

V. 25  
No. 2

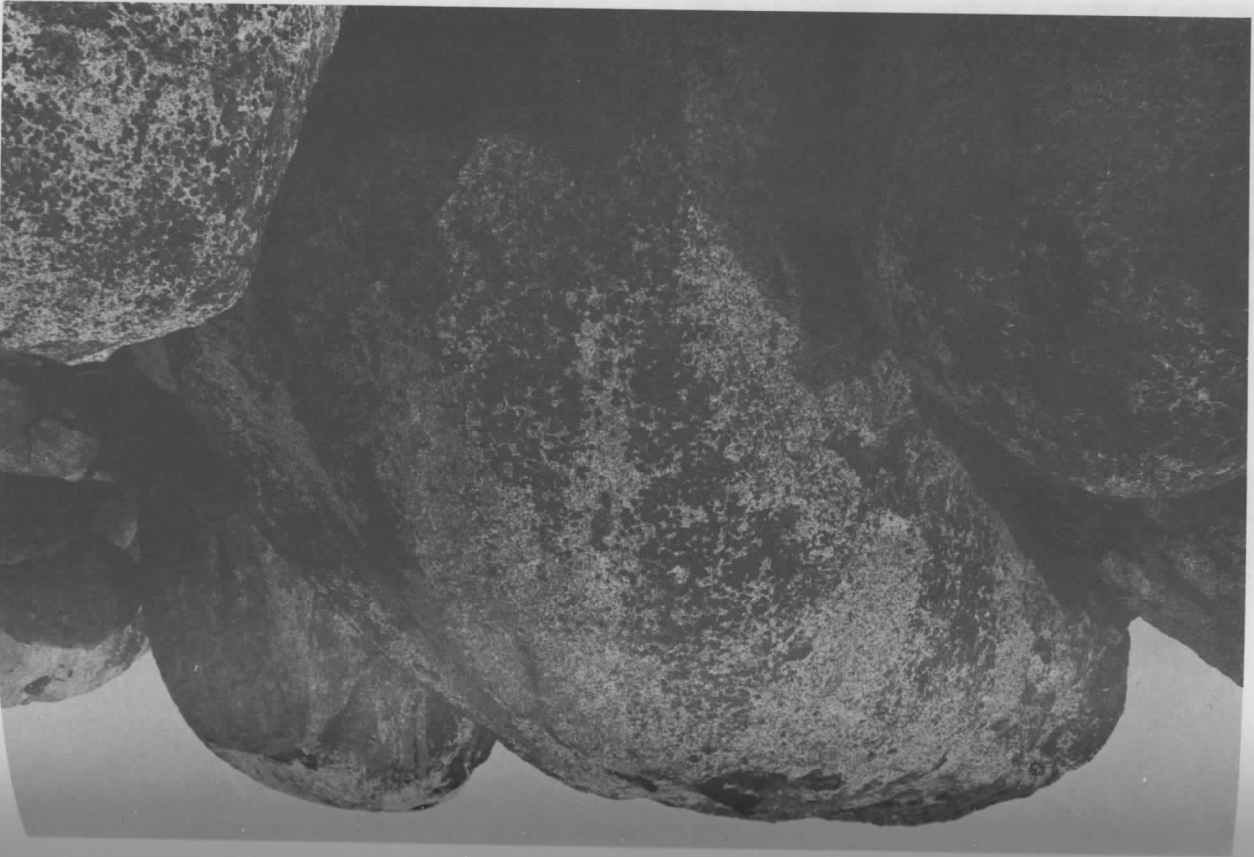
# Exile

Summer 1979 Vol. 25, No. 2  
Denison University Grandville, Ohio



"These, like all times, are good times. If we only knew what to do with them."

**Ralph Waldo Emerson**



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Untitled

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Untitled 1, 2, 3

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Pet Pigs

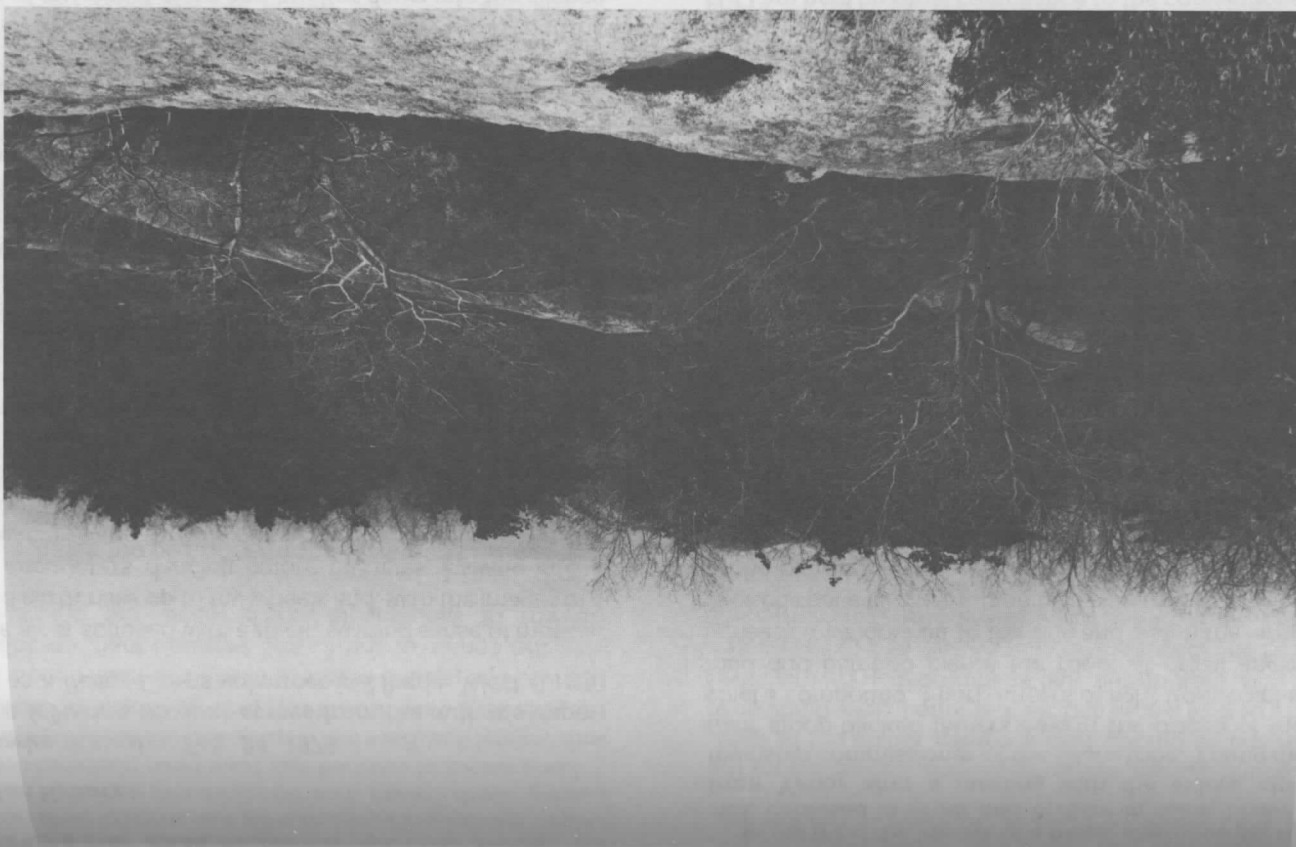
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## In the Cave

by Reid Bandeen

A figure, turning  
Sinister  
Cloaked in leathery folds  
Of dark wings  
The creature stands stiffly  
No longer a harmless, hanging rodent.  
Closed eyes  
Hide the dark threats we have placed there.  
Released  
In the sharp-toothed call.

Overhead I hear thunder. The wind picks up in the trees and the stars are obscured by the gathering clouds. As I turn down the road which leads to the small village in which I live the voices of fourteen young girls, by now well off into the forest, ring loud in my ears. It has started to rain.

The girls, fourteen of them, are swaying in C formation and waving small wooden voice carvings, while two young men attend to the drums and flute. I am joined by the men whom I left so recently sitting indoors. We stand at the edge of the open plaza and watch in silence. The girls (I am told) are early teenaged initiates of the local Sande society. Cowrie shells are strung across their ankles and waists. Each dancer wears a necklace of carved ivory or bone,

Strangely it is not the beating of drums I encounter but trusting the sound in my ear to its source. From the room. Quietly I follow, turning the same corner and cannot sit any longer and excuse myself, as if to pass water, behold and, I tell myself, just as improbable. By this time I They are orange haired and black-skinned, quite fantastic to window and as quickly turn a corner, fading out of sight. Six young women, like an apparition, appear before the

It is a breathtaking performance. I do not perceive a hint of sadness on the part of the dancers or their people. The air is charged with an energy as awesome as it is timeless. If trepidation is experienced it is not expressed, for the initiates must enter bush school with courage. Though some might not return from the bush, not a smile of fear is seen. After each dancer has had a turn the group sings on until a very old, white-haired woman enters the plaza. Her spare, naked body has been dusted with white clay. The drumming tapers off and the singing stops. The woman steps forward and calls the girls into line. She begins a soft, quiet song, turns twice on her feet, and leads the initiates out of the town.

bracelets of copper and freshly inscribed diamonds of white clay painted upon her breasts, stomach and legs. The initiates dance uncovered save for two strips of cloth run on a string which covers their buttocks and genitalia.

Long waves of combed hair have been plastered orange with vegetal dye. Bare feet slap against the hard, dry earth as the girls sing, very beautifully, their goodbyes to family and friends. The ground seems to tremble as each dancer steps into the center of the C and begins a long, complicated pattern of movements which follow the polyrhythmic drums.

## NIGHT RIDE

by Jon Krantz

Yaasarke, Kiteabo, Feb. 24, 1978

The following account comes from the author's experience as a Peace Corps volunteer in Liberia, West Africa.

The air is suffused with a thick, swirling sense of motion. The red earth rises up to my wheels and, with the images of a day's encounters dancing before my eyes, I swing into a shallow curve and throttle down. It is nearly seven. The sky approaches lavender and my senses are enthralled with the encroaching night. I've thirty minutes to totality perhaps and the promise of darkness, the clutching figures of dahoma and the miles of my passage are as descant or dreamsong.

The road dips a bit, narrows, then ascends, snakelike, up a long escarpment of gravel and clay. Deep valleys of daylight green are now dark, silent chasms. Beyond the deep-throated sound of the engine there is a living forest. Leaning back the chatter grows louder, and the grating sound of a billion unseen insects rubbing their wings fills the air. Dark forms scatter as I pass the marbles of emerald green, surely eyes without bodies, glow beyond the throw of my lamp. For a spell I ride through a cloud of moths, paper-thin wings everywhere, filling my nostrils and beard. But they are gone with the last hues of evening, and I pull the denim of my jacket close and hunker down into the silence

of my thoughts. It is night.

In my mind the images of a heady afternoon are running riot, confused in order and brilliant in color. I have come from Yebor after a meeting with the elders, chief and township commissioner of the Glaro tribe. Young men and their stoop-backed fathers swarm the piazza of the town chief's compound. Sharp fingers of light from chinks in the mud and bamboo pierce the room at crazy angles. I sit beneath a window off to the side and watch the large, dust-choked space fill with humanity. The wizened, leather faces of the old men gaze out past the black-surfaced Doubwe, whose shallow draught I have risked in wooden canoe.

After introductions, plates containing large, bitter chunks of kola are passed, then followed, by three heavy earthenware jugs of bamboo wine and sasswood bark. The rounds are made severally, and my head swims with the liquor and the heat and the distance and the promise of a large soft bed many hours away. Expressions are lost as the faces of my hosts come in and out of focus. I am slipping off when a faint, barely audible ripple of notes drifts in through the window. Hard on the wind comes a drum-beaten rhythm and I find myself stretching, with eyes closed, towards the source of these magical sounds. A reed flute, bamboo perhaps, and a drum taut with animal skin are wending their way into town.

Soft ululations of words, first whispered then sung, join chorus with the instruments and I am thrown away by a sudden pounding in my chest. My impulse is to run outside but I am held by ritual compliance to the conventions of our

gathering — no one else is rising so why should I? But the music, mysterious and enchanting, grows louder by the minute and I feel the impulse of Odysseus to run insanely after.

Six young women, like an apparition, appear before the window and as quickly turn a corner, fading out of sight.

They are orange haired and black-skinned, quite fantastic to behold and, I tell myself, just as improbable. By this time I cannot sit any longer and excuse myself, as if to pass water,

from the room. Quietly I follow, turning the same corner and trusting the sound in my ear to its source.

Strangely it is not the beating of drums I encounter but

the sputtering of my own engine. Out of gas. Pulling in the clutch I am gliding downhill, the engine dies and the trees are

at once familiar. I am passing the teak plantation and have drawn to within ten miles of home. Still moving I bend down

and switch over to reserve, let out the clutch and the machine jerks back to life. My muscles ache and my bones

hurt, I am not feeling the road and the air runs cold against my face. But the day, as if to relieve my long and lonely night,

comes back to mind.

The girls, fourteen of them, are swaying in C formation

and waving small wooden voice carvings, while two young

men attend to the drums and flute. I am joined by the men

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are early teenaged initiates of the local Sande society. Cowrie shells are strung across their ankles and waists. Each dancer wears a necklace of carved ivory or bone,

Once upon a grey sky  
When shores of men knew mankind  
And no one cared of  
Price nor reason,  
And passions flowed like  
Morning suns,  
I wept on shores of  
Skylit warning  
With fortress, tomb  
and jesus christis,  
The good man had to consecrate  
With fates chants  
Their tireless dance.

While dance I would, twelve fires  
Came, to brimstone laden mid-  
Night sun; while no one  
Cares of thrice-done  
Treason, (passions knelt  
in beggars  
Blood) I wept on shores  
Of sky-red mournings  
Buttressed walls  
Round jesus christis

by Howard Fencil

## Leningrad, December 1978

Who good men died to consecrate,  
But left their dance  
In morning skies.

by Pearlene Scott

painting crowds  
of bobbing heads attached to unknown bodies.  
sidewalk  
implanted with worn footsteps.  
crusty cracked pavements  
rolled over by hot rubber.  
signs  
with neon lights winking  
at the passers.  
smoke  
piling into the opaque sky  
seeping into red eyes.  
cluttered sounds  
crashing into each other mixing with the wind.

a small voice cries  
smearing the canvas.



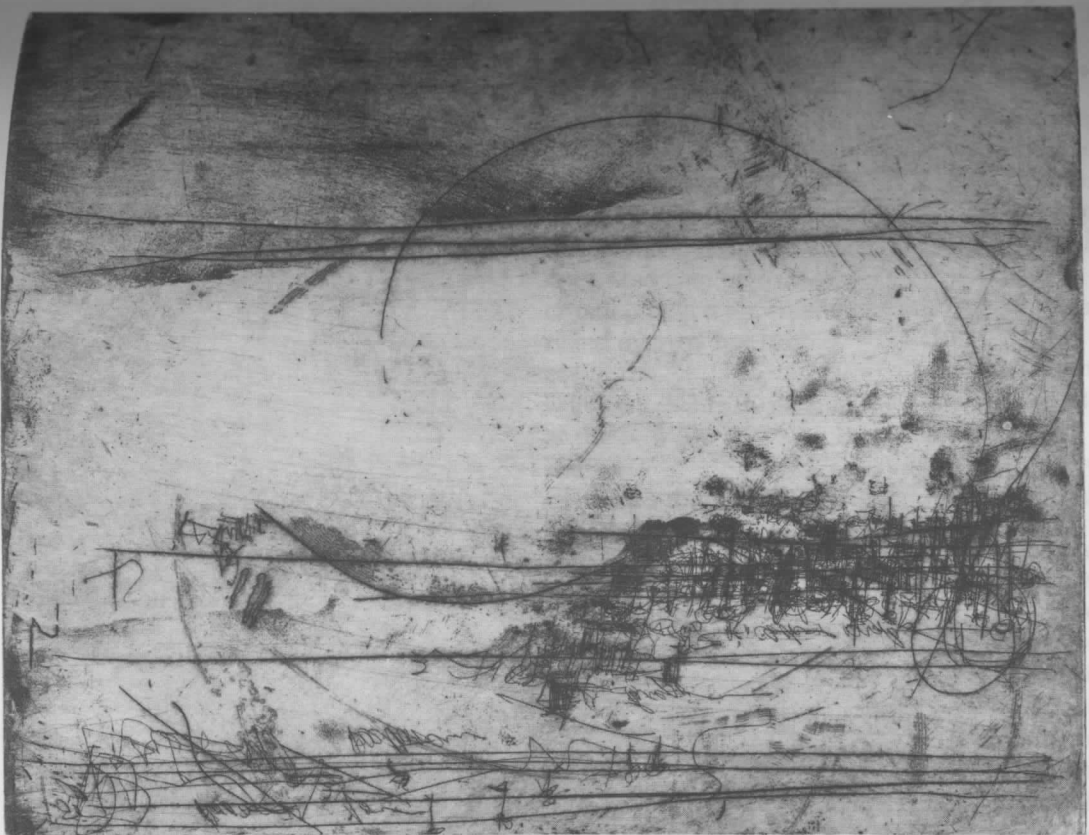
spread quickly over him at night in a delicious, self-indulgent way. Now, the situation was different; his time seemed eternal instead of something escaping like a handful of warm water. Ah yes, that was the main difference between then and now. But he had not lost his great appreciation for that wonderful state of unconsciousness. Sleep was a goal which he still strove for. Granted, he needed it differently than he needed it now.

His bones rested their fragile weight against the mattress. He felt very small underneath the sterile crispness of the sheets and the heavy wool blanket that covered him. He wanted so much to sleep again. His eyes were closed, his body relaxed. He was more than ready for sleep, but the depressing circumstances were that he had just awakened, and there was that chart which showed percentages of food consumed per meal per patient. There was probably also some dermat system; a personality analysis being formulated from this data. Breakfast was being served, and the record of whether or not he ate it meant whether the nurses would scold him or continue to tease him with their mother-like coos of sympathy. He had grown quite impatient, almost angry with those women. Why couldn't they just leave him be? He could tell by their sudden bursts of teeth as they entered the room that they didn't want to deal with him. He pressed his head further into the pillow and rocked it slowly from side to side. He was wishing he could lock the door. He was wishing so hard it nearly became a prayer, but he didn't say amen at the end of his

He was tired. He was so tired he didn't even attempt to open his eyes. He knew it was morning. The cart of breakfast trays was rolling noisily through the corridor and women were calling cheerful, child-voiced Hellos and Goodmornings somewhere along the rows of rooms. And he knew what the room looked like, so there was no practical reason to open his eyes. He lay flat on his back, watching the swirling dark and light move across his eyelids. It seemed to him a remarkable phenomenon that the human eye never stopped seeing. Even when his eyes were shut he watched the oil slick patterns guide across his field of vision. He had never noticed this before; he had simply gone to sleep at 12:45 every night. But that was during a time when sleep was something he dreamed about, wished for, during his precious spare moments of the day, and something that

Cynthia Hohn

# WAITING



on, and she'd be only a few seconds longer. He readjusted himself against the two pillows behind his back and tried to focus on something else to relieve his mind of the light. His eyes chose the highboy dresser across the room. He studied its structure, calculating how its maker had constructed it. He could see the tiny circular plugs of wood which had been used instead of nails or screws. There were two such marks near the edges of each of the six drawers. The thin, crescent-shaped handles for each drawer were brass. The middle of each handle gleamed, but the edges of the handles, which had remained untouched even after years of use, were a dull green. On top of the smooth, polished wood of the dresser was his wallet. He considered this worn slip of brown leather as much a part of his person as his left hand. It was with him every day for eighteen years and rested each night on the dresser when he put on his pajamas for bed, patiently waiting for the next morning. It was comforting to see it there, lying flat and inert on the corner of the highboy. He never carried any important demonimations in it. He wasn't sure why, and as he listened for the sound of dishes to cease, he considered this useless question.

There was a brief pause in the clattering of the dinner plates as she picked up each piece to be dried. Occasionally, a slight, high-pitched squeak filtered through the floor of the room from a dish that was almost dry and didn't need the few extra vigorous rubs of the red-checked kitchen cloth. He smiled to himself at the strange quality of the sound. But overall, the thought of her leaning against the counter,

*monologue. He'd meet Him soon enough in person. He hoped they'd get along, he had never been a "religious man", but he was a kind, personal sort of guy so the chances were pretty good. And it was rare that he experienced a true sense of hate towards his fellow beings, even though he had been indisputably wronged many a time.*

For example, last night at 1:45 precisely he had been awakened by the racket of the Irish pub directly across the street from his window, O'Laery's or O'Lowry's or something. It was closing time and an entire fleet of long-nosed, loud-mouthed, men stumbled out onto the street. They were singing something, probably obscene, and laughing between verses in slow, exaggerated wheezes. When they finally dispersed and the street was silent again, he had to lie awake by himself, probably the only person in the section who was not asleep at that hour. Then, he had to try to convince his body that the excitement was over and it was time to get back to sleep. At first he was angry that he had been awakened, but after a few hours of staring at the screen of semi-blackness in front of him, he began to enjoy the engulfing privacy of the room. He was able to think and occasionally on such nights he actually felt content. It was like eating a Thanksgiving dinner when he had slipped a few pounds underweight, which was a problem, that, unfortunately, vanished somewhere between his thirtieth and fortieth birthdays.

During these times he was able to think about his past in a sort of detached, analytical manner. It was as if he were

A hissing sound interrupted the smooth blankness of his mind. As it grew louder he identified the noise. It was the sound of rushing water moving through the pipes between the bedroom walls. It reassured him that she'd be up shortly. She was leaning against the aqua Formica countertop which bordered the sink. The kitchen was below the bedroom so he could practically feel her every movement through the thinness of the plaster, paint and wood that separated them. He lay beneath the dark violet bedspread like a horizontal cadet at attention. The overhead light was shining directly into his eyes; it was painful after such a long day. The light seemed to shoot through his eyes and pierce straight through his head until it hit the far side of his skull with its frozen intensity. But, he always waited for her with the light

waited.

He began practicing his muscle relaxing exercise, and 85 percent effective method devised by Dr. Markis as a definite cure for insomnia. Toes relax, feet relax, feel heavy; ankles, calves relax, feel heavy against the mattress; knees, thighs relax, heavy, sinking deep into the bed. A calm, powerful voice within his head shouted the commands. When he reached his shoulders, his entire body jerked. It was an internal sort of slipping, falling sensation, nothing that could actually be perceived by a doctor or nurse. Simultaneously frightening, exhilarating and relieving, he let this feeling slice through his concentration. Finally, there was nothing and he

watching another man make his way awkwardly through the exact experiences he had already been through. This sort of thinking was something he had begun looking forward to. It was much more exciting than reading or watching television. But twice the nurses had interrupted it, which was a real show of insensitivity. Since they were trained and paid to be sensitive, one would tend to believe they'd have a bit more perception than a drunk Irishman.

Another cart was pushed past his door, the trays rattling with an irritating loudness. He recognized the heavy-heeled vibrations that accompanied the echoed rolling of the aluminum cart. Within ten minutes it would stop in front of his door. His eyes were still closed, and he thought he might just keep them closed when the stuffed uniform invaded. He wanted to know what she would do. He'd love to hear her scream. If he stayed completely still and stiff when she went to shake his shoulders, her fat hands would slowly stop the morning shaking process, and that's when she'd scream. Thus, there wasn't any reason for him to open his eyes; in fact it was much more beneficial to keep them shut. He'd be able to hear what the old bag sounded like when she screamed, or he might be passed by for breakfast (drawback: demerits), or he might actually slip into another episode of his past. Any one of these would be fine.

The thudding of the heels pounded out their monotonous rhythm as they entered the room next door to his — six or seven minutes, he thought, as he lay staring at the backs of his eyelids, waiting. The digital clock on the nightstand



longer. But she kept firing away, and his wife would be up any moment. He had been waiting so long now, and this white blur was not going to interfere. He was going to have to ask her politely, yet firmly, to leave the room. They could go over these trivialities some other time. He raised his hand from between the sheets and waved its flat palm at the loud, undefined space of whiteness that seemed to hover over him. The noise stopped and he told her in a respectful manner that he was waiting for his wife. The blur was still; no voice came from it. The poor old woman, he thought sadly, maybe she was going deaf.

She just stood there, huge, looking down at him. But, after a while her voice came again, this time a quiet, secretive sort of tone. She was saying she understood, but that a grown man, like himself . . .

Yes, he agreed with a nod, he was a grown man. . . . should be able to remember that Mrs. LaRosa had passed away twenty-one years ago.

Twenty-one years ago, he thought, that was a very long time to live alone. He turned this statement over and over in his mind. He figured it must be extremely difficult to deal with such a loss, but he was much too tired to ponder such thoughts, and it was time for his Farina.

*scrubbing away at the few extra drops of water on the silverware and dishes worried him. It was too much work for a woman her age to keep up with all her chores. Yet, she wouldn't hear of him spending money on a dishwasher or sharing her work. It was her job.*

His body was finally relaxing slowly, as he listened to the sporadic squeaks. The light seemed to grow less intense, and his head appreciated the lessening tension. The highboy stood solemnly straight, almost touching the edge of the dark gold curtains which he had ceremoniously drawn just after he brushed his teeth. The frosted glass encasement of the overhead light appeared strangely ominous from its central position on the ceiling. He blinked at it, trying to focus through the tired dryness of his eyes. It was almost as if it were a prop in some Bogart movie. The air was thick with smoke, and the one light in the room hung at a slight angle. The set was quiet. Soon Bogart himself would pass underneath the light and the lisped monologue between Bogart, and the woman in the gray dress would begin. She'd never actually speak; rather she'd be staring across the room, her long dark legs crossed tightly against each other until she rose from the thin wooden chair and left the room. Bogart, becoming involved in the emotional intensity of the scene, would forget his cue and never turn to watch her walk off the set until it was too late and the cameras had already stopped rolling.

The staccato tick, tick, tick, tick of the black and silver alarm clock his wife had given him last Christmas shot the air

bed. He thought it strange that he was so tired this morning. His body felt so weak he didn't know if he could actually make it through the entire fourteen hours before he could sleep again. His muscles were more relaxed than he had ever thought humanly possible. For a moment he was afraid if they became any more relaxed they might dissolve into liquid. He was amused by the creativity of this idea. But, his thoughts were interrupted by a soft thumping sound. It confused him until he recognized that it was simply the rhythmic drips of the rust and chlorine stained sink which had broken the stillness of the room and his concentration. As he focused on this sound, he became aware that it was accompanied by familiar trodding footsteps. Nurse Ryan and her famous white shoes entered his room. She carried a aluminum tray of Farina and a glass of a dark, syrupy juice. The glass jiggled spastically against the circular depression in the tray which had been created especially for it. He could not comprehend why she was in his room. It wasn't time to get up. He was waiting for his wife and his feet were still cold. But her huge voice boomed anyway: "Good morning, Mr. LaRosa, and how are we?" At this cue his eyes forced themselves open automatically and his lips quickly formed a smile. Then he began nodding in answer to her questions. First nod, he was feeling just fine. Second nod, he loved Farina and milk. Third and fourth, yes, prune juice was a great way to start the morning. Fifth, sixth and seventh — his neck muscles were becoming tense and tired and he knew this whole act would be impossible to keep up much

with a sense of urgency. It teased him in an irritating way since his eyes couldn't focus on its shiny dark face. Finally, the black shade of his eyelids started slipping downwards until only a thin, wavering slit of light was left to represent the bedroom. His feet were cold. The lump they created in the bedspread wiggled slowly back and forth, then side to side, as he rubbed them carefully against each other. It was like rubbing two pieces of paper together, smooth and cold. The only thing he was accomplishing was becoming more acutely aware of how icy his feet were and how exhausted his body was. He could feel his entire body growing limp with the physical exertion of trying to warm his feet. He decide the amount of energy he was using was ridiculous and rolled over, giving in to the dent in the middle of the mattress. He felt for his wife's body, whose feet were hopefully warmer than his own. First he reached out with his arms, then his legs and numb feet. Then, with a sudden panic of new energy his swollen eyelids popped open, exposing the delicate reddening veins against their glassy, white background. He sat up straight-backed, hurriedly throwing back the soft semi-warmth of the covers. For a second he thought he heard the faint, familiar squeaking of dishes being dried, but the over-sympathetic coos from next door penetrated his room and drowned any other sound.

He struggled to raise his body higher against the thin Styrofoam pillow. He was so tired from waiting up, his body seemed to lack any strength. He tried to slide his body close to the left side of the mattress to make it easier to get out of

## Bleach

My mother doing laundry; washing  
and the clothesline  
strung across the yard.  
My face hung linen  
on the bed or  
on the white rope.  
Th breeze drying me  
my arms aching  
and I dangle  
a marionette bleached,  
stuck with clothes pins;  
my skin palely bruising.  
The metal hinges coat me  
rust and shed  
my vein wrappers  
but I am dry.

## Sweating eyes

My black troubles of greed  
make me see  
a sticky patina  
on the clay tablets of Moses  
sweating in the sun.  
I feel fire  
from the burning bush  
singe my face until  
I too sweat.  
In this heat  
I steep my pupils,  
squeeze them out,  
and my troubles of greed  
are no longer in my eyes.

by Lisa Minacci



mummy. Look like you're in traction. Are you sure you're all right? This certainly is a nice car. Aren't you the head of the sanitation department in this area? Is that why you can afford a lime colored Mercedes with a red interior? And I really like this sun roof. You won't buy a car unless it has a sun roof. That's an extremely important feature. Yes, it sure is running well, isn't it? Sounds beautiful. This car purrs. I didn't even have to turn around when I was on the road. I knew it was you. I could tell by the varoom of the engine. That's my father coming, I said to myself. Sounds like a jet. Looks like a spaceship. And my father's the pilot. A Mercedes in lime with a red interior. A gorgeous machine. Well, thanks for picking me up. I just played golf and am now going to get a milk shake. What's that you're doing? Squeezing an orange fuzzy ball. That's a paddle ball, isn't it? Building up that forearm of yours, eh? Good for the tennis, good for the squash, racquet ball, paddle ball. You sure are a racquet man, aren't you? It all started with your father and his championship handball. They're all good games, I admit. But I like golf. I'm hooked on golf. George, you know who George is, don't you? My brother. Your son. Good guy, George. Dad, why do you keep squeezing that damn thing? Captain Queeg. Hell of a man, Captain Queeg, Humphrey Bogart. So how many miles do you have on this baby? Fifty thousand. You're kidding? You haven't even had it for a year. I guess you really like driving. I know I would if I had a car like this. What's that I hear? Sounds like ice jingling in a glass. Why, it is ice jingling in a glass. Smells like scotch. You drink Dewars,

Yea, I'm going down to the Ice Cream Store. I want a milk shake. I want a strawberry milk shake. They taste good after a game of golf. Would you give me a ride? Thanks, dad. I can see you came from the club too. You've got those chalkcolored tennis shorts on. I hope you remembered to pull up that fly. You look pretty funny playing tennis when your fly is down. Mom doesn't like that. She laughs and ridicules you for it. Anyone would. Yes, and I can see you're hot and sweaty from the game. Your glasses are fogged up. I hope you can keep your eye and mind on the road. I never feel safe driving with you. How do your knees feel? How's your back, elbows, wrists, ankles, neck, knuckles? You look pretty funny, do you know that? You've got wrist braces, knee braces, ankle braces, elbow braces. You look like a

by A. Page Spiegel

## Father



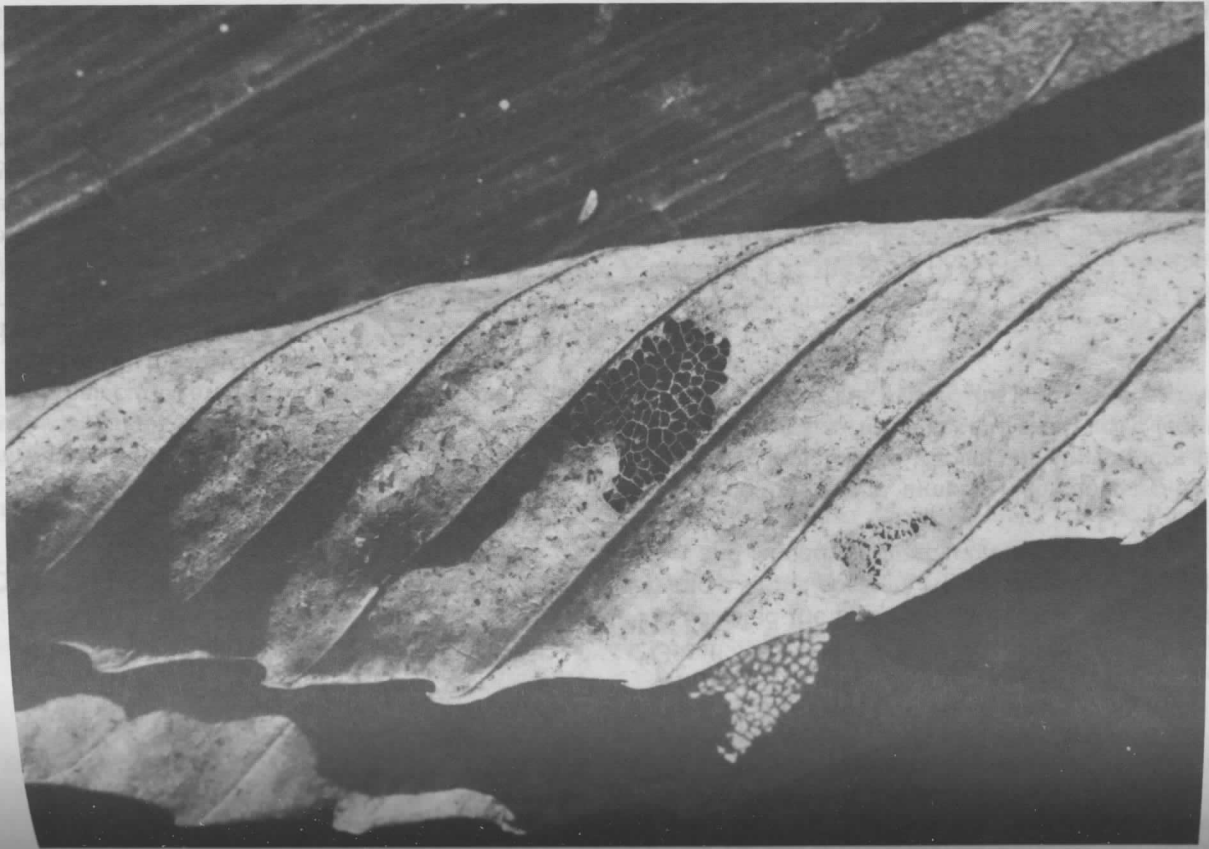
don't you? I'm not going to tell you, but I went into the cabinet one night and stole a bottle. Tasted terrible. Not like a milk shake. Milk shakes don't make you vomit either. So after tennis you like to get a little Dewars on the rocks and drive home with the top down and squeeze a fuzzy orange ball. Your idea of ecstasy. What are you doing now? You've got to be kidding. You got a drink, a fuzzy ball, sun pouring down onto your grey hair, braces on every conceivable joint in your body, and now you're lighting up a cigar. Dunhill, Havanah? Can I have the ring? My knuckles are too big. People shouldn't wear paper rings. Big cloud of smoke in the car. Your glasses are fogged up. Air rushing around. How can you possibly do fifteen million things at once and still drive? You're getting cocky. Someday you'll get into an accident. I'm just the tiniest bit nervous. Anyone would be. Well, it's a beautiful day, isn't it? Yes, but I think it's clouding up. Getting a little chilly, almost. Would you call this a squall? Yes, it's a beautiful view. You can see white caps, can't you? And a few sail boats. This is a nice part of the country, isn't it? The wind is getting stronger. Look at the trees thrashing around. I wouldn't like anywhere else. What the hell are you doing now? Exercises? Facial exercises. My god! In the car! George told me about you doing that. Said he once saw this strange man in a car contorting his face into awful expressions. George was horrified. The guy was opening his mouth as far as it would go and sticking out his tongue. Then he would close it and change to a gigantic smile stretching from one ear to the other. His eyes looked

like planets. George thought the guy was a monster. That monster was you. Amazing. And you do eye exercises too, don't you? You look as far as you can to the left and then to the right and then down and then up. You roll them around in circles, don't you? Stretches the eye muscles. And you do those in the car too. Aren't you ever afraid of getting into an accident? Please, keep your eyes on the road. We're drifting over into the other lane. God, maybe I should ask him to let me out. Keep squeezing that ball, puffing on that cigar, drinking your Dewars, exercising that face. Keeps the wrinkles away, right? You'll stay young until you're eighty. But your hair is getting grey. And look, you got braces all over your body. How do you manage to stay in such good shape? Tell me, where are you going? On the way to the eye doctor's. That's funny. What for? Afraid you need bifocals. Well, it happens. On the way to the doctor's in your tennis whites? Nice touch. The doctor will appreciate that. You say they've got these new bifocals that look just like monofocals. Amazing. That's science for you. So how was the tennis? God damn wife is grating on your nerves, eh? She'd grate on mine too. Never leaves you alone. Why can't a man have his habits? She doesn't let you breathe. Doesn't like the mess you leave in the kitchen after you've made your special health breakfast. To tell you the truth, I don't either. You're a mess. Sloppy as sin. You leave puddles of coagulated yeast solution on the counters and blankets of protein powder on the floor and windows. You never clean the blender. Molasses drooling around all over the place. Off

your face. Lemon rinds discarded in peculiar places. You suck on those damn things, don't you? Good for your hair. Prevents it from turning grey. Well, I got news for you. Your hair is grey. So the lady never leaves you alone. You played tennis with her today? Did you win? Too bad. She kept telling you to concentrate. Got mad when you double-faulted. I wouldn't want to be told that my fly was down either. I can see how she feels. Don't be too hard on her. It sure is getting chilly in here, don't you think? Can I roll up my window? Jesus Christ, you almost hit that guy on his bike! Will you watch it, please? Now let me go over this again. You've got a cigar in one hand, a fuzzy ball in the other, and a drink in the same hand as the cigar, and a steering wheel in both. You're a marvel. How do you do it? I don't know about you, but I'd feel safer if you had three or four hands. But tell me, how's the sanitation department business these days? Making a lot of money. That's good. Did you see that, lightning? Sky is getting dark. Looks like it's about to rain. Feel sorry for the guys sailing. I'm shivering. Hey dad, it is raining! Do you realize that? It's a down pour. The sun roof. Close the sun roof, will you? We're getting wet. Yes, these storms sure do come up suddenly. Thank you. And to think just fifteen minutes ago it was a bright, sunny day. The anomalies of nature. You'll never cease to be amazed. Me neither. Where am I going? To the Ice Cream Shop. And you're going to the eye doctor's. Yeah, it's just up around the corner. This sure is a bad street, isn't it. You've got to be patient. Seems like an endless stream of traffic. Jesus! Why

are you so impetuous? Did you hear that guy's horn? He's a god damn bastard, isn't he? Yeah, that's right, tell him to shut up. Way to go. Not as easy to see when it rains, is it? Even a Mercedes fogs up on occasion. Hey, dad, you can just let me out here. Yeah, it's all right. Thanks. Hope the doctor's appointment goes well.





by Ellen Cox

Watching two nuns  
Makes me wonder  
Why I'm less perfect.  
I want to be good,  
But carrying a habit  
For my body  
Wouldn't make the  
Difference.  
Sometimes, though,  
I want to try . . .  
. . . to spend  
Sundays in church,  
Praying songs to  
Someone I've always  
Wanted to meet.

. . . to seek  
Lonely, empty people  
And pour hope from  
Holy chalices into their  
Flat eyes.  
. . . to laugh  
Tears with the dead  
Who lie in carved marble  
Sarcophagi,  
Remembering and counting  
Days till the Millenium.

But I would cry  
In the love of One who  
So rarely touches the  
Body created.



# Waiting up for Mom and Dad

by Susan Harrison

The recliner was pulled out as far as possible. He lay stretched across its length, his feet dangling over the footrest. His blonde hair curled around his long thin face. He was restless. I could tell by the way he played with the lever which adjusted the fuzzy blue chair. His body jerked slightly at the call of the chair, but his weight prevented any actual change in position.

"Waiting up for Mom and Dad."

"Do you wanta make popcorn?"

"No." He lay back in the chair and stared up at the ceiling.

"Let's get drunk."

"Where'll we get the booze? Dad will kill us if we drink his."

"I already got some."

He stressed the "I" letting me know he was always on top

"How is school? I haven't heard you complaining about it

this year."

"It's gotten better."

"Yeah, I thought it would. Who's the guy I heard you

telling Mom about?"

"Oh, no-one special."

"I bet."

I really didn't want to tell Nicky about Joel. He was very

good at helping me with my guy-troubles, but he was seldom

very interested when I thought I was in love. We didn't talk

for awhile, just sipped our drinks in silence.

"Let's go watch t.v.."

"Okay."

I jumped up and headed for the family room. He grabbed

the glass out of my hand before I got too far.

"Same thing?"

"Okay."

I lay back down facing the t.v.. My feet hit the gold couch

on the other side of the room I tried to push it back against

the wall, but it was no use. The news paraded before me, but

little of it sank in.

"Jackie."

His voice called me from the kitchen.

"What. I'm trying to hear the weather."

"Do you really want to get drunk?"

"Yeah."

"Let's do shots then."

"Okay."

"You be barmaid."

He sat down on the round wood table in the far corner of the kitchen. He put his feet on the golden wood chair in front of it. I fumbled with the bottles, spilling bitter lemon in a cut

on my left hand.

"Shit."

"Lady-like."

"What do you care?"

I succeeded in mixing the drinks in two tall frosty glasses.

"Remember when we were little? How we used to sneak

and make popcorn every Saturday night when Mom and

Dad went out?"

I looked at him, surprised. I was thinking the same thing.

"Yeah, we weren't supposed to turn on the stove and we

had to open the windows and doors so they couldn't smell

it."

"I think they knew."

"Yeah."

I handed him the drink and sat down on his feet on the

chair. I rested my elbow on his knee.

"Mom and Dad are pretty cool, you think?"

"Yeah, I never knew till I went away to school."

"Me neither."

I looked up at him, noticing the Penn State emblem

circling around his pocket. I took a sip of my drink. It was

sour and very strong. I congratulated myself on finally

learning to mix a good drink.

of things. He was laughing and his grin stretched from ear to ear. His blue eyes were wide and questioning. He looked very proud of himself.

"Why not."

I had never gotten drunk with my brother before.

"What kind of booze do you have?"

"Whiskey and rum."

"Great!"

He adjusted the lever one more time and let the chair snap into a sitting position. At the same time he jumped to his feet and landed awkwardly on just one foot.

"Goofus."

At that he took a leap, jumping high above my body as I lay stretched out across the scarlet family-room floor. I tensed and imagined the holes his size twelve feet would make in my back. He twisted his body so that one foot landed on either side of me.

"Fooled Ya."

"Thank God I'm skinny."

"Ha! That'll be the day."

"Go get the booze." I commanded.

Still laughing he stepped over me, skirted around the Christmas tree, and raced up the stairs three at a time. I sat up and went into the kitchen to find something to mix Nicky's treasure with. He rushed into the kitchen, out of breath, and grinning his baby grin. It was hard to believe that he was my older brother.

"We got coke, tab, orange juice, and bitter lemon," I

Nicky ran to the front door and flicked on the porch lights a couple of times. We stood at the window and watched the two people clamber out of the green sedan. They waved to us, as they had on countless Saturday nights in the past. I remembered the bottles then. I grabbed them up and shoved them behind the chair just as Mom and Dad entered the room.

"Did you kids have fun?"  
We looked at each other, then at them.  
Nicky said, "Sure did Mom. How about you?"

He came into the room carrying our two glasses and holding the bottle under his arm. A shot glass was sticking out of his mouth.

"Gross me out. This isn't your fraternity."

He popped it out of his mouth with a sharp contraction of his jaw. It landed on my back and neatly rolled onto the floor. I got up and went to the kitchen to wash it.

"Okay, mom, let's hit the bottle."

Saturday Night Live came on the t.v., it's familiar players promising a good show. We both did a couple of shots, then picked up our drinks and laughed at the comedy before us. At the first commercial we drank a couple more shots.

"Nicky, remember when we were little and we used to hide all Dad's socks?"

"Yeah, and he used to get real pissed at Mom cause he thought she didn't do the laundry."

"And remember how we used to call Mom 'Bomba'?"

We were laughing so hard he couldn't answer.

"And you used to burp real loud at dinner . . ."

He let out a huge belch. We rolled on the floor kicking our feet in the agony of laughing. We each drank two more shots. The brown liquor burned my throat and my stomach was complaining.

"I need another drink."

He picked up my glass and headed for the kitchen.

"You forgot the whiskey."

"I want rum."

"Then mix mine with tab."

He didn't say anything. We stared at each other for a minute. I wondered if it meant peace. Then, he kissed me. It was a long kiss, firm and yet gentle. He put his arms around me and held me very tight. His tongue caressed my mouth and I responded. I tried to open my eyes but something wouldn't let me break the embrace. The kiss ended as quickly as it began. I looked at his serious expression, his blue eyes filled with questions and his mouth set in a straight line. I started giggling. Then he started. We laughed and giggled and roared and shook until we had to stop from exhaustion. My face was swimming with tears and I felt an intense urge to go to the bathroom.

"Jerk!"

of his arm.

He just laughed and kept on tickling. I finally got hold of his hands and managed to wiggle out from under the weight of his arm.

"Nicky, I'm going to tell Mom," I gasped.

breathe. I tried to fight him off, but he was too strong.

was tickled all over. I was laughing so hard I couldn't breathe. I tried to fight him off, but he was too strong.

Before I could build up my defense he grabbed me and I was tickled all over. I was laughing so hard I couldn't breathe. I tried to fight him off, but he was too strong.

"Stop it."

I grabbed his foot and started tickling. I knew it was his weakest spot.

"Shut-up."

"Never could pass up a dare, could you?"

felt very dizzy and my eyes watered. Nicky didn't say anything to me but I could feel him laughing.

"Gross, how about orange juice?"

"No. I want tab."

The room felt suddenly cold without him. I got up and stood by him in the kitchen. I watched my brother's long, thin fingers pouring the drinks into the now warm glasses.

"I'll get some ice."

I reached into the freezer, but of course there was none.

"Nicky, there isn't any."

"Well, the tab and juice are cold."

I closed the door, leaving two smudgy fingerprints on the shiny chrome surface. I turned to find Nicky sticking his fingers in my drink, mixing it up, then repeating the process.

"Tastey."

"You're so foul."

I grabbed the drink from him.

"But I'm cute, just ask any of the girls at school."

"Spare me."

I looked at him, wondering how any girl could help falling in love with his charms. We raced into the family room, spilling our drinks and hitting the floor at the same instant. The house shook around us.

"I dare you to chug it."

"What?"

"Chug your drink."

"I'll get sick."

"And they call that place a party school!"

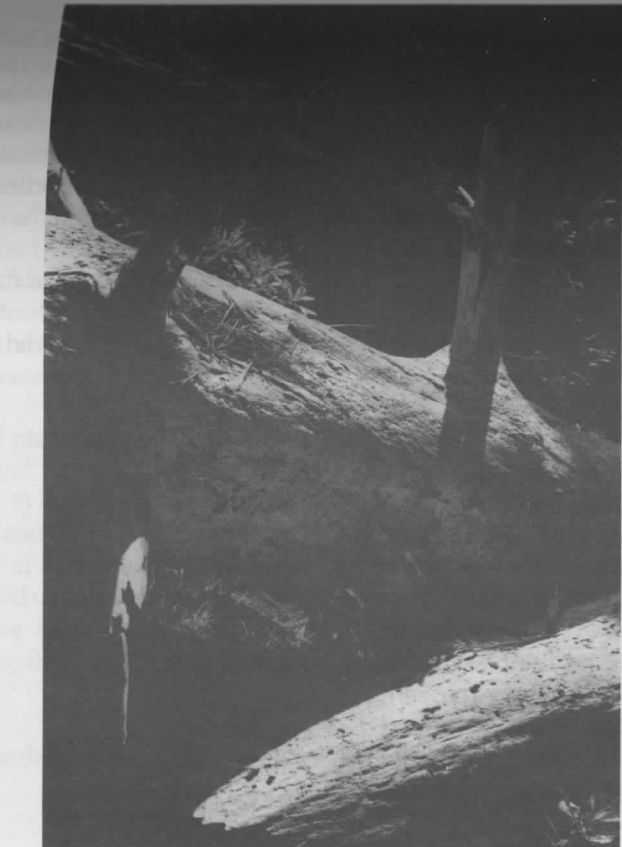
"Shit."

I chugged. The warm liquor and tab choked me. My head

The woman upstairs  
 rattles to the sunrise.  
 splintered shell and egg  
 ooze at the foot of the ice box  
 for her seven cats,  
 a pink stocking bow  
 around the black one's neck.

She comes down for lentil soup,  
 tingling bells,  
 panting cool sweat.  
 Her frantic voice has frozen;  
 her tongue adheres to four words.  
 She lights a cigarette,  
 lets it drop  
 to knot the table's grain,  
 the flaming match  
 poised graciously  
 for a puff.

The policeman comes;  
 I tighten my ears for her screams.  
 She looks through me,  
 leaves quietly  
 as though  
 having awaited  
 his arrival.

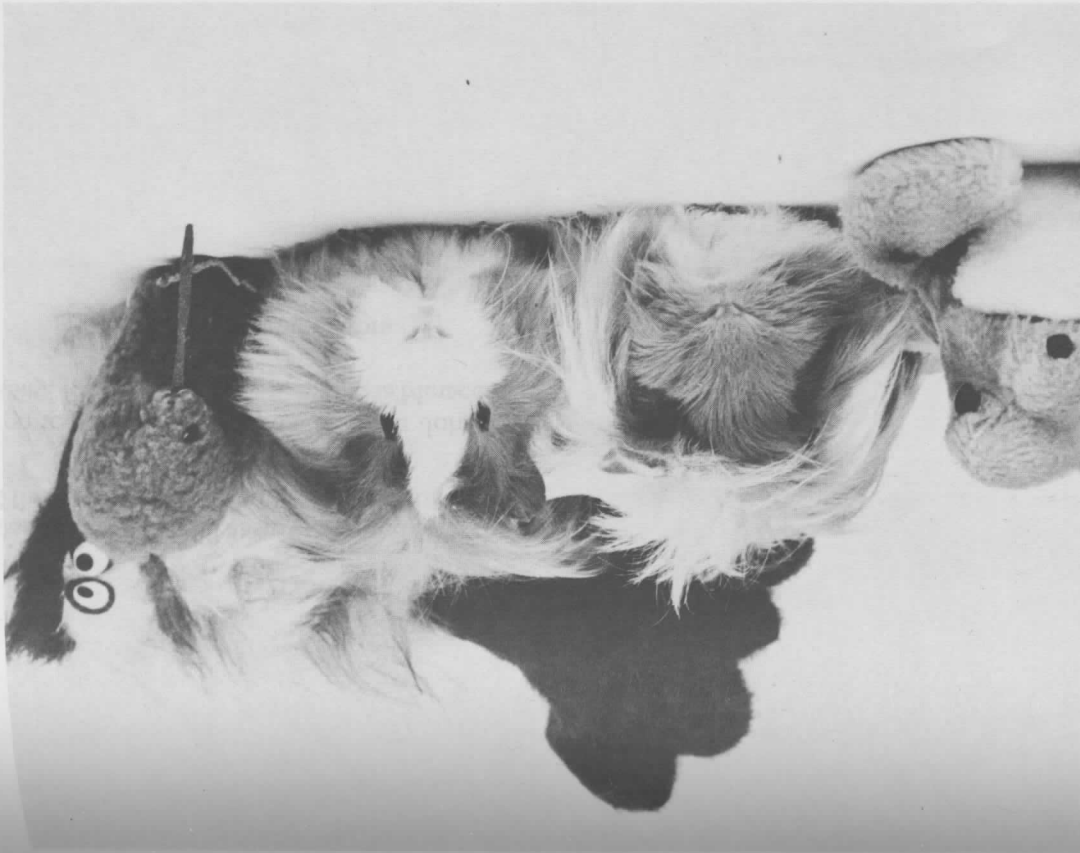


**Two Poems**  
 by Melissa Simmons

I've heard language  
 is the refinement  
 of the groan;  
 and love  
 is not a word,  
 but perhaps  
 the murmur of a whale.

I know a man  
 whose words  
 plunge me  
 to Mariana depths,  
 lift me  
 to loll with cirrus.

He chooses them  
 with hesitation  
 though I listen  
 for their melody.



## **DADDY**

*By Amy L. Shafer*

To uplift corners of a mouth  
held tight, I attempt to pry lips loose  
before teeth bite my intentions  
in two. It's not so easy. Hammering thoughts  
drive your eyes backward through your head,  
out the back of your brain where they  
slide down your back and  
rest there, heavily, until you ache and your eyes  
dull as they look at me,  
staring and wondering who I am and  
what I'm saying to you or perhaps about you,  
you're not sure which.

Corporate hands yank at your  
right arm while I pull on your left,  
weak, out-numbered, and unable to hold you  
for long, I have tried.

Cashmere college fees drive you on for three  
who would gladly exchange it for you and younger  
days when there was enough time to break in a  
baseball mitt in one evening,  
but, you didn't think so.

The days my humor touches you are the days I feel  
I've climbed a mountain, and stand in wonder  
that a mountain does have the capacity to  
appreciate such a cool stream  
determinedly running through it,  
smooth against the rocks and a steady  
rhythm against Time.

We were very glad to see the enthusiasm expressed by both the volume and the variety of contributions to the Summer Issue.

Special thanks go to Jonathan Krant, a student at Johns Hopkins University, for his contribution, and Lisa Minacci, for her help.

—the editors



