

PHOTO

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

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FOR G.S. & A.B.T.:

WHAT IS THE ANSWER ONE CANNOT SAY, BUT ASKS IT ASKS IT ANYWAY –
ANYWAY 'TIL DO OR DIE OR DID AND DONE FOR EVERYONE.
THE MIND REPEATS REPOTS REPLEATS AS IF FOR ALL ALL FOR FOR ALL –
THE QUERIES FORMULATE IN TALL TALL LINES WHICH FALL MELLIFUOUSLY
ALL UPON THE BROW WHO READS

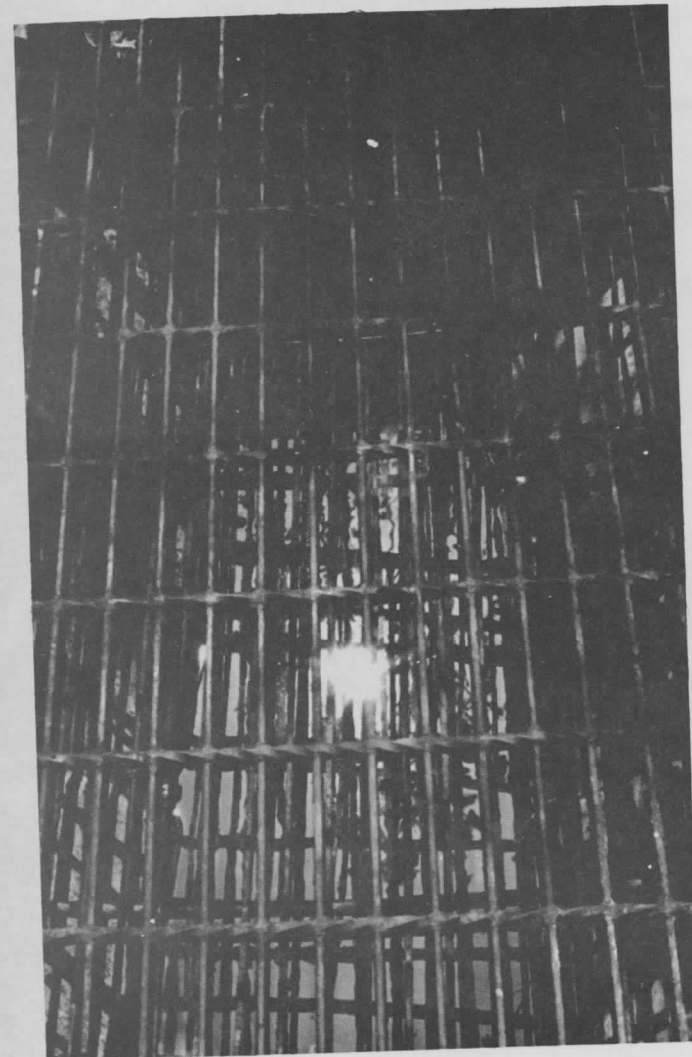
WITHOUT MUCH LUCH EACH DAY BY DAY, WITHOUT MUCH LIGHT SHED
ON THE FRAY-SCRIPT OF TRUTH OR TROTH OR TRIP THAT ONLY ENDS IN
DIPPING DIP THE QUESTION FROM THE ORANGE PIP,
OR TEA LEAVES AS WE GENTLY SIP THE WARMING BROWN FROM CUPS RENOWN
AT SMALL SALONS OF CROWDED FROWNS THAT PENETRATE THE SHARPENED MIND
AND REALIZE ITS QUITE A FIND TO QUERY WHAT THE QUESTION IS?

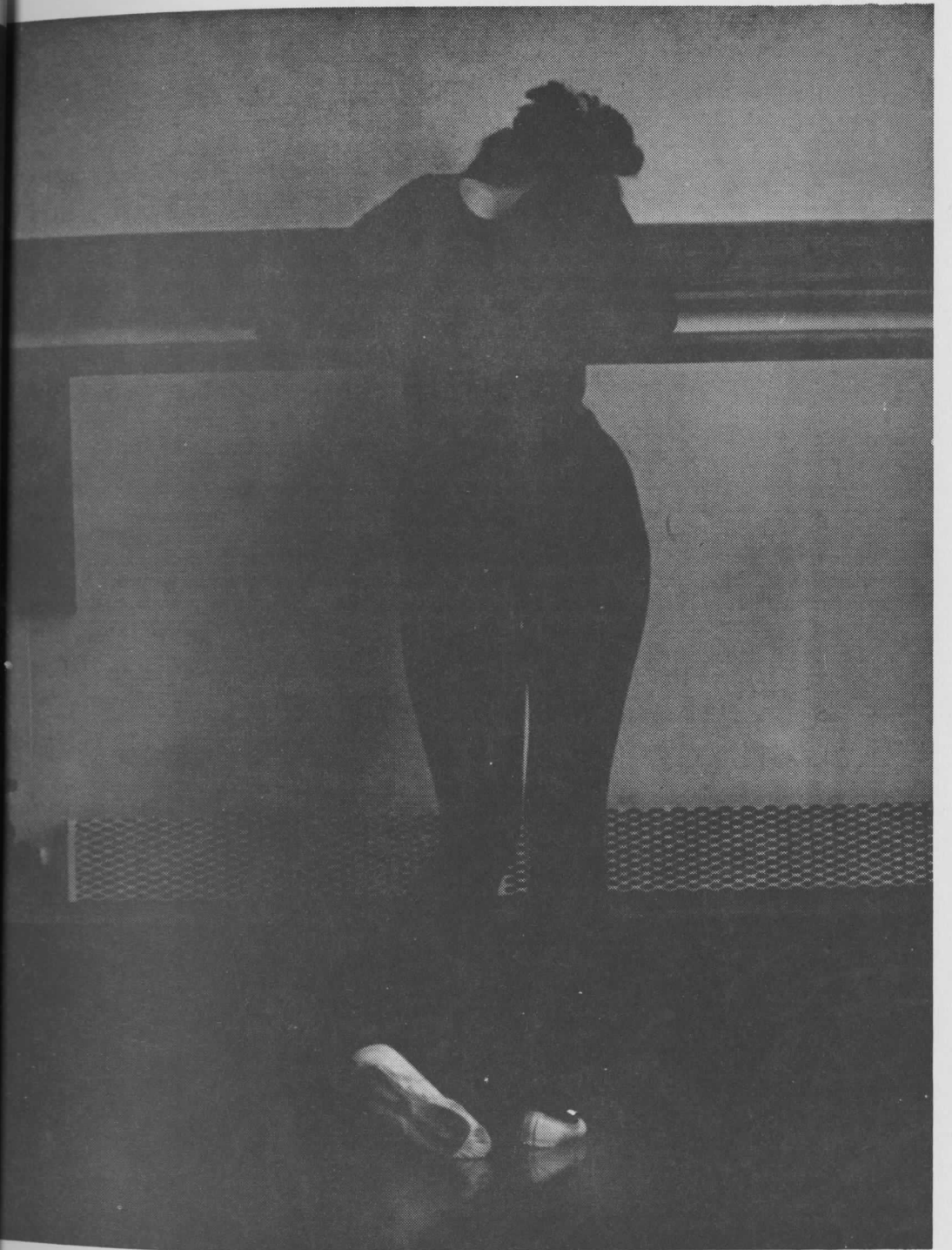
- Paul Holbrook '71

PICTURE-WRITER

I wrote it to be the sun: a globe,
surrounding, spreading rays, its glory,
syllables of fire, its shape.
I polished it till it was metered bright
and, using a pen of orange ink,
printed it neatly on yellow board
and passed it among my friends.
But poems multi-media'd in form
are never quite sincere.

- Julie Lockwood '73





YOUTH

Time steps quietly; gently
Years end as days, quickly,
They say,
Soon a man, soon the end.

They, audience of this circus
On solid ground cheer
So high a step,
Gasping.

Surrounded.
Illumination below not seen,
Seeing how far the fall, judging,
How soon the end.

The net?

Don't touch the poles, clowns,
Leave. On wide streets, thick,
Firm walks, you are balanced.

Big Shoes,
A rope is small.

- Rufus Hurst '71

TODAY I WATCHED FLIES WITHOUT WINGS

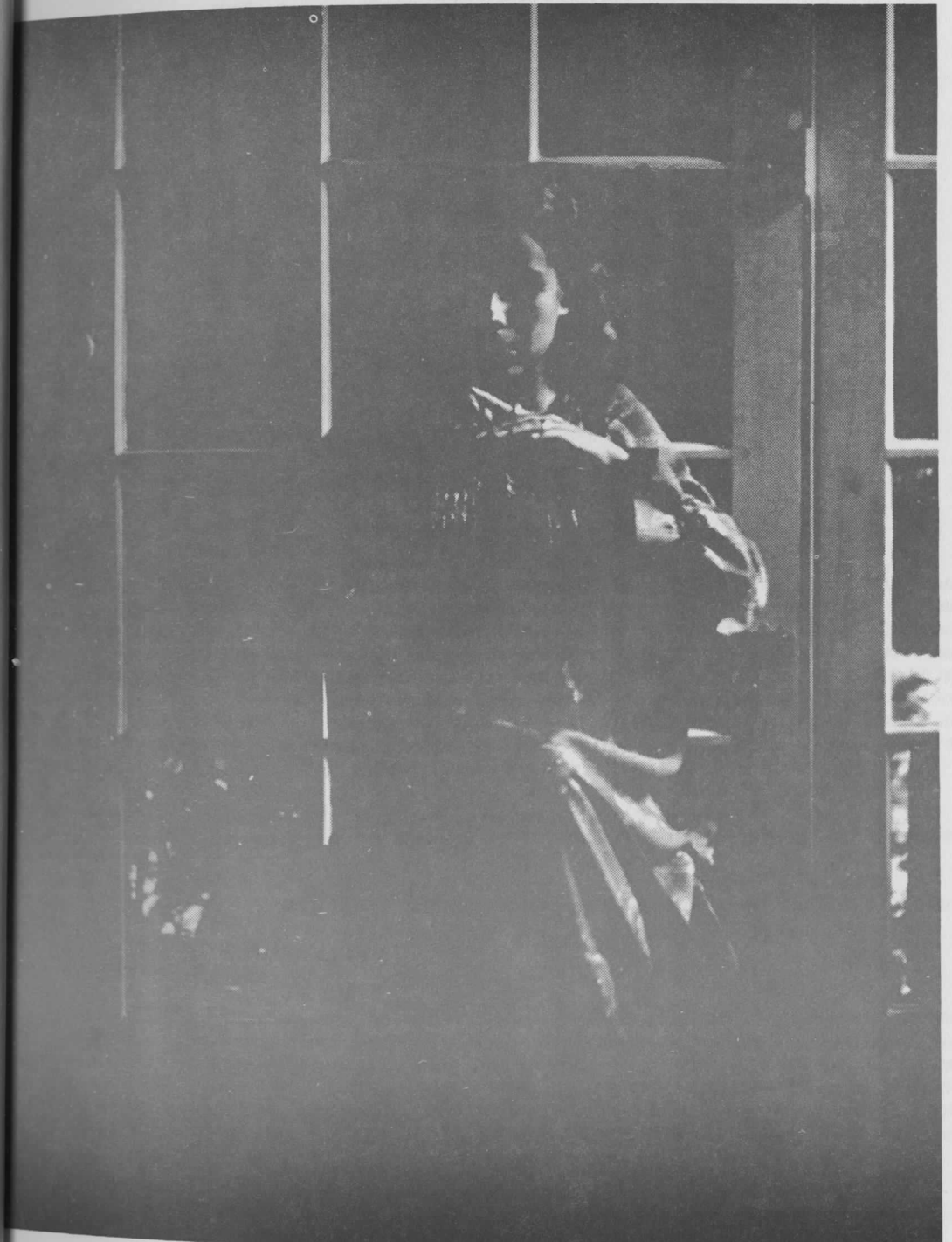
Today I saw my friend tear wings off flies
THEN SMASH their gut blood dirt on the table.
The ones that got away, the ant-like flies,
The fl a nts did not know what to do,
They were naked and embarrassed and confused.
I looked at them as they looked at me
Then slowly we turned and began to watch
My friend very closely
Today.

- Alice Merrill '71

ROOM 102

Yellow filthy wall
Just standing there alone with
Only the ceiling.

- Alice Merrill '71



THE FLICK

I watched myself tonight. . .
Running free in fadeless green
To kiss the cheeks of fairy tales,
Making love to perfection
In beds of plastic blooms.
Edison's waking genius
Finds the couch a bit too salty
For the likings of reality.

-Debby Snyder '72



The Backyard Burial

The day of the funeral it did not even rain. In the movies it always rained and everyone wore black suits and dresses and carried black umbrellas. But on that day the sun came out. I was waiting for Tony to come back from school. He was a patrol guard and had to wait on the corner of Lincoln Street and then Bay Road until four o'clock, when most of the other kids had already gone home. I went out to the backyard and sat down in the grass by The Swamp (that was our overgrown fern garden). I saw that the old flat stone was still there and the big yellow potato chip can was still by the tree. I took off the lid and looked at Frisky, still lying there in the cedar shavings, all quiet and stiff. I put the lid back on and checked the pocket of my school blazer and felt with relief that the two bumps were still there. I looked up when I heard the back door slam. Tony was running out the door. He was carrying something.

"Hey, Cammie! I found a shoebox!" he shouted. He dropped it by the yellow can.

"Good," I answered and opened the can again. I looked in, but Tony pushed my head away and looked at Frisky himself.

"Frisky'll like the box, I think," I said.

"Yeah." Tony was reaching into the potato chip can and taking out fistfuls of cedar shavings and patting them into the shoebox.

"He's really gonna be comfortable, huh?"

"Sure will."

I picked up the hard brown hamster. He wouldn't have scared Rosemary now. We used to let him out of his cage and he would dart around the kitchen and scare our housekeeper. Rosemary wouldn't scream or jump on a chair or do anything normal. She would just order us to put Frisky back into his cage, it was easier for her there. Then she'd march into the downstairs bathroom and shut the door. We knew she was scared anyways. But now Frisky didn't move or wiggle at all. He felt heavier than before. I held him in my hand and stroked his back for awhile. Then I laid him in the box and began spreading shavings over him.

"Let's make something up ourselves," I suggested.

"All right." We knelt down, bent our heads, and folded our hands. Tony began, "Repeat after me. Here we sadly lay Frisky, the beloved hamster..."

"You know, he doesn't feel the same, Tony," I said.

"Of course not."

"I mean, you know how you can still feel him even after you put him down---kinda vibrating? I can even feel that. He just doesn't."

"He's dead, dummy--he's drowned." Tony put the lid on the shoebox, untied his shoelace and began pulling out the brown lace from his shoe.

"I don't see why he drowned in his water when he never did before." Yesterday I had come back from school and was pushing bits of bread between the little bars on top of his cage when I saw one little pile touch him. He didn't move. I bent down to see if he was asleep. He usually slept in a small pile of shavings in one corner. His head was resting in the small water dish by the squeaky wheel he played at night. His mouth was still open and there were little bubbles in the water near his mouth. His eyes were shut. Then I had dropped the bread in my hand and run to Tony.

"Well, he was old, that's all." He was tying up the box and putting a knot in the string.

"But he was only about four years old."

"That's old for a hamster. That's like...I don't know. Maybe like fifty or sixty years old."

"Mom was only thirty," I remembered.

"Um--yeah," Tony sat back on his heels and stared at the shoebox, not saying anything. After awhile he yelled, "Go find a rock, will ya! A nice flat one, the kind that skips good on water."

"I've already found one," I took it from my blazer pocket. "It's a chunk broken off from Mrs. Hayes' driveway. See, it's big enough to write alot on."

"That looks good. Did you bring the fingernail polish?"

"Yes, Trisha snuck some from her mom." I unscrewed the top. "What should I write on it?"

"Let me," he grabbed the little bottle and brush and wrote in sticky pink letters on the stone:

FRISKY

1966-1970

OUR PET

"It's kind of like Blackbeard's stone," I said as we blew on the stone to make it dry. Then we pulled up some clumps of grass near Blackbeard's place. We began digging at the ground with our hands. It was too hard. Tony ran and got a big shovel. When the hole was finally large enough, we fitted the shoebox into the hole and stuffed dirt around and on top of it. We laid the stone at the head of the hump in the ground. I rubbed my dirty hands on the grass to wipe them clean and then pulled up my navy blue knee socks, trying to stretch them over my black knees. We sat back and looked.

"I wonder what will happen to him," I asked.

"He will get resurrected," answered Tony.

"What?"

"I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting," he chanted.

"Well, what is it?"

"It's what you learn later in Sunday school. It's when a person who is dead disintegrated, no, disappears and goes to heaven."

"Like Mom."

"Yeah, like Mom."

We both stood up.

"Let's say something," I said. "A prayer."

"Our Father?" Tony asked.

"Okay." And we said the prayer, each of us saying it once alone. Then we sang "For the Beauty of the Earth" since both of us knew the first verse. After that we walked around the grave a few times humming the other verses. Then we stopped, stood very straight, and sang the first verse again. We heard the clang of the pot and spoon that Rosemary called us in with but both of us didn't stop singing or even turn our heads. She couldn't see us behind the tall ferns anyway.

"Here we sadly lay Frisky, the beloved hamster."

"Down to rest to be resurrected and sent to Heaven."

"Down to rest and be resurrected and go to Heaven."

"Amen."

"Amen."

Then we crossed our hearts and I kissed the stone. Tony picked up some small rocks from beneath the bushes by the alley. I helped him press them in the dirt around the grave. Suddenly he grabbed the shovel and kicked the stone away from Blackbeard's grave. Blackbeard was a black bird that had bumped into the kitchen window and died. We saw him one morning at breakfast and later went out and took him to The Swamp, where no one could see us, and buried him. He had a stone, but we didn't think of a shoebox then.

"What are you doing?" I was scared.

"It's been a year. He must be gone." Tony said as he dug at the small mound. I realized what he was doing and helped him uncover the bird. I felt the black dirt get packed harder and harder into my fingernails as I scraped out the dirt that Tony had loosened with the shovel. All of a sudden I touched something. It was Blackbeard. He was a grey shape, all stuck with clumps of dirt. I jerked my hand from the hole.

"He's still there, Tony."

Tony looked into the hole.

"Blackbeard died before Mom, too," I said.

"Be quiet."

"It's not resurrected."

"No." He threw down the shovel.

"Does that mean Mom is..is still there?"

He glared at me. "She's up there!" He yelled and threw up his left arm, shaking it and pointing to the sky. "She's there. She's there!"

"She's not. She's not. She's still down there." I stamped my foot on the ground.

"Shut up. She is not. She is up there." He stared at the sky. Then he looked at me. "Maybe it just doesn't work for animals."

"What about Mom?" I was puzzled. "Is she in Heaven?"

"She is. But Frisky might not go."

"But God loves animals, too!" I insisted. And I thought of the picture on the Sunday school wall. There was a little girl about my age sitting in the grass holding a white bunny in her lap. Underneath, it said, "God Loves Everyone." I had held and played with Frisky in my lap, too. And he had never really done anything bad. Scaring Rosemary was our fault--we let him out of his cage. Then I looked down at Blackbeard, the grey form all splotched with black dirt.

"You're lying," I screamed at him.

He pushed me onto the ground, sat on top of me, and pinned my arms back with his knees. He hit me in the mouth. I yelled and kicked at him and he pulled my hair. Then he slammed his fist into my nose. I felt the blood rush past my mouth and down my chin. I could taste it as I yelled. I kicked harder and brought my knees hard against his arms and back. He spit on my face. I tried to spit back but the spit dribbled down my chin and onto my collar. I screamed louder.

He let me go. I lay on the ground and watched him pick up the yellow potato chip can and walk toward the house. I sat up, put the nail polish in my pocket and wiped my nose on the sleeve of my school blazer. Then I knelt over the sticky pink lettered stone until I heard him slam the back door. I didn't want him to see me cry.

FOR P.E.H.:

one glorious swan song,
which valid in its nobility
sighs a living homage
to the sensibility of death,
yet intrudes upon the
complete making of certain streams
not so much diverting their courses
as glinting the suns of time off their banks
distracting all who would pebble
the smooth clear pebbled bottom.

the ghost of all in his young years
sits among the souvenirs.

- Timothy Cope '72



"I write this poem, line by line,
In memory of Gertrude Stein."

It's the old ones that die mostly,
Mostly dying from the things that kill them.
Dying, not surviving, ending what is known
The old ones cease their being
Being unable to contend with the contentions
Of thought and hunger that make one's being.
But they are not all old ones,
Old ones dying, dying and not living,
Ceasing and not caring are the ones
That cease the living, living being
Not the being but the seeing and devouring
Of all thoughts to be devoured.
These are dying, dying aging, aging, failing,
Failing miserably are those
That cease the caring and devouring
And are not always old ones.

One wonders
Why the old ones got that way,
Ceasing only late in life living
Long while others ceased in being
Being living while the old ones
Lived life long with deeds of former days.
Deeds and days and former days and
Deeds worth doing on the former days and in them.
In them on them deeds worth doing
Deeds worth living worth surviving
Deeds they did in former days the old ones
Did and did the deeds, the deeds
Worth being worth being without ceasing.
Deeds worth the being and being accomplished
Made accomplishments worth doing without
Ceasing. How they made them old ones
Made them made to hunger while surviving
Made to hunger with a hunger that
Was living and not dying and not starving
But devouring and being living,
Made the deeds that made them old ones
Young ones not so young but old ones
So the old ones were the old ones
Not the young ones dying mostly
But the old ones dying mostly
Being mostly old ones dying and not
Young ones when they died.

Mourn today the passing of the old ones
For they knew what was known and took it with them
Ceasing its being and it being known
And the hunger of its being ceasing with them
With the old ones mourned for old ones
Mourned in morning of their ceasing
Early ceasing ending stopping
Stopping things that could once have been known.

- Michael Daugherty '71



APOGEE ANALOGY - FRW 9:

Near one o'clock the winter sun hits them straight on,
glinting no particular angle of derision.
Brightness points out who's there – Ebenezer Bland, Talbot,
Or going; men analogous in dust, glimpsing on some
wintry afternoon a brief encounter of minds.
The worth of such encounters? – illumination of distinction
between vacuity and actuality (existence in peril of
being judged not to have lived.)
As the angle widens at one fifteen, rays of resounding
laughter are reflected by the stones; Laughter understood
by coupled minds – blurred in thought.
Laughter in mockery? Ridicule? – only ecstatic esteem
at the gently blowing poppies extant in the fields
of the mind, amidst such snow chilled stones.

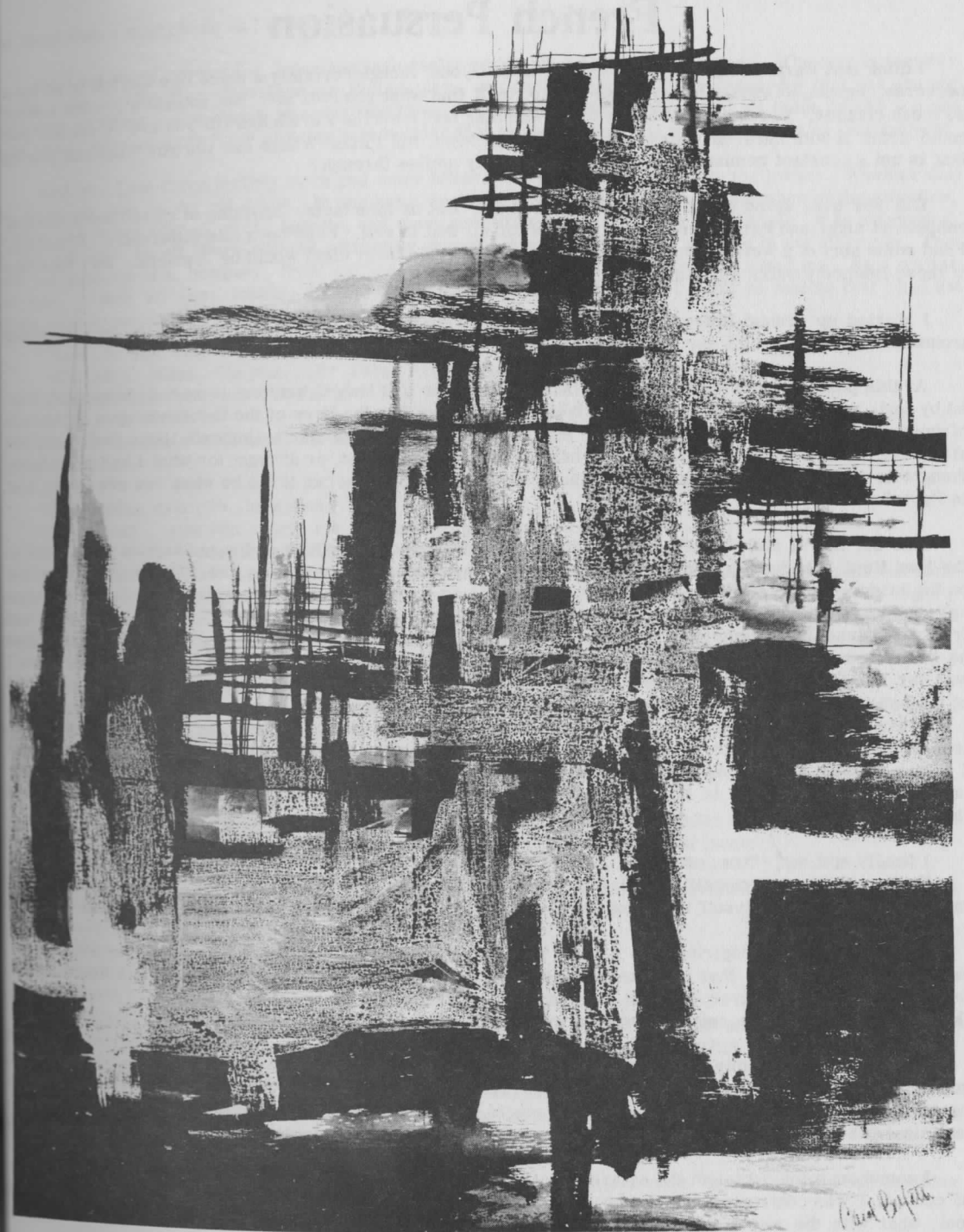
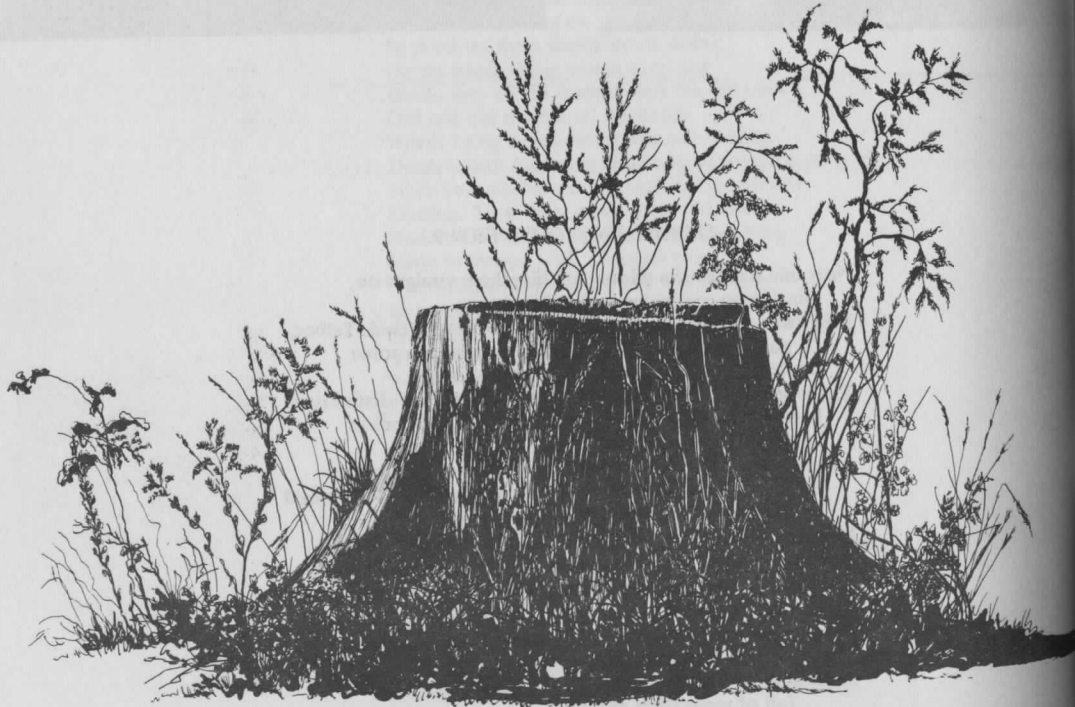
Analogous in the Sun,
Analogous as the men in dust.
Analogous in the loud sun,
full of realization and life.

- Paul Holbrook '71

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Running through the park all bumpety foot,
Singing, jumping, playing,
I spied a man with a hook for a hand,
I cried, I smiled, I laughed,
For when I saw the man at first,
The hook looked very sharp,
Coming closer though, I realized the hook
was rather blunt,
Closer still, it came to me, the hook
was really false,
I found he had two normal hands - at this
I began to laugh,
Running through the park all bumpety foot,
Singing, jumping, playing,
I spied a man with a hook for a hand,
I laughed, I smiled, I cried,
For as the man came closer still,
I saw two wooden legs.

- Austin Hartman, Jr.



French Persuasion

I think that Paris brings out the perverse in everyone, though certainly a place like Zurich is no less perverse. I mean, let us face it, anywhere you go you'll find what you look for. But somehow Zurich seems so much cleaner. You can sit for hours there watching that ice-blue Zurich Sea till you are so thirsty you could drink it with never an obscene thought in your head. But Paris! Where can you go? What can you do that is not a constant reminder of the evil that the city smiles through?

Did you ever spend much time in Paris at night? Let us face facts. Anything of significance always happens at night, and Paris seems to be a magnet for all that is evil. I had been told differently. Honestly, I had some sort of a weird thought that the worst Paris could be at night would be romantic. So I took one of those leisurely walks along the Seine.

I started up around Notre Dame. So beautiful- so chaste. But nothing happened while I was sneaking around the cathedral.

At this point, I rather wish that something had. Perhaps if it had, it would at least have been sanctioned by God- and even if He does not exist, then most certainly by the lives of the thousands upon thousands of knee-worn Catholics who helped build it. But it wasn't, and they didn't. Instead, like a fool, I walked along the Seine, actually half-thinking, half-hoping for the worst, or at least for what I had previously thought to be the worst. Romanticism was in my very blood. How can it not be when you are young and in Paris?

And so, like a fool, I walked on. I should have known that something bad would happen when I got to the Pont Neuf. I had always thought of myself as rather desperate looking. But no. There I was standing on the bridge, looking wistfully (or at least as wistfully as I could) into the very waters that Irma la Douce had thrown herself into, when a boy, a student no older than myself, approached me and asked for ten francs. I cannot quite remember which direction my shock first took me. Certainly I found it strange that he had asked for ten. Two yes. Ten no. Maybe even five I would have gladly given him, so desperate was I for human contact of any kind. But ten francs! I am sure that I must also have registered surprise at the fact that he had approached me of all people. I looked as much like a starving student as he. In fact, I am sure that he would have been as prepared to see me asking for francs as I was to see him. Regardless, my shock got the better of me, and I found myself sputtering for words. My French is adequate, but I swear to God, I could think of no word. I always pride myself in being a pretty sharp fellow who can take most situations well in hand, but I fear that no one on the Pont Neuf that night would have believed that of me.

I finally spit out, "Non, non!"

Rather ashamed of myself, I continued my trek down the Seine, considerably less pleased with myself. In fact, I kept calling myself rather obscene names- names I do not even use in reference to my mother.

So there I was, perspiring like a little pig, terribly uncomfortable. You know that terrible prickly feeling an incident like that can create, and I was a total victim of my emotions. I finally found a nice leafy spot along the river and sat down on the stone embankment to have a cigarette. I smoke like a fiend, and often find it the only solace when my emotions get so terribly excited.

My hand were visibly shaking as I tried to get the last cigarette out of the pack. I always regret getting to the bottom of another pack. Getting that last cigarette out always gives me great embarrassment, especially when I am in a crowd. There is really nothing worse than looking like a fiend going for that last cigarette- especially when you have a sneaking suspicion that you really are one.

I somehow managed to get the cigarette out of the pack. I had to tear the pack open to get at it. Then of course, I was confronted with the problem of lighting the damn thing. I am certain that I looked like a fool, what with the way I could not get it lit. I would have felt a lot better if there had been some wind-

at least then I might have had an excuse.

As I sat there recovering, I first began to really notice what Paris was all about. The city is terribly alive. In a city like Cleveland or Philadelphia, you can sit, secure in the knowledge that you are not missing anything. But Paris is a city that lives. You cannot help but think that all those people you see are either coming away from or going to something that is better than that which you have at that moment.

And so, I sat there feeling more and more bitter. They say Paris is a city for lovers. Whether that is true or not, I do not know. In any case, however, lovers certainly take advantage of the situation. Paris has more lovers, more faggots, and more prostitutes than any other city I know. It is disgusting. I did my best to sit there without attracting enough attention to lure any of them in my direction. That did not prevent me, however, from getting a good look at the activity going on around me. As a matter of fact, I was so busy looking at the obscene walkers in front of me, I failed to realize that I had sat down next to someone.

"How do you like Paris?" she asked. "Maybe I ought to ask why you don't."

"Uh, yeah. What did you . . .?" I fear I blustered.

"I asked what you thought of Paris."

She had a kind of nice face; not really pretty, but pleasant. To tell you the truth, I do not like really pretty girls.

"Is anything wrong?" she asked.

"No, no, ah . . . you just caught me . . . what was it you asked me?"

"I asked you how you liked Paris," she repeated.

"Oh, I think it's fine. A lot of fun." I do not know why I lied, but I think she saw through me for some reason. Looking back, she did seem like a nice enough girl. She was sitting on the wall cross-legged. Her blue jeans made her look like a little kid- or maybe it was her white tennis shoes. In any case, she looked very nice with her legs tucked under her like that.

"You don't sound very convincing," she said.

"Oh no, I like Paris all right, believe you me, I like Paris. It's just that I . . . uh, I haven't met a whole lot of people since I got here."

"You spend a lot of time at American Express?" she asked.

"Well, I usually go over there a couple of times a day," I answered. "Why?"

"You look like the type," she said simply.

"I do?" I really did not know what she was talking about, and frankly think she must have been confused about something. In any case, she laughed a teenaged girl's sort of laugh.

"How old are you?" I asked her. I had guessed her to be about sixteen years old, and was wondering what she was doing there alone.

"Twenty-one."

"Could have fooled me," I said.

"People tell me I look young. How old did you think I was?"

"About nineteen, I guess." I then threw my cigarette into the Seine and lit another from a fresh pack. It reminded me of a joke my seventh grade geography teacher once told. "Did you hear about the man who fell off the bridge in Paris? They said he was 'in-Seine.'" "

The girl cocked her head as she looked at me and said, "Are you shittin' me? I haven't heard that joke since I was in seventh grade."

I did not know whether to be embarrassed or not. I did think, though, that I ought not say anything more.

"How long have you been here?" she asked.
"Here in Paris?"
"Of course, stupid."
"Oh, I don't know, a couple of days. I guess."
"I assume you're staying on the Left Bank?"
"No, why, is that where most people stay?" I asked.
"Oh Christ," she said, "you're really something."

I did not know quite what she meant, but figured that there must have been something wrong with it. At least she was an American.

"Where are you from?" I asked.
"Philadelphia. Would you believe it, I'm from the Main Line!"
"Which Main Line?"
"Oh Christ!" she said laughing.

Something was terribly wrong, but I could not quite put my finger on it.

"Hey, you want to go somewhere for a drink?" she asked me.

I do not normally like to drink, nor do I usually accept offers from strange girls, but I did not know quite what to say. "Well, uh. . . I don't know. . . do you know any good, safe places?"

She laughed again and said, "Sure, let's go."

It was only after we both jumped down from the wall that I noticed what was wrong.

"My name's Tina," she said looking up to me.
"Uh. . . my. . . mine's Tim." She only came up to my waist. She was a midget, or a dwarf, or what ever the hell you're supposed to call them.
"Let's go Tim," she laughed.

I flushed red hot as we walked along. I did not know where I was going, or what I was doing. All I knew was that at that moment I was following a midget through the streets of Paris, and that my only thought was to somehow break away. I knew people were laughing at me.

It was all so perverse. I kept thinking terrible thoughts. You never think about those things unless you really come in contact with a freak. I could not get the idea of sex out of my mind. I wondered what kind of sex life a midget must have. I think that I tripped on every curb which we came to. Could midgets like her achieve a sexual climax? Could they accommodate. . . ?

"This place is o.k.," she said. "I've been here before."

I really hated to follow her in there, but I did, out of a sort of desperation. As I walked behind her I noticed for the first time what she really looked like. She did not look abnormal like your average midget. She did not have that grotesquely large head, nor did she have those ridiculously short, stumpy legs that continue down to hang over the shoes in hard little rolls of fat. She was quite attractive really. She looked like a miniature version of a full grown woman. Her legs were slim, and swelled upward to a well defined and shapely ass. Her breasts, though comparatively small, looked well-proportioned on her. She had a graceful and thin neck in place of the stubby, almost non-existent one you find on most midgets.

I felt terrible as I stared at her, and the more I stared, the harder it was for me to look away. More than anything, I wanted to get my hands onto her naked flesh, to explore every inch of her with my fingertips. Her flesh intrigued me intensely, so tight and drawn it seemed in the smallness that it covered

Even the white tennis shoes excited me. I wanted to unlace them that minute and caress the feet that were hidden from my eyes.

I found ourselves in a dark and smoky bar, in the basement of some scandalously filthy building. There were nothing but couples seated at the various tables, and though their eyes never moved in our direction, I am certain they were laughing uncontrollably to themselves when they saw us enter.

Luckily, we were seated at a corner table, away from the eyes of most of the others there. Tina sat cross-legged again. I thought it rather amazing that a chair could accommodate anyone sitting like that, midget or not. She looked up and smiled across the table at me. "I'm gonna have a Pernod," she said.

I have heard that Pernod is not particularly healthy for the brain. "I'll stick to wine, I think. Red wine."

"What are you looking at?" she asked.
"What?! Nothing. I mean. . . what are you talking about? Nothing."
"Christ," she said. "Don't ejaculate about it. If you're gonna get hyper about it, keep on staring."
"I'm not staring at anything," I said as I turned my gaze toward the surrounding bare walls.
"Don't worry," she added, "I'm used to it. It doesn't bother me anymore. As a matter of fact, I sort of get a kick out of it now."
"Out of what?"
"Shit. You really are screwed up, aren't you! But I kind of like you just the same."
"Really? What makes you think that. . . I mean, who are you to. . . hey, let's drop it, all right?"
"Anything you say, Fritz."
"Fritz? My name's Tim."

"Yeah, but you sure act like a Fritz." Once again she had me confused. What does a Fritz act like? I have never even met anyone named Fritz. I was convinced that she was disturbed somehow. Our drinks came, and Tina was excited to be able to mix her own pernod. "Last time they mixed it for me. I really gave them hell. That's half the fun of the damn stuff." Again I could not follow her.

"The wine is supposed to be very good here in France," I offered. "Of course, I don't drink very much, especially wine."

"I sort of figured you'd say that, Fritz."
At this point I was getting more and more upset. "What are you talking about?"
"You look like a teetotaler. You probably drink less than your grandmother."
"What does my grandmother have to do with it?" I asked rather loudly.
"You really are a half-ass, Fritz"
"My name is not Fritz," I yelled. I jumped out of my seat and shouted, "What does my grandmother have to do with it?"
"Sit down, you little fool," she said quietly.
"How can I? What do you mean? You don't know my grandmother. . . You couldn't even. . . Who do you think you are you fucking little midget?"
"Sit down, you bastard Fritz," she said with a smile.

"I don't have to do a damn thing," I screamed as I pounded my fist on the table between us. "I don't have to listen to a damn thing you. . ." I was breathing hard, and tears were coming to my eyes. I grabbed the edge of the table with my right hand and quickly overturned it, upsetting the glasses and my package of cigaretts. "You goddamn little. . ." As I moved toward her, I noticed that she was still sitting cross-legged on the seat, both of her hands gripping tightly the edges of the chair close to her feet.

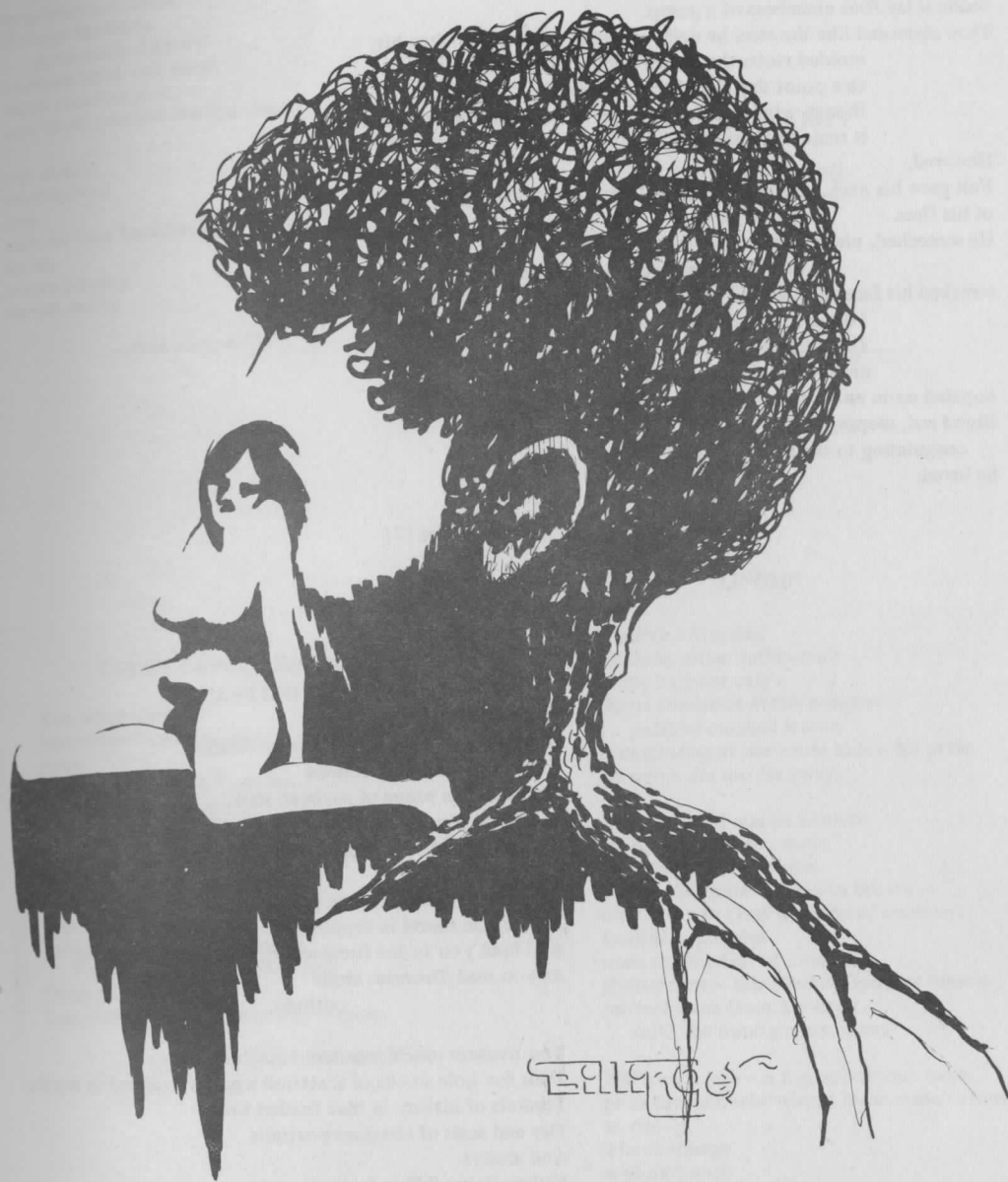
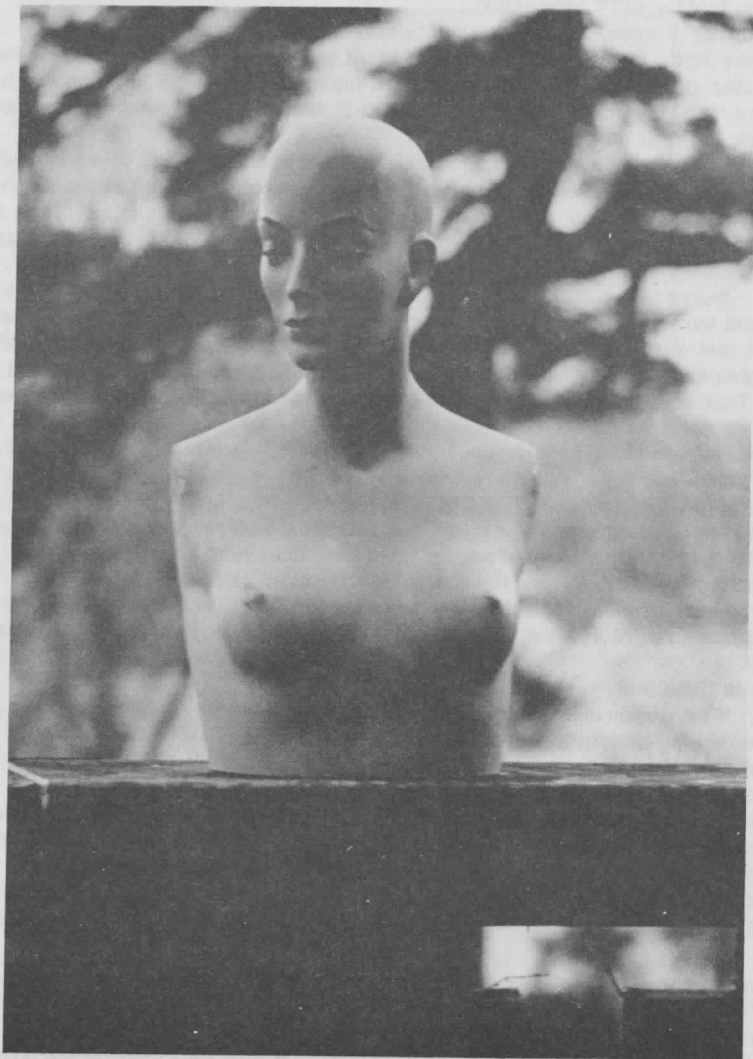
I stood before her breathing heavily. "You goddamn little. . . freak. . . you fucking midget." I moved forward until I towered above her. With a quick move, I shot my right hand to her breasts and roughly fondled the tense flesh while I screamed, "You're all alike, you goddamn freaks. You think you're so goddamn better than anyone else, and all you are is. . ." She still gripped the edges of her chair with

both hands. I tore her shirt open with a quick jerk of my hand. “. . .a goddamn perverted freak!” her chair tipped over backwards, I saw that the smile was still on her face.

I turned and saw the crowd that had gathered behind me. I reached over and grabbed my cigarette pack and what few cigarettes I could that had fallen out of the pack. I then turned and broke through the crowd. I somehow made my way to the street and ran coughing and perspiring as long as I could, until I reached a Metro entrance.

It always happens that way. It is the damned freaks that always try to destroy the little bit of decency that exists in this world. I am sorry that there cannot be more good in this evil world. Thank God there are places where I can somehow escape from the evils of Paris and the rest of the world. The perverts need not triumph if we are strong.

- John Benet



CHEROKEE ARROWSMITH

His muscled torso struck out against the wind, powerful,
inside it lay four chambers of a pump.
They clamored like the steel he daily wrought, hissing hot when hit,
molded violently against will, tempered delicately
to a point that could flay the skin it killed
though winged through space to captivate its capture
it remained unbent.

He loved.

Full grew his neck, veined, red-skinned, taut and dried by the flames
of his fires.

He screeched, piercing the sky
that held a setting sun. exploding beads of sweat
streaked his face then settled gently in a pool beneath his feet.

Torment. Triumph.

The death of an Indian

muscled torso against the soil he once owned alone
impaled upon an arrow of his own making.

Blood red, seeping dye

coagulating to the brown earth
he loved.

- R. Crozier '71

COUNT JACK PLAYING PEASANT

How well you sit your soft warm clothes,
Wooly nub on wraglen floor
And between soups of soybean stew,
You melt your wax and plant the herb
And pass good wine from hand to smile.

Grinning hedgehods make your door.
They circle round in simple beat
And bind you to the fireplace we could only dream of
As you read Thoreau; alone
outloud.

You treasure much, condemn much more,
Your fox hole smells of scattered legends wrapped in myths:
Trinkets of history in blue feather love,
Ties and seals of constant portraits
And always
Yellow flakes falling from the ceiling.
You read them fully before they hit the ground.
Then you try so hard to mend them into just one word.

- Alice Merrill '71

road runs down valley
cut by fast streams
over irrigation ditch
through landslide
green pocked revival
between scrub oak range
aspen meadow graze
past cattle pen and loading chute

owl shrieks
coyotes wail
two
each on bare horseback
ignore
horses panting
stream racing

- Fred Hoppe '71

SINGULARITY

I stumbled through
two hundred
parking lots
looking for a
volkswagon
just like
mine.

- M. J. Wallace '72

GNOME

Dimitrios Stopilas
drinking bitter coffee-mud
in the harbour cafe
Silent Dimitrios draws pungent
puffs of crushed leaves
eyes glinting at the white sails -- his pride
He never sits too far away.

Leather lizard warms himself
by Apollo's chosen shore
Wise eyes slide -- follow
round olive girls bathing in the sea --
only blink to clear the mist of memory.
Dimitrios Stopilas
nods netting fish of dreams
gliding sons -- this Mother Goddess cannot
protect them from her lover. . .
until the mind grunts home

White sails bob -- a tug on harbour ropes
pulls the man who shrugs loose muscles taut
to rise
The challenge
well-met once
defies
not yet.
Tonight Dimitrios will dance.

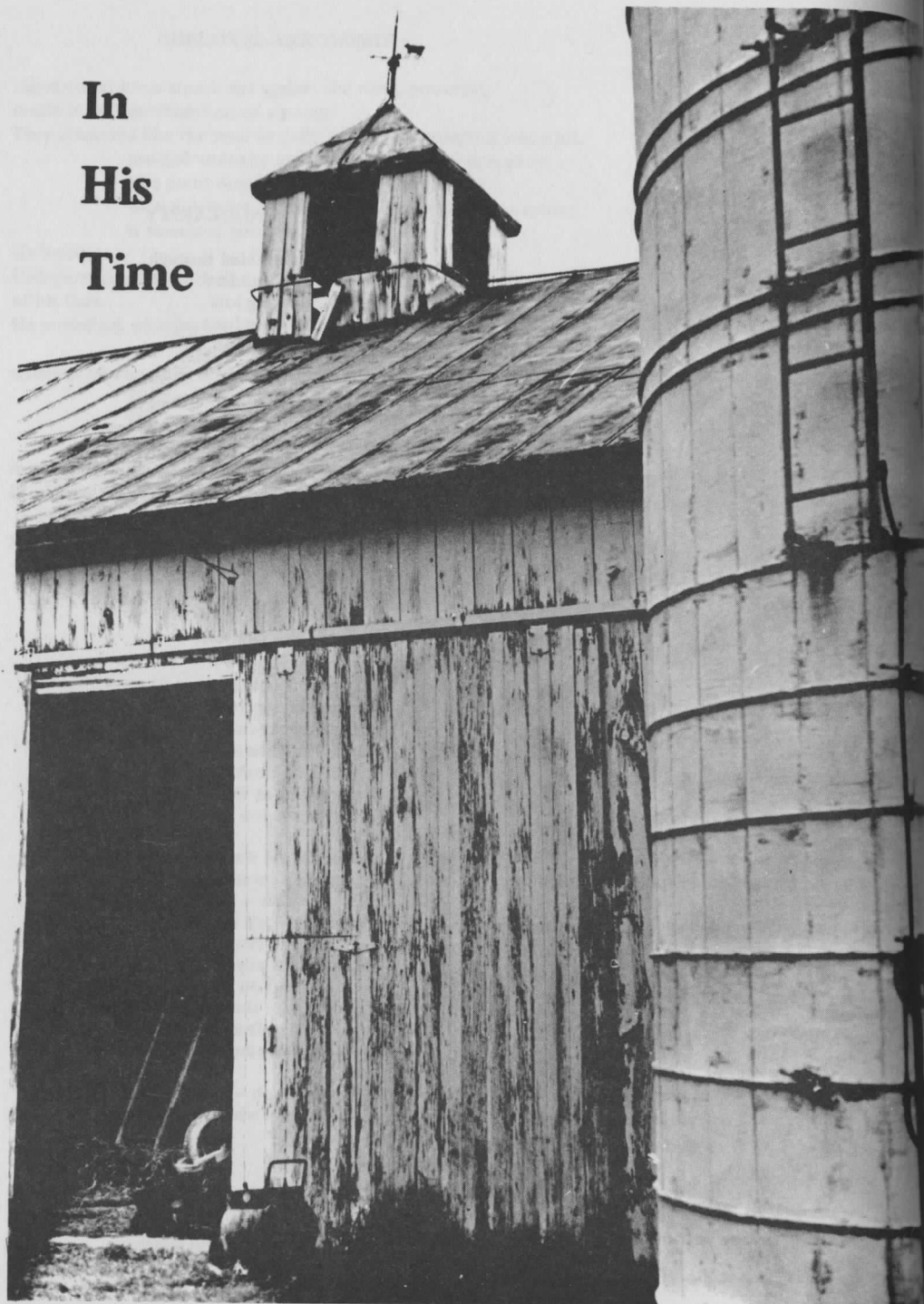
- Cary Spear '71

LOVE'S LABOUR LOST

You whirl him,
blindfolded and struggling,
more.
He has become "it" - at last!
Assured of a victory
he moves
Unaware of a need for careful treadings.
Snake eyes!
They are yours and green.
One more move. . .
Taking the sides of the bored
You bring them together and
Crush him.
You cheated - but, it was only a game.

- Tina Ostergard '72

In His Time



It was a ribald sun, laughing, joking its way slyly across the morning and late afternoon sky, and rolling down to a purple sleep in the dinnertime west.

And how one's feet ached sweetly from too much bare walking on those amazing white concrete sidewalks. There was something delectably perfect about them, so warm and hard and flat with tiny ridges on their surfaces, something so perfect that it wasn't enough to feel it only thru the soles of one's feet; I would have to lie down and feel the concreteness all along my body, cheeks and palms and elbows, breastbone and protruding ribs and at both knees and the tips of my toes. It was always a furtive tryst, at sundown, perhaps, when that sardonic sun had driven everyone else indoors. There was no doubt about it. Sidewalks were perfect.

Grampa was perfect, too. There was the same kind of concrete perfection in the sure way he ran his hand through my hair when I looked up at him as when I lay stretched out on the sidewalk in front of his house. It was warm and hard, not too little, not too much, not too long or short. He was a quiet man because he saw to the core of things, where they were darkest, and this included human beings; I always felt that I would rather stand and stare into the sun than into his ancient eyes.

He was perfect, too. But he died.

Grandma was less than perfect, but more durable. She was sentimental and cantankerous by unpredictable turns, as if she felt senility creeping up on her and sought by an occasional outburst of unprovoked indignation to scare it off a bit, and shake everything else back into place as well. Her life's tapestry, like any throw rug, was to be taken out and beaten periodically to rid it of the dust of her apprehensions.

I count time from the accident on; what went before is still quite vague and sensitive to the touch of memory, and so I count all of my childhood as having been spent in the care of my grandparents. I was still young enough at the time to treat death as a mechanical and perfectly acceptable sort of transition; it was only later when that innate wisdom was killed out of me that I came to view those days with a kind of retroactive horror. My grandparents came for me and took me home with them. I was calm and unemotional and accepted them easily. Their house had an odd smell about it, one which I've since come to recognize as peculiar to the homes of old people, but was not unlike that of my parents; my mother's lineage apparently carried with it very distinct proclivities in architecture and decor, so her mother's house had a familiar air, her cooking was easily as good, her hands as warm and comforting. It was enough.

The hands. They were the only part of her body that fully showed her age now; eyes, brow, breasts, legs kept their secrets well. But the hands were wrinkled, mottled, and large-veined as they flipped through the day's small pile of mail, envelopes still warm from the sun-bleached mailbox, sorting out bills from letters, magazines from advertisements. She paused over one small white tissue envelope and looked up from the movie listings with subdued expectation.

"One for you," she said with studied nonchalance.

"Thank you," I said. It was still warm to the touch, and I laid it next to my cereal bowl in the little square of sun from the kitchen window to keep it so. It was of a gravid, promissory thickness, swathed in onion-skin that positively looked perfumed, scrawlings of ink coily unreadable behind my name and address, asking in the morning sun.

Grandma had opened all the bills and was totalling them in her head.

"I wish your grampa could see this day," she said, the touch of sarcasm in her finding its way out.

"He never thought you'd find a girl who'd put up with you." Her eyes never lifted from the paper in her hand. I took an unusually long time to chew and swallow a spoonful of cereal.

"Indeed," I said.

"What's she like?"

"She's just a friend."

Grandma shot me a glance as she ripped open another letter. "She's a girl," she said simply.

She had me there. I excused myself and mounted the stairs to my room as casually as possible. I was almost twenty. I was embarrassed to be embarrassed at having a girlfriend at age twenty.

*

My grandfather, Franklin Lynd Osborne, struck an unconsciously statuesque pose atop the hill that occupied most of the front acre of his home and small farm. He was very tall, over six feet, and well-boned, a frame still so massive as to speak of the heavy panels of muscle that had commanded respect in his younger days. The muscle had gone a bit flaccid, the torso was just beginning to bulge a bit at the equator, but the animal respectability remained. It shone openly from his small blue sunglasses, deep-set beneath bushy brows, it was reflected in his steady gait, unaggressive but supremely confident, and mirrored again and again in a thousand small physical mannerisms and turns of torso.

He stood on the crest and looked across less than a mile of rolling Pennsylvania countryside to a valley swaddled in amber by the setting sun where, juxtaposed in effete orderliness with the surrounding woods of sycamores and maples, a housing development was creeping, lot by lot, towards his doorstep. He smiled and shook his head. For almost ten years before his retirement he had worked on just such a housing development, dash housing projects, tarring foundations, raising prefab roofbeams, and, when other work became scarce, much for him towards the end, mowing and trimming the freshly-sodded lawns. His experience had garnered him a handsome dividend from the contractor's profit-sharing program upon retirement, a reasonable pension, and a hearty distaste for neo-colonial architecture and nursery landscaping. He had families, too, that moved into these mushroom mansions, seemed rootless and programmed; always a young, bright-shirted husband who was running to his bus down the block as the construction crew arrived, always an arriving at an adjacent lot, always the vaguely beautiful wife who appeared at the mailbox a few hours later, drawing lascivious stares and comments from the workmen, always the cute, vicious children who smashed the truck windshields and jammed the tractor clutches during the night. He watched it all with a casual interest, but was cheerfully oblivious to the purpose of their lives. When he had been the age of these bright-shirted commuters, he had been working the mines, working out of the old #1 shaft over Beacon Hill, the one that snaked underground almost three miles from its only outlet, working twelve hours a day, paid by the tonnage of coal he moved, working with a gritty organic relish that still animates his speech whenever he told me of it, tales dark and warm as the mines themselves, tales by turns hilarious and harrowing, of harmless pranks pulled successfully, of harmful ones bitterly avenged, of wordless, lifelong friendships forged in darkness, of men maimed, dismembered, crushed, in the shafts on the iron rails of the shrieking, thundering coal cars, of men drowned, smothered, never found in the collapsed entrails of the earth-mother, the warmth-hoarder, life-giver and destroyer of men sent down to pluck heated stones from hell. All that he had seen and heard in those times cling to him still, like coal dust embedded under the skin of his arms and in his lungs; still the aura of that private history he had taken from him, natural as his clothing, closer than his skin.

The unseen sun threw up a final volley of amber shafts against the encroaching night. Grampa squinted upwards momentarily to gauge the complexion of the evening sky, and gave a last wary look across the valley to the newly-peopled ridge. They would come soon. They would come and want to buy up sections of his small plot of land, squeezing him out. He would hold out for awhile, forgoing the pleasure of telling them all to go to hell, waiting for the best bid. But he would sell. He had none of his old cronies' fanatical loyalty to land, to nameless tracts of earth that lent them some small sense of place and time. That was nonsense to him. His wife's security and his grandson's education came first, as they always had. That could never be too much set aside for that.

He turned abruptly and walked back down the gentle slope of the hill towards the small, white A-frame porch where I was stalking ants along one of the slabs of sidewalk. In the end, he would sell and move on. In the end, the angular, sharp-edged patterns of grass and cement and asphalt would border his own front porch and the very sidewalk he had bought wholesale and himself lain so carefully not two summers ago.

He strode slowly through the grass and smoky dusk-light. It was that moment of electric calm between day and night. I looked up at him as he passed onto the porch, where he paused and looked back down on me. A gentle clamor of pots and spoons drifted from the kitchen and Grandma's dinner played loudly at our nostrils through the screen door. Grampa gestured vaguely at the ants with a huge hand, though they were almost invisible now in the gloom.

"Watch out," he said. "They bite."

*

There was dirt under my fingernails. There was dirt, dirt, dirt under my fingernails. I scrubbed and scrubbed and the soap ran down my arms to my elbows and dripped onto the floor. An ant was crawling through the hairs of my arm and I caught him and put him in the basin and dripped soapy water on him until he was dead. There was dirt under my fingernails. I rinsed and splashed water in my face and tasted its saltiness. I took a piece of toilet paper and wiped up the spots of soap from the floor and went out.

*

Dinner was hot and rich and as intoxicating as liquor. I ate as much as I could hold and was grateful, never saying so and never really knowing why.

"Your fingernails are dirty," Grandma said.

I nodded in agreement without looking up from my corn.

"Try to do better tomorrow, son," said Grampa.

I nodded that I would. I would try. I would try so very, very hard.

*

The autumn and Marion were beautiful. In memory, they almost meld into a single entity, for, much more than emotion or event, it was a season of indiscriminating mood. This thing love: it is portable and pervasive mood. Touched, it is gone; examined, it withers. It is mood, not passion or even thought, that sustains, transports, mollifies, for thought arrests, defines, passion reduces, uproots, until the sharp edge of its source goes upwards into consciousness and then recedes. But in the place and the time, there was a detached fluidity of perception, drenched and running as it was with a vague and untestable mood of pleasure. It was often sexual, yet not without its shy kindred spiritualism.

But that intrusion of spirit only slightly weakened what drove through our bloods. There was a supreme physicality to our shared pride, yet somehow without bombast or arrogance. It was tacit and calm, a self-consciousness, a simultaneous knowledge of the secret chemistries of decay in the heaped brown leaves where she lay, at one with a clear sense of the silent passages through membrane and vesicle that quickened the chambered seas of my own heart and loins as I made love to her there. The leaves were she, and she the leaves, and I loved them both without distinction, but with a shading of perception as gradual and subtle as that of the electric blue above us both, kissing horizons with the same intensity as the zenith.

And all the cliched unities were ours. I then felt no love so small that it could circumscribe only that woman, and not the season through which I walked with her. They were indistinguishable, and that troubled me not in the least.

It did bother me later, and then I tried to wrestle that hybrid love apart with reason and with
but when it cracked and began to bleed I panicked and released it, let it heal back to its former seem-
ness and left it to grow or die of its own accord. There are no more words; each guillotines part of
it was, each syllogism festers on the scarline of that ancient ambiguity...

*

"Do you still like it here, Kevin?" my grandmother asked.

"Of course I do. What made you think that I didn't?"

"Nothing. But I know that you're anxious to get back to school this year."

"Why do you say that?"

"I can tell."

She paused.

"You know your old grandma can always tell."

Yes, I did know that.

Light draped her shoulders as she bent over the stove to sniff the stew; her head was in the shadow
the cupboards.

"I just hope you don't forget this old house completely when you go away."

It was one of her moods coming on. She would grind herself down into the most pitiable depression
I did not quickly sidetrack her. Too often I had wept in front of her when she began to speak this way
girded myself, determined not to be subverted again.

"Don't be foolish, Grandma. What's for dinner?"

It was too weak.

"Stew. Your Grampa's favorite stew. I learned half of my cooking from him, you know. He was
a cook in his time. Do you remember?"

"Of course, Grandma."

Stir, stir, stir, and the heavy smell of the floured juices splashed about in my brain like some ancient
racial memory.

"I'm glad you remember," she said very softly. "It's important that you remember, you know."

She was going. I couldn't stop her now.

"Especially your grandfather; you must remember him, more than me. He was a fine man in his time.
A wonderful man."

"I know that, Grandma..."

"If only he'd been more careful when he went..."

"Grandma," I cut her off. She relented. Did she do it deliberately? Did she know so well what
to touch to bring the tears from the eyes of the lonely, loving child still locked inside me? I looked
the window and tried very hard to think of something else. Night was falling. It had begun to rain.
seemed to remember reading somewhere that most vegetation was faintly luminescent. Out in the yard
it looked so now; running, ghostly greens.

Dinner was served and we did not speak. Grandma had no shame in these matters, no qualms in the
self-pitying remembrances, but my own pride bristled from me in almost palpable waves, and to this
she would defer.

But I was doubly vulnerable that day.

"Was it a nice letter?"

For a second I genuinely did not know what she was talking about.

"From your girlfriend," she prompted. The adolescent term brought heat to my cheeks.

"Very nice, thank you."

The mottled hands performed some arcane magic with the tossed salad.

"Tell me about her," she said, ostensibly preoccupied with a tomato.

The direct command startled me. I stammered out a breath of resignation. Marion was locked in her
illustrious season, and this was the winter of words.

"She's a pretty girl, intelligent, quiet. I'm sure you'd like her," I ripped off blandly. Of chambered
seas and chemistries...

Grandma was dismayingly enrapt.

"How did you meet her?"

"In class." True enough.

"Why do you say I'd like her so?"

I tried to escape into sarcasm.

"Because she's a perfect lady, very refined, and filthy rich."

To my dismay, she seemed to take me seriously.

"Isn't there anything wrong with her?" she smiled.

Beaten, I reverted to sincerity.

"Yes. She laughs too loud in movies." It was true, but a ridiculous little sidelight seized upon in
desperation."

Grandma levelled her teaspoon and looked me directly in the eye.

"A woman who laughs loudly is afraid of something," she said.

That was the end of the conversation.

*

Wordlessly, Grampa rose from the table wiping his mouth, and disappeared into the living room. It
was his wife's signal to move as well. She quickly and quietly cleared the table while I offered clumsy
assistance with the glasses and silverware. Water was already scalding and soapy in the sink, to which we
consigned the ruins of another meal.

"Bet I could get those fingernails clean in here," Grandma threatened, smiling. Steam rose and frosted
the cold, black squares of the window panes. Somehow immune to the heat of the water, her hands dipped
in and out quickly and surely, wiping, drying, stacking with the well-tutored ease of routine.

She finished and turned immediately to the tall, narrow bucket that stood beside the outer door of the
kitchen. I smiled knowingly and followed. She sniffed at the rim and tilted it slightly so that I could hear
the languid sloshing and smell ever so faintly but precisely the scent of slightly soured milk, the un-

drinkable excess of what Grampa had culled that morning. It would not be wasted; we had not had such a case in almost a month, and even having just eaten, I was tantalized by the thought of it.

Grandma carried the can out onto the porch and picked up a small, tightly-woven burlap bag from the wooden railing.

"You pour," she said.

She held the sack over the edge of the porch and propped its mouth wide open with her fingers, and slowly, I tilted the bucket up and carefully poured the milk, shining white even in the darkness, down the center of the bag, occasionally splashing warm, sticky droplets on her hands and wrists. A thin trickle started from the burlap, then stopped almost immediately. When it was full, she pulled the drawstring and hung it carefully from a strategically-placed nail in the porch cornice. There was a slow but steady dropping of almost clear liquid from the plump underside. In a day or so the water would drain away and leave only the white smearcase behind; rich, tangy cheese to be eaten right then, or to be molded into wedges or bricks and left to ripen further.

I watched the bag swing gently in the night air, dripping. I stood as if mesmerized for several minutes, then turned reluctantly at Grandma's soft, chiding call and followed her inside the kitchen.

Grampa was sitting in the living room reading a copy of Everybody's Poultry Magazine. I sat with my back to the blackened, empty fireplace and watched him as I toyed with the log poker. I was drunk and sleepy with food and warmth. His jaw worked steadily and his left cheek was puffed up. Occasionally he leaned over the arm of his chair and let a drop of brown fall from between his teeth and into the coffee cup. I noticed a cuspidor that he carried with him everywhere inside the house under Grandma's watchful eye. The present package of Red Man chewing tobacco protruded from his breast pocket.

He read without undue concentration, at the same time watching a tiny bug flit in and out of the cone of light cast by the reading lamp, until by chance it flew blindly into the bare, hot bulb and dropped immediately, dead.

"Icarus," he said softly, and he chuckled once, never raising his eyes from the page, and read on.

I watched him and toyed with the poker. I didn't know who Icarus was.

I was seven.

*

The morning air was icily clear and punctuated with smells of breakfast. I rose quickly from my pulpy mattress and pulled on bluejeans and a checkered flannel shirt and trotted downstairs noisily. The house was heavily charged with Grampa's presence, as it always was on Saturdays. Other mornings were thick with time and slow rousings; Saturdays were hard and sharp-edged. His high boots were on the kitchen door as I entered. He had already finished eating, and I froze for a moment when I saw him sitting on the porch, slowly and deliberately cleaning out the long barrel of the Remington .22 Magnum. It was a beautiful rifle, to me a huge one, a lever-action model, stock polished to a ceramic glow and wedged to the heavy blue of gunmetal. It was well-suited for the varmints and big birds that occasionally blighted our small crop, although its use was more a matter of restless whim on my grandfather's part than of any sense of concern over the tiny harvest that his land yielded.

The rifle's presence marked this as a rare day. My heartbeat had quickened perceptibly and I could not taste my breakfast. I bolted eggs and milk and rushed past my grandmother's protests to find Grampa on the porch. He never looked at me, but chambered a shell with a quick throw of the lever and sighted down the long barrel at the woods fringing the yard. I cringed reflexively, expecting the crash of discharge that always frightened yet thrilled me so. But a moment later he lowered the barrel

emptied the shell into his hand, pocketed it, and finally turned to me.

"You ready, boy?"

I grinned.

"Then get my boots. Quick, now."

I did so and we were off in a minute, striding through the cold, glassy air towards the woods, burrs and tall grass clawing at our legs. I walked a few steps behind Grampa, the Remington dangling like a weight from his huge right hand. The tilled acreage lay to our right, bordered by a tall stand of sycamores, and the posts of the dense forest that rolled unbroken beyond. Usually at this hour several large crows could be seen in those upper branches, contemplating the fragile rows of late summer corn below. Today, however, by some infallible natural sense, they knew of the quick violence that swung so casually from my grandfather's arm. Only empty limbs grazed the sky.

We started into the woods along a faint path that was quickly lost to carpets of Boston ivy and wild honeysuckle. There was the pungent smell of loam and fertile decay, of recent rains and hidden, anonymous blossoms, the sense of static power in the ancient maples, the postured riot of a thousand inner alchemies bound up within knotted trunks. There was a tacit fierceness to this sentient life that drove up through the soles of my feet and bristled the hair on my neck as I walked. It delighted me in an oddly perverse way.

We were far out of sight of the house now, trampling almost randomly through the ground brush. I was watching my feet as we began a slight incline when I collided with Grampa's outstretched arm. Gently, he steadied me and gestured up the hill some fifty yards to a tall, spindly elm and the ruffled outline of a huge crow perched on a blighted branch halfway up. I drew a quick breath and turned expectantly to my grandfather to watch. He loaded and cocked the Remington noiselessly, then casually turned and pressed the rifle into my arms.

"You," he whispered.

I was startled. I knew how to use the rifle and had fired it often enough before, but only at tin cans and into ponds and tree trunks. A small, nervous thrill shot through me at this sudden baptism. I gripped the shining wood and Grampa laid his hands upon my shoulders for a moment, then stepped away.

I shifted the heady, seductive weight of the stock to my right shoulder, at first just feeling the long, balanced, woodensteel line of it, not aiming. Then I rolled my eye up the long barrel to the sight and winked the sight in turn to the field of vision beyond, up the mottled trunk of the elm and along the thick limb to where the black bird sat preening itself in the inconstant sun. I sat him on top of the little ball of the barrel sight. The shell fairly hummed with potentiality in the chamber next to my ear.

I touched the clean steel fang of the trigger, nestled it firmly in the first joint of my forefinger.

"Now, boy, now. He's gettin' ready to go."

I caught my breath and began to let it out slowly, hugging the trigger now, tighter, tighter, back towards the stock.

The report was clean and pitchless in the canopy of trees, a quick stab of noise. There was a mean kick to my shoulder as the hot leaden heart of the rifle went out of it, and my own out of me.

I did not make a clean hit. The crow lurched from the limb, flapped off a few feet of wobbling flight, then collapsed like a betrayed puppet, as if only just then stricken. It fell out of sight, just over an ivy-throated knoll. Only then did I think to look beyond the target elm for a backstop, and saw that there was none; unchecked, a magnum bullet could carry well over two miles.

The rifle suddenly turned huge and ungainly in my hands, and I cradled it hastily to keep from dropping it. My arms were rubbery and trembling.

"Okay, boy," said Grampa flatly, taking it from me. I felt a hot flush of confused shame, not knowing whether it was because I had not made a clean kill, or because I had killed at all. My stomach was a knotted stone.

Grampa was expressionless. We reached the knoll and I poked around listlessly in the ground. I was vaguely grateful when we could not find the big black bird.

I was thirteen.

*

When I was six, around Easter, my father and mother bought me a tiny duckling which I carried and played with and kept warm next to the stove in our kitchen. Always the unique smell of my mother and her cooking mingled there, and I loved that room. I loved the duckling, too, and one day I sat alone holding it, feeling its warmth, I gave it a gentle squeeze, affectionately at first, and felt a thrill at it. I squeezed again, harder this time, and the bird gave a soft cry, and I felt the tiny movement of bone and blood within the thing, so frail, so curious, and there rose in me a perverse, furtive pleasure that made my heart race and made me squeeze harder still, though the bird now cried out in pain. Its living softness and warmth and its mystery held me, and I clutched it in return, harder, desperately wanting suddenly to learn its limits, to feel its intricacies, this living thing, to know. . .

The duckling's head lay motionless on my thumb, its warmth suddenly repulsive as I saw what I had done; yet, I had known what I was doing.

I began to cry and my mother came and took the bird from me and I did not see it again, and my parents did not scold me for some reason. . .

I thought about it all the way back to the house with Grampa and the shining Remington.

*

My grandfather died in my sophomore year. I received a telegram from my grandmother telling me that Grampa was seriously injured and that I was to take the next plane home. I did. I never knew what she didn't phone.

Twenty-four hours before, Grampa had taken the old Remington and walked into the woods. He was falling and Grandma's dinner-for-two was cooking when a child from one of the new houses across the street crashed into her kitchen and screamed that he had found Mr. Osborne in the woods. Grandma almost fainted, recovered, screamed back at the boy, irrationally, angrily, and phoned for an ambulance.

It was some forty-five minutes before they found him deep in the brush, his blood clashing against the bright green of the ivy. He was not dead. Apparently he had dropped the rifle and it had fallen up through his right side. I thought that it was odd that he had been carrying the rifle loaded and cocked when he had always been a careful hunter in his time. Perhaps he had been about to fire. . . The magnum bullet had destroyed most of his shoulder; his arm was attached only by shattered bone and tissue and had to be come off almost immediately in order to cauterize the ruptured vessels. He had lost pints of blood.

In the hospital, he regained consciousness for one horrible hour, and he was aware enough to tell me how they had changed his body, and his cries tore out of the center of his soul, in the voice of a man I did not know.

Grandma and I sat long into the night and watched his steady loss of energy.

I was nineteen.

I wept.

*

Grandma seemed more angry than mournful, angry at her husband, at the rifle, at death itself. She was engaged, silently, and in many small ways that only I could read, but raging still, her face set in a stern, hard mask.

I stayed for another week in the old house, listening to the creaking of morbid memory, watching to comfort her, but she never broke in front of me.

I slept in my room, in my undersized bed, hot grief still turning in me, but quieting now, watching the dawn come, and she crying in the night, unrelenting, her misery cascading down over itself, till my tears alone were left, dampening her tablecloth as mechanically, as meaninglessly, as the rain secretly spotting the sidewalks outside.

*

I finished the last of my stew in silence, avoiding Grandma's face. I did not care to talk about Marion further. I did not care to talk about anything. I waited patiently for her to finish, then helped clear the table before excusing myself abruptly and walking out the kitchen door.

There were ragged clouds racing low across the horizon, meshing with the peaks of airy spruce-needles. It was impossible to tell whether the cogs of the earth were driving those of the sky, or vice-versa, so headlong was their motion, so well-oiled were those vast gears by wind and electric fire.

The trees and shrubs still hinted their eerie luminescence, intensified by the dimming of the turbid grey canopy above. The land was moist, fetid and teeming with latent life. Maples stood dripping as if caught in a momentary tableau, as if imminently the forest would explode into rampant growth, expanding, overpowering, choking itself and the earth, decadent and fulfilled, unconscious, oblivious, and therefore invincibly powerful.

I walked slowly, hands in pockets, invigorated by the chill, indulging in the whipping of the wind that lashed at my hair and buffeted it against my cheeks. My feet sank slightly in the wet earth. I walked with narrowed eyes and turned my head at all angles, letting the wind work; I was possessed by a familiar mood of awe mixed with melancholy, a quickened, indecipherable frustration.

My time felt long, like winter, wanting to be made new. There were whole potential lives, I felt sure, waiting just around the corners of the actualities I knew, in glimpses or remembrances of street scenes, buildings, faces, in magazines or through windows, the feeling, the certainty, that I could have been, could be here, or there, or there, doing this or that or that. I was waiting for the time to change, and I didn't really know what time, or what change.

I decided that the elusive, archetypal scent that I sensed in certain moments, like this one, almost in a jolt of pain, was really memory, the oldest of memory. What it was, was a subliminal remembrance of what it had first been like to see such a sight, to smell such a smell, when I was a tiny, gaping child, waiting to whom all things were new, all consciousnesses primary. Those first impressions of the world, grown up against the blank, clean wall of virgin consciousness, were clouded over now with repetition and familiarity, but the indelible patterns that those perceptions had made when they first struck the wall were still lingering beneath, and crept through at times to gild the commonest, most random moments with that nettling aura of portentousness that chilled me whenever I sensed it because it seemed so precariously intuitive, so unknowable, because I was so keenly aware of it, yet could not begin to name it. But for now I called it memory, the great grand-memory, the mind-sire.

*

I went back to school. Marion and I became engaged. I came home for Christmas vacation and told my grandmother.

*

Something was rotting in the garage. We could smell it. It wasn't the garbage and it wasn't the grass clippings. It was distinctly animal. Something had crept into the garage to die, and now rotting, hidden away in one of the million dark crevices of the clutter. Grandma sent me in to find it. It was a grey, stuffy Sunday between Christmas and New Year's. In jeans and a sweater puffing in the musty cold, I clambered through the accumulated debris of three lifetimes, looking for death. It was a cache of all our moulded skins: my old bicycle, the remains of Grampa's small haphazardly boxed, some ancient dresses, one of which looked like a wedding gown, the old rusted Remington, old tools and parts of engines, broken chairs, paintings and photo albums, a dusty harvest of nostalgia. I was not very interested in it.

The smell had so permeated the garage that its source could not be pinpointed. I moved randomly, poking here, sniffing there. I was growing used to the odor. I shivered. The bottom of the box had deteriorated and its contents fell through to the cement floor when I lifted it. I swore and fluently. There were a number of envelopes, news clippings and photographs in the litter, and one of it looked very old. I toyed with the idea of putting it all in the trash. I picked up a small square of yellowed, brittle newsprint and perused it skeptically, wondering what importance it had had. It was a datelined Somerset, Pa. It said that the night before a car had failed to negotiate a turn on Bridge Road and had crashed head on into a bridge abutment. Two had been killed . . .

My heart froze.

I read no further, but carefully put the article back in the small pile and began to draw it all together. My hands were trembling. I carefully turned over an ancient photograph.

I reeled again. There, staring out from the blurred vignette, old enough to be a daguerreotype, was a young likeness of myself, standing by a bicycle in pantaloons drawn up to the knee. I shivered again as I looked at the face, my face; eye, cheeks, mouth, all the same. I felt sick. It was my grandfather; or could it possibly be my father? A stab of vertigo shot through me, and suddenly I felt that I had stepped in his time, marching in mirror-step to long-dead cadences, caught on a hooking helix of time that folded back on itself again and again, foreclosed beginnings juxtaposed with foregone endings, genes clawing up through my blood, his dead bones locked inside my flesh, hinging my muscle, hinging my very thought, racial memory dancing in every cell the mad, primeval dance of atoms, eternal familiarity breeding ultimate contempt in ripples out from Stonehenge, ending here in crashing waves of time. There were no differences in the endless convolutions, no altered sequences, each variation as different as blood itself.

I threw down the photograph and hurried from the garage, gasping, choking.

I never found out what caused the smell, but it gradually went away.

*

Grandma and I sat by the fire late that night and talked about many things: Marion, the wedding, the smell in the garage, money, friendship, love. She shaped the air with the aging, wizened hands, but the thoughts were young; like bright, new buds sprouting with startling incongruity from a cracked and moldering flower pot.

I realized with a shock that she was speaking to me, treating me in every way for the first time as an adult, as a peer, and that what I before had thought was creeping senility had actually been an adult's condenscencions of mind to a person whom she had perceived as a child. Now that spell had been broken in the few months I had been away - by what? A phrase in some letter? The engagement? The way I sat now, or walked, or by my having reached some magical age? I sat slightly awed, suddenly feeling childish in the company of this keen, handsome woman who before had been my grandmother, but who now seemed subtly incongruous with that title and the standard relationship--

...ors I hastily dredged up for my defense. Mother-son? She slapped it down. Neighbor-neighbor? Too polite. Friend-friend? Too patronizing, sexless. I finally gave up and felt myself gravitating towards that other stance that now seemed most natural, yet insidious, the one that somehow frightened and repulsed me: man-woman.

I closed my door securely before going to bed that night, and did not sleep naked.

Marion and I were married shortly after graduation. Grandma was my only relative in attendance.

*

My grandmother died several weeks later. I received a call from the family doctor who put the news to me as gently as he could. Grandma had had a mild case of diabetes through the last several years of her life, a fact that she had asked be kept from me since nothing could be done. The condition could be controlled with pills, and she might have lived several more years, but on the bright morning twenty-four hours before she had left her house spotless, every window jar, every vase, every article of clothing in perfect order, and had driven the twelve miles to town, stopped in a favorite dairy bar and ordered a banana split and a milk shake. She had gone into insulin shock a few hours later and, inexplicably, died the next morning, very peacefully.

I laughed, I laughed long and loud and hysterically. I don't know why.

I went back home again alone.

*

Everything was in its place. Except for a thin film of dust, the old house had never looked better. I began to close the place down. I moved all my things out of my upstairs room and checked my grandparents' bedroom for anything of value. There was nothing, of course. It was all stored elsewhere.

The kitchen was shining in the sun. Airy curtains hovered on the early summer breeze. The refrigerator was well-stocked. I shook my head and took what I could.

I threw open the garage door to clear its mustiness. Very little had changed. The Remington was there, dull even in the daylight. It would be a shame to leave it here to be thrown away. I put it with my other things. Several children from the housing development watched me from across the street.

Much of the storage was damp and mildewed; the tiny skylight in the garage roof had broken and let in rain.

I carefully moved several of the old boxes out onto the white sidewalk to dry in the afternoon sun.

- Keith McWalters '71

Time Ticking Off, Not Stopping

I remember the sea, still slumbering like a great hulking beast that is perpetually stretching, and I remember the sun-dimpled town, the sun not lighting is as a whole but in separate bright pieces. The lights were howling and rolling then, and the men in the smoky, oak panelled rooms sat on the bar stools and swore that they could feel their tombstones shaking out there in the darkness; and I remember walking down to the sea, with the fog sand-sifting over the mountain tops in finger projections and looking to see if the bellowing wind last night had blown away the fern covered cliffs. But they would always be there, just as the sun would always sink Javanese golden, in the evening sky. That was the year that mother knit a scarlet sweater with THOU SHALT NOT stitched on the bosom, and gave it to my aunt, who mother thought was raising hell. That was also the year I received an enormous pea green (I later dyed it magenta) bathing suit, with THE CIRCUMSPECT SOCIETY FOR NEW YORK SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS embelished noisily in huge red letters across its front; and two days later I distinctly remember dreaming that I had been somehow reincarnated in the shape of a Gallo wine bottle. That was the year that men walked to town in blue colored tubular trousers and mothers gave their children warm cinnamon buns and new quarters to take to the zoo, and I remember sharing the last of my moist buns with a dirty, hungry boy, and a sad shaggy lion. And that was the year that you came back.

The grey-eyed evening slowly rolled itself into the far corner of the sky, leaving in its path a wake of pink-tongued garden colors. The bare trees glistened in the flecked darkness and formed lacy patterns against the sky. It was cold, and the small child holding my hand shuddered, despite his long furry coat and woolen cap. I picked him up and carried him in my arms, telling him about a whimsical queen who kept a snow-white boar named Beelzebub, in her boudoir.

"But why didn't she keep him in the garden?" asked the child.

"Ah, well you see this queen, instead of raising flowers in her garden had planted clocks, and she was afraid that the boar, who was known to get a bit tipsy on occasion, might trample on one of her clocks. Besides, Beelzebub was perfectly content sitting in the queen's pink and chartreuse bathtub."

There was a murmur of approval from the child at the sagacity of the queen's choice in keeping Beelzebub in her boudoir. After all, he thought, the castle was probably very large and therefore the queen, wearing a long red night gown and carrying a candle, could ride Beelzebub from one end of the castle to the other while she went to kiss each one of her fourteen children goodnight.

It was growing colder and in the half darkness I listened to the steady money-dropped clink clink of my feet striking the hard surface of the flagstone square as I walked home. The child, now sleeping, his head against my shoulder, breathed softly against my cheek, his breath leaving vapor trails which slowly were swallowed by the growing darkness, when I heard a half whispered

"Rachael. Rachael. . ."

I turned and saw a bundled up figure of my height hurrying towards me. The child awoke and slid down to the pavement, grasping my hand as the figure came closer.

I recognized a round pale face and a pair of extraordinary blue eyes, which, as they always had a thin line of black mascara around the bottom lids, appeared paler than they actually were. She always put the whole of her face into those eyes. Neither of us said anything, but out of each of us came something that seemed to merge into the other. . .somehow making each of us fuller, more whole. We stood and looked at each other, and the child, growing impatient, began to shuffle his feet, making a hard scraping noise as each one of them hit the flagstones. Finally I said,

"After so long to see you here. Let's go have some coffee together and talk. I have missed you."

We walked across the square, long and grey in the evening, to a little shop, Fanny's, and sat down in

a corner. I ordered two coffees and a hot chocolate and she, a plate of gingersnaps. She had remembered I smiled, thinking of the time- I was still in high school then--when we, sitting on blue cushions listening to the rain, ate a plate of warm, just-made gingersnaps.

We talked of the changes that had happened to both of us since we last saw each other, and of the we used to do together. Holding her coffee cup in both hands, as she always did, began telling me her husband, who was a doctor at a clinic in Saint Louis. Her tongue quickly licked the lower lip, fuller than the upper, and caught a drop of coffee. She folded her hands quietly and said,

“And Rachael, you, how have you been?”

I told her about my marriage, unhappy, to a lawyer, about the two children I had had, one of whom had named after her, and about my college years, yet it seemed that while I talked I was unable to talk about myself. Perhaps it was that I had not seen her for so long, or perhaps no one is ever able to talk to another in exactness the nature of his needs, his joys, his struggles and that human speech is made of a few poor sticks of wood when we long to have the means to build a blaze.

We sat and talked for a while, each of us trying to take away with us some part of the other person, each of us feeling what the other was needing, yet unable to say or give it.

The child said that he was sleepy and I, after looking at my watch, rose to go. I asked how long she was staying in Cleveland; she said that she would be there the week, as Larry was attending lectures at University Hospitals, and we promised to meet again.

We walked out of the shop together, I giving her my telephone number and she promising to call. I watched her walk across the flagstones and waved as she turned to say good-by at the edge of the sidewalk. She turned, and the echo of her footsteps soon became, as the image of her person, swallowed in the darkness. The child, taking my hand, asked who she was.

“Ah,” I said, “she was the queen that kept the boar in her boudoir.”

“Why did she go?”

“I don't know. Perhaps-yes, she had to go home to wind the clocks in her garden.”

The child asked no more questions, and we too walked slowly home in the darkness, watching our warm breath vanish swiftly in the cold air.



- Holly Battler

