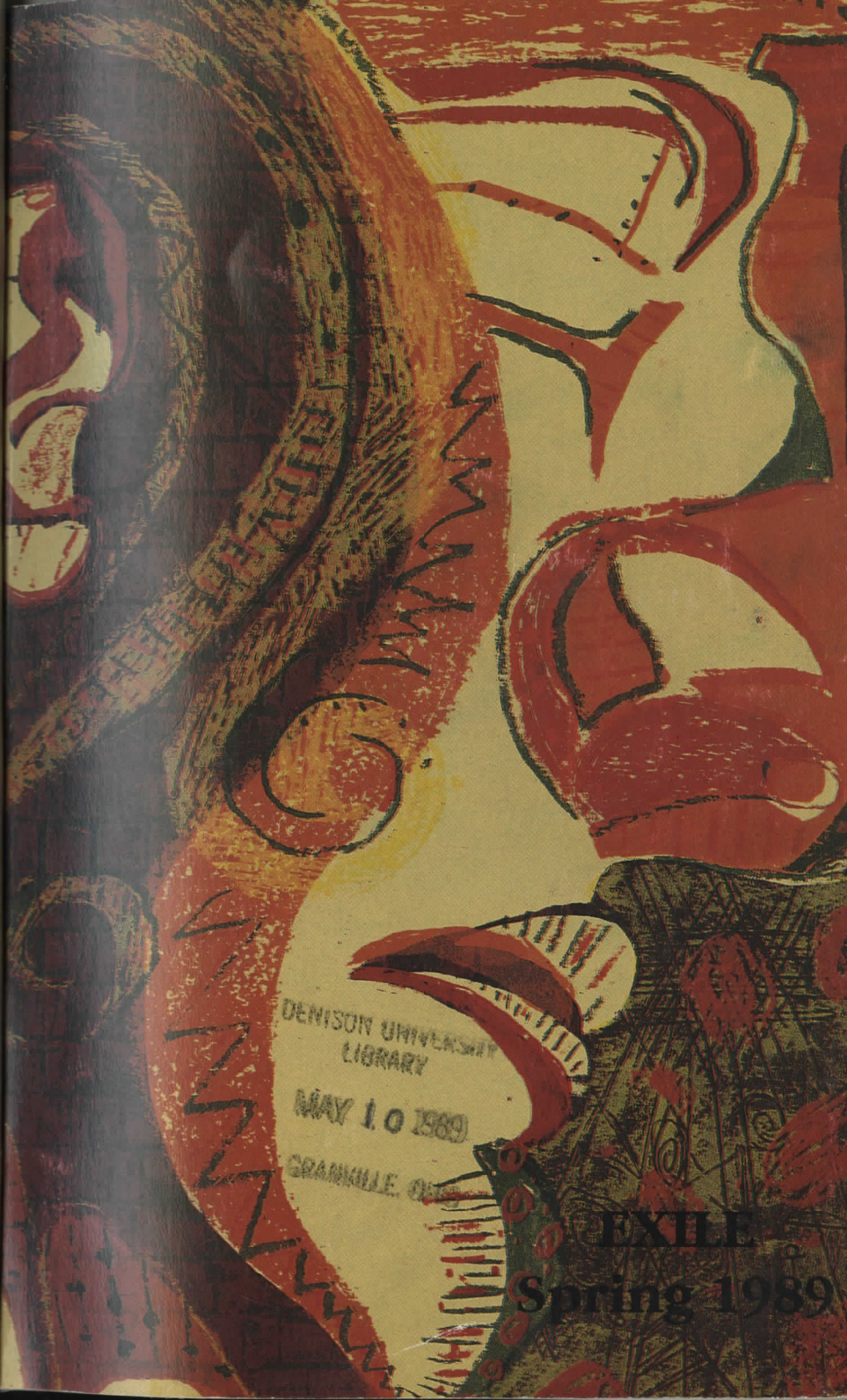

EXILE

Spring 1989

EXILE

Dension University's

Literary Magazine

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You of the finer sense,
Broken against false knowledge,
You who can know at first hand,
Hated, shut in, mistrusted:

Take thought:
I have weathered the storm,
I have beaten out my exile.

Ezra Pound

I Hate Poetry

I have never been to Venice.
I don't know how it is
To watch the willowy winter wind
Waltz across a stark savanna.
And I have never
Lain in bed on a steel grey morning
As the rain drummed her slender fingers
In boredom on the tin roof,

And been reminded of you.
But on Thursday, you and I went to the Drive-Thru
At Burger King together. You looked at me
And smiled when I ordered one
Chocolate shake, two straws.
We rode away in cardboard crowns.

Craig Bagno

Truancy

Burr Oak
30 miles from any town in any direction,
and I am lost
in alder thickets, pine, and Laurel.
This place is not dead – or alive,
but the wind moves it like Rappahannock current
shifting the fleeting sense of decay and ferment
along these vines where blackberries fall and rot
on the ground. I feel the woods
hear the beating of my heart.
The peculiarly awkward sensation of adventure
and panic.
I walk it like a balance beam
where no human stride has found ground.
But it's this dead coon dog
caught in rose haws as thick as knotted barbed
wire,
its leaf-colored eyes wide with life
under a hard autumnal sky,
and me sweating and jerking
like an old Vitagraph film,
finding this untutored awareness
melting like the perfume of ruin
from these thorned mazes.

Richard Latimer

I Ate a Star Last Night

I ate a star last night,
just pulled it out of the sky
like the lint off my sweater
and grilled it up on the barbecue.
It was quite good for its age.
I served it with some asparagus
and white wine.

I sent a postcard to the sun,
just wanted to thank her for my
beautiful tan. I hope it gets there.
Last week they sent back my letter
to Mars marked "address unknown."
Isn't it the first planet to the right,
after the moon?

I called the moon this morning,
dialed direct on AT&T; woke
him out of bed. He was quite tired,
being full only yesterday.
I just wanted to thank him
for a wonderful evening, then I let him
go back to sleep.

I think tomorrow I'll go visit
my uncle Charlie, he's crazy
you know.

Rory Herbster

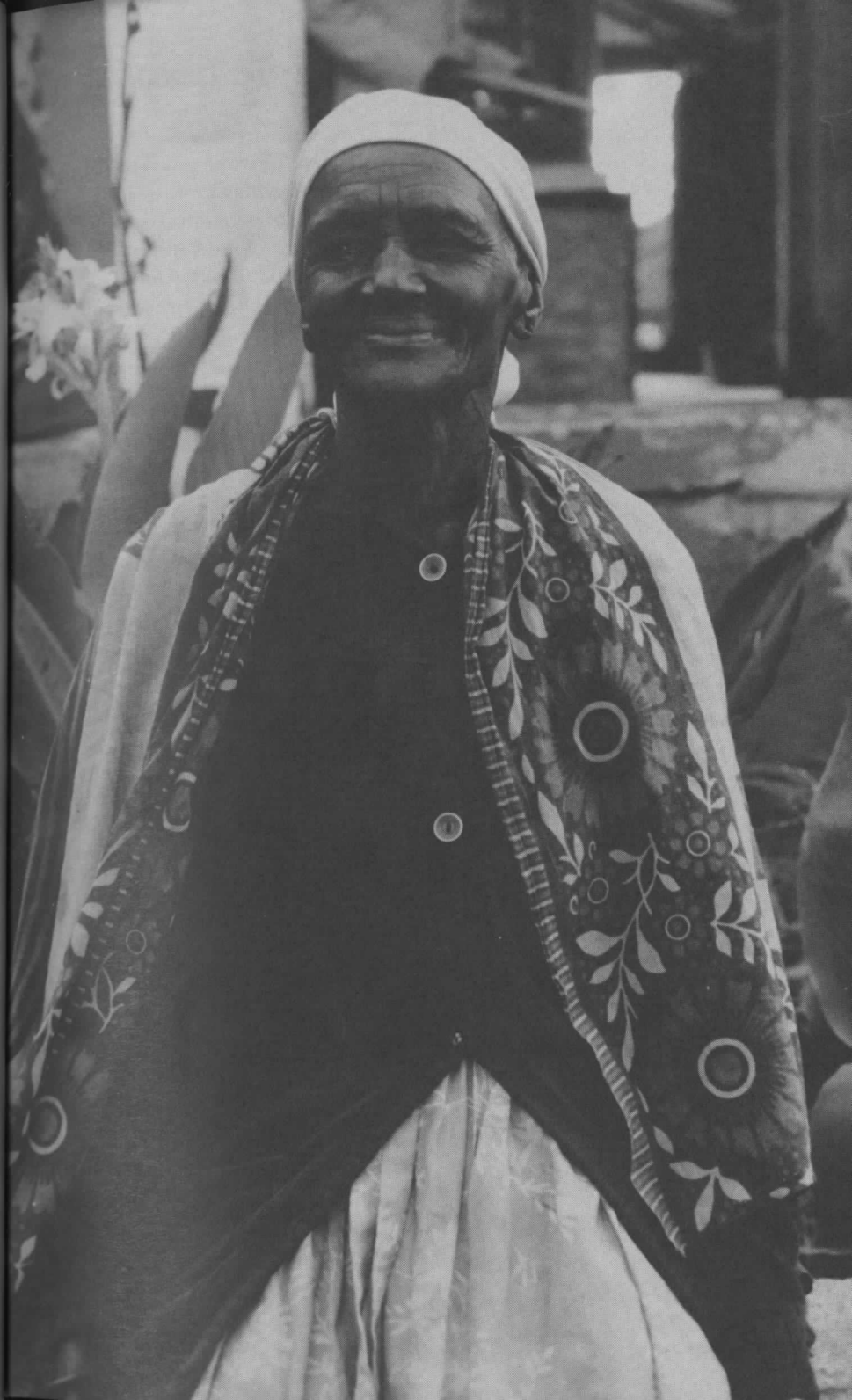
Delivery

Her left leg cripples her progress,
a limp as slow and sure
as pain across generations.
Her eyes are the muddy suffocation
of glimmer, too many wrinkles
from too few years.

This is not her first pain.
Years before I ever carved
my own life from hers,
drinking in her experience,
pushing her blood through my veins,
stretching her body to wrap

her skin around two lifetimes,
that white man with hands as pure
as antiseptic
smacked air into her lungs,
leaving comfort and serenity
in her mother's womb.

Amy B. Judge



Road Signs

White lines on the side of the road,
and the snow blurring their honest
love of distance over these hills, into
the horizon -- the towns blink,
grown from leveled earth
with some degree of permanence in mind;
the wrinkled little waves I cannot smooth.
For the last hour, my hands have held
the plastic dashboard, as though all
the spray paint in the world
couldn't lift these bridges from the ground.
And it's the church spires and the row houses,
but most of all, it's this key chain
with a picture of someone standing under a halo,
someone who looks like Jesus,
and picks my pocket as innocently
as the signs reflected against these windows.

BEER ICE LIVE BAIT. This, I imagine
is true. Someone put it there.
But the lines have melted into the ice,
and this road is a vanilla cream.
The tires, pasting down keep turning
somehow overlooking trucks jack-knifed
into cement medians, as real as
the man sitting behind the seat
of his bruised car. And he'll tell
his story over and over again
to people he feels he can trust.
But the snow falls faster,
and this landscape is lost -- eclipsed.
The lung-choked coal mines and the factories
filled with oil drums, Steel, and asbestos,
they're out there, but all I can see
is the occasional lull in travel
and the rusted out carcass
of a bus that's still on fire.

And everything, for a while, seems intact,
but curious, longing to take away
this meaning that implicates my coming here.
And so, mile after mile, we keep driving,
trying to melt away this feeling,
as though we could just shed our clothes
and rid ourselves of the girders;
that this automobile, passing
these sprawling fields tamed
by the featureless snow balances
us so evenly that we are sheltered,
drawn in and sealed tight together.
Yet our eyes search for something
to cling to, something we can close
into our hands, hold, and never forget.

Out in front of these eyes one lane
winds narrow in uneven dirt.
Pin oaks straddle our movement, surrounding
our vision. A blind spot
tethered by this regimented surge
that leads us past the posted speed limits
and crosswalks that are now so careless and infantile.
The seamless hum of this propulsion
eased with the rich air from a cracked window,
cleansing our souls as if in
rigid defiance of some law
we broke along the way.
Here, there are no lines. We glide
over this uninterrupted shadow
until the brake and the cessation
shed the numbness in our faces.
We can take the keys out of the ignition,
unlock doors, and disentangle
ourselves from these seat belts;
walk into an apple pie house
that smells of Crisco and chicken grease,
peer out through the curtains,
and comment on the garage light
that doesn't work and hasn't
been replaced for a year.

Richard Latimer

Haiku For Me to Possess

Lilac winds blow forth,
pulsating the bulbs to grow
higher than mountains.

Coffee-colored ground,
wet with the pink dew of morn,
blossoms with brightness.

Soft rose-quartz pebbles
nest in the white sand
catching the fast rays.

Ballets of light move
ever so softly, dancing
over my flushed cheeks.

Grape-colored linen
hangs from the living oak tree
as birds jump in air.

Forms of dying wood.
Look! Under the rotten bark,
crawling legs of bugs.

Eons of decay
heave forward into our now --
the sighs of the past.

Shannon J. Salser

Patches

On walkways
Wet
From last night's rain
Wander minds
Grey
And blanketed
That change
As did the sky at midday
From the lost
And hollow
Tired
Monday morning greyness
To patches here
and there
Of silver sunlight
Not warming
But cheerful
And fleeting
And disappearing

Michael Payne

He

The wound of his eyes
A dark, smothering emptiness
Weighing on my smile,
His gaze a dark hand
Stealing up my dress-
My throat tight,
Emotions scattering
Like Autumn leaves.

His eyes are parasites
Feeding on my gestures,
My thoughts;
He whispers my name
Luxurious drops of sound
Spilling into my head
Warming memories
Beneath the smothering weight of it,
The moment swirling around me
A torrent of shattered images
Swallowing my world in a dark chaos,
His arms gently pulling the curtain closed.

Kent Lambert

At The Corner Grill

He finally quieted as she approached the table
And apologized for keeping us waiting
Said she was Emma Jean, was training
The new girl, a slow learner
Just can't find good help
These days
And she looked at me
As she said it
Like she was blaming me
Because maybe I don't have to
Stuff my dyed bun
Under a hair net
Hide my crowsfeet
Wear a name tag
On my left breast
Or those polyester slacks
That grip on tightly
To every bulge in her stomach
And ripple on her buttocks
Or serve greasy burgers and fries
To drunks, truckers, and tourists
Who try to sneak a pinch
Of those ripples
At two in the morning
She poured the coffee
Strong, black and steamy
And went back to the new girl

So he started talking again
Where he left off
How weed is harmless
Because it's a plant
So it's natural
And not made in a chem lab
So what an incredible way
To get high on nature
By getting high off nature
I was nodding
But heard only fragments
Because I was sitting there
Blowing and sipping my coffee
And thinking about that look
On the face of Emma Jean.

Lynn Pendleton

Black Licorice

"There is in the soul a desire for not thinking.
For being still. Coupled with this
a desire to be strict, yes, and rigorous...
And I forgot that."

– *Raymond Carver*

This snow squall has stopped, and the moon has come out.
I don't understand why I sit in the pantry
listening to a weather channel radio.
But I'm alone, and I enjoy its monotone and static
droning off these white-tiled walls,
its conversation clinging to me like sand.
I know the weather from Martha's Vineyard to Norfolk.
And lately, I've become interested in the cold air
pushing in from Canada. Understanding these frontal patterns
is a hard subject. Really. But mostly I'm interested
in the company of something that doesn't think, listen,
or have anything to do. So I sit here before dawn
and learn about tides, wind shifts, and barometric pressures,
stupidly gazing out the window into darkness,
imagining the weather from my seat.

I came out to this place to get away
from everything, especially the t.v. and the newspapers.
Yesterday I lay in the field with my eyes closed,
listening to the wind in the cornstalks.
The same wind that blew in Ottawa the day before,
but a different wind I'm sure.
One that somehow was changed by everything it saw.
I even let myself imagine that I was home,
standing, my back against the fire,
watching Saturday morning cartoons.
But when I heard the bay water white-capping,
I opened my eyes and went inside,
sat down with this weather radio, and believed
in my body's desire for not thinking; left myself entirely
in the keep of the reported snow.

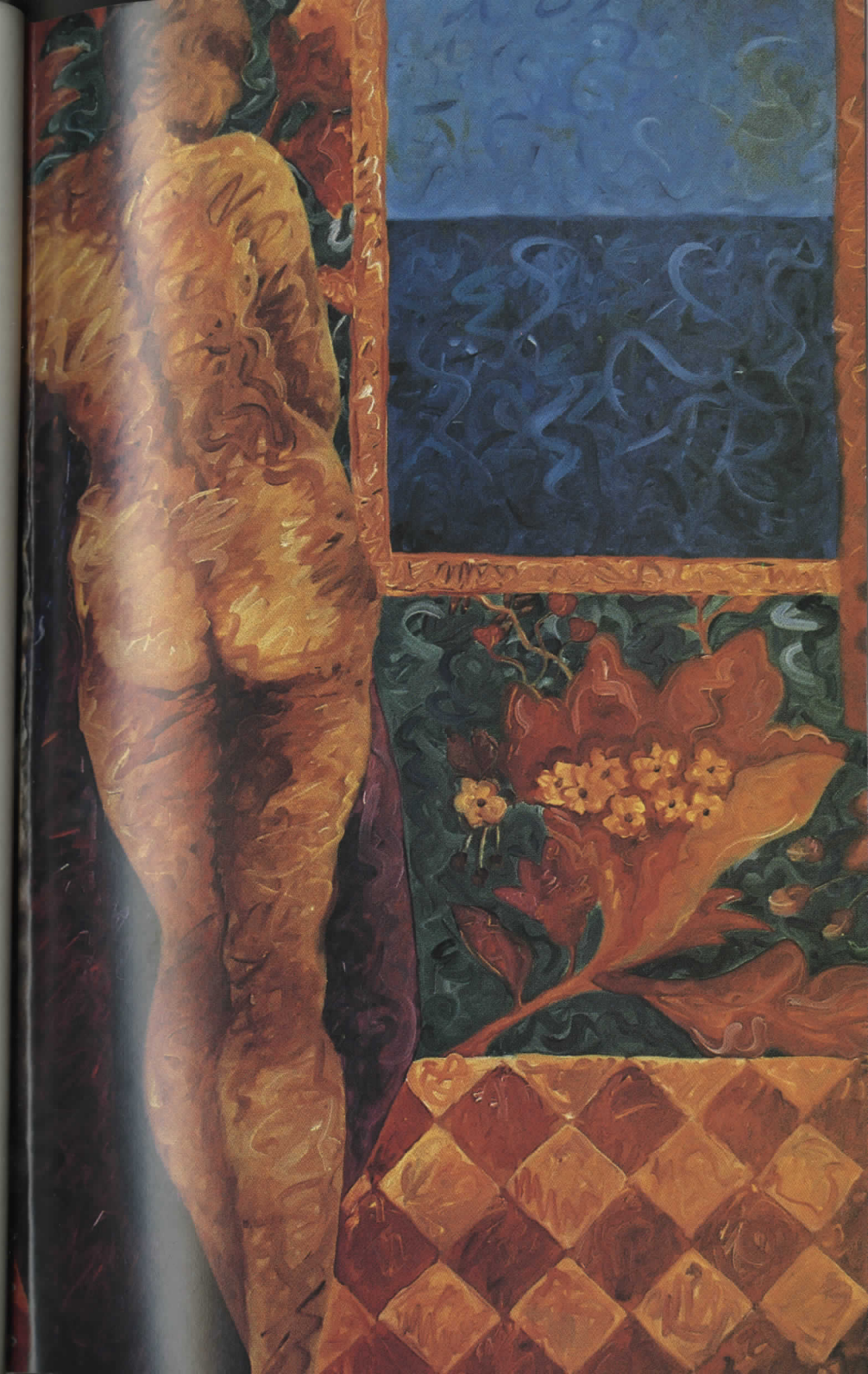
Then it was the blind man at the docks
who fished for flounder next to a bottle of Jim Dickel,
smelling the way liquor smells coming out of a body
the next day, his pores wide as pennies,
undulating with sour mash. "Pay Attention," he said,
"The sky's so dark its gotta snow."
So I asked how he knew what the sky looked like,
him being blind and all.
He said that whenever it was going to storm,
the air tasted like black licorice.
I looked around and made a note of everything,
but this association fell from my body like peeled paint;
went straight home - got drunk - and passed out.

Richard Latimer

Blue Shirt

One morning I awoke
And found my shirt
hanging
On the rail over
The bed.
The same shirt you wore
The night before;
Rolled sleeves
Wrinkled collar
Unfolded pockets-
Sweet with perfume

Michael Payne



" ...Loves a Clown"

Every five minutes the crazy man who looks like my next door neighbor screams. It has taken four of his calls for me to translate him into sight through the one-way mirror that surrounds me. The commuters' eyes are all rolled back in their heads and they can see nothing outside, only themselves. When finally I see the small dirty mouth which emits the only distinguishable noise, I feel that he can see me too, that now I have a link. But for him nothing is recognizable.

*

John said six o'clock. Another scream makes it twenty-five past.

"Meet me under the Kodak picture. It's huge, you can't miss it."

I forgot about rush hour. The circus of commuters scramble to the trains, the same show over and over again. Grand Central's merry-go-round. The light from Grandma's Christmas dinner distorts the mask of business and everyone looks like a hologram.

I wonder where John is.

"Just wait by the picture..."

But I think fluorescent is dangerous.

*

"It's a shame what you did to those nice legs. You sure did have some nice legs. You really gotta get it together, honey. "

I could not see her truly for her blinding and fuzzy pink lipstick. She was as unclear and obscure to me as the crowd in Grand Central. The same dizziness there came back. She went to the window, and though I thought the whiteness of her costume would never allow it, I felt she would do something I somehow knew would hurt, and before I could stop her, before I could scream and stop her, she ripped open the softly glowing white curtains.

"C'mon dear, look at the world. It's beautiful!"

*

Everyone is going so fast around. I look down but the ground holds no relief. My eyes are fixed on the half-eaten jelly doughnut that I know will be somebody's dinner.

I see a woman in a navy blue, belted, down jacket and I think it's my mother, not really, but it could be. She smiles like she sees someone familiar, my father. She gets closer and her eyes scream with wild laughter. She smiles because nothing is recognizable. She reminds me of the clown in the funhouse. Now I can only see her pinwheel eyes and dirty smile.

*

"Mommy, I'm kinda scared of all these mirrors. I don't really like them, I can't really see anyone."

"Don't worry dear, it's just for fun. We'll be out soon anyway."

"Can I get a balloon from the clown then ?"

"Of course, honey, of course."

*

The announcer's voice starts to boom out the schedule changes, but the loud speaker translates only a loud mumble.

Just like the sound of the crowd going around.

Just like the sound of the merry - go - round.

Just like the sound of the side bar going down.

*

"You are such a nice little girl. You are going to get a special treat, such a nice, sweet, little girl. I am going to let you come see all my different make-ups and pretty clownsuits. I have a special balloon waiting for you in my dressing room. It's just over behind the merry-go-round. We'll come right back, we don't want your mommy to worry."

After I was let go, nothing, not even myself, was recognizable.

*

The nurse called the doctor and came over to the bed to try to calm me down. She let down the side railing and the slow squeaking brought back the pain of small legs and the coldness of the sound began seeping into a warm, once innocent self. I scratched violently at my bandages until my blood soaked the sheets.

*

The bright red smile he painted on me was smeared all over my face. It was the only wound that could be seen. The lump under the snarled, matted hair on the back of my head throbbed to the scream of the merry-go-round. It was the shrieking laughter that squeaked from the thick pink grin, through the huge white teeth of the red carousel horse and pierced the air into shivers. His glassy bulging eye watched everything, but he saw nothing...

They must have seen. Why didn't they see? Around and around, the lady with the pink hat, the boy eating the hot dog, couldn't they help? Does it spin too fast to see a bony body being driven again and again into the cold metal wardrobe. Does it spin too fast to translate the meaning of the heavy, nauseating moans that vibrated in my stomach.

The make-up on his face left a huge white hole in my chest where he rested his head when he ripped open my insides.

*

Lying on the starched sheets I feel somehow satisfied as I remember the woman who could be my mother's face in the mirror when she saw me shatter my self into splinters.

The hinged door swung open and a too bright uniform stood there behind the cold metal tray of poison that I knew I would not eat. Even her grin could not keep her disapproving breath from seeping through her too large dentures.

*

So many people everywhere, just like those pictures you have to tilt in the light to see. I hope they don't know anything's happened. Where's my mother?

*

"We all have to pay a price if we want a good man. You're taking things too seriously, honey. Just try to be, well, normal."

I did not know what she was talking about but I hated her for it. She placed the tray on the bedside table.

"No man wants a crazy wife, dear. You're a very pretty girl you know, really, you are."

*

Running towards the funhouse through blurred mustaches and fuzzy pink lipstick, I think I am, but it keeps moving farther away. I'm inside.

I bang hard against the mirrors, hard like I was against the wardrobe, until I am shattered into splinters of glass. Finally the blood comes.

*

"Seven-ten to New Haven on track 24." The voice from the loud speaker seems so clear as I run through smeared white faces. One last time I look back but I cannot see for the explosion of red splinters screaming fluorescent light.

*

The darkness of the drawn curtains on the midday sun is soothing and cool. The sanitary smell is faintly familiar. Swollen hands look better on a nine year old. I can feel the soreness without moving. I want to touch the wet oozing slashes that I know cover my thighs. The wet red and white. The red burrowing into the white, the white that is forever trenched by the red. The red and the white so long buried under the still forming scab of a years-old wound, now brought out into the world of my sight, into the world of merry-go-rounds, of ladies with pink hats and boys eating hot dogs and women with pinwheeled eyes that could be my mother.

Margaret Dawson

The Surreal Sonnet?

I imagine as I wander in the woods,
What might have happened just now
If that man back there could
Have flown to avoid that cow.

It all happened so awfully fast
That perhaps what I saw was not true.
And after a time, at the very last
Tree, I decided what I would do.

I turned right around and hurried back
To the man and the cow, really quite aways.
I walked right up and said, "Hey Jack,
Did what just. . . .," I must have dozed

For when I awoke on my back, the cow, named Ace
Was quickly, if not sloppily, washing my face.

Shannon J. Salser

Swimming Lessons

I was thinking of the ways that
we leave each other. Today I thought
of mornings, your back turned
against me in sleep, a shoulder arched
above white sheets, skin I felt
I was still part of. Nothing new here,
of course, except how light is always so
hesitant at six in the morning;
it stumbles into rooms; something like
the way we stumble out of sleep,
as if we were apologizing for our entrances.
But you were sure-footed in your sleep
and never apologized. I imagined you were
dreaming, a slow dream about the
roads outside of Jacksonville, where
the smell of paper mills and Florida
swampland drifts in and out of Gulf stations
and Publix supermarkets. Were you
dreaming that morning of hot pavement,
chewing gum, shopping carts? It's hard
to tell sometimes. Last night I dreamt
of the cruel silences we impose on each other
as we consider our separate exits, of the woods
outside of Hastings, where the rain
was somehow the muffled sound of a piano
heard through thin walls. I dream like this
sometimes. It's hard to understand. Years ago
my grandfather taught me that the art
of water was not learning how to swim,
but instead learning the best ways
not to drown. Sometimes when I hold you
I imagine that we are treading water together,
that somehow the motion of our bodies could bear us
upwards. Forgive me this, Kattrin.
I am always imagining things.

Richard Latimer

Communion

Tidy, pale men, in pressed suits,
on Sundays successive as sunsets,
delivered small square pieces of bread,
white and dry as aspirin,
and juice, dyed purple, sweetened with sugar,
in single serving glasses
lined up in rows like sparkling clean utensils
on a dentist's tray.

The too clean odor of antibiotic
pervaded their perfect pleats
and anesthetized intellects.
I had that too hard bench,
notes from my sister,
and forgiveness.

Amy Judge

Beth's Last Funny Joke

I still keep the half filled cups of beer hidden in my sister's room. She taught me that flies love beer and if you leave just a little in a cup they fly right in and their wings get wet and they can never get out and it takes them a long time to die. One cup has flies that I caught right after my sister left and they're still alive. The fly joke is my sister's favorite. But she told me once that the joke was only funny if the flies drowned, she didn't think it would be nearly as funny a joke if the flies drank themselves to death. I usually think that her jokes are funny but that's because she lets me help.

All the bedrooms in my house are on the second floor so when my sister would want to talk to me and it was after my bedtime she would have to go out the window of her room along the roof of the porch and then knock on my window so I could let her in. If she would try and sneak into my room through my door my mother would always hear and then make her go to her room and lock her in. I hated when my mother caught my sister because she would talk in her loud and mean way and say, "Beth you fool, leave the child alone."

When my father lived with us he made Beth start to take horseback riding lessons but it was different than my mother making Beth go to her room because Beth loved the horses. She was of course a very great horseback rider. She rode just about everyday which made my mother very angry because that was all Beth did and riding was expensive. My mother thought Beth should get a job and even tried to get her one but never could. My mother said it was because no one would hire her. Which was a good thing for Beth's horseback riding because she had lots of time to have lessons with Mr. Hurley. On my way home from school I would sometimes stop to watch Beth's lesson. She told me that she had to have lessons with Mr. Hurley because he could teach her to jump and that was what she really wanted to do. But I didn't think that her lessons with Mr. Hurley were so great because he would yell at her much louder than my mother ever did and sometimes he would even curse at her. I thought that Mr. Hurley was acting like that because he owned the stable and the horse which my sister always rode. The horse's name was Rowdy. My sister said she didn't care too much about Mr. Hurley because she got to ride Rowdy and that sometime she would jump with Rowdy, so usually she would just laugh when Mr. Hurley yelled. My sister also told me that Mr. Hurley had told her that when Rowdy was younger he could jump the truly high fences and that he probably still could if he wanted to badly enough. But in order for Rowdy to jump truly high fences he had to like the person who was on his back.

This always made sense to me and I knew it made my sister very happy because she thought that Rowdy liked her very much. I wanted my sister to jump, so I used to try and help her convince Rowdy to like her enough to want to jump. But this was hard because it is always hard to tell if a horse really likes you, I mean for sure, because horses don't wag their tales, or purr, they just look straight through you. But my sister thought that Rowdy looked at her as if he liked her, she said she could definitely tell, so she would always give Rowdy carrots after her lesson. She never forgot about the carrots because she thought that she was getting good enough that she would soon be able to jump. She wanted Rowdy to like her enough to want to jump with her on his back when she was ready. Rowdy always ate the carrots she gave him.

Later in the year, when my sister was getting to be so good that even Mr. Hurley said so, we would slide down the drain pipe and into the bushes, after my mother had gone to bed, and walk over to Mr. Hurley's stable to give Rowdy carrots. It was an easy walk and I knew the fastest way because my friend Billy lived right near the stable and I used to play at his house a lot because he had a pool.

We went to give Rowdy carrots in the night any time my mother had carrots in the house and that was a lot because my mother thinks vegetables are very important. So I was sure that Rowdy must really like my sister because we gave him more carrots than probably any horse has ever gotten. Until my mother found out that we were stealing carrots for the horse, which made her very angry. That was one of the worst nights because my mother thought that it was already bad that my sister had to spend money on horse lessons but we didn't need to feed both Mr. Hurley and the horse. That was the night my mother told Beth that she could not go and ride horses ever again.

That night I had been asleep and I heard my sister knocking on the window so I got up and let her in. She came into my room and because it was so dark I couldn't really see her face but I heard her voice and she sounded like she was about to cry. She told me to put on my shoes because we were going to go visit Rowdy. I told her that we didn't have any carrots to give to him and that he might not like it if we showed up without any carrots. She said it didn't matter because she was good enough to jump Rowdy. I asked her if Mr. Hurley would like that and she said it wouldn't matter because neither she nor Rowdy liked Mr. Hurley. We slid down the drain pipe without my mother hearing and we walked to the stable. We passed Billy's house and all the lights were off, so I knew that it must have been very late.

We went into the stable and Beth thought that we should use a lantern. Usually when we came to give Rowdy carrots we didn't use a

lantern which I always thought was a bad thing because he might not recognize my sister in the dark and if he couldn't recognize her then he wouldn't like her any different with or without the carrots. But this time we didn't have any carrots we just had the lantern and Rowdy let out a sort-of grunt when we got near him. My sister held the lantern and it made all the eyes of the horses look red from the flame in the center of the lantern and they all stuck their heads out into the aisle. Having all those animals watching us and ruffling their feet in the hay made me feel very scared because I thought there might be someone else in the stable. I was wearing sneakers so they didn't make any noise but Beth was wearing her riding boots and every time she took a step they made such a loud sound on the cement aisle that I was sure that someone would hear her. She must have been thinking about something else.

My sister went into Rowdy's stall to grab him by his head and bring him out. But when she went in, Rowdy's ears went up and he started to prance around his stall like he was getting upset. You can never tell when horses are happy but you can tell when they are upset.

Beth told me that she had seen Mr. Hurley do this many times before and that she could do it, so she put the lantern down and grabbed Rowdy's head and tried to lead him into the center aisle. But after about two steps Rowdy was leading her and then he started to run and she had to let go of his head or she would have been dragged. The horse sprinted down to the other end of the barn, it was a good thing we had closed the door behind us or I think that he would have run outside and then we never would have gotten him. So I was glad about the horse but my sister was angry because she said that Rowdy never did that to Mr. Hurley. I said that maybe Rowdy was being like that because we had not brought him any carrots. My sister thought that maybe that was true, which made her less angry at the horse and more angry with my mother. Beth said that she would definitely not be able to jump a horse that was not happy with her but she still wanted to sit on him anyway because she didn't think that Mr. Hurley would even let her do that if she couldn't pay and she couldn't pay anything if mother didn't give her money. She said that she had a plan but we would have to wait.

I was definitely willing to wait for my sister's plan because she always came up with great plans. For other plans of hers we had to wait for days, but it was definitely worth it because they were always very funny and turned out to be great jokes. One time we were waiting for my mother to fall asleep in front of the T.V. in just the right position. And it took 3 nights of watching my mother instead of the T. V. but as soon as her wrists were close enough to each other my sister jumped up and taped them together while I taped her ankles together. My mother

couldn't move at all and I thought it was the funniest thing that I had ever seen until my mother started to cry and I felt sorry for her, so I cut the tape. Beth got in a lot of trouble for that and I felt bad, as if I had turned her in.

We were waiting a long time and my sister said that she had to go get some stuff and while she was gone I fell asleep. She must have been gone a long time because I was sleeping hard when she came back and woke me up and handed me a hammer and some nails and told me about a horse's hooves and how they are just like finger nails. And she squeezed my fingernail and it didn't hurt. She told me that Mr. Hurley told her that that's why it doesn't bother horses to wear shoes. So, I guess that's why I didn't really feel bad about her plan.

We went slowly and quietly up to where Rowdy was standing, my sister whispered that he was asleep and that the plan would work as long as he didn't wake up. She pushed me up to the front left hoof and she went to the rear right hoof and we each put three nails through his hooves and into the cement floor. My sister had found long nails and they went through Rowdy's hooves and into the cement but we had to hit them very hard with the hammers. Rowdy woke up but we already had the nails all the way through way down deep into the cement floor. He tried to walk away just like he normally would but when he tried to lift his left front hoof and couldn't he started to get nervous. He tried it again because I don't think he could believe my sister's plan. And then he started to kick with his other free legs and whine in an awful way that I thought sounded a lot like my mother's scream. His eyes got real big and even though the lantern was way back in his stall I could see that he was very scared. And I was hoping that Mr. Hurley wasn't wrong about hooves being just like fingernails because Rowdy looked like he was hurt. But my sister was laughing and I thought that the whole thing was actually pretty funny because Rowdy was trying as hard as he could to move but he wasn't getting anywhere. My sister said she was going to ride Rowdy and she hopped up onto his back, of course he didn't have a saddle or reins or anything like that on so my sister just grabbed onto his mane because, even though he was nailed in, he was still shaking a lot and trying to get away. My sister was very happy to be on Rowdy's back but I was a little scared because Rowdy did not want her to be on his back and I was beginning to wonder about whether the nails were strong enough to hold Rowdy who, after all, could jump the truly high fences if he wanted to. But I couldn't tell my sister to get down because she was laughing and whooping and pretending and I would have felt bad to ruin it for her. So I sat down and closed my eyes and pretended I was at home in my room. I could always make bad things go much faster if I

pretended they weren't happening. And I was pretending for a long time. I hadn't opened my eyes the whole time I had been pretending and after a while it began to sound like Rowdy was calming down and my sister was whooping less but she was still having fun. And then I think I must have fallen asleep because the next thing I heard was my sister scream and then Rowdy screamed and then I heard other horses scream and when I opened my eyes I had to shut them again because the barn was filled with smoke. My sister grabbed my arm and we ran away from the barn towards Billy's house and hid in Billy's bushes. I got scared for all the horses still in the barn and I went up to Billy's front door and rang the doorbell. Billy's mother came to the door in her nightgown and I didn't even have to tell her what had happened because she saw the smoke right away and called the fire department and the police also came. The firemen got a few of the horses out, but not Rowdy. This bothered Beth more than having to leave home because even though it was always hard to tell whether Rowdy liked her, Beth always liked Rowdy. She said she wasn't mad about me telling Billy's mother about the fire, but I felt bad when mother made her leave.

Jedd Gould

Hope for a Peaceful Coming Around

Sneaking around the world on clouds of
Ignorance. Lost souls of those
Living in (quote) sin. I
Enter the room draped in crepe,
Noticing the silent screams of those
Concealed in shrouds of monk's muslin;
Eternity and more, intertwining.

Equality for those who whether they
Queen or dress for society's whims,
Under whose God were created? --
Antiquities of years of freedom and Stonewall
Live in memories of aged people
Sitting on porches of Fire Island.

Death, I fear you not.
Eventually, perhaps, but not now.
Ageism, sexism, homophobia, racism,
Together, words of fear in one's
Hope for a peaceful coming around.

Shannon J. Salser

A Child's Moment

L-I-C-K-W-I-D. That's it. L-I-C-K-W-I-D.

I love when I do things right. It makes me feel warm all over. My dad gave me a book a couple of weeks ago by this guy named Jung. Y-U-N-G. That's it. Y-U-N-G. I'm warm again. He said I am smart enough now to know these things. Jung said that being happy and content with yourself is the key to salvation, so I guess that means that I'm going to be saved. It's strange though because mommy said that the only way to salvation is in the church.

I used to not like church because of that mean old Mrs. Dingle, except when she would let us draw with crayons. That's fun. I always paint those pretty windows with all the colors in them. My favorite is the one you see when you sing. It's a guy with this white light around his head; it's really nice. He looks like God or somebody just touched him. I think Jung would say the same about him as he did me. But Old Dingle says that we're getting too old for drawing now, and she makes us do Sunday School stuff. She never lets us have fun. She says it's time for us to start reading the Bible. The Bible is huge. I read that book my dad got me because it had pictures and wasn't too long, but the Bible is huge. I don't think I could read the whole thing just now.

The best part about church is when the light comes through the top window and seems to hit who or whatever it wants. It hit me one Sunday and made me feel warm and tingly all over. My cat Frank, I named her after my dad; he said I should name her after my mom, but I loved him more, so I named her after him. My cat Frank sleeps in the sunbeam all the time. I used to think she was just lazy, but now I know better, she likes feeling warm and tingly all over too.

Frank is always rolling around on her back in the light. It's like that game you play when you spin around in circles until you can't stand anymore, and then you fall and watch everything you just saw go zig-zagging across your eyes. It's like watching t.v. because you keep getting lots of different pictures in your head at one time. I want to do that in church one Sunday. I almost did it last week, but my dad said we had to go home and watch an important game, so we left too early. I want to be all dizzy and on my back and watch all the pretty windows go by with that one sunbeam on me. I want to feel warm and tingly and dizzy all at the same time. That's why I like church now.

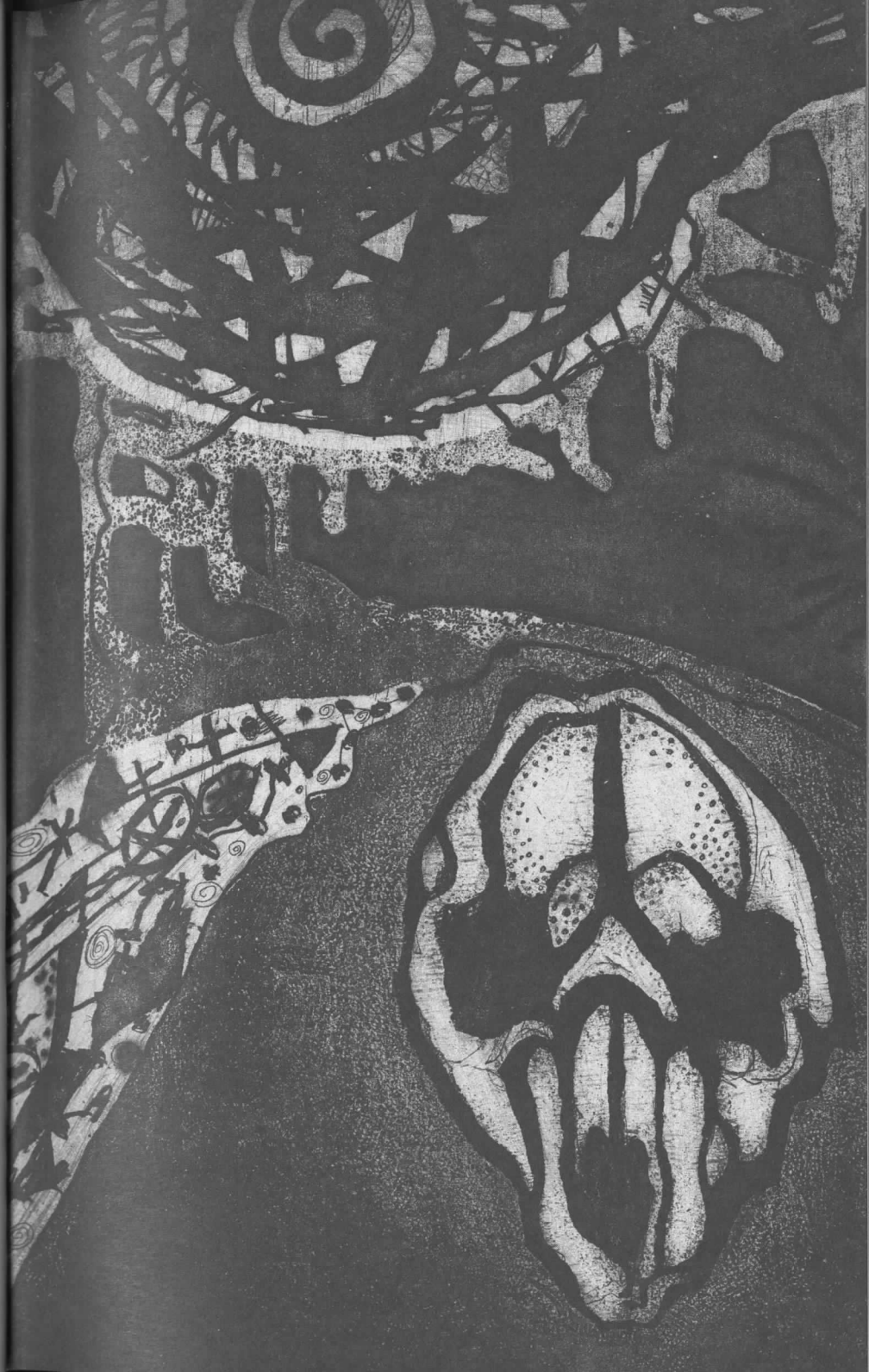
Incorrect, Timothy, the correct spelling of liquid is L-I-Q-U-I-D.

Peter Witonsky

Observation

I see you Orion, dangling over my brain,
impregnable but to the eye, and
safe -- hiding, the meridian is your haven
gravity my leash; but I decipher your cycle.
You are not the diamond of Ptolemy,
or even Aristotle, nor is your belt
a gemmed noose 'round my intellect.
Never horizon, never zenith,
you are never out of my stare,
and I follow your flight
from the swing on my front porch.
You run from me, for even as I stare
into your skies, you are the first
to blink. You look away.
But though you may burn
in the distance that I gaze, your glass eyes will
transfix, will patronize my generations.
And I will die.
But yours is the collection of my earthstone
Yours is my amazement and my awe.

Rosemary Walsh



To My Sister

Don't you know?
Lives aren't supposed to unfold,
like soft covers around precious gems.

Forget the precious gems.
Your life has texture, the feel
of a wool sweater, reaching out to people
with color and warmth, fit to wear,
suitable to show off.

Why must you unravel it,
piece by piece,
until every string lies
pale and limp
under scrutiny?

This is a package deal.

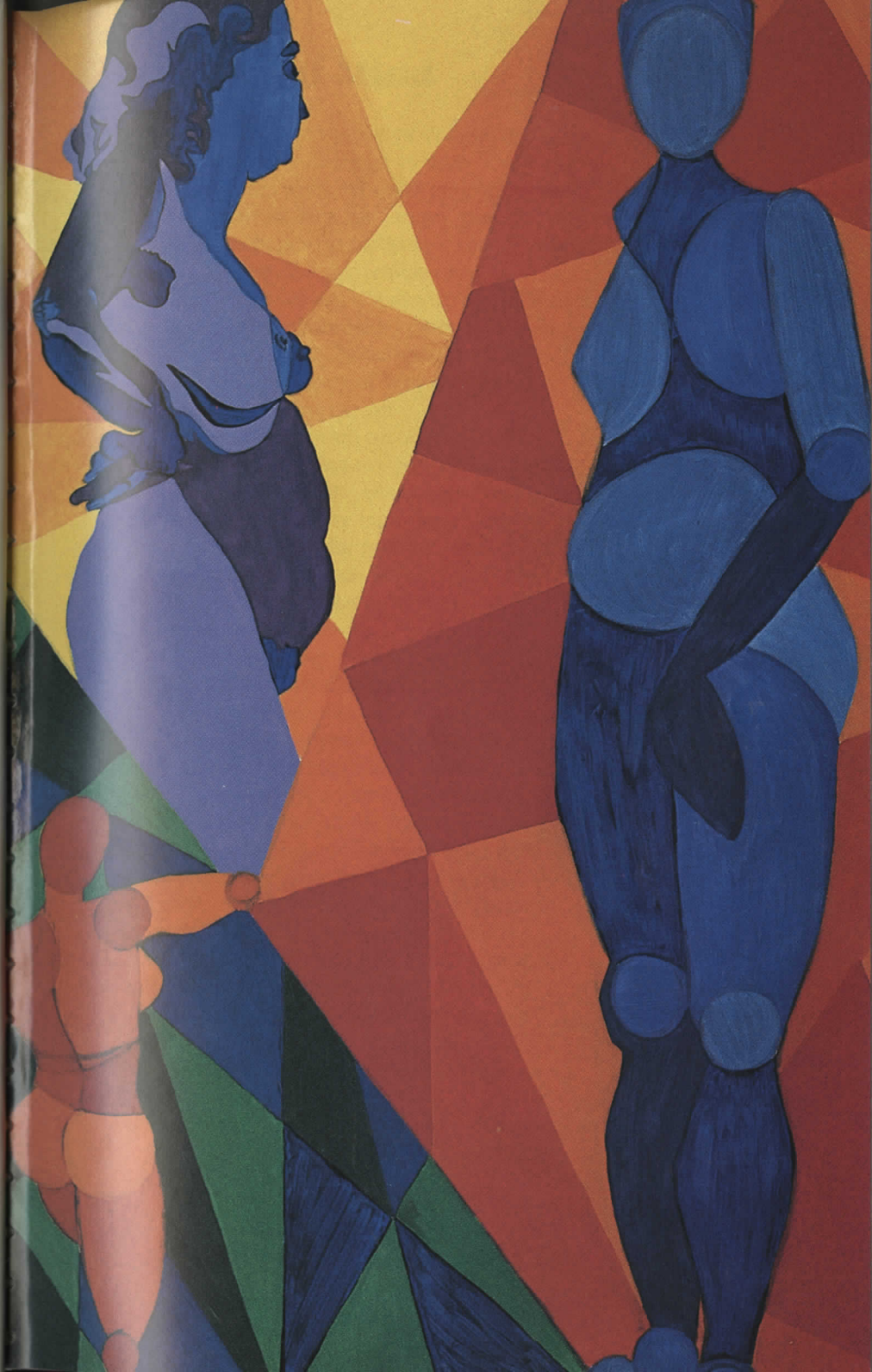
I'll be waiting.

Amy B. Judge

Ideas In Bloom

A farmer brushed aside my hair,
And pressed a seed into my ear.
He used his breath to push it in,
And it took root upon my brain.
The nutured sprout was carefully fed,
Fertilized through books I read
And voices I heard. Drinking water
To help condense and thus grow further.
The light had come; the farmer's work done,
My seed could bloom now on its own.
A new flower burst forth from my mouth,
To share with the world what I'd learned about.
The fruit has now been picked and all enjoy its taste,
A new seed will come along and blossom in its place.

Randy Casden



A Child of Mind

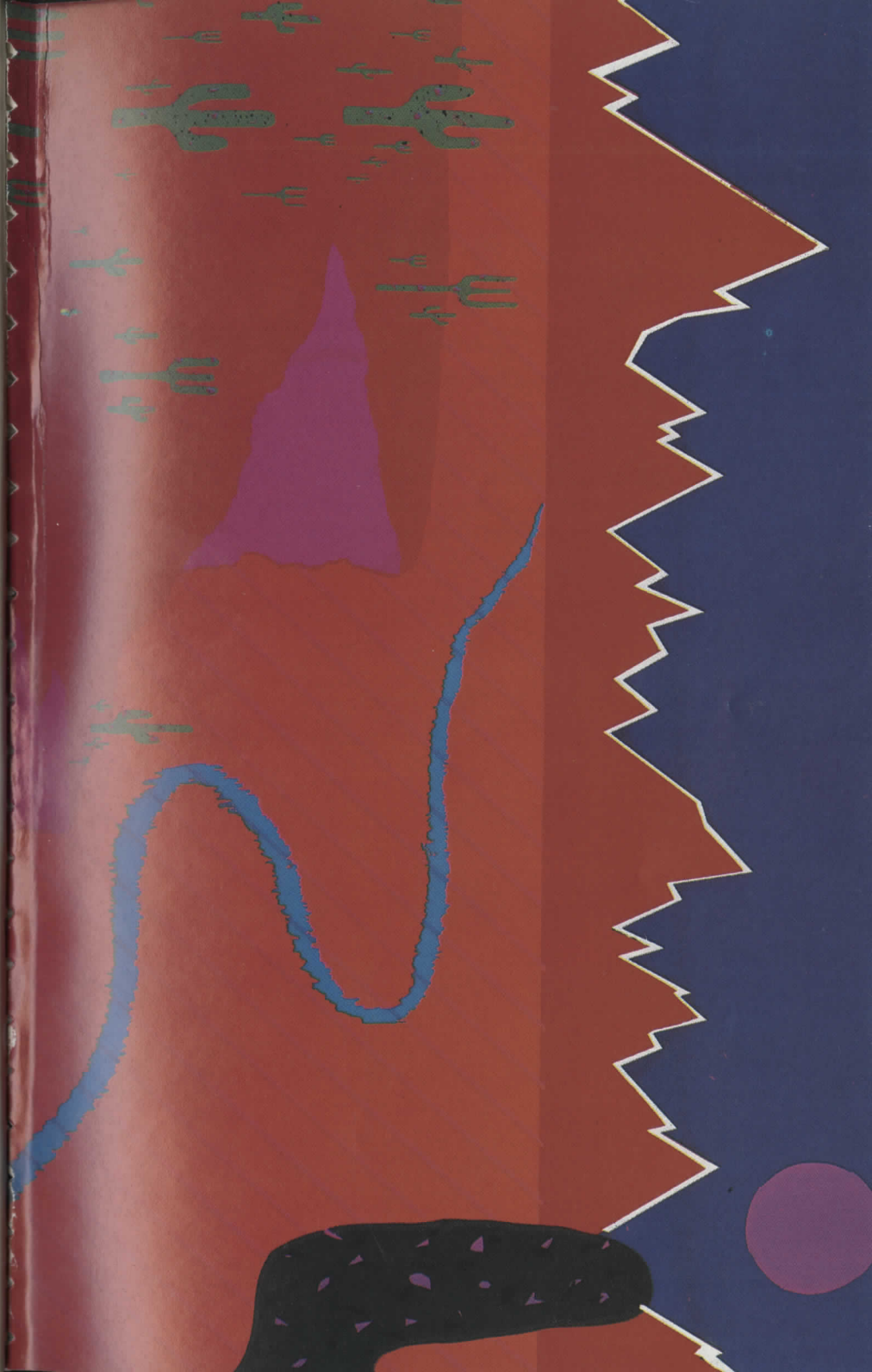
Nights when the conjuring of college thoughts
seem as hopeless as trying to push a raw egg
through a steel wall, the child appears to me.
While I sit white-knuckled to my pen, the tiny peep
of wet Keds begins to tap at my ears. Turning,
I find his cherished toy cowboy hat
passing in front of my doorknob. His little face
comes near, one dominated by brown eyes,
which glow, for they have never focused
on Poli. Sci. or History of War. He has come
to save me, to draw me off
as if I were fresh cream on souring milk.
Reaching out, he grips my pen-locked hand in his;
an embrace so delicate, yet demanding
carried out by Hershey bar-stained fingers.
He rushes me from the room in an urgency
known only to five-year-olds,
for they still believe the world is huge
and by hurrying, one can see all of it.
Little words scamper from his mouth
in a youthful whirlwind about salamanders
and fossils and cartoons which have made him giggle.
He shows me the right way to skip and turn
somersaults. Thrashing hands describe where
China is and how people make babies.
Together, we shout all the bad words we can think of;
then fall down in laughter, both secretly terrified
someone might have heard. Just to make Mom mad,
we swim out to the sandbar in our clothes
to look for starfish and treasure. I am IT
and he dashes off through the tall sagebrush.
I find him by the canyon wall, staring
at an ancient man painted on the stone.
There is only an empty square for a face,
but his trapezoid body is covered by streaks.
They look like tears
and I know I have stayed with the child too long.
I pick up my pen and I shackle myself once more
To the textbooks and exams the child will never know.

Charles Riedinger

Ars Poetica

A technicolored
spray painted VW
bus with a yellow
and black "Jerry for
President" bumper
sticker in the back
window next to a
Greenpeace Foundation
logo was parking
in the lot behind
Neiman Marcus near
a Rolls Royce and a
BMW at two
o'clock last Tuesday.

Rory Herbster



The editors of *Exile* would like to formally apologize to those contributors whose works were misprinted in the Fall issue. We have reprinted a few of the pieces that contained the most errors.

Dancer

Her hand drops after a perfect pause,
Legs shifting imperceptibly across the stage,
Scissoring in secretive steps--the lady walks.
Her arms flick up, they pierce the space,
Carving umbrellas as they slice Tchaikovsky.
His complex bars are but clay to her body's
Surgeon skill whose scalpels sing through flesh.

In third row center, yellow pearls look on.
She watches every slice with care,
Each one seems to scratch her eyes.
In its velvet cushioned seat her skin pulls tight.
As she smiles and stiffens the program crinkles.
And the stained red salt, running down her cheek,
Is leaking from a wound she cannot feel.

Bradford Cover

Skin Deep

My name is Billy.
I am twenty-three years old and I work at the Columbus Zoo, or at least I used to.
It's not really hard work, not like the guys who have to feed the animals or the zoo doctors because I only have to pick up trash. Some days, if not everyone shows up to work, I get to use the stick with the nail in the end to jab the bits of paper that cover the ground. Sometimes I pretend that the pieces of hot dog wrappers with ketchup are bleeding from the hole I put in them, but only on days that I come to work blue. Most days I'm not blue and I just use the broom and the metal garbage collector to pick up the trash.
I don't make a lot of money at my job, but most of the time I don't need to pay for my lunch because not all of the people finish their food, so I keep it. We're not supposed to do that and Dave, my boss, tells me not to if he sees me so I always look around to see if Dave is watching before I pick something out of the trash. Once I found a can of Mountain Dew that was almost full, but when I drank from it, I found a bee that had found it first and I got stung on my lip. I don't drink pop from cans anymore, even if they are almost full, unless I'm the one who opens it, and even then I shake it to make any bees that are inside fly away.
Dave is pretty nice even though he yells at me sometimes and looks mean if I come up and pat him on the back and say "how's it going, Dave." Me and Dave are best friends, but since Dave lives too far away for me to ride my bike to see him and he said I wouldn't fit in his car because I'm too tall, I've never been to see where he lives. Dave brought some friends to see me, though, and we all went to a bar on High Street. Dave and his friends had me drink a lot of beer and I saw a girl who smiled at me and we danced but then I don't remember. Dave said we had fun so I guess we did. The next day I heard my mom crying, but my head hurt so I didn't smile and say "Good morning, Captain" like I usually did. Her favorite apron was soaking in the sink and I asked her why and she said that I got sick on it when she was putting me to bed the night before and she kept crying. When I asked Dave about it he laughed and said that he gets sick on people all the time so it was alright. I said that I didn't think so, but I thanked him for taking me out.

Later when I went to whiz I looked down and saw that I didn't have any hair in front like before. I saw that there were some black lines that I hadn't seen before and so I went over to look in the mirror. Somebody laughed when I turned around but I didn't see who because I was staring at myself in the mirror. Somehow where the hair used to be there was an elephant face drawn on me. There was little eyes and big ears, but the trunk had been there before. It was the best thing I had ever seen. My favorite animal in the whole zoo was Matilda the elephant because she was so pretty and big. Everyone knew it, and they would even ask me how she was because they knew I always went to see her, first thing everyday. This picture on me looked just like her, but it was more of a boy elephant I think. It was so nice that I whizzed in the sink so I could look at it some more. I decided that I liked it very much. When I went to show Dave he was on the phone and he seemed shy about it, but when he saw how much I liked it he told me that it was his idea and that it was a tattoo so it wouldn't wash off. I thanked him very much and left. On the way out, Dave told me not to show too many other people because they wouldn't understand like me and Dave.

The reason I don't work there anymore is because I tried to show Matilda the picture. The day that I tried to show her wasn't too busy and I'd picked up lots of trash so it was alright. To make sure she would see I stood up on the black railing in front of Matilda's House and pulled down my pants. While I was waiting for Matilda to come out a little boy came up beside me and pulled on my pants leg and asked me what I was doing. I turned around and showed him the picture and he said it was cool and that he wanted one, but then his mom came and saw me and she screamed. I think she was just blue because she couldn't have one too. She took the little boy away and the Zoo Police came and took me to see Jack Hanna. I had never seen Jack Hanna up close, and it made me scared because Jack Hanna was famous enough to be on David Letterman. I thought about it, though, and decided that maybe if Dave and the little boy thought my elephant face was cool then maybe Jack Hanna would too. I thought that maybe he would think it was so cool that he would take me to be on David Letterman too. The more I thought about it, the more I wanted to find out, so before Jack Hanna could say anything I showed him my elephant. When I showed him his mouth sort of dropped open so I knew he liked it. All the other men in the room laughed and the Policeman took me out and sent me back to the employee building. When I got there he made me take off my name tag and my Zoo Hat. While I stood there, he peeled off my name from the name tag and gave it to me. I still have my name because I put it on my mirror at home and when I look into the mirror it says Billy Winston and I nod 'cause I know it's me.

When I got home and put my bike away, I saw Mrs. Carmichael from The Franklin County Retard Board in the kitchen with Mom. My dad had called it The Franklin County Retard Board and my Mom hated that, but my dad was gone so it didn't matter. One time my dad had given me a shirt that said "Instant Retard, Don't Need Water" that he had made special out of one of his own shirts, but he didn't tell Mom. I never wore the shirt because it smelled like "The juice of the Devil" that my Mom was always talking about, but I guess I lost it because I don't know where it is now. I'm glad my dad is gone, though, because I fit into all of his clothes. Mrs. Carmichael was getting up when I came in, and she patted my arm and looked up at me and said that she would do her best at finding another job. I told her I liked the zoo, so could it please be another zoo? She looked away and said something to Mom. Sometimes I go to the zoo still, but only on busy days so I can get in. I saw Dave once, but he left before I could say hi, so I don't think he likes me anymore. The animals still like me, though, so I say hi to them. Last week I went and Matilda wasn't there, even after I waited all day. I asked a boy who hadn't worked there when I did, and he said that she had been Put To Sleep because she was sick, so I picked some flowers and sat on the railing to wait. A few minutes later, the boy walked by and after he passed he yelled "THAT MEANS SHE'S DEAD YOU FUCKING RETARD," so I said thanks, but I'd wait anyway. I thought she'd want to see the picture.

Eric Whitney

Sunset

We are like these rows of maples,
and crows nestled in the thin arms
of telephone poles, all black
against the flame of sunset,

all charring to dark silhouettes.
Caught at this corner, we wait,
cooled by the wind and listening
to the winding legs of crickets.

I hold your roundish head in my hands,
notice, suddenly, how your face
has bloomed--too many ripened bushels
past the dawn of a wistful smile.

In your eyes is sunset,
a fading hazel pooled at your eyelids,
and your figure wavers to flecks of black,
a flutter of crows angling toward the sun.

Chris Rynd

Contributors' Notes

Craig Bagno is a junior English major.

Matt Benson, in his free time, can be found cutting grass with a push lawn mower and pulling weeds in the hot sun.

Carolyn Berns is currently working on the incorporation of Jello-O into her work. She loves Oprah and the Butthole Surfers. She hopes to earn her B.F.A. next year.

Randy Casden hates the title of her poem.

Margaret Dawson

Jedd Gould is a senior majoring in philosophy and history.

Rory Herbster - After four intense years at Denison, Rory is going to Florida to be Mickey Mouse.

Laura Johnson

Amy Judge has lived the Denison experience.

Kent Lambert is pursuing different perspectives.

Richard Latimer - They will tell you all this. You will believe them.

Sue McLain

Michael Payne wants to thank his better half.

Lynn Pendleton

Chip Reidinger is graduating much to the embarrassment of the academic community.

Shannon Salser - "He gets the fruit I can't." Lynn Kassover, 1989.

Deb Tily

Rosemary Walsh is 5 feet 14 inches long.

Peter Witonsky - A dedication to his mother for all of her labors.