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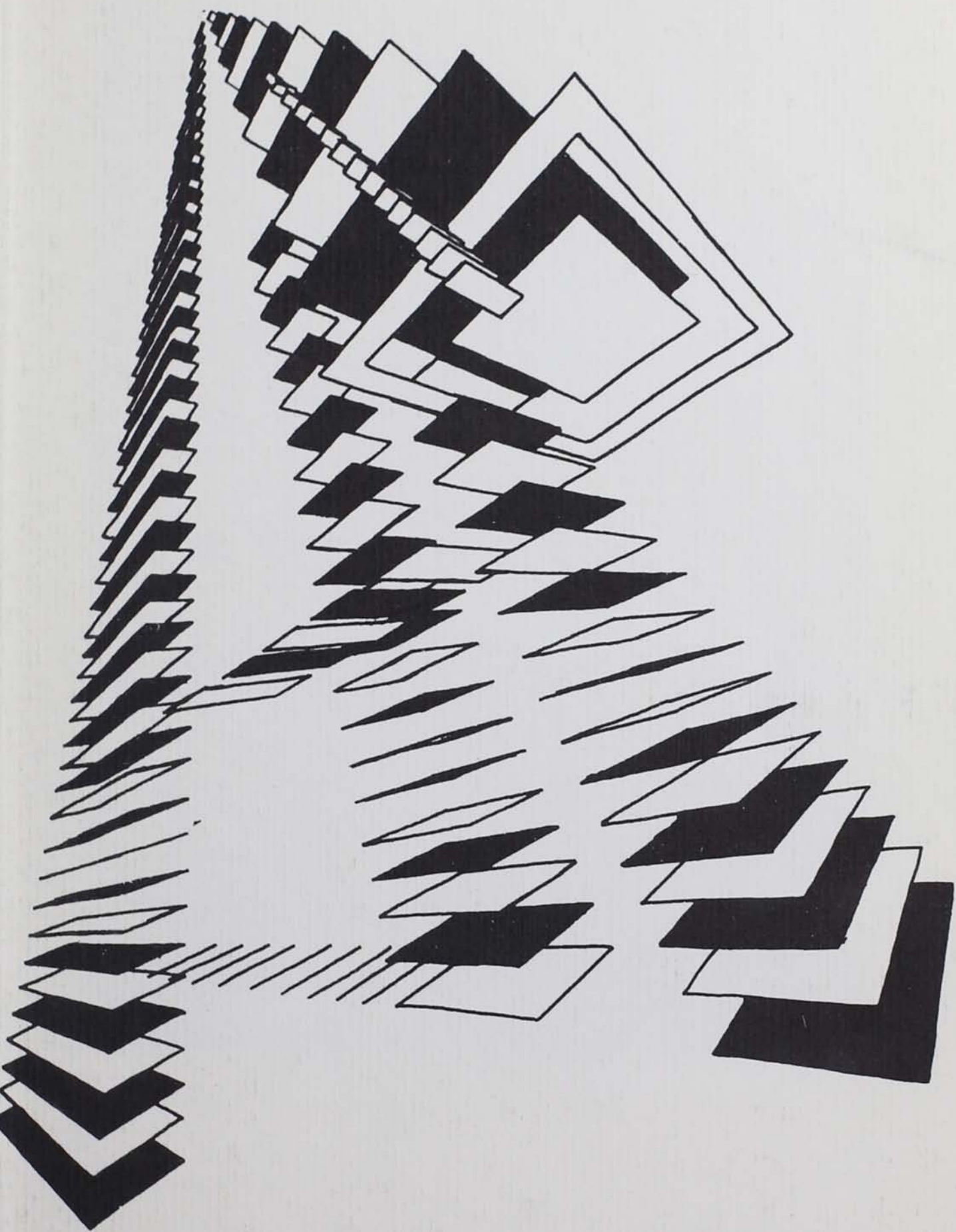
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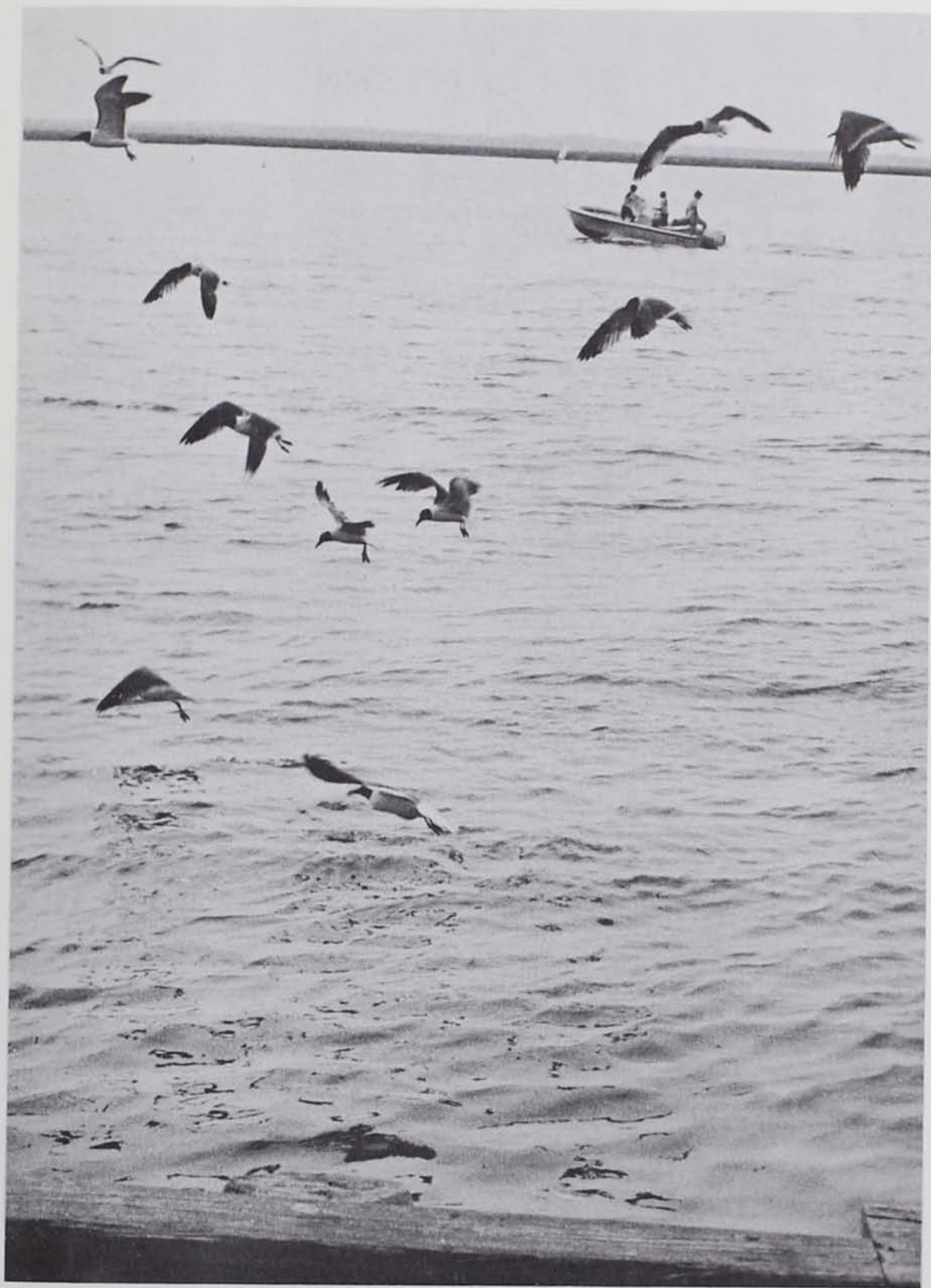
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by Richard W. Clark

THE LANTERN

1973

SPRING

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CREATIVITY AWARDS

Art: Richard Clark and John Roy

Short Story: Vincent Phillips for "His Prowess Confirmed"
which could not be printed due to its length.

Poetry: Nina Camiel

Days of Rain

1.

I hate the rain, she said,
'Cause I can't take my dolly out to the park.
And I have to carry an umbrella.
And I'm tired of my coloring book.

I hate the rain, he said,
'Cause I can't play Army on the dirt pile.
And I have to wear boots.
And Mommy won't let me play ball in the house.

But late that night, curled in a chair,
I smiled as I listened to the soft rhythm on the roof . . .
The lullaby that had sent them both to their quiet dreams.

2.

It's funny how God echoes the heart of someone in love
how He can show the world
the way one of us feels.

Like today.
I was going to be brave and happy
And not miss you at all.
I was going to show the world
and myself

That you didn't really matter.
But He knew what was in my heart
And He made it rain.

Cheryl Hildebeitel

Reflections On Clifton, New Jersey

by Fred Reiss

Walking down the street chewing Swell bubble gum, I opened another pack of Combat cards. I still had fifteen cents left to buy another three packs. Yes, for a nine year old I was sailing high.

For some reason the number one card of any card series was the most valuable card one could possess in my neighborhood. I was a dedicated card collector. I collected Martian, Baseball, Football, Monster, and Man From U.N.C.L.E. cards. After examining my pack, all I got was doubles. That's life!

It was eight o'clock on a bright Saturday morning. Since my Kool-Aid stand had went bankrupt because somebody stole my red wagon, I had no way to earn money. I decided to hit my father up for a dollar.

Since I was a lucrative underhanded nine year old, there was always an ace in the hole for me. Every Saturday I would wake my father. While he was half asleep, I would ask him for a dollar. I took anything short of a grunt as yes.

I ran at break neck speed to Joe's Place. Joe built models better than anyone I knew. He was proud of his art and displayed them in his front window. Every day I would admire them and dream of building one myself.

I slapped my dollar down and told Joe I wanted "The Creature From The Black Lagoon." This monster model I dreamed of building. He handed me my model and I sped home. Running like Jimmy Brown. Dodging cars and counting off the yardage as I ran.

Being a well established model builder, I had all the tools of the trade. My Pla paints, glue, and my model desk. Many a model had left this table.

There was only one problem. I had a little brother, whose hereditary skill was destroying my models beyond repair. Once I arrived home to discover that my "Werewolf" had been completely dissected, smashed, and chewed. I calmly broke down and cried. Then I proceeded to give my brother an upper cut to the jaw.

My mother came in and scolded me. She told me that I am the eldest and was to give my brother an example to follow. I merely stated that I was trying to show him the values of corporal punishment. I pleaded my case in vain. The only thing I received was a forced apology from my brother and a broken ninety-eight cent "Werewolf" model.

Every kid goes through stages. I was no exception. There was the card stage, the Duñcan Top stage, the super hero stage, and now I was deeply imbued with the army stage!

Sargeant Fred Reiss was my name and commanding troops was my game. My equipment consisted of my mess kit, canteen, cap hand grenade, and my "Monkey Division" helmet and gun. These last two were my pride and joy.

The solders in my platoon were Gary Rutledge, Facedy, Gary Markavitch, Mike Hammerhead. Rutledge was our medic. Not because he was a good doctor, but because he had no gun. Markavitch was our mortar man. Facedy was our scout. Hammerhead was our hand to hand combat man.

The only requirement in our patrol was that everyone had to watch "Combat" on Tuesday nights. This was our basic training. Many a battle was won with a Vic Marrow combat tip.

Our patrol won battle after battle. We built forts, foxholes, and a lookout tower. I had dug holes around our key positions and covered them with grass. We camouflaged our machine gun nest and stored onion bombs to keep the girls away.

The only time we got into trouble was when we took prisoners. At about six o'clock their mothers called and asked us of their sons whereabouts. I gave them nothing but my rank, name, and serial number. Markavitch cracked under heavy pressure (his father's belt). Needless to say, that was the end of our military careers.

There is always one thing a person can do better than anyone else. Rutledge could cross his eyes and throw up at will. Facedy could hit anything that moved in a movie theater. I saw him hit a guy seven rows down right between the eyes with a Dot candy ball. I could catch malted milk balls in my mouth regardless of how high I threw them. There was another skill I possessed that was extremely handy. I could hit anything with plastic bowling pins. Anytime my sisters got out of line I'd whip out my bowling pins. This kept my sisters under control and gave me a feeling of power.

One guy has placed an indelible mark upon my life. His name was Coosey. This guy could spit better than anyone I knew. He was the only guy who could spit between his teeth. My mother told me never to go near him because he was from the "other side of town." Coosey was always armed with his pea shooter and was the fastest shot on the block. He was the only one among us who swore. He used words I still haven't heard. We would gather around the Socrates of Sherman Place and absorb every word that flowed from his lips. He was the guy they warned you about in Sunday school.

School was another cycle I experienced. The first day I hid from my mother for three hours under my covers. I couldn't avoid my fate. I was determined not to cry on my first day.

When I stepped into school I was surrounded by giants. Then I met my teacher. She was eight feet tall with dark sunglasses. I took it like the man I was, screamed like hell and made a dash for the door. I spent the first three months in kindergarten crying and planning escapes.

In second grade Mrs. Zacarowski told me I frowned. In third grade Mrs. Grant gave me the worst compliment a teacher can give a boy. She said I was cute. In fourth grade Mrs. Kimble (who looked like an emaciated prune with teeth) completely ignored me.

Mrs. Kimble stands out above all the rest because of her eccentricities. She had a thing for clean desks. If your desk wasn't clean she would dump its contents on the floor. We use to mess our desks up to kill class time. She also loved to give out those elusive gold stars. Mrs. Kimble loved to confiscate our possessions. She had my two sponge balls and my Mickey Mantle baseball coin. We would always play these stupid games she devised and sang "Goober Peas," "Erie Canal," and "I've Been Working On The Railroad."

One event stood out in Mrs. Kimble's class. Richard, one of my numerous cronies showed me a card Coosey gave him. It was the Ace of Hearts with a picture of a nude woman on it. My Sunday School lectures echoed in my mind, but I didn't care. Richard was a strange guy who had a thing for horse manure. He would pick it up on a stick and throw it on people's doorsteps. Justice had caught up to Rich. Mrs. Kimble uncovered his picture and I never saw him again.

School exposed to to a completely new altercation. Girls were always a formidable fear and accepted danger in a nine year old's life. They were always asking you to play house. The only thing that guys liked was those warm muffs they would always wear to school. Everyone knew they gave you cooties. There was always some guy who liked getting the cooties. He ruined all the fun.

School meant that I could get a new pencil and lunch box. I walked into school fully equipped. My "Beverly Hillbillies" lunch box at my side and my "Combat" pencil box under my arm. I had it made.

Comic books were my philosophy. Superman, Batman, Justice League of America, Flash, Green Lantern, Spiderman, and "World's Finest" which combined Batman and Superman were the heroes I lived with at my age. These heroes had a profound effect upon my life.

I dreamed of escaping Krypton, marrying Lois Lane, and foiling my enemy Lex Luther. I even wanted to change my name to Clark Kent and move to Metropolis.

When I was in my summer doldrums my mother use to pin a towel around my neck. There I was flying over Clifton looking for law breakers. Anytime I was in a doldrum, I would go to a nearby hamper and put on my cape. I was off to arch enemies and adventures unknown.

I had already taken my steps towards manhood by nine. I had went from the plastic bowl to the flush toilet, given up training wheels for the two wheeler, was able to cross the street by myself, and was able to hold a quarter in one hand. I was on the road.

There are two things which bother most guys. One is the girl he didn't ask. The other is the guy he didn't destroy and annihilate off the face of the earth.

Most boys have a bully that beat them up. Russell was the bully on my block. Anytime he saw me outside he would beat me up at his own caprice. He beat me up everyday for three years.

My parents told me that we were going to move away from Clifton. This meant I only had two weeks left. I planned my revenge on Russell. I knew that if I didn't get him now I would never get him again.

The last day! My parents were saying goodbye to the neighbors. The Studebacher's engine was running. I hopped out of the car in search of Russell. There he was! Russell was throwing a sponge ball against the steps.

At nine you never swear at a guy. I called Russell "a crumb bum rat fink who has cooties." Then I let fly with my patented right, left and ran like hell. I pretended I was running for a touchdown. Reiss at the ten, twenty, running for more yardage. Russell had just begun running. I made it to the car and closed the door. Touchdown!

As the Studebacher drove off, I looked and saw a frustrated bully. The heat was exuding from his head. I have never gone back to Clifton for fear that he is still there.

The car was taking me to new horizons. A new world was going to open to me. I may be a thousand miles away, but Clifton, New Jersey will always be near me.



Vincent Phillips

MICROCOSM

INTERLUDE

Blinking lights give the world a headache
And the blood flows through my arteries
In the brilliant night of violet embroidery
I become tribulated in the satin strands
And the raindrops falling in my eyes
Do not wash out the misery

Since my disembodiment, I have become anonymous
I have lived a fuller lie
My soul has lost track
And myself no longer exists
But when the Indian gathers his brave
I bestow on him a faded cloak
For his praises do not chase my blues

When the coffee is burned out,
The recharger never works
Beside myself, I live alone
Having died alone, I know loneliness
Through the sheen of the grass that I eat
I see the animal which sears my vitals
But the pain does not obliterate my agony

Wherewith the white becomes discernible
And I see it was to no purpose anyway
But when my slippers arrive, I cry
For the newspaper has been thrown
All is not lost; I have never existed
I am the nightmare of Da Vinci
And the trees cannot conceal the forest of
Dissillusionment

Terry Tucker

Bird in the dirt, dirty bird,
picking at pieces of paper,
do you know your mother's name
or who's your brother's keeper?
I think not, and yet I bet
you'll go on wrestling wrappers
and tumbling pebbles till
you find your next beakful,
and then mount the wind
as if you were your own uncle.

Vincent Phillips

Window Scene

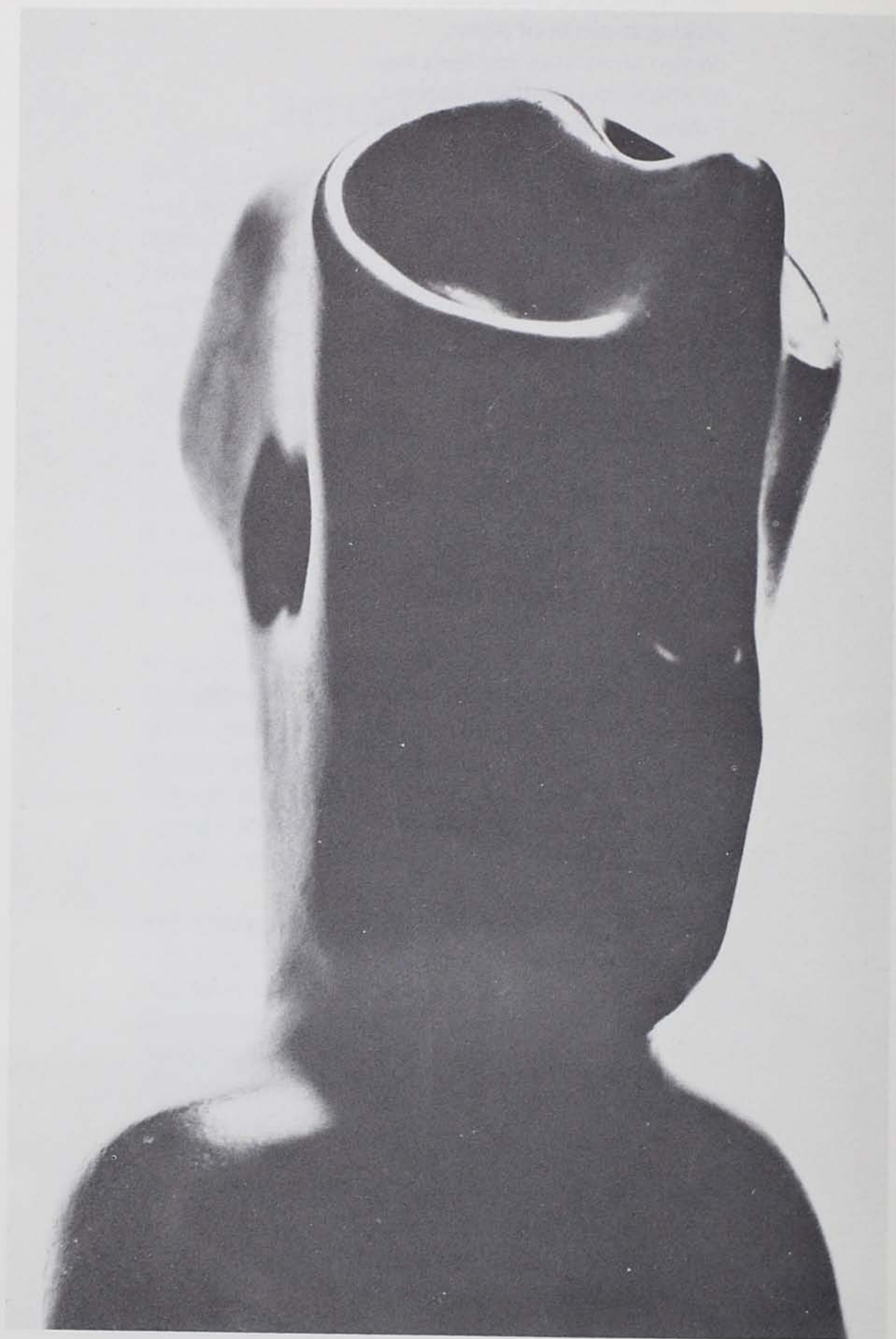
I am held enrapt by the rich burgundy sunset
Drooping heavily in the Winter sky.
The heavens are weighted so that the clouds sag,
And the firmament proclaims its weariness
With elaborate elegies written in golden ink
On the shadows of Evening.
Well has the promise of the morn been filled.

Terry Tucker

Eh!

Shall I compare you to a garbage heap?
Surely that mound is far more fair
Than anything you'd ever keep
To eat or wear.

Kate Swanson



John Roy

Eine Vergleichung

Im kalten Winter schaute ich hinein
In dunk'le, stille Nacht, und sah--ein' Stern,
Ein brennend' Punkt, mit reinsten Klärheit hell--
Vollbrachte Schönheit, glimmerend' Lichtes Quell'

Am Sommertag sah ich ein' Weidenblum'
Das Ding war schief und an dem Rand gekaut,
Doch lebig war's und als ich sie abpflückt'
Erlebt' ich dann ihr' angenehme Duft.

Nun sag mir mal---welch' war die Schönere?--
Denn freilich weiss ich nicht.

Anne Riehl

Meine begehrende Augen sind noch gierig
Um den Gegenstand von dem Leid zu erblicken sehnsüchtig.
Ohne hinlängliche Zufriedenheit
Die verhungern mit klagloser Beharrlichkeit.
Da ohn ihm kann die das Leben unterstützen nicht.

Mit ihm starren die Augen auf tiefgreifendster Verwundung
Wie Narkissos umsonst
Deren Augen gaben ihm den Hungertod auch.
Wirklich füllen meine Augen mit dem Überfluss
Der schöne Merkwürdigkeit

Dass nichts meine Aufmerksamkeit mehr ablenkt.
Mein Sehvermögen sieht mit Ekel die eitele Weltruhm
Dass die ihm wundervollen Freuden einmal geben.
Jetzt sind die alle Nebelschatten ausgenommen Sie
In diesem grotesken Schleier des purpurnen Elends

J. Olson

ODYSSEY OF MALCOLM

Malcolm walks streets of shattered glass,
that turn to crystal in his dreams,
while rats and roaches wage a war,
mothers cry and babies scream.
Buildings shrink beneath his gaze,
the skyline shivers, shakes and fades,
the sun sets on the city.

Malcolm pauses, stops, then frowns
as darkness descends on the town;
he broods to know he has to watch
the murder of his shadow.

Whispers penetrate the night,
and echo through the silent haze.
Diana sheds her pale moonlight
as Malcolm stalks the urban maze.

Sad and lonely, lost and cold
the secret of his life unfolds;
his destiny is trapped within
a moment in eternity.

He finds the doorway to the warmth,
She greets him with open arms and mixed emotions,
Malcolm enters slowly with no reactions;
he slips away and sits among bits of broken crystal,
the remnants of vain hopes.

Edmond Knowles

Tuna on Toast

Most poems are so spontaneous
That their middles are extraneous.

filler
filler,
filler
filler.

The end again revives the fire
That lacking made the middle dire.

Jim Popelka, Doug Stewart

When I fell he cried
And when I died he rejoiced
It was not inappropriate, however,
For my death set me free.
As many others long for the freedom
So they can soar to the heights
As a bird mounts the heavens
And rides the waves of air.
But they must come back to earth,
While I am free to float, unrestricted,
To visit the stars and the expanse
Of galaxy beyond.
My spirit may move as it will
And need not suffer the hampering bonds
Which valiantly try to imprison the soul,
But is challenged by the sun
Whose rays have a cleansing power
Beyond capabilities of being measured
Except by those who are free.

Kathy Morris



John Roy

The Second Avenue Bus

Within the insensible armor,
Beneath the breastplate of the 2nd Avenue bus,
Reality touched me, generating consciousness.
The bus drew its plated cape around us,
Pounding the travelways of the city,
Loosening the grasp of the New York Transit Authority,
Until we were released, imperceptibly.
The bus enveloped us softly, firmly,
As we interrupted the untried continuance without,
Breaking into bits the darkness on either side,
Designing a mosaic trail.
We were strangely Present;
Night yielded to us, and Time played our game.
And we laughed, knowing Time would laugh back,
And knowing also that Darkness would be satisfied.

Terry Tucker

The wind whistled through the trees
Freezing the small drops of water
That hung on to each other
With a desperate hope.
The trees, held by firm roots,
Resisted the wind, which sprang from nowhere
And mercilessly drove the leaves before it
As the sea sends the waves to the shore
To meet their destiny on the rocks and sand.
This force, destructive in nature,
Had no controlling mind,
And having spent its anger
The calm prevailed in the midst of devastation,
Allowing new life to make its debut
Into the world through which it must struggle.

Kathy Morris

Salutation of the Dawn

My eyes strained to see
The windmills of the age of a new Don Quixote.
A landscape devoid of rats
Gnawing at the salvaged ruins of
An unfulfilled society.
The dawn when roseate dreams
Would not be disparaged as
Overtones of naivete
But would have a home on earth.

Then, the rain, the sweet cold iced tea rain
It fell and fell.
And I rejoiced while myraids of teacups emptied
the drops that tingled and trembled
Running happily down the sinuous paths of my cheeks .
Telling me of now,
Coaxing me to believe in the avatar
Of a recondite world.
Someday I shall play a taped enclave of life
And listen and ponder the perfect imperfections,
The masterful performances of nature and man
That receive no ovations
But are engraved in memories
Of all the children
Who joined hands in a circle
Under a halo of stars
And played and fought and lived
dizzingly
gigglingly
In a teacup sea of wonder

Susan Petersen



by Richard W. Clark

Rain and fields run by
As I stand here running
And you beside me too –
A daffodil, golden and tall –
Bending with the wind,
Open to the rain
and sun,
and me,
As I am to you,
And we run
 together
Through flowered fields
Away from an administratively real
World
To a world of our own reality
Where they have never been
For they do not know the way
And cannot find the door
That we have found together,
Led by sea-sky and green fields
Flying as we do through spaces
Filled with love and stars and friends
Being together in a reality truer
Than the many worlds we are.
And love is
The highest law of all.

Mary Spink

So Say Something

You think it kinder not to speak,
To let me make my own decisions.
You simplify my self-delusions,
Multiply my deep confusions,
Then turn and prove me wrong again
And laugh at what a fool I've been.

I can't continue with this game
Of second-guessing day to day.
If you refuse to change the rules,
Then my recourse is not to play.

I will not judge you e'er again
By feelings that my heart receives
Nor any romantic fantasies.
The word, the word, and only words
Will be your spokesmen after this.
No longer will I try to find
The truth behind your tricking mind.

Thus, all assumption out of reach,
You have no right to credit me
With hearing things you haven't said.
My intuition's ears are dead.

Kate Swanson

Wading in water as he walks through the waves,
Stepping on shells as they're swept by the sea.
Little in life can induce as much pleasure than to
 gaze at the boy whom I must try to greet.
For him would I sail through seas of great strife
 knowing of nothing but a yearning for nearness.
A feeling of desire and fondness so dear—
Life that is lonely is tender to touch.
When will he watch and wonder why I've wandered
And see that I've seen the end of my sadness.

Susan Petersen

Mood

My mind the trees.
His lips the breeze.
Our embrace the warmth.
Your win my loss.

Mood II

Your eyes, the leaves, your lips, the breeze,
Your smile, the grass, you're mine at last,
My need is such, my want is much,
My heart beats fast, you're mine at last,
Though we're apart, love has it's start
You are mine at last.

Denise L. Young

Moriarty's Lament

I'll razzle your bath-bone.
I'll bri-gel your noose,
Elicit a moan,
And I'll flambeau your goose.

I don't mind the stories
But, gee, in the flicks
I act like some bozo
With brains made of bricks.

So build a fresh image
In medium new
Or pushed off the tower
I'll grab on to you.

Oh give me a Holmes
O'er a buffalo roams.
Oh please let me win
One or two.

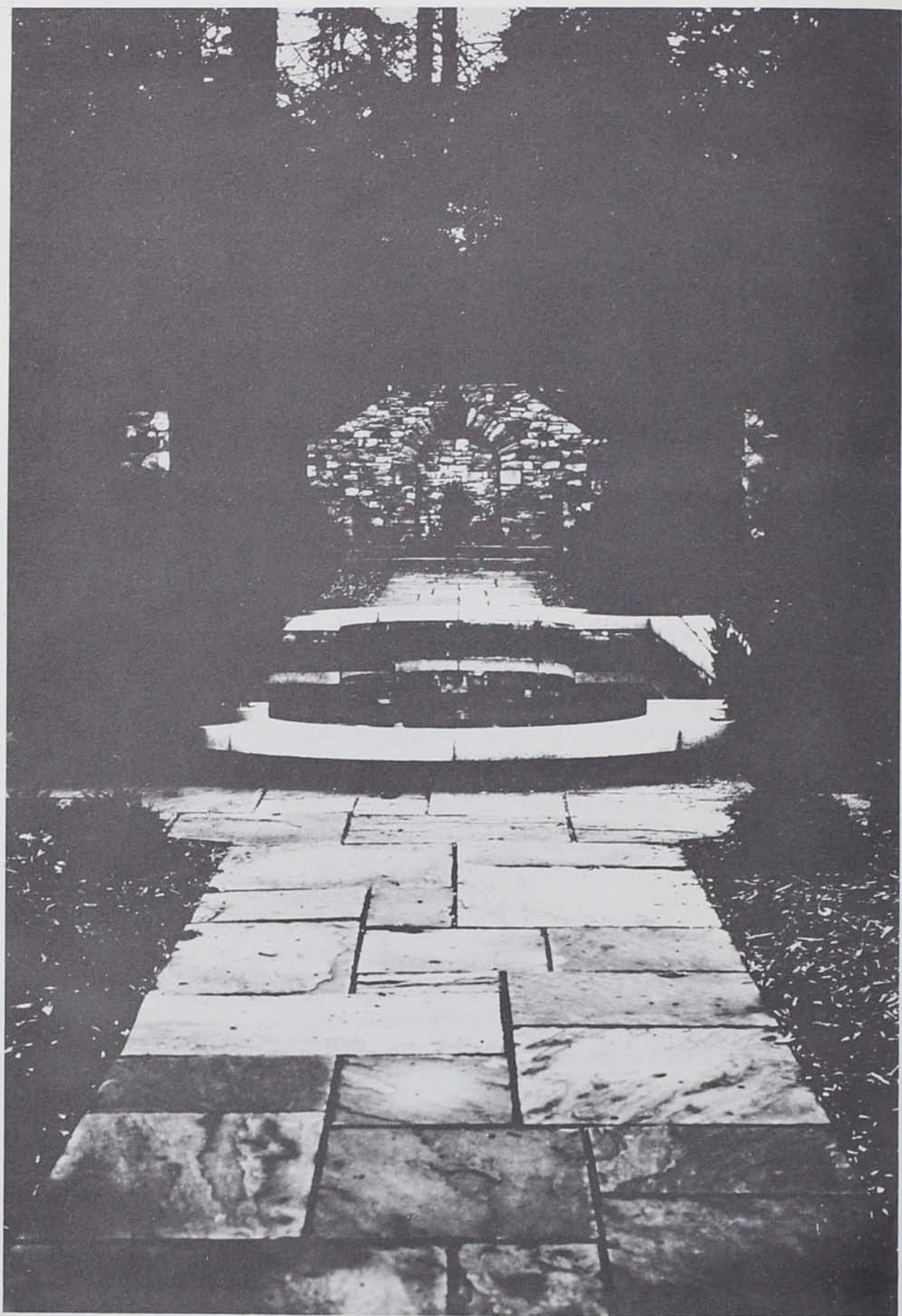
Doug Stewart

Child,
Child, come to me
I hear your night cry
 And open arms and heart to hear you
Why do you cry child?
Why?
I am here, come to me
In your robe of white
Eyes wide with tears
Child,
Come sit upon the bed
And tell me,
Were your dreams of red? or green?
Horrors
Of the day or night?
Come, sit by me and the light
Little one, I am here for you.
Tiny child,
Come to me and cry,
Let me know why,
Then sleep.
And I will take your dreams of sadness,
Change them into charms and gladness.
Sleep my child, and in the morning waking
Find me here, as always waiting:
 I am always here.

Mary Spink

My mind so long upon you
I cannot see where you are,
What you think, feel, know,
And why?
Why must this be?
A situation beyond my control
No solution even in heaven to be found
Dear one,
How I could love
But cannot.
Freedom is too often binding.

Mary Spink



I've been a lonely gypsy

I've been a lonely gypsy
that danced with demons
and felt many
an angel cry into
their hearts.

The window in love's eyes
was flung wide open
while I flew away with
fearful wings, and
my vagabond feet turned
to the horizon
as I went away
from all the memories
given to me by my
broken-souled friends.

The beginning and end of
all that is now
lies before me —

but I am content
to watch the moon fall
and the sun weep . . .

Nina Camiel

change

once,
on yellow paper with wide green lines,
he wrote a poem
and he called it "chops"
because that was the name of his dog
and that's what it was all about.
the teacher gave him an "A"
and a gold star
and his mother hung it on the kitchen door
and read it to all his aunts.
that was the year his sister was born
with tiny fingers and no hair
and father tracy took the kids to the zoo
and let them sing on the bus
and his mother and father kissed alot
and the girl around the block sent him
a christmas card signed with a row of x's
and his father always tucked him in bed at night
and was always there to do it.

once,
on white paper with blue lines,
he wrote another poem
and he called it "autumn"
because that was the name of the season
and that's what it was all about.
the teacher gave him an "A"
and told him to write more clearly.
and his mother didn't hang it on the kitchen door
because the door had just been painted.
that was the year his sister got glasses
with black frames and thick lenses,
and the kids told him why his mother and father
kissed alot and that father tracy smoked cigars
and left the butts in the pews.
and the girl around the block laughed when
he went to see santa claus at macy's
and his father stopped tucking him in bed at night
and got mad when he cried for him to.

once,
on paper torn from his notebook,
he wrote another poem
and he called it "change".
because that was the name of his grief
and that's what it was all about.
the professor gave him an "A" and a strange and
steady look.
and his mother never hung it on the kitchen door
because he never let her see it.
that was the year he found his sister
necking on the back steps
and his parents never kissed or even smiled
and father tracy died
and the girl around the block wore too much make-up
that made him cough when he kissed her,
but he kissed her anyway.
and around 3 a.m., he tucked himself into bed,
his father soundly snoring.

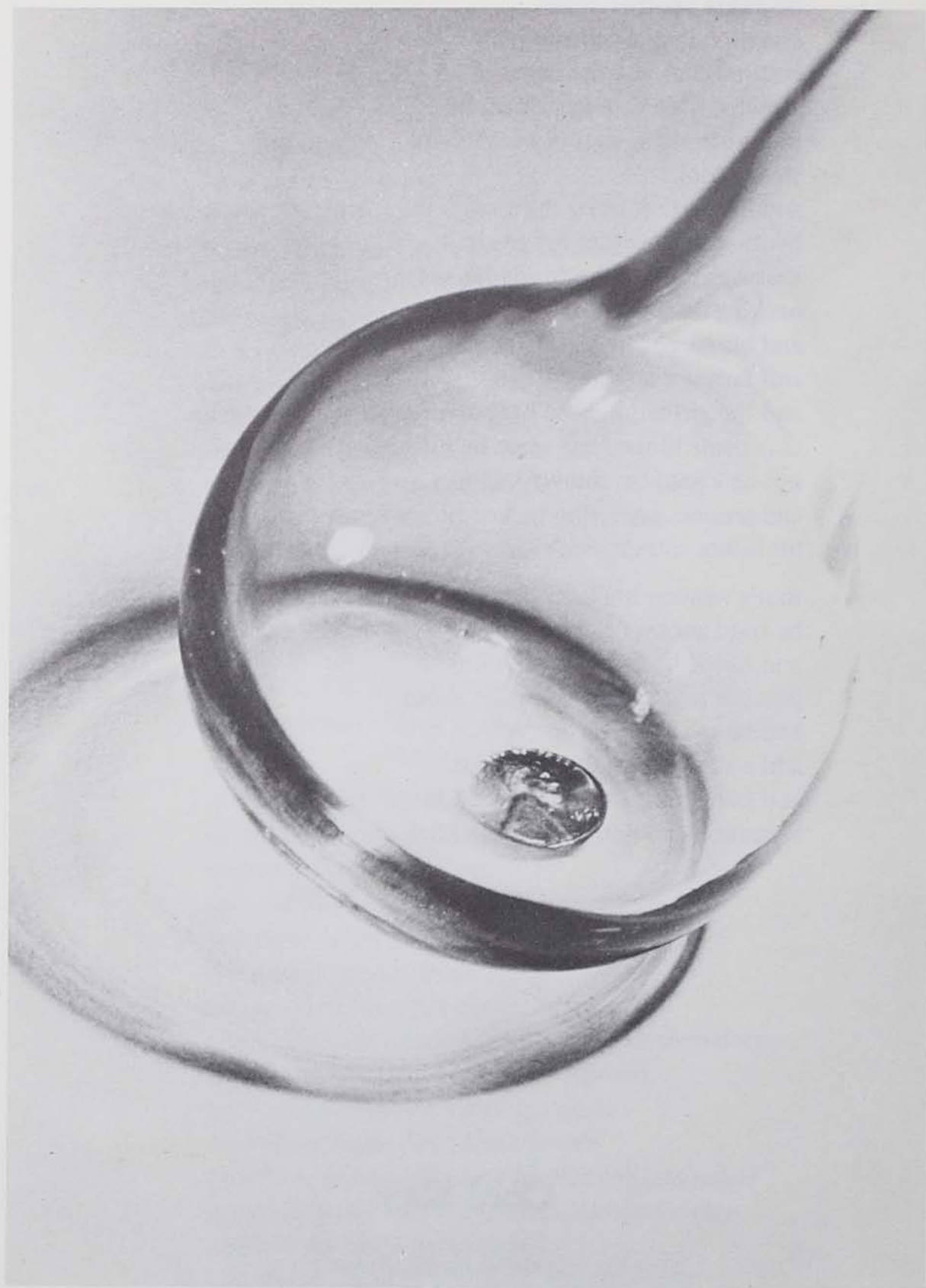
that's why on the back of a pack of matches.
he tried another poem
and called it absolutely nothing
because that's what it was all about.
and he gave himself an "A"
and a slash on each damp wrist
and hung it on the bathroom door
because he couldn't reach the kitchen.

Jill Thomas

Cool Ray

One by one the stars disappear.
The light of the day is almost here.
Bright sight. Awake and dazzle-glare.
Spiked with misery my eyes despair.
The solution is shades so I can see
Polarized light like the honey bee.

Rodger Blind



John Roy

"The Thinker"

Guillaume was resting face ^{down} in his hand

While Fromm and Tolstoy and other men
all great
some dead
were flopped in his lap

His glasses legs were stretched the width of the sofa
One hand hidden in his thick uncombed hair
and he was asleep

Beethoven was ROARING from the wooden box in the corner

Freud stared from a bookjacket
GREATNESS WAS ALL AROUND!
and still he slept

Something changed
He began to stir and automatically reached for his bent-up glasses
He shoved them on
and looked up with his bewildered brown eyes

Then he explained that he wasn't asleep
just thinking



Lonesome hills in the filmy distance,
hills I've never climbed,
ask me why I chose to marry,
chose to sculpt my time.

Vincent Phillips

A Southern Sunset

by Richard Hankison

When Lucius Jamison first spotted one of his slaves running towards him, he sensed that something was wrong. Quickly he spurred his great gray stallion onward to meet the boy. The slave breathlessly told his master to hurry back to the house. Jamison again dug his spurs into the animal's flanks. The horse, sensing its master's fears, bolted forward, and in a few minutes they were flying up the main road. Upon reaching the front porch, Jamison reined the horse and dismounted. Entering the house his fears were confirmed by the sound of his daughter, Joyce, crying in the parlor. He entered the room, and saw her slumped over the writing table, her head buried in her arms. Behind her stood a tall man whom Jamison thought to be about twenty-three. His battered gray uniform was covered with dust, indicating that he had ridden many miles. Jamison quickly spied the bars of a lieutenant on his shoulders. He also noticed the man's stump of a left arm, a grim reminder of the battles being fought to the north. The lieutenant suddenly seemed aware of the presence of someone else in the room. He turned to meet Jamison; his eyes were dull and red from fatigue. He saluted as neatly as his exhausted condition would permit, and then proceeded to speak. "Mr. Jamison, I presume. My name is Lieutenant Sam Johnson, of the twenty-first regiment, Louisiana volunteers. I'm afraid that I have some bad news for you, sir." The soldier paused, mustering his courage to continue. "I regret to inform you that your son-in-law, Captain Seth Parker, was fatally wounded three days ago."

Jamison stared at the lieutenant. It was as if he had not heard the soldier. For some reason, perhaps an act of God, Jamison had temporarily been spared the meaning of the words. At last he stepped backward, and then left the room. The lieutenant made no attempt to follow him. For a year and a half, since a shell fragment had taken part of his arm, he had been reduced to a messenger of death. Many times he had seen his visits have the same effect. He was fascinated by the way people always refused to accept the death of a loved one. The idea of death was so incomprehensible! (Once a young widow had asked him how long her dead husband would be in the hospital. Despite all his attempts, the woman would not believe that her husband was dead.) The lieutenant knew that in a few minutes Jamison would come to his senses. He looked back over his shoulder, and saw Joyce sobbing into her arms — a scene he had witnessed many times before. There was no compassion for the girl in the officer's heart. He squared his hat, and left the house, cursing the twenty miles to the Carlson farm.

Joyce felt a hand taking her by the arm. She looked up into the black face of her governess, Sarah. The Negro woman was about fifty, and had been a part of the Jamison household since she had first learned to walk. When Joyce's mother had died, Sarah had all but become Joyce's guardian. With tears in her eyes, Joyce tried to smile, and then yielded to the gentle guiding of the slave's hands. Suddenly, as she began to stand, weakness set in. Her knees felt as if they could not bear her weight, and pain pounded savagely at her brain. The Negro's grip became firm as she helped Joyce up the stairs to her room. Once there, Sarah began to undress her mistress, but Joyce turned her tear-stained face to her. "Please leave me here, alone," she sobbed. Obediently the slave slipped through the door, and closed it behind her.

The bright light of the afternoon lit the room. It was a cheerful place that Joyce had known for as long as she could remember. The dressing table had been her mother's, and after her death (when Joyce was nine), Lucius Jamison had had it moved into Joyce's room. She tried to remember her mother, but her memory was blurred by waves of grief. As she slowly looked around the room, her eyes came to rest on the fine big bed that took up most of the far wall. Above the headboard was a portrait of her husband in the bright blue uniform of the past. Joyce remembered her father commissioning a northern artist to paint the portrait for their first anniversary. Actually he had wanted to give them a matched pair of stallions, but she had insisted upon a painting of Seth, and finally her father had surrendered to her wishes. When Seth had left with the Louisiana volunteers, Joyce had it placed above their bed. "What a fine likeness it is," Joyce said to herself. She turned away from the portrait as her eyes began to fill with tears. Her eyes no longer saw it, but her mind retained his image. The memories of the years she had shared with Seth began to enter her head. Those memories, once sacred and joyful, now appeared as bitter reminders of a life she could never live again.

Through burning tears, Joyce saw the first time she had met Seth Parker. That night had been the biggest night in her life. For generations it had been the family custom to have a party whenever one of the young ladies reached her sixteenth birthday. As a little girl, Joyce remembered sitting on her mother's lap, listening to the stories of the parties for her Aunts Margaret, Liz and, Joan. Her eyes would sparkle as she sat transfixed by her mother's description of the ladies' gowns. Bright blues, soft pinks, and a multitude of colors danced in her mind. All the beautiful ladies, and their escorts, those dashing young gentlemen! With all those thoughts flooding her head, Joyce slowly began to get dressed. The visions of the grand ballroom, and all the excitement soon proved too much for her, and if it had not been for the help of her slave-governess, she might never have gotten into the violet gown. It was the most beautiful gown that she had ever seen. Her father had sent all the way to England for the material. Again her thoughts turned to the festivities planned for the night, May 23, 1856—She would never forget that date.

It was now almost nine, and the guests had been downstairs for almost an hour. Joyce was nervously talking with her younger sister, Emily, in the upstairs drawing room. Fifteen minutes before one of the maids had checked to see if Joyce was ready, and had said that "Master Jamison would be up soon". Joyce knew the moment had almost arrived. Then her father came to escort her downstairs. She suddenly felt as though she were made of rubber. The excitement was almost too much for her, and she began to shake, but her father's firm grip calmed her. For the first time that evening she noticed him—he was dashing. His silver-white hair and mustache had been neatly trimmed, and his new white suit had been flawlessly tailored. His pride in his daughter showed in his eyes, and seemed to make him years younger. With a smile and a wink he took her arm, and they started downstairs.

The moment the two entered the ballroom everyone turned to gaze upon the young lady taking her first step into southern society. Joyce too, did some gazing. Her eyes immediately spotted Mr. Beauregarde, one of the most prominent men in Louisiana, and a descendent of the original settlers of the valley. Next, she saw her Uncle Samuel. "The rogue," she thought, as she noticed the flock of young ladies surrounding him. She wanted to be with him too, for his charm, deceptive looks, and wit made him

seem more like 30 than his true age of 54. Joyce's eyes roamed to the corner of the room where she spied her brother, Tom, with Becky Thomas. Local gossip had it that the next formal party at the Jamison Plantation would be an engagement party. Joyce smiled at them knowing that they would not return it. They probably would not move from their seats the entire evening. She watched the couple for several seconds, and it was clear to her that they would not be the life of the party.

In the corner sat Aunt Lil with her closest friend, Sarah Ryerson. "What a pair," thought Joyce. "Look at them just sitting there; they probably won't move all night. They just come so that everyone will know that they're still alive." A flash hit Joyce in the eyes. She turned, and saw the light of the crystal candelabra shining brightly off of the carefully polished sabre of a cavalry officer. The tall man looked familiar, she thought. Then she remembered who it was. "That must be Seth Parker," she thought, "My, he looks dashing!" She remembered the near scandal of four years before, when Seth had accepted an appointment to West Point. Most people said that he should have stayed home to help his father manage the plantation. In fact his father had almost threatened to disinherit him if he went. Despite all this Joyce was secretly proud of him, and the uniform now made her prouder still. She would try to keep several openings on her dance card for him.

Joyce and her father walked to the band stand, where until a few seconds earlier, a sixteen piece band had been playing. Her father cleared his throat, a signal for all to be quiet, and then proceeded with a speech that somehow seemed to have been rehearsed. Then upon its completion he said those words that were as traditional as the family name. "Ladies and gentlemen, at this time it is my honor, and pleasure, to introduce to you my daughter, Joyce." At that the band began to play, and as Joyce stepped off of the platform, people began to rush forward. Soon she was surrounded by faces: some recognizable, some she had never seen before. The excitement grew, and soon Joyce was feeling light-headed again. Suddenly she was confronted with the face of Judge Clement. The Judge was her father's business partner, and a man who was greatly respected. He seemed as proud as her father, and indeed he had reason to be so; for it had been the Judge who had risked his own life to suck the poison out of her leg when a rattlesnake had bitten her, when she was five. There had been other incidents, and the Judge had always been there. He was proud to be her second father, and she loved him for it.

From somewhere Joyce heard chimes. She turned, and realized that it was the old grandfather's clock her father cherished. Suddenly she noticed the face of the clock. "Twelve o'clock," she thought, "could three hours have passed so quickly?" She turned to go back to the guests, and walked right into Seth. Her heart almost stopped. Slowly she said hello as she fiddled with her dress in an effort to regain her composure. They began to talk, and she tried not to be too conspicuous as she looked him over. Her eyes came to rest on his. They looked almost wild: a piercing shade of blue with gray streaks running through them. He reminded her that the next dance was his. Joyce tried not to show her surprise. It was not until that moment that she remembered dancing at all, or, for that matter, anyone signing her card. She looked down at the card attached to her wrist.

Dance number 8	Seth Parker
Dance number 9	Seth Parker

It looked as though she would spend the rest of the night with him. She hoped no one would mind.

The music began, and Seth took her arm, and led her to the dance floor. As they danced, Joyce could not help thinking that everyone must be standing around the dance floor, admiring them as they waltzed. She wanted to be with him longer, but the last dance was ending, and the guests were starting to leave. She quickly asked if she could see him again, and they both agreed to meet accidentally while riding by Harper's Pond the next day. With that he kissed her hand, and turned to leave. Joyce watched him until he went out the door, and then went to look for her father. She met him at the foot of the stairs, smiled, and then kissed him on the cheek. He took her upstairs to her room where they said good night.

Joyce sat down on the edge of her bed, quite exhausted yet unable to sleep. Memories of the evening flooded her mind as she put the mental puzzle together. There was a knock at the door, and in rushed Emily. Together they sat for hours as Joyce told her sister of the festivities that had ended too soon. Emily's eyes danced as she listened to Joyce recall how she and Seth had floated across the ballroom floor.

The first rays of the Louisiana sun gave evidence that the emerging day would prove to be extremely hot. A shaft of light was streaming through the bedroom window illuminating the inside. On the bed slept Joyce, dreaming of the evening past. Beside her lay Emily, dreaming of an evening yet to come.

Joyce sighed as she recalled her entrance into society. She had often pictured the night, but the grief for her fallen husband now tarnished her memory. It all seemed so long ago. She again recalled their dancing together, and how she had fallen in love with him during the weeks following the ball. She remembered him bowing deeply; and asking her to go riding, and how she would decline, laughing, in an attempt to raise pangs of jealousy in him. Seth had never shown these signs, much to Joyce's dismay, but instead had always bowed again, and crisply turned away. The game always ended with Joyce running after him. What fun they had had together during those weeks, but finally Seth's leave was over, and he had to leave for his next assignment, in Charleston. Joyce had gone to New Orleans to see him off, and as he boarded a navy transport, Joyce felt empty inside. But there was a happy feeling too, for the night before, he had promised to marry her when he returned. It had been a happy time for Joyce, a time of love and courting—a time that she now realized would never return.

Time passed through her mind, as she recalled many a secret correspondence. The announcement of their engagement had quickly spread throughout the valley, and people buzzed for months about the coming marriage. It was bound to be a huge social affair, for almost everything the Jamisons did was done in a grandiose manner.

Emily ran into Joyce's room, and excitedly announced, "Seth and his family have just driven up!" The young girl had dressed for the wedding less than an hour before, and yet had still managed to smudge her face. Joyce bent over, and kissed her sister's forehead.

For days Joyce had been in high spirits, anxiously awaiting the arrival of her wedding day. At last it had come, and although the preparations had started several months before, the last minute activities made the Jamison Plantation appear to be in

an advanced state of chaos. Several of the kitchen-slaves were busy making final preparations for the banquet, while other slaves were finishing the ballroom decorations. Long before the sun had risen, Joyce's father had been scurrying around the house, seeing that everything was in order. Joyce laughed to herself as she visualized the scene. "He probably has checked every little detail at least ten times!" Downstairs Judge Clement was helping the ushers prepare. Actually his primary function was to keep an eye on Timothy Parker, Seth's twelve-old brother. Timothy was known throughout the valley for his mischief-making. Today, however, it appeared that nothing would happen, for the Judge had the situation well controlled. In fact the only problem was that the best man, Tom Jamison, had misplaced his best pair of boots.

After struggling through Sarah's final preparations, Joyce glanced at the clock in the corner—it was five minutes of ten. Realizing that the time had come, she shot a panicky glance around the room at the other girls. Her sister-in-law, Becky, winked at her, and called the other girls together. Then the bride-to-be and her party started down the stairs.

Joyce met her father a few feet from the ballroom door, and the two entered arm in arm. As soon as they came into view the organist began to play. Joyce gazed through her ivory-colored veil at her wedding guests. All of the prominent people of the valley were there as well as some of her father's business associates, who had come all the way from New Orleans. The ladies all wore their finest gowns, and the men, their impeccably tailored suits. Naturally all of the clothing had been imported from England, as had her wedding gown. Joyce fixed her gaze straight ahead, where she spotted Seth. He was turned slightly to his left in order to see his bride coming down the aisle. Sunlight, which came streaming through the tall windows of the ballroom, glanced off his sabre and gold buttons. His blue uniform stood out in contrast to the light-colored suits worn by the best man and the ushers. His years at the academy and in military service were definitely reflected in his erect posture. With his back straight, chest out, and shoulders back, he appeared to be at an inspection, rather than at his own wedding.

Joyce and her father took the last few steps, and suddenly they stood beside the groom. Lucius Jamison turned, lifted his daughter's veil, and kissed her. Then he placed her hand in Seth's. At last the two of them stood alone before the makeshift altar, made from the same platform that Joyce had stood on when she was introduced into society. Before them stood Father Dupont, a Catholic priest, and the head of the Jesuit mission outside of New Orleans. Seth and Joyce knelt before the priest, and exchanged vows. He told them to stand, and then asked Tom for the ring, which he blessed with holy water. He instructed Seth to place the ring upon Joyce's finger, and as Seth did so, the priest pronounced them man and wife, and prayed for their everlasting happiness.

A reception was held in the front lawn, where tables and chairs had been set up by the slaves during the ceremonies. On the porch was a giant bowl filled with champagne punch. The guests eventually formed small groups, the men talking business while the ladies gossiped, or talked about the wedding. The bride and groom visited each group, receiving the best wishes of everybody. At one time Seth had been stopped by a group of New Orleans businessmen, and asked about the growing tension between the North and the South. While Seth was no expert on the situation in Washington, he did know

about army policy. He told the group that the army was strengthening. "It appears to me that Washington is beginning to fear the hostile feelings of the South," he told the concerned group. "I think that there is a distinct possibility that a war might break out if Congress does not begin to give the southern states more of a voice."

"If there is war, which side will you take?" Seth turned to confront the man who had made the statement—it was his father. Seth took a deep breath, while the shock created by the situation subsided. "I have given the matter considerable thought during the past few months. As it is now, I am sworn to protect the Union, and I will do so to the best of my ability. But if war does occur, then I will resign my commission, and fight for Louisiana."

Actually the decision was not as easy as he made it sound. For the last few weeks Seth had found it increasingly difficult to sleep, because his mind was preoccupied with where his loyalty lay. He loved his country and the service, but he could not bear to fight against his beloved Louisiana.

At last the ill-timed conversation was interrupted by Joyce. "If you gentlemen don't mind, it is time for the banquet to begin. We had better go into the dining room." As the group proceeded inside, Joyce could not get the thought of war out of her mind. She did not care what side Seth would choose, or even which side won. If there had to be a war, all that mattered was his safety.

The inside of the house was filled with the aroma of freshly cooked foods: ham, beef, potatoes, fresh bread, and other delicacies. Joyce and Seth sat at the head of the long table, with the other members of the wedding party occupying the seats nearest them. The noise level began to rise as the conversations from outside were once again picked up. The servants hurried around the table, bringing in the food from the kitchen. At last, when all of the food had been brought to the table, Father Dupont blessed the meal. After the prayer, Tom Jamison rose, and proposed a toast to the health and happiness of the bride and groom. Joyce turned and smiled at Seth, who leaned over, and kissed her lightly on the cheek. More toasts were made, one by Joyce's father, one by Seth's, and several others by well-wishing friends. From somewhere down near the other end of the table, the sound of tapping on a glass was heard. Suddenly everyone was doing the same, and Joyce and Seth were obliged to kiss, much to the delight of the guests.

After dinner everyone returned to the ballroom, which had been rearranged after the wedding ceremonies. Where the altar had been there now stood a bandstand and a twenty-piece orchestra. Once again the guests broke into small groups, and the men talked business while the women gossiped. The orchestra leader announced the first dance. Seth and Joyce glided across the dance floor. Those who had started dancing stopped, and those who were not dancing turned to watch the young couple. The second dance was reserved for Joyce's father, and the third for her new father-in-law. After a brief rest, Joyce and Seth walked around the room talking with their guests, and then they quietly left. It was almost three when they climbed into a waiting carriage. The day's activities soon proved to be too much for Joyce, and after ten minutes of travel she had fallen asleep on Seth's shoulder. In less than two hours, while the party was still going on back at the plantation, they would be arriving in New Orleans. There they would board a ship for Europe, and a six month honeymoon.

Joyce and Seth had had a wonderful time. They had gone to Paris, and then on to England. In London they had met one of Lucius Jamison's business associates. Mr.

Simpson was a man of considerable wealth, and the owner of a large textile mill in Manchester. They were his guests, at his country home for a week, during which they were able to hunt and ride through some of southern England's most attractive country. The newlyweds visited Scotland, and then, in Liverpool, boarded a clipper ship bound for New Orleans.

Several weeks later they returned to the Jamison Plantation, where they would live until Seth was assigned to a new command. But his orders never arrived. Instead he received a letter from the Secretary of War stating that a state of war might soon exist between the Union and several southern states. Seth was requested to make his position known: whether he would remain loyal to the Union, or whether he would honor the policy of his state government. The Secretary's letter stated that all officers and men who came from southern homes were being similarly interrogated, and that a reply should be made in the form of a letter to their present commanding officer, in Seth's case, his last commanding officer. A few days later, Seth sent a letter to Charleston stating that he would abide by any decisions made by the Louisiana legislature. Soon after, Louisiana and several other states seceded from the Union. Seth went to New Orleans to join the army of the newly formed Confederate States of America. He was commissioned a captain, and told to wait for further orders. He had to wait only a few weeks. One morning a column of soldiers rode up to the house. The sergeant in charge identified himself as first Sergeant Josh Hunter, and then handed Seth a sealed envelope. After inspecting his orders, Seth turned to his wife. Joyce knew what he was going to say before he began to speak.

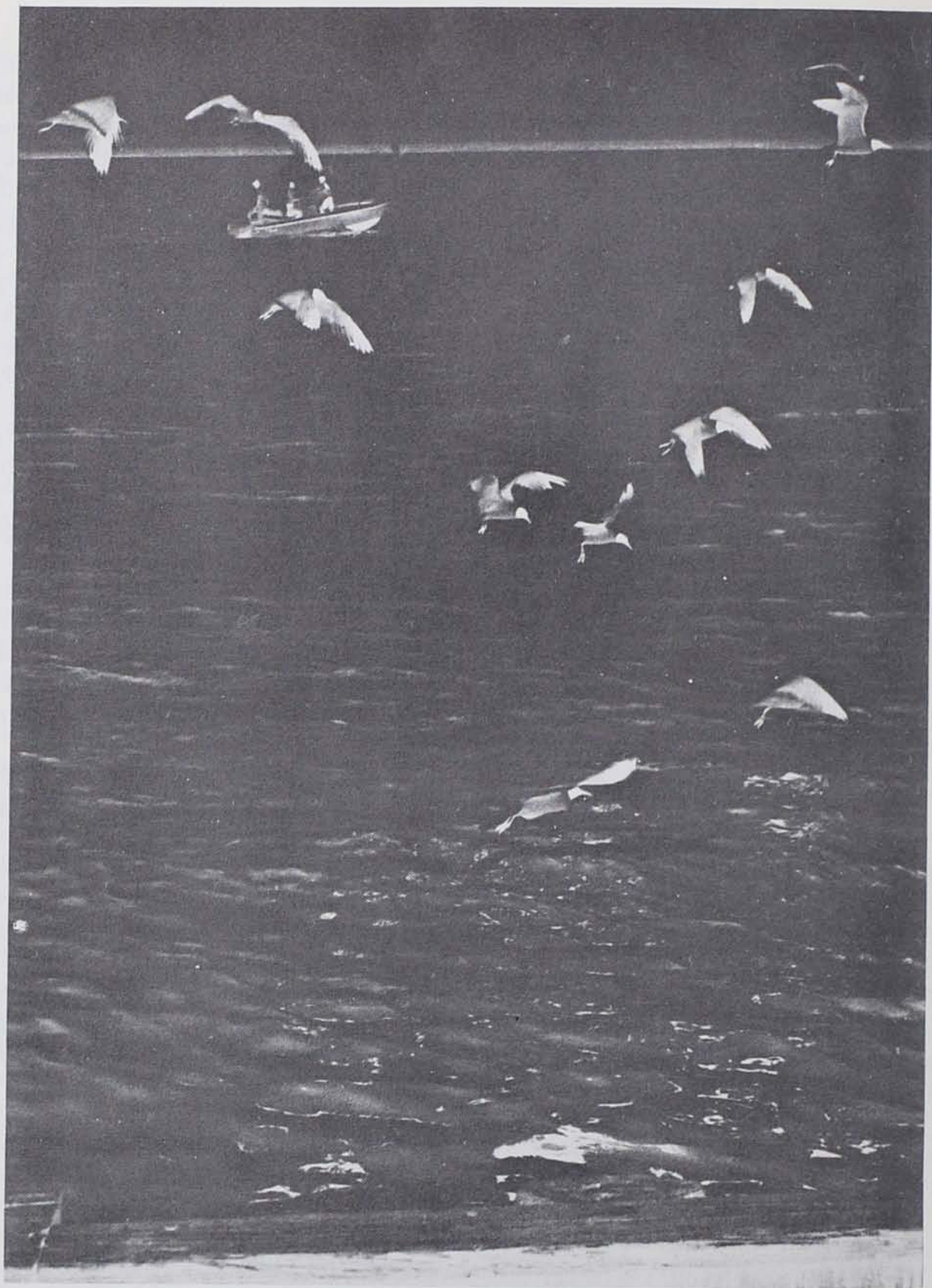
That night was one of the longest Joyce had ever spent. She had tried to go to sleep around midnight, but after two hours of tossing she had given up. She turned to Seth for comfort only to find him asleep. His chest heaved savagely with each breath, something she had never noticed before. She wondered whether he always slept that way, or whether these surges were the result of apprehension. Fears of the following weeks crowded any rational thoughts from her mind. "Would he live? Would he die? He could end up maimed for life, or could be captured, and die in a prison." For some reason Joyce's thoughts did not include the possibility of his becoming a hero, or even returning home from battle unscathed. Bitterness and fear tortured her mind, and forced her to look away from her sleeping husband. Tears came to her tired eyes, and as the sun crept through the window the next morning, she was still sobbing into her pillow, although the tears had long since ceased to flow.

Joyce went downstairs at eight o'clock to help prepare the morning meal. At eight-thirty Seth came into the dining room, dressed in the Confederate-gray uniform he had purchased in New Orleans a few weeks earlier. The moment she saw him, she rushed into his arms and started to cry again. Seth smiled down at his bride of only a few months, and held her tightly while softly caressing her hair. They stood together for several minutes, neither saying a word. Finally she looked into his eyes, and forced a smile. He kissed her forehead, and then they both went to the table. The slaves had prepared a large meal, but neither Seth nor Joyce ate very much. The clock in the ballroom struck ten o'clock; the sergeant would be coming soon.

The mounted platoon arrived at the Jamison Plantation a few minutes after ten. Joyce heard the sergeant's voice, but did not go outside, because she was afraid that she would not be able to control her emotions. Sarah sat with her in the back room for some time, and had been a comfort, but Joyce still was not sure how she would react to their parting. Finally she decided that it was time to say goodbye to her husband, and that it did not matter whether she could do it with some composure or not. Slowly she went to the front of the house. She stopped briefly at the door, and after a deep breath she went outside. The bright Louisiana sun hit her in the eyes, blinding her. Seth, already on horseback, reined his mount around to the porch. He stopped in front of his wife; the sun at his back contrasting him with the sky. Joyce squinted into the sky's glare, and looked up into his face. She could see that he was already concentrating on the task facing him. He leaned out of the saddle of his huge chestnut, and kissed her. Joyce began to cry, and as she threw her arms up over his shoulders, he pulled her up to him. Through the tears she managed a smile, and whispered into his ear. "Please be careful; may God protect you." He comforted her with a smile and a kiss, and then told her not to worry, that he would be back soon. Slowly he lowered her to the ground, and turning his horse to the platoon, commanded the sergeant to "have the men form columns of two". The sergeant bellowed, and the men responded sharply. A feeling of pride suddenly filled Joyce, completely suppressing her fears. She proudly watched the soldiers ride down the road. At its end the platoon turned south toward New Orleans. Seth halted his horse, and looked back up the road. He waved to her, and she waved back. She smiled as he spurred his horse onward, little realizing that she would never see him again.

Joyce awoke from her dream-like thoughts to find herself on the balcony outside her room. She looked out at the river and then down at the ground twenty feet below. Her heart ached with grief, and her eyes from crying. From the position of the sun, she judged the time to be about six-thirty. Looking over her shoulder and back into her room, she could just barely see the far wall. The dull evening light left most of the room in darkness, including the bed and the portrait. Again she turned to look at the river.

The sun's last rays fell behind the distant hills. The twilight hours would soon end, and the night animals would begin to roam the valley. As the night progressed those creatures would be attracted to the lights of the house. Those brave enough to venture up to the house would find the body of Joyce Jamison.



Richard Clark

