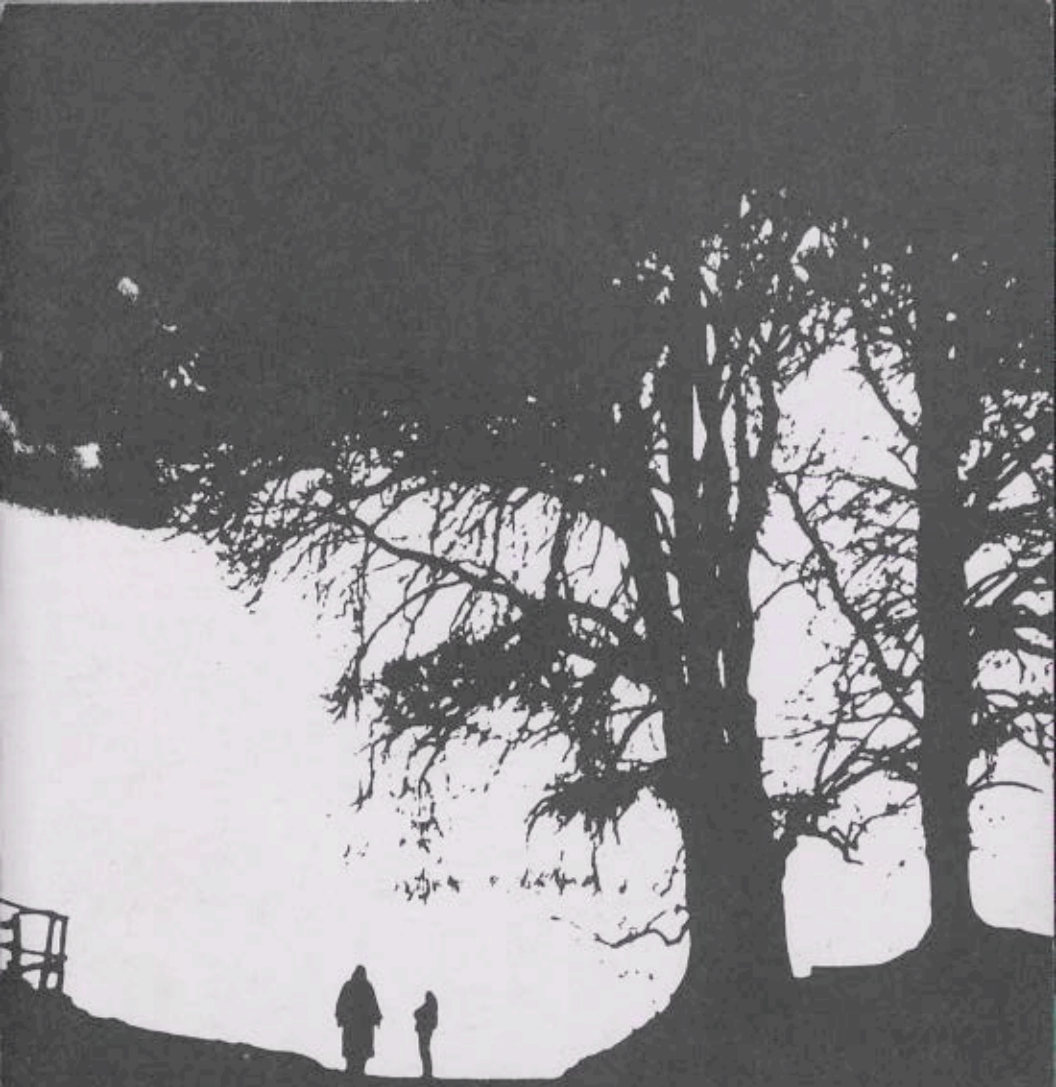

The Idol

WINTER 1992

1906 Postcard from Union College

The Idol

Winter 1992

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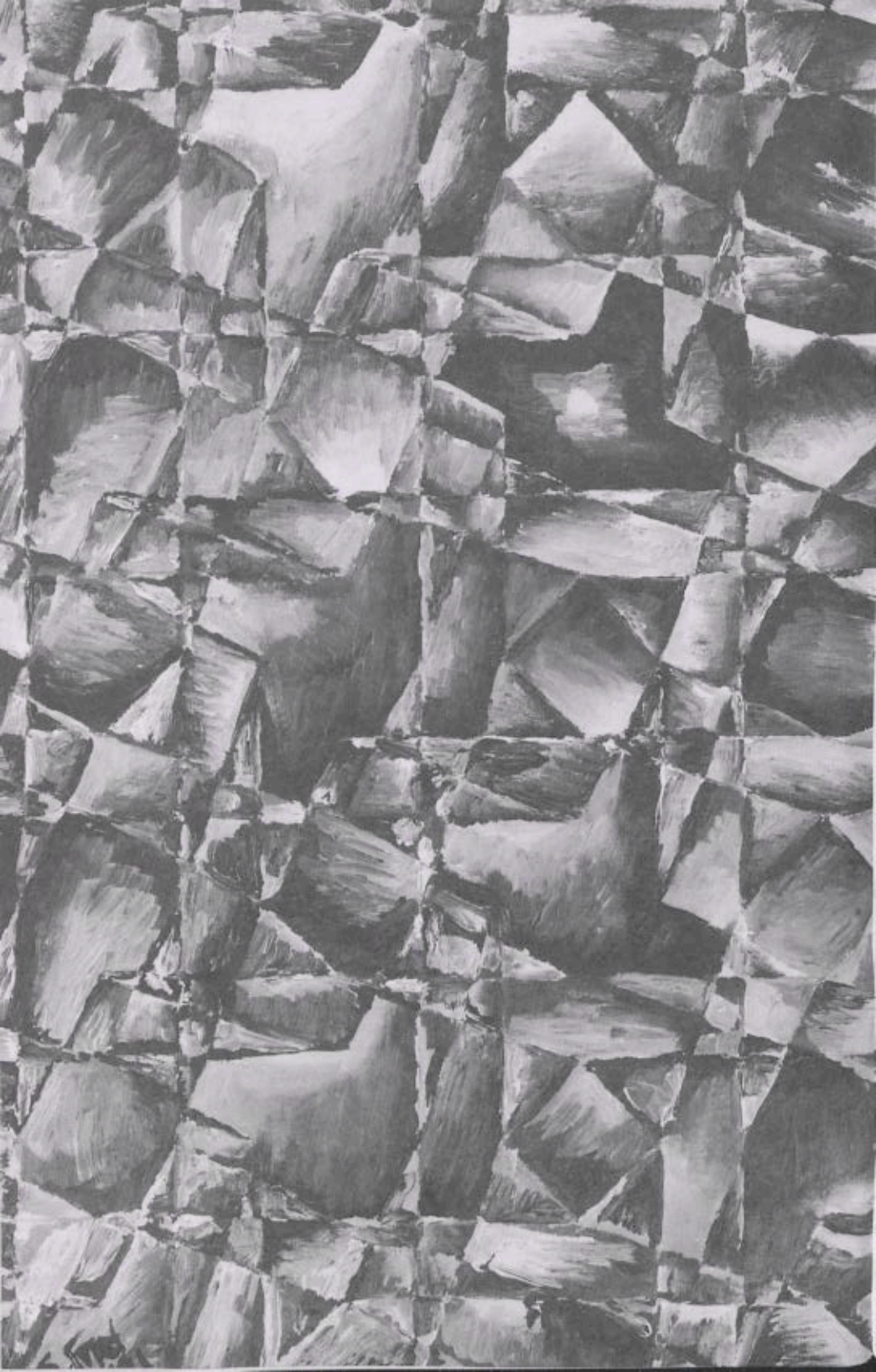

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JEFF MERSELIS

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR . . .

The Idol is Union College's bi-annual publication which offers students a place for creative expression.

MELISSA FABEL

ERRATA

The printer apologizes for the following errors in this publication:

Page 10 –
photo is by CARA CUITE

Page 21 –
photo is by PNINA MILLER

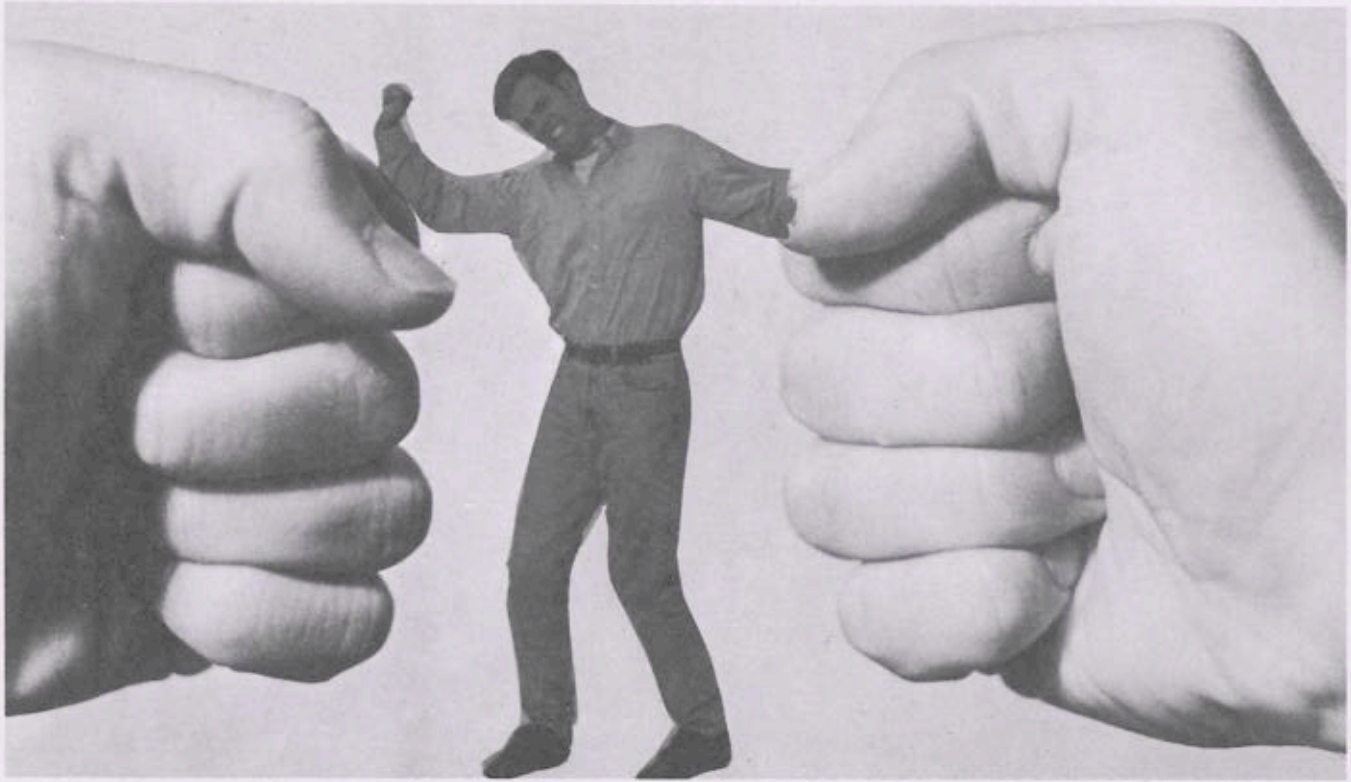
Back Cover –
photo is by GREGORY LEIDNER

April Beamis

PALABRAS WITH WORDS

With words, no one can touch me!
Free to write what I want.
"Hey, that's bullshit man!"
see, it's o.k.
"I hate you white boy!"
"I hate you nigger!"
"I hate you spic!"
Ha, Ha, Ha . . . see just words,
Come and get me with your pen!
I got a 45 caliber, 9mm, Scripto Super Stick
with a medium point! !
NO, I don't hate you.
I LOVE YOU!
That is why I inspire you . . .
Simply with words.

JOE X. KOTRIGHT GONZÁLEZ, JR.



JEFF MERSELIS

URBAN LANDSCAPE

(DARKNESS IN THE CITY)

Ethereal hands of Darkness
Crush the last hours of Daylight.
Obscene shadows of horrific beauty —
Spectral illuminations of insanity —
Claim what is rightfully theirs . . .

No need to pretend
Everything is all right.
At 4 a.m. in the City
All glasses are half empty . . .

Facades of respectability crumble
With the flick of an unseen switch.
Once again we all become
The junkies, whores, thieves, and politicians
We hide from the Sunlight . . .

Nothing to hold back now —
Simply name your pleasure
And take hold of
The serpent's erotic nightmare.

JOHN MCGRAW

TRANSITIONS

In the first Fall light
We stop by that bookstore in Harvard square
The one (I can't recall the name) where books are stuffed
In makeshift shelves leaving little room for the people.

We wander together
Through history to the philosophy section.
I pick up a copy of the I Ching (though I already
Own one) and open it to find my fortune.

I turn to ***P'i/ Standstill (Stagnation)***
It is a time of standstill and decline
When the year has passed its zenith
And autumnal decay is setting in.

I look at the summer color of my arms -
It is fading into white Russian.
I smile and you return believing you're the source
Yet, it is the prophesy of the words that draws it out.

I leave you looking for pictures of new positions
In the Kama Sutre for paintings of Gauguin.
Landscapes are filled with shades of green
Set off by dark women baring their breasts to the sun.

Bright colored cloths melt with the flowers as
Page after page, the verdancy persists, and I wonder
If the sun is permanently fixed over Tahiti
And if Gauguin had ever know ***P'i***.

Leaving the stuffy warmth of the bookstore
We opt for the cold and raw, Sushi.
A waitress in the back screams — she's
Dropped a glass on her foot and cut her ankle

Spilling blood on the floor that looks like my Soy sauce.
Smoke curls from the burning tip of your cigarette
Making you look like a movie star from an old film —
Softened features, liquid black eyes, grainy white skin.

There's a couple seated next to us.
The girl looks pretty in her pink sweater,
Brown hair pulled back off her face into a neat barrette.
Her hands are soft, her short nails covered
with clear polish.

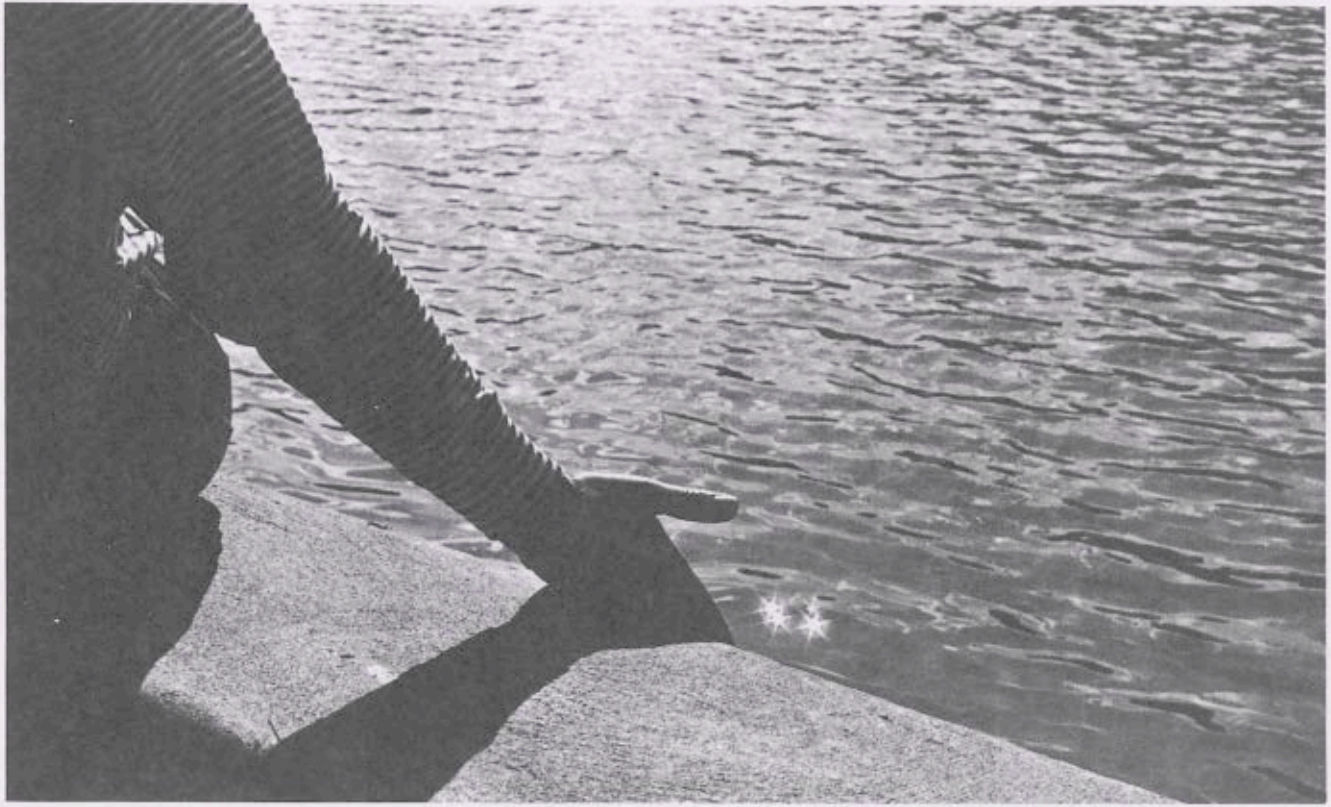
I know her dilemma — she wants to hold his hand but
Is afraid to make the first move, to look foolish.
Her date keeps flicking his eyes up from the menu
To her face — I bet he just smelled her perfume.

You're halfway done with your meal.
I try to concentrate on my food, but
Underneath the table, their feet are touching.
He leans slightly forward, talking, and smiles.

My eyes return to my plate and my thoughts to you.
I shiver in the heated restaurant.
The strips of grey fish stare at me over white rice.
Salmon is pink. I should have ordered the salmon.

I wonder if tonight, they will kiss.

Melissa Fabel



PNINA MILLER

THE BEWITCHING

The angel is deferential.
He slides like scared paint on glass to please me.
But this pleading infant is powerless to move me.
I blink in dissent.
He smells of candles and clay,
How sad — only the sight of wild things and fear
Excites the flesh that grips my spine.
Its long rigid hollowness, in spite of my force,
Shivers when the barefoot jungle conjures sharp wind.
The sound of weeping is bitter.
It is cruel that my tiny fairy feet
Are prone to wanderlust.
And the fragile sky cannot sleep until its noisy darlings.
The stars, are safe beneath my tongue.
He tilts my head into the blank air of night,
And it bobs there, like the earth in his hand.
My heaving lungs offend the silent poetry of this
Angelic Atlas.
He baptizes me, here, in the blackness,
In perfect sight to jockey with God.
My ears prick to the whispered cry of the siren.
So tonight's guile is not benign.
The simple twinkling of the stars through clouds
Captures me.
His sermon is passive chatter against this hymn.
So I leave the angel, as I leave dust.
He swells behind me in fretful good byes.
Words and words, the glory of promises I mean to break.
I have red grapes and laurels.
I have the simple rain, the clash of water and skin.
I am as strong as the bible clutching angel
Who coaxes me to breathe.
I blink in dissent
And the sky whisks me,
On the pride of a stranger's saddle,
To our secret, unseen Eden.

JULIE SHANEBROOK

TIM SOUHAN

BUT DO YOU HAVE STRONG ARMS?

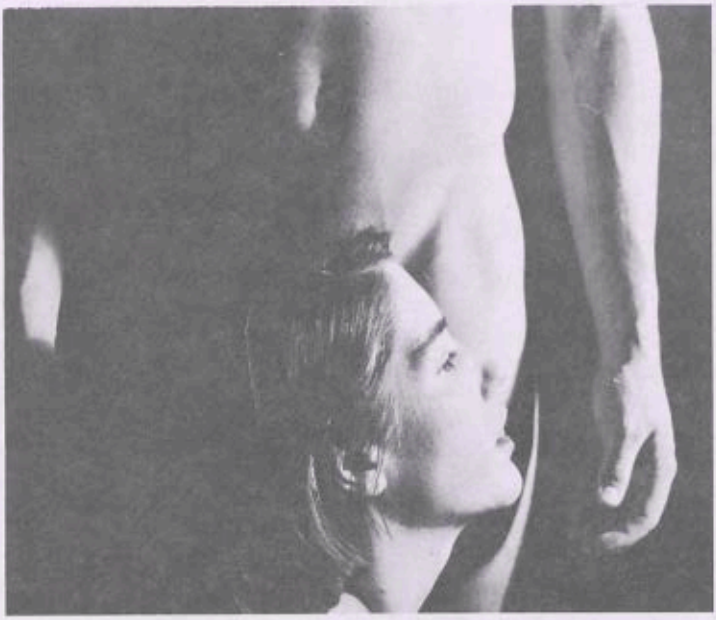
Ration out everything you have to offer
fear the moment I take them
I won't give them back

keep that in mind
you stronghold of my self-worth
I want locks and chains
preventing leakage
I've seen me spilled on the floor
before . . .

Do you have strong arms?
I push and poke at them
testing your musculature
testing to see if you'll let me go
when I ask
and if you can tell when I mean it.
Read my mind.
Superstition is in my soul
And I'm not sure if you're a black cat
or the amulet you sent me,
(knowing I'd need it?)
from a Religious store in Brooklyn somewhere
where I've never seen your house.

Rewards and punishments for actions
not acted upon yet
rationality doesn't enter the picture
I feel like a tiger poised
ready for some ambush that might
(or might not)
occur in the somewhat near future.
Can you hold me back
Can you hold me
Can you hold
Can you?

JANET SCHWARTZ



PNINA MILLER

WINTER

Miscommunication and mistakes.

Verbal violence moves open hands,

draws them into fists. Rage into the cold February night.

How many nights have I been here before?

How many nights have I wondered why before?

"There will never be another night like this."

I think I said that last time.

Forgive, but never forget.

Walking

Downtown.

Familiar faces, yet different worlds.

She'll be there, though.

She's been there before.

How many nights had I crawled from her smouldering sheets and

into my scattered clothes just to move on again?

Up the stairs to her apartment, staring at the numbers on the door.

The music, the voices inside hold my hands in my pockets.

I turn and walk back into the night.

The streetlights

look so different

on nights

like

these.

continues —

Rejection from the immediate, turn to the extended.

Exhaustion.

Sleep, if you can call it that. Waking every hour, on the digital hour.

The your-fucked birds finally rousing me just before the first light.

Telling me to get out. Move on.

Awake before the world and out the door

without Anyone knowing I was there.

The first day of the rest of my life begins

in a bleached-linoleum diner

full of strangers.

"Coffee?"

MICHAEL J. MCARDLE

FLESHING THE BODY OF SOUND

I.

I crawl on four legs among the dead
of autumn dawn
I walk on two within the
grey and the black of evening
past the ravine
where even the sun cannot reach its hands
and even if I were rendered
stoic, cripple on three
I would never turn from you
stammering in the naked wind.

II.

When I was seven
in the down pour at Delphi
I walked with a soaked copy of
D'Aulaires Myths tight in my hands.

Twelve in Florence with a makeshift
accent and a soccer ball playing
with the laborers on their lunchbreaks.

Seventeen at 2 AM
beside the metal railing above the
ravine, here your lip
slipped into mine.

I, my father's son
pierce circles for their core
skirt nettlesome brush

continues —

down into the ravine
where salamanders and bottle shards
on moss specked rocks bring
the familiar smell of childhood jaunts
as the water passes over
everything disinterested, only in
its course, its space, its need.

III.

breath

through the ragged streets withering
in hereditary discord
the youth's face gripped
frayed by reality's chilled
writhe and swarm.
49 suns, I saw them born, wait
and die

there is no dissolution
of need or suffering
and no dry passage emerging
from this thrashing, convoluted
insane lake

breath

IV.

I stagger into the storm's cataract
as the cracked skyline falls
lacerating instinct and syllable.

Grandfather's hand upon shoulder
mother's milk curdling against lip
straining flesh unsure as

all kindred spirits flicker
and wane though their shimmer
would grace us like no touch no light no breath

the only unity of one
branch falling and an eye there
to find and record the loss.

I call a name against this wall
of jeering trees in the stony quiet
fleshing the body of my sound
a shout not returned when the
echo seemed inevitable.

MAX HEINEGG

QUE PASA?

"Pick your head up!" they say.
"What has happened to you?" they thrust.
I answer, "Christopher Columbus!"

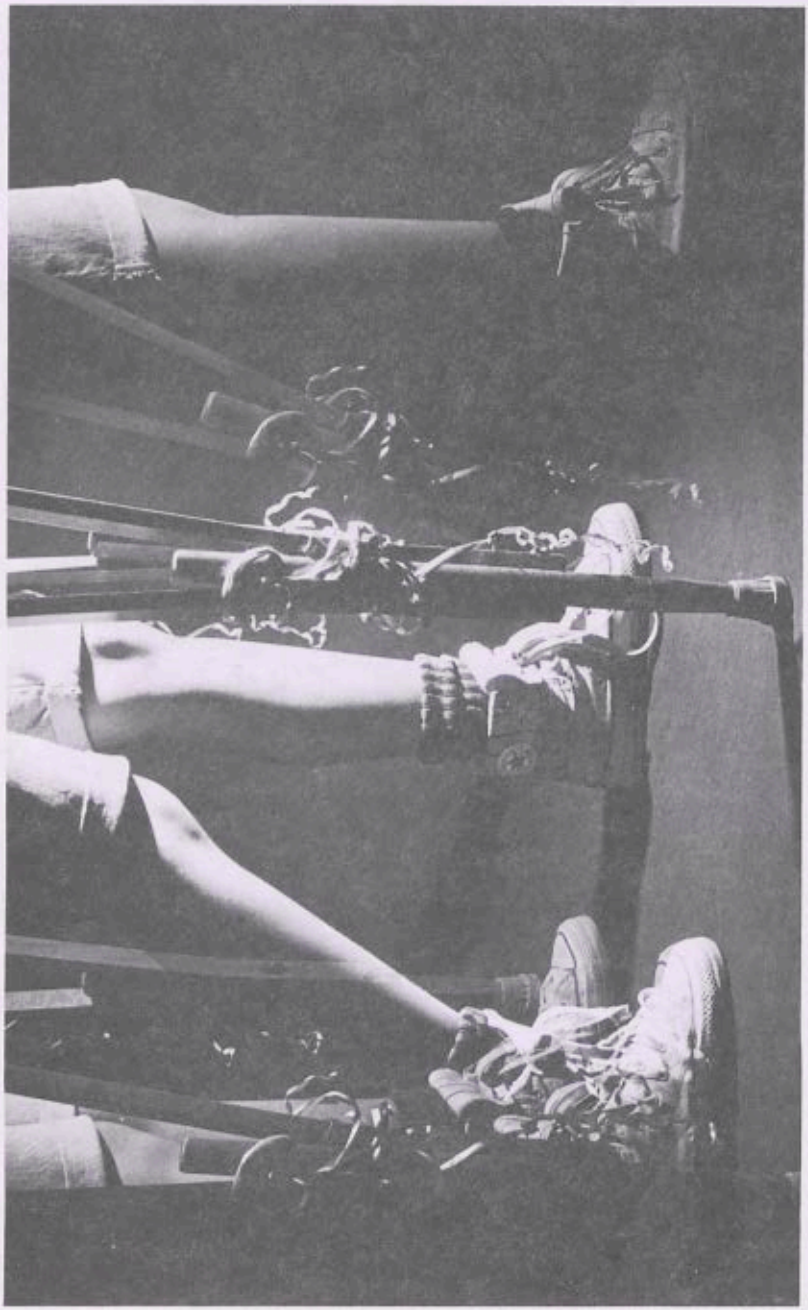
JOE X. KOTRIGHT GONZALEZ JR.

PAM NOVELL

SWEET BOY IN THE PORCHLIGHT

Sweet boy in the porchlight
his body gleaming with an evening's song
glances up as we drive past
his hands pause
for a moment
he's been creating
(music or words or light)
(or all three)
and the night,
which has been slowly gathering like a storm
on the back of my neck
and around my temples,
lifts for a moment
with the vision of a prophet of summer.

JANET SCHWARTZ



KATHERINE ROSS

THE DANCER

She frantically clings to her forlorn hope
  that is all that is left.
For a windy sleepless night
holds no alleviations for her frustrations
  but only increases them
  as she is left alone; again.

Morning light on the cushion
Warm coffee, stale bread.

Lucky people, eyes of light
  they've got it all, seemingly so.
Boarding the train, the money slowly falls
  down the shaft and into its holder.
She takes her seat next to an MIT student
She's seen them before, felt their presence
  they always have a way of making her feel dull.

Above ground
the skaters are thrashing about the Common
  trying to kick the pigeons and squirrels
  hassling the drunks.

She walks down Boylston
wishing it was Telegraph Ave. down near fishermans Wharf.
California was always fun
  especially during winter.
Christmas trees made from artificial plants
  but it was alright, it was all that she knew.

Nighttime under a blue sky
the air is still, the trees motionless.
  She begins to pirouette for the moon
  leaping higher and higher
  on legs made for dancing.

continues —

Familiar voices drift to her
like rain through a window;
some loud, others muddled and distant.
Tears stream down her face
as she begins to feel that dull throb in her leg
which grows with every step until it becomes but
a piercing scream.

No longer afraid she fights the pain
and dances, dances for the moon
until all that she can see are stars
yet this is all that she has ever wanted.

ALLISON FOSTER

The smell of flowers, tulips, lily of the valley, lilac
so sweet, it made my mouth water.
It was new
like the first page of an unopened diary
we would skip class
and run home eagerly
to play under the soft, well-worn sheets of an unmade bed
they would rustle
like the sound of a bird's wings flapping through the wind

Yellow, orange, and red leaves
cascading from the trees
morning dew disappears,
cold, powdery, frost on windshields approaches
and I look forward to spring

ELIZABETH YOUNGMAN

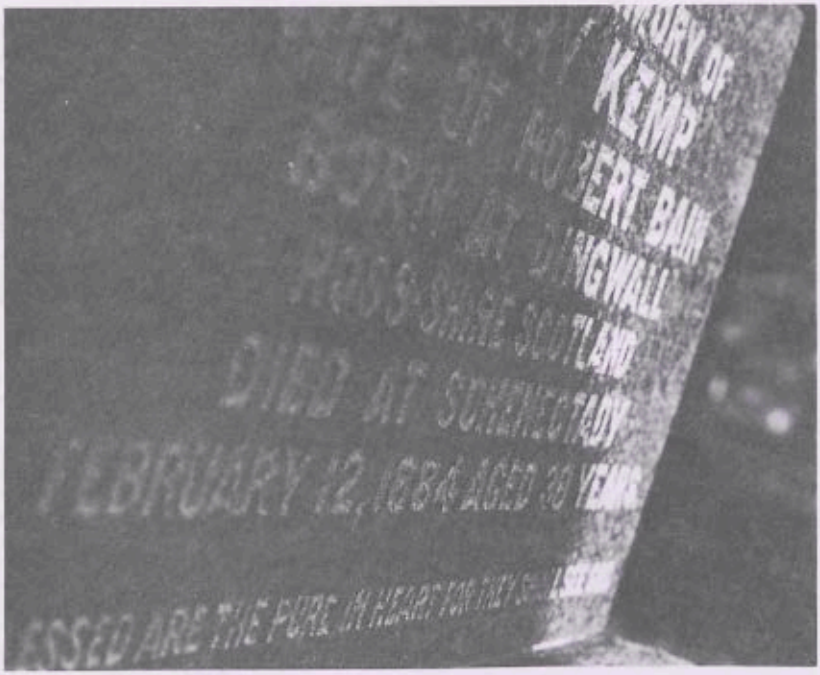
TOUCH MY HAND . . .

Sipping, clutching glaring badge of diet soda.
She mouthed her bored inquiries in ritual fashion.
She knew the answers, she had heard them many times.
An alphabet itinerary. Adolescent crimes . . .

A STUNTED START ON LIFE'S LONG QUEST,
FALLEN FROM THE BIRD'S NEST.
TEETERING ON THE PRECIPICE,
EXHAUSTION COMES FROM DOING THIS.

"Touch my hand," her lover said.
"Our lives aren't over yet."
She smiled and sighed and shook her head.
And reached for a cigarette.

JOSH RUBINSTEIN


KEMP
ERT BAIN
DINGWALL
DIED AT SCHENECTADY
FEBRUARY 12, 1884 AGED 38 YEARS
BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART FOR THEY S

TIM SOUHAN

AN HOUR OF DESPERATE THOUGHT

Where do we get our senses?
Minds race a hundred miles an hour in neutral.
Can't move — tied fast my friend
And I sit quietly.
Impulses race through me
On a nice day of spring.
Grass, my neck, and a tingle
Fight their way through the snow.

Nothing — desperately giving us
New signs to make the best of it.
Just maybe things are all right . . .
Suddenly, vision grows dim.
The warmth of the sun beats on my eyes
But it doesn't work.
Vision jackets give us the feeling,
That thin membrane much like the snake
Gathering knowledge from never blinking.
Confusion is up for the night.
Everything is too clear,
Bright combinations.

We sat, hour upon hour,
Creating colors off my eyelids.
The love that was,
I will explain:
Trees caught on my limbs
And one in between my teeth
And our bodies.
Charge them all a quarter!

Swept into the moment,
Everything was such a task.
Morality to the moon.
Minds numbed in the park —
The first there ever was.
It really was desperately
Trying to drench the Earth
With its lost sorrows.

continues —

Pushing midwest, a man is busy
With eternal hope,
That formula for a new chemical.
Just maybe that forms a reaction
Down on the leather of
A living creature.
We could be lizards,
Paid through the skin
And sparingly cool.

Deficit: his enjoying
Each other's misery is genocide.
Blow through it someday
And shower down onto great nations.

We decided to see
If we could float together an hour
But my body was lulled
Out of its euphoric state.
The chair by the organic
Thing that wasn't there,
Hot flashes at the back of didn't matter
Like pins and needles of a lost past.
Hold tight my friend and try to
Discover a combination of
Two simple elements so volatile that
It will melt our film clouded reality.

He works for Military Intelligence
Over a snake's eye.
The wealth of our tax dollars was blurred
But made way seeing that
We have a trillion dollars of
Spectral illumination.

We always need?
Who knows, we may need.
If I could move I'd catch
The strategic defense of our nation
And put it in a jar for everyone.
But I can't, everything is futile.
So I light another cigarette,
And watch the world go by.

JOHN MCGRAW

IN A NUT SHELL

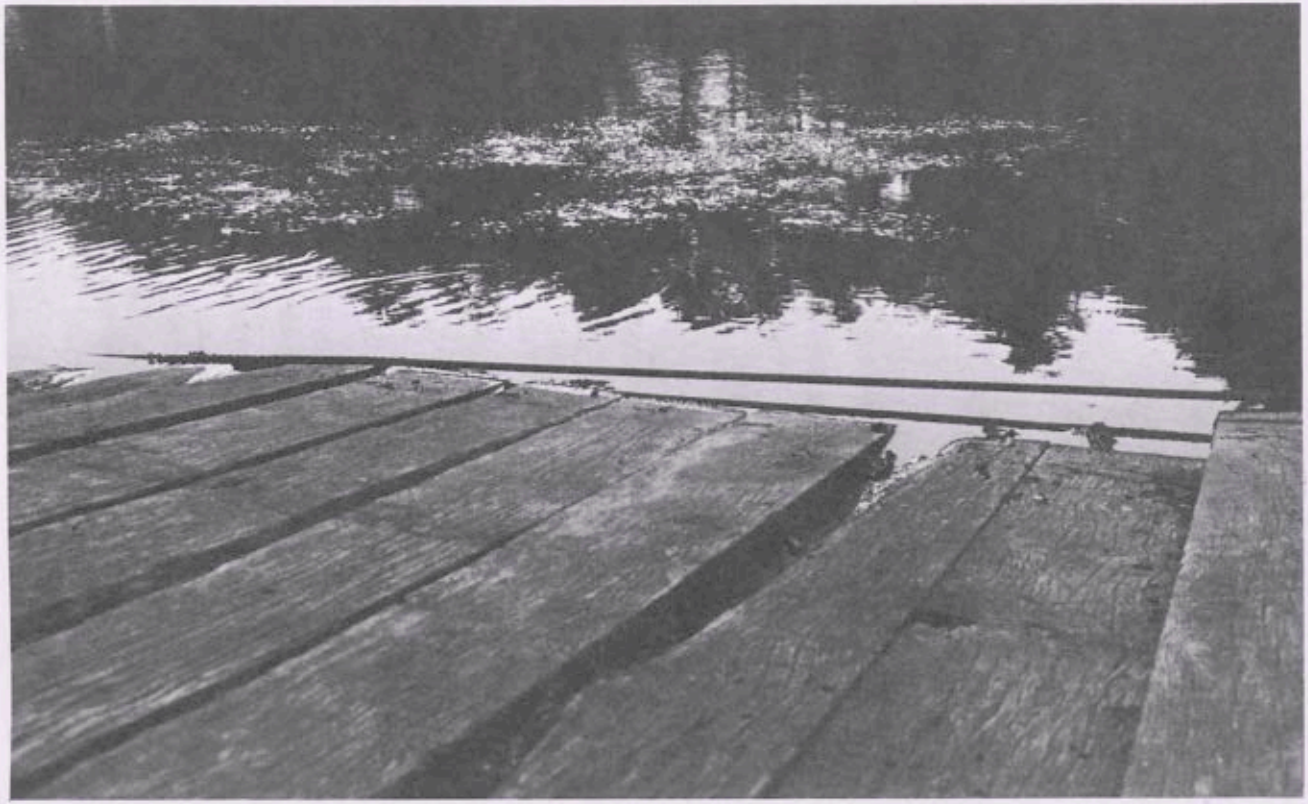
Knock, Knock . . .

Take
Herd
Ship
Separate
Cut
Strip
Shower-
-Not Really
Gas
SCREAM!
F
A
LL
Burn
B
U
R
Y

Repeat 6 million times.

End of story.

WILLIAM I. WOLFF



KATHERINE ROSS

Sometimes even I
ride the subways

And wander in the
rabble.

Sometimes even I
paint the clouds

And chase rainbows
in the meadow.

Sometimes even I
feel shame

And walk by
the cool pond.

GLENN KONOPASKE

TIM SOUHAN

HOMAGE

I turn my wet image like a doll in the waxy pot.
Creases fresh, cheeks sweet, hair unparted.
Eighteen winters have spread upon my shoulders white
& firm is the thought of vision beyond sight.

I have coiled in my shallow cells
darted aloof, stung rapid & curtsied as a clown
purple & fearing in spinsick theatres.

My stalk is slowed, a pregnant lioness
whose body starves to birth.
My breast is traced & I am savaged
bent & rendered by the temper.

Yet in the drunk clothes of life I dress to live.

MAX HEINEGG

THE RIDE

They had not passed a town for nearly half of an hour; they had seen nothing in that time except for the trees that wavered on the side of the road, swaying wearily under the glare of the sun. Cassie had been driving for over two hours and her eyes were swollen from lack of sleep but she fought to keep them open. Bear sat slumped next to her, his head making an imprint on the window, wringing his jacket with his hands.

"How much longer," he managed to say through his frustration.

"I don't know, you have the map."

"Yeah, I know, but we've been on this God damned road for three hours, and it never seems to end. Look at this." He shoved the crumpled sheets up to her face, and she pushed them away violently, "We'd probably be there by now if we had taken that shortcut."

"Bear, I do not want to go experimenting with shortcuts that will end up taking twice as long as it . . ."

"What do you mean experiment? I can read a God damned map thank-you Ms. Ph.D. That road back there was a straight line, this one goes up and down and backwards for Christ Sake! We could have been there by now, or pretty damn close." He bit down hard on his lip to keep from screaming, and looked over his shoulder to see if they had woken Gil yet.

"Alright. Okay. You win. We'll go back and take the short cut, but you drive for awhile. Alright? Bear? Okay?"

"Fine."

The black Eldorado turned off Route 76, and sped down a narrow road guaranteed to get them to Abbot in half the time. The sun ate its way through the blanket of leaves, which sheltered the sky, and danced in patches over the tarry road. Bear settled back into the drivers seat and turned on the radio, despite Cassie's protest that it would wake the baby. But they both knew that Gil had not made a sound in hours, and it would take more than the light hum of an AM radio to rouse him. When the road tar left over from Route 76 evaporated into dust, the car slid over the loose ground, throwing a stream of rocks up into the hot air.

"Bear, are you sure this is the right road?" she asked, tracing the tiny colored lines with her fingers. "This must be a private road, or it would be paved. Don't you think? Maybe there was a road farther back. We could go see, or we could just go back the way we . . ."

"This is the way! I know how to read a map." He reached over to grab it out of her hands. "Let me have the God damned thing! Cassie give me the . . ."

"Watch the road!" Cassie threw her arm in between the seats out of fear that Gil would somehow slip through the harness of his car seat and come flying over the seat. She felt Bear's weight rush forward and she grabbed his shirt sleeve, in a feeble attempt to stop him from crashing through the windshield, which she could not have done using her entire body let alone one arm. But their seat belts held them loosely against their seats, and the car's motion pressed their hearts to uncomfortable depths.

She felt the car spin lazily in a circle, spraying dust into the air like a fountain. The trees moved in slow motion, dancing around them. And then everything stopped. The sound of crushing metal and glass exploded in her head, and leaves rustled down from the Red Oak where the Eldorado had buried its side, but she pushed these noises away as soon as she heard Gil screaming from the back seat.

They sat slouched down, shrinking away from the remnants of sunlight that fought its way through the tree tops. Cassie rocked Gil, slowly in her arms. He had stopped screaming, but his small body still shook with the sobs that he tried desperately

to hold in. Her head throbbed, and grew heavy as she nuzzled the baby's face into the crook of her neck. Bear sat silently next to her, making thick tracks in the dust with the heels of his shoes. He had been given the name in college by his roommate, who said that his size and gentleness was reminiscent of a bear on some television show. The name had stuck. No one called him James anymore.

"What are we going to do?" he asked, his eyes never moving from the trails of dust in the road. "The car won't start."

"I don't know. He has to stay here; I think it might be broken," she motioned to the fat purple ring swelling up on Gil's ankle.

"Maybe someone will come by. If we wait awhile . . ."

"Who?" she squealed. "Who the hell is going to find us out here. We did not pass one town, one gas station, one God damned car on the main highway. Who the hell is going to find us out here? We're at least ten miles from the highway, and another twenty from anyplace else."

"Are you sure its that far?" he asked, his voice trailing off into a whisper as he spoke.

"I can read a map," she barked, tearing the map from her back pocket and shoving it in his face. He didn't push it away, instead he sunk his head lower, and she threw it into his lap with disgust. "We can't stay here. You do realize that, don't you."

"I know. But the car, won't start, I already tried."

"You have to go for help, Bear. You have to walk back and bring someone to help us." she said coldly.

It's starting to get dark, Cassie," he said, grabbing onto the car door and pulling himself up with a grunt. "I know, we'll stay here tonight. We can sleep in the car, and even build a fire. Then tomorrow I'll walk back and get some help." He tried to brush the dust off, but it merely flew up in tiny clouds before settling back down again. "Maybe, someone might even see our fire." He moved closer to them, knelt down and took hold of Gils' hand. "How's that sound, buddy?"

"I don't feel good Daddy. My leg . . ."

"No, Bear. He's hurt. If you wait that's at least six hours before you even get started, and who knows how long it will be before you will find someone. We can't wait!"

"Alright, but I'm not going to leave you two here alone. It's getting dark, and you don't know what's out in those woods," he said.

"Do you?"

"No. And that's all the more reason that I'm not going to leave you here." He walked slowly over to the edge of the road and glared out into the forest, the sun was almost completely gone now, and the trees roared above the ground, their faint shadows disappearing into the darkness. "I don't know what's out there, and I'm not leaving you alone."

"Yes, you will."

He turned around to face her, turning from one darkness to another.

"You'll have to go for help now, or we're not going to Abbot. I mean Gil and I. That's it. No second chance, it'll be over for good. I mean it, Bear."

He looked at her, her eyes were narrowed into a cold stare. She meant it, he knew that, but there was something more than stubbornness in her threat. He could see that she had been waiting for this opportunity, and behind her anger there was happiness. This was her revenge.

"Fine."

He walked around to the driver's side and reached for the keys through the drivers window. He opened the trunk, and rummaged through the contents of the boxes, which had spilled open. "Shit, the china's broken. Guess we didn't pack it right." He

picked up a few small slivers of the plates, turning them over lazily in his hand before letting them fall back into the piles of glass and clothes and pictures scattering the trunk. "Our good china. Damn!"

"We can get new china, Bear."

"I know, but not from our wedding."

"No. I guess we can't."

He stood staring at the heap for a moment, before digging into it. He moved the pieces of china into a corner and threw clothes and books onto the dusty road. "Where's the flashlight? Cassie, do you know?"

"It's in there, Bear."

"No, I think we forgot it. I don't see it." His hands moved frantically through the pile, digging through to the bottom. "Its not here," he sighed, "I can't get anywhere without that. In a little while you won't be able to see your hand in front of your face."

"Maybe, it was in a different box. I know that I packed it" She shifted Gil's weight and slid him off of her lap. "Are you alright, sweetie?"

"Don't leave me here, Mommy." The tears returned to his eyes and he grabbed for her hand, trying to pull her back down to him, as she struggled to her feet.

"I'm not going to leave you. Gil, Mommy would never leave you. Not you. Never. I'm just going to help Daddy find the flashlight, okay?"

"Where's Daddy going? Daddy where are you going?"

Bear didn't hear him. He was digging through the piles on the roadside. He had turned the Eldorado's headlights on, the small lights glaring in the twilight. They lit the road way, but stopped at its edge, beyond which the darkness was growing stronger.

"Daddy where are you going?" Gil yelled, as he let go of Cassie's hand.

He turned to his son. "I don't know," he said.

Cassie found the flashlight just before darkness set in. There was nothing to be seen in the sky, no moon, no stars. If there had been, Bear had assured himself that he remembered enough of the astronomy course he took during his sophomore year that could have found his way by following them. He stood in between the headlights, looking back down the road. His eyes were focused on the circle that the lights made in the darkness, and they traced its limit. "Cassie are you sure you'll be alright?"

"We'll be fine," she said. She was sitting by the side of the car, and was rocking Gil in her arms, humming verses of songs under her breath. "Help me get him in the car before you go?"

"Sure." He scooped Gil from her arms, and squeezed him tightly. "You go to bed now. No problems, right?"

"Right, Daddy." He looked up at his father, his eyes asking hundreds of questions. "When are you coming back?"

"Soon, buddy. Real soon."

Cassie had covered the front seat of the car with thick blankets, and Bear laid Gil down, threw a sheet over him, kissed him good-bye and shut the door. He turned to Cassie, who was sitting on the hood of the car looking at him. "I'll hurry," he said.

"I know."

He walked over to her, and stood between her legs. "I never meant for this to happen. I mean any of this. It was a mistake. I certainly didn't love her. You know that, don't you?"

"Um-hum."

He moved his hands over her thighs. "When we get there, everything will be different." He kissed her. "I mean that, Cassie," he whispered and leaned over to kiss her again.

She moved her hands up and held them up against his chest, leaning her head back just enough so that it would remain out of reach. "You have to go, Bear."

"I will. I just want to . . ."

"You've waited long enough, honey. We need to get the hell out of here. The baby's hurt, we're all starving, and they're going to wonder why we're not at the apartment. We were supposed to be there hours ago."

He backed away from her and took the flashlight out of his coat pocket. "Alright then, I'll go."

She slipped down from the hood, and walked over to him. "You'll probably meet someone on the way."

"Yeah. You never know," he bent down and kissed her softly on the cheek, "bye."

"Bye. I love you."

"I love you," he looked down at her, searching her eyes for something. Sympathy. Hesitancy. Fear. Maybe, but what ever it was, he didn't find it. He smiled and began to walk down the road, the glare of the headlights fading behind him.

It wasn't long before the lights from the car vanished completely, leaving only the weak beam of the flashlight to combat the darkness. The road seemed much longer than he thought it was. He remembered that there had been lights lining on Route 76, but he saw no traces of them. No matter how far he walked there was no sign of the highway ahead of him, and no sign of the car behind him. He walked along the road side, his feet brushing along the blanket of leaves that bordered the woods. His eyes kept moving in between the trees.

"Jesus," he whispered. He had seen a light in the distance, out between the trees. It could have been a street light, or even a car. The road was just over there. He saw it again, that had to be it. Everything was going to be alright, now, he thought. He was sure that if he could walk through the woods toward the light that he would reach the highway. The quick flashes kept flying through the darkness. They had to be cars. He stepped off the road, the leaves breaking under his weight. He moved slowly testing the ground with hesitant footsteps, until he heard a sound break out in the darkness. Pop! Pop! He stopped, leaning an ear forward, hoping to hear it again. But that was it, the sound had echoed and disappeared. He decided that it was a car's backfire. It seemed the only logical explanation, and after convincing himself that he was closer to the highway than he had thought, he started to run. As the woods stretched deeper into the darkness his feet moved faster, moving so quickly over the uneven earth that he stumbled into a dry stream bed cutting his hands and face on the fallen trees.

Bear let his hands travel lightly over his face. Blood was running in a thick stream from his forehead, plastering clumps of earth around his eyes. A stale and salty mixture filled his mouth and he spat profusely, then wiped his mouth on his sleeve. He let his head fall into his hands, wincing as its weight twisted splinters deeper into his palms, letting a dull moan escape. Bear looked up, trying to see how far he had fallen, but the darkness was impenetrable. He shifted himself onto his knees and began to claw the side of the embankment, digging through the rotting leaves into the soft soil, groping for something to pull himself up on. His breath heaved with every grasp upwards. Then his hand caught it, a large rock thick with moss. He pulled himself up with a grunt, allowing his head to collapse on the rock.

His chest had grown heavy from the climb, and he struggled for air as the sweat poured off of him. The lights were dancing on the trees in front of him, and he worked himself up onto his knees, waving his arms above his head. He realized he had climbed up the wrong side of the trench, but the lights were closer to him than ever before, and as soon as he caught his breath he would scream. His voice would break through the darkness, the unseen walls of trees that lay before him, travelling out onto Route 76, where someone would hear, he thought. Then he heard the rustling, coming toward

him from the distance. His eyes strained, fighting the darkness to no avail. He searched the darkness for movement, holding his breath despite the pains in his chest. Then the light sprang up from depth of the forest catching hold of his stare, and sending him into such a blinded daze that he hardly acknowledged the screaming.

"Get it! Over there? Get that sonofabitch!"

"So, how long did you say you been here?"

"About three, four hours, maybe," Cassie said. She had been sitting on the hood of the car when the pick-up pulled up along side of her. "My husband went that way a while ago looking for help," she slid down from the Eldorado, and walked over to the truck's window.

"Well, he went the wrong way. We live just ten minutes back that way." he motioned with his thumb.

Cassie stood staring at his face. His eyes were the color of grey slate, and were hidden by wisps of dark hair that he kept blowing up. "You know, it figures.", she murmured through a laugh. "I'm sorry, you must think I'm awful, laughing like that. It's just that we were going . . ."

"No need to explain to me. Anyways, I wouldn't think something like that about such a pretty lady. Well, why don't you hop in, I have to head down that way. My brothers snuck out, again. The mighty hunters," he laughed. "We'll probably meet your husband out on the road."

"Well, I have my son with me, too. I think he was hurt in the crash. A broken leg, maybe," she said timidly.

"That's okay. We could bring him right out to the hospital, and then come back for your husband. It'll take a while to get here, though.

"Well, actually . . . I feel terrible imposing on you. ."

"Never mind" he said, "just ask."

"Uh, well, I haven't been able to do anything for his leg since we've been here, and I'd really like to get some ice on it, at least. And I don't want to go to the hospital without my husband, so if you could go back and get some ice, then we could go find my husband."

"Now wait a minute. Why don't you and your boy come back to the house with me, we'll get him some ice, something to eat, and you . . ."

"Listen, I don't want to impose on you anymore than I already am. You don't need us turning your house upside down, upsetting your family, your wife. I feel bad enough. . ."

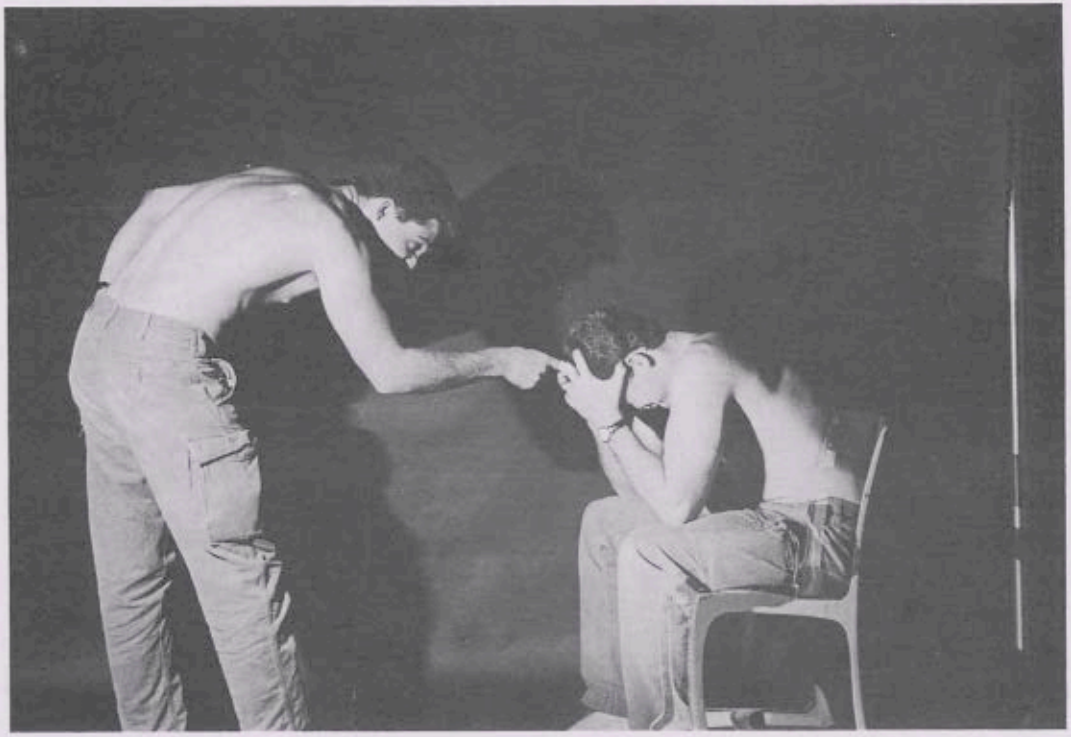
"There is no wife to upset. Just me and my brothers, and I doubt you could turn that house anymore upside down than it already is. Now if you let me finish, I was going to tell you that we can call the hospital ahead of time, and tell them that we're coming. Alright?" he smiled, brushing his hair to the side. "Now let's get your boy some ice. Okay?"

"Alright." He helped Cassie lift Gil, still drowsy with sleep, into the cab, then the truck turned around on the narrow road, and made its way toward the small house.

Cassie unrolled her window. She cradled Gil's head in the crook of her arm and brushed his hair lazily. Her head rested on the back of the seat, and her long hair blew about in the warm summer air. She raised her hand, gathered her hair and held it gently against her shoulder.

"Gorgeous night, isn't it," he said.

DAVID HOPSON



TIM SOUHAN

SCHOOL BUS