

OUR TIME

The Contemporary Literary & Arts Magazine Spring 1993

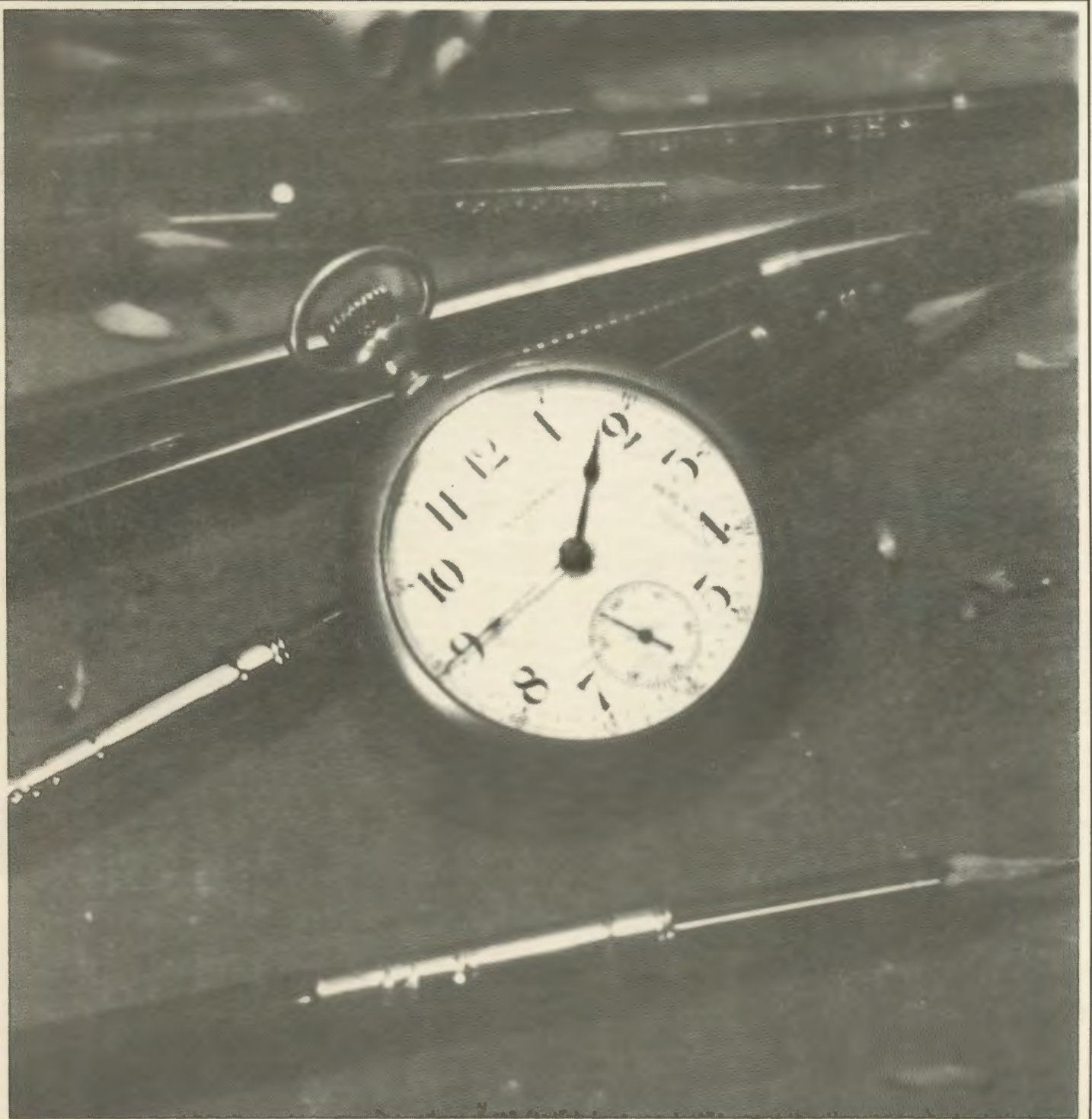


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And Our Time goes on.....

Eight years ago, a man named Kwadjo Boaitey felt that Geneseo students needed a contemporary publication which reflected their thoughts and creativity. Our Time continues to provide a necessary outlet for artists and writers to express themselves. I feel very fortunate to have discovered this unique magazine as well as some special people who shared my enthusiasm and vision for Our Time.

Thank you very much to everyone who devoted themselves so completely to putting together this magazine (a.k.a. The Phoenix edition).

The words and images within the pages of Our Time are the voices of our generation. Please listen.....

-Lisa Scott

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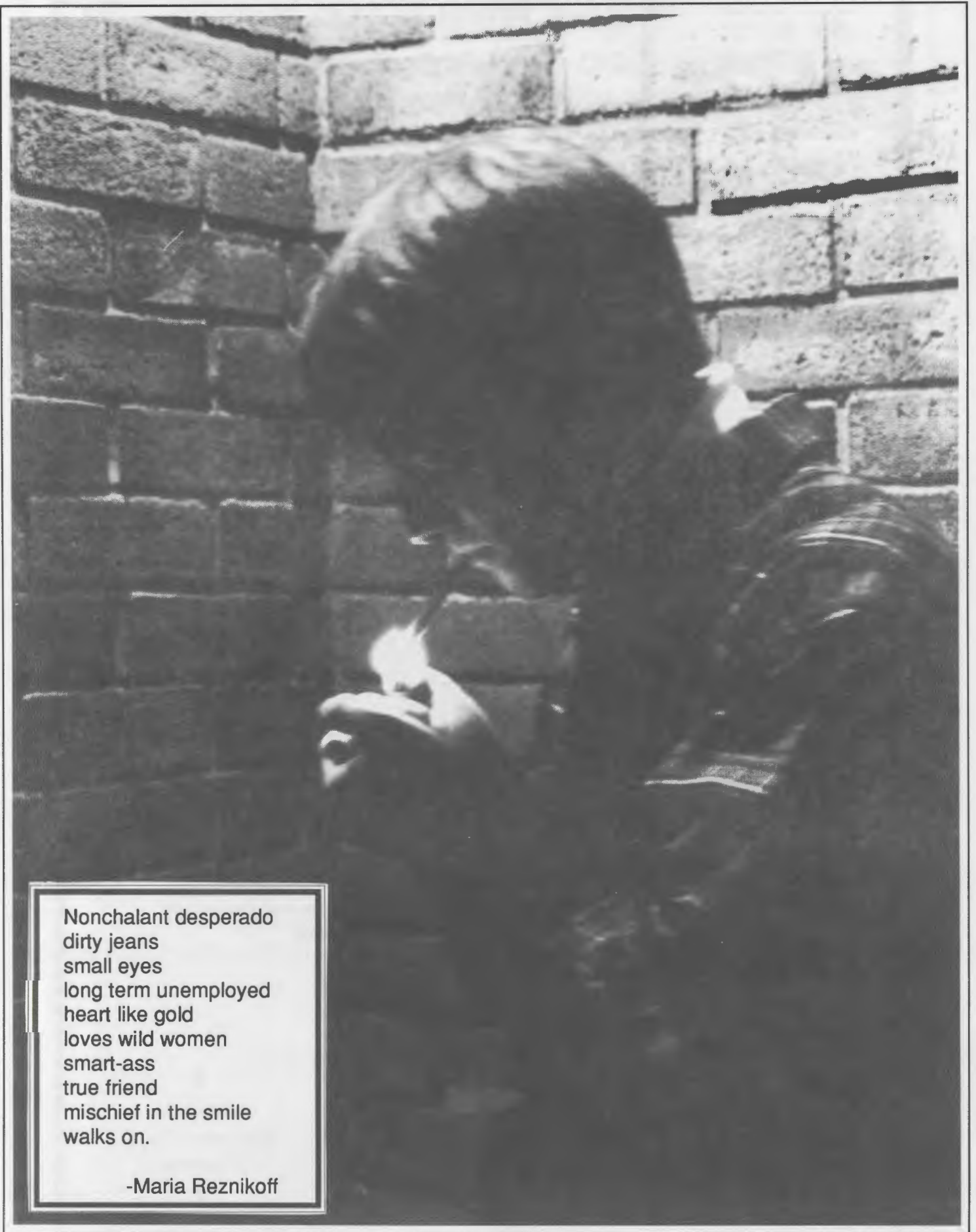
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Nonchalant desperado
dirty jeans
small eyes
long term unemployed
heart like gold
loves wild women
smart-ass
true friend
mischief in the smile
walks on.

-Maria Reznikoff

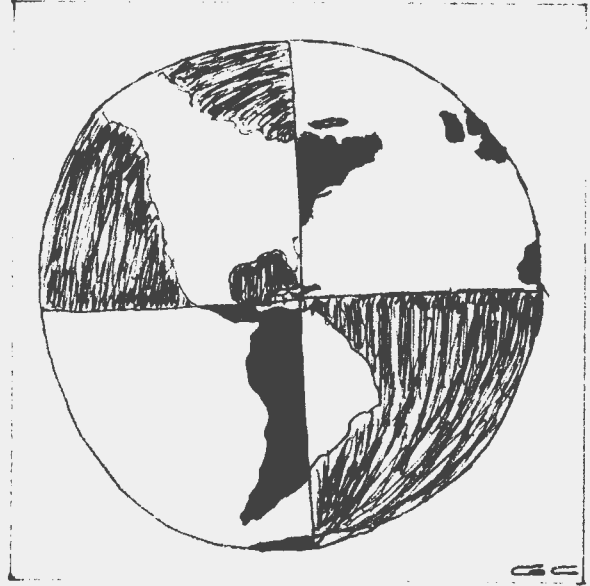
My Revolution

in my revolution
you lose.
but I don't win
because evolution will.
and this land
that once was fertile
does not change-
from wheat to wheat
perhaps.
though not from
man to man.

in my revolution
windows shatter
as houses fall.
still you smile
for I must build them back.
inside I'll place
a family or
remnants
if they breathe.
on their knees
no one stops to pray.
and you will know
we don't belong
while this shrinking planet
slowly turns 'round.

in my revolution
man, you'll weep
and your children smile
gayly playing "war."
they have won
what you have lost.
they will not know
what you cannot.
yet they will do
what you have done.

-Michael Knorwane



I walked down Main Street
today,
dodging shadows
now welcome in an
empty home.
Stark sunlight shows
bags and wrinkles and
regret;
at sunset I pretend wholeness.
I pretend wisdom too,
and joy.
Young arrogant men have power
when wrapped in gentle night.
Maybe yesterday I stood
laughing,
but too much work and sadness
has me tired.
I lie on pillows,
waiting.

-Maria Reznikoff

Freedom Fades

The flag waves
its fading stripes
in a failing attempt
to brighten its stars
that have been stained with blood.

It hangs tilted, its face down
with rips near the seams
It has seen much destruction
and hate.

And now, "We the people", united
under the flag,
have left on our hats.

We no longer say the pledge
with honor...
nor shall we have
the freedom
to care.

-Laurelin Janda

IT'S ALL THE SAME

Everyone talks of the suffering
that smothers the lives
of Vietnam Veterans

The hurt, the anger, the pain
the fears and the tears
all the disdain

No one talks of the suffering
of those who inherit these feelings
and live with them just the same

These are the children
of Vietnam Veterans
who live while it festers
within the family domain

For I am the child of a Vietnam Veteran

I feel the same hurt
I feel the same pain
I feel the same isolation

I cry the same tears
I have the same fears
I am in the same situation

But I was not there

For I am the child of a Vietnam Veteran...

-Child of the War

A Cinematic Christmas

A brilliant flare of light temporarily paralyzed my vision, and a depth of whiteness engulfed my body. A moment became an hour, an hour became a decade, and a decade became a century. Patterns of existence swept through my mind in visions of grayness as the sounds of loneliness filled my ears. Suddenly this strange phenomenon, that had begun in the blink of an eye, ended. My eyes slowly opened to find the body that possessed them sitting in an empty movie theater. The house lights were dimmed, and on the screen in front of me a date appeared: "1897." The date faded into blackness and there was a sense of stillness in the theater that, oddly enough, felt alive. I thought to myself, "Where am I?" I was soon to find out.

As the question raced through my mind, the sound of clicking filled my ears. The noise of an old movie projector whirled in the background and another image faded up from the darkness: "Leonding, Austria." Once again, the message faded out and the theater was still. I was alone, confused, and disoriented; fear began to engulf me as defined through one word: panic. I tried to get up but could not: my legs had failed me. In a fit of frustration, I shouted: "What the hell's happening!" The projector turned back on and its mighty reels clicked as though it were an electric typewriter gone mad. The screen in front of me was as bright as the summer sun is at midday, and it read: "And now for our feature presentation..." I then realized that I was to do nothing but watch the show in front of me.

A panoramic shot of a late nineteenth century Austrian village dawns before me. In it, snow covers the landscape surrounding this rather isolated village. All of the stores appear to be closed. Not a soul can be seen or heard as the town lays dormant in this winter paradise. Then, almost violently, the camera pans right and quickly zooms in on a seemingly ordinary house. For a long time the image remains on the screen, and the theater grows cold and desolate. Then it (the house) fades: into blackness.

The next shot comes from the ceiling of a livingroom. The room is decorated in accordance to this time period. It is also obvious that this particular family is not struggling financially. In the left hand corner of the room stands a Christmas tree: brightly decorated with tinsel, popcorn, and other ornaments. Underneath the tree there are three presents wrapped in silver paper. Then it clicks: it must be Christmas day; but who's house am I in? Just then a well dressed little boy, about seven years of age, enters the room. He sits down in the middle of the room and seems to be patiently waiting for something. Two well dressed individuals calmly enter the room several minutes later: a man and a woman. The two have a rather stern and serious aura hovering about them. They sit down in two chairs beside the fireplace and stare at the young boy: their faces livid.

The father speaks: "Well boy, would you like to open your presents?"

The young boy stands up before his father and replies as if commanded to, "Yes

A Cinematic Christmas continued...

father."

The father gives a nodding gesture and the young boy runs to his presents, madly ripping the foil from them. The first present he opens is a dictionary. The young boy looks at it and appears disappointed.

The father then remarks on the boy's look, "This will aid you in your school work."

The dictionary is set aside and quickly the boy opens the next present. The silver wrapping is torn off to reveal a school uniform. Again, the boy looks disappointed and stares up at his father who coldly returns his look. The young boy understands his father's eyes and places the uniform down and forces a smile. Finally the last present is opened.

The mother then speaks to her son: "I thought you might enjoy this." The wrapping is removed to reveal two metal soldiers. The young boy smiles with sincerity this time; however it is short lived as the father stands up in amazement.

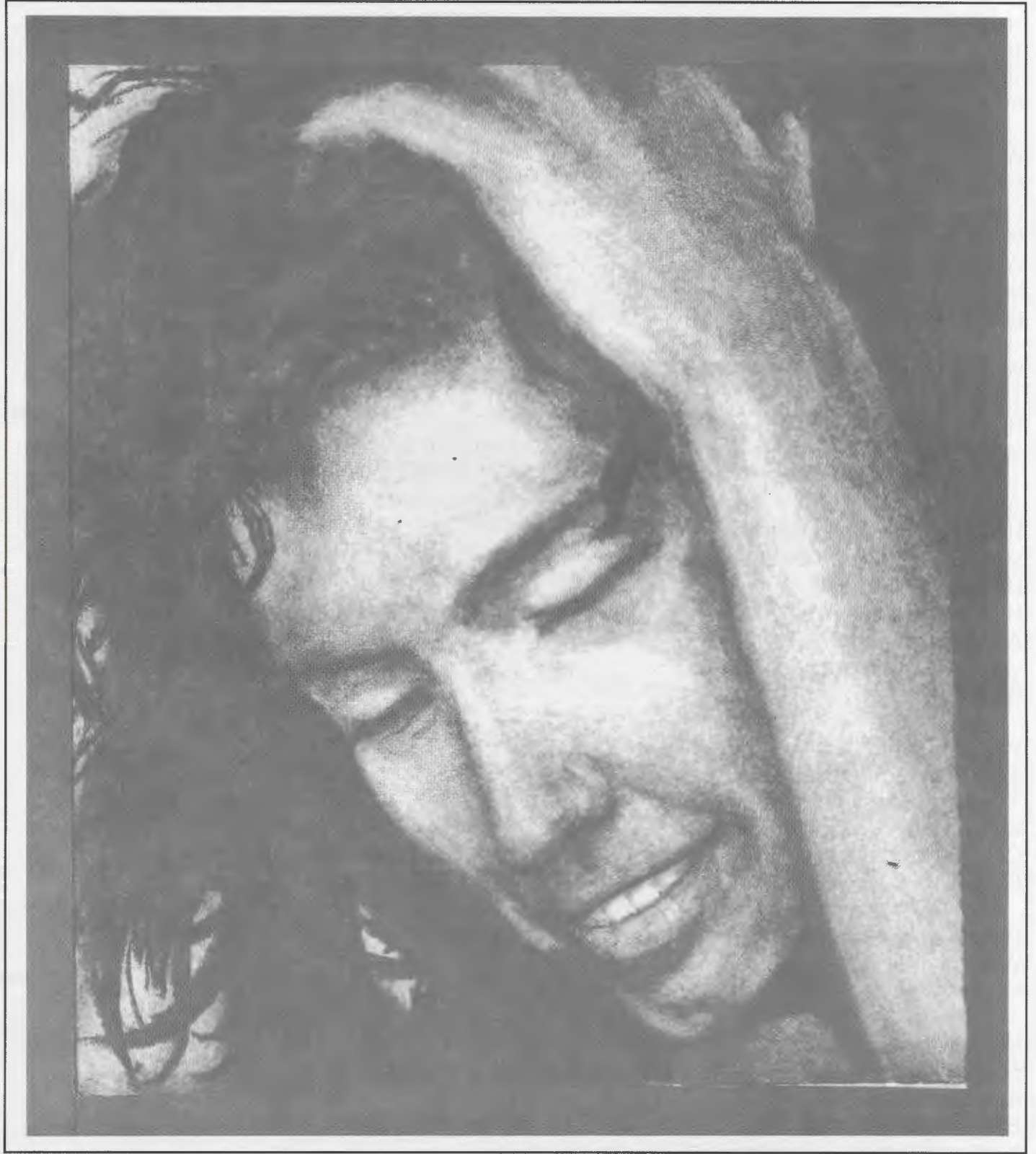
"Klara!" he shouts, "What is the meaning of this? Those are not proper gifts for my son. They will be returned tomorrow!"

The boy, who appears almost horrified at the thought of losing the soldiers stands up and shouts one simple, defiant word: "No!"

The father slaps the boy across his tender face. "Don't you ever take that tone of voice with me!" he yells, "Go to your room without breakfast! We'll call you for church." The boy, tears running down his face, runs upstairs to his room: the camera follows.

The boy jumps on his bed and lies there face down. The muffled sound of crying comes from the bed. The camera then pans over to the boy's desk. Covered with homework, untouched books, and many drawings, the camera slowly zooms in on a homework assignment carelessly left out. Soon the words become legible and so does the name on top: "Adolf Hitler". Then it all makes sense. This movie, this theater, it's all in my mind. It is my subconscious feelings for a man, an image, a boy I hate. He would eventually grow up to bring destruction to the world. Families would be torn, nations would fall, the innocent would die. He would even go so far as to bring a race to near extinction. He brought misery and destruction to my family, my culture, my people, and for that I will never forgive him. Once again, another cold and lonely Christmas for young Adolf Hitler, and although I cannot change the inevitable destruction he will cause, I can most certainly make this Christmas a horrible one for him. With that, the movie stops and the curtain falls.

-Ben Schecter



Modern Woman

Slick pages
Vivid colors
Flawless cover girls start talking about how a real woman
should be
Today
You can have it all
ALL

Woman of the nineties
Pro-Choice
Pro-Life
Single mother
Working mother
Successful career
Successful marriage

Wear this lipstick
This dress and these
Black stiletto pumps
You can do anything
This is how to do it

How to listen/How to talk
Win the man of your dreams
Healthy relationships
Healthy bodies, firm bodies
A body that will get you a man
Get married. Be monogamous.
Be independent. Get laid.

What's In/What's Out
Try this dessert recipe
Tampons, Pads, Pads, Tampons
Sweet musk floral perfume scents
Quickly turn pages for
Fresh air

Have a cigarette
Warning: May complicate pregnancy
Rape, Victim of an Obsessed Lover, My Husband Beats Me

Ultimate fantasy love story about a dashing prince, a virile
cowboy, and a woman you wish you were
Knit a sweater
Read your horoscope
New, quick-drying nail polish in 38 irresistible shades
"You've come a long way, baby."



-Lisa Scott

**"coordinates OR APPROXIMATELY TWO HUNDRED NINETY-TWO WORDS
IN DEFENSE OF THE MODERN EVE (NOT INCLUDING THE TITLE
OR SUBTITLE)" by penny andrew**

i HAVE ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT THE BEST WAY TO GET TO KNOW REALLY INTERESTING PEOPLE IS TO LOOK THROUGH THEIR REFRIGERATORS. we ONCE HAD A REFRIGERATOR THAT MADE us SEEM LIKE INTERESTING PEOPLE. WHEN we HAD COMPANY OVER, IT WOULD GROWL AND consequently FRIGHTEN our UNSUSPECTING GUESTS. AND THOSE WERE THE good DAYS WHEN A HOST COULD GRIN AND SAY TO her guests, "WHO NEEDS AN ATTACK DOG? we've GOT A REFRIGERATOR!"

i LIKE TO THINK THAT god HAD A REFRIGERATOR TOO. NATURALLY, we CAN'T LOOK THROUGH THE REFRIGERATOR AS IT WAS HIDDEN FROM humanity.

god KEPT THE INGREDIENTS FOR humans IN A REFRIGERATOR MUCH LIKE THE one IN MY KITCHEN. YES, ON THE SIXTH DAY, she OPENED THAT BIG 'OLE GENETIC FRIDGE AND PULLED OUT two JARS OF CHROMOSOMES. she LOOKED AT THE JAR MARKED "x" AND "expires on the sixth day, "BUT IT WAS GOOD. SO THEN she OPENED THE OTHER JAR OF CHROMOSOMES, THE DEFECTIVE, UNWHOLE CHROMOSOMES, AND she GASPED, "OH NO! we're OUT OF y CHROMOSOMES! i WILL HAVE TO START WITH THE CREATION OF woman." SO she DROPPED four CHROMOSOMES TO THE EARTH AND THUS CREATED woman.

THEN she THOUGHT, "woman WILL NEED SOMEONE TO OPEN THE OCCASIONAL TRICKY JAR." SO she DROPPED three CHROMOSOMES TO THE EARTH GENTLY AND THREW THE OTHER one DOWN WITH FORCE, CAUSING THE one FRAGILE CHROMOSOMES TO LOSE one LEG.

x

x

THEN she SAID, "i WILL CALL THIS CREATURE man.
FOR JUST AS i HAVE MADE him OF PART OF THE
x CHROMOSOMES,

y

THE WORD man IS A PART OF THE WORD
woman." THUS she CREATED AND NAMED
man.

So God looked upon the work and knew it was good and on the seventh day did not open any jars.

Tomorrow Yet?
by: Richard Bower

Wrecked

My Psychedelic furs "all of this and nothing" record
that you scratched

The bent page, to keep your place in my "Vampire
Lestat" Novel

The bed sheet stays crumpled in a heap at the bottom of our
(my) box-springs
You always made the bed

The hole your damn dog made in my yard! Tripped me
with awkward movements out of weather
Now its full of water, from the Night's Rain

Not Missing

Your constant brushing in a circular motion

The dog pitched way you giggle

Your flickering through channels with the Remote

The necessity of a napkin on your lap at meals

Your Loud, Generic, Mainstream PoP

Fixed

That dripping Kitchen faucet
I knew we didn't need a plumber
Just two, new washers

I mow the lawn, trim the hedges; well
I don't think the hole your dog made really need filling
After all, the water needs some place to go

I stopped smoking and drinking
I haven't even seen the buds at Joe's Tavern in a month
The smoke tears my eyes

I'm ready

to visit my mother (one last time)
since I couldn't make her Funeral

to start writing music again
no more guitar rusting strings

Now I'm ready

to replace your car's bumper

But, I look in the driveway and your car's Still Gone

End

Why I Write

I write because it takes me to places I've never been and lets me assume any identity I choose. I can create my own world, complete with character formed entirely by me and whose actions I control with my pen. With twenty six letters in the alphabet, a blank sheet of paper, and my magical ink, I am provided with the building blocks I need. I can save my memories on paper so that in reading them, I can revisit past times. I write to see my thoughts on paper, to really know what's going on in my head.

I first realized the impact of writing in the eighth grade when my mother was looking through my English folder and she read two essays I had written. One was about how I had a fever and missed my own Confirmation party and the other was on my late grandmother. The first one made her laugh and the second one made her cry. They were just words on paper, the same words found in newspapers, on signs, on beer can labels, but it was the order I put them in that caused her emotions.

I can write anywhere I can sit or lean on something. As long as I have paper and a pen, the only other tools I need are in my mind. I can write from the backseat of a bus, at Jones Beach with sand in my bathing suit, sitting at the counter of a diner, during the intermission of a James Taylor concert, or sitting here at my desk.

What do I write about? I write whatever thoughts I am having, and then go back and read it to find out what I was thinking.

Who do I write for? I write for myself and because I want to share a part of myself with others.

Can I not write? That's like taking away an astronomer's telescope, being stripped of one's most essential tool.

I write because it opens my eyes to the world around me.

I write to see into my brain.

But mainly, I write because I can't not write.

-Jennifer Anne Cerasoli



Convenience

He is a god. A god like
taxi cabs or microwave
dinners.

She reigns
the heavens, the earth.
Her skirt hikes up in the September wind.

He sits at the bar.
She peruses his
body with omnipotent eyes.

The waiter wipes stale prayers
from the table. His arm around her
waist, she giggles magnificently.

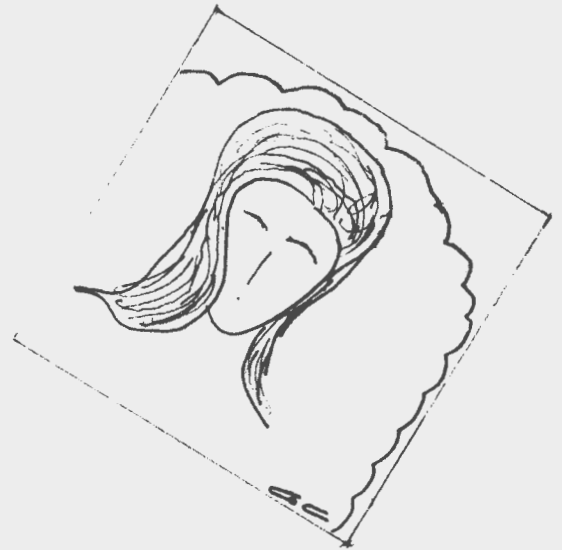
He stops
to put on a condom. She orgasms and
they scamper to their homes under a misty rain filled sky.

-Scott Stamper

THE COURAGE TO CREATE

Come with me my sweet
Virgin child
Together we will find
the courage to create
Let us journey through
your mind and waltz to
the ethereal tones
of a black magic lullaby
and we will find at the
end the all encompassing
illumination from which
Creation is Created
Never again will you be
Wanting for a thought.

-Charles David Forness



Other Girl

Don't mind me.
I am the other girl.
I'll just sit over here
In the corner of your heart;
In the back of your mind;
A silent trembling sugar cube
on the tip of your tongue.

i anticipate

-Penny Andrew

A Garden of Diversity

It is said that one must give credit where credit is due, so to the students and faculty here at Geneseo who are concerned with enlightening those who have been shaded from the light and meaning of cultural diversity, I offer my sincere admiration and gratitude. I am going on my fourth semester here at Geneseo, and in that time I have learned more about the world outside my little sphere than I ever have before.

I am a native of Rochester, but my college experience has taken me to places I never knew existed; places beyond the horizon, that take more than one hour to reach. I have seen an uprising of people, similar to myself in age and schooling, but who have experienced a life I never knew existed.

These people have cultivated the soil of which their roots were seeded. They have planted the seed of cultural diversity and have let it grow, as a sunflower grows in the warm summer sun. And like ivy, this awareness has wrapped itself in the hearts of those who never knew it before lived, and has planted its purpose in the eyes and lives of those wise enough to be amazed by it.

I am only a beginner, and do not know how to cultivate a garden this immense in purpose. I do not know where to find soil this rich in awareness, nor do I know where to find the seeds that are necessary to thrive in this garden.

But I realize I cannot put off this task any longer. The sun of inspiration has shone its rays within my heart, and continue to burn with a force I have never before felt.

Therefore, I find myself left with two choices. I could examine my own soul, and all its contents, to see if anything of worth has begun to grow there, and hope there is enough to fill my garden with. Or, I could look to you, my fellow students, and take from your worth and warmth, and fill my garden with the seeds of your education, experience and awareness.

After viewing my choices, I feel there is only one real answer for me to indulge in. A combination of the two shall be used to fill my garden, and if there is excess after I have completed this quest, then I will have more to share with others.

Please don't hesitate to grow your own garden.

-Denise Schaffner

Ascent

I wander through the ruins
of foundations where
houses used to stand,
proud,
stripped of their pride
by the fire that feels
no remorse.

I stop in front of a
stairway that leads to
nowhere.

A chimney, crumbling,
stands past it, still grasping
at the air, thick with
rotting smoke, determined
to stay standing in spite of
gravity's siren scream,
beckoning it to its early
grave.

I scan the hills for
movement, but all I see
is debris suffocating the
dying grass. The trees.
charred and hurting.

I touch my hair,
plain brown,
and remember contemplating
vainly dying it.

I stare at the steps,
my lungs aching from breathing
in the air saturated with memories.

I climb the stairs
that lead to nowhere...
and jump off...

-Jennifer Weg



Standing Allen

standing Allen
in shallow muddy waters
untied shoelaces
falling over
dirty leather shoes
like long, shiny black snakes.
diving deeper
never touching,
retouching
earth.

standing Allen
stiffly,
against graffiti walls
"paintings of people's paradise."
right side face
pressed,
glued
to a brick masterpiece.
ripped denim.
legs spread
someone searching
for the answer.
arms
tense,
outstretched
defined muscle
taut with anxiety.
scarred hands
with fingers like feathers
longing to fly
perhaps
to glide.
never touching,
retouching
earth.

standing Allen
in hapless rooms.
amidst putrescent air.
clenched fists
head rolled back
open mouth

red,
unable to scream.
piercing,
scratched, cut.
needles and pins.
bloodshot eyes,
heavy,
glass,
streaming tears
slowly falling raindrops
never touching,
retouching
earth.

-Chris Cimmins

Why?

The sun sets,
and a chill rides the air...
surrounding me, engulfing me,
then...
Solitude.

"Why?" is all I can think...
"Why?" is all I can speak...
These thoughts I cannot escape,
the tears flow endlessly,
down
my tender cheek
down
into sleep.

Awaken,
to a new morning sun...
Brilliant,
Hot,
Alive.
Slowly his chariot races from the east,
eye meets eye,
and his lips move,
as if saying to me...
"Why?"

Singing Finch...
courting a mate...
Flight...
Escape...
O how I wish I were thee
small,
simple,
singing,
free to fly away...
and soar through the sky...
and in its voice,
I hear the music of the heart
fill the tranquil air
asking me...
"Why?"

Finch,
fly away...
sing,
and find your mate.
Sun,
travel the heavens...
illuminate,
keep the world in motion.

As for me...
... I wait,
and face each new day
with Hope,
and Heart,
and Soul...
always asking,
always wondering,
always...
"Why?"

-Benjamin S. Schecter



"Full Circle"

But the snow is still falling
While I worship the vibration
Of the wind in the grass
While some prostrate themselves
To one ageless god on the altar
While some (of the same) fight to prove the opinion
Their god is the real one
While the Twin Towers implode
While a cult with guns
Destroys those of the human race
And people are dying!
People are dying
Life leaves and arrives
Into and out of my arms
As I connect
With the ancient living layers
Of humanity and earth
And the snow is still falling.

-Janine Best

Circumpolar

Each travels round and round,
endlessly pursuing
the foggy brightness that lies ahead.
Little do they know
(Indeed, not at all),
that a billion eyes
are forever cast upon them,
marvelling at each individually,
and wondering
why they must circle about so
only to return,
only to return to where they began.

And within those eyes
lies the answer
to this question
and others,
a thousand more like it.

Stars in the heavens,
traveling on and on,
only to end
at our beginning.

-Mark Wahl

Maybe Hickory Nut Hill wasn't the place
to seek shelter from the
thunder and lightning that
caught me off guard in
Arkansas,
three miles up a
rough dirt road and
lots of trees,

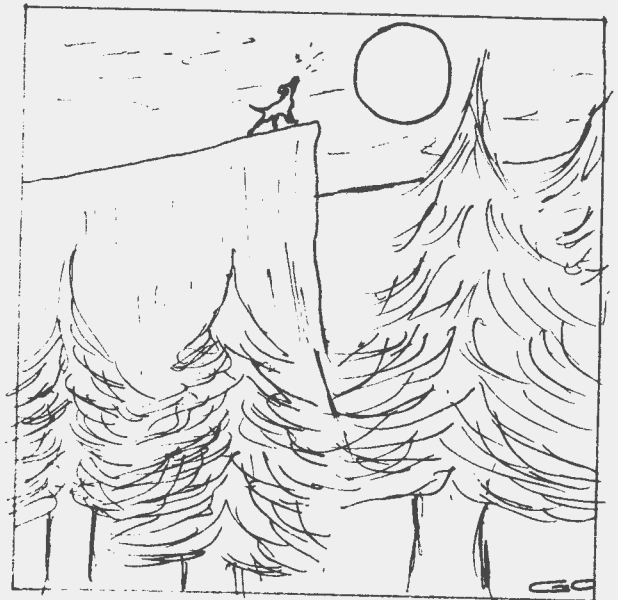
but I asked the weather-beaten van man
with all the cats
and he said the Lord had passed up
enough chances to strike him down before and
like as not
we'd make it through the night.

It wasn't until a bit later
as I sat struggling to make
fire from wood and water that
he called over about the coyotes
people say hang around but
said he had yet to meet one
anyway.

And later still when I
was walking by he asked if
this was my first time on Hickory Nut Hill and
then told me all about
the backwoods of Kentucky and
crooked cops and
small-minded neighbors,
told me about the cats he kept
on strings around his campsite and
the kids who tried to
give him trouble and failed.

Gave me his name and
said he was famous, ask anyone,
but I never have.

I think about him though, up there on the Hill,
cats on strings near a
beat-up van,
stories of justice,
of right and wrong.
I'm pretty sure he meant it about the coyotes,
but they left me alone and
God did too.



-Maria Reznikoff

bench

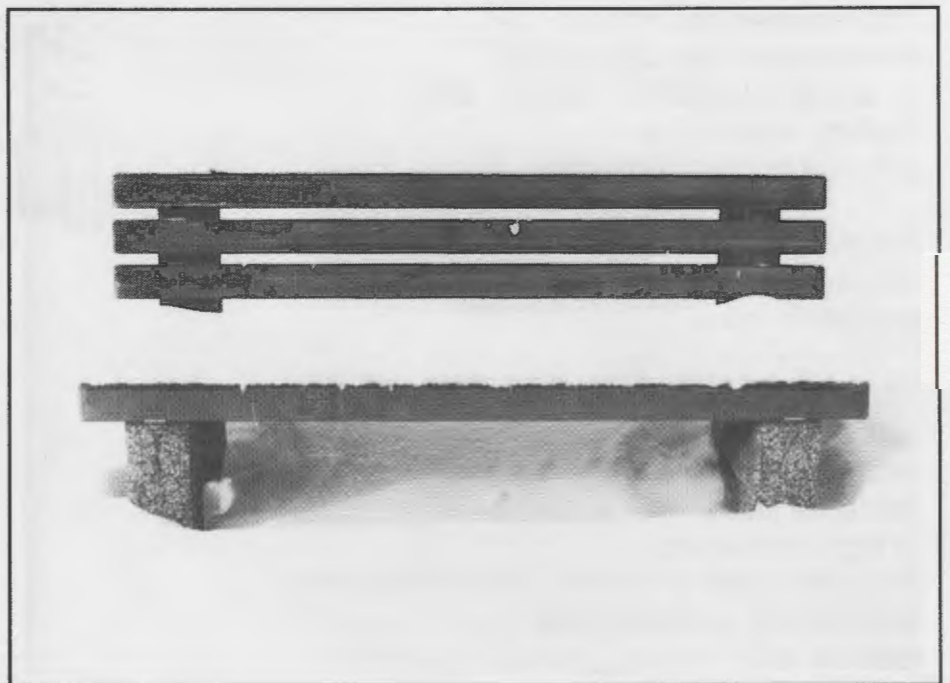
and there once more is the bench
guarding the sea
from high above
and all I have to do is know I'm there
and I am
standing as I did
alone and brave
alone and frightened
alone and empty
western sky giving me all I need
to know someday I'll be free

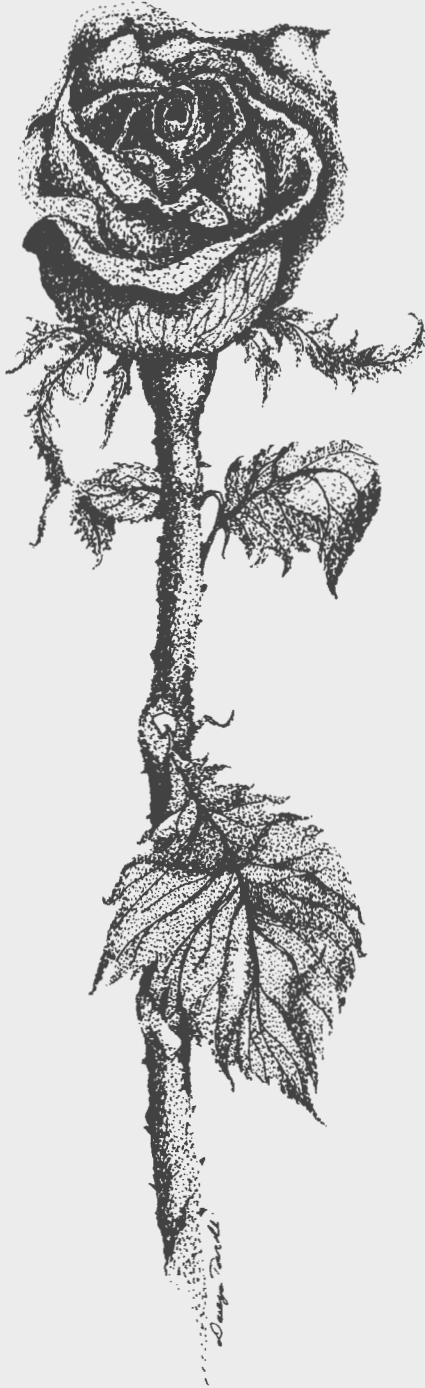
the setting sun makes
a golden river on the watertop
a shimmering river full of warmth
the water flows over me
calm and fluffy as it purrs and moves with me
I follow the golden river
to the mouth, the sun
and though the journey is long
I grow not tired, but strong
the water protects me from the heat
the sun protects me from the cold
and the sky holds the picture of life

sea gulls above me
guide me as their own
they have made the journey often,
this flight into the sun
they know it well
it is my song they sing
flying there and
soaring home
my song
their song
the song of all

I need no more
the bench is there
and I can sit
or fly away

-Yvonne Graf





Noah' s Eden

In a world all its own
Unbeknownst to humankind,
There lives and thrives a being
With its manners unrefined.

Seeming almost calm-
And then CRASH-
The peace is gone
With peaks and troughs unfolding-
A place where humans don't belong.

Can one be as free
As the spirit of the sea?
Will i let my soul be frisked
By the hands of this monstrous risk?

And will i ever calm this fear
Swelling within me as the waters near?
Will my heart ever stop pounding
When i hear the waves' hounding?

Will i ever gain the strength
To stretch my courage the extra length?
And let myself become one
With the water, the sky and the sun?

As another day has set,
Leaving only my feet wet,
It is time for me to go away
And save this quest for another day.

And as i feel the same
The question still remains...
Will i ever take the chance
And trust this watery circumstance?

-Denise Schaffner

BITTER REQUIEM

Oh Great Grandfather
Why have you left us here
In this Red White and Blue
Tainted land
We live in a Sovereign nation
Yet there is no Freedom
For us under their flag
Even our family betrays us
Grandfather rain kills our food
with his acidic Touch and
Great brother sun harms our skin
Till we perish under his harsh brush
Oh, We are doomed to die at
the hands of those we love

-Charles David Forness

The Romanticism of Art History 170

did you just awaken?
The alarm injecting you with the day?
the shower a cold dream's puncture
wound?
to get here, to this sacred
indoctrination?
And what have you learned?

So you walk in on your own
sit down on the side with a smile
trying to learn from all the graffiti
scribblings left for you on your desk
And what have you learned?

Did I find your body attractive?
your young, powerful exterior?
Was I dreaming again, and in dreaming
losing the words that were spoken to
me?
And what I have learned?

-Looseleaf Milliman

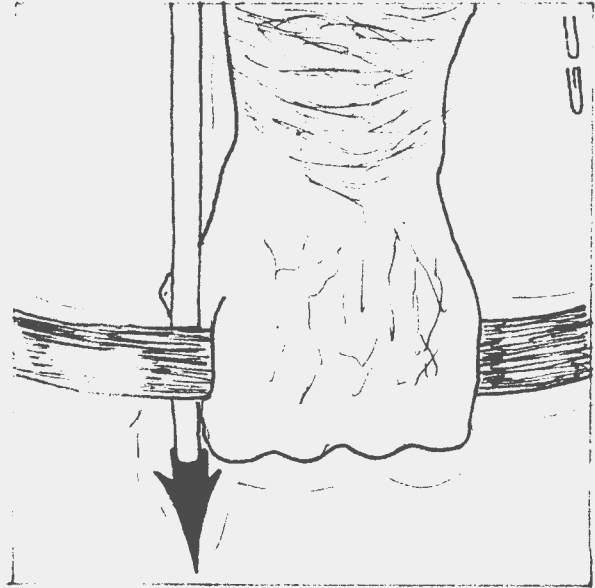


Sweet Dreams

a
Majestic collage formed
a lamp, a rack, some wrinkled garb
encased by the black is Art
wasted weaver of the night Loom
Through a gap i saw Him-startled
the calloused hands still haunt me
and with a blind-eye stare
He cackled the Great "What For"

be
this day the dream, is less a dream
than play
only passing, pausing, pressing
in the tarnished state of day
and as
He sews my eyes for a time
-weary hands program until the dawn-
i wonder what His horrid crime, of
Life
which he still pay.

-Jennifer Campbell



Archer

Wood stick with three goose feathers
Notched, on strands made from cat gut
Pulled, and anchored at corner of lip
Aimed, just below the black metal helm
Released, on target through the wall of wind
Pierced, the skin breaks for blood
Flowing, red liquid on the ground
Silence, until the black crow
Feasts, from remains of life

-Richard Bower

Prophet

Where am I
when I cannot find my home?
I was there once,
I think I can still remember,
but I can find no path marked
"Triumphant Return."

Satisfaction and peace have always been my way.
I've stared deep into the dark pits,
and walked away laughing.
Yet now I cannot resist;
An innocent tugging drags me closer,
those slippery steep walls of faith and despair.
My ears ring from the screams of my brothers;
My eyes sting at these glimpses of death.
The bodies walk
yet the souls lie
in grotesque heaps,
mangled and trampled beneath dualistic feet.

That which has soothed
has lulled me into blind submission.
It has hold and will not release.
I do not want to go this time.
I can no longer follow.

-Mark Wahl

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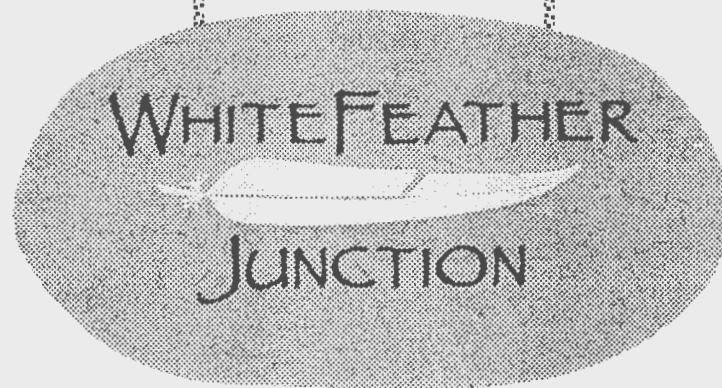


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