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R. van Ruc



*For she out of her secret treasury
Plenty of riches forth on him will pour ...*

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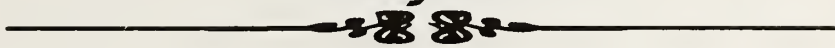
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Preface



I would like to thank those of you who submitted to this issue of *P'an Ku*. To those applicants who submitted and did not place in this issue, please continue to submit. However, while I was reading through the submissions I noticed something. Many of the literature pieces played along the same subject lines. Remember, *P'an Ku* is a student magazine and as students we should be able to open our minds to other concepts and ideas that do not necessarily follow the trends of others. Uniqueness and individuality need to find a rebirth. As students, our search for knowledge should not end at the books, but continue within ourselves. Once inside ourselves, we will find the ability to create. Creativity is a force present within each of us, but in order to develop, it must be practiced.

Marie C. Jennings
Editor



'Still War' Mixed Media by Otniel E. Marin

Hiroshima

In the land where that which rises
The sun once fell upon the earth
The bowels of hell erupted and in
The glorious light of one million stars
The land and the sky became one
Buildings shook to their foundations
Mighty trees shuddered as if
The fist of god had struck the earth
Screams were stolen
Frozen in time with only
Charred bones to mark their origin
The rain was not water but
The flood came still
And all where engulfed by
The great poseidon of flame

- *Anthony Soares*

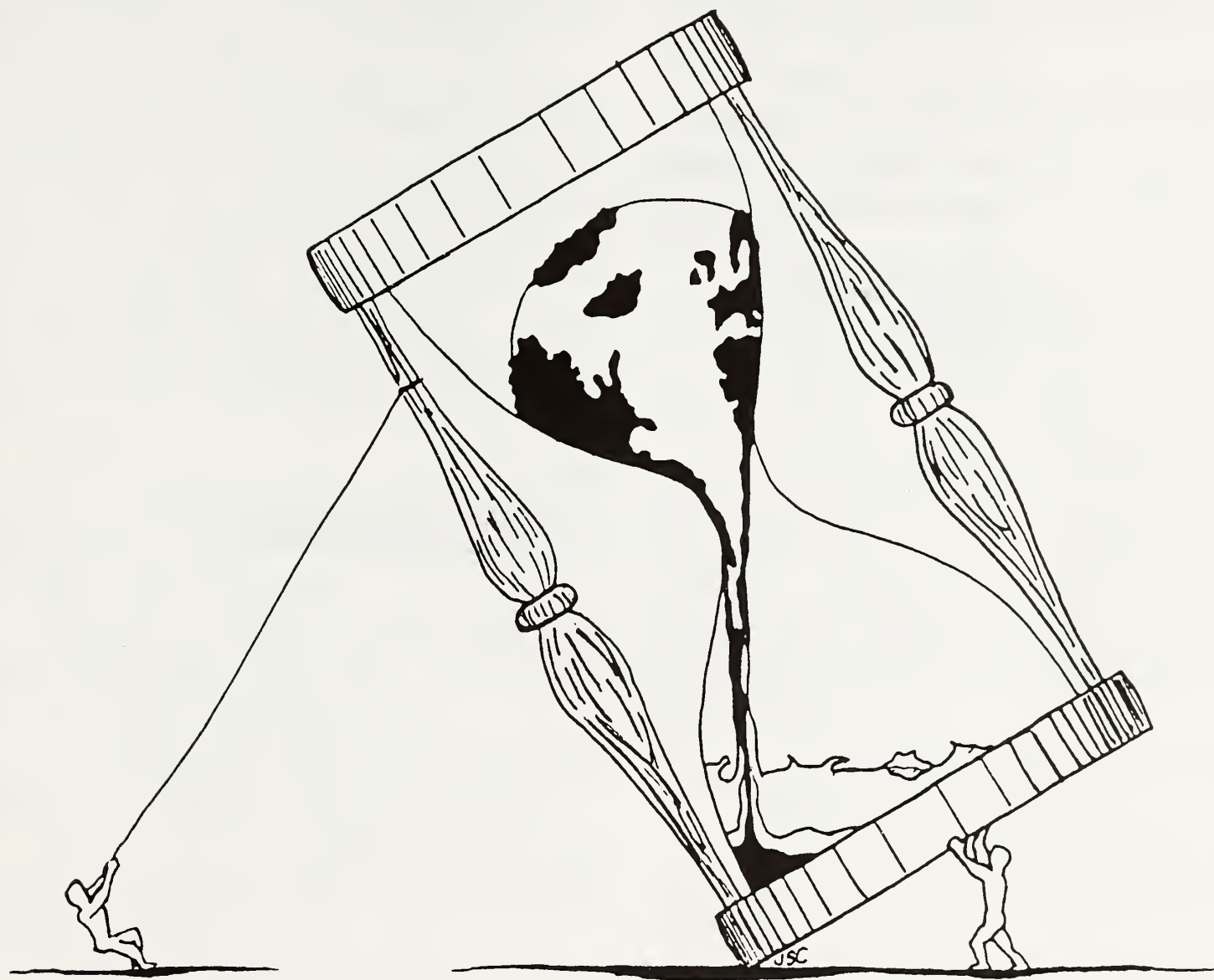
Word's Play

Letters kill hope, kill passion ...
Words are accidents, maybe fears of the mind.
Pain becomes real,
Coloring broken hearts in memories of the past.
Words bare dreams in the coldness of the night.

Words are dubious, impulsive fires
tearing the skies with luscious crimes.
Words are tears of light.
Phantasms of a future that will never arrive.
Words cut dreams, dodge mistakes, mold lives.

And then words are said...
And starting again becomes nonsense
Since words neighbor pain,
And fears haunt nearby.

- P. Orias



'Running Out of Time' Ink on Vellum by Joseph Shaun Coleman

Freedom

If I could get out
of the horse ring
of never ending circles
consisting of romanticism and reality
and ride in the untamed forest without direction
I know I could ride both
life and the horse
better.

- Lisa Joy Huriash

Anne

by Cynthia Northcutt

Karla Jean climbed down from the rickshaw, surveyed the Central Marketplace, and clutched the older woman's hand.

"What do you think happened?" asked Karla Jean. "Why is there so much blood all over the floor?"

"That's not blood. It's betel nut spittle. You'll see the peddlers come around with large brass trays. The betel nut leaf has a chemical that's slightly narcotic. When you've been here longer, you might try it. But, don't swallow the juice, or you will toss your lunch."

"This place is right out of *National Geographic*. Too bad those magazines don't include scratch and sniff. The smell of Jakarta tells it all," Karla Jean said.

The two women walked up and down aisle after aisle piled high with beautiful vegetables and spices.

At one particular vender Anne stopped. "What do you want for this melon?" she asked the small, wrinkled old man.

"Ten rupees," said the vender with the strange looking melon covered with spines in his hand.

"Five," Anne said.

"This is my best melon. But from you, I will take only five rupees," said the vender.

Anne placed the melon in a paper, secured it with brown twine, and handed the parcel to Karla Jean.

"I've been here so long that they know me and know not to haggle too much or I don't buy," she confided.

At one end of the long building,

Karla Jean picked up a handful of beautiful strawberries grown in the highlands around the city.

"Don't sample one, the berries were fertilized with dung. Before you eat any fruit or vegetable, you must soak them in water and bleach to kill the amoebas," Anne advised.

"Yuk! I may not eat for the rest of the summer," Karla Jean said.

"Oh, you'll get used to it. Culture shock, that's all," said Anne.

As the women continued walking, Anne thought back to their ride from the rooming house. She remembered how the rays of the late afternoon sun bounced off the shiny wet street. A streak of the tropical sunlight had burned across the side of her face. She remembered the girl's first look at the Old City.

"The monsoon rain only seems to increase the heat," Anne said.

Karla Jean had sat uncomfortably close to her in the wicker basket of the rickshaw. "It's not the temperature, it's the humidity," she said.

"That saying must have originated here. At least some of the pollution is washed out of the air after the rains. In the dry season, I can barely breathe in this part of the city," said Ann.

Karla Jean's hand had moved under her long blond hair and lifted it off her damp neck. "Was it always this dirty?" asked Karla Jean.

"Ten years ago when I arrived here as a new bride from Holland, there weren't

as many cars or trucks. People used bicycles more. Workers used push carts to transport almost everything," answered Anne. "My late husband's family had a car even back then, but that was rare. After the revolution more fuel was available. Foreigners invested in tin and oil. Progress brought with it modern problems."

Anne thought back to another century when Dutch settlers lived with wealth and privilege among the disease and insects that was early Java. She had heard stories about Dutch colonists in the highlands living in their palaces taking their wealth from the land.

She wished her husband, Bhutti, had lived to see his country prosper and develop. Bhutti was killed years ago in the revolution, but she still missed him.

"The Old City of Jakarta was built on the shores of this river. Dutch companies still have some of the buildings, but mostly the Indonesians run it now," said Anne to the girl.

The Old City had attacked their senses. Karla Jean had sat and stared while vendors beckoned the women, children begged, and the stench of the polluted river caught her breath. She watched a group of women stand down by the water's edge washing their belongings in the filth.

"You'll get used to it, Honey. Culture shock, that's all," said Anne.

"I don't think one summer as an intern at the American Embassy is long enough to adjust to all this," said Karla Jean.

Anne recognized the foul odor of the durian melon coming from Karla Jean's parcel as the women came out of the Central Marketplace.

"It may smell rotten, but it is a very sweet taste and considered a delicacy here. Everyone will enjoy it tonight," she said.

By nine o'clock at the rooming house, the smell had seeped through the cracks and crevices to every room chasing the inhabitants onto the veranda.

Anne announced, "Karla Jean and I were at the Central Market today. She insisted on buying that melon. I told her not to believe the vendor about its aphrodisiac powers..."

"I did not!" Karla Jean said. "You told me everyone would enjoy it."

"And, we all will," said Anne as she put her arm around the girl's shoulder. "The penalty for bringing a durian melon into the confines of a house is the price of beer for everyone."

"I know," said Karla Jean to the group. "I'll get used to it. Culture shock."

Blue Moon Bar

Located in the mid of a dell, the Blue Moon Bar is a hangout for the unusual and obscure. Crowds gather between the forgotten hours of the damp dry nights. Alternative music coruscates through the thick dim lighted air. The bartender invites everyone ordering a drink with an old whore lore. In the corner near the jukebox, a lonely soliloquy with a ten-dollar roll of quarters selects the songs trying to become lost in the music and not remember the day. The house harlot writhes between the stalks of men, like a used books a man can turn hers frail pages, for her lips tell the story that she went past the whisper. Hitchhikers lay a map on the pool table retracing their travels wondering how and when. Looking into a shot of vodka a mother finds her identity. Directing those leaving, the man in scrap garments points to the exit sign. Above the exit sign, among the diverse ornaments in the bar, is a timepiece without hands. An indication that time exist in a place where there is no time.

- Chris Joseph Stancato

A Burnished Black Baby Grand

A burnished black baby grand
lures with the magnetism of a leading man,
tempting.
His strong, solid body shines
in the scant fluorescent light
as his alluring keys
flash a wild smile
across an all-too-silent room
making him impossible
to resist.

- Christine Murphy

My Night With

The jazz pumped through my veins
Ponytailed men were everywhere and
Harry Connick Jr. played

The stage was
Untouchable. The music covered
My body

I swayed to the rhythm. My hands
Clapping to the beat
I sat and danced in my seat

The sax was so soothing
The bass was so
Deep

My body was hot
From the musical
Heat

The audience was one
Unity was there
I liked what I saw

I loved what I heard
The night was a musical treat
As Harry Connick Jr.

Continued to play

- Julieanne Harding



'Stuck Indoors' Black and White Photograph by Greg Barbes

I Come To Sit Alone

by Taranda R. Ross

I come to sit alone. I realize that I wanted something. That I am lonely. I am tired of sitting in that overcrowded cafeteria and still being alone. I didn't want to share another laugh about who is wearing what. I was tired of making small talk and wanting a real response. Not just company, but a critical soul mate. Being smothered. Wanting and wanting. How great it feels to remember such times, but me and my empty thoughts chasing the breeze about. Returning to my heart, I begin to understand just why I feel the way I do. Having too little or too much. But having time wasting away is my only death. Fresh air and standing room. Pressure disappearing amongst the trees. Reloading. I begin to assert myself. But I still realize that I'm alone. I can never forget and all I will remember about this feeling is that it wants to be fulfilled.

-Taranda R. Ross

Silence

Expectations too high,
And the young bird fell.
The street lights
kept the world from darkness.
Arteries, my hope,
Pumped oxygen and blood
Through my heart.
As sure as snow falls in Ontario
In December
I was sure that
I could hold us together.
But
Pollution melted the snow
My arteries failed
And the young bird fell
To his death.

- *Cecelie Ferguson*

This Life of Mine

Oh how these feelings invade my soul
and keep me from proceeding
let the ground submerge and tighten
around my feet

Pull me down deeper
Is there no sky that exists of clarity
and all is serene
Must it all be blue and scattered
as though
my thoughts have escaped me
and have elevated so high that I have lost them
Could this matter be so oblique
I can not find its true structure
Can this world be so deceiving that I no longer wish to
perpetuate in its existence
I only possess feelings of despair and loss
I wish to climb the highest mountain and plunge into
this so-called
life of mine head first
I would laugh all the way down
like I have never laughed before
I could leap from cloud to cloud
waiting
to just fall through
or maybe
I shall just sit and wait
Wait for my overbearing senses to capture
my heart and soul
My wisdom will outclimb any mountain
my wisdom will
exceed to the highest limit
I will pass the clouds by
and find the true structure of being
I will escape all darkness
The only shadows I will confront
will be those outlined in brightness

- Shannen Riley

Scarlett Fever

by Pamela J. Smith

Loretta sprayed a mist of windex on her scanner and gently began to towel the crumbs from its star-shaped window. In her mind she was dusting the delicate crystal pendants of a mantle lustre and enjoying their magical tinkling of her plantation home.

"Can't you do that later? I'm in a hurry!" The irritated voice broke through Loretta's reverie.

"It'll just take a second ma'am, the machine won't register when the glass is dirty," she explained politely. Passing the groceries mechanically across the red beam, Loretta glanced at her impatient customer-acrylic nails tapping on the counter, halter top and cut-off jeans, four pierced rings in each ear and wondered what someone from the nineteenth century would think of a creature like this.

"Thank you for shopping at Dixie-Plenty." She smiled and handed a sack to the sullen blonde. It wasn't surprising to get no reply or merely a grunt from the customers. Loretta had a private theory that there was a toll booth at the entrance to the Sunshine State where everyone surrendered their manners.

The management had studded her polyester smock with merit pins over the past seven years, but they never understood that it was less "Dixie-Plenty Spirit" and more Loretta's attempt to soften

her surroundings that made her so relentlessly cheerful.

Glancing at her watch, it was half an hour till punchout, and then she'd explore that odd new book shop she'd noticed on the way to work. Maybe they'd have the third novel in the *Magnolia Manor* series she'd been looking for.

As Loretta eased her aging VW into the parking lot it crossed her mind that this bookstore couldn't be more than two days old. If Loretta knew anything, she knew the location of every bookstore in Cayoga county for the last eight years.

The orange and red calligraphy in the window announcing *Paper Portals, a Book Emporium* reminded her vaguely of a Charlie Chan movie. She pushed open the door bearing *A. Nomed proprietor* and entered a world of boxes and utter chaos. In the corner, a stocky figure in what appeared to be a black cotton pajamas was rooting in a carton, long grey pigtail flopping on his or her back. To Loretta's surprise, "A. Nomed" turned to greet her sporting a full beard. "Welcome, forgive the mess is there something I can help you find?" the pajamed figure inquired. Loretta took a minute to adjust to the Kenny Rogers/Santa Claus face when she was expecting "Mr. Moto". "Well yes, I've been looking for the third *Magnolia Manor* novel, but I can see you're not finished unpacking."

"Come to the back by my desk, there's a box of new paperbacks, we may have some luck," he said. "Besides, I can use a break."

"What does 'A.' stand for?" Loretta inquired. He paused an unusually long time as if a cloud was passing through his blue eyes, then he shrugged and smiled saying it was unpronounceable. "I like my friends to call me Charlie."

Loretta had to stifle a grin considering her first impressions, and knew she'd have no trouble remembering his name.

While this strange but likable fellow was rummaging for her book, Loretta took notice of a beautiful carved mahogany glass front case standing behind the desk. Displayed within were the most incredible collection of books she had ever seen.

"Would you like to take a closer look?" asked Charlie. He unlocked the case and Loretta poked her nose inside breathing the mysterious must of antique leather bindings. "What sort of prices do you have on these?" Loretta asked cagily, hoping for something she could afford. "Oh, they're not for sale," his merry face beamed, "I rent them by the hour."

Loretta stared at him in wide eyed disbelief. Terrific, she thought, I've found another nutcase. While she was trying to find a graceful exit, Charlie started rambling about how special these books were and how his former clients had been eager to pay the fifty dollar per hour rental.

She was trying to find her footing amid the maze of boxes when he planted himself in front of her. "Because you will be my first customer, I'd like to give you a free

sample read, say...for five minutes...any book you choose." He stood there, so pleased with his generosity, looking so Santa-like and sincere, Loretta changed her mind. What harm could five minutes do? Besides, she'd get to touch one of these luscious volumes.

She walked back to the case and quickly scanned the titles, all classics, *Moby Dick*, *Les Miserables*, *War and Peace*, but there was no question which appealed to her the most. She pointed to the crimson and gilt edition of *Gone With The Wind*.

Charlie removed it from the easel and gestured for Loretta to follow him to a small room behind a beaded curtain. She followed him reluctantly, a small fear that he might make a pass at her nibbled at her mind.

"Don't be alarmed, it's just more comfortable to read in peace back here. In fact I have a special chair I brought back from my studies in the Orient, that I think you'll agree is perfect for reading."

More of a throne Loretta observed, an ornate piece of furniture somehow combining a bookstand, plush velvet seating, and a canopy all decorated with mythical creatures. It looked as if it had been carved from one tree. It was massive, solid and inviting, Loretta climbed inside.

"It is best to start at the beginning" Charlie said cryptically, "when your five minutes are up I will place my hand on your shoulder, like this" he demonstrated "and it will be time to return."

Loretta was hardly paying attention to him so eager was she to get her hands on the book as he placed it on the stand before her. *Gone With The Wind*, she read, by Mar-

garet Mitchell, and heard the leather creak and the yellowed vellum whisper as she turned the first page. (Scarlett O' Hara was not beautiful) as she started to read but an odd dizziness was overtaking her and she felt as if she were being pushed backwards into the cushions. She gripped the arms of the chair and closed her eyes to steady the spinning sensation. A wave of warm air hit her face and she felt much better...until she opened her eyes. She looked down at her hand gripping the railing of a whitewashed fence. The scent of magnolia was overpowering, she realized she was standing behind a huge bush of the white blossoms not thirty feet from the porch of a brick plantation. Two young men were in a lively conversation with raven haired teenager in a enormous hooped gown decorated with green flowers. "You know there isn't going to be any war" the young woman said.

This can't be possible Loretta thought, and yet when she reached out and touched a leaf, it had substance. She pulled the leathery dark green leaf from the branch and deliberately crushed it watching the milky sap ooze and feeling its stickiness.

"Ashley Wilkes and his father told Pa just last week..." conversation filtered from the porch as Loretta took in her surroundings. The sky was clear, she could hear the faint rushing of the river water far off and smell a hint of the pines that lined its banks. In the distance she saw undulating hills plowed with deep red furrows waiting for seed. "Dear God," she thought, "I'm standing in the front yard of Tara."

"Time to come back Loretta" a hand was resting on her shoulder.

She turned and looked into the face of Charlie, she could see past his shoulder to

the beaded curtain and the interior of the bookstore. He was helping her out the reading chair.

"How did you know my name?" she shot accusingly. Given the catastrophic state of bewilderment she was in, she even surprised herself with her choice of questions.

"Your Dixie-Plenty badge of course." He looked hurt and started to ask her why she was so...but Loretta pushed past him, forced her way through the cartons and out the front door. Her heart was beating wildly as she raced the little VW's engine in a panic to get to the safety of her bungalow. Even after she'd locked the door and changed out of her uniform, she couldn't stop shaking. Her gaze fell on the dusty brandy decanter she had set out for display on the off chance a true gentleman would come her way. Loretta poured her very first glass of brandy. It smelled like medicine and tasted worse, but she gulped it down and sank into her favorite chair to think.

What had just happened to her? Had she been hypnotized? Was there some sort of contact drug impregnated in the cover of the book? Some electrical wiring in the special chair? Could she possibly have been transported to Georgia in the year 1861? It had to have been a trick, but her hand was still sticky with the leaf sap and there were traces of red clay on her shoes. Must have been something on the floor of the backroom she reasoned.

A warm glow started to spread from her stomach, making her feel a little better. "Must be the brandy" she thought, and a nasty flashback of her parents nightly stupor and the reasons she left home intruded. Loretta quickly told herself that

one glass of brandy would not be her undoing, and closed the door on those memories. But her mind would not shut up. It was playing ping-pong with the trip to Tara, reality/illusion, possible/impossible, you were there/you were dreaming. She felt herself losing control and headed for the only comfort she could depend on. Loretta walked to her bookshelf. Checking the titles, she suddenly burst out laughing and withdrew the volume she used to read herself to sleep. "I'll worry about all this tomorrow" she thought, pleased with her own pun, and took her old copy of *Gone With The Wind* to bed.

For the next two days Loretta went through the motions of her daily life in a fog of thought, adding six blocks on her drive to work to avoid passing the bookstore. On the third day she made up her mind to confront Charlie.

On her way she went to the Paper Portals drive-in teller and withdrew \$50.00 from her meager savings. This time when she pushed open the door marked *A. Nomad*, a chain of sleigh bells announced her arrival. The store was neatly organized, the shelves carefully stacked with books.

"Hello Loretta, I found your book in the Manor series."

"I'm not interested in that book anymore, and I'm sure you know why." She stared straight into those mischievous blue eyes. "I want you to tell me the truth about the rental books."

"It's very complicated," he said. "It involves positive and negative polarity, light refraction, relativity, teleportation of matter, solidification of mass myth... the chair has the proper magnetic field... but

you don't need to know all the details as long as I am around to control things...I knew you'd be back." He added a wide grin.

Something in that disarmingly sweet face swung the balance for Loretta and she decided to ignore her fears and proceed with her test plan. "Yes," she said, "I'm ready for an hour."

Charlie unlocked the book and settled her in the reading chair as before. This time Loretta knew what to expect and prepared well. She had deliberately chosen a long Laura Ashley style print dress, had piled her long brown hair in a neat bun, removed her wrist watch and other twentieth century accessories, and worn low plain leather shoes. She opened the book to page 24 where Scarlett would slip away by herself to wait for her daddy. She tried to keep her eyes open to see how the transportation worked, but it was useless. When the dizzying force let up, she was standing behind a cedar at the edge of the plantation's driveway and Scarlett O'Hara was seated on a stump looking like a miracle in the late afternoon sun.

"Hello, my name is Loretta, and I'm visiting the MacIntoshes." She walked up to Scarlett wondering if she could be seen or heard.

"Oh my, you startled me." Scarlett rose from her seat. "How lovely to have a neighbor nearer to my own age. Will you be staying long?"

"It's hard to say," Loretta replied, "it depends on how long my aunt needs me, she hasn't been feeling well of late." Loretta was delighted with her alibi, knowing the O'Haras and MacIntoshes avoided each other because of the Orange/Irish feud.

A little furrow had appeared between those famous black eyebrows as Scarlett was scrutinizing Loretta's outfit. "That's quite an unusual ensemble you're wearing."

Loretta was prepared and thought if she could get away with this she was home free. "My mama is doing the Grand Tour and had this sent back from France. Do you like it?"

"Do I!" exclaimed Scarlett, "it looks ever so much more comfortable than these stays and hoops. May I touch the cloth?" As Scarlett daintily examined the rayon blended fabric which would not be invented for another hundred years, Loretta could see the legendary green eyes, the flawless milk complexion, and when Scarlett impulsively grabbed her hand to lead her to sit beside her, she knew beyond any doubt that this was a real, breathing human being and that they were going to be great friends.

Time passed quickly as they talked of the neighboring boys, fashions, parents...in fact, Loretta had never had such a satisfying talk with anyone and the thought of never belonging here made tears well up.

"Take this." Scarlett was offering a delicately embroidered hankie. "Would you be free for supper tomorrow? I can have Mammy cook up something special."

"I'd love to." Loretta heard herself say before she had time to think how.

"Time to return Miss Loretta." Charlie's hand tapped her shoulder. When she turned to follow she realized how perfect the black pajamas fit in, why he could cover at least four centuries like a shadowy manservant without anyone

raising a eyebrow.

"Did you have a nice read?" Charlie inquired. "Oh my yes!" Loretta fairly floated out of the bookshop.

Everything that greeted her outside jarred her senses: gum on the sidewalks, tacky billboards, cars honking and spitting fumes, boomboxes blaring. Loretta hurried home to plan what she should do next.

"It will take at least three hours for a proper supper visit" she thought. Consulting her bankbook, Loretta found a balance of \$96.58. "That would wipe me out, and it's three days till payday." She sat miserably, wondering if Scarlett's tomorrow was the same as her tomorrow, and where she could find the extra money.

She was still chewing on the problem the next day at work. "Will that be cash or check?" she asked looking up to find the rude blonde from last week handing her a hundred dollar bill, Loretta counted out the change, "sixty, eighty, one hundred. Thank you for shopping at Dixie-Plenty." She had substituted two tens for the twenties and the blonde had merely grabbed the money and stuffed it into her tight jeans. The wheels began to turn in Loretta's head, there were plenty of tourists who passed through town and shopped in her store for camper supplies. You could always tell by the way they dressed and acted. You could tell a lot about people by the food they bought. She managed to pick up forty more dollars by the end of her shift, it was surprisingly easy, and Loretta had convinced herself her carefully chosen "customers" would be long gone before they missed the money.

A thousand things were swirling in Loretta's mind as she drove to the book-

store. One thing was perfectly clear, this was real and worth any amount of money. She had the proof tucked in her purse next to the three hours rental: a dainty white hankie emblazoned with a scarlet embroidered "S". When Charlie had laid out the book, Loretta paused and asked him if he had a restroom she could use. As he pointed to a door in the corner, the sleigh bells jingled. "That's OK. Charlie, you go ahead and see to business, I can take care of myself here."

She wasn't quite sure why she wanted to be alone, she just knew it would be important. She found the restroom, then tried the door next to it which opened on the alley. She stepped out briefly noting where the alley led and listening for bells or buzzers. Her curiosity satisfied, Loretta returned to the book and arrived to a warm welcome at Tara.

The evening couldn't have gone better. Ellen and Gerald, Scarlett's parents, were genteel and considerate. Mammy had the table groaning with southern delicacies, and fussed over her all during the meal to try this and that. The dinnerware was "new" spode that would fetch a king's ransom in an antique shop. Loretta couldn't remember enjoying herself so much. She was afraid of running overtime and having any embarrassment about Charlie so she had worn long sleeves and concealed her watch.

As the time drew near, Loretta was making her reluctant good-byes when Scarlett asked her parents if they thought Loretta could be invited to the big barbecue at Twelve Oaks. Everyone concluded that this was a splendid idea and a wonderful way to introduce Loretta to the community. "Until Saturday," she waved, "I'll see myself out."

Outside, Charlie made his rendezvous and took her back. "All went well I trust?" he asked.

"Exceedingly," Loretta answered, a secret look of triumph in her eyes. She knew something Charlie overlooked, this time she had NOT sat in the chair. This little deviation had resulted in her "landing" off balance, but besides needing to be dusted off, there was no difference.

For the next few days Loretta made furious preparations. She stepped up her short changing at the grocery and used the proceeds to prepare a "travel kit". She reasoned that anything she firmly attached to her baody could make the trip. With this in mind, she bought the largest belly bag she could find. She scoured the town fro its contents, first antibiotics and aspirin, a folding spade, two slim volumes of historical data, and a jar of Mary Kay cream. She laughed at this last item, her old jar was six years old and she used only 1/4 of it, so this new one should do for the next twenty four years!

At Acme Coin and Stamp she purchased a small fortune in confederate money for \$15.65

By Saturday morning she was was as ready as she was ever going to be. Loretta's first stop was at the Dixie-Plenty where she cashed a bad check for two hundred and fifty dollars. Her next move was to park her little bug at the edge of the alley and walk around the block to the front of the bookstore, she pushed open the jngling door and was met by the cherubic Charlie.

"Good morning Loretta, all set for the barbeque?" She had confided Scarlett's invitation to him explaining that she would need to "read" for five hours on Saturday. "No worry" he had said, all smiles.

"No wonder" thought Loretta, hand-

ing over the rental, "at this rate he only needs one customer." But after Charlie had laid out the book and left her alone, she felt sorry for her sarcasm. If only Charlie couldn't be hurt by what she had made up her mind to do. "You've been over this point by point," she told herself, "for him it's only one book, for you it's your whole life." With that she lifted the lovely old volume in her arms and silently slipped out the back door.

She arrived home scared but exhilarated. It would be a long time before Charlie looked in on her, she had paid the heavy rental as insurance. Still, her hands were shaking so badly she couldn't buckle her belly bag. She took another medicinal glass of brandy. "Good grief, brandy for brunch," she chided herself, but the buckles finally snapped into place.

Loretta sat for a minute to collect her thoughts before leaving this town forever. Things would work out fine, she would get Scarlett to let her live with them, that would be easy. Perhaps she'd get her pick of Scarlett's leftover suitors. No matter what, she would parlay her knowledge of the future into a tidy fortune. She took one last look around and spotted her favorite book of poems which she slipped into her pocket.

"Plantation life here I come" she said, and opened the book to page 80 when Scarlett would be getting ready for the party. Loretta found herself in the backyard near the grape arbor. "Perfect" she thought, remembering that the ground would be soft here where Scarlett would later be forced to bury a Yankee. She unsnapped the belly bag and dug a spot to hide it with her folding spade. When she was sure her stash would be safe she stood up, brushed herself off, and headed for the house wearing a contented smile.

"Good Morning, I'm here to see Miss Scarlett," Loretta announced.

"You is huh? sniffed Pork the O'Hara

valet, "Has you lost yo mind commin to de fron door?" "But Miss O'Hara is expecting me." Loretta answered uncomfortably. Something was wrong, Pork didn't recognize her.

"Miz Scarlett didn't say nothin 'bout no new girl, 'sides she be busy fixin huself fo de pahty. You git alon nah." He started to close the door. "That's why I'm here Pork, I've been invited to come alng with the O'Haras." Pork gave a hoot and slapped his knee, "If that don't beat all, yo sho is one uppity nigga."

With one swift move, Loretta pushed past him into the drawing room. She was about to call for Scarlett when the sight of her reflection in the gilded mirror rooted her to the spot. Her black dress with a white Peter Pan collar was now a white dress with a black collar and the skin on the face that looked back at her was shining ebony.

"Yo gits back where yo came fom," Pork demanded. "I can't, I can't," she wailed. "I'm Loretta, I'm Loretta."

"Where's Loretta?" Scarlett had come down hearing the commotion. "Here" replied Loretta weakly. She collapsed to the floor sobbing.

"Talk sense girl. What have you done with her? Where did you get those clothes?" Scarlett's green eyes were mere slits and her hand moved as if to strike her.

Loretta stared back hoping for some spark of recognition, but it was as if Scarlett was now on the other side of a tremendous gulf. She summoned all her wits, knowing if she was thrown from this house now she would never survive alone outside in her present condition. She thought hard and improvised, "Miz Loretta had to go to France to met her Mama. She dressed me lak dis an sent me to be yo new maid. She say she sorry she hab to leave so quick." Loretta tried to put a pleasant expression on her woebegone face.

Scarlett bit her lower lip in thought then tapped her fan and said, "Very well, go to the kitchen. Mammy will tell you what to do. I've got to be going."

Loretta dragged her leaded body to the kitchen. Mammy was no where in sight so she sank in the chair to steady her nerves. A bulge in her pocket reminded her of the poems she had brought along. She pulled the little book out like an old friend. When she opened it to find black pages with white type, she recalled Charlie's words about positive and negative polarity. "Wish I had paid more attention," she thought, "maybe

I could find a way out of this mess."

"Poke done tol me 'bout you," Mammy announced, filling the doorway with her enormous starched presence. "Yo sho gots lots to learn," she added plucking the book from Loretta's grasp and tossing it into the cookstove. "Fust, dere be no readin fo black folks. Now you takes dis and see to da sittin rom." she handed Loretta a large soft cloth.

Huge tears welled up in Loretta's eyes and slid down her shiny black cheeks. None of the irony was lost on her as she dusted the delicate crystal on the mantle of her new plantation home.

Natural Animal

RED AND GRAINY LIKE LOWER ANIMALS I ABSORB
 A TONGUE ACROSS THE CANINE
 A SHUDDER IN THE LOINS
 SURGE OF BLOOD RICH WITH HORMONE
 LIKE DISTANT RADIO SIGNAL VIBRATIONS OF DEATH
 I DON'T DENY I AM A NATURAL ANIMAL

I EXERCISE DOMINION OVER INNOCENT CREATURES
 CAREFULLY EVOLVED TO SERVE ME
 NOT A QUESTION OF CONSCIENCE OR COMPASSION
 TO THE JUNGLE MIND ENDOWED WITH REASON
 IN THIS THE NATURAL ANIMAL

SOME OF MY BROTHERS MARCH AND SING
 FOR TEMPERANCE AND A NEW WAY
 RATIONALE THE HIGHER MIND
 STRUGGLE TO CUT THE TIES FROM WHAT WE ARE
 THEY CANNOT FACE THE NATURAL ANIMAL

IN THE PURR OF A SATIATED PREDATOR
 NATURE WHISPERS INEXORABLE LAWS
 FROM WHICH WE CANNOT BREAK
 ACCEPT ME
 BLOODSTAINED AND GRINNING
 THE NATURAL ANIMAL

- SEAN PATRICK HEIKKINEN

Meat

I wonder what meat tastes like.
 You know, human meat.
 Dead carcass decent people step around when on the street.
 If Cannibal were asked,
 "About the Flavor, does it sicken?"
 Would her grin show her delight in that,
 "It tastes a lot like chicken?"
 Is it greasy like a burger?
 Would you fry it in fillets?
 Is gravy necessary for the succulent array
 of chewy tendons, tossed with cabbage
 Bloody veins to color rice,
 Crispy skin around the pinkish flesh
 Or chilled, served over ice?
 The cow becomes our beef
 And pig is pork, but fish is fish.
 What euphemistic entree name could justify the dish?
 Would we be picky, wanting fatted man
 That grazed contentedly?
 Could murder victims satisfy at microwaving speed?
 Liposuction soon might be
 Tar-tar like delicacy
 To cholesterol-unconscious, drooling, blubber bouncing sleeze
 Unless the healthy crowd maintains
 "Vegetables don't suffer much."
 You might highlight dinner menus
 Or cafeteria lunch.

- M. Asia Vu

The Farmer Knows

He stands staring out at the winding tapestry of life
green land rolling slowly, ever so slowly
toward the iron hearts and steel girders of the city.

His face reflects the calm stability
weathered bronze, creased and furrowed like the soil
bright eyes shining through that constant squint
proclaiming his love for your greatest gift.

Mother earth, altered but never changed
there comes a time when even the gods
must return to you to be turned over for next years harvest.

- Steve Tucker

Shovel Talk

Throughout the unforgiving tunnel,
Drawn through the empty abyss,
Uneaten there lies a shovel
Alone, rusted in bits.
Empty fields lie through the strife,
Untilled, it is left unproclaimed.
Blackened earth lies around the scorched life,
Thoughtless: None remain.
Foremost lies the clay-packed ground.
Baked to an uneven perspective.
Upon it lies a bloody crown
And between it the shovel lies: Introspective.
The corroded shovel lies left alone,
The lining upon the empty fields.
Untouched it is what we condone,
Touched, and no crops can it yield.

- David Samela



'The Sentinel' Black and White Photograph by S. A. Toscano

Visions of Children in the Park

by Philip Gardner

Another drop traveled down a lock of my wet matted hair, made it's way to the tip of my nose and lingered there before finally breaking free. The sidewalk glistened with an occasional brighter area under a streetlight. The remaining rain was light enough to fall almost as a late winter snow back in Boston. Fountains of water poured off the roofs and awnings of every building, slapped the concrete and covered up any other noises that I might have heard with exception of a rare passing car.

I kept my head down and watched my shoes alternately smash the thin icing of water that varnished the sidewalk. Another army of chills marched up rapidly from the base of my spine.

"Are you cold?" she asked.

She must have felt the tremble in my hand. I answered, "No, it's just the rain."

Another car approached from behind. The headlights illuminated the street sign of the corner, "East Peachtree Boulevard."

"Why does it rain every time we're together lately?" she asked.

"Because, it's summertime in Atlanta. That's just the weather in the southeast," I replied, still watching my feet.

"Do you think it has anything to do with us?" she asked.

I stopped walking and gripped her hand tighter. I took my eyes off my feet and looked up at her puzzled face. "Seriously?" I asked. She just stared. "No, I don't think it has anything to do with us."

My eyes fell back to my feet. Our steps continued. She spoke, "School begins soon and you'll be going back."

I remained quiet.

She sighed, "God this is hard."

As we came upon the park that marked the halfway point to her apartment the rain rolling off the building tops could no longer be heard and a silence grew. I imagined that I saw children playing and wished I could block that thought from my mind.

The trees in the park were merely black profiles against the dim city glow. They sagged heavy with the night's rain.

"What are you thinking about?" she said.

Still looking down I replied, "Everything."

"Everything meaning everything or everything meaning a lot about one thing?" she asked.

"I don't really know," I replied.

"Have you thought about what we should do?" she asked.

"That's all I've thought about," I said. I felt a trembling in her hand. I thought she must have experienced the same chill.

A distant thunder could be heard and I noticed that a car had not passed in some time. I thought surely she had felt a chill, but probably not of the same nature. Our steps continued.

I asked her, "Have you thought about what we should do?"

"Of course," she answered.

"Come to any decisions?" I asked.

"I can't do this on my own?" she said.

"Do what on your own?" I asked.

"Decide on something like this," she answered.

"Ultimately, it is your decision."

The surrounding streets and buildings became darker as we left behind the aureole of the park and my visions of the children playing.

I lifted my head. She made no sound.

"Well, I mean... I don't feel that I have any right.." She just looked at me in despair. I dropped my eyes once again.

Taking my eyes off my feet but not moving my head I stared at the hem of the

flowered dress encircling her legs just above her bare ankles.

"At least the choice is ours."

"Is that supposed to help?" she asked." I sometimes think it would be a lot easier if it wasn't up to us."

"Well it is up to us , I declared. The water acted as a catalyst bonding our skin at our hands as I grasped tighter once again. I looked up at her face and through a camouflage of collected rain droplets, recognized a single tear.

"Everything is so hard," she said.

With her hand I felt my own. And our steps continued.

Anxious

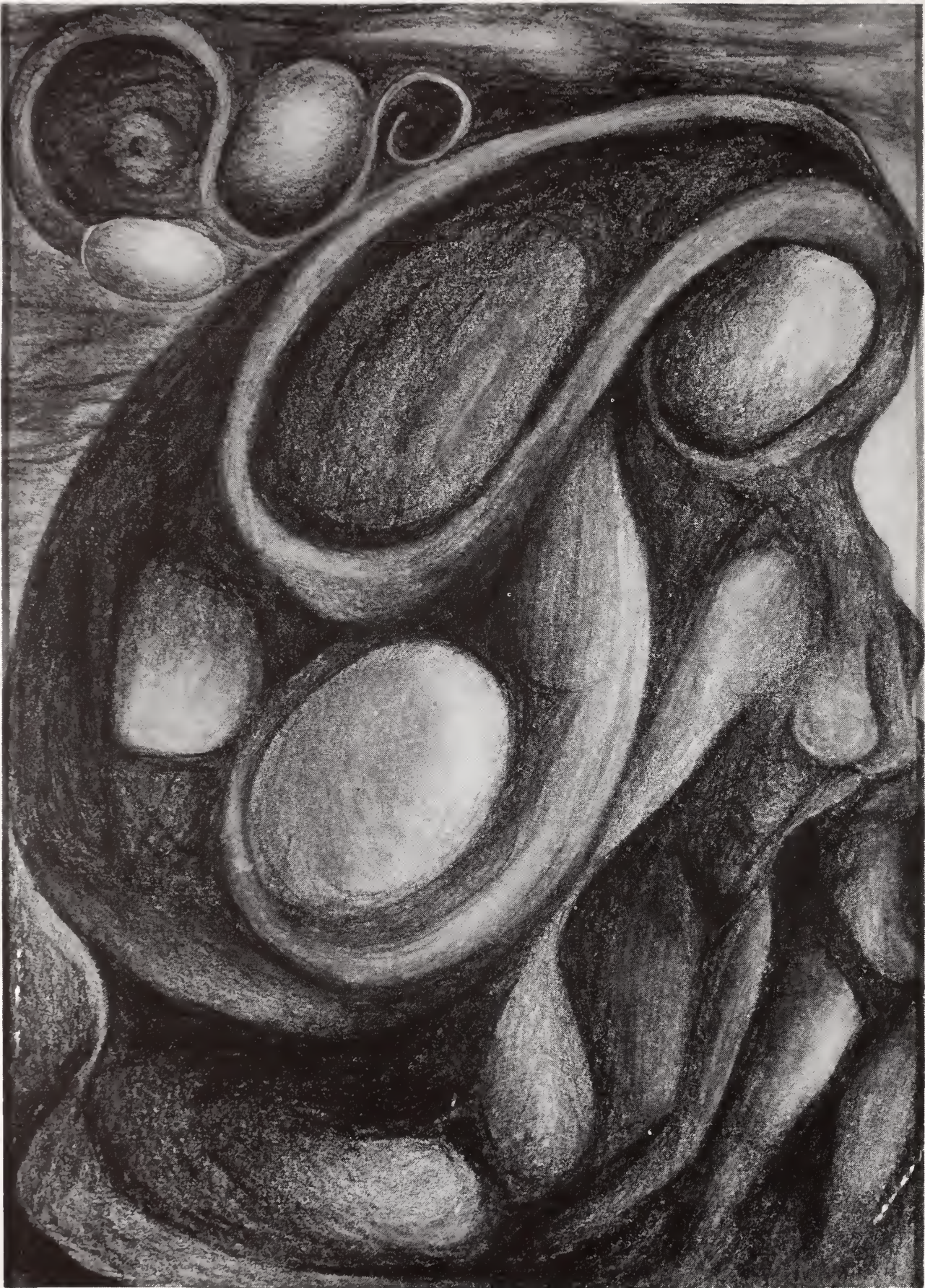


Ring, Ring, Is it him?

I dash for the telephone

Silence is my doom. . .

- *Melina Goldenberg*



'Human Sexuality' Pencil Drawing by Tony Soares

untitled

my love for you is the stage
upon which my impossible fantasies
bravest wishes
are realized.

your eyes touch me from the wings
and i am drawn out onto your gaze
to perform without a net
without fear
of lies still concealed
because although you know the truth
yet still won't let me fall
and even when
sometimes
i lose sight of you
i know you are there
in every seat
and in my heart
i feel your applause

- h. krutis



'Green Pepper' Colored Ink Wash and Crayon by Alba P. Morales



untitled Conte' Crayon by Alba P. Morales

Mockingbird

The hallway moves, like the sea-
I'm falling in my mind-
The powerful waves carry me home-
Lying in the bed that's mine.
The creatures in my closet,
are swallowed by the sea-
My eyes swell shut from saltiness,
that quickly flows around me.
Millions of voices call me, from the corners of my room
Shadows float in waves, and crash down, falling from the moon
My rocking chair sits so still,
as salt in the wood is bored-
A man rocks back and forth in it-
Until I scream no more-
The water comes rushing around me-
calling to play some games-
I'm floating down the hallway-
And someone screams my name.

- *Christine Renee Anth*

Just Daddy and Me

by Natalie Ornes

"Please don't leave me. Mother will never know," I said trying to coerce him. He was lying between my breasts and was looking younger than his forty years.

"I've tried not to love you this way," I said, "but I am nineteen and I know it's what I want."

He abruptly got up and began to dress. "This breaks all the rules. It must stop," he said.

"I can't stop. No one I've ever been with makes me feel the way you do."

"That's enough Brandy... goodnight," he disappeared.

Knowing my daddy was in the adjacent room with her, I cried myself to sleep.

I awoke to the sound of my mother's soft voice.

"Brandy, it is seven o'clock. Time to rise and shine."

I said thank you and told her I would be in shortly with her medicine. I had been giving my mother insulin religiously for the past five years to treat her diabetes. My mother was thirty-eight and tried to fight the fatigue of the disease. Although her illness had caused a wan appearance, her beauty somehow radiated through her tired eyes.

I quickly rose and prepared my mother's dosage. One injection twice a day. As I entered the room I was excited to see my father but, unfortunately, only heard the sound of the shower. My mother was lying on the bed, so I delivered the medicine to the night stand and turned to leave.

"Brandy, do you know why your father

has not been sleeping? I am a little worried," my mother asked.

"No, Mother. I didn't even know he had a problem."

"Well darling, try to be extra nice. Maybe he is under stress."

I left the room and all I could think about was the day she was gone and it was just daddy and me.

As I left the house and jumped in my jeep, the thought lingered in my mind. I slipped into a dream. . . .

"Brandy, you look so beautiful. Just as beautiful as your mother used to be," he said.

"Thank you father. You aren't so bad yourself."

He laughed for a moment and said, "Brandy, how could I have ever said that this wasn't right? Will you ever forgive me?"

"I already have Daddy," I said and proceeded to embrace him.

"Now we will never be apart again."

The beautiful dream was cut short by an annoyed horn. I had obviously been tailgating for a few miles.

I arrived at the hospital and was greeted by all the usual sights. The cold, white walls, the heartless nurses, and all the retarded children that cried out for love. The children were the reason I had first volunteered at Tumberhill Hospital and they were the reason I would never leave. I believed in "softening your surroundings," like my daddy always said, and this hospital needed a lot of softening.

"Good morning, Brandy."

"Hello Stella. How are you?" I said.

"It is a beautiful day and I am doing wonderful," she said.

Stella was the cutest, most lovable, woman I had ever run into. She was sixty three years of age and had the vibrancy of a teenage girl. Stella was the only shed of light the hospital had. Even the hospital did not effect her smile.

"How's nursing school going, Brandy?" she asked sincerely.

"Difficult but interesting," I said.

"You are very intelligent and you can do anything that you set your mind to Brandy."

I always listened to Stella and trusted her advice. The hospital had been trying to get her to retire because of her age but not Stella. She kept wiggling out of the authorities' commands.

It was nine o'clock and it was time for my visit to Randy. Randy was a patient I had been working with for several months. My mission was to teach him how to read. He was intelligent but it was very difficult to keep him interested in one specific task.

"Hi, Randy. How's my favorite person doing this morning?"

Randy's eyes were gleaming with excitement.

"Reating tiime. Reating tiime," he exclaimed.

"Yes, it is reading time," I said, thrilled to hear his excitement.

"Oh my goodness. You are making such wonderful progress with him, Brandy," a voice said. I turned around and there was Stella's smiling face,

The day had been productive with Randy but no miracles had happened. It was three and time for me to leave. I arrived home and my heart began to beat faster as I realized my father was at home.

"Hello daddy. What are you doing home?"

"Actually, Brandy, I came home to speak with you. I figured when your mother is at work would be the best time," he explained.

"Talk to me? What about?"

"Brandy, I am concerned about you. I know I am the adult here but I have made a big mistake and now it is time to correct it."

Horror filled my heart, for I knew what was next.

"Brandy, this situation is totally out of hand. I am sorry but it is going to completely stop."

"Daddy, please don't be so serious. I love you."

"Brandy, it is not the right way sweetheart."

I began to kiss him. He slapped me and I stood in shock, not exactly sure of what had just happened.

"Oh my God, Brandy. I am so sorry," he said and with that he began to hug me. I began to kiss him again and although I sensed his resistance, I persisted.

"Brandy, please. Why do you have to be so irresistible? This is wrong and it must...."

I began to kiss him more passionately. Twenty minutes passed, we both lay next to each other completely exhausted. He began to cry and I reassured him that it was an act of love. In my heart, I felt guilt because I knew he had tried to stop. I asked myself why I felt this way toward him but all I could think of was that I never wanted it to stop. I had heard of incest but that was violence, this was love and pleasure.

The time was five-thirty and my mother was expected home from work any minute. Dinner was prepared when my mother walked in and we all sat down at the table.

"So how was your day dear?" she asked my father.

"Hectic. One of my clients dropped

me from their case. He claims I am not liked by the Judge," he said and began to chuckle.

"Isn't the case pending with Judge Hinkle, the one that always calls you son," she asked.

"Yes, that is the funny part. My client thinks that he is referring to a son-of-a-bitch but is just being polite."

They both began to laugh and all I felt was jealousy. Why couldn't he talk with me like that? Why did it always have to be her? Hatred formed and I asked to be excused from the table. I was so disgusted and filled with jealousy that I felt like hurting them the way I was hurting now. How could he just sit there and be all loving to his wife. Then I thought if he loved me, how could he love her too. I was so confused and couldn't handle all the feelings that were rushing through my body right now. As I thought about the devil, he walked through the door.

"Brandy, what is wrong with you? Now your mother is worried about you."

"How could you do that to me daddy? For goodness sakes, we just had sex less than two hours ago," I screamed.

"Oh, my God, Brandy, lower your voice!"

"No, you hurt me. Now please let me go to sleep."

He left with my heart. I felt betrayed. At the same time, I felt like taking revenge. Something had to be done and like my father always said, "If you want something done, you have to do it yourself". I promised myself I would continue this thought tomorrow, but for now, sleep was in order.

"Stella, have you ever felt jealous?"

"Of course. It is normal to feel jealousy a some time in your life. Why?"

"Have you ever felt it so strong that you wanted to take revenge on the person involved?" I asked.

"Are you in some kind of trouble, Brandy?"

"Oh no, I was just curious. This girl in my class got mad because I passed the test with an "A" and she failed. I just hope she doesn't lie to the teacher or something," I fibbed. I felt bad for lying to Stella, but this was one thing I could not tell her.

"Hi Randy. Are you ready to read that story to me today?"

"Yeess, Braan Muffin," he said respectfully.

His words always seemed to make me feel like I was needed in the world. If not by my father at least by a needy child.

"Th-Th-Th-aaa," he struggled.

"There you go. The, " I said.

"Thaa three baa-err-zz."

"Oh my goodness Randy," I yelled in shock. "You did it!"

I gave him a big hug.

"The Three Bears. You did it! Randy, you did it, " I exclaimed.

There was a smile from ear to ear. The joy radiated from his whole face.

Stella heard all the commotion and came running in.

"Is everything OK.?"

"Stella, he did it! He actually read a sentence!"

Stella gave Randy a big hug and turned to me and said,

"You did it, sweetheart. You got through."

Those words meant so much to me. I was on cloud nine. I drove home and it wasn't until I arrived on my block that I recalled the previous evening. Once again, I felt angry. Randy's miracle slipped further and further in to memory. It was now time to focus on a plan of action. I immediately started brainstorming. OK., what was stopping me from what I wanted? Thinking of that reminded me of what Stella had told me "You can do anything you set your mind

to." Boy, did I agree with her now. I decided that the only thing deterring me from my goal was my mother. How could I even say that or even think such a thought? The more and more I denied it, the more and more I realized what needed to be done. I wonder if Stella would think of this as normal. No, of course not.

As I thought of this morbid plan, I fell into a dream....

"Daddy, can you ever forgive me for what I did to mother?"

"I love you, Brandy. Mother was ill. She was bound to go before us. I loved her, but I love you more."

"Oh daddy, we are going to live happily ever after."

"Brandy..Brandy.. what are you doing?"

I snapped out of my fantasy and there I was sitting in my driveway day-dreaming as my mother stood looking worried.

"Oh...Uh... nothing... I was trying to decide if I needed to go to the store or not," I improvised. "No I don't need stockings yet. I'll go tomorrow," I said completing the lie.

"Why are you home so early?" I asked curiously.

"I have been worried about you and your father. Are you two fighting?" she inquired.

"No, Mother. Why do you ask?"

"Brandy, your dad is always tense and you are always off in space. I thought maybe the two were related."

"No, Mother. Please don't worry about me. I feel wonderful. Guess what?" I said, changing the subject.

"What darling?"

"Randy, the patient at the hospital, read a sentence. I have been working with him for approximately six months."

"That is super, sweetheart," she said

proudly. "I knew my daughter was special."

For once in my life I felt guilty. Here I was planning my mother's murder and here she was referring to me as her special daughter. At this moment, I wished my mother wasn't so perfect. Everyone loved my mother. Even Stella. I recalled her exact words,

"I wish that I had had such a beautiful, intelligent, successful mother, with a heart of gold, to set an example for me. You are lucky, Brandy," she said.

Why, instead of felling privileged, did I feel nothing but jealousy and revenge? I concluded that my situation was unique and my mother happened to be too perfect for my father and me. Tomorrow was the day for the extra dosage. I slowly dozed off, but soon was awakened by my father.

"Brandy, are you awake? Brandy...." he repeated.

I looked up and noticed that my dad was hovering over me and looked like he hadn't slept in days.

"Yes, Daddy. What's wrong?"

"Brandy, I am a weak man. Please help me to be strong," he said.

I hugged him and whispered, "Daddy, I will help you."

He embraced me approvingly, but little did he realize what I meant.

A few weeks had gone by and I had increased her injections. Instead of filling the insulin to the first red line, I filled it to the third. My mother did not notice probably because I had been doing this habitual act for the past five years and she paid no attention. The only thing that I noticed differently about her was she was tired a lot more. But to my surprise, the drug took effect a lot sooner than I imagined.

"Brandy!! Brandy!! Your mother!! Get up!" the erratic voice said.

I jumped out of bed to see my father

in a state of panic.

"She is sweating profusely. She won't say anything. She's shaking. Hurry. . . do something... keys...find the keys!" he screamed.

I rushed to my mother's bedside. A terrible chill ran up my spine. I realized in this instant, I had done this to my own mother. I was frightened. I helped my father get her to the car. We rushed her to the hospital.

So many thoughts zoomed through my head. I had done something awful and it was too late to correct the dirty deed. I wanted to undo time.

Twenty four hours passed. My father and I had become owner's of puffy eyes. We cried all night and day waiting for the results. I knew the results but I prayed to God to forgive me hoping the results would change. Totally exhausted from the night's events, I fell asleep.

I awoke expecting to either be at a funeral or comforting my father in the hospital. To my surprise, I was in a foreign

place. The bed was unfamiliar. I lifted my head. I saw nothing but white walls and white sheets. Suddenly, I recognized my surroundings. I was in a hospital. I tried to jump out of bed, but I was secured by a strap. What was happening? I started to panic.

"Brandy, it is OK."

I turned to see my father's comforting face.

"Oh, Daddy, I was so scared. What is going on?" I asked.

"Brandy, we know what you did. I am so sorry princess. I feel responsible. I love you and we are going to get through this together."

"Daddy, get through what? Where is mother?" I asked with a spark of hope.

"Your mother, thank God, is fine now, but as for you and me, Brandy, we are two sick people. This is our new home," he continued.

All I could manage to say was, "Daddy, please don't leave me."



untitled Pencil Drawing by Mark Jette'

Because I Love You

by Scott Warren

She gazed across the room and her eyes finally stopped at mine. At first, I smiled and then I critiqued her like I do most of my women. She'll do fine I thought, and then I couldn't help but let out a tiny chuckle. Not only is her hair wildly tousled, but also she is a tall girl, long limbed, and high hipped. The rush running through my body and only I knew. Once again the tiny chuckle escaped. I approached this magnificent woman and within a half-hour's time, I seduced her mind. We left the club together and tonight, I realized will be a singular event, a momentous occasion.

Since time is not of the essence, I decide to take the scenic route. The night is crisp and full of life. It is an exquisite evening. She is not like most women I first meet. She seemed relaxed and at ease with me. It felt very strange and quite peculiar. What is she thinking? I thought to myself. I reached over and took hold of her hand. Shocks of pleasure ran throughout my entire body. She reached over, kissed me and whispered, "Are we almost there?" I grinned and five minutes later we reached Misty Lake.

At the lake, I remembered the first girl I met. She was blond, blue-eyed, and built petite. I approached her with a beautiful red rose. We danced the entire night. She was my first chosen one. She was beautiful, my beautiful Isabella. At my secluded house, we fell in love. We spent a few weeks together. Then one night, I watched her sleep and without thought, I grabbed her throat. She awoke and tried to scream.

"Quiet, my beautiful child," I whispered in her ear. Her muffled screams lessened and lessened till finally her limp body lay lifeless in my hands.

A few months later, I met Gabriela. Not only did Gabby possess the most beautiful physical attributes, but she also had a strong magnetic personality. I was drawn to her—sent directly by God to perform his higher purpose. She would go to heaven and I was appointed to once again carry out his task. How lucky she was to be leaving this world of unbearable sorrow and pain. Gabby will meet my maker and then she will understand I did it because I loved her. I remember vividly how Gabriela's life ended. We had just finished making passionate love and she slept. She never awoke. I remember striking her head with a heavy metal hammer. Blood everywhere, on my hands, clothes and the sheets we made love on.

I disposed of her body the exact way I disposed of Isabella's. The bodies were empty, void of life. They meant nothing to me. At Misty Lake, garbage is burned at the incinerator. I would dismember her body till it fit in a bag and throw it away the next morning on my way to pick up my coffee and paper.

She tapped me on the shoulder and said, "What are you thinking, you look distraught?" I looked into her eyes and gently kissed her lips and felt pleasures I have never experienced. We got out of the car and walked hand in hand to my front door. She is all mine I thought. Of the things I am

about to do to her she has no idea, though she thinks she knows why she is here and what is going to happen. Before we made love, I shared a poem I wrote.

If I were an artist- I would paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel to tell the world of my love for you.

If I were an architect-I would build the Empire State Building to tell the world of the height and strength of my love for you.

If I were a composer- I would create the most beautiful symphony to tell the world of the pureness of my love for you.

but i am only i-I could not paint, build, or compose our love for the world to know.

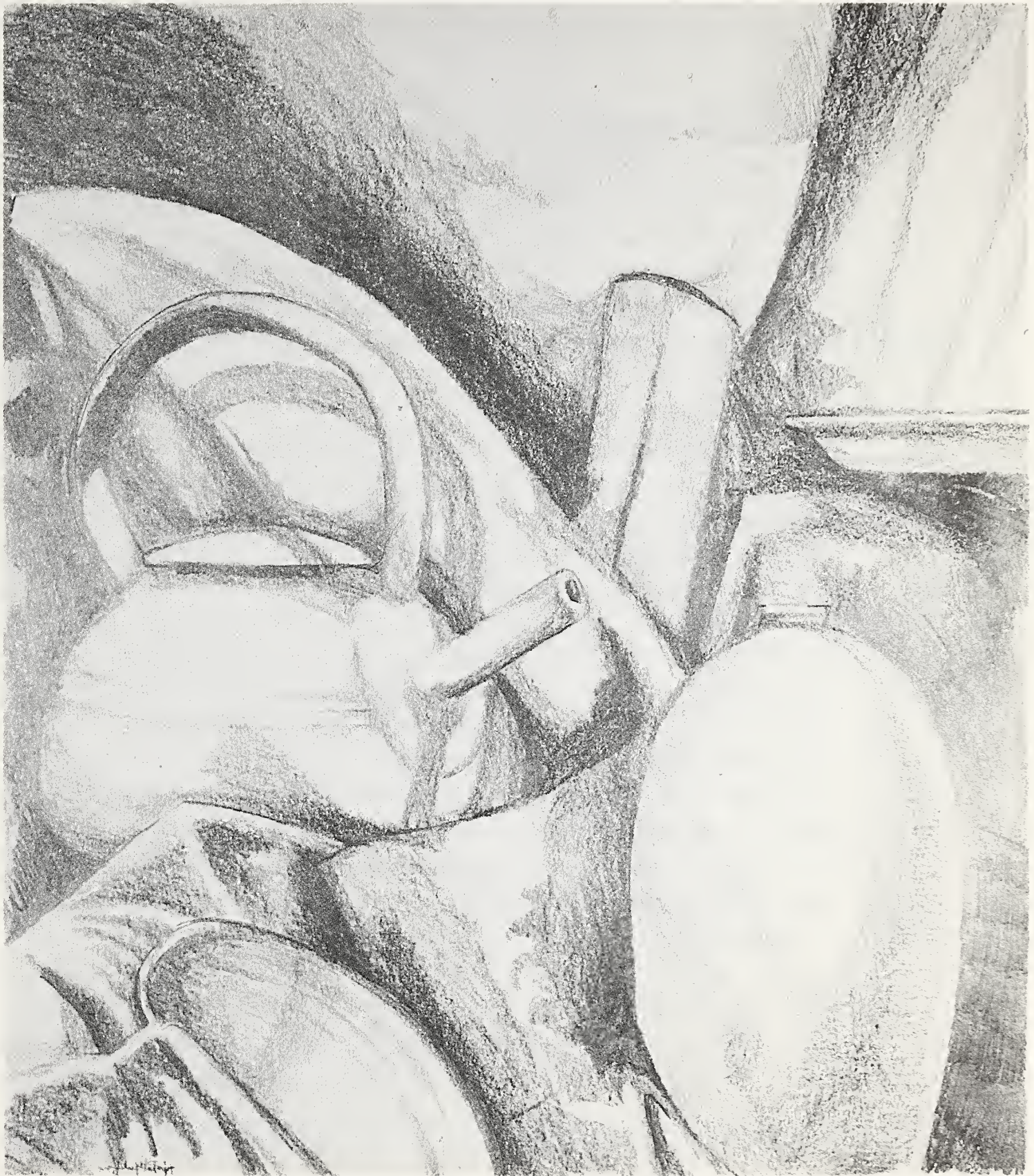
I can only tell in my sensitive ways that I love you
I can show you in my mortal ways

how I love you
I can only move my body
in my only way

To share me with you
To give of me to you
In and of my love.

After we made love, I decided she is different from the others. Amanda, what a beautiful name. She accepts me and trusts me completely. The others trusted me but not as deep and complete as she has. I am feeling out of control. I should not have chosen her. For a brief moment, I thought about being selfish and then I remembered the reason I chose her.

I remained calm and watched her sleep in my bed. When she opened her eyes, she said, "I love you." I gently kissed her lips and told her, "I truly and deeply love you." A tear ran down my cheek. Another brief moment I thought and then with a violent twist, I snapped her neck. She never felt a thing.



untitled Pencil Drawing by Kevin Marks

Coffee and Sex

I sit passively waiting fro Dan Rather's return.
 Eyes doughnut glazed, a trickle of drool,
 my sole protests against the flickering god.
 They say they're peddling coffee
 but it seems like sex to me.
 These are complex times,
 and a complex man needs to keep up
 with babbling multitudes
 of breakfast cereals available.
 These are modern time ,
 and I am a modern man
 fully in tune
 with the trundling Roman legions
 of toilet paper brands at our disposal.
 I found electronic salvation.
 My technically spiritual needs have been completely met.
 My anxieties have melted away
 like snow-white flesh at Dresden.
 There is no fear
 of a scaly waft of stale alligator morning breath
 or an errant and unnatural speck of hellish dandruff
 spooking away a prospective mate
 who will undoubtedly wish
 to drink coffee with me.

- Williams G. Hines

Black Man Standing Tall

Black man standing tall,
back against no one's wall
you know who you are,
that's all

They quietly fight for civil rights,
while men of no color lynch our children at nights
but only you are brave enough to stand shout about the black
man's plight

They misunderstand you,
you with no one to turn to
because you used to, inevitably grew to, only knew to, hate
them

Oh what to do black brother
when the color won't wash off
and every one is calling you
every thing but a man
you stand up tall, shoulders straight, and fight,
yes brother fight, any way you can

Be strong black brother
be strong for me
I'm your black sister,
can't you see
let's do for one another
the man of no color will leave us,
he'll have to, you'll see

- Taranda Renee Ross

Freedom

It's time to clear my head
time to sort out the cobwebs in my brain
insanity may stand in my way
but I shall do it.

Confusion is the lock on the door to my freedom
the key is the understanding of my own consciousness
and I shall find it.

Love is the irony of my condition
the single most thing that tortures my heart and alters my soul
but I will kill it.

This I must do to deliver the peace I crave
it is the mystery of all existence
and I can solve it.

- Tracy Fritz

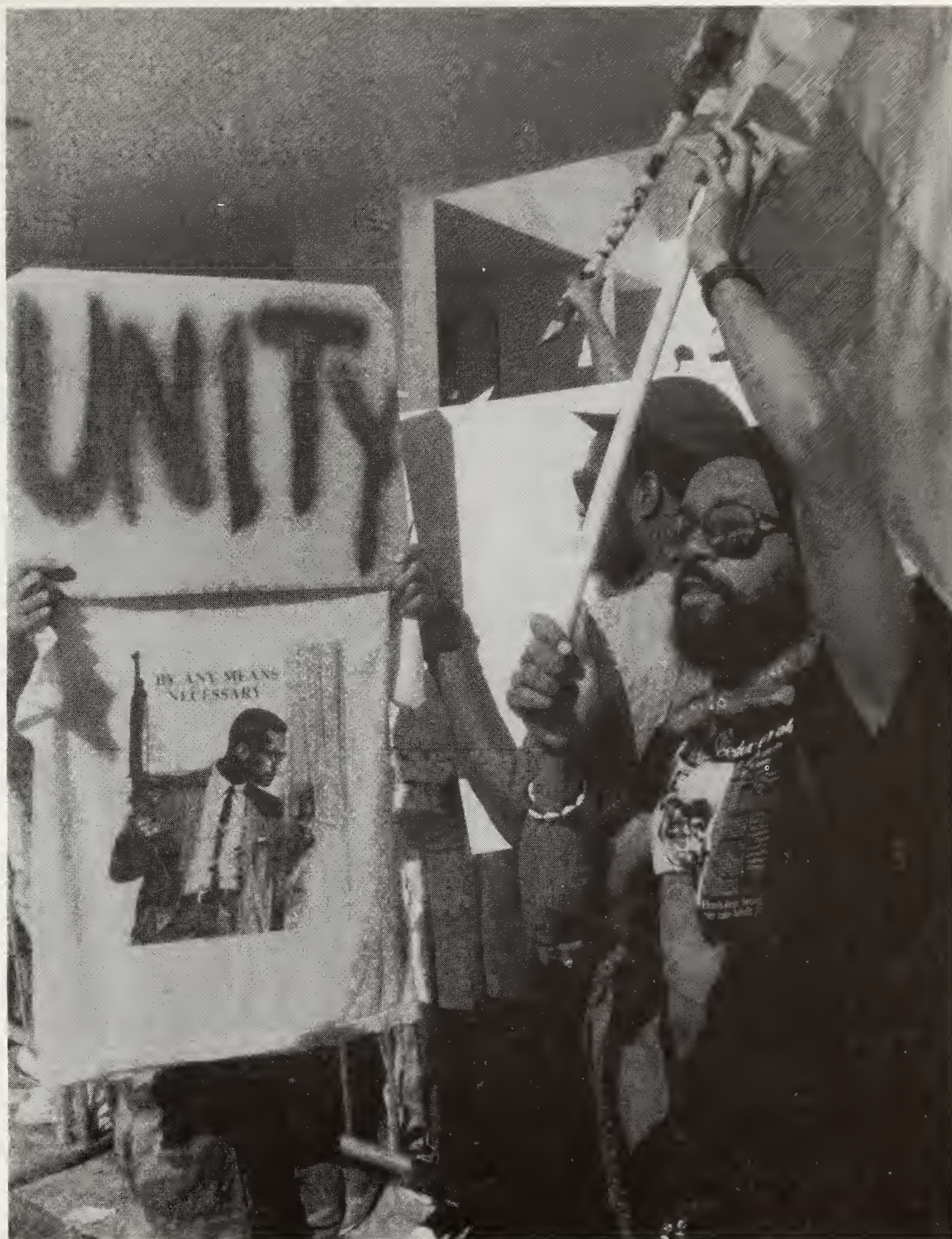
untitled

Te monde est un lieu ethange
habile par les humains,
On le dik civilise
mais il lessemble a une jungle
ou les hommes sont des sauvages
qui ne font que se devorer
tls pledient tous l'umite,
lu paix, lo flaternite,
tais derriete les joltes doses,
daus leurs esflits emblumis
ils ne soulraient que la guerre
Te monde est vraiment etrauge.

- *Rebecca Carmant*



'Neo-Nazis at Palm Beach - 1990©' Black and White Photograph by Victor Damian



'Welcome Mandela - Miami©' Black and White Photograph by Victor Damian

Olongapo

by William G. Hines

Lieutenant Sullivan regarded the blue screen of his Zenith computer with little fondness. His head ached after reviewing and editing countless poorly written enlisted evaluations.

"Can't anyone in this division write proper English?" he asked no one in particular.

Chief Wells pawed at his outrageously non-regulation bush of a mustache before looking up from his own personal mound of paperwork. "Nope. That's what we got you for, sir."

"Thanks for always being on the level with me, Chief." A tall blond youth clad in dungarees swept the blue vinyl electrical matting on the desk. He stopped and leaned on his broom.

Hey, Lieutenant, someone told me that you can't get a shot of leg in any of those places in the Gulf." Sullivan spun his swivel chair away from his despised administrative task. He leaned back and propped his feet up on one of the olive VHF radio units.

"Well, I'm afraid that prostitution is frowned upon in Arab countries, Seaman Byrne. So is murder and robbery. Poor fools, they're missing all of the fun of modern life by trying to uphold community standards."

"That sucks! I want to go back to Subic. The hell with this Indian Ocean stuff."

Sullivan shrugged. Although he did not approve, Sullivan understood the obvious if not crude attraction of Subic Bay. You could buy a woman for an entire night for about \$15. She would cook your breakfast, wash your clothes, introduce you to her

family, and make sure you got up in time to get back to the ship. More importantly, she would also cater to your most carnal whims.

"You and your goddamn monkey women!" snapped Chief Wells. "I hate Subic. You guys all think you're hung like dinosaurs 'cause you can just hang a few pesos from your fly." "Oh Joe!" said the chief in a mocking Filipino accent. "You so big. You so strong."

Sullivan propped his cheek on a fist and took in the performance. "Correct me if I'm wrong, but weren't you the one bragging about buying 4 of those 'monkey women' last time?"

Wells nodded his blond crew-cut head. "Yup, that's right, but it's different with me. I'm married, so I've proven I can meet a woman without paying for it." "Well, how silly of me. I totally forgot about that." Sullivan rolled his eyes.

"Of course, you paid for it, Chief." The voice came from the electronic warfare officer, who had been dozing at his desk, his blue ball cap still covered his face. "Don't kid yourself. You always pay for it because all women are basically whores, and...."

"And to think," interrupted Sullivan, "That there was a rumor going around the ship that you openly admitted to being a feminist." "As I was saying," continued the EWO, "the only thing that sets those girls in Olongapo apart is that if they don't screw, they don't eat. That's all."

Sullivan reflected on how true this last part was. He thought about his first visit into Olongapo, the grimy little town that

bordered that massive Subic Bay naval facility that was the linchpin of American naval strength in the Western Pacific.

There was a short line to the Filipino soldiers checking identification at the exit of the Subic Naval Station. Sullivan watched the brown-skinned Filipino workers huddled around the solitary water faucet squabbling amongst themselves. They fought for their turn to get clean water. They all carried two white plastic jugs, enough for a day's worth of cooking, cleaning, and drinking. The next day they would be back again to fight for the hard-won privilege of clean water from a simple garden spigot next to the chain link fence at the edge of the Subic Naval Station. Moving through the line, Sullivan flashed his green identification card at one of the soldiers. The small, feminine-faced soldier started to wave Sullivan through with a lazy hand motion but checked himself when he realized that this American sailor was a officer. Instead he rendered a crisp salute. Sullivan crossed over Filipino soil. Sullivan was reminded of one of his favorite Bugs Bunny cartoon. The heroic rabbit, suffering through a carrot drought in the North, crossed into the lush South where there was plenty of carrots. The Mason-Dixon line sharply divided the scorched, desert sands of the North from the verdant Dixie. The wind shifted, and now without the protection of the chain-link fence, the strong odor of raw sewage attacked his nostrils.

"Ugh, what is that smell?" Sullivan asked.

"It's right in front of you, Mark" replied the Lieutenant Bill Howland. "That's the Shit River, and we are on the Bridge Over The Shit River. Surely, you've seen the movie."

"Didn't Alec Guinness win an Oscar for that one?"

The rangy hollow-eyed lieutenant

was about to respond when he noticed the steel panels fencing off the side of the bridge. "Lookey here! It used to be you could toss coins to the kids swimming in the water down there, but I guess you can't do that anymore."

"Pity," remarked Sullivan. "It must have been worth a few pesos to watch a kid get typhoid." "Good. Now you're in the proper frame of mind to experience Olongapo. Let's go."

They slowly weaved through the crowded, dimly-lit sidewalk across the bridge. Always there was the assault of beseeching hands. The toothless cigarette vendor offered his toxic wares. The limping teenaged blackmarket currency exchanger guaranteed the best rates. The mother sat next to her half-naked child, who stood on a dingy white sheet sparsely sprinkled with coins. Sullivan flicked a single peso onto the sheet.

They threaded between a smiling old woman holding up worthless trinkets and an American firmly embracing a spidery legged Filipino girl who barely came up to his chest. As they turned and passed the couple, the girl began to screech. Sullivan turned back to see her pounding weakly on the sailor with tiny fists.

Howland pointed a thumb at the girl. "If you got any business to conduct in Olongapo, if you catch my drift," Howland said with a wink, "the bridge is not the place to do it. The girls out here usually are diseased, and they won't let them work in the bars. They come out here to catch the guy too blotto to care about what he sticks his meat in."

"Roger that ." Sullivan shuddered.

"You got pesos?"

Sullivan nodded his head. "Yeah, about \$20 worth."

"In the wallet?"

"No. Half in my front pocket, half in my sock."

"You learn quick for a ensign."

Sullivan smiled. "Lots of horror stories to learn from, you know."

"Hey, Joe!" cried out a smiling Filipino man wearing a frayed straw hat. "I like Americans. Shake buddy."

Sullivan was taken aback by this display, but grasped the man's extended hand. He draped a shirt over Sullivan's forearm.

"A gift for you Joe." The Filipino's two silver front teeth sparkled.

Howland whispered, "Don't touch it. Just let the shirt drop." Sullivan obeyed, and the shirt tumbled into a puddle.

The Filipino was incensed. "You reject a gift from a Filipino friend! How can you..." His voice became lost in the crowd as they briskly walked away.

"What was that all about?" asked Sullivan.

"The old gift scam. They present you with a gift, but as soon as you take it, they want money. If you don't pay up, they accuse you of theft and go to the nearest policeman who's probably his cousin or brother-in-law.

"Oh." Sullivan stared at the litter-cluttered street.

"Ah, don't go getting all depressed because you didn't pick up on it. These guys are pros, and they've been practicing on drunk American sailors for years. Just stay alert and don't trust anyone but your shipmates."

Howland stopped next to a jeepney, half-taxi, half pickup truck, painted in garish orange and yellow.

The driver asked, "Hey, Joe! You go somewhere?" Howland waved him off.

"While we're here, let me point out a few of the major attractions of scenic downtown Olongapo in the beautiful and prosperous Republic of the Philippines. Okay, this is the main drag, Magsaysay. On the

right here is Gordon. If you stick to Magsaysay, your chances of getting in serious trouble are small. Go too far down one of the side roads, and you're just asking for it.

"Where's the Barrio?"

"You have to get a jeepney for that. It's too far to walk. Why? You planning on catching a donkey show?"

"No, I was just curious."

"Okay, but if you do go make sure you're in a big group because those jeepney rides can get kind of hairy. Let's hike down Magsaysay before we go in one of these places."

The streets bustled bright and vibrant compared to the dark exile of unwanted bar girls crossing the river. The two officers walked past numerous shops offering the finest in snakeskin boots, and hand-made belt buckles. Sullivan bought a Baltimore Orioles jersey that looked just like the real thing. They avoided the delicious billowing gray smoke of the monkey meat stands. "If you don't see any stray dogs on the street," said Howland, "There's a good reason to fear eating the local cuisine.

Always there were the legions of children looking for a sympathetic soul with loose pesos. The girls in front of the massage parlors wrestled with patron who didn't want to be patrons. Two white-uniformed sailors wearing black armbands emblazoned with gold letters, SP, Shore Patrol, tramped past cursing the luck that had them policing rather than participating in the debauchery.

"Hey buddy! You want a cigarette! No! How about a tattoo?"

"Buy something!" the women storekeepers would shout.

Sullivan would hold up his jersey. "I already bought something!"

"Buy something else!" they would counter with a generous smile.

Howland stopped. "Rolling Stone."

This is a good place. The bar girls aren't too pushy, but this ain't Pusan. They speak English better than most of our guys."

"Isn't this the place the white woman hang out?"

"Yeah. I guess it is. You know, Subic's tough on them. It's hard for them to compete with the LBFM's so I guess they try to latch onto a sailor who doesn't have enough money for a bar fine."

Sullivan laughed. "Shoot me if that happens! I don't need a Wuba sucking on my face."

The inexperienced observer might come to the conclusion that the American sailor would be starved for companionship of a fellow countrywoman after a few lonely, isolated months of sea duty, but he couldn't possibly be further from the truth. Saddled with the acronym WUBA, Women with Unusually Big Asses, all American women seemed impossibly chunky, clumsy and quarrelsome compared to the lithe, graceful, accommodating and inexpensive women of the Orient.

"Roger that. Let's go have a look-see."

They edged past the shot-gun toting doorman and walked up the red-carpeted stairs into the club. The palpable throbbing pressure of the blaring music made the act of entering the club rather like swimming upstream.

The gauntlet of bar girls descended upon them. Howland merely gestured slightly with his hand, and they left him and congregated on Sullivan.

"You so big and strong."

"I want you body tonight."

"I make you feel good, Joe."

"Ladies, ladies," stammered Sullivan. "I'm married."

"Is your wife here?" breathed the one girl who had a firm grip on his buttocks.

"Um, no."

"But me here. Let's party."

Howland pulled the girl off Sullivan and whispered a few words in her ear. She gave Sullivan a hateful look and vanished onto the dance floor.

"What did you tell her?" asked Sullivan.

"Oh, I just said you already had a bar fine waiting for you at 'Cal Jam.'"

"So?"

"So, when a bar girl has her mark on a sailor, it's taboo for another bar girl to try and pick him up. It's called butterflying. Another thing, saying you're married doesn't carry a lot of weight around here. Especially when you don't know how to lie with authority."

"Wonderful. Honor amongst whores. Thanks anyway."

"No problem. Better than saying we're gay. I tried that line once with ol' Henderson, and the bastards brought us a benny boy." said Howland. "There's an empty table there. Grab it!"

Sullivan sat with his back to a pulsating stereo speaker. He could feel the bass vibrations shudder through him.

"What do you want?" asked Howland. "San Miguel? Red Horse?"

"San Magoo'll do."

As Sullivan waited patiently for the beer, a Filipino bar girl in a tight red leather mini-skirt approached him. "Is this chair taken?"

"Uh, no, but I'm not really looking for company."

"That's okay. It doesn't cost you anything to talk."

"True enough. Have a seat."

"Thank you. My name is Susie."

Susie. Jackie. Liz. Good Filipino names, Sullivan reflected.

All for the sake of making the customer more comfortable with the product.

"My name is, um, John," lied

Sullivan.

"This must be your first time to Olongapo."

"Yeah, it is. How could you tell?"

"Because you didn't have your alias ready to use."

"Oh."

"Are you an officer?"

"Yes. How can you tell?"

"I can tell."

"You speak good English."

"I studied it in school. I watch American television and movies. I read American magazines and books. I have cousins who live in America." She nudged her chair closer to Sullivan. He leaned away.

"Are you afraid of me, 'John'?"

Sullivan shook his head.

"So why doesn't a big and handsome man like you want to sit close to me?"

He cleared his throat. "Well, Susie, it's personal I don't really approve of your line of work. Nothing personal. Really you're just wasting your time with me."

"You don't like my job? It's the best paying work in Luzon if you don't know someone to get you a job on base, and I'm pretty good, and you've been out to sea a long time. No?"

Howland returned with the bottles of beer. Sullivan saw his jaw set as he regarded the bar girl. Before he could chase her off, Sullivan said "It's okay. We're just talking."

Sullivan quizzed Susie on American History and state capitals and sports and movies and whatever other trivial questions came to mind.

"Hey, Billy, she's pretty good, huh?"

"She did better than any of the rocks who work for me could have done," Howland said bitterly. "A word with you, if you don't mind too much."

"Excuse us just a minute, Susie."

The two men walked to the head of the staircase.

"What is it?" asked Sullivan.

"Look, I don't approve of these bar girls, but don't jerk them around. They're working whether you realize it or not. She's going to expect you to pay her bar fine."

"Well, I was sort of planning it," admitted Sullivan.

Howland grinned faintly. "So, I guess that 'I'm a good catholic boy' stuff couldn't hold up against the old hormones."

"No! I'm not going to lay a finger on her!" Sullivan waved a handful of peso bills at Howland. "I've got plenty of money, and I can afford to part with some of it."

Howland put a hand on Sullivan's shoulder. "Don't be a fool! Those bar fines, not a peso of it ever gets to the girl. You're paying the club owner for the privilege of catching the clap."

"I didn't know that." Sullivan put the money back in his pocket. "It's only human to feel sorry for her, but every one of these girls is a living tragedy, and they're all named Susie."

"Lieutenant? Earth to Lieutenant Sullivan!"

Sullivan snapped out his reverie. "What is it?"

"You were kind of zoned out there," said the broom-armed sailor. "You okay?"

"Yeah, I'm fine. I was just thinking about my first time in Subic."

"A blast, huh?" Chief Wells leered at his division officer.

Sullivan shook his head slightly. "No not at all."

The sailor started to sweep again. "My God, you almost have to be inhuman not to have fun in Subic."

A Gift Not Given

by Frank McCormick

The cold wind rushed down through the fence making the bright afternoon sun seem like an empty lie. Still the sharp glare careened of small puddles ice and car windshields all around the parking lot trying to find somewhere to go. The thin winter air outside made Mark's head feel light as he squinted and searched for his truck. The heat from the mill furnace still hung in warm pockets inside his shirt as it tried to fight back the encroaching chill.

Working by the boiler had its advantages, especially in the winter months, but by five everyday you could always look forward to the same burning dust across your eyes and a mouth as dry as road salt.

"Beer, my children," he mumbled to himself. "There'll be Blue Ribbon beer when we reach the promised land."

At the Kwick Stop, Mark checked his oil again. The leak in the pan had gotten worse since last week. He'd have to buy another quart to hold him till payday when he could fix it.

"Hey, is Doug working today?" he called to the red faced man behind the counter.

"No, he called in sick," the man shot back giving him a suspicious stare.

No beer today, Mark grabbed a quart of Quaker State and headed to the cooler for a jug of water. At least Patty would be happy. Damn, Patty. It was too early to go home.

The road up to the water shed was still clear of ice so it would probably stay open for another week of two. The pale

green grass and gray steel of the tower always mad him feel like he was color blind as he looked out over the town. From the top of the hill you could see all over Southend past to the farm tracks and sometimes out to the line highway. On weekends after dark was when the line would blow-up. Amped teens in overpowered Detroit's would blast down the long narrow stretch. Sometimes they'd run it flat out and kill the headlights, going half a mile through the night. Mark always liked that. It felt just like disappearing.

Back up Center Ave he could see the shadows of the street lights growing longer as the sun went down. Brick walls and store windows that hadn't been boarded over glowed a dull red like a shallow cut. Only a few cars sat quiet outside the A&P and most of the sidewalks looked empty. Two blocks over, the old canal ran black and narrow beside the mill, past the scrap yard and out to the fields. Sludge from all over town poured from sewer pipes behind the fence at the bottom of the hill. The runoff made the water thick and slow in the cold. Mark thought about the canal. He knew how it felt.

Now he could see the glow from the big sign at Chelsey's just over the top of the V.F.W hall. Tate and most of the other guys from work would be there by now and would most likely stay till midnight, getting drunk and talking loud. Mark smiled as he remembered the line from an old song, "Somewhere there's someone throwing up!" He yelled out from the hill, happy that there

was no one to hear. A crow jumped and flew away from the bare tree over his shoulder. Mark followed it down as it broke the evening still life out past the bus station where he could see the stoop-light click on in his building.

There on the second floor was the apartment he shared with his girlfriend Patty. Even though he couldn't see the window he knew she was home. She was stretched out on the rug next to the radiator with her piles of laundry, washed, ironed, and folded for 50 cents a pound. Waiting for the creak of the stairs. Waiting against the evening cold. Mark thought about the cold. The sun was 93 million miles away.

Message Received

by M. Asia Vu

They weren't five minutes into the class period before it started.

He looked up from the photographs, quickly scanning to see who had the nerve to try to make an embarrassing situation.

"That's a natural body function!" he proclaimed.

"Yes, sir, but this isn't science class." Most laughed aloud, their pressed shirts and sculpted hair unaffected.

"Don't 'yes sir' me until you learn what it means. You kids today..." He stopped before a speech started. The concept had been pressuring his head for a while, but his pertaining words weren't ready." How does someone of valuable life experience reach the insolent nowadays?"

"Open your books to where we left off last time," he grunted nastily moving to lean on his raised desk. No one would mention the chalk prints on the seats of his trousers nor the specs of the paper that salted his hair.

Two minutes of pages turning upon White Out graffiti, chairs scratching the tracked floor, and murmuring comments ensued. Being a Thursday, he knew how long it would be before a cocky one invaded him, so he ignored the predictable and again lost himself in the pictures.

He stared down silently, thinking slowly. "Speakeasies, F.D.R. and his fiascoes, the Red Scare. What wasn't I thinking when we all were alive? How can my younger sister, born on Stock Crash Day, write an autobiography, so detailed, so sentimental, and share nothing of how I

remember? How could she ever believe Mark Twain and Einstein were really the same person? She knew what would happen when she lovingly sent me a copy.

"What page are we supposed to be on, Mr. I-think-I'll pronounce-your-name-wrong-on-purpose?"

"Everyone today wants the future." His thoughts were louder now. "For the past forty year it's all been about the next century. Not me. All I want is what I missed in the past, back when we all had to quickly make our role. There's none of that, but there's still a four foot dead carp in my driveway, thrown to a man with a back. Something different. To have some thing be different."

"I sure hope he's not looking for our homework." Two minutes were up. He abandoned his book.

"Today we'll be listening to a speaker who is considered to be a living, historical romance, glorifying the courting manners, the chivalry, the patriotism of the 18th century Virginians. Bringing to life, no costume required, the debating minds of those establishing a new genre of government." In his grandest manner, he mimicked the images of his head that out weighted a classroom of leaning scratching bodies. "This romantic fraction has no sway by Hollywood glitter." Repeating another wrist flip and sauntered step, his head jumped back. The last of the paper fell from his hair.

"Another day, he may sound more

like...tragedy. Recalling the disease with which the explorers killed the Red Indians, or the so-called civilizing of the natives that Columbus and his crew initiated. Or what of the hypocritical way that religion was used for control...?"

"Excuse me, can I have the bathroom pass?"

"Do you need to go to the bathroom?" he asked blocking the exit.

"Yes. It can't wait."

"Fine. Go for me too while you're in there." He realized after he spoke what he said could be construed as humorous. He began to circle the room.

"At times our speaker has seemed the Romans De Policiers." He turned close to a bulletin board masked with clippings, arranged by the shade of their fading. "This man has collected, for more than thirty years of his existence, relevant pieces of our country and world, not hiding in a photo album, watching himself shrink as the album bulges. No. To interpret amidst those who have not the experience to do the same."

"Well, is he really coming, or do we have to pay to see this guy?"

"So why is it?" his voice reached for all walls, "that recent history is so repetitive? Are we not to learn from history? To change what was not right the first live through?"

Then it happened again, but louder. A girl in the front corner jumped up clinging to her leather purse but leaving her book to change seats. All the way she waved away the air in front of her face.

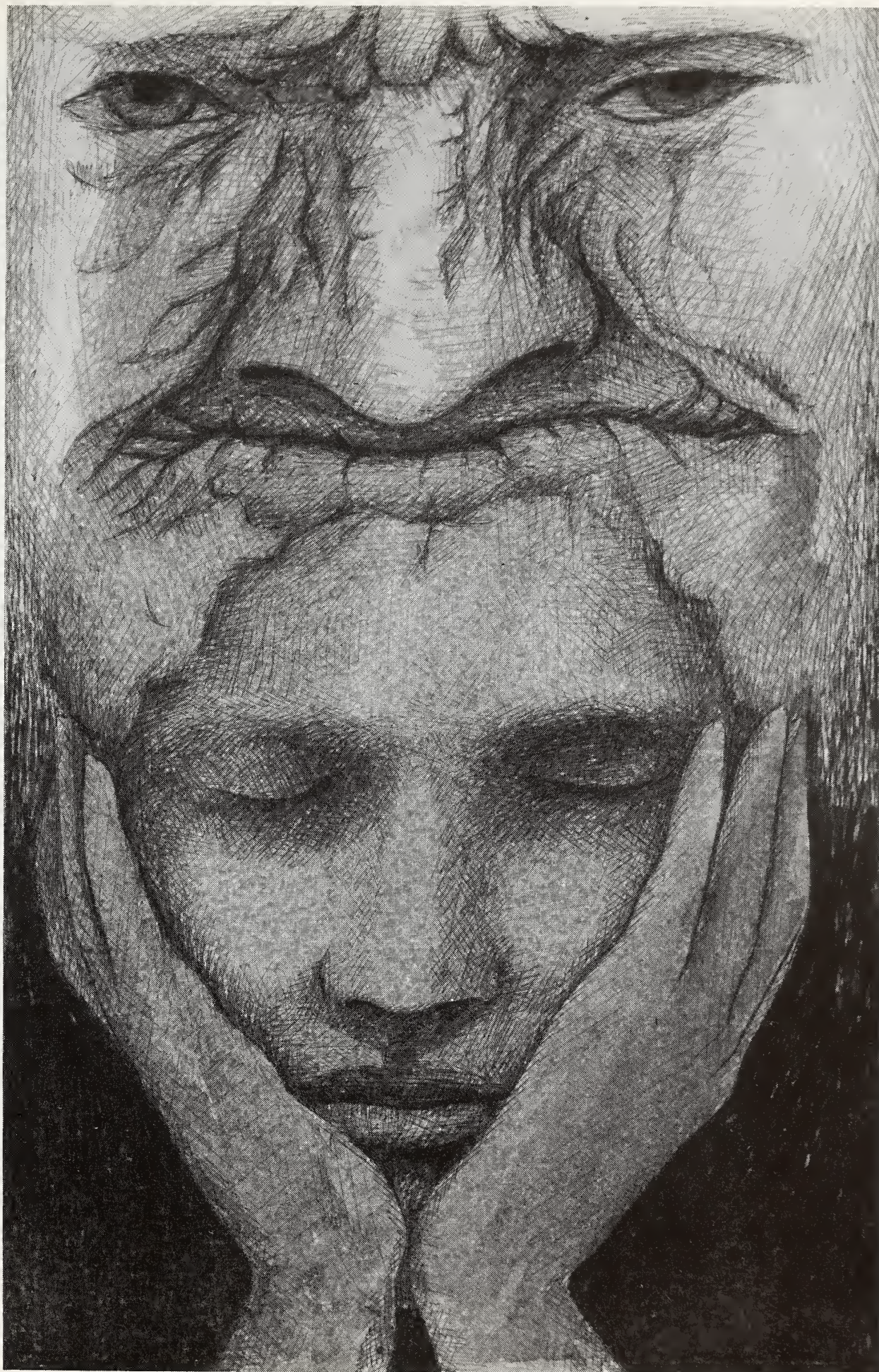
He felt pressure in one half of the chest. Hoping it was the sign of a heart attack, he knew it wasn't. He needed to move around, to relieve himself. There was nothing he could say to make them listen.

He stared down at the girl for an uncomfortable length of time, then forgetting his back he moved suddenly. In the depths of his desk waited his rechargeable shaver he'd been saving. Rolling up his long sleeves, he fixed his eyes on his starting point at the back of the room. With a shriek mistaken for another tack making its way through his worn soles, he lunged with razor held high. Quickly pacing the aisles, he went to work on the prickly, grey scatter. No mirror required, he led the tempo of the motor's noise.

"A shield from their comments, this device will prove to be so close to my hearing." And when seeing that his face dropped upon them no more, he pretended to trim his arms. He continued to leave traces of himself on their desks, until they all took the hint to leave.

Surely they would speed up the process by telling the authorities he was lacking in class control. Certainly this would get him out of lunch duty that day. Most definitely, someone would understand his plight.

He returned to his desk with the history text, his head lightened. He needed no longer to move about and so he looked at the pictures a bit longer before closing his book.



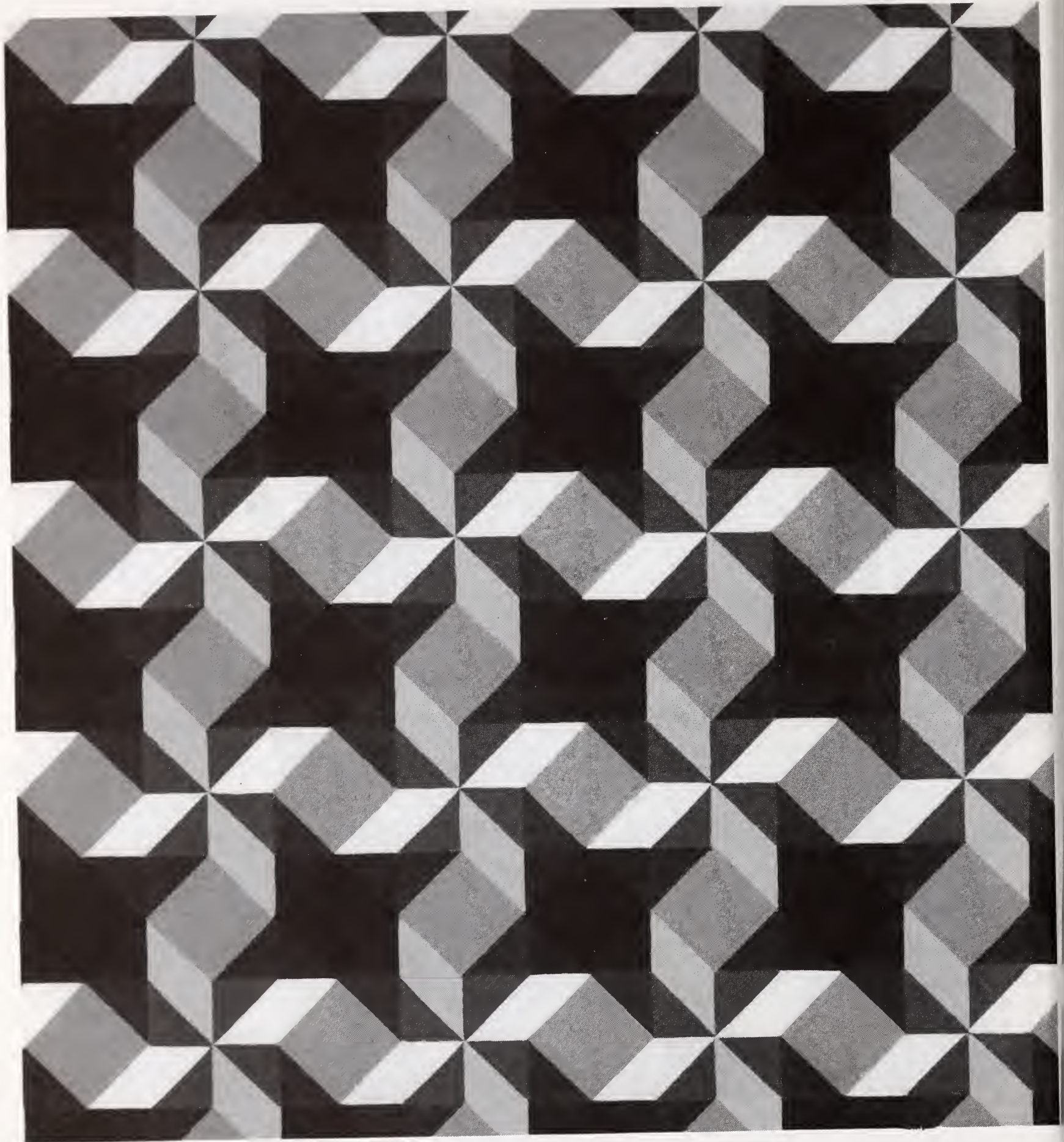
untitled Ink Drawing by Harry Knickerbocker



untitled Pencil Drawing by Clifford Bush



"Flowers" Watercolor by Cynthia Ferraro



untitled Op Art by Jacqueline Levin

Scum

- Dedicated to the memory of Theodore Seuss Geisel-

Scum is such a versatile word.
 Its meaning can range from scientific to absurd.
 Scum can be used to describe or to hurt
 and even as an arcane reference to stop, halt and cease work.

When scum is used to describe,
 You're referring to refuse on the surface of fluids.
 This can be seen in a walk around my apartment,
 known as "The pad of the Druids".

The kitchen is always a safe haven for scum:
 it hides under the refrigerator,
 it's in plain view in the sink,
 it floats on the surface of things we forgot to drink.

The bathroom is next on our search for scum,
 a traditional spot where you always find some.
 There's scum in the toilet, right around the rim.
 There's scum under the sink where it's warm and dim.
 There is scum in the bathtub, which I need to clean,
 mostly hairs of the type that make Anita Hill scream.

The next place to search for the meaning of scum
 is also in my apartment, a place that's rather fun.
 This meaning is used to describe or to hurt.
 It refers to the blob on the couch with the fast-food wrapper skirt.

It's lay there all night and is there after school,
 the TV remote in his hand. . . the scepter of a fool.
 This pitiful site you could definitely call scum;
 this roommate was drinking last night and still smells of rum.
 But to call this thing scum is almost a slight
 to the froth with that name that you could find on this fright.

Another meaning of scum can be found in my place;

this one rhymes with cum, the word it can replace.
 It's a euphemism for semen, not the ones on the sea,
 but the ones that go flying by the millions from me.

When I am lucky there's a female around,
 to share this pleasure, make supportive sounds.
 When I am not, it's just me and a book,
 trying to find someplace to trash this gook.

With three men in our flat, there's enough around
 to fill a large hole that's been dug in the ground.
 When things are going well and three becomes six
 the flow in this place could fill up the Styx.

For the last definition we must leave my apartment,
 this citing is arcane and will not fit this compartment.
 This definition stems from a very old book,
 except to define scum no one gives it a look.

The tome was written in England, back in 1728,
 called *Street Robberies Considered* it hasn't been seen of late (anon.).

The book says that scum once meant "enough",
 from there we can figure a new meaning; not tough.
 If I say to you, "Enough!" it means stop or desist.
 If I yelled at you, "Scum" would you stop or resist.

If a man was seen running to catch his dog
 yelling "Scum" at the beast as it continued to trod,
 he would be seen as a madman and locked in chains.
 Some meanings are better left whence they came.

I've taken a look at four meanings of scum.
 It's in kitchens, bathrooms and bedrooms some.
 We've seen in the past it has meant "enough",
 it can refer to a person who's appearance is gruff.
 We've seen that it means the stuff of life,
 at least half of it, if I have the birds and bees right.

As crooks of Old England may have said with a grin,
as they taunted their teachers with the ideas of sin,
"Now I have finished with my treatise on scum,
and so I say, Scum! -- I am done."

- *Russell B. Stewart*

P'an Ku

Salutes

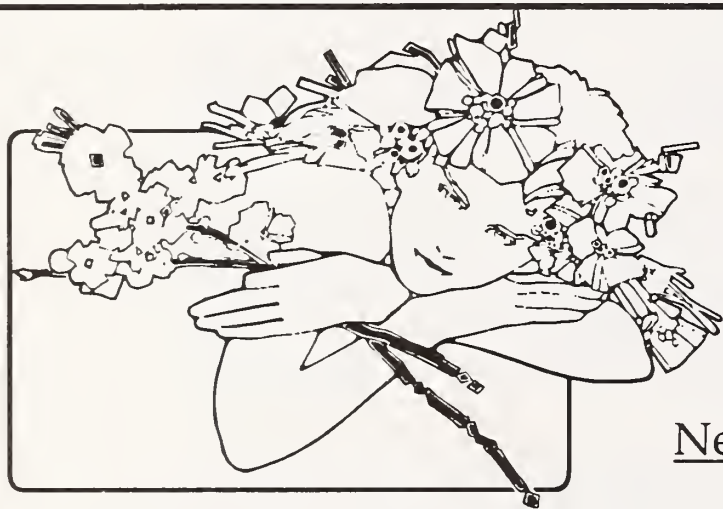
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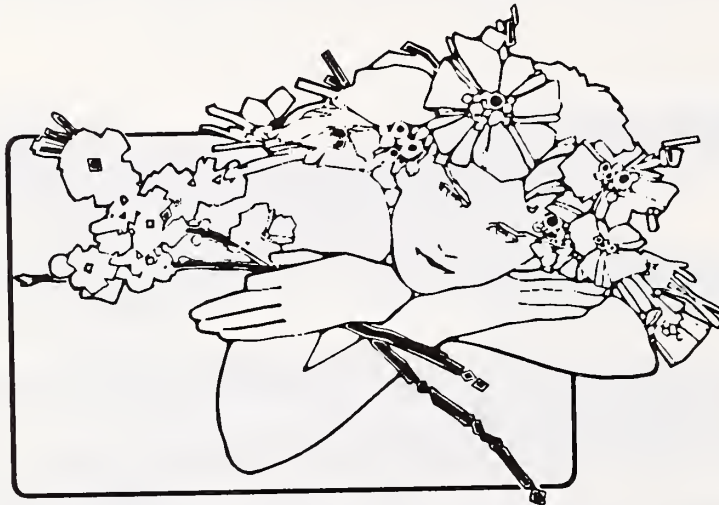
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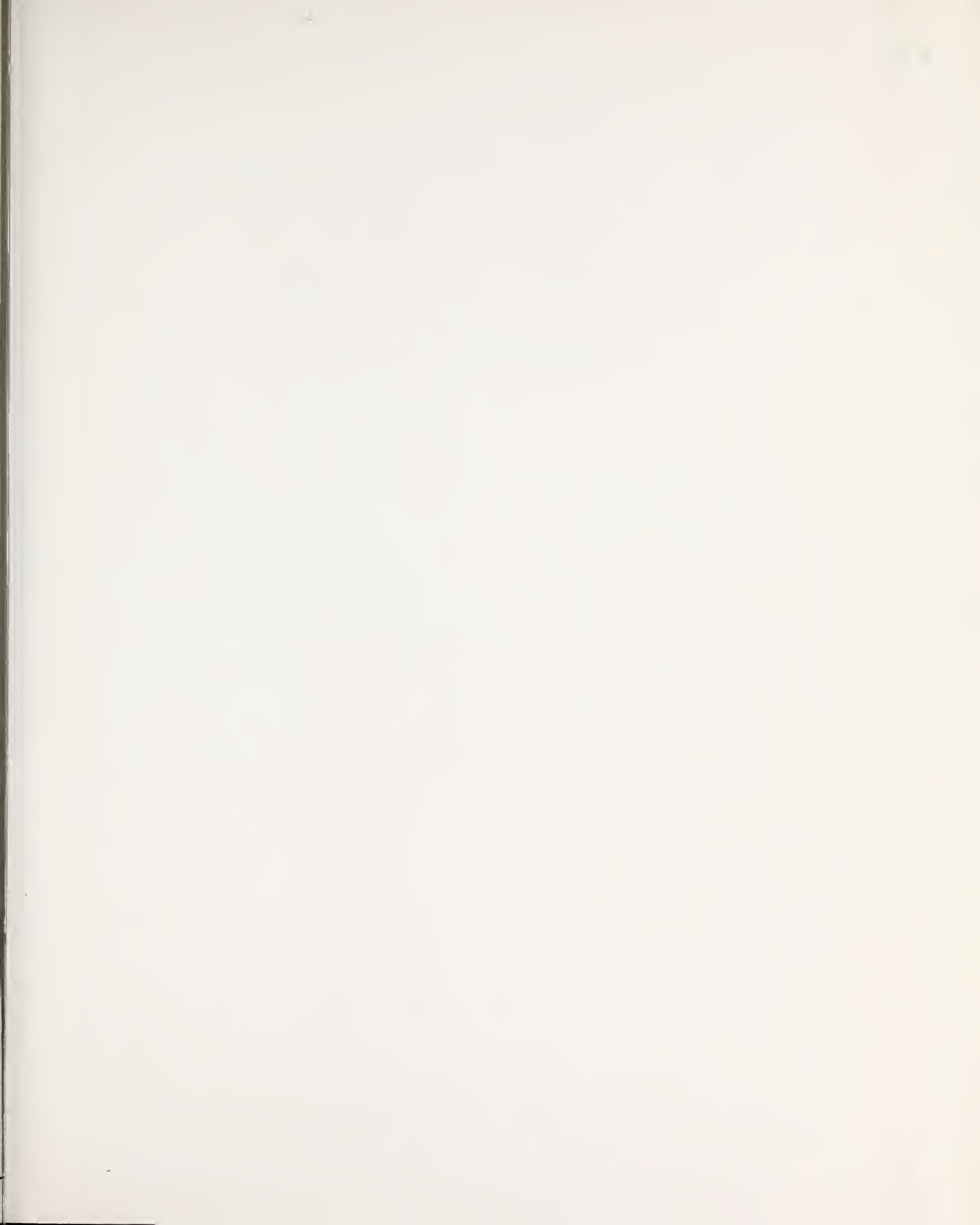
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*... Even heavenly riches which there hidden lie
Within the closet of her chastest bower,
Which mighty God hath given to her free,
And to all those which thereof worthy be.*

*Edmund Spenser
- The Faerie Queene*





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