

A black and white photograph of a person from behind, reaching up to touch a textured wall. The person's arms are extended upwards, with their hands touching the wall. The wall has a rough, mottled texture. The lighting is dramatic, casting shadows on the wall and the person's back. The overall mood is contemplative and artistic.

The Idol

WINTER 1993



Z. CHAUDHRY

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SPECIAL THANKS TO

MARTIN BENJAMIN





SELF-PORTRAIT, 1992

SARAH FOX

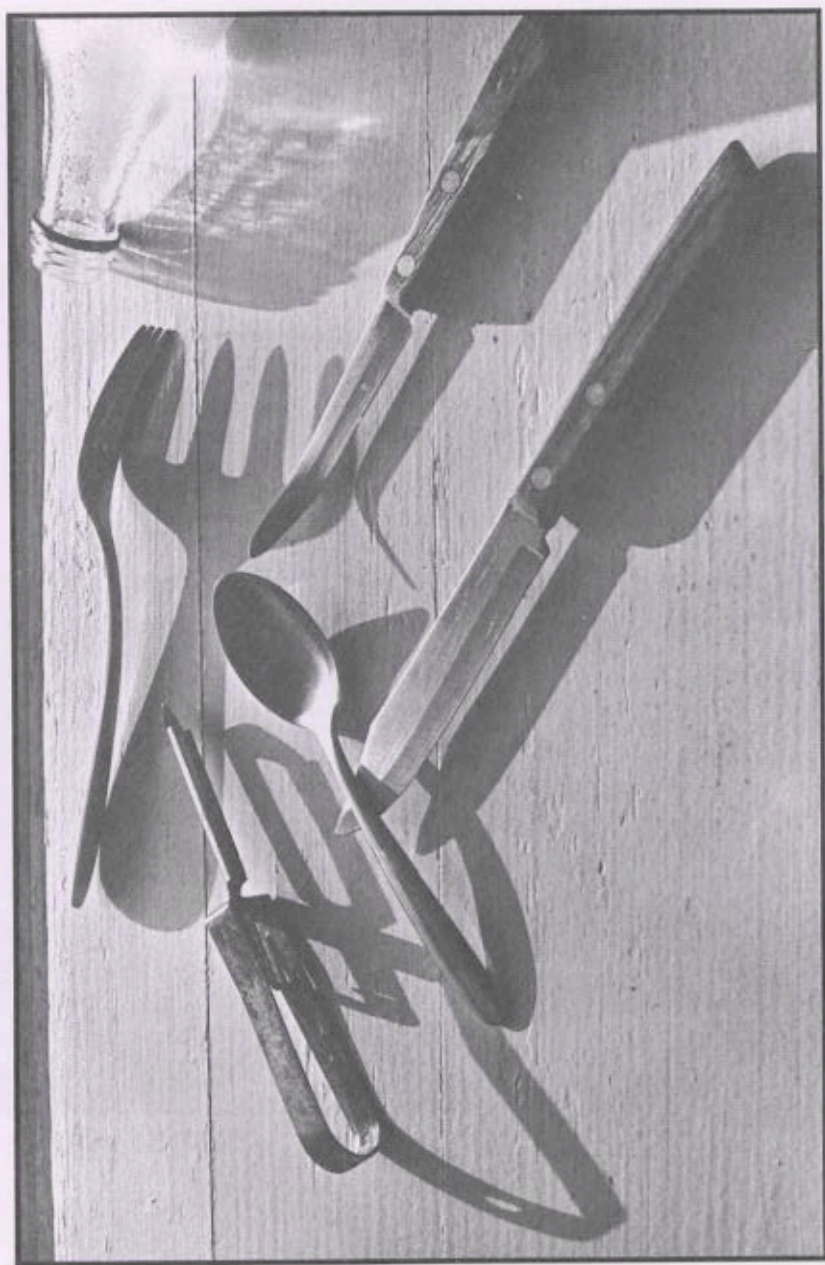
A note from the editor . . .

How can one describe art or poetry?

Carl Sandburg describes them as “. . . a series of explanations of life, fading off into horizons too swift for explanation.” Art and poetry are intended to be appreciated and not explained.

The Idol, a bi-annual publication, offers an opportunity to the many struggling young artists and poets to present their creative endeavors. Thank you to all who have contributed their time, energy, and insight into the human psyche.

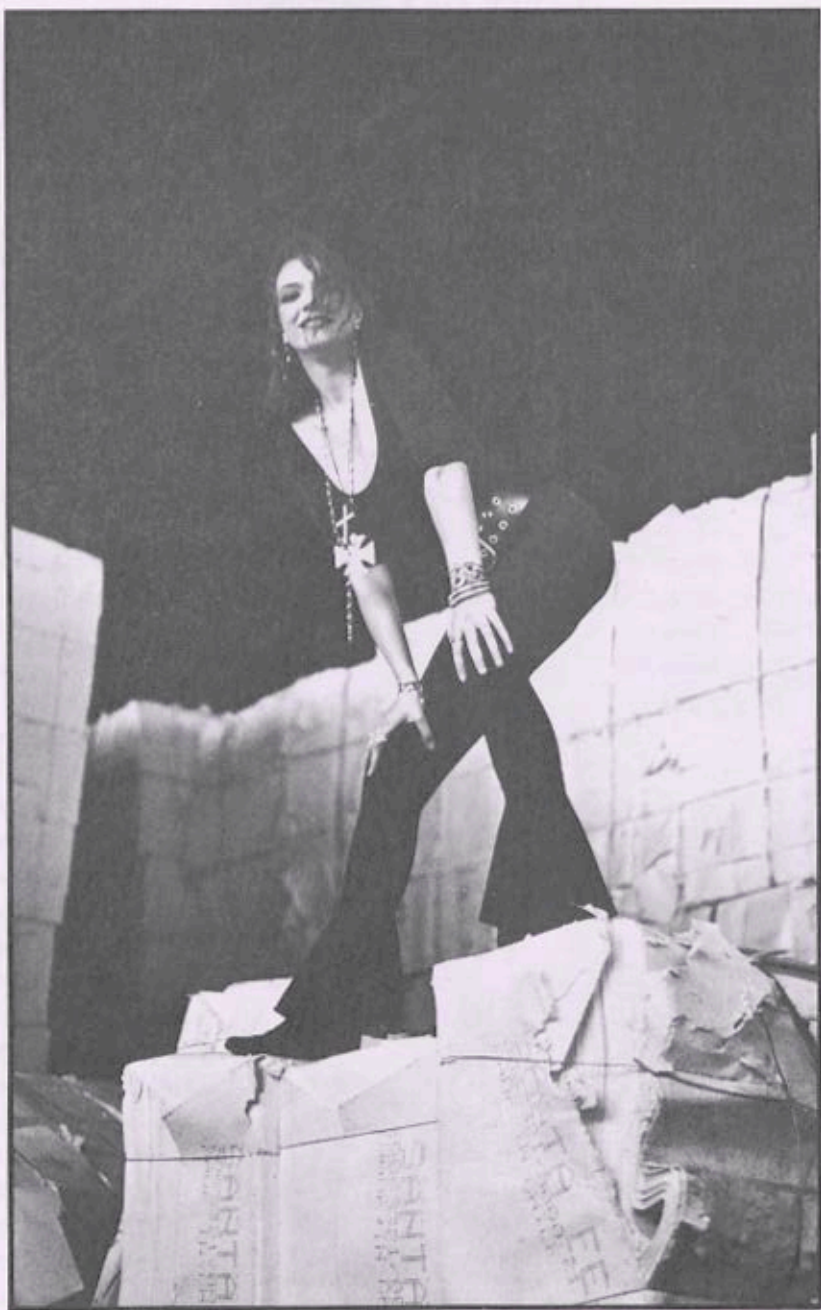
– THE EDITOR



ROZLYN J. MCCALL

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LEIF ZURMUHLEN

EGO

Sensual Pleasure
it must be stopped:

the Power
you move me

the Touch
you excite me

the Nation
you intrigue me

the Vision
you possess me

the Hedonism
you kill me

the Void
you need me.

SHEARA A. REICH

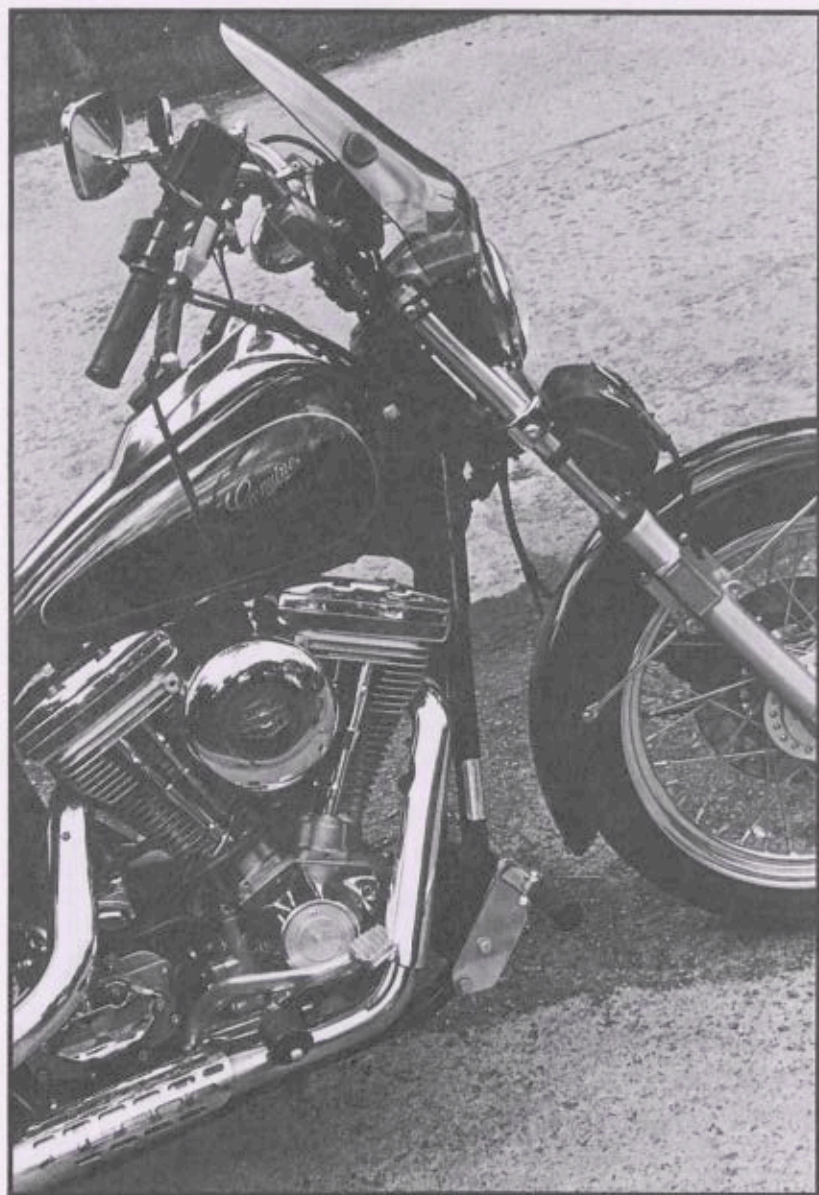


BRET J. GOLDIN

PRIVATE REVOLUTION

Worn, faded canvas hightop, size 4 on left foot, rises above the Earth. Size 4 on right foot set firmly in the wide street. Size 4 on left foot mashes red balloon next to marble curb. Flags wave upraised against summer sky, heat waves from dull pavement. Faded, blue Toughskins loom solid over swollen latex. Black boy grits yellow teeth. Drums, pipes, patriotism, and the bad plays on. *Wud'ja say, faggot? I can't hear you!* Red balloon relaxes under size 4 rising above polished curb. Anger spills from big, brown eyes. Batons swirl in short orbit around white skirts. Untucked, yellow, buttndown flaps above blue Irregulars. *Sometimes I can't get what's in my head to come out right mom. They . . . DETENTION. He said I was reTARded, mom! He say, he said . . . he called me . . . I'm not!* DETENTION. Frustrated tears rocket to dusty concrete. Size 4 rises and falls, rises and falls. Displacement, disgust, discouragement. Jaw tightens, teeth grind. *Cain't'cha talk right? Huh? What are ya'? Stupid? Come on, kid! Speak up or I'm gonna knock you off that fuckin' swing! I . . . I . . . I . . . can . . . c-can't . . .* Red balloon explodes against rough pavement and sharp curb. Size 4's scatter ragged fragments at smoking Vets. The band behind drones for smiling, pearly-white, patriotic freedom. Independence Day heat swells nine year old eyes, pushes exhausted tears down round cheeks. Frustrated child turns his back on Fourth of July, faces empty, gray sidestreet. *Momma, I don't wanna go back . . . I don't wanna go back . . .*

MICHAEL J. MCARDLE



BRET J. GOLDIN

GEOMETRY

A ring of life, a curve of death and dying
formaldehyde in lungs not full of breath
A ringing life and lining staying death,
the cradle rocks and holds the baby crying.
This ageless cyclic motion still's denying
the life of man the circle of the wreath
and always will it stalk with perfect stealth
and strike with little more than subtle sighing.

So stalking subtly, death does compound
the shape of life in geometric mime;
what for generations goes around,
for men and children seems a finite line
which curves around the funereal mound
and cradles, similar at every time.

DANIEL J. BULLEN



AMI KLINSKY

SELF-PORTRAIT TIMES TWO, 1992

CELESTIAL

Marble and granite-
cold harshness colliding with my soul
as I step through the
 endless
 corridors
of a time long gone.

Towering fir satiate
the yearning need for solace
in this palace where
mausoleums and gravestones
are of severe predominance.

The pace I once took
begins to quicken as the
 sonorous calliope
bids me to stay.

Portal closing,
my fingers, like I,
grasp for escape,
trying to avoid
 the end.

LAUREN A. MOUZAKES



PAM NOVELL

IAN

Sick
on cigarettes
In a cloud
of regret,
She screams
to remember
As he drinks
to forget
14 karat
shackles
constrict old
wounds,
never left
to heal,
and stain the
tightrope
between Love
and Hate
a violent
crimson.
What has
come Before
means Nothing
anymore,
Memories of
Better Days
bleach
to obscurity
under tides
of caustic
emotion.

In his room,
the boy moves
from black,
to white,
to black
again
with the sounds
of marriage
Forever
shattering
on the
dull
tile
floor.
Sacred
ties laid
waste, on
another
Namelessday,
by the bare
bulb in the
cracked
ceiling.

MICHAEL J. McARDLE



LEIF ZURMUHLEN

WHORE'S RELEASE

formerly "Destination Unknown"

A random flick of filtered lights sends
ashes scattering
everywhere

I push down
hard
on the accelerator, making the speed
fit our moods

"outside" is nothing
but a blur of green
occasionally broken by the shapes
of civilization

My
hands grip the wheel tightly
stubborn and determined in
flight
his
hands, less certain,
play restlessly with a lighter.
Larger yet more sensitive they
betray him with their softness

Eventually
he sleeps, a
prisoner to the violent images that
play behind closed eyes

Solitude floods my soul
with relief.

MICHELLE JARNEY

untitled

As I was lying on the bed
with my body outstretched
next to his,
the miniature frame of a fly
cascaded its way to the
heights of a nearby window.

The fly was serene as it
remained perched on the screen,
gazing into the depths of the
oaks and evergreens.

What was out there that could so intensely
anchor the fly's attention?
It stared, captivated by something
which I was still unaware of.
Could I be oblivious to the
beauty outside the window?

Together we stared, separated by
our own different splendors.
My attention became anchored
and when I looked to the fly,
it had gone to hide behind
the dresser.

LAUREN A MOUZAKES

"YOUR LOVE TO ME IS A FULL COURSE MEAL"

*—a love poem from Julia Child to a fellow
fiend of fashionable and festive feasting.*

Your love to me is a full course meal.
I can't ever tell you the way I feel.
When I sit at your table and gaze at the feast —
counting of calories is what I think of least.

Tapered candles and napkins of linen,
make me forget the gravy needs thinning,
candle flames burn, they dance in your eyes,
each time I feast I gain a dress size.

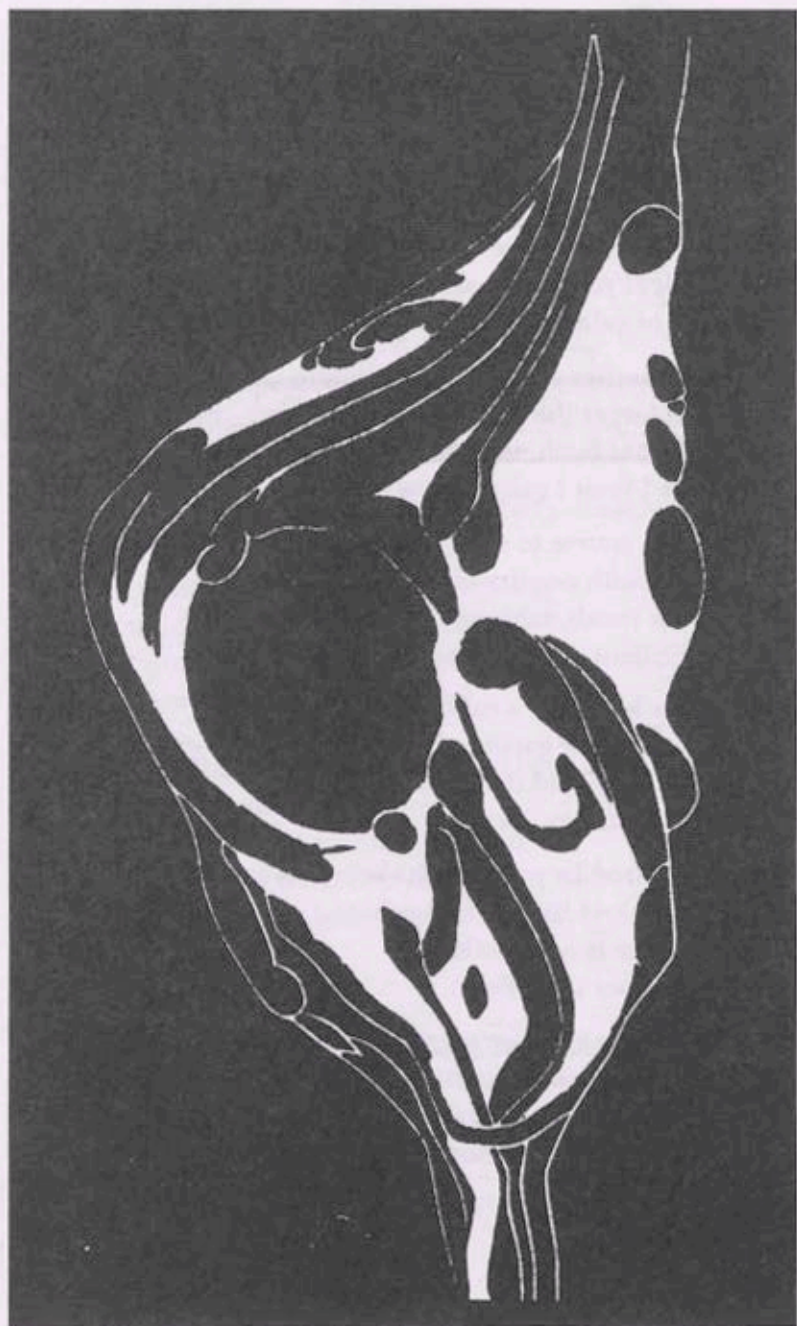
From salad course to final crumb,
white wine with poultry to cherries with rum
I love your meals, table settings too,
each succulent dish reminds me of you.

And if our love, like a turkey should fall
from its elegantly garnished plate
I'd pick you up and dust you off...
Our love is destiny, its fate.

I am appetized by your mocha-brown eyes,
glazed with love like an Easter ham,
for you there is no substitute,
(butter is finer than Pam).

And when our evening meal is complete,
dessert is gone, the liqueur is sweet,
I thank you for our victual treat,
then kiss your lips . . . Bon Appetit!

REBECCA GERGELY



LA RUEDAPELIGROSA

Z. CHAUDHRY

UNLOCKED DOORS

After "Burning Giraffes" by Dali

He has no shadow.
He doesn't even have two human legs.
She stands firm, bare breasted,
With her faceless head whipping back
In the eye's yearning stare.

With an empty drawer in a locked chest
He calls out his messages, one
After another: wrapping, strangling.

And while women sleep with
Unlocked doors,
Three watching giraffes,
Unnoticed, walk into the desert.
Burning.

WILLIAM I. WOLFF



Z. CHAUDHRY

PASSING A FARM

The lone black horse stands,
rain-soaked, neck bent,
grazing on the yellowed strands
slightly green at winter's end.

The rushing stream,
swollen with rain,
quenches the thirst
of the cows.

DANIEL J. BULLEN



BRET J. GOLDIN

SNOW

It's that time of year again,
to paint

A thin coat of white,
added to after a few hours.

Then along comes the children,
with their innocently dirty hands

To paint their own coat,
of fun.

It's hard to tell which is more beautiful,
the calm and control,
of the white
or the disarray,
of the motley.

KATHY L. WALTER



ERIC ANDREWS

GARDENS-SNYDER

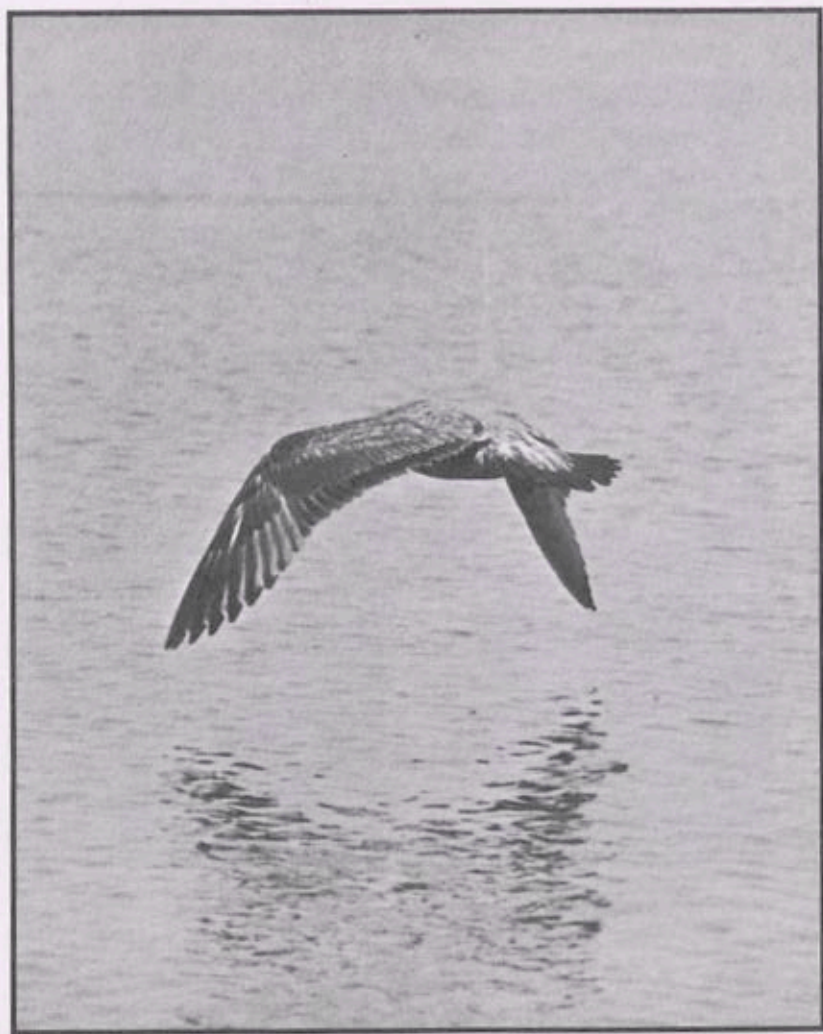
Babbling brook, scorched turf
I sit to rest,
thoughts unfocused, unclear.
then close eyes
and abandon my spirit to the cool autumn breeze.

in the red, yellow, orange, green gardens turning season,
vibrant hues on leaves and pure, crisp air to breathe,

make me one, free of grief, like you.

the hidden abode that nurtures the spirit-
raw beauty –
experience –
that soothes the heart's pain.

CRAIG GREENBERG



JOSEPH J. FEINLEIB

I
the lost,
yes, the lost
of whom we do not speak
whether it be in church,
in temple,
or in our hearts.

the lost have no
boundaries
except poverty

the lost are
beyond hope

the lost kill
each other

the lost
pray for tomorrow

the lost
can be you
or I

the lost
are anonymous

II
the lost
are crying

the lost
are dying

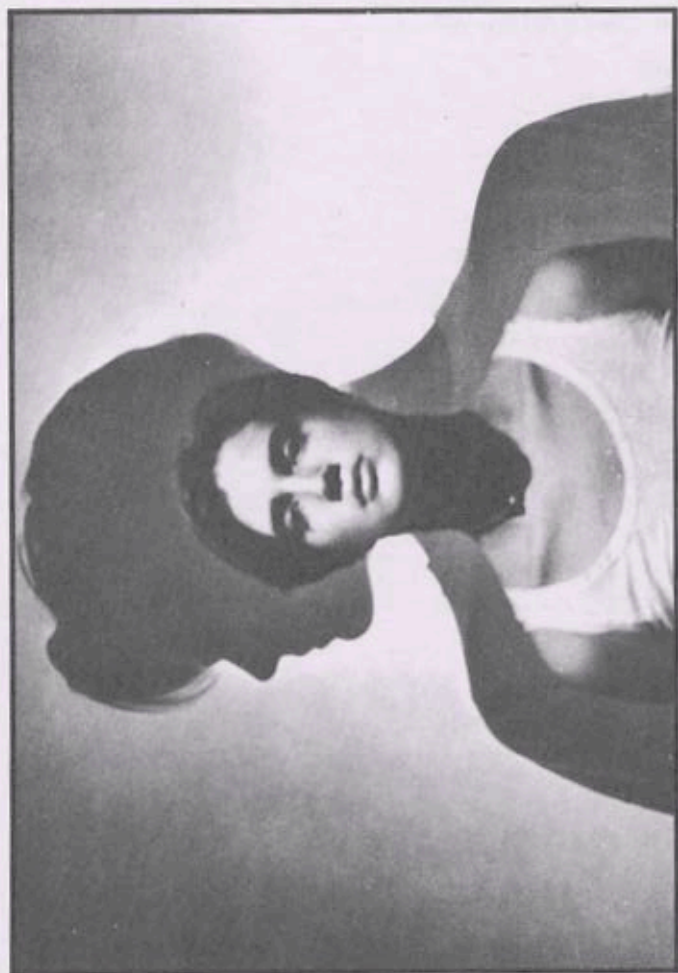
the lost
are forever

III
the lost
chase the
angel

the lost haven't seen a
rainbow

the lost
have come for you.

GLENN T. KONOPASKE



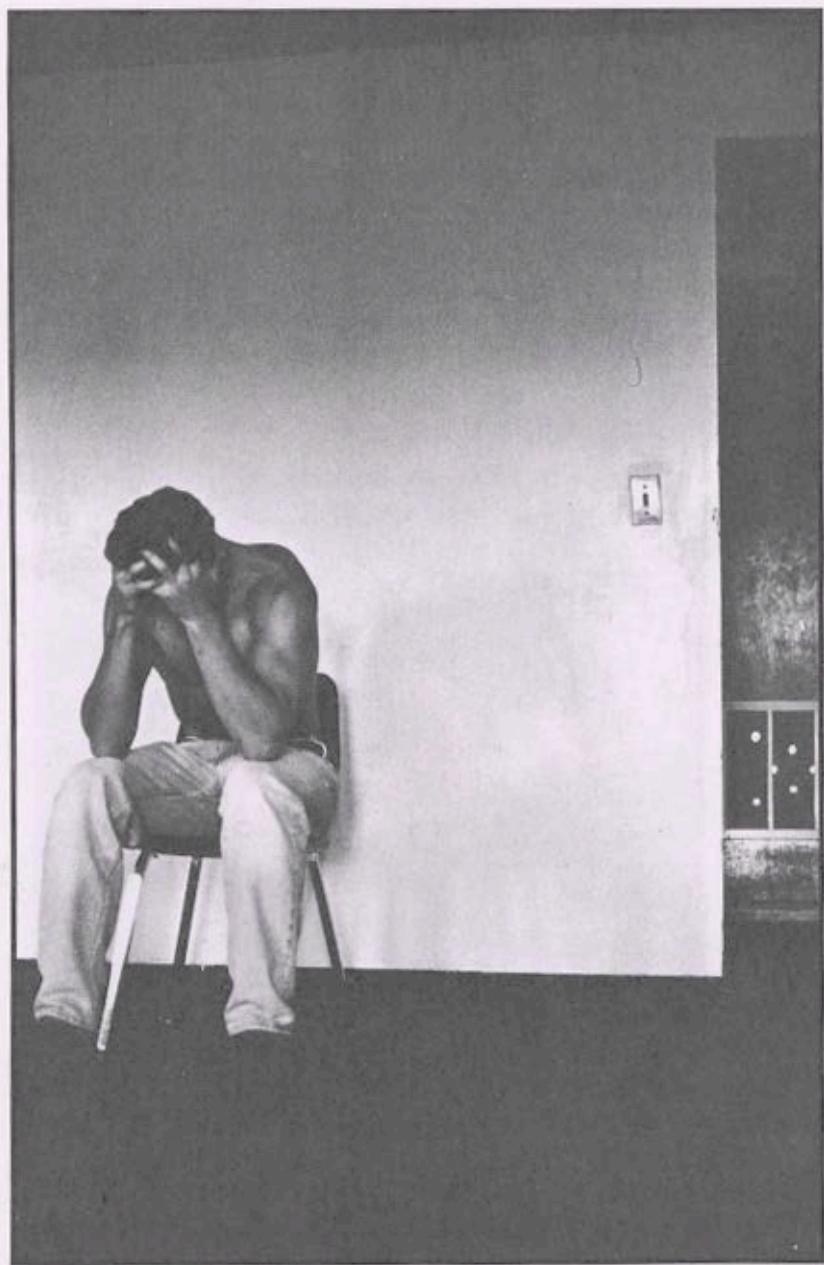
SELF PORTRAIT, 1992

SARAH FOX

STORMS

Floating away in dreams of blood and gold
scarred faces and twisted misshapen bodies
lie scattered on a cracked plain
like gaudy lawn ornaments
Replaced tomorrow with another color of anguish
building castles upon the loose dirt of graves
to bring a new day tomorrow
Blue sky and silky-flowered joy
erased by a storm on the horizon
storms always come
Happiness, like the wandering butterfly
is ephemeral

DAVID SCOTT ROBBINS



ALEX VALLEÉ

SAMSARA

1.

Let me tell you about my life:
I was born in Livingston, New Jersey,
And grew up in the historical town
Of Kendall Park (at least that's what the
Sign on Rt. 27 says.)
I have lived there for 20 years, moved
Once, down the street, into a bigger house.
I played soccer, tennis, had baseball cards
And was loved by my parents.
When I was ten we adopted my sister.

When I went down the shore two summers ago,
My friends were doing hits of acid,
Drinking beers in the shower,
And smoking pot on the beach all night.
A twenty-four hour high they called it.
And I said to myself that they'll
Be fucked when they're older,
All it takes is one bad trip.

When I was having back surgery three
Summers ago, a friend of mine was
Killed by a drunk driver. On the
Day of Billy Martin's funeral,
My friend's father saved her life and
Was thrown fifty feet to his death.
She doesn't remember any of it.
I remember the burial: little Ricky
Stood proud with shovel in hand and
Began covering his father (I saw me doing
That to my dad and screamed.)

2.

Two weeks ago
I hung up newspaper clippings about
The debates and who they thought won.
Take a look. The little pamphlets say
The same thing: nothing.

And while they were saying nothing,
My friend shot someone twice in the leg
In my sister's elementary school parking lot;
\$25,000 bail for a bag of pot.

WILLIAM I. WOLFF

THE PRINTER'S DEVIL

Holding the picture in my hand, I see
your eyes staring back at me with
a spark of integrity burning right through.
You know the picture I'm talking about—
it's the one with just the two of us
sitting on my double bed, which seemed
at the time to be the largest bed around.
I can still feel your arm wrapped around my shoulder,
my head seeming as though it were buried
under your protective wing. I never
wanted to leave that warm comfort you provided.

In your left hand you grasp a story that
you had been reading me. It's my favorite,
or at least one of my two favorites.
In this particular picture, you are holding
the story of "The Very Little Girl." I've heard
you read it many times. Well, both you and
Daddy. Jason was still too young to read it
with the enthusiasm and excitement you possessed.
I wouldn't doubt the fact that we may have
read "Corduroy" after this picture was taken.
This was the other of my story-time favorites.
At times you thought I was able to read
these stories. But I could only recite the lines
because of memorization.

But it was "The Very Little Girl" that stirred my
inside emotions and feelings from the past.
I remember the story clearly; do you?
You always told me that I was the girl in the story.
I didn't know what you meant.
A very little girl always reaching
for things—the doorknob, the cabinet handle—but
never succeeding. Then came the day when she
achieved what she had so long been craving.
She succeeded!
But I used to wonder how that possibly
could be me...

Pumpkin, right now you are the very little girl.
It's hard for you to see all you are capable of.

You used to worry about the most trivial issues. Always doubting yourself, you wondered how you would be able to succeed in this harsh and bitter world. Hours spend at the typewriter, images formed, only to be turned away by those who are still naive.

There will eventually come a day when you will no longer be that tiny girl in the story. Instead you will be a precious individual who will be able to reach whatever it may be that you so desire. Your ability will be recognized. It will come soon enough.
Patience.

It's been some time now, Mother, that I've been waiting. I stare at the ceiling while resting my body on my bed, sunken mattress and popping springs keeping my mind occupied. My back aches from sitting at my desk, restless from lack of thoughts. I often find myself gazing, bewildered, at empty sheets of esquire bond 8 1/2 x 11. My friends often speak of how the paper "calls" to them. I've been listening, but I have yet to hear the shrill cry my paper holds back from me. I wonder if it even exists. I seldom have the thoughts or feelings that they want to hear. Those people don't understand the struggle I am facing. I write from my inner emotions and what suits myself, and yet I continue to be turned away. What is it, then, that I lack?

Believe me, I have attempted many times to write. There have been numerous occasions when I've submitted my work to the local publishers, but only to be faced with the line of rejection which I've become quite accustomed to in these recent days. It's an all too familiar phrase heard not only from the publishers, but from other significant people in my life.

The cruelest of times come when that phone rings. With the most trivial amount of hope, I answer. Could it be a publisher accepting my work for its quality, style, and maybe its ability to captivate? How is that possible when all that I

answer is the hum of the dial tone? It's just another episode of a sadistic trickster taunting me.

Patience.

How many times do I have to utter that single word to you? How can you expect the success without the patience and the struggle? You fail to remember all the stories I have told you. A baby in my womb, I was still seeking employment. I was patient and my extreme struggle was eventually over.

I can't say that I have avoided the struggle, because a majority of my life is based upon this constant battle. How can I avoid being discouraged when all I see are the works of my peers encompassing my everyday life? Is it that I, myself, am a failure to the society of today? What is it that is expected? My inner soul can only hold a limited quantity of emotions. But they don't accept what I feel. I don't conform to what is expected from the audience. I have the sufferance, but not the success. What is it that I am so severely lacking that neglects my forceful strength of my heart's burning?

So, tell me Mother, when will it be that my labors end? How much longer will I have to put my mortal essence on stake for simple amusement? I hear the phone ring, but there is never a response. I open the letters only to face exclusion from the publishers. I've been the very little girl for a long time now. It's been difficult to reach the doorknob and the cabinet handle. When is the day going to come? How much longer do I have to wait until I can touch the doorknob and open the door?

LAUREN A. MOUZAKES



