

PEGASUS

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COVER DESIGN and ILLUSTRATIONS by Barbara Bell

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SENTENCES, Howard Nemerov. The University of Chicago Press, 1980.
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LARRY MOULDER

LITERATURE

Is in good hands, it is being written
By liberated sex-maniacs, psychologists
With an eye to higher things, and novelists
Convinced they are psychiatric social-workers
With a mission to the slums of the human heart;
It is being written by disgraced politicians
From the safety of minimum-security prisons
With pastel walls affording them protection from
The lower class of criminal while they write
Of finding Jesus, Who has given them
The hundred thousand dollar advance against
The major motion picture soon to be made;
And now new generations of trained chimpanzees
Are manning their machines, moving their lips,
Coming along slowly, all thumbs and unopposable.

Howard Nemerov

TECHNICAL WRITER

A writer bored
(his muse ignored)
puts words on paper by the hour:
"How-To-Do Hydraulic Power"
step one, remove; step two, secure;
step three, install the pump ring-core.
While down below amidst the dust
of projects stored, his novels rust;
his poems pitted, lie in bits,
with abandoned scenes of plays he's writ.
The jumbled scraps swell like a tide
and he wonders why he hurts inside.

Paul Clayton



SCHOLAR TO BE

I asked where the dictionary
Was,
The old, leather-bound and thick one,
With thin, silken pages and minute letters,
So that I could look up a word
That
I did not know, and wanted
To
Know well.

Benjamin White

RESUME WRITHING

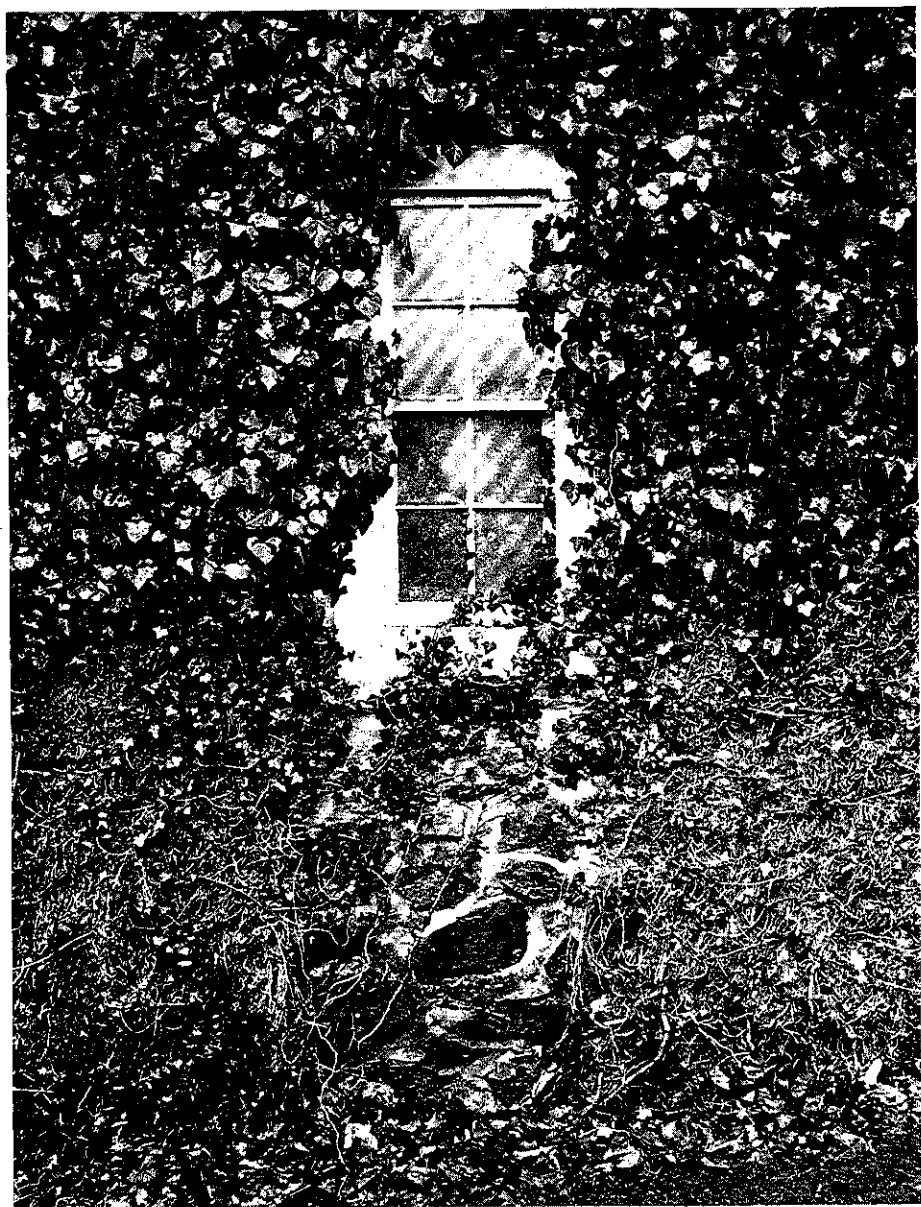
Drab damsel in her doldrums
cast charismatic spells
on all the local yokels she could find
and servings of sweet syrup of
Chrysanthemums in Hell
 assisted in the softening
 of their minds.

Her slink-o-pated wriggle
(in reality a writhe)
was designed to stir the coals of deep desire
in disinterested dudes who thought they could survive
 the most stimulating action
 of her fire.

She'd beckon, and she'd counter
with sinuous approach
(her insinuating movements drove them wild)
Then she gathered them around (that
incendiary coach)
 and proceeded to reward them
 with a smile.

Yes, devilish dance was over,
black boredom was appeased , and
she thanked them most verbosely for their time.
But suffering survivors the wanton witch had teased were
 hard put to harangue her
 for her crime.

D.J. Ammon



GEORGE BALOCK

CATHARSIS

"Huh? Where am I?"

Oscar Frajill rubbed the long sleep from his sagging, puffy eyelids, did a double-take and disbelievingly scanned the stark room.

He saw an eggshell-white enclosure that reeked of impersonal hospital sterility. The plastic, high-backed chair under a cheap chrome and glass table, the crude, lidless toilet, the wash basin that only spat out cold water, even the military-style, single bunk bed, all were uniformly colored - - albumen.

"Maybe I had an accident and I'm in the hospital. That's it; but, no, I feel ok." He explored his body, leaving no parts untouched. "No bandages, no pain except this goddamn headache. I've got all my arms and legs."

He shakily stood and forced away the oncoming dizziness. Finally he was able to move. "I can walk. Whereinthehell am I?" His gaze slowly searched the cramped, six by nine foot, sunless, womb-like room for a door. "No way out," Oscar moaned, "and no freaking window either. What's going on?"

"There MUST be a way out." He excitedly darted about from wall to wall, frantically searching for an exit. Faster and faster he flitted back and forth, pawing every square inch, seeking release from his eggshell-white enclosure. Oscar's strength finally wilted and he collapsed upon the bed.

"I don't understand this. How'd I get in here if there's no door? This is absolutely craz. . .y. Crazy? Oh no, that's it!"

He punched the wall.

"Padded walls. Incredible! What am I doing in the nuthouse? Maybe it's a dream. Yea, that's it, a dream."

Tired from his frantic, wild exertions and incongruous thoughts, Oscar stretched his disheveled body on the bed and slept. Never ceasing to thrash and turn, Oscar slept the sleep of a deeply troubled man. Occasional screams interrupted the still silence. Intervals of awakening broke his fitful sleep. The always on/never off, indirect lights cruelly continued to glow.

Oscar awoke. "It's not a dream, everything's still the same. It's real! What? Food on the table? Ahha, if something got in, there must be a way out," he gleefully shouted. He ignored the turtle soup and then maniacally, relentlessly, re-searched the vinyl-veneered, thickly-padded, constraining walls for any semblance of an exit.

After failing to locate a crack that might indicate a door, he sat down on the bed and contemplated his predicament. "What am I doing here?"

"Mr. Frajill?"

Oscar started. "What's that? A Voice? Where are you? Who are you?"

"That doesn't matter, Mr. Frajill," murmured the remote, monotone Voice, "what matters is who you are. And there is a way out."

Oscar's appearance noticeably changed. The look of resignation ebbed away; the corners of his eyes and lips pointed skywards.

"Oh I knew it. There is hope!"

"No, Mr. Frajill, no hope exists, only this padded, eggshell-white enclosure. This is your world until you find your way out."

"What kind of bull is that? Where am I?"

The clinical -sounding Voice replied, "This is Bedlam Hospital, where you will remain until you find your way out."

"You mean, I'm in the nuthouse, right?"

"If you put it that way, yes." A deathlike shade clouded Oscar's face.

"But how'd I get here? Why am I here? My friends will tell you I'm sane and I never hurt anyone. I kept things to myself," babbled Oscar.

"Now you see the problem, Mr. Frajill," was the Voice's didactic intonation.

"No, no I don't," stammered Oscar.

"You have to sooner or later, Mr. Frajill. Rest for now, we will converse later."

"But wait . . ." No reply, the Voice ceased. "I don't believe this. I feel perfectly normal, but I don't remember coming here. And that damn irritating Voice. He didn't say why I'm here. What could I have done? I've always been in control," rambled Oscar.

"Mr. Frajill?"

"Yes, what do you want?"

"You perceived part of the problem again," prescribed the Voice.

"I did?"

"Yes sir."

"Tell me what it is. Help me, please," pleaded Oscar.

"I cannot tell you--you must resolve your problem from within--and I cannot help you. I am only here to guide, not to act as your crutch."

Oscar furrowed his brow while mulling over the Voice's last statement. "Hmmm, crutch, I think I see." He said aloud, "You mean, I have to help myself, right?"

"Yes, Mr. Frajill, that assertion stands correct. Congratulations, that is a major step forward."

"But how'd I get here? What'd I do? What happened?" Words rushed hurriedly from his now lively lips.

"Slow down, Mr. Frajill, and I shall explain. Today is November 2. You entered Bedlam, under heavy sedation, October 31."

"Sedation? That explains why I don't remember anything, right?"

"Yes. You would not remember the night of October 31 at the Seashell Bar when you fought a man and nearly bludgeoned him to death with your fists."

Oscar's eyes widened, and he gasped, "WHAT?"

"Please do not interrupt, Mr. Frajill. Now, as I was saying, you nearly killed the man, but several of the bar patrons managed to stop you before it was too late. The patrons had much difficulty trying to restrain and to calm you, so the police came and hand-cuffed and gagged you."

"Gagged me?"

"Yes, you repeatedly threatened them and the man you battered."

"What'd I say?"

"I hate him, I hate all you dirty bastards," the Voice replied.

"I said that? I don't understand." Oscar shook his head from side to side and continued, "I've never done anything like that before. That's so unlike me."

"Wrong, Mr. Frajill, the alcohol extracted a long suppressed part of you."

Oblivious to that remark, Oscar queried, "How badly hurt is the man?"

"Several broken ribs and multiple contusions, but he will recover. Your hurt is much more difficult to heal."

"I nearly killed a man," groaned Oscar.

A disquieting sickness started deep within Oscar's stomach. He fled for the toilet and hung his head over it. Slowly, forcefully, his stomach twisted and churned while the remembrance of beating the man slithered through the dark recesses of Oscar's brain. He violently retched while clutching the toilet for support. The thought of his violence lingered, churning anew. He vomited again, then he sat on the edge of the bed.

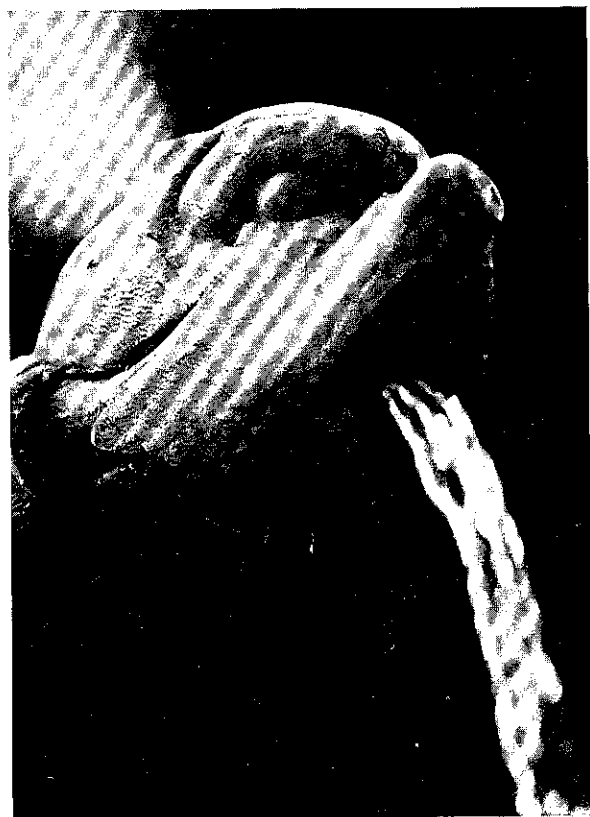
A forlorn figure, Oscar mused, while covering his face with his hands, "I remember it all; even though I was drunk, I was responsible."

Oscar cried, long and hard.

"This is the first time I've cried since I was a kid."

Oscar raised his head. The door was open.

Larry Moulder



KATHY COLAMECO

A HOPE, A DREAM, AND A REALITY

To be dehumanized and stripped of pride
(The hurt and the pain exploding inside)
To experience shades of pity and hate
To turn to a friend that can easily relate
To strive for perfection and compete with the rest
To be labeled as 'average' when I'm giving my best
To realize I must learn to walk before I run
And not to panic at the jump of a gun
To analyze the problem when my feelings subside
To take part in society with a plea to subscribe
To lift up my head and proceed with courage
(My hopes and my dreams have started to flourish)
Only today through my eyes did I see
The process of adjustment has been difficult for me
And for the rest of my life I must confide
I'll only be me with nothing to hide

Marci Young



PROPHECY ON LIFE

To despise life denies the
existence of God.

To tolerate life breeds a
world of apathy.

To like life preserves the
welfare of mankind.

To love life insures great
suffering.

Marikate B. Venuto



BILL FINCH

FRIENDS LIKE YOU

Colorado mountain—green with pine,
Streams as pure as a smile,
Snow capped peaks — so many miles away,
I'll be sitting on you in awhile.

Utah valley — checkered in blue,
A thought as bold as the day,
Backpack off for a little rest,
A thinker with nothing to say.

Pennsylvania forest — brown, tall hardwoods,
Oh damn, you caught me dreaming of when
My lungs were filled with mountain air
And my head with returning once again.

Colorado mountain— green with pine,
Streams as pure as a smile,
Snow capped peaks — so many miles away,
I'll be sitting on you in awhile.

A motorcycle carried me across America,
I've fallen in love—it's true,
But nothing means more to a traveling man's heart
Than having great friends like you.

Bill Finch



FOR YOU

I'm a little package.
Come open up and see
How long I've been
Waiting for you
To look inside
Of me.
You may
Think I'm crazy,
You probably are
Right.
But aren't we all
A little looney
At some point in life?

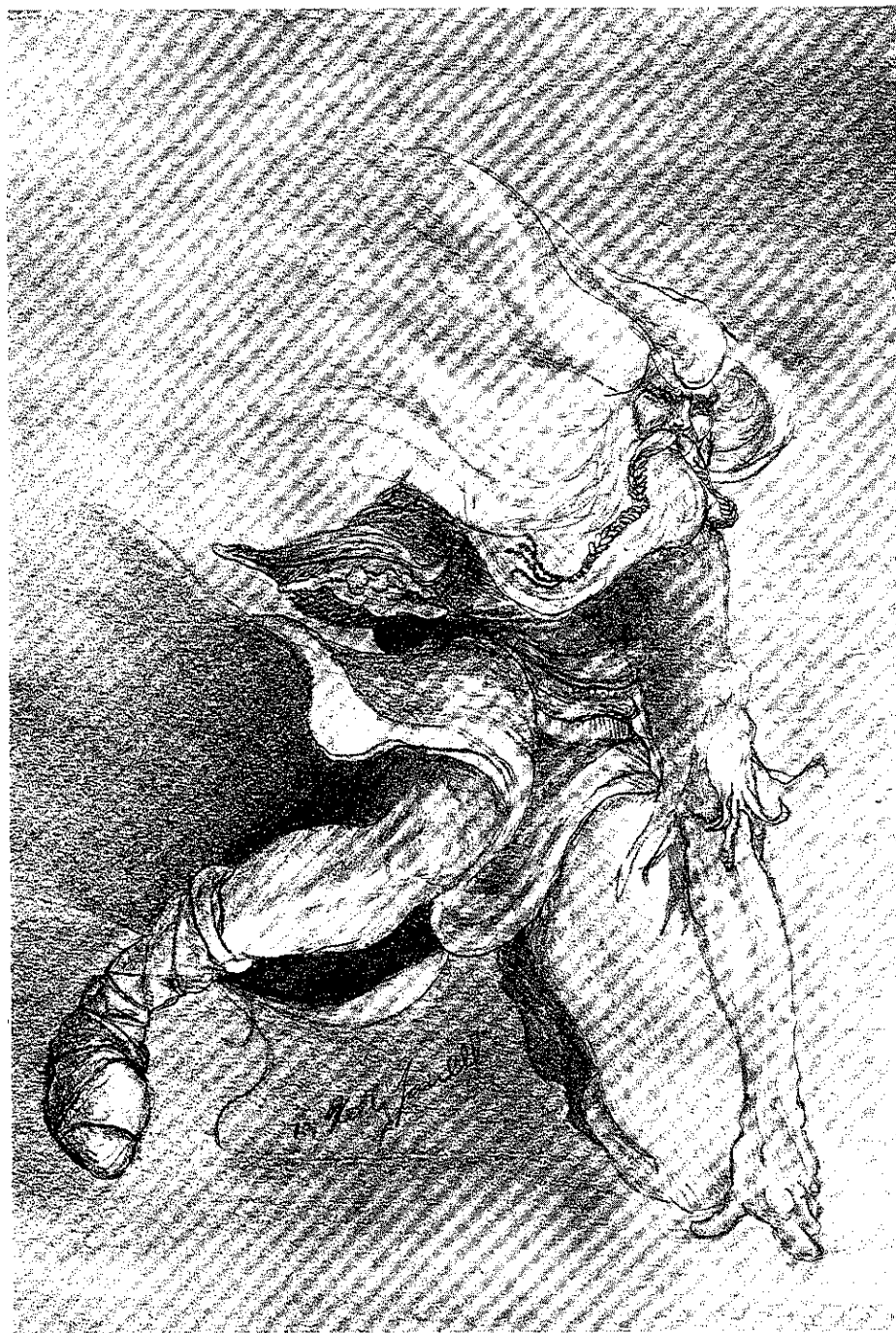
Michelle DeCaro



TO BOB:

If you fall in love too easily
And give your heart away,
You'll only end up crying
On a gray, unhappy day.
There is no one who'll understand
The gift you bring for him.
When you bestow your being
His freedom is looking dim.
The love that sets you free to fly
Over mountains and gloomy rain
Merely seems to tie him
To a life of toil and pain.
You'll never make him understand
That life with you is good
And that he could be free to fly
With you, if only he would.
For when you say "I love you,"
He feels that chains are tightening
And he'll ne'er be free anymore.
So love, I cannot tell you
What my soul longs to say.
For if I hold you to my breast,
You'll surely turn away.
No, I could never clip your wings
As some girls will try to do.
No, I can only vow myself
That I'll love you forever.
As you sail to distant shores,
Please, someday think of me,
The girl who loved you truly
But stepped back to set you free.

"Monk"



KELLY FARRELL

SILVER SKIES

silver skies,
with lightning flashing through my mind,
and the sound of thunder
bring out hidden fears.
starlings flew through silver skies.
ebony bodies that always shine.
lightning flashed and water splashed
and thunder roared and soared.
unpainted pictures
are recalled in dreams
with certain textures
and radiant beams.

unbroken silence
is in dark rooms,
and silver skies
whisper to the moon.
dust gathers where you stand.
waves rush over the sand.
stars fall in the night,
but you won't find them in the light.
never lose who you are,
even if you're very far.
remember time
and how it unwinds.

Rhinnon Anglesey



LYNX

the scarlet dawn turned golden
and the sirius disappeared
as the lynxes' flaming eyes
saw the helpless, brown deer.
the fireflies circled
while the steel breeze
turned into the northern wind, pulled
by a velvet brush of the sea.
sunset was approaching when
the shadow appeared.
the lynx was still searching,
picking up every sign of fear.
the full moon reflected
on the cat's shiny coat.
the night was electric
and lingered on, and on.
where is the lynx?
eyes glance and follow you
as you walk again into the dawn.
then your suspicion grew
you were that fawn.

Rhinnon Anglesey



PLECOSTOMUS

Gray
bloated
scavenger,
Bat-wing fins move you along the fecal-layered stones
At the bottom of my aquarium. Shunning light, you raid the
Darkened quiet of a sleepless night, and, nosing your
O Mouth into the secret
caves of my
mind,
Grow fat on the fascination and fear that you have nurtured there.

Diane Peich



THE BAT

Sunset fires through the ancient woodland
(The furry creature's home seen by no man)
As cold sets in the eve doth begin.
A new sign of life is upon us,
Not of heaven or hell
But of lives up in a church bell,
Not of hearing or seeing
But of knowing. (Slipping through the air as if
Flowing.)
A horror it seems in nightmarish dreams.
With the stealth of a cat
And the swiftness of a gnat,
This is the bat.

Tom Barrett



KELLY FARRELL

ANGEL BRAT

Fluffy sprite has
nervy pep,
Weaves her web with every step.
Dark eyes serve our
small coquette.
ANGEL BRAT

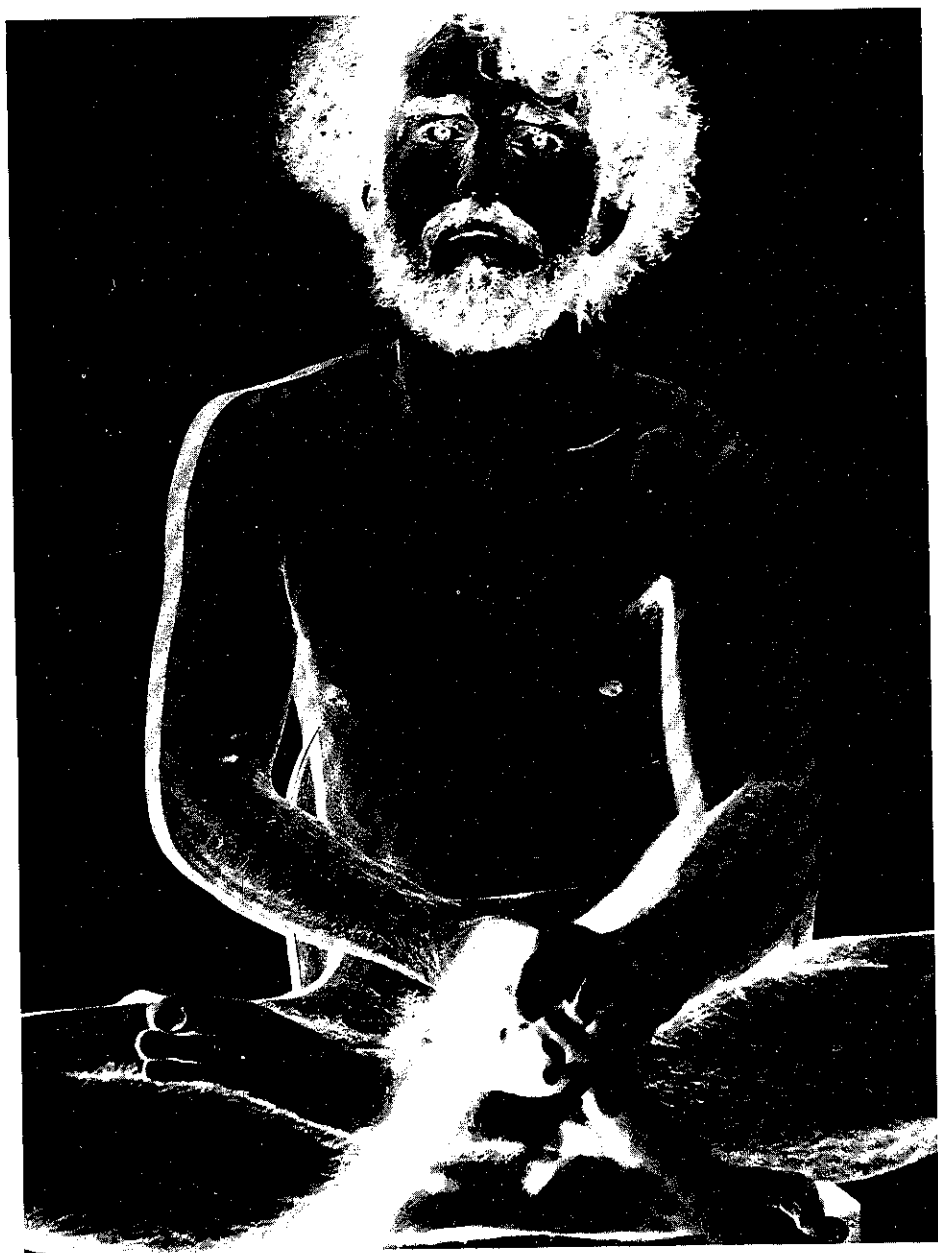
Brief legs pause to
gather spring.
Keen brain reckons everything.
Four-point-landing
makes me sing,
ANGEL BRAT

Walk-time summons
high-pitched wail.
Expectations of the trail
waken piglet
of a tail.
ANGEL BRAT

Waterbed's best
choice because
rests those ever-gnawing jaws,
floats with rawhide
in her paws.
ANGEL BRAT

D.J. Ammon





LARRY MOULDER

UNTITLED

The stalking assassin, the rapist, treads carefully, deliberately, advancing like a brief shadow, pretending now to be a ponderer, now a stroller, now a figure of decreasing threat, while his hungry wolf-eyes stare impatiently. He turns and weaves toward his unsuspecting prey, and as he moves nearer, his fiery eyes glow and his leathery face distorts with the twisted perception of conquering and violating. Then, suddenly, he strides agilely on the balls of his feet, as savagely as a starving predator. He springs, instantly engulfing his victim. There radiates piercing screams of terror, and the subdued maiden resists in vain, while the rapist penetrates his catch.

Ken Klotz



VOYEUR'S DAYDREAM

In the belvedere of my mind
a man holds a crying woman,
kissing away her hurt —

from the basement I smile,
eyes agog, sweating, panting,
peering up under her skirt.

Ettore Angelo

KINDRED SPIRITS

Kindred spirits
move through the same space but
travel in different directions,
only to meet, there, where the
universe and its wondrous colors
are woven into a single spectrum.
Sailing on waves of the sky,
they disappear, there, where the
sky and earth become one quadrant,
seeking the silent and quiet place
for their rebirth.
They share the sun's path and
follow the shimmering trail
reflected over the water's surface.
Crystal moonbeams of light,
optical illusions flashing out
of sight, only to vanish into the
white mist, are the
kindred spirits in flight.

Lesley M. Wood



WATERCOLORS

Beauty rests upon
a calm, green sea,
where a halo sets
the sun in bright yellow
and rainbows fill the
sky with a collage
of color.

The water shimmers
in the rays of the sun
and later on,
the moon
mirrors its reflection
on the sea's surface.

Softly, as the mist clears,
a seagull can be seen
perched light on a tall cliff.
She flies with the weightlessness
of a falling feather.
Echoing her sounds
down beneath, in secret caverns.
Eternal wanderer: spirit.
The sea is a stranger, a soaring
myth which will exist
forever.

Lesley M. Wood

MONUMENTS

We should have followed the fence line to
the huge rough-hewn post that offered leverage
and sent us flying into our secret,
stream-crossed valley.

But today mother's warnings about the expensive
monuments seemed so distant in the sunlight
that we detoured through the graveyard
that bordered our retreat.

You hide—I'll seek. I crouched behind a
monolith labeled "Wutikee" and pressed against
the smooth, cool gray until I saw a chance to score.
Laughing and skipping around veteran's wreaths,

we took dares to jump "Ellison," and all made it
except Tim, who caught a sneaker on the glittering
pine ridge and rolled, giggling, on the manicured
mound in front of "Hadley."

We paused, awed, before "Mulstead"—huge,
white madonna with rifled heart, and I was quick
to shinny to her shoulders for a better view
of our stone-studded playground.

After my surveillance, I ushered friends in a
shipline to "Moore," a marble bunkbed, and two
of us rested on its cool blue, a triple-layered
sacrifice to the sun,

which finally drove us, panting, over the fence
into the dark, spotted shade of our valley.

We ran to the stream and in one movement tore off
shoes and socks and leapt into its shallow current.

Only the discovery of a mud swallow's nest in
the bank of the stream could have tempted us away
from the splashing, and we carefully lifted the four,
pink, paper-skinned, open-beaked, marble-eyed infants

from their nest and placed them on a rock around
which the water rippled with a tiny whisper.
Only Margo got sick when it was her turn to bring
the flattened branch down on her choice of the victims.

But afterwards, when the rest of us had scooped out
a neat hole in the sand and then covered it over
with stones, she felt better when we let her carve
in soft bark with a stick, "Birds."

Diane Peich



KATHY COLAMECO

NATHAN

He is a bee
depositing magnetic letters
in the flowers between the sofa cushions
alphabet blocks
in my briefcase (to bear fruit at work).
He never leaves.

He is a scientist
experimenting wildly
with marbles and Fisher Price people
in the removable basin of the potty chair.
He never stops.

He is a dancer
patting his chest
in a circular dance.
He always disappears.

He is a native from a foreign land,
the unfamiliar object dropped
from the now familiar body,
He always leaves behind . . .

Jill Rouke



UNTITLED

I would never acknowledge the pull of the sea
 til today
--seeing the Canadian geese in the mist on the reservoir--
when the ocean off Vancouver Island
 tugged me gently from my car.

The smell comes back,
 is echoed in the briny smell
 of the menses.

My son's head smelled like that
 when they pulled him from me.
For a week that salty smell clung
 to his head

Despite repeated washings
 in fresh soft water.

I cannot get that sea smell
 from my mind:
Today I am forced to acknowledge it,
 these geese today
 that sea smell
 swaying and pulling me back.

Jill Rouke



UNTITLED

Let the sun create you
and warm the golden sands
on which you lay.

Let the winds create you
and finish off the words
you never say.

Let the rains create you
and waken the archives
of your mind.

Let the moon create you
and guide your fingers
when you are blind.

Candice A. Savage



EARTH BUOY

Bright starlit floater
Tethered here through earth's span
Hold fast our storm-lashed vessel
Rock gently through forever. . .

D.J. Ammon

LEGENDS

The massive gates of iron loomed before him like old arthritic fingers, gnarled and mangled from years of use and neglect. A chill at the base of his spine began to spread throughout him, quickly and without warning, until his body shook with violent tremors. And then it stopped. A cold wind jostled his hair and kissed his cheeks, breaking the mesmerizing hold the cemetery had over him. He took deep, long breaths in hope that this would sober his thoughts. He began to curse his drinking cohorts for the unfair advantage they took of him in his inebriated state. For years they had been trying to goad him into this wager. His profound terror of the cemetery was well known, and he made no attempt to conceal it. But to-night terror had momentarily been forgotten for the price of five, twenty dollar bills. He began another litany of curses, but this time at his own stupidity.

He was a child of seven when his father, a masterful storyteller, had placed him before the cast iron stove, night after night, and had woven macabre tales of forgotten and revengeful souls, of spirits and demonic possession, of evil and death. He could still envisage the tobacco juice oozing out of the side of his father's mouth as he became ensnared in the excitement of his own fiction. Every legend, every story, every detail was burned into his impressionable young mind, filling him with so many morbid images that a blatant neurosis was the only defense mechanism left to him. His own incertitude with the supernatural had been encapsulated, symbolically, by a graveyard.

The moon was covered by blankets of clouds. Night had never seemed so black to him before. He moved by half steps with the unsure footing of a blind man. One step, two steps, painfully, laggardly, with the dry grass crushing under his feet the only audible sound. In his nervousness, he began to reassure himself. All he had to do was to get from one end of the graveyard to the other. Each step in was a step closer to being out. It all made perfectly logical sense. Why couldn't he believe it?

The steps became inches until he could not move anymore. It all seemed like a cruel apocalyptic hoax. Paranoia constricted his every muscle. He was certain that with another step forward he would be falling into the abyss of an open grave. He knew Satanic

forces were waiting to suck him into the bowels of the earth. His palms became cradles of sweat, and perspiration formed on his forehead faster than the night air could evaporate it. He began to whimper, "Oh God, oh God." Panic had surged within him to such a degree that it had solidified in his throat. It became thicker and thicker until he thought he would regurgitate.

He stood in that spot for what seemed like hours, not daring to move. He inhaled deep, long, cautious breaths, and they were beginning to have a pacifying effect. His muscles started to relax somewhat, and his tempestuous apprehensions were easing. Again he began to reassure himself. How far could he be from the exit? A hundred yards? Seventy five? In his momentary excitement at the prospect of being released from his mental hell, his legs began to move. At first it was by inches, then feet, then yards. He began to run . . . faster . . . faster . . . faster . . . forty yards . . . sixty yards . . . one hundred yards . . . one hundred and fifty yards. Again terror began to build in the pit of his stomach, burning like a fiery poker. His reason disintegrated as he realized his calculations were false. But he kept running . . . and running. . .

And then it grabbed him!

It happened so quickly, totally unexpected, yet fully expected, that he reacted with instinct and wheeled around to face his attacker. His eyes saw nothing. But he knew it was there.

It slashed at his body with the swiftness and ferocity of a samurai's sword, slicing deep into his cheeks, lips, and throat. The insidious phantom quickly surrounded him, keeping it's tenacious grip on him. It continued to tear at him like a thousand sharpened fingernails, puncturing his skin, shredding his flesh. Tears, welling in his eyes, became cataracts, obscuring his vision completely. Devoid of all sanity, he punched aimlessly at the midnight air, only to meet another razor's edge.

His screams eradicated the stillness of the night. "You bastards! You bastards!" His words were echoed over and over, sounding like a defective record, until they were no more than a faint gargle in his throat. The miniature knives began a renewed and more vigorous attack. They began to claw at his chest. He felt a pain growing deep within him, burning and becoming more acute. It wanted his heart. Of this he was certain. But he did not retaliate. Instead, a strange numbness took control of him. The warmth of his own blood, covering him like a crimson coat, felt good. He began to sink slowly to the ground. The demons he had feared his entire life he did not have to fear anymore. They had won.

It was a first grader, taking the short cut to school, who first noticed that something was wrong. He saw the tattered threads of clothing, still wet and dripping with blood, hanging from the thorns of the immense brier bush. He approached it apprehensively. In the very thick of the huge bush lay the scarred form of a dead man, his skin ripped open, exposing folds of raw flesh. A brigade of ants maneuvered about him freely, taking a quick survey of their breakfast. The dead man's face was twisted and distorted, the dry blood becoming a red plaster that kept a look of horror permanently sealed there. His eyeballs were rolled back into his head, leaving only a white, milky substance garnished with miniature bloody tributaries at the corners.

The child began a violent retching, vomiting screams of help. He felt the strong hands of another human trying to pry him from his spot, but his body, acting as if it was encased in cement, refused to budge. His eyes etched every gruesome detail into his brain. This was something that he would never forget. The bloody body, the picnicking insects, the repulsive eyeballs, the frozen look of horror. The dead man was something that would bring repeated nightmares to him.

He heard the paramedic tell someone that the old man apparently walked into the brier bush, panicked, and suffered a fatal heart attack. But the child knew better. He was certain that no one dies because he walks into a bush of thorns. There was some kind of evil in the cemetery, an evil of which he had to warn his brother and sister, his future children, and his children's children about.

He ran out of the cemetery as fast as he could, making a vow to himself to rise ten minutes earlier each morning--the extra minutes that was necessary to take the long way to school.

Kathleen Cook

MIRROR

The moment faded to the unchanged scene,
The ice of reality won't melt from a dream.
Entrapped too long in the coldness of steel,
A mind tends to stagnate, forgets how to feel.
Bars on my window, lines on my face,
Deep-rooted emotions for time gone to waste.
Too many I've hurt, now the hurts coming back.
To lose a friend's love, is the true heart attack.
Bitter-sweet memories torture my brain,
Pushing me closer to the world of insane.
Why did I do it? Will I do it again?
Denied suicide, God says it is a sin.
If you know what I feel, then you feel what I know.
Did I fall through the mirror, reversing the flow?
My body pressed hard against the reflectory glass.
The way isn't easy, but it's the way I must pass.
Each time I lose brings a new time to try.
I'll continue to live, because my spirit won't die.

Mark Van Tassel



REFLECTIONS

On Heartbreak

A tossed stone
 barely ripples the lake's surface
 as it enters,
just as the blind one
 barely disturbs her lover
 when she plunges.

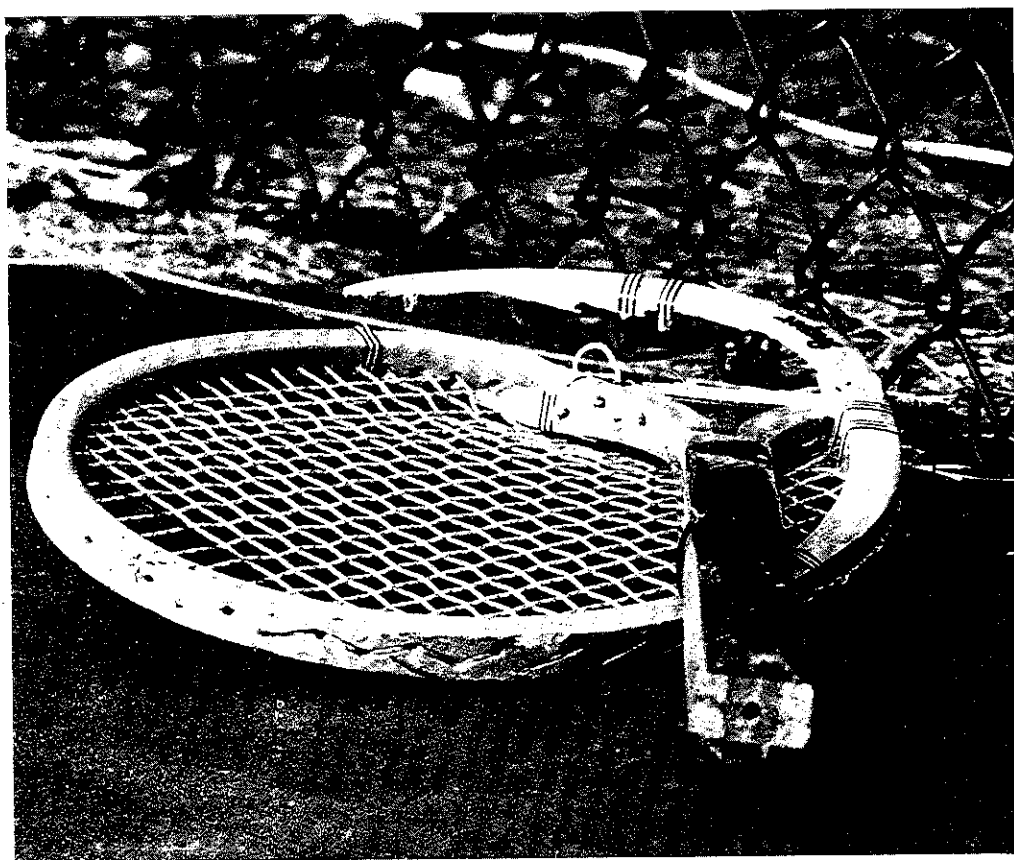
On Tenacity

Then there are those
 who fasten onto life
 like birds of prey
(while minds strain to harness spirits)
 in order to enjoy
 intact
sweet entrails of discovery.

On Discovery

Speechless,
 I pull my reply
 from under cluttered wonderings
 where response lies
(carefully wrapped to prevent bruising)
 and examine
 in light of
 this dawn.

D.J. Ammon



DIANE WEISS

THE APPOINTMENT

As a silent, slender, steady rain rushed down from the ebony sky, Myra regretted having made the appointment for later that evening. She gazed through her third-floor apartment window into the dark, puddle-filled alleyway below. Staring at a light on the rear of a building on the far side of the alley, she could see that the rain continued to fall. With only a week's worth of unemployment compensation remaining, there was no question about it - - Myra desperately wanted, and more to the point, needed the job with the Conrad & Ellison Art Gallery in Manhattan. After four years of undergraduate school and two of graduate, it was time to find a job directly related to her art education. No longer would the odd jobs as waitress, clerk and receptionist do. Myra anxiously paced back and forth in front of the window, periodically checking the light across the alley. She smoked one menthol cigarette after another, lighting each with the red, burnt-down butt of the old. Vaguely worried, and annoyed with the notion of travelling in the rain, Myra finally broke pace, went to the stereo cabinet, selected her favorite recording of Beethoven's "Sonata Pathétique" and, careful not to touch the record with her fingers, gently lowered it onto the turntable. She then dressed for the interview.

Across town in a fifth-story tenement, a woman of short stature stepped from her leaky shower into a stained, dingy, yellow terrycloth robe which was missing most of its buttons and was torn at one pocket. "A fine night it is to be called to work the counter, Hannie," said the woman to no one in particular save an overfed calico cat that stared intently at her as she continued to converse with herself. "Six years I've been workin' that crummy joint, but do they hesitate to call me out on a crappy night like tonight? Nah, course not, the rotten, miserable bastards," moaned Hannie. She brushed her bottom teeth and upper denture, took a last draw on her Camel cigarette, flicked it into the toilet, and gave each underarm a hasty swipe with the roll-on before climbing into her ratty, pink uniform. Quickly, she crumpled up her apron, stuffed it in her purse, shut off the lights and, with only one arm in her raincoat, rushed out the door, forgetting to lock it as usual.

As she hastened down the stairs she wondered to herself whether or not this drab, miserable existence would end and how. Maybe she'd get married yet or take a few night courses at the local high school to get a better paying job? Her grandmother had always stressed the fact that you never knew what was waiting around the corner for you.

The headlights of cars and buses mingled with the streetlights and danced on the wet roads and sidewalks, skipping about, bouncing off storefront windows and making it difficult to see. Lights on wet roads could sometimes play strange tricks on the eyes. It was several hours past rush hour and Myra and Hannie were both thinking the same thing as they rushed towards their respective destinations--sensible people stayed at home on nights like this instead of travelling around in the rain and fog, asking for a cold or, worse yet, pneumonia.

Carelessly neglecting to look both ways before crossing the busy road, she started across. The car seemed to appear suddenly from nowhere. She tried to step backwards but found herself frozen from fear and mesmerized by the oncoming headlights. The driver of the car was hunched forward, squinting her eyes and struggling against the dancing, shifting lights. By the time she spotted the woman, she knew by the sick feeling in her stomach and by the tightness in her throat that it was too late. As she hit the brakes with both feet, she yearned for the woman to step back into safety. But instead, she remained motionless. The car careened into the woman, making a loud thump and throwing her against the windshield and over the roof of the car into the road. A cigarette flew from the woman's hand and landing in a puddle near the sidewalk slowly hissed, sizzling out.

D.B. Haganir

RAE

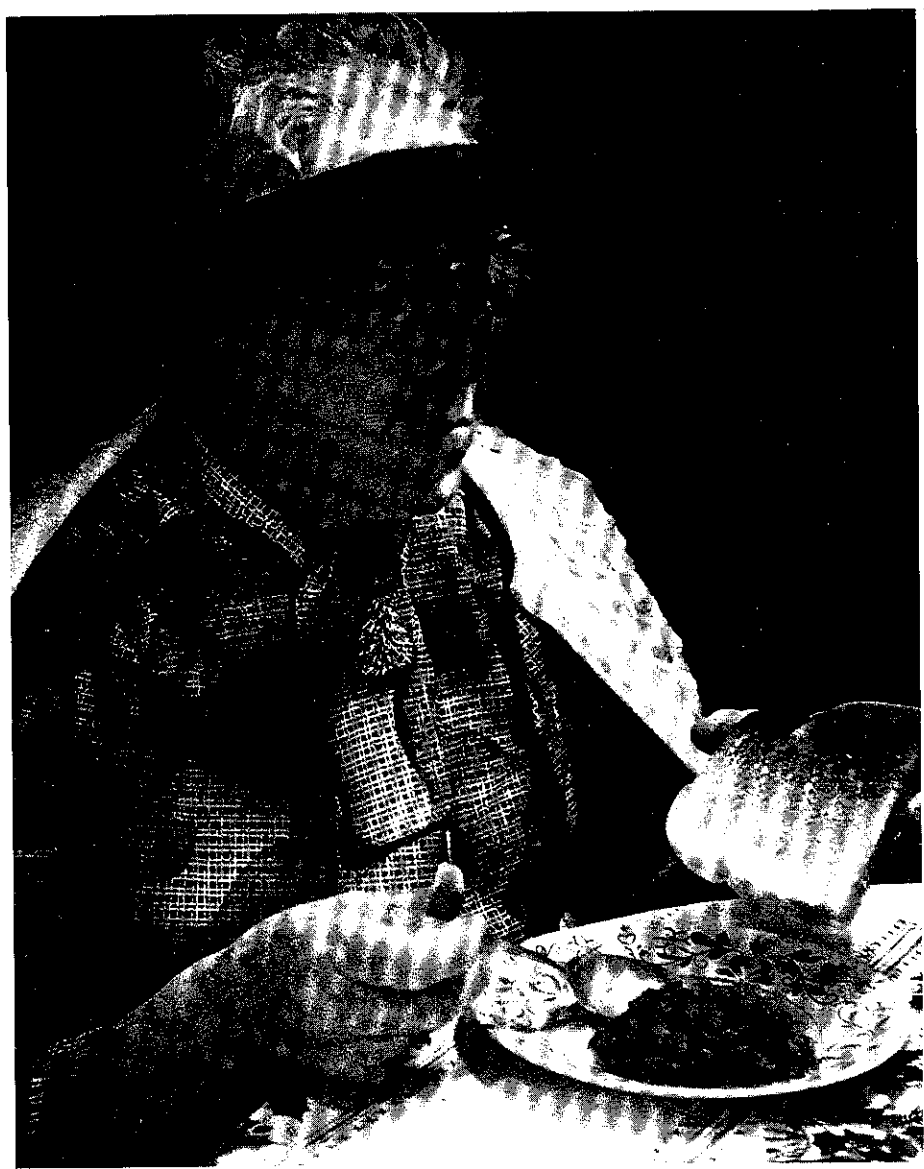
Crass as a child,
Innocence and beauty.
None I have known
Save that of a babe.

Filigree of bronze,
Amber and tan.
Simplicity, kindness,
Ire and bliss.

O, how it tears
like a fire within,
To remember how
It might have been.

Edward J. Barney



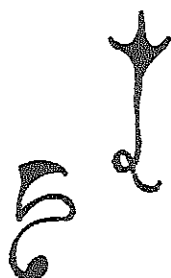


D. B. HUGANIR / LARRY MOULDER

LIFELINES

Consider the lives
measured in milligrams,
lined up on kitchen sills
in brown and orange bottles,
filled with pretty pills,
facing west
waving farewell
and wallowing in the last of the sun,
which
wearily sets itself
into
 the
 night.

D.B. Haganir



A PARTY

two Zen lunatics stand drinking in a corner
one will say anything and will promptly be knocked down
Blake fanatics sit on the sofa playing with the lamp
one will sometimes rise, cover the lamp with his coat
and smile to the other who sometimes does the same
one fellow who believes that we should surrender to peyote
tribes sits swirling his cigarette in shifting ellipses
two couples are sitting in an "O" box playing pinochle
four serious-looking fellows discuss Kafka, Heidegger,
Jaspers and Camus, overusing the word "predicament"
a short, bearded fellow with perfectly round spectacles
nods to himself while reading Lenin, periodically fingering
the .357 magnum in his pocket and shooting suspicious glances
i wonder how i'll get home tonight?

Michael C. Duff



UNTITLED

In a vacant room
filled with Dylan, Springsteen,
and a couple of Stones,
A life was held in suspension
by
two streaming strands
of red thread.
On the noisy street below
a drunken Foreigner sat
and watched a stray cat
rummage through secondhand
trashcans.
The stale siren of an ambulance
echoed and bounced
off the grimy buildings,
As the thread
slowly weaved in and out
of the warp of time. . .
creating a shroud.
His world had turned into
an auto-mated surreality
where all the machines
were As Cold As Ice.
He reached for the moon
by standing on a guitar,
disregarding his unsteady
footing on the vibrating strings.
Now . . .
the moon is in his reach
and his guitar
is as quiet as he,
For the bloody cloak is woven
and he is now
the
Star Rider. . .

Karin Hudy

UNTITLED

Brisk winds of autumn
Send leaves trembling to the ground,
Filling harvest skies
With fleeting summer memories
And a hint of dying life.

Amie Volpe



THE TEENAGE MAPLE

As I gaze o'er windowed sink, momentarily disregarding the urgency of soiled china, dusty cupboard and bickering child, I look for solace to the ever-constant yet ever-changing maple tree.

So tiny she was at first that my hand encircled her waist as I loosened her burlap, freeing her roots to wriggle and to explore the rich soil of her new home. Not yet sure of her footing, she was thrashed to the ground by a ruthless wind. Planted again, firmly but tenderly, she now stretches taller than the house and completely dominates my view. Yet, despite her size, she is but a teenager, constantly changing her dress.

Her body swells with the surge of sap and sends it tingling to each delicate fingertip. Her buds unfurl and form a swaying curtain of pale-green lace against the sky. And it is spring.

In the early summer she baby-sits for a family of sparrows and cradles the young high out of reach of a neighboring cat. She wears gaudy, oversized, birdfeeder earrings and supports the restless, probing six-year-old cavorting from limb to limb. She shades the picnic area and silently endures the heat and smoke emitted by man's amateurish attempts at outdoor cookery. Her straight, slender body becomes a backrest for the garden bench at her base. The stout clothesline girded 'round her waist is but a spiderweb of restraint as she willingly suspends the wash.

In the sultry, humid air she stands motionless, her dust-laden leaves outstretched, impatiently awaiting the rain. Then, with rain-drops singing through her branches, she sways rhythmically to and fro, thoroughly enjoying her shower.

Carelessly now she tosses aside her summer dress. One by one her leaves flick downward, some dark green, some the color of garden mums. Robins drop in to chat with her on their journey southward. Teasingly she catches a low-flying kite and holds it just beyond the reach of its energetic owner.

Then all too soon, she stands gracefully naked, her black bareness etched against the pale, winter's sky. Snow encrusts her armpits and fills to overflow her only vestige of clothing - the birdfeeders. The

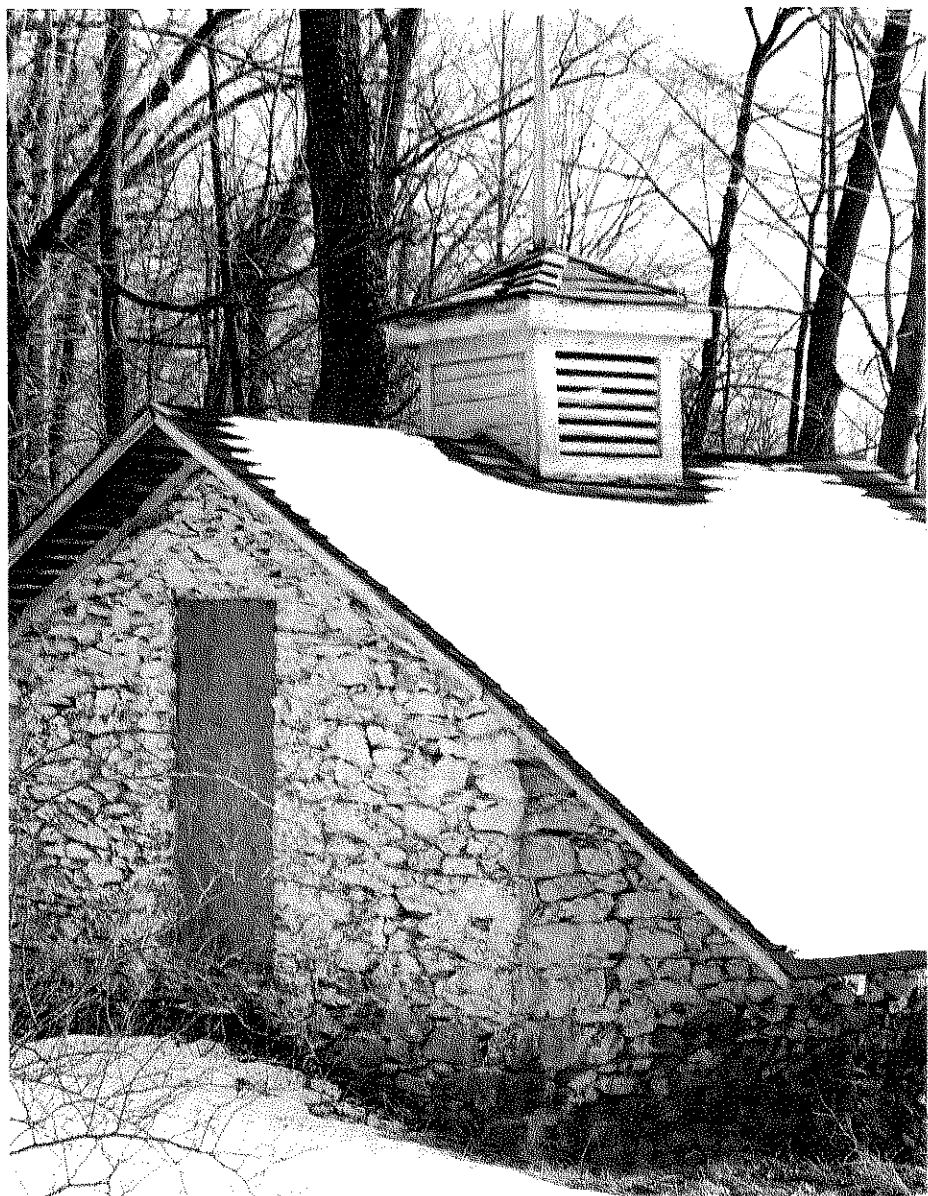
splashy cardinal and nagging jay complain because the sunflower seed is buried beneath the snow. But the maple tree pays the cold no heed, for she is quietly sleeping in rapt anticipation of the coming spring.

However, time will change the maple tree. She will not always be a teenager. Her body, like mine, will become firm and full with maturity as she watches her own gangly offspring shoot up beyond the hedge. Slender young arms will become strong and capable enough to support a treehouse cocoon filled with shouting boys. The bird feeders will wear wedding ring indentations around her outstretched fingers. Squirrels will scamper to and fro in the safety of her great height and a rope swing will gnaw at a stout, lower limb. Her finely textured skin will be scarred by the cruel incisions of initialing penknives.

Still, the maple tree will endure. Her ever-broadening shade will shelter my grandchildren at Sunday picnics. And I, more slowly then, will gather her scattered clothing and again store it neatly in the compost. From the warmth of my kitchen, I will admire her cold, quiet strength as she waits out yet another winter. For long after I'm gone and the garden bench has crumbled with decay, the maple tree will silently yet joyously usher in the spring.

Bernice Webb





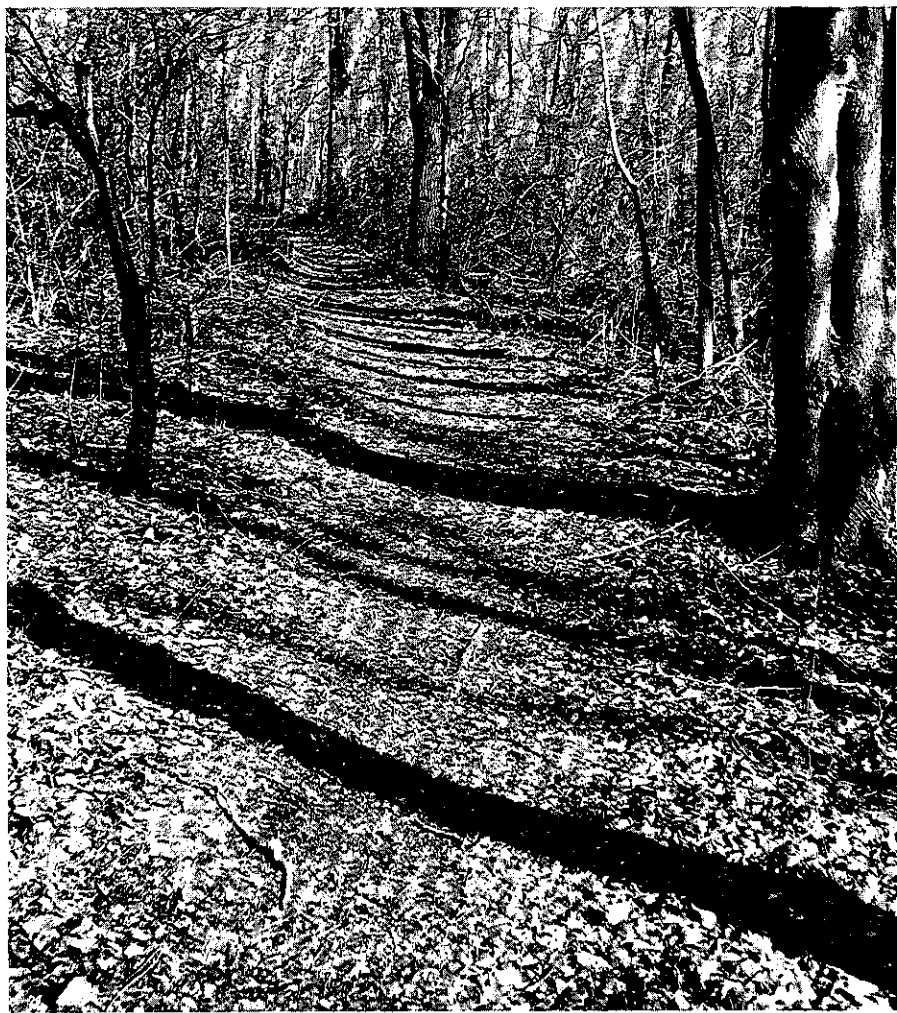
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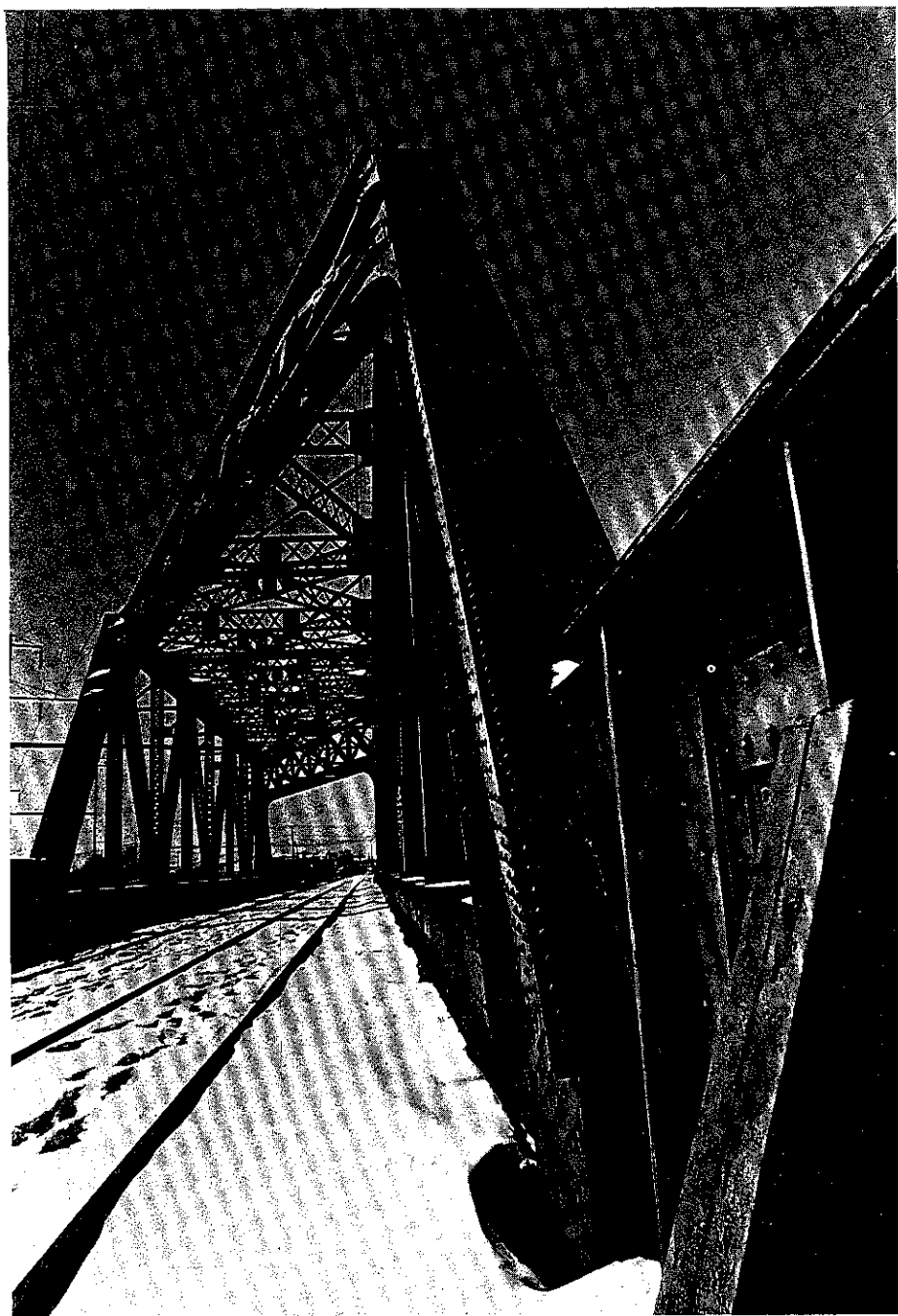
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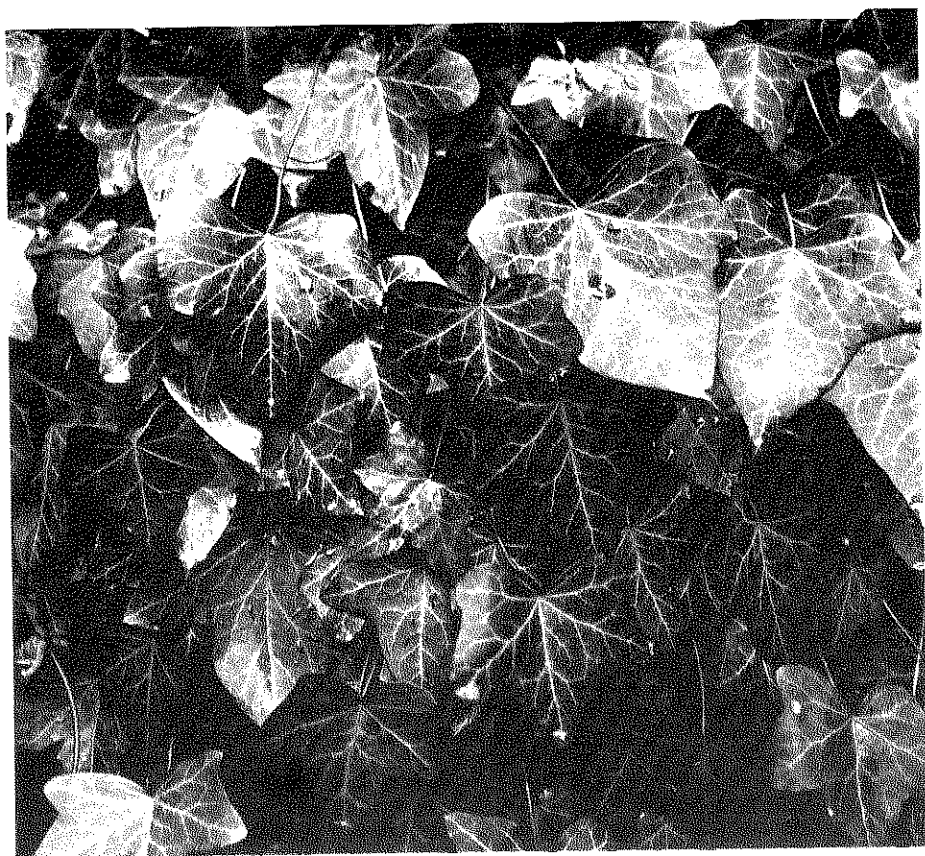
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