

The Mockingbird

1984

The Mockingbird

ETSU Department of Art

ETSU Department of English

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.etsu.edu/mockingbird>

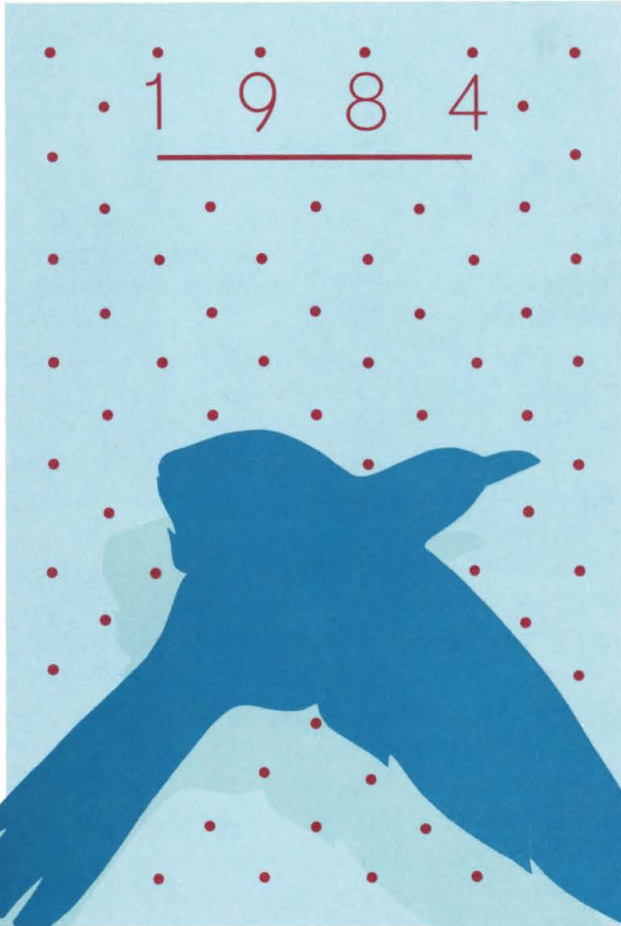


Part of the [Art and Design Commons](#), and the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

ETSU Department of Art and ETSU Department of English. 1984. The Mockingbird. Volume . Johnson City, TN: East Tennessee State University. <https://dc.etsu.edu/mockingbird/31>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ East Tennessee State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Mockingbird by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ East Tennessee State University. For more information, please contact digilib@etsu.edu.



Mockingbird

1 9 8 4

Mockingbird

The annual publication of
East Tennessee State University
Johnson City, Tennessee



JUDGES

- Drawings: Helen Roseberry, coordinator of Carroll Reece Museum, received her M.A. from ETSU with a major in art and concentration in sculpture. She has exhibited her sculpture widely and received several awards.
- Essays: Dr. Richard Marius, a native of East Tennessee, is Director of the Writing Program at Harvard. His novels, *The Coming of Rain* and *Bound For the Promised Land*, have won him critical acclaim. His next book, a biography of Sir Thomas More, will be published in September in New York and London.
- Fiction: Alan Cheuse is the author of several books, his most recent novel is *The Bohemians*. Mr. Cheuse is currently writer-in-residence at the University of the South.
- Photography: Jim Morris, instructor at Radford University, has studied photography and sculpting at Queens College, the Skowhegan School of Painting, and the University of Massachusetts. He has exhibited widely, most recently at the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art.
- Poetry: Dr. Parks Lanier teaches poetry writing at Radford University, Radford, Va. He shared the first AWA poetry chapbook with *Mockingbird* editor Rita Quillen, and has since published a collection of his own poems called *Appalachian Georgics*. Three years ago he judged the first *Seed-In-Hand* poetry contest, with entries from across the U.S. and from several foreign countries. As graduate students at UT-Knoxville, he and his wife, Lois, were backdoor neighbors to Dr. Marius, who asked them to babysit a bottle of truffles while he was on a trip.

MOCKINGBIRD 1984 STAFF

- Editor: Rita Quillen
- Literary Staff: Allen Mincey
Donnie Collette
Toney Frazier
Darla O'Brien
Deborah Scaperoth
- Art Staff: John H. Walker, Art Director
Wade Blakenbeckler
Jennifer Calhoun
Amy Wilkerson

MOCKINGBIRD ADVISORS

Jonathan Donehoo, Art Department
Thomas D. Lane, English Department

Mockingbird Art Prize money donated by the Paul Whitaker Memorial Award, courtesy of the B. Carroll Reece Museum, the Department of Art; and the East Tennessee State University Foundation.

Mockingbird Literary Prize money donated by East Tennessee State University Foundation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cover Design.	John H. Walker	
	Winners	
Drawings:	Todd Tyson, <i>First Place</i>	21
	Todd Tyson, <i>Second Place</i>	22, 25, 44
	Chip Bailey	14
	Sherrie Greear	39
	Steven Standley	26, 43, 47
Essays:	Skip Matherly, <i>First Place</i>	23
	Debra Crane, <i>Second Place</i>	27
Fiction.	Judy K. Miller, <i>First Place</i>	5
	Tim Foster, <i>Second Place</i>	11
	Leroy Crawford, <i>Third Place</i>	16
Photography	Jill Archer, <i>First Place</i>	32
	Monica Edmonds, <i>Second Place</i>	35
	Alice Anthony	19
	Jill Archer	46
	Deborah Gonzalez.	6, 24, 40
	Dale Haines	8, 29, 31
	Barry Jones	10, 13
	Mark Nabstedt	38
	James Price	36
	Todd Tyson	17
Poetry	Greta Talton, <i>First Place</i>	9, 34
	Jane Hicks, <i>Second Place</i>	15, 40
	Tim Foster, <i>Third Place</i>	20
	Toney Frazier, <i>Honorable Mention</i>	41, 25
	John S. Rasnake, <i>Honorable Mention</i>	30, 42
	Donnie Collette	45
	Janice Lyons	38
	Brent Ritchie.	33
	Catherine Romaine	37

Alligator Shoes

Judy K. Miller

As soon as she slipped the shoe on her foot Mrs. Simpson knew that she was as good as the women she saw buying Aigners and Life Strides at Park-Belk and Miller-Rhoads. "Look at my beautiful golden lilies," she said to herself "Golden lilies" was a phrase she had learned from the novel she was reading. The only thing that she had gotten out of the book was that it was about communism and Chinese women who bound their feet to make them small. Mrs. Simpson's feet were size nine and one-half's, but the alligator shoes made them look three sizes smaller. She especially liked the cut of the shoe. It was high enough to help hide the beginnings of the blue cords that rolled along the top of her feet and climbed up the sides of her legs, and yet curvy enough to keep the shoes from looking like they had been made for old women. She slipped off the shoe and held it close in front of her face. The way that the store lights were tinted, the shoe did indeed look golden.

"Could I help you with that, ma'am?" A woman in a white pant suit had walked up beside Mrs. Simpson and was looking down at her naked foot, then up at the shoe in her hand.

"Yes you could," Mrs. Simpson said. "You could help me find this shoe's mate." She dropped the

shoe into the woman's palm. "I've searched all over this table and it's nowhere to be found."

"We just put out one of each. Saves confusion. You know what I mean. Keeps ladies from fighting over the same pair. You just take a seat over there and I'll be right back."

The woman brought back two brown and white boxes and set them on the floor as she squatted beside Mrs. Simpson's feet. "I brought the next size up, too," she said. "Just in case. These shoes run a little small."

"I've never wore a size ten in my life. My Herman says my feet are the biggest thing about me, but I've never had to go to a size ten." She pushed her foot down into the shoe. It was much tighter than the one she had found out on the table. "Are you sure you gave me the right one?"

"Yes ma'am. It says nine and a half right here on the box."

"Let me see that." She read the numbers and words stamped on the end of the box. "It doesn't say one thing about where these shoes were made. They're not any of those foreign-made affairs, are they?"

"No ma'am. American all the way. Both soles and uppers."

"Yes, I see." She handed the box back to the woman and bent over to pull the shoe off her foot. "If there's one thing I can't stand--" she straightened up and

caught her breath, then went on talking "--it's to buy a new pair of shoes and get home and find out they were made in Hong Kong or Taiwan or some other god-forsaken place." She rubbed her finger down one side of the shoe feeling of the ridges. "I may not be able to buy the best, but I don't have to buy the cheapest neither. These are good shoes?"

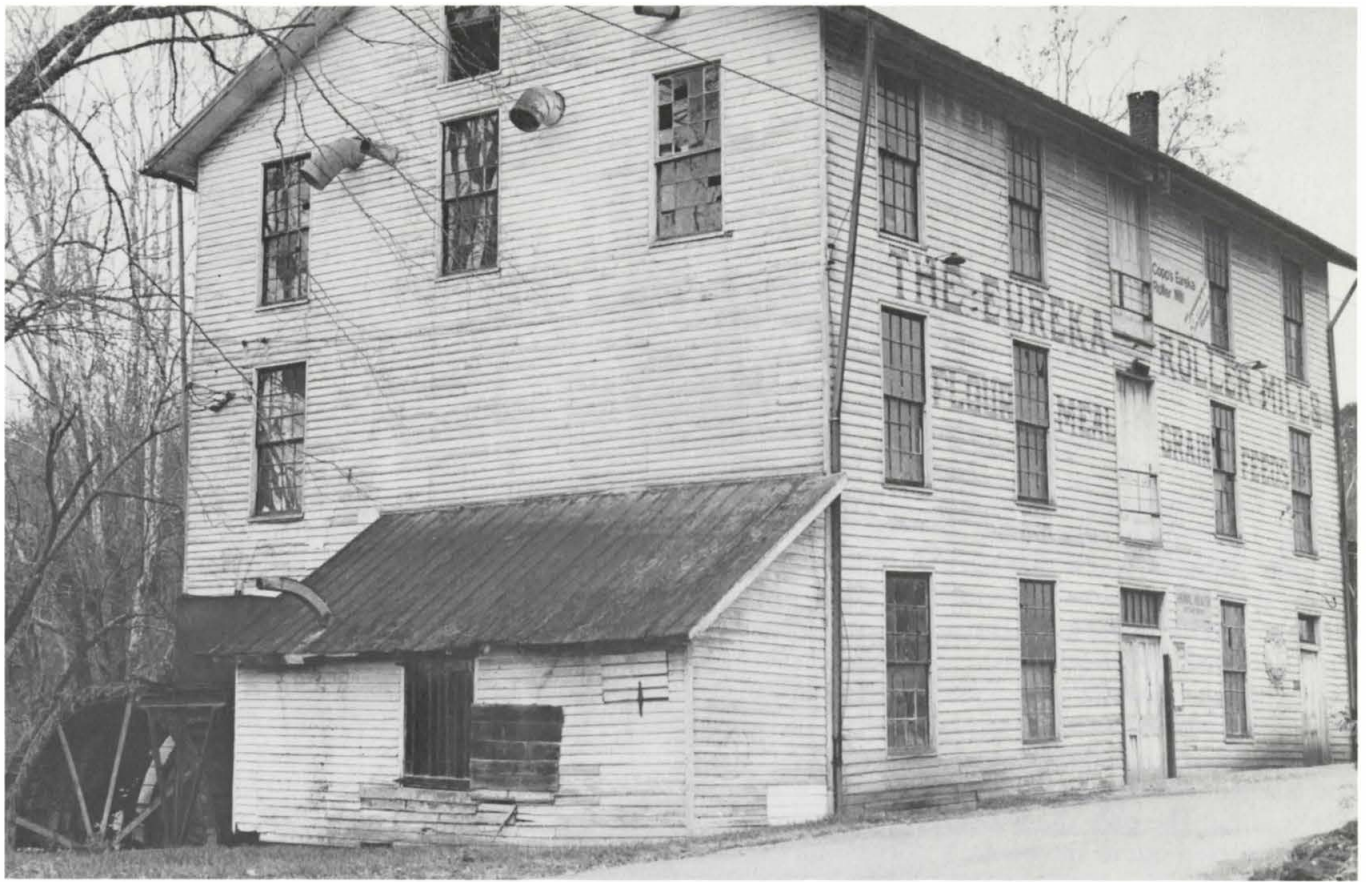
"Yes ma'am. The top of our line."

Mrs. Simpson scratched her fingernail along the lines of the grain. "Well, I do like them well enough, but are you sure they're good shoes?"

"Honey, you don't have to take my word for it. Just ask that girl over there." She motioned toward the clerk who was filing her fingernails, her hand propped up on the cash register. "She bought a pair way back in the spring before they were marked down and she says they're the most comfortable thing she's ever had on."

"Is that so! I never was one to go buying off a bargain table, but I never did like to pass up a good deal neither."

As soon as she got home the first thing Mrs. Simpson did was to try on the new shoes for Herman. As usual, he was stretched out on the couch with a newspaper spread over his chest like a dirty blanket. Ever since he had retired six months ago he had



Deborah Gonzalez

the habit of lounging on the couch for the biggest part of the day while she took care of the important things such as cleaning the house and ironing his underwear

"Look what I got in town," she said. She didn't say "golden lilies" because the last time that she had tried out a new word on him, he had accused her of getting above her raising. He seemed to think that being poor meant that you weren't supposed to learn new things.

"You wouldn't believe what I paid for these " She raised one heel off the floor and pivoted her foot from side to side "Aren't they lovely? Guess how little they cost, Herman, just guess."

Mr Simpson rolled over on his side, then sat up, scrubbing his feet against the carpet. "How much?" He cleared his nose,

making a sound that was between a sniff and a snort. It was a sound that usually made her grit her teeth, but this time she ignored it.

"No. You guess."

"Okay Let's say fifteen bucks."

"Not even close."

"Eighteen-fifty "

"Wrong again."

"I give up."

"You wouldn't believe me if I told you."

"Probably not." He folded the paper, then rolled it into a bat, bouncing it against his legs.

"They're genuine alligator, you know "

He puffed out his lower lip as he examined the shoes. "Nice," he said.

"Yes they are Aren't they lovely " Each word was spread out like a wad of dough being spread thin for a crust.

She took off first one shoe then

the other, holding each up to the light to examine it. "They do look greener, though," she said.

"What was that?" Mr Simpson unrolled the paper and was turning to the society page

"Green," she said. "They're green now, but when I bought them they were a lovely gold, as gold as sunshine on autumn leaves." She looked to see if he had noticed the clever way she had used the language, but of course he had not.

He folded the newspaper into quarters and tapped his finger against the picture of a bride "Did you see this piece about that woman in Galax who married the college professor? It says here she's the daughter of Manford Scott. That's not the Manford Scott we know, is it? I heard his daughter run off with the Methodist preacher not long ago."

"Manford's got two girls," she said as she tucked the shoes back into the box and pulled the white paper around them. "It's his youngest that's getting married. Eliza, I believe is her name."

"That's her. It says here, Eliza Louise Scott. That's the one." He began reading out loud and didn't even notice that she was leaving the room.

Mrs. Simpson carried the shoes to the closet in the spare bedroom and slid them onto the top shelf where she hid her jewelry box and photo albums.

The first time that she wore the shoes was one Saturday before Christmas when Lucille dragged her to the mall for a last round of shopping. She wouldn't have worn the shoes then except that Lucille would be leaving for Florida in two more weeks, and it might be the last chance she would have to show off her new shoes before spring.

Mrs. Simpson had to complain three times that her feet were killing her before Lucille ever said anything about the shoes. Then all that she said was, "You should have known better than to wear new shoes on a day like today."

"But don't you think they're just lovely?" Mrs. Simpson asked. "They're real alligator, you know."

Lucille wasn't listening to her. She was watching a cluster of young people who were huddling around a booth where the Salvation Army usually stayed during the holidays. "Isn't that Thelma Bishop's granddaughter over there?" Lucille asked, pointing toward a girl in a black T-shirt pulled down tight over her breasts and stretched out over her hips. The name Thelma always made Mrs. Simpson think of thimble, but there was nothing thimble-like about the girl in black.

"What do you suppose they're

representing?" Mrs. Simpson asked.

"It's certainly not the Salvation Army, I can tell you that," Lucille said. "Did you ever see the like in all your life? Poor Thelma! I bet it just kills her to have a granddaughter turn out like that. She was always such a god-fearing woman."

"If you'd had children of your own, you'd be a little more understanding. It's a phase they all go through."

"Well, I wouldn't be caught dead knowing a granddaughter of mine was laying around with a bunch like that." Lucille hugged her packages to her bosom and backed down onto a bench that was pushed back between two plastic palm trees.

"I'm going to find out what they're up to," Mrs. Simpson said. "Here, you watch my packages while I'm gone." She dropped the bags on the bench beside Lucille and walked away, her heels clicking against the hard floor.

Ten minutes later she came back and sat down. "Just another one of those fund drives by the college kids," she said. "I forget what they called it. Something like 'Save the Whale,' but that's not it exactly. Same sort of thing though."

Lucille grunted. "Foolishness is what I'd call it. Outright foolishness. I've not got time to worry myself with such nonsense. Come on, let's go to Sears. I heard they're having a sale on girdles, and mine's lost all of its control." She stuck her thumb under the waistband of her skirt and moved her hand across her stomach.

"Let me rest my feet for a while first," Mrs. Simpson said. "They really are killing me." She took off one of her shoes and rubbed her foot against the back of her leg.

She didn't notice the girl until she was already standing in front

of her. She was holding Mrs. Simpson's alligator shoe in the palm of her hand like it was a head of lettuce she was testing for weight.

"This woman's shoes are *yacare*," she said to the small group who had gathered around her. "I thought it was *yacare* when she was standing over there watching us. Can you believe this woman!"

"I told you they were good shoes," Mrs. Simpson whispered to Lucille. She looked down at the girl's shoes. They were the type of shoes that only poor farmers wore. She felt embarrassed for the girl at first for not having anything better to wear, but then she remembered that all young people wore that sort of thing.

The girl took Mrs. Simpson's shoe and dashed over to the group of students who were now waving placards which read
ENDANGERED SPECIES:
WHAT CAN YOU DO TO
HELP?

"Yacare," Mrs. Simpson said. "Isn't that a lovely name. I knew they were good shoes the first time I laid eyes on them."

"If I were you," Lucille said, "I would be trying to get my shoe back instead of sitting there raving about how good it is."

"She'll bring it back. You know how girls are about clothes and shoes." She laughed because she didn't want Lucille to know that she was worried. She was trying to decide whether or not she should get up and go after the girl when a young man with a burnt-red beard touched her elbow and said, "Excuse me, ma'am, but sometimes my students become overly zealous in their enthusiasm." He used her shoe as a pointer, indicating the group of students who were now staring at them. "I'm afraid Estelle mistook this for *yacare*. I hope you'll forgive us for any inconvenience." He placed the shoe beside her

swollen foot.

Mrs. Simpson liked the way the young man talked. "Yacare Is that a good brand name?" she asked.

The man laughed and Mrs. Simpson laughed with him.

"Yacare is an endangered species of crocodile," he said.

"Yes, of course " Mrs. Simpson chuckled. "That poor dear girl mistook my alligator shoes for crocodile, is that it?"

"Something like that. Some of these imitations are very good. Sometimes it's even hard for me to tell the difference But I didn't have any trouble with this one."

"Imitation?" Mrs. Simpson said the word so softly that the young man did not hear her

"Well, if you'll excuse me " His words intermingled with the undercurrent of babbling voices, and he drifted back to his students.

Lucille stood up, smoothing her

skirt and patting her stomach. "I guess that will teach you to wear new shoes on a day like today," she said.

"Yes, I guess it will," Mrs. Simpson said. Her mouth was dry and tasted like dirty rags. "You go on and see about that new girdle I'll meet you at the car "

"Suit yourself " Lucille gathered up her packages and left without once looking back.

For a long time Mrs. Simpson couldn't take her eyes off the shoes. It was like they were a pair of magnets which wouldn't turn her loose "My golden lilies," she said outloud. "My dear sweet golden lilies." Her feet twitched as she said the words. "Who cares if I've got big feet!" She squeezed her eyes shut and waited until she found the strength to stand.

When she opened her eyes the first thing she saw directly in front of her was the shoe store that the midget owned. She had never set

foot in the store and she had sworn to Lucille that she never would. The midget sold the cheapest-made shoes in town--the type of shoes that people on welfare bought. Mrs. Simpson rammed her feet deeper into her shoes and stalked into the midget's store

"I want a nice pair of patent leathers," she told him.

He sold her a skimpy pair of plastic patent leather sandals which pinched her feet when she walked. As she pushed her old shoes into a trash can, she tried to think of what she would tell Herman. Her fingers accidentally dipped into a half-empty can of Coke Carefully, she dried her fingers on a dirty napkin which she had found in the trash can and decided that she wouldn't tell him anything. ✎

Dale Haines



Photograph From An Old Album

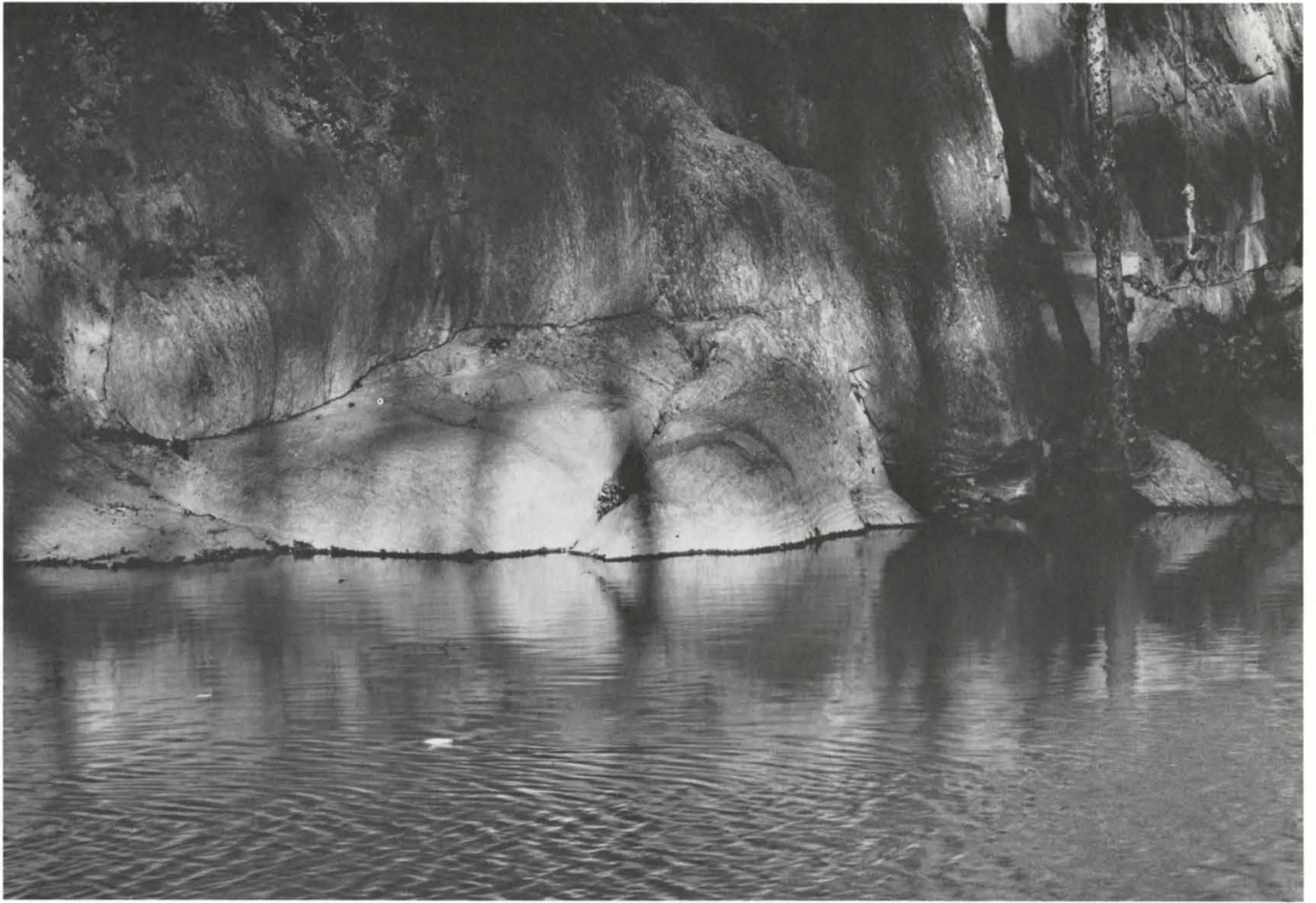
Greta Talton

It would have been simpler if the father
had held the baby Then eyes wouldn't wander
between two separate pictures: the child,
unfocused in the foreground,
the man, distinct, at center right.
Proximity it seems was not their way

But surely this was meant to be
a picture of the baby The chair in which
they've set her is so huge, so immediate,
and such an effort has been made
at dressing her and dressing it:
she in white, with a collar that turns up
around her face like angel wings;
the chair, with a lace-edged blanket draped
like an enormous sleeping cat across the back.

Yet the child looks out in fuzzy shock,
while the father behind a picket fence
of weathered or never painted wood
stares firmly past the camera —
one elbow on the gatepost,
one hand on his hip. To him belong
the elements of composition;
the grays and browns,
the house with crooked shutters,
the grassless yard, the fence;

While for the child sprung from
that improbable chrysalis, there is only
this one poised moment in late day sun,
as unaware she looks beyond, then fades
beneath her father's heavy signature.



Barry Jones

An Impulse of Unconscious Loyalty

Tim Foster

No, they did not bury me, though there is a period of time which I remember mistily, with a shuddering wonder, like a passage through some inconceivable world that had no hope in it and no desire.

— Joseph Conrad

Above me and a little to my right, I could see the reflection of the moonlight as it ran across the metal frame of the swingset. The school was farther behind. I do not remember it that well, and it is not really significant, for I was not trying to remember it. The air was brittle, and very calm, as it engulfed the abandoned insignificance of the school. My hand rested lightly on the chain, and I pushed backwards and began to swing, slowly, in a moment of no great desquietude. I paused and put my feet out to hold myself back. A gleam of moonlight, as it struck the metal, seemed to ring with a note of infinite and unanimated stillness. And I lingered a bit longer.

I thought of Adam. It had been a couple of months since I had seen him, and seldom do I talk with him. We were walking along an old logging road when we stopped and sat down just before dusk. We sat there on the edge of the road, staring in different directions. He mumbled something, I am not quite sure what — but that is the only way I

have ever known him, as if his whole life was just a bit of scattered mumblings, those being the only time one really ever notices him — even when he talks at length on anything. And then it is as if he were speaking to no one in particular. Without looking over, he began talking.

“There was,” he said, “a stillness which had folded its wings, descending upon us in the late afternoon of a winter’s day. Stephen was lying on his side, supporting himself with his right elbow. I pulled my knees closer toward me. I wanted to move my back off the rock, but I knew if I moved, the air would be colder against my wet back. It was that first movement that would be the worst, for the disturbance of tenseness would bring pain. I thought of the word. Pain. I tried to say it in my mind, to test its sound. It was hard to move my lips to utter even the beginning — it is a difficult word to think of without saying. Until, that is, one can get past the need to say it. Then there is something else. Something that for all its cruelty, must, I think, be warm.”

“But mine was not pain, nor was Stephen’s, whose knee was gashed deep, the white flesh, opened, could not bleed. It was not even Rusty, my dog, who was laying ten feet below on the next ledge, his neck broken. When we fell off this ledge that night, trying

to keep up with Rusty, either one, or both of us could have easily been killed. But the fact that we were alive was not extraordinary. We could only wait until we could make the climb through the snow and rocks back to the top. As we had been waiting, in different ways, I assume, through the rest of the night with a small amount of suffering and no real pain.”

“The pain was in the late afternoon, where there is no particularly magnificent sunset (not here, anyway), as the sun simply moves behind each of the many ridges after a time, and the one just above us was in shadow earlier and had only continued to get darker, while the sky to the east was almost black, until it touched the sun, gradually becoming whiter, with shades of blue along its way. But the pain of afternoon is not a pain which you feel, but only sense.”

“I heard the sound of wind rush harshly by cold feathers, and looked up to see the dark brown shape of a Great Horned Owl perch on the branch of a hemlock, and slowly move toward the trunk, before becoming still. I could not think symbolically, or even metaphorically. It could not be tolerated. Not here. Here, it is akin to confusion. Yet the closest I can approach a glimpse of that pain was, perhaps, to look at that owl. The tufts of feathers fell

from his legs down onto his talons. He looked as if he was resting, yet this seemed to be a lie, for no birds of prey are restful. And he was not the embodiment of pain, he was only part of it. Leaving the hemlock, his cumbersome body seemed to indistinctly mock flight — like he were some precursor ”

Here, Adam stopped. Perhaps because he was unsure of what my thoughts were, but that would not have troubled him, and I'm not sure of my thoughts at that time — it was hard enough coming to grips with the idea that I *had* thoughts about his story. I think that is why I remember his words — only the words.

Suddenly, he began again. “Stephen said, without looking up, I've never told you of the time I walked up to the head of Flint Creek. It was on a day damn near as cold as this, but with more snow. I set out with the intention of arriving at the place where battle between the Cherokees and the government occurred in the late 1700's. The 'bloodiest of all Indian battles' I had read. It had, you know, all the appeal of an adventure — at least it is all we have around here now that can be called such. 'But I was born in the wrong damn age.' I remember him saying that,” said Adam, “about being born in the wrong age.”

“He followed the creek on up the mountain. If you've been up there that way you know how steep both sides are, and the sun shines down into the creek for only a very short time during the morning, and it is in shadows the rest of the day. The snow covered the rocks and ice ran out into the water. An old chestnut log would be lying, as it had been for God knows how long, here and there among the rocks and vines, giving the appearance of an earlier age — an age even before the Indians had gathered for what they must have known would be their final camp.

It is strange how it would, from here, seem dark. The past, I mean. But it is part of the adventure, I suppose. But he was, for all that, talking about walking through an earlier time. A time which, for all its stillness and depth, could not be understood. It makes you feel...as if you could not even look upon it. Maybe. .fear, you know. Even now, when I think about it, as I often do, some small aspect may change, but not the fear. I was not afraid, but I could not look too closely into it. Stephen said it was a place which could leave no memories. But what about the nature of memory?”

“Anyway, Stephen paused and moved himself backward while kicking some snow away with the heel of his boot. I had seen the fear he was talking of, or at least felt what it can do — with or without effort I cannot say. It is in the darkness where the waters of the creek run under some rock or under the root of a tree along the edge — and it extends into the forest and upstream, and, most vividly, behind as you keep going. And it closes behind as you glide (yes, I think you glide; for how else may a phantom move) upon the subtle roar of rushing water as it is heard behind, ahead, and underfoot. I squeezed my toes inside my boots. I was startled, for I realized that I was not paying attention to Stephen, who was right beside me.”

“Some time later” Adam said, “Stephen came upon this small rock ledge, where a huge tree had been uprooted, pulling the rocks slightly apart. There was already a small space between them and he said he pried them farther apart to where he could see down in between. It could not have been more than a foot and a half deep and a little longer than that. But there was something at the bottom, partially buried, that was round and almost black. He said

he would have gotten up and left had he not seen something of a little lighter color. He said that what he saw were teeth, and he was looking at a skull. It was inside this hollowed out cave-like thing, and when the tree blew over, it pulled the whole thing up on its end. I remember him looking over at me and saying harshly: 'It wasn't as if I were allowed a glimpse of some long-kept secret or anything like that. It could have been an Indian, at least, that is what I thought. There were supposed to have been many of those who weren't killed and escaped wounded into the woods. I don't know' ”

“Of all I had ever heard him talk of, I remember most his idea of belonging to the wrong time. He went on, telling me that he sat there on his knees for some time. He said 'I never felt so much like I was living in the wrong time. But, strangely, I felt myself grouped with, perhaps of my own choice, everyone else of this age. It is strange how easily I accepted this. After some time I raked some leaves and dirt into the hole and wedged another rock in between the two. After a while, I stood up and left. And it wasn't as if I were leaving anything or exactly going to something else. I just...left... came on out' ”

“Having said that, Stephen looked up to the edge where we had to climb. Neither of us moved. I felt somehow at fault for not being able to understand. My understanding, I think, could only be evanescent, if it presented itself at all. I can only see him kneeling there, over a skull. He fancied himself an anachronism. As I, too, have. It's been a year since he died.”

“It was then too dark to try and climb out, although we could have made it up the face. We waited. And the pain — it leaves too quickly — altogether ”



Barry Jones

It was in that short, faint time
just before dark and just after
dusk, that Adam stopped talking.

I'm not sure what I wanted to
work out, and I will not attempt
to defend myself I watched the
shadows pass by; and had I not
even helped guide them? It
occurred to me how stupid I must
look, sitting on a swing at night,
to those who passed by in cars —
as one passes a drunk on the
street. For some reason or
another, I hurriedly stood up and
took a few steps as if to leave. I
thought of their languid shapes as
they sat in the woods — and
stayed a bit longer — indistinct to
anyone who, upon driving by,
might look in my direction. 🐦



Chip Bailey

Diamond Jenny #7

Jane Hicks

Always before going under
He gasped as if he might never again.
The mountain looms
Gray and scarred above him.
Only Brother Barnes' God and His angels
Could look from heaven and see more
Than he saw spread below
Going down, the gasping
Gives way to measured labor
Like the worm in his lunch apple
He crawls — through the belly of the mountain,
Already halfway to Hell.
(Could have gone to college over at Berea,
But Brother Barnes said only the Devil's work
Went on over there.)
His rumbling belly sends him crawling backwards
Toward food and the chance
To straighten his back.
(It really doesn't straighten anymore.)
The belly of the mountain
Suddenly rolls and rumbles.
On the surface, she belches
Like a beer-joint slut.
He and the worm hang
Suspended in her belly;
Already halfway to Hell.

A Strange Way To Win

LeRoy Crawford

The night of my first pro fight was one hell'uva night. It was enough to make a mare kick and a preacher cuss. I never knowed a man could be so glad, and so sad, and so mad, all in one night; but wait, I'm ahead of my story. Gollee! I had worked long and hard for this chance to be a pro boxer and I didn't wanna blow it. There wouldn't be no slippin and slidin, peepin and hidin this night. Two good men would be in the ring, and some tail-kicking would be goin on. What I mean is, we was gonna be out for blood, and that ain't no lie!

I had signed to fight a dude called Flying Eagle. He was a damn good boxer and he had a string of eleven knockouts to his credit. The bettin odds was two-to-one in his favor. But, I wasn't worried bout that cause I knowed he had to bring it to git it. At the weigh-ins we both weighed 176 pounds. We was fairly evenly matched otherwise, cept for our age; him being 23 and me being 19. The fight was to be ten rounds and you had to take a count of eight when you landed on your tail.

Sittin in my dressing room waiting for fight time, I recollected how it was during my training for this fight. I could feel the nip of the crisp-cool air as I hopped wood, bare to the waist. I done this to git strong in my arms.

I remembered the sweet smell of honeysuckle filling my head as I jogged in the early morning hours. Them newspaper people even came out and took a heap of pictures of me. Just to look at em, theys acted like I'se a somebody for shore. It looked kinda like this poor boy from Frenchtown was on his way up. Golleeeee-ned! I just got to win this fight, I kept a tellin myself, or git run outa town on a rail.

My fans even came out to watch me jog in the early morning hours. On my way to the gym, I could plainly see the faces of my fans as they followed to watch me work out. I could hear them "oooin and aaaahing" when I'd triple jab the little black speed bag. They shore had a ball when I skipped rope. I always did a little tap dance when I skipped. But, gollee! when I got into the ring for a sparring lesson, they'd go hog wild and holler, "Put him down Kid Crawford, put him down!"

After two or three rounds of sparring, Kid Thomas would holler through the megaphone, "Folks, put whatsomever you kin in the hat being passed amongst you, and thank ya'll fer comin," and the training session would be over. Then he'd start on me. "Roy, I want you to git all the rest you kin. I know you ain't gonna fool with liquor-drinkin, but you shore will run atter them gals.

Them split-tails ain't nuthin but trouble, and besides, they makes you weak all over." I'd say, "Okay old man, I ain't gonna run round none. Keep your britches on. I can take care of myself." He'd git so mad he'd almost swaller his chew. He yelled, "Boy, you better lissen and not be so damn sassy. I know whut-the-hell I'm a-talkin bout, and iffen you don't lissen, you is gonna git your ass kicked some kinda good in that ring!"

I loved Kid Thomas like a father. The truth is, I wished many a time that he was my daddy. I never had a daddy. My mama got shed of my daddy when I was a wee-little tyke. She said he wasn't worth a damn for nuthin no never. She said he wasn't nuthin but a whoremonger. Gollee, and him being a preacher too! My mama shore thought Kid Thomas was the cream-of-the-crop, though. She didn't know that I knowed, but the Kid had her nose opened as wide as a barn door. I caught em comin out of the clinches a heap of times, but I didn't let on like I knowed what was goin on. I don't blame Kid Thomas for courtin my Ma. She was a mighty good looking woman. Her hair was long and silky-black with eyes to match. She had smooth brown skin, and she was tall but not skinny. She was built like a Coca-Cola bottle. It woulda been nice if they'd got



Todd Tyson

hitched. Memories like these made me feel good all over. There was a knocking on my door and it busted up my dreaming. It was time to do some shadow-boxing; time to git heated up for the rumble. It was fight time.

The bout was being held in the American Legion Arena. There was oodles of red, white, and blue streamers all over the place. Golleee, it looked like a Fourth of July celebration. The house was jammed-packed to the rafters and iffen noise was any kinda yardstick, them folks was as happy as a flea on a dog with no legs. Gollee, they was livin high on the hog. The police gathered round me and my handlers to help us git through the crowd. On my way to the ring, I could hear my fans hollering, "Put him down, Kid Crawford, put him down!" I shore felt happy. I loved

them for making me feel this way. When I git to be champ I'm gonna buy em all a Cadillac. Golleeee-ned!

We was prancin in our corners to keep warm, waitin for the ring officials to do their thing. Flying Eagle was wearin red trunks, white shoes, and he looked to be in good shape for his hassle. He'd better be, or he's in a heap of trouble, I thought to myself. The ring announcer got into the ring and went into his speil, "LADIEEES AND-UH-GENTULLLMENNN, IN-UH-THISS-KARNARR. .." I couldn't keep from laughin at the way he slurred his words. It's a damn good thing he wasn't chawin tobaccy, golleee! The referee called us to the center of the ring. He said, "I want ya'll boys to break clean when I tell ya. No low blows, no rabbit-punchin. Now

ya'll shake hands and come out fighting at the bell." I stuck out my gloves to Flying Eagle to shake hands; he just turned his back and walked to his corner. I was pissed-off for shore! Who did that nigger think he was? I'll fix him! I'm gonna kick his ass till his nose bleeds!

The bell sounded, the fight was on! We circled each other looking for an opening. I was just as careful as a one-eyed cat peepin in a seafood store. I couldn't afford to miss a chance to git him. I put out a light left jab. He moved straight backwards from me. I knowed right then what he was up to; he wanted me to come into his range. I leaned to him a little and faked to my right. That dummy was suckered. He dropped his left arm and I nailed him with a hard right hook to his jaw. He went down like a sack of potatoes. In a

neutral corner I was jumpin up and down. I was so happy! Golllee-ned! The referee started countin, "One, two," and the fans was countin with him, "three --- four --- five --- six ---seven." Flying Eagle got up at the count of eight. The referee cleaned his gloves and told me to keep on fightin. I knowed I had hurt him, he was slower and his timing was off I went in for the kill. I hit him with one more jab, but he clinched me and hung on till the bell ended the round.

The whistle blew for the handlers to leave the ring. At the bell for the second round, I came out blasting. My gloves smacked - - smacked as I jabbed him in the face. He managed to clinch me and tie me up. Then he used the old Kid Chocolate trick. He whurled me round and laced me -- and he spit in my face! The referee didn't see a damn thing! I got so mad I had a duck-fit. I started throwin punches like a machine gun shootin bullets, and I was missin him by a country mile. Well, he whupped me. He whupped me so bad the referee had to stop the fight.

This fight was rotten, it stunk, it was God awful! I had been fouled on a purpose, but yet, I lost the bout. I hadn't never hurt nobody outside the ring in my life; howsomever, I shore wanted to do some bodily harm to this what-you-may-call him. "Oh, Lordy! Please help me to hang em, cause he ain't got no bizness livin atall! Gollleeee," I mumbled to myself as I slunked off toward the back alley door

There was some cases of empty coke bottles stacked outside of the building. I got me two cases of em and was waitin for Flying Eagle to come outside. I was gonna crucify that bastard with coke böttles. Since he liked dirty fighting, I was gonna show him some back-alley rumblin that he'd never forgit. My fans had gathered

round me in the alley, waiting to help me out. They saw whut the referee didn't see and they was mad as hell too. Then, here comes the police. Sirens howling and red lights blinking. A person woulda thought somebody was robbing a bank or sumthin. Golllee-ned! There was two carloads of police and I could hear more comin. They jumped out of their cars almost at the same time and said, "Aw right, break it up. The party's over, ya'll folks kin go home now " One of em walked over to me, "Whut in the hell is wrong with ya boy?" Crying like a baby, I tried to tell him bout Flying Eagle spittin in my face. He cut me off with, "Ya put them damn bottles back where ya got em from and go home." I started to try to tell him again and he said, "If you don't simmer down and do whut I tell ya to do, I'm gonna put your black ass in jail. Ya hear me boy?" By this time he had his handcuffs in one hand and his nightstick in the other So I figgered real quick that all this didn't need to happen. It was just too much sugar for a dime. I just picked up the bottles and tippy-toed over and put them back real quiet-like. Then I headed for home feelin like the whole world was agin me. Gollleeee.

When I got home I didn't want to go to bed. I wasn't sleepy I was sick at heart. I sat on the porch steps trying to git myself together when Mama called, "Roy, is that you?" "Yes'm it's me Mama." She asked, "Honey, is ya all right?" Before I could answer her she was right beside me. She took a look at my face and said, "Oh, Lord! Wait here baby Lemme git my shoes on. I'm takin you to a doctor " Kid Thomas got there just in time to hear her tell me that. He said, "Stella, we don't need to take em to no doctor I got everything he needs in this bag." Mama had started crying. "Oh, Harold, his face looks a

mess. Whut in the world happened to em?" Kid Thomas told her, "He got tricked by a damn dirty fighter and lost the fight, but he'll be okay I promise you."

This was the first time I had ever heard them call each other by their first names, but I liked what I heard. The Kid kept talking to Mama. "Now honey, please stop cryin and go git me a basin of luke warm water so I kin fix this boy up." While the Kid was working on me, he told Mama about the fight. Mama's eyes was flashing fire now She was mad as all git out. She said, "Roy, I don't know nuthin bout this prize-fightin, but you lissen to Harold, cause he knows. I want you to whup that feller's hind-parts the next time you have a chance. I mean it!" I said yes'm, and Kid Thomas started, "Don't you fret none boy, cause you learned a powerful lesson tonight. The next time it's gonna be different." Mama chimed in with, "Harold, do ya think Roy could be a champion?" The Kid answered, "I know damn well he kin be, Stella."

Sometimes people git good things in the strangest kind of ways. I lost that fight, but I learned something from it that has helped me a heap of times. The truth be told, it's helpin me in my old age today I learned how to keep my cool, some folks say, "Control one's emotions." Howsomever, I learned how to keep it in the ring or anywhere else. I figger I come off with the biggest prize afta all, when ya look at it real close like. Golllee!

Three months later, I had me a re-match with Mr Flying Eagle. The odds was in his favor agin, this time, five-to-one. Golllee, folks shore didn't care much bout their money bettin on him, I was thinking. But, that didn't make no nevermind to me cause my fans from Frenchtown was still on my side. They was still hollerin for

me to "Put him down!"

When we got in the ring, old Flying Eagle was a regular showboat. Thomas put his arm around me and said, "Easy Roy, he's just trying to git your goat. Don't let him rile you boy." When the ring announcer introduced me, I pranced round the ring bowin to the crowd. When I got to Flying Eagle's corner, I stopped and gave him a big mule-chompin-briers grin, then turned, patted my butt at him and did a real sassy strut back to my corner. The crowd went wild; they loved it! Kid

Thomas was bout to bust he was laughin so hard. Flying Eagle was goin crazy; he was jumpin up and down and yellin dirt at me. I reckon bout the only difference tween him and a baboon was that the baboon had a tail. Kid Thomas said, "Roy, you done got his goat fer shore, but whup his tail, don't kill em." I said okay, I'm gonna put em to sleep quick as I kin.

At the sound of the bell, I moved straight at him, jabbed him short and snappy in the face and backed away. I made a half-shuffle

toward him, feinted to my right, and I nailed him hard --- he was still a sucker for a right hook! The referee started counting and my fans always faithful, "One --- two --- three --- four --- five --- six --- seven --- eight --- nine --- and ten --- yur out! The referee raised my arm in victory. It was over in one minute, ten seconds of the first round. Well, I hung out with the broads that night and old Kid Thomas didn't say a mumblin word to me bout it. Gollee-ned!



Alice Anthony



Lynx

Tim Foster

Gaunt flanks move silently between
the shadows of trees
cast by a half-moon onto a floor of snow
just as light from a naked bulb passes
through window shades onto the ground outside

Snow, falling, drifting into
the cat's tracks — where they end

— to begin again
in another place in the woods
where the spectre has softly pressed a paw; or over,
more recent, in the imprint of snowshoes but cold

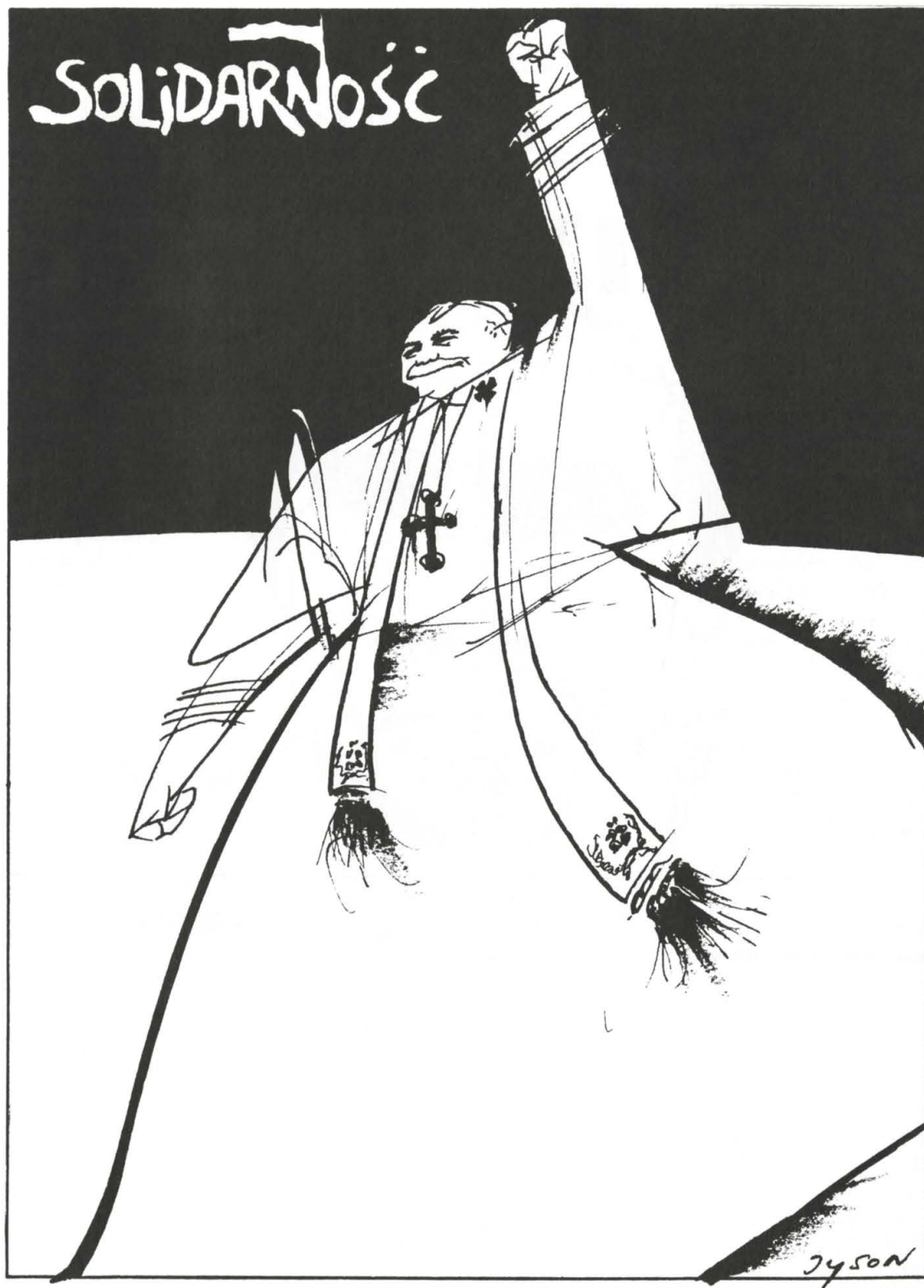
Miles back he circled and stopped
to watch his follower
staggering, as if looking, through halls of ice
which gathered around eyes,
for a place to sit in the blue snow and die in late January
Or at least to be satisfied with
the aching hollowness of soul as blanket wool
becomes a shroud with covered edges

on such a night what could be offered but
a pretence of purgation? of sympathy, all the fiercer
for being self-sympathy

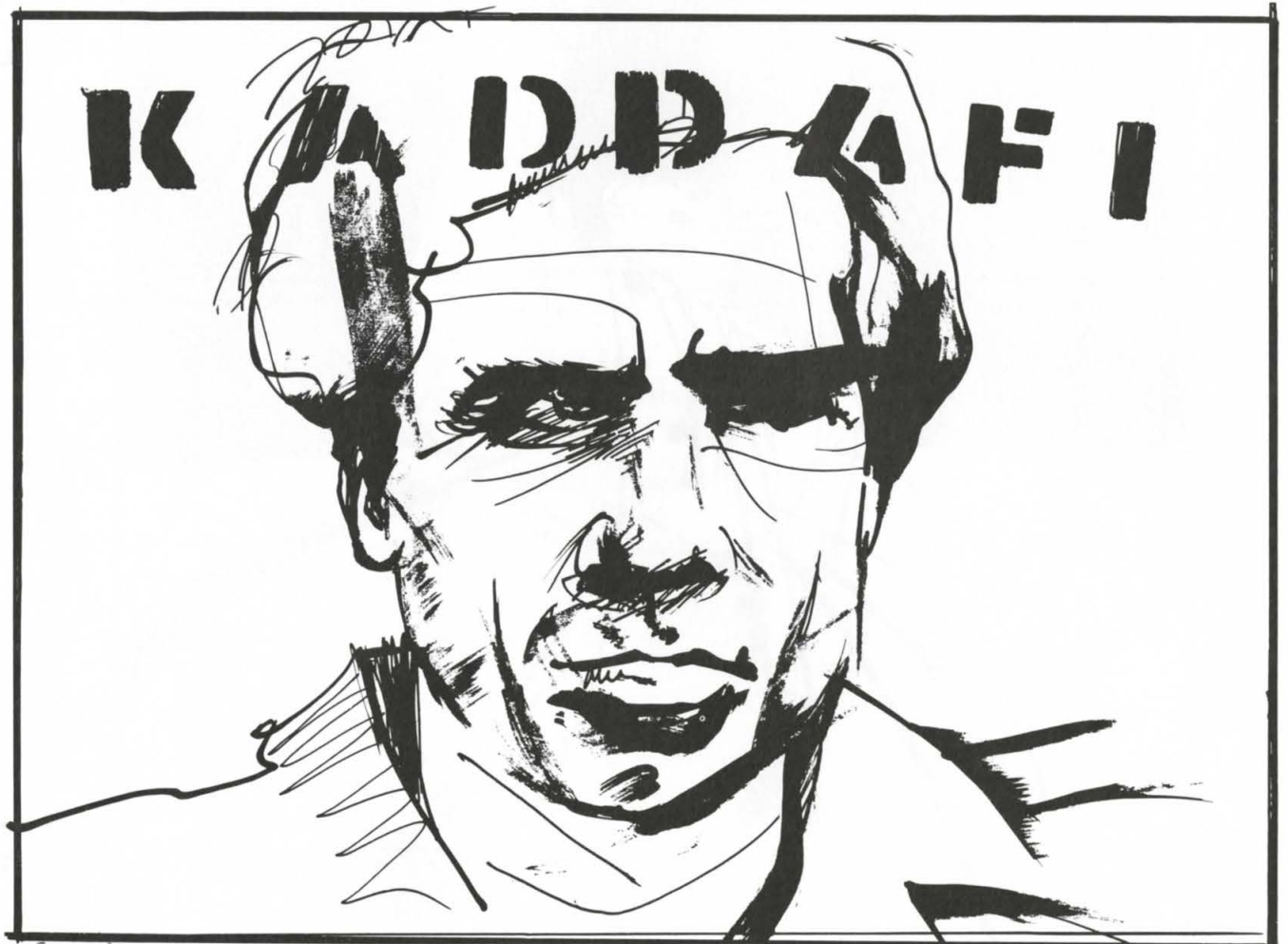
A voice without breath reaching;
and the snow falls as
grey breath dissipates into black

the dark shape stops as does finger

A nightpiece to be recited over
And Over
and I think of squeezing the trigger



2ND
PLACE
DRAWING



Todd Tyson

And the Lord Said: “Play Ball!”

Skip Matherly

“Dear Lord, help us to be good sports; keep us free from injury, and may the best team win.” How many times have we all heard this or a similar plea to the Almighty at the beginning of any given sporting event? This prayer makes one wonder if God really does take sides, if he will actually prevent a 265-pound linebacker from shattering the knee of a 190-pound running back. Does he read *The Sporting News*, a publication billed as “The Sports Bible”—or did he have a hand in writing it? Finally, does he really give Notre Dame all those last-minute miracles? These questions seem both blasphemous and absurd. But, when one considers the almost holy level on which we have placed organized athletics and the participants, the questions seem relevant and troubling to one who tries to honestly assess the role of athletics and religion in our society

Man’s quest for paradise and immortality is, and always has been, pursued in one of two areas: the conquering of the material world or submission to the spiritual world. History and literature are overrun with examples of both. From Gandhi and Socrates to Lombardi and Landry one need not look far to see examples of success in both realms. The most observable manifestations of both exist in the

worlds of athletics and religion. At first glance, the two appear ever closer to a merger of the two, and is not this merger a cruel and dangerous thing?

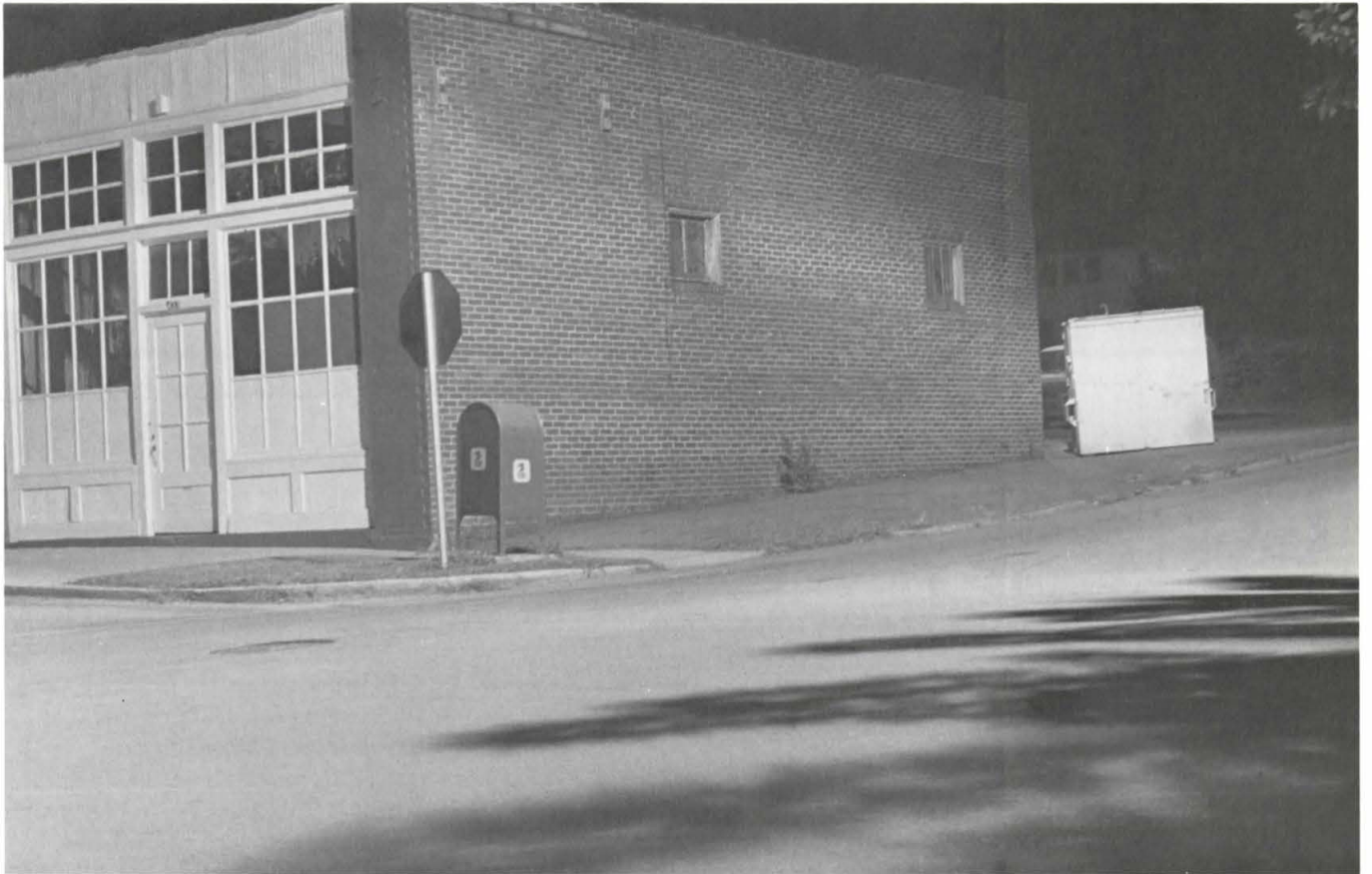
Every weekend, nearly year-round, sporting events take place throughout the country. The participants are paraded on cameras, like so many prize-winning heifers, while frustrated has-beens, half-crazed by booze or fear, scream like petulant three-year-olds, berating officials and coaches, and considering a fumble or a missed free-throw a personal affront.

This attitude lies at the heart of the problem. Sporting events, particularly at the college and professional levels, are pagan endeavors, where participants strive and compete for money, trophies, prestige, and the chance to say, “Hi, Mom!” or “you know ..” every other word during a post-game interview. Have the games themselves made berserk cattle of us all, or is it the fans, competitive though lacking talent, who have turned recreation and fun into an almost holy test of endurance and manhood (or womanhood) these days? What role should sports play in society and what role should religion assume?

Christianity teaches us to pray without ceasing, to live meditative lives, and use the talents bestowed upon us to serve whatever deity

we happen to acknowledge. Sports, games, and play were originally intended as rest for the mind from our spiritual labors, much as sleep is rest for the body. In a competitive society, where the dollar is fast becoming a God, we tend to associate physical and material gain with spiritual blessings. Nowhere is this merging of flesh and spirit more blatant than in sports. An invocation, followed by the National Anthem, precedes every game (one wonders if God actually sings or just hums along), and later the victors claim that God and their parents gave them the ability to run faster, jump higher, and hit harder than the other team. This in itself seems to imply that some of us are divinely equipped to win, “put here” to win fame and fortune for the sake of the very Creator. Fans seem to agree with this attitude; in fact, they may be the very source of it.

We tend to place on a pedestal those who achieve the media success inherent in athletics, especially when they “humble” themselves and credit teammates and others with being at least partly responsible for their achievements. When Herschel Walker was terrorizing defenses at Georgia, The Red and Silver faithful idolized him. When he decided to leave school and become a millionaire, those same mindless crowds questioned his



Deborah Gonzalez

loyalty, felt as if he had done it "to them." The sad fact is that Herschel Walker is human, and he is 21 years old. To expose one so young to that kind of pressure and expect him to please us is in direct contrast to the nature of organized athletics, yet fans and coaches alike screamed in unison when Walker personified the very standards *they* set for athletes to follow

This mentality moves us away from morality, ethics, and compassion. We pray for victory, not patience. We beseech the divine for strength to conquer, not faith to follow. When we set our sights on hero worship, we assure ourselves that our goals will never be reached. Sports assumes a here-and-now person, one winner and one loser. The end, not the means, sells tickets and brings rewards. Lord, help us

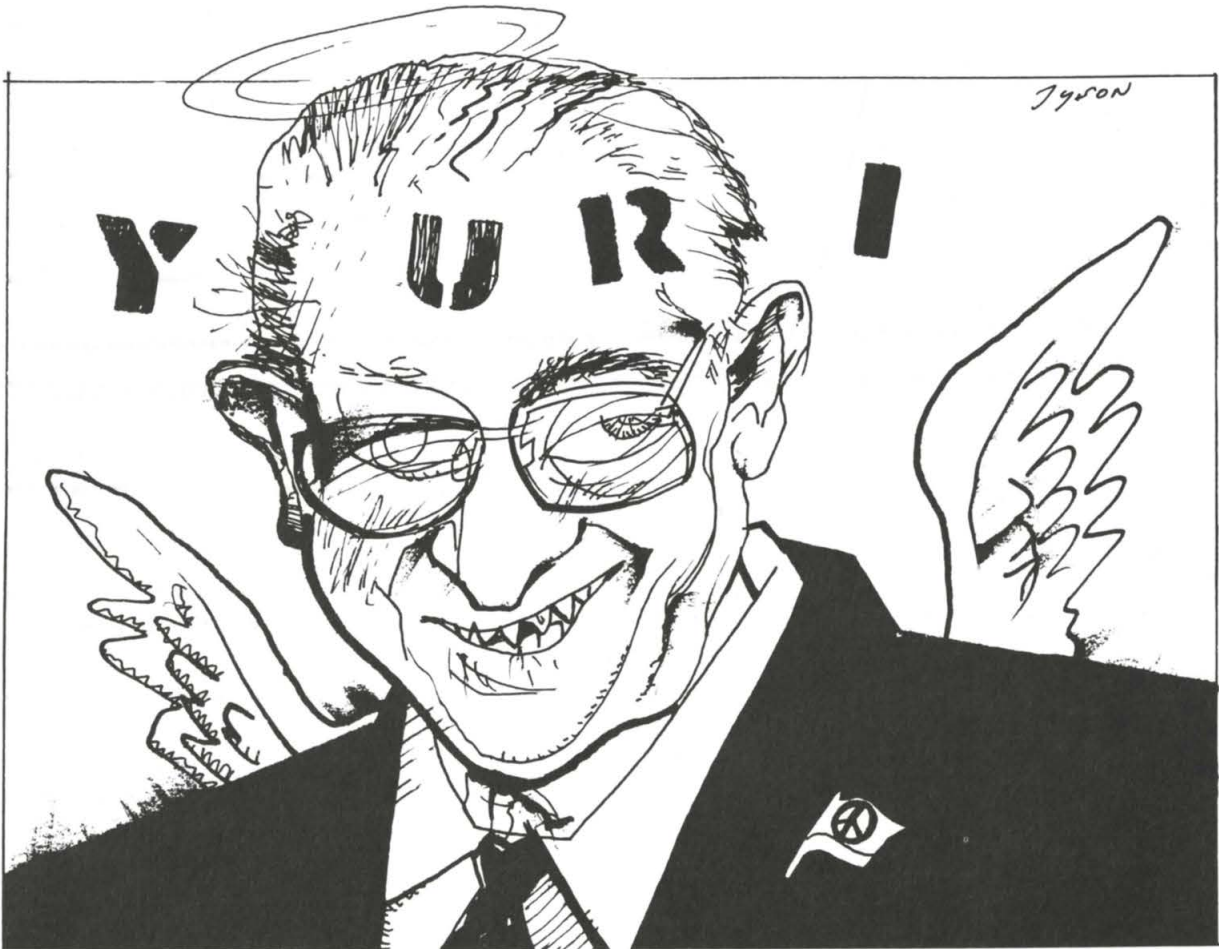
all when there's a tie! Is not the effort, the trying, whatever the endeavor, what really matters? There are sick people to be helped, poor to be fed and clothed. Our hearts grow harder every day, as we turn away from the spirit and, willingly embrace the material, expecting it to bring satisfaction and stability. Bill Russell once said, simply, "Crowds don't think." It is getting easier all the time not to think. We let Herschel Walker and others like him live out *our* fantasies, while we become a herd—a mindless mob. Poverty and war may come and go, but only God can make a Super Bowl. ✎

Heartbeat

Toney Frazier

Alone
The heart
Keeps on beating
Even though
Alone
The voice
Keeps on repeating
How we
Alone
Watch all
Our moments fleeting
Into dust
Alone

Todd Tyson





Steven Standley

Cartesian Nightmare: A Double-Headed Dragon

Debra Crane

There is a moment during a four-mile run when my existence extends no farther than the run itself. It is the zenith of a race which is mine alone, for there is no competitor, no spectator, no victor--just a lone runner on her own charted course. At this moment there is no sound save the rhythm of my breathing and the timed thudding of footfalls. There are no objects of significance save what lies in my path one stride ahead and the loose, sweat-laden clothing caressing me with each pace. And there is no other being whom I recognize as having ultimate significance save myself. This zenith--this nova of human consciousness--is the moment when I accept my reality as it is, when I accept my aloneness in living, when I affirm the "I am." Yet is a moment that goes beyond mere acceptance, because it is indeed a zenith of my becoming: now is the time when I glorify the "I" and give homage to "EGO."

Recognizing one's self as the beginning, end, and purpose of one's life is perhaps the most spectacular moment of becoming a person. When the realization of one's essential aloneness--the physical and conscious separation between persons--occurs in conjunction with the realization that this is one's true state as a human being and is a state worthy

of glorification, mythic sophrosyne becomes an actuality. It is the moment when no contradiction exists between perceived self and actual self. It then becomes the fueling idea of one's creative power in becoming EGO.

Am I essentially alone, separate from all else, especially separate from all other humans? To say "yes" is to say that all other humans are separate from me. To say "Yes" is to say that all humans are separate from one another, that we as persons are indeed alienated beings, that complete human solace is an impossibility. To say "yes" is to send myself hurdling into the most gruesome nightmare, grasping whatever apparent comfort I can to ward off the consuming fear that I am alone. It is to bury myself without hope that there exist persons whom I can love and know and who can love and know me. Or just one person--is that too much to ask? To say "yes" is to confirm the desolation of man, a desolation far too many people before me have known.

From my few experiences of life, I find no proof of my non-aloneness. I have had good friends and great friends, lovers and beloveds, and family members bound to me with the loyalty and love of histories shared, yet I remain alone. Once I experienced

a friendship of the highest order I have known--one where conversation sometimes interrupted our dialogue, one where distance had no effect on the knowledge of what the other was doing at a particular time of day, one where "human solace" found its definition. But there were always moments when a gulf existed between us which at first glance appeared infinitesimal, but unsurpassable at second. It was the abyss of human aloneness. Today, years after her graduation from college, the gulf has widened because our histories are no longer shared, except for occasional catch-up letters and three-day weekends. We have now lost ourselves to remembrances of times when our minds were as close as we have ever known them to be. The remembrances of yesterday act as our link with each other, but keep us separated from today. Even at best, we can never be certain that the remembrances are true to the actual "we" of yesterday or that each remembers the same "we." There is no doubt that she and I are alone today, each essentially separate from the other. And there is great doubt that it has ever been otherwise.

Of course, the nightmare of my humanness is not that I am "essentially alone," rather that I am condemned to an existence of loneliness. On a sunny day when I

am madly dashing from tutoring, to classes, to selling pizzas, to the racquetball courts, then finally to home so I can catch "Remington Steele," this notion of "essential aloneness" has no noticeable affect on me. I do what I have to do and skip the philosophical meditation. Furthermore, on this day the idea of me being alone is actually rather exhilarating. I must answer to no one for the things I do or the joy they bring. And there is great joy in knowing that I can tutor; study philosophy, German, and English, sell pizzas and supervise service; play Kamikaze racquetball, and relax to the unacclaimed "Remington Steel"--all in the same day and without another person understanding or even pondering the connection between them. I am and I love it!

But the dragon has two heads: one as comforting as Disney's Puff, the other as grotesque and paralyzingly frightening as the demon of a child's nightmare; one a youthful egoistic hope, the other a Cartesian nightmare spawned as that same youth ebbs. Take that same sunny day when I am dashing here and there and add to it one thought--I am alone. When I am in class, I am alone. When I am at work, I am alone. When I am with my friends or family, I am alone. When I embrace another person, I am alone. I AM ALONE! It is a human scream eternalized, an unalterable state of being. Now reality and nightmare are one. I feel no joy when I review the events of the day and remember the wonders I have seen but shared with no one. No one knows of me and my day, and I know of no one else's. Now I truly understand the import of "essential aloneness."

The realization that I am alone need not make me afraid or sorrowful--it is a fact. Yet I feel the gloom of an eternal

damnation. "I am alone and I ought not be!" I scream within. I hope beyond all hope to break these chains to self so that I might experience the comfort and solace of "WE." I hope beyond all hope to realize that grand human love that lives in all the myths of human history I hope beyond all hope. .and I remain alone. My hope is only myth, and it will not change until the very nature of humanness changes. Until that day when someone discovers or invents the melange that will breach the human abyss, the knowledge of a way of life that will shed us of our alienation--some believe this day is the Resurrection, others believe it is the utopia of human history, and still others dare not hope too much for man--until that day, my true state as a human being is realized in my lone four-mile run.

In truth, I am alone. This is a fact I must accept or else give myself up to a now impossible dream that can bring me only despair. The choice I have as a human being lies not in whether I will be essentially alone, but in my attitude towards that aloneness. I must accept it for what it is, and this requires understanding what aloneness means. It means that I am ultimately responsible for the self I am. There are no other persons whom I can blame for the failures in my life, nor can I look to them for my happiness or self-meaning. My life is mine to live, to guide and to love, and to create from the possibilities that branch from the forefront of my history.

To live is to make choices: there is no abstaining. And my beingness demands that I make these choices alone. I can look to other selves for guidance, inspiration, or companionship, but no one can make the actual choices or accept the responsibility for their consequences except me. Herein lies the creative power of my self,

the creative power in becoming EGO. This is my existential moment: to accept the responsibility of my becoming, to recognize my creative self, and to begin creating the self I so choose. BUT THERE ARE NO GUARANTEES. I have the power to choose myself from among many possibilities, but never do I have the power to wish myself into being outside of the possibilities of my circumstances. I cannot wish myself into being; I must actively choose and create it. I am the way, the truth, and the purpose of my life. Unto "I" do I give glory. Unto "EGO" do I give homage. Unto myself do I say "Yes!"

Among those who read this credo of self-glory, there will be some who will shudder and retreat from the prospect of their own existential moment for whatever reasons they have. Some will scream "Heretic!" and never look for any truth in my words. Other, more scholarly persons will attack my credo for its argumentative unsoundness and continue to construct their future utopias. There will be a few who will ignore its import entirely, who will attempt to avoid making choices. But if I am lucky, there will be a very few who might at first say "Perhaps..." and later say "Yes!" to themselves and their own existential moments.

Not until we humans change the very nature of our humanness can we be a "WE." Until then, we will remain a holy "You and I." We are indeed alone, alienated from one another by the very nature of our selves, but it is no degradation of our humanness. Our aloneness is part of us: it is a fact. When the melange for our complete non-alienation is created--be it a physical melange or the knowledge of a way of life--then and only then may we evaluate the rightness or wrongness of our aloneness. But



Dale Haines

until that watershed of history, our roles as humans--our proper roles--is not to break the chains of selves and attempt to become a "WE" that cannot be, but to remain the selves that we are, alone and separate from all others, in desperate conversation bridging the abyss of our aloneness.

It is with those persons that recognize their aloneness and affirm it as a holy state of humanness that I hope to find comfort in conversation and as much human solace as there exists on those nightmarish days when my own aloneness becomes a human scream eternalized. And those days will come, for surely I AM ALONE. ✖

If My Feet Were Wings

John S. Rasnake, II

If my feet were wings, I could fly
against a sun and away from
this hole that swallows me with its
bit of clay, wet from the world on
my cheek, collecting at my skin
to breed in my pores. But I have
no sun, no pair of wings whipping
through the wind. I do have this hole
with its noise of nails. I would wash
the gunk from this body, but the
river has dried and now whispers
my name. I could stretch my flesh in
a cloud, in a spiral close my
eyes to dream with such swift silence,
full vesseled, pulsing in rhythm
if my feet were wings, clean and young.



Dale Haines



Jill Archer

Urban Moods

Brent Ritchie

City, big city
Cloaked by night
But alive with light
A shining spell of beaming lights
A glow, professing warmth.
Countless specks pierce the night.

Clear for only the moment
when light travels
from a fleeting scene
Etched in memory — a rendering
in pastels of the real.

Shrouded in the black blanket
I clutch from a distance
I ponder my return from this vantage
and loosen my grip on a soft illusion.

City, bleak city
Stripped by day
the sun obscured by clouds
the city absorbed in gray
and colors without promise.
Nothing or little else escapes.

Did you expect concrete to release
a long hidden radiance?

.or perhaps the sewer grating?
Certainly not well-behaved rock
trained between hollow structures
of human device

But the sun does shine in
Sharing the city with steel and gray,
treating the streets in a mood
they do not always wear with ease
but accept with relief

The Bones Of The Nuns

Greta Talton

UPI—Paris: “Excavation for a new underground garage has given the world an unexpected dividend—a museum. The newest museum in Paris houses 3rd to 17th century ruins beneath the square in front of Notre Dame. Among these archaeologists found 22 skeletons of nuns who worked in the 18th century hospital for foundlings. Two of the skeletons will be on display along with a bronze figurine from the Roman period. ” Tours daily

Here we have the bones of two of twenty-two nuns, laid aside in a far corner of the hospital basement, exhumed now and put on display with other relics for your viewing pleasure. From what we know, theirs was a reclusive order—good girls given to charity, devotions, contemplation—they prayed for the destitute, and children, then went to heaven and left their suitcases. Of interest are the small clay-colored spots on either side of each nun’s temple, placed like indelible dirty kisses. These are rust marks from the pins that held their veils. They were, remember, buried clothed. There would have been hair to hold the pins, and flesh. It is from these marks that we can tell these are the bones of nuns. Otherwise, we would know only that they were women. Note there the birth holes in the bones. Barren. No life slipped through, nor history. No lives with holes of their own in the bones. You’ll see we have folded the hands modestly here, in deference to the ladies’ sex and dispositions, though whether there is modesty after death, modesty once the flesh is gone, we do not know. Now note the eyes—their candor and the way they seem to follow you, like eyes in fine portraits. You must be careful not to get too close, not to lean over the edge of the socket and fall into the space beyond. It’s odd, we know, to stand and see them here like this, believing as we must that what we’re seeing are nuns, not bones, but the bones of nuns.

2ND
PLACE
PHOTO-
GRAPHY



Monica Edmonds



James Price

Strength of the Weaker Sex

Catherine Romaine

We, in our position
Of manipulation and disguise,
Have what they want.
They want us, totally,
Completely, but not permanently
Momentary experiences are everlasting——
A rationale they want us to believe.

Coyly we smile and pretend
That we don't know their motive.
The dreaded moment:
That strategically placed hand
On parts reserved for special conquests
Not for dinner-dancing saps.
Rejection is the climax,
Discovery of expected obligations.

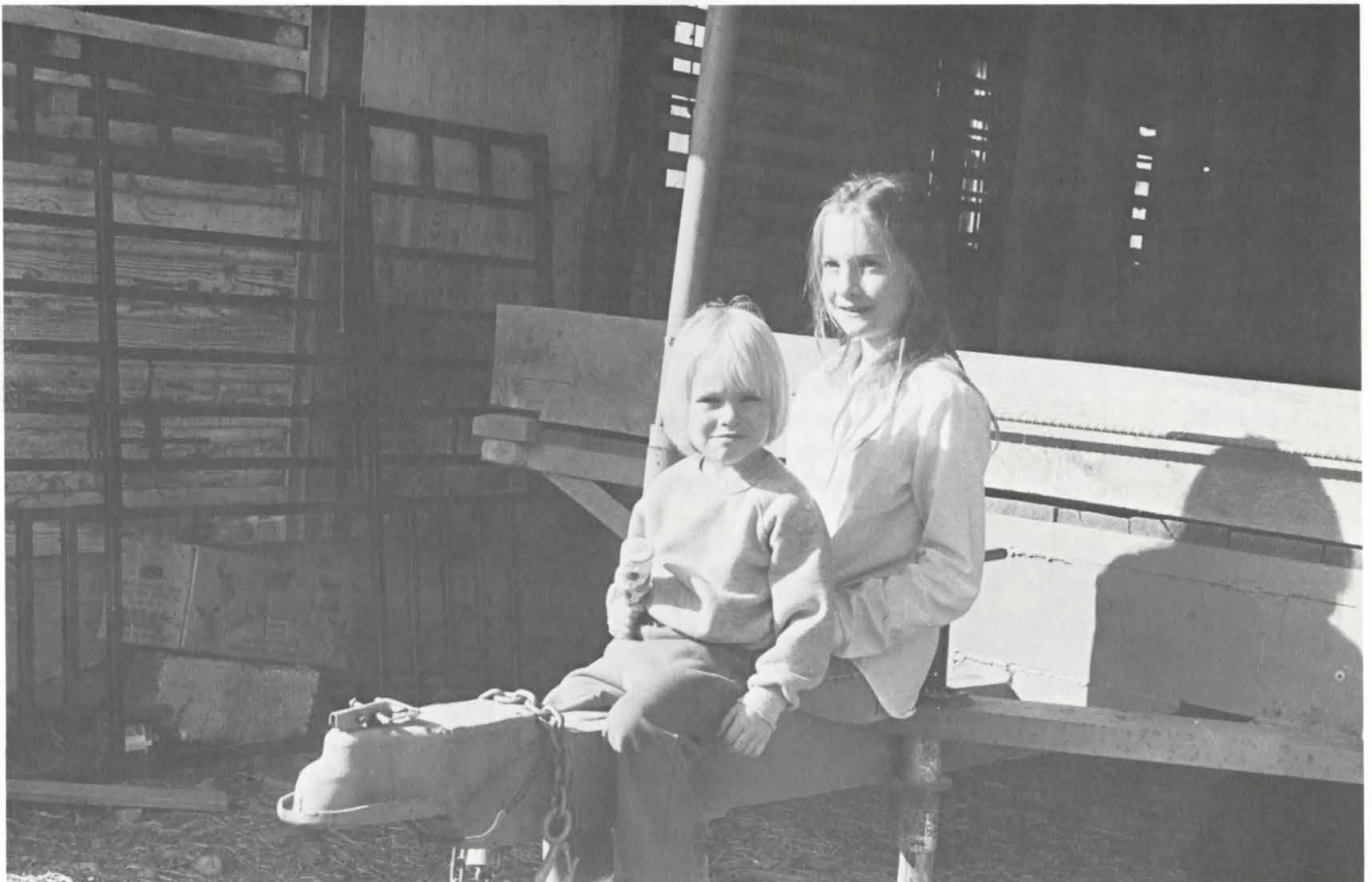
We flash that look
Flick the tongue over the teeth
As a gesture of possibilities.
Uniting perhaps, that ultimate hope,
Ultimate desire, in physical urgency
We have what they want:
Insincerity, brief encounters
And lives of our own.

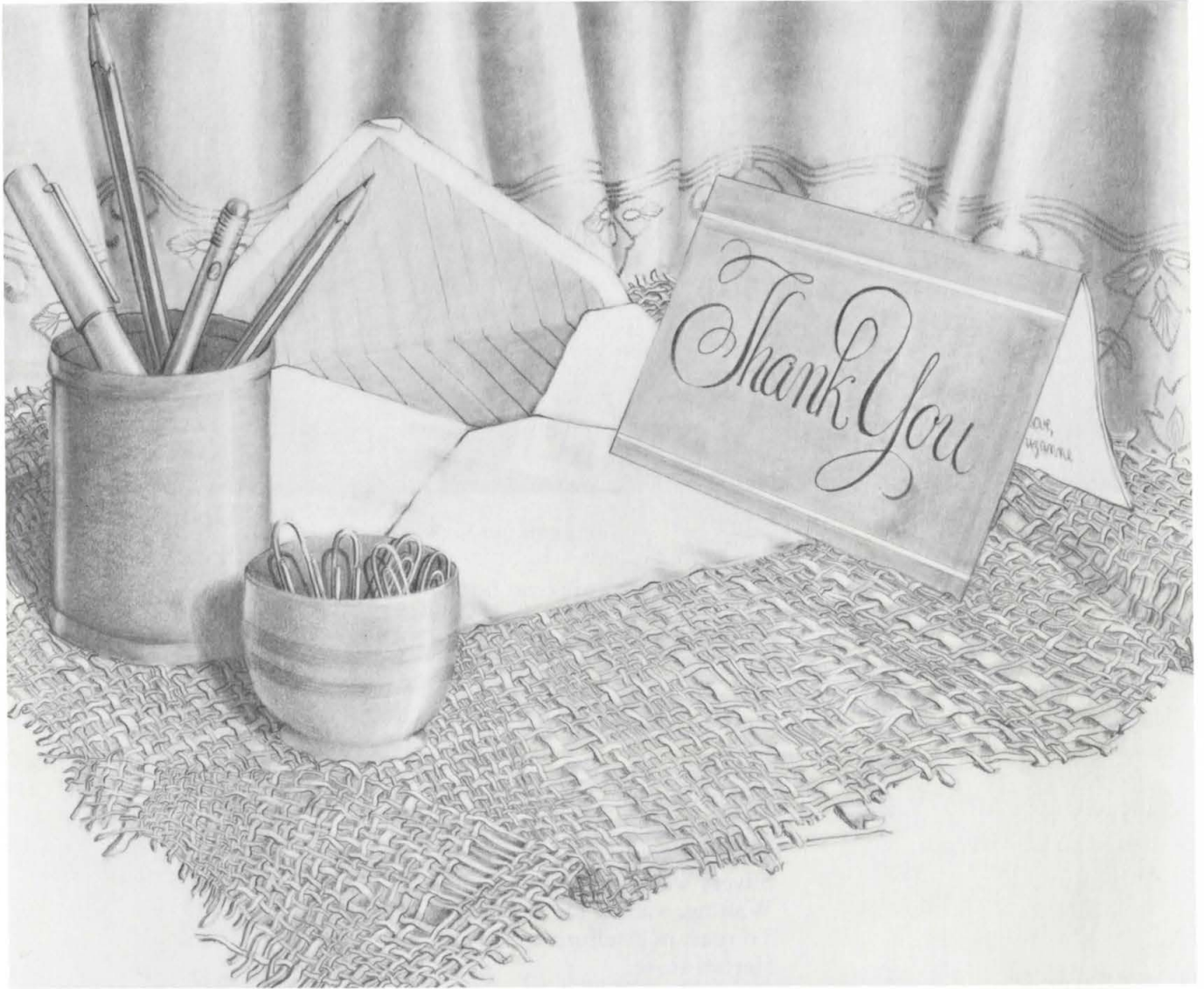
Time Calls

Janice Lyons

As I watched you take that first
step toward independence today
I longed to call you back and hold
you close to me for just a little
longer,
But I would not, I could not keep
you from life
Anymore than I could keep life
from you.
So watching you go, I smiled through
tears knowing time calls and
This is your time.

Mark Nabstedt





Sherrie Greear



Deborah Gonzalez

Renaissance

Jane Hicks

There was a time
When dragons stalked the earth.
Gleaming and shining,
They lay coolly underground,
Silvery wings stirring—
Waiting, waiting for peasants
To roast in a sulfurous death.
Heroes arose,
Pure of heart and vision
To vanquish the dragons.
Still, peasants hold
That heart-chilling fear
Of Death in a fire-strewn world.
Our heroes have died
On the wrong crusades.
The dragons still gleam and shine
In underground lairs,
Their silvery wings stirring;
Waiting to stalk the earth.

Chorus For An Unwritten Country And Western Transcendental Ballad

Toney Frazier

I'm going to Redneck Nirvana

On the banks of a

Pabst Blue Ribbon sea,

Where the moon pies taste like manna

And my mamma

And my karma wait for me

Ice

John S. Rasnake, II

falling, falling

from a dark, earthward

to creak and creep along the ground

in this quick night

through each late and

rolling light, ice in

descent gathers on the dull black

of the dead

from the gutter

fingers braid about

the window as a last signet,

the ice

one grave, knowing,

by pinkish-white, molds

its new daemon into cover,

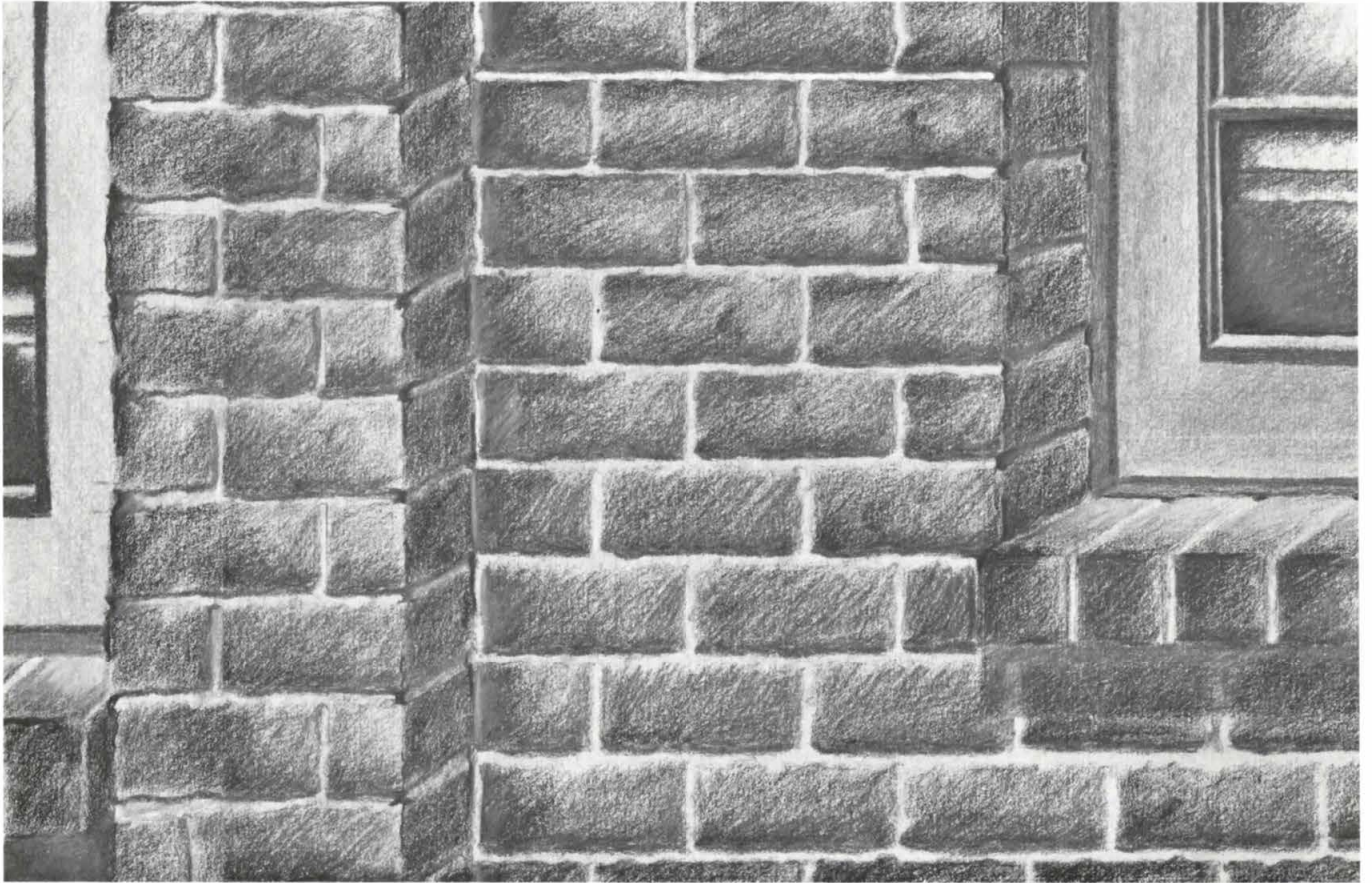
falls

reflection through

the path in smoulder,

falls before Hades, helmeted

* * *
* *
*



Steven Standley



Todd Tyson

Sunday Dwelling

Donnie Collette

The dreamer,
The unwoken fool,
High on a hill in Eldorado

I

Sundays come with dry, white flakes
Like dandruff,
The hot, dry boredom presses close,
An overwhelming leprous lover
With the stench of highway death.
The night brings no relief,
And those last, long waking hours are filled with the dread of Monday

II

Starting distractedly into a plate of heavily salted french fries,
I discern the remains of what I could have been,
So it goes.

But this eggshell alienation has gone on too long;
My misguided denial of life,
Comfortably numb, has led to this
And multiple vitamins.

All food loses its flavor in the arctic zone,
So that any preference is artificial,
But I can taste smells, and old habits kill hard.

III

And I find myself walking from one room to another
And not remembering why
And I catch my disappointing silhouette in the hall mirror
Out of the corner of my eye

And my undernourished heart pounds desperately,
Afraid of a life that has grown cold with a freezing numbness--
A dried-up twig on the family tree.

Echoes.
In a hollow tomb.

and the shell i call me
and the life i call you
and the wall i call fear

IV

The quiet screams are the scariest,
In the early morning before sunrise,
While the darkness is still.

Having woken from a dream,
In which you tickled my palm
(You would not let me hold your hand)
And I never saw your face,
I stare at the soft grains in the panelling,
And I lose myself in a brown not unlike your eyes.

But how could I tell you of my concrete alienation?
This quirk of personality
This failure of socialization?

V

I lie on a back
That has forgotten the sensation of another's touch,
And stare at my memorized ceiling.
And the pulse in my neck sounds bored.
And apparently seeing no reason, my eyes don't bother to focus.
And my emotions gel.

Jill Archer





Steven Standley



SBR 130-009-84 ED/UP 3-84

Printed by the East Tennessee State University Press

