



The Idol - Spring



Spring

1974

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Competition Issue

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The content of this issue is the result of a writing competition sponsored by the *Idol*—an idea partly stemming from a desire to include the campus in the publication and a curiosity on our parts to see what interest writing holds for the campus community. We were pleased by the overwhelming response the contest drew. Over twenty-five pieces of fiction together with nearly sixty poems were considered. Needless to say, the process of narrowing down, and finally selecting the best was a necessarily difficult one, particularly given the inevitable differences between six human judges. To reinforce our powers of objectivity we asked those entering to submit material under pseudonyms. In many cases these names were as enjoyable as the works they represented, so we are sharing them with you in the table of contents.

We would like to thank each person who took the trouble to lay their work on the line in this contest.

And Now the Winners....

FICTION: MARK MINDEL

POETRY: STANLEY WISKOSKI

AND

DANIEL J. VALENTI

First Prize for Fiction

Mark Mindel

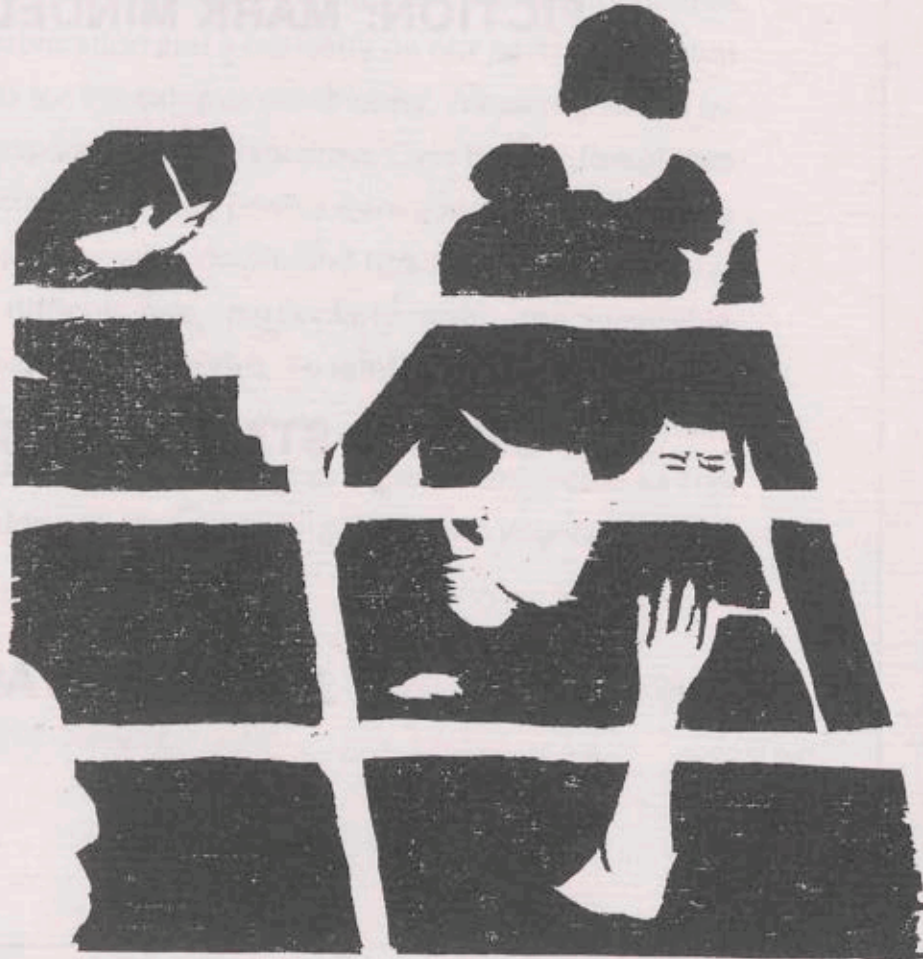
Guy hung up the phone and stood for a moment, rubbing the corner of his eye with his little finger. The God-damn bitch! Hung up the phone the way she did everything else. Like you had nothing to do with it. Didn't even have the decency to ask you to ask him to call her back. "I'll call him back then. Tell him. Bye." Didn't even leave room for the polite responses. The bitch. He picked up the stub of chewed yellow pencil that Stu had tied to the phone and doodled with it over the message pad. . He drew a naked girl with a bloody knife pointed at her under the row of one-legged chickens someone had drawn during another phone call; then he crossed everything out with heavy dark lines that left an impression on several pages behind the one on which he had drawn.

He looked around the room. The heavy corduroy curtains Madeline had made for the apartment were still drawn, but enough light was coming in through the gap between them to inform Guy that he'd been asleep for a long time. Almost two hours, he guessed. . He wrote "Madeline" on the phone pad and circled it slowly. He shook his head several times. . "Christ!" he said, crossed out the name, and wrote "Jill Called, Will Call Back" across the bottom of the pad in small printed letters. The little bitches always call back, he thought.

He walked across the room to the couch where he had been sleeping when the ringing of the phone awakened him. The long homemade

mosaic coffee table, pushed against the couch, was covered with used kleenexes, Superman comics, Playboy magazines, various cold pills

Madeline had brought over from the dorm last night, sticky spoons, and a Cheracol bottle. Guy groaned as he lay down on the couch. He rubbed his



eyes and sniffed in hard; a thin line of mucous disappeared into his nostril. She made everything seem so rotten. Just talking to her made him feel sicker than he already was. "Stinking little bitch," he said aloud. He rubbed the bridge of his nose and tried to decide what Jill had wanted. Little bitchy Jill with her pale skin white like flour, and her big teeth white like a shiny new car, and a little pale freckles all over her nose. Once she had long black hair, but she cut it all off until it was shorter than a boy's. She looked like a little chink from the back now. The bitch. Why did she call Stu anyway? Maybe she was tired of sleeping around with Mickey Jaffey and his all fairy band. Or maybe they were tired of sleeping with her. That was more likely, Guy thought. You got tired of her type after a while.

He went into the kitchen and started to heat water for tea. When the kettle started to whistle, he leaned over and tried to breathe in the steam to see if it would clear his nose. He remembered how his mother had made him stand over the bathtub with the hot water tap on full blast when he was little and couldn't breathe well. The thin line of steam coming from the water kettle burned his nose and made his eyes tear up. He swore and poured out water for the tea, trying to remember whether Stu had a date tonight. If he didn't, and he called Jill back, which he probably would do even though the bitch hadn't asked him to, then Jill would probably wind up staying here overnight. If there was one thing Guy didn't want in the house tonight, it was Jill. He wouldn't mind if Stu brought over one of the little freshmen girls he'd been dating recently. They went home at twelve

thirty, at least. They were cute too, cute and nice. If anyone talked about staying over or anything that sounded vaguely like sex to them, they giggled and tried to look knowing but only succeeded in looking naive and healthy. like apples and sewing boxes, or something you'd find in your mother's kitchen. Guy tried to picture Jill in his own mother's kitchen, but she'd be out of place there or in any kitchen. She was dirty. Both hygienically and otherwise. Her neck. Her hands; but of course she was proud of her dirty hands. She was a fine arts student and lived close to the elements of art and all that. He liked cute, giggling girls. Girls like Madeline. They turned him on.

Jill didn't exactly turn him on, but she affected him tremendously; fascinated him really. She made him feel the way he felt when he saw an old bum having convulsions in the street; he hated the sight but he couldn't force his attention away from it. He had slept with her once, and he especially hated to think about that. Sometimes he thought about it for long periods of time without really realizing what he was doing. He despised himself when that happened. He hated remembering. She was hard; bony and narrow. Her hips were like boys', and her breasts were small and pointed with hard little pushed out nipples like a twelve-year-old's. He hadn't even had to urge her, or seduce her. She'd done everything. She was such a bitch. She undressed them both. She took off his clothes first, then her own, then she pushed herself up tight against him so he could feel all her hardness. Her hipbones were like stones against his. Later he decided that lying on top of

her would have been like lying on the ground when he hunted with his brother out west. No matter what you did, it was never comfortable. He hadn't been on top of her, though. Everyone always talked about how some girls crawled all over you, but Guy had never had it happen to him until Jill. When she had gotten on top, Guy had been interested, but repelled. She moved like an animal. It wasn't really that she did anything so different, but she was so grabby. With other girls, he'd had to kind of guide their hands, and they'd kind of resisted and finally touched him, and if they liked it, it was only after a while, the way it was supposed to be. Jill just barged ahead doing what she wanted, she even pushed his hands where she wanted them. And when it was over, she cried out, as if she'd been punched in the stomach. Guy had felt like slapping her.

What the Hell did the bitch want with Stu, anyway? Guy gulped down the tea which had already grown too cool to do his throat any good. He put his head down on the kitchen table and waited for Madeline to come. She was a little late, which was unusual.

When Madeline came he felt better. She made him some more tea and told him to be sure to drink it while it was still hot. Then she took a little bottle of Vicks Rub out of her purse and giggled.

"Hey, that's for kids," Guy said. He tried to push her away, more in fun than in seriousness. It was cute, he thought, the way she babied him. He took off his shirt and lay on the couch. He liked the feeling the combination of Vicks Rub and Madeline's fingers gave him. He tried to pull her down to him, he could tell she had expected

him to, but she giggled and held her arms rigid. "Stu will be home!" she whispered, as if announcing nuclear war. He laughed. She was funny, he thought. Like a soft, warm baby. He blew a kiss at her, and she blushed.

When Stu opened the door of the apartment, he was grinning. He had a bottle in his hand. "Old Doc Stu is about to concoct a miracle cure—all for lumps, bumps, mumps, measles, finals, colds, and even. . ." he paused and closed his eyes, "that most delicate of all ills—the dreaded lady troubles." Guy laughed and then looked uneasily at Madeline, who giggled and covered her mouth.

"You're gonna love this," Stu said, ignoring the look Guy had given Madeline. "My grandpa taught me the secret of The Great Cure as he lay on his deathbed. He was ninety-nine years old and he owed it all to this."

Madeline's brow puckered. "I don't think Guy should have anything like a drink right now, Stu. He still has a fever. Maybe we should just let him rest for a while."

Stu had already opened the liquor and was pouring it into a shaker. "Oh, yeah," he said, "well, he'll sleep for sure now."

"No, but. . ." Madeline began.

"Can it, Madeline, huh? We're big kids now."

Madeline sighed and sat on the edge of the couch watching Stu work. She put her head on Guy's forehead. "I think you feel a little cooler now," she said softly.

Stu turned around and laughed. "That doesn't say a hell of a lot for you, Maddie. Maybe we'll give you a little sip of the great cure too."

"I don't want any," Madeline said. She spoke a little petulantly, Guy had

to admit, but not really so much so that Stu needed to go into one of his acts.

"All right, then," Stu said, sticking out his bottom lip and stamping his foot, "you needn't have any." He proceeded to stomp his way into the kitchen.

Madeline picked up one of the Playboy's and started leafing through it. Guy wished Madeline and Stu would try to get along a little better. Neither of them was anything like the impression each gave the other. Madeline never said too much about Stu to Guy. Guy and Stu were good friends, and Madeline wasn't the type to interfere with friends. Stu, however, said more than enough about Madeline to make up for her reticence. He called her group of girlfriends "The Cherry Orchard" and referred to Madeline as "Madam Lin, your little cherry blossom." Sometimes he even called Madeline, "Madam Lin" when he was talking to her. Guy guessed she attributed that to Stu's general inanity; she never asked him what it meant.

Stu came out of the kitchen looking pleased with himself. "I'm warming it up. It'll be ready for you in a second. He glanced at the Playboy on Madeline's lap. "Hey, did you guys get a look at the playmate?" He grabbed the magazine away from Madeline and flipped through it to the fold out. "Shit," he said, "she must be last month's." He tossed the magazine on the coffee table. "Anyway," he went on, "she's this real small-boobed piece. You can't really see 'cause they've got her in this cowboy vest thing, no blouse or anything, just the vest. But the body—it's just like Jill's. Honest to God! It's amazing. Tight

and hard and everything. She's dressed up to be a cowgirl or something. She's got this whip in her hand and this look like she's gonna have you the way she wants you. Cruel-sex. Like Jill, you know?" He looked at Guy.

Guy nodded. "Yeah," he said lamely.

There was an awkward silence. "She called you, by the way," Guy said finally.

"Are you kidding?" Stu laughed. "What a riot. I just got myself all hepped up for her. Maybe she'll come over."

Madeline stayed the afternoon. It made Guy uneasy knowing Jill was coming for dinner. If he wasn't so sick, he could have taken Madeline for a ride and they could have eaten at one of the little places along the road. Or he could have gone back to her dorm and had dinner with her there. But now she'd heard Stu inviting Jill for dinner at the apartment, so she'd probably expect them to all eat together. She liked it when Stu had a date and they all made dinner together. She said it was like a family meal. She was sweet, no matter what Stu said. She was sitting in the big arm chair with a quilt over her drawn up knees, leafing through his Russian economics book (his minor) as if it were a *Ladie's Home Journal*. She kept calling out little pieces of information she thought would interest him as if saying "Look, dear, a recipe for shish kabob—your favorite!" He decided she'd hate Jill. She should. Little bitches were an insult to girls like Madeline.

He kept getting more and more uneasy as the day went on. He thought maybe it was the cold that was mak-

ing him feel so rotten. What in the name of God would they all talk about if Jill and Stu stayed home all evening? Madeline liked to play games, Scrabble and Monopoly, and talk about her friends and who everyone on campus was going out with. Jill was always trying to get everyone into a radical discussion. She'd say something like "We've got to legalize marijuana," or "It stinks the way this country handles the abortion laws." Her ideas were good, and it was exciting to argue with her, but it was the way she spoke, Guy decided. He always felt she wanted you to ask her if she'd had an abortion or if she was on something. If you did, she'd just laugh and tell you she thought you were a real kook.

It was six-thirty when Jill came. Guy was lying on the couch, listening to Madeline and Stu in the kitchen arguing about what was the best way to broil steak and toss salad. Jill walked in without knocking and stared at Guy as if wondering what he was doing there. She made him nervous. Even if you knew Jill and were expecting her, it was funny to have your roommate's date just walk in as if she owned the place. Her eyes moved around the room slowly. "You sick?" she said without looking at him.

"Got a cold."

She smiled a big, wide smile that showed all her teeth. She was such a little girl and she had a huge mouth. It was really incongruous, Guy thought. Not really ugly or anything, just strange. You had to notice. Stu thought she looked like one of those weird models in the New York Times fashion supplements. Her smile lasted longer than most people's. The more she smiled, the more you stared,

and the more amused she got. Her smile would stretch until she'd laugh as if you were the funniest thing she'd seen in years. He wondered suddenly if she even remembered that she'd slept with him once. Maybe she laughed that way at people she'd slept with. He tried to remember how she'd been before, but she was already laughing, and he couldn't think.

"A cold!" she said. It was as if he'd just delivered the world's greatest punchline. "Oh, God!" She walked over to him and tried to see into his mouth. "Open up and say ahh," she commanded. He started to obey, and then realized how foolish he'd look. She confused him. "Why don't you take off your jacket," he said.

"Why don't you open your mouth and say ahh?" She was standing so close to him he could feel her breath on his face and see how dilated her eyes were. She doubled over and laughed. "You're a real kook, Guy. You really are."

Stu peered around the corner of the living room. "What's so funny?" he asked.

"This kook won't open up and say ahh for me. I can't make house calls for uncooperative patients, you know."

Stu went along with the game. "Come, on, Guy, open up your mouth for the doctor."

Guy opened his mouth and felt foolish. Jill pressed her finger down on his tongue and peered into his mouth. "Tonsils," she said, nodding several times. "And don't tell me you don't have any." She started tickling his tongue with her finger and his mouth snapped closed automatically. She squealed and pulled her finger out, and she and Stu laughed. After

a moment, Guy laughed too. He couldn't think of anything else to do.

It seemed to Guy that Jill touched Stu more during dinner than a nice girl touched her boyfriend all day. She clapped her hands over his cheeks and told him to feel how cold her hands were. She rubbed his sweater and told she thought it was ugly and asked him why he wore it. She brushed crumbs off his face. She hardly had time to eat anything; in fact, she didn't seem to want to eat anything, except peas. She pushed the meat around and got it all mixed in with the potatoes until the mixture was so disgusting it almost made Guy sick to look at it. She kept reaching over everyone to wherever the peas happened to be. She never asked anyone to pass them to her. The last time she reached for the peas, the dish was empty. Stu laughed. "The princess and the peas," he said.

Madeline, who was up making coffee, turned happily at Stu's words. They had had wine at dinner, and wine always made her fluttery and excitable. Her eyes shone and she was flushed a bright pink. "I love that story," she said. Guy expected Jill and Stu to laugh, but Jill looked up seriously. "Do you?" she said. "It makes me cry." She stared ahead, not really at Madeline but at the wall behind her. "Like what good is it if she's a princess if she's so damned rude she tells the poor hostess, who's gone through all the trouble of digging up seven million mattresses for her, that she's all bruised from the bed and she didn't sleep at all. I think she stinks." She lowered her eyes quickly. "If she's a princess, so what?"

Madeline walked over slowly with the coffee. "Well, it's only supposed to

show. . ."

"I know," Jill cut her off. "I know what it's supposed to show. I just think it's sad. All those things end wrong." Madeline's eyes widened. "What do you mean?"

Jill took out a cigarette. She lit it by flicking the match against the cover with one hand, close to the cigarette. She inhaled and held the smoke in for a moment. When she spoke, she spoke quietly. "Remember the girl who had to weave jackets for her seven brothers? They had all been enchanted into swans and everything, and she had to weave at night, with thistles that pricked her fingers. Remember her?"

Madeline nodded.

"Well, I just think that maybe for one of them, maybe for the one she loved most, the littlest, she could have left off the sleeves so he could have kept his wings."

"She left off one sleeve."

"Accidentally. She didn't have time to finish it. And anyway, you can't fly with just one wing. Who could want arms when he had wings?" She looked at Madeline.

Madeline nodded. "Well," she said slowly, "at least with one wing, he could remember how it was. Better than the others; he'd be reminded, you know? It would never leave him."

Jill smiled, her eyes on the smoke she had just exhaled. She nodded slowly, her smile growing with each nod. Her eyes met Madeline's suddenly. "That's nice," she said. "I never thought of it that way. I like that."

While they drank the coffee Madeline had made, the girls talked about fairy tales. They talked rapidly, like old friends who had just met after

years and years, trying to discuss everyone they knew in common during a short wait between planes. Jill thought Hansel and Gretel were a couple of brats who deserved to be baked into gingerbread. Madeline didn't like the Grimm stories because it made her sick to think of people cutting off fingers and feeding their daughters to their husbands. They talked with animation and wild gestures, and they squealed in delight at each other's memories. Madeline, who hardly ever smoked, even accepted a cigarette from Jill and smoked it quickly blowing out the smoke hard and fast, with her bottom lip protruding, so she could confirm or argue a point with Jill immediately. Then it began to slow down. Madeline said, "What about Little Red Riding Hood?" Jill looked away. "Oh. Those. I don't like nursery stories." And it was over. Madeline looked embarrassed and started clearing dishes away. Jill looked at Stu. "Want to clean up now or later?"

"What about you?"

"Later." She stood up and walked into Stu's room which opened into the kitchen. They all watched her flop across the bed, face down, her arms under her. She hardly moved at all. After a moment, Stu went into the bedroom and closed the door behind him.

Guy waited for Madeline to say something about Jill. He thought she would widen her eyes the way she usually did when she had found something shocking to share with him and say something about how Jill had just walked into the bedroom. Then they would laugh together. But Madeline didn't say anything. She kept clearing the dishes away,

carefully emptying the garbage into a large brown bag, scraping the dirty pieces of silverware against each other to clean away the scraps before laying them gently in the sink.

"Well?" he said finally.

She jumped, surprised, and turned, still holding a fork in her hand. She looked as if she were going to fend him off with the fork, Guy thought. "What?"

"What are you thinking about?" he asked.

"Nothing much. What should I..."

"About Jill." He didn't know why he sounded so sharp.

"I wasn't thinking about Jill."

"Well, what do you think of her?"

"I don't know. Nothing much." She lowered the fork and started to scrape a plate with it.

Guy got up from the table and pulled her around to him. "Tell me what you think of her."

Madeline cocked her head to one side. She was frowning. "Guy," she said. "What's wrong?"

"Please. Just tell me." He didn't know why he felt so desperate.

"I think she's strange. She's okay." Madeline spoke slowly watching his face, trying to determine what he wanted. "She's not pretty, but she's interesting. She laughs a lot." She paused. "What do you want, Guy? What do you want me to say?"

He dropped his arms. "I don't know. I'm sorry. I just wanted to know... I guess I just wanted to hear you say..."

"I like her," Madeline said. "I think she's kinda sad."

Guy turned and walked into the living room. He swept everything on the coffee table to the floor with one hand and lay down on the couch, his face in the pillow, his outside arm dangling

over the side. He knew he was going to start remembering how it had been with Jill. It panicked him the way images of that night could take control of his mind. She didn't seem to affect anyone else that way. None of the other guys she'd slept with. No one ever seemed to realize what a bitch she was. Even Madeline hadn't seen. She thought Jill was sad. Stu thought she was sad too. It was funny, Guy thought, that they'd agree on Jill.

"My God!" Stu would explode whenever Guy started talking about Jill. "What's to hate? She can't hurt you. Why don't you just laugh at her the way you do at other trampy types?"

But you couldn't, Guy thought. You couldn't laugh at her as if she were just one of Stu's "tramps". There was a big difference. Somehow you knew that if another girl heard you laughing about how she messed around, she'd get embarrassed, or adamant about women's sexual rights, or maybe so sick she'd go home and cry to throw up. Somehow you knew that even if you told Jill right to her face, she'd just smile that stretching smile that kept going and going until she had to burst into hysterical laughter to release her face muscles. You couldn't laugh at Jill. She wouldn't let you. She was the one who got to laugh.

Guy turned over and stared at the ceiling. He didn't want to remember. He hated remembering. He clenched his fists and pushed hard against his eyes.

"Headache?" Madeline was standing over him. She had done the dishes. Her arms were wet and there were water spots on her blouse. Her cheeks were still flushed. She looked

like a pink baby after a bath.

He smiled at her. "No. I just don't feel good. It's hard to breath."

She put her damp, cool hands on his cheeks. "Maybe some more Vicks Rub." She stepped over the mess he had made on the floor, ignoring it deliberately. She took the Vicks Rub out of her purse and turned and looked at him. "Want to lie down in the bedroom? If you want to." She giggled. "What do you want to do."

They looked at each other silently. "Lead the way, then," Guy said finally.

Once inside the bedroom, Guy immediately lay down on the bed. He glanced at the open door. Madeline stood awkwardly by the side of the bed, watching him. "Do you want it closed?"

He said nothing, and after a while she shoved it closed with her foot. "You're really not a very cooperative patient."

"I'm not really a patient." He watched her face settle in a sick room smile.

"Okay, non-patient. Take off your shirt."

He lay rigidly on the bed, his eyes on the ceiling. "you know how to take off a shirt."

She shook her head back and forth rapidly, giggling. "Guy, you're being impossible." She sat on the edge of the bed by his side and started to unbutton his shirt. She hummed as she worked. He sat up and she took his shirt off and pulled his tee shirt over his head. He sat, naked to the waist, watching her. She stopped humming and a small frown appeared. She pushed him backwards and opened the jar slowly. "If you don't want me to put this stuff on you..." she began.

"No," he interrupted her. "Do what

you want."

She dipped her fingers into the white jelly and began to rub it over his chest and throat, her fingers held tightly together. She watched his face. "Feel good?" He nodded. She kept massaging long after the medicine had been thoroughly rubbed in. She spread her fingers out and began rubbing his shoulders, his arms, the sides of his neck. He made no move to draw her to him. Her face flushed a deep pink.

Wine made her sexier, too, Guy thought. He'd never slept with her; she was still a virgin. But she liked sex, and she came sometimes, if they made out long enough.

When she leaned forward to kiss him, he opened his mouth. She sat up suddenly. "I'll get my blouse all greasy. You better put your shirt on."

"You could take yours off," he said.

She drew her hand over her forehead and bit her lip. "Guy..."

He did not respond and she began to unbutton her blouse slowly. When it had been folded and placed on the floor, she turned to him, but he was giving no more suggestions. Still sitting, she suddenly turned away and unfastened her bra.

When she came to him, he received her passively, feeling the strangeness of her above him and the slight sting of the medicine between their naked chests. She began to move, slowly at first, and then in quick rhythmic movements. His hands rested gently on her back. He did not move, even when he felt her quicken the rhythm. She held herself rigid for a brief moment before she crumpled and rolled off him onto the bed.

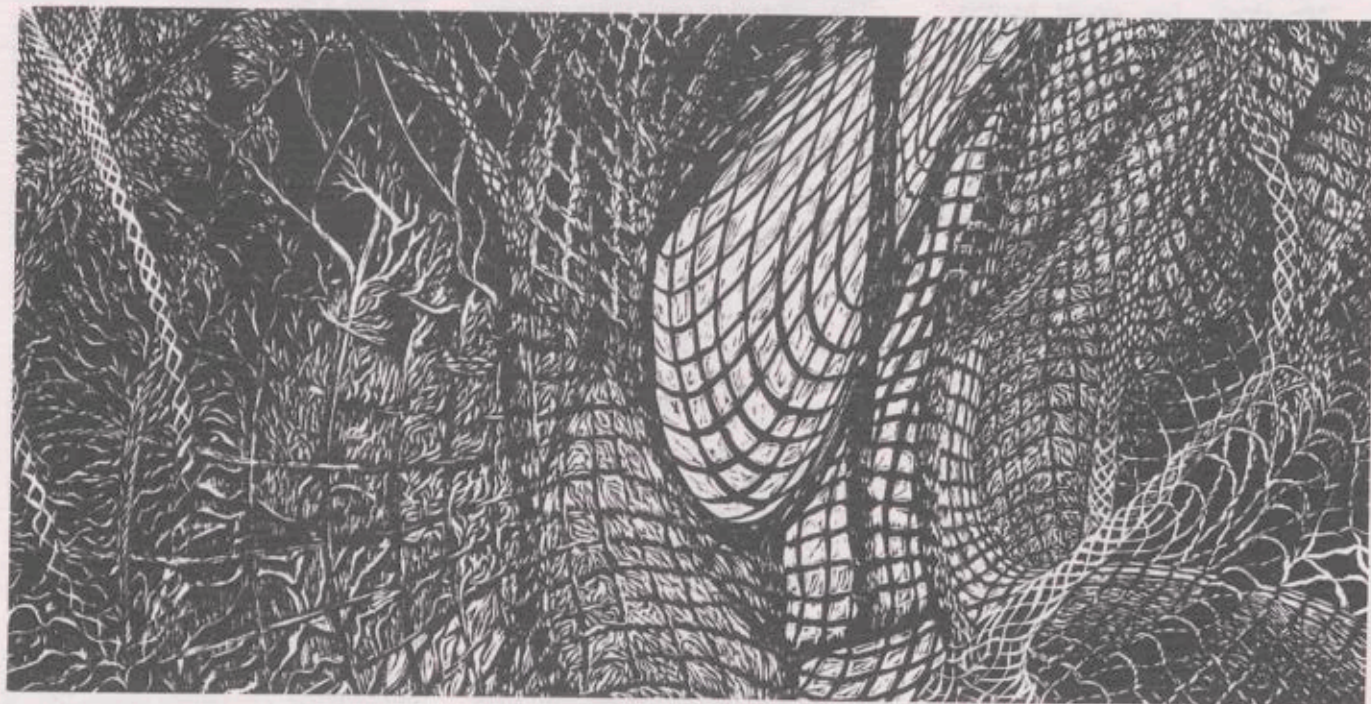
He watched her for a long time. The curve of her soft pink back, hardly

moving as she sobbed quietly. The place on her neck where her hair grew soft and wispy, like a baby's, damp now, with the hairs sticking together.

He reached out and drew her to him. She lay clenched and rigid as he kissed her, cheeks, eyelids, ears, forehead, neck, arms, quickly, almost

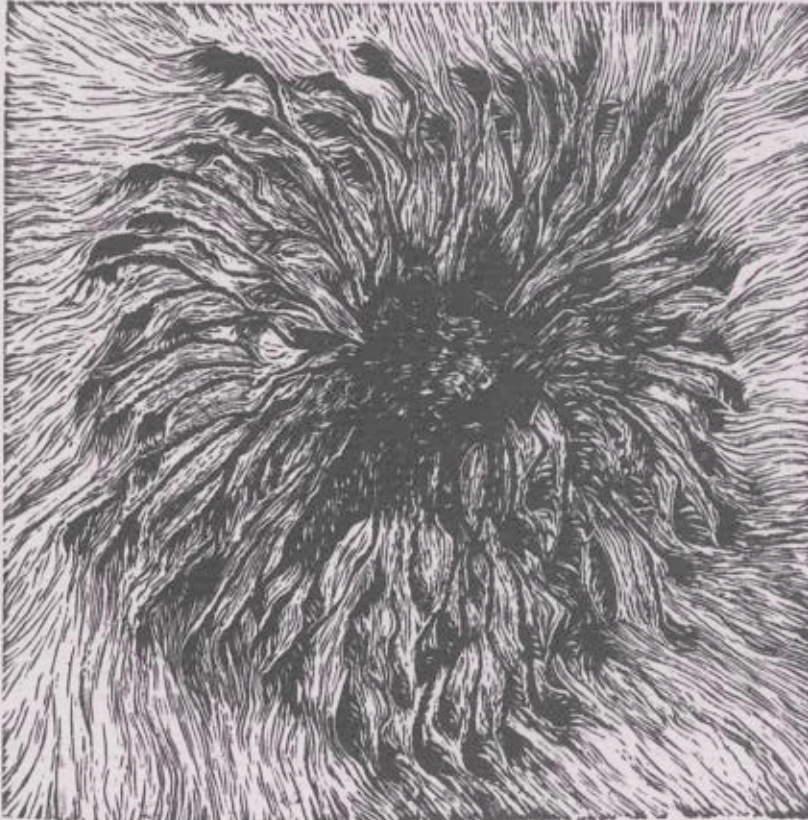
brutally, in an effort to block it all out of his mind.

The Goddamn bitch. The stinking, Goddamn, little bitch.



STANLEY WISKOSKI

Pre-Spring



The snows have melted:
It's raining and has been for days,
And it lashes baby leaves
Till their heads lower "in the"
In the breath-capturing cold.

My hair huddles in strands
As worms might do for survival:
I can almost feel the rain
As it tries to seep down to my head
Like the ground.

Like marrow from a cooked bone,
I formlessly fall to my knees,
To my neck, cheek...
Arms like string, legs like twine in the mud:
Withering and shrinking.

I lay here deep and depressed
As a powerful seed.

Standing and Looking

Over a Field of Dandelions

Yellow-spot host—
Like a simple city from a distance in the dark—
Odd candles, oddly flaming—
(Setting my eyes on fire)
I, sheer and naked,
Would gather you all in with
Long arms,
Then bring your masses upon me
To inquire as to the time of day
With each tickling chalice.

Then would I lie naked and consumed,
With seeds and white dusties sticking to me
And floating everywhere like molecules.
But beneath those I would be spotted yellow smeared
Now and also ever,
With your yellow stain.

A Gift From a Rock

Standing on an edge of a brook,
The water laps like a love dog at my feet.
I look to the middle,
Gaze on it.
A Rock stands out:
A jagged one, through the years.
Water runs around it and gurgles,
Molding little bubbles
For a moment seen by me.
They pass down the lane like angles,
One, by one, in pairs, or
Sometimes manifold—
I see them before they burst away
(Or is it that I blink?
I miss a lot that way),
Leaving a three-dot sprinkle to carry
To a fat sea.
They themselves circle back becoming whole
(Not half as on the water).
Now unseen save by other bubbles and the rock:
An eternal scientific to and from
Seen by me only in part—
The dog part.
Lord that I could swim—
A gift from a rock.

DANIEL J. VALENTI

I

"BOANERGE"

There is no evidence left
of the girl I want to marry.
(Near the **lectus summus**
on the left side of the
couch she sat, her
position close to me
so close we nearly touched)

Not **Boanerge**, but the
Daughter of Thunder:
A kiss for thirty coins
So true a gift she was.

I was tied to her and lashed,
fell three times under her weight
and died upon her
I leave my mind whenever I think
just what my pain would have been
had her slivers been real.

II

"PRE PONO"

Mourning is far off.
Hours, like weights,
threaten to crush Bloodyboy.
The WOMAN stands over the bed.
Washes the blood from the right hand.
Tiny movements of her hand
like the inches of time sneaking over
the crossed surface of the clock.
A winding.

Mourning is too lost a word
to tell what evening in that
bloodbox of ice was like.

"PONO"

There is proof that . . .
she certainly was here:
objective proof, the proof of things:
(+) the blood stains on the wall,
(-) the empty Tang glass,
(=) the morning service:
There is the spear, the wood, and the water,
me nailed to the future of her arms.
In fact, there is so much proof that
I'll even call her guess at daybreak morning
to keep the chill of that night in the
notion of what we called the next day's dawn.

III

"MY LOVE FOR THE WOMAN"

My love for the woman
was a Saint Francis love,
a love hidden, close, and cave-like.
It was the love of an evening
late in November—month of the crab,
month of the sister.
She knew me by the color red;
peeled my fingers off at the knuckle,
a ribbon at a time.
Oh, the red and white of my
mattress and head—a valentine for you,
my lover; a gift for all the pleasure
of the god you serve.

DANIEL J. VALENTI

I
"BOANERGE"

There is no evidence left
of the girl I want to marry.
(Near the **lectus summus**
on the left side of the
couch she sat, her
position close to me
so close we nearly touched)

Not **Boanerge**, but the
Daughter of Thunder.
A kiss for thirty coins.
So true a gift she was.

I was tied to her and lashed,
fell three times under her weight
and died upon her.
I leave my mind whenever I think
just what my pain would have been
had her slivers been real.

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IV

"BLOODYBOY"

Bloodyboy got up with sleep on his clothes,
love on his left pantleg.
His love was still there,
tired, but empty-bladdered

BLOODYBOY: What happened last night
(my dove)?

HIS DOVE: Nothing that faith couldn't
handle (my snake).

"A BLOODYBOY ADVENTURE"

If Bloodyboy's at the house
of the Engineer, then why is
the Engineer's wife well set to
deliver him from the BloodyMan of the Dark?
It's not the Devil that makes
him drown in tears, but
he drowns from what he never had
and what they cannot hear.
(pianophones, diningworm, hardwood,
and moneystomachs).

"You're doing it all wrong,"
cries Bloodyboy.

"Why couldn't you have been factory workers
who can mind their own noses, tired out.
Everytime! Time to do nothing with
breeds a Bible."

They get this wisdom masticated,
chewed enough for Doomsday to suck.
The Engineers listen in diaper-green
and swallow their lumps like good
Christians-a-marvel at this shiny
Christal in new sheep's clothing.

"DWIGHT" A.

Bloodyboy still wears wight
on his girdled right hand.
He shakes everyone with the left,
the way a fag might,
smiling from behind his coffee spoon,
mary-had-a-little-lamb-like looking.

THE WOILD: "How are you getting along
with everyone, my boy?"

BLOODYBOY: "Great, except for the minister.
He thinks I'm the devil.

"DWIGHT" B.

Of all the pink cobra-mouth white
thrown at me this warm December evening,
from Razor-ears leading the hymns
to Chinamouth carving her crucifix
on my tongue,
I was struck most by the quivering mass
of skin glued together by the second-
cradle promise of a nerve long-gone dead.
Something they tell me must pass for
a human being: Dwight.
He drools his spittle on his chin
the way a two-headed cow might.
You cannot understand him;
he is hideous to behold.
You can only pretend that you
do not pity him; yet, I know something
that the others don't:
I can cure him.

VII

"SEAFARM"

As if to tell me a
modern day ghost story.
Uncle says that this right eye
is made of glass.

All night.

I sit around.

bored out of my eyes.
But the dinner is interesting.

We talk about religion and superstition,
the crucifixion and scourging
it leads us eventually to Lucifer,
bearer of light, a man I pity
more than anyone else.

They accuse me of being unconscious
for the joy of it.

but they misunderstand.

I only want to see the Ocean at night.
I do not want to say what it is.

VI

"7.23 a.m."

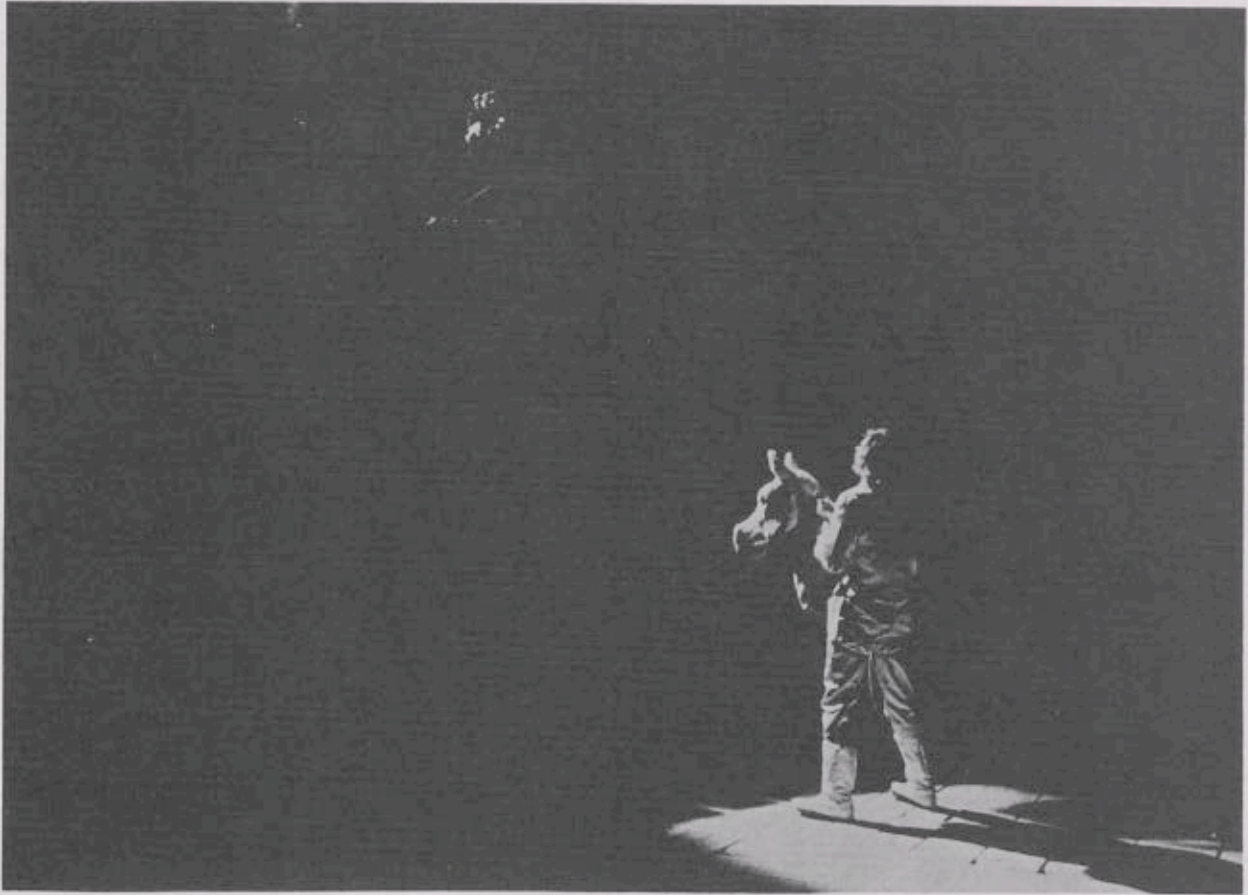
When the term is over, you feel good
But saying goodbye when the term is over
is an action not so well understood.
It's buying silver and getting wood,
And losing the shining part of her.

"7.51 a.m."

We will not pray for the final time.
We'll just look at each other and smile.
The humming of the clock gives us the time.
for the first time we've been together,
to think.
Appropriately enough, we sit on
opposite sides of the table.

Theater at Union

A Portfolio of Photographs by Scott Gordon

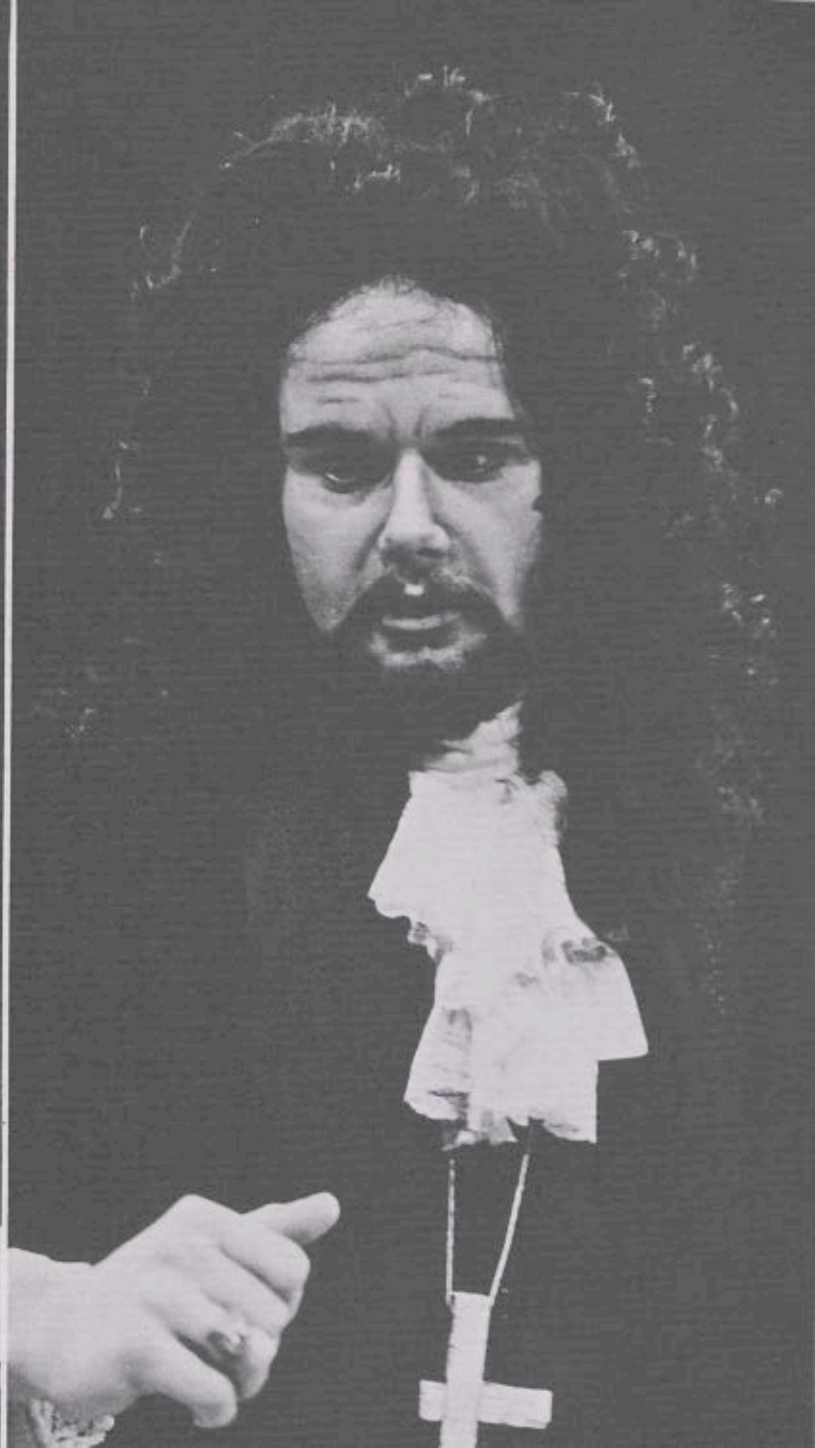


Indians

No Place to be Somebody



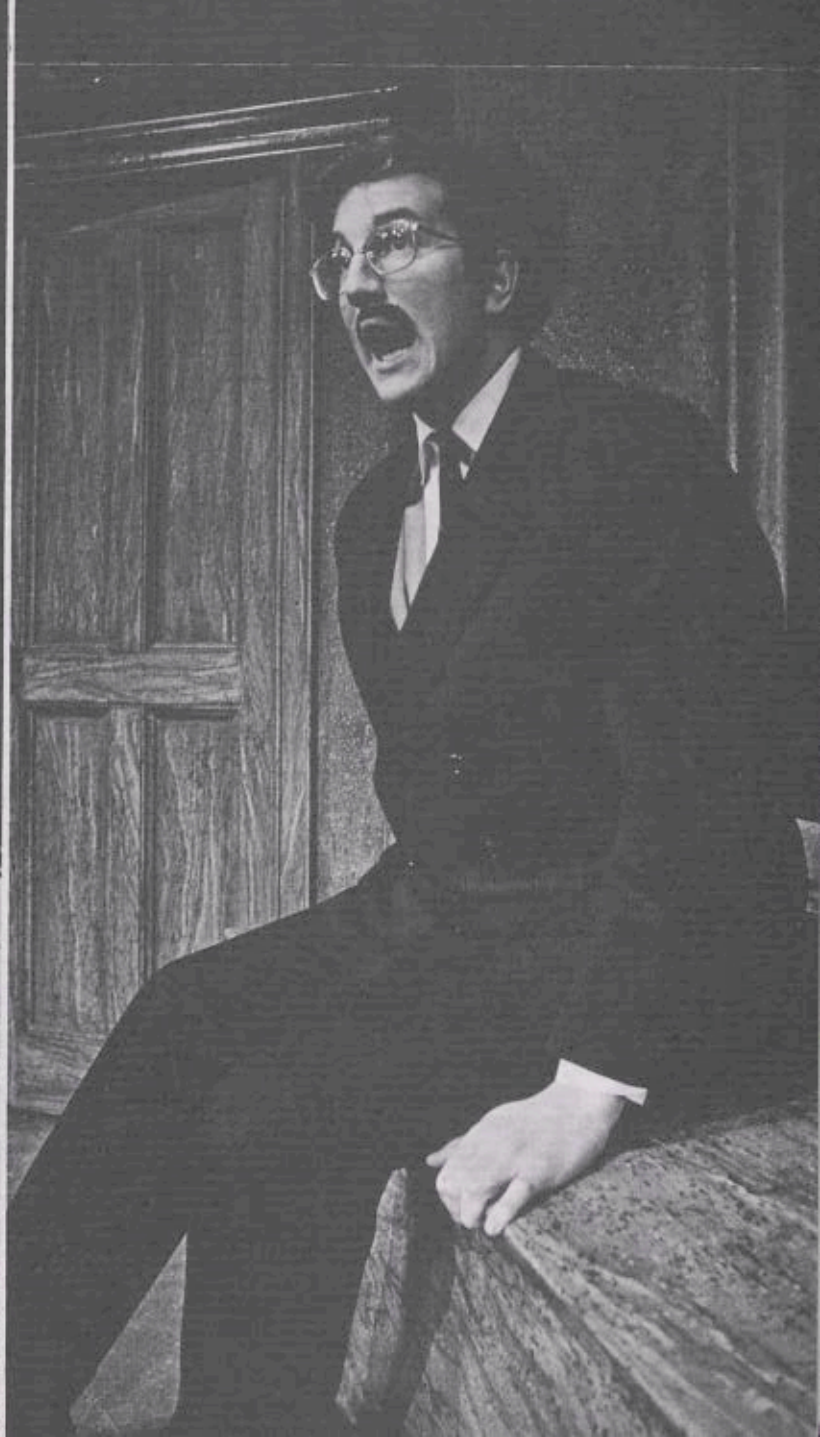
Tartuffe



Cavedwellers



Arsenic and Old Lace



For Larry Kelley Newton

It's so good to see you, you said; the world hasn't reached you. Well, that was a long time ago; the world has come much closer. Now, before you come again, I want to tell you how close, and how I don't always smile now. A funny thing happens, though: as the world comes closer, I move farther away, hiding behind remnants of those smiles that used to welcome the world that couldn't reach me. Could you see me now and know anything more than what you've always seen? So I've disguised myself in this story; perhaps in this way I will reach you.

There wasn't much to do when we finished school. Most of the boys were overseas, and from boredom as much as for their sakes, we kept ourselves busy writing letters and knitting bright, gaudy sweaters which we were sure would make the war seem very far away. But that got boring too after a while. I found a job working as a teacher and my two roommates moved out, almost simultaneously, one to marry a photographer, the other to the mid-west. We kept in touch for a while, but believing as I did, that friendships are pretty much of a time and place circumstance, I stopped bothering. So I had the apartment alone. I got to know the people who taught at my school, who were for the most part amazingly stupid and mechanical, the ones who've been turning out excellent multipliers and mediocre spellers for decades. If there ever was

a time for not smiling, it was in that school. But I had enough confidence in myself to know I wouldn't be there long, and eventually I did move to another school.

But so far, this isn't much of a story, it's just the setting and I haven't disguised myself at all. This much I think you knew, or most of it. We kept in pretty close contact, those first few months when I was teaching and you were learning to pull teeth painlessly. Our occasional meetings still make me smile: I never knew what they were leading to. But to continue—this is the point where the story begins.

He had walked the same way for several nights. He no longer noticed the incongruity, the lake on one side, the houses on the other; he walked always with his face to the water. Tonight was not special; his father had already been dead a week.

Bending down, he felt for a flat stone, then sent it skimming onto the water. If this skips five times, I'll turn around. Damn it to hell! The stone left six clear circles; picking up a handful of sand and rocks, he hurled them toward the ripples. He continued walking.

Further down the beach, he found the grove of willows, carefully arranged pillars on the beach. He found the one with the initials carved in, and felt for his own. Ah, there they were, and beneath them his father's. His fingers caressed them; he took off his gloves and pressed his hand against the tree.

Then, he fell to his knees, sobbing screaming against the wind, his hand extended over his head, clawing the tree.

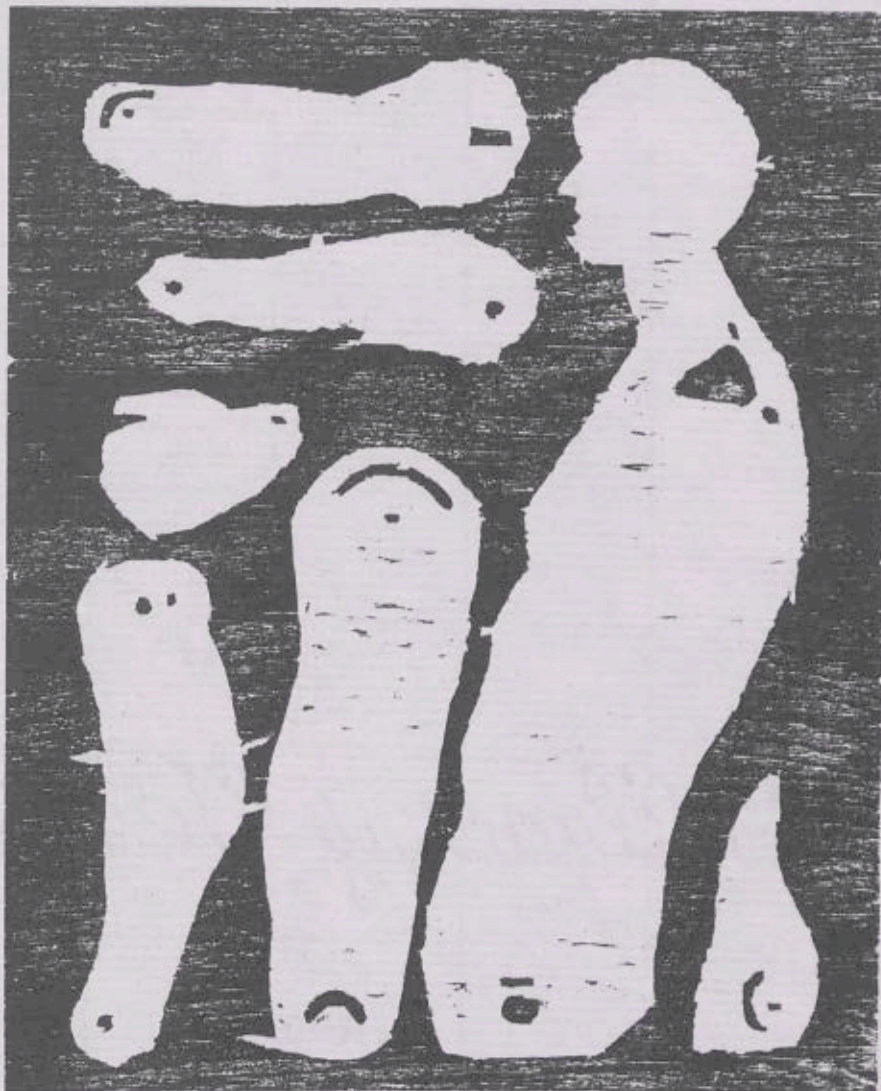
His father has been dead two weeks when he returns to the apartment. He goes straight to work from the airport, picks up the copy which he is to illustrate, and then goes home. He makes himself a drink, then sets it down and moves over to the piano. He pulls up the lid and begins to play, absently, mechanically. He isn't very good, and when he misses more and more of the notes, he stands up in disgust and walks back over to his drink. He continues drinking and smoking until midnight, when he moves over to his desk and begins to draw.

Hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil—how's that for a holy trinity? Three monkeys anyway. Wonder if they'd like that for their book. Be serious, my boy, jobs like this are hard to come by. One day you'll even thank me for sending you to all those drawing classes. Okay, I'll thank you now, but that doesn't make those damn monkeys go away. Jesus, I wish he'd given me piano lessons. But back to business—no deviates allowed. Almost butting his cigarette, he pulls it back, grimaces at the too-near-the-filter taste and stubs it out. Finishing the last of his sketches, he rises, walks over to the window, and stands staring, staring, marking the patterns of the frost on the glass. Slowly he turns and starts to the bedroom. He pivots angrily, but they do not stop their

laughter. He bolts to the window, but it is only two couples, slipping home beneath his apartment. His hand rests on the patterns on the glass; carefully he traces two sets of initials in the frost. Turning, he turns back again, clawing at the ice until no trace of a pattern can be found. There are only long, thin streaks, grotesque mockeries of letters. Tears are streaming down his face; there is not enough frost left to re-trace the initials. Taking an Exacto knife from his box, he moves slowly to the piano, and gently, meticulously, carves in four letters. Then he locks the door behind him, and he is gone.

Tonight, sitting at the piano, one hand over the initials, I wanted to be able to say, see, I've overcome this, I am still the same. But my hand clutches those carvings, and I can't find any earthly reason to let go.

We talked for hours that time we said emotions were principles. I said that an emotion which could be forgotten, abandoned, I said then, was never real, had never actually been there. I remember you sitting very erect in your chair, then reaching over and taking both my hands in yours. You're wrong, you said, some of the things that mean the most must be the first to be forgotten, as part of the compromises the world demands. I argued and said, over and over, don't sell out, don't ever try to lose the things that mean the most. Now, I want to believe you, I want to leave this world of things that should have been memories long ago. But with that damned piano across the room, and the window frosted over again, I know I'm right: for principles do not bend, and a feeling, if it's real, always exists.



And you are going away

Two fragments of light
from the unshaded window, curtains of angel-hair framed;
and am I this light square,
this longer square, splashed across the blue wall,
outlining pieces of tree branches, without to within,
making shadows of the things which define me?
am I the more narrow rectangle,
side-wall graphics rigidly defined, window pieces, table
edge, all caught in set form, inside the window?

Kelley Newton

Outside the window
only the gaping faces of another apartment,
windows lined row after row, waiting,
behind the naked tree branches;
and am I the branches so bare,
frozen on the wall,
mocked by the regiments behind the windows?

I did not say, don't go—
for how could I have phrased it?
How could I tell you
that when you leave, I will be the mocked,
the naked branches whipped by the wind?
Cover me, be my buds, my leaves,
and if we must, if you must go,
sever like the leaf, later, in the fall,
or let me be ever green.

But not now, not now; it will soon be April;
twenty years ago April I was borne.
Each year another window has been lit,
waiting to consume me; they will rape me,
waiting with their axes to shape more windows,
if I remain in winter.
Cover me, be my buds, my leaves,
and if we must, if you must go,
sever, like the leaf, later, in the fall,
and leave me ever green.

Jezebel Angstschermerzen

She dragged hard on her cigarette, a long, deep inhalation that bypassed her lungs and settled in the pit of her stomach. Then, summoning forth the purple smoke, she slowly relinquished it.

"I have this theory," she began, "about meat."

"Meat?" the vacuous face briefly assumed character.

"Yeah, meat—M-E-A-T—meat."

"Oh." Then, expectantly, "Yeah?"

Her words came slowly, then picked up speed, as if she was afraid he'd drift away again before she finished.

"Everyone, at one time or another, has a craving for meat, right?" Not waiting for assent, "Well, ideally, we would like filet mignon all the time, but sometimes the desire for red meat is so strong that we just have to settle for hamburger." She looked at his face for an answer.

"Yeah, steak is expensive." She got one.

"I'm talking about **sex**," she snapped.

"Sex? But then, what's this theory of me—"

"Oh forget it." She threw cigarette to the floor, her heel viciously grinding it up to nothingness. She lit another.

"Look, this is going nowhere. . ."

"Wanna beer?"

"No, it's fattening—yeah, okay." She watched him spring to his feet, lithe, supple: potent. What a waste, she thought ruefully. It's almost tragic.

He returned with two opened

bottles, handed her one, and sat in his chair, facing her. She took one full gulp and rolled the liquid around, letting it caress the sides of her mouth. She swallowed unceremoniously.

"Hey," she began again. He looked up, straight at her. Now, she thought, catch him now.

"Evan, I know we don't have any great feelings for each other. That's okay—I mean, I'm not looking for any commitment from you. . . ." Jesus, how many times have I said this before? The least I could do is phrase it differently—even I'm getting tired of hearing this line!

His eyes became wary. "So?"

"Well,—oh shit, I can't stand this hedging. Look, I want to sleep with you. That's all—I know ours isn't any overwhelmingly cerebral relationship, but I'm just really sexually attracted to you, and I—well, that's all I wanted to say. . . ."

"Oh, that's all. Yeah, sure, okay, if you want." Was that relief she saw? She couldn't be sure. Boy, that one was easy—too easy. She was bored; she drank her beer rapidly. Soon her body felt warm; she looked up at him, waiting.

"Uh, there's just one thing. . . ."

"Yes?" She immediately started formulating the pat responses.

"I have this nine-thirty class tomorrow—so could we sort of, well, start or whatever, now?"

Oh, Christ. "Sure, Evan, sure."

Of a sudden, he rose, grabbed her brusquely by the arm, pressed her against him. He thrust his tongue between her lips; in another part of her his hand was following suit.

"Uh, do you want the lights out or anything?"

"I don't care—yeah, you might as

well."

She averted her face, not wanting to show him the excruciating pleasure he was giving her. Damn you damn you damn you she cursed between short, rapid breaths.

"Uh, I can't seem to find you—could you turn on the lights for a second?"

"I'm right here, Evan."

He threw her roughly on the bed, forcing himself into her.

"Hey, are you on—I mean, do you want me to use—protection or anything?"

"Look, don't worry. I'm okay."

She tried desperately to hold back, but at last she could contain herself no longer, and with one cathartic shudder, she was released from him.

"I just wanted. . . ."

"I know—don't worry." She led him slowly, firmly, to the bed. Her hand moved down his body: he was hard. Thank God, she thought, at least he can do **that** much for himself.

That'll teach you, you bitch, he whispered hotly in her ear.

She mounted him, moaning slowly at first, searching with her body a rhythm that would mesh with his. Her haphazard undulations gained momentum, gears found their proper cogs—click. The machine, well-oiled, ran its often repeated course: the climax came quickly, almost without her.

"My, I **am** a wonder," she thought wryly. Trying to see his face in the darkness, she perceived only obscure shapes and hollows framed in a limpid black ink of hair.

God, do I hate you, she spat out passionately.

"That was good," she said, rolling over.

The Pawnbroker

Meg Tuman

Lay your soul before me on the table,
Expose the goods you've wrapped in gauze and paper;
Then stand and sweat along: for I'm the viper
Who sweetly sucks from men both strong and feeble.
Helplessly you stand, as I, the master
Put value to your sacrificial offering.
I crack a joke: obey me with your laughing
Then I, too, smile—to see your hatred fester.

And if my stomach's satisfied with dinner
And if my bookie picked (for once) a winner
You might receive some recompense from Mammon.
But if the Man just came to get his dues
Or if I'm cursed with bunions from my shoes,
The answer's "no"—despite the tears you summon.



My Uncle

Makoto Hirano

I met my uncle for the first time in a winter when my father was afraid that the well would run dry since there hadn't been any rain for over a month. My uncle had a farm in Hokkaido, Japan's northern-most island. Having little to do on his farm that winter, he had come down to Tokyo to stay with our family for a while. We didn't see each other too much because I was seven and there was school for me during the day. He left the house some time after I did, and came home late at night. By the time he came back, I was in my room ready to go to sleep.

Our family had always eaten supper early, so my mother would heat the soup again, and bring out some sake for my uncle and my father. The three of them would sit in the kitchen with the stove burning for a long time. I remember falling asleep to the sound of their voices coming through the thin wall that divided my room and the kitchen. The wall was so thin that my father used to tell me with half seriousness that it would cave in if I leaned too hard against it. We were poor then. During the day, my father rode around on his bicycle delivering bars of soap that he and my mother made in the back yard storage. He then stayed up late at night writing stories that he always carried with him during the day in case he could find some time to visit a publisher. Our house wasn't big either. Soap boxes and cartons of all sorts took up a lot of space and there wasn't much

room for all of us who were living there. That must have been why my father asked my uncle to go home that evening when my uncle came home earlier than usual. The television was on while we ate together so I didn't listen to what my father and my uncle were saying. But after the dishes were cleared off the table, my father reached across the table, turned off the television, and told me that my uncle was leaving the next morning. Before I went into my room, my uncle asked me to come to his farm sometime. That seemed to be a great idea, for I had never been on a farm. My father had once been a farmer; I might have been too if he hadn't moved to Tokyo. "In a few years," my father said, and that was that.

It wasn't until I was sixteen that I got to go to my uncle's farm. My father received a letter from my uncle in June asking if I could come to the farm to help him over a few weeks in July. There was very little for me to do in Tokyo, and my father thought it was a good idea. I got on a train from the Tokyo station early one morning in the second week of July, glad that I was leaving Tokyo for Hokkaido.

A lot of people were on that train. Most of them were people trying to get away from the city. Others were people working and living in Tokyo who had originally come from somewhere else and were going home over the summer. Like my father, they were from the country. But unlike my father, they had a home in the country to go back to each summer. On that train I was able to distinguish the ones going home, because they travelled alone, carrying bags probably filled with gifts for their family.

The train made numerous stops, some times at a crowded platform, other times at a small station where only few people got on and off. I got off that train at Aomori, which was the last stop, and went to the ferry terminal right next to the train station. After waiting for an hour, the ferry left the dock to cross the ocean on our three hour trip to Hakodate, Hokkaido. There I took a local train to Setana. Compared to the long train that left Tokyo filled with people, the local was small and empty. At Setana, I stepped out onto the platform behind a group of school kids. It had been almost twenty hours since I had left Tokyo. With a blow of the whistle, the train conductor closed the doors, and the train pulled out. Seeing that my uncle wasn't there yet, I sat down on the edge of the platform, with satisfaction that from where I sat I could see the ocean. Far away to the right was a mass of houses. As I saw later from a hill over looking the village, a stream knitted the roof tops that were clustered along the inland sea. The train that had left the station was already moving beside the coast. I stepped down onto the track and placed my hand on the rail, expecting to feel the vibration of the train. But it had gone to far away by that time. The heat from the sun sapped by the steel rail passed onto my hand instead.

In the village of Setana, there were many rice farmers, but my uncle and six other families were the only dairy farmers. The others who made up more than half the village population were fishermen. Like my uncle, all dairy farmers lived twenty to thirty minutes away by car from the center of the village. My uncle didn't say too much in the car that day. He was glad

to have me there. Setana was cool and dry. It was almost cold inside his air-conditioned car. I remembered how hot and humid it was in Tokyo.

His farm wasn't as big as I had expected. It had a clean house that was freshly painted yellow, a barn which was opposite the house, and an orange tractor under a tree big enough to cast a late afternoon shade over the house. A dog was tied to the tree, and as I had stepped out of the car he began barking at me. As he barked, his leather strap stretched pulling the dog by his neck.

The dog got used to me after two days, but the post man who came every afternoon always had to listen to his shrill voice.

My uncle's wife who had a chubby face, smiled a lot. When she smiled, her eyes got thin and hidden under her cheek in a way that I thought was pleasant. On the day that I stepped out of the car with the dog barking at me, she came out of the house with her baby in her arms to greet me. While my uncle was at the back of the car getting my suit case, she said, "I didn't expect you to be so big." Before I said anything my uncle looked up and told her that the photograph with my father was taken almost five years ago. "Yes, I guess so," she said nodding at me. Then, we all went into the house and ate the supper that had already been set out on the table.

It was a good meal. My aunt asked me many things about my family and Tokyo. I told her all that I knew, and tried hard to recall things that I couldn't remember clearly because she really enjoyed listening to what I said. When our conversation died down, my uncle told us about himself and my father when they were young.

"Those days, we didn't milk cows," he said. "Our family were rice farmers and we were always out in the rice paddies with our legs soaked up to the knee in mud."

"My father does not say much about it," I told him.

"I wonder why?" my aunt said.

"Your father and I talked about what it would be like to live in the city. We talked just to forget about the farm and the rice that our father was so worried about."

"Do you have brothers?" my aunt asked me. I told her I didn't.

"Your father and I had a good time together," said my uncle.

After the supper I realized that I had not slept well for a long time, and that I needed the rest. My uncle took me up to the room that was to be mine for the next few weeks. Before he went downstairs, standing by the door, he said that work began early in the morning while it was still dark, but that I should rest tomorrow and get acquainted with the farm. I told him that there was no need for it. I remember hearing the baby who began to cry somewhere and thinking that my aunt must be doing the dishes downstairs for I also heard the water running in the sink.

Next morning, I didn't get up early. Doing what my uncle said, I got up in the afternoon and spent the rest of the day in the house and in the back yard.

From the second day on, I woke up with my uncle at four-thirty every morning to milk the cows. It was dark, alright. When we went into the barn to milk, we had to turn on the lights inside to find our way. I tried milking several times in the first couple of days, but I never got the hang of it. Besides, there were other things to be

done before we went back to the house for breakfast. The feed had to be mixed and given to the cows. The cows had to be taken out of the barn after they were milked. Empty milk cans had to be cleaned and filled with milk, then loaded onto the back of the tractor. After the last milk can had been loaded onto the tractor, my uncle would smoke a cigarette. When he was done with it, he'd say, "Let's clean the barn and we'll have breakfast."

His wife would have the breakfast ready for us on the table. Because morning in Setant was cold, there would be hot-milk to warm us up. My uncle ate very little and my aunt never ate at all but I was always hungry after two hours of work so that the fresh pancakes and the eggs were always good. My uncle liked to have the television on while he ate. He made sure every morning that we would be having breakfast in time to see the seven o'clock news. When my aunt spoke to him or asked him about the cows, he answered quietly with his eyes fixed on the screen.

Breakfast lasted for about half an hour. I usually spent the thirty minutes following the meal, sitting around and watching television. During that time, my uncle was outside preparing the tractor and other things to begin the work. We didn't always get started on time. Sometimes he looked at the baby who was awake by then, or took a longer time smoking his cigarettes. It wasn't too good to be late delivering the milk, and my uncle knew this but it happened sometimes.

When we arrived late at the delivery station, other farmers didn't appreciate it. The delivery station was ten minutes outside the village. Farmers brought their milk every

morning to be picked up by a truck which carried them to a plant two hours away. When their own milk cans were loaded onto the truck, farmers sat around until the last can was on the truck. They didn't leave until the truck had left. When my uncle was late, things were delayed and that wasn't good.

But even when he wasn't late, my uncle seemed to be in other people's way. They said good-morning, talked about the weather, and asked about the cows, but that seemed to be all they ever said. At least to my uncle nothing much was ever said. I am not saying that they were impolite. Like my uncle who was polite to them, they were polite to him. It's just that my uncle seemed to get in their way because he was so polite, or maybe he was being polite so that he wouldn't get in their way. I didn't know. I saw that he seemed to be tired all the time, but I didn't know why.

One morning, I noticed that one of the farmers was wearing a silver cross around his neck. I didn't see it until then probably because he wore it under his shirt, except that then it had slipped out. Riding on the tractor going back, I asked my uncle why that man was wearing a cross. I guess it wasn't a smart question. He told me that the man was wearing a cross because he was a Christian. He then went on to say that they all wore a cross. I thought of asking him why they all wore a cross, but I didn't. Instead, I asked my aunt after the supper that day when just she and I were left in the kitchen finishing our last cup of tea. Without going into much detail, she explained to me that they were Christians who had moved into Setana about eight years ago to

introduce dairy farming to this part of Hokkaido.

"Is my uncle a Christian?" I asked.

"No, I don't think so. They have church meetings on every Sunday morning, but we never go to those. I think we should but we don't go. Your uncle did go for a while, but that was a long time ago."

She asked me if I wanted a fresh cup of tea. I told her that I was going up to my room. Walking up the stairs, I imagined that my uncle was asleep already for he seemed to be tired that night, as he was most nights. Then I also thought that maybe he wasn't asleep, and that was why he was tired in the morning.

Everyday, after we came back from the delivery station, we drove out to my uncle's pasture above the hill to pitch hay. The grass had already been cut before I came up to the farm. What needed to be done while I was there was to pitch the hay onto the back of the tractor, then take it down to the silo next to the barn and store the hay in the silo. We made several trips during the afternoon but we could have made more if we wanted to because we usually stopped working way before it began to get dark.

Most afternoons, a breeze swept through the field. Once in a while, a cold wind came down from the northwest.

On really nice days, we ate lunch up on the hill. My uncle would stop working earlier than usual to go get my aunt and the baby who would come on the tractor with a basket containing rice cakes that were still warm, and sweet fish and cooked vegetables. Hot tea or, sometimes, hot milk was brought in a thermos bottle.

Below our field was another pasture, with cows feeding on the grass. Over by the sea was the village. The train would pass through twice, maybe three times during the afternoon. When my stomach was full, my eyes became heavy, and I would lie on a pile of hay with my hat over my face to block the sun. My uncle would wake me up when the time came to pitch hay again. My aunt and the baby were taken home, and I would not see them until the evening meal.

One Saturday afternoon, when we were on the hill just finishing our lunch, a man came from the field below to talk with my uncle. He asked my uncle how things were—the cows, the hay, the work—and talked about how nice the day was.

"By the way, who is this young man I have been seeing around?" he asked smiling at me. My uncle told him that I was his brother's boy from Tokyo, spending the summer in the farm.

"How do you like farm work?" he asked, and also asked me my impression of Setana. He was a cheerful man and he talked with my aunt for a while about the baby. Before he got up to go, he told my uncle that there was a community get-together planned for the following night. A group of American high-school students who were children of missionaries in Japan were arriving to visit the farms. This was going to be a welcome party, and all of us were invited. He said good-bye, and walked the hill down to his field.

We went to the party without my aunt. I don't know why she didn't come, but it was just my uncle and myself riding in the car with the radio turned on loud going to the church where the party was. What took place

there is hard to explain. I am sure nothing of what I think happened ever did occur to the rest of the people there. But something did happen to my uncle and I wondered about it for a long time. At that time, it was a thing that I only vaguely felt, so that I had no clear idea of what it was and how it affected my uncle. Now that I am more aware of it myself, it wasn't something that took place in a moment that night, but something that was there for a long time.

When we arrived at the church, the field outside was filled with trucks and cars. Although most of the people including the Americans were there, the party had not yet started. A lot of the Americans spoke fluent Japanese because, as I found out later, they had been living in Japan most of their lives. But people were shy about being with them so there wasn't much conversation. Things got relaxed after some of the more outgoing ones began to speak to each other, and soon there were a lot of questions asked and fascinated faces.

At about seven-thirty, a man got up to speak. We were asked to sit down on chairs that had been placed against the walls. When everyone was seated, the man went on to say how glad he and all of us were to have American students on the farm. Since we, meaning the farmers and the students, didn't know each other, he thought it would be a good idea for each of us to stand up and introduce himself. After a brief commotion, the man introduced himself as "Tanaka, a farmer,"—at which people laughed. A man sitting to the left of him got up making the next introduction. It was then suggested by Mr. Tanaka that in-

troductions be made clockwise around the circle.

There was a farmer who spoke of cultural exchange between Japan and America among those who believed in Christ, while there were others who spoke on a lighter topic.

Not all Americans had lived in the same place in Japan. There were a few who spoke with an unusual dialect and they were fun to listen to. There was one girl from Kagoshima, who had lived and gone to school there for eight years. She was bigger than any farmer there and she spoke as politely as she seemed to be able to in her dialect. She was funny and we all enjoyed listening to her.

The man next to her said something about his sense of belonging to a community as a dairy farmer and a Christian of Setana—which I didn't really understand. Soon it was my turn to speak. I got up feeling nervous and told everyone my name, and that I was spending my summer vacation with my uncle.

Until I sat down looking to my side, I had forgotten about my uncle. It's not that I had completely forgotten him, but that I had forgotten that he was there. He was sitting there wearing his new orange jacket that seemed a bit tight on him, concentrating on something. When he stood up, he just said, "My name is Okudaira Ichiro. I have been living here all my life." I thought he was going to say more. He looked as if he was trying to say more. But the girl next to him was eager to stand up. She must have thought that my uncle was done. She stood up; and my uncle sat down when she began to speak. By that time, everyone was looking at the girl anyway so it didn't matter that it had

taken my uncle a long time to sit down without having said much. That was all that happened. Nothing more.

Afterwards games were played. Some people sang and played the guitar. Snacks that had been plentiful on the center table were almost gone. At the end, we all got up to sing hymns. The lights were turned off. The candles were lit. Some one played an organ that didn't sound too good. We sang three songs, none of which I knew, and the evening was over.

That night, we drove the same road back to the farm. Tomorrow would be Monday. My uncle must have been thinking about the work. I listened to the sound of the gravel as we drove down the road.

A week after that night, I was on the train back to Tokyo with a bag full of tomatoes that had been picked in my uncle's back yard.

My story about my uncle and his farm is over. But as I felt on the train going home that summer, my uncle is like my father, and my father is like my uncle. It has been five years now. My father is still living in Tokyo; and my uncle is in Setana. It's just that what my father had gone to, had come to my uncle. Once things were too good for them being together. Now, there is the soap business for my father to manage. And my uncle has his farm. As for myself, I too have left, and have been living in America for the past four years. You see, I am trying to tell you this story without much confidence. I am not sure if you have understood me for it is hard to say everything in foreign words. On the other hand, it would be foolish for me to tell this story another way.

Paris

Karen Manno

The ancient summer men
sweep the dust onto
the morning street
and the clochards*
brush their coats
and move on,

The inconsistent darkness
on the rat-a-tat metro track
the glass panorama of St. Germain
the hungry eyes of the tourists
and the shop keepers are so pleased.

Halved jack rabbits
and yellow pies
closed gates,
the hungry eyes of the tourists
and the shop keepers sit until two.

A dimly lit alley
paved with clochards.
Black tailed messieurs
in drawing rooms.

The ancient summer men
sweep the dust onto
the morning street,
and the clochards*
brush their coats
and move on.

* tramps, street people





There Was Something Wrong

Mark Mindel

The sound of a basketball being dribbled don't usually strike terror in your heart, but when I heard it coming from our backyard I knew what to expect.

"Billy! Come on out, Billy, we need one more."

I was inside our house, upstairs in my father's room. I ran out in the hallway and into my mother's room, hopped up on her canopy bed, pushed back the curtains, and looked out the window overlooking the driveway, which doubled as a basketball court or an ice hockey rink depending on the weather. It was noon and the sun was just above the peak of the garage. The rays of sunlight spread into the room and showed the dust flowin' in the air. I pulled up the window and the cool spring air rushed into the room. Looking out I saw three older boys standin' in the driveway. Sonny Maguire who was now holdin' the basketball in his hands, repeated the request. I leaned my head out the window.

"Naw. You guys go ahead 'n' play. Maybe you can get Robbie or Jimmy. I got . . . some stuff to do, now. And besides the Yankees are on pretty soon."

Dickie Cole stole the ball from Sonny, dribbled between his legs, and with that silly, smilin' look on his face, threw up a long, long jump shot. The ball ricocheted off the loose boards of the front side of the garage and fell cleanly through the frazzled cords which dropped from the rusty, un-

sturdy rim. Dick lifted his left leg high, tooted out a fart, and let out a screaming laugh.

"Yoooowsers! I'm hot! Come on, Billy. See how hot I am? Me and you, Billy, me and you."

I was tryin' to think of a better excuse when Robbie Cervera and K. C. Maguire, Sonny's younger brother, strolled into the driveway.

"See, now you have enough guys to play."

And just as Sonny and Tommy Connelly were gonna yell up to me that they still needed one more to make the sides even, my big brother, Jimmy, came crashin' out the back door. He trampled down the back porch steps, swinging onto the driveway from off the skinny rusting metal rail and stumbled over to pick up the ball at the same time as Dickie did, and they both fell to the ground struggling. The back door, which has a sorta air pressure contraption hooked up to it was just hiss'n' shut and the railing was still shaking slowly back and forth when Jimmy pulled the ball away from Dick. Sonny yelled up dismissing anything I could think up.

"Ah, we don't needja anyway, ya pussy."

And I breathed a sigh of relief.

How could I tell them why I didn't want to play. How could I explain it to them? The feeling had come over me. The first day when you feel it, usually some time in March . . . I mean, it's such misery, so painful sittin' there in

class staring at the clock, and the window wide open and the air, ya know, about 55 degrees, pouring through and the sun striking ya on the side of the face as you sit in the desk closest to the window even though it belongs to one of the girls — but what do they know about baseball? And then the bell rings but you already have your baseball cap on and your spring jacket with the baseball patches of about ten teams stitched on, and you grab your books, even though ya know you're not gonna do anything with them, and you run out of the school building and across the street to Lina Newstead's and lay down ten cents for two new packs of chewing gum and baseball cards, but that early you probably just get the rookies. I remember last year when I got a Tommy Tresh card and laughed at the name and then he was Rookie of the Year. And you breath the air and feel the sun and smell the spring and hear the birds tweetin', maybe even see a robin, and you **know** . . . you just feel, baseball. And then you smile, and you know everything's gonna be O.K. again. I mean all winter you **do** know that baseball is coming, but when that first day actually arrives you feel so much better. And the **Bugle** puts out the baseball booklet and you look up Yankees and under the column that says "place finished" for the last five years you see first, first, first, first, first, and you know they're gonna win again and everything will be fine.

And you remember when you use

to go to Ferro's Restaurant every Saturday night and the waitress would come up and wink at you and say, "How about **our** Yanks?" and pat you on the head and say to Mom or Dad, "Me and the towhead, we **know**."

And even though everybody in the family HATES the Yankees, deep inside you know that it ain't really hate. They just don't understand things like you do.

But how could I tell them why I didn't want to play?

The game wouldn't start until one, it was a Sunday Doubleheader, but I had to get ready. I got out my blue New York Yankee pencil which I bought for five cents the very day Mel Stottlemyre made his Yankee debut, last August. It was this very same pencil which Mickey Mantle, who hit a five hundred foot homerun **over** the fence **behind** the monuments to win the game for Mel...it was great, I mean just to be there at the Stadium is great, probably the greatest thing in the world, but I was watching Mickey real close from our seats behind the dugout and I knew Mel was nervous this being his first game and all, but looking at the Mick up there at the plate, I knew that he knew it too, and when he went up to the plate, I could feel he was going to do it, and I was so proud that he was a Yankee, and I knew he had lived up to the other Yankees of the past that my gramp, who took us to the games, always talks about and tells us how much better they were, and I knew what he was gonna do.

Everybody else was nervous, but not me, I looked at the Mick and I **knew**, but my brother was cursin' at him, callin' him a bum, (Jimmy just

doesn't understand), but anyway, the Mick just rippled those big Oklahoma muscles and that ball just popped completely out of sight, and Mick, thinkin' he got a little under the ball, thinkin' he popped up and didn't come through for Mel and maybe he wasn't as good as DiMag and Gehrig and the Babe. Mick, he just threw that bat down in disgust and it broke right there in front of home plate, and he was so embarrassed when he looked up and saw that ball sailing as fast as a new jet plane heading for the clouds, clear over those monuments of Ruth and Gehrig and he just had the widest grin on his face as he jogged around the bases and everybody, even Gramps and Jimmy, was clappin' and me, I had to take a big long gulp of Coke and wipe the mustardy napkin around my eyes to keep everyone from seeing I was cryin'...but anyway it was this very same pencil which Mickey used to sign my glove, and my baseball which Gramp got me from Fort Lauderdale where he goes every Spring with Gramma and Aunt Corinne and Uncle Billy, who is really my Mom's uncle, she named me after him; and he signed my scrapbook, too, which I've been keeping for two years now..

I gotta tell ya about the baseball and the scrapbook. It, the baseball, stands on the dresser in my room next to my three camels from Africa which Bob something-or-other, my sister's old boyfriend, brought back from Africa, and my piggy bank, and Pixie and Dixie, my mouse dolls. The baseball is inside this case which is on a stand. The base is diamond shaped and green, with the base-paths colored dirt brown and the bases painted white, and from the pitching mound a

plastic tube comes up, like the stem on one of my mother's champagne glasses, and sorta forms a plastic case which ya put the ball in. Gramp got several good Yankees — Tony Kubek, Whitey Ford, Yogi Berra, and some good visiting stars like Eddie Matthews from the Milwaukee Braves. But my penciled Mickey Mantle from the day he hit the homer is the pride of everything I own.

Like I said I've been keepin' the scrapbook for a couple of years now. Every day I cut the Yankee clippings and box scores from the morning **Bugle** and paste them in the book. If the Yanks have good day I ask my Mom to get the **Herald Tribune** or **New York Times**, or even the **Daily News** at the drugstore across from where she works so I can see what the real Yankee writers have to say, not just the AP.

Boy those coast games sure are the toughest to get, especially on a Saturday night. I try not to miss any games on the radio, but when the Yankees travel to Anaheim to play the L.A. Angels sometimes I fall asleep around the seventh inning. And the Sunday papers never have the boxscore or even who won, because Jimmy says it's the early edition which arrives at Salamack's by train from the city early in the morning. And ya hate to have to wait for Mel Allen or Red Barber to tell ya what happened the night before on TV. It makes ya feel guilty or unloyal or something.

But I sure have probelms finding the boxscores for those games 'cause the morning **Bugle** doesn't publish on Sundays and it never runs anything on Monday mornings. I sorta feel they

are jippin' ya of a whole day of sports by not puttin' out a Sunday paper, and I could never figure out why. Boy, if I was a sportswriter, I couldn't wait to write about the game. I always told Jimmy I would give anything shorta my autographed baseball to write the Saturday night coast games for the **Bugle**, but he only laughs at me. I mean it though. I always dreamed of doing something in baseball like even being a batboy or hot dog seller. I bet I'd be a great statistics man. Boy, wouldn't that be something.

Luckily the evening **Record** started printin' just the boxscore of the late Saturday coast games so I didn't have to worry about Mom gettin' the Monday **New York Times** and hopin' they'd include a "reprinted from yesterday's late edition" article.

So anyway I got out my pencil and the scorebook along with the statistics for the young year. I like to keep score for some of the games because it's something to keep your mind on while you're listening and then it's easier to update the statistics for each player right after the game. Then I went down cellar and opened up the top drawer of the dresser filled with toys and saw my collection of rubber balls. I picked out the shiny new red one whose cover squeaked with freshness when I rubbed my fingers into it to prepare it for the game. I usually bought a new supply of balls at Strang's every few weeks or so, and some of the older used balls were in the drawer though many more were scattered about the house and yard. Most of the fairly new balls had cracked covers and you can make new cracks in 'em with your fingernails and shove your fingers around inside to the center of the ball. The

older ones are all coverless, their shiny plastic covers worn off long ago from play, and their roundness completely gone. You can peel chunks of the rubber off these balls and they look kinda like one of the smaller planets in the universe, Pluto maybe, which Mrs. Czech, the art teacher made for us one day, they're all bumps and craters and dingy brown.

Carrying the ball in my left hand, I went upstairs to get dressed. I put on fresh white socks still smellin' clean from the morning wash; low black Keds, 'cause they look most like spikes; blue jeans; a white tee shirt; and over that my blue baseball jacket with just the Yankee patch sewed on. I always marvelled at the guy who designed it. It's majestic, the round red circle over the blue background forming a stitched baseball and the sweeping "Yankees" lettering highlighted by the "K" formed by a slanted bat capped by a red, white, and blue Abe Lincoln hat.

Then I went downstairs in the closet and got out my Yankee hat, not with an NY patched on, but with the stitched letters for the interwoven "Y" over the "N" just like the real players. It's not an ordinary "Y" either, ya know, its stem is just a little bit stretchier and the forks seem to reach just a little bit higher and wider than most. Most people think of the pinstripes when they think of the grandeur and tradition of the Yankees, but when I look at the stitched "NY" on my cap it brings a feeling over me kinda like watchin' **The Babe Ruth Story** or Lou Gehrig's **Pride of the Yankees**.

Putting on the cap is not a task to be taken lightly. Ya don't put it on backside first like most of the colored players do but with your right hand ya

place the bill part on first, then with your left hand you gently coax the back side down over your head 'til it fits just right.

* * *

I went upstairs, got my good luck chain from my room and put it in the pocket of my pants, then went into my dad's room for the first game. I turned on the T.V., channel 11, just as Mel Allen was finishing the first of many Ballantine Beer commercials to come. Red Barber ran down the starting lineups, but I was ahead of him putting in the names of Richardson, Kubek, Maris, Mantle... before the ol' Redhead got his chance to drawl them out in his patient, slow-moving, almost falling asleep Southern voice.

"...Rojah...had ... himself ... quite. a game...heah ... last night ... wouldn't you say ... Mel?"

Amid the sounds of another fight between Jimmy and Dickie I watched the first game. It went quickly. The Yankees were flat and Gary Peters of the White Sox had great control. The Yankees were beaten 3-1. Nothing I did worked. I got out the red ball in the fifth when they were down two to zip, tossed it in the air a few times, even tried throwing it against the wall when the Yanks were up and lettin' the rebound get by me for a base hit, but it didn't work. I got the chain out in the seventh. The chain is just a small thing. My mom sometimes goes down to the G & H Hardware Store to get some stuff and I go along with her and we park in the back. When ya enter through the back door they have all these chains wrapped around and around on these big rollers, kinda like thread is wrapped around a spool, and they're all sizes and shapes, big thick ones and small silky ones, but I



kinda like this little thin one, and my mom buys me some whenever we go there. Well, this one time, they had some really neat chain, real thin and fancy, and my mom bought me about five inches of it and that's my good luck chain for the Yanks. I wrap it around my index finger when the Yanks are in trouble and twirl my finger so it unwinds and then winds back up the other way. But it didn't help either. Something was wrong, but I didn't know what it was. It was kinda a scary feeling. Even when Stottlemire would put one right down the middle and my right hand would jump up to signal a strike, the ump would call it a ball or the batter would connect for a hit.

There was something wrong.

After the game I walked dejectedly into my room and picked up my glove. There would be about twenty minutes 'til the second game started. When I walked downstairs I saw Mr. Cole, Dickie's father, come storming into our house, right into the living room.

"Alright, where is he? Where's the Big Man?"

Mr. Cole is a short fellow and has a raspy voice. Whenever you call up the Cole's house he answers the phone with a sharp "Col' here!" and someday Jimmy's gonna say something to him like, "Oh, sorry to hear it, why don't you turn up the heat?" Anyway, Dickie was standing behind his dad when Jimmy stalked into the room, and he had that silly look on his face. Dickie was wearing his red and white checked shirt and his butch haircut, just like all the other boys in his family. There are eight. Jimmy and Mr. Cole went face to face, my brother being just as tall as Dickie's father and quite a bit bigger, and they began

shouting back and forth just like an umpire and a manager. From the look on his face Dickie had to hold himself back from burstin' out laughin'.

I usually listen to the radio games on the back porch, but I just grabbed my dad's G.E. radio which always seems to need batteries and along with my chain and redball and glove and hat I headed for our big back lot behind the garage. My mom asked me when I was gonna eat and when I was gonna do my homework, but I just said "later", and Vickie, my older sister, was cryin' 'cause she just got off the phone with some guy, but I just hightailed it to the backyard. We've got the biggest backyard in the neighborhood and it's pretty well cut off from everything. It's got the garage and house hiding it from the street on the west side and three big willows which cover up the north side and a forest all along the east side, leaving just the top part, the south side and part of the west side beyond the garage, unsheltered. It sure is a pain to mow all the grass, though. We play softball back there and the only one who ever catches the balls out of the willow tree in deep centerfield is Dickie Cole, and he does it with his eyes closed, I swear. In football, though, when we play tackle (touch on Jim), I get on my brother's team and we run an end sweep in which he leads the blocking and I run behind him and nobody can get through Jimmy to tackle me. And then when Dickie gets the ball Jimmy runs up to him and Dickie gets down on his knees and cries, "I'm down, I'm down!" But Jimmy throws him into the bushes anyway.

So I went into the back and put the

radio down by the fence in Bessie's yard next to the garage, and I was playing the game by throwin' the red rubber ball against the back of the garage, like if Pepitone was up, I'd pitch it low against the board along the bottom of the garage and the ball would sail way over my head through the willow branches. But Pepi would strike out or something. Something was wrong.

The Yankees lost the second game and Red Barber said he couldn't remember the last time when the Yankees had lost a doubleheader and I knew there was something wrong and I went into the deep part of the yard and was throwing high flies to myself, and I'd go way back to Bessie's fence and lean over it making great catches of sure homeruns just like Maris used to do.

And then I saw something which must have been going on for sometimes, but I hadn't seen while I was listening to the game. Up there by the top part of the yard, almost hidden by the bushes were Dickie Cole and a girl named Hank Kundert. They were lyin' on the ground, real close to each other, and kissin' and kinda movin' all around. As I turned away I saw the sun settin' real low in the west, with just the last few rays of goodness and light leapin' up at me in a blaze of dyin' warmth.

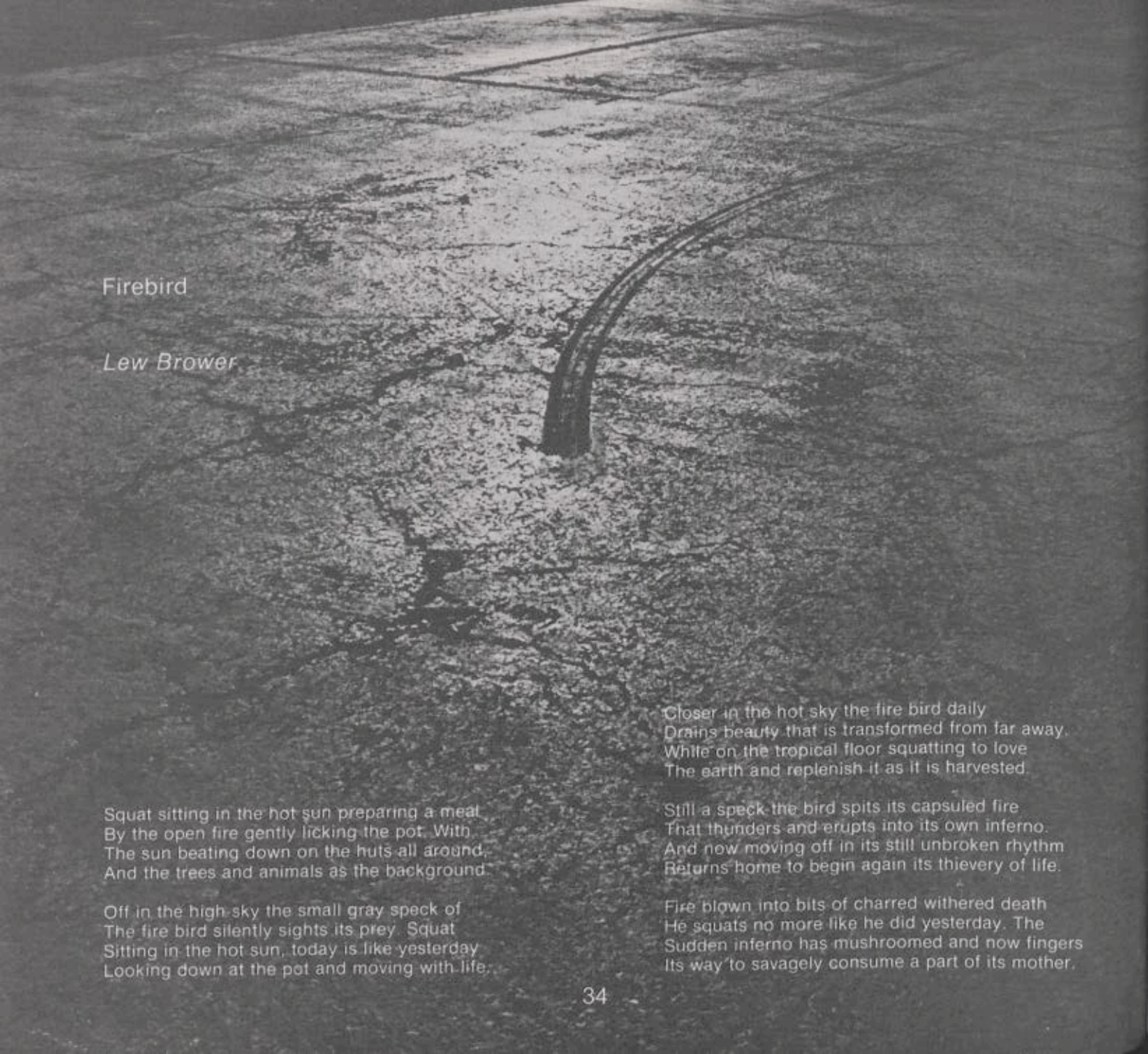
I didn't feel like goin' in to eat or do homework so I went out in front of our house under the streetlight and pitched the ball against the wall made from the flagstones which we got in Vermont. And I was playin' for a long time, and the Yankees were winnin' again, and then the chain fell out of my pocket onto the road. And a car was comin' down the street and like



always I pretended Red Barber was announcing my game — "Yes, suh...there's ... another... sweepah... comin' through... the Stadium... sure are... keeping' ...the Stadium ... clean ... these days ... wouldn't you say...Mel?"

And as I stepped back out of the road the car swept by real close, it was Sonny and K. C. Maguire out with their father's car 'cause he wasn't home, and they came screechin' by me to pull into their driveway and the rear wheel ran over the chain and pushed it into the sewer which is under the street lamp.

There sure was something wrong.



Firebird

Lew Brower

Squat sitting in the hot sun preparing a meal
By the open fire gently licking the pot. With
The sun beating down on the huts all around.
And the trees and animals as the background.

Off in the high sky the small gray speck of
The fire bird silently sights its prey. Squat
Sitting in the hot sun, today is like yesterday
Looking down at the pot and moving with life.

Closer in the hot sky the fire bird daily
Drains beauty that is transformed from far away.
While on the tropical floor squatting to love
The earth and replenish it as it is harvested.

Still a speck the bird spits its capsuled fire
That thunders and erupts into its own inferno.
And now moving off in its still unbroken rhythm
Returns home to begin again its thievery of life.

Fire blown into bits of charred withered death
He squats no more like he did yesterday. The
Sudden inferno has mushroomed and now fingers
Its way to savagely consume a part of its mother.

Window Seat

Rod Aldrich

Blank faces evenly spaced among
the rectangular perspective array.

My body does not...

Little glass beads hang upon
a dirty green transparent film.

..resist the padded...

Fluttering drops merge to dance
a race against the flash by signs.

..jerks in changing gears...

Worn grass blurs gold beside
the gray edge of something black.

..but is pressed down...

Heavy drone fills the gap between
rhythmic claks of scraping arms.

..by the unseen river...

Far red spots float in pairs
of pairs amid close dark forms.

..which carries the falling rain.

Untitled

Steve Ramm

They follow me,
Old men who sit alone,
Close by city streets
Bent forward broken mouths
Left open, mocking prophets
In their silence. Old;
Left frozen against the image
Of men who hurry home.

They follow, blind,
With their cracked
Faces saddled in mourning
Last breath gleaming above
Their eyes, hanging with
Promise lost.
Taking time with broken hands,
Beggars sifting trash in empty streets.

Loving

Caroline Elgar

Mrs. Morriston sat in her favorite chair, pushing at the little dog with her foot. He would not move and having given up attaining a softer alternative, curled up around the foot and slept. She frowned at him, but left him where he was, taking care not to disturb him.

The chair had been placed in front of a window so that she could watch the day pass in solitude. She had been helped into the chair, her dress smoothed and the curtains drawn open. The helpers had fled to more pressing duties, knowing Mrs. Morriston was content to spend a good portion of the day resting herself and looking through the glass pane.

A girl stood on the lawn under the big tree. She was too small to reach the first branch but still she tried, scraping red sneakers on the gritty bark and hitching up the old dungarees over her skinny hips. Impatient, but always courageous, the adventurer kicked at the tree, too absorbed to notice her companion creeping through the shrubbery towards her. He grabbed at the back of her shirt and she jumped in surprise. She pushed him to the ground and they wrestled for a moment, struggling for some private triumph. A white cloaked figure discovered the two; in dismay he gestured at the well tended grass, scolding the children who gazed at him with indifferent eyes. Mrs. Morriston knew these two from the third grade class she had

taught ten years ago. She remembered the aggravation she herself had felt when confronted by guilty faces that became defensively blank at her demands for obedience. The boy had once, (she remembered it well), spilled ink over his white shirt front, and the girl always encouraged him in his pranks.

Now the two retreated to the gravel drive, watching solemnly as white coat flapped his officious folds. The mother appeared from somewhere and joined in the lecture, pointing at a smashed flower bed angrily. She and white coat smiled in agreement and began a conversation while the small criminals ran away. Mrs. Morriston knew the girl, one of her favorite pupils, would rip a delicate frock in school the next day, but she would forgive her. She always forgave that one as she was uncommonly bright and quite adept at arithmetic. The boy, unfortunately, was an incurable rascal, despite her best efforts to discipline him.

"Mother," A young woman approached her from behind the chair. A baby reached out from her arms, singing in tiny gurgles. "I've decided to call her Rachel. I've given her your name, Mother." An older man was with her; she looked at him fondly and his presence comforted her. "Isn't that wonderful, Rae? I knew you'd be pleased."

"It certainly is very nice, dear." She received the child, took her into her lap. Carefully she looked at the face.

"She has a definite likeness to you, dear, especially around the mouth."

"I think she looks rather like you, Rae. Beautiful like her grandmother." He embraced her and took her packages from under the desk. "Don't you want to come home now? Leave your work for tomorrow."

"But these are the spelling tests I promised I'd have corrected by tomorrow."

"The children don't care, darling. Besides, I wish you'd stop teaching. You have grandchildren to look after now." He beamed at the baby in her lap.

"Yes, I think perhaps next year."

"Mother, come home with us. Jack is waiting. We want to celebrate, the five of us." The daughter emphasized the word "five" as if it were strange to her. She sounded a little uncertain, but content in her new role. A grandmother. Could she be getting that old? She decided she would rest before dinner and leave the spelling tests.

The dog moved, stretching his short legs and scratching an ear. Mrs. Morriston pushed at him again and he looked at her, disgusted at her inhospitality. "I have to fix dinner now, dog. It's time for dinner."

"Have you taken your pills yet today?" They lay on the tray before her, yellow and orange, next to a paper cup filled with water. The white sleeve was prodding at her, putting the pills into a shaking hand. She had made a dress that color once, Celia

looked so well in orange. "But Mother, I hate orange. I refuse to wear it." They had argued so bitterly sometimes.

"Come now, be a good darling, Rae, and do take them." Someone should tell this impudent girl to speak to her properly. She took the pills and the sleeve disappeared with the tray.

Tears. Celia cried often. "Why, oh why? What could I have done wrong, Mother? I'm healthy, I've had one child who lived, there's no reason. . . ." There had been a reason, one she couldn't remember, but it didn't matter now anyway. She would have offered her life for the child, but the Maker had seen fit to take that one away even before the first breath. A small hole in the ground and a voice had proclaimed, "He, in his glory, has taken this babe, a male child, yet unborn, into his Holy Kingdom." Little Rae had romped among the quiet stones, oblivious to sorrow. Yes, there had been others, not too long afterwards, who had lived. She, Mrs. Morriston, has always yearned after this silent one, a victim of a misplaced boon from her God.

A man, well-dressed and efficient, strolled across the lawn. He leaned against the tree, smoking a cigarette. As if he had suddenly realized where he was, he started and threw the cigarette away, smashing it into the grass. "So impulsive," she thought and smiled. Jack had been an impulsive boy and had grown to become an impulsive man. She had always liked Jack and was relieved when Celia had chosen him over that other beau, the ill mannered, swarthy looking one. "What do you think, Jack?" she called out to him. He grinned and waved at her, walked over to her to tell

her about some business escapade that he could claim as a personal victory. "Mother Morriston, you're a bright gal. Why don't you come with me to the next buyer's convention? Hoo boy, would they all stare at us! What do you say, think we'd make a good pair? Together we could cook up a deal that would make us millions, right? Two brains like ours. . . ." She laughed and he put his arm around her, dancing her across the room. "Honestly Jack," Celia giggled, "Do let Mother sit down."

The man lit another cigarette and looked at his watch. A white coat beckoned to him from the driveway; scowling, he turned away and walked into one of the gardens. The white coat shrugged and followed him.

Two people stood next to her chair. They were speaking in quiet tones, almost whispering. A few words escaped their guarded secrecy. ". . . doesn't know you at all. Of course, she can't remember."

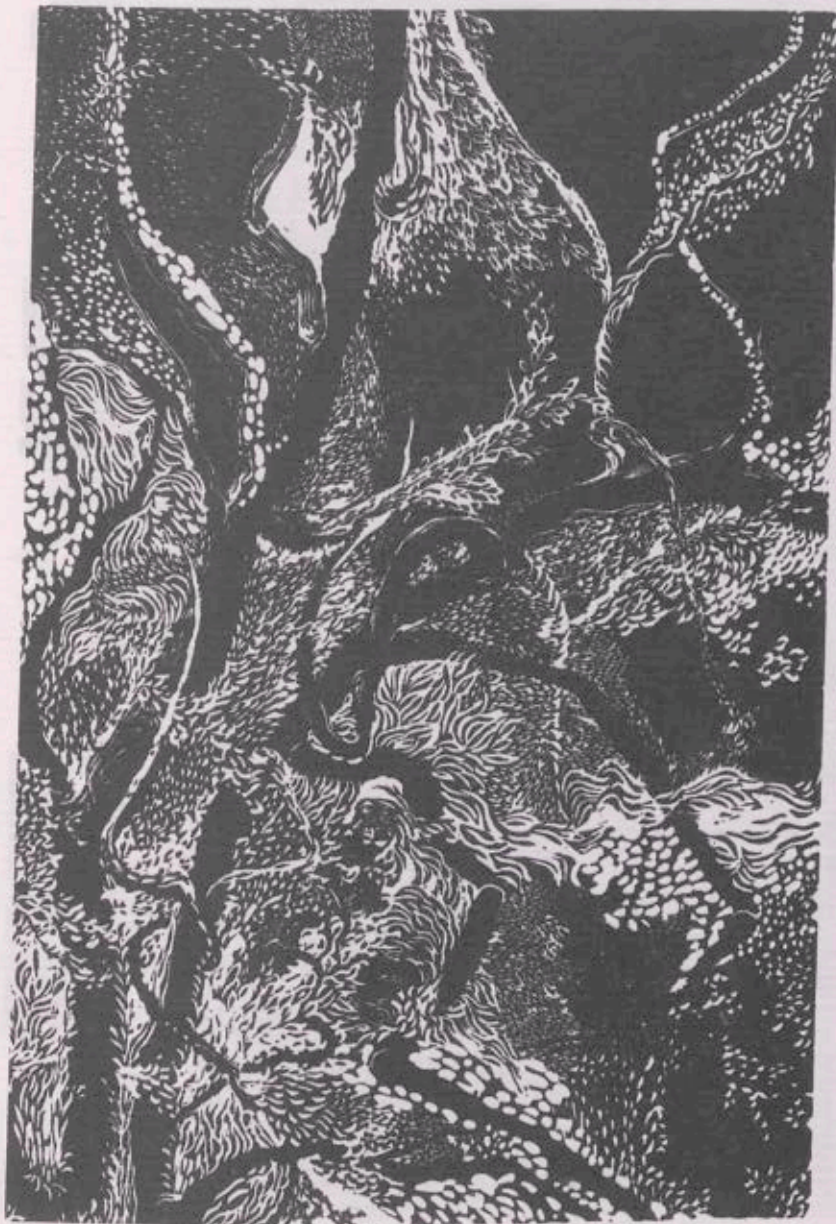
A pale moon materialized in front of her, dark eyes blinking rapidly. "Do you remember me? Don't you remember me?" Somewhere around the mouth, the expression jarred her temporarily. Around the mouth, there was something familiar here. Then the face was gone and her memory rolled back into a cloud of other thoughts.

"Come along, Rae." The man took the young woman's arm. "Of course she doesn't. Please don't be upset, sweetheart. You know what the doctors said about her. . . ."

The sun was gone from Mrs. Morriston's window. Outside someplace a car door slammed. A taxi cab disappeared down the driveway but she didn't notice. Mrs. Morriston

had fallen asleep, thinking, dreaming of the smallest silent one.



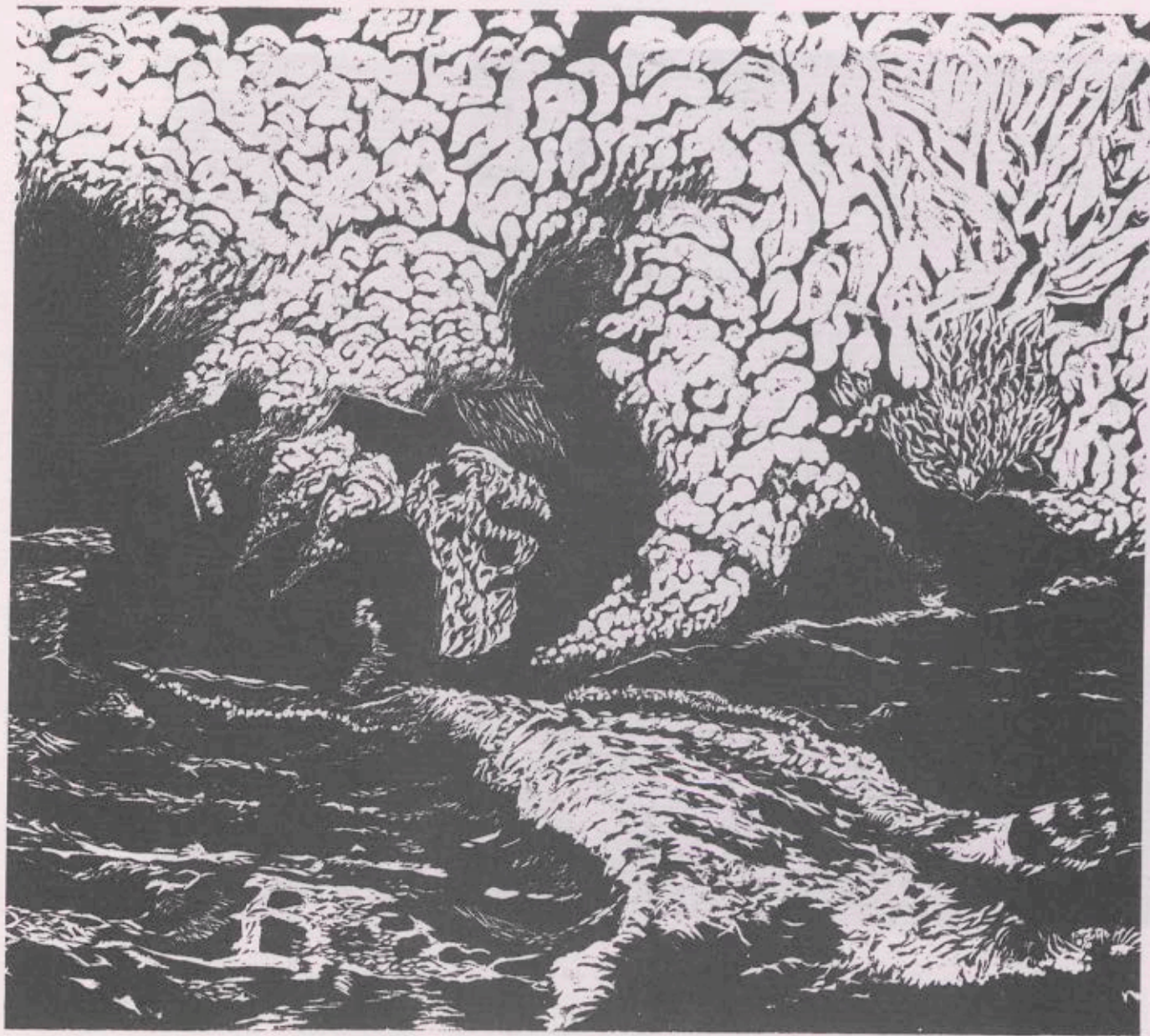


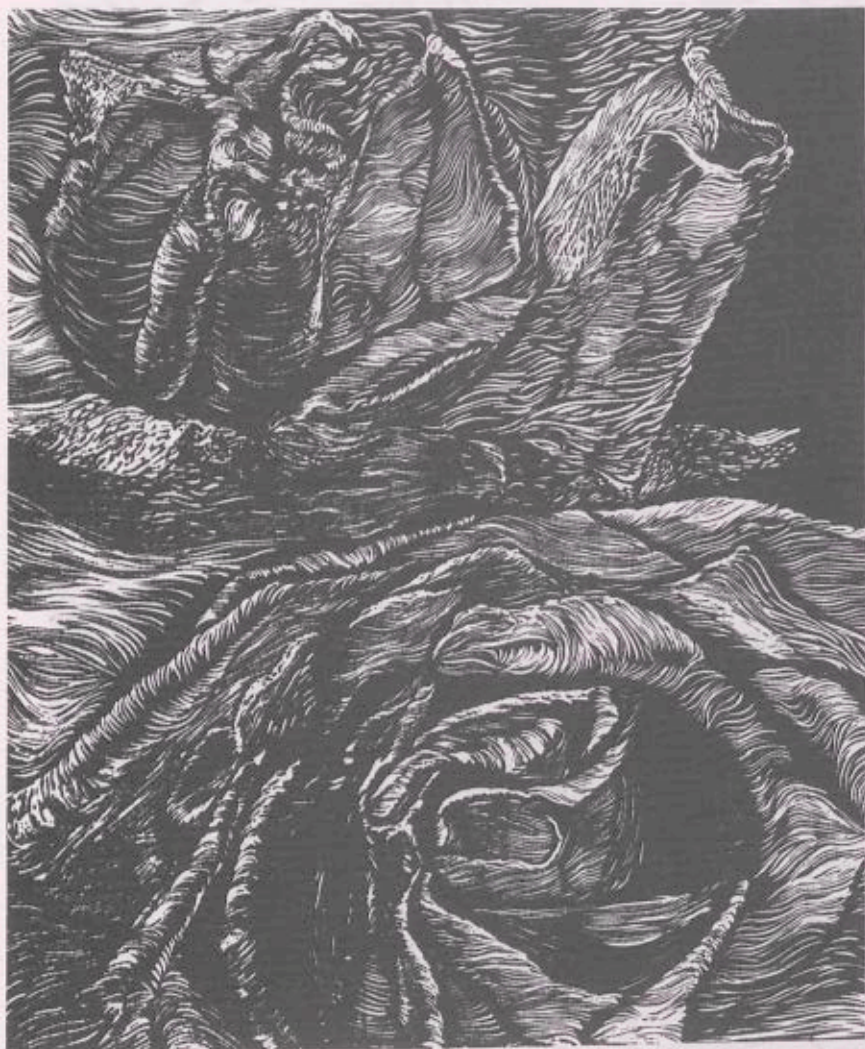
**A Gallery
of Student Prints**













Falling

George Miller

An old man. I'm an old man now, but when I was a boy I would have marvelous dreams. Of falling. High above the ground, at the top of a tree or a building, somehow I would fall, and hit the ground. But I would never be hurt. I had this dream many times and in different ways, but in each I would have all the sensation of falling thru the air, the fear, and the excitement, and the half sensation of flying, that moment beyond when you knew you could hit the ground safely, as in a jump. I'd be beyond that, be in the air past that moment, but always still land unhurt, and almost gracefully.

When I was eleven my parents began building our home. It was what they had always wanted; the house that would mean leaving the apartment, all the apartments, and the landlords who would come to collect the rent. My father had worked for a while as a carpenter, and he would talk to my mother about how to construct a house, and what kind of house we would have when there was enough money, and how it was possible for them to do it themselves, because he knew how. They began in the spring, and every night and on weekends we would drive to the land we had bought, and work on the house. Sometimes my grandfather would come, and talk to my father about how it was coming, and what was to be done next. My father would listen to him quietly, but never ask any questions. I'd help by carrying nails and shingles to my mother father, or

by putting two x fours near the places they would be used next. I remember I always had my hands in my pockets then. Even when I was carrying something I would try to hold it under an arm, or in one hand, and have the other in my pocket. I would be bringing my parents something, and my mother would tell me, "Take your hand out of your pocket. God gave you two hands so you'd use them both." My father would look over and say, "Yeah, He might think you're playing with yourself," and then laugh at my mother's shocked expression.

In one of my dreams I was by myself, on the roof of our house. I could see my parents on the ground, working on the lawn, raking and seeding it. They didn't notice me, though I was standing on the edge, watching. I leaned over, looking at them, and then fell. I was falling very fast but I stayed in the air a long time. I thought that I would be killed, smashed on the ground at their feet but I couldn't cry out, I tried but I couldn't. I kept falling and falling, finally coming close to the ground, and then landing on my hands and knees. I realized I hadn't been hurt, and stood up and looked at my parents, but they hadn't seen me fall. They turned around and saw me, but it was as though I had been there all along.

The dreams of old men are short and drugged, and often forgotten as soon as you wake. On the second floor of the convalescent home where I now stay, there is a lobby, where other old people spend their afternoons. Some in wheelchairs, we talk quietly among ourselves, speaking of the same people and events many times over. I often sit by the window, and look for hours at the beautiful

land on which this home was built.

My grandfather had been a sailor, and had tattoos of naked women on his arms, and one of a snake on the back of his hand. Every time he came to the house he'd play the same game with me. I'd come up to him, and he'd reach down and wrap one arm around my head, and then pin me against the side of his leg. I'd try to get away but he would hold me there. He would bring his other hand up to his forehead, like a visor, and look straight out and all around, and say, "Where's Billy, where'd he go. I haven't seen him around all day." Then he'd look down at me, and laugh and say, "There you are, so that's where you went," and then let me go.

The last time I ever had a dream about falling, I was on a bicycle, and going very fast down a steep hill. Somehow the bike fell but I was thrown somersaulting high into the air. Below me I could see the wheels of the bicycle spinning slowly on their side. I began to fall back towards the ground, but I knew the dream well by then, and felt only a little doubt, a small amount of fear. I fell through the tops of a group of bushes and landed unhurt, with the excitement of falling still with me. There was moss on the ground, and the leaves of the bushes were closed in a circle around me. I could hardly see thru the roof they formed above. I thought then that I had found a secret hiding place, one that I could always go to. And I thought that I would never tell anyone of it.

The Flick

Scott Wittet

"It's a strange film that you're about to see—an imaginary epic filled with life and love, important thoughts and ultimate triviality. It ends in death but then continues—the show goes on another night. Bulbs light and grow dim then they shatter as the reels turn. These spin as time unwinds and brightens your life—leaving you a little more mystified, your children grow more sure."

The lecturer, a distinguished looking young man, continued, gesturing grandly with his arms one moment then shrinking down into himself the next. He held his audience like a mesmerist—their bodies swayed with the rhythms of his Hollywood speech, and when he rose they sensed a glorious human potential. When he fell the weight of the earth was on their necks.

"This is not the type of movie that you are probably accustomed to viewing. It's no storybook romance and no suspense thriller though it is the stuff of them. And one couldn't call it a mystery because it has no solution, no right and wrong. You see, rather than being good or bad it is content to simply exist and here, perhaps, is the key. All that I can say for certain about it is that it seems to be there. It is a work of art working on our basic, subconscious drives. It excites us on levels we don't suspect and over which we have no control. My film is an environment, it invokes the seasons of the mind, it paints the color of our thoughts. To appreciate

it, please relax and accept, watch without interior critical commentary. Listen to the music for it is designed to help you in your relationship to the film. It will aid in the total experience, one shared by every person in this room. I will be available afterwards to answer your questions."

Vic Garner thanked them and paused for a moment onstage, ignoring the applause, examining the audience for the second time that night. They seemed pleased with the introduction and excited to begin this new adventure, this touch of the avant-garde in their dreary outback lives. Descending the stairs carefully, he headed for his customary back row seat where he waited only long enough for the house lights to be lowered before he exited in search of tonight's dinner.

Outside of the theatre was Main Street, a collection of scar-faced buildings, ragged posters peeling from red brick store fronts, and dirty neon signs epileptically lighting. "Another Okie hole," he growled, kicking up a pile of red dust, watching it collect in balls and roll to a stop in the corner. A diner promised greasy dinner on a stool but Vic entered quickly, sat and checked a menu, trying to avoid a look at the other customers. His life, lately, had been a string of small dirt-towns—days checked off on an Oklahoma road map, along back roads and cheesy turnpikes. His shows seemed to be beads gathered on a lengthy chain,

each one representing the hungry crowds waiting for his words to convince them to stay and see the movie. They needed his lectures which were concerned with the surrealistic philosophy of a severed hand, groping, or the subconscious psychology in a homosexual embrace. I'm running out of my twenties, he thought, and I'm still on the road. But Vic's job was travelling. He knew nothing about the art of the director or producer; his business was explaining. Vic had a product to sell.

The cook took Vic's order and returned quickly with a bowl of chili. Watching it congeal, he imagined the rows of small-town frat cats back at the theatre, the Women's Club presidents and the high school principals, the bored and the curious, sitting up in their seats, anxiously waiting for explicit shots, for graphics, for the seamy side of modern art. "They just come for the titshots," Vic sneered. It seemed amazing to him the way that the film fascinated them though. There was never a moment when the audience was not panting or sighing, screaming or gasping or smiling to themselves, or chuckling secretly but in fact giggling along with everyone else. One scene was particularly effective. It started out with a shot of an expansive lawn, well maintained and easily the pride of any suburban rat racing. From the loudspeakers came a plaintive meow. The audience gradually became aware of its source

as they scanned the ground. Somebody had accomplished the seemingly impossible task of burying a cat neck-deep in their front yard. A circular patch of sod had been cleared, about 3 feet in diameter, from the center of which issued a feline head, obviously hungry, fatigued by the effort of her unheeded cries. The camera moved down to a ground-level, close-up shot. Twin ears stiffened as she first sensed vibrations in the ground that gradually manifested themselves as a deep and continuous roar coupled with the lethal chatter of rocks, twigs, and a rotating blade. A lawnmower, rider type, rounded the corner of the house in a wide arc, then corrected its course towards her. The driver, an excited kid, probably twelve or fourteen years old, nervously toyed with the steering wheel while attempting to align his path perfectly with the barren spot of ground. The screen image shifted from cat—eyes wide with terror, the muscles of her face contorting spasmodically—to approaching behemoth, to the fascinated and maniacal eyes of the operator, blinking and bugging out and biting his lower lip. The audience always hold tight onto armrests; they try to believe it won't happen and stare, paralysed, at the screen. Then they come back again and again to revel in disgust.

Vic pushed the empty bowl across the counter and stood, stretching his arms and arching his back. A slight wave of nausea attacked his stomach but he ignored it and threw a bill at the cashier. As the screen door slammed shut behind him, Vic knew that he would never eat in that diner again, never even re-see the place. But he couldn't forget it. Once Vic had taken it into his body it became part of his

mind.

The streets were deserted—it seemed as if everyone was either at the show or had already retired with their wives, for their Saturday night specials. They would have gone to bed with tightly drawn curtains, for the summer sky was still light though the horizon had become tinged with red, illuminating the cracked, rusty fields and the choking clouds of red dust. These seemed to flame, to burn, devouring themselves in the hot summer evening. They would be black and dead, burnt come night.

A small park between dime stores, merely a bench and a few thirsty trees gave Vic a chance to rest and digest his meal. The seat felt familiar as he settled onto it, a reflection of other evenings in other small towns wasting hours alone. People don't even walk their dogs here, he thought. And where are the bums, the guys who prop themselves up to talk to you—to tell you about their younger days, their women, the ships and trains they rode—then collapse back into a private world, dreams that taste of vomit. Here there was nobody, but Vic could not leave for he had a show the next day, a matinee, then he had to be back on the road. It would be a long drive to the next town, the distance left little time for a social life, little enough even for sleep. The miles drag you down, he thought. That dust cloud rising from the wheels, behind me, is my energy. How long will it be before I run out and all the dust settles?

Vic sat and watched the sun move lower and lower, fall practically and hide behind the earth. He began to walk, pretty aimlessly to his mind, but in the direction of his hotel, towards

the tavern in the lobby. Joylessly, inevitably, he swung open the double doors and chose a booth. The barmaid could come to him. He carefully hung his coat, he would need it to be clean and unwrinkled for the next two shows, and sat, facing towards the darkened street. A big, round clock over the window garishly endorsed some obscure beer. A couple of dim lamps, crooked on the wall, were nearly the only illumination, the only way to distinguish a few shadowy forms sloughing over the bar. He was glancing furtively around the place, waiting for the bartender or someone to serve him a drink, when he noticed a woman. He turned to intercept her gaze from the back of the room. She wore a short skirt, dark green, above her long white legs. Deep almond eyes stared out from a pale, cold face. Framed by her hair, black as space, it seemed to shine like moonlight. He was attracted to her smile, peaceful and childish, and the vacuum intensity of her great, blank eyes—unimaginably cold, still, and tempting.

Slipping off the barstool, she moved gracefully towards the paralytic, the Victor-corpse in the booth. Tearing away from those eyes, rising from a pit, he only managed a grin, a clumsy invitation. Silently she sat with her drink and looked around the bar, accepting the trough horses and sipping pigs as her own. Coldly she took everything—the torn vinyl of the stools, the floordirt, flies, and cheap wine—in. Vic felt that she could as easily adopt starlets bathed in Hollywood neon or the bourgeoisie bored at a mountain resort.

"Fresh one?" he asked, indicating her empty glass with an unsteady

finger. She nodded and Vic called for the waitress—too fast, he realised, after it was already too late. The drink arrived and he tried to speak like an adult, as if he were in control. He tried to speak to her but she pulled constantly at him, answering softly, almost mocking his words yet accepting the intent, accepting his nervousness and idiocy.

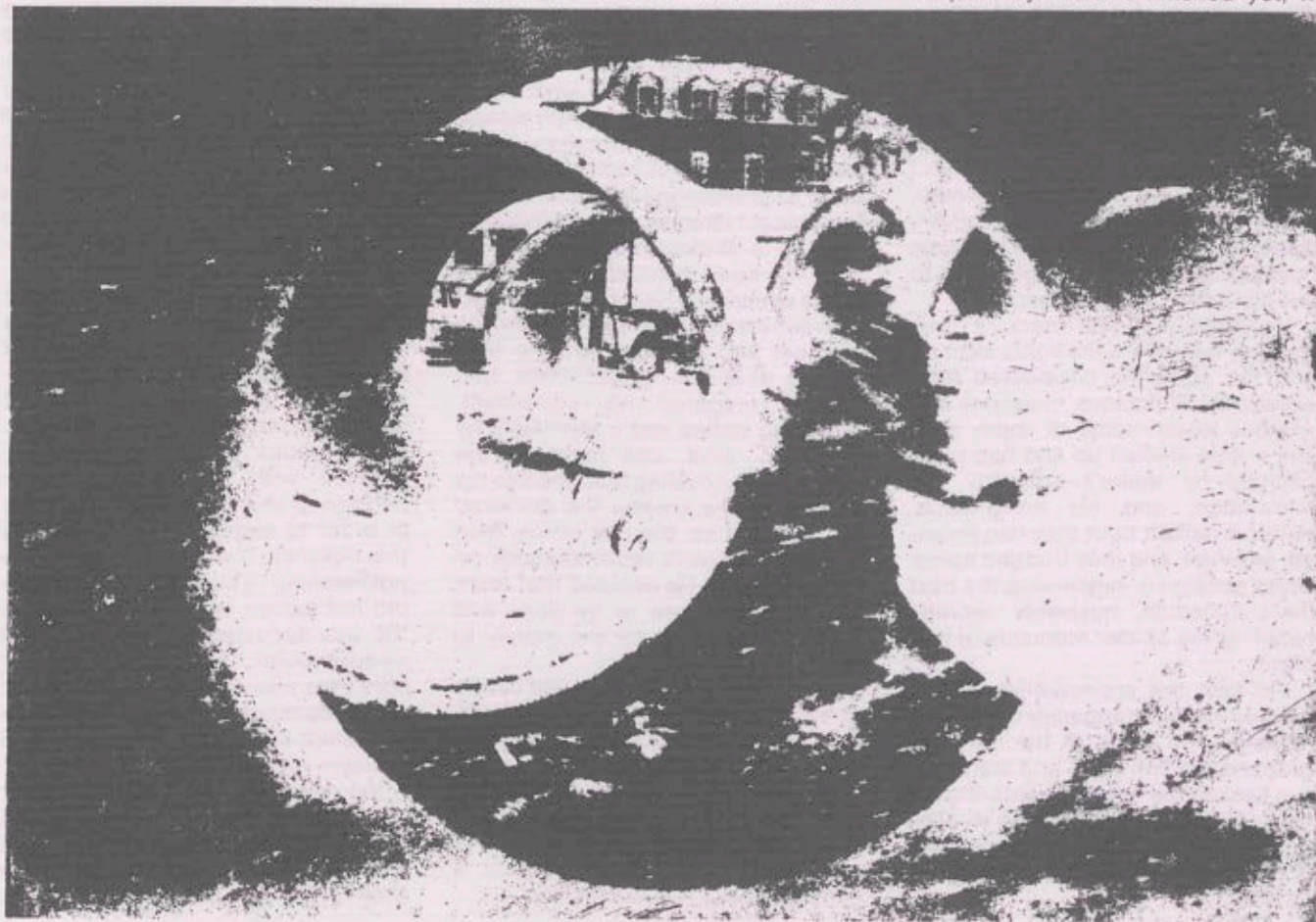
"What are you doing tonight?" she

asked with another smile, repeating Vic's ignored question of ten minutes before.

"I've got to go back, pack up my movie and collect the door receipts. I'll be free, then, I guess." He paused. "There's really not too much to do around here..."

Interrupting him, she made quick and precise arrangements to meet later. Vic stared back flounder-

mouthed. I'll have to pick up something to drink, he thought, confused, noticing her hair again and those terrific eyes, or will she want to smoke? He was worried that she'd disappear as suddenly and as easily as she had arrived. He shifted his gaze to the clock in order to think; it was getting late. With a start Vic remembered the show. My god, I hope they haven't finished yet, he



thought, grabbing for his coat.

Vic excused himself now hurriedly smiling and, one arm in a sleeve, said goodbye. He wanted to reach out and touch the girl before he left. Vic only managed to amiably pat her shoulder, "Christ!", rushing past.

The theatre was a few blocks down from the hotel; Vic broke into a trot. He began to perspire in the sticky heat. Moths and flies, maddened by the nearness of a bright, gleaming power, swarmed in a chaotic cloud around the streetlamps. They flew, blinded, at Vic's face, or he ran into them. He was wondering if she was a whore. Not with so much class, he thought. Still...

He could see the marquee now, darkened since intermission. Ah, what the hell if she wants a couple bucks, a chick like her. A guy's got to get his rocks off somehow.

Fortunately there were a few minutes left before the lights went up and the audience considered their questions. Ridiculous questions and anxious ones—some of them were still a little shaken up and had to be pacified by Victor's authority, his knowledge, and his imagination. Within a half an hour they had finished, satisfied, and they trudged home; wives gossiping, rehearsing the next day's schedule, husbands secretly recalling the spicier moments of that night.

Vic paid the projectionist, having already made arrangements with the manager for rental of the building, grabbed the film cans, and started to run back to the hotel. Re-entering the bug cloud he remembered to slow down, to calm himself. Vic got cool and started to whistle a song from the radio.

She was waiting for him outside of the lounge. The bartender had locked up and gone home. Vic gazed into her eyes, he admired her movements, her shape. Apparently there was nothing to say. She turned towards the stairs, Vic watched her walk; he followed her to his room. Vic had bought no whiskey, was empty handed, excited.

Vic awoke wanting her again but something was wrong. She had disappeared with the sunlight in his window; he felt the bed as if for any trace of her, of her departure. Uncomfortable, Vic began to dress, then looked at his watch. He had overslept, it was well past noon, and had only an hour or so to prepare for the matinee performance. His eyes were red and he needed to shower but there was no time. His body responded inefficiently. He whipped a tie around his neck, shaved electrically—fast—threw on his coat and was out into the hall, hoping that the projectionist had already prepared his equipment. Grabbing coffee and a sandwich, he chose to drive, one hand on the wheel, one shoveling bologna into his mouth. At the theatre Vic delivered the film, set up the box office, then went to the men's room to check on himself again. He decided that there was nothing more to be done and waited, backstage, for the money to flow in.

As he sat amongst the great banks of switches and obsolete props Vic wondered if she would come by to see the movie. He couldn't remember even mentioning it last night—had she known why he was there, about his performance, his lecture? He seemed to have forgotten about it himself during the lovemaking.

Vic could hear them filling in now, talking and wandering, waving to friends across the aisles. When most of them were seated he advanced, with a few unnecessary notes, to the podium. Vic scanned the audience. They seemed fairly typical in outward appearance, a normal mixture of human types, but they were noisy, especially for a Sunday crowd. They were restless, waiting almost a minute after Vic had arranged himself behind the lectern before growing quiet enough for him to begin. Even then they were more eager and attentive than usual; they seemed strangely animated, energized. There were, among them, one or two isolated hecklers whom Vic had come to expect—kids who would make jokes at words they did not understand—but he was surprised when older, more dignified, people responded to their cheap cracks. Spontaneous laughter arose in different sections of the auditorium, not general amusement as if his fly were down, but seemingly senseless outbursts within small groups here and there. Vic fidgeted with his sheets, though perhaps to change the tone of his talk in order to engage them, to abolish this distance. It wasn't as if they were not listening to his words, rather, they did not exhibit the respect to which Vic was accustomed; they were not awed enough. One man with bright little eyes was smiling amiably at him as he concluded the speech. When Vic stepped down he heard him chuckle with the applause.

Vic felt more urgently than ever now the need to find the black-haired girl. He saw her nowhere in the crowd as he walked towards the rear of the theatre. He did not wait for the film to

begin but left directly and climbed into his car without any real destination. It seemed feasible that she might have returned to the hotel, maybe she'd only stepped out for lunch, so he drove up Main Street, eyes darting back and forth to each sidewalk. The desk clerk had seen no one leave that morning, had no idea what her name might be. Vic was back on the street again before he realised that everything was closed until Monday, that there was no place left to look. A wind had come up, making vision difficult with the clouds it raised from the parched farmland. Vic drove, still searching the walkways for her, squinting to see through the dust in the blinding sun. He began to turn back onto the main road without looking and was shocked at the blast of a

horn. He hit his brakes and turned to see a huge truck barreling past, the driver scowling at him in annoyance and fright. Before Vic's eyes flashed the scene of the cat, he felt her helplessness and urgency, the adrenalin excited necessity of escape. Shaking the illusion off he proceeded frantically; he headed for the theatre, for his seat far in the back.

The darkness, as he stood in the auditorium doorway, did nothing to calm him. He tried to speed the dilation of his pupils in order to orient himself; he dropped into a seat. Vic's hands were still shaking, he rubbed his eyes and slouched in the chair, took deep breaths to slow the mental activity. This place was safe, solid. Gradually Vic found that he could see the others around him; they were

deeply involved with the film. He glanced down his row and noticed, seated in the middle, the girl for whom he had been looking. Vic did not bother to stare, to make certain, but rose, stumbling over chair legs and into armrests. He finally reached the seat next to hers. She turned to look at him and smiled. Vic leaned towards her ear. He wanted to tell her about his life, how the people, the animals, were devouring him in their hunger, how the dust and the roads were tearing at his skin, leaving it raw and burning. He longed for the cool power of her touch. Vic leaned towards her and whispered. As he spoke his words roared over the loudspeakers in the ceiling, swept as a wave through the theatre, battering his eardrums. Victor's face, onscreen, winced in pain.



the trees have dominion again
they are the only creatures of the air
Nimblest, quickest to catch spattering snow
the most patient to garner it
unmoving

tenderly cradled by tufted fingers
(Grey sings the sky of its own
blue croons the sky through clumpy branches)
upward, through singing air
rises the snow on fragile parent arms

White, before grey,
has revealed what fanning miraculous
intricacy is born of silent chiaroscuro days
when springs improvise
on a green theme long remembered

L. Mark Slawson

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