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Expressions

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1987

Expressions 1987

Pat Underwood

Bill Graham

Gene Harder

Kathy Tyler

Tom De Vries

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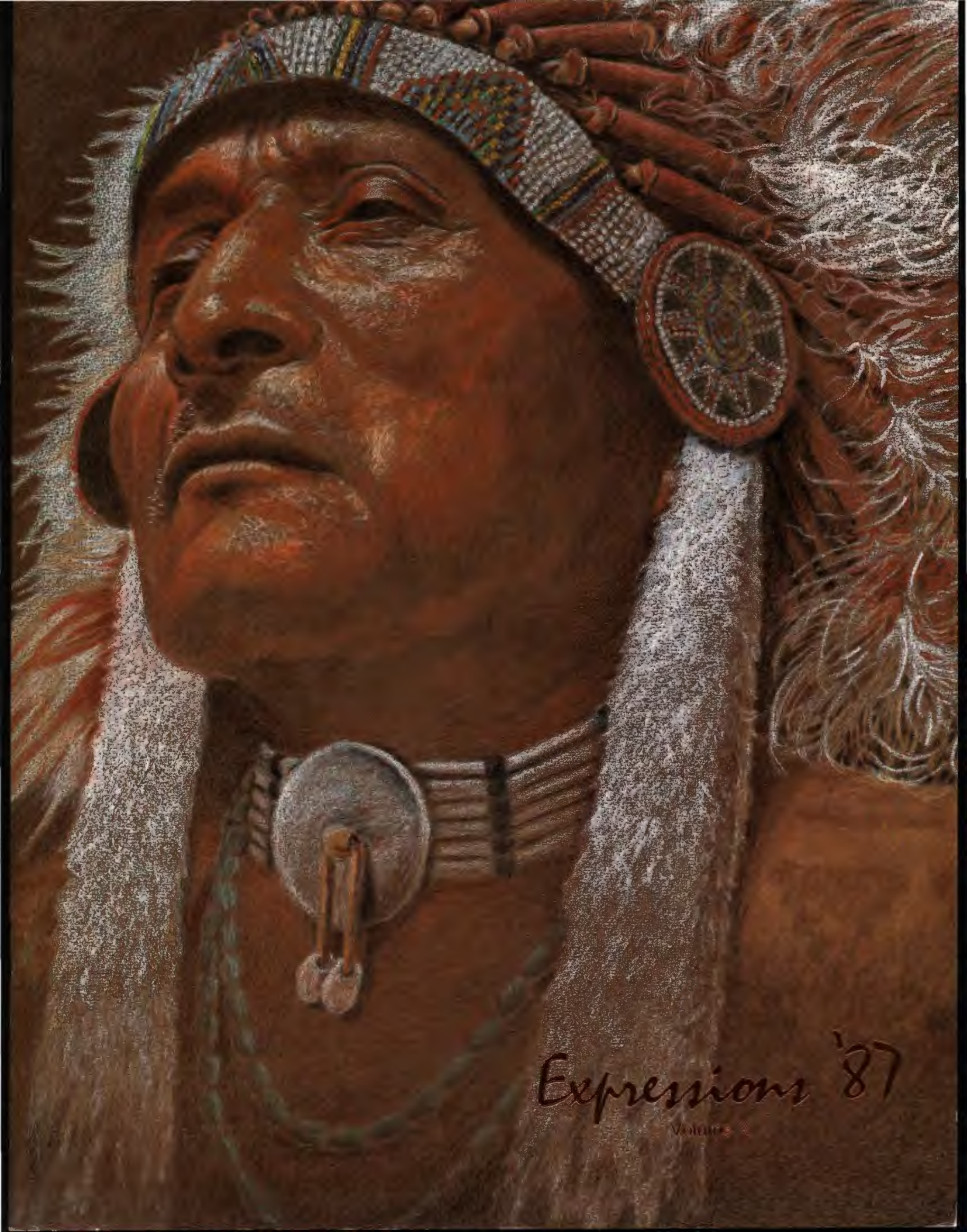
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Authors

Pat Underwood, Bill Graham, Gene Harder, Kathy Tyler, Tom De Vries, Steve M. Olson, Meta Evenbly, Donna Kemp, Kathy Fitzsimmons, Ann E. Bobrowicz, Sandra Bench, Gloria Blumanhourst, Dotti Roush, Deb Galloway, and Betty Paglia



Expressions '87
VINTAGE

I don't feel we did wrong in taking this great country away from them [the Indians]...Our so-called stealing of this country from them was just a matter of survival. There were great numbers of people who needed new land, and the Indians were selfishly trying to keep it for themselves. What happened hundreds of years ago in our country can't be blamed on us today. We'll all be on a reservation soon if the socialists keep subsidizing groups like them with our tax money.

John Wayne

The above quote is taken from

Nancy Wood, **When Buffalo Free the Mountains: The Survival of America's Ute Indians** (ISBN 0-385-01474-0), Doubleday & Co., Garden City, N.Y., 1980, p. ix.

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Advisors:

Monty Ballard	Commercial Art
Dolores Johnson	Commercial Art
Jack Mastrofski	Commercial Art
Penny Sullivan	Commercial Art
Pat Mathias	Typesetting

Staff:

Project Director..... Rick Chapman
Editor Ann Halbrook
Art Director.....Judy Tiernan
Art Assistants..... Christine Borgen,
.....Cathy Till
Assistant Editors.....Dorothy Ackerson,
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.....Linda Gust, Pat Hennessee
..... Mary Jo Manly, Vonnie Minnick
.....Styles Sass, Kathy Tyler
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..... Tad Smith, Pam Sufka

Des Moines Area Community College, Ankeny
Campus, 2006 South Ankeny Blvd., Ankeny,
Iowa 50021

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AFRICA

The hollow faces
bored with the holocaust
stare in their tears.
The gauze of the bandage
has slowly lost its power.
Africa.
Rich with resource.
Bank tellers wear carnations
in their lapels.

Isn't that how the Jews
marched to the chambers
smelling skin
among the roses?
Their separated
blue eyes from brown
nailed on the wall
like today's calendar? *
I've heard one fall
without even looking,
a charcoal drawing.

He shapes his mouth
into a saggy "O"
not over fireworks
and peers through
a landscape of broken glass,
skin turned black,
fragments shattered.
Making more work
in cleaning up.

A single dove's feather
drifts to the ground.
Telling me there is no
orphanage for parents
only camps near the roses.

Pat Underwood

* Dr. Josef Mengele, the so-called "Angel of Death" at Auschwitz, had an office wall full of human eyes, many cut from still warm bodies, mounted like butterflies ("Survivors Tell of Horrors at Trial for Mengele," February 5, 1985, Des Moines Register).

Visiting On The West Side

Bill Graham

On a cold night I faced a long trip home on the "L". Walking alone down the sidewalk, I was elated by the crisp definition the winter air gave to the reflections of streetlights off the black street ice and to the steam rising from the Cook County Hospital heating plant. On the west side of Chicago a lot of buildings had been torn down leaving gaps between the tenements like brick-strewn playgrounds. It felt good to be in the midst of this desolation. I was on another planet, a solitary explorer of alien worlds. It was past ten P.M. and there would be a long frozen wait on the train platform.

This street bordered a low density housing project laid out like suburban townhouses for three blocks. Somewhere ahead, in the Loop, an elevated train rounded a curve with a sustained screeching of steel wheels against the rails.

I'm not sure how long he'd been there or where he came from. I was alone, then suddenly I wasn't. I turned my head to look. Shorter than I, he wore a black watch cap and a plaid coat with frayed cuffs.

"I gotta gun," he said in a high voice.

He pulled his left hand part way out of his pocket to show me something. It could have been anything. His eyes were big, brown, and round with surprise, shocked that he had spoken. Coils of black hair stuck out from the bottom of his cap. He shoved me in the direction of a doorway saying, "Get in dere." Another shove. "I kill you ef you don't." He pointed his pocket threateningly.

I wanted to laugh but fear moved out from my gut, through my arms to the tips of my fingers and back, rising up through my neck, and tightening the skin on my face. I imagined a whole gang inside the project, waiting for me, just inside that door, with knives.

The big steel door operated with surprising ease. A hydraulic device made a sucking sound, shutting it behind us and it latched with a solid clunk. The building was like a prison, all pastel concrete and steel. The windows had wire mesh in them. Inside it was dusty with bits of trash, a crushed beer can and a yellow Big Mac box. It smelled of urine and of clothes worn too long. No one else there, no gang. My assailant stood behind me jabbing into my back with his concealed hand.

I turned to face this kid. Did he really have a gun?

"Gimme your wallet."

"I haven't got much money," I said, pulling out my wallet and opening it, showing him that, in fact, I really didn't have much. "Let's see. Five, ten, one, two, three, four. Fourteen dollars. I've got fourteen dollars." I wanted to ask him his name, defuse the situation, make a little casual conversation, but he grabbed my wallet and pulled the money out. The



photograph by Shawn L. Leonard

humiliation of being robbed by a kid no more than eleven years old was making me angry.

Sensing this, he threw down the empty wallet and backed out through the door. I picked it up. My heart pumped hard, my head swelling with a flood of adrenaline and I flung the door open.

He was about fifty feet ahead. "You little son of a bitch!" I screamed. I ran hard slipping on patches of ice. Down the street, through vacant lots and back into the projects. Winded, I stopped shouting but still ran after him. A shock jarred my clenched teeth each time my feet struck the pavement. Sweat beaded on my forehead and ran onto my glasses where it froze.

I pursued him to the back entrance of one of the apartments in the projects, closing the distance while he banged on the door and pulled at the handle.

Abruptly the chase was over. He was inside and the door was slammed shut. I stopped, bent over with my hands on my knees, venting white plumes, grimacing from the knots of pain in my chest. I stooped like that for minutes. Then I stood up.

"I'm not gonna call the cops," I yelled. "You can rot in this stinking place. Your life ain't gonna be worth crap. You're gonna end up dead or in jail and I hope you suffer. I hope you suffer! Do you hear me?" My rage expanded like a hot gas into the void that stretched to the east, towards the constellations of lights that were the skyline of downtown Chicago, until its particles were spent, cold, and alone in the night's vastness.

I stared at the door he had disappeared into. Damp with exertion and shivering, I walked back down the once more deserted city street.



BRACING THE WIND

It's as if you could see her vast hull
passing in the greyness of the fog,
tacking into the storm,
carefully searching for light,
straining to hear the foghorn.

We stood on the cape, a clear day,
moss swaying beneath ocean tide,
waves lapping barnacle-bearded stones,
the broken point holding a lighthouse.
Behind us, the pines lengthened their stems
and tented magnolias that stood peeling
red skins, naked in the dark.

Tonight, she'll slip silently by,
only the foghorn still groaning
to warn her against the fierceness
of the storm...finding her way blindly
in the wind-tossed sea.

Pat Underwood

JULY

We skinny dipped! It was to be a stroll
through a meadow beyond a hill or two.
The warm sun left no shadow at all,
it must have been about, you know,
July. Me entering puberty, she
already there for awhile sorta
you know what I mean, like-
if memory serves me at all
we knew we differed some.
It was more than heat-
you know like talk,
suggestions like
what I mean is,
cool water and
lota things
a you know
I mean a,
you know
I mean,
sorta,
and,
aa
you know
you know --- modern idiom
has its advantages;
how else can one reveal a secret
and still keep it
you know -

Gene Harder



Rod Enochs

Farewell To Arms

Kathy Tyler

That summer it rained a lot and then in September the nights became cool and then with the first cool days the leaves on the trees began to turn and I knew the summer was gone.

And I said goodbye to a friend.

I really hadn't known her very long, just that summer. Our encounters were brief and very controlled so that there were only short moments to work on something more permanent and deep. And there was an additional impediment -- she couldn't talk about a lot of things and so she didn't. To me, it was so astonishing that someone so young, only nineteen, was able to keep quiet, because I can never keep my mouth shut, especially at times when I should.

There is a fixed capacity for the mind to fill itself with things that are creatively useful and leave out the rest. Looking back now, I try to remember some things about her. One time when I was over there, she said, "I've treated myself to a new nightgown -- a lavender one." It was her birthday and she was wearing a new dress that matched her eyes, jade green. If I were to give her a color, it would be jade green.

The first time I saw her, I was careful not to stare. Still I noticed, you know, that she had a full, sensuous mouth, and a fresh coolness about her, like cool green leaves. Her hair was a grain brown, like sorghum, and she had smooth skin, the kind that welcomes the sun and turns golden because of it. It was easy to imagine a man holding her in his arms, finding her fresh and new and smooth and young and lovely -- cool as lavender. I think that's why she got the

nightgown, so she could imagine that.

Another time when Reverend Stone (who accompanies me when I go to play for Sunday night services) and I came in the door, she and Chris, who is also nineteen, were racing down the stairs. I mean that they were seeing who could beat who, and I thought that it was so, well, neat, you know, actually more than neat, because none of us is really supposed to have fun. And for that one moment, the god of mirth was tripping down the stairs saying, "I will go where I please, world. And tonight I please to dance down the stairs with these two young women." You should have been there--it was the kind of moment that would make you regret that you weren't.

Lisa, that's her name, is pretty all right, pretty in the wholesome-looking way of freshmen co-eds at State. Another thing I noticed the first time I saw her were her teeth. They were very straight and white and I knew that she had had a good orthodontist and that she had not come from the kind of family that most women here ordinarily come from--because of the teeth, you see.

There were other differences. She played the piano very well. I suggested that she play for the services, but for some reason she didn't want to.

"You come back and visit," she told me. "I want you to."

And I thought that she meant it, so I kept coming.

There were others who joined our group from time to time, but with Lisa and me and Reverend Stone, it was self-contained--our small world. Maybe we were like people who associate with those of their own calling--painters hobnob with painters, and musicians with musicians. You know how it goes. One night when there were just the three of us, Reverend Stone said, "Don't you like it better when we're alone?" And Lisa replied, "I feel lonely when they're all here." I liked it because I liked Lisa and I liked Reverend Stone because he's a Yaley and he's fun and he's smart and he admits that he's not sure what God is.

We always met at twilight. All summer long we would sit in a gray-walled room with a dusty carpet, the sun going dark, and a creek frisking down the hill a little ways. One evening, with the shadows cast by the setting sun angling through the windowpanes, Reverend Stone said, "It looks like a cross." And Lisa said to me, "Oh, don't you see it!" I said I didn't and

then Lisa said that she thought she might like to paint it. I knew I wouldn't.

Tonight--although honestly I'm not all that religious--we are reading out of Exodus about the fatted calf, and what I know about all this you could put in a thimble. I guess Moses hung around up on Mount Sinai so long that the people needed some sort of a sign so God gave it to them. I can't keep my mind on the reading and glance sideways at Lisa, then quickly past her to the fat one with her chin hanging in double folds--fat all the way up to her ear, with no neck and a blanched complexion. She's the one who's always saying, "I'll be out in two months." And I can't keep my mind on her either, and I glance back at Lisa. Her face is calm, set, though her mouth hints of disillusionment. Everything about her is cat-quite, except for her foot. I don't know if Reverend Stone ever noticed--I always did--and tonight, like always, her foot taps the floor in a faint, incessant staccato.

I had something special to play for Lisa tonight at communion. One night she played "For Elise" for me, her neck swan-curved over the piano, her slender arms moving up the keys, and the silver notes of Beethoven transforming the drab room into a fancy salon. Tonight I said, "Oh Lisa, I want to play 'Ave Maria' for you." I knew she would like that, even with the mistakes and even more now because I want to cry and I am losing it and my eyes are getting wet and it's hard to see the music, that incredibly beautiful music that is swimming in my head, and Lisa herself, a lovely maiden with her sad face and passionate mouth. Suddenly, we are holding each other.

In a little while, Reverend Stone says that we have to go. As I walk past the landing, I see her packed boxes--there's a stuffed animal in one that's still open.

Tomorrow, the Arkansas authorities are picking her up. She will be tried on a murder charge. Arkansas carries the death penalty.

The writer Solzhenytsen said, "If you have to remember the size of your collar, you have to forget something--something very important." And I guess I forgot to tell you about the teeth. You see, a lot of women in here have missing teeth and when I first came I didn't understand that until somebody told me that they were prostitutes and their pimps knock them out, and then I started noticing. A lot of them do have missing teeth. I forgot to tell you that.



Judy Tiernan



Tad Smith

SILK BUTTERFLIES

Thrice she had seen him.
He with dark eyes;
strong; graceful.
He was Osan, a dancer.
She, almond-eyed and lean,
had plum blossoms
that danced in her cheeks
like silkened butterflies
against the sun,
and limbs that swayed
like wisteria in the breeze.
Where the water is narrow
in the river of swirling pools
they were lovers.
The water drew them,
her touch silk upon his chest.
Near the sun-splashed rocks,
Mohei sang to him,
each taken breath tender
as it fell upon their hearts.
She blushed timidly,
love piercing her breast,
and he danced for her.
His thoughts sank
as he felt Edo's rule;
she surrounded with riches,
he from a humble class.
When the sun lowered
over Ganju San,
they said good-bye.
Mohei's hair fell softly
through Osan's fingers
as she turned from his side.
A breath of anguish filled
the sky with grey.
She saw him dragging his steps
on the sandy floor,
her sigh distant,
drooping numbly against the wind.
The trees of Edo
were sorrowful when he departed.
And Mohei wept quietly
upon the water's bank.

Pat Underwood

Fond Memories

Tom DeVries

Miss Dickenson was an old-maid on our block; her life's joy being an extensive garden that covered a large portion of her vast backyard. One day on the way home from school I heard a hysterical voice cry for help, and watched a panic-stricken Miss Dickenson appear from behind her house. I was warned, "Don't go in the garden, there's a snake in the cucumbers!" But being at that age when a snake holds a curious fascination for a boy, and in true buckaneer fashion, I dashed into the garden. But the only thing I could find was a six-inch Garter snake that looked more like a worm than a snake; and I chopped it into pieces with Miss Dickenson's hoe.

Needless to say, Miss Dickenson was greatly relieved as well as eternally grateful. She commissioned me to come around twice a week and comb the garden for snakes with a twenty-five cent bounty offered on each snake found and caught. I was absolutely elated, but after four days and no snakes my spirits began to fall.

Being a young capitalist, the idea occurred of going down the river to catch some of the big Bullsnakes that like to sun themselves on rocks, and transport then via gunnysack to Miss Dickenson's garden. I caught two three-footers, and one extremely nasty-looking four-footer, and kept them overnight in my dad's garbage can. On the way to



school I set free the four-footer and one of the three-footers in her garden.

On the way home I saw an ambulance and a police car parked in Miss Dickenson's driveway; red-lights were flashing; shouts echoed from behind the house. My first reaction was to run away. My second reaction was to investigate. It seems Miss Dickenson was tending her garden when she stumbled upon the four-footer wrapped around a stake in her tomatoes. As Miss Cratsovitch, another elderly spinster on our block, later reported, "The poor dear, she nearly died with fright. She's seventy-five, and from the time she was a girl, she's been deathly afraid of snakes. Why, she just fainted."



Karen Wolfe

Miss Cratsovitch, from her back-porch window, had seen Miss Dickenson collapse, and called an ambulance and the police. The police arrived first, and Chief Ryan rushed to Miss Dickenson's aid, but inadvertently crouched seat-first upon the coiled reptile and was bitten repeatedly. In the meantime, the ambulance arrived; a medic revived Miss Dickenson and was helping her to her feet.

That's when I arrived. I grabbed Miss Dickenson's hoe and with a hardy thrust had killed the snake. Then our next door neighbor, Professor Jones, walked up; and, after inspecting the snake, asked, "Where'd you get the *Agkistrodon Piscivorus piscivorus*?"

"What's that?" gasped Miss Dickenson.

"A Cottonmouth."

Miss Dickenson shrieked and began sobbing uncontrollably. She had to be put under sedation. Another ambulance was called for the Chief, but nobody seemed willing to suck the poison from his wound as he lay on the ground writhing in a delirious state, held down by medics.

As it often does, fate has a habit of shining brightly on little ragamuffins like me. I was awarded the Presidential Medal for Heroism with great pomp and ceremony at city hall, where Chief Ryan sang my exploits. The chief had made a hasty recovery with the most painful of his injuries being a badly bruised ego. Miss Dickenson, however was slower to recover, and never again succeeded in recapturing the previous uninhibited ease of her garden paradise; therefore, I was hired by Miss Dickenson and several other elderly ladies on the block for the chief purpose of maintaining a safe and reptile-free environment, and, indeed, was looked upon as providence by some of the widows after I had ostensibly extradited a large quantity of the ever-growing snake epidemic to the river from the various gardens in town.

That was twenty years ago. Today, I'm a successful entrepreneur, who's amassed a fortune in pest control. And in retrospect, nothing really changes. The game gets more sophisticated, and you play for higher stakes. That's all.

ESPADRILLES

What I remember most about her
when I saw them together that day,
(you think it would have been the
face, but I couldn't really tell you
much about that)

was the shoes.
I had always wanted a pair like them,
though he never knew it.

Somehow, they always seemed
"too extravagant. . ."
something to play in
when there wasn't all that much time to play.

And, anyway,
I needed shoes for
work.

Red canvassed, these were,
with rope cords that snaked down her calves,
crossed their heart at her ankles
. . . and knotted at my throat.

Kathy Tyler



Teresa Burgin

Fashion

Forever-changing
facelessness,
forcing those
imperfect, ordinary ones
into the molds of
fantasy
created by those
who attempt to change
the reality of
difference
into their utopia
of indifference.





Jennifer Welshhons



Judy Tiernan

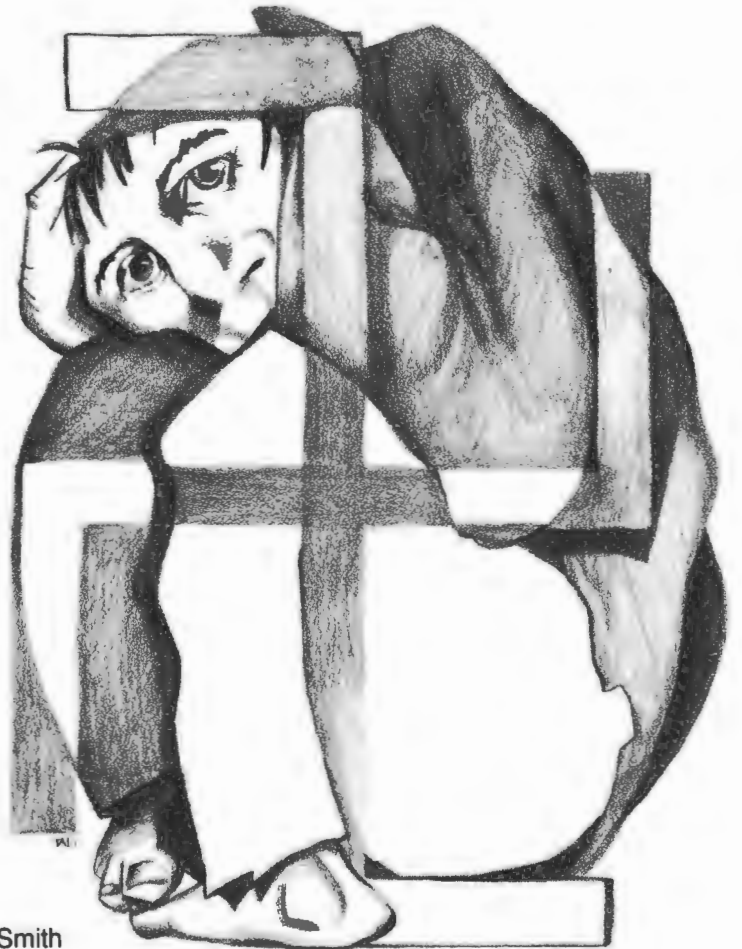
RELATIVE DEATH

I remember
Walking into
mother's room
That sun soaked afternoon
She had been on the phone
Curled in the curtains
She lay, tangled in the cord
Sideways across the bed
Her head on her arm
Body bent and twisted
I stood small
In the doorway looking at
The sun cut through the window
Across her body, dust glimmering
She lay crying about a death
I stood helpless and small

Steve M. Olson

View From The Window

Meta Evenbly



Tad Smith

Niet naar buiten gaan, Meta" ("Don't go out, Meta"). What was my mother saying? I must have heard wrong. She always told me not to be underfoot and encouraged me to play outside. Now she told us that we had to stay indoors. The house was chilly, even though the sun was shining brightly. There was no carpet on the floor. In the large living room stood our heater, about a meter from the wall. But there was no fire in it. The outside, discolored from the heat, had turned the silver metal an uneven reddish brown, while the inside was black with soot. The heater had once been a small, shiny round-bellied garbage can. A friend of the family had converted it by lining the can with bricks and somehow attached a stove pipe to it. The pipe led through a cavity into the wall, and I presume, up the chimney. There had once been an elegant fireplace with a mantle. I remember how we had all laughed when Ben had fabricated our new heater, which was to serve as our stove as well. How small it looked in that high-ceilinged room!

Everything had lost its luster. The wallpaper, which also covered the interior doors, was a drab beige on which flowers had once bloomed in bright orange. The beauty of the room consisted mainly of the large windows, that are so typical of all Dutch homes. And one of those was a corner window, reaching from the floor nearly all the way up to the ceiling. From that window you could see a large part of the Weimarstraat (Weimarstreet).

During World War II our home was a flat in The Hague, two floors above the butcher, first door on the left. On rare occasions when the butcher actually had some meat products, the queue would snake down the sidewalk and around the corner, while they waited patiently for their turn to exchange their rationing stamps for something edible. The same queue with the same gaunt faces would sometimes turn up at what used to be the ice cream parlor on the opposite corner, next to the bicycle repair shop. There they would sometimes have "klop op" (whipped up), a sorbet glass filled with white foam vaguely reminiscent of whipped cream with a vanilla flavor. We never actually knew what it was and decided that it was whipped up "nothing".

That day there was a hushed silence in the air, as I stood looking from the corner window. All around us windows were covered with old blankets, newspapers and curtains. They were not only for the blackouts at night. The light of day could also be dangerous, because of what one could see, and often because one could be seen.

Then I heard it. Sharp, strong and steady. Click, click; click, click. I had first heard this sound years ago on a railroad station in Germany, when as a little girl hanging onto my mother's skirts for 24 hours, the shiny black boots had made their sound on the

platform. I was on a yearly visit to my mother's relatives in Germany when word came that all foreigners had to leave the country. However, all trains were in use for the German invasion of Poland. And the German soldiers, who looked snappy in their first new uniforms, were wearing those shiny black boots. They were happy then, with rifles slung over their shoulders. They were singing as they boarded train, after train, after train, on their way to "conquer" Poland. The singing, however, had ceased a long time ago and these days the click, click, went slower.

But the sound was strong again and the boots were polished to perfection. The soldiers wearing them were trim, walking purposefully and carrying guns, machine guns. My breath stopped. A raid!

I had heard so much talk about the raids. Germany was insatiable for men to feed its cannons. During these raid the Germans ruthlessly rounded up the few men who were left in out homes. Sometimes the men would hide in order to escape a certain death on the German fronts, or perhaps a more immediate death for retaliation. From sobbing women I had heard about Nazi's emptying their machine guns into floors and cupboards during their searches for "onderduikers" (men in hiding). And my father was still at home.

But these two soldiers did not enter any homes. They walked back and forth, back and forth. "Come away from that window," my mother said. My father stood in the shadows further back in the room. "The swine," he hissed through his teeth. Outside the sun was shining brightly. Up and down the street they walked. To what end I did not know.

It lasted all morning, the watch, the vigil. Then it happened. As a man rounded the corner on his bicycle with wooden tires, he was shot. He fell off his bike; the back wheel slipped and the bicycle was thrown free of the man. The man wore a brown suit and was about as old as my father, maybe a bit younger. Now he was dead.

The soldiers waited and stood back. Then they circled the body, in much the same way as hyenas. The soldiers pulled the bike away and placed it against the wall next to the ice cream parlor.

Again they waited for what seemed to be an eternity. One of them kicked the man's foot. Then he emptied the rest of his machine gun into the man's chest. They rolled him over and shot the body in the back. Only then were the soldiers finally convinced that their victim was dead.

Then those shiny black boots moved as one, crisply over to the body. One soldier grabbed an arm, the other a leg. Together they dragged the body into the bicycle repair shop, out of sight.

Retrospective

**10th
Anniversary**

in celebration of our 10th anniversary, we proudly present a retrospective of outstanding art and literature works from previous editions of EXPRESSIONS.

CIRCLES

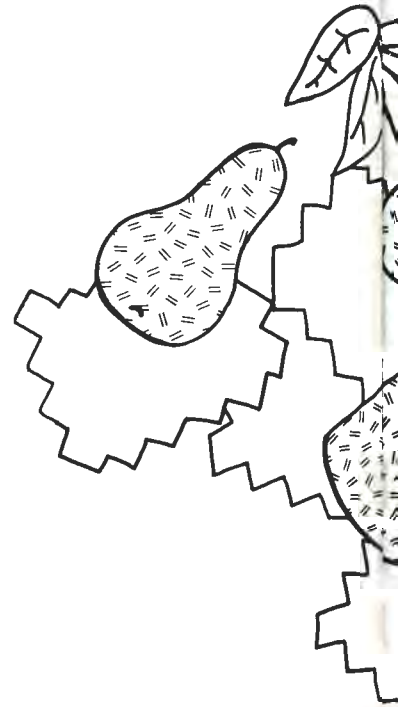
Reds, yellows, faded blue
Cotton fabric, thin and old;
Paisley, dots, and florals, too
Lie softly heaped up to renew
My pile of rags.

Buttons to be saved,
Zippers to be kept,
Sundress, shirts, striped sleeves --
With no mercy silver shears
Rip and zip and part the years.

Too late--they swiftly snip and cut
Strains of sweet-remembered sweat,
Cherries picked in Spring,
And pears in Fall,
Grape jelly and apricot jam,
Silently the dresses fall.

Someday's vision comes to me
Of some granddaughter--
A stranger to me now--
Who rips some rags
And with her shears
Releases long-forgotten years
When we shared--just we two--
The sweetness of life.

Donna Kemp





Kim Scavo



CHOICES

Tripping through the thicket,
what choice was made
that rules us here?
Somewhere in a garden
visions were made
bought and paid for.
Who screams for the living?
And if no one was there,
who would ask ?

Kathy Fitzsimmons

Only

Ann E. Bobrowicz

When first they met his unique sense of humor had attracted, made her own tentative laughter seem brighter. They married and she smiled when the plastic

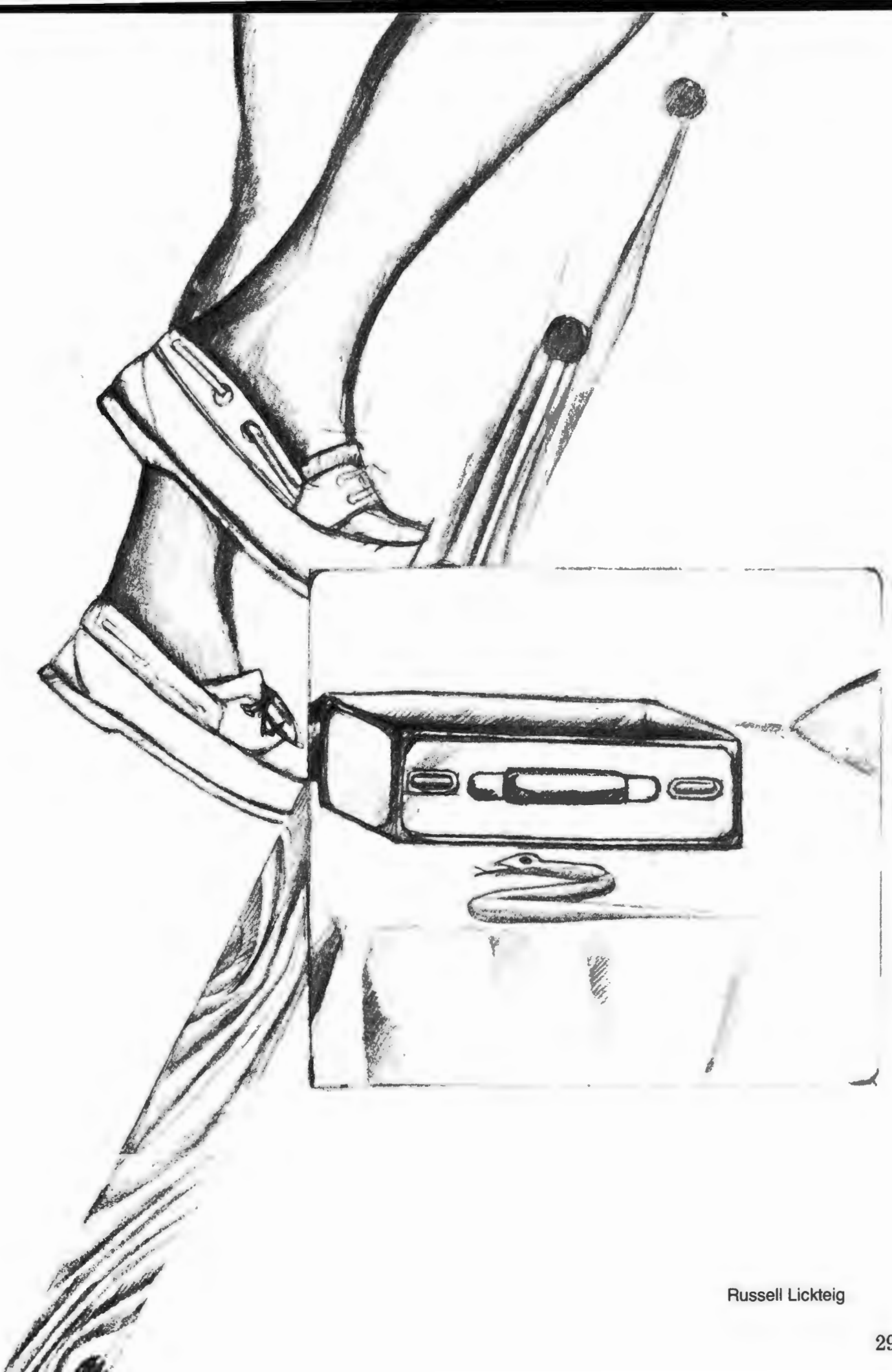
snake fell out of her luggage. And, of course, it was only a joke when the steam iron sprizzled red all over the laundry. How the other wives envied her; imagine living with such a "wild and crazy guy," why the story of his gluing down all the office ashtrays was a classic.

Months turned into the first year and she found herself hesitating before opening drawers, peering around corners...the house took on the aspect of an enemy conspiring against her. The winter they got mice she diligently set traps, all the while hoping that none would be sprung. The guilt of killing a furry little creature warring with the dislike of sharing her home with the same furry little beast. The doctor was laughing as he was listening to her husband explain that about the rubber mouse that had momentarily joined her in the shower. And after all it was only a sprained knee.

Her eyes took on a haunted look. She was sure a twitch was developing in the left side of her face, but nothing would show in the mirror except a reflection of herself. Even he had begun to notice how pale and distraught she had become and there was nothing for it but for him to treat her to a small vacation. He took time off - first a few odd jobs around the house, a matter of a day or so, and then he would devote himself fully to her; obviously what she needed was a change of pace, a few laughs.

Together they set up the ladder against the side of the house. "Please be careful, you'll be so high up, wait till I get ready inside..." she cautioned and, laughing, he scoffed at her fear, nothing would happen. As she reached the upstairs bedroom, a scream pierced the air, dying as abruptly as it started. Freezing in place, torn by indecision lasting seconds, repeating "... it was only a joke, it was only a joke. "But what if it wasn't? Rushing to throw open the window, leaning out, his twisted form filling her view.

It was a lovely funeral and she did have to admit that black was flattering. There had been a moment of worry when the police had noticed a small amount of oil on the rungs of the ladder, but it was a matter easily explained by the spilled can of oil in the garage. Not perhaps the most subtle touch, but, after all, it was only a joke!



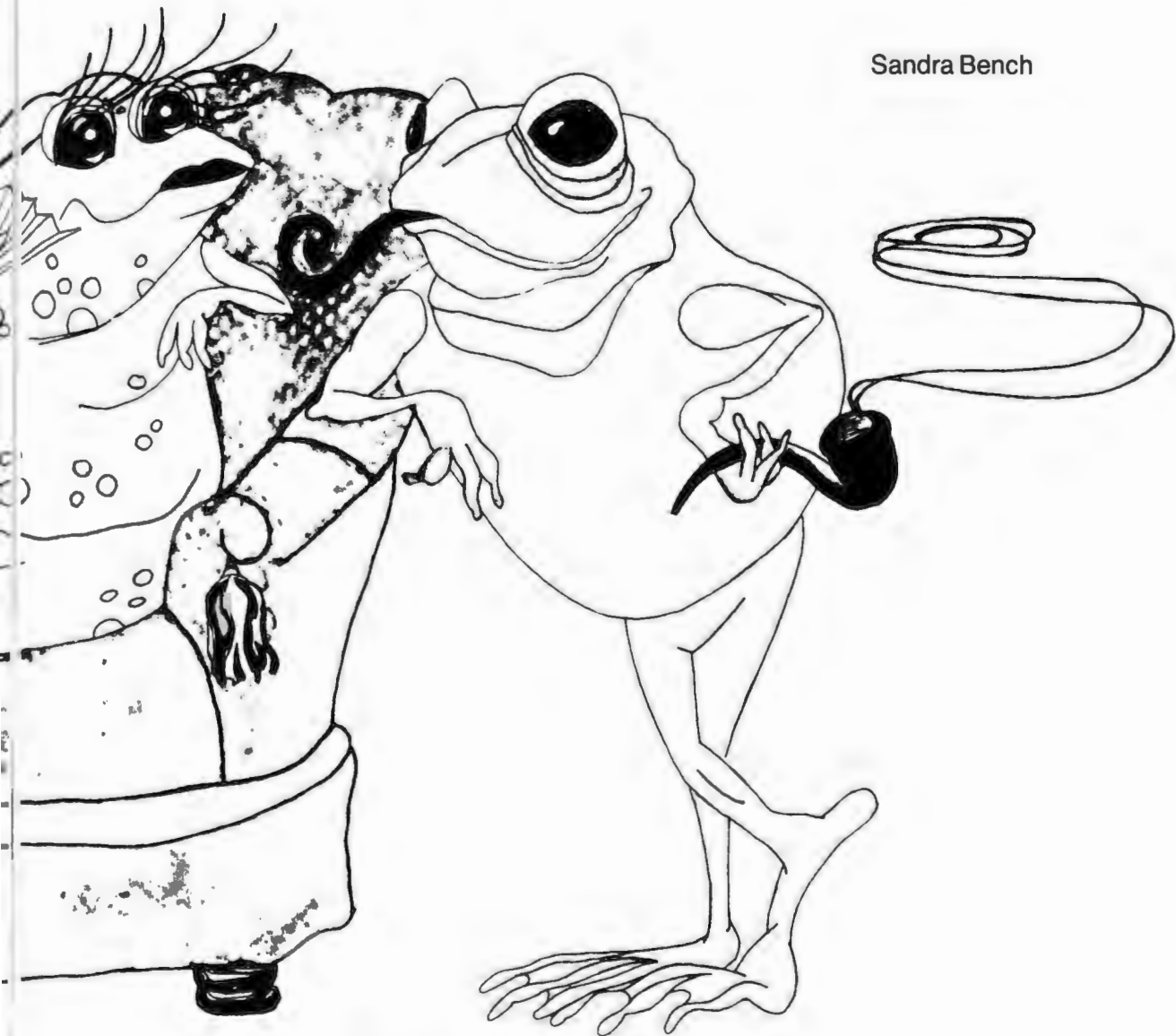


Michael Adams

ADVICE

Remember that...
Young men
make
good lovers;
That...
More mature men
are
ideal husbands;
And that...
Older men
are superb,
With a little sauce.

Sandra Bench





photograph by
Gail Gidwitz



CLOUDED SUNSHINE

i've more than enough umbrellas
if i wanted shelter

but i choose to walk
bare-headed and shoeless
in your grey morning

even the occasional lightning
and accompanying thunder
are tempered by the gentleness of your
summer smile
and i'd almost swear
i saw the glimmerings of a rainbow

there can't be any reason for
forty days of rain unless it's the
creation of a fresh-washed sunshine
sliding off a rainbow
into one more
golden glow

Gloria Blumanhourst



Dan Allen

DID YOU NOTICE THE SHIP

Did you notice the ship
that rocked you through the night
was me?

You sailors so love the sea
and every port
is home.

But the ship is just a way to go.

Dotti Roush



Lorna Busler

DEATH

My love stands
barren
as your blackened bronze
covered by the soft virgin snow.
I have loved you
in the winter of my heart
with eyes squeezed shut
in revolt
against the whiteness of your absence.

Donna Kemp



Russell Lickteig

WORDS TO A CLOWN

Oh, laughing clown,
You with the terrible nose.
You with the lips frail from smiling.
Your smile pinches upward and
your eyes boast exaggerated squints.
How difficult it must be to keep your sorrow
hidden!
You are only a clown,
and clowns cannot cry.
With a certain skill you have painted yourself a
smile.
But, dear clown,
It is your eyes that betray the man hidden within
you.
They look through and beyond the laughing
faces.
Your face is carved with deep furrows,
and you cannot cover them with your magic
paints.
Oh, laughing clown,
Your man is sneaking out.

Deb Galloway

The Best Seat

Betty Paglia

After buying groceries, Mom, Dad and I stood in front of the PX at Camp Hood, Texas, waiting for the bus to come and take us back to town. I was hoping it would be the same bus that brought us out earlier in the evening, because it had marvelous, bouncy seats in the very back. The people sitting in them flew up and almost hit the ceiling when we went over the railroad tracks. This trip maybe I would be lucky enough to get one of those seats.

"The bus is on time," Dad said as it came around the corner and stopped in front of us. The door opened, and I climbed in. Good! The bus was empty. I ran straight to the back while Mom and Dad sat down in front. As we went over a small bump, I bounced clear off the seat, much to my delight. This was even better than I thought. If I bounced that high going over a bump, I would really fly when we hit the railroad tracks.

The bus driver kept looking at my mother and glaring at her, trying to get her attention, but she was watching me and laughing. After four or five blocks he said, "Ma'm, you better get your little girl."

"Why?" Mom asked.

"The back is for niggers. She rides up here."

"What?" Mom exclaimed in astonishment. "No one is here but us."

The driver glared at her through the rear view mirror. "Lady, get her! She rides up here!"

"But the bus is empty!" Mom argued.

"Come up here, Betty Lou," Dad called. He had been stationed in Texas for several months, but Mom and I had joined him only a few days before. He knew it was wise to end the argument.

I climbed down from my wonderful seat and walked slowly to the front of the bus. As I sat down, I leaned over to Mom and whispered, "How come the best seats are for just certain people?"



Kim Scavo