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THE JASON - FALL 1978

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Star carpet

thrown

carelessly over a cactus

illuminates this swatch

freeway machete

cutting through sand and mesquite

Arizona night

lizards tap dance across

warm cement.

- Mark Hall



I am in awe of the dew-laden spider webs
whose kinship to crystal is revealed
by the rays of light on a cold mountain morning.

- Dianne Lazear

The Guru and the Queen of Venice

Two old men sit
silently
on a chipped green park bench
the morning paper
thoroughly read
twice
and neatly stacked between them.

The guru walks along the hot cement boardwalk. His hair is long and grey, his beard an unkempt mass of withered curls. "What say, what say, wah man guru?" A rollerskater in a string bikini and red and white striped socks nearly runs him down. The guru is wrinkled and brown, his old karate suit dirty and torn, in places patched with colorful bits of cloth and uneven stitches. "What say, what say, wah man guru? What say, what say, what time today?" He passes up an offer of a hit of reefer, a passive face of age. Alone he walks among so many. His disciples sell Mexican imports on the beach and falafel to hungry skaters - the batiked and tie-dyed remnants of the sixties who nod reverently as he goes by.

One stares
distantly
at the sky
travelling
thru a long forgotten past
A beautiful lady
he remembers
once smiled at him
as she passed him on a busy city street
he never saw her again
but in his mind
he makes love to her
passionately
every night.

The queen is enthroned on a park bench. Ignorant subjects bustle along by, one or two, now and then, stopping to stare and point fingers.

But the queen remains poised, conscious of the responsibilities of the sophisticated royalty, and smooths a rumpled, ragged, faded pink dress across knobby knees, adjusting a floppy flowered hat on a head of yellowed white hair. The queen watches longingly after the young men as they pass, hair carefully coiffed, wearing tight brief swimsuits as they head for the beach.

The other
his mouth puckered against soft gums
takes his old felt hat from his head
fills it with seed
from a large brown paper bag
and
scatters food on the ground
for the birds
who
he hopes
will come.

The court musicians gather in the grass between the beach and the boardwalk. Fifteen black men in cutoffs and ragged Hawaiian shorts, glistening with sweat as they pound out rhythmic sounds on their congas. The queen sits stiffly on her throne, while the people of Venice abide by the long time local law of kickback. A court jester entertains with brightly colored juggling balls while another plays the blues on a guitar. Everywhere the people smile and laugh, tanned by the sun and warm with beer and condiments.

The queen raises a bejeweled hand in solemn salutation as the guru passes by. He stops and stares acknowledgement with burning deep dark eyes. And then he continues his walk and the queen of Venice runs a nervous hand thru a long scraggly beard and tugs at a dangling gold earring. The queen smiles a brief toothless grin, then regains composure and vacantly reigns over the kingdom.

and they sit there
everyday
waiting
rarely talking
because
so long ago
everything
was already said.

The guru sits, a serene buddah form against a graffitied public restroom wall. He stares out at the surf, then closes his eyes to the milling figures and his ears to the pulse of the congas and sporadic whoosh of flushing toilets. Motionless, he draws a crowd who wait patiently for him to begin to speak. The people listen, nodding as they grasp his truths. The guru opens his eyes and is finished speaking. He wanders off to find a meal. Someone is singing Dylan and someone recites Kahil Gibran to the waves. A dog barks and leaves his mark on the pavement. A roller-skater whirls on by. The guru finds a half-eaten sandwich in a forgotten paper bag and while he eats thinks of the truths he will speak of tomorrow.

And the queen sits, still, down the way on her sidewalk throne, waiting for someone to come live her life with her.

- Kristin Frost

The Glacier

It covers the lowlands
majestically embracing all motion.

A whiteness
conceived without faults
begins to unravel.

Receding towards the summit
Like so many hairlines
uplifting earth and tree and stone.
A wake of granite boulders
are left behind
like Hansel's breadcrumbs.

Its presence gone
and they remain.
Motionless reminders
on a timeless trail
to be weathered used
and never moved.

- John Partigan



The glass shoe lies in splinters,
The pumpkin's in the pie,
The cat has killed the coachman,
Godmother passed me by.
The clock chimes break the silence
And shatter lies of old,
Of happily ever afters
And straw spun into gold.
The apple I had reached for
Turned poison in my hand,
I clicked my ruby slippers,
And stayed in Munchkinland.
I clapped my hands, I closed my eyes,
I never once forgot.
I always wished upon a star,
But found no Camelot.
No cavaliers, no princes,
No armor on the stair,
And though I've searched the countryside
My shining knight's not there.

- Felicia Udden

SAYING GOODBYE

There is beauty
here

beauty
you
will never know

the air crisp
crisp enough
to just hint
of fall

silent
but for the crickets
in loud overtures
beating the night
in constant rhythm
a familiar rhythm
this place being home

No.
You'll never know
it
not from me

Because
you'll never hear
the crickets

so how can
you
hear me?

- Curtis Cole

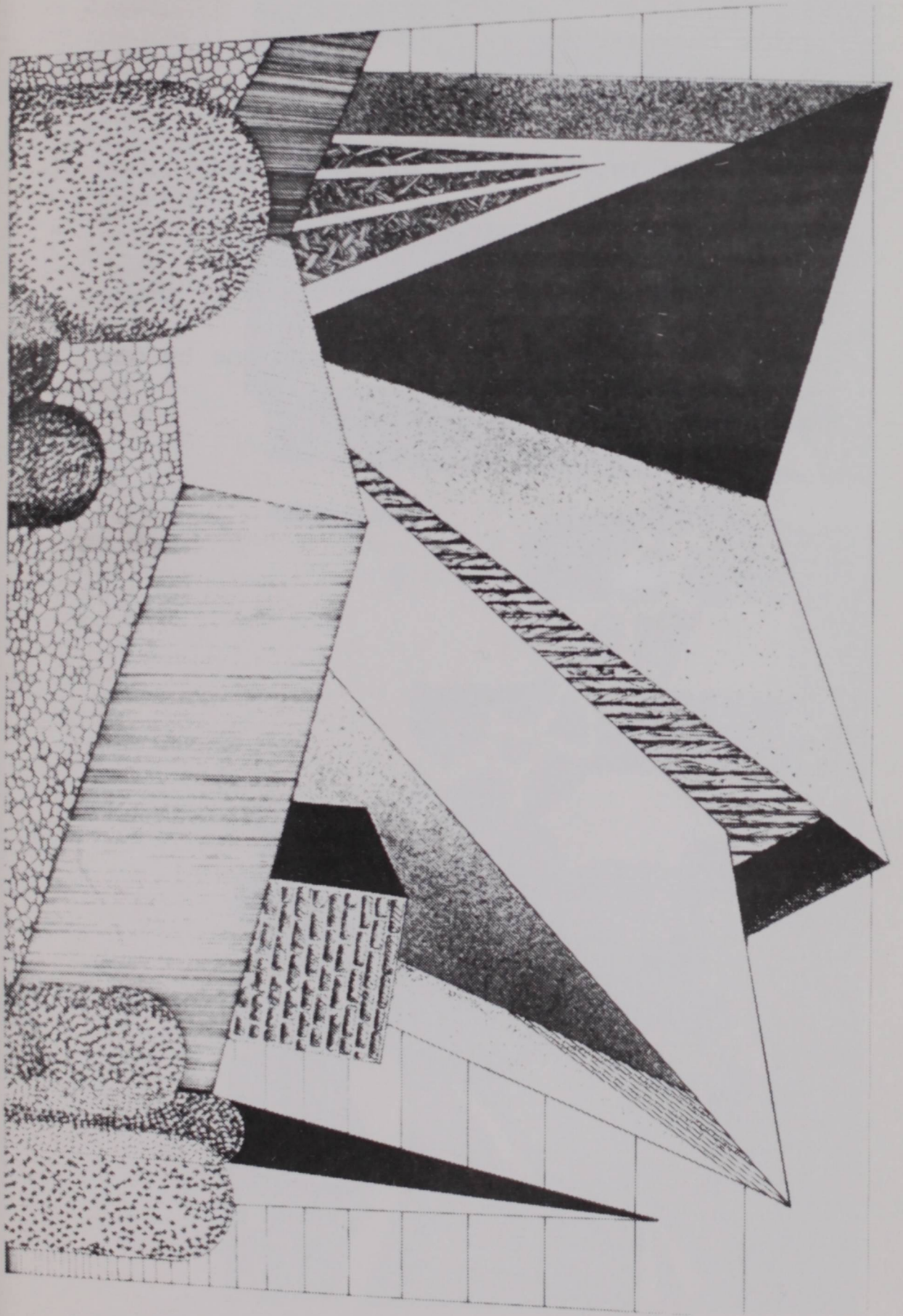
The Bridge Game

Crazy cackling women babble endlessly at tea-tables laughing hysterically at the latest non-entity.

Secure middle class muddled marble meringue pie TV dinners for the kids and dad in the den drinking daiquiris with his war buddy Bob blasting about broken beer bottles on the road home from work while the kids smoke stoned out grass gambling their memory bank savings from the boob tube brain damaged comedy shows stalemated and washed water down to be entertaining for the masses adolescent frustrations to fit in with peers 11 o'clock news nudie pictures with puberty poverty punctuated discarded wiped clean and out of the latrine.

More tea ladies?

- Doug Walther



A Candidate's Debate

With a backstabbing grin of a visage

A soldier,

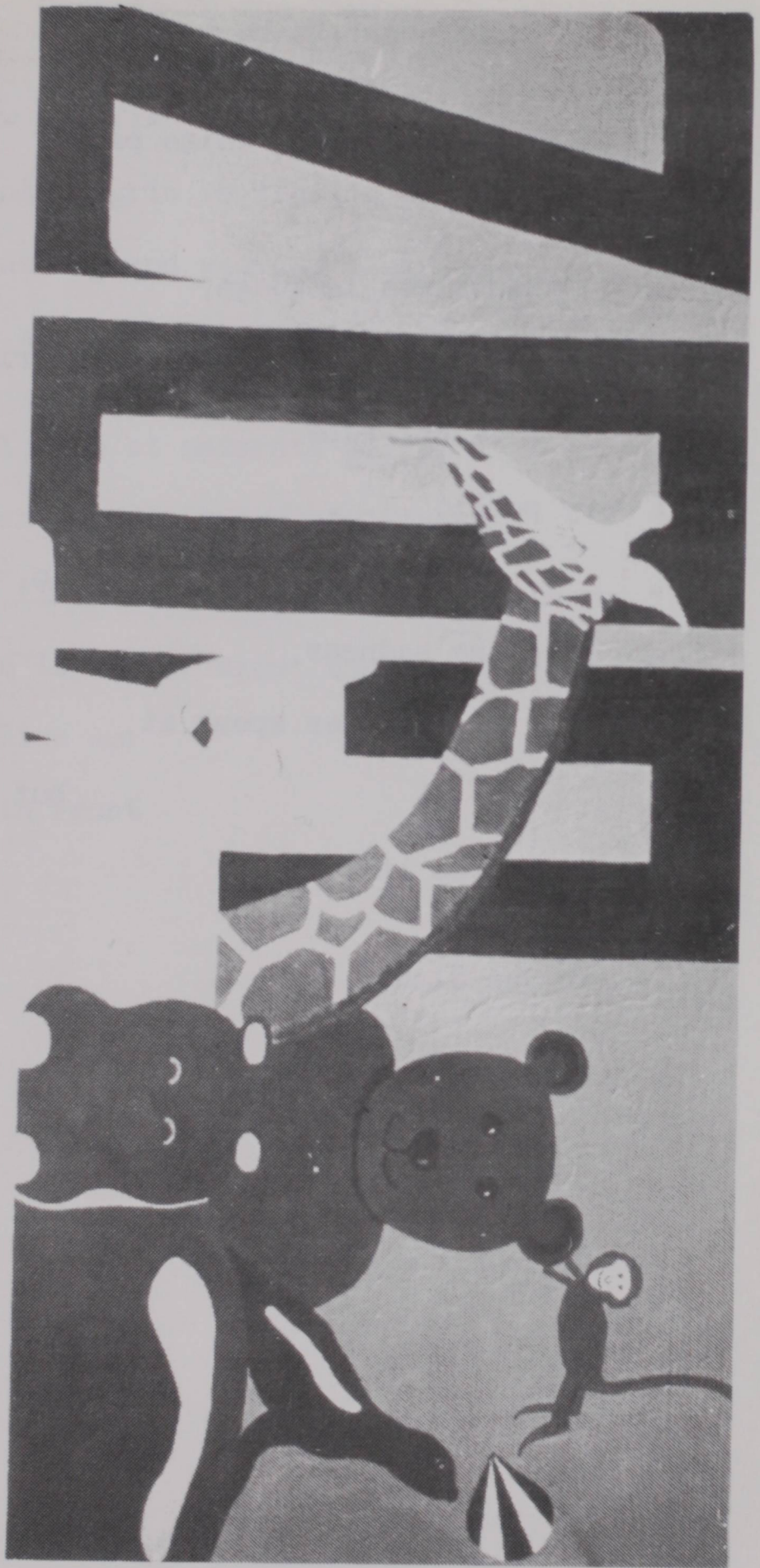
(Instead of repairing his own lacerated
extremities)

Will remove organs of the enemy piece by piece

and one by one,

Until he himself looks whole again.

- Kathy Daniels



There ought to be a Law

Black ink violating white paper

Ugly words,

senseless language,

painful cries

A silent rape,

But very public . . .

all one needs do, is read it.

Songs sing the sadness,

tongues speak it,

but oh,

Paper preserves it.

- Lin Sue Glass

Orphans in the Stream

Today I saw the fish run high
Grey, beneath a grim reflection of the sky
Wildly thrashing and weaving their way.
The river, a scatty mother's labor pains.

I watched in awe at nature's plight
her children born to breed and fight;
and at the finish line, when the ribbon's cut
the winners lay their eggs, then rest -
silver bellies up.

- Kristin Frost



Thomas Crapper
Unsung Hero
1837 - 1910
by
Dave Kneeshaw

Thomas Crapper, the
plumber's mentor and his
valveless water
waste preventer;

Boon to mankind, past and
present; had made our
living, far more pleasant.

Born in eighteen thirty-seven;
apprentice plumber at
age eleven.

Blessings on his birthplace,
Thorne, in merry England,
where he was born.

An unsung hero, alas!
forsooth! He perfected
the flusher, and that's
the truth.

So why these humble lines
of verse? Without him,
life would be much worse.

Truly an artist in every sense;
his contribution was
most immense.

By his merger of China, and
pipe, and grout, the
wondrous biffy was
brought about

More than a throne of
humble duty; Crapper
made it a thing of beauty.

Ensnconced with design of
various hue; a truly
remarkable thing to view.

No more trips to the shed,
outside; housed indoors
with pomp and pride.

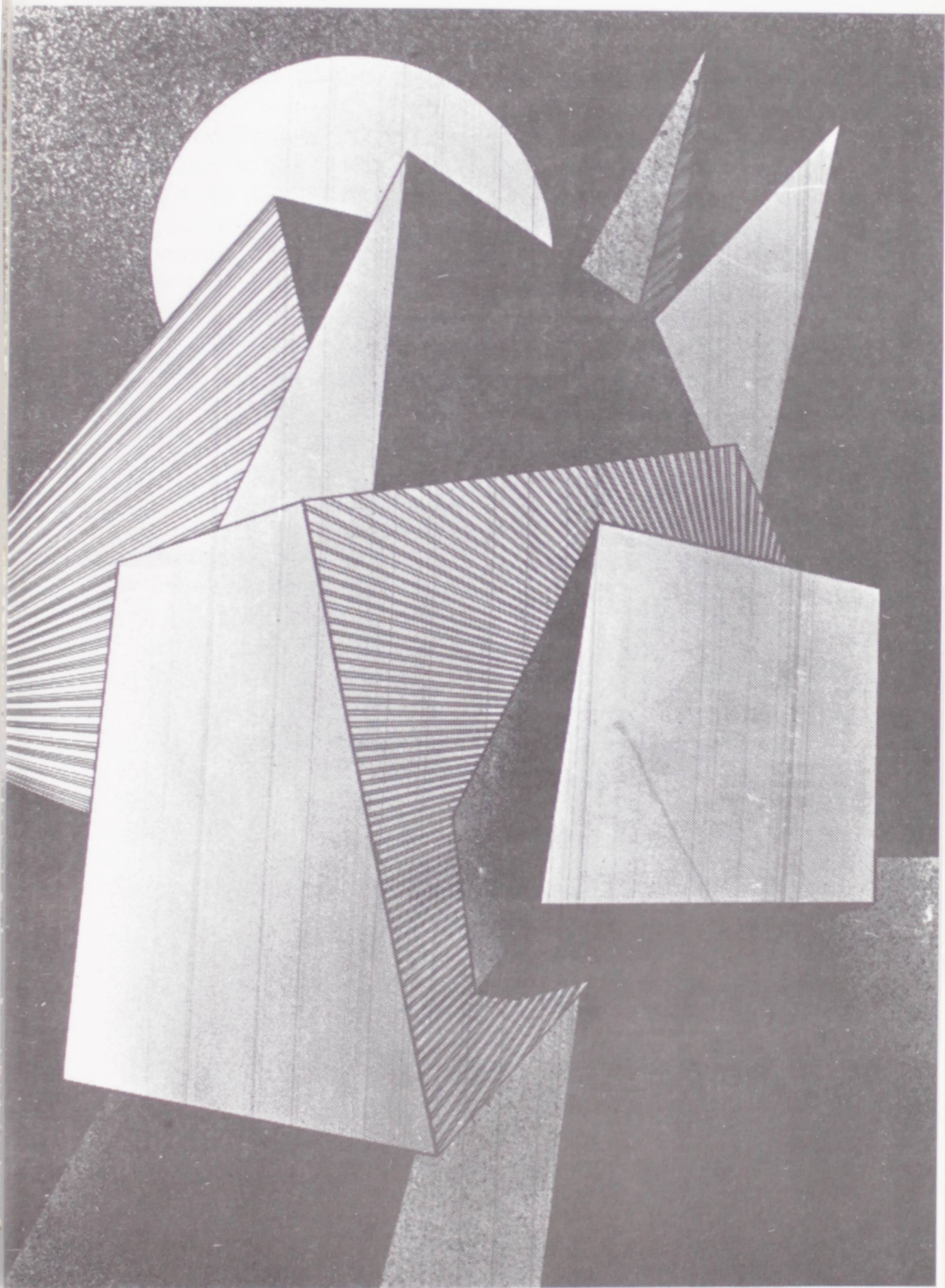
No more clatter beneath the
bed; enshrined in its
own little room instead.

No longer a vessel of vast
disdain; a marvelous
chamber of China
and chain.

My friends, we've come a
long, long way; the
outdoor privy is gone
to stay.

But, alas! poor Crapper has
long since died. So, shed
a tear, and flush with pride.

- Submitted by University Center
Custodial Staff
Bonnie Wade, Jan Partin and Clancy Quinn



Music Theory

Musical notes with agogic rhythms
Make it hard for me to know
Whether it's duple meter, triple meter,
Or a mere mistake of toe.

But in tapping just a wee bit more
I usually will find -
The basic durations split in three
So it's the compound duple kind.

I've learned the names of all the modes
the mixo-lydian too!
But to listen to them being played,
I can only name a few.

If I remember the lowered second,
Phrygians a breeze.
Yet lydians not that simple you know,
When 'ere she hits the keys.

Yes Theory has its ups and downs,
With scales everywhere.
But the sharps and flats will equal out,
And knowledge finds us there.

- Selene M. Bochnke

never ends the Night

As songs go through the Day with Love,
They fill the night with Hate!

That hate-filled night never ceases. It
begins with Death, and
Life is the Morning.

Dawn never comes, for the dawn of
Day had its time before eventide.

If the light shone not before,
How shall it end the night?

Flax strands under the yellow nails of the
Weaver's hands handsomely date the
Tears of the weeping star-spirit.
Her tears are the fabric of the night
Hung on the warp of linen,
Strung on the strands of
Sun in the waters of Noon.

As she cries, the torrents of
Night flow and the salt burns the
Warp, and night is opened by a fissure as
Wide and Bright as the Weaver's glistening loom.

- Scott Herzinger

END OF SEPTEMBER

I feel of afternoons.

Of summer's slow maturing

To autumn's rain and cooling calm.

I feel of warm breath

returned

By the smooth skin strength of your naked back.

The easy rhythm of your sleeping

and the ticking of the clock.

Your boy's smile.

Let's make love.



A Sandcastle

Do you see them?

There, out on the shore.

Building a sandcastle.

Can you hear them?

They're silent

Clumps of sand, shaped together to form a mass.
Sculpting. Little hands building, hurrying to
beat the tide.

Can you hear them?

They're silent.

Can you see it?

White foam, bits of seaweed, blue water.

The tide.

Hurry children, hurry!

Can you see it? A sandcastle. High and mighty.

Towering over the sea.

Its walls brushing the ocean silently.

small windows, army men, cannons. Can you see it?

Can you feel it?

Water, cold blue water.

Crashing, splashing, engulfing the fortress.

Army men floating. Cannons sinking.

Windows broken.

Children running.

Can you see them?

- Brian Wilson

Paranoia

Like some sweeping sickness

perhaps Sartres nausea

A pulsating crowd of

concert crazies

swarming and bursting through the door

and nobody searching for bottles

there's nobody taking tickets

Paranoia

You've caught me once again

squeezed and pushed

between sweaty layers of cloth and flesh

this Parnoia

thick envelope

that tucks me inside.

- Mark Hall

Part of me wonders why I ponder so much

Mainly about intricacies or things that will
always be

With every thought a link appears

I long to break these chains I have created
for myself

Yet, it continues! the words forever whirling
and spinning within my head

I escape with the days end

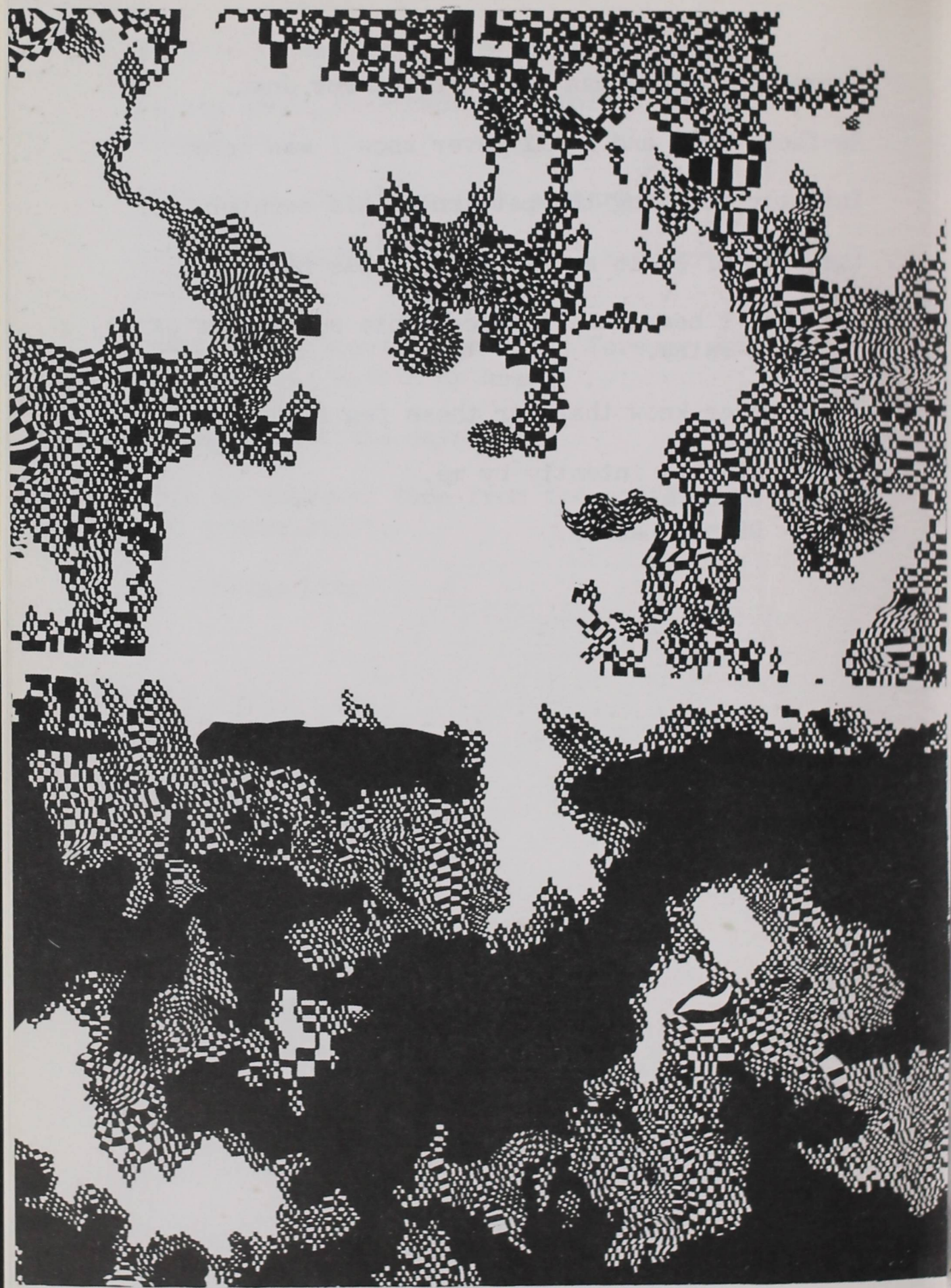
When my thoughts fade from the conscious into
the dreamy night.

- Donna King

There is a young man not three tables down.
He faces away and he'll never know I was here
Intently studying the pattern on his sweater
the flip of curls at the nape of his neck
nor that I heard the indiscernible soft tones of
his voice.

He'll never know that for these few minutes
he was studied intently by me.

- Dianne Lazear



Surrounded by track homes...

A barbed wire fence
now rusted
cries posted
unnoticed.

Crawling into a field
eating your way through wild strawberries
somehow made sweeter
by their limited size.

Wildlife
frogs and birds and rabbit.
Hedgerows of treasure
quartz mica
and gold for a fool.

Anonymously
they survive
the trilliums and roses.
Mayapple and Bloodroot?
an Iroquois could capture
food poison and warpaint
from these.

Jack sits in his pulpit
beside a red trillium
as the lilies the daisies
and more berries
parade
some black some razzle
some thimble some goose.
The seal of King Solomon
the britches of Dutchman
and my ladies slipper
join the procession.

One could feast on butter & eggs
wild garlic onion cucumber
and sweetpea.
To amuse
merely poof
magic spores from the puffballs.

Trees of wild cherry and apple
dogwood
the willow who weeps
by the creek
the aspen that quakes
before rain.

An uncharted refuge
for young suburbanites
hungry with adventure--
enjoyed
and soon to be swallowed.

- John Partigan

FEELING OUT THE NIGHT

Air hangs quiet

now

in the darkness

Water drips

from the trees--

rain over

I smell leaves

burning,

wondering

about the first snow

before I close

my window

for bed.

- Curtis Cole



The Woods

I cried the last time I was home. I'm not one to cry easily - in fact it takes a lot to make me cry at all. I guess this was one of the most upsetting moments of my life.

I cried hard and long - tears of despair, anger and of very deep hurt. Death is sometimes extremely difficult to understand...

A very close friend of mine, one that I have known since my early years, has begun to die a slow and painful death.

My friend has been sentenced to a tragic and tortuous death. She has committed no crimes, no violation of law. By nature she is calm and peaceful.

As a child I grew up in a beautiful rural area. We were surrounded by a towering forest on all sides of us. My brother and I used to play for hours in the woods - we ran and wandered all about it, grew and changed with its every season.

In the fall, the trees would turn to reds, oranges and golds, littering the ground with crackly color. Rosy cheeked and laughing, we'd run down out on a limb, shut our eyes and jump - scattering screams of delight and a mosaic confusion of color that seemed to fill the woods. We'd do it again and again - each time becoming a little bolder, climbing a little higher till either exhaustion or our mother's yell of "dinner!" took us away. Racing, we'd make our way over the fallen logs, leap the deep mud, wiggle under the barbed wire and finally scramble up the hill to the road and home.

In the winter, the skies turned grey and rainy. The woods became a wonderland of flooded swamps and slippery logs - the smell of the wet earth and fresh evergreens permeating the air, bright orange lichens

and an occasional early yellow bloom of skunk cabbage punctuating the shiny scene. Everyday after school, we'd pull on our rubber boots and if no one was looking, borrow our dad's 'gaters. Opening the gate for our collie dog Lorna Doone, we'd head for the woods. We had an elaborate maze of trails and old bridges - mostly of logs and planks and a few ropes to swing across ravines on. If the water rose high enough, some of the bridges would float away. We'd go hunting for them - sloshing thru the water or mudstomping, the earth making remendous sucking sounds, till an excited call or bark summoned us all together. Lorna would jump aboard and we'd pull and tug till the bridge was back in place, securing it tight with branches and large stones. Sometimes Lorna would go into an absolute frenzy and we'd look, usually catching sight of a swimming muskrat or beaver on its way home with sticks and reeds in its mouth. As dusk began to settle, we'd head for higher land, cutting thru the cow pasture and grabbing hold of Lorna's collar so she wouldn't chase the cows. Running, leaping and whooping, our breathless arrival home would always be met with a demand to remove our sodden clothing and water-filled boots and sometimes a rather exasperated request to replace our father's 'gaters in the basement before he came home.

Spring would come and all the new green would start to show on the trees and plants. The flowers would begin to bloom - tiny pink buds dotting the wild rose bushes and Tiger lilies unfurling their long strands. Our paths would be overgrown so we'd go down to open them up. Once, my brother found an old machete in the shed and we decided to be pirates. We climbed a tree and I, much to my delight, got to man the crows nest and sight for land while my brother allotted himself the title of captain and the job of steering the ship. I've always suspected that the job of captain was rather boring as we always managed (by the captain's orders) to hit land before it was sighted. When we landed, we'd scamper down the tree, I armed with my trusty pistol (a stick) and my brother with his machete, having to chop our way thru the overgrowth.

On one occasion we lost track of our dog and fellow pirate and went in search of her. Finally we heard barking. Crawling thru a particularly low overhang of dried berry vines, we discovered a paradise which we dubbed "Lorna's Hideaway." We found Lorna jumping around, her tail wagging excitedly, in front of a small hollow made of a broken base of a tree and covered with shroud of leaves and vines. Inside were five cute round balls of fur with their eyes just barely open and a mother fox with her teeth bared, growling menacingly at Lorna. We left quickly, dragging a reluctant Doone behind us and were soon discovering other things of interest. Part of the underground was lush with ferns and little candy stripe flowers, padded with a thick mossy covering. It was strangely quiet and bathed in a soft sunlight, tempered by the shadows of the low hanging leaf tapestries. We found a fallen tree that we could wriggle up on our bellies to lie silently listening to everything around and below us. Trickling beneath was a little stream, so clear that we could see all the minnows and salamanders swimming around. One of the best things was listening to the birds - sometimes we could imitate them and they'd call back. Once, a bird we'd never seen before flew in and lit gently upon a fragile branch. It was yellow of body with streaks of green and a beak of orange with brown red eyes that seemed to look straight thru us. We just lay on our tree staring at it, and it, without blinking, stared back and then without a sound lifted its wings and disappeared. The place had always seemed very magical and now we were certain that it was indeed a very special and sacred place.

Spring soon gave way to summer and lazy after - noons after berry picking. We had a private place - a tree house old and rickety that we'd discovered in a cool and shady thicket. With the neighbor kids up the street we decided to fix it up. From the backs of garages and sheds, we amassed a tremendous amount of lumber and nails. Being dreamers and fancying ourselves in nothing but the best, we managed to fashion quite an elaborate structure of three split levels complete with secret ways in and out and even some old lawn chairs and a few

watermelons from nearby fields. When watermelons were lacking or watchful eyes were not, we'd nominate one of us (usually me, youngest and the only girl - I was assured that it was the democratic way) to run out to the field and pick some wild blackberries. I soon tired of democracy, and Lorna and I would wander away to the sanctity of other parts of the woods to eat our hard earned berries and talk or sleep in the warmth of the sun.

The seasons ran on; we got older, yet the woods remained the same. Whenever I was down or frustrated or just needed to get out, I'd run to the woods and hike with my dog - climb a tree or follow a deer trail. The woods were always there; they always understood and were always home. I could plop down in the middle of a golden field and smell that honey wheat scent mixed with the fragrance of the warmed flowers and berry perfumes and listen to the humming of the bees and all my cares would be gently carried away with the breeze.

In the rain, I would walk till I found a cluster of cedars and pines and sit cross-legged on a log, watching the rain pound down outside. After the rain, the smell of the earth and the tang of the evergreens would seep in and sometimes I felt if I absorbed enough I would melt right in too.

In early morning, the dew left everything fresh and I could walk with Lorna across the logs till we had a good vantage point of the sun rising above the hills and, if we were lucky, might catch a moment with some deer licking droplets off the leaves or nibbling the clover.

At night, little lamp worms shined their lights in the earth and the forest came alive with croaking frogs and the hooting of the owls. The woods is a very beautiful and special place. She is one of my best friends - a very close friend - she's alive with so much character, so many sides and we've shared countless, wordless things together. The woods is very much a part of me - and with the death of my friend goes a piece of my being.

I fought, my family fought, our neighbors fought...but we lost. Now, one thousand multiple dwellings will sit where a wealth of trees, flowers, fox, squirrels and numerous other beings have lived and roamed for ages. Even the swamp and the skunk cabbage will go - drained, to be covered by cement for a trailer court.

And, she's dying. And all those who were a part of her and loved her, all of them are losing something of themselves. But, they will carry with them always, a present from her, that money and power will never replace or take away - love of the earth and nature...

My tears keep falling, her trees keep falling, but, one day, we will be together again.

- Kristin Frost

I once worked in a nursing home,

It's name was Glendoveer.

I had a rare experience

I'd really like to share.

One night while I was working hard

The nurse came in to say;

Has anyone seen Mr. Brown?

I fear he's run away.

"Oh me! Oh my! Oh no!" I shrieked.

"Not dear old Mr. Brown.

He said he had to meet a man.

I'll bet he's gone to town."

We searched the east; we searched the west.

We searched that nursing home.

We searched in every single place

We thought that he might roam.

Mrs. Brown, his faithful wife

Who lived just down the hall.

Was frantic and hysterical

Which didn't help at all.

We couldn't find him anywhere.

We called the F.B.I.

They begged us please to have no fear;

They'd send a private spy.

We waited not so patiently.

It seemed to take forever.

But finding one so small as he

Is quite a large endeavor.

Finally after hours and hours

We heard the telephone.

They'd found him sitting on a bridge

Quite wet and all alone.

- Terri Anne Webster

Get Thee Hence

A Morning of mornings

appearing, rising
transparent and effervescent
Stimulating, exhilarating -

Challenging the spirit to new depths

From afar
you smiled and greeted me

The aura of the Morning prevalent, blinding

You escorted ever so subtly my spirit -
into the meeting of your companions

And the Morning of mornings disappeared...

Too late.

A den into a sepulcher, a charnel house
The smiles into melted candied apples;
oozing, dripping, spilling down your
vestments

You bowed -

sequacious to your doctrine

AND I KNOW YOU NOT

- p. pearson



SONG OF THE SEASONS

From the dense agglomeration of white-washed cubes with green-tiled roofs of buildings concentrated in the valley, modest cottages continued up the surrounding hills and mountainsides, spreading toward the snow-line. Upon the higher peaks, if one looked north-east on a clear day, one could glimpse the distant ribbon of sapphire which was the Mediterranean, fading into the brilliant azure sky. From sunrise to sunset on all ordinary days, one heard the chants of holy men in the minarets, praising the greatness of God and begging His mercy. Often, on religious holidays, the chants continued during the night.

Scattered about the town, even in the sections where only people, horses, donkeys and cats could fit in the narrow winding streets, one suddenly came upon parks with formal flower beds lining the paths and benches arranged under tropical trees.

At sunrise, the valley was shrouded in mist which evaporated as the sun rose overhead. From early morning, the streets were crowded with animals and people, bustling along on business. By the time the markets closed in early afternoon, the air was so clear that one saw crisply for miles. Gradually, the crowds thinned out until, shortly after nightfall, the streets were empty again except for the cats, which were always about, everywhere.

Early, on such a day, Benissa went out of her doorway to find the first warming rays of the new Spring's sun. Within her the warmth awakened joyous feelings from the relief that she had survived another bleak winter. As the heat spread through her body, it enkindled a dormant store of energy that sparked in ecstasies of welcome for the reincarnatant season.

To give vent to her exuberance, she ran over to the park where she lost track of time as she explored the fields of newly opened crocus and the green buds peeping from every branch. She felt intoxicated by the fresh new scent of greening. A sense of delight in her youth, on impulse, caused her to turn somersaulting down a lone hill. Breathless, she stood in the glen, vibrantly one with the electric life around her.

Thus, she rested, eyes closed, face toward the sun to soak-in its warmth. The crackle of a branch, behind, drew her attention to someone watching her from the top of the hill. Warily they watched each other -- still strangers, motionless.

He stopped his observations first, as, with controlled languid movements crisply outlined by the sunlight on the top of the hill, he leaped in seeming slow motion to catch at a twig from the lowest branch of a nearby tree. Landing, he held the stick tenderly and looked at her, watching him. Moments later, feigning disinterest, he played with the twig, tossing it, catching and batting it, and darting after it to get it again.

Unexpectedly, he rolled it down the hill, so accurately that it stopped just at her feet. He rested against the tree to watch her reaction.

Surprised at his sudden motions, and too animated to be restrained by her usual caution, she gave-in to a momentary whim, daring to join in his game. Picking up the twig, she tossed it over her shoulder and whirled around to follow it. Coming back to it, she kicked it further away then bounced after it again. After juggling it back and forth a few times from left to right and left, abruptly she kicked it hard, back towards him.

It stopped near him, but at the foot of the hill. She sat on the grass, unconcernedly scratching her head, to casually observe his next move.

With powerful strides, he stepped majestically down the hill, scooped up the stick and in smooth, uninterrupted movement came to her side, greeting her, boisterously.

Shy, she answered quietly.

They stood there for a few minutes, like two statues, intense within their mood's surrounding, filled with feeling yet inarticulate. Around them, birds twittered busily, searching for nest-building materials. A toad hopped along looking for breakfast, and oozing silently over fresh leaves, hundreds of tiny, chomping snails gorged their guts, leaving thin black, moist trails behind on the lace-gapped green remains. Innocently, the crabgrass put out its first fine blades.

Brusquely, he tapped her hard on her back and spurted instantly away, calling for her to catch him. Wildly, she chased after him, up the hill, through the forest, into the brush.

Behind a large bush he stopped short, hiding, until she caught up to him, where he pounced out on her as she ran past. Falling together, they tussled back and forth over the ground amid the bushes, playfully at first, then with growing seriousness.

Her earlier gaiety now lost to sudden fear. She struggled to get away but he had her pinned down. Panicky, she fought ruthlessly, biting and scratching.

Increasingly, his anger controlled him. He had never lost a battle, nor would he lose this one. She tore his ear and escaped momentarily, but, enraged, he soon caught her.

No matter how hard she tried, she could not get away. Panic became despair, bringing a weariness that made her helpless with weakness. She felt as though she had been running for hours, stretching her endurance beyond its limits almost to the point of death. Every movement seemed loaded down with hundred pound weights. She had no strength left to continue the struggle.

* * * * *

The parching glare of the early summer sun blasted Benissa as she left the shade of her doorway. Its extreme heat made her hesitate momentarily. She longed to stay in her shady home, but hunger drove her out to the market before it closed.

Her body moved slowly, laboring with its pendulous weight. In walking, her legs pulled painfully at the muscles stretched over her tautly bloated belly. Her will determinedly steeled her self to ignore that sensation. The need for food could not be disregarded any longer.

She contemplated the impending events with grim weariness. Time moved at once too quickly, bringing closer the dreaded day, yet too slowly in endlessly increasing discomfort. She found it ever more difficult to do the usual necessary tasks of life, yet was driven to them by increased needs. Consequently, she had to carefully calculate the extra efforts needed to do everything, especially pushing and climbing, while allowing for her awkward dimensions, exaggerated gravitational-pull, and tendencies toward imbalance.

As she got to the market, her nerves tightened: survival would be a real battle, today. She went straight to her favorite butcher shop, hoping the butcher would recognize her and she could finish quickly and easily. She was so tense as she entered the crowded stall that she didn't recognize "him," her acquaintance of that Spring day.

She waited quietly on the side, watching for an appropriate opportunity, ready to respond instantly. Taut.

The butcher paused in his operations to toss down a spare tidbit to a waiting cat by his feet. Benissa, who had been intently observing every movement the butcher made, sprang into immediate speed: before the butcher's hand moved halfway past his worktable, Benissa's mouth was receiving the scrap from aside the other cat, who blinked in surprise.

She chewed quickly and swallowed, knowing she must get ready for a fight, and retreated to a favorable position, all at once. The other cat recovered from his amazement and turned on Benissa, snarling.

The counter, refrigerator and the many legs in the crowded stall did not give Benissa much space to maneuver in. Yet, in spite of her condition, she fought with a ferocity known perhaps only by someone who in facing the worst terrors has somehow found the courage to go on beyond them.

The depth of her rage seemed boundless. This fury harnessed that strained body so that though it had moved with awkward weariness before, now, with alacrity she held her ground through an intense, massive power -- dodging her opponent astutely and attacking decisively, at precisely opportune openings. One faulty move could mean death; she could not allow for mistakes.

The butcher grabbed the broom and swatted Benissa and her opponent repeatedly until he separated and chased them away. Soon, the market was quiet again except for the busy hum of transactions in trade.

Benissa walked to another butcher's stall and reconnoitered the terrain before advancing. One of the first butcher's customers came towards her. She, too, had a distended abdomen and walked awkwardly, carrying a full basket. She reached into her basket and gave Benissa a tidbit, watched her eating it, then, slowly walked away.

- A. Q. Stevens

Gazing Out the Window At the Unemployment Office

Ignoring the graffiti-clustered desk at which
I wait,
I see -
a dark cloud passing in front of larger,
more distant white clouds,
moving in the opposite direction.

bare trees shaped like naked umbrellas.
No protection from the downpours there.
Happy cloud above.

a scenic cruiser bus pulling out of the station.
Its tinted windows
make America the Beautiful seem greener.
Toilet to the rear.

- Luanne Barnes

Easter Promise

God never promised sunshine

without a bit of rain;

God never promised laughter

without a bit of pain;

God never promised roses

without a thorn or two;

God never promised happiness

with a sad adieu.

But:

God promised us a rainbow

to come behind the rain;

God promised hope in a handclasp

to help to bear the pain;

God promised sweet perfume rare

to cover hurt of thorn;

God promised life eternal

on that glad Easter morn.

- Donna J. Thiel

Double Entendre

The clanging cymbol stopped,

And for a moment

I heard

The sweet melodic sound

of a folk guitar.

- Kathy Daniels



My Wall

One night while watching the plaster crack, I was predisposed to monumentalize my abode, to fashion a collage of colorful current pictures, easy on the eyes, commemorating the bicentennial spirit.

With scissors I snipped Pat Boone, taping him next to Tarzan above Hendrix and Mickey Mouse. Roy Rogers smiled from the thermostat. Caricature and character, alive on my wall.

For depth I use: a wooden rainbow, eagle on a nail, Ballantine beer can swinging from a thread, miniature flag from a cake on the Indian's head, free take one Kodak film envelope dispenser, Jimmy Carter's smile, Rocky giving the finger.

We want you says Uncle Sam, Merit cigarettes in pocket. Flowers on bayonets, pills, grenades, earth shoes and Stretch Armstrong. Thumbs up says the Fonz.

The American economic system and your part in it.
Slim Pickins for the class of '76
Who needs college?

Tired from snipping, taping, gluing, stapling and nailing,
I sat down to wait for my beard to grow.

- Doug Walther

Another Night

Another night...

The cars sweeping by unattached.
Red, auburn, then green,
They stall and engender.

A mist of light brushes
The torn curtains.
The clock dances forever on the sill.
A hand rubs a gentle tear,

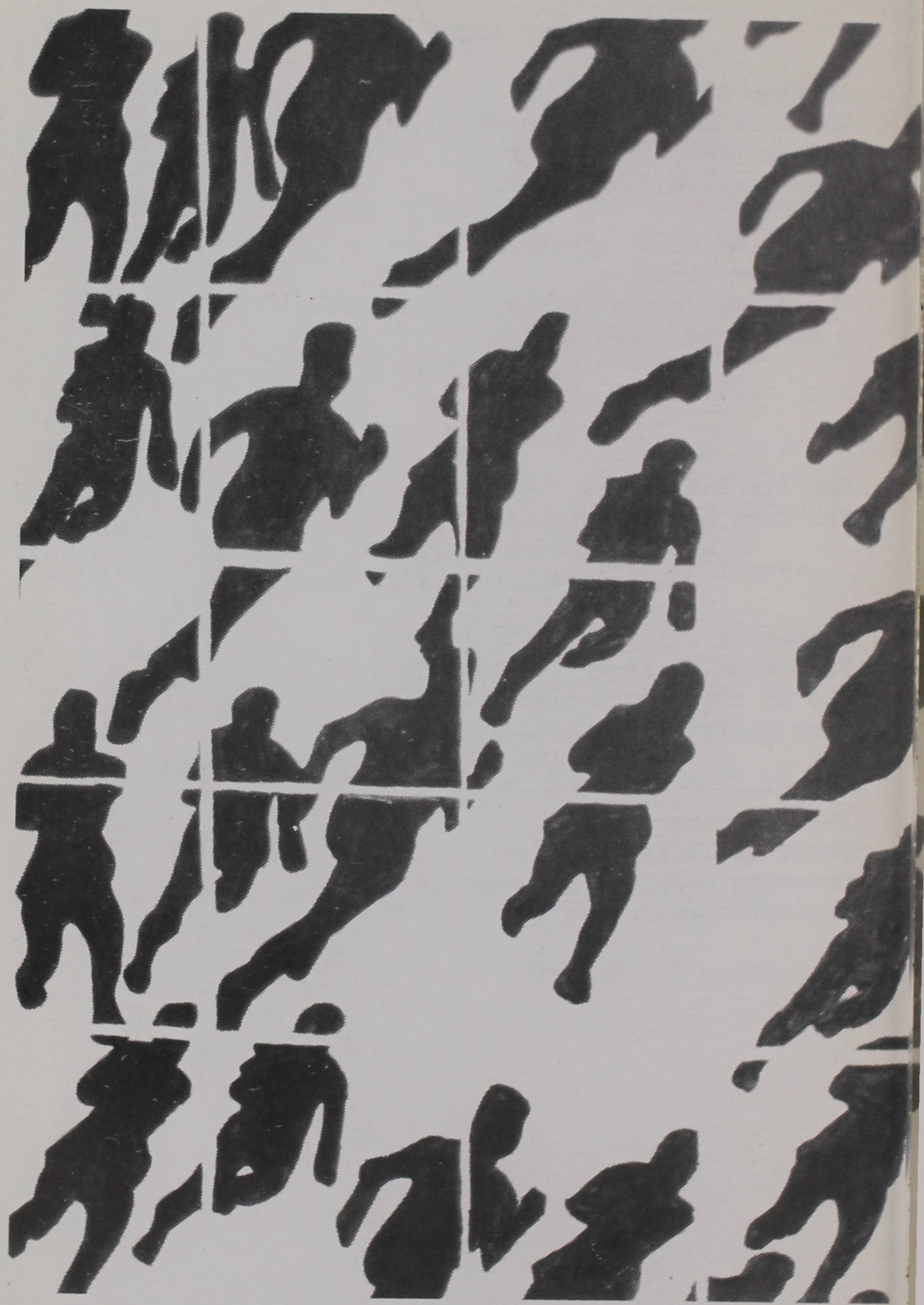
another
and
another.

The light startles the diamond broached eyes.
Red ruby cheeks subside.
another thought is given,
another tear is shed.

A poem is written
For belching frogs in the wood,
Who in those dark nights
Were patiently listening
to once connected conversations

But now have resumed
Their belligerent voices,
Drowning only bruised memories.
Another night...

- Stacy J. Heyworth



The walls are crumbling down.

I reach, I touch, I feel you.

Weeks before seeing you behind glass,

now the glass is gone.

Does it matter if I speak to more than one?

One's a lover, one's a friend, and one's a curiosity.

Hey secret friend.

When you stood by the door, watching the rain

I wanted to stand next to you.

Tell you that my troubles were dissolving into

puddles on the street.

- Margaret Herrmann

Sweet Clover

Straining
flowers extend
to yawn in the brightness.

Fallen petals
preclude
chlorophyll candelabras
hollow with seed.

The flavor runs --
from virgin wick
to the most frayed
underworld roothair.
A taste
like only red blackberries.
Sweet?

Exhausted leaves
draped
like boneless umbrellas.
Bathing reveals
astronaut foil --
the reflecting skin
of a thousand school lunches.

Blot them dry
and discover
the valentine heart
or the middle-aged rump
of somebodies ma!

- John Partigan



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