

QUARTZ

Chrysalis 79



It's So Easy to Slip, It's So Easy to Fall
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Chrysalis 79

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LITERARY AWARDS

First Place: Lori Magai, "From Just Your Passing Glance"

Second Place: Cynthia C. Wills, "To the Poet and the Man"

Honorable Mention: Denise Norred, "Autumn"
 Michael McAlice, "The Prairie Dog"
 Lynn Woodson, "On Passing by Death"
 Charles Martin, "Father"
 Margaret Jones, "January"
 D. S. Preston, "Opus #1"

ART AWARDS

Honorable Mention

Marty Newman, charcoal sketches

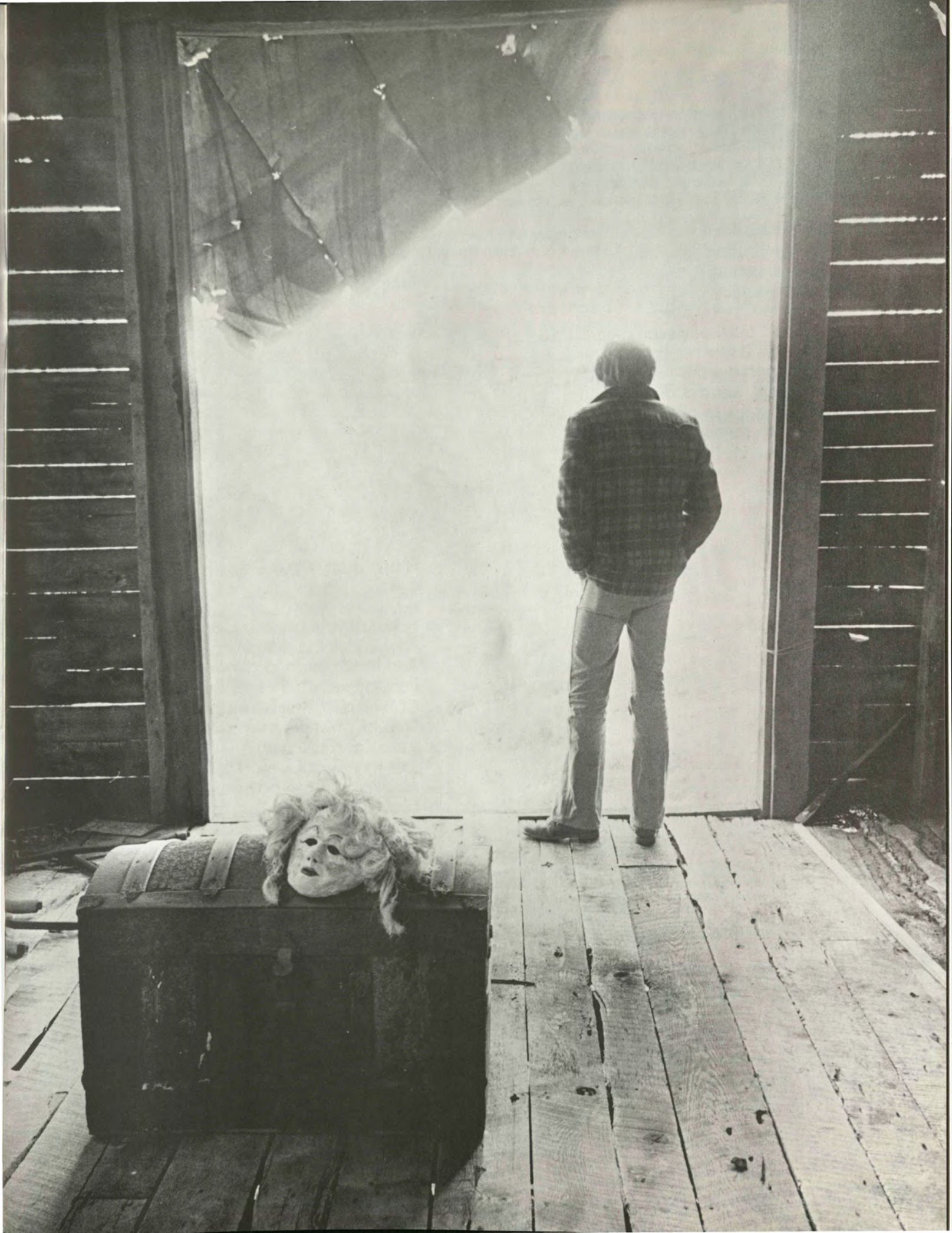
Linda Jo Sheldon, photography

Betty Willberger, photography

Andrew Black, photography

Rita McCaslin, pencil drawing

Dean Honeycutt, Typoi



January

Grey flannel sky,
the dying afternoon fire.
We are, almost,
comfortable.
The gravel in the drive
that hurt our feet all summer
crunches under our boots.
Walking to the car,
our words, wet clouds,
drift up to be punctured
on frozen points of stars.

—Margaret Jones

From Just Your Passing Glance

From just your passing glance,
I could pull the stars from their places
And teach them to dance;
I could touch the faces
Of Time and Time's henchmen,
Stop them where they stand
Frozen and still, then
Turn them back with a turn of my hand;
And from your steady gaze,
I could take a midnight and turn
It into morning's blaze;
And all my sorrows burn
In the fire of your eyes.
With all my guile,
I could frame no lies
That could stand before your smile.

—Lori Magai

L. S. B.

what a terrible mess this is for you see people depend on me to be happy and carefree and full of wisdom and cute sayings so they stare at me in my confusion and wonder how to act when i lie on the floor and try to keep my head from falling off my shoulders. they try to act casual when my arms start waving and my subjects no longer match my predicates and they have never mentioned it to me but i have overheard them saying that everytime they see me i'm making breakfast without any clothes on but they don't see that everything is stained with gravy and that all my presumptions are a castle of cards and everyplace looks like Newark and that my own voice sounds like an echo down a dusty dim hall.

if only you were here we could hop on a train to Boston and spend an autumn day strolling the backstreets by the wharf and at night we would go to my sister's spare room and kiss each other to sleep.

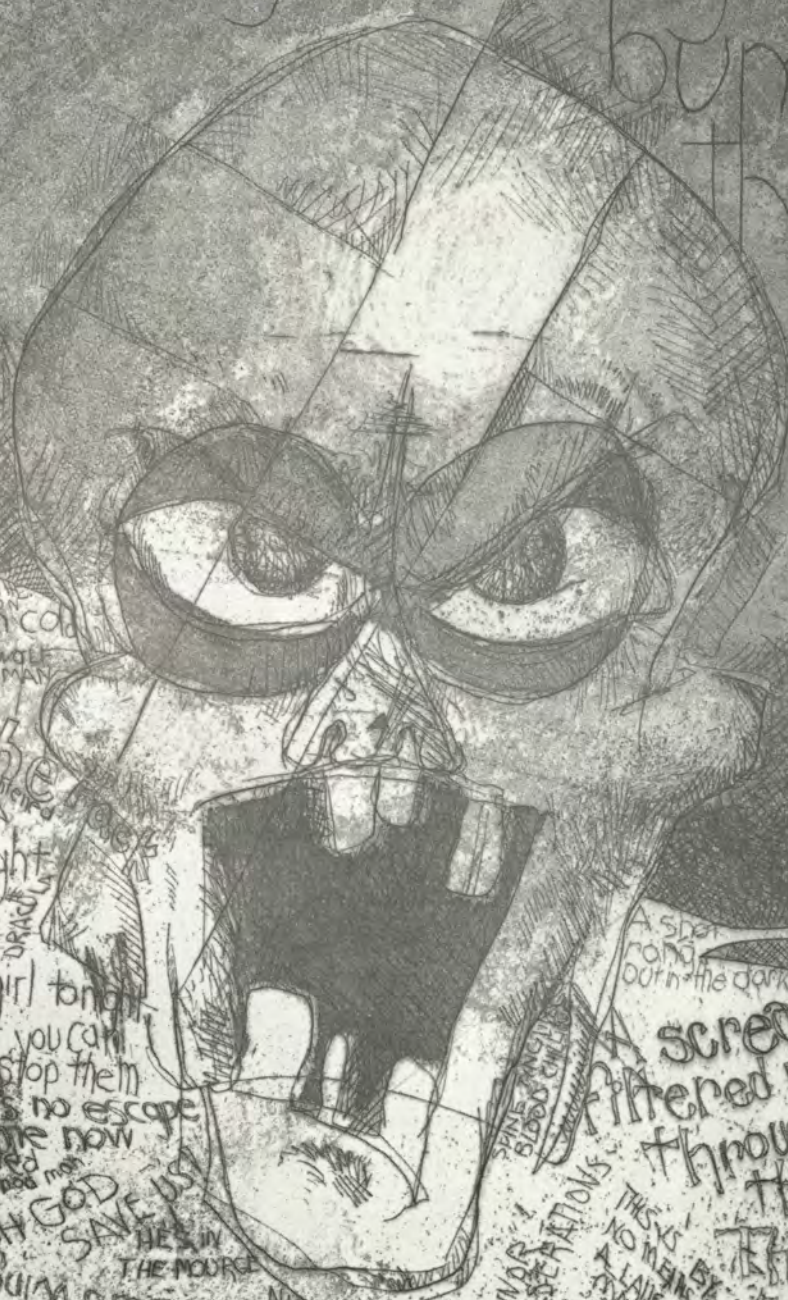
—Aaron Cross

untitled anonymous



And things that go

bump in
the night



His blood ran cold
I know
The phone was
And you thought
I was DEAD
they are killing the girl tonight
she laughed
and pulled a
knife from
her purse
The horrid laughter
filled every pore
and chilled me to the
bone

THE WOLF
MAN
DON'T
my child
the only thing
that was
And you thought
I was DEAD
they are killing the girl tonight
she laughed
and pulled a
knife from
her purse
The horrid laughter
filled every pore
and chilled me to the
bone

A sharp
ring
out in the dark
A scream
filtered up
through
the
The blood flowed
freely &
warmly

A GUN
SHE LAUGHED
HEARTY UNTIL
A BULLY RIPPED
AT BROUGHT
CHEST
NUMEROUS STAB WOUNDS
BETTER DEAD THAN RED

The Circle

The deep set eyes
And black coat
Kept coming toward her.
A torch flame
Licking at the ceiling
Danced in flickering mystery.
The axe was slowly lifted-
Balanced on the edge of death.
Glinting metal and heavy smoke combined
To conjure a desperate scream.
But as the axe came
Swooshing down,
Momentum increasing,
Hearts racing,
Minds awhirl,
Eyes so wide,
Muscles on fire,
She changed the channel.

—Steven Palkovitz

Christmas Eulogy For My Brother's First-Born Son

Tiny coffin, wrapping you in blue velvet;
Your face was never so pale in life.
The preacher too concerned with little lambs,
And I, confused — "Is that my brother sobbing?"
On Christmas Day a child of light was born.
On Christmas Eve I saw you die, and all
The light I knew went out with your last breath.

—Lynn Woodson

Nursing Home

From under the shawl her hand hobbles to hold
Mine, finds it, and grips it like a vise.
She leans and whispers, "I'm paying quite a price—
For them to bring it all dried-up and cold!"
She drops my hand; her fingers, suddenly bold,
Dart like a crab; she jabs the offending slice.
Her voice goes high — "But Grandma, that's not nice!"
It lowers again — "They think I'm stupid and old."

On the bureau, among the bric-a-brac,
A solemn photograph of her at twenty,
Proud and straight and slender; and in black,
Smiling, next to it, is one of me,
Dusty, beside an empty vase, a stack
Of cards, a cup, some bandaids, a can of tea.

—Juanita Brunk Clemmer

Autumn

Dusk envelopes
a distant, once-green hill;
the small hill
wears a tattered cloak of leaves
and faded wildrose
tossed about its shoulders
and cradles a lonely boy.
The child hugs his knees,
sinking in the sweetbriar
and clinging to the comfort
of this autumn world.

—Denise Norred

She Wakes at Dawn

She wakes at dawn to watch the sun arise.
She eagerly awaits the bright of day,
And yet she fears the light will blind her eyes.

A child she seems (but this her age denies),
Who clings to dreams that seem to slip away.
She wakes at dawn to watch the sun arise.

Her dreams are like the morning sun. She tries
To coax them from behind the misty gray,
And yet she fears the light will blind her eyes.

She chooses not to see the world. Its lies
Are more than she can bear. Yet everyday,
She wakes at dawn to watch the sun arise.

She prays the sun will shed its dark disguise,
And anxiously endures the long delay
And yet she fears the light will blind her eyes.

In spring a flower blooms, at winter dies.
Love grows till sorrow sends it on its way.
She wakes at dawn to watch the sun arise,
And yet she fears the light will blind her eyes.

—Cynthia C. Wills

The Hidden Unrest

" . . . let us also lay aside every weight, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us."

Hebrews 12:1

A runner.
the feeling of winter hands.
the pins and needles
giving way to warmth, but
no,
the numbness does not go.

a grey pain
left as a muscle-pull
a broken nerve
or imagined
hypochondria:

my lower chest
splintered nerves
the jolting
of bone and flesh
shoots pain.

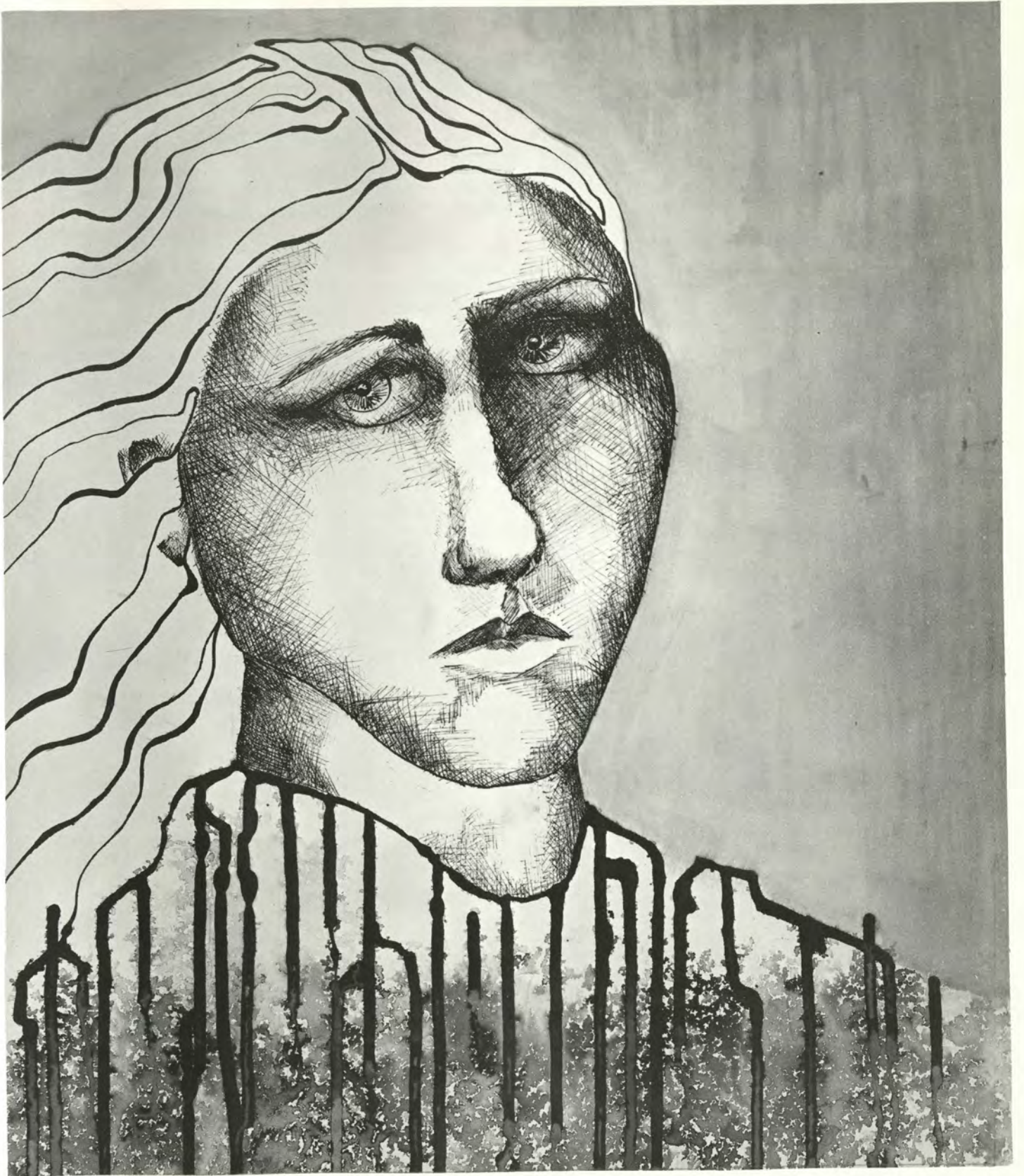
a spinal tap
imagined?real
pulling fluid
like opaque ink,
waterstains on my file.

the curiosity seekers
doctors for the week,
then ring me at home
for my head-aches
unable to crack me.

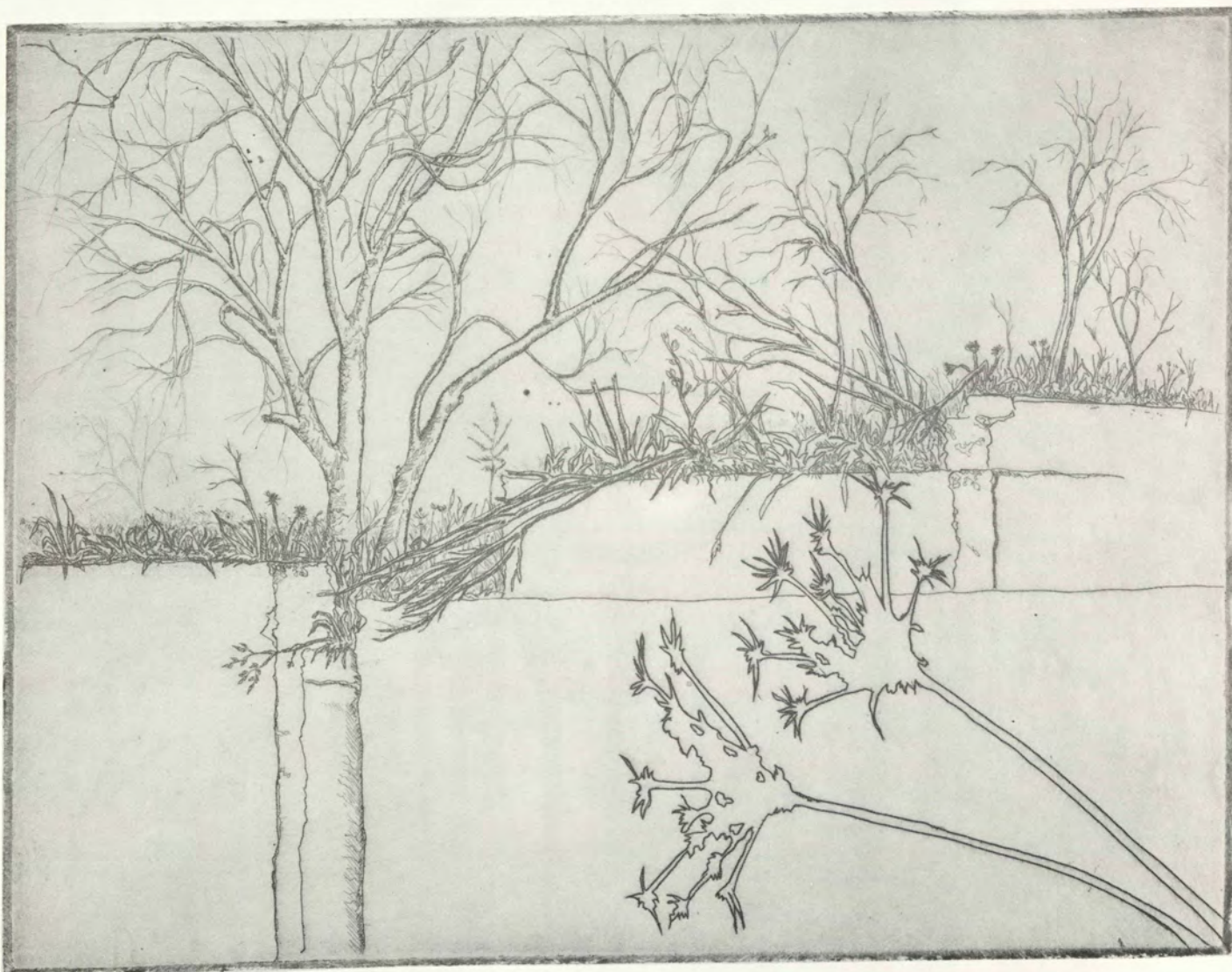
hanging like ice on muscle;
I'm tight. It's not a pull.

I want to run.

—Charles Martin



untitled
Mary Beth Timpano



Eventually
Mike Copple

The Red Altar

I opened the window and filled my lungs with the air that only an elite group was breathing. It was fresh and pure as if it had just been emitted from the nearby forest. The sun peeked over the jagged mountainous horizon and its rays gradually reached the dark western sky.

The parents would not be getting up for another hour, so I rejected television in favor of watching the circus in my backyard. The big black ringmaster perched upon the fence and with a shrill, graveled shriek signaled for the show to begin. Trapeze artists dressed in an assortment of costumes soared through the air from one branch to the next, and two furry clowns chased one another up and down an oak. Some of the onlookers sat strung out on the telephone wires whistling their approval, while others gathered on the lawn, bobbing and moaning, more interested in the refreshments than the performances. Thousands of flickering green hands applauded the players and the clapping became louder as the breeze blew harder.

The circus was interrupted by a buzzing alarm in the next room. I folded my pajamas, placed them under the pillow, and put on my hunting outfit. It was just a T-shirt and jeans, but it became a good luck charm on the day of the hunt.

She was already downstairs by the time I finished dressing, and my entrance into the kitchen surprised her.

"Oh, Mark, what are you doing up so early?"

"Couldn't sleep," I said, leaning against the refrigerator door.

I was struck by how pale and gentle she looked standing by the stove in her faded pink robe, her hair carelessly pinned behind attractive colors, and her face so colorful and full of life that she could be one of those girls on the magazine covers. But looking at

her now fixing that man's breakfast, her simplicity showed through.

"Mark?"

"Huh?"

"I said you didn't have nightmares again did you?"

"Nope, just couldn't sleep."

"Something special today? . . ."

"Excuse me," she said, coming towards me.

I moved over by the stove.

"Nope; just going hunting," I said.

"Ooooooh," she drew out,

bending over to get a grapefruit from the crisper.

"Excuse me."

I moved over by the doorway.

"Why don't you watch TV while I get your father's breakfast."

"Nothing on."

"Nothing on?" she repeated, tapping the eggs on the side of the pan. "What about the Hillbillies, or whatever that show . . ."

"Almost over now."

"Cartoons, then."

"Aw, Mom, that stuff's all make-believe."

"Well, what do you know — an eleven-year-old intellectual."

"Just don't like fakey stuff."

She gave me an annoyed glance but took it out on the eggs instead. "Augh, if I don't get a teflon soon . . ." she growled, scraping at the broken eggs.

He came into the room engulfed in a cloud of aftershave. "Excuse me, son."

I took a seat at the table.

His large wide frame dominated the kitchen. He held her by the shoulders like a coach does when he's talking to his player. I knew he had the power to crush her as easily as she had broken the yokes in the pan. He bent over and gave her a short, direct kiss on the forehead. He had been irritable lately because of the diet she made him go on. With his athletic career he never had to watch his weight before, so the contents in the pan and the half of grapefruit sprinkle with artificial sugar disgusted him.

"I'll be growing feathers soon," he moaned, dropping his hands from her shoulders.

He sat in his customary chair at the head of the table and acted as if he had just notice me for the first time.

"What're you doing up so early?"

"Watch out now, hot coffee," she said, forcing him to lean back in his chair.

"Mark?"

"Just couldn't sleep."

"Couldn't huh? More nightmares, son?"

"Please don't get started," she said, turning to bring him the eggs.

He raised his eyebrows and sighed. He picked up the newspaper, pulled out the sports section, and placed the rest in its original spot on the chair. The headline upset him.

"Damn those Phils." He studied the article before commenting again. "That bum Wise only lasts three innings before getting pulled." He continued reading while shaking his head in disgust. "Those bums only got seven hits and their only run came on an error. Jesus!"

I waited until he turned back to the front page.

"Hey, Dad, you gonna be there Saturday?"

"Saturday, what's that?" he mumbled while scanning the standings.

"It's his recital honey. I discussed it with you last night," she reminded him, turning off the burners.

"I don't remember."

"I've been practicing real hard. Almost every night."

"I certainly remember that," he said, mumbling into his cup before drinking. He put the cup down beside the plate. "Might as well go. Paid for the damn horn."

"It's a clarinet, Dad."

"You want some eggs, Mark, as long as I'm still up," she said, leaning against the back of her chair at the table.

"No thanks," I said.

"Better eat something," she added.

"I will. Need my strength today."

This caught his attention.

"Taking up the tuba, son?" he asked, looking at her for approval. She gave him no encouragement. He went back to his reading. She sat down.

"You know, Martha, if the Phils won thirty of their remaining thirty-three games, and the Pirates lost every one, my team would still have a shot at the play-offs."

"Believe me, Frank, I've had enough baseball around here without that team playing in the Super Bowl."

"Super Bowl, the Super Bowl!" he exclaimed, lifting his eyes from the paper. "How many times have I told you that's football. It's the World Series. I must've told you . . ."

"I really don't care, all right?" she said sharply.

"The Super Bowl," he mumbled while finishing his coffee.

He checked his watch and finished his breakfast. While she escorted him out the door, I heard him kiss her good-bye. His departure for work had become a ritual lately. She would stand in the doorway and he on the front step so that they would speak to each other almost face to face.

"Give me a call at work as soon as you get home and tell me what he says," I heard him say. "And tell him all those little pink pills do is make you sleepy."

"I will."

He would kiss her again while they exchanged good-byes and she would wait in the doorway until the car was well down the street.

She walked back into the kitchen where I was reaching for the box of cereal in the cabinet.

"I'll get it, I'll get it. Just sit down," she said, shooing me away like a pesty fly.

I sat down at the table. The air between us filled with tension. She did not say a word while she prepared the cereal, but I could hear her say, "You more than anyone know how hard it has been. Forgive me. It's just been so hard."

She sat down at the table with a pot of water and a cup. She dipped the bag on the string into the cup, playing with it like it was

a dancing marionette. The water turned brown. She remained silent, her hand supporting her head, but I could hear her say, "You know, Mark . . . it's been hard, so terribly hard."

After an eternity her words broke through the thick, lazy air sounding as though we were sitting in an empty can.

"Mark . . .?"

"Yeah," I said, knowing she wanted me to say something before she went on.

"We both love you very much, Mark, you father and I."

I remained silent. I chewed the cereal but it had no taste.

"Things'll be back to normal soon. Give it time."

"Been over a month. Besides, it doesn't need time. Nothing does." She didn't touch her tea.

"How about if we go to the lake this weekend. We haven't been there in ages," she suggested.

"Just over a month I figure."

Only a few kernels remained floating in the milk, looking like victims in a boat wreck struggling to reach land. I stabbed at them with my spoon.

"What time you going out?" she asked lightly.

"Bout twelve."

"With Melvin?"

"Of course!"

I stared at her spoon tapping on the saucer.

"Be back in a minute," she said. She returned almost immediately handing me the net.

"See, all finished. Used extra strong thread."

I examined her work. "At least you used green thread this time."

I raised my head, she smiled, and the strained air was whisked out of the room.

"Of course I did, silly. Can't even tell there was a hole there. It'll catch anything you put in it."

I put the net over her head and we both laughed.

I returned to my room and made my bed. The circus outside was over and the air already smelled stale and used.

Green Acres . . . The Match Game . . . Father Knows Best . . . The Rifleman. I dropped the TV guide beside my bed. Nothing on but make-believe.

I was lying on my bed when it came to me. My room was a living

memorial. The empty bed, the clothes taking up space in the closet, the silent radio with the dial frozen between the 13 and 14, the dusty bottles of cologne whose odor reminded me of him. On the shelves were precisely spaced memories of his achievements, with the epitaphs at their bases reminding me why he will be remembered. A golden man swinging a golden bat, a half-naked in silver lady holding up a wreath, a ball covered with signatures all in agreement that he was most valuable that day. And there were more, many more. They covered the shelves, the dresser, showing off in the sun, dangling in front of my face, prodding, pushing, reminding, reminding. And the face, it was all around me, on every wall, posing, smiling, laughing, laughing, being congratulated by others saying, "On behalf of . . . you receive this . . . in honor of . . . truly deserving . . . superior . . . congratulations." And the voices, the golden men and smiling faces, shouting, praising, cheering, chanting, "Go Frankie, score Frankie, win Frankie, kill Frankie." Sometimes they would shout so loud I'd close my eyes and put my hands over my ears, but it didn't matter. He was there, his presence filled the room like a lingering odor. I'd leave my room, go downstairs, close the door so the noise wouldn't disturb the parents, but it was no use. The calendar hanging on the refrigerator reminded me how long he'd been gone. The clock on the wall telling me lies because everything has its own time. Frankie stopped ticking, but the clock hasn't, because it doesn't care.

"Mark! Hey, Mark!" the voice sounded from behind the door.

"Yeah?"

"You deaf?" she asked, and then, "Listen, if you're back when I return from the beauty parlor, maybe I'll take you on in a game of Death Trap."

"All right. But you won't beat me. I've become an expert."

"We'll see," she added.

We exchanged good-byes and I heard the front door slam. I got up, smoothed over the wrinkles on the bed and went downstairs to prepare for the hunt.

Melvin would arrive right on time. Never late, never early. I glanced at the clock and went to the window. He was just opening the gate.

He wasn't superstitious, he just wore the same clothes every time he went hunting because, "They've become an integral part of the hunt, just as kings wore sacred robes while hunting."

He was three years older than me but everyone said you couldn't tell. Before he came here he was probably reading some books his mother brought him home from work — *The Knights of the Round Table . . . Swords in Legend . . . Kings and Dragons*. His mother liked these kinds of books.

He was my best friend even if the other kids called him "egghead" because of his head's strange shape. He walked with his knees turned out, a little far apart, and there was a large gap between them as if he were riding an imaginary horse. The boys at school said it's because he sits and reads too much, but his mother said he was born that way. His arms weren't much thicker than the pole he was carrying, and the thick-rimmed glasses he wore made his eyes look large and bulging.

I opened the door before he had a chance to knock. He spoke as if unsurprised.

"You ready, Sir Mark?" he asked, using his special name for me.

"Yep."

He always came prepared. In one hand he held a canvas sack containing a large empty mayonnaise jar, a bottle of alcohol, a few band-aids for emergencies, and a cluster of cottonballs. The other hand held his net with the tiny scratch marks indicating how many he'd caught. He'd refer to his net as "the sword of Arthur, the symbol of bravery, the conqueror of evil."

I looked at Melvin. His eyes were fixed on the retreating figure. His face became excited and anxious. He didn't look like Melvin anymore, except for the glasses and big head.

"He's challenging me," he shouted, "I must accept."

He picked up the sack and started to run after the slowly

dissolving black speck in the sky. There was something terrifying yet funny about the scene. I was left standing frozen in the position I was in when the intruder first appeared, watching him run as only he could, more like a girl hurrying to get to the bathroom, running after something which was more to him than just a physical object. He ran possessed by something that I could not feel or understand, chasing after some flying dream. Some kind of unspoken challenge was passed between those two fleeting figures, a code that I couldn't translate. Melvin understood and accepted. So now they both leave me standing here, not playing the game, not even knowing the rules. And Melvin, running awkwardly, chasing that dream in the sky headed towards the backside . . . the backside . . . backside.

"Melvin, stop!" I shouted, realizing the consequence of his direction.

I ran after him, following his bobbing head, towards the now vanished figure in the sky, towards the . . .

I was gaining quickly on him. "Melvin, stop!" Engulfed by some force controlling his actions, he didn't or wouldn't hear me. He was heading directly towards them. I knew he wouldn't stop. He would forget about the invisible barrier.

We reached the edge almost simultaneously. I lunged out and caught him around the waist, but it was too late. We had already begun to fall. We fell for an eternity. Me holding onto his waist, him rolling over me and then me rolling over him. Sky and earth, sky and earth, a violent shatter of glass, a strong odor of alcohol, exchanging grunts as we rolled down that steep gray hill.

Finally, we stopped rolling and all I could see was the sky.

We lay there, quiet and still, yet breathing heavily. I sat up and realized where I was. I turned my head towards them and they were ten feet away. Two metal rails running parallel with thick wooden ties lying between them horizontally. They ran endlessly in both directions but it was just two short parallel sections that condemned the rest. It was there that it happened, just over a

month ago when Melvin and I snuck out to watch the newly elected President of the Secret Seven undergo his final test. At midnight the club's members tied him to the tracks to test his courage. I guess he was brave because no one called him a coward after the accident.

Melvin and I both saw it, and on that same night lit by the moon which illuminated the horror we swore to never come here again. Somehow the tracks looked harmless in daylight. This bright red paint that once covered the two sections was now faded, and only the sides showed traces of the peeling paint, the tops being worn clean by the spinning wheels. It was on that red altar that the secret ritual turned into a human sacrifice. We stood at the top of the hill and saw everything. The huge engine screeching, trying to stop, sparks jumping from beneath the wheels, the horn sounding like a woman warning him. But he didn't move, he couldn't. He struggled with the ropes trying to free himself, sitting up on one rail and his legs stretching across the metal waiting to be removed from the rest of his body. The great physical specimen, immobile, unable to untie one-too-many knots his club brothers had tied. Sitting there pulling at the ropes like an animal caught in a trap.

Before the black object hit, he just lay back, giving up. He covered his face with his hands and just waited for the metal to perform the operation. He didn't cry out until it reached him, and then he screamed until his voice went hoarse. Then he just lay there, quiet, eyelids shut tight, his mouth wide open but no sound coming out. He didn't have to raise his head, he knew.

We saw it all. We stood at the top of that gray hill and looked down. Half of him quiet and motionless, and the other half behind the silent wheels. A few of the men got off and huddled around him. One man put a blanket over him and a pillow under his open-mouthed head. They stood around him with their hands in their pockets, shaking their heads. One man turned his head and threw up against the wheels. They talked in a low

murmur, waiting for the radio call to take effect.

He raised his net like that big statue holds her torch. "Onto the battlefield to slay those flying beasts mercilessly ravishing the land."

"My mom likes 'em. Thinks they're pretty."

He lowered his eyes to meet mine but said nothing. We walked on.

It was only a large gray hill covered with grass and tall weeds on the sides, milkweed and wild flowers on top, but to Melvin and me it was White Horse Mountain, partly because of its color but mostly because of our imaginations. We walked up the hill following our shadows and immediately started checking the milkweed leaves for feeding caterpillars. We were just about to examine a new plant when Melvin spotted the first one. Its orange wings were bright against the blue sky as they guided the body to its destination. It was a common one, but worth the chase. He got a headstart on me. It came to rest on the small blue flowers that grew like ivy.

"You want it?" he whispered between gasps.

"Go ahead."

He put the bag down at his feet and circled around until he was directly behind it. Unaware of its fate it picked at the flower's nectar, its wings slowly opening and closing, opening and closing, like someone wiggling a nervous foot while eating. He crept up, knees too far apart, glasses zeroing-in like two powerful telescopes, and raised the net. It flapped in its green prison.

"Hurry up!" he shouted.

I picked up the sack and ran towards him. He pinned the wings together with his fingers, careful not to smear its markings, and, like a doctor treating a patient, he pressed the cotton saturated with alcohol to its head. The bead became still, the black thread-like legs stopped kicking in the air. He placed it in the jar.

"They always look more beautiful feeding on the flower," I said.

He took out the pad from his shirt pocket. This time I got the head start.

The jar began to fill. They fell

lifelessly on top of one another. Some were not quite dead and they squirmed between their companions.

"You take it, Melvin."

"Go ahead, Melvin."

"It's all yours, Melvin."

"That's all right, Melvin, maybe I'll get the next one."

He hunted as if there were some strange force controlling his misshaped body. Sometimes I thought he enjoyed pressing the wet cotton against their heads. Often he would press too hard and the head would come off in the cottonball when he pulled it away. All he saw he caught — or "conquered" as he said. To him it was more than just good sport. It was some kind of deep, dark game that only he was playing.

The sun was on its way down. We hadn't seen any in a while. Melvin squatted in the dirt writing on the pad. He looked up at me.

"I count nineteen to six," he said, putting the paper in his shirt pocket and standing up.

I stood squinting at the falling sun.

"You must admit," he continued, "I gave you equal opportunity."

"I know, I know."

"Well, Sir Mark," he said, putting the belongings back into the canvas sack, "we came, we saw, and we conquered."

Our shadows pointed east. He picked up the top for the jar and screwed it on tightly. He held the large jar above his head and, using the sun as a backdrop and the sky as a frame, he admired it as though it were some rare and valuable work of art.

"We'll get some fine mounting out of this bunch," he said, "Trophies any man would want."

I stared at the collection in the jar knowing that only a few would be mounted and the rest left to be forgotten in some garage corner.

He began to put the jar filled with the dead carcasses into the bag when he looked at me, or rather past me, something above my head, far off. His eyes gradually began to fill the thick lenses, and his mouth formed a large 'O'.

"You all right?" I asked.

"**Papilio cresphontes**," he whispered in awe.

"Pap what?"

I followed his eyes with mine

and saw it immediately. It was big, too big, more like a bat flying in slow motion. It was coming toward us, moving with power, strength, an air of dominance. The black figure slowly changed into dark brown with yellow circles outlining the wings. It circled above our heads like a vulture waiting for an animal to die. We squinted as it disappeared into the sun when suddenly it swooped down and touched Melvin on his head. It shifted directions and headed towards the backside of the hill.

No one except my father could understand it. The doctors said there was no medical reason for it. Only minor infection had set in, and when he left the hospital he was thought to be completely recovered, except for the missing legs. When he got home he never said anything. He just lay in bed like he was waiting for something. Sometimes I would try to talk to him, but he just stared at the ceiling or maybe it was those golden men or his own smiling face. He ate very little and Mom began to worry about his rapid weight loss. But she didn't have to worry for long. It was on the day when he was to begin his rehabilitation program that it happened. The doctors were baffled, as he slowly, quietly, faded away like fog in the morning. Only my father said he understood why.

I stood up and brushed off the dirt and burrs on my clothes. A trail of tiny corpses and pieces of glass were scattered on the side of the hill. He just sat there staring across the tracks, saying nothing because he knew why I did it. It was our secret pact. We both knew it.

"It's over there you know," he said, motionless.

"Yeah," I said, inspecting my elbows.

"Did you hear it laughing at me?"

"Yeah, I heard." I lied.

I looked over across the track, at the place where we used to catch the biggest and rarest ones. It had changed considerably since the last time I saw it. The recent fire gave it an evil appearance. The ground was dark and the surviving traces were charred. But arising out of the black ocean like a deserted island was a large patch of tall wild sunflowers. They had

grown back soon after the fire, and it was there, on that yellow island, that the large, dark figure had found a sanctuary. But along with my brother most of the surrounding area had been destroyed, except for the tall sunflowers that reached up towards the sky like yellow hands as they overlooked their consumed neighbors. Melvin said they were too proud to be destroyed.

"Let's go home," I said.

He turned his head and looked up at me with those bulging eyes. He turned towards the hill.

"They're no good now," he said, referring to the trail of tiny corpses.

"Nope, just junk now."

Melvin stood up, picked up the

soiled cotton balls and placed them back into the sack. We started walking up the hill when he stopped and looked at me through those thick lenses.

"Sir Mark?"

"Yeah?"

"I'm glad you caught me. And don't worry, our pact is still binding because we lost our spoils in the process."

"You're crazy," I said smiling.

We looked at each other and started laughing. He kicked at the corpses in the dirt. One was still alive and trying to fly. He walked over and crushed it with his heel like one does a cigarette butt.

"Dust to dust," he said, now somber. "All good warriors must

eventually die."

I picked up one and threw it.

"Now try and fly." It spun in the air like a poorly made paper airplane.

"Melvin?"

"Yes?"

"Do you think we'll ever go to our old hunting grounds again?" I asked.

He stopped walking and looked at me.

"It no longer exists. It was destroyed in the fire. They've turned into sacred grounds where all the great ones go to die. Didn't I tell you?"

I shook my head. We hurried home to beat the darkness.

Brian Rubery

Train Time Mike Copple





untitled
Marty Newman

On Passing By Death

Old Lady Death, don't look at me.
—I'll not rock on the porch with you
and knit black sweaters;

Don't mock me with your palsied limbs.
—I'll not touch your purpled hand
or follow you inside;

Don't show me albums of friends deceased.
—I'll not sit with you on faded sofas
to hear your rasping stories;

Old Woman Death, turn away your eyes.
—I'll not have you watching, reaching
for my shoulder as I pass.

—Lynn Woodson



Marriage

Tho' splendid rings of ambiguity
sought love
and promptly banished me,
committed am I, to God and state,
to limbo-life—
A single mate.

—Tony Blasioli III

untitled
Marty Newman

These Wings are Past

i

below and above a thin
geographic
scab of ground,
clouds.
ocean stops next to
the patchy
land.

props are loud at
takeoff
then, fade away,
become invisible.
before,
green fuselages
glutted with
primitive weapons,
and ten bright
men fly.

of legs, white
buttocks and smiles,
sheepskin on their
necks
infantsboysyouth.
they laugh
and check guns,
now wear khaki
and brown leather,
live in hangars
with one long
oxygen cord.
they rush into the air
to drop,
to meet with other
crackling machines.
wind noises
and fright.

but these men are
soft inside,
they curl up at night,
tender bodies,
smooth.
who discover
flight and thin chances
for living, but
it's not urgent
yet.

ii

the sky cracks
with muzzels and
crosshairs,
he stands in
noise creating
a sad movie of home—
flashes.
he feels cramped
and aloft.
no way out but in
and down.

he is one
expression, target
in his eyes
as huge forces drop
the plane,
it spins
with ten fresh
men-
eighteen seconds to
vouch himself
and family,
a machine
pulling him away,
complete.

—Mark McMullen

The Motorcade

Beading sweat set my eyes on fire,
As the large white-gloved hand
Held three lanes of hungry employees
At bay. Horns blasted . . . then silenced—
Eight black and white Harleys,
Eight black and white men in blue;
Two silver-blue four-door Sedans,
Serious men in three-piece suits.
I wiped the sweat with my shirt sleeve;
Head out the window, a breeze in my face—
The heavy exhaust of a station wagon.
A long grey hearse crept by,
Inside draped in Red, White, and Blue;
Another Sedan, a brown one with whitewalls,
A red-headed lady and a dark-haired boy,
The only child, in a three-piece suit.
I glanced into a pickup truck—
A heavy man in blue overalls
Eating a banana sandwich;
My stomach growled—
Only ten minutes left of a half-hour lunch!

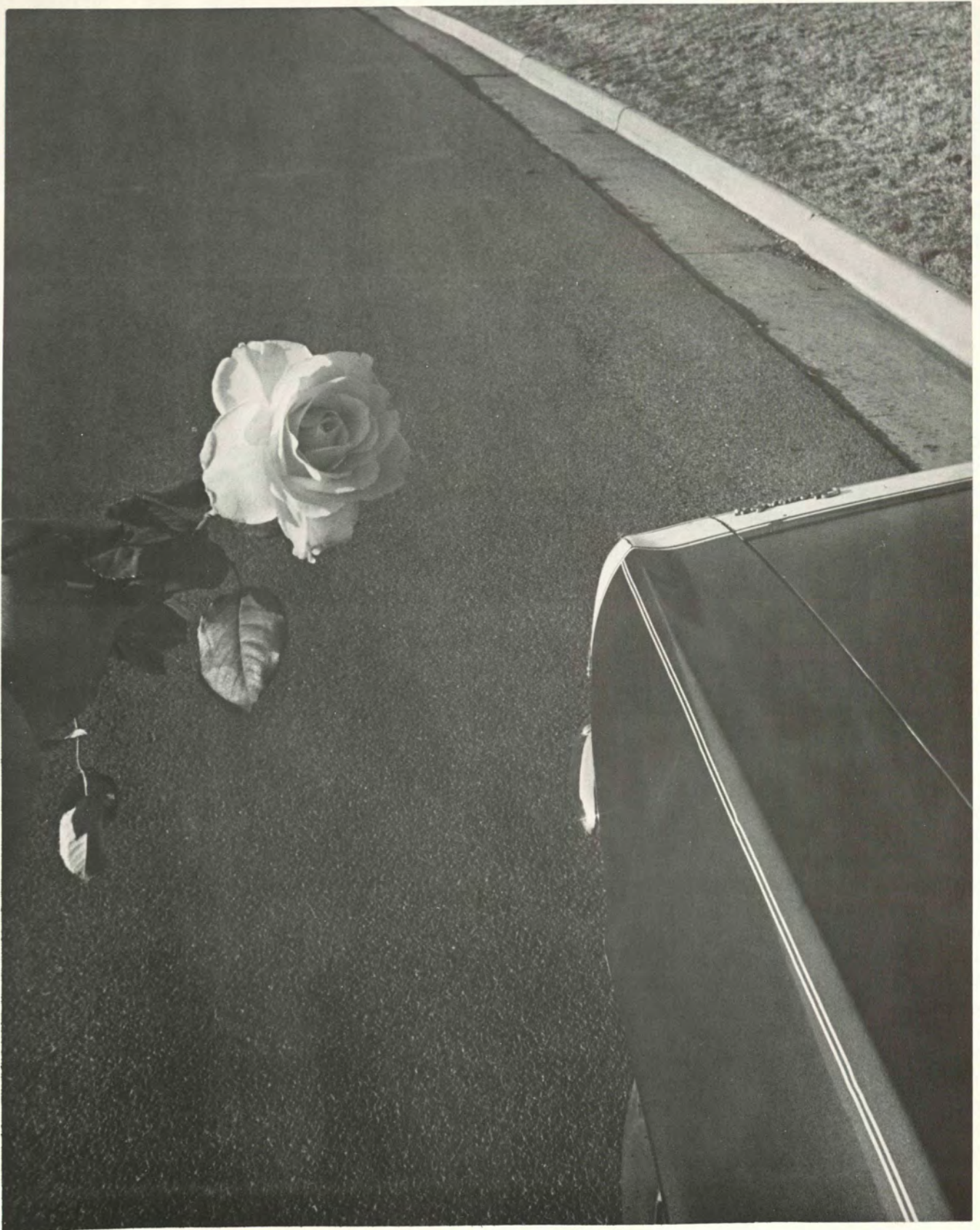
—Wayne Motley

Life? Dale Minter





untitled Linda Jo Sheldon



Untitled
Don Becht



Left to Right
Dale Minter

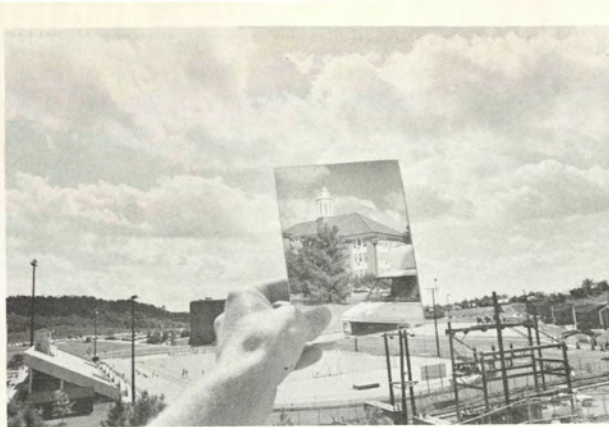
In Oxford

I have not come here
to pay tribute to the moldering
memories of poets and professors.
The world has Westminster for that,
if any at all dare to step near
the immortal dead frozen in dignity.
No, Oxford is not death alone — here
genius comes to be born; it chases
the swans on the Childe Thames,
and unchanging youth yet
blooms begowned on medieval garden walls.
I have come to rest against Merton's gate,
to ignore the itinerants and the tourists,
for this is Oxford, and I seek rest.

Physics swears the world is winding down,
but I will swear that countries are wound
to explosion; a single touch — who knows
how many wars were begat
by an awkward glance?
Nations in generations have trod, tethered
to a tightening center, throwing
their chains round one another.
And for their efforts, the molded masks
concerted in anonymity achieve
nothing — a single mass of dulled desperation,
to plod, to plod, to die.
A lone dissenter seeking refuge
is not so great a thing
that it would not be missed.

Therefore I have come to Oxford;
not to the clock-winders and the clock-stoppers,
nor to those who merely tick away,
but to those who escape it entirely,
to where thought falls between conception
and action, where tension and release unite.
I will sit and trail my feet
in the Isis, and count the swans
as they swim past, and if none come near
I will die here.
But if one bends its head to teach me,
I will paddle after, chase behind,
perhaps to flower on an Oxford wall.

—Lori Magai

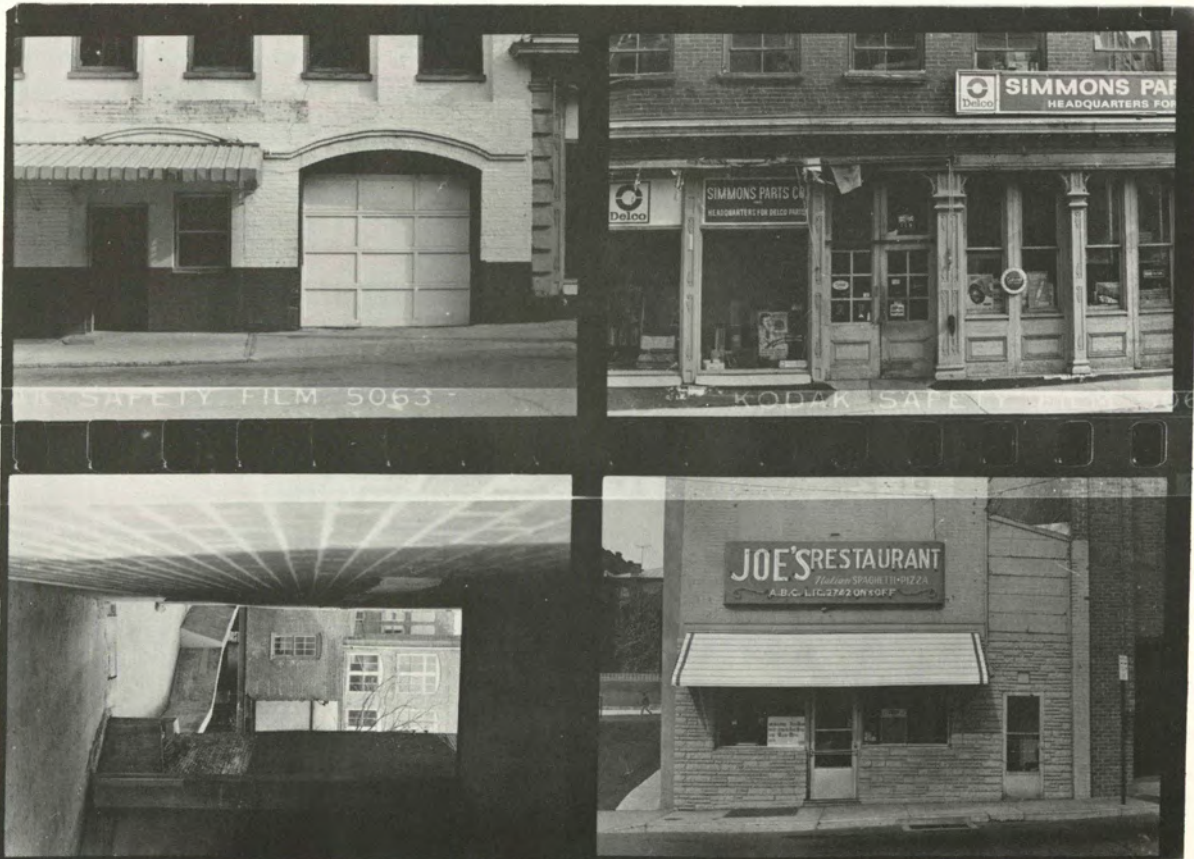


There is something
Vaguely comforting
About just sitting
In the shadows
Eating cold pork chops
Drinking grape juice
And hearing the fridge hum
Sitting on the floor
In your own kitchen
Watching the clock tick
Waiting for college
Savoring your home

—Carolyn Haykin

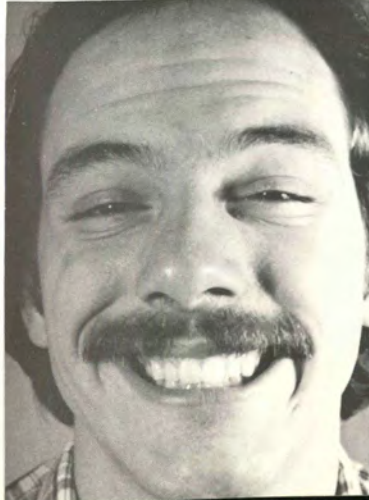
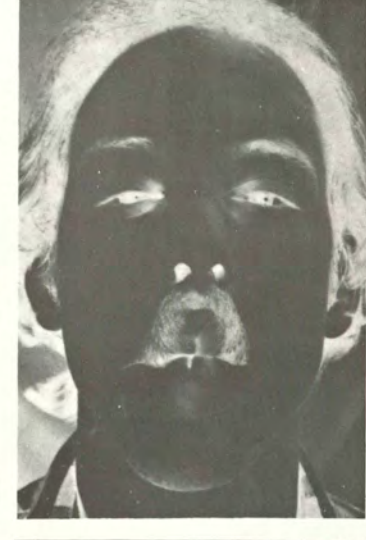
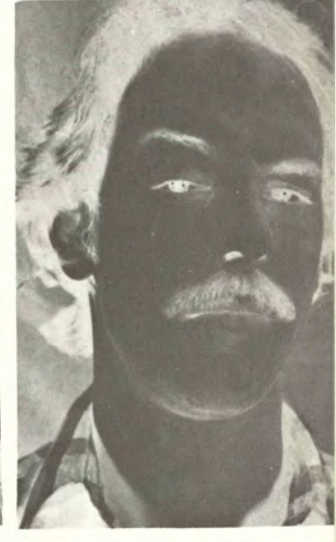
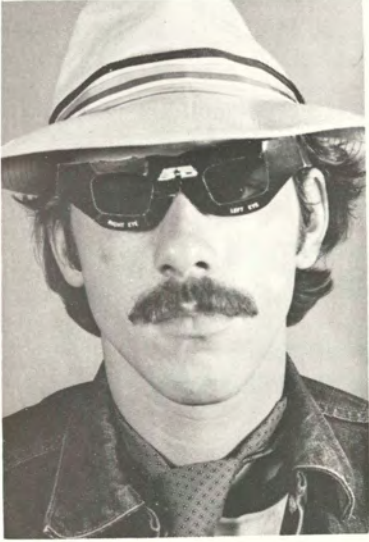
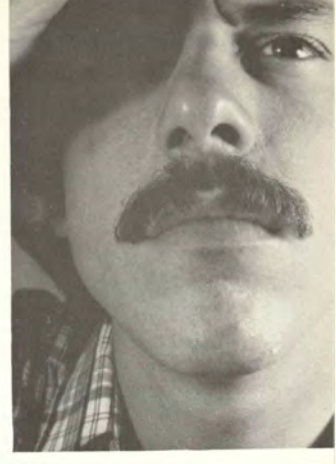
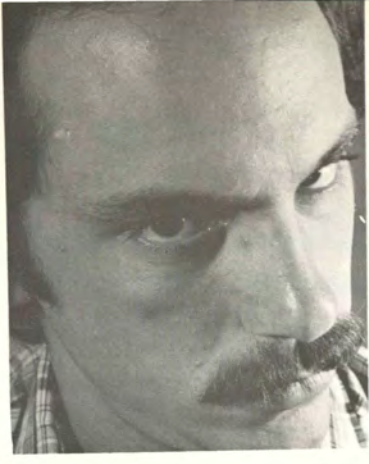
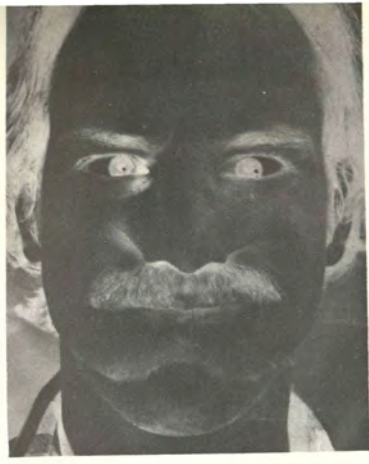


untitled
P. Fines



Staunton 1978
Andrew Black

Andrew Black Never Try to Teach a Pig to Sing. It's a Waste of Time and It Annoys the Pig.



For C.F. and the Mountain View Boys

If I died, it would be from lack of consideration.

Oh, I've seen them.

I've even been them.

Standing on the corner

With a beer can clutched red-white in hand.

I have laughed a many-nighted game of cards.

Or shuffleboard.

I have been drunk with them.

Chased Jim Beam with beer with them.

And even thrown up out the truck window with them.

The cans by the side of the road are my night's work.

And theirs.

(porky griffin's little girl was killed by some long-hair hippie
two years ago musta been stoned shouldn't have a permit if they
can't be responsible enough to drive safe).

We have laughed at our wives.

Oh, they get so mad they could burn the place down.

G.B. says if his old lady gives him any more hell,

he's gonna cut her head off.

I've gotten used to their empty eyes.

and her empty eyes

when she says she doesn't give a damn anymore.

(Why does Blake's wife wait tables

and mine won't even wait supper?)

I have been them.

But when they go blue fishing they never call me

(unless I'm good for the beer).

We haven't had a quiet night in weeks.

She's been rotten lately—maybe it's the Change

though she can be nice when I try to be.

But she doesn't understand.

None of them do.

If I died, it would be from lack of consideration.

—Lori Magai

The Prairie Dog

Fifty miles in a day's run.
Six days to Pretoria and to the Honourable
Balthazar Johannes Vorster.
Six days to Salisbury and to
Ian Douglas Smith.

But they do not matter on the veld
Where the low grass prairie is cut by the Limpopo
River,

Where my village is too far from the road between
Zimbabwe
and Pietersburg to hear any noise at all from the
trucks,

Where my father's compound protects his wives
And my brothers and sister,
Where we speak in Sesotho,
Not in the English we are taught in school,
And where I can hunt the prairie dog with three
spears cut from elephant grass
As my ancestors did four hundred years ago.

Now I hold one spear in each hand and begin to
run.

That animal will tire before I will.
My nostrils flare with each breath to allow the air to
come with greater ease.

Salt water creeps into my eye and I blink.
As the animal turns to see where I am, I lean forward
a second time,

Hurl my second weapon and fail again.

I fill my lungs and do not release the air.
I hold one spear level with my ear, the tip elevated,
and begin to sprint.

I lunge forward and hurl the spear,
But the marmot is too quick and my weapon fails.
I stand between him and his escape
To any of his holes to the east,
So he begins to run west.

We have run together for an hour now
And are on the road between Zimbabwe and
Pietersburg.

The dog in the middle and I to one side.
A cloud of dust approaches, now a truck.
The marmot is stunned and does not move.
The truck leaves my sight and the dust settles
over us.

The prairie dog is not completely squashed, but the
meat is bruised

And will taste too much like blood.
So I walk back to my village with the third spear at
my side.

—Michael McAlice

Birth Announcement
(For Mernie)

Born today—
A Child of the space age
And heir to the universe!
The conqueror of cancer, nuclear fusion,
and the rush hour.
This babe will face the future
Filled with concrete and supersonic booms,
Fast-food jingles and flashing Santas.
His life, begun in a dark, secret,
Loud moment, is unplotted
Free form (within certain precepts)
And ready to start.

—Debra J. Magai

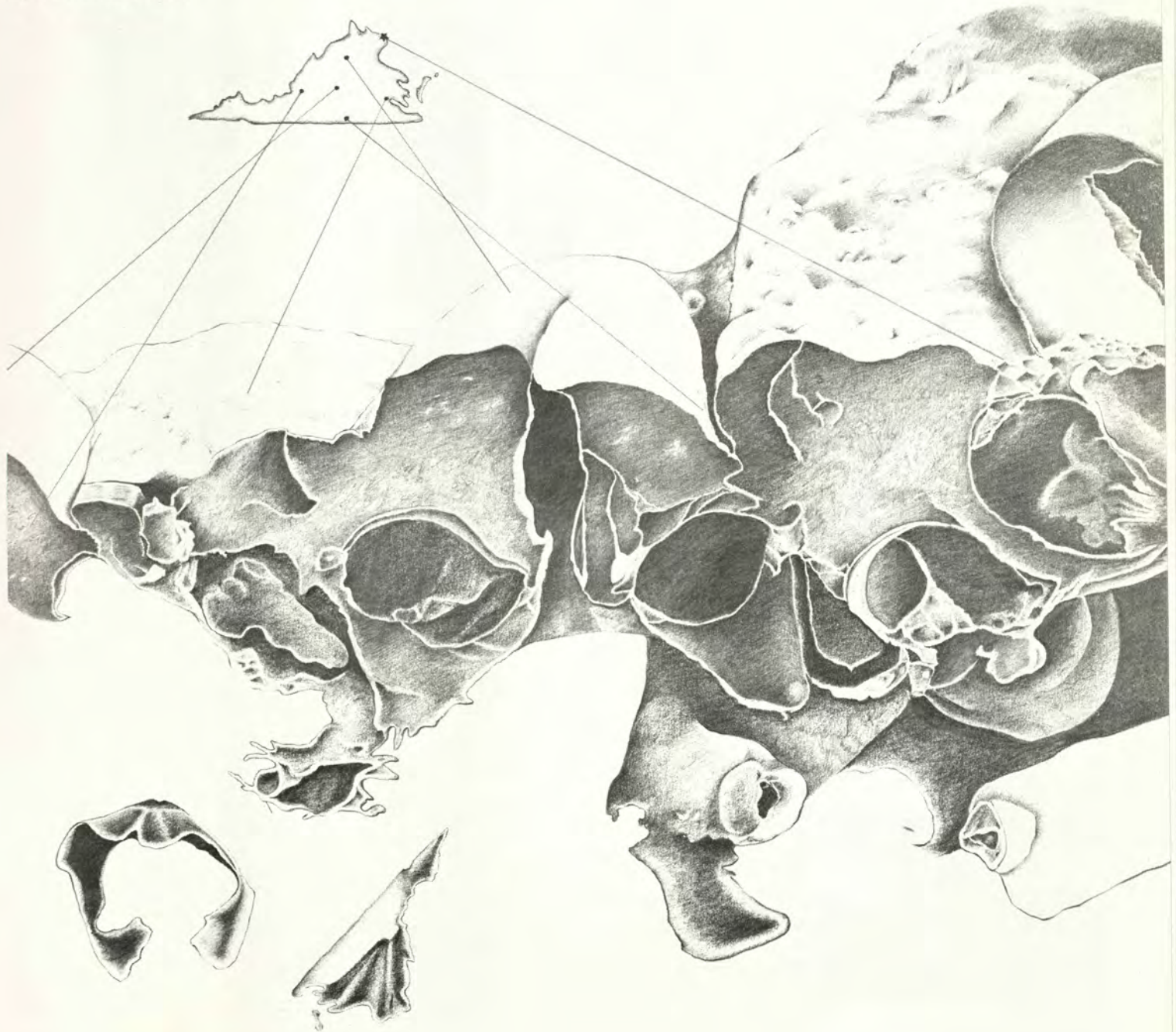


24 Hours

Y9 Rita A. McCaslin

24 Hours
Rita A. McCaslin

untitled
Rita A. McCaslin





Suicide
Paul Accardo

An' if'n when I die
an' you bring me flowers—
pick 'em yursef
an' put 'em in a bottl.
I never did like a vaz.

—D. S. Preston

Opus #1

Because I want to Really,
Your most Holy Superlative,
And just,
Your Glory and Praise forever,
I'd like to end and close by saying
Amen and Etc.

—D. S. Preston



untitled
Betty Willberger

Damon
(for Wayne)

I curse
whatever made you
the elder child of an oscillating psyche.
Were you a lesser man,
it would be a lesser tragedy,
for you, my dear, are a lover
of guilt and despair.
It does not fit you well.

You fathered your sadness, you
foster it, foster child of too much truth.
You love it; it devours you.
You should love the bright half of truth
and accept the rest as an aftertaste.

Love is bitter, to love
is a shuddering in sunlight, your love
is frail porcelain hanging on a dark wall
near an airport. And you want it there.
Brain-whipped and broken
expectations crowd your walkways
of past, and passing, and to come.
Damon, how often
have you said you felt
like old Saint Andrew
who died seven times?

Yet I would not love you so much
were you not another side of me.
And I would not grieve so
if it were all so unnecessary.
You must deny it, foster son,
for you to discover the brightness
of your personality.

—Lori Magai

Does a Famous Poet Eat Watermelon?

"Does a famous poet eat watermelon?"
Carl Sandburg once heard this question.
I really wonder if he did.
I do not like watermelon.
Maybe I should cultivate a taste for it.

—Steven Palkovitz

If Carl Sandberg Only Knew

Those clean talkers
(who wouldn't slur their speech
but would slur me for being from the south
and talking with a drawl and not shaving
except on Sundays)
shaven clean.
No whiskers or dirty finger nails
all clean and trimmed
even their manhood trimmed
to fit into a three piece suit
and wing tipped shoes and specks,
to be circumvented by Ph.D.
their lives spelled out in acrostics
with (poet) at the end.
These trimmed men
who know about passion
having read _____, the Poet of Passion
and about religion
having read _____, the Poet of Religion
and about life
having read _____, the Poet of Life
whose poetry was so good
good as shit—
sh-sh-shi-shit—
Yes, they learned about shit from _____,
the great 20th century Poet of Defecation,
the Macabre and Perverse
who has influenced us all
and who I'd like to speak on today beginning
with . . .

—D. S. Preston



HIDDEN MATHS
BIBLIOPHILE

SUSPECTED
NON-FATAL CASE

HER EYES
WERE LIQUID
LOOKING
SHE WAS
DEAD

NO ONE CAN
TO CLAIM THE
BODY SO IT
WAS SIMPLY LEFT UNSEEN

THE KING OF
BRIGHT ONE GETS FROM
A PHONE CALL IN THE
NIGHT

THE CORPSE'S FACE
WAS AN ASHEN GRAY &
HIS MOUTH & TONGUE HAD
TURNED TO A HIDEOUS
YELLOW.

KEY STYLING
HAS HIS SUITS
BY THE DOOR
DETECTIVES SEEK LEGIONNAIRES
Special 799
Junior Top
Long sleeve fussy look
acrylic tops Assorted
styles

PANDORA REVISIT

THE DEAD EYES
LOOKED WITH A
LIQUID STARE

ACIA
AUGA
AUGA
TINTO
SHADOW
NO SILENCE WHAT GROUND



PYRAMID POWER
PREVAILS!

GLOOM SEEMED TO
EMANATE FROM
THE CORPSE

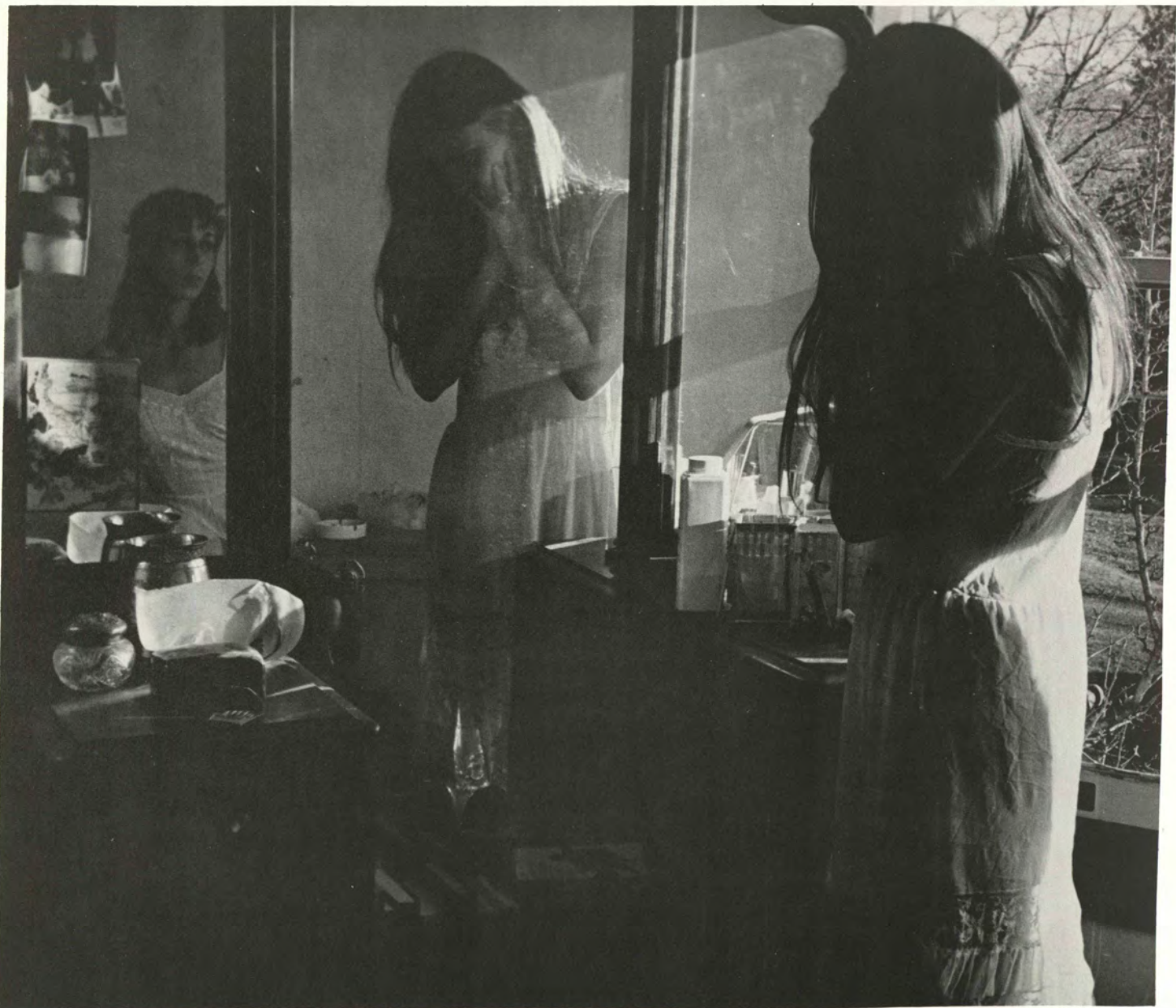
Alone I Will Remember This Day

Far away, I will remember this day,
how passion was a dry flame in my mouth
and the crickets made brittle noise
on the floorboards.

Alone, within foreign walls
my unbuttoned imagination will see you
squatting, estranged, brushing away
the dull glow of low coals wagging
their last, languishing tongues of smoke
up past the fissured rocks,

and the self I seek will hunch
in the rafters
like a monstrous, laughing cat
and mock,
and mock,
and mock.

—Juanita Brunk Clemmer



untitled
Sara Gray

Song of the Besiegers

In child's landscape, chalcedony
hills, fields vert emblazoned
d'or beneath azure'd skies,
with dragon, lion, and unicorn, a child's castle
a castle-child, with four strong towers,
postern gate, and watery moat—
a child could do no better.

Rolling landscape, chalcedony hills . . .
bristled banners, speartips bright.

A moat could be a wall, could be
tumbled, could be bridged.
A castle could withstand the warrior's attack
as long as no shiver were to run along the stones,
asking why it was they were attacked.
The shiver betrays
belligerance, invites
doubt, invites disease,
dissolves the wall's mortar.

Moats can be bridged, dreams
can be torched, hopes can be murdered.

A wounded castle is a lonely thing.
It refuses risk of greater hurt; it
turns from aid and withdraws
mindfully behind its tumbled walls.

It whimpers as its last protecting stones
are rudely stripped away. It whimpers,
softly, unobtrusively, it curls about
its wounds, and slowly it bleeds to sleep.

And this is how they know
that we have come.

—Lori Magai

And once it was Winter.
Clear, cold air nipping
the red to your cheeks.
Grey clouds dispensing
White flakes, the joy of
school children. Covering
earth with royal ermine.
Moonlight illuminating the
winter forest,
a palace,
two lovers, well-bundled,
hold hands, in awe of themselves
and the world around them.

The snow has melted for a time.
Ice patches the land, sweet woodsmoke
tinges the brisk night air.
Wet from sleet-rain the night street
glistens with a thousand lights in
the moon's shine.
The forest crackles its
frozen fingers and my boots
beat a limping cadence on
the cold pavement.
This is my winter.

—Carolyn Haykin

7 A.M.

Buzzzz! Snap.
Ah . . . Stretch, yawn.
Icy wooden floor.
Slap, slap down the hallway.
Splash! Puffy yellow face
Staring back at itself. Slap, slap,
Back to cold black woolens
Pulled from hiding in dark drawers.

Down to the yellow kitchen,
Air heavy with bacon and chatter,
Clanking pans, clinking silver,
Snowy mittens dripping on the stove.
Melting into an armchair, steaming coffee,
TV buzzing, plaid coat waiting,
Red woolen scarf and kiss goodbye.

—Lynn Woodson

Boarding School

The smell of tomatoes, and I am back
Remembering my friend, who used to slice
Them, pudgy-fingered, with her pocket knife.
She'd slap some mayonnaise on bread
And eat the whole mess
Dripping over paper towels at her desk.

In the attic, we smoked cigarettes;
Heads in cobwebs, we peeked out
A crevice in the roof
To a toy town, trivial, minute;
We, the rebels, giant and aloof.

—Juanita Brunk Clemmer

Traveling

Having left your liver paté on the train
you were hungry as well as tired,
and running with knapsack through the rain
gave you ample excuse to complain
that your feet hurt, your gut ached, your nose
was running, "This damn city stinks anyway
and it's been three days since we had clean
clothes,
no, **four**, it was back in Pylōs."
I said "Py-los," you shouted "I'm going insane!"
Hungry and tired, having left
your liver paté on the train.

—Juanita Brunk Clemmer



The Return of Nacho Cheese
Andrew Black

The Cure-It-All

The Intro to Philosophy class was full, and in walked Ed McDole, a middle-aged man who looked like William Faulkner wearing wire-rimmed glasses, grey khaki trousers, a blue nylon pullover shirt, and muddy hiking boots. He walked swiftly across the room. Under his arm he carried a Bible and several old paperbacks with rubberbands wrapped around their covers. He dropped them down on a desk. While the books scattered, he sat down and surveyed the class, looking as if to say, "Why, why are all of you here?"

"Well, I told you all last week that I was tired of talking and that I'd made up my mind to quit. However, I've got to talk, or lose my job, so today," he announced, "we're going to learn about the

search for truth . . . now let me tell you a story concerning the search for truth. I was working as a grad assistant for the psy-cho-lo-gist name Abraham Zeckulure, who was a little chubby guy always runnin' around sayin', 'We're looking for truth, Eddy!'" McDole shook his head. "This guy really thought he could create truth . . . I mean perfection for Man. All his career he'd been working on this pill . . . for Man to take. Well, he was sort of a joke at Yale, where we were. One day while I was feedin' some white rats, Dr. Zeckulure charges into the lab, screamin', 'Truth, Eddy! I've made it! He was runnin' in and out of rooms, pushin' his glasses up his nose and screamin'. Finally he calmed down and said, 'Look here', and he opens his chubby fist

and shows me this pill about the size of a quarter. 'I call it the Curitall. Six hundred and sixty-six times I've experimented and experimented, but this one's it.'"

McDole shook his head solemnly, and continued the story. "'We will all be equal,' said Zeckulure, 'as intelligent as the next person, and no man will ever surpass another in strength of character and heart.' Then Zeckulure got up and walked down the hall saying, 'Contentment will rule the world.' Then he popped his head in a side door down the lab, and yelled, 'The world is in unnecessary turmoil. Calamitous events succeed each other daily. But at last Man has hope, and within a pill! The age of anxiety, of moral uncertainty will no longer be

spurred on by conforming, materialistic middleclass values. We will be alike in perfection.' So then he left, but then he came back into the lab. "When the Curitall has been administered, nevermore will a sorrowful tear be shed. Man is saved, and he needn't look past his medicine chest for redemption. All he must do is accept his imperfection and acknowledge his need for the Curitall, and it shall be given to him. For I so love the world as to give the Curitall for free.'

"Then I asked, 'Isn't it a little big to swallow, sir?'

"Do I need to remind you, Eddy, that I've worked on this for thirty years. I know how skeptical you must be, especially since you're a theology student. But Man needs this more than anything, for the Curitall can become our soul. Think of it, Eddy, Man being responsible for his humanity. We could all have faith in one another! There'll be no struggles to attain this faith. No devils taunting us, or a God damning us. Perfection, moral, physical, everything, will be easy and quick. And it will happen within four minutes of taking the pill.'

"I shook my head and said, 'I really have to clean a monkey cage, sir.'

"Later that week these seven doctors came to see Zeckulure take his pill. I stood in the back of the lab.

"In my hand,' said Zeckulure," is the key to Man's soul. Truth!

Perfection! A new God that can be seen, and whose results aren't to be philosophized about. The Curitall is faith incarnate. No longer will there be guesswork as to where Man's salvation lies, for I've created it. The Curitall #666.'

"Then he opened his hand and waved the pill in front of everyone. He passed it under their faces like a magician does with an egg he makes disappear. He passed it around. Looking over someone's shoulder, I saw it. It was round and white, and stamped on it was Zeckulure's Curitall #666.

"Zeckulure then says, 'Watch gentlemen.' He took the pill and popped it into his mouth and followed this with a gulp of water. We were all still. The room was very quiet. Then something started happening. Zeckulure's smile disappeared into a gag, he dropped the water glass, and began to shake. I thought it was a reaction, but then he grabbed his throat, and was gasping, and twirling his head. One of the doctors said, 'It's too big, he's choking on it.'

"Zeckulure charged about frantically, knocking over bottles and chairs. His face was blue, and his eyes looked like a locusts', and his hair was all over his face like those rock stars when they get sweaty. One doctor grabbed him and tried to get the pill from Zeckulure's throat, but Zeckulure was so wild that he knocked the guy away. Finally Zeckulure fell down dead.

"They all turned to me and said, 'Where's his papers, his formula?'

"He told me he used the formula paper to wrap his gum in one day . . . I mean I don't think he has it anymore. You could look in the garbage can.' They all hurried out of the room like firemen to a burning house.

"Then they came back in despair.

"But we'll never know if it worked,' said one scientist."

"Then another doctor said, 'If this Curitall is so immense that it choked its creator, well to be obvious, it's hardly perfect . . . '"

McDole scanned his class and noticed the typical college pseudo-literate who gets put in the wrong class and spends his undying hour in total submission to his imagination instead of the professor.

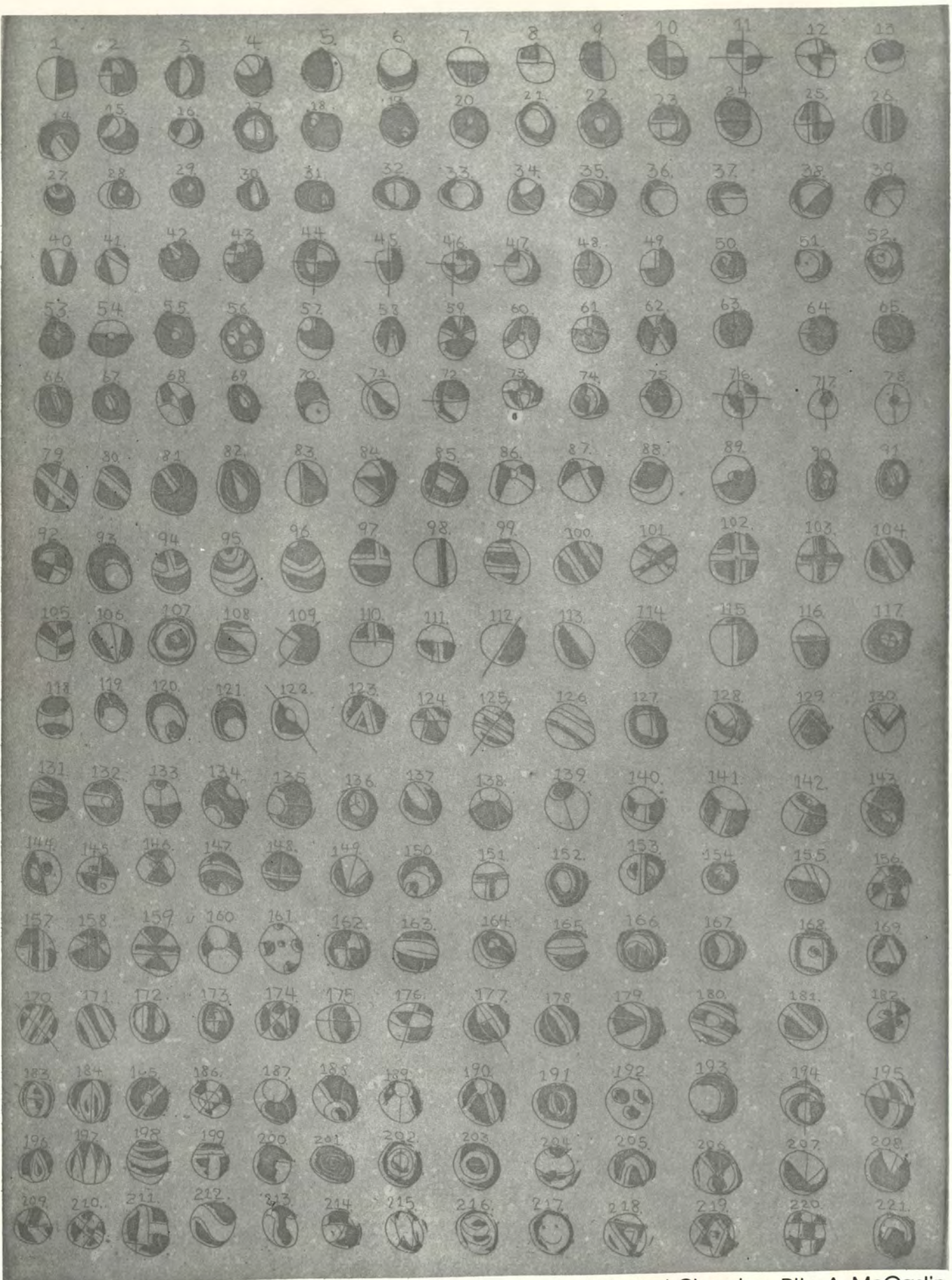
"Shadoan," asked McDole, "what is this story really about?"

"Ah . . . Ah . . . that it's . . . Oh! . . . It's about the search for ah truth!" Shadoan smiled as if he knew he had nailed the answer.

McDole shook his head and mumbled, "Why do I talk? Why do I come to this class? . . . Why do I even get up in the morning?" McDole glared at Shadoan, and then threw his hands into the air. Turning around he looked at the clock, "So much for truth," he said. "Budweiser beckons!"

McDole left. Shadoan was close behind him.

—J. Mark Shadoan



Father

the sail boats
sat in torn sails
years ago
but remained to drift

i was a loner
walking into harbor cafes
after hours
pulling life styles
off the women
who'd wink or twinkle in the dark
not getting as far
as my words had you think.

i'm in another harbor now
but think of you
using your knots
to hoist sails
and raise anchors
clutching the sea.

the drifting
did us some good
and the charts i've gathered
are memorized
to take me
farther.

—Charles Martin

A Swift Run and a Smile

A swift run and a smile
Like fire on a cold night
And cool water to the thirst,
Opening me like a reed
Between Earth and Sky.

—Jay Bender

To the Poet and the Man

You are spoiling me
with your words,
and your willingness to speak them.
I crouch at your feet,
a pagan before the idol,
hoping to be redeemed by association.
But . . .

New York is alluring to even the most
pragmatic of minds . . .
beckoning neon bulbs that dazzle
light a worn path
that you will follow to the city,
entering by the back door
and surprising the world.

Now, while all other poets are sleeping,
you should make your move.

. . . when you are gone
there will be no one to pray with
who understands the ins and outs of a poet's mind.

Who will read me poetry
when you are gone?

—Cynthia C. Wills

CRISTAL

Chrysalis 79



photo by Andrew Black

Does a Famous Poet Eat Watermelon?

'Does a famous poet eat
watermelon?'
Carl Sandburg once heard
this question.
I really wonder if he did.
I do not like watermelon.
Maybe I should cultivate a
taste for it.

—Steven Palkovitz

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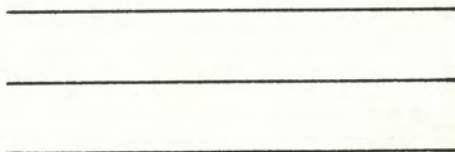


photo by Dale Minter

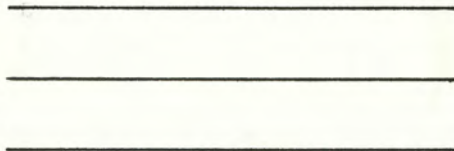
Boarding School

The smell of tomatoes, and I
am back
Remembering my friend, who
used to slice
Them, pudgy-fingered, with
her pocket knife.
She'd slap some mayonnaise
on bread
And eat the whole mess
Dripping over paper towels at
her desk.

In the attic, we smoked
cigarettes;
Heads in cobwebs, we
peeked out
A crevice in the roof
To a toy town, trivial, minute;
We, the rebels, giant and
aloof.

—Juanita Brunk Clemmer

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