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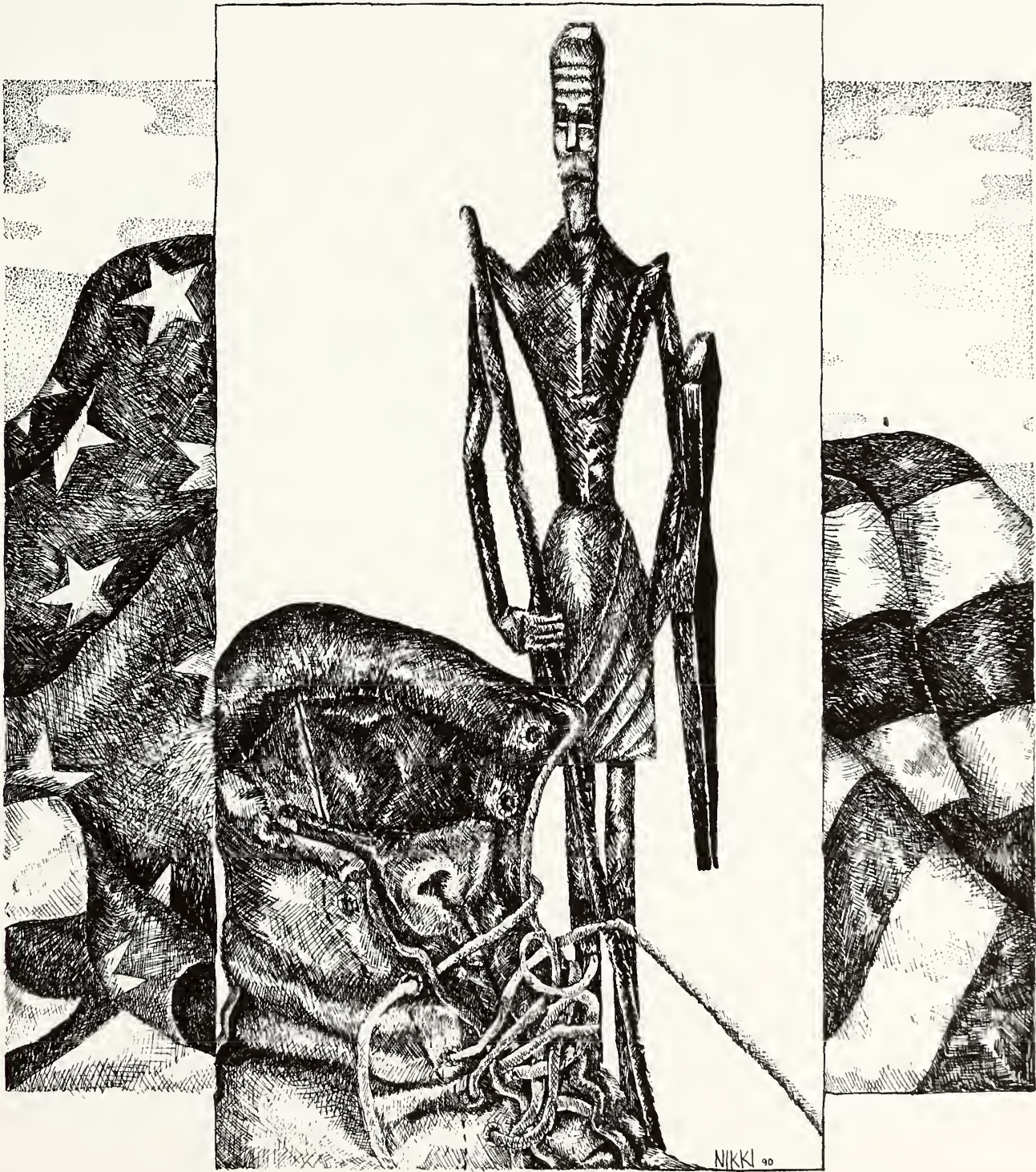




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Pan Ku



The Broward Community College Literary/Arts Magazine



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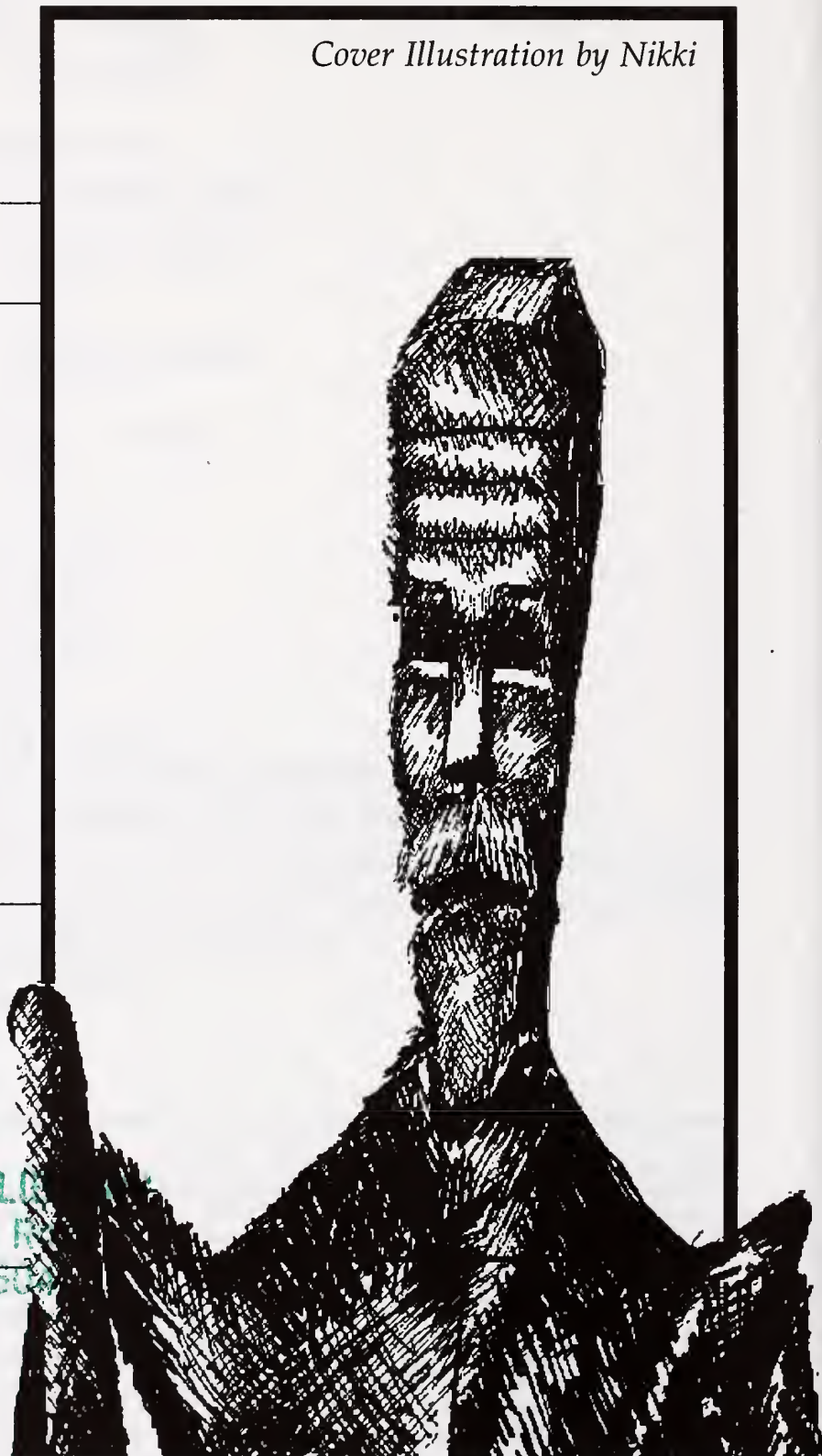
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Scott E. Coventry

Preface

We live in a dangerous era. Many of our basic freedoms are under attack in ways which could end things like Tom Sawyer, Playboy/Playgirl, Stephen King Movies, and Bugs Bunny. Examples abound everywhere.

We've entered a war over oil. Not out of duty, or threat, or to stop unwarranted aggression. If it were over aggression or duty we would do something about the U.S.S.R. assaulting the Baltic Republics right now. But we're not moving either militarily or through U.N. sanctions to prevent those actions. It seems that we have a problem tackling somebody our own size (Although, a case may be argued that the U.S.S.R. doesn't export that much oil to the U.S.).

We have ignored the idea of prosecution without due process by allowing police officers to take the drivers licenses of those *assumed* to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Police officers are now judges?!

We think that the flag is more sacred than the ideals that it represents, and so we try to change the constitution (again).

We arrest *Two Live Crew* for singing

adult lyrics to adults because they offend sheriff Nick Navarro. They were singing the same words most pre-sixty year old Americans say daily.

We shut down artistic exhibits because they offend the sensibilities of a few (i.e. the Maplethorpe exhibits temporarily closed because of homosexual themes). We even force mural painters to put bikinis on renditions of Adam and Eve because their butts were partially showing. Ah, but only in Broward! Wrong.

Welcome to Nineteen-Nineties McCarthyism. Protect your rights, write:

President George Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest
Washington, District of Columbia 20500

Senator Connie Mack
United States Senate
Washington, District of Columbia 20510

Congressperson Lawrence J. Smith
4000 Hollywood Boulevard
Suite 360 N
Hollywood, Florida 33021



William G. Hines

I Didn't Start the Brawl at the Hof Van Holland

The entire incident was particularly tragic, but I can assure you that I was blameless. After all, I had just been sitting at a sidewalk cafe on the Rembrandtplein in Amsterdam, sipping a drink, minding my own business. Honest.

Since I was not involved in the raucous proceedings, my recollection is perhaps a tad shaky, but I'll do my best. As I remember, Paul, my traveling companion, and I were sitting next to the Hof Van Holland. It's not a hard place to find. It's right at the corner where Amstelstraat meets Utrechtse Straat. The tram line branches there between the side that has the McDonald's, Burger King, and the other side that has that nightclub, "Excuses." The name of the cafe we were at eludes me, but I do remember they advertised "Life Music," which seemed overly spiritual for a town as hedonistic as Amsterdam. A place where prostitution is legal, and the ladies

advertise by putting a red light in their window. Actually, I figured they meant "Live Music," which is a totally separate matter, and indeed they did have a live band consisting of a guitar, piano, and accordion with a female singer. It was revolting to note that the piano player, an old man with liver spots on his bald head, kept his dentures in a glass on top of the piano. Try as hard as I might I couldn't persuade them to play any Bee Gees or the like. I guess disco is dead in Europe, too. Pity. Okay, it's not a pity.

Anyway, I digress. The trouble all started when a group of Dutch girls entered the Hof Van Holland. Doesn't it always start with women? Having been indoors, which was a lot more comfortable than enduring the chilly April evening, arguing with the phony blonde singer, who had pencilled-in eyebrows, about starting up a chorus of "Saturday Night Fever," I came

back out into the street to find Paul eyeing these Dutch girls. Actually, I couldn't be certain they were Dutch; they weren't wearing wooden shoes or anything like that.

I guess I should explain lest you think I'm some linguistic whiz, able to fluently *parlez-vous* Dutch with the natives, that the Dutch speak English fluently. Paul thought it showed tremendous foresight on the part of the Dutch; I thought it was a glaring admission of a national identity crisis. I mean, give me the French any day. A good Frenchman would refuse to speak to you in English, even if he had been raised in Iowa as a child. We were in Paris, and do they show American movies with French subtitles? Hell no! They dub over in French, and there's no telling how badly they butcher the story line. Toss in a title that has been thoroughly mangled, and you can understand how Jerry Lewis got to be such a big hit in France.

In a way, it's how we ended up in Rembrandtplein in the first place. We wanted to catch a movie, but the Dutch haven't quite perfected the cinema business. We go to their Cinema 16, although, I doubt they call it that really. "Driving Miss Daisy" was playing in English, and that seemed to be a good bet except a mob of what seemed to be European soccer fans, or homeless people (it's hard to tell them apart), was milling about the theater entrance. It was hard to figure "Miss Daisy" getting such a rabid response here in Amsterdam, so I imagined there must be an encore performance of "Ishtar" or "Yentl II." Not surprisingly, I wasn't even close in my surmise. No, the theater showed 16 movies, and they all started at eight-thirty!

This did not heighten my already depressed mood. Our visit to the Rijksmuseum was marred by the absence of

Rembrandt's, "The Night Watch." Some crazy had sprayed acid on it a few days prior to our arrival. Actually, the real title is "The Hunting Party of Captain Bligh" or Captain Standish, or Captain America, or one of those captains. After the fourth time I was corrected in the museum for using the wrong title, I began to search for my very own Rembrandt to victimize. Additionally, we couldn't get a sleeping cabin for the night train to Copenhagen, although, I was annoying Paul by calling it Kobenhavn as the Danish do. That was going to make for an uncomfortable 11 hour ride on the Nord-West Express.

I could see it very clearly. "Paul, how much longer to Kobenhavn?" I would ask.

"That's Copenhagen, damn you!" he would scream back. It didn't sound real fun, especially considering how your feet swell up after sitting for 2 or 3 days.

It also didn't help that we were spending \$100 a night on hotel rooms because everyone was booked up for the Easter Weekend. The clerk told me that Amsterdam is always crowded on Easter. Personally, I couldn't think of a more pious city to celebrate the resurrection of Christ. In fact, in the religious fervor of the holiday, one man was kind enough to ask me, "Hashish? Cocaine? LSD?" Even though I realized all the proceeds were going to charity, I still didn't buy any.

Anyway, I was wandering, wasn't I? Oh, yeah, these girls. There were about 10 of them-which is about 10 too many the way I figure. They were swilling away at bottles of Heineken, or maybe it was Meisterbrau but probably not, since the Heineken brewery was just a few blocks away. In any event they were all wearing party hats except for one comely lass decked out in a tattered white smock. Ah...now this was the birthday girl! She

had a tin funnel on her head, and a fake witch's nose.

The birthday party that disappeared inside the Hof, but I could see Paul was being drawn towards them, much as a star is sucked into a black hole, with the same catastrophic result.

He started to whine. "It's not fair. Three weeks! I haven't had a woman in three weeks!"

Fearful he would start looking at me the wrong way, I suggested he go make their acquaintance. "Maybe one of them hasn't had a man in three weeks," I told him. In Amsterdam, I knew there was little chance of this, but maybe one of them would feel sorry for him.

Then, with a loud cheer, the girls came spilling back onto the sidewalk in a mambo line. I was stunned! It's not everyday that you see a crowd mambo to the strains of Van Halen, but somehow they managed it, and as quickly as they filed out, they filed in with Paul in close pursuit.

With Paul gone, I went inside my cafe. I passed the time in rousing renditions of "Gilligan's Island," "Hi-Ho Gafoozalum," and "The Man who Shagged O'Reilly's Daughter." After my third performance of "She's a Super Freak," my voice began to give out. The choking cigarette smoke didn't help matters. After tossing the guitar player's toupee to the appreciative patrons, I stepped out for a breath of air.

I reclaimed my table and told the waiter to bring me a Coke. "Hold the ice," I said. I could tell he was impressed.

The taste of the carbonated battery acid was refreshing. I downed the soda in one swallow, which isn't easy. My body responded with a sound I had previously only heard cows make. In a fit of European exuberance I tossed the glass over my shoulder. I admit it wasn't the most consid-

erate thing to do, but fortunately it only hit a street mime. There was a general murmur of approval.

I sat looking at the hapless mime, secretly hoping that I had struck him a fatal blow. I felt a pang of guilt over what I had done. I didn't have the right to throw someone else's glass like that. However, the waiter assuaged my conscience, telling me that I had performed a noble service.

"Nice shot!" said Paul. He had a buxom Dutch nubile on either arm. They apparently did not object to his somewhat unsubtle public groping. They were certainly cuties, the sort who made a habit of avoiding me.

The three of them put their heads together in conference. The brunette with the smeared green eye shadow told me, "You should meet Clotilda. She likes American men."

"Oh, yes, this is your lucky night," agreed the redhead.

You no doubt see it coming, don't you? If you don't, here's a hint. Clotilda is early Germanic for "famous battle." Actually, I didn't know that little piece of etymology at the time, but call it a gut reaction. Names like Helga, Bertha, Clotilda, Jocelyn, they just rub me wrong.

Clotilda was a whole lot of woman, certainly more than I deserved. I suppose there's no need to tell you she was stocky, and her blonde hair was pulled back in a severe bun. After all, with a name like that, what else could she look like? I hadn't seen her in the first gaggle that invaded the Hof, but it was not unlikely that I had mistaken her for a streetcar or garbage truck. In my already hysterical state of mind, I imagined that she was retribution for a mass murder I would commit in a future life. It made sense cosmically.

Paul and his harem joined me at the table. There was no chair for Gruesome, I

smiled, hoping she would get the message and go far away. One of her friends pointed at me, and before I could react, Clotilda dumped herself on my lap. At that moment, I knew how the rider felt when his horse fell on him, crushing him to death.

My screams of anguish moved her sufficiently to unburden me. She did it with the grace of a musk ox. I let her have the seat. After all, I am a gentleman.

"Come on, darling," she said in a husky (what else?) voice, "you can sit on my lap."

I refused, but she had a stranglehold on my leather jacket. I slipped out of the jacket. I regretted losing it, but far better she eat my coat, than my arm.

I looked for another chair, but the cafe was packed. I had no choice, really, so I kicked on old lady out of her chair. Her husband squawked, so I stole his chair, too. Not needing the extra chair, I threw it at the mime who had just regained his senses. Actually, that is somewhat of a contradiction.

The chair missed the mime, sailing far over his head. Now things started to get strange. After I missed the mime, there was a fender bender on Amstelstraat. A tiny red Fiat slammed into the rear of a police car. For the life of me, I don't know why they have police in Amsterdam since anarchy seems to have completely overrun the city.

The driver of the Fiat was an enormous man with a cigarette dangling from his lips as he gestured wildly, pointing first at a chair stuck in his windshield, and then at our little group on the sidewalk.

I had no idea what this guy's problem was; I suspected it had something to do with being cramped in such a small car. I could see that the mime was adding his two cents to the discussion.

"Say something, you idiot!" shouted the short police officer with the faint mustache.

The mime held out his hat, and I was gratified to see the slender cop with his cap tilted back, smack the fool in the head with a night stick. The best mime is a dead mime.

While the cops were disposing of that pesky mime, the Fiat man approached our table. For some reason, he screamed at me in a strange guttural tongue. Clotilda yelled back in the same language. They reminded me of two pro wrestlers jawing away at each other. Clotilda carried the simile one step further, and decked him with a devastating right cross. She wasn't a member of the East German women's Olympic swim team; she was a member of the East German women's Olympic boxing team. I felt badly that I had made such an unfair and premature judgment of her.

Anyway, Mr. Fiat went sailing into the tangle of tables in front of the Hof Van Holland. Things were getting wild, and fights were breaking out everywhere. When I saw that Clotilda had Mr. Fiat in a headlock, I grabbed my leather jacket, my friend Paul, and left. I saw no point in sticking around and involving myself in the affairs of the natives. After all, I had just been sitting at a sidewalk cafe on the Rembrandtplein in Amsterdam, sipping a drink, minding my own business. Honest.



Nancy Morgen

Tubing Deep Creek

My sons run on ahead, bouncing
black tubes up winding track, overhung
with sycamore and oak
While I push on behind. I roll
unwieldy tube, push each knee
straight against earth's drag and climb

I pause to look out, down,
to creek below, where shrieking
bodies flow with laughter down
the teal-blue silk cascade
with white lace foam.

They shoot between the wet gray
granite boulders, down, down,
my stomach wrenches at the sight.
I follow on enticing call of jay
and wren to journey's end
at top of creek.

The boys are there before me, seated
in bobbing tubes--they push off as I
come into view, and whirl and twist
among the stones that throw up knobby knees
like bare gray bones to catch them
unawares

I take a dunking, climbing on, and twist
and slip to find my seat, on restless
bobbing, bouncing steed.
I catch the current, paddling arms
and kicking feet--no oars, nor rudder,
ride the flow
And hang on lip of boulder, helpless
to direct my flow, till I catch
the rock with pushing toe and cascade past
and drop to pool below;
I whirl and spin, my feet grown numb
in icy flood.

Again I catch the current's flow
and shoot between the rocky points
and backward, go over, down
another drop, and so at last
to safer stop

My tube bobs gently, rocks and sighs,
floats past our tent, pitched this morning
there beside the water where,
last night, a brown bear mother
and her cubs strolled, and nosed about for food,
then ambled off

I took Deep Creek home with me,
the sounds of birds, and laughing
boys, the hint of honeysuckle in clean,
loam-scented air, the beat of sun
that can't quite warm my icy blood
Before the next trip down,
the woodchuck, standing bold beside
the road, and almost especially
the bears I didn't see.

Jacqueline Miessen

Spring's Liturgy

I will give you crocus kissed
And honeysuckle breath,
Rainbow bridges, purple sunsets,
Yellow-bellied allamandas.
I, the most blessed of women
Give to you lilac smiles,
Butterfly breezes, and rose's pink flush.
I, so honored to give new life;
Whisper sounds of love because
It's birthing time on earth.

Dreams

I cannot turn dust into gold,
Nor change what is into what was.
I cannot fly with butterflies,
Nor smell like honeysuckle vine.
I cannot spin translucent webs,
Nor slide down a vivid rainbow.
I cannot caress a moonbeam,
Nor swing on a star in the sky.
But, in the stillness of the night
Surrounded by infinite dreams,
I believe I can do these things.



Celine Johnson

The Rooftop

At the time, sneaking up to the rooftop at Ramblewood Court Condominiums seemed fun, but rather insignificant. It was three years ago, but as I looked back on it, it feels like forever and just yesterday at the same time. It is inconceivable to imagine a single place having such an overwhelming effect on a person.

It was incredible what we used to have to go through just to get up to the roof. I was always with my friend Laura whenever I would go up there. First we had to wait for her parents to fall asleep, which sometimes felt like an eternity. We would shut off the lights and ever so slowly lift up the window, about a quarter of an inch a minute. In the meantime, listening for any indication that we had woken her parents. Racing up the stairs in excited anticipation, we would reach the entrance to the roof laughing and out of breath. The hatch door would squeak on its hinges as we held our

breath waiting to be discovered. I think that was half of the excitement, doing something we were not supposed to be doing and getting away with it.

Once we were on the roof, relief washed over the both of us. It was the most amazing feeling when I would close the hatch door, because I knew we were home-free. When I was on top of that roof, looking out over the parking lot and the tall towering trees, I felt an amazing sense of freedom, of power, and of control that I had never quite felt before. It was overwhelming and utterly awesome. I could do anything, be anyone, and let my mind take me anywhere I wanted to go. As far back into the past or as far forward into the unknowing future. Up there, the cars looked like tiny squares and the towering vast forest trees like tiny twigs. I felt very much in control, so powerful that nothing could touch me. There were no parents around to tell me

what to eat, when to sleep, how to live my life. There was nothing threatening at all, just me, Laura, and the roof.

The roof was made of hard, smooth cement so I always felt secure. There were several long, angled, slopes that made the perfect backrest for looking at the glistening stars. It was as if it was a million miles to the cold, empty earth, but only an arm's reach to the dark, clear sky filled with billions of luminous stars. It was as if I could stand on tiptoes and touch one of those brilliant stars enclosed in the intriguing sky. Puddles of muddy water from countless rainstorms that summer heavily populated the floor of the roof. At first we tried to avoid them, but after awhile we gave in and sloshed the water between our toes, making footprints in the few spots where there was dry pavement. The roof was rectangular in shape except for the very edges. Sometimes we would stand there and test our ever-decreasing fear of heights. We didn't stand on the edge of the roof often, but when we did, it was the most exhilarating, terrifying, fantastic feeling in the world. Standing there I felt weightless against the night. It was like standing on the edge of the world. Mostly, though, we just laid back and reveled in the fact that we could see everyone and everything, but no one could see us.

Laura and I shared so much in our conversations up there. I discovered that the feelings that I had weren't so unusual because she experienced them too. We talked, laughed, even cried together. We rediscovered the past by talking about the

silly things we used to do; we would often smoke cigarettes up there, once even in the rain. It took us ten minutes just to get the stupid things lit. We had drops of rain running down every part of our bodies. Finally, when we got them lit, we were spitting out nicotine flavored water from inhaling drenched cigarettes in our mouth. Somehow it felt as if the roof held a magical, mystical power and we weren't afraid to let go or to express our innermost thoughts and feelings. We discussed several possible futures, including our goals, hopes fears, aspirations, what we wanted out of life, what we didn't. It was then that I realized how closely related the past and future are to each other. Slowly, I began to realize that I couldn't live my dreams or move forward in life without first understanding and learning from the feelings and experiences I had already had. We helped each other to confront our feelings so we were no longer embarrassed or confused. In this sense we were set free, and then most importantly, we were saved.

The rooftop started out being a place where Laura and I could sneak away to just talk. What I discovered was how extraordinary friendship was, that part of the unique magic I felt on the roof was due to the fact that I was sharing it with a very special person. The roof was another world where we could laugh, cry, and talk about anything. Most importantly, I realized that I wanted to turn my dreams into realities and to always try to reach for the intangible stars no matter what the impossible odds or where I might be.



Murry A. Dixon

Rickey Seegul and the Blues

Rickey Seegul stands alone
 On a floating stage of ice and moans
 Some bird blues to an ever-shrinking audience
 Of bergs in the rising gradients
 Of springtime on the little lake,
 Where soon will zoom a widening wake
 Of boats and boaters...vacationers in wave
 After wave after wave after wave...
 And then the summer only birds
 Will flock to the growing people herds
 For a pinch of bread and some fish-gut scraps
 From a dumpster near the tourist traps
 That light the town where Rickey lives
 Through the best and worst the weather gives
 In Michigan. He's seen them come -- they all
 Go away by late summer/early fall,
 But this is Rickey's only place and here
 He'll stay, though frozen thick half the year.
 Oh, someday he might migrate South
 For the winter, with a sqwaking mouth
 Like the rest of them when they fly away
 On the first, slightest unwarm day.
 He'd like to go and see the sights;
 Unfortunately he's scared of heights
 And never rises past the trees
 Or stays up longer than he sees
 Necessary to get from here to over there.
 Rickey Seegul hates the open air,
 And, so, he stands there on the lake-side dock,
 The leader of his one bird flock,
 And as the year's first snowflake finds his beak,
 He hums a riff—a bluesy squeak
 That's all his own.
 Rickey Seegul is alone...
 Again.

The Spot Unfrozen

She's the spot unfrozen by the dock,
And every year as the ice lays down
On the rest of the lake,
Moving hard and thick
And strong to the shore,
There she remains, unfrozen.
And even when the winds
Blow her smoothness all about,
Rippling her up on the surface
Her larger,
Deeper,
Unfrozen calm below
Just shivers it all away,
And soon she is as glass again --
As ice, unfrozen.
She is clear and clean
And fresh as an Autumn night,
And I am amazed when she says
She is mine.
And when I wake to find
My edges crusted over
With the newest crystalline,
I move to her open shore
And she melts me in her
Calm, unfrozen warmth.
There's a spot unfrozen by the dock,
And I am hers.





Jennifer Jordan

untitled

They ask me
what i'm thinking of
a small girl alone and afraid
nothing new, nothing special
the silence is so loud when you can't hear
oh she's a little freak
a hummingbird without a song, a room without a view
and they all laugh, the faces jubilant, the sounds fuzzy
tears cascade the gentle face
she can't hear her own frightened sobs
and she'll never really hear you
but she'll always understand what its like to look in
to never truly belong
trembling, lost between the worlds
always the victim of childish games
wishing they knew that the sight of laughter would always sadden her
and that the future would be an even greater challenge
yet she'd someday show them all
if the tears just wouldn't fall
when their lips ask her what she's thinking of
and all she can see are those faces so happy and secure, laughing

Ronee Saroff

Do You Know the Clank Rain Makes on a Fire Escape?

It's raining. The rain smacks against the glass of my window in the way Oliver did with the side of his palm some mornings. I crack the window and the smell of rain permeates the room through a screen.

Across my thighs rests a hard cover copy of Dylan Thomas' collected poems. We used to read the author's prologue on the subway home from school each day. Even though he got off at eighty-sixth street while I continued on to fourteenth, we always managed to get the first page done. Oliver promised one day we'd go to Central Park, and lie on the grass in Sheep's Meadow to read the rest. "But you can't bring a blanket or anything," he would say. "You have to feel the grass poking through your shirt, and let the words soak through your skin like rain." Like rain, I thought... It became my favorite analogy for all things pleasant. So I showed up in the Meadow, and situated myself at the apex of a slope.

Shoeless, sleeveless, and armed with my book whose cover reflected the sun like a new found religion. I let my legs hang downward, ready to be drip-dried, but I never felt a single drop.

"I met Shakespeare," he told me one morning before class. He was always spewing out fantasies like that to anyone who would listen, but mostly to me because I believed. A few nights earlier, he confided in me his brief meeting with God. "He wore Levis and smoked a log pipe made out of ivory. I guess no one told him about the elephant problem." He laughed at himself, and inevitably, the world laughed with him.

One morning he was two and a half hours late for class and burst into the room proclaiming "I caught the zodiac killer!" He proceeded to tell the story of how he tied the killer to the post of his miniature basketball hoop until the police got there.

"What did you do while you waited?" a teacher asked anxiously. "I read him the horoscopes," her said, grinning deviously over the web he had spun around their curious heads. Everyone snickered, and he looked to me with a deep smile. We both knew he had gotten himself out of another predicament.

Oliver was a true Beatnik, or would have been one had he lived in the fifties. He spoke with the nonchalance of Kerouac, wrote with the simplistic fervor of Ginsburg, and wore his dark clothes very big, very used, and dangling very limply from his body. He loved jazz and would stand outside The Blue Note on Friday nights trying to convince older women to get him inside. At around twelve-thirty he'd give up and meet me at the movies to see a French or Japanese flick. "I hate reading movies," I'd complain, and so he would read them to me, being sure to annoy those in front and beside us into leaving. It didn't really bother me to read the subtitles, but I liked the way his breath felt close to my ear. He knew this and would fake an accent imitating the actors. Occasionally his voice cracked, and a high pitched hum would echo through my ear to the back of my head where it vibrated for days. But I didn't mind, and he was never embarrassed of the unusually long time it was taking for him to become a man. "For Christmas, I only want a beard," he said. But he had to make do with a leather bound writing tablet instead.

I was shocked the first time I saw where he lived. Between Broadway and Amsterdam, it was a small gray building with a plum colored awning that read "One Hundred and Fifty-One" in beautiful white script. The door was opened by a man named Felipe who took me down a white marble hallway and called for my elevator. The doorbell chimed like the bells of

Westminster Abbey in London, and Oliver opened the door in ripped jeans, a worn Dead Kennedy's T-shirt, and a pair of oxblood Baby Docs. I wiped my feet carefully, and inhaled the rose-and-lilac-perfumed air. It had to be simulated oxygen, perhaps from a store bought canister of some sort. "One minute," he said while he went into the kitchen. I stepped into a sitting room that I thought only existed in my dreams. Everything was petite. Two flower tapestry chairs sat across from one another with had carved mahogany legs that matched the corners of the coffee table. The center was adorned with a silver tea set, and a package of English Breakfast Tea in each cup. On a wall over the fire place was a lithograph, or so I assumed, or Monet's "Water Lilies," and a photograph of a couple in black tie on the mantle. I turned and saw Oliver in the entrance way clashing terribly. "I had no idea you-" "It's not my money," he interrupted, "it's theirs. Let's go." We did, and somehow, what he said made me feel better.

We decided to meet at the Meadow one Sunday. My mother didn't like for me to go there on Sundays because it was collection day--when the dealers collected drug money from the kids who sold for them. My train was delayed and when I got to the West entrance, I saw Oliver sitting indian-style near my slope under a tree. He was reading aloud, and I decided to sneak up from behind. About five yards away, I noticed a huge, dark man with dingy brown hair tied back in a blue babooshka approaching Oliver. I couldn't hear the conversation, but the man grabbed Oliver's book, shook it madly, and threw it a few feet in front of me. He stormed off, wildly dodging seated people. I picked up the book and as Oliver turned to see it safely in my hands, he stood up, then gathered his

things, and came toward me. "Hold on to the book. I'll see you later," he said blankly. I did not question him.

Two days later, he called. "There's a book sale going on at Papyrus. Wanna go?"

"I'll meet you in an hour," I answered. On the train ride up, I fought with myself over whether or not to ask him about the man. I decided against it. We made our way to the back where the art books are kept. They were piled high, and had to be taken down, dusted off, and examined on by one.

"So who was that guy in the Meadow, Oliver?" I asked against my better judgement. The question spilled out like rain all over the books.

"What guy?", he asked innocently. Taking the hint, I remained silent, then fought with him over a book on Matisse. He won, and I took the consolation prize, Gaugain. Besides, I knew he'd bore quickly, and want to switch eventually.

A phone call woke me from a dream, and when I answered, it was Oliver's voice whispering and breathy. "I called to say good-bye," he said." "That man from the Meadow wants money I don't have. He came to my apartment looking for me, but I hid in the closet, and my mom told him I wasn't home. I'm going to San Francisco to stay with a friend. Keep my

Dylan Thomas for me."

"Uh-Huh...yeah, Dylan Thomas," I repeated sleepily. "Listen, I'm really tired. Can we talk tomorrow? I'll meet you in the Meadow at eleven. O.K.?"

"Uh...O.K.," he answered, "I love you," and the phone clicked off to a dial tone. My rain loved me, I thought, sliding back into my dream. I'd meet him in the morning to tell him the same...

The rain attacks my pillow with a vengeance. I don't know why he left without saying good-bye, and his mother still calls every day to see if I've heard from him. The cover of his book on my lap is dull compared to mine. I will not tell his mother or father if he writes or calls, or about the inexplicable wad of money I found stuck between pages forty-eight and forty-nine. He would probably tell me it was the only thing of his that was never theirs...

I place his book on the window sill, until it is drenched with rainwater. Removing my nightshirt, I place the book in the center of my chest and feel the cold water trickle down the sides of my torso. Mixed with the clanking sound of rain on the fire escape it makes me quiver strangely, unpleasantly. I do not think this is what Oliver meant when he said to let the words soak through me like rain.





Steve Warner

Essay on a Natural Creature

The mother hen red-tailed hawk dived at me as I shimmied around an unusual twist half way up the huge tree. I couldn't stop my knees from shaking, but I spiked farther up the tree with the clinging boots. As I peeked over the edge of the mass of matted sticks, I got my first look at her. It seemed like miles to the ground from up there as I lowered the young hawk down in a burlap sack.

The hawk house was ready for her; I had cut the fork out of a tree, braced it securely and built a nest of sticks in it. I gently put the downy carnivore in it and stepped out of her mew which is on the other side of a solid wall. The young eyas could only hear me. I provided her with a small trap door, enabling me to pass her food in on a wooden plate attached to a six foot rod that could be rested in the nest. This was the only contact I would make with her for the next four weeks. I watched

her briefly through the small open door as she tore viciously at the day-old chick tied to the hack board. Her feathers were growing, pushing through the grayish down. She needed a lot of vitamins while she was developing. This was my fourth year practicing falconry; I knew what I was doing. She would become the meanest, most beautiful eyas hen in the Kentucky Falconers Association (K.F.A.).

Her Feathers were hard-pinned when I took her out of the mew and began the next phase of her conditioning. She sank her sharp, black talons into the screaming, day-old chickens quickly, and with no mercy, three and four times a day. I gave her beef heart laced with vionate vitamin powder. In less than a week, she was killing half-stunned rats daily, crushing their heads with a death grip. She would look at me and scream her violence as she did her work over the helpless prey. Her

feathers shined; her wings and tail were half open, frantically protecting her fresh kill as if I were going to take it from her. The warm blood could no longer quench the thirst she now had for the kill. She became angry when the life would leave her prey; it seemed like the only thing she could love...the act of killing.

I decided to call her Lisa. I had locked up with a girl from school that spring in the honey-suckle bushes nearby. It was her name, but now I loved the hawk more than the girl. Lisa jumped when I called to her. The heavy glove with the red meat between my thumb and finger caught the complete attention of her clear light brown eyes.

Soon she was jumping without hesitation the full length of her leash for the small bits of meat on my gloved hand. I started flying her free. A long line wouldn't do for Lisa; she needed her freedom. I didn't want to chance breaking any of her now perfect feathers. She was like the girl.

It was the most paralyzing feeling of my life...the first time she flew free to my gloved hand, a feeling only a falconer might know. A live rat could always bring the wild, fearless creature back when necessary.

Her daily training continued with the added task of flying straight up to my gloved hand; later I began using an extension ladder. Lisa's strong, beautiful wings now carried her vertically over seventeen feet. One day she bit my lower lip. I felt her love-hate for me. She raised the feathers on the back of her slightly lowered head, squeezing hard at the glove on my hand as she stared and screamed as my blood ran. Finally she was ready to start hunting wild game.

Lisa got frustrated after missing a fast, wild, grey squirrel. My beagle hound ran through the woods happily while I

threw sticks at a grey squirrel. She sat in a nearby tree waiting for her quarry to move. Missing her prey made her violent. She flew past me in a dive, nailing my little beagle's head and shoulder hard with her long talons. He cried in fear and pain as I pried her feet loose. The dog ran home and never again followed us on the hunt. Lisa was fearless; nothing seemed to intimidate her. When I called her out of the trees, she sprang immediately. At times she hit the glove so hard I thought she was trying to knock me down. At night I would go see her and test my bravery by letting her stand on my bare arm. The grip of her needle sharp talons burned against my skin and I tried my best to keep my composure.

She was three to four times the size she had been when I captured her. She looked so beautiful flying. Hunting with her was all I wanted to do. I began missing school regularly. In late autumn, my eyes started following me through the now bare woods. She was well aware I made the terrified squirrels move for her by throwing sticks at them. Some of the members of the K.F.A. stopped over to watch her hunt with me; they were amazed. They had been feeding their birds chicken necks and had let them sit around, without giving them the chance to kill or fly. I could feel they were intimidated by her. Lisa's spirit was far superior to their birds'. The word of such skill travelled quickly among the members of the K.F.A.

Since I was Gary Render's apprentice falconer, he was as proud of Lisa as I was. His bird's name was B.G. (Bitchy Goose); as big and mean as Lisa but a mature eyes with three years' experience behind her. Lisa quickly learned from B.G. how to gain advantage over the grey squirrels by getting above them in the tree and forcing them down, then going into a

corkscrew dive around the tree following the terrified prey. She worked the head of her prey with a keen delicate precision; not once was she bitten badly.

The highlight had arrived; rabbit season started. Next to a new large subdivision Gary found a field into which hundreds of rabbits had been forced. Lisa and B.G. gained the undisputed record for kills in the K.F.A.

Several people came out to witness fantastic flights. There was resentment among some of the other falconers. Gary

said it was because their birds weren't anywhere near as fast and mean as B.G. and Lisa.

I was part of Lisa after training her. I think I will always be a part of her. I know she is part of me. Lisa may have died after I went in the Marines - a hawk's life can sometimes be short -But I know death could never destroy or hold for long that energy in her beautiful, wild spirit. Certainly she must live again in a woodlot, somewhere in the hills of Kentucky.



Mary Burke

An Interview with Kyra



Kyra is a professor of art and art history at South, where she will also be the director of the Art Gallery opening in January 1991. She was born in China and grew up in Argentina. Kyra earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at Arizona State University in 1973, then received her Master of Fine Arts degree in 1975 from Florida State University. She has completed course work for a Doctorate degree and is currently working on her dissertation on the topic of sexist attitudes in the college environment. Kyra's career as a professional artist has been extensive; she has exhibited nationally and internationally, and has more than 30 solo showings to her credit. During the course of her professional art career, Kyra has been subjected to numerous cases of censorship of her work. In the following interview, she discussed her own experiences and observations of censorship.

What was your reaction the first time you were censored?

"I was surprised. I had started showing when I was in graduate school at FSU. The first time something came back, I never thought it might be because of subject matter. It took me quite a while to realize what was going on. I realized it when one of the colleges in Georgia asked me specifically to do a one person show. A group of us went to see the show and it wasn't there. It was taken down. No one had told me. Evidently, someone had decided the male nude was too much."

Were you ever given an explanation?

"No, never."

What areas have you been censored in?

"Many places, Florida, Georgia, and

even New York."

Weren't you censored by *The Village Voice*?

"Yes, they sent the image (a male nude) back to where they took it from, and the gallery in New York did not want to tell me about it. I actually went over to the office of *The Village Voice* to talk to the editor and he refused to explain."

Why hasn't the press picked up on the censorship of your work?

"There have been articles in the newspaper, including the *Miami Herald*, and some other publications. Many times the press probably feels that since it is an issue concerning a woman the public will not be interested. The press always looks for something that people want to read. They probably feel if it was a gay issue, people would be more anxious to read it; but if it's a woman's issue, they won't read it."

What do you feel are the implications of the result of the Cincinnati trial of the gallery that displayed the work of Robert Mapleson?

"It's part of the backlash we are having against artistic freedom; but now there is also a wider acceptance of eroticism. In the past what was acceptable as proper erotic point of view was only the white heterosexual male point of view. The museums are full of work ranging from very romantic to extremely violent, very negative from my point of view, including rape being glorified- all over museum walls. The female nude being exposed in every way, shape and form is very acceptable. It's all a part of male erotic expression. While that is totally acceptable by society, no other point of view was allowed by the establish-

ment to be exhibited. Hardly do we ever have anything shown from the female point of view, no matter how romantic."

Does that include art by lesbians?

"I would say that is included. That is a minority erotic sensibility that is different from mainstream that has not been historically acceptable by the establishment, although there have been some works that have been done by male artists that do playfully examine lesbianism, but the works were created not to please lesbians, but to please the erotic sensibilities of the white male."

You have seen the Maplethorpe show. What was your perception of the exhibition?

"People definitely knew before they entered that they were going to see an exhibit that dealt with a different kind of sensibility, a different kind of lifestyle. Even within the exhibit, there was a special section that dealt with the more violent aspect of the gay sensibility, which I understand is not common to the entire gay population, but to some faction of it. In fact, the photographs were in a smaller format than the rest. They were set up in tables that were slanted, of course under glass. You had to go to a different part of the gallery to see them. People knew exactly what they were doing, that they were going to see the most controversial work. If you did not want to go that far, you could just enjoy the beautiful male nudes, or the flowers, or the portraits and walk out. You were given a choice as to how far you wanted to go. I think this is sensible. I don't believe in censorship. I feel that people should be allowed to make their choices. What Maplethorpe did, he showed the world an erotic point of view of

the gay male. Although there is a backlash, we have a tremendous audience that wants to see the work. The show broke attendance records; there is definitely a desire from a section of our society to see this kind of work."

Do you think it's curiosity because of the censorship that has caused interest in the work?

"It could be. For one thing how did it get there (to the museum or gallery)? It got to the museum because there is a strong section of the community which happens to be gay male that had influence and funding to put the artist there. An artist cannot exist alone; he or she needs the support of the public or some part of the establishment. Obviously Maplethorpe had enough support to get to first class galleries. Obviously there is a strong gay element in numerous communities. The figures are there, the desire for this art to be seen. On the public's part it is a mixture of curiosity; and the gay element, of course, is there to see the show. What we have here is at least a partial acceptance of a different point of view from a gay male perspective. We still have not had a major show on the erotic point of view of the female of our society. My hope is that our society will get at least partially accepting for heterosexual women to exhibit their sensibilities. We don't know anything about that. Women have other battles to fight before they can ever get in touch with their own sensuality. Many of us, and I'm definitely considered a pioneer in the exploration of female sensuality, have been doing this for years, but I don't show very often for obvious reasons."

When you first started creating this type of art work did you think there would be so much resistance to it?

"No, I never imagined this. My outlook, when I was exhibiting in college in the mid '70's, I thought, 'Well it's just a question of a few years. Maybe in a year or two society will reach a point when female sensibilities in art will be almost as acceptable as male sensibilities.' I never imagined it was going to last this long. Now I think it could perhaps last my lifetime."

Why is society against females expressing themselves?

"There are many reasons. I can't give you a full answer in just a sentence or two. I have been studying this issue for a long time. One of the reasons is theological. Our society for the last 2000 years was led to believe that female sexuality was evil. At least it has to be restrained. Of course the underlying issues are deeply sociological. It's an issue of passing your name to your child, or land, or property ownership; and of course the need of patriarchy to convince women to stay where they are without the use of physical power, although that has been used. The use of that invisible grip of philosophical/religious restraint was and still is effectively used in the denial of female sensuality."

How has the public's reaction to your work been?

"I do get a lot of feedback. An immense majority of the public enjoys the work. They appreciate the sensual, romantic aspect of the beautiful male nudes. What you see is male communicating with nature and a very peaceful coexistence between humans and nature! Most of the people enjoy that. I did have some exceptions, which I expected. A couple of older gentlemen and an older lady did make comments that they didn't feel it was appropri-

ate for a woman to deal with sexual content or sexual subject matter. To them, a male nude represented ugliness of our society."

What was the worst scenario involving censorship?

"It's hard to decide, but perhaps the most irritating incident was when it got down to name calling. I was accused of being a loose woman, and not exactly in those terms, for dealing with this kind of subject matter- the male nude form. My ability of being able to appreciate male nude form was questioned in such a manner that in that person's mind I was a loose woman, to say the least."

Do you think the reaction would be the same if the drawings were done by a man?

"If it were done by a man, the work would be more acceptable because the public is still not aware of the great women in the history of art. Until recently, in the past ten years, women were almost excluded in art history books. The public has little knowledge of women artists. Since in the eyes of the public history belongs to the male, it is acceptable that he be able to explore any subject matter that has already been explored. Of course male artists have done male forms before."

Such as Michelangelo's David.

"Absolutely, which is probably the most famous male nude in the history of art. Michelangelo did David during a time when artistic sensibility was very high on that scale of values, and there was more artistic freedom than ever. During the end of his life, things tightened up, there was a backlash like we're having today with Jesse Helms. His 'Last Judgment' got censored,

so he suffered a bit of censorship too.”

How has more than ten years of censorship affected your work?

“I don’t think it has affected my work because I do what I want, that’s why I teach for a living. But it has affected my attitude about the art establishment, there is no question about that. Being hit with censorship all the time does affect you. In a way I’m much more tolerant to them censoring me. I don’t get excited about it. I’m so used to it. I no longer care how much the work is exhibited. In other words if they call and ask me to exhibit, which does happen with some progressive universities or museums, then I’m happy to show it; if not, I do it for my own pleasure. This is my change in attitude. Before I always wanted it to be in the public as soon as possible. In terms of the output of my work it has affected me, I’m sure, because when you are encouraged, you tend to produce more. When you are constantly discouraged, and have no support, you tend to produce less.”

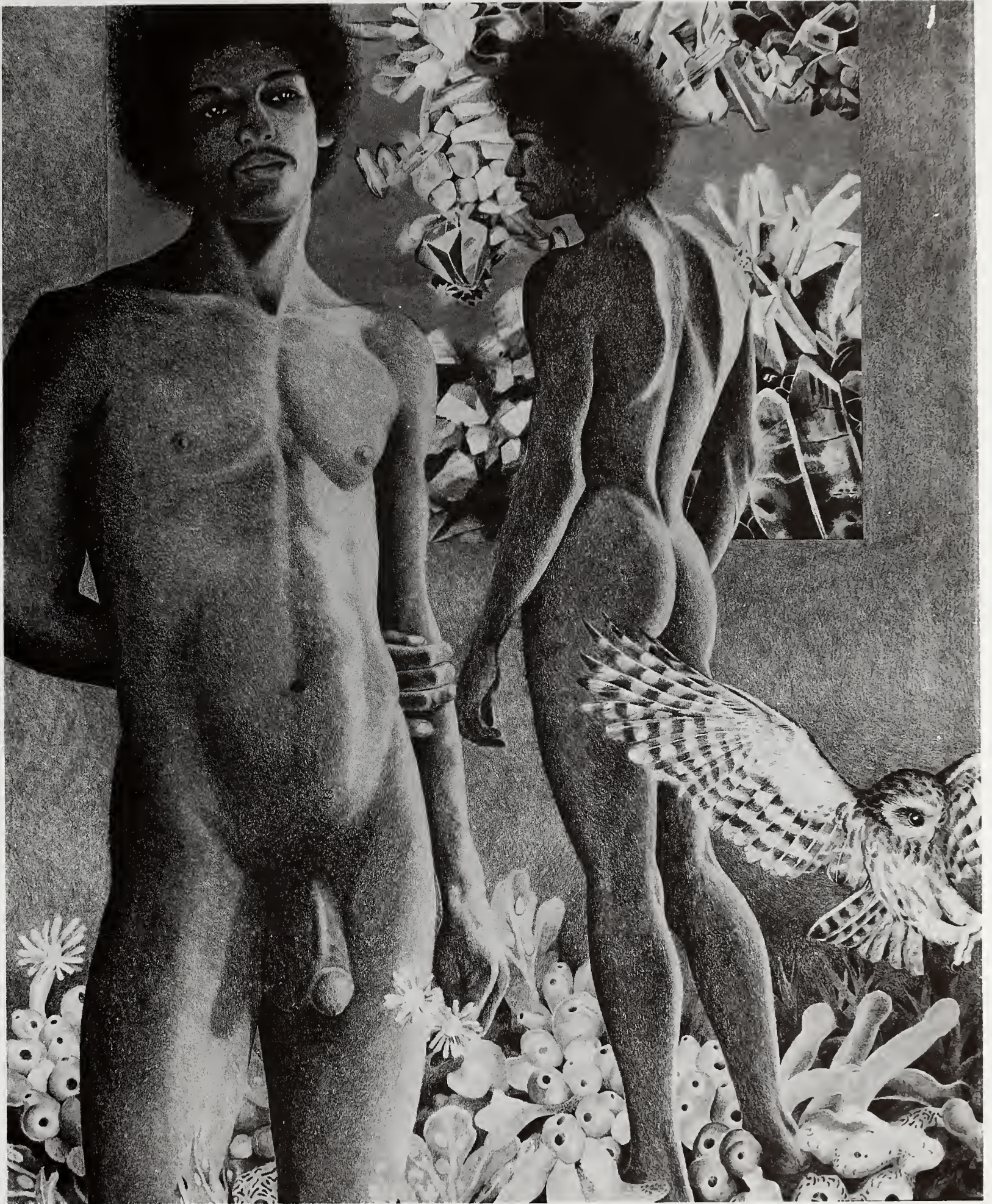
Do you view controversy as a reason for creation or as a by-product?

“I don’t think that (controversy) should be the purpose. That is my personal opinion. I do what moves me. If I have a strong feeling about something, that is when I do it. I’m not doing it because I want people to like it or get upset over it; I do it because I enjoy doing it. To me this is the most important thing, part of a creative pact. You have to like what you are doing. I realize that there are some artists who are purposely seeking controversial subject matter because it is sometimes helpful to get into the press in a major way. In our society, unfortunately, something that is offbeat will get into the press quicker than something less controversial.”

What is your opinion on the re-election of Jesse Helms?

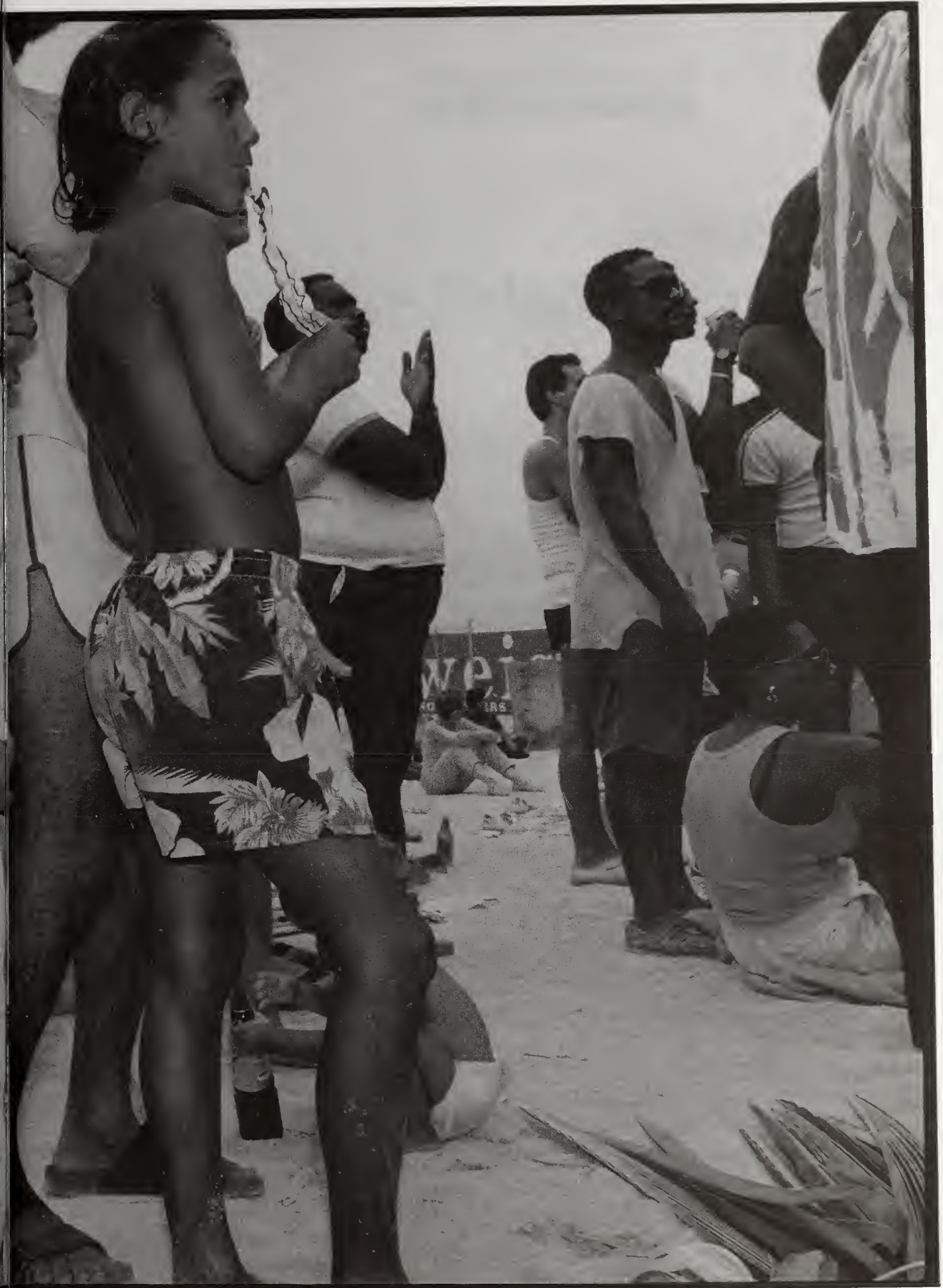
“I think it is unfortunate that Gant got defeated. I think he would have made a wonderful senator. He had a very good platform, and he also fought for the rights of artists and freedom of speech. Now that Jesse Helms has been re-elected, I think we’re in for another stretch of censorship.”







P'an Ku



P'an Ku

Nancy Morgen

Picnic

I lie sprawled across the rough plank
picnic table
in the green,
eyes slitted against the green,
park

and you upright beside me,
vigilant
eyes mobile
touching me deep, deep
as I move into that other place,

other reality
of feeling, of sensual being
not me but another
there
and yet me

your hard caress
under the hard-edged tropical
sky
pushes me into yellow-bright

abyss
I struggle to hold in
sounds of my

explosion
back into this time
and place
where I lie
more naked before you
than if I wore nothing

Marie Jennings

Within the Palm of Our Hands

Courtyards of conformities
 weeded out by placid society,
 Ringing bells of independence
 while individuality is taken out with the wind.
 The ocean no longer consists of water,
 it is full of wasted want-nots,
 Silhouetted by the cast-out souls, left in
 purgatory to float amongst the clouds.
 Misconception brings destruction to the
 earth,
 and her spirit is dying steadfast,
 murdered by the narrow mindedness of the
 wicked and the ignorant.
 Salvation lies in a realm
 unobtainable,
 and peace is a dream of the communes
 which now are overtaken by the
 fallen angels we name as our leaders.

Infection spreading rapidly through
 the bloodstreams of the youth,
 as pestilence sets in their minds,
 Screaming anarchy from within.
 Subliminal messages of violence and

fear are accepted through the network.
 Decrees of the judgmental undertakers
 reign disaster for the common man.
 Continual suffering of poverty and
 misplaced intelligence,
 are intermingled among the chaos
 of this century,
 and the blood we have spilt
 becomes the river in which we drown.

This, our painstaking reality
 weighs down our compassion
 and constricts our hearts to
 shades of darkness
 as we continually ponder
 over the same repeated questions,
 why?
 The answer is lost, vanished along with
 the God we once turned to for comfort
 and the cause of this malicious
 reality we claim as our own
 is found within the palms of our
 very own hands.

Neil Ebanks

My Crazy Ma

Never before have I seen such a display of complete out-of-control behavior from my mother. That stuff she was always drinking turned her into a wild person. I knew it would. Now, all the kids at school make fun of her, but it does not bother me.

"Janie, where's Mrs. Hulk Hogan, your mom?" they ask me, but I ignore them. Some ask me, "Are you going to be a wrestler when you grow up, too?"

I guess most kids would be ashamed of their mothers throwing a teacher to the floor, and beating on her head with a chair, but I was proud of my crazy mother that day, October 9, 1990.

When I was three years old, Daddy ran away with Aunt Judy, and I have not seen him since. I never did like Aunt Judy. Mommy and I got along fine without him for the first year. We moved to Los Angeles and Mommy got a part-time job. When she was not working, she sat home and ate, and

ate, and ate. Occasionally, she would take a break to spend time with her new friend: a bottle of rum. She would start walking and talking funny, and once she asked me if I wanted to taste it. I tried it because I trusted Mommy. I was very sick and had to go to the hospital. Mommy cried and said she was sorry when the rum wore off.

By the time I turned four, Mommy was so fat that I thought she would burst. I hoped that I would not look or act like her when I grew up. She would get mad at everything and everyone for no reason at all, but never at me. I did all sorts of bad things, like walk on the carpet with muddy shoes, and throw food around, but Mommy just laughed and told me to stop.

She loved me so much that she would do anything I wanted her to do. I found that out when she ripped a poster off the video store's wall because it scared me. The store manager yelled at her, but she

told him to go to hell.

Mommy put me in pre-school, so when I reached kindergarten, I would be smarter than the other kids. I learned the alphabet and how to count to one hundred. It was fun. When I was not learning something, I was playing on the monkey bars in the playground. I was always the last kid to be picked up from there. Sometimes, Mommy would not pick me up until seven o'clock at night. It was not her fault. She told me she had to work late or she would not have enough money for her medicine. I did not really understand that. I never saw her take any aspirins or anything like that. I guess she was talking about her bottles.

When I reached the age of five, we were forced to leave our apartment and move to North Hollywood. I was really scared for Mommy. She got really fat, she was not working, and there wasn't much food in the house.

Shortly after our move, Mommy put me in Holly Mills Elementary School, and it was not as fun as pre-school. We had to do a lot of work, and I had a mean teacher named Mrs. Swantek. All the kids called her "Mrs. Swan Neck." I thought that was funny, but Mrs. Swantek did not like it at all.

She never called me by my first name and that made me mad.

She would say, "STOP TALKING, MC CRAE!:", "SIT UP, MC CRAE" or "SPIT OUT YOUR GUM, MC CRAE!!"

I got up and screamed "GO TO HELL SWAN NECK!!!" I knew I should not have said that, but it was too late. Mrs.

Swantek took me outside and yelled at me until I cried. I had never been yelled at before, and it really scared me. I knew Mommy would make sure it would never happen again.

That Tuesday morning of October 9, Mommy woke up with a bottle in her hand saying, "No damn teacher gonna make MY kid cry." I kind of wished I hadn't said anything, but I wanted Mommy to make Mrs. Swantek stop calling me "Mc Crae."

Well, I did not have to worry about that anymore. Mrs. Swantek died Wednesday morning from, I think they called it a "concussion." I do not know what it means, but it must have been really bad.

Two police officers came to the house, Thursday morning, and took Mommy away in handcuffs. They brought me here to a place called "The Bridge," where there are a bunch of other kids just like me.

I missed Mommy so much. I cried every night away from her for the first two weeks, and then they let me see her. She looked different. She was still big, but she looked clean and very awake. She explained what the bottles did to her and what bad things they were. Now I understand why we had such a hard time surviving.

It has been rough for Mom and me, but I am glad that I learned, early in my life, the devastating power of alcohol. Mommy learned a lot from this, too. She said that anything that keeps her away from her baby is not the thing for her. I love that crazy woman.



D.M.L.

It's hard to believe it's been so long, but I met him nearly six years ago. We both worked in clothing stores right across from each other in a shopping mall. I had noticed him weeks before. He was tall, 6'2", with a strong, masculine body. He had long, light brown hair, big sad eyes and a big, warm smile. One day he came strutting over to my store, introduced himself and began a conversation with me.

He told me he'd been working in his store since the day the company opened. He had just graduated from high school and planned to start college next semester. He eventually wanted to become an architect.

At nine o'clock, we closed our stores. He came back over and asked me for my phone number. I thought he was nice, so I gave it to him. He walked me out to my car. It was already dark and lightly drizzling outside. He said goodbye and

told me he'd call me later. He did.

A few weeks passed and I got another job. Our phone calls became less frequent and eventually stopped. Maybe by not seeing me every day he didn't think of me as much. I still thought of him all the time, but I refused to call him because I didn't want to let him know that I really liked him.

One Sunday night, sometime later, I saw him at Monty Trainer's. I went over and said hi. He seemed very happy to see me. He was still working in the same store and he'd started college. He wasn't doing very well in school, however. Apparently, his friends were always calling him to go out and party with them and he could never say no. He was having fun though and that was all that seemed to matter. We danced together for a while and had a great time. He had to work the next morning, so he left around midnight, but before he left,

he asked me out for my birthday which was Saturday night. He told me we'd do something special for the occasion. Of course, I accepted.

We talked on the phone all week and he told me he had something nice planned for the occasion and it was to be a surprise. We decided he'd pick me up at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday night and I was to dress up. Well, 7:00 p.m. rolled around and he hadn't shown up. I called his house. There was no answer. I was beginning to get worried. Either I was being stood up or something had happened to him. Finally, at 8:30 p.m. he called and informed me he couldn't make our date. His brother was going through a bad marital break-up, needed to get away and wanted his company. I couldn't believe it. I was crazy about this guy and he was standing me up on my birthday. I told him it was okay to go with his brother, since he needed him, even though I was crushed. I stayed home that night crying. He never bothered to call me again.

A few years went by and we didn't see each other. I had thought about him frequently, but I refused to call him, because I didn't want to let him know how he'd hurt me.

One Sunday a few months ago, I went to Monty Trainer's and I was waiting at the bar to order a beer when I noticed, out of the corner of my eye, someone was staring at me. When I looked over, I saw this beautiful smile beaming back at me. He came over and gave me a big bear hug and told me he'd missed me. We sat down at a table and proceeded to catch up on each other's lives. About a year ago, he finally decided to pursue his dream and become an architect. To avoid his friends' influence, he chose a school out-of-town. While away, all he did was work and study. He saved his partying for Miami which he

referred to as his "playground." He told me he was doing very well in school, (finally), and seemed very proud of himself. He also brought up my birthday and apologized. He really felt bad about it, but his brother really needed him. Afterward, he didn't know what to say to me, and that's why he never called. He promised to make it up to me someday.

We danced all night and right before the bar closed, it began to rain. His friend had left earlier and I had agreed to take him home. We walked to the car laughing and holding hands in the pouring rain. Neither one of us minded getting wet.

We decided he'd come to my house, and when we got there, we put our wet clothes in the dryer. He emerged from the bathroom with his long, wet hair all stuck to his face, wearing my big, thick, pink and white terry cloth robe and a huge grin. He was such an adorable sight.

Long after he fell asleep, I laid there staring at him. Just a small bit of light was seeping in through the blinds. It was a soft, warm light. He looked so beautiful, so peaceful. Anita Baker was playing on the stereo and the evening had been perfect.

We awoke the next morning to loud, rolling thunder and I drove him home in the rain. He had to be back at school the next day and there was a long drive ahead of him. We exchanged letters and phone calls for months, but in August I left for a long vacation and after I returned, we never got back in touch.

A few weeks ago, I was at home watching the news when a story about a gruesome murder came on. It had occurred out-of-town, but the victim was from Miami. The apartments where the murder was committed looked very familiar. I called my sister, who works as a producer for NBC news to find out the name of the victim, since it wasn't being released until

relatives could be notified. When I heard her say his name, my body began shaking. I was crying "please, please, not him."

It wasn't real. It was a violent death. Multiple stab wounds, his throat slashed, he was gone.

He was brought home to Miami and laid to rest in his favorite place, his "playground." I couldn't bear to go to his visitation or his funeral. I wanted to remember him the way he was the last night I saw him standing in the doorway in

my robe with his hair dripping wet and that big, warm smile on his face.

Last week I finally went to the cemetery to visit him. I brought him some flowers and was at last freely able to tell him how I've felt about him for the last six years. I stayed for a while, but the clouds were turning grey and I knew I should go soon. I said goodbye and promised to visit him often. Then, as I got to my car and slowly drove away, it began to rain.



Shirley Fleisher

Fantasy Flight

The drone of a plane
As it leaves the field
The sight of it

d
r
a
w
y
k
s

g
n
i
r
a
o
s

Creates excitement
Deep within me!
Oh planes lined up
In colorful array
Like birds in formation
Prepared for flight
to exotic places
Take me with you!

In fantasy
I spread my wings
Poised to zoom
Upward and Onward
But like Icarus
With wings of wax

I
c
r
a
s
h
to Earth

to reality.

Denise Melanson

Goals

I look out upon the trees
through this broken window.
I can almost touch the tops--almost.
I never reach the leaves, but I try.
I try to squeeze myself
between the fractured glass,
but, it always results in
deep cuts, painful slashes, intense wounds.
It is the price I pay
for the beauty and the dream.



Jedidiah K. Rydell Blake

Those Teachers

She fell upon us like an over ripe mango, splattering the class with her creative juices. "All the world's a stage and we are merely players who have our different exits and entrances..." she declaimed. She seemed oblivious to our presence as she flung line after line of Shakespeare's soliloquy into our ecstatic hearts. Then with wonderful transition, she shifted gears and drove us across the plains of American Pastoralism as she invited us to Robert Frost's eternal spring of creativity and renewal. The liquid, ditty notes rose and fell, reverberating in our mental skies...

"We're going out to clean the
pasture spring,
We'll only stop to rake the leaves
away;
And stay to watch the water clear,
we may..."

It was the spring of 1980 and Ms. George, our recently-appointed English Literature teacher, had just arrived to replace Professor Hardby who had been transferred to the St. Kitts-Nevis Teachers' College.

Ms. George's 6A class exploded in a rainbow of activity for the ensuing months, with our instructor striding the stage like the great, animated dramatis persona that she was. She soliloquized Thomas More's memorable defense against King Henry VIII. She mimed Lady Macbeth's psychological conflicts over the murder of Duncan, King of Scotland. She wept bitterly as she recited, with pathos, Walt Whitman's poem. "O Captain, my Captain!" She was pregnant with joy as she related the happy ending of Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing. As she cantered from theme to theme, venting rage and expressing joy, enthusiasm burst her seams and ushered us into the dramatic arena as actors. By the

summer of 1980, we had initiated a literary extravaganza for the Basseterre community—monologues, mimes, recitations, soliloquies, and the abridged play, Man for all Seasons. George was poesy epitomized.

Her methodology was commendable and her magnetic personality provided an excellent complement. She possessed the wit of a Voltaire, a talent which often times plunged the class into rapturous delight, and on occasions such as these, we simply gave ourselves to wild abandon because her laughter was contagious. Moreover, her disarming smile and her soothing voice were her constant body guards. They never left her even when she was perturbed. But what exuded from her most was her love for us. She never verbalized it but even Bartimaeus would have noticed. Her warm touch and her tender eyes spoke eloquently. George had resurrected us from the academic grave of Professor Hardby.

He was boredom incarnate. We sat incarcerated in the confines of 6A listening to his incessant droning, an ordeal exacerbated by his wonderful, nasal twang. Yet he

clung tenaciously to his subject matter, biting slowly into time with mere trifles about his academic competence, his students' lethargy, and his love for literature. If indeed he did love the subject, he was a cruel lover; neither did he introduce us to his friend. Hardby was like a spent wave washing over a smug and placid class.

If he perfected some modus operandi after twenty years of teaching, he showed none in the class room. Intermittent chatter punctuated by empty sermonettes about "filling our empty craniums with facts" was the sum of his efforts. He read long, complicated commentaries on Shakespeare while we yawned our way through his verbomania. Indeed, after four months of torture, we were still wading through mountains and mountains of scholarly criticisms on the bard of Avon. Hardby's reign of boredom was threatening to smother our academic flames when George's renaissance erupted. I seized the opportunity immediately and grew to adore George, a woman for all seasons!



David Samela

The Tree

Second Version

Standing aloft and alone by itself,
 A sapling endures its first frigid winter.
 Alone, almost undone, the sapling grows.
 It converts.

--combined in lost innocence
 --it grows and matures
 --a sapling no longer
 --a sprout no deeper
 --the tree survives.

The years grow by, the tree spreads on.
 Releasing its fruit yet withholding its seed.
 Its scenery is different, yet its life is still there.
 Alone, and always aloft.

Ages late the tree still stands.
 Shading all that I can see.
 Spreading out its glory, the tree is a tree.
 And now a church stands by it.
 And a school lies underneath.
 The tree spreads on,
 sheading its leaves onto me.

Vickie Lowe

What If?

What if...

The birds didn't sing...
The sun didn't shine...
The grass didn't grow.

What if...

The moon didn't glow...
Snowflakes didn't fall...
Lightning didn't strike.

What if...

I, left one hour sooner...
Left one hour later...
Never left at all?

What if...

She, didn't take a drink...
She, didn't run a stop sign...
She, never left at all?

What if...

The sky wasn't blue...
The grass wasn't green...
A cloud wasn't white.

What if...

The wind never blew...
A leaf never fell...
The days never changed.

What if...

I, took a different route...
Stopped for a snack...
Never left at all?

ADRIAN ALBERTSON / 2011





Daphne E. Parker

Goodbye Again

As I looked out the window, I watched the planes take off and land on the wet runway. I thought about our brief encounter. Is it going to be another three years until I see him again? I don't know.

Seven years ago, I received a phone call from an old friend of the family. His mother and mine had known each other since childhood. We used to visit each other's homes on occasion. When he joined the navy, I heard about it third hand from his mother to mine and then to me. Out of nowhere he phoned and wanted to know if we could put him up for a few days while he was on leave. I wasn't sure what to expect when I said yes. When he arrived, he looked a lot different than when I last saw him. Ten years had passed and his thick brown hair had been cut very short and shaved on the sides. He had grown about nine inches in height and his skin was a little lighter than it used to be because there

isn't much sunshine in England. Although he came in civilian clothes, I tried to picture him in his uniform; white hat and sailor suit pressed to perfection. My only knowledge on how a sailor dressed was from the movie *Mister Roberts* starring Henry Fonda as a Navy officer.

We talked until four a.m. about his travels and life. When we were young, his presence bothered me, he being younger and more worldly than I; but now he was on his own, a communications officer aboard a war ship during peacetime. He had changed a lot. He was not the person I knew so many years ago. His manners were better and his conversation was interesting and adult oriented. He stayed for two days. We went bowling and baked sugar cookies for my mother's birthday. I asked him to taste a cookie and he really enjoyed it and told me it had been a long time since he had something that was

home-made. When it was time for him to leave, I felt like I was losing a good friend so I said "give me a hug" and we embraced for a long time, then he left.

He wrote me a lot and had a dozen long stem red roses delivered to my home for no reason. The roses were beautiful and their bouquet lasted for weeks. For my birthday, I received a stuffed animal in the shape of a snow leopard and on the tag it said that a portion of the sale will be donated to the World Wildlife Fund, so it was like two presents in one since he knew I was very involved with helping animals. He also mailed me beautiful pictures of

places he had been, such as, Scotland, Australia, Norway and England. He did not like being on the ship, so four years later when his tour was over he re-enlisted for a base job in London.

He phones me a lot from work to help make the day or night go by faster, and maybe it makes him feel like he is home again. We talk about the weather, our cats and life.

Today, he left for England after visiting for a while. I thought about our brief encounter. Is it going to be another three years until I see him again?



Jeffrey Reinman

Waiting

They say he only has a year to live
The time is short for him I know,
I'm supposed to feel sorry for him
But sometimes I wish he'd go.

He isn't a very nice person
Everything he does is for himself,
Bleeding everyone 'til they're dry
They say put your feelings on a shelf.

Dying brings peace to a tortured soul
Life can be better than on earth,
I only wish that he could find inner peace
A serenity that has eluded him since birth.

I hope to make amends of our friendship
Although it runs much deeper than I say,
He is my blood and I'll miss him dearly
The day he is swept away.

Jean-Marie B. Pierre

War Game

For some maniacs, a war is just a game.
 A game they play to satisfy their greed and desire.
 A game in which they don't have anything at stake.
 Other people's lives don't mean a thing to them.

They make their wars at home
 Using chips for human beings
 Using maps for battle fields
 What's the difference, they will never participate.

Like a piece of meat thrown to a lion's cage,
 They send people to war without any regard
 Soldiers of the world, your life is meaningless;
 You aren't too important to their stylish society.

Don't be a fool and fall into their trap, soldiers.
 They are using you as a machine of destruction.
 Beware of their psychological game that they're playing.
 Stop this madness before it is too late.

I will give this to you Mr.; you are clever.
 Your brain is full of tricks, and you know how to use them.
 To stop this carnage, you make your point; you dupe them all.
 Your game must be stopped; too many lives have already been wasted.

Nancy Morgen

A Good Night's Sleep

"God Damn it, just go ahead and start so we can get this over with." I lay on the bed, rigid, every muscle tense. I knew I'd never get to sleep until it was over. I never did.

My muscles ached from a full day of school, football practice and work. It was after midnight, and I needed to sleep. But they hadn't started yet. Or at least not loud enough for me to hear. My ears strained in the darkness.

"Don't start, Ethel, don't start."

That was Dad. I could hear the strain in his voice. "I don't need your bullshit tonight."

"But you said you would talk to him. You promised." Mom's voice jangled my nerves. It was high-pitched and irritating even when she was calm, but when she started to get angry, it got that whine that reminded me of a dentist's office. You could sit in the waiting room and listen to the drill, knowing you'd be next.

"I don't need no God damned

counsellor. I'm not an alcoholic."

"Just talk to the man. Please."

"No."

"Please." Mom never knew when to quit.

I lay in the darkness, waiting. Their voices had dropped, so I couldn't hear, but I knew it wasn't over. It never was.

"You know I love you, Lou. I want what's best for you."

No sound from Dad.

"You just need to talk to him. Just call. Promise you'll call tomorrow."

"God damn it, Ethel, shut up. I told you I'm tired."

"It's not just for me, it's for Jess."

Things were starting to heat up. I knew it when they brought me into it. I always hated it when they did that.

"Jess needs a father who's there for him. Someone to talk to. When you're drinking you cut him out."

"He's a good kid. I talk to him."

"Yell at him, more like. You never do things together. You never take him fishing, or play ball together."

"Jess has his own things to do. He's sixteen. He's too old for that little boy bullshit."

"It's not bullshit. It's important."

"Just shut up. I'm trying to watch the news."

Dad didn't like to be pushed. He'd try to back off, but he didn't like to be pushed. I knew she wouldn't let up for long.

"Lou, when are you going to fix the washing machine?"

"When I get time. Now lay off."

"It's been almost a month. I don't have time to go to the laundromat every few days."

"I said when I get time."

I heard the sound of ice and the refrigerator door closing. A bottle clinked against a glass. It sounded so loud in the dark.

"I'm going to call a repairman tomorrow."

"Go the fuck ahead, but don't expect me to fucking pay for it. I said I'd do it."

"Lou, don't curse at me."

"I'll say any fucking Goddamn thing I want."

"I don't like it when you take God's

name in vain. I think you should have more respect for me. I expect to be treated like a lady."

"Then act like one."

"I will when you act like a gentleman. I hate it when you talk crude in public."

"We're not in public. I'll talk any way I fucking want to in my own house."

"Not to me, you won't."

"You bitch. I told you to shut the fuck up." I heard Dad's glass slam down on the table. I knew he was getting riled.

"Don't you threaten me."

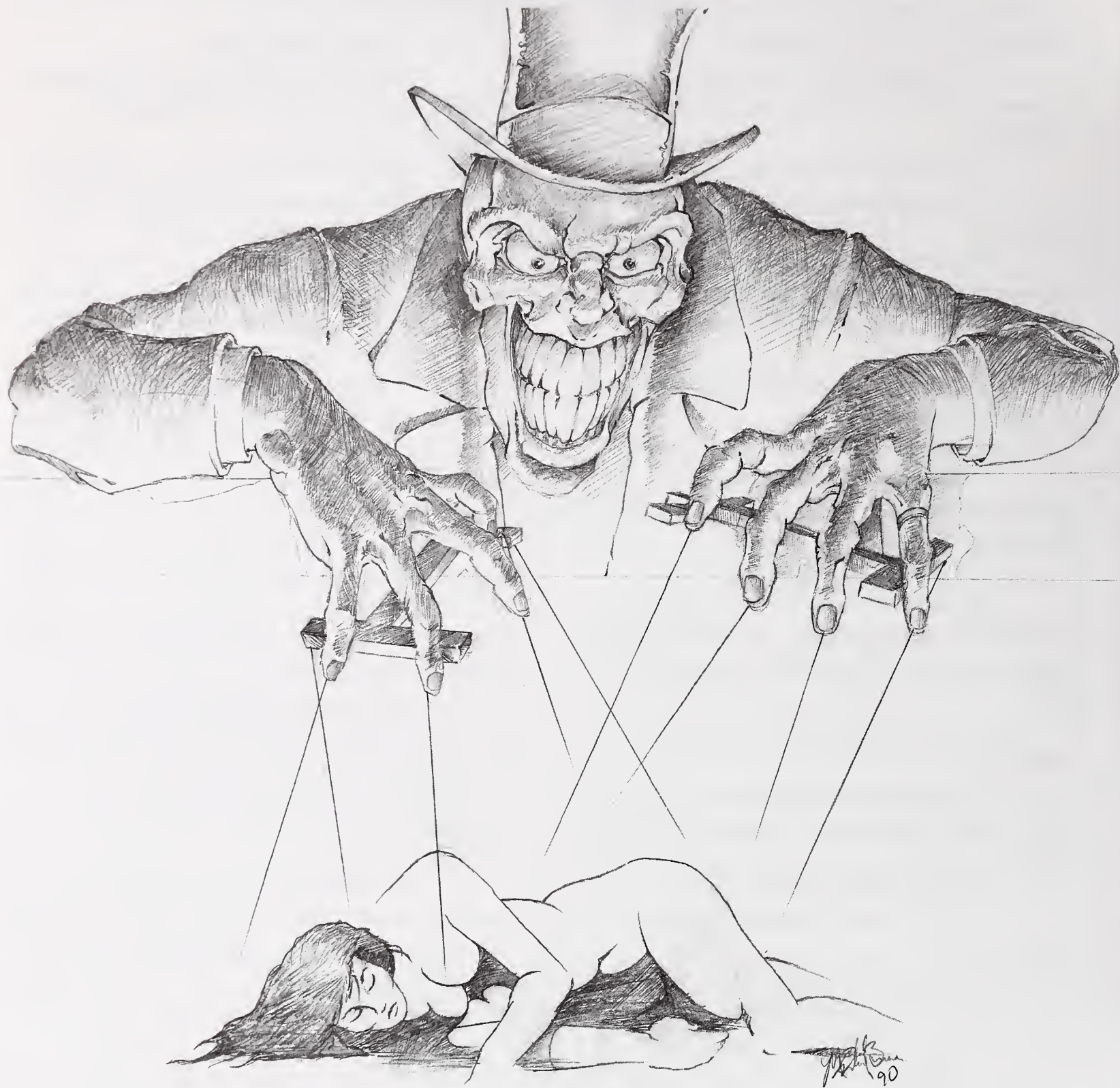
"I ought to..." There it was. I jumped out of bed. By the time I got to the living room, Mom was backed up against the wall. Dad was standing over her, hand raised. He started to swing.

I grabbed his wrist. "Stop it! Dad, stop it." I held onto his arm until I felt the tension go out of it. It was over. The anger and the tension went out of Dad's face. His shoulders slumped.

Mom pushed past us, into the bedroom. Dad followed slowly. I stood in the living room until I heard the bed creak. Once they went to bed, it was okay. I turned out the lights and went back to my room.

I crawled under the covers. A warmth spread over me as I snuggled into the pillow. Now I could get a good night's sleep.







Susan Clerici Knill

Carnal Paradox

Seeds of dissatisfaction
have been germinating for
a long time.
I see a shadow of appeasement and
follow it within the
recesses of my mind.
Sensual fantasies
where I play out my satisfaction.
Taking the form of supple
flesh and carnal
desire.
To where the delirium ends
and the rudeness of
reality
curves around my wanton body.

Mike Stairs

Touch and Go

I once flew a plane from North Perry.

The trip was quite scary.

On my third touch and go,

I came in too low.

And took out a rabbit named Harry.



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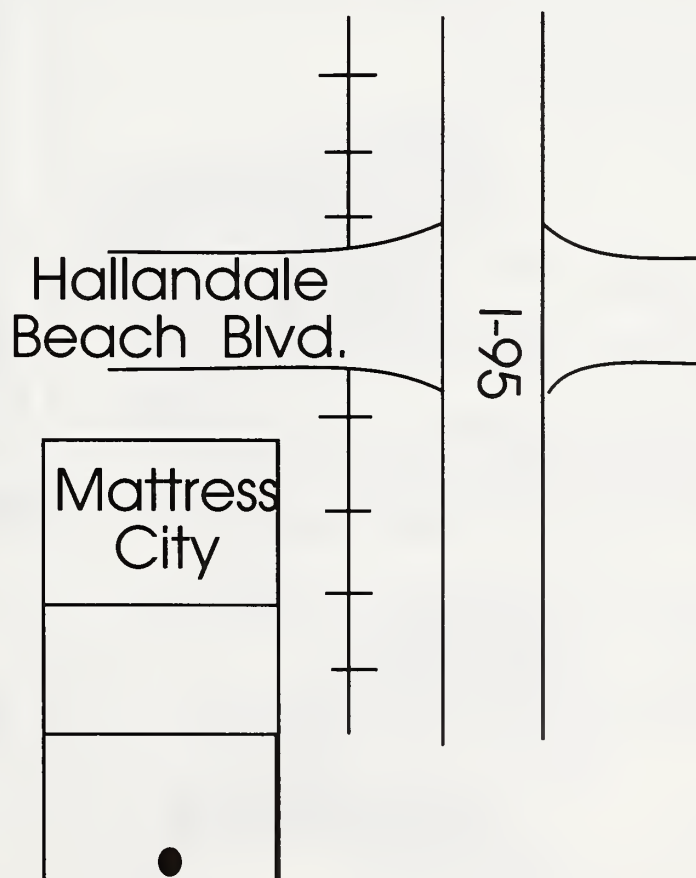
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