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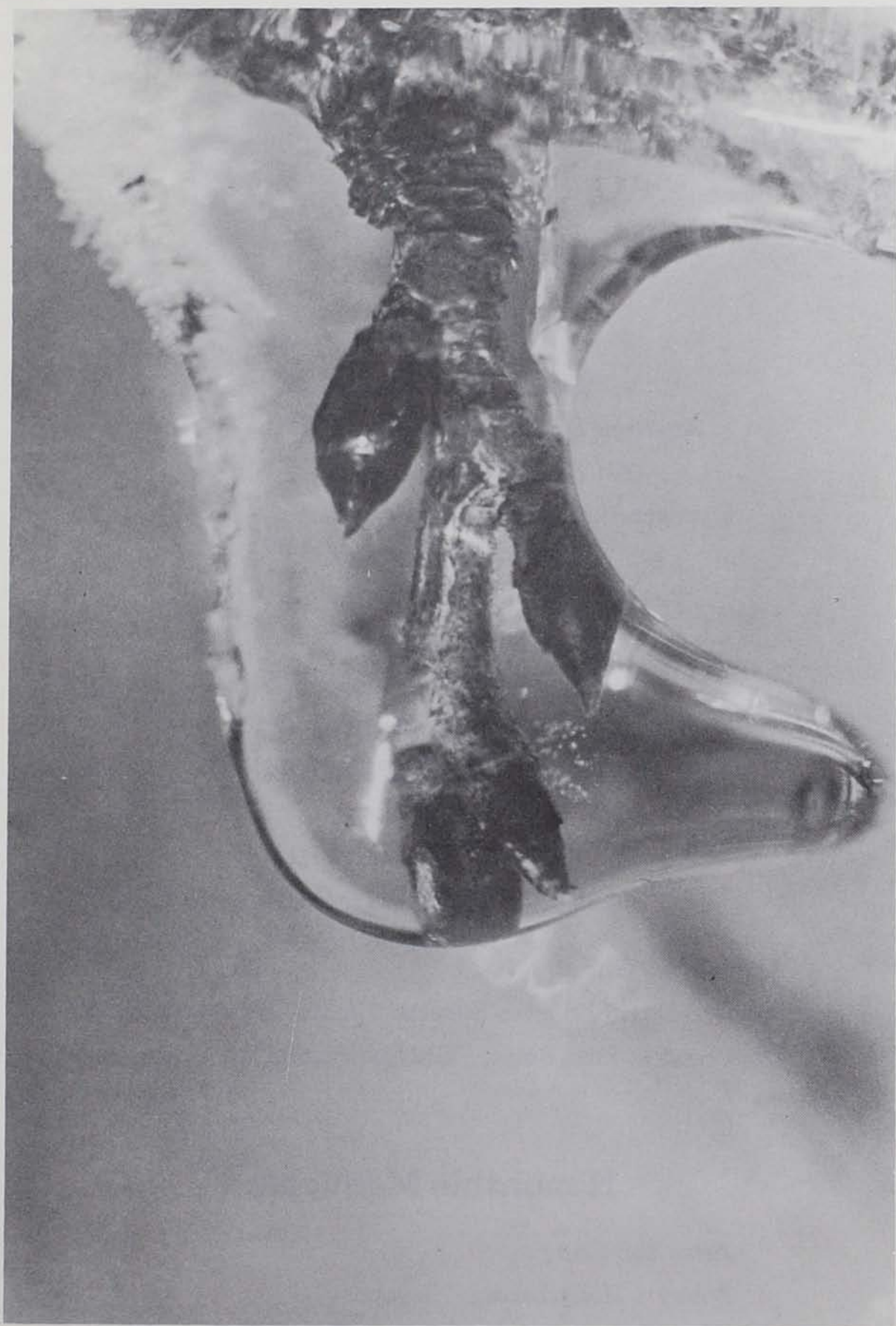
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JOSEPH P. OLSON

# THE LANTERN

1974

## SPRING

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*Short Story:* Fred Reiss: "The Showdown"

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*Art:* Bob Carty

*Poetry:* Holly Leber: "Response"

*Short Story:* George Bause: "Scramblen' Zone"

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## Response

— in answer to John Donne's "Song"

Stop and see the blowing air,  
     Search the sea for sparrow's nest,  
 Find the love in cold, hard stare,  
     Or the peace of final rest.  
 Show me the spot where earth joins sky,  
 Or number the camels through needle's eye,  
     And say  
     What ray  
 Gleams of hope where poor do stay.

If thou dost speak of wonders,  
     Impossible tales singing,  
 Then dost swear that no foot stirs  
     Of woman true and waiting,  
 That of all strange sights, this the most:  
 No woman faithful can thou boast,  
     Why quell  
     Thy yells,  
 Need look no further than thyself.

Yes, there thou'lt find the true fault,  
     'Tis in thy nature hidden;  
 The flaw breeds in closed vault  
     Called man, if I'm not taken.  
 For lack of trust is lurking there  
 Which means thou'lt find no woman fair.  
     Instead,  
     I've read  
 Man is false when he makes his bed.

H. LEBER



## Roads

roads  
to and from  
they're all the same.

I divorced myself from you  
and now  
going forward  
I find myself  
looking back  
to you  
and where I've been  
so it wasn't all I wanted  
it was more than I have now

I find it hard  
to think of new roads  
and highways  
instead of footpaths  
and our ways  
we never climbed a mountain  
but we combed the foothills  
and of all we didn't share  
there is still  
all we did

I know I can't retrace the paths  
but sometimes when the door  
seems just a little open  
I daydream  
and wish myself back.

EVA MORGAN



Q.L.B.

## Ghost Dance

*for Pache*

Word came.

How all the deer  
Came out,  
Looking neither this way  
Nor that, moved  
Out of the thicket and  
Onto the clear field;

If I seem happy tonight  
Without reason,  
It is for that  
Which I have seen:

How the low sun cast  
Miraculous shadows  
Across the grass,  
And all the animals moved

Easily among  
The shapes of the green land.

DAVID KENNETH ROBERTS

## Natator

The clouds like phantoms cross the moon,  
 The coldness slushes about me;  
 My muscles grow numb from aching,  
 From this darkness, there is no escaping.

The waves are growing quiet now  
 All sound is being dulled;  
 I picture everything in the sea  
 Just gliding, staring at me.

The past—the future are all one,  
 Everything is clear.  
 My life, my struggle is ended now  
 The beginning is finally here.

*STEPHEN HORSTMANN*

## Make Believe

If you don't share the real  
 all that's left is make-believe.  
 I know I'm guilty sometimes too,  
 but people tire of fairy tales  
 and painted dragons  
 even castles fall.

*EVA MORGAN*

## An English Sonnet

Life's love, when young, is tender, beautiful,  
 And then goes on through springtime's joys and tears.  
 Obedient, the heart is dutiful  
 To whims and fancies; scornful of its peers.  
 The younger lovers have no cares to face;  
 They leave them for their elders to work out,  
 And think their pretty thoughts and have God's grace.  
 They hope that they will never have to doubt.  
 Life's love, in autumn, quickly dies in flames,  
 Or withers with the flowers of the spring.  
 They loved, but soon forgot they made their claims,  
 And lost their reasons that they gave to sing;  
 The meaning's gone from starry skies and moon,  
 Love comes; love goes; it's over all too soon.

NINA ROEDER

## A Cinquain

Morning.  
 The fog is thick.  
 Screeching pierces the air.  
 Glass flies, people scream, sirens wail.  
 Mourning.

NINA ROEDER

## Icarus

Earth, Air, Fire, Water.

A whisper of anticipation,  
like rising out of morning mist,  
seeps through into the world of youth  
with promise of a better world.

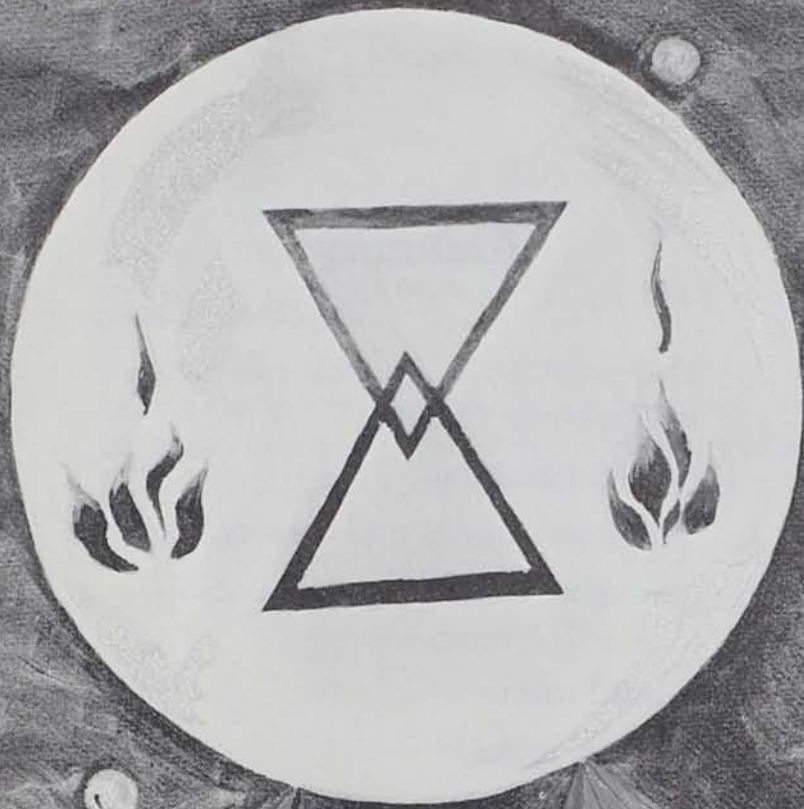
The remnants of a generation  
have carved a pathway through the clouds  
and desire's orb shines through the gap  
and draws the dreamer to its flame  
but he has only wax for wings.

And death comes too soon to the dreamer  
but first the fall of futile fears,  
which, perhaps, is all that counts . . .

And the remnants of this generation  
have carved new pathways through the clouds  
and left courage for some future youth  
who moving t'ward desire's orb  
may avoid the strength of passion's fire  
and reach outward for a better world.

Fire, Water, Earth, Air.

EDMOND KNOWLES



B. Grant

## Alchemy

*for Loren Eiseley*

In a room in the attic  
an old black hat  
with thunderbolts and crescent moons  
sits upon a great leather book;

a hard rain:  
the roof leaks  
into a dozen metal pans  
scattered across the floor;

a man studies  
the movements of his own hand,  
matches the figures his shadows make  
on the bare walls,  
stands back in wonderment.

DAVID KENNETH ROBERTS



## Pain

It is not like the burn of the flame,  
for fire kisses the skin with dry lips.  
Nor is it like the burn of steam,  
for vapor unlocks pores with prickling keys.

But it is like bathing in bubbling lava,  
or showering in droplets of molten steel,  
or being the prey onto whose tender flesh  
a liquid sun pours forth its inner contents.

*DEBBIE ERBE*

## Love

Your love was like a delicate snowflake.  
It floated down from the sky,  
And happened to land on my coat.  
I marveled at its simple yet intricate beauty,  
Blinked my eyes, and it was gone.

*DARLA WILSON*

## Scramblen' Zone

By GEORGE BAUSE

Wallie had never actually considered that there might be something beyond Rheimsalt Flat. Of course he had never been told otherwise. He shifted his pipe slowly toward the opposite side of his mouth. The heat seemed unbearable.

A whisper of a breeze stirred at his feet. He felt, absent-mindedly, for his timepiece. Ah yes. He had forgotten. Eyeing the sun and the denser underbrush to the northeast, he concluded, "One-thirty," and quickly surveyed the landscape a second time. Seeing nothing particularly friendly in sight, he settled back.

A curse followed by a rough kick sent him reeling into the undergrowth. Dazed and not particularly anxious to meet the boot again, Wallie rose to confront his assailant. Before him stood a monster of a man with a sizable cigar dangling from his mouth. Avoiding the man's glare, Wallie stooped to recover his fallen pipe. Even *monster* seemed somehow an understatement in describing this fellow. He stood a full seven feet tall. His hands and face were deeply burned by the tropical sun, and harsher elements hadn't done his complexion any favors. A monster and an ugly one at that, mused Wallie.

The monster boomed, "You Wallie?"

Wallie was taken aback. Not sure if the man was speaking in earnest or not, Wallie artfully hedged, "Well, some call me that."

Wallie felt the giant's paw around his neck. Apparently the newcomer did not appreciate cleverness.

"Wiseacre, you Wallie?"

A nearly throttled affirmative was the only response.

The monster released his grip on Wallie's throat. "My name is Hoss. I'm the foreman." And a brute of a man, thought Wallie. "Come with me." Hoss chewed on the cigar. He was disturbed because his new recruit was staring at the peculiar patch stretched full across the crotch area of the foreman's monstrous pantaloons. "Come on," Hoss growled ominously.

Hoss and he reached the railhead by daybreak. Exhausted from his efforts, Wallie dropped to his knees and fell headlong into the undergrowth.

A swift kick roused him. Damn, thought Wallie. The boot was all too familiar. He wheeled around to face Hoss. A grinding blow to the kidney left Wallie senseless and perhaps sadly wiser. He'd moved too quickly for Hoss' liking.

Sputtering for breath, Wallie regained his senses with some reluctance. Hoss was obviously a force to be reckoned with. The next minute, though, found Wallie gaping wide-mouthed, not at the sight of his tormentor but at the sight of something just beyond him.

For out on the veranda had emerged—wonder of wonders—a woman. Hoss hurriedly explained. Apparently she was the wife of the "prahpriater," a Mr. Schwemp. As proprietor or, more accurately, head engineer of the Drakensberg Railway System, Schwemp was permitted the luxury. Wallie had to marvel at Schwemp. To attempt to lay rail this deep within the continent was, to say the least, suicidal, in view of the natives' recent uprisings. Certainly it was far from typical for Boers to expose their wives to such immediate danger. What then prompted Schwemp to drag his wife along? Wallie knew from that point on he'd have to make an all-out effort to meet this Mr. Schwemp.

Dorothea, with a quick shaking motion, bounded up the stairs, away from the two men, and back inside her jungle home. She felt strange whenever she forsook the porch for an extended period of time. And whenever she felt uncomfortable, she invariably began to giggle. She entered the bedroom and informed her husband of Wallie's arrival. Schwemp ignored the news and rolled over. Dorothea giggled.

Hoss seemed to find pleasure in his new role as guide to this fresh recruit. At any rate he took it upon himself to explain to Wallie the circumstances. Seems that as far back as Hoss could remember, no one had ever seen Mrs. Schwemp—he called her Dorothea—venture more than a few steps outside her home. He said "no one" with particular harshness. Wallie said nothing.

After chewing a new cigar, Hoss left Wallie with a railhand, a tremendously muscular mulatto named Joseph. The fellow, though not nearly as tall as Hoss, towered almost a foot above the recruit. Joseph grinned sheepishly and introduced himself as "Gray Joe," a nickname he claimed Hoss had given him. Wallie was wondering whether Joseph had received a cuffing from Hoss anything like he'd experienced. Joe nodded and offered Wallie a piece of chicle. The men smiled at each other. The pain of initiation. Well, at least it was something they had in common.

Tracks stretched endlessly behind them but came to an abrupt halt just a few hundred yards ahead. Puzzled for a moment, Wallie soon realized what the problem was. A steep hill loomed ahead. About half a mile up the direction the track would eventually be, he saw a blasting crew. They were all dressed in crisp, khaki-colored uniforms. Wallie was amazed at the precision of their movements. Ah, all the more reason to admire the leader of the operation, Mr. Schwemp. Surely, thought Wallie, this Mr. Schwemp must be a man with dreams . . . and insights . . .

The rest of the morning was spent in teaching Wallie proper techniques to use in setting rail, driving spikes, and hauling loads. The company had on hand over forty mules whose sole purpose was to drag rock and debris from the vicinity of the railhead. The mules were generally bad-tempered, yet Joe always seemed to come up with a kind word for them. Throughout the morning Wallie had noticed how Joe had steered him clear of the blasting area. When jobs came up that required work forward of the railhead, Joe volunteered for them.

Noontime found Wallie wrestling with a particularly long piece of track. He was disappointed to have learned earlier from Joe that "that damn Herman" had neglected to make arrangements for Wallie's lunch. Joe rather big-heartedly decided to forgo lunch. Thus the two campmates continued working while their fellow railhands relaxed and while the blasting crew was returning from break. Wallie was just aligning that ugly piece of track when he began to feel vibrations running up and down the line. Then a tremendous shriek pierced the shadows of the craggy mound ahead: "Scramble!" Wallie turned just in time to spot his terrified campmate streaking towards the jungle. With a blinding flash and a terrific explosion, part of the moor gave way. Wallie caught a glimpse of his friend diving into the undergrowth. **THE CONCUSSION.** Wallie was flung headlong into a pile of scrap track. He staggered to his feet, tottered slightly, and finally regained his senses. Dashing toward the lush curtain of foliage Joe had so hastily parted, Wallie found a strange pleasure in having evaded death so easily. A sweating but silent Joe emerged from the jungle. He was obviously quite shaken. Wallie helped him back to their lean-to and sent word to Mr. Schwemp that neither of the campmates would be working any more that day. Wallie knew Schwemp would understand. Perhaps—just maybe—if Wallie worked things right, he would even be able to meet the man.

"Gray Joe" was indeed a pale gray. Try as he might, Wallie could not get any response from his campmate. To ply him with cheap beer seemed heartless, so Wallie tried patiently to bring Joe out of himself with conversation. For ten minutes Wallie pressed his friend to say something. Wallie finally offered Joe another chicle stick. With a sudden flicker of emotion, Joe rocked the camp with a second explosion. "Damn that damn Herman! That damn bastard—I told him! Working us like that, practically on top of scramblen' zone. Damn that bastard!"

Wallie was relieved. The two of them talked the rest of the afternoon and most of the evening. Joe finally let Wallie in on the camp gossip. The most amusing incident concerned Hoss, the foreman. Joe, now himself again, recalled Wallie's attention to Hoss' immense pair of pants. Rumor had it, Joe explained, that Hoss was making too much of an effort to draw Dorothea from her perch on the porch. In a brilliant flash of humor, her husband had pressured his poor foreman into wearing that ridiculous patch on the crotch area of his pantaloons. Hapless Hoss was the laughingstock of the camp for quite some time thereafter.

Wallie was once again amazed that he had yet to meet the clever Mr. Schwemp. Just imagining Hoss' attempts to hide the patch nearly doubled Wallie up with laughter.

"Damn that bastard Herman." Joe spoke in a subdued tone now.

"Ah, come on, Joe." And the friends mused over the crotch patch till sleep set in.

The next morning they began the routine work after breakfast. Both men though made a point of memorizing the schedule for blasting; neither planned to scramble for his life again. The first explosion was due, so the campmates stood a full two hundred yards off behind a small outcrop of rock. Something went amiss, however. For instead of shaking the surrounding jungle, the explosive charge emitted a puff of smoke. Howling with laughter, Joe tugged Wallie out from behind the shelter. Then, with a second puff, the dampened charge showered the area with rock fragments. Grinning broadly in the direction of the dud, Joe broke out in a second peal of laughter. But the chuckle caught in Wallie's throat as he, with a sickening groan, dropped to his knees and fell headlong into the undergrowth.

The rest of the railhands rushed *en masse* to the spot where Wallie's corpse lay.

And closely behind them Mr. Schwemp followed.

And a little ways behind him, Dorothea.

"Vat's der problem?" queried the boss of Drakensberg Railway. He had a curious habit of rubbing his oily palms together.

"Herman! Herman!" Dorothea screamed as bewildered she abandoned the porch.

"Here, here I ahm," responded her husband. Schwemp's hands were practically vibrating against each other.

Hoss swallowed part of his cigar.

"Don't vorry about der Negroh; are all der mules okay?" Schwemp asked aloud.

The railhands were stunned. Joe, weeping silently, actually spat out his chicle.

"I mean der mahn ve kahn replace, but dem mules kahst money."

Unnerved, Dorothea started giggling.

Then—silence reigned.

## In the Gathering Wind

"And there are visions to be seen again and  
voices to be heard from beyond the world."

—JOHN NEIHARDT

In the clear—  
On a great hill looking out  
Over water, on all sides:

And again the old man walks  
The edge of the sea, a great,  
Gruff bear of a man, brooding alone  
Watches the storms gather  
At the edge of the world;

And again the river winding down  
Steadily from the mountains,  
The ten or twenty small boats  
That move along it, their sails  
White and full;

And again the lake half-hidden  
In the trees, where the lights  
Of the sun collect themselves,  
And the canada geese beat their wings  
On the water, lift themselves hugely  
Into the air.

Standing out  
At the top of the hill  
As the wind coming in off the sea  
Quickens, and the forms  
Of apprehension dance in the sky,  
I make myself ready for change.

And again the exhilaration  
As the storm bears down,  
And the massive figures that fill  
The sky move out upon the water,  
And I gather myself  
In a wind of amazing dimension,  
And let them come on.

DAVID KENNETH ROBERTS

## The Circus

The kids don't like a circus anymore;  
the tents are echo-empty every night.  
From a wooden pony mute on an abandoned carousel  
chips of paint, like tears, fall to the ground.  
The pony runs to time-forgotten sounds.

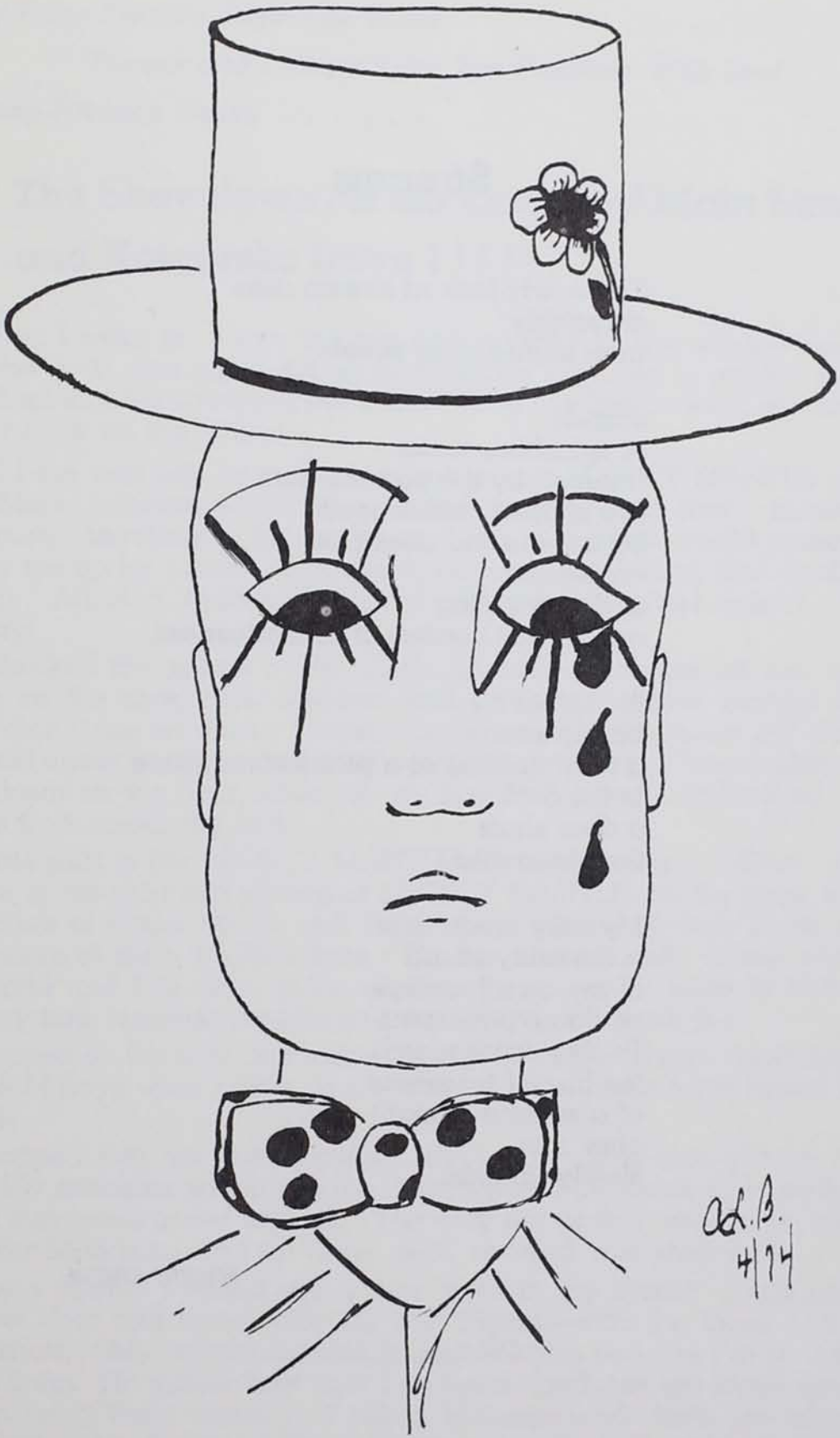
The clown is feeling old—he can't recall  
a time he didn't paint a smile on.  
And the circus has gone out of style, just freak shows draw a crowd.  
Tents collapse like night-discarded gowns.  
He cries to see the big top coming down.

So time has passed the circus people by;  
once fed on roaring crowds, they starve alone.  
And like tightrope walkers on a line too frayed and frail to hold,  
tumbling, they fall crashing to the floor.  
Not dead, they're only crippled all the more.

We all are geeks and transient mimics now.  
Our roots, self-severed, wither, shrink, and die.  
Like a wand'ring gypsy stirring ashes of a long-cold fire,  
I search for living embers glowing warm.  
But circus tents are made for moving on.

CINDY SHELMIRE





ad. B.  
4/74

## Streams

The newly-formed stream rises  
sluggishly  
from night-bound streets.

sounds  
of splashing water  
fathered by the passing cars  
are shaped and echoed  
by a thousand obstacles  
coalescing  
and dissipating  
on the faint borders of consciousness.

the turbid air  
barely stirs  
a faint tinkling of a piano somewhere  
in the dark  
a door shuts  
the piano dies

My only music now  
is the gritty sound  
of my own footsteps  
on damp pavement.  
To this death-march  
the humid tenseness  
of a summer's night  
after rain  
slowly unfolds.

ROBERT SIMON

*Freddy Reiss Proudly Zaps You With:*

*Franny and Zoey's Fried Zen Cashews With Beef*

*Parts and Nirvana Gravy . . . . .*

## **The Showdown on the Corner of Main Street and Koscuisko Drive ! ! ! !**

When I woke up, I saw the sun coming through the window and I heard the birds singing. I sat up and rubbed my eyes to get the sand out of them that the sandman put there. Then I looked around, groaned, and lay back on my pillow.

All I did was just lie there and look at my MICKEY MANTLE and Roger Maris pictures, which were taped to my closet door. Besides, there wasn't anything to get up for, and I figured Mom would come in to wake me up for school. I yawned, punched my pillow, and ducked under it. All of a sudden it hit me! There's no school today! It's Saturday!

I chucked my pillow at the closet, kicked my covers off me, and hopped on the nice, cool, wooden floor. When I looked around my room I didn't see the shirt. I looked under my bluejeans, on my door-knob, and under my chair, but it just wasn't there. Then I Re-membered! I bent down on the floor, lifted up my baseball covers, and pulled the shirt out from under my bed.

(This shirt is My MICKEY MANTLE And Roger Maris T-Shirt. On one side of the shirt is a picture of MICKEY MANTLE, on the other side is a picture of Roger Maris, and right in the middle of their faces are two pictures of them holding bats. It's the greatest shirt in the whole wide world and I've worn it for six days in a row. I have to hide it under my bed, because if Mom found it, she would wash it.)

I slipped on the shirt and looked at myself in my mirror. I felt good. The M & M Boys were riding on my chest! Who could have asked for more!!!!

I hopped into my pants, pulled my buckle tight, and put on my socks. My sneakers weren't on the floor, where I left them, so I checked to see if they were under my bed. The only things that were there were a Monster Magazine and an army man covered with dust balls.

Then I figured I would see if they were in my closet. I slid back the closet door and there were my P.F. Flyers—with the laces tied in double knots. (My sneaks are tied in double knots because I'm no good at tying them. No matter how tight I tie them, the laces get loose, and I wind up tying them again.) I asked Hammerhead—he's one of my friends with a head shaped like a hammer—to tie my sneaks in double knots. Hammerhead told me his double knots were so tight that he never had to tie his sneakers for a whole year. So, you knew when

Hammerhead tied a knot, that baby's in there for keeps!

I stuck my thumbs in the backs of my sneaks and wiggled my feet into them. It was so quiet in the house I could hear the kitchen clock humming and scrunching. I went to the kitchen on my tippy toes to get some grub.

When I got to the kitchen, I climbed up on the counter and took a cereal bowl from the highest shelf of the top cabinet. I hopped back on the floor, opened the bottom cereal cabinet, and took out the only box of cereal that was left: Shredded Wheat. I grabbed a spoon from the spoon drawer, took the milk out from the fridge, poured the Shredded Wheat in my bowl, and put milk in it. I just sat there staring at the bowl. The stuff looked like two Brillo Soap Pads in a dish of soapy water.

(My sisters eat all the good cereal and leave me all the bad stuff.) Just yesterday, there were Sugar Pops and Cocoa Krispies in the cereal cabinet, but today there is nothing but Shredded Wheat. This stuff tasted so bad it took me twenty minutes to eat it. (I don't know how Mom and Dad can like it. I don't even know why she buys it. How can you buy a box of rotten cereal that doesn't even give you a prize in the box?)

I looked up at the clock. I wasn't sure whether it's 7:30 or 8:30. Telling time wasn't my best thing. Mrs. Zacarowski—that's my second grade teacher—failed me in Time, but Rutledge—he's one of my friends—told me how to tell time good. All you have to do is make believe the big hand is moving ahead till it gets to the twelve. I did it and figured it was going to be 9:00. Boy, it's sure good to have a guy like Rutledge for a friend!

After I drank the rest of the milk from the bottom of my bowl, I picked up My Box Of Baseball Cards from under the chair I was sitting on and started looking at the Fourth Series Check-list.

456! That's the card I had to get! That's the number of MICKEY MANTLE'S BASEBALL CARD! That's the card. Without MICKEY MANTLE all my Yankees didn't mean a single thing to me. Even though I got Roger Maris, Moose Skowron, and all those other good Yankees, I still didn't have THE MICK, and without him the Yankees just aren't the Yankees.

I reached down into my pocket and pulled out My Brand New Crisp Dollar Bill. My godfather Uncle Veets sent it to me for my birthday—my birthday was April 29th. Most uncles don't give you anything for your birthday. (The uncle that always gives you money is your godfather uncle. The others just shake your hand or buy you a soda.)

I stuffed My Brand New Crisp Dollar Bill in my pocket and went back into my room. I put on My Baseball Jacket and Yankee Hat. Then I went into the corner of my room, took a card out from under a big tall pile of heavy books, shoved it into my pocket, and went back into the kitchen. I grabbed three packs of doubles and my favorite

players pack out of my box. (Wherever I go, I always take some cards with me, because you can never tell when you might need them.)

I opened the front door, pushed the rattling screen door open, and jumped from the top step to our front sidewalk. I hopped on one foot till I got to the sidewalk that ran in front of all the houses on the block. All of a sudden I started running . . .

I drew back into the pocket. The rush was on! The defense had pulled a blitz! My linemen couldn't hold the rush. I scrambled out of the pocket and looked down field. All of my receivers were covered. I glanced at the clock and saw that there were only ten seconds remaining in the game. We had no timeouts left, a hole was opening on the right side of the field, there was no alternative: I had to run the ball myself!

The stadium's in an uproar. A voice came over the loudspeakers, "Reiss is running the ball from the New York Giants' own twenty yard line! I can't believe the courage of this rookie New York Giant! . . .

(I ran past two telephone poles.)

". . . He's picked up more yardage by picking up a block at the thirty. Boy! He passed those backs like they were standing still!" . . .

(I jumped over two garbage can lids.)

". . . Reiss makes a spectacular leap over two of his own men! Friends, I'm astounded, utterly and totally shocked at this rookie's courageous and determined drive. He's at the Packer's ten . . . the five . . . the four . . ."

(I squeezed between two garbage cans, grabbed the street pole, and started swinging on it.)

". . . He's shaken off a tackle, moved to his left, and been tripped up by the remaining safety. But he's not down! He's made a last ditch effort and dived for the goal line. REISS IS OVER THE LINE! TOUCH-DOWN! He's so happy, he's swinging on the goal posts!"

The gun sounds. The roaring appreciation of the fans makes the ground tremble and the stadium shake. Programs are thrown in the air and the fans enthusiastically wave their pennants back and forth.

The announcer says, "The New York Giants win by the score of thirteen to twelve due to the exploits of Fearless Freddy Reiss, The New Football Wonder!" ----- Zip!

(The horns honked and the cars whizzed by. I'm on Main Street, The Busiest Street in all of Clifton, New Jersey! This street is so busy that you can't play kickball on it, and if you did, you would get a sore throat from saying, "Car, Car, C-A-R; stick your head in a jelly jar.")

I looked in front of me and behind me and saw that nobody was around and I had the whole block all to myself! When nobody's around, I liked to sing, so I started singing, "Take me out to the Ball Game, take me out to the crowd. Buy me sum peanuts and Cracker-jacks, I don't care if I ever get b-".

This little rock was sitting in the middle of the sidewalk. I gave him

a kick. The rock rolled up the sidewalk and curved into the grass. I pushed the little guy back on the sidewalk and gave him another kick. The same thing happened. (Some rocks are like that, even if you kick them a thousand times, they will always roll into the grass.) I didn't even bother to give the rock another kick, because that's the way the rock was and there is nothing you can do about it.

Every Saturday this Lady Policeman stands in the middle of the street and waves at the cars. This Lady makes me scared. She has a white face, sucked-in cheeks, and on her lips she wears this red, shiny lipstick. She is ugly! And spooky too! She wears white gloves, a nurse's hat with a badge on it, and she has these **BIG BLACK SHOES!** I mean these shoes are **BIG!** I bet if you wore them you could kill five-hundred ants with just one step! Facedy (we call him that because he's really got a Face!; he wears braces, has droopy eyes, and likes to pop your bubble gum bubbles so you will get gum stuck all over your nose and mouth) told me the Lady Policeman wears gloves on her hands to hide her Black Fingernails!

No Prune-Face Lady with red lipstick, a whistle, and Black Fingernails is going to help me cross the street. I'm going to Jaywalk!

After I passed her, I kept on walking down a block, and made her think that I wasn't going to cross the street. Then I sneaked between two parked cars and peeked up the road. The Lady Policeman had her back turned. This was my chance!

The Lady Policeman turned around and saw me crossing the street. She started waving her hands and blowing her whistle at me.

TwEEEEEE . . . TwEEEEEE . . . TwEEEEEEEEEE . . .

Then out of nowhere came these two cars from the side roads that run into Main Street.

Huuunk!

BEEEEEEEEEP!

Screeech . . .

ScreeEEEEEEEEEEch!

The Lady Policeman yelled, "EEEEEEE-yike!"

Both cars stopped short and right in between them was the Lady Policeman with her hands over her eyes. She was almost mashed into a Lady Policeman Pancake! It was funny!

One of the guys yelled from his car, "HEY LADY! WHAD THA HELL YAH WAVIN' US ON FOR?"

The other guy said, "WHADDAYA TRYIN' TAH DO? YA DUMB . . ."

I couldn't hear the rest of what he was saying because I was running so fast and trying not to laugh. The guy must have been her son though because he called her "mother" something. I kept running till I thought it was safe to stop. Old Reiss gets away clean! Just call me speedy.

Now I'm standing right in front of Joe's Smoke Shop And Luncheonette Soda Fountain. With a name like that you got to be good! This place is the greatest! It's got Monster Models, Weirdo Models, Comic Books, Soda, Ice Cream, and all the Candy Bars you can eat! When I was just a little kid, Mom wouldn't let me come down here by myself, but now I'm nine and a half and in the fourth grade.

As I opened the green, wooden screen door, its spring creaked. The bells tied on it rang, and the door clonked behind me. I looked over at the counter and saw Joe standing and wiping the soda fountain soda squirters with a rag.

Joe looked at me, took the smelly cigar out of his mouth, and, with smoke coming out of his face, said, "Hiya, Fred."

"Hi Joe! How'z buziness?"

(I'm a regular at Joe's store.)

"Oh." He wiped the counter with the rag, and, with smoke coming out of his mouth, he said, "As well as can be eggspeckted."

Joe always said that line.

"Hey Joe. Did yew get any Fourth Series Cards in yet?"

"Shure, I got them in this morning; Thay're right over in tha back comar."

"Okay, Tanks."

I went back to the corner of the store, and sure enough, there was a brand-new box of Baseball Cards with twenty-four packs lined up in three rows. I knew that I could buy almost all the cards in the box, but I didn't because I knew Mom would kill me if she found out I spent my whole dollar on Baseball Cards. I grabbed the middle pile of cards out of the box—the best cards are in the middle because things are always fresher in the middle. Then I closed my eyes, made a wish, and took two more packs of cards.

I went up to the counter, slapped down my dollar, and went outside with my fifty cents change and my ten packs. I sat on the corner in front of Joe's, opened my cards, thumbed through them, and shoved all the gum into my mouth. Even though I got some good guys, like Rocky Colovito, Zoilio Versalles, and Milt Pappas, I still didn't have MICKEY MANTLE. I mean, all those guys are real good, but none of them can beat THE MICK in my book.

Before I went up the street, I peeked from between two parked cars, and looked up the road. The Lady Policeman wasn't there! They must have taken her away. I shoved my Baseball Cards into my Baseball Jacket's pockets, put the wrappers into the litter basket—I don't want to be a litterbug—and started walking home.

There were about a million cracks in the sidewalk that I was walking on. I tried not to step on them, because I wasn't mad at anybody, and it's no fun stepping on cracks unless you're mad at somebody. (Once in a while, when Mom and Dad yell at me, I just change the song a little, saying, "Step on a crack. Break your father's back.")

Today I wasn't mad at them, so I figured I would give them both a break and not step on any cracks.

How long can you step in between cracks? I got tired of walking in between them and started balancing on the curb. The hardest part about balancing on it is trying to step over the black things that stick out in between the cracks of the curb. . .

I couldn't fall! It would mean a rapidly certain death! The falls below me thundered and roared. Who would think that I, Fearless Freddy Reiss, would venture to tightrope walk across Niagara Falls. The high-strung press called the feat "Barefoot Suicide"! They wouldn't say that, if they knew what the real Freddy Reiss is made of.

I slowly put one foot in front of the other. Everything went smooth as a sled on snow . . .

(I slipped on the dipping part of the curb.)

A gust of wind shook the rope. I momentarily lost my balance. My balancing pole slipped from my hands and fell into the seething turbulence of the foaming falls.

The crowd gasped.

"Gasp!"

Children covered their eyes and screamed.

"Scream!"

My mother fainted.

(I stood on the curb with one foot. My left side started to pull me down, but I leaned real hard the other way and brought my feet back on the curb.)

I stuck out my hands to regain my balance, steadied my feet on the rope, and walked triumphantly to the other side. Flashbulbs popped, people cheered, and the band played *Stars And Stripes Forever* (the song gave me a headache), while confetti formed eddies of triumph above my head. The crowd walked over to me and carried me away on their shoulders. And they said it couldn't be! - - - - Zang!

"I win you lose, keeeee-id. Tuff luck," said a guy across the street.

"Awe com'on. Give Some Of Them Back! You wonned all my cards!" said the guy next to him.

"Listen, keeee-id; when you play the best, those are the chances you take," said the other guy.

I looked both ways and crossed the street to find out what was going on. When I got there, I saw two guys flipping Baseball Cards at Goog Fermica's Bar And Grill Store. I saw the guy who wanted his cards sit on the curb and look with wet eyes at the sneaker marks he was making in the dirt.

Flipping cards in Clifton is like gunfights on TV. If you can't flip, you don't make it, because without Baseball Cards you ain't worth noth-



ing. Cards are like notches on a gun—the more you have, the better you are.

In Clifton, there is only one way to flip cards: Each guy takes a turn throwing his card at the wall. Whoever gets closer to the wall wins the other guy's card. The winner always runs up to the wall to pick the cards up. The loser keeps on flipping first until he gets closer to the wall than the other guy. It's always better to go last, because that way you know what you have to beat.

The guy who said *kid* funny has a pile of about seventy-five cards right by his left foot and a shoebox full of Baseball Cards in front of him.

I went over to the two guys that were standing on the side watching these two guys flip. Since they were here before me, I figured they could tell me how good this guy really was.

"Hey is this guy any good?" I whispered to one of them.

"Good?" He looked at me like a flag flying in the wind. It bugs me when a guy makes a face at me. He said, "He's the most fantastikal fwipper I ever saw'd."

"Yeah but is he good?" I asked.

The next guy I asked rolled his eyes, walked to the curb, and sat down next to the guy with wet eyes.

I took a step and asked the next guy, "What's going on?"

He crinkled his nose and said, "What's going on?"

These two guys must be brothers. They didn't look like brothers. The guy that went over to the curb has a can-opener snozola. This guy I'm talking to has red hair, freckles, buck teeth, and a green runny nose. He sort of looked like a green wrinkled handkerchief. The kind that you keep in your pocket for a week and, when you find it, throw away.

He looked at me through his gray eyes and freckles and said, "That guy beated me fitee-too throws in a row. He's the most terr—"

"I give up! I Give Up!" said one of the guys that was just flipping. "Anytime a guy beats me twentee-two innah row, I knowed it's time ta quit!" The guy wiped his knees, shoved his cards in his pocket, and said, "Com'on yoose guys. Let's go."

All four of them left together. They were all looking at the ground, dragging their feet, and kicking the little rocks in the dirt at the curb. I felt sort of quiet for them.

The Great Flipper laughed like a donkey, looked down at his cards, and thumbed through them. Then he put one hand to his mouth, and yelled, "Hey yoose guys! Don't go away mad . . . . just go away!" He laughed like a donkey again, looked at me, and saw the little square boxes of Baseball Cards sticking out of my pockets. He smiled like a crocodile and said, "Hey Keeee-id. Ya wanna fwip?"

I stared at The Great Flipper's Shoebox Full of Baseball Cards, looked at the pile of cards in his hands, and thought about what those guys told me about him. This guy looked mean, with that teeth smile of his, and I didn't like him.

As I walked away I said, "No Tanks."

"Keeeee-id, I got any card ya wood want."

I stopped right in my tracks and started thinking about what that guy just said. Then it hit me: Maybe this guy has MICKEY MANTLE! I turned around, looked the guy right in the eyebrows, and asked, "Dew yew got THE MICK?"

Then he laughed like a donkey, smiled at me, and said out of the side of his mouth, "Mantle? That guy is nutting. I got him in trips."

"Ya wanna trade him?"

"Nope. I wanna fwip."

"Yeah, but dew yew really got him?"

"I ain't pulling ya leg keeee-id. I gotted him."

"Look I'll show ya." He picked up his shoebox, thumbed through the cards, stopped, and pulled out one. "Here look if ya don't believe me." I reached out to grab the card, but The Great Flipper pulled it back. "I said look . . . not touch." He held the card just out of reach, but not far enough so that I couldn't see it. There is THE MICKEY MANTLE BASEBALL CARD! THE MICK is smiling with his bat cocked behind his back. WOW! The Great Flipper said, "What's yar name, punk?"

"F-F-Fred Reiss."

"Well Greasey Reissy! My name's Oggie Lambeck Searling. I'm The King Flipper Of Passaic, New Jersey." Then he smiled like a hungry crocodile and said with his teeth, "Are ya game, Greasey?"

(No matter how good Searling is, to me, there is nothing better than having a MICKEY MANTLE BASEBALL CARD—only meeting THE REAL MICKEY MANTLE would be better, and that's the truth. Nobody can ever beat THE MICK!)

We started flipping at about 9:00 on the corner of Main Street and Koscuisko Drive. The only people on the whole block were me and Oggie.

Oggie looked at me with a smile on his teeth and said, "I'll go forst to give ya a break, keeee-id."

Searling wiped his left hand on his bluejeans, picked up a card with his left hand, and bent down till his knees were almost touching the sidewalk. He lowered the card to his sneaks, cocked back his hand, and threw the card with a smooth five-fingered push. The card spun perfectly flat, just an inch above the sidewalk, and headed straight for the wall.

As the card bounced off the wall, Oggie said, "Hold and spin baby." The card hit the sidewalk, spun back, and landed right against the wall! What a shot! I never saw a guy flip a card like that in my entire life!

I bent down on one of my knees, lowered my right hand till my knuckles touched the sidewalk, looked at the shot I had to beat, and

flipped my card. My toss wiggled, wagged, and landed about an inch from the wall. I won on this shot most of the time, but this wasn't most of the time; it was harder.

Oggie made a toothy smile, jumped up, ran to the wall to pick up his winnings. Then he ran back, looked at me with a mean smile, and laughed like a donkey.

I lost on my next twenty flips. Oggie smiled, put my twentieth card in his big shoebox, and said, "Hey Keeeee-id. Ya sure ya don't want to give up while ya still gotted the chance?"

There was something about the way he said it that made me feel mad at him. I reached down, picked up another card, and said, "Not on yer life Searling! . . . What are yew? . . . Chicken or sumthing?"

Oggie yawned and said, "Listen Greasey Reissy: I was just giving ya a chance, 'cause ya know I'm gonnah clean ya out anyways, and that ya gotted no chance to beat me." Then he laughed like a donkey that's trying to kick somebody.

I didn't like him.

The sun got higher and higher. Oggie kept winning and I kept losing. In his shoebox were two packs of my doubles. It just kept on getting hotter and hotter. I took off my Baseball Jacket, rubbed my sore knees, and blew on my red knuckles. I was losing, tired, and sore. I kept my Yankee Hat on, took the rubber band off the pack, and got ready to throw my next card.

The sun got a lot higher, more cars came down Main Street, and some grown-ups started to walk by us. We kept flipping and flipping, and I kept losing, losing, and losing. No matter what I did I just couldn't beat him. I would throw my card right against the wall and Searling would throw a leaner. I would throw a leaner, Searling would knock it down, and his card would be closer to the wall than mine!

I lost my three packs of doubles and all the new Baseball Cards I just got at Joe's. It looked like my flipping days were over and that I would never win MICKEY MANTLE from Searling. I looked in Searling's shoebox and saw all my new cards and doubles just laying there. Then I reached into my pocket for my last pack of cards. I looked back at my cards in Searling's shoebox. My eyes started to get foggy.

"Have ya had enuff keeeee-id? I'm getting tired of running into the wall." Searling smiled like a crocodile and laughed like a donkey that just kicked somebody.

I didn't say anything and just looked at THE MICKEY MANTLE BASEBALL CARD that Searling held in his hand. . . . .

MICKEY MANTLE Is The Greatest Baseball Player In The Whole Wide World! The Great Number Seven! He's the only reason I watch the Yankees. Everytime he gets up, I yell, "Com'on MICK! Cream That Ball! Give It A Ride Right Out Of The Park!"

Everytime I get up at bat, I make believe I'm The Mickey Mantle of Clifton, New Jersey! I always play center field. When Rutledge, Hammerhead, Facedy, and me knock out fly balls, I practice making those shoestring catches that MICKEY MANTLE is so good at doing.

I asked My Dad if he has a Favorite Baseball Player and he told me that he likes Joe DiMaggio. Rutledge's Dad said he likes Ted Williams. Facedy told me that his Dad likes Willie Mays. I guess Everybody Has A Little Mickey Mantle In Them . . . Zip! Bang! Zowie! And Swoosh!

"I'm no quitter!" I said back at him.

I took the rubber band off my last pile of cards and put them down in front of me on the sidewalk. In that pile are My Yankees, some of my favorite player cards, and three cards that Facedy traded me for Warren Spahn. I looked at all my cards in Searling's shoebox, thought about that finko's laugh, wiped the fog out of my eyes, and said to myself, "Nobody's going to stop me!"

I flipped My Yankees first. I lost Bobby Richardson, Roger Maris, Moose Skowron, Whitey Ford, Yogi Berra, and Hector Lopez. Then I flipped my favorite players. I lost Tito Francona, Vic Power, Camilo Pascual, Jerry Lumpe, Ernie Banks, Jimmy Piersall, and Duke Snider. All I have left are the three cards that Facedy traded me.

Just as I was ready to flip, this little kid with no front teeth and elephant ears came running around the corner. He ran with his legs apart so that he wouldn't trip on his loose clicking sneakerlaces.

"Hey Oggie!" the little kid yelled.

"What ya want, chowderhead?"

"Mommy and Daddy are leaving now. Mommy iz saying good-bye to everyone and Daddy iz waiting in the car." He took a breath. "Daddy wants you now!" As he ran away, he said, "And I'm gonnah tell Mommy you called me chowderhead again." He cut around the corner and was gone.

Oggie put his pile of about seventy-five cards into his shoebox. He said, "I gotta go, keeeee-id; it was fun beating ya."

I got MAD! There's a rule in flipping that means you can't quit until you clean a guy out or he says *uncle*.

I yelled, "YEW CAN'T QUIT! YEW HAVEN'T CLEANED ME OUT! I STILL HAVE TREE CARDS LEFT!" I wagged the three cards right in front of Searling's face.

Oggie just moved his head back and forth. His eyes were half closed as he said, "Tuff luck, keeee-id. That's the way the cookie crum-" Oggie's eyes got real big, his mouth opened, and he grabbed my hand and looked at the cards I was holding. "Hey ya gotted Dick Groat, Jim Gentile, and Clay Dalrymple! I need those guys to fill in my Thord Ceres Checklist! Ya wanna trade? I'll give ya Mickey Mental?"

"Nope. I wanta flip!"

A horn honked three times from around the corner. "HEY OGGIE

GET YA ASS OVAR HERE ON THA DOUBLE!" The horn honked three more times.

Oggie cupped his hands to his mouth and yelled, "I'm cuming, Dad!" Then he looked at me, scratched his chin, and said, "I'll tell ya what . . . since we only gotted time for one more fwip . . . I'll bet ya all my cards against those tree on just one fwip. . . . No penny tax, backsies, or craps." He donkey-laughed and said, "Ya won't win anyways, so I don't have to worry about anythin'."

"Yew got a deal, Searling." I looked him straight in his eyeballs when I said it, too.

I don't know why Oggie wanted to bet everything on one flip. I guess he just liked cleaning people out and laughing at them. He probably wanted to smile at me and make me feel bad because I lost my last chance to win all my cards and his whole shoebox.

It all came down to this last flip. Oggie pushed his shoebox in between me and him and I put my three cards next to his stuff. Everything is riding on this flip.

I reached over and pulled a card out from My Baseball Jacket's Pocket.

Searling opened his nose, lifted up his eyes, and said, "Trying to hold out on me, Greasey Reissy?"

I just smiled at Searling . . .

Little did Searling know that this card was my secret weapon: It's My Hal Reniff Card! I kept Hal's Card under a big tall heavy pile of books so that it would stay perfectly flat. This Card Is The Perfect Flipping Card!: It's nice and smooth with no bent corners, and it still has the smell of bubble gum on it. I only use this card when I have no other choice, and it was now or never! - - Zooooooooooom!

The horn honked three more times.

Oggie loudly yelled, "I'M CUMMING!" Then he looked at me like a hungry crocodile and said, "I'll go forst to give ya a chance." Searling bent down, turned around, spat his Bazooka Bubble Gum into the dirt of the curb, and got ready to throw his card.

Just before Oggie was going to throw his card, I asked, "Hey Oggie. Have yew ever losted a fwip befor-"

"Nope. In fact . . . Greasey, I'm gonna clean ya out right now." He donkey-laughed at me. "Watch this, keeeeeee-id."

Oggie Lambeck Searling drew back his hand and threw his card.

I COULDN'T BELIEVE MY EYES!

Neither could Searling. He rubbed his eyes and said, "I don't believe my eyes!"

His flip went two feet! It was six feet from the wall! Oggie Lambeck Searling flubbed his shot!

(Victory is in my eyes. In Hockey the best thing is getting a chance to shoot the puck at an empty net, and in flipping, it's getting a

chance to shoot your card at a flubbed shot!)

I bent down to shoot, lowered my knuckles to the sidewalk, and looked at Searling's flip and the wall. I held My Hal Reniff Card with my four-finger hold, drew back my hand, and fired my shot with a smoooooth snap of my wrist. The Card spun perfectly flat and landed right against the wall. I tucked away A Perfect Shot!

VICTORY!

I ran to the wall, picked up My Hal Reniff Card, and gave Hal a great big kiss. I said to him, "I promise never to trade yew and I won't throw yew away when you become last year's card." I ran back and picked up THE MICKEY MANTLE CARD THAT IS NOW MINE. Then I went over to My Baseball Jacket, tied its arms around my stomach, and picked up my winnings. I shoved the three cards in my pocket, stuffed My Shoebox Full of Baseball Cards under my left arm, and kept MICKEY MANTLE and HAL RENIFF in my right hand. I beat Searling fair and square.

Oggie yelled real loud, "YA CAN'T TAKE THEM FROM ME!" His lips shook and his eyes started getting wet and gray. "Com'on, Giv'em Back!" Then he took a step back and got his sneaker all covered with the chewed-up Bazooka Gum that he'd spat in the dirt at the curb.

Searling and I stood face to face. I looked at him and he looked at me. I said, "Listen: When Yew Play The Best Those Are The Chances Yew Take." I didn't say "keeeee-id" because I didn't want to be like Oggie. All I did was walk away.

After I took ten steps, I turned around and saw Oggie. He was looking straight down into the dirt of the curb, dragging his feet, and kicking a rock every three steps. Oggie stopped and scraped his sneaker on the edge of the curb, but the bubble gum on it didn't come off. That's the way gum is, but if you scrape it enough, it'll come off.

The car honked its horn three more times.

Oggie said, real mopey like, "I'm cumming."

When I turned around, I saw that the trees were out and the sun was in the real gray-blue sky. I looked in front of me and behind me: Nobody is around.

So, "Take me out to the Ball Game, take me out to the crowd. Buy me some peanuts and Crackerjacks, I DON'T CARE IF I EVER GET BACK . . . . ."

"I'll do anything for a chocolate chip cookie."

— *Chango Rag*

## Fandango

Riding in the elephant parade  
 Hump hump . . . . up and down  
 those bristles hurt my seat  
 look at those kids watching  
 God they make me sick  
 I wonder if the elephants are hungry  
 I sure hope so.

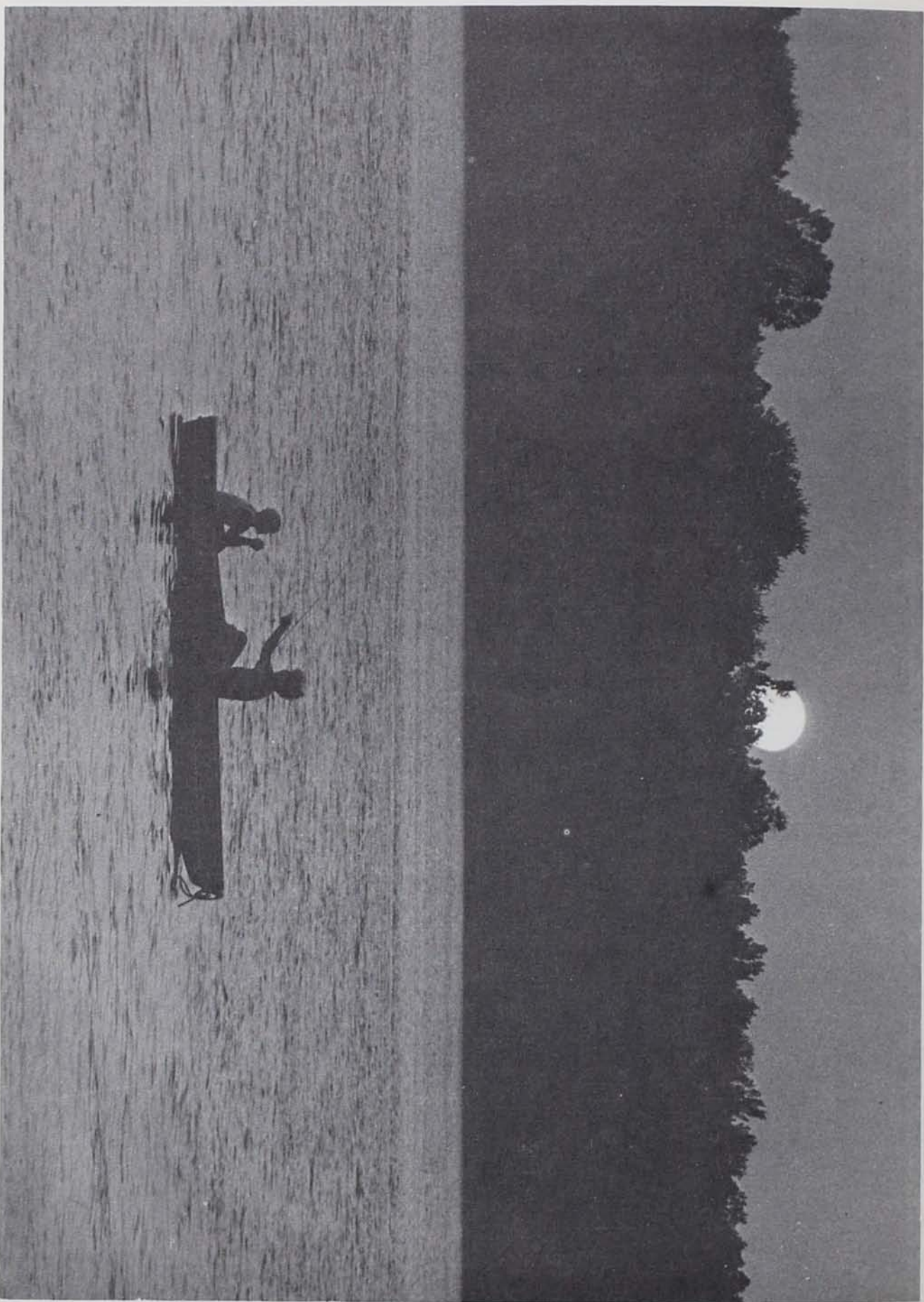
## Ode to an Orange Orangutan

Oh, alas orange orangutan  
 why are you in my minestrone soup  
 you ain't suppose to be in there  
 you're not a pea or carrot  
 you're not even Italian  
 you're Hungarian.  
 So get out of my soup you orange Hunk!

## Nausea

See the monkeys eating oatflakes  
 wonder if they are Quaker's or Mother's  
 They must have upset stomachs  
 watching them makes me sick  
 I wish I was a monkey.

PHIL HENRY



BOB CARTY



