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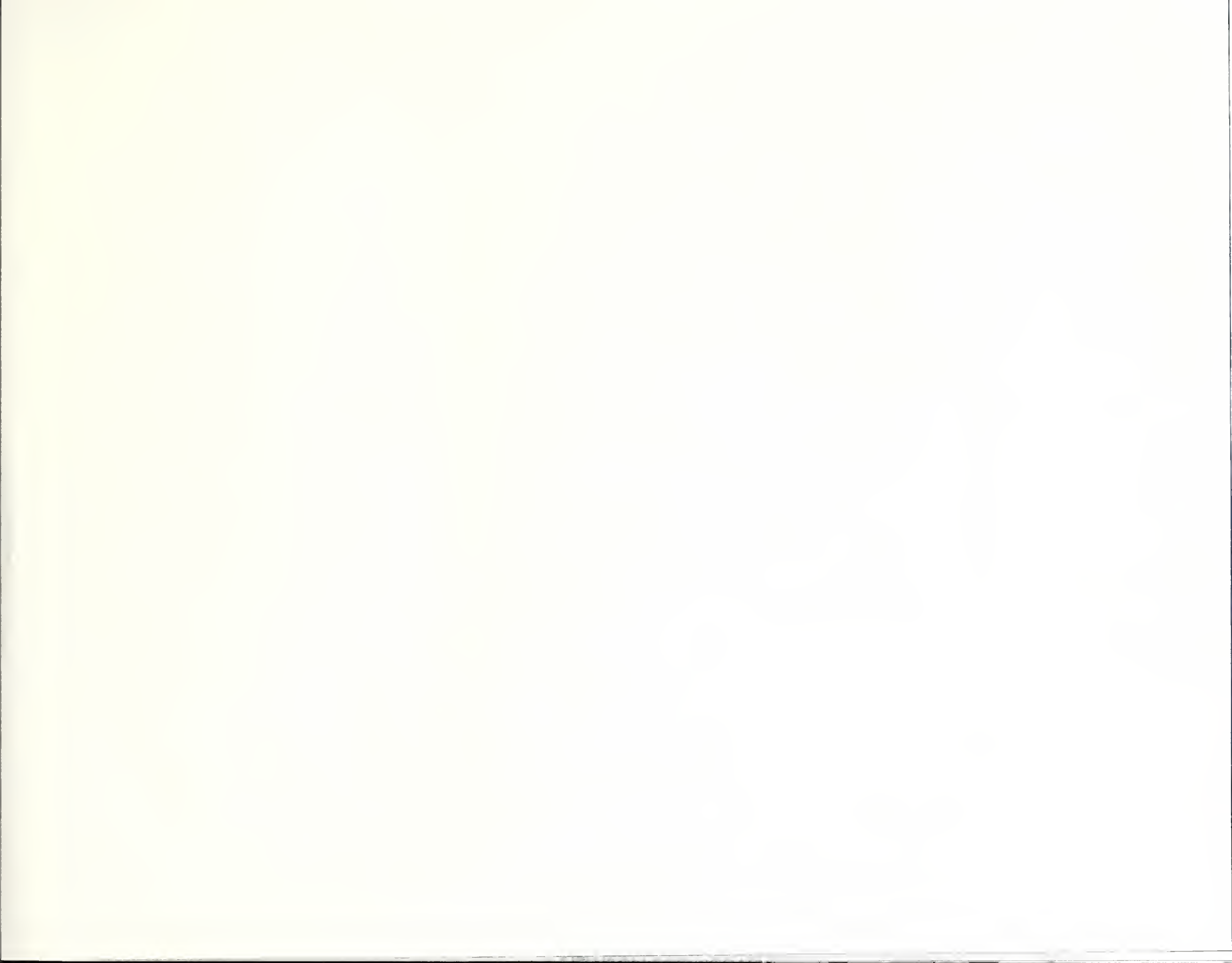


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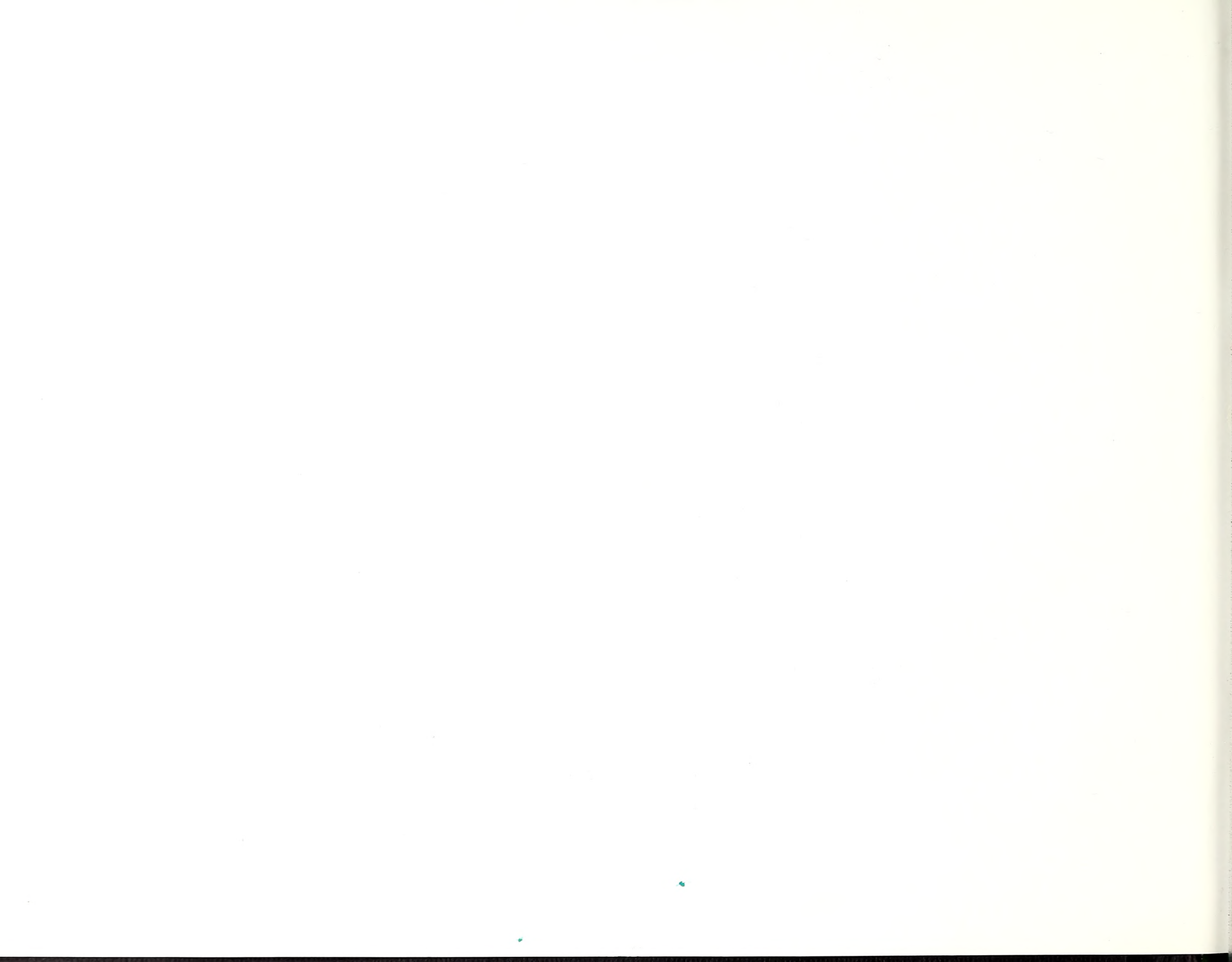
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P'an Ku

Fall 1996

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thank-you

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Japanese letterings created by Kimiko Moore

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COVER PHOTO: COLOR BY DANIEL JAY
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 CHARCOAL DRAWING BY MICHAEL E. SPICER

Editorial

during the early stages of producing this issue of P'an Ku, I was approached by several fellow students and asked if I would dedicate this issue or perhaps a special section to Joe Pratt. Joe's untimely death, by the unpredictable forces of nature, was a seemingly senseless tragedy. Joe was a young, vibrant young man just beginning his journey through life. Nature had other plans, however. I understand the compassion behind requests for this tribute to Joe, I decided to dedicate the entire issue to everyone who has experienced the level of sadness and pain that only comes with separation from someone you care about.

Many lives, including faculty, administration and students, have been lost due to unforeseen circumstances while they were a part of our college experience. John Orias, director of the North Campus ESL program died in a motorcycle accident while driving home from school. Ben Klein, a young man who touched many lives, lost his courageous battle with cancer. Last year, Don Sundquist, adviser for the BCC Broadcasters and speech teacher on Central Campus died after a long illness. Scan Heikkinen, a former section editor for *The Observer*, and friend of mine, committed suicide two years ago.

The word P'an Ku is the name of the creator god in Chinese mythology. He separated earth and sky and created the world. Meaning, "the dog of many colors," P'an Ku embodies the spirit of yin-yang philosophy. To live, you must experience death, to smile you must cry, and to create you must destroy. This is evident in nature. Human Beings, longing for permanence, resist the natural consequences of existing in a world that knows no permanence.

The cycle of life is ambivalent, constantly revolving, much like the planet earth, ignorant of feelings and emotions. Those of us who have lost a loved one know that only time can heal the hurt. Expressing this pain through creativity is a testament to the P'an Ku that resides in all of us. This edition of P'an Ku is dedicated to those who have had the courage to carry on, and to purge their grief through creativity. *Death Be Not Proud*, the classic book by John Gunther, about his son's death, was in reality, a celebration of his life. This is the ultimate tribute to a soul who passed through life and left an impression on the living.

Life holds no guarantees. In many cultures, death is viewed as a beginning. Buddhists believe that death is a gateway to true enlightenment and oneness with the universe, Shintoists see death as an honorable alternative to humiliation, and Hindus believe we are reincarnated to rectify mistakes made in previous lives.

When tragedy strikes, death is the enemy—a fearsome display of our mortality. But if we truly try to see death for what it is, simply a transition to the next plane of existence, perhaps the fear will leave us. Maybe if we celebrate life more, we will fear death less. Thus, when those whom we love are taken from us, we can channel this grief into spiritual creativity, cherishing them in our hearts and our memories.

I honor those who have died.

I also honor those who continue to live.

Tracy Fritz, Fall 1996

Lonely

In memory of his brother Aaron Pratt

Sitting in a Chair
Talking to the Air
No one else is There
Because I'm...
Lonely

Standing in the Rain
Heart is filled with Pain
No one knows my Name
Nearly gone Insane
Because I'm...
Lonely

Children watch the Sun
Go and have some Fun
Gotta fly Away
Someday Anyway...
Because I'm ...
Lonely

-Joe Pratt

TRIBUTE

driving to class
turning the corner
without warning
tears flow
as we see
bouquets of flowers
tributes
placed by
teachers, students
and those
who care
and grieve
for a young life
lost
in an instant
by the powers
of the elements.
Joe Pratt
was gone.

-Dee Cone



Looking for Mr. Goodwrench

She's hard to start when cold
warming up, shaking, sputtering,
trying, to turn over
Flooded too much too fast
choked, stalled
BACK OFF
needs time to take it all in
Try again gently now
Take her out
attention focused, ever wary
of every bump
curve
groove
in the road
building to speed GLIDING
SMOOTHLY
from gear to gear
patiently
never
grinding her
down
Open
her up
Feel
her
fly
How
she responds to your touch
handled by your touch
handled by your whim

now
you've turned
her
on
She reacts brakes on
she stops
but she
unaccustomed to rough handling
balks
shudders
at unexpected twists and turns
Think
feel
her
limits and power
respect
how quickly can she come to stop
how much speed
can she grip the road?
you're in her
moving
top down
hair going wild
Tuned to Otis Redding singin'
'bout something so sweet
it sticks
in your tooth
makes you cry
smiling
'cause

you know
Making love on Burgundy
naugahide in the back seat
denim hanging around your ankles
some dislocated, faded halo
when you're done
still feel
her
under you
solid, comforting, vibrating, quiver-
ing
moon and stars shining
off her gleaming body
REV
up again
take off
winding 'round familiar lanes
'till you reach home
AHHH——
shut down
now
pull out
remembering the journey
anticipating possibilities ahead
linger
awhile
touch her
Turtle Wax shine
thankful for all before you
turn away

- Kathleen Marie Davis



Guess

I'm back folks
It's been a long time
metastasized from London's fires
guess my name
Rumple "fucking" Stiltskin
I'm the tree in your backyard
the serpent's apple
bite my somatic skin
chew the flesh
lick my juice from your drenched hands
orgasmic wonders I do provide
come to me.

Pull into my pumping station
ignorance is cheap
only \$.99 a gallon
hell I'll fill you up for free
let me check your undercarriage
trust me
it won't hurt
I'll grease your lubes in a jiff
you'll like that.

I'm the doctor who refuses to register
fuck lists no time to waste
I'm the small scab on your dentist's forefinger
re-opened by your back molar
just swallow
okay spit
go ahead.

Come to my hospitality hospital
I clean all the instruments myself
must recycle
Windex is a great thing
don't worry make a fist please.

I'm the body you fuck
behind the speaker in the club
feel the bombastic bass of the music
create your own rhythm
jolt a new beat inside me
a new song is born
you see we're artists.

I'm the hustler you pick up on Biscayne
damn you look too cute in that Miata
my prices are reasonable
\$10—hand job
\$20—hand job and suck combo
\$50—the works—no water sports please
I didn't bring a change of clothes
go compare my prices
you'll be back I'll just wait.

I'm the affair your wife caught on tape
the fear trembling in her
as she throws you out
leave the VCR on continuous play
re-enact your epic over and over
always change your leading lady.

I'm the teacher
you'll pass my test
it's easy no studying involved
no candles to burn tonight
look you've earned a big fat "plus"
go show the world.

I'm politically aware
bi-partisan by nature
I'm partial to the elephants plight
I have power
my name alone commands money.

Here is a hint
I'm a clinical abbreviation
in a singular form
I once meant relief
guess my name.

-Jerry Hahn

Childhood Kitchen

and I plan to make a fine meal.

Grandma's attic is my kitchen today

but not for long.

Guarded treasures try to keep their secret

while rows of boxes form the ranks as I move past.

Faded cabbage roses muster to attention on the walls

New, new, new greets my eyes and hands.

Old, old, old salutes my nose---

a triumphant fanfare as I march through

The door at the top is small and plays

I rise to the height of my expectations.

slowly, but with a determined step---

Up the stairs, holding tight to the railing---

-Sally Rudolph

The Perfect Instrument

The belly-
shallow,
wispy,
low.

The chest range-
deep,
brooding
hallow.

The head-
high pitched,
thin
sharp.

Separate, they
are weak.
Together, they
are bold—

Voice.

-Mindle Bala



To The Beat

homeboy with the afro sheen
on the floor with a baseball bat
pimple in a dimple of your maturity
boxers droop to the roll of a ghetto ball
two socks and masking tape
along the wall of graffiti speaking to passersby
speaking to me
telling the truth of a philosophy
why young ones like neal and rick
got beat down to the brown of their heritage
with the three billy clubs gruff
because of a tag
because of a sign
painted while i fainted alongside
those spraycan jigaboos and
spic-o-ramas
names used by councilmen in private rooms
never felt the weight of a boom box on the shoulder
blasting vicious sounds
soul pounding realities
of getting paid getting laid getting killed
getting respect
can't keep brooks brothers suits in check
long enough to say
we shall overcome
i have a dream
your gun is just one
three piece come to shut down
bearing a grin and a flat ass
new world order
no original thought
in terms of doo-wop

be-bo-a-luladeedadee
one pant leg is higher than the other
brother to all brothers
but not convicted of a capital offense
because that doesn't happen in your
neighborhood
with the needless to say
white picket thicket of thorns
me gusta ska with the funky horns
checkered riff
jamaican spliff
giving out a case of the bad brains
that majorities and minorities
can be one
not just for another benetton
billboard
united colors of what needs to be taught
to the teenager
twentywhatever
thirtysomething
fortypossibly
fiftymaybe
generation x
yz rapped about thinking of a master plan
for unity in his hood
it could also be in a barrio
to the beat of fania all stars volume 1
love at the red garter
which is burned into the cranium
over a steaming hot plate of arroz con gandules
and platanos maduros



THORAZINE HIGH

Her jaw dangles like a brass hinge
A developer's darkroom left carelessly ajar
Her tongue idly bobbing
Back and forth

Her livid voice box lingers overhead... An inevitable black wave
She, the petrified limb of a winter born tree... Scrawny and barren
Abruptly, "it" lolls off the taste buds, from the recesses of
that medicated sanctuary
A sedated child caught in mid-tantrum
The moan... The incurable cry

What is the trouble?

Socked feet scuttle dumbfoundedly about the sterile halls
Wringing arthritic fingers
She nervously paces
Back and forth

Varicose thighs emphatically shake
Therefore, bursting the contaminant sac
And spurts of sheer gold erupt, tottering languidly
Forming a foamy lagoon of long soured lemonade
With that, an acute discovery, that even her own body had forsaken her
Leaving her socked feet drenched in abandonment

What is the trouble?

Meanwhile, on the day room telly, God sings psalms of savior
to the brain sick
And legions of praising hands, acquittingly flutter
Back and forth

Yet, left to wallow in a puddle of disarray
She gnashes her teeth in fury and spits back at the drug
This thorazine high
Which has stolen her aspirations, her insights
Leaving her forever trapped in the echo of that moan...
That incurable cry

-Brandy Sejeck



TWENTY-EIGHT

It is a cheat, this armored thing,
and it is cheated
It is neither brilliance nor bright
or filled with song

It is long-dead roses
lying in a baker's batch
as seen through a backward glance

Blurry-eyed and waiting did you leave
those intrusive words
in my private space

Emptily felt and lesser conceived
those brambled husks of once-great things

A dying tick beside the lamp
no longer the mimic of my own heat
but a stripped down tank
gears upon gears wrapped forever in my briared temperament

All misspent time among the tarot

You are correct and forever will be

It is grayness
and oh how it bleeds...

-Lawrence Carrino



Fetish

if you tug and pull at the restraints dear, you will surely bruise
no, I cannot let you go, not until you've paid your dues

welts or scars may appear on your wrists and ankles
don't fight it pet, remember, you're in leather shackles

you are not my prisoner, but you are my slave
such resistance, insistence, my aren't you brave

now, if you lay still, perhaps I will remove the blindfold
these mundane fantasies of yours, so easily bought and sold

you want me to discipline you, punish you, begging me over and over
standing above you, leather strap in my hand, letting it hover

I take you, slowly I dig my stiletto heel into your back
next week, if your good, I'll hang you from the rack

no, this is not my profession, more like my obsession
I'm not a priest, but I will listen to your confession

tell me what you want or how naughty you've been
you know this is a game, one which you will never win

what? you want me to pour hot wax where?
not a good idea love, it could singe some hair!

I know what you think of me, I see it in your eyes, such reverence
still, I make you tremble with just my very presence

you see me now, I can feel your loathing, sense your gratification
sometimes I wonder from where it stems, such a fixation

twice a month, I won you, for you pay me for this handsomely
true, it's something you cannot get at home with the family

-Silvia Quintana





Unconscious

Black and White Photo/Eduardo Cure



Therapist on Board

Did you know that Henrietta
is leaving John for Mitch?
—or that Phyllis thinks her sister
is a nasty little witch?
That vitamins can kill you?
They killed Flo's husband, Ben...
and Nancy is searching for a guy
whom she can trust again?

I hear everybody's problems
and they ask for my advice,
'cause I'm a Frequent Flyer
and they all claim I look "NICE."
No matter where I'm seated
it happens every time,
I just listen, nod or shake my head,
and NEVER MAKE A DIME!

But, perhaps I could earn mileage
if they let me "work" the plane;
with everyone relaxed and calm
they wouldn't need champagne!
I think I'll write and ask them
if we could make a deal
by substituting THERAPY
for every lousy meal.

They ask Four bucks for movies,
Heck, I oughta bring in Five—
No fussin' with a Middleman—
I'd be coming to them LIVE!
I'd be saving them a fortune, too,
as far as I can see...
They'd only have to spring for Coke,
a bag of nuts and ME!

- Lois Wood Schiman



Katie

Lori, my heart bleeds for you,
To have lost your Katie, so strong and true.
A braver little girl, there never was.
She faced her pain and rose above,
to show us all what spirit is.
Yours for a time, but now she's His.
She never lost her sense of self, never lost that smile.
A gift of sweetness, given to you for just a little while.
There's another world beyond, I've been there myself.
Katie's soul is now enjoying, the astral body's wealth.
Katie has walked into the light, and left us all alone.
Her soul has so much power, she may make her presence known.

-Shelley Herold (Michelle)

A Formal Protest

Tibetan chants that do not come
from mouths slapped shut
But strong women march
after rape
and the birth
of the world's burden
they are strong - they bend
they reach and pull
and show their anger
with enough decorum
to become organized

The beauty of their Eastern lips
are bruised and covered
with silk to hold in the cries
of women who hit laundry
against rocks and babies
who will never feel them

The silk of the costume
and the scarf around gagging
are a realness of truth
that no esoteric
dogma can explain
away

*A contingent of Tibetan women marched at the
1995 International Women's Conference
to protest mass rape by the Chinese in Tibet.*

-Rena Register



Turbo Jello

*Buddha in the kitchen chugging gummy
bears
Luther on the grass,
rolling up his rules, carefree*

*Mediocre mama's by the porch
Laying thumbtacks in the pasta
Praying to Allah
wla spoon
and shooting love
into her eyes wla taco*

-Sivan Al-amary

Stain

Back
Top
Laid down
Rest upon my silk, or satin wear
I propose a toast
To clumsiness
And spilt wine
In all directions
A turn, a quiver
Gliding through the air
Making a perfect "10" landing upon my blouse
Oh I suffer
The knowledge is a treat
A spread of often foreign foods
Glazed and sparkling
A rush to the bathroom door
It still holds its mark of fury
Thrown into a frenzy of embarrassment
Withdrawing from the amusement
A kitchen knife, butter knife perhaps
Grape to steel
I sting the evil
That bore my stupidity
Along with the pie that sits in smog
Restless caviar
Waiting to be disturbed
He who are the stain, bleed

Metronome

She chews in time with her rocker,
a box of crackers in her lap,
rocks forward back, forward back -
slippers touch, lift off the wooden floor.

Seven sparrows line the sill,
peck for crumbs they will not find,
cock heads in a one-eyed gaze
at the boards--boards
which block their view into the room.

Inside, the woman rocks...
Nylon chafes, rubber soles squeak
as the heavy white-clad aide,
mouthing casual banter,
moves around the room,
picks discarded clothing from the floor,
turns down the bed.

The sparrows peck...
The woman rocks...
Sightless eyes stare at a screen,
monochrome images flicker ghosts
across the floor, over the bed,
upon the walls

-Cheryl A. Bringas



Panthers

Your muscles move in a tempo
Only you can hear
You become one with the ice
Cross checking and back checking
Gliding forward and backward
In the blink of an eye
The crowd roars -
As the puck comes your way
My heart races -
As it smacks against your blade
You cradle it with ease
The crowd screams approval -
As you race to the net
Twisting and turning like a figure skater
Avoiding other hockey players
A back shot and the puck sails through the air
The crowd goes wild -
The buzzer sounds
A standing ovation
Rats rain the stadium ground

-Doreen R. Ebert

Punx Rock Show

kids packed in darkness
 each finding their own rhythm
 the disharmony is deafening-
 it unites us
I am pressed against the naked backs of
skinheads
sweat-slicked and tattooed
they smash the air-
a desperate fight for space
 skin twists against me
 forcing me down against reality
 I am anchored by shoulders, legs,
fists-
 a steel-toe crashing into my temple
elbowteethbootscreamfist
heat heat heat
I am hit hard by the sudden realness of
my body
in this rage of ecstasy
I become complete

-Amanda Farnsworth



Ultimate Reality

Bernie guzzles a Molson Ice and devours
greasy buffalo wings, burps, scratches
his gonads and grunts like a satisfied
pig. he gazes at the purple lava lamp
with blind wonder. the blobs like atoms
indestructible collide crate
water fire stone a life
i envy as he pouts taps his leather
boot on the Puppy Chow tile crackle
crisp crunch i feed him more ego
weep in my damp bed. i suckle my stress
under a mildewed cocoon like a caterpillar.
the voices of bothered married women fuss
about my dying shrubs, the five-year-old paint,
black skid marks.

on the sidewalk, the kids play hopscotch
scribed in rock. i'm only thirty something
and i am as stale as night old pizza slices.
if i could meet a man named Charles or Andrew
black tie intelligent myopic we could discuss
Aristotle Epicurus over a bottle of Bolla
Valpolicella skittish numb wrapped in gold
ribbon like a wedding gift.
then bernie crushes an aluminum can
with his head, places his achievement
on the sticky coffee table and with a flutter
of my eyelashes i realize the possibilities
of blowing bubbles and death when they burst.

-Natalie Kappes



The Midnight Train to Delaware

*Smoke stacks
black coal
burning in the fog
I missed the train to Delaware today*

*I suppose I'll go to Kentucky
instead
you're not there -
you're not here either
and Delaware never knew the likes of you
So I guess I'm safe.*

*Black sky burning red -
like my lips
tingling
parched
cracked
dry-on-fire*

*ignited by the flying smoke
on its way to Delaware*

-Jennifer Gilbert





Tinajones Camague Yanos
Watercolor Still-life/Joey Antonio Machado



Where Else Can We Go?

In our hometown, we get killed
In a foreign place, we get kicked
Do we come from Pluto?
Are we a UFO?
In the Bahamas, they send us back home
In the U.S., they send us to Chrome
Do we deserve to die?
Do we need to stay alive?
Let us know if you know
Somewhere else for us to go...

-Pierre Dukens





Untitled

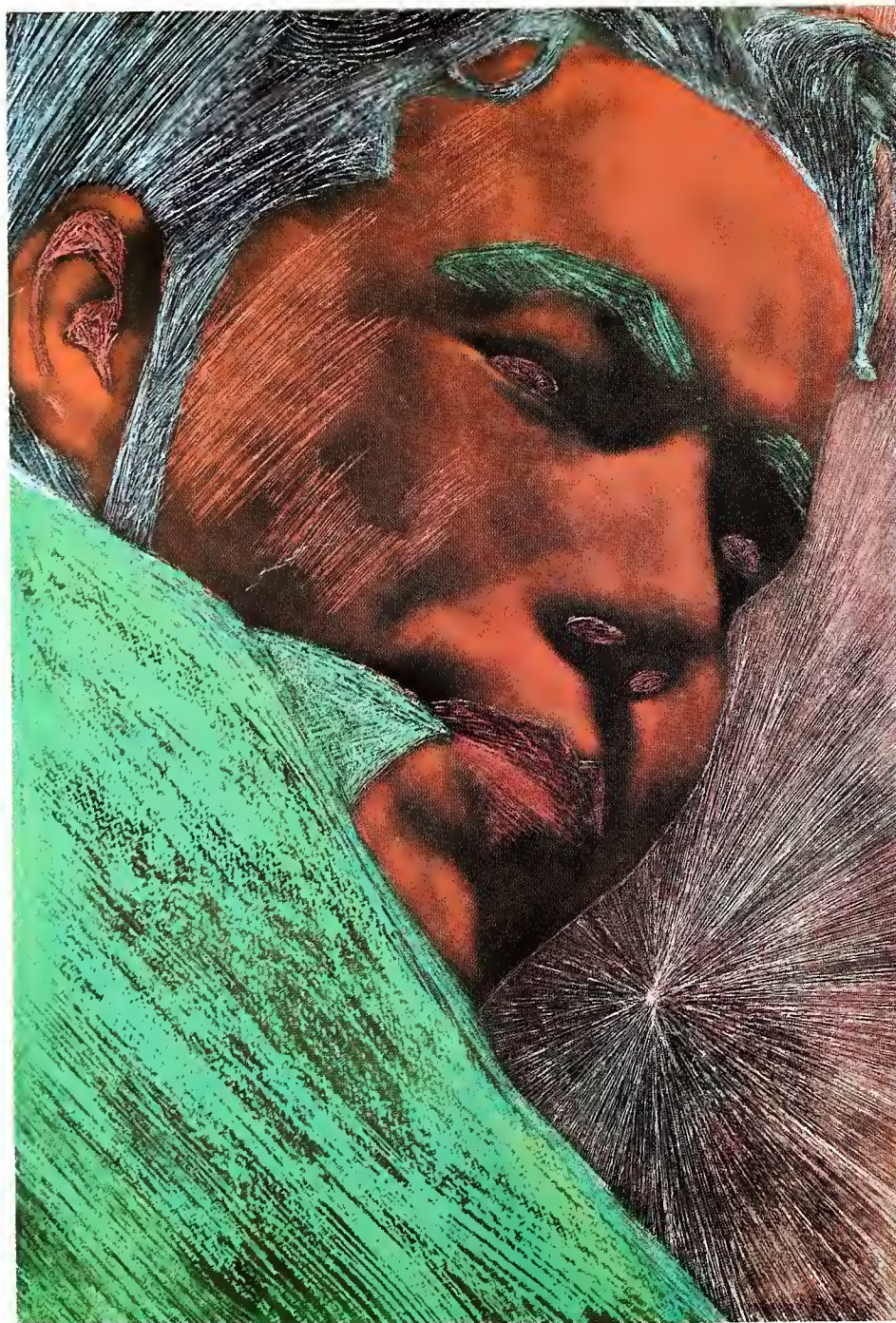
Delicate glass heart
shattered by your poisoned kiss
doused in your tongue's blood.

-Alyssa Yankwitt

Bessye

Black and White Photo/Joshua Prezant





After The Blast

Photo/Ortho/Acrylic/Mel Montaluo





Fire

Wall Piece, Oil on Panel/Ramon Pinto

Song

Who are we?
A generation with nothing to fight for or against
Clustering into jazz coffeehouses to recite poetry
And revive souls who appear as brethren
Spouting words for their own sake and being and becoming
Searching for truth while running from the rat race

So lost in dreams, intellect and revolution that we never revolt
And instead become manipulated by the forces by which we refuse to be
manipulated

When finding truth become lethargic and only wish to be
Forgetting how to live
Scampering about dreaming of poets and being poetic
Bop jazz and obscurity

Listening to trains
But never jumping them, because "things have changed"
Moving about city to city
Tasting culture: free to roam
Working at dreary employment with goals of being
A writer or artist or bandsman
Scribbling away late nights on ringed binders under lamps and candles
Pouring out souls to spill in the ink that is our essence

Sweat and sex hanging heavy in rooms
Where we explore the nirvanic passings of orgasmic lovemaking
Fucking without a concern for anything
Save that deadly cloud which frightens all
Under umbrellas of condoms and abstinence

Living bop jazz, changing, improvising
Upbeat and stumbling clumsily on the downbeat
Leaving all a bit disheartened at what's to come
Preparing endlessly through study of communism socialism democracy
And autonomous anarchy

Searching for perfect political systems and arguing their place
In a society we flee
Never doing, by being begin to become life for life's sake
Until with tragic psychological loss we realize we must do
Or die

Embracing one another
To shield the blows from outside

Tennessee small town lads who listen to Beatles, Floyd, and Doors
Arguing Emerson and Thoreau
Smoking bowls and drinking malt liquor
Dreaming the road

Atlanta freaks who shock one another with their appearance
Gathering about Little Five Points in pizza pubs and cafe's
Talking politics and free jazz

No town Dead-heads always roaming
City on the move from show to show
Pandering goods to survive from day to day
Packing it in after every gathering
Finding rides and riders with family
See you at home

Ft. Lauderdale's Muddy's who flock on late Wednesday nights
To Mudhouse for coffee and Jolt
To hear the voices of poetry in toboggans and lids of all sizes
Mop tops and skins smoking Camels in the courtyard

L.A. and Miami gang punk graffiti artists with a cry against oppression
Anger filled poets following Islam and Farrakhan
Wise to the cards dealt against them

Teen-age girls enraptured by the Americanism that dwells in the pirates

of the streets
Giggling and shyly reciting in their meek voices to rooms overflowing
with genius
And feeding light to the enlightened
Offering their initial attempts at freedom

Older hip cats laughing amongst themselves at the spawn that is
The ideas that flow through the younger as a pop influence
Despising pop-plastic culture

Zen Buddhism, Islam, and Wicca finding a voice in some entity who is a
friend
To live out their ideals to the same peace

Voices cracked and harsh
Growing weary, a bit sheepish to the change that hangs heavy, blinding
fog
Waiting to happen
But still waiting, waiting, waiting

Where is our voice?
Our Keats, our Kerouac, Our Thoreau, our Miller
Who will be the voice that establishes us as a cultural entity
As we are labeled a grunge generation or Generation X
And want only to not be known as a generation

As we do not speak loudly
For fear that we may be a voice to label all the other voices
We so respect

Watching as a beautiful subculture is born and will never be given a
chance for revel
To die amongst the eighties and yuppies
In a washout of consumerism and non-action

Doing for your own and striving for independence
Only to lose the very thing we search for by not acting
To be lost in paradox and not caring

Still being and being alone

Staring blindly as we bore with life
And then fall in love with it once again
Day to day

Lying in bed early mornings and realizing that we are
And that's all we can truly believe in our mass media society
Which lies to us and everybody else day in and day out

Always stale-mating because we do not move and have no wish to win
Therefore never lose

Dancing, singing, screaming out our existence
And then settling into bed alone with our minds
Which haunt us with dreams
Doomed to disappointment, as we fall in amongst trends
When we are trying to create a way of life we enjoy living

And sitting down when the poem is over
Wondering what the people felt as you poured your soul out
Like coffee across a table
To lie naked liquid in front of the eyes of existence
And not caring because it was you
And it was truth that sped from your lips
Like an arrow to pierce your brethren

-Robert Cooksey

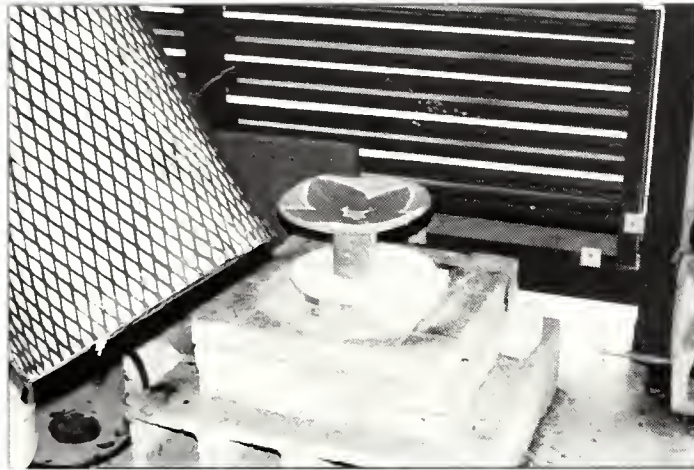


The process of making Raku ceramics originated in Korea, where delicate ceramic tea bowls were used in the religious and social tea ceremony. It is an ancient art, dating back to the 16th century. Americans in the late 1940s and early 1950s began experimenting with Raku because of the unique colors and effects that the Raku process produces. Raku uses a post-firing reduction technique that is not used in ordinary ceramics. Instead of placing the bisque-fired clay piece in a kiln, the Raku piece is taken out of the kiln while it is still red-hot and placed into a garbage can containing sawdust and leaves. The smoking materials interact with the glazes to produce a luminescent hue to the glazes applied to the piece.

Jim Lansing, art teacher at North Campus explained how Raku developed in America. "They accidentally dropped a few pieces on the ground on top of some leaves

The Art of Raku

and it made a smoking effect on the glazes, changing the colors. That is how



1

and bisque fire it; that makes the piece hard. Then the glaze is applied and we put that into the kiln for the glaze firing at a higher temperature. It is a much longer process. The Raku takes 45 minutes after glaze is applied."

Irwin Fait, a student of Lansing's has been working with Raku for ten years. Fait enjoys working with Raku because of the unusual colors that it creates. "I love the colors, you can't get these colors anywhere else. The glaze

2



3

the post-firing reduction idea started. Through experiment it has evolved into a different process altogether. In normal ceramics, you make a piece out of clay



melts at 1,250 degrees rather than at 1,800 degrees {this makes} the glaze flow easier. No two pieces are the same. It's the colors that fascinate me more than the pieces."

Porosity and humidity make Raku pieces unsuitable for everyday use, but their fragility and beauty are cherished by many. Traditionally Raku pieces were created specifically for the tea ceremony and discarded after use.

Today, Raku pieces are generally created for decorative purposes. Raku is becoming a popular form of ceramics in America and a few pieces are included in The White House Collection of American Ceramics.

4



5



6



7



Raku Pottery

Irwin Fait

Untitled 17

i've stared into the void
and made it through unscathed
i terrorized my pens
and wrote how i was made
i've been down the cold roads
and my nipples frozen
i've swam in the warm pools
and my bones had broken

but this is something else
something i've yet to do
these are stranger feelings
and all of it seems new
i've been this place before
i made your face in dreams
but now it seems too late
no time, you said, it seems

i scream
i scream
i scream
i scream

-Christian Manzella





Trapped

Cut paper on board / Amanda Ptak



Sun Saturation

Acrylic on Canvas/Robert D. Fennell



Craig

Pencil Drawing/Shirley Arce



Eleven, Twelve, Thirteen...

Black and White Photograph/Natasha Enslin



Essence

I see myself
Squalid within vague crevices
Like a dwindled lily in a censored book
Vast upon a silver horizon
Soiled like forlorn child

I feel the universe
An infinite sea
Gliding through my fingers
Along the stream of time
Lush with the fertility of history

I see my brother
An eagle in a nest of buzzards
Proud without sacrifice
Patient and enduring
While awaiting a dream

I touch mother nature
Caressing her green skin
Dancing in her pacifying breath
Unraveling the damage of me
And upholding my spirits in rich palms

I see myself
Bold as a fiery sun
Faint as a butterfly
Lingering in the oasis of time
And reveling in the fruits of tomorrow

-Brandy Sejeck



666

When I found the mark in his hairline, he swore they were nines.
 Fevered and tired, I call to him
 hoping to interrupt his argument with John Madden.
 When the frogs arrive with the beer, he finds me
 surrounded by white angels, crushed and soggy
 or folded to serve.
 Wadda ya want? You don't look so good. You gonna make dinner?
 Sure, right after my funeral.
 Scraping knuckles on the ground, he returns
 to his gridiron sanctuary shouting profanities to a deaf screen.
 Every sound is a jackhammer in my head.
 I beg for silence.
 He responds like a blind man to a semaphore.
 I steam into his haven, take out a .45
 and riddle his Budweiser bloated body,
 stomp and stomp on the bloody remains.
 I stand in front of the Hooters girls and a monster truck.
 Hey! Watcha doin'?
 Could you PLEASE be quiet?
 Sullenly retreating, I take a few more shots at his head.
 I fluff up my world, softening my martyrdom
 and drift in and out of sleep.
 Ungluing my eyes, I find him offering Nyquil
 like a plastic cup of ambrosia for the dying.
 Feeling better, Sweetie?
 Yea, some.
 Good, could you iron a shirt for work tomorrow?
 Go away!
 He tiptoes out, no sudden movements.
 Returning to holy ground,
 he defends his righteousness to Ted Koppel and Jack Daniels.
 Winding tickity tocking wakes me to my love handled Adonis with tube socks.
 Fleshy kisses and stale breath give rise to amorous attempts at apology.
 He is the Rain Man of sex.
 Hey, I love you.
 Love you, too.
 Maybe they are nines.

-Kathleen Marie Davis



Old Picture

Sitting in a box
Must have been
30 years old.
Twisted breaking and
Shattered.

The picture framed
The tall handsome man
That was my father
Chin up head high
Shoulders square like
A soldier

Wish I knew him
Prior to his departure
Leaving a wife, brother,
Sister, and son.

Never knew how
Things are now.
"Son stay in school
And stay out of trouble."
Sticking to those words
Made me the man I
Am today...

I wish he could see how
It all turned out.

-Geraint Byfield



From Old Age Born

From Old Age Born To Live Backward, ...
 From Old Age Born As A Body To Learn, From Birth To Death,
 From Old Age Born To Live Backward, To Know Mistakes Made, From Old Age Born To Live Forward, From Old Age Born To Live Backward, ...

-Rena Register

Untitled

Suddenly she realized
As a pulse of familiarity
Increased in magnitude
Until every pore of her body
Was enslaved with the knowledge
She was not alone.

She brought forth
In a spectacular moment
Of actions captured
And engraved in the heavens
By time only
Another heartbeat, another soul.

Knowledge of a language
Not yet acquired
Two souls whispered
In a tongue known
Only to them
Important only to them.

She clutched to her bosom
The essence of her life
Caring and protecting
As instinct deemed she should
And as both aged
Maturity and honesty were beacons.

Then one had to leave
The other ached
But such was their fate
Of the physical
Though heartwrenching
It was accepted.

The ethereal heart is stronger
Undefeated determined
And two souls still whisper
Never apart.
The child is not alone
Neither is the Mother.

-Sharlene Sookhoo



A Brief Pause

Writing in clouds
Of alcohol haze
I forcibly extract
Creative, funny thoughts
For my new children's book
Mr. Toad's Bubble Blast
Cease for a moment
Listen to outside
Although muffled by concrete, steel

Sounds of tough boys
Bleed through walls
Misguided children in pro-player jerseys
Sport gang-slang hand signals

Rain bullets on a cowering populace

Inside unaffected
I take a shot of Bacardi
From my dyin flask
Resign my pause
Then concentrate
On the child's play
Cluttering my screen

-Jay Lewis



Junkfood

I only tasted love
You never really fed me
You served up the emotional equivalent to:
MILK BONES
And you made me think - -
Mmm. . .This is so Delicious!
I was Pavlov's Dog
You made me forget
That it's normal to be hungry
Thanks.
That was sweet of you.

-Rhoeda Anne Beardsley



Serenity

My eyes blur as they try to see
her lying next to me
cautiously, I climb out of bed so as not to
disturb
her in her sleep

I put on a simple, woven shirt
pants to match
the coldness of the floor
penetrates my feet
I wear sandals to comfort them

I open the door and greet the morning
the trees hide the sun and cool the earth
walking through the open maze
I feel the leaves and fallen twigs crackle
beneath my steps

as I draw closer to my destination
I hear a faint whisper among the trees
like a crowd of people who speak all at
once
with a harmonious tone

deeper I go
louder the voices become
finally, I arrive at the gathering

I greet the conversationalists without bias
and observe the discussion
rocks in civil debate with the river
try to convince the water they are stronger
the water laughs as it flows over and
around

I climb on top of one such boulder
sitting at the edge of the bank
it supports me with the greatest of ease
as I watch and listen to the two parties
continue with their benevolent interaction
neither of the two raise their tone

finally I gather my thoughts and depart
I trace my path back home
she waits for me outside
a smile across her face she greets me
with a gentle kiss
and a warm hug to match

-Kristian Serrano





Cats and Dog

Ink Drawing/Dwaine Simpson



Day Guard

Pen and Drink Drawing/Jessica Gunn

Untitled

Forgive me love
for my misbroken pain
forgive this rat that
snaps our cord of
delicately bound words in
dear meant to soothe like
rose petal balm, and you
shining as the moon
instead come crashing like
hail on my crater side.

-Chandrenie Sukhu

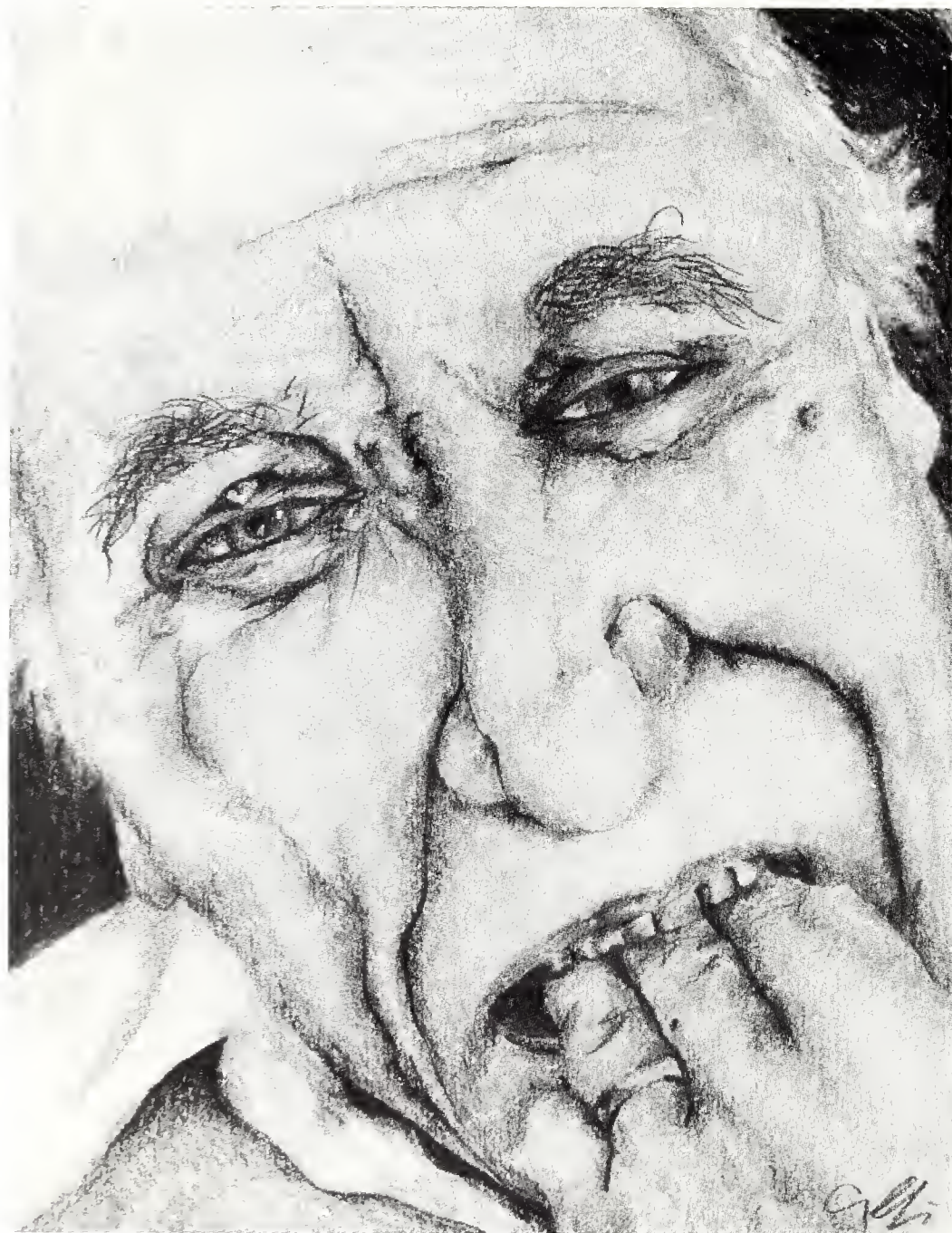


As

dress me in truth
and motivate me
to love again
as open as I once did
without fear
of losing everything
that was taken away
erase the things
sad memories bring
and blanket me
in soft ease
as gray skies do
at times like these
where there's nothing left
but what you say
and feelings so real
even time cannot change
holding me gently
as life forces me to move on
in this world of lost loves
and broken dreams
from which we escape
in the silence of sleep

-Heidi M. Negrono





You're Only As Old As You Feel

Pencil Drawing/Angelika Kallin

Picasso's Greatest Work

His skilled hands
Pierce my skin passionately
They burn right through my flesh
And touch my soul.
As the artist
Molds and sculpts
Statues of passion and ecstasy
He recreates me.
I run my fingers
Over his perfect form.
I gaze into his lust-driven eyes
And I see my own.
I put my lips on his
And I forget
The ills of the world.
I absorb myself in him.
I attempt to know every inch of him
As he endeavors to do the same to me.
He brings out the passion
Long dormant in my soul.
I look as love's afterglow
Illuminates him
And I allow the love
To seep from the
Dark depths of my heart
And rise to the surface.
I release the words,
"I love you."
The faintest breath humanly possible,
Just seconds before
I drift off
Into love-induced sleep.
Tranquility overtakes my soul,
Leaving a smile on my face
And I remain at peace,
In his arms,
Throughout the night.

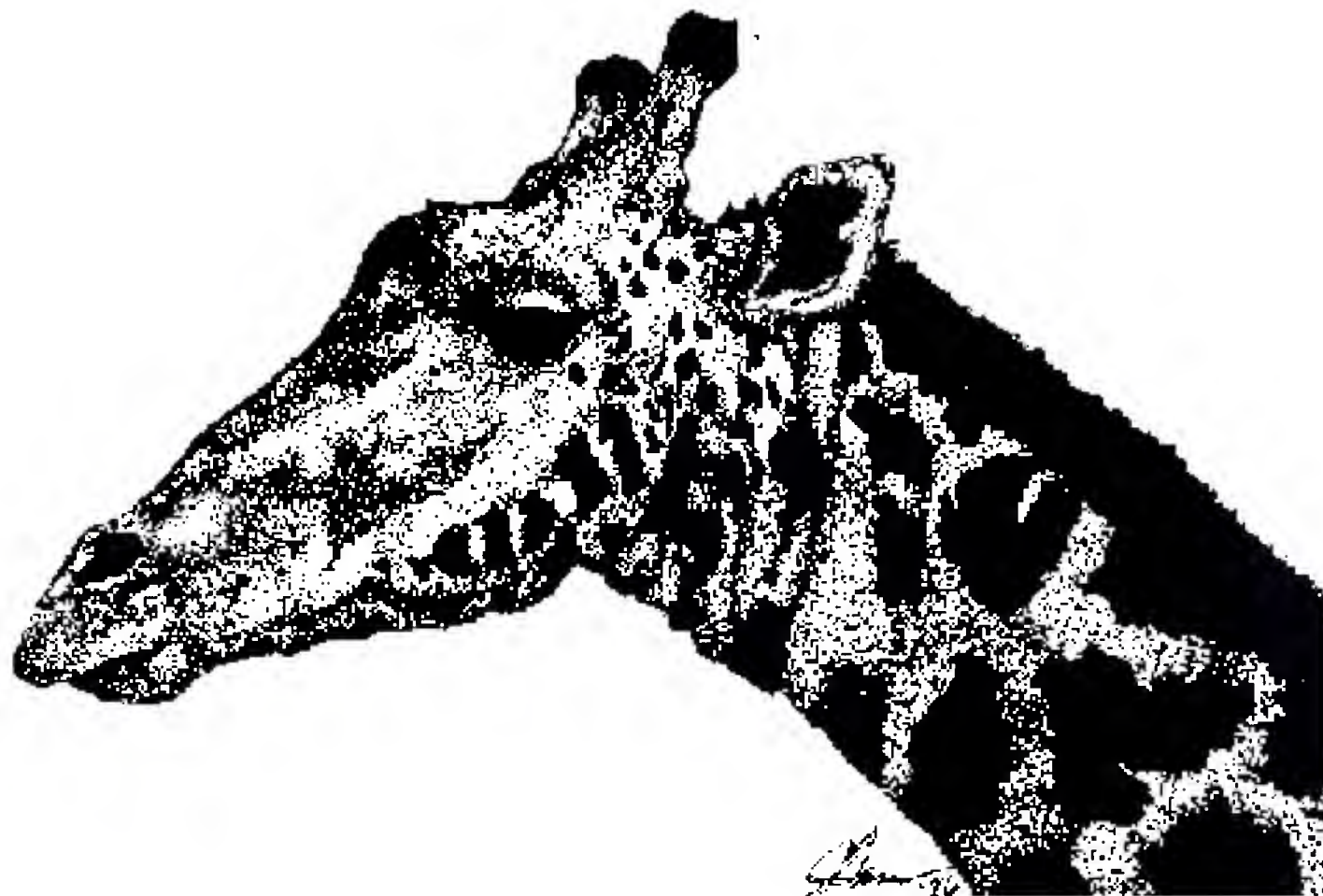
-Christie Daniels

And I'm Dying

There's a blindness in my eyes
That stops me from seeing the facts, I'm dying.
There's a deafness in my ears
That stops me from hearing the truth, I'm dying.
There's a numbness in my body
That stops me from feeling the signs, I'm dying.
There's two parts of me both fighting for control.
It seems like both sides are winning,
Making me lose my mind as well as my life.
I look in the mirror, tears come to my eyes
I don't like what I see, I'm dying.
Somewhere inside me the truth is crying out, it says:
"Help me, Help me please . . ." I'm tired, I'm lost,
I'm confused, I'm bulimic . . .
And I'm dying."

-Elizabeth Chiocca





Giraffe
Jessica Gunn

Dreaming Aloud

Kiss upon my lips
and embrace exquisite entity
steal me from my feet
to a tremendous place of solidarity

Stripped of all my pride,
integrity and self-esteem
God, can you restore my emotional well being?

Love, dignity, self-respect -
did it all go with the last man
with whom I slept?

Am I a statistic,
a number of a board?
or is it easier to call me a whore?

All of my heart and desire
I dedicated to you
yet you broke my heart
because your desire fell through.

Can I lay my money on the table,
and bet the next relationship
on another heart's drunken fable?

Wake up ... wake up.

-Christine Young



What is Next?

Life after death
Division of souls
Dividing the mind
From the body of old

Where does it go?
No one can tell
Nowhere at all?
Or straight to hell?

I think not
Not for the good
Or even those
Who knew they should

Life brings us here
And death takes us where?
I dream of a place
Without sorrow or despair

A body lay dead
Its energy breaks free
To and from places
Of unreal reality

Once you get there
Or never at all
You will then know
What answers your call

However, until then
One can only speculate
How the endless possibilities
Will unleash a new fate



Am I Still a Nigger?

By Shosharona Charlton

My skin is white
My hair is straight
My eyes are green
My mother is white
My father is black
Am I still a nigger?

Your skin is white
Your hair is brunette
Your eyes are green
Your parents are white
Am I still a nigger?

I love rap music
You love rap music
I speak Texan
You speak Texan
Am I still a nigger?

I am a scholar
You live in the ghetto
I attend an all-white school

You attend a desegregated school
Am I still a nigger?

You hate blacks
And I refuse to claim my black side
Am I still a nigger?

I only date white men
You stick to your own race
I disclaim my black side
You raise your nazi flag
Am I still a nigger?

I do not associate myself with blacks
You hate to living by them
I check white on my applications
You preach 'white' hate
I protest against racism yet disclaim my black side
Am I still a nigger?

Challenge: Find out what nigger is then answer my question.



Emergence

Chandrenie Sukhu

Mother ocean rippled under the pale morning sky. The white glow of the last stars became suddenly insignificant as a brilliant sun pushed through the horizon. The waters joyfully greeted the first golden hues to caress her glittering surface in the ritual celebration of a new day. The steady hiss of surf pulsed hypnotically as Ma-Rhianna lay, content after eighteen moons of impassioned lovemaking.

Normally she resided in an expansive state of oneness as the Great Mother Ocean, Ma-ah. In this original form, Ma-ah's consciousness encompassed the entire ocean, equally attuned to the drone of her dark, still depth as to the lively activity of the colorful fish that swam through her body. Although she experienced her many forms simultaneously, her existence as Ma-ah remained the ever present source, like waves which rise extending outwards, taking on shape and form, and experiencing a temporary identity, before merging once more into the ocean.

But then, interrupting her state of oneness, came the potent pang of desire. Its strong force curdled her being and turned the unified Ma-ah into clumps of confused emotions. Helpless in her pain of agitation, she found herself congealing into a mass of intense longing. Warped by her plight, she became Ma-Rhianna, the lusty being whose long winding currents sucked and pulled with consuming desire. In this intensity her need reached out for Karanarak, her consort since the beginning of Time, who loved in the Fiery dimension.

There in his world of phosphorus energies, Karanarak lay in deep slumber. His enormous serpentine body coiled around a brown stone mountain which jutted through a sea of scarlet lava. From the mountain's crown emanated swirls of green and blue fluorescent energies. In this dazzle of color, light and energy, Karanarak remained distinct. His imposing black form, tight with power, commanded awe. Although not easy to disturb Karanarak's dormancy, Ma-Rhianna's call pierced his suspended state instantly, bringing him fully awake. Her need became his and with this urgency,

he uncoiled his black shiny body and headed toward his Queen. Swimming a river of flaming blue energy, Karanarak forged forward, aching for the feel of cool waters.

"Ma-Rhianna!"

With this focused thought he pierced her dimension, creating an opening in the sky. The heavens crackled with electricity as blue sparks from the fiery river spilled through. Then, as suddenly as it appeared, the entrance closed, and at last he dove into her waters.

"Ah Beloved!"

His monstrous size dwarfed the whales and giant squid of the deep ocean. The intense heat emanating from his body, created a blanket of sizzling steam as his skin contacted the cool oceanic waters. The sea creatures retreated in terror. But not Ma-Rhianna. She embraced him totally. Their powers matched and escalated their passion.

They danced in unison. She wrapped him in her waves as his sinuous form dove in and throughout her great vastness. Phosphorus sparks emanated from her lover's body and trembled through her womb. Their energies mingled and from these clenched moments, where the essence of Karanarak and Ma-Rhianna fused, came the inspiration for her most perfect creations. The serpent's fiery realm overlapped on his consort's aquatic realm their dimensions rode dangerously close together until, at Ma-Rhianna's weak points, Karanarak's volatile world broke through. The ocean bed trembled as the hot expansive pressure increased under its surface. Then it gave way and hot lava flowed. Ma-Rhianna roared in her ecstasy for eighteen timeless moons.

At last, her passion spent, and her lover once more coiled around his mountain, Ma-Rhianna felt completely satisfied.

But this morning was different. A strange luminous quality permeated the atmosphere. Her curiosity increased, stirring her relaxed state and forming her into a mermaid, as green as her ocean. She climbed onto the rocky shore, with eyes searching the dawn for the source of this new feeling.

There, in the midst of the last cluster of fading stars, stood a



radiant white unicorn. As the sunlight entered his mane, there flickered the hint of countless tiny rainbow prisms. His horn shone as if woven from moonbeams, and his composure spoke of a fineness she had never known.

In contrast, Ma-Rhianna felt for the first time, the coarseness in her appearance. The seaweed tangled in her long black hair barely covered her bulging breasts. The stench of fish clung to her salt crusted skin, exposing her raw and primal origins.

Ma-Rhianna gazed at the unicorn, profoundly confused by the mixed emotions at play in her being. Wasn't she the Great Mother, containing all within herself? Could there be more than what she already was?

In the presence of this gentle being, Ma-Rhianna felt the

uselessness of her awesome powers. The curious dry warmth emanating from the unicorn's body was so clam and soothing. His huge eyes, like great dark pools of tenderness, softened her wild heart, giving birth to the sweetness of love.

Although she wanted to experience, to understand, to embody this mysterious creature, she saw with sadness, that the distance between them was greater than the ocean itself. Nevertheless, her heart was set. Realizing how much more existed, she could no more return to her ocean, her gaze was fixed towards her unicorn. With this longing, her identity separated from the great Ma-ah, and looking bravely ahead, at all the lifetimes to come, Ma-Rhianna began her journey.



Darling Names His Day

Rhoeda Anne Beardsley

Calvin Norris Darling was haunted by the shame of signing his own name. With each pen stroke he watched anxiously as the last of his three names appeared at the bottom of a document. His Mont Blanc seemed to intentionally linger over all nineteen letters as they rolled from the nib. Then Darling would use three quick, malicious jabs to dot each "I" as he surveyed the name that had robbed him of so much. Without fail, Darling, nearly 50 years old, panicked whenever his secretary walked into his office with a contract or a memo. He still felt his heart pounding in his ears and heard the uproarious laughter of his first grade class when the pretty young teacher called the roll.

"Calvin Darling...?"

The giggling, the smooching noises and the phony love notes followed him through school and into the Marines. It was while his unit was awaiting transport to Vietnam that Calvin Norris Darling began to obsess about his name. It was ironic and awful to hear Sgt. James Love call his name, but what finally pushed Darling to the edge was the overwhelming sense of loss he felt as his eye caught the endearment he knew only as a name in some of the other guys' letters from home. My dearest darling...I love you darling...I miss you darling...He was Calvin Norris Darling and nothing more. The work, his name, swirled and hummed in his brain during every waking moment for the last 28 years. He never told anyone. He never complained. He just listened.

At 4:32 on a Friday afternoon Calvin Norris Darling was still listening. For nearly half an hour he held the phone to his ear and listened to his wife yammer on about something. Be a darling and do this...Darling, I told you that...Darling! Darling! Darling! The word was vacant and so was he as he stared down at the calendar that loomed across his desktop. It was August tenth, three days before his birthday. What was she talking about now? He droned all of the appropriate responses while he put the finishing touches on a very intricate doodle drawn inside the calendar box for the tenth. It was a man, looking remarkably like himself, only with an uncharacteristic wry smile, holding a gun to his head. Darling was pleased with himself as he penned a clever play on words in the right hand margin of the calendar and used a bold black marker to draw an arrow toward his little sketch. The noise in his ear said something about being home on time, darling. It was too much. He used his free hand to reach to the back of his file drawer. He heard himself speak some mindless assurance, but this time he was listening to the sound of the clip as it snapped into place. The noise had to pick up the dry cleaning so he said, "Good-bye, darling..." and laughed a silly little laugh. Without drama or hesitation, he held the gun to his head and thought, good-bye Darling...and pulled the trigger.

Calvin Norris Darling had signed his name differently this time. It was there, next to the big arrow in the margin: Cal.N.Dar.

Life's A Motherfucker

Egan Saint-Michael

"Come over here boy an' run me in circles."

"Hell nah!" the scrawny younster replied without looking up, his black eyes resolutely focused on the book between his legs.

"Yuh better get your ass over here boy, 'fo I comes over there an' gets yuh!"

"Aw Shit! the boy cursed as he approached the old man.

"What yuh say boy? Yuh better keep yo' sass to yo'self. I'm fittin' to put a lickin' to yuh as it is."

"Why I gotta do this 'fo?! Why come I gotta do it?!"

"Shut up an' run me in circles, goddammit!"

The thin negro boy grabbed the handles of the wheelchair, and with the greatest of resentment proceeded to slowly push the old man in a circle. His thick lips bore more than the usual pout.

"Faster, boy, faster," the old man scolded and encouraged all at once. The resentful child barely responded.

"Faster I said!"

Soon they were going round and round the center of the room, the knob-kneed boy running through a string of cuss words in his head, the old man gleefully laughing as he leaned into the arc of the turn. He laughed so loudly one might have thought he was back in Smokey's, sharing a drink and a Joke with the boys. But such was not the case. He was now simply an old fool with too much time on his withered and vein-laced hands. He laughed until his belly hurt, 'till he started to cough so much that his frail body shook with each one. Dizziness was overcoming him, and he yelled for the boy to stop.

The boy pretended not to hear and kept the pace up with energy that he didn't know he had left, finding its way to his scrawny legs.

"I said stop, boy!"

The boy brought the wooden chair with the big wooden wheels to a somewhat reluctant stop; he was puffing hard, and

a petulant smile curled his lips. The old man coughed a few more times, straightened himself in his chair, then reached behind himself to try to get a hold of the boy who was still back there, secretly grinning to himself. He got a hold of a thin arm and pulled the boy to the side of the chair.

"Get me my paper, boy, an' some water."

The boy returned a minute later to find the old man fast asleep, and threw the paper at his slipper-covered feet, in more of an underhand motion rather than an overhand one, as the latter seemed maybe just a little bit too disrespectful. He went back to his book still sitting on the floor; there were a few dusty wheel tracks across it, and he flipped the page with vehemence and indignation. He took a sip of the water and placed the

glass beside him, and went back to reading (as best he could), his brow unfurrowed, his lips back to normal. His black eyes gleamed as he read.

"Mama, can I go out this afta-noon?"

"What fo?"

"To play stickball wit' Charlie an'... "

"Boy, yuh know yuh can't go nowhere in the afta-noon. Yuh have to stay wit' yo' gran'faddah. I done tol' yuh that a hundred time already."

"Why I gotta, mama? Why can't I go nowhere?"

"Pass me the potatoes, boy, an' stop both'rin' me wit' foolishness."

"Mama he wierd! He crazy! He make me ...

The boy's ear rang as his mother's heavy hand caught him in the face.

"Damn, mama!" he said without thinking, and he quickly regretted his imprudence as one hand grabbed for him while the other shot for an all too menacing shoe. He spun to escape, but there seemed nowhere to run. While he contemplated the alacrity with which those crabs that his mother had tried to cook a few weeks back had managed to find a place in the

"Shut up an' run me in circles, goddammit!"



kitchen to hide, (they had to be cooked alive she had said, something which the crabs no doubt found rather disagreeable as a number of them climbed out of the big black pot and headed for cover); a kitchen which now seemed so incredibly bereft of even one relatively safe refuge, the shoe landed on the small of his back. Whack! ("Goddammit!" the word rang through his mind, as his body proved all too receptive to pain, to hurting). Whack! ("Goddammit!") Whack! ("Goddammit!") Whack! ("Goddammit!")

The old man coughed a couple of times, but he still seemed to be asleep. The skinny boy fought the urge to look up. If the old man was in fact awake he wouldn't want to look at him. Eye contact was like an invitation for the moronic game to begin, although, as the boy knew, and much to his displeasure, a lack of eye contact did not ensure that the old man would not bother him with his usual request.

Everyday, the same shit: "Run me in circles." Sure the old man probably needed some amusement, but why did it have to include the skinny little eight year old who wanted to do nothing but go outside and play? The boy couldn't remember the last time he'd been down to the creek to swim, or fish, or just throw stones at anything that moved from the covey of the bushes. What the hell kind of life was this? Being in a wheelchair all the time could not have been much fun either, but hell, that wasn't his problem after all.

"Do what yo' gran'faddah tell yuh, boy, an' don't let me hear another word 'bout it" his mom had said. What did she know? While she was at work he was the one stuck with the old man, the one who had to sit near him and make sure he was okay and that he had whatever he wanted or needed. All he ever wanted, all he ever needed it seemed, was to be "run in circles" in his damned wheelchair. As much as the boy hated the wheelchair he had to admit that it was quite beautiful to look at. It was wooden through and through; a curious quality in and of itself. It was made of a gold-colored wood that had a nice shine to it; the wattled sides were quite intricate and had a pretty design woven in. The wheels were also made of the golden wood, and were every bit as elaborate as the rest of the chair;

with the hubs having a design on them, and the spokes having a pleasing rounded quality to them. It was undoubtedly a thing of beauty.

The damned thing had cost a fortune, however. The boy had been angling for a bicycle for some time now, but his mother had been her usual dismissive self: "Boy, yuh want me to buy yuh a bicycle an' I ain't even have a car or nothin' fo' myself? If anybody gonna get a bicycle it damn sure enough gonna be me." And that was the end of that. Such being the case the boy saw no reason to do anything his mother wanted him to. The prospect of finding himself on the wrong end of one of his mother's shoes was more than enough to get him to comply with any requests however.

The way the boy saw it, it was a case of his grandfather getting the damned chair instead of him getting his bicycle. And after all what did it matter if the old man had the chair or not? He never went anywhere really, nor did he do anything but just sit up there in his room and sleep (when he wasn't being run in circles, anyway). Everyday he had to climb up to his grandfather's room to go sit with him, to keep an eye on him, to push that damned wheelchair round and round the room. He resented every step that had come behind that wheelchair, every revolution of the wheel that had included his efforts.

"Hey, boy, get over here." The senile demon was awake. The boy kept his head down, his eyes focused, unblinking. "Come over here boy an' run me in circles." The boy's head remained lowered, and he did not reply.

"Is yuh deaf boy? Goddammit! Get over here an' run me in circles!" The boy sprang to his feet and kicked the book ahead of him as he started to walk towards his grandfather. His grandfather didn't seem to notice.

"Be a good boy an' run me 'roun' the room befo' I tell yuh mother yuh been defyin' me?"

The boy's nostrils flared more widely than they ever had, and his thin brows convened in the middle of his forehead. His lips blossomed into a lively pout. As he seized the handles of the



wheelchair he silently cursed his grandfather for being an invalid, his mother for being a bitch, and himself for being so impotent. The force with which he moved the chair reflected no enthusiasm, the snail-like pace eliciting the usual protestations from the old man.

"Faster, boy, faster!"

The boy quickened his pace, then quickened it some more, and soon they were flying around the room like a couple of idiots.

"Ah ha haaah!" the old man laughed, his laughs punctuated by wheezes and coughs. They were already going much too fast, but the old man was still yelling.

"Faster, goddammit, faster!" And he laughed some more. His grandfather, his mother, the bicycle, the wheelchair, all his thoughts were disconcertingly centered on these things. Every fucking spare penny had gone to the damned wheelchair, and the boy just didn't know why. It made no sense to him, and he didn't understand it at all; but he knew that it inspired nothing in him but hate and loathing.

The wheelchair teetered tenuously on the inside wheel; the rigors of the old man's game proving a bit too demanding. For such a use it was certainly never intended, and it seemed ready to relay this fact in no uncertain terms. The boy could feel the chair tipping, but he ignored it. Instead of slowing down he gave the glossy golden chair a final shove, his actions sending the old man and his golden prize crashing to the floor. Both slid along on their collective side as the boy looked ahead at the stairs, the ones which he climbed so ruefully everyday, lying just ahead. The boy's big black eyes widened as the chair came to a stop just short of the staircase. The old man remained still.

The staircase represented the only real exit from the room, and the boy was now possessed with an urgent desire to flee. He tried to tell himself that he was not afraid of the potential consequences of his actions, but he was. He was not willing to leap from one of the windows, as he was two stories up. There

was no other way out but by his prostrate grandfather and the chair. He stood there, frozen, and then suddenly started to run. He envisioned his grandfather's time-gnarled fingers reaching up to grab him as he leapt over him, but the old man lay still as the boy cleared him and the chair. The boy misjudged the distance to the staircase a bit, and almost ended up going down the stairs on his head. He slid down the first few steps, but managed to grab a hold of the railing and thereby saved himself further harm.

The old man was still just laying there, and the boy thought he might have killed him. As the boy stood staring at the figure on the floor he worried that all that had just happened would hold the most dire consequences for him.

Then the old man raised his head, blood spilling from his mouth and pooling onto the floor. There was a ridiculous and altogether inappropriate grin on his face, and his eyes seemed to be searching for nothing in particular. The boy turned to run, and just then the old man muttered something, three garbled words which the boy did not quite comprehend.

As the boy flung the door open downstairs he was greeted by a flood of sunlight, and he could barely see. That room upstairs was so dark and gloomy, and so oppressively quiet, except for those two or three minutes a day when the old man was being run in circles, and his laughter could be heard echoing through the house, much like it was now. The laughter seemed to follow the boy as he ran, and he knew that if he had that fucking bicycle right then he might stand a better chance of escaping that laughter, so terrible and mocking as it was.



Marge

Pamela M. Hurley

Not one to not be noticed (but only passively not to be noticed, never actively not to be noticed), Marge bought the calendar because of the picture; a dark brooding picture by a master of an almost forgotten era, the era of the darkly shadowed suggestive pictures, the era of the hidden, repressed (yet precisely because it was repressed) compressed, ready-to-explode-at-a-moment's notice light. But none of this was readily apparent to Marge. She hid the calendar in a paper bag, refusing to let the world's polluting eyes see it until she was sure she had secured for it a safe port. This was none other than her desk, her dark brown desk of office wood where she sat, day after day, frantic, distracted, frustrated, almost unable to see the numbers of the checks that she was required to see to maintain her job (and oh then no job what would she do would he beat her he beat her sister black and blue sometimes). The calendar's dark shadowy pictures rested her. She slipped softly into the base of the black mountains disappearing entirely. She sat still.

“Marge, what the hell's the matter with you? Where the hell are your goddamned checks?” His presence, violent, intrusive, raped her world. She jumped in her seat, repeating over and over, the slightest of edges in her voice, “Right away, I'm coming, right away, I'll do it now, right now, right away, right away.” Her pile of checks, now hopelessly disorganized, Marge began her discordant symphony of meaningless gestures, which only served to enrich her level of frustration, desperation even, to the point beyond all human rationality, to the point that was so refined, so intense, it shivered like light in her brain. And then her eye caught the point of light in the picture, She followed it out of the cloud, down through the black mountains, to the lush glen below.

No one in the office ever noticed that Marge never flipped the pages of her calendar. It was always July and always time to rest.



Meterman

Daniel Jay

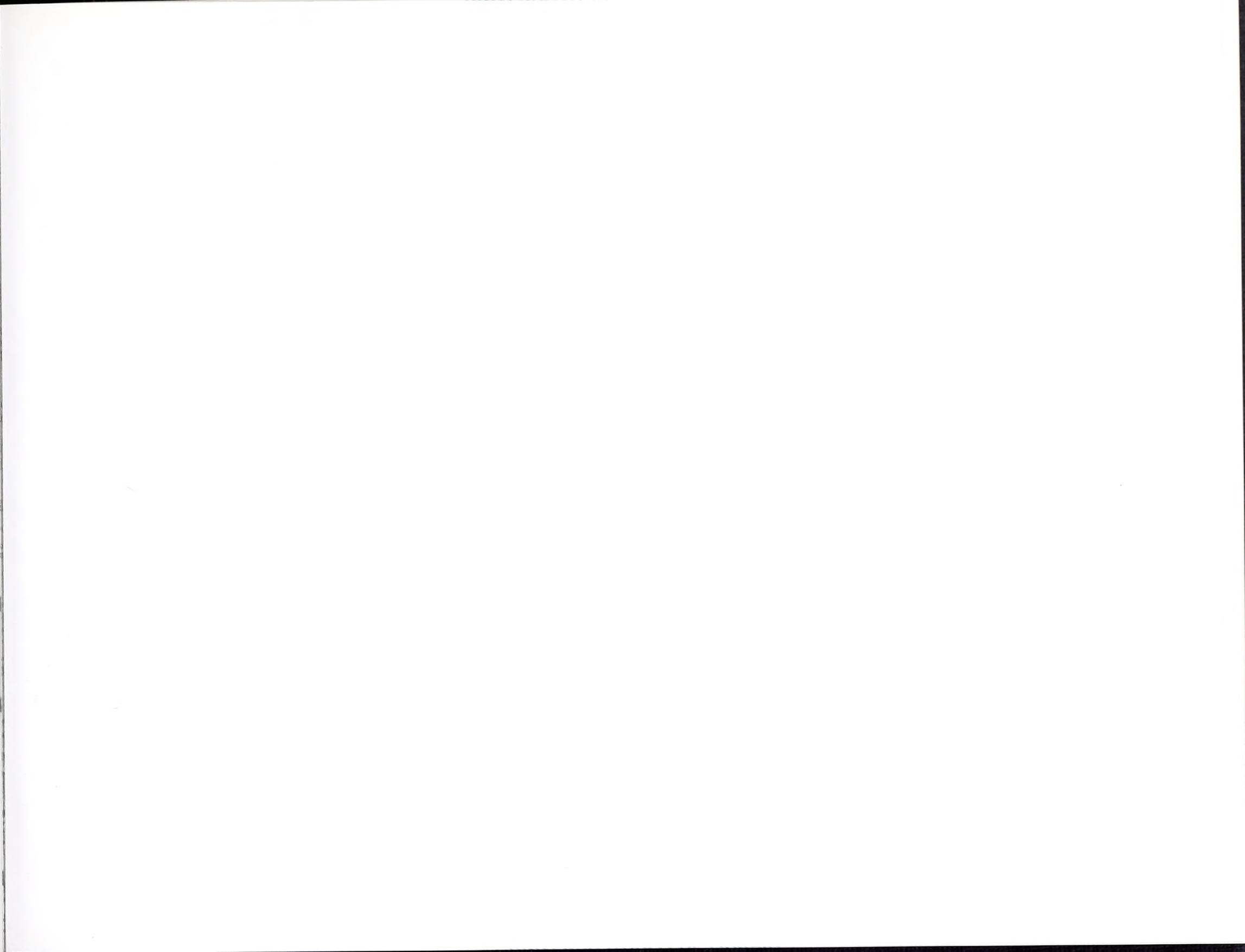
A guy goes to a beach parking lot in casual dress, you know: white T-shirt, boxers covered by some dark-green, khaki colored, pleated pants, with cuffs hemmed at the bottom of each leg, long sleeve button down shirt, some cheap socks, all topped off with a pair of expensive shades acquired by a lucky find at a mall parking lot on a rainy day, and a brand new pair of Doc Marten's.

He carries with him... a pocket full of quarters. The fat, bitchy, unhappy with her own life so she wants to take it out on every unsuspecting, vulnerable, citizen just looking for a happy little spot to park their happy little car on a happy little, sunny little, joyous little day, metermaid cunt, stops to give someone a ticket..... but he's there. He's on a mission... and he's there!

He carries out the expected of any crusader encountered with the dangerous events involved in a normal day of the life he leads. He places the quarter in the evil parking meter slot with an uncanny ability known by few, and with charisma displayed by only the most noble of men.

She tries to give the ticket anyway, after offering an evil eye of confusion. The look returned by our hero is one of extreme confidence and power, implanting second thoughts into the petty mind of the nasty wench, as she covers away towards her parking patrol pig mobile, and on to the next unlikely victim's vehicle..... but he's there.....





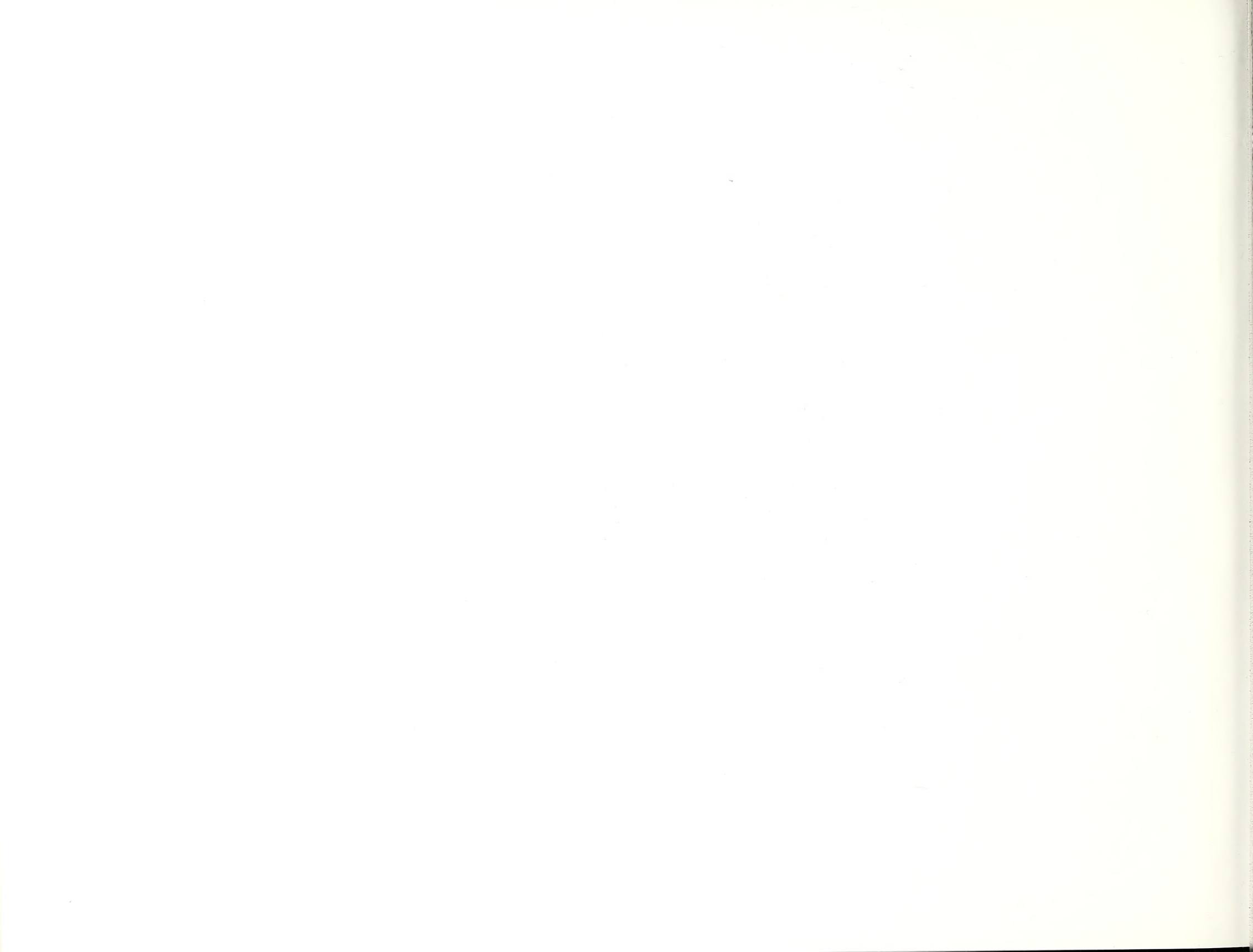


P'AN KU

THE LITERARY ARTS MAGAZINE OF
BROWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Cover Art: Arnulfo Corpus *Padre* Acrylic on canvas



Captive Multi Media by Ravindejit Singh

TOO...MUCH.....WORK.....NO.....SLEEP.....MAKES...ME
.....CAUTIOUS of the name tag that I keep on my chest
a name for the company's purpose only
No time to be lonely when you have no time for anyone else
Name tags waiting on the shelf for the next unfortunate soul
who see a need to be placed on the payroll
Tolls to be weighed-Bills to be paid
FOR WHOM THE BILL FOLDS in this wallet
Try and stall it but the deadlines won't be delayed any
longer
Headlines say the economy is getting stronger
Worth is judged in wealth
Wealth is a judge of health, comfort and status
The system has had us where it wants us too long
Procedures in place to confront us with lies
Alibies prove where I was last week
Hours of life listed on a check Multiplied by a wage
that society says we should be paid

SPEAK NOW OR FOREVER HOLD YOUR PIECE
of the pie that you have been cut
and if that piece is enough Then
SHUT UP and eat it and always
be full SHUT UP and eat it and always be
FOOLED!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Steve Buxton



Off With His Head B&W Photo by Megan Leschak

An Epitaph for the Night

A virgin Star
illuminating the effervescent Night
rendezvous with the Moon
dances with constellations

Pulsing nebula
This virgin Star
immaculate conception, pure incandescence
rendezvous with the Moon

Black velvety Night
pulsing nebula
like a brilliant fire in Heaven
immaculate conception, pure incandescence

But boiling beneath the Sea's
black velvety Night
the Sun emerges, sizzles
like a brilliant fire in the Heaven

Spotlight rays burn the Earth
from beneath the boiling Sea
the Moon hides in a sun-lined coffin
the Sun emerges, sizzles

The Sun is smirking with delight
spotlight rays burn the Earth
the Night dies gracefully
the Moon hides in a sun-lined coffin

An epitaph for the Night
the Sun is smirking with delight
For Day has raped another
virgin star

Alyssa Yankwitt



What could the future hold? Pencil drawing by Tamara LaRene'

Jarred Artichoke Love

by Pamela M. Hurley

Dahlia knew that something was wrong when one day on a cleaning spree she threw away her wedding gown. Of course, she still lived with her husband, pretending everything was okay, but, of course, it wasn't. So Dahlia looked for ways to lay blame; to make evident the stench. But the full flavor of the stench stubbornly denied exposure. It was coated in oblique fragrances with names like, "Oh, I really didn't think you would be hungry tonight," (when dinner was non-existent); or "I thought you wanted to buy your own underwear," (when shopping had been non-existent); or, better yet, just SILENCE, subtitled, "Just let him mention that my usual servile fawning is lacking; just let me see that I'm punishing him." But, of course, none of the scents lasted very long. The foul odor of human dispassion grew ever more noticeable, and it was in such a fetid atmosphere as this that Dahlia served the artichokes.

The artichokes: Livid, slimy creatures that they were to the unpracticed gourmet, Dahlia, nonetheless, was drawn to their color, their texture, their taste. She set the table carefully, choosing the brightness of a yellow tablecloth. It

was the perfect color to intensify the yellowness of the artichokes, making them almost golden as their liquidy leaves glistened in the light of a late afternoon sun pouring in through the kitchen windows. Carefully, very carefully, Dahlia had chosen the tableware: Seas of bright daffodils danced on a sky-blue background. Particularly, very particularly, Dahlia had dressed. Her blouse was golden like the sun's light, and she wore her citrine jewelry. Layer of gold lay upon layer of gold as the moment of the sublime approached. Light-heartedly, very light-heartedly, she called her husband into dinner. He sat stone-like, stupid at his end of the table where the light could not reach. Dahlia sat near the sun, near the jewel-like artichokes. Tenderly, very tenderly, her fingers clutched the first artichoke. She closed her eyes and felt the soft pillowness of another's lips. Moving the artichoke to her lips, she tasted another's saltiness. Lips to lips they danced slowly in the bar of twenty years ago. Now she could no longer see or hear her husband. Nor did she want to. It was then that she realized that the stench was gone.



Gelatin Silver Print by Mary Spinelli

Firefly

I am but a firefly whose inner beauty glows
Dancing through a summer night of flight without repose

But in the natural course of time my flame will often flicker
Leaving me in nothingness my beating heart grows quicker

And all the inner light I shone now fades in shades of the unknown
As night with constant loving awaits surrender to spark aware

That sunrise may ease outer strife
but inner rays are a chosen life

Pegi Richardson

Mexican in D Penance

standing patient at the busstop
smiling frailty of a flower
venerable grace leaning posted
the bus comes once an hour
she doesn't speak but from her eyes
clutching her purse in this new order
not understanding where her world went
her nurse is probably south of the border
can't really see the line in between
no one is left to care for her now
deserted everyone ever too close
her quartzite heart has softened somehow
standing patient at the busstop
with the frailty of a flower
venerable grace falling forward
the bus never came for her that hour
the service was nice, albeit the attendance
but it was paid by a nurse, in Cancun, as a penance

Christian Manzella

.....
Writes Of Spring Winner - Poetry
North Campus

Sad Flower, Thou Hath Wilted

by J.J. Perry

Sad flower, thou hath wilted
and bent in towards the ground.

The air is stale. We are all
Puffy of it, dying culture baking
In the tropic sun.

Cross the highway, asphalt salamander
winding fraying edges of golden coasts,
seething graveyard of unfortunate
possums, coons, and sailors.
Epitaphs in spray painted concrete jungle tombs,
Abandoned there, a van
a garbage bag, a child.

Florida is bloated.
It is swollen, lazy blistering daughter
of greater greater histories.
The mare scrapes her forefront across
sawgrass desert. The fountain is a mirage,
a tikki bar by the pool where the elderly
bake unwittingly like geriatric raisins,
fields of brown and gray-
Beware especially so of these gators!
a wrinkle in time saves wine;
the pool is empty and everyone here
wades in the shallow end.

De Leon was another German tourist
That never found his way home,
Scalped.
For cigarettes, bingo, and all possible
outcomes. A leather purse, a map.
A mangrove tree weeps for its legends.
I hear the ocean cry. An Egret pecks for dinner
on a stone.

Sad flower, thou hath wilted,
No longer pollinated by pirates,
who drink your riches down like rum-runners
From coconut shells and while
your fields are plundered,
While your children are expelled
While majestic white panthers diminish their platitudes
In tragic favor of the mouse, hoary ruler
of your middle-earth,
While the flamingos stand on one leg
And dot the landscape like giant cocktail shrimp,
While the ones that do remember you
Drink unto your name, like all the other ghosts
That inhabited those candy Keys to
The treasures of your heart. Broken sailors
spit blarney, full of oyster teeth, galleons,
and galls. Minstrels hide in swamplands,roasting
spitted bass and singing songs.

.....

This, my sad-eyed lady of the swamplands,
this is the glossiola, the swell of your chest
You, so fading yellow
and crackling in the sun
Like so much yellow parchment that bears your name.

Do not let your histories settle like
The sun, coral dust manatees
hidden away in cool starfish seas.

Do not hide your vanities under vast
neon-blankets, and stripmalls that sing
inefficient tributes to your fruits.

Let not the lizards hide the flushing skin
of plumed and pulsing peninsula
Bird of paradise ascending
Let not the tapestries or your past get trampled
By the great diaspora, that cursed hurricane of
foulness, blemishing your countenance
and soiling your past like they have your waters.
Let no dreams or histories be purchased,
only to be held in scrutiny
and a tiny hand-scrawled eulogy spoken
amongst the few remaining herons
whispering to the orange groves in a soft Brooklyn accent.



Sunflowers Pen & Ink by Deborah L. Mesa

FISH STORIES AND OTHER LIES

by Christopher Morris

Pat Harrigan handed a live, twitching shrimp to his nine year old nephew.

"Are you watching this, Robby?"

Robby looked at the bait as if were something from the nether reaches of the universe and said, "You bet."

"This is how you hook a shrimp without killing it."

Pat brought the hook in and out of the top of his shrimp's shell, and held the example out to be admired.

"I don't think I can do that. It's still alive, and I dropped mine."

Pat looked down just in time to watch the lucky escapee flip itself over the seawall and into the Hillsborough Inlet to freedom. The current caused by the outgoing tide swept the shrimp into the darkening shadows under the concrete and steel drawbridge. Floating by a barnacle encrusted piling, it became caught momentarily in the swirling eddies near the bridge support. A feeding snook quickly sucked it under.

"Sorry," Robby said.

"That's all right. Take this one, and I'll rig another one for myself. They're cheap, and we have more than we can use anyway."

As the boy cast his bait out into the inlet, a shape detached itself from the shadows under the bridge and started toward them. The newcomer held an old fiberglass pole, its rusty open faced spinning reel secured with duct tape. Long hair fell from beneath his dirty baseball cap as he tipped it and began speaking.

"Got any extra shrimp?"

"No," Pat answered. "Go away."

"But, Uncle Pat, you just said that we did."

"Damn it. All right, take these ones."

Pat reached into the bait bucket, grabbed three dying floaters off the top, and handed them to the stranger.

"Now move on. We've got this spot already."

"Don't worry about it. I'm fishing under the other side of the bridge."

He nodded to Robby and said, "Thanks, kid, that was real nice."

He shuffled down the dark tunnel formed by the overpass bridge, cradling the expiring shrimp in both hands. Pat rigged his bait and cast out into the current. He then sat on the seawall, letting his legs hang out over the water. Robby stood next to him shifting his weight from one foot

to the other.

"Do you have to go to the bathroom?"

"Nope, I just want to catch a snook. When do we catch snook, Uncle Pat?"

"Soon, I hope."

"That man didn't have any shoelaces."

"He's poor, Robby. He's probably fishing for dinner."

"It's late for dinner. It's dark already."

"When you're poor, sometimes dinner is whenever you have food."

"Is he going to eat the shrimp?"

"I don't think so, but you never know with homeless people."

"Why didn't we use your boat? I like being on the boat."

"It's better for snook if we fish from under the bridge."

"Can we fish at the other end?"

"No, Robby, the fish will be at this end. That man is down there anyway."

"He smelled really bad."

"Well, we're probably sitting in his living room and fishing in his bathroom."

"You mean he lives here, under the bridge . . . like a troll?"

Pat turned and pointed up into the darkness where the bridge and the road met and said, "Yeah, probably right up there."

"Does he pee in here?"

"More than likely."

"Cool!"

"You think so?"

A loud splash from the other end of the bridge caused both of their heads to turn in that direction.

"I'll be damned. Sounds like he got into a big one!"

Robby dropped his pole and began running down the walkway into the darkness toward the sound.

Pat grabbed the pole, reeled in the line, and started after him yelling.

"ROBERT RYAN HARRIGAN, GET BACK HERE!"

When he got closer, he could see Robby standing next to the homeless man giving him advice on how to land the fish.

"Don't reel him in so fast. My uncle says you got to let them get tired first."

“Your uncle’s smart, kid,” he grunted. “But this reel won’t last through a fight, so I’m going to horse him in right now.”

With the rod bent almost double and reeling like a madman, he brought the fish to shore. He reached into the water and grabbed the fish, hooking a thumb under its jaw, and lifted it out of the water. He then handed his pole to Robby.

“Hold this for a minute, O.K.?”

It was a beautiful snook. It weighed at least thirty pounds. Silver, with a black line half an inch wide down both sides from the split of its tail to just behind its eyes. A fish that most fisherman would be proud to catch and, if you had an extra five or six hundred dollars, to mount.

The homeless man’s face split into a grin that threatened to connect behind his ears, until the flashlight illuminated it.

“What do we have here?” said a voice from behind the light. “Could it be a snook? I just bet it is.”

The light played along the length of the fish and a man in a green Florida Fish and Game Department uniform let out a long, low whistle.

“Boy, it’s a nice one too. Now, make me happy, and tell me that you have a current Florida salt water fishing licence with a snook stamp.”

The homeless man looked at Robby, then at the boy’s uncle and said, “Don’t need one.”

The game warden smiled as he asked, “And why, sir, would you say that?”

The homeless man smiled back and said, “Too young.”

“Come on, you’re definitely over sixteen.”

“Yes, sir, but he isn’t,” he said handing the fish to Robby.

Robby’s mouth opened and shut like a hungry grouper. He looked from the fish, to the old fishing pole that he still held, then to his uncle.

“You should’ve seen it,” Pat said. “He hooked it at that end down there and it dragged him all the way over here. If this guy hadn’t been here it would’ve pulled him right in.”

“That’s right officer. If I wasn’t here to grab him, we could’ve chased him to Bimini.” The homeless man sucked in his stomach, puffed out his chest and continued. “I’m a hero!”

“Yeah, you’re a hero? That’s pretty incredible.”

The homeless man stood even taller and replied, “That’s right. Pretty damn incredible.”

The game warden shook his head and turned to leave.

“What a load of crap! I hope the whole night isn’t going to be like this.” He said as he disappeared back into the darkness.

Robby stood between the two adults holding the fish in one hand and the beat up rod in the other. He looked at the homeless man and asked, “Why don’t you come down to the other end and fish with us? We have lots of shrimp left, live ones too.”

The homeless man looked at Pat, whose eyes narrowed slightly.

“I don’t think so. I have to go and cook dinner now. Maybe you can come back sometime and help me fish again, O.K.?”

“O.K., that’d be great, wouldn’t it, Uncle Pat?”

Pat looked at his nephew and gave him the adult’s answer to all uncomfortable questions, “We’ll see.”

“That’s right, we’ll see,” the homeless man said. “In the mean time, can I have my fish back? I’m hungry.”

Robby handed over the snook and the fishing pole.

The homeless man said “Thanks,” then walked away from the water and vanished up under the bridge.

Pat took Robby by the shoulder and turned him back toward their end of the bridge.

“Come on, Robby, let’s go see if we can catch one of those for ourselves.”

“Uncle Pat, why did you lie to the policeman?”

“He wasn’t a policeman, Robby. He was a game warden.”

“But, you still lied.”

“Robby, don’t tell your mother I told you this. Sometimes you have to lie. Sometimes it’s the only honorable thing to do.”

“But, lying is wrong. Right?”

“Right, but, that wasn’t lying. That was telling a fish story. It doesn’t count.”

“It doesn’t?”

“Not when it’s about fishing or how someone looks or ...well, check with me about the other times, O.K.?”

“O.K., but I don’t get it.”

“That’s all right, very few people ever do.”

Writes of Spring Winner - Non-Fiction

View Not Included

by Steve Kever

On Sundays the public bus becomes the vehicle of choice for scenic tours by the homeless. On these quiet, lonely days you can see them sitting at the windows silently staring out as the city rolls by. City scenes become a series of photographs ingrained by the cameras in their mind.

I join this experience on a Sunday when I go to do some needed research at the Main Library. A twenty minute trip becomes an hour and a half trek as I now remember: if you don't have a schedule and you get caught between buses you will wait forever for the next one.

After completing my research I hustle back to the bus station. Catching what I think is my bus, I head the wrong way. Just as the situation dawns on me, the bus I should have caught passes us, going the other way. Irritated but resigned, I settle back to become another silent face in the window on this bleak, gray Sunday.

The tour begins. I sit and watch the endless mural of life and the city unroll. As the images flow by, my stationary reflection in the window stares back at me. It occurs to me that it is sometimes difficult to tell between the two—which one is real?

With each stop a cast of characters alternately get on and off the bus. A curvaceous, dark-skinned lady gets on wearing a red halter containing firm mounds of mothers rest. Beautiful lady brightens a lonely day: where are you going? Two lovers snuggle in the back. Down the aisle a covey of teenagers shout at each other. You would think they were

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down the block, rather than sitting across from each other.

As evening approaches, we ride through the neighborhoods. Rich and poor, tailored lawns and rundown shacks: it don't make no difference the color of your skin, poor is poor. Yards of overgrown weeds double as used car lots. For every car or truck that runs, two are dilapidated and rusted parts only. Red halter departs to the rolling eyes of every male on the bus.

Everywhere, convenience stores have replaced yesterday's candy stores. Teenagers who bike, skateboard, or walk cluster at the corner of these stores-- usually at the phone box where they call the girls. Here, too, the business of the young and the night is conducted. Bikes and cars circle the block. From time to time, various members of the cluster peel off, are gone, or are seen conversing with unseen faces in open vehicle windows. In the rites of passage for the young, the games are different and dangerous. The rules are few, and all boundaries are challenged.

Everywhere there are torn up, construction-zone streets. Even on a slow day traffic is delayed. From huge power cranes portable generator packs hang—carrots just out of reach of would-be sticky fingers.

Coming to the beach, the world changes. But even here, at the end of the day, it is quiet. Lazy, lapping waves give a rippled effect to an endless ocean. Diehard beachgoers populate short stretches of sand. Lightly clad bodies run about. String bikinis outline tan, watermelon butts.

It is here at the beach that the Native American Indian belief that: no one owns the Earth, takes on new meaning when we come to the towering condos that have eaten up large sections of the sand: concrete and steel tech toys,

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monoliths of today's greed. Many display signs, hawking their wares, ludicrously proclaiming: "View Included." However, there is no view for those others who cannot afford these square, wallboard cubicles. Facades with fancy names and lovely plants in artful arrangements do not make up for the selling of the seashore.

My stop is next; the tour is over. Stepping off the bus, I watch it depart in a mushroom cloud of diesel fumes. The sun is setting on "another day in paradise" over the crazy-quilt of mom and pop motels. For working girls, it is time to ply their trade. Marveling at contradictions, I turn and head for my cubicle: View Not Included.



Flower Pen & Ink by Deborah L. Mesa

South Florida Tunes In

by Michael Snelten

Since the birth of radio in the early 1900's, Americans have been treated to wonderful sounds that are invisibly transmitted through the airwaves. The radio informs and sings to us, like music to our ears. In South Florida, the charged airwaves are filled with a constant buzz. One may hear the announcer's voice boom, "Don't touch that dial!" There are almost seventyfive stations (AM and FM combined), with the balance tilting slightly toward FM. In fact, because there are so many stations and a large population to support them, *Radio Guide* ranked South Florida number eleven in the country. Whether it is rock, urban, adult contemporary, jazz, classical, country, foreign language, or even talk radio, the dial is painted with a wide spectrum of colorful choices.

When it comes to some real rock and roll, Zeta 94 (WZTA-FM) supplies the bang. Radio personalities provide music, brief news bits, and caustic humor for the morning drive. Zeta plays the current "chart toppers" and some of the older songs, for the aging rockers. For alternative rock, WKPFM 88.5 spins a wary mix of thrashing tunes. Interestingly, the station is managed by students, who pick music that is anything but glum, at Piper High School in western Broward County. Their operating schedule is primarily during the daylight hours. Then there is the old favorite of WSHE-FM 103.5. Though it has gone through much transformation recently, it still carries a tune. Stations like this have become a tradition. Contrasting with rock, there is the urban sound of the city streets.

Power 96 (WPOW-FM 96.5) beats with a pulsating rhythm that is the heart of dance music. With an exuberant

Writes of Spring Winner - Non-Fiction

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youthful sound, it's no wonder that it is a prime choice for teens as the Arbitron ratings can testify. Though Power 96 began merely a decade ago, its appeal keeps it at the top. WHQT-FM 105.1 hits the mark when it comes to rhythm and blues. Hot 105, as it is known, spins love songs. As a Sunday morning treat, they give you "Sunday Morning Joy," which is hours of heavenly and soulful gospel music. For a rapping and unique African-American beat, WEDR-FM 99.1 booms over the airwaves. Enough to make any sound system shake, this station pumps up the volume with Rap, Jam, and Soul. WEDR offers a passionate beat to enliven anyone's adrenaline. For those listeners who want a more tepid sensation, there are other choices to chill by.

Adult contemporary station, WRMF-FM 97.9, supplies easier listening to the ears. This Palm Beach County station emits friendly, gentle, and relaxing melodies, which won't rile the nerves. Also, WRMF creatively uses contests at regular intervals to attract a loyal audience. For the really laid-back types, there is WLYF-FM 101.5. Sorry folks, this one is for sleepers and waiting rooms. The station may be on the dial, but it's a wonder that it has a pulse. When one is up to relaxing, and not sleeping, Love 94 (WLVE-FM 93.9) is a hearty choice. Jazzy notes waft from the speakers, and they tranquilize the listener like a cool breeze on a hot, steamy South Florida day. Love 94 has made quite a niche for itself by striking a chord with the local audience, smoothing any drive time, and offering a relief to tension like musical medication.

Classical music has a long history that goes back a few hundred years, making them the first "golden oldies."

On WTMI-FM 93.1, the great works of such notable composers like Mozart, Brahms, Ravel, and Tchaikovsky are replayed with immortal splendor. WTMI truly serenades South Florida's classical music aficionados with memorable operas and stirring symphonies. For another choice, listener-supported WXEL-FM 90.7 also contributes to the local scene. Though its music may be delightful, it is a little distracting. WXEL is a public-owned station which injects in-depth news and information, administered via the National Public Radio (NPR), in major doses. So, the music is more of a filler for the news.

For something with a more rural kick, 99.9 WKIS-FM fills up the boots and cranks out the country music. From cowboy ballads to outlaw blues, KISS croons all day long. Every weekend they even have 6 1/2 hours of uninterrupted music on both Saturday and Sunday nights, calling it "99 at 9."

When it comes to internationally cultured regions, South Florida certainly receives its exposure to more than just the hot summer sun. Foreign languages add a rich flavor to the cultural mix, with Spanish being the main ingredient. Latin stations comprise a sizable portion of channels, spicing up the local scene, and satisfying the taste of a large immigrant population. Stations such as WXDJ-FM 95.7 and WRMA-Fm 106.7 deliver Salsa, Merengue, and romantic love songs, adding a passionate touch. Another Caribbean culture that found their way to our shores are the Haitians. WAVS-AM 1170 offers lively chatter and a spirited beat in Creole. The feeling of the tropical island home is just a flip-of-the-dial away, keeping them in touch with their roots. It is like a contact point on

the dial. One station that plays a potpourri of different languages throughout the week is WSFR-AM 1580. Here can be heard the zesty groove of Italian, the oompah sound in German, and the Brazilian flair in Portuguese, just to name a few. It is a microcosm of global expressions squeezed into one station. Every culture likes to hear their native tongue, and as a result, there has been a proliferation of the foreign language stations.

Not to be forgotten, talk radio has strongly verbalized its presence. Morning, noon, and night "talkmeisters" yap about their pet subjects or the party line. Some favorite talk stations are WJNO-AM 1230 and WBZT-AM 1290. Subjects could range anywhere from health to finances to self-improvement to sports. Talk shows have become so popular, that many personalities have now received national acclaim. For talk and news around the clock, WINZ-AM 940 gives the latest news flashes every ten minutes. They provide a convenient way to absorb the news while on the run. They also provide traffic reports every ten minutes, so alternate plans can be made at a moment's notice. VVINZ is reliable for "the short of it." Talk radio provides useful information for every listener, and it is just one of many choices.

Although there were only a smattering of radio stations mentioned, it was obvious that South Florida has such wonderful options. There is no need for boredom on the airwaves as there is a perfect match for everyone. Radio already has the ability of being transmitted over the internet, and one day the traveler will be able to access that favorite local station from a remote location - at whim! Whatever may happen, radio will never be boring as South Florida tunes in.

Comforting

Fire

A vital flame

Scorching the soul

Animated Sheen

Shimmering splendor

Reflection of self

Blue Blood

White Collar?

Blue Collar

Tainted Blood?

Incessant endeavor, multitudes of Pain *AND* Pleasure

Countless questions and limitless replies.

Brilliant voyage

Tranquility

White

Jeff Grudin

Rejection

I remember the first time you saw me.
You stood in awe, staring at my beauty,
Exclaiming I was perfect, not a single flaw.
I was the treasure at the end of your quest.
Your conquering spirit consumed me.

You gently wrapped your arms around me
As you helped me onto your car.
Oh, and that proud expression of yours
When you displayed me to your family.
They seemed even more thrilled than you.

You had chosen me, over hundreds of others
For the natural beauty I possessed.
So why did you dress me up in baubles and frills,
Hiding all the things you had so admired?
I hated those bright colors and shiny glitter.

Time has passed and I am dying.
I droop more each day. As I fade away,
You begin to ignore me, say I am disgusting.
You can't wait until I am gone.
Don't blame me—you caused this.

Now a new year has begun and you're cleaning house.
I am unceremoniously tossed out in the cold.
Here I lie, broken and crushed like a pile of trash,
My alpine perfume mingled with decay.
No trace of what I was before you possessed me.

I was severed from my roots too young,
Prostituted for the pleasure of others.
Now I am cast upon the side of the road,
Neglected, unwanted. All that remains of my two lives
Are falling needles and some faded tinsel.

Pamela J. Steele



Mystic Waters by Pamela D'Aguiar

Perspectives

I have walked a million miles
In a million pairs of shoes,
And seen with countless eyes
An endless point of view:

I am the farmer and the seed,
Both the flower and the weed;
I am the victim and the offender,
Both the truth and the pretender;
Always the giver, sometimes the taker;
Often the mender, sometimes the breaker.

From what I've seen, what I know:
In a lifetime,
We all must walk a million miles
In a million pairs of shoes;
Some we wear only briefly,
Others 'till they're ragged through.

With every mile that is walked
Another corner is turned;
With every corner a lesson is taught
And character is earned.

Who are you?

Jennifer Bartley

I would have lit a cigarette
but don't smoke and I was high anyway
soaring
on the tea of bad feeling
of boredom
of eternal solitude
this room closed in
oppressive
once and for all a prison more so even than this
 body which holds my breath chained
too small for me
I pulled a hat over my eyes
and entered the night
awash cool, by breeze and thought
I wandered, absentmindedly at first,
a mad poet rambling, crying at shadows
somehow rather guided then wandered
I ended up high under the open night
perched atop an old parking garage alone.
(What is it about my life that leads me
 and the leaves high and alone?)
It all rushes in when there are no trees,
no buildings, no friends
or annoying flapping voices
distracting the soul from itself
like a thousand waves

and I in the center
it all hit me at once
under the stars infinite and bright
I stood on my car as though
that few feet more toward heaven
would take me so much
closer to peace and opened my arms
Christ like accepting to be accepted.
I breathed deeply of the stuff of night
saw the pinholes above me
felt at last peace
everything was there still
the night has and
will never change anything
but still it helps
in some small way
a placebo of a mother's kiss,
which perhaps,
is all the night has ever been anyway.

Wil Medearis

Consumption

Walking down the street I see consumption
Little kids munching on ice cream cones
freezing up their brains
Old people bitching about the price of tea in China
And sipping still the same

I stand wishing the diner was still open
I lick my lips
Hunger eats my brain like a bag of chips

The sign reads closed.....
I comprehend and I fend for my self
I don't need nobody else to feed me
My mind has freed me from the fear of empty plates

Take your free lunch and stick it
my meal ticket is expired
And I've aspired to the bottom of a dumpster and the bottom
of a can
Sitting at the bottom with a bottle in my hand
I'm not sitting at the store begging for some more
I'm in the back looking through the trash
The dirty side of cash is on the dark side of the room
where all the voices boom of getting out
wait for the letting out the lunch time bell to ring
I see that you bring your lunch every day
unwrap your meal crushed in tinfoil
A boiled egg and piece of bread
You decided not to eat it and trashed it all instead
I pick it up lick it up like a dog
I'm not less proud but more fed

Steve Buxton

DESTIERRO

DESTIERRO

¿Adonde vas?

Tu, brotito
los bolsillos agigantando
las manos manejando
la boca trabajando.

Esperas

exaltado y temeroso
el descubrimiento
de tu tesoro.

Que haces?

Tu, extremito mio
saludandome
ensayandome
rodeandome

Allegas

tu espíritu
tòcame
con beso de tenura.

Por què tiembblas?

Tu, razòn de mi vida
recordando
pesando
rogando.

Todos

queremos
ser amados
encubrièndonos
con empeno.

(Cargado de los dulces, robados de la cocina de su casa,
un niño es hallado por un pariente que lo quiere profundamente.)

Margaret Miller

La Nostalgie

Seul dans un pays inconnu
Là il y a beaucoup d'humiliation
Moi, je suis solitaire
Même si je suis dans les pieds de mon père
Je me considère seul
La cause c'est parce que je ne suis pas dans mon pays, HAITI
La vie ici est très dure
Cette vie peut m'envoyer sous la terre ou au tombeau
Je suis ici, Je vis ici
Mais je n'appartiens pas ici
Je veux tourner dans mon pays natal
Où la joie inonde
Ici, c'est le contraire qui règne
Toutes ces choses font venir des larmes aux yeux
Je me rappelle les arbres fruitiers
Reconnaisables par leur douce odeur
En ètè, je vais à la campagne
Pour prendre de bon air
J'ai manqué un doux vent sous les arbres
Et j'ai oublié tes parfums de fleurs
Je ne veux plus rester emprisonné dans ce país lointain
Où se trouve la discrimination
Vivre loin de toi, HAITI c'est une ruine
Retourner dans tes bras, ce sera le bonheur

Dukens Pierre

A Soldier's View

by Heriberto Cane

A bell tolls in the distance, a dull, solitary, repetitious toll. Only the wind, rolling on the field, can be heard nearby. There is no sunlight. The clouds up above and the smoke nearby hide any hints of the earth ever having a sun. The smell of smoke and of fires that recently have died, choke the once clean air. Another sound is heard in the distance. Thunder looms upon the horizon. The rains shall soon quench this dead, gray, battlefield.

Once, mighty men with mighty machines set foot upon this field, now only wreckage and death can be seen. I was once one of these men, proud, full of life! Then the enemy appeared with their men and machines. There was a moment of hesitation, then there was fighting. They fought with the same determination as we have fought them. I witnessed the enemy with my own eyes, and now my body lies broken upon this dead battlefield. There is my enemy, once determined, now dead. It's funny, I hated this man enough to kill him and now I see my enemy is actually as human as I am. I would have never known this, I was too blind to see. That was an individual, an individual that was part of a whole that we were at war with. To kill his kind. An individual with dreams and hopes, aspirations, love and loss, and a family. Now I realize his kind was my kind, but with subtle differences. These were the differences that killed him and others like him.

The rain has started, it feels cool to the body. The pain has long ago turned numbed, but still I feel the cool. I'm getting sleepy, it has been a very long day. I miss my wife and my two children. I miss her joy and her beauty. And my children, how much they must have grown. What have my children done that I have not seen or will ever see?

I remember the day of my departure. I remember the tears shed by my family, how their crying ripped my heart to pieces, but what I truly remember is that look of sadness within my wife's eyes. I could never understand the meaning held within her eyes. It was as if she knew of what was to happen. I merely looked on, then turned away to what is now going to be forever. "Bye, bye daddy", was the last I ever heard of my family. This war started and our dreams were put on hold until the war ended and I would return, or so I thought. "Don't worry I'll be back soon", was the last time I spoke to them. My wife nodded once, slowly, with tears in her eyes, but always with that look of certain sadness. Now I lie on this dead battlefield.

Looks like the rain is starting to let up. The rain and the wind washed and blew the smoke away. I'm really starting to get tired, fighting sure takes a lot out of you. I wish it wasn't getting cold. Yes, I'm tired and cold. Sleep is a very welcoming friend right about now. What's that I hear? My tired mind must be playing tricks on me. No, wait. A soft choir? Yes, soothing voices, helps me sleep. Getting dark, helps me sleep. Tell them I'm coming home, tell them I'll be there soon. Any minute now, getting sleepy. The sun is out now, how beautiful. I'm not fighting anymore. Going home, going home....

And with this man's dying breath, the sun broke through the barrier of clouds as its rays received the angels and the soul of the soldier arising to the boundaries of heaven.

Ode to a Telephone Pole

I mourn the tree
 you once were
That now stands
so naked
beside the road,

Shorn of your beauty,
 the little leaves
That once sang
 in the breezes overhead.

Now your outstretched limbs
 bear long gray wires
Instead of the robin's nests
 woven in spring.

Nevertheless, I know you
 for what you are,
Your silhouette so stark
 against the pale blue sky.

You are majestic still,
 your presence
Towering over the
 city streets.

You bequeath us
 light and energy now,
Your beauty no less diminished
 by your new role.

You are still
 a tree to me,
Oh proud, erect,
 magnificent
 telephone pole.

Edward T. Kohberger

South Campus Writing Contest Winners - Poetry

1st Place

Black Woman

What's wrong with you Black Man?
Why do you talk like that Black Man?
Why do you walk like that Black Man?
THIS AIN'T YOUR WORLD!!!!!!
Black Man.
It's not your World.
MONEY DON'T MAKE IT YOURS
CARS DON'T MAKE IT YOURS
HOUSES DON'T MAKE IT YOURS
Black Man.
So don't talk to me like that Black Man.
DON'T WALK BY ME LIKE THAT. . . MAN.
Jus' cuz you bought the crown
Don't make you the king.
Black Man.
WHAT'S WRONG BLACK MAN?
STOP STRUTTIN'.
YOU CHANGED YOUR WALK AND YOUR TALK.
You forgot the rules from Sunday School Black Man.
THIS AIN'T NO MAN'S WORLD.
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU BLACK MAN?

Berthange Rene'

2nd Place

Sitting in a cafe at sunset in Paris

A light breeze with the sunset
blows over the tepid cafe mocha.
Sitting at a table across from mine,
your fingers are still cluttered
with silver rings.
Your hands hold a familiar grace.
Still strong, rough. Cold,
maybe this time from the breeze.
Out of the corner of my eye
I can see a canvas in front of you.
Barely making out
your portrait of a woman.
In the city of lovers,
I whisper:
"Is that a portrait of me?"
Suddenly your hands stop.
Eyes darting up,
you look around.
Your gaze finally settles on me.
Staring dead into my eyes
you ask:
"Have we met before?"

Alyssa Yankwitt

3rd Place

Ice-cream

I am crazy
about dripping
sweet licking
sweetness that
sticks to my teeth
and lips and mind

I am addicted to
anticipation
of the drip
stickyness of
licking
sweetness of
the flavor
I never tire of

When the palate
has gone
I know
the sticky sweetness
when I see it
I know the cue
from the back
of my mind
my throat knows

I can consume
sweetness
that will linger
the licking is
all I feel and
all I love

The torture of
the dripping
The need of
the licking
I crave to have more
dripping licking
I need to have more
licking dripping
I want to have more. . .
Ice-cream

Rena Register



B&W Exterior Panorama by Donna Keagy



South Campus Writing Contest Winner - Fiction

Herbert, Harriet, and the Lawn of Jake Rosewood

by Adrian Mesa

On the day Herbert and Harriet Johnson pulled up to the Rosewood house on Rubino Street in Payton, Florida, their eyes feasted on the gorgeous, elegant poses of sculpted birds: some in flight, suspended by gossamer strings, others on the porch railing or resting in the grass and even upside-down and twisted into—death poses.

The porch was flocked with people, cameras flashed; the death poses of the birds were the glimpse through the eyes of this purported, young, “dark genius,” the “Rubino Street Artist” that Herbert and Harriet had wanted to see so badly.

Herbert snorted. “Let’s go, Harriet.”

She piped a painful affirmative, smiled garishly, then fixed her hair and rearranged her oversized sunglasses four times before stepping out of the car delicately like a fragile swan.

Herbert took her by her tiny wrist and stomped up the driveway to the porch. A small wooden box with magic-marker writing on it, hung on two links in the chain fence. “Ticket Money,” it read. Herbert dropped thirty dollars into the slot and opened the gate.

No one standing there could watch the birds without tremors of delight or shudders of fear; they stood perplexed between wholly loving it, as the display was characterized under “Art” and hating it with utter revulsion. Most couldn’t decide, and maybe that’s why The Rubino Artist had survived for so long.

At the front door was a young man with short red hair and the buds of a beard. He had strange, forceful green eyes, that seemed to remain perfectly still in their sockets while you knew...you just knew he was looking at everyone around him. A smile poked out beneath his tight cheeks.

“May I have your attention?” he said very smoothly and Harriet giggled. Herbert snorted. “You’ve seen the front yard sculptures, but that was merely the hors d’oeuvre. Now we are

going to see what I’ve constructed for the backyard, the main course of my work. Since these sculptures might be unsettling, they are in the back and not the front. For reasons widely known and understood by myself and others, the local community has prevented me from creating or recreating my sculptures in the front yard...” He paused, allowing a soft giggle to pass into the air. “They fear it will devalue the surrounding property. Follow me, please, and do not deviate through the house. Your admission only allows you visage to my sculptures, not my private things. Thank you very much for your understanding and cooperation.” For a young man in his twenties, he carried himself very professionally, Harriet thought, thinking this kind of behavior comes only through good raising by a good mother.

He creaked the door open, and the tour group entered like frightened little lambs. He grinned to each of them, gesturing them inside. When everyone filled the living room, he closed the door behind him and walked through the group to the front, leading them through the kitchen and out into the backyard.

As he opened the door, Herbert was rapt in a queer fascination as if his eyes were hungry taste buds, soaking up all he could consume. But Harriet’s stomach started to turn.

“My work,” he said mysteriously, letting the door open by itself slowly. “The Rosewood Lawn.”

The lawn fell away before them, statues winding up from the grass, living extensions of the lawn. Here the grass was darker, and the sculptures were of...people, yes...people in the most godawful positions. One’s grass-stuffed mouth was locked in a scream, hands clutching at his own throat. Another was a woman, holding aloft a baby whose pained face bore small buds of grass that seemed to streak the baby’s face like...like sculpted tears. The woman tried to hold her in the air, or throw her, as if the ground was burning—and the mother’s self-immolating sacrifice was keeping the child from the flames. There was a small boy on his knees, without an arm, praying, head bowed; an old woman with a broken back, was bending over backwards so her fingers brushed her heels. If the grass was any darker, Herbert thought, the bodies would be burned corpses or bodies buried in lava and ash, only to be sickly rediscovered by Jake Rosewood.

"What's your inspiration?" someone asked.

He stepped to the front of the group. "My family," he joked. "They like to complain a lot, so here's the result." Some people chuckled. "No, really. It's a kind of therapy," he explained gently, "to work out your problems in a creative way. Now, you may peruse the lawn and view each sculpture as you like."

The group began to fan out, like dead leaves blown from a tree by the autumnal wind. All of them were afraid to reach out and touch the ostensibly alive contortions. Harriet picked her way carefully across the lawn towards the old woman. Herbert drew very close to the strangling man and made to poke a finger through the grass, but a voice whispered, "I wouldn't do that."

Jake was hovering over Herbert's shoulder, smiling. He raised his voice so everyone could hear. "These sculptures are held together by a thin, nickel-wound wire that molds and keeps the sculpture into the shape I've formed. Fooling with the wire could cause something to come undone or warp the sculpture ever so slightly, and I would have to recreate the entire piece, so please refrain from touching the actual pieces."

Harriet came hobbling over, her hand on her stomach. "I'm sorry," she whined unnecessarily, "but the one of the old woman has made me not feel very well. Do you have a bathroom?"

"Of course!" he chimed, as if this was the response to his work he wanted. "Through the kitchen, make a left, down the hall, third door on the left. White room."

"Thank you," she grabbed his hand and shook it. "Very pretty work," she coughed, nearly choking on vomit as she went in the house.

Yes, pretty work. Very pretty work. Harriet closed the bathroom door. The hallway was dark, and quiet; she vaguely heard the chattering outside. She didn't want to go back: the contortions were too terrible, the one of the old woman with the broken, twisted back kept flashing and flapping back and forth in her mind. But she didn't want to wait for Herbert in the car either—the heat would get to her. "This isn't right," she told herself, "no child with such good manners, obviously raised by a good mother, could have made those things." She looked down the hallway, and there was a door at the end with a sign that said: DO NOT ENTER.

She could not resist. "I'm going to get to the bottom of

this," she insisted.

She stalked to the door, opened it easily and stumbled into a messy room littered with clothes and empty pizza boxes, CD cases, papers, plastic bags, shavings of grass, a large, unmade bed with two lamps on either end, and a sliding glass door onto the backyard that was now covered in blue curtains. There were no lights turned on; the room throbbed with a faint blue hue from the curtains.

"Jake's room," she said softly, "I can't believe this," she shook her head in disbelief, "I just can't believe it. What kind of monster raised this child? To teach him manners but not how to keep a room? And to let him, actually permit him, to make those things?...in their own yard? My children would have never done this!" She fussed, and then she did what came natural—she started to clean. She hefted a pile of clothes in her two arms and tossed them on the bed. She folded two pairs of jeans, a red-stained apron, a blue turtleneck sweater, three T-shirts, and tucked four pairs of socks. As she did so, the room changed. She was home, home with the big windows that overlooked the worn tree house that was always empty and unplayed in. A sigh for children unborn, longing looks out the windows, and as she finished folding, Herbert mentioned a cross-country trip she didn't want to go on, but he convinced her that it was for the best. She supposed so, what with being unable to bear...to put voices in the treehouse, to put faces in the trees...she supposed it was good, good to get away for a while. But cleaning up Jake's room, she wanted to go home—but even there, where the voices of young children singing and playing were haunted tunes sung secretly in the empty rooms of the house, Harriet would be forever unhappy.

She sighed and went for another bundle of clothes. Peering up from under the clothes, was a small black, leather-bound book. Worn pages, markers of some sort stuck out of all ends like a million different fingers to a million different stories or stars. She knelt, slid it from under a large sweatshirt, studied it in her hands, then sat down on the bed and opened the book gently, almost reverently in the strangely-lit room.

It was a journal with dated entries from June to August, each signed "Jake Rosewood," or "J.R." A bright yellow highlighter had marked certain passages in the seemingly extensive entries; Harriet understood these to be the important ones, reading those,

as if Jake wanted those to be read.

June 1:

arrived home today from school for summer break to find the house empty and in odd disarray...the lawn, unkempt, has grown, miraculously to some six feet in height(app.)...phone's dead, and...I don't know, something weird about it all. Too weird—found family journal, but the entries are too confusing...I can't make out exactly what happened...gone, waiting a few days...did something unexpected: ripped out family journal and burned them to ashes.

June 4th:

I haven't left the house since the first...no sign of family, but...impression within me starting to build...of something not altogether peaceful...the grass, the grass, God though it sounds insane...I think it is alive...will wait a few more days. Odd...block seems empty, no mailman for three days, no Wallace cats yeowling...nothing...nothing...nothing..

June 6:

potatoes...made run for car...grass has covered it bumper to bumper! Every move covered...I think it is trying to contact me by the way it sways...plenty of water though...locked doors...locked windows...starting to feel things slip...

Her eyes skipped down a few entries.

June 24th:

two weeks no food...today grass fucked me he fucked me good...shut of water...only matter of time before i go before i go...the dweem the dweem that keeps i awake at night of voices and beauty and whisspers and ssssnakes and troooth out there....i'm scared...what will i find...unholyholyholylord the deal has been made...tonight under moon i walk walk i out into the shade, slipping slipslip to the gwass the gwass the awful, awful gwass...deth or foood deth or foood....i be food i be food for its mouth like birdies like birdies.

Harriet stirred, unsettled. The dead broken birds took flight, flapping around in her head, screeching away as she imagined something terrible and unholy snapping their bodies. She wanted to run away after her mind altered Rosewood's calm, earlier voice to this frantic...but something held her gaze: it was the jagged, even more insane writing of later that night.

Later, June 42th

i went into the gwass to see what i kuld find and if i meet the devil there i know he in muh mind...it opened...it opened fer me and...oh god oh god!...what!...!...FOUND!

Harriet looked up; she thought she saw a face peering in under the curtains. She slammed with the book with an airy slap, which she regretted, then quietly tucked it back beneath the sweatshirt. She stood and stopped. She heard Jake's voice down the hall.

"Thank you all for coming! Herbert? Your wife?"

"Probably in the car, waiting. Your sculptures scared her."

"True, very true. Well, thank you for coming."

"Thank you," Herbert responded, "you're very talented."

"Not all of my talent, I'm afraid." He chuckled.

The door closed, and Harriet heard the "click" as the deadbolt slid closed on the front door. She choked in fear. She tried the sliding glass doors, but they were locked; she didn't want to go out there anyway. There was a darkened walk-in closet, and she ducked inside.

Footsteps came down the hallway, and Jake opened the door. He stopped, staring at the neatly folded clothes on his bed. The clothes! Harriet stifled a gasp. Her heart pounded up into her throat, and she was afraid if she opened her mouth to breathe, Jake would hear the dreadful thumping. Then Jake suddenly switched his gaze from the clothes to the closet. She saw his eyes through the slats in the closet like an animal's in the deep, dark forest.

It was black in the closet, and Harriet tried to stop her heavy, anxious breathing, so he wouldn't hear the faintest trill of air, but she smelled something rotten in there that made her want to cough.

Jake grabbed the handle and flung the door open. Harriet

Johnson screamed.

"Your husband is waiting for you outside." His soft voice crept under her skin. He stepped aside, letting her crawl out.

Nearly crying, she fumbled out of the closet and made for the door. "I'm sorry," Her frightened, shaky voice was barely heard, because she kept her head low to avoid his odd, green eyes.

"Harriet," he said quietly; she jumped at the sound of her name. She scraped up enough courage to look at him. He reached a thin hand inside the closet and pulled on a chord. A bright white light flooded the closet from a singular, suspended light bulb that swung like a pendulum. And where the light fell were three bodies, dangling. Their watery eyes bore into her.

She wailed, long and hard, feeling her legs give out.

Jake walked towards the bed, unfolded the red-stained apron, draping it around his thin body. Harriet saw the blood now, something she didn't notice before. It was fresh and bright and still soaking into the fabric. As Jake came nearer, he bent down, pushing aside a bundle of papers, digging out a large pair of rusted shears. "It's time." He said softly. He opened and shut the shears with a ear-piercing snap. A soft humming filled the air like a swarm of angry wasps converging on her.

Her eyes rolled, and she felt the room floating away. She fell onto the clothes and piles of paper...and fainted. It was too late—it was all too late—a shadow deep and black with gleaming green eyes and hair like hellfire descended, and Harriet was no more.

The grass jerked violently; a sickly snap drifted to the two men.

"Stop," Jake commanded, and the fluid body of the grass that surrounded Harriet froze like hot wax suddenly cooled. "There. Just what you wanted: hanged by her own tongue."

Herbert was speechless.

In the far corner was Harriet, caught in mid-air, floating, her body a shell of dark grass. Her grass tongue wrapped around her neck, and stalks of grass finished the noose that was rising up into the air.

Harriet's neck was twisted and broken. Her arms and legs were splayed out in all directions, as is she was too dazed to know what was happening to her or to fight back.

The statue hovered above ground for an eyeblink, then thin

stalks of grass swarmed up to join and wrap around Harriet's feet. Tiny movements throughout the body were tiny buds filling in the gaps, parts of Harriet that showed: her glasses, tufts of hair, patches of clothing.

Then it was done.

The newest addition to the lawn of Jake Rosewood.

Herbert extended his hand; Jake shook it.

"Good work as always, Jake."

"Thank you, I try." Jake eyed Harriet. "How did you know your wife would go in the room?"

"A hunch; you live with a woman for over forty years, and you know what she's apt to do." Herbert paused to pull out his wallet; he leafed through the yellow receipts that made it thick.

"All right if I mail you a money order?"

"Fine with me." said Jake impassively.

"Great," Herbert said, lighting up a cigar and turning to leave. "Oh! Jake, do me a favor since you've been so helpful," A wisp of white smoke curled up around Herbert's face, "tell your father, from me, he raised a good kid, huh?"

"Will do, Herb."

"I'm sure he's proud."

"I know he is." And Herbert left, shutting the door behind him.

Jake Rosewood stood on his back porch, admiring his "work." The grass moaned and invisible winds made waves in the grassy sea. He walked, shears in hand, to trim the sculptures of the yard. He came to the strangling man and snipped some excess weeds off the nose.

He drew close to it. "You hear that, Dad? You proud of me? Sure you are." He fancied the man might have moved, but he knew it didn't. "You raised a damn good kid." He went off singing a little tune as he trimmed, one he'd dreamed up. He didn't know when he dreamed it up, and then again maybe somebody taught it to him a long time ago and he'd just forgotten it. "Yes, that must be it." He sang, "I went into the grass to see what I could find, and if I meet the Devil there I know he's in my mind."

South Campus Writing Contest Winner - Essay

Is The Monster Dead? A Marxist Critique of Mary Shelly's Frankenstein

by Donna-May Lemessy

The novel Frankenstein is Mary Shelly's attempt to capture the ethos of an "Age" in one of the most dynamic periods in Europe's history. Although her work evokes feelings of horror and despair while the reader experiences a kind of visceral inertia, it is indeed more than just a horror story, as portrayed by popular contemporary media. To interpret Frankenstein otherwise is, in my opinion, to misconstrue Shelly's intent and to be remiss on an important dimension of contemporary literary critique: analyzing literary works of this genre out of its socio-historical context. Yes, a literal interpretation of this novel makes interesting - albeit horrifying - reading; nevertheless, when viewed against the sociological backdrop in which it was written, the romantic views/convictions Shelly held and the subtle nuances of its complex metaphors, it is transformed from just a story into one of the most important socio-literary treatises of its time.

Europe's tumultuous social experiments between the 18th and 19th century are recounted in the key themes of Frankenstein. From the boulevards of the Champs Elysee to the assemblage at Hyde Park, Europe was mired in the cries of liberty, equality and fraternity. Specifically, these intervening years were characterized by a ubiquitous enterprise of—to use a Frankensteinian metaphor—"social engineering." Accordingly, the industrial Revolution which ushered a period of unprecedented progress and development was accompanied by a sense of disbelief, despair, and disenchantment in a Europe which had enjoyed a period of increased stability beginning with the events at Westphalia up until the Bastille. As Warren Montag noted,

.....

*there is everywhere a sense of monstrous forces
unwittingly conjured up in order
to serve the project of progress and the
Enlightenment but which have ultimately
served to call that very project into question.*

The subsequent failure of these experiments and the social upheaval that ensued are reflected in the main themes of Shelly's novel. In fact, the similarity between these events and the manner in which the plot unfolds leaves little doubt about its symbolism. Take the case of the protagonist, for example; Dr. Victor Frankenstein yearned, in a relatively scientific way, to create a new species, one that would bless him as creator, and proceeded to assemble a creature of gigantic proportion "in his workshop of filthy creation."

The significance of this plot is twofold. First, the industrial age was characterized by an emerging paradigm-science. Following on the heels of the Enlightenment, it was perceived as the panacea to the problems of the religious dogmatism that marred the dark age and the relatively short lived Renaissance. Second, the increasingly differentiated class structure was threatening to end entrenched patterns of existing social arrangements, namely - the established monarchies vis-à-vis the emerging proletariat. For the first time, serfs, plebeians, commoners, and simple peasants were transformed en masse into the urban industrial working class. Given Shelly's disposition, it is quite unlikely that these events would have-escaped her interest or her pen. If anything, she may have been giving warning of the impending crisis of the "body" politic of Europe itself.

.....

The antagonist, just as the venerated "monster" was created by Frankenstein's disillusionment on one hand and society's crass rejection of it on the other; so too, the movement of the working class was created by two juxtaposing forces - on the one hand, the forces of progress trying to draw it into a new dispensation, while on the other an anachronistic regime trying to keep the old system of values in place. Of "giant proportions" and comprised of many pieces joined together is an apt anatomical description of Frankenstein's creature; yet, as a metaphor, it symbolizes the way the sweltering working classes of Europe "joined together" comprising many parts (former serfs, peasants, urban poor); each as the lifeless body parts the creature comprised of, but united as a mobilized mass with the potential strength and capacity to upset the balance of power. The Frankenstein "monster" personified.

The analogy here is fairly straightforward. If the novel is read as a work of the Romantic Era (a period remembered for its emotional overtones), and the politics of the day is duly noted, the symbolic link between the proletariat and the monster becomes unmistakable. Paradoxically, Shelly's exclusion of the actual creation process may be a bit puzzling. Why did she purposely make no mention of the science behind the experiment? I am inclined to think that apart from a lengthy discourse being superfluous, it would have detracted from the point Shelly was trying to make: the birth of the monster, like the dynamics of change had no antecedent. Another plausible explanation is that to detail the actual creation process would have been attributing a lot of importance to science and

scientific procedures. Accordingly, Shelly's concept of using science to create life, a feat that has always been attributed only to a supreme power, may be more of an indictment against science, for trying to usurp God. It is important to note that during that time science had become a "religion" of sorts in many parts of Europe.

Throughout this novel there is a sense that Shelly had a hidden purpose in the way the characters developed, the plot unfolded and the story concluded. A lot of what she wrote was couched in terms that disguise a political commentary beneath the plot of a simple horror story. For instance, all the murders committed by the creature were as a result of strangulation, what is the significance of "choking" the victims to death? Throughout the history of letters the term "strangulation" has had connotations of domination, which probably was exactly what Shelly wanted to imply. Two hundred years after Frankenstein, there are still some startling parallels when compared with the 18th Century. Just as morals were set aside then, when in Frankenstein's haste to see if he could, he never stopped to think if he should, so too in our time, science is straddling the ethical boundaries in their endeavor to prove that they could. Mary ensured the death of Victor the creator, but interestingly enough no one can say for sure what became of the creation. So, is the "monster" still alive?

Beachcomber

the year I turned seven
my family hoarded our change
exchanged the coin
hebdomad cabin on Ft. Meyers Beach
rickety stilt house shone a kismet castle
we slept in bahama beds on a jalousied verandah
met low-tide tin bucket trowel in hand
clammed at dawn
scavenged for coral conch shells sand dollars

Owl bay's leathered Lucy told me about starfish
miracles dey're snap 'dem off a leg it'd growd back
got a flat bottom rubber tub
collected a seaworthy constellation
excised their legs
planted appendages in a salty garden
brought shank echinoderms brine shrimp
and kelp breakfast six days

we packed to leave
Daddy discovered sticky grey film on my dead sea
made me bury them deep in the sand
tears in my eyes
Lucy laughed
caint growd 'dem from jus' legs gots ta' have more ta'
dem den dat

I had never killed a living thing
and I flung my shells to Poseidon
Lucy smiled veraciously
mercy chile near mostbody kill dey don' all cry

Kathleen Marie Davis

Mist of Imagination

Minnesota mist moistening the madness
of the highway few have traveled
Pavement moaning its melody
sharp as a spear
heard by the Sioux as they were treated
like a harvest without rain
Windmills standing like skeletons
seeking the spirits of visitors
to endure agony in the darkness
Shadows enhanced by moonlight
morphing butterflies to bats
Bursts of breezes
whispering to desolate fields of crops
Trees bleeding sienna and rouge
spilling and splashing blood
over lands near and far
That Minnesota mist derails my mind
away from the calming beauty
into fear of nature untamed

Cheri Valenzuela

La bassier bonne nuit

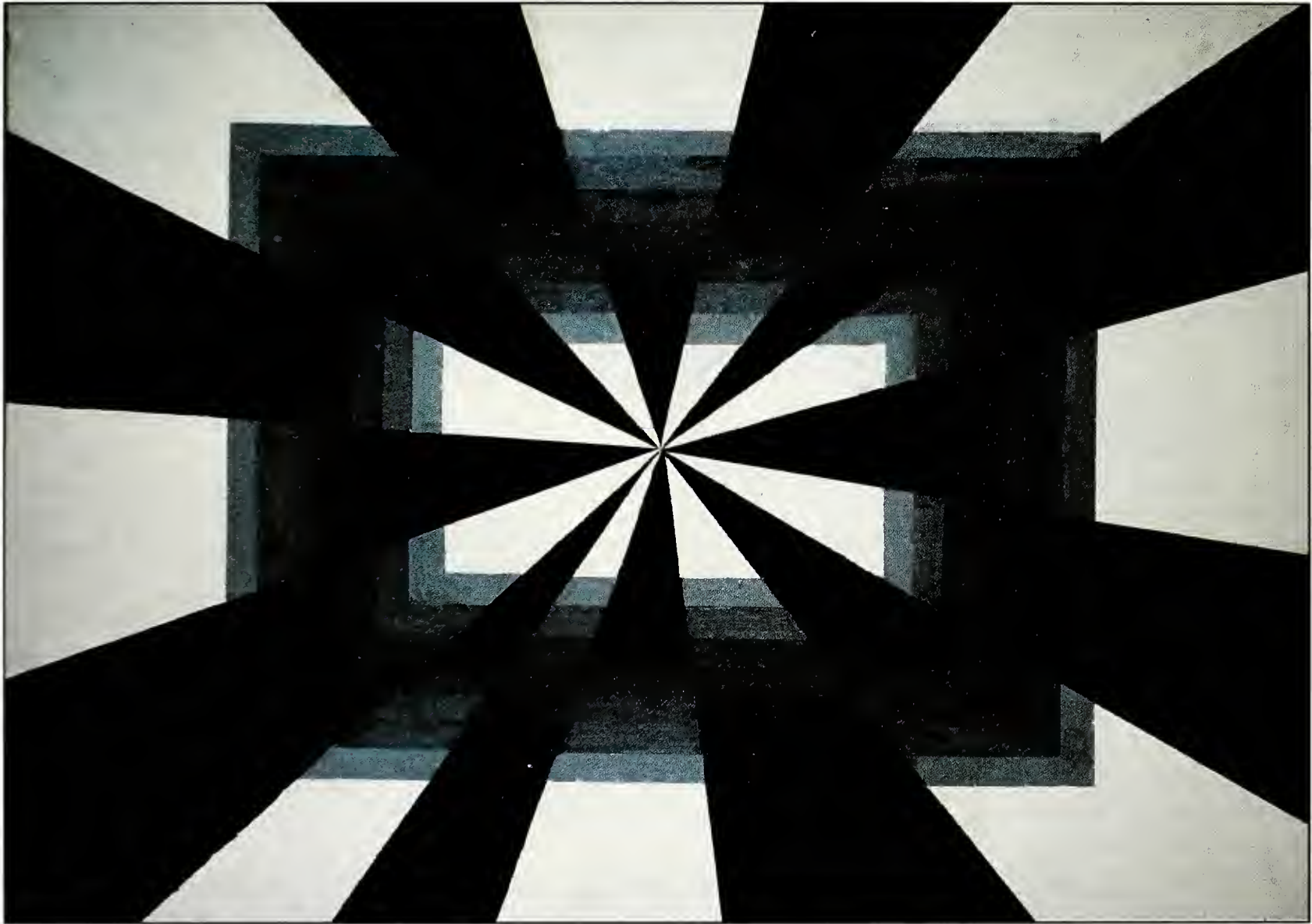
and they sit
these two dolls on a shelf
jointed and painted, dressed and
set in never ending stillness.
The little girl watches
watches first with keen interest
then with interest waning and then
with confusion.
She sees them,
these two dolls on a shelf
nestled amongst a perfect picture of domesticity
he, with tiny hands gripping a newspaper,
hat and coat hung perfectly in
a perfectly painted closet.
Then she, she with her meticulously painted
face and tiny embroidered apron, hands
locked in the perpetual gesture of
offering afternoon tea.
She sees them,
these two dolls on a shelf.
With sleepy eyes and fading interest,
she leaves them now,
these two dolls on a shelf.
She returns to her room, her perfect room,
tucks herself in and falls asleep,
never having been kissed good night.
Sans l'embrasse bon nuit.

Sherrila Levin

Daddy

The patio's white light
Spears the darkness
Blinding big bulbous Bufo
Who stumps the wall
Behind him
In a perfect arc
Spring little toadlets
Tiny black hands splayed
Against the wall
The long black tongue of night
Licks once and
The babies are gone.
The light expires.

Pamela M. Hurley



Tunnel Vision Acrylic on Canvas Board by Yvette Estime

Christmas Parade

the art form of distance
 so near
 so drear and tiresome
 the androgynous angel
 stands behind me
 kissing my neck
 with an origami mouth
 rows of paper dolls as teeth
 paper boys...
 winter warmth
 her burning breasts
 arms that smell of fire
 and the forest
 the life of this forest...
 plastic reindeers
 and one half-dead tree
 we gather 'round
 the golden star on top
 its shinning reminds us
 how to shine
 and feel
 five arms reach and five arms wrap
 around five legs
 I want to stay
 in the center
 of the star
 like a child
 time is the raven
 blazing through the atmosphere
 I hide
 inside the shooting star
 the fiery fist of God
 step on the cracks
 in the ridge of the Milky Way
 milk from the breasts of God

pierces the heart
 like rods of brass
 powerlines running cross-country
 to keep the t.v.'s on
 for all 25 hours
 of Christmas Day
 Hell is like a dinner table
 covered with empty coffee cups
 and dried memories of love
 the wish of love
 outside the air
 thickens
 with the fog of hate
 to be without
 on the day of everything
 spirit of unchanging changes
 fingernails
 grow and curl around
 the apples of knowledge
 great charging bull
 hair so long it catches
 on the thistles and rips
 where the angel sleeps
 and God leaves
 and people step
 and emotions reak
 like an invisible parade
 on the streets
 of the world where everyone is dead
 and the light is dry
 and the dark is electrified
 opening the wounds
 that never existed
 before Christmas Day

David LaRocco

SEDUCING EVE

Eyes
big, bright like the moon
full, round filled with salt

Tearing
my heart out through flesh and skin
blood dances on your fingers

Sin
falling from your lips, like the Devil's kiss
that the serpent cursed upon my shadow

Tangled
in the web, venom flowing through my veins
poisoned, from your pear

Alyssa Yankwitt

Lane Conditions

Oily, Dry, Patchy,
it affects them all:
Some more than others.
The good ones adjust.

Every so often
a sharp pain starts
by my arrows:
 but I'm used to it.
I like the light ones,
so small, light, slow:
 They soothe the pain.

Once in a while
there is one who figures me
 out.
Do you have what it takes
 to conquer me?

David Mioduszewski

Pagan Excess Unremarked

Red fat flab swings
White crest points
Muscovy male
Dips
Spoonng in the afternoon delight
He mounts his female
Right wing holds her neck down
Left, by her side and grounded,
Balances him.
Squawking and cooing
In the sweet-spicy shade of a lavender tree
They copulate.
No one notices.

Pamela M. Hurley

The Call of Israel

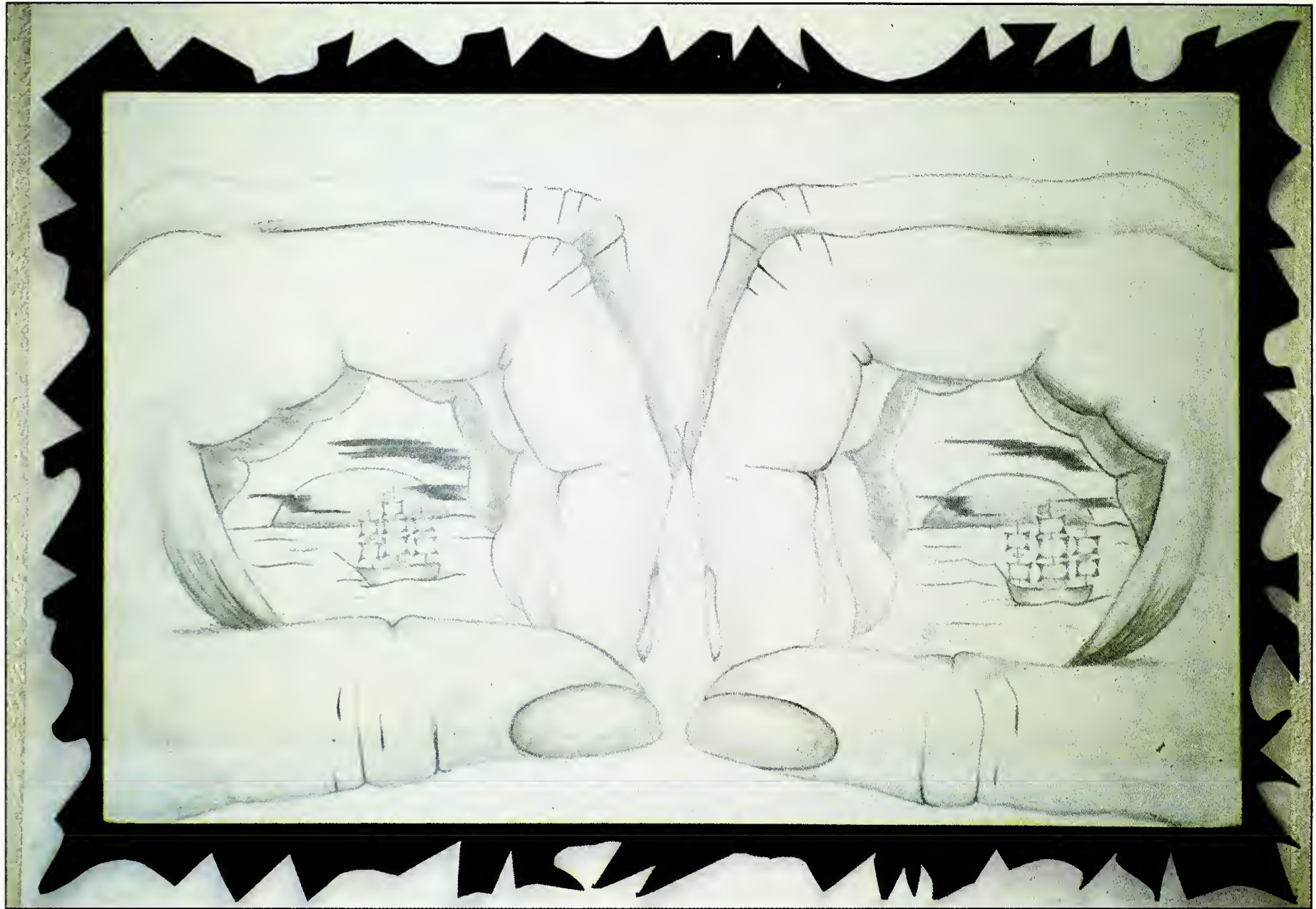
Shadows of antiquity corrode the rock of lime.
Voices from the past resound throughout the span of time
I hear my father's call "Hear me!
The way of truth is ours. Stand tall!"

Within the relics of lost centuries they speak.
The tombs and temples. Now found, do leak
A potion that makes my heart to over flow.
A joining in the march with those of long ago.

I hear the voice of Moses speak the law.
I see Abraham's pain as he kneels in awe,
Receiving G-d's word to slay his seed.
Then Joshua's trumpet call that he will lead.

Among dark Catacombs the prophets lie
Their wisdom motivates our lives and will not die.
Only here, in Israel, do we feel that call.
The arms of Yahweh do enfold us all.

Allen D. Greenstone



Larger than Life Pencil drawing by Tamara LaRene'

The Music Men

The fools
blame
us
for our wits
They strum
fiddles
with a deaf ear
eagerly
mysteriously
they pluck
for gratification
broken notes
suspend themselves
on denied lips

tapping feet
in anguish
stapling
scorned tune
to our brains
a serenade
wilts
to a balcony
of shadows
an empty
wine bottle
for fruitless words
holds shallow
regret
for thirsty
music men
longing for
the bitter sweet
intoxication
of fermented grapes

Natalie Kappes

The Shoebox

I lift the shoebox cover
that opens up my past,
I think of all those years
that slipped away so fast

Inside the tattered box
a pile of ticket stubs,
To movies and to concerts
and even teen night clubs.

In the dark corner
hidden in camouflage,
There sits a fragile,
dried-up wrist corsage.

The one I received
at a Friday night dance,
The time in my life
I discovered true romance.

I see a picture which
brought back a tear,
My favorite stuffed animal
comforted a fear.

I look in the box
my memories piled,
I see pictures of myself
when I was a child.

Remembering all my memories
until my mother knocks,
Then I think of the present
and close up my box.

Renè Bellini

The Withering

Blood tinged bile rushes behind clenched teeth
overtakes them —

seethes between them
rivulet by rivulet.

Tongue retreats, bathed in an iron acid stew.

Dry cracked bluish lips part and

vomit, like mercury, rises

rips apart a ravaged throat

acid scraping through stomach lining

like a spectre's scythe.

She rises

wheatgold hair, dry, limp lifeless, like

an unreached potential, flips up and

eyes stare into the mirror through

darkened hollows

in the pasty white pale face.

a hand rises to wipe flecks of vomit

from withered lips—

satisfied,

she smiles.

Thin.

Sherrila Levin

You are a Stone

Sad smooth

and gray

frigid water

eroding

substance

cold continuation

of stone

completely forgotten

by feet

that take hold

Dense emptiness

and cosmic ruin

stone of flesh

and nerves

and bone

coldness

always penetrating

water running

erosion at work

in my heart

Rena Register



Pen & Ink wash by Tra' Scott

Public John

by Richard Judd

It was late in the afternoon when I woke up, badly hungover and depressed at having slept away another day, and thought some exercise might help to clear my head and mend my spirits. I put on a T-shirt, an old pair of shorts and laced up my beat up running shoes, then into the bathroom to throw some water on my face. An angry reflection stared back at me through the mirror. Eyes red and swollen, resting above deep, dark bags. One doozy of a hangover. Simple movements hurt. The run would be a torturous chore, but I ached for some sort of catharsis, and that was always painful.

I went to the fridge, up-ended a bottle of purified water and gulped madly to cure myself of the horrible thirst that goes with a hangover. The water was cold and quenching and clean, not like the city water. The City water came out of the tap cloudy and tasted like shit, and although I trusted it to shower with, there was no way I was gonna drink it. I was living in the 1990's and one had to take precautions. I locked the front door of my one bedroom apartment and started at a slow trot down North Park Road toward the big county park with an Indian name. Legend has it that the park was raised on top of an ancient Seminole burial ground. Weather fact or fiction who knew, but the place did give off a mad vibe as if surrounded by a very dark aura. If you looked closely, you could see it; breathed deeply, you could smell it; reached out, you could touch it.

It was uncertainty.

It was Death.

Strange and terrible occurrences were commonplace at the park with the Indian name. Children drowned in its waters. People choked at company picnics. A maintenance man was crushed to death by a overturned dump truck. At night the lights of pavilions flickered on and off for no apparent reason. Some claimed the park was haunted by the spirits of angry Indians. Others believed it was the ghosts of those who drowned in its lake.

Of its true origin, I knew not. But there was a definite madness about the place which was as tangible as it was contagious.

In the center of the park was a lake, bordered on one side by a campground, and a dock and boathouse from which people rented leg-powered paddle-boats and a great rolling field of grass which required continuous policing by the brown shirted maintenance men riding on power mowers. On the other side, across from the man-made attractions, was a small forest of gnarled and spooky trees. A trail ran around the lake, paved until the edge of the forest where the roots of trees grew through the blacktop, turning the paved path to one of gravel and earth and fallen leaves .

It was a hot and muggy South Florida afternoon, the air moist and still. Running through the entrance of the park I felt a little dizzy. I was sweating bullets and my mouth was dry. I waved to the Park Ranger at the gate.

Running along the trail through the scary trees, footfalls cushioned by dead pine needles on the ground, I came across a man sitting at a picnic table, brown paper bag in front of him. He heard me and turned around and watched me purposefully. He looked as if he recognized me and he called out,

"Hey Friend," but when I ran within eye shot he realized his mistake. "Nevermind," he said, "I thought you were someone else."

"No such luck," I wheezed through a smile and ran by him.

The sun began its descent and shined brightly through the trees casting beams on the ground like stagelights. I started to feel queasy, and wanted to stop, but ran on. I could run through anything I reassured myself. I had the guts, and that's all it took.

Rounding the lake I encountered another man running the path. I had seen him in the park before. A real yuppie type. Mid-thirties, clean cut and snobbishly dignified. He wore a fashionable jogging suit, the type Clinton and his Secret Service boys wore on press conference jogs, but it was his shoes that I recognized. He ran in those high-tech over designed running shoes that sold for \$200 a pair. Had I seen him anywhere else in the world, I would not recognize him without those shoes.

As we passed I waved and gasped out a "Hello." He ran past as if he had never seen me.

"Asshole," I mumbled to myself. My stomach ached and fiery burps that tasted of whiskey broke up my rhythm of breath.

The sun blazed in my face as I rounded the lake. My mouth was dry as sand. That's when the feeling hit. I had to shit, and I had to shit bad. It was one of those hurry call shits when the stomach knots up, and the forehead sweats cold and you're sure that death can't be far behind the wave of misery crushing over you. There was a bathroom on the other side of the lake beyond the dock and past the rolling lawn on the edge of the spooky forest. I hoped I would make it.

I kept running.

My stomach cramped.

I doubled over, but I kept running.

The sun glared blindingly off the water.

To cope with the pain I began thinking of Santiago and his brave battle with the big fish, Man vs. Nature, and while my battle with nature may not have been as noble, it was just as desperate.

When I got to the beat up old shack that was the public John, the wave of pain had passed, but I knew another one would follow close behind. I went inside and splashed some yellow water on my face from the rusty faucet. I even sipped a little bit from my cupped hands before realizing how gross it was in there.

The cement floor was slimy with thick grime and it stank, oh how it stank. Those who claimed that this park with the Indian name carried the smell of death were right, I thought, but it was not because of evil spirits or the ghosts of pissed off Indians. The origin of all evil in the park, and maybe even the world began right there in the corrupt stank of the public John.

Another ill wave approached. Seven stalls, side-by-side. Looked like fourteen. Nauseous hysteria. Seeing double. I opened the first stall door. The bowl was fractured in half, no good. Stall two had no seat. Checked stall three. Still no luck, for settled in the bottom of the bowl was a waterlogged load left by an elephant or perhaps a creature of even greater proportions. The door of stall four was marked with a crude handwritten sign

proclaiming it OUT OF ORDER. I opened the door and everything looked O.K. (as O.K. as you could get in a place that rank). I flushed the toilet to freshen it up a bit.

It worked.

I laid down a cushion of toilette paper on the seat and a few sheets flat across the water to prevent any unwanted splash. I was living in the 1990's and one had to take precautions. I couldn't hold out any longer. I sat down and purged with a long heaving contraction which I thought might turn me inside out. It passed and another, then another, then one more and I was O.K. The wave had passed.

I sat there for a minute or two and let everything settle back into place, numbly watching a black spider, graceful and cruel, make efforts to repair a web that I must have destroyed by opening the door. That was when they entered the public John.

"Get in there, I said," came a voice, gruff and assertive.

"All right, I'm going. Just be careful with that thing," I heard the other man say,

"Do you have any idea who I am? Do you know who I work for, you stupid mother-fucker?"

"The same people I work for," said the first man, "only you got it wrong. Ya see, YOU are the stupid mother-fucker and YOU don't work for nobody nomore. YOU have been replaced."

"Replaced! Wha...what are you saying? What are you talking about?"

"You have been relieved of your duties and obligations to the organization because you STOLE! I have been sent to...serve notice of this action and conduct your final interview. Question number one...where is it?"

"Where is what? Fuck you, I want to talk to..." the second man began, but then a thud and then another as one of them hit the slimy floor. I picked my legs up so as not to be seen from outside the stall.

"I'll try again, Jesus, it stinks in here, Question number one, Where is it?"

"Where is what?" the second man said and then three more dull and sickening thuds and then the groan of a grown man

in pain. I wanted to groan right along with him but I didn't dare to make so much as a peep for fear of ending up as the unfortunate individual on the other side of the stall door.

"If you don't want to get kicked to death answer my question. ANSWER MY FUCKING QUESTION!"

"It's a mistake! You gotta tell him It's a mistake! I don't know anything! I didn't do anything!"

"You're lyin' to me," said the man in charge. "Get up. I said get up. Open the door."

A stall door swung open on rusty squeaky hinges.

"No, not that one," he said, and then the stall door beside mine kicked open and my mind raced, Jesus Christ there gonna find me in here and it's motherfucking curtains for me and it makes no difference that I didn't see shit or that I don't know shit or that I was only in here because I had to shit because now I'm DEAD because this jerk got himself SNAGGED and...

"Oh yeah, that's perfect. Pretty nasty in there huh? Stick your head in the bowl there."

"What!"

"I said put your face in the bowl. Now."

"You're crazy..."

There was a hell of a commotion going on over there now. Splashing and thrashing and banging and coughing and gagging and the toilet flushed.

"Look," said the man in charge, "this is no way to die. We know what you did. We know you planned it. You wanna know how we know? You been fingered, pal. Betrayed. The Cuban ratted you out."

"He's lyin'! The Cuban is a born liar"

"Oh, he did some lying alright, but that all stopped as soon as we tortured him. You should have heard him sing once we tortured him. He told us all about it."

"He's lyin to ya! I swear to fucking Christ he's Lyin!!!"

"You, Friend, should be making your peace with God right now, not cursing his name. Ya see, we got the driver too. Stupid fuck he was. They blinded him with lit cigarettes. He lost his eyes for ten percent. Don't you feel bad paying him a miserable ten

percent.? Of course you don't. And He must have known what a piece of shit you are, because he copped to everything the Cuban did. So let's cut through all the bologna right now and tell me what I want to know. Maybe the boss will take it easy on you. Last time, where is it?"

"The boat. It's all on the boat." The man was weeping.

"The boat. You gotta be fucking kidding me," laughed the first man.

"No. No kidding."

"And it's all there? All of it?"

"Yes, all of it, except for some we gave the driver. I swear.

"Hold on a minute, I have to make a phone call. Miracle of modern technology these cellular phones," he said. "It's me...Yeah he's with me now. Uh huh...It's all on the boat he says. That's correct...Hold on a minute.

Hey, Fucknuts, where on the boat?"

"In a bait bucket," said the other man. The defeated man. I felt sorry for him, also hated him for dragging into his dreadful world. What cruel twist of fate brought us together in the public John? I was scared.

"He says it's in a bait bucket. Allright..."

"He's gonna check it out and call me back. Great little invention here. Used to be nothing but pay phones after a job. First you had to find one, then you had to have change...Big fucking pain in the ass, those pay phones, but not this baby

And while he rambled on about payphones and such, the spider, whose web I destroyed and who made this stall its home, dropped down by a thin silky line of web and came to rest on the head of my cock. I was not sure if I could endure much more. I was sitting at the edge of madness on a white porcelain throne.

The spider sat there on my cock unmoving and I was sure he was staring at me, aware of everything happening around me. It wanted me to scream. It wanted me to flail. It wanted me to give myself up and suffer an indignant demise in the grimy shithole it called home. I watched in horror as the spider crawled from my cock into my pubic hair and down to my testicles. I wanted to scream. I wanted to yell "Jesus creeping shit!" all over

the world. But to make a sound was death.

Alternatives, options, something, anything. My mind raced hysterical. Swat off the spider maybe? Make a break for the door? No, this guy was a pro. I'd be dead before I pulled up my shorts.

The spider dangled by a silk thread from my scrotum. I was near hysterics. To make matters worse, there was a new rumbling in my ill stomach. I had to fart. I knew I couldn't hold it in, and that it's sound would give me away. Death by flatulence!!! It was unacceptable. I did not want to die. Not like this. Not in here.

In my head I began to pray.

I prayed to God.

I prayed to the Indian Spirits

I prayed to God of all Spiders (If there was such a thing).

I prayed to my asshole to hold firm.

I let it rip, or rather it let itself rip, and the force of it blew the spider off my nuts and into the bowl.

I waited for the door to open. I wondered if it would hurt to get shot. I heard the second ring of the cellular phone. The second ring. I was safe. The phone drowned out the sound. I was safe, which was a lot more than could be said for the other guy.

"Yeah...It's there...You got it, great," said the man in charge.

"That was them. Your story was legit.

"That's right...I was straight with you! Let me talk to Him. Let me straighten this out."

"Nope. No can do. You screwed up. Don't ever bite the hand that feeds you. It'll always come back around to slap you in the face. The boss wanted you to hear that."

"So...so what happens now?"

The sound was like a muffled fire-cracker, and almost scared me out of my self preserving silence. Two more muffled pops followed, then footsteps. I sat there for I don't know how long trying to digest what went down. I had forgotten about my stomach all together.

After a while I wiped my ass and pulled up my shorts.

My legs were stiff from having been curled up in the stall. I looked around the shitter.

In the stall beside mine lay a man in a dark puddle of piss and shit and blood. A long stream ran from the puddle and down a drain in the center of the grimy floor. Even with half his face gone I knew who he was. He wore a fashionable jogging suit. I recognized his shoes.

I waited in the public John until after dark wondering what to do. . . Should I call somebody? The cops? The press? But I knew the answer before I asked the question. This was no business of mine. It was nothing new to the world anyway. Every day the papers are filled with it. Theft, rape, murder, death. Man's inhumanity. Or is it really HUMANITY? In an age where sixteen year olds play cops and robbers for real, where senseless violence is the norm, a calculated hit seems like a rational act.

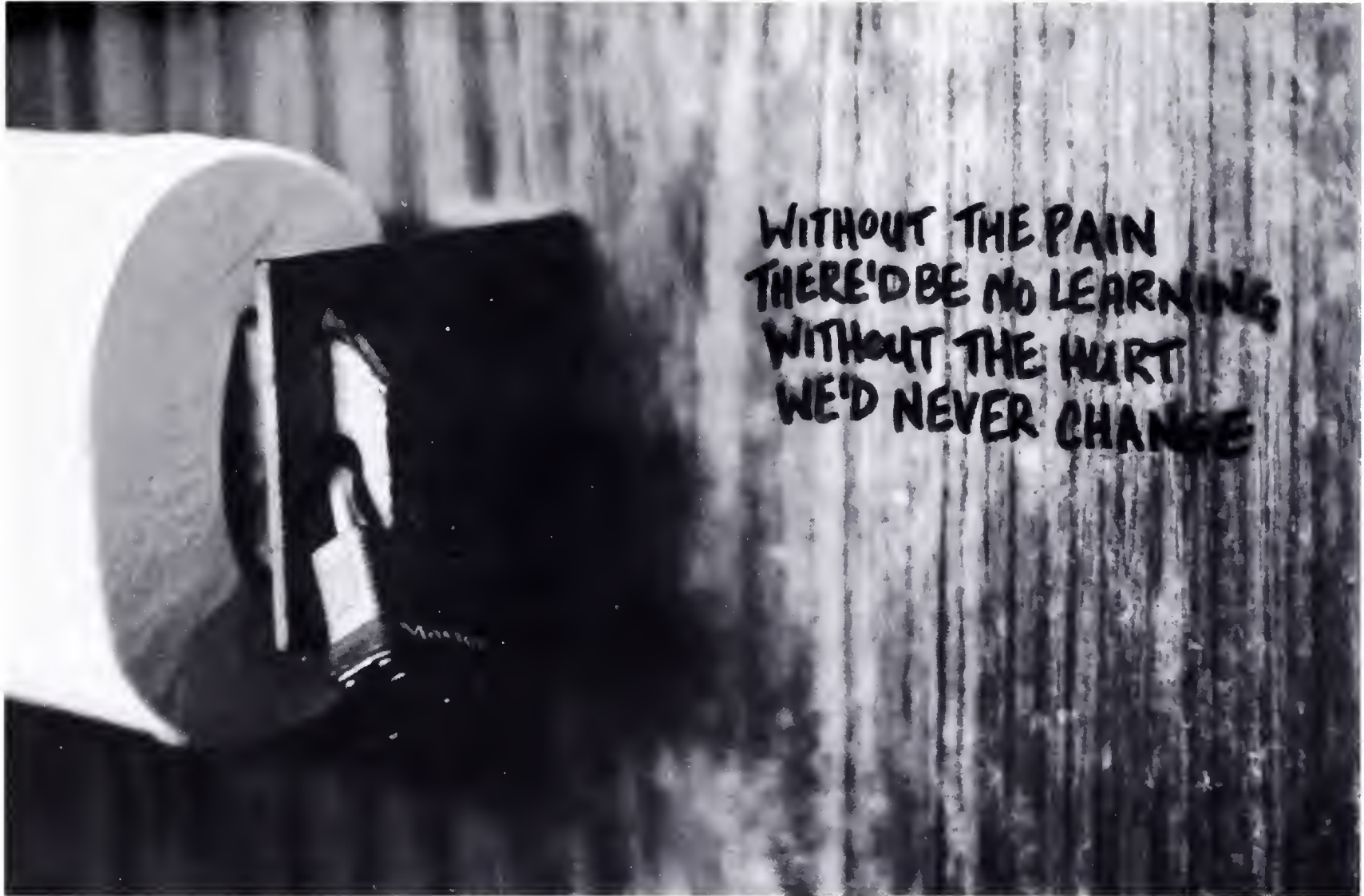
With every late breaking story the line between right and wrong becomes more and more nebulous creating a state of consciousness that no longer differentiates between the two, but recognizes only, unquestioningly, what is. I felt jaded by it. I hadn't asked to be there. No one needed to know I was. Let the cops and reporters do their own work. Let them and the killers and the thieves perpetuate their bullshit game. "Who stole the cookie from the cookie jar?" The guy in the crapper with his face blown off, that's who. They had their rules, but that didn't mean I had to play. Not my affair at all. I wasn't going to say a damn thing to anyone.

Running through the scary woods, past the ghosts and the spirits and the spiders and the killers and the thieves. I never looked back. I climbed the fence and stuck to the shadows. I was living in the 1990's and one had to take precautions.

At home I showered and poured a stiff whiskey and soda. I fell asleep watching a bad movie on cable.



Moon B&W Photo by Miana Graeis



Bathroom Wall B&W Photo by Annamarie Remondelli

The Sperm Spinner

Funny how affection flies
When technology offers
the least sensual replies

Sperm can be separated
from semen this day
The whole concoction
placed on a Sterile tray
then set in motion
just like a salad spinner
microscopic, of course
spinning, spinning and getting
thinner and thinner.

Behind closed doors
a few groans and moans
"Damn it honey, you lost the load"
a muffled reply mixed with a giggle,
"Now I'll need 15 more"
"Yeah , right," I think, as I pass on by
"this guy's in his 40's
try, more like.....45"

I like my job
separating the guys from the gals
so much alike
with one tiny difference
busily swimming in a sea of white
It's like playing God
a certain power involved
when wanting to conceive
It's Nature's course
We wish to deceive.

Cheryl L. Belknap

Birds of prey

Vultures are waiting for me at home
Though not the kind that pick at the bone
Of rotting flesh left to bake in the sun
No...they want dinner...a civilized one
Prepared and served without delay
Make it good—make it their way
Birds take places so carefully selected
Allowing them views so all is detected—
The look and noise and fragrances sweet—
Of anything resembling something to eat
Beaks open wide and want to be fed
Feathers get ruffled and the eyes in their head
Will dart and dance and follow each move
With such intense focus, it feels like a groove
Has been left on my body to serve as reminder
“Hey nature is calling! Be quick and be kinder
Allow us some dignity...don’t make us squawk
Or stay at this table like some tethered hawk
Just give up a morsel—better yet two
We will be quiet and stop bugging you”
But day after day we play the same scene
And maybe later I will become keen—
Change this whole deal for one that makes sense—
I will have dinner at their expense

Sally Rudolph

This is just to say. . . .

I have eaten
the fondue

right out of
the warm bowl

and with
the chocolate I
savored
the berries

It was delectable
so warm and fresh
so sweet
I’d like some more

Sasha Stewart



Bravo Seasons Mixed Media on Posterboard by Ravindejit Singh

fourteen million to one

when I win the lottery I'm gonna tell all the assholes to go to hell
their car keys dangling approval held sex used love earned?

When I win the lottery I'll hold those accountable
I'll hunt down Mrs. Lozar my second grade math teacher
make her know the fear she instilled in me

when I win the lottery people will want me
Mom? Mom who? I used to know someone named Mom
she sent me to school in long-sleeved turtle-necks and pants in June
to cover purple/red stripes

when I win the lottery I'll woo my first lover
wear skin tight red dress buy him Maine lobster Pouligny Montrechet
look him straight in the eye announce
I never enjoyed sex with you anyway

when I win the lottery won't choose between milk or bread
never eat peanut butter and bologna again
I'll order an entire meal at St. Michel's
from the dessert cart: chocolate mousse carmel almond creme
raspberry fudge in vanilla creme broulee
without puking later
go to school for an education not a degree
get facials at Jacques de Sange
liposuction every ten months
build a ball pit in the basement of my four-story house
Pete Rose will coach my son's little league team

when I get an extra dollar
and I win the lottery
things will be different

Kathleen Marie Davis

夕陽

漫 天 的 雲 霞 披 上 彩 衣
都 為 了 您 而 您 的 美 善 慈
為 要 讚 謝 您 的 仁 慈

因 為 只 有 您 給 故 鄉 送 上 祝 福
可 以 為 我

只 有 您 可 以 為 我 送 上 思 念
給 遠 方 的 親 人

只 有 您 可 以 代 我 告 訴 他 們
在 遠 方 的 我 念
一 切 安 好 勿 念

Ng Mei Po



Innocence of a Child Pencil drawing by Altraveise Grace



Wish you were here. . . . Acrylic on canvas by Arnulfo Corpus

Molester

under a banyan tree loafs a bearded man,
grey whiskers prickle outward like a porcupine
with a brown crooked fence for teeth, he chews
on a Granny Smith, sulks at the sourness,
reminds him of his daughter.

He'll cherish petite Nell until earthworms
enjoy him for Sunday Supper. He crunches,
recollects Nell clutching earlobes, shrieks
"no!" with sore purple lungs. "Daddy, Daddy!"
she begged, rubbed her breasts,
small like mosquito

bites. His morality muffled by the aroma of honey
suckle flesh. Her thin red locks tangled
themselves in the cigar stained fingers. He ogled,
Glow Worm, Pound Puppy, Cabbage Patch Kid
frowned upon Nell's monster. Strawberry blonde

mommy with wrinkling lips tripped on her feet,
grabbed daddy by his deaf ears, pelted papa
with her platform shoes. He gave Nell
yellow dresses, birthday cakes, hotdogs
quality time.

Father, burnt holes of green pants nose
picked blue shirt, nibbles on the pitted
apple core for meaning. Decayed, distraught,
pot bellied bum under a banyan tree.

Natalie Kappes

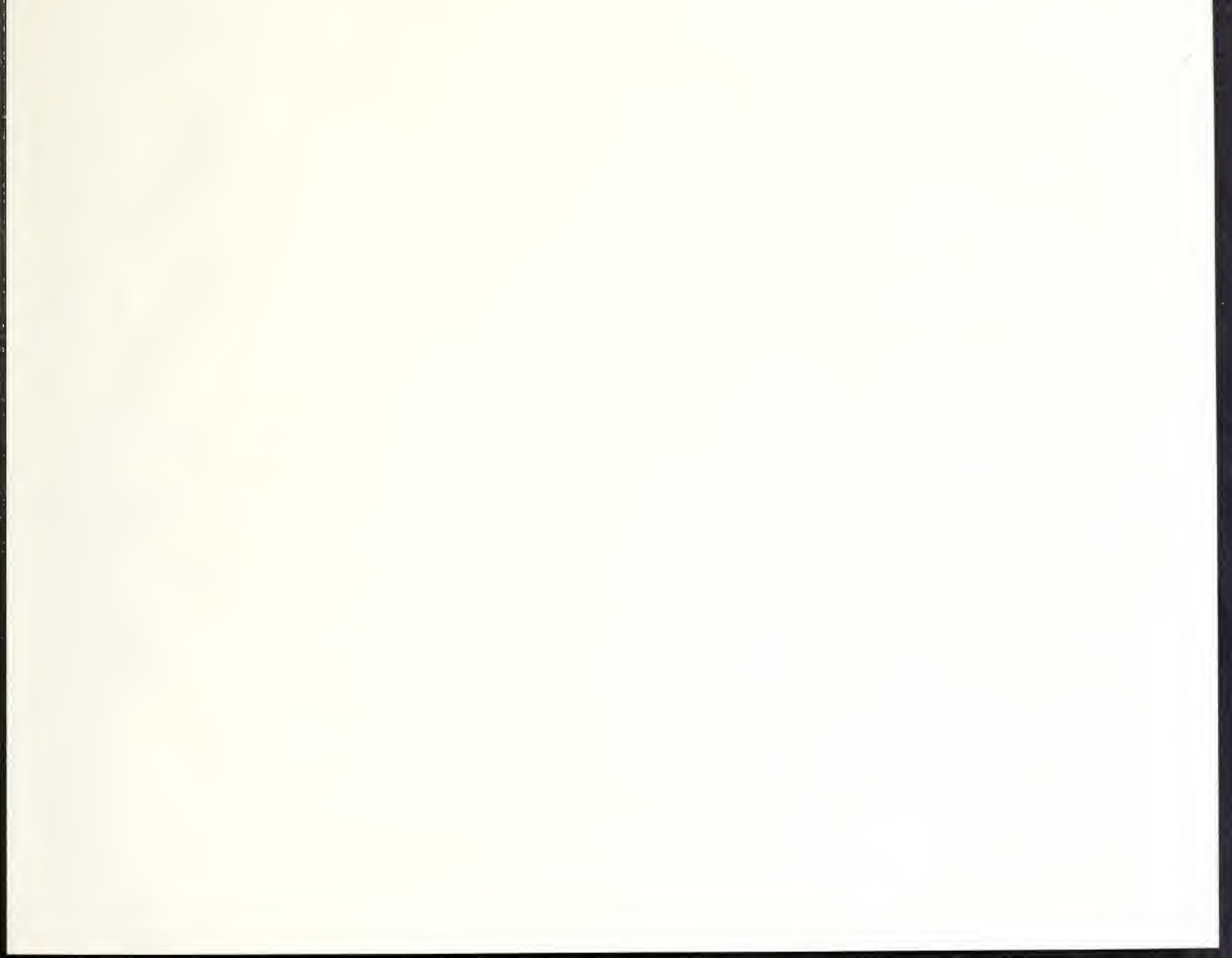


Diaper Heaven B&W Photo by Melinda Richards



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