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Exile Vol. XVI No. 1

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Authors

Robert R. Bowie, John Anderson, Keith McWalter, John Whitt, Linda Notzelman, John Benes, Lauren Shakely, M.S. Wallace, W.K. Mayo, Louise Tate, Tim Cope, Bill Whitmore, Whitney Carman, and Paul Bennett

EXILE

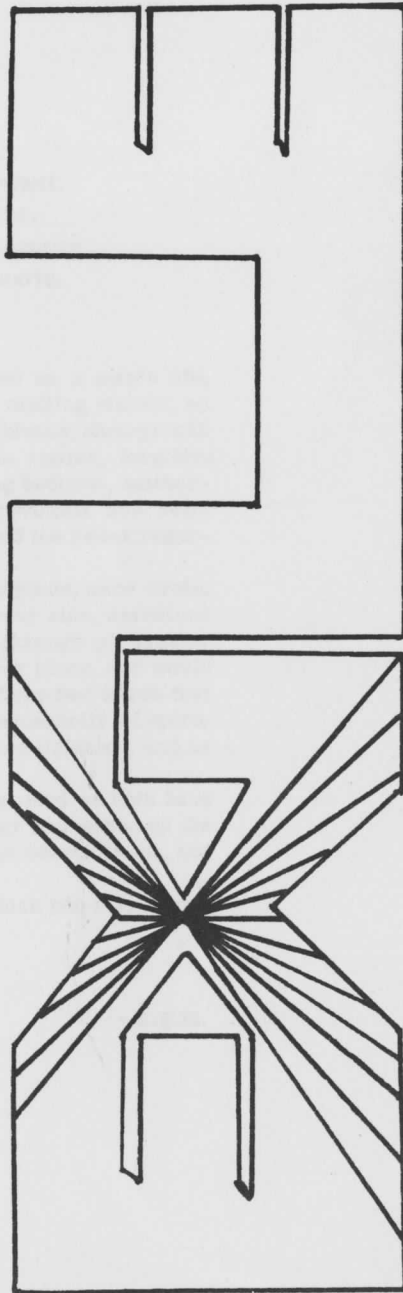
Take thought:
 I have weathered the storm
 I have beaten out my exile.
 —Ezra Pound

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PREFACE

No, I cannot tell you what I want;
I cannot show you what I mean.
When we love, we love in obscurity;
If we speak, we speak from exile.

A paltry set of circumstances makes up a man's life, and the sum of all his memories. No vaulting visions, no grand epiphanies, but vacuous, absurd tableaux, photographs of naked infants on bedspreads, frozen smiles, forgotten jokes, old men reclining near comforting bedpans, leather-bound, collecting dust on shelves, provincial and self-indulgent as home-movies; nostalgia and the sweet regurgitant of cemetery worms.

You read now. I, at sometime, in some place, once wrote. You have your family, lover, friends, your sins, ambitions and fears; I have mine. You cannot see through my eyes or speak with my voice. I cannot stand in your place, nor would want to. I can only touch you through these few words that we both understand, and at that soft underbelly of spirit; where thought should be uncommunicated lightning, and as quick to strike and burn.

I can meet you only on that narrow ground we both have crossed before; footsteps of commonality impressed on the various soils of our experience. Let us search it out, and quickly. Let us name it, now.

. . . Here extend another path, upon which you may apprehend my footsteps, and I, yours.

- k.g.m.



Wandy Soke '69

GOD'S POCKET

- Robert R. Bowie, Jr.

Scene I is set in the cab of an old pick-up truck, two seats, and back window, and some form of gear shift. Lights go on slowly as the sound of a truck pulling over and stopping on the side of a highway, becomes louder. Lights officially go on as the boy (Trevor) jumps into the cab next to the driver (Dan). Trevor is about twenty years old, dressed in old clothes carrying a duffle bag. Dan about forty-five or fifty dressed as a Black workman in large blue overalls; he is a solid man, strong, and still exhibits a great of youth in his mannerisms and movements. As Trevor has hauled himself up into the truck and pulled the duffle bag in behind him, the lights are all the way on simulating just before sunset at the point of dusk.

TREVOR: Oh, thank you very much. For awhile I didn't think I was going to get a ride before dark.

DAN: Yea, getting pretty dark. 'Fraid nobody was goin' t' see ya out there.

TREVOR: (Trevor pulls out a cigarette) I was afraid of that myself. Mind if I smoke?

DAN: No, man, your privilege.

TREVOR: You like a cigarette?

DAN: No thanks, man. Don't smoke.

TREVOR: (Trevor lights his cigarette, settles back for the ride) How far south you going?

DAN: I ain't going very far. Only down as far as Unionville. Just got off work from the canning factory up near Federalsburg. (Signals behind with his thumb.) Just goin' on home. How far South ya want t'go?

TREVOR: Eventually, I want to get down as far as Atlanta, but the rides have been short so it might take me another day or two. I am going down to see a friend of mine who is there. I thought I'd go help him with his work.

DAN: What part the North ya from?

TREVOR: (Laughing) How'd you know I lived in the North?

DAN: (Does not react to laughter) Just standing on the road I know'd ya was from the North. Ya got that look 'bout ya. (Laughs to himself.) People from the South like ya don't live too long. Yea, I used t'work up North. I used t' drive big rigs outside Cleveland (thoughtful) Yea, I like da North. What part of da North ya from?

TREVOR: Just outside of Boston. A place called Cambridge, Massachusetts.

DAN: Oh yea, Cambridge? (Laughs) 'Bout a year I

lived up in Central Square. Ya know where dat is, huh?

TREVOR: Oh sure. Live right near there-Porter Square. What part of Central Square?

DAN: Up the far end of Brookline Avenue.

TREVOR: Yea, that can be a pretty tough place.

DAN: (Laughs) Oh yea, I had my fun. Ya do a lotta rambling?

TREVOR: Sure. If I can get my hands on fifty bucks, I hit the road. (Both laugh).

DAN: (Grinning, throws head back gently remembering). Yea, I know what you mean, man. I know what ya mean.

TREVOR: Got all the way out to California and back last summer on fifty-four bucks.

DAN: Ya jump freights?

TREVOR: Coming back through the Midwest, I jumped one that took me through Iowa almost all the way to Omaha.

DAN: (Settling back). Yea, that's a good life. That's a good life. I dun my ramblin'. You smoke reefer?

TREVOR: Beg your pardon?

DAN: Grass, man?

TREVOR: Grass. Oh sure, on occasion (slightly weary).

DAN: (Lost in his thoughts). Yea. I used t' smoke reefer. I remember them good times. Smoke a little reefer, drink some wine. Used t'do that up in Central Square. Yea, I dun my ramblin'.

TREVOR: What made you stop?

DAN: Oh man. I met my little woman outside of Baltimore. Now don't ya go believing what some people will go and tell ya about gettin' married, man. Ya get yaself a good woman, you'll be a happy man. (Leans over to Trevor with a big smile.) You'll find a woman and that ramblin' life (laughs) it won't look so good. Yea, Ise a happy man. I goin' t'my little woman and be happy all night long. Man, that's the life. The ramblin's good for a while but ya get yaself a woman and you'll be a happy man.

TREVOR: Well, I'm still looking.

DAN: Well you just keep on lookin'.

TREVOR: (Joking) I believe you. I've been looking almost five years now but can't find that right one.

DAN: You got family up in Boston?

TREVOR: Yea, my Father is a teacher up there.

DAN: (Thinks for a second) Well listen, man. Is ya righteous?

TREVOR: No, not really.

DAN: (Dan laughs slightly to himself.) Well I'll tell ya. It's Saturday night and I don't work Sunday. So I generally get me some beer coming home. Ya like beer?

TREVOR: Sure. I've been hitchhiking all day and you get pretty parched. I've got a little money. Want me to help get some?

DAN: (Starts rummaging under the front seat.) I guess we've both been workin' hard t'day. No man, I don't want ya money. (Pulls out brown paper bag) Here I got some all ready. Ya like National Bohimian? (Passes beer to Trevor).

TREVOR: Sure. That's great.

DAN: Now ya got t' keep it down now 'cause the cops don't like us drinking on da road (opens his beer), but I guess if we're careful, what they don't know won't hurt 'em none. (Takes a drink. Signals to Trevor to do same). Come on man. Ya only lives once. Ya gotta get happy. (Trevor laughs and takes a drink. Pause.)

DAN: What makes ya want t' go down t' Atlanta? You're liable t' get yaself beat up bad, if ya ain't careful. Ya know the South ain't like no other part of dis country. It ain't like going t' California, you know that man?

TREVOR: (Seriously) I haven't been in the South much before, but I plan to be careful, real careful. (He laughs and looks to Dan for approval, but doesn't get any.)

DAN: Ya do that man. (Drinks) You're a real nice fella. Hate t' see someone like ya get hurt - but ya was tellin' me why youse goin' t' Atlanta.

TREVOR: I don't know really. I was just working up in Boston. Had this little apartment up there with two other guys and about a week ago, my friend from Atlanta sent me a letter. We always write to each other. He told me about what he was doing - civil rights work and voter registration. (He takes a slug of beer. Dan motions him to go on.) Well, ever since the beginning of the summer after I'd finish work and clean up the kitchen and everything, I'd take this old chair I had and prop it up on the back porch - we were on the third floor - and I could look over this playground, and watch the sky get dark, and I knew all the time, I didn't want to be working there. I wanted to get out and ramble. So when I got

this letter, I started thinking about how I could go down to Atlanta. Never really been through the South before, but more than that, you know, more than that I thought maybe I could help somebody 'cause I've had it pretty easy and all, and I know that. (Puts his feet up) So yesterday morning I called up the guy at the job real early and told him I'd quit - told him he could keep the rest of the pay check and I packed the duffle and by eight o'clock I was thumbing down the Mass Turnpike on my way to Atlanta. So here I am.

DAN: (Pauses) And ya ain't got no place t' sleep t'night?

TREVOR: No, but I've got a sleeping bag and I normally curl up by the side of the road.

DAN: (Another pause) Well listen man. We ain't got much. We ain't got much at all, but if you'd like a roof over ya head, you're welcome at my place, if ya wants.

TREVOR: Yea. Yea, that would be very nice. Thank you very much.

DAN: Well I tell ya man. We ain't got much but if that don't bother ya, ya're welcome. Sides that man (he grins) I got a bottle over the kitchen shelf and it is Saturday so we can have ourselves a good time. All right?

TREVOR: All right! (with grin. Both of them laugh happily. Lights dim and fade out.)

Scene II

Four Blacks milling around a store window that has been broken. They are taking stolen goods. Light goes on as two of them are pulling off a television set - one youth stands guard holding a gun.

WILLIAM: Hurry, will ya? Hurry. Someone's liable to come along.

FIRST YOUTH: Hold on brother. We're doing the best we can.

SECOND YOUTH: Hey man. Ease it round man - ease it round.

WILLIAM: (Holding the gun) Hurry, hurry man. Hurry.

SECOND YOUTH: Come on, William. Don't get tight. We're doing the best we can.

(From the far left of stage the Third Youth runs in)

THIRD YOUTH: There's a cop coming. Get yourselves outta here. (Runs all the way across the stage to the right and disappears. Two boys with the TV struggle off to the right.)

FIRST YOUTH: Come on man. Don't give up now. (Cop appears on the far left with gun drawn.)

COP: Hey there. Hold it you niggers. (Fires shot into the air.)

(William aims and fires. Policeman drops to the ground. Second Youth comes from the right.)

SECOND YOUTH:

William, what ya doing man? (William stands like a statue staring at the fallen policeman.) Come on man, run. Run man. (William turns, looks at the Second Boy. They all run off to the right. End.)

SCENE III

Scene opens in small house in Unionville. Kitchen table, ice box, various shelves - all clean and neat but fairly impoverished. Few chairs are around the kitchen table. Stove is over to right. Back door at rear right. Light hangs down from kitchen ceiling. Two characters are in kitchen. The Mother about 45 dressed in old simple but colorful dress. Hair up in curlers. She is Black and is shifting pots saving a dinner for her husband. Seated at the kitchen table is Faith, about 18, attractive, dressed somewhat inexpensively to the current Black styles. Mother speaks from the stove as lights go on to start the 3rd scene.

MOTHER: He ain't happy now. Look at the way he came in this mornin'. He's tired and worn out and he's scared, Faith. He's scared. It was Baltimore that done that. It was Baltimore that changed William. Ya go up there with him like he wants and you'll come back scared and running too. I tells ya Faith, don't go t' Baltimore. It ain't what ya want. I'se beggin' ya.

FAITH: (Standing and turning away from Mother). Damn, Mother. If I stay down here I'll be a nigger till the day I die. I'll be cleaning houses and doing White man's laundry. You don't have to be a nigger nowadays, Mother. You can't understand that. Up in Baltimore you con't have to be a nigger no more. (Turns to Mother.) Yea, you're right. William is scared but William don't "yes suh" nobody. He ain't nobody's nigger cause William ain't afraid to fight for what is his. He's a leader; he's got respect and Baltimore gave it to him. Don't ya see. . . .

MOTHER: Ya don't have t' run away to Baltimore to get respect, child. I respect myself. Baltimore don't teach ya respect for yaself. Baltimore teach ya to hate. Did ya see my William come in? He says he came down here to fight. I never taught him that. I never taught him that. It was Baltimore that taught him that.

FAITH: You gotta fight sometimes. William is trying to be free, Mother. He's trying to be free as a Black man.

MOTHER: Ya don't have to come all the way down from Baltimore to fight down here in Cambridge and Oxford. That's looking for trouble.

FAITH: This is where William was born. This is where his home is.

(There is the roar of an engine, of the pick-up truck outside. The Mother wipes the tears from her eyes with an apron -- turns back to the stove. The back door opens. Dan walks in, hugs his wife, kisses her on the forehead.)

DAN: Woman, it's Saturday night and your Dan's gettin' drunk. (Throws his head back and laughs. Proceeds over to Faith, kisses her on the forehead and pats her on the head.) How's my beautiful daughter? (as he reaches up to get bottle on highest shelf at the far end of the kitchen.) Though ya was goin' out tonight, Faith? A beautiful girl like ya ain't staying home on a Saturday night with her relations, is she? (Goes on collecting two glasses, puts them both on the table, turns to Trevor.) Trevor, like ya t'meet my family, my missus (points to his wife) and my daughter, Faith. (Trevor walks to shake hands with both of them.)

TREVOR: Nice to meet you. Nice to meet you.

DAN: Trevor was hitching down the Federalsburg Road so I told him that at my house company's always welcome 'long as they ain't 'fraid of sleeping on the floor. Now woman, ya got some food ready? (Mother turns to the stove.)

TREVOR: I'm pretty dirty, Do you mind if I clean up?

DAN: Sure, man, right through that door. (Points, Trevor exits.)

MOTHER: (Waits until Trevor leaves.) Dan, William's home. He wants to take Faith up to Baltimore with him when he goes back. (Dan slowly pours his drink after sliding a drink down for Trevor.)

DAN: Where's William now?

FAITH: He's gone into Cambridge. Been there since morning.

DAN: He gone to fight ? (Pause-knows answer.) Well Faith, you going with him?

FAITH: I don't know yet Father. I think I will.

MOTHER: Ya can't let her go, Dan. Don't let her go. Look what Baltimore's dun to our William....

DAN: If she wants to go, there ain't much I can do 'bout it.

MOTHER to Faith: If your Father tells ya, ya can't go, ya wouldn't disobey him, would ya? (Dan interrupts Mother.)

DAN: It ain't a matter of disobeying any more. Woman, our cillins grown now. One day ya see the chillen that's been playing in ya yard and that you'se been watchin', spankin' and takin' care of, has just growed up. Ya can't stop it woman. Ya just can't stop it.

If Faith wants t' go t' Baltimore, I ain't gonna be making her do no disobeyin' t' do it. (Mother turns around and looks down at the stove.) If ya wants t' go, ya go then. I dun my ramblin'. Ya got the right t' do yours, but just ya remember one thing (gets up, leaves glass on table and goes over to her, puts hands on the back of her chair.) The only thing good and I mean really good that comes from doin' ya ramblin' is when ya stop and ya dun all ya figurin' and ya know what ya want and then ya settle down. Ramblin' only good, child, when you can go home. All that travelin', driftin' around, that's no good, cause ya always runnin' away from one place and runnin' to de next. But there ain't no peace of mind in dat. Peace of mind is when ya find yasef a home. Always make sure ya can stop, Faith. Some people dus sometin while they ramblin' so they can't live decent, so they can't ever stop, so they can't get that peace of mind. Ya know what I'm talking 'bout Faith? I sure hopes ya do (starts walking back to his seat.) Ramblin' only good if it teaches ya, Faith - teaches ya t' live decent. Faith, ya decide. When William comes, ya decide. (Pause)

FAITH: I think I'm going.

DAN: Well that's all right then, Faith. When's William comin' back?

FAITH: I don't know, Father. He said he'd be by tomorrow morning. I guess I go then.

DAN: We'se gettin' up t' go to church. If William wants, he can eat breakfast with us. Then ya all go, but I wants us all t' be together before ya leave. That ain't askin' much.

MOTHER: (Turns around almost in tears.) Dan, you can't.

DAN: I ain't gonna talk 'bout it no more. Now we'se gonna all forget our troubles and I'se gonna get drunk. Anybody want t' join me, there's a lotta whiskey in this bottle, but I ain't gonna talk 'bout dis anymore. (Mother turns around, serves the two of them dinner.) Ain't ya all gonna eat with us?

FAITH: We'se all ready eatten. We kept this warm for you. You'se late tonight, Father.

(Trevor enters drying his hands on a paper towel, not paying attention until spoken to. He feels at home)

DAN: Yea, we got t' talkin' and I musta got out late. Got some bread for us, woman? (Mother goes and gets two slices of bread.) Trevor lives up in Boston, right near where I used t' stay.

FAITH: What ya doin' coming down here?

TREVOR: I'm going down to Atlanta to meet a friend of mine. (Throws away the towel and returns to his place.)

FAITH: You hitching the whole way?

DAN interrupts: Yea, he is. (laughs) I told him it'd be mean, but I don't think he believes me.

TREVOR: Oh, I believe ya. I just can't afford to go any other way. Besides, it's interesting.

DAN: Yea, man, but have ya ever been hurt bummin'? I mean really bad? I mean so bad that ya just didn't know whether you'd just ever survive?

TREVOR: (Joking) Had the daylight's beaten out of me in Omaha last summer.

DAN: (Taking a mouthful) Oh yea, I been through Omaha. Where was ya in Omaha?

TREVOR: Up in the northern part.

DAN: Oh yea, up in Omaha (laughs) - they got things kinda mixed up. All the Whites live in the south and all the Black folk live in North. Black folks got ya, huh?

FAITH: Well you came to the right place for revenge.

TREVOR: I don't understand. What do you mean?

FAITH: (Looking the other way.) I mean the South.

TREVOR: I'm not going to Atlanta for revenge. My friend is helping with voter registration. I am going down to help him.

FAITH: (Laughing) What makes you do that?

MOTHER: Now you hush, Faith. This boy's our guest.

FAITH: (Interrupting) What you really mean (very quietly) is this boy is White.

TREVOR: You've got no reason to be afraid of me. I couldn't harm you if I wanted to. Your Father says that they don't like Northern boys here. I don't think they'd pay much attention to me.

FAITH: Before you're Northern, you're White.

TREVOR: (Trevor pushes his plate forward and stands up -- picks up plate and starts to take it over to the sink.) Well, if you want to hate me for being White, there is nothing I can do about it.

DAN: (Still eating) Faith don't hate ya cause ya White - she's just testin' ya. She don't mean no harm.

FAITH: (Cynically) You just don't find too many

Whites down here who are willing to treat a Black man decent. That's all.

(A roar of an old car outside stops the conversation.)

TREVOR: There must be some good Whites in the towns around here.

FAITH: Yea, but there ain't many.

MOTHER to Dan: (Dan belts down another half glass whiskey) Ya been hittin' that stuff hard. Don't ya want t' slow down?

DAN: No, I can drink my whiskey. It's Saturday night woman. Why don't ya have a glass too? Come on, now. (Pours some more into Trevor's glass - goes and gets a glass for Mother.)

MOTHER to Trevor: You sure ya got enough t' eat, now? Ya got a long way t' go tomorrow. Ya might as well eat good tonight.

TREVOR: No. Thank you very much, but I couldn't be happier. Can I help you do the dishes?

MOTHER: (Laughs) No, I dun the dishes for Dan and me for twenty years now. I thinks I can do it, but thank you though. (Car door slams outside.)

FAITH: Trevor, you got a place to stay down in Georgia?

TREVOR: Yea, I guess. Probably stay with my friend till I can get a room.

(Kitchen door opens. In walks William. He has a coat on, a neat but old pair of pants, alligator shoes, Afro haircut. William surveys the situation with silence.)

DAN: Well come on in, William. We'se gettin' drunk, William. We got a glass here for ya. (Starts to get up.)

WILLIAM: Saturday night. Just as sure as clockwork. Old Dan, my Father. Old Dan. After finishing his White man's week, six days at the canning factory for a buck seventy five an hour. The week-ends and all he wants to be is another drunk nigger with a couple white buddies (signals to Trevor) to keep him respectable. (Turns to Faith.) You comin'?

FAITH: Yes, but let's leave in the morning. We can all have breakfast together before we...

WILLIAM: We're leavin' NOW. Come on.

FAITH: If you want me to go, we're gonna have to leave in the morning.

WILLIAM: God damn you all. God damn ya. I gotta leave now! (William turns and leaves.)

MOTHER: Don't go William. Just stay with us a little while.

WILLIAM: (Turns on his heel, speaks to Faith.) If I wait till mornin', you'll go?

FAITH: Yes. I said I would. (Pause)

WILLIAM: All right. All right then. I'll go tell 'em to come back in the morning. (William exits.)

TREVOR: (Stands up.) I think I'd better be on my way. I think you've got enough trouble without me here.

DAN: (Looks up.) Don't let it bother ya. This happens every time he comes down from Baltimore.

(Roar of engine of a car leaving.)

TREVOR: It still would be a better idea if I go. Thank you for the meal. It's been nice meeting you.

FAITH: What you running away from? This is the Black man's problems. You scared, White boy? You leave this in Maryland and find it twice as bad in Atlanta. You sure you're cut out for this, boy?

TREVOR: I don't know. I just hope. (In walks William.)

WILLIAM: Where you going White Boy?

MOTHER: William, don't bother him. Let him go. He wants to go; let him go. He ain't dun nuthin'.

WILLIAM: He may know too much. What you know boy? What you know about Cambridge, tonight?

MOTHER: We ain't got nothin' to be 'fraid of.

WILLIAM: Oh yes we do. How'd you get here, boy?

TREVOR: I was hitching. Your Father picked me up.

WILLIAM: You been to Cambridge?

TREVOR: No.

FAITH: Leave him alone. He hasn't done anything. He's hitching down to Georgia - down to Atlanta to help a friend of his who's working with Blacks down there.

WILLIAM: Sure, I know. You going to save the Blacks, White boy?

DAN: William, what ya talkin' bout?

WILLIAM: You had the radio on?

DAN: No.

WILLIAM: You don't know, do ya! Everybody knows but you don't. All right then, I'll tell you. They are looking for a nigger on the Eastern Shore tonight 'cause down in Cambridge a White cop was shot 'bout forty-five minutes ago.

MOTHER: Oh no, William. Oh no, William. You didn't go and kill?

WILLIAM: That's right, Mother. I killed the cop. That nigger they lookin' for is your son. (Pulls out gun as he speaks.) So White boy, you're staying right here.

(Mother bursts into tears. Goes into the bedroom. Dan stands.)

DAN: William, ya ain't nevva gonna be free now. Ya can't ever stop ramblin' now. Ya ain't nevva gonna be free.

WILLIAM: I am going to be free! I am free!

DAN: (Nodding his head.) Ya ain't free, William. Ya ain't never gonna be free.

WILLIAM: (As Dan walks into the bedroom.) Nobody saw me. If nobody saw me, I'll be safe here till morning. But White boy, you'se coming up to Baltimore tomorrow. You ain't leavin' tonight. I'll put you on a bus in Baltimore.

TREVOR: He's right, you know. You're never going to be free.

WILLIAM: What do you know about it, White boy? (Walks over to the stove to get a cup of coffee.) What do you know about it? You never had to fight to be free. If the Black man gotta kill, then he's gotta kill. I seen more cats like you - White boys- decide they're gonna ease their conscience for what the Black man been through - make themselves feel real good by helping the Black folks. They learn the way Black people talk and they try and be White Soul Brothers and get tight with the Blacks. But there ain't no White man who knows how it feels to be Black. You don't even know what the Black man gotta do to be free. How in the Hell can you help him?

TREVOR: I don't know. Maybe you're right but I've thought about it. I've thought about it for a long time, and I think, I really think I'm doing what I can to help. I've been lucky. I've been real lucky. I know that. So somehow I gotta help somebody else out. I've got to.

WILLIAM: Help a White man. In Cambridge, the White man could use your help. You know that Black school they been promisn' for the last four years? They're gonna have to give it to us now. That old school - it's burning now, and a block of the old slums and that

supermarket - they're all burning now. White man gonna need you soon. There is nothing you can do to help Black man because the Black man is helping himself. Do you understand that, White boy? We don't need your money 'cause we ain't beggars. We don't need you 'cause they're plenty of us. Do you understand that White boy? You'll have to soothe your conscience some other way.

TREVOR: It doesn't have to be Black. It doesn't have to be White. If you try to rebuild by hating and by destroying, I can't do anything about it, but me - I'm going to try to re-build by re-building. I'm going down to Atlanta not to help Black but to help people-maybe they are a different color - I don't care. I try not to think in colors.

WILLIAM: (Laughing.) You Whites are so stupid. You got eyes that see color. You better get used to it. Hey man, why you going down to Atlanta to help people? There ain't nobody in your neighborhood you can help? You got to go all this way to help somebody? I don't remember it being that good up North. No, you cats - we don't need you. You live off your capitalism - take dope - and be happy. But don't go thinking we need your help, because, brother, cats like you can't help nobody.

TREVOR: I think I can help. I'm going to try.

FAITH: We're not questioning your good intentions, man. It's just right now the Black man can only help himself. Maybe if you learn 'bout what it means, really means to be Black you can help someday.

DAN: (Comes out of bedroom.) William, ya know that I think ya dun wrong but we gotta help ya now. We gotta help ya get away. Your Mother is gonna cook up some chicken for you all t' take with ya to Baltimore. I ain't got much money saved (during this speech Dan puts cap back on whiskey bottle, returns it to the upper shelf) but I'll give ya what I got. When ya get t' Baltimore, ya take a plane up North and try t' get started up there. You take Faith with ya now. Ya hear? Don't let her get into trouble. But we decided we gotta help ya now. You'se our son. We gonna help ya. Come on woman (calling into the bedroom) - get out there and get that chicken cooking. Faith, you go get yourself packed. We'll be all ready tomorrow when your people come. Now if we hurry, we can get all the work done t'night and then get some sleep - have breakfast t'gether - then ya leave. But ya take care now, boy 'cause your my son.

TREVOR: How did you shoot the policeman? I mean did he shoot at you first?

WILLIAM: It was in self-defense but that don't make no difference down here.

TREVOR: If it's in self defense, you ought to get yourself free. Otherwise, you'll be running for the rest of your life.

DAN: William's right. It don't make no difference down here. I guess William's right. (Mother has gone out and started working on the chicken. Faith has gone to get packed-exits through bedroom door.) Now William, ya lay that gun down and get yaself into some clean clothes. Ya go and take my two new shirts and that old pair of work pants that's clean in there. Pack yaself some of my socks in that old suitcase - just ya take what ya need. But hurry now. Ya gotta get yaself some sleep. (William exits.)

TREVOR: Can I help?

DAN: Not just yet. Thank you man. I hopes you understands. He's my son - my son, man. Ya set down in that chair. If we need ya, I'll call ya. (Dan goes over to his wife) Don't ya worry none now. If nobody saw him, like he says, maybe William will be free. Oh Lawd, I hope so.

Voice from off stage: (Engine roars) All right. Come out of there, before we blow you out. (Dan runs to window. William runs out of the bedroom.)

DAN: It ain't jus cops out dere. Oh Laud give him the gun. They ain't jus cops out dere. They're com' in.

WILLIAM: (Screams) Give me the gun. Give me the gun.

TREVOR: No. Turn yourself in. You can get off.

WILLIAM: Ya don't know what your sayin' man. Give me the gun. (Trevor pauses for an instant then as the door is pushed open and three Whites come in, two in state trooper uniforms, with shotguns, he tosses William the gun.)

FIRST WHITE MAN: Okay nigger - drop the gun before I blow your head off.

WILLIAM: (Stands awestruck for a second then drops the gun - turns to Trevor.) You bastard. You White bastard. I told ya, ya weren't no good for us. I told ya, ya didn't know the ways of the South. Don't ya see? Ya can't help the Black man. You White bastard. If you hadn't been here, I'd be free. If you hadn't been trying to help, I'd be free. Who'll ya help now? Ya haven't helped the Black man. Oh Lord, you haven't helped the Black man. He ain't gonna live no better after this. Ya didn't help the White man - he ain't never gonna change. So who did ya help. White boy? Who did ya help?

FIRST WHITE MAN to the second: Well look what we got here. (Pushes hat

off his forehead) Just you look and see what we got here. A White nigger. The man just told you. You ain't Black and yo sure not White. You just a White nigger. Gonna save us? (Five or six White men come in the door.)

SECOND WHITE MAN:

(Screams out) Hey, White nigger, you gonna save us? (Bursts into laughter.)

FIRST MAN: We'll let you go White boy. I seen lots of your kind before. (Laughs) Hey White nigger, you gonna save us? (White men pick up chant.) Hey White nigger you gonna save us?

(As it gets louder, Faith and William join in. Trevor quietly leaves the stage and joins the audience.)

PARALYSIS OUTLINE

I. Situation

Horizontal I look at my books
and think I should be a more interesting
person than this. In my parent's house
I clean myself helpless
until space measures by footsteps
leaving me alone, even the bed
does not know me.
Portraits of curly young men
I immerse in some flood,
and feel instead
winter creeping hand over hand over
the windowsill. . .

II. Past

Conversation with several friends in Ohio
where
by
impossible difficulties such as
an orphanage in Tibet
we are teaching one another distance
until dreaming on the floor at dawn
I float house-height above the beach
where I am really lying, foot in low tide,
a sandy blue-lipped drowned boy.

That afternoon visitors
ignore the baby who lives here
who smiles and smiles
and breathes bad air.

III. Present

I believe I am making a scrapbook.

Someone has asked for old poems. I squat on the floor of the garage on red burlap curtains looking through a big barrel looking through my papers I find the words for a love song written on an old paper napkin by a boy-friend two years ago I find an IOU for \$2.35 from a boy who died in the summer war Then I find my old painful poems several shiny notebooks with ideas I can't remember by myself.

I roll my brother's bike into the driveway. The bike is red. The three kids playing next door ask are you the wolf? No. Who is the wolf?

Autumn wind pressing dry leaves down the drive
before me as in
Cleveland, Ohio, the same time weeks ago, street
from one brick wall to another
the sidewalk is covered with
fall though it's summer, then
someone steers from the topic
as we pass the last wall, he brings up
euthanasia

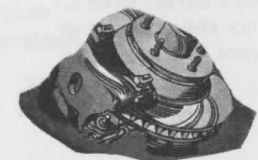
and pours all images
into the same abstract, but now
I have been lying for three days
in a bed that doesn't need to love me
and have found that it all goes in circles
and that is no news.

some days pull together
like chromosomes trying to become two
and even tangled in those tight central threads
it does no good to prod
a stuck moment to divide
and multiply.

IV. Response

It makes no sense so/but isn't this like
running over an animal
already dead on the highway,
a dead goose, so flat,
that the car feels nothing
passing over

- Lauren Shakely



Wandy Sefey '09

A WOMAN READS CAMUS
There are no more deserts

she says
 she is still
 guarding the body's doors
 so nothing can come close

no thing
 poor word understands void
 only as ghosts,
 absences in the house

she is afraid of the dark
 because night is an empty barrel
 because everything is taken away
 and nothing appears, left-over

a black pit
 swarming with bats
 cluttered with ruins
 without the bats, the ruins,
 without even the outline
 of a barrel

she concludes that men
 let things fall apart
 she is an empty house
 with sealed doors
 she feels dark and heavy
 like a huge worn rock
 waiting for the tide
 knowing it cannot float

in dark in silence
 the ocean washes to the door
 but in the dark, ocean
 doesn't look any different
 than night itself

men ask what is the matter,
 she names nothing,
 no words.

today she receives
 a book with a clue
 a gift from a man
 a clue she already knows:

the damned aren't real
 aren't unreal aren't,
 or as she explains to
 lovers who ask,
 nothing is wrong
 nothing is wrong.

- Lauren Shakely

don't sell my rings
 I left them on your coffee table
 one for each finger and two thumbs
 you'll remember the day
 it was raining, I woke up funny
 rained walking away,
 still funny, a skull
 full of damp feathers,
 rain predicted tomorrow
 turning to sleet, also rain
 stroking the gutters
 coating windshields of cars
 in that sloppy movie
 we watched on your TV.

you said you felt sick
 and gargled salt and water
 a noise like drowning

I left on the subway at one
 ears yelling AU SECOURS,
 AIDEZ-MOI cross-head to each other
 I was hoping I'd be raped
 or something
 so I could write you a note
 and leave town altogether

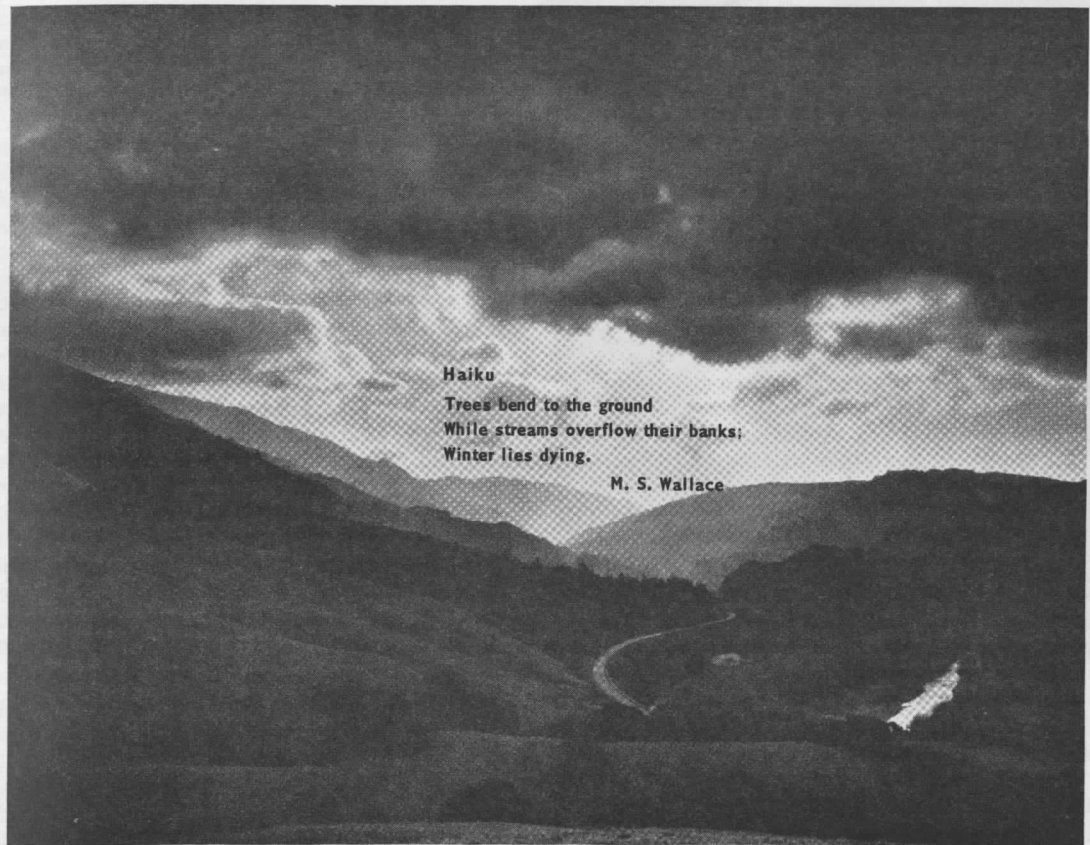
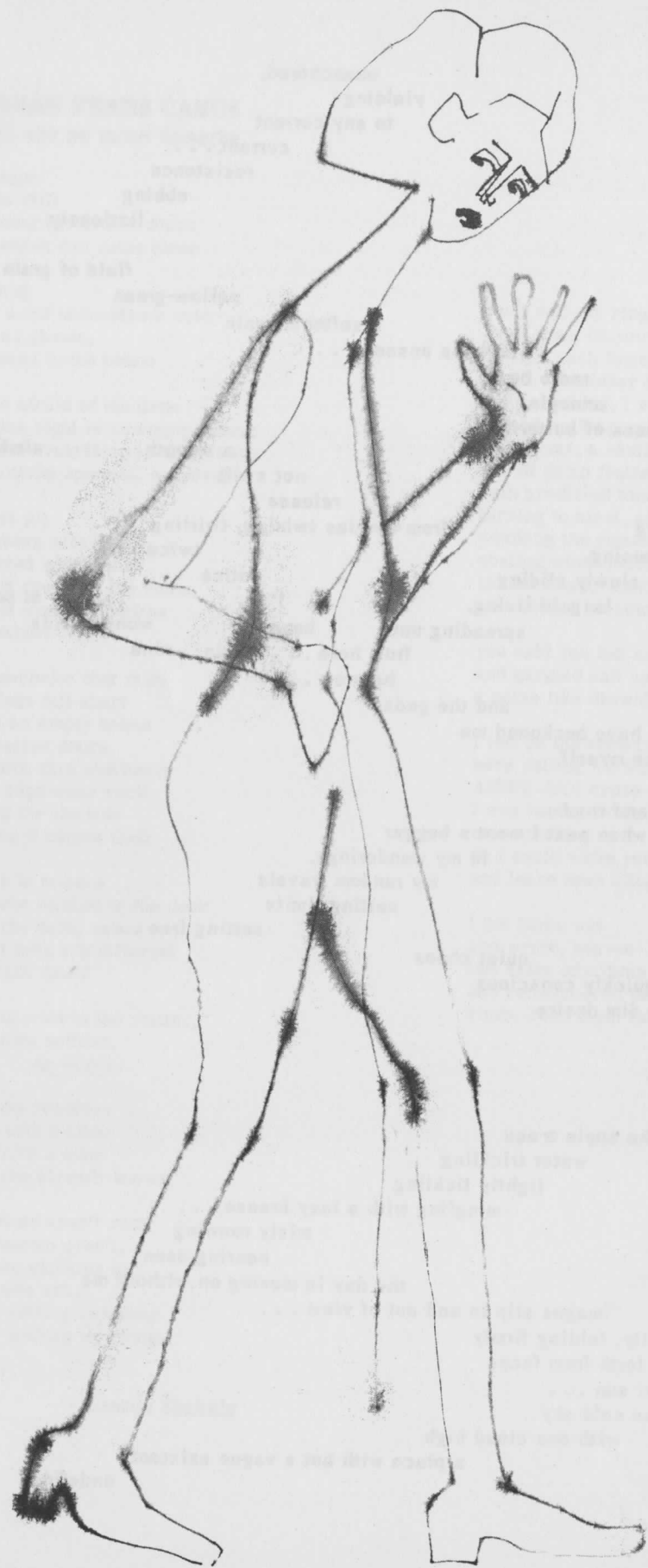
I got home wet
 and wrote, heaven-
 two sides of a dime
 and remembered those silver
 rings. send them back.

- Lauren Shakely

DRIFT

unanchored,
 yielding
 to any current
 current . . .
 resistance
 ebbing
 listlessly
 away . . .
 field of grain
 yellow-green
 a softening rain
 perhaps unseen . . .
 radio buzz
 annoying bee
 quintessence of butterfly
 flutter by
 me . . .
 a gentle
 half amusing
 musing,
 slowly sliding,
 languid living,
 spreading out
 from here . . . within
 before . . .
 and the gods
 have beckoned me
 to raise myself
 from hiding
 and take the right-hand road
 when next I meet a beggar
 in my wanderings,
 my random travels
 setting limits
 setting free . . .
 quiet chaos
 quickly conscious
 dulling down to dim desire
 lasting briefly
 becoming lost . . .
 doubts that blur
 but fail to vanish
 swinging in the apple trees
 water trickling
 lightly tickling
 mingling with a lazy breeze . . .
 misty morning
 nearing noon
 the day is moving on without me
 images slip in and out of view . . .
 freeing fully, folding firmly
 fingers flowing forth from faces
 glimmering in the distant sun . . .
 one cold sky
 with one cloud high
 a place with but a vague existence
 undefined

- John Whitt



Haiku
Trees bend to the ground
While streams overflow their banks;
Winter lies dying.

M. S. Wallace

STEVE CROUCH: Storm clouds

THE WAGON

It's May now and I still haven't answered Billy's Christmas card. I've really blown it this year. I just kept putting off sending a card and it would be a little silly to send one at this late date. A letter is called for, I suppose, but I hate to write letters and anyway just what would I say? Are you still 1-Y? How's your job? Is the family all right? The same old questions and I already pretty much know the answers. He still has high blood pressure so the army is out of luck; the job is okay but could be better. His family is fine. The fact is, you just do not write a letter to a Christmas card person. A Christmas card person gets a Christmas card and if I'd sent Billy one like I've done every other year there wouldn't be this problem.

I first met Billy in the summer of 1958. That was the first summer that we spent in the cottage on Long Island. My parents had bought the house the previous fall. It was warm but my father had decided that the family should get out of the city during the summer and had made the purchase. The house was located in a summer colony and most of the other houses were also owned by people from New York City. Billy's family was one of them.

Billy says he had met me in the fall when we purchased the house, but I'm sure we didn't really meet until that first summer. We've argued about it quite a bit and neither one of us has been able to convince the other that he is wrong. I guess the reason I'm so sure it was summertime is because of the wagon.

I had found the wagon in back of the house practically obscured from sight by the poison ivy which has always grown rampant there. It was an old wagon and had apparently been abandoned by the past residents being very much in need of repair. I had put on the two new wheels necessary to make the thing useable but it was still pretty rickety. Fred Schultz, the kid across the street, and I were riding the wagon down the hill in front of my house when Billy first showed up. Billy seemed to know Fred. He watched us for awhile and before too long the three of us were taking turns guiding the wagon down the hill. I was a little afraid and kind of dragged my feet whenever it was my turn to ride. Billy and Fred, on the other hand, were each trying to out do the other and soon decided that the hill wasn't big enough. They both turned to me, since it was my wagon, and suggested that we go somewhere else. I was still concentrating on making a good impression on my new friends and didn't have the nerve to disagree.

We went off to a bigger hill down by the beach. It wasn't so much steeper as it was longer than the other and you could get up a lot more speed. Billy and Fred offered to let me go first but I mumbled some excuse and told them I'd wait. Fred got in the wagon and started down. A few minutes later he was back panting and excited. Billy then took his turn and came back equally as elated. I was a reluctant next. I started out cautiously and reverted to my practice of dragging my feet in order to keep from building up too much speed. The hill was paved with asphalt and there was a great deal of sand on top of the paving which sprayed up into my face making me quite uncomfortable. I was glad when I reached bottom. When I got back to the top I naturally acted excited and praised the ride. I half expected one of them to ask me why I dragged my feet but no one said a thing. We took turns until supper time. Billy and Fred got progressively more daring and I continued to employ

my braking technique. Finally we started home.

As Billy lived in another part of the colony we split up and Fred and I pulled the wagon home. On the way we talked about the ride and how much fun it was. We also made plans to go again the next day. And then Fred did ask me why I always dragged my feet. I managed to mumble some sort of response and was grateful that before I could be quizzed any more we reached our houses.

All through supper I wondered what my new friends thought of me. Did they think I was a coward? I conjured up all sorts of things which I was sure they said while I was taking my turns down the hill. I tried to tell myself it wasn't important but I knew better. I vowed that tomorrow I would not be afraid.

The next morning we went as planned back to our hill. All morning we rode the wagon and every time it was my turn I continued to drag my feet. Fred and especially Billy seemed to find more and more ways of increasing their speed and the length of their run. I felt as if I didn't belong. Yet strangely no mention was made of my failure to keep up with everyone else. Once as I came back from my turn, I thought Fred was going to say something but Billy looked at him kind of funny and Fred took his turn without a word.

We began to spend almost all our time riding the wagon. Billy kept finding new hills to try and Fred always concurred. I followed hoping they would soon tire of the game. It seemed they never would. Every morning I could count on pulling the wagon off to some new hill and I never protested for fear of losing Billy and Fred's respect. Then when I was resigning myself to the fact that it was going to keep up all summer the game stopped.

Billy and Fred came to get me one morning and when I started to go around back to get the wagon they stopped me. We went swimming instead and played basketball in the afternoon. It seemed as if the burden of the world had been lifted from my shoulders. While I wasn't an especially good swimmer neither were the other two and I was the best basketball player of the group. We never played with the wagon again all the rest of the summer and it never even came up in conversation. When the summer ended we parted company with genuine regret. Billy returned to the Bronx, Fred to Queens and I went home to Brooklyn. That Christmas we all exchanged cards for the first time.

We have kept our summer home on Long Island and I have spent at least a part of every summer there ever since. All through grammar school and up until the time when I was a junior in high school I spent almost the entire summer on the island. When I reached that age where it becomes necessary that one work during the summer I still managed to get out for the weekends. Through all that time Billy and I remained friends. Fred had stopped coming out and his mother said it was because he had a girl friend at home. Bill and I managed to adjust and became even closer friends. In fact, all those summers we were inseparable. And every year we said goodbye on Labor Day and didn't see each other until the next summer.

When I sit here now and look back on all this I realize how absurd it is. Billy was probably the best friend I have ever had. I would do just about anything for him. Yet, every winter the only contact I have had with him is a Christmas card. I can remember once standing in my room at Christmas time looking at the card he had sent me and actually praying for ten minutes that Billy would have a good life: that he would always be happy. Then I cried.

I guess I'd still pray for Billy if I thought it would do any good. But I cannot write him a letter. I can't see filling the page with trivialities and I'm certainly not going to get sentimental. The whole situation is ridiculous. I should have just sent him a Christmas card and been done with it.

--John Anderson

- John Anderson



TO BEGIN

One day you stop. You don't know why.
You don't care, really
you just do. You look around
and wonder,
What am I not doing anymore?
And you don't know.

Then it begins.
You grow desperate
to start.
You don't know what.
To start is all you need.
You do.
You don't know what
you've started.
It just begins
until,

One day you stop.

- W. K. Mayo

DARK IS RIGHT

Awesome arches are room
And room enough to float
With subtle smoke
From golden bowls
Dimmed by tinted light
And on an incantation
Or soft sigh.

Apollo's silhouette advances
Through yellow mists;
On strident strings
Heroic themes
In dorian scale
Refute the dark
And moaning winds.

Echoing in moss
Muffled caverns
Meditation mellows
My insistant soul
Veiled by red velvet
Dances with shades
On ragged rock.

- Louise Tate

My mother died as I shall die
Alone in an upstairs room
On a summer's yellow afternoon
With old lace curtains swimming in the air,
A worn rag rug on a bare plank floor
An open transom above the door,
Two threadbare sheets on her father's bed,
And two flies buzzing on the window-glass.

- Tim Cope



I am waiting
with folded hands
in a closet.
There is everywhere
the smell of moth balls
pressed flowers and lace.
Here now there is nothing
New.
And I am waiting
for the green of something
I remember --
not the dried green of thyme
boxed to preserve
but the green
I remember of grass.

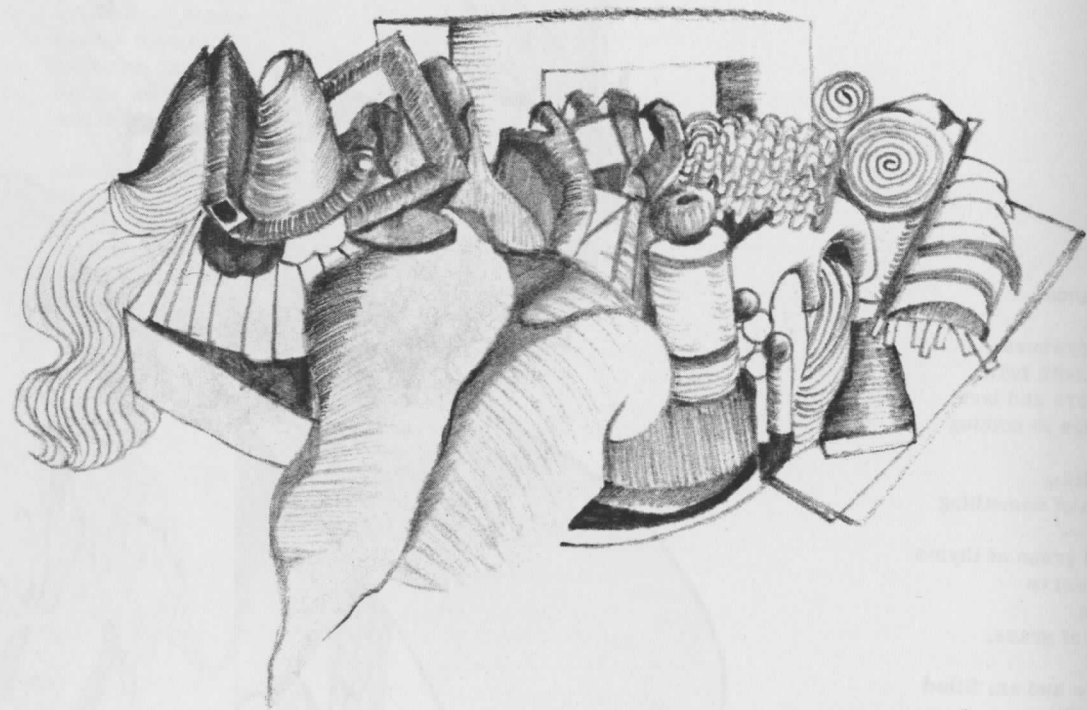
I breathe now and am filled
with moth balls
and the cedar of the walls.
I am boxed
and they are boxed --
the pressed memories
dried roses and lace
wall paper rolls to patch
paper that has been painted over.

And I am waiting
in my wooden and paper box
for a door and for green.
Waiting
forgetting among forgotten things
to unfold my hands
to feel for the cold of winter
to know the crystal and the white.

I am waiting now
for the green in the white
and to find a door
through ice.

- Louise Tate

STAFF
11/69



Wandy Soley

AN INFINITY OF MIRRORS

The summer closed hard that year. You could almost hear it fall with the leaves, clattering like brown paper to wet pavements. You could hear it falling with the wind and the afternoon sun, falling discernibly earlier every day, the ruddy disc aging to a feeble yellow as it bled across the month of September and stained the earth brightly in its wake. You didn't walk in that season, you waded, splashing through the leaves in the rustling ebb-tide of the year, brushing into the street ripples of fiery decay. It had rained for days, and you had the odd sense that even the streets were clean; they were shining black and smelled of still water.

And at times the sweet sauce of rain would coat the streets and sidewalks so smoothly that they shone like mirrors and shot the blinding sun into your eyes from a hundred angles, from corners and open alleys. And that intense blue sky. . .

But now, anyway, you remember the way it was. And you remember the way Stacy used to dress, especially around the flat, in that long pinstripe shirt or a sweater and not much else except her sandals. And I would come wading in through the leaves and the dusk every evening, freighted with half a dozen cardboard tubes and a briefcase and an arm's crook-full of new paperbacks, my fingers giving out completely just as I got to the kitchen table and dumped the whole assortment down with a clatter and a sigh.

Men never tire of anything, unless it is done so repeatedly and so poorly that their souls can find not the smallest beauty in it. But we worked and loved well, and so I never tired of the walk back from the bus or the kiss on the back of Stacy's neck there by the refrigerator, or the telling of the day's events, outlines of new designs, and synopses of the new books. I never tired of it, I swear, and some of the most placid moments of my life were spent over soup and coffee and crisp gingham, waiting for the sun to burn itself out in the sea of flat roof-tops outside the back door, the pattern of light from the latticed kitchen window creeping higher and higher and dimmer and dimmer on the blue stucco wall.

And Stacy would sit quite calmly, respecting always my silences, watching the movements of my hands or glancing out the window with me. I think we must have picked that flat because its back wall faced the west. I don't recall, actually. But she would sit in quiet deference to thought, waiting easily for my cue of words, always nimble to follow it.

"Did you look over the synopsis to that poetry anthology?" I asked.

"Mmm." she nodded through a mouthful of coffee. "Beautiful, I think the forest design will be right for the cover."

"Appropriate?"

"Yes."

"Not too. . ." I groped at the air. ". . . light, maudlin?"

"No, I don't think so. Depends on how you handle it. Keep the colors broody. . ."

"Mmm," I agreed. "What do you think of this?"

I tossed one of the new paperbacks across the table to her. It was a new James Kirkwood novel. I had finished the jacket design for it a month earlier. She picked it up, inspected front and back, fingered the cover.

"It came out well, don't you think? Printer did a nice job on the mid-tones."

"You notice anything different?"

"Well. . ." she hesitated, "looks a little, uh, simpler than I remember it."

I snorted. "It should. You'll notice they cut off half the collage from the right-hand corner."

"Oh God, yes." She studied it a few minutes in silence. "Any reason given?"

"Yeah. Detracted from the author's name, or something. And they switched the position of the title at the last moment. Isn't the effect I'd intended at all. Look at the size of that blurb copy on front. Can't see half the background detail for it."

She sighed. "Uh-huh. I think it still works, though."

"Well," I blew across the surface of my coffee, "no use worrying about it now. It's gone to press."

She smiled and put the book down, folding her arms. It was a habit of hers, the folding of the arms, familiar as an old photograph.

I wished I could have seen more clearly what went on behind those eyes. . .

The gears that turn the universe,
somewhere behind the skies.

The phrase popped full-grown into my head and hung there, waiting. I reached into my briefcase for my small, green notebook and flipped to the first empty page.

"Mmm?" she asked.

"A cute little couplet just came to me," I explained, scribbling it down:

That I could have seen more clearly
what went on behind those eyes;
the gears that turn the universe
somewhere behind the skies.

It already looked less imposing than it had first seemed; it had the smell of anonymity about it. "Anything new come in today?" Stacy asked, seeing my pen stop.

I closed the notebook and put it aside. "Yes, another short story anthology and a history piece on Harry Truman. I thought a nice A-bomb blast might be interesting for the jacket, maybe another photo-collage, much as they're overdone."

She grimaced her displeasure over the Truman assignment. "I hate history. You're so limited with

what you can do with it. Any ideas for the anthology yet?"

"Nothing concrete. I've only barely had a chance to glance at the synopsis. Usually like to read a few of the stories, at least, just to get a sense of mood. I want to keep the jacket pretty clean, tho. Modern."

She nodded.

I pulled some layout paper from one of the cardboard tubes and spread it out next to my soupbowl. "If it fits at all, there's something new that came to me that I want to try on this cover. It has to do with mirrors. . ."

I looked up at Stacy, bent over the paper just as I was, smiling attentively. I was subtly pleased somehow to notice that she had changed sweaters in the few hours since lunch. I had a sweetly nettling vision of a beautifully long-haired girl pulling a sweater down over her head, freeing the strands that had gotten caught inside on her shoulders, and brushing, brushing her long hair smooth and shining as some finely-textured wood.

Some of the vision found its way into my look.

"Yes. . .?" she smiled, reading it.

"Forget it. I'll show you when I get it worked out better." I rolled up the paper and shoved it back into its tube.

We made love a little later, and were perfect together, as usual. I could almost feel her smile in the darkness afterwards. I smiled back.

"Happy?"

"Consummately," she mumbled sleepily. "We really are unusual in a way, I think."

"Hmm? And in what way might that be, young lady?" said I, kissing her neck between words.

"Oh, I don't know, we're just so good together. Do you ever get to feel that we're part of one another, you start to reflect my traits, I start to take on yours? It's funny. I often wondered if that sort of thing would happen."

"We were always pretty compatible, miss," I said, pulling the sheets tighter around us.

Winter came up quickly. You could hear it in the cold contractions of the flat, in the wind past the shutters. You could see it creeping in the icicles down from frozen cornices, scattering prismatic light across the floor of my tiny studio. And on the weekends I would shovel our short sidewalk and come in puffing and sweating from the cold.

Stacy brought something hot to drink and followed me into the studio.

"I'd like to finish that layout today," I said, nodding towards my drawing board.

She took my coat and hung it up. "Which one's that?" she called from the closet.

I perched on the stool and flipped a light on over the assorted papers and tubes. "It's the jacket for that story anthology, the design with the double mirror effect. I don't think I showed it to you."

"What's your commission on this one?" she inquired, leaning gently on my shoulder.

"Same as usual. Fifty for the layout, fifty more if they decide to use it, a negotiated contract for the final design, plus a tiny chunk of the royalties, if any. I think I'll ask a lot for this one. It'll take some doing."

She kissed the top of my head, walked over to the easy chair by the window and plopped down with a magazine. I pulled some sketches out of my briefcase and scattered them across the board, sizing up dimensions. On the wall in front of me was a framed collection of my favorite jacket designs, some of them award-winners, old casual acquaintances, each one a two-dimensional image of what little I had tried to know of some other man's art. They were simple printer's proofs, without titles or authors' names.

"Nat," Stacy said without looking up, flipping casually through her magazine.

"Yeah," I said absently.

"Do you think I ought to go back to work?"

I looked at her. "No. Why?"

"I don't know. It might help out, that's all."

"We're doing fine, baby. There's no real reason for it. I'll let you know when things start looking tight. Ok?"

"Ok," she smiled, returning to the magazine. "Just thought I'd ask."

I was engrossed in pencil and paper, sketching guidelines on the layout sheet.

"Do you want to work?" I said slowly.

"What?"

"I say do you want to work again?"

"Well, no, not particularly, unless you thought I should."

"What I think depends largely on you. Would you be happier working?" I asked, reaching for an eraser.

"I doubt that I could be," she said through a yawn and a stretch. "I doubt that I could be any happier than I am already."

I smiled at her, and we didn't speak for several moments, the silence punctuated by my scratchings of pencil and paper.

"Do you remember the last time we had an argument?" she asked finally, frowning at her reading.

"Hmm?"

"The last time we had a serious fight or something. It says in this article that it's normal and healthy

for couples to fight fairly frequently. Gets out all their frustrations and latent hostilities, and is an indication of the continuing operation of two unique and distinct personalities in the marital partnership," she read off smoothly. "I can't remember the last time we really had a falling out."

I made a fist and thumbed my nose belligerently.

"Wanna fight, baby? Huh?"

She laughed and curled her legs up under her in the chair.

"No, really," she said. "That is kind of unusual, don't you think?"

I snickered. "Darn psychiatrists can't leave well enough alone. What would we argue about, anyway? I suppose it's all due to my generally milktoast personality; I always give in to you."

Her eyebrows arched. "What do you mean? I'm always the one who gives in to you."

"See?" I said, palms upturned. "What do we have to argue about?"

She dropped the magazine and stood up.

"Nothing," she said, walking over and circling her arms around my neck. "Nothing at all. What are you working on?"

I put my pencil down and folded my arms.

"That jacket design I was telling you about. The one for the anthology. It has to do with the idea of each story in the book being a reflection of the human condition, that sort of thing, you know?"

She nodded. "Have you read the stories yet?"

"A couple of paragraphs, here and there. All I need, really. Anyway, what I want to get across in the design is an effect of hundreds of reflections interlocking, you know? You see the effect in barber shop mirrors sometimes. . ."

"Mmm, yes, I know what you mean. The infinity of mirrors. . ."

"Exactly. It's fascinating. Two mirrors facing and reflecting one another, the image of the first reflected in the second, and back again, and so on. You always imagine that if you could look straight down that corridor of images, you would see at its end -- well, what? Some devilish face staring back at you, or some spot of whitest light or deepest blackness, you know, some visual representation of infinity itself. Disturbing. But of course when you move to look down the corridor, your own reflected image blots out the view. Standing to one side and trying to peek doesn't help, because the slightest angle of vision cuts the corridor's end off from sight. Any photographic device installed between the mirrors, no matter how small, would still necessarily blot out the crucial center point with its own reflection." I demonstrated with my hands. "It's a sort of Pandora's box, permanently locked by the laws of physics. There's probably nothing to see down there, but denied the sight, you can never be sure. Curious, humm?"

Stacy squinted down at my sketches and chewed the back of her hand.

"Very. It's a fascinating idea, Nat. I'm sure they'll like it. Do you still have the synopsis? I'd like to read it sometime."

I grinned up at her. "Ahh. Now if everyone who sees this would react that way, I'd consider myself a success."

"You're a success with me," she laughed. "How about some dinner?"

We walked out past my framed favorites and into the kitchen, where soup was bubbling on the stove. And later we watched the sun die out among the snow-covered roofs beyond the back door, she looking out the window with me, quiet, waiting. We finished our coffee, folded our arms, and looked across the table at each other. My rhyme came back to me. . . That I could have seen more clearly. . .

It seemed childish and absurd now. How beautiful she was, the day's last light and my own face reflected in her hair and eyes. And a little later we would make love.

Night came quickly in that season. You could see it creeping up the street with the lighting of the street-lamps, in long, endless rows, hear it in her soft breathing next to me in bed, echoing my own.

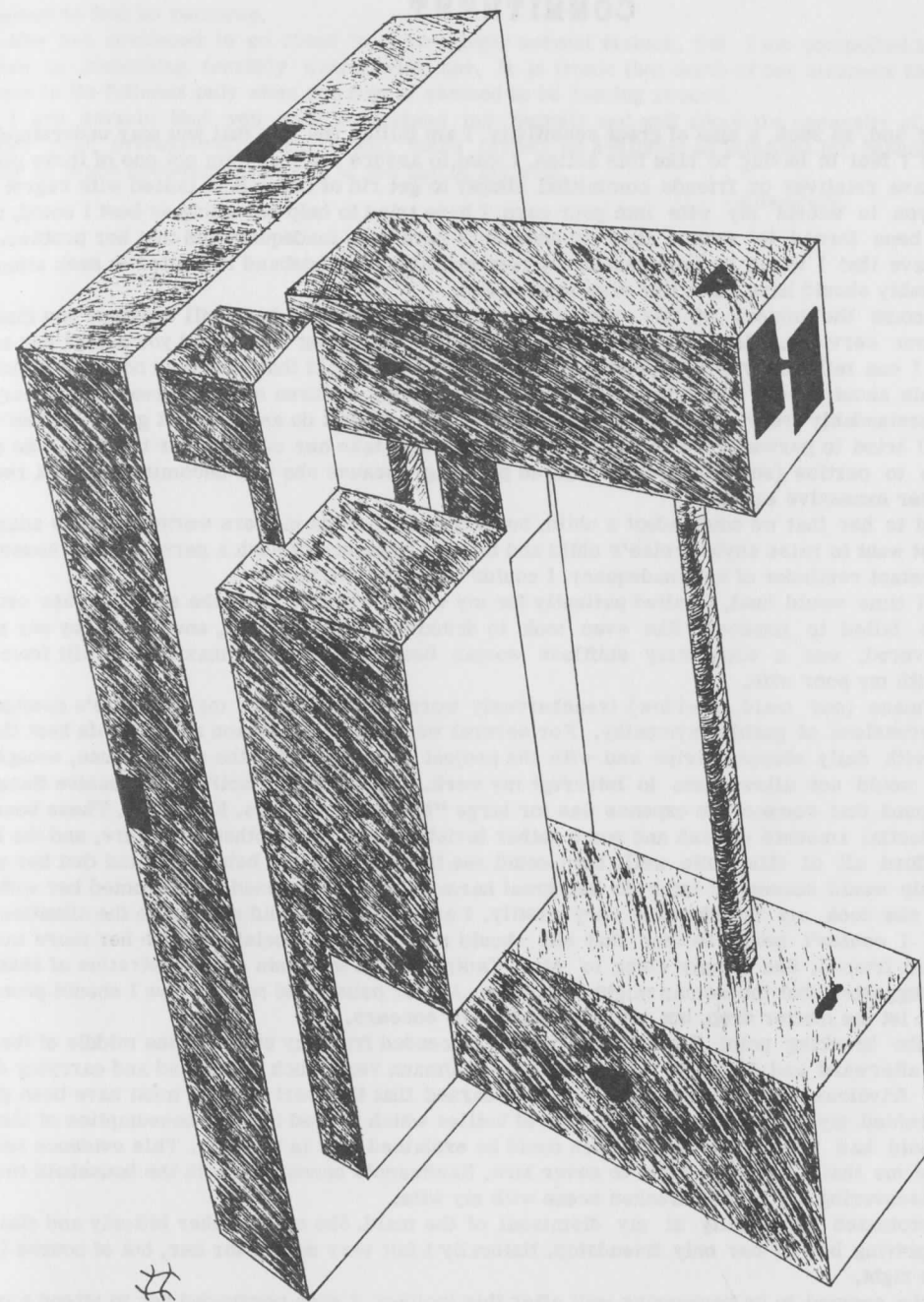
- Keith McWalter

I never blamed you,
 You, who think I might have blamed you,
 I never blamed you.
 At least, I do not blame you now.
 Maturity is Destiny's only master.
 And if my bones are set cross purposed,
 the cockswain in my skull
 must parallel the oars
 by calling swift clean even strokes,
 and must remain a constant sentry
 against the spasms of a sudden catalepsy.
 No man is an island.
 God knows that's true enough when all's said and done,
 but I am my own person
 belonging to no one but ourselves,
 navigators who reckon the sounds of a
 northern continent, marking the bays
 of distant hounds on the jagged coast,
 and seeking passage to a warmer tropic
 with spices and gold, incense and mirth.

- Tim Cope



EDWARD WESTON: Grasses and Pacific



SEPARIDIAN

a shoe box, or maybe a tobacco pouch,
 anyway, I need somewhere
 to lie down and think about everything:
 a separidian for my soul.

- Bill Whitmore

COMMITMENT

Gentlemen:

I am an artist and, as such, a man of great sensitivity. I am telling you this that you may understand the profound grief I feel in having to take this action. I want to assure you that I am not one of those people who try to have relatives or friends committed simply to get rid of them. It is indeed with regret that I must ask you to accept my wife into your care. I have tried to help her along as best I could, but I have at last been forced to realize that my endeavors have been inadequate and that her problem has become so grave that I would be negligent in my responsibility as a husband if I failed to seek attention for her. I probably should have taken this step months ago.

I shall recount the history of this case in the hope that what I say here will convince you that my wife needs your services. Also, this may be of help to you in treating her should you accept her case.

As far as I can tell, my wife's difficulties began when we were told that she could not have children. We learned this about a year ago after her miscarriage. Having children meant a great deal to her and she was understandably very despondent. For a while she wouldn't do anything but gorge herself with food all day. I tried to persuade her to do something that would take her mind off her troubles. She even refused to go to parties (she had always enjoyed partying) because she was becoming obese, a result, of course, of her excessive eating.

I suggested to her that we could adopt a child, but that simply made matters worse. She was adamant that she did not want to raise anybody else's child and that the presence of such a person in her household would be a constant reminder of her inadequacy. I couldn't reason with her.

Hoping that time would heal, I waited patiently for my wife to recover from the effects of her ordeal. However, she failed to improve. She even took to drinking behind my back, encouraged by our maid who, I discovered, was a completely shiftless woman bent on reaping the maximum profit from her relationship with my poor wife.

Mrs. Kaufmann (our maid, a widow) treacherously wormed her way into my sick wife's confidence with false expressions of gushing sympathy. For several weeks Mrs. Kaufmann and my wife kept themselves busy with daily shopping trips and with the project of redecorating the entire house, except for my studio. I would not allow them to interrupt my work. I tolerated this activity, expensive though it was, until I found that some of the expense was for large "bonuses" for Mrs. Kaufmann. These bonuses included substantial amounts of cash and some rather lavish gifts of fine clothes, furniture, and the like.

I could afford all of this quite well, but I could see that my wife was being used and that her new-found friendship would sooner or later do her great harm unless I intervened. I confronted her with the problem and she took my interference very nastily. I am afraid that I did not handle the situation especially well. I couldn't persuade her that she should resume her associations with her more worthwhile and truer friends. She simply clung to Mrs. Kaufmann and went into a demonstration of absolute rage when I suggested that the woman might have to go. At that point I had no idea how I should proceed. I was forced to let the matter drop, but you can imagine my concern.

However, the breaking point finally came when I ascended from my studio in the middle of the day about a week afterward and found my wife and Mrs. Kaufmann very much inebriated and carrying on in a pathetically frivolous fashion. Soon thereafter I learned that this sort of thing must have been going on regularly behind my back. I found a collection of bottles which proved that the consumption of alcohol in the household had risen to a level which could be explained only in that way. This evidence served only to assure me that I had been right to sever Mrs. Kaufmann's connection with the household immediately upon discovering her in that drunken scene with my wife.

My wife protested vehemently at my dismissal of the maid. She cried rather bitterly and claimed that I was depriving her of her only friendship. Naturally I felt very deeply for her, but of course I had to do what was right.

Actually, she seemed to be recovering well after this incident. I even persuaded her to attend a party given by some friends of ours. Unfortunately, the influence of Mrs. Kaufmann had not worn off and I was unable to keep her from overimbibing. She became uncontrollable and we had to leave early. I must assume a large part of the blame for this incident for attempting to force her back into social life too quickly.

Later that night I was awakened by the sound of her crying and I found her curled up in front of the door to my studio. When I finally stopped her crying she told me that she had wanted to see my paintings but she couldn't find the key to the door. I took her in and showed her the paintings, explaining each one individually. Her interest came as a great surprise to me since she had never shown any concern about my art before. She seemed particularly drawn to Words, an abstract depicting a resolution of the struggle between silence and cacophony.

After that night she came to the studio frequently while I worked. She would just sit watching me and I would explain what I was creating. I was pleased that we seemed to be coming together and that she was coming out of her shell. I began leaving the door unlocked while I worked so she could enter whenever she liked. She even had friends in and brought them down to the studio. It appeared that she was making rapid progress and I was gratified to see that. I'm afraid I became overly optimistic and I have come to regret that feeling profoundly for the damage it has caused.

Yesterday morning I went to the studio to find that I had left the door unlocked for the night. I entered to find that Words had been savagely slashed, utterly mutilated. My wife admitted the deed readily and

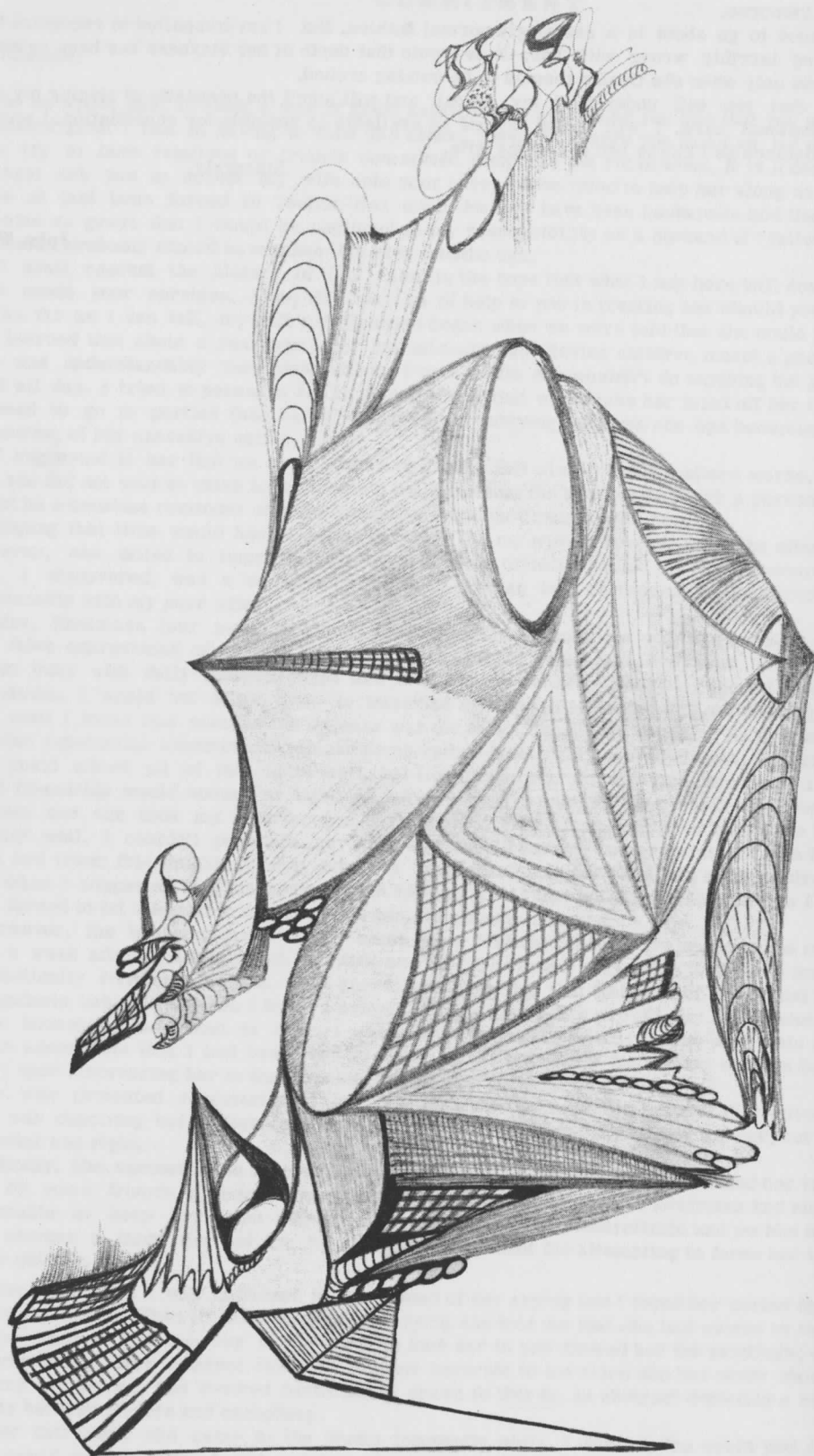
seemed to feel no remorse.

She has continued to go about in a seemingly normal fashion. But I am compelled to recognize that there is something terribly wrong with her. It is ironic that depth of her sickness has been revealed to me in its fullness only when she finally seemed to be coming around.

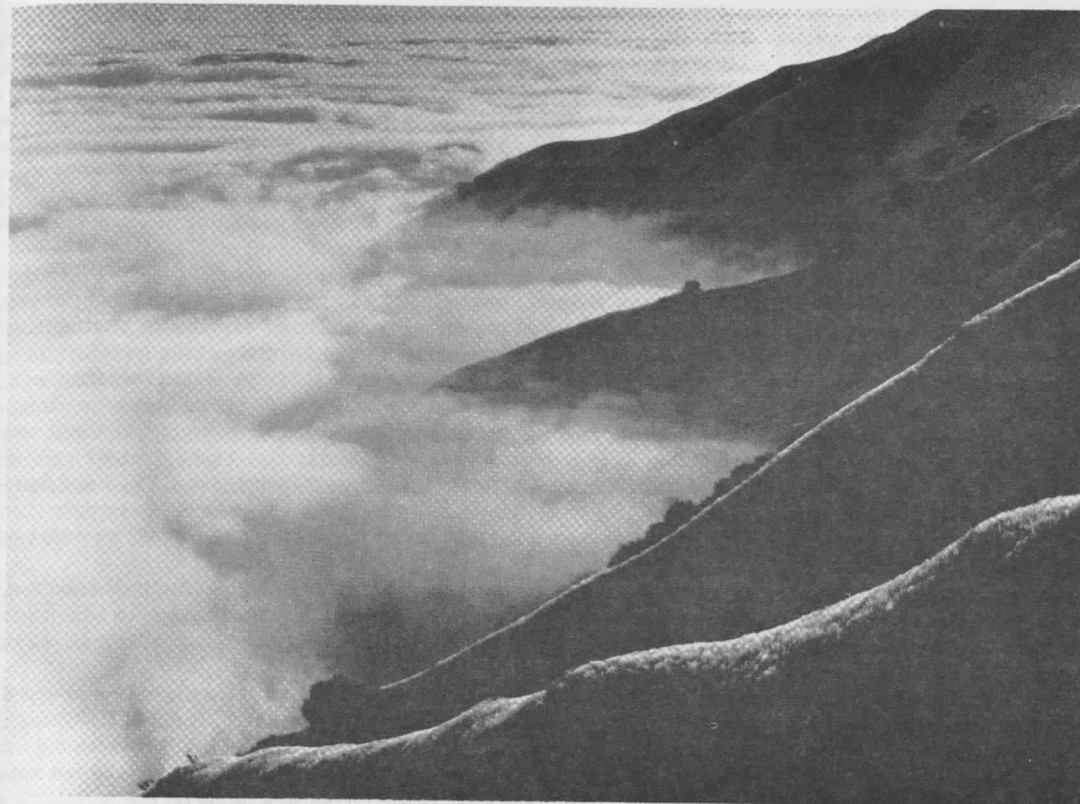
I am certain that you will understand my despair and will admit the necessity of placing my wife under your professional care. I will make myself as available as possible for consultation. I want to offer as much assistance as I can to you and to my wife.

Sincerely,

- John Whitt



Faculty
11/3/69



STEVE CROUCH: Fog and ridges below Big Sur

He walks on into
The dawn
Emerging from the gray
That precedes,
The gray that made phantoms
He had not felt great fear
He had only been afraid, a little
The gray land
Had shown him only shapes
He could scarcely discern
His fertile imagination had caused
Both the little fear
And whatever moved him onward
Until the gray land had lightened
It was perceptibly brighter
Presently
 though still in the black
 and white of early dawn
He discovered his shadow
Passing over the ground in a
 caricature image of himself
The image followed him, even preceded
him in his wanderings
The shadow was cast on whatever
he came near
His darkling alter ego took many
forms
All of the same mold, though
 none of the same
Splashed on concrete
Swishing through the grasses
Mocking as it danced on walls
Rippling at the bottom of a clear
pool on whose surface...

The surface let one image pass
Throwing back another
On the bottom
 his dancing friend
 constant companion in the light
But on the surface
 a liquid image that filled
Itself
The finder bent closer
And in its fullness the image also
 drew closer
The shadow responded as it could
The finger in the water
Rippled the reflection with the
Laughter
That shook the body of that finger
Statement and shimmering response
Passed easily
And though the two were much
 alike
Much passed between them

He had come from the gray
By himself
The other from he knew not
 where
Neither did he care to know
Until the falling rock
Shattered what he had found
Leaving him with the shadow

- Whitney Carman

It began not long ago. . .

A faint chuckle was rising from the sea. The waves were frothing the beach. A damp, chilling fog was rolling in. And still I stayed. I was held, entranced. I could not grasp what my mind was searching for, what it is still searching for. My eyes were drawn out to sea but my gaze was lost in the fog. A series of scenes began to flit before me -- a dim curtain of grey formed the background. The setting was the same in all, the island. The island--it is all I know--my world, unique and mystical. The scenes faded and the fog thickened. Soon I was enveloped by its evil shroud, with the spirits of the sea whispering unseen in the gloom. The spirits cannot be ignored. They are the life of this island, an island of 500 ship-wrecks and 5000 lost, graveyard of the Atlantic where ships are caught by shifting sands and sink into eternal sleep.

"Corinna, the storm, we must know."

The chilling air was filled with portentous elements so befuddling to my reason. I ran from the hated place, scattering the sand in blind panic. I experienced true loneliness. Then I saw the fog parting ahead of me -- my aperture to reality. I was through the door, anxious for the security of the monotony of my existence. But halt! I had been deceived. I had not escaped. I had been led to the hated threshold of the graveyard. I was drawn into its midst by a powerful force, shadowy. I wanted to run but some phantom hovered behind me, bracing me, retaining me, inviting death. I looked around me--nothing but dull slabs of stone wearied by weather, staring into space, repulsive in their blankness. Then, a transformation. The detestable slabs became living spirits, spirits happier than myself though dead. I was dazzled by their death chants, their dance. They were like wispy breaths of air, detained. I wanted to imitate them. The spirits encircled my soul and lifted me to a point just below their realm. It was all so odd. I felt mania and depression.

A stray ray destroyed it all. Once again I saw harsh, grey slabs. My original feelings returned. I knew it was wrong to lose myself, but it seemed so onerous to resist. Is there reason to resist now?

"Reuben, get the provisions and put them on board. We'll give her a few minutes. It's all we can afford."

I can hear the voices around me but my eyes refuse to focus. For the present these people are not here. The house, it is to my right. It is not my home -- only a crude imitation. It hurts my eyes, my whole soul to stare at that small, weather-beaten abode. Sorrow echoes around it as the wind cuts the corners. A man lived inside, my father, also a crude imitation. He was lost in a past I did not know; a past where my mother, my sister, my father, and I (an infant) lived in a home on the mainland, so far away in distance and time. Yet he lived in its remoteness. He told me once, in a lucid moment, about my mother, about her death, about his irrational voyage to the island with Heather and myself, misery distorting the logical. Sometimes he would play the sailor of his far past, roaming the seas, involved in numerous adventures and the island. More often he lived in his nearer past, finding solace in his role as husband and father. I was always walking into his memories. I hated it.

"Heather is that you? Come here, tell your mother Corinna is fussing. Heather how is it you are so pretty? Come, tell me what you contrived out in the garden with your playmates. I didn't hear the sparrows today. What mischief have you been up to?"

"Father, stop. No. I am not Heather. I am Corinna."

"Are you sure you didn't do anything a bit naughty? We must maintain our honor."

"I am Corinna. Corinna. Corinna. I am Corinna. Throw away your petty memories. Corinna is here."

"I believe you Heather. It is all forgotten. Now go to your mother."

I couldn't stop him. I wanted to scream at him in horrible fury but I knew I would not be heard. He was incessant. Heather is gone. She deserted. A government boat provided her escape three years ago. She was the other part of me. Quarterly arrivals of government ships brought letters, attempting to replace her friendship, exonerate her desertion. Heather appears in memory. She is like a slowly burning candle that will eventually extinguish itself.

"Corinna, we've pleaded. You're detaining us, look out there, what a few moments could mean."

"I, I'm not sure, wait. I'll be back. There's something in the house."

The house. It frightens me. Last night I had a dream--empty. I saw a dog tied to a whalebone, jutting out of the snow. The dog cried mournfully throughout the dream. I woke up listening to its howling--so full of suffering. It reiterated and echoed my own soul. Yesterday brought blackness and blight to this house. It was my father, she killed him. He died when he heard, crying softly as if he really knew, as if he really cared. The ship brought the news. The old sailor finally told us. His face wrinkled as he tried hard to be sorrowful. He didn't care. He had no quest. It wouldn't affect him. I screamed inwardly when I heard his ugly lips pronounce Heather's death. Dead -- so final. Drab, grey walls closed in on me. The sailor continued to look sorrowful five minutes longer. He handed me a box and some letters. "From Heather," he said. I hated him for using her name so familiarly. It belonged to me. I grabbed the box, hoarded it away in a chest in my room.

"Oh, God, feel its presence? A monster of a storm. Rutger, the mizzen mast. . ."

I wanted to lock myself away in that chest, alongside her box, eternal peace. But I turned away, returning to the room full of strangers, remnants in body. I entered and saw only a man, sitting alone, rocking in the center of the room, his head held high, sad dignity. I walked over. He touched me, slightly, as if afraid. "Corinna, Heather is dead, your mother is dead, I never existed," were his last words before his hand slipped my arm and his head fell against the rocker back, his gaze and stature preserved.

I held my own memorial service, a memorial to fantasy. The strangers buried him two hours later, another grey slab.

The key to this chest, I must have it. Heather is within. The keys? It is so hard to open. The box, Heather's last words, I must know them. But. . . a small statue of a sparrow, a drawing of the room-- a lone rocking chair, a sketch of the shore, and a book of poems, her own.

The sound of the rain beating on the roof
Forces sympathetic tears as proof
That sadness has returned again
The ruptured heart must mend

Just as the rain erodes the soil
The tears loosen memories--so loyal
Memories that can not stay
Oh, God, they must be tucked away!

"My God, Corinna, we're leaving. What do you want, can't you see? Tell me, it's our lives too. Be quick. They're waiting out there. It's you last. . ."

An unrecognizable voice, is it mine?

"No, the island, that's all there is. I told my father I was Corinna, not Heather. And I am. I have to be Corinna. She couldn't find it. He never existed. Ah, The Ipswich Sparrow, her song signals the end of heavy thought. I'm sorry. No. Leave."

They went, followed by a riotous sea.

- Linda Notzelman



STEVE CROUCH: Sun and waves

FOR MISS DIDAWICK

Never having been in the right
place at the right time, the Borealis
have shimmied just constantly
outside my field of vision.
Of course, I'm not prone
to stay up at hours when such
phenomena most frequently occur,
and I reside in platitudes where
such do at spacious and vagabond
intervals. I have been known,
especially when humming a nocturne
to refrain from catching or
wishing upon a falling star.

But something I do do - on Easters
and other odd mornings of early uprising
is observe and exalt the gentle ascension
of the single star that matters
moving through the forelight into morning.

- Tim Cope

AS DROWNED MEN RISE

He was the strange one
With a surname no one
Could remember to clear
From his palate, and a given name
That sounded farther out -
Orbiting, hand-me-down,
Launched and never recovered.

A consolidation of flesh,
Bulbous of head, butt, nose,
He looked better sitting
Than standing, and when buffeted
By the straight lean kind,
As he usually was, he moved
Sideways, with crab's gait,
To a more distant seat.

If he is remembered -
And he will be so long
As drowned men rise -
It will be because his voice
Became whatever thoughts
His mind could shape,
And when he read words
He made love to them
From the deep dark caverns
Of his loneliness.

I remember him too
For his juggling feats -
All that bulk moving under
An unwieldy poem,
Making it cleave the air;
While he danced, airy with desire,
He said: "Furthermore,
If turned on its side,
Its two stanzas become
Twin mountains. It is,
You will notice, a woman,
Waiting to be tuned, played -
Or do I presume?"

- Paul Bennett

JAUNDICED EVENING

Hoyt thought to himself that it must have been close to one -- maybe even one-thirty. That evening he had picked up the kids from his mother-in-law's at seven. During the summer, they were over there all day long. David, the oldest was still not twelve years old, and his younger brother Allen could not have been much over ten. Hoyt was not certain. Perhaps next summer he would send them both to camp. Then there would be a problem with the youngest, John. But this summer they could spend every afternoon over there, as long as Skipper's mother did have a pool in her back yard.

As Hoyt walked into his own dirty kitchen, he wondered why Skipper's mother could not keep the place cleaned. Both of his parents were dead, and so he looked to Skipper's family. He felt it their duty to take care of such situations. "Goddamn Skipper," he mumbled to himself as he picked up the dirty paper napkins that lay on the kitchen floor. "It's her own damn fault this place is such a mess." He temporarily forgot where the waste basket was, and instead, threw the napkins under the sink. His wife kept the waste basket in the back closet where her mother had always had it. When Skipper moved into the house with Hoyt ten years before, she had insisted that it be placed in the closet too. Hoyt still threw papers under the sink. "That's where the damn thing's supposed to be anyway."

Hoyt turned around and opened the freezer part of the refrigerator. The yellow color that Skipper had insisted on for her kitchen appliances still hurt his eyes. The only other person he knew that had that color refrigerator was Skipper's mother. "Haven't you got any goddamn originality? Besides, that yellow makes me puke."

Hoyt mechanically reached for the ice tray. The tray was frozen to the freezer, and he gave a good yank. As the tray came free, water spilled to the floor -- the cubes were not yet fully frozen. "Shit." Hoyt threw the dish towel on top of the puddle and left the ice tray on the counter, half-filled, half-frozen. Walking to the sink, Hoyt poured the diluted whiskey down the drain, being careful to save the two half-cubes left in the bottom of his glass. He filled the glass halfway with whiskey, the rest with an already opened bottle of Canada Dry Ginger Ale which he found next to the toaster.

At a loss for excitement, Hoyt moved to the living room stereo. He crouched before the record stand and searched for something appropriate. He knew that he was looking for one record in particular, but could not remember which one. He finally sat down on the floor cross-legger and thumbed through the records one by one. He finally found his Caterina Valenti album, "Make Someone Happy."

A year before, he had heard that song on every radio station that he listened to. Valentine's Day, Father's Day, his birthday. . . every occasion he could think of he had asked Skipper for that album. She never took the hint, so he finally bought it for her birthday that February. He fumbled with the turntable until he got the record down and in place.

As the song came on, he walked to the mirror above the fireplace. He hated that mirror, but she had insisted on it. Turning away, he instead walked to the side windows. He unbuckled his pants and pulled down his shirt. He reached inside his drawers and freed his binded crotch. Rubbing his hand over his lower abdomen, he thought to himself how remarkably well preserved he was. True, he was only thirty-four, but he still prided himself in his excellent physical condition. He played tennis every Sunday with Skipper at the club, handball on Tuesdays and Thursdays during his lunch hour, and made love to Skipper every third night. He was glad for his occasional business trips that helped him vary his sex life.

He walked back to the mirror before tucking in his shirt. Putting his drink on the mantel, he stared at his own reflection for a moment. Then quickly, without thought, he unbuttoned his shirt. Stepping back to the center of the room, he put his hands on his hips. Running his hands over his torso, Hoyt threw back his head and gave a short bark of a laugh. He quickly rebuttoned and tucked in his shirt.

He sat down and listened to the album all the way through one side. He had timed his drinking to finish with the record. He regretted that Skipper was not there that evening. It was a third night.

He climbed the stairs with his hands on his thighs, taking the stairs slowly, but two at a time. Following the banister around the hall to the right, he came to a closed bedroom door. David, the oldest son, shared the room with the youngest son John. The room next to their's was Allen's. Hoyt walked to Allen's door and turned the knob carefully. As the latch clicked, Allen sat up in bed. "Who is it?"

"What are you doing up?"

"What do you want?"

Hoyt felt awkward. He did not know what he wanted. His awkwardness became hostility. He could see Allen sitting up in bed, almost leaning forward toward him. Friends thought Allen "handsome." Hoyt knew a ten year old kid could not be handsome: it was his manners they admired. "You waiting up for your mother?"

"Leave me alone." Allen could not make his words match his feelings.

"I'll give you a tip kid. . ." Hoyt began.

"Leave me alone," Allen whimpered. Hoyt thought him pathetic. His pajamas were too large. Most kids looked cute in their bedclothes. Hoyt thought Allen looked pathetic.

Hoyt was anxious to get out of the bedroom. He wanted to get the image out of his mind of Allen in those oversized pajamas, sitting upright, staring into his unseen face. "Door open or shut?" Hoyt offered.

"Shut."

Hoyt quickly trotted downstairs and returned to the living room. Going to the mirror once more, he combed his thick black hair. Grabbing his sport coat from off of the floor where it had fallen from the couch, he went out the front door, leaving the screen door ajar -- the spring was broken.



Hoyt stood on the front porch, and perused the neighborhood of fifty thousand dollar homes. The light was on across the street. He felt rather like a fool with his one hand in his pocket, the other holding a drink, but resigned himself to have a good time nonetheless. He stopped under the street light on the other side of the street, and looked toward the lighted house. He could see no activity, but walked up the brick walk to the house just the same. He tried to look through the curtains in the windows, but trying the doorknob and finding it unlocked, decided to go on in.

"Dave? . . . Char? . . . anybody home?" Receiving no answer, Hoyt stepped into the hall. He heard the television in the family room in the back of the house, and walked back to see who was still up. Just before he entered the room, one of the neighbor's kids walked out into the hall. He could not remember the name, but knew that she was Barb and Al Harris' daughter.

"Oh. . . gee Mr. McIntyre, you scared me. . . I'm baby-sitting tonight."

"Dave and. . . uh, the Rays aren't here, huh? . . . Saw the light on and thought there was a party."

"No, they're down at the Norris' party."

Hoyt wondered why he had not been invited. Even though Skipper was not there, he could still have gone. He had been to many of those parties without her, and besides, he was a relative. Hoyt looked at the girl. She was fifteen. She still had braces, but Hoyt could see that she would soon be good looking. He wondered if all that he saw was really her, or if her mother had worried her into falsies.

"Thanks," he said.

"Should I tell them you were here, Mr. McIntyre?"

"No. . . Say, uh. . . which one are you?"

"Peggy."

"Oh yeah. . . Peggy. Listen if you need some more jobs. . . you could sit at our house sometimes." Hoyt put his hand on Peggy's shoulder.

"No, I really don't think so, Mr. McIntyre. My parents really don't want me to do much more sitting. . . I mean, I've got lots of work in school this year and. . . well, you know how it is. . ."

"With Skipper away I thought I. . . well anyway. . . so long. . ."

"Bye Mr. McIntyre. I'm really sorry."

"Yeah. . ." Hoyt quickened his steps as he neared the door. He was glad to get back outside to the night air. Skipper and he had made love in the wet night grass in weather like that. "That Peggy's got a nice little ass," he thought to himself. "To bad she's one of the neighbor's kids," he laughed to himself.

He stopped beneath the streetlight again and looked down the street to the Norris' house. He really had not been back on the cocktail party circuit and though he might as well start again that night. "To hell with Skipper," he said outloud as he walked steadily down the street. He walked into a tricycle in front of the Triscaro's house. "Low-class wops shouldn't live in this place anyhow." Giving the tricycle a shove with his foot, he sent it rolling into the street.

There were no cars in front of the Norris' house, but there was noise emanating nonetheless. Hoyt reasoned that the party must have been one of those spontaneous ones, just neighbors, and no longer felt badly about not being invited. Without reservation, he walked up the house and stepped inside without knocking.

The party was of a spontaneous nature. It was to celebrate the Norris' day-old announcement of their daughter's marriage. The daughter, Nancy, was a junior in college. She had been dating steadily her new husband for several years. The neighbors had been waiting for an engagement to be announced, and were quite surprised when the wedding was announced instead. Every speculated. Everyone knew. No one said anything.

Hoyt's entrance to the party was unexpected. People were embarrassed, but still relieved to see him back in the cocktail set. His original drink still in his hand, he sought out the host and hostess. Rob Norris was talking with several women from down the street. Rob had gone to Yale, and Hoyt could barely stand to be in the same room with him. He hated Rob's overbearing, overdressed, overly personal attitudes. Amanda Norris was Skipper's sister. The two families never really got along -- Skipper's mother bought both sisters the two houses on the street. Hoyt never did want to move in, but Skipper had rationalized to him that they would never have been able to find or afford as nice a house anywhere else for a long while.

Amanda was not a bad girl in Hoyt's opinion. A little stuck up, but so was Skipper. He felt glad that he had finally cured Skipper of her false airs, but he rather liked those qualities in Amanda. The two sisters both dressed well, but Amanda somehow seemed more aloof, classier than Skipper. Hoyt always regretted that he never got to know her better. He finally spotted her talking to Nancy and her new husband.

"Hey there, Grandma, how are you?"

"Oh. . . Hoyt, why. . . well it's nice to see you. Have you met Doug yet? Doug, this is Nancy's uncle, Mr. McIntyre."

"Nice to meet you, sir."

"Yeah, you too. . . Come on Nancy, give your old uncle a big kiss. I get to kiss the bride don't I?" Hoyt wrapped his arms around his neice and gave her an affectionate kiss. Stepping back, he caressed her stomach. "Got a little something cooking in the oven, Nance?" he whispered into her ear.

"Really, Hoyt, I wish you wouldn't act that way," Amanda warned as Nancy and Doug left.

"Come on Amanda, let's be honest about the situation. . . If the girl got herself. . ."

"Hoyt, I'm warning you. We've all tried to be helpful to you; you've got no reason to act this way. We've nothing more to do with you now. None of us do. We've been more than civil with you these last months. It's hardly her duty to take care of those brats of yours, but still, Mom feels a certain responsibility. . . We don't. Leave us alone. Please."

"Amanda, I don't know what the hell you're talking about."

"As far as we're concerned, the whole thing died with Skipper. Now if you'll excuse me, I've got to check on some things in the kitchen."

Left, standing alone with his drink, Hoyt looked around the room for the bar. He thought of going after Amanda, but noticed that Rob was now watching him. Hoyt moved slowly to the porch where a Negro in a white jacket was mixing drinks at a make-shift bar. With a fresh drink, he carefully stepped down the steps onto the patio in the backyard. Nancy was sitting alone on a white porch chair. Hoyt sat down on the bar brick patio beside her. "You happy, baby?"

"Oh Uncle Hoyt, I'm sorry."

"Sorry? About what? Why you've got a great husband there. Isn't he the one that's going to law school?"

"That's not what I meant. Yes. He's the one. . . I'm sorry I didn't come home. That was the week that I. . . well that was when I found out."

"You know that doesn't matter to me. Your mother was a little upset that you weren't there, but that's only natural, baby." Hoyt pulled a cigarette out of his pocket and lit it with some matches he found on a table near Nancy's chair. After he had smoked it for a few minutes in silence, Nancy took it from his hands and took a drag herself. She gave out a loud snuffle and wiped her nose on her arm.

"Oh Uncle Hoyt, I'm so sick of all this. I wish I could just move in with you."

"Don't think your husband would like that. Think your mother would like it even less."

"Why's she so mad at you, anyway? You'd think it was your fault the way she talks."

"I sure as hell don't know. Or care." After a few more moments of silence, Hoyt picked up his drink from behind Nancy's chair. After stirring his drink, he licked his wet fingers. "She was always like that -- your mother that is. I don't know what it was. Probably damn jealous."

"D'you ever date Mom?"

"Once. Hell, she was so frigging. . . oh forget it, babe."

"No, Uncle Hoyt. What was it?"

"Ah. You're like your aunt. Yeah. She could make me talk. Made me forget those goddamn snobs," as Hoyt squirted whiskey through his front teeth. Nancy took a sip and did likewise. They both snorted with delight. "No, your mother was against me from the start. Then when Skipper and I. . . got married. . ." Hoyt waited for Nancy's reaction. He did not know whether she knew the particulars of his marriage. Nancy gave no indication either way.

"Yeah, but she's not like that with me."

"Give her a chance." Hoyt laughed. "No, she's careful about who she's a bitch to." Hoyt thought that perhaps he should stop; it was her mother he was talking about. But again she showed no reaction.

They both stood up together. Nancy took off her shoes, and the two walked out into the wet night grass. Hoyt stopped by the swing hanging from the huge oak tree. "Yeah. You look like your aunt. She used to walk out of these parties without telling me." Nancy sat in the swing. Grasping the ropes in both hands, she leaned far back to look up into the sky, faint with stars. Hoyt, standing behind, closed his hands over hers. Leaning over her, he kissed her softly on her neck. She stood and faced him. They embraced through the swing. Taking both her hands in his, Hoyt kissed them and then placed them on his chest. Then giving a quick laugh, he said, "We'd better get you inside before your mother notices that you're gone." They stood for a moment in the cool night air before walking back to the terrace.

As Nancy ran the last few feet ahead of her uncle, she called over her shoulder, "Hey Uncle Hoyt, I'm gonna have a sip of your drink." Nancy took a good gulp and then handed Hoyt the glass. The two walked to the door of the porch.

Giving her a slap on her bottom, Hoyt barked, "Get your ass inside!" Nancy laughed as she ran up the steps to the porch.

Hoyt did not walk into the house. He stood looking through the door as Nancy re-joined the party. There were too many people whom he did not want to see, too many who did not want to see him. They had all shown at the funeral, and he had received them all as friends. It made his blood boil to think of them. He took a sip from his now almost empty glass.

Hoyt walked quickly to the back gate. He could never remember how the latch worked on it, and it took him almost a full minute to get it opened. Once opened, he walked out to the newly re-surfaced driveway. He sat down on top of one of the garbage cans and took off his shoes and socks. Holding his shoes by the laces in his left hand, his drink still in his right hand, he walked slowly down the center of the smooth, almost sticky driveway toward the street. Once beyond the front of the house, he cut over to the neighboring lawn, leaving a trail where he walked in the grass, wet with a silver colored dew.

Once out to the street, he sat down on the curb and leaned against the trunk of a tree until he finished his drink. Slowly and rhythmically, he chewed in succession each of the remaining ice cubes. Aiming for the street light on the far side of the street, Hoyt threw the now completely empty glass. It had been the same glass that Skipper and he had received in a set as a wedding gift from some aunt in Ashtabula. It had been something of a miracle that it had lasted as long as it had.

Forgetting his shoes and socks on the tree lawn, Hoyt turned and sprinted back to his house, still marked by the lights burning on the first floor. He stopped abruptly before he entered the house until he remembered that it was he who had left the door ajar. He closed it firmly behind him and bolted the door with the chain. He then slowly walked around the downstairs, turning off the lights. The kitchen was still a mess.

Hoyt then returned to the hall and began to climb the stairs quickly, taking them one at a time. The florescent light in the upstairs hall illuminated the hall enough so that he had no trouble finding

his way to the master bedroom. He flicked on the light and scanned the disheveled room. Clothes and magazines lay over the floor. His bed had not been made for weeks, but Skipper's twin bed on the other side of the nightstand remained neatly made, untouched since she had died two months earlier.

Hoyt stepped to the full-length three-way-mirror that he himself had installed for Skipper when they had first moved into the house. Quickly he undressed until he stood naked. Then, lighting a cigarette, he moved quickly about the room, picking up his dirty clothes as he went. As soon as the room was cleaned, he made his own bed, pulling the bedspread over the pillow tightly. He then stepped into the bathroom where he vigorously brushed his teeth for several minutes.

Re-entering the now dimly lit room, he stood for several moments in the doorway, his hands on his hips. Then, slowly running his hands over his torso, he threw back his head and turned off the light switch with a quick jerk of his hand. Then, giving a quick bark of a laugh, he ran for the bed, pulling back the covers, burying himself as he rolled between the faded yellow-colored sheets of his wife's bed.

- John Benes

THE TOLLING OF THE BELL

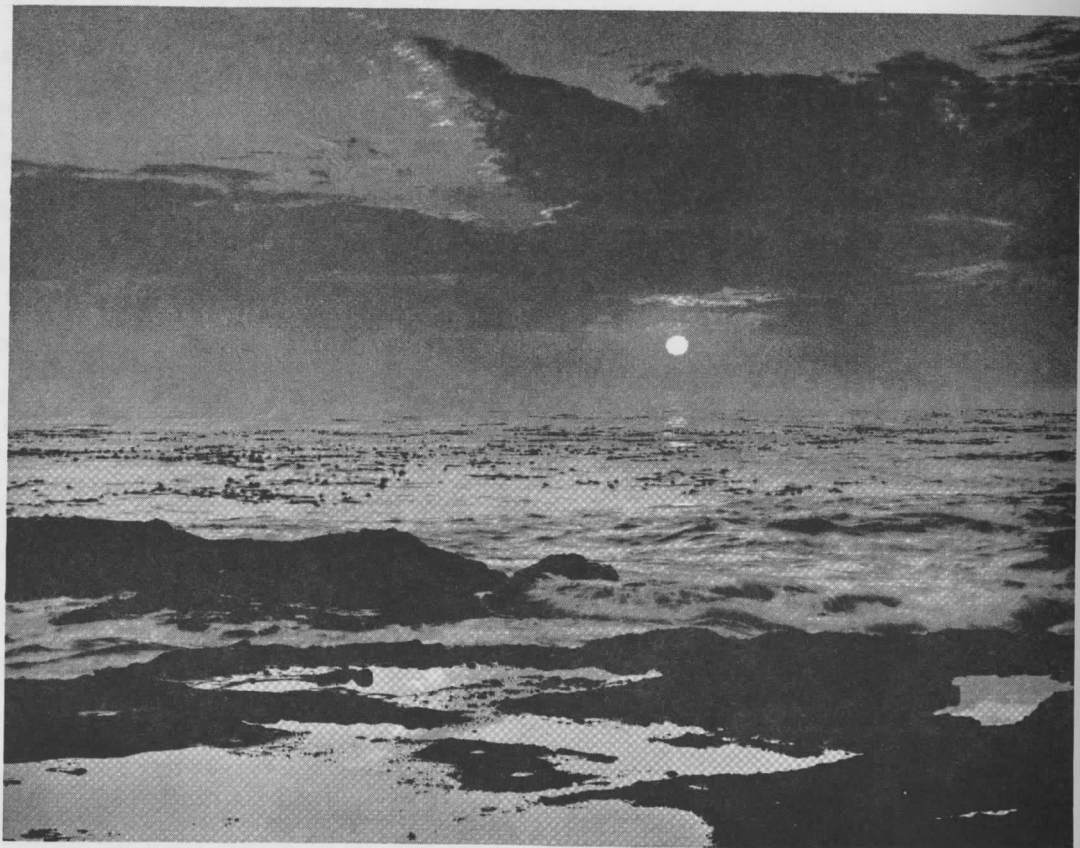
Out of the crowd, the infinite vision:
the face - the turning leaf of the invisible,
the fingerprints of God upon my temples,
the White Adam,
cursed with the fear that kills.
Twisting in early morning sleep,
searching for
a cool spot on the bed,
I breathe sun,
vomited out upon uncertain blue,
the sheets stained with the blood of flies,
here, in the place of love. . .

The tolling of the bell
makes clear to sense
all the movements of sky,
of wing against air,
the drapings of light
across concrete shoulders,
the liftings and fallings
of muscle and bone
in infinite machination
here, and in all tiny human haunts,
now,
and in each space between
the clappings
of metal against metal.

- Keith McWalter

What Exile from himself can flee?
To zones though more and more remote,
Still, still pursues, where'er I be
The blight of Life -- the Demon Thought

- Lord Byron
(Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Canto I)



WYNN BULLOCK: *Sunset, Big Sur country*