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The Mockingbird

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1990

### The Mockingbird

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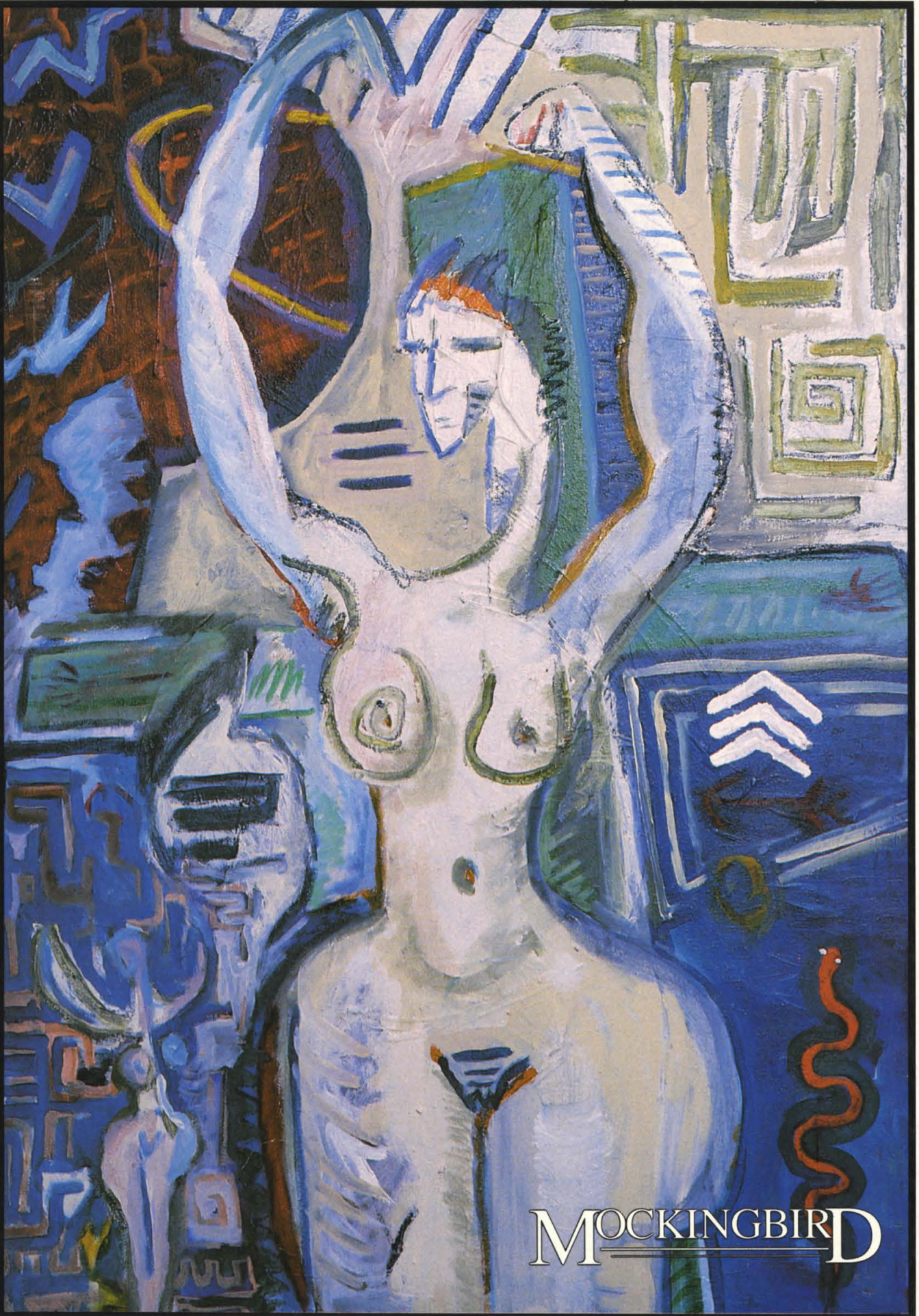
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MOCKINGBIRD







MOCKINGBIRD  
'90

The Annual Literary/Art publication  
of East Tennessee State University



## A Note on the Cover

This was supposed to be a painting of the Bird Goddess, but it isn't. It is only an illustration of the idea of the Bird Goddess. For the people that worshipped her (and they were many and diverse), she was not an idea but a truth. Their representations of her are more than representations; they are embodiments. I wanted to paint just such an embodiment, but I couldn't. I had to resort to using symbolism and color in such a way as to make the painting interesting. I think I succeeded, as far as that goes. It's just that that wasn't my purpose.

Nobody paints figures anymore. It would seem as though the human figure has lost all its fascination. I know that's not true, any more than it's true that just because nobody paints Christ anymore that nobody cares about Him. But art does reflect the times more than most of us are willing to consider, just as everything we do (think, say, create) is finally the reflection of what we hold sacred. And so it really bothers me when I set out to paint or say or write something that I think I really love and find out I can't, because I know that the weakness is not in my talent but in my faith. The only thing to do is keep trying.

**Robert Alfonso, Jr.**

# Table of contents

<b>Art</b> , Robert Russell, <i>1st place short fiction</i> . . . . .	7
<b>The Day After Viewing <u>The Tin Drum</u></b> , Christine Lassiter, <i>1st place poems</i> . . . . .	10
<b>A Bone Dry Dream, Or How I Learned To Love The Rain</b> , Jeff Keeling, <i>1st place non-fiction</i> . . . . .	12
<b>I have been to a death in winter</b> , Tom Lee, <i>2nd place poems</i> . . . . .	16
<b>The Failure of the Fragrance</b> , Randy Handel, <i>2nd place short fiction</i> . . . . .	18
<b>The Gift</b> , Ed Price, <i>2nd place non-fiction</i> . . . . .	24
<b>Eggshells</b> , Christine Lassiter, <i>3rd place poems</i> . . . . .	27
<b>Think Not of Earthly Things</b> , Jeff Keeling, <i>3rd place short fiction</i> . . . . .	29
<b>Christmas</b> , Robert Russell, <i>honorable mention. poems</i> . . . . .	37
<b>The Rise and Fall of the Mighty Hunter</b> , Ed Price, <i>3rd place non-fiction</i> . . . . .	39
<b>Reunion</b> , Felicia Pattison, <i>honorable mention. short fiction</i> . . . . .	43
<b>Studying for the GRE (Word List 50)</b> , Randy Handel, <i>honorable mention. poems</i> . . . . .	54





**Untitled**, John Edwards  
*honorable mention. photography*

# Art

Robert Russell

The desk my mother used for drawing sloped gently towards the tall, high-backed chair where she sat. The end of the board was even with my chin, and I would rest it there while watching her draw. On the right side of the board were rows and rows of pastel-colored crayons, chalk and charcoal. There were countless colors, resting in cardboard grandeur, so many colors that I could hardly tell some of them apart. I wanted to draw with them, like my mother did, but I was not allowed to.

I didn't like my crayons. They were bright, flat and unmysterious, the paper around them unblemished and pristine. Even their names were boring — cornflower blue, brick red, green. My mother's crayons were arranged in a way that blue drifted from purple to green almost magically; red, orange and yellow ran a natural, pleasing course. Wrapped around each stub of crayon, the paper was smudged and ripped. They had a history, had been used to create, not to color within the lines, showing the stains of the fingers that had guided them. They probably knew my mother better than I ever would, or ever will.

When she was finished, the pastels, chalk and charcoal were put back into their boxes and placed on a shelf beneath the desk, out of the light. Then we would cook, or watch television together, my head leaning on her shoulder or against her chest, watching the people who lived in a world of black and white.

The desk stood beneath a window in the corner of the den and was pushed against the same wall as a long, brown sofa and a cane-bottomed rocking chair. The opposite corner of the den belonged to me, with my toybox and my record-player and my crayons. Sometimes, when I knew that my mother was outside, I would risk climbing up onto the tall, high-backed chair. I would sit and pretend that I was an artist, like my mother, tracing the shadow-corners of the window's light with my fingers.

One morning I was alone in the den, prowling listlessly through the pages of coloring books whose Poohs were half colored and Tiggers only half-heartedly striped. I glanced at my boring crayons — “64 colors,” they admitted, and then at my mother's desk.

She sat there, head bowed close to the desk. Her right hand sketched slowly and carefully while her left

steadied the thick paper-board she drew upon. I could tell that she was using charcoal because I saw fresh, dark streaks on the khaki slacks she always wore when she was drawing or working in her flower garden outside. I got up from my books and walked toward her, hoping to spy on her creation. But, this time, I couldn't.

“Go back over there and sit down.”

“But I want to watch you.”

“Go back over there and sit down, honey. Color the Pooh-bear.”

“But I want to watch you.”

“Please.”

“Okay.” I went back to my corner and sat down hard. She turned around as if she were going to scold me. She didn't scold me, she just watched me. I was mad. I tried to pretend that I didn't notice her and started coloring again. I colored Tigger green and Eeyore purple.

After a few minutes she turned around and continued to draw. I played my record player louder than I should have, but she did not seem to notice.

The next day was different. When I got up, my father had already gone to work and there was no cereal on the kitchen table, just my father's empty coffee cup. My mother was in the den, drawing. Her head was bowed down close to the desk and she didn't turn around when I asked her what time it was.

“What time is it?”

“I think it's about 10:30.”

“Where's Dad.”

“Gone to school.”

“What are we going to do today?”

“Honey, I have to do this. This is my job. Just like your father has to go to school, I do this. You can play, so do that. I'm sorry, honey,” she sat up and looked at me, “but I really have to do this.”

I went into my mother's and father's bedroom and turned on their television. It was small and black and white. My grandmother and grandfather had a color television with a huge screen. I always sat too close to it and my grandfather said that I would get cancer that way I never sat very close to the television in my parents' room. It was not that exciting.

The telephone in the kitchen rang and I heard my





**Tuff Stuff, Janet Davis**  
*third place graphic design*

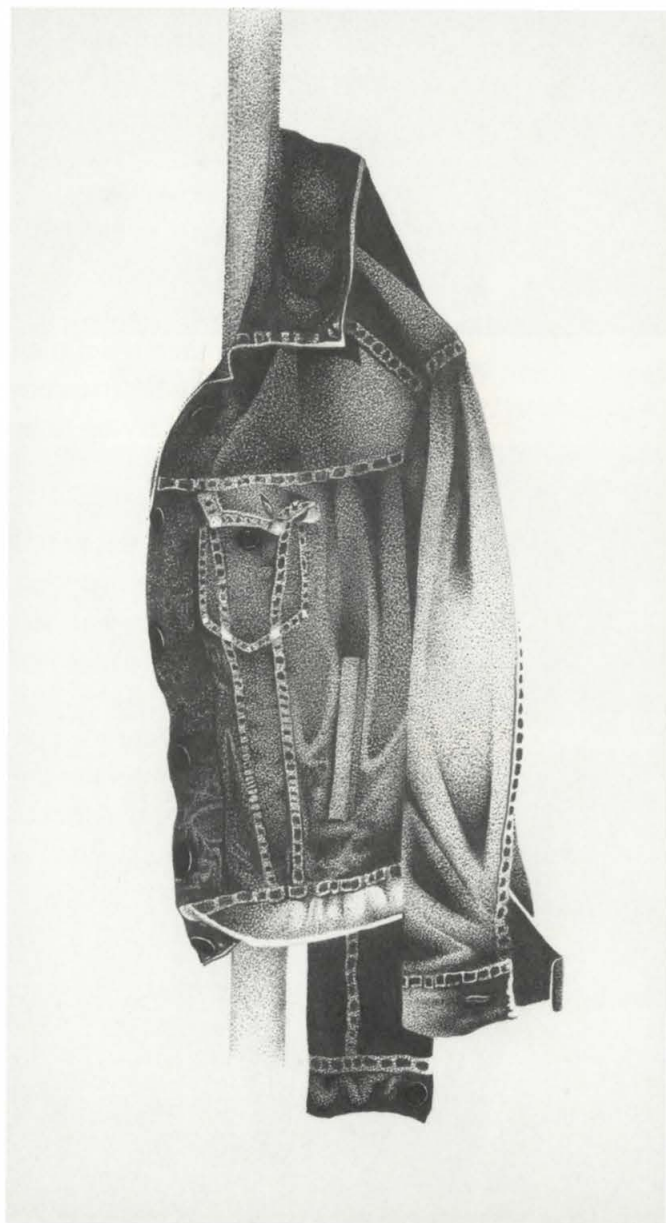
mother answer it. It was my aunt, her sister. She always called at lunch time. I remembered then that I was hungry, so I said goodbye to Big Bird and turned off the television. To get to the kitchen from my parents' room I had to pass the den.

My mother and my aunt always talked for a long time, usually upsetting our lunch and making my mother quite mad, but today she sounded pleased. Feeling righteous and brave, I crept toward my mother's desk.

My mother had drawn a portrait of a child in charcoal. It was a boy with round cheeks and fat hands, a boy who looked bored in black and white, playing with "64 colors."

I can't remember whether I desecrated that drawing with my crayolas or with the forbidden pastels. If there is any sort of balance in this universe, I must have used a brick red, a cornflower blue and that rich crayola green.

When my mother saw what I had done she sat down in the tall, high-backed chair and cried. I watched her from the hallway leading from the den to our bedrooms, and then I walked over to the desk, resting my chin on the end of the board. After a while I began to cry with her, because I loved her. I wanted to hug her and for her to put her arms around me and forgive me, but this did not happen, and we were fixed in that position until the sun went down and my father came home.



**Blue Denim**, Chris King  
*honorable mention. graphic design*



# The Day After Viewing The Tin Drum

Christine Lassiter

Yesterday I laughed.  
Today thinking about laughter I remembered  
how pain strangles it, how empty the throat feels,  
how a play forced the emptiness out, forced  
a sweet release, only for me to choke it  
back the next moment, how false others'  
laughter seemed, but curious too,  
like a moon where gravity is something to play with.  
And I remembered sometime later laughter  
pouncing on me, a kid brother in the dark —  
terror then relief then anger — later still,  
laughing for the sake of laughing,  
like a kid trying to make another kid laugh by  
laughing in his face for minutes.  
Laughing 'til it exhausted itself and turned into tears.  
Like today thinking about yesterday  
I could have laughed 'til I cried. I could  
have chosen tears to begin with. Oskar,  
pathetic-eyed, growth-stunted Oskar and his  
eel-eating, lik-m-aid-seducing, fascist-parading world.  
Where dying men play cards 'til they slump, then  
watch with grateful eyes as friends strap  
their flaccid spines to beams so they can resume,  
the play punctuated now and then by  
polite retching.



Graveyard, Gray, TN 1989, Jenny Lokey  
*first place photography*



State Fair, Gray, TN, 1989, Jenny Lokey  
*honorable mention. photography*



# A Bone-Dry Dream, Or How I Learned To Love The Rain

Jeff Keeling

Revelations can come at strange times. I certainly wasn't expecting one as I trudged up my alley toward Western Washington University the first day of spring quarter, 1988. I was actually in somewhat of a funk, for the rains that had begun a week earlier showed no signs of abating. The clouds flung steady sheets of wetness from the ashen sky, and a wind worked the damp under my collar, saturating me before I'd walked half a block. With the temperature hovering around 42 degrees, I felt like turning around, walking home, shedding my sodden duds and crawling back into my warm, dry bed until the sun came back.

A small stream running down the middle of the alley shook me from my wishful thinking. About a foot across, it carried with it twigs, rotting leaves, fallen blossoms. I tried, unsuccessfully, to imagine the alley without the stream. It had been there forever, a slender Styx sending insignificant bits of flora to their final resting place. I plodded on, wearing a wet scowl. Drops of rain settled on my hair, then crept down to the tip of my nose, collecting until they gained enough volume to slide off and plunge onto the wet pavement below. With my gaze levelled at the ground, I saw a very gray, dank world.

Something, though, made me look up at the cherry trees blooming along the alley. Their slender branches hung heavy with moisture, and the fragile-looking, light pink blossoms clung fiercely to trembling twigs as the drops beat down incessantly. Each blossom, each young leaf seemed to bow, acknowledging the clouds' gift, as a raindrop struck it.

Witnessing this natural exchange, I was struck by a disturbing vision. I don't know what brought it on, perhaps a recently read article about the greenhouse effect. I saw myself walking up the same alley; instead of a stream running down the middle, fine gray dust lined its sides, and a bone-dry rasping wind stirred the dust into the air in small clouds. Instead of blowing stinging rain into my face, this wind blew the dust into my eyes and throat, forcing me to cover my mouth with my hands and lower my face to avoid being completely blinded. When the wind died and the stinging in my eyes subsided, I looked around me and instantly wished the wind would pick back up, because I didn't like what I saw.

Where there had been houses with yards full of trees, ivy, ferns, flowers and blackberry bushes, I witnessed just a few skeletal frames surrounded by dry, lifeless ground and the remains of abandoned cars. Time and the elements (excluding water, apparently) looked to have reduced to nothing all but the sturdiest houses. I felt queer, moving and breathing among this lifelessness — no trees, no people, no dogs. Because of the dearth, I had a clear view of Sehome Hill, which rises more than 1,000 feet above Bellingham Bay. Where once the crowded trees had blanketed the mound in more shades of green than the eye could detect, only a few needleless spires remained to interrupt an otherwise barren hump of land.

Another gust whirled more of the stinging dust into my eyes. After it passed, I looked down toward the bay. Below me, a few buildings remained, but where once had been a busy city of 50,000 souls there now was a repeat of the scene above me: barren soil, probably like the kind Pa Joad had squatted in, sifting it through his fingers as he decided to leave the Oklahoma dustbowl for the promise of California; more abandoned cars; and an occasional tumbleweed rolling solitary in the wind, its light brown barely discernible against the dominant gray. The only indications that this had once been Bellingham were the shape of the bay and the location of the hills. 10,778-foot Mt. Baker still jutted up to the east, but it looked lifeless as Sehome Hill, devoid even of its usual snow.

All this flashed before me in seconds, and then I stepped into a puddle, the vision departing as suddenly as it had arrived.

Somehow, I had witnessed the likely consequences of my desire for constant sunshine. Though the scene may have been extreme, I was reminded of a childhood move I had made to a climate more like my vision than it is like Bellingham.

When I was seven years old, my family moved from the southwest Washington town of Naselle to Omak, in the north-central part of the state. Playing with groups of kids in green rubber boots and yellow raincoats; tromping through the puddles while waiting for the schoolbus in the rain; walking barefoot along the soft dirt paths that wound through dense stands of evergreens and moss-covered undergrowth; warm



summer days at Long Beach, laughing as I fled the cold and crashing surf; and above all, standing momentarily at a rain-streaked window, pausing in my indoor activities to wish it would quit raining: these had been my experiences up to then.

Until I moved to Omak, I knew nothing but the sodden climate of Naselle, which receives more than 80 inches of rain each year. To me, such an abundance of water was normal, and playing in the rain was a fact of life. I soon realized, in my seven-year-old way, that though Omak saw much less of it, water played a larger role there than it did in Naselle.

I learned early why Omak receives less than twelve inches of rain a year. The Okanogan River Valley lies less than an hour's drive east of the north Cascades. After the wet Pacific storms have crossed the one-to-two-mile-high crest of the mountains, they've often spent their loads. Along the river's banks, cottonwood, sycamore, and beech trees, cattails, and pussywillows grow in abundance, but unirrigated land any distance from the river would look quite barren to the untrained eye of a lifelong western Washingtonian. One sees only dry, yellow grasses and gray-green sagebrush, and the ground is a gray mixture of dust and sand.

I soon collected new memories, though, suitable to my new environment: rattlesnakes on the golf course — and sometimes out behind our back yard; swarms of grasshoppers every spring, seeming to come from nowhere, to be crushed by the hundreds under tires and size three sneakers; sprawling ranches, nearly devoid of vegetation and supporting a very low number of stringy looking cattle per acre; and sprinkler pipes — thousands and thousands of four to six inch diameter aluminium sprinkler pipes. Thirty-foot lengths piled triangularly between endless rows of apple trees, or being carried by kids, the pipes bowing in the middle with each step. Without these pipes and the precious irrigation water pumped through them, the millions of fruit trees here, trees that produced apples bound for Minnesota and Vermont, Arkansas and Tennessee, would wither and die. And if those trees died, so would the small towns along the river: Oroville, Ellisford, Tonasket, Riverside, Omak, Okanogan, Malott.

It didn't take me many hikes into the parched hills outside of town to realize how dependent on irrigation the area really is. Though it isn't often discussed, the valley folk know what a tenuous existence theirs is. The monotonous, ceaseless routine of changing sprinklers is a grim reminder of nature's hold over these

people's fortunes. Despite their ingenuity in making the desert bountiful, if nature decides to shut off the taps, north central Washington could become almost as desolate as the Bellingham of my vision.

The valley people's awareness of their climate's fragility translates into a more frugal attitude toward water use than the one displayed on the west side of the mountains. Though the valley is by no means a hotbed of environmentalism, its limited resources teach harsh lessons to those who would leave taps running unattended or wash their cars every few days. Two or three stretches without any water tend to change even the most wasteful person into at least a conservationist by necessity.

Attitudes are different on the west side, though, and I think the fear of a drought across the entire state and indeed the entire West is what brought the vision of a dustbowl rushing into my head in the middle of a spring drizzle. Western Washington had experienced two consecutive dry years. To most people, this meant little more than beautiful summers, and, in hard-hit areas, occasional water rationing. After the rains of April, 1988 ceased, reports assured us that area reservoirs were almost back to normal. By that time, though, I had changed my thinking about water. The clarity of my revelation had shown me how much we depend on it and how often we take it for granted.

Since that day in the rain, I have been plagued — or perhaps graced — with other visions of a withered land. The land in these visions is not one of spring tulips, drizzly winter days, or verdant pastures ripe with the pungent scent of natural fertilizer. It is a land of dust and wind, of dry river beds and the skeletons of those creatures that could not escape. It is a land so foreign to our experience in western Washington that we cannot imagine it happening here, so we perhaps do less than we should to prevent it or prepare for it. It is a land I hope my grandchildren never see.





**Contemplation**, Libby Barnes  
*third place drawings and prints*







# **I have been to a death in winter**

Tom Lee

I have been to a death in winter  
where the wind was so cold  
and the ground so hard  
no tent could stand  
above the desolate hole  
where no canvas  
covered the living or the dead,  
as seems common to me  
at such affairs,  
but the sky ...

I have been to a death in winter  
where the wind was so cold  
and the heavens so dark  
it seemed that man himself  
was lost  
in the shadow of a canvas sky.



**Old Man of the Sea, Sara Honeycutt**  
*honorable mention. drawings and prints*



# The Failure of the Fragrance

Randy Handel

Lynde walked toward the cafe to see if his aunts needed him. The newly painted walls and shutters made the old large farmhouse of his grandfather's hardly recognizable. No one had ever visited here when Lynde was a little boy. Then, he had come with his mother and father only once a year. During these times, Hendersonville, North Carolina, which lay twenty miles south, could only be reached by a dirt road that doubled as a creek during spring. Now with a highway stretching black across the front of the house, his aunts had no difficulty drawing in wayward travelers: an occasional truck driver, a tired salesman, but mostly sight-seeing "Yankees." These trusting motorists believed the tea house to be some historic antebellum mansion that somehow survived Sherman's destructive march through the South (despite the fact that Sherman never came within a hundred miles of the area, not to mention that the house was built in 1902). But Lynde's aunts were not about to disillusion their weary guests and eagerly filled these vacationers' ears with fabulistic minor skirmishes and mythical battles of the Civil War until the unwary victims were lulled into staying at an authentic boarding house that Robert E. Lee might have passed on his white horse: The Green Shuttered Tea Room (with vacancy).

Entering, Lynde smelled vegetable soup mingling with a familiar yet distant perfume. He turned into the gaze of Florence Ryeling's eyes — blue, enticing — beckoning him to come closer. Her face was more beautiful than Lynde remembered, but it still possessed the same angular chin and round cheeks that he knew so well; the chin and cheeks dreams were made of. He didn't even notice the pancake covering the darkness under her eyes or the unnatural rosiness of her cheeks.

"Hey Lynde," she said batting her long synthetic eyelashes. She smiled coyly at him, making him duck behind the counter in embarrassment.

It had been more than a year since that fatal night he had jumped out of her car at the Piggly Drive-In, so scared he pissed in his pants and ran all the way home. Since then, the sight of her made Lynde squirm, anticipating a run to the bathroom. She had the upper hand and she knew it. Every time she looked at him he felt like Play-Do in the clammy hands of a six-year old.

"Yoouu home from school?" he stuttered out in his weak Carolina drawl — the kind that sounded like he would never finish a sentence.

"For a week," she answered, "I'm goin' to summer school. I couldn't stand another summer in this God-awful town. Besides, college don't have Mamma or Papa breathin' on me wherever I go." Lynde kept his eyes fixed to the counter top.

"Yoouu get watched over, don't you?" he stammered, losing his voice as he always did with her. He figured since she was going to a religious college that sharp judicious eyes kept constant watch over her.

"Hell no!" she backfired, "Nobody tells me to do nothin' in college. I can do whatever I want." She suddenly changed her voice as she slowly repeated "Whatever I want." Lynde glanced up from the counter to find her looking right at him with those eyes, just as she had done a year before.

Lynde felt a sweat break out all over his body, sending a shiver down his back. He bumped into the cupboards, rattling the glasses.

"Yoouu want anything to drink?" Lynde sputtered out. A glass had edged its way out above his head and was about to fall when Florence leaned over the counter, catching it as it dropped.

"That depends," she answered, handing him the glass. She ran her eyes up and down him as he timidly took the glass from her grip. "What you have to offer?"

Lynde tried to run a quick menu through his head and began listing ...

"Let's see, we've tea, of course, and coffee and Coke, lemon ..."

"Coke will be fine," she said, cutting him off. "Do you have any bourbon to go with that?" she boldly asked as Lynde was bending down in the cooler and fishing around for the right bottle.

"Uh, no!" Lynde replied as he shot up out of the cooler and banged his head. "My aunts don't like me to drink in the store. You know, bad for business and all." Lynde felt stupid. He knew damn well he didn't drink at all, because if he did, somehow his aunts would find out and make him go to every church service that the Reverend Boswell gave. One was bad enough as it was. What was worse, Florence knew it



**Shamrock**, Linda Beckett  
*honorable mention. photography*



too. She just asked to tease him. He looked down, dismayed.

“All we got is R.C. That okay with you?” She silently nodded, and he popped the cap off the bottle which began spewing foam.

Lynde searched frantically for the glass he had just had as Florence leaned over the counter and grabbed the fizzing soda with her teeth. She sucked the foam off the mouth of the bottle Lynde held in his shaking hands. Then she ran her tongue across her lips which made Lynde drop his head again in embarrassment. But Florence reached out and cupped his cheek in her hand. She pulled his red face toward hers and Lynde felt the soft of her moist lips press into his own trembling ones. The sweet taste of the cola hit his tongue as hers brushed against it. He felt like he couldn't move. Every muscle in his body had a cramp in it, but his hands shook so much that the soda gushed all over his shirt. He couldn't budge his feet to get out of the way, and the cola dripped down to his pants. Yet the sensation in his mouth was overwhelming. Everytime she moved her tongue, his muscles twitched. Lynde suddenly remembered his aunts and abruptly pulled away. The religious consequences raced through his mind.

“My aunts might come back any minute and catch us. They told me to stay away from you. Said you was trouble with a capital ‘T’.”

Florence sat quietly for a moment, not responding to his comment. Then she suddenly bent over the counter, grabbing a rag as she did.

“Look at you,” she said. “You got soda all over yourself.” Florence started to dab at the spilled liquid on his shirt. “It'll never come out,” she mused as she began rubbing harder. “Look. You even got it on your pants.” She started to move toward the spot on Lynde's pants when he backed into the cupboard with such force that it sent a row of glasses crashing to the floor.

Lynde was lost. He had no idea what to do, so he tucked his hands in his pockets and waited till the last glass splintered on the hard tile. Lynde could only shake his head in dismay.

When Florence pulled one of his hands from his pocket and whispered, “Come on,” he offered little resistance as she pulled him toward the door.

“But, but, but what about my aunts? What about the store?” he finally blurted as she was dragging him out the door. “I better clean this up or I might get in trouble. Don't you think we cou...” Florence cut him

off with a short kiss and finished tugging him through the door. Lynde glanced back long enough to see his Aunt Louise's picture on the wall. She was dressed in a white wedding dress than had never been used because the groom never showed up. Lynde was being pulled too quickly to think much about it. He only hoped she could not see through the picture — the way the eyes always did in those mystery movies.

Florence led Lynde into the field behind the cafe toward a barn where his grandfather had raised horses. It was empty now, and the years of neglect showed when Florence opened the door. The hinges popped and chunks of rotten wood fell off as the darkness of the barn leaked out. The damp musky hay still filled the barn and Lynde's nose stung with the earthy smell. Florence began to laugh effortlessly as she let go of Lynde's hand and climbed up the ladder to the loft. She looked down at Lynde with those alluring eyes of hers, begging him to follow. Lynde hesitantly crawled up the ladder after her and was pushed into a bed of hay at the top. The hay's aroma rushed up, intoxicating Lynde with its odor. She dropped down beside him and tickled the inside of his ear with a stalk of hay. She giggled at the face he made, and he began to laugh too, strained at first, but then as naturally as if he were used to this sort of play all the time.

He had wanted to do this for so long, but she seemed so strange to him a year earlier. Now she seemed different, more like ... or rather, how she used to be. She began to caress and kiss and hold him. Lynde shyly passed his hand over her breasts and felt a tingle between his thighs that he had never felt before, at least not like this. It wasn't like masturbating in the bathroom with the lights out. This time he didn't know what the outcome would be, like he always did when one of his aunts would come to the door and ask if everything was alright.

“Yes,” he would answer, “I'll be out in a minute, I'm just reading a magazine.”

“With the lights out?” she would ask. “I better come in and see what's wrong.”

This was always the climax, the chance of getting caught. But he always locked the door and by the time she got a key, he was back on the seat reading National Geographic in the dark. He always thought it was odd that he never really got excited by those pictures of native women running around half naked, not like his father's magazines.

This was different though. He didn't feel like one of his aunts was going to burst through the barn door



and shower him with guilt. This time he didn't feel like a stupid kid in the back of a blue Impala who didn't know the difference between going to the movies and going to the drive-in. This time he was relaxed — more relaxed than he had ever imagined. He was free to be himself and act the way he always knew he should. His father would probably be proud of him right now. It would make up for all the times Lynde had let him down.

These thoughts built up his confidence, so he made another pass at her breasts, but when she showed resistance, he pulled his hand away. She reached out and grabbed it, pressing it closer. Lynde was confused by this, but it excited him. Lynde rolled over on top of her and began to massage both of her breasts, just as he had seen it done in one of his father's films ...

"Lynde, what are you doing in the closet?"

"Nothin' Dad, just playin'."

"What the Hell?! So you got into your ole man's closet where I told you not to go. What the fuck you think you're tryin' to pull, you little shit? Put your Goddamn pants back on and bring that film to me in my room in five minutes. And bring one of your belts with you too. I'm going to teach you to listen to me when I tell you not to do somethin'."

"But Dad, I..."

"Shut up and hurry up! Put your britches on, you look like a Goddam fag sittin' on the floor with no pants on..."

The stinging memory made Lynde flinch. He looked down at Florence and she smiled back.

"You okay Lynde?"

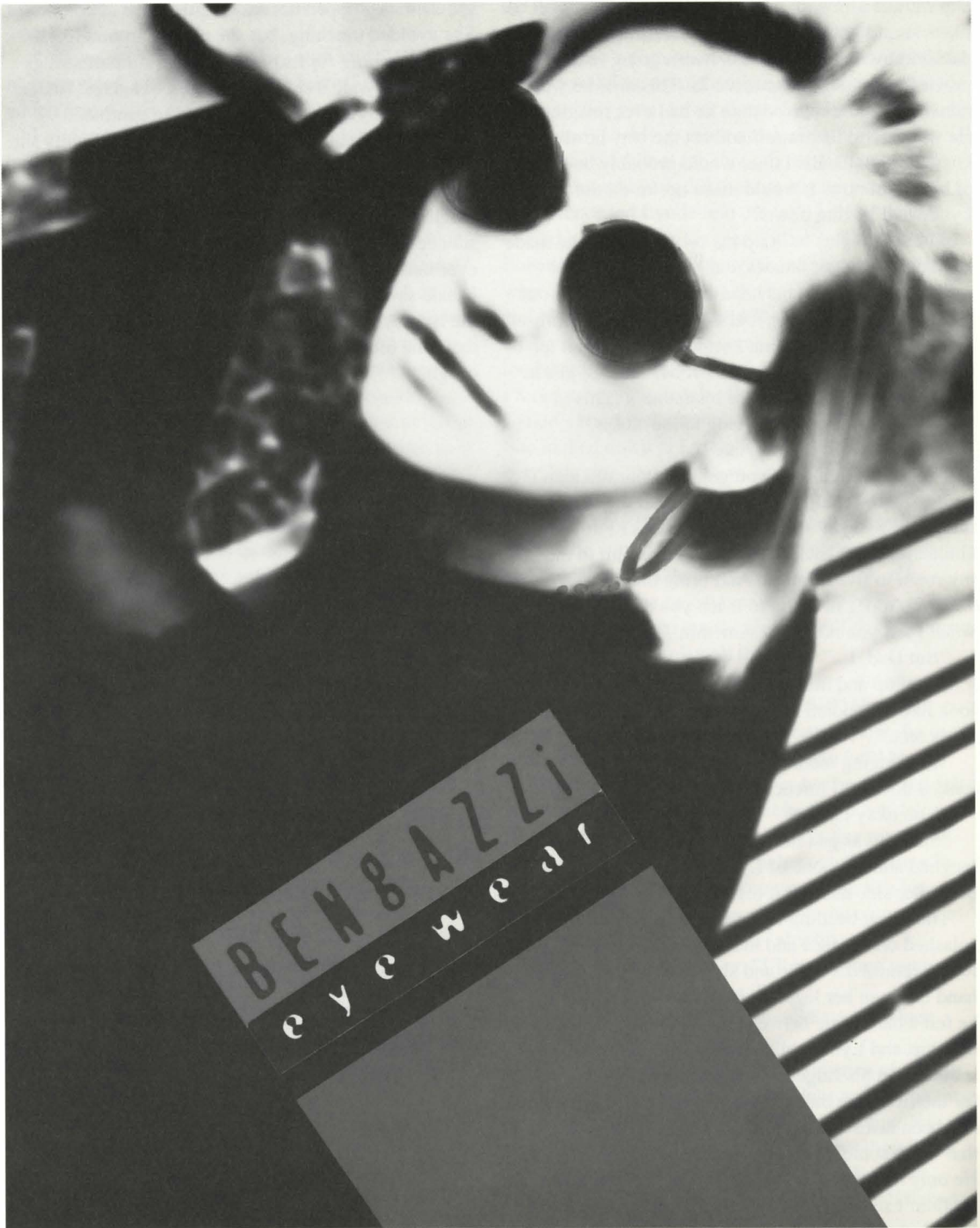
"Sure, I was just thinkin' how nice this all is." She laughed and took one of Lynde's hands and moved it down her side and left it resting on her hip.

The sweat beading up on Lynde's forehead splashed on her face and made her laugh again. Lynde feebly returned a smile and slowly moved his shaking hand between her legs. He went black for a moment as he felt a hand slide between his own legs. She lifted up her skirt and Lynde rolled the soft cotton of her panties between his fingers. He glanced down and noticed for the first time that her legs were not so thin as they had been last summer, but he knew, for some reason, that when some women grow older they gain weight. He only had to look at his two aunts to figure that out. He didn't seem to comprehend that different women grow larger for different reasons.

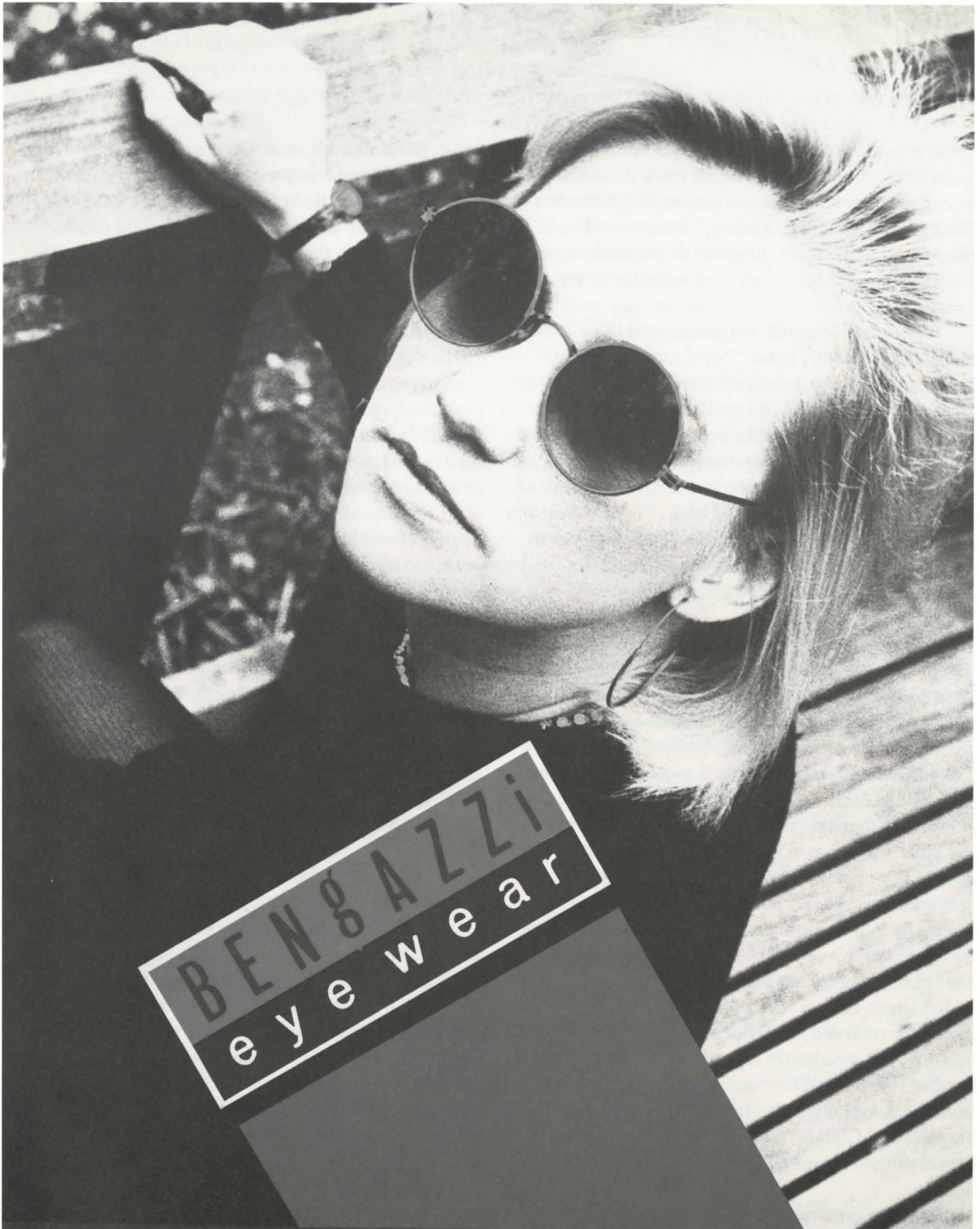
The vibration of his zipper woke Lynde from his musing as she loosened his pants. A feeling began to

grow as she slipped her hand beneath his cotton briefs. She avoided touching, but she circled around like a hawk searching for its prey. The sensation of strings pulling at Lynde's stomach left him in a daze. He had never felt anything so incredible. She continued circling, getting closer with each pass until finally she grasped with such speed and unexpectedness that Lynde completely lost himself. Florence began to laugh uproariously and Lynde looked down to see the stained cotton, worse than any stain any cola could ever make. Florence could not stop laughing and as Lynde saw the bun of his Aunt Louise's wig rising up the ladder, he realized that he had been wrong. It was the same old climax, only this time he had been caught.





**Bengazz Eyeware** (before), Fathi Bakkoush  
*second place graphic design*



**Bengazz Eyeware** (after), Fathi Bakkoush  
*second place graphic design*



# The Gift

Ed Price

“Wie geht’s!” Old Simeon Swartzentruber shouted to me from the gloomy end of the smithy. It took several seconds for my eyes to adjust to the darkness. Finally I spotted him. “Quickly,” Simeon said as he turned toward the forge. I hurried over, nearly upsetting a stack of freshly-repaired plowshares in my haste.

“You’re late,” the old Amishman said as he thrust a pair of tongs into my hand. “Now, turn.”

The tongs fit my hand well. Simeon had made them for me the week after I had told him that I wanted to learn a thing or two about being a blacksmith. He had even chiseled my initials on the handle. I clamped the tongs around a large iron ring that lay on the hot coals of the forge. Old Simeon stood back. “Turn slowly so you can heat the metal evenly,” he said. “Otherwise the tire will not fit snugly on the wooden rim.”

I panicked. “I’m not ready for this, Simeon,” I protested.

“You must learn,” he replied quickly. “It’s easy. Here, I’ll show you once again.” Simeon took the tongs from my hand and began turning the ring himself. “Slowly now. Like this.” Then he added with a grin: “I wouldn’t trust just any Englisch to do this.”

I had learned a lot from old Simeon in the eight weeks I had spent in his smithy. From repairing plowshares to making digging irons, I had done it all. But there was more to my panic than fear of performing a major operation for the first time. Putting iron tires on buggy wheels was an almost sacred task, especially in this particular Amish community where the controversy over iron vs. rubber tires on buggies had been raging for several years.

In Garrett County, Maryland, the Old Line Amish (those who resisted any modernization of their austere lifestyle) had steadfastly argued that the more comfortable ride that rubber tires would afford was a gift from the devil rather than from God. They believed progress and God did not mix. The iron tires/rubber tires controversy was a symbol of Old Line determination.

But some grown children of Old Line families, gazing longingly at the world of the Englisch, were already forsaking their parent’s prohibitions by acquiring items like rubber tires, tractors, electrical service,

and even transistor radios. On the surface, it looked like the Old Line was about to snap. But Old Simeon, in his simple faith, held firm to the belief that God would intercede and make everything right again (even though this theological notion went against the basic precepts of community beliefs). “The Lord works in mysterious ways,” he was fond of saying.

I looked up from the iron tire, which was now beginning to glow a dusky red from the heat. Simeon studied me through his watery blue eyes. The light from the forge caused his gray, moustacheless beard and his face to adopt a warm orange hue. His was a hard face at that particular moment because it reflected an urgent matter which was on his mind.

“I must speak to you of family business,” he said finally. “I wouldn’t admit this to an outsider, but I will say it to you. If I should die, there would be no one left to run the smithy.”

“What about Samuel?” I asked.

“Meine grandson is interested in other things. I fear we are losing Samuel to the Englisch.”

“Just because he put rubber tires on his buggy?”

“Ja.” Then Simeon took a deep breath and said: “There are less than three dozen of us keeping to the old ways. By next spring, that number may be cut in half. And, as you know, Samuel Spohr is the only other blacksmith in the area — that is, except you and me.”

It was my turn to take a deep breath as I suspected what was coming next.

“It is not the practice of our faith to solicit converts,” Simeon continued. “I only ask you to consider the possibility of joining us. I want you in the smithy.”

Me? An Amishman? Certainly I had quizzed Simeon about the sect, but I had never seriously considered joining its ranks. But, at that point, my adventurous and romantic spirit whispered in my ear and tempted me heartily. I knew nearly everyone in the community. I had been to Amish meetings and understood their particular brand of Calvinism. Simeon’s son-in-law, John Yoder, had introduced me to the backside of a mule, so I could plow a field. I could hitch and pilot a buggy or a cutter (a horse-drawn sleigh) with passable skill — no problem there. I was even beginning to understand the Swiss-German



dialect the Amish spoke. At that moment I thought it would be wonderful to disappear into a simple, agrarian community and work as a smithy for the rest of my life. But, at the same time, this was not a decision that could be entered into lightly.

“I will let you know tomorrow,” I said quietly.

“Then I will wait,” Simeon replied as a slight smile curled his thin lips and turned the corners of his mouth downward.

Then we turned our attention, once again, to the iron tire. It took both of us to carefully place the red-hot iron over the wooden rim of the buggy wheel. Then we dipped the whole affair into a tank of used motor oil to cool the metal slowly and preserve its temper. A cloud of greasy smoke filled the smithy and spilled out the open windows. When it was time to leave, a pall of smoke still hung in the smithy, along with the pungent aroma of scorched oil. Simeon and I had completed six buggy wheels — a good afternoon’s work.

I waved goodbye to the old man, got into my car, and headed for home. That night Simeon suffered a massive stroke and died.

The next morning when I arrived at the smithy, John Yoder broke the news. Then he handed me a piece of paper that contained a few lines in Simeon’s careful scrawl. I read silently for a moment, then looked at John.

“Simeon wanted you to have the smithy,” John said quietly, “and the land as well.”

“But it says here that he left me ten acres,” I protested, while fighting back the tears. “That land belongs to you and your family.”

“Simeon has provided well for his family,” John assured me. “But he wanted you to have a little piece of land to build a house on and to farm. There’s plenty of room for a truck garden and there’s a couple of acres of woods. In the meantime, you can stay with Leana and me until you get started.”

Simeon’s sudden death and the paper John handed me had complicated my life considerably. The notion of joining the Amish had rolled around in my head all night. But the unfavorable points of such a move had outweighed the good, and I had decided not to join the community. Under the present circumstances, if I declined to join, it would seem as if I were flinging Simeon’s generous gift back in his face. But I finally had to refuse.

“I understand,” John said.

“The only thing that I want are those tongs that

Simeon made for me — the ones with my name on the handle.”

“Done.”

I never did figure out whether or not John was relieved that I chose not to accept Simeon’s gift. According to Amish tradition, the eldest member of the family made all the really important decisions. If John had objected to Simeon’s wishes concerning me, he had kept his silence.

I returned to the smithy only once after that day. It was a year later and I drove by, wondering whether the building was still there. Well, it was still there, and the smoke billowing from the chimney told me that it was still being used.

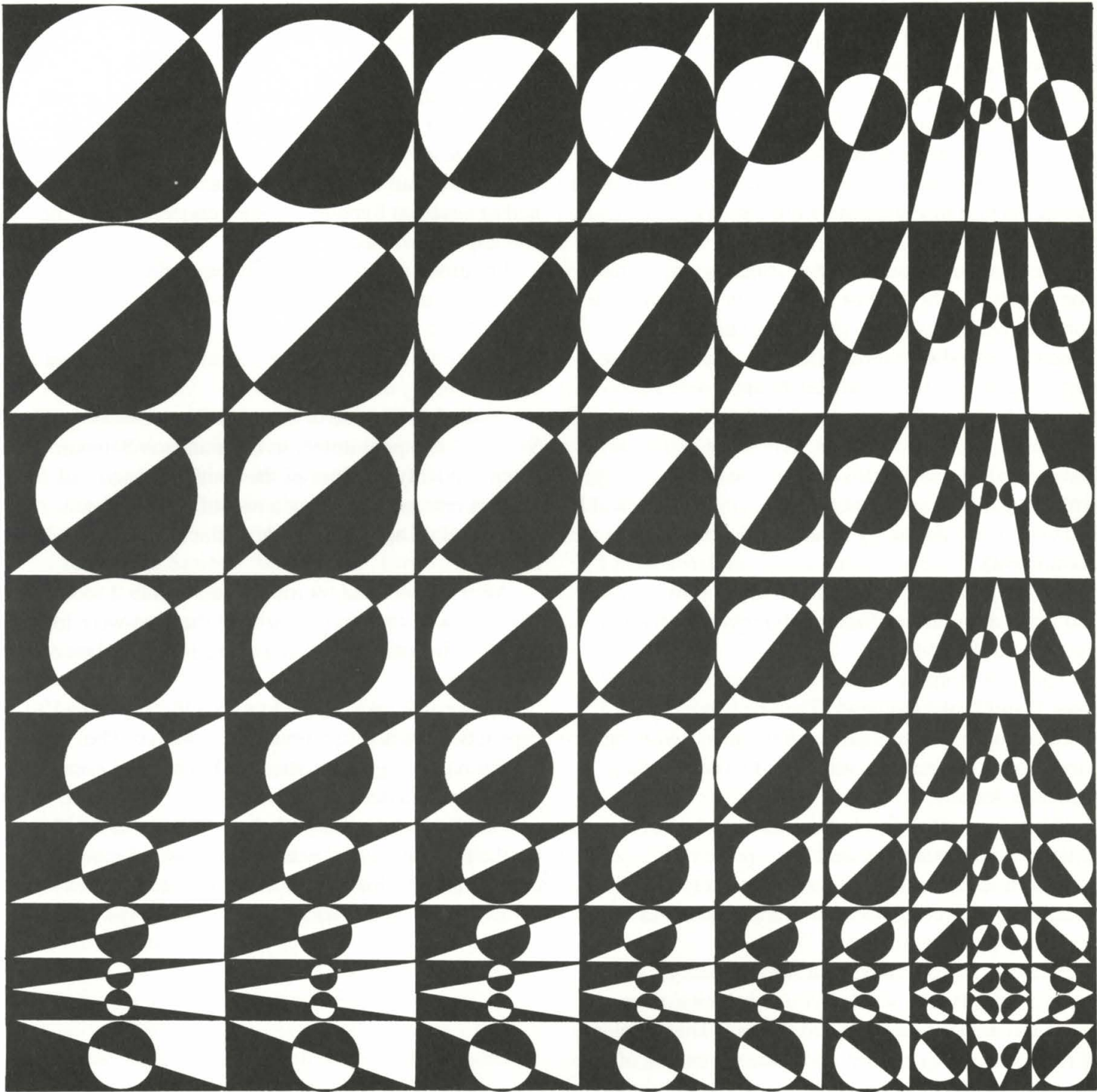
I pulled to the side of the road. I was thinking about Simeon’s disappointment in his grandson Samuel, when suddenly the door of the smithy opened and Samuel emerged, carrying a pair of buggy wheels which he laid against the side of the weathered building.

After Samuel had returned to the inside, I took a closer look at the wheels. Around the rims were iron straps — iron tires. I relaxed against the backrest of the car seat.

“Sam came back,” I said to myself. “If you had accepted Simeon’s gift, Sam might not have. The Englisch didn’t get him after all. For once in your life, you’ve made a decent decision.”

I started the car and pulled away from the smithy for the final time. As I was driving away, I thought of the words that Simeon had uttered so many times before: “The Lord works in mysterious ways.”





**Gradation Grid**, Carol B. Patton  
*honorable mention. graphic design*

# Eggshells

Christine Lassiter

Alone after the wake I ponder his young death  
and watch brown eggs in a glass bowl and cry.  
He and I made fine sport one night gently  
blowing yolk and white out of pin-pricked eggs.  
When Morrison sang of blood and sorrow, he told  
of ghosts crowding a child's fragile eggshell mind.  
I try to know the clear-eyed wonder of a child  
and feel betrayal plunder my blue-sky world.  
Does innocent joy once destroyed never restore?  
Does hate stalk every love, stabbing again and again?  
Do wounds from eggshell splinters never mend?







# Think Not of Earthly Things

Jeff Keeling

Carlos Delarosa sat in the 30th row of the Seattle Center Coliseum, staring at the crowd of more than 10,000 that had gathered to hear the word of God, straight from the mouth of the Reverend Roy Dean Lafayette. The faithful in the seats around Carlos gazed intently at the man whose weekly “Sunshine Sunday” program reached the souls and wallets of an estimated 4.5 million viewers worldwide.

Roy Dean’s first trip to Seattle had piqued the 19-year-old Carlos’ interest, but not because Carlos was among the Reverend’s followers. In fact, Carlos blamed Roy Dean for his family’s pathetic situation almost as much as he blamed his father, who had left town with what little money the family had when Carlos was nine.

Carlos’ mother, Nina, had devoted her life to Lafayette three years ago, after claiming he had cured her, through the television set, of a self-diagnosed brain tumor. Since then, close to half of the welfare money Nina received each month had gone to Roy Dean’s ministry. Carlos wanted to see in person this man who kept his mother glued to the TV every day, watching videotapes of sermons she’d already seen twenty times, on a VCR that Carlos’ cousin Jesus Moreno had stolen. Nina was at home right now, watching the service from the couch she rarely left due to chronic bunions that Roy Dean had yet to heal.

The audience, open-mouthed in rapture, watched Roy Dean. Carlos, tight-lipped in disgust, watched the audience. Roy Dean’s Louisiana drawl rose and fell rhythmically as he spoke pleasantly of the abundant gifts his followers would receive when they joined Jesus in heaven. Carlos turned his attention to the Reverend. Even thirty rows from the stage, Carlos could clearly see the thick golden rings, encrusted with rubies and diamonds, that graced Roy Dean’s sausage-like fingers. He could also see what he interpreted as a greedy glint in the Reverend’s small, black eyes. Folds of fat surrounded the eyes, complementing the Reverend’s sweaty, puffy cheeks and double chin. He wore an expensive-looking, blue pinstripe suit, and gold cuff links squeezed the gelatinous area where his wrists were.

Whenever Roy Dean knifed the air with his fist to make a point, his disciples would shout, “Glory, glory,

puhraise Jesus! Amen, Roy Dean, amen brother!”

Roy Dean shifted gears from the subject of paradise to discuss a favorite topic, his childhood.

“We didn’t have much, brothers and sisters, we didn’t have much. Sometimes I didn’t all know where my next meal was comin’ from, and sometimes it never come until the next day, but did I fret over such earthly things? I did not. I put my trust in Jesus and knew he would watch over me, for just like you all, I was part of God’s plan.”

“Praise the Lord! Amen, brother, amen.”

“Now I know many of you has got cares and burdens. We live in strange and evil times. Our streets are filled with crack and crime, prostitution and pornography. But I want to tell you something that Jesus said once, something y’all would do well to keep in mind when these earthly cares seem unbearable, when you don’t know where your next meal is comin’ from. In the book of Matthew chapter six, Jesus said:

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment?

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

Therefore, take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”



Roy Dean's sweating face twitched reverently as he read from Matthew, and the crowd rocked from side to side as one. Carlos sat rock still in his seat, his dark eyes penetrating Roy Dean's moist upper lip. When the Reverend finished, the coliseum exploded with "Amens" and "Praise Gods."

"I know y'all will take these words to heart as you go back into the neighborhoods of Seattle. And when people ask from where came that peaceful look in your eye, tell em you've found the true path to eternal happiness through the Lord Jesus and "Sunshine Sunday." Now I have to bring up one last thing before I leave this beautiful group of God's children."

Here Roy Dean's voice dropped an octave.

"As y'all know, our ministry has been doin' God's work all over the world, thanks to your generous support. We recently expanded our missionary work in southern Africa, where we've begun to enlighten many lost souls. Good as this project is, it has seriously strained our resources."

Roy Dean licked his lips.

"If y'all could find it in your hearts to give what you can when the plates come around, I promise your money will soon be doin' the Lord's work. And anyone who can double their monthly gift to the Sunshine Ministry will receive a handsomely bound, large print, King James Bible with our Lord Jesus' words printed in sunshine yellow. God bless you all."

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Carlos stepped off his bus into a cold February rain and began the five-block trek toward his mother's Rainier Beach apartment. Before he reached home, he had passed eight prostitutes, including his sister's best friend, two crack houses and three abandoned buildings. Garbage lay piled in the street next to some kids jumping rope.

The stairs up to Delarosa's third-floor apartment were sticky and smelled of urine and vomit. At \$75 a month, the one bedroom jobs were popular with winos and drug addicts, not to mention other people who had better things than rent on which to spend their money. Carlos walked into a living room strewn with dirty dishes, videotapes and empty wine bottles (Nina faithfully celebrated communion every day). Nina sat on the couch, remote control in hand, watching the coliseum service for the second time. She didn't look up when Carlos came in, so he waded past her and into the small bedroom he shared with Roxanne, his 11-

year-old sister. He picked up the phone and dialed his cousin Jesus' number.

"Hello."

"Jesus, que pasa hermano?"

"Hey, Carlos, I'm good. Que pasa?"

"I just got back from seeing that faggot Roy Dean Lafayette in the flesh down at the coliseum, man. Mom's got a screw loose for listening to him. He's nothing if he's not a fuckin' crook."

"Yeah, well, what can you do? You know Nina's been a little off since your sister was born."

"So? That doesn't mean she's gotta spend all our money on that con artist. Anyway, I called because I've got an idea. Come over in a couple hours and bring your car."

"Sure man, whatever. Adios."

"Later."

Carlos went to the kitchen and opened the refrigerator: a bottle of wine, some mustard and a hunk of moldy cheese.

"When you gonna get some goddamn groceries, Mom?"

"Please don't talk that way, dear. I didn't know you were home. How has your day been?"

"Groceries, Mom, groceries. You want your kids to starve?"

"I don't have any money, Carlos, I'll get a check in ten days. Besides, the Reverend Lafayette gave the most wonderful sermon today, and he spoke about how we shouldn't worry about such earthly things."

"Roy Dean Lafayette's a pig, Mom, and he's pushing his stinking snout around in our money while I steal food from my job so me and Roxanne can eat."

"You're killing me with such talk, Carlos, you know that. Now please let me get back to my show."

"Yeah, get back to old Roy Dean. Maybe he'll heal your bunions."

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Carlos called his friend Howard, who agreed to work his shift for him the next morning at the Silver Spoon Cafe, where Carlos was a breakfast cook, and then he walked out to the sidewalk to wait for Jesus. It was only 5:30 — Jesus wouldn't arrive for more than an hour — but Carlos always escaped to the street when he wanted to think. The rumble of the buses, the loud rap blasting from boom boxes propped on scrawny shoulders, the crude banter of the whores — these sounds became a dull hum that sedated Carlos.







He would lean against the brick wall of his building, improvising songs on a battered harmonica that he kept in his back pocket. Sometimes he would read the newspaper and wish he could go someplace far away. He often dreamed of moving to Argentina and going to work on a ranch. At times he wondered about his father, and much as he hated what the man had done to the family, he wished he were with him instead of Nina. His father had been irresponsible but intelligent — he'd taught Carlos to read before he went to kindergarten, and had told him things about the different parts of the world Carlos liked to dream about now.

Tonight, though, Carlos concentrated on the project at hand. The Reverend Lafayette was registered at the Westin Hotel downtown, and Carlos knew from his mother that wherever he happened to be, Roy Dean never failed to step out for an evening constitutional, "to ponder this great universe and thank the Lord for speakin' through me." Carlos also knew that as "a man of the people" Roy Dean shunned bodyguards on his nightly walks.

By the time Jesus pulled up in his primer gray, roofless '67 Chevy Impala, Carlos felt confident that his plan would work. He Fosbury Flopped into the back seat of the Impala and flashed a rare grin at Jesus.

"The Westin, lackey, on the double."

"Man, whatchyou wanna go to that tight-ass place for? We gonna' break into some BMWs?"

Carlos crawled into the front seat and threw Jesus a dark glower, causing the cousin to retreat into chastened silence. At 23, Jesus was four years older than Carlos, but he had found his niche among the 17-year-old delinquent crowd, where his thievery was legendary. He had stolen cars, bicycles, stereos, wallets, purses, TVs, VCRs — one year even lifting the Christ child from a local outdoor nativity scene — and he'd never been caught. Carlos attributed this to dumb luck, because Jesus was a bit thick, but Jesus considered himself a master thief, while admitting Carlos' superior intellect. Now that he supplied most of the marijuana in his neighborhood, Jesus had cut down on the stealing, but he liked to keep in "game shape" with an occasional heist, the booty from which he usually gave away to friends or admirers.

"You know I don't steal anything but food," Carlos said, shivering in his light windbreaker. The drizzle flattened his curly, jet black hair and crept cold down his back. The silver crucifix hanging from a chain around his neck created a cold spot on his skinny chest, reminding him of its presence. He hoped Roy

Dean wasn't averse to a little precipitation.

"So what's the plan then?" Jesus asked, lighting a joint.

"We're going to pay the Reverend Lafayette a little social call when he goes for his nightly constitutional."

"Forget it, hombre. I'm not into snuffin' nobody."

"Do you think I'm stupid? I just want to take him for a ride, get to know his private side, chat him up a little, maybe tell him about Mom's bunions."

"You're a strange cat, Carlos, but I'll trust you. Whatever we do'll be more interesting than the tube; although I did pick up a beauty 25-inch Sony the other day."

Jesus pulled into the Westin parking lot within sight of the front doors at 7:45 p.m. At approximately 8:25, Roy Dean Lafayette walked out into the Seattle night. He carried a black umbrella and wore Sergio Valente blue jeans, a brown leather bomber jacket and lizard skin cowboy boots. Two pairs of eyes followed his figure as it walked in the direction of Denny Park.

"He'll go to Denny Park, I can feel it," Carlos said. "I'm going to follow him; you pull up in the church parking lot by the park and meet me at the statue."

Jesus drove off and Carlos walked about half a block behind the Reverend. The rain had stopped, and an almost balmy chinook breeze blew pleasantly out of the south. Roy Dean lit a cigar and sauntered leisurely along the sidewalk. Occasionally, the streetlights flashed on a jewel in one of his rings. Each time this happened, Carlos' nervousness dissipated a little and his anger rose.

Sure enough, Roy Dean wandered into Denny Park. After Roy Dean sat on a bench in the center of the park, Carlos ran over to Jesus' car.

"C'mon, man, we gots a critter to catch."

Jesus laughed and flicked his newly lit cigarette. The orange tip described a perfect arc and landed with a hiss in a puddle.

The pair crept through the bushes until they were about 15 feet behind the Reverend, who sat on the bench humming the "Sunshine Sunday" theme song. Jesus tiptoed up behind him and threw a pillowcase over his fat head, quickly clamping his hand down over Roy Dean's mouth.

The Reverend struggled mightily, flopping around like a 230-pound catfish, until Carlos cracked him on the kneecap with one of the tools Jesus used to break into cars. Then they gagged him, tied his hands behind his back, bound his legs together, and dragged him



through the bushes to the edge of the park. Jesus went to his car, drove up nearby, and opened the Impala's trunk; after a sweaty struggle, they managed to stuff Roy Dean inside.

"I'll drive," Carlos said. He hadn't imagined it would be so easy, but he was relieved that it had been. He put a Pontius Co-Pilate tape into the stereo, turned up the back speakers full blast, and drove toward Interstate 90.

Carlos stayed on the freeway for a couple of hours, until just past Vantage, when he turned onto Highway 26 toward Othello. At about 2 a.m., with Led Zeppe-  
lin's "Nobody's Fault But Mine" pulsing metallicly into the crisp Columbia Basin air, Carlos turned onto a dirt road that hadn't been used since the latest snow-  
fall. He was about halfway between Royal City and Vantage, with no town of more than 1,000 within 50 miles.

The road dead-ended after about three miles. A farmhouse sat about three-fourths of a mile back toward the highway. Carlos stopped the car, got out and opened the trunk. He and Jesus donned ski masks and hoisted the limp Roy Dean onto their shoulders. They carried him over a small hill just out of sight of the car, plunked him down, pulled off the pillowcase and untied the gag.

The Reverend squinted through the darkness at his captors.

"What are y'all doin' this to me for?" he whined. "What do you want from me? Whatever you want, y'all can have it, just please let me live. Take my wallet, my rings. They're worth thousands."

Carlos fished Roy Dean's wallet out of his back pocket and, not very carefully, forced seven rings off his thick fingers. He opened the wallet and pulled out a large wad of cash.

"863 dollars! Reverend, what would a man of God want with that kind of cash? You were going to send it off to Botswana, perhaps?"

Carlos stuffed two twenties into his pocket, held the rest of the cash six inches in front of the Reverend's face, and pulled out a lighter. He burned the remaining 823 dollars in front of Roy Dean's shocked visage. Then he held each ring out to the Reverend, turning it in his hands before flinging it far out into the snow.

"You're crazy, boy." Jesus nodded in agreement at this. "I think you're the devil."

"Not at all, Rev. We're going to go home now; there's a farmhouse up the road. But before I leave

you, I want to say: Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? (Whatever the hell that is.) Consider the lilies of the field, the birds of the air. They don't worry about earthly things. Aren't you worth more than birds — possibly?"

Carlos and Jesus turned and walked back toward the Impala. As they topped the hill, Carlos looked back. The Reverend Roy Dean Lafayette was digging around in the snow, looking for his rings.



**Scarab**, David Steele  
*honorable mention, drawings and prints*





**Nude Alphabet**, Sara Honeycutt  
*first place graphic design*



**Untitled**, Tony Duncan  
*honorable mention. photography*





# Christmas

Robert Russell

I found Jesus last night

after years of searching

I found him in the J.C. Penney's parking lot  
holding court above the leaves of red and gold  
that crackled beneath my feet and begged me to forget  
we walked on pavement

His back was straight against the twilight sky  
a strong, swarthy arab with a beard of red and gold  
and thick lips

No crowds followed him or asked his wisdom  
but I did see His name on the front of a black Ford Bronco that  
belonged to an older man who worked for the phone company  
I talked to him and he said that direct connection was the only  
way

the only way to heaven

He was still there when I got back  
Wrapped in paper and bows I shrugged and smiled at him  
and in the glow of a security light tied at the top with a red  
ribbon  
his sign read "Peace on Earth, good will toward men

I will work for food"

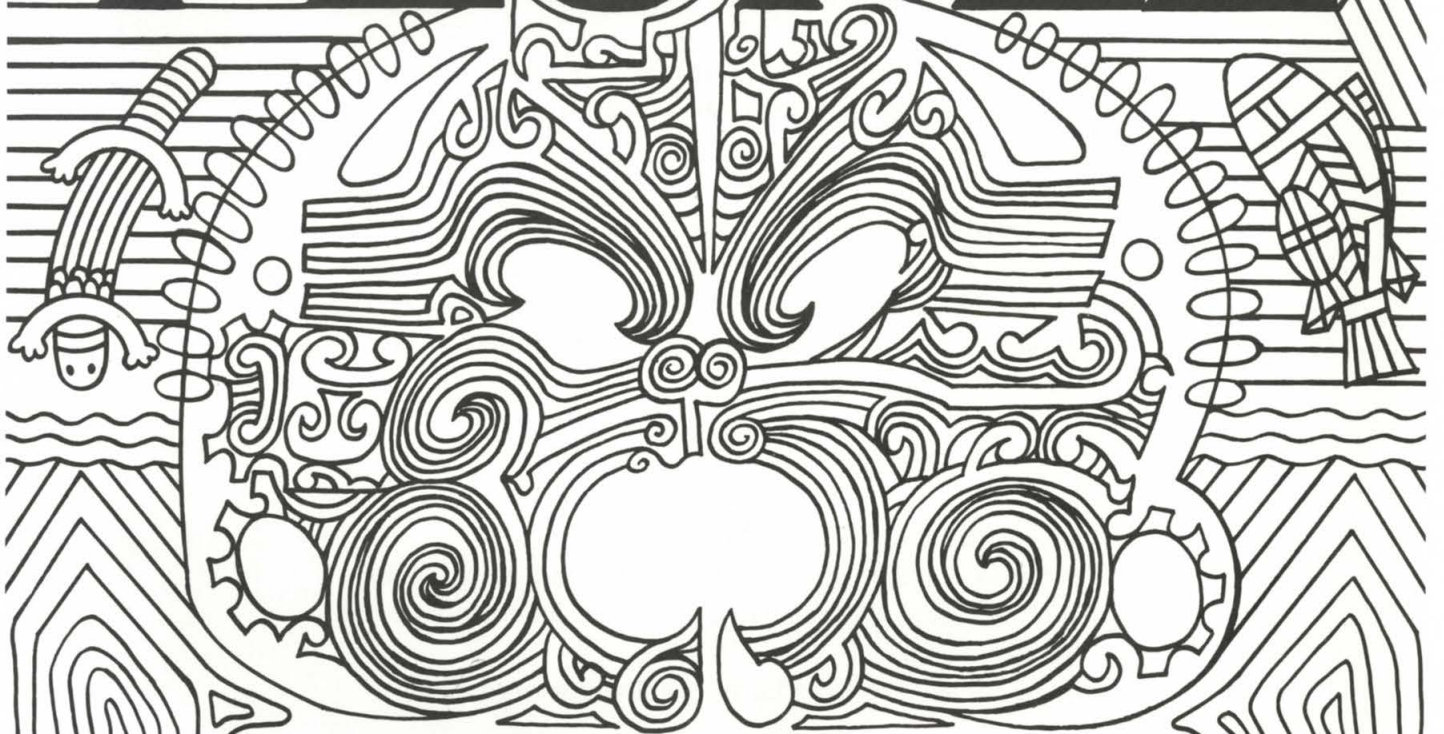




**FOREST**



**PEOPLE**



**A Unique View of Life  
Within a Forest Culture**

**Friday, March 31 - 7:00pm on Channel 2**

Forest People, Sara Honeycutt  
*award of merit graphic design*



# The Rise and Fall of the Mighty Hunter

Ed Price

As most boys raised on a farm, my father always told me that an essential ingredient in manhood was in owning my own gun. The second was to spend hours crunching through the autumn woods in search of squirrels or rabbits.

I often wondered why Pop did not practice what he preached. Sure he owned a gun, but he seldom used it. In fact I had rarely seen Pop pick up a gun, much less take one out hunting. Then one day I discovered the reason. And, on the same day, I also discovered just how human my father really was.

Like the legendary grandfather clock in the song, it seemed that the old Columbia shotgun had “stood 90 years on the floor.” The hoary 12-gauge had once belonged to my grandfather, and when he became too lame to use it anymore he passed the gun on to my father. Pop kept the ancient artillery piece around for years, never knowing quite what to do with it.

The old gun was never a pristine specimen. The end of the barrel was so worn that the corroded metal appeared as thin as paper. And nine times out of 10 the firing pin would puncture the primer and spray a whiff of burning powder back into the face of the hunter. The Columbia was one of those doddering old “pop guns” that people tend to have lying around the house for no particular reason, only to take it out every once in a while and see if it still works.

In October 1949, Pop decided that I was old enough to hunt squirrels. He explained that it was a man’s thing to do. “Besides,” he added, “it’s about time you learned to use this gun. Never had much time to use it myself, but you might. At any rate, the gun’s yours.”

I was unimpressed and said nothing. I had never shot a gun in my life, much less gone hunting with one. Although I had been raised on a farm, Pop made plenty of money at his job as an electrician with the Baltimore Gas and Electric Company, and we didn’t even have to kill a chicken to grace the Sunday dinner table.

“Gotta get some shells,” Pop said. “Want to go?”  
“Sure,” I answered.

The sporting goods’ section of Bob’s Five And Ten-Cent Store in Ellicott City reminded me of Fischer’s Barber Shop next door, the place Pop always

took me for my annual summer wiffle — totally and thoroughly masculine. There were always a few local sportsmen loitering around the counter, drooling tobacco juice from the corner of their mouths, and lying about their latest hunting or fishing exploit. Pop would often visit the shop for no particular reason at all because he never hunted, but he liked to commune with those who did. He fished only once a year when his father and a number of brothers would pool their money, rent a charter boat, and spend the day fishing for spot and perch near Solomon’s Island on Chesapeake Bay.

On this particular day at Bob’s, the clerk regarded Pop’s request for 12-gauge shells with the same kind of incongruity with which he would have regarded someone who had asked if .357 shells would fit a .22 pistol.

“You’re crazy, Harry! Don’t you remember the last time you went out hunting?”

Pop glanced quickly at me out of the corner of his eye. Then he shushed the clerk with a throaty growl.

The clerk smiled pleasantly and reached beneath the counter, retrieving an unopened box of Double X shells which he placed on the glass-topped counter. Then with all the seriousness he could muster he said: “How many shells you need, Harry?”

“One box,” Pop growled. Then he paid the clerk and hurried from the store.

“What was that all about?” I asked innocently.

“None of your business,” Pop answered sharply. “Get in the car.”

Next morning the family was up before sunrise. Mom fixed a big hunter’s breakfast for Pop and me, all the time singing at the top of her voice. I knew Mom sung a lot, but never this much and never this early in the morning. Something was up.

“I can’t wait to taste that squirrel stew,” she finally said, smiling in my direction.

“Helen! Will you knock it off!?” Pop growled.

Then Mom continued her song while she put some more sausages on my plate, next to my second helping of hot cakes. I poured the hot maple syrup over the cakes in sufficient quantity that the sweet stickiness would also engulf the sausages. Pop screwed up his face into a disapproving scowl, but said nothing.



“More sausage, Harry?” Mom asked brightly.

“No thank you.”

Then Mom moved to the stove. She stood for a moment, facing the wall. Then she said: “Yep, I can taste that delicious squirrel stew right now.”

Pop had spent about an hour after breakfast in the field behind the house showing me how to use the old Columbia. When the time came for me to actually pull the trigger, I was terrified. Pop had given me a pair of safety goggles to wear so that the powder would not get into my eyes, but it did not shut out the noise.

“Hold the stock tight against your shoulder,” Pop advised. “That way you won’t get a bruise.”

I shot the gun once or twice. It was not as traumatic as I thought it was going to be, and I was relieved at that. Still, I did not care much for the experience.

The next thing I knew, Pop and I were tramping through the woods searching the tree tops for squirrels. The leaves were still at the height of color, ranging from deep red to orange and gold. The air was warm. It was still Indian summer. We passed the sharp bend of the creek that served as my private swimming pool in the summer, and the thought ran through my head that I would rather take a quick dip than hunt.

On lazy summer days I would lie on my back in the musty-smelling water, looking up at the trees. I often walked through the woods, seeing plenty of furry little rodents scampering around and chattering at the top of their voices. The forest always seemed to be alive with squirrels. But this morning something was different. There were none. There were no rabbits either. It was as if the woods were suddenly wiped clean of all life. Very odd, I thought to myself. Maybe the little varmints know a shotgun when they see one.

Pop acted the very essence of experience. “Quiet, now,” he cautioned.

“Ain’t said a word,” I replied.

“Shut up, then,” he replied, his eyes fixed on the colorful leafy roof spreading overhead. “Never know when you’ll see one, and you don’t want to scare him away.”

Then Pop stopped, his gaze riveted on a branch of an oak. “There,” he whispered. “Up there.”

My eyes strained ahead through the scratchy glass of the goggles. “Where?”

“There,” he said pointing. “See him? Right next to the trunk, about 30 feet up?”

“No,” I answered truthfully.

“Shoot him,” Pop ordered.

“I can’t see him.”

“Dammit! You need glasses!”

I strained harder to see, but all I could see was a mass of red leaves.

“If you don’t shoot him, I will,” Pop warned.

“I can’t see him,” I repeated.

Then Pop grabbed the Columbia and took hasty aim without raising the stock to his shoulders. There was a sharp report like the crack of a whip and I saw something fall out of the tree to the ground.

“You got him, Pop,” I yelled. “You got him. You shot from the hip just like Lash LaRue!”

Pop stood stone-still. The Columbia drooped in his hand. He said nothing.

“Pop! You got him!” I repeated excitedly.

Still Pop did not move. Since I was standing behind him, I could not see his face. “Damn!” he said.

“Damn, I didn’t mean to do that!”

I stopped talking. There was a sadness in my father’s voice that told me all was not right. There was a long silence and neither of us moved. Then Pop turned slightly so he could rest the Columbia beside a tree.

“You know how to get back home all right by yourself?” Pop asked in a broken voice, but not turning around so I could see his face.

“I guess so,” I answered. By this time I was really getting worried. “Aren’t you coming with me?”

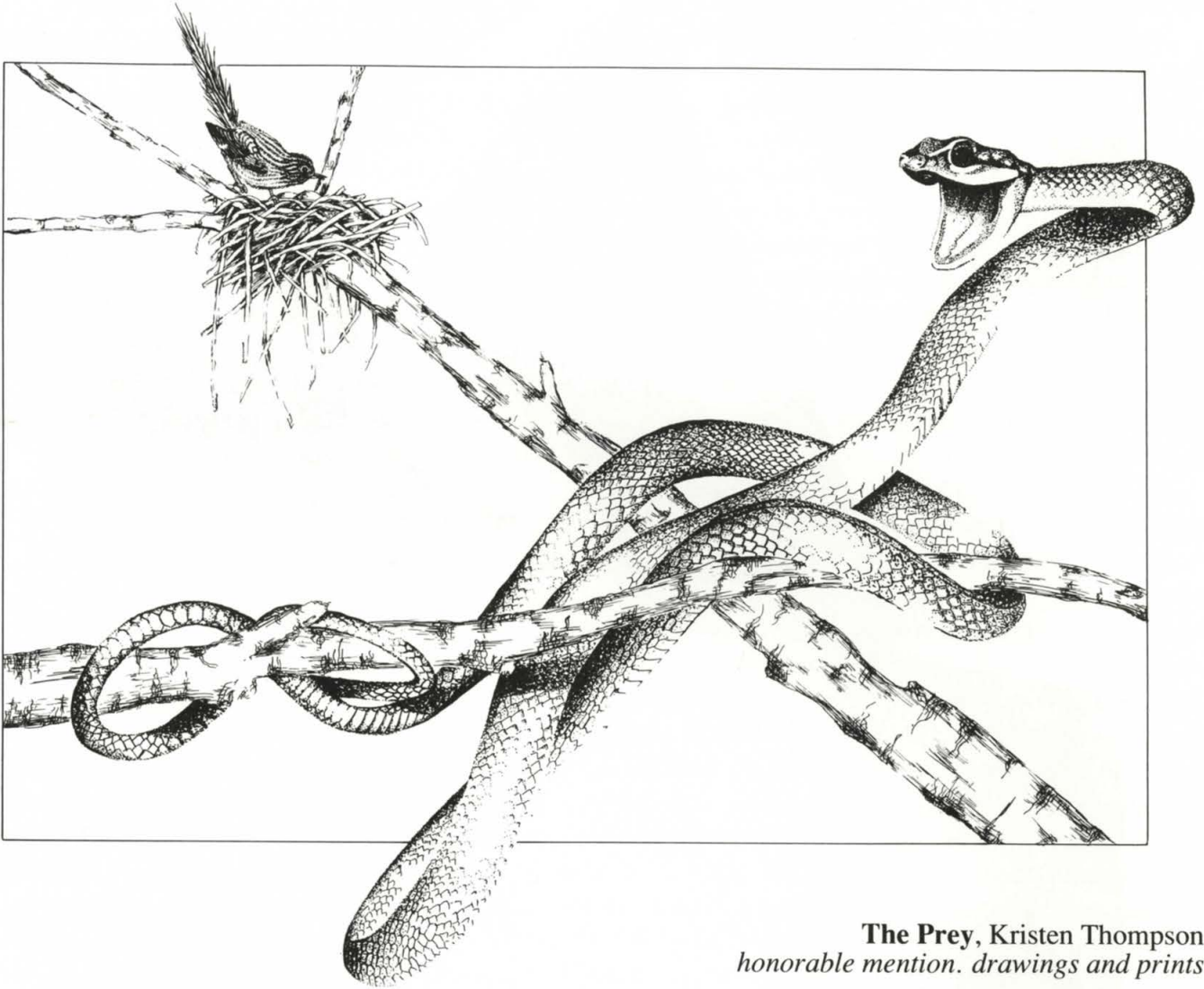
“I’ll be along directly,” he said. “Take the gun with you and be careful you don’t shoot yourself with it.”

I started to approach him but he waved me away. I still could not see his face. “Go,” he said. “And tell your mother I’ll be home in a little while.”

Pop finally came home about an hour after I did. I had never seen him wear such a hang-dog look in my life. His eyes were rimmed with red, just like mine looked after I had had a good cry. And I noticed that he was not carrying the carcass of the squirrel he had shot.

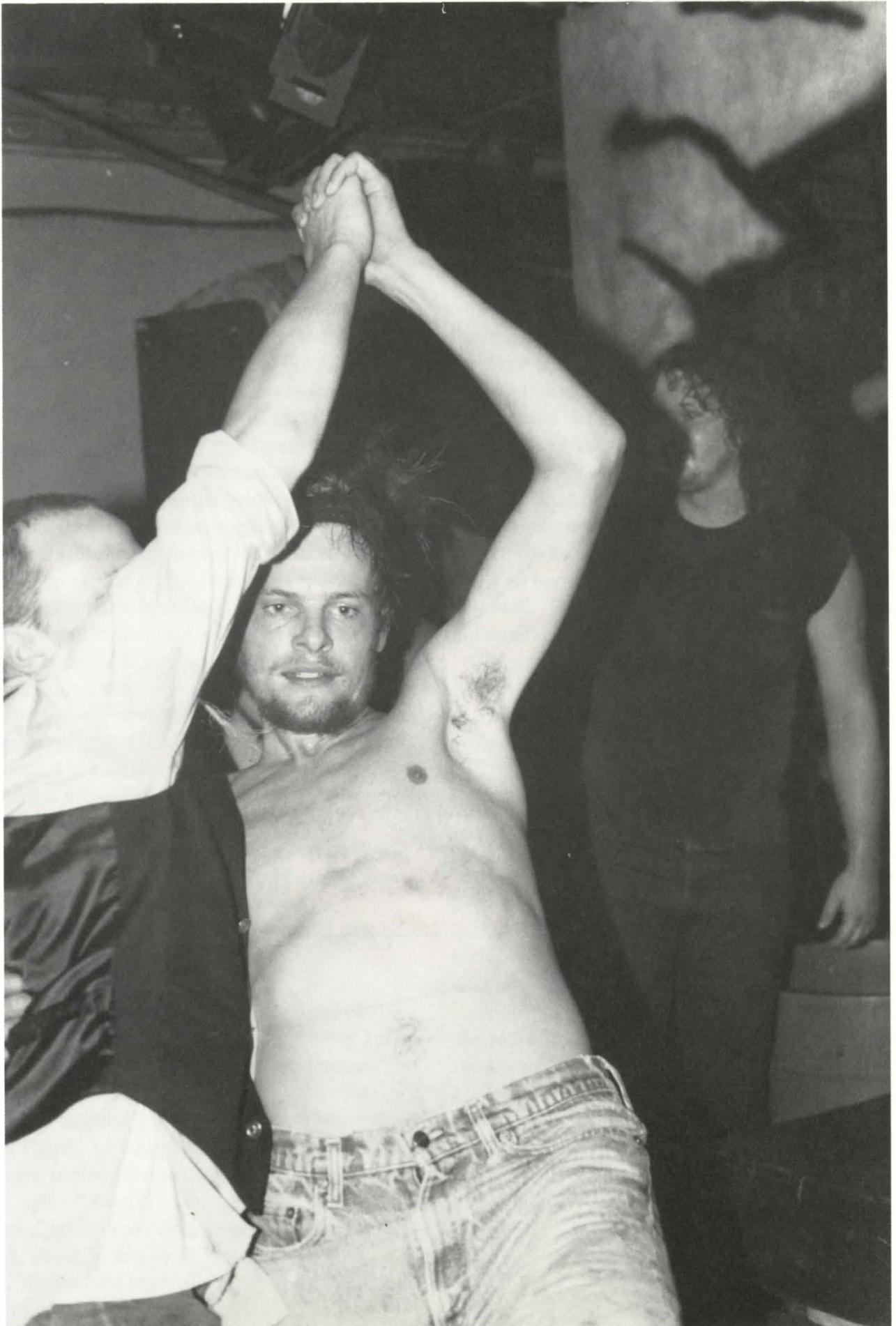
Mom put her arm around him. “I love you, Harry,” she said softly. “Eddie told me you got one. I didn’t think you’d do it.”

Then Mom looked at me. “Go out and play, Eddie. I don’t think Daddy wants to hunt any more.”



**The Prey**, Kristen Thompson  
*honorable mention. drawings and prints*





**Slam Dance, Virginia Stafford**  
*honorable mention. photography*

# Reunion

Felicia Pattison

As soon as Colleen entered the familiar old college building she ducked into the ladies room to check her appearance. She lined up her supplies on the metal shelf above the sink: Static Guard, hairspray, lipstick, brush, and White Shoulders.

Pulling up the skirt of her new red silk dress, a Liz Claiborne, she sprayed her slip with the Static Guard, trying to reach the back as best she could. She kicked off her black pumps and pulled up her slip, praying no one would walk in on her, and tightened up her panty hose, working from toes to thighs; but in nervous haste she put her right thumb through the stockings. “Damn it! Just one more thing to worry about.” She rummaged through her black bag, sorting through spare earrings, assorted makeup, keys to nowhere, movie ticket stubs, pacifiers, lifesavers for her children, and came out with the clear nail polish which was never used for its intended purpose, but which she carried around just for this kind of emergency. Carefully, she dabbed nail polish around the hole, while pulling up the hose, then sprayed her legs with Static Guard. She gently let down her slip, gave it a couple of token sprays, and let her skirt fall down.

She backed up to the wall to see as much of herself as she could in the mirror, but couldn’t see below her waist. Proud that after three children she could still wear a size 6, she enjoyed looking at herself. Her breasts had suffered a little, but her husband said he enjoyed them more this way.

Moving back toward the sink, she bent over at the waist to brush her hair out. It was long — like it had been in high school — and she received immense pleasure from brushing and running her fingers through it. She didn’t really know what good standing on your head while brushing your hair did, but the hairdresser she went to once in New York a few years ago did it, so she had done it ever since. Straightening up, she flipped her hair back and looked in the mirror. As usual after this ritual, she looked like Medusa, so she brushed her hair out, then scrunched it with her left hand while her right hand pumped the non-aerosol bottle — her token effort to save the environment. As she picked her bangs she looked closely for gray hairs. Because she didn’t want him to see any of them, when she spotted a gray hair she carefully placed it under

the brown ones.

She took the cap off the bottle of White Shoulders and sprayed behind her ears, the back of her neck, behind her knees, then unbuttoned the two top buttons of her dress and sprayed in her cleavage — habitually doing so, even when she was without her husband (as on this trip) and sex was highly improbable. She carefully buttoned up her dress, slipped her pumps back on, and stepped back to look in the mirror again, straightening the pearl necklace her husband had given her on her 30th birthday. Then tightening the back of her pearl earrings, she stepped back up to the mirror. She carefully put on lipstick, “Almost Nude,” and smacked her lips together, pressing her face to the mirror and checking to make sure no eye shadow had worked its way to the corners of her eyes. There was a little bit of blue, so she carefully picked it out, straightened her eyebrows, and backed up to take another look.

“Well, I guess that’s the best I can do.”

She gathered all of her supplies and tossed them into her bag and looked at her watch. It was 1:40.

“Twenty minutes early. Good.”

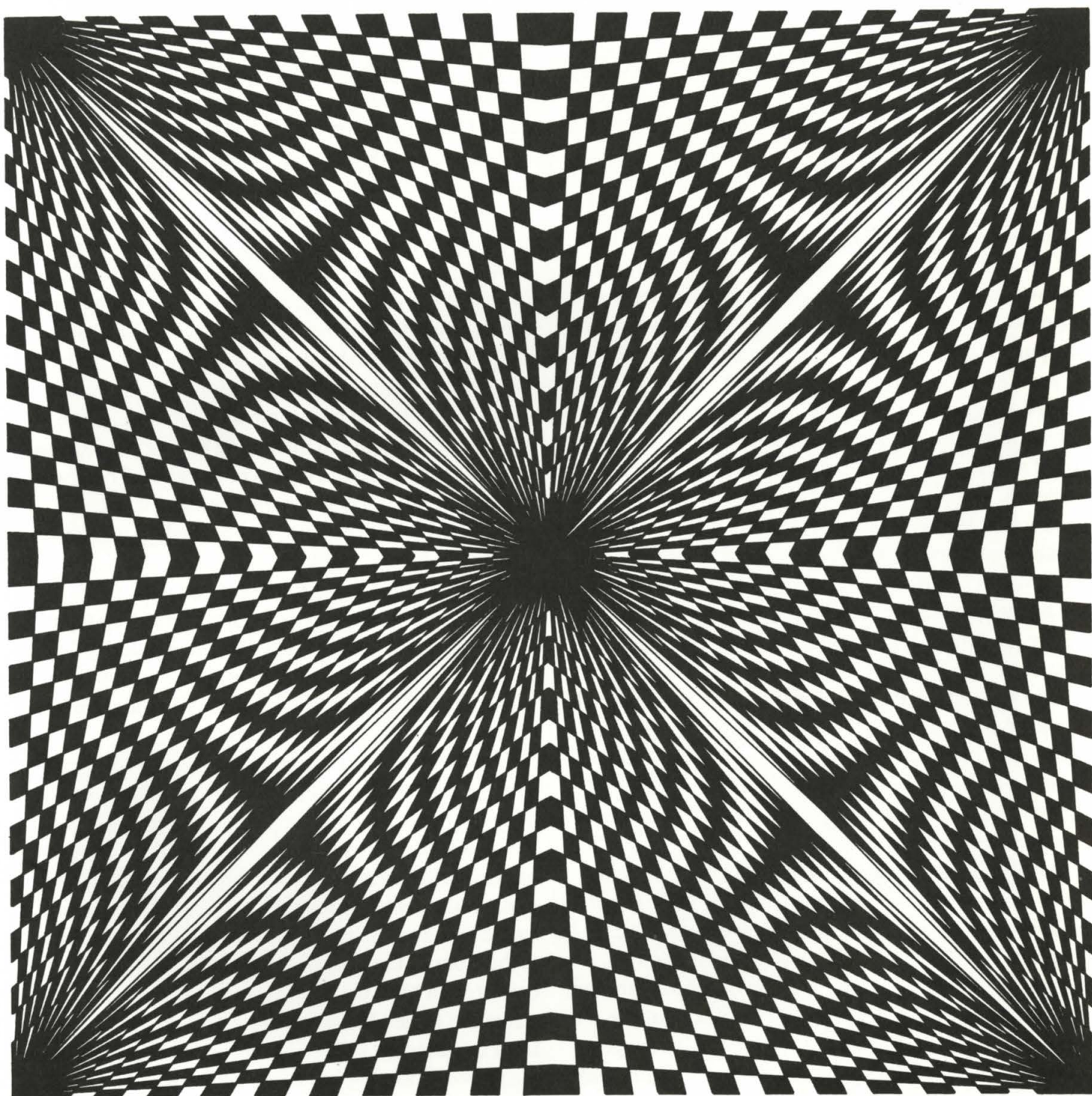
As she left, she took one last look in the mirror and smiled.

Colleen walked into the auditorium fingering her name tag. Dotting the room were about thirty round tables with six folding chairs at each. The tables were covered with white paper table cloths. A blue paper napkin, held down by Oneida tableware, was at each seat. At the center of the table was a white vase with a single orange carnation. Above the speaker’s podium at the front of the auditorium was a large orange banner with “WCU — Committed to the Future” printed in large blue script. Colleen found a table far from the door but still in a good position for viewing the whole room. She sat down and looked at her name tag: COLEEN MEYER. Disgusted, she threw it into her bag. As if she would put two pinholes in her new dress anyway.

“This school hasn’t changed a bit.”

It was a small college, so every year at graduation they had these alumni dinners under the pretense of class reunions and fellowship, when really what they were after was money. She knew all about these





**Radiation**, Melanie Derry  
*honorable mention. graphic design*



dinners because as a student she had participated in the con. She usually didn't bother to come because she lived across country and she didn't want to give the school any money anyway; but this year she made an exception because it was his fifteen-year reunion and his graduating class would be among those honored. She was sure he would be here.

Though they hadn't corresponded, Colleen was able to keep up with him through her mother. Her mother told Colleen every time she saw her: "He never married, you know. His father says that a little girl we all know broke his heart. He will never marry." Her mother lived in a dream world. Still, it was fun to imagine ... and certainly he had been interested in her at one time.

More people had entered the auditorium, and she searched each face for something familiar. A few people she recognized stopped by her table and talked to her for a while then moved on to other faces. "Think. Think. Think." She fingered the dry piece of nail polish through her dress, and tried to put his face together in her mind. He had a full head of brown hair, and she thought he had brown eyes. "Or are they blue?" She would see someone who might be him, but they weren't who she was looking for. "How tall?" She was just over five feet, so that he was taller than her wasn't very helpful because almost everyone was taller than she was.

He first approached Colleen during the first few days of her freshman year. "Why don't we go jogging some afternoon." And that was how it had started — innocent afternoon jogs. She could not figure out why he was interested in her. She was 17 and he was 23 or 24 (she never knew for sure), a leader on campus, and liked and admired by all, except by those who were jealous of him.

He was studying to be a minister, so on one particular afternoon jog she teased him, "Say something to me in Greek;" at the time not realizing that Koine Greek is not spoken. He thought for a few minutes and said something in what she presumed was Greek.

"That was beautiful. What does it mean?" But she knew what it meant. He could only have said: "I love you passionately, and want to carry you away and live with you forever."

"Go into the desert."

"Go into the desert?" She lost a step and almost tripped over her blue striped Adidas. She wanted him to admit his love for her in an exotic language, and all he could say was "Go into the desert."

"Yes; go into the desert."

The auditorium was almost full. In order to earn a little extra money, eager college students wearing orange aprons were beginning to serve the meal: dry roast beef, mashed potatoes, green beans, and a cold, hard roll and frozen butter. The people at Colleen's table were all talking to each other, but fortunately she didn't know them, so she wasn't expected to participate. She tried to eat her dinner, but the processed mashed potatoes turned to sawdust in her mouth, and the roll crumbled when she tried to spread the butter on it. The lukewarm water in the dishwasher-stained glass tasted like Lemon Cascade.

Colleen would never forget the day their afternoon jogs came to a halt. A faithful friend of hers was his messenger. "He thinks you are wanting the relationship to go further than he does. He likes you as a friend, but isn't interested in you romantically." But wasn't that funny. While Colleen was starving herself and avoiding him whenever possible, her faithful friend started dating him — she was interested in him romantically.

Some college group, wearing blue, was singing now. They were horrible — flat, couldn't keep a steady beat, and stood as stiff as Lazarus of Mary and Martha fame; but because the audience was full of alumni, they were supposed to love it. She didn't think they were ever going to stop making all that noise, but they finally did, and everyone clapped for joy. She quickly scanned the room again, but he still wasn't there.

It was only a few months before the wedding when it hit her. It had been lying dormant for three years and was suddenly stirring. She telephoned all over town for him before she tracked him down. "I must speak to you immediately. It's urgent." Even though it was 3:00 a.m., he came. He looked like one of the plagues had hit him, and Colleen was almost sorry she had called him. She had forgotten that he usually wore contacts, so his black rimmed glasses were distracting; he hadn't even bothered to comb his hair, and he had the subtle smell of morning and sleep about him.

They talked through the early morning, sitting outside on the steps of the school where they met. They talked about his work, his future educational plans, and her faithful friend.

He didn't even look at her as he spoke. "I guess your friend and I weren't meant for each other. I want someone plain and simple."

"I don't want to marry my fiance." Her eyes bored



into his temple, as if by pure thought she could make him look at her and pay attention.

“She wouldn’t come down for me. She said: ‘I demand certain material things you can’t provide, and I won’t change.’

“I think I’m in love with someone else.”

He turned to Colleen. “She told me: ‘If simple’s what you want, go to someone else.’

“I don’t want to marry my fiance.” She looked through his thick glasses, directly into his distortedly large eyes. “I think I’m in love with someone else.”

“I don’t want to get married right now.” He looked down and fumbled with the zipper on his green Woolrich jacket. “I have plans.”

“I want to get married this summer.”

“I’m not ready to be married.”

“I am ready to be married.”

She got married that summer, and he went to Ohio to divinity school.

Now there was some guy from the college up at the podium trying to get the alumni to give money to the school. He was wearing a brown polyester suit from Sears, and a blue tie with the initials WCU boldly embroidered on it in orange. Colleen chuckled at her own wanning school spirit while members of the singing group danced around the tables handing out pledge cards and envelopes. “You don’t have to give the money today,” the man squeaked; “but we do take Mastercard and Visa ...” Colleen looked at her pledge card and played with the post of her right earring. How convenient they made everything. All she had to do was fill in her name and check a box. She reached in her bag for a pen as she perused the room.

That spring after she was married she graduated from college, and he was there. She hadn’t seen him since their early morning talk, and she thought she had forgotten him. He spotted her, came toward her calling her name, “Collie!” and extended his arms to embrace her. She turned away without a word. At first sight of him her mouth and throat dried up so she couldn’t speak; her legs felt like they would give out from under her; and if he hugged her, he would feel her trembling and all dignity would be lost. It was easier to run away and hide.

Only this time she would not turn away so quickly, no matter how afraid she was. She would listen to him implore her to forgive him. She imagined him saying: “I made the biggest mistake of my life when I let you go. I have been miserable without you. I love you, and will never love anyone but you ...” She would turn

away from him satisfied, knowing he would never marry and would pine for her the rest of his life. She could go back from this reunion to her husband and children and be truly happy, knowing that someone else loves her.

The singing group danced back through the tables and collected the pledge cards, but just before Colleen put her card in the basket she looked down to see that she had committed herself to giving a hundred dollars. She laughed at herself, checked to make sure the clasp of her necklace was at the back of her neck, and settled into her seat.

Just as the main speaker began to speak, he walked in. She watched him as he walked slowly toward her with deliberate steps. As he passed people he knew he squeezed their shoulders and smiled at them. After pausing to say a few words to one person, he turned around without looking and bumped into a student waiter, sending a basket of hard rolls to the floor. He stopped to help the student retrieve the rolls. By the time they accounted for all of them they were laughing quietly. He patted the student on the back before continuing his journey to her.

He had grayed, but still had a full head of hair and was sporting a moustache. No glasses. “Thank goodness!” Despite the name tag on his lapel, he looked dapper in his blue suit, especially with the red power-tie. As he approached her, she stood up and smiled at him. Colleen watched him as he walked past without acknowledging her.

Grabbing her bag, Colleen excused herself from the table, left the auditorium, walked through the campus to her rental car. She drove to the airport, shifting mindlessly through the gears.

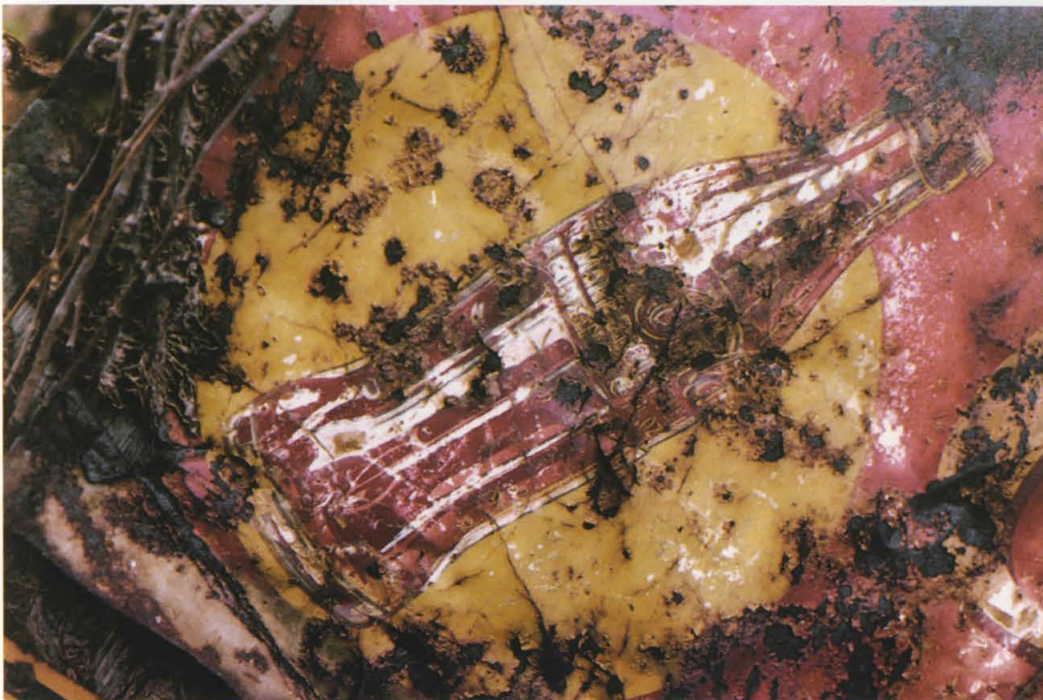
At the airport she waited calmly for three hours until the next flight, browsing through the gift shops — buying souvenir bears wearing “State” t-shirts for her children and a bottle of area wine for her husband. Sitting in an airport bar, treasures at hand, she drank a Coors Light and watched a few innings of a Mets-Braves’ game. A half hour before her flight was scheduled to leave, she clasped the bears and wine to her chest and plodded to Gate 6.

Colleen tucked away her gifts in the overhead compartment and buckled herself into her seat. Once safely in the air, she breathed a deep sigh, stared out the window, and allowed herself to cry.





**Consider this the Bottom of the Stone**, Jennifer Nicholls  
*second place drawings and prints*



**Coke Sign**, Jonesborough, TN, 1989, Jenny Lokey  
*honorable mention. photography*





**Untitled, John Edwards**







Maya, Sara Honeycutt *first place drawings and prints*



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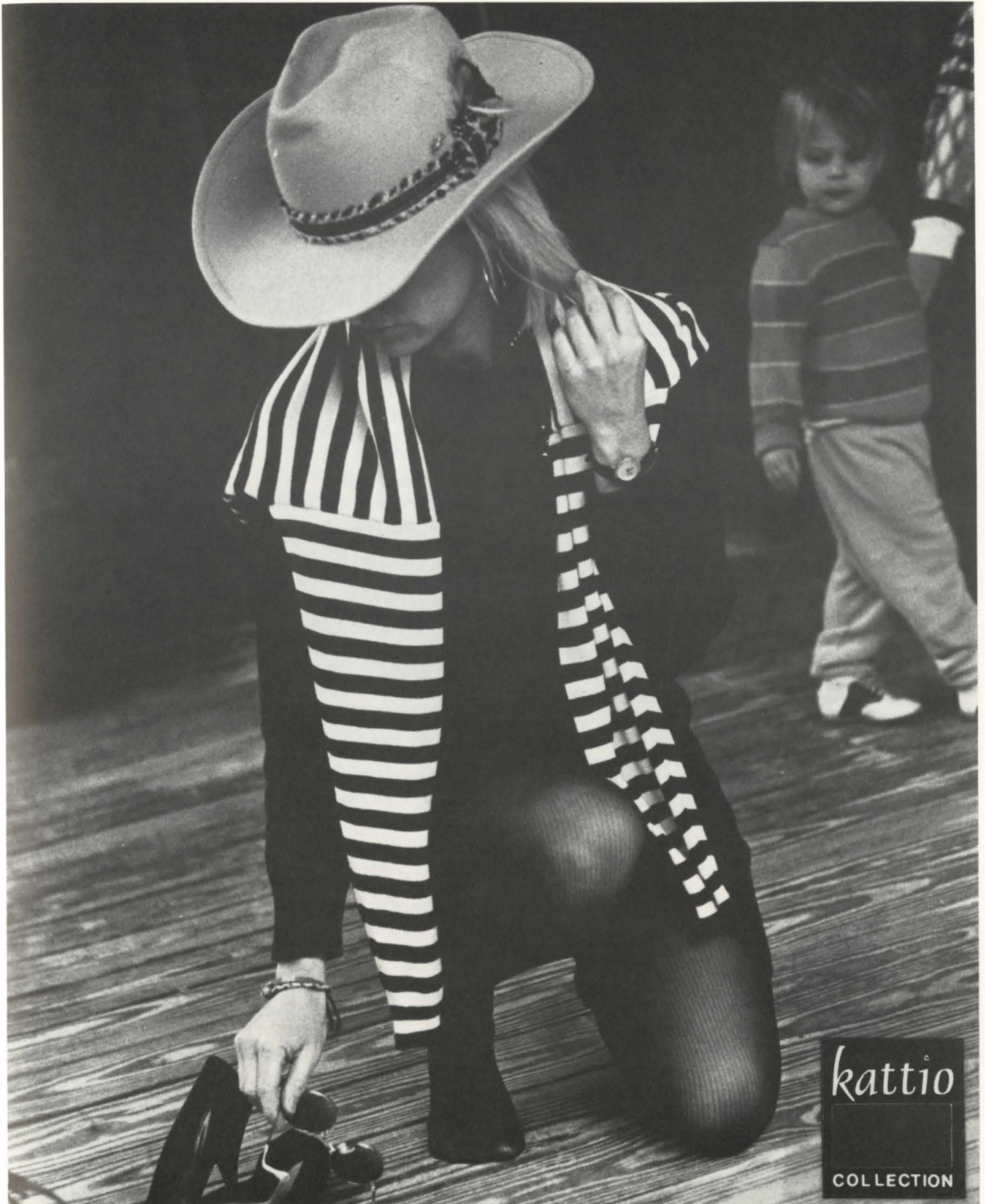
Kattio Collection (3 pieces), Fathi Bakkoush





Kattio Collection, Fathi Bakkoush





kattio

COLLECTION

Kattio Collection, Fathi Bakkoush



# Studying for the GRE (Word List 50)

Randy Handel

You and I are volatile  
Yet seemingly of our own volition  
Despite you voluble protests  
You cannot burden yourself with  
such a voluminous task as us

Still, the voluptuous sound of your lips  
Make my appetite all the more voracious  
And I am but a votary of you  
As you vouchsafe our eternal friendship  
Leaving me vulnerable to your vulpine emotions-  
vying for favors of me, yet wafting past  
as soon as a stronger one beckons-no matter  
how waggish their intent

Leaving me a waif, waiving my freedoms  
to wallow in the pity  
of this waning love. . . which you  
wangled from in your wanton desire  
for fulfillment

Your warble is heard, warranting me  
to trust you again  
Yet the warren of your crowded heart  
Becomes wary of its inhabitants  
A wastrel, you profligate love  
In hopes it will wax as you wait  
to waylay the more favorable  
And wean yourself of the rest

I will weather the welts and welter  
of your wheedling words  
I am but a whelp, my appetite  
only whet by your love-whimsical  
as a horse's whinny  
For the love we had is not a whit  
of the love I have to give  
And as you begin to count the whorls  
of your aged trunk  
Your wily ways will fall  
and you will wince at your  
decision  
Remorseful of the windfall you let  
rot on the ground  
Finding your winnowing left you with  
the bad

Then winsome again, your withered  
heart will call back with witless witticism  
for the wizardry of a wizened but agile heart,  
Your wont of worldly gains  
Making a wraith of you rsoul

Wrangling with the wrath of  
bad choices that wreak havoc  
on your watered brain- wrenching  
what sanity you have left and  
wresting the pumping organ from  
your frail body-you  
writhing on the kitchen floor-telling wry jokes  
to the dog

A xenophobiac yen-to be  
yoked to a yokel form unknown regions  
from a land of yore.

    You are zany, a zealot of love  
waiting for your zenith

But I ride past on a zephyr and  
watch the setting sun





**Emptiness, Denise Russell**

# Mockingbird Judges

## Literary

**Wilma Dykeman**, non-fiction judge, is the author of sixteen books which have achieved critical acclaim. Her articles and reviews have appeared in the New York Times, Harpers, U. S. News and World Report, Fortune, Virginia Quarterly Review, Journal of Southern History, Reader's Digest, Ebony, and New Republic. She is a Phi Beta Kappa scholar, a Guggenheim Fellowship recipient, a senior member of the National Endowment for the Humanities, holds two honorary doctoral degrees, and has received several prestigious writing awards. Presently, she is Tennessee state historian and professor of English at the University of Tennessee Knoxville.

**Jim Wayne Miller**, judge of poetry, is a poet, essayist, professor of German at Western Carolina University, and a student of the history and literature of his native Appalachian South. His books include Dialogue With a Dead Man, The Mountains Have Come Closer, Vein of Words, Nostalgia for 70, and His First, Best Country. Miller's poems and essays have appeared in many magazines and journals and in textbooks and anthologies.

**Leigh Allison Wilson**, judge of short fiction, has won the Flannery O'Connor Award. She has published two books of short fiction, From the Bottom Up and Wind: Stories. Her work has appeared in Harpers, Mademoiselle, Grandstreet, the Georgia Review, the Southern Review, the Kenyon Review, and elsewhere. She teaches in the MFA program at Syracuse University.

## Art

**Ann Ropp Curtis**, judge of artwork, has a Master of Fine Arts from Columbia University with a double major in painting and printmaking. She has been a teaching assistant to Bob Blackburn in lithography and to Nicholas Sperakis in woodcut relief printing at Columbia University. Her latest exhibitions were at Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei, Taiwan Republic of China and Ralston Fine Art, Johnson City, Tennessee. She is represented by A Clean, Well-Lighted Place, Inc., New York, NY, Somerstown Gallery, Somers, NY and Ralston Fine Art, Johnson City, TN.



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