one day undermine society as we know it by forcing her hairstyle upon the unknowing masses.

Rachel Grose ('89) enjoys sunbathing by moonlight. Her dreams are to live in New Jersey and drop a bomb somewhere in Ohio.

Jill Himelfarb ('89) did the research for her story in the A-6 aisle at the K-Mart near Leisure World. Sooner or later she expects her hair to have its own nightclub act.

Sheila Horgan ('89) rolls like a leaf, blows like sand and she tumbles like a paper cup caught in the wind.

After detailed biological analysis, **Julie Huang** ('89) has determined that she is going to die at age 30. This was good news as it means that she can write off sophomore year as her mid-life crisis.

Candice Hwa ('90) drinks only water. She loves to write and mow the lawn. Her goal is to be one of the Railway Children.

Peter and Phil Kang ('89) are the same person. They are the *Erehwon* gardener. They enjoy running over old ladies, beating wimps with sticks and watching plants die. Recently they were wounded in a knife fight with a rabid oyster.

Kenneth Katz ('89) turned to writing as solace after his dream of becoming an emcee for wet t-shirt contests was shattered by local zoning ordinances. Since then he has dropped out of society, communicating only through his poetry and complex physics equations. Friends say his life has not appreciably changed.

Kristen Kingfield ('90) mysteriously disappeared from Churchill last January. Rumors are that she's hobnobbing with congressmen on The Hill.

Dating primates is **Jen Krzyminski's** ('89) worst vice, but if she didn't, what would she do for kicks? Sexy dancing turns her on, but remember, she hates men. She dreams of dancing the Merengue with Hal and detests poems about love.

Richard Kuo ('89) was born in East L.A. He is one of the rare people who has black hair and brown eyes.

Monica Lam ('91). One fish, two fish, red fish, blue fish.

Melissa Levine ('90) has an imaginary friend named Bolivar who looks like a Narwhal. Together they collect bugs and pin them to cardboard display things. Their Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle was really something until Bolivar impaled it by accident.

Sharon Meth ('90) used to have a hundred cars, but then she crashed them all so she could take a cool photo. Hey, it's on the cover.

Christine McGuinness ('90) considers her most memorable moments to be loaning Jordan her calculator and choosing "Livestock Management" for the side design on her class ring.

Lauren McMullen ('90) has been awarded top honors for her artistic ability, but she doesn't know it.

Eric Napoli ('90) shot the sheriff, but he did not shoot the deputy.

Vijai Nathan ('89) wants to take voice lessons so she can sing to the moon. Her main goals are to become a Tupperware lady and teach the world to spell gorilla.

Hal Niedzwiecki ('89) is insane and grotesque. He enjoys Asians and nose picking. He spends his free time in the Yukon, but will never realize that Canada is for those who can't cut it as Americans. Hal stars in his first feature film, *Journey to the Center of Hal's Mouth At Lunch*, which will be released this summer.

Christina Nunez ('89) likes counting other people's money. Be on the lookout for her new book of scintillating fashion poems, written under the pseudonym Christine Noonez.

Chien-Yu Peng ('91) has affectionately established himself as *Erehwon's* most elusive artist. He could not be reached to verify this bio.

Roy Perlis ('89) stars as a hard-hitting, two-fisted, tough-talking, all-American who single-handedly takes on an army of Sino-Soviet, left-wing, pro-choice, Nazi sympathizers. Morgan Fairchild is his wife and Lassie is his dog. Coming this fall.

Julie Phillips ('91) photographs often come out very well. She attributes this to luck rather than know-how. She hates the word "like" and would "like" to extract it from the English language.

Jennifer Schouten ('91) has the pagoda down pat. In the next two years at Churchill, she hopes to master the tepee, jungle hut and Tudor castle.

Daniel Sharfstein ('90) is an existentialist.

Michelle Shih ('89) has 25% less cholesterol than the leading brand. She rejuvenates your skin and removes bathroom odors. Act now and a major appliance is yours. It's the right thing to do.

Audra Small ('89) hates literary magazines and all other forms of writing. Otherwise, she is very open-minded. In fact, she hates these things so much, we often wonder what the hell she's doing here.

Karen karen bo baren banana fanna fo faren me mi mo maren KAREN! (**Sondik**) ('90) She wrote a story. It's in *Erehwon*. Film at 11:00.

Robin Suleiman ('89) is the resident poet laureate of *Erehwon*. When he occasionally slips out of his coma, he enters rigor mortis for revelations. In his spare time he traces in travel the egg of the earth.

Debbie Wassertzug ('89). "The World Is My Earring."

Picture a young co-ed who wears jeans with no sides and bikini underwear. You've got it, it's **Jen White** ('89), the beautiful writer who joined *Erehwon* so she could prove that she was better than her sister.

Bryan Wolf ('89) has a sister who is much better looking than he is and a grandfather who is part of an elite group of cigar eaters. His hobbies include never being anywhere on time, arguing with his friends, family and strangers and forcing innocent virgins to drink tequila so he can take advantage of them.

Chris Yates ('89) has experimented in contortionism, Tibetan Yak cross-breeding and assorted Jedi mind tricks. He is a Catawba Indian whose great ambition in life is to eat a teacher.

1989 PTSA Creative Writing Awards

Fiction

First Place: Jordan Ellenberg
Second Place: Rachel Grose
Third Place: Melissa Levine

Rick Peabody of *Gargoyle* magazine has written and published two books of poetry, *Echt & Ersatz* and *I'm in Love with the Morton Salt Girl*. His articles, reviews, fiction and poetry have appeared in *Fiction Writer's Market*, *City Paper*, the *Washington Post Book World* and many other publications.

Poetry

First Place: Michelle Shih
Second Place: Deborah Wassertzug
Third Place: Robin Suleiman
Honorable Mention: Chris Yates

Julia Alvarez is a bilingual poet and fiction writer. She has served as Kentucky's poet in the schools for two years. Her poetry and short fiction have been published in small magazines and anthologies. Her first collection of poems, *Homecoming*, was published in 1984. Her recent awards include the Third Woman Press Award in Fiction, a General Electric Younger Writers' Award, a PEN Syndicated Fiction Award, and an NEA fellowship. Ms. Alvarez teaches creative writing at Middlebury College, and has recently completed a manuscript of her short fiction, entitled *Small Change*.

Erehwon is a member of the Columbia Scholastic Press Association (CSPA), the National Scholastic Press Association (NSPA), the Maryland Scholastic Press Association (MSPA) and the Southern Interscholastic Press Association (SIPA).

The 1988 *Erehwon* received the following honors:

Silver Crown, CSPA
Pacemaker, NSPA
Marylander Award, MSPA
First Place, SIPA
Superior Rating, National Council of Teachers of English

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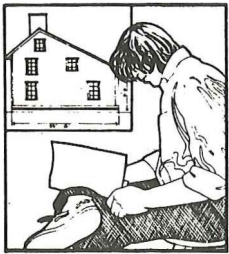
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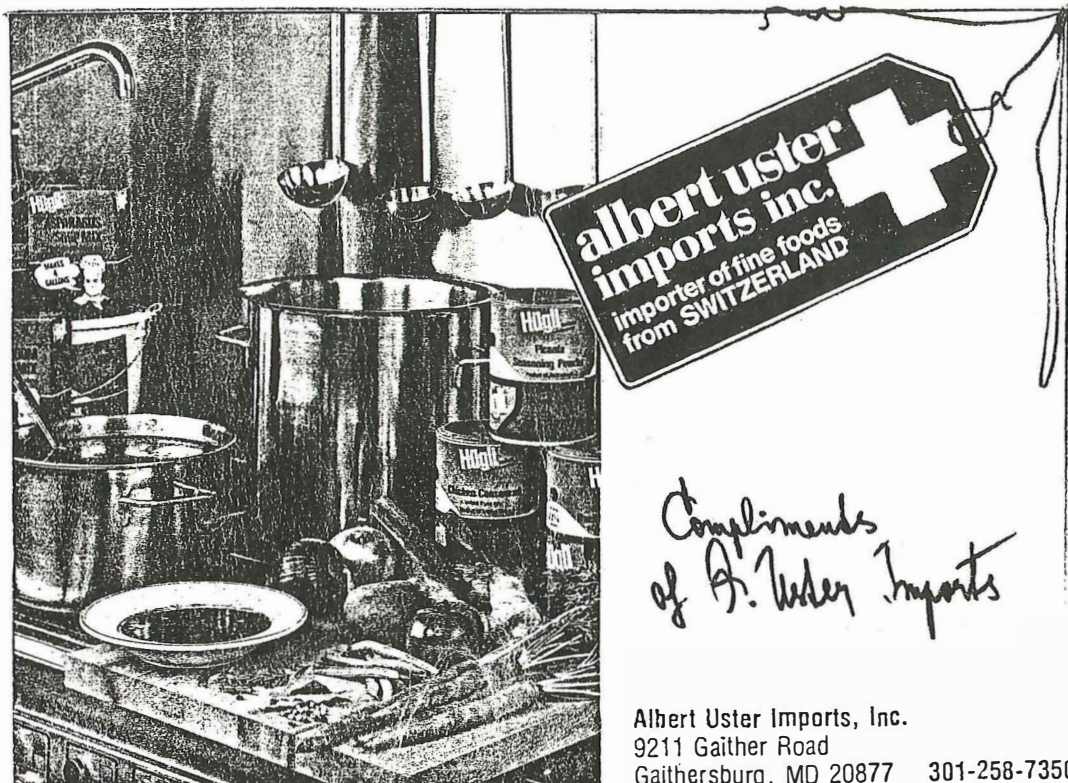
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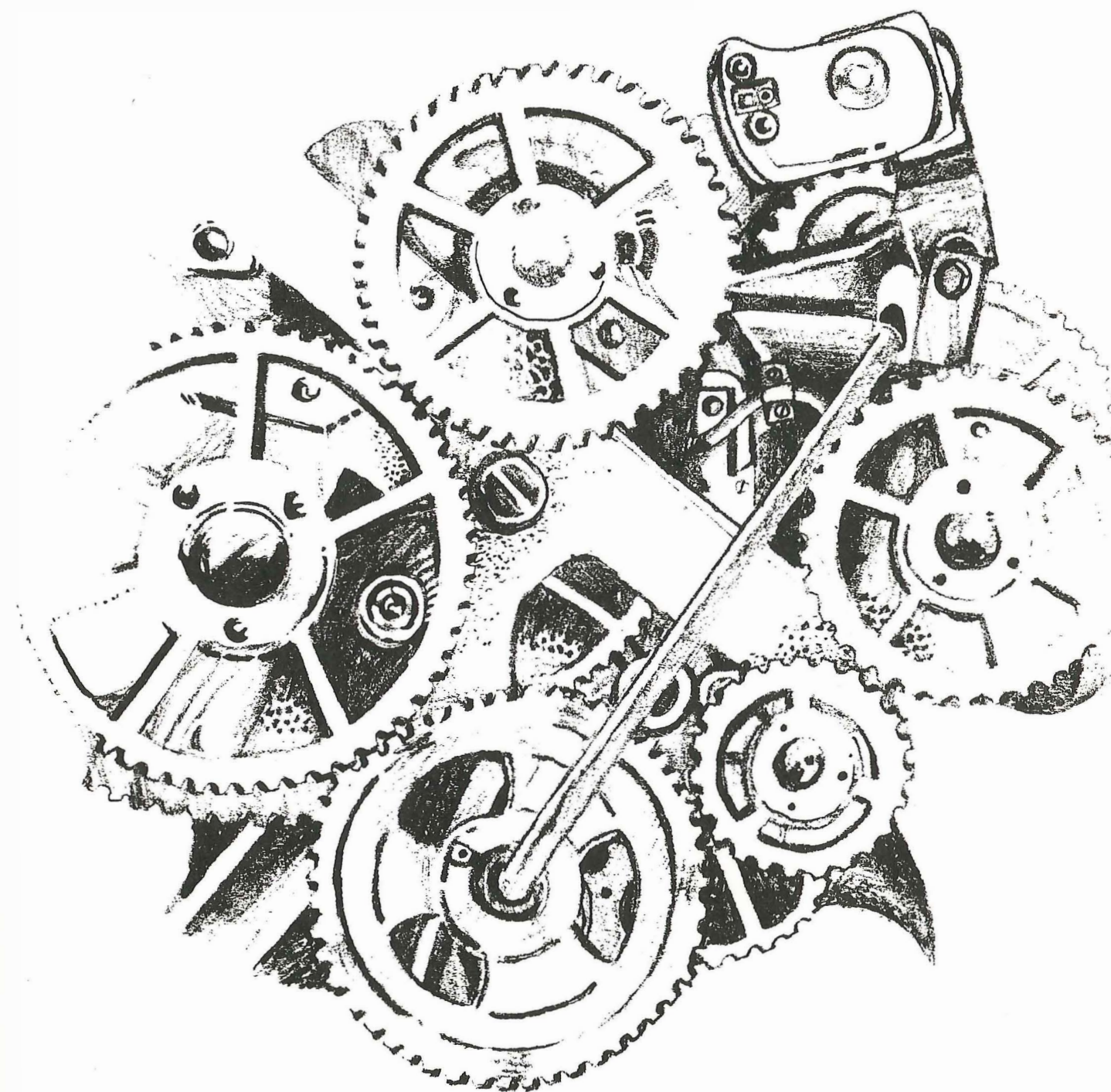
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