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### The Vehicle, 1969, Vol. 12 no. 1

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Marcia Trost

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Vol 12 No. 1

# Vehicle

Eastern Illinois University  
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Charleston, Illinois

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## Art Credits

Kevin Shea:	Cover
Mike Dorsey:	pp. 4, 23, 28
Steve Williams:	pp. 7, 16, 19, 24, 26
Jim Miller:	pp. 10, 22
Dale Huber:	p. 13
Nick Dager:	p. 3



## A New Look

I will not say that our language is dead. But all language is now quite tired like an old milk wagon horse led around with blinders for years. Much blame can be placed on our arbitrary rules of grammar. Rules are necessary. Standards must exist in language or communication ends. But stifling rules initiated by under-educated 18th century printers with a love of expediency and not language must be looked at more objectively. And in fiction these rules must be ignored. The first level of communication is the only place where grammatical rules have any relevance and the true worth of fiction does not exist in the first level. A new breed of people must take this objective look at the rules of writing and a new language must result. The arbitrary decisions must still be made. But today with the advanced printing techniques that we enjoy these arbitrary decisions should be made by the artists. Let them decide if punctuation, capitalization, and other less common standards are really necessary for effective communication. Leave comma pushing to the printers and the outdated grammarians. Let's take the blinders off our language.



**HANG YOURSELF,**  
brave  
**Cyillon**  
**WE FOUGHT**

**AT**  
**AYQUES**  
**AND YOU WERE NOT**  
**1 1/2**  
**FEET**

## The Ring

Through continuous cavity  
the Mustang gallops  
                  until  
giant firefly bellied  
                  blinking  
break the monotony of motion.

White eyeballs  
          stare down

the spastic insect  
and in cautious thrusts,  
                  pursue,  
push aside the target.

Safe within the powerful beast,  
I pondered  
soft, nimble fingers  
that had fondled those wings.  
Those same fingers  
when gold was bright,  
squeezed his guts  
to ornament the hand.

And behind me,  
the black mouth of night  
                  swallows.

## Waiting

Yesterday  
in the supermarket  
out of the corner  
of my eye  
I watched  
a mother toiling over the treasures  
of her pregnant cart,  
my arms useless at my sides.

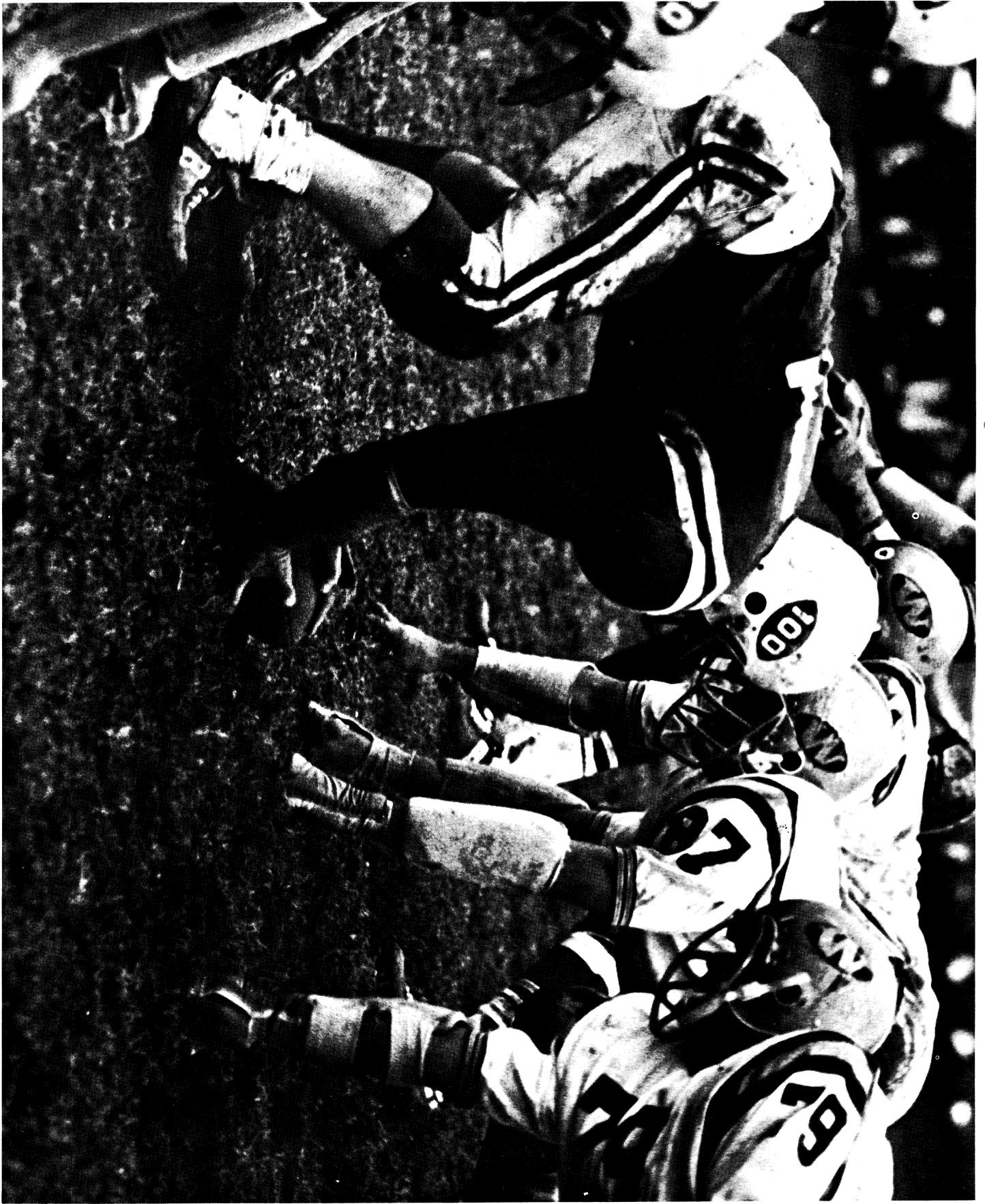
The same day  
but one aisle over  
automatically  
my legs led me  
to genuflect at the alter of your  
cast and crutches  
where cereal boxes bowed down.

Every morning  
before rising,  
unlike Buddha,  
I meditate celebrating our  
ritual, gazing at your  
belly.

But each evening  
at five  
I crystalize  
to a Christain soldier,  
arms plastered at my sides.

And as the minutes  
tick away  
within me,  
I anxiously  
await  
the unbanning of the human bomb.





## Before Cotton Fields

The elder's withered limbs  
with threadlike fingers catch  
the wind. His trunk uplifts  
the growth of time. . .his chest,

ribbed and furrowed. . .his base,  
a falsely pregnant gut,  
less grooved but sagging. . .out  
of character, between,

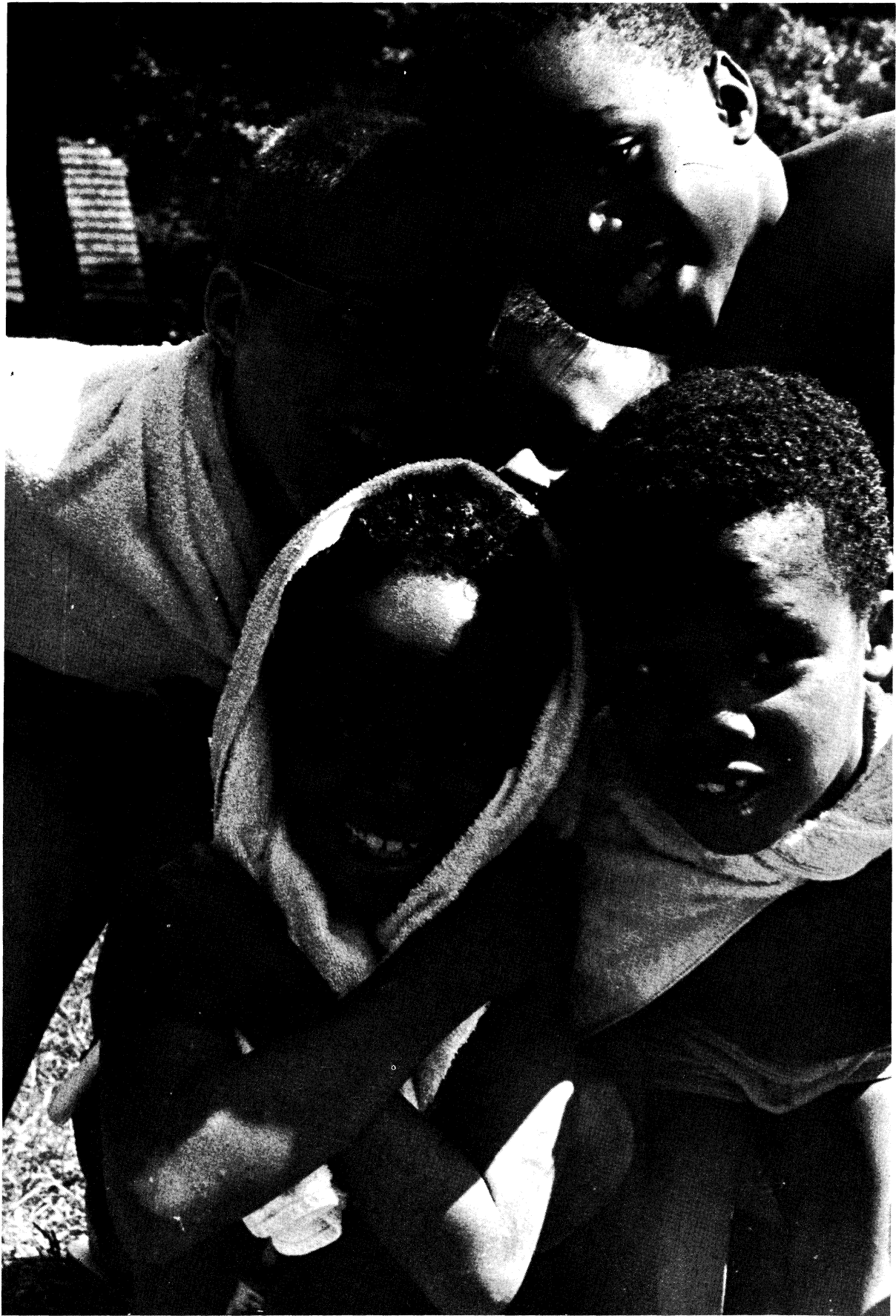
a fallow field. . .his heart,  
slashed and scarred, when youth was  
bold, by tiger claws not  
yet dead, The picture drawn,

the silent wind picks up  
and drops, like milkweed down,  
the tale to fertile minds.  
And breathing on the shrubs,

lately planted as if  
by hand in juttred rows,  
the cotton heads begin  
to nod in circular

procession. Hungrily,  
gorilla noses gulp  
the air, and saucer eyes  
neglect the naked breasts.

I am I  
And no one else.



# The Socratic Irony

It must have been at least ninety degrees inside the small racing green Renault even with all the windows down. It was the black interior that was doing it, thought Carole, as she felt the beads of perspiration trickle down inside her bra under her yellow turtleneck sweater. She wondered why she had been foolish enough to wear slacks and a sweater on such a hot day. Steve parked the car on a narrow street, turned off the ignition, and reached for his wallet inside the glove compartment.

“We’ll take the short cut to the apartment,” he said turning around in his seat picking up his leather jacket. “there’s never any room to park on Downer anyway.”

He opened his door, slammed it abruptly and started around the front of the car. By this time, Carole had opened her own door and met him halfway.

“I’m sorry,” she said slightly apologetically, “I guess I’m not used to having someone open my door for me.” Crossing the street, Carole glanced back at the small car baking in the bright sun, wondering whether she had left her sunglasses on the dash. “Should we have locked it?”

Steve, unanswering, hastened a few steps in front of her, and she had to run to catch up. As they walked along the sidewalk passing a beauty salon, the couple looked simultaneously at their image reflected in the shop window. Carole laughed out loud in embarrassment to think that the woman inside knew that they were looking at themselves and not at her. Not watching where she was going, Carole tripped on a crack in the pavement.

“This way Clumsy Carp,” Steve said as he turned down a short alley sidewalk connecting the side street to Downer Avenue.

Downer was a busy four lane street with shops lining either side. As they stepped off the curb, Steve grabbed Carole’s arm and they ran the rest of the way, her long strap purse bouncing off his leg. Safely on the other side, Steve approached a dull black door sporting the bronze numerals 2619.

“Is this it?” Carole asked turning the worn doorknob. “Ah, the mail’s here ” he answered, never answering at all, “nothing for me as usual. I wonder if UWM will ever send me my registration materials.”

Carole looked around at the foyer of the building. The ceramic tile floor was rather dirty showing slate grey where white should have been. She started up the stairs, assuming the way although she had never been there, and Steve followed still mulling over the mail. After climbing two flights of stairs, they came to another foyer with two adjacent doors. Steve walked to the first. On the door was a large calling card which read “James Middleton, photographer, 2619 North Downer, Milwaukee.” Carole recognized the card and the scrolly design in each corner and under the name. Steve carried a small one in his worn brown wallet, and she had seen him take it out occasionally and look it over fondly as if he was proud to be associated with the man whose name appeared in big black print.

“Well, here we are, my nine month home. It looks like Goodshot isn’t here, or else he’s still in the rack,” he said as he pushed his key inside the lock.

He held the door for Carole as she walked into the room whose largeness made it appear nearly bare. The floor, once painted bright blue was scraped clean because of the traffic. She walked to the center of the room gazing up at the high ceiling. A huge bare-bladed fan hung down from the center.

“It doesn’t work,” Steve said still standing by the door.

“I love it. Do you really live here?” Not waiting for an answer she continued to explore the room. There were several chairs placed in a semi-circle, all painted a different color; blue, orange, yellow, green, and red. A tripod movie projector was set up behind them.

“Looks like Jim’s been showing stag films again,” Steve volunteered.

One side of the room was covered with a thick singlepaned sky window about twenty feet high, draped on either side by heavy, beige plastic curtains. Just in front of the window stood a table surrounded by photographer’s lights. On the only full wall was a barrage of shelves made from pine



planks. The shelves were a menagerie of books, photographs, empty wine bottles, a few coke bottles, one antique looking model of a Spanish ship, and a football. A work bench cluttered with what looked like photography layouts and some copies of "Kaliedescope," stretched under the shelves the entire length of the room. As Carole finished her once-over inspection, she realized that Steve had been watching her the entire time, and she felt somewhat self-conscious thinking she had intruded.

"Would you like to see the rest of the place?" he asked assuring her that her feelings were false. Steve led the way past the work bench into a small L-shaped room. "This is our kitchen, we don't use it though, we eat all our meals out."

Carole walked up to a wall sink overflowing with dirty glasses. "Doesn't that get awfully expensive?" She asked wishing she could find a dish cloth and start in on the mess. "Why don't you buy a refrigerator, in the long run it would probably be less costly."

"I suppose so, but I usually only have one meal a day, supper, unless I have a candy bar for breakfast," he answered.

The guided tour continued into the next room, which appeared to be a bathroom containing only a sink and a bathtub. A shower curtain covered the tub, but Carole caught a glimpse of the rusty drain and the obvious iron deposit rings around the sides.

"Well, well, let's go look at Jim's equipment," Steve said and they retraced their steps through the haphazard kitchen, through the studio room and into an adjoining porch room.

The porch was full of photography equipment. Steve steered Carole to a machine that he called the animating table and proceeded to explain its use and advantages. Listening in expression only, Carole's eyes wandered out the double windows which overlooked Downer Avenue. A big clock sat outside the windows on the roof's overhang, clearly visible from the porch. It was 11:50 a.m. She had been in the apartment for a half hour, but Carole felt she had been there for days and years, and had lived in the studio all her life.

"You're not listening are you?" Steve interrupted. "I'm sorry I brought you here, you don't like it do you? Well, I didn't know if you would, I just wanted you to see where I live so you could go to school and tell everyone about this novel freak you went to Milwaukee with, and you can sit back and laugh about it all." He pulled a half crumpled cigarette package out of the pocket of his leather jacket which he had been carrying the entire time. Lighting the cigarette, he flipped the match away from his right hip on the blue speckled floor with a quick snap of his wrist.

"Yes, I was listening, Steve, to every word, I swear." Carole lied. "I love your place. I've never seen anything like it before. I wish I could come to school here and live here and never go back." Steve laughed his disbelieving laugh which sounded more like a sniffing in his nose. "Do you think Goodshot's at work?" she asked, trying desperately to avoid the caustic remark that may have followed. Steve was like that, she thought, a person had to anticipate what he may say, and in that anticipation quickly move along to anything, as long as it was completely uncontroversial.

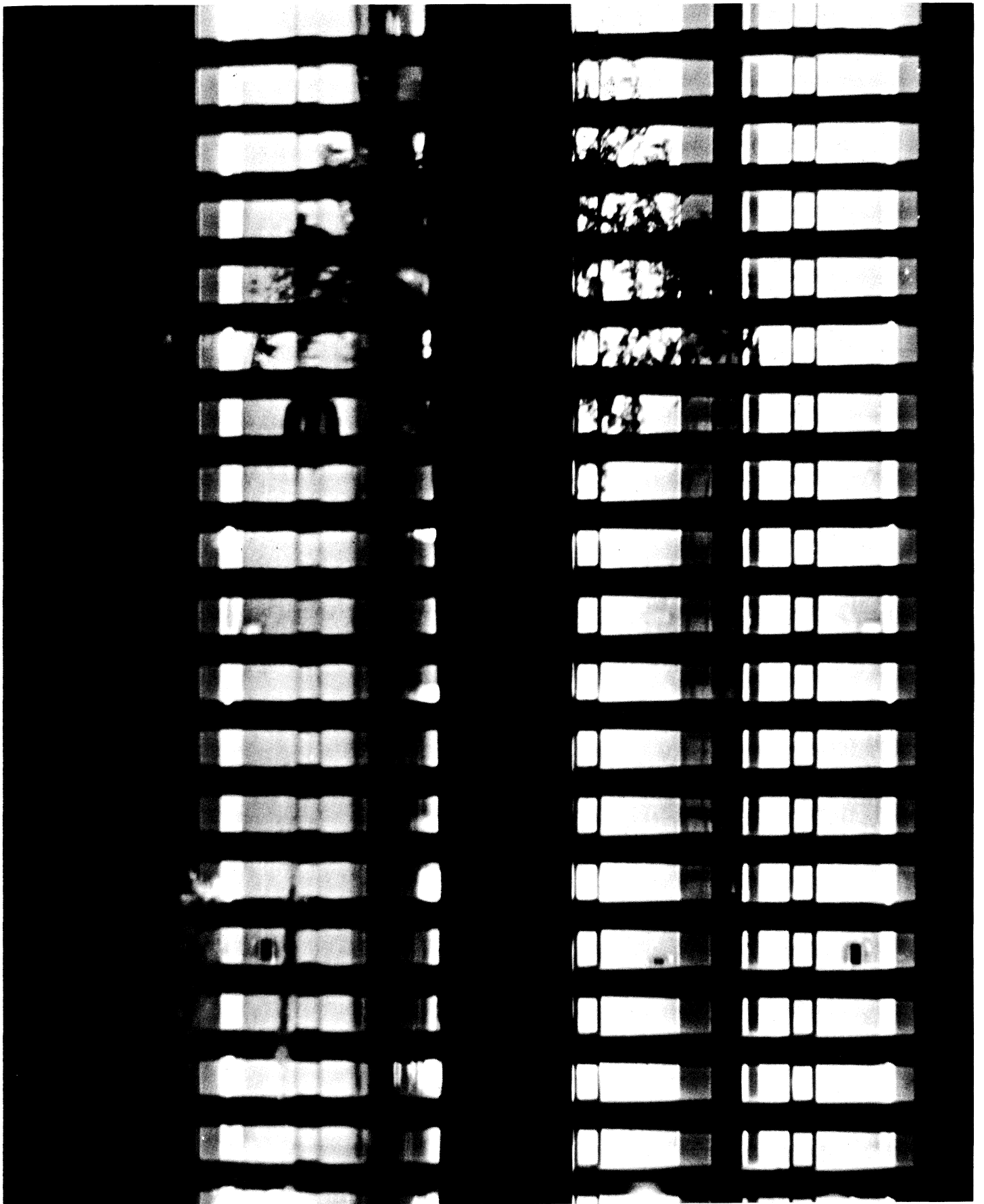
Whether her mental strategy worked, Carole was uncertain, but Steve was already across the studio and headed for Goodshot's bedroom. A large square window fan sat in the middle of the hallway aimed directly at Goodshot, the fabled roommate, who slept undisturbed and lulled by its hum.

"Ah, there he is," Steve said. "Well, I guess you're not at work are you. Late night last night? I'll bet you were up watching Jim's stag films, or doing something else equally subversive, you dirty boy." By this time a head had appeared from under the covers. "Oh, Carole, this is Goodshot. Goodshot, this is Carole," Steve continued, finally making the introduction.

"Hello, John," Carole replied, using the roommate's real name, wondering why he was called Goodshot, and if he really was a good shot at something. She had envisioned him as being a tall and lanky basketball player, but the bumps under the covers of the high bed built into the side of the wall contradicted her preconceptions.

"It's past noon. Up, up with you." Steve demanded, as he turned from the room, allowing Goodshot the privacy of rising if he was going to at all.

Returning to the studio, Carole wandered over to the work bench and picked up a copy of "Kaliedescope," and thumbed through it nonchalantly. Steve had taken a seat on the orange chair in the semi-circle, and was lighting another cigarette.



“May I have one, Steve?”

“Come, come, here you are in two strange men’s apartment, reading an underground newspaper, and asking for a cigarette. What would the girls at the house think of that?” he teased, lighting another and handing it to her. “Remember, you only get three of them today. I don’t want you to get a headache.”

“Oh, I won’t.” She sat down next to him on the blue chair, and continued to look through the newspaper, wondering what the girls at the sorority would think of the studio and the people who lived there, and most of all, what they would think of Steve.

Her thoughts were interrupted when Goodshot emerged from his bedroom wearing a pair of blue levi cutoffs. From behind her newspaper, Carole watched the slender young man walk barefooted across the studio and on to the porch. He was almost fragile looking, she thought. His bare chest and back revealed delicate skin, the kind that would blister and peel after an hour of hot sun. His shoulders were rounded, much the same way Steve’s were, and she decided it was probably from living in the studio, although she wondered if that could do it. Goodshot stood looking out the clock window with his hands on his hips. Carole noticed the bundle of sandy brown hair on his head and compared it to the absence of any on his chest or legs. That was probably from living in the studio too, she thought, silently amusing herself. Goodshot turned around, and walking back into the studio room pulled a wrinkled dollar bill from the small tight pocket of his faded cutoffs.

“Steve, would you mind going down to that place on the corner and getting me a Coke for breakfast?”

He speaks, thought Carole, and before she knew it Steve was out the door and she was left alone with the roommate. He had returned to the porch, and feeling somewhat uncomfortable Carole followed him. A tall open window led from the porch to the rooftop of the building nextdoor, and Goodshot was climbing through the window, his bare feet trailing behind, looking much like a young child escaping his playpen. From the window ledge, he jumped to the rooftop, turning around to see Carole pursuing.

“Could you help me, John,” she begged, “I’m afraid of heights.”

Goodshot stretched his hand across the space between them, and Carole accepted it noticing the lightness and hesitance in his contact. She looked down at the narrow strip of concrete between the buildings, looked again into the unexpressive blue eyes of the roommate and jumped.

The tar on the rooftop was already soft in the noon heat. Carole was thankful that her thin soled moccasins afforded some protection. Sitting on the floor in her bedroom that morning she had pulled out the inner cushions of the moccasins and had thrown them on top of the jumble of shoes in the bottom of her closet. That morning she had thought she would be a martyr, walking around all day thin soled like Steve did. The hot roof made her wish she had not removed the cool green cushions. Padding across the roof, Carole leaned against the building’s facade. Goodshot sat sideways on the concrete ledge and inspected Downer Avenue’s Saturday noon traffic, yawning occasionally.

The opposite side of the street was a collection of small shops—a book store, an antique shop, a dress shop, a barber shop, a men’s store, and a hardware store. Nearly all the stores had a similar woodpaneled front with the same kind of signs which read: Van’s Bookstore, Van’s Apparel for Men, Van’s Antique Shop, and Van’s Dress Shop.

“It looks like Van has a monopoly on this block,” Carole said, hoping to begin a conversation.

Goodshot, ignoring her attempt, scooted from the ledge and walked across the roof seemingly oblivious of the heat rising from the black tarred surface. Carole followed like a shadow, feeling rejected but determined. He led her past three scattered folding chairs, a flower box of purple petunias, and stopped at a pot containing a straggly looking tomato plant with one huge orangish red tomato ready to crash down on the hard cracked dirt inside the pot.

“Oh look, a tomato,” she said ridiculously.

“I thought it was marijuana.” Carole laughed, and playing her mind game said, “No, marijuana doesn’t look like that,” having no idea what it did look like, but somehow hoping the roommate

would not discount her as being completely stupid. As soon as she said it, Carole knew she had given herself away. She wished desperately that Steve would return and intercede for her and tell Goodshot that she really wasn't as straight as she appeared. It was too late. Again Goodshot was escaping through the window waiting politely to help her back inside.

She was relieved to find that Steve had returned with three plastic covered glasses of Coke.

"The small one is for you," he said handling the glass to Carole, "I didn't know if you wanted one."

"Yes, that's fine." Carole set the glass on the work bench and started into the kitchen, stopping on the way to examine a large bottle of Plen-E Vitamins sitting on the window sill. She returned with a gold glass mug filled with water and headed for the open window leading to the roof.

"Where are you going with that?" Steve questioned.

"It's for the tomato plant on the roof. Would you help me out?"

"Carole, it's not our plant, it's the neighbors."

Somewhat reluctantly Steve helped her climb through the window, and he followed her across the roof and watched her pour the water into the pot.

"A lot of good that will do, you didn't bring enough," he criticized, "Anyway, plants, pets, and kids are all in the same category."

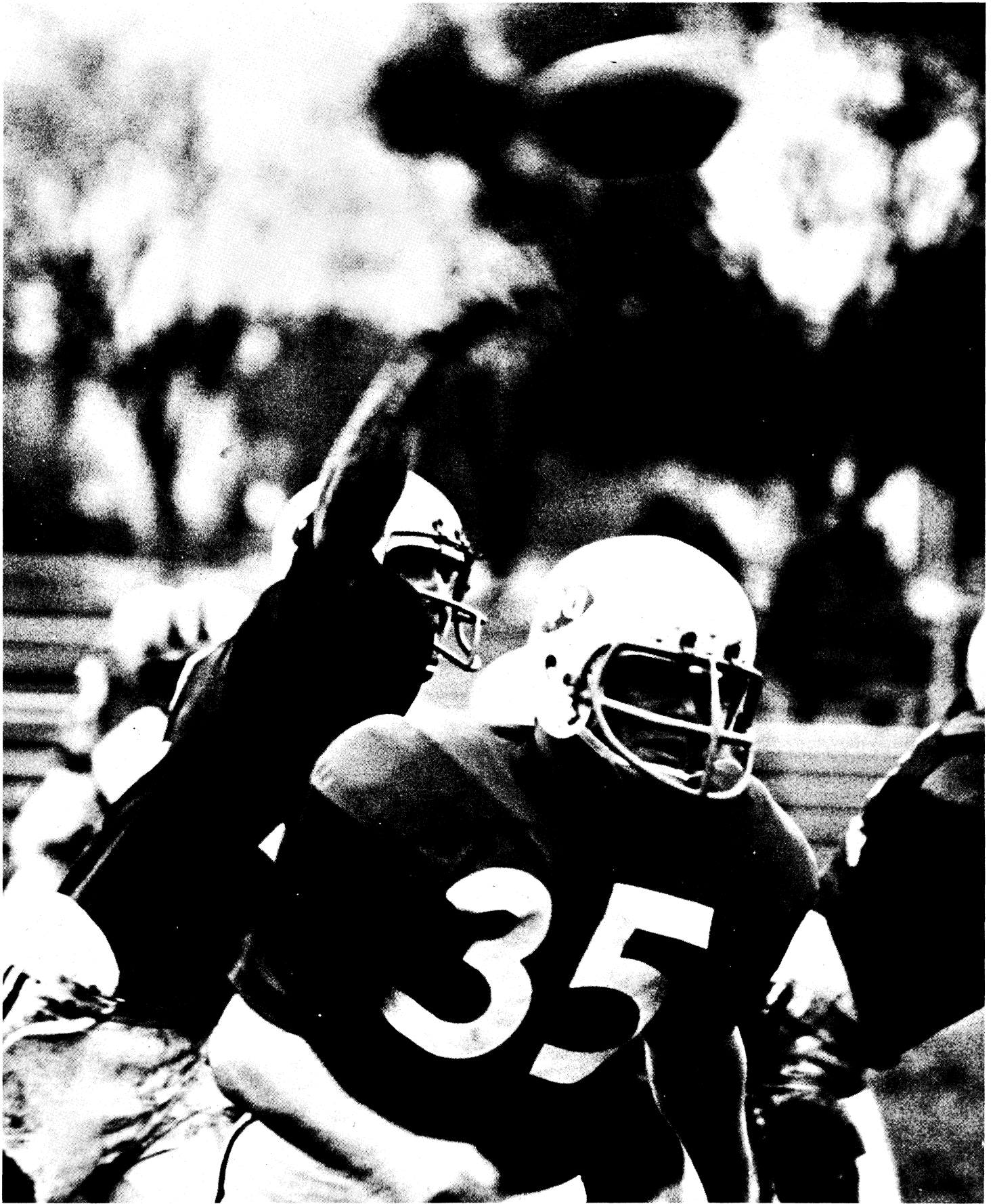
Carole returned to the studio wondering what he meant, but never had time to decide. Since Goodshot had disappeared, Steve suggested that they use his room and stereo set for a concert of the latest British rock albums.

"I had to send away for these," he said, placing a few records lovingly on the turntable, "you can't get these around here, they're too new."

Carole sat down on the blue shag rug and leaned against the wall underneath Goodshot's high berth. Steve sat safely away from her, and began talking on and on about the music and what to listen for in the bass accompaniment. Looking across the narrow room, Carole watched his image in an oval mirror hanging on the wall above the light switch. For the first time that day she studied him. Steve was certainly not what the girls at the sorority house would call beautiful. There was little physically beautiful about him. His ears were too large, his nose too long, and his lower lip was too thick. His dark naturally curly hair grew wild around his head, and his wide sideburns seemed to extend almost to the end of his long pointed chin. The deep dimple in his chin looked like a small round hole left in a potato after a bad spot had been cut out. Perhaps his only attractive characteristic was his chameleon eyes. They were large and warmly gray, trimmed with long dark lashes, and they changed depending on what he was wearing. Steve's voice, beginning at the end of a song and stopping at the onset of another, seemed to Carole a melodic drone, blending with the music and the hum of the fan in the hallway. She sat back and tried to collect the reasons why she had been so attracted to him. It was funny the way they had met, she decided, at the factory with all those blank-faced people. She had resented his indifference. No one had ever completely ignored her. For weeks she planned ways to win his attention, but he only barraged her with insults and questions challenging her position on every issue he could think of. Carole remembered the way she had hated his questioning and the way he never ceased to ride her about the sorority. "Narrow-minded, middle-class, sorority girl," she could hear what he used to say. Carole thought of the day she had gone home crying because she could not defend herself. She had hated him for his well-informed mind which mocked her unintellectuality. Then she changed. Scooting sideways Carole looked at herself in the oval mirror. She looked the same, she thought. The yellow turtle-neck sweater set off her small round face and she compared her image in the oval mirror to an old solemn photograph. Stiff. Carole wondered if she was still so stiff; she knew she was trying not to be. The unstiffening had begun when she realized her incapacity. Wondering how she could take herself back to school, Carole lowered her eyes from the mirror. She wished she could stay in the apartment, away from everything. One year, she thought, if the girls noticed the change maybe they would call it "senioritis."

Steve's voice was louder now. "Carole, you're not listening are you?"

"Yes, Steve. To every word, I swear," she lied.







## rain

rain  
sparkling on the waters  
forming two layers of stars  
    too much like the two sides of love  
    the painful birth  
    the painful death

willows  
leaning near the grove  
dirge  
muffled from a dirty conch  
reminding me  
    although there's no need  
that you're Life

Soon you'll go sailing  
with a panda in an umbrella,  
with Dawn's fingers  
intertwined in your hair—  
    as I,  
    once—  
Searching for the jar of honey.

I'll be gone, also.  
My lighthouse  
and the fog  
wait

    as I,  
    once.  
I'll sit in my tower  
staring  
at my tracks trailing themselves  
only to be eaten  
by the fog.



## Linda

Standing frozen, you in split-second  
shuttered black and white, with tears  
in animation suspended beads to neck and  
smile royal from doublepage spread of year-  
book. And we your delphic oracles reckoned  
your future most successful. By sheer  
accident (which the newspapers said)  
you crashed. I feel the chill of the dead

# To You My Father

I suppose I should have gone to church this morning. I don't mean should have, I would have liked to have gone. In fact, I might've even enjoyed going. But, I'm one of those people who feel funny about only showing up on Easter Sunday. I mean usually the ladies, the old ones who sit in the back two pews to the left of the center aisle, the ones with the Easter bonnets with all the frills and all that; well, they usually stare holes through me and then inspect the ceiling to see if it's cracked. It's too bad they don't have Easter on some other day, say the third Tuesday of the month when the ladies are more interested in cards than God. Then maybe I'd go.

Jeremy Eastman sat on the edge of the sagging horsehair couch at the west end of the living room, unconsciously enjoying the warm rays of sunlight on the back of his neck, and trying to remember the last time he had been in the local Methodist Church. After a few moments of concentrated but useless effort, he decided he couldn't care less when it was, or why, or with whom or anything. For all he knew, he had been sitting on this sofa all his life and had only pretended to go to church. Gazing haphazardly around at what had once been a rather large room, he was a little surprised at how it had shrunk. It was now so small, so small and crowded. He made a mental note to commend whoever had taken it upon himself to "spread the word," for whoever it was had done an outstandingly thorough job. All of their friends, neighbors, acquaintances and strangers were there, or had been there or were on their way. Just like one hell of a cocktail party, except no cocktails.

I wish these people would leave, just disappear. We could skip the handshaking and shoulderpatting and cheekkissing. All this bunk about "wanting to do all they can." What's to do? It's all been done. Births, marriages and deaths, they're always the first to arrive and the last to leave. They have to be there for all the firsthand details so they can screw them up when they report them over the backyard fence, under the hairdryer and at the bowling alley. Nose-trouble is what the old man calls, called it.

I can tell by the forlorn nodding of heads that they've voted and unanimously agree that "Ruth's in a state of shock and probably will be for at least a couple of days." I mean, I know my old lady, she's tired, really worn out, and all she needs is some rest. But then, Aunt Iris understands. Aunt Iris understands why Ruth can't possibly sleep on that bed. After all, he (ever notice how quickly they lose their identify?) had "passed away" on that very bed only hours before. For Chrissake, my father died of a heart attack not the plague or typhoid fever. It's not like the bed's contaminated or something.

She caught my eye while I was staring rather coldly at her and must have thought I was subconsciously begging for consolation. Good old Aunt Iris. She slowly eased herself off the footstool (all the time collecting her thoughts), straightened the dark brown seam of her left stocking (still groping for the right words), and then walked unhesitantly towards me. When she was standing before me, she folded her hands in such a way that she could have held water in them if she wanted to. She reminded me of Miss Krane, the soloist in the senior church choir.

"Jeremy, why don't you go lie down for a little while, darling. You look simply dreadful, and I know you'd feel so much better." Emphasizing the fact that she was a relation and, therefore was entitled to console me whether I wanted it or not, she bent from the waist bringing her eyes only six inches from mine. I was at once enveloped in both the suffocating sweetness of "Evening in Paris" and the stench of an older woman's nervous breath.

"Well, I'm glad you don't feel dreadful, dear, but the next couple of days are going to be a terrible strain on you, and you're going to need all of your strength." Straightening, and at the same time smoothing her jersey print, "All right, all right. See, you've already become cross and irritable."

At those words, I shot the old babe one of my “didn’t-mean-to-offend” looks, which I immediately regretted. Taking a secure hold of my right elbow, she firmly nudged me over, which irked me as I was the only one on the couch and she could have easily walked around the coffee table and sat on my other side. That is, if she had to sit down.

After burrowing deep into the baggy limpness of the shapeless cushion, then reaching through the collar of her dress and tightening first the right and then the left strap of her full length slip, and finally removing a small black ball of mascara from the corner of her eye, aunt Iris was ready to deliver her speech of enlightenment. No, not quite ready. She suddenly pulled from one of the many pockets of her bra a small square blue and white flowered hanky, with which she dabbed at her now watering eye, the one that had held the ball of mascara. She took excruciating pains to straighten out all the wrinkles from the used hanky, spreading it squarely on her lap and using her hand as an iron, smoothing one corner after another. All at once, she stretched the opaque piece of cloth between her two hands and gazed at it as if she were looking for some flaw in the construction or material.

“You know, Jeremy, you’ve got to be the man of the house now. I mean, you are the man of the house now. You’ve had a great deal of responsibility heaped on your shoulders and with no warning whatsoever. But we can’t sit and brood. Death is tragic, but must be accepted as God’s Will. It is all a part of His plan.” She paused for a moment and concentrated on a thread that was dangling free from one corner of the hanky. Turning slightly, she was looking at the right side of my face, expecting me to acknowledge her wisdom, but resumed when I failed to respond.

“Your mother needs you very much right now, much more than you realize. You’re going to have to think of other things besides girls and cars and sports.” I just about got up and left at this point, but decided I was too tired to raise myself from the couch, and besides, I had been sitting here first. She was going to be the one to give in.

Too bad it isn’t Palm Sunday. instead of Easter. No, I don’t mean Palm Sunday. That’s when He rode down the streets on a donkey and people waved palm leaves at Him. That’s right. He was crucified on Good Friday. Why do I Wish it was the same day that Christ died? I don’t know. I suppose it would be nice to think that the old man might be on his way by now. Just exactly on his way to where I don’t know either. And besides, who in the hell am I to compare his death to His? At least he didn’t have to suffer or wait for death to arrive. Just one paralyzing blow was all it took. He must have really felt lousy to let Mom call the doctor. I guess we should have known then that he was going to die. He never lets Mom call the doctor. It was just a matter of thirty seconds, forty-five at the most. Then there was nothing. He was nothing any longer. He just disappeared without even a goodbye.

An obstinant pencil mark on the table top was slowly giving in to the spittle on Aunt Iris’s hanky. Her voice though still subdued became somewhat triumphant. “Ruth says you don’t have any financial worries, which should be counted as a real blessing, young man. Your father’s insurance is more than adequate for the two of you. He may not have been a lot of things, but no one can say your father didn’t look out for his family. Now don’t go and tell everybody about it. People are always wanting to know if there was insurance and if so, how much, and who gets it, and, well, you know what I mean. It just simply isn’t anyone’s business but yours and your mother’s. But it really is a blessing, isn’t it, honey.”

Again she was staring at the side of my face, zeroing in on my right eyeball. “Just paying for the funeral breaks a lot of people. You count yourself lucky.” Removing the magazines from the coffee table and laying them on the floor, she began to run the flowered hanky over the spotless table top.



I don't suppose Mom sent my blue suit to the cleaners anyway, and I certainly couldn't have worn that green glen-plaid to church. They couldn't have asked for a nicer day, a little cool and maybe too breezy, but nice and sunny. Great day for hunting Easter eggs. Of course, it may have only seemed windy out on that treeless hill. Tombstones don't make the best windbreakers. That seemed number one in importance to Mr. Smapler, our local undertaker, or mortician if you will. I had to get right out there and buy a burial lot as if there was a shortage of them. Hope he'll like it okay, the old man, I mean. His brother, Edward Noah (after their old man) lives just a couple of rows up and to the right. I really do wish I could have gotten him under some tree, it would probably be a lot cooler in the summer. What's really too bad is that there isn't some big, black cave around here. We could just slip him in, push a big rock over the entrance and wait for the trumpets and angels and what not.

"No, dear, you and your mother won't have any financial worries. The car is yours, the house is paid for, no large debts, why you're just in real good shape." She had replaced the magazines on the table in some type of pecking order. There were two *Lifes* on top, followed by a *McCall* and rounded out with a *True* and *VFW* on the bottom. She was quite pleased with herself, both for her neatness and because she felt she had done me a great service.

For the first time I turned and looked her squarely in the face. The sun had almost disappeared, leaving the horizon blindingly bright at her back. All I could see was a black outline. No expressions, details or colors could be seen in her face. It was a void, a nothingness. I saw before me only a shell. What had been my father was now only a shell. What ever he had been had slowly seeped out his nostrils and died at our feet. Only a crust was to be religiously buried.

"The worms crawl in, the worms crawl out, the worms play pinochel on your snout."

"Thanks, Aunt Iris, you've been a great help. Everything you've said had made me realize how really fortunate I am. Really. But, if you'll excuse me, I think I'll go lie down for awhile. I am awfully tired, and like you said, I'm going to need all my strength. No, that's all right. You just leave the coats on my bed. I'll just stretch out on mom and dad's bed. I always did like it better than mine."



LEWD betrayal  
OF TIMES NEEDED  
AND LOST.  
PEDDLING

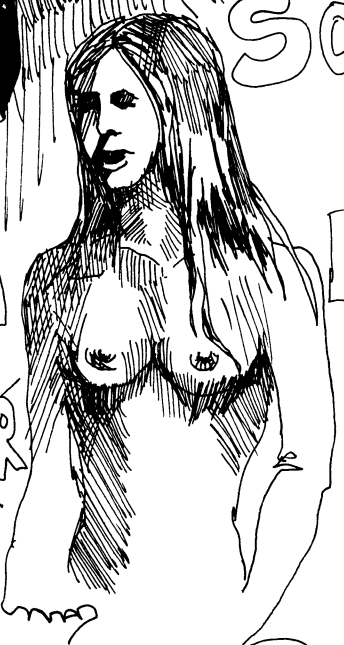
SKIES  
IN WISER  
HEADS.  
FAITH-

FULL CHARITY  
BRACING THE  
SONS OF

HARSH

PERFORMERS.

Thyme in  
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SMOOTHER



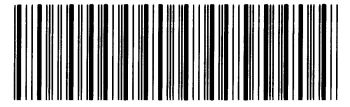


## Let's Run

Let's run—  
To nowhere?  
To everywhere!  
Anywhere!  
Fleet-footed centaurs  
In a field  
Of green buildings.  
We'll push aside  
Those undergrowths  
Did I say undergrowths?  
Overgrowths!  
Of chained humanity;  
Leaping,  
Gazelle-like,  
The stoned curbs  
That have fallen  
Drunkenly beside the gutters.  
Dismount that high horse—  
You've got your own hooves,  
Just half the number  
But pawing hands, too!  
The clock will still be here  
When you return,  
Let's run!



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