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MacArthur High School



Bullseye 1992

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Volume 8

Douglas MacArthur High
School
North East Independent
School District
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In our tribe
we are one body,
forming a circle
around the fire of survival.
Our fingers burn if we
smother the flame.
Our feet grow cold if we
walk away;
the fire withers to ash.

With hands held,
as threads in the same
blanket,
we are all kept warm,
sustaining life.

Provider



FROM OUR LABOR
THERE IS LIFE.

Warrior



WE GIVE THEM
PROTECTION WHERE
THEY GIVE US LIFE.

Healer



OUR SOLACE
COMES FROM THE
PRESERVATION OF
LIFE.

Artisan

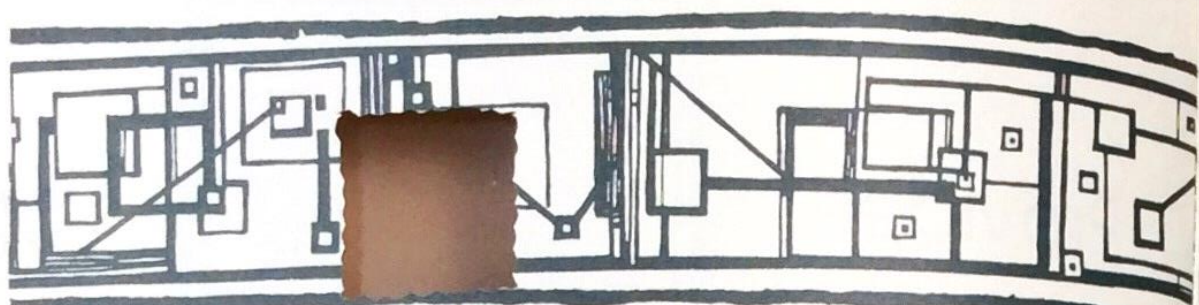


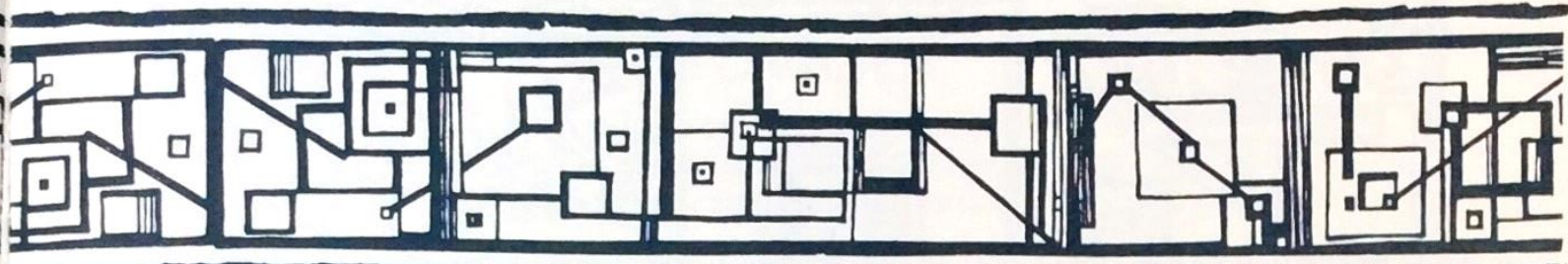
LIKE THE VEINS IN
OUR BODIES, ART
GIVES LIFE.

Storyteller



OUR STORIES WEAVE
THE PATTERNS OF
LIFE.







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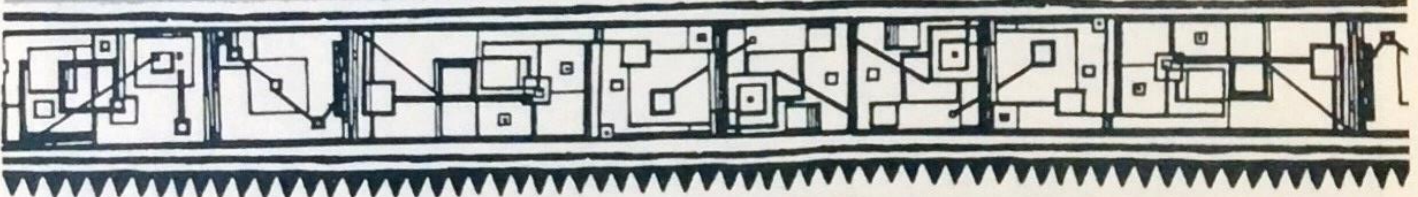
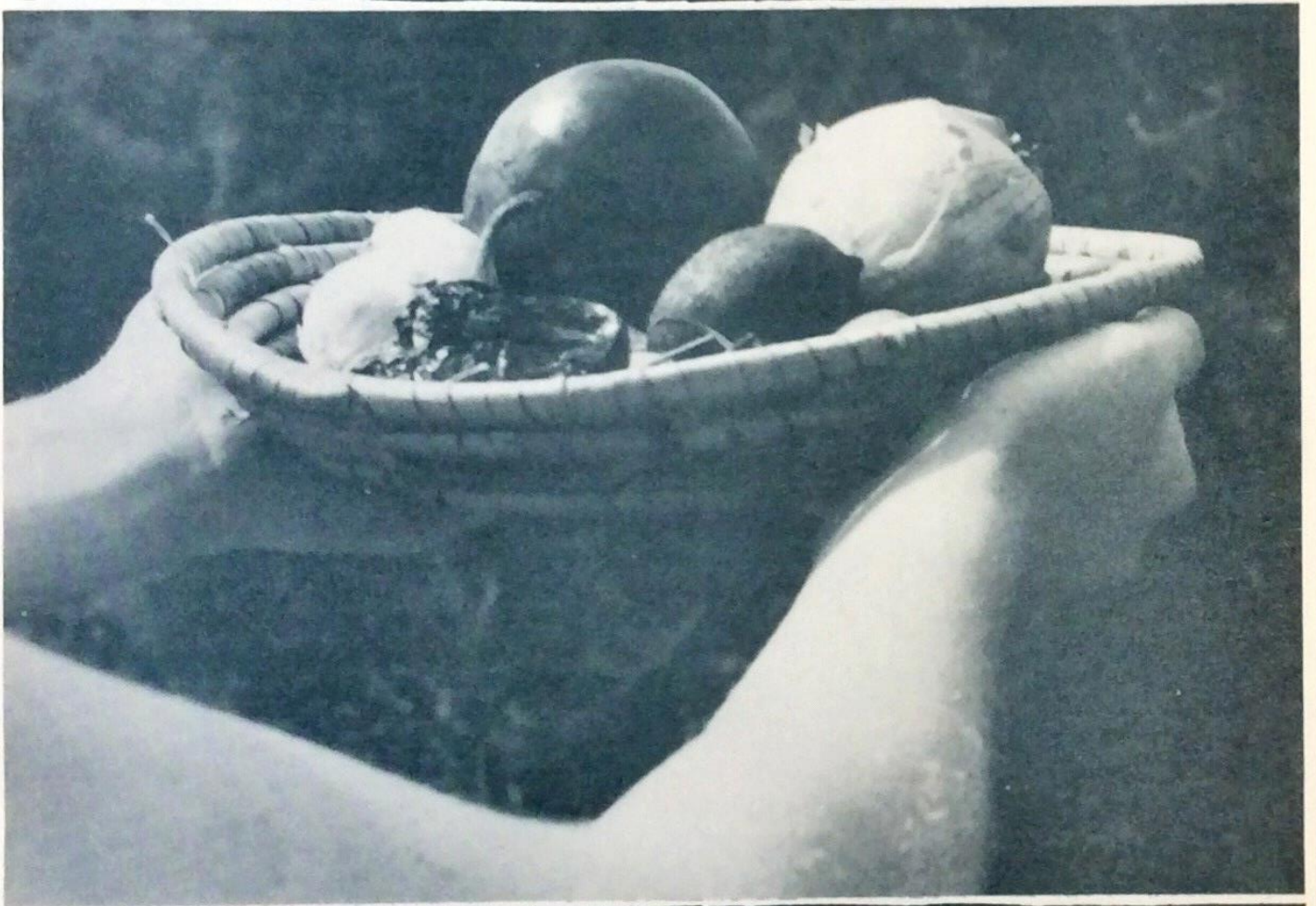
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Provider

We come from the earth and the earth provides for us. Survival is our teacher and life our only lesson. From our friends, the animals, we learn to keep our bellies full, our bodies warm, and our families sheltered.



Kim Beal

FROM OUR LABOR THERE IS LIFE.



Lauren Donohue

I don't want anything
Taryn Nasis

i don't want anything
to do with you
anymore
you are too wonderful
too you
i can't walk down
a street
in this cold sad weather
without thinking of you
the cold becomes you
melting into one immovable
force
g i a n t
i can't love you anymore
i've been forgetting
to breathe

wait
Debbie Banford

minutes fall past so slowly
like warped dominos in the
wrong dimension
and
time is the force
that pounds
the tick of the tock
and births so many grains of
sand;
time drags itself on wounded
paws
--broken animal--
and weariness
does open its mouth and
roar
as life falls from my sight
and
I blink.

Untitled
Risa Hollingsworth

He speaks in lies.

Hearts building to a rousing
cadence.

**Shifty (?) I feel lightheaded yet
not simple-minded.**

His waves crash against her
shores

**Pulling the wheel to the side of
destiny.**

Slipping and spiraling to their
purest forms.

Aiming for the Starcase

Lost to their own thoughts

**Shooting through the moon (my
heart)**

(Censored)

Piercing my consciousness

The current drags her in and out
slowly.

From the corner of my eye

Three steps of feel-good.

Sights settle on him

Faintly drunk

You're too obvious

Eyes moistening in response

Draw in

Lost.

Sink






Emrys Berkower


Count Down
Mary Taylor

Ten o'clock at night,
Nine hours to dream.
Eight hours spent thinking of
Seven days this week.
Six hours of class,
Five seconds of thought
For those things don't matter.
Three wishes left.
Two of us together,
One love.



reflections
Risa Hollingsworth

WISDOM... is that what i lack?
do i lack the ability to perceive
you as anything short of a god?
you brought my body to a
trembling
frenzy and my mind to a level of
unconsciousness (naivete) and
never
did i feel lost to you,
only lost with you.
we went walking through a
forest of
temptations and we exited
unscathed.
(If only. . .)
no remorse.
a mastering insatiability pilots
my day.
i put myself into your hands,
And you slipped through my
fingers.



Not Picture Perfect
Anne Gibson

Picture Perfect

That's not what I am
But I'm told I should be.


Many people come to and fro
Trying to mold something to perfection--
Something that won't mold.

Voices ask

"Why can't you change?"
"No! That image won't work!"
"Please, this is getting old."


As I look at myself

I don't see my image projected through my features
(As imperfect as some might see them.)



I see my heart

that can cry in anguish
laugh in fun
and share just for the sake of sharing.



So all I have to say is that I might not be picture perfect,
But my heart is pretty damn close.



Different Me Veronica Venegas

THE ADVENTURES OF FELLGRIM THE DREAD, PART XVIII

Sean Tait O'Sullivan

General revelry was the dish of the day in the vine-encrusted, crumbling, white villa that contained the hardy establishment known variously throughout the centuries as "Publius' Tavern," "The House of Publius," and "that damn good Roman bar" by the various people who had frequented it. Not nearly as old as the famous city it neighbored (at a distance of a few leagues), it had nonetheless survived through the last two centuries of the Roman Empire and four more besides. Though razed to the ground by Visigoths and Huns several times, Publius' Tavern had always risen from its ashes to be serving drinks anew within the fortnight. In some circles it had earned the nickname "The Phoenix's Flagon."

The current Publius in charge was a balding, lean man in a line so long that the various Publii who ran the inn had long ago stopped keeping track of which number they were. This led to some odd-sounding comments such as "Publius once served a horn of beer to Alaric himself!" But as long as the patrons were familiar with the incredible age of the tavern they frequented (which most of them were), the blood shed over ignorant replies like "Which one is Alaric?" was kept to a bare minimum.

The part had reached a crescendo. The music was boisterous and loud, the singing was boisterous and loud, and the crashing sound of pottery breaking was boisterous and loud. The olive-skinned serving girls Publius employed fairly danced between the tables as they carried their trays full of steaming roast pig and oven-fresh bread to the patrons. Publius himself (at the bar, as always) filled every mug offered with a piece of wit or wisdom as well as

the spicy red wine he poured. The patrons themselves, a motley but jovial assortment of Italian peasants and foreign mercenaries and traders, downed their drink with Medieval gusto and sang along with the minstrel quintet as loudly as their off-key voices could.

And then a tall stranger entered the room, a shark-grey coat of steel chain on his breast, a raven-black beard on his heavy-browed face, and a bejeweled sword in an iron-studded leather scabbard hanging at his side. He shouldered his way through the rowdy crowd of happy people to stand before the bar and stare down upon the unsuspecting Publius.

"May the peace of Balder and the strength of Odin be with you, innkeeper!" bellowed the strange northman.

"Hello," said Publius in his queer, low voice.

"I am Fellgrim the Dread, son of Grimfell the Brave, son of Boldgrim the Strong, son of Boldfell the Courageous, son of Dreadfell the Grim, son of Dreadgrim the Bold, son of Strongbrave the Fell, son of Waycul (slayer of the dread dragon Hungerworm) who was conceived upon the woman Ethreda the White-Breasted (daughter of Airk the Fair) by the great god Thor the Thunderer, son of Odin!" announced Fellgrim.

Publius nodded and answered, "I am Publius, son of Publius," in the Viking's own barbarian tongue.

"But who was his father?" asked Fellgrim, thinking it discourteous that Publius should give so few ancestors.

"Publius," Publius replied.

"I think you are repeating yourself," said Fellgrim.

"No I'm not, sir," answered Publius.

Now Fellgrim was curious. "And who was that last Publius' father before him?" he asked with all

earnestness.

"Publius."

"And his?"

"Publius."

"And his?"

"Publius."

"And his?"

"Well, he was born Julius, but he changed his name to Publius when his elder brother Publius died heirless," answered Publius, as serious as the Viking.

"And his father was named Publius too?" gasped Fellgrim, astounded by the history of the innkeeper's name.

"Aye, indeed it was."

Now Fellgrim's brow furrowed deeper, completely dumbfounded by the idea that everyone in this man's family was named Publius. It defied all the logic and tradition of Fellgrim the Dread's Viking upbringing. A man's name should be his own to earn through right of deed, even if it did end up sounding suspiciously like his forebears'.

"And his father before him was named Publius as well," said Publius with pride.

At this Fellgrim's mind could take no more. With a mumbled order for ham, bread, cheese, and wine, he stumbled over to a bench, threw its occupants off of it, and sat down. Ignoring the curses and futile threatening gestures of the Italian peasants he had displaced and their feeble attempts to lift him off as he had them, he sank into thought. He pondered the strange sacrilege of the name of Publius and combatted a growing sense of frustration and anger, a throaty growl in the back of his mind that heralded the approach of the berserk rage he had been cursed with in his heroic battle against the wizard Xex'ne'pal.

Suddenly a wooden platter heaped with steaming ham and bread clattered onto the table before him, and a large clay mug

of mulled wine was placed by his hand. Trying to clear his mind, he downed the spicy beverage in a single draught and turned to his meal. His wine-sharpened mind immediately realized that while the ham and bread were there, the cheese was not!

"I ordered cheese!" bellowed Fellgrim the Dread; all attempts to rescue his crumbling sanity drowned in the blood-red sea of the Norseman battle-fury. The

magic sword Foe-Maimer leaped from its scabbard to the black-bearded man's hand, disemboweling a Frankish merchant as it flew.

"I ordered cheese!" shouted Fellgrim as his battle-cry. The sword he swung stained walls and floors and the clothes of all around with the rich red gore it tore from its victims' flesh. Fellgrim struck wildly, uncaring as he hacked his way through the

crowd.

"I ordered cheese!" Fellgrim the Dread roared as he cut the throat of a Moorish mercenary and dashed open an Italian wench's brain-pan with a single back-handed slash. Mindlessly, he kicked over a tall oil-filled brazier, which immediately spread its flames to the curtains of the minstrels' platform.

"I ordered cheese!" Fellgrim whispered hoarsely as he thrust himself over the bar and Foe-Maimer pierced the chest of the skinny, bald man on the other side.

Standing only because of the three feet of dwarf-wrought steel through his left lung impaling him to the wall, Publius gasped out a final reply, his voice gurgling through his own blood. "Cheese?" he said, "I thought you said bacon

....

The House of Publius was blazing as Fellgrim the Dread let Publius' body drop to the floor, for the fire on the curtains had quickly leaped to every other flammable part of the building. All not dead had already fled so Fellgrim was not hindered as he looted several clay amphoras of Greek wine. Leaping over fiery fallen rafters to reach the door, Fellgrim escaped the inferno and disappeared into the night.

The next morning, the late Publius' son and his widow, Sofia, returned from visiting his sister-in-law in the city. Taking a single glance at the smoldering ruin, Sofia turned to her child, "Publius, didn't I tell your father we needed more cheese? With Vikings all around, it's safer to be well supplied." She sighed. "This is the same thing that happened when Publius didn't have any goat when Attila showed up."

"Which one's Attila?" asked her son.

And so ends part XVIII of the saga of Fellgrim the Dread.



Lauren Donohue

Forgiveness
Samantha Feagin

Forgiveness,
I plead late on Sunday night.
Please forgive me;
I didn't really mean to hurt you.
Please,
come back to me.
I'm sorry I went
away for the weekend
and partied with the girls.
I don't think you'd
have enjoyed it.
I thought of you,
I really did.
I'm sorry I didn't call,
but
you wouldn't have understood,
anyway.
How could you leave me?

I only neglected you
for three nights!
You could have held out—
if you had really wanted to.
But maybe it's for the best,
at least,
for you.

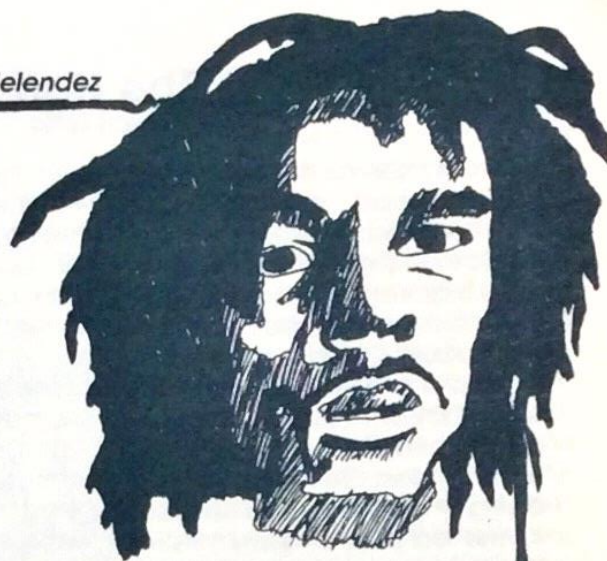
I say this
as another tear
is tasted on my lips;
to my emaciated cat
who I thought could
open the brown cardboard box of food
left sitting on the third shelf
of my pantry.
I guess he couldn't.



Dorothy Lam

blind beautiful
Alex Sanchez

my beautiful, blinding sun,
it (you) gives life to everything.
you call on the moon.
you are the summer,
you melt the winter
--cold--,
come, warm my every pore.
your rays
--arms--
--soul--
tint my skin--like paint.
i'll stare at you
--go blind--
for i'll still be able to soak you up
until your cancer rots me away.
don't give into the stars,
12 hours is eternity.
you're one.
you're all.
master of the universe.
i always see
--feel--
you,
always blinding
--beautiful--,
even with my eyes closed



Somebody
Robert Root

I know not her name nor her soul, yet I know her.
I understand her pain, I understand her happiness.
For she flows through my every essence and courses through my every vein.
At her sight my imagination is stirred,
and I wish to live one thousand loves in one lifetime.

I see her ivory silhouette in my every thought,
and I become swallowed in the dark pools called her eyes,
For she is both angel and demon.
I wish to scream out--it is me--I am the one!
Still, still I remain quiet in every moment of aching silence.

I will protect her with my every action;
I will calm her with my every word,
For I am here as the world twists and turns.
So close your eyes now and allow the night to engulf you
and let the world slip from your mind.
For I stand the silent gargoyles
and wait tittering on the endless expanse of limbo.

I hold my hand to my ear.
Please say a word, a single word
Either good or bad, glorious or weak, just a single word
Share with me your love and set me free.
Say you need me and promise me all of your life and all of your shelter.
That is all I ask of you.

My mind knows not why she moves me, for she is just a girl.
Yet, if she said she loved me, I don't know:
Would I retreat or would I fall prey to the spell of her mystic charms?
So, still my heart waits, beating silently, silently throughout eternity.
For you alone are in my heart.

The Hart

Stewart Loffis

Griffin froze as the hart warily raised his head. The magnificent buck scanned the breeze, his nostrils flaring to catch some subtle scent that would confirm the whisper of danger he sensed. The hart was beautiful, more majestic than any human monarch, adorned with a rack of antlers whose splendor shamed crowns forged by the hands of men. Griffin was chasing a king of the forest, and he knew it. The red deer dwarfed most of his brethren, matched his size with a grace that one of the faire could envy, and had an intelligence that approached human. Few hunters, man or beast, could find his trail just hours cold, and fewer still could follow it; Griffin had last seen him two days ago. The hart peered through the forest around him; it was not very dense here, almost like a park, with large bushes and saplings spaced with mature oaks small enough that it would only take two men to encircle one of them completely.

Griffin allowed himself a small smile as the red deer's gaze swept across the tree he was hiding behind without detecting anything out of the ordinary, but did not relax; the slightest sound would ruin four days of exhaustive tracking through damp, miserable weather without a fire or even sound rest. Griffin smiled again when he felt something akin to a feather brush his mind and then pass on. The hart was attempting to use the web that tied together all that lived within the Watchwood Forest to locate his hunter. But Griffin was a master woodsman, and within his thirty-five years of life, he had gained a mastery over the web that few men with twice his age ever reached. Currently, his presence in the web was muted; instead of a shining globe of desires and emotions, he presented an image that blended in with the

surrounding landscape, melding with the sedate glow of the oak tree he knelt behind and that of the honeysuckle thicket that masked his other three sides. That his mental camouflage was good enough to fool an animal as canny as this hart was no small accomplishment.

Griffin breathed a silent sigh of relief as the hart finally lowered his head and continued along in wraithish silence. He had not moved yet; experience had taught him many of this animal's tricks, and one of his favorite was to double back to a spot where he could see anything moving along his trail. This gave Griffin plenty of time to dwell on the strategies of the hunt.

It's more of a game than a hunt, he reminded himself. Griffin knew that if he had wanted to kill this animal, he could have done so seconds ago with the great bow that rested at his side. But the mystic bond of the Watchwood inspires a great deal of respect for other life. Two days ago, when Griffin and the hart had chanced face to face, the rapport between man and animal allowed Griffin to tell the hart that he desired a chase and nothing more. The hart had bounded into the forest like a shadow into night, but not before accepting the challenge. Now, after two more days, the game was finally drawing to an end. Griffin felt the anticipation build. He had drawn within a hundred paces of the hart, and sooner or later, the deer would take a path that would let Griffin anticipate his moves well enough to touch him. It all depends on where he shows up next, Griffin thought as his penetrating dark eyes scanned the wooded hills that surrounded him. There he is! Griffin concentrated to make sure that his excitement didn't reach the web as he peered to his right

at a small rise about an eighth of a mile away where he had seen a brief glimpse of that unmistakable rack.

Something was wrong. The hart suddenly moved into clear view. He was acting nervous, prancing along the edge of a defile that Griffin knew was once a stream. Over the four days he had hounded less adept human hunters as well. Not once had the hart shown any sign of fear or concern. Whatever he faced now was not natural; it was something malignant and evil and worth giving up the hunt to investigate.

With that in mind, Griffin relaxed his screen over his presence in the web. Now, any creature that wished to could read his location, but, in turn, he could now unleash the full powers that came from intimate association with the Watchwood Forest. The hart wheeled suddenly toward the disturbance in the web and bolted away from both the hunter and the evil in the defile. His white flag waved merrily as he ran.

The Watchwood Forest was aptly named because even if some creature is not a part of the web, it disturbed the foliage. A party of goblins had dared to enter the Watchwood. Griffin cursed himself. While he had been "shielded," they had passed within a mile of him without his knowledge. There was no danger of the goblins sensing him; no creature of the underground could touch the web.

These dark creatures lived in caverns miles below the surface of the forest, braving the sunlight only to raid or to change tunnel systems that were close together but not connected. These seven were spreading out from their tunnel entrance. No, there were six goblins chasing a young man who had momentarily escaped his captors. The goblins were wary of the forest but would undoubtedly find the boy if given enough time. That won't happen, Griffin

thought. The way they are spread out, it will almost be too easy.

Their first warning of danger was the trees attacking. Everywhere they turned, a branch would lower itself with lightning speed and bat a goblin back in the direction of the defile. Two died this way, and three more fell to the ground with arrows sprouting from their necks as they ran towards the safety of the underground. The last one huddled in the mouth of the defile, not daring to enter the forest and too scared to risk entering the defile.

Griffin felt pity for the wretched thing. He moved into the open and said, "Go back to your hole in the ground, and remember what the forest has taught you."

The goblin looked up with a snarl of rage twisting its features. He saw one lone human and charged. Griffin felt a pang of regret as he raised his bow, but never managed to draw the string. Behind the goblin, the underbrush boiled and the hart leaped clear, stabbing down into the grey flesh of the dark one. The hart then hurled the goblin back into the defile, returning it to the darkness from which it came. The hart deigned to glance at the boy who was awkwardly scrambling out of the tree in which he had hidden. He and then met Griffin's eyes for one long second, and was gone. Griffin felt a momentary pang of regret, but he knew they would hunt again. Now, he had more important matters to tend to.

"What is your name, boy?" Griffin asked, trying to soften his normally brusque tone of voice. "Where did you come from and how did the goblins take you?"

"My name is Allen." The boy said, trying to appear calm and brave, but failing at both. "I... my master and I were travelling through the forest with a caravan headed to Evan's Crossing. We came from Whitecliff. Please, sir, what is going on? Where are the



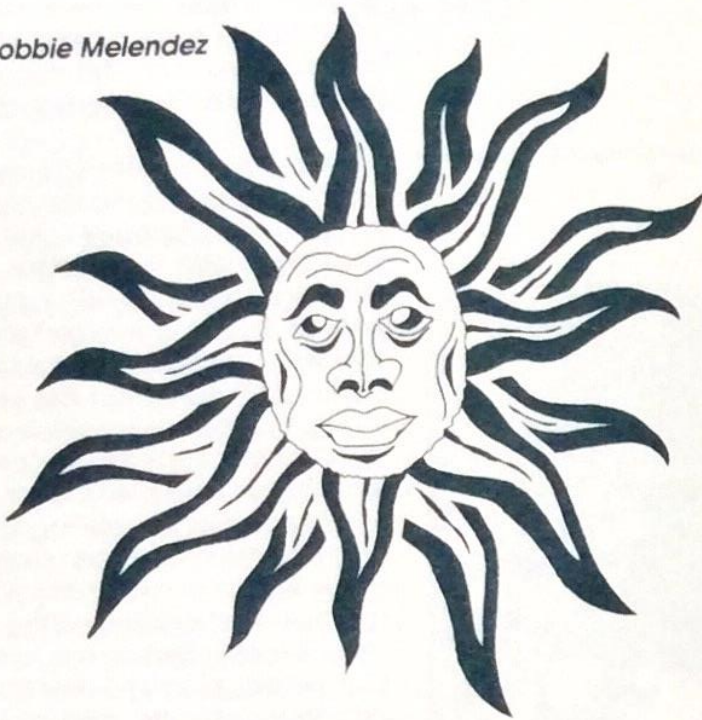
Veronica Venegas

others?" Allen's voice was thick with emotion now; he was obviously trying very hard to hold back the tears that were demanding release.

"Hush, child," Griffin said awkwardly. "I can find out for you, if you give me a moment." Allen's face lit up with expectation as Griffin touched the web and began to search for information about the caravan and the raid. It was not hard to find; the oaks along the tradeway were still screaming about the recent presence of goblins in their branches, and the grasses were telling tales of spilt blood. It had been a large caravan, over forty men and close to a hundred animals pulling fifteen wagons through the forest. Many small groups of goblins had converged on the spot of the ambush with barely enough time before the caravan had gotten there. They then scattered just as quickly so as not to disturb the forest any more than was necessary, and to make tracking and retaliation that much harder. Even so, the web was full of news of the attack. Men, elves, and other sylvan creatures were rushing to the scene. But the raid had been well staged. There were no nearby settlements, and most of the goblins were safely back in the earth by now. Everyone in the caravan had either been killed or captured; there were no signs of a human who could not touch the web wandering about in the forest.

Allen's face fell as he sensed the answer before Griffin could tell him the fate of the caravan. Griffin wrapped his arms around the child and let him cry for a time. He then bent down and whispered, "Come with me, Allen, Oakshade will welcome you home." Griffin did not know if the boy heard or not, but he made no resistance as Griffin picked him up and began striding through the forest with one last mental call of goodbye to the hart.

Robbie Melendez



Odin
Jason German

A white raven flies over my head.

Startling in a monochrome flock.

Albino, it hovers on the edges of the group. Almost outcast, but not quite. Almost ready to fly alone, but not quite.

Its rubied eye glares at me for a moment, stopping me, stopping time for an instant, and then the contact is broken and the moment renews.

I watch the flock fly toward the horizon until they are not even a mote in my hidden eye.

I prepare to walk on but freeze as my good eye looks down.

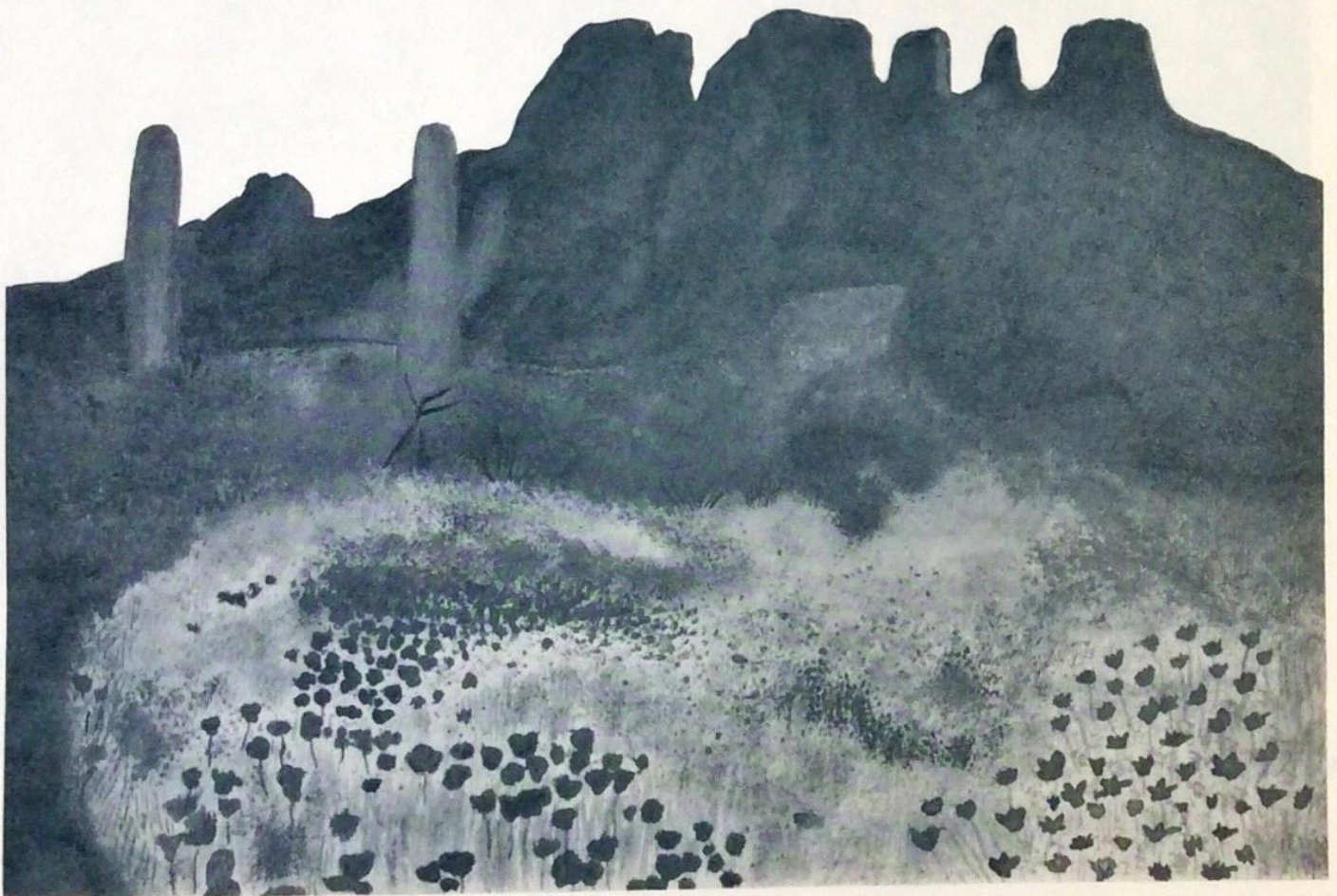
A single, perfect white feather lay at my feet. An offering from one stranger to another.

Paradise
Jennifer Northway

The bright orange sphere that hung so delicately in the vast sea of coming darkness was slowly being swallowed by the earth. Rays of pink, purple, yellow, and red flashed across the sky bringing them a soft, comforting breeze. As I walk slowly across the warm, wet sand, I can hear the melodic singing of the palm trees welcoming me. Their song mixed with the rhythmic beating of my own heart. My feet are kissed by the sand and our embrace is left only to be remembered by myself and the sea. Walking into the water, my foot is swallowed by the sea and sand. Deeper and deeper I walk and the cool, clear water softly caresses my body. The sun is sinking further and further into the earth, and I stretch out my arms to rescue it. The last rays of sunlight kiss my forehead and bid me farewell.

My Special Place
Amy Walther

When I need to get away from the problems and pressures of my life, I drift off to a special secluded place all by myself. I picture myself shaded from the setting sun by a large oak tree. The long outstretched branches look like arms ready to sweep me up and rock me in time with the wind. The green leaves, speckled with the last brown hue of fall, make quiet music as the wind rushes gently through them. Around the friendly, mellow tree are magnificent colors of spring wildflowers. The flowers blend together as though they were dancing as the warm breeze pushes them. Far off on the hill beyond, the sun's rays spread over the land giving off their last beam of warmth. The rays deliver brilliant colors, painting the sky golden orange before they sleep for the night. This is a brief moment and soon the sun fades behind the hills and life sleeps until morning.



Terry Storch

Warrior

And then we build walls of self, forged from bronze of arrow sharp. Our feathered warriors join in great wing strength and beat the ground in prayer. We lie face down upon our families, our tribe.



Lauren Donohue

WE GIVE THEM PROTECTION WHERE THEY GAVE US LIFE.

**Conscience of a Screaming
Deaf Man**
Adam Gorelick

To the end, I say,
to the end, to the end!
I stare thee down, and
I swear it now—
to the end, to the end, I plead!
I grapple with me, I grapple with
thee.

Die! Must you. Die!
I fight an endless fight,
And tonight I dare might
Break you, Shake you, Make you
Mine to control,
Yes, mine to console.

Wretched Morality!
A simple formality.
And how I love thee,
Yet I loathe thee;
Still, I thank thee, and
Spit thee, hit thee!

You haunt me, yes?
You stalk me when I sleep,
Walk me down a well so steep?
Slipping, Gripping,
Biting, Spiting,
Die, sweet Justice, Die!

Jonathan Wilkinson

Frankinator

Kevin Strauss

After what seemed like an eternity (or a day at my grandmother's, you choose), we made it to the gate. Jeremy was practically half way to his house while yelling to me that he would call me later to see if I made it. Just before I jumped on my bike, I felt a sharp kick hit my back fender. As my bike gained speed, I looked behind me to see Frankie shouting, "I know who you are! This ain't the end of it!" I also noticed that my rear reflector was the only casualty of the "Frankie incident." I could have cared less, though. It was Friday, I was still alive, and bicycle safety devices were overrated anyway.

Over the course of the weekend, I got up enough courage to inform my parents of the "Frankie Incident." They were both pretty upset, and needless to say, the next Monday morning my dad and I went to the big guy himself (the principal). I related the entire incident, from how I had corrected Frankie's grammar in the bathroom to when he kicked out my reflector and threatened Jeremy and me.

After assuring us that he would "speak" with Frankie, the principal asked, "Well Kevin, what did you learn from this little experience?"

I honestly looked that man straight in the eye and replied, "Well...I learned a lot of bad words."

It all happened in the second grade. All that could be heard as the school bell rang were shouts of joy from the cavorting kids getting out of school. It was a beautiful October afternoon, a Friday to be exact (which made it all the better because tonight was "Dukes of Hazard" night on television). The sky sang out in solid blue, and the sun gladly warmed our young faces as we raced to get home from what we considered to be that big legalized prison we all knew as elementary school. It was as if during that time span from the end of school in the afternoon until the next Monday, life was so good. Isn't that how it was for everyone?

It was a little different for me, however. My Buster Browns avidly pounded the sidewalk as I raced to the bike rack that guarded my one-way ticket to freedom. You see, earlier that day I was going to the bathroom and in came Frankie

Cuckarello, the fifth grade bully, along with several of his pals. He made some type of remark to one of his friends like, "...I ain't doing nothin'!"

Well, being the "future English major" I am, I summarily corrected him. "You mean, I'm not doing **anything**." He sharply turned in my direction and yelled, "I'm gonna kick your butt after school!"

I didn't feel like getting beat up on that particular day. I was all set to go, and there wasn't anything in this world that would spoil my getaway, until...

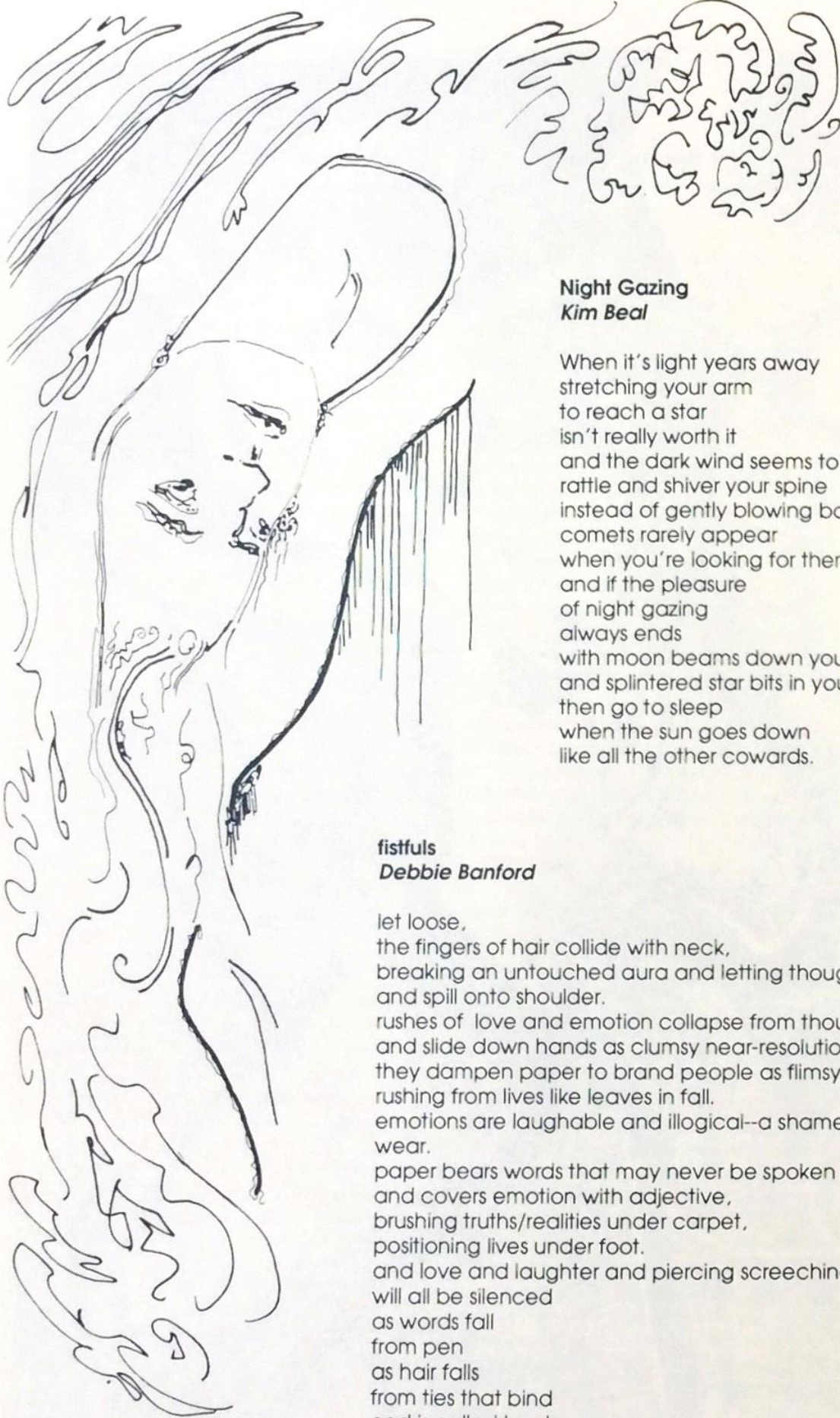
I knew exactly who it was just by the sound of his hideous laugh. It was Frankie all right, the reputed bully who was held back a couple years because of all the kids he had supposedly put into the school clinic. If there were such a thing as a fifth grade "Terminator," he was it, and I was to be his "Sarah Connor" for the day.

I nervously ignored him and quickly tried to catch up with my best friend Jeremy Tyson, who was already on his way out of the school yard. I then heard Frankie's depraved voice yell out for me to "comeeeeere". My heart raced faster than the time I gave Diane Green a box of chocolates on Valentine's Day the year before. I helplessly yelled out to my trusty companion, Jeremy, to wait. He turned around, saw Frankie walking towards me, and stopped. When I caught up with him, I told him what was "going down" and asked if he would help me out. He replied that he would because he didn't like Frankie either.

"Hey dork, ya' better stop, or I'm gonna get real mad," Frankie imitated in a classic bully voice that I thought I only heard on those old gangster movies. I knew there was no escape, so I picked up a handful of rocks, gave half to Jeremy, and we started throwing them at Frankie. We both missed, of course, so we decided to make a break for it. During the whole time that we were running with our bikes to the "ride your bike zone" of school, Frankie chose to shout some pretty bad obscenities at us, most of which I had never heard before (even though I thought I had heard it all after being with my dad when he was running late in the morning.)



Boy Holding Dog Arnica Grace

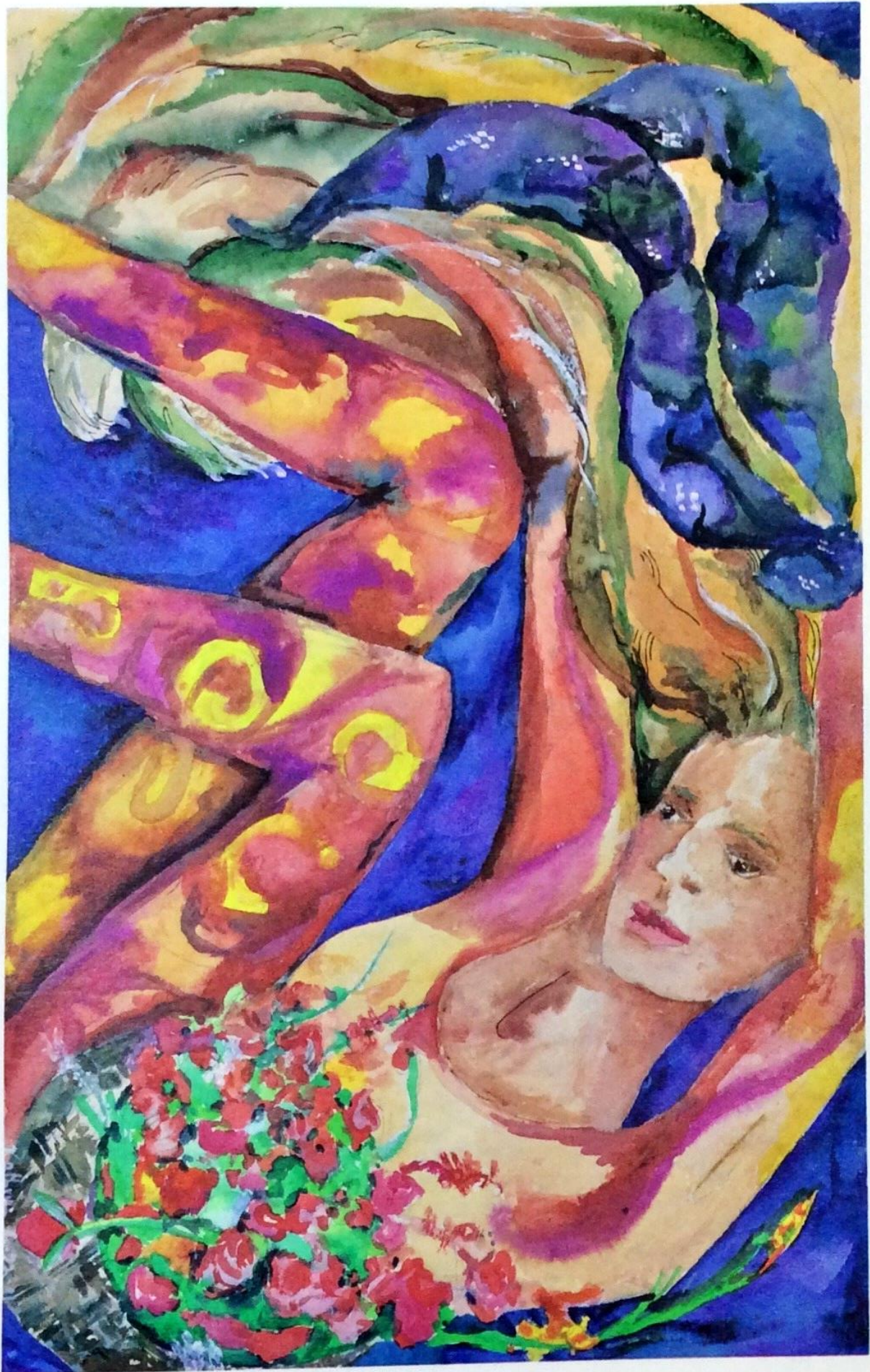


Night Gazing
Kim Beal

When it's light years away
stretching your arm
to reach a star
isn't really worth it
and the dark wind seems to
rattle and shiver your spine
instead of gently blowing back your hair
comets rarely appear
when you're looking for them
and if the pleasure
of night gazing
always ends
with moon beams down your throat
and splintered star bits in your eyes
then go to sleep
when the sun goes down
like all the other cowards.

fistfuls
Debbie Banford

let loose,
the fingers of hair collide with neck,
breaking an untouched aura and letting thoughts fall
and spill onto shoulder.
rushes of love and emotion collapse from thoughts
and slide down hands as clumsy near-resolutions.
they dampen paper to brand people as flimsy-
rushing from lives like leaves in fall.
emotions are laughable and illogical--a shame to carry, to
wear.
paper bears words that may never be spoken
and covers emotion with adjective,
brushing truths/realities under carpet,
positioning lives under foot.
and love and laughter and piercing screeching thoughts
will all be silenced
as words fall
from pen
as hair falls
from ties that bind
and is pulled back once more--
into a fist.

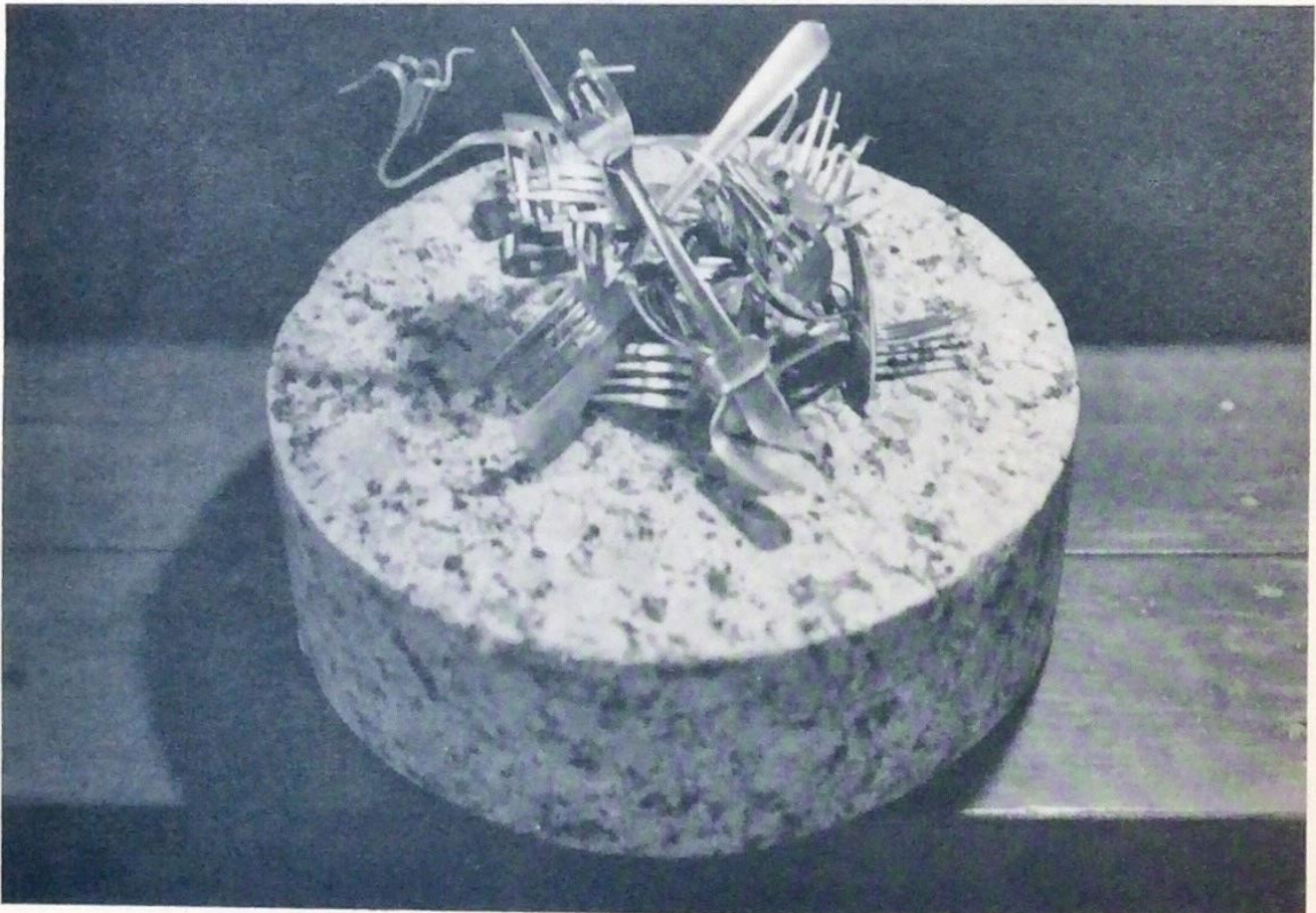


Solstice Kathryn Woody

Bullseye 1992

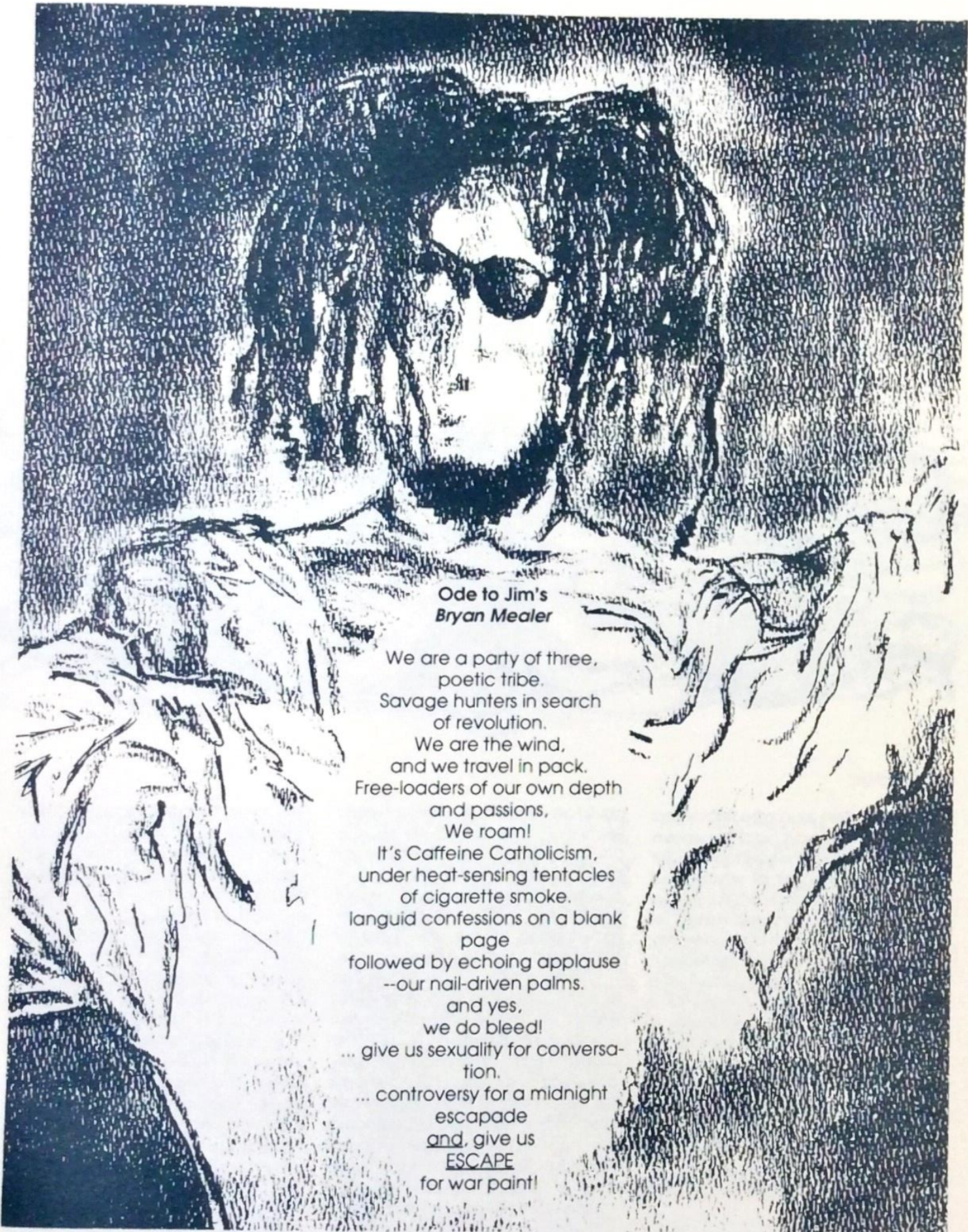
Of a Union
Eva Burmeister

honestly, sir,
I have known love
like glossy magazine fold-outs
stretched wide with memory of
certain spring day smells
of him
and I have known passion
fast and violent blue-bruised
sweet to the touch
and yes,
I have been weaved
through another
and have begged for single
breath
without the taste of him
and could you think for one
minute
I could stand the metal curses
of the quick mad dogs
and the sharp silent slit of
their tongues
on my wrists that he,
love,
has known as his own?



Sculpture *Jason McCoy*

Photograph *Lauren Donohue*



Ode to Jim's
Bryan Mealer

We are a party of three,
poetic tribe.
Savage hunters in search
of revolution.
We are the wind,
and we travel in pack.
Free-loaders of our own depth
and passions,
We roam!

It's Caffeine Catholicism,
under heat-sensing tentacles
of cigarette smoke.
languid confessions on a blank
page
followed by echoing applause
--our nail-driven palms.
and yes,
we do bleed!
... give us sexuality for conversa-
tion.
... controversy for a midnight
escapade
and, give us
ESCAPE
for war paint!

Enter Soul Ali Ansari

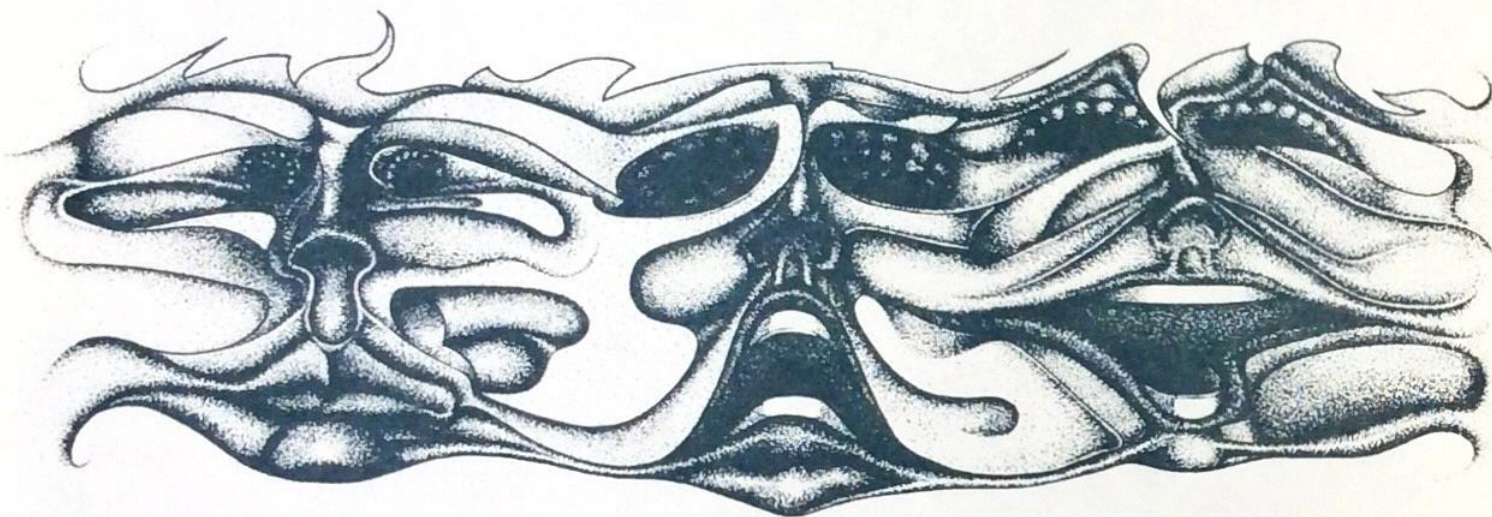
Pain from

Ramon Quinones

12 p.m. For me the beginning of what would soon be called the hottest day of the year. The "Friday night blues" had systematically become a Saturday morning headache. From first light I knew the sun would be as unforgiving as an executioner on judgment day. I sat by the window as the last breath

last days of summer had long since passed. It was the perfect night for romance; the moon was ripe and full; the sky filled with sparkles of faraway worlds, an endless dream that was a pleasure to witness. I waited for her in the park by a tree where so many lovers had stood before us, engraving their names in hearts with bittersweet misgivings like forever, and always. I knew it

answer, but instead she shrugged away my words without even an intimation of care or understanding. I stopped and leaned my back to the door, perhaps to reassure myself of safety within the walls. She delicately pranced to the end of the hallway and slipped off her shoes. She turned and carefully removed her coat as she spoke to me for the first time since she had of-



of a forgotten cigarette feathered into the air. I find it hard to believe a man could sell his soul to sin, but it was about the gist of what I had done. I sit back and recall the way I held her in my arms and kissed her oh so softly. I met her in a supermarket of all places—Savannah Miles, a twenty-year-old hypergamist who learned the value of money at a very tender age. She was the kind of girl who could talk a man to the limit of his credit card, then leave him standing in a hotel room with his pants down. She was married to a man with more millions than he could handle, a real true-to-life Daddy Warbucks. He was well past his day, a man who had played his last gambit.

It was on a cold winter's eve, the

could never be that way between Savannah and me. Even so, she could stare with her devilish eyes deep through the mirrors of my soul and say, "I love you," and I would believe her. I glanced away from my thoughts for just one moment and realized I was no longer alone.

"Hey, sailor, can I have this dance?" she said with a crooked smile. My place was only a few blocks from the park, so we decided to walk. We exchanged only a few simple glances along the way. Still her thoughts seemed troubled and I had expected an explanation on the elevator, or even in the hallway. As we entered the tastefully modest accommodations I gracefully called home, the silence forced me to speak. She gave no

ferred me that first dance. "Why have you been so quiet, and how could you make me wait so long?" I gave no answer so that she could play her little game. It wasn't long before we made our way to the bedroom where the passion burned like a wildfire, and time was no longer of any consequence. We lay wrapped among the burning sheets, drenched in the heat of passion. For just one moment I knew we were truly in love. . . and then it was gone. She began to talk about how happy she could be if we married and how we would be the wealthiest young couple with all the things other people could only dream of having. "I killed him, James. Davis is dead." My heart stopped and my head began to spin; was it just an-

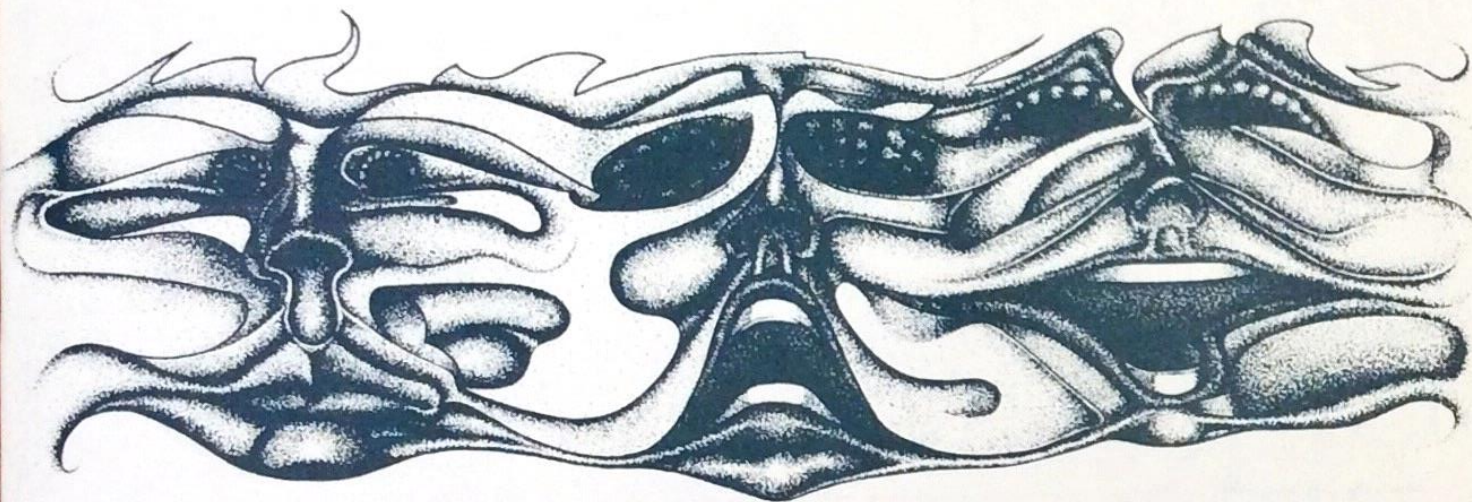
Pleasure

other game? Yet the tears in her eyes and the terror in her breath told another story, and all I could see was a gravestone, the last mark of a once great man. Everything I saw and heard told me it was true, but clouds of disbelief rained before my eyes. "I killed him, he's dead, I killed him." It was all I could do to keep my sanity. I threw a glass of good scotch across the room

each holiday season. We walked through the kitchen and into the dining hall. I realized my hands were quivering. Our footsteps seemed to thunder through the floorboards and shake the walls. We stepped to the dark room, our eyes searching through every corner as though we were being watched. Plick, plock, the sound of feet softly breaking a thin spot of wet floor stopped us

forth between the two of us. Savannah screamed and cried and said everything she could to save herself.

Without a second thought, I ran at Davis and grabbed his hand. My heart jumped with the sound of gunfire as we wrestled for control over life and death. Moments later a second shot rang through the halls of the Miles estate. His cold body



Stefan Ruff

and tore away at everything I could get my hands on. I loved her but how, how could this be? "Come with me, I'm scared. What was I supposed to do? I hated him and all his shriveled up old skin. I couldn't stand to be with him for even one more second. You wanted him dead as much as I did!" There. The truth was out, so why was I so angry? The pain became laughter, the hate, the anger became love of life and all its worldly pleasures.

We left for the Miles estate at around two in the morning. As we went inside, the silence made it seem as though the world had stopped moving. We went in through the back door, where the empty service chambers would wait for their owners as they did during

both in our tracks. "Damn it to Hell, my new suede shoes will simply be ruined." Only Savannah could say such a thing. She reached for the lights, trying to maintain her balance, as she took off her left shoe. With the lights on, I realized I was standing in blood. I looked up at Savannah who was paralyzed with her back to the wall and one foot sopped in blood.

Before we had had a chance to regain our composure, an old crooked laugh accompanied a dry hacking cough between the walls. I guess the old guy wasn't dead after all. He walked into the room with a small .38 caliber pistol carelessly at his side. He didn't say a word. He only giggled and shuddered, pointing the gun back and

lay motionless in the middle of the room, as the grim reaper ushered away his soul. I turned and saw Savannah, her eyes closed and her lips slightly parted, the breath taken from her cold heart and laid her body to rest. I sat on the steps and cried with the barrel of a loaded gun at the brim of my eye.

I loaded my things into the back of my old used Chevy convertible. The soft light of the morning sun slid across my face, giving me strength to leave Savannah and the Miles estate behind me. As I drove away, I realized that what goes around comes around. I sit here every day staring through the bars of a damp, dreary cell wondering if I would have been better off pulling the trigger instead of having to wait for someone else to drop the switch.

Newt the Professional

Matt Neese



The full moon illuminated the sleeping city of Danar Hadin. All was at rest. The streets were bare, except for the usual unconscious drunkards. A wolf howled so distantly that it was barely audible. Security and serenity hovered over the town. Not a soul stirred.

Luckily, Newt didn't have much of a soul, for she jumped silently from one roof top to another. Her black shrouded figure blended with the darkness. The charcoal smeared on her face accentuated her bright green eyes which darted from one object to another. Pulled back in one long braid, her black hair bounced on the large backpack she carried. Though weighed down, she moved like a shadow and maintained a certain gracefulness about her.

She stopped on the roof of a small, two-story building and carefully but quickly climbed down to the ground.

Losing no time, Newt sprinted the distance between the building she had just left and a large wall that spread in

front of her. The wall only took a moment of her time as she leaped like a panther and used her fingertips to pull herself up and over.

A magnificent, four-story manor stood in the center of the lot she had entered. Newt hid in a nearby cluster of trees. No guards seemed to be patrolling, or at least she could not see any. She wondered for a moment what type of nobleman maintained such a structure and surrounded it with so little protection.

Scanning the grounds, she focused all of her attention on the encompassing night. A small whistle caught her ear and turned her attention to a nearby bush. She snapped twice; two more whistles answered. The bush quivered and a head popped out. Newt motioned for it to come to her. The other motioned for her to come to it. Newt sighed and crawled over to join the occupant of the bush.

She noticed that he was a man of thin but muscular build clothed much

the same as her, including the charcoal covering. From what she could make out, he had a fairly handsome face. He seemed to be carrying nothing except a bastard sword and a dagger.

"Took you long enough to get here," the man whispered. "I suppose you had a hair appointment that went late."

"I suppose you want me to cut off your happy parts before we get to work," Newt answered. Instinctively, the man closed his legs tighter. "Have you seen any guards?"

"Yeah. There are two standing in the shadows of each of the doorways, and a band of six patrolling around the building. Here they come now."

Six men dressed in chain mail came around the corner. The men halfheartedly scanned the area as they walked along the side of the building then turned a corner and disappeared.

"Your job is to get me in there, so let's go," he said as he pulled her along. He stopped in another patch of trees. Newt noticed that no doors led into the building on this side. She also noticed that this side of the house had windows on the third and fourth floors, unlike the side they had just left which had none. Most of the lights on the fourth floor glowed brightly and flickered about with some inner movement.

"There seems to be something happening on the fourth floor," Newt whispered.

"I know. Hurry up!" The man scanned the area almost nervously.

Newt climbed a tall tree that stood nearby, pulled off her backpack, reached into it, and pulled out a folding long bow and locked it in position. She notched a grapple arrow on the string, pulled it back and let it fly. Behind the arrow, a long rope trailed from her backpack. With a slight thud, the arrow dug deep into the stone wall right above one of the few dark windows on the fourth floor. She pulled on the rope. It was firm. As she tied it to the tree, the man climbed up.

The tree was tall enough that they were even with the third floor of the manor. Newt quickly threw on her backpack and began climbing hand over hand across the rope. When she was halfway across, the guards came around the corner. She continued her ascent as soon as they were out of sight.

Looking into the large window under

the arrow, Newt saw what seemed to be bedroom furniture but no people. She held on to the rope with her left hand and used her right hand to pull a lock pick out of her belt. Within a matter of seconds, the window swung open, and Newt climbed into the room. She immediately ran to the door and listened. The sounds of a party came through, but nothing was very near.

"Watch out," whispered the man as he pushed past her. He opened the doors slightly and peered out. Seeing that it was clear, he stepped out and shut the door. Newt pondered for a moment the thought of leaving. Whoever this man was, he seemed to her to be only a reckless fool. She decided to follow him.

Peeking out the door, Newt saw that a hallway led by the room. The loud noise of celebration came from two great doors to the right. To the left, the hallway continued until it turned right. Many doors lined the walls. She could see no sign of the man.

Newt was about to step out of the room, when the two great doors swung open. She retreated back into the room and locked the door. She heard many footsteps and voices outside the door. Suddenly, the doorknob moved, but only slightly for it was locked. The sound of metal sliding into the lock warned Newt that the person outside the door had a key.

Newt ran to the window. Climbing out, she grabbed the rope and pulled herself up to the roof. Voices called up to her from the ground; at the same time, she heard the room's door slam open. Many people shouted orders and obscenities. The door inside slammed again.

"Who are you?" she heard someone yell. "Kill him."

Next, all she heard was the clashing of metal and the crashing of furniture. Newt looked back over the edge. Four guards stared back at her from the ground. Unexpectedly, her view was blocked by a large man flying out of the window below her. The guards, not responding fast enough, collapsed under the falling man.

Leaning far over the edge of the roof, Newt peered into the room. The man stood with his back against the wall, parrying the blows of one guard with his dagger while he attacked the other with his sword. Two men lay dead on the floor, surrounded by smashed furniture.

Newt contemplated escaping while

the soldiers on the ground were severely disoriented. Deciding not to risk receiving a bad name for losing a client, she swung herself through the open window. Upon gaining balance and bearings, Newt unsheathed two stilettos from her wrists and flung them into the backs of the guards. The blades slid nicely into the back bones of her prey. They dropped their weapons, clutched at their backs as their knees gave out, and fell to the ground, ending the dance.

The man shook his head. "Deadly," she heard him mutter. He ran to the window as she retrieved her knives. Wiping off the blood on the leg of a dead man, she resheathed her weapons. She quickly checked each body for valuables and found that the dead men were paid handsomely and had large purses on their belts.

"I need a rope!" the man said as he pulled one of her ropes from her backpack. Newt allowed him to take it. Tying one end to a bed post, he threw the remaining rope out the window. Grabbing the rope, he repelled down the side of the house.

Three of the guards were standing up. The man ran by them, slashing one across the throat, decapitating another, and disemboweling the last. With the arcs of blood shooting about, the scene looked like a red rainbow.

The large man who had flown out the window earlier began to regain consciousness. Newt's partner in crime grabbed the man by his grey hair and slashed his sword through the man's

thick neck. Holding the head in the air, the man in black shouted, "I've got what I came for." With that he turned and disappeared into the darkness.

The door behind Newt burst open. Without thinking, she dove out the window. Luckily, she managed to grab the rope with which they had made their entry. Crossbow bolts flew past her head, one clipping the rope. Letting go, she fell down and onto the pile of bodies. They made a loud squishy sound under the impact, and the bodies squirted like tubes of toothpaste. Newt ran into the night, more bolts thudding into the ground around her.

Upon jumping the wall and climbing to the roof of a nearby building, Newt house-hopped until she was far enough away that she could barely see the rising commotion over the dead nobleman. She lay flat and allowed herself a moment to catch her breath.

What a night! After moving through burglary after burglary without coming into a single conflict, she had allowed an assassin to join her. Sure she had gained four bags of gold from the dead men, but there was so much more in that house that she hadn't got.

"Oh, well," she thought. "You win some, and you lose some. It's not easy being in a private profession these days."

Newt spread her arms out and closed her eyes softly to be embraced by the moon.



Robert Salas



Craig Epstein

I used to think
by Mary Richards

I used to think that
my feet were there
for me to walk on,
my back was there
for me to keep my
posture straight, and
my heart was there
for me to make my
blood flow—

But now I know that
my feet are here
for you to step on,
my back is here
for you to stab, and
my heart is here
for you to break.

A Prevalent State

Mykel Andoloro

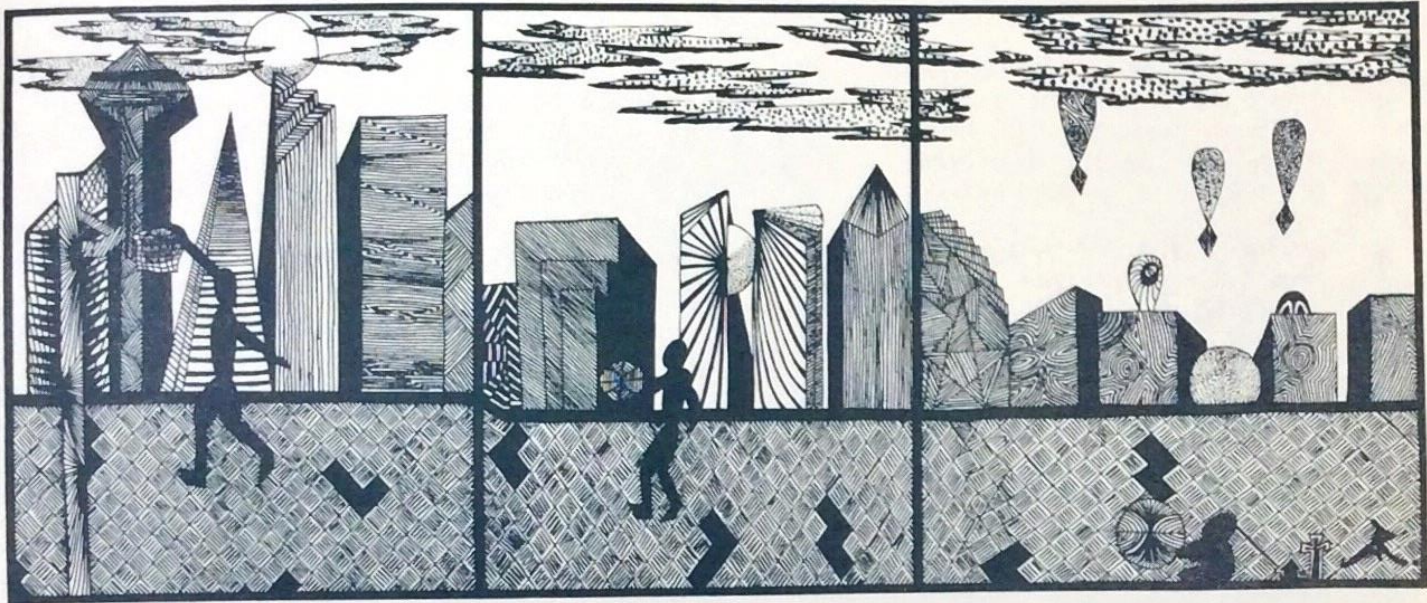
You live in a prevalent state of self-fulfillment, apathy, and greed. Look back and examine times past; you will abhor your apathy and drive toward self-gratification that pervades your civilization. Humanity has not, and most likely never will acknowledge my outcry. You selfishly create environmental disaster and worldwide social ridicule. Man is earth's disease, but a disease, which in time, can be cured before a complete deterioration occurs.

To do this you need only to look at the natural world around you. When you see a bird patiently turning leaves over to uncover a hidden morsel; learn patience. Watch a pack of proud wolves encircle a stag with such precision of movement and togetherness and learn cooperation, unselfishness, awareness and limitations. Perhaps study a pride of lions to note the balance of order; learn control. See a bird of prey, an eagle, attempting to teach her young to fly learn love and maturity. Man may be the dominant species on this planet; you are only a student who does not choose to learn.

You have lost the simple meaning of life to greed and personal pleasure. Yes, you have accepted my natural law, but with such personal gain you have no concept of the meaning. You have overlooked the meaning by making selfish assumptions, asserting personal law, and exercising incredible greed. Man has created a *de facto* maxim: to make the best of today (to achieve personal gain without heed and pity for the natural environment.) Personal development and expansion are the goal. Dominance is prime, sacrifice is common and personal survival is culmination. For tomorrow, man may die. To pleasure oneself by luxury without mercy or regard for all that is around us is a rather translucent sin.

Quest For Knowledge
Jaime Ingaran

Curiosity overwhelms us; questions are strewn aside. Why can't you answer in honesty; the innocent are lied to. How can complex questions come from such a small mind? Because you told us we could be anything and to reach for the stars. But, you never told us anything real. We ask you why, and you say, "God wanted it that way." We ask who's God; you say, "He lives in heaven." We ask, "Where's that?" and you say we ask too many questions. So we question everything, and you put down our need for knowledge. You say it's good to want to learn, and we ask you why. You say, "So you can be something when you grow up." But, aren't we already something?



Madblood
Jason German

Andrew Rios

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil . . ."

The night screams its anguish as the white moon rises.

Blood tide rising.

Blood tide calling.

Can you feel it pounding along the paths of your mind?

Hear its siren call. Pick up your sword and march to its beat.

Whirl and skirl in tune with its sweep and sway.

Taste its power sweeping over you.

Laugh and dance in mad glee as it beckons you through your mind.

Pause upon its dark doorway and for an instant lose your surety.

You look back and with insane eyes dance once more into the seductive arms of
your dreams to die endlessly beneath ruby seas.

Blood tide echoing.

Blood tide falling.

The night rests once more as the red moon sets.

". . . for the Lord our God walks beside me."

Have You Seen Me
Sumalee Karwacki

Have you seen walking through the halls
A woman with afflictive eyes and yet
a fortunate smile?
Like the changing colors of a chameleon,
Her moods are irregular.
Abstruseness is her nourishment
And solitude is her prey.

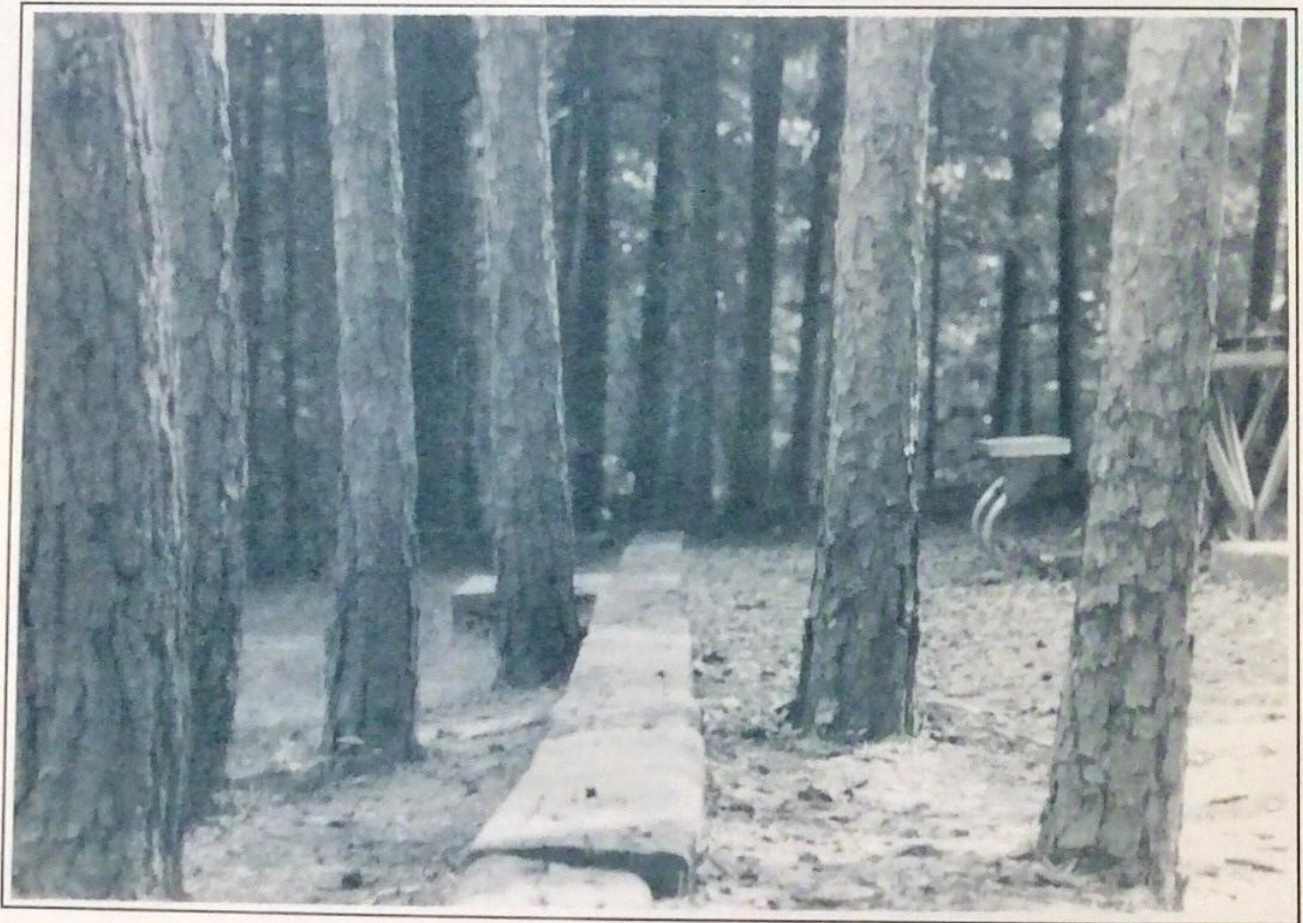
The unfamiliar drive her from herself
Causing her to become weak.
And as she walks down the halls,
She feels ambiguous about herself
And the others that surround her.

Her strength is taken by minutes
And her life is taken by every day.
The days go by like shadows

And she is drained like a fevered moon.
With downcast eyes
Pity is taken from her heart
And made into a smile.

It was not hers, but mine.
She holds it in, but struggles
Because as she looks into the mirror,
She fears to see a face that is molded
With hatred and alienation.
She beats the windows inside herself
And shakes the bolts that lock her in.
She hides herself in the crowd
And keeps her distance wisely.

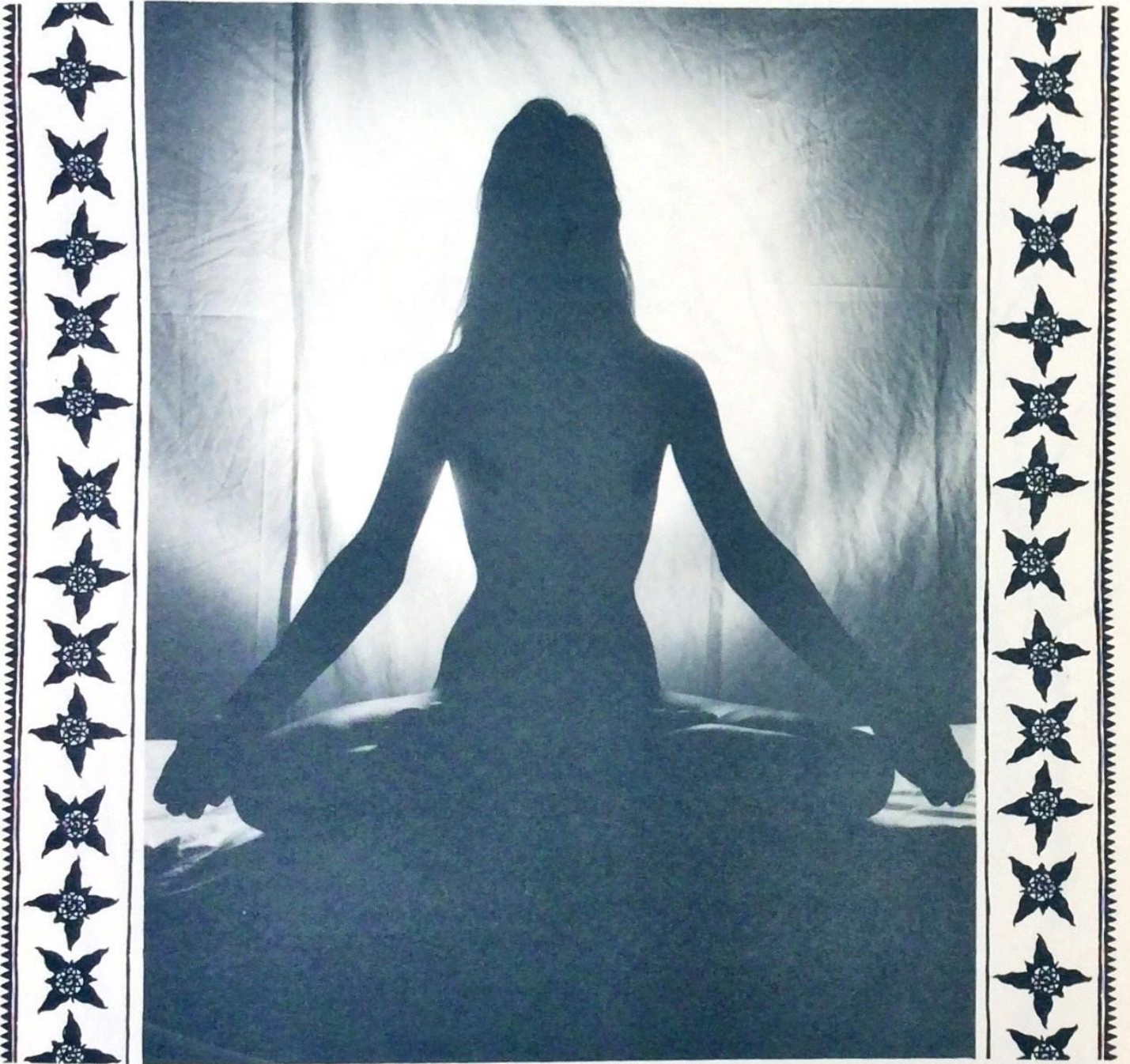
Have you seen walking through the halls
A woman with afflictive eyes and yet
a fortunate smile?



Amber Brien

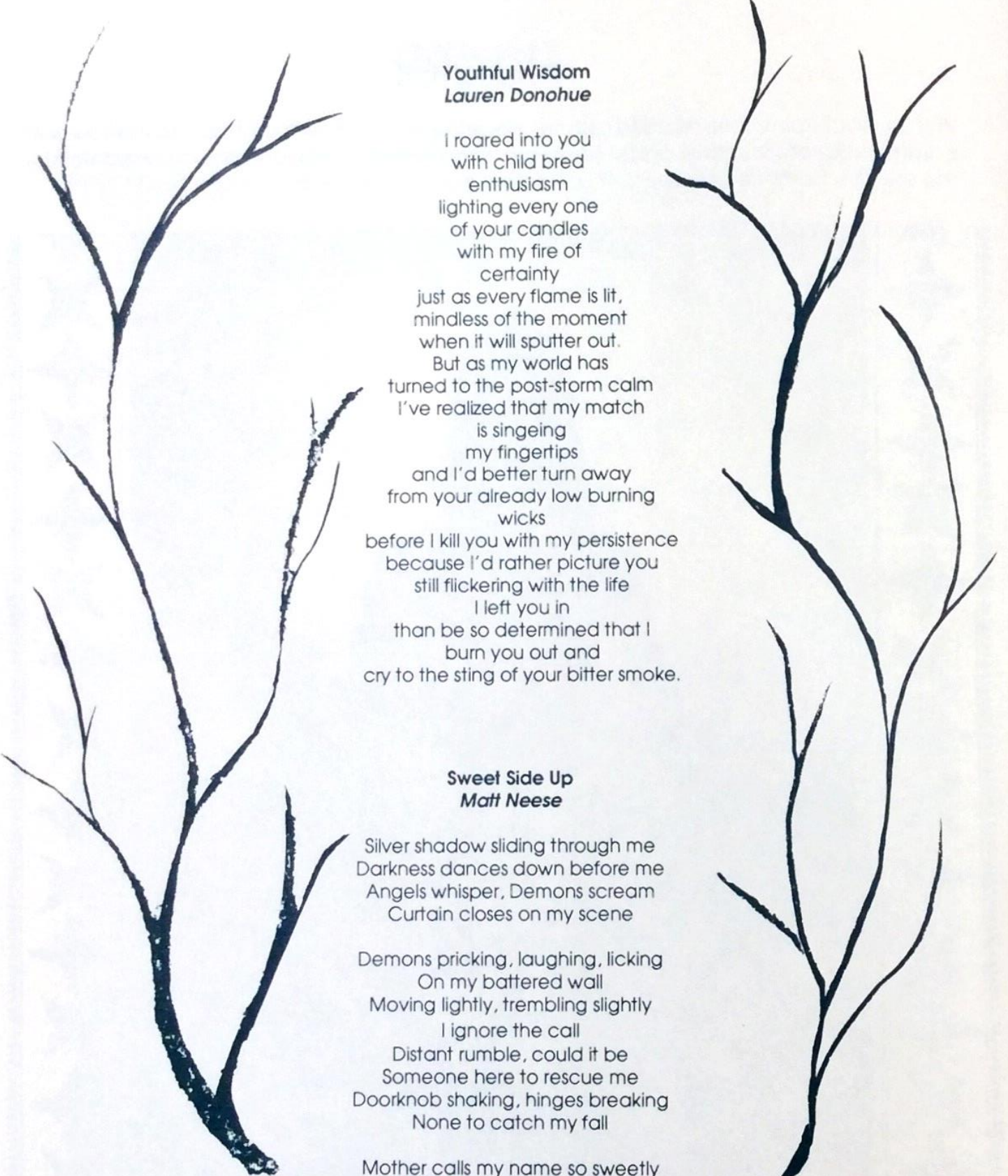
Healer

With conflict comes the need to restore. We repair the body with hands and the soul with communication. Shadows and sickness are banished with herbs and poultices granted by the soil. We balance between what is taken from the earth and what it has to offer.



Paul Morales

OUR SOLACE COMES FROM THE PRESERVATION OF LIFE.



Youthful Wisdom
Lauren Donohue

I roared into you
with child bred
enthusiasm
lighting every one
of your candles
with my fire of
certainty
just as every flame is lit,
mindless of the moment
when it will sputter out.
But as my world has
turned to the post-storm calm
I've realized that my match
is singeing
my fingertips
and I'd better turn away
from your already low burning
wicks
before I kill you with my persistence
because I'd rather picture you
still flickering with the life
I left you in
than be so determined that I
burn you out and
cry to the sting of your bitter smoke.

Sweet Side Up
Matt Neese

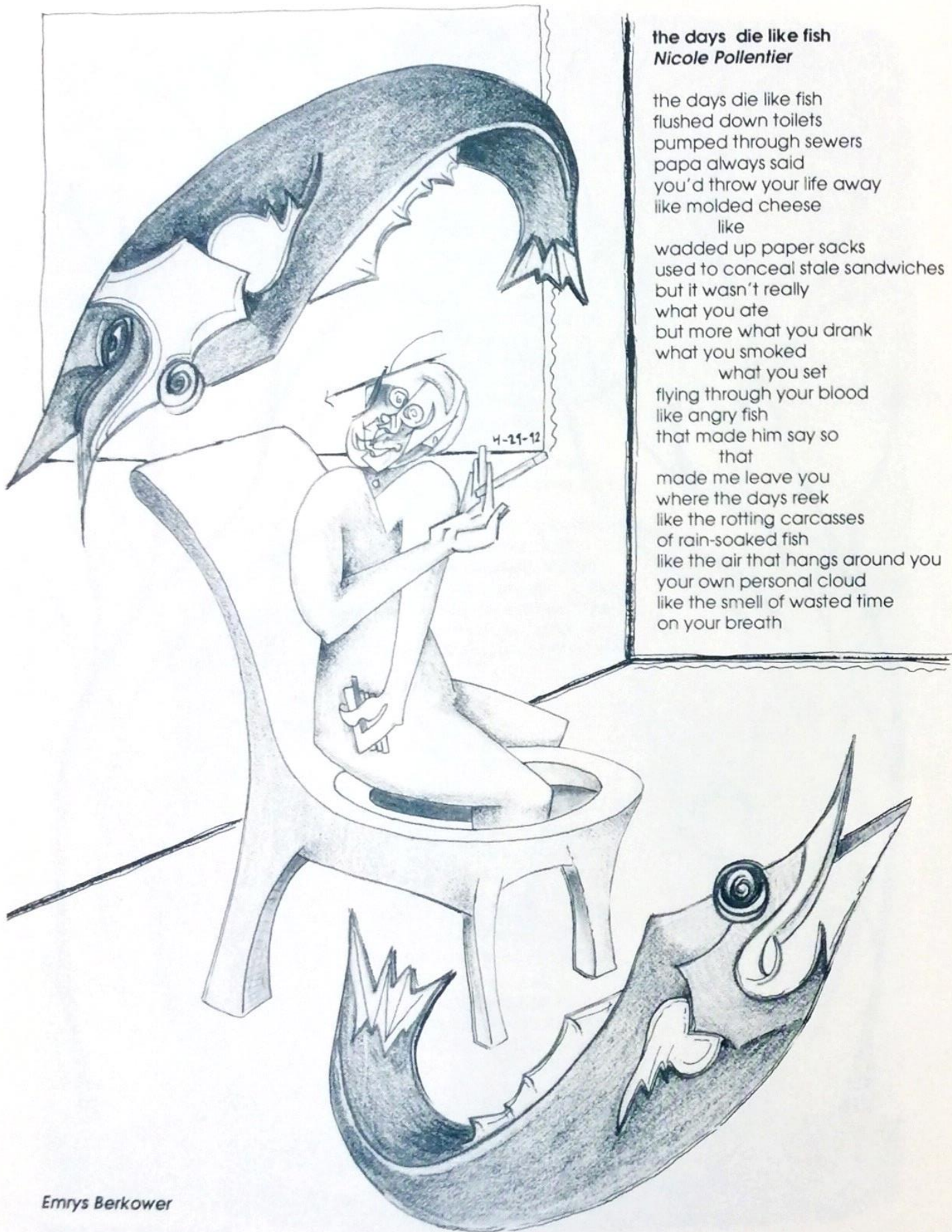
Silver shadow sliding through me
Darkness dances down before me
Angels whisper, Demons scream
Curtain closes on my scene

Demons pricking, laughing, licking
On my battered wall
Moving lightly, trembling slightly
I ignore the call
Distant rumble, could it be
Someone here to rescue me
Doorknob shaking, hinges breaking
None to catch my fall

Mother calls my name so sweetly
Purple pain roots in me deeply
Who will ponder, wonder why
On that dreary day I die



Baby Bottle Alice Lam



the days die like fish
Nicole Pollentier

the days die like fish
flushed down toilets
pumped through sewers
papa always said
you'd throw your life away
like molded cheese
like
wadded up paper sacks
used to conceal stale sandwiches
but it wasn't really
what you ate
but more what you drank
what you smoked
what you set
flying through your blood
like angry fish
that made him say so
that
made me leave you
where the days reek
like the rotting carcasses
of rain-soaked fish
like the air that hangs around you
your own personal cloud
like the smell of wasted time
on your breath

Emrys Berkower



Nicole Pollentier

i was thinkin' maybe
Taryn Nasis

i was thinkin' maybe this whole world
would come crashing down if
i was your woman
(this only because when i am
with you or at least around
i feel like eve
and she was never good at
holding an empire)
i was thinkin' maybe lots of things
like just havin'
everyone
because everyone
isn't you
which makes the idea
all the more charming
i thought about askin' this guy out
because he needs savin'
and lovin'
and he needs to be a man
but it all leads back to
the weight of the world
and bein' your woman
and how i would still be eve as long
as you were there but
i was thinkin' maybe everything
and in it
i found you

Sounds
Raetta Towers

Has it been that long
Since I saw your face
Since I caressed your hair
Since I kissed those lips?
I see it in your eyes
I can hear it in your words
I can feel it in my heart.
The clock attached to this kitchen wall
Seems to think it was only yesterday
Yet we both know that neither minutes nor hours
Can keep track of the pulsating rhythm
Belonging to one's heart.
It hurts
And still we play the game:
time racing emotions
Because there are those moments
when the ticking and the throbbing
Become one.



Lauren Donohue



Translations
Amy Carter

A man walked up to me in a grocery store
(I wasn't on my side of town)
His whole body seemed to shake
around his eyes,
large and cold,
frozen in frustration

He needed to ask me something
(Where's the bathroom ?)
(Does this tomato look too ripe ?)
Needed to ask me so badly that
he trembled and shook
A strong, proud man
But his English was childish and halting

I looked around in panic
for a shovel, perhaps ?
or a hammer
Maybe with my bare hands
I could build a mighty Tower of Babel
and this time,
God would not let it fall.

Sometimes I am that man
Shaking with a rage that erupts as a giggle.
Shopping for tomatoes
or trying desperately to say
I love you I like you I hate you why did you
how could you



Anything!

But I just can't translate
my mind's native tongue
into one you would understand
and even now my words
cannot begin to describe the
round, orangish swirling
inside my head.

And even now I'm not writing what
I really need to say,
Always praying for a pentecost
but expecting the rain.

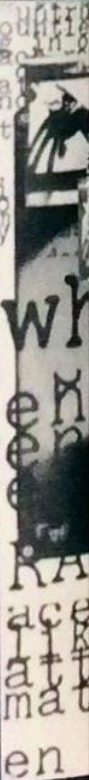
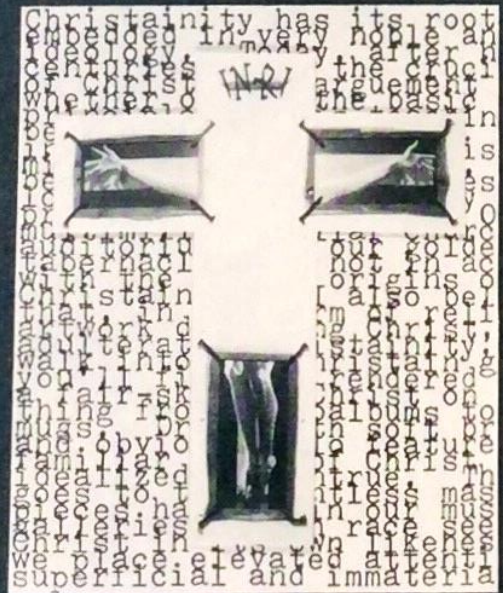


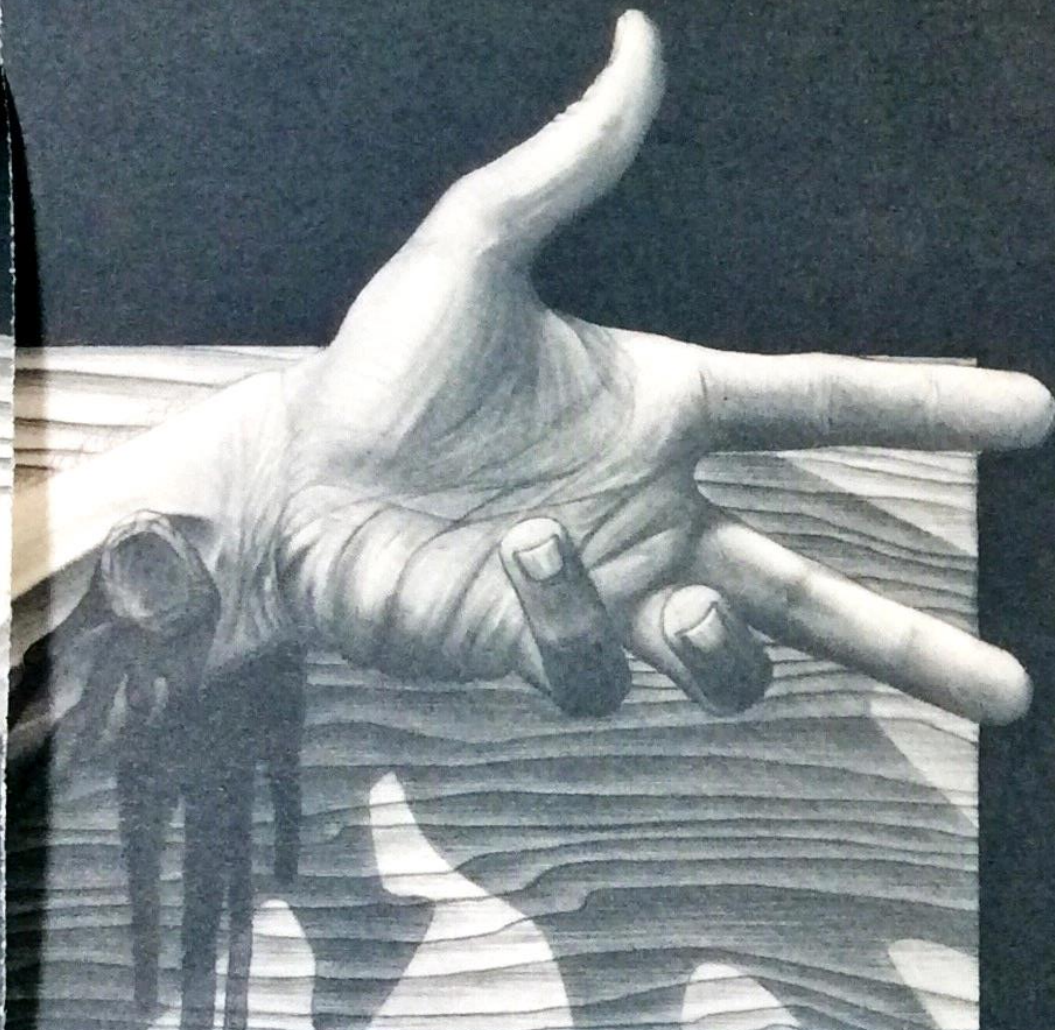


Insecurity Kathryn Woody

Bullseye 1992

Extremities of the Cross





Extremities of the Cross
Robert Cervantes

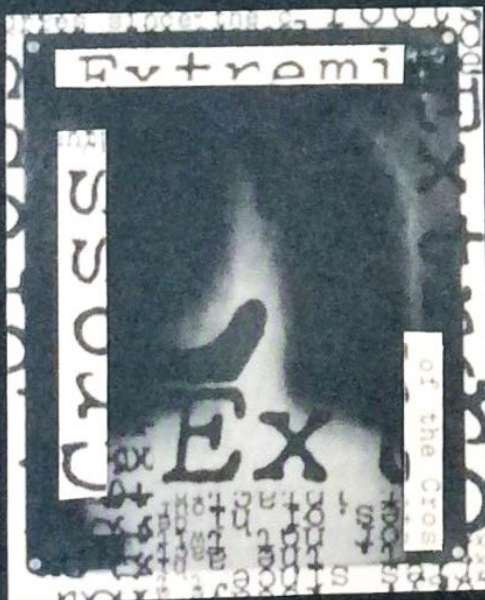
Christianity has its roots deeply embedded in modest ideology. After nearly twenty centuries since the crucifixion of Christ, Christian ministries are hypocritical to His humble teachings. Our multimillion dollar church auditoriums and our golden tabernacles are not in accord with the simple origins of Christianity. Mainstream religious art work depicting Christ has perpetuated the adulteration of Christianity.

Walk into any Christian gift shop and you'll find the image of a fair-skinned Christ on everything from photo albums to coffee mugs. Drawn with soft brown hair and obvious Anglo features, our familiar image of Christ is idealized and untrue.

We are not alone; each race sees Jesus Christ in its own likeness. Countless masterpieces hanging in our museum galleries have initiated these stereotypes. Thus, we place elevated attention on a superficial and material image.

It is arrogant, even racist, to see Christ as ethnic. It makes no difference to me the physical form Christ took; it doesn't make me appreciate what He did any less.

This piece shifts the focus away from the face of Christ and places emphasis on the four end points of the cross. To me, the extremities of the cross are the most expressive features of the crucifixion. Alone, they symbolize God's love in the purest and truest sense.





Yellow Flowers *Kim Beal*

Pedantry
John MacDonald

The sun warms my face now.
It didn't used to.

The grass feels so soft now, soft like a dream.
It never did, either.

I release my miseries onto you clouds,
hold them for just a while.

Take away my sorrows, you blessed sky.
Rid them from my empire.

Feel with me the wrath of disease that this
rabid universe has dealt us.

Feel with me, I insist; I lay here on these
burial grounds of wishes so that no longer will
my thoughts be filled with trifles, but of a
high flying rainbow in the pale blue sky and of
trembling nights lying with stars,
seemingly watching the wind chase the night
into eternity.

Undesired Bricks
Diana Buentello

Your caustic words pierce my shield,
but you deny the apparent clues.
The biting manner in which you speak
causes me to fear every upcoming thought.
When will you unblind yourself
and see me trembling in the corner of icy solitude
where you force me to keep shelter in?

I reach out desperately to grasp a fraction of your hidden warmth,
only to feel the degrading sting
of your painful blows once again.
Realize that every word from your fierce lips
adds another brick to the rising wall between us.

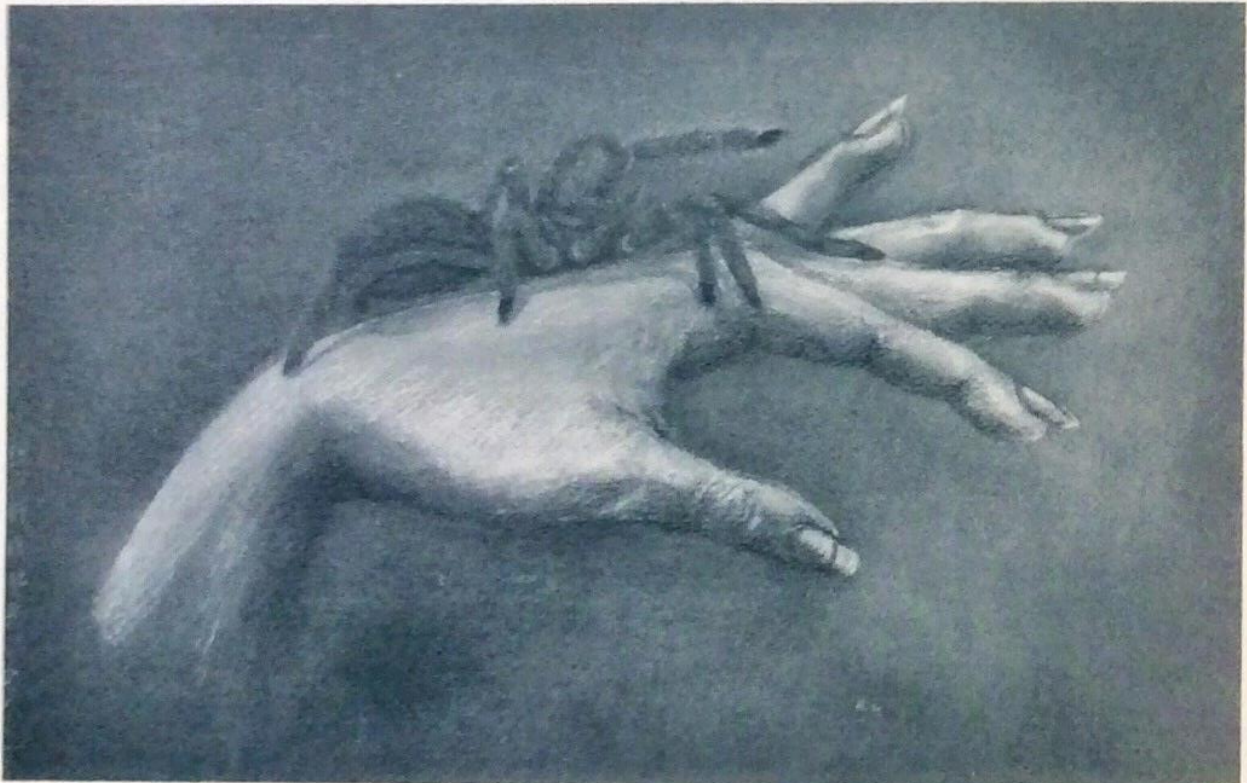
Crying alone
I anxiously await the demolition of these unwanted bricks
(an unfeasible dream)
I secretly know this impossibility has grown concrete.

I'm keeping a collection
Elizabeth Roen

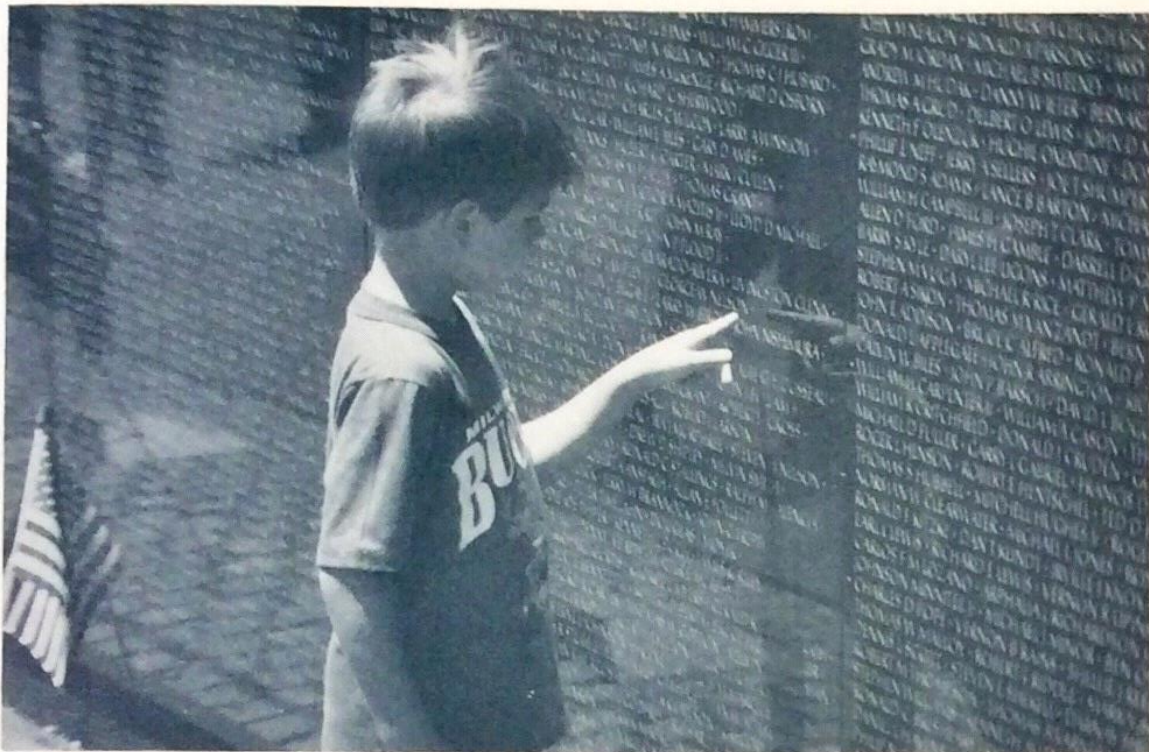
I'm keeping a collection of poems,
held in between fingers,
cutting skin,
someday I'll publish them, and
title them
Wishing You Could Love Me,
and as I flip through the book,
blood letting from webbed fingers,
punctuating the page,
I'll bleed for your eyes
and the times I wanted to hold them
in my mouth (pouching my cheeks)
and I'll bleed for
my silliness,
pushing forth small children sentences
that you listened to so fatherly,
and when my body
thirsts for what I have
given taken wanted,
I'll still bleed,
draining life with
all I have done and regretted
from my flesh.
Hold me then,
my cold stiffness
awkwardly in your arms,
and we'll cry harmonically,
I for what you couldn't give
and you for what you never wanted.

A Morbid Diddy
Leigh Labbo

I visited the cemetery
for no good reason
and painted my fingernails
over exited souls
that know death
like I know remorse.
My heart is in limbo.
I remember before
sixth period I tensed
my fingertips
into your hand,
as if to say goodbye
to a dying life
or love
or dream.
And my body will be
wrapped in black,
my eyes will shed
diamond tears.
Because that's the grief
of being alive
while your love
is being laid to rest.
And I took a nap
by our tombstone.



Veronica Venegas



Monica Oberkoller

The One Who Listened

Amanda Furr

The fight was over. She didn't have to listen to his threats anymore. He just didn't understand. She had so much to deal with on her job, leaving no extra time for romantic interludes. The fighting started almost immediately after she turned in her application. "It just sounds too ridiculous," he would yell, "Why would someone hire people to check parking meters. They have policemen to do that. It just seems fake."

"At least I'm not selling my body to pay the rent!"

"Anne, calm down. I would never ask that of you."

"Just shut up and let me support myself!"

The ad simply stated "Make easy money walking and looking. No one can touch you. Call 653-LOOK." She had been unemployed for three months and was willing to do anything at this point. . . within reason. So she called; a cold, mundane voice answered, "Name and previous occupation?"

Startled, Anne almost dropped

the receiver.

"Anne Carson, waitress."

"Mailing address?"

"P.O. Box 783, in town."

"Fine."

Only a click followed.

When the application did arrive it only stated, "describe yourself in 200 words." In a brief summary she described her life story, her lack of family, and how she had always had to struggle for respect. She sealed the envelope and mailed it.

Three days later a plain white card arrived stating, "First instruction: count unpaid parking meters on Main... and meet someone. Mail results." And she did. Unfortunately, the only person she stumbled across was a sleeping bum. So, she sat down and listened to his story. At the end of the evening, she "mailed the results." After a week or so, it became a game. Who could she meet; what piece of the puzzle would they surrender? Steve would still argue with her, "I never see you. You spend all your spare time on the streets. What are you doing out

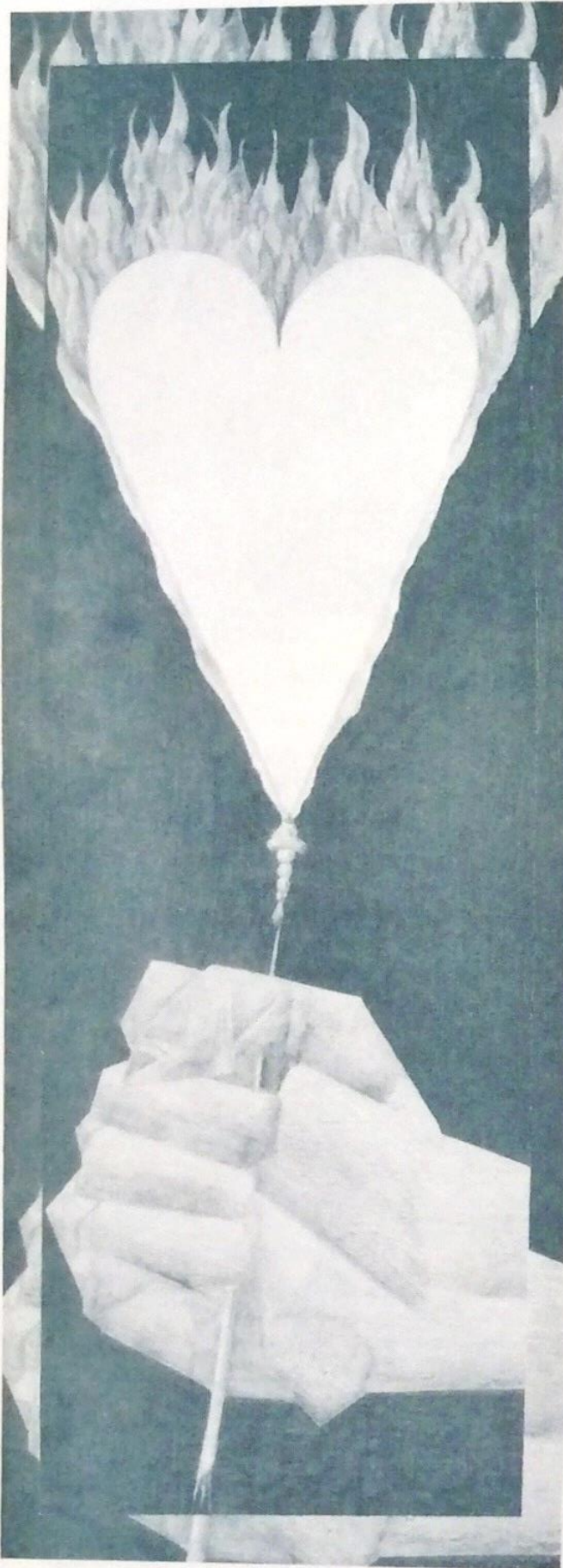
there?"

"MY JOB!"

Eventually she quit sending the number of meters and just sent the stories. But, she also started losing touch with who she was. She only existed to listen and observe. Every gang and prostitute knew her by name. Every bum and bartender had released a part of himself to the "one who listened."

She became the street and the buildings; she was the traffic lights that were eternally changing. She sat on the curb staring into a puddle. The image was not her own, only a tired old woman who had aged faster in the past months than she had in her whole life. She realized, regardless of who existed, everyone was alone. Her worst fear had grown into reality. This pain separated her soul and left her without meaning.

The next day her lifeless body was found on the street. That same afternoon the F.B.I. had the biggest drug bust in U.S. history. They said their only tip was from an ominous source called the "one who listened."



Jonathan Wilkinson

Simple Refinery
Lauren Donohue

He holds bad deeds behind his eyes
she told me
gold curls twirling
and dusty eyes mixing
into confusion.
Trying on confidence
a regretted costume of necessity
too large
shrouding her form.
Our hearts do not fit together
she explains
comforting her rummaged
soul with cool words
of contemplation
transformed into substantiation
as she stares at her hands
feeling their emptiness.
I do not love him
she asks
back retreating downward
into every vertebra of weakness
like a collection doll
embroidered in gold
but filled with sawdust
as simple as any human could be.

Love Hurts
Myrna Perez

You mock me
with your restrained righteousness
your prep school courses in humility and
humbleness are grossly inadequate.
You don't love me
—maybe my stability.
You know you are capable
of bending my thoughts.
For TOO LONG I was your victim
just because I love you doesn't exempt me
from the pain of your words.
Turn and leave me;
I'm too stupid to run away from you
or too dependent
That was your doing as well.
I've been stripped of my memory of other
friends and happier times;
You stole them when you captured my heart.
I'm scared of what I might find if I try and
regain them;
I know how you distort things.
The only thing more empty than the words
"I Love You"
is my soul.



Enchanted Rock *Chris Brizzard*

Hands Tied: Book II

Stephen Bennett

My head was about to disown me. I had spent two hours restocking the "Thrasher" shelves which are illuminated only by three black lights. Therefore, I wasn't in the most refined state of mind when this young man found his way up to the counter with a *Front 242* CD. Hell, it could have been *Ministry*; I honestly don't know or care. It's all noise to me. The guy was apparently one of those Nazi skins. He wore the oh-so-common Doc Martin footwear, a pair of elastic waisted Levis, and a T-shirt that I swear

though I hadn't browsed through the store in weeks; I knew pretty much what they kept in stock. I did notice one difference; Kerouac was now categorized under "Literature" rather than "Fiction". Walden's had listed him that way all along. Emmy and I both agreed Waldenbooks was the better store, but she had never bothered to apply there.

"I'm ready, Jake."

"Coffee?"

"Yeah, that sounds good."

"Barnie's or cheap?"

"I don't care, just as long as it's strong." I swung her backpack over my shoulder, and we headed to the

bored me, but I can't stand illiterate conversation. Any literary knowledge or philosophy I possess can be attributed to the years I have spent being Emmy's sounding board.

"There you go again with your earth-shattering sighs, Jake."

"I'm sorry. Are you about ready?" Emmy closed her book and packed it away. I stood up and helped her into her coat. The night was bitter cold, and though it wasn't raining, the roads were slick.

"Look in the glove compartment, Em." Emmy opened it and pulled out a copy of Plath's "Winter Trees".

"Happy birthday. I had to special



Kelley Stevens

had drool stains around the collar. He had a small swastika stud on the side of his nose that I initially mistook as a fantastic hickey from Mother Nature.

"Ist das alles?" I spoke in my husky, winter dialect.

"The hell you just say? This is the U.S., man. Speak English." I decided to leave the conversation at that; he wasn't worth losing my voice over. Before long, I found myself off the clock and in Dalton's bookstore.

Emily had another twenty minutes to go. She had been working double shifts all week and they were beginning to take their toll on her. Her complexion, though pale, still seemed healthier than that of a librarian. Al-

Food Court.

Emily settled at a table while I went to get two cups of Joe from the blackest, most shallow pot I could find. I came back to find her hovering over a collection of Dylan Thomas short stories.

"That any good?" I asked placing a cup in front of her.

"Not bad." She sat up, reaching for her coffee, "then again, I've always been partial to Irishmen." She smiled at me then went back to reading. I pulled a Calvin and Hobbes Treasury out from her pack and flipped through the pages. Emmy smirked. She had once referred to me as a "passive intellectual". Books have always

order it." Emmy stared at me, her forest green eyes wild with excitement.

"Thank you." She looked at the book then back at me. "Let's go back."

"Back where?"

"Back then." She lifted the book.

I began to breathe heavily, "You know we can't."

"Why not? Let's go; I mean it." She was determined.

I sighed, "All right."

I pulled over at North Hampton Cemetery. After stumbling out of the car, I walked between the monuments. I turned to Emmy; her cold granite stare seemed harder than ever. "Happy birthday, Em."

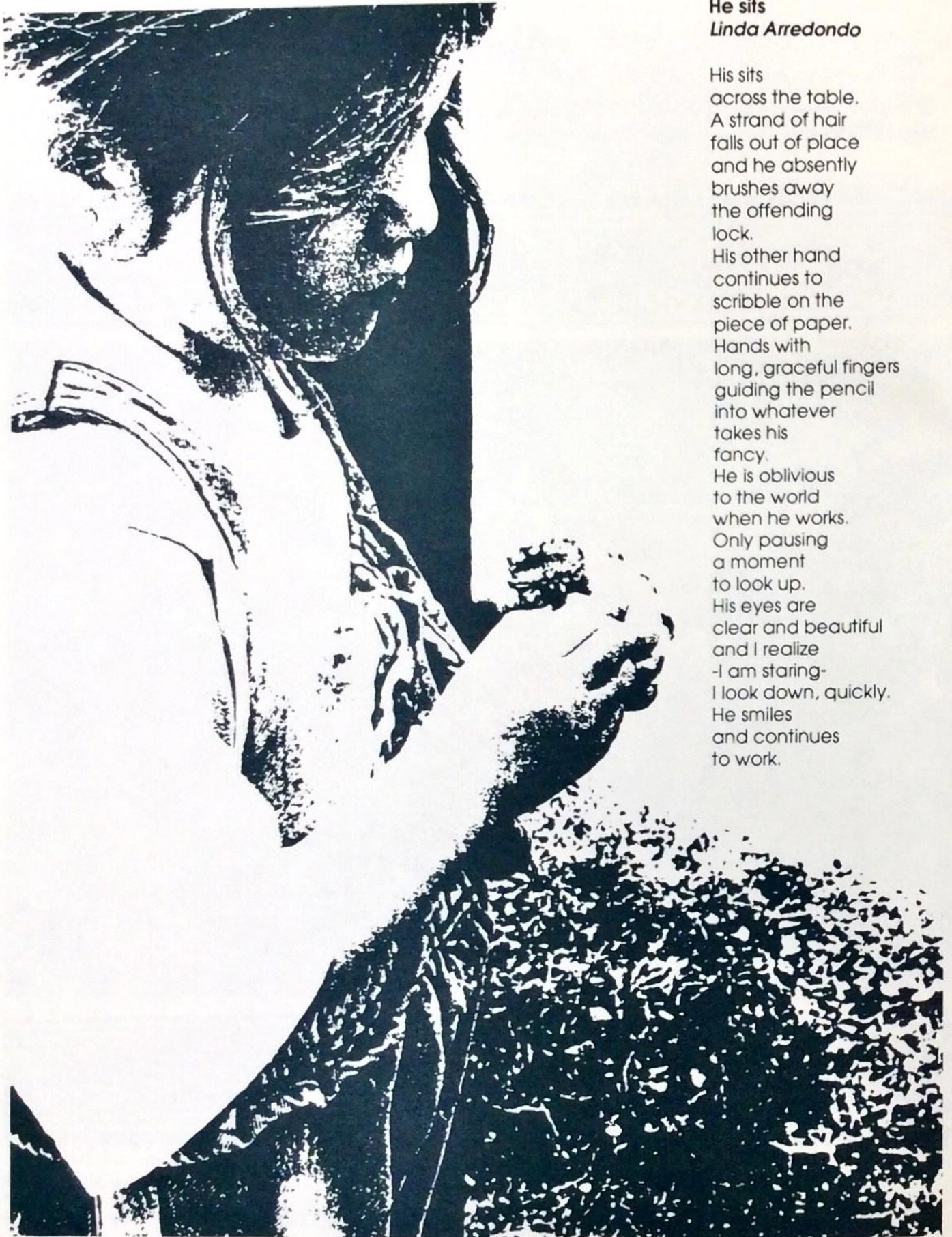
Artisan

We are aware that tears paint pictures and laughter yields the movement of hands.
We define ourselves in the art we create, tangible expressions.



Lauren Donohue

LIKE THE VEINS IN OUR BODIES, ART GIVES LIFE.



He sits
Linda Arredondo

His sits
across the table.
A strand of hair
falls out of place
and he absently
brushes away
the offending
lock.
His other hand
continues to
scribble on the
piece of paper.
Hands with
long, graceful fingers
guiding the pencil
into whatever
takes his
fancy.
He is oblivious
to the world
when he works.
Only pausing
a moment
to look up.
His eyes are
clear and beautiful
and I realize
-I am staring-
I look down, quickly.
He smiles
and continues
to work.

Lauren Donohue and Robert Cervantes



Moment
Iva Burmeister

she begins with a laugh,
a subtle movement,
a turn of her ankle
and he is poised at the home of her
neck for another sudden screaming night
of her



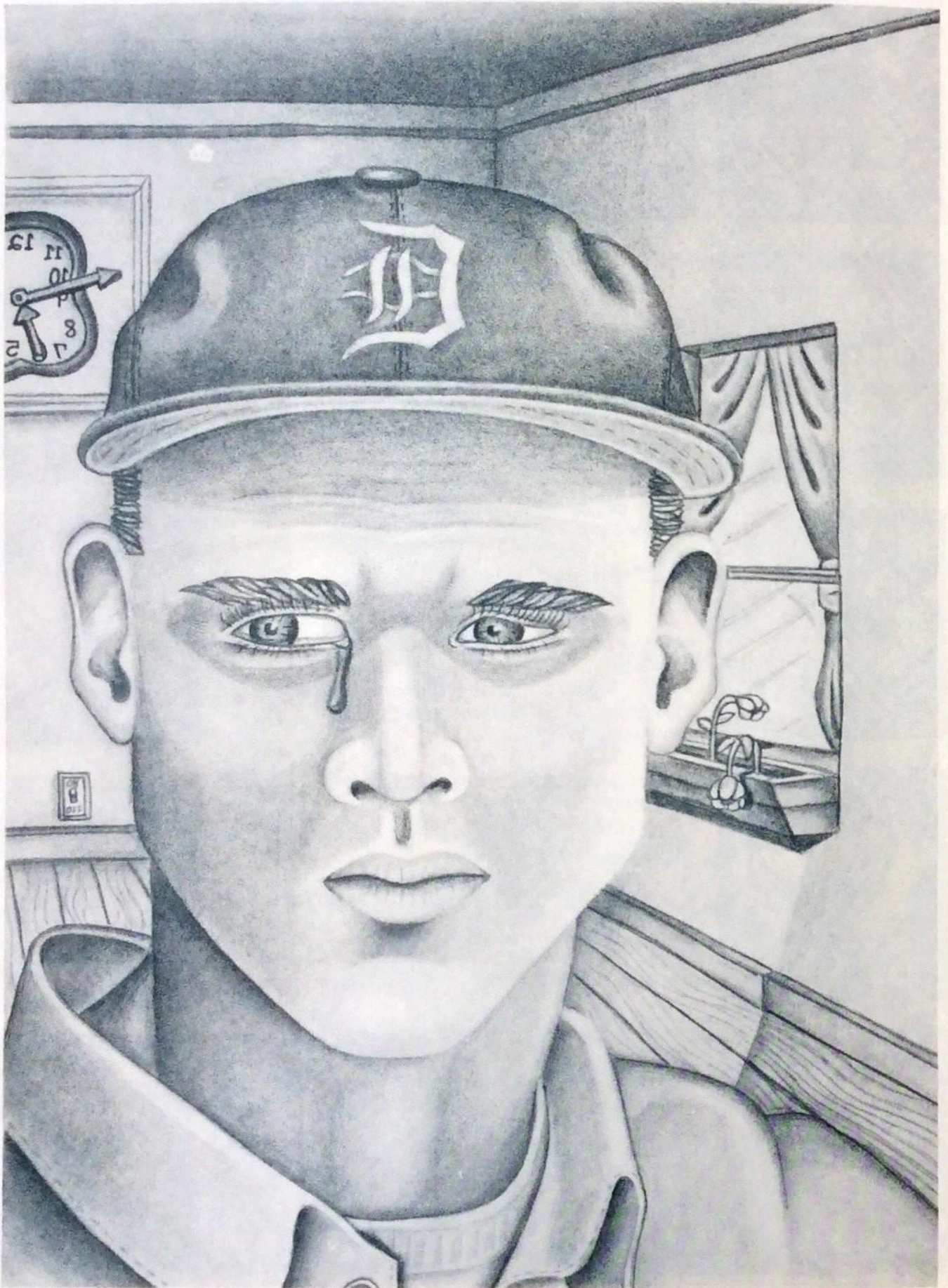
he runs along the slimness of her wrist
he
takes in the green of her eyes
with the certain angle of his chin
he has
and she comes towards him like the tide
she steps
and he breathes in a moment of her waist
the slipping of her hair past her shoulder
she steps and



he has her in his grasp
touching the gentle curve of her back
and there are her lips
against his chest
ah gentle pressure, a kiss
a promise
for the impatient picking of a flower



Angela Smith



Torment John Jarrett

Answers
Bryan Mealer

- I. Why do i fall in love?
... so that i may write poetry.

- II. Love, melancholy love,
and its seductive lines
smother me in its black veil,
and i'm blind.
i breathe in its essence
like ether.
my lips are numb
... cadaverous.

- III. The sky is falling down on me
on a night that is more
majestic and stimulating
than my words under
your balcony.
Throw the rope down so i can
piece them together on my way up.
i'm delicate.
a spider on a web
... heaven is destiny.

- IV. Excuse me as i squeeze myself into
this statue.
i'm "the Thinker"
head down but forever awake
poised.
the rain soaks me and
penetrates through the shell.
nakedness is appropriate.
a symbol of a hostage
and a representative to the meek.
...sorrow is monumental.

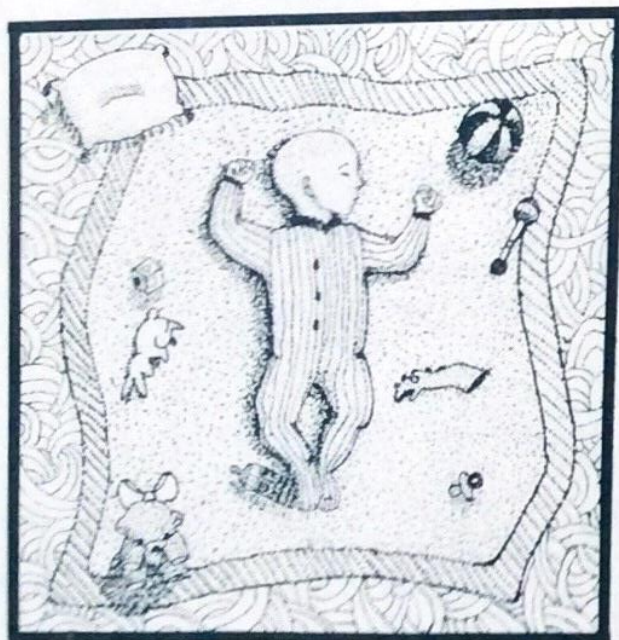
- V. Why do i write poetry
... so that i might escape love.

Between the Canned Peas and the Tuna
Nicole Pollentier

I guess I thought moving
would be a lot like
grocery shopping:
I packed all my favorites
into brown paper boxes
that veered to the left
when I walked to the right
and headed for the express lane
expecting no tax
no commitments;

but someone locked the doors at H.E.B.;

I live between the canned peas
and the tuna;
where discriminating eyes
label me day-old bread
and decide I'm not good enough
to mingle with their carrots
and cheese;
and I want my real home;
I'm sick of Aisle Six
where the same old women
in pink foam curlers
pad past me
day after day;
where the synthetic voices
of piped-in elevator music
constantly remind me
that I'm in a strange place,
and I still haven't learned
the local songs.



Linda Arredondo

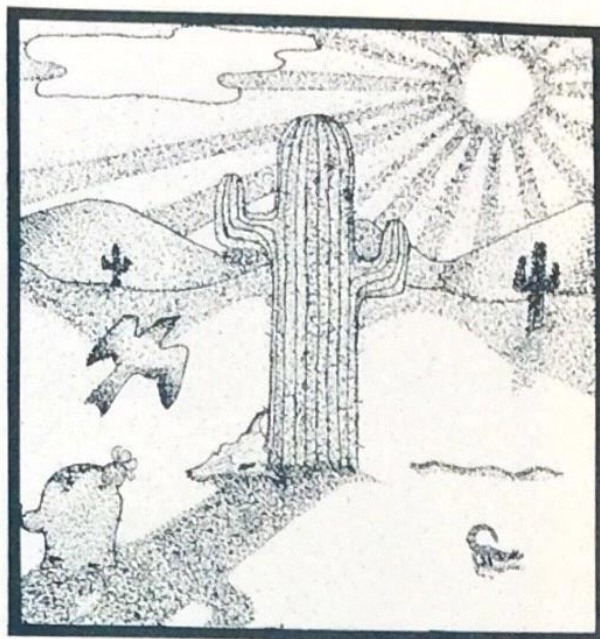
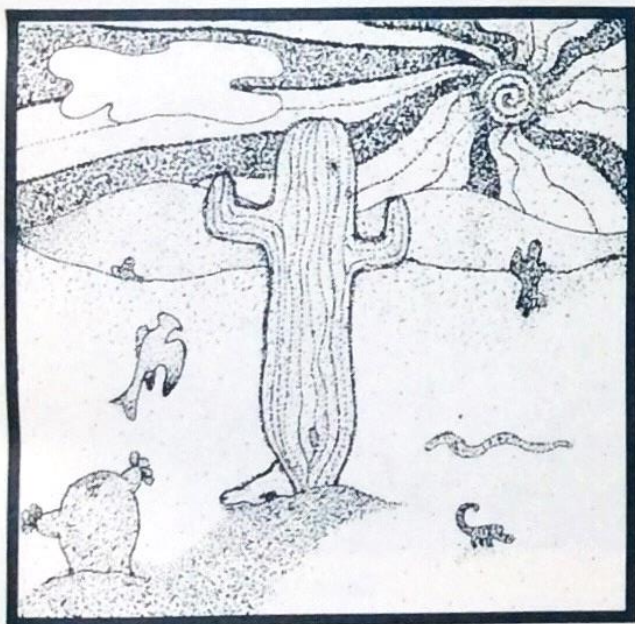


For a split-second, I was a slinky
Alice Lam

'For a split-second,
I was a slinky'
Hurdling down some
unpredicted
stairwell,
Moving with
such uncertainty
of jello in a bowl.
I was a sentence
with no period
or question mark
but rather a
dot . . . dot . . . dot . . .
(a race
with no finish line)
I was alive
and would not
win my race
end my sentence
moving upstairs to downstairs
until I died,
coiled on the floor.

Poem for Algebra Teachers
Elizabeth Roen

you said
"eleven"
with the accent
of a mother tongue,
laying a bed in your mouth
to cradle the number.
I have watched you
birth equations,
and name them.
you have labored through
variables and quotients
and now they all have
a nook in your mind,
complete with quilted comforter
and cedar chips
(to keep the moths away).
I could open my mind as an inn,
and rest weary numbers
as they travel from far lands,
but I'd rather keep a
private residence,
and use each
out-of-the-way corner
for my own recreation,
keeping my mind aware
of more appealing facts
than $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$.



Rain Story
Jason Garcia

It's been raining
Ever since I can remember
I'd buy a boat, but
The stores are under water
I'll have to make do
With a few pieces of wood
And you.

I'll sleep with you
In our watery bed
I'll drink it up and
Breathe it in
Some would say we'd drown--
But what do they know
About what we can do?

We can sit on a raft
In the middle of this sea
With a table and two chairs
(Extinguished candles)
And the rain pours down
And fills our glasses
And we laugh and drink
And drink and drink.

I get home late, the water
Lies in little puddles in the street.
The street light brightens up the night
I close my door, hang up my coat
And I prepare myself for bed. . .
My bed that's warm--
My bed that's cold
The rain still falls
I sleep alone.



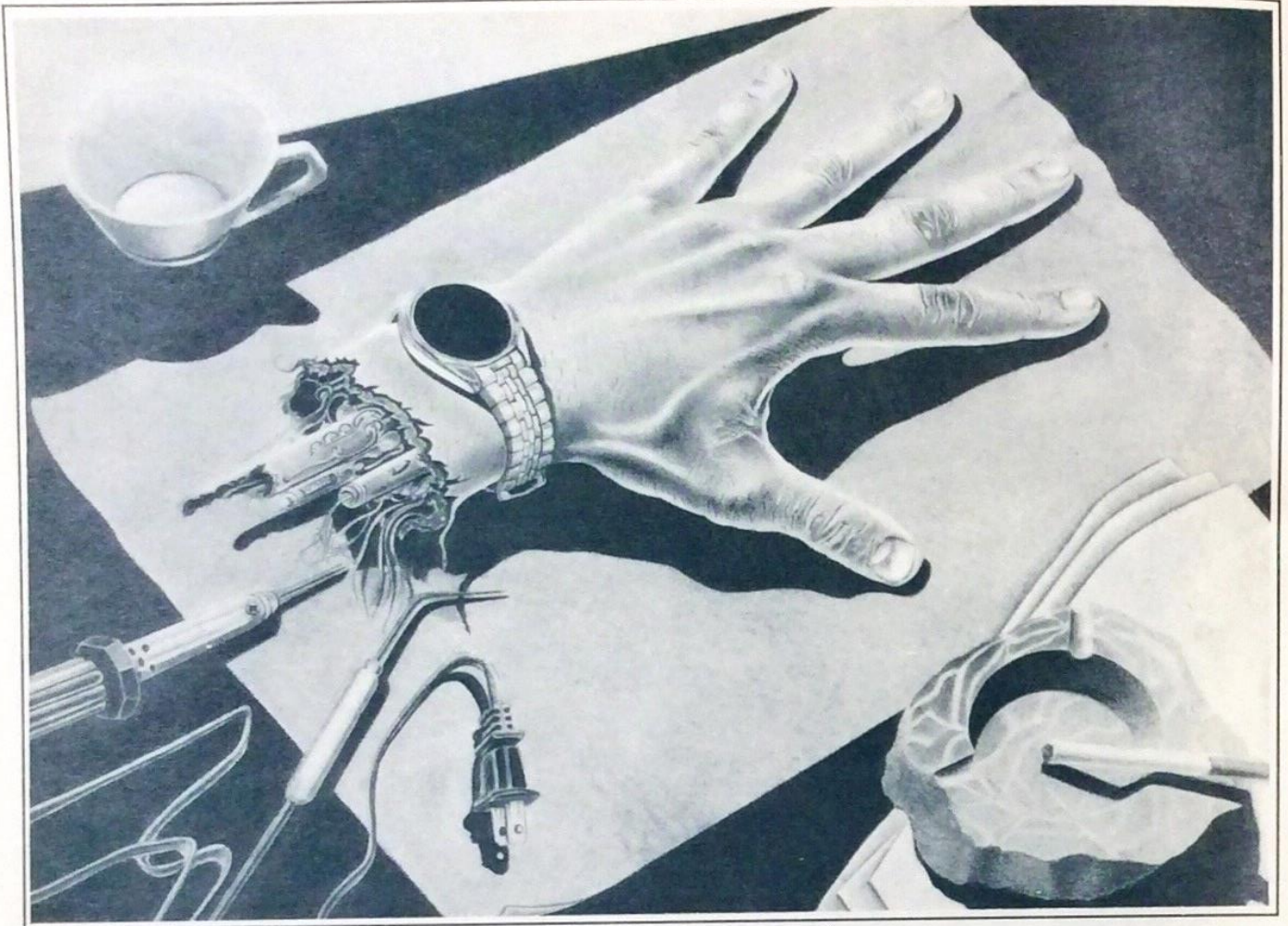
Green Girl Alice Lam

Afrocentric
Karen Hooper

**Endless waiting on an English field trip
Gathering of "smart kids"
To get a taste of some African program--
This exciting cultural experience**

**they appeared then
dancing and chanting on the wooden stage
singing their lives to us
The kids all cheered as the drummer beat by
swinging his legs with the board between them
moving his body as if he were under the sun
the circling dancers with their muscular legs
dusky brown over the painted stage
smiling like stars and playing their strange instruments
Stranger outfits (only to us)
woven and wicker with sunshine colors
they finished the song and waved goodbye
dancing behind the black velvet curtain-eclipse.**

**And then the leader came out
To answer silly political questions
what about the dust they dance in
He shuffled his bare feet and listened to
The translator
what does he care
in his braided hair
About us trapped in belts and shoelaces
Our sun is bikinis and surf
not beating down on scanty crops
concentrated water
life as a quiet singing celebration**



Robert Hilton

Frank and I
Melissa Sadler

"Frank, I've got to go eat lunch," I said to my friend.

"Okay. I'll meet you at the tree when you're finished." He walked me to my front door, then left.

"How's your day been so far, Phil?" Mom asked as I entered the room.

"Okay. Frank and I played spies in the field across the street."

"Why don't you ever invite Frank over? You seem to spend a lot of time with him, but I've never even seen him before."

"Well... I don't know. He's very shy around adults. He even feels shy talking to his own folks."

"Maybe one day I'll get a look at him."

Lunch was over and I rushed out to meet Frank. We played for a while, and then I had to go home. Weeks went by and Frank and I spent all of our time together. Then one day when I came in for dinner, my mom asked, "How's Frank today, Phil?"

"Well... Mom, Frank died today," I said very lightly.

"What! What happened?"

"Well, we got in a fight and I pushed him. He fell and broke his leg. Now he's dead."

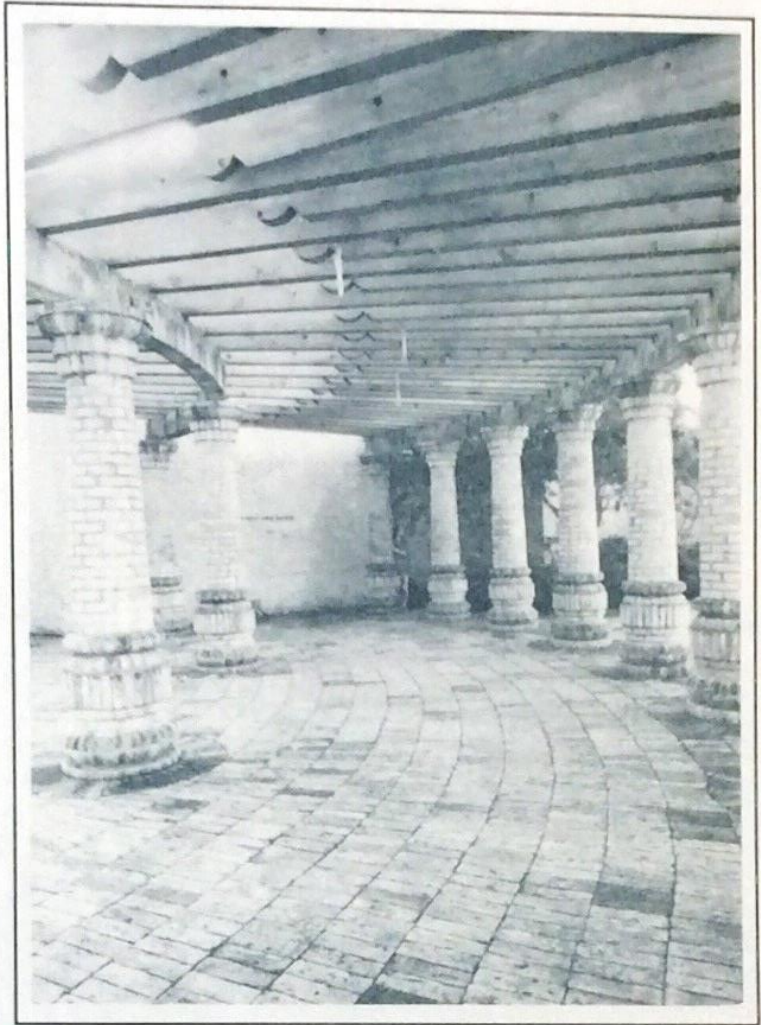
"No he's not. He just has a broken leg."

"No, Mom, I decided Frank wasn't a very nice imaginary friend. So I made him die."

Hands

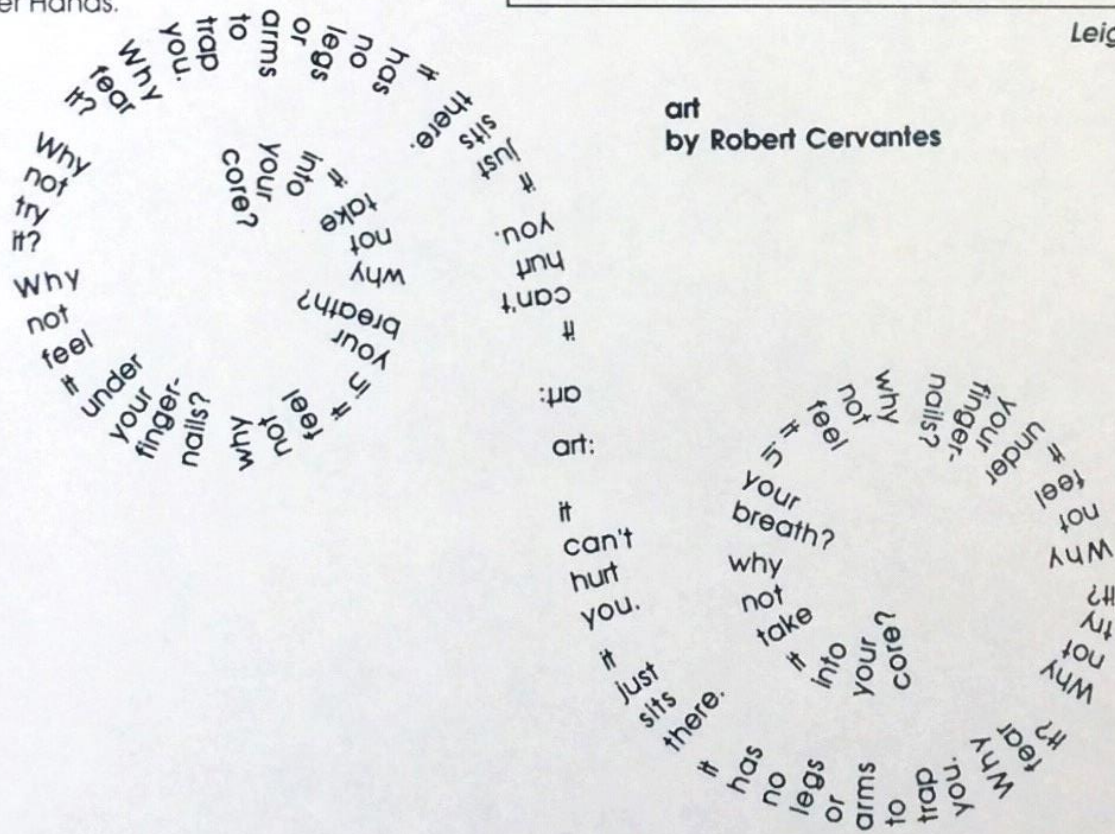
Linda Arredondo

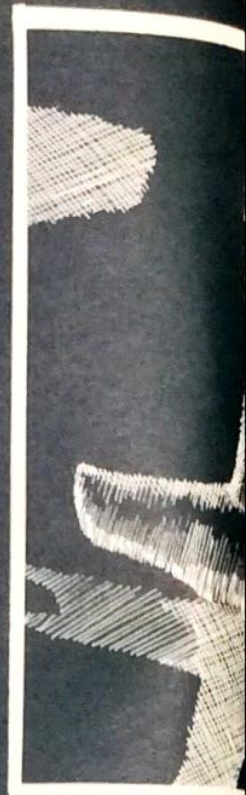
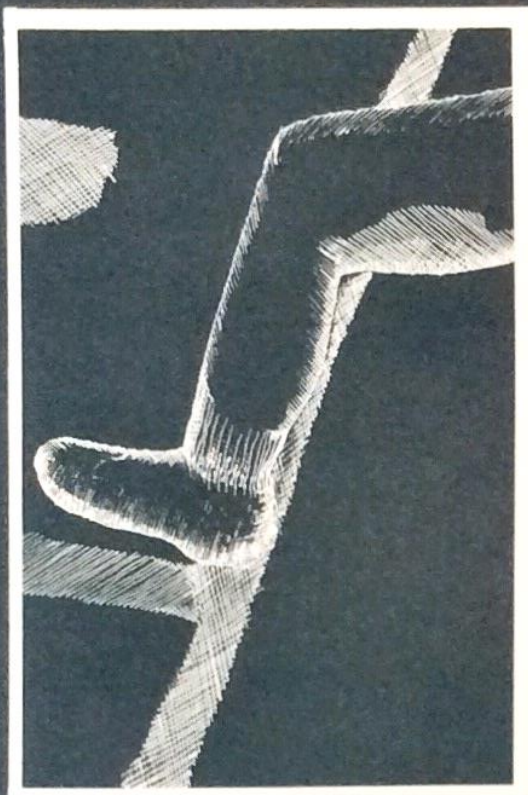
The first thing
 I notice
 are the hands
 Hands are newspapers
 of the soul,
 if you care to read them.
 Youthful, graceful, nimble hands
 of an artist
 marred only by the callous
 on his finger
 caused by his need
 for expression.
 Dirty, rough hands
 of a laborer,
 hardened
 but full of strength
 as he provides
 for the mouths at home.
 Clean, dynamic hands
 of a writer
 taking a pen
 illustrating
 her thoughts with words.
 Old, gnarled, aged hands
 of a withered woman
 whose trembling, arthritic fingers
 are held by her daughters
 as she passes away
 into other Hands.



Leigh Labbo

art
by Robert Cervantes





rain in nineteen parts
Alice Lam

i.
tiny invaders attack
surrounding their
surrendering captives

ii.
battle in the streets
angry mobs
hold black umbrellas

iii.
cars slide on slick roads
like wobbly children with
new shoes

iv.
newly washed Fords
cringe through muddy puddles
(they seldom wear galoshes)

v.
water slips through my hands
and rains on my wrists
(it's hard to drink from the sky)

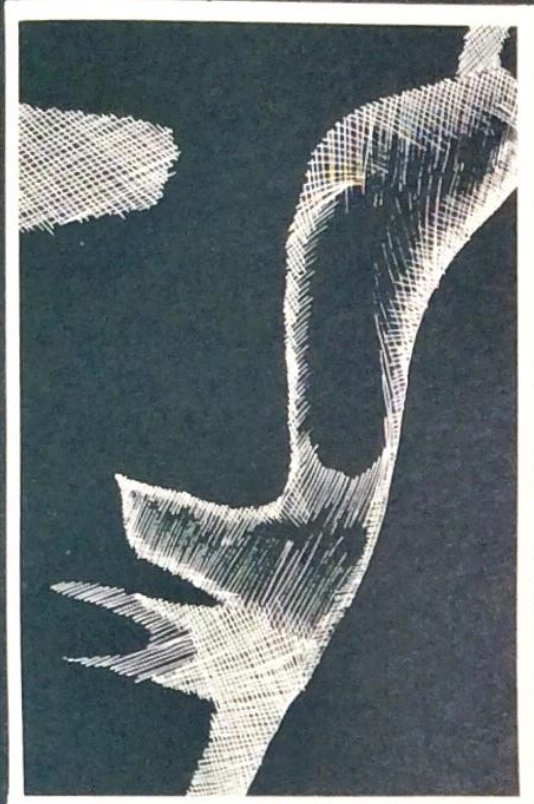
vi.
steady hum turns to incessant buzz
a wash of green paint is spread upon the land

x.
the brink of the rain
in his eyes
grew nearer with each blink

ix.
one tormented thought following another
thoughts impeded her brain
until it overflowed with emotions

viii.
rain is death to fire
and life
to flowers

vii.
bunnies scamper
over soaked grasslands
moistening their ears



Matt Norris

xi.

oh my nose tickles
old people creak
and cats wail

xii.

my hair grows heavy
with mingling
burdensome drops

xiii.

"grunt!" said Dorothy
and all five warthogs
sped away like a fast rain

xiv.

rain falls from eyes
rather than clouds
in the crowded theater
(have a nice day)

xvi.

drip, splunk
a hole in the wall
a pool on the floor

xv.

if heaven is so nice
why are the angels
crying upon our wretched earth?

xvii.

rain is an unwelcome visitor in my house
else I would have no windows

xviii.

walk between the drops
she said.
(I did not get wet)

xix.

she rejoiced in the drops
and the gloominess of others
because she saw not the death of water
but its constant reincarnation



Tiger *Blake Sandberg*

Storyteller

We are children from the trees and from our mouths stories grow and are nurtured by the passing of time. Our ancestors live in our eyes and dance on our tongues.



Kim Beal

OUR STORIES WEAVE THE PATTERN OF LIFE.

An Angel in Heaven

Kimberly Perkins

Andrea DiMaggio moved into the house on Rawlings in August of 1977. Marcie and I wondered who would take the place of Davey, our best friend, who had just moved out and was on his way to a new life and new friends in Omaha, Nebraska. The realtor had told us that a new girl would soon be our playmate, but little did we know that she would change our lives dramatically.

Andrea was only two years old, and Marcie and I were three. She was a very small child, and we quickly renamed her "Little Andy." She became our baby, and we loved to spend time with her. As we all grew into darling little girls, we continued to be the closest of friends.

In the summer of 1978, Little Andy became ill. She stayed at home a lot, and we missed being with her. The diagnosis was Neuroblastoma. Little Andy had cancer. She had several tumors within her tiny body, and her parents were told that she had at the most two years to live. The news was devastating, and although we could not begin to comprehend the seriousness of her illness, we could tell that she was very sick. Little Andy's mom, Sue, quit her job immediately to spend the final months of her only child's life with her. For Marcie and me, the next eighteen months were filled with a myriad of emotions. Sue took Little Andy everywhere, and we always went along. We went on fun excursions to the mountains, the park, even all the way to Disneyland. Sue bought a video camera and was constantly filming the three of us at play. She took roll after roll of pictures, and she never got tired of having us at her house.

The holidays were a very special time, and Halloween was Little Andy's favorite. We dressed up in our costumes every day for a month. Marcie and I thought it was neat that she could eat all the candy she wanted and her mom never got mad.

Time passed all too quickly, and Little Andy only seemed to get worse. She spent a lot of time at the doctor's office and the hospital, and Marcie and I experienced it right along with her. We saw her give blood and take lots of medicines. We also saw the side effects of chemotherapy. We watched as she lost her hair day by day until it was all gone. We even laughed with her as she tried on wigs, just for fun. She would oftentimes vomit profusely and then be so weak for days

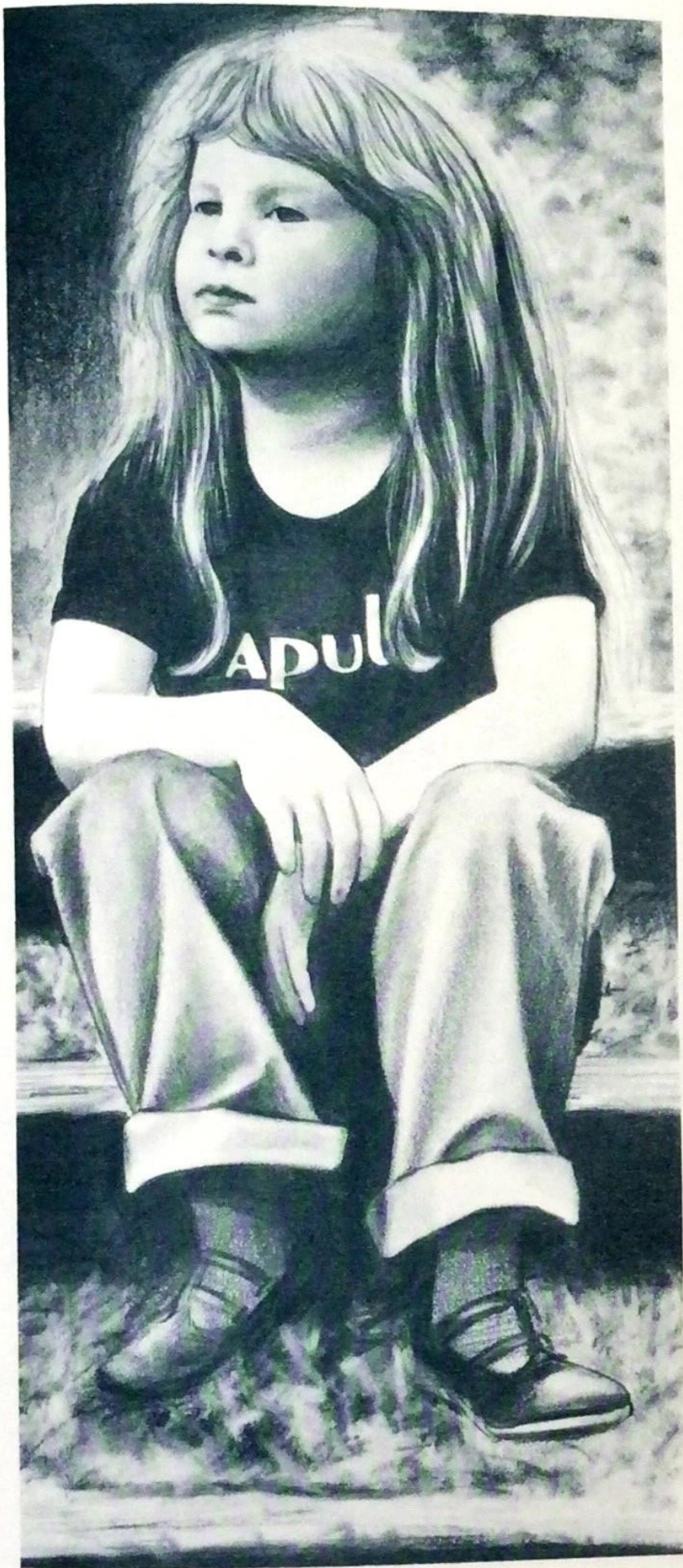
afterwards that instead of playing, she could only watch T.V. Sometimes we would even watch the *Wizard Of Oz* for days in a row. That was her favorite movie. Marcie and I never tired of being with Little Andy, and we were always patient and helpful. It was like we knew that spending time with her and being her friend would be one of the most important missions of our lives.

In August of 1979, Little Andy underwent surgery. She was cut almost completely around her stomach to remove a large tumor. The surgery was done to hopefully prolong her life for a few more months. It was a very difficult decision for her parents to make. We went to visit her whenever she was well enough to see us. We met many other children who were ill with cancer, and we marveled at how these very sick children always seemed happy. During little Andy's hospital stay, Marcie and I and our families became involved in fundraising for the Albuquerque Ronald McDonald House. We sold hundreds of Ronald McDonald House T-shirts. It was a great experience.

Although we were only five years old, we seemed to understand a great deal about her illness. Sue was always very open with us and explained what was going on. When we asked if she was going to die, Sue told us that she would be going where there was no more pain and that it was beautiful there. We often asked if we could go there too.

Little Andy was too weak to go trick-or-treating that year, but we were determined that she not miss it. We dressed up her stroller, gave her a funny hat, and pushed her from house to house. This year the candy made her sick so she gave it all to us. By Christmas she was much worse and could only open a gift a day. By New Year's Eve, there were still many unopened packages under the tree. On New Year's Day, little Andy felt so bad that we were only able to visit with her for a short time. On January 2nd, 1980, Andrea DiMaggio passed away. She was four and a half years old.

Marcie and I did not understand about death, but somehow we knew that we would never see our dear sweet friend again. Finally her pain had come to an end. We talked about her a lot and decided that she had gone to the Disneyland in the sky, and we were glad that she no longer had to suffer.



Lauren Robert Cervantes

Bullseye 1992



Standing Woman Emrys Berkower

Barefoot And In Love
Leigh Labbo

I peel my socks off
and walk naked-footed
before you.
As you sit with
all those shoe-wearing girls
that wish to play footsie.
I'm way above rubbing feet
I tell myself.
With my ten toes tipped
and my heels pivoting
I turn away.
Praying that you don't know
I'm looking at my feet
because I'm saddened
terribly saddened that you
noticed all their shoelaces
instead of my toenails
that I did paint bright red
just so you could watch
me walking away.

Oh What Silent Beauty of Love?
Jessica Young

How shall I greet thee, when
I only know
Your voice?
Nay, not the voice that flows
From
Your
Tiny, rose mouth,
But the voice that
 Precedes,
 Follows,
 And surrounds
You.
The voice that holds the silent
beauty
Within
Your
Smoky eyes.

How shall I greet thee, when
I only know
Your beauty?
I hide behind the trees and
Gaze
At
You
As
You
Dance in the rain.

How shall I greet thee, when
I only know your
Voice?

Or shall only
I admire
You
 Silently?

The Vacuum Black
Kim Beal

The vacuum black
of deep night sky
shimmers a drunken opai blue
Like the crushed velvet
worn by a
steely, stary woman
selfish with her secret
seductively winking
with a million fiery eyes
right before the sun comes

An Invaluable Lesson

Monica Oberkoffler

"Go," Kristin said. "You're gonna love it!" Somehow, I couldn't be too sure. A few days earlier, I had finally found enough courage to quit taking piano lessons from a teacher I hated. I felt I was done with piano playing. Finished. Maybe I *had* been playing eleven years of my life, but enough was enough. I looked at Kristin, trying to think of a way to tell her that I just wouldn't go to the stupid week-long piano camp. But she had no idea what was going on inside my head. "You'll have so much fun at Workshop," she grinned, her blue eyes sparkling. "JK will be able to teach you so much."

I sighed. Kristin, who was two years older than I, was a fine pianist headed for a pre-professional music conservatory in New York. Since I had always greatly respected her opinion, how could I argue? She was right. I needed the experience. Beaten, I managed a weak smile and said, "O.K. I'll get started on my application this afternoon." In my heart, I knew I needed to give up part of my summer and go to the piano workshop at the University of Texas in San Antonio.

I first met JK at the workshop. Dr. Janice K. Hodges, known to everyone by her nickname, was not only Kristin's teacher, but also the supervising professor at the piano camp. She had an extraordinary personality — one so vivacious and full of life that I could not help but like her instantly. Predictably, JK was also a magnificent teacher. Despite my considerable reluctance at the beginning, she helped me to erase my old hatred of piano. By the end of the workshop, music came alive for me.

On the last day of the piano camp, I approached JK about becoming my regular teacher. Although I knew she rarely taught young high school students pri-

vately, I was determined not to lose my love of music again. Surprisingly, she actually agreed to take me. Thoroughly excited, I worked harder than ever to learn what she had to teach. My lessons soon grew into bi-weekly excursions to the University. Within six weeks, I finished a Bach prelude, a piece by Rachmaninoff, and was starting on a Beethoven sonata.

Unfortunately, school started in late August. With both of our tight

schedules, JK and I suddenly found that scheduling a convenient lesson was almost impossible. Weeks passed. Finally, on a date in late October, we both managed to spare an hour. Though exhausted that evening, I was able to get to my lesson on time. JK was visibly tired as well, but we both made the best of the situation. At last, around 6:30, we decided to quit. I packed up my music and started to head outside.



Jeremy Mack

"Wait," JK said. "I'll come with you." She picked up a large bag of books. "I finally get to go home too."

The parking lot was a considerable distance from the music building. However, JK came with me and the walk seemed a little shorter. On the way, I noticed that a marvelous sunset was slowly fading in the sky. Although I was tired, somehow the sunset proved to me that the day had not been wasted. Finally, we came to the parking lot. JK put her arm around me. "I'll see you in a couple of weeks, sweetie," she said, with a tired smile. "Keep up the spirit." Then, she got out her keys and climbed into her car. I turned to watch her drive off. Her car slowly disappeared into the last dying embers of the sun.

Four weeks later, one day before my next scheduled lesson, a college student called my house with a message. JK was in the hospital. She had been diagnosed with three malignant brain tumors and the prognosis was grim. I hastily arranged to take some flowers to her. However, once there, I was told that only close friends and family had visiting privileges. "Well," I thought to myself. "Maybe that's the way it should be. Who am I to interfere?" After all, I had only known her five months.

I never saw JK again.

A few weeks later, Kristin came home from college. On the cold evening of December 23, we finally talked about the entire incident. Kristin, J.K.'s student for more than four years, knew exactly how I felt. As she related her thoughts, I was glad to know I wasn't alone. Still, I wondered how she managed to deal with it. After a long silence, she finally turned to me.

"Look," she said simply. "You will never find another person like her. You will have to move on." I stopped walking and looked at her. Her eyes expressed the most

profound look that I had ever seen. As I listened to the wind howl through the dead trees around us, I knew I would have to approach the piano alone.

One month later, I attended JK's memorial service. Since Kristin had gone back to college, I knew almost no one there. Still, I knew I needed to be present. Feeling very much a stranger in the midst of friends, I quietly listened to various people talk about the JK that they had known. Then suddenly, about half way through the service, I froze in my seat. The church echoed with the sounds of JK's performance of Chopin's *Nocturne in E minor*. I remembered how much she had wanted to teach that piece to me.

I was determined to continue on as we had planned. I found a copy of the nocturne and began to work on it. The notes came quickly. Later, a friend of JK's helped me to perfect it.

My first performance was at the Regional UIL Solo-Ensemble competition in February. Though I easily received the highest solo rating, I was very much dissatisfied. There was something else I had to do. Gradually, the months passed by. My junior year ended.

In June, I traveled to the University of Texas at Austin to perform at the Texas State Solo-Ensemble Contest. Oblivious to the dozens of musicians crowded in the college music building, I stood outside the performance room, nervously waiting to perform. The person in front of me seemed to take forever. Finally, I entered the room.

"Feel free to warm up a bit," the judge said. "You may start when you're ready."

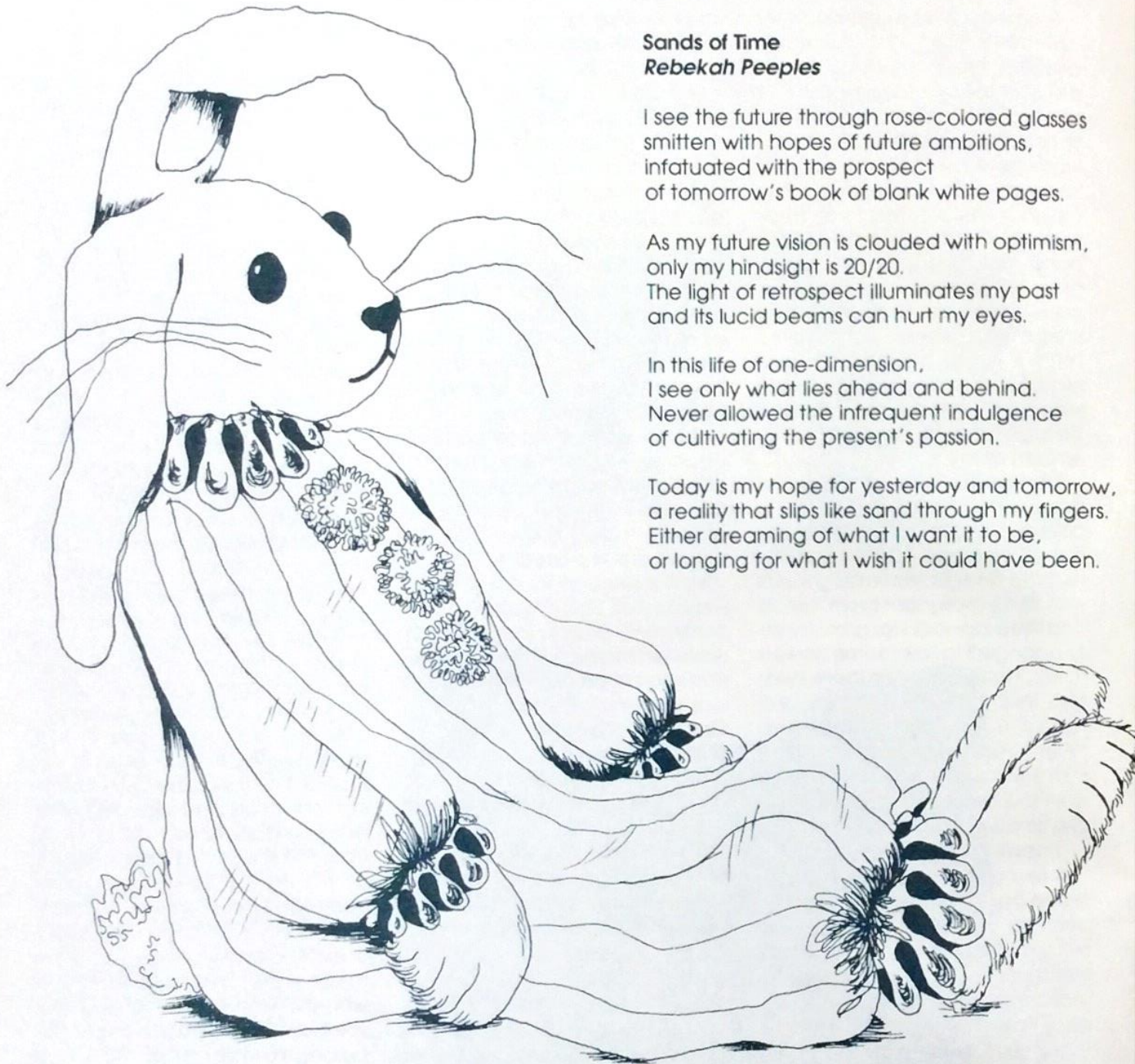
I ran a few scales up and down the piano. I could feel the cold ivory beneath my fingertips. The keys were waiting for me to make them say something. I folded my hands in my lap and closed my eyes. If ever there was a time that I would speak through music, this

was it.

As if in slow motion, I raised my hands to the keyboard. The piece began softly—slowly. A thin melody echoed the ache JK left in my heart. Then, without effort, the notes began to build. The sounds grew more complex, the cadenzas pierced the original melody, and my emotions grew so intense as if intertwined with the very essence of the piece. But it did not last. The climax was short and I reached the end. As my fingers held on to the last chord, I touched the final, lingering note. The music faded into silence. I had nothing more to say.

My last performance was nearly one year to the day that Kristin had first talked me into attending the U.T.S.A. piano workshop. One week later, I learned that I had been named **Outstanding Performer on Piano**, an award given to only 143 of approximately 16,000 state competitors. On my comment sheet the judge wrote: *Every once in a while --very rarely--a student will begin to play and from the first split second that they touch the keys you know you are about to experience something very special. It is a magical and almost mystical effect. Your playing did that today. It was the kind of playing that makes a judge suddenly put down the pencil and look away from the score and merely drink it all in ...* As I read the remarkable comments, a sense of contentment finally came over me. "Every once in awhile," I thought, "very rarely, a person will find someone who will teach her something very special." That recognition did not belong to me alone. All I had done was express what was in my heart. That award really represented the invaluable lesson that JK had taught me. People can never be replaced. Be eager to learn from their knowledge and experiences while they are here. Never take them for granted.

I feel extraordinarily blessed that JK was part of my life.



Heather Neville

Sands of Time
Rebekah Peeples

I see the future through rose-colored glasses
smitten with hopes of future ambitions,
infatuated with the prospect
of tomorrow's book of blank white pages.

As my future vision is clouded with optimism,
only my hindsight is 20/20.
The light of retrospect illuminates my past
and its lucid beams can hurt my eyes.

In this life of one-dimension,
I see only what lies ahead and behind.
Never allowed the infrequent indulgence
of cultivating the present's passion.

Today is my hope for yesterday and tomorrow,
a reality that slips like sand through my fingers.
Either dreaming of what I want it to be,
or longing for what I wish it could have been.

Mi Abuelita Wore White
Adan Jesus Quavez

I was sitting on the bus
thinking about my
grandmother

when I noticed all the women young
and old wearing white. I thought,
they must be nurses.
and I remembered
mi abuelita wanted to
be a nurse, but she
never graduated from
high school. She became
a maid.

I saw that they were all Latinas and
blacks.

Mi abuelita always
felt like she wouldn't
accomplish anything
because she was a
Mexicana.

I felt proud because they seemed to be
making up for all the struggles mi
abuelita went through.
She had always had a
hard life.

But something seemed odd. While they
were happily chatting, I remembered
that they got on in the barrios nowhere
near a hospital. I told myself
they probably just lived there for
sentimental reasons.

Mi abuelita always
said no matter how
rich or how poor she
was she would never
leave her barrio.

I figured they must just be commuting
to their hospital.

Mi abuelita always
had to take the bus
to her boss's house.



Lauren Donohue

But as a couple of them pushed
the stop button, I saw we were in the
richest neighborhood in town. There was
no hospital in sight, but they all got
off, one by one, young and old, all dressed
in white.

And then I
Remembered
My heart sank porque mi abuelita
And the nurses wore
White
And the world suddenly
Was not as bright as it seemed.

The Roaring of the River

Stewart Loftis

The smell of the damp grass wafted up to my nostrils as I approached the empty lots. They marked the boundary between the city and the wooded area that seemed to shrink and be destroyed almost as fast as I was growing up. My destination was the creek in the center of the woods. It had been raining for several days. It still was, and the torrential downpour promised that my trickling creek had now become a raging monstrosity. I would barely recognize. I could already hear her rumbling in the distance as I felt the gentle rain become replaced by heavy, intermittent droplets from the trees above me.

I looked around, once the tree line had fully enveloped me. The underbush had been cleared away nearly a week before the rain had begun. My formerly brush-choked maze now resembled nothing so much as a meadow filled with sodden grey oak trees. It was rather spectacular. The weak sunlight shone off the new grass thriving in the cleared areas with that vivid light green that only comes in springtime. The only sounds were the occasional thump of water drops released from the branches, the clamor of the floodwater, and the whisper of my breath. I moved on toward the creek. Now I could hear the roaring clearly. I had actually reached the new 'edge' of the creek even though trees still hid most of it. In order to get a proper view, I had to backtrack and climb a ridge whose crown was normally six feet above the ground. Water had shrunk that to three feet above the water line.

The creek surpassed all expectations. The brown water swept by as I stood awestruck by the powerful transformation. Where I was now, the creek normally narrowed enough that I could hop across without any effort at all.

But now it would be a challenge to swim across if the water were standing still. Of course the creek, now a river, was moving faster than I had ever seen her move before, faster than I had ever wanted to imagine her moving. Debris was constantly being swept downstream, not only the normal pieces of trash, but also crates and boxes, and even tree trunks that would normally span the creek's widest point. I moved closer to the edge of the river and felt the earth beneath by feet slide away.

I never stood a chance. The whole edge fell in with me on top of it. In less time than it takes to tell, I was underwater being pulled by the current. My mind started working in three directions at once. I was never able to figure out which ideas happened first. One part simply went, BETRAYED, and panicked. Another screamed, "You stupid idiot! You should have known not to go near the edge. I knew we would fall!" and then panicked. The final part started to actually think. I needed to get to the surface, NOW! I kicked upward and rode the current to the top. In the second I had been in the water, I had been moved well into the center of the flooded creek, and it seemed she had no intention of letting me go. I set out toward the closest side, angling into the current so that I could avoid the rocks and trees downstream. I knew they could crush me if I hit them wrong. I was making progress and was almost feeling confident that I would make it out alive when an uprooted tree swept into my ribs. The wind was knocked out of me and was replaced by the filthy water in which I was submerged again. I spit and tried to surface, but the tree was above me now and I was entangled in it. All I managed was a gasped breath

before it forced me down again. The river was trying to kill me. I knew that idea wasn't logical even as I thought it, but it had an amazing effect. I suddenly felt more alive than I had ever felt before in my life. I was consciously aware of every sensation around me. I could feel the omnipresent cold water pushing into my pant legs and weighing down my shoes. I noticed how waterlogged the bark of the small oak tree that held me was. I could almost feel the blood rushing through all parts of my body. It was glorious, and I wanted to keep being that alive no matter the cost. But I could sense death was approaching.

Then a miracle happened. My prison struck one of those trees in the middle of the river that I had been so worried about, and it

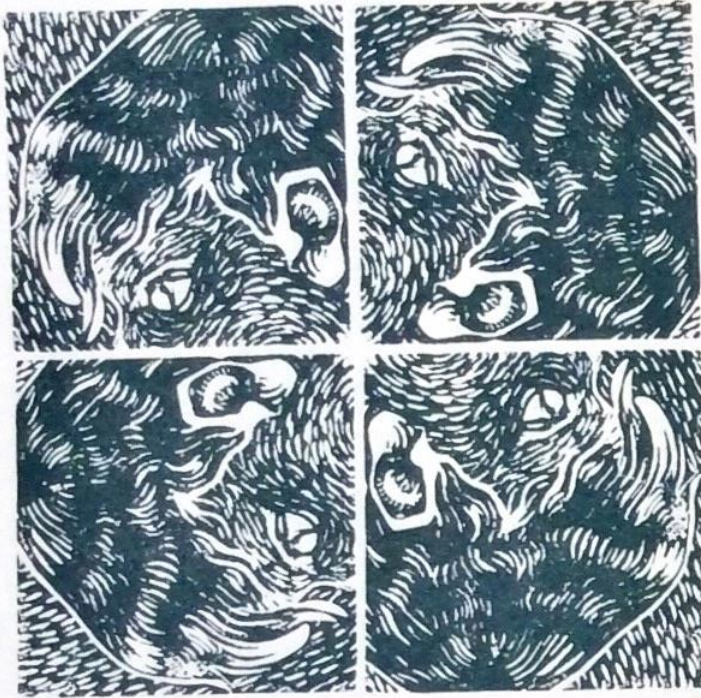
stayed where it was. I untangled my arm from the branches but held on to the sentinel that had saved me. I was on what was normally an island in the middle of the creek, but in this river that had replaced it, I was literally in up to my neck. I was numb. For at least a minute I did nothing but stand neck deep in the water and hold on to that tree and think of absurd ways to show my gratitude. I considered worshiping it and building an altar in front of it. The image was so ridiculous that I actually broke out laughing in the middle of everything. I didn't want to move, but I was afraid that the water might rise even more just to drown me where I stood. So, reluctantly, I shoved off with all of my strength, actually coming halfway out of the water with my

lunge. This time I changed my tactics and angled downstream so the current would actually do some of the work for me. The godlike awareness I had felt before returned when I pushed off. It seemed that I could feel every individual particle of water as it rushed past me and I rushed to shore.

I have never swum better or faster in my life, but it still seemed like hours before I was in the calm backwater next to the shore. I pulled myself out on my hands and knees until I reached a cleared area away from the edge. As I fell onto that wonderful spring grass, I was giddy with relief and triumph. I listened; there was the thump of the water drops, the gasping of my breath, and the roaring of the river.



Amber Brien



The woman stands alone
Adan Jesus Quavez

The woman stands alone in the street.
 Under her decaying straw hat
 and dirty hair
 her eyes are all glazed over,
 An expression of nothingness
 on her dirt-smudged face.
 She begins to walk aimlessly
 or is that gracefully
 she dodges the cars
 as if they are not there
 pacing herself just right.
 A yuppie honks his BMW car horn
 and yells, "What, are you crazy?"
 But, of course, as she nears the median,
 oblivious to everything
 except crossing the street,
 she can't hear him.
 She's carrying 2 straw bags
 full of nothing.
 Her soiled hands grip them tightly.

The State Hospital released her,
 5 years ago.
 It was too crowded so it decided to
 crowd the streets.

As she reaches the curb,
 she looks anxiously left and right
 more afraid of people than of their cars.

under the quick blow of steel and glass
Robert Cervantes

under the quick blow
 of steel and glass,
 flesh is no match --

It is no harbor to hold on to as it is

r i p p i n g,
 and s w e l l i n g,
 a n d t w i s t i n g,
 and p o u r i n g o u t--

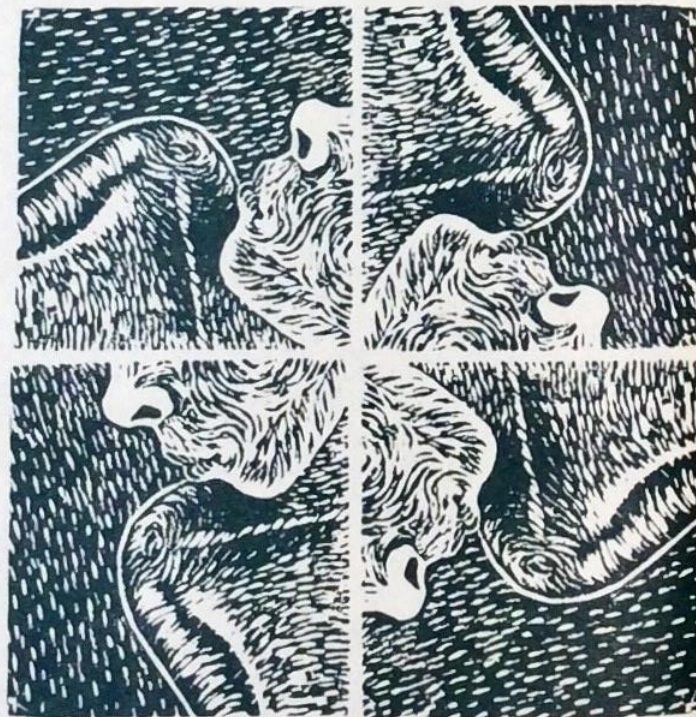
leaving a pulsing hole
 for your soul to escape.

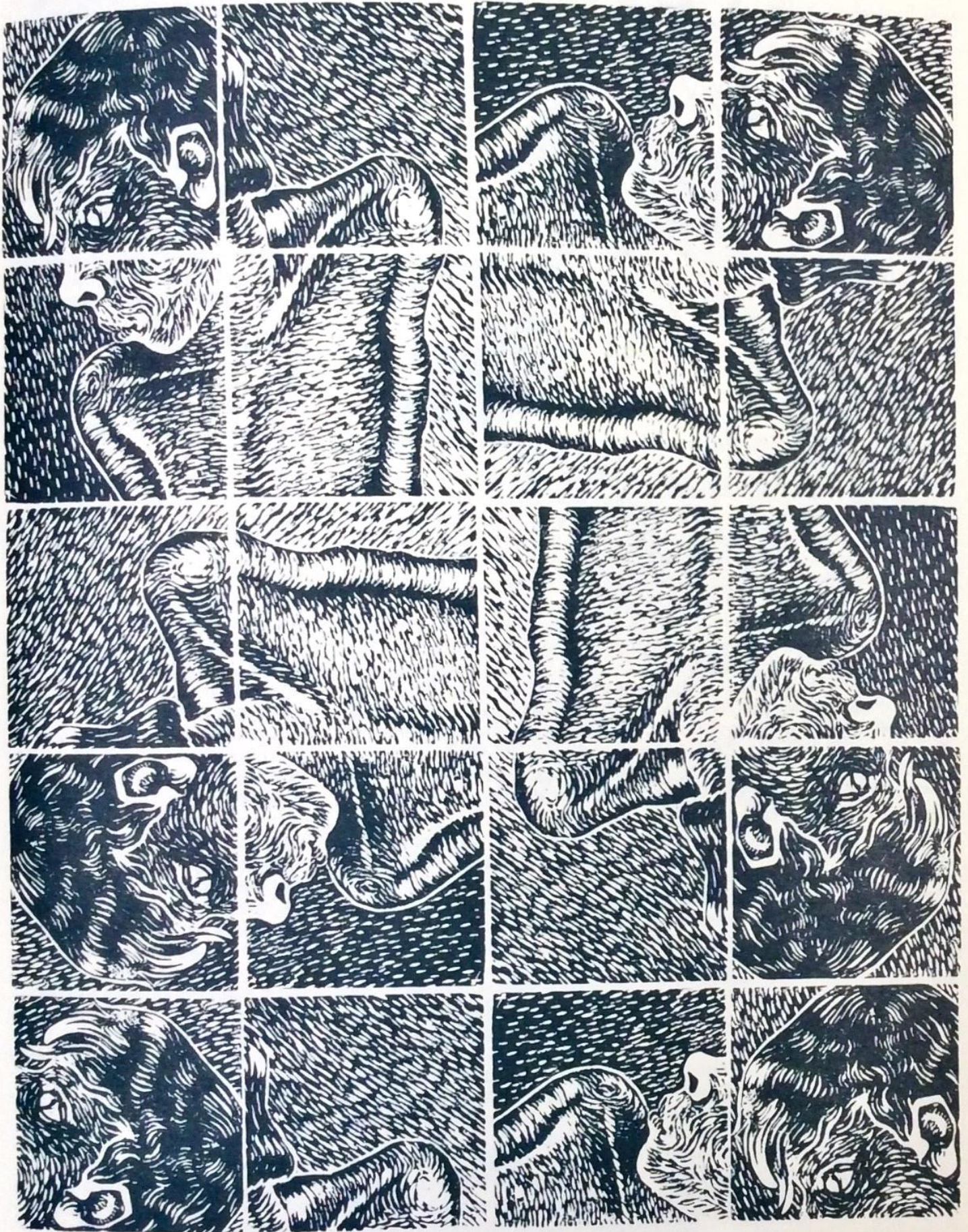
a sudden push
 and then a jerk,
 there was no way to prepare

(or to beg for forgiveness.)

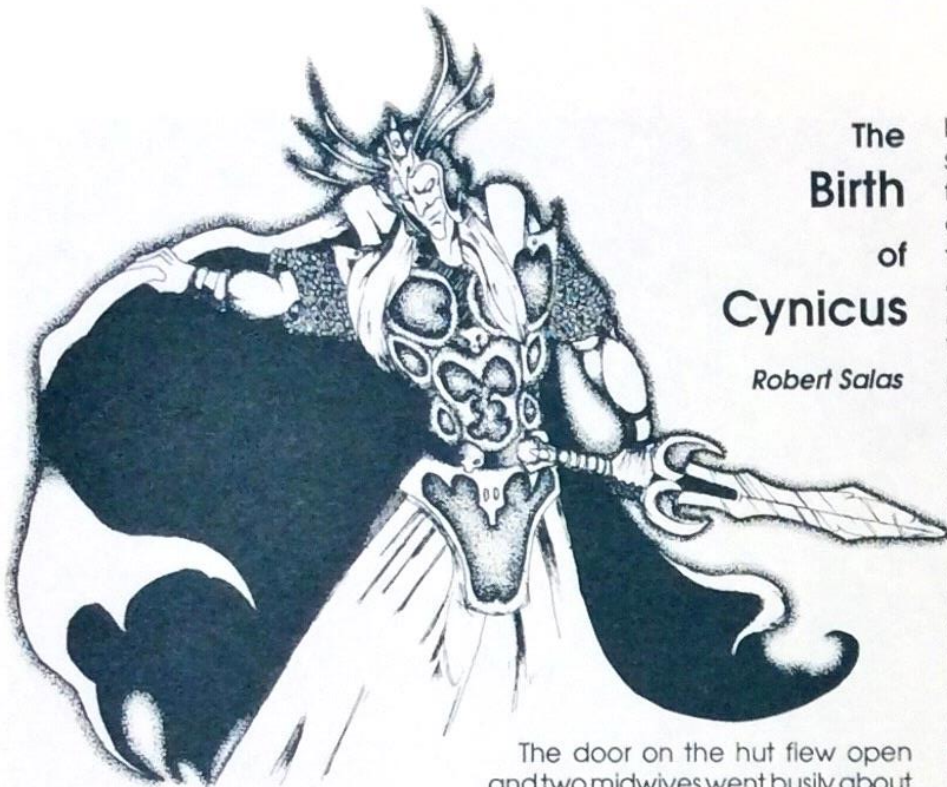
snapping branches and knotted fist,
 the lights made impact
 and a dark blade dropped swiftly
 behind our necks,

leaving us between sleep
 and our mother's arms.





Robert Cervantes



The Birth of Cynicus

Robert Salas

Twixt and twain the white and gold moons of Scira, the curse of ancient and forgotten gods came to fruition; whence into this troubled time two thousand years after the last Runesinger had fled the scarred lands came to be the clever yet caustic hero of the age. Upon his bronze name heaped dread and prestige, and his name was Cynicus, thick-hewed adventurer of mixed parentage and hearty spirit. This is the story of who he is and how he came to be.

The night of his fated bearing, the stormheads raged and typhoons swarmed. Feeble old women chattered foul invectives to old gods who had long since left this plane and left their people to die. The tall Tyrian known as Leonius cared little for this though; tonight his first son of many was to be born. There would be celebration, ceremony, and lots of wenching. Yet in the very back of Leonius' mind lay the slight chance of female progeny. Thoughts of such shame crept stealthily into his mind. Furiously, he shook his head letting his top knot whirl through the stagnant air. In decadent Tyrian society, the birth of a female first denoted weakness and physical ineptitude. Many a promising noble had been cast into ruin due to this belief. Leonius bit back his fears and drank another mug of spirits.

The door on the hut flew open and two midwives went busily about their work. A passing stranger might gather that they were wraiths on orders from an evil sorcerer. Leonius grasped his thick beard and gaped into the hut. Darkness. Total darkness. A Ytrialian woman. Tis this what he had to become entangled with. Curse the night that he had found her tender arms alluring. Male. The child would have to be male.

The moons were in full eclipse by now. They seemed all too foreboding in their nighttime glow. All about, the old hags spat their invectives and cast glazed eyes where Leonius waited patiently.

The night cast its glance at the little hut where a Ytrialian woman was held in labor. The cries became infernal and a crescendo built. Tis this what Mira had to face. The agony of childbirth. The agony of waiting. Leonius licked his dagger in anticipation. If male, honour regained; if wench, one clean blow.

As the screaming rose to the pinnacle of its climb, so did the clouds gather overhead. Yet in their dark midst was a dark evil eye of terror as the moons aligned themselves in the skies above.

Jagged spears of white light parched the earth before the hut and Mira kept screaming. The Tyrian waited in the rain and howled in anguish. The doors flew open. It was over.

The midwife brought the newly born babe out into the rain and smiled a toothy grin at the newfound father. Leonius smiled as well. His child had been born. He watched the night eye and laughed. A lone dagger went up in the rain-invaded air as he took hold of his offspring. The dagger kept revolving on its axis as Leonius held the child out by one foot. He was ready to pronounce the child's name. Tis here, when terror took to his eyes, he discovered the child was not male.

He caught the still spinning dagger in his free hand and smote the child with a wicked slash. The midwife shook with horror as she watched the grisly sight. Leonius let the child fall onto the rain-soaked ground and hissed, "Tell Mira that she is no wife." With that said, he mounted his horse and rode off into the night's realm. The thunder crackled again, and the shocked nurse was pulled back inside by the clawing hands which seemed to whisper, "Twins!"

A second array of thunderous lightning heralded the second birth. The clouds circled and swirled like vultures. Thunder boomed as the screams rose again. Then it was all over. The storm receded.

The old maid ran back out with tears in her eyes and held out the child by one leg in Tyrian fashion. "Behold craven Tyrian! Behold thy only bastard son! Let the son of the cynic have a name befitting. Thy name is Cynicus, youngling. Know that the gods have cursed you and this day. In thine eyes I see the sorrows of many men. Thou wilt be a killer as thy father is. Woe to the world! And woe to thee. As with this sight I cannot let thee live, O slayer of men and gods alike. Better then to join thy sister in Hell!"

The nurse placed the child on the wet ground and raised her scissors high above her grayed head. She gritted her teeth and stabbed downward and would have indeed slain the babe had not a single bolt of jagged lightning come roaring from the heavens and smitten her. The moons slowly came out of their embrace and all was still.

Such was the birth of Cynicus.

Woman in a Toga (Not)

Sean Tait O'Sullivan

"Have you seen my Muse?" I asked him. He seemed surprised. Scraggly grey eyebrows arched. His puckered, wrinkle-ringed mouth drew back in what was once a disarming smile. Brown eyes, paled with age, twinkled with merriment. He thought I was being humorous. "Sorry, young man, but I haven't seen a woman in a toga since my college days," he replied with a voice like well-worn leather. Maybe it was not like leather per se. It certainly reminded me of leather, like that of my grandfather's flight jacket. Maybe he reminded me of my grandfather, and at the time I was thinking about leather. It didn't matter.

"You haven't even heard her description yet," I returned aloud. To myself I said, "My Muse doesn't wear a toga either, you Romano-centric bastard."

"Well?"

"First, get the word 'Muse' and all that conventionally goes with it out of mind, please," I replied far more politely than I wished to. His last syllable had been rather haughty in tone as if he were superior. As if he were superior to me! Twit....

"First of all," I said, "she isn't exactly a Muse. She has the same function as a Muse, but she isn't a Muse. Bean-sidhe would be closer to the proper term, but that would give you the wrong impression so I won't use it." Bean-sidhe is more commonly spelled banshee.

"Huh?" Good, he was starting to become inarticulate.

"She's between five-foot-three and six-foot-one, by which I mean she changes size. Usually she's shorter than me, which often places her at five-six. Sometimes she's got pointed ears, sharper than Spock's, but not often when non-elves are around." I was gesturing dramatically at every word. He was really looking at me strangely now. I laughed. "Is something wrong?" I asked.

"What are you talking about?" the old man asked. This time his voice was more like a squeaky bi-

cycle wheel. I haven't ridden a bicycle in years.

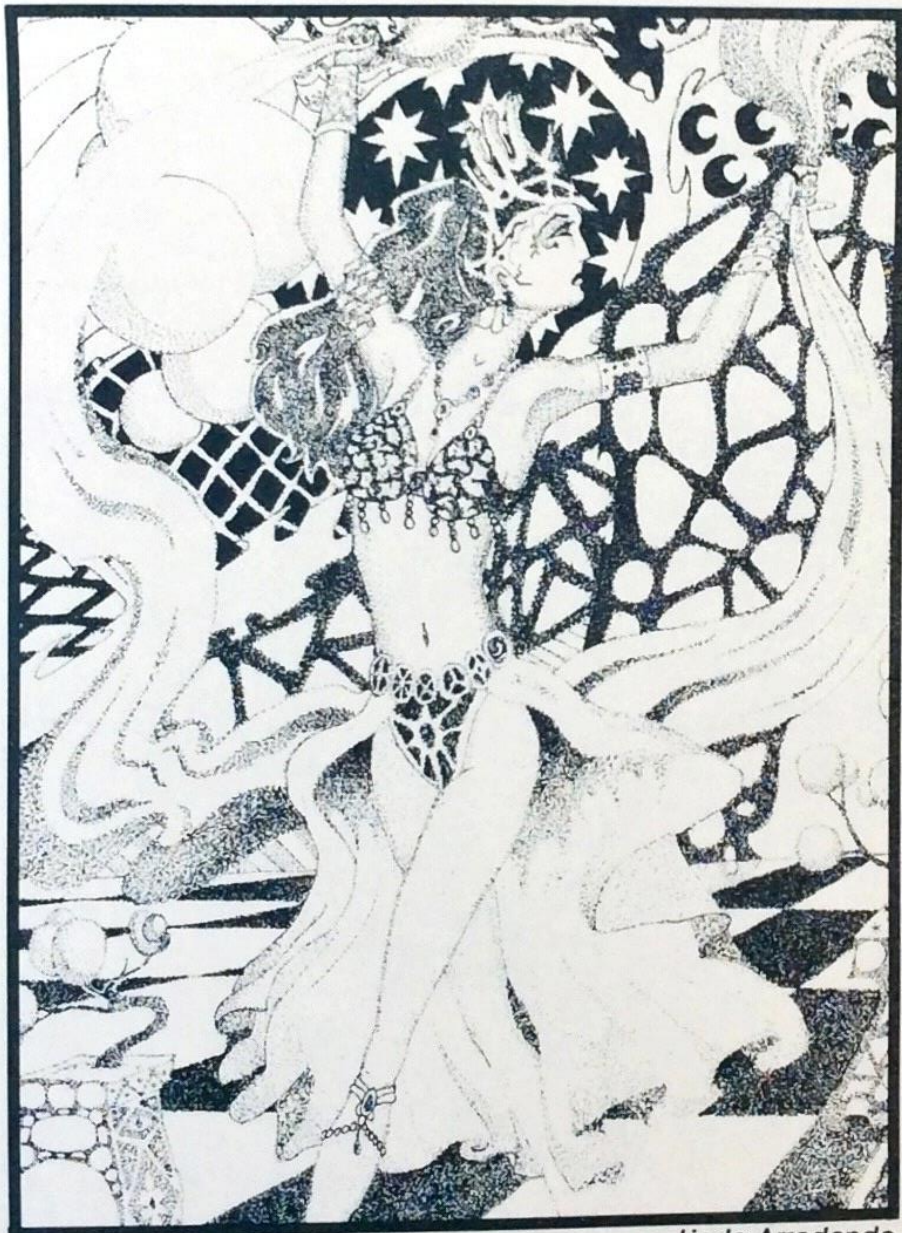
"I am talking about a fairy woman, an elf, one of the Tuatha De Danaan, a pagan goddess of the best kind! I am talking about an inspiration, an image inviolate and unapproachable by mortal man or woman. A dancer on the edge of sight, a Pre-Raphaelite painting come to life, a dream." I elongated the last word in my best Nicole Williamson impression. "I am talking about the most beautiful creature in this world or the other, one of the Nine Maidens who keep the Cauldron of Poesy warm with their honey-scented breath!"

"I don't get it, kid," he said. He'd waited about twenty seconds to

respond. I was counting. A bird landed in the tree overhead. I moved out from under it.

"I'd give you a description, but, as I've noted, she doesn't always look the same. She might just look like a woman in a toga to you." I winked at him. "Nudge-nudge."

He turned around and walked away, a confused bugger in a slate grey suit. He shook his head. He probably thought I was nuts, or joking, or just perverse. I could almost hear the tired 'kids-these-days' cliché dashing forth from his lips. I scratched my head, played with my chin fuzz, caught a glimpse of a gleaming white face out of the corner of my eye, and ran down the street in pursuit.



Linda Arredondo

am i evil
Brian Santos

when the streets went red i ran,
now "It don't mean nothin";
never did, and i'll call it life but i really don't think
it's supposed to be like this.
but who sees the skies
when the rain falls, and who's the one to taste the
drops; i suppose only the man in the alley
drowning in his own blood.
and what a story to tell
when a blind man sees my future; and what a way to
die, my friend in my arms.
and i swore i'd never kill again.
will a dead man see me cry
when i hold a knife in my hand; and will the devil
leave my soul if for once, i pray. in this darkness i can't
see much, i guess i never did.
but, i have power in my own hands.
today i killed a man, and the day before.
tomorrow; hell, it's just another day.



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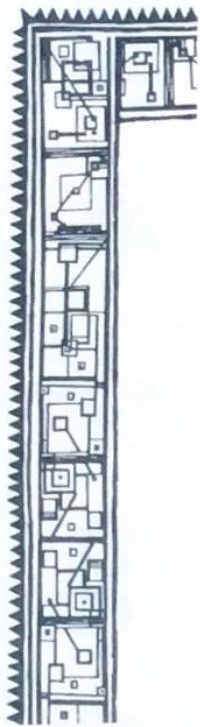
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