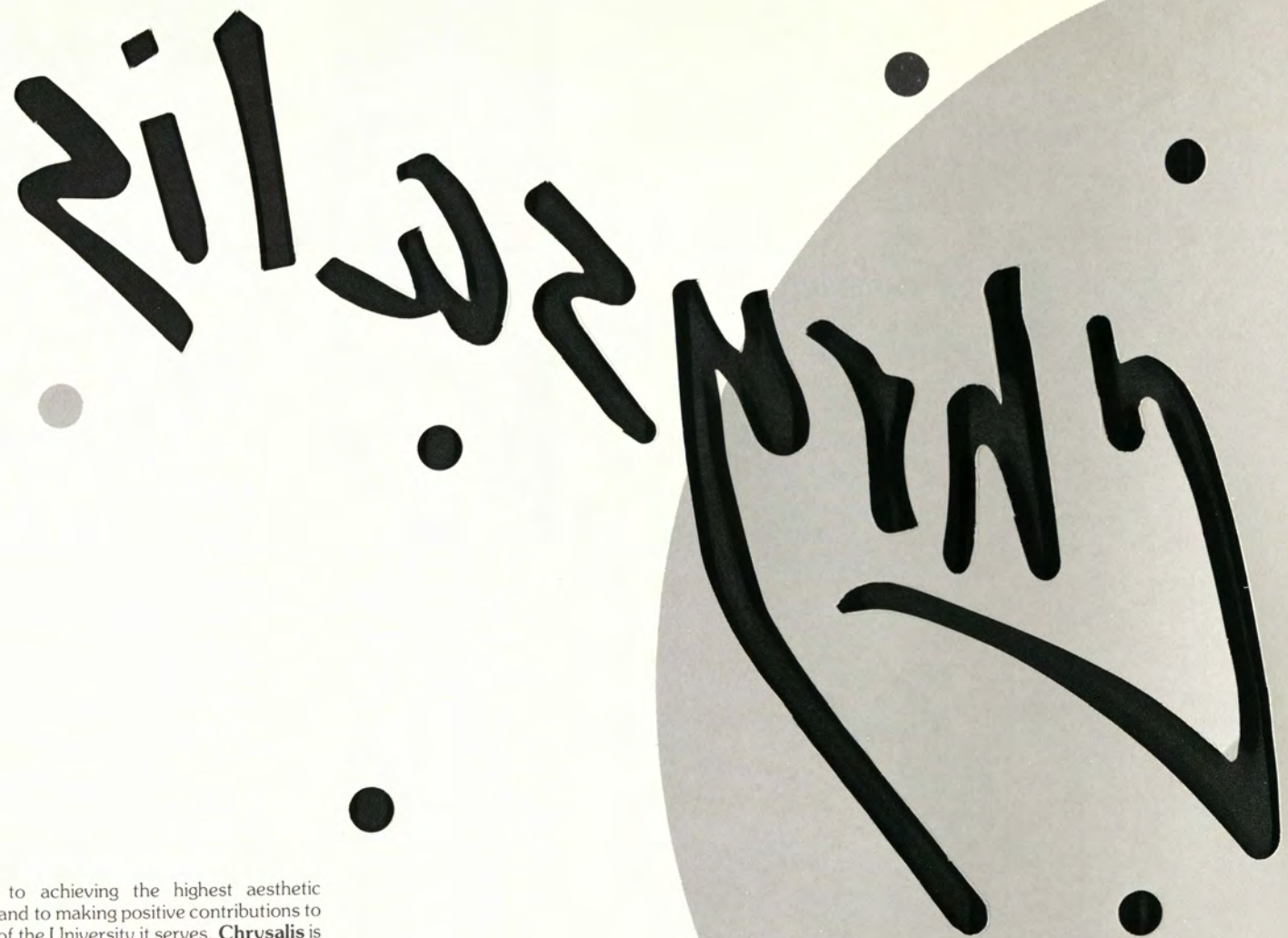


chrysalis



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Photography by Paul Accardo and Donald J. Becht.

Phrysgallis

[1981]

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David Carter
"Satyr"
lithograph, 17 x 21"

Insight

Either
You
Read
Me
Like a book,
 numbering each look and gesture
 as if they were pages
 turning toward
 some inexorable denouement,
 suffocating me between tight covers
 on a dusty shelf
 for your 'future reference;'

Or
I
Take
You
Like a picture,
 my shutter eyes flexing
 to trap each pose
 in two dimensions,
 forming images as rigid
 as those stuck
 between plastic sheets
 for all the world to see.

But
Our
Sight
Is
Like a blackened tunnel,
 for all our frames and bindings
 contain only shadows
 dancing on the edge
 of an elusive spectrum.

Ash Johnston

Rosato

A smooth tepid Rose
Goes down with just the mildest sting—
A delicate blend you say,
And I only know the feel
Of warmth saturating my skin,
A sudden rushing steal
Of surprising ease,
Heavy eyes that gaze in
Drowsy fascination. You laugh and tease
Me once again, call me
Naive and I go pink—
More from incarcerated rage
Than the coyness you think
Governs me. No, naive I
Am not, I understand well
And I've learned not to ask why,
Better still, not to care. Reason
Often tells too much.

Now you've begun
Going through the rhetoric
Of asking me to stay;
My eyes are frozen and fixed;
Your words only skim
The surface of my mind,
Long ago gone dim.

The only thoughts I own
Flash a brilliant neon
Warning of something I've always
known . . .
We belong to different worlds
Never to join or merge;
I the hopeless innocent,
Vulnerable and purged,
And you from a world of avant garde . . .
Carelessly free and escalated far above
My limited vision. Yet you
Taunt me like a dream.

Hours now and still not through
With your eloquent speeches — what a
shame,
Such promising words wasted on me;
I smile and barely hear,
Feel my eyes closing steadily . . .
And long ago this smooth Rose
Has ceased to sting, though the blend
Is less delicate than you say.

Barbara Hall



Paula Dubill
"Layers of Consciousness"
lithograph, 16 x 18"

Sepia

A brown brittle hand
places dry weathered wood in the
stove;
Her coarse gray hair
sifts in silent communion with the flour;
A wrinkled face
watches the drying fruit;
Her pale-yellow eyes
find cracks in coffee-cups;
Hairy ears
hear scary sounds no more,
The evening sun,
warm through the window,
and a toothless smile.

Wayne Motley

12:06 Out of Crozet

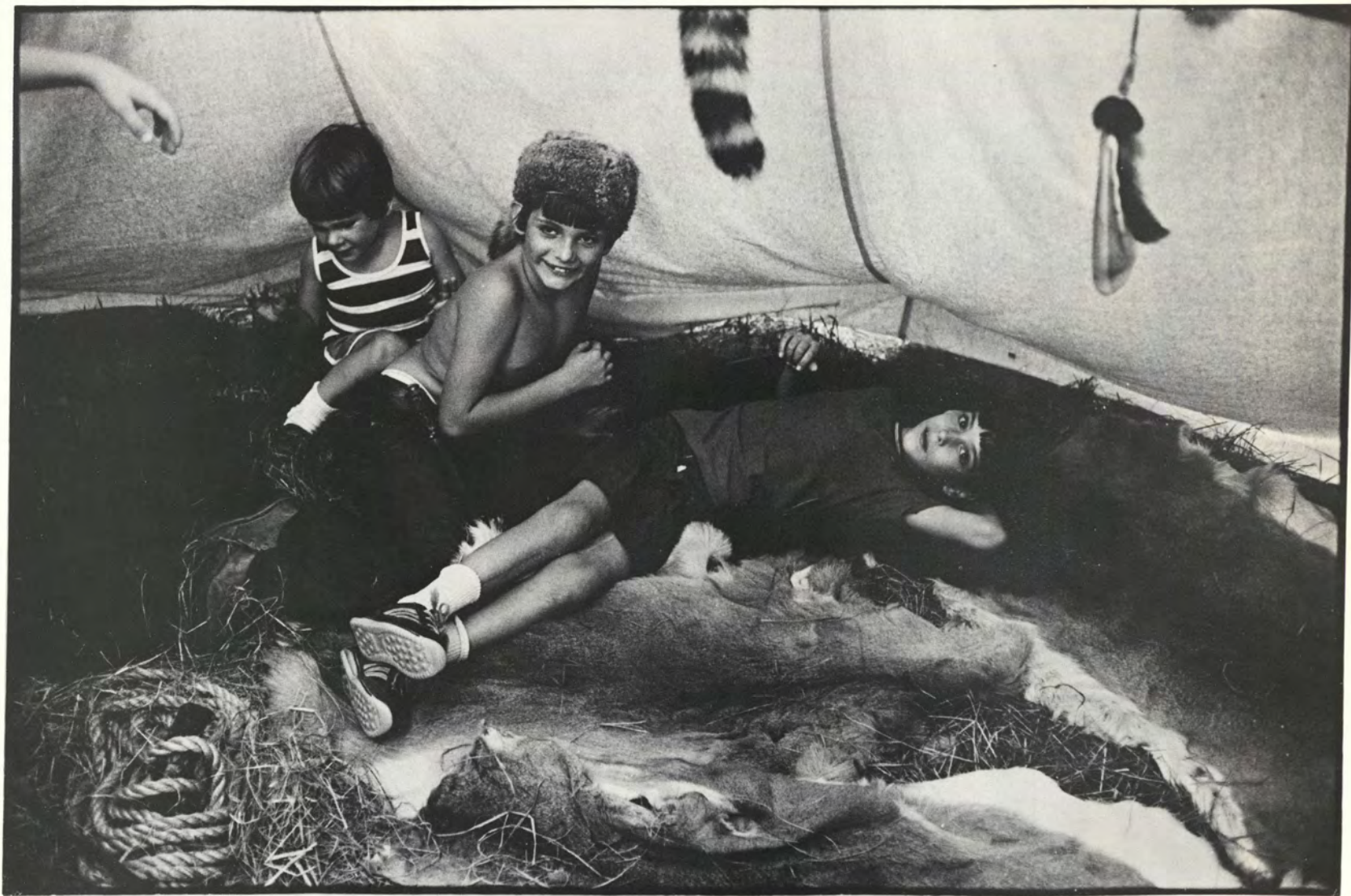
It wasn't like we thought it would be.
Train seeping down the mountain,
gaining speed.
Watering eyes in the wake of disturbed
sky.
My toes clawing at the ground.

With the mountains unzipped,
the landscape peeled,
a bare horizon
tried to echo
your goodbye.

John Brownlee



Linda J. Sheldon
"Kinetic Self Series"
silver print photograph, 11 x 14"



Karen Byer
"Port Republic"
silver print photograph, 4½ x 7"



Judy Clark
"Expo-land"
silver print photograph, 6 x 9"



Lanny Hodges
"Bracelet, Vase and Knife"
metal work

Eliot Ness

Eliot Ness
Sits by the banks of the
Styx
And waits for the gas prices
to go down.

They say he has
a '32 Packard Straight-Eight
Equipped with special
Pontoon
to cross Death's icy waters.

But Gas is too expensive,
he can't afford it
and they don't pay
much for time spent in Hell:
"Are you kidding?" he says,
"I've been waiting since 1937
and all I got is 29 cents."

But he's working on it;
Dano is off somewhere
trying to arrange a deal
with a couple of
Dead Arabs

And there's a B-52
Flying over Germany—
if it ever gets through,
it's got a load of Gas
that Eliot can have.

Meanwhile, he waits
and sits and sheds
Tears
at all the unsolved crimes
in the World.
And grinds his teeth
at every cheap
Syndicate hood and Bootlegger
that gets away with it;
And he cringes every time
a Judge takes a bribe
And he thinks
Las Vegas is a gaping
Scar on the face of
America.

But still, one day
he's counting on
coming back.

This time not only
Untouchable,
But as one of the
Invincible Dead.
And he's gonna round-up
Every crook in
America
And make them do some
Hard time in Sing Sing,
For their crimes.

Until then
He waits and waits—
Sitting by the
Running Board of his
Special '32 Packard Straight-Eight,
And stares out
Across the Steaming Styx,
Across Death's Great
Distances.

(and he cries too
over the fact that
Gas is \$1.13 a gallon
and at some places as
high as \$1.44)

Bobby Girardi

Co'Cola

“Would you **pleez** come and open this door!” I heard somebody yell right in the middle of “Dallas.” I plumb could not believe it. It was one of the best shows I’d seen all year and I hear somebody hollering like it was judgement day. So what do you do? You open the door. There was Jean Carol, standing with a suitcase in her hand big as Ike. Jean Carol, that’s my friend from high school and clean down to childhood I reckon.

“What do you mean hollerin’ like a banshee outside my door?” I asked her.

“It ain’t like you got no neighbors to wake up,” she said and helped herself right on into my trailer, bringing in half my front yard on her feet.

I looked out in the driveway and didn’t see trace one of that ’69 Chevy.

“You walk down here?”

“Yes I did, and would a walked another mile if need be,” she said real huffy-like. I stood looking at her with my hands propped on my hips like so, waiting for her to say something but nothing doing. I was going to have to drag it out of her.

“You and Dwayne have another fight?” I asked her.

By now she had set her suitcase down meaning to stay awhile. “Yes ma’am. And this, I believe, is the end of it.”

Now everytime Jean Carol and Dwayne have a fight it’s the end of it, but she never went and packed a suitcase before. I didn’t say nothin’. She wasn’t in the mood for friendly criticizin’.

“Where’s Billy?” she asked, looking nervous.

“Think a minute, Jean Carol. It’s Friday night. He’s down at Popeye Rowland’s drinking with the boys.”

She seemed to calm down after that. She had herself a seat and started looking at the t.v. I wasn’t about to tell her what was going on with the program.

“You want a Co’Cola or something?” I asked out of politeness.

“No,” she said.

“You sure? I got some salted peanuts.”

“No, Lucy! Don’t you listen to nothin’? I tell you Dwayne and me’s broke up and you ask me if I want a Co’Cola and peanuts. No ma’am, I don’t want a thing!”

Well, bless me, she starts crying. I couldn’t exactly fuss at her then. And something sure was wrong cause even when she had the flu virus and couldn’t keep nothing down she would ask for a Co’Cola and salted peanuts. And when we would go shopping into town or to the Laundro-mat she’d always have to stop and get a Co’Cola and peanuts. So I knew she must be tore up. On account of the suitcase, too.

“Well,” I said, taking a seat beside her, “just tell me what happened.”

“It all started,” she said, real anxious to talk, “when he come home from the mill and I was fixing supper. Seems he didn’t take a liking to hamburger steak and green peas. And I was

havin’ Martha White Dinner Rolls, and he didn’t even like the sights of them. He says, ‘Jean Carol, what do you mean feedin’ me a damn piece of hamburger and peas you get out of a can, and some store bought bread?’ She stopped and blew her nose on a ragged piece of Kleenex.

“So, I says, ‘You fix your own supper if you don’t like it and beside — this is what I grew up on, Martha White Dinner Rolls. My mama used to have ’em all the time and not a one of us complained.’

“Well, he says, ‘Jean Carol, things ain’t like they was when you were growing up. You was poor and that was all you had. But between your job and mine we can afford better than to starve.’ He says to me, ‘Things are different now and you’re still hangin’ on to your mama’s coattails. We’re a higher class than your folks were.’” She took a deep breath and kept on going.

“So we exchanged a few words about my family and the next thing I know he sorta slapped me right across the cheek.”

I looked and saw how it was turning purplish.

“So I marched myself into the bedroom, packed a few things and strutted on out, with him just sitting in the den drinking on a beer and sayin’, ‘Jean Carol, you ain’t going nowhere.’ And I just laughed and showed him.”

She was almost out of breath now and says to me, “And I ain’t goin’ back.”

Well now, I was speechless. I had run out of suggestions and she had run out of things to say. She was starting to wring her hands. Finally she said, "So, can I sleep here tonight? I'll sleep on the couch. Or else can you drive me down to Mama's."

"You can stay right here," I said. "If you really ain't goin' back." She looked at me and sorta half smiled. So I asked her if she would have that Co'Cola now and she said yes, maybe she would. While I was in the kitchen getting it for her I heard her giggle and I knew she was just waiting for me to ask her about what, so I did.

"I was just thinking," she said.

I gave her the Co'Cola in the bottle. She didn't much care and I didn't want to dirty up a glass.

"'Bout what?"

"I was thinking 'bout us in high school," she said.

Like I mentioned before, we were best friends in high school and did all the usual things you laugh and talk about over a Co'Cola.

"What about high school?" I asked.

"Well, 'member that time you and me got caught drag racing with those Gullidge boys on Willow Hill. My mama said wasn't a one of those boys nothin' but poor white trash. And when that happened she cried and prayed and all but locked me in my room for the duration. 'No tellin' what'll become of that child,' I heard her tellin' Daddy, and I just sit back and laughed."

"What in glory made you think of that?" I had to ask because ten years or better had passed, both of us long since out of high school and married.

"'Cause I was thinkin' about goin' out to California all the way walking down here. You know my piano teacher always said I had pretty hands and you and me swore when we got out of high school we'd go to California and I'd try to get a job modeling rings and

finger nail polish and stuff in magazines. And you wanted to be a stewardess. Yes ma'am, we were goin' somewhere."

She laughed sorta sad like and had not taken swallow one from her Co'Cola.

"We was kids, Jean Carol."

"I don't care. I still want to go out there. They say you can go swimming at Christmas time."

"You can't swim a lick."

"I can learn," she said. "It ain't too late to learn." She set her bottle down on my coffee table and started walking across the floor. I put a magazine under the bottle so it wouldn't make a ring.

"Come with me," she said. "I ain't foolin', Lucy. It's got to be lots of exciting things out there we hadn't seen yet. We always said we would but instead we went like fools and got married."

I laughed at her foolishness. "I ain't complainin'."

"Oh, I seen days when you swore to leave Billy. You sat in my own living room, tears just flying and saying you led the life of a dog."

"Folks say things when they're upset! Just like you're doing. But ain't nothing to it."

"This time it is." She walked across my floor, making tracks all up and down my rug. A whole day's worth of vacuuming. "It's time we made something to it."

"Jean Carol, are you going to drink that Co'Cola? 'Cause it's going to go flat as a mackerel and then won't be fit for nobody."

She walked over and picked it up but still didn't sip from it. She stood there holding it in her hands and said to me, "You know something? Dwayne said to me things ain't like they used to be, they're different now. But they ain't different. I used to see my mama walk out with a suitcase in her hand and come back in a day or two and do the wash every Monday like usual. Well, Dwayne says things

ain't the way they used to be. So I'm going to do something my mama never done. I'm going to keep on walking."

By now I was fed up. I had missed a whole episode of "Dallas" and couldn't find out what happened until I saw Edith at Wednesday night church meetin'. And here stood Jean Carol talking nonsense about going to California. A woman can take so much.

"Have a seat, Jean Carol. You make me a nervous wreck." I got up and turned the t.v. off because she had rambled on so long that the news had come on.

"I mean it," she kept on. "I'm going. You can stay here and rot but I'm going to do what I was meant to do. When you see them Sarah Coventry ads with those shiny rings glitterin' away that's going to be my hand . . ."

My temper about flared then.

"Well," I said, "you go right on ahead. But I ain't goin' a step. I got no cause to complain. Life is just what you make it. And if you sit around moping about what you don't have you won't be happy a day in your life. But what you ought to do is thank your lucky stars for a good home and a decent husband. That's probably why your mama always came back. She got about halfway to where she was headed and came to her senses!"

Jean Carol stared at me, her bottom lip sticking out and her cheeks puffed up real pouty like. She'd be over it tomorrow, I knew that, first time I called her up and said that Sear's and Roebuck was having a sale on mix and match pantsuits. I been through this routine so many times I knew it by heart. So I wasn't even surprised when I heard gravel spinnin' in my driveway. Jean Carol's head darted around and we listened to the heavy footstep sounds getting closer to the front door.

There was this ferocious banging and hollerin'. "Lucy Stone! Open up this door. I

know Jean Carol's in there and I come to take her home with me!"

"Hold your horses a minute, Dwayne. Ain't no use in yellin' at me." I opened up the door while Jean Carol just stared, not moving.

Dwayne burst through the door mad as a hornet without so much as a good evening to me.

"Get yourself on out in that car, Jean Carol. I've had enough of your foolishness."

"You talk like a crazy man. Busting in to Lucy Stone's house like a lunatic," said Jean Carol.

"Beg pardon," Dwayne said to me, but not real cordial.

I supposed it was better than nothing. I would of asked if he cared for a Co'Cola but I was blamed if I'd open up another one for nobody to drink.

"Come on now, Jean Carol. You had your fun. Let's go on home," he said, a little less mad.

"You hit me, Dwayne. Square across the cheek."

He sighed, real disgusted. "I'm sorry about that, Jean Carol. I didn't mean to hit you that hard. Now, let's go."

"I don't have to. I was thinking of going to California and having my hands photographed."

"Will you cut out that stuff. You know you can't go nowhere. You ain't got no money to go to California."

"I'd get it from Mama," she said real pitiful like my little niece sounds when she wants something.

Dwayne rolled his eyes around. "Jean Carol, you know your mama'd do what she always done when you run cryin' to her. She'd tell you how your place was with your husband."

"Humph," she snorted. "She'd change her tune when she saw what you done to me."

He shook his head. "How could you expect

your mama to go anywhere in this town anymore. The ladies at church would be full of questions about why her daughter run off to California for no reason. It just ain't done, Jean Carol. People get married, they stay married. Your mama, she did. And look here at Lucy, she ain't talkin' about goin' off somewhere."

I smiled at him and nodded. Least he knew what was what, even if he didn't have a speck of manners.

"That's how it is," he said, real firm. "That's the way things are. Now come on home." He meant business.

Jean Carol's face had gone blank. She wasn't lookin' at him or me, just starin' at her hands wrapped around that bottle of Co'Cola. She didn't look mad or teary. You couldn't even tell what she was thinkin'. Then she bent down and picked up her suitcase.

"Maybe for now," she said. "But first thing in the morning I'm gettin' to the bus station, somehow."

Dwayne had latched on to her arm now and was leading her out of my front door. Jean Carol didn't look me in the eye once, but she handed me the bottle on the way out.

"I'll call you tomorrow and we'll go into town," I yelled out to her. "For groceries."

"I won't be there, Lucy. I'll be at the bus station!" she said back.

"Well, I'll try you anyway."

I watched her and Dwayne get into that '69 Chevy and I kept on watching as Dwayne spun gravel into my front yard. Billy was going to fuss about that, I knew, and I just kept watching until I couldn't see their tail lights anymore. Then I went into the kitchen to look for a cap or something to put on that Co'Cola. It was full to the brim. I just don't like to see anything go to waste.

Barbara Hall



Beth Shively
"Floral Razz"
oil on paper, 11 x 11"

To All Interested:

3 p.m. will be a gusting of wind
at 3rd & South—

Garbage huddles in fire-escapes,
Venetian blinds scream,
Soot-net laundry curls overhead,
Shredded headlines erupt from
 alleys,
Brick-flayed power-lines fry rubber . .

A stranger's hat will, of course, blow off.
Blind Lemon Jefferson will sing an elegy to
 the hat.

John Brownlee

Idiosyncrasies

The green woman lured and seduced me
And took me to bed
And when
The green lady undressed

She revealed two purple breasts

I laughed and howled
Because
My red feet and turquoise chest
Had made me
Apprehensive and ashamed

And the green woman with the purple
 breasts
Took me with her strange body
And told to me
Strange stories of love I had not heard
 before
And
Held me until dawn in awe and fascination

The strange and mystical human beings
Have messages to bring
Romance to pronounce
Dreams to spin
For our flesh-colored ears

The green woman
Took me to bed
With her strange body and assorted
 idiosyncrasies

Bruce Potts

American Highway

wandering boy
tramping alongside the two lane
highway

snow is big and wet coming down
disappearing as it hits
—is it snowing from the ground up in
China?

the cars whiz by
and terrible trucks in anger
spin their thick wheels and roar
—the capped and bearded men seem
to enjoy this.

beside the road
(face down now because of the
driving snow)
are cans of Pepsi, Strohs and such
—good for kicking
but glaring like fires in heaven.

looking up
the faces shooting by
are blank as weathered gravestones
and tired like the old mule was
when he no longer enjoyed work.
—it's getting late.

trudge it on home boy.
get in out of the cold.

Steven Palkovitz

She's Got

She don't have much — material.
She's got an old blue Valiant
That still runs. And she's got
A few old clothes, her Ma's wedding ring,
Some well-scrubbed pots and pans
And two or three pieces of furniture
All tucked in a tiny cabin
Hidden, way back in the hills.
She'll weave you a basket
Or quick-carve a cooking spoon—
Things most folks just buy.

When I think of how little she owns
I feel like I'm sitting in a ghetto,
Eating a juicy-lean steak,
While the children scitter about my
feet
Like sparrows fighting for crumbs.

She probably never studied
ornithology,
And doesn't give a damn about birds
flying south
Except that it means winter is
coming.

Charles Grady



Edward Hume
"Pork Alive! - Under Cover"
mixed media, 15 x 20"

The Untimely Death of T.F. Kellett Jr.

Multiplicative product of accidental
conception
Owner of an often-kicked football of a
face
With teeth arranged for television
reception
He was one of the smartest guys I ever
knew.
We hung by nerve endings for survival
Where fathers bequeath sons the art of a
Redman chew
Perpetuating the eternal spit on our
Hardee's floor
We wore the hats, cleaned it up, hung on
because we knew.
Sitting on the hood of your '65 Chevelle
Chuckling empty Busch cans in the
passenger window
In a foreign tongue we slurred "ambition,"
"iconoclasm"
In high school naivety we spoke our
solemn vow.

Then I returned from my job to find you at
yours
Your once sparkling eyes drag the ground
and I find you
Besieged into nothing, into becoming
your chores

We should start where we left off, am I
correct?
Your Chevelle is axle-deep in mud, the
greedy Arabs
Primer, rust-studded finish and now a
frigid 283
Your Keystones you skipped lunch a
semester for
Well, the neighborhood kids took your lug
nuts away.
No more comic remedies, I only watch the
smoldering embryo
Tears on Mom's varnished wood floor
couldn't more disagree
Things have happened; you cannot, will
not understand
If not unhappy, the cynic is unhappy.
Was I a drug for which you've substituted
others . . .

Death oneness is peace, but not when
witnessed a thousand times
Not when I haven't looked into unfocused
eyes for last
Expensive peace, while I seek motivation,
turning my back
I walk from a desecrated, inescapable
past
As if I had a choice—

David Letson

The Queen of Calvary

The floor folds out, a marble
fan worn dull by pilgrim feet
as sun through a window
throws my shape across the tiles.
I am the vortex — light caught my form
and flung it to the altar — Mary at the
cross.

The choir is silent. Something
hovers above — a trembling assumption.
Footsteps on this floor were never
so loud as this — so empty,
the oratory so silent . . . and holy water is
tears
he never shed, and blood
is wine of course, and bread — corpse.

Nora Oseberg

I Believe in Perfection

I believe in perfection

like the moon
endless beams
radiating a cover
for the bleak
play of the night

like snow
under streetlights
swirling streams of flecks
an obscure halo

like a smile I watch
from the side
while you drive

Mary Morello



Keith Mills
untitled
intaglio, 6 x 8"

Fighter Pilot of World War I

(A Poem)

All I want to do
is fly a biplane
back and forth across
The Front
And stare death in the face
With a "Pour le Merite"
around my neck.

Everything else is so dull.
The rest of life makes no sense—
Not women
Not drink
Not talk
Nothing.
Especially not people.
But a Sopwith pup and Fokker DVI
make sense,
'cause one of them I know
will go faster than the other
across the Ardennes.

And also, one day
the fact that I will go
plunging in fire to the earth
With 50 caliber bullets
through my fuselage and my neck;
That makes ultimate sense
And there's nothing else I need to
know
And there's nothing else I have to
know.

So, I just sit and wait
Til the day when I'll
be smiling in Hell with that
"Pour le Merite" around my neck
And all the downed pilots of
DHV's, DHVI's, Albatrosses and Nieuports
will be there asking me if it
was all worth it — all the
Blood, and lives
And sobbing wives.

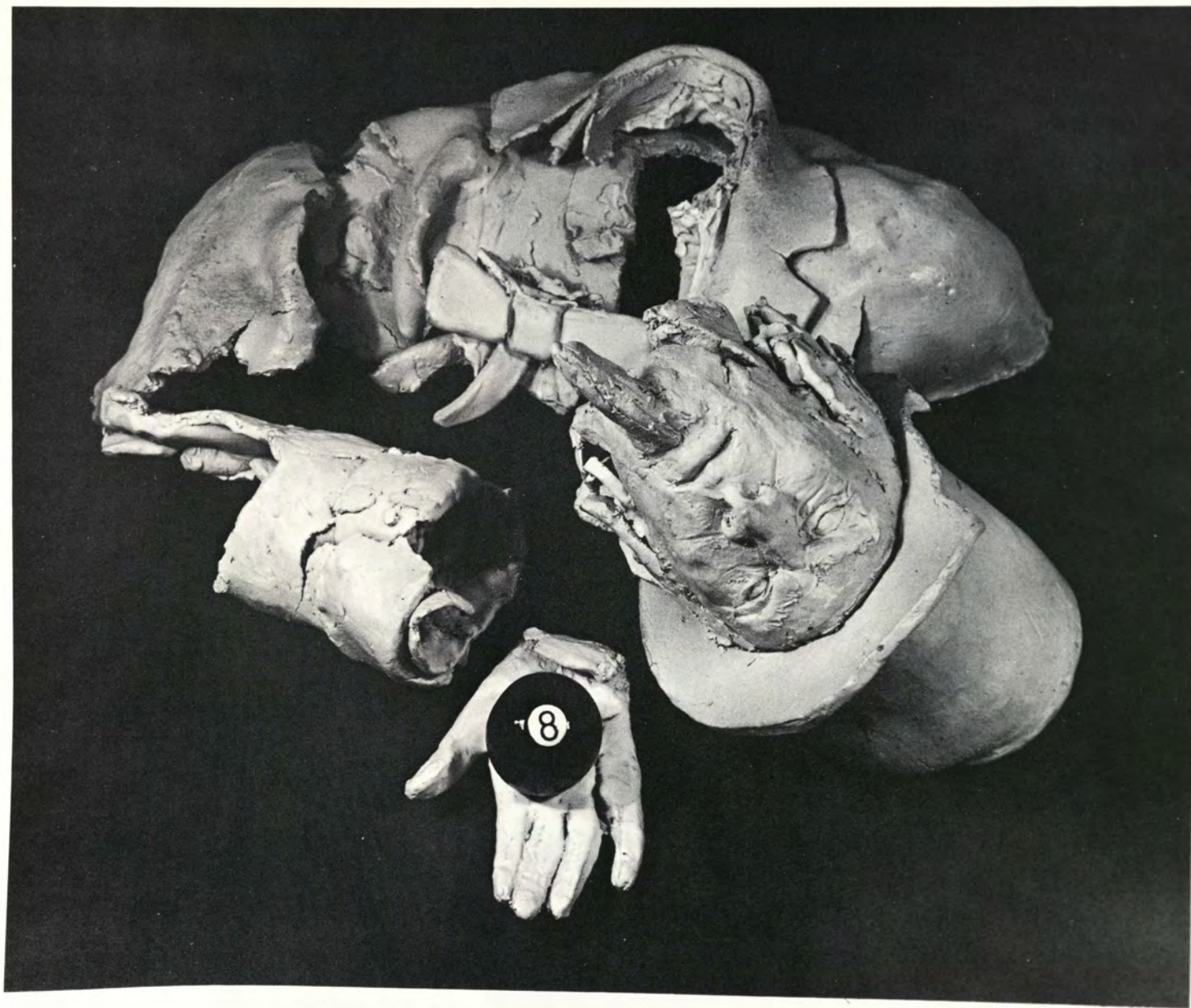
And I'll simply say,
Flames licking at the "Pour le Merite"
glinting at my throat sharply:
"Sure."

Epilogue

And the enemy will
fly low
And throw a black wreath
on the airfield.

For Conspicuous Gallantry, 1918

Bobby Girardi

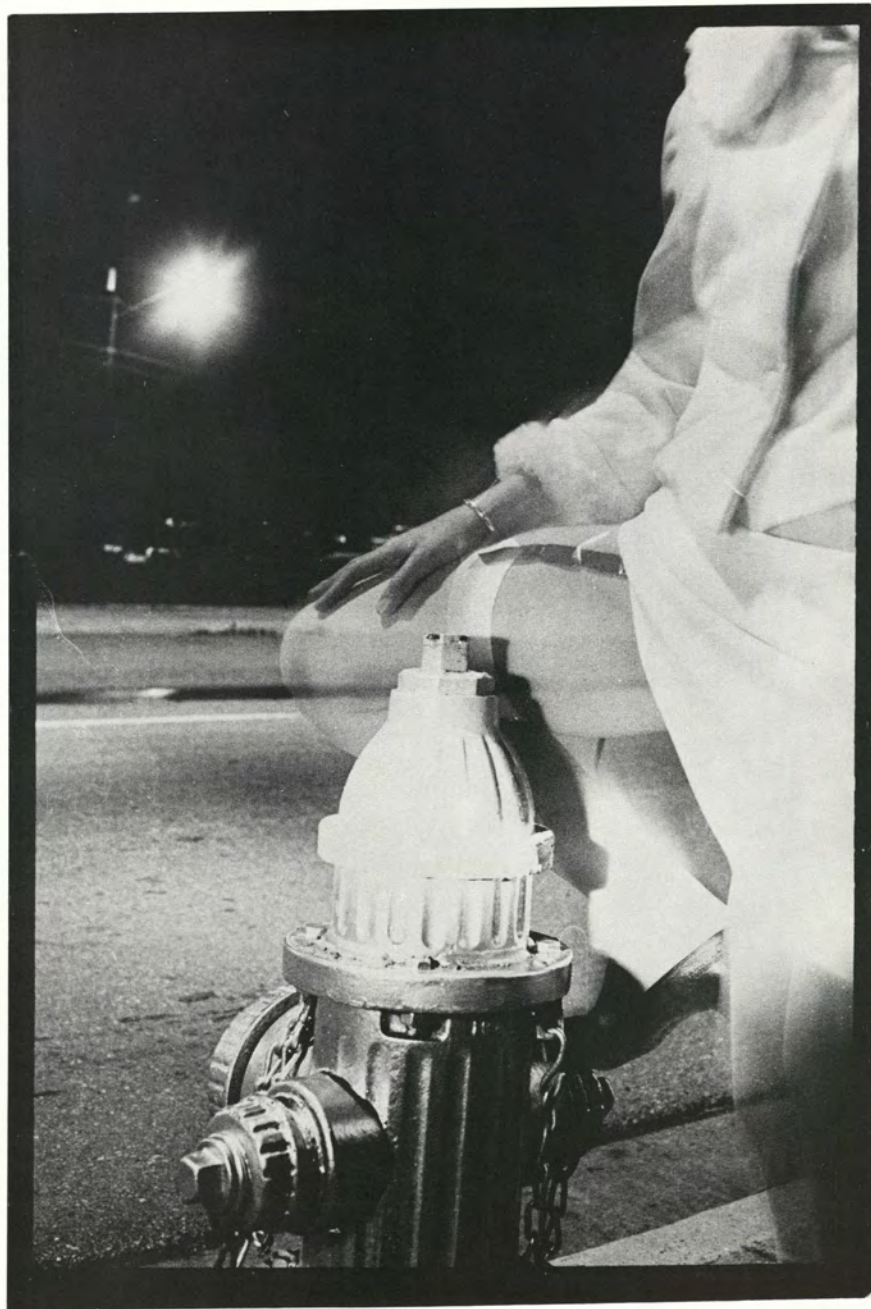


Mark Pascal
"Trophy: USA"
ceramics



Linda J. Sheldon
"Kinetic Self Series"
silver print photograph, 11 x 14"

Linda J. Sheldon
"Kinetic Self Series"
silver print photograph, 11 x 14"





Judy Clark
"Rose is Downstairs"
silver print photograph, 6 x 7"



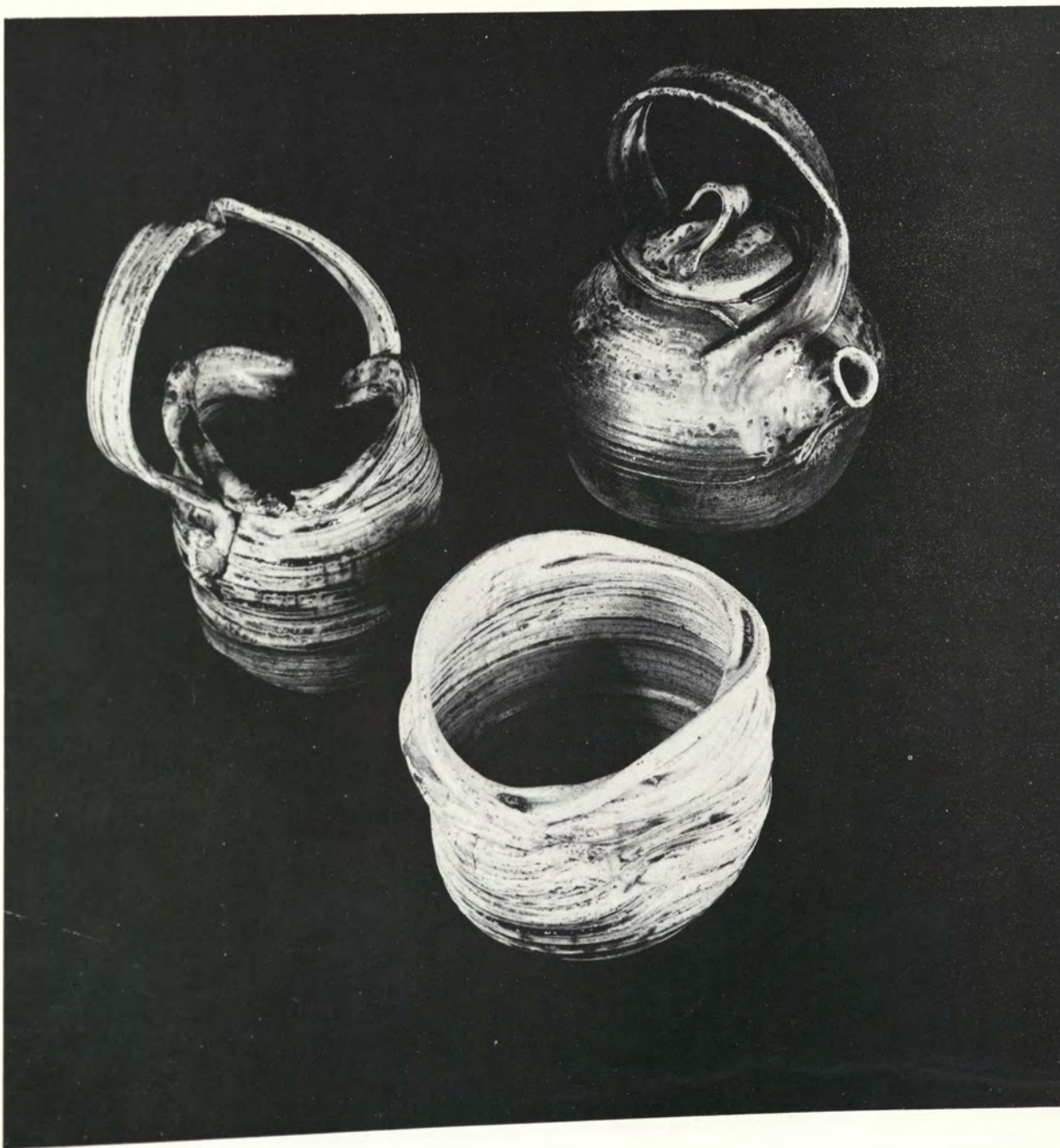
Judy Clark
"Franklin Street"
silver print photograph, 6 x 9"



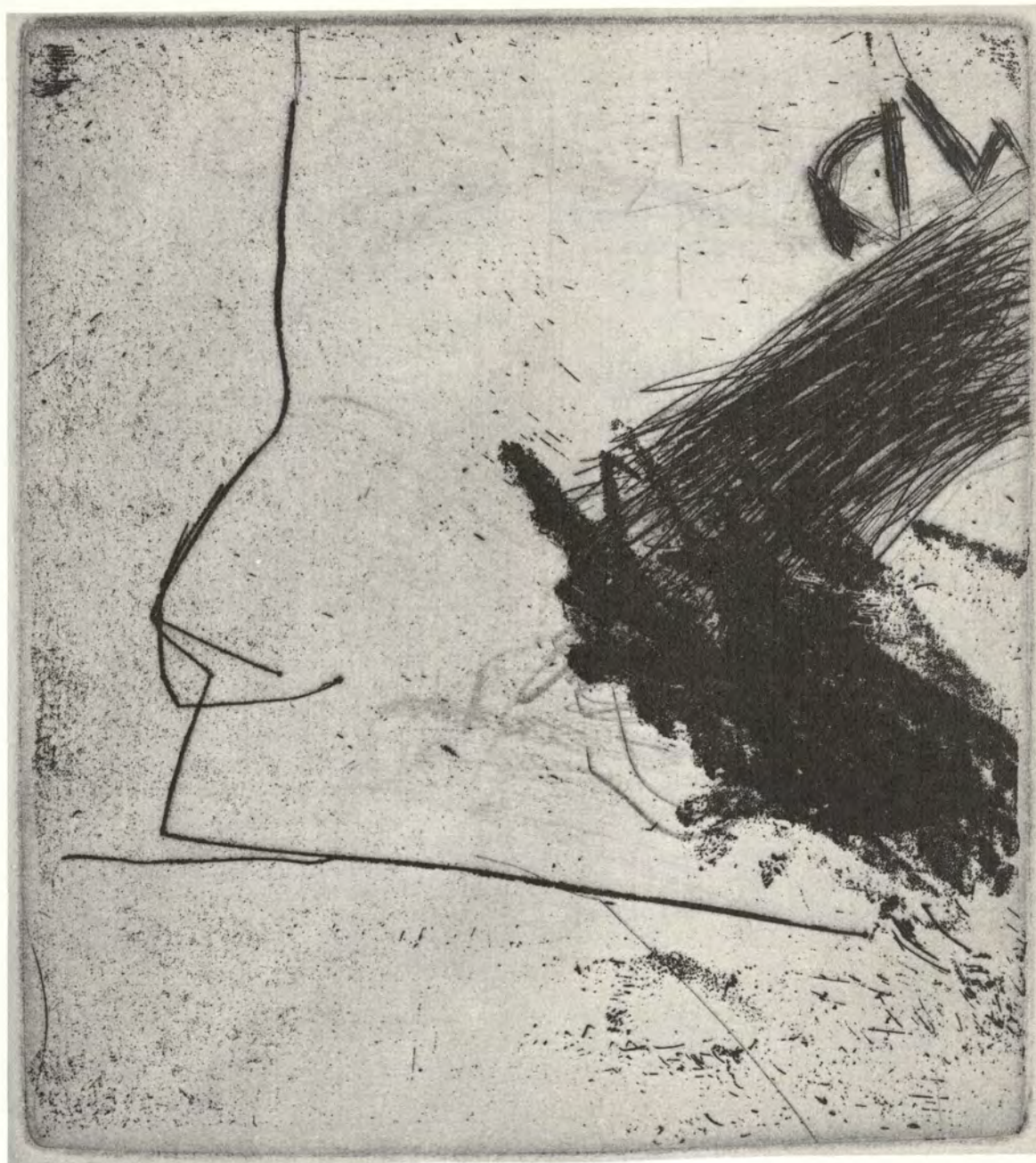
Craig Young
"Shenandoah Mountain, VA. 1980"
silver print photograph, 10 x 10"



Craig Young
"Rockingham County"
silver print photograph, 10 x 10"



Marguerita Hawkins
"Teapot and Basket Forms"
ceramics



Martin Newman
"Privet"
intaglio, 6 x 7"

Your House

Mom couldn't stand you, but she always did like your house. When she would yell at me to go out, that's where I would go.

"You're not going to see that Michael Herbert again are you?" she would ask.

"But Mom, I don't have no place else to go." Then she would look at me sternly with her pretty face, and worse than what she could have said, she said nothing at all. I could tell what she was thinking.

"I'll . . . I'll just do something else then," I said, and she knew what I was thinking. I slammed the screen door, hopped on my green bike, and rode as fast as I could to your house.

My brother always said you were queer, but he didn't even know what that meant. What did he know. He would never let me talk, and he always wanted to play football without a ball or a field. I could never win. Why should I listen to what he said. He didn't know that I had to play with you because I had to have a friend and you were the only one around.

And there was your house, two big stories of bricks with lots of air conditioning inside so we wouldn't have to sweat. That Volvo was always in the driveway. People may love them, but not your Mom. She always used your Dad's car because your Dad was always on business trips. When just that Volvo was there I knew she was still at school. (You know teachers, they were probably making a witches' brew.) The big house was empty, and we could have fun doing things that were wrong. I got off my bike and rang your doorbell.

We went inside and drank Kool-Aid ice cream floats out of your Mom's champagne

glasses while trying to decide what to do. You hit me pretty hard in the chest, and I said I was going to leave if you didn't apologize, but you wouldn't so I pretended to forget. You told me what your neighbor Herman did to that girl and I said that my Mom told me people go to hell for such things. Herman was in high school. We couldn't wait until we were in high school so we could get drunk too. We gulped down the rest of our floats, and you threw your glass against the wall but it didn't break because it was plastic.

You were mad at your sister that day. You said she was ugly and I believed you. We found her outside, pulling her red wagon full of dolls. We told her we wanted to play too, and that made her happy. But she quit smiling and started screaming when we ran with her wagon down the street to that big hill we always rode our bikes down. It went down real fast after we gave it a push, and when it hit the curb at the bottom, the dolls jumped out just like how the people do on safety belt commercials. You laughed your head off, she cried, and I didn't know what to do. I figured I was supposed to laugh, so I did.

We went back to your big house because you had to feed your ugly German Shepherd, Lady. We went inside and you opened up a can of Kalka, the supreme dog food made from proud horses. You had to shake the can, and it all came out in one piece that looked like the inside of the can. Flies were all over it but Lady gobbled it up anyway. Then you kicked her in the side and yelled at her to go away because it was time for us to play with fire.

"Matches are so much fun," you would say, "but my Mom's cigarette lighter is even better." First we lit kitchen matches off of our jeans, the cement, a tooth, or whatever. Then we made paper airplanes and wrote "Jap" on the side and set them on fire. The most fun was when you got your Mom's hair spray and her lighter, and made a big blue flame. It looked just like that Godzilla movie on t.v.

"It's really lots of fun, and my Mom doesn't mind." I believed you, but I was never going to tell my Mom.

My family went on vacation after that day, and the day we got back one of my brother's friends said while we were gone you had put peanut butter all over yourself and run across the street naked. You must have been bored.

It was another day and Mom told me to get out of the house again. I lied to her so we would both know where I was going. When I got to your big house the Volvo was there, but when I rang your doorbell, no one answered. I went inside your garage and knocked on the inside door, and then I remembered you said something about going on vacation. I still hated school, but wow, what was I going to do with you gone. I sat on the cold garage floor and took out of my pocket the book of matches you told me to always carry. I built a little fire with some paper, and it was just like you were there with me. And then it was time to go. I thought about putting the fire out, but you always said, "That Smokey the Bear is just an asshole who doesn't like cigarettes." I rode my bike home.

Me and my brother were playing in the front yard when we saw them go by. Just like everybody else we followed them. First it was

a right turn, then a left, and then — Oh God — the fire trucks stopped at your house.

The fire was out in a couple of minutes, but my brother just had to search through the mess.

"Mike, let's go home. It's probably time to eat," I told my brother frantically. We went inside and my brother began his Perry Mason account of the story.

"Looks like it started here in the garage," he said. "The hot water heater probably overheated and got the fumes from these paint cans," he said, pointing to some black pieces of metal.

"Yeah, I bet that's it," I said, and I tugged at his sleeve. "Come on, let's go."

We went home, and I ran inside and hugged my mother until she said her neck hurt. I thought about telling them, but I knew I couldn't because they would not understand. Such secrets were never meant for the mind of an eight year-old.

I walked into my room and I thought about how Mom and Dad were wrong, Mike was wrong, you were wrong, and I was wrongest of all because I believed. I stuck my face in my pillow and I cried even harder than when Bimmy died because now I knew that no one was right.

David Letson

The Gas Station Attendant and the Invasion of the Forces of the Night

Against steadily growing planes of night,
beneath power lines,
Thrown criss-cross at the setting sun
is my place of employ
From six to twelve each evening
as dusk's shadows
meet and converge and converge again
in deeper shadow
Down the Road.

To my left the lighted gas pumps,
sixty-seven — sixty-eight — sixty-nine —
seventy . . .
tick away gentle comfort
And they know, yes they know
They've held the vigil with me on
Successions of starless nights
Looking and Watching and Seeing,
And in every car that comes by,
I inject in the oil check,
in the window wash, in the gas tank
A little warning:
I tell them the Forces of Night are
about us

I have seen them coming
Astride great black steeds,
Black hooded figures
Eyes glowing
Red like the blood of lost souls
With grease smeared on their cloaks;

I try to tell all of them
Chevy Impalas

Ford Mustangs
All of them
But now it's too late
The winds of time have carried them off
Under streetlights
Leaving only the faintest trace of tire tread
To mark their passing.

I shiver, almost
as I watch them trail off into the night
Alone
For I know
The forces of night approach,
they are here, they are all around us.

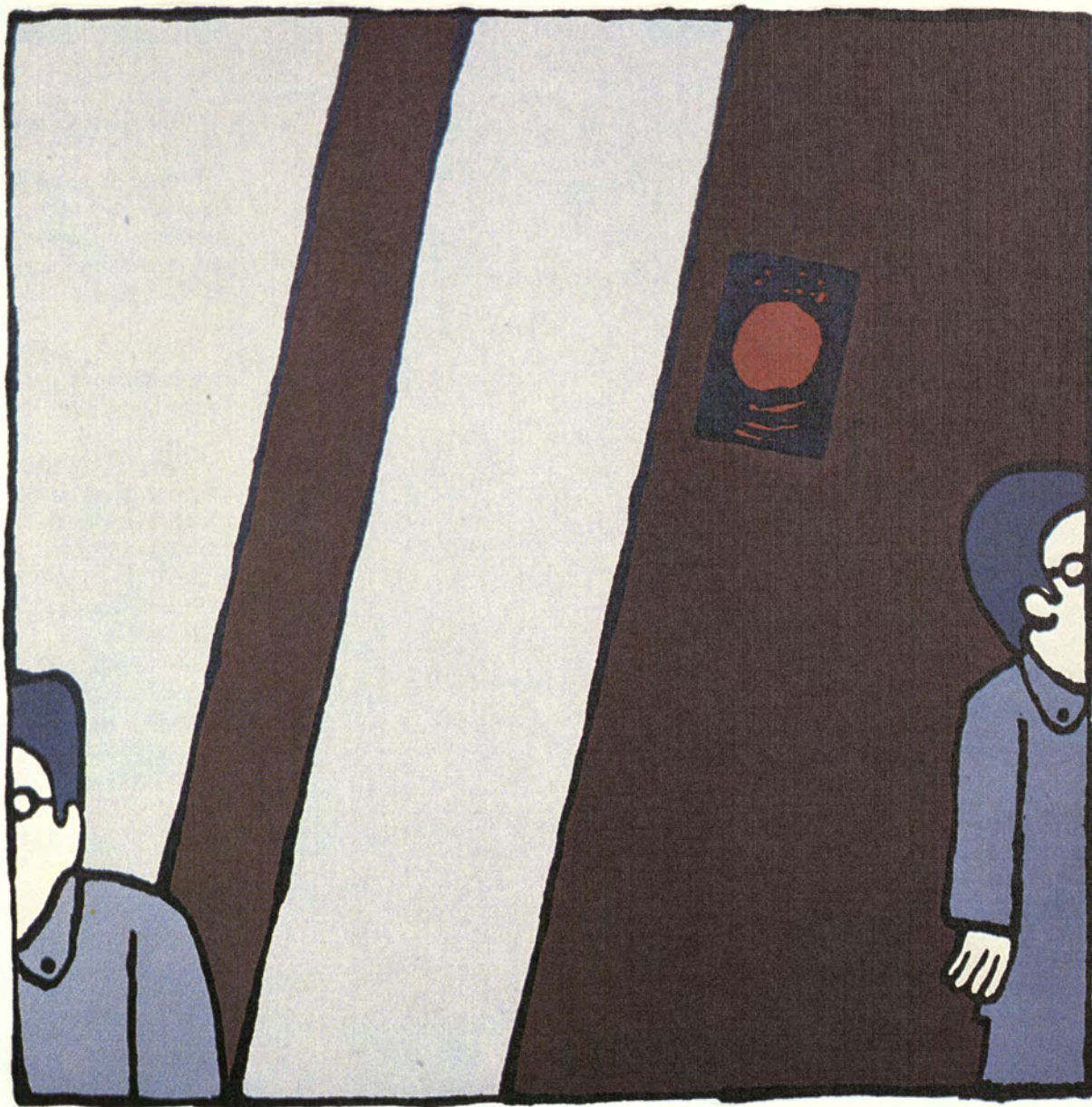
Then, a cacophony of silent noises fill
the air of night
The forces gather around but they keep
their distance
They wait as a '64 Plymouth Fury groans
its impatient engines
Cahoog, cahoog, cahoog.
I knew they were coming
I felt it
I could tell in the number of fan belts
that needed adjusting
And in the way transmissions were slipping . . .
They came quietly, awhile ago
hiding their great black steeds behind
the old auto glass factory outside of town
Some went into the grocery store
and stood staring at the cashier
Fiddling with her buttons
While ten thousand of the rest of

them pressed their faces against the
glass and peered in

But yes, yes
I see them now
And I stand ready, with my gas gun
raised
Blazing at the blackness of prolonged
existence.
Just let one of them come near me
or my station and I'll spray
White gleaming light in their faces
And I know,
I am the only one who knows
The forces of night are about us

I stand and look into the darkness
And stand and wait
Now, I'll wager, they're coming
for me.
For the Forces of Night have come
They are in us, they are with us
They smile over our shoulder
As we read the morning paper
And read along with us
Even in the day we cannot shake off
their adhesive shadow:
Civilization is poised on the brink
For the Forces of Night are about us
And there is only one little gas station
attendant
Staring down endless highways
To warn of their presence.

Bobby Girardi



Garrett Boehling
"Moscow"
serigraph, 11 x 11"

Incubus

Side by side
We skipped baby shoes through briar
paths
Delighted at the crunch of dead leaves
under our feet,
Catching exotic flying bugs to explore the
colors—
We wandered with faith into the yawning
limbs
And forest sounds
Until unseen branches slapped us
Dragging needles across our cheeks,
Pricking our eyes, to show
Snakes slithering around the moss . . .
Ears perked to the growl of hidden beasts,
Steel snarl of razor teeth—
Waiting
And sometime I looked to see that you
had gone,
I stood a solitary reed
Swaying in the prelude of a storm,
Night painting the scene
And lost in the roar of a million red-eyed
demons
Watching
While I called for you and listened
To my voice echo in empty circles
Through the trees.

Barbara Hall

A Grey Backyard

thirty soon turned
into thirty one
now is when maybe
they all start to run
together and soon i
will be old and soon
i will be dead

and why did you
perch there to eat
those berries

then suddenly
you are gone to the
south leaving me
standing here
looking after you
with only my
imagination
(as if i could
possibly imagine
a wing)
while standing on
this frozen earth.

Aaron Cross

Summers

August
I smell it
Sticky heat waves and slick, slimy torsos
Long lit days
The celebration of open windows
and warm thick breezes
Cherished with closed eyelids and liquid
brow,
The unforgettable fastball popping in the
web
of a trusted Rawlings mitt
And the sweet fragrant leather and
dinnertime smells and
cut grass at dusk,
The late morning risings to airwaves of
sound
Glancing through the blinds at
next door's black bikini
In the throes of Coppertone copulation
Long, slippery strokes . . .

Bryan Powell

The Evil Cicada

The moonlit blue-black demon
Creeps forth from his dank mother earth
lair,
And leaves his ghoulish crustacean shell
Clinging to the skin of a rotted cypress.

Bulging hoot owl eyes,
And a voice like a stick on a rickety picket
fence;
His staccato curses affirm that his
coffin-contoured body
Is harder than the hoariest tombstone.

In fact, on the moldy crust of the earth,
No henchman of death can be found
More dangerous and more disgusting
Than the Evil Cicada.

Charles Grady



Rita McCaslin
"(A Trap For) No-No Man"
serigraph, 14 x 15"

Eruption

the eruption of a passing train . . .
I wake to pull the window down—
in the windowsill
I touch yesterday's shriveled wildflower
finding again

a pulse in the folds
of the palm of your hand
mild arms insistent
and still shy
molding my back

questions crinkled on your forehead,
audible as a broken whisper

under coursing hands,
skins rising in ridges
under the shadow and the glare
of dimpling arms

I balance on knees
before the window,
the night's color muted
the moon sheds a blue tinge
revoking the dark—
the congestion of the night
dissolves — I sleep with
the dawn.

Mary Morello

Creativity and the Brown Telephone

I have a brown telephone
That sits forlornly
And my brown telephone
Knows I have no one to call

And so
It sits and pouts
And refuses to let anyone call me
No lovers
No friends
Dare to knock on the door
Of my unfriendly brown telephone

My brown telephone
Has heard of creativity
And has risen against me
Like an outraged slave

My brown telephone
Has heard of creativity
And will not heed when I tell it to behave

My brown telephone
Will sit and hold its breath
Till it turns black and blue
Or until I find a confidante
To share my silly stories
Of creativity and brown telephones

Bruce Potts

Missing Limb

My brother is coming home today
From a foreign place across the ocean.
For almost a year he's been away,
For all my life he has been gone.
He will walk smiling, extending hands,
To a youthful wife and two small
Faces that don't understand
Where Father has been for all
This time. And I stand silently by
Watching and wondering the same.
My mother pretends not to cry
And says, "The army is to blame,
They have had your Daddy over there."
But that makes no sense, they don't care,
They just know he's coming, almost
here . . .
And I want to ask, "But where
Has he been all of these years?"
I never remember him being around
Just always coming back

From college, a honeymoon, a distant
town.
I would sit in awe and stare
Across the family table as he
Told his grown-up stories of somewhere
I'd never seen — miles and years from me.
My friends never had such brothers as he,
They stayed at home, pulled hair,
Played baseball and climbed trees.
But when I was born he was a man,
He loomed over me, above the ground
Like a prince from a fairy land,
I whispered the word "brother" to hear
the sound . . .
And how many times before did I stand
Like this, wide-eyed and anxious to see
My brother coming home again
To his family
And to me.

Barbara Hall



Beth Shively
"Party Girl"
charcoal drawing, 23 x 35"

Because His Notes Sounded Flat, or Lost

I heard a weird piano player
drunk in Bridgeport's Carriage House,
the kind you'd sit with in the dark all
night—
his sluggish blues, his black-man vibes
scuffing dreams in the tarnished light.
His laugh, like the sun gasping
over south-west Jersey,
hung well into the night.

He swept his life up with his hands;
in a junk-store-owner's ramble
down his ivory aisle,
selling enough to make plans.

Charles Martin

Ethyl

Love
The savior of this world
Is a verminous weasel
Emerging from its hole
In the soddy, uncharted landscape
And from the fog
Carrying a torch.
She bares her bristly white teeth
Yanks, rips, tears
Hunks from my liver
Sucking from them my blood
Then permeating into
Rubbing them against my face,
Making it wet.

David Letson

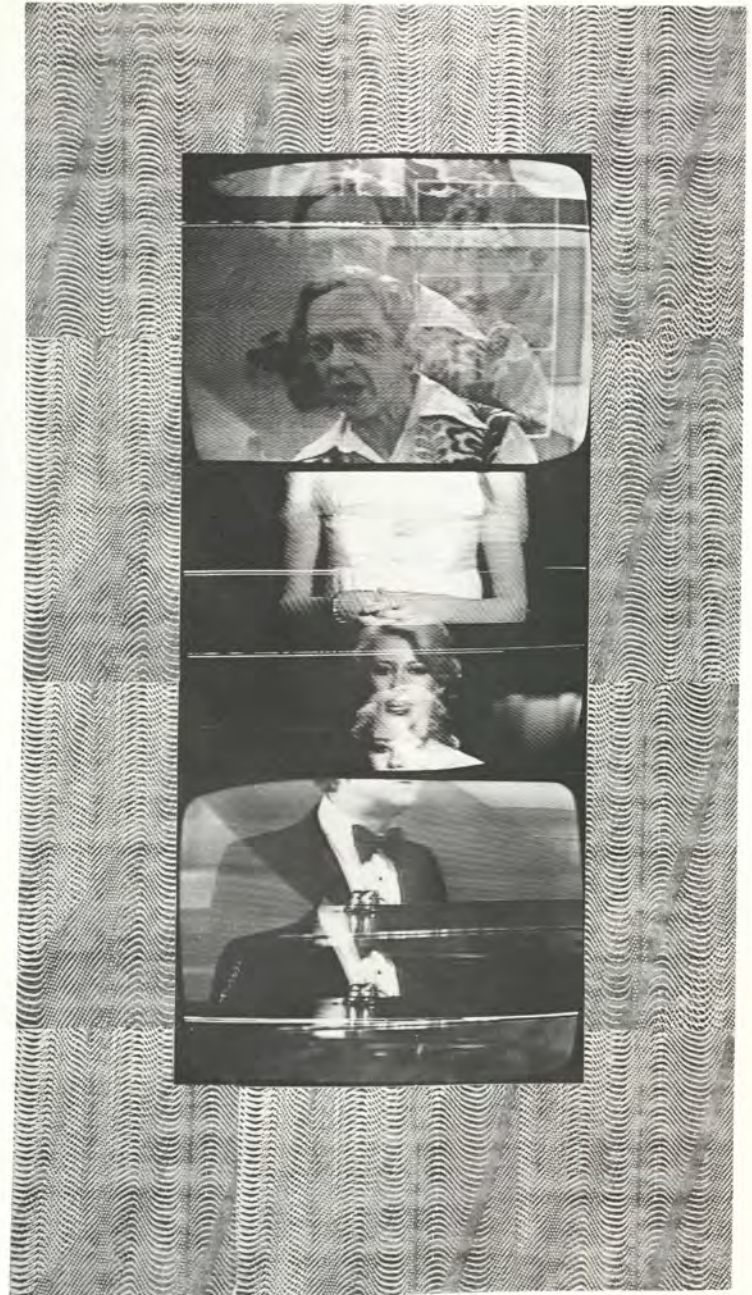
When The Fat Woman

i am corrupt
but when the fat woman touches me
it will be complete
for who can distinguish good from
bad when they bathe in evil, chew it at
dinner and walk with it in their hand.

when i hear her snorts and grunts
the thread of resistance will not break
but slowly rot away.

Aaron Cross

Mark Hardin
"Video Static"
photo copy and silver print photograph, 13½ x 24"





Karen Byer
untitled
silver print photograph, 10 x 11½"



Mark Hardin
"Biomorphic Lines"
silver print photograph, 11 x 14"



Donald J. Becht
untitled
silver print photograph, 6 x 9"

Los Angeles: 1969

Callahan longed to be **the** director of the 70's, the single most influential **auteur** of the decade. He had worked hard at developing an egotistical, outspoken, immature, ambiguous personality; all he needed now was experience, and that's why he came "West."

Somehow it didn't seem appropriate to go West as Jr. Smigens from Boston, Mass. So after consideration, Jr. became Callahan from the East and entered the UCLA film school.

With the freedom for spending he had known as a child, Callahan had attended a minimum of seven movies a day since age nine. This of course led to his complete alienation from society and explained why he wore mirror sunglasses even at night. His knowledge of the technical and aesthetic value of film was varied for a first year graduate student, while his appearance was Cecil B. DeMille all the way. He always wore a silk scarf draped over his trench coat to match his French cap and called everyone by their initials, "Hey, J.B., K.C. How in the hell are you? T.J., baby, long time."

His first project, he decided, would be a documentary, and he chose his subjects with the utmost care and precision.

He threw darts at the phone book.

After sailing two darts out the window and nearly killing his parrot with the third, Callahan finally put a dart smack in the "o" of Louis Viking, 1683 Pebble Lane, LA, Calif.

The Vikings were in no way a wealthy couple. And even to label them middle-class would be a slight exaggeration of the term, but Louis Viking had established a solid, independent business and in fifteen years he

had risen from floor sweeper to sole owner of his own two chair barber shop. Viking was at his shop the day his wife made the mistake of answering the door.

"May I help you?" Mrs. Viking asked the dual reflections of the sun, staring at her in front of three other men loaded down with enough equipment, cameras, clipboards and cable, to start their own network.

"I'd like to speak to Mr. or Mrs. Viking?" Callahan asked.

"I'm Mrs. Viking."

Callahan paused. "You're Mrs. Viking?" He paused again, then erupted. "A Negro!" he cried, "I can't believe it. My first assignment and I got a Negro."

Like a child who **expects** a new bike but receives an Italian ten-speed, Callahan rushed past Mrs. Viking, urging his crew to follow and set-up, while he plotted his course aloud. "I can see it now. A film that depicts the plight of a black family during an age of struggle for Civil Rights."

He paced the floor, his trench coat trailing behind him.

"A view of one family's reactions to the victories and defeats of **their** people on the battlefield of human justice, in such stark explicit terms that . . . that this film and this film alone, will change the course of man . . ."

To say that Mrs. Viking's command was forceful would be grossly unfair, for when she shrieked, "What in the hell do you think you're doing here?!" San Francisco, three hundred miles away, shook visibly. Callahan and his crew froze, confused by her emotional outburst. But in that same moment of stop-action, Callahan recovered.

"I'm terribly sorry," he apologized, "I'm Callahan from the UCLA film school and

you've been selected to be the subjects of my first full length feature."

"Originally I had planned a documentary on a typical American family, but as you well know you're black . . ."

"My God!" Mrs. Viking countered, "Please don't tell my husband."

Without really understanding her joke, Callahan brushed aside the comment and continued, "Yes, well, this inconvenience did change my plans for a moment, but as is my nature, I've decided upon a new angle." Holding his hands apart as if they were a neon sign he proclaimed, "Blacks in America: Is the difference only skin deep?"

Mrs. Viking's head slumped into her hands. "Look, son," she said looking up, "Why don't you talk to my husband? He's at work now, but leave a number and I'll have him call you."

"Ma'am, this is your chance," Callahan explained, "Your face will be known throughout the world."

"I'd like my face to stay right here in L.A.," Mrs. Viking assured him.

"**Don't** you want people to know the pain and suffering you experience everyday?"

"What pain and suf . . ."

"**Don't** you want people to see the humiliation you feel everytime you go to the Welfare Office?"

"What Welfare Office?"

"**Don't** you want the thousand dollars that go along with the project?"

"A thousand dollars?" Mrs. Viking finally interrupted, "As in money dollars?"

That's right, Callahan lied. Sometimes ethics had to be bypassed when they obstructed your goal, he reasoned.

"I'll have to think about it of course, but those things you said about pain and suffering

and the Welfare Office . . . Well, they're simply not true."

"Sure, sure," Callahan said, ushering his crew out the door, "we'll be back tomorrow for your answer," and then pausing at the door himself, "Uh, Mrs. Viking, is it possible to make this place a bit more . . . uh, well, shabby?"

"Shabby?"

"Never mind," he responded quickly, "See you tomorrow."

Mr. Viking sat on the edge of his bed stretching, scratching, and rubbing the sleep from his eyes. Normally, it took him a few minutes to return to life and this morning as he stumbled towards the bedroom door sleep still blinded him so that he failed to notice the intense light streaming underneath.

Upon opening the door, Mr. Viking would swear later, he thought the sun had fallen into his hallway. The three spotlights radiated as much heat as light and from behind the wall of light and loud whirr of the camera came Callahan's voice, "Beautiful! Beautiful! Go with it baby. Are you getting this Ernie? This man is beautiful. Look at how he wakes up. I love it."

Slam!

Mr. Viking stood leaning against the door, breathing heavily, a look of stark terror covering his face.

"Alice! Alice!" he cried, "The klan is here . . . I think . . . Don't panic. I don't know how they got it, but don't panic."

"What are you talking about?" Mrs. Viking asked groggily, attempting to sit up, but managing only a half-slouch.

"There were lights . . . and like a 'whirrrrr' and . . ."

"Oh, my God," Mrs. Viking gasped, suddenly realizing, "Hey," she shouted beyond her bedroom, "is that you kid?"

"Yes, Mrs. Viking," Callahan's voice answered.

"Remember I said I'd be back tomorrow? Well, tomorrow's today."

"You scared my husband to death."

"He was brilliant. Absolutely brilliant. You should've seen the look he gave us. Packed with emotion, I tell you."

"Yeah, well the only thing that's gonna be packed around here is you and your equipment unless you give us a chance to dress," she hollered.

Mr. Viking had listened to this conversation calmly, but with a twisted look of confusion, then he exploded, "What the hell is going on here?"

"You were brilliant, Mr. Viking," Callahan reminded him.

"Brilliant!" Mr. Viking raged, stepping out the door. "I'll show you brilliant!" but once again the invisible hand of light and heat forced him to retreat to his bedroom.

As the noise of the dismantling outside filtered into their bedroom, Mrs. Viking explained to her husband about Callahan, his project and the thousand dollars. The money had a calming effect on his nerves and, until they had walked downstairs, the couple had agreed to at least listen to Callahan's proposal.

The Viking's modest, contemporary living room with silver hanging lamps, shag carpeting, a white couch with matching end tables, plants and a 24-inch black-and-white T.V. set had been transformed into a living

reminder of World War II Poland, a replica of any apartment in the Watts section of L.A. Plaster was scattered on the floor from the newly formed holes in the ceiling and walls. A single light bulb hung from a worn cord. Springs and stuffing were pushing their way free from the confines of an ugly gray, urine-smelling couch set on the barren floor. Rats were released from behind a spotlight and children . . . eleven small black children dressed in rags torn from the upholstery of the couch, were crowded in front of the lights and cameras eating dust under Callahan's direction.

"That's right kids, give us that hungry look," he urged, "Hungry! hungry! Don't you kids know hunger? Come on shed a tear or two, we've got to have you back at the rental agency by three."

Noticing the Vikings staring down on the scene from atop the stairs, Callahan shifted his camera to the couple.

"Get those people on celluloid, Ernie. Look at that embittered look. Those people are angry, angry at the injustice, angry at the unfairness . . ."

"Angry at this damn fool standin' in my livin' room," Mr. Viking shouted, racing down the stairs.

Callahan, backing away from the charging man, kept the camera rolling and continued his monologue, "Excellent, Mr. Viking. Verbalize your feelings."

"We'll redub the sound track," Callahan whispered. "Have him crying out against the heartlessness of the government."

"Where the hell is my furniture?"

"Sold it," Callahan said, "to finance this project. Come on down Mrs. Viking. The rats are only mechanical."

Calmly, very calmly considering the turmoil, Mrs. Viking stepped down the stairs, walked across the room, and began pulling the plugs apart on Callahan's equipment.

Callahan sighed as the camera's whirring slowed.

"Mrs. Viking," he said despairingly, "You didn't have to do that."

But momentary setbacks were just that, and Callahan quickly regained his enthusiasm. "Hey, that's okay, we'll just set up this next scene in the kitchen. I've got some grits and hamhocks and Twinkies in there, but of course there won't be enough for you and the kids, so we'll really see a primitive factor come in to play. Man's basic need, food, is being denied one family in this 'Land of Opportunity'.

"Okay, Ernie, take the crew into the kitchen, set the lights up next to the pantry — wait till you folks see the kitchen," Callahan said to the Vikings.

"**A**in't gonna be no kitchen scene." Mrs. Viking's monotone sounded strangely ominous amid the clatter of moving equipment. Her voice could have frozen molten lava, and everyone, including Callahan, was congealed by its chill.

"What was that, Mrs. Viking?" Callahan asked.

"I said, there ain't gonna be no kitchen scene." Mrs. Viking's voice was still cold and emotionless, drained almost, as she lifted one of the children from the floor and dusted the dirt from his shirt.

"Y'all better just leave now and don't never come back. You had your chance and you almost had our cooperation, but we ain't no

share croppers or slum dwellers anymore. We made it out of there and built a life worth respectin', and you just tryin' to drag us back and remind us how it used to be."

Mrs. Viking was intent only on the child she held, and Callahan stepped back in disbelief. He adjusted his mirrors, started to speak, stopped, then spoke.

"Well, Mrs. Viking," he said smugly, "You obviously know nothing about documentaries."

"No," Mrs. Viking answered without hesitation, "You just don't know anything about people."

Callahan stood at the door and supervised the exodus of children, crew, and equipment. Ernie stopped before him and spoke for the first time.

"Boss," he said, "I think I saw a Chinese couple down the street."

"Great. Take the crew down there. I'll see if I can turn these kids in for some Orientals."

After the rest had gone Callahan turned to the Vikings and removed his glasses; his eyes dark, beady and bird-like.

"You people," he said, "You people may be able to play basketball, but stay out of film."

Replacing his glasses, he shut the door behind him.

Kevin Crowley



Deborah Dyal
"Hot Dream"
linoleum cut, 10 x 13"

Benediction

As you smoke, it circles and makes
you a halo, curled in your
chair — oh buddha, my head is
breaking and it won't
stop—
sunk in your chair, you close your
eyes because they see too much.

I close mine and lean my face
to your knees and it comes, a wash — no
i meant . . . so much . . .
promises unmade . . . eyes . . .
closed turned away — oh, christos don't
let
it happen again i'm going mad — yet
it comes — how could i have done
what i have done? — it licks
my fingers, nuzzles my neck — what
haven't
i seen oh take this
cup — my heart is already
in your hands i want it
crushed — i need
trampling . . .

I lean against you like smoke except that I
hold still
(someone's walked across my grave.)
Your knees are wet — how I
kiss them! oh (father forgive) gentle
You touch my hair, raise my face, and lift
me
in your arms.

Nora Oseberg

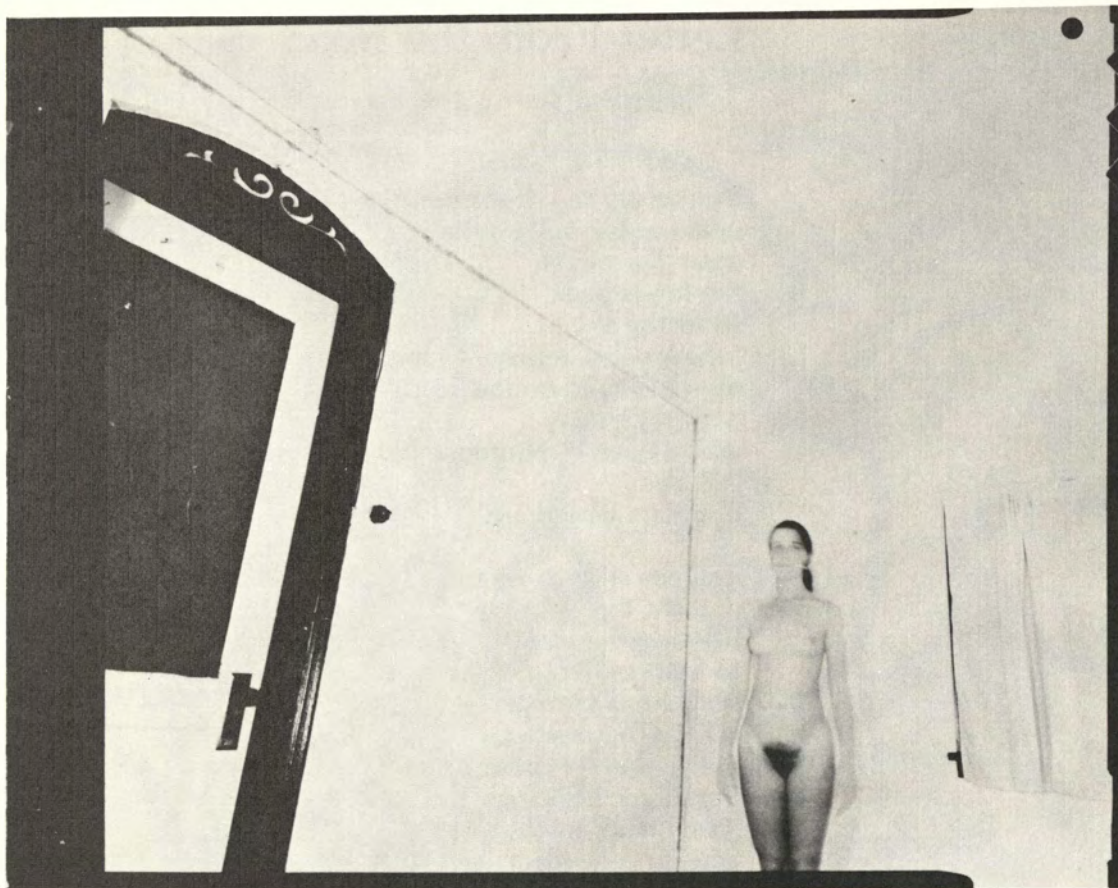
Letter From the Road

to james morrell

You would recognize the Black bug
beat up, but still on the road;
even this winter
the top is back
to let the sky in.
I think you'd remember me, too,
my eyes fixed on the road—
a quiet camera
with a head of photographs,
still lifes
of others who drive.

The car still has no radio—
at night the listening
has become tuned
to less restless songs.
My faith is stronger—
driving to know
the reason for dreams.
Persistence is a sign
giving miles to go;
and life is heading
where long ago
a sun nailed itself shining
to the sky.

Charles Martin



Donald J. Becht
untitled
silver print photograph, 4 x 5"

The Blue Door

It's raining in the city
Old man winter blowing harp
So I step inside the doorway
It's cold, damp and dark

So I go inside
Worn leather shoes on a creaky wooden
floor
Down the winding stairs
To the hallway lit by the naked bulb
On the right, the blue door

Knock once, knock twice
When one glass eye spies a familiar face
A gorilla will open the door
And let you in the place

Step inside the door
See the faces crowded there
Wrapped in thick warm haze
Candy colors dance on kinky hair

And the ones onstage
Are causing the craze
Smoke arises from phallic lips
And from their fingertips

Hear the blue notes flowing
Feel the rhythm shake the floor
A steamy ocean of bodies in motion
Behind the blue door

Stale compression fills the room
Beer and women and sweat and perfume
Smiling faces show no traces
Of the world that lives upstairs

Bryan Powell

Sparks

burning roots streaked blue
silhouettes hover, distant
as sparks quiver up to
crumbling bronze leaves.
they step back
instinctively . . .

he pulls her over,
warms his hands
. . . why can't we seem
to fall
in love . . .
again he asks

she only looks—
questions strain her face
she flushes as her tongue
slices words meant for apology
into pieces

sparks scatter,
they turn,
stare back
at the fire

Mary Morello

Today

Old man with a crumpled paper face
Rakes rust leaves from his autumn pool
"Everybody wants to swim,
but nobody wants to clean."
Struggling between cigar exhaustions
Like trips to Havana themselves.
My scribbled orthodontist's note
Stopped my scheduled feet
Government, Algebra,
The dreaded Spanish III all to pass
"I like your head; you'll do something
Would you like to fix up that Valiant up
front
and maybe you want to meet my
daughter"

Today
My fingernail rode the glass of varnished
stair rail
To a breakfast I slopped on my face
I turned off the news
I drank a beer
From the other side
Walked out to the rust autumn pool
That faded from my mind
Like life through follicled skin pores
A bleached frog rested motionless
As a monument to a schoolboy prank
Leaves were everywhere—
Stems getting caught in my shoe laces
There was nothing I could do
Today
I am old.

David Letson



