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P'an Ku

80
218
413
1920

March 1917



ER

And I saw in the turning so clearly a child's
Forgotten mornings when he walked with his mother
Through the parables
Of sun light
And the legends of green chapels

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melodie rolling

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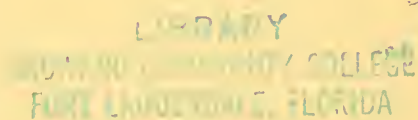
fall, 1976

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You stand
 (with your self-righteous indignation)
asking me with your eyes
how I dare to be different
 from your ideal of me
And I,
 stripped bare
 (unable to tell you I've never changed)
stand.

melodie rolling

moonshadows
move quickly
 (revealing)
a lightning bright look
 (at two)
behind the
spider-guaze veiled
darkness
eyes shimmering
 (one to another's)
moonshadows
move quickly
 (revealing)

Eclipse

Where black burns as ice burns
here . . . within the abyss
flees fast all light and the eyes appear --
stubborn steel now broken glass.

Snickering silence slaps slowly
in waves around my thighs and
standing stiff, stunned, and staring
I raise a twisted hand.
The eyes do not care.

In these hours of stark totality
death's skeleton breathes near
and pulls me down in frenzied passion,
forcing my soul into her.

Above! At last arise! Come quick corona
and spread your cover over!
She has passed and freedom gasps
though the eyes shall reappear.

k. lynn magee

chuck ebbighausen

Your smile was my guide
and through our lives we tried
to forget that people were
all around us.

And many months ago
when the summer sun
was captured in the
radiance of every gesture
you could sew.

Was here I found my place
amid forbidden grace
into my heart you crept
and forever you'll remain.

My mind's a symphony
you always play in me
and I could never love
a moment more.

In riding out the wind
floating gently to your side
I'll love you now

I've loved you all the time.

"carnival dreams"

It seemed to be more than a dream:

The carnival isn't very large; a double ferris wheel, The Mysterious Giant Tent, a pool of water, a baseball throwing contest, and the people comprise the entire show.

This carnival would not be at all worthwhile if it weren't for the people.

Yesterday the ferris wheel stopped for two hours. One of the seats was loose, and a terrible accident almost took place. The loose seat was occupied by a young child and was at the top of the highest circle when the electricity shorted out. There was a bystander near the edge of a gathering of marks who decided to become involved. All were awed as the bystander, at considerable risk to himself and to the child, proceeded to climb until he reached the child.

Then, after the child had been pulled from the seat and into the comparative safety of the bystander's arms, a specially designed ladder truck and a trained squad of ferris wheel climbers dashed out of the Mysterious Giant Tent and then took control of the situation. The ladder was driven into place,

and the child and man were rescued in a very professional manner.

This made me very angry because I knew that the squad of ferris wheel climbers had deliberately waited for the bystander to act. This seemed foolish to me because after all it was their duty to rescue the child.

I asked the Mysterious Giant why he had held the emergency team until the last moment. The Mysterious Giant replied that he wanted to give the marks a good show.

Despite such random occurrences, my life here at the carnival really isn't too bad, my biological needs are taken care of by the management. But I do wish someone would tell me just what it is that I'm supposed to be doing here. Each time I ask someone they laugh so I never seem to receive an answer. I've been sitting over a large tank of water for a long time now. All that I can do to occupy myself is watch the marks throw baseballs at a target just underneath of me. No one has ever come close to the bull's eye yet. I would really show them how to hit the mark if I could only get down and throw a few myself.

by chuck ebbighauser



Ya no eras tu. Cruzaste por mi lado
y contemple las ruinas de todo aquel pasado
como el que ve la sombra
de alguien que ya murio.

Te vi pasar. No me reconociste
Apresure mis pasos y me penti muy triste
al ver, entre las ruinas,
que la sombra era yo.

It was not you. Walked by me
and I contemplated the ruins of all that passed
like one who sees the shadow
of one who has died.

You passed by me. You didn't know me,
My steps became faster,
I felt sadness
when I discovered among the ruins
that the shadow was only me.

No es de patriota querer
la patria a su gusto y modos;
que no puede patria ser
la patria que no es de todos.

It is not for a patriot to want
his native land to reflect
his likes and desires
But for the land to be
The land that belongs to all.



dany katz



Al yanqui què pretendiera
hacer un yanqui de mi
le dire que cerca de aqui
hay una patria que espera.

To the yankee who pretends
to make a yankee of me
I say, close to here
there's a land that waits for me.

From the lips of a Jewish woman
I heard
Oh! if she'd be buried here
one day to transport her
to the land of Marti.

I could see, I did see
that deep within herself
that Jewish lady was
as much a Cuban as I.

A una judia le oi,
Ay, que si aqui la enterraran
un dia la trasladaran
a la Patria de Marti.

Y pude ver-lo vi yo,
viciosa de mi bandera
que aquella judia era
tan cubana como yo.

The Graveyard

Two citizens strode quickly through the
spreading shadows that cast their web about
the stones protruding from the earth
where those sleep that have had their chance before:

“Well, if you insist, but we should hurry
for the night is not kind to this hill
where we stand and are faced with the past.
Only Albert you say? Yes, I must concur
that it is somewhat strange for a cross so small
and distinctly separate to have but one name.
Wait! Wood left to the ground is soon to rot
and I think that my memory shoves forth
a face that expired near this one’s time.
He was quite queer if you catch what I mean
for he never had children nor a wife that
we knew of and he lived on the edge of town.
No, he was not old in the sense of the word
nor ever young nor in between just simple
a fellow who got along fine with all.
Certainly he worked! Grounds keeper he was
for our town but it was no challenge,
no career, no goal aspiring for progress.
One might choose “indolent” for proper description
yet children were forever at his side
and he flashed always a smile with outstretched hands.
It is sad, I agree, that he was so empty
for what can be life without what we know?
(I once saw him try to write his name)
What is more dreadful still is the sight
of that soul stretched over the tracks
and his flesh lying loose from his blood and his bones.
Please, let us go! I don’t remember the
details of why, when, or how,
for it was nothing and too damned long ago.”

Then they left and behind them remained
the wooden protestation that was destined
to soon crumble from the weight of worms,
of rain, of snow and . . . of men.



diane ross

Fallacy
or
familiarity breeds passivity

It's nice to know just what you are, when you're lying there not knowing;
Whether you're dead or think you are, but to them it's just not showing.

'Cause your brain has stopped
though you're thinking of why,
And your heart doesn't beat while it
keeps you alive,
And your eyes see the dark,
And you know you hear silence,
And you touch without feeling
And are sure you'll survive.

But they're not convinced and you won't be exhumed, no . . .

You'll lie there and rot,
And it's so stinking hot,
And while thinking 'bout things,

(more likely than not) . . .

You'll finally see without opening your eyes
That your soul's trapped in bones and encompassed by lies.
"My God! How could you have been so cruel?" And you think of
the young ones in Sunday school . . .

To think once a week you confirmed yourself fool.
You've been stabbed in the back
And then turned your cheek,
You played well the Christian and
Helped all the weak.
Never thought of yourself:
Little sufferin' now
And I'll reap all the rewards in the end;

Meanwhile . . .

The few who lived then and were out for their own,
Had all the fun -- why, they've rotted to bone.

And, meanwhile, eternally --

You're all alone.

To think of the good times you might have had,
And merited timeless tribulation instead;
One lousy, archaic novel went to your head,
Couldn't cope with reality,
Didn't want to be dead.

Though to tell you this now's surely

Wasting my breath --

I see not Utopia

In life after death.

j. blair young

from "The Catholic's Guide to Meteorology and Collected Recipes"

Norma D. Plume



j. blair young

B. Y. O. B.

I drink to forget,
Quick! Now this thought's
Sinking --
I've finally found the
Cure for excessive social
Drinking --
Drink alone.

from "Barside Rendezvous"
Norma D. Plume

On the Killing of a Cat

Clawed at first . . . but then,
Clasping fur and neck in hand . . .
Silvery steel, platinum coated death,
rips,
shreds -- slishy-sloshy gurgling.
Crimson spurts of life --
My nostrils flare; sweet scent.
My cat is dead, but it's o. k. -
I had to get my mouse out.

from "Murders in the Rude Morgue"
Norma D. Plume

Some Notes on the Last Parade

One Man --
held a flag;
But he didn't smile.
And the horses that weren't there
Made it needless to sidestep.

from "History Runs in Rinse Cycles"
Norma D. Plume

Breakfast

She looks good,
Early in the morning.
You'd like to:
Strip the bacon,
Pierce the eggs
With your fork,
But she's probably not worth
The trouble --
You'd have to butter 'er up . . .
Calm those poached desires?
Unscramble your thoughts.
It's over quickly,
Over easy.

from "The Diner Shore Talkshow"
Norma D. Plume

Winds

I am, for the most part, content
To let my life be twisted, bent
And formed by slow erosions.

The winds of change that sculpt me
Develop lines, shape accordingly
My feelings and emotions.

It is not fate or destiny
Allowed to work meticulously
And perform these soft explosions . . .
No,

I chose to stand unsheathed outside
I chose the winds of time to ride.

from "Life in a NutsHell"
Norma D. Plume

Unrequited

The one you desire
Cuts her hair,
Removes inhibitions and sits
closer every time . . .
So why fear the confrontation?
When she, too, wants the relation?
Is it that One-nighters
Simply widen the void?
Hence, it's easier to-Avoid.

from "A Far, Far Bitter Thing"
Norma D. Plume

55

Impulse to drive --
Highways excrete steel hulks;
Lethal lean-burn butchers,
Auto-da-fe' for virgin
Velocities. Rumbling at me . . .
If I die in my sleep . . .
There's the guardrail headrest.

from "The Frisbee Reports:
New Ways to Wage Woe"
Norma D. Plume



joanie faulls

Glands II

She sits there
 Waiting for him to come . . .
 If he doesn't --
 Perhaps she should take it
 Lying down.

from "Passage of Conflict"
 Norma D. Plume

Lady Lost

Fragmented fragile beauty,
 Broken form of symmetry,
 Strewn across an inland sea.
 (Beholder's eyes have pierced her)

Believed she was a Queen of Hearts
 And minds -- a painted scene
 Misplaced amidst reality,
 Lost in creation's hoax of Dreams.

Woman, goddess, lady lost,
 denied her youth's expression,
 Clinging --
 to a leafless limb,
 Dancing --
 on a lifeless, dim

and faded floor,
 Her movements scuff the past.
 Losing tempo, finding it politely
 Cutting in.

Garden strolls would force her smile
 'til blossoms shadowed on the floor
 Receded into sleep.
 (Memories closed, too, and she would weep)

from "Conflict of Passage"
 Norma D. Plume

Must of Had Too Much to Drink

Spoon-fed with lies, half-baked illusions;
 We lured them in for tea,
 Served mixed emotions, sugared truths:
 Sensory puree.

from "The Corrugated Hues: 1805"
 Norma D. Plume

Aqueducts

Through the vents like heavy,
 viscous fluid:
 Filtered, cooled;
 Raising goose bumps in crop-rotation,
 Fields abundant over
 Gently rolling chills --
 Somebody turn it off!

from "The Lethal Seasons"
 Norma D. Plume

j. blair young



Suite I: Who Do I Love

As coolly as the blinding sun fades into a clear moon,
She turned away from me;
Silver reflections from a tide pool;
The touch of dark smoke,
Trailing away to a departing ship.
Overhead, the galaxy flies on golden wing.



edwina jaffe

O Dying Child

Stumbling downstairs in pajamas
much too large and slippers handed down;
rubbing last night's dreams away, and pushing
back the uncombed copper curls that flourish
and fall in morning's mad disarray.

Bursting with hellos for me, you
climb up on my lap and brush your little lips
with mine; holding my face between two small,
smooth hands, you chide me that your cheeks I've
scratched with the stubble on my chin.

Yet you descend and play at my feet
with your stuffed dogs and plastic dolls and
imitate our laughter shared in tickled ribs,
and the scent of bacon fried, soaked in maple
syrup on the waffles that you'll eat.

O Dying Child, your wild innocence
lies long across my frozen chest, Don't ask . . .!
why the sun is orange, round, and hot,
who your mother is, and where and why,
nor that damned "must people always die?"

Don't ask! Just ignite that child-sweet
smile you own, opium for my silent groans
that blow from cold, brown, barren plains;
I could tell you only lies, and besides,
infants cannot recognize death alive . . .
wasting once-proud, blood-filled veins.

k. lynn magee

After Dinner

Across a strait of emptied plates,
sipped drinks, and candles lit --
you sit, before me.

Raven hair falling long
and cocoa eyes that,
through their flitting movements,
betray your disappointment
and dismay.

As with any woman that I've met,
or shall ever meet,
I slander time with shallow sounds
erupting from an arid throat.

I care not a moment
to harp upon the current antics
of frozen men in buried worlds.
Still I descend and amply deliver
observations apropos
while we exchange opinions
and strive not to be
what we most fear.

Meanwhile, our assessments are constructed
upon such useless lime and sandstone
as that which we allow to show.

Lies, and gross distortions
of truths we cannot know.

If perhaps I was a gambler
senseless to futility
and owner of a reservoir
of infinite emotion,

I might grasp my pale, yellow mask
and claw it from my face

But there would only be
another and another and . . .

I once tried that long ago.

And so we culminate our evening,
I take the check and you arise --
struggling to decide --
if you have been too quiet
in your endeavor to create
an aura of harmony
which I appreciate.

Yet tranquil you cannot nor ever could
with me feel.

Yes, I know young silent one:
as intimates we'll never speak
nor in hunger shall our mouths meet,
and I may call, if only
to watch you scamper awkwardly
away from me.

Or stop you in the street sometime
and amuse my darker side
as you glance discreetly at your watch,
shrug and sigh, and comment
that it looks like rain.

Our eyes are polarized.
In your perceptions you believe
in mirages as too often seen
within different shapes and hues.
I describe but one level plane
of one dull ebon shade
and an epitaph --
scrawled upon an unhinged door.

For I am a poet:
mistress to the misery of every man,
seduced by the throb of language, and a
mother of symbol, sound, and image.
Thus I live, and thus I die.
Alone.

k. lynn magee



mickey tidwell

in which direction does a black man's mind run . . . up or down the busy streets and narrow pathways of society's fun filled madhouse, proficiently skilled artist of top class manifesto . . . people of the "damned," and cursed by the ever present depression kicking in the teeth of a race of people that's too untogether to realize, time ain't awaitin', and the young being brutally martyred by the "axe" of drugs!

in which direction does a black man's mind run . . . when he has been kicked in the head 'bout his "own-behind!," and the saga of deprivation in his keen sense of manhood . . . with six-o-clock still on its way? the fact that his ol' lady's too much for him to handle, the rent is too long past due, and persistent naggin' of neighbors got . . . and they ain't got, and you gotta or you should . . . better yet you I. S. is!

in which direction does a black man's mind run . . . when his main man jammed him up . . . rolled him over . . . and plugged a mickey into his delicate mind with the not-so-funny face after the beat of nothingness explodes into the deepest growings of his heart!

in which direction does a black man's mind run . . . when he's gone through the soothing motions of pleasure and moving experiences, and the black off his back still damp with feelings!
so i ask . . . in which direction does a black man's mind run . . . when he's abreast of the things that make tomorrow necessary and rhythm of the distant piper blowin' for freedom . . . free-dom!

Trees move awkwardly
quick
and slowly
sometimes not
at all
flowers bloom pretty
and bright
as the brainless
creatures of the underworld
work constantly during the night
yet they know not of time
time that goes and ages on in
quiet power
time that has retarded minds
into whirlpools of confusion
and time
that has made me fear
time
in an emotionless state
and yet
I am privileged to be
alive . . .
humph!

k.c. cummings



denise bartell

We rolled the canoe down into the water.
The mist created another world as we drifted along,
Steadily sailing across the mercury lake.
No sacrilegious sound dared challenge the silence.

We had talked and laughed all night
But now were quietly whispered through the pale dawn.

Our cloudy kingdom finally nestled under
The protection of the overhanging fir.

walter uhlar



TWO VICTIMS

k. lynn magee

Shea abhorred having to entertain herself. It was, she felt, a bore, and completely unnecessary. Consequently, she always tried to keep company and, since she was now traveling alone, that company consisted entirely of strangers that drifted almost daily in and out of her merry existence. She did not at all mind the vacant stares, the awkward words, or the multitude of subtle evasions which she often failed to recognize. Her intentions were so sincere, and she so eager, that often a certain feeling of unity, of wholeness with everyone around her, met or unmet, swelled up within her. Actually her ideas about this marvelous sensation were pretty vague and centered chiefly around a little pamphlet that had been read to her one rainy afternoon in Central Park.

The most vivid impression of it engraved upon her mind was the photograph on the cover: the old, bald man with wrinkled, brown skin, sitting cross-legged. He had looked very thin and very holy, therefore, she had listened respectfully to the skinny, squeaky-voiced youth whose eyes had bulged forth as big round balls behind his thick-lensed glasses as he recited passages from the book. Huddled together under a sheet of discarded plastic, the boy had told her all about the ragavida and the ruler of knowledge, or whatever, she could not recall exactly. Then too, there was that line from the book: "As the mighty wind, blowing everywhere, always rests in ethereal grace, know that in the same manner all being rests in Me." She had copied that down and memorized it. Even though she had to admit that she didn't quite understand it, the line

was quite beautiful and she thought of it whenever she felt that sensation of unity, especially when making love, as with that skinny boy after he gave the pamphlet to her. Of course, she promptly lost it afterwards. Shea always referred to sex as making love and with all the love she felt pitter-pattering within her tender chest, she figured on a lifetime of making it.

Anyway, she was now in an unfamiliar oceanside bar in a strange state, and alone, much to her chagrin. She surveyed the room with indiscriminating eyes, determined to terminate her regretful predicament as soon as possible. Within a minute she had selected a man, or a boy, it was hard to tell in the dim, smoky light. Besides, what did it matter? He was seated across the small, crowded, and extremely noisy lounge and, immediately, she noticed the conveniently unoccupied stool next to him. Brushing back a few wayward strands of her short, brown hair with a swift flick of her fingers, she started toward him.

As soon as Shea seated herself she laid her hand across his wrist. She felt him cringe and tighten. Undaunted, she asked his name as he turned toward her. Instead of a reply she met two dark, puzzled eyes. He leaned closer.

"I can't hear you," he said.

Laughing, she lifted her mouth to his ear and repeated her question.

It was an unfortunate question for the man she was now addressing did not care for exchanging names. He turned his head away and frowned, allowing his foggy gaze to fall upon his drink on the counter, clasped tightly in his hands. Deliberately, he brought the liquid mixture of vodka, orange juice, and

Liquore Galliano to his lips, freeing his wrists from her grasp. He chuckled inside at what he might say if she asked for his surname also.

"It's Harvey," he said wryly.

"Really? Mine's Shea."

His little joke flew right by her. She was not unattractive even though the short hair, the small breasts, and the slightly absurd cowboy shirt she was wearing tended to make her look rather plain and unnecessarily boyish. Still, he said nothing and shifted uncomfortably in his chair. Around him shadows of mouth-moving people squirmed in and out of the smoke-filled darkness that was checked only by the two rows of blue lights on the ceiling. A lusty laugh here, an incoherent outburst there; those were the only discernible forms of communication that pierced the sturdy palisade of dull noise.

"Would you like to dance?" she asked.

The eager flicker in her eyes illuminated the slightly mocking smile planted firmly on her lips. He must be, she thought, rather slow.

Shifting, he looked to the mass of nameless faces distinguishable only in vague, almost grotesque forms, dancing beyond the tables in front of the rickety bandstand. He watched them writhe and sweat, flailing spasmodically from the hypnotic energy generated by the uniformly dressed group above them. Shaking his head, he returned his gaze to her. "I hate to dance," he said.

"Then you can buy me a drink," she pressed, cocking her head daintily and forming her lips into a seductive smile.

Suddenly his own drink, still cradled between his sweaty palms, looked very sour and he pushed it away, repulsed. Squinting,

he glanced at his watch. It was ten o'clock.

"I tell you what," he said, resigning himself temporarily to her presence. "Why don't we take a walk?"

"Sure, I'd love to!" She was beginning to wonder anyhow. Really, she told herself, you would've thought that she smelled or something, he was so damn reluctant. She calculated the heavily pronounced lines on his forehead, the persisting scowl, and the murky eyes that refused to meet hers. He appeared much older than what she had initially thought, seeing him sitting there, alone.

"Where to?" she asked.

"Anywhere, c'mon." He rose from the bar and waited for her to follow. He did not wait long.



Once outside they stuck to the westside of the boardwalk, hemmed in by the human traffic that pressed relentlessly from one attraction to the next.

It was still early for the summer crowd of Atlantic City tourists and every display window was well-lighted, every glass door open for business. There were family restaurants, dime stores, and candy shops whose shelves were lined with neatly packed boxes of salt water taffy. Here and there flashing neon lights heralded an enticing burlesque show, though more direct satisfaction could be purchased from the painted whores lurking in the buildings' shadows. Naturally there were more bars, straight and gay, although the latter were, for the most part, situated on New York Avenue. Hotels jutted up everywhere, ranging in style from elegant structures containing lushly carpeted suites to teeming, rat infested cages

adorned with rusty fire escapes whose steps were dotted with fresh vomit. Atlantic City, as most slowly dying urban resorts, catered to everyone's desires. In two weeks the Miss American pageant was scheduled to begin.

Through this labyrinth of human chaos Shea and her new man-friend waded, aimlessly following the flow. She was quick to notice the absence of his arm around her waist so she slipped her hand between his arm and the side of his chest and affectionately squeezed the tense muscle of his bicep that lay hidden beneath his gray, cotton jacket. At the same time she snuggled closer to him. He kept his hands in his pockets.

"Look!" she exclaimed, letting her hand fall from his arm. He relaxed. Shea darted away from him and ran into the crowd, reappearing just as quickly on the other side of the walk. He saw that she was waving for him to follow and, spellbound by her behavior, he obeyed. When he reached her, he found her sitting on a bench comforting a small girl.

"Oh, Harvey," she whined, "I think the poor thing's lost."

"What?"

"She looks lost. That's why I left you. What are we going to do?"

He was confused so he said nothing.

In her right hand the girl was clutching a stiff plastic doll whose head was crushed, an innocent victim of a stranger's foot. In the other, she had stuffed the remains of a ball of cotton candy. What she had not eaten she had apparently smudged on to her face. She had been crying and her tears had carved small rivulets through the sticky-pink wasteland on her cheeks. He guessed her age to be around four or five.

Shea drew an old handkerchief from her jean's pocket and, after dipping it into a nearby water fountain, she washed the child's face with patient care. The girl clung to her and started to cry.

"There, there," Shea murmured softly, soothing the little girl by running her hand gently through her straggly blonde hair. It was sticky too.

"Everything'll be okay," she said. "Where's your mommy?"

As soon as that last word slipped from her lips the child jerked forward and tore herself from Shea's arms. She fled, disappearing into the crowd. Shea jumped up to follow her, but was held back by a hand that had seized her shoulder in a vice-like grip.

"Let me go!" she blurted, and turned to her oppressor, afraid. Her fear melted when she saw that it was him. She smiled but he did not let go.

"Let her be," he said.

She squirmed, trying to relieve the pressure of his grip and for a moment, for a brief passing second, his hold hardened, and then he released her and in his eyes she noticed a faint element of surprise which she could not fathom.

"Well, don't you care about what could happen to her?" she asked breathlessly, nearly angry.

He shrugged.

"It's too late now," he said.

"Boy," she said. "You must hate kids or something." She was confused and flustered by his reaction and her words were twisted with a trace of contempt, because she was slightly hurt. She loved children and it was hard to believe that anyone could not.

"I don't hate them. It's just stupid."

"What's stupid?"

"Everything."

He began to say something else but stopped. "Let's go," he said finally.

"Aw, you just hate kids, I know." She did not really know, she was just teasing him now. Besides, when she thought of it, what did it matter? Someone else could help the girl.

They continued walking and after a few steps he laughed.

"You know, come to think of it, I rather like them. It's kind of fun to watch them as they die into adulthood."

"What?" she asked. "I didn't hear you."

"Nothing," he said, "just nothing."

Shea stopped and pulled at his sleeve.

"Look!" she shouted, "over there! Pinball

machines!"

He groaned.

Taking his hand in hers, she pulled him along and he followed obediently.

It was a giant arcade, recently built, and probably the most popular place on the walk. Juveniles struggled with adults for better positions, grasping the silver handles and feeding the belching machines with quarters and nickels and dimes and occasionally a slug, if it passed.

Furiously Shea pushed through the throng of people that clung to their stations as maggots to a decaying carcass. Still, she did not release his hand and he did not protest.

In the corner they found a game that no one was playing. It was a war game. Shea fed the machine a quarter and simultaneously the lights began to flash while the two toy tanks beneath the glass budged slightly, waiting to move into action. The object of the game was to destroy the other tank with missiles that

were but traces of electronic light which shot out of the revolving tank turrets when a certain button was pushed. But to do this the tank had to be moved from the safety of its bunker and exposed to the opponent's fire. That required the pressing of another button. Completely confused, he fumbled listlessly with the controls while Shea maneuvered hers in grand fashion, pelting his bunker with torrents of missiles. Yet her efforts were in vain as long as he remained hidden. Shells exploded around and around him.

"Hurry!" she screamed in frustration, exasperated with his incompetence. "Time's running out!"

The bombs continued to explode in a relentless barrage, shattering his nerves. Around him he sensed the maggots closing in

and he could not breathe. He was the carcass and the odor of his rotting flesh penetrated his nostrils and coated the walls of his stomach with nausea. Still the missiles crashed and Shea was screaming something else, bouncing up and down, and his tank was suddenly moving, the tracks grinding slowly over slowly while the maggots surged closer chewing and then a flash and a roar and his tank was destroyed before his eyes and Shea was laughing, wildly laughing, and blood was in her eyes, and the buzzer was ringing and ringing because their time was up and she had won and the maggots had penetrated his skin and were sucking his own blood and he screamed and fell across the machine, pounding his head against the glass.

* * *

A bench. It was hard and wooden and the little metal rivets which held the boards

together pressed into his skull and caused him pain. He was sprawled across it and hands were running through his hair. A voice was in the wind singing more distant and more solemn than a fading star.

"There, there," it was chanting softly. "Everything will be alright."

He opened his eyes and saw, not his mother, but Shea.

"What happened?" he groaned. He did not cry, though he wanted to. He did not cling to her, for he was afraid, and he did not run, though he considered it.

"I don't know," she said. "You fainted and I got someone to drag you out here."

"I needed air," he said. "I guess I needed air."

"Yes," she said. "I guess you needed air."

* * *

They were up and walking again and he was feeling a little better.

"By the way, where are you from?" she asked. She wanted so much to converse, to be happy. Again she slipped her hand between his arm and chest. His hands remained in his pockets.

"Everywhere and anywhere," he said. He could not tell her because he did not know exactly. True, he was familiar, too familiar, with the shadows that he lived among, the shadows that he fluttered in and out of day after day. His home now was in the alleys, in the ashes of burned out buildings. His bed was usually cement, and he slept well on such a mattress. There . . . in his shadows . . . phantoms floated endlessly among the limp, hanging tissues that were all that remained of his soul, a soul deformed by the flames of his childhood. He was forever in hiding, not from

choice, but from instinct. With him, the will to survive had prevailed over every other force. Yes, he could tell her where he lived, but it would make no difference. She did not dwell in the shadows, her place was in the light.

"Why don't you ask me where I'm from?" she asked.

"Where are you from?"

"Oh, everywhere and anywhere," she mimicked, laughing. He laughed too, but not aloud.

"Wait," she gasped, stopping again.

They were standing before a women's boutique. Women's fashions . . . women clad in jeans and women dressed in silk. Plastic women that in the windows were posed in different postures. Women. Shea stood and gazed at the clothes and inside the store she could see the many different pantsuits, the

blouses, and the dresses, all hung upon the many racks. Still, she did not move to enter. She laughed and then she sighed.

"I wish I had the money," she said.

She moved to the next window where there were more clothes, all part of the same shop, and she continued to gaze longingly at the infinity of designs and fabrics.

He had frozen into a cold, stone statue. The plastic women were real women and his eyes were locked upon them and slowly his eyes unfastened the buttons, the snaps, the neatly tied bows. He could not stop his eyes, they would not close. His arms were frozen stone or he would have covered his eyes or plucked them out, to squeeze them into a mangled pulp of dripping jelly. His feet were frozen stone or he would have run away, swiftly, far away, back to his shadows. Helpless he watched the blouses as they slid

off, exposing the tender necks and the shoulders, the slowly breathing, warm, beckoning breasts, the taut stomachs. Helpless he watched the skirts and pants slide downward, revealing the fleshy thighs, the flaxen pubic hair and the boney knees and

finally, the feet. Helpless he watched and his fists, clenched into marble balls in his pockets, tore through the fabric, ripping the threads that held the pockets together. Flesh was touching flesh and the contrast between the ice cold strangeness of his hands against his warm, hairy thighs shocked him into reality. He was awake again. He was alive again and shaking as sweat steamed from his pores and he continued shaking. He was alive again and he pulled his hands from his pockets and spread them flat against the side of his pants, resting them. He breathed in deeply and the shaking subsided.

"Let's go," Shea said, coming over to him, taking his arm in order to pull him along. He had trouble moving.

"Hey, are you okay?" she asked. She saw that his eyes were screwed shut and that his face was glistening with sweat, illuminated by the pale light shining from inside the window where the women were.

"Yeah, a little feverish," he mumbled, gradually gaining control of his faculties.

Shea pulled out her handkerchief, still damp from before, and wiped the beads of sweat from over his eyes and from the rest of his face. He did not resist. She felt afraid for him. First the scene inside the arcade and now this. What if he were really sick?

"Are you hungry?" she asked.

"No, but I'd like to sit down."

They walked over to a small cafe. It was poorly lighted and the waiter came, handing

them their menus roughly, maintaining a diffident air.

"We close soon," he grunted.

They were the only customers, except for a family of four sitting smugly in the far corner, laughing and eating intimately.

"I'll have a ham sandwich and a beer," Shea asserted. She looked across the small table to the slouching man staring vacantly into the ashtray.

"Get him a glass of water," she added.

The waiter shrugged and left, and then returned.

She ate and they did not talk much and when she tried to get him to eat part of her sandwich he refused. She ordered another sandwich and ate it because she was very hungry. He sipped the water and it helped him a little. When she finished, she coaxed him into emptying his glass. They left.



Oddly enough, the crowds had dissipated and gradually they became aware that they had wandered almost to the end of the walk. With her arm she guided him down some steps and on to the beach. He seemed to revive a little when they reached the shore and so they walked, saying nothing to each other. Shortly, they came upon a fishing pier. It was abandoned, an ancient relic of the past that creaked and swayed on its rotted stumps. Yet, in the night, it seemed to Shea a worthy shelter and she steered him under it.

"You know," she said, as they sat down, "we haven't said anything about where we're going to sleep. Do you have an apartment?"

"No," he said. "I just got here."

It was a lie and it was not a lie. He had no real place to stay but he was no stranger to

this city, no new arrival.

"I just got here too," she said. "I guess this is as good a place as any."

Above them the aching wood whined mysteriously as the salty wind wound its way through the cracks and crevices. On the shore the waves crashed one upon another. They were alone.

Shea looked to this new man-friend, this stranger that had entered her life tonight. He was lying down now and she could not tell if his eyes were closed or open. She could not comprehend his behavior though she knew that it was not normal. As she had always done before, she shrugged her questions off and left them to the forces that she sometimes sensed but always ignored. Thus, she was not afraid of him, not really. He was a man and she was a woman and she felt that he could be helped by what had always made her happy. She laid down and slid next to him, pressing her lips against the side of his face.

"Do you want to love me?" she whispered in his ear.

He rolled over on his side to face her. He was trembling.

"I can't," he said.

"Why?"

"I don't know. I don't want to talk about it."

Now she was really confused. Oh, she had met some freaks before but never this. Unless, of course, he was a homosexual. That would explain it.

"Could you, if I were a man?" she asked.

"No," he sighed. "No, I don't think it would make any difference at all."

"Then let me try, please."

He did not resist, nor did he respond. Shea tried, using everything she had discovered and remembered and always enjoyed. But it was

no good. Afterwards, he lay as if nearly dead, cradled in her arms. Weary, though puzzled, she fell asleep.

As he lay there, sheltered in her arms. He smelled the sweetness of her breath as it engulfed him in a blanket of beer, ham sandwiches and other assorted scents. He felt the flesh of her breasts fold in tender, small wrinkles as he nestled his head between them. So close, he could taste the sweat-salt of her skin whenever he opened his mouth to breathe. He heard her breathing too, slowly and evenly.

Opening his eyes he saw but bare flesh, her flesh, and he knew if he looked further he would see more, for she was naked, as was he. Yet he did look to her face, but it was not Shea's face. He saw his mother, long lost, sleeping soundly. His mother was beside him, naked. Gently he pried himself loose, much afraid. She did not awaken. Quietly, frantically, he fumbled with his pants and his shirt and managed to unite all the necessary snaps and buttons. He rose and stumbled to the shore, where the waves were still crashing. He sat at the edge of the water and gathered his knees in his arms but they did not shield him from the stinging drops of splashing spray.



He was floating among the apparitions of the past. His mother, forever gay and bright, had possessed a laugh that bubbled always from between her daintily parted lips. He remembered all the nights that she had slept with him and kept him from the demons in the dark. But he had grown older and though she had occasionally slept with him, other men, many men, slept with her too. Then later he was not allowed to sleep with her at

all and he was often left alone. He had known no father, only the many men that hung around their small apartment of paint-peeling walls that roaches and rats had scampered across at night. Soldiers, sailors, hard men, silent men, unshaved and drunken men . . . they all had looked upon him with hating, resentful eyes. One day she had not returned and from then on he lived alone. But now she had come back to him. He arose, wavering on two trembling legs, and he left the shore and returned to her, his mother.

Standing beside her, he watched her sleeping peacefully. She did not remember leaving him because she had never cared. He fell to his knees and they sunk into the sand. Slowly his fingers pryed themselves loose from the marble fist that they had formed. He pressed his two thumbs into her throat and he felt the flesh of her neck surrender. The muscles, the veins, the tissue, the fiber: straining, tearing, screeching, and screaming . . . they were dying.

Her eyes bulged open and almost popped from their sockets and for a brief frenzied second he thought that she saw him, but she never did. He remained in that position for over an hour; he on his knees, breathing heavily, holding her limp, crushed neck between his hands, pounding her lifeless head into the sand.

Later he sat back and stared at the blood-drained face, the face of his mother, and he smiled wearily. Patiently, he dug a trench in the sand and fitted her into it. Then he covered her. Standing up, he noticed that one bare foot had pushed through and was staring mutely at him. He moved to kick some sand over it but stopped. It did not matter. Alone again, he fled into the shadows of the black night.





P. Zimelman '76

Binding Words

For Little Millie

A quiescence ago, I stole a sight of
a child, who softly slept within a small cradle.
Her mother and father were in another room;
and as I heard them calmly converse, I brooded
on you, little one, who will be constrained by them.
I hope that you may leave the years of subjection
to the many words, which you'll hear from your parents.
These lucubrations come not from lack of love, but
seem, regretfully to cram you with the many
reflections of parents; reflections that bind you.
We bind each other with words, unfortunately.
If binding is inevitable, little one,
may you secretly, somehow, cast off the word chains.

steve de gangi

A Historical Footnote

The
monolithic, neolithic, paleolithic,
bronze age, iron age, modern age,
circumstance, consequence, casualty,
fact, fact, fact,
language lays in lecturers and literature.
The annals inoculate with ostentation:
the Persian wars, 490-479 B.C.,
the Peloponnesian wars, 431-404 B.C.,
the murder of Philip,
the mounting of Alexander,
the Julio-Claudians, the Vespians, the Flavians,
the Charlemagnes, the Napoleons,
the Bismarks, and the Hitlers.
The chronicler concludes correctness with his
debuts, dates, deeds, and deaths.
And accuracy is ascertained, when
the historian harbours his pretence
that measures accuracy by
debuts, dates, deeds, deaths,
data, data, data, data . . .

At Ernie's

The redundance of racing cars droned route one of Fort
Lauderdale's twilight.
Reiterating neons radiated against the blackness,
with a recurring blink, blink, blink, blink.
Between the breathing berg's breaks of neon brightness were
alleys of remoteness and dim lights that leered not.
A solitary neon settled in spans was amidst the dim shimmers.
This opaque neon was benighted by the droning cars on route one;
for a driver would note this neon, only if, he was in knowledge
or inquiry of it.

The perpendicularly placed neon designated the building
that was discerned as Ernie's Barbecue and Lounge.
Within the patrons were packed.
They gathered at the bar and sat at tables;
they awaited provender to be brought by the waitresses.
Political graffiti was imbued on the walls of the dimly lit
eating and drinking house.
A group of rambunctious young men thronged one table.
The rectangular, planked, pine table supported many mugs
of draft and shakers of salt and pepper that were
filmed with grease.
A window, which was parallel to the table, let beams of
light, from the racing cars on route one, to blurringly
remind the men of the breathing berg.
These virile men though, shirked the city's symmetry of
neon streaks and shadowed alleys.
They respired radiance that was ripped from the dark.
With rage, they stoutly stared at it.
With rage, they restrained it.
Well had the bard taught them with his light that broke
from where no sun shines.
Well had the bard taught them with his rage against the
dying of that light.
And so the beer mug was passed, in rite, at Ernie's, that
fluorescent night. As virility was, and is with those
who rage against the dying of that light.

steve de gangi

How can I tell you how I feel?
What words shall I use?
As I sit here
 Meditating upon my life and all it has to offer
I feel tired.

Why?
 Why is my head pounding?
 Why do my feet ache?
Will you call?

As I sit here amidst notebooks, papers, cigarettes, smoke and
 miscellaneous clutter

I don't want to move.
I want to sit here for the rest of my life --
 Pushing my thoughts from mind to pen to paper until my
 mind is drained
Devoid of feelings or ideas.

Should I take an aspirin
 Joining the society that believes there is a cure for all that
 ails you,
Simply by taking a pill?

I'm so tired -- I wish you would call.
My intense desire for the phone to ring is a signal that it won't.
 Silence will be my companion tonight.

I think I'll go to sleep and never wake up -- till morning.
Sleep, peaceful sleep
 What a nice way to escape, going into a world of fantasy
Slowly drifting . . . everything can go your way
What will I dream about tonight?

Only every now and then do things go wrong
 And my peaceful escape turns into hell
I scream, sweat, cry-out . . .

I'm too tired to push this mess off my bed and onto the floor.

debbie

Living Together

When first we lived together I tried to play a role that was
 new to me.
My guidelines being those given to me by my mother and other
 married women.
I cooked for you,
 Not realizing that you never ate dinner before us.
I cleaned every day,
 Scared you would think me lazy if the bed were unmade
 when you came home.
And I cried.

I felt my youth slipping away
 Binds more restricting than any marriage contract hung
 heavy around me,
 Causing me unhappiness and pain.

I didn't know how else to be or show my love to you
I was frustrated . . .
 Reading magazines that didn't seem to apply.
Now, looking back
If it hadn't taken so much out of me, I might laugh.
Instead,
 I cry for all the women struggling to fulfill their happiness
 and marriages,
The way their mothers told them to be.

rubin

Mother, I do not deny that you are happy
Or less of a woman than I'll ever be.
But I have seen the years harden you,
Numbing you to your own awareness about yourself and life.
While Dad plays poker,
And entertains businessmen in expensive restaurants,
Why is it that you are home
Dealing with repair men and dirty dishes?
A child bride wed at 15, mother at 16 with 6 children now.
Do you ever feel cheated
Having relied totally on your husband for companionship and
entertainment?
Have you grown, Mom?
Are you a happy woman?
I see tears in your eyes
Although you try so hard to conceal them
Were they also there when I was a child
unable to see or experience you as I do now?
What would you do different, Mom
And why have you pushed each of your daughters away from you
As they grew to be free and independent?
Is it jealousy?
Or something that you will never quite understand or express
To us who love and ache for you so deeply.

Sisterhood

My older sister bound to me by blood and soul alike
Is twenty-five, divorced and living in that big, crazy,
Anything can happen city of Chicago.
My younger sister, Eighteen and beautiful
Swears she will marry before me
Saying it always in jest.
And I?
Having lived with a man for a year's time,
Have declared myself independent, living alone now.
I am no longer protected against: car trouble
overdue bills
blown fuses in the night
and overdrawn check books.
I sleep alone now
In a bed that was once warm
With love and lust.
I am content
Sometimes imagining myself happier than a mother of six
children
Or the wife of a beer drinking, he-man protector of women.
I cannot condemn love or marriage
Or despair for friends from high school now married
With children as dreams to fulfill
There is no right or wrong.
I have chosen a different road to travel through life
One that continues to open me to new experiences, awarenesses
and levels of growth.
There is no turning back.

"BUCKWHEAT"

BY BUNNY DEC

It seemed kinda fittin' when the sheriff went up in thet plane an' dumped thet last hunnert pound bag o' buckwheat flour out all over the country-side.

Thet's what they was a'sayin', them reg'lars. down at Paddy's Bar 'n Grill, while drinkin' beer 'n whiskey. All them big shots from the papers was there too, Ya betcha! An' since Ah were there, they kep' askin' me 'n askin' me to repeat it. Wal . . . Ah might as well repeat it agin. T'aint like Ah tol' it enough already. Reckon 'bout a thousan' times . . . at least.

Goes back a long time. Winter o' sixty-three, it were. Yup. Thet's when ole Buck Rogers up an' got hisself hitched. Good ole Buck. Dern fine lookin' fella he were. Tall 'n blonde. Big too.

Buck Rogers? Yeah, thet were his real name. Took some ribbin', he did 'bout it. Like, "You still in them comic books, Buck?" or "Where you land thet space ship in them hills?" Stuff lak thet. Ya unnerstan? Took it all right kindly, he did, so's we all thought he's the greatest. But when he upped an' married Emmy Schulster, Jee-hossifer! We was shore surprised. Bean pole, she were, all red-haired 'n skinny 'n freckles goin' ever' which way. No tits. Mean as a cotton mouth too, but allus gigglin' 'n makin' up to Buck.

An' pore. She were pore, bein' from the Vaginny coal country. A real trans-ee-unt, she were, jes passin' through. Got herself a job at the drug store. Workin' sometimes. Loafin' mostly.

Now Buck had hisself a fine piece of property up in them hills, up behind the church steeple. Thet's where he lived. Had hisself a house, a trout pond, 'n twenty prime acres, he did. A real ketch fer Emmy.

Wal, Buck done bought her jes 'bout ever'thin' she asked fer, lak a real rabbit coat 'n some o' them cult-yooored pearls the wimmin luv ta wear 'roun ther necks. But one day, Ah guess she asked fer too much, an' he come 'a roarin' inta Paddy's madder 'n a rabid coon-dawg. An' to top it all, he tol' us 'bout'n how all she could cook were pancakes. The drunker he got, the more he was a ravin' 'bout all 'cm pancakes . . . pancakes . . . pancakes . . . alla time pancakes and he were SICK o' 'em. Thet's when he 'sploded!

Ah guess he really got ta beltin' her aroun' some after thet 'cause one time she come inta town fer some winter vittles, an' she had herself a bunch o' bruises unda one eye and was a'limpin' some. The bag boy hadda carry all them supplies out to their truck, cause she couldn' lift nothin' nohow.

Didn' hear much from 'em 'til the big blizzard thet hit in February. 'Member when we was all snowbound fer fourteen days? Jee-hossifer! Thet were some storm! We kinda worried 'bout Buck n' Emmy, but we all figgered they had 'nough food and Buck allus kep' a lot o' firewood aroun'.

Wal, when come time fer the snowplows ta git aroun' an' they got up into them hills, some o' us went up ta see Buck. But he were

plumb gone. Shore as shootin', Buck Rogers had up an' disappeared. The snow had melted some from off'n the ground and it weren't all thet cold, but Emmy had a fire goin' in the furnace thet'd singe the hair off'n the devil's ass. Said she were havin' some chills. Looked lak she weren't feelin' too good either. Figgered she were worried 'bout Buck bein' gone an' all. She looked lak a ghost, all right!

Wal . . . the whole town, all 1,500 o' us thought Buck mighta gone fer a walk an' got hisself lost in thet blizzard. So the sheriff got together a searchin' party an' we looked plumb ever' where, all over them hills, but no Buck. Some o' us figgered he got so sick o' them pancakes, thet he really took off fer good. A man kin take jus' so much, ya know.

The rest o' the winter passed an' Buck never did come back. Come Spring, it were time fer the Hoovertown Baptist church ta have their April fair. Wal, someone 'membered 'bout how Emmy could cook pancakes so much an' suggested thet she might lak ta have herself a pancake booth. Somethin' ta do, ya know . . . to keep her spirits up.

Mrs. Lowden, the minister's wife, up an' asked Emmy, an' she said okay, as long as she could make buckwheat pancakes . . . sort o' lak a mem-o-ree-al fer her husbin. An' since she already had three hunnert pounds o' buckwheat flour at her house, ever' one said, shore, buckwheat's fine.

What a fair it were, by golly! Rides an' crafts an' eatin' lak ya never dreamed. And Emmy's pancakes was being bought right an' left. Ever' body were eatin' Emmy's buckwheat pancakes. Ever'body said they was right good. A little different, but right good.

She said it were an' ol' family recipe. Anyhow, she musta sold thousands. An' ya know . . . Emmy seemed changed. She didn' seem lak she were so sullen lak before, why she were even gittin' downright friendly. Seemed lak she were'a havin' some sort o' joke on ever' one an' laughin' alla time, but every'one else were laughin' too, so nobody give it much though.

"Buckwheat pancakes!" she'd shout over the din. "Git youah buckwheat pancakes here!" An' ever'body did. Jes lak the folks usta lak Buck, now they all began ta lak Emmy. An' they shore ate pancakes!

One day, the Baptist Minister, Reverend Lowden an' his wife went up ta see Emmy, an' she even fixed 'EM buckwheat pancakes. Did thet a couppla times after thet until the day the reverend needed a glass o' water.

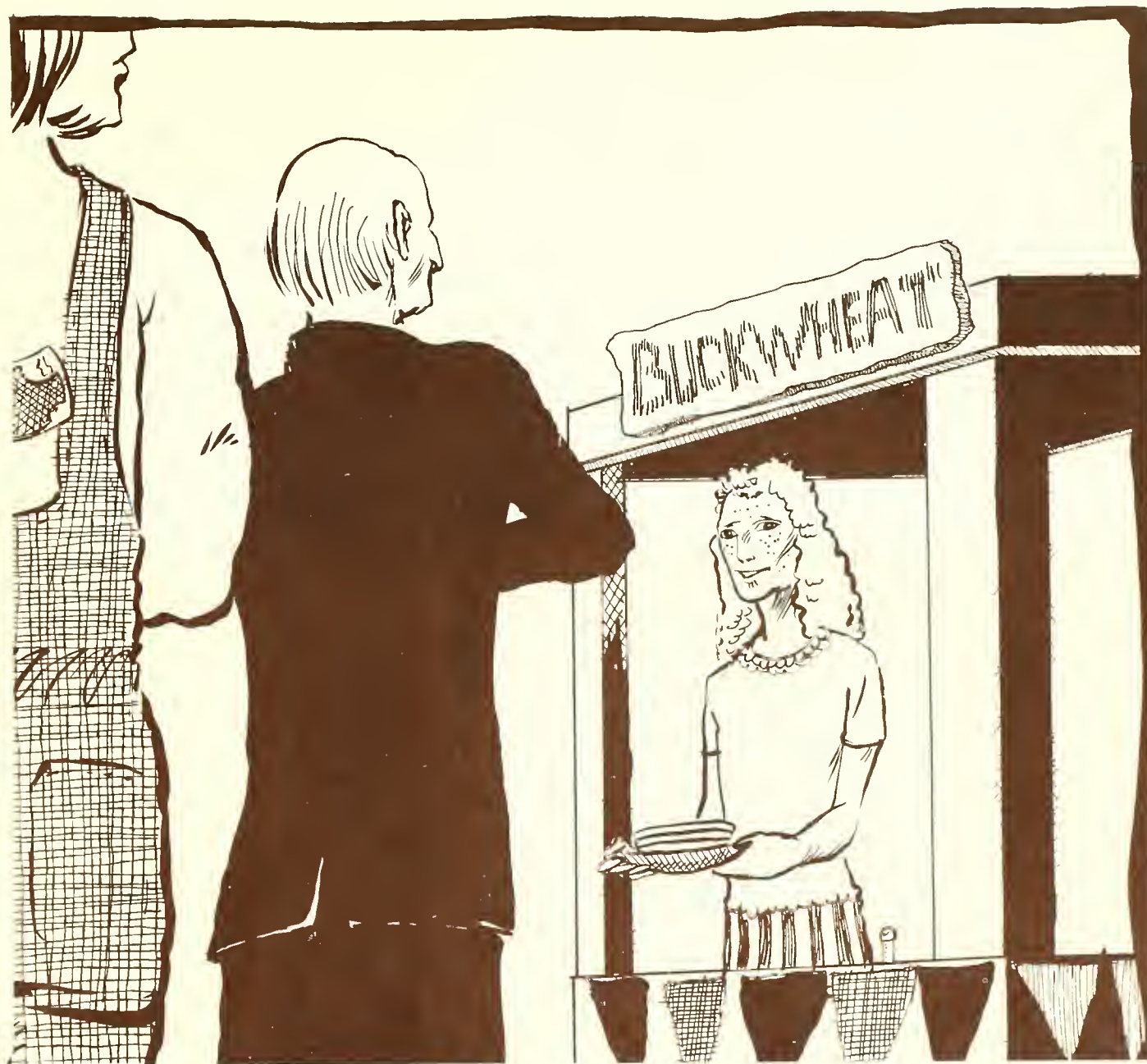
Seems lak he was a'chokin' on somethin'. Wal, Emmy was out o' the room, so he jes opened the cupboard in the kitchen to help hisself of a glass. There, right on the shelf, right next ta the drinkin' glasses were some bones. Looked lak human bones, they did, an' teeth, all charred. Not many, jes a middle-sized baggie o' 'em settin' there.

When the reverend an' his missus got back to town an' called the sheriff an' he in-vest-ee-gated, the story got out all right . . . an' what a story it were. By Jee-hossifer! . . . there weren't thet much commotion since the dam busted in '55 and drowned sixty people!

Thet blizzard Ah mentioned thet lasted so long . . . ya know . . . when Buck vanished? Wal, he never went nowhere. He 'n Emmy had jes had a wingdilly argument 'bout her cookin' an' she done axed him when he was asleepin' an' stuffed his body into the furnace.

Took nearly the whole fourteen days ta incinerate his remains. Then . . . now listen . . . this here's the wust part . . . she went an' took his ashes an' mixed ever' bit o' 'em into thet buckwheat flour!

We all had a part o' Buck thet spring, but nobody ever suspected. 'Cept me. Ah hate buckwheat pancakes. Never et 'em. Ah allus did think they was too heavy and thick . . . ya know? Like they got too dern much body!



phil zimeiman



mike relfs

My first lover was a sinuous spiral of
fears and passions who allowed herself to
be climbed by me trembling in wonder at
her olive body lying back skin taut with
expectation She wanted to feel heat crawl
through her veins wanted to melt the mold
into which she had been so assiduously poured
and frozen and I not wanting to disappoint
the inchoate desire in her eyes reflecting
the need to experience herself alive with a
woman like myself She allowed me to wind
myself around her and cultivate her passion
opening to lips and fingers attuned to the
chambers of her body She left
unsatisfied the mold still intact and
I ventured to keep the fire smouldering

sappa arising

we are women
flowing like a visual symphony
through each other

our bodies intertwined
form a landscape of
textures shadows contours
gentle and wild like the
jungle sighing in moonlight
touching exploring tasting
we perceive yet another dimension
of our emerging expanding lives

we are women
with energy sprung from anger impatience
flowing through our present
with daring crystallized in lovers rebels
growing toward our future

yvvie bleue

confessions of a suburban communist

words drip from my tongue
like honey from a jar-
 thick, ponderous, pleasant to taste--
forming pools of
interwoven truths & untruths
at my feet.

eagerly i approach the
smug enemy
ready to hurl my
formulas & quotations--
 the sacred incantations
 of a subterranean cult--
with the precise accuracy
of a master archer.

deeper & deeper
into the labyrinth
of ideology & life
i pick my way through
slogans & statistics
always hugging the
theoretical wall
lest i fall into the abyss
of purposeful action.

marlena rupp

She sinks into the shimmering dawn
 embracing a faint image of
 a rising lavender moon.
A bitter chill is blowing behind her
 thoughts, and she longs to
 touch the fluid warmth of dusk.
Through nerves pieced together
with grated perception
she senses his presence
 (shrouded with the odor
 of ink and skulls.)
He slithers across starched sheets
in daily ritual, clinging
softly to her skin, waiting
 to seep venomously
 through her tensed pores.
He is a sarcophagus in
phallic disguise, and
his passion, his empathy
 lie buried like fossils
 in countless poetic tomes .
His existence is a death rite for her,
 from which she must flee with
 feet not bound by love.
She leaves him to his frozen surroundings,
 and rises with devouring impatience
 to reclaim the moon (glowing lavender)
 with her own arms.

Spring Wind

The Summer wind ---
Transports children's laughter.
Birds linger
In vast blue shimmer,
The autumn wind ---
Gently rustles through dry leaves,
Plucking the subtle colors
Into the undertow.
The winter wind ---
Conveys a heavy mood,
While silence creeps,
Into yesterday's memories.
Ah, but the spring wind ---
It puts to sleep winter's heavy mood.
And sings of joys to come.
It swirls indefinitely
Around the trees
Pushing, shoving
And crusading on endlessly.
Its freeness envelopes
My softly spoken thoughts.
As I stand beside
The serene blossoms of the northern lilac,
Their cheerful clusters timidly wink
Through leaves at dancing sunbeams.
Inhaling the purified freshness of the breeze
I tenderly sustain their delicate fragrance.
Dreams explode
Like a volcanic shaft,
As desire sweeps through my mind.
All that is created
Intrigues me,
And my surroundings appear bright and new.

Haiku

Cold, white, glittering,
Blanket of beauty awakes.
Dawn perceives stillness.

lanette

My Soul Is Free

This shall be my permanent domicile.
That which I've acclimated myself to so well.
The sinuous curves of the monstrous hillside
Allude to my inner thoughts,
I warily approach them,
Knowing the fracas
That will build inside my mind.
A feeling of chagrin will enter itself
Into my emotions
While the vanguard built in the day
Quickly falls from conventional standards.
The mystics in life reveal themselves
And the unspoken is swirled around me.
Think not this is a reprehensible act,
For I will set a precedent for others.
The little respite I've known
Surpasses all the evil
Man has bequeathed through time
And about the defamation in your thoughts
I shall not repent for the differences in us.
For I am a happy renegade to society.

stanley

The ocean at night
Creeps onto the shore
Gently swishing,
Mingling with the sand.

You, one so wild,
Lover of passions
Holding secrets so deep
You taunt my soul.

Your thousand arms
Are reaching to caress
Ahh, but I've seen you,
A most tempting lady.

denise bartell



In Fear Of The Future

The earth bleeds rich, red blood,
and those eyes live in truth, fear in sadness.
Tall and noble, delicately clothed in fresh summer snows,
Her mountains die
and those who pause in wonder feel nothing but the fright
within their grasp.
Flowing, like falling stars, the waters cleanse her inhabitants
From the grave.

Towering forests, shelters of life bearing walls of sustainment,
Creak and wither, burn and break.

The cool, softening tones of an autumn breeze, breathe in wisps
Of poisonous gases
and those who care to see are frozen in a vision too late,
and those who now know, know this:
She is dead.



mike woodall

diane ross

industrious man

oh industrious man maker of
machines
cut down your hedges and trim
the foreseen
pollute your earth and
feel esteem
for the bowels of the earth shall open
and redeem

christopher l. palazzaki

the traveler

it is not in me to judge or to
condemn
but only to think amoral as a
child
and to visualize
wisdom
for i am but a traveler
in a sea of endless
time
and timeless
ends
waiting for the golden breath of
god
to be taken into my
nostrils

the diver

i don my gear mask snorkle and
fin
to go out and down beyond the
rim
to explore the unknown and feel weightless
and free
to twist and turn like a porpoise on a fun
loving spree
yes to play in the world of weightless
mystery

wake

wake me gently dear earth's
song
for i have been sleeping oh so
long
wake me with your rising sun's kiss
and your gentle breezes
caress
wake me with your birds whispering love
in my ear
so that all may cast away my
fear

christopher l. palazzaki

the beachcomber

giant waves crashing on algae covered
rocks
forming their swirls pools and
locks
sandpipers pecking beneath the
sand
while gulls soar above soon to
land
and i the beachcomber with staff
in hand
walk the beach and probe the
land
feeling carefree with no troubles in
mind
in hopes an ancient fossil i may
find
just keeping warm cozy and
kind

bunny dec

In A Dark Mirror

Scenes impressed upon the viewer
Speak of early man:
Lonely, wary, pursued, pursuer:
Life and death by plan.

Millions of years in time progress
And man's continued image
From its path does not digress
From barbarian lineage.

Now the day is dawning clear
For the souls who cannot rest.
On the face of earth we hear
How hatred's voice is manifest.

White man, Black man, Yellow and Red
Furious crushing impetus.
Forward surging, loathing-led . . .
"Kill that man, he's not like us!"

The mirror clouds then goes beyond
Gates of the distant future.
Where wondrous monuments were found,
Now blackened skeletal structure.

Barren wastes reveal a stranger.
Mothers run to seek their cubs.
Two men, different . . . meet in anger
And threaten each other with clubs!

Poetic License

The poet sat at his typewriter.
The keys spelled out p-e-o-p-l-e;
Hungry --hating -- hurting --
Looking to him for salvation.

The enormity of this responsibility
Overwhelmed him.
"Must I provide for these creatures?"
He cried.

Such Divine Omnipotence filled him with doubt,
So he backed up the carriage -- and X'd them all out.

Words
 drifting
 endlessly
from pen
 upon paper,
 black and white
feelings
expressed in
 color.
a poet.

This is a simple,
narrow poem,
void of originality.
All critics who
thrive on
sophisticated
imagery,
stop reading.

Now that I have
captured your
little bird minds
I want you to
know I am
laughing because
you are wasting
your precious time
reading poetry
which you classify
as juvenile and dull
because it is so simple.

darlyne baldwin

during the summer months
we slurped melted ice-cream in the p
spray-painted our names on the jettie
climbed high in towering tree tops
and splashed in the foamy white surf
you moved west as summer died
and now that it's fall
I wish you would journey home
so that we can fly kites

He awakens from deep contented sleep.
Grudgingly, he crawls out of bed,
Pops a piece of bread into the toaster,
Cuts himself shaving.

Hastily dresses
and chews his cold toast
while driving miles of distance
in still darkness and cold

He unlocks the door
And enters the silent classroom
Footsteps echoing.
Checks planbook,
reviews notes
and takes one last breath before
the first student strolls in.
Quickly equips his face
with a smile
and pretends to be occupied
until all are seated.

Time to begin the day's lecture.
A lecture on what the system
says him to teach.
Ignoring tired, lowered heads,
hit-chat, tardies
he rambles on
hoping to possibly reach one or two.

Class drags on.
Fifteen minutes left
yet heads are turning
toward the clock,
books are slammed shut,
fidgeting mass.
Dismissed (why not?)
A maze of grabbing noise.
After the last straggle out,
before the next wanders in,
he takes another breath
and replaces the old smile with a new.



mickey tidwell

the liberal gadfly

It has been my experience that seldom are things the way that they seem. Of necessity I have adapted to this. I have found it necessary to accept that there are sufficiently available perspectives to any situation. It is, I think, important that this concept be made known to as many people who can understand it. That it is wrong to take something too seriously, or too narrowly. That there can be no confining restraint other than time, and that definitions can only be personally imposed. It is within our perspective, the natural order of things for all living creatures to grow; to change.

BINARY MAJOR PREMISE

All things are relative.(1) The others are human.(2)

BINARY MINOR PREMISE

My personal thought is within the set of all things.(1) I am of the same category as the others.(2)

SYNTHESIZED CONCLUSION

Therefore, the level of my own thought is relative to the level of thought of other humans.

... blip ... Assuming that I now speak to a thoroughly human audience, I shall advance a simile that has been submerged within my internal conscious processes for some time now ... blip ...

That we as human beings are limited. We are limited because we are human beings and because human beings are definable. Anything definable is limited (LIKE) A man walking down a sidewalk might wander from one side to another. In so doing he is given a certain amount of freedom, but if he is to remain upon that sidewalk then he must conserve his movements to its definitions.

especially brilliant, but I believe that is functional. As a potential audience is composed of human beings and as we are intellectually relative, one to another, I made it that way in order to gain the greatest number of prospective readers ... blip ...

It should be remembered that all things are merely a matter of perspective. As such, it is impossible for us to ever reach a truly objective view. Still it is positive to attempt at least a number of limited objectivities. All things are open to interpretation. Because our reasoning processes are defined, they are limited.

All human endeavours are directly or indirectly related to each other. Thus the motivational power behind politics is not completely alien to gardening; the need to satisfy biological impulse is not unlike our plunge toward the moon.

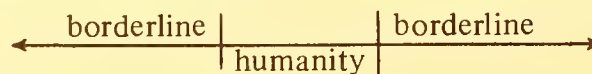
THE LIBERAL GADFLY; THE LIBERTY OF ART

Never before have men spent so much time on reality in the hope of improving expectation. Never before has man advanced his goals to the face of such an advanced state of pessimism.

Ideologies replacing gods; pragmatism a creeping shortsightedness.

There should be a direct relationship between literature, the advance of technology, and the development of callous ideologies.

There exist borderlines between technology (conservatism) and art (liberalism). A simple diagram might represent the condition as such:



It is the task of a practicing liberal gadfly

to help others cross the borders. To free their minds so that they might expand further than before. The problem is one of expanding the borderlines of the sidewalk.

An artist pursues truth for the sake of learning; a technician utilizes the truth gathered by the artist for purposes. An artist expands himself; a technician feeds himself.

THE LIMITS OF CONSERVATISM: THE SHORTSIGHTEDNESS OF TECHNICIAN

While speaking to a socialist friend, I asked if he was in New York in 1968 during the time of the mayoralty campaign, and if he remembered the candidacy of Norman Mailer. Knowing me well after two years, he laughed and stated, "Yes, he ran a campaign based upon intangibles, a typical type of NON-RELEVANT, highly literate campaign."

I contend that there is something sick about a system that places someone through six years of higher education just so that they might make such a statement.

A conservative will not define the actual impetus of change and so will be prone to slip into cliches. A technician will learn to rearrange cliches in order to eat.

THE PRESENT

Never before had men held less hope that they might someday establish an utopia. Today we replace not only men with machines, but the mind of man with electronic calculators.

But there is greater reason for hope today than at any time in man's past. The limits of perception have been pushed greatly. The problem today stems from the fact that most of us are technicians; that not enough of us bother to think.

It is an artful thing to be a liberal gadfly.

Oath of a Lonely Son

In restless sleep she lingers now
and sips her final cup of dreams
through frail and frequent gasps for air
which sickness slays.

Her eyes thus closed refuse to stage
the conflict waged beyond within
that canyon crumbling from the quake
of life's decay.

Her strength derived through gilded growth
of green and blue and golden hues
has gushed as blood from severed flesh
in frenzied spray.

My heart shrieks shattered from its frame
before this cancer fiend which feeds
upon her swiftly folding lungs
that scream today.

Impotent I leave her one
to greet the shadows of twilight
though pledged to rage against that dawn
when silence scrapes . . .

Clean the womb whence all men spring.



k. lynn magee

Plowman on the Nile

Spring has come for Sirius rises
to drift near the sun's fervid rage.
With an ear pressed to the earth,
And an eye on my starved heart,
I hear an ancient astronomer
calling out.

Shortly I must sow the heritage,
filtered down through the centuries,
In meager, crooked rows that
Will blossom and bear fine fruit
from the bosom of mother Isis;
so I pray.

Yes, with plow in hand I shall sweat and
wipe the beads across my brow,
Quaff the salt, and scream from doubt;
For my mind, brave fool, still plods
in circles, blinded by the blaze of
facts and lies.

This year will not differ from those passed,
and next year vows but only more
Back-bent and soul-wrenched labour
Against all odds, all reason.
I shall not fall, nor stoop to taste the
buried life.

Each age parades his heroes and each
nation builds her pyramids of
Stolid, blood-stained stones that taunt
Wind and rain. Yet, among the
odes that monuments lament, I must
carve my name.

Autobiography of a Mirror

*"Other men's books are mirrors through
which we read our own minds."
—R. W. Emerson*

a plate of fine glass cracked
coveted once but screaming now
within a rusted ragged frame
against this orgasm
that is existence

lying strewn amongst the weeds
of what was once fenced in and manicured
a mattress for the excrement of stray dogs
and the vomit of passing drunks and
rocks flung from young but eager hands
that strike not yet their target
but will surely
as the amber fingers of afternoon
crush and catalyze reflection
bright and blinding

though I am not of anger now not I
only silence sewing satin
from patterns of the past
and more tired than the orange sphere
arresting the sky behind my shoulders
and plunging into darkness . . .

k.lynn magee

In Exile

O Time, old faithless warrior
conscripted for sacrificial slaughter
reamed in and out and over beyond
the mask that roars far riotously
more than the echoes that lurch forward
from the throats of plums blistered and swollen
which sweat and reek chanting smugly
coward? he is nothing more than
a bastard child of busy men spawned
by the septic sperm of wasted organs
who detest their own reflections
and idolize intention yet rage that

O Time, life's conscientious objector
should miss such thrills as shrapnel-torn
intestines or amputated legs and arms
so hatred seething rushes rather
painful though dull as the bronzed blades
that bend before the duel of seasons
freezing but rising to bleed again
since forever has destined him to
flow caged within the tide of reason
propelled through swirling pools to embrace
(upon that precipice past despair)
calm Morpheus, Lord beneath the chasm.

To The Artist Within

Beneath your armour there are eyes
of languid, dissolving September hues.

Avenues disorganized?

Shafts that descend to the brackish slime
of a time ravaged well
that must dry though never die . . .

They are, your eyes, as sentinels
intrenched against surrender;

That harbour the frail and delicate mind
of one exposed, excessively yet not at all,
imperiled by men and their dissonant chimes.

Ignore my tongue's enchanting waves!

Silence can conquer mere words from white lips.

In you my jaded breath belongs.

You . . . stark hunger and an empty plate,
squeezing the gut into screams insane.

At your fancy I rape the virgin doubt.

You . . . the flicker that stays the onrushing night,
are also the gale that shall blow it out.

Whore! Where cowers your conscience?

Your pity? What can you cherish!

Have I not earned some brief respite?

And yet, if so, then I must perish.

(As if it were not too late)

Yes, look to me, brown fugitive with shrouded eyes:

Repel the smooth seduction of my mouth
and the heat of my hands upon your thighs;

Shed not your shield against the sun!



denise bartell

listen, then arise

when i was young, my ancestors
did whisper truths.

they whispered, so as not
to disturb my awakening.

for, with eyes full of mist
and a ray of light,

i stood and quivered, as
if, a new born fawn.

michael ingram

see
i close my eyes
and open my mind
to see faces that
bring a smile.

i close my mind
and open my soul
to love that
they inspire.

for souls, that i
will know through
eternity.

lord, my love-strip me naked
so that i will be.

lord, my love-tan my skin
with thy fiery warmth.

lord, my love-tear my flesh
from my bones.

lord, my love-devour my soul
for within thee is love.

Genuflection

Must sanctity be chaste and Greco-gaunt,
With manhood hid by fig leaf of the arts --
Oblation damming flow of senses' font?
Do those love most with meek, ascetic hearts?
By passion does man's splendor soar high skies,
Belying gravity's unfeeling grip.
The senses are the wings of wondrous why's
For creativity and fellowship.

Each person is encased in mystery,
Pervaded with potential, deep, profound --
An earth born seeker mining treasury
Of earth-bound gems from incarnated ground.
Oh, Saint, full humaneness you must have known
Before a rite on cold, grey, Roman stone.

John Donne Notwithstanding

Suffering island
In a solitary sea,
Lean into your aloneness,
Like a birth,
Where pain is not a separate thing
But becomes the self
Engendering loneliness.

Equinox

Gallant instincts hue October's face,
Whose flying leaves belie her life,
Lest those with loss of hope
Fear there will be no spring.
Through meager banks
The gibbering stream
Soliloquizes its apprehension
And gives back reassurance,
Like an idiot's self-ministry
To his loneliness.
A cardinal mother,
Of gender even nature will not frock,
Lingers from migration,
Still faithful to the empty nest.
Cool, the autumn air
Rouses summer lovers from their bed,
Where expression of the spirit
Gave comfort and cause
In the world of meaningless patterns.

Take one more look, and listen
To green and red and gold,
Before ice will grip the earth
In the winter laws of cold.

mary munson

Life

Crouching stillness in darkened brush,
Muscles tense as quivering bow,
Mind and body toned in one,
Patiently crouching, green eyes that glow,
Emeralds fixed fast, body stiff frozen,
Then spring with volcanic explosion,
Fangs and claws digging deep,
Endowing quick deathful sleep,
Ripped flesh, neck and tattered hide,
Torn to shreds with devilish pride,
Swift and flawless action pace,
Death dealt with unsurmountable grace,
The hunter and the hunted.

arlis james edmondson III

Future of Man

Sun burning bright, off hard bronzed armour,
The dust arising under trodden sandals,
Colosseum filled high, to the brim,
Laden with wine drunken senators and fools,
The sweat gleaming bodies straining furiously,
Against one another,

IRON UPON IRON,

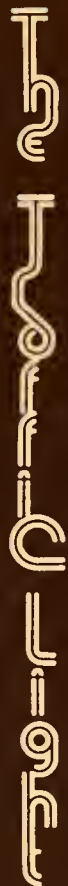
IRON UPON BRONZE,

IRON UPON FLESH

A minute spot, momentarily soaked with
hot warriors' blood, murdered warrior,
Murdered almost, moaning, groaning, sighing,
and dying.

The CROWD ROARS, SPORADICALLY, VOCAL EXPLOSION,
of gratitude, entertainment fulfilled.

A victor today, maybe tomorrow.



Bleak and putrid,
Betrayed and villified,
The toilet for industry,
It gasps in vain . . . the evening sky.
Against it, hung
upon the threads of sanity
commands our King -- The Traffic Light.

Sheets of steel
Weak with choking pistons,
Shrill trumpets of confusion.
Still swift with greed the greased beasts run.
Red! a demand
and the conflict for peace is won,
stability -- The Traffic Light.

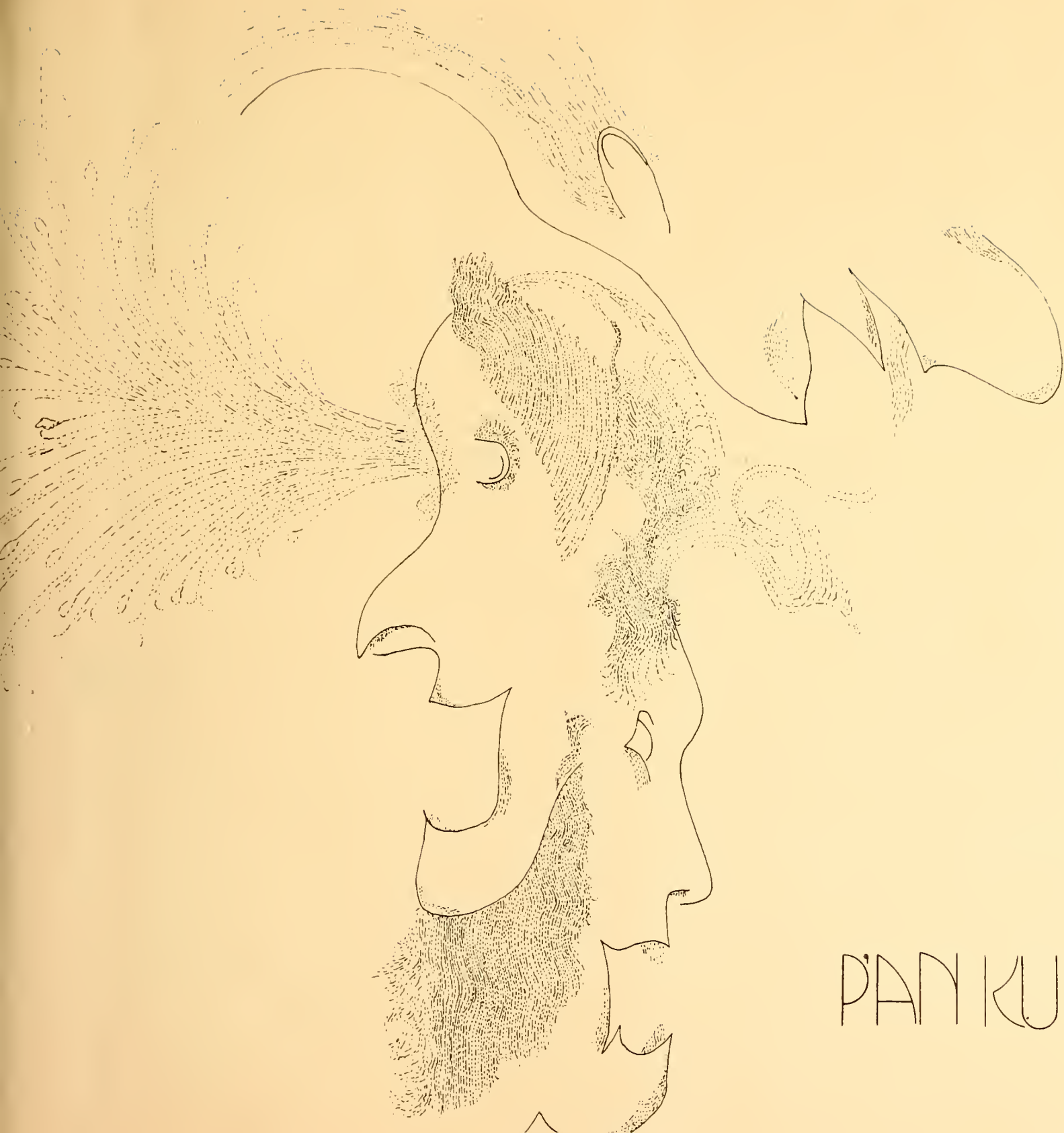
Laugh! ridicule
These highways of the ants,
Yet hasten shall they come green,
The shade of Time's eternal dance.
Pathetic? Yes,
that order becomes these machines
only because of The Traffic Light.

the time has come nearer to say
goodbye, the time is coming when we
shall part and only feel the distant
drummings of passion, in the backs
of our minds a sparkle of a remembrance,
embrace yourself and pant softly
i feel the thunder of ebony and jade
beneath the mystic corners that lurk
my soul, the time has come nearer
for us to render the message that
no one can understand, the time has
come for the silent and unspoken moments
alone to speak loudly upon us, for
this moment is the medicine to cure the
repetitious pain of loneliness.

k.c. cummings



DR.



PANIKU



And so someone asks what to do about monsters.

Some say beat them with sticks

hire social psychologists to explain their deviance

smile peacefully and they're sure to go away

But perhaps so much better to lend them pens to free our souls that

loving artists and shouting spirits might have a means of showing that

beauty which is life

Chuck Ebbighausen

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Spring, 1977

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Cover Illustration by Giacomo Amazon

Rose's Rose

A tiny rose bush was
planted last spring
by a tired old lady
who watched proudly
as the first green leaf
sprouted from that
straight strong stem.

Awed, she watched
a small yellow bud
glistening glowing bright
in morning dew, and
soon she saw the
blossom burst as the
delicate petals caught
the majestic rays of the sun.

The petals fell from
the straight stem yesterday.
The blossom had become
as old and weathered
as the woman. It too
had passed from
seedling to maturity
leaving nothing but a
sweet memory behind.

Gramma's Wedding

Looking out
like glassed in artifacts
Smiling
one-dimensional grins
From
that wooden cage
He is
dressed in armor of ages past
A man
whose child bride is
Adorned
in white lace flounces
Reaching
button top shoes
Dewy eyes
hidden behind an opaque veil
Speak
in tones of restrained despair
For the
man she could not love.

Rochelle Colestock

In the morning she wakes
to an empty house
An empty life;
Husband off to work
Children in school
and her day begins

The afternoon finds her
entranced in a soap opera
taking on troubles as
each were her own
But after a time
the loneliness creeps in

Starting dinner early
just to pass some time
The kids home from school
Clamor up the stairs
to live separate lives
Isolating her.

Lonely Man

At five she sets the bar
preparing for the routine kiss
from which she has pulled away
for over twenty years
The door opens and
the first scotch is poured.

She has had two to his one
by the time it begins
The yelling and bickering
she instigates so that
he can't hide behind
the Evening News.

Dinner table conversation
with topics kept light
trying not to trigger
an agitated response
which could produce
a water pistol of tears

He escapes to the den
where in seconds his snoring
drowns out her complaining
The dishes finished,
the kids disappear
and another lonely evening passes.

Lonely Wife

Donna Morris

Polish Legacy

"Fammy" is my grandmother, and her voice
sings with the balalaika music of the

Polish Ukraine

Her hair, once rich and black
is now a negative of its

former self.

Cheekbones high and dark set almond eyes
are the testaments to the scores of

Tartar and Mongol invaders

that swept down, thru mountain passes
to the flat fertile plain of the

Polish Ukraine

From Kiev to Krakow, and on to
the over-ripe-richness of Europe.

Leaving behind their seed

to whisper
of Tashkent and Samarkand.

The Stoopball Players

In summer, the air grew thick and
scented with sausage smells,
Italian spiced with garlic.
City streets steamed and simmered
asphalt smooth as fudge.
Trucks Good Humor White, called
children from their hide and seek places.
And boys called Stash and Marvin
played stoopball on the corner
and waited for older girls of 14
or so, to wiggle by in pants
Capri short and tight.

The Wine Makers

In spring, the old women would gently
guide their black babushkas from drawers.
Over braided hair-knots they'd be flung;
wrapped and tied and peasantly fingered.

Elephantine ankles, too long in childbirth
would slit the maroon felted slippers
that shuffled them off, in armies;
to pick dandelions, flower bright and yellow.

to Frank

I don't want to be a poet
For poets see too much
too much,
and what is worse
they feel.
It is a frost fire that
ignites with-in their soul
a ferocious flame,
singeing corners of indifference.
It is an ember that will not die
but breathes in
all that surrounds it.
combusting from the inside out
till all is ash.

Taras Shevchenko

translated by Walter Uhlar

My Thoughts

My thoughts,
I am troubled with you!
Why do you lie on the paper
In such solemn files? . . .
Why has the wind not scattered you
On the steppe, like particles of dust?
Why has your misgiving not been put to sleep
As you would your troubled child? ; ; ;

For you were matured to suffer the caprices of your fate
Washed by tears . . . Why were you not drowned,
Not carried away by the sea, not washed away in the field? . . .
Then people would not ask - what it is that torments me?
They would not ask the reason I curse my fate, and
Sicken of the earth? "He is good for nothing"
They would not taunt....
My flowers, my children!

Why do I love you, why did I bother to care?
Will you find even one sorrowing heart in this world
To share your sorrow as I have? . . . Perhaps I've guessed it.

My thoughts, my thoughts!
My flowers, my children!
I raised you, watched over you-
But where can I send you?
Look to Ukraine, children!
In our beloved Ukraine,
Where you can wander like homeless orphans,
While I -- perish here.
There you will find a pure heart
And soothing words,
There you will find a pure truth
Perhaps, even, glory . . .

Greet them then, my mother!
My Ukraine!
My children are as uncomprehending
As your own child.

Days Pass, Nights Pass

The days pass, the nights pass
Spring lengthens its stride. The yellowed
Leaves rustle, my eyes fade and dim,
My thoughts retire, my heart sleeps,
And everything rests, and I wonder
Whether I'm alive, whether I've lived my life
Or must I wander the earth,
No longer do I cry or laugh . . .
Fate, where are you! Why do you hide yourself?
There is nothing in this life for me;
If I must wait unsatisfied even for your compassionate pity, Lord,
Allow me misfortune and evil!
Deny the wandering witness sleep,
Their starved hearts are like rotted logs
Scattered without purpose across the face of the earth.
Just let us live, let our hearts flourish
And love your people,
But if you would rather not . . . then damn us
And consume the earth in your sulphurous fires!
For terrible is it to fall into slavery,
To die in shackles,
Or even worse -- to sleep, to sleep,
And to sleep, smother our free will --
To sleep an eternal age
And not leave a trace
That I have lived, that I have died!
Fate, where are you, why do you hide yourself?
There is nothing in this life for me;
If I must wait unsatisfied even for your compassionate pity, Lord,
Allow me misfortune and evil!

A New Etiquette

It will not do
to be seen in all the best places
Pucci'd and Gucci'd
glittered and crowned
the toast of the town,
Emily Post notwithstanding.
(If I were the clap,
I'd claim the "A" students,
the ladies in the carpool,
the DAR
Andy Hardy, and his father the judge . . .
Emily Post notwithstanding.)

I don't care which fork you use
how much you leave
 for the poor little waitress
 working her way through school
 and hooking on the side
or if you never hold a door for me,
Emily Post notwithstanding.

(Did I ever mention that--
thanks to escapades of lust in the far-off past--
the subway smell of
piss and disinfectant
gets me hot? . . .
Emily Post notwithstanding.)

So you're not the queen of the prom.
We will still burn our candles to the shadowed night
entwine and turn our bodies to the sun,
sweat-anointed with filthy joy,
open our raincoats, flashing to the world
our brightest secrets . . .
Emily Post notwithstanding.

Roger

George, Boston (10/76): A Jazz Poem

A room away the music is playing, jazz piano,
I add a drum solo with my heart
Yours is a bass riff in my open ear
unrelenting, unforgetting.
My spine uncurls in yellows and oranges as the saxophone blares
there is a map, in the corner of your eye,
of thin blood roads that have seen mountains fall
The strings of your lips fiddle with me
tauntingteasingmounting
singing in velvet.
The fire-log crackles, sizzling snare.
You smell of lemons and Asia and blue
And I hold the lies of you
on this island-bed in time
in the place in my skull
where, in melting, green things return.
I have to live in the country of your eyes.
The work is done: we gather our strings and mutes and
fade
like our winter breath.

Klorese

Choices

Picture Abraham,
on the morning he shattered the ikons he had loved,
who tucked him in at night,
told him stories (the one about the bears),
what books to read, what movies to see
what dances to dance
and hugged him in their arms of serpent-stone.

Picture Abraham,
mallet in hand, with a voice of leather and steel urging him on,
telling him where to go,
what rivers to cross, what kings to deceive
what wives to keep, what concubines to screw and drive away,
what son to offer as a lamb.

Picture Abraham,
swinging his hammer at voices
and only breaking stone.

The Day of the Purge

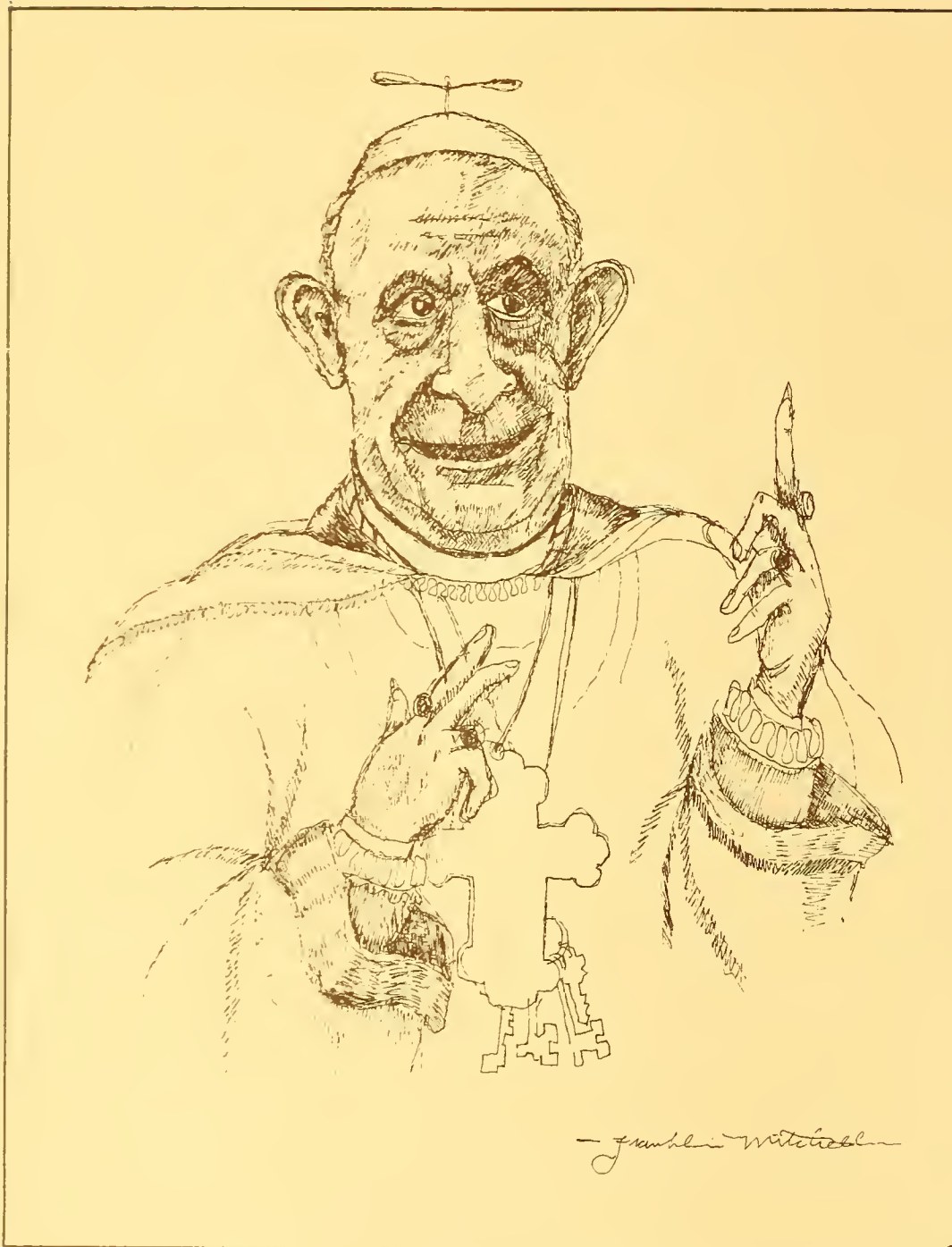
Today is the day
to watch the poets bleed.
Shopping-bag Betty has sharpened her meathook umbrella,
anxious for a taste of the main event.
The microcephalic pope's decree,
underscored with each swing of the ecclesiastic pendulum,
built the scales, cut the kindling, whittled tinder,
waved the red flag before the charging hordes,
who try to wipe away their pain in blood and dust.

There are dying flowers on the ground,
their pungent fruit-and-cancer on the grey arena air.
They are the blooms,
now forgotten but for the stink,
the witches held in their arms, just a few days ago,
as the flaming faggots crackled
"You're next"
at their blistering feet.

The tickets were sold, the pennants are drooping,
searching for a breeze,
but on this day of the Game, as ever before,
the air is concrete.

The Man from Glad brought his butterfly net, just in case
a wanton poem should fall to his feet
that he might zip-lock it away.
The words in their last bid for reprieve
are crying out their shame in yellows and purples
but there is no repentance on this near-winter afternoon.

This is the way it goes:
they will kill, with pious fury, till the earth is red with broken promises,
take home a finger, a toe, a cock, an eye
bottle it in formaldehyde
and put the Red Badge of Culture on the mantelpiece
where it will make for Good Conversation.



Papal Bull

I pity
the Pope's testosterone.
(crazed little hormones racing
around that great, celibate body.)

-subject to restraint
day in and day out.

I bet they'd trade their eye-teeth
for a shot at the rhythm method
-instead of Holy Abstinence.

And how their little hearts
must have sunk
when the boss announced that masturbation
was a no-no.

Frank Mitchell

Virgin Mary

Virgin Mary stands bra-less
in a muslin negligee, looking down
not out of humility, but curious
as to whether toes can be errogenous zones.

Save Our Children (from

Anita Bryant
has splinters in her shoulder.
-seems she's having trouble with her closet door-

Physics would tell her, they would,
that you can't close a door
that's got a foot in it.

All she can reasonable expect,
I mean, the most she can hope for

is a few bruised toes).

Circe's Watercolors

My father had green eyes once,
like pitted olives,
like common clover,
like me.
Now they are blue,
his eyes,
as clear and blue
as the Mediterranean.
And his face is as sad and pointless
as a sandbox in Egypt.

Just yesterday
I looked in the bathroom mirror,
-pitless olives confronting common clover--
and I watched carefully,
listening to Honky-tonk Sirens in the medicine chest,
and waiting for the Argo
to come up over the horizon.

U-lis-ease

As Penelope sat down to weave

Molly Bloom said,
"Penny, your rug is pretty, but
you've got a loose thread here."

-and unraveled
the whole damned thing

Frank Mitchell

High-coo

1.

I ripped my heart from my breast
and held it squirming in my hands before you.
"I like it," you said,
"at a distance."

2.

How stupid I felt,
Standing there in my ratty overalls,
watching your eyes search
for a prince in satin.

3.

Watching you leave this morning
without a word, without a glance,
God, I thought, how comfortable
the celibate bed must be.

Rocking
(in my self-imposed senility)
I drifted
past urine stained floors
and
pollution covered windows
to when

Frank helped me when
we climbed the fence
(made of stones piled
waist high)
And
when we raced to the cluster of trees

I won
(the red gingham tablecloth
flying behind me in the wind).

We ate
fried chicken
drank
lemonade with peppermint
and
slept
(enveloped by honey sweet clover).

I hear someone calling
trying to . . . "Annie, are you asleep?"

no i'm just smelling clover

have you reached the
impasse when
(after climbing old lovers)
you dream of greys
and greens

(and wonder)

Melodie R. Rolling

Forebearance

Knowing I would not have seen you even if you had been home;
I missed you.

Long rains continued to pour,
Never a given thought to whose sunlight and pleasures they
Forbade, while minds slept through ever growing despondence
And despair.
In view of such emptiness.
I missed you.

Dawn bloomed into color, and new days brought back the old,
Numbly, the wheels of life churned and strained in anguish,
Ringing out the passing of time, while death lay humbly in a
Quiet solitude,
No ears bearing pause,
No tears shed of apathetic eyes,
No one to know;
I missed you.

A child's cries haunt far into the night,
Long and lonely,
With only an accompaniment of stars.
Deplorable faces, hollow with an eternity of destitution,
Depict horrifying pains of hunger and tormented anxieties,
An innocence desecrated by thick, unruly smoke and the stench
Of polluted waters.
The bare coolness retains a shine;
Black,
White,
Gleaming without sun or sky,
Mechanisms of a no man's land, once cradled in a dream.
But above all,
I missed you.



Diane Ross

S
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C

S
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K

It's strange
that when you died
A metamorphosis
of your being took place.
You became a
"Fine, Christian young man"
who was a credit
To family and friends.
But as I look
At your silent form,
I remember the days
of smack and coke
And think that
maybe your death
wasn't a shame
after all.

That bitter cup of experience
from which I drank
Tainted the innocence of my soul
An innocence . . .
that needed to be felt
by one so young
An innocence
That never accepted the invitation
To stay awhile,
An invitation I forgot to mail.

Leap Year Confusion

Plastisoid faces of currency green
Fraudulent eloquies make us believe
Promises aimed at the popular plea
Made while well knowing they never could be
Does anyone know what it all means?

National strategy plied locally
Brought to the masses on home viewing screens
Showing the profile they want us to see
Of rubber stamped mannequins down on one knee
Does anyone know what it all means?
Do you comprehend what you see?
They're begging a part in the opening scene
Of leap year confusion in what's happening
Does anyone know what it means?

We form our opinions from what we have seen
Then exercise rights in the whole mockery
To further the plight of our Democracy
Does anyone know what it means?
Do you comprehend what you see?
Are the people you meet really free?
Does anyone know what I mean?

C
O
C
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S
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T
C

Unlife Prolonged

Slithering tendrils, plastic tubes,
 Intrude into almost every orifice.
 Mechanical monsters
 Breathe out cruelty,
 Set in motion
 By mechanical minds,
 Themselves involuntary victims.

Mind, heart, and soul
 Protest the outrage
 Of Nature's violation;
 Protest the nightmare
 Warp and wool
 Of plastic tendrils woven
 Into desolation.

Vigil for Gary

We stand shadowless
 silent in black dawn
 hands clasped against the cold
 wrapped in the chill of death.

Light spreads
 over the sleeping palms
 like blood flooding
 from the wounded sky.

It is over. We flex
 our stiffening limbs
 Motion is life --
 not strapped in black chain.

Part of us is dead.

Shadows

The tail waving
 Black above the green field
 I never saw the dog.

Dawn Song

Crowing
cock struts his spurs
in dance on weather vane,
rustling wings fan the burst of glow,
dawn comes.

Lane Cox

Slum

Hell's rack: moldy stalls
are rank and foul screws
shackling grappling forms,
twisting into suppliant arms.

Malignant tumor: raw.lifeblood
in sparmic throbs pulsate
along the blighted blocks
of the skeletal rims
enclosing the dessicated slum.

Wishing bones, brittle flesh
cries in surging moans
as manacled wrists, deep slashed,
flow from arterial flight--
entombed in the terminal slum.

Hawk

Soaring heights immune,
Arched in perfect symmetry,
Intent on its prey.

Dove

Skyborn innocence,
Commissioned to retrieve an
Olive branch of peace.

Man

Here, hawk and dove meet,
Entwine, struggle and become
A tenuous whole.

Joanne Wharton

Arise!

The birds sang sweet songs
like short bursts of a whistle
The wind softly wiggled the
down
of a thistle
And rising
as if it were the first time
nature was born
So began one hot summer's morn.

Majestic Mountains

The mountains, stand
with rock filled arms
on brown
earthen hips
while cool water streams
trickle blue-green
into crevices
and sun warmed snow
jogs sluggishly
through
rainstormed troughs.

Sounds of Eve

Sometimes,
the nights look very dark and the stars don't
shine so brightly

The wind howls like an animal
caught in a trap
Trees bend on their knees
in prayer

And it seems as if the whole world
will explode.

Twentieth Century Love

You make stale potato chips still crunch
when we're together
and dill pickles
aren't even sour
I glide three feet above the floor
as if I'd just taken a shower
with "lifebouy"
My baskin robins sundaes
never melt
and
my levis and tee shirt
feel like a forty dollar disco dress
from Burdines
How wonderful a spell of love's illusion
To be a fairy princess
and
yet
me

Lori Lambeck

Desert Panorama

Desert winds
whip the earth like scarves
in a breeze
Lonely sand grains roll searchingly,
under a scorching mid-day heat
Animals scamper here and there

And serene peacefulness catches it all in her long arms
for a warm embrace.

Endless Journey

We rode like
two shadows
on a golden stallion
passing up the sun
he waved to us
and smiled light rays
as the clouds blinked back
their tears
and forced
a soft white smile

The Clock

by Nina Lange

Tick, tick, tick, tick, sounded the clock. That noise! She couldn't bear it anymore! Sleepily, she rolled over in bed and groped for the switch. At first the light blinded her swollen eyes, but they gradually began to focus. The roundness of her alarm clock suddenly came into sharp view. Reluctantly, she listened to it; tick, tick, tick, tick. It never seemed to give her peace. Every morning was the same. She'd wake up, turn on the light, and gaze at her clock. There it was again! That sick, empty feeling ran through her body, leaving a hollowness inside her. Unconsciously, she let her hand stroke the side of her face. It felt dry and wrinkled. Wrinkled? She held her hand in front of her for inspection. She saw a gnarled hand, with veins slightly protruding from within. Dark spots covered it in uniformed pattern and size. Yes, it was the hand of an old woman. But that couldn't be! Why, only yesterday morning she'd had soft, smooth unblemished hands. Or was it a thousand mornings ago? She suddenly felt confused.

She pushed her feelings aside and sat up in bed. Slowly, she slipped off the right side of the bed and made her way to the bathroom. Once it had been a dull tan color, so she had decided to brighten it up by changing the paint to a bright yellow. She hated dreary surroundings. Everything else in the bathroom had remained unchanged, even the rust stain in the sink, though at one time it had been

much smaller. "That's funny", she thought out loud. She never noticed its growth in size before.

Now it was time to start breakfast. She went down the stairway and into the kitchen. She took a couple of eggs out of the refrigerator and fried them. She sat down to eat them when she suddenly let out a giggle. For some reason she suddenly remembered another morning when she was eating breakfast. That was the morning Frederick the mailman had a little mishap on his route. He was delivering across the street when the German shepherd broke loose and charged straight for him. In his fright he swung his bag at the dog and all the letters flew all over the place. The silly man! The dog never stopped, even to look at him. It just kept running down the street. The poor fool stood in the yard, gaping at his empty bag. Frederick quit by the end of that week. That was over ten years ago. Could it have been that long? She suddenly lost her appetite.

She left her breakfast unfinished and went into the garage.

"I'll go into town, that's what I'll do."

She had to do something to keep her mind from wandering. She put the key into the ignition, but when she turned it the motor made some sputtering sounds and then died.

"Oh, no." She had forgotten about the battery. She didn't believe what the young

man at the service station had said. They were always hasty in their judgements, and in such a hurry to get your money. They don't take time to check into things. After all, the battery was guaranteed to last out the life of the car. The car wasn't *that* old. Of course not! She might have left the lights on overnight. Without checking, she went back into the house.

Once inside the house, she became depressed. She went back into the kitchen to sit down. She was trapped inside her house for the day, and there was nothing she could do about it. And she had planned to do so many things in town today. There was always so much to do. But wasn't that how it always was? A feeling of panic rose within her. She finally realized what it was. She was caught in a trap that held her and twisted and bent her. She tried to sit perfectly still. Maybe it would pass if she just remained still. No, she knew nothing in this world would make it stop.

She heard it then. Like the beating of her pounding heart. She despised that sound, for she knew it well. She couldn't stand the sound. She wanted it to stop! She jumped out of her chair and ran up the stairs toward her room. Each footstep echoed in the wooden hall. Her heart was pounding wildly now and her breath came in gasps. The frenzy mounted until she reached her doorway. Then . . . all sounds ceased—except the quiet ticking of her clock.

Animated pebble
sits legs withdrawn
meditating in shifting shade.

Weaver, having woven,
hangs on complex threads
and watches green gardens.

Dangling on air waves
as if weightless
vacillating in the breezes

The shaking of stitchery
rouses the spider
from her noonday nap.

Stirring at last
she stands tilted
and moves to the drummer.

The webbing quakes
as she moves
to his rhythms of mating.

He mounts them both
the weaver and the woven
and the dance begins,

The drummer-now-dancer
and the weaver-now-still
knot blackly together.

The curtain falls
to windy silence
for the two alone.

The spinner turns
on the dancer-now-dined-on
and sews him a death cage.

She returns to center stage
her meal completed
and slumbers.

The stage is empty
The play is played
The score performed
The hourglass of the seamstress
gleams redly
as she waits again.

Thomas

E.

Walker

Ladies Night, 2 for 1

Catherine on the cool, black vinyl
Stool uneven but compensated by gin-gyros
Swaying towards equal-librium
Barside rendezvous
Ping-table song
45 atmosphere all night long
They left out the twist
On words hangs despair,
Mixing Metaphors, Double Entandre's
With care,
Can I buy you another?
You said you're from where?
And yes, it's a new watch,
You've got beautiful hair,
I bet you're a model--
Now the come on: Web-weaving
How long ago did I say
I was leaving?

from "On the Rocks; May I See Your ID?"
Norma D. Plume

J. Blair Young

Fashion

It goes on.
It wears off--
With the back and forth
Of sawteeth:
Phosphorescent hose and
Pre-shrunk venim and
Peking sequins and
Wrap around neon
Dropped like napalm on
Seersuckers with haphazardous effects.
Pierced fearings of
The Passe . . .
Narcissus, shattered god.
It wears off . . .

from "The Glass Haderdasherry"
Norma D. Plume

Tick-Talk

Time is a syrupy slowness
A muffled megaton of subsequent
Explosions--
Knocked around yet trapped
in amber
We fight it with
Emotions.

from "Amber, dextrous: The Stigmata of Colour"
Norma D. Plume

Whorescope

After-twelve ladies,
one in pyrotechnic hose--
legs angular, flexible
last night her name was Rose;
tonight she beds with Lynn.
Gutter jewels: selling what
started it all to begin with.
They'll fade or end up lungs
slit and foamy,
after the Barside rendezvous,
or maybe end up as country singers . . .
But who's counting?

from "Trampfire Girls: A Sonnet"
Norma D. Plume

Is she waiting,
the glass empty by the chair
while the tears flow?
Is she crying,
taking curlers from her hair
does she know
when to end a sad affair?
Is she sleeping,
half-awake to hear the door
do her eyes
cry when I do not return
at sunrise?
Is she lonely,
writing words of poetry
to show me?
Is she hoping,
things had worked out differently?

Notes on Things Lost

refracted rays of life your prison
someone shatterglassed the prism:
emptied out your caring jar
joined you
left you
right you are to leak the tears
and mouth the swears,
then softly inside start repairs
and not a chance to see you weep
determined all the while to keep
your perishable virtues tupperware-tight
insured against loss or recall of the night
that they were.

no man is an island,
nor a poet or prophet
nor of any signficance
to any but he.
Even backed by our numbers
we tend to be useless
like the unsalvagable gold
dispersed through the sea.
Yet all the myriad islands
when seen from far above
make definite impressions
Individuality--
Comes not through one alone.

from "Gold to the Highest
Bidder; the Stigmata of Colour"
Norma D. Plume

J. Blair Young

Reflections

Foolish imitation of man
stands before me joking
smiling
Foolish imitation of man
remember as best you can
What you are.

Two a.m. thoughts

Where does it say I must love you
to make it all worthwhile?
As if to disregard all research
and call forth for results?
Anyway, you left your earrings over here.

A Migrant Melody

Between the Ultra Brite
and padded bras
of last night hypnosis,
I chant to the subtle air
celluloid of Bette
back in 'thirty two.'
My crotch heart bites
her hand angelic
Satin bitchery as
I pant and pray
to Bette
back in 'thirty two.'

Interruptions dictate
hungry love psychosis
that I just can't buy,
soon to channel through
an innocent void of Bette
back in 'thirty two.'

In televised trance
on barren motions
of transmigration rouge,
I am the find of my search;
the cruel ballet of Bette
back in 'thirty two.'
The imagined grace
of her improvised drone
becomes heel shadow shoes
I dream in, searching for
the love of Bette
back in 'thirty two.'

Ultra Brite dims
into sermonette
as my crotch heart
bites pillow bosom.

C. J. Blue

A Thought

All there *is* because
there exists in our minds this
concept of being. Outside of our
minds there is nothing but that
which could be there. There is
always nothing and in this existence
of nothing we build reality.

If I Only Had a Pimple

In time
I'll break
the manacles
of almost thirty
mania,
stepping a little
slower across widths
of galoshing Sahara.
A coffee break
over maps, with
rum or Kahlua,
on a yearlong
horizontal tour
of the bolder mental
stunts will lift
the blisters off
an almost thirty
mania,
before I break
in Time.

Another Moon

She came,
stayed,
and left.
A moon appeared
outside the window,
it left,
another moon appeared,
it left.
After a year
I called her,
she was not home.
Another moon appeared.

Don't Smudge the Sleeze

It's only a body, solid cellular,
and they call it male,
the jail of fleshy form.
And I wear the pants
Adam would have worn
when snakes had town
veils of astral pure,
and they call it male,
the tattooed ego
beer quenched
sex hungry grin
but I'm only in
the jail of fleshy form,
solid cellular,
soulful asexual;
trying to escape
Madison Avenue machismo.

Three blocks from
the jungle, around
back of the diner
a monkey met a
lizard in two dimensions
behind rows of
cardboard, where corrugation
was the only support
between two strangers
who chased the eyes,
glowing in serpent vision.

A century of suns
evaporated residual Darwin
into clouds of
fur and scale,
as the monkey squinted
at the lizard squinting
toward the cabbage head,
polaroid glaring.
Hedged by cardboard,
mover of feet
and nations

the monkey and the lizard
shook hands and carried
the cabbage away.

C. J. Blue

Querras volver un día por los viejos caminos
y los surcos resecos, donde nunca sembraste;
Vendras en el crepusculo, cuando la noche crece
y entre sus brazos grises agoniza la tarde.

Tendras los pasos lentos, pero prisa en tus ojos;
querras hallarlo todo tal como lo dejaste:
La jaula del canario colgando del alero,
Tu retrato en un piano que ya no toca nadie,
Oliendo todo, todo el olor de tu ropa
y brillando las cosas como brillaban anter.

Querras volver un día con los brazos abiertos,
pero ya sera tarde.
Querras vivir de nuevo todo lo que viviste
y hasta mirar las cosas que una vez no miraste
Querras volver un día por los viejos caminos.
Querras volver nu día . . . pero ya sera tarde.

You will want to return one day by those old roads
And those dried out furrows,
Where you never planted;
You'll come in the twilight, when the night grows old,
And among its grey arms the afternoon will be dying.

Your steps will be slow, but a haste in your eyes;
You will want to find everything as you left it:
The canary birdcage hanging from the cave,
Your picture at the piano I no longer play,
Smelling everything, the scent of your clothing
And shining all as they once did.

You will want to return someday with arms open,
But it will be too late.
You will want to live again all that you once lived
And even look at things that before you never did.
You will want to return by those old roads.
You will want to return someday . . .
But it will be too late.



Jodie Rolling

Nunca te ame. Tu fuiste como un objeto raro
que se adquiere de pronto y sin saber por que.
como compran los niños el juguete más caro,
pero nunca te ame.

I never loved you. You were that rare object,
That I acquired suddenly without knowing why,
Like children who buy the most expensive gifts,
But I never loved you.

La muerte muere ante los pies del héroe,
Ante el hombre total, definitivo,
porque no tiene edad. En la vergüenza
no hay otoño ni invierno; no hay frío.
Y en el valor es siempre primavera
verde, como la hierba junto al río.

Death dies before the feet of the hero,
Before the total man, the definite,
Because it has no age. In shame
There is no autumn not even winter; it is not cold.
And in courage it is always spring green,
Like the grass close to the river.

Dany Katz

Amigo que no es amigo
y de serlo se envanece
es lo que más se parece
Al perfil de un enemigo.

Friend who is not a friend
And to be one in vain
is the closest you can get
To the profile of an enemy.

Cada mañana aumentan mis antojos
de contemplar la luz que resplandece
en la sonrisa de tus labios.
Y en cada amanecer mi duda crece:
Si abres los ojos porque ya amanece
o es que amanece por abrir tus ojos.

Each morning my fancies augment
To contemplate the light which
Resplends in your smile.
And each dawn my doubts grow:
if you open your eyes because
The sun rises or because
The sun rises when you open your eyes.

La envidia de un hombre honrado
Y libre de corazón,
es ver morir al garrion
Cuando se siente enjaulado.

The envy of an honest man
And of a free heart,
Is to see a sparrow die
When he feels he's caged.



Melodie Rolling



Denise Bartell

Denise Bartell



Inspiration

years lawd, years
it's been so long
you knows we try n
everyday to keep up wit
what we don't eben know
nothing 'bout yet.

workin through the wind
and trees is been keepin me
going yall, to
sing a song from ma heart,
and ma soul sho be satisfied,
 and you,
you is the reason i fears no mo.

Took Off

sitting to take off days and nights
i ponder my mind immensely fulfilling many
wants and desires
 channelizing extremes through concepts of truth
i create a man and woman so beauti ful i wish world
eyes to see
 as i wander through this fine world of gold
and silks i see the "new" people passing
on the "new" word
 the "new" word that explains why black folks
did what they did three four years back 'n
 my ol lady she say "C" i knowed da's a place
'n heaven for us
 now i wonder why the world seems to be so sweet
 i'm tripped out wit so much real peace and
all the got DAMNED people wit satisfied
looks on their faces
 it "had" to happen i "knew" it
we's really free
 wake up
 wake up
WAKE UP FOOL FO YOU BE LATE FOR WORK AGAIN!!!

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

K. C. Cummings



COLD STEEL CITY

I lived in New York City alone
for six months
before I learned to bend beneath the weight
of tall buildings
that rise higher than the men who created them
and I learned to walk without pride
among colorless people
looking like those faces seen only in the last light
of subways descending swiftly through the ground
because dignity there
is spelled with a dollar sign
and there can be room for no God except greed

There is nothing
that looks like those travel posters
displayed in train stations
remember -- of a dark Manhattan skyline
with lines of white light energy
bringing dimension to everything that is not human
so that cold steel and concrete
look like cut crystal

when seen from the distance of a photograph
But there is another New York City
in the factories and mills
where only the illusion of crystal is made
by people working
under a wave of machine noise
or before the heat of open furnaces
and pain does not let them forget
that there is no pride between 9 and 5 o'clock
so that in poolhalls and barrooms
they push forth private revolts
while swinging blindly at the night
or at nothing
and crying for the final fix
that will bring both death and defiance
knowing each is the same
to a man already dying

And I lived in New York City alone
until I was buried
under a sullen sky
that reminded me I was there
not out of a need to feel shame
but because I wanted to
Then after driving through the tunnels
and finding moonlight again
across the Hudson River
I turned back to watch an angry animal
fall earthward from the sky
but instead saw
only lines of white light energy
lending dimension to all but the living
and I hoped that some part of it would die
because I knew it was not cut crystal anymore.



Reminiscence of a Lefthand Guitarist
(phil ochs)

chained to walls of unwise wisdom
he came
dirty
like all the days that had gone untouched
singing in a rage
that no man's mind could hope to tame
his words without reference
knowing only time would teach
what wisdom each word must hold

yesterday came and went
and a voice for sad songs died
knowing there was no fun
in chasing rainbows anymore
you usually catch the wrong end
and in leaving
like a fighter worn from the fight
he left us with less
than on better days before he came

Joseph

In Morning Stillness, the Wind

rushing through hollow reeds
along the riverside
the wind is cooing
dove like
in the morning stillness
of open fields
where i alone
may touch it
though it touches me more readily
when pressed against my face
until early evening
when the wind passes
through my flesh
and within my hollow bones
like the river reeds
where i can hear it cooing
that it is time to go home

Lisandrillo



Melodie Rolling

THE WAIT

by Marty Laughlin

The rain beat furiously upon the thin shingles and tumbled down in small rivers on to the water swollen ground. Every now and again a few drops would manage to find their way down the chimney and fall on the smoldering logs sending up a hiss and a wisp of smoke. The old woman had not replenished the fire because she would be leaving soon and it was a sin to waste good firewood when no one was there to benefit from its warmth and brightness. She shuffled about the room in her usual slow, patient manner, having become stooped with the years but still strong, her gnarled hands doing the daily chores as a matter of routine now with assistance from neither her eyes nor her mind.

The room was beginning to grow cold and the rain cast a grayness about the usually cheerful shack. A large straw bed in the corner near the fireplace and a rough board table in the center were the room's only furnishing except for a chair near the window and an old trunk where she kept her sewing things.

But the old woman seemed to notice neither the empty drabness of the room nor the chill. She was cleaning eggs with a damp rag and as she cleaned she chatted quietly with Celia. She would talk to Celia from early morning rising to late dusk when she banked the fire and set out the old black skillet for the following morning's mush. "Celia, ya' really ought to be ashamed of yourself, ya' know. Ya' never do anything to help me, ya' know. You're the first one up with the crowing of the cock, but do you ever light the fire

for me and put on the water to boil? Oh, no, ever since my husband was taken you sit on your hind end and do nothing. Just you wait till they let him come home, my dear, you'll find yourself doing a little work around here again. At least you could go hunting and try side a town down by them tar pits. Ya' was stuck all over with tar, ya' was, like the little tar baby an' lef' to die. David figured it was them foreign soldiers what killed our mayor. They musta been drunk and stuck ya' up with tar so as to see ya' stagger 'round trying to move what with yo' legs half stuck together like they was. Ay, and such a little thing ya' was, too." She paused and smiled down at the egg in her hand, remembering the happiness she had had.

"But look at ya' now, so big ya' near eat me outta house and home." She reached her hand down and scratched Celia gently behind the ears. At this Celia showed the first signs of life by thumping her tail slowly three or four times on the hollow wooden floor and raising her head just enough to lick the old woman on the wrist.

"A few more minutes, Celia, I'll be finished and we can go. I gotta take these things to Mrs. Wilinsky. She's finally taken to her bed ya' know. I always say these past ten years ya' gettin' old, ya gotta quit totin' those heavy tubs a' water fer all that laundry. Ya' wait till my David comes home, he's going to build her a trough right up to the tubs. Then

all she gotta do is lift the dam board and the water runs right into her tub. Then when it's full, put the dam back down and the water stops. She'll never have to lift another tub when my David gets home. Come on Celia, ya' and me gotta go take her these eggs and bread now. She's gotta eat even though she can't take in laundry for a while.

The old woman set the last egg gently into the basket on the table and covered it with a piece of burlap. She shuffled over to the door and took down her shawl and coat while Celia rose slowly, raising her rump in the air and stretching her legs full out in front of her. She yawned with deliberate patience, then snapping her jaw shut she lumbered over to the door and stood waiting while the old woman tied her faded shawl under her chin.

Mrs. Wilinsky lived on the outskirts of town near the prison. Her husband had been taken many years ago along with David and many other village men and she continued to make her meager living as best as possible taking in laundry. But times were hard, work was scarce at best and her bones hurt everyday now. Her husband and her youth had been taken from her and the weight of the years rested heavily upon her shoulders like a tub of wet laundry she was unable to sit down. Her hands were red and stiff from many years of being submerged in water and she lay in her bed with corpse-like stillness because the smallest movement sent white hot iron spikes

thru her bones and joints. She had drifted into a semi-conscious sleep and the sweet relief of a dream was spilling bright, warming sunlight into her pores and sending her the joyous absence of pain, until a heavy pounding pushed her rudely back to earth.

"Sarah, come in," she called. "I'm sorry not to open the door for ya' but my bones rule me and the rain rules my bones."

Sarah smiled and pushed the door shut behind Celia. "Ay, I know, this weather is for the dogs. My David used to tell me of places on the earth where snow never falls and the grass is always like that of midsummer. Can you imagine? And when it rains it's not like the feel of melted ice down your back but like someone was sprinklin' a bucket of the warm springs on ya'. Ay, but here, I've got something just as good." She pulled her wet shawl off and shook the water from it then began to prepare hot water for tea and pulled the eggs and bread from her basket.

I suppose you'll be going in this rain to see David then, Sarah." It was more a statement than a question. In fifteen years Sarah had never yet failed to go to the prison twice a week on Sundays and Wednesdays well before the specified hours.

"Oh, now Margaret, ya' know a little rain would never stop Celia and I from trying to see David. Let me show ya' what I've been making him for the winter setting in." Sarah reached into her basket again and pulled out

to bring us home a rabbit for supper, no? Eh, well, I love ya' anyway, you old fool. David will be so glad to see ya'. Do ya' remember when he brought you home to live with us? Eh, no? Well, it was near onto eighteen years ago. David and I had been married but five or six years, we had. Just newly weds, we were then and she chuckled low in her throat to think of it. Found ya' out in the woods out-a heavy man's sweater and spread it carefully on the bed for Margaret to see.

"I made one arm shorter than the other just a bit and it's got just a few bumps in it when the light got dim. Now that the days are getting shorter, I haven't enough daylight left after I am finished with my other sewing so I have to work on this by the firelight and I can't see my mistakes all the time. But perhaps David won't notice. It's heavy and warm and that's what he needs to see him through the winter."

Margaret fingered the sweater lovingly and thought of her own husband dead and gone these many years. A strong, healthy, young man he had been put in a damp, cold, wet cell to rot; never allowed to speak a single, solitary word, never allowed out, confined like an animal to die in captivity. She also had gone to the prison with Sarah, some time ago, twice a week to try to catch a glimpse of her husband until she had heard as most of the women had heard that her husband was dead. Since then she had been waiting patiently to die and be done with this life of pain, toil and loneliness.

But Sarah continued to wait for her husband to come home. She had never heard. The high, black walls of the prison had swallowed him and never once released even the tiniest memory of him yet Sarah knew he was there.

Even now she gently gathered up the unfinished sweater and folding it carefully, replaced it in the basket.

"I'll stop by on my way back to build up the fire and warm ya' another chunk of bread

and cheese," she promised Margaret. "Ya' rest now, I'll return shortly. Come on, Celia. David's waiting."

The old dog arose and again stood waiting patiently as the old woman placed her shawl over her head and picked up her basket.

"God be with ya', Sarah," Margaret called weakly from the bed as the door closed and the rain shot a blast of wind across the room. Margaret pulled the blanket tighter about her shoulders and closed her eyes wearily.

The rain seemed to be driving harder now and Sarah could feel the icy sting of each drop on her face. The towering black wall of the prison loomed before her and she stood alone on the far side of the street gazing up at the rows of gleaming iron grills and empty gray windows of the prison. Quite some time passed before she was joined by a few more women all wrapped tight in their coats and hunched against the rain. As the bell in the prison tower tolled the hour, shaved heads could be dimly made out behind the barred windows and hands reached out and grasped the iron bars. It seemed as if the figures behind the bars had only heads and hands which flickered and fluttered out against the bars then the heads would disappear to reappear a moment later.

Sarah stood and smiled up at the bodiless heads seeming not to notice the rain pelting her face and running down her cheeks and beneath her coat collar like icy tears. She only smiled up and from time to time she waved. When the tower bell rang again she crossed the street with the others and went to the little door by the draw bridge between the guard shelters. When her turn came she approached the guard and gave him her name. He ran his finger down the board and not seeing her name there, he looked up again and said, "No, I'm sorry, Sarah." He knew her. They all knew her.

"Is there any news?" she asked.

"Everything is just the same as far as I know but I never see the prisoners," the young guard replied.

"So there is no chance of my seeing my husband this time," she said flatly. The hopeful questioning had gone out of her voice.

"I'm sorry, Sarah," came the reply again.

"Will you place my request with your superiors?" she asked.

"I promise but the decision has nothing to do with me."

"I know." She turned and walked slowly back to the other side of the street and smiled up and waved again. Then, hooking her basket over her arm she carefully removed the sweater she had been working on and held it up to show the progress she had made.

The bell in the tower rang again and the shaved heads disappeared instantaneously from behind the bars. Sarah waved once again this last time with her handkerchief then turned and shuffled with the others toward the side streets, drawing the shawl tighter over her head and hunching her shoulders lower against the rain.

Sometimes she returned before darkness fell and would stand staring up the grilled windows empty of the shaved heads and helpless hands.

Margaret heard her returning and closed her eyes tight, pretending sleep. She found it harder and harder to bear the more and more frequent look of despair and hopelessness on Sarah's face, especially after she'd been to the prison. Perhaps that was why neither she, nor any of the others, could bring themselves to tell Sarah that they had heard something, long ago, about David. That each one of them and each for his own reasons had spared himself from telling her that her husband, a political suspect, never in any case allowed out of his cell, had been transferred to another prison sometime during his fourth month and executed the following morning.



THE LETTER

by
Susan Lynn Andrus

The grey light filtered through the dusty panes of the window, dimly lighting the small room. Mary, a fragile old woman, bent over the bed in an empty attempt to smooth the covers. She wore a bulky brown dress covered by an old pink sweater with small blue flowers embroidered at the top. Only one of the tiny pearl buttons still hung loosely by its thread and the tattered garment fell limp over her bent frame.

Mary's pepper hair was combed into a tight bun at the back of her head and a few wispy strands fell toward her face as she finished the bed. Cold grey walls formed a rectangle with a door and a window at either end. In an open alcove near the door sat a rust-stained sink and toilet. The old bed was pushed against the wall near the window and the blue metal desk, that sat on the opposite wall, held the hot plate she used to cook on and a faded photo of her son, John, a doctor in California.

"Need to go to the store," Mary said as if someone else was in the room, "need some sugar, bread, and a little coffee, too."

She moved across the room to the desk and brought her purse from the lower drawer.

"Wish there was a store closer than Gersh-

man's. He gives me goose-pimples with his sneers. He thinks I'm an old bag who ain't worth a thing."

She stopped suddenly as she caught herself talking to no one, and pulled on the heavy black coat she wore whenever she left the cold grey room. Mary moved to the door, taking the key from her purse, and carefully locked the door behind her. She labored down the stairs and through the dark hall to the steps leading to the sidewalk. Trudging heavily, Mary made her way toward the dirty market at the end of the block. Mary hesitated before going in as she glanced at the peeling red paint that spelled out Gershman's Market on the cloudy window. As she struggled with the dirty door Mary never looked up at Jack Gershman, a crude man who often cheated her on the price of her groceries.

"How are ya today, Mrs. Kent? Nice day ain't it." He spit into the rusted bucket at his feet and rearranged the juicy wad of tobacco that bulged from behind his right cheek.

Gathering her food, Mary brought it to the counter where the grinning Gershman stood. Vainly Mary tried to add the prices and figure the proper change, but Gershman was quick at

it and Mary's feeble mind could not keep pace. Often, she would return to her room and find she had been overcharged, but Mary was always too embarrassed to go back and question him.

"That'll be three sixty-five, Mrs. Kent," he said looking down his nose, "and a nickel change. Thank you, have a nice day."

He spit again into the bucket, splattering the floor in a shower of juice. Mary gathered up her bag, trying to avoid his mocking gaze.

"Maybe today. Today I'll get a letter from John. And he'll tell me if he's coming for a visit," she said, rambling, as her slow shuffle carried her down the street.

Mary stopped to rest on a bus bench. Children on the way home from school passed her without a glance as Mary watched from behind grey eyes. John had two children, a boy and a girl, but she had never seen them and she liked to pretend that these children were her grandchildren. Listening through dull ears to the street sounds moving past her, Mary sat for many minutes with her eyes closed. The squeal of brakes came along side of her and Mary opened her eyes, surprised to find the city bus to 20th street in front of her,

its door open.

“Lady, hey lady,” the bus driver yelled, “is ya getting on or ain’t ya?”

She shook her head. He gave an unhappy look and slammed the door. The bus roared off leaving her surrounded by dirty fumes that choked her and made her eyes water. The street seemed mean now and Mary rose unsteadily to walk home.

Mary struggled up the front steps making her way down the hall while children, home from school now, dodged around her as they ran up and down the hall. The small bag seemed to grow in weight as she wobbled up the stairs and walked toward her room. Mary fumbled to find the key, unlocked the door and went into the room. She was disappointed that no letter had fallen to the floor after being shoved through the letter flap in the door. The warm empty stare of her son’s picture followed Mary as she entered the room.

Mary looked quickly away and said, “Johnny, you should write your mama once in a while. Well, maybe I’ll get a letter from ya tomorrow.”

She sat down wearily on the bed and began talking to the photo again, “Johnny, this old lady ain’t gonna last too long now. Got no friends here. None that’s alive at least.”

She glanced at the picture, “Now, I know you’re a busy man but a letter to your old mama can’t take too long.”

Crying she sobbed, “Oh son, I do want to see my grandchildren so. Won’t you come take this old lady out West where it’s warm so I can see your children and die in peace?”

She heaved a great breath, “This old lady’s gonna take her place in heaven, I know, I feel it in my bones.” She pulled a yellowed handkerchief from her dress pocket, wiping the

tears that flowed down her wrinkled face.

The leaky faucet had stained the back of the sink and above the drain in a rusty patch. Mary leaned over, splashing her face with cold water; it tasted sweet on her lips. She patted her face and the back of her neck with her hands, straightening slowly. Mary’s aged face, reflected in the dark spattered mirror above the sink, was creased and brown and sagging from the years. Leaving the sink Mary sat on the bed, which moaned slightly under her weight. Mary clumsily removed her shoes, wiggling the old crooked toes with a sigh of relief.

“Johnny, I’ll be so happy when we get to California. I ain’t seen you for so long. It will be such a happy day,” she smiled at the thought but her aching body brought her back to the dim room that was her life.

The sun was hovering above the horizon and the small room sank into darkness. Mary lay back on the bed letting the quietness of the room settle down upon her. She had no strength to change into night clothes so she pulled the covers over her tired body, closing her eyes to the dark.

When Mary woke the sun was streaming through the window, casting great shadows over her bed. Mary pulled herself out of bed, standing unsteadily for a moment. The grey concrete floor burned ice-like on her fragile feet. Walking carefully to the sink Mary washed, then changed her clothes to fix breakfast. Picking up the black cord of the hot plate, she bent to plug it in. As she began to rise from her knees Mary heard a noise at the door, and hoping it was a letter, she spun quickly to see. Her knees buckled and Mary fell in a heap on the floor. No letter fell through the slot. After a few minutes she

struggled up slowly and wobbled to the sink to get water for her coffee. Filling the glass that sat on the back of the sink, Mary poured the water into a small pan she kept in the middle drawer of the desk. She set the pan on the hot plate and waited for the water to boil. Mary watched the hot bubbles pop at the surface of the water, then poured some of the steaming liquid into a plastic mug. She carefully measured a spoonful of instant coffee she had gotten at Gershman’s the day before and dumped it into the water. The water turned murky brown and foam swirled at the top as Mary stirred. She unplugged the hot plate and poured the extra water into the sink. Sitting on the unmade bed Mary sipped the dark brew from the spoon as she watched the letter flap. When the coffee had cooled Mary took long sips, letting the warmth roll down her throat. When she had finished Mary took the mug to the sink and rinsed it out, letting it dry upside down on the back of the sink.

The sun had passed the window and dimly lit the room. Mary put on her pink sweater and began to make the bed, pulling the top sheet in weak anger.

“Johnny, I’m expecting a letter from ya today. Now don’t let me down, ya hear, Johnny,” she said angrily.

She sat for a long time watching the door and waiting for the footsteps of the mailman. Black clouds moved to fill the window and seemed to seep into the room as solid blackness. Rain slapped the window and the sounds from the street became muffled. Mary, stretched out on the bed, pulled the sweater close around her against the blackness.

“Johnny, I’ll be so happy when you come get me. California must be a pretty place. And warm, yes, so warm.”

Vernal Equinox 1977

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Shall we swing? Shall we swing?
Do we dare to ask what sorrow brings?
No, let us go, let us go
and pray the silken moon to sing,
and pray the silken moon to sing.

I, who am rejected by the caste of men
(because I would not deny that
part of me that is woman - and threatened
to expose it in others)
have come unto the caste of woman
and declared myself.
and am called comrade,
friend, sympathizer, feminist,
empath, brother.
-and because there was no fear of incest,
because it was assumed I had no want -

I was called Brother.

-and because I feared no incest,
because I had no want -

I called you Sister.

And so we danced our symbiotic waltz,
Woman and I,
keeping time, time,
time, two three, time two three, time two three,
time,
to a rhyme, a rhyme of the sea, two three,
sea two three, sea two three.

I have known the sea. I have known the sea.
We have chatted over death and tea.
She has heard my plea (to drown in seahorse pools
while menstrual stars
sing out of key)

-and answered back a noncommittal we shall see.
we shall see.

When first I saw you (mirror image of myself)
your red bandana like some
ceiling painted red somewhere,
-a-sign-in-the-window-omen
saying yes yes it's me. it's me.
I thought, this is my sister come home.
this is my sister come home.
And I called you Amazon, and Fury,
Gorgon, Sappho, Siren,
Joan of Arc and Susan B.
and Edna St. Vincet Millay.
I worshipped your anger. I gloried in your
stainless-steel will.

"I'll show you mine if you show me yours,"
I said. (or was it you?) So we took out our little
monsters, like Kens and Barbies, and placed them on
the table
and fought to see who
was Ken and who was Barbie. (I forget now which was which)

We vocalized our love-songs (emitic as they were)
and read like braille
each other's scars
that for so long we lied
and said were birthmarks.

Street corner evangelist
(pushing pamphlets and salvation)
says that Jesus died for our sins.
"Not ours," we say, "not ours, baby.
We died for our own sins. We have
seen the beast dance. We have seen
him dance a jig."

Jesus loves us anyway.

This we know
for the Bible tells us so.

Cronkite tells us so.
Cronkite tells it the way it is.
Cronkite wants to castrate me.
(Fidel Castrate. infidel. infidel.

They will crucify us, I tell you.
truce-ify us.
deuce-ify us.
puce-ify us.

No, you say, we will not let them. (that's what St. Peter said)

"He who lives by the sword will die by the sword."

I don't want to die in a poem, lady, I swear I don't.

You handed me your heart, all ravaged
and uncircumcised,
and I thought, I cannot eat this, I cannot.
I cannot give back. I cannot.
-then saw myself all of six years, standing at the wee-wee,
mommy towering over saying, "Tinkle just a little
more," and me saying I can't but doing it anyway.

And yes I was afraid
of your fierceness and your beauty.
(afraid because I could not tell them apart)
But I am no longer ashamed to say
I fear the dark.
And will you hold my hand
until I am asleep?
just until I sleep?
and are the mountains deep?
and are the oceans steep?
and how long until I sleep?

how long until I sleep?

Driving home I watched
you sleep for more than thirty miles,
and thought,
This is my sister, no longer my sister.
For we have come beyond titles and
relationships,
beyond flesh and gonads and jock-straps
and monthly cramps . . .
we have come beyond.

(and I watched hitch-hikers, asphalt weary,
and wished that I could stop and tell
them that I only have a two-seater. Perhaps
they know. Perhaps they know.)

Drained and complete you slept. Drained and complete
I cradled you,
rocking back and forth in my car,
breathing in the ribbons of interstate. hush. hush.

And but a mile from the place you call home, I gently
woke you
and watched
as you gave up that peaceful sleep
that cost you more than thirty miles,
looked around and recognizing said, "I'll be damned."

We have seen the sea. We have seen the sea.
We have toiled the waves and set them free.
We have known and we have bled.
We have raged and we have killed
and laughed instead
of dying.
We have slit our wrists with our own ennui.
Just you and I. (and of course the sea)
but just us three.
Just us three.

"Dateline . . . 1986"

. . . From his penthouse apartment atop the Peking Hilton, Richard Nixon today officially forgave the United States . . .

Meanwhile in New Mecca City (formerly New York City) Resident Landlord Spiro Agnew announced that "Lawrence of Arabia" will be shown again this year as it has been for the last five years. . .

Hollywood . . . Former Senator John Tunney has been signed for the starring role in "From Plains to Blands, the Jimmy Carter Story." Among those considered for the role Jim Nabors and Tammy Wynette.

. . . On a sadder note, former Gerald Ford impersonator Chevy Chase was buried today. Chase fell from prominence with Ford's 1976 defeat. He'll be buried between Vaughn Meeder and David Frye.

. . . And finally after a ten year legal battle, the estate of Howard Hughes was settled today. The bulk of this huge estate will be used to establish a research foundation to study the male menopause syndrome.

Richard Smith

Cat-Burglar

The Sun, cat-burglar,
Crept on a roof by twilight.
Night arrested it.

Jack Gould

Class Snooze

And his voice droons
on and on and on
Never ceasing for a pause,
in his dull lecture full of
demand curves.
Puffing on cigarettes as he
hastily speaks,
In a panic to interest the class
Ennui settles upon me,
My lids growing heavy
later,
My head jolts forward
Awakening me
To see the eyes watching
Me in my moment of weakness
And his resentment for
my showing him his.

Teacher

Yes, I think you're pretty
And so I pat the child,
And yes, I think you're nice,
I've told you so now twice.

Yet she has the feeling,
What's more it's sad, but true,
That some great thing is lacking,
Child, I can't feel love for you.

Perhaps you've been rejected,
Leaving stain upon your soul,
And you overcompensate
To reach your childish goal.

But you wind your arms around me,
I feel I'm in a snare,
And all you want, for God's sake,
Is someone who will care!

So I try to be more patient,
And not reveal the clue,
There's a cold dark stone inside me,
Child, I can't feel love for you.

Linda Sammarco

Melodie Rolling



ESSAY

SSAY

SAY

Sheep could be seen grazing as the bus passed out through the main gate of the base. Yesterday morning these same sheep had been in the narrow strip of land between the adjacent runways of the military and civilian air fields.

A young guard had shot a Greek in the back because the man had panicked. To produce fear and keep discipline the military planted Arab terrorists behind every bush in the minds of its men. The Greek national, who was coming to the base to work, violated an intangible; he panicked.

Things are like that in Spain. The history of this century has not been kind to her. As an American bartender living in Madrid had said, "Be careful not to give the police reason to use force on you. This is a fascist government here and if the police club someone in the street then it's a matter of just that; the government gives them that right."

To live in Spain must be like walking a line between brute force and regulation. The sheep had learned not to cross the active runways.

It is a sunny place and this was a crisp sunny day. The flatness of the land ends abruptly where right angle dirt and rock terraces suddenly poke up as if someone, long ago, had pushed buttons on a juxtaposed panel on the opposite side of the surface.

Driving south towards Madrid, fields to either side of the road artery are increasingly divided by barbed wire fences. Here there are less sheep and less buttes; there are excavations where the surface has been pushed inward at right angles. As if to create symmetry

by Chuck Ebbighausen

by pushing buttons down from the surface.

There is a natural brightness and crispness to everything here. Buildings stand bursting with life contained. In Madrid few people walk with nowhere to go; that is part of the order of the place.

As the bus entered Madrid and passed the old and new standing together the greenish tint of the windows reduced glare and created that feeling of viewing through a filter: of being able to look closely into the fabric and the structure of the atmosphere.

Architecture is unified by a singular flavor here. Streets seem planned by a subconscious grasp of order shared by those who live in Madrid. Some are straight, some are curved, others are both straight and curved; all is in unison as are the buildings and geography.

Red line cabs are a tenth of the traffic as triangular road signs in Spanish line the curving thoroughfare and shorter six lane streets shoot off and connect and dusk approaches.

Headlights of small cars dart and weave. A friend and myself walk in and around small pubs and taverns and analyze our impressions as we talk about authors and try to gain a grasp of the feeling of the place.

I try to imagine life here and images of a language unlike my own. Billboards glare short one and two syllable messages and strongly lined red and black pictures of vivid flesh tones. This must have a context in the thought of the place just as the cosmetic qualities of the Frankfurt women find some origin in the too superficial quality of the highly structured unpoetic German.

We pass a construction site and realize we

cannot be lost because we have been walking in the same circles now for more than two hours. In an English pub I order a beer for myself and stand tottering on the edge of an answer while searching for a men's room.

But they aren't talkative at the counter, except between themselves, and we leave for our American bartender, cheap red wine, and a pledge to our writing and the memory of Hemingway.

Boarding a bus to return to Torre Jon I begin to take mental notes while still intoxicated by the still flowing perceptions. And as a footnote I suddenly miss Florida and try to grasp the difference between there and here. Is it the history? I wonder, or does the familiarity cause my alienation and mental exile from home?

And now, returned home, with memories of a recent trip to Key West fully in focus I feel able to write again. It was not the familiarity that barred writing here before. I now realize it was the lack of mystery compounded with a loss of the love of doing it.

That is where the American educational system fails and where its chances of success are most limited by its present tack. Because loving anything, a woman, a man, an object, an art, requires first the cultivation of a personal aesthetic and that requires work and an appreciation of that work. American classrooms seldom hint that, and too often when attempts are made the positive responses are small in number or latent.

I realize this now learning to love Florida and preparing to leave to return again: a need for a moveable feast.

Do You ? ? ? Take This (man/woman) To Be . . .

He brought

pretty gifts
with rainbow colored string.

We danced

laughed at life,
tied the knot
and traded rings.

He yanked

his puppet's cord

She jumped

(for her king)
to wash his clothes,
the floors
and grease
the squeaking bed spring.

He spun

his selfish web
with deadly
black silk string.

It choked

respect and love
then wedding bells
ceased to ring.

Suzanne M. Parker

Was it something I said
that made you walk away
from the fire in my eyes

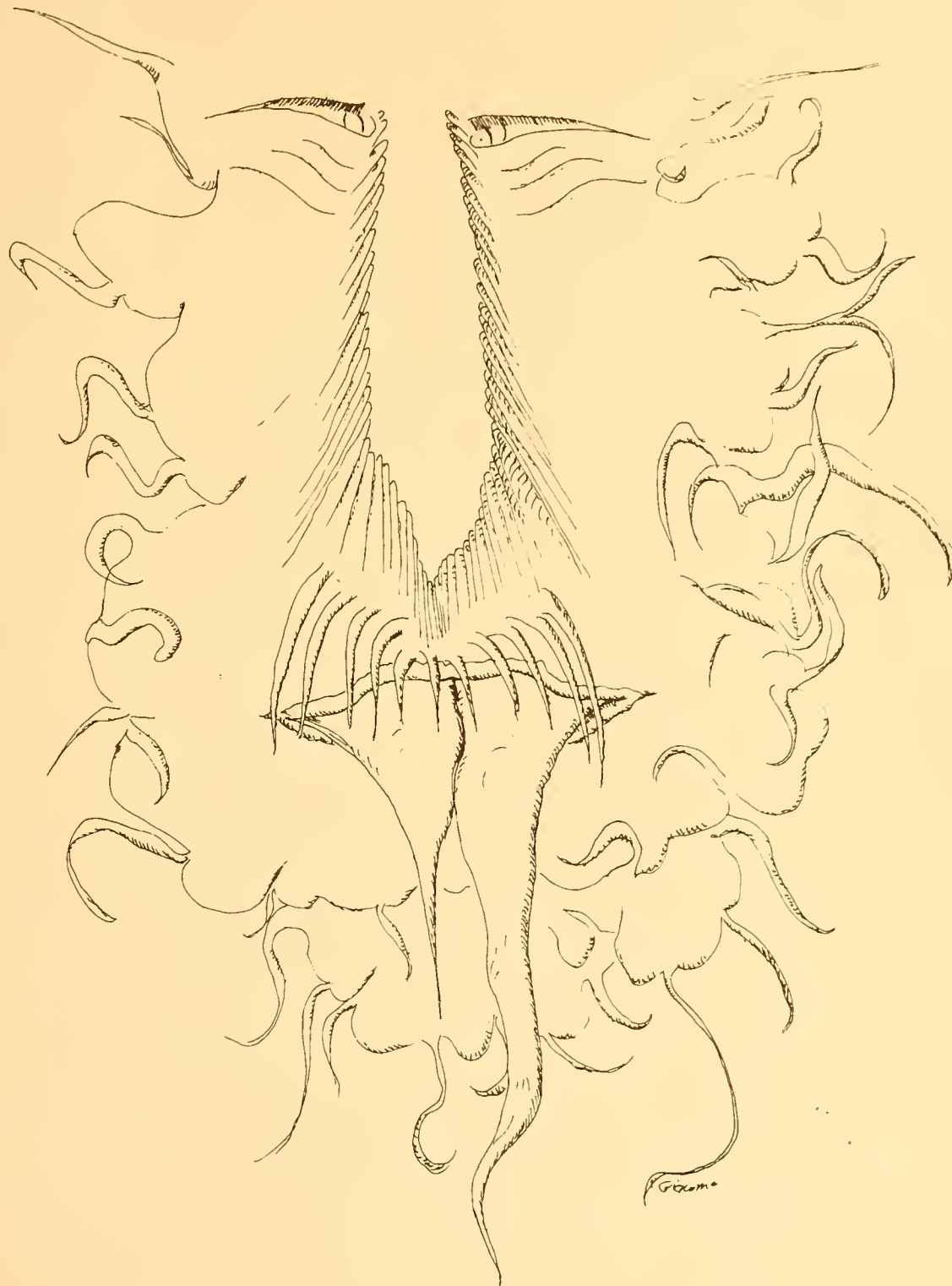
Or was it just that your
mirror image of me
had fallen away
to reveal an angry soul

behind a submissive disguise

shocked to find that
I have a cause
that's been hidden from view

I've been weak for so long

I've changed my mind
come back
listen to me
I've finally got something
to say
that isn't an imitation
of you.



Anna Marie Kinch

Your footsteps echo in the hallway. The eunuch floors herald your coming with clinical accuracy. The walls around me whisper, detailing our encounters in voices void of passion, not un-like the bi-focaled nun who teaches personal hygiene. Each footfall grows more intense like the fire that rises slowly from the floor beneath the bed. Passing through the bedsheets it singes the outline of my still body. I wait for you. Lapsing from the silence of this world into the chaotic terror of another, I wait, unbreathing, unmoving.

From the hidden recesses of my trembling limbs, the drops of perspiration creep forth, the drops of perspiration, creep, creep. I gasp. Like a glutton, I devour the stale air, only to heave it back up like the vomit of a drunken nausea, forth, creep forth. The room dances madly in patterns of hideous red. My consciousness becomes engorged with turning blood. From the ceiling and the tell-tale walls the blood rushes, violently. From the gaping echoes of your feet the blood leaps. From the severed testes of the eunuch floors, from the mutilated wrists of the nun who had no need for personal hygiene, the blood, the blood, the blood. Gasping for the stale air that has become the torrents of blood, my lungs are the abyss that begs for the blood, the endless flow of blood that my lips tread, tread like the insatiable vampire, the vampire that is the abyss of my lungs that beg, for the blood, the blood.

From the hidden recesses of my trembling limbs the drops of perspiration creep forth. Bleed forth. I hear them searing on my skin, rolling down the trembling little limbs in furious protest. One by one they fall. From the dank armpit the sweat rolls boldly, down the trunk like tears down a mountain side, like the tears of Apache women, down the mountain to form black stones to be held in little boys' hands to be held to the light to be held in awe, to be held in a father's arms who told a tale of tears that rolled boldly down mountain sides like drops of perspiration that roll down wanting bodies. And does the mountain feel the tears like I feel them? And who found the tears, daddy, who? My shallow breath becomes one quick, silent shriek as I feel the drops leave my armpit, they are so cold against my skin smoldering rage. Why did the tears turn to stone, daddy, why? I trace one cool drop as it comes to linger about the outskirts of my quivering breast and then thrill as it falls swiftly along my side. I follow the drop as it falls, the drop of sweat for the drop of sweat wrought in killing, for the drop of blood wrought in dying, for the drop of tear wrought in that pretty charade called dying. The bead of liquid falls from my body. I feel it as it slides across my torrid flesh and plunges to the sheet below. Listening carefully, I hear its last pitiful cry as it loses itself amid the flames beneath the bed. Pity. Pity.

Frank Mitchell

PhD

I once loved a man with a PhD.
(three little letters that set him above humanity)
a scholar, a wit,
a wise and learned man.
And I was so glad at last
To have something to drag around
at parties.

-Hello, I'd like you to meet my very good friend
Dr. Whatshisname. Oh no, not a 'medical' doctor.
Whatsi here has earned a doctorate in Medieval
Classicism.-

But the good doctor grew weary of introductions
and I lost a friend
but kept the title.
(and somewhere along the proverbial line
I learned that every man has an alphabet to offer.
A whole alphabet!)

But there I sat with my three-letter memories,
knowing
they were about as valuable
as the sound they made: phd phd phd.

Frank Mitchell

Media class

I am torturing the Tupperware,
burping it against its will,
twisting its ugly little lid
until it squeals.
"Better watch out," I warn, "or you'll end up
like the Lettuce Crisper over there, melting away
on the Deluxe Self-Cleaning range,
spreading and bubbling sticky green
on white enamel,
ploppin' out its final belches: plop plop."

Ho do I do it?
I take care of the kids,
clean the house,
run the PTA,
serve on five presidential committees,
two blue ribbon panels
and a specially convened grand jury.
I am a pillar of the community
and a white tornado in bed.
The old man,
he thinks he'll keep me.

And I'm on top of everything,
I've found the hairspray that will keep my set,
and the anti-perspirant that will hold up
under any conditions.

Cosmopolitan says that's not enough,
but I can't complain.

Menopausal anxiety stands outside my window,
rapping the pane with his arthritic knuckles,
"I see you in there. I see you."
Thank God for hormones and modern technology.
Maybe me and the old man can shave together in years.

It's five o'clock
and dinner's not ready.
I'm thinking it might never be.
Lettuce Crisper smokes and threatens to
combust,
while a man on the radio
wants to know if I'm aware
that Marilyn Monroe would be fifty
if she had lived.

Last Dance

I danced slowly
to the lone songbird
that sang outside my window,
and thought briefly of you,
moving to the frenzied rhythm
of disco,
and I thought how sad,
how very sad
that never once
would we dance together.



May the west winds
carry you lightly
away
for i know no
cure of what
we no longer have
and i see no reason
to foolishly play
the game of pretend
by shedding tears
over losing what was
lost long ago.
may the west winds
carry you gracefully
away.

Darlyne Baldwin

The lioness, in all of her
feline beauty
lay her prey dead.

Long Walk to Happiness

I've been taking a long walk.
I can see happiness in front of me,
But, I can't get a hold on it.
Although hurt and happiness followed
me along the way, barely reaching me
at times,
I think I've finally found the happiness
that I've been looking for.
To have you to hold on to,
To make me feel secure in your arms,
To exchange our innermost thoughts with
each other,
For you to care.
I've found you, but in waiting for you
to find me,
Hurt caught me.
I've been fighting the hurt and have been,
Trying to reach you.
It wouldn't work if I made it the whole
way alone.
Can you meet me half way?

Anger

Anger is a fire,
Ignited by the stinging sparks of words.
Its flames devouring heart,
Its smoke blinding judgement,
Fed by the fuel of indignation.
Anger is a fire,
Spread by the changing wind of impulse,
Destroying the forests of wisdom,
Unchecked by screams of experience,
Leaving the blackened ruins of regions.

Ilene Miner

I couldn't get to sleep last night,
Just because of that dumb little fight .
I turned and tossed,
I cried and was lost.
I wanted to wake you,
I wanted to feel near.
And when you opened your eyes,
I noticed your tears.

Jane DeLessio

Niki Martin

Clear skies
encircle my life
My mind alone
creates the clouds,
and I rain upon
what I've made of myself.

My rainbow has yet to come.

All I wanted
was a single flower
But you didn't understand.
You covered my hillside
with your love
until all the roots became
entangled, and
I couldn't breathe.



We talked of disappointments
Shared sad stories and suicides
Remembered funerals and fights

Swinging high
We sang songs
and cried over the ironies of life.

They say if you dig deep enough
You'll come to China
I think they lied.

Think I'll try walking straight ahead
Laying in the cool, blue water
rocking to and fro like inside my mother's womb

Write a poem Frank
Make it a good one

I've pulled all the bits and pieces out of the trunk
Laid them all out for you to see
But just as expectations of China soon become boring
They always run away

Leaving me
like scattered playtoys
Discarded and spread around

No, no more you say
Until the next time

So I made a tomb stone in the sand
thought of your tears last night

And buried one small part more
These small deaths
they grow like cancer
Until all that's left is wasted energy and another sad poem
Isn't there more?

Write a poem Frank
Make it a good one

I'm done.

Debbie Rubin

I can still remember prowling neighborhood streets
looking for love in the back seat of cars
and on mattresses that sagged and creaked
With promises and soothing words for light

Wearied from sleepless nights
and the dull, empty ache to belong
I painted my life black
with a bottle of Boones Farm and a handful of pills
thinking I didn't need anything more

Intoxication slowly dulled my senses as my speech became slurred
drifting into an almost pleasant unconsciousness

Laying on the cold, sterile table
Seeing an obese, distorted body looking at me . . .
Pumping poisons
as I screamed, covering up the pain

A young boy called his middle-class suburban mother,
"Mom, I'm going to kill myself instead of lunch today."
"No son, you know you can't do that."
But it was too late
the shot had rung out
and he was dead

Six years and a friend's funeral later
I know I've fought too hard to give up easily
You might have learned the same.

Beauty no doubt does not make revolution
but a day will come when
Revolutions will have need of beauty.

Albert Camus





DATE DUE

OLIVE
FLORIDA

