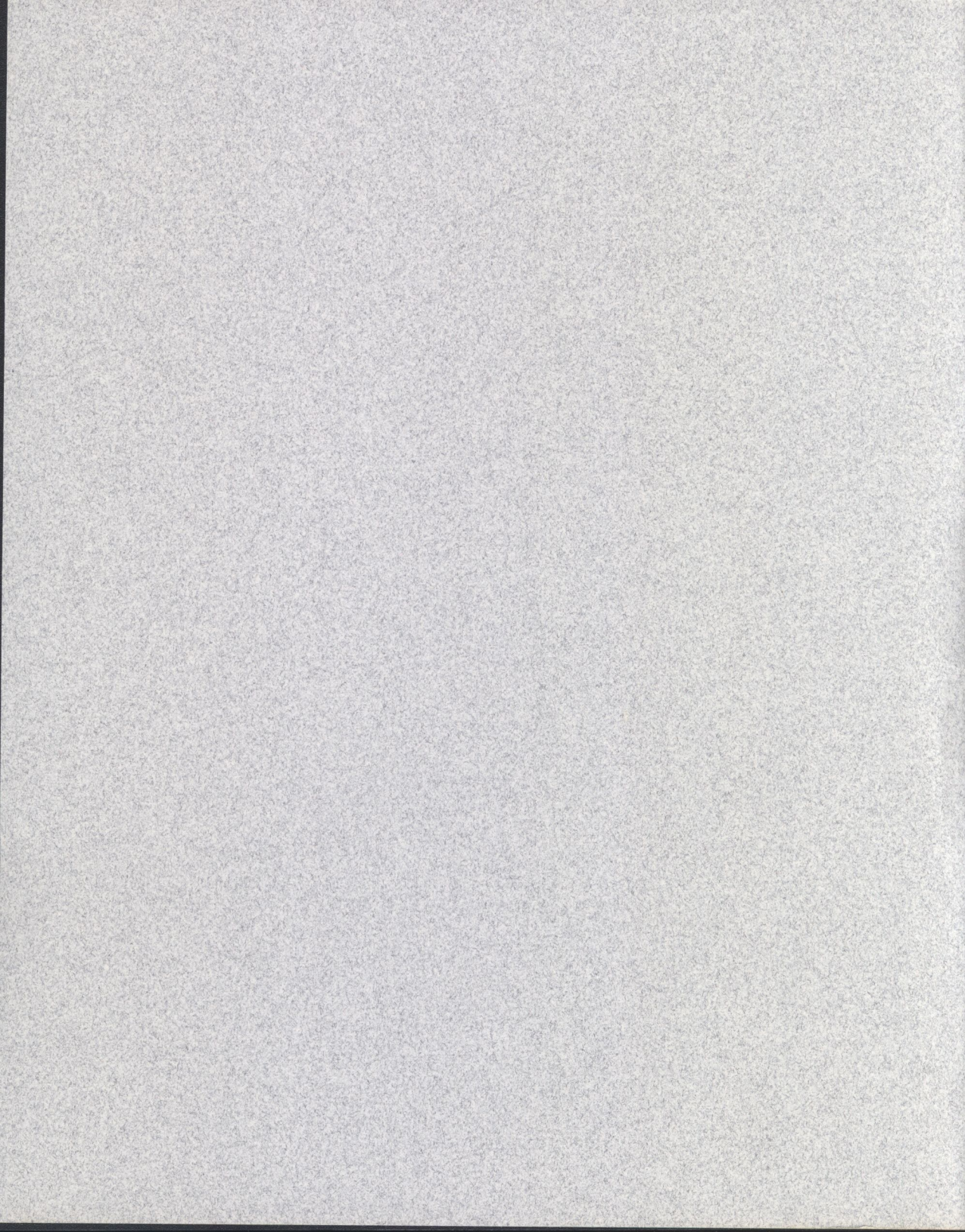


the **JASON**
Volume Twenty-Six
Spring 1991



the **J**ason
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1990-91 Jason Staff

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Something There Is That Whispers	Brian Buckley	1
Letter for Debi (Fall)	Dan Beacham	2
My Back Deck After Rain	Julie Muniz	3
I as a Chilled Silver Bowl	Kris Gates	4
The Clay Pot	Julie Sigloh	5
Vase	Paula Portinga	6
How Long Have I Had These Flowers?	Tara Campbell	7
“These are the petals”	Barbara Dumas	8
“I didn’t know until”	Barbara Dumas	8
“Would you just let her walk away”	Barbara Dumas	9
Taken Aback	Blythe Gardner	10
Dreams, #1	Dan Beacham	11
Transitions #1, 1990	Mary Ann Johns	12
Transitions #6, 1990	Mary Ann Johns	13
Rain	Van Granger	14
Untitled	Andrea Foust	15
Flower Child	Alice Mah	16
Riding in the back seat on the highway between Eugene and Salem	Julie Sigloh	17
Falling Asleep at the Wheel	Molly Borghorst	18
Bad Luck (for J.M.)	Kris Becker	19
Young Woman Sitting	Paula Portinga	20
Thoughts from the first few hours...	Russ Beaton	21
Silent Movies	Gregory Mulhauser	25
Eight-year-old eyes	Julie Sigloh	26
ghost costume	Suzanne Wittke	27
Gray Stone Walls	Marcia Latta	28
Clisson, France	Marcia Latta	29
Panneau d’Affichage Nantes, France	Marcia Latta	30

Kreimhild in Spring	Virginia Enguehard	31
RENDEZVOUS at hills like white elephants	Tara Campbell	32
Reflections on a Tell	Heather Bufford	33
Beating My Head Against a Wall, Waiting for Something to Fall out of My Ear	Shelley Tomlinson	34
My Friend is Not Here Now	Dale T. Miller	36
Dancantes	Kay Hefferlin	38
My Shoes	Paula Portinga	46
The Intruder	Mei Ching Tan	47
Untitled	Andrea Foust	51
Remedy	Alice Mah	52
Untitled	Andrea Foust	53
Denim	Amanda Wells	54
Blue Jean Boy	Karen Lynn Hill	56
Perfect	Blythe Gardner	58
mascara	Lisa Golda	60
Sappho's Dance	T.J. Moore	61
Foot Binding	Molly Borghorst	62
Old Woman Standing	Paula Portinga	63
mother	Kearsty Dunlap	64
To the impatient, to learn some of pride	Tara Campbell	67
Last Call	Laura Periman	68
Untitled	Sara Heil	69
Untitled	Sara Heil	70
I know of three	Suzanne Wittke	71
hands	Lisa Golda	73
Why poets live alone	J.D. Roth	74
Photographer's Trail	Suzanne Wittke	75
"So I got this tasse du cafe"	Barbara Dumas	76
Optimism	Sara Heil	77
Amadeus	Dagny Haug	78

**“What one has written is not to be defended or valued,
but abandoned: others must decide significance and value.”**

**William Stafford
Writing the Australian Crawl**

Something There Is That Whispers

You hope to own land,
perhaps in a valley,
full of wheat and rye
that is a great amber swish and sway
in the breeze,
a golden hub with a rim of patchy, solemn hills.
A place where it is natural to be distant
and right to be alone.
True, it is solitude chosen,
for company is but a stroll up a dusty road
or an amble through an acre of corn.
There is movement always,
as in the soul,
that makes scattered hills a range
and sprinkled fields a valley,
but something there is that whispers
it is good for wheat to go to wheat,
and corn to corn,
with the narrow roads and low, wobbly fences
that separate them,
and that this, too, is peace.

Brian Buckley

Letter for Debi (Fall)

Dan Beacham

Love, much love you should see the leaves in the october
midmorning frost brigade of soaring red and bright, nearly
painful yellow over the misty clearing beyond my rooftop, with
eyethoughts rolling from pavement heavenward. The grass crunches
under your feet and oh, love the air is so crisp this morning
Sunday of worship and fading. The tree branch crooked lives are
slowly straightening, slowly extending their thanks skyward and
showering our world with leaves of folded paper withered
perfection; they bow and sink, bidding us good morrow before the
winter and temporary rest.

My sidewalk Sunday mourning took me past leaves and chill wind by
the running water of lives and bridges in the constant, fluid
grace of death dance motion. For a time, the first ever, all was
so clear. The only way to see the world and smile is to
appreciate the fact that it all ends the same— The colors flash
and fade; they bloom, blur, and run together into flurries of
blanket peace in blackness beneath the wait for new life. We are
Born and carried, as

frame by frame

we drift out of our treehouses to go home with the
wind, dressed in our best, most brightly colored fall clothing.
We are red on fire orange as crush cold morning, dying flowers.
We are love, celebration in leaves, much love.

I write poetry once a year in celebration of slow death.
Nothing escapes the seasons in perpetual motion; we are slaves to
the eternal return of our startstop, leather shoe telephone booth
lives amidst unending cycles of blossom and wither. We are
clocks with hour hand minute faces, waiting to break or just
unwind. Today would be a beautiful day to die.

i think of you and smile

Give me a tear on a day like this and call it rain; there's
nothing more natural. Come to this place.



My Back Deck After Rain, *Julie Muniz*

I as a Chilled Silver Bowl

You sift the shore

Looking for rhinestones

And I envy your costume-jewelry daydreams.

Even as I kick in the walls of your wells.

Even as the wind flattens your sifted piles.

I turn to mow down the reeds with my wicked scythe

you carve them into flutes

and it is only your song

that persuades me to desert my heavy blade.

As it falls to the sand,

A sparkle appears in your sieve

You

Throw it

to

the Sea

Before it breaks the surface,

I have reclaimed my knife

and I beat you lighter and whiter than

the white of an egg

and you fly away, foam

on the wind of my harsh tongue.

Kris Gates

The Clay Pot

You sit and talk to me
as I throw. And I talk back
—angry words between us—
but my mind is less on you
than on the clay.

Beneath my fingers it spins,
round and round on the wheel.

Careful,

I must be careful
to hold my hands just right.

Centered,

make sure it's centered.

Clay that wobbles now

becomes the pot
that explodes in the kiln.

Wait, I say, when you ask for my response.

My fingers move gently

as the lump on the wheel takes shape.

This moment will make or break my pot.

When it is finished,

I look up.

Where have you gone?

Julie Sigloh



Vase, *Paula Portinga*

How Long Have I Had These Flowers?

Petals flung brazenly wide,
Pistil and Stamen are offered up;
unable to touch, they wait for winged satisfaction,
aching for its buzz and thrumming, yearning for its tiptoe hum,
craving its caressing legs, their vicarious union;
standing straight with supple tension,
anticipating insect-quick agility,
waiting, outstretched and outstretched.

So how long have I had these flowers of yours?
They've started jerking off onto my desk,
their earthy, orangey semen floating down,
filtering through the grating of my clock
to coat its inner wires with indiscretion,
fouling accuracy with lurid chalk—

And we,
who time our kisses,
make appointments to hold hands,
schedule interludes of trust,
and grasp for moments we may touch,
glance again at the digital sun:

12:00 *** 12:00 *** 12:00 *** 12:00 *** 12:00

You pull me closer and request a bee or two,
But who needs bees when flower dust will do?

Tara Campbell

These are the petals
of a wild rose,
From my wild heart,
to your wild nose.

Barbara Dumas

I didn't know until
When a few days ago I noticed
The moon also sets.
I only saw it go down as far
As the trees that camouflage the cannery.
I said, Look. Look at the moon
It's going down.
It's the man in the moon going down on mother earth.

Barbara Dumas

Would you just let her walk away
if she told you she loves you?
You know, she knows, she has that way about her,
one that moves you,
makes you.

What if you woke up to hear her telling you
How quietly she loves you?
She's afraid for you to know in the light,
to your face.
It's safer to say some words in the dark.

Some people simply walk around not knowing
how they touch one another.
Others walk around and feel embraced always.
Still others walk around,
sit there and wait,
which is difficult to do,
Muttering the words for a right moment
They know will come to pass
not soon enough.

The last question,
when it comes down to the end of a page of poetry is,
Why do some people turn away from the ones who love them,
Only to look, with desires indescribable,
For the one to love?

Barbara Dumas

Taken Aback

His back
with its tan folds and dark creases
makes my face warm
and my hands cold.

The shoulders
young and broad
move my eyes
down

His back
is the side of him
with which I am most familiar

I know
his back—

What if
he turns
around?

Blythe Gardner

Dreams, #1

I can't sleep.

The people upstairs are fucking again, and
If I weren't a little turned on,
The sounds would be disgusting.

I've been dreaming a lot lately.

By day, my desires have become confused and schizophrenic,
But in my nights I know old lovers,
And reunite with scores of strangers whose faces I must have
Once seen in the marketplace,
A taxi cab window.

I saw her again last night.

We had met on some rooftop to make love, and somewhere nearby
There was a wedding going on.
The sex was urgent and pregnant with passion;
She used to cry when she came
But she wouldn't look at my face.
Dear Celeste... I'll never forget her martyred eyes,
And the still, smooth purse of her lips
Like curled willow leaves stained red,
Still moist with the last few words
Quietly submitted to me before I left.

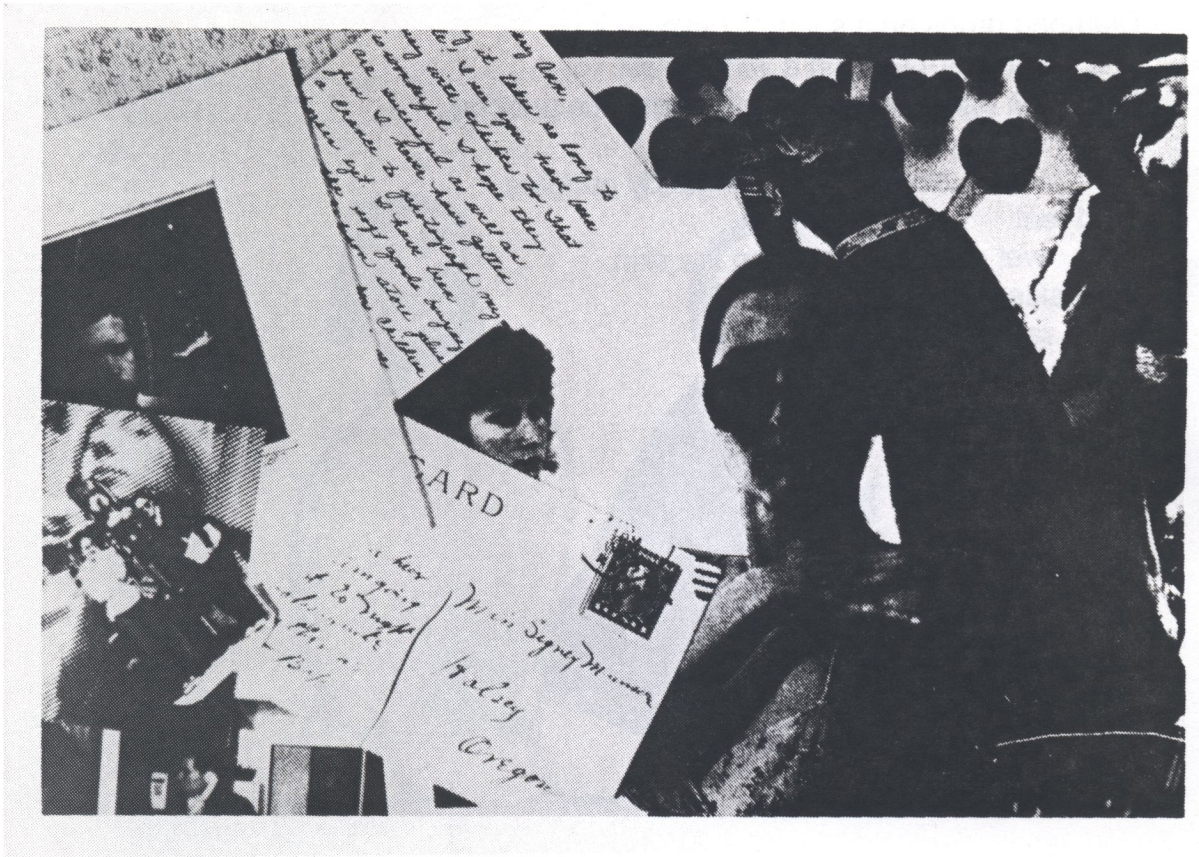
Suddenly, I was in a crowded sandwich shop playing a strange and
hurried game of pool. My mother was there, and she ordered an
imitation crab salad sandwich on good German rye. I lost
the pool game and woke up.

It's been so long since I've loved.

Dan Beacham



Transitions #1, 1990, *Mary Ann Johns*



Transitions #6, 1990, *Mary Ann Johns*

Rain

I like rain.

Silvery-gray clouds glistening with dew.

Diamond drops on a spider's delicate web.

The gentle ker-plunk on a window sill.

Galoshes squish-squashing through little puddles,
muddy puddles

sloppy shoes in muddy puddles

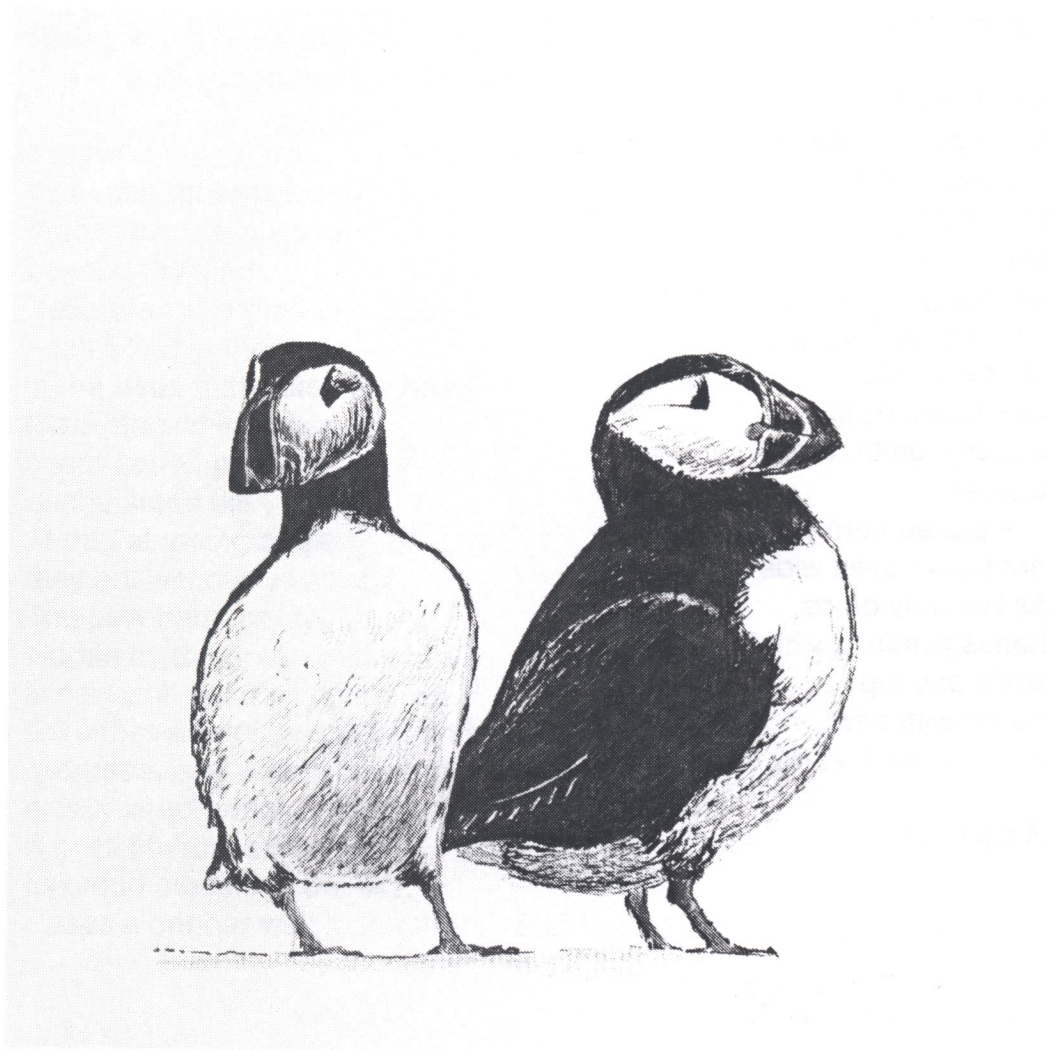
Cold feet

wet clothes, soaked to the skin.

Gray skies of gloom...

I hate rain.

Van Granger



Untitled, *Andrea Foust*

Flower Child

It's chocolate
she plants on my cheek,
the firm smack
of smoothly
soft petals
unfolding a smudge of blushes,
pink warmth, a squeal
on my old skin.
She breathes in
sweetly, embracing
daisies
she picked from a vast field,
her brown eyes wide
as Hershey drops,
hands fluttering with flowers
white and top
heavy with dew,
a sticky laugh at my cheek.

Alice Mah

Riding in the back seat on the highway
between Eugene and Salem

It is not a fallen world
that I see through the window,
across the white line and
beyond the ditch.
Yellow is more than one color
—more than a thousand—
in the trees that watch me pass.
Black and white cows
stand easily, patiently,
on the steep hill.
At that alarming angle
they eat without complaint.
The pink barn, partly
hidden by the green of the trees
is not bashful for its difference.
On either side of the old green farmhouse
two trees, one yellow, one red,
quietly watch what passes.
A brick church, stretching
its proud steeple to the sky,
clasps a banner which proclaims *Peace on Earth*.
Then I know that it's not true.

Julie Sigloh

Falling Asleep at the Wheel

I left that school and got a job
to dance with a cash register, senseless—
until little Hanna nearly lost a finger
a sacrifice of her own dance with the bathroom door—
and inert.

I left that school for love (or lack of it)
and to escape the highway tyranny of a shot gun
or a moody San Andreas fault, eliminating
any such stimulation that might keep me on my toes.

I spoke with a friend who's still fueled by that danger.
She's going to do lunch with the VP of
Fox Broadcasting and so-and-so is making \$400 a day
at her new Hollywood job and ...
I drive around unthreatened,
knowing very little about \$400 a day,
but sure of my cash register at minimum wage.
I left that school to escape success
and did quite well.

Friends at that school drive to their meetings,
hobnobbing social activities, connections with
heads of departments, the director's couch—
any chance to throw their scripts in someone's lap.

I drive—around.
Falling asleep at the wheel.

Molly Borghorst

Bad Luck
(for J.M.)

When I heard rumors of your misfortune
I wanted to see you myself,
the bruised eyes the shuttight jaw
the soreness in the ribs and your books
and money stolen. I heard of it:
how they knocked you down like
a mortal wind and kicked,
pummeled, I heard of it:
the fist and the boot and your body
bending, the slap and the thrash and
your body curling, a flower at dusk
or in a room when the light is suddenly
snapped off. I wanted to touch you
for new reasons, your poor bruised lips,
I used to want to kiss them, we
were smaller then and sometimes
androgynous, both as straight as rods and
thin as twigs, newer younger
and lucky whenever our hands
came together in the dark.

Kristin Becker



Young Woman Sitting, *Paula Portinga*

Thoughts from the first few hours...
Russ Beaton

I hope never again to have the opportunity to express my thoughts and feelings under these exact conditions, so to repress many other feelings struggling desperately to crowd into my consciousness, I'll entertain myself by trying to "capture the spirit of a unique opportunity."

Simply can't describe the feeling of the phrase "They're bombing Baghdad" when your son is out there somewhere in the sands of Saudi Arabia. It's started. No - this couldn't have happened. It couldn't be happening. It wasn't supposed to be this way, not to Alan, not to the U.S., not to the world... We should be fishing now on the Little North Fork. I know - it isn't perfect - they're probable hatchery trout, but nothing's perfect. I'd even be willing to play him in tennis right now, even though he beats me most of the time. I'm a big boy. I can handle defeat - a little adversity in my life. Besides, I could beat him - I doubt he's been playing much.

How do you maintain sanity? Interact with the television and mesmerize yourself with the details that you can't stand to watch and can't stand not to watch. I know what - I'll watch for little shreds of evidence that allow me to conclude that he's O.K. Think probabilistically, (A probabilistic missile?) since thinking philosophically and emotionally isn't working too well. It's such a big desert, how could they possibly hit just him? He's no threat anyway, he's a medic. He just joined to learn how to help people - get some good training, see Europe... you know, BE ALL YOU CAN BE. Boy, that didn't work...get some Kleenex.

My poor wife - she's sure he's dead. But, dear, the TV says there aren't any casualties. (What do they know? - he's dead.)

Oh, good, Delana, this retired general with a pointer and a big diagram is explaining to Tom Brokaw how a cruise missile works. What a lovely and efficient weapon!!! (That'll protect him. He'll be fine now...) More Bushbabble...Ratherblather. Dan Rather got us into this. He's been pushing this war for a long time now. I think he was

getting bored and knew it would be a great story. A Pulitzer prize for Rather - that's why we're at war in the Middle East! (Where's Walter Cronkite when I really need him?) He wouldn't let this happen. He shared our tears when Kennedy was killed, our wonder and excitement when Neil Armstrong stepped on the moon... Walter was there. Walter was on the moon. Walter has safely taken us everywhere. He'd pull us through.

I'm feeling better now - a little anger, a little cynicism, go for it! Besides, I'm feeling guilty for just worrying about my own son. I'm sorry. I apologize. There's a lot more at stake. There are other folks whose sons are in a lot more danger. I'm just feeling sorry for myself. How about those pilots? How'd you like to climb into one of those jets and head North? (We've been here before...Why are we always heading our planes north?...) Bet they're scared. What a feeling of power; 1500 miles per hour and all those bombs hanging on you. What a stud. Top Gun. Bet Tom Cruise would like to meet me! They're probably gonna be heros now. Poor bastards - hope they're ready to be heros. (Wonder what being a hero this time will mean?) Probable, they can get elected to Congress, anyway, like last time, and then support the "unavoidable" military action against Colombia in 2016. Back to the jungles for that one. Cycles, you know... (Nobody should be allowed to treat people the way they treated those poor Venezuelans.) Besides, we've gotta take out their cocaine capability now. (Make the world safe for alcohol, I guess...)

Oh, God, Rather's back. "Countdown to Confrontation" has become "Showdown in the Gulf." CBS has some great writers. What the hell is this

— The Superbowl?! Incidentally, they're talking about cancelling the Superbowl, I hear. Boy, is that gonna be a predictable debate: "It doesn't seem right when there's a war on..." "That's the kind of thing he's fighting to preserve..." Might as well have it - how the hell do you think we learned this behavior, anyway?

Hey!! Here's Walter Cronkite!!! I think we're O.K. now... Hmmm. He's calling it a "wonderfully efficient operation." A little disappointing, I thought he'd know better. Maybe retirement has soft-

ened his brain. Back to the moon, Walt. No, I'm sorry, I still appreciate all you've done for us. Bob Hope, too... He wouldn't miss one of these wars. Bet he's too old for Colombia, though.

Here's Connie Chung. Wonder what they'll have her doing? Oh, of course - the woman's role - interviewing all the poor crying wives (I'm so scared but he's doing what he has to do and we're so proud of him and I pray they'll get the job done and come home soon...") Boy, this war will set sexual equality back a ways... Pretty traditional stuff. Connie ought to have a cheerleader's outfit and a couple of PomPoms. No, she's pregnant... Don't get me wrong, I feel really sorry for those folks, too, but why can't I relate better? Also, why do they put up with the TV cameramen? I'd stuff my Kleenex up his damned nose...

Pray for peace... We really appreciate all our friends who've said they're doing that for us - can't do it for myself... wish I could - No, I don't. George Bush cured me of that. Do you realize he dragged in his minister yesterday and asked him to "pray for peace?" How about praying you won't pull the trigger, George?!? (Never trust anybody with lips that thin...) Boy, Marlin Fitzwater has kind of a "snivelling" look to him, doesn't he? Looks like he ought to be named Marlin Passwater. He's fat and has thin lips - that's worse.

Wonder what I'll do for class tomorrow? Seminar in American Ethics - we sure ought to be able to get a discussion going... Great to teach with Lane McGaughy, but I'm going to have to apologize to him. Lannie was in a tank in Panama a year ago right now, and I didn't even know at the time. Guilt again - Lane didn't feel good... I didn't know it. Lannie and Alan were good friends in high school - played next to each other in the line learning teamwork, camaraderie and "valuable lessons for life." (How about death?) Boy, they're going to have a lot to talk about some day... We can all four go fishing on the Little North Fork. I'll dig some worms in the morning - no I won't... More Kleenex.

Taught the first class in Energy Economics today. We talked about demand curves for oil. Boy, can't say I don't engage my values and "do relevance" in my teaching this semester... I'm so relevant I'm exhausted.

These rallies, vigils and TV shows also take a lot out of you. My God, they're covering the war from the target! Tom Brokaw's looking pretty tired, too. Damned Dan Rather looks fresh, though...He's pumped. I think Peter Jennings has gone to bed. He's smarter, he's Canadian. There may be quite a few more Canadians before this is through...

Looks like we're winning...(I knew the 49ers would repeat...) "successful operation." What a disaster. Military-Industrial gloating. All that ignorance will be so convinced it was right...Isn't worth the lives to prove them wrong, though, That's for sure...Nothing will ever convince me they aren't.

Lots of words today...Heat-Seeking - 1800 tons of bombs - Fertile Crescent - Terrible efficiency of these beautiful weapons - Saddamized Kuwait - Mesopotamia - Dipstick Diplomacy -Stealth.... Support the Troops - Countdown to Confrontation.. ...Cradle of Civilization.....I'm so tired...

Silent Movies

As I watched,
you dropped your video camera on the sand
as if it was nothing,
and you ran, silently—
why didn't you scream?—
to catch your child before the wave did.

Had it been you
being chased,
perhaps you would have made it,
but he was much smaller
and lighter.

And he, too, never made a sound,
or at least if he did
I never heard it:
the sea took whatever sound there was,
and folding it up in translucent green arms,
held it tightly without even trying.

Again I watched
as a roller came to claim
an indestructible plastic shovel
from a tipped-over red wagon,
while the video camera
worked its way
to the end of a tape.

Gregory Mulhauser

Eight-year-old eyes

Hope

is such a foreign word to these kids.
Might as well say it in Latin or Greek.
They've learned some lessons I never knew
about how to fight,
how to hurt,
but Hope—
it's no use to them.

Now Anger—

Anger is a different story.
In their eight-year-old eyes Anger sits.
At the least indication of challenge
it captures their faces
and often their bodies.
They hit back.
They know about that.

Julie Sigloh

ghost costume
Suzanne Wittke

In her ghost costume, she felt invincible. Up and down the sidewalks of the neighborhood she would float, screaming at the other ghosts, witches, and Sesame Street characters. At the doors, she would demand her treats and skip gaily to the next house. She wasn't afraid. Afraid of the gorillas that answered the doors or of the shadows cast by the eucalyptus trees. And even if she was a little scared, (not much, just a shivery-type scared) she would shine her flashlight and frighten away the dark.

Finally, when she knew her pillowcase with the pink flowers couldn't hold another Hershey bar, she turned towards home. Her flashlight had become cold to the touch, her fingers too numb to even flip it on. She walked back, her pace slowing and the sheet heavy with her perspiration in the cold night. In and out of the eucalyptus shadows she stumbled towards a place where her flashlight lost its magical power and every corner was dark and frightening.

Her sheet brushed past her dark, deserted porch as she opened the front door. It was cold in the hall, and her Hershey wrappers crackled too noisily. Into her room she floated with the silence of the stale air.

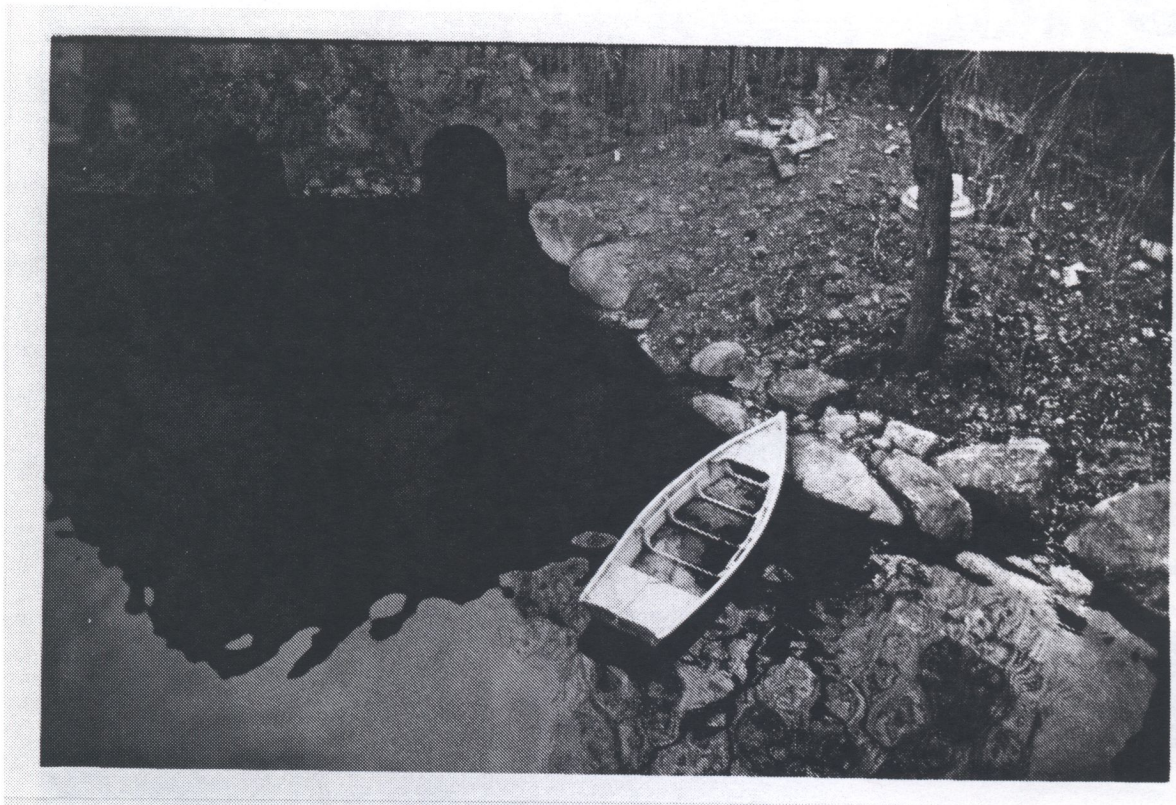
And she was afraid. Afraid of the waking of the house, of the thunderous snoring across the hall that might fall silent, of the evidence that she had been out that evening.

She jumped at the sound of a drunken grumble from her father's room. He always drank more on the holidays; he was more violent too. She knew he was asleep for the evening but she still slipped quickly under her ghost sheet she had spread on the bed. At least under her sheet, she could hide behind her mask and listen cautiously to the uninterrupted snoring of her drunken father.

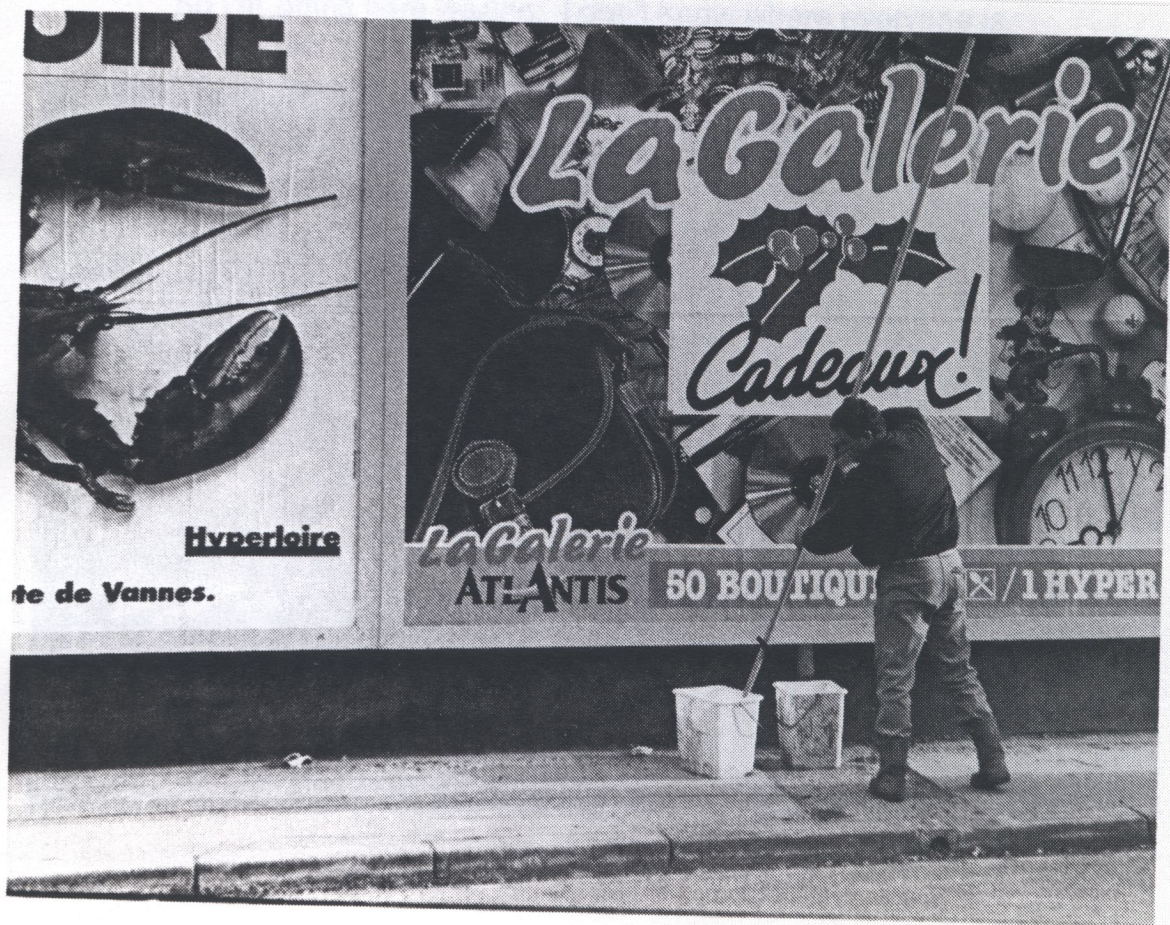
Gray Stone Walls

Marcia Latta

So I'm sitting here waiting. I don't know where everyone is. I was told to meet them here. So I'm sitting here waiting, looking at the gray stone walls and I'm just thinking and I can remember my friend with gray hair at age 20. I remember she once told me that in summer she likes to eat her lunch in the cemetery in her hometown. I thought it was morbid but she says it is peaceful. I think of the cemetery I walk by every day in this town I just moved to. It is large with a huge old stone wall surrounding it and the wall has ivy clinging to it. I went in one day and just walked around. I wandered through the tombstones. There were graves dating from the 1800's and earlier, to this year. I guess they're going to keep stacking the graves until it is full or people don't die anymore. I saw some family plots and all the names were inscribed on some and birthdates were there without a date of death and I wondered how I would feel seeing my grave before I die. My friend said one should feel comfortable with death and maybe she's right but I would not eat my lunch in this place.



Clisson, France, *Marcia Latta*



Panneau d'Affichage Nantes, France
Marcia Latta

Kreimhild in Spring

I have found her,
the grinning thing,
a new queen
who pinches herself daily
a sphere of breathing linen
flat
a woman on the floor.
The darling sleeps,
golden strings, musically tuned
not so sleek her maddening wound as
her deeper breaths.
She is a most pleasing bleeder.
Two sweaty little blades
clawed three pink lines apiece
perched bonily,
symmetrical guardians of her straight spine.
I reach
and move her fingers.
They are tired springs,
these,
hand in hand with mine.
Such
is how I have found her.

Virginia Enguehard

RENDEZVOUS

at hills like
white elephants

I wait for you in this heat-stained
 blurry-vision place,
Fingers tracing my feathered lips,
Thinking of the Anis del Toro
And how it would sting.

I wait for you to come,
Feeling your parchment hands in the wind,
Hot currents pressing against my skin,
Opening my mouth to your arid tongue.
I breathe in your sand
As it scatters about me,
I lie down and breathe in your sand
Waiting as you come.

Tara Campbell

Reflections on a Tell

It takes careful observation to figure

The fundamental laws of fire:

hunger

fear of water

heat

Once a man extends the day,

Finds new ways to hunt and cook,

The mind becomes a journey place;

The last divergence of our race.

The fundamental law of where we've come.

Heather Bufford

Beating My Head Against a Wall,
Waiting for Something to Fall out of My Ear
Shelley Tomlinson

This blank piece of lined paper is slowly driving me crazy. I have been sitting here, in my rigid black molded plastic chair for over an hour, intermittently picking up my chewed-up Bic and randomly stabbing it at the paper, trying to force words out of it. I have resigned myself to a morning of completely wasted time, resorting to staring at the spot where the blue top line bleeds into the red left margin marker, feeling completely devoid of all creative thought.

I keep wandering out of my room, down the quiet hallway to torment the studious. I knock, enter, and flop down on a bed, asking, "what should I write about?" The stupid thing is that I don't really care about the answer. I am not listening to the words that come out of anyone's mouth, I am listening to the sound of their speech. Interesting. Sabrina ends every sentence with a lilt, whether it is a question or a statement. My objective reached, having disrupted anyone actually accomplishing anything school related, I leave.

I return to my grey-carpeted cell, to the room with the blank paper that torments me. Maybe walking around will help. I slowly tread around the room, picking up anything of interest. Now I remember what it is like to be a toddler, indiscriminately grabbing at anything within my sight. I have seen my roommate's pictures hundreds of times, but I pick them up and look at them anyway. Perfect little family moments frozen in time, great.

I am now sarcastic, having crossed the barrier between frustrated (potentially negative) and cynical (purely negative). I flop down on the bed, looking up at the bottom of the shelving, where some previous inhabitant of my cubicle has lightly scrawled "I love Ted" in pencil. I am suddenly struck by the desire to find out who this person is. Why did she think that I would care whether she loved Ted or not, and even if I did, would Ted have been flattered to know that his name appeared on the furniture of someone's room?

It's official. My brain has completely shut down, refusing to

focus on anything. The only thoughts of which I am capable are long and rambling ones about Ted and the girl who loves him. I continue to examine the childish scrawl, thinking how ironically cyclical it is that the more I realize how much I need to put some words on this damn sheet of paper, the more impossible it becomes for me to do it. Somewhere, the literary giants are laughing themselves silly at my pathetic efforts to squeeze a few words out of my mind.

In desperation, I consult a book written by so-and-so, Ph. d., designed to help me think of something to write. I page through it, looking at the loop process, the direct writing process, and a few more processes. I'm not sure why I keep this book around. My attention wanders too much to follow any of these contrived methods for long without getting bored. I prefer my own writing process. I call it the "beat your head against a wall until something falls out of your ear" technique. It almost never produces any text worth reading until I am on the verge of an emotional breakdown due to stress, but remains my writing method of choice.

I giggle to myself, a sort of nervous laughter designed to scare myself into action when I realize that I am laughing to myself in an empty room over something that isn't the least bit funny. It's working; I'm scared. I sit up, get back into my plastic-masquerading-as-galvanized-steel chair and pick up the pen again. Oh God, I only have an hour to crank out an entire essay that's worth something and I'm still waiting for something to fall out of my ear. Then, the miraculous happens. Words start to form on the page, words form sentences, sentences form paragraphs. Hallelujah.

My Friend is Not Here Now

a story in the style of Robbe-Grillet

Dale T. Miller

I.

I was here only one week ago, and I saw my friend for a few hours between his classes at the University. He is not here now. The thick wooden door is closed behind me. There is nothing in the center of the room, except for a large rug. Many things are around the edges of the room, next to the walls; it is not a large room.

There is a note on the table near the window. The table is an end table, made of cheap wood polished to look as if it is oak. It is between the west wall and the sofa, and there is a long radiator along the floorboard between the table and this wall below the window ledge. The sofa extends from the table to the doorway, which is near the corner of the room.

This room is square, though not cubic; the ceiling is much higher than the width of the room. A window frames almost all of the west wall, but nothing is visible beyond the room. The carpet is tan, and in the light of the lamp on the table near the window, lines of rust in the center of the carpet are barely visible. The lines form a square, which is partially covered by a large rectangular rug, and the lines are the size and shape of no other object in the room. The color of the rug matches the velvet sofa, which faces it from the north wall.

There is a damp spot around my feet. It is raining outside. It rained yesterday. It rains forever.

Near the door, next to the east wall, there is a reclining chair. It is brown in the lights of the room. To the right of the chair there is a cabinet, which has water on it; the cabinet is in the shape of a cube. The cabinet has many intricate designs cut into its wood. It has two small doors on the front. To the right of the cabinet, near the corner, on the south wall, there is an open doorway.

In the water on the cabinet there is a plecostamus hanging

from the nose of a bust of Bach. There is a bust of Mozart also, and above it are six neon tetras. They are transparent except for their brains, eyes, and stomachs. The plecostamus is very large, spiny, and grey. At the bottom of the water there are plastic plants, and a clown loach. There are smooth brown pebbles around the plastic plants and below the loach. A black molly is next to the glass in the aquarium. She has bulbous eyes and large, thick scales. There are white spots of ick around her gills.

A plant is in front of the aquarium on the table. It has long, thin leaves that come to a point at the end. It is taller than the water in the aquarium, and it is in a clay pot. A small plastic spike in the pot of the plant in front of the molly reads "Dragon Tree; *Dracaena Marginata* ." There are droplets of water where the leaves of the Dragon Tree come together; they form a pool in the stem of the small tree. It is raining quite hard outside.

The plant on the table near the window is much larger than the plant near the fish. Under the large plant there is a reed basket. In the basket there are only roots and dirt. There is no plastic tag in this plant. The dirt is dark: the dirt is almost muddy. The roots lead up to stems which are attached to leaves that are round at their base, then come to a point at their ends. There are droplets of liquid on the tips of the leaves, some of which hang above the note on the table. There are miniscule pools of water below the ends of the leaves.

Next to the note on the table with the lamp is a magazine; the note which is on this table is smeared and unreadable, and the magazine is wrapped in plastic. The magazine is titled The Atlantic. There is another magazine and several newspapers under the The Atlantic, which is the magazine wrapped in plastic. The date on the magazine says "October, 1990".

The lamp is very dim; there is a disc of light on the table. An arc of the disc of light is on the arm of the sofa: the arc on the sofa distorts the disc. The sofa is maroon, like the parts of the rug which are not navy, and the light from the lamp has a similar hue.

On the windowsill there is the round base of a stand which could hold a tobacco pipe. There is a briarwood pipe in the stand, with



1/1

"DANCANTES"

Dancantes, Kay Hefferlin



"
Kay Hoffert (Primavera 90)

a mouthpiece that curves downwards; the pipe is a lustrous mahogany color, and its bowl curves around sharply to the dull black mouthpiece. Near the pipe there is a box of matches and a fat brown leather pouch that is folded into a square. Behind the pipe there are venetian blinds, which are closed. There are dripping noises behind the blinds. It is always raining outside. There are ashes scattered around the window sill, except near the edge. The window sill is painted white. The walls of the room are painted white. The ceiling is dark and invisible, except for a hole of light directly above the lamp on the table next to the window. The hole in the darkness is pale yellow.

On the south wall there is a tall rectangular piece of oak; it is next to a door which does not lead outside. The oak is in the shape of a tall box, and on the front of the box there are three circles of different sizes. The circles have circles inside of them. The circles are embedded in the front of the tall wooden box. Music is in the room, though softly. It is old music that is still played. To the right of the box from which the music is coming there is a bookshelf: there is no empty space on it. There are many books stacked in the bookshelf. Adjacent to the bookshelf there is a large plastic black cube. It is not completely plastic; the side facing the center of the room is glass, and there are buttons along the bottom edge on the front of the cube. It is between a bookshelf on the left and another tall oak box on the right. It is on the upper shelf of a wooden cart which matches the bookcase in color. There is a stack of black metal boxes on the lower shelf, and they are covered by black buttons and knobs on the front, and there are white and red lights on them also; the lights glow onto the rug which covers the carpet in the center of the room. The boxes are almost square on the top and the bottom, and the sides, the front, and the back of them are very long rectangles, with their longer sides parallel to the floor; the tops and bottoms of the black metal boxes have much greater areas than any other sides. There is another tall oak box, and more music, to the right of the plastic and glass cube. The music is very soft, and I can hear pattering on the window, behind the venetian blinds. It is raining outside.

I sit on the sofa. On the south wall, there is a large black

and white photograph, framed in black metal. It is in the dark part on the white wall; there is not much light there, and it is impossible to see what this photograph is of. There are two smaller photographs in black frames on the east wall, above the aquarium. The light from the aquarium reflects on those pictures, and the light is the color of the water's reflection. The black molly is in the center of the water now. Those photographs are of my friend and me. We used to be very good friends. My friend is not here now. I will come another evening. I pick up my umbrella, which is leaning against the wall between the sofa and the door which leads outside, and leave the room. I shut the door behind me, and go outside. It is raining. It has always rained. It has rained forever.

II.

It is Tuesday now. I knock on my friend's door. It is still raining outside. I open the door by the handle, which is brass, and tarnished. There is no one in the room. I close the thick wooden door behind me. A piece of wood is against the wall. It is a curved wooden handle which becomes straight and long, then touches the wall near the door. The handle is attached to black fabric that is drawn together near the floor, and is loose near the curved part of the wood. There is no water on the umbrella. The carpet is damp around my feet, which are standing on it next to the end of the sofa, near the umbrella.

It is very bright in the room, and the room has no shadows; the light is white, a brilliant white - there is also light between each slat of the venetian blinds which are closed and cover the window, but the light on the ceiling is much brighter than the light which is between the slats; the light on the ceiling is long and rectangular, and made of plastic.

There are many books on the floor of the room: most are open. One has many small round holes burned on the pages; a package of Dunhill cigarettes are on the windowsill. There is a square

piece of glass on the cabinet opposite the windowsill. There are many butts in the center of the piece of glass, which has a notch cut into each corner. There is an aquarium behind the cigarette butts in the piece of glass on the table, which is next to a dying plant. In the water of the aquarium there are several fish. A plecostamus and many neon tetras are there. They are floating at the top of the water. There is not a black molly in the water. A small statue of Bach is at the bottom, inside the aquarium. The ridges in the wig and the face on the statue are filled with algae. The aquarium is half full of water; there is no light in the water.

There is a magazine on the table near the window. It is covered with plastic, and says "October, 1990" on it. Near it there is a large plant with broad leaves which come to a point at the end. The points of the leaves are touching the table. The leaves are bent and thin. The soil in the basket below the plant is light brown, and dry. The lamp on the table, near the dead plant, is not on. There is a crack in the base of the lamp. The crack leads from the table to under the lampshade. The lampshade is bent on the side facing the north wall. The sofa next to the table has many stains and ashes on it. One stain is especially large, and is almost the same color as the sofa. There is a pipe sitting on the left sofa cushion; there are two cushions on the sofa. There are white ashes all around the pipe, and there is a charred spot near the pipe on the left cushion. There is a sock on the sofa's back, and a pair of green plaid boxers between the cushions of the sofa.

Along the south wall of the room there is a large bookshelf. It is almost full of books. Next to the bookshelf there is a television. Half of the television is covered by a white towel, which is hung over the top. There are stereo components below the television. There are no lights on the components. The room is silent. The rug in the center of the room is navy and maroon. There is a large stain on the rug. It is directly in front of the large stain on the sofa. There is another stain on the rug, smaller than the large red stain, that is brown.

Next to the aquarium, there is a brown plant. It is dead. I take the small plastic spike from the soil in which the plant had lived. It

says, "Dragon Tree; *Dracaena Marginata* ."

Near the southeast corner of the room there is a doorway. It is halfway between the cabinet and the loudspeaker. It is directly across the room from the door that leads outside. I do not want to go outside. It is raining. I walk to the doorway.

III.

It is difficult to see in this room. Here it is much less bright than the room with two doors. However, there is some light here; there are two lights in this room. There is a yellow light here, next to the bluish reflection on the smooth surface of a desk in this room; that reflection is from the second light. It is dark, except for a blue glow, and the light of an incandescent bulb which hangs from a battered desk lamp on the desk in the corner of the room ahead.

I am in a very short hallway which connects the two rooms; the hallway is actually a part of the room which is ahead. This room has only four doors, one is the door which leads to the other room; I walked through that door a very short time ago. On the left side of the hallway there are two other doors that open from the middle, where they meet. These doors are mirror images of one another; one of the doors is slightly ajar: there are clothes behind the doors. No room is behind those doors - it is a closet. On the right side of the hallway there is a fourth door; it is open, and there is a small, dark room, and a toilet and a sink. There is a plastic curtain also, with part of a bathtub showing beneath the curtain.

Ahead there is a room that is exactly the same shape as the other room. This room is different, however. There is a window on the west side of this room. The window is covered completely with venetian blinds. The ceiling is very high, and dark. The walls are painted white, and the carpet is tan. There are rust stains on the carpet.

On the window sill, there is a rectangular window planter that is filled with dirt. In the dirt there are very long vines, with leaves at the end. There are beans hanging from below the leaves. The vines are intertwined with the venetian blinds which cover the window.

The beans are green. The leaves of the plant are dead.

There is a painting of a duck in a swamp on the wall above the computer monitor in the corner of the room; the swamp in the painting is full of dead grasses and reeds. The monitor is on the desk next to the desk lamp. A blue light reflects from the desktop in front of the computer. A keyboard is in front of the monitor. To the left of the computer, there is a machine with many curves and many straight lines; it is black plastic, with a glass pot sitting within it. It is a machine which has a shape unlike any other thing in this room, or the other room. The glass pot in the machine is half full of black liquid, and there is a smell of stale coffee grounds near it. A mug half full of amber liquid is next to the keyboard. There is a string with a small square piece of yellow paper stapled to the end of it; the string begins in the mug, and the piece of yellow paper is on white paper with black printing and blue ink. Between the mug and the surface of the desk there are pages of white paper in a small leather binder; the white paper pages are in a black binder. It is open: on the left page of the pamphlet there are three boxes; the boxes fill the left page. In the upper left corner of each box there are letters. The letters in each box are not the same as the letters in the other two: the letters in the three boxes read: "Mon", "Tues", and "Wed", which are printed in large black letters on the white paper; these boxes are also full of handwriting in blue ink. On the right side of the binder there is a page with three boxes. They contain the letters "Thurs", "Fri", and "Wknd". There is no handwriting in any of the boxes on the right side of the planning calendar.

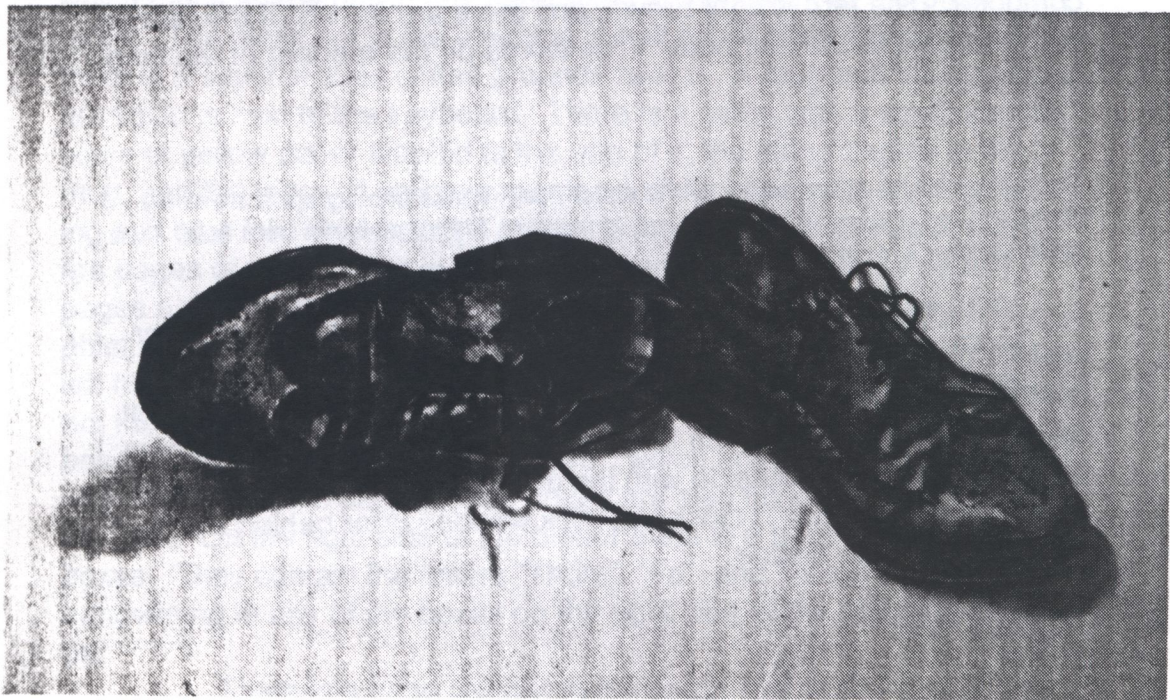
There is a futon parallel to the south wall of this room. The futon occupies a large amount of space. There are green flannel sheets on it. Above the futon there are plaques and framed documents with my friend's name on them. Across the room from the futon, in the northeast corner of the room, there is a metal kitchenette. The kitchenette has two hotplates above a cabinet door on the right side, and a refrigerator on the left side. There are many boxes of tea on the counter to the left of the hotplates, above the refrigerator. A teacup which is over half full of black liquid is next to the boxes of tea. A loaf

of wheat bread, which is moldy, has green tufts on it; four cans of tomato soup are also on the counter in the corner next to the wall. There is not much light in this part of the room.

There is the sound of a telephone ringing. The voice of my friend answers the phone. The machine next to the telephone makes a long beeping noise, and a voice speaks to my friend. The computer, which is next to the telephone, makes a low humming noise. The light from the computer is blue. There is a fern in a clay pot next to the computer. The fern is light brown, and there are fronds of the fern on the desk next to the computer. The words on the monitor of the computer are:

The black molly is in the center of the water now. Those photographs are of my friend and me. We used to be very good friends. My friend is not here now. I will come another evening.

The planning calendar is open to the week of November twelve. On the sheet of the bed there is a leg, a hip, a shoulder, a head: my friend is laying on the bed. I go through the open door, at the end of the hallway which is a part of this room, to the other room; I open the door to the outside with the doorknob which is made of brass, and is quite tarnished. I close the thick wooden door behind me, and walk outside. It is raining.



My Shoes, *Paula Portinga*

The Intruder
Mei Ching Tan

The day it happens several other things happen. When grandfather is walking home with a basket of fish on his back, wicker and rope straining into his shoulder, the bottom of the basket falls out and fresh fish are strewn all over the dirt road and into the mud, scales gleaming in the sunset. When mother mends a tear in Ah Chang's shirt, she pulls hard on the needle which is said never to break although it is so slim, and it snaps, one end in the shirt and the other halfway into mother's finger. When I see a lizard in the bedroom, I try to hit it with a stick, only it slithers away so fast that I hit its tail and the tail breaks off from its body. Lizard's tails wiggle when they fall off, to distract the enemy, but this tail is still, dead. When grandmother comes home from Ta Hu, from an acquaintance's relative's funeral, she finds that she has forgotten to get a piece of red thread for good luck from the family of the dead, so she tries to make up for it by washing her face and hands with water and flowers twice, instead of once, to thoroughly clean herself of dirty spirits.

Mother says that these misfortunes are coincidences, but I am glad I do not tell about the lizard tail. Three unlucky things may be coincidences, but four, *si*, the number sounding like "die," will tip the scale. Grandmother takes out three joss-sticks and prays to the Old Sky God to disperse this cloud of misfortune that hangs over the house. Then she plants the joss-sticks in the ground beside the main door.

Mother, grandfather and grandmother are in the leisure house with some of the villagers by early evening, leaving me to care for Ah Mui, the Teos' four-year old daughter. Ah Chang is with his friends all day. I collect the grass from the branches of the tree outside the house where it is left to dry, and bring it to the bedroom in big arms full. Ah Mui starts to pull bundles from below the stack and gets showered when the stack falls on her. Now she helps me pack them up. She is a quiet little girl and we work in silence. As I tie up more bundles she wanders to the bedroom door. I turn to look for her and realize it has

gotten dark so I can only see her watery shadow by the door. I go to her, about to say I will light a lamp, when I see a stranger by the chimney, halfway between light and shadow, human and spirit. He is searching around the fireplace, bending to poke among the ashes. I grab Ah Mui and pull her behind the bedroom wall where we peek out at the side. The man moves to the potatoes at the corner on the floor and rummages through them, as if a potato will reveal itself as a precious stone or a piece of gold. Finally he stands up and looks around the room. He comes towards the bedroom. I shove Ah Mui into a stack of grass and squeeze myself in beside her. I put a finger to my lips. Her eyes widen. Please don't cry!

There is shuffling in the room. Then a drawer is opened, rustling heard, then another drawer and more fumbling. All the drawers in the cabinet are searched. Then a silence. We breathe in grass seeds and dust. My chest feels tight and juices in my stomach start to swim, slowly, then furiously like a whirlpool. I want to urinate. The man comes towards the grass stacks and begins to search them. The stacks fall, scatter, to show they have nothing hidden, they are innocent.

Footsteps sound from the outside. The stacks stop falling. As footsteps enter the main room, the man in the bedroom starts moving too. Ah Mui starts to whimper. Both the person in the main room and the man stop. Ah Mui starts crying. The man runs. Then there is a shout — it is Ah Chang who has returned — Wei! Thief! Wei! Everybody! There are more shouts, some from the villagers emerging from the leisure house. Some people give chase, shouts of where? where?

I pull Ah Mui out. She is crying hard. Urine starts running down her legs and spreading onto the dirt floor and mixing with grass.

Mrs Teo comes in soon and ushers her daughter home, giving me a dirty look. Mother pulls hard on my ear — Why didn't you shout? You wooden head. If that thief took anything, you'd be damned. Aiyah! He searched my drawers! Aiyah! Aiyah! Where's my savings? Aiyah! Not here! Damn! Damn!

The villagers are back by now, no sign of the thief. Ah Chang rushes to me, grabs my upper arm. Did you see the man? I shake my

head. Are you sure? I nod. Mother shouts out the door, into the darkness. Damned person! Dead person! Then she shouts at me for being stupid. Grandmother mumbles — not Shi Ying's fault, she is scared, lucky no one is hurt. Mother curses as she puts her cabinet drawers in order. The villagers have already gone to check their own belongings. I start to pile up grass, my arms weak. Ah Chang helps me a little. By and by, when mother leaves the room, he asks if I have seen the thief. No, I have already told you that.

Yah, I know, but you may be scared by all those adults then. So did you see his face or know anything about him?

No, nothing. I wait for an insult about my stupidity. Nothing comes, except — oh, too bad. Then Ah Chang straightens and stretches. So sleepy! And he leaves.

Mother does not speak to me the next day, but Ah Chang does. Do I remember anything? How come you were in the bedroom and not in the leisure house?

Because Mrs Teo had no one to look after Ah Mui.

Aiyah, you are so unlucky Shi Ying. Maybe because you have a bitter-gourd face. Then he sniggers and asks me no more, except to give me orders to say that he is working on a plot of land with Ter Knia—Piglet—in Zhong Hu if mother or grandmother or grandfather should ask where he is for the day. Oh, and today mother and Mrs Ho go to Ta Hu for supplies, right? I nod and watch him saunter away. I repeat his instructions like a mynah bird when mother asks, and am thankful there are no other questions I may not know how to answer.

I work in the fields with other villagers. When they take a lunch break, I take a lunch break. I try not to be left alone. Maybe I am crazy; I have nothing of value to be robbed. My heart beats heavily when I return to the house. I see in my mind the table and chairs upset, the bowls and plates shattered, the bed and lamps broken, the cabinet and drawers smashed and all their contents strewn on the floor, dirtied, what little rice we have stolen, leaving us with nothing, nothing sacred.

When mother and Mrs Ho come home in the evening, they sit with other villagers and grandfather and grandmother in the compound,

settling who asked for what and what is cheap today and what has gone up in price and who asked after who and whose son has grown this tall. Where is Ah Chang? Mother asks. I don't know. Mother thinks he is already in bed.

I bring some new grass to Moo-cow, who seems to appreciate its dusty smell. I feel someone following me and turn around several times to convince myself I am alone. I dump the grass hurriedly into the cow shed and start to walk back, glancing about me to see if anyone strange is following me. Suddenly, around the corner of a house, a figure appears, dark and lumbering. My heart thumps painfully; I back away, but before I get a chance to hide, I see that it is Ah Chang. He growls when he sees me. Did mother ask about me?

Ah Chang's breath smells strange, vinegary. I nod. She thinks you are asleep.

Did you tell her what I told you? He leans towards me, swaying, and I catch a whiff of tobacco smoke, mingled with that awful vinegary smell from his breath.

I nod, and swallow so I will not gag.

If she asks again, tell her I am asleep.

Yah, I nod.

Tell her I am asleep, remember. That I tilled land all afternoon and am now very tired. He raises his eyebrows at me. Do I smell funny?

Not really.

Ter Knia and his friends had some rice wine, nothing special. Do you know about the card game, Twenty-one?

No.

No, you wouldn't. You're too stupid. Maybe your bad luck rubbed off on me today.

You gambled? I hold my breath, so as not to breathe his.

You think I don't have money?

I shook my head, about to burst.

I have lots of money, lots, only no luck. I had your bad luck. Go away from me. Go!

I escape thankfully, breathing in clean air.

Mother does not ask about Ah Chang.

I lay on the bed I share with mother, feeling cold. I try pulling the blanket closer, and curling up into a ball, but I am still cold. I hear a noise, and I twist my head to the door. It is only my imagination. I shift so I face the door, my back to the wall. Although I can watch now, I cannot when I am asleep. And there are always those holes in the walls, which I cannot see, which intruders know about, which I always twist my head towards in a panic, seeing grass stacks on the floor, mixed with urine, holes that drink up the urine, dreaming of softened, weak walls that crumble, breath that stinks and faces that lie.



Untitled, *Andrea Foust*

Remedy

The night before
father puts frozen baby
squid in the sink.
My brother and I teeter up
on chairs and peer
into rugged iciness, into
creamish skin reflecting red
freckles and brown specks
big as our eyeballs, smaller than
our chicken pox.
We shiver in our pajamas.
The tentacles lie as if tucked
in by an undertaker.
We go to sleep with the blankets
pulled up, feverishly
under our chins, salve
on our cheeks.
In the morning he prepares it,
lopping off tentacles, bad dreams.

Alice Mah



Untitled, *Andrea Foust*

Denim

In markets, they will stare at us,
call us movie stars with our golden hair,
lower the prices
and unfold blankets, sweaters
make us try them on
these items which smell
like living sheep
in the rain.

Their brown, dimpled skin
and faceted ebony eyes
looking at our jeans
and jackets,
looking at their laundromat corduroys
and celebrity T-shirts

Mork from Ork

Farrah Fawcett

And we unfold our leather wallets
shake our heads
leaf through tens and call them ones
to make a better deal
and grin, ask them to sing "La Cucaracha"
and they do
and dance
and long for the labels they watch
as we turn around and skip away
with fourteen hours' work
in a flimsy supermarket bag.

They would take two-bits,
eat half a meal
take what they could
flash those unhygienic teeth
and set those brats to work
selling *chicles* in the street
to buy a second-rate pair of Wranglers
in a third-hand store.

And look out for the loco woman in black
with no teeth
with dirt under her even wrinkled claws
she has twenty-four *nietos*
ten still live here in Tijuana
she will watch
and hide her hungry, obsidian eyes
when you drop your Levi's jacket on a chair
and order a Margarita
you won't feel her rank breath behind you
but will see it on a migrant worker
when you go back home.
Ah well, in ten years it would
have gone there anyway
and we would rather have a pair of huaraches
than denim anyhow.
December 9, 1989

Amanda Wells

Blue Jean Boy

As I watch the water underneath wash by
I remember the clamour
of our feet racing across
this bridge, the slap of our young hands
hitting the tree which stood
on the other side

I hear again my young voice calling "Andeee..."
as I ran down hill from my house to his
then together with an old olive green knapsack
bouncing on his back as we continued to run to Rock Creek
where holding our breath and each others hand
we side-stepped carefully across
the fallen maple laying over the swollen stream to reach
the other side

Not far from this bridge, the six flat rocks
remain where he sat by the lake
his legs akimbo and his uncombed
hair blowing light brown, in the
wind
with Nikes untied and brown with mud
he sat there still, ducks
would come close to eat popcorn from
his hand.

I remember the change, I remember how
the three words "I have cancer"
echoed in my ears
I remember his thinning legs run determined
to keep up with the others.

As I watch the water underneath rush by,
I remember the last day.
The hum of his fish tank;
the tangle of tubes.
He could not speak to me anymore
or laugh or go out to play.
But, I held his hand,
so thin in mine, and sat
with closed eyes, my head held next to his
and remembered the days of
long afternoons and grubby blue jeans.

Karen Lynn Hill

Perfect

My friends were always pretty.
They had boyfriends and
curly hair and
beer stains on their prom dresses.
I had scholarships and
"exotic good looks"
and books to read on Friday nights.

My mother told me
everyone liked me
My best friend told me
Her boyfriend liked me
I said
I liked me
but I still got sympathy looks
on Homecoming night
at home.
Was it so uncomfortable for them
to see me so comfortable with myself?

I never understood
why anyone would rather spend an evening
with strobe lights
and heavy metal
and a half-full bottle of beer
in their coat pocket
than with
potato chips
and Saturday Night Live
and a perfect partner for Solitaire.

Oh, I suppose
I wasn't a perfect partner
for anyone but myself
but then again
no one ever
has my exotic good looks.

Blythe Gardner

mascara

black flowers on my pillow
i do not know how they got there
my lover is asleep beside me and
besides he never brings me roses

and then i remember the dreams and
more blossoms bloom in the dark
falling soft silenced showers
the bouquet i never got, wet on my pillow

must all flowers come from the dark
all beauty be born (borne) alone
my lover is asleep beside me and
besides he brought these black roses

i wish i never asked him for them

Lisa Golda

Sappho's Dance

'Love wears a purple mantle'
Sappho has said.

dancing and laughing
in a field of hyacinths
and heart's delight,
weaving garlands
to be worn and adorned
on a dark haired beauty,
a love, who's name
cannot, dare not
be spoken;
we danced,
garlands fall,
forgotten and trodden on.

And all that remains is the purple stain
tattooed on the soles of my feet.

T.J. Moore

Foot Binding

Just as they walked
 on three or four inches
of disfigured flesh unknown
 to the human forms'
own composer,

under protest
 we sit,
to bear infants in our arms,
 or to struggle to accept
our own unlawful mutilation.

Moved by the republic's intolerance of mistakes,
 or the degradation of choice and free will,
we wobble on to the butcher or the 'blessed event'
 to sacrifice our life's footing
and abort the stability and mobility
 that we didn't not know to cherish at our birth.

Molly Borghorst



Old Woman Standing, *Paula Portinga*

mother

We met at the cookie table after church.

You, listening to others ramble about state work ethics,
grandchildren, and

“my wasn’t The Pastor inspirational today?”

And patiently nodding,

your mouth opening only to emit pregnant silence,
and a quiet smile in my direction.

I think you must be an intelligent woman.

I once ventured briefly into your apartment,
to return your children after Sunday School.

You sat, awaiting our arrival.

At home in the stench of
old cigarette butts and beer burps
from the one you call “husband”.

And I found it hard to control my temper
when he, inconvenienced by your excitement
to hear what the children had learned,
sent them to their rooms to be quiet.

But today while The Pastor spewed meditations
on The Parable of the Talents,
I saw you with a full view.
You sat in the pew in front of me,
smocked in cranberry floral print
that was faded by your continued poverty,
with your youngest on your lap.
He snuggled his body up to your breast,
his head in the crook of your neck,
and you slowly caressed his cheek with your face,
back and forth in a rhythm
only the two of you understand.
It was when his tiny hand reached up
and touched your ear in contented sigh
I realized I had only seen you peripherally.

Kearsty Dunlap

To the virgins, to make much of time

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles today
Tomorrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the Sun,
The higher he's a-getting,
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he's to setting.

That age is best which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse, and worst
Times still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time;
And while ye may, go marry;
For having lost but once your prime,
You may forever tarry.

Robert Herrick (1591-1674)

To the impatient, to learn some of pride
(Written in response to Robert Herrick's
"To the virgins, to make much of time")

We thank you, sirs, for your concern,
Our youthful dew is drying;
Yet she whose head tonight you turn.
Come morning might be crying.

'Tis true the scurrying sun's our foe;
Yet if one marks his gender,
One sees why males, sympatico,
Oft seek the quickly tender.

From whence has come this desperate taste,
As if skill never mattered;
As if a mate plucked up in haste
Were reason to be flattered?

So look ye for rosebuds elsewhere, sirs,
You'll gather none here today;
For honor only the rosebud stirs
Whose bloom remains fresh and gay.

Tara Campbell

Last Call

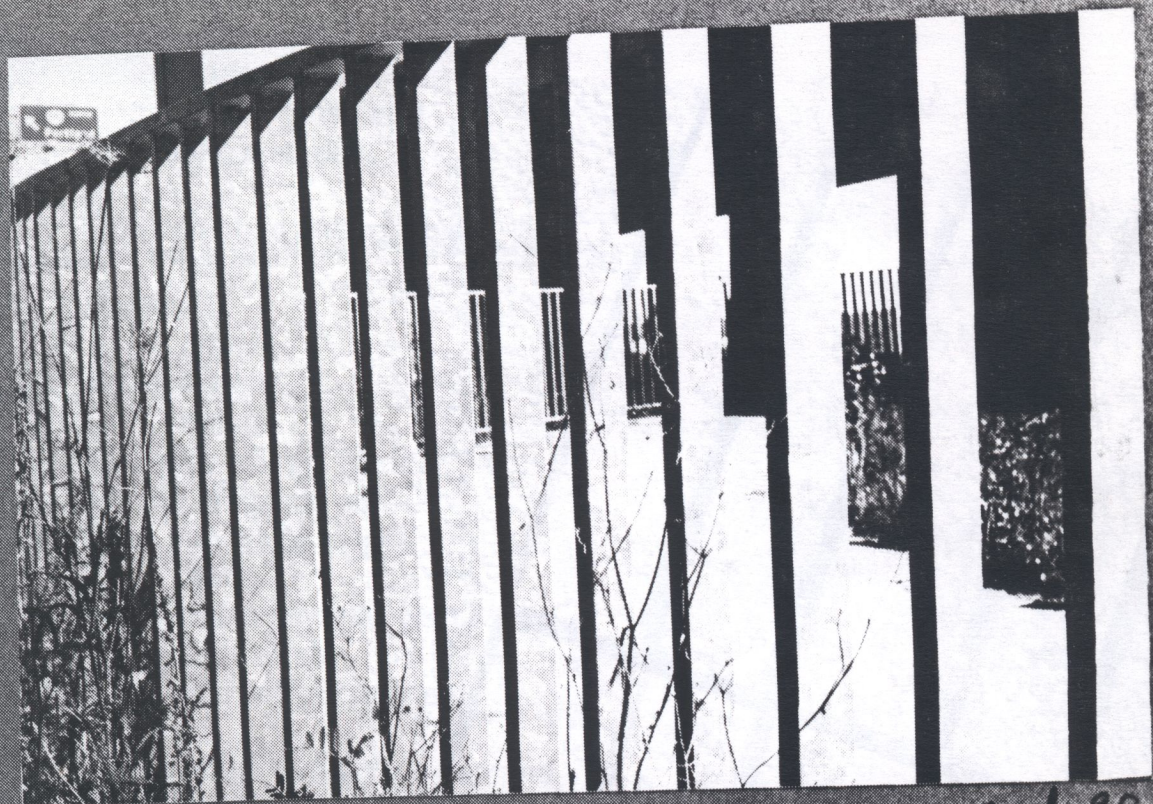
Barley-scented vapors
Escape his flushed lips
That gush forth steamy words
Like some heated dragon

Dilated glazed eyes
Scan the length of her
Up, and, down; drinking it in
Briefly stopping at her breasts and hips

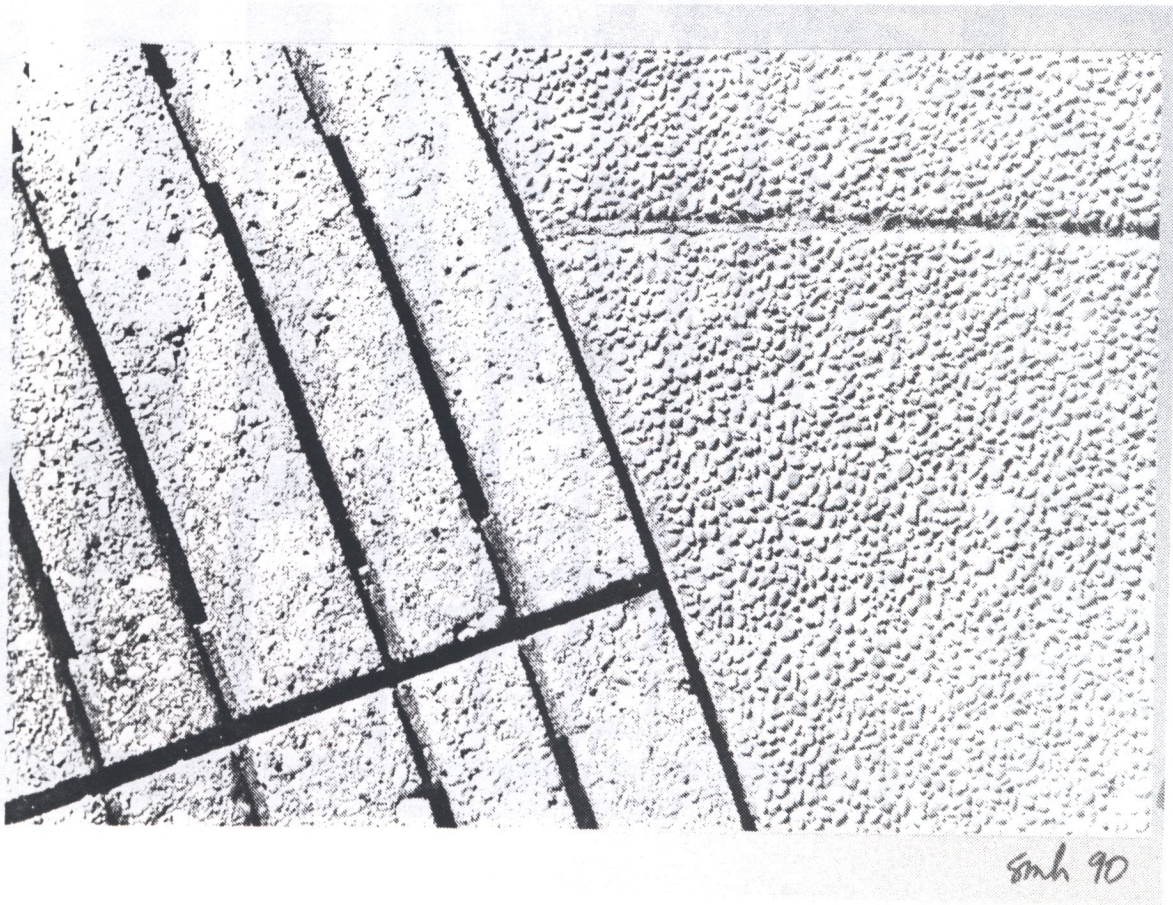
Unnoticed and Unattractive
Just an hour's time before
The bartender's last call
Of spirits to whet the lips...

Sanguine eyes drip lies
And languid body presses too close
To her sudden sensuous beauty
Enveloped in the revolting vapors.

Laura Perriman



Untitled, *Sara Heil*



Untitled, Sara Heil

I know of three

I know of three
who are insecure,
 perfectionists,
 pressured,
into eating disorders.

One has been through this
 before.

she helps
 others.

she overlooks
 herself.

she is my closest friend
but she shuts me out
when she starts to feel
 alone.

her unstable homelife causes
 self-blame,
 and self-punishment.

Two is under everyone's demand
and follows
 orders.

she feels that if she lost
 five
 more
 pounds,
that everything would be
 all right.

she thinks her
new boyfriend
is a result
of those

five
pounds.
she thinks that's why
he
loves
her.

Three denies the disease
after already admitting it
won.
she's lost so much that
she wears her
sixth
grade
clothes.
She can't escape the
self-deception.

I know of three
three who are
beautiful,
smart,
perfect
in their own ways.
I know of three
whom I love.
three who
can't
love
themselves.

Suzanne Wittke

hands

i stretch out my hands
to lace my fingers with yours
and grasp clenched fists.
i hold them anyway.
they are, at least, part of you
and if all you can give me
right now
are your fists
i'll cradle them to my heart
wait for them to open, flowerlike.
you strike me before they bloom
i hope for healing in you
and i
waiting
fingers gentle
hands outstretched

Lisa Golda

Why poets live alone

Poets cannot be people
because people live with people
and it is people which drain
the poet from the poet,
sucking words, sipping rhythm,
gnawing at the tortured mind
leaving an empty poet
in a world of people. Lost.

J.D. Roth

Photographer's trail

She took
the car out of motion.
Slow shutter, fast car.
Lines of neon pink light;

detective finds a trail.

Follow his neon pink mohawk,
to Bob's barber shop.
Sign flashes,
attracting bugs to death.
Zaps their wings,

cuts his hair,
chews his gum.
Fizz whiz pink gum
that matches his eyes,

In her camera's misled sight.

Suzanne Wittke

So I got this tasse du cafe
& I got this poets thing going
 & there's nothing the matter
 but I don't have some words.
 The words
 fail.

So I get art,
under a black beret with a cigarette,
& it speaks, wordless, to me
 on colour
 texture
 form,
While I touch life while it touches me
& I feel.

Barbara Dumas

Optimism

If time goes by, and a year from now
I realize
I know you less than
I thought I did
It will have been a year well spent.

Sara Heil



Amadeus, Dagny Haug

AUTHOR INDEX

- Dan Beacham Dreams, #1 11
 Letter for Debi (Fall) 2
- Russ Beaton Thoughts from the first few hours 21
- Kristin Becker Bad Luck (For J.M.) 19
- Molly Borghorst Falling Asleep at the Wheel 18
 Foot Binding 62
- Brian Buckley Something There is that Whispers 1
- Heather Bufford Reflections on a Tell 33
- Tara Campbell How Long Have I Had These Flowers? 7
 RENDEZVOUS at hills like white elephants 32
 To the impatient to learn some of pride 67
- Barbara Dumas "I didn't know until" 8
 "So I go this tasse du cafe" 76
 "These are the petals" 8
 "Would you just let her walk away" 9
- Kearsty Dunlap mother 64
- Virginia Enguehard Kreimhild in Spring 31
- Andrea Foust Untitled, cover
 Untitled, 51
 Untitled, 15
 Untitled, 53
- Blythe Gardner Perfect 58
 Taken Aback 10

Kris Gates	I as a Chilled Silver Bowl 4
Lisa Golda	hands 73 mascara 60
Van Granger	Rain 14
Dagny Haug	Amadeus thingy 78
Kay Hefferlin	Dancantes 38
Sara Heil	Optimism 77 Photo one 70 Photo two 69
Karen Lynn Hill	Blue Jean Boy 56
Mary Ann Johns	Transitions #1, 1990 12 Transitions #6, 1990 13
Marcia Latta	Clisson, France 29 Gray Stone Walls 28 Panneau d'Affichage Nantes, France 30
Alice Mah	Flower Child 16 Remedy 52
Dale T. Miller	My Friend is Not Here Now 36
T.J. Moore	Sappho's Dance 61
Gregory Mulhauser	Silent Movies 25
Julie Muniz	My Back Deck After Rain 3
Laura Periman	Last Call 68
Paula Portinga	My Shoes 46 Old Woman Standing 63 Vase 6 Young Woman Sitting 20

J.D. Roth	Why poets live alone 74
Julie Sigloh	The Clay Pot 5 Eight-year-old eyes 26 Riding in the back seat between Eugene and Salem 17
Mei Ching Tan	The Intruder 47
Shelley Tomlinson	Beating My Head Against a Wall, Waiting For Something to Fall out of My Ear 34
Amanda Wells	Denim 54
Suzanne Wittke	ghost costume 27 I know of three 71 Photographer's Trail 75





