

THE IDOL



THE IDOL

SPRING 1989

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THE IDOL WORKSHOPPERS

THE IDOL
SPRING 1989

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DINA SCHWEITZER

BEAT AND STRUM

*Rhythm injecting bone-
calous feet,
and muscles loosening
with time.*

*Expansive, it grows
and heightens into
euphonic screams
as men and women band
together in passions,
warranting calls.*

Hyper. Hyper.

*Come on fast now
beat and strum.*

Air musicians mock on.

PORTRAIT OF MY GRANDMOTHER

My Grandmother,
who used to step over
cracks in sidewalks
and laugh at city people
crowding around
three card money's
in spring,
now rides on broken down fume buses
searching for quarters in her
satchel of things.

In her mothball closet of memories,
a motley of fads
hang dusty and worn.
Some still in plastic
retaining the glitter
of nights spent in cafes
giggling with bubbly
'til dawn.

And of hat boxes, scarves, and feathers;
and of hair locks woven,
the pattenleather shoes with shine;
and lips of red passion,
perked together to give
justice to the refined.

Those crystal baubles of
timeless reflections
so easily remembered;
but the yesterdays of today
seem hard for her to recall.
She is a woman with swollen legs
and what I want to know is
where is she going
now that she has no direction?

MOON DRIVEN

Once, there was an old man
by the river who said,
"City boy . . . be careful when the silvered moon
shines."
And I knew, as I stared into his deep hazel eyes,
that he didn't lie.

Then one night,
peering through the shield of wind,
(as I was driving on the Saw Mill Bridge),
I saw the melon chandelier,
and thought of what the old man had said.

Suddenly, I felt a tug from within,
touching me, telling me
"CITY BOY-DRIVE STRAIGHT! HOLD ON TO THE
WHEEL!"
But it was too late, the night was lit,
a passion drew me in . . .

Vooo

oooshhh!
I plunged into the cut river,
like a warm knife in butter,
submerging. Side to Side,
suffocating in reruns of what had been,
I died.

Now by the river's edge,
patiently waiting to warn,
we sit; just the old man and me.
And in the water's reflection,
the winking moon still shines.

ANN GARROD



DAVID J. ADINOLFI II

BLUE JAY

Cold gray-black steel;
Color of the day and the Crosman
.177 caliber Dirty Harry (so I called it)
Pellet pistol.

I push the pellets into the six
empty chambers; chick, chick, chick,
thinking the heroic thoughts
of the red hot, bush-wise soldier,
or sportsman, twelve and a half years old.

Locked and loaded, moving carefully
through the dense jungle (we have a single oak tree)
of my back yard. You never know
when a VC or a lion or Darth Vader
will jump out from behind one
of the numerous evil hiding places.

A nasty old baby-robin-eye-eating
blue jay lands midway up the tree.
Ernest wrote, "In order to kill the bull
you must, for that moment, be the bull."

So I'm in the tree looking for more food
and I hear, "phot! snap! rip!," something
fly past me and break that little branch.
Then I hear, "phot!", and feel-unggh!

Something tore into a spot below my cold
white breast, through and out
my neck, near my wing . . .
and I shriek.

and try to fly from it
but the air is too light to hold me now
and I am too heavy. I can't breathe.
I fall faster than I ever flew
. . . Jags of rock . . .

I feel nothing
but emptiness and black bile
below my cold white breast.

ANNA PATTON



JENNIFER PACCHIANA

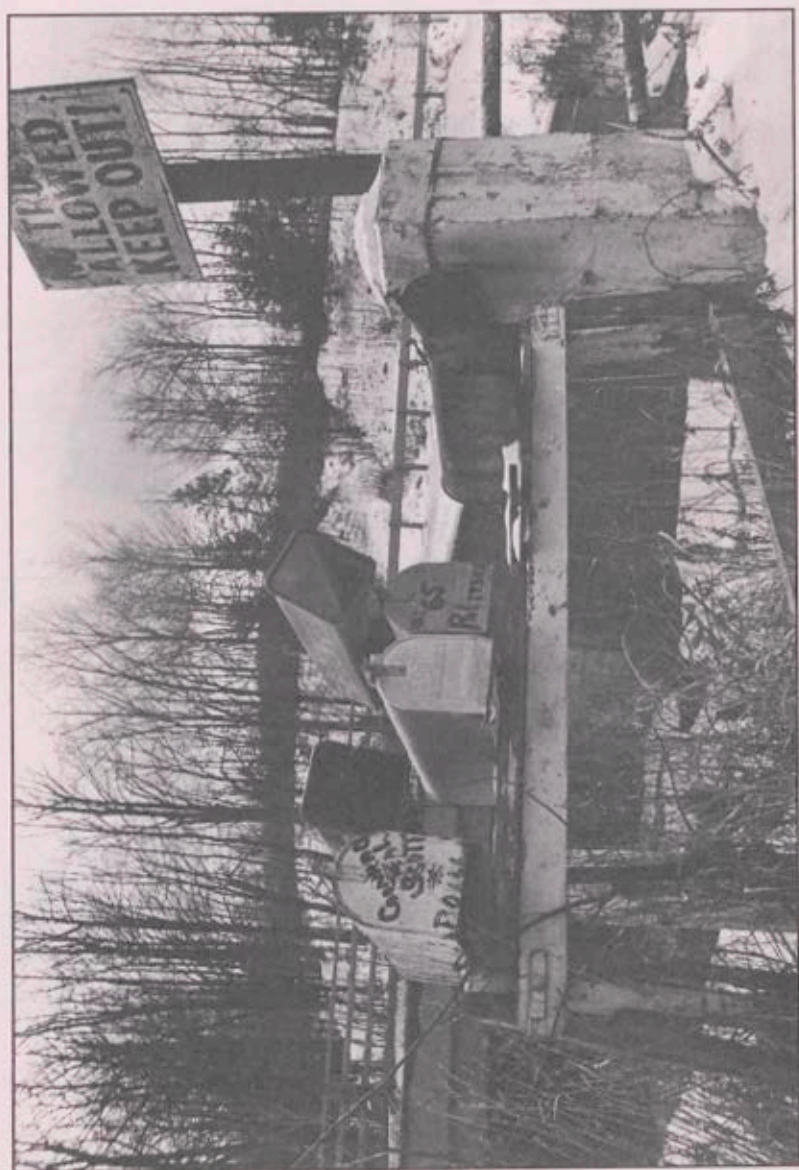
AFTER THE FIGHT

*After the fight
you and I resume
like old ladies at tea:
"Please . . ." and "Thank you."
Slowly we raise our cups
and lower our eyes;
every movement labored, arthritic;
every awkward crossing of our gaze
just one small step . . .*

*Timidly we don our coats and our
feather-soled shoes and
begin the walk home over
miles of white porcelain sidewalks,*

*Until you smile
and pull me to you
and we're home.*

ED HOOD



MATTHEW FUTTERMAN

A LETTER TO GRANDPA

Sunday Night

"Futts, telephone first floor."

"Hello."

"Hi Matthew."

"Hey Dad, what's up."

"Well, I'm afraid there's some bad news. Golda (Dad's stepmother) died."

"Oh really, that's too bad. Is Grandpa all right?"

"Well, he's obviously upset and probably more than a little scared. I mean he is 85 years old and can't live alone in Florida when the only people to take care of him live up north."

"Yeah, that's true. It's really too bad."

"Do you have his address? You might want to write him a note, you know, tell him you're sorry about what happened."

"Ah, yeah, yeah, I have it upstairs. -

(Bullshit, just too damn lazy to get a pen and a piece of paper. I'll get the address one of these days.)

- I will definitely write him Dad."

"Well, how's school?"

"Good I guess. Everything's going all right."

"All right Matt, I have to make a few more calls."

"O.K. Bye Dad."

"Bye bye Matt."

Wednesday Night

"Futt, beer pong, let's go."

"No, I got a lot of reading and some other stuff to do."

"Come on, you been laming out all week. Let's go."

"All right, look, give a half hour I just got to finish this chapter." -

(I'll write the letter this weekend. I still got to get the damn address anyway. Mom and Dad going away for a week starting Saturday. Better get it before then. Just call Dad in the office tomorrow.)

(more)

Saturday Afternoon

"What are you doing Chaser?"

"Not much, just some medical school stuff."

"I'll tell you, I'm pretty psyched. Last week I did just a shitload of work so these days I don't have much to do. You want to go play some hoops? Me and Paget are going over in a little while."

"No, I got to go see my Aunt in the hospital."

"Oh really, all right. You drinking tonight?"

"I might have a few."

"Sound's good. See you later."

Mid-Next Week

(Work's tougher than I thought, taking up time. Not feeling too great either. Got meetings to go see professors. Damn, I got to write that philosophy paper over. Can't believe the S.O.B. only gave me a B-. Stupid playing those couple of games of beer pong last night with all this shit to do. Didn't even play well. Get me to the weekend. Going home. Parents in the Virgin Islands, gonna see the girlfriend. I'll get Grandpa's address, write the letter, and send it from there. Yeah I'll take care of it then. Just get me to the weekend.)

Saturday Night

"Hey Karen, you want to go see 'The Accidental Tourist?' It's playing at 9:30 in Scarsdale."

"Do you want to go?"

"Yeah, I think so. Lindsay said it was really good."

"I've heard mixed things about it, but I'll go. I just want to do some work before it though. Do you have anything to do."

"Yes, I have to watch the St. John's - Georgetown game."

"Don't strain yourself too much."

"I'll try not to but you know how I get watching the Redmen play."

Tuesday Night

"Futterman telephone first floor."

"Hello."

"Matt, Dad."

"Hey Dad, how was the trip?"

(more)

"The trip was good but I'm afraid I have some more bad news. Grandpa it seems has had a, well, a massive heart attack."

"Oh God, that's terrible. What'd the doctor say."

"Well, he gave kind of a gloomy prognosis. He doesn't think Grandpa is going to leave the hospital alive."

"Oh Jesus."

(Up the stairs get the stationery out and write this thing damn it. Oh lord please keep him alive. Letter'll take about a week to travel. I know he's weak but he's strong too. Just let this letter get to him. Maybe someone can bring it to him the hospital. Come on Grandpa hang in there. Be strong and hang in there, you always did. Even when those damn hoods kept robbing the grocery store you hung in there 'til you had no choice but to leave. Grandma Millie died even before I was born but you've been going strong ever since I've known you. Come on just a little while longer.)

Thursday Afternoon

(That damn phone won't stop ringing. Feels like it's just been ringing off the hook the last couple a days. Sound's changed too. Doesn't sound like a telephone anymore, more like a fire alarm making me feel like something terrible could be happening sending nerves burning through my stomach and sweat coming out of my skin. Oh shit, there it goes again.)

"Futts telephone first floor."

"Hello."

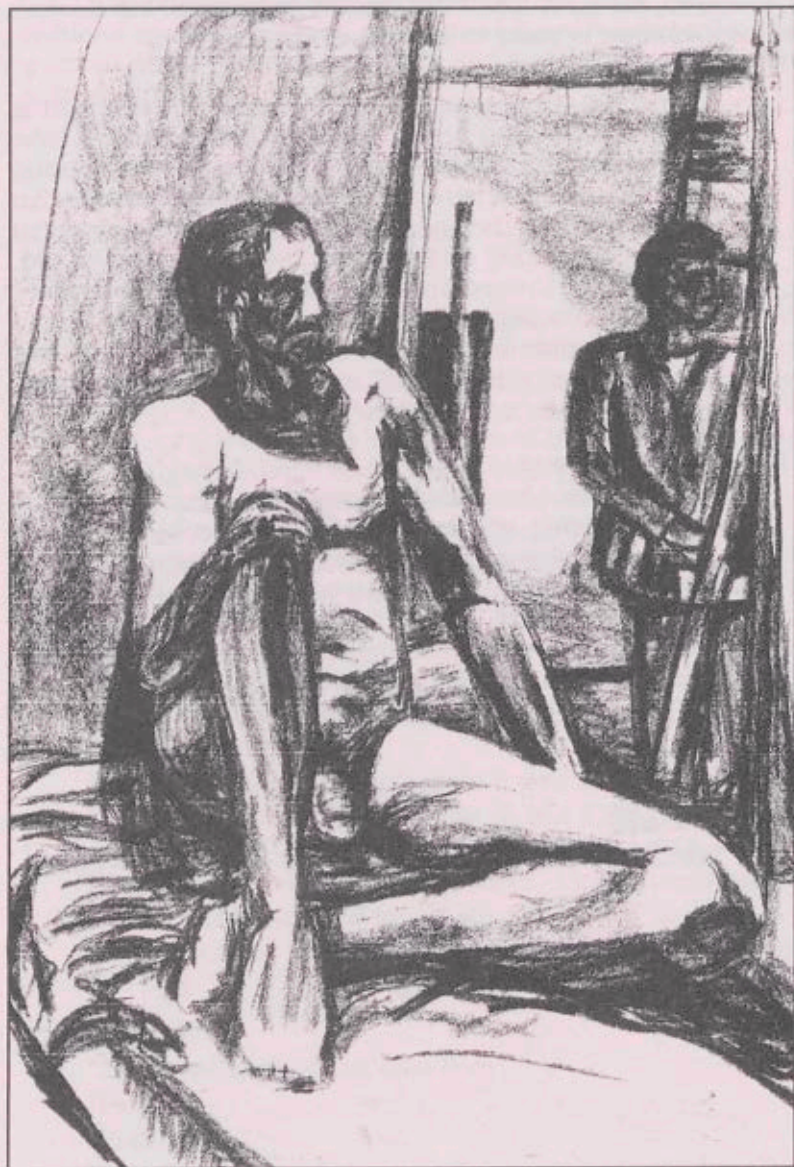
"Matt."

"Hi Dad."

"Matt, your grandfather died about ten minutes ago."



ANNE HOBAN



JOSÉ ANDRADE

SONG

for Hugo Wolf

My
eyes
blossom
kind
thoughts & serene
senses
while
choirs

echo a
thrush's dance;

I sit and wonder
to the stars of
it all, this
great plenty
I am enjoying,

the leaderless love
forlorn of spite
or anything else
of a complicated
spirit-

Thy mind still,
a frequent pessimist
also enjoys a sojourn
everynow and then, from
mysterious mists of ideals
and the inflated tradition of
nothingnesses.

As the songs sail
through air unabashed,
may this kind fever endure,
a quiet contention for my heart,
a surrender I shall
not be melancholy,
nor bitter.

Melancholy self, misprized words of the quest,
Serene thy night, sweet cry in thick meeting,
We celebrate titanic victory, with spirits egest.
As pleasant slaughters, done thy course erwhile,
Accompanying my single heart beating,
'Lo the stars, a dance bewildered awe,
Thine yesterday's appetite for the involved.
We galloped across the sheepfolds of York
Through a copia of piquant sepia dainties,
Through forests and rocks unresolved,
To our enemy unprepared, ripe for sharp dissolve.
We squandered them, a gallant, fair fight not
As Crimson sun walked among their motley lot.
A hoary victory nonetheless, a revelry of digress

*And what are your thoughts, fine Sir Reginald,
Do you not doubt our fair victory?
Like that of a hearld, I greet you
As this song shall be quiet for the rest, amidst our
 voices.*

*Retreat of musty emotions, part of limitless choices,
I can speak to you, a brother of arms,
As the dawn approaches, let me continue.*

Our King's call brought us forth to travel asunder,
To abject defeat, and return with pleasures of thunder.
I longed to fell, as a knight strong with fight,
Yet battled in rapture nepenthe¹ of their sleep,
To our swords forfeited their noble keep.
They burn unguarded, an illuminated night,
As the trumpets and cool spirits swallow
Our rejoice toward a frenzied delight-
Lusts of my heart grow, an unwelcome abyss,
Shielded by night's sootened traveled fortress.
Our King will hail our splendid return
As our enemy Vanquished shall continue to burn,
The plums are sweet and King's coffer will be astrong,
Knows not him of our victorious wrong

(more)

And as the night endures our lascivious war,
My fortress asimple, a blue black clear,
Occupies a locus I can not fear
I wish for mountains white with wild mares
Far from seas deep, valleys of villages,
Woods and rivers - a reprieveful lair
To walk as equals without mortal worry
Where daylight abounds and all is fair.
What do you wish for, fine Sir Reginald?

Does this victory phase you not as me,
As the trumpets muted somehow sound of glee?
Will thee be able to approach honorable pyre
While we laugh at the vanquished true to sweet liars?

Answers me not, the sentimentality mine,
Spare yourself of returning sickening song
To my unknown wrong withheld in fight
Ungrateful I am for our Lord's sunken kind

O Lord, despair us not of victory
As the sun approaches through night's still twilight
It rises roseate to my eyes' near,
I recognize a notion, once unclear,
Smited by ignorance and vainful plight:
Behind my dreams young in heart,
We must be a victory, for sure,
For my thoughts to today endure;
O spiteful, vain song of the night unfed,
Maybe you and I, not products of certain dread.
Upon our chargers depart we to our land,
To thank providence for victory in our hand.
Through copia of piquant sepia dainties,
That smell as sweet as the maidens who pick them,
We return having guarded King and country's liberty.
Victorie! Victorie! The fruits of gracious victory.

MICHELE ALFANO



LORI RICHARD

HOMEWORK

*I didn't know,
That books could be
So pretty-
If they are the right colors,
Stacked neatly, vertically,
Tightly up against each other.
Even, here,
On a grey bookshelf.*

*Those
Colored books,
take on
A liveliness-
spilling off of the shelves,
And onto the carpet.*

*Neon oranges and yellows
Make you think of an
Impossible sunset.*

*Deep dark forest
Greens,
Give you winter fir trees and
Wet, slick leaves in
The rain.*

(more)

*And pale, milky blues and deep blues of the sky
On clear, crisp days,
Or tired, hazy days.
And electric blues you see
Only in posters.*

*A red as
Smooth and heavy as
Velvet.*

*And a navy blue of cold, dark points beneath the
ocean,
And the color of uniforms.
And a green the color of
A slice of lime that you can put in
A clear glass of gin and tonic with ice. Delicious.*

WINDOWS

*Content with corruption
Because it is not seen
Or understood
Only intellectualized.*

LINDSAY FEINGOLD

THE HUNT

*Heavy, black boots crunch their way through
frozen pieces of sky*

*which have rested
for days.*

Four days he had searched for that hound.

It had been his boy's favorite

It had been.

A thick branch cracks, a heavy heart jumps

Dim eyes avert to the orange-brown sky

No cars

No stars

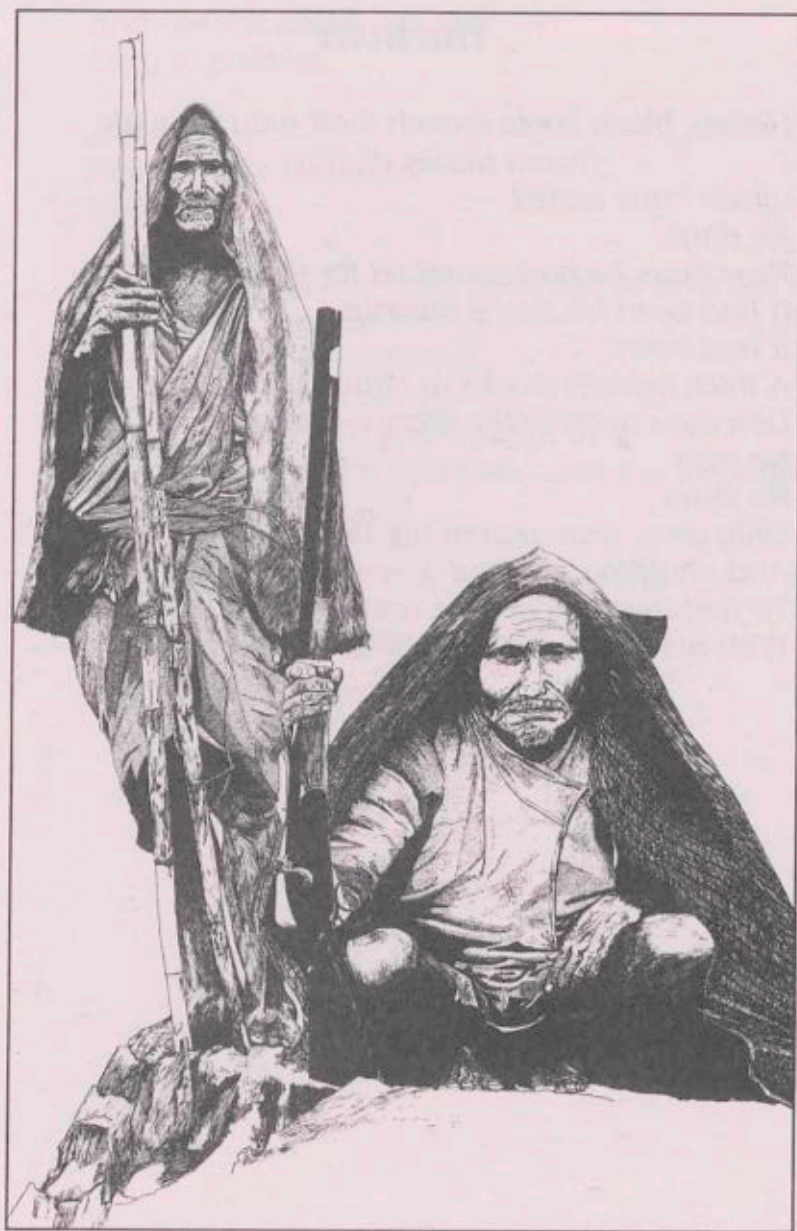
Only grey, transparent breath

And shuffling, wishing steps

To find that dog amidst hardened crystal

With his boy it could never be that simple.

JOHN MAHER



GREG GOETZ

THE STREET FIGHT

The lean youth held out his arms, hoping to grab his aggressor, and spare himself a beating. For a fleeting second this tactic worked. However, the assailant soon grabbed him and, after a few vicious blows to his head and body, threw him down. He landed on his back, cruelly sent to the frozen black top.

The front door of the corner tenement opened, and two wrinkled, old black women on their way out instead cowered in the entrance. Within fifteen feet of this one-sided battle, a family stood petrified around their rusted, Chevy land shark. From the safety of dark second story windows, others looked on with fear and perverted disinterest.

Unable to think, react, or even avert my eyes in disgust, my body moved towards the combatants. Yet, each blow that the boy received drove me further from any act of intervention. And as I neared the fight, I assumed the overwhelming apathy of the neighborhood.

Meanwhile the toppled teen writhed on his back, twisting in terror, trying to escape. His scrawny legs, which spastically lashed out in an attempt to drive away his attacker, instead only provided him something for him to latch on to. In his furor, the violent boy rabidly pumped his right leg, the sole of his shoe repeatedly meeting the chin of his defenseless prey.

"Hey, what the fuck are you doing?" in a deep, frightened voice I bellowed. Startled by my ludicrous outburst I wondered what meaning could be in my unknown and possibly unheard voice. I was not part of their world, this decrepit, one-way street.

Cursing and spitting, the triumphant victor, a boy pumped up with adrenaline and god knows what

(more)

else, finished this statement of his manhood and strutted all twenty-five yards home. A bleary-eyed black man and I gathered around the prone victim. He tried to stand. Teetering on the legs of a new-born calf, the boy slowly gained a haphazard equilibrium. His eyes, pleading and full of pain, inflicted more guilt than I had ever felt before.

I could have ripped the vicious little bastard to shreds. But I had nothing, ultimately indifferent to and intimidated by the public display of disregard of another's fate.

The jaundiced black man sympathetically told the boy, "go home, you got your ass whupped but good." Obviously in shock, the boy muttered something about glasses. In the gutter I found them, scratched and intact. I gave them to the other man, who gave them to the boy. Miraculously, he was able to put them on. They sat crooked on his scrambled head. He reeled away, drunk with pain, floating in misery.

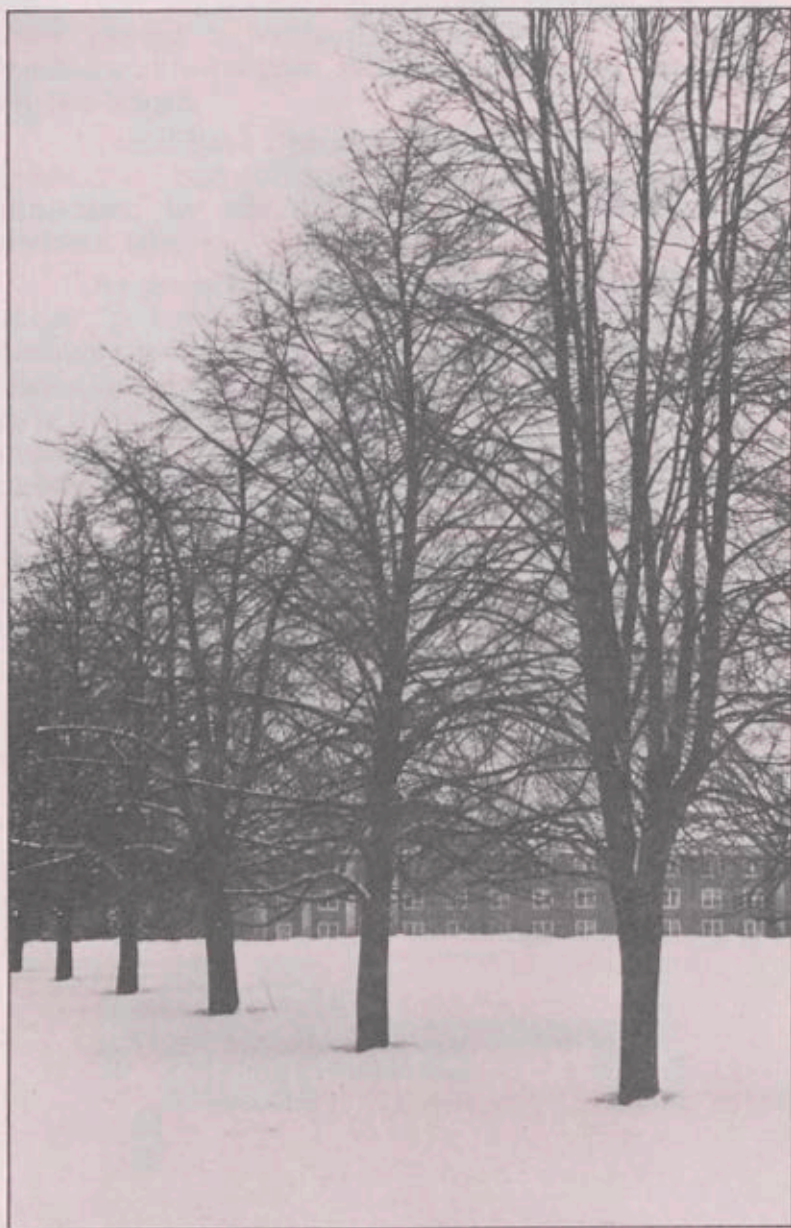
There was blood! Singing neon discharge ran out of the back of his head. As he walked away, I denied this sight. The whole scene frightened and disabled me.



ERIN

*Floating across the stage
like a gypsy
fancy-free and without care
she expresses everything she can
not worrying about anyone
only the rhythmic beat behind her
bouncing, gyrating, spinning, prancing
she falls into sync
with her own mind
the audience is mesmerized
stunned and impressed
by the presence before them
they look inside themselves
to find her
if they can.*

RICHARD CROCKER



LARRY MANNINO

THERE ARE NO

GREEN COCKATOOS,

MR. STEVENS

-There's something about lying in bed for hours on a rainy Sunday morning in November, lying there doing some of the work that you ultimately HAVE to have done by 8:50 a.m. the next morning - reading some O'Connor or Webster or something. Lying there alone in a ripped T-shirt and boxers listening to the rain plash against the slate roof which is your view from your window when you take the time to look out with a leisurely cup of coffee and an unhurried sense of time. Time, which stands vigilant next to your bed, commands you to glance over and take note of it, which you do, and realize that if you want to get the Times you have to rise from the snug nest of comforters and pillows bathed in the yellow glow of lamplight, shower, dress, and hurry out before the shop closes at noon. You get up, forego the shower, throw a sweater and a pair of well worn khakis over what you're wearing, grab the umbrella, slide a hat onto your head and a coat over your shoulders and set off into the cold, gray day with the knowledge that you haven't left the relaxation of Sunday morning behind, but merely postponed it for a bit.

You return, place the umbrella against the wall near the door where it stains the paint with its dampness, take off the coat, hat, sweater, shoes, khakis that have served to protect a Sunday morning which lies underneath. The bed is not yet cold. You read some more of the things which you HAVE to. Later you arise by

(more)

choice, put on some hearty beef soup, some Steely Dan, and some shorts because your apartment has no curtains.

As you eat, you suddenly become aware of the strangeness which this picture must present to anyone but you. The models in the Times Magazine look so perfect, so perfectly beautiful as they stare out at you from the pages which also hold advertisements for mansions in Connecticut and pleadings for the support of some little bedraggled girl named Juanita who lives in Central America and needs just 12 cents a day to eat. You also notice the striking similarity between your apartment, which is littered with books, and that of the Polo man, whose apartment is also littered with books. You don't think that he reads those books, and he also looks uncomfortable and foolish with those stiff dungarees on and a dog on his lap. In a tank near your bedroom a predatory wolf fish hovers in the water with a grotesque leer as fish which you no longer have any use for swim nervously about.



ONE MAN'S SHADOW

It was the time of the year when nostalgia strikes the edges of the soul, as if the sickness were caught, somehow, tremendously from the air . . . wandering through the mind and flesh of the man, at times scratching, others tickling . . . eventually falling to his heart to reside and devour, dining at every pump and beat.

Listen carefully, if you will, to the thumps as they battle one another in time, for time; tempo rubatta - to the sounds and clanks of knives and forks, cheers of chalices kissing, and the savouring 'oohs' of every bite, chew, and swallow.

It was the time of the year for a festivity, for gluttony of the heart of man, solus - an invitation to the f(r)iends of tears and cries, those ghosts of alienation, who love to feast of the divine.

"Take me home" the man whispers, kissing the air, as he bows down to rest and listen - his life beats pounding away, chew by chew, and the rising voices of one gourmand over the other . . . The devil and all his imps arise to the occasion. 'Greetings and Welcome . . . Eat, Drink, and Be Merry, for tomorrow he shall Die!' The man could almost hear the gentle smoking of the own epicurean lips. . .



ED HOOD



CRAIG LYONS

THE OLD BIRD

*I live I need
No thoughtfulness
No cleanliness
No proof of existence
Less the "Sparrow"
On my mailbox
They can't tell me*

*I've seen the war
I still see it
I've felt his love
I still know it
I've walked the wire
And I show it
They can't tell me*

*I know they see
They question me
About my flights
They tell me that
"You have not been
To Disneyland"
They can't tell me*

*They tell me not
To worry or cry
To swoop or die
They say "Fly high"
This is your time
To live the life
They can't tell me*

*And so I sing
Soft to myself
And sleep because
The dreams I see
Are mine eternal
And I know this
They can't tell me*

THE FUTILE ACCEPTANCE

Prelude:

The ice pained
gnashing between his rotted teeth
and dissolving
into saliva that
he spat
onto steelworkers shoes.
With a slap of a rag
The black showed through;
The uniform was ready,

A goddess with
a manager and his
camera removes the beanies
from the lads foreheads
and anoints them with
a kiss for their first flight
into forsaken lands.
And the soldiers laughed
to a Morrison tune
As they boarded
And felt their way
toward a seat to-
only they knew where

Strapped into position
the motion began
and the nose of the plane began to rise
until there was a red
flash of emergency and
the stewardess' face
appeared and Lucas
saw the face of the
cashier he held at gunpoint
for a can of ravioli and

(more)

a 12-pack, the face that
sent him into the darkness
of the bog they disrupted
crashed and were
now sinking into.

The stewardess was dead.
And the young man
had a hole in the knee
of his pants but there
was no blood so he
crossed himself in thanks
and limped back to
the airstrip to mount
the next bird enroute to
what they've all been
cheering for him to see.

Chapter 1:

Stumbling through the
familiar jungle he'd
never been to he
recalled the icy puke from
the first stench of the
rebirth pit at base camp.
But the living, growing
holes in the body next to him
could as well have been
the envisioned chasms
in his head
when the body lies limp
not knowing
the swamp
about its ears
about its groin
not knowing it's dead.

PATCHED GLIMPSES

*A tattered wretch
a wraith shadowed
by this wind
(pigeons frightened
by the clap
of a garbage lid)
shuffled past me.*

*Below oily doves
proudly bathing
in the aggravated fountain
this artisan washes
his hands before setting
course for home.*

*Beneath the streetlamp
he sits at home
suckling his Chianti.
Vision blurred by dusk
he patiently waits
for his illumination
to reread il "Paradiso."*

BURNT VISION

A candle once burned here:

*Contemplating the sadness,
Oxidation on the marble sacristy,
I reached out to feel remorse.
Stroking the blackened spot I perceived
a stern voice:*

*"Fool! Look, do not touch or I will have you
locked up!"*

*Hypnotized by that burning soul
I turned. Silently I floated off.*

*But, burnt embers still pungent on my fingers,
a response ignites:*

*"Why in the most holy Christian house in the world
do you not ask me, 'please sir, suffocate
your inner-most desires and pray do not touch,'
Please." 'Go to hell bastard' was my
inflamed response.*

ANNE HOBAN



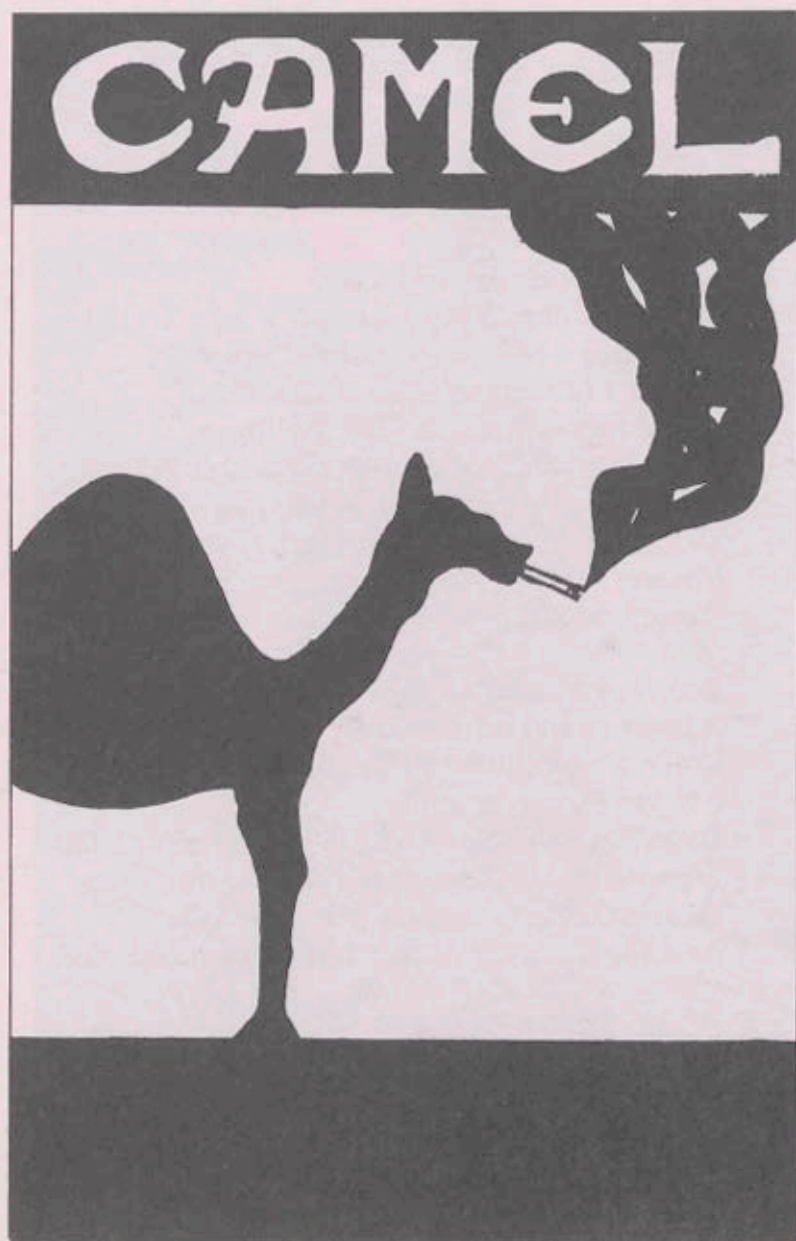
NINA SMILARI

DINNER PARTIES

Smoke clouds linger loud
in laughs above my bed:
Your dad's big "joie de vivre" voice
I think I have a crush on. Tick tocks
of the mahogany clock in the hall,
night light shadows on hazy gray wall.
White folds rumble in thundering,
static covers pulled overhead.
Yawns put sea-roars in my ears;
sleep still stays away.

Scuffling shocks on first few steps,
a peek at the adults: wax dripping
down those damn silver things
I shined with no smile.
Bitter brandy, Sambuca espresso with lemon,
enjoyed at the Last of our family dinners.
Dessert didn't clear us from the table
And we laughed at that old "impotent joke."

PHILIP WOODBURN



MELISSA BLOOM

RED

*I wore red and you never showed
The band was bored and not loud enough
So I watched the only couple in the crowd.*

*He was loud and dark and nervous
She was embarrassed to be with him
Every time he yelled for service.*

*The waiter brought me gin and tonic
I wanted daisies and I wanted passion
And to think of you and not feel sick.*

*And to get to the story's climax
The symbolism of my life
But people die of Syphilis.*

*Are you going anywhere now? Soon?
Is there anywhere to go
I had to go to the bathroom.*

*The waiter was sexy in a denim way
He smoked Camel cigarettes without filters
My eyes were closed my body swayed.*

*During the break the drummer bought me a drink
I smiled at the waiter so
The drummer didn't know what to think.*

(more)

*I don't play this game very well
"Just don't play, you can't lose."
A dark bar, electric tension, whiskey smell.*

*Then I was dancing with that waiter
I wanted to make love to this casual person
Because he smoked Camels-no filter.*

*I wasn't drunk-I was, but it didn't matter
I started to get violent but no one saw
Because plastic cups don't shatter.*

*You're so gentle - I thought - and shy
So sensitive - I thought - so heart and soul
I crossed my legs and bared my thigh.*

*The waiter drove me home and left me there
I tried to cry but it was late
Where the hell were you anyway?
I wore red.*

OUT OF THE BLUE

Metal and bodies hurtle forward
above the blind to clouds
secure and blase but for the instant
the wheels lift - it's too late to get off.
Tensing my body into floatation cushions,
pushed backward, I see the Scotland Surprise,
the mother waiting for her Baby.

In this silent silver tube I pretend
I'm alone. The rich glossy pages blur
into a monotony of thin sex cosmetic
ads, too perfect for persuasion. The child
in front of me - far more diverting - plays
peek-a-boo, but I don't disappear.

He's waiting for the surprise, disappointed.
The moon dips and slides
as the plane descends.
I smooth the wrinkles from my plain
blue traveling dress, avoid the lavatory mirror.
You are down there in the airport, nervously
checking your watch - the sky - the watch -
the clock - the sky, waiting to surprise me.

My heart is punching and the wheels touch.
You are prepared to smile before I step
through the gate. I image you
imagining me, and wonder if we are not
the most distorted people. You have a humble
perseverance; when I left, for good, I said
"don't wait." So who is surprised?

BLACK COFFEE

"I'd like a cup of coffee, please." I have to keep reminding myself that I am an adult, pretty much anyway, and have as much right to be here as anyone else. Still I feel guilty, because not only am I ordering just coffee, I'm alone, so I represent two full meals not tipped on.

The waitress intimidates me. This job is her life and she hates me. She would hate me even if I didn't order just coffee. But I did.

I look around for a point of glow-shine to lose myself in, like around the mouth of a sax or the edges of Chinese restaurants dishes. There's none here, just dull fluorescence. I want to think hard about my life, to forget everything and find a revelation. I can't concentrate. I'm bored. I have a novel I've been reading, and I pull it out. That is when the waitress brings the coffee.

She really does hate me. I try to roughen my voice. "Thank you" but it doesn't matter. Her eyes slit down to the book and I am so ashamed. No expression, she asks if she can get me anything else. I feel it, I feel her contempt.

After she shuffles away, I reopen the book. I can't read it. I smell bacon. The words say "he felt an incomprehensible unavoidable pull from the universe - his soul was turning fucia." The waitress is at the counter, laughing "So after Cynthia was arrested, Joey left her. You remember Joey, he's the gorgeous cop Debbie used to go out with. So he just took the baby and left her stranded in jail. Cynthia, not Debbie."

So many of the important discussions in my life have taken place over bad coffee. I must think better on bad coffee. I drink my coffee black. It stays hotter longer that way. Unfortunately there's nothing to disguise rotten coffee. This coffee is sludge.

There's truth to the adage of being whatever you believe yourself to be. Sometimes we sit around in ugly cafes drinking sour wine or bitter coffee, and pretend we're young - spiritually - aware - socially - conscious - esoteric - intellectuals, which we become, eventually.

"So then Rick bails her out. You knew they were having an affair, right? You didn't? My God, I thought everyone knew, they were pretty obvious. Neither one of them made it to the parade, and then remember New Year's Eve, when they both disappeared for, like, hours."

"Bitch!"

"So now Joey - tell me he isn't ripshit, right? - he doesn't even know if the kid's his."

"Bitch."

"No kidding."

One of my friends from high school is living in a slum section of Syracuse. He says his parents' materialism has driven him to poverty.

(more)

They send him rent money. He says he's punishing them. I don't know. I'm pretty materialistic when it comes right down to it. I like my things. I'm not one of those who want the fastest, newest car, but I won't walk. I'm not proud of this, but I like to be comfortable. I'm content to think my entire generation is just disgustingly self-oriented, and at least I am aware of the injustice that I have too much.

My cup is empty. Refugee grounds sit in the bottom. I look to catch the waitress' attention. She meets my eye, then sits.

"Got a cigarette?" to the man at the counter. God, she hates me.

January is a stupid month. Nothing good ever happens in January.

After she finishes her break, she fills up my cup. One of her rings is attached to her bracelet by a gold chain on the back of her hand. I am bewitched. It reminds me of some kinky bondage costume. She lifts the pot away, and her hate floods back at me. My ideas make her stomach squirm with loathing. She knows she has a job and cash in her apron pocket. Every morning she looks in the mirror and there's her pretty face. She's got a man she sees every night. When they fight she breaks ceramic vases and screams "I hate you!" and means it. When they make up, she promises to love him forever and means it.

"Could I have a glass of water please?" She fetches it. I almost didn't ask. She thinks I pity her.

"Thank you."

A bearded truck driver-type man walks in with his jaw hanging, just a little. He sits at a table near me, facing away. Red and black flannel. Over his shoulder I see white old lady hair. It makes a fascinating contrast, the aged delicate crescent gracing faceless brute strength. I think it represents humanity. It might. The grace along with the structure. The muscle. The thrust of life. The blood that forces itself through a dancer's frame. The goldenrod in a swamp. More than goldenrod in a swamp. The instinct to kill for love. The passion of the animal. The monster in us all, the base functions but sublime intentions! Yes, yes!

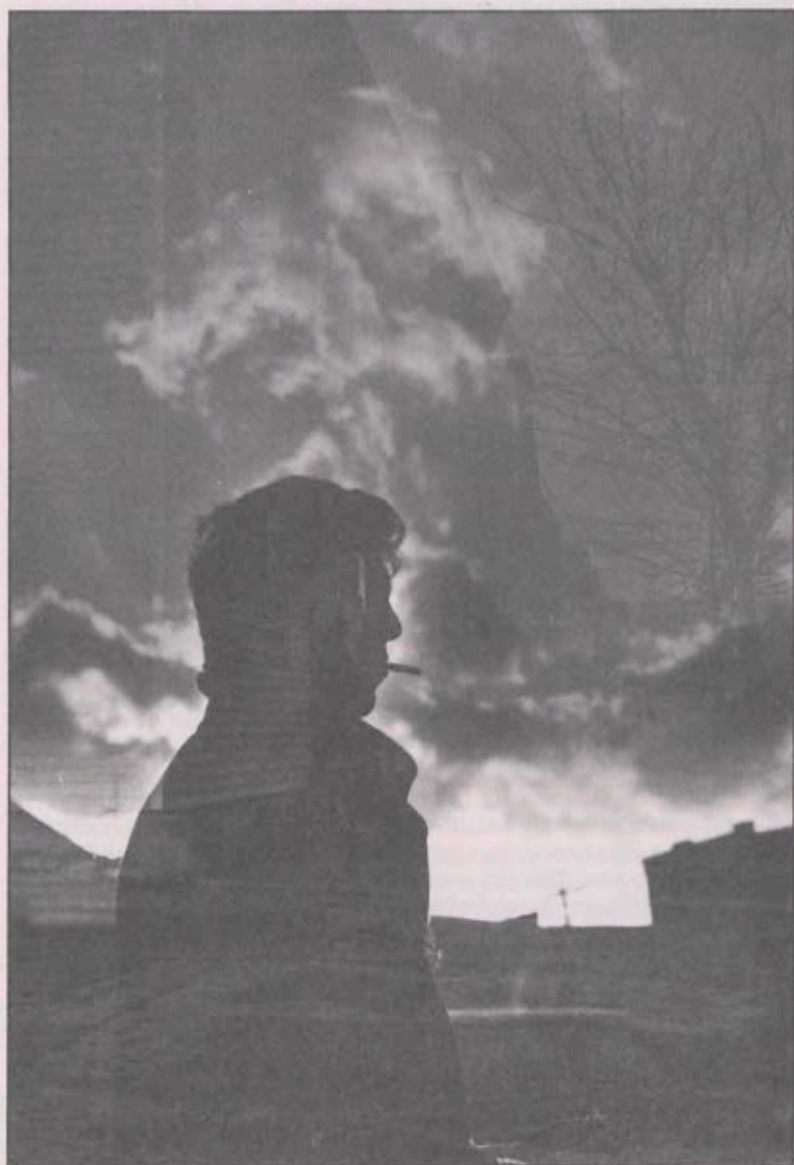
A faint tinkle-crash surprises me. There's water all over the table, all over my leg. My hand is wet too, and bloody. And I don't feel a damn thing. The beard man is twisting his bulky body around in the strict booth to see. The old woman lifts herself a few inches out of curiosity too. Ah, my model of humanity, still in sinc!

My heart thinks we're on the steep side of a rollercoaster. My mouth opens and I see the waitress. She covers her own mouth with a hand, the one with the finger chained to the wrist. I giggle. I can't help it.

They're all staring at me. Silently hysterical, I am getting dizzy. As the tears form, these people start to worry. Someone is wiping the blood from my hand, and the waitress is clearing my table. All these people touching me, looking at me. There is no pain. I don't feel a damn thing.



WILLIAM T. CASE



KEN BERLACK

CONFESSION

*We encountered,
mitigated . . .
a countenance
of flustered chaos*

*In streams of what we know,
many ways resembling shallow
presence*

*We churn-grope-snicker
as it all comes to
a drowning least to be
chosen, tonight*

JOHN ELLINWOOD



JOHN DONOHUE

LET IT STAND

The man blowing beat
red, flying tonight
just going to explode
one moment extended, no past as such.
Pieces of Nick all over the bar
red faced hitting notes hitting the soul.

Second set still like striking
a match flame extended-heat.
Shining silver rim of baritone sax
all that is right with life and America
Sweet tears

Ancient odd Hemingway types snapping their
fingers in the audience bearded and shaking their heads.

Feeling foreign and
divorced from the moment
can't have enough of
life and unfamiliar experience.

Piano and bass. Nick
takes a break. Drummer fat
as fat holding.
Fat black beautiful black man slowly
shaking. Yeah Yeah.

Break in sax man

Bring on that drum solo.
Short.

More sax

Cows and thunder in
Vermont, the first jam session
on green fields eons ago

Deep baritone sax cows echoing
Rolling drum roll type thunder

Stop. Stopping.
Bringing it down to sleepy sad sands of Jersey

(more)

Crisp cymbal taps speeding
Breaking busting balling
Bam Bam thump higher hit
me love it ahhhhhh
Break it and burn
Yeah clap heavy beard
Cheap seats combat zone
"Play the gig man," from the fat black man in back.

Laughter. New tune take
me break me Miles Davis.
Ride the bass. Squeal screech
Blow man blow
bring me something something new
don't waste a chord or a note high low.
Holiday Inn type room we're in go
away. Banish pastel colors bring
me back to music
red faced sax man;
catch your breath,
wipe your eyes,
ready yourself for a
second helping of life. Lay
it on me dirty antiseptic world. Breath
life frantic notes piano man
Yeah yeah hit hit hit snap.
In the audience echo Hemingway echo
Snap snap shake your old bearded head roll old man roll.
This is life. Scratch
it scratch it burn it
on my mind. Be too much for
me to handle. Leave me
burned out depressed like a cold woman.
Subtly in a sea of music, one
note different here another there, help
the sad balding long hair in the back
John Lennon type glassed guy sitting by himself.
Make my palms sweat and
eyes near tears. Explain
to me this slow song yes slow song give me
the answer. Slowly find me the questions.

(more)

Bring it up drummer man, fat
fat drummer. Fat saxophone sound narrow
at the moment-of the moment-
teach me on your black board of sound the
richness of life before death musical didactic church.

Night in Tunisia Bogart drum roll
Titanic sax held sideways during
intro drum solo

Bring it down
Pause.

It's back rocking bad piano and
sax and bass in their chords upon chords
Now rolling bop rolling
in and on so heathly

He called it:

Piano break fingers only Yeah
clap clap roll roll. Waves
of measures. Hamilton on piano
Blow sax blow
Basically fat and loud
Feed me feel me.

Better than any glass class room type test tube academia
Blow

and burn me out; carve that moment
across some cerebral cortex don't let me see the end
Keep the moment's momentum. Break
and bring it thundering wave drummer
Syntax syntax period comma period
Bam bam down eggbeater fly swatter drummer man
Break-

look sax man look
and now blow

pushing back that second hand

Breath life long long deep notes solo
Yeah burn now keep it on in the end
"Mean ride cymbal"

WILLIAM T. CASE



DAPHNE MARGIOTTA

THE CHICK

I asked him to come by and see me,
"maybe baby, we'll see."
At the diner drinking coffee,
He's picking up my sister in front of me.
I just hate that
So I figured I'd get to work early
and sort out notebooks and pens.
Some harley chic came in
Real blonde, real fake
looking for Charlie (this guy, right?).
It was his sister - nice girl, yeah! - Charlene
I asked her if she was on Dallas
She blew smoke in my face
(really pissed me off)
and said, 'whah?'
so she was bilingual, and big hipped
what did I care?!

It's just the damn fact that
my nail was chipped and bleeding
my legs were aching
and I was an hour away from my next cigarette
break
(could've used one then)
Finally she left
I went back to aisle 5 - "Back to School Things"
- smurf lunchboxes all over the floor-
and watched the clock tick until my next drag.
If I did see him tonight,
It didn't really matter.

RAUD ALAMIN



JANET SCHWARTZ

"C" TRAIN TO PORT AUTHORITY

*i am one cool looking bitch and i
am white and i
stand tall
(even though i ain't tall at all)
because i am white see
and my clothes are neat see
and i got clean hair today smelling good
from my shower i took this morning
then this black chick
she gets on in my car
and this chick
she got some nice clean looking kid with her
all clean and not ratty looking like some of them
look like
and she says Luther, you stay right here by me
now, hear? you stay
right here.
real final like.
and i think
whats this bitch think
im gonna steal him?
so i think to myself im gonna say something.
so i turn around to say it
cause im white
and she aint
but this black chick
she look real good too
so i just don't say nothin.*

JIM EHLEN



KATIE BOYD

MIDWEST

*If the midwest contradicts
between overwhelmingly there
and distantly aloof,
its stalks of corn twisted skyward reach
til reduced to earth clinging stubs,
then so do I.*

*When abandoned cars progress
from stubbornly hopeful
to admittedly defeated,
and headlight beams steered forward search
til vandal smashed to scattered shards,
then so do we.*

SCALING THE FOOTHILLS

"But do you like fish?" Kipper asked the silken lady.

"Occasionally," she replied without moving her lips. He noticed her bulbous eyes scan the room. They finally settled on the window directly behind his shiny bald head. He turned to see at what she so intently stared. He saw that the windows somewhat distortedly framed the foothills, the fall-like wind blown slopes had scratches of red clay peaking through the mesa green. These clay and gravel sculptures promoted expectations for the mountains beyond. While looking out the window a deep furrow cut into his forehead, trapping the sweetly pungent sweat which flooded his forehead, creating a small river which, at his temples, ran onto two identical birthmarks. Obviously repulsed by the window he whipped his head back around.

"When were you last at the Islands?" he asked, affectation dripping on the word Island, spilling over his strangely white lips, and falling into his mineral water.

Oblivious, she continued to watch out the window answering only "never."

"Honestly?" Jubilantly ahead he continued, his breath, reeking of bloated appreciation, forming a dirty yellow cloud above them both, "but you've got to go. St. Thomas, Grand Camman . . . the water's perfect, you'd just love it there," he smiled, spreading his ghostly lips into a vicious oval displaying silver and gold between his weak double rowed teeth.

Still her attention was absorbed by the activity beyond the wavy glass.

A bit deflated, he pushed his short sleeves up, uncovering a peculiar orange rash in between the scales of which several two inch long black hairs sprouted. "Maybe we could visit them on our way back from the

(more)

Mediterranean," the hairs were actually growing there in the restaurant, "look do you want another? I'm going to the counter."

She nodded almost imperceptible.

His figure transformed dramatically when he straightened. Sitting he appeared fairly well built; upon standing it was discovered underneath his developed torso were dwarfishly short legs, practically flippers. Any impression of strength and height he gave while sitting quickly succumbed to one of vulnerable top heavy malformation. His confidence, so nauseating at the table, disappeared as he wiggled up to the counter. In vain he tried to get served.

"They were out," he practiced his excuse as he made his way back to the table. But she was already gone. He plunged himself into her chair and stared out the window. He saw her out the window, as he knew he would, swimming up the foothills.



