

Fall 1987

Overtures - 1987

John Bergman

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Overtures

1987

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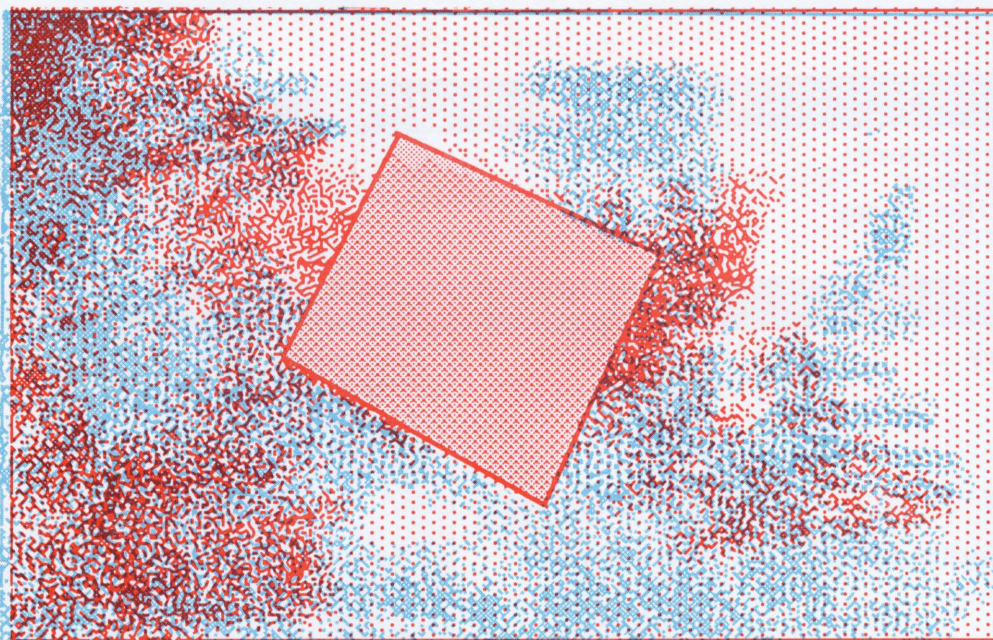
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A magazine of
Poetry,
prose and
short fiction

Overtures

1987

Volume Eight • Number One



Overtures is a magazine of short fiction, poetry and graphic arts published at Northeastern Illinois University by Apocalypse, the student literary organization. Submissions are welcome. Do not examine this issue in an attempt to discern the tastes or biases of the editors. Send us your best, most original work. Send a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your submission to:

OVERTURES
c/o Apocalypse
Northeastern Illinois University
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• T h a n k s T o ... •

The staff of *Overtures* and *Apocalypse* would like to thank the following people for their gracious help, time and effort, without which this year's activities would not have been possible (or who could have made our lives miserable, but didn't):

Ken Morris, Tom Bracken, Jerry Nemanic, Don Schnitzius, Sr., Mary Novak, Glen A. Moore, Tami Miyahara, Jay Petroski, Maurice Terenzio, William Lewin, Kelly O'Mahoney Swieca, Sandra Flores, Monica Dailey, Chuck Uchida, Judy Puschmann, Walter Williams, Vaughn Siarny, Mike Wilson, UNI Public Safety and John Pennisi and crew.

We would also like to thank Peter Jankus, Carlos Lopez, Kermit Lattimore, and Rudy Rose.

Overtures 1987 was designed and typeset in its entirety using an Apple Macintosh Plus computer and LaserWriter Plus printer.

APOCALYPSE READING SERIES

Each year, the Apocalypse Literary Organization sponsors readings by poets and writers. We try and represent the full spectrum from the nationally known, often published, to talented, but as yet unpublished, local poets and writers.

Due to printing deadlines, Carol Oles, who read at Northeastern in Spring '86, is included in this issue. Readers from Spring '87 will be featured in the next issue.

• Linda Mizejewski •



Linda Mizejewski, winner of the 1982 Signpost Competition for her book, *The Other Woman*, is a widely published poet and author. Her poems, essays and criticism have appeared in *Harper's*, *Southern Review*, *Calyx*, *Frontiers*, *Ironwood*, *College English*, *Germanic Philology*, *Journal of English*, *Women's Studies* and a number of other publications.

She was recently a Fulbright Scholar in Romania and is currently working on feminist film theory concerning Nazism and female spectacle.

Ms. Mizejewski's lecture, entitled "Thousands of Romanian Handmaids: A Tale from Present-Day Gilead," was co-sponsored by Apocalypse in conjunction with the Northeastern Women's Studies Program as part of Women's Visions '87, on March 31, 1987.

• Celia Gilbert •

Celia Gilbert, currently of Cambridge, Massachusetts, has written two books of poetry, *Bonfire* and *Queen of Darkness*. Her work has been published in numerous literary magazines, and she has been the co-editor and co-publisher of the magazine *Women/ Poems*, as well as the poetry and fiction editor of the *Boston Phoenix*.

Ms. Gilbert was the winner of the 1981 Emily

Dickinson Award from the Poetry Society of America, and of the Discovery Award from the Poetry Center at the 92nd Street YMCA in New York City. Her poem, "Lot's Wife," was included in the *Pushcart Nine Anthology*. The ALA booklist has characterized her work as 'dazzling but solid.'

Ms. Gilbert read at Northeastern on March 5th, 1987.

THE GARDENER

So thick a summer man as one
of snow, he stands stock-still
in the garden

and startles me, as I pass
on the dusty street, with
his odd murmuring. I see

bare feet, drooping belly,
torn pants, for an instant
stare into dull eyes,

then quickly look away,
too late to erase the shock
of that moist mouth,

as if I'd touched
an alien life that might
reach out and know me

against my will. But his hands
placed the strings where morning glories
scale like reckless lovers,

his breath inspires the trumpets
of the yellow squash, the strawberries'
red-toothed mesh.

And isn't it towards him
the sunflower's great insect eye
turns, over the chicken-wire fence,
for counsel, for radiance?



Marjorie Shostak

• David Hernandez •

David Hernandez is a Chicago poet, performer and political activist. His work often deals with the urban experience and the joy and suffering that are part of that experience. He has been writing for twenty-two years, teaching for thirteen and performing for twelve.

Mr. Hernandez' first book, *Despertando/Waking Up*, was published in 1971. His work has appeared in *Tri-Quarterly*, *Heretics and Mythmakers*, *Banyan Press*, *Stuffed Pike* and *Parade/Sun Times*. He has edited the anthologies *Nosotros/Us* and *The Other Chicago Poets*, and has served on various literary panels,

including the Illinois Arts Council and The Chicago Council on Fine Arts.

In addition to conducting poetry workshops throughout the country, he has recorded an album, *David Hernandez and Street Sounds*, and appeared at the Goodman Theater with other Chicago musicians.

Mr. Hernandez is currently performing with "Street Sounds," conducting a workshop, the Poetic Independent Studies Society, and is preparing three books for publication.

Mr. Hernandez read at Northeastern on January 27, 1987.

PIGEONS

Pigeons are the Spiks of Birdland.
They are the survivors of blood, fire and stone.
They can't afford to fly south for vacation
or a Florida winter-home.
Most everybody passing up a pigeon-pack
pecking on gutter-crumbs tries to break it up
because they move funny and seem to be dancing
like young street-thugs to the music of an 18 foot
10 speaker Sanyo boom-box radio on a 2 foot red shoulder strap.

Pigeons have feathers of a different color.
They are too bright to be dull
too dull to be bright
so in the long run they are not accepted
because they are not like them.

Nobody wants to give pigeons a job.
Parakeets, canaries and parrots have a corner
on the market as far as that goes.
They live in fancy cages, get three squares a day
for a song and dance routine.
When was the last time you saw a pigeon
in someone's home? Unless they bleach their feathers white
and try to pass-off as doves, you will never see pet-pigeons.
Besides, their accent gives them away when they start cooing.

Once in a while some creature will treat them decent.
They are known as pigeon-ladies, renegades or
bleeding-heart liberals, and what they do is build these
wooden cages on roof-tops that look like huge pigeon-
housing projects where they freeze during the cold-spells
and get their little claws stuck in tar on hot summer days.

No wonder they are pigeon-toed.
I tell you,
Pigeons are the Spiks of Bird-land.



Kim Beréz

• Carol Oles •

Carole Oles was born in New York City and is a graduate of Queens College and the University of California at Berkeley.

She is the author of three books of poetry: *The Loneliness Factor* (Texas Tech University Press, in cooperation with Associated Writing Programs, 1979), *Quarry* (University of Utah Press, 1983), and *Night Watches: Inventions On The Life Of Maria Mitchell* (Alice James Books, 1985). Her poems have appeared in *Poetry*, *Prarie Schooner*, *TriQuarterly*, *The American Poetry Review*, *Ploughshares* and other magazines.

Ms. Oles has received a National Endowment for the Arts Grant in Poetry, a Gertrude B. Claytor

Prize from the Poetry Society of America, a Prarie Schooner Prize, a Pushcart Prize and a Writer's Choice Award. Her *Night Watches* was selected for inclusion in the Frankfurt Book Fair.

She has been an artist-in-the-schools with the Massachusetts Artists Foundation and has taught at Clark University, The University of Massachusetts at Boston, and Hollins College. She has been a staff associate at Bread Loaf Writers' Conference in Vermont and a staff member of the Port Townsend Writers' Conference.

Ms. Oles read at Northeastern on March 25, 1986



Miriam Berkley

AT THE VATICAN OBSERVATORY

How should I know my heathen feet must not enter the sanctuary, my woman's robes not brush the seats of learning, The Father's eyebrows fly. I feel improper. Later

permission granted. Again I err, supposing the door which opens to one woman opens to all. I ask to take with me my Italian maid who on our evening walks has learned the names of stars and said them back in her sweet tongue. Request refused, and swiftly.

The Father's telescope clockwork measures earth's motion on its axis — persistent though the Holy Church declared it wrong. Two centuries: Galileo watches.

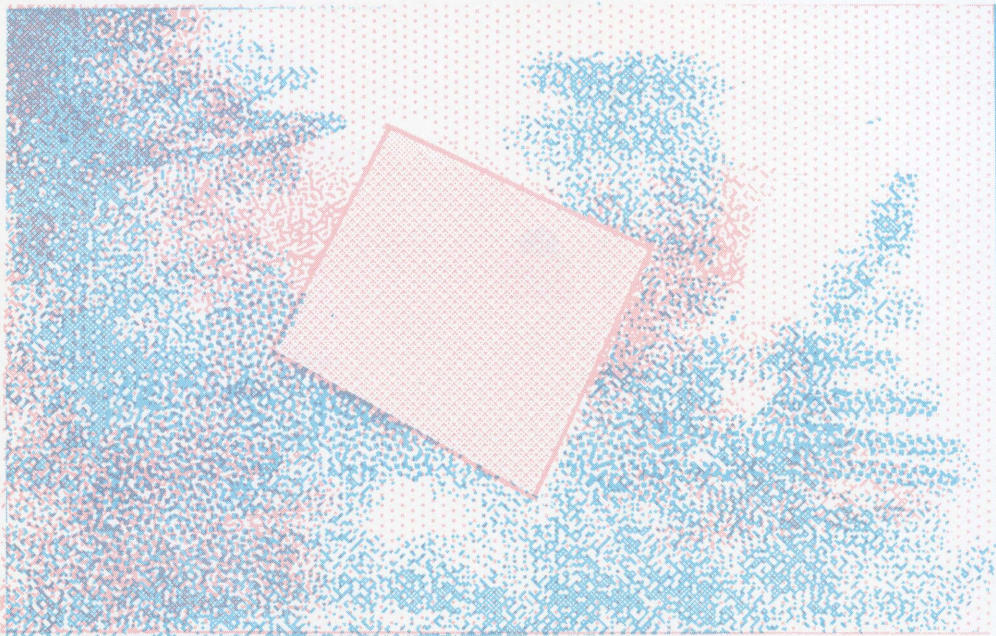
I wish to stay after dark to look at nebulae. Foiled again. The Ave Maria will ring half-hour in advance of sunset and I must leave before, like Cinderella arriving home just as the bell rings out their warning stay. What do they think I will become at nightfall? Or what will they?

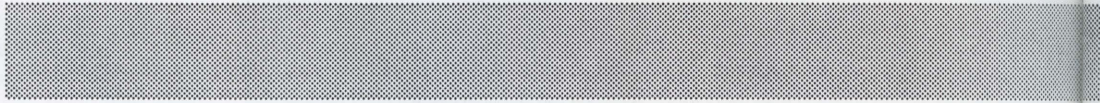
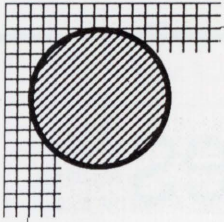
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Overtures

1987





AFTERNOON IN JANUARY

Cold makes no sound
a hand is lost

in the snow
travellers'

advisories cloud
the tea-cups

your heart wrapped
in tinfoil

smokes
like dry ice

caught down the
sink, words

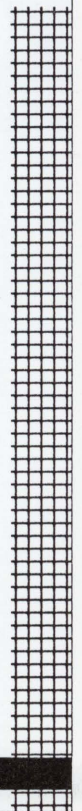
in back of
your tongue rise

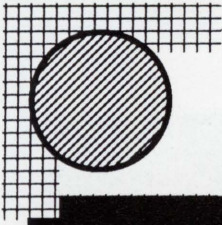
white against
ruined

sky, then drop
like wind

in a fork of
trees

Gertrude Rubin





LEFT BANK

It should have been a warning; the scent
She left & I dared to breath again.
She was only a woman walking through the train
Then was gone. But

I am left

Asking; how far away have I come
From the firmness of legs crossing tracks
Splintering on the skin. Round belly
Like my mother, mother me. You speak of homes
I am homeless
For the breasts that rise on the earth like
The hills in northern Italy
Where ships fly & broken castles nod
In the spindle mist, intruders in a care less age.

For the moment doors open, close,
A southern June morning is hidden
In the crevice of your pale magnolia arm
Like the brilliance of outdoor tables & accordian monkeys
You unfolded yourself in an afternoon
Cheekbones so golden they were knives — O I wish
You were here to cut me now.

I am a stone falling from the empty guard tower
I am my own barbed wire; I coiled around you once
I would coil around you again
If only for the time it takes
To leave this daily train. We escape
But we come back, sometimes sweetly, sometimes not
One tiny drop of scented oil on heated flesh
Tattooed me forever. The train stops here.
Good bye again.

L. Jackson

(untitled)

unsettled
a moment's rest
between circles
and games at the edge
of the melting board
unsure of moves
i think only of trials
spinning faster against the clock
worrying
about falling away from her
or holding on

the choices often wrong
i run and search for odd pieces
that could never fit
but always looked good
for a change of colors
in the schemes between us

outside afterwards
past crowds
and evening cafes
past open eyes
and held whispers
where even fading echoes remain
too clear
i turn my head
away from the light
and crouch
to skim pools
and an overflow of memory

joel zeltzer

AFTERWARD

I walk on the crust
of snow over
black rivers hear
gurgling like a
dark water in the
throat of the
woman who wouldn't
eat, who's been
nice too long,
feels what was
fleck away, a
diamond cut
too often

Lyn Lifshin



by Helen Liza Haukeness



Seattle and Beyond

She is in the JFK Airport. She looks helplessly around for a face she can't find. *My father died last night.*

Outside the windows, morning fog is a blank sheet of paper. Fog and wetness in her eyes make watery shapes of porters and passengers on the curb. She stares at the flight board: 425 SEATTLE CANCELLED WEATHER CONDITIONS. She arranges for a later flight with a connection in Chicago. The nine-foot-tall ticket agent is dark blue and has battery-operated eyes and hands. Everyone staring at the flight board is wearing the face she can't find.

She is thirty-eight years old, though hourly since she got the message she grows younger. Her shoulder-strap luggage and oversized handbag cut into the soft muscles of her adolescent shoulders. Nothing beeps as she walks through the electronic security check, and she smiles to herself. The boarding area by her gate is crowded: flights to San Francisco, Tucson, Kansas City have all been cancelled. Tilting her head so that her short, curly hair almost covers her eyes, she listens to two youngish men from California exchange stories about the unavailability of rooms at the airport hotels. One of them looks toward her, and she smiles rakishly. *My father* Her mouth twists to one side, then down.

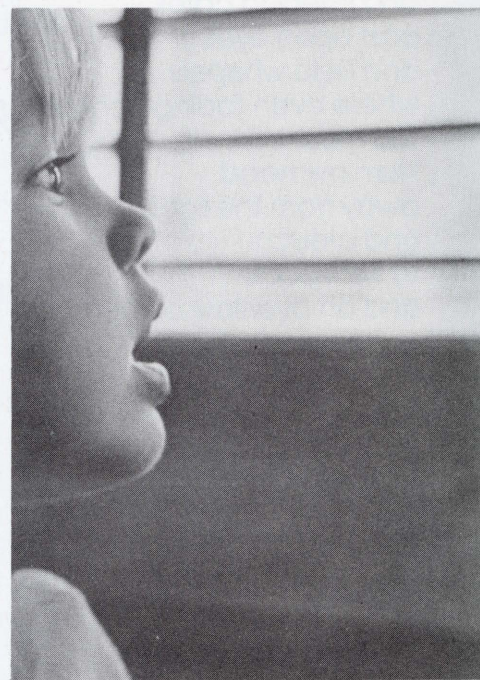
Her rescheduled flight boards an hour late; will they make the connection? "Will we make the connection with the Seattle flight?" she asks a toy Oriental flight attendant, who is noncommittal but who says he hopes. Her voice is a thin, childish soprano. The man in the seat to her left, wearing an extremely brown suit, transmits reassuringly, "There are flights out of Chicago to Seattle every two hours." The passenger to her right is tall and quite good-looking; he says hello to her before he buckles himself in.

His hello confuses her. He is not anyone she knows: He is—*Bob... Hal...Harve...Russ...Jeffrey.* She wipes her eyes and fumbles with her own seat belt, pulling the strap as far as it will go to hold her shrinking self in place. She is fourteen years old.

She turns to the man on her left, who has plump hands and clean, carefully filed fingernails. His reddish hair is beginning to recede, and his weight looks as if it is carefully watched. "Are you going to Seattle?" she asks. "Were you booked for an earlier flight that was cancelled?"

"I was scheduled to be at the controls of that plane," he answers modestly. She looks shyly away and down, thinking of more questions, but says nothing. *My father just died.*

She hasn't slept for more than thirty hours; she is a character in an animated cartoon. She leans



forward, winding a clump of long blond hair around one forefinger.

From the corners of her eyes she watches the man who said hello and sees that he has red-brown hair like the man to her left but without the balding. Immediately after takeoff he removes a Bible and a sheaf of handwritten notes from his briefcase and spreads them out on the pull-down tray. She tries to read his small pencil script, and realizes it is a sermon he is working on. A clergyman...a sky pilot! She giggles, stopping abruptly, and wishes there were someone she could tell. Seated between an airline pilot and a sky pilot, she is assured of safe arrival.

She has many airborne hours ahead of her. She thinks abstractedly of the sales beginning in the city she has just left. Sportswear. Handbags. Bracelets, eighteen-carat gold. *My father...*

She spends her inheritance.

A meal of plastic sandwiches is served. By stretching tall, she is growing older; she is twenty-one. From a distance she hears the airline pilot thank the flight attendant profoundly. He begins to eat with small, fastidious bites. She tries to watch the Bible-reader to see how he consumes his meal: Baptist or Episcopalian? His yellow sweater is acrylic. His face is Presbyterian.

Her seat belt suddenly is looser. If she goes back and starts her trip again, her father will be there when she arrives, his face creased with pleasure at the sight of her. She drops the small bar of chocolate from her tray into her handbag. At bedtime, when she is under her soft blanket with panda faces, she will nibble carefully until it's gone.

Who will be the pallbearers, who will be the pallbearers?

She will carry his body in her own arms to a place where he can lie down.

The sky pilot bows his head briefly when his meal is finished. He fills another sheet of paper with sermon notes; at the bottom he writes James 29:22-24. Is it a sign to her? She discovers there are only five chapters in the Book of James.

The airline pilot is studying what looks like a set of test questions. At the top of the sheet she reads **The full boost pump opens the rat. T___. F___**. The pilot has checked neither answer.

The pilot in the cockpit announces that in Chicago fog and rain prevail. They will land in twenty minutes. The plane glides through a dense cloud-ceiling; she glimpses a minareted castle isolated in a mist of trees. Perhaps she will walk off the plane in Chicago and spend the rest of her life there. Perhaps she will buy the minareted castle. She has \$200 and credit cards in her handbag.

The landing is a perfect one. The sky pilot steps back to allow her to exit first. She winks at him over her shoulder, pushing behind one ear the long straight hair that reaches almost to her skinny waist. "G'bye, Reverend."

What's the shortest verse in the Bible? "Jesus wept."

Flight attendants with stretchy smiles line up at the entrance to the ramp. "Give my compliments to the pilot," she says grandly.

Inside the terminal, she looks at the flight board and runs to her gate. The endless corridor smells of carpet that has just been cleaned. Her handbag and luggage weight her narrow shoulders. Passengers do a square dance around the check-in counter. A voice without a body asserts: "Flight 206 to Seattle and beyond will be delayed. The flight is still scheduled to depart. At this time we cannot tell you what departure time will be." She inches her way forward, peering between pillared legs and torsos, then turns away. Her shaking keeps her steady.

Nearby, a black upholstered seat is empty. She rakes a thumbnail across the



plastic arm, wriggling her body restlessly. Outside the observation window, fog swaddles lifeless jets. Somebody demands, "Will Blush Honda please contact Terald Tord at the Yew-nided ticket counter." She sets her watch to Chicago time.

She hears the disembodied voice again: "Flight 206 to Seattle and beyond is still scheduled to depart this afternoon. We are waiting for equipment to arrive. At this time we cannot guarantee what departure time will be, what equipment the plane will have, or what condition the plane will be

in." The voice sounds bewildered. The voice bewilders her.

If she lies down and sobs into the airport carpet, who will care about her, who will pick her up?

Her watch says one-thirty. The terminal is a gigantic ballroom with everyone in it dancing a slow dance. The terminal has become a revolving dance floor. Now it is time for refreshments to be served. She looks around for a snack shop. Her bags have gotten heavier. *The full boost pump opens at the rat. True or false?* Pepsi is served in a paper cup and tinkles with little chips of ice. Both of her hands are already in use; she grasps the edge of the paper cup with her teeth.

A rawboned, jumpy woman with a lined face smiles and offers her space at a table she is occupying with a small boy, who is momentarily waddling on inch-long legs toward the observation windows. The

woman is wearing a bright blue polyester dress that trembles over her upper arms. "We was going to visit my sister in Oklahoma between Christmas and New Year's," she observes eagerly, "but then Donnie, he was gittin' two stomach teeth." Donnie returns and buries his face in the woman's surprisingly padded lap. "My husband sez people don't drive the way they used to."

Overhead, white fluorescent lights filter through smoky fog. She hasn't slept, but she feels she will never need to sleep. She has just turned twelve years old. She keeps her expression stern in an effort to appear older.

The woman's lined, nervous face loses its smile. She gets up awkwardly, protecting Donnie with one arm, and moves away, her fallen stomach swaying under the bright blue dress like an air inflated mound of Venus.

"Will Blush Honda please..."

Two Japanese businessmen with identical faces and different-colored suits sit down at the table with her and purr nonstop to each other in Japanese. She examines their briefcases while leaning forward to listen. "Haralaralara," she says, and walks quickly away without looking back.

She draws her fragile bones upward. Her white cotton pullover is stretching from the weight of the bags suspended on each shoulder. Soon she will disappear in a cloud of white cotton fog. Or perhaps she will dissolve like the universe in fading moonlight. Already the ribbed cuffs have covered the heels of her thumbs and are halfway down to her knuckles. She stops to shove them up with her forehead so that her hands will not disappear completely, but notices that someone is staring at her. She stares back haughtily and moves on. Her pullover is not stretching; she is merely getting smaller and will soon be swallowed up by swaddling clothes.

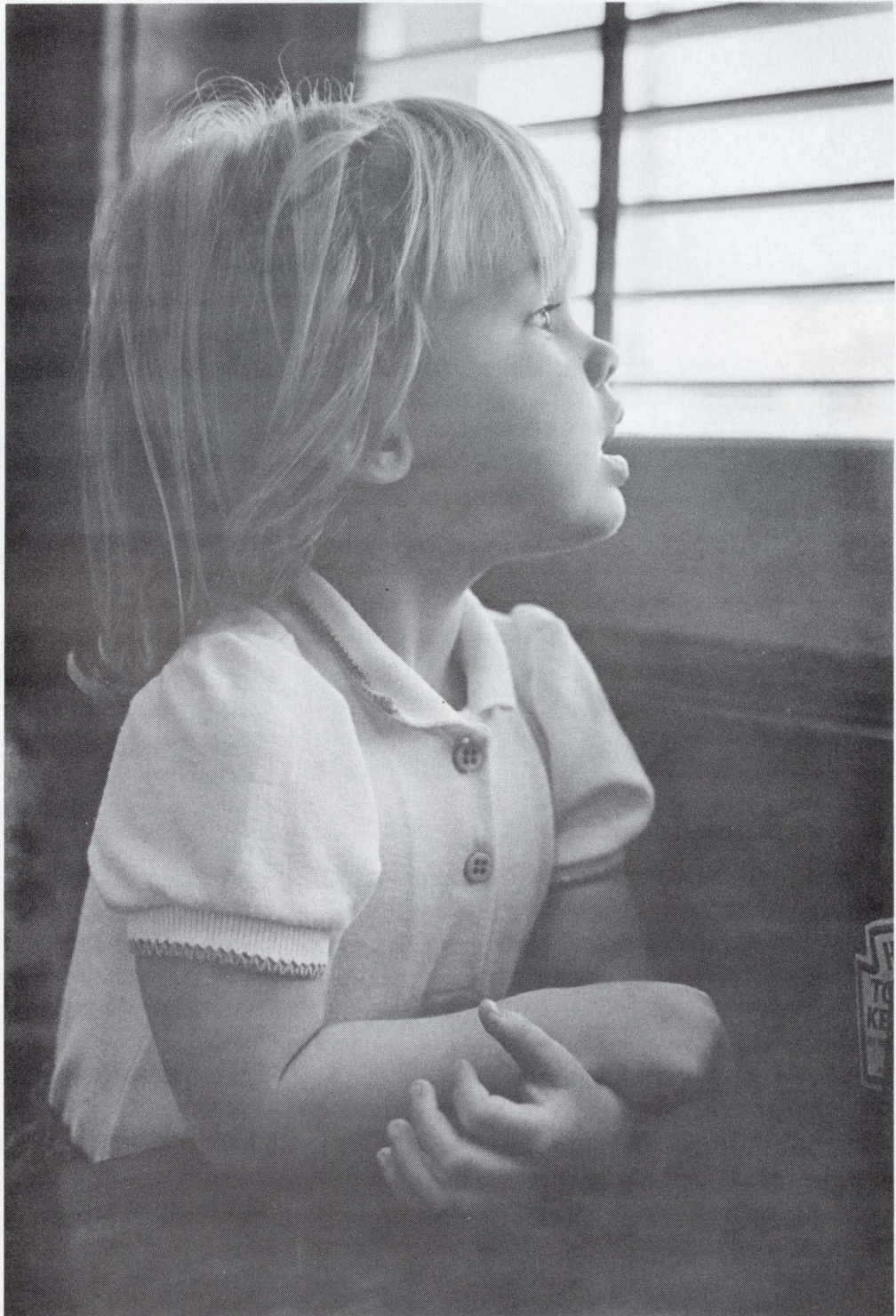
She feels moisture trickling down her sides. She is too young to be traveling alone. Her name and address tag has fallen off. Without her father there to meet her, she has no destination.

It is three o'clock. Disembarking passengers enter the terminal two by two, walking slowly as if in a cortege, or perhaps leaving the Ark. She walks by a sign announcing THIS AREA RESERVED ONLY FOR THOSE PASSENGERS REQUIRING SPECIAL ASSISTANCE. Only a few of the seats behind the sign are occupied. No one is talking, although everyone sits in twos.



No one else is all alone. She flips back the thin, fine braids beginning to escape from their elastic bands and stares across the blue-carpeted room to watch fog bunch and slide against the window glass. White shapes with vague, floating tendrils bunt each other.

The white fog bunts and slides. Clutching her luggage straps with aching fingers, she rushes toward a man with an upside down quarter-moon mouth whose skinny thighs rest lifelessly against his wheelchair seat. She plants her tiny feet apart and looks frantically up to his face. Peering from between half-closed lids, she takes another shuddering breath. Daddy.....



Journal entry:
Walking the gas line:
19 June 1985

out walking, just after sun-up, i often see jackrabbits, with their exaggerated ears, crossing the gas line and Westover back to O'o'dham reservation land.

this is not a money-rich neighborhood, i'm not apt to find coins along the gas line except maybe if a nickel or quarter escapes from the jeans of a rider lifting the front wheel of his roaring beast to leap a caliche-hump.

this morning, i do encounter two roadrunners doing their love dance. she, holding her dark head high, its small black crest lifted, a hopper in her long beak. he, running up behind her, shagging his black and white wingfeathers, shuddering them up close to her. she runs a few steps ahead, leading him, pretending to be only after grass-

hoppers. yet, when seeing me, he turns into cover of greasewood and dry grass, she lowers her crest, sets her sharp beak forward, and runs after him.

on my way back, carrying firewood desert-weathered for next winter, I speak to the roadrunners quietly. a third roadrunner, loner, hunts nearby. they watch, the two, then both race off into desert cover as i pass them.


from reservationland, a tall saguaro cactus watches like a tribal dancer, takes the swift wing-shake and fastfoot treading into his own limbs. i can't tell if i'm looking back into a future forgotten or ahead into a past not yet discovered, working with wings in our ankles and shoulders.

Later: now, midmorning, a roadrunner with black, white and red headdress, in a rare yard appearance--stalks small spray from the garden hose. i thought i heard a deep woodwind call, but a cactus wren is scald-scolding the bold predator away from her young: i have to listen to a faint playback in my skull for witness. i consider reading my poem to the roadrunner, then leave that one to the hose. i add these notes, like a journal entry about an encounter with....

Will Inman



BAJA LULLABY




Tecate —
a girl,
violet small,
in a coral cotton dress,
her skirt floating
in an air weighted
with silver.
Here color creates
the shape of the evening,
the form
of a deep dreamt ballad.
The girl herself
un sueño,
a dream,
walking
the fields of her waking,
following the white fillies
of stars,
the Spanish song
of the wind.

Mary Hess



SWALLOWS



A burst of black wings
shading the horizon line.
The swallows
enter
the still, sweet sky
above the bayou.
Their formation dwarfs
the rowboats beneath them,
the blue-backed figures
casting into the river.
The soft wings sing
in the fine summer air,
arch
toward the high, hidden currents
of light.

Mary Hess



AFRICAN VIOLET

healing/loving

A woman loved
by a
gentle
man
becomes
smooth and supple
and yawning wounds
and mishealed hurts
fade
quietly
in
twilight

Collette Armstead

Saucily elegant in your
purple hat

Stylized leaves soft

Palms of a grande dame

Touching silk.

Did Renoir pose you

On my sill?

Verdant, remote

The raucous wandering Jew

Given its druthers

Runs amuck like a
maniac

Decorous, the violet

Shuns rowdy display

A queen, subject only
to the sun.

Bella Donna





one person, two waves crossing

for the artist, Angel R. Varletta

let the youth search for the old man
watching from under his heartfelt ribs

let the old man come awake in the young one
from behind ancient eyes

let them meet in a sweat of carbon
let them meet in a midstream of wonder

Leonardo finds a lover years beyond him
stroking his face awake with aware hands
making his face look out again,
now inward to his lover's eyes

let the new artist
feel those fierce old eyes
measure his own soul with new vision

let his hands enter those aged hands
with the strength of woke centuries
with a shaping from inside the carbon

for a little while youth and Leonardo
are one person, two waves crossing
in an instant of single awareness

Leonardo stays, on paper, a mark of high tide

the youth moves on, drawing earth and skies
into the carbon of pencil
into the beat of his heart

and whose is the face behind the hands?

Will Inman

29 August 1986

written in class in Room 10

Rincon Prison



THE DIVERS

In the dry hot season of the year
The children clamber up the diving tower
Some eager, some in fear,
But all to make the necessary leap
While mothers sit and watch them by the hour.

The first to dive is sure;
His graceful body arcs into the pool
with sinuous ease, secure
From anxious depths he quits in haste
To catch a laughing girl about the waist.
His mother smiles to see him act the fool.

The second cries and falters
Till he falls, ungainly as a fledgeling,
Breaking peaceful waters
Into shafts of mirrored sundown in a frame.
Recovering his breath, he joins the game.
His mother listens to them as they sing.

The next, a wiser child,
Reluctant as a hero toward his death,
Plunges unbeguiled
Into the startling bath. Then, stupefied,
He flounders to his mother to be dried.

Mary Wren Small

Beach Bum

A disheveled seagull,
feathers askew,
staggers down the beach
like some skidrow drunk,
plucking life from
seaweed, sifting
sustenance from
the shifting sands,
muttering to himself
in subdued screeches,
admonished by his brother
cruising smoothly overhead,
"move on fool, you're a disgrace,"
unheard, unseen.

Michael J. Chappell



feuding outside the species

all he wanted to know
that day
was whether spiders were vindictive.

he had killed two the day before
in a fair fight
in the bathroom

and that morning
had found evidence of webbing
suspiciously close
to the room where he keeps the vcr,

but it wasn't until that night
when he got home from work
that he noticed
several shelves of books out of place
and his bed was missing.

it was at this point
or shortly after
the phone calls began
and the pizzas started to arrive.

Dan Pearson

LOINCLOTHS

OF

THE GODS

Up until last Tuesday, I was night watchman at the Feanementhe Museum, a storehouse of fur, bone and antiquities, funded by billionaire, "Crazy Eddy" Bentwick III. It was the first job I got after I dropped out of my freshman year of college.

Four months before that Tuesday when I left my job so abruptly, I'd been on my midnight rounds, strolling along, checking everything out and eating a few candy bars. When I passed the storage room off the prehistoric reptile wing, I noticed the door was open. Fearing an encounter with one of Feanementhe's man-eating rats, I drew my gun and kicked the door in.

I flipped on the light, jumped in the room and assumed the Kojak cop stance, both arms triangulated on my .38. Cringing in the corner was a half-grown, skinny black dog who'd been gnawing some phantom meat off an old fossil bone.

I put the gun away and walked over to the still-cowering pooch. In spite of its long fur, I could count its ribs, so I stuck out my half-eaten Snickers. The dog looked at me with a can-I-trust-this-guy look, sniffed the candy, and swallowed the whole thing, wrapper and all. Then his tail started wagging sixty miles an hour. I wondered how he got in the museum, but figured I'd find an opened door in the receiving area later, which I did.

"C'mon, boy," I said, coaxing it out of the room and down to my desk with another chocolate-smudged candy wrapper. I opened the bottom drawer and gave him the meatloaf sandwich I had in my lunch bag. He ate that in three bites. All I had left was a cupcake and a can of Diet Rite. I gave him the cupcake and found a clean ashtray to pour the pop into. He drank it with a slurpy flourish.

I'd never had a dog, but I once considered getting a puppy from the Hound Pound when I started working nights at the museum. I live with my mother, and I don't like leaving her alone for eight to nine hours a night in our gang-infested neighborhood. I didn't get the Hound Pound dog because Mom ended up buying a rifle which she keeps loaded under her bed. But I decided to keep this dog, Hermes, as I named him. Mom's rifle made me nervous, so with a watchdog around, I thought, maybe she would get rid of the gun — or at least unload it.

Something about the way he slobbered so delicately all over my hands told me he liked me. In addition to the watchdog plan, I figured having a pet to take care of would teach me responsibility. Right. Anyway, I liked him and I thought Mom would, too.

To kill time until the four o'clock rounds, Hermes and I played Fetch with my shoe, while he learned his name from me screaming, "Go get it, Hermes!" I got the name from the book I'd been reading, *Gods and*

by

Janice Tobey

PAGE 17

Goddesses of Folklore.

After this little game tired him out, I grabbed his snout and stared into his big brown eyes. "Hermes is your name...Hermes. Hermes, you are getting sleepy. Your eyes are closing...."

I woke up at 4:05 with a stiff neck from sleeping with my face on my knees. I jumped up to start the rounds and called, "Hermes, let's go!" My buddy gave me a toothy dog smile and came running.

We began rounds in the hall by the mummified cats. We went past the Roman wine presses, the Aztec pyramid model and the shark jaws big enough to drive a motorcycle through.

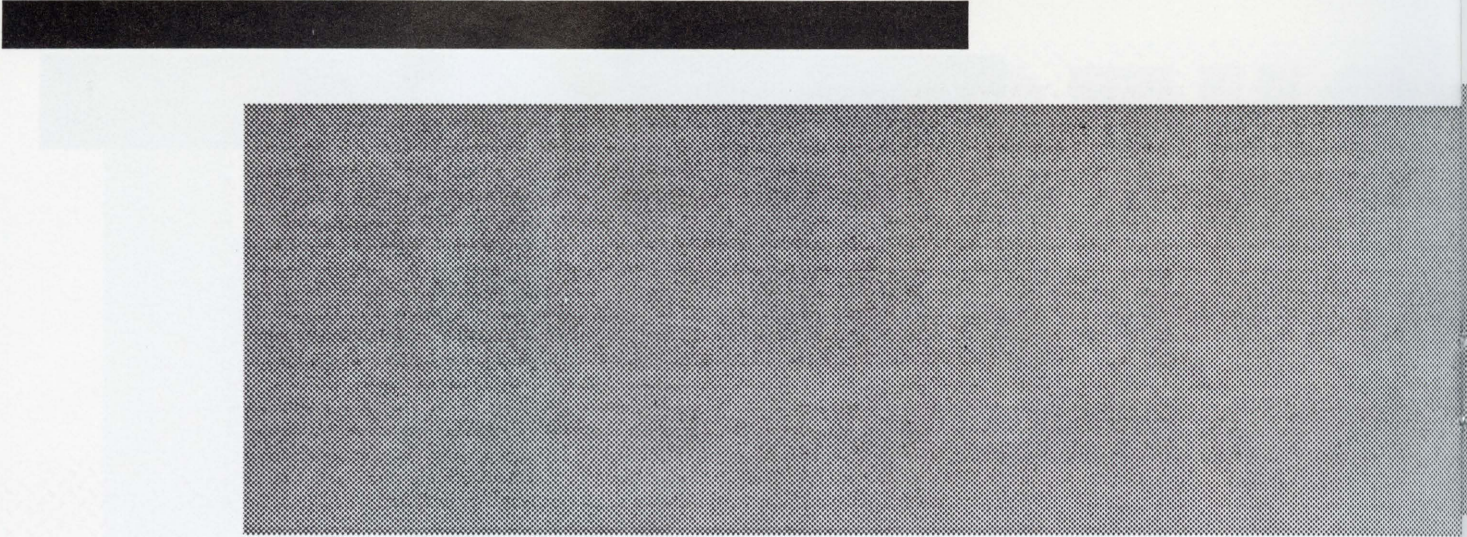
We hit a snag at the stuffed animals. Hermes snarled and leapt at the glass encasing a six foot bison who had the nerve to stand there and threaten us. Talk about nerve — alive, that bison could have made dog jelly out of my canine protector. But Hermes was no one's fool. After a few minutes he noticed the bison hadn't moved and he realized he couldn't smell the big hairy thing anyway. So he casually became very interested in licking his hind leg. "C'mon, boy," I said. We continued walking, checking the lights and cases.

We finally made it to the last hallway: Prehistoric Persons — yes, persons, thanks to Crazy Eddy's wife, Mrs. Bentwick. She's a real modern woman. Usually, when I got to this last lonely corridor, I'd sing out loud to myself just to hear a human voice.

"Workin' in a coal mine, goin' down, down," I sang, but I could hardly hear myself. I didn't know why; I didn't have a cold or an ear infection. My head felt like someone had pulled out my brain and replaced it with a big cotton ball. Even Hermes' toenails sounded like they were wrapped in mummy linen.

We strolled past the display of tools and mammoth tusks to the dioramas, scenes peopled with life-sized plaster models of Neanderthals and Cro-Magnons. In the first diorama was a guy crouched over a stone. He looked like he had a telephone receiver under the skin of his forehead. Every single night this poor Neanderthal guy worked on a chopping stone, but he never made any progress. He had far-away eyes, like he'd just swallowed about seven Quaaludes — no wonder he couldn't get that tool done. Mrs. Neanderthal held a baby and gazed out the cave door, praying for Pampers and enough money for plastic surgery.

The next diorama had four males skinning an elk outside their cave with three women looking on from the cave entrance. You could have dressed these folks in jackets and dresses and taken them



anywhere. Nobody'd know they came from a cave. One of the women — a girl, really — had red hair and wore a sabertooth necklace. I always liked that necklace. Right outside the cave there was a big expanse of rock which extended back into the wall of the display.

"RRRowrrRR!" Hermes snarled wildly, baring his teeth. He jumped the iron display fence to chase a hare which had suddenly appeared. It somehow ran through the painted scenery of the diorama's back wall.

I didn't want Hermes to wreck something I might have to pay for, so I jumped the fence after him. But he had also run through the wall, or the wall had come forward to meet him and me. Actually, the wall wasn't there anymore.

I stopped dead in the middle of a previously cement creek which was now rushing and gurgling around my Oxfords.

I stared pop-eyed at seven Cro-Magnons who were no longer life-sized models, but fleshed-out human beings, blinking and staring back at me. They frantically spoke what sounded like the French I used to hear on the warbly tapes my high school teacher played. "*Qu' est-ce qui se passe? Euh? Qui est là?*" they asked each other.

The head skinner, a big bearded guy, wore a sagging leather loincloth decorated with three heavy pointed bones. He took a step toward me, flint blade poised about six inches above my right eye. He looked at my small but tasteful earring, my polyester uniform, my black leather tie-up shoes, then shook his head and began sweating like my cousin Eugene trying to dance. He seemed to be putting two and two together and getting three, just like I was.

I had to be dreaming; I was still asleep at my desk — that was it. I'd fallen asleep again and dreamed I did my rounds and this weird thing was part of the dream. That had to be it...oh please, Almighty Being, let that be it.

I pinched myself. A dream? I'd never had a

dream where I dreamed I was dreaming. I shook my head slowly. No, I was still standing in water, looking wild-eyed at a French-speaking caveman. He said to the redhead next to him, "*Phew! Il est très laid! D'ou vient-il? Je m'en fiche.*"

"What the hell is going on?" I wailed. Elk-skinner and company just stared. I wanted to wake up but couldn't, and I started to realize it wasn't a dream.

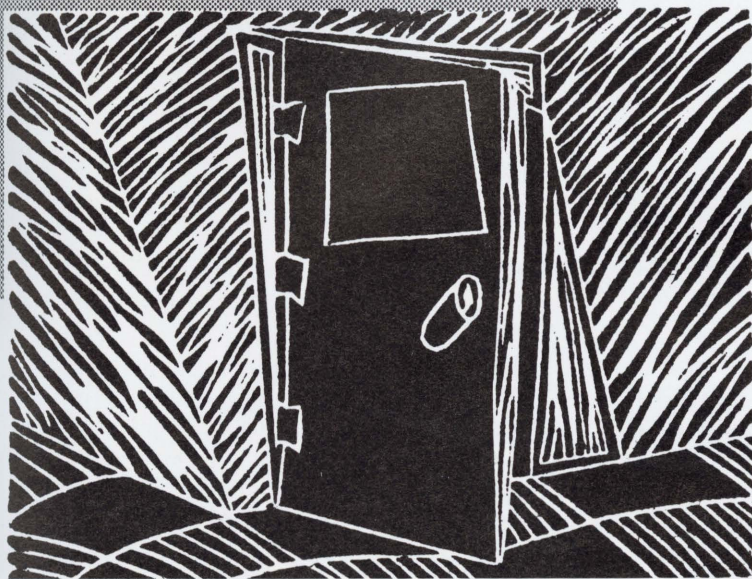
Maybe this was a bizarre trick perpetrated by Crazy Eddy. I could just see the headlines: "Night Watchman's Suicide Result of Joke by Museum Owner." I wonder if I'll miss "Dallas," I thought distractedly. Then hysteria crept up and I pleaded with Chief Elkskinner, "Please, are you working for Eddy? Are you?" My voice rose and trailed off into a whine.

The Chief looked at me and said, "*Euh? Qu' est-ce qu' il dit?*" I felt like I would soon start screaming and not stop. No. I had to get hold of myself. Whatever this strange situation was, it wouldn't be helped by getting crazy. Calm down now, Dennis, I told myself. I figured I'd just watch these people, sit, think.

I stepped out of the creek just as Hermes returned with the hare in his jaws. He dropped it at my feet. Damn, what a hunting dog! "Thanks, pal," I said automatically. Chief and company couldn't believe their eyes. This creature that looked kind of like a wolf chased down a rabbit and delivered it right to my feet. "What is this?" they asked each other in French.

Meanwhile, I thought of how much I didn't want to be there. Instead of the comfortable chairs, drinking fountains and vending machines of the Feanementhe, it seemed I'd been rudely jerked back to Mammothville, a suburb of the Twilight Zone.

The people surrounding me were still babbling furiously to each other and me. With my four years of high school French, I understood as one old wrinkled broad said, "*Tu peux l'assomer, il ne s'en rendre pas compte.*" Sounds real elegant, right? It means, Bash him on the head, he won't notice. I slipped my hand to



my gun.

Chief Big Skinner edged closer to Hermes who sat next to my ankles. The Chief was fascinated by Hermes, having never seen anything like this exotic domesticated dog. Their equivalent of man's best friend were a couple of wolf-like creatures who lurked at the edge of the camp.

The Chief looked at me, a little confused. Seizing the moment, I held out the hare for him to take. "For you."

"Moi?" he asked. I nodded. "*Merci*," he grinned. I remember being surprised he had most of his teeth. Smiles spread through the group and the conversation buzzed louder. If the Chief was happy, they were all happy. Apparently, now I was Mr. Big Shot because of my dog's food contribution. That was fine. I was just glad they weren't going to kill me immediately. I had the gun, but I really didn't want to use it.

Some instinct forced me to smile. I nodded and sat down beneath a berry bush by the cave opening to think, even though I couldn't, really. Thoughts rushed and crashed around in my head like cars driven by blind people.

The redhead with the necklace and another woman in a fur tunic came over to investigate me. The Chief was off showing his rabbit around and pointing at me. The redhead was pretty, but her hair was a tangled mess and she smelled like sweaty dead rats. They all did. I thought a good name for them would have been the B.O. People,

but I found out later that night that they were the Elkskinners, and the redhead was Nicole. Nicole Elkskinner. That name became an anthem to me. Thirty-three of them were wintering at this particular cave.

Nicole, fur-clad Vivien, and the rest of the tribe stared impolitely at me. They seemed astonished and awestruck by the fine design of my K-Mart polyfill vest, my superbly cut uniform pants — with pockets! — and my creek-soaked shoes. They especially liked the shoelaces, but couldn't get them retied. Vivien tried to shape the loops again, creasing her smudged forehead in concentration, while Nicole had her fingers up my pants leg and inside my socks.

After twenty minutes of feeling me up, I couldn't take their probing fingers and stupid French comments anymore. "Get out of here," I shouted as I shoved them away. Nicole jumped to her bare feet and looked down at me, wondering. I think I hurt her feelings, but I was about half-crazy at the time.

"Jesus. Jesus H. Christ," I muttered, rubbing my eyes until I saw stars. I looked up and when my vision cleared I saw Hermes being warily circled by his snarling cousins at the garbage heap. They meant business, and I hoped he could hold his own if it came to a fight.

I took inventory. On my belt I had my loaded

gun. I had \$8.43 in my wallet, my keys, another Snickers, a few beat-up McDonald's salt packets and a little tin of aspirin.

I looked inside the cave, where in the middle of the floor a big fire burned in a stone-lined pit. Above it was a ventilation hole and at the door was a fur drape held back by a bone hook. On the walls were chaotic red and black pictures of grotesque humans and animals.

It seemed to be dinnertime for the tribe and something smelled very good over at the fire. I remembered I'd given my last sandwich to Hermes many hungry hours ago. When Nicole saw me tearing into my last Snickers, she brought me a clay bowl filled with roast elk, greens, and something which looked like a cattail and tasted like a sponge. She also had a cup of liquid I was betting wasn't Diet Rite. I took it all and gave her the last half of my candy bar.

She smiled at me like a confused angel. "Eat it," I said, making chewing motions with my mouth.

"Eat?" She chewed and her face lit up when she tasted that yummy sugar. "*Tres bien, merci,*" she said excitedly.

She stayed near me all that night, bringing cups of the rank stuff they got drunk on. It worked, but then again, so does grain alcohol. It was the only drink in town, so I had a second cup. And a third. Then I lost count.

When it started to get dark we moved into the cave and the Chief and his right-hand man, Pierre, threw more logs on the fire. I watched a guy they call Guillaume turn his cup and comment about the "legs" of the mead we drank and the "bouquet" of its vintage. "You pretentious Cro-Magnon booze snob!" I yelled to him.

He nodded and smiled. "*Booze snob, oui?*"

Somewhere in between the third and maybe eighteenth cup of that so-called liquor, I jumped up to do the moonwalk. I'd been saying drunkenly to the Chief, "You know, I'm not from your world."

"Don't you think I can see that," he answered in French. I was embarrassed, so I jumped up to dance with Nicole. "Hey babe, let's boogie!"

"*Oui, boogie bébé!*" she said laughing. She would have said oui to anything at that point because all of us remaining drinkers were totally sloshed. Nicole and I moved together across the packed dirt floor like a couple of rubber bands. She had a talent for bending her slippery little legs, and I just draped myself on her.

Everyone howled. The hilarity was caused by the potent and fully kreused mead which had been aged in fine quartz bowls for up to an entire week. Guillaume and a few of the guys got up and shuffled around, jerking from side to side and pointing at the ceiling. Jean-Paul, who had feathers in his hair that night, joined in the wild guffawing, "*Quelle boum,*" which roughly means, What a gas, man!

There was no real music, of course, just our off-key groanings. Simone, one of Nicole's friends, had a big skull with holes in it which she tapped to produce a hollow rhythm. "*Mmm, oh la la la, frere Jacques....*" I heard the Chief warbling along with Simone as he pirouetted before the fire, casting long spooky shadows on the cave wall. Before the song ended, though, he hit the dirt in an alcoholic stupor. I joined him horizontally soon after I started to sing "When Irish Eyes are Smiling." Nicole somehow caught the crazed look in my eyes because I vaguely remember her trying to get me to sit down in the middle of it — "and when Irish eyes are SMILING, sure they'll..." I also remember feeling very choked up singing this, realizing there was no country of Ireland then at all.

That's as far as memories of my first night with the Elkskinners go. I woke up early the next morning with

my lips wrapped around a fur on the chief's leg. It was like sucking a piece of roofing insulation. I crawled over to the creek to water my crystallized tongue.

A few of the women were already up, feeding babies, cooking and tending the fire. They saw my white face and puckered lips and laughed loudly. "Silly boy," they clucked in French.

After I drank the delicious creek water and splashed it on my head, I remembered Hermes, who had been inside the cave with us the night before, head between his paws. I didn't have to



look to far. He'd been wandering outside the cave but bounded over when he caught my scent on the morning breeze. He pushed up my elbow with his wet nose, saying, "Morning, chump," in his doggy way.

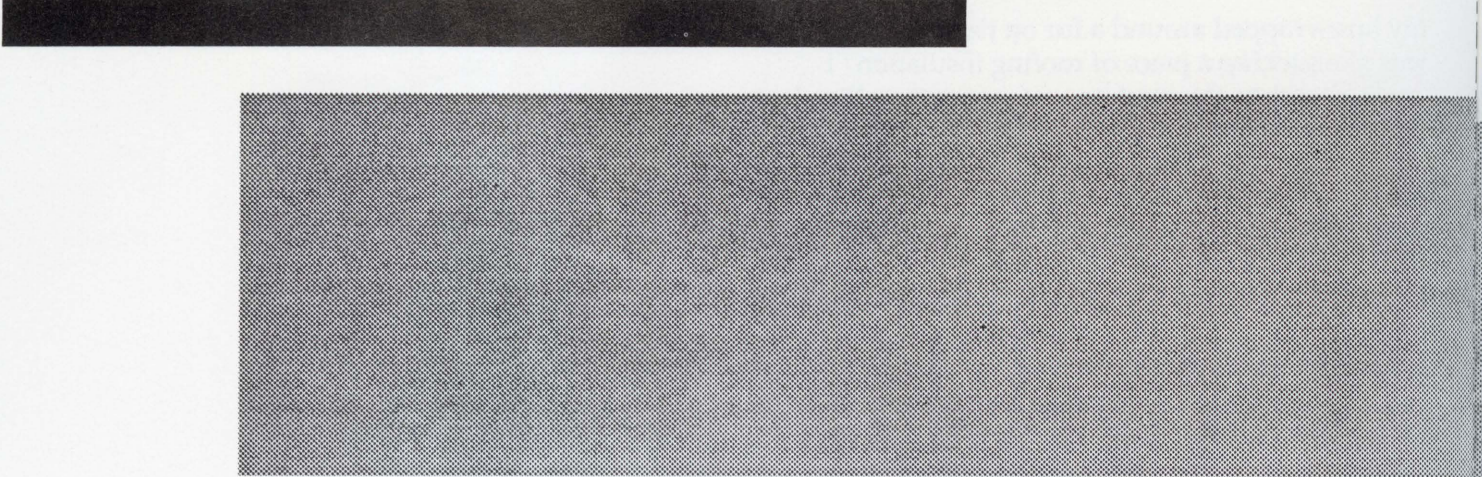
The gravel behind me crunched as I turned to see Guillaume stumble over. He looked like he'd slept with his head in a vise. "*O, o, la tête,*" he mumbled, rubbing his temples.

Just seeing him rub his head made mine hurt — like hot wires were being threaded through my eye sockets. I pulled the tin of aspirin out of my pocket and choked two down with a handful of water. I offered Guillaume one. He held it between his thumb and forefinger like it was a dead fly. "For your head, *tête,*" I pointed. Then he pressed the pill against his forehead, looking puzzled. "Swallow it," I said, gulping more water to show him. He coughed and gagged, but got it swallowed. About twenty minutes later he came back and thanked me over and over while squeezing my arm. "I feel so much better! Unbelievable!" he gushed in French.

After that first introduction to life with the Elkskinners, all of the days merged into little more than a daily struggle for survival. The men hunted in the daytime — overnight, if they stalked mammoth. They butchered mammoth where they killed it, but smaller animals were cleaned and skinned on the rock outside the cave, just like the diorama. I say 'they' because, for me, hunting was optional. I did pretty much what I wanted, I suppose because of the strange way I came to be a part of the tribe. Because of my partner, Hermes' regular contributions of rabbits and game birds to the food larder, they didn't pressure me to do anything, although I made myself useful every day.

Some of the guys made tools of bone or tusks. Some of them, and the women too, made fur clothing and wraps. Nicole and the other women cooked, tended the fires, sewed, and of course, took care of the kids. Vivien drew most of the crazy pictures on the walls. I even taught them a few things, like tying shoelaces and whistling.

When the snow came, I let Nicole, the Chief and a few others wear my vest. They were amazed by its warmth and were flabbergasted when I told



them of the modern world I came from; not only did we have warm clothes, but we heated our living areas so we didn't have to wear clothes inside if we didn't want to. During those long cold nights in the cave they heard a lot of fabulous stories of the world I came from. I talked about newspaper machines, 7-11 stores, erasers — anything at all.

In the Mammothville winter, we had to melt water every day, but we never had to worry about food spoilage. Everyone got colds and I ran out of aspirin fast, but I'd read that aspirin came from willow bark, so we made a tea out of it and it worked almost as well as the tablets. But aspirin tea or not, winter was miserable.

In spite of the constant activity, I got bored. No books, no movies, no TV, no radio, no junk mail — I would have killed for an ad from Ranzetti's Oldsmobile City! I kept time the prison way — marks on the wall for the days gone by. I scratched up 11 months, 18 days before my time with the clan ended. I tried to explain the idea of recording time to Nicole, but it was like explaining something to a potato. She wasn't stupid, she just had no interest in this idea.

One day, about a month and a half after I'd "landed," I went hunting with the guys. I got tired of running across the grass for hours on end, waiting to get downwind of the herd of quasi-bisons. I took real good aim at one of the beasts and shot it three times in the heart. "So that's what that thing does," said the Chief. All the others were going oooh, and aaah, and très bien and all that. We butchered the animal right there and dragged as much meat as we could back home. The Chief decided it was time to celebrate and hauled out the hooch.

During supper, I became Wonder Boy for the second time that day when I fished out the greasy McDonald's salt packets from my vest. Everybody tried some and thought it was wonderful. They'd never tasted salt except from the perspiration on

their skin. Funny, the things you can take for granted.

Everybody loved Hermes and he loved it there, too, except when he got his leg ripped up by one of the wolves. I was working outside when I heard all the snarling, barking, then howling. I ran over to the trees by the garbage, scared shitless. The wolf took off, blood dripping from his chops. Hermes was whining hideously and trying to drag himself to the cave. I picked him up and carried him to the creek. What a gory mess — it looked like stew meat. Nicole came over to help me wash and bind his leg with some herbs. The fur never did grow back.

Hermes learned from this to leave the she-wolves alone — the fight had been over a female, we guessed. But there was one human female I couldn't leave alone: Nicole. When it started to freeze up, we all spent more and more time inside together. There was something about her — I understood her and she understood me. I got used to her smell and later it actually helped me find her in the dark. I smelled like a bagman myself after a while.

Women seemed more matter-of-fact back then, because after that first drunken night, Nicole picked me to be her man. She took care of me, at first just by bringing me food and furs. One sub-zero night she brought me some extra furs and instead of going back to her mother's section of the cave like usual, she climbed under the furs with me. To be honest, she couldn't leave because I wouldn't let go of her hand. She bent over, kissed me and said in French, "Move over, Dennis." So I did. Nicole knew what she was doing and I had no complaints. From then on, we slept together almost every night and she did everything for me.

Towards the end, though, she spent a lot of time giggling with the women in the morning, laughing even louder when they looked my way. What the hell, were they laughing about my sexual technique? "Practice makes perfect," I shouted at them as I chipped even more fiercely on the flint knife I was making.

My clothes gradually wore out and I began to look

and smell like the rest of them. When summer finally came, I had lots of flies buzzing around my head. To get me looking like the virile, rugged caveman I had turned into, my woman made me a great outfit — leggings, tunic and a cape.

I slowly got used to my new life, harsh though it was. What I missed most were my mother and Snickers bars. I had a lot of time to reflect on the things I missed, why I was there and other cosmic matters. I never did figure out why I ended up with Nicole and the tribe, though I thought about it over and over, inside out, upside down and backwards. Maybe I just happened to be in the right spot at the right time, like the way a lot of things happen.

Then, early one cool summer morning, I was sitting alone outside the cave watching Hermes walk toward me across the big flat rock — the patio, I called it. I'd left Nicole under the skins earlier, threading my way outside through the snores and muffled grunts. I'd had the same dream all night between spells of wakefulness. I dreamed we were hunting elk, running across a clearing with our spears, when a helicopter landed in our midst. Then Crazy Eddy got out of it. The dream abruptly ended there. I sat up straight and my eyes flew open.

But something was funny now. I couldn't hear Hermes' nails click on the rock like usual when he crossed it. I couldn't hear anything — the birds, the sound of flowing water, the branches scraping the rocks. I felt like cotton candy had been



forced through my ears....

"Hermes," I yelled as I ran for the creek, the same creek where I'd landed cultural light years ago. Hermes smiled, tongue out, and ran into the water, happy because he thought we were going to play in the creek. While we were both in motion, the scene swirled and shifted like a child's

watercolor. I looked up when my vision cleared and the Chief stood frozen again in front of me, skinning that damn elk with Guillaume, Jacques and Pierre. I stood on blue plaster.

It had happened again and I couldn't believe it. I couldn't move. I couldn't think at all for that first minute. When I could, the only thing on my mind

was the drinking fountain I knew was at the end of the hall of the Prehistoric Persons annex. Hermes waited in the hallway and chased his tail. I climbed out of the diorama and walked to the fountain. I turned it on, over and over again, just to watch the water drain away. Slowly, I walked away. I felt schizoid. I was thrilled to be back...sort of. I just wished Nicole was there with me. I hadn't really thought of life without her. It'd happened too fast.

When Hermes and I got back to my desk, the clock said 5:38 AM and the calendar showed the same date as when I'd left. All I could think was, Why? Why? Why?

I sat down in my padded, comfortable chair with Hermes at my feet. I looked like Mike the Bum who sifted our ashtrays at the Feanementhe for cigarette butts. My clothes were shredded, my shoes were almost not there, but I did have a fine reindeer cape on. I was glad, overjoyed to be back in the 20th century, but if I stayed as security guard I'd be reminded every day of Nicole and the tribe when I had to check "my" diorama. One minute I felt uneasy, depressed; the next, happy and elated. Snickers! I didn't know whether to get another job or stay at the Feanementhe.

I sat there dazed until the end of the shift at 8:00 AM. Hermes and I left and I didn't know if I'd be back that night or not.

On the way out to the parking lot, I took off the cape. I looked weird enough without it and I knew I'd see my shift replacements, Dave and Cletus. I only saw Cletus, though, and he looked

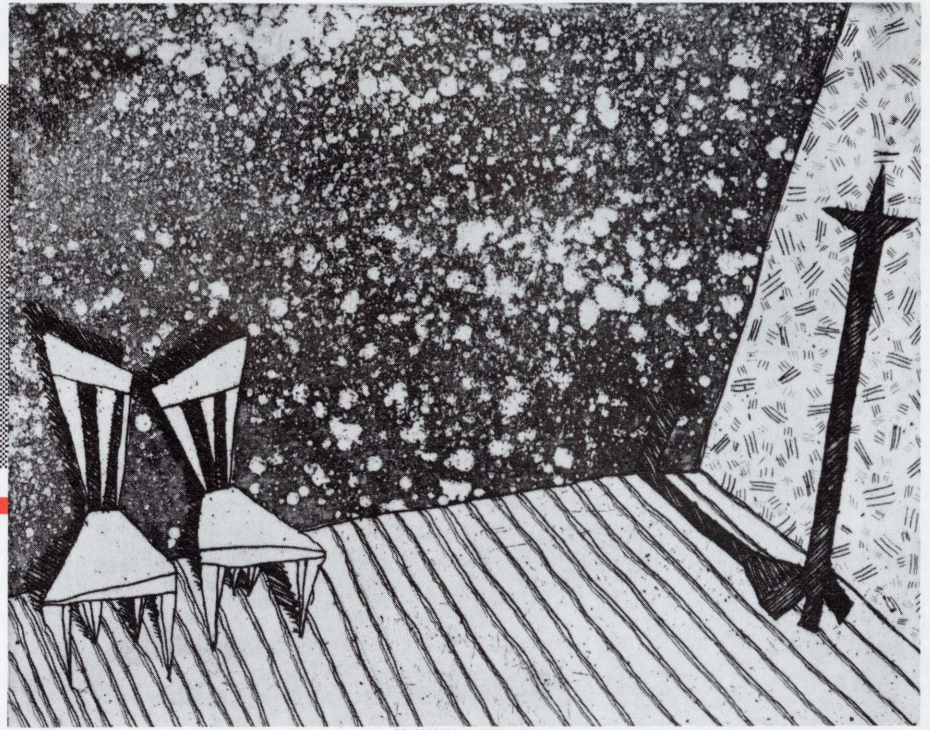
at me as if I'd just come from another world. Ha! Before he could say anything, I said, "Hey, Cletus, my man, gotta get some shuteye, see ya." He just stood there scratching his head as I blasted out of the parking lot.

Hermes rode shotgun in my '74 Ford, letting his now full grown ears fly in the wind. Once we got home, my mother seemed glad for Hermes. "A watchdog, you think?" she said. "And what a cute doggie." If only she knew what me and the doggie had been through. The only thing she said about my appearance was, "Nice cape. Where'd you get it?"

"Zayre's...they were on sale," I mumbled, looking down. She probably knew I was lying, but she never said another word about the state I was in that morning. Now she had protection for when I worked nights. She agreed to unload the rifle she kept under the bed if Hermes stayed as watchdog. I went back to the Feanementhe that night. I loved Nicole, but I couldn't try to go back to Mammothville. I was a 20th century man.

From then on, every night during my rounds, I stopped at the diorama to have sad and fabulous daydreams of the fun Nicole and I could have if she were here with me. But she just looked back from behind the cave door flap with that fixed stare, wearing the necklace I liked so much. Even though she never changed positions, the expression on her face started to look different somehow, or so I thought, until I convinced myself it was my imagination. I found myself thinking of the Pillsbury Dough Boy one night when I looked at her. Damn, she did look a little doughy at that, but I really didn't pay much attention. I should have.

One night, four months after I'd made my



magnificent return, I walked up to the diorama, imagining what Nicole would look like in red high heels and nothing else. She stood there as usual, seeing but not seeing.

As my eyes grew accustomed to the shadowy light of the scene in front of me, I noticed with growing shock that my Nicole had indeed changed. In her arms she held something wrapped in rabbit furs and I knew it was ours.

Larry, dying of AIDS, december 1985

I don't really mind this cold little bitch of a wind much...
Don't really mind the cold sticking snow
that piles up inside the collar of my coat.
Funny, because it used to drive me up the wall,
used to make me feel all damp, and chilled, and sick,
yearning for a beach in St. Thomas.
A cold Chicago winter can make your body numb.
But really, when you come to think about it,
you can't feel much more alive than when
the snow shoots into your eyes and the wind cuts through you.

It's these damn shopping malls I can't stand anymore.
Coming to dress up their cramped little windows
with the glaring lights and all that gaudy jewelry.
"Oh Larry," the girl from the store says, "that looks just lovely!
Amazing what you can do with that...that...."
(That overpriced crap. Yes, amazing, isn't it?)
But I just smile and let out this high staccato laugh
that I can't believe actually came out of me.
And then she asks, "Of course, we'll see you at the Christmas party...
won't we?"
(Oh sure, if I don't have something really important to do,
like dying of pneumonia. Wouldn't want to kick off
between the cocktails and the serving of the soup.
What a gloom that would be.)
But I just say, "Of course darling, wouldn't miss it for the world."

It's six o'clock so goodbye, goodbye, goodbye.
Worked two hours overtime, they'll have to pay me time and a half.
Better get out there and start spending some of this money
before my sister Alice sends it off to save the whales,
or the wombats, or whatever that silly charity was
that I told her I wanted my money sent to.
Well, that's it. The last of the plastic cranberries lined up on the shelves,
The bug-eyed angels are dangling from the light fixtures,
and the gold colored garland is wrapped around everything else.
Back to the cold, bright, snowy, outside. Ready for the ride home.

Karen Ford

(untitled)

i am dockside
in the pastel of
this exchange:
light and the shadows sleep
of a cape bay background
with unseasoned quiet
in moored boats
creaking for attention
with idle gulls
that form funnels in flight
and disturb
the slow track
of afternoon into night
all this
an unfinished canvas
and you appearing
out of the magnet horizon
before me
too serious in blue eyes
and scripts of poem work
bare handed
i'm able to stop watch
to only plan ambushes
to make you smile

joel zeltzer

OXYGEN TENT

Old office manager Nelson
lay there like a fly trapped in amber —
eyes of a man who had drowned in his tub.
He could see us
I'm sure he could hear us,
buried alive in his transparent coffin.

Half the office force came to smirk
at this petty tyrant who suffered angina
in Caroline Dawson's apartment.
And no one even aware that he knew her —
O'Rourke whom he fired
just before his pension was due,
Jimmy Martin who hated his guts,
and all those others he had tortured
or lashed with his bullwhip eyes.

Such a lively gathering of people he hated.
Not a flower on the table or window sill,
just laughing and drinking and telling jokes —
a fiesta of those who came to see
how tough he was now with his heart sick.
Little Angie from Sales Record
actually wanted to blow him up
with her lit cigarette on his plastic tent.

But soon the joking died away.
The terror we saw beneath the sheet
brought an end to the stupid laughing.
His was the silent scream of lobsters
trapped in their nets.
We watched the crest of his swollen fear
slip down from its flood stage,
down to a weaving, winding flow
to a faint hope of rebirth
complete with manger bathed in light
and meek lamb and pensive cow —
all of this floating in his eyes
with bottled messages to us
recounting what little good he'd done
as though they were moments of saving grace.

Monday morning when they asked
if we had a chance to visit Nelson
we answered
"Yeah...we saw him."

John Dickson

BLUE COLLAR, BLUE HANDS

Granite City,
your legs, perched in soft chrome stirrups,
are saluting a nation.

Your child's eyes, glassy with fear,
turn to me with an industrial knowledge of birth.
Your child's wide fetal nostrils, accusing.
Your child's tiny arms and half-formed legs,
waving like the hands of a watery clock.
Your child's nervous tic of a mouth,
echoing within a gaping drainage pipe.

This is how you came to me.

I was your worker, clad in hard hat,
harder conscience. Parked in back of
the Hope Clinic, I stretched out
on the ground and made faces at the vile tastes in my mouth:

sort of an acidic morality,
a Catholic residue that no toothbrush can remove.

Staring into your factories and gray iron gates,
staring at the faces that scurry like magnetized graphite,
I realized that you are not a dream
or a blind prayer,

but merely a silent, unjudging city
composed of sand and human saliva.

At that moment, part of me was torn
down and made into a parking lot.

GLEN A. MOORE

QUIET BATTLES

"All these things
make a woman,"
he said
while beating my stirrings
and bruising my hopes.

I listened for a long time,
but raged my rage
through inner ears that echoed
I dream
I dream

I acted for a long time
but raged my rage
through sinews that flexed and tensed
I dreamt
I dreamt

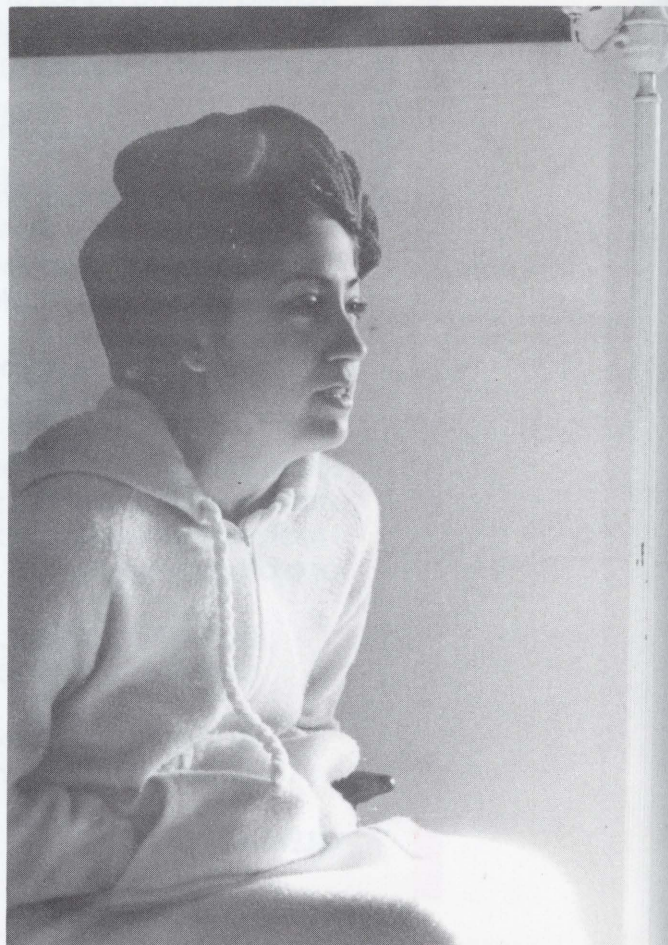
I smiled for a long time
but raged my rage
through teeth that whispered
I'll dream
I'll dream

These quiet battles added
added full to my soul.

So I prettied my heart
and smartened my face
and I survived.

I survived.

Lolita Hernandez-Gray



SPARROWS

What would it be like
to shed the seaweed that pulls her down
into the mire of silence, rules, and study?
Remembering father's words,
"Don't come out while I'm alive,"
she kneels a little straighter,
clasps her hands until the knuckles
whiten, hoes the convent garden
with newborn vigor,
while sparrows talk of morning.

In a one-window cell
with a silver cross above the bed —
a nest among cloisters —
the Bride of Christ says evening prayers,
and welcomes sleep that eases
her too-tightly wound harp.

When father dies she stays
behind the walls, trying to imagine
a man years older than the mental still life
she has store like a picture in an attic.
No weed is left to root
in her garden — tomatoes beheaded,
seedlings squashed by her sandals.
The power of silence grows until
her throat closes up at Vespers

like the iron grille at the door.
Silence is her Kyrie,
Agnus Dei.

Wearing out-of-fashion clothes
she leaves the convent, seeing father
at the door, but he disappears
like the veil she has worn.

Telling curious inquirers she is too old
for college boys, too young for widowers,
she pats freshly-styled hair winged
with gray, brushes imagined lint
from her gabardine suit, and builds walls
of smoke in her office papered with clients,
shambles home to an apartment
with tea-colored curtains, tired
books, and silver cross above the bed,
to feed the spider plants,
repack her briefcase, and dream
of a garden and the songs of sparrows.

Constance Vogel



**MADONNA WHO MOVES PEOPLE AROUND LIKE FURNITURE
OR PLATES SHE THROWS IN THE DRIVEWAY**

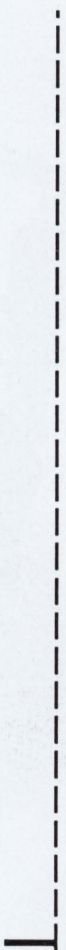
to get new patterns
she wants to be in
control you're the
old sofa slammed
behind the leaking
plant the frayed
rug about to be
rolled out to the
curb. Everything
bores her she
thinks that if she
smashes what she
has, friends, lovers,
the cat or the stack
of Fiesta glass or
brick, she gets
new energy to burn
whatever she has to
like someone smash
ing the atom

Lyn Lifshin

RHINESTONE MADONNA

you think she's
real wild
she lights up
any August Tuesday
blinds and dazes
twists what
you see

Lyn Lifshin





snaps from my summer vacation, roll # 1

1. a view of the plane as seen from the boarding gate
2. a view of the plane as seen from the liferaft
3. the rest of the group in the water
before the storm separated us
4. Mr. Jeffers, who was in real estate,
before he was eaten
5. Louise, our stewardess, who remained cheerful
even after being assaulted by the nuns
6. the fish Mr. Williams dropped after posing
7. our first sight of land in seventeen days
8. the group gathered around the U.S. atomic testing site sign
9. the message we wrote to the Sunshine Tour Company
in turtle blood on the biggest rock on the island
10. Louise bathing
11. the canoes the cannibals used to carry away all the nuns,
Mr. Williams and the tour guide, Fred
12. the entrance to the cave that Louise and I and the kids called home
until we were picked up by the Japanese whalers
who also developed the film.

Dan Pearson

MURDER IN

"Ah Penterbault,

the Roxy has always been cursed with sticky floors," film critic extraordinaire Harrison Hamlin solemnly announced. "I'm afraid Mr Uterbach's unfortunate condition will do nothing to improve the situation." Unfortunate condition indeed. Thanks to a decidedly deadly steel-tipped arrow, J.J. Uterbach's various stomach parts still littered the seventeenth row floor of the Roxy Theatre Movie Palace.

"Don't you think you should save the witticisms for your newspaper column, Mr. Hamlin?" I asked, trying hard not to gaze at the corpse still seated in his chair. "This is a grave dilemma." As Mr. Hamlin was well aware. For tonight, during a special invitation-only screening of J.J. Uterbach's latest film-making venture, *Murder In Three Dimensions*, some diabolical fiend utilized the movie's 3-D process to commit a horrendous act: while a victim of *Murder* was being eliminated halfway through the film with an arrow fired into the camera for maximum 3-D effect, a real-life arrow had emerged from the screen at exactly the same moment to claim the life of Mr. Uterbach, one of the most powerful members of the Hollywood community. None of the Roxy Theatre's two-hundred and fifty patrons — including myself, head usher Sean Penterbault — realized what had occurred until the lights were raised. The police, naturally, suspected everyone and would not allow us to depart until a proper search was conducted.

Mr. Hamlin, meanwhile, initiated a search of his own. "The art of 3-D filmmaking has long been dead," he said, crouching to his hands and knees to investigate the area surrounding the body. "*Jaws 3-D* saw to that. But Uterbach's stubborn insistence on reviving a dead art form lead to his own demise. How deliciously ironic."

I decided to be of some assistance to Mr. Hamlin and directed my flashlight towards the floor. However, the gory sight of him sifting through Mr. Uterbach's innards was truly sickening and I couldn't help but rest the beam of light on Mr. Hamlin's nearly-bald head.

"Well, if it isn't Martin and Lewis, up to their old tricks," a gruff voice said from the aisle. It was Simon Petrie, lieutenant of police. "That you down there, Hamlin?" he asked.

"Yes Petrie, it is. And doing the work of the police department, as usual."

Petrie was not amused. "You know, Hamlin, you're one of the most respected film critics in the country and there you are swimming in a pool of guts on a

THREE DIMENSIONS

theatre floor. Doesn't make any sense. By the way, me and the missus saw *Tootsie* on the tube last night. Loved it."

Mr. Hamlin stood and wiped away whatever intestinal parts were clinging to his knees. "I assume you would like for me and Penterbault to step aside."

"You got the right idea, bright boy. Now why don't you two junior G-Men go join the rest of those nice folks on that side of the theatre?" Petrie pointed to the right, where the audience was sitting. "We'll start questioning you one at a time. And Penterbault...."

"Yes sir?"

"Have some of your usher buddies take Uterbach's body out of here. It's beginning to draw flies."

"Then come, Penterbault," Mr. Hamlin said. "Let us exit stage right."

I momentarily considered protesting Petrie's dismissal, but decided against it. After all, the lieutenant was well aware of Mr. Hamlin's status as an amateur sleuth — the two of them have clashed on many occasions — but would never acknowledge it. Mr. Hamlin's much-publicized feud with director Alfred Hitchcock, for example, is near legendary: after visiting the set of *Psycho* in 1960, Mr. Hamlin correctly deduced that Norman Bates and Mother were one and the same. Mr. Hamlin then threatened to reveal it in his newspaper column eight months before the film was scheduled to open. Hitchcock's attorneys convinced Mr. Hamlin to do otherwise. And I was fortunate enough to be ushering at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion the evening of the 1978 Academy Awards, when Mr. Hamlin apprehended the murderer who bludgeoned an assistant director to death with an Oscar statue. Since that time, I've played Nigel Bruce to Mr. Hamlin's Basil Rathbone several times, although, at least in a physical sense, I'm closer to resembling a young Woody Allen, and Mr. Hamlin, an elderly Sean Connery.

"Penterbault," Mr. Hamlin finally said, stopping midway up the aisle, "are

by Anthony Letrich

you at all familiar with *Murder on the Orient Express* ?"

"Oh yes sir," I answered eagerly. "Murder on the Orient Express...Agatha Christie's brilliant novel..."

"Not the novel, my boy," Mr. Hamlin interrupted. "I have neither the time not the patience for literary works. I'm referring, of course, to the 1974 film version starring Albert Finney in which every suspect had a hand in the victim's death."

I was momentarily puzzled, but eventually figured out what Mr. Hamlin was insinuating. "But sir, you can't possibly suspect this entire audience of conspiring to kill J.J. Uterbach?"

"Penterbault, please consider. Mr. Uterbach, unlike Jimmy Stewart's George Bailey, was certainly not blessed with a steady stable of friends. There's not a soul in this theatre that Uterbach did not at some time or another lie to, cheat, backstab or bully while climbing to the top of the corporate ladder in Hollywood. Is it not possible tonight's patrons decided they had had enough of Mr. Uterbach? But enough speculating for the present. Let us get to the concession stand...a box of "Jujubees" always helps to clear the mind."

I lead the way to the lobby, where the Roxy Theatre's faithful popcorn and candy girl Rose was busy wiping the candy counter clean of unpopped kernels of corn. "Ah, Mr. Hamlin...get you the usual, sir?" she asked.

"Indeed Rose. A box of Jujubees...and how about a platter of Nacho chips with cheddar cheese? I feel like doing something frivolous tonight."

Rose looked surprised. "Why Mr. Hamlin...Nacho chips? You are living it up. Of course, it may just be your nerves. After all, it isn't every day someone is murdered at the Roxy." Rose turned towards me. "Anything for you, Sean?"

"No thank you, ma'am," I answered. "I snacked during the film."

"So you did," Mr. Hamlin said, reaching for his wallet. Rose shook her head slightly, indicating there would be no charge. Mr. Hamlin smiled, then continued. "You were spared ushering tonight and watched *Murder in Three Dimensions* with the rest of us."

"Well sir, we've never had 3-D at the Roxy before...it was a big event. Mr. Curtis, the Roxy's owner, was kind enough to allow all his employees to sit down during the movie."

Mr. Hamlin tore into his box of Jujubees. "And what did you think of *Murder in Three Dimensions*, Rose?" he asked in between chews.

"Well sir, it was a bit outlandish for me, but otherwise enjoyable," Rose replied. "But that 3-D...my word! Gave me an awful headache, it did. Feel free to use that in your review if you wish."

"Thank you, Rose. I just might do that," Mr. Hamlin said, then turned his back to us. For nearly a minute, the deafening sound of his teeth grinding up a handful

of Jujubees filled the lobby. "Penterbault," he finally called, "I wonder if you will join me back in the theatre for a little demonstration?"

"Demonstration, sir?" I asked.

"Yes. If you are up to it, we may be able to trap Uterbach's killer with a "sting" that would make Mr. Redford and Mr. Newman proud."

"Whatever it takes to apprehend this villain," I replied, trying not to sound afraid.

"Very sporting of you, Penterbault. And Rose..."

"More Jujubees, Mr. Hamlin?"

"No no," Mr. Hamlin laughed. "But we may need you out there for this little charade to be effective."

Rose agreed to join us, and minutes later we paraded into the auditorium where the crowd of two-hundred and fifty suspects were still waiting to be questioned. Mr. Hamlin positioned himself and Rose under the theatre screen while he consulted with Lieutenant Petrie. Finally, Mr. Hamlin and the lieutenant joined us, and the crowd – obviously curious as to why we had taken centerstage – stopped their murmuring and settled down.

"Ladies and gentlemen," Mr. Hamlin bellowed, "on behalf of Lieutenant Petrie, let me apologize for detaining you here this evening, but the demise of J.J. Uterbach obviously warranted an investigation. However, I am confident the identity of the murderer is now known to me and you will all be able to go home...all, that is, except one of you."

"Then skip to the punchline, will you Hamlin?" shouted the familiar voice of Martin Oddo, film critic for the "Daily Dispatch" and Mr. Hamlin's chief rival. "My dinner reservations expired two hours ago."

Oddo's comment produced some chuckles from the audience, but Mr. Hamlin remained undaunted and continued. "J.J. Uterbach undoubtedly offended everyone he encountered during his time among us. The working environment on the set of all Uterbach Studio productions was incredibly hazardous, his recent decision to colorize everything from *Citizen Kane* to *King Kong* only met with frowns in the Hollywood community, and as president of the United Theatre Workers Union, Uterbach refused to approve both a wage increase and new uniforms for theatre employees."

That last item seemed directed towards myself. I began to wonder...would Mr. Hamlin's solution to this atrocity somehow involve me?

"However," Mr. Hamlin went on, "there is one among us whose dread of something Mr. Uterbach is responsible for must be greater than Indiana Jones' dread of snakes. Why else would an otherwise sensible person follow the tarnished yellow-brick road to murder?"

Yet another impatient voice cried out from somewhere in the back, "Cut the theatrics, Hamlin, and make your point!"

"If you insist," Mr. Hamlin called back. "Observe to my right...Rose Treadwell, the Roxy Theatre's candy counter attendant for the last twenty-four years."

Rose stepped forward. "Yes, Mr. Hamlin?" she half-whispered.

"Rose, if you would be so kind as to place this platter of nacho chips and cheese I hold in my hands under your nose and inhale deeply. Can you do that for us, Rose?"

Rose stared at the platter for what seemed like an eternity. The entire audience, in turn, stared at her, waiting for something – anything – to happen. Could it be? Could faithful Rose be our killer?

"I...I just can't do it," Rose finally blurted out, choking back tears. "If I come into close contact with melted cheese of any kind, I'll go insane...just insane!"

Mr. Hamlin put his right arm gently around Rose. "As I suspected," he said softly. "Dear Rose, as often as I've visited the Roxy, I've noticed you never served nacho platters with much enthusiasm and always distanced yourself from them. For some unknown reason, you despise melted cheese with a passion. And you plotted revenge against J.J. Uterbach."

Mr. Hamlin was shouting again, only now it seemed as if his voice had taken on the bellowing vocal properties of Rod Steiger. "For as head of the National Theatre Concessions Board, it was he who proposed that all movie houses begin selling nacho chips and cheese."

"Th...that's right," Rose stammered. Her face had become frighteningly pale, and it looked like she was about to collapse. Lieutenant Petrie motioned towards her, but Rose stood firm and continued. "When I was only nine years old, my father accidentally drowned in a vat of melted cheese while working at the Valvitner Cheese Company. Since then, melted cheese...melted cheese of any kind...drives me wild! Uterbach had to pay for the hell he put me through! He had to pay!"

We had heard enough. I signalled two of my fellow ushers to lead poor Rose to the back of the theatre where several police officers were waiting. The audience's uneasiness at having witnessed such an ugly spectacle was near palpable, and slowly they began to exit.

Hesitantly, I approached Mr. Hamlin, whom, I imagine, was not feeling particularly proud of himself. "I...I cannot believe it," I exclaimed. "Sweet Rose, transformed into someone comparable to Jason from those *Friday the 13th* movies. How awful! What led you to suspect her, Mr. Hamlin?"

"Elementary, Penterbault. While in the lobby, Rose claimed she watched the movie with the rest of us, yet lacked the essential proof to verify that claim."

"Which is?" I asked.

"Cardboard 3-D glasses leave on their wearers an unfortunate impression...three

distinct indented red marks in the flesh...one on the top portion of the nose and one behind each ear. Rose, I noted, possessed no such marks."

Lieutenant Petrie, still standing nearby, did not seem impressed. "That's kind of weak evidence, Hamlin. You're just lucky she admitted to killing Uterbach or we'd never have a case."

"I agree completely, lieutenant," Mr. Hamlin said. "However, if it's more definitive proof you desire, look no further than the palm of my hand."

I squinted at what appeared to be a chocolate-covered peanut. "Why Mr. Hamlin, that's nothing more than a "Goober."

"Precisely...or at least that is what it's made to resemble. I found it on the theatre floor after Mr. Uterbach did his all-too-real impersonation of the chest-bursting scene from *Alien*. Rose obviously placed it at the top of the Goober box she sold him, figuring Uterbach would swallow it before the movie's arrow sequence."

"But if it's not a Goober," Petrie asked, "what is it? Certainly not a poisonous capsule."

"Oh no," Mr. Hamlin answered. "Rose was clever enough not to poison him...a poisonous Goober would be traced back to her. And she was well aware that even the world's greatest marksman would have a difficult time singling out one specific figure in a darkened, capacity-filled movie theatre. So Rose employed some assistance...this miniature electronic device camouflaged as a Goober served as a homing beacon for the fatal arrow."

"Right out of a James Bond movie!" I cried.

Petrie lit a cigarette. "Not too shabby a plan," he said. "We're just lucky Uterbach wasn't into sharing, or someone else may have been the recipient of Rose's affections."

"And now, gentleman," Hamlin announced, tossing the Goober to Petrie, "if you'll excuse me, I have a newspaper column to write."

"What's your final review?" I asked.

"For *Murder In Three Dimensions*, only two stars. But Rose...Rose receives four stars. She truly concocted a brilliant mystery. Good night, Petrie. Penterbault, I'll see you Thursday night for the premiere of John Huston's latest."

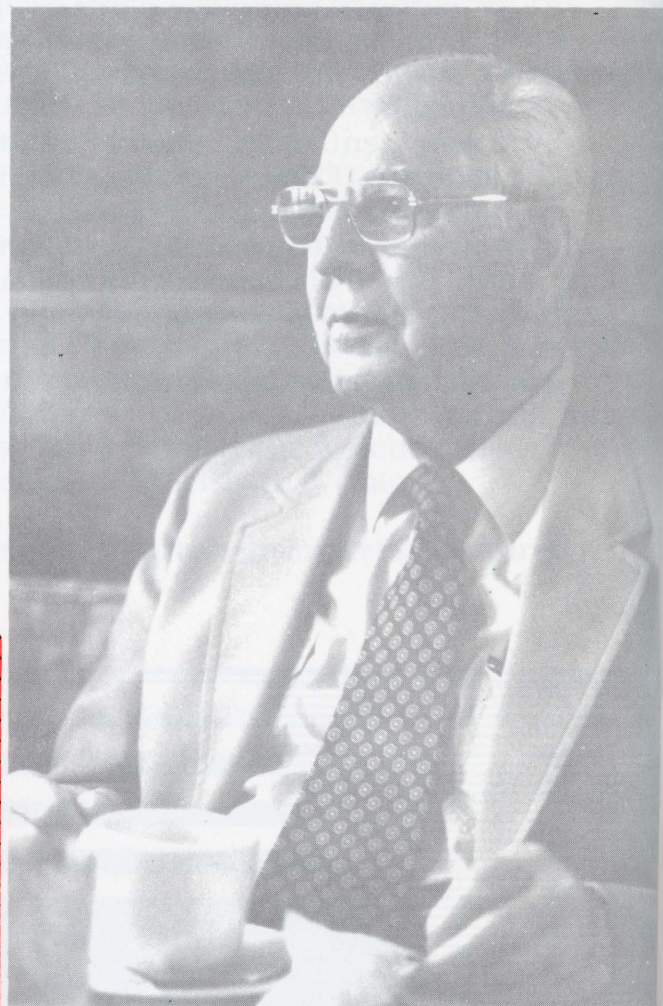
And with that, Mr. Hamlin walked up the center aisle of the Roxy Theatre and disappeared.

ALTA, 1915

Lula, seems I think on you
every time I look
at the handwork
on that towel you embroidered
for me.

I keep unraveling
the embroidery floss
of my dreams
and aim to stitch
something fine —
vermillion roses
on white linen days.
Like you, Lula,
I will sew
fine stitches.

Mary Hess



AMBROSIA

- I. Hard, tight kernels break
into cotton balls and come
tumbling down the shoot of the hot
air popper, our blue enamel spaghetti pot
spilling with hundreds of
fluffy, uneven heads.

I pour a sizzling river of butter
and pepper clouds
with crushed orange peel,
dill, sweet Hungarian paprika.

I scoop popcorn with your favorite bowl,
bone-white, Aztec gold
and sky-blue triangles charm the edge.
Your bowl crackles with blown corn,
spice, and golden butter, as I place it
in your hands.

You hand me a small pond of Mosel,
the cool glass like spring
in my hand. We toast,
give thanks to the delight
of each other.

- II. Holding hands, he and I
near the fire. Softly,
we tremble
and whisper. Skin and skin,
melding, kissing, we sway in
movements of heat. Flames
blaze around us. Our shadows
relax in the fire, our flesh,
like tender fruits simmering in
dark Jamaican rums, consumes,
consumed, the rich ambrosia
of adulthood.

Savoring the taste
of each other, we sleep,
contently tossing, legs, arms,
entangled. Shadows we cast
on the bedroom walls roam
the night long
like huge, silent bears.

Mary Novak

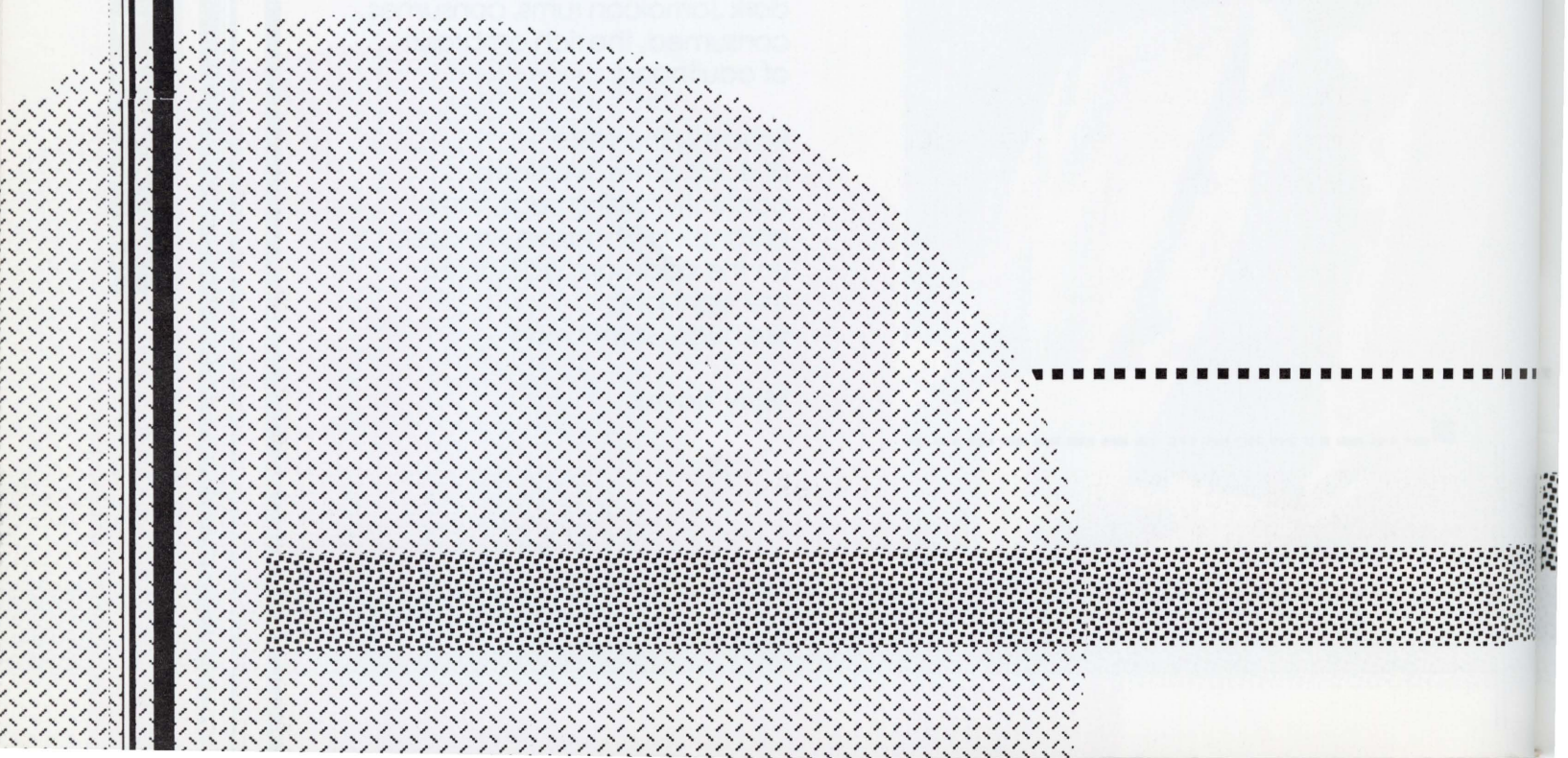
SYNTHESIS

he was rhythm
would gather mute child
onto a thigh
long and lean and encourage
"lay palm against skin,
rap what you feel"

she was rhyme
splicing
long songs
equipoising
image and reality
firmly planted
in the earthiness
of her own dream

together they
synthesize
half-notes
and symbols
together they
render complexities
into subtle
scaled shades of light
and life

Collette Armstead



COMFORT: BED OF ROSES

(to the man who makes my toes curl)

You and I are like the comfort of a warm quilt
on a snow banked day
country,
soft
 against the cityscape
with thumb and forefinger
you knead the bead of my breast
without reflection,
in a crowd
a gesture of belongingness and tenderness
I tap your hand
and blush a blush as red as a twenty-five year old black woman
can blush
I blush and smile
You and I are like comfort to one another
matched by the unseen hand
two sturdy and struggling
black cottonwoods
bark stripped to the darkest grain
cotton sifting
 drifting down
on a bed of wild black roses
in celebration of the shedding of spring
in anticipation of sultry summers to come

Collette Armstead

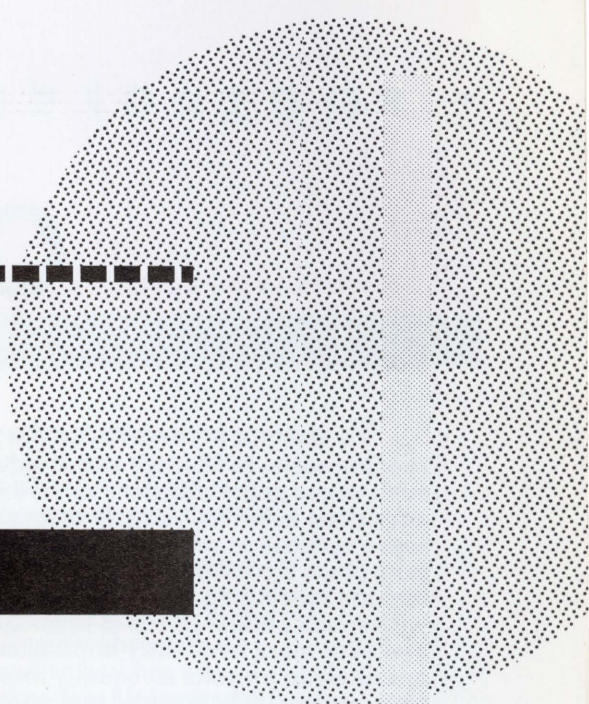


The Poem

I have heard a music in the air
 cajoling,
 tempting me
to grasp not vague sounds in the distance
like rhythms of swallows
flying north to south
painting the sky
 with swoops
 and dips,
but in sentences
that sing, dance,
flash and roar: force open
the mind to feel the sound
 of lightning
as it pierces the clouds.

Robert Mills





THANKS YOU

You go with some sadness, that's true,
but the stones of the stream go, also,
seeking, your feet say, stones' stairway home
beneath ocean as blue as
the glittering shadow of God —
knowing, by this time,
no foot sinks through air
its shaft of warmth
alone,

but always there are carseats
encouraging lovers
airplanes uniting the unlikeliest would-be-angels
wheelbarrows bearing mortar to
an office building's awkward adolescence
and even the sun
under its terrible burden of vacuum
thanks you for being someone
for it to lean upon
going down.

Ralph Salisbury

• special features •

CHICAGO POETRY:

To attempt to characterize the present poetry reading scene in Chicago and avoid descending into such vague generalizations as varied, lively and ambitious is difficult largely because today's poetry scene succeeds so well on those very levels. Readings take place virtually every night of the week. They include everything from open-mikes to special dates with much published out-of-town authors. Inspired and ever more frequently impassioned performances are likely to provoke an equally impassioned response from increasingly involved audiences. And it seems that with every season someone else is out there with either a new or an expanded and more far-reaching program.

It is almost difficult to remember the time when the open mike series at the Get Me High Jazz Club was virtually the whole of what was available in open forum readings. These days the traditional participants in that sort of reading (younger poets wanting to try out their wings, more experienced poets with new material to test, as well as the general unsuppressable enthusiast) can choose from regularly scheduled open mike series at Amethyst Lounge, UIC, the Town Hall Pub and Batteries Not Included. Weeds Tavern, the Left Bank Bookstall in Oak Park and Chicago Filmmakers also sponsor an occasional open mike reading.

The original Get Me High series is, of course, still going strong on Monday nights, offering audiences a

raucous, bawdy brand of poetry that threatens every so often to spill out into the streets from which it came. Batteries Not Included, a corner bar that has recently become home to much of Chicago's young and new music scene, affords audiences another Monday night spot from which to choose. Tuesday nights the Amethyst Lounge combines folk music with its open mike. And the Town Hall Pub, which also mixes poetry with folk music, sponsors a particularly popular and rowdy open mike on the first Wednesday of every month.

Readings with set programs and featured poets also abound in Chicago, running the gamut of local writers as well as offering an increasingly varied selection of out-of-town visitors. Links Hall has in many ways taken the lead in this area, providing a first class venue for the best local talent at the same time it has expanded its program to include big names from the national scene such as John Giorno and Ed Sanders. In a two night show in April, the Links Hall Performance Series featured LA poets Michael Lally, Jack Skelly, David Trinidad, Amy Gerstler and Benjamin Weissman. And in early June at Links Hall, New American Writing will sponsor a night with Alice Notley and Maureen Owen. Another evening Clark Coolidge and Geoffrey Young will be featured.

The Spoken Word Cafe, a program begun last fall at Filmmakers, has proven spectacularly successful in its combination of video and reading performances by various artists. Often sold-out with people turned away at the door, this once a month event will typically feature readings of poetry or prose followed by a brief intermission and the

Other Publications

Due to the burgeoning and changing nature of the local scene, the following listings are not comprehensive. They are intended as a quick overview and guide to the range of

Publications

Another Chicago Magazine

P.O. Box 11223
Chicago, IL 60611

Ariel

Triton College
2000 5th
River Grove, IL 60171

B-City

619 W. Surf
Chicago, IL 60657

Black & White

P.O. Box 478318
Chicago, IL 60647

Chicago Anthology

Feminist Writers' Guild
P.O. Box 14095
Chicago, IL 60614

Chicago Review

University of Chicago
Faculty Exchange
Box C
Chicago, IL 60637

Chicago Sheet

P.O. Box 3667
Oak Park, IL 60603

possibilities available as of presstime, and are not an endorsement by the editors. We sincerely apologize for any omissions.

The Year in Review

screenings of a video or film chosen to compliment the readings. Of special note is a June 27th appearance by Walt Whitman award winner Antler, who will be performing along with long-time associate Jeff Poniewaz.

Yet another poetry and performance series, Dogma Productions, has recently relocated to Gaspar's, bringing to that location a wide array of poetry, performance and theatre, all of high quality and all of a particularly local genesis. Weekly on Tuesday nights, this series' present season runs throughout the Spring and Summer with a bill that includes a book release party for Paul Hoover and a book debut party for poet Debbie Pintonelli.

Chicago bookstores also host an occasional poetry reading: Barbara's Bookstore on Wells St. is one location to look for readings and the Women and Children First Bookstore is another. Guild Books on Lincoln Ave. is a more frequent sponsor of these events, generally supporting a calendar of several high quality readings each month.

Another reliable reading location is the University of Illinois at Chicago which regularly schedules readings in its Chicago Circle Center. Various departments at the university have developed different reading programs; but in general, the university offers a choice sampling of talent from throughout the city, a fairly consistent selection of visiting readers, as well as ample forums to display the talents of in-house luminaries.

Which brings us finally to Uptown and the Green Mill. And what would a discussion of the poetry reading

scene in Chicago be without a few words concerning the Green Mill and its regular Sunday night poetry slam? Vrdolyak and Washington couldn't create as many sparks between themselves as the regulated contentiousness at this poetry competition in which poet is pitted against poet and may the best verse win. Certainly this is not for the faint of heart, but if flamboyance with a particularly sexual and sometimes violent bent sounds good to you, this Uptown spot may be the place to go. An open mike and featured readers are also offered, but make no mistake about it — at the Green Mill it's the slam that draws 'em in.

For more detailed information about these and other poetry events, interested parties can either write or call Links Hall or Filmmakers for their calendars. Upon request, Guild Books and UIC will also mail announcements of their readings.

Barry Cassilly is editor of Letter eX, a newsletter containing information and commentary on the local poetry scene, as well as book reviews and criticism (see listings). The views expressed in this article are not necessarily those of the editors or publishers.

You Might Enjoy

F2 Magazine
1405 W. Belle Plaine
Chicago, IL 60613

Garland Court
Loop College
30 E. Lake St.
Chicago, IL 60601

Lawndale Renaissance
P.O. Box 23020
Chicago, IL 60623

Letter eX
P.O. Box 476917
Chicago, IL 60647

Lucky Star
The Erie Street Press
221 S. Clinton
Oak Park, IL 60302

New American Writing
(formerly *Oink!*)
1446 W. Jarvis #3D
Chicago, IL 60626

Nit & Wit Magazine
P.O. Box 14685
Chicago, IL 60614

nothing sinister
3321 N. Seminary
Chicago, IL 60657

Ommation Press
Mati
Salome: A Literary Dance Magazine
5548 N. Sawyer
Chicago, IL 60625

Open Mike
c/o Marc Smith
1829 S. Euclid
Berwyn, IL 60402

Other Voices
820 Ridge Rd.
Highland Park, IL 60035

Apocalypse Literary Series is soliciting manuscripts for its 1988 edition, effective November 1, 1987. We are interested in poetry, short fiction and prose as well as photography, graphic art and illustrations.

Written submissions must be typed and double-spaced. Art must be camera-ready and suitable for reproduction in black and white.

Please include your name, address and a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you wish us to return unaccepted submissions.

Deadline for receipt of written submissions is February 1, 1988.

Deadline for receipt of art submissions is March 1, 1988.

Send your work to:

Overtures
c/o Apocalypse
Northeastern Illinois University
5500 N. St. Louis
Chicago, IL 60625



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OVERTURES 1988

Publications (con't)

Overtures

Northeastern Illinois University
5500 N. St. Louis Ave.
Chicago, IL 60625

Poetry Magazine

601 S. Morgan
P.O. Box 4348
Chicago, IL 60680

Rambunctious Review

1221 W. Pratt Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60626

Rhino

3915 W. Foster
Evanston, IL 60203

Shadowboxing

6964 N. Greenview
Chicago, IL 60626

Spoon River Quarterly

P.O. Box 1443
Peoria, IL 61655

Story Quarterly

P.O. Box 1416
Northbrook, IL 60065

TriQuarterly

1735 Benson
Evanston, IL 60201

Tomorrow

212 N. Sangamon
Chicago, IL 60607

Vice Versa

838 E. 57th
Chicago, IL 60637

Reading Spots

(all locations are in Chicago unless otherwise indicated)

Amethyst Tavern & Grill

6230 N. Broadway
743-0088

Barbara's Bookstore

1434 N. Wells
642-5044

Batteries Not Included

2201 N. Clybourn
348-9529

Chicago Filmmakers

6 W. Hubbard
329-0854

Gaspar's

3159 N. Southport
871-6680

Get Me High Lounge

1758 N. Honore
278-8154

The Green Mill Cocktail Lounge

4802 N. Broadway
878-5552

Guild Books

2456 N. Lincoln
525-3667

The Heartland Cafe

7000 N. Glenwood
465-8005

Left Bank Bookstall

104 S. Oak Park Ave.
Oak Park, IL
383-4700

Link's Hall

3435 N. Sheffield
472-3441

Town Hall Pub

3340 N. Halsted
472-4405

Weeds Tavern

1555 N. Dayton
943-7815

Women and Children First Bookstore

1967 N. Halsted
440-8824

In addition, the Skokie and Chicago Public Libraries sponsor regular readings, as do most universities and colleges.

OVERTURES

Volume 8
Number 1

Published at Northeastern Illinois University