

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

ScholarWorks @ UTRGV

riverSedge: A Journal of Art and Literature

Special Collections and Archives

Fall 1979

riverSedge Fall 1979 v.3 no.2

RiverSedge Press

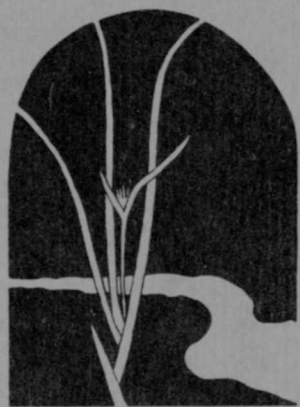
Dorey Schmidt

Patricia De La Fuente

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.utrgv.edu/riversedge>



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#)



riverSedge

a journal of

art

poetry

and

prose

Vol. 3 No. 2





riverSedge

general editor
dorey schmidt

associate editor
patricia de la fuente

advisory editors
jan seale
ted daniel
carl estrada

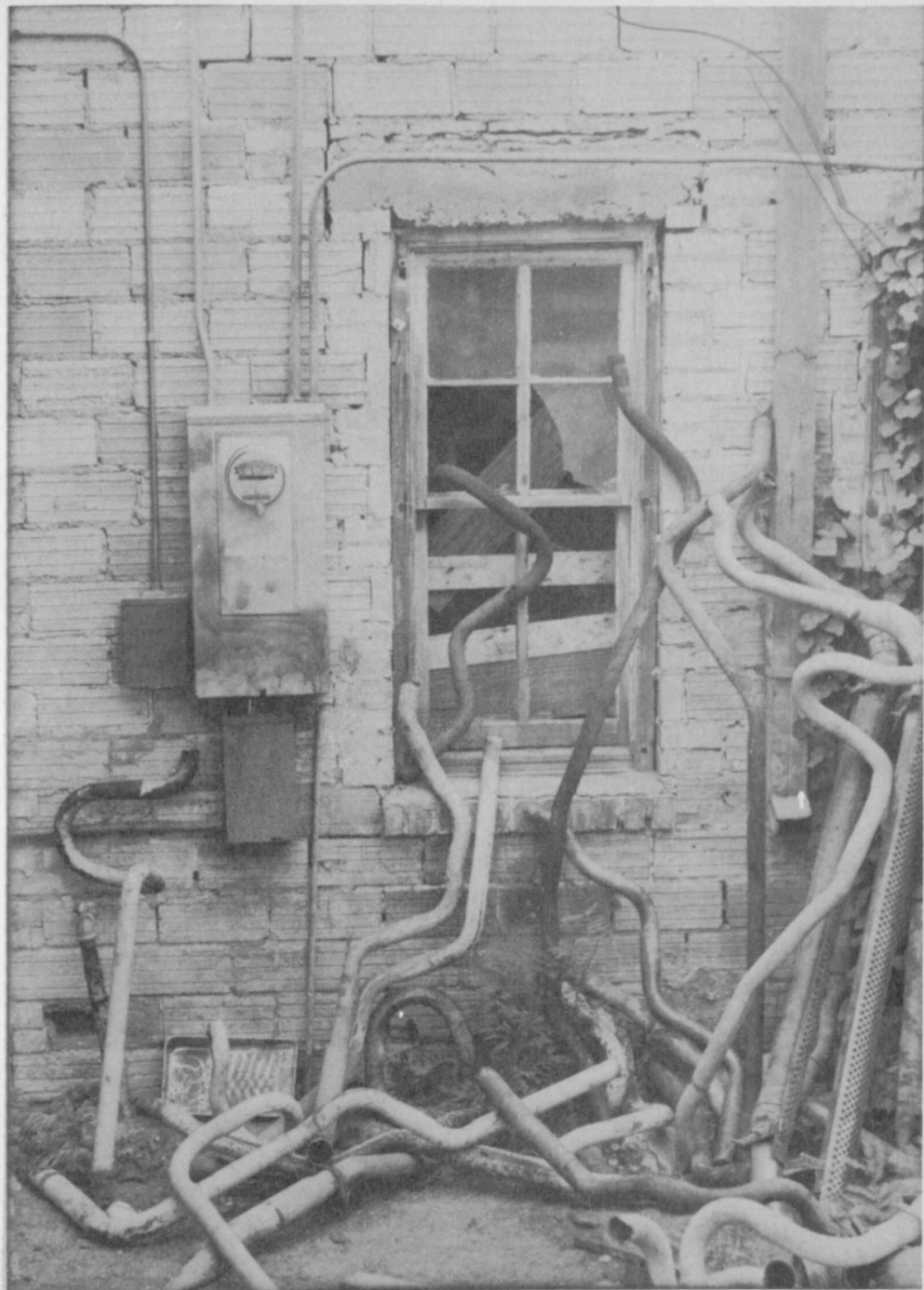
riverSedge press
edinburg, texas

Contents

R. E. Sodowsky	5
Jan Villarrubia	18
Roger Jones	20
J. W. Rivers	21
Dawna Maydak Andrejczak	22
Barbara Jameson	23
T. C. Buell	30
Timm Louis	31
Susan Baran	32
Sarah Brown Weitzman	34
Allan Morris	36
Robert Necker	40
David E. Cowen	41
Randall Schluter	42
Jeremy Palmer	45
Phillip Corwin	47
V. T. Abercrombie	51
A. C. Kimball	51
Tonita S. Gardner	53
Contributors	61

Graphics

Ansen Seale	3
Nancy Umphres	4, 17, 41, 46, 47, 56, 57
Ulrike Gasprian	21
Gloria Herrera	29, 43, 44
David E. Keyes	32, 33, 52



Ansen Seale



Nancy Umphres

NOODLERS

Not yet mid-morning, but the sun was hot on their backs, the two Tucker boys, the water already warm. Limp, they let the slow current carry them, their feet dragging on the bottom, lifting their faces for air when they had to, exploring the rocks with their hands, searching for holes with fish in them. They already knew that the rocks could be painful: Kenny, the elder, fifteen, had a bruise and bloody scratch across his knee, and Wayne had scraped his thigh.

They were imitating the Shakaskey brothers ahead of the, the real hand fishermen, the real noodlers, small, Indian-looking men who, Rufus Tucker said, "could stay under water till a week from Sunday and then not come up by God unless they felt like it." If they found no fish, then Kenny and Wayne knew they wouldn't. But it was their first time to noodle, and Frank Shakaskey, the gray-haired elder, had said, "Just drift behind us and try to cover what we miss. The river's wide here. We'll miss some." Both Frank and Milo had gunnysacks with drawstrings of braided cotton rope, but Frank had told the boys, "You better let your dad carry yours till you get used to the river. You might get tangled up at the wrong time."

Rufus walked along the sandy bank beside them in flopping overalls and mud-stained tennis shoes, shirtless, scarecrow tall and skinny. He carried the boys' sack in one hand, in the other a six-foot section of lightweight pipe with a large fishhook welded to one end, the point and barb newly filed. The shaft of the hook was as thick as his little finger. He would not get in the water, they knew, until they reached Caboose Rock, the first of the giant boulders, where the big catfish would be.

"Hell," Rufus said, "I don't want none of them minnows. I'm after *fish*."

Kenny understood now why Frank and Milo wore T-shirts. His back was going to blister. He tried to sink, float lower. Strange sounds there were in the water sometimes . . . *ping . . . ping . . .* like in a submarine movie. He wondered: is it alive? What is it? When the Shakaskeys and Rufus and the other men brought in sacks of catfish, silvery channel cat, blues, big flatheads, and dumped them in the yard for the whole neighborhood to gawk over, he had imagined the fish dozing on the bottom of the glass-clear river, waiting for Milo or Frank to dive down to them. But he couldn't see his hand before his face in the murky water. Feel, it was all feel. Feel around in a hole in a rock, or on the sand of the bottom, your eyes shut, and then suddenly the slick skin and twisting strength of a catfish, or something else. Something, he thought . . . and maybe it claws or stings, or comes right past your hands and bites you in the face.

All the old noodling stories, stories to make a boy queasy when he got in the water: Old Man Ospaugh, they said, had a hole in his hand, a three-cornered piece bitten out by a beaver hiding where a fish was supposed to be; "Just as neat," Rufus used to say, "You could drop a screwdriver right through it"; rocks with cottonmouths under them, and black eels that six men couldn't hold, that oozed right through their hands; gar as long as men, with spear-shaped mouths full of teeth like yellow needles; snapping turtles that could bite off a man's finger and eat it just like that; the Pawnee boy who had gotten a rope through the mouth and out the gills of a catfish and tied it, and put a slipknot over his wrist, and had been found a week later and ten miles downstream. The catfish was still alive . . .

I don't think I'm afraid, Kenny thought. Daddy's not afraid of the fish. I don't think. But other things, he is. The story of Rufus and the beaver: below Caboose Rock once, Milo had come up from a long dive beside Rufus, who was waiting, treading water, and said "Beaver down there." And Rufus had fled, arms and legs flailing madly, squawking like a guinea hen, fled to the shallow water, threshed through the cattails and up the bank and finally stopped, panting, fifty yards away in the dry sand.

"I don't know if Rufus can walk on water," Frank Shakaskey had said, "but he sure can run on it."

After the men had stopped laughing, Rufus had replied, "I

wasn't fishing for no beaver. I didn't want none, so I just left." But Kenny knew he was afraid.

Ahead of him he saw a rift, a small pucker on the surface, and he knew a rock or log would be there. He drifted toward it with his hands out, fingers spread, and found just under the water a flat boulder as wide as his outstretched arms. Steadying himself, he began to feel for openings, the current tugging gently at him, trying to take him around the rock and on downstream. The front of it was vertical, and he could not reach the base; the water was deeper. He held his breath, went down, and found a ledge; beneath it, the water was colder and faster. He started to put his hand in, into the blackness, wanted to put it in, and--couldn't.

I got to. He came up for air and saw that Wayne had drifted on and was almost even with Frank, who was putting a fish in his sack. Milo was working against the current, coming back toward him. I got to. Again he dove and caught the ledge, let the current push him so that his face and shoulder were against the rock, and reached under. The ledge, the rock again, the colder water--there!--a hole, big as a basketball, and he put his hand in quickly, touched WHAT cold slickness, powerful surge of something away from him, his own jerking back and quick gasp, choking, and as he fought up for air he felt the fish slide past his leg and jerked away from it again.

When he had stopped coughing, Milo said, "Find one?"

"Uh huh." Kenny looked down. The water was just over waist-deep to him, nearly shoulder-deep to Milo. "I let him get away."

"I forgot about this rock. I should've been here to help you."

"You knew it was here?"

Milo nodded. "Straight down, there's a hole, right?" He held up his hands. "About so big."

"Uh huh."

"Feel around on the downstream side. There's a little breather hole over there. Was it a big one?"

"I think so."

"It probably couldn't get out the breather hole." Kenny started to go down. "Wait. Just use your foot. Feel the hole with it. If you got to get something chewed on, wouldn't you just as soon it be your tennis shoe as your fingers?"

"I feel it."

"First thing when you find a hole is to block it, with your feet, body, a rock. They know you're out here, and they won't stay put. Then keep your hand flat and feel on the bottom, see if it's clean and sandy. If it's muddy, most generally there's no catfish, because they keep it swept clean with their tails."

The sack floating out from the rope looped over Milo's head and shoulder contorted violently, and Kenny fell back from it. "You caught one?"

"Two. Little flatheads."

They began to drift. "There's some rocks Frank's missed on this side," Milo said. "We'll pick up a couple. If you put your hand in the hole flat and real slow, touch them on their belly, sometimes they'll just lay there to be scratched, like a tame hog."

"Do you hear something when you're underwater? Kind of high tapping?"

"That's drum. They make that sound."

Downstream, Kenny saw Wayne hold the sack while Frank dropped in a fish as long as his arm. "Wait," Milo said, "found something." He disappeared as Kenny dug his toes in the sand. The riverbed was broad and shallow here, with low tamaracks creeping down toward the water, behind them slender cottonwoods, and farther back tall sycamores with flaking white bark.

He can't stay down that long, Kenny thought, and then Milo surfaced and held up his right hand, the knuckles covered with blood. "Blue," he said, grinning. "They come and get you."

"He get away?"

"I got my foot in the hole. Hold the sack. I'll get him this time. Come here and put your foot against mine. There. When I go down, I'll put your foot in so I can move around better."

He went down, and Kenny felt his foot being pushed in, Milo's shoulder against his leg, heard--what?--thunder, almost, low. He could feel Milo struggling, the fish being pulled past his leg, and then Milo was up, his face barely breaking water, his black hair flattened over his eyes. "All right. Open the sack a little--not too much--and hold it out of the water a foot or so." Kenny loosened the drawstring and lifted the sack. Suddenly Milo brought it up, his thumbs in the corners of its wide, bulldog-like mouth, his

fingers clenched in its gills. He lifted it, thick, blue-black tapering body and white belly, dropped it tail first into the sack, and Kenny jerked the drawstring. The fish thrashed furiously, foaming the water. Milo's thumbs were bleeding, and there was a long, angry scrape on his forearm.

"He give you a bad time?"

"Not much. They grab your hand and roll, if they can. They don't have teeth, but their mouth is like a wood rasp."

"How big is he?"

"Ten pounds, maybe."

"Hey," Rufus shouted across to them. He was sitting on a drift log, a pint bottle of Heaven Hill in his hand, the pipe propped against his shoulder, the sack hanging from the hook. "When you going to quit fooling around? Let's get to the granddaddies."

"I heard a noise when you were down there. Like thunder."

"It's the fish, hitting the rock with his tail," Milo said. "When you get one like I had him, you got to scissor him with your legs. A fish is just a long muscle, his whole body is a muscle; if he can use it against you in the water, he'll get away, even one no bigger than this."

They drifted again. Kenny found a hole under a rock, but the floor felt muddy, slimy to him. He surfaced and said, "I don't think there's anything in it. You want to look?"

Milo dove and came up almost instantly holding a carp curved like a horseshoe in his hands. "You're right, no cat-fish. This one was just visiting. You hold them like this, bent, they can't do anything."

Kenny looked at the brown-scaled body, the down-turned sucker mouth. "You going to keep it?"

"No." He pitched it away. "We're about to a place where there'll be a fish. Your turn now."

His shoulder against Milo's leg, he kept his hand flat, knuckles down against the sandy floor, pushing into the hole slowly, and when he touched the fish he flinched, felt the powerful swirl of water as it turned, and heard the oddly displaced thunder when it struck the rock. Again he found it and put his palm under its broad belly. It's big, he thought, a thudding in his chest; it's bigger than the others. But he was out of breath, and he came up.

"Got a good one? It sounded like it."

"Pretty good." He sucked in air greedily.

"You want to use the rope? Put it in his mouth and out his gill so he won't get away?"

"Can I try without it?"

Milo smiled. "Sure. Get your thumbs in the corners of his mouth--he'll chew on them a little--and your fingers up in his gills good. They have gill guards, little spikes. You just have to hold spikes and all."

Again the broad belly. The first time he ran his hand the wrong way, toward the tail, and had his fingers buffeted against the rough rock wall. The fish twisted frantically, stopped, and Kenny found one of its gills, opening, closing. He put his thumb in, felt the sharp gill guards, then thought: No. Thumbs in the mouth. He worked his other arm into the hole, felt where he thought its mouth would be, and guessed exactly right. With frightening strength it closed on his hand, shook, sawed, and he gasped, jerked away, and came up for air, ramming his elbow into Milo's shin on the way out.

"Trouble?"

"I'll get him."

"Looks like he's already got you." Kenny saw that the backs of his hands were bleeding freely. "Don't forget to get a scissorlock on him when you come out."

"How do you stay down so long?"

"Just do. Just make up your mind and do it."

A bit of luck immediately, the thumb of his right hand in the corner of its mouth and fingers secure in its gill, muffled rumbling thrashing of the fish as Kenny shifted against Milo's leg to reach farther, found it with his other hand, the rough mouth grinding on his thumbs, gill guards cutting his fingers, and then he backed out of the hole pulling the fish, remembering almost too late to scissor it, rolling on his back, doubling up, and pressing its head against his thighs, genitals, stomach as it emerged until he could lock his legs around it. He floated up slowly, its spasmodic bursts now muted, shuddering through his own bones, tasting the muddy, faintly salty water in the back of his throat, watching the murky light brighten until his face broke the surface.

"Got him!"

"All right. Catch your breath a minute." Milo held his head above the water with one hand.

"How do we get him in the sack?"

"Still don't want to use the rope?"

"No."

"Okay. Same as we did the other one. He'll be stronger in open water. When you lift, do it fast, right up over the sack and down again."

Bobbing in the water, he watched while Milo readied the sack. The fish was quiet against his legs and stomach. He liked the feel of the smooth, elastic skin.

"Now." His legs had cramped, and he could not stand quickly enough; he lifted it half out of the water before the whipping, twisting reaction, before it tore from his thumbs, seemed poised above the water between him and Milo for a long instant, the glistening yellow body and white belly and broad flat head and sharp side fins and fleshy whiskers, and then it splashed and was gone with a final small swirl and gurgle from its black tail.

Rufus yelled, "Well, gah-odd-damn!"

"I couldn't hold him."

Milo grinned. "He was a good one. Tough to hold."

"How big was he, do you think?"

"Sixteen, eighteen pounds, maybe."

"I'm sorry I lost him."

"Why? You had the fun of catching him, and now he's free and not hurt, and we're not starving. Nothing to be sorry about."

"You don't care?"

"I don't ever care if one gets away. Ever see a snake get into a nest of cottontails? Sometimes I think that's the way we look. They didn't do anything to us."

"Why do you do it, then?"

"Always have. But I clean and eat everything I catch, and I don't hurt anything and leave it."

As they drifted, Kenny asked, "How come it's deeper at the rocks?"

"The water digs out at the base of them. It runs faster there, too, because it's kind of funneled in that deep spot. Take a big rock like Caboose, it might be twenty feet deep, and once the current gets you, you can't do anything about it."

He floats so you can't even see him, Kenny thought, about like a fish. Barely see him get a breath of air.

At Caboose Rock Wayne and Rufus were perched high up on the oblong block of red sandstone while Frank waited in

the water. Rufus had stripped to a pair of GI shorts and his tennis shoes.

"Kenny!" Wayne called, "I heard you lost a fish."

"If that ain't dumb," Rufus said, "Sacking him without a rope."

Wayne said, "I got me a channel cat."

"Hell, let's get after them," Rufus said. He stood up, waving the pipe with the hook on it above his head.

Milo frowned. "You going to use that hook?"

"I sure as hell am. That's my fish tamer."

"I don't want anything to do with it," Milo said.

"No," Frank said, "that's bad business, Rufus."

"It's all the way you look at it, ain't it?" Me and the boys are going to use it, and use it right here. You can help, or find another rock."

"There's plenty more," Milo said. "Ready, Frank?"

"Ready."

Milo looked at Kenny and said, "You can go on with us if you want to."

Kenny kept his eyes on the water. "I better stay here, I guess."

Milo nodded. "Be careful." He and Frank pushed away from the rock and let the strong current carry them around the end and downstream.

Climbing down the steps that had been hacked into the sandstone, Rufus squatted on a narrow shelf just above water level and said, "Now this rock ain't near as wide underwater. It's just as long, but it's only about eight feet thick. I know, because I seen it when it was bone-dry. That hole is middleways of the rock, and it'll be about seven or eight feet underwater. It's big enough for a big-assed man to crawl in, so you got to rock it up. That's what I keep them rocks here for. We got to put them in first. Then we can use the hook and stir things up."

Kenny said, "How do the Shakaskeys do it when they fish it?"

"I don't give two hoots in hell how they do it. Get them rocks in."

There was a ledge, the boys discovered, just above the hole; they could rest their backs against it while they blocked the hole, diving down with one chunk of sandstone in their arms at a time. When they had finished, Rufus stood up and said, "All right. Now I'll see what's in there." As he

let himself slowly into the water, he said, "Jesus God almighty, it's cold!" But he paddled one-handed over above the hole, holding the hook, and then his cheeks puffed out and he sank while Kenny and Wayne clung to the shelf and waited.

The sounds from below carried, spread up through the boulder: a rock being moved, the metal scrape of the hook against the wall--first outside, Kenny thought, after that inside the hole, perhaps against the roof; and then a low, strong, reverberating sound, as much a tremor in the rock as sound. The boys looked at each other.

"That's a fish," Wayne said.

"Big."

Rufus burst up out of the water. "How about that, by damn! First time down and I got him hooked."

"How big is he?" Wayne asked grinning.

"Big enough. Can't tell yet. Big by God enough." He pulled himself up on the shelf, panting. "Now what we do is wear him down. He's got a lot of room in there, and he ain't coming to where you can reach him if he can help it. Just take turns making him move till he wears down and you can pull him over to get the rope in him. There's a breather hole on the other side, and I'm going around there. I'll reach in and keep him scared away from that side."

He scrambled back up the steps. "Wait till you think I'm down before you start. That hook's in him good, but if it comes out poke around and find him and jerk it in him again. Hook him underneath. Pull his goddamned guts out for him." On top he stooped, and came up with the bottle, tilted it. Then he disappeared.

The boys waited, and then Kenny said, "Go ahead." Wayne braced his hands under the shelf and pushed himself straight down. Kenny strained, but couldn't see him in the brownish-pink water. He heard the scrape of the hook, but not the low thunder, the tremor.

Wayne surfaced. "He got off. The hook was just laying there. You try." Kenny went down, found the ledge, and braced himself against the current. Reaching in through the small opening they had left, he found the end of the pipe and began thrusting with it.

I don't even know which way the hook is turned, he thought. He found he could touch the far wall with it, heard the solid *chink* as it struck. It's big enough a man could

crawl around in there, he thought. But where?--and then he felt it, the softer yielding flesh and the thud of its tail against the wall and swirl of sandy water in his face as it went by the hole.

"I heard it," Wayne said. "You get him?"

"No, I just felt him." Wayne went down quickly while he leaned against the shelf trembling, sucking in air. In seconds, Wayne was back up.

"I got him! I got him! Go down and keep it in him. Don't come up till I get there. Let's keep him going!"

"I didn't hear nothing."

"I don't care, he's on. Hurry up!"

Kenny dove, and just inside the hole he found the pipe, twitching, moving like a living thing. He pulled on it and felt the weight coming toward him. I can't get him, I don't have the rope, he thought, and then with strength beyond his the pipe pulled away from him and stopped. He's against the far wall, sulling; he knows where I am, just as well as I do. When he pulled again the weight came reluctantly, inch by inch, and then the force he could not match, and the pipe slipped through his hands almost to the end before it stopped. He felt Wayne's feet at his side, Wayne beside him, pushing in, so he guided his hand to the pipe, released it, and surfaced.

When he had caught his breath he yelled, "We lost him but we hooked him again, Daddy!" The wind had come up stronger, however, the waves slapping over the shelf, and he realized that with the wind and the steady rush of the water Rufus could not hear him. He went down and took the pipe from Wayne. Again, he found he could tug it steadily toward him a certain distance, but then there was the greater force shuddering along the handle and into his bones, and it pulled away from him.

He thought, why don't it move around more? It stays straight away from me. He twisted and jerked the handle viciously, feeling, understanding now the direction and menace of the hook and barb, and the weight reacted violently, shaking, vibrating. In a sudden swirl of colder water he knew the smell-taste of blood.

It still ain't moved. It just stays. Why don't Daddy move it? He jerked and twisted again, but there was no flurry of response, just the weight. Why don't Daddy?--and then, as if the murkiness had frozen into clear ice or glass, he look-

ed, or thought he looked, straight through the hole and through the rock and saw Rufus, white as the white belly of a catfish, his mouth and eyes open and his jaw slack, pulled taut against the breather hole, his long arm stretched inside, the gleaming hook with its inescapable barb piercing between the bones in the palm of his hand. Kenny tried to yell, scream "NO--" but he choked, the water hurting in his nose and windpipe. As he twisted away from the hole he felt Wayne against him, nudging him, and he kicked and struck out furiously, elbowing, clawing. They surfaced at the same time.

"What the hell is wrong with you? You goddamn crazy--"

"We got Daddy!" he screamed, coughing, spitting, already in the current, going around the rock. "We got him hooked! He's drowned!"

Wayne looked at him, his eyes wide. "You--"

"Come on!"

Wayne called once as he followed Kenny, "Daddy!" But there was no answer. The current took them a dozen yards past the other side before they could escape it. They worked frantically over to slower water, then swam back. There was no sign of Rufus.

"We got to go down," Kenny said. "About here." They dove, clinging to the rough folds of the rock, pulling themselves downward into the colder, swifter water coming up at them, stopping to reach out, feel about for the breather hole, for Rufus caught still warm against the cold rock. The current tugged at them, pulling their feet away from the rock. Wayne tapped Kenny's shoulder, and they came up.

Wayne said, "I can't find nothing--" and then from behind them, farther back than Kenny had judged him to be, Rufus spoke.

"Well, what... what in the *hell* you guys doing over here?" His arm was hooked over a willow root in a split in the rock at water level.

Kenny gasped. He said, "Well, we thought--"

"Oh, hell!" Wayne hooted. "You know what Kenny said? He said you'd drowned! He said we had you on the hook!"

"Well, Jesus God almighty." Rufus grinned. "I ain't hooked. You think I'm that dumb? Get your ass around there and work on that fish."

As they climbed back up over the rock Kenny thought, he

could've been hooked. It felt like it. he could just as well've been.

Wayne jumped into the water and hooted again. "Jesus almighty! Hooked and drowned!"

They met the Shakaskey brothers as they began the long walk back to the pickup. Kenny and Wayne took turns carrying the sack with the big flathead in it, its head broader than Kenny's waist, its body more than waist-high to Rufus. While Wayne carried the sack and hook, Kenny walked ahead with Milo.

Kenny said, "How do you get them out of that hole? In Caboose Rock?"

"Just get them."

"Well, I don't see how, if you don't use a hook. It's big enough in there for a man to crawl around--" And then he did see. His voice dropped almost to whisper, and he said, "You go inside it, don't you? Right in there with it."

"Yes."

The man and the fish, the sandy floor and low sandstone roof and narrow sandstone walls, not much wider than a casket, Kenny thought, and in his mind's eye he heard the thunder in the stone, saw the man with his groping hands and scissoring legs and the smooth muscularity of the fish, the brief fierce struggle and the man seeking the way out, seeking light and air. He shivered. "Ain't you scared?"

"No."

"Do you always get the fish out?"

"No. Sometimes he's too strong."

Kenny dropped back to spell Wayne. He eased the gunnysack over his badly sunburned shoulder, and they walked together silently, the path leading them gradually away from the river and into the blackjacks and hickory and cedar, up a long hill beside a deep ravine, an impossible tangle of hackberry and blackberry bushes and wild grapevines and honey locusts.

Kenny stopped and turned to Wayne. "Throw it away."

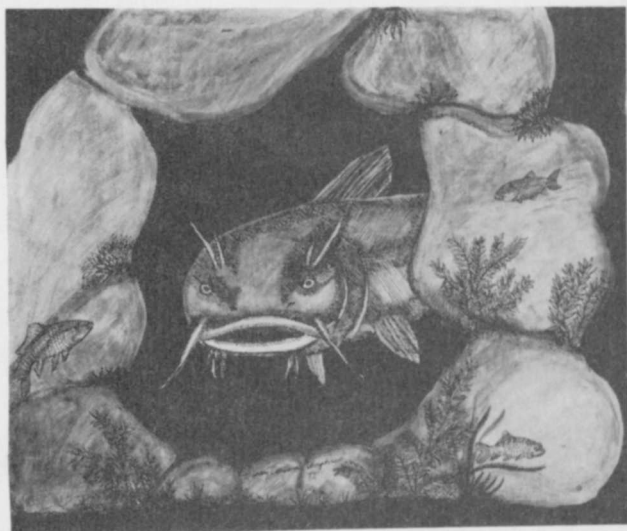
"What?"

"The hook. Throw it down in there."

"You're crazy. I ain't about to." Wayne walked on.

"Throw it away, or let me throw it. I'll tell Daddy I lost it. Or I'll tell him I threw it away. I don't care."

"Go to hell," Wayne said, and kept on walking. After a moment Kenny followed, the blood of the fish dripping down the backs of his legs and the stench of its torn belly and ripped entrails in his nose.



Nancy Umphres

Jan Villarrubia

RAW MEAT

Thick raw meat.

The knife slides in quickly,
hits bone.

Red beef, bleeding from every pore.

I am at the dining room table,
about six years old.

The meat is pink and juicy.

Mother cut it in chunks
and I have to eat it.

I chew it gently, try to think of
sweet potatoes so I won't gag.

I swallow it almost whole
so I won't feel the blood
running down my throat.

Beefsteaks cut clean
stacked on the chopping block.
Qualmish from the smell of blood,
I wash my hands,
take out fish for dinner.

In the river near the pilings
he lowered a sack, the woman had said.
Invited me home for a drink.
Seemed he'd just mopped the bathroom,
water smeared on the floor had
a pinkish tint to it.
They checked his plumbing
for pieces of flesh.
Never did find the body.

Roger Jones

DIM ELEGY

His eulogy was not
to be so opaque,
but there he was
in his box
just like the rest of us;

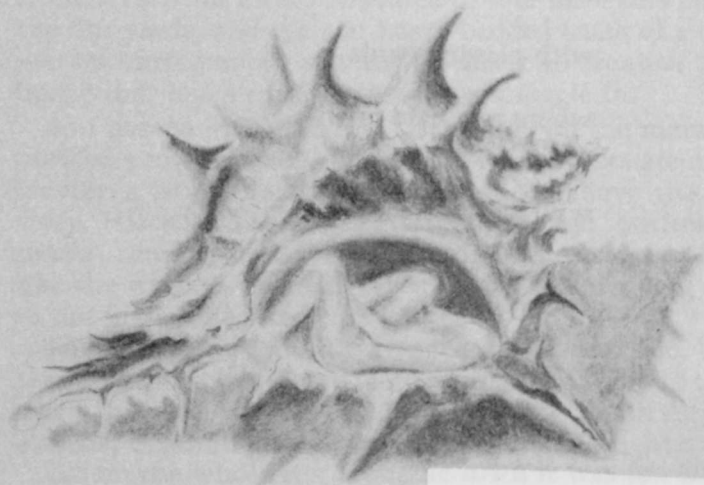
still wearing that
smirk of monarchical
self-assurance,
which the mortician
plied his pallid trade
to smear
into a smile
of rapturous peace,
like a pope's last blessing,

as if he did not
reign over his dark porch
like a tyrant
those last days,
scattering all
of the flocking children,
who, with the sparrows,
were quite unimportant
in his great grey Eye.

J. W. Rivers

THE RAFT

Jeanette is on her stomach,
the lake rises gently,
glides along her body
as she looks for me below.
Last night in the water
her top came off,
two milk-white fish
with raspberries in their mouths
swam in front to buoy her
as I dived to pick it
from between her treading legs.
She leaves for home tomorrow,
tonight she has to pack;
I'll be on the raft
with water lapping at me,
looking for two fish
that nibble raspberries.



Ulrike Gasprian

Dawna Maydak Andrejczak

LIKE A PAPER DOLL

My mother
who has cut out her tongue
neatly
like a paper doll
is more fragile
than a paper doll herself.

She is building
her house for dolls
with playing cards
where any card is wild
wild as the wolf
blowing cold at her door.

Barbara Jameson

THE DAUGHTERS OF ORION

Brown. If I had to describe Ambersonville with one word, that would be it. They say a true Irishman can distinguish forty different shades of green. Well, I'm sure a true South Texan could find at least forty shades of brown if he really wanted to. And don't ever think the natives would trade their wind-shifted drifts of red-brown sand for the real Christmas white stuff, or their bleak, feathery mesquites for frosty evergreens.

A tour of Ambersonville never did take very long, and I don't believe it took me any longer this evening that it used to. My brother Josh and I only bring our families home to visit once every couple of years, and we never can tell that anything's changed much. Today I noticed eight or ten small new houses on the edge of town, tan stucco, mostly, with a few pastel-painted wood ones thrown in for variety--or by mistake. The paint is peeling on the For Sale signs in front of most of them, but three or four have cars parked in the dirt yards, and the slat-board-bedded truck of a migrant worker-entrepreneur sits in the street in front of the one house that has a yard beginning to scraggle in.

As I passed Mr. Watkins' Drug Store on the main drag, I noticed a few more of his red false-front bricks are missing, leaving a jack-o-lantern mouth smiling above the second story. His windows are larger now, though, outlined with redder, rougher bricks and glowing with pictures of things like the whole world singing with Coke and giving its face to the little blue Noxzema jar.

The bank next door has changed its outlook, too. The vacant lot out back is cleared for parking space next to the new single drive-up window, and a blue neon "Bank Anytime" was just beginning to glimmer in the fading light.

But on the whole it's the same town it was ten or fifteen

years ago. Even Mrs. Dawson's house, next door to my parents'. She's put up those same Christmas decorations ever since I can remember. Her cardboard choirboys are there in her front yard again this year, opening their mouths wide, I'm sure, although I can't tell with the painted faces almost completely worn away. And her lights. I know they're the same ones. All red, and strung in every possible place.

The big white star on her weathered gray shed building out back looks right in place once a year, anyway. It's been there so long now everyone takes it for granted, and Mrs. Dawson would never change that building with a coat of paint. Part of her heritage, she says. She and her long-gone husband lived in it while their house was being built. But I remember very well when that star first appeared.

It was sometime during the fall of the year I was thirteen that Mrs. Dawson asked Josh and me to play for her Daughters of Orion installation ceremony. I had always known Mrs. Dawson. Besides having been our neighbor for years, she used to come to school assemblies to play the piano while we sang "America the Beautiful". She sang, too, but her voice sounded like the horn on the Missouri Pacific. That train came through town twice a day, and it always sounded its horn right on low F, the one below middle C.

This was far from the first time we had been asked to play for one of Mrs. Dawson's many meetings. I believe that woman belonged to every organization in town except maybe the Pirate Pushers, who raised funds for the local football team. But this was our first shot at the Daughters.

I agonized a long time over what to wear that night, vacillating between a red jumper and white blouse out of respect for the Daughter's colors and my new blue sweater and skirt out of respect for the chance of seeing Jerry Weaver on the way over. Jerry Weaver won out, but Mrs. Dawson insisted we ride with her, and there went my chance to walk the few blocks past Jerry's house and over to the Daughter's meeting place.

We sat in the back and Mrs. Dawson shared the front with an enormous red glass punch bowl.

"You young people are very fortunate," Mrs. Dawson's Missouri Pacific baritone boomed through her big white car. "This is a unique opportunity for you to see democracy

and American initiative in action. Every other meeting of the year is closed to non-members, but tonight you may view a worthy organization at work."

The hazy gray smoke from her cigarette blended briefly with the blue-gray of her hair, then floated to Josh and me in the back seat.

"Yes, ma'am, we're looking forward to it," I said. Josh, out of the range of Mrs. Dawson turned to ask if I was catching a cold. Without waiting for an answer, she took off on a tale of a fool-proof cold remedy given to her by one of her Orion sisters. I was too busy ignoring Josh. He already thought he was Red Skelton, and I couldn't see any point in encouraging him.

Besides, we were passing Jerry Weaver's house. I felt a poke in the ribs and heard Josh whisper, "Jerry's not home, Marty. So quit gawking.

The cold remedy took us all the way to the Daughters' room above Mr. Watkins' Drug Store. There were several Daughters there when we arrived, all in red, all waiting impatiently for Mrs. Dawson to unlock the door.

Mrs. Perkins, the postmaster's wife, fluttered over to Josh and me and twittered her delight that we were going to play "one of your lovely duets. Mister Perkins would have so loved to hear you. So unfortunate he had to work late tonight. He's such a music-lover, you know, and--oh, well, if it isn't Janet Weaver. She's one of our new members, you see, and such a darlin' lady. I really must see how she's getting along." As she patted my shoulder and hurried over to talk to Mrs. Weaver, Josh crooked his elbow and cocked one eyebrow. Everyone in town knew what Mr. Perkins did when he "worked late"--everyone but Mrs. Perkins, I mean.

Janet Weaver. I wondered if Jerry might possibly put in an appearance.

I felt a hand on my shoulder and turned to face Mrs. Roberson. "My goodness, I would have given you children a ride tonight. I had to come right by there." She put a hand to her scarlet mouth and whispered, "Then you wouldn't have had to ride with Her. Those cigarette fumes aren't good for young ones." She shook her head and her third chin wobbled.

By this time we were inside the meeting room. Bare light bulbs were switched on to glare at the rough wooden floor

and the triple semicircle of folding chairs. A long table with a red cloth and an arrangement of long-stemmed red roses and equally long-stemmed silver stars occupied the space behind the chairs. Facing the chairs was another table, fringed with red crape paper and holding an immense silver gavel. Beside the table was a red flag with an Orion-shaped formation of silver stars.

An old upright piano stood across one front corner. Mrs. Dawson bustled over to tell us to "go ahead, try the piano before we start. It's a lovely instrument. It once belonged to Mrs. Tackett's mother."

Mrs. Tackett herself, the largest woman in the room, waddled over to add her encouragement. "Has a superb tone, dear. Go ahead, try it out. It's better in tone than the one Doctor Tackett bought me last year, I do believe. Poor Doctor Tackett couldn't come tonight. Expecting a very important phone call any minute. Such a disappointment to the poor man."

The room was soon a small Red Sea, as the Daughters rustled around, straightening chairs, smoothing the red cloth, and setting out refreshments.

Too bad Jerry Weaver can't be here to see all this, I thought, with his mother being installed as a Daughter and all. And what a shame to waste my blue sweater. Even if there wasn't a lot to fill it out, it was still a pretty sexy sweater. I should have worn my red junper. At least I would have matched.

About the time Josh sat down to try out Mrs. Tackett's piano, Mrs. Dawson, as the outgoing Bright and Shining Star, cut into his first couple of bars of "Blue Suede Shoes" with an emphatic pounding of her gavel. Josh and I went to find seats, and the whole Red Sea swished around to look as my chair scraped the floor loudly and I narrowly missed sitting on the floor. Agony. My toe caught in a knothole. Josh's shoulders were shaking, his face was red, and I knew I'd hear plenty about it later.

Mrs. Dawson cleared her throat, pounded her gavel again, and announced, "Mrs. Pratt, our outgoing Bright and Shining Chaplain, will open with a prayer."

Little Mrs. Pratt, the Methodist minister's wife, slowly made her way to the front. "Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come--" I often wondered why people always said the Lord's Prayer, since he

surely was pretty familiar with all that, and I decided the more extemporaneous prayer Mrs. Pratt sent forth afterwards was more to the point. She asked for the "health, prosperity and safety of all our sisters everywhere, especially our outgoing Bright and Shining Star, Louella Dawson, and our incoming Bright and Shining Star, Harriet Roberson." Then she went on to implore blessings for all the worthy leaders of the group, both outgoing and incoming, finally ending with "our incoming Bright and Shining Cleanup and Refreshment Chairman, Agnes Jones." About the time she was winding up, Josh poked me and rolled his eyes, hands folded in mock piety. My loud snort turned all eyes my way. I glared at Josh, who was regarding me in innocent amazement, and began then and there to plot my revenge.

After the Service Pledge, with all the Daughters rising to salute the Orion banner and pledge "lifelong devotion and service to our Bright and Shining Sisterhood," it was time for Josh's and my contribution. Mrs Dawson launched into an introduction of "Joshua and Martha Billings, well-known to all of you, and indeed to all of Ambersonville, for their outstanding musical ability. Although not yet into their adolescence, these young people have for many years been a credit to the youth of Ambersonville." (Actually, Josh was nearly fifteen and I was thirteen, but Mrs. Dawson never bothered with little details like that.) "Now I present to you, with the greatest pleasure, Miss Martha and Master Joshua Billings, to play for you a lovely four-hand rendition of Felix Mendelssohn's 'Spring Song'."

As it turned out, the piano was more than a little out of tune, and two or three keys were broken, but our duet (selected by Mrs. Dawson, of course--Josh and I had intended to play "Blue Suede Shoes") drew enthusiastic applause as we returned to our seats. Mrs. Tackett reached out and patted Josh's back as he went by, and little Ann Pratt touched his arm and murmured, "Such an angel." I was pleased to see that his face was as red as a ripe tomato when he sat down.

Now, apparently, the big moment had come. The Daughters rose in unison at a signal from Mrs. Dawson. Our view of the circle they formed between the table and the chairs was perfect. We were sitting at the back, across from a few uncomfortable-looking husbands of new members and a patient, resigned-looking Mr. Roberson.

As the ceremony began, the red skirts whirled endlessly in their circle. Step, pause, two, three, step, pause, two, three. The stark light caught the shine of a nose here, the sparkle of a large rhinestone ring there, and provided no shadows to hide the perspiring faces of the husbands--or Josh's forefinger, wagging in rhythm to the parading feet, as he whistled "Jailhouse Rock" softly and slowly under cover of the Daughter's rustling and tapping. But the rustling didn't last long enough to cover my snort, and the Daughters once again turned to find me red-faced, with kind, brotherly Josh offering me a Kleenex. Now would be a good time, I thought, for the creaking floor to give way and send me into Mr. Watkins' darkened store below.

But since it didn't, the ladies finally turned back to watch Mrs. Dawson and Mrs. Roberson step from their places and up to the table.

"Harriet of the House of Roberson, please respond." Mrs. Dawson's baritone bounced off the stained Celotex ceilings.

"I respond, Celestial Sister of the Stars." Mrs. Roberson's light syrupy voice seemed to trickle along the nicked baseboards.

"Do you pledge, Stellar Sister, to uphold the traditions of our order, lead the starry procession of sisters, and carry out your duties faithfully as the Bright and Shining Star of the Daughters of Orion, Chapter 184, for the celestial year of 1961-62?"

"Mrs. Roberson's voice trembled as she answered, "I do so pledge, celestial Sister of the Stars."

Mrs. Dawson hefted the enormous silver-painted wooden gavel, and presented it solemnly to Mrs. Roberson. Mrs. Roberson very nearly dropped it.

But the Daughters bravely overcame this crisis and went on to the other sisters who were waiting to become Bright and Shining, although somewhat lesser, lights in the court of Harriet of the House of Roberson. After all, Bright and Shining Vice-Star does pale a bit in comparison with the Star itself, but this didn't seem to disturb Mrs. Taylor, who approached the table in her turn, an appropriately solemn face replacing the jolly one she always showed to patrons of her small dress shop.

On went the scarlet promenade, circling and curtsying between the solemn pledges of the Bright and Shining Chaplain, the Bright and Shining Keeper of the Books, the

Bright and Shining Communicator with Sister Constellations, the Bright and Shining Keeper of the Coin, the Bright and Shining Worthy Projects Chairman, and finally, the Bright and Shining Cleanup and Refreshment Chairman.

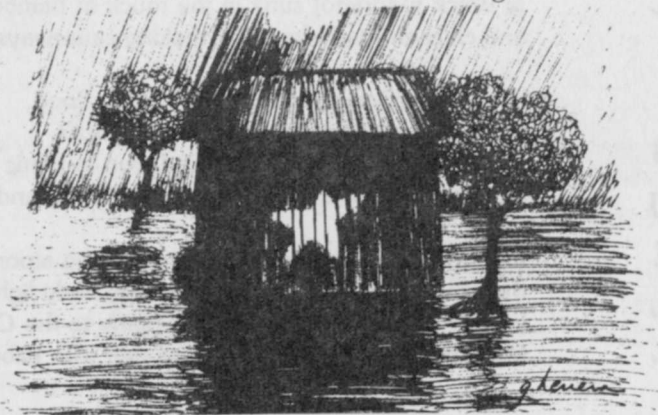
At last, after installing the new members, Mrs. Roberson adjourned the meeting with a boom of her new gavel, and invited "our guests" to take first turn at the refreshment table behind the chairs. So Josh and I and the perspiring husbands helped ourselves to the punch, cake and other stellar delicacies.

I had just gratefully gulped a mouthfull of red punch when I heard Josh say, "Well, look who's here. How's it going, Jerry? Basketball practice over already? Marty was hoping you'd be able to make it. Didn't want you to miss out on the festivities."

I choked, spewed red all down my sweater, and turned to find Jerry Weaver smiling at me in all his complacent, sixteen-year-old, basketball star superiority.

The next morning, during breakfast, the doorbell rang. As soon as Mother answered the door I could hear Mrs. Dawson's indignant voice. She had found a large white star spray-painted on "that sacred building of my heritage" (her shed) and my dad's old green ladder propped against the wall. I left before Mother found the can of white spray paint in Josh's room.

As I took my last few bites of toast out the back door, I could taste sweet revenge with every bite. I took my usual shortcut behind Mrs. Dawson's house on the way to school, and as I passed her shed I looked up with a critical eye. The star was a little tilted, and one of the angles was a bit wavy, but I didn't believe anyone could have done any better on a rickety ladder at two o'clock in the morning.



T
H
E

Ballooning tourists lumber into flight
with pelicans above the Odyssey Motel,
and siren wagons gather passengers
from ghostly ships that whiten Tampa Bay.

G
U
L
F

Here cruise directors offer syntax for salvation.
Here are fountains for our wrinkled youth.
Here we roll in gold dust before we shower and sleep.
Here we bask in cobalt blue all day among the mangroves.

C
O
A
S
T

But this I only dream, lying wet with fear,
and hear the muffled prehistoric roar
of TV beasts on "Godzilla and the Priests,"
and remember how we fought waist deep at Lauderdale.

Remember well how we swung at Sebring, where bones
and dried leather hang now in the gibbeted sun.
Nobody's at home now at Nixon's place. Empty.
The airconditioning turns off automatically.

I tear away my skin to eat an orange and see
above the sky of Disney's Land footprints huge
as Bigtop Clowns run by tinsel hatted mice.
I awake without regrets. So what if my white

innocence has flown, and what I didn't know
has left me nothing else to think or do--
except to cruise the Everglades, flashlight ready
for the perfect-crystal-fake, sold by Seminoles.

T
C

No matter that my compass rose has wilted.
I will find the lost keys to my Budget Car
(a Buick Eldorado) sunk in the muck of hamburgers
and chicken fried along the reeking causeways.

B
U
E
L
L

Where MacDonald arched the golden flood,
frightened tourists clutching their Konica's
and bottled rum against the End, run in panic
as Great Walenda loses balance in the fog and falls.

My Eldorado's almost out of gas, but the airport says
they can see to fly, so just in time by early light
I catch at twice the cost the last plane to the Coast.
My sample case, of course, is stuffed with baby alligators.

Timm Louis

BORROWED TIME

Days out of number
and no one believes
there is this loneliness
as thick as ink
pinching my neck and eyes
taking each kind word from me
when I am talking to my self
about you
edging for courage, testing reality
alterations after we have been too promising
and, *do you want me there*
is the lyric following every suggestion,
desire eating fast then hiding
leaving us alone together
the couple to their necks
in debt to the calendar
to the second hand.

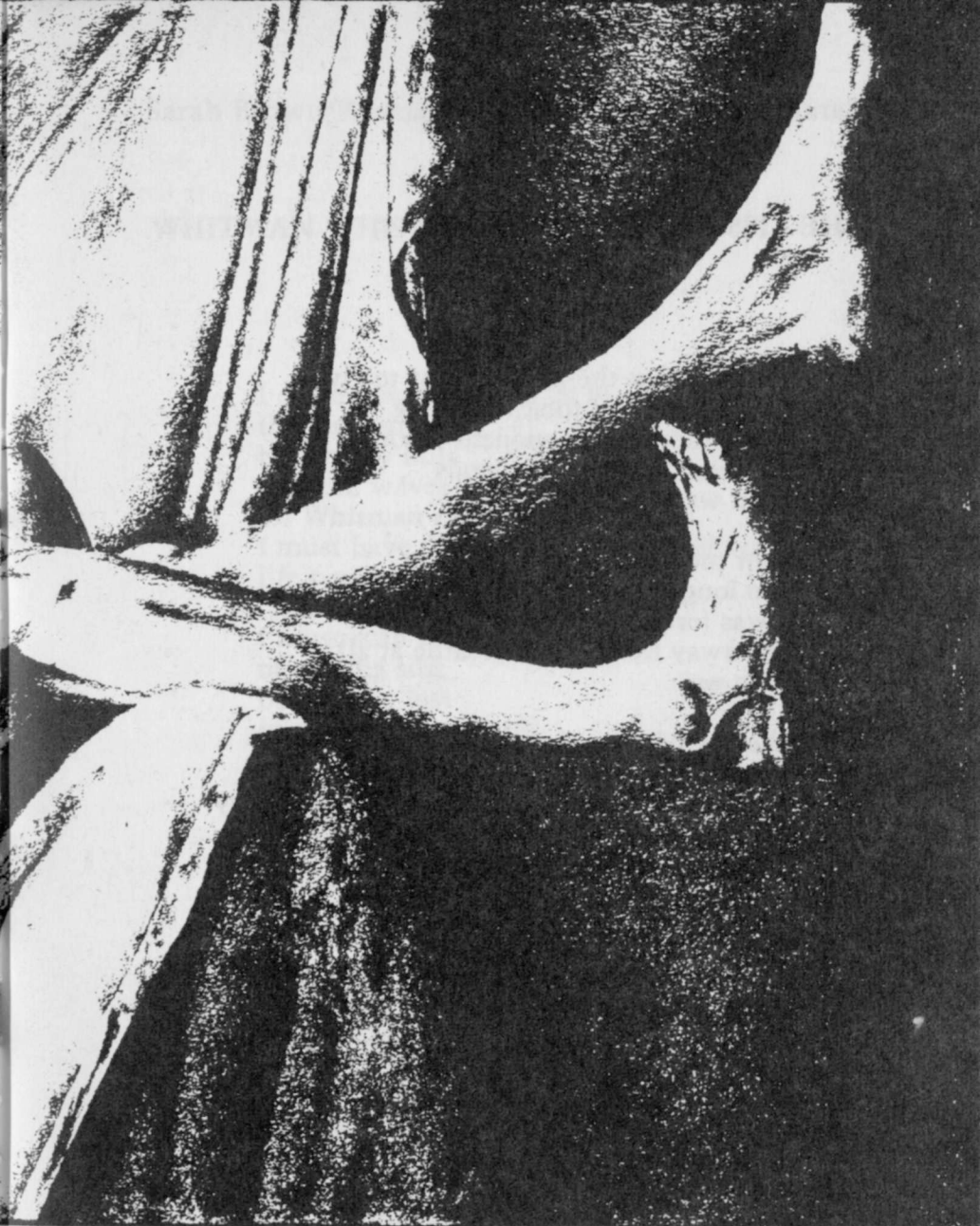


Susan Baran

LOVE POEM

I am laminated
in plastic wrap
sealed air-tight
I keep you out
keep me in.

Your tongue wears away
the film across my nipples
darkens their color.



Your hands peel away plastic.
I will help you-
here is my mouth
it is filled with the breath
you left there last night,
Here are my eyes
can you feel them wet in your palms?
They are dilated with pictures of you.

David E. Keyes

Sarah Brown Weitzman

THE KISS I MEANT TO GIVE

That was not the kiss I meant to give
But the one you took, lingering
In my thoughts as suddenly more
Between old married friends
Than we could answer for.

Your mouth on mine was held
Too long and too hard
It was for me to breathe
You away from me or breathe at all
With ease.

They saw it, too, I think.
At least she did.
Perhaps men do not notice such open display
Of mouth. But then
He never said.

I laughed and spoke such nonsense
That you finally understood
What was at work
Was your imagining
That was the kiss I meant to give, lingering

In your fancy later in the dark
Long and full and thrill
When you old married friends kiss goodnight
The kiss I meant to give
While I in another dark keep still
The one you took.

Sarah Brown Weitzman

WHITMAN WHISPERED ME

I could never live locked in
the random land
blinded by hills
far from waves
for Whitman early whispered me.
I must have the scud and squirm of sea
life near and be on shores
renewed in those wild rhythms.
I must scan the perfect force
of a rising surf
before it is lost
in confusions of foam
drawn on
tides of anticipation that turn
our rhymes
and by the beauty
of such men's lines
who've set their craft upon the sea
that swell in all of us
until this stranded life
lies deep
in some real sea
as slime perhaps
stirring vaguely
to each new moon's command
returned to grey beginnings
in the artless sediments of time.

THE GREAT AMERICAN PASSTIME

The name was totally unfamiliar, but Timothy assured me that F. Norman Rasmussen was internationally renowned as a biochemist and had shared a Nobel Prize many years before.

"I met him at a faculty social several months ago," Timothy said. Fascinating old bird. A little crazy, perhaps."

"*Crazy crazy?*"

"No," said Timothy. "Eccentric crazy. But very nice, actually. Very easy to talk to. Look, we're having lunch at the faculty club Saturday. If you've got nothing better to do, come along. You'll like him, I think."

I arrived at the club a few minutes early, but they were already there. Although athletically slim and several inches shorter than I, Timothy seemed to dwarf Rasmussen. The old man--he looked to be in his late seventies--had a great shock of white hair atop a tiny wrinkled head. A wispy goatee decorated his chin. He wore a shapeless tweed jacket with worn elbow patches and rumpled gray slacks. His hand, as he shook mine, was clammy, the grip flaccid.

We took a corner table in the dimly lighted dining room. An ancient waiter shuffled over, and drinks were ordered. F. Norman Rasmussen chose a double martini--"Very dry, if you will"--with a twist of lemon.

The conversation was random and parochial. F. Norman Rasmussen seemed neither as eccentric nor as interesting as Timothy had promised. But he did talk a great deal in a cracking, high-pitched voice with a slight accent of indeterminate origin.

A second round of drinks was ordered and quickly consumed. And as Timothy gestured to the waiter for refill, I began to be aware of the odd way in which the old man was tapping on the table top with the fingers of his right hand.

He would tap with all five fingers at times, and with only the index finger at others. Every minute or so, the rhythm of the tapping would change--from slow and deliberate to very fast, to medium slow. After we had ordered lunch, I saw that Timothy as well had begun to notice the tapping.

"Norman," he said, "what exactly are you doing?"

"Doing? I'm afraid I do not understand," Rasmussen said, his brow slightly furrowed.

"The way you're tapping your fingers, I mean."

"The way I'm tapping my fingers?" The old man stopped tapping and looked down at his hand. "Ah, yes," he said with a slight smile. "What I am doing is very simple, really. I am playing baseball to your speech rhythms."

"You're *what*?" said Timothy.

"It is quite explicable," said F. Norman Rasmussen. "I have developed a formula for measuring speech rhythms by tapping my finger, you see, and..."

"Norman," interrupted Timothy, "I don't think I understand exactly."

"As I said, it is very simple," said Rasmussen, "and not really very interesting. What is interesting, however, is that I have worked out a system of playing mental baseball with this tapping method."

"Baseball?" said Timothy.

"Yes! Yes!" The old man's voice was becoming animated. "Permit me to explain. Now you, Timothy. You're a long ball hitter. You invariably go for distance. Home runs and extra-base hits, and..."

"Norman, I don't quite..."

"...but unfortunately," Rasmussen persisted, "you strike out a great deal. I'm quite sure that over a full season, your batting average would be quite unsatisfactory."

F. Norman Rasmussen fell silent for a moment. He stared at his right hand which had resumed its tapping rhythms. From the look on Timothy's face, I could see that he was as puzzled as I.

"It is fascinating," said Rasmussen, "how many variables in hitting one can measure with my system. Take your friend here--" He turned to me. "You, sir," he said, "are quite the antithesis of Timothy."

"In what way?" I asked, hoping that the old man would not think I was humoring him.

"It is apparent, sir, that you are a congenital singles hit-

ter. Home runs are not your forte. You are content to hit for average, to get on base as often as possible."

"Is that good?" I asked. Timothy clutched his drink tightly with both hands. His face looked blank. Rasmussen's crinkled with excitement.

"All teams need some players who can get on base frequently," he said, "so that long-ball hitters like Timothy can drive them home. In this respect, your hitting style is indeed productive." The old man's tappings continued.

"Norman," said Timothy, "have you been playing this game for very long?"

"For some years now," Rasmussen replied. "But, of course, I am not really playing the game right now. There are, after all, only two of you."

"Of course," said Timothy.

"In point of fact," Rasmussen said, "I do occasionally have an opportunity to play an actual game. Every so often, I ask my wife to give a dinner party for several carefully selected guests. But never more or less than eighteen people."

"And you divide them into two groups of nine each," I ventured.

"Exactly!" the old man's voice penetrated the murmurings of conversation in the dining room. "Splendid! I can see you understand the rudiments of baseball."

"Well enough," I said, "to know there are nine men on each side."

"Excellent! Well, to continue. I do in fact divide my guests into two teams, carefully balanced to insure that the game will be maximally competitive."

"Of course," I said.

"Of course," echoed Timothy. He had by now drained his third drink. F. Norman Rasmussen sighed.

"But alas, baseball games take time," he said.

"Maybe two, two-and-a-half hours," I volunteered.

"Unfortunately, my method requires more time than that," Rasmussen said.

"Unfortunately," Timothy repeated.

"Often, by the time my guests are ready to leave, the game is only in the sixth inning. Seven at the most."

"So you never do have an opportunity to complete a game," I said.

"Not so," the old man said. "I have total recall, you see.

The box score of each game is indelibly and forever fixed in my mind." The tapping stopped again.

"I suppose that means you..." But the old man cut me off.

"...It means that at some point--even months later--my wife will invite exactly the same people again."

"Aha," said Timothy, his eyes slightly bloodshot now.

"I simply complete the game and begin a new one," Rasmussen said. "A fascinating exercise." He looked at his watch. "Ach! It is already three o'clock. I am time's slave. Gentlemen, if you will excuse me..." He had hardly touched his lunch.

The late autumn air was brisk and reviving as Timothy and I walked across the campus to his car. For a while, we did not speak. Timothy's face wore a faintly quizzical expression. His step seemed a trifle heavy for a man of thirty-six, I thought.

"He's wrong, you know," said Timothy.

"Wrong? Wrong about what?"

"About my being strictly a long-ball hitter."

I stopped in my tracks. Timothy stopped a couple of feet ahead of me.

"Good God," I said. "You don't mean to tell me you were taken in by that old loon. Playing baseball with speech rhythms! Jesus."

"How he does it isn't the point," said Timothy. "But something's wrong. Either his system doesn't really work, or it doesn't work insofar as it concerns me."

"Timothy, what in hell are you talking about?"

"What I'm talking about is that I never *could* hit for distance."

"But for God's sake, Timothy, it's just a game, a mental exercise. What's it got to do with..."

"...I never had power when I played baseball as a kid. I don't have the build for it. Even now. Hell, they always had me batting lead-off. And I was good. Damned good. Bunts. Walks. Singles. You name it. But home runs? Hardly ever. I was your classic singles hitter."

"But Timothy..." I began. And then I realized that anything I might have said would not really matter. Timothy simply wasn't listening. To reason, commonsense, or anything but his inner thoughts. His face was a blank again.

I resumed walking to where the car was parked, and Timothy followed alongside in silence. After we had gotten to the car, he dropped me off at my hotel. His malaise--if that's what it was--seemed to subside somewhat. He shook my hand warmly and wished me well before driving off.

I have seen Timothy several times since. But he has never again mentioned F. Norman Rasmussen and his mental baseball game.

And neither, for that matter, have I.

Robert Necker

THE STARTLED FARM

--Saturday

comes racing unbuttoned

down the blue-shadowed stair

way that climbs back up to

Sunday whose dimly-lit kitchen eyes

with despise what was Friday night's shout

in the street about nothing -- repair crews

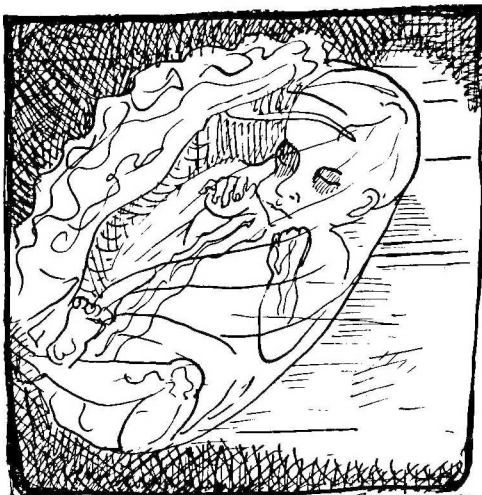
begin drilling Monday.

David E. Cowen

FETUS IN A BOTTLE

it isn't that you
might have been anything great,
the retarded son
of a retarded mother,
conceived by a neighbor's drunk,
aborted by embarrassed parents.

it's only that you missed
seeing a silver dolphin
soaring with a squeal
towards the fresh fish
held out by the man
on a twenty-foot platform.



THE BUFFALO CLUB

O Buffalo Club specializing in Buffalo Beer in pitchers and mugs as well as the buffalo pool on the prairie of green felt where the Buffalo Bill cueball drives the spherical bison into pockets to be shipped to meat-hungry builders of railroads for a quarter a game, O Club of Splendors and tables of laughing men and women, I sing of thee at one in the morning as the man on my left seems violently ill but is not, nor is the man on my right sober, nor am I.

A woman in jeans and red red hair is telling the dark man in the corner, as they sit at the round table by the clicking pool table with clinking glasses all around, that she is not happy. "Do you still hate me?" she asks, and the man leans back in his chair and drops his crucified-saint's smile onto the floor and kicks it under the table to pretend, so that this woman cannot feel her martyrdom to be justified, that he hates nobody, not even the wicked. The Buffalo Beer pours out in a vast herd slaughtered by the white man during his race for interstate glory at the paradise of the Pacific, in this town of Buffalo Beer. The red woman and dark man pass the night in this sodden bar hating each other beneath the daguerreotype Buffalo Brewery, an original worth two hundred dollars; and the man on my left is violently sick, almost.

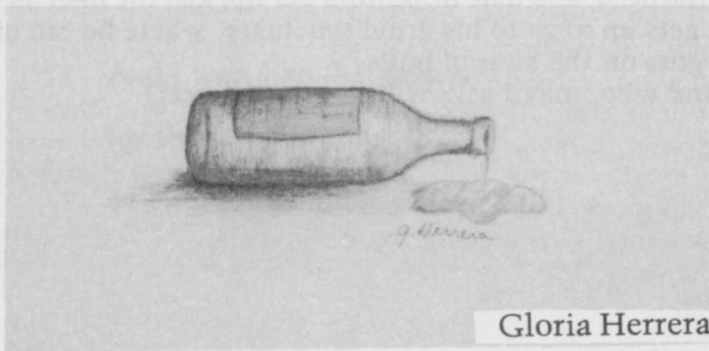
"Do you still hate me?" A loaded question for a loaded night. The man beside me who is not sick but sober has undergone a divine tragedy for which he is paying his bucks to the brewery. "At one time I was more fortunate and less drunk," he says, "but today an underworld goddess seized me by the scruff and hurled me into this Tartarus along with a pocketful of quarters for the jukebox."

Belching like a thousand dead Indians, I say, "Tell me your story, lest I understand and be converted."

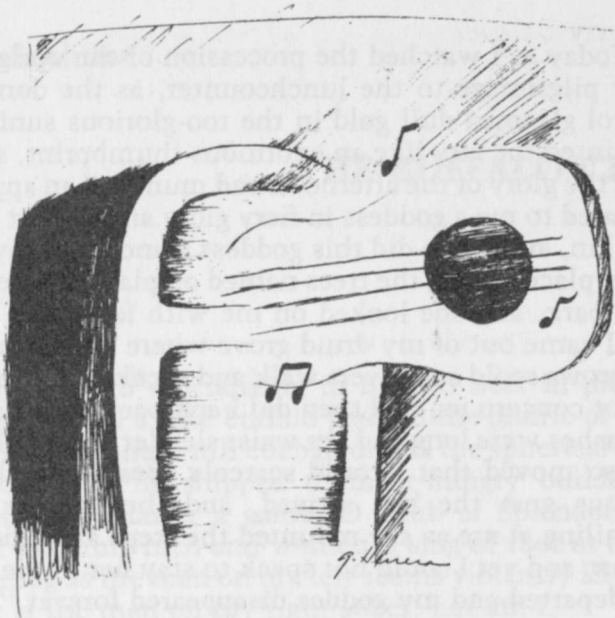
"Today as I watched the procession of the upright on its daily pilgrimage to the lunchcounter, as the dome of the capitol gleamed dull gold in the too-glorious sunlight that imprinted the city like an enormous thumbprint, as I walked in the glory of the afternoon and munched an apple, there appeared to me a goddess in fiery glory and a short skirt and tan skin, and twice did this goddess glance into my humble shady place among the trees named on plaques screwed into their bark, and she looked on me with favor so I thought. And I came out of my druid grove where the squirrels play and crows scold and lovers walk and speak of matters which do not concern us, and then did I approach this vision, and her lashes were long and her waist slender as the wind, and I was so moved that I could scarcely speak, and then with noxious gust the bus arrived, and the goddess glanced unsmiling at me as she mounted the steps and paid the ferryman, and yet I could not speak to stay her as the stinking bus departed and my goddess disappeared forever."

"Long live Hermes Trismegistus!" I cry and the Buffalo Beer goes down like a train of ore to the smelting furnace in my guts. Fort Knox relocates in my liver, and my lights shine. And the man on the left is not quite violently sick: Satan, take pity on our pain.

Under the shadows the red woman smokes her cigarette, and she heedlessly gestures with the buring tip like a branding iron helping ranchers usurp the buffalo on the plains of glory. The woman frowns, waiting for the dark man to speak, and angels swim in the smoke-burdened air above spills of bloody beer on the floor. She stamps out the butt with her foot and rips out his throat with her eyes, till at long last the dark angel replies to her "Do you still hate me?" with a judgment writ large on his palm, this verdict turning her cheek red as the dying West.



Gloria Herrera



A guitar stampedes from the jukebox that glows with hellish light, as the woman red from crown to toe in the jukebox light cries like a cat and, claws out, rips the tender darkness and upsets the cosmos, crashing pitcher, mugs, and ashtray to the floor where a controlled herd is thinned by hunters and sold to supermarkets in thick steaks. "Do you still hate me?" echoes down the dusty trails and the demons turn from their buffalo game to watch the explosion of fire and the reply of darkness, who lashes the red woman with palm, fist, and foot and then stumbles helplessly out to the gutters where the last of the buffalo in gray coats with wine stains lie. And the red woman weeps for the dead, and hate drips from her lip, and the man on the left gets up to go to his druid sanctuary, where he can offer his guts on the altar of bulls.

And who, may I ask, will pay for the beer?

Jeremy Palmer

MORNING

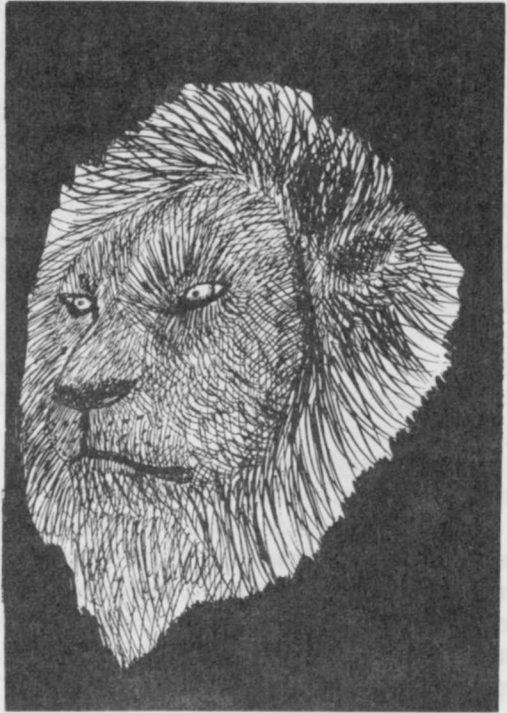
The phone rang before dawn
for another party on the line
and so I rambled to sun up
watched a buck spread velvet points
out to dry above the ferns
came back to bitter coffee
and the cabin still in darkness

Now I sit at the work table
watch finches dulled by frost
only conscious of today's shadow
the higher presence of some hawk
that has stopped all but the brook

And I wait like the finches
for the terror to flap off
down through forest aisles



Nancy Umphres



Phillip Corwin

DANIEL

During my years as a human I have often been forced to confront hungry lions: among my business colleagues, my neighbors, my relatives, my lovers. Their intent was always the same -- to drink my blood.

Now I happen to like lions, and can understand primitive hunger drives (I was once an ape myself), so I harbor no personal animosity toward the beasts. Lions do as lions are, given the nature of jungle life in amino acid cultures.

Nevertheless, I realized early on that I had a problem that was elementary as well as alimentary -- how not to be devoured. And I knew that I had to endure, for reasons that were never completely clear, or even ethical, but which were presented to me in regular monthly statements, with care and growing interest by my friendly banker.

One obvious solution was to remain unappetizing at all times, as repulsive as possible, a bane to carnivores and intellectuals. (That option, of course, explains why there are so many unappetizing, repulsive humans stalking the planet; they are merely trying not to be eaten alive.)

I tried that approach initially. I packed myself a survival kit of ammonia essence, ethnic minority extract, and infectious hepatitis, along with a collapsible lion cage, to be strapped to a magnesium spike protruding from below my waist. I made a talisman of chile peppers, shaped like a desert, and stuffed it with rotten zebra meat.

For emergencies I carried love drops spiked with emotional commitment.

Fortunately, since I had no concern for money, fame, sex, or chess, dignity was not a factor.

For a while, my device worked. In fact, they worked so well that I ran into opposition from ecologists. I'd begun a trend, it seemed, and soon all the ingredients in my survival kit were on the way to becoming endangered species or scarce natural resources. Deserts were in the shortest supply of all, and had to be flown in from Mars.

I was approached by a distinguished group of vertebrate ontologists and asked to surrender my adaptations for the good of the species. They appealed to my sense of primate responsibility.

I agreed, and gift wrapped my innovations in a basket fashioned from oil spill, and shot them off to heaven in a family rocket. The Government then passed legislation making my behavior vestigial.

Ecological balance was restored. The stock market rose sharply. Private enterprise prospered.

It was at that point that I became interested in the history of the prophet Daniel.

Like Daniel, I had slaughtered a dragon (disguised as a patriotic fantasy) and offended a few high priests. I had also refused to worship certain gods of the ruling dynasty: television, commodity speculation, work and mommy.

Though I had no religious beliefs for which to be persecuted, I was, nonetheless, a Neptunian with my own views of the universe, not to mention my own satellites, and a past president of the Interplanetary Xenophobic Association, an atheist group suspected of having Communist leanings. My very existence generated enormous hostility.

And so I decided to simulate Daniel's experience in the lion's den as closely as possible, to learn what I could about survival.

As a first step I organized an expedition to Babylonia to search for a proper site for a den. I ultimately settled on a dry hole that had been drilled by an oil exploration team from Disneyland, on top of what was once a detention center for errant lepers.

I dug and dug. I uncovered drilling bits, polyurethane gravestones with Sanskrit inscriptions, and transistor radios made in Hong Kong. The rocks were shaped like Phoenician ships.

I sprinkled dehydrated lion urine every six feet for ambience.

I imported seven lions from Africa and primed their appetites on TV dinners. Then, for six days before I was ready to descend into the pit, I fed the great cats nothing at all.

When I finally jumped in, I had nothing with me but a copy of the United Nations Charter taped to my navel.

Since I couldn't hire an angel (they were unionized and far too expensive), I contracted for a helicopter to drop food to me every other day. Meanwhile, the lions ate nothing but an occasional tootsie roll.

I attracted great crowds. Unfortunately, two photojournalists who tried for an exclusive interview were eaten alive by an audio system that went out of control.

A European diplomat who tried to recruit mercenaries to assist the lions, was thrown to the bookmakers and buried alive.

The oil producing countries raised their prices on money.

A North American consortium established a franchise in lion roars.

Ranier Maria Rilke wrote a posthumous poem about me.

I began to enjoy myself. Here was life in the raw, no subterfuges, no pretenses. All communication was crucial.

I had never experienced such excitement. Of course it was dangerous, but precisely because of that, I lived every moment intensely, memorably, uniquely.

I even had a satisfying relationship with one particular lioness who liked politics. I fed her editorials from the Times of London and whispered anecdotes about Lenin into her beautiful ears. Whenever she pawed me I went bananas.

After a week I was convinced I wanted to live in my new

den forever. No more she-wolves for mates (give me a lioness in heat any time), no more subways (how much nicer to live and work in the same area), and no more dental bills. I grew a full beard and burned my mortgages.

But after a month I was forced to leave my new home. The need to do so came after a lion had bitten me one night, in a very sensitive place, while I was sleeping. He became so sick that he died the next day; thereafter, I was ostracized. Even my tootsie roll were rejected.

I returned to civilization full of regrets and leonine putrescence. My only souvenir was a stereophonic tape of chromatic purrs.

I've been back about a year now and am slowly adjusting to the more conventional world of anxiety brokers, storefront churches, and instant salvation. In retrospect, I can honestly say that my stay in the den was a worthy experience. I'm no longer afraid of being devoured by my colleagues, my neighbors, or my mother. I'm virtually fearless.

The only problem is that, as a result of my lionizing, I've developed a liking, almost an obsession, for the raw truth.

And I have trouble abstracting. I want things to appear exactly as they are, and in their proper context. I have no patience with synthetic jungles, or with real toads in imaginary gardens.

Otherwise, in troubled times I try to recall my lovely lioness (who sends me a token whisker every Christmas), and growl affectionately.

It's not so terrible being human, I suppose.

But next time around I'd like to be a cat.



ROSANNA ORSO

V. T. Abercrombie

WINTER WALK, LAKE TRAVIS

Winter's frigid air clicks along
 behind my heels
tapping the way without a stick.
Sounds come back again
echoing off limestone rocks.
At the bottom of the hill
just around the curve,
a deer is dead.
Fur intact, head to the side,
the eyes seem to see
past the wind
 that swallows sound.

A. C. Kimball

ENERGY SHORTAGE

we used to have two windmills
but we had to tear one down
because
there wasn't enough wind
to turn them both



David E. Keyes

THE LAST BAG OF GARBAGE

He'd been gone for two days -- gone to Michigan to bring our daughter's body home for burial. And when he got back, I'd watched him set down his suitcase, watched his disapproving glance take in my reddened eyes and the way my seated body slumped against the kitchen table -- kept on watching as he focused on the two full bags of garbage propped up near the sink.

And he'd pointed to them and said, "This stuff's been here since the day before yesterday. Don't you think it's about time you got rid of it?"

And that's when I finally told it to him -- just blurted it right out: "Like hell I will! I'll never take out another bag of garbage again -- not for as long as I live!"

And he took off his coat and looked at me as if I was out of my mind. But even I was surprised at his ultimatum -- surprised that the waste products of our wasted lives could suddenly become so important to me. And I thought to myself: The garbage is my life now -- all that's left of it. Why should I take out my own life?

But he said he'd hold out as long as I do. Longer if necessary. "You have no strength of character," he announced in that calmly reproachful voice of his. "And you brought your kids up the same way -- too soft, too easy -- and if I call them *your* kids it's because they certainly never took after me. But it's no use crying over spilled milk. Just pull yourself together and cut out this sniveling nonsense -- do what you have to do. And that means taking out the garbage. It's your job; always was, always will be."

He's partly right. It always *has* been my job. I've always taken out the garbage when he said I should, and I've also picked up his dirty socks from under the bed and washed them and folded them and put them neatly away in his sock

drawer until the next time he dropped them onto the floor again; and I cooked the foods he liked and also kept the house clean and dust-free because he has hay fever and dust bothers his allergies. I did everything I had to and more -- painting the woodwork, mowing the lawn -- and the more I did the more he expected of me (and never a "please" or a smile of thanks) --and I withstood his indifference and his coldness and because of the children, I never said a word.

Because of the children. A joke on all of us!

But now, even though it looks like a stubborn contest of will, of me trying to assert myself twenty years too late, the truth is that since he got back from Michigan I can't help my inertia, my lethargy. For more than a month now, I've simply lacked the strength to give a damn about anything; cleaning the house, washing the clothes, shopping for food.

And for the first time, he seems to be realizing this, seems to be taking a slightly different tact. Softening? That's hardly the word, of course. Once an egg is hard boiled it can never be softened again. Still, he's no longer waiting around in his quietly nit-picking way for me to snap-to his orders the moment they're issued. Mostly he just looks at me and frowns and shakes his head.

And even though the garbage remains in huge overflowing pyramids piling up from the kitchen into the hallway (beneath his dignity to cart it out of the house), I've noticed that he won't allow my so-called "indolence" to interfere with his personal comforts. At least two or three times he's changed the sheets on his bed and (who would have believed it!) plucked his dirty socks and underwear from the floor and hauled them off to the laundromat. And he brings food from the German delicatessen and the Italian and Chinese take-out places and there's usually enough left for me to nibble on if I so choose. (A tentative peace offering? Perhaps.)

But I don't care if I eat or I don't eat, don't care that my clothes are now unalterably large on me. I just sit here in the kitchen all day with the garbage and I think about the kids and why did those terrible things have to happen to them and I go over and over in my mind about what I did wrong and what he did wrong and what we both did wrong -- and there aren't any clear answers -- and even if there were a hundred million answers, because of the kids, nothing could ever be right again in my whole evil-smelling garbage dump of a world.

The kids: Sara. I think about Sara a lot. Sara, my lovely prize of a daughter -- dead from a butchered abortion in the back of a butcher shop -- lying there like a slab of prime meat as that moonlighting murderer put his filthy blood-stained hands in her and pulled away her beautiful young life.

"But don't worry, Mommy, he's highly recommended," my nineteen-year-old college girl had assured me when she called long-distance to confide that she was pregnant, to ask me to wire her the money...

"Don't worry, Mommy. I'll be fine."

"Sara, I *am* worried. I want you to come home right away. You can have the operation here in New York, rest up for a few days, and then go back to school. Please, baby, do it for me."

"Mommy, I *can't* come home now. You know what'll happen if my father finds out. He'll make me leave school for good and he'll never let me forget what I've done and I can't face any more of his god-awful lectures about character and self-control. He's always predicted I'd get into trouble -- and yes, I made a mistake and I'm suffering for it -- but I don't want to be reminded of it for the rest of my life. Honestly, Mommy, the more secret it is, the better for me. I'll call you as soon as it's over."

The call came a few nights later. But it was Sara's roommate who called, not Sara. And he answered the phone and from the expression on his face I thought it was a wrong number until I heard him mention something about subsidizing an educational whorehouse, and then the voice at the other end began to cry and he cut the voice off by saying "If that's what she did, then it serves her right." And I thought to myself: Poor baby, she changed her mind and couldn't go through with the abortion, and now he knows all about it -- and I grabbed the receiver from him and shouted into it, "Put Sara on! Please! I want to talk to her--" but there was a click at the other end and I started jiggling the button and calling "Operator! Operator!" and he said "Don't waste your time, she's gone," and I said "Gone where?" and he didn't answer, and wildly, pleadingly, I looked at his face but it told me nothing -- and I began to scream at him "For pity's sake, where *is* she!" -- and then in his usual reproofing monotone he announced to me that our daughter the tramp was dead.

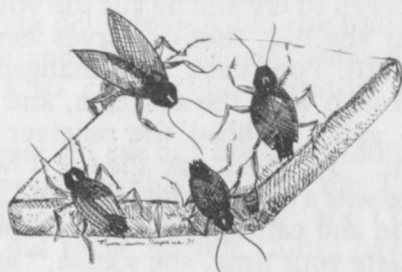
And he went out to Michigan to claim her body and while he was gone I tried to locate my son Jamie, to tell him about his sister, to cling to him, to weep with him, and I searched all through the East Village, but no one had seen him there lately or heard from him or knew where I could find him.

Jamie. My brilliant son Jamie the ex-speed freak who gave up speed for good and switched instead to Big H. Belligerent, vulnerable Jamie:

"What do you mean you won't tell him about me! I *want* you to tell him, to sock it to him right in the balls, to rub it into his law-abiding face: 'Your son Jamie is a junkie!' Hear me, Mom? That's the way I want you to let him have it. Maybe, just maybe, it'll shake that complacent son of a bitch up, make him show some human emotion for the first time in his creepy little self-centered life."

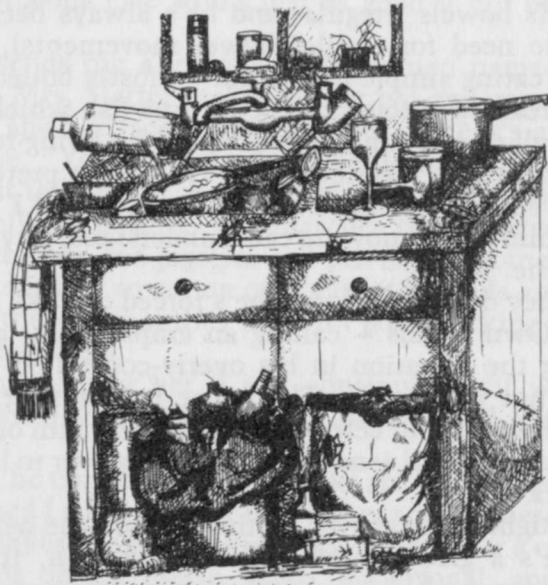
And I did tell his father about Jamie and Jamie was right --his father finally did show some emotion: he sneered -- and then he went and had all the locks on the doors changed so that Jamie couldn't ever come home again.

Where are you, Jamie-Lost-And-Gone-Forever -- are you alive or are you dead? I think you're dead. I think you died of an overdose in some hole-in-the-wall cellar, and I think you're lying there right now being eaten up by rats even as your flesh rots away like the garbage that's rotting away right under me here in my kitchen here in my life.



Nancy Umphres

And I look around me at the piled up putrefaction as a newly-arrived colony of huge brown roaches brazenly sashays under and over and around my kitchen counters, cupboards, and floor and I say to the newcomers: "Welcome! Come and bring your friends to the feast." And I watch them devour the moldy orange peels, sink their jaws into the rind from a rotting hunk of misshapen Swiss cheese, and attack the bone from a tough T-bone steak that neither he nor I enjoyed right before the news came about Sara. Our Last Supper.



Let the roaches, the ants, and all the other insects have the scraps from our daily bread -- they'll survive the deadly staph germs growing in the staff of life, in the broken scraps of gray-coated bread. They'll survive because their instincts are strong. Almost as strong as *his* instincts.

And they do survive: Breed and multiply. Multiply and breed. Take over my kitchen, what's left of my life.

But then! A minor miracle -- and I realize the roaches are my allies: He comes in for an evening snack, sees them (they no longer bother to hide), and immediately carts out one of the bags of garbage! Just one, mind you (don't want to spoil the little woman), and when he comes back in he's sneezing and rubbing his nose and filling up a fresh garbage bag with snotty kleenex, and I can tell that the dust is finally getting to him, making his hay fever flare up worse than it's ever flared up before. Gulping down an antihistamine, he begins to vacuum out one room for himself -- his own private haven where he can more comfortably await my Return To My Senses. (It's also Jamie's old room; I hope you haunt him there, Jamie!)

And now, having also given up on take-out foods (they make his bowels irregular and he's always been obsessed with the need for regular bowel movements), he's gone back to eating simple food again -- mostly boiled eggs with toast, creamed cottage cheese or tuna fish which he serves to himself on paper plates, eating in the living room where the roaches aren't as numerous. He tries to pretend that he doesn't see them, but of course he does and I know they bother him and I know he can't understand why they don't bother me.

But they don't -- and thus he's forced to Take Matters Into His Own Hands -- calling an employment agency, explaining the situation in his overly-controlled voice. (My wife is not well lately. The house has been neglected. Et cetera. Et cetera. Et cetera.) and I can hear him offering double wages if they'll send The Right Party over to help out his poor sick wife.

The Right Party arrives at nine o'clock the next morning and she's a great strong bulk of a woman, this Yvonne Washington -- a black bulwark coming between me and my mountain of neglected work. And I rouse myself enough to show her where I keep the clean rags but even the clean rags aren't clean because he's used them to tidy up Jamie's room. Without a word she takes the dirty rags into the bathroom and washes them out one by one and then she returns to the kitchen.

"Miz Fairchild," she says to me, "you're troublin' real bad I can tell you is," and that's all she says and suddenly I want to lean my head against her shoulder and cry until I dehydrate. But she plunges in immediately and works like a

latterday slave and after eight hours there's a visible difference in the amount of dust and dirt and the whole upstairs is shiny clean.

"An' I'll get the rest of the house tomorrow an' the next day," she promises, and I don't blame her for leaving the kitchen for last as I hand her the envelope with her double wages.

But the next day she doesn't show up and somehow I feel even more bereft than usual and then the employment agency calls and a whiny voice informs me that Yvonne won't be coming back to work for a long time, poor woman, she's been mugged by one of her own kind -- a Watusi-sized soul brother who filched her purse with its double wages and sent her on a stretcher to St. Luke's Hospital. "But I can send you someone else who's just as good if not better is that okay?"

And she sends me a vicious little woman named Mrs. Slattery and Mrs. Slattery takes off her hat and comes into my kitchen and her face screws up like a rodent's and she shrieks at me, "You don't need a maid here what you need is an arsonist to burn down this filthy place!" and she jams on her old pillbox of a hat and marches out, muttering to herself about slobs and pigsties and privileged women who are too goddam lazy to get up off their fat behinds and haul out some of the shit that they leave for poor working people to haul out for them.

And I don't answer her. I just continue to sit where I always sit and I think to myself: Goodbye and good riddance.

And when he comes home and looks around and asks me what happened I don't answer him either and he goes to the phone and makes a few calls and a day or two later a crew of men descends on the house, brisk, impersonal, and they bring their own equipment and cleaning supplies along with their lunches in brown paper bags -- and suddenly, miraculously, all the garbage is gone and every room, including the kitchen, is gleaming. And the roaches look confused and scurry back and forth, trying to reorient themselves in the now-unfamiliar surroundings.

But before they can do so, an exterminator entices them to death with poisoned bait, along with the ants and silverfish and other insects that I can't identify. The house is immaculate once more -- just the way it used to be. And still I

sit in my kitchen and continue to stare at the walls, and I'm thinking that somehow I liked it better with the garbage all around me and the roaches to keep me company. But he comes home and actually smiles at me for the first time in twenty years.

"We'll make a fresh start," he says to me -- and to prove it he orders and has installed a garbage disposal unit for the wet oozy kind of waste and he feeds the stuff into it himself and the act of doing it seems to give him a great deal of pleasure.

And now he also wants to buy a trash masher for the boxes, bottles and cans that the garbage disposal can't handle.

"You see," he says, magnanimously pleased with his own cleverness, "I've solved the problem for you. You'll never have to take out garbage again -- only a single container of compacted trash a week." And I think to myself maybe he's right. Maybe he has solved my problem. All my problems. And I'm struck by the irony of his solution, by the appropriateness of it. But I don't know for sure whether the trash masher'll do the job properly, won't know until it's installed, until after he's given me a thorough demonstration of the way it works.

In the meantime I can only imagine, longingly imagine, that it *will* work. And mentally I skip over such preliminary details as blending the leftover roach bait into some cottage cheese and borrowing a hack saw from a neighbor -- and instead I concentrate on how I'll lower his severed head into the trash masher and how I'll turn on the switch and carefully listen to his skull being crushed until his brains liquefy and run out through the avenues of sharded bone fragments -- hopefully compressed into an unidentifiable mass of muck along with his smelly tuna fish cans and styrofoam egg cartons -- and the snotty tissues from his hay-fevered nose.

Contributors

V. T. Abercrombie, another Texas poet, lives in Houston and has had poems in various journals such as *West Branch*, *Cedar Rock*, *Texas Traveler* and *Sam Houston Literary Review*. In 1977 he placed third in the *Writers' Digest* Contest.

Dawna Maydak Andrejczak is a Pennsylvanian who has won prizes from the Texas Poetry Society and published in more than 35 magazines and anthologies, and all this since 1975.

Susan Baran is a native New Yorker and has taught school in the Bronx. She is studying in the M.F.A. program at Columbia University and participated in the Writers' Conference at Aspen, Colorado, in 1978.

Tom Buell is a professor of English at Portland State University in Oregon and a sometime actor and sculptor, besides being an almost educated (Princeton '50) husband and father. He is a recent initiate into the realm of poets.

Phillip Corwin is a poet, novelist and critic. He works for the United Nations and lives with his wife, three children and two cats in a suburb of New York City. His poetry, fiction, book reviews and journalism have appeared in *The National Observer*, *Barron's*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Poetry Today* and others.

David E. Cowen is a Senior English Major at Sam Houston State University and has published in the *Sam Houston Literary Review* and *The Rectangle*. A native of Brownsville, Texas, David received an honorable mention in the Eleanor B. North Award Competition sponsored by *The Rectangle*.

Tonita S. Gardner is a short story writer from Great Neck, New York who has published her fiction in *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*, *Descant*, *Redbook*, *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine* and others.

Karen J. Gray, a graduate from Texas Tech University, is presently an art teacher in the Lubbock Public Schools and a practicing artist.

Barbara Jameson is another Texan, from Dilley, presently living in Albuquerque with her husband and two daughters; besides writing and reading, Barbara enjoys British history, early classical music and hiking.

Roger Jones, a second-year graduate student at Sam Houston State University, is working on a creative thesis. He is no newcomer to *riverSedge* and has also appeared in *Sam Houston Literary Review*, *Separate Doors*, *Artes Liberales* and others.

Allan Kimball from Pasadena, Texas, calls himself a "tall skinny kid with a beard" and has published two books of poetry, *Opus 25* and *Scribblings on the World*. His poems and short stories have appeared in *Hyacinths & Biscuits*, *Poetry Today*, *Wayfarer*, *Elan* and a British science-fiction anthology, *Super Heroes*.

Timm Louis, another New Yorker, now lives in Los Angeles and is working on his first novel which will be ready by this fall.

Allan Morris heads a small public relations-advertising-graphics firm in Manhattan, where he lives with his wife, an artist and illustrator. A native of New York, Morris has written almost one hundred stories and satirical pieces, about a quarter of which have been accepted for publication by various magazines.

Bob Necker, originally from New Jersey, is a newspaperman in Waterbury, Connecticut. His poetry has appeared in *Saturday Review*, *New York Herald-Tribune* and a McGraw-Hill textbook, *Poetry: Meaning and Form*, besides other smaller magazines.

Jeremy Palmer perseveres, and feeds chickadees, in an isolated corner of the Catskill Mountains. His poems have appeared in *Eureka*, *Yes*, *Wetlands*, *Cave*, *Spectrum*, and others.

Jim Rivers was born in Chicago but is a long-time South Carolina resident. His poems have appeared in some forty magazines, including *Southwest Review*, *Southern Humanities Review*, *South Carolina Review* and others.

Randy Schluter is presently enlisted in the United State Air Force and stationed in England where he lives with his wife, a new baby, two cats and a rabbit. He has a story accepted by *The North American Review* and other poetry and fiction published, he tells us, in various obscure magazines.

Roland E. Sodowsky teaches and writes at the University of Calabar in Nigeria. He has also been the editor of a small town newspaper and wrote his story "Noodlers" while teaching at the University of Oklahoma.

Jan Villarrubia, from New Orleans, won the Academy of American Poets Prize at Tulane University in 1979 and has published in numerous magazines, including *Dacotah Territory*, *The Literary Review* and *Attention Please*. She is an active member of the New Orleans Poetry Forum.

Sarah Brown Weitzman is a New York poet who has published in *Contemporary Quarterly*. This is her first appearance in *riverSedge*.

Ulrike Gasprian was born in Vienna and has travelled and exhibited widely. She and her two children enjoy camping and hot air ballooning.

Gloria Herrera recently exhibited in Quetzalcoatl II and sold her first painting.

David E. Keyes, a veteran of three years in the air force, is a talented new area artist.

Ansen Seale, a young photographer now studying at Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas has contributed both drawings and photographs to *riverSedge*.

Nancy Umphres is a Southern Californian who now lives in McAllen, Texas with her family and studies at Pan American University.

riverSedge THANKS

SPECIAL FRIENDS

First National Bank, McAllen
First State Bank and Trust, Edinburg

PATRONS

David Alvarez
B.I.C. Realty,
Norm and Pam Browne
Bob Dowell
First National Bank, Edinburg
Richard Fulton
Don & Berry Fritz
Mike Reed & Sylvia Rendon
Joe & Violette Metz
Izora Skinner
Valley Federal Savings & Loan
Frederick von Ende

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Single issue	\$2.50	_____	
Special Chicano issue	\$2.50	_____	
Subscription	\$7.00	_____	a year/three issues

CHAPBOOKS

Bonds, Jan Seale	\$3.00
The Valley (regional)	2.50

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE _____

Special Friends (\$100 _____ \$150 _____) and Patrons
(\$20 _____ \$35 _____ \$50 _____) welcomed
and acknowledged in *riverSedge*, a nonprofit press.

MAIL TO: riverSedge press
p. o. box 1547
edinburg, tx 78539

Publication of this magazine has been made possible, in part, by a grant from the Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines and The National Endowment for the Arts.

riverSedge welcomes submissions of art, photography, poetry, short stories, and essays accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Payment is in copies. Rights revert to artists and writers.

Cover Design : Norm Browne
Layout & Paste-up : Dorey Schmidt
Patricia De La Fuente

Copyright 1979

riverSedge press

MEMBER
COSMEP
COMMITTEE OF SMALL MAGAZINE
EDITORS AND PUBLISHERS
BOX 793 SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94101

