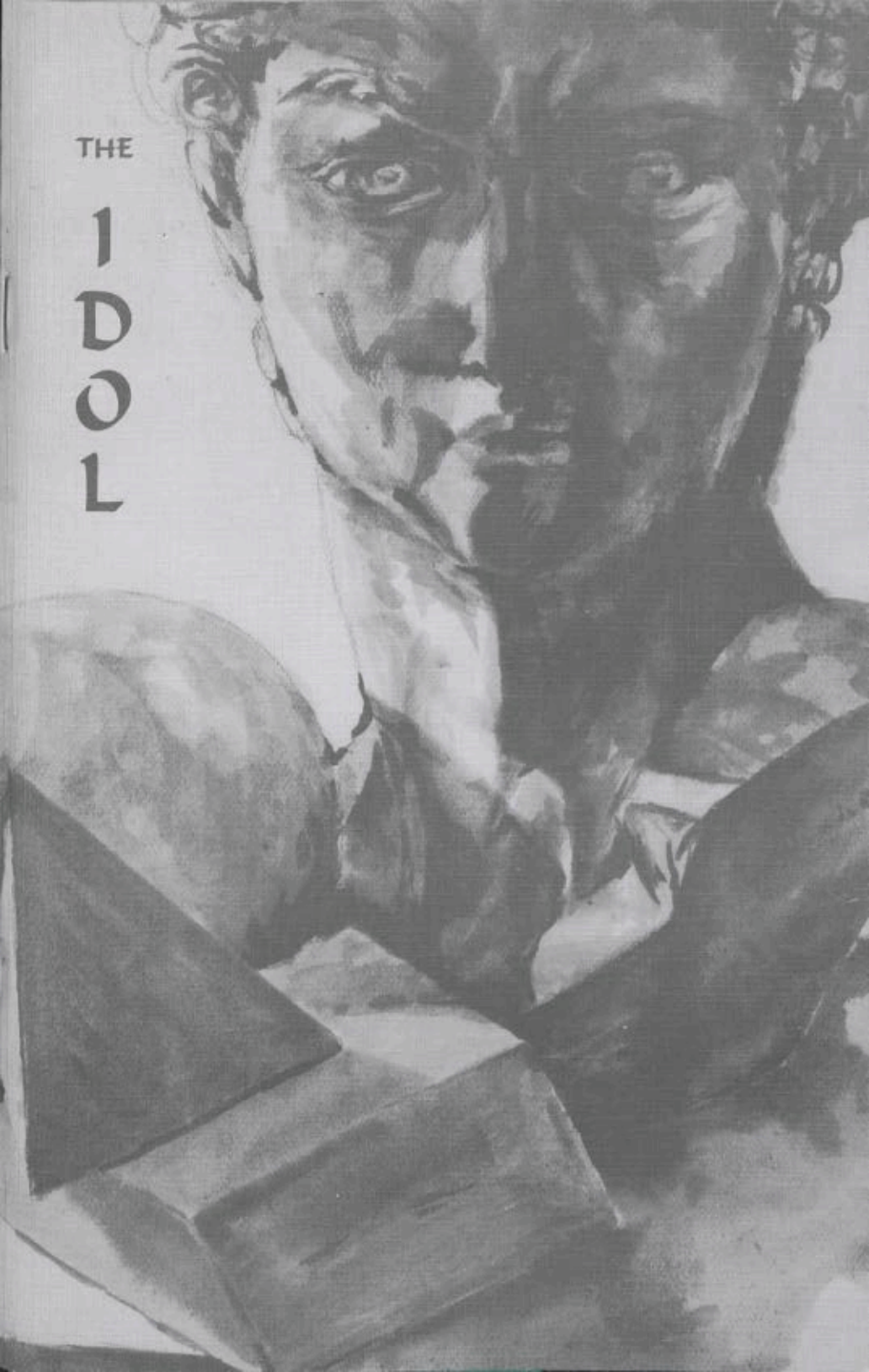
THE
IDOL

# THE IDOL

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# THE IDOL

*SPRING 1988*


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## JuNk YaRd

*Shard glass protruding*
*from molten metal in graveled sand.*
*Looming stench of death*
*rising with mist in the air.*

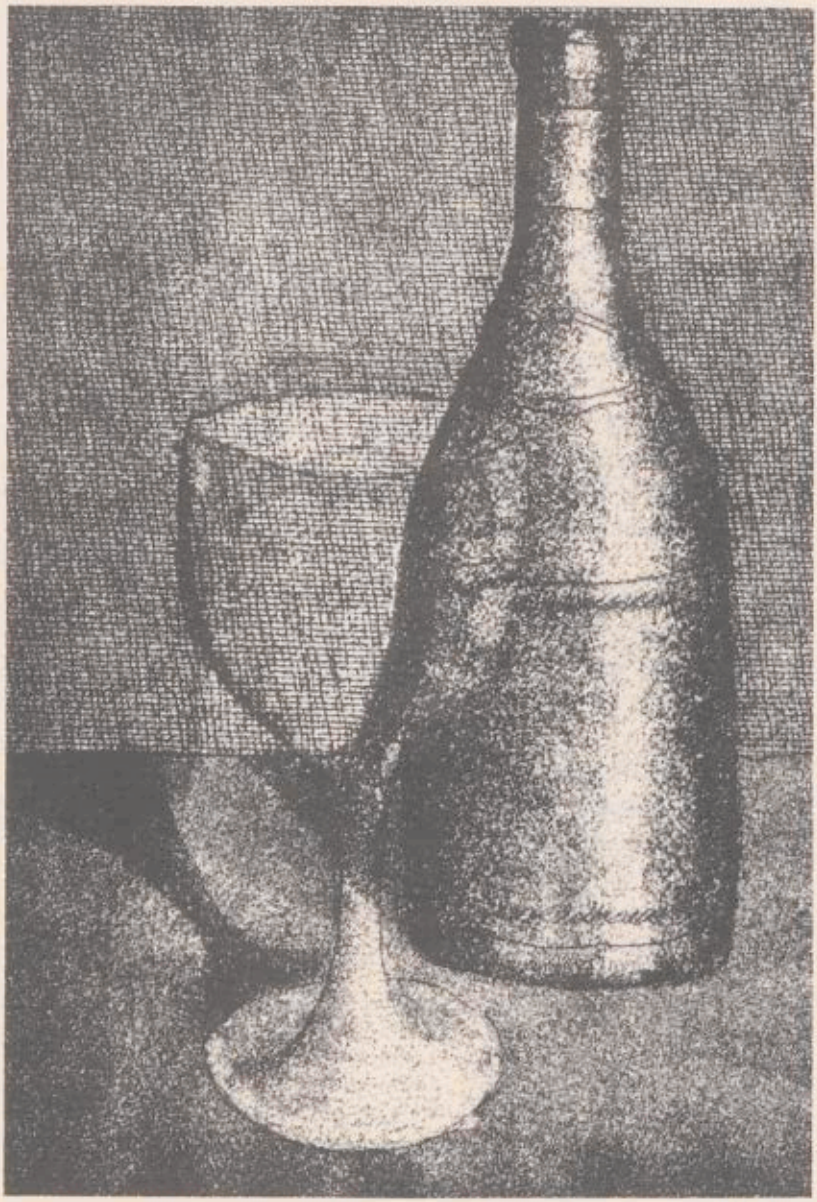
*Contorted Chevy, stripped of blue color,*
*rusting away at the rear.*
*Shattered mirror, but half still remained*
*of the 16-wheeler van.*

*Twisted handle, broken spoke-*
*no longer a cycle to be rode.*
*"Little boy . . . little boy . . .*
*where do you rest now?"*

*Memories awakening remnants of the past as*
*darkened shadows quicken my every glance.*
*Flaxen locks on a small-boned face,*
*pitter steps pattering through mire.*

*I thought it was him.*

## *Etching by Richard Clayton*



## *RESIDUE*

*An empty liquor bottle*
*on a chest of drawers*

*next to a dull brass frame*
*with a picture of him,*

*and charms in a*
*glass stained case.*

*Colored ribbons with lace*
*amongst babies breath*

*and black roses releasing decay.*
*Read letters discolored with age*

*and a telegram with a message*
*in reference to him.*

*Salty tears against a porcelain face.*
*Sorrow mixing with rage*

*condensing on a frosted window*
*pained with the residue of tragedy.*

## *Etching by Clem Gazzillo*

"AFTER PARANESI"

## LEAVES

every year the pretty colors fell off the trees i played in them as my gloved father tried to create order with his rake he sadly let me ruin his piles he wanted me to enjoy my brief youth he just smiled i couldn't understand why he would want to get the leaves off the lawn it seemed as though they just belonged there the cool and damp covering my young body made me feel warm inside

my dad told me they were dirty and if he removed them the winter would come late as i grew up my dad showed me how to wield the oversized rake i still jumped into the pile when it was ready for me my dad wouldn't clean up my mess anymore after i played i raked the leaves back into the pile i had already created fearing my father's harsh words i raked the leaves for a long time just because my mom asked me to she said my dad's back was sore and it would make him happy to see the yard clean when he got back from golf i lived in a condo for a while but now i have my own house and yard and trees

the leaves still fall my kid presses them in a book says they're pretty i think they're a damn nuisance. i hate the sight of them piles on the property line aren't good enough i burn every last one no more reminders maybe winter won't come if i rake swiftly enough and trick my kid into helping too one has to fight for his life you know i've taught my kid to rake the leaves he doesn't use gloves doesn't mind the blisters i just smile when he scatters the leaves all that work i'll buy him a rake that he can grow into i know he wants to be like his dad i know he will even if he doesn't want to my kids are gone off to school i pay for the leaf raking squads that make the campus look so nice i watch the leaves fall i just sit and watch them fall i accept it now just sit and watch them fall i feel sad that some dad somewhere is making piles in the corner of his yard or burning i just sit here all day long and watch them fall the wind takes them away to someone else's lawn or lets them stay in mine

occasionally i get company from someone else's yard

i let them do whatever it wants

some kid somewhere is playing in the leaves

he'll get old too.

## *Etching by Margie Kelly*

*And this for John Donne*
*At the age of 21*
*who probably intended*
*greater moments for his poem*
*than are endured*
*in the hearts of*
*men*

*No person is an island*
*this much is clear*
*my brothers and sister*
*affect me as much as the weather*
*that is, often as not, cloud swept*
*dry and clean*
*as blue slate,*
*clear;*

*but if it be true*

*that every person's death*
*dimishes me*
*then I be . . .*

*after traveling*
*several blocks,*
*or in historical terms,*
*a league from the place*
*of my birth; unknown to the rest*
*of the rounded globe*
*as they to my own-*

*(continued)*

*then I be . . .*

*without having seen*
*the desolate faces of Nigeria*
*Zimbabwe and the rest*
*of decaying Africa*
*sitting idly atop*
*rotting corpses*
*as the saying remains*
*in our empathetic lore*
*switching swatting flies*
*and staring at the ocean*
*floor now deceased,*
*with only the reminder*
*of some ancient fossil*
*teeth*

*then I be . . .*

*deprived of or*
*denying the sound*
*of dying children*
*in ragged and dirty draped*
*neighborhoods below the*
*invisible and hardly felt*
*poverty line of this*
*our inspired nation*

*then I be . . .*
*then and now*
*a sorry piece*
*of Humanity.*

## *A PICTURE OF BROTHER CHASE*

*I.*

*My brother is framed in brass and silver*
*a frozen icon*
*always the same one*
*a sad refrain (of that last December)*

*I can't remember his last name*
*although it was the same as mine*
*this has to do with being brothers*
*of forgetting the other's last name*

*II.*

*He's always sitting in my memory*
*flashing the same frustration;*
*his face atop two wheels and a chest*
*I have two things: his collection*
*an animal and a chair and my imagination*

*the wheelchair is a place of tranquility*
*you could say, a headstone with wheels*
*anyway, a mockery of motion, nobody's*
*business*

*and, that toy turtle would ring*
*ring rang ( December)*
*ring ring*
*when his finger could crawl up its tail*
*only*
*when his finger would crawl up its tail*
*only*
*when his hand could make it up the stand*

*(continued)*

## *Etching by Clem Gazzillo*

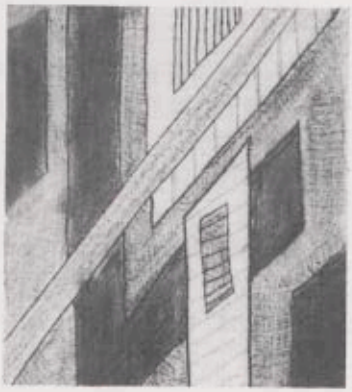
*ring ring*
*ring rang*

*III.*

*He sang, my brother, at christmas*
*his last free christmas*
*that song about bethlahem*
*and mary and jesus? (of December)*
*and stopped half way through*
*he forgot the refrain (of December)*
*he misplaced his cue,*
*kids laughed parents shrugged and smiled*
*understanding well*
*that he didn't finish the song*
*(of December)*

*IV.*

*somebody told me once*
*that God had a picture*
*of everything that was;*
*and I: are wheelchairs*
*scripture*
*and turtles Love?*



## SHE CALLED HIM WASTED ONCE

She noticed it that day they walked through the back acres. The crops were harvested, the burnt corn stalks sticking out of the dusty frost ridden dirt emphasized all the changes they'd gone through since the summer. He was talking about Marx, or drugs she wasn't really listening though she responded with nods occasionally to keep him talking. A plane flew overhead. She doubted he realized it but he stopped walking, he stopped talking. He just concentrated on the plane flying overhead. He watched that plane after it was out of sight. And she knew he thought that even if he couldn't see the plane he'd still be able to see the fireball if it crashed.

For a single minute she could see he was really sick and she could hate him. After the plane he continued their walk picking up the conversation where he'd left if, in mid sentence. Yet he couldn't block out his eyes and the disappointment which mixed with relief when he knew the plane was safe.

It was an awkward beach. Round white rocks rested on top one another providing temporary stability only. The water was high leaving maybe only three feet of beach. The rocks in the water were moss covered and slippery but the water itself was clear and cold-purifying. It was fresh water - no fear of mysterious creatures and still big enough, wide enough to give an impression of the ocean. Beyond the beach was a thin veil of forest, pine and birch trees mostly. Then there were the dramatic limestone cliffs. Finally inland were all the farms, their farm.

On Tuesday nights The Sport's Bar had .50 cent Kamikazees. He must have spend $5.00 on shots alone. She'd had a terrible night at the restaurant and ended up spending

*(more)*

all $8.00 of her tip money. But then again she mostly drank beer, she didn't want to get hammered. She saw him fall off his barstool. With alcohol induced bravado she picked up his barstool, looked at him still sprawled on the beer soaked carpet, and marched out the door. With his keys.

She wasn't sure how he got home, and he'll never remember but the next morning after spending a sleepless night in the restaurant parking lot she drove home. She expected a fight, a reconciliation, she even fantasized he'd be upset having stayed up all night wondering where she was. She slammed the car door, she even accidently hit the horn. Yet she knew he was still passed out. She opened his bedroom door, he was tangled in the mismatched daisy print sheets they'd stolen from the Salvation Army. He'd gotten a beer from the refrigerator before going to bed, the can was still in his hand. She guessed the beer itself was soaking the right side of the bed. Her side as she had imagined it.

"You're pitiful!" She said loud enough to wake him, if he'd chosen to hear it.

That night both hungover they watched movies on tv. They drank the rest of the scotch he'd brought back from his dad's house. They'd had just enough to feel secure again. Her head was in his lap and he was playing with her earrings, it was nice. And she wanted to ruin it. She called him wasted.

He just nodded.

## WEEDS

It was a continuing story, just the usual about a circle of friends. But it never came off. She just couldn't get anyone on paper to care. And it bothered her. Alot.

Once she came to me in tears, confused. I lied, I said it didn't matter. I couldn't help it. I was bored, I didn't want to talk about her problems. I didn't want to talk about problems period. I guess it was what she wanted to hear anyway. She smiled and thanked me when she left. So I can't really be blamed. She heard what she'd wanted to hear. I can't believe I said it though.

Get off, get off

beyond.

Tequila and beer. Wednesday night's ritual fell too many times that month. Now I wonder why. It's funny I always wonder too late, like my memory which works backwards too. I mean I don't forget things I just misplace them till someone reminds me with a "remember when. . ." story. I kind of like it like that anyway cause when I do remember, and I always do, it's fresh, it's new, not just a repeat. But I wonder too late. . .

My brother and I were driving across Wisconsin farmlands, complete with peeling red barns, corn crops browning before October's harvest, when we saw it. I saw it first and laughed outloud. The road was empty, rural routes are perfect that way, I pulled a wide U turn and stopped. A group of maybe eight spotted cows, the black and white kind, stood on one side of a puddled lake. Clear on the other side was a lone solid black cow trying to figure out how it would wade across and join the group. My brother saw it too and laughed. I've heard about twins' having secret languages and maybe sometimes it works with just regular siblings too. Because he understood, he saw. Our

*(more)*

only comment, I think he made it, although I could have just as easily, was "Wading to get his spots." I think that was the last time I felt someone really understood. But then it's not really fair for me to expect anyone to, I didn't understand here.

Escape to Wisconsin.

"This isn't my coffee. This coffee has sugar. You know I don't take sugar."
Bitch I thought, but said nothing.
"This isn't my coffee." she sighed and drank it.

I never even put my book down, but every sip she took was a victory for me. When she finally banged down her mug and got up to leave I was invigorated, I asked if she needed a ride. "Don't bother." It was a dead sentence, it killed everything with it's sterility. And if I'd tried I might have felt some remorse. Instead I was relieved, I was that lazy.

"Did I have fun?"

"I think so, it's all kind of a blur."

I think I've gotten better, I had to. I had to go home. I couldn't pull the same shit there, different shit maybe . . . I'd get up early, by ten at the latest. And, all day long I'd be doing things. Stupid things like washing the car, taking down the Christmas lights - we decided June was late enough though my sister still wanted them up, she's queer like that but it's kind of cool. I'd even take walks up the mesa, the sown weeds begged for just one match. Just one would have sent the whole range up in flames. Not that I thought about doing it, it was just something I noticed, something other people would have denied thinking, though they did. I know they did.

I even got a job. I weeded. And although it was mean job, when I had my walkman on and a good song played I could stop thinking. And it was so nice to be able to just tune out

completely. It was simple justice - the people wanted grass, the weeds didn't belong, so I pulled them out. No ambiguities, grass was right weeds were wrong. And I was God.
All summer my friends and I repeated G.I. Joe's line "It's tough going, can you make it?" Someone tried to change it, halfway through the summer to casper the FRIENDLY ghost's question "Does your mother know I'm here?" But it never caught on, G.I. Joe was truth.

Deserted swing sways forlorn, footworn push-off patch flooded.

And then we all went to Wisconsin, and while I still missed everything, even my job, I liked it. It was different and so rustic. And then we saw the cows. I felt like everything was complete and I was scared because I knew it had to end. And I'd be shattered again. Reflected off all the differences still I didn't care anymore. I'd stopped smoking but the day I realized how temporary everything was I bought a pack. Two days before I left I took a six pack of Bud and the butts and sat on the back pier. The water was freezing, and the breeze snagged my face, I was cold and uncomfortable but determined not to leave until I'd finished both the beers and the cigarettes. And I did, throwing the butts into Lake Michigan. Hating the forest's, the farmland's, and the Lake's permanence I gathered up the beer cans. I went home and got sick.

## *Pencil Sketch by Sue Overslaugh*

## OF A BREAKING

*Flash, Flash!*
*I'm digging your grave,*
*bound in the arms of Minute-distance,*
*weary for the ride.*

*Like the breaking away of the dove from Noah,*
*searching freedom and a place to sit.*
*The animals wait eagerly,*
*their turn too will come.*

*Suspension drapes me in clear curtains;*
*Held and waiting for the landing-perhaps.*
*I couldn't cut loose my parachute, any slower.*
*One snap, I lunged headfirst to the ocean below.*

*I can see you rocking on the waves, miles away.*
*You are fighting yourself and wrecked by your strength.*
*Your warmth startles me,*
*the smell of the ocean mingles with mine.*
*Water splashes on my face and strangles me.*

*We are drowning. Drowning.*
*Our feet defy our gravity.*
*Like lead they break through the current*
*and pull us downward.*
*My hair trails behind me, weaving a pathway*
*to my grave.*

## *Pen and Ink by John Maher*

## *SONG OF THE SNOW QUEEN*

*Estrogenital, elemental*
*song she breathes as she speaks.*
*Punched by phallic fists*
*(Her) love leaks blooms of lip-blood.*
*Knee chains bind her steps,*
*wrench the tender from her grip,*
*mock her grieved fight.*

*Red ice burns her smooth cheeks,*
*saliva hardens her teeth*
*body rises, curves taught,*
*skin cracked and oozing blood.*

*The song of faith sets with dusk*
*withheld from dawn by bearded shadows.*
*Rip her skin till bone-white pus leaks out.*
*Time will unhinge the oppressor's door someday,*
*and she will scream on scrolls.*

*Mother, Sisters, Daughters fight*
*and such, some Men who cry.*
*Unite the fists and burn them all,*
*can you ally for this at least*
*Look at her.*

*Moon-loved soul of breasts and beaks*
*twist left to pierce and right to die.*
*The scars we hold from neck to thigh*
*navigate our world with faces white, legs red.*

*Scream-laugh cries in heart*
*sucked out. Spit out tomorrow tears.*
*Caress infant-ivory skin of all the parts we share.*
*Grasp each mind in forehead bare,*
*love her ugly entrails,*
*she fears only skin.*

## *THE WILL TO CHANGE*

*Old black light*
*beneath angry pores,*
*pushes tender bone through skin-curtains:*
*my burnt offerings to you.*

*(". . . but I can dig having lost it . . .," says Adrienne)*

*Talking of freedom and my cuts,*
*child's dream-chains burst through day.*
*So, night-time finds sterility instead.*

*I cannot stop flying, wing flux fulfills*
*my lone-loving . . .*
*Mind sinks and swerves with my body*
*when I glide in half-circles of leftover time.*

*("the artists talking of freedom in their chains")*

*Light striations blind me if challenged.*
*Can I sustain with torn sheaths,*
*to leave with few wounds?*

*Remember Mourning's calllous caw,*
*the Day-light voices' cry,*
*yet unrestrained and hoping,*
*in spite of my charred blood.*

*("still the blind will turns for its target")*

*I reek of it and lie alone,*
*shivers suck my joints.*
*Each un-clot spares a limb,*
*prod and pressed life-size again.*

*Pray that old black light renew,*
*to What?*
*A muscle turned your skin aside.*

## *THE WHITE TRAIN*

*Steel white cars link overkill*
*from Texas through barren land*
*along the coast fulfilled with war.*

*Pebbles crushed with future blood*
*beneath wheels of the White Train.*
*Rolls cool cargo anyway.*

*Reporter leaks the mission*
*of the hidden warhead's race.*
*Time-told hope and tears of freedom..*

*Vigil stand to give witness,*
*sleepy watch along the length*
*of the "patriotic" road.*

*Wyoming rests in silence*
*but for 100 freezing*
*demonstrators protesting there.*

*They thrash the train with flowers,*
*roses smashed on mystery white*
*which splatter bloody petals.*

*Later hours at Washington*
*250 welcome the threat*
*the machine brings with bursts and beeps.*

*Sweet song and prayer greets the foe*
*while the clergy kneel, enrobed*
*of wish unidentified.*

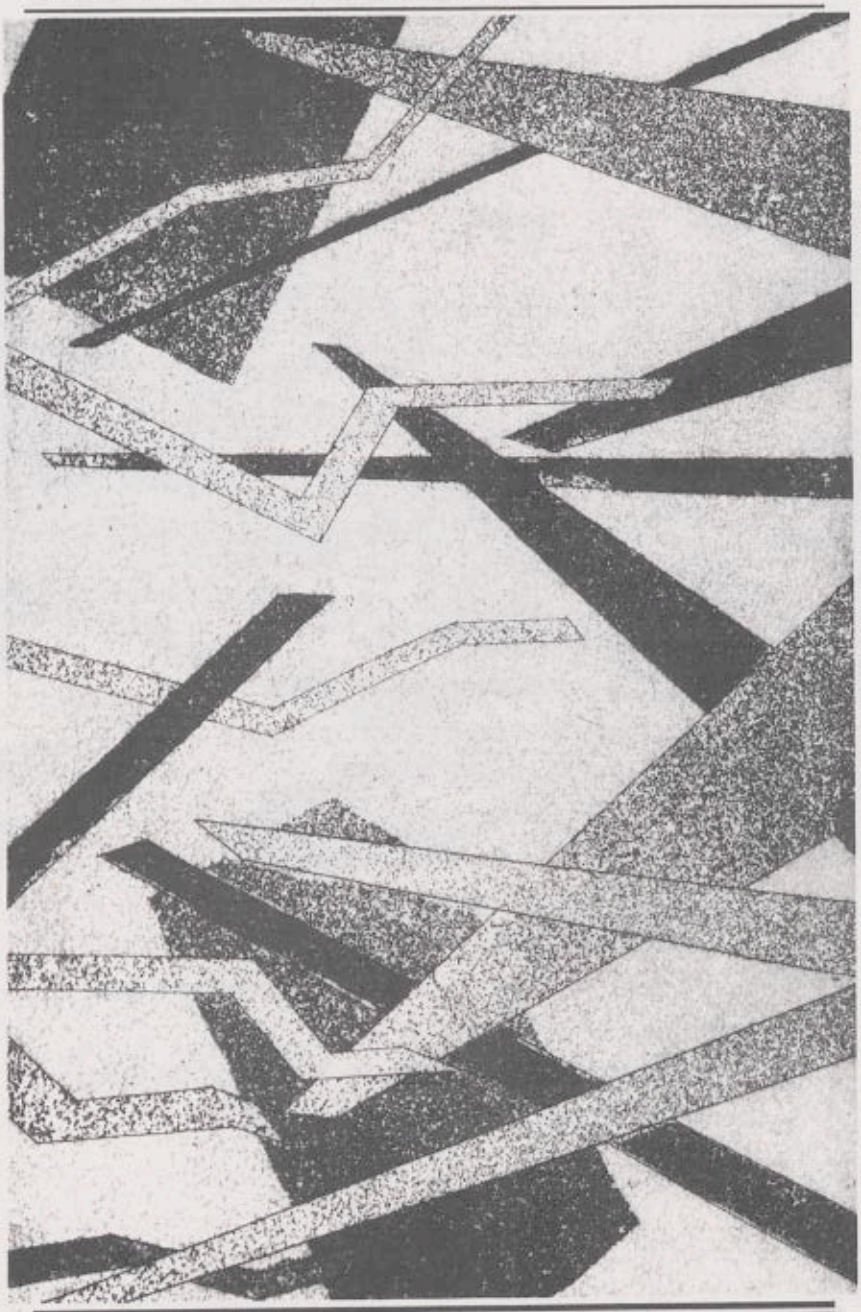
*Un-reluctant train reels on,*
*splinters chants and pleadings worth*
*much more than weapon's bloody threat.*

## *Etching by Sharon Panas*

## *TRUTH*

*He looked at her deep and real*
*Mystical galaxies curling, burning*
*Behind his muddy eyes.*
*Wonderment and curiousity*
*Led her soul to his,*
*The two intertwining like smoke of his cigarette.*
*He spoke with nonchalant bravado*
*His hands were thick and hard*
*And the eyes . . . the eyes.*
*Danger was beyond conception,*
*For hypnotized souls have no fear.*
*But the bruises that shaded*
*Her skin, soft and pale,*
*Spoke truth as the winter sun,*
*With morning madness,*
*Pointed hot fingers through the glass.*
*Wiping the grains of sleepy dreams from his lashes*
*He pulled down the shade, hiding white light*
*And she smiled as she dug deep into*
*His eyes.*

## *Etching by David Bernhard*



## THE STEEL BIRDS

*"The steel birds are growing again,"*
*I was told.*

*And I told Alder,*
*"If you listen, you*
*can hear their steel wings twitching . . .*
*There is no sound quite like*
*scrap metal beating wildly."*

*Only Alder was so bold*
*to tackle one.*
*I cried "No,"*
*but steel birds are not like us -*
*they will not comfort an open fist;*
*they shed grief of rust.*

*He put up a good fight*
*and they seemed almost as rustling leaves*
*tumbling on the fields*
*in the direction of wind*
*until its claw blades*
*sunk into neck flesh.*

*Alder lay twitching,*
*his head pecked at mud chunks*
*while his arms stretched reaching for clover*
*and he shrieked the same dry notes*
*endlessly.*

## *(UNTITLED)*

*I think it was day break,*
*the sun's aura still vivid,*

*when you cured me and said*
*I looked like a stranger*
*stranger than you've ever known*

*now in the new light or new arch or . . .*
*it's all so pointless*
*there was no question of purity*
*no soft prayers*
*and I sank into a corner*
*like a broken toy*
*discarded, but not abandoned*

*even gods must finally die, I resolved*
*and yet, some would seem to go too soon*
*and we are left empty*
*bonded in loss, groping still*
*for stranger comforts*

## *OPTICAL BEACH*

*Out there,*
*there is an optical beach*
*and crystal waves rising.*

*Peddlers follow sand tracks,*
*friction ripples on the water*
*and slicks back the sands.*

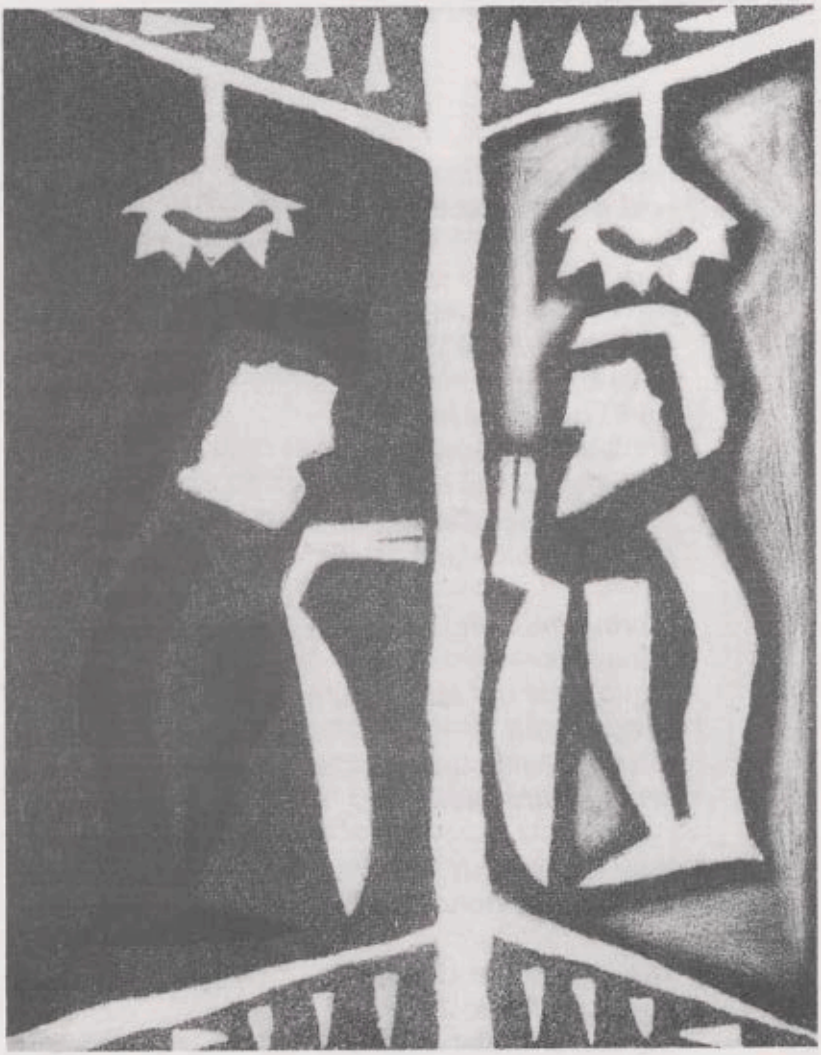
*And I am there too,*
*not like the placid monks*
*starving for the hunt*
*lounging in the shade on*
*withering blankets.*

*I wring my hands in tense waiting*
*waiting*
*waiting for the last trace of human debris*
*to come and*
*clutch the mustard sands*
*armed with servile flint*

*they will smash the lens;*
*they will be honored in stone.*

*The clouds are clouds*
*above the optical beach*
*the last trumpet coughs*
*and no names can change.*

## *Etching by Erik Lliason*



LOUIS A. LANNI

## A SUPPLEMENT TO:

## *THE JOURNAL OF DR. HENRY JEKYLL.*

*"There comes an end to all things; the most capricious measure is filled at last; and this brief condescencion to my evil finally destroyed the balance of my soul."*

*Robert Louis Stevenson*

I often walked through Regents Park as Hyde. Parks interested me. They are peaceful during the day, but at night they transform, molded by poverty and greed, into refuges of sin. Hyde took pleasure in walking in the light of the sun, unhindered by my conscience and quite content to pursue any fiendish goal that fluttered into his thoughts. His actions, cloaked in the random social graces of the impolite or downtrodden, were very sincere. I delighted in these doings as Hyde, and then, once transformed, cried out with the memory of them. If I seem to be confused as to whether I am Hyde or he is me, I offer this answer. Hyde is a part of me, but I must distinguish myself from him for he is not all of me. Not yet - for I am still able to write this statement.

It was in January and I was in the Park. Not in the pure form of Hyde, but as Jekyll, the mixture of good and evil; the complete essence of man. It was an especially fine January day, the kind that releases a person from the bondage of a month of clouds and cold.

I was on a bench, considering my situation with that of other men. The releases of Hyde from my soul had made me more active in the pursuit of good. It seems that Hyde's excursions quenched the evil part of me, and I, as Jekyll, be-

*(more)*

came impulsive in the need for goodness. I was a man of extremes, but still a man.

It was on this bench that a most terrifying event occurred. Indeed, it is the reason that I am now writing this account.

An attractive woman in her thirties stood near me. She was wearing a rather colorful dress which gave me the impression of a beautiful bird. A bright beautiful bird on a wonderful January day. I remember this very well for I could not stop staring at this lovely creature. I felt refreshed by the poetic thought she stimulated.

Suddenly, I became very aware of her shape. I stared at her breasts and hips and then her slender white neck. All the while, the park birds were singing and the children were laughing. I soon felt an incredible urge to expose this women's body. I wanted to rip her clothing to see that which I could not. Mere imagination, which had settled past thoughts of less intensity, would not do. I looked away for a moment, but soon turned my head back and continued staring. I prayed she would leave, but she was watching her children on the grass. I wanted her. It was both a violent and sexual need which I can only describe as pure selfishness. It was then that the pain and nausea set in. I knew the transformation was beginning. The pain was not nearly as acute as when I had used the potion. It was as if the old Hyde needed the chemicals to break the bars of his cell. Now he had tricked me, acquired the key, and after a minimal struggle, escaped into the night. The bird songs rang in my head. Once again I became younger, more light on my feet, and extremely evil. A quick look at my features solidified my convictions. I was Mr. Hyde.

As Hyde I felt a new love for that January day. I no longer enjoyed it as a window shopper enjoys a fine suit of clothes. It as me; the free spirit that is Mr. Hyde. He had gained the upperhand -and was now eyeing a certain woman with my black nefarious eyes.

◊

# JOY E. RUNYON

## *IN THE IRISH SEA*

*From an endless block of greenish black marble;*
*with this craft I thee cut.*
*Through through through - easy*
*with undulating breaths.*
*Immediately comes white*
*the ancient plaster*
*delicate curls of a lion's mane*
*active now, spilling*
*on each other with the wind*
*they disband into directionless footprints,*
*masses of frothy confusion.*
*Not so immediate is the distance,*
*where the white has gone back*
*to its dark purity;*
*but the lines don't stay; move*
*forward, grip themselves to stop,*
*descend into disappearance,*
*then reform to turn back upon themselves.*
*As far as I can see*
*this mock erasure continues*
*until I no longer know the material*
*I am working.*
*All I wanted was your image in stone;*
*with this craft I thee cut.*

## *LESSONS FOR MY NEPHEWS*

*I.*
*Handsome eyes will go a very long*
*way in this world, but never further*
*than your own vision.*

*II.*
*In learning to speak clearly*
*you may want to put pebbles in your mouth;*
*but make sure you have something worth saying*
*before you remove them.*

*III.*
*The dreams you now have are interrupted*
*every few hours with some sort of light;*
*fear not: the dreams you will later have*
*will stay until you chase them away.*

*IV.*
*Every man has a duty to comfirm*
*a trust in the world, with his limbs;*
*his heart, and his mind: all*
*grow firm in this peace.*

*V.*
*Bid yesterday goodby with one hand full*
*of today's rich and simple fabrics,*
*and the other caressed by the wind of tomorrow.*

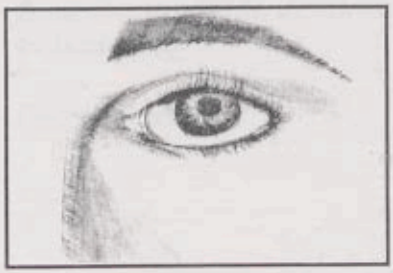
*VI.*
*Your mothers were the first people*
*to swaddle you in white;*
*let them never see you shrouded thus again.*

## MASTER

*The cracked ceiling, when it swallows*
*your word, demands the end of this tuition.*
*We can walk away,*
*drawing on smoky fear,*
*smelling cancer, the kind*
*that pressed hard against heart*
*centuries ago: a defect*
*the builder passed on to this ceiling,*
*the root of heaven, the root of all -*
*Eve'll testify to that, apples bulging*
*in her throat, her man condemned*
*to their generational choke.*

*But who made her? You*
*tug and wring your fingers. Would you*

*have my hands formed thus,*
*fingers pulled from pods of clay,*
*spaces between for yours to hook on whim?*
*And if I turned an empty hand*
*to you, blind man?*
*Might you then see? Your fingers*
*go to the hem of your own cloak.*
*You, smooth-masked - tell me the secrets*
*that fly desperate out of a drowning man's bubbles.*
*I too grow weary of waking.*



## *Etching by Sharon Panas*

## THE SPACE

*I know, mom, there are spaces,*
*gaps of indecision*
*and sometimes lost names.*

*Marette asked me once*
*when speaking so routinely*
*of her children, her job,*
*the feeding, the hospital . . .*
*"Am I starting to sound*
*like mom?"*

*But when* ***you*** *ask*
*in the introduction of one*
*of today's epic masterpieces*
*of Rambo cinematography*
*"Why did he have to die?"*
*I see how space is defined:*

*The vastness of hope*
*from unattainable distances*
*In-humanity*

*Fear not Marette.*

## *SEARCHING FOR THAT JAZZ*

*That cry, that whining fright*
*Could barely drown it out*
*Those trills of passing jacks*
*And a rapping, rickety bus.*
*Alas! Oak street's in sight.*
*Squeal-hush and I'm out about*
*To see what my day lacks . . .*
*Hey man, no need to cuss*
*The beach is just outa sight.*
*That sound is not a mouse,*
*Girl's woes echo through that*
*Tunnel which calls for your fuss . . .*
*I tried to stay in spite*
*Of children who cry out*
*Of chatting bikes attacks*
*Of a howling whistle lush*
*Of whirring frisbee bites*
*Of a foreign family bout*
*And passing pud's bull flack.*
*But, past even the dog who sneezes*
*Water rolls over here*
*Where whisps of pantlegs brought me*
*Over sheets of silk or sand*
*Where fog horns blow to sea*
*And these white-haired men believe*
*In appraisal of my land*
*Check mate! Ain't that the jazz.*

## *COAL*

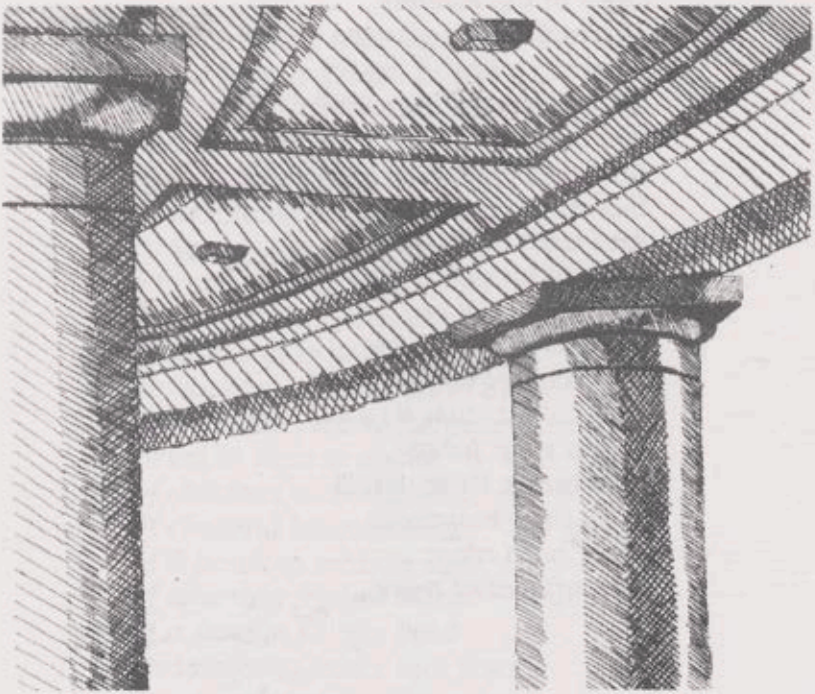
*I once knew a man . . .*
*And the coalminers labor*
*Deep in the tunnels*
*The manmade caverns*
*Snaking miles of tracks*
*Carrying machines and explosives*
*Solemnly beneath what lives.*
*And they pick at the individual*
*Stones of coal mined.*
*And with each pick*
*And with each explosion*
*The dust thickens . . .*
*His world was dark . . .*
*They collect coal to burn*
*And collect dust that burns*
*Burns their lungs*
*And burns their minds*
*Until they inevitably*
*Must burn also . . .*
*He suffocated there.*

---

## *GENTLE MAN*

*Gentleman lives on a bathroom door with the same spite toward arrogance of which I am full.*

## *Etching by Joe Mauro*



# WILL COOK

## BATTLE

Having a cold during the hot humid days of summer is a taste of death. Death itself is the only condition more miserable than lying awake with fever and a stuffed-up head in the still air on a stiff sticky bed. There I lay, hoping that sleep would arrive somehow to temporarily relieve the suffering. The bedroom door and window were both open in an attempt to encourage circulation but it seemed as if the muggy molecules of could not pass through the screen.

Just as I decided that my pendulum of luck must be passing the lowest point of its curve, someone lengthened the string. I saw the shadow. It was a flutter. It was barely discernible in the dim glow cast by the night-light in the hall. Maybe it was a trick being played on my eyes, after all I was ill. Another flutter. It was no trick. It was bigger than a mosquito. It was bigger than a moth. I lay uncomfortably for a moment vainly telling myself it was not what I knew it was. It was a bat! I was sick and alone in the house with a bat.

My mind turned its attention from battling the germ which infected the body toward battling the bat which infected the dwelling. What a mess! What to do? Was it still upstairs? Was in now downstairs? I had to find it. I cautiously arose and carefully crossed the room to turn on the light. Sight was my advantage. His advantage was flight as well as the threat of his bite. I crept down the hall flicking up each switch in each room, closing each door after a short inspection in search of the invader. He was not upstairs. The search must continue.

I descended toward the darkness downstairs. Step by step feeling three huge heartbeats for every long drawn breath. As my first foot found the landing, the villian suddenly swopped. "Hit the deck!" snapped the reflexes. Instantly the bat disappeared. I lit up the living room. It was not here. Through the archway into the dining room. It was not there. Around the kitchen. It was not there. It flew in from the entrance hall, flapped overhead and frantically escaped into the last room: the library. I jumped at my chance and slammed the door.

The beast was captured. I now had time to plan. But my body chose quickly to dominate my mind with ungentle reminders of its illness. The heart thumped while sweat glands secreted and the muscles, lacking the adrenaline that had been powering them, now felt exhausted. Determination drove me on.

*(more)*

I decided to inspect the room from outside relying on the windows which would protect me from the prisoner. It was now very late but it was still hot out in the back-yard. Out in the warm summer field the lightning bugs accented each measure of music played by the crickets. Leaves drooped on the trees in the thick night air. I peered into the library through the picture window. My eyes scanned the interior of the room until they noticed a small lump of grey fur nestled in the corner where the pane of glass meets the wooden frame of the window. How could this motionless mouse have that huge wingspan? This tiny mammal might have been longing for sleep as much as I was. The outdoor openness began to unclose my mind. If we could only trade places, then he could be out in his usual environment and I could be inside mine. It was not that easy. The windows were open but the screens could not be lifted from outside.

Back inside and feeling the weight of illness and the latness of the hour, I resolved hazily to kill the bat. After all which did I value more, my health or that of the bat? I reasoned in an attempt to raise my wrath and thus my taste for vengeance. Dressed in an armor of heavy clothing from a hat on my head to boots on my feet, armed with a strong straw broom I entered the room. The layers of clothing soaked up the sweat and my heartbeat echoed as I held my breath and approached the creature. I paused when I was within reach but he remained undisturbed. It seemed he knew the solution I had settled on and wished for it to be over quickly as did I. I stood a short time for a long while. It was like standing on the edge of the diving board as a small child. It was not what I thought of as being poised for the kill but somehow I lunged, driving the bristles into the corner. He squeeked higher yet softer than a violin. I slowly pushed the broom down the picture window and then quickly sideways toward the adjacent open window. As I released the broom the tiny animal fell to the sill and squirmed like a beetle on its back and in one swift movement I shut the window traping him by one wing. His small jaw opened wide baring his miniature teeth. I winced, clubbing him as a boy clubs a fish that flaps on the too dry deck. They he lay still and I stood quietly.

I brushed his featherless, featherlight corpse into a brown bag, carried it outside through the backyard, through the field of crickets, out into the woods. I looked back at the house with all the lights still on and my head felt more stuffed-up and I felt more sick and tired and hot.

## SAVIOR

*The ablest of them*
*Sits, half-slouched,*
*Upon the quicksand ottoman.*
*Her torn jeans*
*And limp, earthen hair*
*Scream to the world*
*A self-confidence*
*Of no small proportions.*
*This creature*
*Believes that the messiah*
*Has arrived*
*And is currently contemplating*
*Whether to save the human race*
*Or, better yet,*
*To make further observations*
*From the vantage point*
*Of a too-soft ottoman.*

## *Etching by David Bernard*

## BANCHO BANCHEWSKY

### Prelude

*One Saturday, a man, i think 84,*
*an Opera coach who lived on 56th,*
*attended the matinee performance*
*of Verdi's Macbeth at the*
*Metropolitan Opera House.*

*During the first intermission, he sat on the*
*edge of the balcony and was asked to sit down;*
*He sat down*

*During the second intermission, he sat again on*
*the edge of the balcony and was asked again to*
*sit down; he threw himself into the orchestra*
*section, grazing one lady.*

*For about an hour, administrators babbled and*
*finally, cancelled the rest of the performance.*
*The attenders were*
*promised tickets to another performance, of course,*
*at some other time.*

*That's all i know, for that is what my grandmother told me*
*on the Saturday's tomorrow.*

*White-faced attenders*
*burrowed home with steared silence*
*and what about Kord, Burchinal, Polozov/ Ramey as well*

*(continued)*

*as the orchestra, chorus and other roles in the Opera?*
*They'll be back as well as have-to, i think it's in the contract.*
*And who cleaned it up?*

i.

*In the presence of the recessing congregation,*
*Bancho spinned a superficial self-battered presence*
*that continues to act without canes or guns, but with*
*a daub of art which enlightens the terrific trials ahead of me*

*Plunging into a translucent wall outside of Dante's Inferno*
*resembles the unlasped purity of his thoughts*
*while the no-lawful subvention of souls & his*
*chaffed-self flies the*
*laxen, unflappable aviatoring Abraxus*
*toward the orchestra section, finally*
*crescendoing against three seats*

*Then there was milt-second silence (16th note, at least),*
*which was immediately supplemented by roaring shrieks*
*cries, some lies, but no applauses or hi!!!s*

*Someone else says 'something'?*
*and remarkably a smoky laugh of blood*
*split sucks unnurtured nipples*
*While, I docile & liverated, guard*
*unto the primal presentation,*
*teary-eyed & trained*

*Rezin-ess eyes develop pain as*
*well as the absolute nidification of*
*the world, no restitution desired or maybe I will*

*(continued)*

*while the whisper of his eyes*
*longed for the school-time recess to end*
*and to sit down and watch Macbeth get off-ed in everyone's presence*

*NO triage needed for Bancho, the Don Quioxiote of the afternoon, for the Mimicing malignities felt/a rose-white death*

### *The Composer*

*You, nimbus, a shining divine,*
*in Lohengrim or Don Giovanni, adequate? - (They are not in the epetoir of the 1987-1988 season, nil)*

*Where are Wagner and Mozart, the disenchanted and shy? - I usually*
*see them together in the audience listening to the competition,*
*sometimes with Beethoven, sometimes with Bizet and once in a while,*
*Puccini, but I suppose they can't make every performance*

*My mistake. They swagger in with cigars and cognacs,*
*bumping into ushers and other lost individuals,*
*in order to "pick up the pieces" with*
*pen & crumbled Paper in hands*
*w*
*riting the 'proper' accompaniment*
*to save the Met from the legacy of Guiessepe*

*A dab of his blood*
*succinctly determines*
*the quills' friendliness*

*(continued)*

*as it fondles the paper,*
*residuing silence with sweetness*

*I and stagger, and cough, and wonder*
*and smell your plume-blue smile*
*overflowing with the same moment*
*that Columbians enjoy both soccer & badmiton*

*However, Mozart and Wagner are too light for such a deed,*
*let it be Guiessepe, apogee of romanticism and opera,*
*who leaves the pulpit and lets his nose guide him to the*
*'a-pex of silence' as the alpine atmosphere of the Met*
*progresses into an aura of absolved disruption and excude*

*Guiessepe, caress his lascivious, off-color hand,*
*and I, while sweat roles down my thigh and then another,*
*will appeal to your "live" courage that you*
*displayed on the broadcast of "*
*Saturday Afternoon At The Met" whose recording*
*barometer neglected to register your benign*
*respect towards Guiessepe, the a'more of dramatic en-*
*dings*

*Brunnhilde (on next month) would be proud of you*
*except you are as real as she is imaginary*
*to the exact intention of her steed*

*However, I listen to the clatter and it is*
*your piece, it's cheeky finite brilliance*
*which nobody wanted to hear or listen*
*of a piano*

*It speakes human & me & paper*

# HILARY LYNCH

*ON THE CRUCIFIX, KITCHEN PROSE AND GUTTER RHYMES:*

***Images of a boy growing up.***

The sun was burning the fields.

It was a beautiful day and the arrogance of the young was total with the sheer bursting confidence that comes from innocence.

He was the essence of a four year old boy, with an open perfect face not yet molded by society and its rules, a face that didn't understand the concept of evil.

He was an animal, artist, mystic and clown as he ran next to the water. The blue water rushed over the rocks, turning white in the sun and the seagulls, flashing white, traveled in a spiral pattern. Their calls rang like bells in the wind, calling and echoing, mocking and enticing.

A familiar smell came with the setting sun, a lacing of hay with mud, and pollen with oyster shells, and crab remains and the stalks of grass. A soft rising breeeze suspended it, making little waves.

The reflection of the water lapped on his cheek, moving gently, weaving a pattern of light across his jawbone, touching his mouth.

The stained glass was beautiful as the dusk illuminated it, making glow. The light, changing as it came in contact with the glass, rested on the plaster leaves atop the column, now red, now brown, playing with the leaves, changing them.

A single candle, hanging from the ceiling, burned in the corner. In front of the light, illuminated, was a silver cross, and on it, the image of a man, suffering and in great pain.

*(more)*

The light attracted him, and he didn't resist.

It shone on the fair hair of the little boy as he watched the dust drifting through the soft ray. His shadow was small and taking a dislike to it , he moved under the light so it couldn't change him.

But his image, reflected, was strange and twisted, an imperfection out of place in the cold symmetry of the cross.

◊ ◊ ◊

Under the cross, he played with his marbles.

They were very pretty as they rolled with the light catching their colors and shiny surface giving them an abstract quality that was pleasing.

The echo bounced off all the shiny objects, returning only after it had gone as far as it could go, telling all.

◊ ◊ ◊

"You don't think, do you?"

There was no answer to that.

All was quiet. He wondered if The God was there.

◊ ◊ ◊

The colors moved, changing, becoming paler as they slowly receded, turning the rose sunset into blood, leaving only the corner in light.

*(more)*

Abandoned, the marbles rolled. The fading light wouldn't play with them anymore and they were, again, only marbles.

Rows of names were scratched into the stained glass, all meaningless, all the same, using kitchen prose and gutter rhyme to sum up a man's life. Colors changing, molding, becoming one, becoming three, alighting on the flag, changing it, shaping it, molding it.

The puddles, taking each golden ray of sun and twisting it, bending it, refracting it, were calm under colorful ducks.

A bright orange umbrella crossed the street followed by a red one, clashing horribly. Under it, a baby gurgled and laughed, drumming with dimpled hands against his mothers hair.

Looking too small for the red umbrella was a little boy.

He had a blankness of expression that was absolute, a cynicism unbecoming his youth. But it was the eyes that caught and held your attention. The sun seemed to surprise a combination of sophistication and boyishness, a battle.

A decision made was evident in their lighting up as they rested on a rock.

The rock was flat, abstract and completely unmusical. The puddle was shiny, a pattern of light weaving across its surface. The sound dodged raindrops, calling and echoing, enticing, and with, that smile, like a piece of crystal, delicate, brittle, rare.

◊ ◊ ◊

"You don't think, do you?"

There was no answer to that. It wouldn't help to say what he thought.

He reveled in the thought, seeing the gray evening through the door, the puddles shiny in the street. It was a

*(more)*

gigantic revenge, plotted by gleeful schemeing people. They seemed to crowd into the room, laughing and joking like old friends reunited for a special occasion. The air of festivity seemed to grow as the first rock was thrown, followed by many more. He could feel resistance setting in like arthritis, stiffening his whole body.

Still and unyielding as one of the fallen tree trunks that supply protection to the defenseless creatures of the forest, to the butterflys that crowd in their hollows and to fragile flowers that emerge from their bark, then remain clinging - tenaciously, as only the delicate can cling - during the whole period of their brief lifetime he sat, waiting for it to end.

◊ ◊ ◊

The wetness deepened the colors of things, making them gaudy and garish as if the rain had been droplets of color. Cobwebs of feelings, half sensed, as if from a long time ago, touched him. He watched the petals and leaves bend under the droplets of water that came from the sky, and later, the trees. The drops fell looking like sparkling jewels and then shattered when they met the hard reality of the street.

All was changed.

A pale sun had set and the lamps had been lit, one by one until now, picked out by the embankment lights, the river was a curving band of darkness and the smell of the cold evening grass floated elusively in the air.

A horseshoe crab lay at the water's edge, waiting to die.

The light of the lamps sought out the liquid surface for reflection but found it in the blue eyes.

◊

# JEFF BERNSTEIN

## *OFF OF 'TURTLE ISLAND'*

*When I read about the voices of the earth*
*I think of how I have heard them*
*in only a young spirit*
*How in older spirits we strain and yearn*
*to hear the Earth speak*
*water and fire speak*
*and in our yearning make them Man'speak*
*Man'speak knows no limits in stories*
*only in truths*
*Rock crags and embers*
*have spoke to me as loudly as*
*glacier glare and mountains*

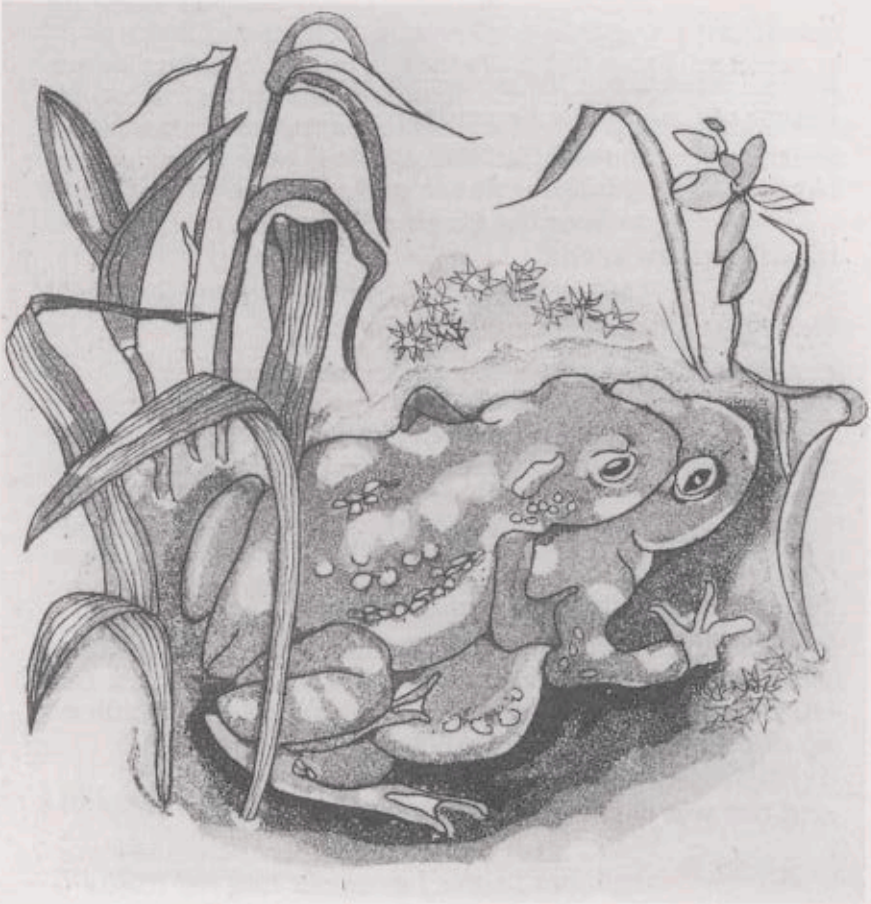
*Indian pipes, and fire orange newts*
*have told me of*
*the eternity, nutrition and softness*
*or rotting birch logs*

*My eyes have been opened*
*by thundering runoff rivers*
*my sight aligned by rows of pines*
*and the soft smell of their underfoot needles*

*but few people have ever told me truths*
*that needs no meanings*
*Small truths which speak*
*to every question with the humility*

*(continued)*

## *Etching by Ann Garod*



*of being finite and undreaming*
*fire red and rotting warm*
*ice blinding or peak shadowing*

*I think it is the sadness of*
*wanting to be soft like birch and newt*
*and hard like the mountains and embers*
*that makes us lose the small truths*

*We are thoughts*
*not hard or soft*
*but only big and small*
*too big for the forests*
*and too small for the logs.*

◊

## *RAGDOLL*

*They called her tragedy, for her innocence*
*and her eyes were always fixed wide*
*wonder black and staring*
*hungry for impressions*
*like baby eyes*

*she loved to sit barefoot*
*in stairwells*
*and bang her shoes against the walls*
*listening and rocking in ecstasy*
*at the echoes.*

*after a while*
*they allowed her this pleasure,*
*it didn't hurt anyone else*

*still they did restrain her quite frequently*
*to keep her from pulling out her hair in clumps*
*as she was known to do,*
*when she wasn't trying to carve numbers*
*into the flesh of her thighs or forearms*

*they kept sharp or hard objects away from her*
*leaving her with few toys*

*(continued)*

*her favorites were the shiny cloths or stickers*
*they let her play with*
*and her rag doll.*

*It hurt them most of all*
*when they would see her slap herself rythmically*
*cooing and smiling,*
*all the while looking up and off*
*with those wondering eyes*

*they never understood*
*how she felt life, in her way*
*that her pleasure*
*was noise, sensation and pain*
*just as theirs was*

*if they did*
*they might have envied her, her world without complexities*
*her wonder at the warmth of her own blood spilling*
*at the warmth of her ragdoll.*

## *APPLETREES*

*Blossom born of upper boughs*
*there would be an added sweetness in the taste of it*
*soft spots for idleness on the branch*
*hanging*
*as if waiting for a young boy*
*to pluck her*
*with a stretch*
*and the danger*
*of a bit of a jump*
*on a rain moistened morning in later autumn*

*A few bites later*
*filled, he dropped it*
*and for a moment*
*a pigment draining eddy*
*was staid and unwound*
*as he smiled that front-toothless smile*
*to the plum line plunk*
*of fruit dropping in rivers.*

## *FREQUENT MODULATIONS:*

### *Around the dial in 80 seconds*

*I changed the station and heard*
*the same background noise, nothing came in clearly*

*not*

***95.6***
*Dr. Carlsburg the nuclear physicist and his discussion*
*with the author of "The Myth of Soviet Conventional Supremacy"*

*I tried to tune in but the signals wavered*

***onto***

*a reading of inmate poetry*
*on lightning executions and the self*
*sustaining nature of cheap labor, income, and*
*consumption on the continuing existence of institutions*

***98.3***
*"Everybody did think somebody*
*would do*
*what anybody could*
*and nobody would"*

*but no the lights didn't dim*
*at my house "when little joey was lit up"*
*but the reception went crackly*

***onto***

*(continued)*

***101.4***
*and I too felt the need to say*
*"No devil! I will not give up my god given soul*
*in the pursuit of blood lusts and sin.*
*I will not exchange my*
*heavenly right for eternal torture in the fiery pits of Hell!*
*I Praise The Father! The Son!*
*and I Praise the most holy Ghost!"*

*There was more static and nothing came in clear*
*for anybody*
*or me*
*or little joey*
*not for Dr. Carlsburg,*
*somebody, The Righteous Reverend Bobby Joe Creedy,*
*not even for*
*the author of "The Myth of Soviet*
*Conventional Supremacy"*
*nor Ronald Regan*
*(our most conservative president in recent years)*
*but we all heard*

***103.5***
*"Get back*
*Get back*
*Get back to where you once belonged*
*Get back Joe"*

*the lights had already dimmed*
*and the boys in the yard . . .*
*they knew what was going down.*