

1975

Linda bab...matlack..
weiss...jim...linda ba
ones...gerwyn...matlack
e...janet volmer...weiss...
donna clauson...ones...ge
ingford...george spillane...janet
antley...linda chadwick...donna clauson...
en orcofsky...chuck shillingford...george s
Linda baboudjian...carol brantley...linda chadwick
matlack...john newell...ja orocofsky...chuck sh
weiss...jim williams...linda baboudjian...carol br
ones...gerwyn lewis...tim matlak...john newell...ja
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chuck shillingford...spillane...Janet
Carol brantley...ck...donn
well...janet...llingfo
as...da b
...tim matlack
...cathy weiss...jim

Deadline Time Again

I'm writing like the devil,
Smoking like a fiend.
I eat between corrections,
There's no end to be seen.

Work piled to the ceiling,
Boss is at the door.
So why all this confusion?
It's deadline time once more!!!

Nature Spawns

Oh ocean, so bright and so blue
Why is it that your earthly
beauty cannot inspire in me
the awe and fascination that
has driven so many poets to
write of you so highly?

Why can't your crashing waves
which rhythmically run to
and fro across your sandy
bottom make my thoughts
race to my pen to scribble
a mortal tribute to your
beauty?

Why not? I think it is
because your beauty is
such that it is beyond my
ability to translate into
mere words.

Instead it lulls me into a
state of serenity and
peace which threatens
to take my pen away
forever.

gina brisgone

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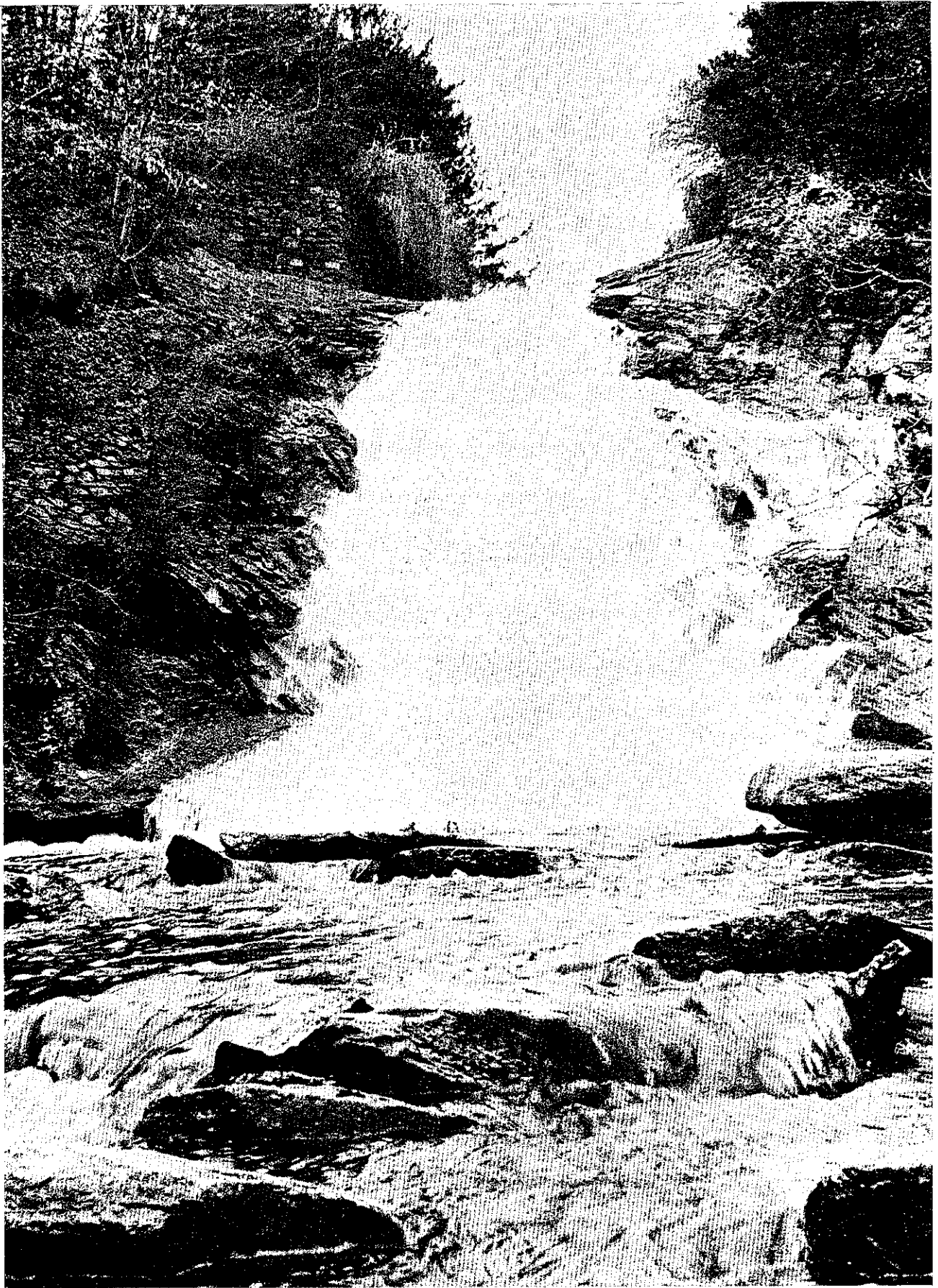
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Cover Design by Cathy Weiss
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Dawn

At

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I

The path he took wound slowly through the wood,
And he bent low to pass beneath those limbs
Which hung to touch the earth. He could
Not go too fast, for all about was dim -
The morning gray - the wood gray-green and still.
Beneath his boot the snap of cone and twig
Could not disturb the silence of the hill
That he descended, careful, now, to dig
His heel into the dark, moist soil. And each
Chill breath became a little cloud in air
Before him as he made his way to reach
The water, for the reservoir was there.
He passed beneath an arch of tall pine trees
And stood before a stretch of gray so clear
He thought, The sky has come to earth to please
All eyes that watch the gentle valley here.
A glance revealed the firmament untorn -
There was no hole in heaven. He could see
The water was a mirror of the morning sky
Reflecting, calmly, dawn's serenity.

II

*above the dam
above the dam
a morning glide, this easy astral dance
above the dam,
this floating down on air to float once more.
the cool breeze rides the water to the shore
where tall trees stand,
above the dam,
and watch the wild geese wing their astral dance.*

III

He watched the easy advent of the sun
From where he sat upon a fallen oak -
Upon the northern shore. His seat was one
Of rough gray bark, and wore a mottled cloak
Of cool green moss and vine. And here the trees
That stood upon the bank pressed near the edge -
Stretched far their leafy branches to the breeze
That drifted o'er the dam. A tangled hedge
Of honey-suckle ran along the line
Where earth and water met. He yearned to share
In all of it - the warm sun golden, fine,
Bees hovering in soft green misty air
Above the tiny flowers. Sounds came too,
So faint at first - just whispers to his ear.
As minutes slowly passed, the whispers grew
Until the woods resounded with the clear
Unbridled harmonies of life. He rose
And looked a last time at the reservoir - at dawn -
Then turning, sought a path and chose,
And, climbing up the long, steep hill, was gone.

ron brown

The Unthinking Mind

My little brother once asked me why,
People were born when they only die?
I couldn't answer, I just wasn't sure--
If I would be right, so I said nothing more.

My little brother once came to me,
He wanted to know why we are free.
I couldn't answer, I just wasn't sure--
If I would be right, so I said nothing more.

My little brother once asked me for
The reasons to why countries have war.
I couldn't answer, I just wasn't sure--
If I would be right, so I said nothing more.

My little brother once wanted to know,
Why people rush wherever they go.
I couldn't answer, I just wasn't sure--
If I would be right, so I said nothing more.

My little brother then asked me why,
I wouldn't answer, or even try.
I couldn't answer, I just wasn't sure--
If I would be right, so I said nothing more.

My little brother won't come to me--
He says I don't care about what should be.
And I couldn't answer, I just wasn't sure--
What could I say, so I said nothing more.

sheila pearlman



Escape

Escape the joys of happiness
And with it will come pain,
Escape the joys of freedom
And join society's brain.

Escape the joys of laughter
And with it will come tears,
Escape the joys of confidence
And with it will come fears.

Escape the joys of loving
And then there'll be just one,
Escape the joys of picnicking
And with it comes no sun.

Escape the joys of forgiving
And with it will come hate,
Escape the joys of patience
And you'll have no need to wait.

Escape the joys of learning
And with it will come sorrow,
Escape the joys of future goals
And there'll be no tomorrows.

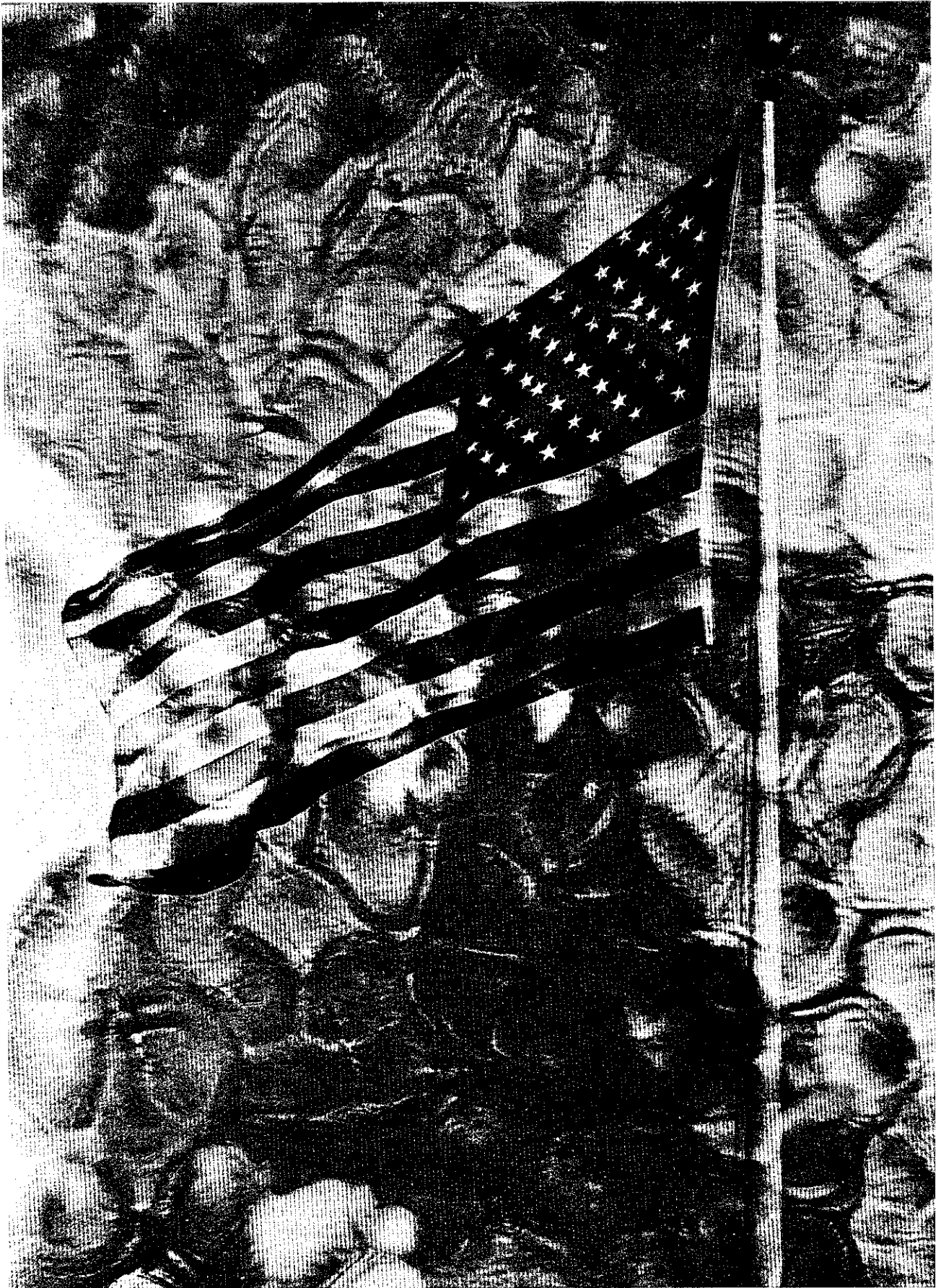
Escape the joys of living
And with it will come death,
Escape the joys within your mind
To find there's nothing left.

sheila pearlman

Untitled

Brothers and sisters of all nationalities take my hand
Feel my heart throb as will I yours
And we'll eventually blend together
We shall sweep through the land
And abolish everything that is undesirable
We can start with colors of the universe,
Make the sky blue again, the grass green
The water azul and love its exciting orange blue
We'll restore the sight of the blind
Bring music to the ears of the deaf
Give faith to those who have lost it
Invite happiness into the lives of the sad
Give children to those who never had
Away with you worry, displeasure and greed
One day there will be children for this warmhearted task
And the world will be budding
With the "Be for real Breed"

donna moody



The American Way

The man represents a display of sweat,
A retired effigy of us all.
As he looked at the world through his glass eyes,
He squinted, yawned, and ignored what he saw.

Of course, there is nothing strange about this,
Because this is the American Way.
The traps were set for solitary doom.
Get the connection, blind man? What'd ya say?

I judge too unfair? Where's my evidence?
My humor vein doesn't accept this joke?
Look about you, or don't you have the time?
Your impartiality makes me choke.

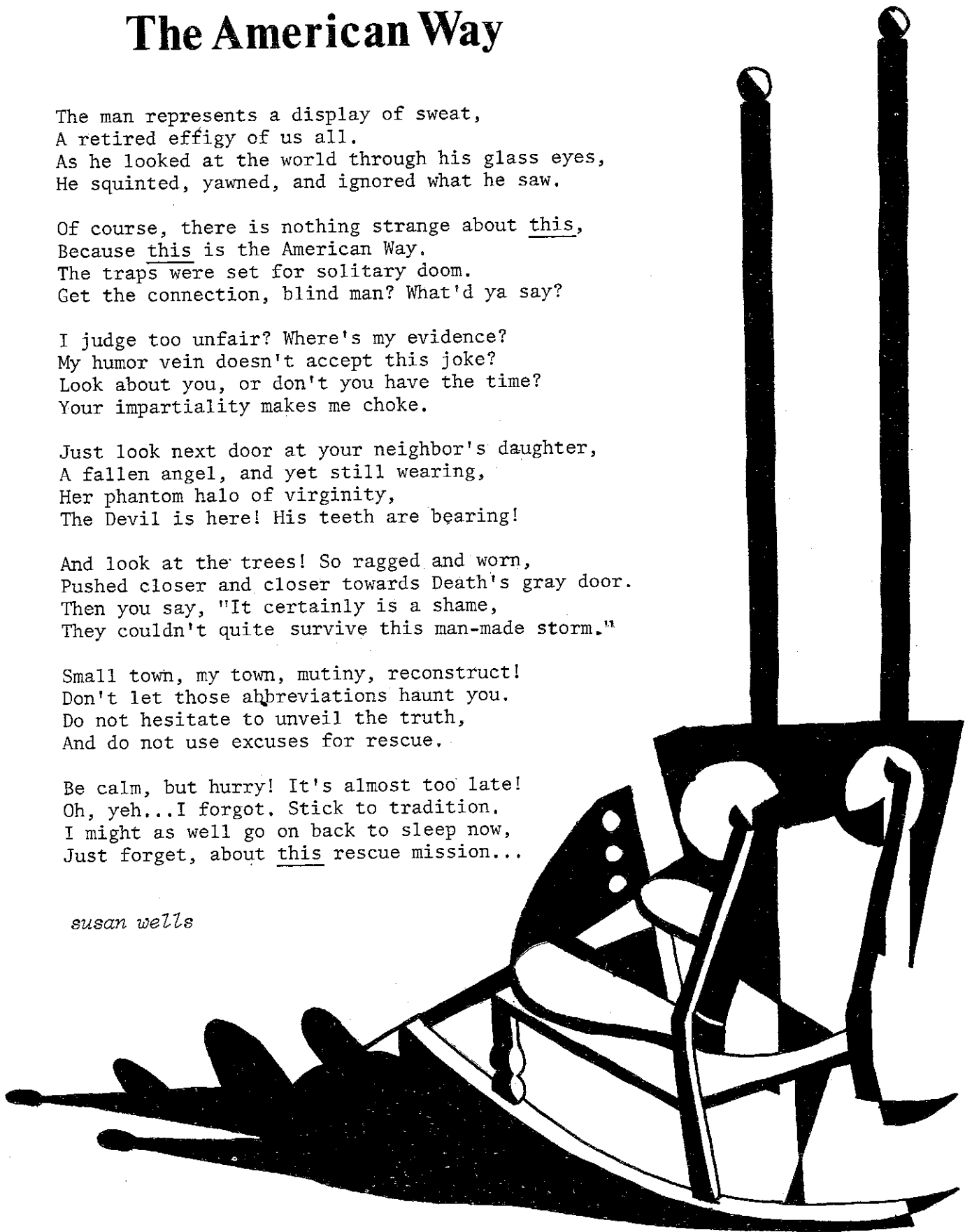
Just look next door at your neighbor's daughter,
A fallen angel, and yet still wearing,
Her phantom halo of virginity,
The Devil is here! His teeth are bearing!

And look at the trees! So ragged and worn,
Pushed closer and closer towards Death's gray door.
Then you say, "It certainly is a shame,
They couldn't quite survive this man-made storm."

Small town, my town, mutiny, reconstruct!
Don't let those abbreviations haunt you.
Do not hesitate to unveil the truth,
And do not use excuses for rescue.

Be calm, but hurry! It's almost too late!
Oh, yeh...I forgot. Stick to tradition.
I might as well go on back to sleep now,
Just forget, about this rescue mission...

susan wells





Christina

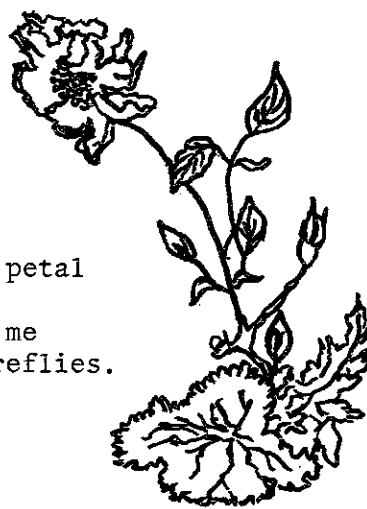
Touch a wisp of angel hair
as it curls into her liquid blue eyes
softly melting you
into the toy she wants
to play with.

Hold her closely and she melts into you
Her hands touch yours and you embrace them
wanting her thoughts and feelings
that very moment to flow into you.

You kiss her forehead, resting it gently
against yours
close both eyes
and try
to dream her dreams.



Find him beneath a petal
in the garden
reading sonnets to me
by the light of fireflies.

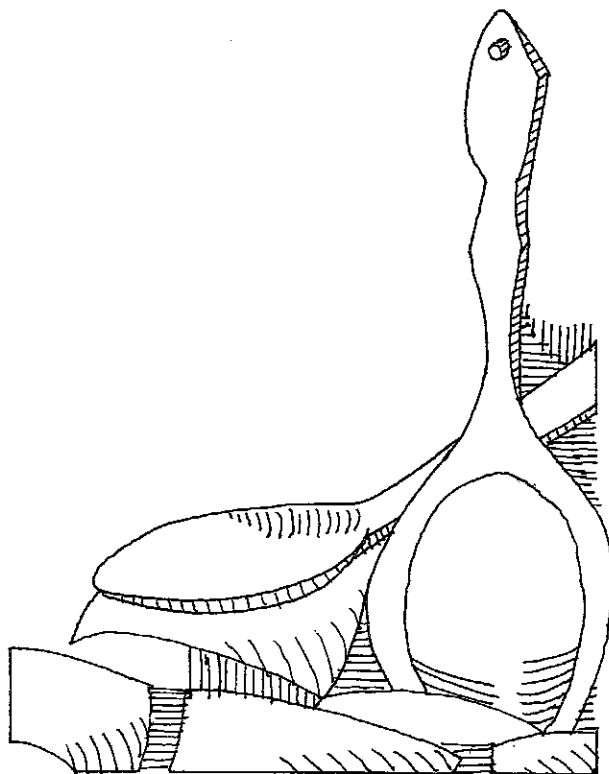


jan orcofsky

Fronti Nulli Fides

Sacrificial fishermen
bequeath us boats
(with hidden holes
as wide as the nets
they toss into the tide.)

Such that we mortals
might sink in guilt
(while they stand tall
on imaginary stilts)
in the sea of truth.

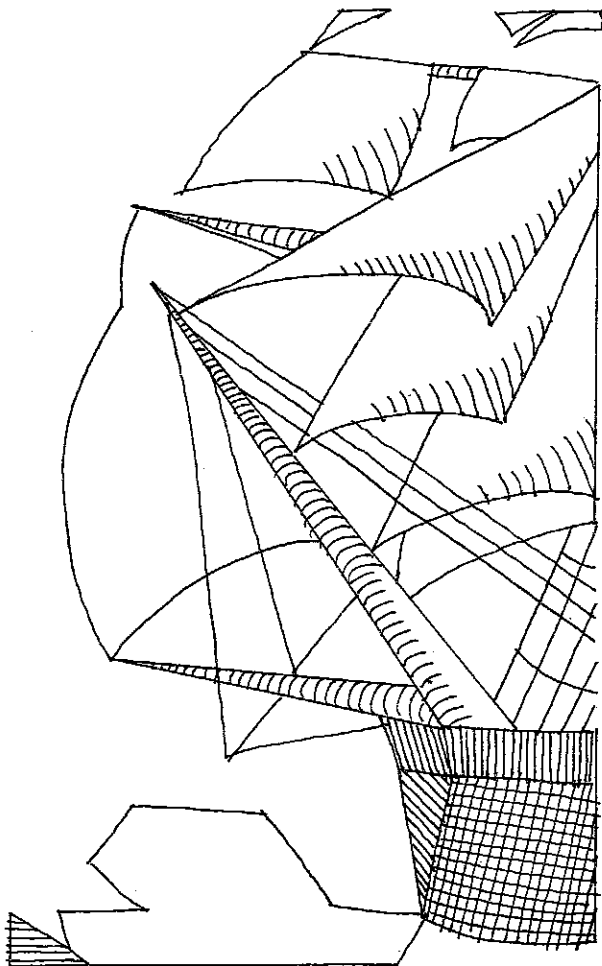


Requiem To The Living

Suicide, they said.
My God, I saw her
only yesterday
and now she's dead!
But her eyes
seemed to glow
as they stared
into mine
only yesterday
as we talked over wine.
Could it be
that I never really saw her,
That we passed only
in the streets of our mind?
Or could it be
that she saw me,
that she reached my soul
and mourned for it?

She's dead, they said.
And where was I?
Under a lid of coke
with all the world.
In retrospect, we cry.

jan orocofsky





Love In Braille

Your eyes are gone.
They no longer stare
into mine.
I can no longer see
the flow
of your beautiful thoughts
as they drift
into me.

I can no longer see
your hazel sunshine
beaming down;
but I can still feel
its presence
and I glow
though my eyes
no longer show it.
Take my hands and
walk with me again
through country meadows.
Teach me to feel
the changing colors
of oak leaves
in October,
the depth of the stream
that crosses the rocks
beneath our feet,
the fledgling that
has just taken wing.
Be with me now
and guide my thoughts.
I can still see you.
My fingers can kiss
your warm face.
My lips can brush
the lashes that magnify
the intensity
of your eyes.
But I can no longer
see your eyes.
Thank God
I am alive
for I can still
feel your sunshine.

jan orcofsky



To Heaven Once

In the sky
with the wind
watch him soar
higher,
Majestically
wings embrace
the world,
triumphantly
spread before
the horizon.
Today
a gunshot
destroyed
the wind's lover.

ERICH

New England Flood

Maine awakens me to sleep
beyond the shutters,
as grey metallic sorrow
shades the sun.
Swift September
had sent out
the invitations;
my ears observe
the guests of honor
having fun.
In a blood-stained swamp
where pointers rush.

Little hands secured to wooden boards
Tiny fists clutching dearly to life
in this new world,
seeking again
the warm fluid shelter of my womb.

As I sit by your nursery window
my mind sinks long
into hours of deepened thought
my eyes searching always
to reach you.

Yet my heart grows heavy as I watch
the steel-grey machine
that is breathing for you now
the intravenous bottles that nourish
your frail ashen body.

My strength is yours, your needs are mine
Therefore, our dreams
how tediously they must be carried
like huge blocks of ancient pyramids
no easy task we two must share.

jan orcofsky

Mort: Media Muse

You open your ears
 and let the wind
Blow through your mind.
 Words bounce around
Like rubber balls in continuous
 motion
Careening through times - -

Times that change yet
Always seem the same

You hear songs that we sang
 together in rooms-
 that became our wombs
And you - - and we
 were on the threshold of life

Our smiles buried themselves
 against moist and we
 discovered how difficult
 it is to function
Partially whole.

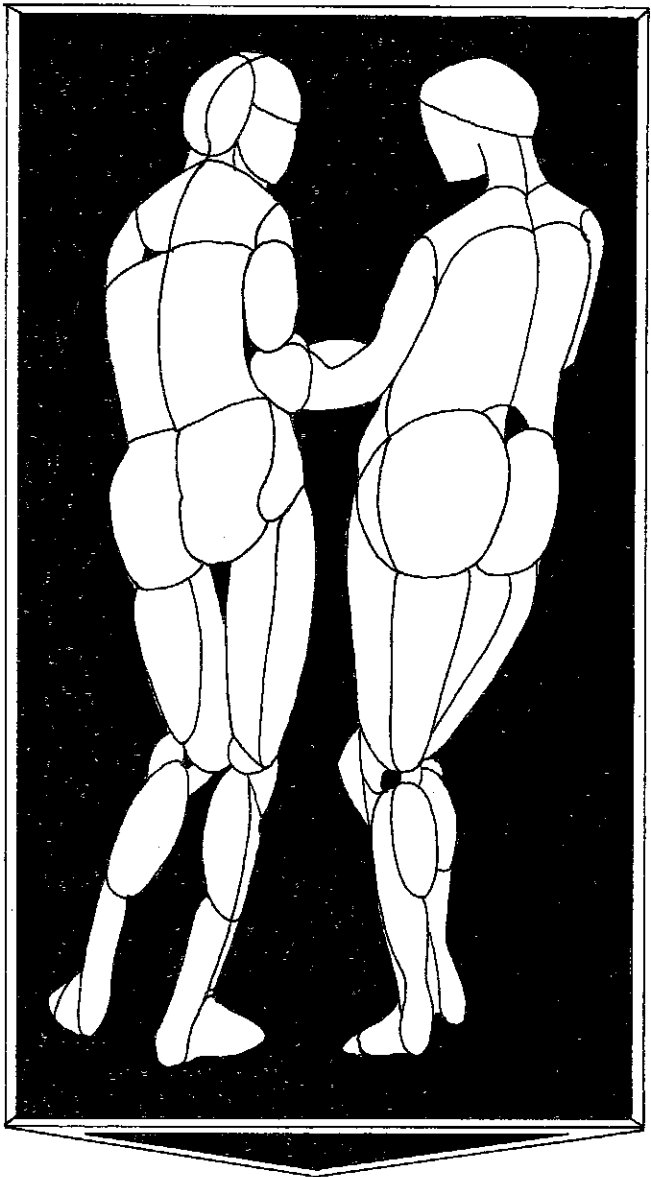
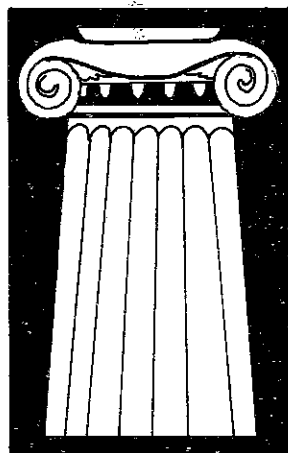
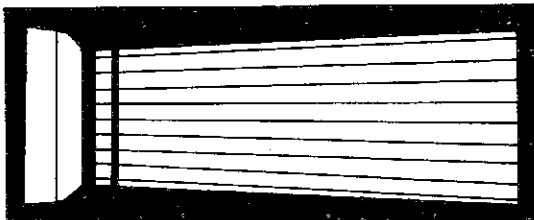
But you chased away the
 staleness of clouds
 of chain-smoked cigarettes
 and fought
Through the past to the present
 ignoring the oil
 patterns on the
 Seas of Time
the trail of empty bottles
 and forgotten grass.

You aired the stale rooms
 so long closed
 and knew
That somewhere in the whirlpool
 the center awaits you
And you wrote your songs
 with words that wait
 to lift men and send
Them off on wings
 that will never burn.

george t. spillane

Picnic on the Brandywine

Lying there --
 so softly lying there --
 her hair a web of gold blazing
 against the blue meadow
 her dreams dance soft smiles
 on the shimmering stream
 and
 I see her hair all over covers-pillows
 her child-woman's body floating
 like mist-blue dreams
 amidst the softly threading
 golden moon flames
 and
 I taste the strawgrass greenness
 of her wandering hair --
 a golden strand of wispy softness
 brushes my lips
 and
 circles 'round searching fire-tongues;
 the strength of love
 forces silent lips to part
 while eyes flash with soul-light
 and shout
 soundlessly
 awed by the creation
 of this special day,
 this new universe.



Brandywine Interlude

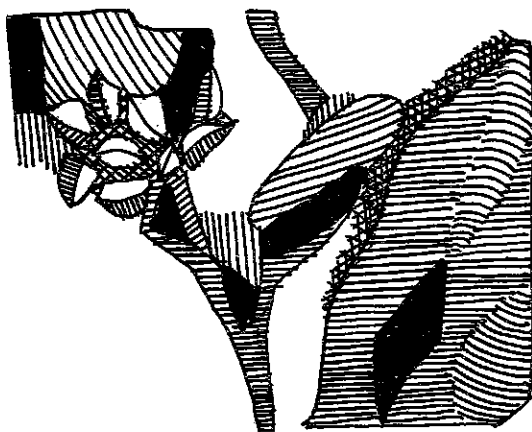
We lie here
 you and I
 With our hearts beneath
 a silver sky.
 Our souls entwined this
 perfect, cloudless day
 and softly float away

 Our love unshaken by the breeze
 or morning's certainties.

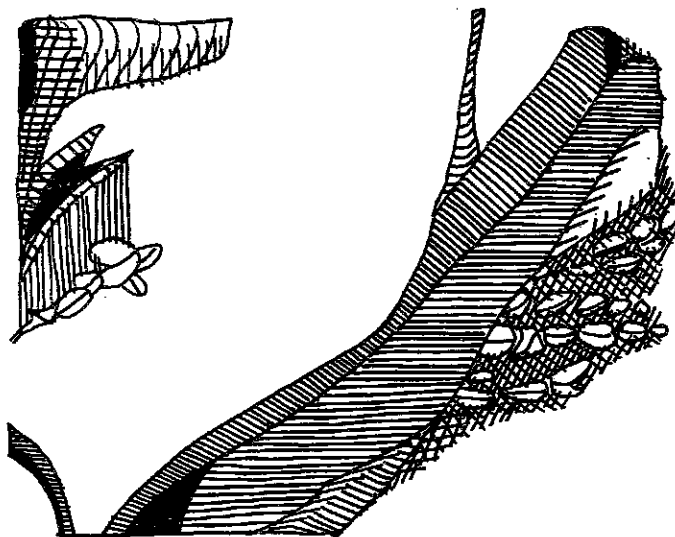
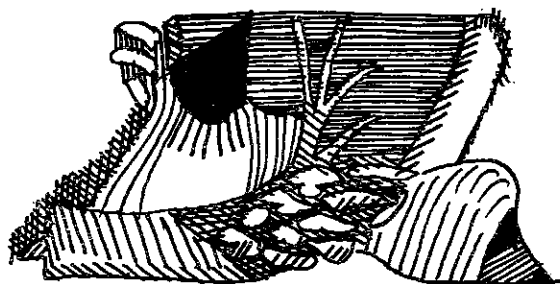
george t. spillane

Past e n s e

I was on the phone
Talking with her
When Jerry arrived.
God, it was a hot night.
We ate bluefish and corn fritters,
Drank ice tea
And broke the bread
Of each other's heart--
Rediscovering that the best people
Are always the most vulnerable.



It was late;
He drove off,
And I waved from my balcony.
Alone
I stretched out on my hammock



Later we shared a Budweiser
And talked of
Malamud,
Marianne Moore,
Runyon, Roth,
Spring training,
New poems,
Potential novels
and
Old lovers.



Thought of A&P food freezers and mulberry trees
And then, suddenly chilled by a blue breeze
Realized
That I had spoken of you
In the past tense.

george t. spillane

DREAM TAMER

Histories from now
other lovers
will open my time capsule
and find the poem
that is you.

But right now
I'm a dream tamer
trying
to capture a wild thought
and
train it to roar politely.

Dreams are illusive
and
thoughts demand too much eloquence;
leave the big game
to Frank Buck and Clyde Beatty.

I'll blow pink globes of Fleers Double Bubble
fly a kite
or sit in a swing.
But Hell,
the gum soon loses its taste
kites always blow out to sea
and playgrounds are too damned hot.

At this point I really don't care
I'm too busy tripping on rainbows
and walking in summer snow
and blowing dandelion heads
and looking for the metaphor
that is you.

george t. spillane

achroma

technicolor was fun for a while;
shocking, really, with its gaudy sets
and perennial sunshine

and color TV had its chroma hook
sharp as red, inviting as yellow.
but they distort, after all,
And I tire of someone else's
green image of myself.
Black on white is black -
and colors deceive the eye.

al deprospero

Beach Party Agapé

One morning
I stood on the beach
with a stranger
and watched the sun
Like a new Christ
Rise from the night

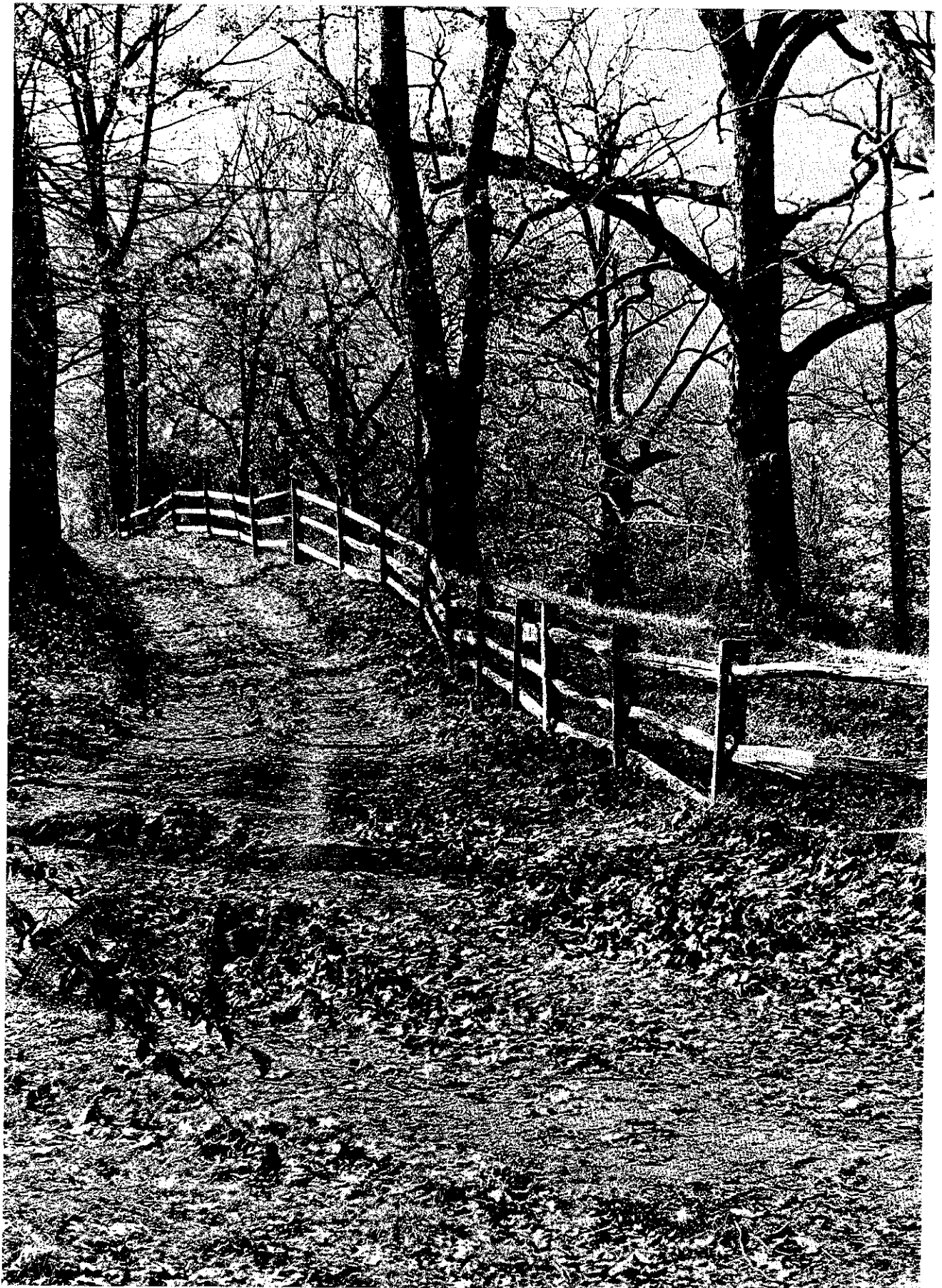
al deprospero

Winter's Night

The night lays naked to the wind
That beats upon the glass and doors -
Begging for shelter from the icy cold
And seeking the comfort of my arms...
Death knows not where I now live,
But seeks me out,
Borne upon the wind
That strips the warmth of the night;
Gentle gloom lays raped by death and dawn
There to wither until the night,
To come again and seek my warmth,
There to die upon the wind.

john newell





The Card

THE rain had stopped — the worst of it at least. He peered through a crack in the blinds, attempting to penetrate the black without, and discerned that moisture still fell in the form of a slow, murmuring drizzle. The blind snapped into place as he turned and crossed the room. In the bathroom, he washed his hands and face, brushed his teeth, and combed his black hair straight back from his forehead. For a moment he studied his reflection in the mirror, his face betraying no hint of reaction to the image before him. He turned away, suddenly, and returned to the main room. From a dresser drawer he took a pair of underpants, and, stepping into them, pulled them up over his thighs and hips until the band was tight around his waist. From the same drawer, a tee-shirt was procured and donned, the bottom being tucked into the waist-band of the shorts. In a slow, methodical manner, there followed black stockings, a blue cotton shirt, and heavy denim trousers, very tight; with a thick, black, leather belt fastened by a silver buckle. The buckle was most ornate in craftsmanship, and was wrought in the image of an open palm, in the center of which was the tiny figure of a naked woman. She was doubled up, wrists and ankles bound, head thrown back, face painfully contorted — the silver of her body gleamed in the light of the small dresser lamp. On the floor, at the foot of the bed, sat a pair of black leather boots, cut very high, and brightly polished. He seated himself and pulled the boots on with a quick, smooth motion, carefully tightening the silver buckles about his ankles before rising. He then went to the closet and took from it a grey woolen scarf and a leather coat. The coat was black in color, and shimmered with an unordinary and subdued brilliance. When he had put the coat on, he looped the scarf about his neck and throat, and crossed the room to a small table by the door. On the table top was a stack of books and a pair of leather gloves. Picking up the latter, he reached over, turned off the dresser lamp, and left the room, locking the door as he went.

The table at which he sat was positioned in a corner, as far removed from the bar as was possible in the small and crowded room. This served to isolate him from the noisy throng, which, for the most part, pressed around the bar itself — drinking, laughing, dancing to deafening music which forced conversations to be shouted, and created a mood of frantic urgency in the place. He, however, sat calmly, exhibiting no apparent interest in the scene before him. He stared without expression at the sweating faces, hazy in the smokey blue cloud, his eyes passing slowly from one to another. His eyes focused upon a woman in the corner opposite himself, who was seated at a table with two other women. He blinked. For a minute, perhaps two, he watched her with an intensity his empty face belied. Then, rising from his seat, he crossed the room to her table, leaned over to speak directly into her ear, and asked her to join him. She said a few quick words to her companions, and rose to follow him back to his corner. She had been drinking considerably, as was evident from the difficulty with which she maneuvered through the crowd. He noticed, and grasping her arm, pulled her quickly along behind him. Seated once again, the woman facing him, he inquired what she would like to drink, and ordered it for her. For himself he ordered nothing. Her drink arrived, and as she sat sipping, he continued to study her face, making no attempt to engage in conversation. She glanced up from the glass, and their eyes met — for a long moment she stared back into his face, but it was blank, so she smiled in the easy fashion of the intoxicated, and continued sipping. When she had finished, he rose and put on his coat, which, even in the dim light of the bar, was aglow with muted, creaking reflections. He took her arm to help her rise. The open palm flashed for a second in a light from somewhere, and the drunk woman's gaze was fastened for that second upon the tiny face, upturned, tortured, a silent scream escaping the silver lips. Then the leather coat was buttoned — the strange vision was gone. As she buttoned her

own coat, she looked intently at his cold, implacable countenance, shrugged her shoulders, and, somewhat sobered, followed him from the bar.

The room was uncomfortably hot, but he had not taken off his coat. Like a statue, draped in black leather, he sat on the edge of the bed, and looked at the woman from the bar. She stood but three feet from him. The only light in the room came from the small dresser lamp, the shade being tilted to one side to direct the light upon the woman, who stood naked in its pale glow. For the most part, she stood motionless, moving only when he told her to change her pose. His instructions were explicit; she was told exactly how to stand. At first, she followed his directions, though somewhat reluctantly, while he sat rigid, as if frozen, his eyes alone moving easily up and down her body. As the minutes slowly passed, however, and he showed no response or desire, she began to complain, and, at length, told him she was going to leave. She walked toward the chair where her clothes lay folded, telling him over her shoulder that he was crazy. In a single, quick step, he was beside her, clasping his hand, vise-like, upon her wrist. With his free hand, he grabbed her hair, pulling her head

back sharply, and, through stiff, unmoving lips, kissed a few words in her ear. Sobbing and rubbing her wrist, she returned to her place in the lamp-glow. He resumed his place on the edge of the bed, dispassionately, detached; removed from the flesh he scrutinized and controlled. The sobbing continued, but the trembling woman made no further complaints, nor any attempt to leave. Mechanically, she obeyed his orders, forcing her body to perform the subtle changes he demanded. Feet apart, then together; clasped hands; arched back; facing him; turned to face the wall. And all the while, he exhibited no response to the woman before him. After the passage of an hour, he said, suddenly, in a dry, hollow voice:

Put your clothes on and get out of here.

After she had gone, he undressed and took a shower. Then, before getting into bed, he took from the top drawer of the dresser a small card, creased and worn with time and use. On one side of the card was printed a prayer. On the other, in bright colors, was a picture of The Virgin Mary, beautiful and serene, bathed in a heavenly glow, and poised upon the huge and open palm of the Father. He looked at the picture for a minute or two, then turned off the light and went to bed.

Above Eternity

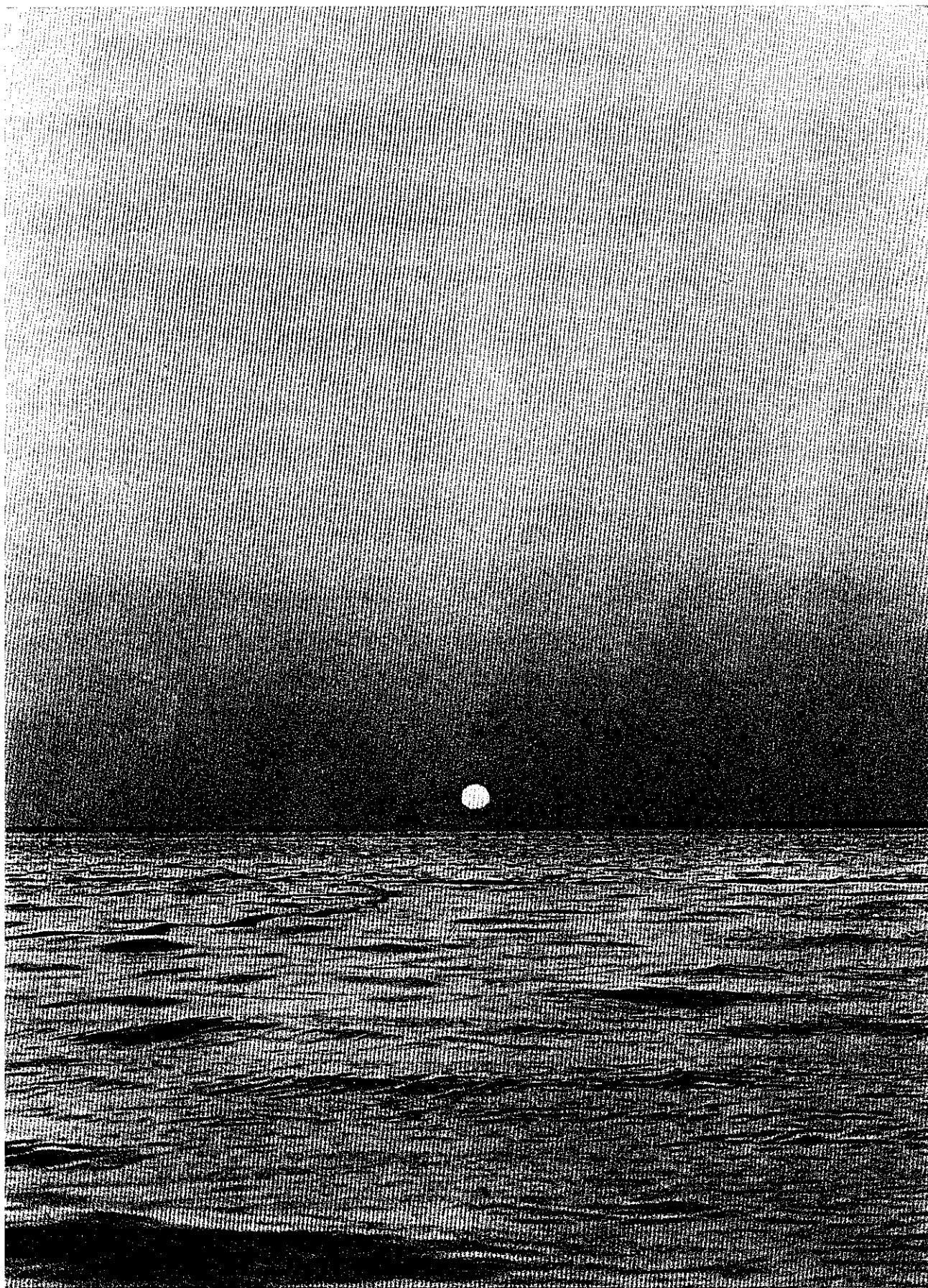
Farther out above the sky
Is eternity
It comes and then it passes by
Careful to be silent

Many a dark dark night it comes
Aware of our awareness
It passes through with a quiet hum
Capable of madness

Sick and old along they go
Faster than the eagle
Playing soldiers far below
Ignorant of preaching

Searching for the unknown shore
Flying far above
We are playing rusty war
We're in search of love

janet volmer



Sails, Winds, Seas

Winds lift the seas in repeated attempts to
remove her from her natural place.

Only man, with his sail, is able to tame the
wind enough to slip a keel through the waters
he knows.

Luffing of his sails, the wind reminds, "you
cannot tame me...

"I am an element, basic as life itself,
I exist only for existence. You, man, may flow
with me and use my strength or resist my power
and falter..."

Now the sea joins the wind in a calm hush
of harmony, reminding all elements are equal.

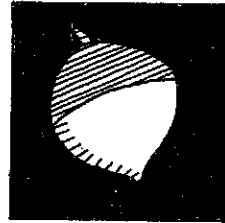
Man on the horizon, his vessel at full sail.
Gathering all it may, respecting the sea and
thankful to the wind.

Man's journey searches for no end.

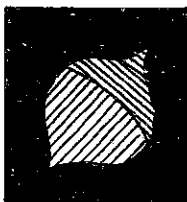
tim matlack

I'm walking through a Woody place
 Just stumbling along a footpath
 From fairborn skies leaves fall with grace,
 Stepping from shadows to sunbath
 On in the distance
 And off to the right
 A young girl laughs
 She's feeding a squirrel
 He sits on a tree stump
 And eats from her hand
 What a marvelous hand
 What a wonderful girl.

Criket

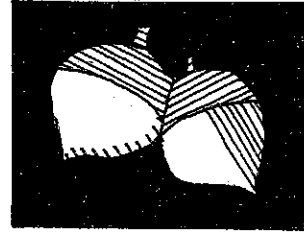


I sit on down and ask her name
 She replys, "You can call me Criket,"
 I say, "Pardon me, but the name's kinda strange"
 She says, "Don't blame me, he picked it"
 She points to the squirrel and I just smile,
 There's something about her
 And we talk for awhile,
 But the usual questions never come to be asked
 For here is a lady
 With no use for a past.

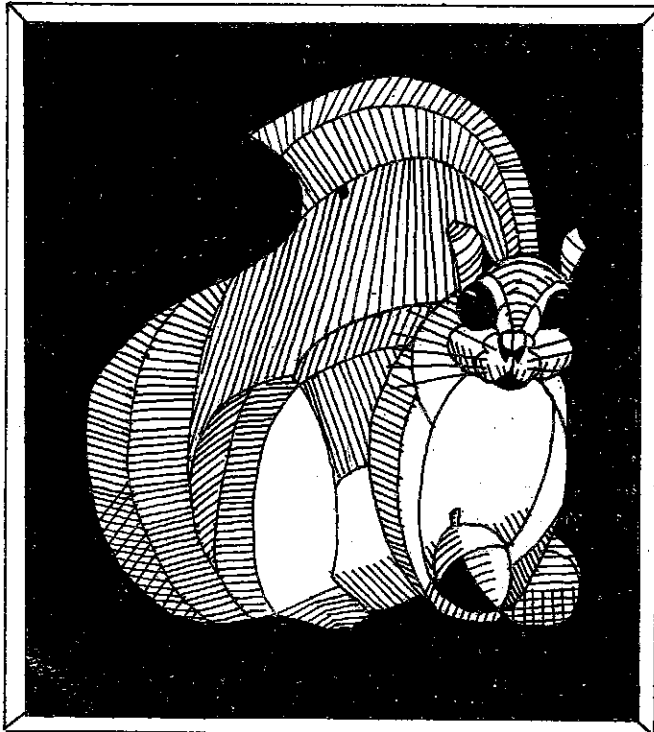


And as we speak, so lands a sparrow
 Near to her hand, and sings us a song
 Her eyes, they light up, as we speak of tomorrow
 Oh I wish I could someday Belong
 She smiles contently, her gaze never falters,
 She's living in harmony
 The birds and the animals know her so well,
 And in her eyes it's not hard to tell,
 That she is no virgin to heaven or hell,
 That she's just the woman for me.

We spend our time together that night
 Breaking bread under the stars
 I make up a prayer to the past, and the night
 To Jesus wherever you are
 I Pray, "Nostalgic life please go away,
 I think I've found a woman today,
 Who lives without the fear of sorrow,
 Who lives only for tomorrow."



And as I'm drifting off to sleep
 I hear a woman's voice in peace
 Announce these words in a whispering weep
 And cry the tears of hardened years
 She cries, "Nostalgic life please go away,
 I believe I've found a man today,
 Who lives without the fear of sorrow,
 Who lives only for tomorrow."



A campfire glows brightly
 The flames show the shadows
 On the face in the moonlight
 Of the girl I will marry
 And I think about children
 Will I have a son
 Or a daughter to carry
 While I am still young
 But what does it matter
 So long as I'm with
 A woman who shows love
 With every movement she lives.

Jim Williams

Christmas '74

I've been looking for you,
And I'm glad you found me.
Terrible thing to be lost,
Frustrating to be searching.
The pain comes from the fear
 of not finding,
And the anxiety from the time
 spent unfulfilled.

But there's more...
There's finding and being found.
There's finding when you weren't sure
 what you lost.
There's being found when you didn't know
 you were lost.
There's realizing you found more value
 than you thought.

And finally...
There's fear some stranger will appear
 with the right credentials,
 the authentic claim check...
 and you won't be able to argue.

john marran

Windchime

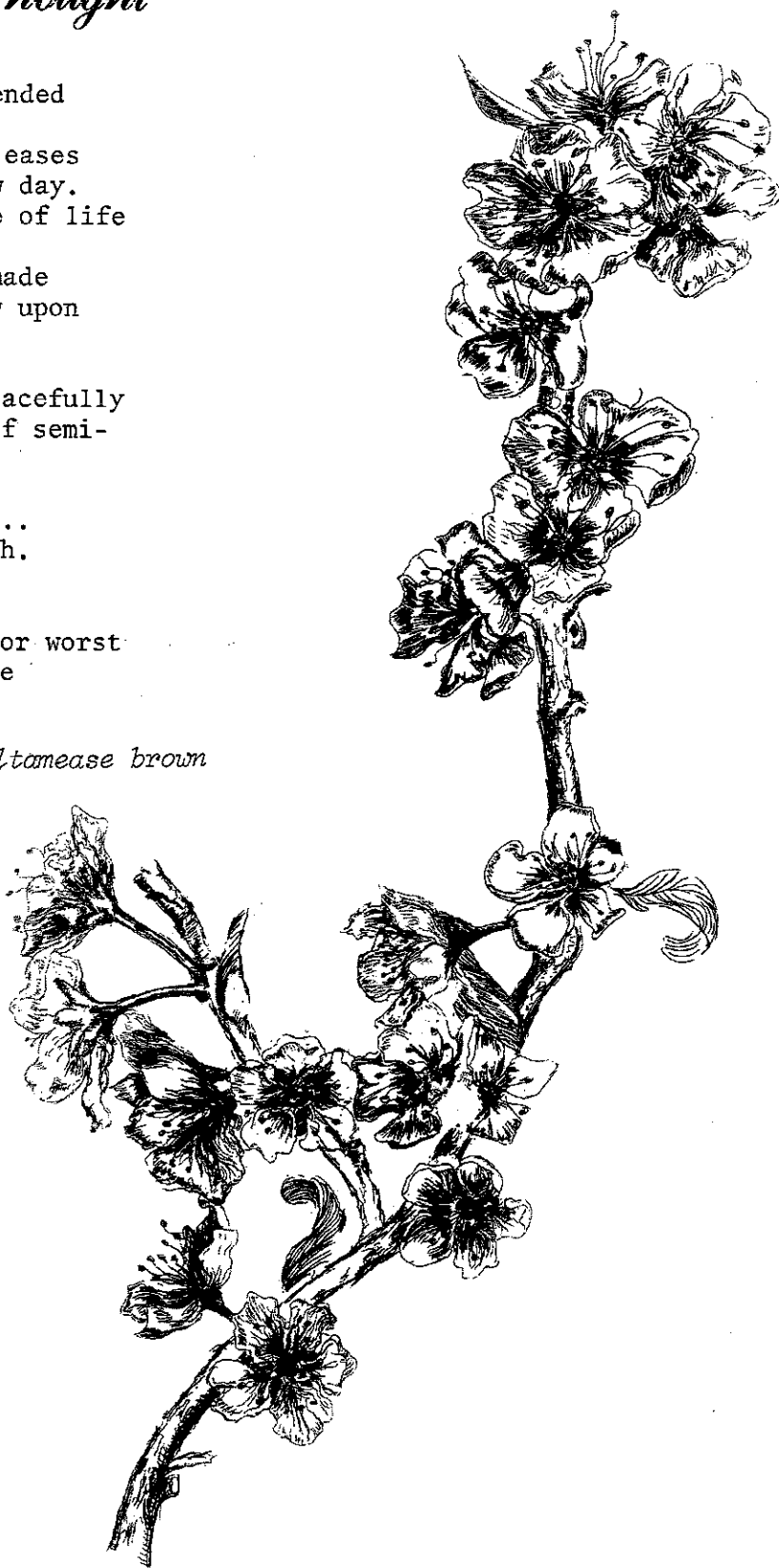
A blustery Saturday afternoon solitude
Surrounded me as I sat in our cottage
Listening to music, reading,
The dogs by the fire.
The book lay unattended, though,
For my eye was held
By our little oriental windchime
Suspended in the maple tree beyond the window,
Whipping and circulating in the wind,
Backed by the turbulent grey clouded sky
And stark expressive branches,
But sounded by the music and fire
There in the house; and this eerie
Separation of perceptions pronounced
Not separation, after all, but the comingling
Of all my perceptible worlds.

david patterson

A Morning Thought

The night has ended
now
as dawn slowly eases
its way into a new day.
Another episode of life
is afront.
Love has been made
and sleep is a dew upon
my mate
so content
resting peacefully
in his aurura of semi-
consciousness.
Dawn has set in
bringing the morn...
bright and fresh.
Another thought
a new idea
for the better or worst
lies in the
path of fate.

altamease brown



Jancee

It hurts me to see you sad, Jancee
You're the best friend I've ever had
I love you, not in a romantic way,
And to see in your eyes what you try not to say,
That you never again want to see the light of day,
That hurts me, For your pain is mine.

It hurts me to see you sad, Jancee
For I've seen you good and you bad
For a time I got by on the words you preached,
For a time You were the only one who reached me,
Now you don't live by the ways you teach
Remember, Pain fades with time.

It hurts me to see you sad, Jancee
You're the best friend a friend could have
But to know you no longer put your trust in me,
To see you go on in misery,
No longer having the need to be,
I can't help you, But your pain is mine.

And that's why I say I must leave, Jancee
Though I know that you can't understand
I love you, For you've shown me the way,
But to see in your eyes what you're trying not to say,
That you never again want to see the light of day,
That hurts me, Myself in a mirror of time.

Jim Williams

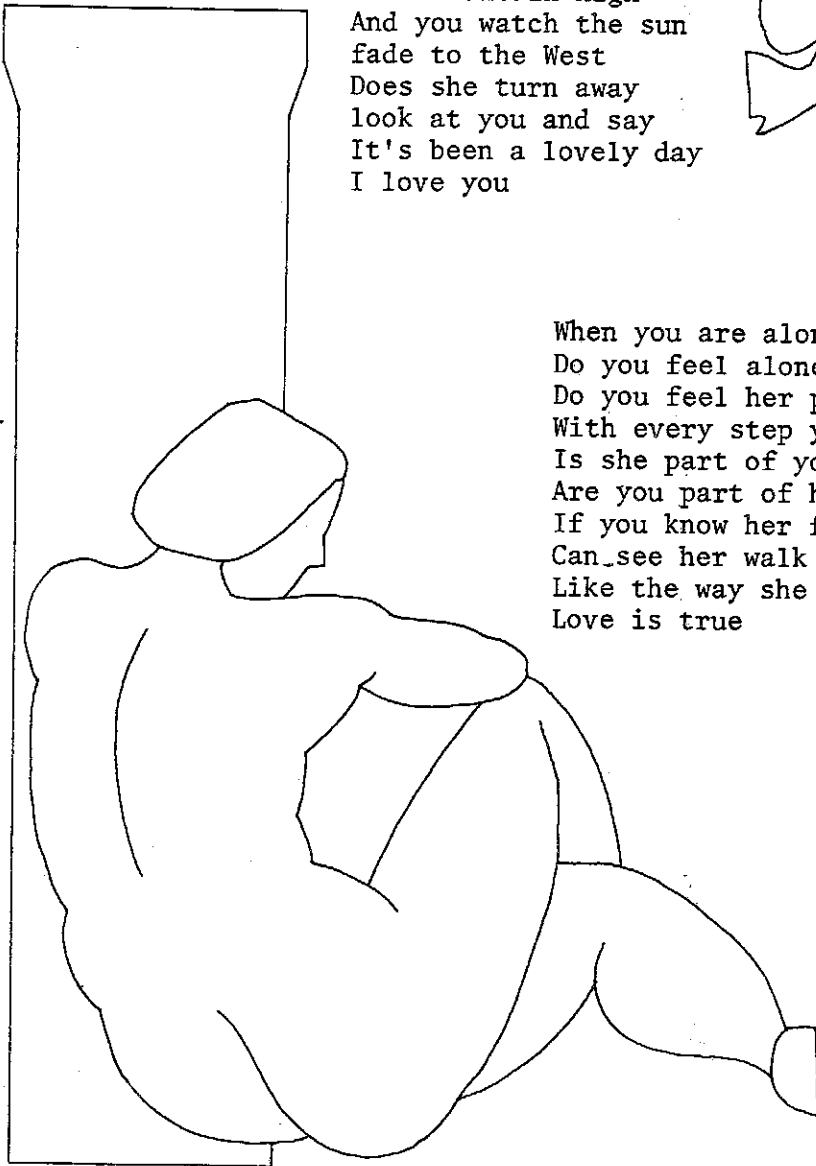
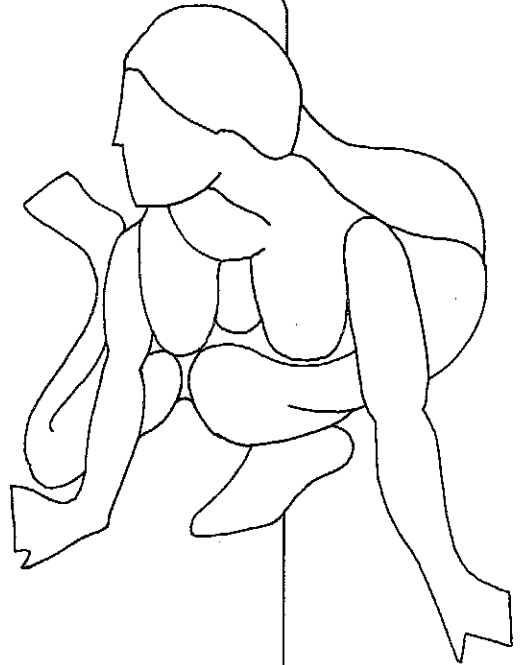
When She Calls...

When she calls your name
Do you look around
Do you know her voice
Can you see her smile
Would the same hold true
If she were you
Would she turn away
Look at you and say
It's been a lovely day
I love you

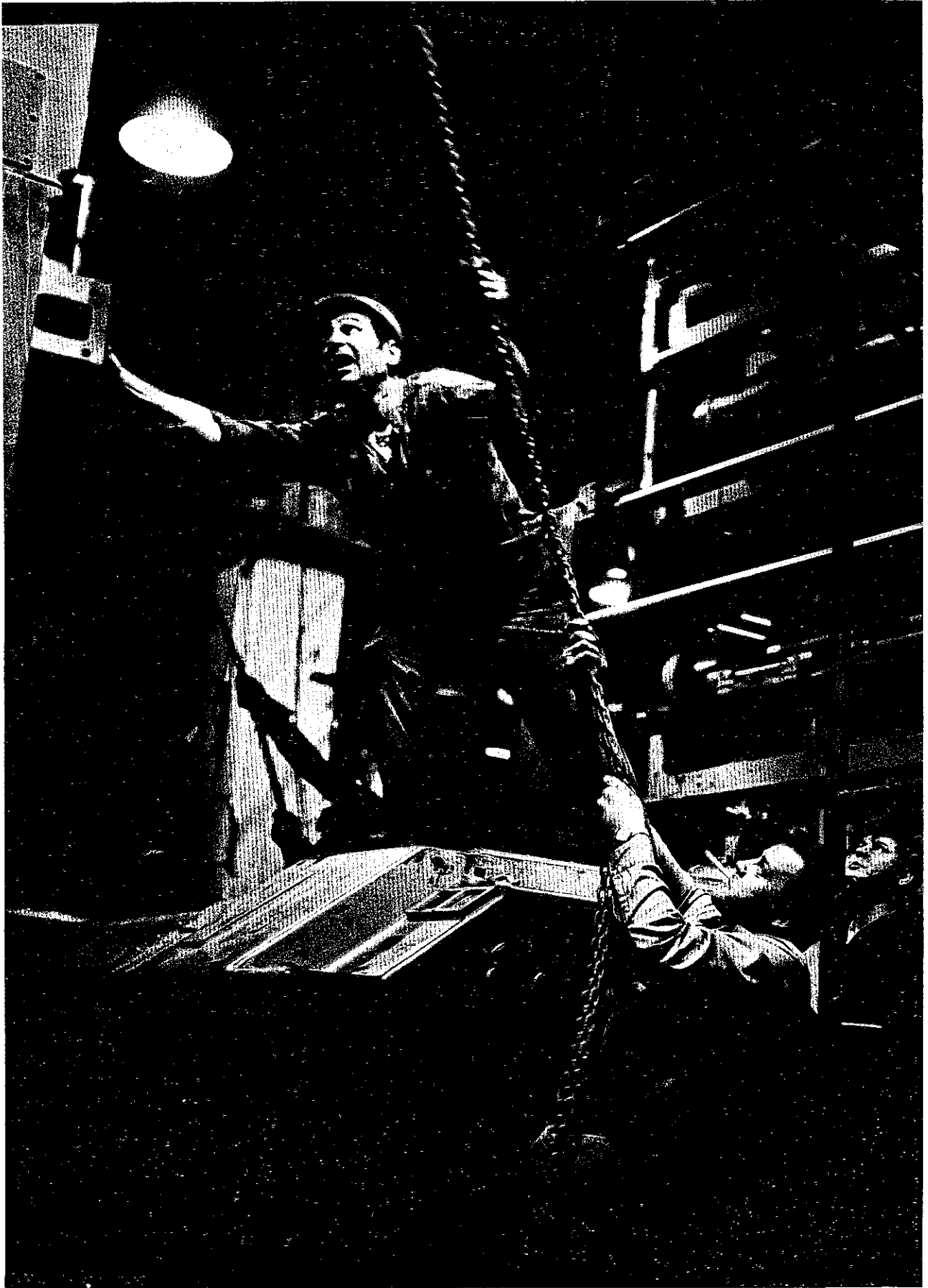
When you fall asleep
Do you dream of her
Is she in your arms
On a mountain high
And you watch the sun
fade to the West
Does she turn away
look at you and say
It's been a lovely day
I love you

When you are alone
Do you feel alone
Do you feel her presence
With every step you take
Is she part of you
Are you part of her
If you know her faults
Can see her walk
Like the way she talks
Love is true

When you are with her
Do you have to speak
Can she hear the voice
Within your touch
Does the same hold true
When she touches you
Is there a certain way
She doesn't have to say
It's been a lovely day
I love you



Jim Williams



DUTCH WONDERLAND

Noel Armstrong

HIS feeling of apprehension mounted as he slowly opened the large glass door and stepped into the factory where he spent his days. Inside, the machines raised an incredible cacophony of clicks, whirs, and deep metallic growls, bringing his paranoia to an almost unbearable peak. Sometimes he felt like the last man alive in a world of hostile, unforgiving mechanical enemies ready to injure him over the slightest mistake.

How could he, accustomed to the quiet solitude of country life, possibly live with these threatening metal adversaries? He let his mind drift remorsefully back to the incident that had led him here.

He had been raised on a farm in the rolling green countryside of Eastern Central Pennsylvania, by his father, a strict Amish farmer who adhered strongly to the old ways. It was a simple life, no machinery, and they spoke the distinctive dialect of the Pennsylvania Dutch. He went to work on his father's small farm as soon as he was old enough to lift a hoe, and for this he was given a small share in the meager profits from the sale of their crops.

By the time he turned eighteen, he was a brawny young man, broad of shoulder and taller than his father by half a head. The wad of money, kept in a leather pouch concealed in his room, had been growing too, and, as is the way with money, his desire to use some of it was great.

His father regularly warned him of the consequences of foolishness, but foolishness is something that rides hand in hand with

youth, so the warnings went unheeded.

One beautiful spring afternoon, he drove the horse and buggy to Lititz, a small Pennsylvania country town consisting of a few local businesses and several blocks of small brick houses; and there purchased a beautiful red convertible, only a few years old, at the local Ford agency. His joy was overwhelming as he carefully guided his wonderful new machine down the drive and parked it in front of his father's tiny white farmhouse. He leaped out, and grabbing the rope that rang the dinner bell, called the family in from the fields.

His joy was short-lived, however, for when he saw the look on his father's weathered face, he knew he had committed an inexcusable sin. But he enjoyed his beautiful automobile more than anything he had ever owned, and he knew he did not want to give it up. He had a difficult decision to make.

Not a word was spoken among the family that night, and by the morning, he had silently piled his belongings into the shiny red car and started for Philadelphia. He was sure he could find work there; not the sweaty, backbreaking farm work he had done all his life, but clean, easy work made simple by wonderful machines like his beloved red car. It took him only a few days to learn that this was not the case, that this work was even dirtier, harder, and less rewarding than the work he had run away from.

And now that he knew better, he could not turn back.

The Unhappy Joker

I know a man who hates himself.
He makes jokes all the time.
Jokes that cry out. Jokes that don't laugh,
and make one's patience climb.

He always smiles to everyone.
He hopes they'll smile back.
The smiles come, the smiles fade,
as people come and pass.

He has some dreams. He wants to learn.
His hate forms no death wish.
He's trying hard to like himself.
It's his long road to bliss.

I pity him. I understand;
know what he's going through,
for on that darkened lonely route
I had traveled too.

Prayer For Everyone

Friends for all alone
Life to all who live,
and those who only can exist
a friend his life to give.

Listen

Listen.
Do you hear it?
Listen to the sound.
The sound only heard by sensitive hearts.
The sound that cuts the listener in two
with its high-pitched tones
even heard above drums and guitars,
screaming and shouting,
dreaming and laughing.
The sound's called loneliness,
shouting for an answer to only one question...
Where is love?

cathy weiss

Love Untouched

Brown swirls of endless nights
stared in the darkness of your eyes,
as I pictured us, entwined, touching
your face and losing myself,
unconsciously in your atramentous
tresses

Breathlessly, brown skin shinning,
in nights before, dreaming your
dream of lovingness, warm as your
lips that I have never kissed and
seeing, your so beautiful

Seeing your deepness of thought transferred
to words, caressing the world with
your fingers and touching, lightly, gently,
being of friendship, with your love
somewhere inside

Your of everything, a magic pencil
ride to heaven, I want to come with
us finding a way, loving you,
leaving a trail of smiles, looked
upon by others as happiness

Eyes of yours, still; alive; glowing,
holding mine in a distance, undisturbed
by our messages, communicating
warm heart beats, gentle strolls,
passions fainting falling and waiting

Chuck Shillingford

Christmas Soldiers

The march of tin soldiers
Made a terrible roar
Up the steps of the basement
To the big kitchen door.
All year in a corner
They were boxed in a crate
Sadly forgotten
They rusted in wait.

Their general awoke them -
Their bugler trilled!
A hundred tin soldiers
Mustered and drilled.
The general was angry.
Everyone knew
Tin soldiers guard Christmas
Each and every year through!

The general, be-ribboned
And puffed out in pride
Issued his orders
From the pony he'd ride.

"We'll march to the tree -
Surround all the toys -
Make everything ready
For good girls and boys!"

With their horses and cannons
Now shined up like new
They made up a column -
Two after two.
Hoisting cannons and horses
By candy-cane cranes
They stormed up the steps
Climbing pop-corny chains.

At the head of the stairs
And all ready to aim
Ten tiny cannons
Were to blast the door frame.
But the general commanded:
"Save ammunition!"
We'll get the door open
With a bit of ambition."

With cables of tinsel
At the bugler's call
They pulled the door open
And entered the hall.
By the general's command
They formed into file
Each standing a square
Of checked kitchen tile.

They rounded the corner
From kitchen to den
And sent out their scouts
Who yelled back to them:
"The tree - Here's the tree!
All covered with lights -
With presents about it -
Like all Christmas nights!"

"March on!" cried the general,
And the cannons rolled on
And the horses pranced forward -
They had only till dawn!

'Cross the carpet they charged,
One-hundred strong
Halting at last
As the clock chimed "Ding-dong!"

Then from the chimney
At exactly midnight
A noise just like thunder
Gave the soldiers a fright.
Through the smoke and the soot
A big, bearded man
Strode straight to the soldiers -
Shaking everyone's hand.

"Thank you good soldiers!
You've done a fine job -
Guarding from goblins
That break toys and rob."
"Remain here," said Santa,
"Till the first light of day
Then I'll return
To take you away."

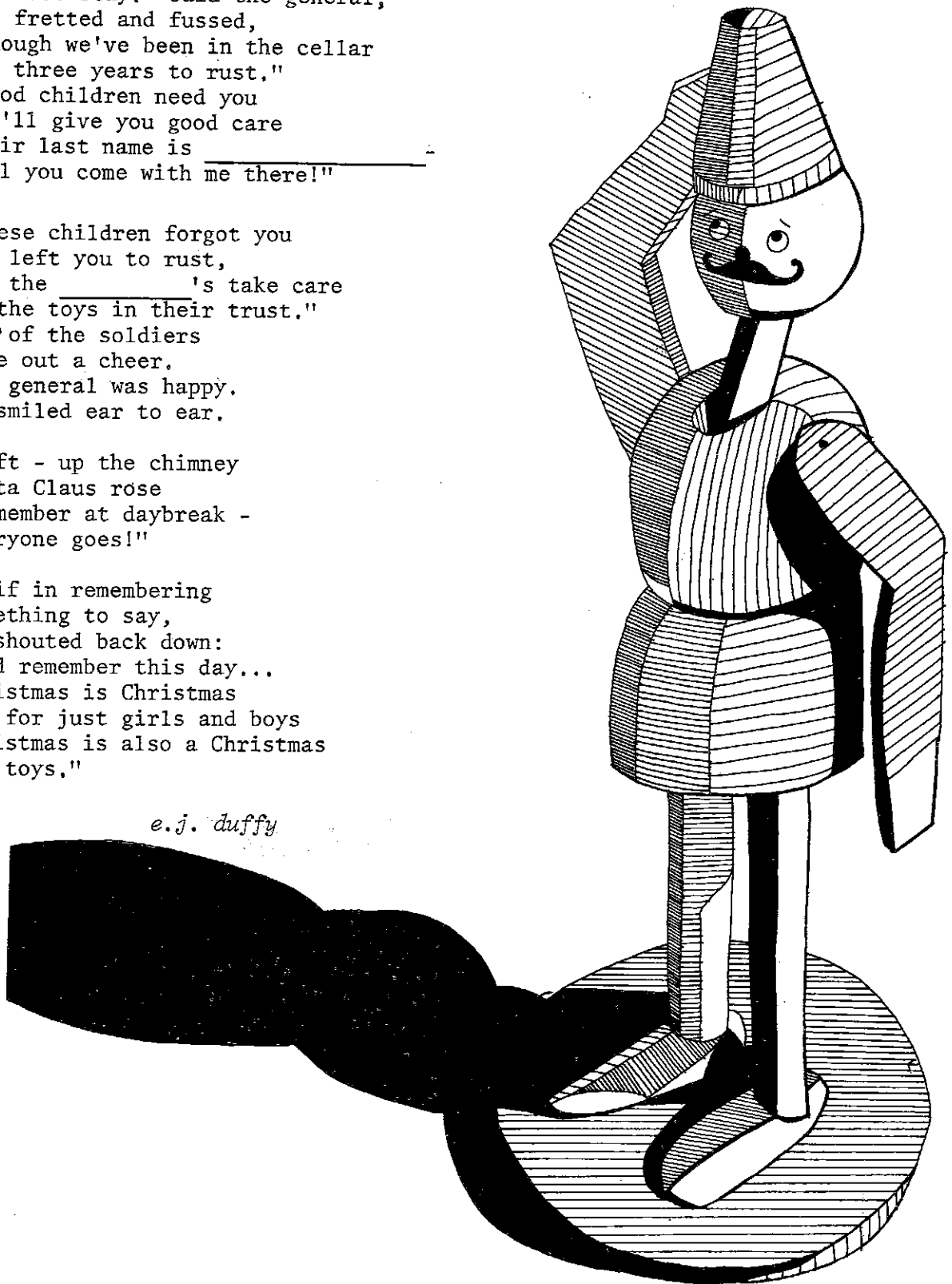
"We must stay." Said the general,
Who fretted and fussed,
"Though we've been in the cellar
For three years to rust,"
"Good children need you
Who'll give you good care
Their last name is _____
Will you come with me there!"

"These children forgot you
And left you to rust,
But the _____'s take care
Of the toys in their trust."
All of the soldiers
Gave out a cheer.
The general was happy.
He smiled ear to ear.

Swift - up the chimney
Santa Claus rose
"Remember at daybreak -
Everyone goes!"

As if in remembering
Something to say,
He shouted back down:
"And remember this day...
Christmas is Christmas
Not for just girls and boys
Christmas is also a Christmas
For toys."

e.j. duffy



Ghouls in Gothic

Gargoyles, griffins
and fiends with fanged faces,
gape-mouthed and bat-winged
all crouched in dark places,
seemed poised just to pounce
on those innocents who
tether the brink
of the cresting curfew.

Craggy stone smiles
seem to curdle and die
when the town-cryer's lantern
stirs the shadows nearby.
The church spires shiver
as the bells knoll curfew
and the creatures creep forth
from their knurled gothic mew.

Or so it would seem
in the prisimy panes
of the light or the mind
that the cryer maintains.
Icicles leak
down his unbuttressed spine
as he steadies his ladder
to light curfew time.

From spires to steps
through crannies and niches
THEY sneer in the glass
in reflected twitches.
From portals and lintels
the ghouls grope and reel
stalking the cryer
to gnaw on his heel.

He glances askance
as he's trimming the light,
He isn't quite sure
if it's THEM or his fright,
but - IT rattles his ladder -
his footing falls short
and he lands on his pride
with his chin on the court.

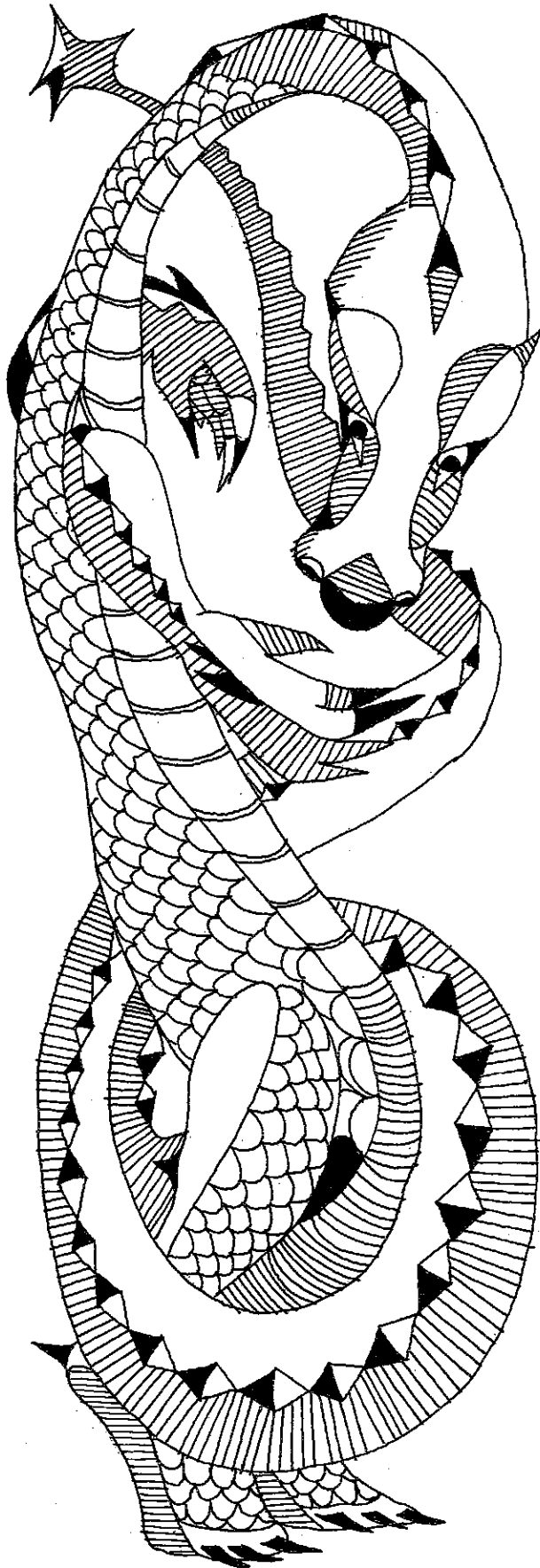
He's always to say
(though he's never quite right)
that the gargoyles and griffins
had followed his flight.
But - you can church-wait and wager
when the curfew tolls sure
that the cryer's been past
on an earlier tour.

A Note for John in Lieu of His

O Lord,
who lets the blossoms scarf
against the coming night,
leave me likewise shroud.
The sun is crypted
in the west's chill hillside
but I, unlike the flowers,
have no stem
to mull the earth's night frost
nor petals have I
to wrap before the west wind's hale.

I've yet no seed
nor'd wish for mine
to scatter with less succor
than that You've given plants.
I'd want no seeds I'd sired
dawned - debris of night -
to decorate Your day.
Leave me shroud!
I'll be a bed of fertile humus...
rather that
then rootless vegetation.

e.j. duffy



Sancho - Panza's Promise/Plea

Don't pose me on white chargers.
Horses make me sneeze.
The malady is mutual -
They mimic me and wheeze.

Don't draw me in white armor.
Armor makes me seethe.
And white alludes to virtues
I'd rather not achieve,

Don't sculpt me swords and lances
For quests I shall not seek
Dragons are my bosom friends
And windmills are too meek.

*

Pose me on a burro,
The brother of an ass.
I'll tie your favor to my switch
To prod his plodding mass.

Picture me a minstrel
Not some knight-errant of yore
I'll live to sing the ballads
They - belated - must endure.

I'll tilt for you no windmills
Nor slay fictitious beasts.
Your magic favor on my switch
Can banish those at least.

I joust but wayward lyrics
And only beat a few
So if you have a few a-stray
I'll juggle them with you.

*

I'll charge not out ahead of you.
I'll tarry while you long.
I'll draw my beast abreast of yours
And sing for you - my song.

e.j. duffy

THE

E V E N T

I AM a fledgling nestled in this tree's hollow for what seems an eternity. I have only to show the slightest concern and I am at once covered with a warm, soft feather.

I have come to love life with its endless supply of worms and warm bodies pressed to mine in this softly lit world. Few could be as content as I.

Still, since the beginning, a strange force makes me gaze, with frightening regularity, at the soft lines of light with their moving specks of dust. What joy can the specks find in direct line with light that makes them dance so?

Before I can sort my thoughts, one of my brothers leaps to the source of our light, hesitates, then disappears.

I search the shallows of my inexperienced mind for the why of such a shocking departure from all I have known. I search too for why, in all its novelty, there is an uneasy familiarity. For a brief moment I feel an uneasiness in my stomach as if anticipating some impending moment. Still, there have been odd upheavals in many areas of my young form of late. Undirected energies, just yesterday, had me flick my arm in a very unnatural way. The event is still inexplicable but time has mellowed the memory and allowed me to collect my wits. I am ready for sleep.

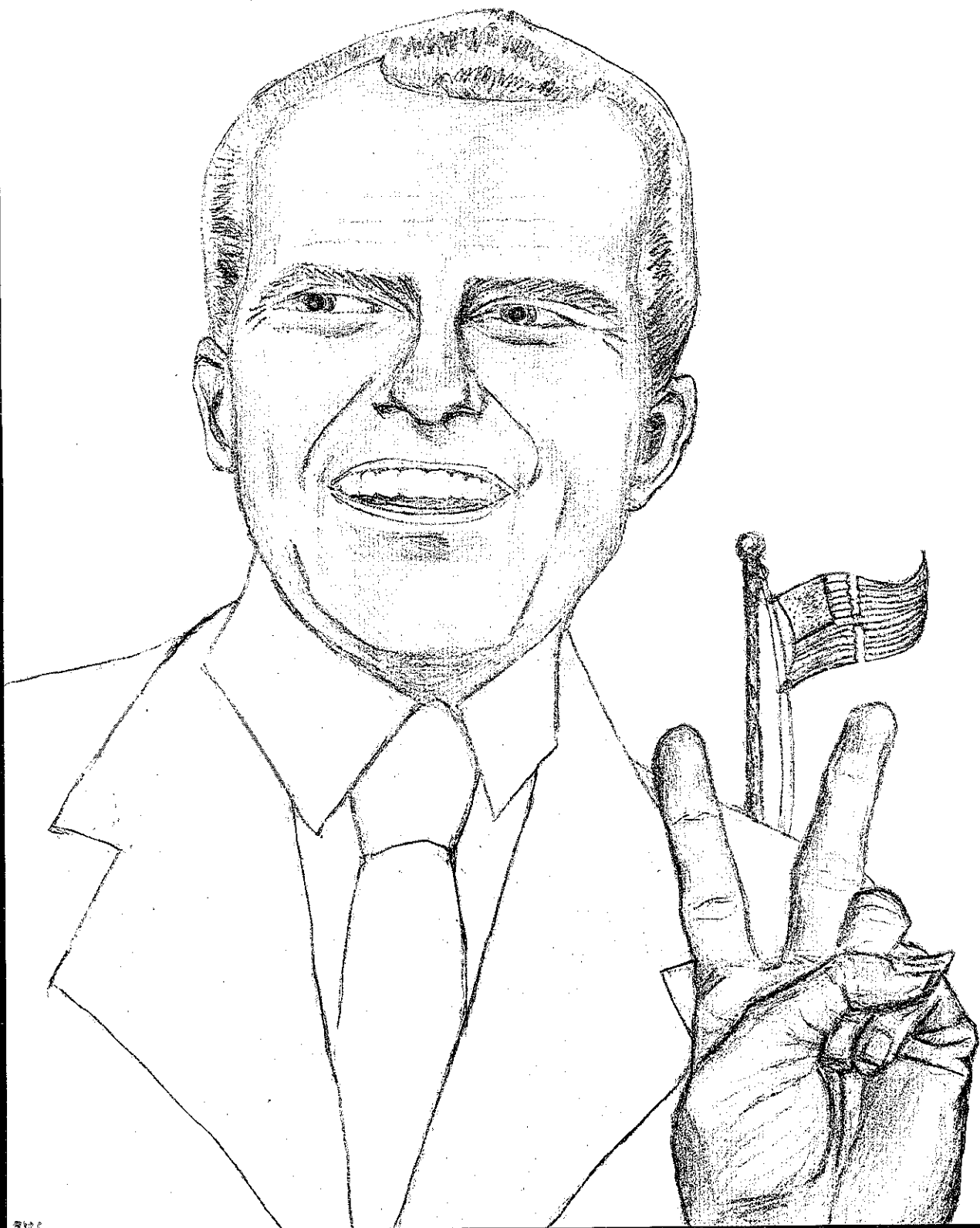
After what seems like a brief time I am awakened by the frenzy of my two remaining brothers. Oh no, it didn't happen again! No sooner does the question echo in my mind than I see the event repeating before my now greatly enlarged eyes. We are now only two, but at least that. I move towards the warmth . . . his feathers flutter and lift him to the light and away.

The soft, constant beating that has always been with me now has increased and seems to be lifting up from deep inside me as if lunging for the light, I fear remaining. But what if I too disappear. Perhaps this is how it ends . . . I didn't know it was supposed to. Did the others feel like this?

As my questions move so do my wings. At first only enough to lighten the burden on my legs, then lifting me up and into the sides of my hollow world.

I am changed. I can no longer remain here. I have found the joy in dancing with the dust.





Love Letter from Key Biscayne

The time invested on your lips
crashed the wall street of my heart.
My Dow Jones is spiraling,
my economy is receding without you.
You are my black friday
and my accumulating deficit spending.
The West Wing is
my remaining retreat.

I should simply ask you
to resign your position;
so that I might get a replacement
who may give me everlasting immunity
from your tourturous scams...
and those eyes...
those eyes!

I might even write a book
and expose this scandal
so that all who follow shall
beware your watergate.

Oh! It's not that I'm bitter
sweetheart,
my A. T. & T. is still holding.
It's just that I haven't
gotten any returning dividends
to show for this investment
with you...
I'm trying to see you
but gas has doubled to sixty cents.

It's the system that's keeping me
from your house,
not my apathy.

All will pass I presume,
after all, things could be worse;
I could be asking for foreign aid
or that my friends move in
and that you please feed and clothe them.
Gee Honey, that could start something
awful between us.
And you know how much I respect you...
after all didn't I return your records?

*martin s. hindsley
&
larry smythe*

There is No Tomorrow

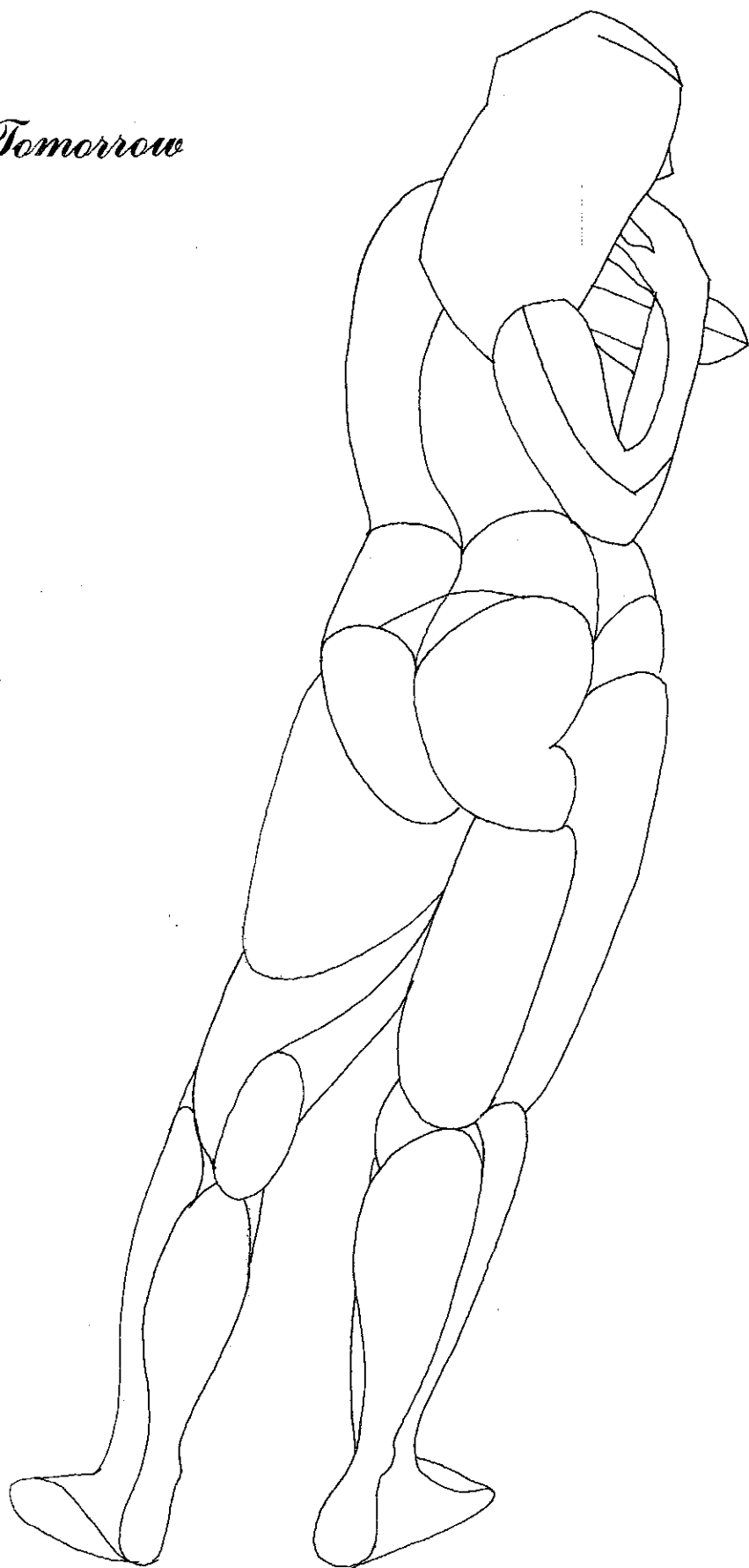
So precious
is today
that I make love
at sunrise
then glide
slow motion
through the rest
of my forever.

I memorize
intricate patterns
on delicate wings
of butterflies
taste wine
in heaven's tears
hear song
from darkened clouds.

I remember
flapping snow angels
in childhood winters
and lying naked
on deserted sand.

I linger
in the loudness of
today's silence
the past is now
and
the now is passing.

winnie patterson





Jungle

kitten of the jungle
stalking his prey.
elephant snuck behind him
and yelled, "say hey!"
kitten turned around
and gave a nasty growl.
elephant laughed
at the little "meow."
elephant of the jungle
no longer is;
kitten chewed him good
for not minding his own biz.

susan wells

Spiffy

I must be crazy
but your girlfriend
really turns me on,
she speaks fluent something
and my ears aren't accustomed
to fluency.

It's just a stage you understand
like the lifeguard posted
over the waterbed.
So don't be a Schmoie
keep your eyes aglow
wear your saftey goggles
and we'll go to that
concert at the Spectrum,
except we won't go
"dutch treat" this time.
You can bring the Quayludes.

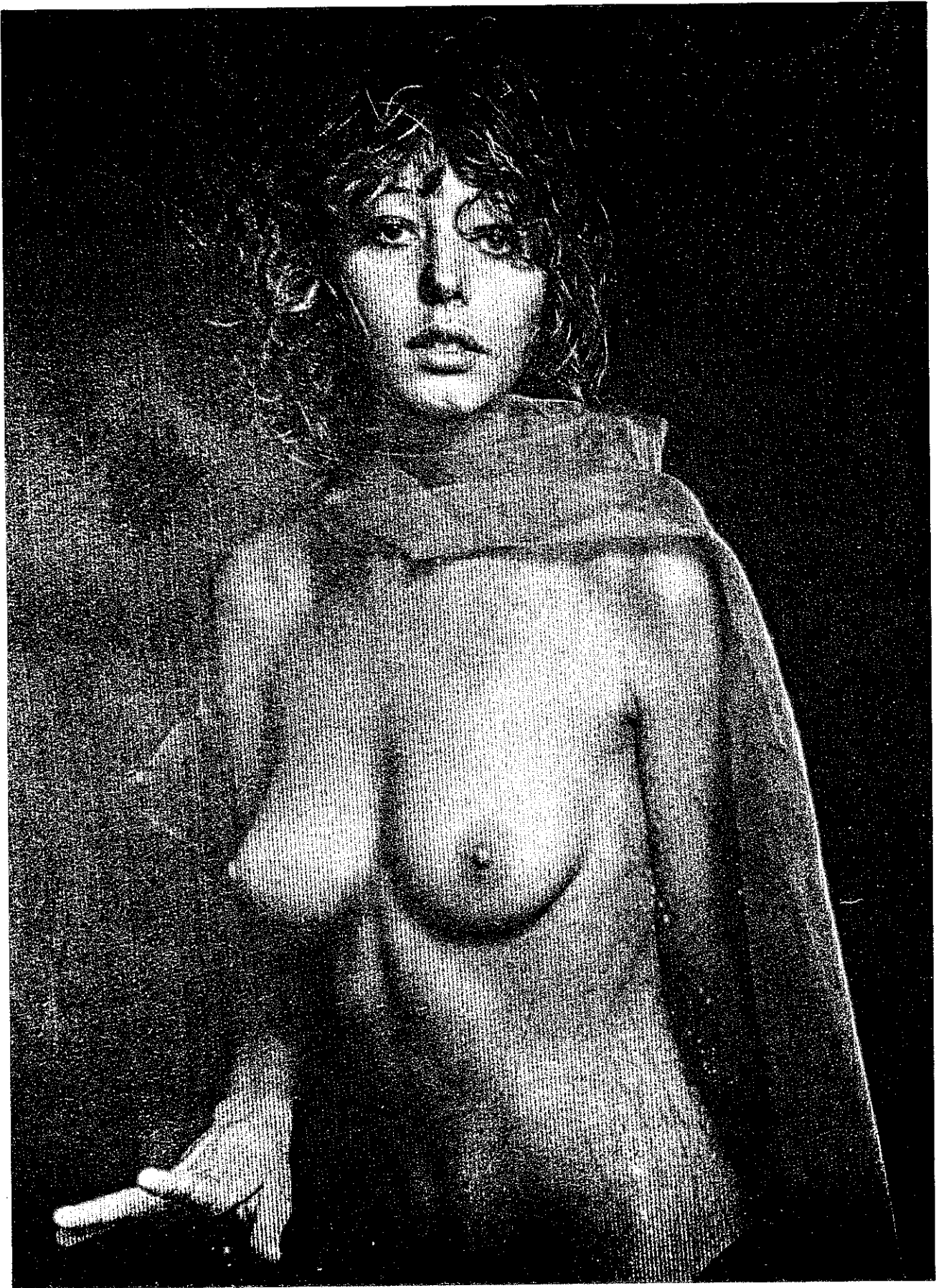
Now that it is settled
fall in love with me again
and give me your girlfriends
number, I think I lost it
in the scuffle.
You're simply spiffy,
and I'm running out
of buttons.

martin s. hindsley

bathtub blues

I'm so sad, baby
My ducky done drowned,
I need a new bath partner,
So come on around.

susan wells



Journey To A Smile

Mysteries, of natures beauty arrive
by natural splendor, unfounded
through mere
consciousness

flowers tomorrow, clouds in
play
enchant today from yesterday
and the mystery becomes life

Golden sun gives birth, the
sky, the rain, the kiss to be
untouched, but seen through
change

flowers tomorrow, clouds in
play
enchant today from yesterday
and life becomes a wonderousness

Natures life, abound in its
glorious array;
overwhelms, with bursting
displays - colors of warm
cold stillness and magic

flowers tomorrow, clouds in
play
enchant today from yesterday
and the world becomes alive

Then, beyond words, upon soft
light, drifts a thought, composed
from a smile
like rays of the sun casting
a lifes sparkle to an inner space

flowers tomorrow, clouds in
play
enchant today from yesterday
and all the enchantment becomes your smile

Chuck Shillingford

Catch 23

He wanted to be back in the barracks where it was warm and smelly. It really wasn't a barracks, it was just a row of old garages and it served as a latrine and a place to sleep. The air smelt of sweat, food and shit but it was warm. Outside it was too cold to smell like anything. The soldier paced and pounded his arms together as he stamped his feet in the icy snow. He looked with longing into the farmhouse that was now the officers' quarters.

"I wish they would invite me in," he thought, "even if it was to yell at me." Lieutenant Bachman had shaken him out of a shivering sleep and told him to come to officer's house for orders. That had been three hours ago. Now the sun was up but it made no difference. The sun is not warm in Russia, it's just a hazy ball of grey light. In truth, nothing is warm in Russia.

The door of the house opened and he was called in. He ran to the house, sucking in icy breathes. Inside it was warm and smelled of leather and beer. His mouth watered.

A general, two colonels, and a major sat at a table in their shirt sleeves eating buttered bread and talking in low voices. The major turned in his creaky chair as the lieutenant ushered the soldier in along with a gust of chilly air.

"Shut the door Bachman!" he growled and turned his eyes to the newcomer.

"Can you ride a motorcycle?"

"Yes sir!" croaked the soldier.

"Good," said the Major. "We have some very important papers that must get to Poltara by tonight. The older bastards seem to desert once they get on a bike." He smiled humorlessly.

The soldier thought there might be more so he waited, but the major just turned back to his conversation.

"Come on," said the lieutenant. "I'll get you a cycle." The lieutenant put on his coat and they went outside and around to a shed on the side of the house. Inside there was a big BMW with a sidecar and a smaller Zundapp. The soldier began to pull out the bigger cycle.

"No, not that one," the officer pulled his hands off the BMW. "Take the Zundapp! it's lighter and will get through the snow better."

The soldier frowned and grabbed the smaller motorcycle and drug it out, its wheels crunching in the snow. The officer removed a folder full of papers from his coat and put them in a leather case. The case had "General Staff" embossed on it in gold letters along with a swastika.

"Wear it over your shoulder and don't lose it, it's important!" Then he ran back to the house with his hands thrust in his pockets.

The soldier put on the gloves and the scarf supplied in the kit attached to the bike, then rummaged thru till he found the goggles. He put these on and pushed the bike onto the road which had been partially cleared. After a lot of kicking and swearing the bike started and he buzzed down the road toward the main roadway which would take him to Poltara.

The road was in terrible shape; the tanks had torn it up and there were cracks and fissures caused by the extreme cold. But the bike was light and he made good time.

The highway to Poltara was covered with packed snow where the tanks had gone and was slippery but the Zundapp clung to the road better than he'd expected. The wind on the road was intolerable but the warm engine between his legs felt good and when it was possible he would steer with one hand and hold the exhaust pipe with the other.

"They may have a warm meal for me in Poltara," he thought and pressed the bike for more speed.

It was getting toward nightfall and the perpetually gray sky turned even darker as the bike hummed along the tree-lined road. A black lattice of branches flashed over his head as he rushed on trying to see beyond the thin light beam from his headlamp. He was going to slow down because of the dark but thought better of it. It's not healthy for a German to dally in the woods in the dark, he rationalized, especially if those woods are Russian.

His headbeam picked up the thin cord stretched across the road; but too late. He hit the brakes and turned sharply which threw him into a skid. The bike crashed into a tree in a shower of ice. The soldier shook his head to clear his mind when he heard the shots from the roadside and the splats as bullets hit the trees around him.

On hands and knees he crawled into a drainage ditch. He was soaked to the knees as he broke through the ice scum and he got his gloves wet. He could hear shouted orders now as the firing increased. He ducked down and removed his gloves and unstrapped his rifle from his shoulders. His teeth chattered but he knew it wasn't the cold. His hands shook as he cocked a shell into the chamber. He squatted down in the icy mud and waited.

They had trained a machine gun on him now which threw slush and dirt down on him as it drew a path across his position.

I could use a grenade as a diversion, he figured, and then run back into the forest and continue on foot in the morning. But his hope was dashed as he heard hushed voices on his side of the road. He was surrounded.

Then he thought of the papers; they must not get to the enemy. He would tear them up before they came. His breath hissed as he fumbled with the strap. He unbuckled it and unsnapped the case — then got out the folder and tore it open.

"I might not have time to tear them all up so I'd best start with the most important," he thought as he shuffled through the papers. The moon was up now so he could see them. He sorted the papers. The papers that had to get to Poltara by nightfall. The papers that the General could rely on him to deliver. The papers that might decide the outcome of the war for Germany:

Three invoices for the delivery of toilet tissue, boot laces and two receipts for government issue prophylactics, and lastly a letter from the General to his wife asking her what she might want from Russia for Christmas.

He could hear their boots crunch on the ice and he wanted to cry but he knew his tears would only freeze.

Pegasus

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The boats that dock at the harbor's mouth
Carry dreams and give them out
For sailors tell their daily tales
Of lands and winds and ruffled sails.

But as long as there's seas and traveling men
Words will travel through the pen,
and bring the worlds of many to
those who can only see a few.

cathy weiss

