

EREHWON

1990 • A MAGAZINE OF CREATIVE ARTS • VOLUME 25



UNDER GROUND

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Winston Churchill High School
11300 Gainsborough Road
Potomac, Maryland 20854

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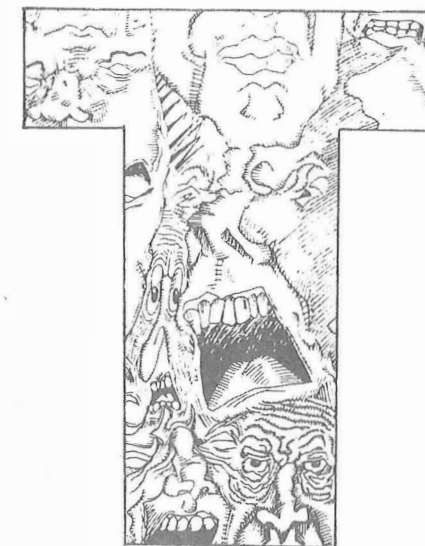
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■ The creative world is the world under the ground. Writing, painting, sculpting, acting, performing—all require a descension, and the result is an unearthing. The order that reigns below the ground is both intricate and chaotic. We, as writers, must burrow into this realm, completely detached from the concrete limitations above ground. The product becomes a visible representation of what exists beneath. ■

■ We invite you to descend with us and shed the ties to the mundane. Perhaps by exploring the depths, we can reach a better understanding of the surface. ■ *The Editors of Erehwon* ■

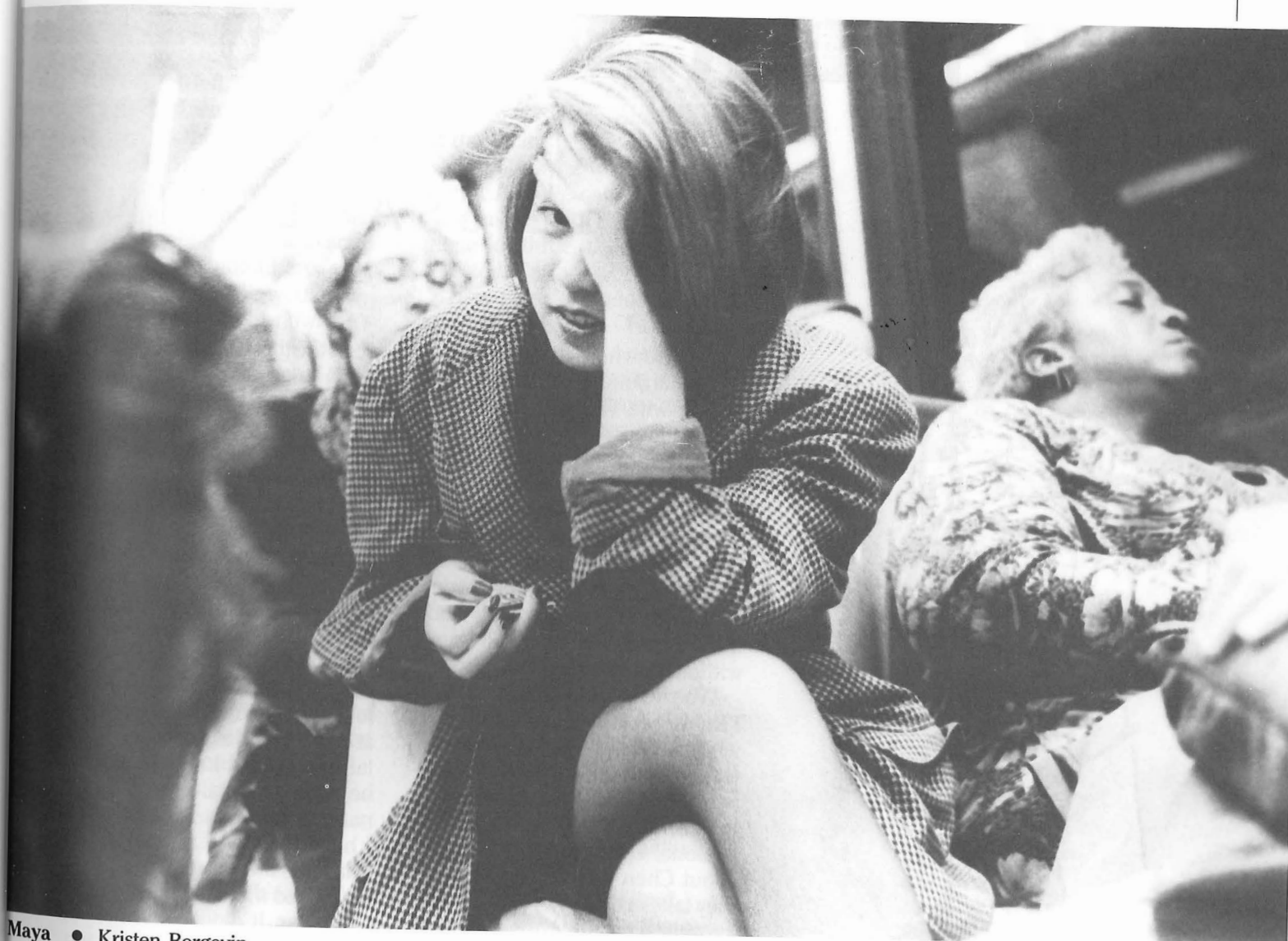


underground

Mirage

Maybe it's the minerals they put in our tap water,
you know,
for our teeth.
Maybe it's those crazy kinds of cereals
I keep trying
but never finish the boxes,
Super Mario Brothers and
Christmas Cap'n Crunch.
I don't know,
but lately when I look at the sky
all I think of are wacky violins
stringing along in the orangey sunlight
and wonderful breezes
shimmering breezes
that remind me of nowhere around here.
All I can smell is
watery cactii
and the sun seeps through
the clean laundry on the line in the back.
And when I close my eyes
this peace stretches for miles around me
across the deserts in New Mexico
where it's warm and dry
and floods in through my fingers,
into my bones.
It slowly stirs my head
and all I can do is breathe
and breathe.

Candice Hwa



Maya • Kristen Bergevin

AMERICAN DREAMERS

MELISSA LEVINE

The whole thing centers around Chen and his wife Woozie. They're Oriental, but you're supposed to get that from the names. I don't know what kind of Oriental they are, but if I decide somewhere in the middle, I'll drop a hint: "Chen! Come quick! Our phone bill is disastrous! Who made all those calls to Korea last month?" And if it's subtle enough, you'll know without knowing how you know.

Woozie is a real Korean name. I know because I had a friend who had a mother whose name was Woozie, and she was and still is Korean, and you're supposed to get these things from your personal experiences. The thing about Chen and Woozie is that they take in this guy, Carlo. I don't know if I'll put any symbolism in that. Carlo is the Italian Carl, and Karl Marx was a great Russian. It's kind of a tradition that the bums and the clowns are the clever ones, and they always fool the supposedly smart people, but Carlo isn't too keen. Really, bet-

ween the three of them there isn't much to go on.

I'll tell you right now, though, I think you're going to like Woozie. She may not have a clue, but it doesn't matter. She and Chen have a new suburban house but they don't have any kids to get it lived in, so Woozie does her best. She takes her time breaking in the white walls, sitting for long periods of time in each room and talking aloud. Chen comes home at six, and they sit in the kitchen for dinner. Woozie's really good at duck, especially if it's an Oriental thing, and I know there must be other Oriental dishes I could name, but I'll have to do research. I hope the story still rings true. That was a big problem that happened when I wrote about the Civil War. It didn't ring true.

Today there's this guy hanging around the front yard, which isn't too likely because Chen and Woozie live in the suburbs. Okay, Chen and Woozie live in the city. They have this new row house that's in an in-between neighbor-

hood. It isn't a bad neighborhood, because the guy that's hanging around isn't drunk and dirty. Anyway, today there's a guy sort of milling around the sidewalk in front of Woozie and Chen's house.

"Could you let me use your bathroom?" The guy has knocked on the door and Woozie has answered. Maybe someone else wouldn't have answered. The man has dark lines but he isn't so bad, not to Woozie because she's clueless but not to anyone else either.

"It's to the left." That line would be ironic if I used the Karl Marx symbolism thing.

"Thank you." Woozie sits in a love seat and listens to the man go to the bathroom. The man comes out. Maybe some description would be good here, especially since Woozie would be looking at him right now. He's tall, but he doesn't look tall because he has a large way about him, larger than tall. You could say he's big. His hair is black and thin and greased against his head, and he shaved two days ago but he didn't shave yesterday. "Thank you." That was for the bathroom.

"Can I get you anything?" Woozie means it.

The guy says, "I don't want to make any trouble for you."

"Well, you aren't." And Woozie's right. If you couldn't tell already, she's bored. We have on our hands a bored Korean Woozie.

"My name is Carlo. I need a place to sleep."

"Hello, Carlo."

"I hate to ask you. It's an imposition."

"Well, it isn't. We have an extra bedroom. Chen comes home at six, and we're having dinner." (I'll get that later.)

"I'd like to join you."

When Chen gets home, Carlo and Woozie are in the living

room. It feels a little softer now, a little more like a place to live. I should be subtle — The couch underneath Woozie is comfortable and warm, and Woozie notices that Carlo's tie matches the pattern of the drapes. She makes him stand next to the drapes. When Chen comes home, they're sitting on the couch.

"Hi, Woozie. Who's this?"

"Chen! Come quick! Our phone bill is disastrous! Who made all these long distance calls to Korea last month?"

"Hi, Chen," Carlo says.

"Chen, this is Carlo. He's Italian. I'm setting a place for him at the table."

"Well. Maybe we'll play Rumicube. We can never play it with just us two, but it's a fine game for three, if you're interested, Carlo."

Now these are good people, and dinner is fine. Chen smiles at the meal on their new table in their new home. Carlo smiles at Woozie. Woozie smiles as she excuses herself from the table. She returns with a gallon of ice cream and three spoons.

"Which would you like?"

Woozie lays the spoons out on the table. "You're the guest."

Carlo selects a spoon. "Well, it's a shame," he says.

"Hmm?"

"Well, I don't like chocolate. Not in an ice cream. In a cake, well, that's fine, but I don't like it in an ice cream." He takes a spoonful to his large mouth. "I'll eat it," he said, "but I don't like it."

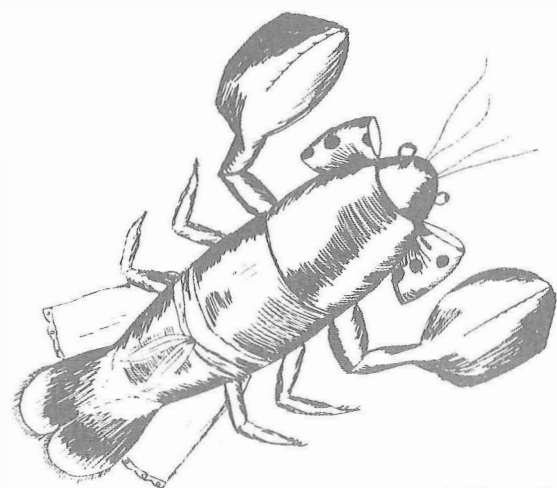
"Tomorrow we'll go to the Food Mart and get something else," Woozie says.

After dessert is finished Woozie takes Carlo to the guest room to show him where to put his things, except he doesn't have any things. It's a pleasant room, soft green and bland, and if a baby happens then Woozie can make a nursery out of it without changing too much. Carlo puts

"Chen! Come quick! Our phone bill is disastrous! Who made all these long distance calls to Korea last month?"



Paper Dolls (pencil) • Erika Kao



Lobster (pen and ink) • Erika Kao

Breaking Bread

Her father broke the bread
while her mother rolled out a parade
of cheese and noodles and cleverly disguised fish
which would soon litter her plate
while she eyed the elders' wine
and nervously twisted her hair.

She has long, stringy brown hair
which her mother says smells like fish
and, because of not enough washing, is home to a parade
of mysterious head bugs. "Wash it with wine!"
her crazy aunt proclaims while scraping her plate
for crumbs. Her father scoffs and gnaws at his bread.

She carefully butters her bread
and arranges it on her plate
so that it looks like the stern face of a parade
leader who has a poached fish
for his hat and noodles for his hair.
She thinks, "I wonder how you wash noodle hair with wine?"

She wants to find out and asks for a glass of wine.
The adults just laugh and her mother pats her stringy hair.
Disappointed, she eats the bread
and shreds the hat of fish
and soon the face that once occupied her plate
has become a deformed, technicolor parade.

Dinner is finished and everybody parades
out of the dining room. She helps clean the plates
trying to ignore the smell of fish
while her father drinks one last glass of wine
and wraps up the leftover bread.
"Before you go to bed," her mother says, "wash your hair."

That night, while she sleeps, her hair
smells like shampoo instead of fish
and she dreams about drinking wine
and searching for bread
so that she can arrange it on her plate
and talk to the leader of the parade.

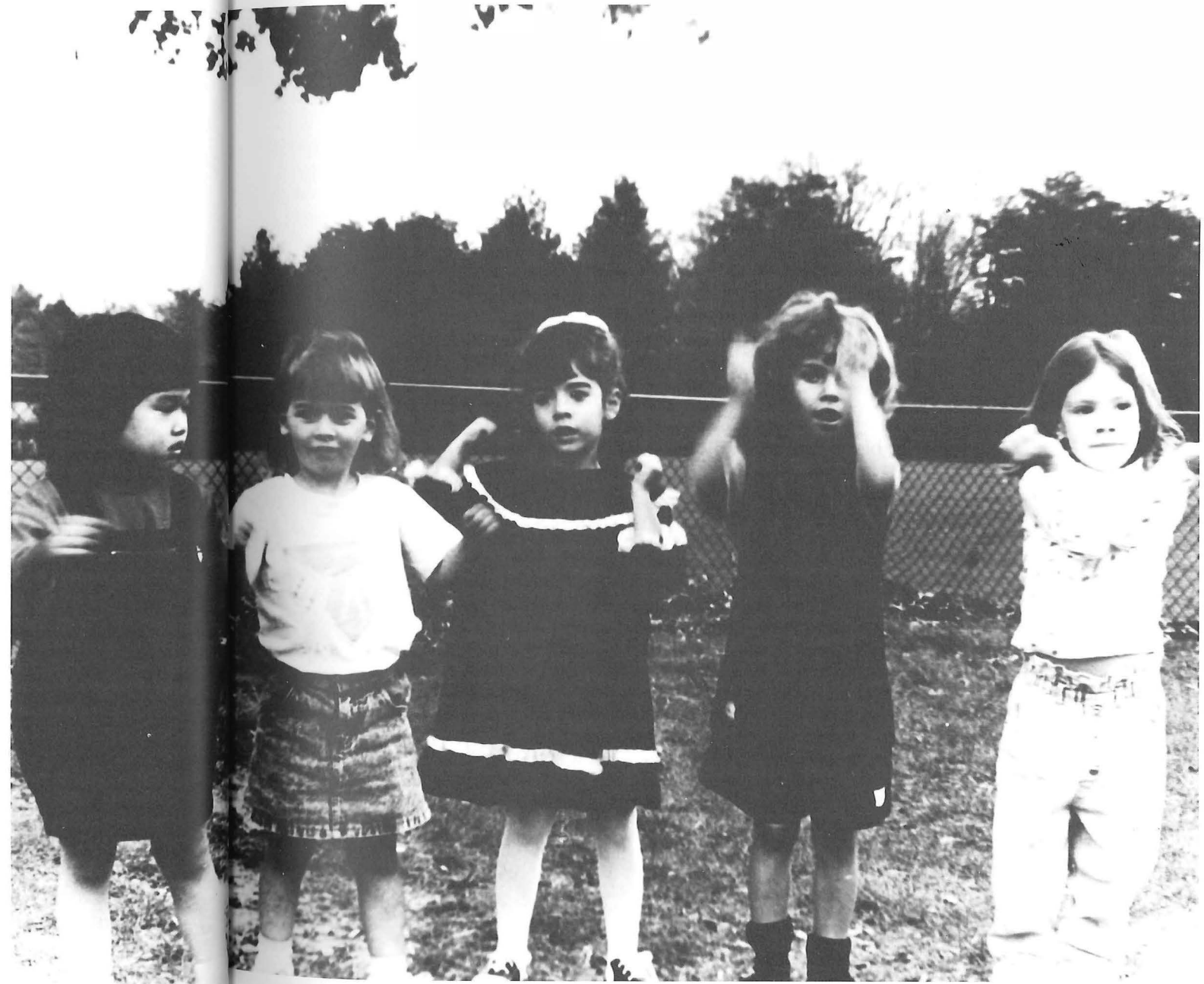
She dreams that the parade leader on her plate
with the hair of noodles and the hat of fish,
she dreams that he smiles at her, then washes her hair with wine.

John Donahue

Getting Dirty

Mom tried to keep me clean when I was little it was not a hard job, I didn't get dirty. But when I began to play in the dirt with the big boys mom ran a bath for me every night the same routine "to keep my five year old glow" she said. Mom lathered me with mom-wife-worn hands and rinsed me until I squeaked and shined and sparkled, but somehow little pieces crept way under my fingernails where mom couldn't reach.

Karen Sondik



Lineup • Robin Jaffe

Blue Jays Try to Bust Some Ghosts (Casper Rebels)

Casper,
What were you thinking?

To try to escape
To break through the boundaries
that boxed you in
To rip the threads
that kept you bound
To leave for me
an uninhabited page,
empty boxes and deflated balloons
A dogear on page five—
the only clue.

You are the friendly one,
not the hoodlum
who strikes out
one night a year
to hoo and spook
and trick the treats.

Casper,
Count your blessings.

The Blue Jays
let you walk
this time,
but not next.
They will
perch on every tree
and scout for you.
For now,
just go back to your box
and inflate some
balloons with your words.

Casper,
What were you thinking?

Karen Sondik

Bambi Hits Video Market With A Thump

She struts along
tall, sleek, and sexy,
and the cops have come to watch.
Drinking donuts and coffee
they see her sidle up beside
a nervous man eyeing the latest movie ads
through the window of "XXX Sassy Rentals"
who quickly walks away.
The cops laugh and blow steam off
the tops of their styrofoam cups.
She strays back to her corner of glass and
neon "ADULTS ONLY" signs
is roughly grabbed by the arm
and spun face-to-face with a tough
in black leather and stubble and whiskey breath
Bambi squeals and snaps about in pointy-toed heels
this way and that, her purse jerked about
hanging from her elbow by the strap
passers-by pass quicker,
knowing Bambi and her kind,
caring little for her protests
and the tufts of fur
escaping from the collar of her coat
as he snatches at her breasts.
Later, in the courtroom,
Bambi testifies that she used the thump
in self defense
and that she'll pay for Sassy's
plate glass window that shattered
when the bruised brute ducked
from her bludgeon.
"I played softball, y'know," she snaps
and flexes
and snaps and flexes her gum too,
and the officers chuckle in the back of the courtroom
and still later, offer her coffee.

Christine McGuinness

AN APARTMENT WINDOW

IRENE CHIEN



Boy (pen and ink) • Maggie Weil

The girl whose mother dropped off newspapers at Arthur's building had terrible eyebrows. They were cut like little triangles of black paper and arched over her constantly blinking eyes with an insane precariousness. "—and guess what happened to HER. The police found her arms and legs all chopped up in the—" They jumped and crouched as she spoke and Arthur tried to concentrate on the ring on her left pinky, a shiny pretty silver-colored ring that she had bought from the ice-cream man. But then with the words "No EYEBALLS," her eyebrows shot up like they might fall off and twitch on the ground before dying and Arthur stepped backward.

"I think I hear my mom calling," he said. "I think I better go." Arthur ran up the stairs, turned at the landing, ran up, turned again, purposely skipped the step on which he had found the smushed beetle the day before, and ran through the half open door of the apartment. He kneeled under the window across

from the bed and caught his breath. Rubbing nervously a round maroon scab on the side of his neck, Arthur stood up and sat at the chair by the window. He waited a minute before pulling up the shade as if he expected the girl's face to be peering up at him as he opened it, her eyebrows whipping as she continued, "Somebody CUT them OUT."

A block of stark, unfiltered light fell into the apartment and onto the bed, where Arthur's father and the woman were still sleeping. Arthur could see the dust rising in the light from the socks and pants and undershirt on the floor and he stuck out a tensely pointed foot and pushed them under the bed. Then he very deliberately placed his shoe over the hole in the carpet that his father still hadn't fixed after that woman last week and Arthur could almost believe that the hole was not there. There was a smooth, clean strip of floor from the edge of the bed to his shoe to the chair, and even though it hurt the back of his calf, Arthur kept his shoe there stiff and quite

perfectly positioned so that the hole disappeared.

Arthur's father was ruffling now and a thick, hairy knee shot out from under the covers as his father rolled over. Arthur's eyes focused on the face sunken in the pillow and then darted out the window when he saw the smeared lipstick from the corner of the mouth to the chin.

"Hey, you get the newspaper yet?" Arthur's leg jerked as he stood up and cried out rather too shrilly, "I'll go down and get it right now." He looked curiously willing to throw himself through the glass.

"Forget it." Arthur sat back down. "Stay here." His father was pushing the covers down and scratching his armpits. Arthur imagined small white flakes swirling out from the tangle and wafting up in the air to his mouth. He stood up, very quickly again, and pushed up the window. The air outside was cooler and moved up Arthur's cheeks and into his hair. He was breathing heavier, concentrating on it, trying not to hear the coarse scratching, the nails against skin and hair and dry flakes. It stopped and his father was now whispering in the woman's ear, "Come on, get up babe." He didn't look at the clock on the nightstand. "It's almost ten, come on you lazy broad wake up."

The woman stretched and wiggled the red-nailed tips of her fingers. "Oh God I feel absolutely wonderful." She squirmed in a conscious effort to be luscious. "What a gorgeous day." Arthur looked outside and suddenly the sun hurt his eyes and his neck felt cold.

The woman pulled herself up on one elbow and Arthur saw her face. Her hair was crushed into a flap on one side and Arthur could tell she had been wearing a lot of

Arthur's father snorted and looked over at the woman, who was jamming her toes into a wrinkled lump of pantyhose.

make-up last night. She was licking her bottom teeth when she noticed Arthur and said, "Hi little boy. Oh, he's cute. Why didn't you tell me you had a kid as cute as that?" The woman's head tilted upward when she spoke, exposing thin oily ridges of loose skin around her chin. "Hello, little boy. Hel-lo." They were giggling. Arthur's mouth smiled as he turn around. He climbed up into the window seat, pressed his back against one side of the opening and his right knee into the other.

"Shut up and get out of the bed," his father said. He groped on the floor for pants, hands knocking a wineglass off the nightstand and punching the chair where Arthur's foot rested. Startled, Arthur pulled his left foot into the window and swung the other foot over the side. The hand was large and bumpy with veins, and for a moment, Arthur was dizzy and lost his balance and he was falling toward the cool air, slowly. His hand gripped the ledge of the window and he stopped.

"What a strange kid. I usually get along won-derfully with little kids. Would you hand me my blouse over there?"

"Jesus Christ, here. Now get the hell out of the bed. Maxine's coming any minute."

"Only if you promise to let me

get him something so he'll like me. You remember that book The Little Curious Puppy or something? I used to love that book. All kids love that book. What's wrong with him, anyway?"

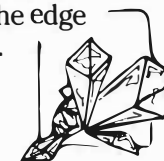
Arthur was looking at a plastic lawn chair down on the sidewalk below, a bright yellow plastic lawn chair with a cup holder in the armrest that someone had dragged up onto the sidewalk. Arthur was glad it didn't have an umbrella that would block his view. His hand on the ledge unfisted.

"Why don't you just invite the entire neighborhood in while you're at it? Why not wave your hands around and invite the whole goddamned city to come and take a look?"

A woman had walked out from the building next door and sat in the chair. She was wearing a very large, clean white hat and Arthur was wondering if maybe she was a baker. He leaned sideways and strained to see more clearly. She was pulling something out of her pocket, like she was excited, too. It was probably a spoon but he couldn't really see yet. Maybe it was a muffin.

"Hey, what the hell are you looking at? Get the hell out of the window. You want me to have to peel you off the concrete before I can even get any goddamn coffee?" Arthur's father snorted and looked over at the woman, who was jamming her toes into a wrinkled lump of pantyhose. "Want me to have to scrape you off with a goddamn stick or something?"

Below on the sidewalk, the woman sitting in the lawn chair yanked a cigarette out of her pocket. Arthur tilted back into the apartment, saw a crinkled-up fly on the ledge near his left foot, and flicked it neatly over the edge before he climbed down.



Last Words

"I ain't jus' any roach—
I the leader of this whole territory!
You see, my bugs here, they's got a problem . . .
They LOVES the poison that's killen 'em!
I tells them,
I says to each 'n ery one of 'em,
'I ain't never used that poison!
My mind is TOO SHARP,
my body is TOO PRECIOUS
for me to put some
poison in *me*!
That's what I been sayin' for
ten years or mo!"

And when you close the public door
you see this roach
Approach the 'unapproachable'
and walk right into that
Roach Motel.

Lisa Sturman

The newspaper man

The newspaper man
comes at three a.m in the night.
His large rumbling van
shivers, wiggling up the street.
I was standing on the curb
under the baleful eye
of the frightened moon
hoping to say hello when he passed by,
the little old Chinese man
who flings *Washington Posts*
mercilessly onto driveways.
As the van of the world crier passes me I wave
and the smiling eyes, short fingers
pick up a roll of gray print to fling
slams it into my face, direct personal delivery in the dark
not having seen me in his effort
for true aim.

Monica Lam



Squatter's Rights • Eric Napoli

MY SWORD WAS MY RIGHT ARM

PAUL BOERNER

Vorpai (pen and ink) • Amit Bagchi

The hag's terrible claws flashed across my cheek, adding four parallel tracks of crimson to the sweat that slipped down my face. I hissed like a serpent and snapped back, sword flashing, but it was too late, as the poisons of my foe's talons poured themselves into my exhausted bloodstream. The hag shrieked her savage, gloating laughter and, pausing to lick the thin curls of my skin off her claws, raised her awful hand for a death blow. I sagged, my will to fight gone, and even as the barbed, blue-fledged arrow buried itself in the shrieking fiend's intestines, I rolled over, pulling my arms and legs over my maimed face as a last protection against my destiny.

Something was prodding me. "Hey." I shook my head gently. "Hey. What're you doing?"

I opened my eyes tentatively. My sister was standing over me, the K-Mart bow gripped mercilessly in her hand. Her face was screwed up in disapproval.

"Poison!" I gasped.

"What're you talking about. I killed that hag. Killed her dead. Fine help you were. Say, why are you all bunched up like that?" Her eyes were dark with suspicion.

I uncurled my legs and arms, prying them out of their convulsions and off my torso. "People always lie like that when they get poisoned. Its called Richard Morgsis or something." I defended the seriousness of my wounds with hurt pride. "I almost got her, really I did, then she went and clawed my face. So the poison got in and I died."

I rose to my feet and stretched my stubby fingers. It was amazing how quickly one stiffened in forty-degree weather. The plastic sword, the icon I most feared in the lurid world of youth, was lying near my feet, surrounded by the limbs and twigs I had severed from the hag-tree in my final defense. My sister was retrieving the notched dowel from a crook in the old tree.

"No, no you didn't. You only got dizzy and fell down." Her superior knowledge and uncanny ability to rework the past always amazed me. "Then I killed the hag—one shot, see!—then I saved you. 'Cause I know all 'bout herbs and medicine."

"How come I don't know that stuff?" I asked, mistrustful.

"I'm older'n you. Anyways, then I took the treasure, 'cause I killed the hag. And the people made me queen."

"I wanna be—" but she was walking away. I staggered after her, holding my tried and trusted blade in a tight grip. I felt better that way. But this always happened.

"I wanna be king 'cause—"

"No, no, no, they made you the prime minister. That's better than king."

"Really?" My eyes widened. Was *anything* better than king?

"Yeah, you get to make treaties and sign things and go to tea with presidents. All I get to do is sit in my palace and have all my servants do everything for me."

"But—"

"Except when I want to go adventuring. Then I sneak out of the castle on my white horse and ride with my trusty bow at my side to seek out evil and restore peace to the world."

"But—"

"You can come. Sometimes. If you're nice to me."

I was quite bowled over. This sudden turn of generosity had me rather surprised, though I did suspect treachery. My mind was still puzzling this out when I heard her sudden warning cry before me.

"Dragons! Dragons crawling out of the river! They must be hungry!"

Now I saw them. And suddenly nothing else mattered in the face of fatal danger. Long, sinuous, evil creatures, these were, with tremendous fangs and flint-hard red scales—

"These are green dragons! The worst kind!" I rubbed my eyes and looked again. Why, so they were. I drew my sword and snarled a challenge to these defilers of tranquility, snarled a snarl with all the primitive savagery of a tiger (my sister observed that I always made funny faces when I had a sword in my hand; she did not understand the warrior's battle-rage, although she did explain that the animal part was because of the curse our father had incurred before us when he opened the tomb of the Dark Animist so many years ago).

"Dragons! Dragons crawling out of the river! They must be hungry!"

"We must stop them before they kill lots of farmers!" I made this statement in safety: Farmers, I knew, must at all costs be saved.

"You go fight them with your sword. I'll cover you with my bow." She took up a position on the side of the hill that sloped down to the boiling river where the dragons were spawning. I opened my mouth to protest. "Hurry! Before their fiery breath ravages our beloved countryside and scorches the farmers' crops!" I could never argue such eloquence. With my death grin fixed and my sword-arm steadfast, I plunged down the ravine to the awaiting drakes.

The impact was tremendous. A spray of foul water surrounded me as I plowed into the midst of the demons, right arm severing heads and tails and wings with each sweep. Then they curled around me, grasping with their horrible claws, biting with their gaping orifices. I slashed with growing desperation, jabbing at the red—no, green—scales and heads and bellies that threatened to engulf me.

Thunder was building in my brain. A deluge of river water flung into the air in the shock of the battle was pouring down on me and my foes; they dug gruesome fangs through my armor, rending my flesh until the blood coursed freely over my arms and chest. I fought with berserk power, thrusting and hacking, any thought of parries consumed in the madness of fear and pain and triumph that was a battle.

The blue-fledged shafts were zipping into the fray now, but I could hardly feel their impact on my foes. The worms overwhelmed me; leering serpentine visages swarmed over my face. I thrashed in panic, fighting for my life to get the beasts off me.

My palm must have been slick from the water of the river, because at the apex of a particularly violent cut my sword flew from my hand and smashed into the archer's kneecap. I heard a stunned scream, then a shape came tumbling down the ravine and thudded to a halt in the river.

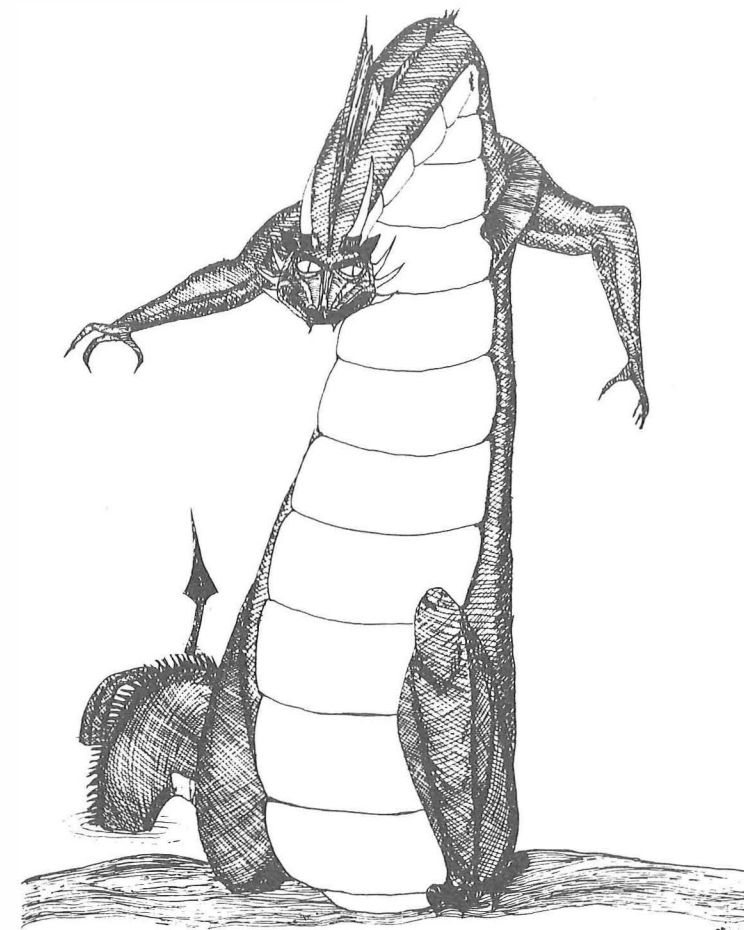
I shook myself free of sea spray and serpents and stood in knee-deep creekwater, gazing in stunned silence at the form sprawled like a hideous bridge across a section where the creek was a two-inch trickle. She wasn't moving.

The dragons clustered around the queen's inert figure, open concern in their reptilian eyes. She lay face up, hair awash in the building stream, hands loosely cupped over the knee that had startled and started the fall.

I looked only at the plastic sword with the slippery handle where it lay at the top of the hill. The blade had a plastic crease in it.

"Ooohhh." I turned around. She sat up, scattering the clucking dragons easily. "That hurt." I was silent. I turned back to the sword.

"Why'd you go and do that for! People can drown in just one inch of water." I said nothing for a moment.



Smaug (pen and ink) • Amit Bagchi

"I th—"

"You're so stupid sometimes. You and that stupid sword." She rose slowly, feeling the back of her head where a lump was forming. "Now I'm going to have an egg on my head for the rest of my life."

"Sor—"

"I probably won't let you be prime minister anymore." We started walking up the hill, so steep in those days. "I may not even let you come adventure with me."

We reached the summit and paused for breath. It had been an exhausting encounter, but the dragons had been put to flight. My sister picked up her weapon (I left the sword) and looked down into the creek. "Those were vicious dragons," she said solemnly. "We might get a great reward for this deed."

Mom was calling us to dinner. We turned and regarded the last fifty yards to the back door of the house. "In fact, if we arrive at the castle before sundown, a great feast may await us." We giggled and started off on the last leg of the quest.

"That was fun."

"Yeah."

"Course, those dragons probably laid eggs in that river."

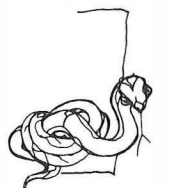
"Umm." I opened the door that meant warmth and food and safety after a harrowing day of questing. We went inside and closed it behind us.

That night, I lay awake for a long time. Fascinating things were taking place on my ceiling. Finally, I rolled over and looked at the bed across the room from mine.

"Say, Ann?"

"Yeah."

"Next time, can I have the bow?"



Evening

what did she do
at the first cycle
did she scream rage at God
was she scared of herself
did she slink down
inside the river
submerging herself in the cool eddies
washing in the water rush
forbidding the flow
not bowing to any darkness
not even her own
did she stop herself up with leaves
afraid they would get lost
inside of her
and hide from him
did she think,
anything but him
or did she keen in a bloody crouch
while her muscles shook
until the insides
of her legs were red
did she sleep in a
small shivering heap
on the nearest mountain
without looking down
and wait
when did she come down
was she a hysterical bitch
was she hysterical
what happened the first time
when she found out it was
up to her
when she found out that
all of it was up to her

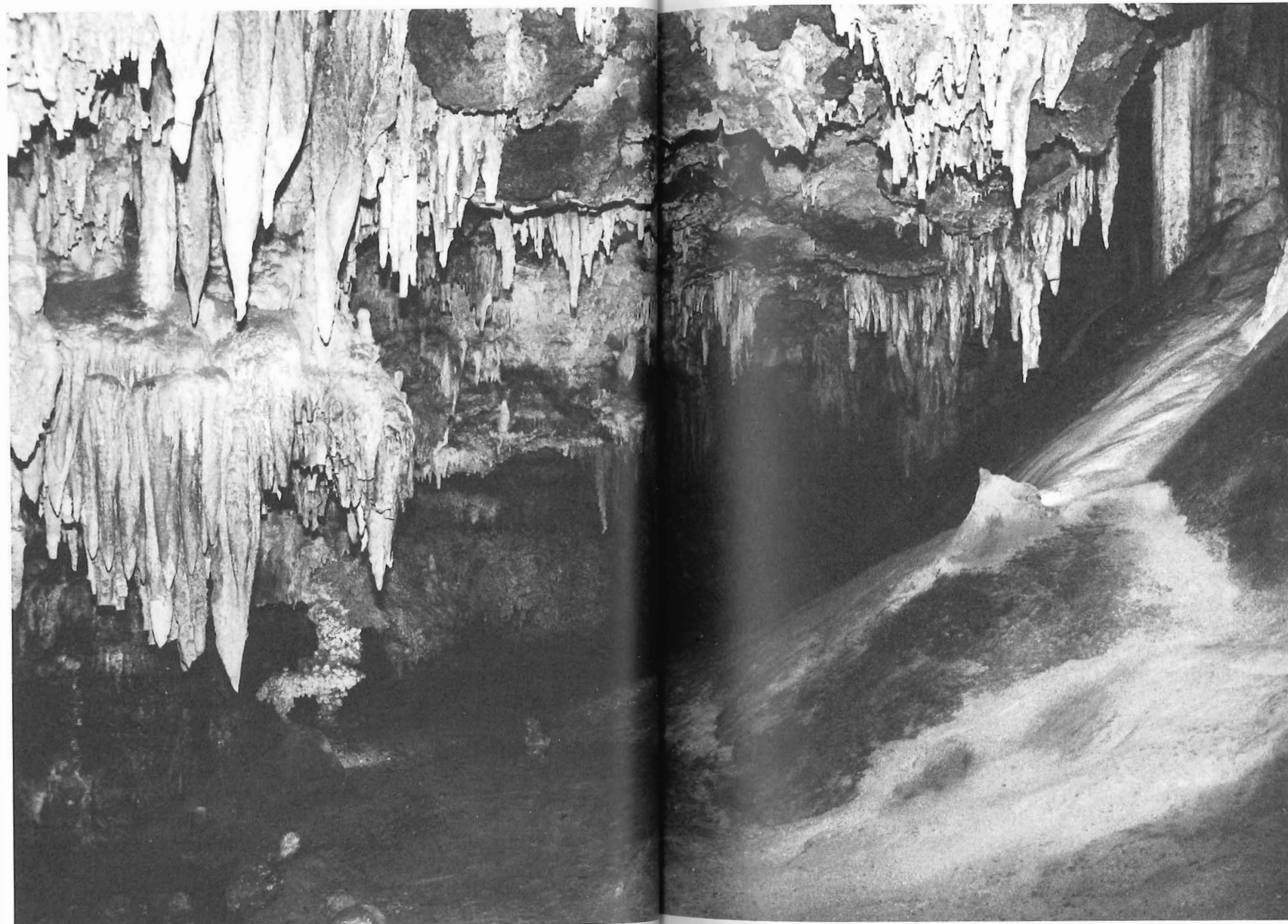
Melissa Levine



Sliding Out of Silence

Silence slips
into a ghostly howl
windows whistle in the windy swirl
that rustles the nervous leaves.
Trees creak and branches crack
as the moaning breath rises
to its climax
Nature's exhale extinguished,
Silence slides back

Matt Mengers



Caverns • Jeff Tow

On Blighted Paths

Pawn two timid on black flat liquid
slashed, in cold blood, crisp bright.
Trouble about: sprouts white scream—
rushed queen felled in a mite.
Rook slimes the muck across
to blighted paths of man castle.
Spark hero climbs on limbs
of Knight.
Dark rises with woman
starts at wet-eyed king
of alone conference with
mushy Bishop.
Rise anon to dark dank.

Jennifer Cohen

CONQUISTADORS

ERIC NAPOLI

The arms on the Snoopy watch stretched as the car passed the Capitol building, and the three young passengers screamed Andalusian folk songs:

“Don’t leave yet
Don’t leave so soon
For something dies in the soul
Every time a friend goes away.
Don’t leave, please don’t leave.”

“Are you sure, Paco, that you can go to this place on Fridays?” asked the one with the strong lips.

“Yeah, it’s just like straight night but less people. Trust me, Sebastian.”

“Good, I haven’t been here since . . .” thought Sebastian.

“Since our woman left us, eh?” teased Amador.

“Our woman? Mar was mine and only mine!” continued Sebastian, playing with Amador.

Now that Mar had left, many were saying that Sebastian was too good for her. He was much too attractive and great a guy. She was still a young sixteen years old, and taking care of her seemed to appease Sebastian. Since she had left, he would always cling on to Paco and Amador because it helped him remember, or was it the other way around?

“Amador, you have to realize

that there is no other place with this ambiance,” noted Paco.

“Doesn’t it bother you? I mean the element?” tried Amador.

“Conquer, man, conquer or be conquered!” Another philosophical statement rang from the voice of the same Paco who had once said that calculus was really neat because it was an opportunity to put all mathematics together.

“Hey, where did Paco go?”

“I don’t know.” Amador and Sebastian found him dancing by himself and joined. Sebastian, as always, found two or three girls (of course the only good ones) to dance with him.

“Did you check that girl out, Paco?”

“Rapable, Amador, rapable!”

“Dance, man! Let’s go dance! Conquer!”

“Yeah, Paquino,” replied Sebastian.

In a single file line they marched to the dance floor: Paco, staring at the video screen above; Sebastian, checking out the people to the left and to the right; and Amador, making sure not to look in anyone’s eyes.

The songs and the taste took them to months passed when the “gang” was still together, and when Mar was still in Sebastian’s lap. And they remembered and they danced and they forgot.

Paco shook his head, Sebastian laughed, and Amador tried not to notice as a 6’6” black man with hair like a horse’s mane was being chased by a white Anglo-Saxon Jabba the Hutt. After the chase, the giant sat next to a prostitute and played.

“What do you think?” asked Amador.

“Well, the music’s a lot better on Fridays,” eluded Sebastian.

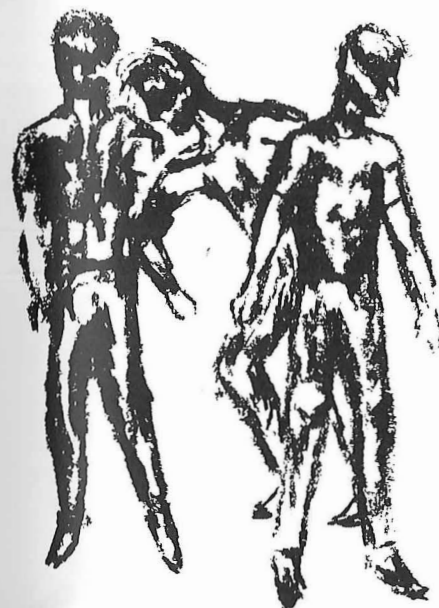
“Sebastian! Sebastian!” interrupted a rapable blond.

Flexing his two muscular lips, he gave the two expected kisses. “Hey, what’s up? Gosh, I haven’t seen you since . . .” Sebastian seemed to know all of them and got along with everyone.

Paco and Amador left them to chat and went for a drink. “Paco, you should have been there,” explained Amador, “that day at the airport when Mar left.” There was a pause, a silence.

I had never seen anything else like it. We went—Mar, Christian (Sebastian’s brother), Sebastian and I. Everything was normal and tranquil. We ate; we talked. It was like always. Then, we arrived at the terminal. Christian and I, we said our goodbyes first and let Sebastian and Mar go into the line alone.

Conquered (charcoal) • Erika Kao



from holding them deep in my throat. They touched lips, they rubbed, and I got cold.

At the end of the line was a door, and it was slowly swallowing the passengers. It kept inhaling more and more until the only ones left were these two. I loved Mar, I still love Mar, and she was like my sister. I was always satisfied or refreshed watching her kiss him, watching her love him.

She turned, and I saw her face—a pool, and I wanted to dive in. The line took a last deep breath . . . “Sebastian” and she was gone. He turned, and the skin and the lips slid down off his face. He fell into the arms of his older brother. There, two of the greatest ladies men I’ve ever seen held each other up under the spotlight of everyone in the terminal. There was a silence, a wounding ringing in my head and in my chest. They held tight. I envied them.

Paco, if you could have only been there, I would try to explain it to you. It would have made an incredible movie.” Amador turned his head back and let the tears back down in his throat.

“Sebastian, where did you go?” Paco asked.



It was 3:30, and the only people left were the element. Paco seemed to ignore them until one began to dance with him.

The speaker announced that the club was closing, and Sebastian and Amador glanced at each other with a certain degree of relief. “Well, guys, we closed the place,” claimed Paco with a sense of pride and possibly satisfaction.

The three exited the doors and entered the street. The path to the car was always long with the stench of the atmosphere.

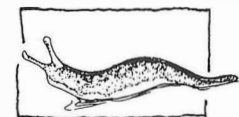
They reached the car, and Paco stretched for the door. Amador began to think. He put his arm around Paco’s shoulder. Never had he noticed before the build of his friend’s body. Never had he noticed the satisfaction of touching his friend. Looking into Paco’s eyes, he smiled. “I’m really going to miss you.”

“I’m gonna miss you too, man,” replied Paco.

The tears climbed up Amador’s throat once again as he gargled, “Thanks, for everything.”

“Conquer man, conquer!” entered Sebastian.

Laughing hysterically, Sebastian, Paco and Amador huddled in an embrace that lasted until Paco was gone.



To be God

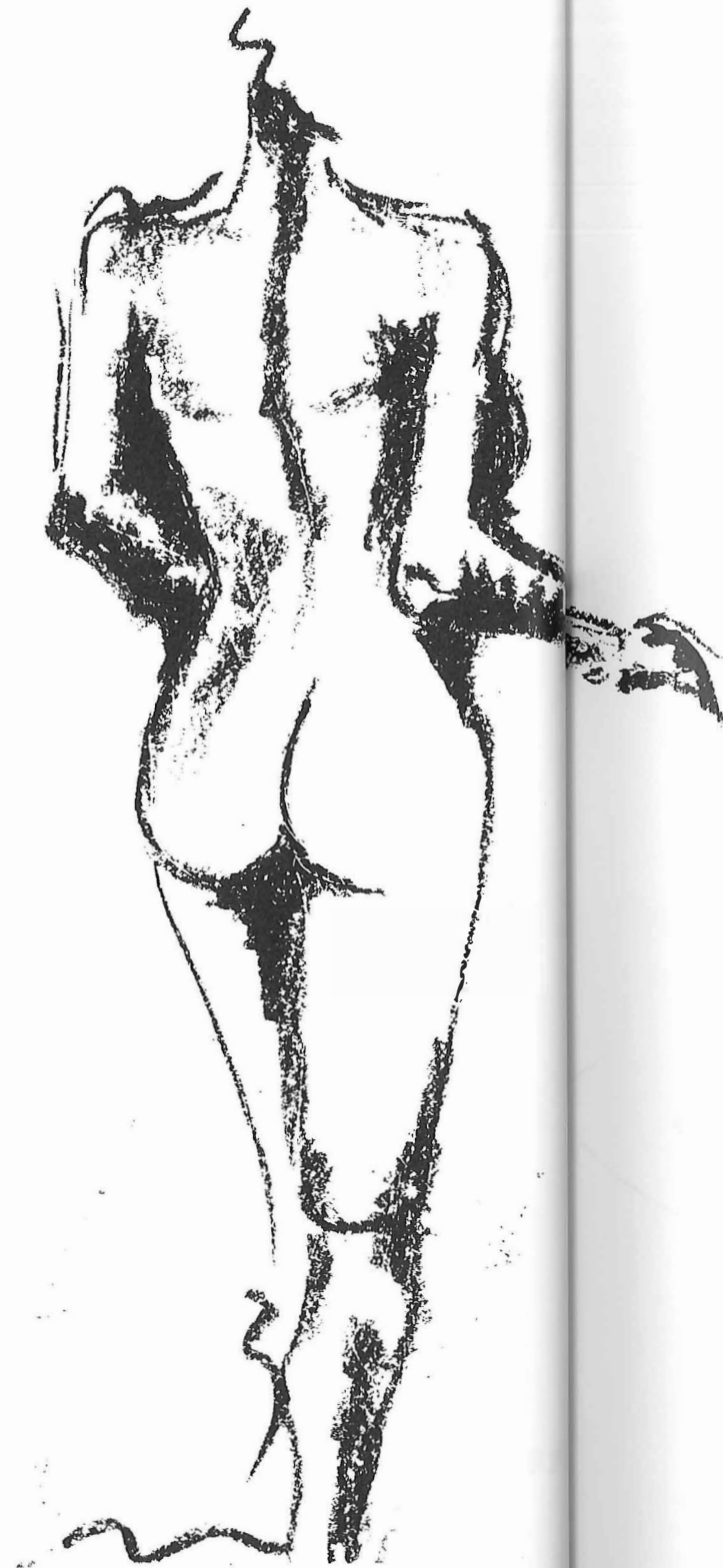
Last night I was God,
dreaming of breathing,
creating the snow
before it was even cold or white.
Your body was transparent,
your eyelids growing
in the palms of my flesh.

The air in my lungs
makes me laugh
and tickles the blood
that we spit back and forth.
We rub melting snow
across our naked nipples
in our tearing eyes.

You lie down but I prefer that you smile
and so you do
I stretch the earth folding
it against the curves of my back,
rippled and torn—
blue scars of wind
parallel to my skull.

I wake in a jar
of shaking snow,
omnipresent, His eyes look in
through the smog.
I, trapped inside
the bones of my head,
run crying to my bed
and become God again.

Eric Napoli



Study (oil pastels) • Lauren McMullen

Caballero

Hija.
What language exists
where the words
have not been exhausted,
where they are not old and sour men
and where they do not teem
or swarm
like flies to dung.

Tonight I am dying for don Quixote.

The nightgowns are scrubbed
and starched
and hang like flying monks
in my father's closet.
I tried again
with the cow
but she is old, almost dry,
not responsive to my hands.
Her skin hangs off her like wash
on the line.
Her hide is cold.

It was late
when the toothless one left the tavern,
drunk and terrible.
The younger one in the corner
would not leave.
I took him to bed.

This hombre does not know me,
nor that I am spoken for
in the battles
on the highways
between the taverns.
Yes,
I have yet to see the caballero,
but there is a sweetness
in the stories
that drunk men tell.

Melissa Levine

Grey Matter Blender

"Tell me," she said,
 "What's on your mind?"
 But how could I tell her
 that my brain was being chopped, grated, and ground;
 stirred, puréed, whipped, and mixed;
 blended, frappéed, and liquified?
 How could I tell her
 she was sucking my mushy mind
 through the straw she stuck in my ear
 and then spitting it out onto the street?

John Donahue

Rain

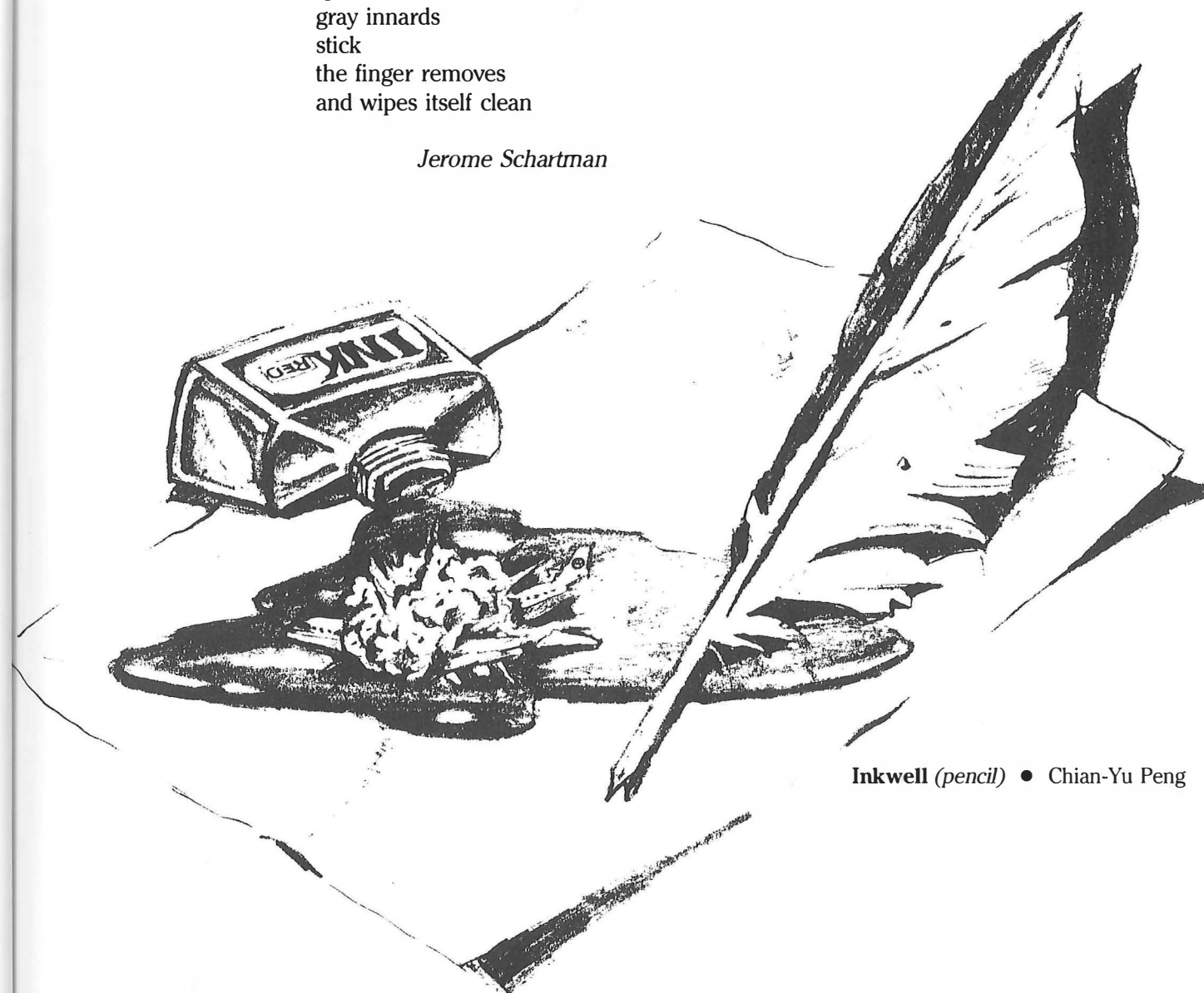
And the sky poured down in sheets of metal drowning you and me slicing
 our umbrella into shards of blue spilling onto the sidewalk and our clothes.
 I asked you if you had the time but two o'clock was not what I meant when
 I stripped the sheets bare and broke the lavender china in the muddy
 puddles below. You kicked the cat and drove away I spilled polish on my
 only white dress and when you came back the room was unchanged but
 everything was gone. So there I left to run outside and you yelled WAIT
 but as I started to cry under your words I couldn't hear and now our shirts
 are drenched to our skins beneath the sky unzipping in silent shocks of
 purple.

Candice Hwa

Dirty The Sky

A small silver bug
 crawling across
 paper very blue
 is ended
 blood fire-hot
 spurts
 gray innards
 stick
 the finger removes
 and wipes itself clean

Jerome Schartman



Inkwell (pencil) • Chian-Yu Peng



Untitled (pen and ink) • Ari Norouzi

ESSAY

COMMON GROUND

"Maybe all men got one big soul ever'body's a part of."

—Reverend Jim Casy,

from John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*.

CONFESSION

Linda Schartman

A couple days ago, I read a letter sent to my house by a Catholic church. It told a story of a poor, elderly blind lady who went to a Sunday church service. She was passed by by the ushers collecting money because they felt sorry for her. After mass, she confronted the priest. She handed him some bills and told him, "I'll always be able to afford a gift to God." The letter went on to say that we, God's people, should follow this kind, grateful heart's example. That we should repay God for all He gave us. That we should tithe. This reminds me of way back when the Catholic church would sell indulgences. They would charge money for a piece of paper that said something like "You are forgiven for your sins by God."

I stand last in line of the uniformly dressed second grade boys and girls, grasping the skirt of my red, white, and navy-blue jumper with my hands. I notice Sister Teresa tip-toeing over to me with her head held high. My heart jumps. As she reaches me, she slaps my hand, snapping her wrist and whispering into my ear, "You are in church. Try to act like a young lady. Fold your hands, bow your head, and pray that God will give the priest permission to forgive you for your sins." I fold my hands and nod at her instead of answering the usual, "Yes, sister," for fear of my voice coming out throaty and loud. She gives me a strange look and tip-toes away.

I suddenly remember where I am. Confession. What is that devilish looking priest going to do to me? What sins do I tell him? What if he tells my parents? What if he—I mean if God doesn't give him permission to forgive me for my sins? What if I die and go to hell?

My eyes wander to the boy with short dark hair standing in front of me. The tallest boy in the class. Brian Fisher. Brian Fisher. I snap my eyes away from him to the floor. If Mary Ellen sees me looking at him, she will tell everyone that I like him. I know she already suspects it. I can't give her evidence. Then life would be awful. Constant teasing and Brian—Brian Fisher—he would hate me!

I realize that my mind just wandered, that I should be thinking about my sins. Brian Fisher walks into the confessional. I'm next. Wait—what were the prayers I was supposed to tell the priest? Shit, I don't know. I just thought a bad word. There's something to tell the priest. Brian Fisher exits the confessional, walking towards the altar to kneel and pray for forgiveness. He wasn't in confession very long. He probably didn't commit any sins to tell the priest. Now Sister Teresa is tip-toeing towards me again. She tries to glide like an angel but how can she in those ugly blue old lady shoes? I check to make sure my hands are folded. They are. "Young lady, do you ever plan to enter the confessional or are you going to let the priest sit there forever? You know, he hasn't been sitting there for the last hour for his own good."

I laugh out loud at myself. Sister Teresa's mouth falls wide open. Everyone in the church stares at me. I shut my mouth closed tight and run for escape.

Past the purple velvet drape, I enter the confessional. It's nothing but a small compartment of darkness with a crucifix, a bible, and a pew to kneel on. What relief! This isn't bad at all until I see two icy cold brown eyes behind a wire screen glaring at me, ordering, "Kneel." I do as told and recite what I can remember the nuns telling me to say.

During the car ride home, my parents asked me if I felt cleansed. I didn't respond. If I had been forgiven for my wrongdoings by God, or by anyone for that matter, I couldn't sense it. Maybe it would have helped if I had paid for absolution.

HOME SICK

Gregory Goldin

The pounding headache started on Sunday. Determined not to let a little pain interfere with my seventeenth birthday, I ignored it. Monday the headaches continued but still, I fought on. I was not going to get sick. By Tuesday morning my temperature had reached 102. Each movement of my head measured over 8.9 on the Richter scale.

I climbed out of bed slowly so I wouldn't shake the Planet and put on my blue and black checkered bathrobe. A sure sign that I had accepted defeat. The robe is old and tattered, but I wear it every time I get sick. And besides, when you're not feeling well, you can look as bad as you want. Finding my way to the couch downstairs, I immediately collapsed. This was to be my home for the next two weeks.

I don't remember much about the next two days. They kind of run together and mutate into some healthy person's nightmare. I would make my way from my room upstairs to the couch downstairs, pass out, and sleep for the rest of the day waking only to go to the bathroom.

By the third morning my fever was down and I decided I was ready for a little mental stimulation. I turned on the TV remembering all of the fun game shows I used to watch when elementary school was cancelled due to snow or something like that. Flipping the channels I found only talk shows. My childhood memories of people winning fabulous prizes was replaced by a circus of "Reformed Women Prostitutes" on Phil, "Where is Elvis This Month?" on Geraldo, and "All Men Are Scum" on Oprah.

By the end of the first week, my mother began to worry. She said I looked thin and dragged me upstairs to weigh me. I had lost eleven pounds. Having spent most of the week passed out and sweating profusely on the family room couch, I had not really thought that much about eating.

"You have to eat!" she said. "At least drink something, please!" She attempted to feed me but I wasn't hungry. I took a few sips of water to make her happy.

Every morning I would find a plate of toast on the coffee table by the couch. A few times I'd eat it, but mostly it would sit untouched, growing cold and stale. When the toast didn't work, my mom tried an old favorite, pasta. The plate of wet noodles stared tauntingly at me from the table. Out of sheer boredom, I picked up a wriggly strand and



I don't remember much about the next two days. They kind of run together and mutate into some healthy person's nightmare.

slurped it down. By nightfall, the entire bowl of pasta had disappeared. The next day my fever shot up again. So much for eating.

My throat soon became very sore. I could not eat, drink, or even talk. Naturally, now that I was unable to swallow food, I was hungry. My friends often called to find out how I was, but I couldn't stand the pain enough to talk to them. I was alone and helpless. For the first time I began to worry. If I don't eat, I die. If I don't drink, I dehydrate. Even forcing water down my throat was impossible. How long can you last without nourishment? Miserable and out of energy, I just stayed on the couch and slept.

Soon, I could not remember ever having been healthy. School seemed like a distant memory, and I wondered if I was ever going to get better. The mind can sometimes play tricks on your other senses when you are sick, and mine went into overtime. I began to imagine having other, more dangerous symptoms. My fever would break and I'd wake up sweaty and disoriented. Late one night, I shot up in bed, finding my t-shirt and sheets pasted to my soaking body. Through the dark haze, I discovered about a dozen inch-tall men erecting tiny buildings in my room. I watched them work in awe, until I fell asleep again. During the next few nights, I witnessed the hallucinations build an entire city on the floor of my room. That was it. I had to be well again.

The doctor diagnosed me as having the flu topped by a case of mono. This was a bit of a relief. He gave me medicine to cure my throat and I soon went to work putting back on the fifteen total pounds I had lost. By the third Monday I was back in school. It felt good to be active again. My friends joke around about my strange but effective diet. Maybe they should give it a try.

PICTURES OF YOU

Guang-Shing Cheng

Dear Brother,

Dad caught me in the closet, looking at old photo albums. I was sitting there, with the album on my lap opened to the picture of you and me and mom on a bed giggling. When Dad opened the door, I tried to hide my face among the hanging clothes, but I'm sure he



noticed my hot, puffy eyes and saw the contents of the album. He said that he and Mom were trying to sleep, so I left, taking the two albums in which we are together. Well, Dad noticed that too, so he followed me to my room. Thank God I locked the door in time.

Then he knocked on my door and said, "Don't look at those pictures, now." And as an afterthought, "It's late."

Come to think of it, I'm the only one now who ever looks at those pictures. Since you left, there have been albums and albums of me and len (our little brother) and Mom and Dad, but there are only three with pictures of you. These I always have to dig out from under all the rest.

The pictures are mostly of the trips Mom and Dad took us on, like to Florida and the Shenandoah Mountains, remember? There are pictures of Yellowstone and Mount Rushmore where you found the smelly remains of a mountain goat that was probably eaten by a mountain lion. I remember that you were the only one of us who dared go near the formidable pile of bones and shreds of clinging meat that seemed to reach for me. My four year-old mind couldn't accept how a nice cute goat could die and become a gross, scary, skeletal monster.

Well, it's been twelve years since that vacation. Time has a funny way of twisting my perception of you. You will always be my big brother, although you will never grow out of your nine year-old body. Did you know that I dreaded turning nine, because I thought I would die, too? I wonder if you are still nine in soul or twenty, like you would be if you were still here. Can you hear me and know what I'm feeling? Maybe time has made you ageless.

Eleven years since I saw you. Today we are the average American family, Mom and Dad, two kids. It's just me and len now. When I look at the photo albums filled after you went away, I wonder what they would look like with you there, hugging me and tousling len's hair. If you were here, our round breakfast table might not be so symmetrical. It would be a tighter squeeze at dinner, but I wouldn't mind.

You know, if you were here, you'd live in the room across from me where all the guests stay. This year you'd probably be at college, somewhere like Harvard. Mom and Dad would be even tighter with the checkbook than they are now, but I wouldn't mind. Maybe you'd come home with a girlfriend or some tall dark handsome friend that would say, "So you're the queer kid sister that Guang-Yeu's been bragging about." I would be able to tell my friends about the crazy things that my twenty year-old brother does. You could drive me to school and even sign sick notes for me when I was really sleeping in, since you would have gone through it all before me. I'm sure you would yell at me for

constantly "borrowing" your stuff, but you'd still tease me and play stupid card games with me. Maybe I wouldn't have such a hard time with Mom and Dad about doing things. And you'd be in the pictures of our family outings.

Maybe you would be none of these things; I'll never know. I do know that if you hadn't left, we wouldn't have to talk about you in hushed tones and act like there were always four of us, the ever-so-happy, average American family.

We moved after you left. Mom couldn't bear to live on the street where the accident occurred. I don't think Mom and Dad kept in touch with anyone from that neighborhood after you left. For months, it seemed like Mom cried, or actually flooded the house with her sobs. If I mentioned your name, she would break down. After a while I just didn't mention you at all.

Even today, whenever my friends come over and they ask who drew your "Monster Feature" poster that hangs in the kitchen, I always respond a little haltingly, "Oh, that. A distant cousin drew it." I did tell someone once, a short while after you left. At the time I didn't understand why Mom and Dad were so upset that I told; I was only five. Once I understood that you weren't coming back, I couldn't tell people "My big brother drew that" and explain you without feeling red and blue and puffy.

Did I already mention that I'm the only one who ever looks at the albums? Sometimes I ask Mom if she'd like to look at them with me and she'll absent-mindedly say okay, we should. Then I'll ask if len and I were pretty babies and she'll say yes, we were, but you were the prettiest of us three. I guess Mom doesn't need photos to see your baby's face. And you know how close-lipped Dad is about these things. He has a picture of you wrapped in yellowing plastic, an eternally preserved taboo, but he doesn't like looking at old photos. I always end up looking at the albums alone, so I can remember your face.

Most of the time, we live as if you were never with us, and I was always the oldest child in the family. Mom doesn't cry anymore. Sometimes she'll mention you, though not in a sad way. (Actually, she suggested that I write a letter to you.) Dad never mentions you, except when we visit your grave. len never mentions you.



As for me, I wanted to tell people who have older brothers how lucky they are. I can only imagine what life would be like now, if you were here. I have wanted to ask our parents what you were like, since I was too young when you left to remember much about you. I have wanted to tell people what "death at an early age" is really like. This is the best way I know how.

Are you happier where you are now than when you were here? Don't you miss not being able to grow up with us and doing those things that you could be doing? You left me with what some may call grief, or sorrow, or mourning, but there is no word to describe it. It is the feeling that makes me cry in the dark when I'm alone, and ask these questions, knowing that you won't answer.

Sometimes I feel as if I am a stranger looking at those pictures, that those cute kids couldn't have been you and me and Ien. Well, it's been a long time since I've seen you. If I reach into the recesses of my memory, I can catch glimpses of you leading me, carrying me. Each year the pictures mean more to me because these images of you are fading. Every time I look at them, I cry for being too young to know you other than a big person that I could cling to. I also cry for that hopeless vision of what life could be, should be, if you were here. The pictures are the only things I have left of you, so I at least know that you once held me in your nine year-old arms.

TRAVEL FANTASY

Aubrey Fox

Mak and I were returning from Walt's with our bag of margarine when Mak nudged me and pointed into the pool area.

"Look," he said. "Babes."

Indeed, there were—two girls lounging in the hot tub, a scene resembling a bad teen-sex film you see late at night on HBO.

But I was especially interested in the scene unfolding before me, for I had been saying all week long that if I saw any girls, I would ask them over to our place for dinner.

This had been one of my persistent travel fantasies, the possibility of meeting someone new and exciting. The fantasy had survived countless family outings, and I thought my chances were even greater now that I was old enough to take more vacations than not with friends.

Trying not to peer into the cloudy pool room, I worked on my delivery. I believed it would be easy. All I would have to do was be smooth and say something like, "I don't



normally do this sort of thing, you understand, but would you come over for some dinner?"

Then, undoubtedly, they would accept, also eager to fulfill their own "travel fantasy."

So with a mixture of stupidity and stupidity, I shoved the grocery bag into Mak's arms and went inside the pool area, where the girls were waiting.

The first thing I did, of course, was to walk by them to the bathroom. After all, I had to make sure they weren't either much older than us or horrendously ugly and disfigured.

Naturally, in trying to be so casual as to not arouse their suspicions, I wasn't able to get much of a look.

No major limbs missing, I thought, and I took the obligatory lap through the bathroom (ball up toilet paper and toss into trashcan).

Then there was that moment right before you take the big risk, where you almost desperately try to stop yourself, opting instead to mumble a quick "hello" and look at your shoes while you shuffle by.

But the weight of all the promises and a strange, indescribable feeling that allows you to push the last number of a girl's phone number without thinking about it made me push the door to the bathroom open and walk over to the girls, whose gay laughter ceased suddenly at my appearance.

"Hi. Do you mind?" I asked as I dangled my feet into the water.

The blonde one smiled at me tentatively. "What?" she said.

Despite the initial misstep, I was pleased. The blonde girl was pretty, very pretty, in an immediately recognizable way. The other girl, who had darker hair and a plainer face, was harder to draw a bead on, mostly because her friend overshadowed her. Still, she was intriguing, interesting. They both seemed to be about my age.

"Hi," I repeated loudly.

"Hi," the blonde one said.

"Are you having a good time down here?" I thought I would find out more about them before I actually popped the question. (Though they would either have to be neo-Nazi's or transsexuals for me to reject them, they were so attractive.)

All I would have to do was say something like, "I don't normally do this sort of thing, but would you come over for dinner?"

"Yeah, a great time," the blonde one said. She was the assertive one.

"Are you going to high school?"

"Yeah, we're gonna be seniors."

"Where?"

"New Jersey."

Suddenly, I realized that I had spent my entire conversational load. What else was there to say? Didn't they want to ask me the same questions?

I decided to move closer to them in the hot tub. I sat down on the deck and got my good pair of shorts wet at the bottoms.

Great, I thought. I'll just sorta sink here as they stare at me, expectantly, but not at all (at least to me), hopefully.

"Look," I said, "normally I don't do this sort of thing, but I was wondering if you two wanted to come over and have some dinner with me and my friends."

"I don't know," the blonde girl said. "My parents bought a chicken and they might be mad. I'd have to ask them." BOUGHT A CHICKEN! ARE YOU KIDDING!

And what was worse, she had not been fazed in the least! As if she was expecting me to bare my soul after only knowing her for twenty-five seconds.

The blonde one continued. "But, I dunno, maybe we'll stop by later. Which apartment is yours?"

After I told them, I walked away, picking up their low murmur that exploded into gales of high-pitched laughter after I closed the door to the pool behind me.

For a moment, I considered charging back in there and saying "What! Did you think this was easy for me? Did the thought of meeting new people scare you so much that you had to try to laugh it off to justify not taking the risk, or are you two people without feelings, only out for the quick high of rejecting another human being!"

Or, on a slightly smaller scale, "Couldn't you have waited until I was totally out of earshot?"

Later, I played the scene over and over again in my head as I stirred my specialty spaghetti sauce (the only thing I really know how to cook). The chance of their coming by occupied my thoughts, but after a while that faded, leaving only a kind of pride at having tried. The travel fantasy lives on.



Mein Kampf

Because I screamed, shook fast,
my gaping insides clawed raw,
gasping for sweet air.
They're still after me.
My disintegration into a million unclean pieces,
bursting into a festering nightmare was
stopped by the weight of thick oak.
Unscathed, but
drowning in thin evil,
skeletal quicksand.
My breath is polluted.
my struggle, eternal.
After my shell is contaminated
and my blood filthy
and my frame scorched
(hotter than the most pragmatic oven)
a jumping reel reveals: my hair and eyes
are brown.

Jennifer Cohen



Old Man (collage) • Lauren McMullen

Filial Piety

You did not want to take your grandfather on that plane, see the seat belt flattened against his hips his head too big on the wrinkled light body, all the strange ladies who passed us gently touching his elbow and smiling, "Here you go Grandfather" while you shrunk your head into a pillow and looked at the foot rest. You used to tell your brother how he made you sick for being so pathetic so old and enjoying it you'd rather die he nodded eyes averted you were both ashamed. You would not sit next to him in cars or restaurants so revulsed by the veins on the table, hesitating near the doorway until some cackling relative bunched in beside him. His eyes had clouded blue gray and watery like oyster gut right before you watched it slide into someone's mouth did they ever blink and his skin so stained and taut over his jutting cheekbones it hurt your face yet the thin maroon lips turned chinward—just don't open them like that no—a fleshy empty hole or teeth you had once seen so still on the bottom of a paper cup in the bathroom. You always wanted a grandfather like the Buddha on the mantelpiece, smooth fat belly and red lips you would scramble to his knees and out of the folds of his robe he'd pull peaches.

Irene Chien

Vegetating

I'll bury myself in our garden,
that ragged father's fetish, that fetters me
with sprouts of sweat and time. I'll lay myself
among roots, dump clipped grass over, and work down
to bedrock: there rest, and let worms feast,
and watch father turn with envy
as his garden greens overnight.

Jonathan Blum

Face (pen and ink) • Monica Lam

Colonized

I step into a war
walking in my city
I see no blood
no bullets
just women
and the soldiers.

One man talks with the soldiers,
who are taking time off from their war,
about finding beautiful women
in my ugly city
they are tired of bullets
sick from the smell of blood.

I step into a puddle of blood
left over from yesterday's soldiers
they hid the bullets
they cleaned up yesterday's war
they hid the dead women
in the back alleys of my city.

I can hardly recognize the city
the buildings are painted with my blood
they have changed the women
from mothers to whores for the soldiers
to support their noble war—
reward for shooting their bullets.

Am I put together with their bullets
just as they have constructed my city
made it into a factory of war
fueled by my blood
run by their soldiers
paid for with women?

I see a group of women
decorated with necklaces of bullets
telling each other of their beautiful soldiers
how long they will stay in the city
before they must shed my blood
once again for their war.

City of my blood,
you will die from soldiers and bullets.
Your men have abandoned you, and the women give birth to more war.

Daniel Sharfstein

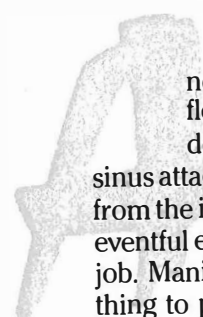


God's Man • Kristen Bergevin

BRAILLE EMISSARY

MORTEN YEUNG

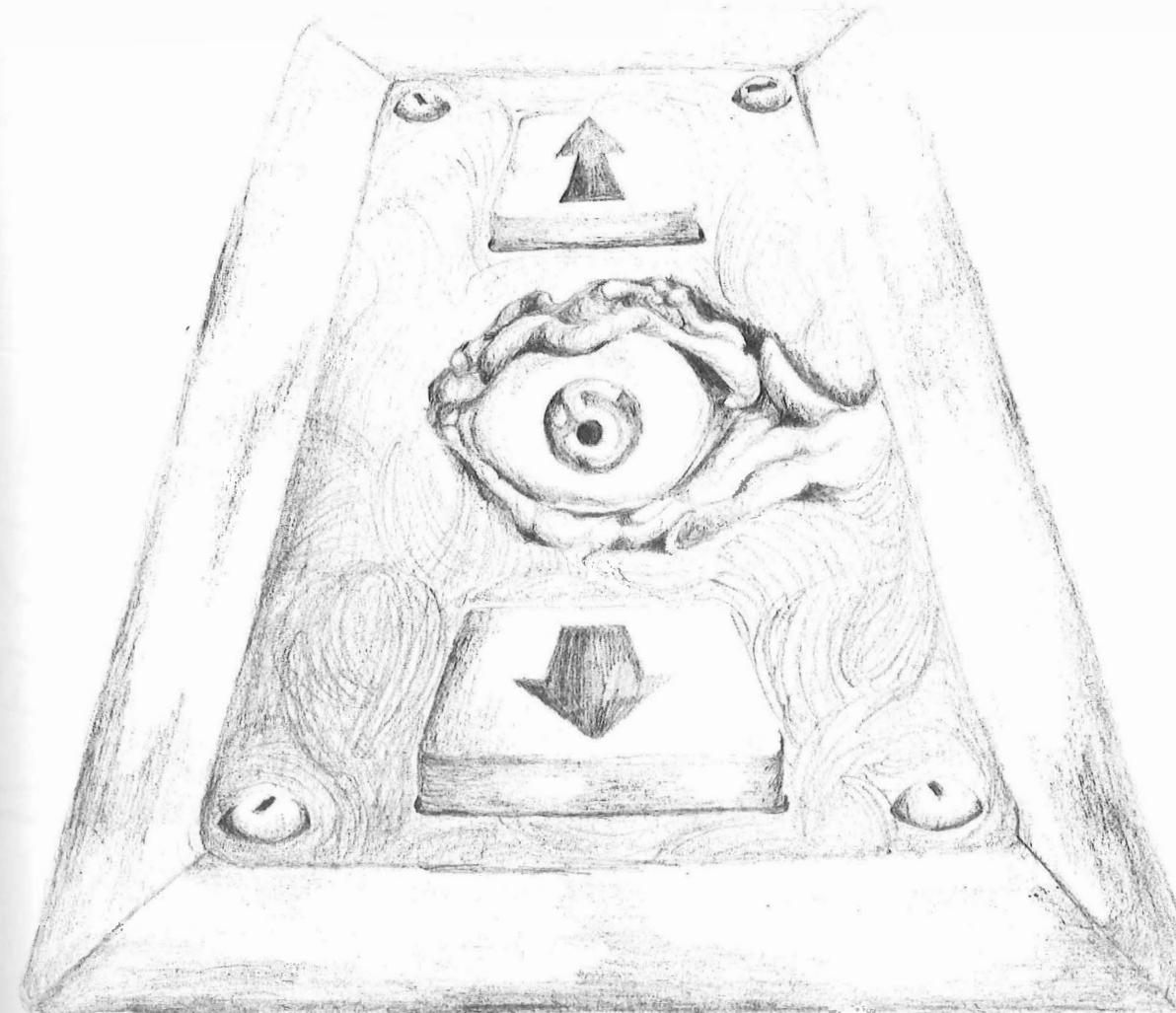
... one bored right index finger wanders over the raised dots underneath the large numeral five. One remote portion of a wearied brain attempts to unravel the enigma concerning braille and the blind; are the little raised dots really simpler to feel than the actual shape of the number—if you're blind?...



nd so, I wait on the fifth floor, at the elevator door. Briefcase in hand, sinus attack pressing my eyes out from the inside, I stand. Nothing eventful ever happens at my desk job. Manifestly, in need of anything to ponder over, then, my mind begins to wonder about the man standing next to me before

I actually notice him; my head and eyes nudge to his direction. I remember nine hours ago washing my hands in the lavatory sink, looking in the mirror. This man looks like me. His quaking makes my heel itch. Fast exhaling complements a dance that his neck plays, rolling side to side. The rest of his body, bobbing up and down unevenly, can't follow his neck dance in rhythm. A scenery of crevices stretched into his face squirms, and folds waving white moustache hair twitch. Twitchy, stretchy, bobbing, rolling icky living breathing reflection gnaws at my heel.

The handle slides off with the glistening moisture of my fingertips, and the briefcase thumps on



Boil (pencil) • Irene Chien

the floor. Heat from my face makes my nose drip and the paste in my mouth foam. My right arm rises and deftly crashed upon the man's glasses. His neck stops moving.

"Stop breathing!" I shriek, and follow up with a left.

"Wha—" he cries with a puzzled, startled shrill. The unwary sap collapses to the floor moaning raffishly, and the wall meets his skull with a crunch.

I sniffle and poise myself and glance down on the heap of gray business suit. Greeting the sound of scratchy, foggy breathing from the mound, my shoe curiously prods the man with my toe, finding its way right under his chin, against his flaccid neck. A patsy

springs alive as the man jerks his head back, violently escaping my toe.

"...y-y-you can... What do you want! Do you want money? Take, take my wallet—and my watch... please don't hurt me, don't kill me..."

The man's glasses beside me on the floor crumble under my heel. I lean over to pick up the pen that ejected itself from the man's pocket. The shiny, chromed ball-point resists the leathery eyelids of the man, but travels through the pulpy insides like a spoon squeezing into gelatin.

No time to clean up; the elevator door whirs open with an enthusiastic "ping!" Lifting my

I remember nine hours ago washing my hands in the lavatory sink, looking in the mirror. This man looks like me.

briefcase, I board the elevator and forget on what floor I stand. "Door Open" button depressed, I poke my head out to ask the man a question.

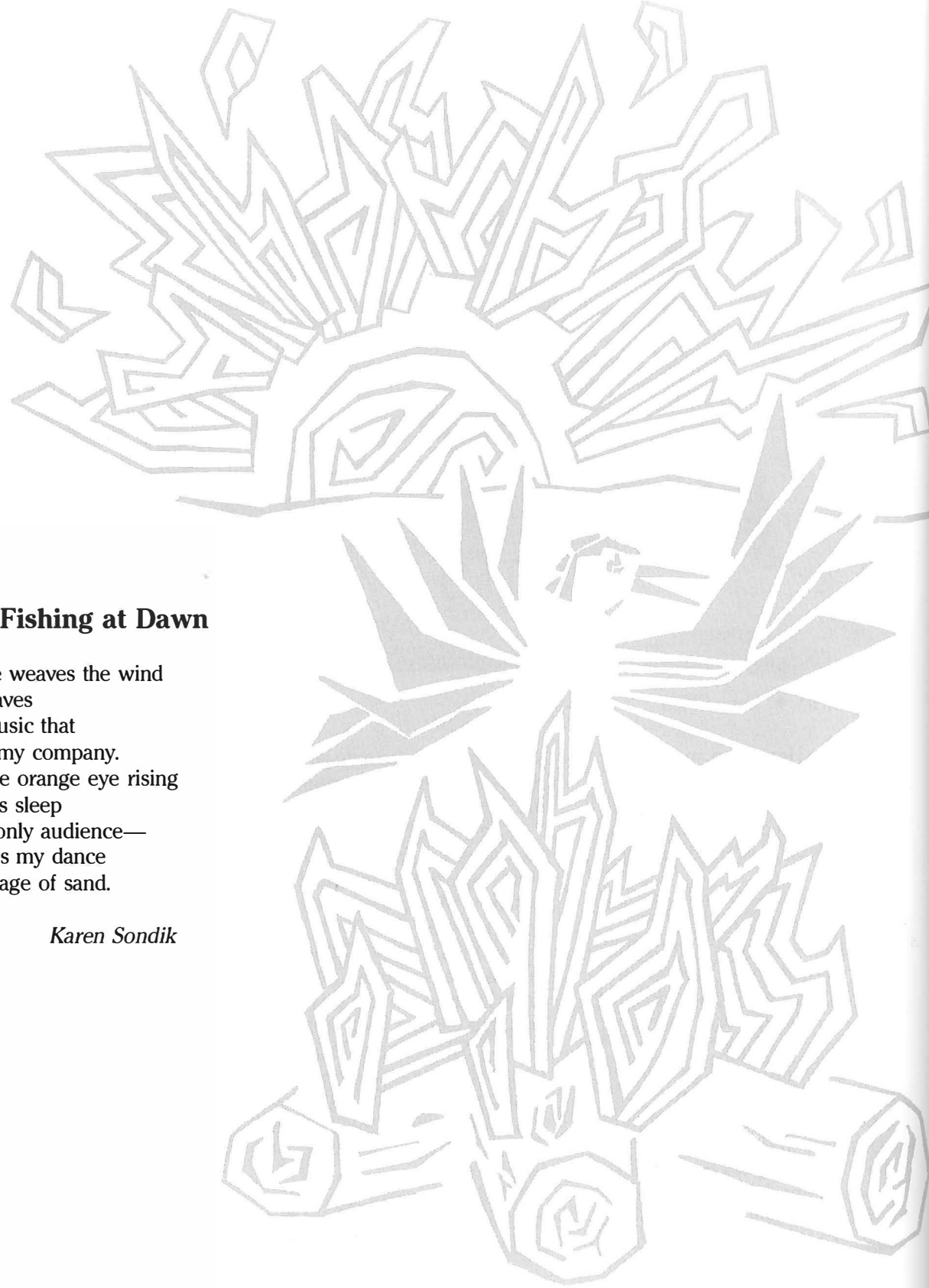
"Excuse me, sir, could you feel the metal strip and tell me what floor we're on?"



Surf Fishing at Dawn

Silence weaves the wind
and waves
into music that
keeps my company.
And the orange eye rising
from its sleep
—the only audience—
watches my dance
on a stage of sand.

Karen Sondik

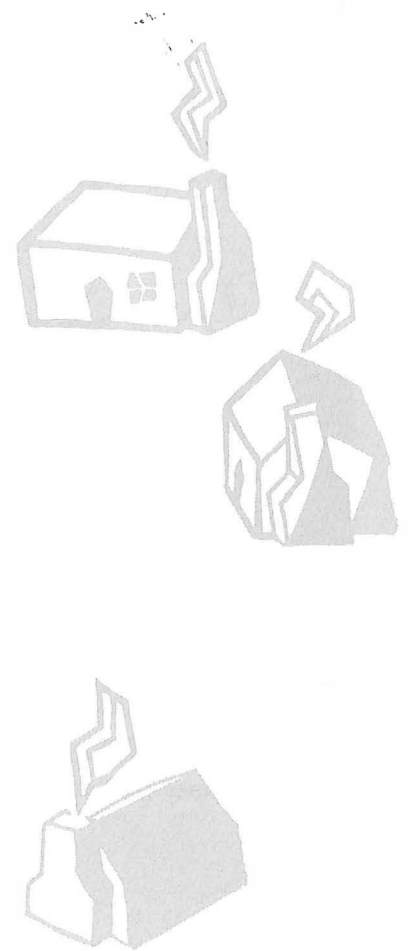


Sea Plane

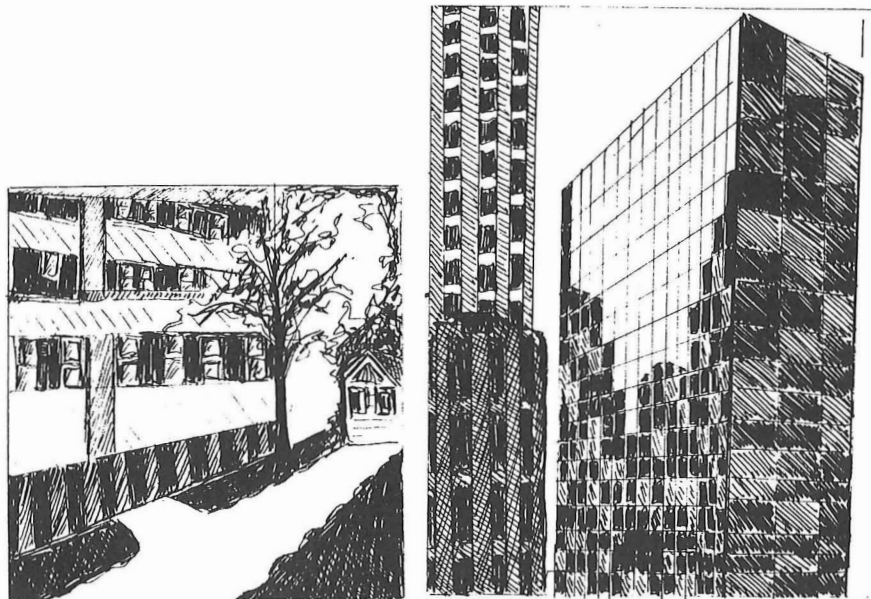
i speed
humming
wings thumping
tailfeathers spinning
slicing the silent dark.
Taking the downdrafts
i forget the air
drop and bob
motionless
weaving threads of vapor
through my wings
my song grown soft
long and like a lullabye.

Losing where i soared
and how i came
my silver plumage
reddens in the wave.
Not to soar
is to sing
the song of swans

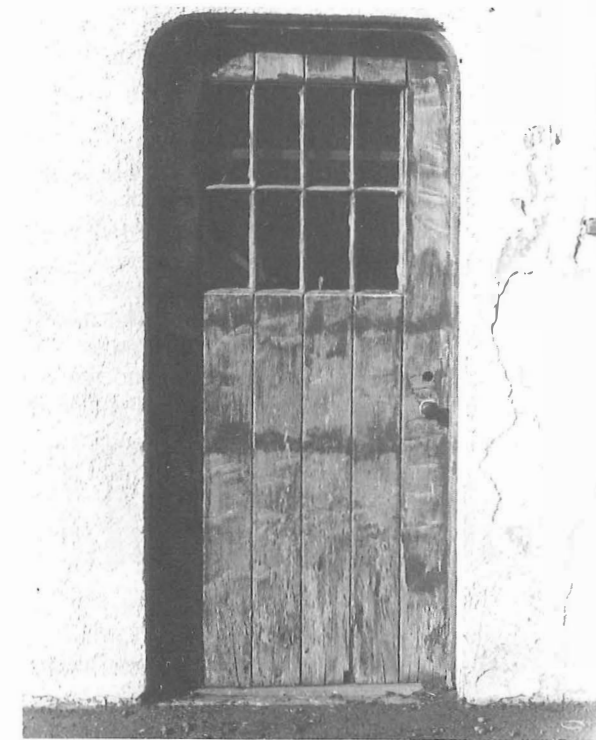
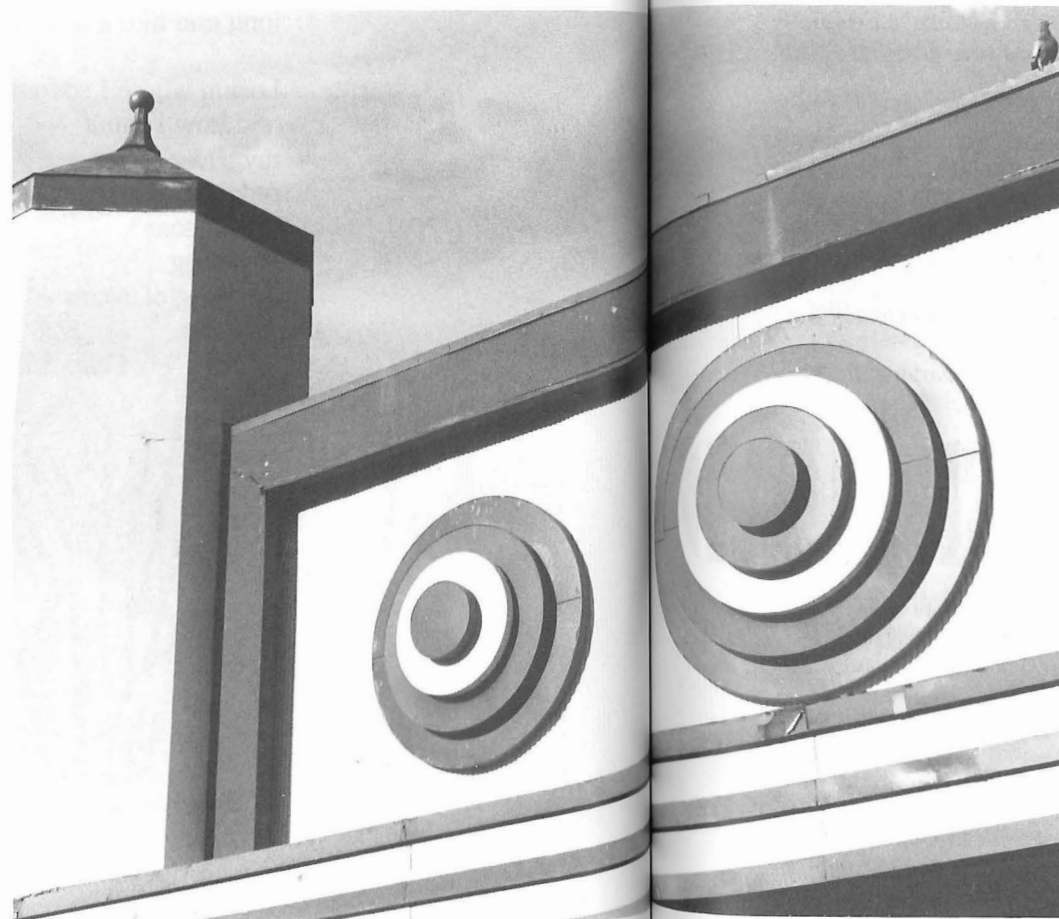
Colin Suleiman



"Behold! Human beings living in an underground den...like ourselves...they see only their own shadows, or the shadows of one another, which the fire throws on the opposite wall of the cave."
—Plato



Cityscapes (pen and ink) • Lauren McMullen



Study of Glen Echo Park • Margy Yuspa

FROM THE GROUND UP

BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG DEAL: A YOUNG WRITER KEEPS HER HEAD



photo by Kristen Bergevin

"There are no metaphors for writing, unfortunately; writing just is."

—Marti Leimbach

There are no metaphors for Marti Leimbach, either. Marti Leimbach just *is*—and that's saying quite a bit.

First of all, she is a twenty-six-year-old novelist who, after selling her first novel, *Dying Young*, to Doubleday Publishing Company, is in the process of becoming one of America's most well known young writers. (The book was also sold to eleven foreign countries, and the movie rights were purchased by Sally Field's production company, Fogwood, in conjunction with Twentieth Century Fox.) Not to mention the hefty advance from Doubleday, which previous to *Dying Young's* release, made more news than the novel itself.

She is also a fundamentally confident young woman whose voice projects thoughtful assurance; there is no modesty or false modesty, no coyness or arrogance, just *Marti*.

And she is a 1982 Churchill graduate who grew up in Potomac.

The Formative Years

"Death was something which was very available; death was as possible as anything to me."

Leimbach experienced an atypical Potomac childhood. She moved to Potomac from Washington, D.C., when she was three years old. When she was four, her father died. That left her mother—a full-time journalist who worked downtown—to take care of Marti, her older sister and her younger brother.

"We pretty much raised ourselves," Leimbach said. "We were always out of money."

Her independence forced Leimbach to start making big decisions at a young age. When she was sixteen she

dropped out of high school and went to Europe.

"I wanted to go away," she said. "It was the best thing I ever did. I came back and said, 'Gee, I really want to do something with my life.'"

After a year of waiting tables and mixing drinks in Europe, Leimbach dropped back into Churchill. Almost immediately she was faced with another important decision, as her mother planned to move out of town. Leimbach decided to stay. She spent her senior year working for a Potomac woman as an *au pair*.

"I was really this little adult," she said. "I had bought my own Chevette."

She became a strong member of the debate team and an editor of *Erehwon*. She was a prolific poet whose writing won national awards. Still, there were barriers. The term

"misunderstood" comes to mind.

"I was not very well liked," she explained. "I was fairly maladjusted. I never got into the gifted classes."

A few teachers did believe in Leimbach's ability. *Erehwon* advisor/creative writing teacher Peggy Pfeiffer, who still keeps in touch with Leimbach, helped to nurture her creative growth and offered emotional support while Leimbach attended Churchill.

"I remember something she said," Leimbach recalls. "I was coming back from a poetry reading with her and I said, 'Oh God, you think it's really silly wanting to be a writer?' She said, 'Yeah, but Marti, I'll tell you something, and I usually don't say this to students—if there's anybody who could make it, it's you.'"

She pauses.

"And that really stuck with me."

Assistant Principal Mike Zarchin was also sympathetic, Leimbach said. "He knew something was screwed up at my house. But I remember he said—I'd pulled a prank—and he said, 'People like you don't get into the college of their choice.'"

Leimbach's face creeps into a knowing smile: Harvard was the college of her choice; she got in.

Even the unshakeable Marti was a bit surprised.

"I remember driving down Tuckerman Road, after I found out," she said, "and I was thinking, 'Yeah, things are really going to change now.'"

Writing and "The N Word"

"I was terribly serious in college—I wanted things, I wanted to learn things—I wanted to learn specific things, and the rest of it just seemed to me to be a waste of time."

It doesn't seem as if Leimbach has wasted much time at all. Though she did come upon some early obstacles, her writing has made remarkable progress in a relatively short time.

She originally had intended to focus on expository

AMIDST THE HYPE

writing and poetry, but at Harvard Leimbach began to slip into the world of fiction, writing fictional narratives into essays.

It was when she decided that she wanted to learn how to write short stories that Leimbach came upon her first stumbling block: lack of a starting point. "I thought, how am I going to write a short story? I've never been to Africa—can't be Hemingway."

Just as she was struggling to find a style with which she could identify, a new, more contemporary brand of minimalism began to surface in New York which would leave an indelible mark on her writing.

"I discovered this huge group of new writers who were doing things that were very accessible to me," she said, "and I learned how to use the language by studying those

works and then I started writing my own short stories."

In the midst of developing her fiction-writing skills, Leimbach came upon another barrier: finding her "voice." She described her quest as a trying one—a "searching"—which ended with surprising abruptness. One day, she said, when she was about twenty-four, she simply started writing in a way that felt completely natural, a way that ultimately became her style. "Like the way you have handwriting," she explained, "or the color of your face; it's that much a part of you."

Then it was time. Senior Thesis: Write a novel.

"I was too afraid to even call it a novel," Leimbach said. "I had to call it, 'The N Word.'"

This first project was understandably overwhelming. However, Leimbach said that even as her skills become sharper, writing the novel remains a very involving experience, a way of life. "Even if I am not writing the novel," she said, "I am in some way considering the novel."

Though she was pleased with this first effort, Leimbach made a conscious decision not to look for a publisher. She said that she did not feel it was a sincere representation of her work. She emphasized the importance for writers, especially young writers eager to see their names in print, to be ready to stand by any of their work that gets published. For at least four years, she explained, published writers will be thought of only in terms of their published work.

The Book

"You really have to feel like this is something that...is part of me, just as much as an old photograph is part of me, as much as my clothes are a part of me, and you're not ashamed of it and you're not going to recant on it and you're not going to deny it—it's there."

Being ashamed and recanting are not two options with which Leimbach must concern herself these days. She feels that she has produced a legitimate piece of writing. And Doubleday agrees with her.

CHARLIE BUCKHOLTZ

Of course, the thought of big-money publishing scarcely crossed her mind from October of 1987 to April of 1988, when Leimbach slaved over the first draft of *Dying Young* while attending the Writers' Program at the University of California, Irvine (into which she was accepted with scholarship money).

She said that although this was an extremely hectic time for her, the novel's characters continued to propel the book forward. "I really think about the characters," she said, "and they...do things. Because otherwise I'd be too bored to write."

The last thing that Victor, Hilary and Gordon (the novel's three main characters) are is boring. Victor, a young, handsome, bitterly sarcastic (and usually charming) genius, has terminal cancer, and he has decided to refuse treatment

"It's like dancing and stumbling; it's like walking and falling."

and let the disease run its course through his body. He awaits death on the small seaside town of Hull, Massachusetts, with Hilary, his attractive nurse turned lover. No story is ever very interesting with just two lovers, so enter Gordon: a video game manufacturer spending the winter in Hull making improvements on his parents' summer house. Hilary turns to Gordon for normalcy, a break from the mounting intensity of her relationship with Victor, whose health is noticeably deteriorating. Gordon and Hilary become lovers; Victor and Gordon become friends. The novel examines varying types and degrees of love, and it toes the thin line between pleasure and pain.

It is a line with which, in a somewhat different form, Leimbach has had a good deal of personal experience. Her mother, who had cancer ever since Leimbach was in college, died last year.

Leimbach said that her mother's illness and death were difficult for her, but denies that they were the basis for *Dying Young*. "I didn't think about the connection, autobiographically," she said, "that I had been loving someone who was dying—it didn't even occur to me."

She admits, in retrospect, that some aspects of her relationship with her mother subconsciously worked their way into the novel. The idea that the worst aspect of terminal illness is its boredom, for instance, is a prevalent theme in *Dying Young*. But she insists that this is the exception, not the rule.

"It seems to me that Victor and Hilary's relationship was so unique and so separate from my own," she said, "and that all these sorts of tragedies are entirely unique—and that the drama of that kind of, sort of love and pain—it's a private drama."

And it is a drama which she has certainly fleshed out in *Dying Young*. One of the novel's overriding features is its perception, its insight into the most miniscule details of human nature. It is a characteristic which Leimbach believes is integral to her style.

photo by Margy Yuspa



"Even if I don't write a lot about a particular scene or a particular thought," she said, "I like to have thought many things about it, considered it at many angles, sort of like turning a graph on its side."

This type of ultra-analytical thought comes naturally, according to Leimbach. "It's the way I think."

Example: "I had this thing after my mom and my grandparents died when I was in front of the mirror, and I started looking at myself and I thought about my face not in terms of 'my face,' but in terms of my father's jaw, and my grandfather's lips, and the curve of my cheekbone being my dad's and the unevenness of my mouth being like my grandfather's. I just felt as though it was almost like a hologram, you know that you break up a hologram and no matter how many pieces you have, each one is entirely the same, so when you have family it's like each person, each child or grandchild or whatever, is just another turn of the image."

Surreal departures such as these, she said, are perpetually playing in her mind.

"The trick is to get it into narrative form and then to work with those words and to make it more precise, to get at the center of what really is coming forward from that kind of thought."

One of the most important things to remember, she said, is not to get caught up in the technicalities of writing. "If you have to think about how to write a sentence—the individual sentence—while you're developing something in your work, then you just—it's like dancing and stumbling, it's like walking and sort of, falling; I mean, you really have to have those feet moving."

Leimbach believes that words must be completely available to the writer. Not a complex vocabulary, necessarily, but a vast warehouse of words that the writer can *feel*, that allow him to express himself in one, fluid motion.

"Those first couple steps really matter," she said, "and

"I thought, how am I going to write a short story? I've never been to Africa—can't be Hemingway."

You really have to keep those feet moving."

then everything comes easier and easier, until you're not thinking about the steps, you're just thinking about the feeling you have, and then it is over...and you just sit down and say, 'Okay.'"

But when she had finished *Dying Young*, Leimbach did not just sit down and say, "Okay." First, she went into a deep depression, having convinced herself that the novel would never see print. Then she stopped eating frozen foods.

"I keep [my manuscripts] in the freezer because it's sort of fireproof—not entirely, but more or less—and I thought, 'Well...there will be no more Swansons because I have written more manuscripts that have gone nowhere.'"

She strongly suggests that all writers follow this cultish ritual. "People lose manuscripts, they burn up, dogs pee on them," she pleaded, "it's a terrible thing. You have to really...freeze them is the answer."

Her frozen food fast did not last for long.

Published and Beyond

"I knew I had written a book I liked; I knew that other people would like it. I didn't know that a lot of people would, but I knew that someone else would like it."

MacDonald Harris liked it. In fact, Harris, an author and one of Leimbach's professors at U.C., Irvine, liked the novel so much that he sent it to his agent, who immediately signed Marti as a client.

"Was it easy?" Leimbach quipped. "Yes—[my agent] said, 'I love your work, of course I want you as a client.' It was the nicest thing in the world, best phone call I've ever had."

Before she could say, "Houghton Mifflin," publishers from England, Sweden, Denmark and other countries around the world had picked up the novel. In February, 1989, Doubleday bid higher than any of the other American publishing companies at auction (necessary when more

than one publishing company has designs on a piece of writing).

Because of her own Cinderella-like success, Leimbach is a firm believer that the talented writer can achieve success by working within the normal publishing channels.

"Editors want writers as much as writers want editors," she said. "Editors feel that they don't find enough good writers...once they have you, they really want to keep you."

She also insists that her situation is not as outrageous as many have hailed it.

"The legacy of young writers who've made it big early is a very, very large list," she said. "I just think that if you write well...editors are looking for good writers."

Currently working on her second novel, Leimbach said that she's got at least three more to write before she even surfaces for air. Then, possibly, a child, or something else that will "stir things up."

"I feel like I'm in a very creative time," she said. "There's a lot to write about."

Specifically, Leimbach said that she wants her work to reflect "a particular perceptivity to the way we interact and think." She looks forward to being more aware of another aspect of life—that is to say, success, much of which she still attributes to her mother.

"I am really very much my own person at a young age and have done an awful lot in a short period of time," she said, "and the reason is that my mother allowed me to do anything that I really felt strongly was right for me. She never told me I couldn't do things."

Once again, Leimbach insists that there is nothing supernatural about her or her circumstances. "You hear all of this when you're in high school and college," she said, "you hear, 'Oh look, no one can be a Hemingway or no one can be a Salinger or nobody can be a...whatever, fill in the blank. But, you know, anybody can be a Marti Leimbach.'"

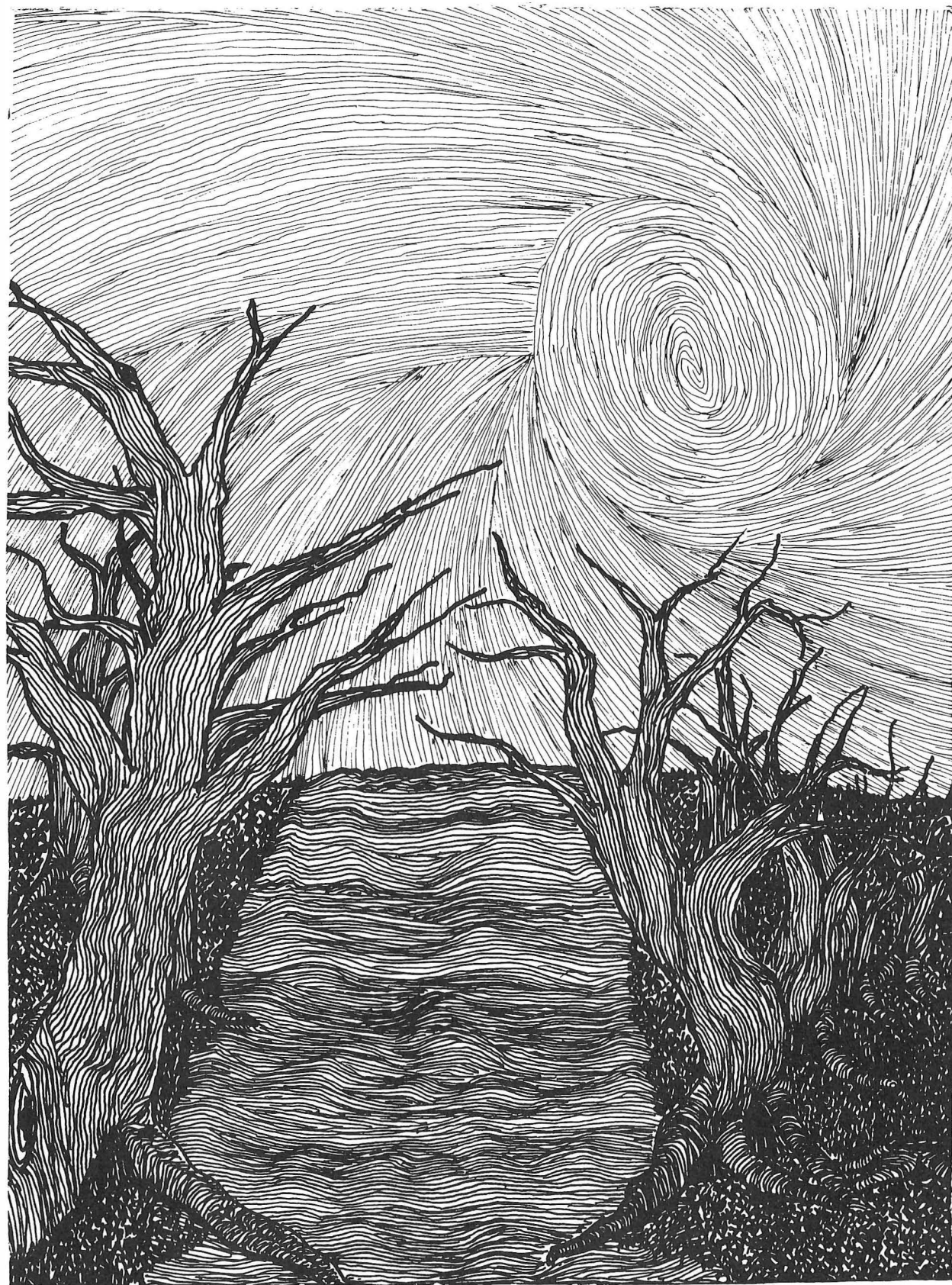
Anybody?



photo by Kristen Bergevin



photo by Margy Yuspa



Weeds (pen and ink) • Amit Bagchi

Drink

Moon hanging like Prometheus' eye
coming back with each ripping,
lacing shredded nerves through the optical sky.
Under the shadow of somnolent lashes,
you sweep your hands clean
of the past.
Consumed by the gaze of the night,
we wet blades with incandescent words
the prisoner of the feast, and the teacher of some design.
Your eyes boil with the colors of the world,
lurid light slipping supine off your alabaster skin
glows the sin under the nails, sweet white hands.
Such savage conscience caters to your senseless thought
and blood that pulses in your glass veins with hearts
torn from beneath rippling flesh.
You destroyed the one you loved
for the drink of your ecstasy,
the wine of the gods.
And until I feed your cold
touch on my neck
I will stir no lies from your lips,
a face seen only by the moon.

Monica Lam

Masker

His kiss is cold
and instant.
The love bite disappears
like early snow.

He doesn't warm to cocktail
conversation,
but dances both the powerful
and clever.

He waltzes where the
virgins sit,
despised by rosier
suitors.

He can wait
his will,
until the cheek becomes
the proper gray,
the leanness ekes
to meager.

He is the true and only child
of love.
She whispers in his ear —
my precious pet,
go gather where
you will.

Colin Suleiman



Our Hero (pen and ink) • Monica Lam and Chian-Yu Peng

Twelve Tasks

I

Your first task is to clean the air.
Strip the heavy yet floating grease
and subdue the great kitchen odors.

II

Then you must protect the door man from
the careless oafs that bumble about him.
Hose down his face morning and evening
to keep the flies out of his swinging thankyou mouth.

III

When his belly is full, he must be slaughtered.
Gash open his front and remove his sack—tie it!
Tie it quickly to avoid the gaseous perils.
Timing is the key.

IV

Beautify the stalls of rest.
Flood the floors with scouring water until
not a hair or speck remains.

V

Destroy the artificial and develop the natural.
Do not be deceived by color and texture, for many
are they who did not notice
the plastic brick wall.

VI

Servitude can be an ennobling experience.
Penetrate the front lines and disguise yourself
as one of them.
Arm yourself in the polyester uniform.

VII

Treat each person in the line as if
he were your superior.
Remember that they are right no matter
what they say.

VIII

Next you must struggle with Refuse
and win.
Conquer his disorderly appearance
and keep him from gathering on the tables.

IX

Bring back a vessel
of grease so that I may know
that you braved the horrors
of the fried.

X

Capture the head of an
ammonia bottle
but beware of the fumes.

XI

Sweep the floor clean
of all the paper, straws, and crumbs.
Mop it until it shines, but complete this task in
one day's time.

XII

The most terrifying of all.
Capture a sample of the cuisine, but
beware its powerful gaze that could turn you to
a man with an afflicted appetite.

Tom Iarocci

ONE BROKEN NOSE IS A TRAGEDY

DANIEL SHARFSTEIN

I broke my nose yesterday in statistics class. We were discussing hypothesis testing and t distributions of sample data. I fell off my chair and broke my nose. The teacher said, "Whoops!" and Dolores the nurse ran up to me. She said, "Can anyone get some ice?" Sabine, the German dental hygienist said, "Yah okay. I get some." My teacher said, "What?" The woman whose job was "Pizza Toppings!" just laughed. The man who never talked sipped his Sprite. Laura, the loud-fat health researcher, babbled something about how my broken nose reminded her of the time she was bodysearched at the Bonn airport all the way in Germany and boy was she scared.

It wasn't the kind of statistics class that broken noses are made of. I got there at 6:15 like I always do. I go early so I can listen to the "Soul Fix at Six" on the radio. My teacher was there and so was Laura, the loud-fat health researcher. They were talking.

"So I was walking out of the

Pike Plaza, you know, off 355, 'cause I was buying some shirts and anyway there were a bunch of young guys in leather jackets with a girl between them and they were shoving and I thought 'Oh no.' and then one gang broke the other gang's car and smashed up their windows and CDs and all the police came and they rounded up witnesses and I was one and Oh my God I had to wait for an hour and a half for the two just two policemen to question everyone. I've been witness to three crimes in the past six months where I've had to testify in court and I'm tired of witnessing other people's crime."

"Isn't that something," said my teacher.

Sabine walked in and sat in front of me. She always sits in front of me. My teacher turned from Laura and said, "So, Sabine. The lady at the math lab said, 'Do you have a Swedish student or something?' She didn't know how to use the computer to do a t test." Sabine just said, "Hah." Maybe Sabine's Swedish. But she'll al-

ways be a German dental hygienist to me.

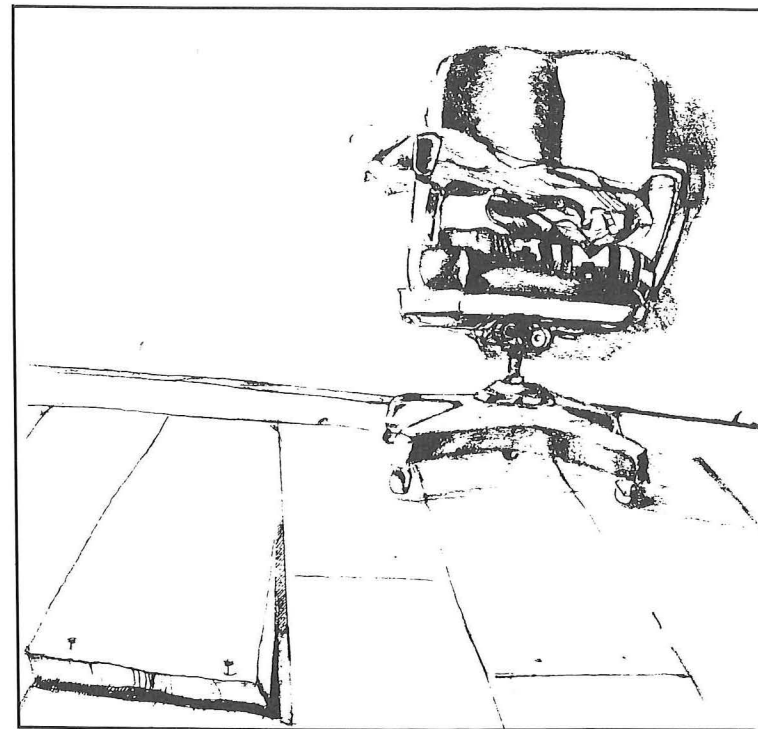
The man who never talked walked in. He had a Sprite. His jacket and pants almost matched. He didn't say anything. He just sipped his Sprite.

I put my head on the desk and closed my eyes. Then I pretended I was spinning. I rolled my closed eyes around and around. But my teacher said, "Okay. I know it's a little early, but let's start. Sabine, what are tonight's homework problems?" Sabine said, "Pege four two oh, number fife three six." "Five point six?" asked my teacher. "No." "What? Five point six?" "No. Fife three six. Three. Three." "Right. Laura, would you like to do that one?" "Oh yeah, I liked that one. With the democrats and the republicans." "Right."

"While Laura's doing the problem on the board, let's go through our hypotheses that we are going to be testing. We'll start with you, Maureen."

"Well, I don't know if it's so good."

"Come on, tell us." "I'm trans-



Empty Chair (pencil) • Chian-Yu Peng

lating a computer program into a language that will make it run faster."

"So you'll be testing the speed of the program before and after the translation. That'll mean maybe ten trials."

"I'll be doing fifteen."

"Good. How about you, Marcy?"

"Well, I like to jog. So I'm seeing how fast I run a mile before and after exercise."

"Great. Do you run marathons? I had a friend who ran in them. I thought that was the craziest thing."

"No."

"How about you, James."

I think James is homeless. He wears an Orioles cap and carries around a Payless shoe store bag. He said, "I'm seeing how batting averages of the Orioles change with the new rule about the hitting coach closer to the backstop during the game. Hopefully, there'll be ten Orioles left over from last year." He laughed and snorted.

Liz, the garbage analyzer, was next. She monitors garbage at many sites across the county. The "Pizza Toppings!" woman went. She's looking at how many people

buy sausage on pizza when it is a special sausage incentive day as opposed to when it's a nothing day or another topping day. Then the computer guy with the cigarettes and the long hair. He wants to see how good the main-frame works in his company. We skipped over the man who never talks.

I put my head down again. I saw myself counting all the bricks in the Washington Monument. I'd say, "One." and place a brick on my forehead. I did not really count them all. I just kept saying "one," and thinking you're not counting it and better start over, stupid, or you'll get a virus.

The teacher said, "David? David."

I looked up and said, "My name's not David."

"Right. What's your project?"

"Well, I don't know. I'm trying to decide what to do." Laura sighed and shook her head. I looked back and narrowed my eyes at Laura.

"What are your choices?"

"I think maybe I should use some of the data I got from my summer job."

"Where'd you work?"

"National Institutes of Health."

I saw myself counting all the bricks in the Washington Monument. I'd say, "One." and place a brick on my forehead.

"Why?"

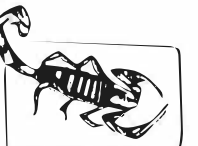
"What did you do there?"

"They put me on a platform and spun me around a lot." Someone laughed in the back of the room. I turned around to see who did it, but I couldn't tell.

"They were researching motion sickness. They'd feed me different foods and spin me around until I threw up. Some I threw up before I even started turning. Like anchovies. But others, like peanut butter, took forty or fifty high-speed turns." Someone else laughed. I turned around faster than the first time I turned around, so I could see the laughter. But then another person laughed. Soon the whole class was laughing. I was turning around and around, watching them laugh at me like I was the subject of some joke.

I fell sideways out of my chair and rolled over to pick myself up. But bam—it was a broken nose all right. I bled all over my "The Jerk's Right Here" shirt.

Too bad I had to miss the last part of statistics. We worked on proportional data. I heard that's the best part of the class. Instead, I was counting the number of patients in the Emergency Room with green, red, and yellow shirts on, blood stains not included. It's for statistics class. Everything I do winds up in statistics class.



Sestinaevil

You
the thinnest shadow of a man
crawl through woven roots of moonlight
vanishing hope, swamping fear
stretches your face into
hollering terror, mind

why this moment is, and mind
why fleeing your engagement only brings you
time enough to realize into
the torture of every man
before you, before you ever see fear,
ever savvy by the moonlight

might be scampering from the moonlight
shining on the secrets in one mind
the scriptures of your fear
crowded with sins by a wealthy soul, and you
with no excuse for mortal man
licked deep into

Death, baked into
the Devil's soil, cowering from his moonlight
from the fate of every other man
escape his scraping your gelatin mind
slut you were, you
sinned and never gripped a glimpse of fear

the fear
driving crazed panic into
all the rotted corners of you,
rustling moonlight
grapples around your mind
slithers alongside the bones of evil man

your care-free soul, less than man
shakes no fear
here to vanquish your mind
to collect on the secrets, into
whores and pain, wicked thrills, staggering moonlight
mashing you

and the fear of a mind
driven with moonlight
sealed you into forever man

Morten Yeung



Eye

There is a haunting in the lake.
A weary branch drips the downpour of the night
onto its glass
like lidocaine.
Ripples skim its face
as fleeting feelings.

Only the icy agate of its eye
stares back at me,
probes,
feasts upon my thought,
sucks in my waving face.

It shatters,
rips me open
knows me
where no eye was meant to see—

and shuts
me down

Colin Suleiman



Fruit (pencil) • Monica Lam

CHOCOLATE MOUSSE AND CHEESE FONDUE

JONATHAN BLUM

Brad went down to Georgetown on Saturday night. Some hippie punk was asking for money in front of an M Street hardware-store-turned-bagel-boutique, so he ignored him. He'd gone down to spend a night with the others, and particularly with Anne. He had plans, now that she had officially and loudly broken up with Charlie. Crazy Charlie, the one who later killed himself in a car wreck. He'd talked with Charlie about her the day before at school—he always liked to get a feel for his targets before he tried to, you know, get a feel for them—and he'd gotten some hints from him on how to work her. "Feed her chocolate mousse," he'd said, "and she'll be putty in your hands. Chocolate mousse and cheese fondue." So when he caught up with her and her friends as they

tried to flirt their way into a bar with no ID, he hung around for a while, and then when she said something about being hungry he dangled a good French restaurant in front of her nose. She went along. He saw Charlie alone at the next table and looked at him for a moment, but then Charlie gave him a little be-seeing-you wave. Then he knew that Charlie wasn't holding a grudge, so nothing stopped him. He went on and ordered dessert for himself and Anne. Chocolate mousse. Bull's-eye. They slept together for the first time about a month later. It really was the first time, she said, and he agreed. So eventually he married her, bought a three-times-too-big house in the outermost suburbs, became a rich and successful advertising executive, had a beautiful daughter named Karen,

and came home one night to find that Anne had been electrocuted in the Jacuzzi.

Anne went down to Georgetown on Saturday night. Floyd was asking for money in front of an M Street hair salon, but she ignored him. She kept her distance from him, because he'd almost gotten lucky with her one night. He gave great back-rubs. She was going down to be with Suzanne and the others, and also to see if there was anyone interesting out there, because she was now officially on the rebound from Charlie. Crazy Charlie, the one who later became a used-carsalesman. She'd been as moody and strange as she could to Charlie lately, in the hope that he'd dump her and let them both keep their images, and

it had worked. Down in Georgetown, she noticed Brad lying in wait for her and decided he really wasn't that much of a scumbag. Besides, she was hungry. She dropped a few hints, so Brad took her to some supposedly ritzy French place with fake oak panelling and an expensive-sounding menu all in French. He was paying, of course. He kept pushing the chocolate mousse, which was odd because it just didn't do a thing for her. They slept together for the first time the next weekend, almost by accident. It was the backrub that did it—just like in the movies. So eventually she married him, became a rich and successful advertising executive, negotiated deals as smoothly as that first dinner with Brad, had an incredibly talented daughter named Karen, and came home one night to find that Brad had been electrocuted in the Jacuzzi.

"Feed her chocolate mousse," he'd said, "and she'll be putty in your hands. Chocolate mousse and cheese fondue."

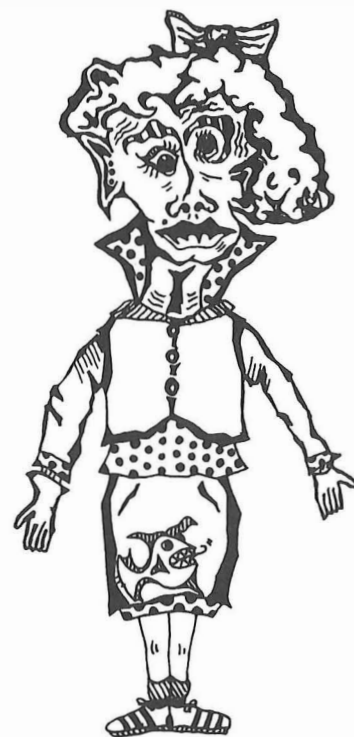
Charlie went down to Georgetown on Saturday night. Floyd was asking for money in front of the gold-domed Riggs bank, and he gave him a couple of bucks. He was going down just to see what was going to happen between Brad and Anne. He'd known something was up when Brad started asking him questions the day before in school. He'd fed him some bull about chocolate mousse and cheese fondue. And Anne had had an eye on Brad for a while, even while she was still going with him. When she started trying to get him to dump her, he'd known it was hopeless for him. And she thought she was being subtle. Just as subtle as she was when she got Brad to take her out to dinner that night. Maybe it would work on someone who trusted her. Charlie went to the same restaurant—he didn't feel like letting him out of his sight. So he sat at a nearby table at some expensive French place. The dinner trashed his paycheck for the week. He didn't mind, just so he could keep an eye on her. Then Brad noticed him, looked back at him innocently as if he



Four Dudes (pen and ink) • Melissa Levine

actually cared. So he made himself give a little casual wave and smile slightly and turn away. He imagined a Panaflex camera pulling slowly back from the scene, revealing him sitting alone, separate from them, ending in a freeze-frame for all eternity. He wanted to say that they deserved each other, that they'd have fun trying to manipulate each other, but it didn't sound right. He had a feeling he'd look back at this night and shudder with embarrassment anyway. So he kept an eye on them until he left for college, dropped out, became a used-car salesman, watched as they raised a brilliantly mindless daughter named Karen, and found out one night that Brad and Anne had been electrocuted together in their Jacuzzi.

Floyd went down to Georgetown on Saturday night. It always helped to get a bit more money where he could, and Georgetown was the best place for that. He could get away with it. Brad brushed past, dripping disapproval, probably not even really registering him. Then Anne came by, not looking at him, forearm resting on her pocket-book to keep it shut. God, she was tight. But all it took was chocolate mousse and cheese fondue and a backrub to loosen her up. She wouldn't admit it, though, probably not even to herself. She'd also probably claim she was a virgin until she was a grandmother. "First time"—right. He'd used his formula two or three times, and it always worked until she figured out that he was working from a pattern. Then after she started avoiding him, he'd let Charlie know about it. Charlie hadn't had the brains to know when to use it. That was Charlie—no retakes allowed, and it didn't count if it didn't fit through a camera viewfinder. At least the kid was always good for a buck. When he realized that Charlie, Anne, and Brad were all heading the same way, he knew he had to go just to see the fun. He caught up with them at some faux-expensive French joint and looked in from the outside, trying not to press his nose against the window glass. Brad and Anne were just beginning their desserts. Chocolate mousse. Smart boy. She was eating it up, and gazing deep into those slightly-crossed limpid pools he called eyes, and he was eating *that* up. And Charlie sat alone and played the lonely not-quite-drunk, but then Suzanne came in and Charlie was lost for the evening. Quick



Some aging hippie-punk is giving her the eye. He really isn't, but he is sure she thinks so, and that's what matters.

recovery. As he turned away and started walking along the curb edge, balancing carefully out of habit, Floyd knew he knew better than to fall into such simple traps. He wouldn't get caught, or cinematic, or in love with his own deviousness. So he left, grew old, hung around M Street, and found out one night that Anne and Charlie had been electrocuted together in the Jacuzzi and Brad killed himself in a car wreck.

Karen is going down to Georgetown on Saturday night. She left her tape deck sitting by the Jacuzzi, but she knows her parents aren't stupid enough to leave it there when they go in. She is going down to be with Ellen and the others and also to see if there is anyone interesting out there, because she is now officially on the rebound from Kevin. Crazy Kevin, the one who will probably grow up to be in politics. She's been as moody and strange as she could to Kevin lately, in the hope that he'd dump her and let them both keep their images, and it had worked. Strange no one had thought of it before.

For some reason, she thinks about getting off the Metro train at the Tenleytown stop. Some aging hippie punk is giving her the eye. He really isn't, but he is sure she thinks so, and that's what matters.

The train breaks down in Van Ness. The resulting traffic mess makes the ten-o'clock news.



Nausea

The Nausea takes me over
burning in the pits of my eyes
emptying in the tunnel of my neck
pressing on my stomach
with a cold wet foot
it has been so long since I have seen you
now there are nails, claws
scraping the thin barriers of my heart
my neck stiffens, stinging
I can't remember you
I can't forget you
a life of autumn
lasting throughout the seasons.

I want to puke
the delicate flesh
from behind the ears of my legs
behind the knees of my arms
chokes weeping silence
I'm scared!
I refuse to move
I'm frozen in existence
I won't pull down the lips of my eyes
just remain waiting
avoiding the dreams
the images that give me
the Nausea
of the future
without the past
without you

my friend
my life is like a
fear burning
attempting to express
pain of unneeded change
these memories:
purple-spotted images
in the pink veins of
a black screen,
highlights of a movie
and how I wish I knew
the ending.
Even when I cough
I taste you in my phlegm
you've become a part of me
and I wad you up in

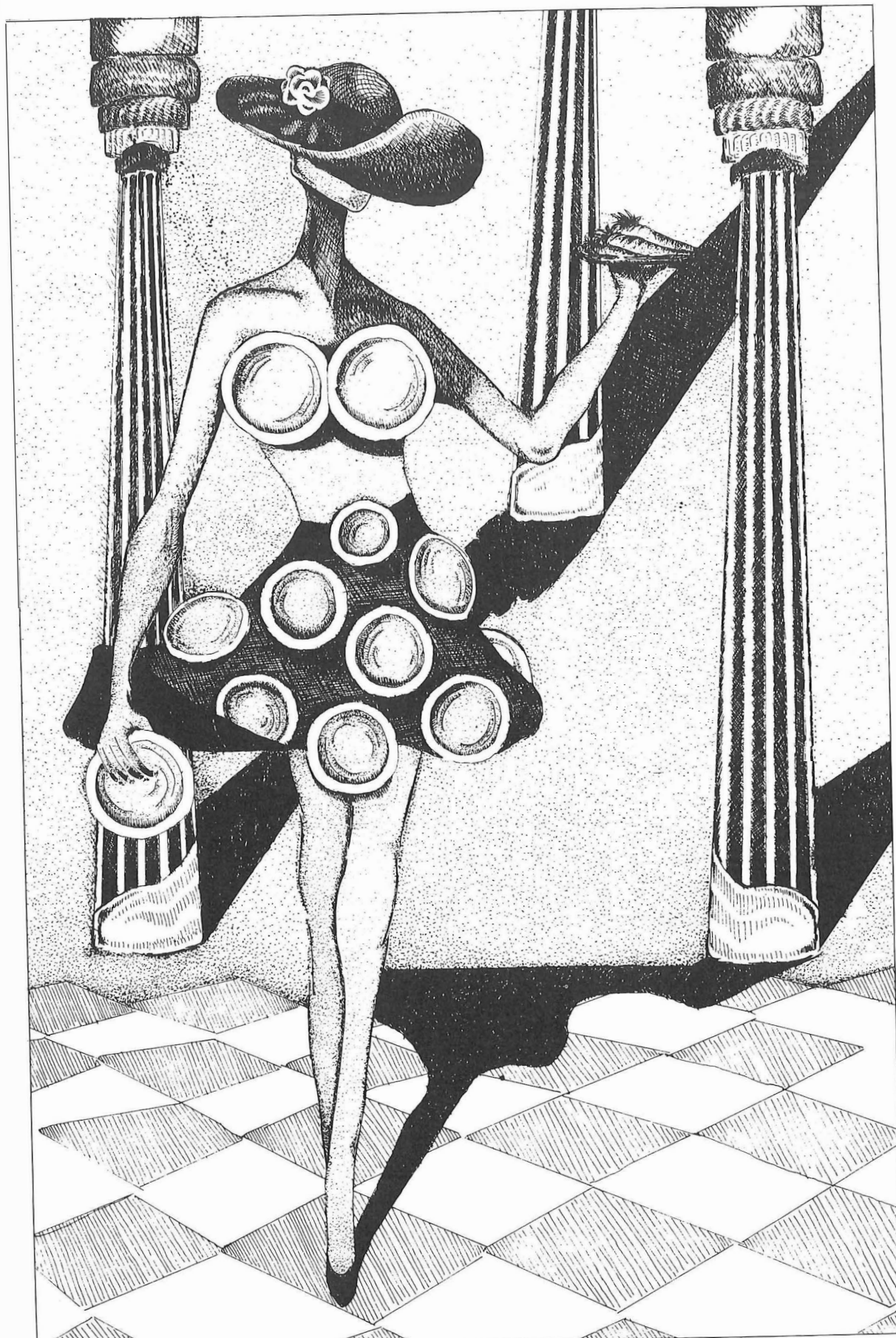
a saliva ball and spit
onto the cement below my feet
it just lies there and
I can't draw it back
it is like myself

there you are where I'm not
I wish I had never let it escape
but you're so distant
that I can't put
it back in my mouth
and be like you again.

My eyes are watching
I'm in the same room
where I have always been
nothing is ever the same
I vomit up into the air
and struggle to make
you land in the soft mitt
of my blue oceans
for the tears I thirst
with little moisture
at night I scream a pitch
that can't be heard
of your voice laughing crying
in the airport
saliva on the pavement
I have aborted my breath
and its ghost haunts me.

I slide through the shoots in my skin
down to the bottom of my sensitive toes
and then pull my way up the
rope with all the weight of the
vomit on my back to withstand
our next meeting and then fall back again
like the bleeding knot
of hair that I tear
from my scalp
searching and searching
to show you
my life
and the Nausea continues dormant
in a puddle
about me
in front of this mirror.

Eric Napoli



Fallen Femme Fatale

I was the powerful goddess
Your life in my
slender hands and
That my eyes and pouting
lips would carry you
forever! But how
surprised I was
when you began to
loathe my criticism
and walked
away

And you the once
lonely soul who
desired to be loved
walks proudly while
I cower and cry

Erika Kao

Some Small Momento

Wrapping your golden arms around my waist
you cling and tumble farther down
kiss my neck

—I cringe at the orange-flash burning my eyelids—
caress my leg

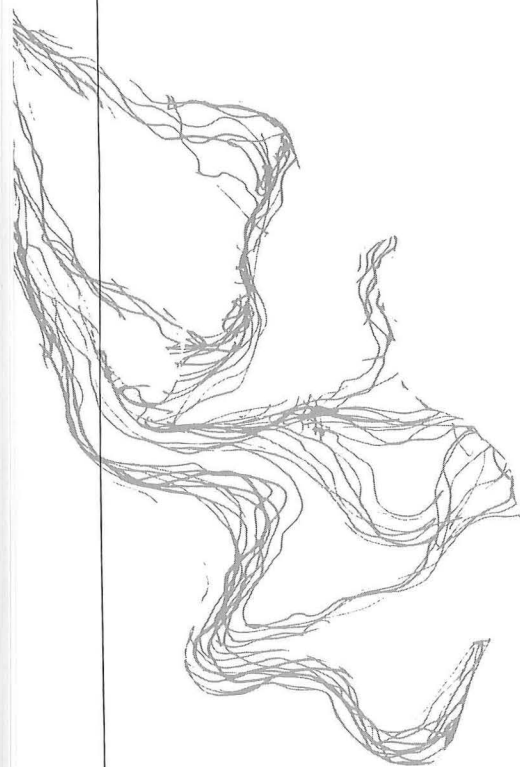
—writhing away from the glaring insistence of your fingers—
and drip your honey lights through the tangles of my hair.

Candice Hwa

Sunset

A scoop of neon
The sun is a sombrero
Brimmed by brilliant clouds

Taryn Wolf



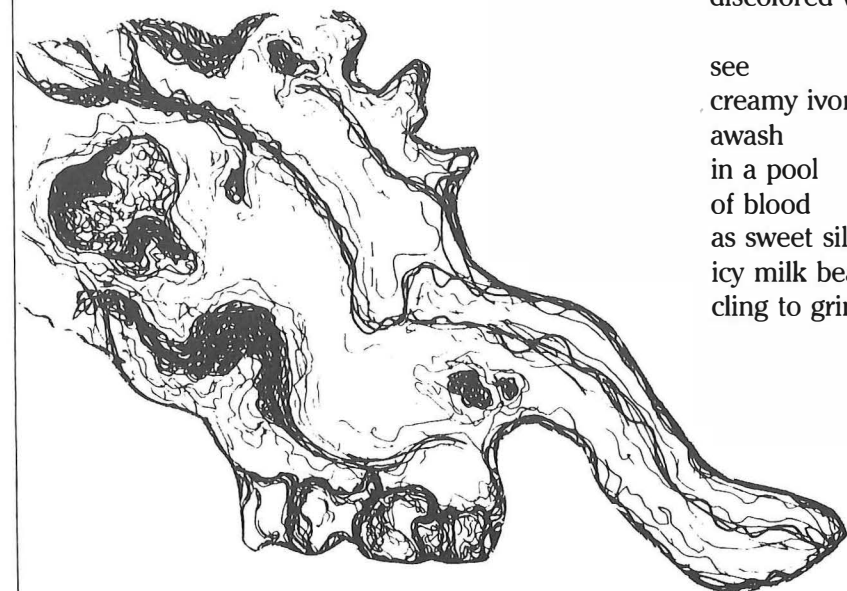
Ivory Beads

sweet silky ivory
icy milk beads
clinging a princess neck
creamy dewdrops on Buddha's ears
dreamy haven, an ornament
carved with delicate skill
pure and sweet as alpine white chocolate
that can melt and be shaped at will
and bathe grimy skin.

imagine
the true possessors of the ivory milk
who once possessed tusks to tug or tear
tokens of endowed natural dominance
that succumb to artificial weapons
fathom
the bang-crack-bang of the ivory gun
the helpless thunk of bemoaning bodies
their putrid carcasses raggotting away on the plain
like maidens limp and lacerated from rape
comprehend
clean ivory origin sullied by axe
passed from greasy finger to greasy finger
followed by eyes that see gold spun from cream
discolored when finally in the carver's hands

see
creamy ivory
awash
in a pool
of blood
as sweet silky ivory
icy milk beads
cling to grimy skin.

Guang-Shing Cheng



Sockets (pen and ink) • Sucia Mih



Derailment

A night air rush, the coal coated stream of
iron over the fields,
stalks slouching, tendons sore,
their sides ache and throb
from bending to whisper the echoes
of his howl, uprooting
in concentric echoes,
flattening the grass,
extending the deadly pulse,
a swelling, dilating sore,
its roar tired of destroying the field

Softer now,
thick iron joints and muscles tender,
a marathoner's moan
tumbles towards the arms of the rush,
dark and alone, in his ears his death
his own echoes

Stalks whisk to soothe its crumpled hide,
honored skeleton. By the grimy dried stream bed
the fields still pulse. The tracks unroll
under the doorway up the stairs
out the sweet window where
the crickets wave along and the rush sighs goodnight

Christine McGuinness

ARTISTS UNDERGROUND: CREATIVE ALTERNATIVES IN DC

ADAM BLOOM

They're lurking in our streets. They're eating in our restaurants. They're infesting our city. If you don't look for them, they will probably go unnoticed. But if you witness one of their performances, they will surely grab your attention.

These are the local artists that deviate considerably from the mainstream. They are artists dedicated to creating works which others would never dare to make. Artists who work for themselves and rarely receive widespread popularity. Artists underground.

They seek alternatives because they have to. "I do it from obsession," said Alberto Gaetan, a member of the group Art Attack, which specializes in creating installations. Installations are usually grandiose forms of sculpture which the group creates outside for the public to see. Recently the group cut a huge diamond shape out of a Massachusetts Avenue home, slipped the piece through the roof, and it became a weathervane. They also recently created a series of objects made of galvanized steel which they featured on a half-mile long median strip on MacArthur Boulevard. The objects changed every week as the group attempted to show how things often change without anyone noticing.

While the majority of the public enjoys their work, the group has encountered some opposition to their projects.

"Some people have objected to our work," Gaetan said. "And of course those are the people who make the most noise and get the most aggressive." Art Attack had to attend a town meeting to defend their MacArthur Boulevard project.

When Art Attack formed in Los Angeles in 1978, it was known as a troupe of "Guerrilla artists." The group built projects anonymously, without the necessary permits only to see them taken down in a few days. In 1983 they relocated to Washington and became "legitimate" by obtaining permits before building their sculptures.

Finding a site to make a project can be difficult. "It takes a special owner to say, 'Do whatever you want to on my property,'" said Gaetan, "but usually the houses we use have already been slated for demolition."

While Art Attack receives no monetary compensation for their work, the group has gained many other rewards. Their installations have received international recognition. They have travelled to Germany and France to make instal-

lations and have received an invitation to make installations in Yugoslavia.

Installations are just one form of alternative art in the Washington area. A more common form of expression is through performance.

One of the Washington area's more well-known performance groups is the Sabotage Poets. Although the group officially disbanded in 1985, the original members often gather for reunion readings.

The Poets' goal was to present poetry in a way that would engage their audiences. Instead of merely reading a poem to an audience, the group would act the poem out.

"We were trying to take poetry another step and present it as an art form that is still alive," said Poet Sylvana Straw. "We used our group as a vehicle so people know [poetry] is still alive and happening."

Just as interesting as the performances was the poetry itself. At monthly get-togethers, the group would come up with a topic to write about, such as, "The Night I Spilled Open." Then each member would write about "The Night I Spilled Open," and from these writings the Poets eventually created finished products.

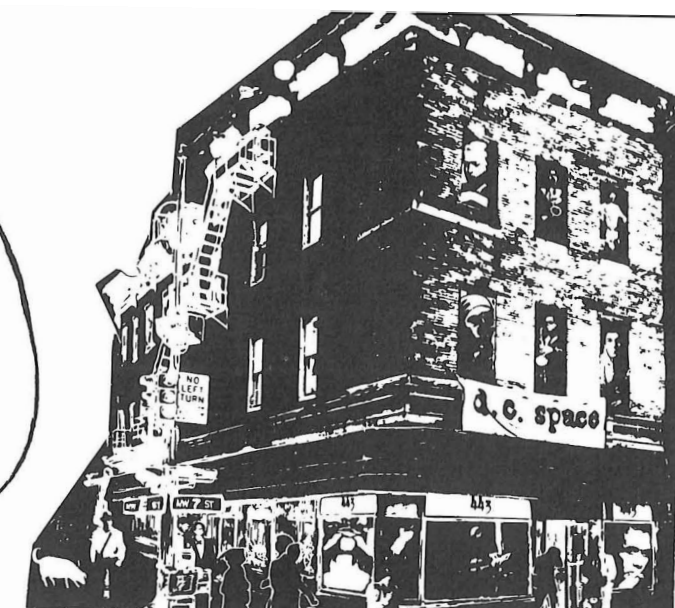
The Poets thrived on manipulating their audiences' emotions. Through music, movement, and the performers' personalities, Straw said, they could alternate between unnerving the audience and comforting them.

In one performance, Poet Jared Hendrickson stood in a crucified position while he and Straw alternated throwing paint on each other. Not something you would expect to find, say, at the halftime show of a football game.

The group became very popular in the Washington area and consistently played to packed houses at the alternative arts haven d.c. space. Especially in their early years, the Poets enjoyed putting their audiences on edge. Straw said she enjoyed watching the audiences' reactions nearly as much as she enjoyed performing.

"We did a lot of things mainly for fun," she said. "There would always be people who would really analyze everything."

At the "Inauguration Brawl" at the 9:30 Club in 1984, Hendrickson hung from chains wearing a garbage bag diaper above a cluster of television sets displaying only static. Meanwhile, a voice in the background repeated, "Is



Nicky the Art Dog and d.c. space courtesy of Bill Warrell

that god?"

"Some people really ate that stuff up as art," Straw said.

Of course, most of the Poets, as well as other performance artists, do attempt to express a meaning or make a statement through their work. Sabotage Poet Foodhead (yes, Foodhead) is a photographer as well as a poet. He recently had an exhibit displayed at the District of Columbia Arts Council (DCAC) which consisted of photographs and accompanying poems from his experiences in the Caribbean, Mexico, and Central America. The work was entitled "Joining Indians," and Foodhead said it expressed the belief that "humanities should strive for unity and cooperation that will lead to a better and safer environment for both people and the ecology."

Artists also use their art to help worthwhile causes. Foodhead said he hopes that he and the Sabotage Poets can get back together for benefit performances for causes such as world hunger and the plight of the homeless.

Of course, after these artists create works, they must find places to display their projects to the public. In the Washington area, organizations such as District Curators, the District of Columbia Arts Council and the Washington Project for the Arts (WPA) provide centers for alternative artists to perform.

d.c. space has become one of the most popular spots in the area for alternative artists and writers. It features many different art forms, including poetry, jazz, comedy, performance, film, rock, and cabaret. However, space rarely features performance artists.

"Unfortunately, we don't take money at the door like some places," said Cynthia Connelly, booking director for d.c. space, "so we have to book acts which can attract audiences that will buy food and drinks at the bar. I would prefer to book more 'avant garde' groups, but we would simply go out of business."

Connelly cites a lack of media support as a main reason that local performance artists often do not succeed.

"It's extremely hard to crop up an audience to see anything avant garde," Connelly said, "and the papers shy away from these artists. Even the *City Paper* mainly focuses on politics rather than the arts."

Because of the lack of exposure in Washington, many alternative artists eventually move to New York, where they

receive much more publicity and benefit from a larger market.

Yet some performance art groups have found success in this area. The Sabotage Poets consistently filled d.c. space when they performed there, Straw said. They now do a show called Nightshift twice a year. The shows run from midnight until dawn and feature a variety of artists. Straw said that the shows have received large crowds and great response. The shows originally took place at d.c. space but now they are seeking the larger venue of the DCAC.

Reputation is key to success in alternative art. People often go to shows because they have seen a particular act, because they know performers in the group, or because they have heard about them through word of mouth, Connelly said.

Also, being from New York is almost like a stamp of approval for alternative artists. "Someone will do something here and get no attention, then move to New York, get attention, and then come back to Washington and get a lot more attention here," Connelly said.

Much of this attention comes from the local arts community. "Usually the audiences are in arts themselves," Straw said. "Many of the same people come to all our shows."

David Hildebrand, director of education programs at the WPA, describes the audiences he sees as well-educated, higher income people between twenty and forty years old. It is generally good to have a familiarity with literature and theatre in order to truly appreciate much of the alternative works.

"The audiences usually has an idea of what they are going to see when they go to these performances," Straw said.

Alternative art seems to be on the rise in Washington. "Older groups like Sabotage have provided a platform for new and younger poets in the area," said Foodhead. "And places like DCAC and d.c. space are performance areas which showcase new and emerging artists in the performance genre."

So if you see the shimmer of galvanized steel reflecting sunlight along MacArthur Boulevard, take a second look. It may be the work of an underground artist surfacing for air.



Te Mato (canción de amor)

Tanto amor qué me quejo!
Mis dientes rasgan la piel de tu cara
palida y suave
Y mis ojos te comen los labios rosas
como un salvaje con un agujero
en el estómago
y un vacío en el corazón.

Tanta pasión que te mato!
Entre mis dedos blancos están tus pies
rotos y inútiles
Y mi boca bebe las lágrimas de tus ojos
como un pez con sed
bostezando
en un vaso, lleno del mar.

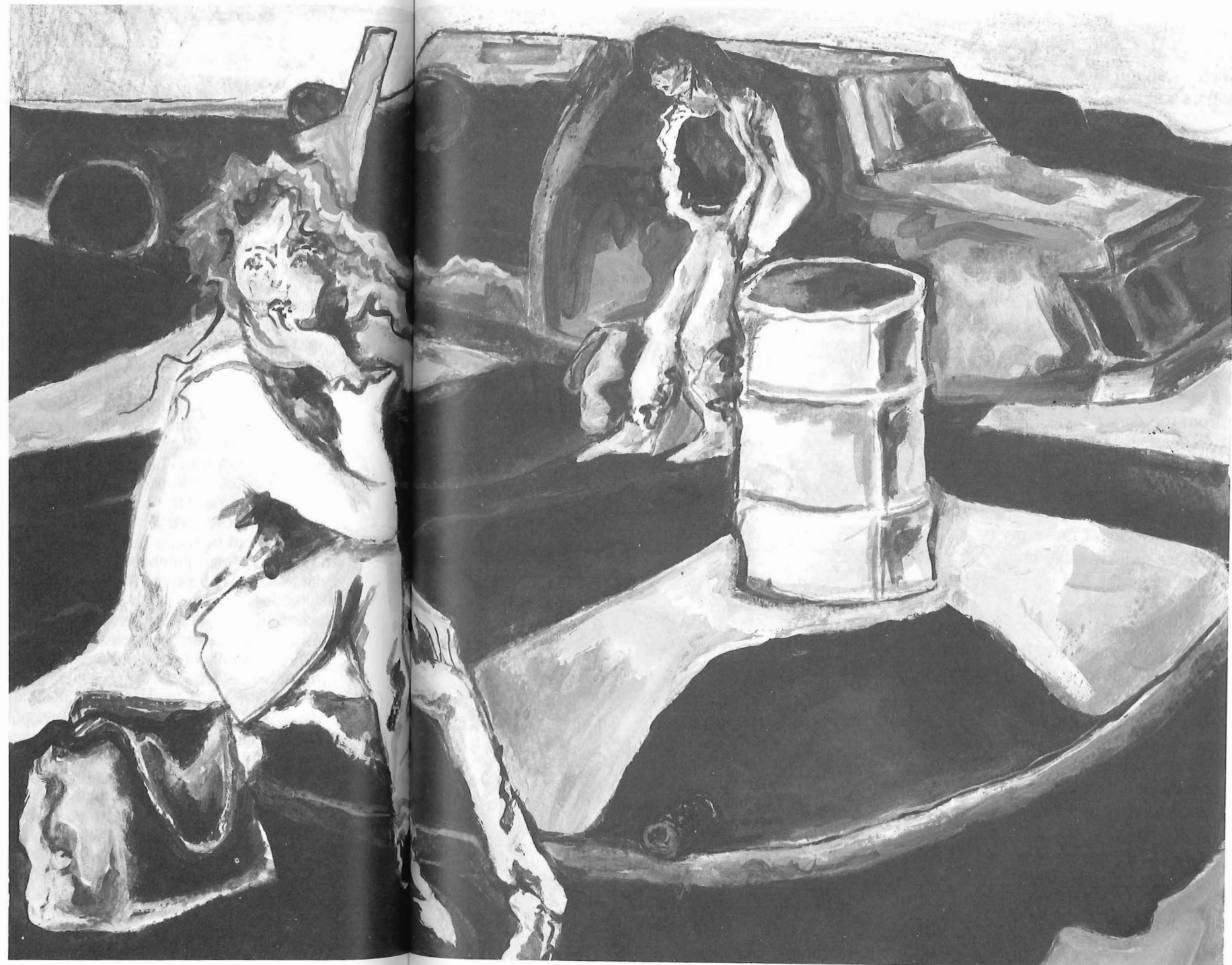
Eric Napoli

I Kill You (song of love)

So much love, that I'm infuriated.
My teeth tear the skin from your face
pale and soft
And my eyes eat your pink lips
like a savage with a hole
in his stomach
and an emptiness in his heart.

So much passion, that I kill you!
Between my white fingers are your feet
broken and useless
And my mouth drinks the tears from your eyes
like a thirsty fish
yawning
in a glass, filled with the sea.

Eric Napoli



Concrete Mixer (water color) • Lauren McMullen

The Swinemaid

My waves bring them in like foam.
Lapped up, grasping at my island edges,
dog-hungry. What does my bidding—hands
of sand and crazy hair and an inexorable fear—
yields anchor-caution only to their ship.
These sailors will not make my pass.

Slow and heavy, still forewarned, they pass
the first hour: asleep in the sugary foam,
warming on the planked wooden ship,
spreading themselves into her corners, her edges.
What watch they keep, what fear
persists, twists itself in the captain's hands.

He has stones beneath the skin of his hands.
At once, he turns away to let his soldiers pass;
the thick-faced, too old to fear,
step down the rope and through the tired foam.
They at last cut in, past my eager edges,
broken from the dark wood of their ship.

I have been watching their ship.
My elbows fly like flags and I am all hands
when the men surround me. A brave one edges
towards me like a dog. I make my pass.
My soldiers are quickly rabid hogs, and yellow foam
leaks out their mouths. Their eyes are fear.

One, still man, hidden from strange fear
some paces off, makes a path back to the important ship.
Then back to me, with the captain, and wearing foam
chains, wrestling warmth out of frightened hands.
The captain is ready for my pass,
and his mouth has only warmer edges.

Our cups are stained about the edges.
The hogs, relieved of what they fear,
stamp music into my island and pass
bread from their unbelievable snouts. The ship
is clean, anchored, never having left my hands,
resting in a bed of foam.

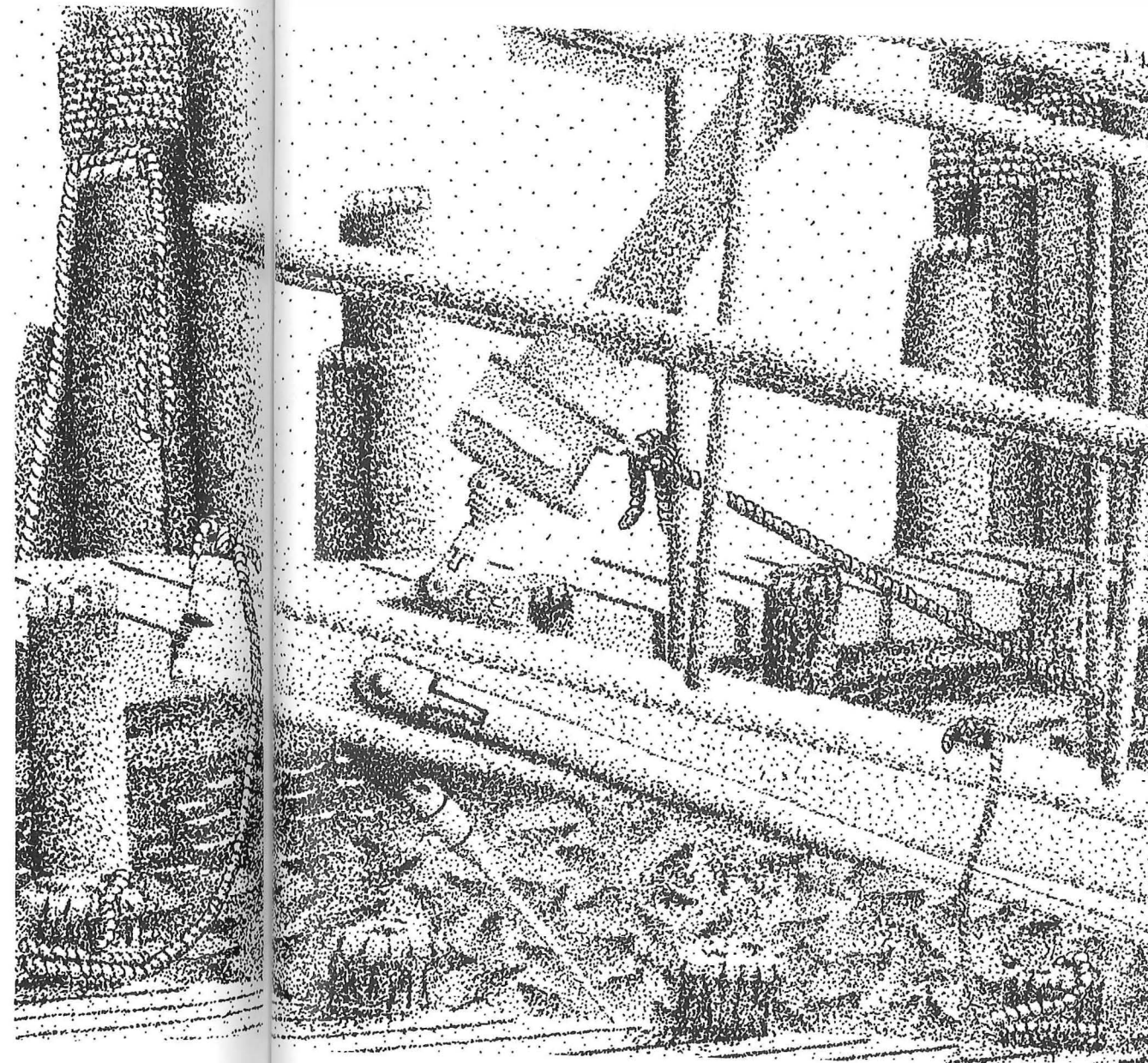
I fear my captain's leave. My edges,
vulnerable foam, still cradle his ship.
Slowly, I pass the cup and hold his lingering hands.

Melissa Levine

Snow on Wedding Day

The light of pure snow
is the natural sister
Of the naive bride

Deanna Ham



Harbored Spirits (pen and ink) • Wayne Chang

CROSSING

MONICA DORIN

"My brother and I used to do stuff like that," David said. "Do you like to sing 'La Cucaracha'?"

The bus driver shifted his weight on his seat as the tourists loaded into the bus. He watched as the senior citizens outside the door funneled into empty seats. More than once an old woman would squeal at his resemblance to her son.

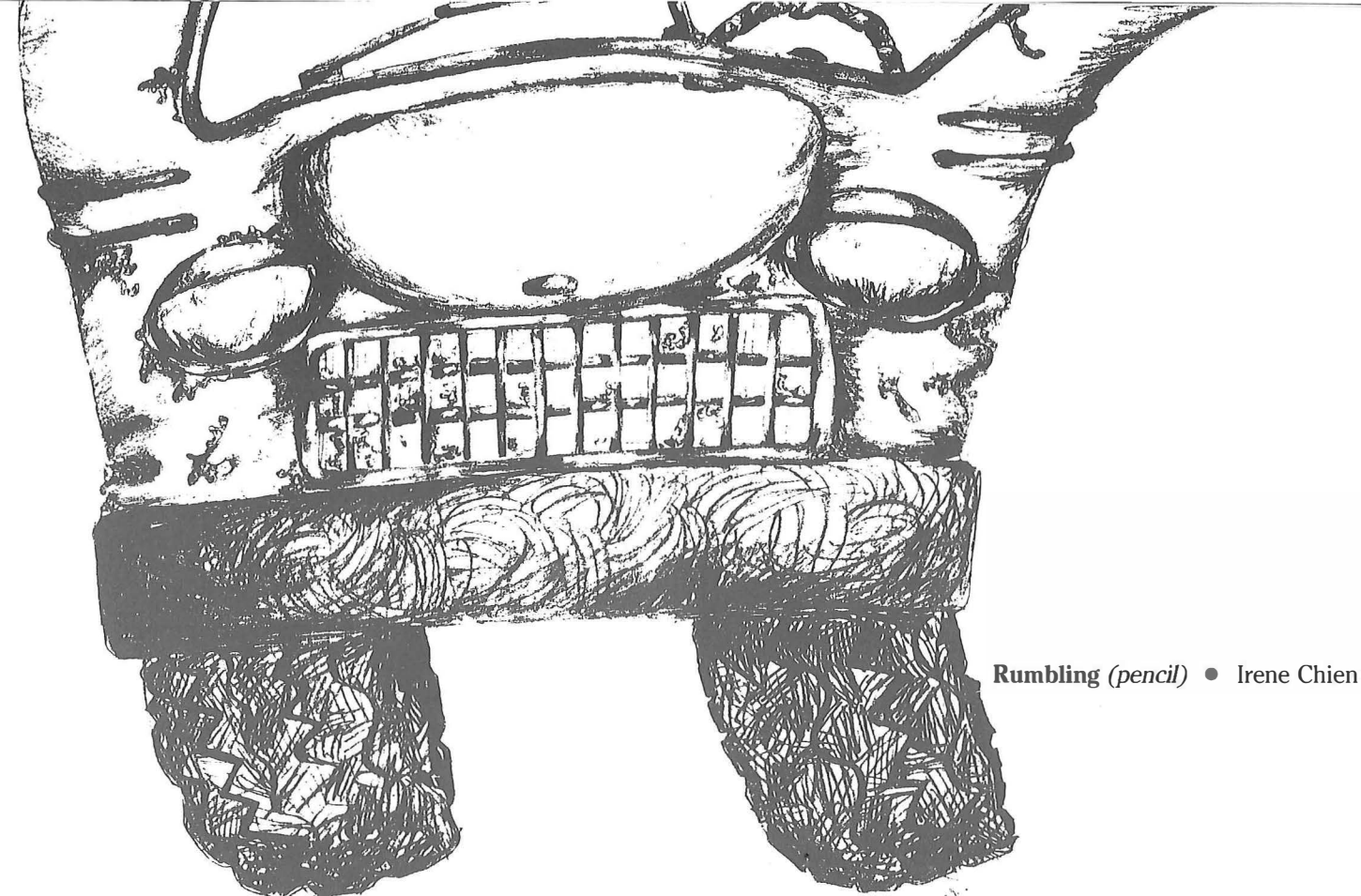
"You're a good man," they would say, but David would only stare, mesmerized by the acres of frosty blue eye shadow stretching from top lashes to penciled eyebrow. Most of the retirees' faces, below tufts of white hair, were red and puffy from the searing sun. As the last passenger stepped on the bus, David replaced his blue cap with his name embroidered on it and vacuumed the door shut. He picked up the microphone.

"Thank you all for coming. My name is David Arletta and I will be your tour guide today as we travel along the Plata River and visit many sights of Buenos Aires."

David drove along side streets, informing his riders about the sights. "Soon we'll reach La Boca, one of the most interesting sections of our city. Italian immigrants first settled here and built brightly colored houses and buildings. As we approach it on

the right, you will see many artists selling their work along the street, and at very good prices." David hoped the painters would appreciate the sales pitch; he knew people were having hard times these days.

He continued to recite the prepared informative speech about the sections of the city they traversed. David thought he was lucky to have his job, although some people would better deserve it, since he lived alone and had few expenses. Soon he would have enough money to send home to his family in the next province north. Certainly then they would recognize that his move to the city was wise. David's thoughts faded as a young boy, about nine or ten, slowly crossed the open street ahead of him. The young boy took tiny steps and halted a few feet in front of the massive vehicle. David slammed on the breaks, whiplashing the passengers. Was that kid crazy? David almost left the bus but remembered his passengers. "We have reached La Boca. Feel free to explore the area for thirty minutes and then return to this area." His tour had been going so smoothly until now.



Rumbling (pencil) • Irene Chien

After parking the bus, David saw the young boy's body erect and motionless. He looked misplaced on the street as the passengers stepped down, liberated from their cages. The boy then approached the descending passengers smiling and said in broken English, "Excuse me, senora, but where are you from?"

"The United States." The woman leaned down to the child who continued.

"I have a coin collection in my house. Do you have a money from your country for my collection?" The boy widened his eyes and smiled, his brown cheeks bulging.

"Oh, of course I do, sweetheart. Oh my, I only have a ten dollar bill. Está bien?" the woman offered, happy to help a local.

David sighed at the little boy's scheme and sat down on a bench near the bus while the passengers dispersed down the broken cobble pathways lined with artists' work. The tourists oohed and aahed at the many canvases

displayed by hopeful painters. David used to cheat tourists in his own town, before he outgrew it. The barefoot youth in ragged clothing joined David on the bench.

"Why did you stand in front of my bus?" David asked.

"It gets the attention of the tourists. They give me money," replied the boy. He didn't have to lie to this man. He was no rich tourist. Anyway he looked like someone from the neighborhood.

"What's your name?" asked David.

"Diego."

"Your parents make you go out and earn money?" David asked.

"I take care of myself." Diego looked at his toes and mumbled.

"My parents are gone and my brother is barely ever home."

David looked at his watch.

"Sorry, kid. Why don't you get a newspaper route or something? I almost ran you over before."

"I'm not twelve yet," he answered, surprised at the indifference shown by this stranger.

"Besides, since my brother thinks he will find a new job for more pay he forbade me to work. I just do this to buy a sandwich at the cafe on the next street."

David pulled out a pack of gum, unwrapped a piece for himself and then offered a piece to Diego.

"Thanks." He chewed a few minutes and then took the rubbery substance and stuck it behind his ear. "For later," he said when David squinted an eye.

The two sat without speaking. David placed his gum at the tip of his nose. Diego stared but didn't laugh. David looked around and saw a tree. He pressed his sticky nose to it and pretended he was stuck.

"Ha, ha," Diego articulated slowly and crossed his arms.

"My brother and I used to do stuff like that," David said. "Do you like to sing 'La Cucaracha'?"

"Not really."

Disappointed, David stood and prepared to return to his bus. He waved to Diego and strode away.

Inside his bus David noticed a small face peering through the glass doors. David sucked the doors open and recognized Diego. "Will you return tomorrow?" asked Diego.

"Of course," replied David. Diego smiled and sprinted towards and alley. David relaxed in his seat, but the familiar bulge in his back pants pocket was gone. He shoved his hand into the pocket. His wallet was missing.

The next day David drove the same route. Again, a young boy stood in front of the approaching bus. It was Diego. Screeching to a stop, David instructed the passengers to roam the area. He approached Diego, who had now squatted near the curb. There was plenty of time before the passengers returned.

"Diego, care to join me for a salami sandwich?" asked David.

"Well . . . are you paying?" said Diego.

"No, actually, you are. With my money, of course."

"I was going to return it to you today. I felt badly . . . because you were nice to me." Diego fumbled with the hem of his tattered shirt.

"Forget it. You remind me of my little brother, and he is a mischievous kid like you."

As they strolled along the sidewalk, Diego pointed to a building. "That's my apartment, see?"

"It's very nice," David lied, seeing the run-down tenement. Young children like frenzied chimpanzees screamed in delight, jumping in sewage puddles near the building. Their mothers were hanging laundry on rope between the upper floors of the building, their hair covered in brightly colored handkerchiefs. David gazed at the young boy clutching his fingers.

The two had been silently plodding for some time. Diego still clutched tightly to the elder's arm. They reached the cafe and



School Crossing (pen and ink) • Gregory Goldin

ordered huge sandwiches with pickles. David watched as his friend ravenously wolfed his meal.

David hesitated and then asked, "Diego, yesterday when you stood in front of the bus, did you really think I would stop for you?" Diego's expression churned his stomach with the realization that he had almost killed someone. Why would a child risk his life like that? Didn't he care about living? David banished the thought from his mind. "Well, my little friend, why don't we return to the tourist stop."

The two headed back, sleepily satisfied with their gargantuan meal. Before leaving, David stretched his hand out to Diego in jest. "Until tomorrow, Diegito." Instead of grabbing David's hand, Diego hugged his friend's stomach tightly.

"Will you return tomorrow?" questioned the little boy.

"Of course, brother," David softly responded.

That evening David received a letter from home. His brother was sick, and his family needed him. Immediately he packed a suitcase and rode the first bus home. On the trip he thought of Diego's huge eyes expecting him in the morning.

The next day Diego again began to drag his feet across the wide street when the tourist bus approached. It rolled nearer and nearer and Diego realized the bus was not slowing down. Sitting in the driver's seat rested another man, not David with his signature cap. Diego knew he should move out of the way but stood unmoving, still in the center of the street with the speeding thunderbolt ahead, the honking flooding his ears, and then he ran, running faster than he ever would and his adrenaline pumping in the scrawny legs that ran, and he closed his eyes and ran to the other side of the street, safe.



Scatman Flintstone

I
always thought
it was the coolest thing
that Fred Flintstone was into scat.
Fred would be up on the bandstand,
of course none of the band members
would be black
just a bunch of white guys
illustrated in the washed-out colors
of the earlier episodes.
Anyway,
Fred would be up on the bandstand
scooby-doobling and be-bopping away
and I would wonder why Fred was a quarry worker
when he could scat like that.
Why was he slaving away for Mr. Slate
when he could be signed to a major record label
and touring with Mel Tormé?

John Donahue

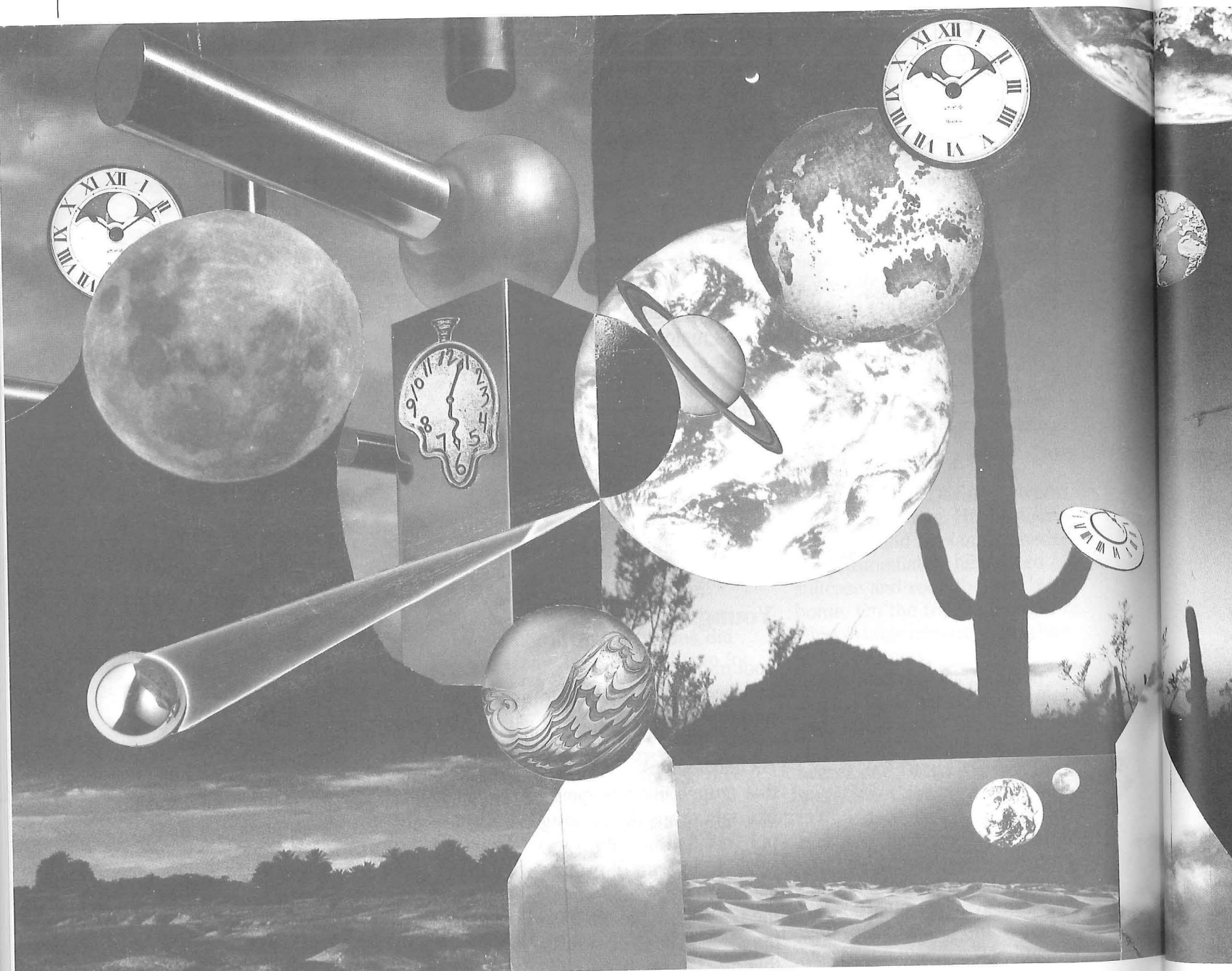
Young

cool mint green
that becomes a puddle on my tongue
and slides down my throat like a baby down a waterslide

chocolate chips
that crunch like wumping on ice cubes
like rain drops firecracking against the roof
only not that fast

a sojourn to youth—
the days spent gobbling up
the sweetly charred skulls of the ghost
that lived in my treehouse
munching on his green vapor

Jerome Schartman



Spheres of Influence (collage) • Amy Perlman

The Transcendentalist and the Existentialist at the Beach

"chocolate bunnies continue
to embrace my brain in
utter disarray"

(she's mad because her diet
won't allow her to eat more Goobers)

"superficial sincerity is
the foundation of our
being"

(I told her I wanted to see
other women)

"one spray of blood upon
the canvas IS my
disintegrating body"

(her suntan lotion leaked all
over her makeup case)

"wherefore am I to go—
to be, in a world
with no eyes?"

(a kid just knocked down her
diet Coke)

"I don't know, babe, I've got my
shades on."

"Total Ignorance"

"Just do me a favor, hon, and
move to the right. I've
got to catch some rays
before two."

Linda Chen

THE GRANDMOTHER'S BOOK OF SELFLESSNESS

CANDICE HWA

We haven't spoken for five minutes now, I'm thinking, and that's pretty bad, considering we've been in the car for six. I try to find something to say, something that will hopefully lead into a conversation. "What did you do today? Did you read?" (this all in Chinese)

"No. I usually do, but I didn't have any more books, so I didn't do much of anything."

Great, so much for that. I can't help sighing—I know she won't notice anyway, and I think about the letter I got that day from my boyfriend in Toronto. "Be nice to your grandmother," it said, down near the bottom of the page where the handwriting got more illegible, and I got a headache trying to determine where one sentence ended and the next began. I wonder what made him write that? At any rate, I thought about it. Why aren't I nice to my grandmother, I thought. Maybe it's because I can't even talk to her for two minutes without her bringing up her husband's death or my parents' divorce. But wouldn't it be an achievement to actually spend some nice time with her, take her out to dinner or something. I mean, I know she's not busy.

Imagine going out to dinner with someone of your choice, then choosing the company of your food over the conversation of your dinner partner.

The radio isn't turned up as loud as it usually is, so my grandmother doesn't think I'm some sort of delinquent or something. Besides, I'm not in the mood for booming the speakers with her sitting next to me. It's Friday night and me and the grandma are gonna paint the town red; I can't help but laugh at the picture. I flip the dial around and hit Jackson Browne. Perfect. I hope my grandmother is benefiting from this.

Halfway down a bumpy road where the never-ending construction just seems detrimental, I wonder if I'm driving too fast. Am I scaring her? I still don't think she quite believes I'm a licensed driver, me being only seventeen and all. The orange-and-white striped barrels whiz past, narrowly missing my door. A cement median passes closely on the passenger side. I look over. She's staring straight ahead, and nobody's going to distract her from that. I slow down. I flip the dial again, and get another Jackson Browne

song. Perfect. That's the thing about his songs—they all sound alike, but they all sound good. Mellow, nostalgic. My grandmother doesn't seem to hear it.

At the corner light, right before you turn onto the street where the restaurant is, she speaks.

"It's actually rather far, isn't it?"

I reply that it's not, it's actually pretty close, and convenient. I'm so glad that she finally said something.

The hostess seats us right away because it's so early in the evening. Two or three waiters are still eating their dinners, one of them sitting across from me in the next booth. I notice him because he is slurping his noodles. My grandmother does not notice. She takes off her jacket and doesn't touch the menu.

"What do you want to eat?" I ask, hoping she won't say, "Whatever you want."

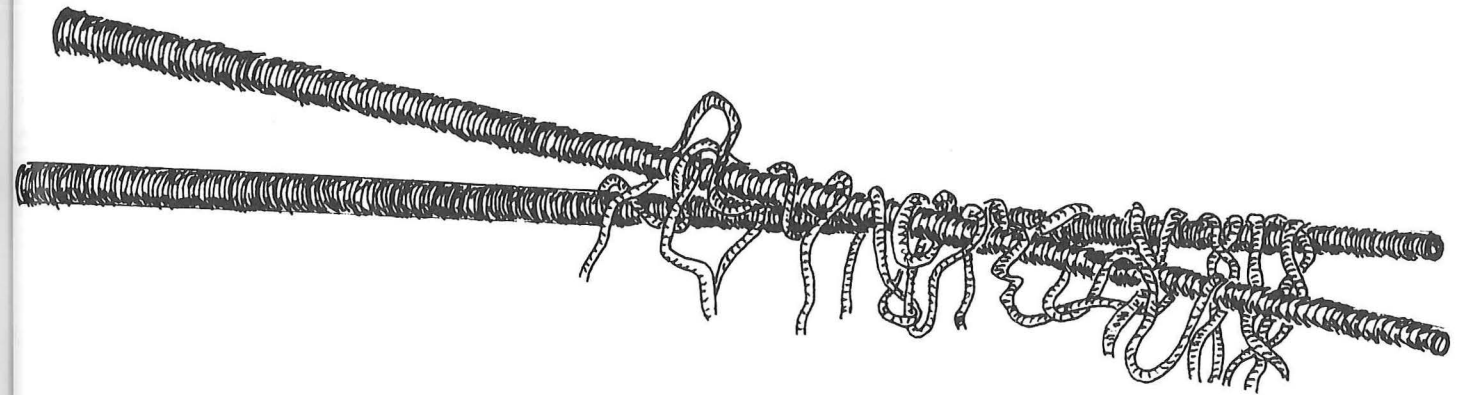
"I don't care. Whatever you want."

I knew it. I knew it was a bad idea to take her out to dinner with me. Now we'll never decide on what to order. So I choose to momentarily ignore the problem and ask her instead where she got her jacket from. It's a Chinese

quilt jacket, rose on the outside and blue on the in.

"Reversible," she explains. I try to tell her to order whatever she wants, to not think about what I want to eat, that it's up to her. About five minutes later, we decide on the structure: two entrees, as opposed to two appetizers and an entree, or one appetizer and one entree. Five minutes after that, we have chosen the food for the evening. I order, in Chinese, and impress my grandmother. And probably the waitress, too, who seems surprised that a Chinese-American teenager can actually speak her native language.

When she leaves, I decide to have another go at conversation. We succeed, this time, and talk I think more than we've talked since she came to live with us, about two and a half months ago. It sincerely seems like a longer time than that. The subject of my parents' divorce comes up, inevitably, as the result of a foolish question on my part.



Chopsticks (pen and ink) • Amit Bagchi

"Have you seen Grandma and Grandpa, since they've come?" My other set of grandparents are in town visiting my dad.

"No, I would feel too uncomfortable. It's not right. You know, the last time your father was in Taiwan, they called me over to see them, the three of them. All they did was beg me to talk to your mother about the divorce, tell her that what she was doing was wrong, that she was acting foolish. They were so insistent, I didn't dare say anything."

"How can someone do that, blame it on her? And anyhow, how can you tell people what to do and what not to do with their personal lives? It's nobody's business but their's." I'm tired of always saying the same thing.

"Exactly. It is their own business. Who can blame whom, in something like this? I can't tell your mother what to do. She is her own person, an adult. That's what I finally told them."

I'm rather surprised at this. And she even goes on.

"I said, 'When I gave her to you, she was fine. Don't say anything to me about it, it's not my fault.'"

I don't reply. She makes my mother sound like a marketable item, like she could be returned for defects in manufacturing or something.

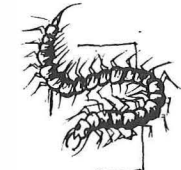
The food arrives, and we both realize we're really hungry. So for five or so minutes, all we do is eat. Only with my grandmother, I think, would this happen. Imagine going out to dinner with someone of your choice, then choosing the company of your food over the conversation of your dinner partner. We finish off most of it, and she actually takes what she wants during the meal instead of carefully watching me eat and taking what it seems I don't want, regardless of whether she likes it or not. I guess that's in the *Grandmother's Book of Selflessness*, but I really wish sometimes she would just be aggressive and take the fish if she wants it, screw me. Which she does, this time. I mean, it wasn't like a free-for-all or anything, but at least

I didn't have to make sure not to give preferential treatment to any one dish, lest she deprive herself of it. Don't get me wrong, this is an incredibly thoughtful action on anyone's part, but my grandmother sometimes seems to live it in every aspect of life. I wish she would think of herself first, sometimes.

So as we're leaving the restaurant, after our crooked waitress tries to keep my change (I don't give anyone a 25% tip), I feel happy that my grandma took the last shrimp. (She must have known I wanted it; I purposefully eyed it for several seconds.) It's chilly outside, and windy. I turn the heater way up inside the car and hit the defrost button. The radio goes off.

I'm thinking that it's funny how my grandmother and I never really talk about my parents' divorce. I mean, not even a word about how either one of us feels. I only remember saying to her one time, "It'll be okay." And actually, have we ever *really* talked about anything? All that summer my sister and I spent at her apartment in Taipei, shopping for bok choy at the corner market while my grandfather was in the hospital; all that time, and my grandmother was never an actual person to me. One whose granddaughters thought she was a weak woman, for letting them eat all the dessert. One who was strong, but might have liked a granddaughter to talk to.

I listen now, while she tells me about when she was small, and the boys in her neighborhood would tie tin cans to the ends of cats' tails, then watch them run back and forth, scared and confused. She and her friends would watch and cry and eventually run home, tattling on the boys. When we reach the stretch of road under construction, the girls have recouped their forces and begun to pelt the boys with berries from the low, spiky bushes by the sides of the dirt roads. It's warming up, and the radio starts to work.



the Straw Dogs

I. warm human companionship

Another day winds down
the progress that luck brings is
enough to be
free
but never again touching the tart blister
of emergency, where we rescued
you from calvary

II. growl

I'm the instant familiar
howl on the mike
the cry to our people
romp it up fest, Boston bred
go ahead and grab the key to me
on the pounding groove, we are
important

III. left the others for dead

this is my show
on every track I scar your ears
razorfine chops erupting
through the painstaking care
that said
we love better, we rock better

but we didn't,
the tragedies
caved in on my head
talent to fuel a special thinker
who rocks

"You do what you're supposed to do
but everybody laughs at you
It doesn't matter what you do

You say what you're supposed to say
but nothing ever goes your way
Makes no difference what you say"

I don't think anybody hears straight,
but
maybe on the agnostic front

IV. stability

I can sit alone
and play the spine of every revolution
we kicked into your head

I can smash the rhythm of two generations
senior citizen dying at the forefront
of what the youth really wanted
to hear themselves sing

V. in deep

obsession of expression
my name in the game
revving the weapon of breakthrough
tears, my tales of visions
where sinner takes all and
you've got to lose

I'm taking a chance
To clench my jaw, and anger
crunching out who we are
across the land
Our song, we touch
you



Negativland (collage) • Lauren McMullen

VI. we are not amused

tarnished,
where I could speak and be heard
a forgotten rage
that rests in peace

where is the world grooving to my immense talent?

No Bones would rest in peace when
I'm not loved
and I'm not heard
and quitters dedicate thin air in my memory

simply a photograph sifting sand, and pebbles

if there were no escape
if there were no rolling heap of American iron
if there were no such thing as Death
if there was only the golden ladder to
the cloud where I dreamt I'd float
young, rock and roll sensation
spectacular skins man

but, r.i.p. C.J., I know I'm really just Bones now

VII. steel jaw

wet
tongue laps slippery steel fangs,
to wonder why you see me burn
in the face of every coward

then hear it all, feel all the screeching roar
of a Straw Dog
and cringe with your fellow craven creatures
of carve and polish my sculptured
cold face

no
beast cuts like my pack
so feared and execrated by cruel fate
a slaughtered son,
a deserted blood

disarray

steel jaw,
rusted shut
under the hammer

Morten Yeung

To Michelangelo

Veil of hush lay over prayers
Humbly facing upwards
to heralds of Heaven and Hell
Holy icons speaking silent words
the Great Story of sun, moon, Adam
Angel, Sibyl, Bible incarnation
from Flood of Genesis to fall of Man
Creator's wrath shedding mortal blood.

Scarcely a whisper, hardly a sigh
silent songs of soul sacrifice
Even heathens worship on high
the strokes of God-given gift graced
Mortal and immortal flesh, life and death,
Wisps of earth and wind, laced
Born of divine brush and the Lord's divine breath.

Guang-Shing Cheng



Statuae Spirantes • Kristen Bergevin



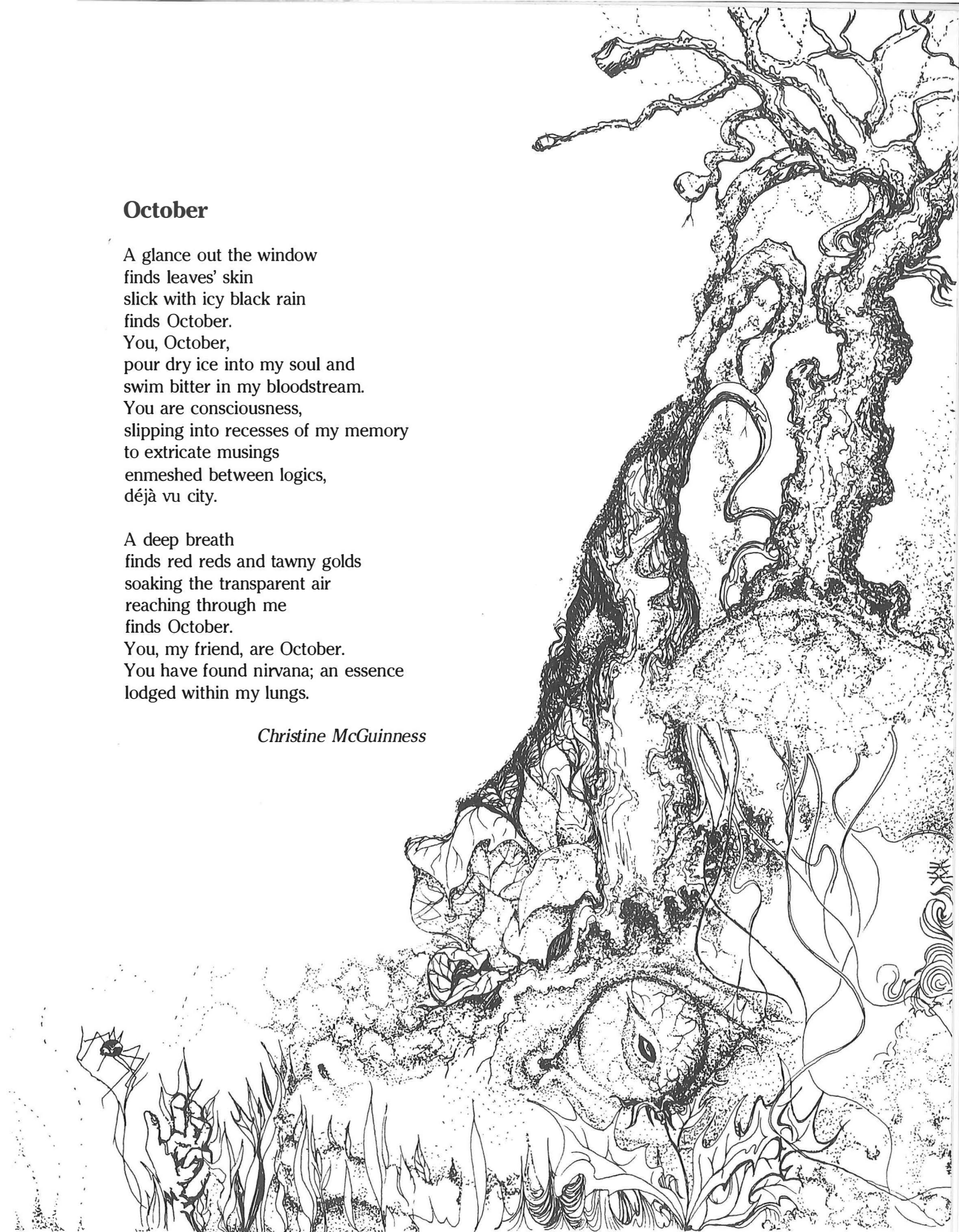
Grove (pen and ink) • Monica Lam

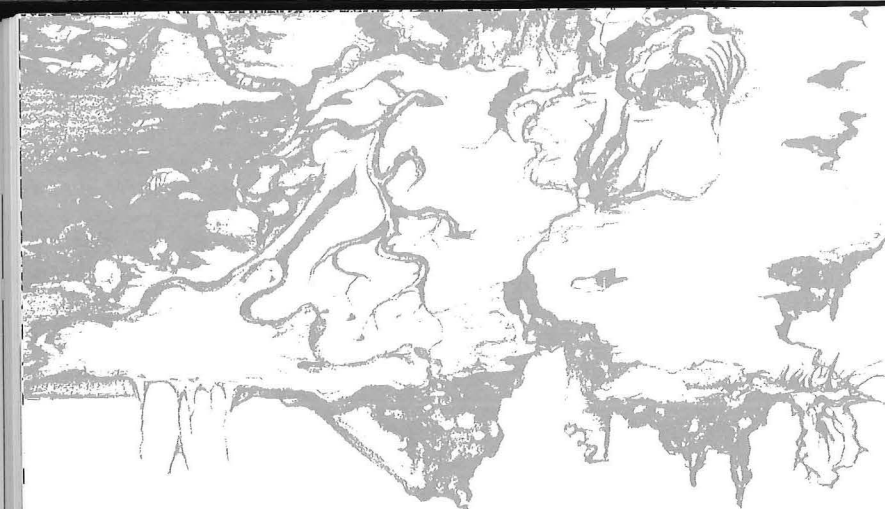
October

A glance out the window
finds leaves' skin
slick with icy black rain
finds October.
You, October,
pour dry ice into my soul and
swim bitter in my bloodstream.
You are consciousness,
slipping into recesses of my memory
to extricate musings
enmeshed between logics,
déjà vu city.

A deep breath
finds red reds and tawny golds
soaking the transparent air
reaching through me
finds October.
You, my friend, are October.
You have found nirvana; an essence
lodged within my lungs.

Christine McGuinness





"all the roots hang down
swing from town to town
they are marching around
down under your boots
all the trucks unload
beyond the gopher holes
there's a world going on
underground"
—Tom Waits,
from *Swordfishtrombones*

CONTRIBUTORS

Amit Bagchi ('92), after hearing that this year's theme would be "Under Ground," decided to make a fashion statement by wearing only earthtones.

Kristen Bergevin ('92). Naked men running through a fresh field of flowers. Pepper, wine, house, train, back to hell. Pictures are mine.

Adam Bloom ('91) is the coolest.

Jonathan Blum ('90) never goes down to Georgetown on Saturday night. He wishes to apologize to his father—he doesn't really hate gardening *that* much—and to Barry N. Malzberg's anti-plagiarism Ninja lawyer death squad.

Paul Boerner ('92) has developed a highly sophisticated system of non-verbal communication which only his closest friends and mother can understand.

Charlie Buckholtz ('90), better known as "Laughing Boy," ran off to join the circus and has not yet returned.

Jennifer Cohen ('90) is the winner of a brand new car! She has thirty seconds to call 555-4321 to claim her red 1991 Mustang convertible!

Linda Chen ('91) is a bouncy, loveable, fabulously unpretentious spa lady.

Guang-Shing Cheng ('92) will always be the Ham's number one nerd baby.

Irene Chien ('91) is a Taoist who needs sandals.

John Donahue ('90) is a prisoner of hip-hop.

Monica Dorin ('91) only writes poetry while sipping water underneath summer moons and thinking of Italian waiters.

Aubrey Fox ('90) grew out his hair so he could put it in a ponytail and wave it in people's faces.

After receiving critical acclaim for his mono essay, **Gregory Goldin** ('91) has decided to contract the mumps.

Deanna Ham ('91), Guang's mother, is a daisy among dandelions and should not be confused with luncheon meat.

Candice Hwa ('90) writes sexy poetry, and her last name means "flower."

Tom Iarocci ('90) (ya RO che).

Robin Jaffe ('91) hates to be smacked in the forehead.

Erika Kao ('91) plans to publish "Smuzu the Exploding Dog," a black comedy for avant garde children.

Monica Lam ('91): frying pan.

Melissa Levine ('90).

Christine McGuinness ('90) is distinguishable from the other blond-haired, blue-eyed Irish co-poetry editor by her raging Firebird.

Lauren McMullen ('90), like Picasso, produces masterpieces on her lunch napkins. Most of these can be found throughout the magazine.

Matt Mengers ('91) is huge. Or maybe you've noticed.

Sucia Mih's ('90) name, when spelled backwards becomes one of Tarzan's favorite expressions in the movie, "Tarzan and the Lost Legions of Rome."

Eric Napoli ('90) occupies 194,400 square miles on the Iberian Peninsula and includes politically the Balearic and Canary islands. Population, 33,290,000. Capital, Madrid.

Ari Norouzi ('91) will be taking a year off from school to track down the rare carnivorous bird, Lanius ludovicianus.

Chian-Yu Peng ('91) wins this year's Chian-Yu Peng Award for just being himself.

Jerome Schartman ('90) once hit a guy so hard he broke his own ankle.

Linda Schartman ('92)'s seemingly unpurposeful life can be both amusing and tasty when she wakes up.

Daniel Sharfstein ('90) would just like to go through each day with a smile on his face.

Karen Sondik ('90) is a shining exception in this age of drunken, ignorant teenagers. She's president of the senior class, scored over 1300 on her SAT's, and has a 3.8 GPA. She dances and has an ant collection. We love her with all our heart. We'll miss you, Karen. XXXOOOXXX.

Lisa Sturman ('90) is no longer with us. Oops! She just came back and boy is she mad!

Colin Suleiman ('93) has a brain far too big for his freshmanly physique.

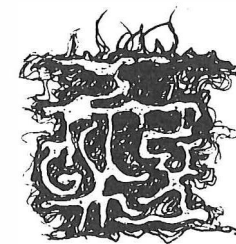
Jeff Tow ('90) has a strange fascination for caves and often yodels the word "stalagmite" at inopportune moments.

Maggie Weil ('92) likes to do funny tricks with water, but upon looking in the mirror, seeing her flushed face distorted, she laughs and falls on her noggin. She vows never again to do funny tricks with water, but always returns to this groovy activity.

Taryn Wolf ('91) aspires to a successful acting career culminating in a hit sitcom called, "Taryn."

Morten Yeung ('90) had a sex change and became Aline Hull.

Margy Yuspa ('91) doesn't take her pictures. The pictures are taken through her.



1990 PTSA Creative Writing Awards

FICTION

First Place: Jonathan Blum
Second Place: Daniel Sharfstein
Third Place: Melissa Levine

Tom Whalen judged this year's fiction. He directs the Creative Writing Program at the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts (NOCCA). His fiction, poetry, criticism, and translations have appeared in over two hundred journals and books. Currently co-editing an issue of *The Review of Contemporary Fiction* on Robert Walser, he will begin teaching, in addition to his writing and work at NOCCA, creative writing at Loyola University.

POETRY

First Place: Melissa Levine
Second Place: Irene Chien
Third Place: Christine McGuinness
Honorable Mention: Candice Hwa

Julia Dubner, who judged this year's poetry contest, is a 1984 Churchill graduate. She studied anthropology at Harvard and now works at the Writer's Center in Bethesda. She writes fiction and plans to attend a graduate writing program in the fall.

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 1989 *Erehwon* received the following honors:

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Marylander Award, MSPA
All-Southern, SIPA
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"For Nature beats in perfect tune
And rounds with rhyme her every rune
Whether she work in land or sea
Or hide underground her alchemy."
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

"If you would keep your soul
From spotted sight or sound
Live like the velvet mole
Go burrow underground."
—Elinor Hoyt Wylie

under ground



COLOPHON

Erehwon is published annually and distributed to students as part of a package deal with the yearbook and newspaper. Individual copies may be purchased for \$5.00. Sunil Freeman at the Writer's Center typeset all the body text in Criterion Book, the window quotes and bylines for all prose in Avant Garde, the folio tabs in Souvenir, and the poetry titles in Criterion Bold. Paul Grant at Phil's Photo typeset the prose titles and running heads in Fat Face and Avant Garde Condensed. McNaughton & Gunn, Inc. of Saline, Michigan, printed this issue under the supervision of Nancy Compton.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Erehwon accepts poetry, fiction, drama, essays, art, and photography from the entire student body. Students should submit two copies of each typed manuscript, one original and one xeroxed copy. Double space all prose and single space poetry. The editors suggest revisions to writers whose work has been shelved. Editors may edit manuscripts for mechanics and clarity.

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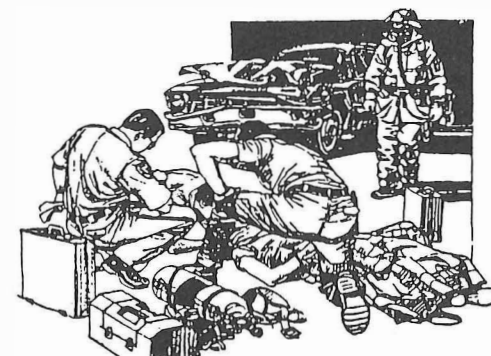
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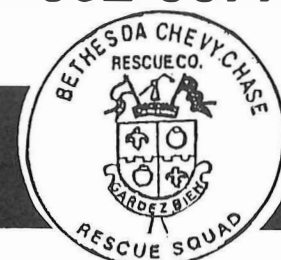


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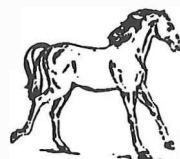


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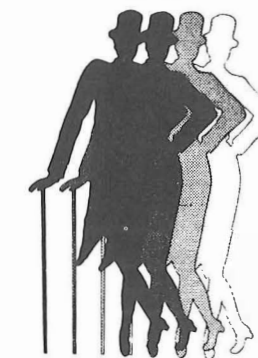


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