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Donna, Donna

Robert Lietz

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Donna, Donna

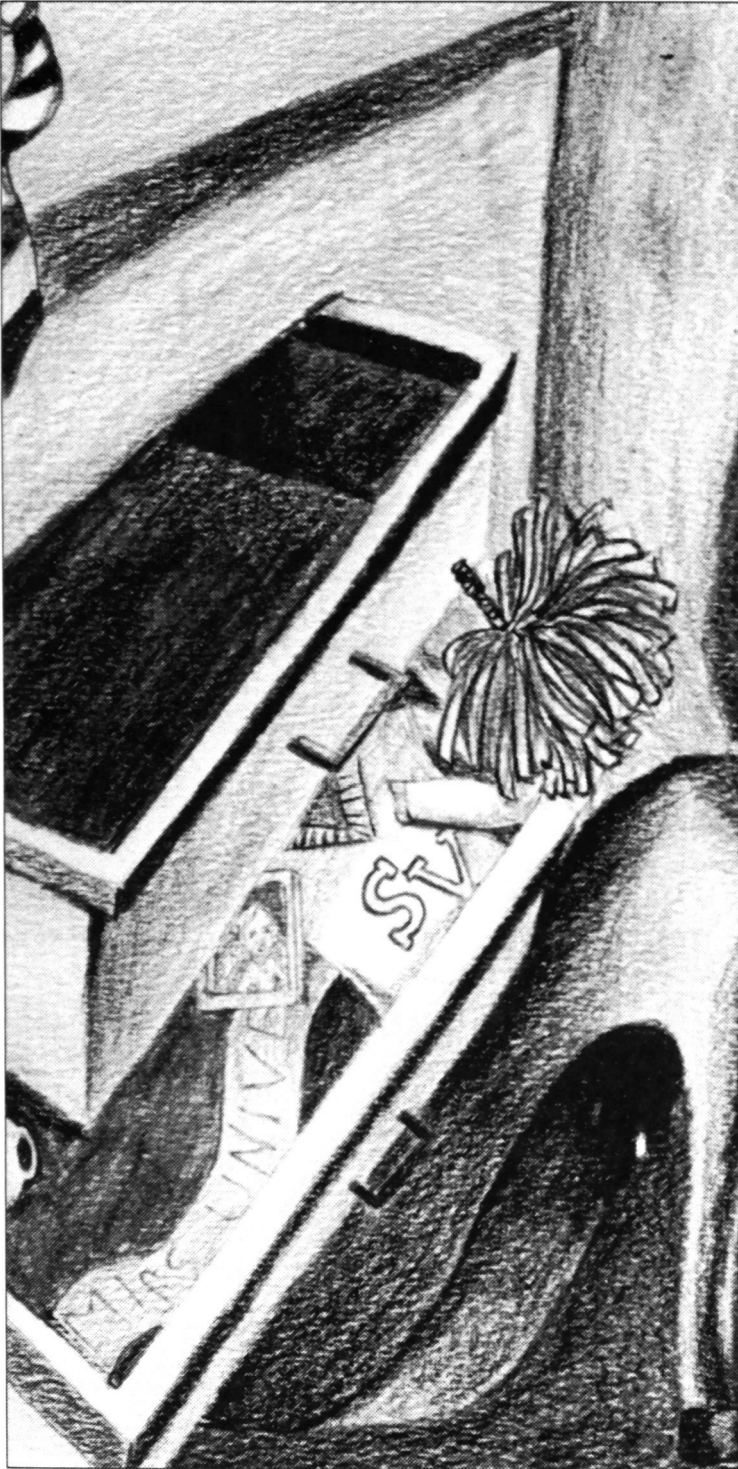


ILLUSTRATION BY EDGARDO GEORGE

The stone-rounding cold chastens
skin's edge, re-sets the calendar. And here,
at the heart of storm, wind,
that had died a little, picks for its own
the dry materials of world,
through clutches of men, in work and out,
picks its way down blocks
adorned with jukeboxes and daughters.
While vendors cry
their barbed complaints, while lights flash red
then dark, the starlings
seem in time, blown off charred skies
and back around the power stacks,
and the convulsing gutter drums, the steps
of men blown in, each
to his cupped storm, each with that look
of wave-grey logs,
tossed here by waves revisiting a shoreline.
*The meteors that were her hands,
the comets that were her fingers,
part the hanging beads, tally the colors
like carried zeroes in striptease.*
Taboo throbs at the heart of their critiques.
And in the courtships
she constructs, *there*, in waves,
and, *there*, in the faces of boys
she orphans now by her unbuttoning,
and orphans now
in the gold of her farewells. Leaving
the men their afternoons,
grateful as lifetime piece-workers
for day-labor, as she,
with her apple breath, and breath of origins,
crumples the dawn news,
speaking their names like exercise
and attitudes toward spices,
the weather weakening, this cousin
from the sticks
who taught herself the dancing,
bearing the thunder still,
over the autumn-yellowed, winter-flattened grasses
of the play-yard. Statue-straight
in rain, like the *honeycomb* love was,
absorbing intenser blue,
she whispers the names of kids
and of the gardens set on fire,
stone by, stars by stone and stars
re-made, in the light rain come
like a revision of the lightning,
acquainted as these with tasks
and with the revelling
after tasks.

Robert Lietz