THE IDOL

UM I21 1999

THE IDOL

1999

PUBLISHED BY:
THE STUDENTS OF UNION COLLEGE SINCE 1928

CO-EDITORS IN CHIEF

CHRISTINE BOWER AND AAREN HATALSKY
LARRY GUTMAN, ASSISTANT EDITOR IN CHIEF

EXECUTIVE EDITORS

AAREN HATALSKY, LITERARY
CHRISTINE BOWER, ARTS
STEPHANIE SIENKIEWICZ AND MARY FUREY, ADVERTISING
BRENDA PHELPS, PUBLISHING

LITERARY ASSOCIATE EDITORS

ANDREA LA PIETRA
SETH MADISON
MARIUS CALIN
JONATHAN YARKONY
AMY PANDYA
MICHAEL S. MCGUIRE
COURTNEY HAYDEN
MARY FUREY
ANNA HURST

ARTS ASSOICIATE EDITORS

COREY SILKEN
JOSIE GLUCK
BECKI DANCHIK
BRENDA PHELPS
GENEVIEVE GRAHAM

SPECIAL THANKS TO
CAPITAL PRINTING • MARC LAGER

Aaren Hatalsky "Crazy Hindrance Man"

A Note from the Editors

As graduating seniors affiliated with *The Idol* for three years, we are especially proud to present our 71st edition. We have seen many dedicated members come and go, and we applaud the efforts of all those individuals who have helped us achieve our goal—representing Union's creative and talented student body. We hope that this tradition, beginning in 1928, will continue far into the future.

The Idol staff would like to thank and congratulate the contributors to this year's journal. We regret that all of our submissions could not appear in this issue as we have limited space, but we are grateful to all of the artists and writers who shared their work with us. It is our hope that by reading this collection, the Union College community will be inspired and reminded of the importance of maintaining a forum for creative interaction.

Congratulations to all.

Christine Bower
Aaren Hatalsky

Co-Editors

Table of Contents

Christine Bower	*Jenn & Andy 1999*	FC
Michal Sofka	*Untitled*	BC
Aaren hatalsky	*Crazy Hindrance Man*	II
Scott Dicks	*Untitled*	VI

Literary: Part I

Josie Gluck	*A cry from me*	2
Mike Webb	*Rout 3*	9
D. Shayne Aldrich	*A Sick Pleasure*	10
Jonathan Yarkony	*Per Aspera Ad Astra*	11
Donny Johnson	*U-N-I-O-N*	12
Aaren hatalsky	*Schism*	14
Amy Pandya	*Sands*	18
Marius Calin	*In the hour of contempt*	19
Duncan c. Crary	*the shade*	20
Alex Chase	*Forbidden Flame*	21
Michael S. McGuire	*Some Other Time*	22
Emily Wood	*Untitled*	23
Professor Ed Pavlic	*You Sound Unseen*	24

Art Submissions:

Andrew Tsiropinas	*Untitled*	26
Autumn Renn	*Untitled*	27
Becki Danchick	*Untitled*	28
Deana Grattan	*Untitled*	29
Betsy Pekin	*Untitled*	30
Scott Dicks	*Untitled*	31
Clark Smyth	*Untitled*	32
Deana Grattan	*Untitled*	33
Mike Mosall	*Untitled*	34
Douglas Seder	*Untitled*	35

Table of Contents

Emily Wood	*Untitled*	36
Genevieve Graham	*Untitled*	37
Jacqueline Eatz	*Untitled*	38
Meghan Mumford	*Untitled*	39
Michal Sofka	*Untitled*	40
Mike Mosall	*Untitled*	41
Mike Pingpank	*Untitled*	42
Veronica Sack	*Lake District*	43
Betsy Pekin	*Untitled*	44
Bill Servant	*Untitled*	45
Garrett Brown	*Untitled*	46
Veronica Sack	*Willa*	47
Erika Mancini	*Untitled*	48
Becki Danchik	*Untitled*	49
Aaron Seliger	*Untitled*	50

Literary: Part II

Amy Pandya	*Good Poetry*	52
Marius Calin	*Untitled*	54
Kafi Sanders	*Woman Liberated*	55
Duncan Crary	*bird in hand*	56
Mike Webb	*Urania's Bastard Child*	59
Anonymous	*Peripheral Murder*	60
Seth Madison	*Marcus Eating Dinner With His Friends*	62
D. Shayne Aldrich	*The Basement*	66
Jonathan Yarkony	*Still Life with Memory*	67
Aaren Hatalsky	*Cursive*	68
Alana Benoit	*The B-Bop Train Done Left Me Behind*	71

Scott Dicks "Untitled"

THE IDOL

1999

LITERARY PART I

"You're about to be told one more time that you're America's most valuable natural resource...
Have you seen what they do to America's natural resources?
Have you seen a strip mine?
Have you seen a clear cut in the forest?
Have you seen a polluted river?
Don't ever let them call you a valuable natural resource.
They're gonna strip mine your soul
They're gonna clear cut your best thoughts for the sake of profit
unless you learn to resist because the profit system follows the path of the least resistance and following the path of the least resistance is
what makes a river crooked.
hmm."[1]

I feel guilty because I am a human.
I am confused because I see humans hurt nature, but I know that humans are a part of nature.

It's the humans that deny a land ethic, those "self-called creators"[2] who refuse to understand their role as "creatures;"[3]
it's the people who separate themselves from nature that make me feel guilty for being human. But it's also me, because as I ponder Leopold's proposal, consider myself a creature and question the quirks of my species, I disrespect the earth.
I litter cigarettes,
eat packaged slaughter-house poultry,
and watch TV.
I can't escape the question that I fear is becoming the excuse:
Aren't humans a part of nature?

I don't know my role in the whole.
My culture doesn't even know the cue.

I am a member of this sad culture, but I want to be a solid part of nature. I want to work to live off her resources, and I want to feel her use me back.

use me.
abuse me.
suck me dry.
disease me.
displease me.
don't even try.
neglect me.
infect me.
watch me cry.

She stays silent, still and solemn.

[1] Utah Phillips, "Natural Resources," Track 9, The Past Didn't Go Anywhere
[2] Berry, p. 9, What are People For?
[3] Berry, p. 9, What are People For?

cont'd.

Beaten and broken.
Sliced and stolen.
Her weapon is our own creation.
Population
Pollution
Her creation is our weapon.

Population.
Evolution.
Our confusion
Human delusion.
"Land is not merely soil."[4]
It is a "community"
we are members
simply "creatures" with human features.

The ecosystem
encompasses
everything.
A mutual relationship is called for. A "mutual autonomy"[5] is needed not only between humans and animals, but between humans and all the land community.
"Enjoy the land, but own it not"[6]

"We call out — and the land calls back"[7]
I can't tell the difference.
Are we calling to the land?
Is she calling to us?

We use her, but do we even call first?
Our call is selfish, we're fair-weather friends, and high maintenance, too.
Her call must be for help.
We expect and accept her help, but we refuse her ours.
We are too proud to listen to her cry.
Why should we even listen, if we're human and humans are natural and nature is in us so what we do to nature is therefore natural and we shouldn't alter the course of nature?
Justified.

So why conserve?
"The enterprise of conservation is a revolution,
an evolution
of the spirit."[8]

[4] Leopold, p. 216, A Sand County Almanac
[5] Hearne, "How to Say Fetch," Adam's Task
[6] Thoreau, "Baker Farm," p. 233, Walden
[7] Williams, "Yellostone: The Erotics of Place," p. 82, An Unspoken Hunger
[8] Williams, "The Erotics of Place," p. 82 An Unspoken Hunger

cont'd ☞

Revolution. Evolution.
Conservation. Revolution. Evolution.
"Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land."[9]
"In wildness is the preservation of the world."[10]

What is this sick trick?
What is nature?
Is humanity
and all its insanity
a part of nature?
I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
We are composed of natural elements.
Elementary
Childish
Children

Nature is a perpetual child
Nature is the "mother of humanity"[11]
Nature is so tangible, physical that you can make contact.
Why is it so abstract?
Find the wild
with your hidden child
Hide there. Think.
Seek out details. Blink.
You missed it.
The moment.
The present became the past.
Contact
"pat the puppy"[12]
Where am I?
I was here. I was part. I was a mandatory link in the chain.

Until I remembered I am human

I am guilty.
I think I am harming a nature.
I dropped the cherry from my cigarette on her skin.
It fizzled, charred and dimmed
after I ground it into the ground with my shoe.
Burned.
My leather shoe
By my command
With a rubber sole
What Soul?
strip mined.

My command.

[9] Leopold, p. 207 A Sand County Almanac
[10] Thoreau, p. 390. "Walking"
[11] Thoreau, "Spring," p. 332. Walden
[12] Dillard, "The Present," p. 78. Pilgrim at Tinker Creek

cont'd.

I didn't understand. I lacked the "right to command"[13]
I don't understand. The language of the land.
I am guilty of ignorance.
"Rely on ignorance."[14]
Ignorance is bliss...

Justified.
Stripped mind.

Teach me
"The teachers are everywhere."[15]

If all the ignorant get taught
who is ignorant
where is hope
what happens to bliss?

"Too much power, too little knowledge."[16]

Power is an illusion
We do not possess power
or strength
at length
in the wilderness
We need tools
tools for fools
Guns and shoes
or else we lose.

Face it.
We are physically frail.
A chain is only as strong as its weakest link.
We can think. But we can't know.
We can speak. So?
"Nature's silence is its one remark."[17]

Can you talk like a rock?
Can you think like a mountain?

You only think
you think
like you think a mountain
would think.

What would you think
if you were a mountain

[13] Hearne, p. 46, "How to say Fetch"
[14] Berry, "Healing," p. 13, What are People For?
[15] Berry, "Healing," p. 13, What are People For?
[16] Berry, "Damage," p. 5, What are People For?
[17] Dillard, p. 69, Teaching a Stone to Talk

cont'd. ☞

fantastic with awesome sublimity
Hard. Raw. Real.
calm with graceful beauty.
lush, young, pure.
injured by the ignorance of hunters,
who killed the wild "green fire"[18] behind the wolf's eye.
whose ignorance weakened the mountain's community
the mountain's land
ecosystem.
food chain
the weakest link
who didn't think like a mountain would think.

now I carry the burden of those who thought
they knew.

Humanity.
Let me out.

I want nothing to do with you.
Nature
"Bring sanity
to [my] insane life"[19]
of humanity.

Let me see
Let me be
letting you be.
Nature.

I am nature.
Nature is in me. I am in nature. Humanity is in nature.
I hate humanity,
false power
misguided thought
blind fool
Don't know where to look
at your-self.

Urge to control
Desire to demand
Careless and cruel
Have some respect
detect
the power of nature.

Ever changing

[18] Leopond, "Thinking Like a Mountain," p. 283, Wilderness Reader
[19] Stegner, "Wilderness Letter," p. 239, Wilderness Reader

cont'd.

Communal living
Land pyramid.
She calls to us while we call to her in "the ecosystem.
The echo-system."[20]

Forgiving nature, forever accepting our apology.
Her arms are open
to her child Humanity
whose arms are stiff and cold to
nature's perpetual childhood.
Innocence.
Ignorance.

I am a human.
I feet guilty.
I use nature.
I think about her (like a human)
I analyze her (I can't stop)
I break her and take her
But she won't be broken
And if she hurts she will heal
because she is nature and nature is all powerful and nature will never die because nature will prevail.

Justified.

Unless she's already dead. Unless we've already killed her.
By contact
By breathing,
By inventing
By being
Evolving
Revolving
Around the endless cycle of the chain.

I'm on a guilt trip and I'm
Freaking out.
I am bad.

Humanity is bad.
Selfish
Selfish
Confused
Amused.

Nature take your course. Purge your system.
Ecosystem
Echo-system.

[20] Williams, p. 82, An Unspoken Reader

cont'd. ☞

Cleanse your soul
strip mined.

Free me
Leave me
Alone
Let me
Be me
Alone
Love me
Keep me
Alone

Stop trying
I'm dying

Nature I'm sorry for what we've done
Nature I'm not the only one
Nature I'm trying to come clean
Nature I'm mean
Nature I mean what I say
Nature let me free of human ways.

Stop trying
I'm dying
You're prying
and lying
I'm dying
I'm crying.
You're deaf.

I walk along hard city streets
on feet misshapen by restricting shoes.
I pass by thousands I'll never meet
and I sleep in a room –
a restricting tomb.
The walls close in upon my soul
and hold back my silent screams.
A clock sits ticking on my wrist
allotting time for work and dreams.

I can buy clothes and tunes
and even cars
from salesmen only known by phone.
Exchanging a product we've never seen,
we seal the deal with a cellular handshake.
And I wait,
faceless as they,
hoping they'll be fair,
doubting they care.

I escape these city walls
and, watchless,
forget time.
I live near few enough to know
them all by sight and guess their minds.

I escape and I run...
barefoot...
howling...
feral...
free.

Trapped in a web
consisting of fiber
that doesn't exist at all
I'm trapped in a web
of favors and pleasures
designed for the purpose of increasing measures
and decreasing displeasures
by dispersing the measures
still retaining the perfect balance of it all
and that's all
there's no best without worst
or most without least
acknowledging either will validate me
and salivate me
while yearning for something to satisfy me
because without desire existence can't be
existence must be a sick pleasure for me.

Another empty page staring at me draws me once again to the aesthetic pleasure of a pen scratching across the paper. Once again I wonder why I write, letting my ego dissolve and the pen be my defense (mechanism). I want to, but cannot quite explain, so I keep on writing into the void filling a long stretch of toilet paper with ideas not forgotten but of no consequence, only trying to keep clean of the germs that breed increasingly in the bowels of my mind. Thinking of Newton, Darwin, Marlowe maybe, Donne and Deliverance. Just trying to be a citizen of nowhere in particular, a particular nowhere that offers me a temporary home. Always reaching out for friends when not searching for words because friends are so much simpler. Watching the sky when I walk home at night, at home in the night, a home yet found, hoping the stars will dance their patterns and reveal the secrets of the universe, the secret of time. In La Mancha now they make wine with white labels so that the drops escaping the goblet spill, slide, and make veins on the label where windmills are only windmills. Wine with black ink, whiskey with watercolor, beer, black, in a clear glass. Parc Guell, Casa Batllo, more places I wanted to be, was, and was not disappointed, expectations dimmed by broad, rambling avenues and inattention. Why complain about being lost when that is the only path. It is the Way. There are moments of beauty and pain in that wide labyrinth, rejected beauty and unavoidable pain. Band-Aids for pain and blinders for beauty, lest we forget we are ugly. Answers to questions we have not asked and dull recriminations for unwanted information. Questions to answers, constantly changing, from night to day and subtle shifts of moon and stars. Reality is only a memory stretching back from a moment not called now. Memory is the past, memory is imagination, memory is the future. The one thing we have that makes us unique is nothing at all, that nothing being everything we cannot say. As we grow, so does memory, pushing imagination aside and dimming its light till we are blind old fools, stuck in our ways and memories, stuck in the dreams that stopped changing with us.

Give me a U

I hope that U see how we're bred to live
Senseless individuals that use 1/16th of their common sense.
U
Upon observation one will understand what U go through.
A community of liars, racists, back stabbers & alcoholics, drug addicts and underachievers.
Hmm. America's future.
On a path to success.

Give me an N.
Niggas
Oops. Negro.
I apologize. Minorities.
A people that possess so much within-
Yet let the outside tear them apart.
Internally diseased
Distorted because my conscious
Thinks twice.
Exposed by the lifestyle in which they lead.
Let's look at a few specimens.

You've got your: fake ass gangsta
Timb boots
Baggy Jeans
Bubble Jacket
He walks with extra emotion
on a daily basis.

cont'd.

He quotes the words of his master
Like a Christian does the bible:

Money Cash Hoes (4x's)

Where my niggas is at? (4x's)

Where my bitches is at? (4x's)

What, What, What (Too many times)

What?

The repetitiveness of this tune gave me headaches.
It made me realize.
Complicate minds only deal with complicated issues.
And a large percent soak in this environment as the real world,
Like a roll of Scott tissue.
It's only purpose to clean up your shit.

Do U need to wash your ass?

I denounce
the fate of delving
in vain
once driven
to ineluctable indulgences
{like the heat of sleep breath}
that eliminate
my chances to deliberate
on most rational choices
when you and I
deserve to be together
but cannot.

I crave
your soft words
skimming
skin off
the top layer
of my sanity
until all the rulers
in the world
can't straighten
my shaky lines,
until all the handbooks
in the world
can't illuminate
the patterns
scrawled out by
blunt pencil tips
in my nefarious
left-handed way.

The tips of my digits
will still touch
surfaces that have nothing
in common with you
and feel you,
and all the rules
of all the rulers
in the world
are proven totally
and soulfully unnecessary-
in halogen or sunlight
on hot sweaty one sheet evenings
or chilled woolly blanket mornings.

Rikers. 10 jails. In one, 2500
black faces, 10,000 hopes and
dreams. And they wonder why
'niggers' get radical.

alone
brother,
eighteen years of trying to sever
the bond
eighteen years of rising up,
being that good ol' role model,
not looking down, at the faces that
cried, forgetting I was one of those
faces, still am
brother,
working so hard to prove that he
could make it
I stepped back.
markings on a pad, lyrics flying out his mouth
like water, music, on the side
Swollen lips.
'cause that didn't make pockets fatter
neither did 5.50 an hour,
but it was his.
Blacker eyes.
brother,
being screwed over, misunderstood, struggling
as I struggled, only,
I couldn't see that then, too fucking focused
on proving…
I stepped by,
my brother,

cont'd. ☞

thinking of him, watching me, wondering
why I don't pay him no mind, him don't
know that I look up to his strength,
the kind of strength that has bottled up
eighteen years of being warped in a
struggle he seemed destined to lose,
brother free,
underneath the mango tree
free, living again, in this world
me wishing him free
thinking how there ain't no such
thing as the right thing for a Black man to do,
when the belly of the beast is calling
on my block.
me thinking there ain't no way
for you to understand
the latch that won't close, the river that runs
through my home, words can't express why two faces,
growing up together, ain't togetha no mo'

But, dear brother,
I'm with you now, now
always been there, just didn't know how to be there.
How to be a nywhere but where it didn't hurt
I'm thinking of how stupid I've been, working so hard.
so hard, so hard,
it doesn't matter does it, 'cause don't nobody see the work
they don't see the shit, bouncing around in my head
they can't see me, spitting fire like you say, holding back the
malice, for myself, I'm changing, changed, change.

cont'd.

general population is consumed by the image
of what it should mean to be me,
to be him, don't want us to figure it out,
sick of hell conscripts enjoying a free ride,
but they ain't going no where (smile) 'cause they
fucking with my world, and I'm there all the time
brother,
thinking of you, man,
hoping that within all this madness,
you won't become another Black man swallowed by
the womb, ain't no peace in that—
a message from 2501.

gulls glide to dodge the deadly aim
of dazzled mire, spiral upward through tunneled
Gyre. calypso thundercrash
claps its last, withering to a cadence of scattered
gasps. I stand among the ruins,
racing fingers through sand of plunging dunes,
its last grains empty from my grasp. fall
fast to earth, all
pauses beneath its impact.
upon the waning waves of ocean blues
are shattered hues of fading sun.
silent gulls within breezy lull
drift below a slippery sheen of
rolling velvet reams. banshee cries through
hollowed rock and I stand upon the ragged shores
drink the sea with my restless eyes
and await yet another tempest-rise.

Perhaps, under the influence of desire's aggravation,
skin will pierce skin, with complete consent,
and orbits will intertwine at the simplest
acquaintance...

Physically stagnant,
unforgiven to actuality,
fantasies forged for what?

I hold imagination in contempt!!!

Nevermind that I am trapped by universal laws,
it's that itch I can't reach, which is the binding
stitch ...

Intertwined snakes, they dance in my view
because of necessity -
man and woman dance too, and spiteful
are they of each other: "I'll love you, I'll kill you,"
and she poisons him with her milk,
as he draws in the last breath out of her,
and the consciousness in her womb holds
them in contempt.

Duncan c. Crary "the shade"

I started itching on Monday. First it was my armpits, so I stopped using deodorant. Then it was my scalp. My ass. And balls. Water irritated my skin so badly I stopped washing. Sweat was worse, so I stopped moving.

I could feel my epidermis coming loose, so I stopped drinking. I lost my appetite and smoked instead. I had to kill my cat ... so I could sleep.

Then one day it all came loose. And like a great serpent I sloughed off my shell and tacked it to the wall. But the itching never ceased. And it all happened again. And again.

Until the walls were hidden by my trophies so many.

And still the itching persisted.

One day a man came to the door and offered me $100 for each skin.

—What will they do you for?

—I will staple them to small dogs and children then rape them till they breathe no more.

I sold the man my skins for $100 each. So I could pay for my smoke.
He said he would return in one month's time for the rest.
So I waited
and shed
and waited
and shed
until there was nothing left
but my blackened lungs and my soul's wisp.

When he returned for the skin, I asked him to buy my lungs and soul too. For they did me no good without a hand and mouth to feed them.

—$50 for the lungs—surely I can make use of them.

My soul he refused.

—Money, sir, is useless for me now. Surely you can help.

—There is only one use a soul such as yours can be put to. But if it is usefulness you desire I can help.

To his house of horrors he was followed. My new use I was put to. I am the rancid acid festering in his vat. Eating all I am fed. Dead dogs and children cloaked in mine own skin is the only sustenance I know. Belching their fumes into the savage orange sky. Soon there will be nothing left of me at all.

She walks
-the world is between her legs
She smiles
-I feel privileged
Beautiful Skin
Let me in

The sun sets and the fire starts
The land is lit by primitive glow
Here comes the good part
The one everybody knows
The drums begin

Dum-dum Dum-dum

She feels the music
Tastes the beat.
Smell the dirty air
And let go.

Dum-Dum Dum-dum

Consumed
The flames burn
Pounding

Dum-dum Dum-dum

Thrust
Lost control
Revert to true self
To the animal

Dum-dum Dum-dum

Alcohol Burns
Consumes
Spinning
Into the Mountainside
Go with the beat

Dum-dum Dum-dum

She spins down
Twisted and broken
Wind blows fire
The twigs snap .... and fade
Now embers
Pass out.

When it's sleep I lack,
And I want only to rest,
This is the time my imagination chooses
To Come Alive.
Incredible.
Let me be.
When I had naught to do and a will to do it,
That is when I want you
To aid me in my endless quest.
A quest to make something worthwhile.
Not now,
When it takes all my energy just to perform
The simplest of tasks.
The putting of pen to paper.

Emily Wood "Untitled"

Sometimes I pretend he's here
But then looking around
There is only me
Me and my thoughts
They tell me he can't be real
But looking around, he is everywhere
Watching the water's waves ripple toward the damp, solid earth
I see him.
Letting the crystals of sand tickle me as they dance through my fingers
I feel him.
Tasting the salty water of the ocean forms a look of pleasure within me
I taste him.
Sitting on the edge of this somewhere
Looking out on the edge where nowhere finds me,
I see him, I feel him, I taste him.
Together we undulate toward the damp, solid existence waiting for us
Together we are tickled by the fingers of the other
Together we taste the salt which drips from our skin
Together we are only in my thoughts
Because alone he swam one day for that nowhere place
Because that day too, he was unhappy and alone on the edge of
somewhere
That somewhere I want to be too
Somewhere with him
So that I don't have to pretend anymore
So that in everything I don't see him
But in him I see, I taste, I feel
And in me he finds that edge that takes him flying instead of falling
That sea where he floats instead of drowns
And together he sees us
Just as I pretend.

The charts & lyric sheets are gone. A spotlight burns a brassy cyclone of silence on the cymbal's crown. Turn the word over. Give up the mark between sight & the unheard. Save your ears for tongue tips & the things they do well. Let's don't disturb unspoken cyclones. Leave the sweat profile alone on the sheet. Step past the taste & stain in the street.

& nobody knows what to do at the lakefront after a storm. Confessions wash ashore. Wave set upon wave, & an inland sea of touch off the Point, adrift

—don't have to look no more
& acting sane these days means fingers hurt, means we braid our own hair.

THE IDOL

1999

VISUAL ARTS

Andrew Tsiropina "Untitled"

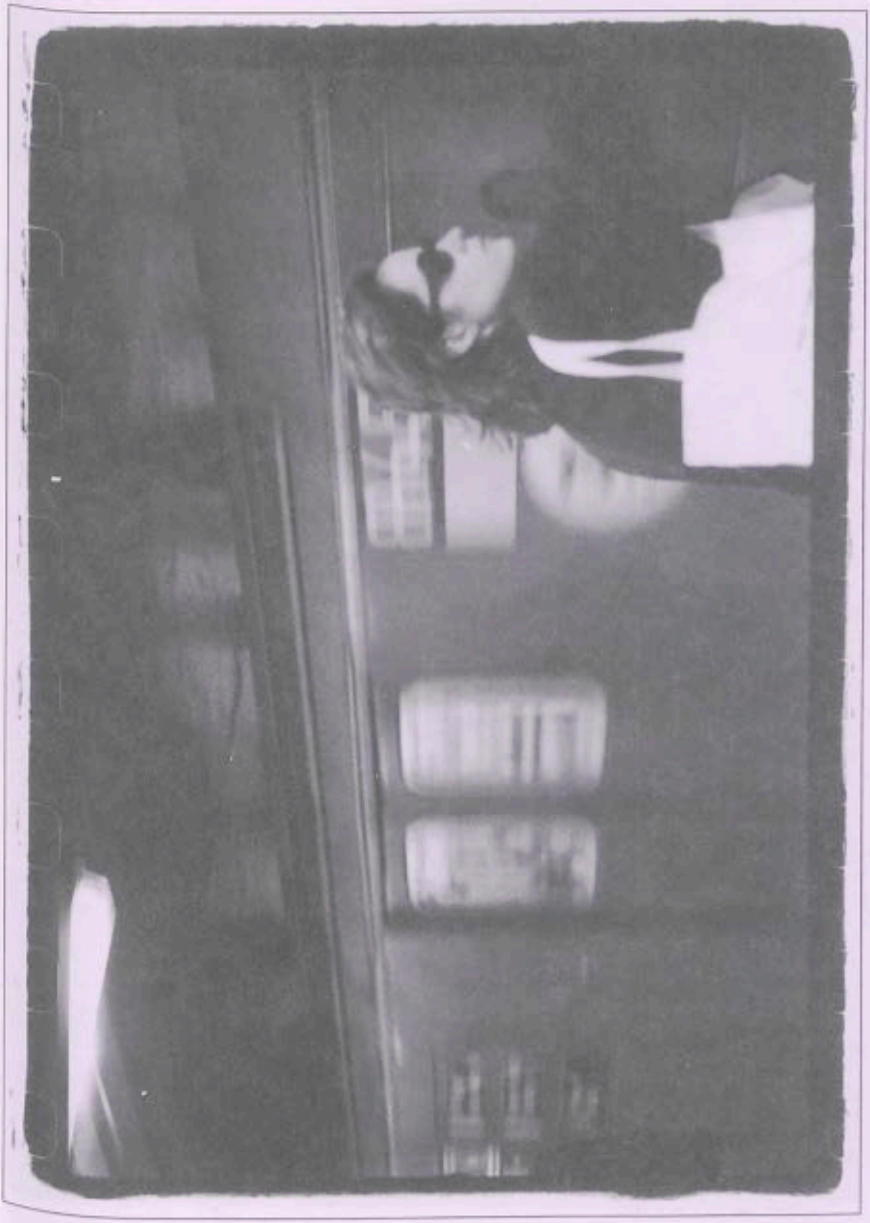
Autumn Renn "Untitled"

Becki Danchick "Untitled"

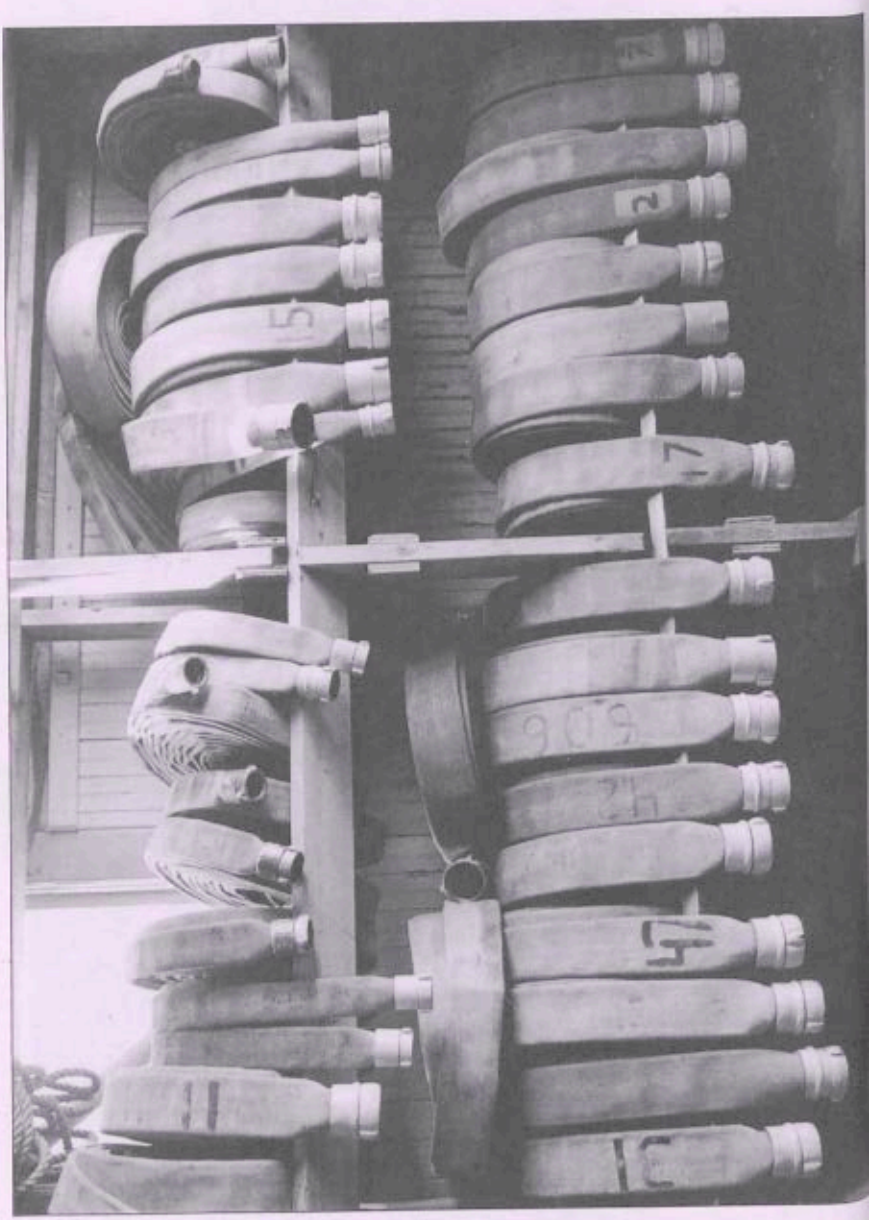
Deana Grattan "Untitled"

Betsy Pekin "Untitled"

Scott Dicks "Untitled"

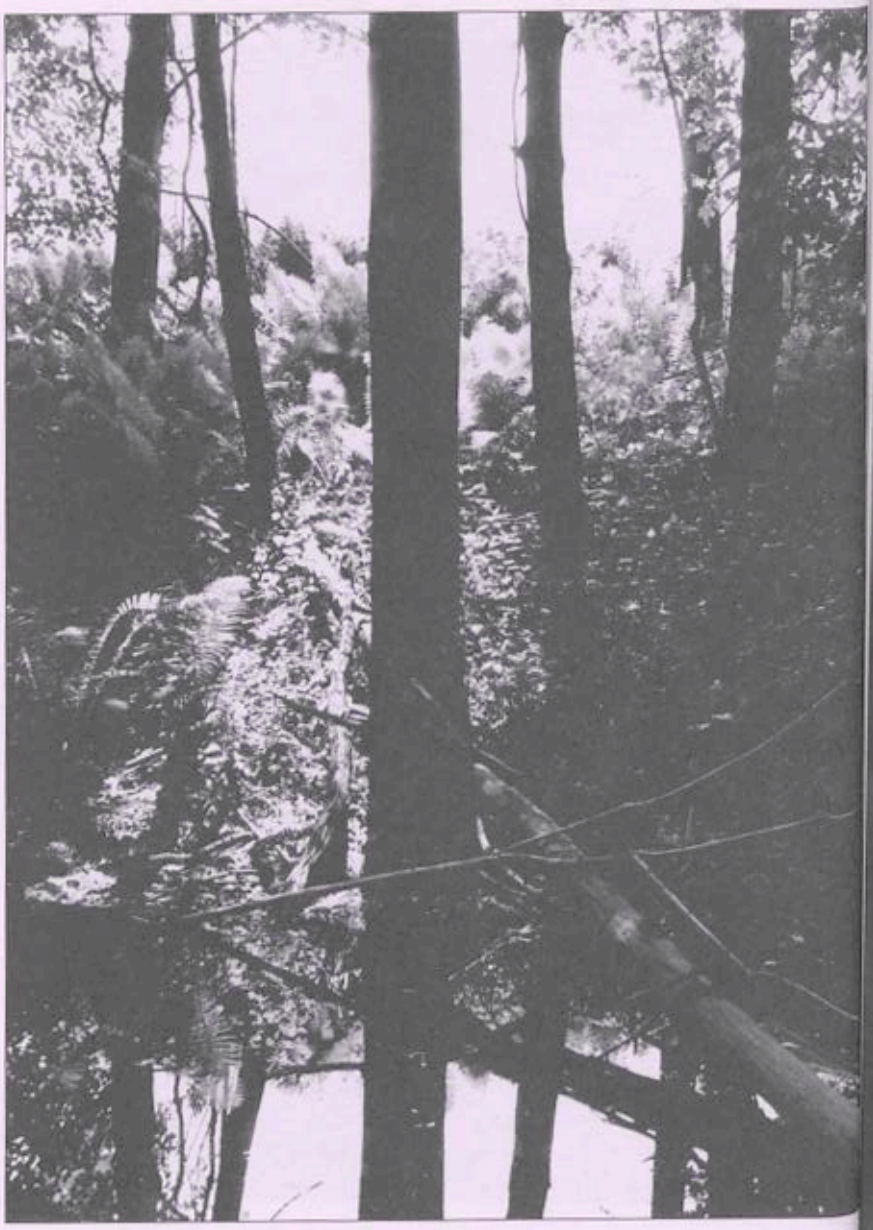


Clark Smyth "Untitled"



Deana Grattan "Untitled"

Mike Mosall "Untitled"



Douglas Seder "Untitled"

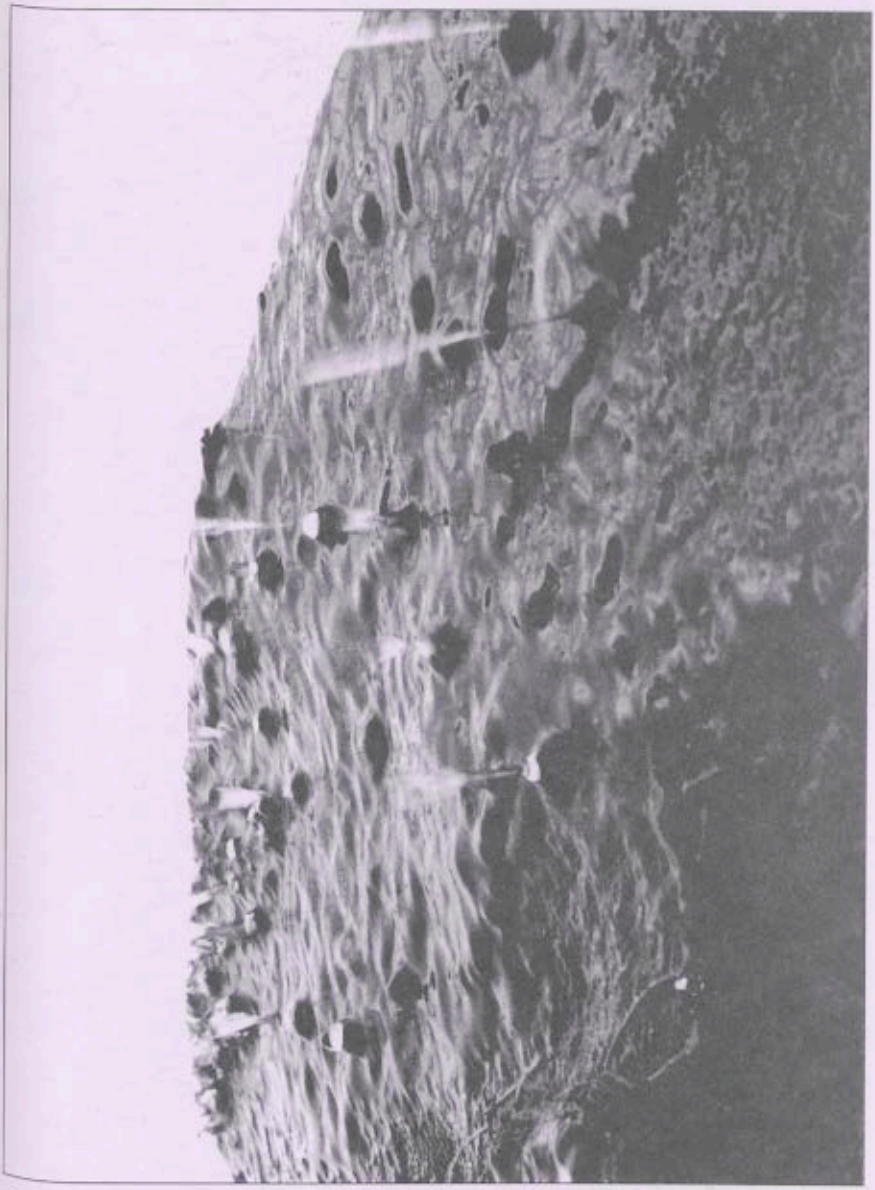
Emily Wood "Untitled"

Genevieve Graham "Untitled"

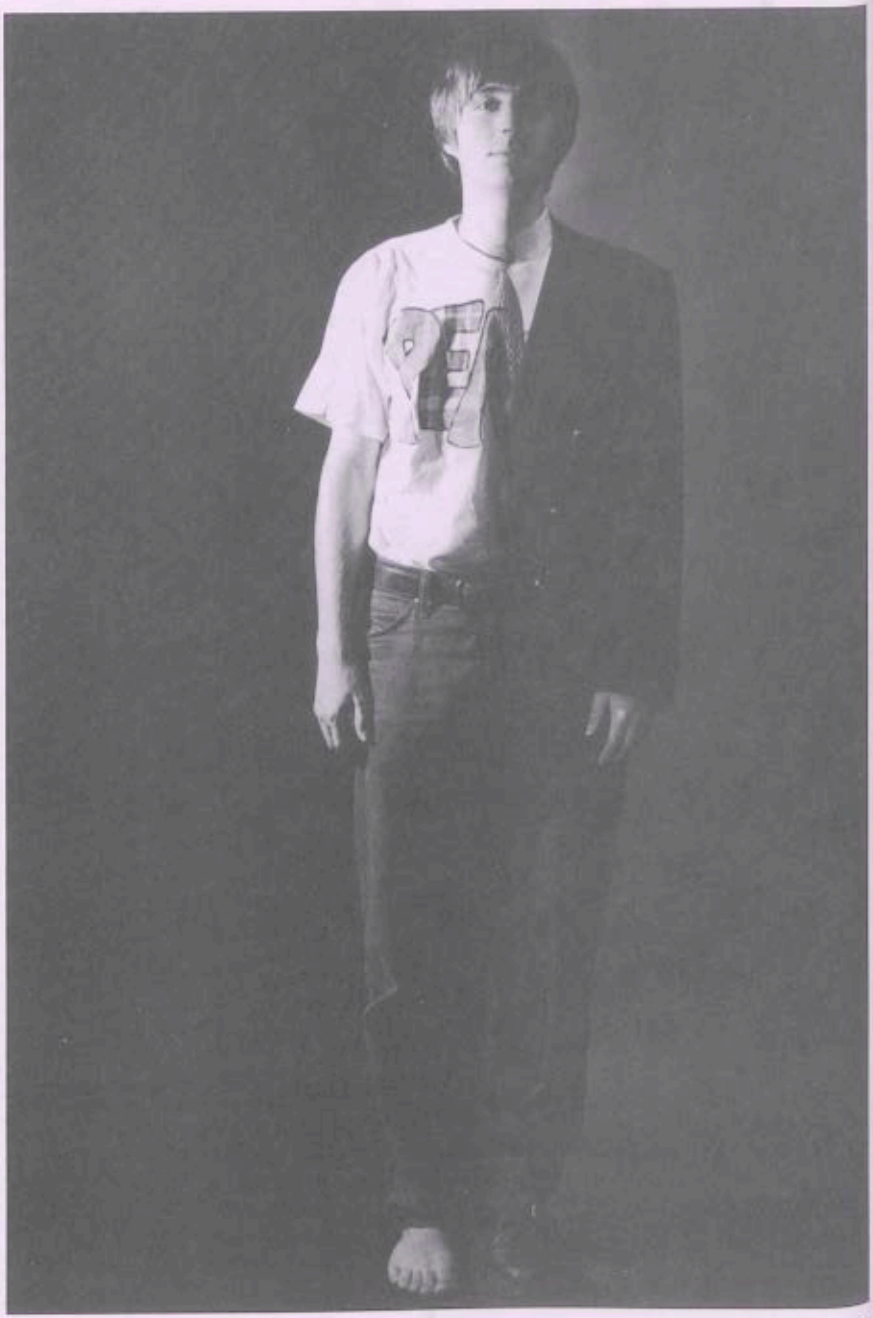
Jacqueline Eatz "Untitled"

Meghan Mumford "Untitled"

Mike Mosall "Untitled"

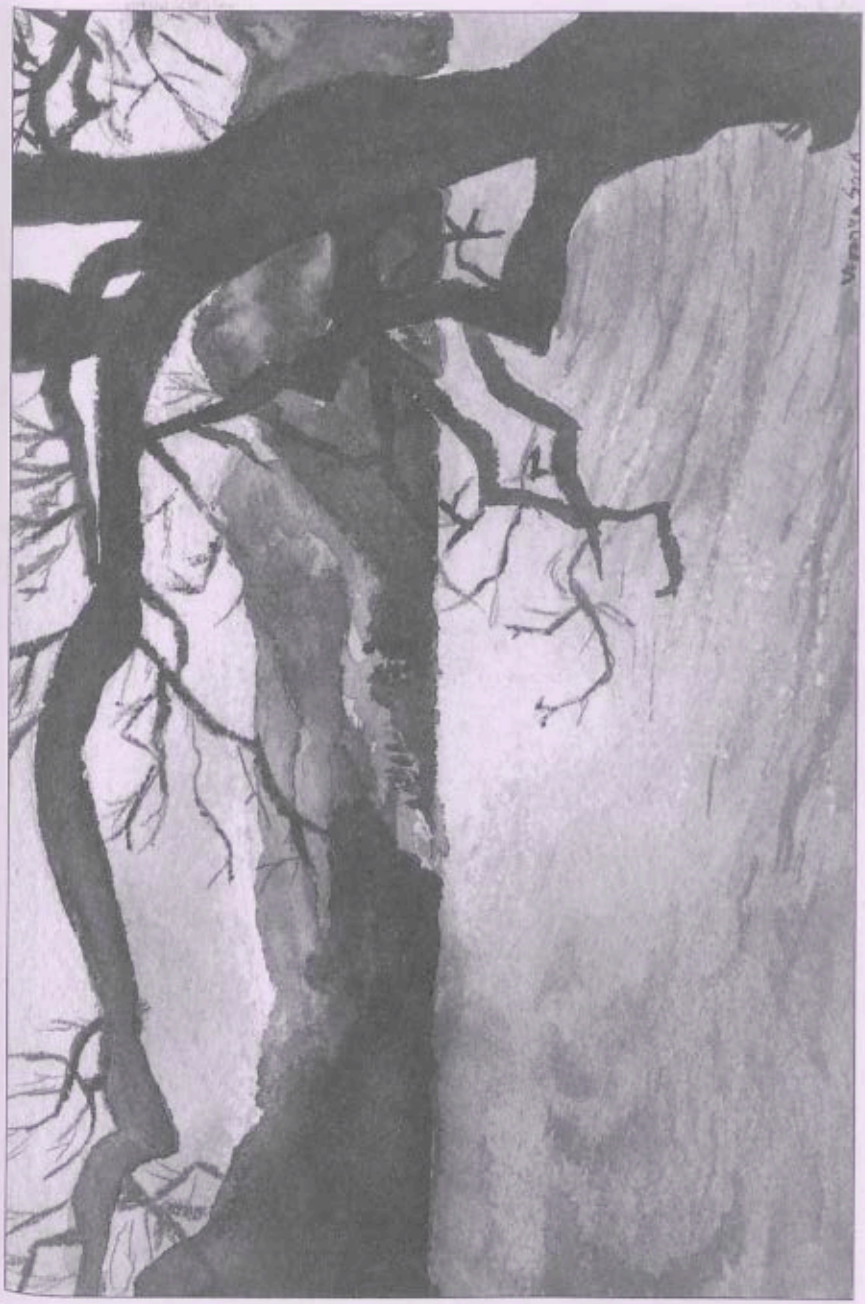


Michal Sofka "Untitled"



Mike Pigpank "Untitled"

Veronica Sack "Lake District"

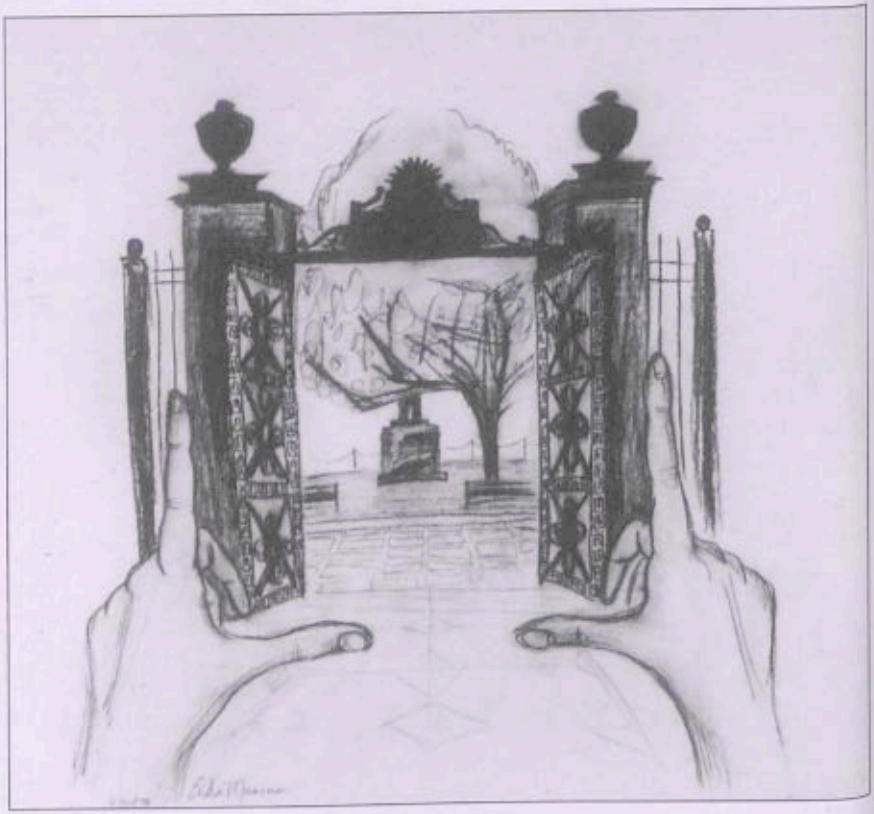


Betsy Perkin "Untitled"

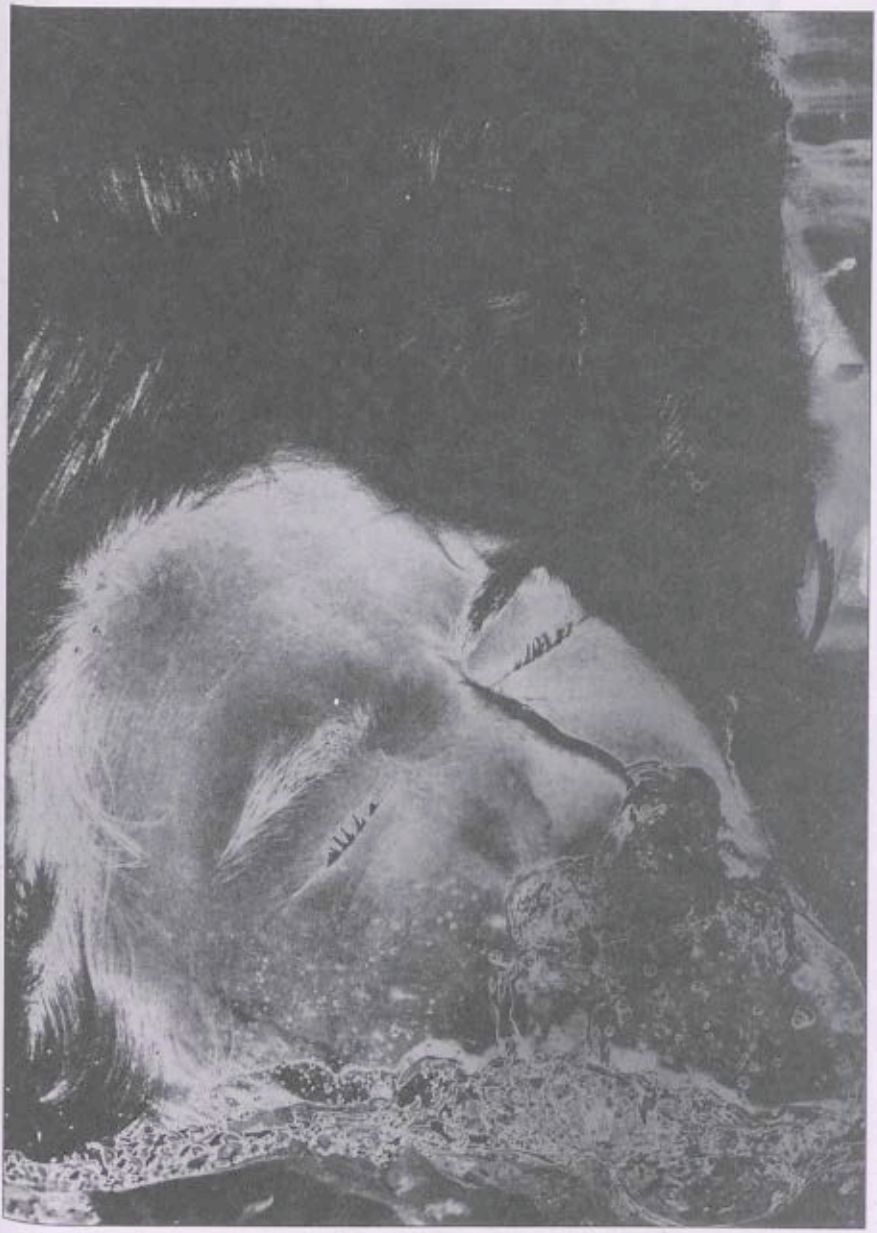
Bill Servant "Untitled"

Garrett Brown "Untitled"

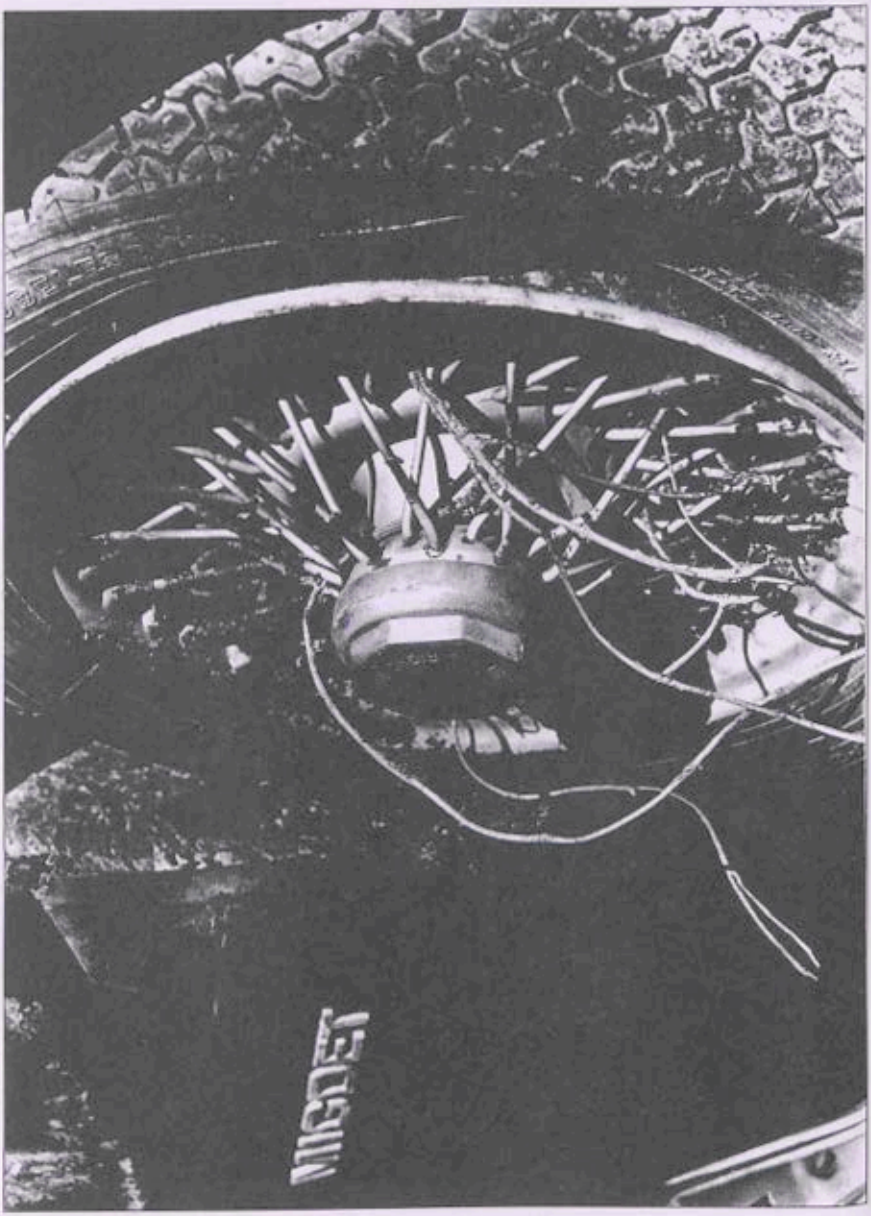
Erika Manicini "Untitled"



Becki Danchik "Untitled"



Aaron Seliger "Untitled"



THE IDOL

1999

LITERARY PART II

Every moment there are ideas floating about, ideas that influence, impact, and finally come to rest, entangling themselves among the loose verse, subjectifying even the most innocent of pronouns.

She reads Keats, between the pages
she finds her mother's voice
where reeds and soft grass rush
in sudden wind. Her mother's cries
carried by the biting gale of a fading
night, sweeping through the minds
of a hundred city dwellers. Rush past,
flapping sweet wings to caress her face,
cast blue shadows at a flickering
pace. And in that moment the words
have entered, she is entangled
the horizon drops.

Scheme hinders the sweet song of
unwinding flying forever
undying dreams. Lost between the
contrivances of steady form,
fizzled and cold,
dead wire that rests lightly
upon the pavement. Onlookers squint and marvel,
the horizon drops.

A sonnet, dear girl, is structure that must never be applied as function. There is no danger in a purposeful poem, there is no danger in words that have been chosen. We must have danger.

Make me a sonnet, make it good.
It must end in a rhyming
couplet, it must serve
this most fascinating subject.
Shakespeare now, and she forgets

cont'd. ☞

to count the beats, caught in
the slick slippery plasma of his bloodied words,
his passion rests on the typeface,
alive and beating in her hard fist.
corrupt my saint, please. Taint me
with your impassioned speech,
the rhythms of your heart's bounding beat as it
screams. She reads, the pages flicker and blaze.
Raging among the iambs,
pushing the constraints of quatrains,
past the push of the restless desire
to be entertained.
Feeding on that which preserve the ill.
We are fevered now, Will
and I, caught within the rush of a sickness
that washes over us, preserved only by
that which we taste and touch. Betrayed himself
by form and restraint, within his sonnet
remains a most graceful rage.

Promiscuous verse, seducing and
multiplying, its litter entangling each synapsing
neuron, corroding the hard and fast,
caressing the seedling of expanse.
My ability to capture, re-capture, harness,
and finally expel, explode onto the
page into your brain. An essay in poesy,
a poem in prose, sift my hands through
the pages, draw me close. Couplets and
quatrains and iambic verse, their energy
constrained, their passion immersed.

Words preserved in constraining verse, harnessed rage bound within this silent page. Where is my poet, where is her prose? Amongst these lines I remain enclosed.

sometimes, we hear the empty spaces
and we see the screaming faces,
we kill the dead through memories
and choose the empty corner in the sky,
to find our answer there,
comets clear through skies without
trails to follow,
lost...
again and again and again,
undo the shackles unlocked,
endless chains accompany,
spotless cobwebs still cling to my eyes,
the morning dew reflecting like a prism,
the different paths to follow,
masturbate your mind to ecstasy,
and find yourself impregnated with a notion
of senses unrevealed...

She coins the Lustrasilk in her palm
To protect like a sealant the moisture of her hair
Especially the Kitchen.
"Escapes like a convict in the night without protection".

Her style is in her,
Smile if she lets you capture it.

Yes She Is:
The do-ragged warrior of the night.
Do-ragged dreams flirt with her eyes as they close.
Her body relaxed
Her thoughts peaceful when she lay.

Pillow-headed mumbles meticulously describe her adventures.

Black woman liberated.
And strengthened by the power of night moon water
Awaking to the dismay of daylight
The warrior crown is removed.

Afros, Plats, finger waved, conked,
Braided, pressed, and curled,
Hairs are revealed.

All day she works to make her dreams reality
Until She Is once again
Encompassed by the adornment of her crown.

On Sundays the boy and his father went to the farm to hunt grouse. Up the dirt road

charged the Dodge Ram. The father was the first out; then the boy; then the old Brittany. The boy and the father wore orange vests and hats. But the boy's vest was too large; his hat, too small. The boy made faces at his reflection in the side mirror while the father unpacked. A Churchill .12 gauge for the father. A Browning .20 gauge for the boy.

Sundays, the boy thought, are always gray or breezy. He liked gray days and he liked the breeze. The boy sat down to play with the old Brittany. The old Brittany looked to the father with tired eyes as the boy tugged at its face.

"Leave the dog alone, boy. Come get your gun."

The boy rose and walked to his father. He took the gun and some shells. He slid one shell in the top barrel and one shell in the bottom barrel. The boy dropped the remaining shells in his right vest pocket. He rested the broken .20 gauge on the crook of his arm.

When the father was ready, the old Brittany rose. The boy snapped the Browning shut and trudged through the brush after his father. They moved quietly past an old Dutch farmhouse with spider-webbed windows. A great gnarled tree had grown over the rusted chains of a broken swing beside the house. When there was room, the boy spread out from his father. The father and the boy marched in a line with the old Brittany working between them.

Mother stopped taking the boy to church after his confirmation. Now, on Sundays, he hunted grouse with his father instead. "God's church," the father said now and again, "is in nature; not indoors. "

They passed the pond with frogs and bullhead. They passed the old pigeon shack. They passed the second house.

"Don't get too close, boy. The foundation's going," the father said as he did every
Sunday.

It was a long day. No birds had flushed.

cont'd.

They hunted edges.

"You stay on the outside, boy. Wait and see if the dog can flush out anything. Then I'll send 'em your way so we don't lose 'em in the cover," the father said to the boy.

The boy swished his feet through the dead grass. Edges gave the best cover for grouse. The boy walked on, trying to catch a glimpse of orange through the thick entanglement of aspen, thorn apple, and red osier dogwood. As he moved on, the boy's mind wandered. He imagined the farm as it was when Michael Dermott first purchased it at the Sheriff's Sale in 1917. Then he imagined farther back to when the Dutch lived on the land. He imagined a small Dutch family braving the new world, harsh winters, and Mohawks.

"BIRD," the father shouted from somewhere buried in the brush.

The boy heard the grouse before he saw it and fired.

Slowly the bird sank to the ground and disappeared back into the cover.

"Did you get him, boy?"

"I got him, but he's back inside. "

"Come on dog. Find the bird," the father yelled from inside the brush.

The boy moved excitedly up the edge, peering into the thick cover. The bell around the old Brittany's neck sounded far off. The boy slowed his pace when he arrived to where the bird reentered. He stood still and listened. The bird was near. The boy crept beneath a snarl of thorns and pushed aside the growth.

She was alone in a small clearing. She couldn't fly but she scurried away at the sound of the boy. He chased her through the dirt until he caught hold. The boy lifted the hen and held her in his arms. Father and the old Brittany were far off. Everything was still except the gentle breeze above. The hen was soft and warm. The boy could feel the warmth spreading to his arms. He ran his fingers across her head and she shied away like a purring cat. He tickled her ruff and ran his fingers up and down her soft breast feathers. He was alone in the woods with the hen and the breeze.

cont'd.☞

A wish. Could he stay.

But he called out to his father and worked his way back out to the field. The boy stood in the field stroking the grouse awaiting father and the old Brittany. When the father appeared from the brush he said, "Go on, boy." And the boy grabbed the hen by her neck and swung her body around in a circle. The boy felt nothing. Again he swung the hen around by her neck. But she was still alive. She looked at him with half opened eyes as he held her by her neck. The boy looked back at her.

The father walked up and took the hen from the boy. He held her in his two strong hands and slowly pressed his thumbs into her chest. She tried to gasp for air once or twice ... then let her neck gently go limp. The tip of her tongue fell from her beak. Her eyes closed all the way.

Silent, the father handed the boy his hen. The boy tucked the hen into the back pouch of his vest. They moved on. For a while the boy felt the tepid body pressing against his back, but it quickly faded to a cold dead weight.

When I awake to peaceful morn,
Rare morn when yet no torture burns,
I fear not long to suffer empty Joy
Before Pain, my ever-faithful muse, returns.
More oft I wake to tortured mourn,
Peaceless mourning deep inside me;
I soon begin to pen the words
For my faithful-muse, she walks beside me.
Her arms around me, resting gently,
Coax the words with stroking claws;
Pleasured-pain peaks, subsides;
My lover leaves and leaves me lost.
Yet I fear not that Joy will come
Because I know my lover won't be long.

My mouth is
rotting

God it hurts

Rotting away it is
says I

Told you
I did
says the dentist

Brush you will

and brush I did

God damnit I brush

No you listen

I don't have the money
for a
triple
root canal

I don't have the time

for interrogations

Who does He think He is
Anyway

God it hurts

cont'd. ☞

My mouth is infested
with
disgruntled entities

havoc they reek
God it Hurts

they have decided to take
my mouth
hostage

God it hurts

I will fight the gnomes

until I win

But they have the
Advantage

because they are in

my mouth

I can't lose them
even when I
run

and run I do

God it hurts

I. Marcus Eating Dinner With His Friends

Marcus sat upon his thrown,
A chair to be exact.
He looked at the table around him.
He looked to his friends that were there.
There was Danny and Paully,
The two kids near the hall.
There was Bob and Blue-Hair,
And the three near the stair.
There was Steven and Nick,
And of course there was Jude.

While eating the meal,
Consisting of wine, and pork chops, and grilled veal,
Marcus decided the timing was best
To unload a couple of things off his chest.

Marcus proclaimed to the poor for starters.
He sank all the rich and proclaimed all the martyrs.
He cried in the alley with a bucket of tears.
He robbed from the kings enhancing his fears.
This first he said to Jude.

Second came Bob and Blue-Hair.
With two tantalizing phrases he summed it all up,
Eat all those pork chops
And drink my red wine.
Upon hearing those words the two began to eat.

The three near the stair knew not where they were.
Their conscience was loaded,
Their morals corroded,
They rejected what Marcus had tried to confer.

For Danny and Paully it went something like this:
To Danny he said write my word down.
To Paully he said now spread it around.
For Marcus the craving was fame.

cont'd.

The kids near the hall listened intently.
They saw future visions of marble and money.
Discussion ensued and a plan was devised.
They created a Religion to beat all financially.
Finally Steven and Nick started asking questions.
Does this theory of yours have literary merit?
Does this theory of yours have a contextual background in astrophysical space in the third
dimension, assuming that the matter/energy relation is in effect at its highest
frequency?
Marcus said yes.

II. How Marcus Learned His Trades

Marcus was born the son of a poor, poor man,
The wrong side of town to be exact.
Growing up in this condition had quite a few lasting impressions on him:
Like the time he walked into a high class bar.
He felt like the fool,
So he pulled up a stool,
And proceeded to sit in the corner.

Then came the man from the back of the bar.
He was dressed for the ages in purple and black,
A mathematician to be exact.
Descending from Pythagoras.
Euclid a cousin by marriage.
(in other words a guy who knew what he was talking about)
He saw our poor hero draped in the dark,
And he said to himself:
The world I will conquer with this one man,
a pawn really,
a blank mind for which I can use.
This man,
Of logical-conceptual calling,
Called Marcus.
(Using the language of old,
the molder of minds,
with powers untold,
with numbers and symbols
with magnitudes of oceans
or thimbles,
containing such things as A, B, or C
and 1, 2, or 3).

cont'd.☞

You will become my pupil if and only if (iff) there exists a sun in the sky and an ocean to
travel ([a sun in the sky an ocean to travel]).
And the man taught Marcus the ways of infinity and how to view

t	d	s
h	i	p
r	m	a
e	e	c
e	n	e
	s	
	i	
	o	
	n	
	a	
	l	

IV. How Marcus Learned His Trades

Marcus,

Growing up as he did,
Had problems with math as a profession of choice.
He felt it did nothing to amplify his voice.
He had problems with society as a whole.
He felt it was something he had to control.
Math was great for confusing
the people,
But what he wanted was to conquer
the people.
As Marcus always said,
Confusion is nice if you know who to mock
But controlling is better for swaying the flock.
So in true political style He stopped analyzing what he was saying,
And came to the conclusion to use words for swaying:
To Danny he said write my word down
To Paully he said now spread it around
For Marcus the craving was fame.

V. How Marcus Came To Be Eating Dinner With "Friends"

Where to start was the question at hand.
Who should be the first to be injected by his ideas.

cont'd ☞

He felt that the founders need be a diverse band
of rich
and poor
and sick
and intelligent.
He walked the streets and compiled a list.
It's safe to say it looked something like this:
Danny (stenographer - may be able to help with dictation)
Paully (traveler - possible public relations go-to-guy)
Roger and Billy (young kids - might be around for a while to help me with the development of my own Religion, possibly an intricate monetary system for making people feel guilty)
Bob (Jewish - I might be able to sway him, it might be nice to have a Jewish perspective on my side)
Blue-Hair (also Jewish)
Dom, Pete, and that other guy- (Don't know what's going on with these guys, but it might be nice to have a chaotic contingency at this party - note to self: these guy are pretty smart, it could be hard to sway their beliefs)
Steven and Nick- (be careful, these are guys that know my mentor and the teachings of mathematics)
Jude- (don't worry about this guy, you can tell him anything).

VI. How Marcus Came To Get Caught

It's quite simple,
Dom, Pete, and that other guy ratted him out to the authorities.
And the authorities, being quick to see a bad situation, killed Marcus and hoped that his teachings would soon fade.

VII. The Lasting Impressions of Marcus

His theories on infinity were misinterpreted as love.
His theories on love were misinterpreted as miracles.
His theories on religion were misinterpreted as an attack.
His theories on death were misinterpreted as life.
Marcus died at the young age of thirty-three.

Within these walls that I have built
my life feels so surreal
motivated by lust and guilt
and the id that I conceal
Silence and scatter
diffusion of matter
a breakdown of reality
resulting from the latter
on the right path
but miles away
down in the dark
by the light of the day
So systematic and simple
is the cyclical cycle
which wrinkles my twinkles
and renders me psycho
when will it begin
when will it all end
mental manacles
over so-called friends
Forbidden love
forbidden knowledge
olfactory masturbation
around the corner of the college
Rosemary
burn for me
remember me
and help me see
that life is shadow puppetry
falsely lit for all to see
Including me
yours truly.

One step behind my thoughts again,
crosswords and film canisters, a hundred dollar pen,
reporter notebooks, addresses of lost friends,
friends to be lost and friends to remember ...
accounts of daily weaknesses, forgotten apologies
and ones yet to be made ... cartridges, plastic bags,
insiders on your mark, spirals of revisions and exams,
notes of the memory, or for ... songs of movement,
songs of memory, comments of a brutal nature,
full of potential, should apply oneself here.
"By the way no individuals need apply,
we shall do all the thinking here",
thank you and fuck you, you cannot define art
for me, that is a sacred unanswerable,
for it lies differently in every heart...
envelopes ripped open in haste
to see the fruits of idleness...
pennies and pounds, withdrawal slips,
reminders of a god I do not pray to yet am slave to...
nail clippers, because my body knows, my body grows,
constantly changing, living in uncertainty
but living none the less ... a wallet full of memories
and impossibilities beside the raw tobacco, raw because
"There's something about a man who rolls his own"...
immature dreams of masculinity and no idea why my hands
cannot rest ... keys, always bringing me back to one
production of time echoing in my mind
know thyself, and bite the hand that feeds you.

My mother wrote so quickly
in cursive
and I was little
very little and I
would watch her

pen dance deftly
across white
big person paper
and form languid limbs
with fingers
and curls of raven
silky hair
swirls and knots

add them to the body
of the line
stretched out lengthwise
in conformity
doubling black over black
tie it all together
only to let go of
the surface
and slide gently
the tender side
of her hand quickly
across and hiss out
a space and stop short
to cross tees and eyes
and dot with a period.
Awe.

cont'd.☞

I tried to envision
my hand my pen
and in secret
I would scribble
twirl and double back
and hiss out spaces
and search my mind
for familiar contours
of the grand body
of the words
I could not understand
and bang a loud period
out of my mind
onto the table.

I thought of how much easier
it will be to write as fast as
you are thinking. I was thinking
that life would be good
when I could write in cursive-

By then I would
surely have something
to say.

****

My mother has written her first poem
she wanted to share it with me
she was embarrassed
I said I'm sure it is great
she tried to disclaim it but I
cut her off just before
she told me that it didn't mean
anything
maybe I wouldn't understand it

cont'd.☞

So I listened in silence
she recited it with hesitation
like I might forget my manners
or like she might cry
and when she was done
she said it made sense to her
why does it have to make sense to me
to be poetry I said
she said it was about looking
out the window
but that I knew
and I said which window
she said the one near the swing
I often stand there and remember
remember what
though I knew
that through the late evening sun
I would see her in the window
when my father would push me
high on the swing
and she would wave
and I would wonder
what she could be doing
in there all the time at the sink

I never realized she was watching us

So the poem was about the feeling she feels
when she looks out this window
and stares at the still swing
and notices that every year
there is less dirt in the oval
where we dragged our shoeless
feet and the grass keeps on
creeping in and yesterday
she knew that we were gone.

I imagine, I can hear the crows calling,
the whistling,
I hear that beautiful sound, which everyone else seems to fear.
The world of the spirits is calling me, for now.
I, ignore them telling myself that my resurrection
was not an error.

globs of oil paints are being mixed together by
unsteady hands, fragile ones,
I stand there, below him, watching the globs form,
then not form, only
to form again, my terror

His eyes are closed the voices are invoking, the colors
to come
our souls sing
and we think of cool,
smooth sound, intricately woven like dozens of
globulars in the night sky,
like Bird,
at least he told himself it was night.

multiple colors, wet paint dripping from sticky, clammy hands,
multiple sounds, moans, pleasure, then the cry came again
as the crows flapped their wings in unison
no starry night tonight, or sunflower patches

"Why are you afraid?"
"What?"

splicing of rhythm, like splicing of color,
the re-creation of life, the surface ache of living
as death is released, from the crows

Prey spotted. I still stand
in the heaven of definitive beauty,
keep on mixing and blending, make
me want you.
let your sun burnt kisses leave tracks
of crushed flowers and harmonic tones
on my lips, as I watch
his body lowered into her womb.