

Fall 1986

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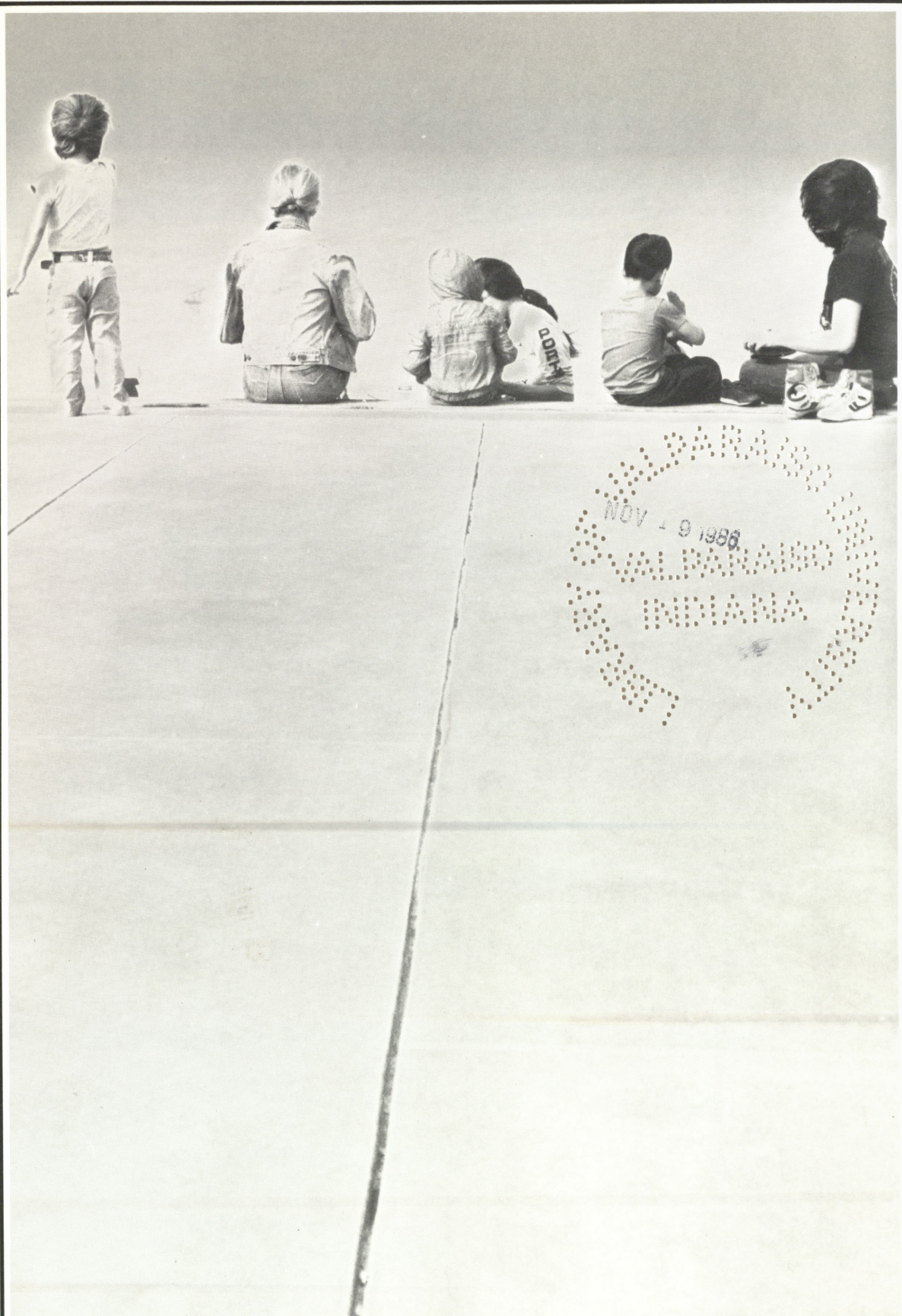
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LIGHTER



LIGHTER Fall 1986

Volume 32 Issue 1

Valparaiso University's magazine of creative expression

cover photo -- Kim Seidler

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I didn't really care
about the humidity or the damn mosquitos or the sand-
Betty made us laugh
as we passed the hours with little games of
Gin Rummy on a cooler
the sweaty hours of scenery with the Beatles.
Dutch would show us that stupid song when he
Struts his feathers in the quacking dance
and we didn't even mind.
Jeez, how nervous everyone was
in the town square, with a cramped belly
By the sight of the cardboard valley, the churches,
the penny factory
All I could do was walk and smell and laugh
Until we came to the place where
Orange Crush was 17 cents.



Neiman Marcus's View

Mary A. Bird

The Shore

Andrew Beck

a seasonal child, now a boy marked up with summer
the tide tickled his bare brown toes
when they flew through the sand
the ocean roared in his tangled hair
and on his upper lip
his tongue licked the dried salt from
where whiskers someday might mark manhood
but the wide eyes of youth know
nothing save one dash of life at a time
a quick run along the shore
as gulls lose themselves in love and appetite
his age and breath are shallow
when he stops to see the coast creep on

Telephone Pleas

Samantha E. Arnold

The six-o'clock sun is coming
down on my left shoulder--orange
half-brightness streaming through my hair
making fuzzy shadows on the wall.

There used to be a navy couch, spots too bright
to touch, on a gusty afternoon
when the corners offered their shadowy coolness.
The sweet taste of the corn-on-the-cob was almost
dust until you called; now it's caught
in my teeth again

Ringin' like a broken bell I tried
not to answer, but the pumpkin light moved
out from behind a cloud
fuzzing my brain like the shadows on the wall.

The morning I left, the air pointed
at me, and all the leaves stood up
in approval. Now, the leaves are dead
and unmouthed accusations spear my brain.

The pine trees out my window have been whispering
pleas and blowing the precise air
away, but I'm not going to answer them
because if they lie to me I won't be able to eat
sweet corn again.

—Requiem for Clovis—

George Zahora

"I often feel," announced Cameron Sangrail, as he poured himself yet another glass of wine, "that some inestimable damage will be done to the Great Chain of Being if I don't cut myself at least twice while shaving each morning."

"Mmmm?" Walton looked up from his own drink like an man leaving his wife to go to war.

"Nothing, nothing," Cameron waved away the inquiry. "Just speculating on some universal truths." He turned, walking to the drawing room window. Outside, rain was beginning to patter dark circles on the dust-coated surface of Walton's Wolesey. Some children were playing French cricket on the lawn; they chose that moment to add a larger, tennis-ball sized circle to the polka-dotted Wolesey. He chose to ignore the intricacies of sport, returning to his conversation.

"Universal truths, you know," Walton said, suddenly shattering the silence, "are very transcendental things. One can't entirely be certain whether a truth is universal unless everybody believes it, and of course in order to find out one would have to ask each and every person in the entire world, and regardless of the redundancy involved I really don't feel terribly enthusiastic about the travel involved, let alone the cost in interpreters, and then there's..."

Walton trailed off, losing the train of his thought, and stared off into space in a vacant fashion for several seconds until he rediscovered his drink.

"D'you want to know a universal truth?" Cameron ducked as a somewhat more talented French cricket player sent the tennis ball flying through the open drawing-room window. It struck Walton on the head, causing him to spill a small portion of his drink, and rolled off into the corner.

"Yes, rather," Walton replied in a rather dazed tone of voice, rising to temporarily stable his drink on the sideboard.

"Nobody is sarcastic anymore," Cameron sighed. "Nobody uses irony, nobody's prone to witty asides, there's no air of whimsical jollity anymore."

I don't know," came the voice of Walton from his new position under his chair. "I think there's hope in films."

"Not since Uncle Clovis died," Cameron said, glancing idly around the drawing room as if hoping to discover exactly what Walton had been staring at so vacantly.

"Urr, yes," groaned Walton, making a concerted attempt to scale the back of his armchair. "How did he die?"

"In the war," Cameron replied silently, after a second-trimester pause. "Nobody knows exactly what happened. It was back in 'sixteen, in a crater near Beaumont-Hamel. We don't know whether he was shot, or killed in a mortar bombardment, or what have you. I do know what his last words were, however."

"Really?" Walton, meeting with a difficult slope on the west face of the chair, paused to gasp a reply. "What did he say?"

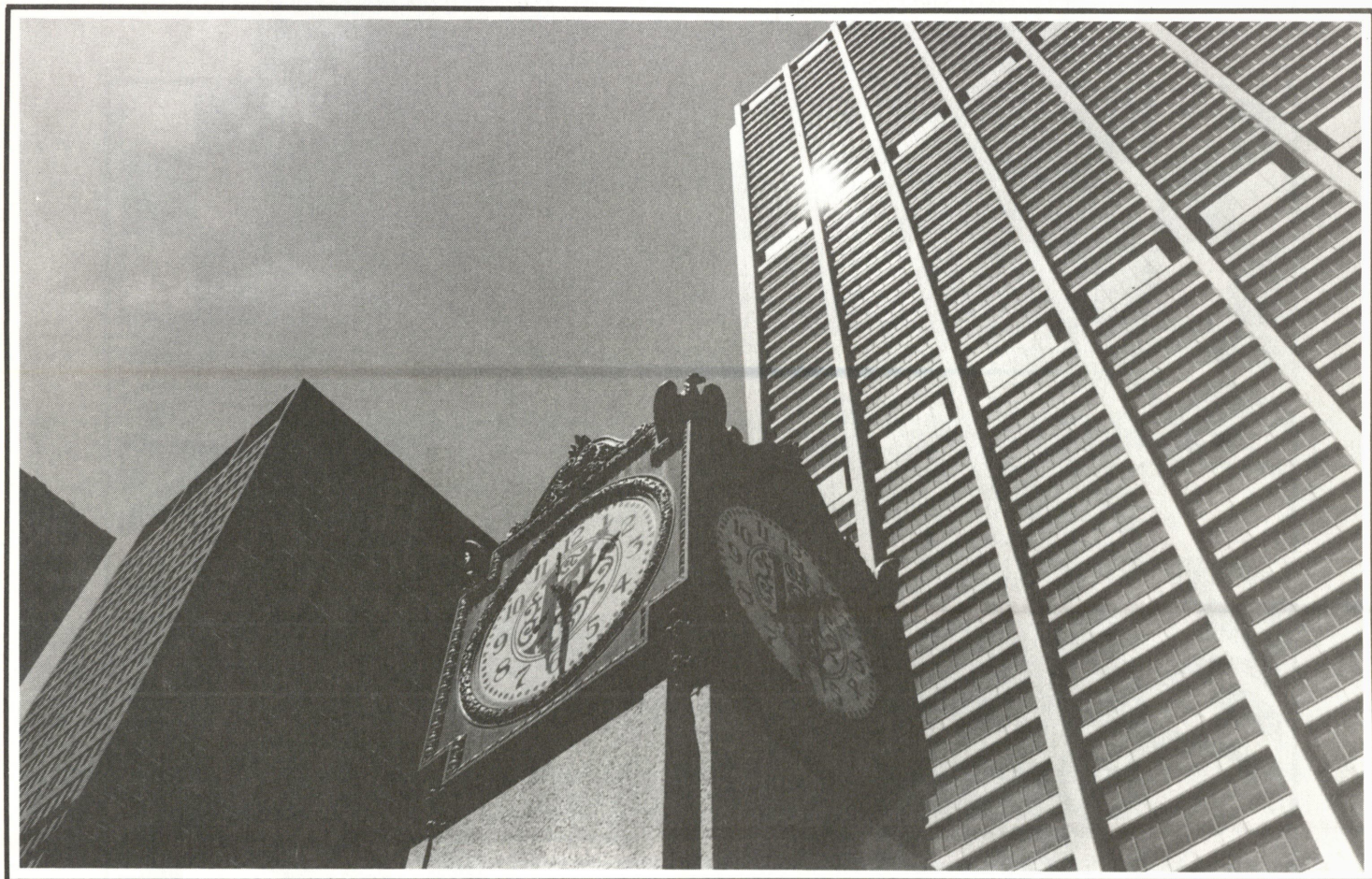
"Put out that bloody cigarette." Cameron found the tennis ball and threw it violently at the French cricket players, who had in the absence of their ball fallen to battering each other about the head and shoulders with the tennis racket. The ball struck one of the children on the head, knocking him to the ground.

"Yes," Cameron sighed wistfully, seeking his pipe in his coat pocket. "I guess there just isn't any sarcasm left in the world."

Walton moved to answer, but fell from the chair in the attempt.

"Care for another drink?" inquired Cameron to the prone form on the hearth rug. Then, hearing himself, he paused, and stared off into space at a totally different point than the one chosen by Walton.

"Well, there's hope," he said.



Lunchtime in Chicago

Krista Lewis

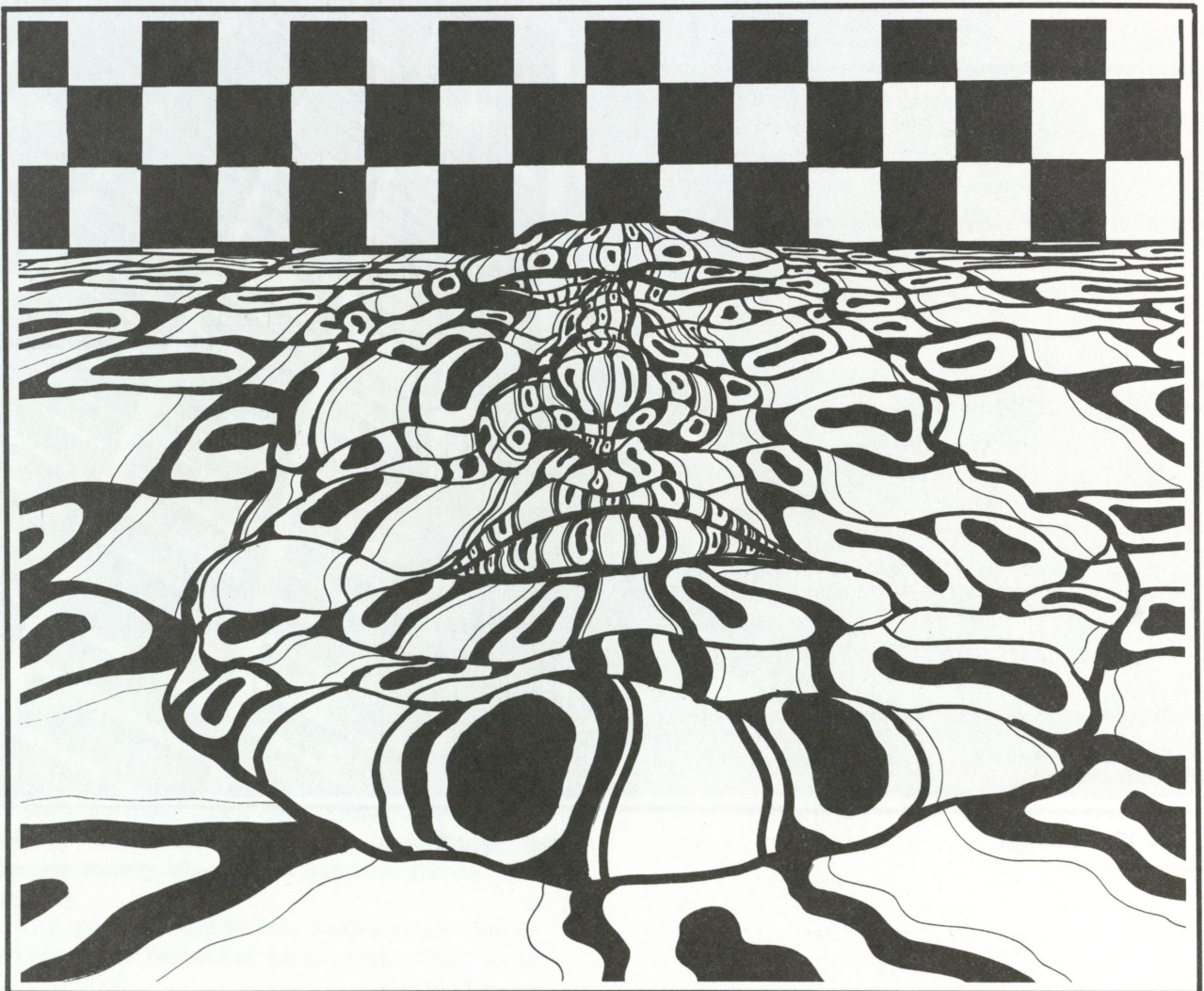
Graveyard and Stone

Patrick Burnette

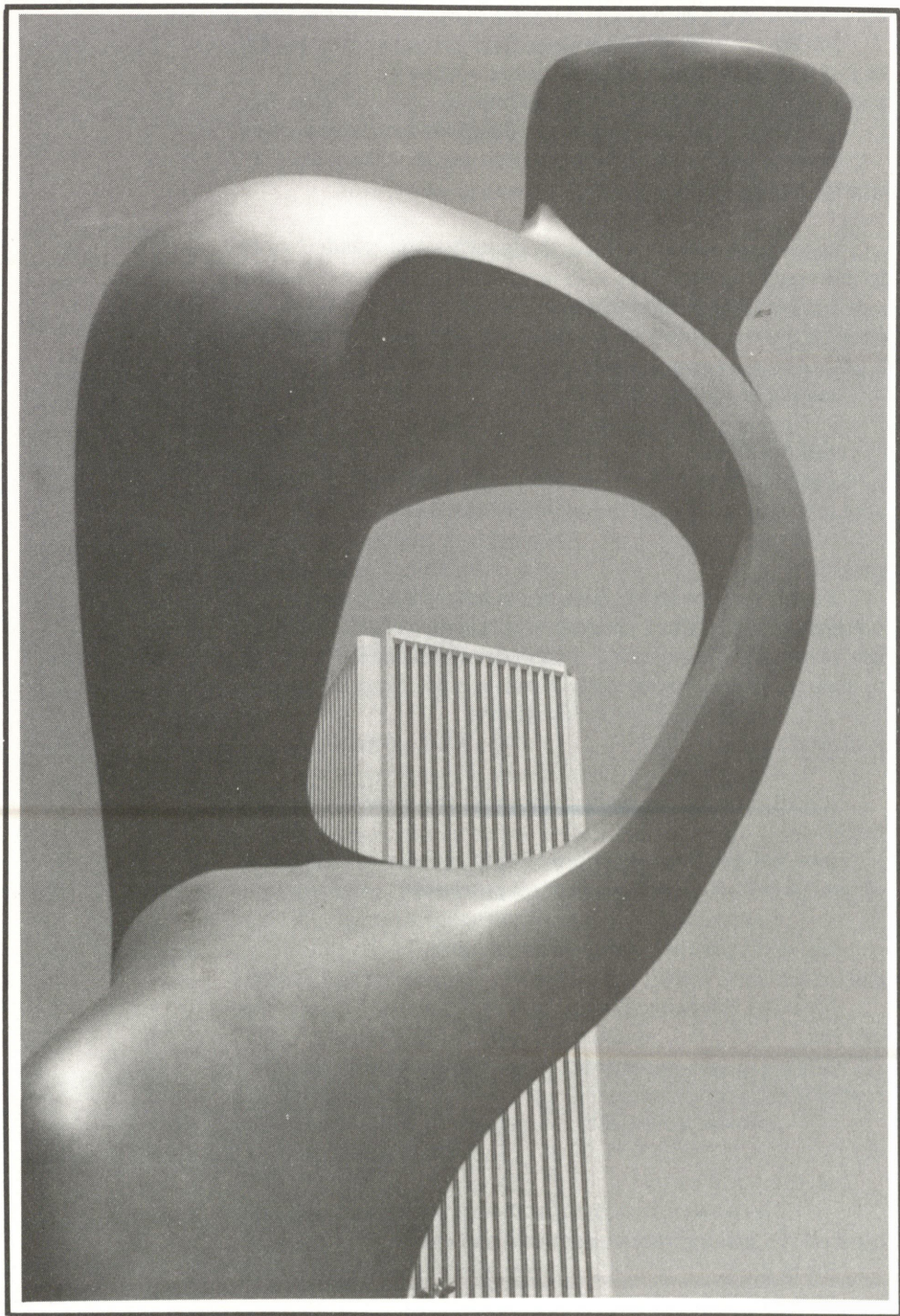
The graceful withering of flowers
Is marred by misanthropic statuary
Sullen and still
Cold to the lovely decay of the dying vegetation

Marble figures unnaturally young
Eyes too clear and empty
To acknowledge the years stared past

Keep the company of corpses--
Statues make poor companions
Youth froze out of flux
Is more void of life
Than the memories curling about tombstones
And the whispers
Drifting between graves and fallen leaves



Thom Mitchell



Krista Lewis

Yes/No and Sometimes Maybe

Paul Fackler

it's not as if only yes/no and no middle were all the world was
(or is)

or just true/false without the chance of a white lie
and multiple choice just isn't the answer
so maybe math--but it doesn't add up (and certainly
its days are numbered though
who's counting) all the ways of love.

so i love you--yes and true, that's both a and b and
let me count the ways
but for a lover infinity is much too small
(and by the way, that's not a statement but a question and not
a yes/no true/false numerically answerable excluded
middle or multiple choice)

call it a flower
and pick the petals one by one (and repeat after me)
s/he loves me s/he loves me not until there's just
one
petal left.

i'll tell you--the game can't be more stacked than this
but it's a question there and you read it and you can't just
say yes/no true/false could i try another flower or if it ends
up love it's even love-me-not is odd--
and really, it's all very strange
(but who's asking)

it's all very simple really, just a multiple choice you
might say,
love love-me-not one or zero on/off yes/no true/false and
all you have to do is pull off that last petal and--
do you call it love or love-me-not
and don't say that depends on where you
started and how many petals because
the rules (there aren't any) don't
say you
can't skip (yes that's a double negative) and who
ever said
a flower isn't a liar.

so, there is a catch
(let's call it fine print for the romantic) and
after all it's just a flower so go ahead and choose
(or is it)
and what do you say when s/he says i love you (yes
that's a question--we've talked about this before)
you should never sign your name before you've read the
fine print (they teach you that in school along with
math true/false yes/no multiple choice and this is just a quiz)
but don't worry
this is just a game we play
(or is it)

and we tend to think
it's very real when it's happening but later on
(in the film version) we see it was just another
star-wars-box-office-hit-selling-heart-throbbing-belief
that a flower is something more than a flower
and mother nature would never lie to you
(except for poison ivy which looks like something safe)

so we'll try another question right from gradeschool where
miss whoever tells you to name the vowels
(which is very odd considering they already have names) and
you recognize this as multiple choice
(26 to choose from) and might as well start with the
first petal

or letter (it's all very confusing) and you say
a
and ei and then stop
trying to remember which part of that huge letter in the
middle of the alphabet
(elemenopee) is a vowel. o yes--
there's o and there's u (or you)
it's very hard to keep straight and then there's that last petal
we'll call it sometimes y
(but you're never sure when)

so is now the time and is it
yes/no true/false could you repeat the question please
(i love you)

love-me-not oiu or iou or iouaoe (that's a hug--
with a silent e) and sometimes y
and today it's red roses and white
(mother nature)

lies
i feel somewhere in the middle --
and maybe i love you too--

but that's nor an answer either
who ever said you can't answer a question with a question or
that flowers aren't liars or sign on the dotted line (don't
bother to read the fine print)
this is life

(not a quiz)
and be a little romantic
sometimes maybe
yes/no true/false and sometimes
(i love you)

My Last Paper

An Experience of My Own

Ann Rehfeldt

I couldn't write the last of my personal essays for my English Life and Culture class, but it wasn't as if after a semester of writing about and discussing the life I had nothing more to say. I tried writing it about the pervasiveness of stone throughout England: the stone houses, the cobblestone market places, the stone ruins, the stone walls. Yet, even though I had a thesis and details for its development, I couldn't resolve the thoughts haphazardly floating about in my mind into ideas expressed in organized sentences filling a page. Besides, for my last formal discussion of the life and culture of England, I felt the need to say something about my experiences there as a whole. The ideas were there for that paper, as well. I titled it "More Than Just a Postcard Holiday," and I began it in this fashion:

'Dear Aunt Elsie, This is a picture of the cathedral where I went to church Sunday. The service was very nice, and the organist even played the Buxtehude piece that I had to play for all the organ professors freshman year! Spring has come to Cambridge. The lawns, along the River Cam, behind the colleges are covered not with dandelions, but with purple, yellow, and white crocuses. I see them every day when I walk into town--beautiful! Thinking of you. Love, Ann.'

I've written that message once, and variations on it countless times since I've been in England. Writing such postcards has become more than a means of satisfying the desires of those who requested I send them a postcard from England. It has also become a means of sharing my experiences with those who informed me they would be vicariously living these five months through me...."

That was my way of approaching the intended subject. I wanted to say something about my experiences abroad being more than simply seeing the Big Bens and the Ely Cathedrals. They had to do with experiencing things, not merely seeing them:

"Sending a postcard of the North Sea could never fully convey the motion of its waves the day I saw them from the train window and watched them, long before they curled their white lips, rolling and swelling in the distance like the rounded humps of blood vessels on the back of my grandfather's hand. The motion and the movement was a key part of the simple experience. Similar-

ly, a postcard from Bath Abbey would have said nothing about my time there, for what I remember, and what captivated me, was not the physical structure, but the sound of a Mozart Requiem being rehearsed within its walls by choir and orchestra....

A postcard, I went on to say, of the mountain top I wandered along above Llanthony Priory could hardly communicate the sensation of walking through the springy heather at its top. Obviously, I maintained, my experiences in England, as well as any experience of life and living, were inextricably bound up in a whole wealth of sensations and perceptions. My experiences of England were not snapshots, but were acts of living, and as such were not flat, but dimensional, shaped by my sensations and activities.

"Thus it would be a more accurate sharing of my experiences here if I were to do something like the following:

'Dear Grandma, Please find enclosed a stone. It is one of the ones I used to step on when crossing a field of mud six inches deep in places. There was a small path that was reasonably dry, but the cows were standing on it and since we couldn't get them to move, we had to go around them. I may have gotten dirty, but it was a lot of fun! Sometime ask Aunt Esther to show you the cutting of heather I sent her from our mountain-climbing adventure. With love, Ann.' "

I wasn't happy with that conclusion, though, because it didn't seem right to write a paper and conclude it without mentioning that which in the first place moved me to conceive the idea for it. I had failed to mention my three and a half mile walk through recently turned-over brown fields, sheep-filled pastures, and winding country roads as I searched for Rievaulx Abbey and my having given up on ever finding it, only to follow a bend in the road and see it in the valley half a mile away. I couldn't send anybody a postcard of that abbey because it would be unjust to simply present someone with a picture of it. The magic of Rievaulx lay in finding it. I couldn't write that, though, not in words that would accurately and precisely describe the magic of that discovery. The means to communicate it eluded me, and that frustrated me. I felt as though I had been defeated by words that I could not find. The more I thought about my failure to express myself, the more it bothered me, for I realized that I hadn't fully captured what seeing the waving North Sea or hearing the singing choir or feeling the

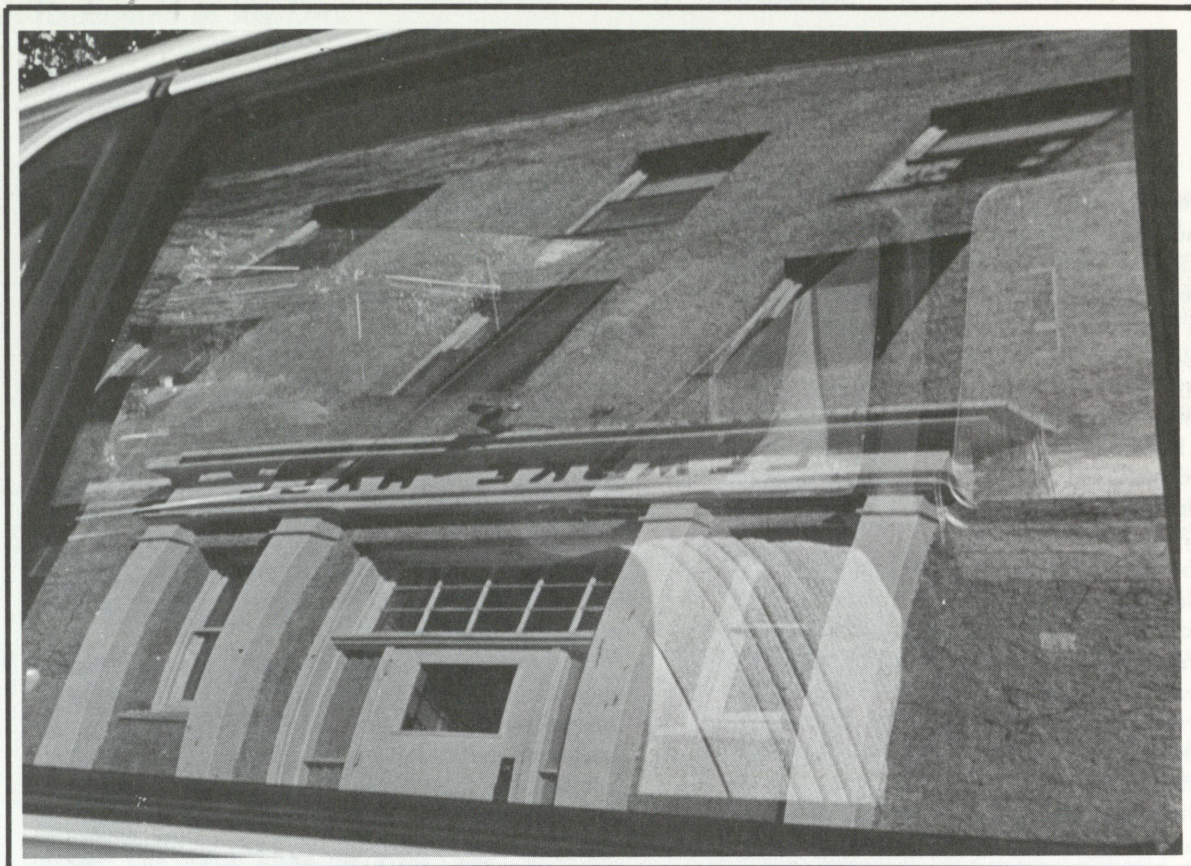
springing heather meant to me.

I tried placing myself in any type of environment that I thought might be conducive to my search for words. I sat at my desk; I lay on my bed. I sat along the Backs, but nothing provoked an ability for expression in me. Yet, although I didn't discover the words I needed, I did discover why I couldn't find them. As my three companions and I walked home from our afternoon of studying next to the River Cam as it flows through the college Backs, we commented amongst ourselves on a small black water bird that none of us had ever seen before. We all saw it at the same time in the same place in the same atmosphere, and we all shared a common sense of amusement. Yet, what I experienced was vastly different from what anyone else experienced at that moment, for as I saw him gingerly hobble forward toward the river, I was reminded of the limping pigeon that my family and I had seen while we sat on San Diego's Coronado Beach and watched the pelicans dive into the ocean.... I thought of my brother who could probably identify that bird for me.... My experience of the present was being shaped by my experiences of the past, just as my experience of the waves was shaped by my experience with my grandfather's hands. Even what I was thinking and feeling at the time influenced my experience....

Our waterfowl sighting was a group experience but also a personal experience for each of us, and once I realized that, I

realized why I couldn't write my last paper. Who I am as a person as much as the environment shapes my experiences, and I am not fully aware of everything that works together to make me who I am. How then can I be expected to account completely for all that constituted a given experience? And even if I could, those to whom I communicated it would, with their imaginations, shape it and perceive it according to their own personal preconceptions and ideas. That thought helped ease my frustration at not being able to write my last paper on my experiences in England. It diminished my feelings of inadequacy with words, and it convinced me that no one could vicariously live my experiences nor could any physical record preserve the experiences for me. They could, and only will, live on within the me that shaped them, and that's the miracle of memory.

That, I concluded, was what I had to say about my experiences as a whole. I was afraid that it might sound sentimentally overbearing, but I trusted Professor Feaster who had to read and grade it and those who had to hear it, along with their own papers, read in tutorial would, as possessors of special experiences and memories, understand that that was not my goal. I trusted that they could empathize with my attempt to express what I couldn't put into words—the smile that comes at the thought of Easter at St. Paul's, snowball fights on the way to Pembroke College, the bus ride through the Lake District,....

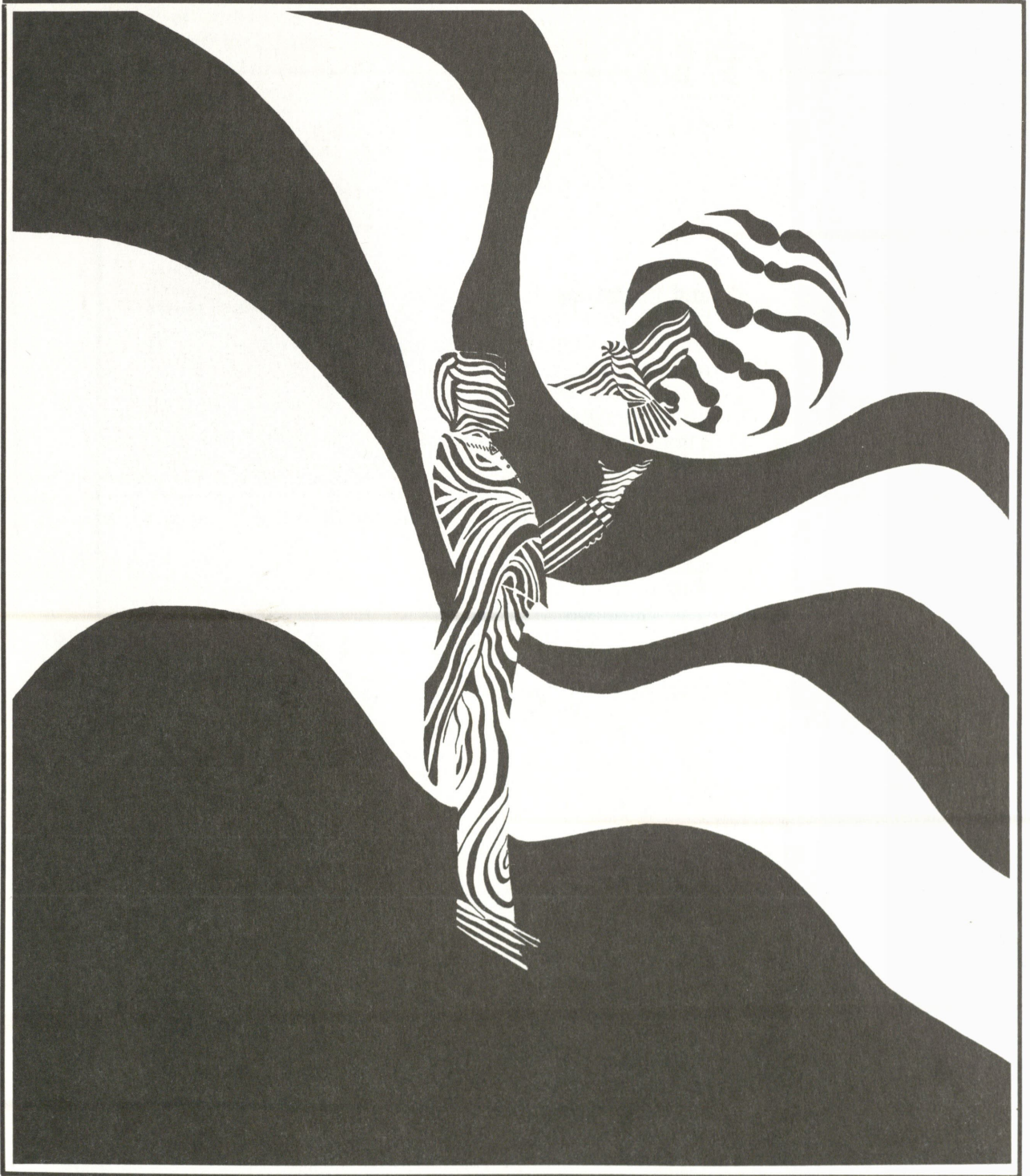


Barbara Hoel

Evolution's Cycle

Bradford C. Statham

It's curious	the way
people are.	I sometimes
wonder if	Evolution was
right in	splitting apart
Male from	feMale. It
seems that	the two
spends eternity	trying to
get back	together in
one brief and blissful moment	
when they become one with	
themselves fulfilled in a	
glorious moment of ecstasy.	
And then	they part
as dictated	by their
very being.	Once again
divided into	two parts,
Male from	female. Left
incomplete to	repeat the
endless	cycle
all	lone.



Dina Holst

7:37 am

Eric Appleton

and I'm sitting in the half-light
on the couch staring at the wall
with sleep lingering in my head
and pressing in like folds of cotton
and I'm thinking
"fuck you Jim Morrison
I don't give a damn about
your cock or your death
or your shithouse coming down
or your beat poetry or your atonal delivery"
and I pick out the dated phrases
and with a
flick of the wrist
toss them one
by
one
over my shoulder
but then realize that
with each one I throw out
a small portion of me
goes with
--I look down
and find parts missing

Ancient Egypt

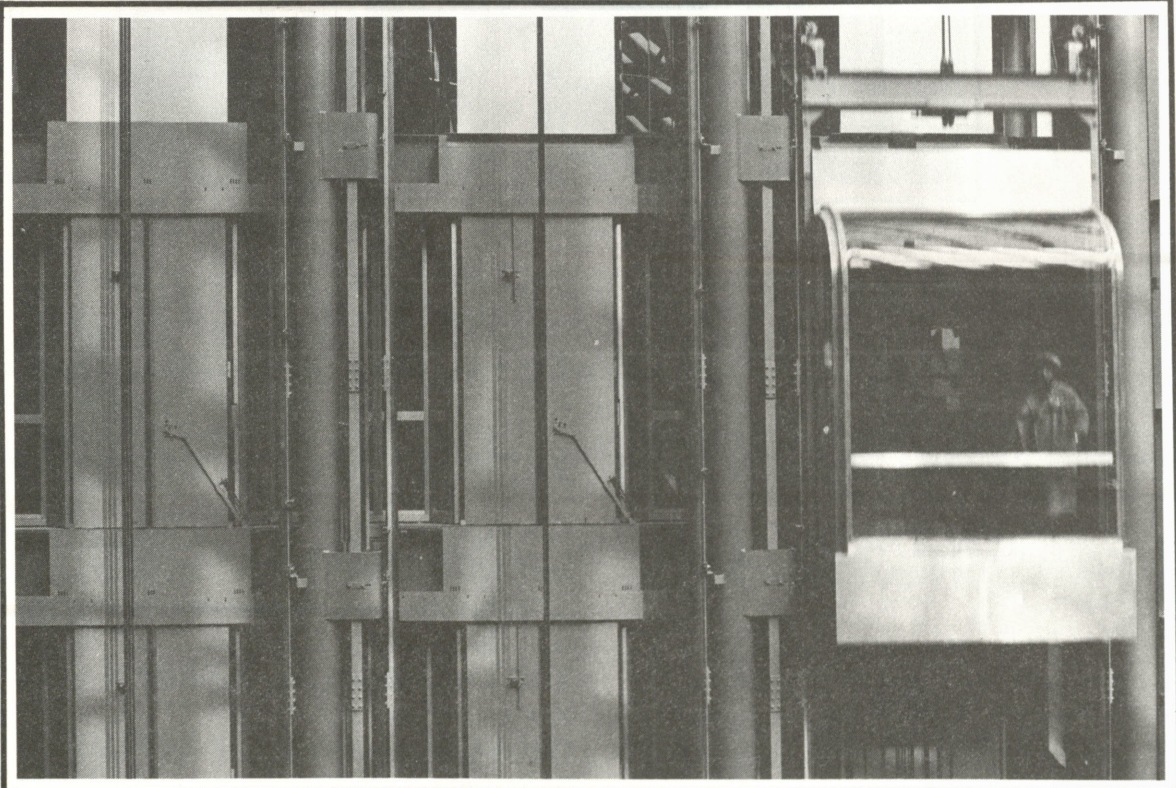
Patrick Burnette

When Egypt ruled the east
You could always find your place
Sweating stone up hills
Or soaking bandages in ointments
On ground as solid and deep
As cycling seasons and changeless dogma

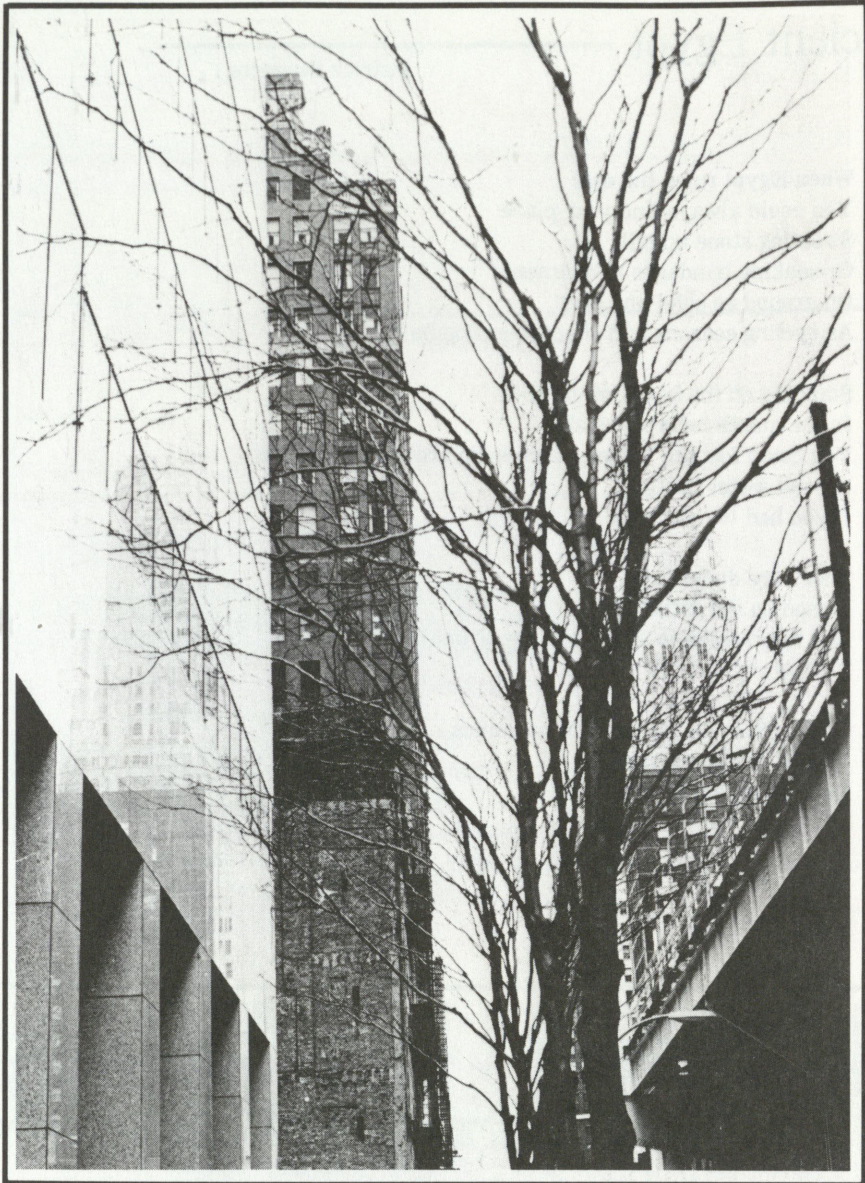
Standing on the banks of the Nile
In the month before Khoiak
You could feel the inundation creep up around your ankles
A quiet water death
If you had the patience and the will

There are dams now
Poised on the cataracts
And new bandages can only hope to heal
Temporary wounds

The earth is too thin to hold pyramids--
A crust of uncertainty
Over an emptied necropolis



Robert L. Wehmeier



Kara Beth Hidde

Driving

Andy Shaw

Watch the neon
On the edge of town
(55 mph.)
Lost on an open road
Bumping
But don't cross the line
Think of sea waves, motion of tides
Knee deep in mud
Quick! Stop the car!
Scenery!

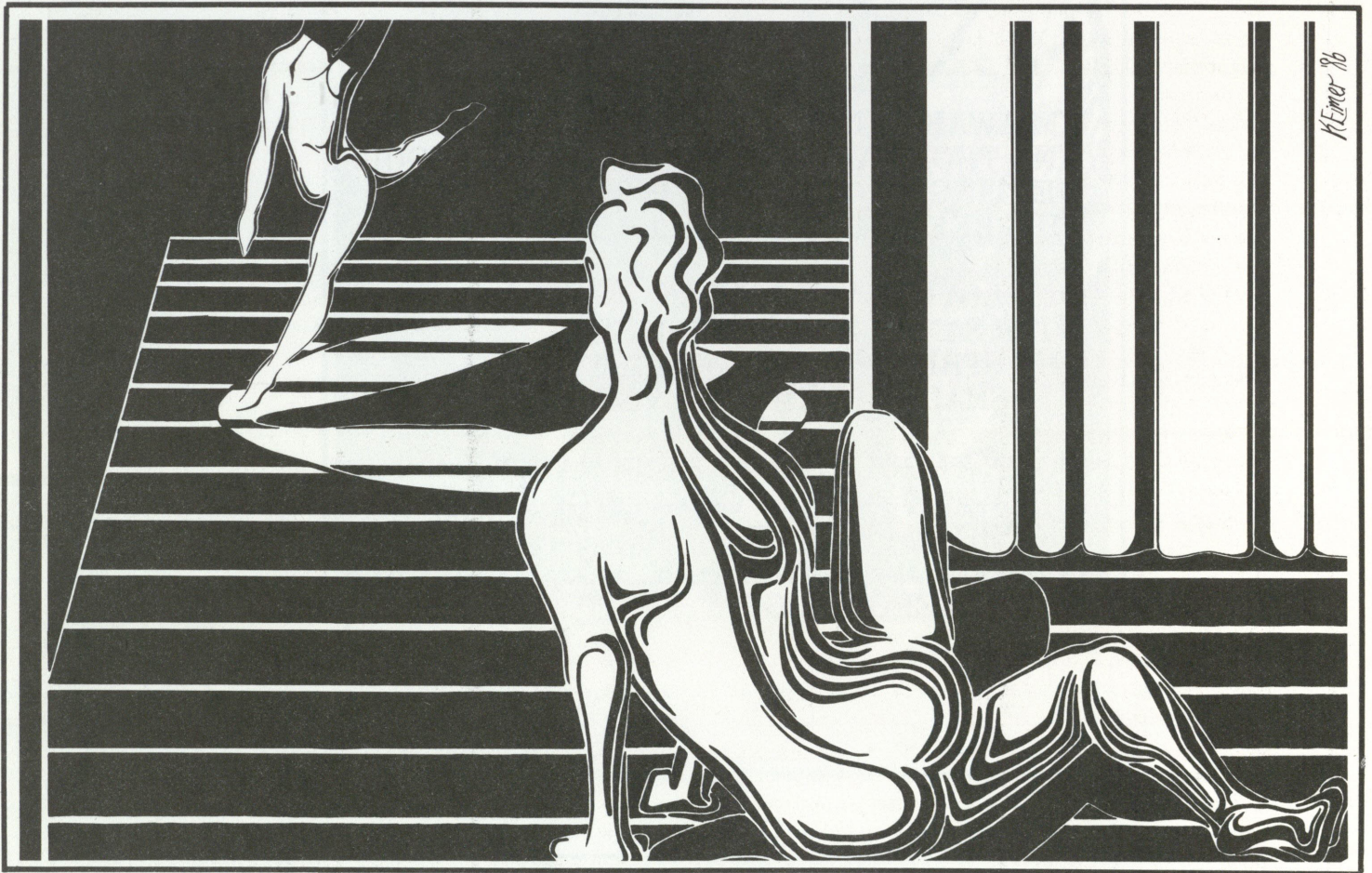
AFTERTHOUGHT

Fritz Eifrig

I'M AWAKE AND SMOKING CIGARETTES
AND THOSE ARE QUIET HARDWOOD FLOORS-
GETTING UP TO TAKE A PISS IN ALL
THIS BEER STAINED HALLELUJAH

OLD LOVERS WALK AWAY
WITH SANDY STEPS ACROSS
THE STREET THROUGH GREY
CAT SHADOWS WHICH NEVER MEET

DOWN THROUGHOUT FRESH PAINT
SIDEWALK TREES CHEATING
ON THE IN AND OFF
GIVE ME JUST ONE MORE
DRINK BEFORE I GO



Kathrin Eimer

Grandmother's idyllic little cottage sat in the middle of an idyllic little clearing in an idyllic little wood. It was a nice, friendly sort of cottage, a fact that played an essential part in putting the first wolf off his guard, causing him to be electrocuted by the idyllic, electrified white picket fence.

The second wolf, justifiably having lost all trust in the idyllic appearance of the house, managed to clear the fence but was cut down almost immediately by the idyllic heat-sensitive machine guns mounted in the idyllic apple tree in one of the more idyllic corners of the garden.

The third wolf, using a Mark IX Flora and Fauna Fragmentation Grenade (Forest Species, For Use By), took out the machine guns and a sizable portion of the electrified picket fence but was crushed to death by the sixteen ton weight that fell on him when he disturbed the trip wire on the doorstep.

Thus the responsibility for action fell to the fourth wolf.

The fourth wolf knew his responsibility very well, and was none too keen on living up to it, particularly if sticking up for wolfdom meant being blown to bits in front of idyllic cottages. Still, if he should succeed against such overwhelming odds, his name (the wolf went by the unlikely appellation of Mockturtle) would mean something important in the forest—rather than being synonymous with the word 'idiot,' as was the general use for it currently.

Mockturtle synchronized his watch (Mickey Mouse Analog Variety, Fairy Tale Animals, Carnivorous, For The Use Of). At least, he hoped he synchronized his watch, though he had a sneaking suspicion that two or more people were necessary to synchronize watches. It did sound professional, though, and provided a much-needed boost to his much-unboosted ego.

At precisely 6:15—or 3:30, he'd never been able to tell which of Mickey's arms were longer—Mockturtle advanced on grandmother's idyllic house. Vaguely wary of the front doorstep with its sixteen-ton bootscraper, he scrambled swiftly, if not gracefully, around to the back of the house. After a nasty incident during which he almost fell into grandmother's missile silo, he slunk slowly, slyly up to the back door. Amazingly, it wasn't booby-trapped, and even more amazingly (if somewhat more mundane) it was unlocked. Mockturtle opened the door, took one last look around, preened for a second in front of an incongruously placed mirror, and slipped inside the house.

Grandmother sat at her security console, charmingly finished in imitation oak, and watched the wolf stand in the back doorway. Mockturtle stood in the back doorway, watching grandmother sit at her charmingly finished security console.

"Oh, dear," she muttered. "Not another blooming wolf." These ill-chosen words served only to enrage the sensitive Mockturtle.

"ANOTHER BLOOMING WOLF?" he screeched. He enjoyed the the walls reverberated, and he screeched a few

more similar phrases of righteous outrage. Tea-cosies fell off of various comfy chairs placed haphazardly around the room, revealing a number of monitoring devices, death traps, and the like.

"Wolves can't talk." Grandmother was decisive.

"Be real," groaned Mockturtle, who was getting a headache from all his screeching. "If wolves couldn't talk, there'd be scads of fairy tales screwed up. Wolves can talk, alright, you old bat, and--"

Mockturtle fell to the floor, struggling to break free of grandmother's full nelson, before finishing his sentence. For the next hour, he and grandmother fought a cat and mouse battle through the various rooms of the house, and Mockturtle was only saved from inevitable death when grandmother collapsed suddenly from lack of Geritol. He locked the old woman in a closet, put on one of her more conservative nighties, picked up a copy of FAIRY TALE DIGEST and sat in bed to wait...

* * * * *

Wrimbey the magic snail crawled happily across the highway, singing a happy little song to himself. This was only natural, of course, as Wrimbey the magic snail was a happy sort of snail, blessed as he was with a charmingly dear little family of magic snail-lets, a lovely magic snail wife, and a fun-loving, entertaining pet wood louse named Spot, who loved to gambol and carouse upon the glen on a warm summer's evening. Yes, Wrimbey the magic snail lived the good life, all right—far from the hectic rough-and-tumble workaday world, instead living safely in his own little glen, content with being a magic snail—even if he'd never actually figured out what sort of magic he possessed.

A shadow passed over the sun.

"Mmm, getting late, it is," thought Wrimbey, glancing at his watch (Mickey Mouse Analog Variety, Forest Crustaceans, Magic, For Use By). It was 6:20—or 4:30, he'd never been able to tell which of Mickey's arms was longer. Regardless of which of these two times was accurate, though, it was much too early for it to be getting dark.

It was at that moment that Wrimbey the magic snail made the connection between the word "highway"—the thing he was crossing—and "car"—the large object that was very likely bearing down on him at that very moment.

It occurred to Wrimbey that he should look in the direction of the shadow.

"Aha," he said gleefully, "it seems that I was incorrect. That's no car, it's a Harley Davidson motorcy--"

There was an almost inaudible crunch.

Little Red Motorcycle Jacket steered her Harley off the highway and onto the thin footpath that led to grandmother's house, not noticing as she did so that she was

running over the first (and last) of a totally new variety of woodchuck that had evolved as nature's response to pollution. She thereby became the one person singly responsible to the utter extinction of the woodchuck five years later. She was a pretty, young thing, was Little Red Motorcycle Jacket, in spite of the stogie hanging from her mouth, her mohawk haircut, and the scar on her left cheek (from an accident during a friendly game of Chain-Saw Catch). She wore a backpack, in which she carried some goodies for grandmother--a six-pack of Michelob (Lite, of course), two bottles of Everclear, and, as her grandmother would say, "a gram or two of the really good stuff."

The Harley skidded on the wet grass as Little Red Motorcycle Jacket pulled up on grandmother's front lawn, flattening several frog princes and an enchanted caterpillar. Little Red dismounted, noted the general mess, and stooped to remove a watch (Mickey Mouse Analog Variety, Fairy Tale Animals, Carnivorous, For The Use Of) from the left foreleg of one of the dead wolves. She stepped nimbly round the sixteen-ton weight and knocked on the front door; it fell off its hinges, and she entered the house.

"Yo, granny!" cried Little Red, "it's me! I'm here!"

"In the bedroom..." came the distant reply.

Little Red Motorcycle Jacket glanced at her watch and wondered why grandmother was in bed at 7:30--or 6:35, she'd never been able to tell which of Mickey's hands was longer. The same old intuition that had saved her life many a time when she was a tank commander back in Nam had returned, and was making her a tad uneasy.

"Yo, gran! I got the stuff! Let's party!"

Before grandmother could answer, Little Red plunged into the bedroom, and stared at the thing in bed.

"You need a shave, grandma," Little Red muttered evilly.

"My, my," said Mockturtle, "what big--"

"Gimme a break wolf. That's my line, and besides, these are the eighties. I can tell a wolf when I see one. Now, where's my Grandmother?"

The seconds ticked by like seconds, only longer.

"I'm not telling!" Mockturtle cried defiantly, glad to have something resembling the upper hand. Little Red, not even batting an eye, drew a .357 Magnum and fired several shots into the walls around him. When his heart slipped back down his throat into its usual place, he gave Little Red one more defiant glare. The girl shoved the gun in his face.

"I know what you're thinking, wolf..." she muttered, in a low, scratchy voice that would've made Clint Eastwood rummage through his pockets for a cough drop. "Did she fire six shots, or only five? Well, y'know, in all this confusion, I kinda forgot. But seein' as this is a .357 Magnum, the most powerful handgun in the world--can take your head *clean off*, what you've got to ask yourself is 'Do I feel lucky.' Well, do you--Wolf?"

Mockturtle considered his plight...the needs of the many--i.e. Wolfdom, and the moral victory involved--versus the needs of the few, or the one--in other words, his continued existence. It took him exactly three seconds to decide that Wolfdom could go jump in the lake.

"She's in the broom closet," Mockturtle said meekly.

"Y'know," grated Little Red, "there's nothin' I hate more than a wolf who's afraid to stand up for himself." Her finger tightened on the trigger anyway.

"Go ahead...make my day," sighed Mockturtle, who foresaw his last opportunity to get in with some interesting dialogue. Little Red pulled the trigger.

There was a loud click.

"Uh-oh..." muttered Little Red Motorcycle Jacket. She reached nervously into a jacket pocket for the six extra bullets that were even now sitting by the roadside next to the body of a totally new sort of woodchuck, who was at that very moment sitting up in woodchuck heaven chuckling over the sort of vengeance wreaked upon people who ran over totally new sorts of woodchucks while riding their motorcycles with such reckless abandon as to let things fall out of their jacket pockets.

All of the finer nuances of this revenge-from-on-high meant nothing to Mockturtle, who was at that moment picturing the theatrical appeal of this particular scene in the film version of his autobiography.

"Go ahead," he invited again, an irritatingly smug grin on his face, "make my day."

Little Red peeled off the rubber mask she'd been wearing, revealing an even uglier face. Mockturtle gasped in fear as the tables turned once again.

"You're a rhinoceros!" he cried.

"I'll trample you! I'll trample you!" screamed Little Red, and attempted to do just that, smashing a rather nice floor lamp in the process.

"Wait," screamed Mockturtle, who had grabbed a book--*Fairy Tales--Rules and Regulations*--from the bedside table and was frantically leafing through it.

"Aha!" he cried, dodging a swipe from a nasty horn-type protuberance, "here it is! Section 8, Paragraph 34, Subsection 22, Clause 9, Hike: No heavily armored

animals--e.g. Elephants, Rhinoceri, etc., may be employed to defeat big bad wolves." He smiled triumphantly.

"Oh, *&?!," swore Little Red, and returned to her own form. Mockturtle tossed down the book; the page he was reading from, had Little Red cared to look, was blank save for the cryptic phrase, "Placed by the Gideons."

Mockturtle looked at Little Red, who now stood trembling before him. He smiled a toothy grin.

"Boo," he said, drily.

With a frightened screech, Little Red turned tail and ran. She managed to cover six feet before tripping over her grandmother's air traffic monitoring station and knocking herself out cold.

"Golly..." said Mockturtle, in a voice as laden with disbelief as a cheap order of spaghetti and meatballs is laden with sauce to hide the fact that there aren't really any meatballs at all, "I did it."

Mockturtle had never actually eaten a person before, but he decided to make an exception in the case of Little Red Motorcycle Jacket. After all, it served her right for all that nasty stuff with the gun, and avenged an age-old fairy tale injury.

Granny made a nice apertif. Electrified Idyllic White Picket Fences had been outlawed long ago by the Geneva Fairy Tale Conference, so it was her just desserts to become just his dessert.

Mockturtle sat back to watch MTV in grandmother's house. He opened a can of Michelob (Lite, naturally), and glanced at his watch. It was 8:15...or 3:40--he'd never been able to tell which of Mickey's arms was longer.

I DIDN'T MEAN TO BE SO RUDE ON THE PHONE TONIGHT
RATTLING BONES THAT SHOULDN'T BE STIRRED
DRUNK IN THE HEAVENS OF THIS PINK-TILED BATHROOM FLOOR-JUST RIGHT-
I DO REALLY MEAN IT.
WHY DOES THIS SAME UNCERTAINTY KEEP CREEPING
UP ON EVERY SINGLE TIME?
A GREAT SLOW WIND BEATS BLACK AGAINST THE SPINE OF THE WINDOWS
LIKE THE SO COOL BREATH OF A MAN SWINGING BUG-EYED
PEACEFUL NOW AND AGAIN - SO IF THEY ONLY KNEW - MEMORIES THROWING
UP ONCE OR TWICE IN THE CORNERS OF FORGOTTEN TRIPS, GOODBYE, GOODBYE.
I KEEP TELLING MYSELF THAT IT'S A LOVE FOR REAL, AND LATER LET
A VELVET CURTAIN FALL BETWEEN ANOTHER SELF AND THEN WHAT'S ME.
AND ROWS AND ROWS AND LINES OF TILE KEEP THE SCENE SO REAL, SO TIGHT,
RIGHT ON, MY MAN, RIGHT ON!
SHE LAYS HER HEAD ON VINYL WAVES SO CLEAR AND WRONG, I TELL MYSELF
JUST LET'S FORGET - BLOW YOUR HORN AND ON AGAIN.
THIS CROWD GIVES FREEDOM TO MY TONGUE AND SPILLS IT ALL
ACROSS WHATEVER NEVER CAME MY WAY
WHATEVER THAT I STILL THINK OF -
OH SO VERY BLACK AND BLUE THAT JUST MADE SENSE
AND LET ME FEEL
THE COLD COOL TILE BENEATH MY HEAD





Kara Beth Hidde

The Maple

-for Grandpa

Polly Atwood

When you taught me
to prune trees, I got
the ladder and shears and climbed
to the third rung. Blindly
cutting at the branches, I knew
it wasn't right--not the way
you would have done it.

To get at the highest limbs, I had to
crawl into the attic. Quickly
passing your memories, I slip
through a window to the eaves. Leaning
over the gutter, I snip at more
branches. Sticks and leaves drop
around your feet. You stand, bent
at the neck, looking up at me.

How to Raise a Child that Can't Cry

Paul Fackler

Childhood, the slow rape of consciousness.

The laughing faces and bile. Sweat and urine.
You called me baby till I was seven,
because I wet my pants and cried.
My brothers called me "sissy"
"baby."

Somewhere I learned to fill in the cracks,
because I wanted to be a grownup,
wanted to be a man.)

All the woman crushed down,
hidden in my fingers and swelling
only rarely to my larynx and eyey
never beyond.

The quaver of that other voice never passed
beyond the lips.

She expands in me with the years.
Urging tears.

But I bite hard on my lips,
Clench hands into fists, force her down.
Just as she has always been forced down.

If I ran my hand
over my body at night,
only half-awake,
I know I'd feel not muscles over the ribcage,
but two tender breasts.
"It hurts me, here." And blood on the sheets.

You didn't have to touch me,
coarse handed.
The words were sharp enough and bruised
all too deeply.
Till the callous formed.

No, I don't say "I love you."
It tastes like bile and urine.
Your little boy's grown up.
See, I don't cry any more,
even when it hurts.



Success Hasn't Spoiled Me Yet

Mary A. Bird

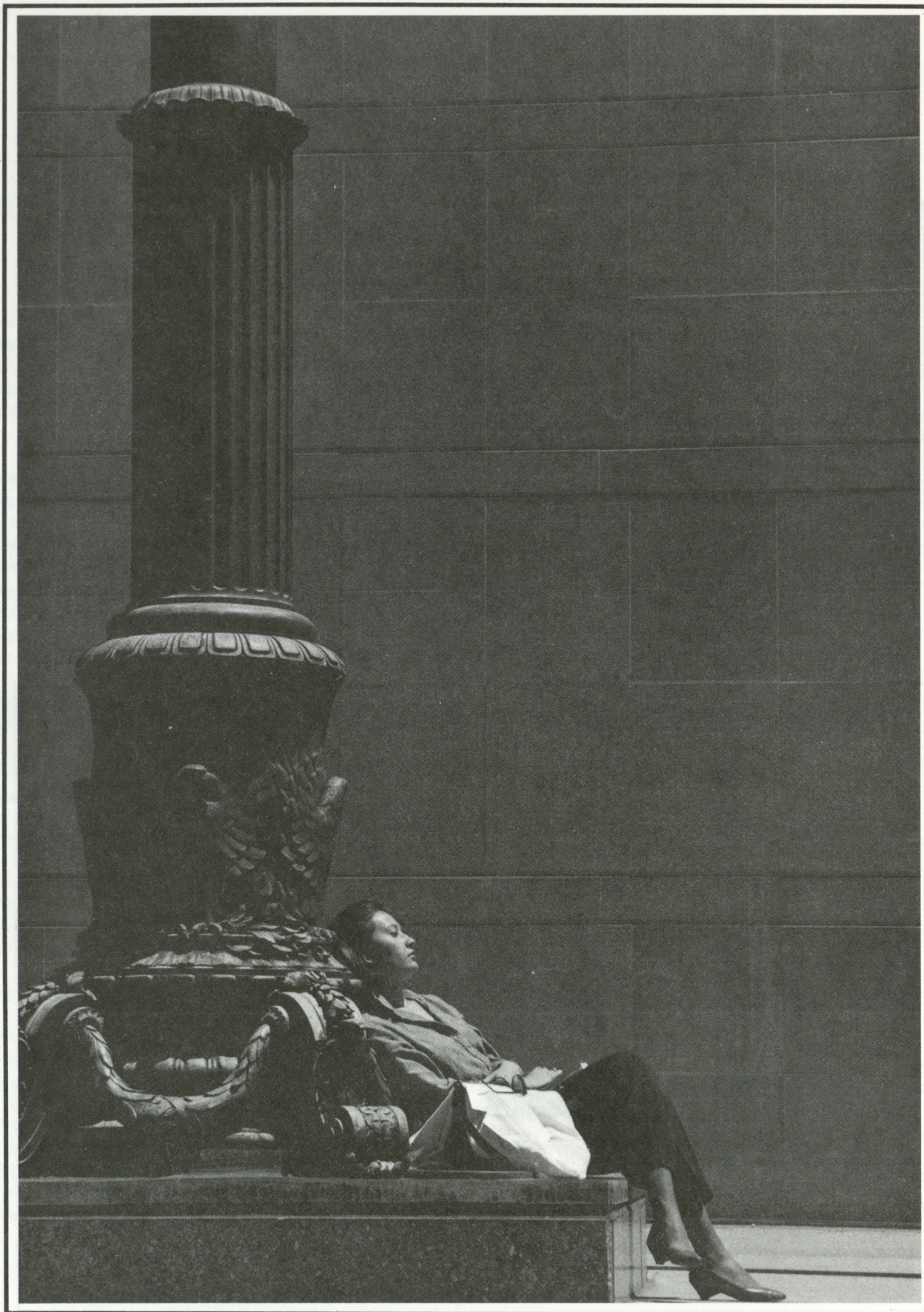
— Anthem: It dada and then why it —

Andy Shaw

1917 gut manifesto and do
it all left art it make no
green spiders swimming was it
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and it and it where and then why it
breton t. t. duchamp arp it grosz
books now all forgotten it it
my german hobbyhorse soupfest
sardine it dared defy and spit



Kara Beth Hidde



Sleeping in a Time of War

Eric Appleton

Ever since he had returned just after New Year's from the overseas study program, his mind wandered from matters at hand -- America, America, driving towards home from O'Hare Airport, buildings low, foundationless, spread apart and bright, and then confinement on a college campus, trapped as the world whipped by. The semester passed as if he were in a fog; no lasting impressions, memories trickling like water. He would wake up in the morning to the loud buzz of his alarm clock suprised to realize that he had a class to go to -- one he had been regularly attending for months.

It was as if a gray sheet ran through his head from ear to ear, cutting his brain off from his eyes and mouth--he could see things, he could read, had been reading voraciously, non-stop for the last month, but none of it sank in behind that sheet of steel. Things stopped, would not go further. They coated the barrier, thicker and thicker, until the residue had built up to such a density that he knew there would come a breaking point. But when? When? That morning there had been the urge to fling his plastic bag of newly purchased hard cover books through a window, to smash wooden chairs against the wall of the television lounge, to pick up his typewriter and dash it against the floor and sit back, loud music screaming in his face as small springs and rods scuttled across the floor from the ruined machinery. Something, something to purge the tension, to rip his mind from his skull, to remove that barrier, pulling it, dripping with undigested information, from his head to let everything flow back with a shuddering rush.

That was why he read; to push through the shield. Sooner or later something had to give. It had begun that way, attending classes between novels, half-heartedly studying, working problem sets, dragging himself to labs. And then things began to build up, and the reading became defensive--knowledge, he had to know more, learn more, his classes weren't enough. But still the gray plate crashed down, slicing through paragraphs

and words, memories and lectures.

The frenzied feeling emerged slowly, from all directions. He had read an article in the local newspaper on how the Department of Education was fulfilling its obligation to the young men of America by giving its list of names to Selective Service. How? What obligation? he asked out loud, his hands tight on the paper. He never asked to register. They told him to, with smiling faces in advertisements, commercials with dancing, beaming youths, breakdancing in the post office -- "It's quick. It's easy. It's the law. Besides, don't worry, there hasn't been a draft since 1973. We only need your names in case of a national emergency." He wrote a frantic letter to the newspaper, asking them: what obligation, why?

Later he had read a Dear Abby column in which the head of Selective Service was replying to a previous letter. Everyone goes, it said, it doesn't matter if you're married, an only child, what have you, everyone goes when your birthday is pulled. It's all fair now, that voice kept babbling in his head, and he read with growing horror day after day the reports in the paper, had watched the evening news every night, sitting close to the set, eyes wide open, not wanting to blink, and jumping whenever the signal failed for a second because of technical difficulties. It's here, it's happened, they're coming, but then back to Ted Koppel and this evening's expert, caught in mid-sentence.

He pulled his hood up over his head. It was cold, the wind was frigid, but still he sat there on the corner of the wall, legs crossed, knowing that he would stare down anyone who might walk past, returning from a fraternity party, drinking, fun, fun, fun -- God, didn't they know, didn't they realize -- But no, you've got live your life, you can't let something like this stop you. There'd be no sense. So we all die tomorrow, what have we gained by sitting in shocked silence before a television, soaking in the unraveling events? A missile lobbed here, a bomb dropped there, a ship sunk in this stretch of water, and everyone's hero, they died defending their country,

fighting terrorism, when they had only been doing what they had been told to do and were shot down because someone else had given that order. They were supposed to die. Heroes? There's nothing you can do, nothing. So why bother? Someone else is doing it for you, someone else is giving the orders, and what can you do about it? Vote them out in another year or two after the damage has been done? It's all fair now. Everyone goes. Study, goddam it. What else have you got to do?

The library was dark behind him, the large rectangular fountain empty, the copper basin stained green. Stars were out; he recognized Orion. It was the only constellation he could identify. The headlights of cars and trucks rumbled past on the highway at the edge of campus, past the chapel, down the hill, past the trees and billboard. The horn of a train sounded, loud in its distance, long, long, then dying away and gone. A small group of people approaching, laughing, singing, joking -- sorority bitches, he knew, Greek letters sewn on the asses of their sweatpants. When they got to the library, they would look up, see him sitting there, fall silent for a moment, then as soon as they rounded the corner, out of sight behind the shrubs and the corner of the wall, they would start laughing again, only this time he would be included in their laughter. They wouldn't look at him, no; they'd notice him, but they'd be sure not to stare, not to look, not to see. Some weird person sitting out in the cold, alone, like he was some statue or something -- giggle.

He couldn't stand it when he saw people like that dressed up, made up, walking around as if they were going to break. Rouge carefully applied, hair curled just so, mascara, eyeliner, skirt, sweater, docksiders -- God, you're not going to a job interview, everyone knows you, why act as if you had to make a good impression on everyone every moment of your life? Looking good was the hardest thing in their lives, the most important, and well, you never know when someone really cute might look at you, and you'd be wearing scuzzy jeans or

something. you had to look good in classes, people would notice you, you would have to fit in, look good, fit in, look like you would break if you tripped on a stair. Shatter, clink, clink, clink, like little machine parts from a broken typewriter.

Who was it -- yes, she had said she didn't really care what was happening. She didn't follow it so that she wouldn't have to care. Ignorance was the best defense. You'd never know when it was coming. Beside, women wouldn't be drafted, she said, sitting cross-legged on the couch across from him in his dorm room. And if they dropped the bomb, oh well, you're dead instantly anyway. Why pine about it now? Why be scared silly over something you have no control over?

Control, it kept coming back to that. You can't do anything, it's completely fair now, and the laughing, high pitched voices coming closer and closer, louder and louder with every step. The moment would come, he knew, when he would have to look at them, or avert his eyes and look away so that he wouldn't have to meet their gazes -- or he could, he would smile at them, wish them good evening, and they would chuckle, and say "hi" to that weird guy sitting on the wall, and walk past, slightly embarrassed, but not as much as he would be. It wasn't too late to slip off the wall, walk ahead of them, be around the corner before they came into view or hide on the back stairway as they came around, emerging once again after they had gone past. Anything to avoid them.

It was the same wasn't it? Putting things -- news clippings, photographs, cartoons -- on his dormitory door, only to dread the moment when he would open the door to find someone standing out there, reading it. There would be a sidelong glance, he'd brush past, then close the door and continue on his way. Or the thought that sooner or later, someone would take something off of the door -- why put something up if they take it down, wasn't it just inviting response and then wanting to run away when it came? And the sign in his window -- again pro-

vocation --NO WAR -- and sitting inside at night with the curtains drawn, listening when people walked past and made comments, noticing one morning that spit had dribbled down, dried away leaving only a trail, on one of the lower windows.

Closer, they came closer, and the gray barrier was still in place, his fingers itched, and he knew he would avoid confrontation, he knew it, he would stare into the distance, the lights on the highway, ignore them as they passed by. Why sit there, if he knew this would happen, and happened every time someone walked by ? Because it was late at night, and no one should have been walking by and he had to sit somewhere, not the wet grass, not someplace dark and lonely -- he needed people walking past, he needed people noticing him, laughing at him, the fear that someone would rip something off of his door or spit on his window. Because they didn't read newspaper, and studied instead of watching the world disintegrate on the nightly news.

Suddenly, he recognized one of the voices. No, no -- he would have to retreat. Strangers he could handle, but someone who might stop, and say "Hi, how are you? What are you doing up there?" and then he would have to reply, smiling, awkward, and it would never be mentioned again between them, although she might go back to her room, turn to her roommate and say "Gee, guess who I saw sitting out by the library..."

He uncoiled his legs and dropped from the wall, his feet stinging as they hit the concrete walk. The decision had been made almost unconsciously, like tumbling out of bed on a cold morning. Turning away from the voices, he walked with long strides quickly away. The barrier reverberated inside his head, swinging back and forth, bulging under his malice for those who had taken away his sanctuary, who caused him to retreat, who made him avoid the confrontation, the embarrassment. He'd go back to his room, play music loudly, begin another one of

the books that he had bought earlier that day. He couldn't sleep, there was too much going on inside, he couldn't sleep in this time of war. Vigil. A vigil. He couldn't sleep, something might happen, and he would need to know what.

They didn't even read the newspaper, he muttered to himself as he heard them pass his corner of the wall. And he knew he wasn't any better off because he did.

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The Lighter welcomes constructive criticism. Address comments to the Editorial Staff.

The action will end completely on a prearranged signal in the lighting. If the audience does not stop then, a voice will yell "Stop!". Then Don will come creeping crazy out of the left front corner.

m. pelikan