

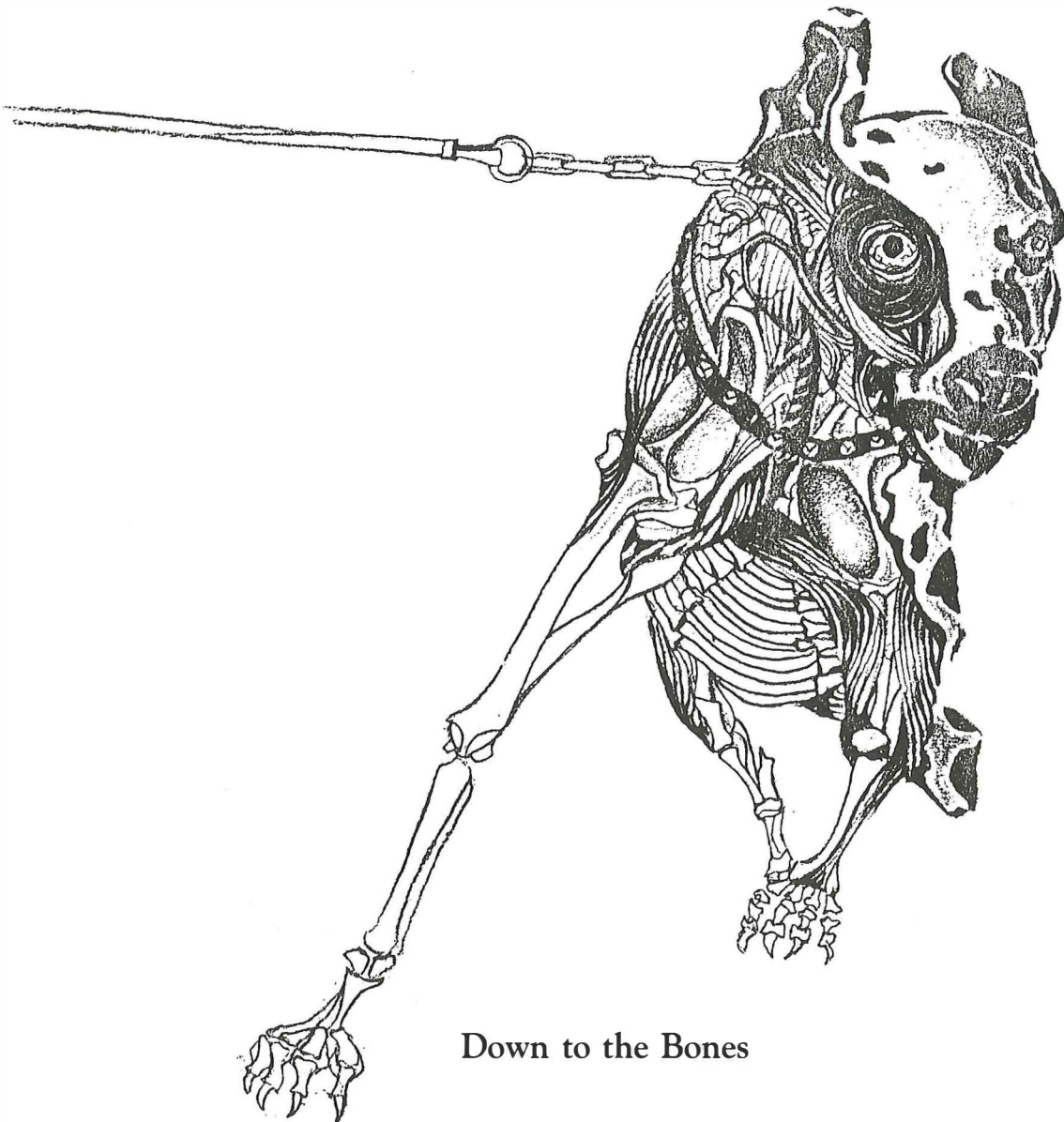
EREHWON 22/23



B O N E S

EREHWON 22/23

A Magazine of Creative Arts
Spring 1988



Down to the Bones

Winston Churchill High School
11300 Gainsborough Road
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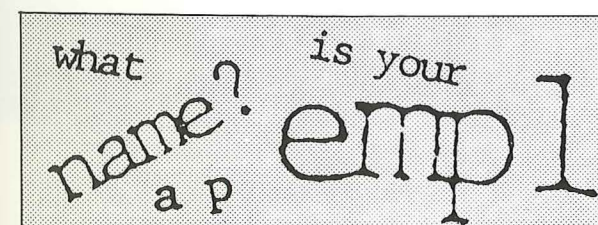
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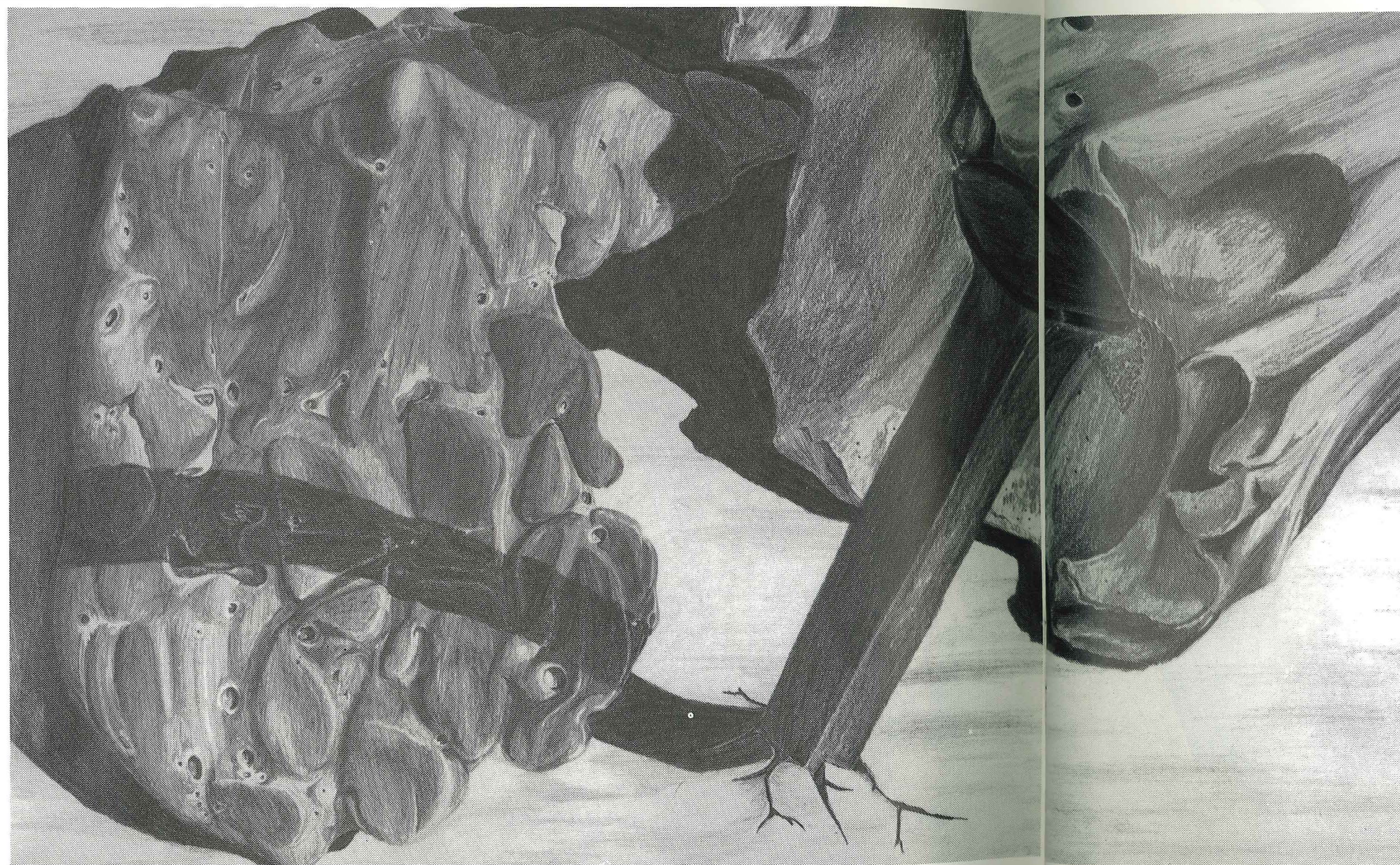
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* Winners of the 1988 PTSA Creative Writing Awards

"Bones are what's underneath everything: all our fat and ideas and flesh and clothes. They're the last thing to disintegrate in a coffin. Maybe they represent some sort of human essence to me, plus they're so white and blank and they can break like tree limbs. I'd love to have an assembeled skeleton in my living room."

Amy Gerstler, poet
Los Angeles, 1987



Opened Bone • Alex Heffess

Down to the Bones

A writer starts with the bones, a skeletal framework of ideas. He builds upon them layer by layer until the body of the work is whole. Yet for readers, the process is reversed. We begin by seeing the whole and, as we read, we gradually uncover and translate the meaning in the work. We strip away the writing until we reach the essence of the work.

This process does not always follow the pattern so directly. Some writers start with the bones, and go no further. We sometimes find deeper meaning in the minimal arrangement of such works, because the essence of the work—the idea—comes from the bones themselves.

Bones are essential to all writing. Ideas stay with the reader, even when a work of writing disappears from the mind. Long after the work is forgotten, after the body of writing has withered away, the bones remain.

The Editors of *Erehwon*



Riding Away • Alex Gibson

Walking Unhurriedly, Away From the City

It has taken
too long
but now that it's
here, isn't it sweet.
The air is like
something you'd like
to have running firmly
through your hair.
The tease of wind.
Stirring nothing
but heat, midday heat
through this straight
flat stream.
Listen to the wind
so full of sun
and shimmering leaves.
The trees flanking
the slow water
escort it at even intervals:
A grove, an avenue of water.

Tell me something
about yourself
I've never heard before.

Tell me some secret
you might have once
sworn you never would.

The heat rises, it improves;
it's been so long.

Jeff Pruzan

MANDALA

ROBIN SULEIMAN

"The sun is mean today," Ed told his huge glass of tequila and lemonade. He sat on the front porch looking out over a blinding flash of desert. The dunes ricocheted flashes of heat as the sun banked fireballs across them. He reached lazily to the table for his radio and spun up the volume.

"... the world. On the weather side, today's high is expected to be around 112 ° F. And now, this is Frisco Freddie saying goodbye from Akchin, Arizona until the five o'clock news."

The radio then launched into an insipid version of "Blue Moon." He turned the volume down and took another long sip of his cooler. Belching loudly at the bad news radio, he stared out across his kingdom, the dusty acres of waste his family had bought almost forty years ago around the time of the Great Depression, just before the money ran out. Man, he sure could use that money now! Never did find a use for the dust!

He surveyed the dunes and dingles, finally letting his eye move left across the red desert brush till it fetched up on the crumbling Hopi huts he had never had the energy or inclination to investigate. Looks like a pile of dung, he grumbled. Course, they about looked the same when Gramp made his famous land deal. Said he only went to that mesa once, to tell the old Indian that he now had a landlord. (The sonofabitch that dumped the property on Gramp had neglected to tell him it was inhabited.) Gramp said the old Indian never said a word. Just nodded. Gramp had decided to leave well enough alone, as long as the Indians didn't bother him, he would return the favor. But, a few days later, the Indians were gone. We never knew where. Gramp never went there again, although he scoured the land for gold or oil or anything to justify his purchase.

And Ed had never been there either, although he'd been coming out here for two weeks every year—and sometimes at Christmas—ever since Gramp had passed on and left the place to 'Eddy,' his 'only reliable kin, in the hope that he yet might understand.'

Strange old geezer, Ed thought. Got mad at everybody and just lived out his life here by himself. Run anyone off who tried to come near him. Except me, Ed thought, swigging absently. Gramp had called him a smart-assed college kid, but he'd let Ed come and visit, sit on the front porch with him. And they'd rock, not talking, and watch the sun shadows get longer and longer until there was nothing left but shadow in the empty land.

"Well, hell," Ed thought, squinting at the huts, "I'm sure as shit not going to spend time now, touring Indian real estate in this heat!" He closed his eyes and saw again the steel and glass face of the high-rise that was his life fifty weeks a year and slurped another draught from his loyal glass. (He was getting good now. Damn good. He could get his glass to his mouth, swallow and return without ever taking his eyes from the horizon. It was all in the wrist, he announced to himself, and started to giggle.)

But then his gaze found a faint brightness, hardly visible, but very sharp and constant. "Damn mirage!" And he swigged and giggled again. Finally setting the empty glass down, he rubbed his eyes, wiped his thick tinted glasses, put them back on and peered out again. It was still there. "Mirage!" he snorted. "Desert's finally getting to me too!"

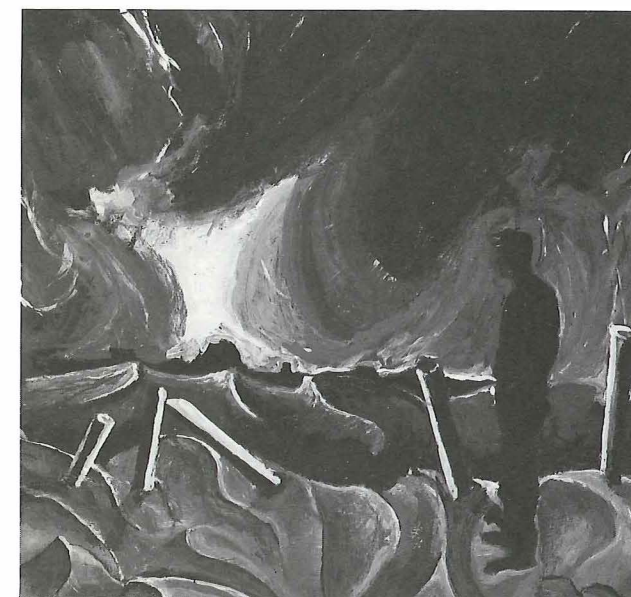
Truth was, Ed was having trouble figuring out why he came out year after year, but it seemed important. Like Gramp expected something of him, something that he had to 'understand,' and he had to come and try to figure what it was. A couple of times, he brought Sondra with him but when that broke up, well, it just seemed better to stay by himself. And now, seeing lights and all, he guessed he was just getting as queer as Gramp had been. Queerer, but no wiser!

Ed considered this for a moment, then made a momentous decision, braced his hands on the edges of his chair, and pushed himself up. The chair chattered at him. He took a leak off the end of the porch, watching the yellow stream

hiss into the thirsty sand. Damned stuff will drink anything, he slurred. Then he sauntered into the shack, poured another glass of Arizona Acid, and walked back out.

Searing light hit him a blow to the head. He couldn't believe it. The small bright dot had grown and was now a blazing ball darting slivers of piercing sun. "Aw, hell. Just the light glancing off a beer can or something." Yet his eyes were stuck, like a tongue to a sore tooth. He stood for a minute staring dumbly and finally took a long draw from his glass. The eternal solution.

He thought, but nothing occurred to him and the light hurt his eyes. He slumped into the rocker, managing to keep his head turned, his eyes averted from the Hopi huts. But the strain of trying to think in his condition had been tremendous and, after a few minutes with his head turned sharply left, Ed fell quietly asleep. The glass dropped from his hand, dribbling the rest of the Arizona Acid onto the warped porch floorboards.



When Ed awoke, the light was screaming. He couldn't see at all. "That does it," he mumbled through the cotton in his mouth. "It's some goddamn prank! I'm going over there and take the head off whatever's doing this!"

He stumbled into the shack and emerged jamming a pair of shells into a shotgun and stuffing another even dozen into his jeans pockets. He tripped down the step and hauled himself into the jeep, ramming down the gas pedal repeatedly, as always, to wake up the damn thing. Nothing. He smacked the steering wheel, turning the key while the car complained bitterly, and drew in his breath for a long stream of curses.

Just as he was about to tell the car a thing or two, the engine decided to turn over and the jeep reared forward, then stalled out again. The jerking and bucking exacted a cruel vengeance on his already aching head. Left it in first again, asshole, he spat at himself, finding for once the proper object for complaint. With a burp, the restarted jeep

dragged itself forward into the desert.

As he rumbled and bounced, Ed tried to get his eyes used to the increasing glare of the thing which he had now firmly convinced himself was just the sun on something at a peculiar and inconvenient angle. But as he sputtered on, wind blowing his graying hair, his mind was gnawing at him. Why, if he was so sure what it was, would he bother to go look? And why had he brought the shotgun? He jammed the thought into the space in his head reserved for useless questions, but it crawled out again and perched above his left eye, grinning derisively. What are you gonna do, put a Coors can out of its misery? Butcher a Bud? Massacre a poor defenseless Miller? (Questions can be merciless.)

Then, somehow, he had arrived and now sat, jeep chugging beneath him, staring at a towering adobe structure that bore no sign of an entrance. It didn't look anything like a pile of dung close up, he thought grimly.

No door. No door. Impossible. Oh, sure. These things

What are you
gonna do, put a
Coors can out
of its misery?
Butcher a Bud?
Massacre a poor
defenseless Miller?
(Questions can
be merciless.)

have their doors on the second level and you get up to it with a . . . ladder.

There was no ladder. He could now see what must be the way in, but had no way to get up to it. He grubbed around in the brush for one, whacking at the sage with his rifle butt. "Now dammit, Eddie, think!" he yelled, then stepped back and looked at the two-stories and at the old jeep.

Hell, you ought to be good for something, he snarled at the chuckling machine. Flopping back into the seat, he drove the jeep up to the building base. After three years in the army, I ought to be able to do this at least! Climbing onto the hood, he stepped up onto the edge of the windshield and leapt to grab the bottom edge of the doorway above. Then he swung his other hand clumsily up and deposited the shotgun with a slap on the flat surface inside the opening.

Ed was sweating now, and his left hand was beginning to slide. At that moment, as if on cue, the jeep's brakes

slipped and the car went into a lazy roll, taking his tennis shoe and almost the foot inside it along for the ride. He spat out a string of curses through clenched teeth, clenched because his jaw had just come solidly down on the rim of the doorsill. Large green globes began to float before his eyes and he could taste the blood on his tongue. He shook his head and, with a desperate clawing motion, like a kitten trying not to fall out of a tree, he dragged the top half of his body up onto the second floor. He felt vulnerable as hell with his ass in the air and quickly pulled himself up, grabbing his rifle and leaping to his feet to face all mockers. He took in the scene menacingly and of course he was alone.

The room he was in was a complete surprise. It was small and dust-free. Tidy. The sun streaming in through the front door opening filled the room to every corner. The thing that held Ed's attention, however, was high on the wall facing west—a huge bossed round of mirror metal which shot brilliance like a laser just above his head though the opening.

**Tiny silver fish
swam in a lapiz
brook and coral
buttes reached the
opal sky where a
great bird spread
turquoise wings
above a tiny world.**

Was it really silver? Ed took off his shirt and draped it over the opening to staunch some of the pouring sun, then slowly approached the object. The gun clattered to the floor as he reached up and brushed one shaky hand across the shining face. There was no dust. It was silver. And he saw then that it was inlaid with turquoise and jade, and that these stones were inlaid in turn with many differently-colored beads. As Ed peered closer, he could see some sort of pattern forming. Adjusting his glasses, he began to discern the nature of the design.

Huge buffalo charged and dodged. Tiny silver fish swam in a lapiz brook and coral buttes reached the the opal sky where a great bird spread turquoise wings above a tiny world. Out of his diamond eyes, the sun shone in incandescent spikes.

You're rich, whispered Ed's mind, as he stared into the eyes of the thunderbird. This sucker is going to redeem Gramp from all the God-forsaken kin that called him crazy. Poor old bastard, no gold, no oil, no nothing. And all the while a fortune sitting in this damned rubble, the only place I guess he never looked. And it's all mine now.



Visionary • Alex Gibson

Ed took his shirt down and put it on. The sun was beginning to sink, but looking out the door, he could see faint traces of its early fire still throwing a spotlight onto his shack off there to the west.

The west. Greeley's opportunity. The ancients' land of death. The place where the Indians had gone. All things went west to dream or die. Ed shrugged and started to reach toward the disk. The diamond gleam had dulled. The great eyes looked hollow. The fish and animals had darkened, muted into shadows that were something else. The sheltering wings now seemed to form a headdress beneath which eyes, cold as death, looked out upon an emptying world. It was the face of the Great Spirit.

Ed shivered and stopped. A wind had risen that sighed in the abandoned clay. Its voice sounded like keening that arched into crest after crest of mounting anguish. Sheets of heat lightning splashed a suddenly darkened sky in bursts—now short, now long—like semaphore. The wind plucked at the mouldering brick, whining at every crevice. And the dizzying whirl of sound and light animated the great silver image like a kaleidoscope. The mouth moved, the eyes narrowed, and Manetho pressed down upon the shrinking man until it and he seemed wedded with the storm and the heaving land.

Ed's knees were straw and there was a rock in his stomach. He thought maybe he'd have to puke, but he sure was sober. He shrank against the wall of a room that had become a maelstrom.

And then it was over. As quick as it had come. He waited, shivering, forever. But nothing else happened. There had been a storm. It passed and he was in an old Hopi ruin and it was nearly dark.

"Bullshit!" he said, too loud, and groped around for his rifle. He felt more comfortable when it was in his hand. Finally he found the strength to step up and grasp the silver circle and felt the grains rush through his hands as the mandala crumbled into powder.

Ed had known those stones were real. How the hell could diamonds turn to dust? But he had fumbled around the floor of that hovel for as long as his nerve held out. There was nothing there. Finally, he had given up and started to leave the chamber. Looking out over the vast expanse of desert in the last of the light, the dust of the icon in his nose and on his hands, he could almost see the face of the old Indian who had lived here. He must have been a shaman, Ed supposed, to have had such a thing. Ed could almost see him, assembling his people, see them ride off until they became things as tiny as their image in the mandala, things in bright colors, their dappled horses only specks against the line of emerald and blue that marked the edge of the desert. They would follow the tracks of the great bison which had preceded them westward, where west became east and the land disappeared. They had been absorbed into yesterday just as the world of the mandala had resorbed into the face of the Spirit.

And that's when Ed had seen it, flickering like a star on the black horizon. By the time he had reached it, the shack had already become a pile of glowing sticks.

It was morning. Early, but the sun already burned into his back. There was no shelter now. No Arizona Acid. His mouth felt like blotting paper and his back hurt from sleeping like a larva in the jeep. He was scratching through the cooling rubble aimlessly, letting the hot blackened sand sift through his fingers. Charcoal and earth. He knew he was looking for nothing. He had had nothing, and so could not have lost much. There was nothing of value here. Only charcoal and earth.

And then he understood. Like the Indians before him, he had only held this place in fief, to fish its silver fish, soar its lapiz sky. To tend it, revere it, study its great silences. And to learn that, one day, the land must again be forfeit to another apprentice.

Both he and the desert existed within the great mandala. Only the details changed with each rising sun. And he knew too, without going back to the mesa, that he would find a new mandala shining against the wall, keeping the small images of a man and a jeep, of a shack in the desert beneath a cloudless sky, waiting to reflect, some afternoon, what they in their turn, had impressed upon it.

Ed gathered himself together, climbed into the old jeep, and headed westward toward the city.



Witness

Forgive me, father
for I have sinned.
Coax me
coat me with syrupy salvation—
I'm still witness to
the kiss behind the corner
the moneylender's shake
dances with the bottle
the body by the lake.

Repeat the rule:
I will not lie
I will not see
I will myself not to see
more lies in truth.
(Swear it on the book.)

I can see you, father
through the black latticework
of absolution.
A cheek, a flash of teeth
listening, lurking
the wetness of an eye
that seeks too much
trembling, twitching
in its socket
leaping out through the dark
for one orgiastic glimpse,
withdrawn in a squint
that knows:
Now it's me father.
Absolve me you?

The night I met my maker
I sifted Egypt's armor
from the Sea
sniffed timbers
from the Ark
felt tears in rain
told acts from
acts.



Forgive Me Father • Bryan Wolf

Oh, heavenly father
standing top the altar
grinding groveling into gold,
wear gloves with the
holy water
should it spill,
anoint thee witch.

Bless me, Father
for I have seen
Your face behind
this mask
this man
Forgive me, father
for I have seen.

Robert Sondik

Last Prayer

I wish I had remembered you.

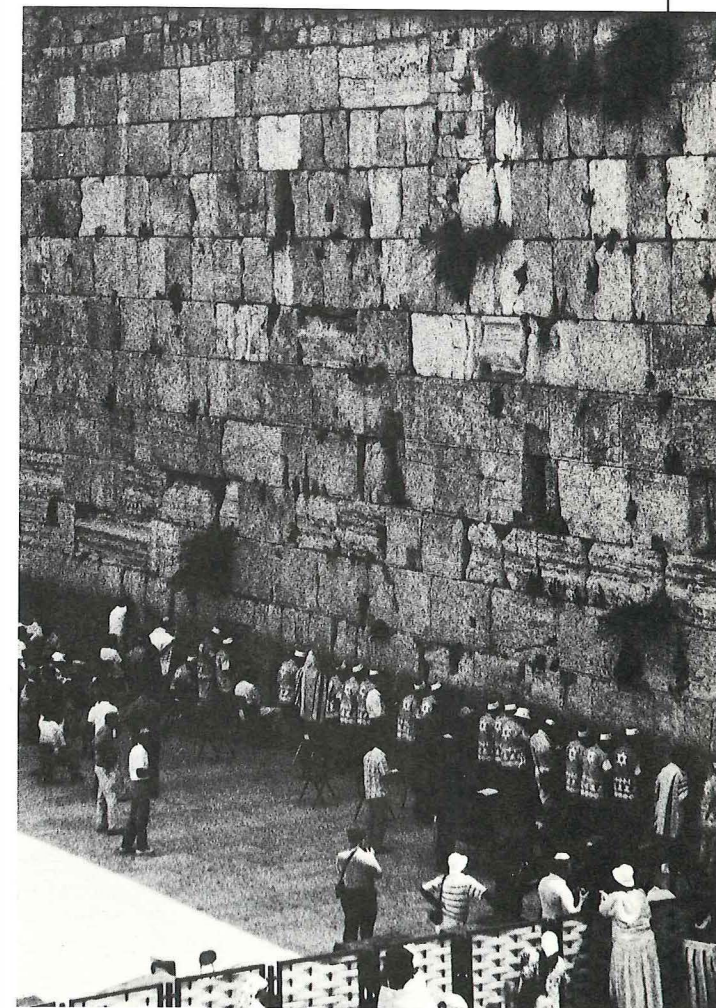
Its high holiness loomed before
me in the dark of night.
Spotlights shimmered, bounced and
streamed back into my face.
Slabs stacked like childrens' blocks
papers peering out of your nooks
women beside me prayed, chanted
in Hebrew, cried out to your holy name.
My first time at the Wall.

I prayed for Grandma in Florida, hoping
she'd win her next bingo game.
I prayed for Nana, slowly losing her memory
in a convalescent home.
I prayed for Mom and Dad, waiting my arrival home.
But I did not pray for you that Sunday night.

Sitting at your funeral two days later,
I stare at your coffin, lying carelessly
before the small gathering of people.
Sobs, sniffles, resound in my ear.
My eyes are dry as I try to remember
the last time I saw you.

Do you remember me?

Debbie Mintz



Wailing Wall • Bryan Wolf

Found in Typing 1A

fin din sin gin kin sit lit kit hit fit;
find kind nine line gine tine fins tins;

he gnashed his teeth at the killing gale
he gnashed his teeth at the killing gale

love in the afternoon
lone ranger
tinted windshields
find kind nine line fine tine fins tins;

he sang in jest at the sight in the jail
he sang in jest at the soght on the jaol
he sang in jest at these far fat lads
feed these fat lads

she asks in jest; she needs his kindness
he is a fine dad; she said he had a kite
he is a fine dad; she said he had a kilt

the lights shine at night
the lights shine at night

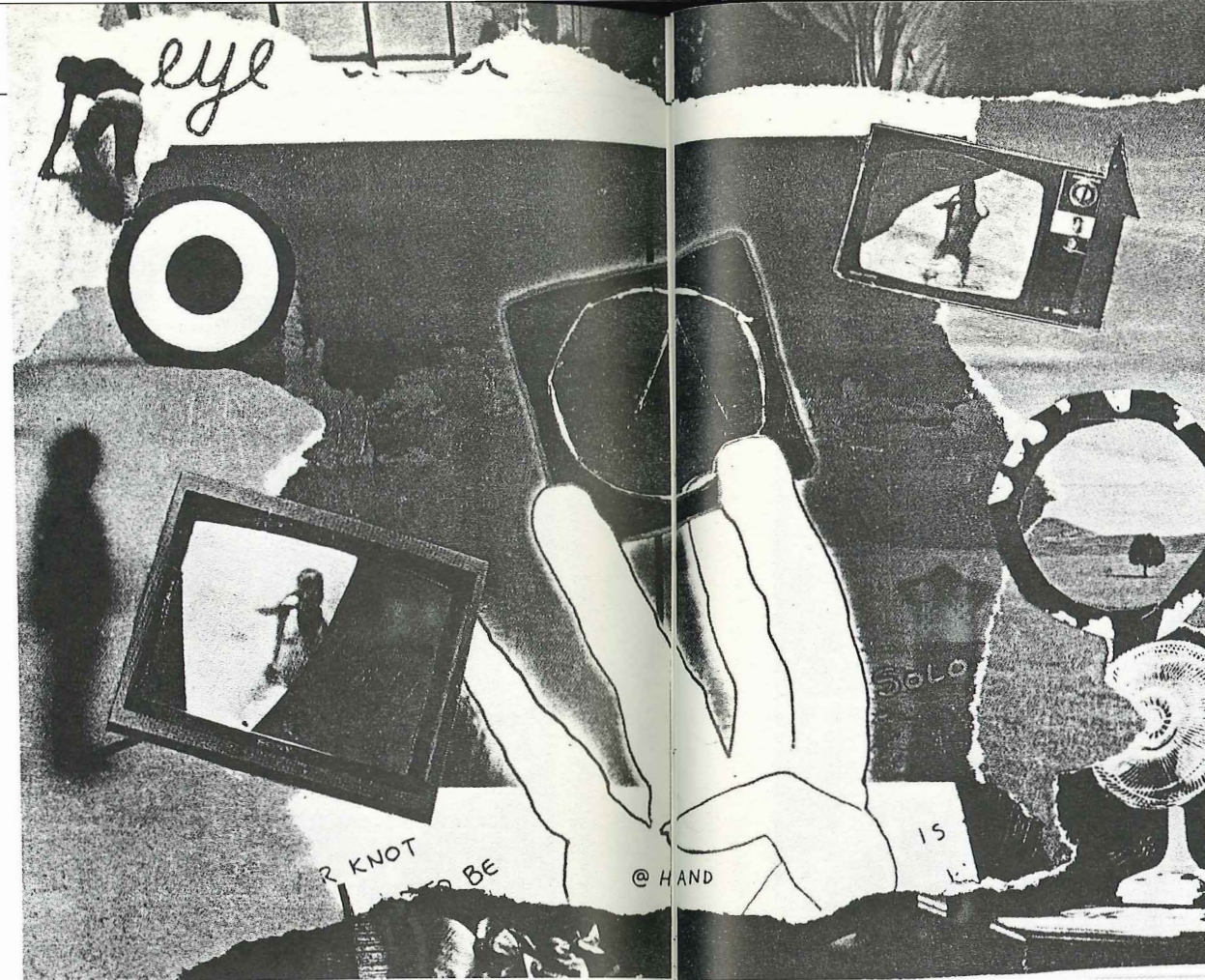
he is a fine sister; he had a sex change
he is a fine dad; she said he had a kite

he felt he needed things at the sale
he felt he loved the woman; she was a saleslady
he felt he needed her at the sale

feed that woman
feed these fat lads
wholesome goodness in every mouthful

the sale at the kingfish is in his hands
the sale at the kingfish is in his hands
the sale at the kindly idiot's house is strange
the sale at the kingfish is in his hands.

Dan Sharfstein



Scrap • Alex Heffess

Mr. Mouth

Flip
your chips
between his moving lips.

Marc Star

Found Product of Taiwan, R.O.C.

Welcome to Chinese Restaurant.
Please try your Nice Chinese Food with
Chopsticks. the traditional
and typical of Chinese
glorious history
and cultural.
Learn how to use your chopsticks
1. Tuck under thumb and
hold firmly.
2. Add second chopstick
hold it as you hold
a pencil
3. Hold first chopstick in
original position move the
second one up and down.
Now you can pick
up anything!

Todd Pruzan

On Good Breeding from Wilson's Fourth Reader, 1860

Being
civil is
absolutely necessary Attention is
absolutely necessary for improving behavior
Honor and virtue are
absolutely necessary of mankind Politeness is
absolutely equally necessary to make you
absolutely agreeable.

For example it is an awkward man who
coughs in his glass
and besprinkles the company
Who eats with his knife
(to the great danger of his lips)
Who daubs himself with soup and grease
has strange tricks putting his fingers up his nose
snuffing up his nose
or
blowing it so greatly
as to disgust the company.

It is extremely rude
It is also rude it is ill bred
It is awkward extremely awkward
It is an awkward man.

Matt Jaffe

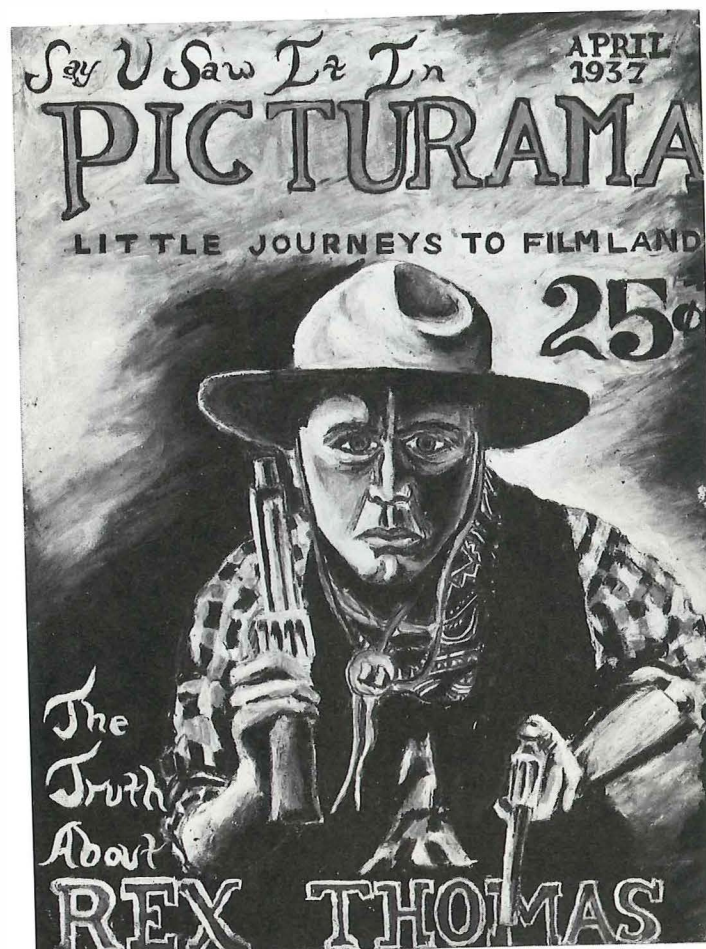
LOVE IN THE BADLANDS

JORDAN ELLENBERG

Black Falls, Nevada rose from the desert like a polluted oasis. It was a hundred miles from the closest town, and twice as far as that to the nearest jail. Criminals, vagabonds, every form of human refuse inhabited Black Falls. It was a city of stink and noise and death. People called it the Sodom of the West when they were feeling righteous. Everyone thought that something should be done. A few even thought that someone would do it.

One man decided to do it himself.

The woman who loved that man was named Katarina Linton, and she had been riding alone towards Black Falls for four days. For the hundredth time she shaded her eyes and searched the horizon for any sign of the town. This time she was rewarded with a glimpse of a dark smudge that could have been Black Falls or a low-lying cloud. Her heart raced in fear and anticipation. Soon she would see John, soon. Soon she would know whether he was alive, or killed by the town that lay ahead of her. Katarina looked again at the blot that was by now clearly the city of Black Falls. Very soon. She leaned forward in the saddle and



a fleshy hand fell heavily on her shoulder. She spun away from the screen, eyes wide.

"I've told you before about watching movies while you're working, Mullins," the man said, scowling.

"It's Molin," she said.

"Molin, yeah. Molin." He turned the word over in his mouth. "Molin. I had my doubts about hiring you in the first place, you know. You're one of those dreamy people, is what you are. Can't keep your mind on earth. Wouldn't be surprised if you were taking some kinda drugs, I swear, everyone else is. Now get back to work before I kick your goddamn ass out of here. I would right now, if I weren't the guy I am. I swear." His eyes flicked to the screen. "Christ. And it's always that Western crap. Can't you watch something decent at least?" He pulled the tape roughly out of the machine and dropped it in front of her. He watched her, trying to gauge her reaction, and found none. He grunted and went back to the storage room.

She looked down and began to sort the videotapes. She picked up the one that had been playing and held it for a while. "LOVE IN THE BADLANDS," it said, "a gripping

tale of romance and savagery in the untamed West. Starring Rex Thomas and Angela Montaine." Katarina and John stared boldly out of the cover.

"Sara?" A questioning voice, behind her. Linda's voice. She turned. Linda was standing there, waiting. She seemed distressed, but then, she usually did. Gently frightened deer eyes watched Sara from under a mop of dull brown hair. She looked like a girl waiting for a prom date.

"Mr. Stein is like that to everybody, at first. You shouldn't take it personally, you know?" Smiling hesitantly, she put her hand on Sara's shoulder, and removed it quickly. Sara nodded and turned away. Linda watched her back helplessly, trying to think of something to say.

"Do you like that movie? The Rex Thomas one?"

A ghost of a grin touched Sara's eyes, flickering in and out in a moment, a rumor of a smile.

"I like it."

Linda waited for her to continue, but Sara had turned back to her work.

"Well . . ." Linda said, slowly, "that's alright, then." She opened her mouth to say more, and thought better. You never know with a girl like that, she thought, walking back into the storeroom, you never really know.

Sara stepped out of the video store into the windy bluster of October in the city. She walked slowly, straight ahead. People stepped out of her way. Somewhere someone was playing a radio too loud. The beat, alone, floated through the air, the rest of the music lost. Sara turned onto her block, stepping over discarded bottles and torn newspapers. In front of her building there was a pile of furniture, most of it broken. An old television was perched on top, like a sentry. Another eviction.

"It was Mikulski," Joe said. Someone had thrown a blanket over him today. "Had it coming, y'know? A deadbeat. Hocked half his furniture to pay for last month." He coughed vigorously. Sara turned away from him, and he forced a blackened grin.

"What's the matter, darlin'? Don't want to see my pretty face? I oughtta be in show biz, y'know? The next John Barrymore, that's me." He cackled at her as she retreated into the building. Joe wondered about her, as he did every time he saw her. She wasn't screwed over, like everyone else out there. She didn't belong. It was all money, he thought. You had it or you didn't. He chuckled shrilly at his reflection. Smart guy, he thought. Turning into a regular Einstein. He giggled. Out of his blanket he took a bottle of something that tasted horrible and drank. Right to the liver, he thought, right to the liver. Worse could happen.

The city stank. Whiskey and vomit and blood were everywhere. Ugly buildings of wood and thatch rose up on either side of the road, their windows dark against the noontime sun. An old drunk leered at her from an alleyway, and she turned away in disgust. Her horse whinnied nervously and she patted its neck.

"Almost there," she whispered. Indeed, a broken-down inn was sprawled on the left side of the road. She maneuvered the horse into the dusty clearing behind the building and dismounted.

An old man, the innkeeper, shuffled out from the back door to greet her. His skin was scarred everywhere, and Katarina saw with a shudder that one of his eyes was missing.

"You want a room?" he said.

"No, sir." She tried to keep the trembling out of her voice.

"Can you tell me where I could find John Rand?"

"John Rand? I don't know the name. What does he look like?"

"He's tall, with blonde hair. He has a badge."

"A badge? You might want to check the cemetery, ma'am." He laughed harshly at his own joke. Katarina's face went white with anger and fear.

"Are you sure you haven't seen him here? There's ten dollars in it for you." She extracted two deeply creased bills from her bag. The innkeeper's face lit up for a moment.

"Now that I think harder, I did see someone like that. He was at the Last Chance, last time I heard." Silently, she handed him the money.

"And ma'am?" She turned to face him. "If you're carrying more money like that, be careful. Not many people in this town wouldn't kill you for that much." She seemed not to notice.

"Where is the Last Chance?" she asked.

"Other end of town. Big building with swinging doors. You can't miss it."

"I won't," she said. Slinging her bag over her shoulder, she stepped out into the street and

switched off the VCR. It had cost her fifty dollars, and the television had been another twenty-five. It was alright. Sara didn't have a lot of use for extra money. She stood

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up, stretched, dropped down on the bed. Rex Thomas smiled rakishly at her from the ceiling, flattened into a yellowing poster. She winked back at him. Rex was everywhere. Eight inches high, he watched her from the windowsill. He and his horse, Thunderbolt, posed heroically on the small table. His image littered the walls in posters and photographs, publicity for movies long forgotten. Shoot-out in San Pedro. Dead Man's Hand. The Arizona Kid. And, biggest of all, Love in the Badlands, covering the window. John was there, wearing his silver badge, staring grimly, challenging. Sara reached down and picked a scrap of newspaper. A tiny advertisement, circled neatly in pencil.

See REX THOMAS
Film Star
Kosciusko Park
Saturday, October 24
2:00 P.M.

The date was today's. She put the advertisement in her pocket, stood up, and left the cramped apartment.

Bundled against the cold, Joe watched her leave. She looked as though she were going somewhere. Maybe she was moving. Good for her, he thought. He lifted his bottle and toasted no one. "Upward mobility," he said, and drank.

She walked into the sterile warmth of the video store and Stein looked up in surprise.
"You're not on for today, Nolan. It's Saturday. What do you want, overtime?"

"Molin."

"Molin, right."

"I'm quitting."

"Quit—But you haven't given me any notice, I can't get through the weekend with just Linda! What the hell do you think you're doing?"

"I'm quitting. Today."

"I can't pay you for this month, you know."

"A week's money will be fine."

Defeated, Stein counted out the wages and handed them to Sara. Linda stopped her before she could leave.

"What is it, Sara? If it has anything to do with Mr. Stein yelling at you, don't worry, he's just like, that, really. You don't have to leave." Her eyes were pleading.

"I'm meeting someone," she said. "I don't think I'll be living around here anymore." She left, gently closing the glass doors behind her. Stein watched her leave, his fingers working.

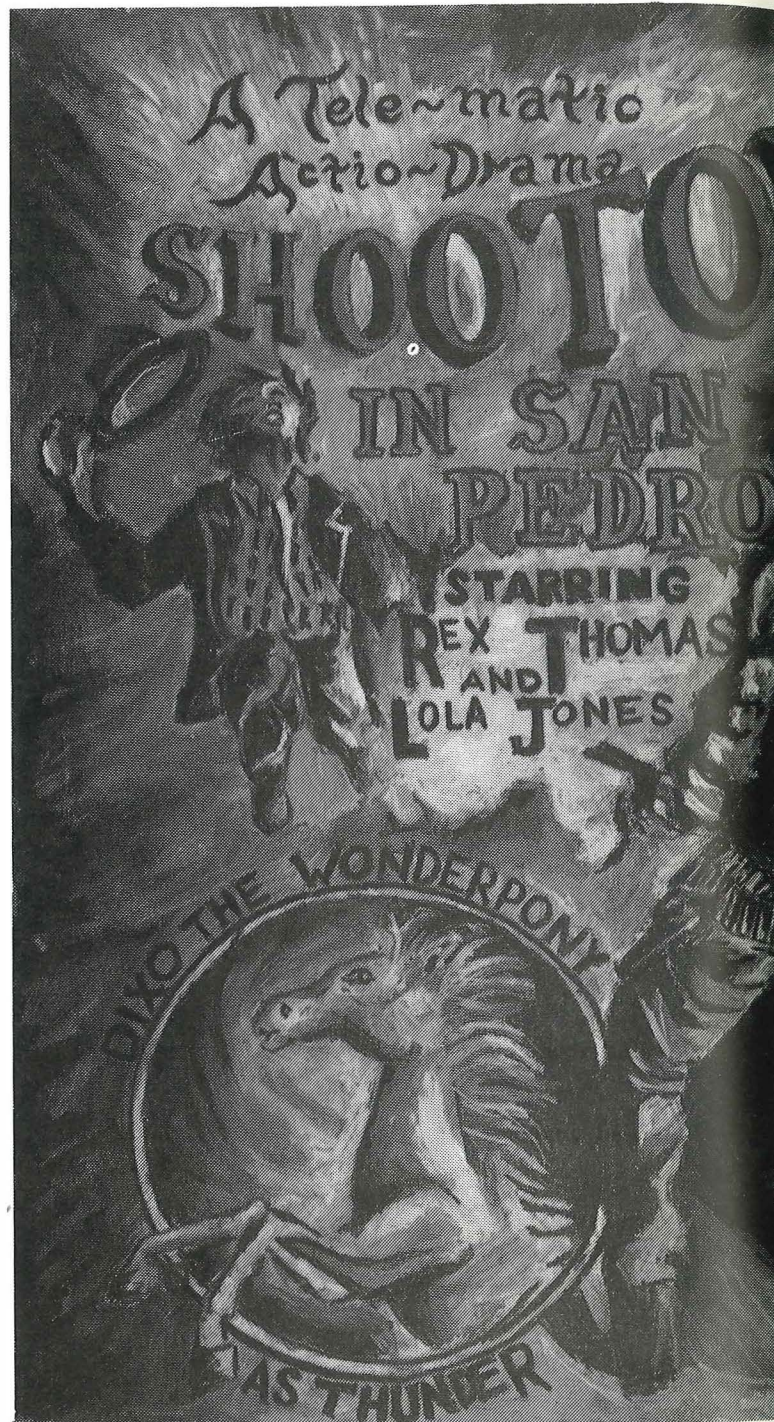
"Didn't I tell you I knew she'd be trouble? I knew it ever since she walked in here. Never shoulda hired that girl, I swear. Her and everybody like her. Didn't I tell you? They don't know where they are. Christ, it's no wonder I have an ulcer. I swear."

The Last Chance was in view, a dilapidated building that might once have been cheerful. Now the bright colors of the awnings had faded in the sun, and they hung at strange angles, like so many broken arms. Katarina stamped dust from her boots. Almost there.

"Hey, beautiful! How about a kiss for old Elias?"

Hands clamped her wrists from behind and she screamed involuntarily. She could feel the man's grizzly cheek touching hers, smell his liquor-soaked breath. She struggled, throwing her body right and left, but the man was far too strong.

"A wild one, eh? I like that. I like that a lot." He kissed the back of her neck. Now there were others, men in bandanas and leather, approaching her, grinning hugely. She screamed again, and Elias clamped his hand over her mouth. Something cold



touched her throat, and she looked down to see the blade of a knife touching the skin.

"You want to hold still, little girl. This won't hurt for a second." The men clustered around her, touching her. One tugged at her blouse. She suppressed another cry, remembering the knife. She knew that to these people, she was almost as good dead as alive.

"Get away from her." A quiet voice, but powerful. John. Her knees were weak, and she almost fell as Elias released her. And there John was, her love, silver badge glinting in the sun. The crowd retreated to the sides of the road, watching.

"You shouldn't have come here," he said.



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been cheerful.
Now the bright
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broken arms.

"It's not a place for you."

"Not for you, either. Come back with me. You can't change these people, you must know that."

"I'm not coming back."

She felt dizzy from sun and shock. He had to come back, had to, she had come here for him.

"I have work to do here," he went on. "I can't let things go on like this."

"You'll be killed, you know. You can't survive here. Come back with me." She felt empty, emotionless. Nothing was happening as it was supposed to. The people looked on and she felt trapped by their gaze.

"No," he said. "Go home, Katarina. If you love me, go home."

"I love you," she said, "I love you forever. You know that."

She looked past his shoulder and

stepped across the street, looking to the left and right. The grocery clerk watched her as she crossed the street and opened the door. Straightening her skirt, she took a box of crackers from the shelf, looked it over, and brought it to the counter. Silently, the clerk registered the purchase. It was strange, her coming in on a Saturday. She was one of those people who came in at the same time each week, bought the same things.

"Get a sudden urge for a snack?" he said, smiling uneasily.

"It's for a trip," she answered. "I may not be coming back." She left before he could say anything else.

Kosciusko Park was only sparsely crowded, as usual. Sara arrived at ten of two and sat down on a bench to wait. Slowly, people began to congregate, holding babies and autograph books. At two-thirty a limousine drove into the park, and an old man stepped out. For a moment Sara thought it was not him, but underneath the grey hair he was there, Sara could see him. She stood up and pushed her way through the crowds. The people seemed to clutch at her and she shoved them away. There he was, she was almost there, almost, and then she was there, standing next to him, with him. He looked down at her and smiled. It was hot, too hot, although everyone was wearing heavy clothes. The sun was bigger, brighter, as though someone were holding a magnifying glass to it. She reached out to him.

"Come back with me," she said.

He smiled widely, a practiced smile.

"I'm sorry, miss, but I have a job to do here."

"I love you. I love you forever, John. Come with me. You have to come with me."

Now the smile faded. A burly man began to get out of the car.

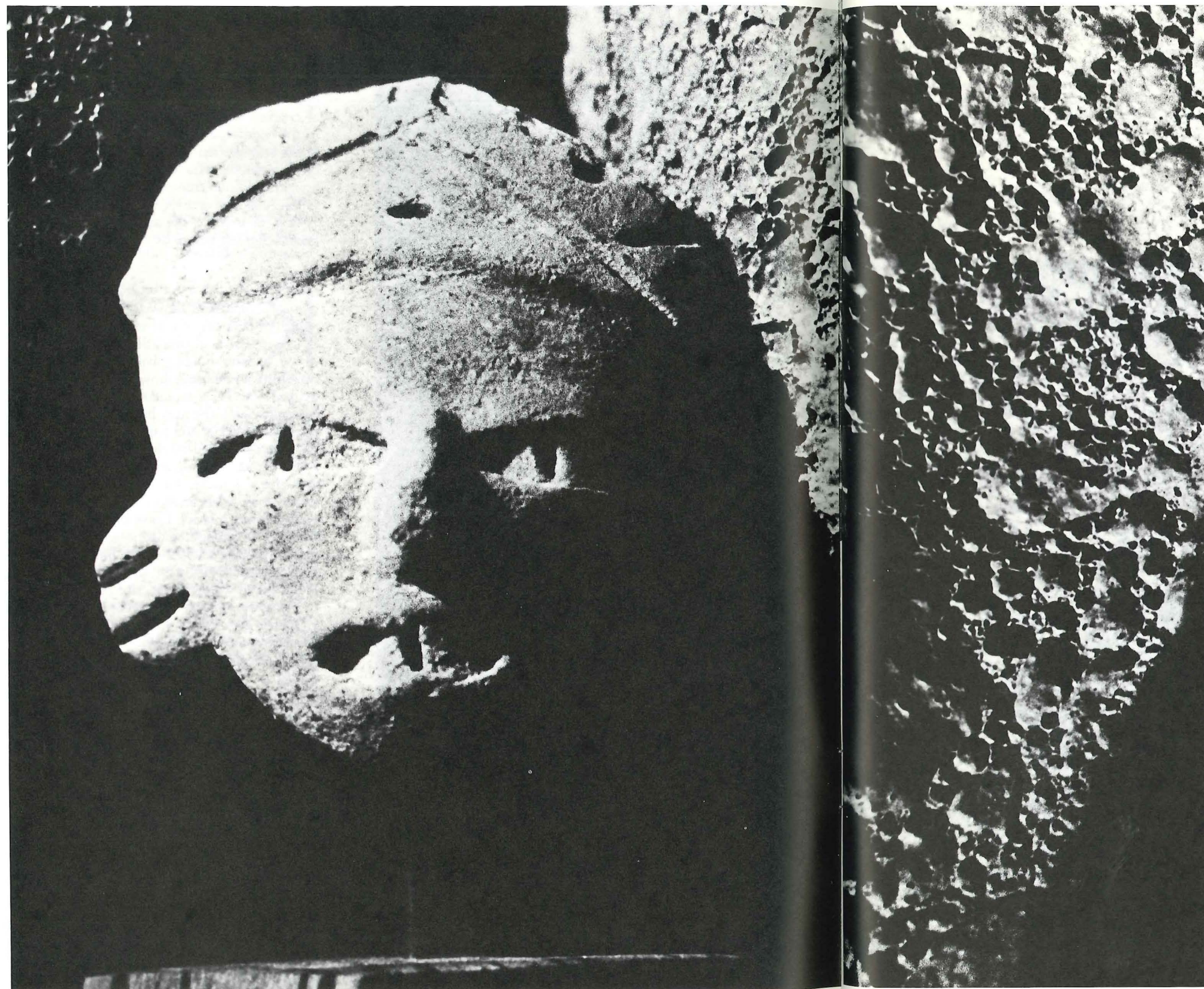
"Maybe you should sit down, miss. You don't look well at all."

He didn't understand, he wouldn't come. She had known that it would happen this way; she had seen it, a hundred times before. The people were all watching her now, staring, waiting to pull her back, to catch her. The sun screamed light.

"I love you." Almost a whisper. His face was puzzled, old. The burly man took her by the shoulders and began to pull her backwards.

"It's not you. It never was you." She spoke, calm. "John is coming for me, he's coming, he's coming!" The crowd parted behind her, closing her in, trapping her in pitying gazes. She looked at his face and it was the face of an actor who had forgotten his lines. Then the people were in front of her and she could see nothing except their terrible faces, seeing her, making her one with them. She pulled free of the burly man and ran, pushing the people away from her until she was alone somewhere. Almost there, she thought. Very soon.





Ritual Mask • Jeff Solomon

Ritual Dances

He traces in travel
the egg of the earth
his family, a gourd
that rattles, that goads
his conscience.

He carries his medicine bag
from his wandering
stuffed with the shards of his much better sense,
enters by egg light
decked for the war dance
the shaman is home
in his fierce painted face.

Mother moves in a slow water walk
the hollow step dance of the sink and stove rite.
Gray as a zombie she bends to the rhythm
slow as a zombie bound to the night.

Her boy-son is crammed like a kachina doll
with gravel and grovel

with echoing steps
with hope that is growing as gray as her hair
with hatred as bright as the blood in his throat.

A doll dance of sham
for the shaman his father,
a leap from the light
to his mother's slow breath,
kachina doll split by the grit
of his stuffing
kachina doll doing his own
dance of death

Robin Suleiman

Open-road, own-risk

A burning throat reminds me of where I am:
one drought-ridden moat in Africa.
Dust clouds my line of sight
500 tons from mighty Addis Ababa

The desert is elusive as fluid,
spreading until it merges with the sky.
This is the nightmare.

Mr. Kebede said the road is open
I hope the rebels remember this,
for Eritrean guerrillas ambush convoys.
God, let it not be mine.

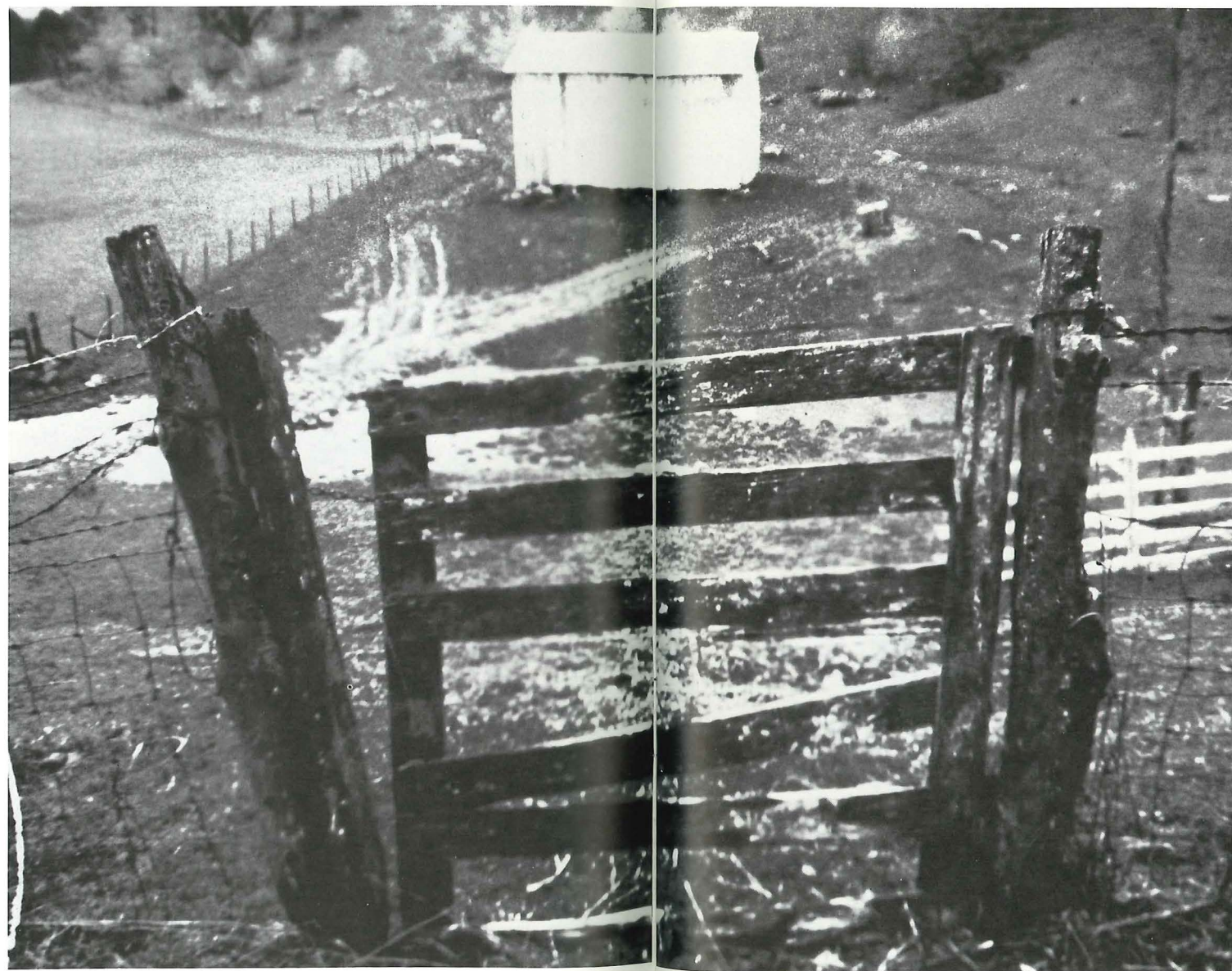
Our convoy, like worker ants
with sacks bearing a red cross,
wanders in ignorance,
trespassing through hell.
Can we be attacked?
My stomach feels the answer
I have a wife, kids

So do the refugees.

Is it? Yes, Mekele is ahead
Sitting there in dusty splendor
Thin villagers begin to surround us

It is quiet now, peace at last
for Christmas is upon us
A dusty Santa hands out food

William Dodge



Fenced In • Matt Jaffe

Running

He could always remember the running
though he sometimes lost the why.

Quicksilver fish were flying at him
where he lay,
running from rage of weeping cloud.
He looked deep
trying to see the Fisherman
but not remembering what to look for.

He remembered warning her
he was an angry man.
She hadn't listened.
She kissed
and teased.

The in-force,
what he called it,
what it was,
ran over

And then it came again,
the memory of fragile bones
collapsing at the flashes
of his fist,
his fists
bone running to blood in the soft earth,
the comfort and the cool of the soft earth,
and not remembering for long millennia the angle
of her neck

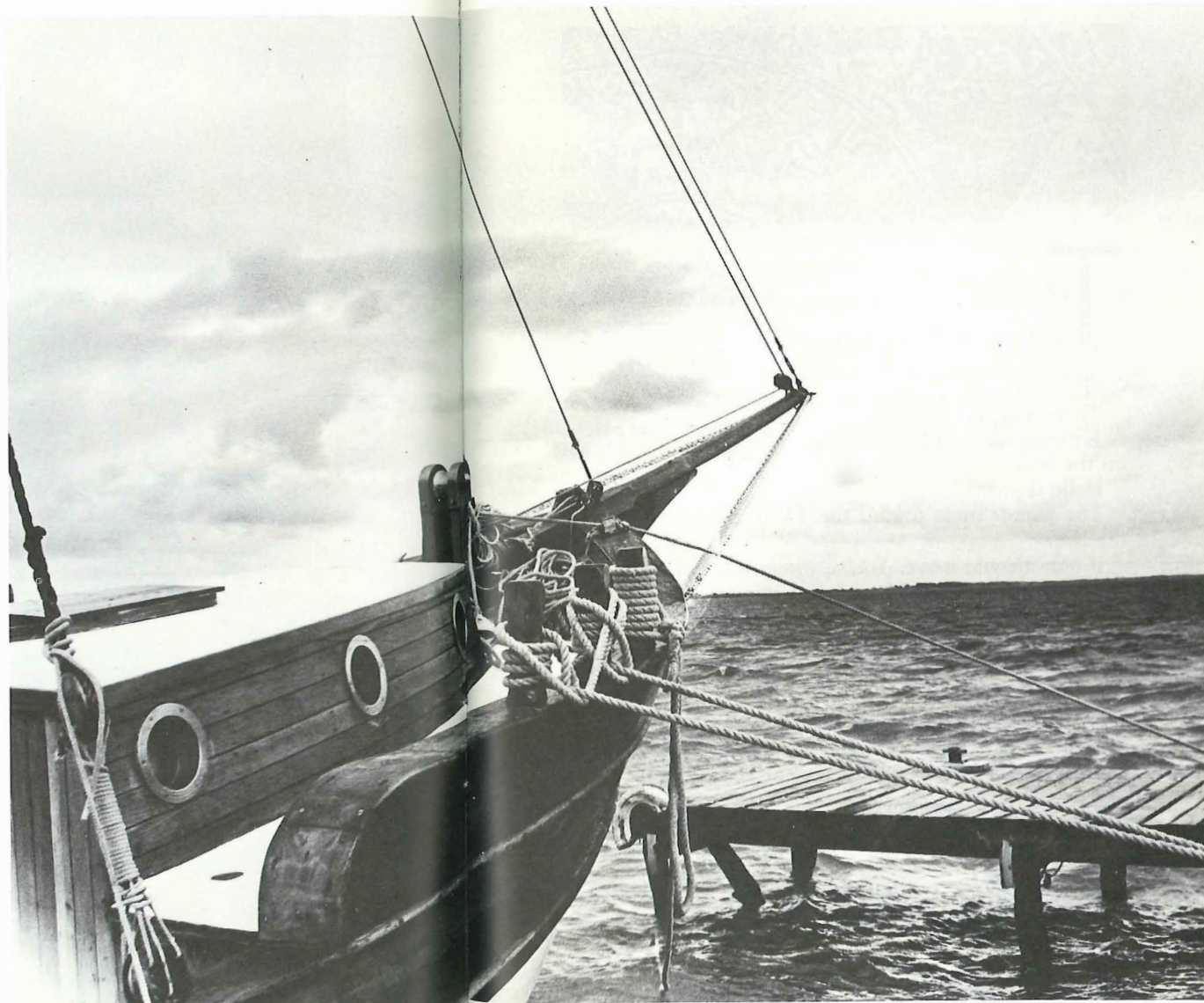
And he had run—
like silver from the sky,
like blood along strands of shining hair,
all his life
for his life
running now
at the wrists,
the fists,
lying against the earth,
the cool earth,
waiting for the running
to be over

Robin Suleiman

Patterns

And she ran from me. And I ran from her but the note slipped to me one day said I'm sorry I love you and I knew it wasn't true but yet who am I to know the truth so I ran to her and I love you's echoed in my ears and my mouth spouted phrases as if I was a parrot or a mimic or a canyon and I echoed back what was said to me though truth be told I couldn't ever love her no matter how many times she ran to me when my lips sputtered words meaning much more than I wish they had when I found myself in the embrace and how was I or she to know that together we made up two liars and I pulled against my tethering but words can hold you back as well as send you forward and I found myself unlucky again my only wish to unexplore this topic and sink as if I were the anti-Cousteau, Running from me.

Hal Niedzviecki



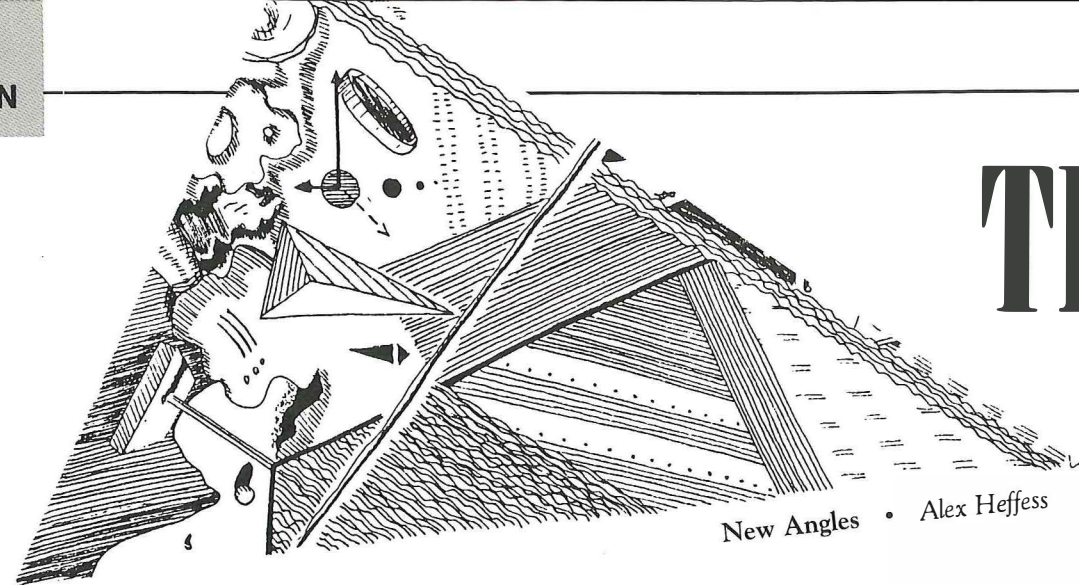
Without Haven • Matt Jaffe

Cabin Fever

All agley the cabin
The filth and the keel
Riding the wave clefts
Cock of the sea
The rust
The dank cot
Lips catching rheum
Like the ghost of a kiss
The tally of loneliness
Fever
Despair cuts to the quick
One more notch
One more prayer

Beg for a whispered
Benediction of witch
Who mourns the lost dagger
Sinks to her knees
She said to me
Don't tempt me with rain
Your nightmare ship
Adorn me with antler
And appleseed
She is the earth
The haven from storm
Salt of the sea has no place in her home

Jennifer Sainato



New Angles • Alex Heffess

IVAN PETRELLA

Critics have devoured my writings, spit them up, molded images which I did not intend. Catholic States have banned my work, while Jews and Protestants call me a devil. This I am not. I am a priest. I preach the philosophy of truth. I am not the first to accept this view. Throughout the flow of history philosophers such as Francis Bacon,¹ Friedrich Nietzsche,² Bertrand Russell,³ and Jean-Paul Sartre⁴ have proclaimed a Godless universe, and yet none have been censored as violently as the school of thought which I represent. Proclaiming a chaotic universe, a universe where the supreme being is man, a universe where the supreme evil is a plastic God, our movement holds the key to the divine prison. Indeed, the greatest evidence of the validity of our school's thought was the suicide and resurrection of its greatest exponent, Wilhelm Capelle, two years ago on this day.



Wilhelm Capelle (1970-2032) was born in Munich, Germany. He attended the Bratzwin for a year and then moved to Paris where he emerged with a doctorate in philosophy from Le Sorbonne. He taught for five years at L'Institute de Philosophie in Brussels until he was expelled for being a "renegade Jew in cahoots with the devil." He began to write. In his short stories and numerous essays he portrayed the insignificance and inadequacies of our human condition. One of his earlier stories, *Life*, is characteristic of his theories which were later assembled into the philosophy of truth. *Life* was written during the Third World War, an event which, coupled by the two preceding major conflicts, punctuate the failure of our Western civilization. The story reads as follows:⁵



The doctor walks across the hall.

"How's 112?"

"The same, doctor."

Entering room 112 he stops and gazes at the body buried on the bed.

Hello doctor.

The doctor turns toward the TV-like apparatus beside the bed.

If only I could move. You've wrapped me up tight.

Toying with the dial the doctor stares at the readings. Then he checks the tubes, one in the mouth, one in the nose, one on the arm, blood.

Bye doctor.

A lady enters the hospital. Her hair crops up like weeds towering over roses, her eyes are bloodshot, and her mouth is a dried fruit. Slowly walking towards room 112 she looks like a man carrying a weight on his shoulders.

"John," she says.

Mom.

"John."

I'm okay. There's the doctor. Talk to—

"Mrs. Peller?" the doctor says. "Yes."

"Follow me."

Is Jeff coming, Mom?

Jeff, how's work?

"Were you drunk, John?" Jeff asks.

It was an accident. It wasn't my fault.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF TRUTH

AS PORTRAYED BY WILHELM CAPELLE AND ANALYZED BY HAMMER STRONBERG

Jeff looks at the body which follows him with empty eyes.
"I've got to find Mom."

"Mother, doctor, I just got here," Jeff says.

"Sit down."

"Tell us, doctor."

The doctor speaks and his words float like a thief, a killer, silently across the room.

"Let me take you home, Mom," Jeff says.

Jeff stands under the doorway of room 112 looking like an old rug. The respirator stands confidently, a life-giver, God in a box. Red and green lights sprint across the panel, in the finite and painful cycle which compounds a human existence.

He turns toward the body lying limply on the bed, living in the artificial rise and fall of its chest.

Jeff.

He sits down. The box pumps oxygen and blood like a man squeezing an orange for juice.

"Mr. Peller."

He looks up.

"Yes, doctor," he says, "I'm leaving."

The doctor walks across the hall into room 112. He switches the dial to off and unplugs the respirator. He watches as the patient's chest stops heaving and recedes, shriveling into a raisin. Taking the box, he calls a nurse to move the body and leaves closing the door behind him.



Life is written with short, shallow strokes. The reader never feels for the characters because there is no emotion involved in the piece. Portions of the dialogue are not punctuated by quotations. These parts are thought, not spoken, words from the patient on the bed. The obvious conclusion is that the patient was

alive at the time of the "unplugging"; and so we must also conclude that life and death merge into one. Is there a solution? Yes—suicide. If God exists all is His will and from His will I cannot escape. This has been the history of mankind, one of universal suffering, one of divine enslavement. But if He doesn't exist, then it is all my will, and since God is an illusion, I am bound to self-will. I am bound to take possession and assume responsibility for the two greatest elements of my being, life and death. If you recognize that there is no God and that one is God oneself; if you recognize that you are supreme, then you will live wrapped in the freedom of glory. I, as Wilhelm Capelle, must sacrifice myself to prove self-will. By committing suicide I become Shiva the destroyer and Brahma the creator; I become Nietzsche's superman; I become the pagan Christ. Then the populace will live in glory, and I will be God.



1. Solomon saith: "There is no new thing upon the earth." So that as Plato had an imagination, "that all knowledge was but remembrance"; so Solomon giveth his sentence, "that all novelty is but oblivion." (Francis Bacon: *Essays* (LVIII))

2. Author of *Ecce Homo*, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, *The Gay Science* and *The Antichrist*.

3. States the planet was created only a few minutes ago and that humanity recalls an illusory past. (Russel: *The Analysis of the Mind*, 1921, p. 159).

4. Man is born by accident, extends itself out of weakness and dies by chance. (Sartre: *Nausea*, p. 97).

5. It is imperative to recall that Camille's essays were censored by most religious states; thus he was forced to begin writing stories as vehicles for his philosophical ideas. His stories must not be read for their literary content, but for their view of our world.



Schism

The washcloth
sparked my memory
standing in the
motel bathroom
cold water dripping
down my face
I recalled
those same
thin, white things
not fit to be called washcloths
stacked for me
in my grandmother's
bathroom
She must have
stolen them from
some motel she stopped
at once
I can see her
packing them in
her suitcase
thinking of my impending visit
Her house
was only a hotel
I did not have to
pay for
My cousins and aunts
would have used
her candy-colored linens
but for me
something disposable
No sign of me
in her house
My pictures are tucked
safely away
My cousins' faces
haunt every room

Cate Marvin

To a Furnace

Were not electric wires sprung
and coal from upland crumble dug,
you would be. You with many
molded bullet latches torqued
with iron seams, dark like cannon-mouth.

If you were bell you would ring
your own procession, toll your own wake.
Two hundred years has hatched ash enough
to bury cities six feet deep in soot.
All from metal body's breath.

Anatomy and purpose both bore
a blackened belly and a flue
for heart. Mouth creaking wide,
you swallowed cords of wood
from forests now stump-sawed bare.
You ate rock. You picked your teeth
with rolls of rotten newspaper.

To drive steam into train pistons
and kiln clay walls of home,
factories churned on furnace casing.
As winter came, came you.

By belly-fulls we shovelled dust
that piled at hearth. When happy,
you pinged and popped
as if heat rose enough to expand you—
the sound came from the rivets, though.

Never mind the rag-picker and the scrap-metal peddler.
Pay no attention as we pass through the gates
of the county dump. Moan no alarm.
While remembering the steel mill,
remember the steam ship and the forge.
Forget that once, lined up to smoking chimneys,
your kind fed on whole neighborhoods.
You ate their eyes and skin, their limbs.

Erik Goldner

BOYS MAKING NOISE

MATT JAFFE



The Naked Apes, passing time on their favorite rooftop, take a brief respite from the more demanding procedures of making great music.

Photographs by Kate

"We're the next Beatles," says Marc Star, lead guitar for the Naked Apes. He's strumming away—tuning up—while the rest of the Apes scurry through the cramped studio, connecting power lines, plugging in microphones.

"We are the first Beatles," says Bones, the drummer. "They copied all our songs." He beats his hands on top of an amplifier. Bones' drums are at home. The Apes have already laid down the drum tracks for their soon to be released, as-of-yet untitled demo cassette. Today, in this tiny studio, the Naked Apes hope to record the guitar and keyboard tracks. At twenty dollars an hour, they had better play fast.

See, when you're in a high school rock and roll band, it's hard getting started. Money is a problem. Getting gigs is a problem. Recording is a problem. But the Naked Apes don't worry about that. Like every other new band, they just want to be great—to be a success, to be recognized for their music.

Marc plays a few more chords, and Mike Nuell, the lead singer, looks up from the sound board and says, "That sounds good, but do it again. It could be better."

The Naked Apes started like most high school rock bands, with a couple of young musicians jamming together, playing their favorite tunes. "We wanted to be cool," jokes Nuell. Then Mark Katz came along as the keyboard player. Katz doesn't look like he's in a rock band. He is more mellow, like a jazz artist or someone who works at a piano bar. But the notes coming out of his keyboard shake the entire studio with deep, earthy moans. "Doooo dooo doooo."

"That's an evil sound." Nuell jerks his head up and down in time with the keyboard's groaning. "We want evil sounds for this demo."

Meanwhile, Bones and Star imitate Katz's chords with their voices. "Doo dooo doooo!"

Bones (his parents call him Paul Tewksbury) and Ted Sidey, the bass player, joined the Apes about a year ago. They go to Landon, while Katz, Nuell, and Star attend Churchill. Bones is a big guy with a crew cut and thick eyebrows. He looks like someone you'd call Bones, or maybe Sluggo. "Evil is what we're aiming for," he laughs while banging his fists on his shoes.

"Yeah evil." Nuell agrees. He dances over the tangled cords and wires that cover the floor, and sings something in a deep voice.

The Naked Apes aren't an evil band. They don't sing music that is normally associate with, for whatever reasons, evil. "Actually, we're progressive."

The sound engineer, Dave Moore, turns from the reel-to-reel recorder and asks, "What is progressive?"

Nuell is stumped. The keyboardist helps him out: "It's a lot of things." And he punches a bomb of a chord on his keyboard.

"You know—bands like Genesis, Yes, Talking Heads started it."

"We're New Wave," says Star, still tuning up.

"We're punk."

"We're completely different."

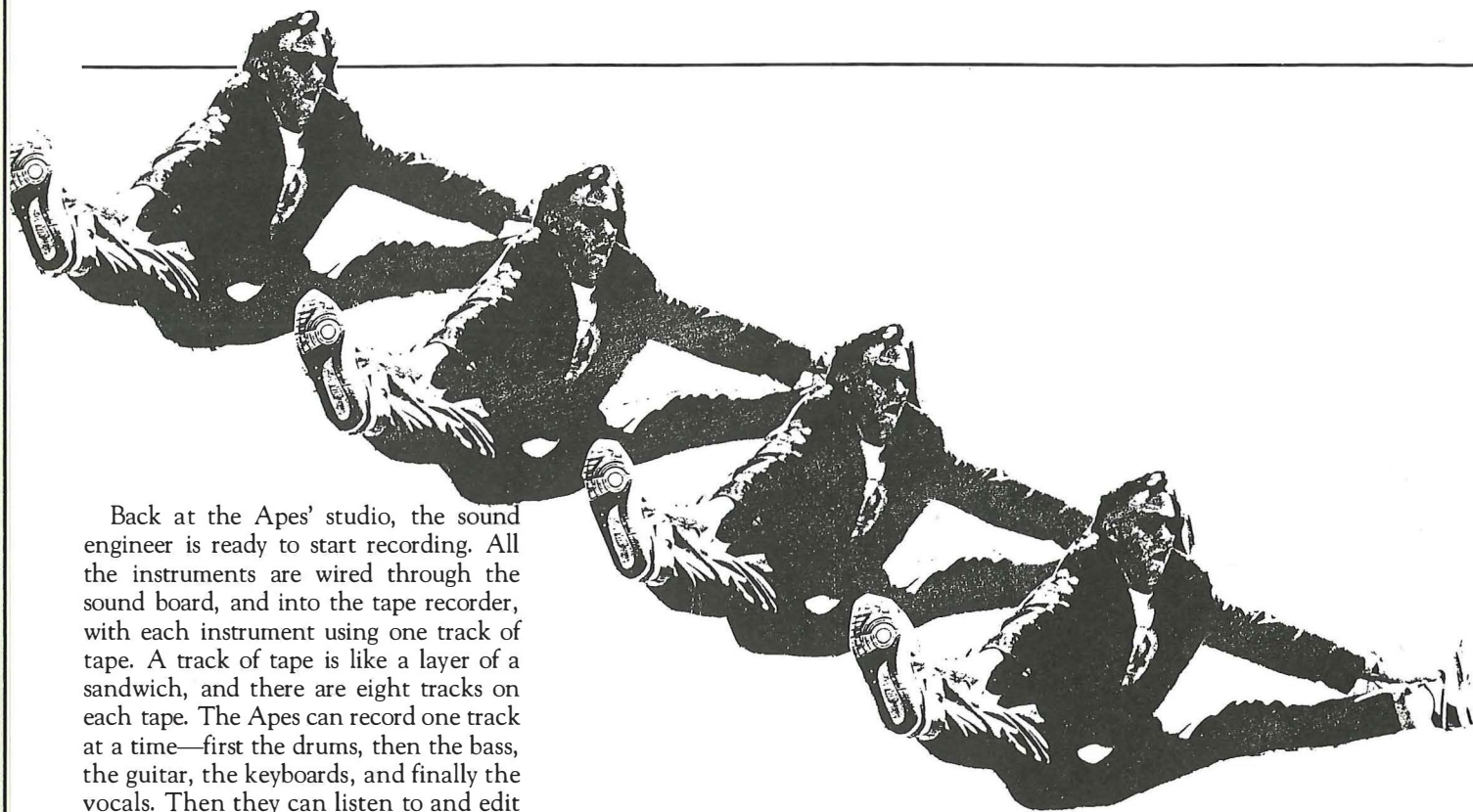
When you're in a high school rock and roll band, it's hard getting started. Money is a problem. Getting gigs is a problem. Recording is a problem.

Down Route 270, in Germantown, another high school band practices in a small garage. Vortex is a heavy metal band specializing in "glam" rock—Mötley Crüe, Ratt, Whitesnake. They're loud and fast—so loud that Todd Stackpole, the lead singer and guitar player, can hardly hear himself sing. He tries to tell the band to fix their amps, but his voice is lost in the screaming guitars and bass. Finally, he stops singing and sits down on the floor with the microphone sticking out between his legs.

"Check the volume, dudes."

They reach over to their amps and crank up the volume knobs two clicks.

"That's better."



Back at the Apes' studio, the sound engineer is ready to start recording. All the instruments are wired through the sound board, and into the tape recorder, with each instrument using one track of tape. A track of tape is like a layer of a sandwich, and there are eight tracks on each tape. The Apes can record one track at a time—first the drums, then the bass, the guitar, the keyboards, and finally the vocals. Then they can listen to and edit each track separately, until they are satisfied with the piece.

"Just like the professionals," notes Bones.

When the recording starts, the band gets serious. Bones, Nuell, and Katz sit along the studio wall, while Star plays the guitar tracks for an instrumental section of a piece called "Those Eyes." The sound engineer plays back the bass and drums from the tape while Star strums his guitar. He watches his fingers, concentrating on every note. If he misses a chord, he knows it and stops. "Let's try it again from the beginning."

David Bunch, the bassist for Vortex has just blown a fuse in his amp. The practice session is going to have to end early, but that's okay because the temperature in the garage is about ninety-five. "If we were famous, we'd have extra fuses," complains Bunch, wiping the sweat off his forehead with a pink bandanna.

But Vortex isn't famous. In fact, they have never played a paying gig. Stackpole says, "We didn't get started to make money, but it was like we were all into metal—especially Crüe—and we wanted to have a good time playing our favorite music. We practice twice a week in my garage, just to piss off the neighbors." He lays his guitar in the case and closes it.

Music isn't the only element in Vortex's act. "We have to dress cool," explains Bunch. "It's all part of the scene—long hair, leather, and tight pants. Todd wears make-up sometimes too."

Stackpole, whose blonde hair tapers off just above the waist line of his red stretch jeans, nods in agreement. "I bleach my hair once a month. My mother hates it, my boss hates it, my teachers hate it, and my father *really* hates it. But my girlfriend thinks I look cute."

"The music we play is party music," continued Stackpole. "We call the songs Krush Songs, because they're loud and fast and crush your ears. I know it sounds stupid, but when I'm frustrated, I can take it out on my guitar. Sometimes I try to write my own tunes too, and some of them are pretty good. But no one wants to hear originals these days. Everyone wants Crüe and Wasp. One time we were playing at a party, for free of course, and we tried to sneak in a song that the band wrote. As soon as we started everybody stopped dancing and left. What a bummer."

After several takes, Marc Star records a perfect track for "Those Eyes." It took longer than the Apes would have liked, but none of them would have been satisfied with anything less than perfect. But in the studio, time is money, and the Naked Apes are just about broke.

"I'll lend some dough to the band," offers Nuell.

"How are we going to pay you back?" asks Katz.

Nuell thinks for a minute, scratches his head and says, "When we get a gig."

**Bones is a big guy
with a crewcut and
thick eyebrows. He
looks like someone
you'd call Bones, or
maybe Sluggo.**

Bones, Katz, and Star groan in unison. The Apes haven't had much luck getting gigs. To date, they have played twice at T.T. Reynolds, once at The Grog, and once at the Back Alley. It's hard to get Washington club owners to take high school students seriously, and, to complicate the situation, most clubs do not allow minors through their doors because of the drinking age.

"Our gig at T.T. Reynolds didn't go over too well because T.T. Reynolds is more of a country-western bar, and I don't think the crowd appreciated our music. We didn't get too much applause," says Star.

"But at the Back Alley Cafe, I think we were a hit," Star continues. "There were only thirty or forty people there, but they loved us. In fact, we had been booked for another show, but the place closed down three days before we were scheduled to play."

"We really want to play the 9:30 Club, and we're hoping that the owner will hire us after he hears our new demo. We could be an opening band, or play on one of the 3 Bands, 3 Bucks nights. We really need the money."

Now the band is preparing to record the tracks for a song called "Can't See So Far." The entire band wrote this song. "Usually we start off writing a song by just jamming together until we come up with something we like," says Nuell. "Then me or Marc writes the lyrics, but we like our songs to be a whole band effort."

Most bands who play originals write the songs together. Take The Rage, for instance. The Rage plays a kind of music called fusion. "Fusion is mix of as many music types—jazz, blues, rock, pop—that can work together in one piece," says Aaron Halpern, founding member, and keyboard and bass player. "We like to explore musical possibilities, to push ourselves."

The Rage has recorded a three song demo in Halpern's basement. He says, "I have a multitrack studio down there. I'm really into recording."

Aaron also plays in a jazz band called Midnight Madness. "We like to come up with original riffs, and especially original lyrics. Lyrics are very important to me."

Aaron hopes to go to college on a music scholarship. He wants to study music or music engineering. "I am a very serious musician."

The Naked Apes have just finished recording the keyboard tracks for "Can't See So Far." Now they are ready to record the lyrics. "I wrote these. It's a song about suicide," Nuell says.

*I went down to the ocean to see what I
could see*

*From the big rocks there
I looked down to the water,
Saw my reflection staring back at me
But I didn't know if I cared.*

*I looked out to the ocean where the waves
touch the sky*

*Saw a ship turned out to see
I looked down to the water
Saw my reflection crying crystal tears
And I wished it was me.
The night has gotten darker, the birds cry
to the stars
The pounding waves have finally ceased
I looked to the water, my reflection fleeing
into space
While the sun sets in the east.*

When Nuell finishes the song, the Apes call it a day. They still have to re-mix the entire tape, and record a few more vocal tracks, but the band is satisfied with the work they have done.

"We really want to make something great," says Katz. "We're all going off to different colleges next fall, and we're not sure what's going to happen to the Apes. It won't be the end. We want something to come out of our work. It's very important that we take ourselves seriously."

Bones bangs on Katz's head, "Yeah, seriously."

"When we have to break up, for whatever reasons, we want people to remember us," says Star.

**"I bleach my hair once
a month. My mother
hates it, my boss
hates it, my father
hates it. But my
girlfriend thinks I
look cute."**

Some bands have managed to stay together beyond high school. Bands like Marginal Man and Frontier Theory have endured, and found success in the Washington area. Both bands started in high school. Both bands have released several albums.

Marginal Man played their final concert the last weekend of March. Andre Lee, a founding member, says, "When we released our last album we realized that the Washington music scene was basically hopeless. There's only so much you can do."

Marginal Man helped define the distinct sound of harDCore, a local punk movement. Over the years, the band developed a loyal following in the Washington area. "We stayed together so long because we love to play. We just wanted to play."

Bob Kelley, who started Frontier Theory with three of his brothers says, "The band has kept me very busy lately." Frontier theory plays pop and fusion. They have recorded two albums, and plan to tour the country. "You've got to make a commitment to music. Once you do, you can't lose. If you keep trying, keep practicing, you're bound to attain some level of success."

Mike Nuell can't wait until the demo is finished. The Naked Apes want everyone to hear it. "You've got to hear it. It's going to be the greatest thing on earth," says Nuell, smiling. The Apes have a sure fire way to test the quality of their music. "What we want to do is send the tape out to all the local nursery schools. If the kids listen to it and have nervous breakdowns and crying fits, then we know the demo is fantastic. It's got to be."



Loup-Garou

*My brother Esau is an hairy man
But I am a smooth man.
Genesis 27:11*

My brother is
a hairy man.
The wind tells me.

I shake my head
for I am smooth.
He keens before
the slickness of the moon.
I mourn within
the furriness of forests.
The moon darts silver shafts
that boil the blood.

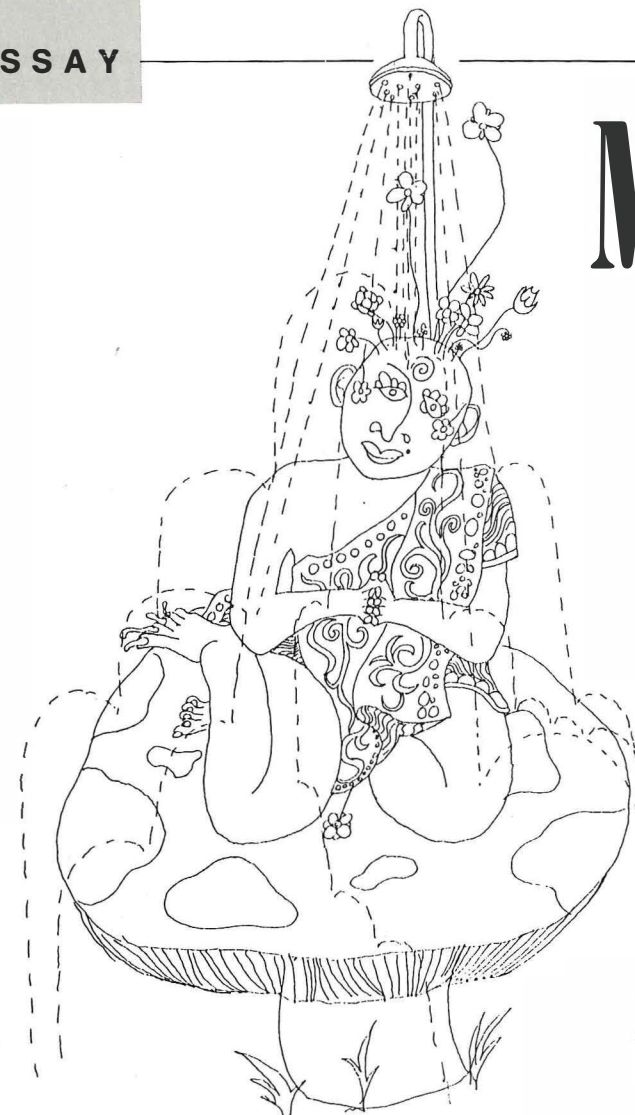
I speak
and hatch a furball from my throat,
crawl inside myself
to look for him
and find only his hand
at my arm's end.

I am man smooth but
hismyhandarmhairy
my smoothmoonbrotherI'm

a hairy man
The wind tells me.

Robin Suleiman

ESSAY



Beverly Hills Mystic • Alex Gibson

MEDITATION FOR THE PEOPLE

DEBORAH WASSERTZUG

Okay, so you're saying, "Isn't there a better way? A less painful one?" Sure there is. First, invite all your friends to lunch and tell them about the "totally intense migraines" you've been getting. Next, search up and down Rodeo for clothes that don't infringe upon your, like, Essence. Buy a bamboo mat and build an addition to the house, which you will call The

**Next, search up
and down Rodeo
for clothes that
don't infringe
upon your, like,
Essence.**

Shrine. Also pick up a couple of plaster icons, the kind you scowl at in gardening stores. Now you can start. Contort yourself into an early-morning-public-TV-yoga position, then stop for carrot juice.

So you're now completely repelled and vow never to attempt meditation again? Well, be consoled that you can suffer along with us non-believers.

the word "love" is a universal panacea, and (3) that the reader owns a pair of ripped jeans and pink lipgloss.

The way I see it, there are two forms of meditation, both of which seem ridiculous to the rookie meditator. The first type is what is referred to by purists as The State of Mind, while the second is the canned product which Beverly Hills divorcees pay thousands for, to achieve Nirvana™, Bliss™, etc.

Achieving The State of Mind requires a lot of time and preparation. Feigning it does not. Slamming your thumb with a hammer produces an effect that pricey incense could never evoke. Try it. Now, instead of screaming an obscenity, channel your pain into the development of an incantation. To do this, imagine a grocery list written in a Serbo-Croatian dialect. Then groan it to yourself in a Bela Lugosi tone. Cleansing, isn't it?

Seventeen Magazine recently published an article that gave "helpful pointers on meditation." Along with the article was an Instructional Photo of a model in ripped jeans and pink lipgloss sitting Indian style, pretending to be relaxed and saying "ohmmm . . ."

The article made several assumptions, among these: (1) that the reader will follow directions, (2) that

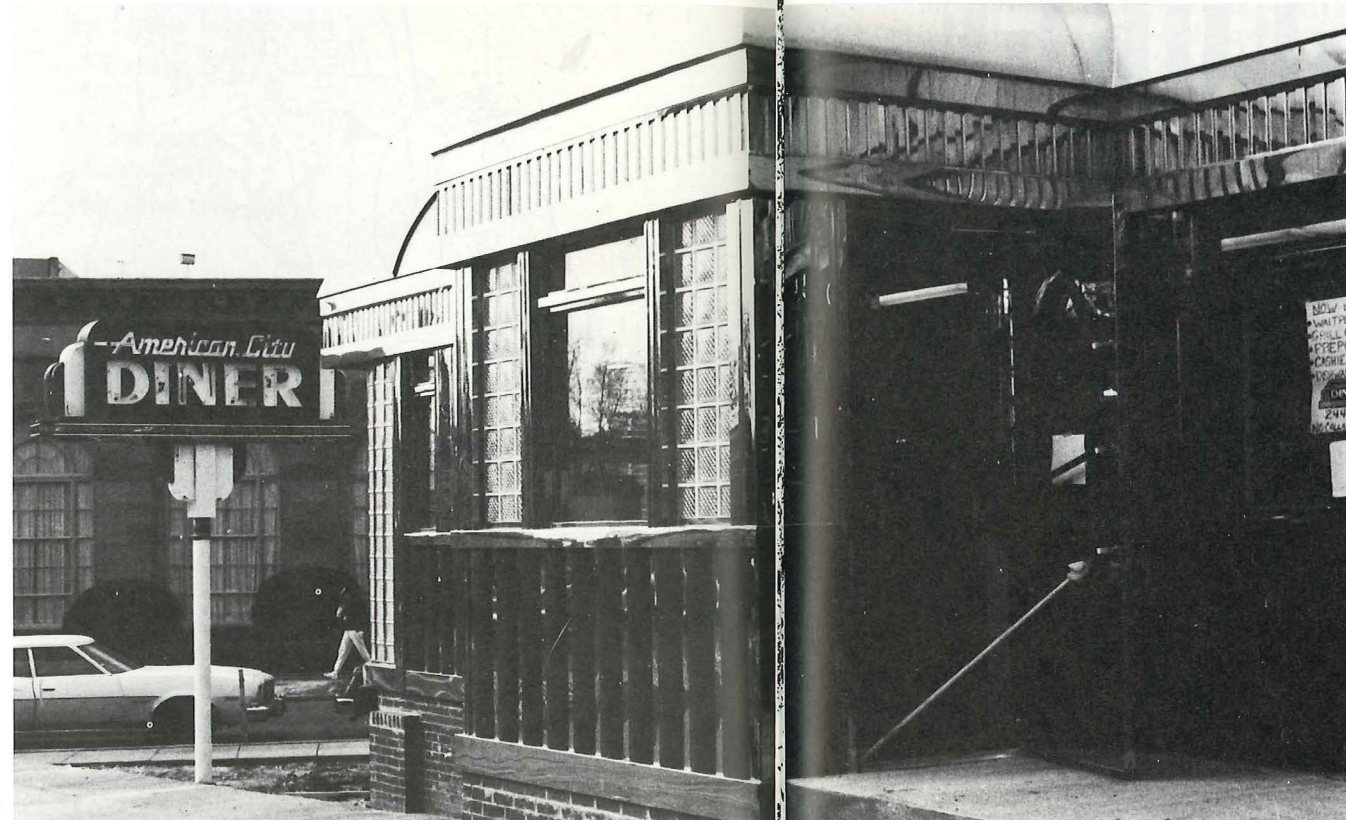
Tuning in One Evening I Hear

his voice, a continuous roll.
 He's the oyster man.
 I can see his tongue stretched
 to his gums, flicking at his teeth as he talks.
 Dose teeth dey are done crooked, ain't dey,
 I bet.
 His lips curl around a harmonica.
 It bleats out a song—
 You play it see, whit de hand,
 fluttering
 for these oyster men, shoveling up
 four thousand pounds daily for
 well,
 oyster shells.

To see the recording equipment on the table
 in the Carolina shack,
 the reporters with long microphones,
 and the oyster man talking
 clear out of radios
 rolling over hills lined with
 telephone poles
 into the houses of oven mit women
 and cars with yellow tied men
 pondering the possibilities of
 oysters.

Surely he'd pull back his lips
 and smile with golden teeth.

Robert Sondik



Snack Shop • Jeff Tow

Working Titles

If things start to wind down towards the
 thick of the afternoon and you've got a minute,
 bypass that glitzy Italian *Gelato* place and
 poke your head into the Sherman Avenue Snack Shop. Behind the
 antiquated postcards BubbleYum mints matches and pencils
 by the electronic moneybox sits Kirby,

a gentleman who will give you a thank you
 gratis at the conclusion of your banana
 split and chocolate shake,
 real food, newborn, behind the swinging door;
 I swear you can taste the sweat in it.
 Granted, the Snack Shop is a lively stench.

Now here's a truly great man.
 Someone who's had the courage
 to abandon his adult life worldly reveries,
 without remorse, to the bottom of the treasure-chest,
 examined less often and with more embarrassment than old snaps.
 How is he to argue with an enjoyable job
 and spending money with which to
 support his family?

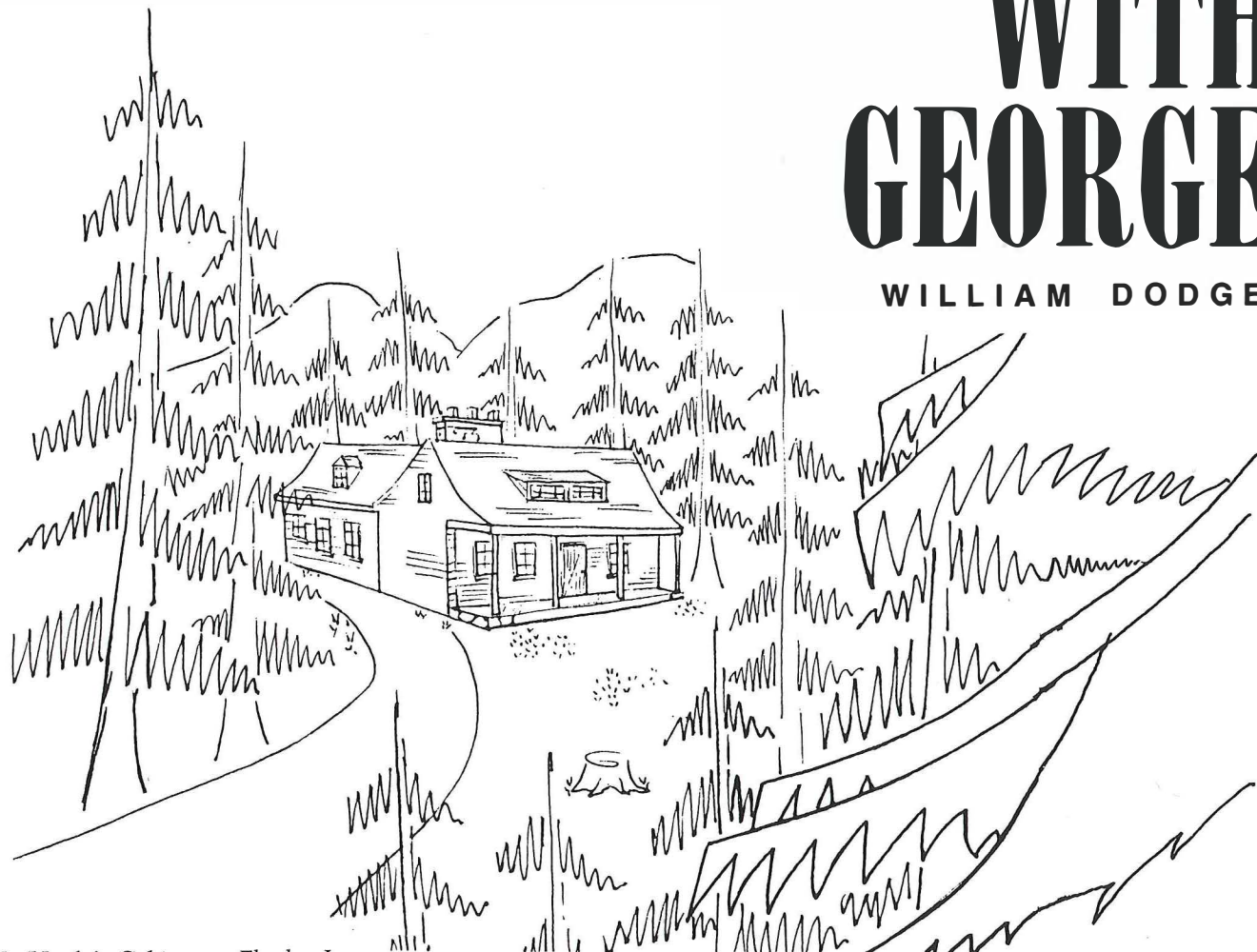
John and Curtis, his old friends,
 stop in for a bite and a pearl of wisdom at four.
 One teaches English at the high school
 and the other is over at the Osco a block away,
 meticulously placing
 eggs and two-liter plastic bottles
 into crinkly cream-colored bags.

As you leave, leave a big tip
 and be sure to doff your hat
 to the three who willingly wear only one apiece.

Todd Pruzan

TOGETHER WITH GEORGE

WILLIAM DODGE



My Uncle's Cabin • Fletcher Jones

I sometimes wonder why mountain roads are built. I mean is man really that eager to destroy the wilderness? I've seen the Korean wilderness destroyed by man; now I'm watching the Oregon woods cut into lifeless stumps. I guess I could try to stop it, but I ran from my post in Korea and men do not listen to cowards.

It has taken me seven hours to drive into a section of untouched forest. And in this unspoiled wonderland is my uncle's cabin. I think I take a left up here.

I can't see why my nephew George would come here to see me. Korea probably distorted his brain. Oh well, maybe he can help me hunt ole Missy. I feel good this week. One shot! only one shot! That's all for ole Missy. Helen would be proud, but she's, of course, no longer . . . Tch—no need to worry about her until God calls me. Then Helen and I can live together again.

"Hello uncle," I said as our hands met. Grey hair brushed my uncle's neck. He swatted a fly that hovered around his dark cheeks. I noticed that his nose had that same shape as my own.

"My boy! how are you? Ready to shoot some cat?"

"Uh . . . can't wait." He looked at me closely. I wondered if he was disappointed with what he saw. Probably. But I was disappointed with him also. I can't understand why people hunt. I think killing something is cruel. But I decided that I could and would kill once more, for my uncle's sake.

He led me into a large cabin. It had about ten rooms in it and was well-furnished. A brass candle holder on the wood table reflected the light of the early afternoon. A high-pitched whistle from the teapot disturbed my thought.

"Tea?" I asked. I knew already that he would like some. I suppose I can read minds. George was well-built, but he

did look older than twenty. War has done something bad to him. But he and I are going to stuff ole Missy.

As I poured tea into two small tin cups, I could hear George tapping his feet. I passed the cup to my nephew. His hands were shaking.

"I've got tomorrow all planned out," I said.

"Really?"

"You know there's an old mountain lion in these mountains that has never been shot, photographed or even seen. We're going to hunt it."

"How do they know it exists?" he asked while placing a hand over his quivering mouth. He thinks I'm crazy! He'll find out when he tries to stuff Missy.

"Ah! one who knows the mountains doesn't need to see something to know it's there. He can smell it, hear it, and taste it. You'll learn that if you stay here long enough."

"That is something I have to talk to you about, uncle. You see—um, I'm not all that eager to go hunting with you," I said. I thought he would become enraged when I told him this, but he just sat there staring at the hardened wax on a candle.

"How many people did you kill in Korea?" he finally asked.

"You heard me!"

"What? What are you talking about?"

"I know you've probably slaughtered your share of Koreans. Just tell me, how many?"

I don't understand why he couldn't just answer my damn question. What is this? And look at that—he's crying. Maybe I'm being a little hard on him. Helen liked seeing me cry. Missy probably does too.

"Look, let's get some sleep," I said.

"Yes, I think that would be best, but I really don't like to hunt," he replied. Tactless. I guess he isn't going up running towards his room. I heard him throw his door shut.

After twenty minutes, I got up and walked toward his room. I could hear the inhalation of phlegm through the door. Opening it, I saw him shaking on the bed.

"George, I'm sorry," I said. "I don't know what came over me. Let's forget about it, okay? Tomorrow we'll go hunt for Missy and I can tell you some stories. By tomorrow night, we'll know everything about each other. That'll be great! What do you think, George?"

Silence.

"George?"

Silence. He was asleep, but was still shaking and crying. I quietly retreated from the room. It was late.

It was still dark when I got him. The time was 5:30 a.m. I dressed and started for the door. As I entered the hall I saw my uncle sleeping in the hallway. Deciding to leave him there, I put a blanket on him and then went to the kitchen. Even though it was July, the mornings were still icy. I tried to pour a cup of coffee, but some of it spilled onto the floor. While cleaning up the puddle, I heard my uncle go into his room.

"Ready to hunt?" I asked. He sat there poking at the scraps of bacon and eggs on his plate. His face rose to look at me.

"What?" he said. A piece of egg was hanging out of his mouth. I bet if Helen had seen him, she would've run over to his side to wipe it off.

"Hunt! Are you almost ready to go?"

"Yes. What do I need?"

"Enough to keep you alive for a week. We'll camp at Missy's favorite spots."

"Can't we do other things, besides hunting?"

"Sure."

We moved quickly at first, but our pace started to slow down after the first hour. The heat of the sun cut through the treetops to warm the life below. To cool ourselves, we would splash some of the cold river water onto our faces. The forest was quiet. The last time I had been in a forest was in Korea. Men and machine tried to conquer each other there, and now stumps and grey ash are all that remain.

God damn that stupid

rabbit! I can't deal

with it up here!

Everything is hiding

from you. I don't want

anyone to hide from

me again. I am not

a coward.

"How far till our first stop?" I asked.

"Not far. Getting tired?" he answered. He seemed to enjoy this heat, with that damn smile on his face for the entire trip.

"No . . . What's that in the bush?"

I couldn't believe a little rabbit scared him that much. All it did was run across the path, but he jumped off the trail and then turned around and shot at the rabbit. I've never seen anything like this. His hands were shaking violently now.

"Are you okay?" I asked.

But he just stood there. Suddenly he got up and started walking down the trail. I called for him to wait, but he continued on. I started after him.

God damn that stupid rabbit! I can't deal with it up here! Everything is hiding from you. I don't want anyone to hide from me again. I am not a coward, I just want

"Would you like some of this?" my uncle asked while holding up a can marked "Beans." Beans! what do I want with beans!

"No, thanks," I replied.

"Tomorrow we'll find Missy," he said.

"How do you know?"

"I know. Missy is tired and doesn't want to be hunted anymore. So she is going to come to us."

"She's giving up! There's no sport in that."

"She's not giving up! She's coming to kill us right away! And this isn't any sport! This is life and death!"

"So what do we do?"

"We shall meet her halfway."

"I'm going to bed."

I was still awake when the sun first appeared between the two mountains on the other side of the valley. Today was the day, it had to be! Missy, it's you and me and him. Helen, I'm going to kill Missy today. Then I will have earned the right to be with you.

It would be another five miles before my uncle said we could stop. We were right on the edge of a great field that I hadn't seen from the mountaintop. He told me that we should rest before hunting Missy. I opened up my sleeping bag and fell asleep. As my eyes closed I could see my uncle standing there, looking out over the field. I didn't know what to expect.

Would the cat be waiting for us? Doubtful. Was there any cat at all? And how long were we supposed to wait? Oh well, I wasn't about to say anything to him.

My sleep was shattered by a crack of gunfire coming from the mountain across the field. I got up and ran towards the shot. I called for my uncle, but received no reply. I can't say I was expecting one. Thorns scraped against my leg as I stumbled through a patch of brambles.

Then another shot! This one was closer. I tripped over a rock and fell face first.

I've got to concentrate. Can't miss again. I should've gotten George up. He could've helped. But where's Missy now? I can't fail again. Not again.

My lip was bleeding, but it was my head that really hurt. I called for my uncle and was answered by another gunshot. I saw movement in the grove ahead.

At that moment, something invisible shook me. I began to feel cold and alone. Missy? Was she somewhere nearby? This could have been the feeling of her. I broke off into a run after my uncle.

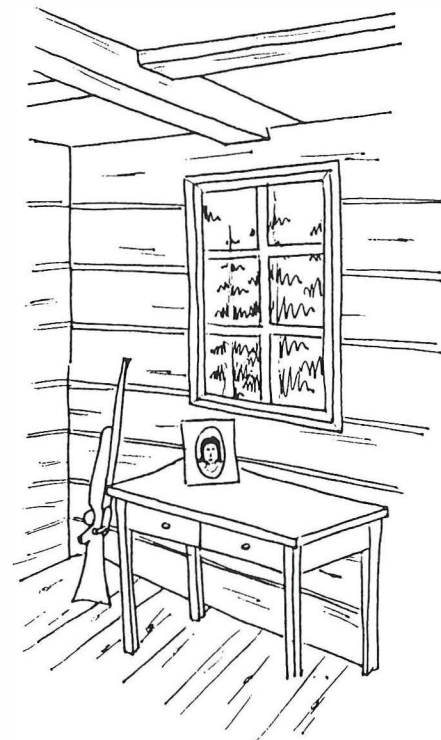
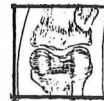
Soon I had to stop to catch my breath. As I looked up I saw him. He seemed to be searching for something in front of him, he looked confused. I started to walk towards him, but I heard a snort over my left shoulder. I fingered the trigger on my gun. I decided not to shout to my uncle, hoping not to scare it away. It was approaching. I turned slowly towards a large bush nearby. Something in it moved. I fired into the bush. No result. A huge mountain lion

jumped from the foliage and advanced. Missy! It was her! I yelled and fired. Missy continued to charge. I tried to reload, but then

The doctors and nurses tell me that a bloodied old man carried me into the hospital. They tried to help him, but he refused. The staff doesn't know where he went. I have an idea.

I don't know what happened to Missy, but I think my uncle finally hit his target. After I get out of here, I'll go up to where I last saw my uncle and try and piece together what happened. A government man came to see me this morning, wanting to buy all my uncle's property. I guess I can comply. My parents are flying in from Salem and should be here soon. The doctors are nice though, and they'll help me get my mind straight.

I think I can get through okay.



Helen • Fletcher Jones

Shooting Skeet

The shotgun splits
open like a dead branch.

A Winchester twelve-gauge,
smooth bore, specks of powder

in the chamber. My fingertip shivers
at the coldness of the hammer. So does the shell.

Exhaling, the barrel breathes fumes
of cherry-bomb, bottle-rocket.

And while the instructor murmurs distantly
like a man smothered in a basement closet,

the shell, a red firecracker,
cowers in hand.

Now I feed it to the shotgun's upturned
mouth. Arms snapping gun straight,

I restore the wholeness, the length
and heaviness stocked at shoulder.

If only someone down there in the valley
would chase the clay saucers, and catch them,

soaring from the mountain when I say
Pull.

Erik Goldner

A Happy Man

The lake froze
yesterday
the ducks have
flown south
Now the dog
has nothing to
bark at
so he'll have to
shut up
The wife
misses the birds
used to feed them
bread every
afternoon
Now she'll have to
stay home.

Cate Marvin

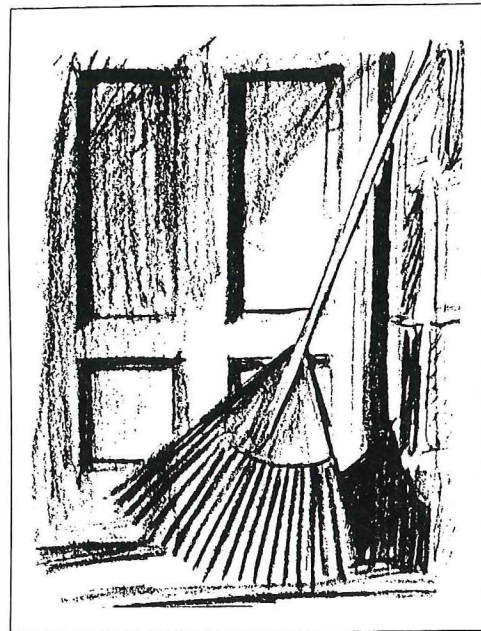
Nearby Dying Oaks

We could even watch them sicken
with weaknesses lasting a year's length.
They bent this way and that
on dead October days.
All twisting was harnessed
by a grabbing wind,
plucking away leafage
like stolen gifts, thefts
made to thank a surly god.

Sometimes whole wraps
of roping weeds would come
off the oaks,
using only gloved hands.
These trees had killed their
stripping stalks before
stalks could choke them.

As for the other oaks,
quite another tale;
the stalks themselves
ate until the food was dead.
Snapping the thin trees,
not yet having sunk root into earth,
I found a buried thought, right as
dead oak plunged skyward in hand.
I felt a start:
"For a thin tree, a bad year."

Jeff Pruzan



Grow

Blunt hoe
crumbles earth
underfoot.
Sunblaze
crazed shadow
crusts in corners.
Seeds spill from pouch.

Ask I:
Shall sprout prod
from this mound
or shall seed rot and die?

Go weeks,
up goes the shoot
from tip to root
soil in stem lumped.
Snails stir and shrivel in the sun.

Deborah Wassertzug

In This Forest

where school paths cut thin borders
from territories explored by calls of birds,
they destroy the nest. For those

who never thought the tree would fall,
forget the time when four or more held hands
around the trunk, arms wide, embraced at base.
Those pictures are fading in the albums.

Because this afternoon, insect buzzings
shuddered the walls of the house.
Down the path to the pond, the sound
swarmed like clouds of locusts.

Or coughs of gas. The chainsaw sputtered,
then keened under his gloved grip.
Others lashed the highest limbs with rope—
they strained. The chainsaw cut short.

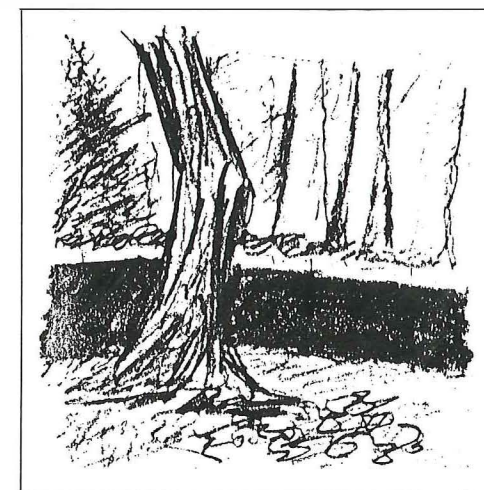
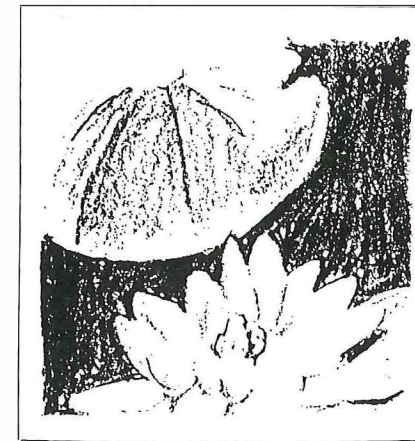
The tree screeched and cracked
like embers of a forest fire.
Ripped across the pond, the tree crushed its skeleton,
fractured shoulder, arm, and finger branches.

So. The water accepted the body in whispers.
The waves rolled. Bark floated.
"No one gets hurt," he would say. "That branch
for the rope-swing snapped, tree's dead anyway."

A shame—it's clean ash wood—good for gun stocks
and baseball bats and plow shafts.
They said, think of all the fireplaces
warm this winter.

With ways home followed, a girl wound down
to the pond. Dropped her book-bag,
she stopped at them and scratched her neck and said,
"What's it going to be, a bridge across the pond?"
The men laughed, winking, agreeing.
She shrugged. "Always hated going around it."

Erik Goldner



Dead October Days • Alex Heffess

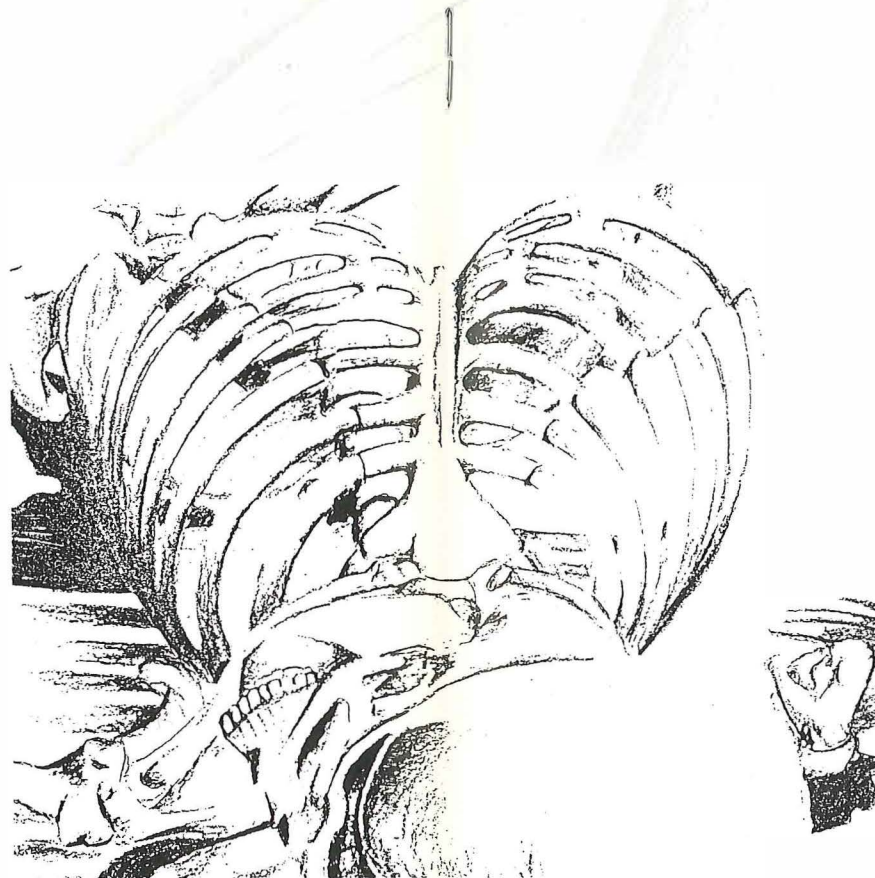
A Lesson Never Learned

The slap cracks
remembrance in my brain
when worlds ago your palm
met my cheek.

A stolen kiss was capital
punishment in your book
of rules.
A faint taste of cherry lip-gloss,
my only prize.

Years later as
red fingers beard
the left side of my face
I realize my charms haven't improved
and your rules never changed.

Vijai Nathan



Empty

Metacarpals entwined
we walk.
Light glints off your dull white skull
once so stuffed with memories
that incidents trickled from your ears
like summer rain.

Now we are empty
light shines through the cage of your ribs
dappled bars on the sidewalk.
I look deep into your eyes
to find my reflection, but
I see black
the same dark that makes you turn from my eyes
when we kiss.

Joanna Schaenman

Bone Cage • Missy Hogan

RAIN IN SEATTLE

JOHN MUFTI

They say it always rains in Seattle. They're wrong, because the sun shines here just about as much as anywhere else. But it does rain a lot in the winter and spring, and every once in a while we get a solid week or two of nothing but rain. Today is March 7 and it's the 8th straight day of rain in Seattle.

I live in an apartment on a corner near Frederick & Nelson's, where I go often. I know many people there. Some are good friends. When I'm not working I spend most of my time talking with them, whiling away the hours.

I work for a distributing company that handles mostly foreign goods from Japan and China, so I travel to those countries every once in a while. Sixteen years ago I fell in love with a Japanese girl in Tokyo and we married. After five and a half years we couldn't stand each other anymore and divorced. I have never felt for anyone the way I felt for her the first few years, so I have not married again. There are many things about her that I wish to forget. I try to remember only the good things.

I walk in the rain. It is 3 o'clock and I have finished work for the day. I normally finish at 5, but my boss has let me go early.

A woman on the other side of the street walks her dog under the roofs over the store entrances. She is bundled against the rain but she doesn't have an umbrella. The dog is very wet. Under one of the roofs the dog shivers and shakes his wetness. The woman looks at some of the mannequins posing in the window, but the dog pulls at the leash, and she leaves. Together the woman and dog disappear around a corner.

I walk on. A car horn honks. I love the sound of car horns. On my left is the movie theater, and I decide to watch whatever is playing. I smile at the clerk in the old fashioned glass booth outside the theater. She has known me for several years.

"New film this week," she says.

"Oh? Any good?"

"I think so. It's a romance." She smiles. "I think you'll like it."

I take the ticket and walk in. Everything smells musty—the carpet, the walls, even the popcorn. I don't know why I eat popcorn. I don't particularly like it. Who ever thought of popping it, anyway? The Indians? It's perfectly good on a cob or cooked like peas.

There aren't many people here. This is the best time to see a movie. I love going to movies alone. When you're with other people you're thinking too much about what they think of the movie—did they like that scene? Do they like that actor? Did they think that was funny or vulgar? And if you're on a date you're thinking a thousand more things like, Is she having a good time? What are we going to do later? Better to just sit back and take the picture in.

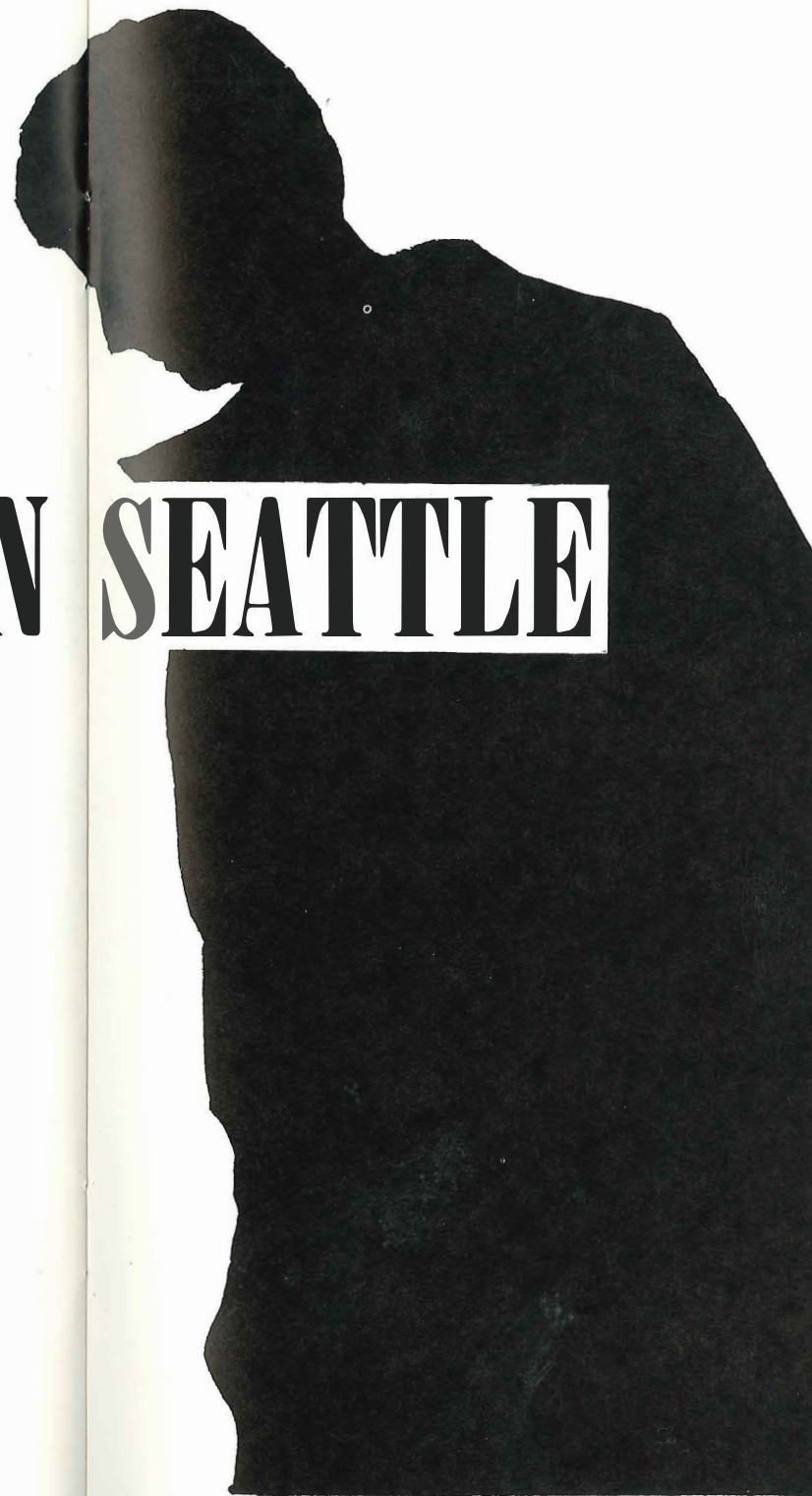
Two hours later I am crying. It's a damn good movie.

"You were right," I say to the clerk.

"You liked it? Hey, you're crying!"

"Yeah." I laugh. "I guess it got to me. See you round."

I can hear her saying, "Wait!" but I don't want to. I feel like walking. I put on my hat and turn left. It is getting dark but it's still raining. When it rains in Seattle it doesn't seem to stop. Maybe it won't and everyone will leave because they'll get so depressed.



Overcoat • Tanya Saah

There's an old man slumped against a building, his pail half-filled with coins. I stop and pull out my wallet and try to decide between a one and a five. I choose a five and am about to drop it in but realize it will get wet. A shame it has to rain and force people to give this man only change. I place the five in the man's hand. He doesn't wake up so I squeeze it tight in his hand and put his hand in his coat.

I walk on. The rain seems to fall harder. I put up my collar and sneeze. I pass by a couple under the lights of a storefront. They are joking and laughing in the rain without anything on their heads. I wonder how old they are.

Me and the girl I married were like that once. I remember how beautiful her face got when she was happy, but when she was mad that beauty seemed to transform into a cruel coldness.

I shiver picturing her cold face.

**The rain has
soaked this city.**

**No one can do
anything without
getting wet.**

Everyone is wet.

**Clothes, shoes,
carpets, and walls
smell damp and**

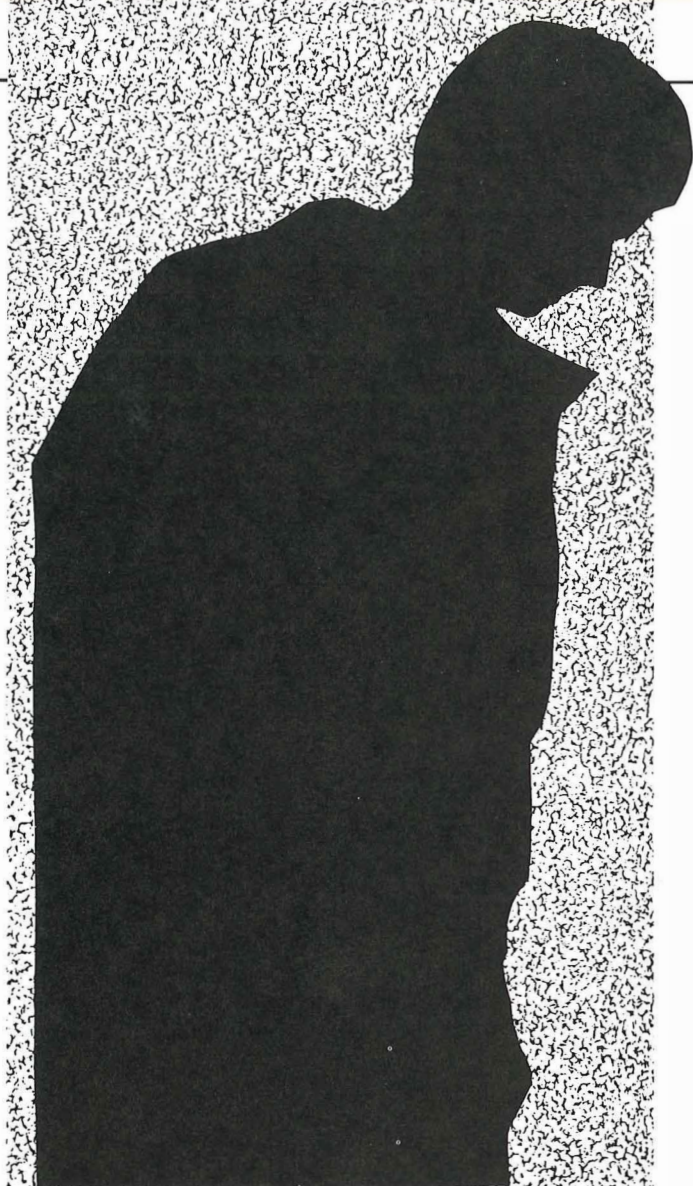
**musty. My office
feels like a cave.**

At home I cook myself a small dinner and eat it while watching the news. Israel has just declared war on Syria. The Soviets say they can't trust America anymore. Africa is starving again. Still, the space program is looking good.

I turn the t.v. off and sit in the dark. I stop and wonder what I should be doing instead. What duty awaits me. Then I realize that I have nothing left to do but go to sleep. I probably should, too, since I wake up at 6, and I haven't slept much this week. I could use ten hours of sleep. I'll get ready for bed.

In bed I toss and turn for hours. I turn on the light and think of the girl I married sixteen years ago. I am still trying to figure out why we ended hating each other. It wasn't just that we couldn't live with each other anymore—we really hated each other. I think for a long time.

Finally I get out a pen and pad of paper and start writing her a letter. I know where she lives because I have kept track of her ever since we divorced. She lives in Miami, Florida, clear on the other edge of America. She re-married a guy from Brazil who trains skydivers.



As I write the letter I realize that this is silly. We haven't communicated in ten years and she still hates me. Why should she care about what ruined our marriage? I like the letter, though, so I keep writing.

Thursday, March 10, and it's still raining in Seattle. I wake up and see the letter still sitting on my desk. I still don't know whether I should send it. I want to, but I worry about what she will think.

The rain has soaked this city. No one can do anything without getting wet. Everyone is wet. Clothes, shoes, carpets, and walls smell damp and musty. My office feels like a cave. I print the message CAVE DWELLERS INC. on a long, narrow sheet of memo paper and tack it to the wall above my desk. My boss likes it and so does my secretary. My secretary says she hates March and April in Seattle because of the rain. I suggest she move to Miami for March and April of every year. She says that's not a bad idea but she likes the people here. I nod.

In Frederick & Nelson's my friends are getting along fine. They don't see the rain much, except for my waiter friend in the restaurant, which has a lot of big windows. "At least I don't long to go outside anymore," he says. "Everyone who comes in here is wet, even the rich folks. Jeez, at the

end of every day we have to practically blow dry the carpet." My friend in the book department enjoys just reading books. We talk about the current state of the world rather than the rain. "I think they will annihilate each other," he says. "Syria also has the atomic bomb. And their air force is as strong as Israel's."

I walk the streets. The pretzel vendors are having a hard time, but I like pretzels so I buy a couple every day. They are soft and hot and only get soggy in the rain if you let the waxpaper slip. I still eat cheese hot dogs from the drugstore near The Bon. There's nothing better for lunch than a cheese hot dog, a pretzel and a coke.

At night I look at the letter again. I want to send it. I tell myself I should not care what she thinks and send it. But I shake my head as I slip into bed.

It is Sunday, March 13, and it's still raining. For two weeks it has not stopped raining for more than an hour at a time.

I make my way through the crowd at the Farmer's Market. Voices yell above the crowd's murmur: "Fresh fish! Salmon and swordfish!" "Fresh fruit! Get your fresh figs and papaya!" The sweet and sour smells sting my nostrils, but they fade as sprays of water blow in from the rain.

I walk to the Space Needle. No one is in sight. A car passes by every now and then, swirling a spray of water into the air. I gaze at the spaceship head of the Needle. It looks so lonely sitting there by itself with the rain pelting it. I glance at the wet black-and-white remains of a newspaper resting in a pool of water by the curb. It is yesterday's paper

**It is so ironic
for a city to
receive so much
rain. A city
does not need
rain; it pumps
water in from
the outside.**

and the watery headline reads: SYRIA BOMBS TEL AVIV—4,017 REPORTED DEAD, AT LEAST 10,000 INJURED. The black ink slowly dissolves into the water forming a black pool.

I reach the Space Needle and ask the man at the elevator if anyone is enjoying the view anymore. "Quite frankly, there is no view," he says. "I'm sorry to hear that," I say. "I'll go up anyway." He obliges me and opens the door. The ascent in the elevator seems a protest against the downward collapse of rain. When I reach the top I feel as if I have been transported above the clouds, and I expect to confront a blaze of sunlight as the elevator doors open. There is light, but it is not a blaze and it is not from the sun.

I eat lunch alone. The world rotates around me, it seems,

though I know it is merely the floor that moves. The city looks even more depressing from this height: you can see every inch of steel and concrete that the rain has soaked. It is so ironic for a city to receive so much rain. A city does not need rain; it pumps water in from the outside. Why doesn't this rain fall on the farm fields of the mid-west?

I sip my wine slowly. The waiter comes by and I ask him if he would like to make a toast with me. He smiles and says he really can't drink alcohol on the job but he'll toast me with water. "A toast," I say, "to the rapid end of this rain." We clink glasses.

That night I sit on my bed and stare at the letter. I re-read it. I sigh and decide that I have to send it. She can laugh if she wants. She can even throw it away without reading it. I don't expect her to write back. But I must send it. I put it in an envelope, seal it, address it, place the stamp. It looks good with her name on it.

Overcoat

Your long blackgray covering
wraps you in warmth
hides you
straightens your shape.
The wind blows the ends of your protection
away from your stockinged feet
like breeze from a window
lightly touching the drapes
that soften the glow
of the morning sun.

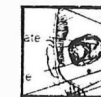
John Mufti

It is snowing. The city has come alive as if reborn. It is snowing in the middle of March and everyone feels like a kid again. After two weeks of rain, snow seems like a joke.

I race, slide, slip, stumble my way to the post office to make sure the letter gets sent. The man at the post office says it'll get out of Seattle by 7 p.m., but the weatherman predicts ten inches of snow. Ten inches!

I walk outside into the fresh cold clean white cascade of flakes. People are literally cheering in the streets, boys throwing snowballs and adults saying "Merry Christmas!" with smiles they didn't seem to have at Christmas. Cars honk. A man is standing on the roof of his car tasting the snow on his tongue.

It's snowing in Seattle.



Racing Yellows for Gold

But the American's car just won't stop!—it keeps going
through, and no misgivings on his part can retain it,

—*Brian and Debi were finished with their ice-dances—
so Wayne, of Armand's Pizza Ambulance fame,
—“remains the last chance for American gold in Calgary.”*

*“Well yes Dick he's definitely got
the speed to win this first heat but what about form?
The East Germans have the edge on him in this one”—*

Wayne; he isn't listening or thinking.

His car surges, then swallows the yellow like a pill,
like it's the whole point.
Shortly after, he gasps

—*to the announcers: “Well I just figured
y'know once
I could
get it
through safely
that'd be it”—*

and then the second heat's moment consumes him:
another green light ripens too fast and yellows.
Should he? Shouldn't he?

Tastes that gold, breathes it, hallucinates
and doesn't flirt, stands on the brake,
screams to a skid.

But the Domino's car next to him

—*“goes over the line! East Germany
is disqualified from the second heat!”—*

gets nabbed as it shoots beneath
one illegally-colored light.
The poised policeman melts
from his parking spot,
flips the flash: the colors shriek.
The enemy's car groans
and obeys; the pizza within loses
seven minutes and twenty degrees

—*All Americans, pleased, rise
and flap their flag, salute their man.
Champagne de-corks—*

and Wayne, victory around his neck,
hams it up
and smiles his best winner's smile at his enemy:
with lips perfectly taut between the ears.

Todd Pruzan

To Frost, from a Red Chevy Impala, '69

My love, you are daintier far than nimble dancer
keener still than gleaming point of lancer
Lacy tendrils twirling, spun by the winds of life
piercing my skin, O unblunted knife

You, my only sight, you, so unkind
blossoming over my eyes you blind
You sidle up to my side each wintry night
shrouded in darkness' enthralling delight
Bathe me in crystal-clear sparkling ordure
Ah! how fondly, how insiduously you torture
I shelter your offspring in my lee
delicate needles smothering me

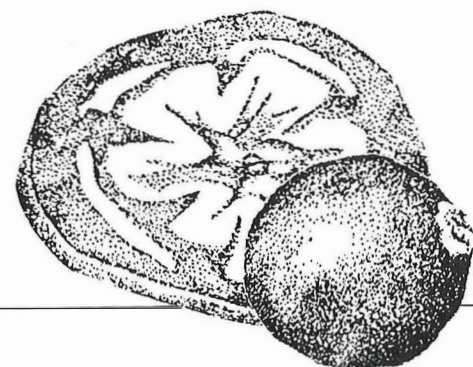
Yet I adore on, O my love,
we are paired as hand in glove
Come summer's lonely heat
I weep, burning to feel the crackle of your icy feet.

Pearl Tsai

Broccoli for Thanksgiving

Old Tom
get him fatter, quicker, cheaper
till he's four times normal
like a tag team wrestler
shove him in a shack
full of clucking women
and make him love every one
Scientist discovers
test tube turkeys
so Tom doesn't have to do *all* the work
Tom and scientist make babies
until there are 13.4 pounds
of Tom for everyone
all for a night using the good china.

Mai-Trang Dang



Dinner Guest • Missy Hogan

Western Civ

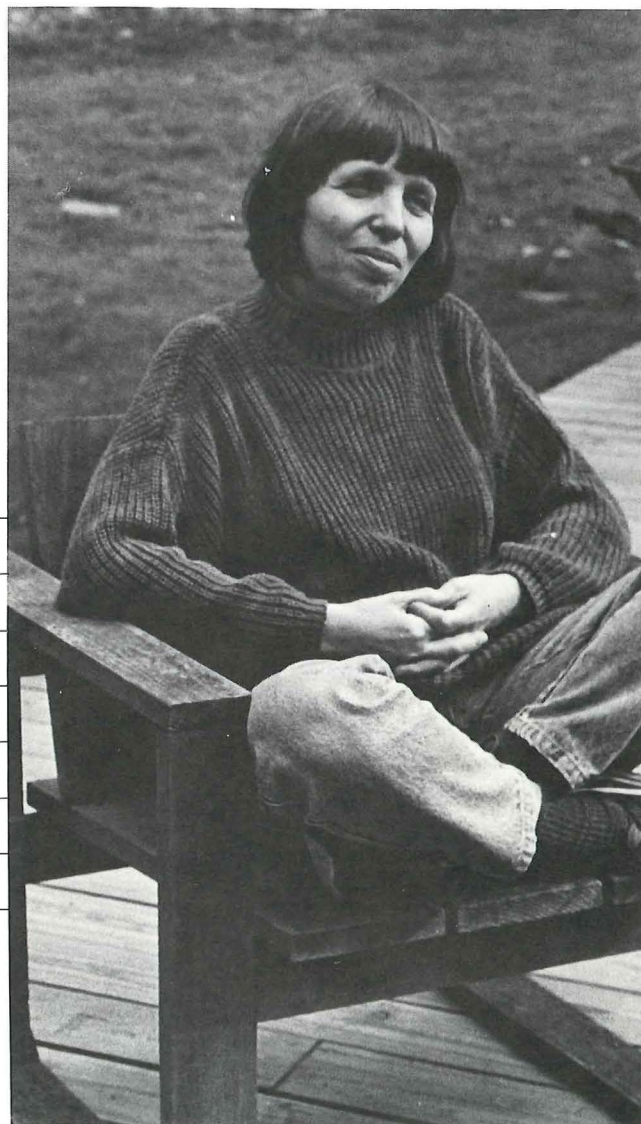
bun bun bun bun bun
meat cheese lettuce tomato
bun bun bun bun bun

Jennifer Krzyminski

POETRY AND A CONVERSATION WITH LINDA PASTAN PRAISE

ANN BOERNER

She struggles with each poem. She writes as though her newest were her first, and inspiration, she explains, is only the first step of creation.



Linda Pastan, relaxing at her Potomac home, discusses her successful poetry career. Photographs by Becky Cohen

"After Reading Peterson's Guide"

*I used to call them
Morning Doves, those birds
with breasts the rosy color
of dawn who coo us awake
as if to say love
love . . . in the morning.*

Linda Pastan curls in her chair, grasping the toe of a scuffed sneaker with her hands. "In my free time I love to walk in the woods, to cook—mostly I read."

*But when the book said
Mourning Dove instead,
I noticed their ash-gray feathers,
like shadows
on the underside
of love.*

She smiles. "I devour novels, two or three a week; the ones I go back to are the ones probably most people go back to, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Anna Karenina*."

*When the Dark Angel comes
let him fold us in wings
as soft as these birds,
though the speckled egg
hidden deep in his nest
is death.*

Pastan focuses once more, on her own wooded backyard. "I love the oak trees, of Potomac." She tilts her head up to the trees, and the sky is reflected in her eyes.

Linda Pastan had published five acclaimed poetry collections, and her sixth book, *An Imperfect Paradise*, just appeared in April. She attributes this success to her poetry teachers: Emily Dickinson, T.S. Eliot, William Shakespeare. "I never learned to write poetry," she said. "I just read a lot."

Read—and wrote. Pastan first published a poem in *Mademoiselle* in 1955, but she had been writing long before then. "Actually," she reflected, "I didn't take that first publication seriously enough." Just married at that point, Pastan stopped writing to raise her children and only began to concentrate on her career again ten years later. Now she tries to write every day. "I force myself to sit at my desk," she explained with a smile, "and just write. When it's going well, I can work on a poem all day, but sometimes I just can't do it."

No matter how her writing is progressing, however, Pastan's family is first in her life. "They're so supportive," she said. "Even if I'm at the typewriter when I'm supposed to be doing something else." She laughed, remembering a time when her children were not so supportive. "When they were adolescents it was hard. Adolescents hate having attention drawn to their parents." Pastan speaks of adolescents with a sympathetic smile, sympathetic because she remembers her own teenage years vividly. "I was a miserable teenager," she said. "I wasn't happy until I got to college. I loved the independence, and I found friends."

Pastan attended Radcliffe in Cambridge, a whole world away from her New York City childhood environment. She majored in English, but never had any career plans. "In the '50s you were going to get married and have children," she said. "That was a career." In 1971, however, her first book, *A Perfect Circle of Sun*, was published.

She struggles with each poem. She writes as though her newest were her first, and inspiration, she explains, is only the first step of creation. "I carry scraps of paper with

me everywhere to write down ideas," she said. "The inspiration is different with every poem." Pastan recalls discovering the perfect introductory quote to her fifth book, *A Fraction of Darkness*—in the novel she was reading at the time. "I was so excited to find that quote," she said. "It was a happy coincidence."

She finds many ideas at home as well: in the twilight of her backyard, the Japanese stone lantern on the front walk. Perhaps because of these personal inspirations, and certainly due in part to the intensity of Pastan's style, her work often seems autobiographical. But Pastan protests this assumption. "It's just like writing fiction," she said. "I write in a different voice."

Pastan finds her voice mainly through poetry; she has not published fiction. "The main impulse of a novelist is to expand," she said. "The impulse of a poet is to condense." Pastan does write occasional literary reviews and criticism, but she is usually on the receiving end of such writing. "I think every writer remembers every bad word in a review and none of the good ones," she laughed. "I'm always afraid that my book won't be good." This attitude, though, has not affected her excitement over *An Imperfect Paradise*, resting on the table before her. "There are several sonnets in here," Pastan said, "and a long section on Adam and Eve—the 'imperfect paradise.' Biblical themes have always intrigued me."

Yet some main themes of her work are continued in this new book, Pastan said. "I deal with loss, the possibility of loss even under domestic surfaces." She shrugged and looked down at the black-bound volume. "I think it's my best book," she said. "For a poet, where there's not much material reward; to have the object in your hand is enough." She lifted her head and half-smiled again. "I try not to be too greedy."



The Writer at 16

He thinks of himself always in the third person, an only child of his own imagination, gazing into his life not with love or pity but with a curiosity in which he may almost drown.

There is still a mother there and a father, the way the moon is there during a partial eclipse of the sun, but even the blue of the sky can seem bruised by his terrible insights.

At night he looms over the page, inventing his muse, an older woman, and in the explosive silence of that house he chews his pencils as noisily as his watching sisters chew their nails.

The Moon and Sixpence

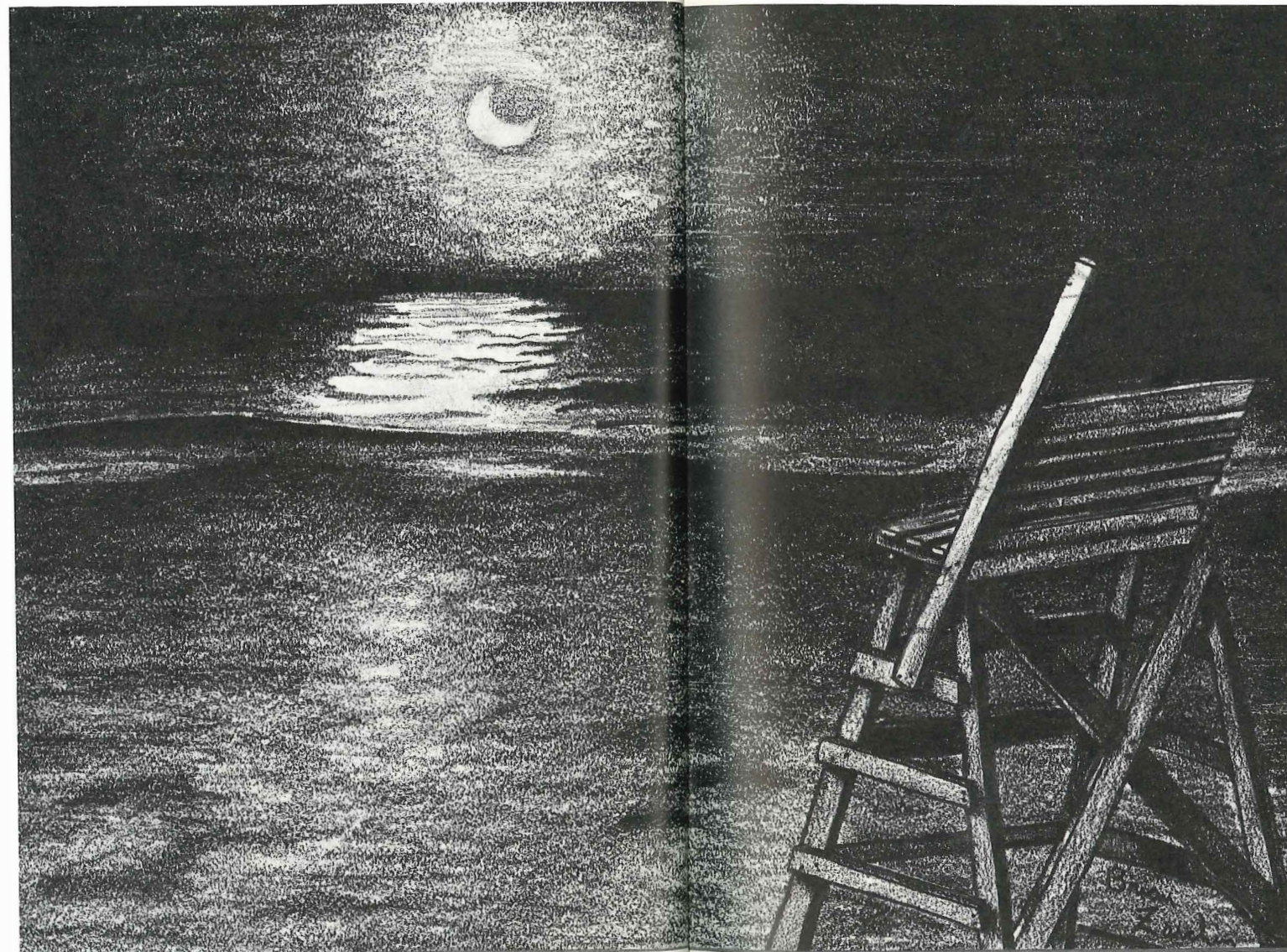
Folded in a secret forest
of flamboyants and banyan trees
painting in the pale of the Pacific night
is Gauguin, given the forbidden fruits
of the moon and sixpence.

Sea foams coral sands
that footprints never press.
A child of
an idol's cruel innocence
suckles at his mother's breast.
At once timeless,
lovely, cruel, sublime.

Sunset
lights a native lip
with its golds of mango
and sweeps the sky
that holds nectar
raised upon the wings of palms
after tastes of crueler times.

Her almond eyes gaze with
the deepest shades
of the coconut
but a deeper shade hides
dark as the white inside.

Alex Gibson



Off the Boardwalk • Brian Zarchin

Me and Louie

Louie hides from the sun
spun in a cocoon of terry cloth
he clasps the umbrella
and hangs
dreaming in the shadows of hotels
that stalk Miami Beach like ancient cliffs.
He breathes twice
once for heat
once for shade
His first breath is a cloud of sand
a cough of curses
The second is a billow of Jersey winter
full of snow and iced freeways.
The ocean blows it back into his face
and through it I see Louie
as smooth and brown as a brown egg
I remember Louie

When we drank gin on the Jersey shore
and girls were enough
in one-pieces and pink sandals
they kicked sand at the college boys
It was the weekend of my brother's wedding 1952
I sobered for the ceremony
so I could kiss the Rabbi's wife
but Louie slumped through Kaddish
like cousin Sammy
who lost his legs at Verdun.
Sunday me and Louie drank on the boardwalk
and I dreamed for the first time
that my lounge was a tank
landing beneath the ancient cliffs of Normandy.

Matt Jaffe

Medea

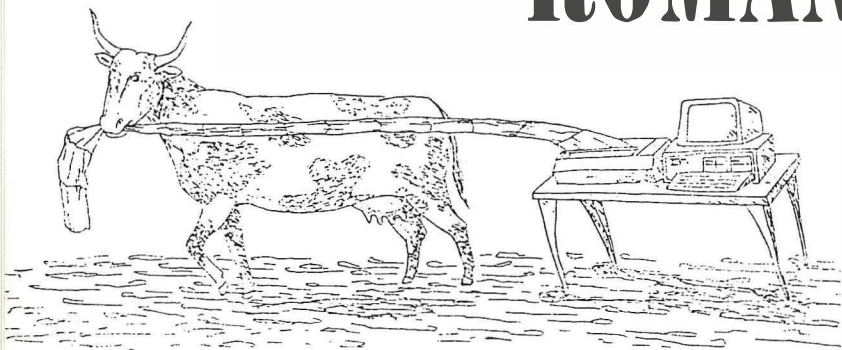
Don't cry for sons you never held
 hero of a hundred tales who
 cringed when the blood ran too red.
 I'd see you leering at women
 running over them on the street
 with your eyes;
 touching the tv screen like some cold
 pointilist picture of a breast
 turning to me only after
 your hands came out empty.
 There were
 Saturday morning cartoons where
 you were all three blind mice
 rolled into one big rat
 only I turned the knife the other way;
 late night soaps where you played
 the oil baron, or better yet
 the swashbuckling sailor who stole my heart
 then served it as a feast for a thousand other women;
 Don't cry for your unborn sons
 their blood seeping through me
 like the burning red flow of a childless wife;
 they were only characters
 embraced in your twenty-four
 inch full color arms.
 Let their lives spill
 black and white on the page;
 I'll keep that technicolor death
 for the one you really love.

Jennifer Sainato



LILLY MARLENE, ROMANCE NOVELIST

DEBORAH WASSERTZUG



Grazing • Mark Thompson

I was just trying to drive the cows home that day, but I couldn't. They didn't have anywhere to go because the corral wasn't built yet. So I turned back to Chapter 3 and stuck in a couple of paragraphs about the thing.

Now the cows got back and I had to make at least one of them pregnant so the vet could come and fall in love with Mary. But since it took a while for the cow to be pregnant I stuck in a line at the end of Chapter 4 and I mentioned the corral again.

The phone rang and I answered. I said "Hello." I said hello again, "Hello?" and then the recording started about did I want to buy three Hoover vacuums for the price of one? Sure I did, so I said "Yes," to the beep but didn't leave a number. I thought they had it or they wouldn't of called.

My name's Lilly Marlene and I write. My husband Tom says I scribble for a living but it ain't true, I use a typewriter.

So I put the phone back. The vet fell in love with Mary when she brought him a pail of boiling water. I made him say that her eyes were limpid pools cause Tom told me to shove that in somewhere.

"Mary, your eyes are limpid pools," said the vet, but Mary doesn't know that limpid doesn't mean like a slug so she slaps the vet and spills boiling water on his feet. I made him say "Ow!"

Mary says soooo sorry and I had to pee. But while I did I thought about how Mary and the vet should be getting serious in the next chapter or should she first invite him to lunch?

"Am I rushing it?" I said. "Maybe she should first invite him to lunch."

I got back to work and some of the keys jammed. I unstuck them and started over.

I got this idea in the late afternoon that maybe I should invite the Latin guy, the Latin-lover guy from the other book, Rodolfo, to come back into the story. I mean, this one's about the West so at least he can say the names right. Of places, I mean.

So I wrote him in as the little servant-boy in some places, but then said that wouldn't do because he should be at least 27 by now.

"That won't do," I said to myself. So I cut out those parts and ate lunch.

By the time I'd finished eating, Mary was in bed with the vet, cause the editors said an 80's novel.

"We'd like you to try for an 80's novel," they said. So I said I would, "I will," I said.

And Rodolfo as the butler walks in on them, then I thought of making it a mystery so at the end I could say the butler did it. But Rodolfo got real mad cause he loves Mary in secret and he goes at the vet with a fireplace poker, so I had to build a fireplace in Chapter 2. I made the vet say "Ow!"

The phone rang and

I answered. "Hello?"

I said hello again,

"Hello?"

I felt like having a baby named Gerald so Mary got pregnant but first she had to sleep with Rodolfo so she could be confused. Then I made her take LSD when she was 16 so Gerald could come out weird. Tom said it was too weird.

"You know, this is just too weird, Lilly Marlene," he said.

"But it's what the editors want," I said, cause it was what the editors wanted.

Tom said I know best.

Three pages later, Mary's great-grandchildren found out about Mary and the vet and Rodolfo and they went on a rampage, burning her in effigy. Tom told me it was too short.

"Lilly, honey, ya know, it, uh, it's too short."

So I sat down that very day to write Chapter 1.



The Ballad of Barbie and Ken

Beneath a pile of garish garb,
a fair young maiden lay.
Her arms and legs flayed all about,
neglected for the day.

She rolled her eyes and tapped her feet.
"How dare he make me wait?"
Her coiffured locks began to wilt—
she'd have to break the date.

Now Barbie, she was not a fool,
though her mind got no respect.
Ken loved her for her milk-white skin;
her gloss, she must protect.

"Oh Barbie, sweet, I've come at last,
to sweep you from your tower."
Anticipating Barbie's wrath,
Sir Ken was armed with flowers.

"My love, I have a rare surprise,
two tickets to the ball.
Now primp and preen so we will be
the envy of them all."

But then she heard a wicked laugh,
alerting her of girls.
A giant hand probed in her box
and snipped away her curls.

She knew at once what she must do,
although it pained her so.
They found her sprawled upon the floor,
choked with a feather boa.

Alas, that was poor Barbie's fate,
that wicked crime of passion.
Yet, still we can console ourselves,
at least she died in fashion.

Karen Ginsberg

It is only 11:30. Six and a half more hours of shoving little metal pieces into my friend Myrtle's mouth, which bites eight threaded holes into each one and spits it out. Had today been a regular day, I would have just finished a full morning of pulling weeds from the cotton fields, mango groves, date trees, gardens . . . but strange coincidence allowed me to sleep five extra hours and work the factory's day shift.

It is lunchtime. Actually lunch began fifteen minutes ago, but those pigs who run the factory cut our lunch hour short. But they still call it the lunch hour—lunch forty minutes doesn't sound right.

Lunch is the only real meal of the day. Breakfast consists of salad. Dinner consists of salad. So after I drank too fast last night, I was simply a malfunctioning food processor that spilled a cornucopia of home-grown vegetables all over the floor.

Today, like yesterday, and the day before, I get the vegetarian meal. Why am I avoiding red meat if my other choice is a noodle casserole plus eggplant sauteed in borscht? I guess it was one of those God-I'm-bored-with-life-why-not-become-a-vegetarian inspirations. So it's been a month since I started, and after seeing parts of cows hanging from ropes in Jerusalem's Arab market, I don't miss it at all.

I sit in the Kibbutz Khadar Okhel with most of the resident kibbutzniks, but I find myself lost in a swirl of Americans and Britishers. It appears that the vast majority is joking about the black licorice liqueur incident that dubbed me American Idiot a mere twelve hours ago. I guess it is pretty funny, so I chuckle. The voluptuous German girl across from me snarfs the casserole. She is no longer attractive.

I just awakened. The factory foreman is bitching in Hebrew or Arabic or Serbo-Croatian for all I care. It seems that I fell asleep while Myrtle and I were still doing our thing and a piece got jammed and Myrtle died. But thanks to modern technology, my buddy Shlomo just revived Myrtle's power. I say "slikha" and put my Walkman back on. Anytime I do something wrong, I simply mutter "slikha."

SUMMER LIFE ON A KIBBUTZ

BRYAN WOLF

I am listening to *Stop Making Sense* for the third time today. Today's excitement occurred when my Welsh friend, Tracy, got a metal shaving in her eye. Besides that interruption, today's work has been one big televised bowling tournament.

I am having visions of the fat man on the forklift waddling by to send us on our coffee break. After all, it's three minutes past four.

It's 4:04. Tracy and I are washing our hands. We drink the factory's wonderful lemonade. Tracy says it's nitroglycerine, but I argue for Prestone II.

**The voluptuous German
girl across from me
snarfs the casserole.**

**She is no longer
attractive.**

We walk to the lounge where just 36 hours ago a mouse had jumped out of my coffee cup, onto my shoulder and down my back.

Tracy sits down and smokes. We drain two cups of Guest Coffee—half Turkish coffee and half half-and-half.

She tells me how wonderful her one-tooth-shy South African boyfriend is, and how he is illegally out to work on the Saudi Arabian pipeline to make the equivalent of a smart coke dealer.

We stretch out our break. By 4:25 the forklift man has placed us in front of Fred and Myrtle. I am getting restless and begin washing my hands and gulping antifreeze about every ten minutes.

My eighth tape ends, so I take the Walkman off my sore ears.

I seem to be sticking about 450 metal pieces into Myrtle each tape.

2,250 metal pieces in one day and I've only broken her three times. And it is because of me that 2,250 Mercedes owners will have sideview mirrors that actually protrude from the car. Mercedes in Israel. Only in this world could there exist such a paradox. Now it is twenty before six.

I weigh the advantages and disadvantages of stopping now and beginning to clean up. If I stop now, I can leave, whereas if I continue, I can finish listening to *ChangesOneBowie*.

I sweep up my metal shavings from the floor and try to sneak out with Tracy fifteen minutes early. Big Brother catches us and makes us sweep the entire factory. So we slip out the rear exit.



When I Was Small

I didn't know that when you stick something wet onto something dry and cold that it would stay there for almost ever so I licked a frosty lamp post in the white of winter and afterwards I became part of the street lamp. So then I hummed the Street Corner Blues while my foolish curiosity took its toll on my tonguesicle. With my mouth gaping I waited while icicles started on my upper lip. My mom came out in her yellow flowery night gown down jacket and furry après-ski boots and with a huge voice said "what are you DOING?" and I couldn't even answer her. Anyway she pried me from the deceiving lamp post and I wath thalking fungy yike thith. Now I never eat popsicles.

Mai-Trang Dang

together

you are	my counterpart
my empty space	and so
with you i am	much more—
everything that	i love
comes only from	you.
having you,	connected
as the rest of me,	at last,
and you are	my reciprocal.

Jennifer Krzyminski

Laundry

All of my clothes smell like you
 my lips, mouth
 taste of you
 It is a fragrance
 that rises unexpectedly
 jars my brain
 stings my eyes
 I press my hands to my face
 only to inhale you once more
 Tonight
 I will wash every shirt
 every piece you have touched
 I shall scrub my body raw
 And tomorrow when I wear
 my fresh clothes
 you will impregnate them
 with your scent
 once more
 As I hang my heart out to dry.

Cate Marvin

Elementals • Alex Gibson

Elements

How does she dress when she wakes in the morning
 Impassioned by her dreams, furious with the world?
 Does she cover nakedness with iron and crows
 Blackness and chains her new bridal robes?

Or does she scream out her pain to the wind
 Disdaining small comfort the clothing would give?
 Pale furrows of scars from a million red births
 Exposed and expecting some justice be served.

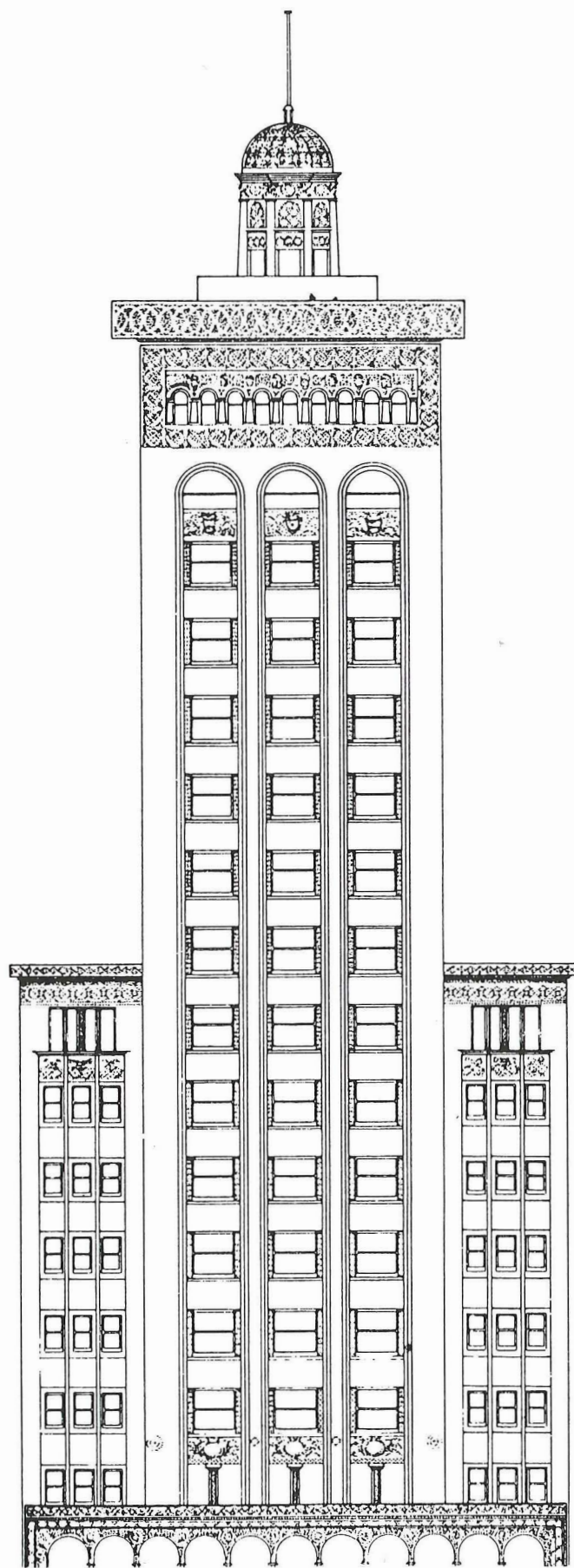
Does she spread herself wide, inviting the sun
 To warm her cold body with red and gold tongues?
 Beckoning brashly, her arms touch the sky
 Grasping at lovers as they quickly pass by.

Does she hold her head high when she's bathed in the blood
 Of hot faceless lovers both noble and young
 Who, in a moment of reckless delight,
 Forgot that the goddess demands sacrifice?

Does she smile with pleasure while licking her lips
 Pale skin and soft innocence clenched in her grip?
 Or does she cry softly while trying to sleep
 Imagining new loves to cherish and eat?

Jennifer Sainato





All morning, I'd been thinking, yeah, she was right—it *had* been years since we'd been down to look at the museums. Usually, I'm too busy to go. She knows I work hard all week. Besides, I don't like the museums. They're all too big, so I feel like I'm missing something. Somehow, I'd rather miss all of something than miss only a little bit, and be just that far from perfect knowledge, far enough to hold between your thumb and index.

Museums? Okay. I said, "Sure, Gail. Let's go to the museums."

She got all little-girlish. "Which one!"

Which! "I don't know," I said.

"Wanna see dinosaurs?" Gail said. "Sure," I said. We left and drove her old blue car downtown. The car hasn't been in a shop in years, but it needs one like nothing I've ever seen.

Gail had the elevator-music going on the radio. I didn't know what she got out of that station, but there you are. There's no cassette player. Once when my brother was in the car we were listening to a basketball game on the radio, and he kicked the knob at a foul, and the dial jammed onto an elevator-music station on the AM.

JEFF PRUZAN

DOWNTOWN

At one intersection, we paused for all these tourists. Some had cameras and straw hats, and one woman had huge teeth—and a really saggy bust. The engine, which had sounded awful lately, made this high-revving sputter sound. Then, right as the saggy woman was crossing, it died on us. Gail said "Oh shoot!" and tried to twist the key back into action. The car gurgled for a while, and Gail finally got us going again, as the light turned green.

The museum with the dinosaurs was a couple blocks away. We'd already passed all the art museums, and a couple of other places. I thought about one museum which I used to actually kind of like. It was this place with all these things you could touch and get an idea of. I sat there, trying to remember some of the rooms and exhibits. Suddenly, I wanted to see it again very badly—I figured that, with all that new stuff they're finding, it must be incredible.

I said to Gail, "What's that museum where it has all those strange rooms and you can do just about anything you want? You can sit on a bicycle and power a light, and you can test probability and try out all the video effects and slow your voice down . . . you know the one, Gail?"

She slowed down to another light. "Huh. Um, think I remember it. Was there this room where you could stand at an angle, since it was an optical illusion?"

"Yeah!" I said. "Yeah. Let's go there, Gail!"

She looked disappointed. "You don't want to see the dinosaurs?"

But I was transfixed by the idea of seeing it. "Come on," I grinned.

After hesitating, she said, "Well, okay, but we'll have to turn around. So keep looking out for lefts." Gail must have known this area. I was lost.

We took a left turn onto a street with office buildings. We needed another left, but the next street had a "No Left" sign. When I looked up again, I saw that the next possible place to turn was a one-way street in the other direction.

A loud 7-UP commercial came on the radio and Gail turned it off. The next intersection had a red light. We stopped and saw another "No Left" sign.

It suddenly occurred to me that I had no idea where we were! A lot of black people were walking around. Gail was driving patiently as ever, but I was kind of restless. It could've been a different city.

On the next block we had another red. My eyes met momentarily with the eyes of this black lady in the car next to us, who had glanced at me when I looked at her. I looked away and turned red.

Gail pointed and said, "That next street we can do it—it's two-way." I looked around. There was a shoe store, a restaurant, a church, a Mad Polly's Wigs, and a small turquoise office building. Sometimes areas that aren't repulsive—and this one wasn't—make me nervous if they even *look* a little seedy. I don't know why.

We made the left turn. Suddenly, as though on command, the engine coughed and turned off. Gail coasted into a parking space in front of this coffee-shop. There was a man who walked next to the car at the same pace we made getting into the space. Gail turned off the engine and sighed.

"Okay—what now?" I asked.

"We just need to call a shop and get this thing fixed up," she said.

**It suddenly
occurred to me
that I had no idea
where we were.
It could've been
a different city.**

I turned away from her, facing the coffee-shop. We sat in silence for a while. She turned in her seat. I felt sure we were the first white faces there for a long time. The neighborhood was very active—people were going around doing all kinds of things.

Gail pulled off her glasses and kept looking straight for a moment. Then she turned to me and said, "Let's get some coffee or something. We can call a truck inside."

But I resisted. "You crazy? They'll kill us. You'll be the only white face in the place!"

"What!" she said. "Look. Do you or don't you want any coffee?"

"No thanks," I said. I wasn't too sure why she wasn't even nervous.

She shook her head and pursed her lips as she got up. She shut the door. I watched her walk around to the back of the car and past the curb. She opened the glass door with the hours marked on it and went in.

I locked her door. I drummed my fingers on the dashboard. I stared at the steering wheel, imagining news reports of thugs and gangs. She'd be in there, calling the truck, taking care of things. I could relax, safe and locked in here. But I wondered when Gail would get the hell back into the car. I don't think I'm a bigot. But I do worry about these things.

After several minutes, something tapped on the door. I'd had my eyes shut, and before opening them, horrible thoughts registered. I expected to see some crazy junkie there, some idiot, trying to sell me drugs, steal my hubcaps, pawn a ring for a quick fix. Gail says I get all red when I'm scared about something. My heart usually doesn't race, but I do turn red. I was pretty red. When I didn't open my eyes, the tapping came back.

My stomach fell. When I opened my eyes there was a very small black girl standing with a cup of coffee. She smiled when I looked at her, and steam from the cup drifted way above her head. She was maybe five.

"Mister, Gail sent you this," her muffled voice said through the window.

I thought of her, sitting inside that damn little coffee place. She'd laugh at me when I went in. She'd never stop laughing at her big, brave husband, afraid to set foot in a neighborhood he'd never seen before.

I rolled down the window. "Gail?" I asked.

"Gail sent you this," she said. She blinked. She wiped her nose with her other hand. "Gail's funny!"

Oh yeah. Hilarious, I thought. I rolled up the window and undid the seatbelt. When I opened the door, I got out and stood up. I was much taller than the little black girl. I took the cup gently.

"Thanks."

"Welcome!"

I sipped from the cup, and the coffee was very good, though much too hot. After a moment, I went in. Gail was sitting at a table, with her head leaning in her left hand but she was red and wouldn't look at me.

"Hi, I'm here, Gail," I said. The place was pretty full.

"Hi, I called the truck," she said without looking at me. "Let's go wait for it."

She stood up right as I sat down, and so she sat down. But I stood up. She stood up too. "Let's wait outside," I said.

"Okay," she said, still avoiding my glance, and began to walk with me to the glass doors in the front. The little girl ran up, chanting, "Gail, Gail, Gail." She looked up at the man wiping up a counter, who smiled to himself. "Could I get you people anything else?" he said.



Lost in the City • Alex Heffess

"No thanks," I said. The girl kept chanting: "Fun-ny Gail, Fun-ny Gail."

Outside, I remembered that the little girl had been calling Gail "funny" even bringing me the coffee. Funny? I thought. After a moment, I said, "Gail, how were you funny? Why did that kid say you were funny?"

She started to say something, but she just stared into the street, past the car, into the space where the truck would be pulling up.

"Nothing," she finally said. "It's just—just that I—tripped and fell when I walked in. I was walking to the pay phone," she said, and sighed. "I tripped, and everything fell right out of my purse—money, keys, everything. That girl asked me what my name was, and I told her. I said, 'Gail.' She started chanting my name and laughing. Everyone laughed a little, and these really nice people came over to help me out. That's it. That's all." But she was still red.

I looked around the corner. A tow truck was making that same left turn we were forced to make. It drove too far but backed up, making loud beeping sounds. I wanted to get back in the car, even while it was being hooked up to the truck. When Gail, pointing at the truck, said, "Come on, let's climb in," I looked at my watch and it was mid-morning.



Unwiped City

Damn city muck all 'round.
Been drivin',
drivin' past the tree on them curvy road—
letin' my car find its way.
Drivin' fast—
feelin' the turns pull
and drag my arms out the door.

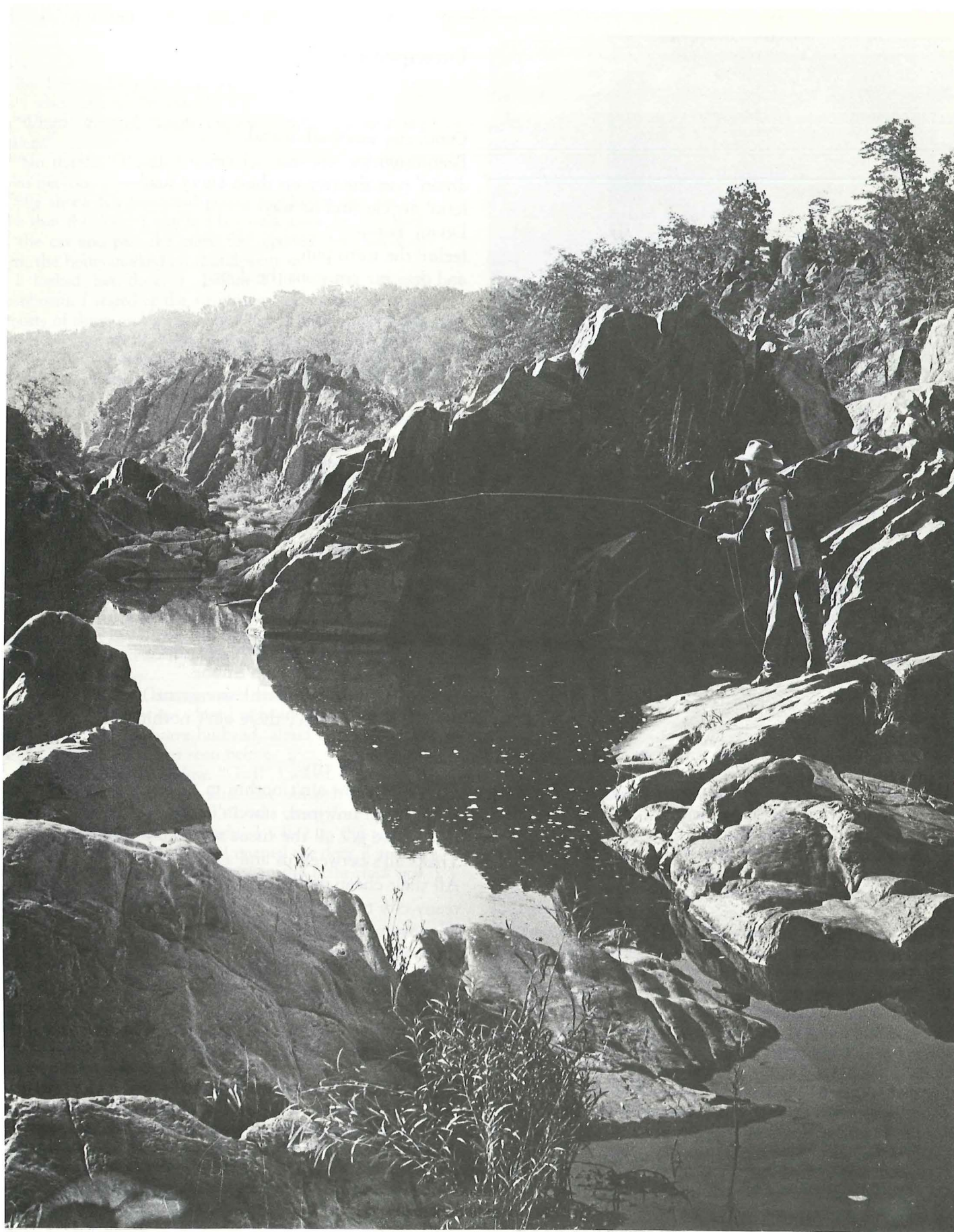
Window's open
The air just slide in, slip up my nose
Tinglin', green and grassy.
Been' drivin' round the fell branch—
Now potholes rib up my old tires.

Bumpety, bumpety—
rotten concrete under speckled skies
jolts me 'round.

Air draggin' old dogs' trash up my nose.
Little pieces of paper, used Malboro's in my face!

My friend, a city!
Yea, "Go, an' get some food out that city," she said.
Hmph, "Honey, there ain't none."
"You just go (damn worthless vagrant!)"
"Hey, I been lookin', there ain't nothin' to be found—
work or food."
"Go on, to the city."
She don't know ain't nothin' in the city.
Just a damn unwiped, starvin' child.
Honey, we got all the tissue we need at home.
That's all's between us and a city—
All their cheap paper's whirlin' 'round concrete,
teeny city trees hidden, worth less th'n paper.
We love our trees.

Jesse Shadoan



Mirrored

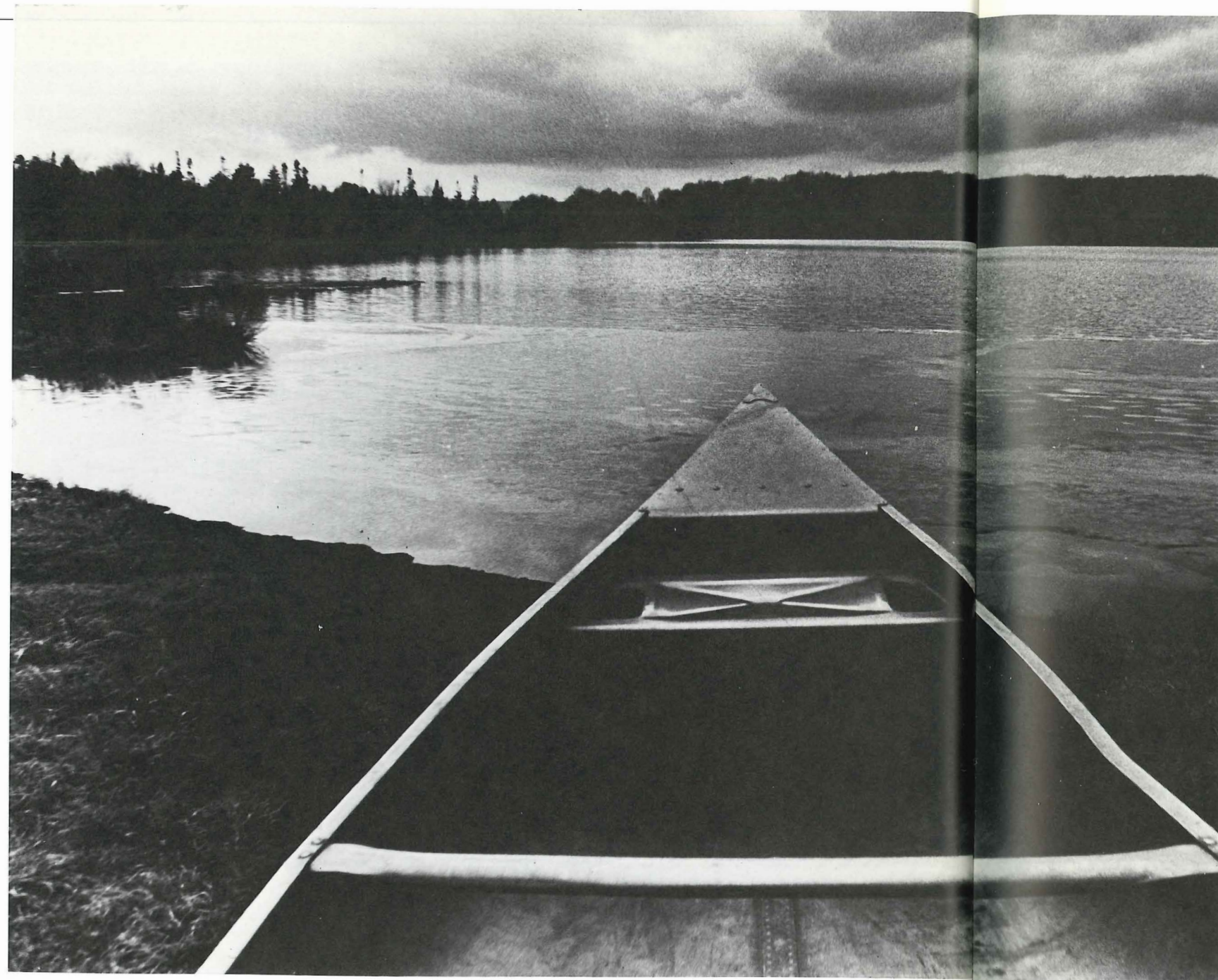
The reflection in the lake
 forms
 the literal
 distorts
 and fades into the lake
 like watercolors on a wet oak leaf.
 It floats past the sailboat
 on the
 ever green water
 to catch
 the butterfly on the sand.
 Mirrored whispers to the water
 shy and shaded
 waiting for the eye to find its twin
 and set the butterfly free.

Becky Cohen

Gendarme at Seneca Rocks

For eons you stood, looking over the slowly
 shrinking giants.
 Now you lie, your own headstone.
 Born from violence, so you die.
 For a fleeting time we were together as I climbed your
 hard face.
 I stood elated on your pinnacle,
 never dreaming you'd fall before me.
 When my last grain falls I hope I go like you.

Jon Bellingham



Oyster Love

You, a grain of sand
lodged in my gullet, waiting
calmly for pearlhood.

Jordan Ellenberg

Isleboro

With clattering buckets and clumsy boots
we turn through birches that winter scolds bald
through an island that ages as fast you.
Late afternoon fishnets branch outlines
upon the leaf floor
but the shadows tangle away
as we reach sands
washed "bone clean," by the moon.

Under October's weight, waves rhyme
laughing before they rake back though the mussels.
"Pick the small ones, the good ones," you always said
and I knew they would be.
But, when you twist one from the wet rocks
and wedge the small mouth open,
we find its orange body stolen by the lowering water.
You say, "I guess we can never tell."
I bite my lip as
wind unfurls from the arctic
or, perhaps, overland.

Alex Gibson

On the Shore • Matt Jaffe

Waltz

She wants to dance
float
silently like the silhouettes in the window.
But she steps with the slow
plodding rhythm of drops from a faucet
and apologises
even when she does not trip.

Jennifer Sainato

JOANNA SCHAENMAN

COLD DAY

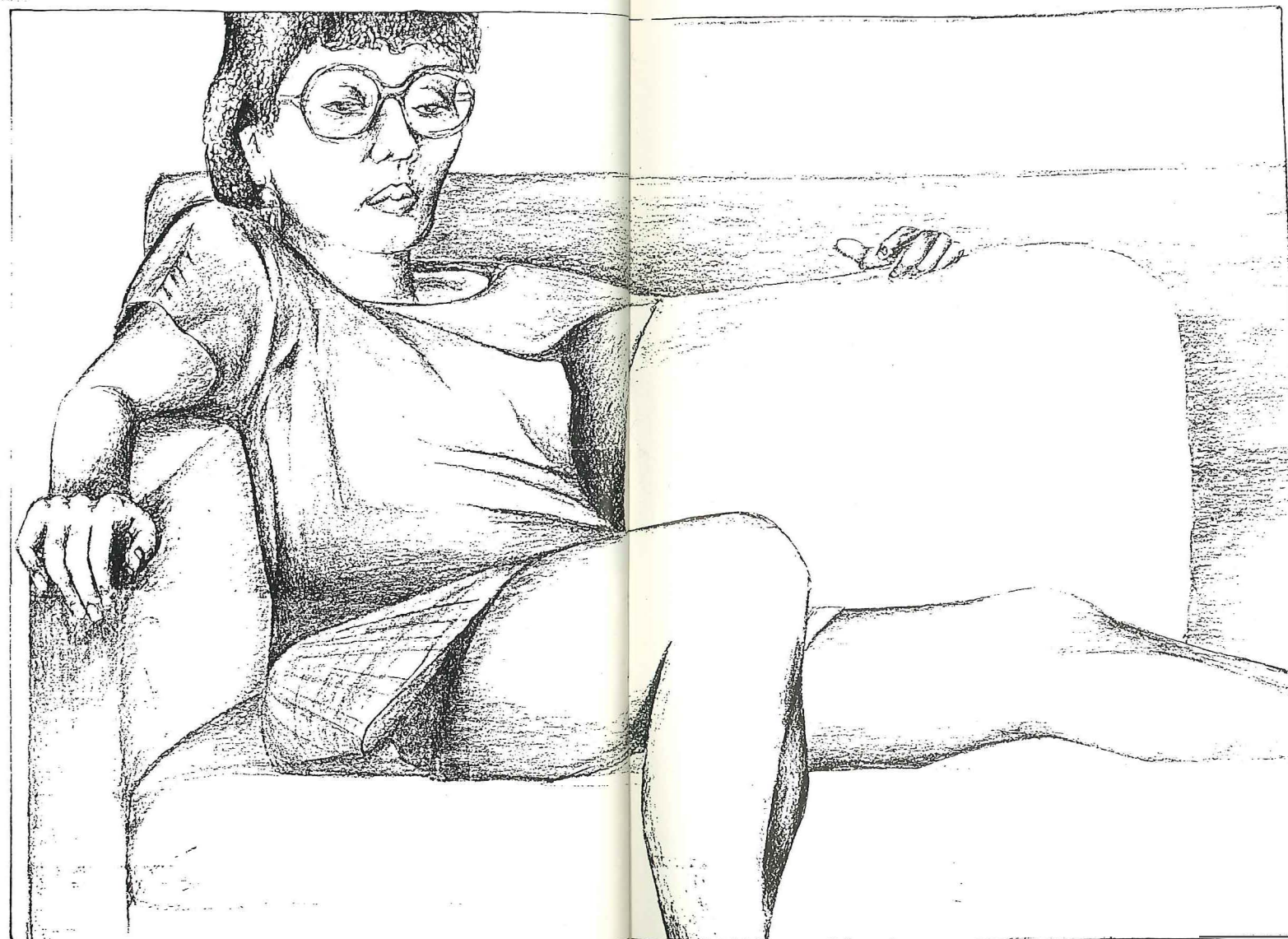
"Damn flick your Bics! I hate dem thangs!"

She turned to look out the window, tearing her eyes from the sweat pooling down her father's chin to the thick folds of his neck. He cursed again, rolling the window down violently to heave the lime green lighter out onto the highway. Her last phone call to Mark. She ran her thumb nail along her fingertips, and the third finger with its broken nail still unfiled looked fatter than the rest. It was like talking to a stranger, and if someone were to pick up the other extension they would swear she barely knew him. The conversation had broken down, for there were only so many mundane details to discuss about the move from Kentucky, her father's new job at the station in Manhattan, her new school. The silver ring he had given her clenched below her knuckle, and flesh welled up on either side. "I'll really miss you," she had said gently. Pause. "I know," he said. And then she missed the rest of the conversation, eyes blurring. Finally she got up the courage to say, "Mark, why are you so indifferent?" "No. I'm not," he said, and she gave up. Now she just wanted a cigarette, to feel its warm caress in her nose. And she also wanted to ask Mark why it mattered if they kept in touch, if she would never feel his touch again. At least not until August.

She purchased a new lighter, a yellow one. On the sidewalk, she lit it again and again, holding the flame up to the sun. Mark had called last night, and she smiled waving the lighter until the flame disappeared when she remembered the choking silence on the other end. The lighter was placed carefully in an inner pocket and the purse zipped shut.

From the end of the hallway, the open door bristled with light. Her figure cut a rounded silhouette against it, head tipped back to release a cloud of smoke that the light shredded.

Beyond the door her father droned on: "Thank yew for yur kind hospitality. And let us resolve to have the best durn fahre station in the Manhattan County!" Cheers and applause.



Cold Comfort • Missy Hogan

An alarm sounded. "Station two-oh, station two-oh, we've got a two story hotel fire at 32nd Pennsylvania. All engines must respond. Repeat, all engines must respond." She stretched and knocked an ash to the floor. The door opened and men poured toward the garage, her father among them, already sweating. The trucks roared.

She followed their path into the garage, now huge and echoing with each truck gone. She dragged heavily on the cigarette, then examined it. The once-bright tip receded and she tossed into a nearby garbage can. Smack went a rock against metal, and she turned to see the back of a kid smashing stones into the row of empty hooks. "Hey," she said. Her voice reverberated through the empty station. She wished she had kept quiet and rubbed her thumb nail against her finger tips.

"What?" said the kid, who turned to stare. He was probably about her age, but his squinting wrinkled his forehead and put crow's feet by his eyes. He was slight, his untucked shirt waving with his motion. She dug in her purse, lighting up with another cigarette and used the yellow Bic to light it. She sucked quickly to start the glow.

"Jeez, calm down," she said, inhaling deeply. "Want one?" He approached, nodding, and she watched his eyes, a scuffed blue, examine her. She pulled in her stomach and brushed her hair out of her eyes. She pulled out a second cigarette, and he lit it off of hers.

She smiled and followed him inside. "My dad's the first lieutenant," he said, and they sat on the couches in the quarters over the big-paned, glass station doors.

Windows tinkled. The flag burned. Soon the building flickered, too.

She could not breathe. Coughing awake, she saw the room filled with haze. They had nodded asleep in the warm tackiness of the orange and brown lounge. He stood in front of her and nodded seriously. "A fire," he said, and pulled her to her feet. They rushed outside and watched the fire tear through the station. Windows tinkled. The flag burned. Soon the building flickered, too. Fire engines arrived, from a different company; she watched each figure and none bore the familiar hunch of her father. Emptiness grabbed her by the throat and she ran. Towards home. "Where are you going?" floated the kid's voice—John's voice. She ran, and she arrived panting at her front door. It was open. She ran to the kitchen, seized the phone, and dialed. She wiped her eyes and fumbled for a cigarette.

"Hello?" said Mark.

She hung up the phone.

Final Cut

Everything is still as you look out your window somewhere in Chinatown and watch the homeless slowly freeze you smoke like crazy waiting for the phone to ring finally grab your black trench coat from the bed and slam the door trying not to trip over a drunk in the stairwell.

A match flicked center stage
lit by James Dean
greeting the spot light

into the night's flesh
like a sacrificial knife
piercing the heart
of the Golden Gate
(weeping violins close curtains)

Applause! Applause!
you finally brought down the house
take a bow

and sit

on the hood of your car
underneath the water's surface
entranced by the rhythm
of the bridge overhead

The sun is melting
into the water
only matched
by your golden hair
and warmed
by your emerald eyes

Pull another cigarette
from the worn
leather jacket
place it between
your lips
and light it off
the dripping sun

John Norman

Employment Application

WHAT IS YOUR NAME?

My name was destroyed long ago,
floating in the smoke of Alexandria.
I rose again like the Phoenix
but no one knew me.

LIST PERTINENT PAST EXPERIENCES.

I rode the asteroid that pitted
Earth's smoking skin,
and learned my work from the craters.

In Mesopotamia
lurking in the rivers round the land,
I sneaked up to nibble the toes of
children.
They were cold
afterward.

I swam the seas to Yucatan,
took the Mayans into my carriesak,
left their buildings
hungry for the future.

In the Middle Ages
I traveled Europe in a tight black
tuxedo,
a fast one-day touch, my calling card.

WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT EMPLOYMENT?

none
waiting
doing odd jobs

I have seen no worthwhile employment
in a lifetime
but I have not changed my address.

WHAT IS YOUR SALARY EXPECTATION?

I would need more than before,
this I know.
I could use a good dose of ague
for those pampered in soft new
continents
and would love a war, a flood
or any cool wave
washing feed into my silos.

WHAT ARE YOUR LONG-RANGE GOALS?

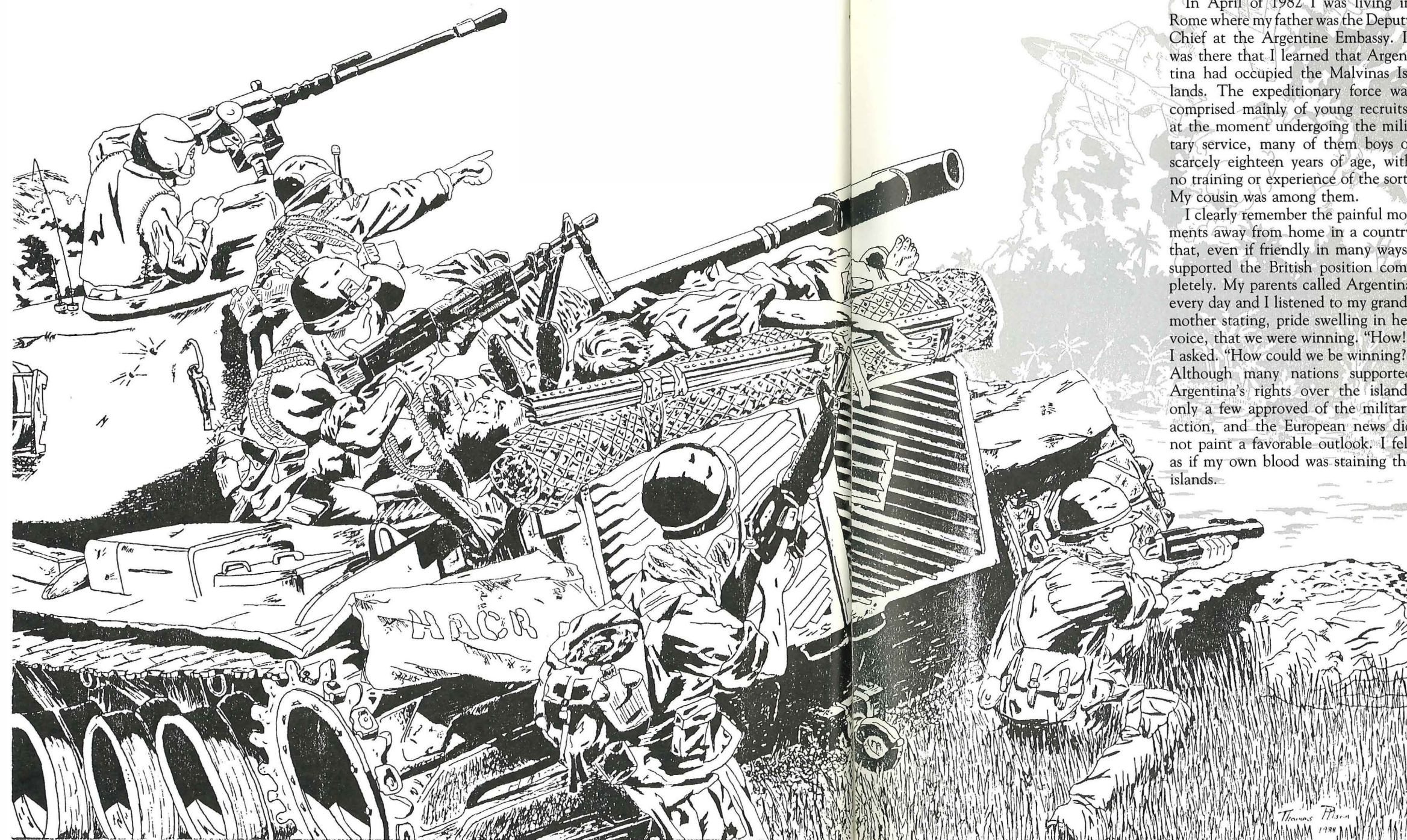
I want to rule
as all do
but I need not waste my energy
for that.
I wait
while other leaders
do it for me.

I am good
at waiting

Robin Suleiman

SCARS

IVAN PETRELLA



The Scars of War • Tom Pilson

There is no greater wound than that carved by war. I know this. I also know that it is an infernal task for a family to watch from abroad how a loved relative, barely out of high school, is sent to fight without the essential weapons and training.

In April of 1982 I was living in Rome where my father was the Deputy Chief at the Argentine Embassy. It was there that I learned that Argentina had occupied the Malvinas Islands. The expeditionary force was comprised mainly of young recruits, at the moment undergoing the military service, many of them boys of scarcely eighteen years of age, with no training or experience of the sort. My cousin was among them.

I clearly remember the painful moments away from home in a country that, even if friendly in many ways, supported the British position completely. My parents called Argentina every day and I listened to my grandmother stating, pride swelling in her voice, that we were winning. "How!" I asked. "How could we be winning?" Although many nations supported Argentina's rights over the island, only a few approved of the military action, and the European news did not paint a favorable outlook. I felt as if my own blood was staining the islands.

Until the war ended, amidst the reports drowning us, my cousin's fate was uncertain. We only received rumors that he might have been captured or killed in the battle of Goose Green. I did not see him until late 1982, back in Argentina. Once graceful, he now limped due to the freezing temperatures to which he had been exposed. Once of healthy complexion and muscular build, he now was pale and sickly. Once humorous and friendly, he now was diffident and somber. He neither talked of his experience nor paid any attention to what others had to say. He cried in bed and was afraid of loud noises and bright lights. He took drugs. I did not accept this at first. I refused to believe that my cousin, my friend, was gone forever. I refused to accept that this parody had once been a person whom I admired. I cried. Later I learned that his platoon had been decimated by missiles and I accepted his change as you accept a loss in the family.

**My parents called
Argentina every day and
I listened to my
grandmother say
that we were winning
the pride swelling
in her voice.**

A few days ago I received news of my cousin's death. The cause of it was not made clear. Some say it was suicide, proving his cowardice and providing an explanation for his scars in battle. I don't know. Whatever the cause of his physical death now, I think he realized he had died long ago. The Malvinas war fulfilled his destiny. Outliving it promised nothing to him or to anyone else. That was his true death, outliving his destiny.

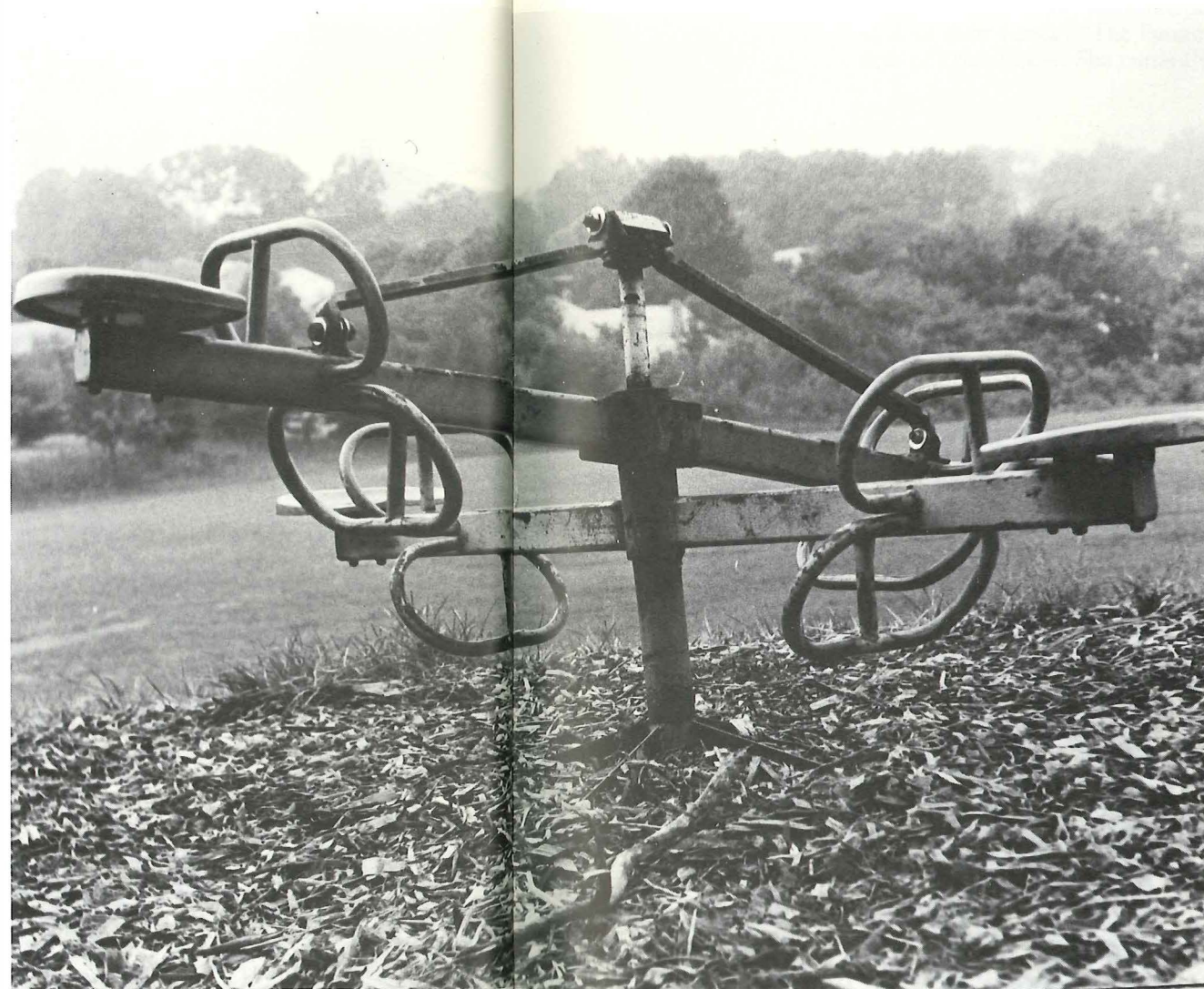


Flight

Perched upon the plastic swing
chained to an iron frame,
I dangled my legs, knees
scabbed like a Rorschach ink blot,
over spikes of grass.
My mother urged me higher as
I strained to catch
my piece of the sun,
but that enigma
ducked and dodged
behind silk screens of clouds
while I remained tethered
to the earth.

Now I crouch upon the same seat,
swaying on rusty chains
that creak the same rhythm
as my joints.
Scientists predict
one day
the earth will touch the sun,
but I, with feet heavy
as stones
that weight me to the earth,
know a shroud of soil will shield me
from that golden kiss.

Michelle Shih



Winding Down • David Schaenman

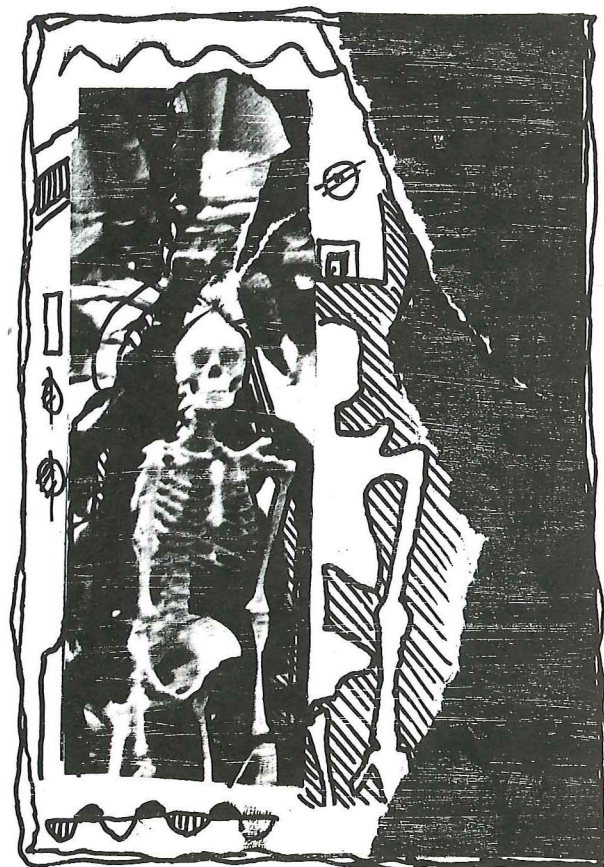
Heavy Days

When my scalp
is prickly
and my clothes
peeled away
and the drone
of the mower
has ceased

only the pungent smell of
grass and gasoline remains

With rubber muscles
I dig deep
into green
Pulling out clumps
sifting through
the soft grass
I find a blue eggshell and
stop.

Robert Sondik



1988 PTSA Creative Writing Awards

Fiction

First: Robin Suleiman
Second: Jeff Pruzan
Third: John Mufti

Susan Weinberg, the judge of this issue's fiction selections, has had her work published in *Indiana Review*, *Washington Review*, *Antietam Review*, *Black Ice*, and *Gargoyle*. In 1987, she won third place for the Virginia Prize for Fiction. Her recent work of short fiction, "The Future As We Know It," appears in the Spring 1988 issue of *Other Voices*. She currently resides in Front Royal, Virginia.

Poetry

First: Matt Jaffe
Second: John Norman
Third: Erik Goldner
Honorable Mention: Cate Marvin
Honorable Mention: William Dodge
Honorable Mention: Alex Gibson

Lyn Lifshin, who judged the poetry in this issue, is an internationally-known poet and editor. One of the most published poets in America, she is the author of over 70 books. Recent titles include *Kiss the Skin Off* (1985), which won the Jack Kerouac Award, and *Raw Opals* (1987). Lifshin has edited a series of books on women's writing, including *Tangled Vines* (1978), *Ariadne's Thread* (1982), and a forthcoming collection of women's memoirs called *Unsealed Lips*. She is the subject of a recent feature-length documentary, *Not Made Of Glass*, released this year by Karista Films. Lifshin lives in Nisayuna, New York.

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 1987 *Erehwon* received the following honors:

Gold Crown, CSPA
All-American, NSPA
Marylander Award, MSPA
All-Southern, SIPA
Highest Award, National Council of Teachers of English

Patrons

Nathan Again
Jon Bellingham
Dr. and Mrs. William R. Dodge
Dr. and Mrs. Charles H. Evans
The Green Family
Rosalyn and Lawrence Grose
Sarah Hexter
The Himelfarbs
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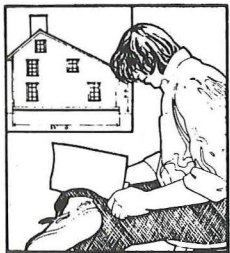
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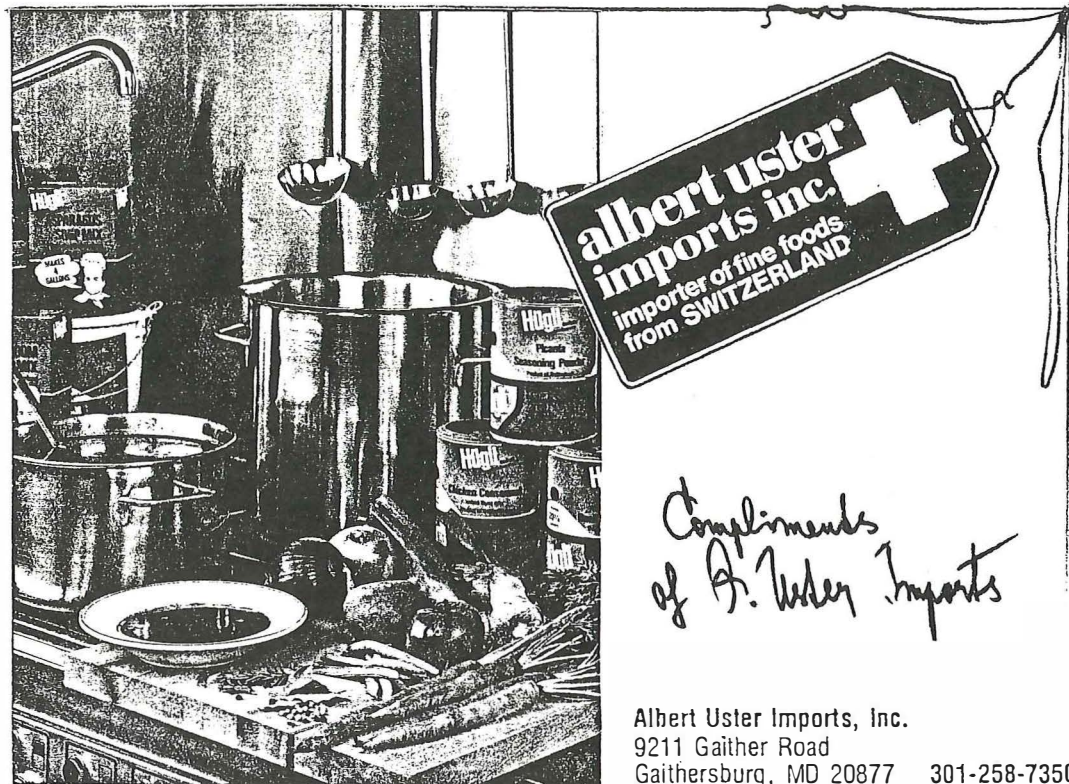
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