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THE IDOL

1998

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THE STUDENTS OF UNION COLLEGE SINCE 1928



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We are very pleased this year to present our 70th issue to the Union College community. Since 1928 *The Idol* has been a voice for those who wish to express themselves creatively. It gives us great pride to continually be able to showcase such individual talent that often goes overlooked.

Despite many limitations this year, we have achieved our long-standing goal of incorporating color into our publication. We can only look towards greater improvement in the future.

The Idol Staff would especially like to acknowledge and thank the artists, writers, and poets for their contributions. Their work represents the excellence of Union, and is our continuing reason for existence. To all those who took the time to submit work, we extend the same gratitude. Above all, it is the dedication and perseverance of our members which allowed us to create such an outstanding issue.

Congratulations to all.

Larry Gutman
Orya Hyde-Keller
Christine Bower

Co-Editors

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THE IDOL

1998

LITERARY
PART I

Simply for the sake of
maintaining the habit
and unearthing the forgotten,
among grey lingering prior to the year's rebirth
comes the third week of March, bearing
A sea of green: shirts, hair, shoelaces
filling every mug.
One day drenched in green to remember
the exile of serpents
and selling cereal, linked by
a pot of gold.
For the proprietors, it is:
recalling not the language,
rather the typeset.
A dead tongue
Alive in signs and in matchbooks.

Lou Holtz resigned, Knute Rockne's gone
he's with O'Leary in the grave.

Three generations have passed
with no straighter a spine.
Mine burns, pointing in some other direction.
Though diagnosed, no amount of therapy
no pills, no stretches
could undo a birthright.

Nobody's fault but my grandfather's
spent his days leaning and limping
Back broken by soldiers
who saw he belonged in a heap
among the debris of a homestead.
Helpless as the farmhouse
mercilessly was ransacked
by soldiers in search of a printing press
providing propaganda for the cause.
Propaganda for the liberation
had falsely been traced back
to his home.
Propaganda, it seems
broke my grandfather's back.

Days here were spent serving
not acres of potatoes
but the grounds of intellect's triumph
maintaining the facilities of
men in Cambridge who

sat and smoked pipes
discussing Yeats and Kavanaugh
the immortal in things mortal.

All the promise of a new land, its new hope
met eventually in inescapable fate:
The disease had reached him
just before I had.
No word he said
in the five of six years
our paths crossed
I heard.
The disease had slurred his speech, and I
failed to see beyond his glasses.

Nor his wife
who saw in the suburbs
where the meadows were not
and found no
American trustworthy
raised her daughter and sons
in paranoia and longing
for the land that broke her husbands back.
Until one Thanksgiving morning
the colossus ceased, and
peace found her.

I'm sure she cried when both Kennedys died
but she cried more at being an immigrant bride.

Had they any words left for me
I'd have heard
one myth, particularly resounding:
The gold was stripped off the flag
Fin Mac Cumhail's gold was looted
becoming the orange of King William's soldiers.
To mark their massacre
once and forever
the Orangemen who conquered.
Immortalized in the flag.
The sole source of pride
the single asylum of identity
compromised to signify a unity
that has never existed
a unity alive only in conflict.
Championing the burial three thousand more
among the one million tombstones of famine.



These Troubles, whose
bounty is the bombs in the cabbage.

Trouble lived for a while
in the baby sister who survived the burning of her home
living ten more years, waiting to meet
a soldier, and his bullet.
Her struggle, a mere twelve years.
Consider her blessed.

This unity, and it's one flag,
flies above
barbed wire and burned out neighborhoods.
Flames burning a bright orange.

It glows in every candle.

Leaving my adolescence behind
has taught me
that Margaret Thatcher will not pay my chiropractor's bill
I am aware further that
Lucky Charms are neither lucky or nutritious.
They will not undo this burning in my back my grandsons will
inherit,
though my grandfather's shillelaigh may.
At least while reading the box at breakfast
or hearing the commercial:

Red Hearts
 Yellow moons
Limbless children
 Blue diamonds
Machine guns
 Orange stars
Burned out churches
 Green clovers
 And Purple horseshoes.

For all the identifying
the faces, and the names
the pot of gold remains
unfound. Perhaps a dawn will rise
one day: the orange will be
compromised and the gold
will be restored.

sweet dreams were not enough
to set sleep sound

inside we were dancing
lightly on our toes
circling with our spines
eyes glowing in a dimly lit den
half moon smile rising to the rhythm
"The night was long
the night went on...
we were chillin' out until the

break
of dawn"

go sister
SOUL sister
moving right along...

I see the laundry there, left for me to fold
I don't mind, but why would you want someone else
folding your underwear
fingers sliding along seams that
sliding fingers fingered not so long ago

an erotic afterthought, I thought
it was the best sex ever

After, I was cooing at this little fruit of a womb,
eyes round in wonder
his, not mine
tiny trail of drool collecting on a blanket
mine, not his
their toenails are so tiny

speaking of the possibility of meaning
poetry, let's say, is wordy but articulate
pinching literate nerves
such a lovely thing

what are the sources of pleasure
-Oh pleasure?- in poetry

I took Blackburn for my bathroom read
and stayed there for an hour
I only had to pee

On my way across campus
wind whistling,
blowing hard...bad day to be a smoker and
I'm always late for class

wooden chairs house a lively debate
squeaking and groaning while
we flail desperately to be
wordy but articulate
I'd like to be excused, by brain is full...

Of anticipation, glorious days
they'll all be here soon
so much for my paper, why be nine days late,
when you can revel in two weeks

tucked under my belt
stitched into my shirt
stinking up my hair and oozing on my skin
are possibilities

Tomorrow, maybe tomorrow

sweet dreams set sleep sound

The wind swept me away with the ripples of the giant puddles that I trudged through as we fended our way amidst the waves hitting against us. We had left all of our armour at home as there was no thought of the skies turning. Anastasia and I stopped into a furniture store which was just about to close and acted like we were looking for a new popof chair. The fact that we had no money to part with never even came close to reaching our minds. We looked at each other and began admiring this and that, feeling the droplets repel down our faces.

The old man tending the store just watched. You could tell he didn't want to bother us or use the "I'll get in your way and see if I can convince you" approach. There was a look of serenity in his eyes and although it was six o'clock and time to close, there was no rush to dim the lights and put on the tweed overcoat which hung on the rickety pole in the unintrusive corner. Fifteen minutes went by and instead of looking at the different patterns and fabrics I kept glancing into the man's eyes wondering if he would have to make his way through the weather, if he had a warm place and a bowl of soup waiting for him.

The idea of age enveloped me and I wondered if I would get old with Anastasia, whether we would one day actually have the money and resolution to buy furniture and decorate our lives together. And I thought of the outdoors again and whether she would be there to help take off my tattered and saturated articles.

The rain always does things to me, the wind sweeps me into the puddles and I often get carried away with them. As I walked out of the store, I gave the man the most sincere and respectful nod I could evoke, and wondered if he saw anything in me, in my air. I again thought of what would happen when the furniture faded and the darkness and unrelenting drops of cold made their way onto the serenity of his face and the tweed coat which would cover all his years. He wished us a good night as the tarnished bell chimed on the door.

I got in bed with some syllables
also, a line

We were all jumbled up
getting caught in each other's hair
and
twisted in the sheets

I tried to make some sense out of it all

"Straighten out, you!" I barked at the
naughtily squirming line.

"Get it together, dammit," to the syllables
They were hyper active and up way past their bedtime

TOO MUCH ENERGY WITH NO DIRECTION

a bit of a disappointment...
what with all the expectations of
the "Single Intelligence"

Someone put it badly once:
 Head ' ear ' syllable
 Heart ' breath ' line

Maybe I just have bad breath

Having a little trouble with the dogma
working towards a revelation of language and action
thought and procession
form and content...

He said something about actions speaking louder...
no, no, that's not it,
actions working harder...
well, closer, but still not right,

It must have been that to think requires little but to think of acting...

damn
I fucked it up

Again

long live e.e.

shit, man, I just want to write

the concrete and mortar of these words, ideas—
the objects strung together
strong and unpretentious
sneering at outdated simile and description
(oops, there's an oxymoron in our midst)

Clearly, the poem is in control here

A wise man once said that the poet,
(once he ventures forth into the great unknowns of
FIELD COMPOSITION).

is naked and exposed to the elements of style that his poetry creates
Well, perhaps I have changed the theme a bit to suit my own poetic
desires

but I do believe he also said to go with the flow
I'm just letting my perceptions take me where they want to go

Clever, isn't it, that little rhyme snuck in on the side
Naughty and a bit childish, yes
but so rewarding it is hard to see the harm

still stumbling on
sorting through emotion
imagery
concept
idea
scholarship
allusion

so many levels
and what does it all mean?

oh stop it,
this has really gone far enough

Part I

Big room,
 little people
Munchkins dancing on the
table,
Monsters standing on the
head of a pin.
home, hearth,
 where crackling coals
 induce frenzied feeding
 on empty concepts.

Part II

The balloon pops,
the music stops;
Splintered shards of
imagination scream past,
Replacing the laughter of innocence,
displacing the echo of diffidence.
Confusion, compulsion
 they push me away
From myself,
 leaving me in disarray.

Part III

A special game,
a special name,
 ATSAR, he cries,
 wanting to be heard
through the din,
The cannon can
destroy the pegasus,
but only with its dying breath.
It has upset the pythagorean
only one can listen
to the hidden,
the yellow red and green.

Jason was the first person that Sarah had ever taken to the "Secret Garden". She started talking to Jason one day on the bus when she was forced to sit next to him because there were no other empty seats. It was actually Jason that started the conversation and for once, Sarah decided to dismiss the fact that he was a boy and she was a girl and she allowed herself to talk to him. Jason was one of the new kids and everyone always fought to be friends with the new kids for some reason, so if asked she could justify her conversation with a boy as one of courtesy. During their conversation she found out that he had just moved to Round Hill with his family from San Francisco during the summer and this made her smile. The farther away the new kids came from the more desirable they became. Sarah had never met anyone her own age from California and so naturally the fantasy slipped into her head of becoming friends with him, secretly of course, and then getting invited to go to San Francisco with him to visit his old friends and his old neighborhood like she had done when Laura moved to Round Hill from Pennsylvania. The brakes screeched as the big yellow school bus came to a stop and then the door opened so whiny Marcy Coogan could get out. Reluctant to finish her conversation, Sarah realized that her stop too was coming up, and didn't want to miss it because she had already missed it twice the preceding week - once because she had fallen asleep, and the other time because she had gotten herself tied up in a game of Cat's Cradle with Karen Hansen's younger sister; if her mother had to search for her again before dinner, calling the school, calling the bus company, calling other mothers, she would not be happy. Why did mothers worry so much? She didn't mind being lost, in fact she found it rather entertaining, kind of like an adventure. Nonetheless, she had to make every effort to remember her stop for the rest of the week for fear of having to be picked up at school, her mother's biggest threat of the year. Nobody got picked up anymore, it just wasn't cool to ride in a car when you could ride on a bus with no teachers and no parents and a bus driver that barely spoke English. It was one of the earliest marks of freedom and she wasn't about to have it taken away from on the account of a silly boy, even if he was from California.

"Excuse me, I have to go because I'm the next stop but I guess maybe I'll talk to you tomorrow if I see you around. It was nice meeting you Jason," said Sarah as she eased out of her seat, pulling her skirt down and making sure her braids were in order.

"I live at the stop after this one but I might want to try getting out here just to see how much further it is. I know my mom won't care," he said as he grabbed his Star Wars lunch box and G.I. Joe action figure.

As he followed her off the bus a few people gave them suspicious stares but that was only to be expected. Sarah herself was a little taken aback by such forward behavior but she decided to attribute it to his being

from California. Actually the thought of having someone to walk with might not be half-bad, even if it was a little embarrassing to be seen in public with a boy. "Where's your house anyways?" he asked matter-of-factly, chomping on a wad of gum ten sizes too big for his mouth. If he was looking for an after-school snack at her house he was barking up the wrong tree.

"Mine's the white one with the green shutters and the blue car in the driveway but I'm not going home yet," she said, so as to steer that idea out of his head. Boys definitely did not go to a girl's house after school unless their mothers were friends or unless their older sisters had to bring them along, as was the case with many of the neighborhood children.

"I go to the beach every day to collect shells and rocks and sea glass--"

"Can I come?" Jason wanted to know.

"Well, I guess, but you can't tell anyone we went together okay, it has to be a secret."

Jason looked nonplussed for a second and then he said, "Okay, then let's go, I promise I won't tell anyone."

Sarah hoped he would stay true to his word for the sake of her reputation inside of school and out as she carelessly walked, sometime in the middle of the road, sometimes on the right side, swinging her Barbie lunch box back and forth, listening to the sound of her uneaten bologna sandwich beating against the tin. She hated bologna and she had told her mother this at least a thousand times but her mother never seemed to take anything she said seriously, probably because she was just a kid. Someday maybe people would listen to her and realize that she was not just another stupid kid; she had ideas and plans for the future, someday Sarah Slegel would be rich and famous, maybe even on TV. Lost in thought, her stomach drifted her mind back to reality, hoping her mother would whip up one of her favorite meals to make up for the lousy lunch so that she would have the strength to live until she became famous. As the beach was only a block away, they reached the entrance in no time. Jason, suddenly overtaken by a wave of heat in the late September afternoon, tore off his navy blue hooded-sweatshirt revealing a well-worn white and blue baseball shirt with the number six on it; he then flung his sweatshirt and his lunch box in the sand by the gatehouse as Sarah stared in amazement. Boys. Sarah held onto all of her belongings as she did not want her sweater to get dirty and she did not want ants or other bugs crawling around in her lunchbox, even if it meant they would eat the dumb bologna sandwich.

"Hey, wait up!" said Jason as Sarah absentmindedly galloped ahead.

"OKAY, OKAY!" she shouted as she unwillingly slackened her pace to match his. He was never going to get anywhere in life if he went along walking at that rate. That was a little bit of information she had



picked from her wise father—he was a President, kind of like Ronald Reagan, only he didn't live in the White House and he drove himself to work.

Slowly, they wrapped their way along the black pavement as it wrapped its way around the five-mile peninsular beach. They had just passed the tiny marina and boathouse on the right, and two bicyclists were careening down the woodsy trail towards the pavement on the left when Jason stumbled across something on the side of the road. Before he could even say "Look what I found!" Sarah pushed him aside and grabbed the object.

"Let me see, oh yeah, this was my friend's," she said as she picked up the black walkie-talkie. "She lost it when we were playing detectives last week," and she slipped it into her deep pocket.

They had not walked more than 200 paces when Jason stopped again.

"A diamond, a diamond! I found a—" and he was cut off.

"Give that to me," she said, snatching the cubic zirconia, "this is exactly like the earring my mother lost a few days ago when she was here walking Shelby. She'll be so happy I found it for her."

"Wait a minute, I found it not you Sherlock," said Jason, in exasperation after seeing the second object disappear into her pocket as easily as the first, thanks to his good eye sight.

She had to admit, he did have a pretty good eye for a novice; she couldn't remember the last time she had found two valuable objects in the same day. Hopefully the Radio Shack walkie-talkie she had in her pocket would work with the Fisher-Price walkie-talkie she found at the end of the summer. Then, instead of just advertising one walkie-talkie she could advertise a pair, or two-for-one, which would be worth a lot more. If she couldn't find anything better she could probably take an earring from her sister's jewelry box to go with the diamond she had found today and she could advertise it in the jewelry section and make a fortune. Just as she and Jason were nearing the hidden entrance to the "Secret Garden," where she knew Jason had never been, two older boys came racing by on mountain bikes and one of them dropped a stopwatch on the pavement without realizing it.

"You dropped your—"

"Wait Jason, don't say anything. I need to see that for a second because I think it might be the one my new gym teacher said that he was missing in class today and I want to see if it's the same one."

Examining the blue digital object in her sweaty, excited, little hand she decided that it probably was the one Mr. Hawks lost so she stuffed it into her pocket.

"I'm beginning to think something fishy is going on here Sarah," said Jason as the two boys on mountain bikes were spotted walking back with their bikes, looking carefully at the ground.

"What do you mean?" she asked innocently, while her heart began to beat faster and faster, and the boys with the bicycles drew nearer and nearer, and Jason's gaze became more and more intent.

"I just mean that I think this is getting a little to coincidental..."

She didn't know what to say, her only escape was the Secret Garden but if she took him there she would have to tell him everything and then who knows if he would tell people and get her in trouble. Her mother would probably demand her to come straight home after school and maybe never allow her to ride the bus again. She had sworn she would never take anyone there, not even Laura, her best friend, but as the boys with bicycles squeaked nearer she took Jason's arm in a panic and pulled him towards the entrance of the garden. Up the damp rocks she climbed stealthily, expertly, under tree branches, dead and alive, he followed her in silence. When she reached the top she saw all the pretty flowers and birds and how lovely everything looked basked in sunshine. Then she thought of the underground hole under the holly bush where she kept all the objects she recovered that had no home. They were so safe there, protected from thieves and murderers, and she checked on them daily as if they were her children. Telling him would mean an end to her future, and end to her fame, an end to her freedom; he wouldn't understand, he was just another kid.

Without saying a word she left the garden of peace, she left Jason, and she ran back to the road where she found the two boys on bicycles, still searching.

"I found this and I was wondering if it was yours. At first I thought it was my teacher's but then I realized-"

"Give me that, and then get lost kid," said the bigger of the two.

Jason watched the whole thing happen in disbelief and then she was gone, like the wind. She ran all the way home, knowing that the only way she would ever get anywhere in life was by running

he scatters
his home with wooden
things usually old
moldy and unrestored
and retaining
age, he has hung
from his mantel
an antique fire extinguisher,
circa 1872
glass bulb filled with water
copper spring and clapper
when heated too much
will launch and explode,
with it dangling from his fingertip
he asked me What do you think
this is? Smoke snaking
around each word
eyes-down explanation that the bulb still
would extinguish
126 years later,
like letting me in
on the secret
that fire has no age

To contemplate the other side is base;

But who decides?

A rose surrounded by daffodils
Is not nearly so deserving of acceptance
As its conformity-ridden counterparts.

Its thorns are despised,
For they bring about the discomfort of
Others.

Red in a sea of yellow —
The Devout persecute ceaselessly.
And the translucent Sun which
So willingly spills its golden
Liquidity over daffodils casts
Only shadows and blackness
Upon the helpless crimson product
Of Its own folly.

I want to scratch my skin up in harlequin patterns
Make a bite or two in the plate of me
Put myself through the press to squeeze
My lust for you out.
Leave its tracks on the paper
Give it to you — push it under your door
After hours...
So you can hang it in your office and all
Your little drooling girls who need "extra help"
Can stare and wonder
Whose lust hangs on your wall this month-
Exploded and smeared
Exaggerated and yet still clearly mine.

The loveliest girl I know left my questions unanswered as the party ended early. She slipped out while I imitated the social butterfly, acting like I knew everybody, only in an attempt to gain her fancy. I quickly exited after I found out that she had departed and searched the vacant hillsides, sniffing for the longing scent of her perfume, feeling around aimlessly for her touch which I so coveted. The hillsides eventually lent themselves to roadsides which eventually poured into an all night café where I bought a coffee and three songs on the juke box. Like everyone else, I had missed something that night and had come to play a part in the all night lamentation, adding an angle to the agony, infusing a few lines within the ongoing drama, whose players entered in and out of the swinging door manned by a cigarette vending machine to the far left. After making small talk, finishing the coffee, and disposing of an ever flaky piece of pie, I decided it was time to go back to everything I knew. I hailed a cab and without much interference, landed at my doorstep to the roar of my mongloid companion who scratched at the door even before I had ascended upon the second rickety step.

In my vain aspirations, I had expected to dance up those steps, accompanied by another, my sun shining ever so brilliantly, my face plastered in shadows of cordiality and romanticism. Instead I unlocked the doors with three different colored plastic coated keys and greeted my pet, asking him how his night had turned out. He only replied that he grasped the starshine, explaining that he had been more than satisfied in such an attainment. I commended him and he escorted me out the door, while I mulled the mind story of randomly spotting the glimmer of the face of the evening, the spark of the candle whose effervescence descended upon me above all of the others who held their cocktails in hand and passion somewhere else.

A small frail woman, old with white curly hair,
Shoulders hunched, walked in the other night.
Cumberland Farms, open 24 hours.
She asked for a half gallon
Of whole milk.
Her eyesight slowly deteriorated, leaving her not enough
to distinguish the Red cap
She started rumbling within her fake, leather purse,
Rust colored.
A twenty dollar bill, she held, though each bill to her the same,
All twenties, She blankly focused on me, the price?
The most incredible shade of jade reflected back
Held constant in her irises.

- i. Good Morning
said Johnny to the flea,
as he picked up his guitar
and the music went free...
- In the woods all by himself,
needle by his hand,
he strummed the strings
of bliss and misery...
- ii. as it boils
 it separates
 sucked in,
 spit out...
- as it flows
 you fly,
 you sleep,
 you die...
- as it leaves
 you awake,
 you realize,
 you reflect...
- as it's absent
 you crave,
 you obsess,
 your grave.
- iii. snorting lines by shattered glass
grabbing flesh from behind
stories told of a visual night
when sensitivity makes ones persona light.
purple streaks of want wonder walls,
a room, a person, and beckoning calls.
juicy apples, of sin, shame at where desires's been;
dropped glass, hardwood floor, open door, peeked
through,
broken dreams and failed schemes of party nights.
pale skin, feeling death within,
as truth has been taken away,
perhaps forever, or just tonight,
slight hesitation to miss at what had been.

Fragments fly furious for their spot
On the mosaic of my soul and fit there
Together, perfect in the randomness-
Praising unity amongst entropy.
Glass, tile, bad luck mirrors
Stones, pottery, bolts and sea shells-
Bring the sharp shattered shards to me,
There is room for them in my
Ethereal universal design.

Yet before I freeze the broken
And the battered in bogus time
With the grout I call compassion
Let me warn you that I covet,
Attract things with rough edges.
I am cut up and callused
Immune to most of the sting
I feel no pinch or rip and
My tesserae never harm me.

You call them garbage- unworthy and ashamed
Pathetic remnants of a once beautiful whole...
I call them tesserae.
I join the independent and frail
To create a conglomeration of radical individuals
Misunderstood
Who come to me to seek refuge.
It always has been and always will be
For I was born to heal and nourish
To weave a whole out of parts that need
To have space, to be loved when they are lonely
To have space, to be held, be held.
They are morose and forgotten
Chipped and finish dulled
Disjointed and purposeless
Empty, crying, needy,
Full of sensible madness.
Unhappy with their origin, birth, life and death.
I am tired, their numbers are growing,
But I only see someone to love.
Billions of pieces that I need to hold.

Feet rush by, racing each bag —
paper or plastic. Arms legs, heads
bob and weave, dodge, duck
and dive through a cradling
sea of sound.

Noise and motion churn faster,
louder, harder until their
rhythms collide.

Chaotic beats rise and swell in a
blur of color and music
that blinds and beats
you to the ground as you
stumble towards safety.

Dizzy, trapped you follow your
brain which says to escape
just walk outside and
shut the door.

"I'd like one cup of coffee, cream, no sugar, a raspberry danish, an apple strudel, two pieces of french toast, and a chocolate and banana milkshake," said the man with the plaid flannel jacket and the big construction boots that looked as if he hadn't showered in the last decade.

It was just another rainy, miserable, windy, Saturday night in late December in the small Midwestern town of Granville, Ohio and this night would come and go as any other had, Susan supposed.

"We're all out of raspberry danish tonight but we have blueberry and cheese if you care—" she started to say but she was quickly interrupted.

"Forget it, if there's no raspberry danish then just forget it. Just give me a cup of coffee, cream, no sugar. Actually make that milk; two percent."

"Are you sure sir, do you want to see the menu again?" she asked in a plaintive voice.

"I don't have time for this. Just give me a cup of coffee, cream and sugar on the side like I said before Miss," he grumbled.

Susan sighed a heavy sigh as she turned around and headed back towards the swinging doors of the greasy kitchen where Manuel stood dripping with sweat from 4 PM to 2 AM daily, whipping up orders for the hungry, ungrateful customers at "Aunt Clara's Country Café."

As the door came back and nearly hit her in the head for the 363rd time in the past week, Susan wondered how many more dinners she would have to serve before she would see him again. She was 24 years old when he left and she was nearly 26 now, not that anyone was counting.

"He'll be back Heather. I know you think I'm crazy but that's just because you've never been in love Heather, you just don't understand. What's that? Yes, I can meet you there after my shift but I have go now because my order's up. Bye Heather," and she hung up the phone and picked up the rubbery looking scrambled eggs for table two.

Michael would come back one day, she knew he would, she just didn't know when. Every time she brought out another cup of coffee or another Saturday Special she replayed that warm September morning when she had seen Michael for the last time. It was the morning after he had told her he loved her for the first time and she had eagerly echoed his words. She made him blueberry pancakes and bacon that morning - his favorite - and he ate every

last bite and then he was gone, just like that. No explanation, just gone. But she would stay right here waiting; she wouldn't go looking for him for she was not the desperate type. She was the type who believed in fate – if it was meant to be he would come back. And she knew, deep down in her heart that this time it was meant to be, that's why she still wore his old class ring that was obviously way too large for her slender fingers, tied around his neck, and that's why she hadn't gone out on a single date with anyone since he left – the mere concept of it (dating) deemed utterly absurd. When you meet the man you're going to marry everything changes. She no longer had to live vicariously through the lives of her customers, she had her own life now and her own problems to contend with. You'd be surprised how many people are just dying for some perfect stranger to talk to, someone who will listen and someone who will always bring food as a response to all the severed marriages, the years of drug abuse, the attempted suicides, etc. That's how she met Michael in the first place. He had come in late one night, the place was dead, and she sat him at a corner table, all alone. But he didn't want a corner table because he wanted to be able to keep an eye on his car so he moved without being asked. He hadn't planned on telling her everything that night, he had only planned on having a quick cup of coffee and then getting back on the road with his dog Moses, but in life things seldom turn out as they're planned. Whether or not she believed his story was not even an issue. Did he really kill the man stuffed into the trunk of his car? Was he really related to Gerald Ford? Was blue his favorite color? She didn't know but this didn't bother her. For some reason, perhaps fate, Susan was attracted to him and that was all that mattered. He was brilliant and if she married him her children would be smart and they would attend Harvard and become doctors and lawyers and escape this pathetic town of Granville, Ohio where nothing of any consequence ever took place. Absentmindedly she asked the old woman who had just sat down at the corner table if she could take her order.

"What can I get you today, Ma'am?"

"I'll have an order of blueberry pancakes with bacon on the side please, Susan," she said in a raspy voice.

Returning to the kitchen Susan realized that she had forgot to put her name tag on this morning. A smile spread over her face as she came to the realization all at once. That old woman sitting at the corner table, all alone, was Michael; he had returned, and Susan was right here, ready to serve him his favorite meal once again, just as fate had planned...

Warm breezes have settled, nestled in the hollow den.

Days have passed, like the leaflets from the autumn sky.

Memoirs have become distant stars that sparkle only in the midnight sky.

He has gone forever, the pleasure, the joy, the laughter he has taken in a
Suitcase, like clothes for a long journey.

Me, I am left, a banana peel thrown on the side of an old roadway.

Sweetness, there is none to speak of.

The warm gaze from the eyes has become a cold stare, off to a distant land

Seeking its blissful days.

Those days are gone, like dust by a sweeping broom.

The coquetry that filled each day, has been replaced by lonely moments with
The soul.

Stillness can be visualized.

Serenity, there is plenty of it.

He wasn't a fool you must know.

He was a darling sweet fellow, but the seasons he too mimicked.

Indeed, he was the sun, a beaming ray of light on this shady patch, but then

As all things must end, so did that day.

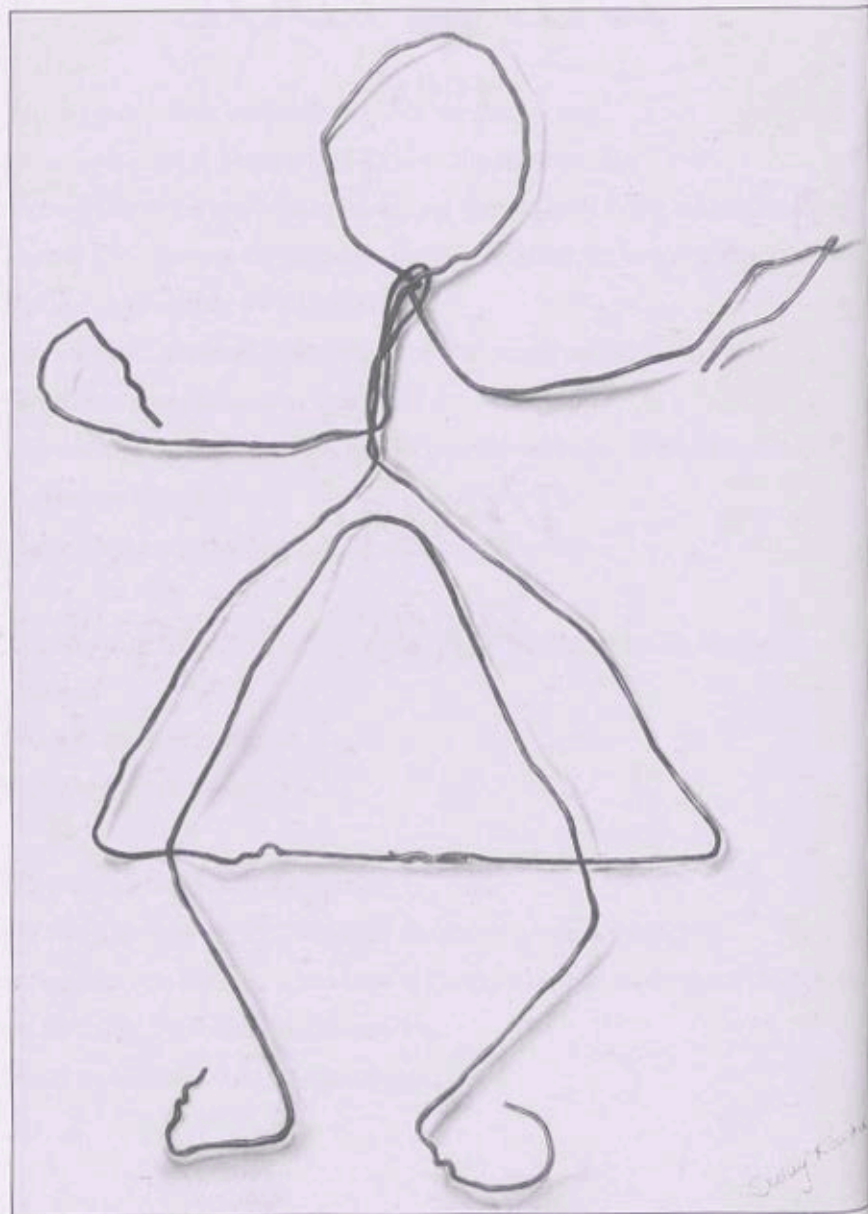
Night took its turn and swept the sun away.



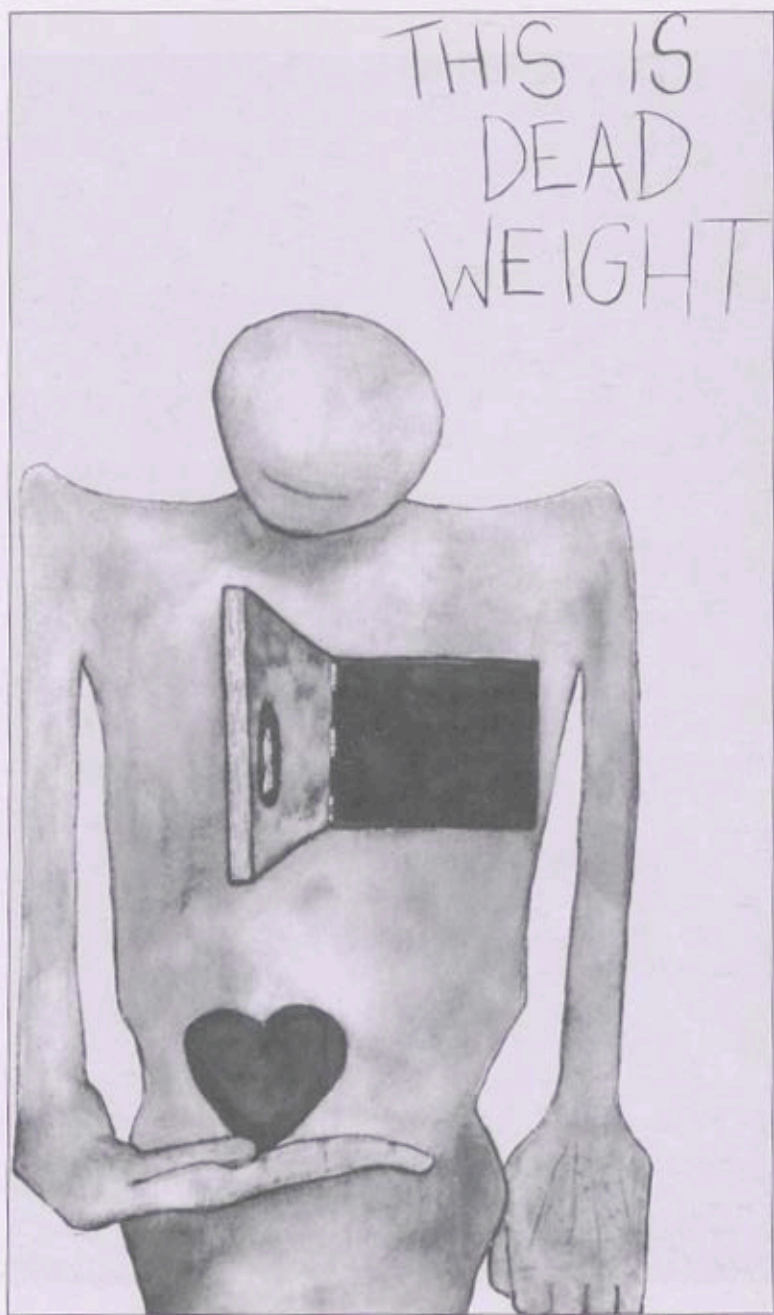
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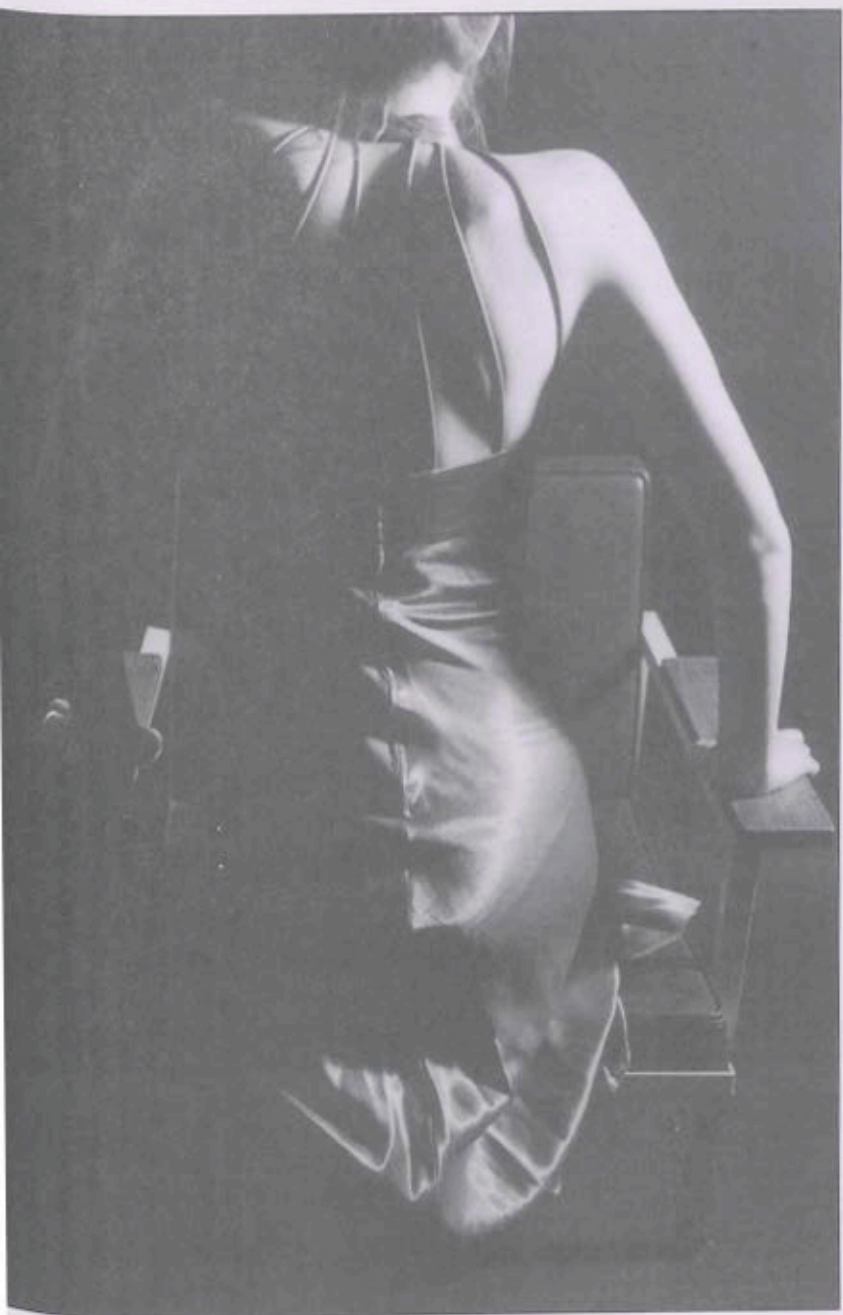
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*VISUAL
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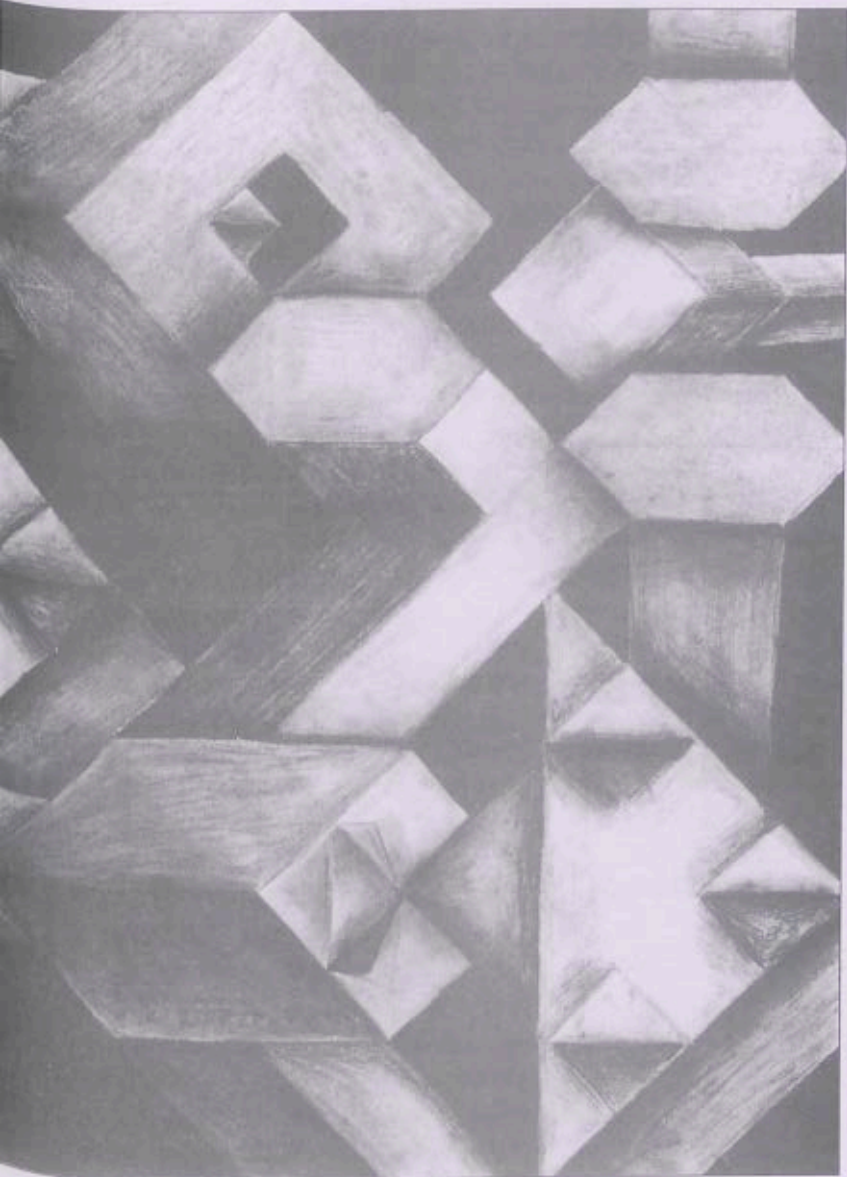


















"Woodward"

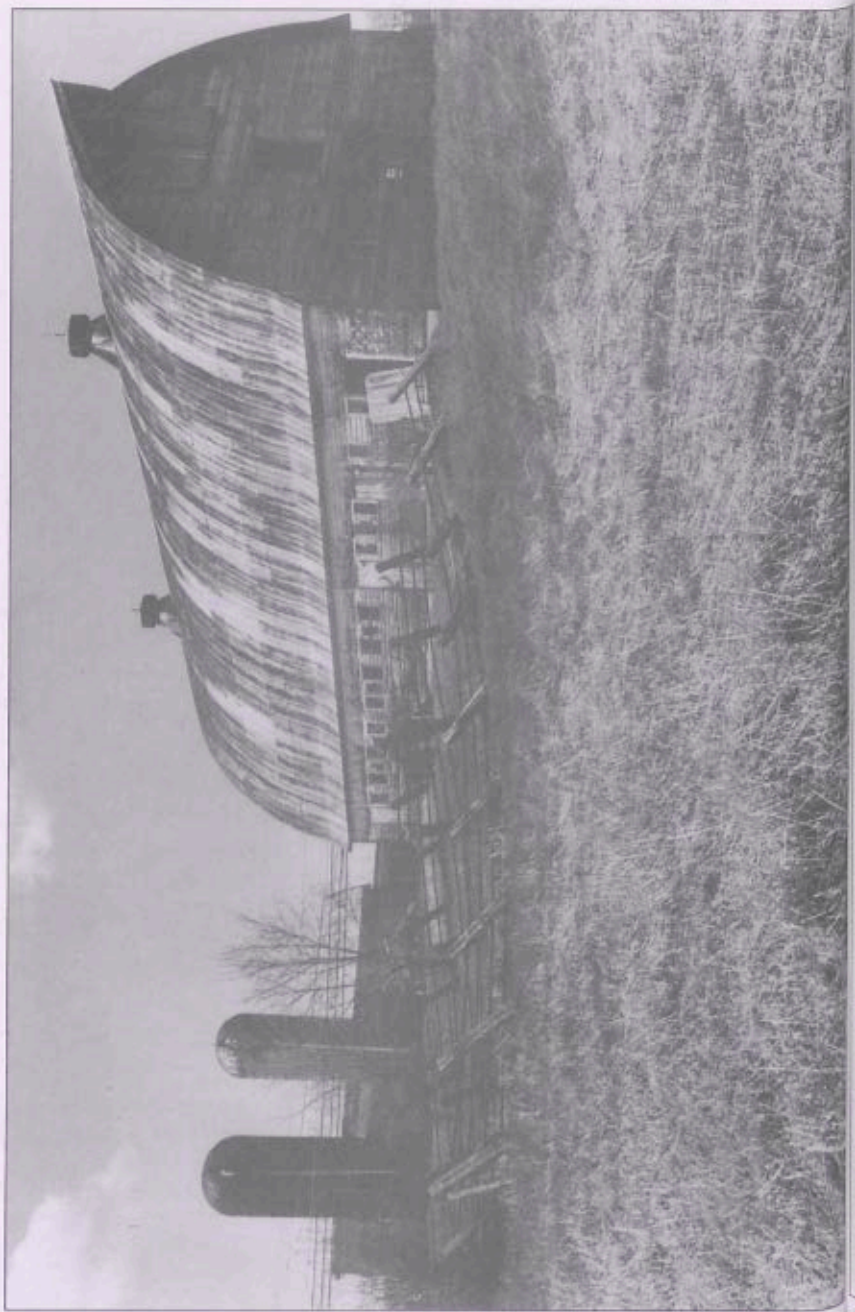
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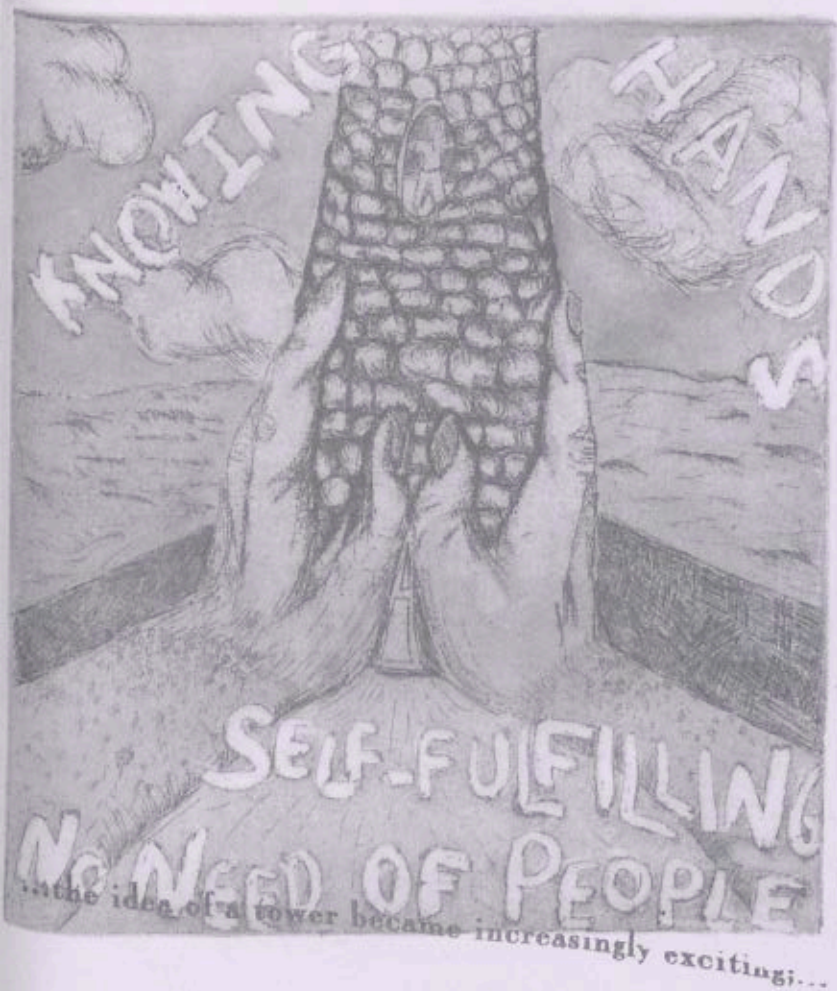
Brooke Kaminsky





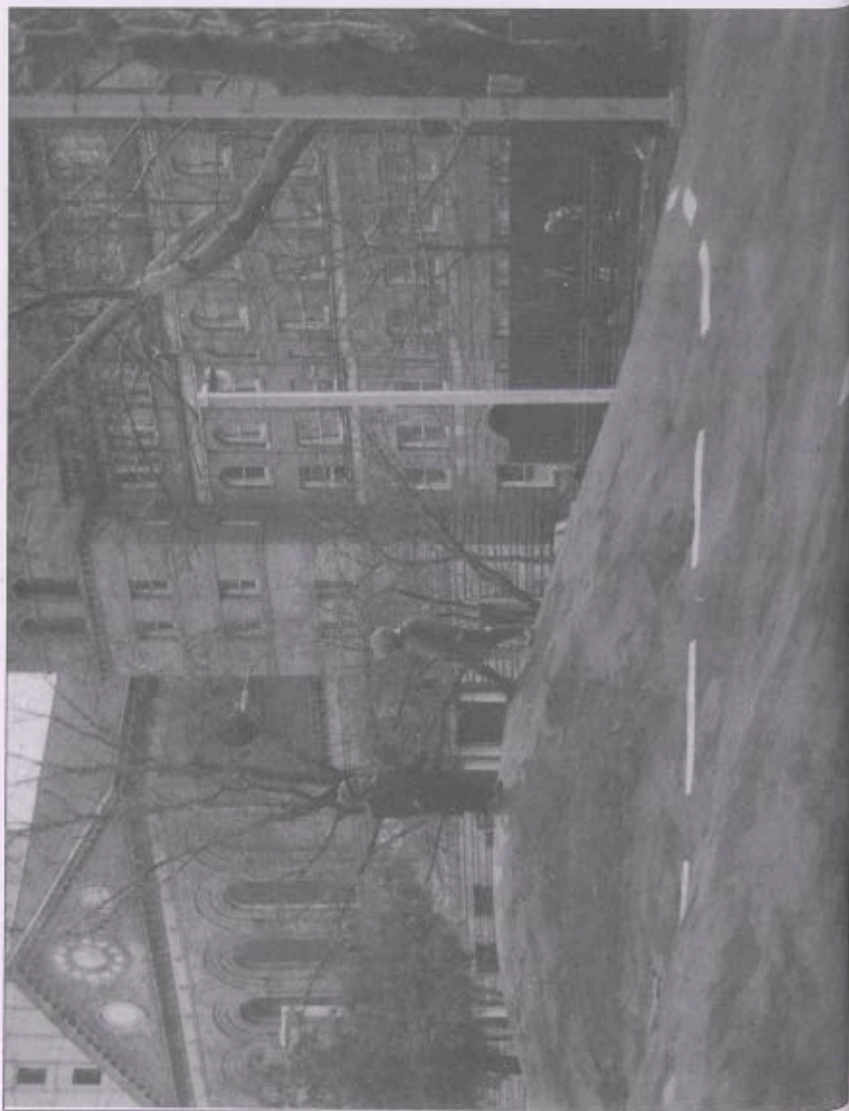




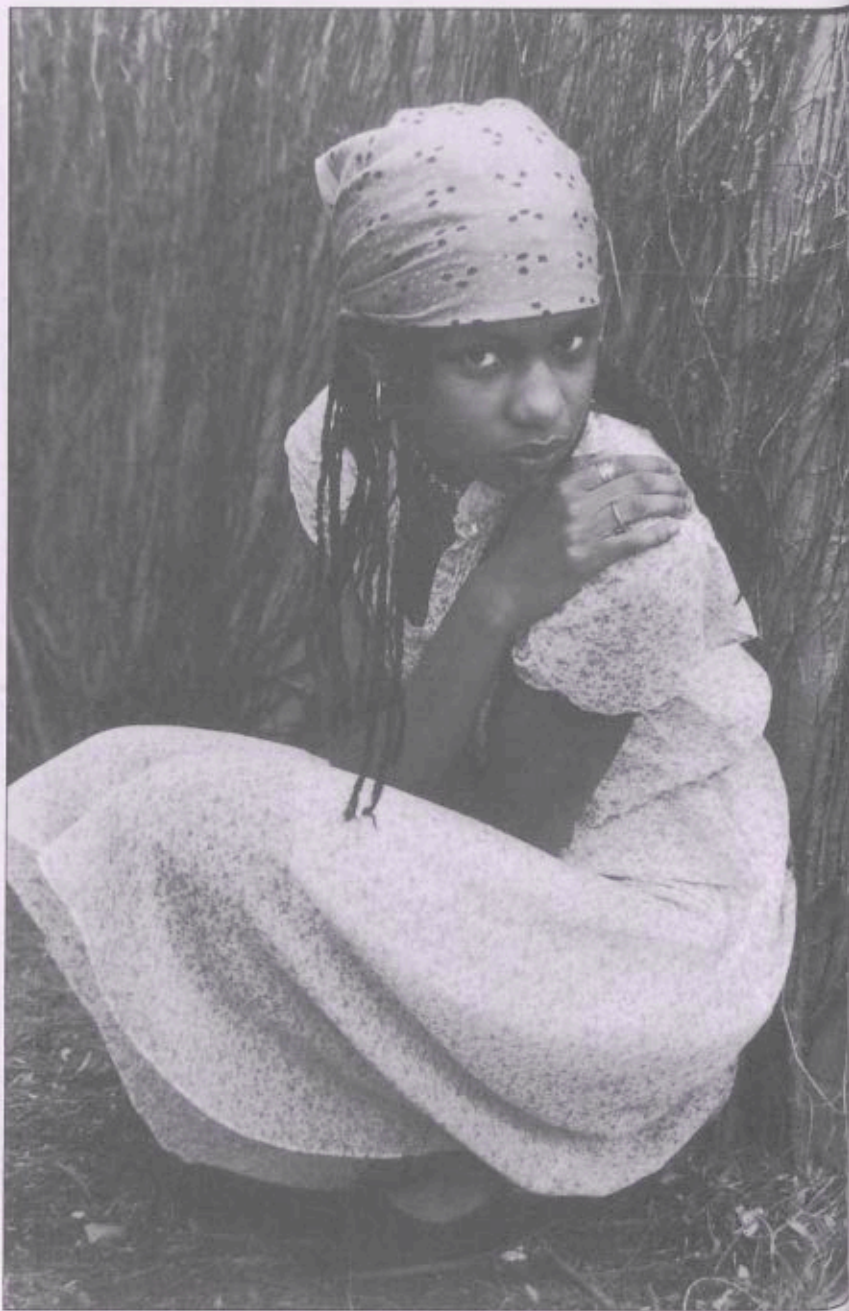


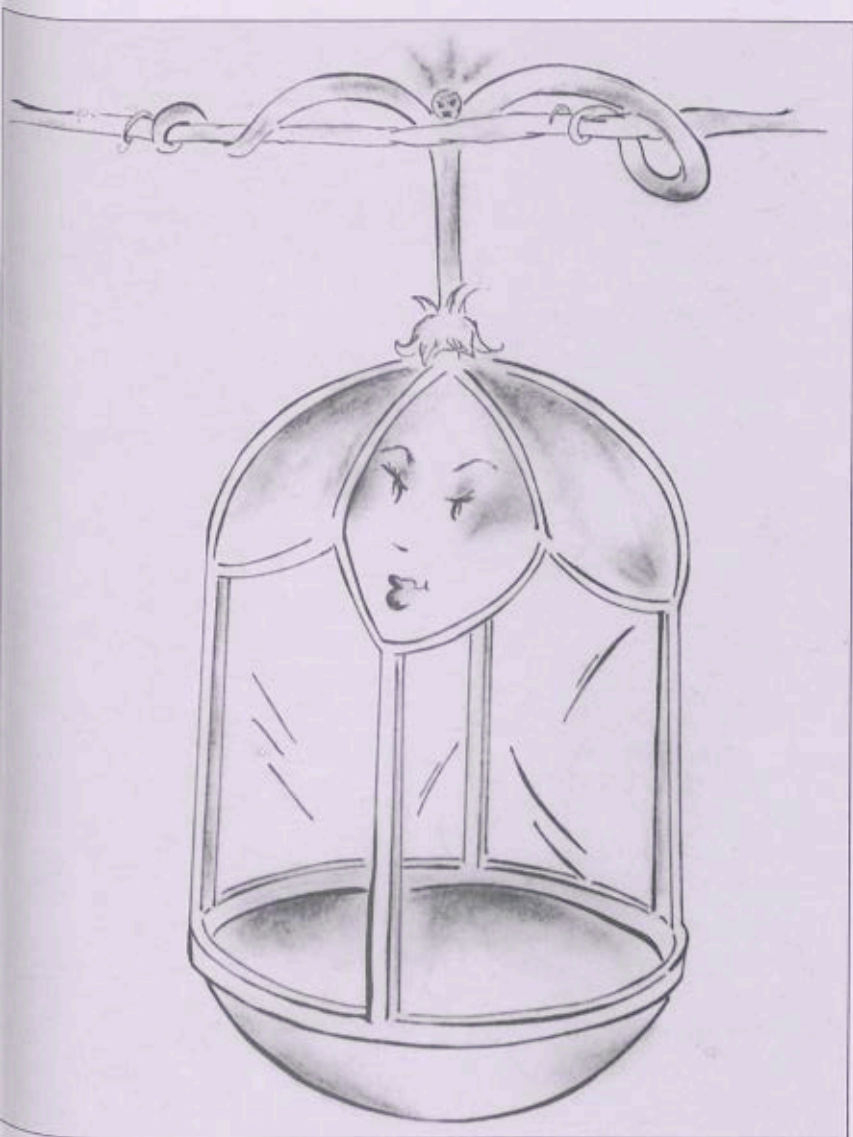
No need of people,

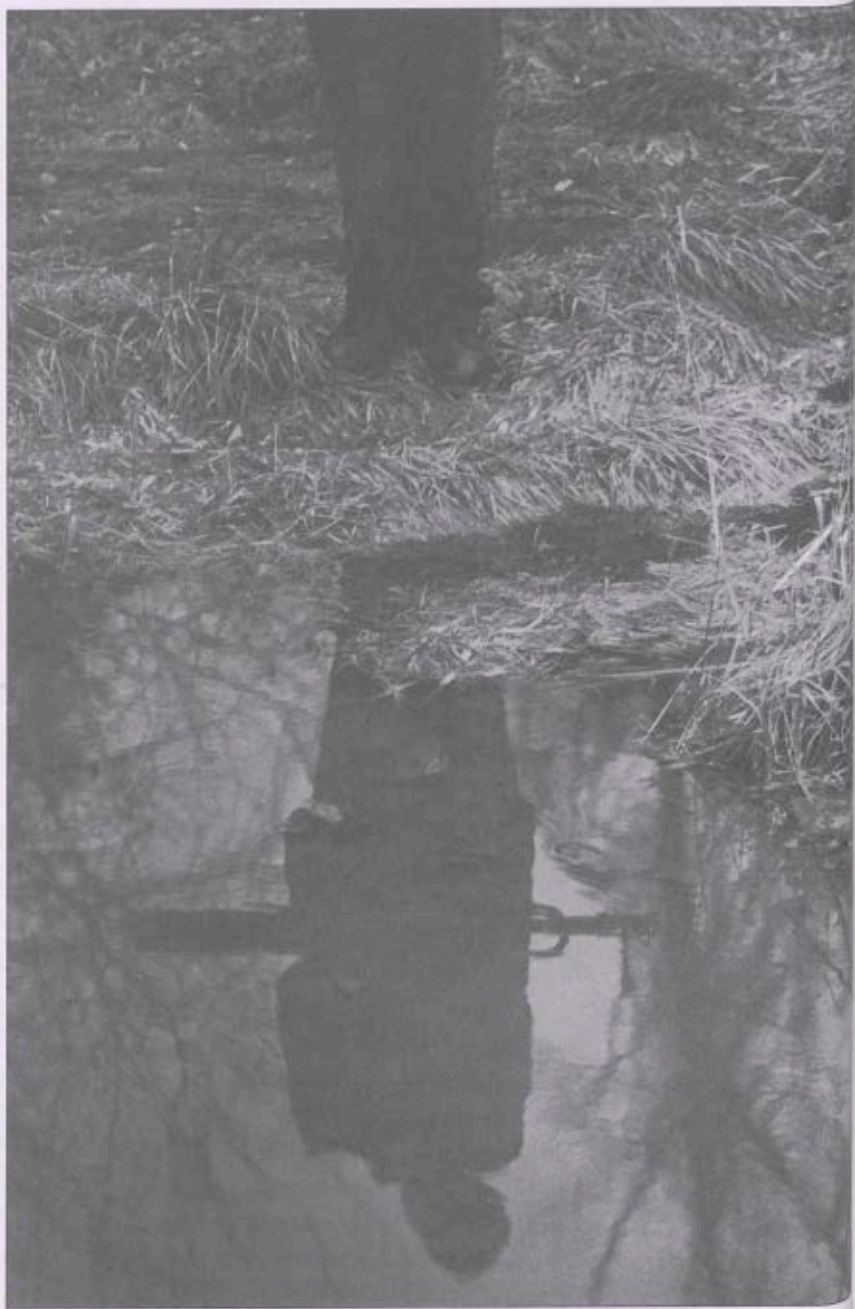
because she was self-fulfilling, delighted
by the pre-eminence of her art, and the future of her
knowing hands.

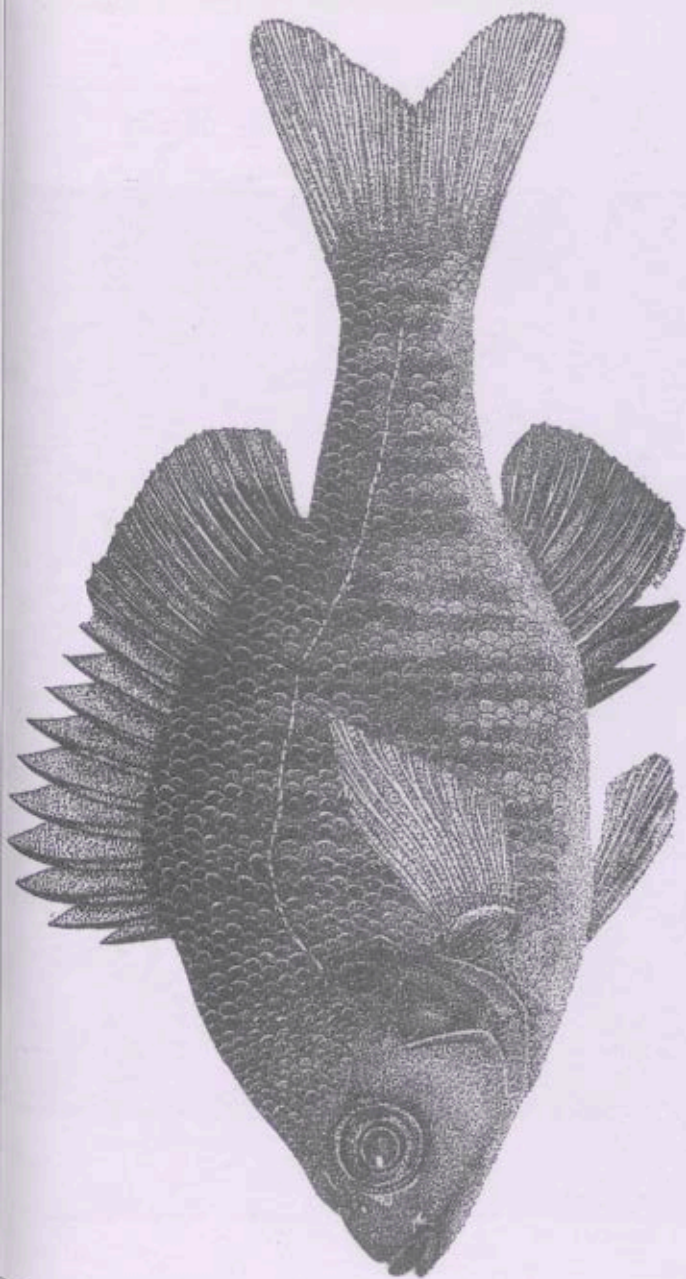




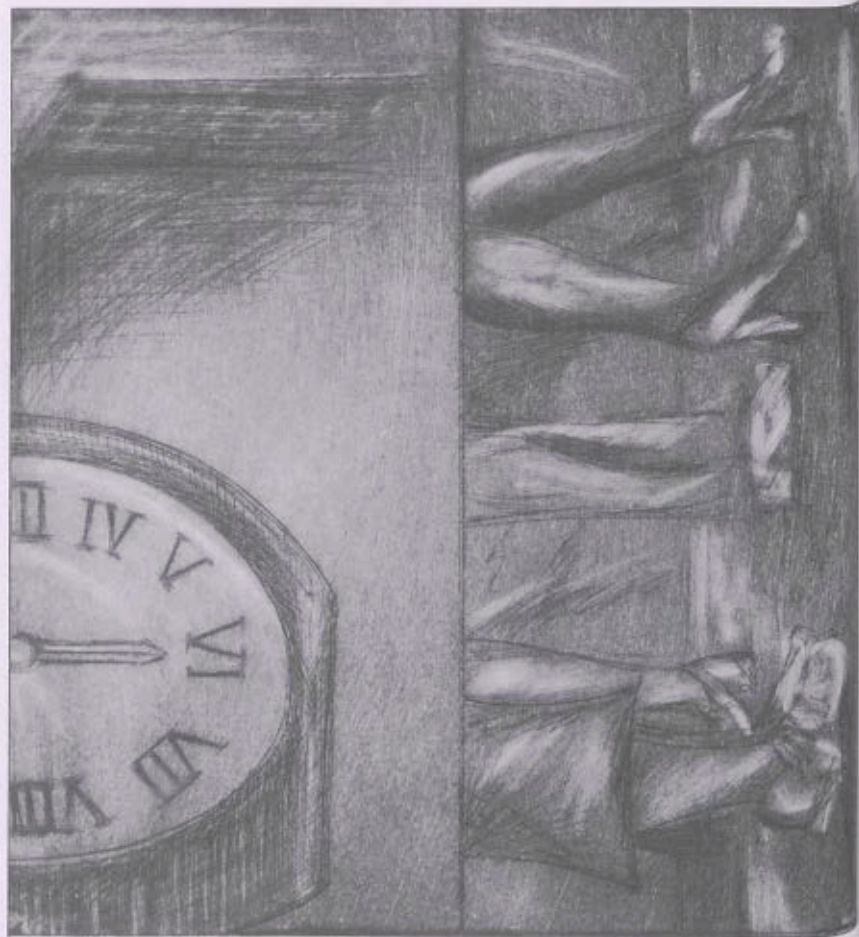




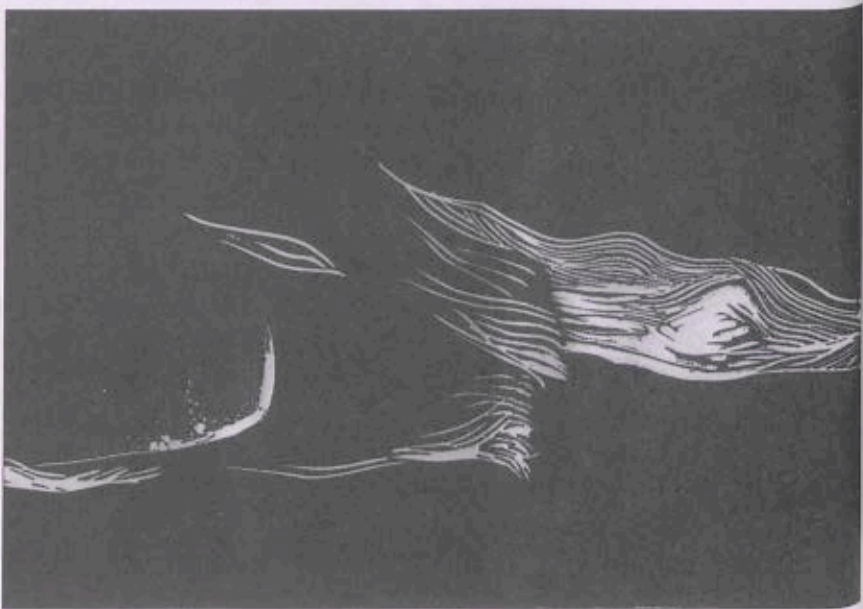




bluegill Sunfish
Lepomis macrochirus









THE  *IDOL*

1998

LITERARY

PART II

Hers was the heart of a stranger time
a time when vows weren't mere words
but minute in the face of an emotion

Who can overpower death?
Faith? Hope? Love? Perhaps

This fellow, Richard
wide grinned and bespectacled
with the pride of a new home in his eyes.
With her a daughter and her just born brother.
The pride they shared
overwhelmed his heart.
Its failure left behind
her blue eyes, like some sky
or a sea full of hope.

Fifty five years of a long, lonely lifetime.
Fifty five years with one photograph
and what the heart keeps.
Between silent anniversaries,
four wars, eleven presidents.
Fifty five years
Though life shared less than ten.
Tears the lone tribute.

The endlessness of each day
a seminal single mother facing
the endlessness of alone.
Through the miles circling the globe
soothed wounds, they were
wounds that never aspired to heal:
it was never a void.

The voids instead dwelt in the homes planted in her neighborhood
Each night blue lights crept from silent windows
pressing unreal fantasies of everywhere else.
Inside were wives filled with regret
of husbands with wandering eyes and busy hands ashamed of
sons
who evaded everything, hungry only for some unknown daughter
blending in at some mall.
A neighborhood of thoughts everywhere else.
Revering unfulfillment.

She dwelt among them for fifty five years
until the longest distance relationship
is fulfilled.

Here in New Bedford
at a cemetery in autumn
There is no such thing as Niagra Falls
only puddles and gutters.
The sunset is hidden behind
Rooftops and smokestacks.
There are no kisses in the rain
and nobody's playing our song.
There are only two headstones
side by side. Two
and eternity.

January puddle jumping through
lakes of melting purity
mixed with mud.

The lakes carved into snowbanks and that
Penny, sitting down at the
pool's bottom.

It sits like it were in a mall
fountain or a wishing well
and it is quiet.

I walked over that penny today,
and it was just a penny,
dull and brown.

The water has drained off and made it
no more than a coin that fell
to the ground.

A wish ungranted.

Once, I watched her walk through
a grove. The sun rose as she
entered and it gave brilliant light to
all she set her eyes upon. But curious
was the effect.

Her perception of the scene is
to me unknown, but mine clear and cement.

All the grove grew dim. It became
a secondary attraction to this main display.
on her the sunlight fell and left
the grove in subtle hues.

Life around her did not die – of that
be sure; to die in her presence
would be a death worse than sin –
it simply, humbly faded to the greater
light. Branch and rock gracefully
bowed in honoured silence.

The first light that shone
on nature's beauty never returns to
the grove when she has left.
the sun sets with her head's drop
from the horizon.

Her exit leaves the grove content,
yet longing. No petal wishes to be seen
again after so deflating an experience
and begs for the darkness it now
drowns in. But every blade and branch
wishes for your return and wakes
every morning to the disappointing
shades of innocent deprivation.

i stood in the sand and looked into what frightened me i looked it in the face and i moved out and faced the wind and the darkness as raindrops pelted me like needles tattooing fear and courage and innocence all over my shivering body i breathed in the cool night air and licked salt from my lips and wiped it from my eyes i watched the darkness swell up and i lost my feelings in the incessant motion i knew it was coming to take me and in the howling wind and pounding waves and in the rumble of the thunder i heard the voice say *are you ready? This is where it begins* as if to defy its origins and i stood confused not knowing exactly what to do and i looked deep inside and i summoned the spirit of my youth and the vitality that i knew would somehow hear me and respond and i waited i waited and then as if driven by the same force that propelled the dark adversary toward me the words leaped from my heart and echoed loudly and purposefully in that already deafening air *i'm ready i'm a child and a man and everything and nothing i'm dirt and sunlight neither of which is less important than the other i'm foolish and wise and often weak but right now i am strong and you have only seen the beginning all these distinct but overlapping entities that comprise your enemy find little common ground outside the body but right here right now they agree on this the we that is me is not ready to let you have your way i will fight with every bit of strength and every ounce of courage i will fight you and i will win to you and i this is a promise...and now the days seem long for reasons both obvious and unknown light and darkness have become so similar that they are often impossible to separate far between and few are those glorious moments when sunshine warms my heart or when i see those beautiful purple mountains or when i am affirmed that you still care yet once in a while when it seems like i'm grasping at thin air and i see that dark and tempting foe rising on the horizon i think back to that brief moment when i was a king among nobody and i look deep inside and i see a candle flickering in the darkness and i remember that it is the very same flame that burned brighter than my alleged superior on that damp and victorious night it is the very same force that propelled words of defiance and inner strength at him like bullets and allowed me to keep that old promise i am reminded of the wind and the waves and the thunder and the needles and the voice and youth and i am reminded that the human spirit will prevail*

I walked along a different path,
Unaware of aftermath.
I followed footsteps never made
And took the road my mom forbade.

I think of thought unordinary –
Not pleasant dreams, but quite contrary.
Mind is mixing, manic mazes
My heightened mood returns in phases.

Here my eyes are blank or blurry
Racing thoughts create my fury.
Speedy curves for short-lived glory
"Guilty concludes the jury.

They take the road most traveled by.
They wear their jackets, suits and ties.
They all eat breakfast, drink their teas:
Lively, Little Families.

Kiss their kids, off to work
If I were them, I'd go berserk
They pay their bills, make more money,
Call their spouses "dear" or "honey."

They live a life of purity,
That is what appears to be:
Without a flaw or stray of path,
They don't know bullshit, pain or wrath.



Because I followed Robert Frost
I took a path, and I got lost.
I trampled roads too caked with shame-
Frost or me, who is to blame?

Drug-lords lined my road not trees
And Drag-queens laid their lines and pleas
I found no grass, and no pink flowers,
Just boulders, rocks and endless showers.

Taking heart no words of poets
Led me nowhere, no I know it.
Brain is sizzling, charcoaled feet,
On unpaved paths there's no defeat.

So take the road most traveled on,
Don't march to a stranger's song;
The drummer's tune that's known too well-
A truthful beat it might dispel.

When choosing roads to follow, friend-
Don't trust your instinct 'till the end:
Stay where light is, or find my way,
And join the hell in which I stay.

*A boat rocking on hot water,
bobbing, nearly tipping,
but somehow maintaining
precariously gripping fingers on the waves.*

There is a world entire existing in
The edge of our eyes-
An otherworld that we
Perceive, wholly, only
Through dreaming, fainting, going insane; squinting
Sometimes we catch the shades and the movements
But when we turn: nothing.

It's been 2 years too long
And two long years, too, assault my heart.
And my hope is splashed on the sidewalk in front of my
door
But still I nod my head and smile.

I shave my head too long,
And I know I'd make my mother cry,
And I am robed in what I hold most dear.
I fight my sleep too long
And do I live outside the realm of sleep?
And do I live on the doorstep of my inside

'Cause I'yam what I'yam
And I just need to find out what that means
And I just want to find it out with you
But still I hold my tongue and smile.

a cool beer in my hand to keep me sane,
to comfort in a world gone mad and to
eliminate the cold blunt edge of pain
numbing my perception and coursing
through
my brain, my vein, my, how they entertain,
dancing and laughing in the moonlit rain.

the standard is set for the Second Coming
of prodigal days in a purple maze
of Bacchanalian dreams, now adorning
our misery in laurel leaves, lazy
metals steeped in pride, ugly girls brushed
aside,
knowing the left goes in front of the right
but little else as the stumbles multiply,
tripping over my face, falling as I cry.

My breaths are deep swoops of gulls
playing currents of rising air
over rippling waves
laughing curls

A life at sea, no complaints
Bliss in stillness, practiced patience
driven, now drifting,
yet waiting

*She happened along, unseen
motion, pushing purpose
Strings straining skyward
against a swollen sail*

*Catching breaths, called to action,
propelled through the tight clamp
of short tacks in the sun
toward ends idyllic, terrific,
somewhere softly in between*

*She, coursing over me
a cantilevering kiss
I turn, hoping she will follow*

But dozing, then waking in
time to see afternoon sun slip
behind cool bleak walls
she departs

The movement gone, sail now slacked
left in irons, take in the air
be aware of breath
once again

Here we are, once again, sitting on your floor and talking about the discontent at hand. I've lost the days of giggle-giggle fall down humor; the disappearance of the sun's growth has hid my own. Carried away and frozen deep beneath, we're waiting to be reborn. Trying to get each other through with promises of new dawns, but they're shattered by rattling tongues in our ears. I don't remember when I started hating the way you eat your food, or you hating the sound of my voice. It looks like we're floating away from each other.

But, right now I'm still sitting on your floor and we're only getting angrier. In a last effort to remain sane, I pull you off your beanbag wasteland and into the street below. The half-shining stars don't dull the emptiness with their dubious light. Wandering, circling the path like the smoke we're exhaling, being spent in the midnight gale. So low in my disenchanting rhetoric, I curse the morning for leaving me behind in its shadow. We talk more about shit. You try to cheer me up and I you, until we're sick of lying to each other.

Back to square one of this cyclic change, lamenting the pitfalls we can never seem to avoid. Recoiling from the world in respective bubbles, we forget how cold it is outside. Passing the houses asleep under snow blankets, I peer into the windows above in hopes of escaping to watch someone else's life for a while. You grab my paw, jerking my back to reality and take me running sideways into the undisturbed crystals. The powder swims over our faces as we fall over, laughing like children. We lay back and let the iciness seep into our clothes and joke about imprinting all six of my asses. I'm holding you in my thoughts; the old you I didn't know as well, the one I filled in the blanks with superlatives. Right now your eyes are veiled and you won't let this freedom embrace you. Something's held back and I want to cry because you don't realize how illuminating your smile is, I just want you to smile. I snuggle next to you; a massive compared to my frame, and I want to be frozen there forever, because right now, you look beautiful.

You start talking bullshit again, like old times, and I ramble off tangents that have no point. The sky's red clouds are drifting over us and you seem to be thawing to the idea of acting happy. In this perfect structure of snow, the peacefulness enraptures, detaches us from the world. But the night draws deeper into its course, so we raise ourselves, brushing off the clinging patches. Some strange hand must have turned my face. As I looked back to where we were laying, I felt it start. The drops of the gentle rain began to fall more rapidly, washing away our imprints with every second. And then I looked at you; into you, those clouded eyes of yours, and saw something. I admit it scared me that second. So if you're wondering why I just said, "I'm proud of you," and walked away, it's because I'm sorry.

My blue cotton striped shirt
Brown suspenders absent, alone
Hanging from her muscular shoulders
Revealing long, powerful legs:
A memory of this morning when I awoke,
To her toasting bagels, and the smell of coffee

Frequent distractions from the monotony of homework,
Perpetuated by alluring scents left on my sleeves
And necklines passed through intimate interactions,
I can't concentrate.
My hands moved in a virtual stampede of caresses
Meant singularly to overwhelm her will power

Kiss me in photographs
I want to remember your sensual lips
Touching skin so violently bare.
Love is too cerebral to counter
The motives of lust.

The water rose to the top
Which is how I found it,
not yet spilled over

I called the sink's owner
told him of the situation
for the second time in a month.

"It drips, and it probably froze
one drop at a time."

I froze one drop at a time
My fear the falling mercury
of my soul. Gradually, my mind
stiffened, began hobbling
like an old man working
protesting joints on a
cold Sunday morning.

Memories of warm curves
on snug flannel
trickled, expanded
then solidified, trapped in my
tiniest passages on dark days
streaked with idle anger
bursting privately-
winter alone.

Next day, both of us stood
over the now-empty basin.
Temperature rose enough, I guess.
I unstuck the pipe
indirectly, with non-action.
Hot, fluid water
met the ice
And they became one.

Others call out to me
Streaming thoughts through
the pores of my mind.
And as I am warmed,
Fearful daggers dissolve
and join the flow.

Drained,
Alive.

I hold your feet
And in the learning
And the saying of the word
There are African Women
Beckoning to me
Shoga they whisper
in the women's way of whispering
the way in which only women will want to hear
Kusikiliza-To listen.
They invite me in to listen
I am sure that they are
Veiled, buibui completely covering
Except for their eyes-muddy ovals
portraying a muted sense of
Holding my feet
And I want to ask them or
Tell them if they did not know
How the Holding of Feet
has so much to do with a
Good morning, Good Evening
and Good Afternoon.
Shikamoo-I am holding your feet.
I am holding you.
I am listening.

