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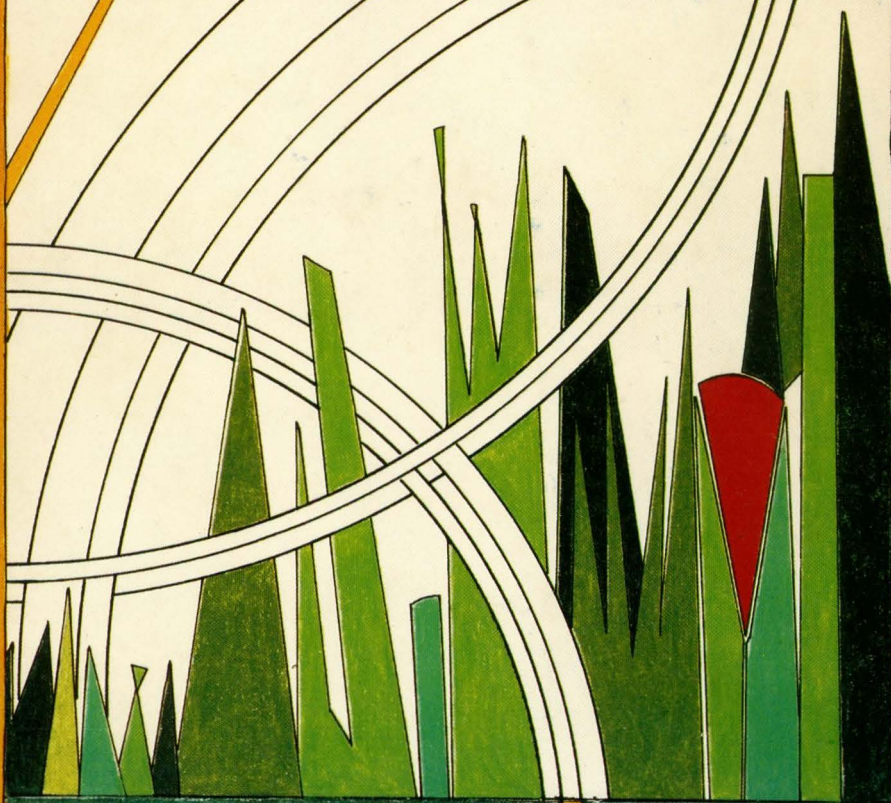
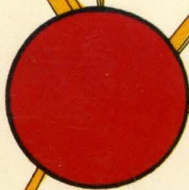
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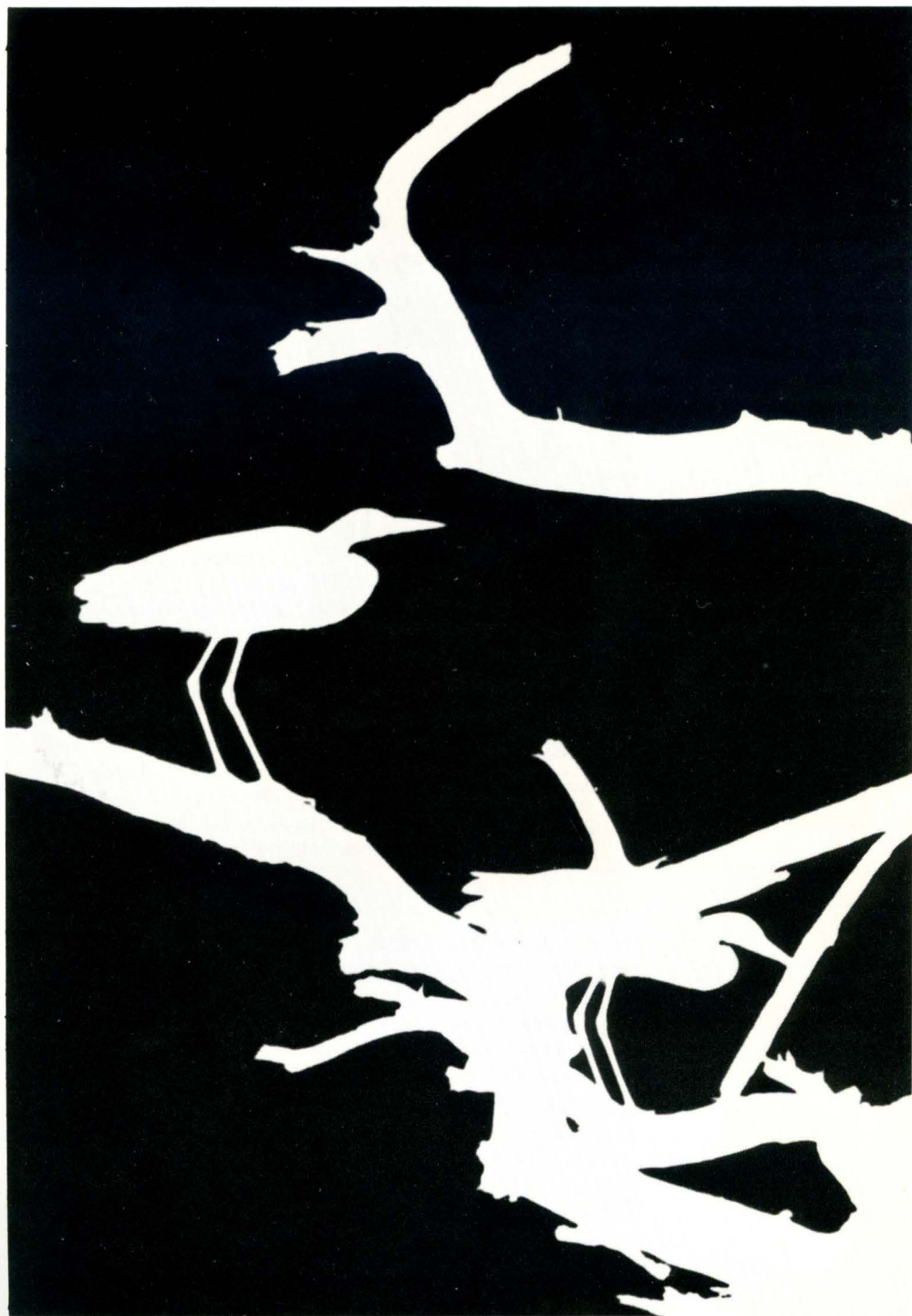
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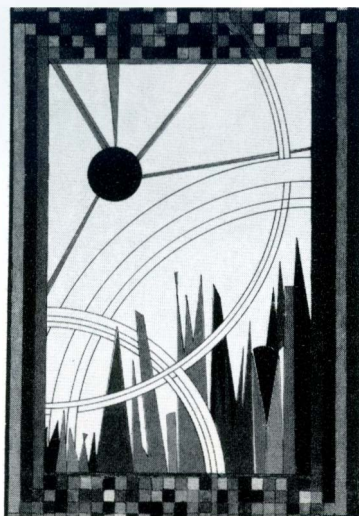
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BRUSHING





BRUSHING • SPRING • 1983



COVER DESIGN

The cover artwork was conceptualized after pondering several thoughts for a few days and then altering almost all of them. The resulting electric design boasts Spring and Love. Drawn with ordinary color pencils and ink on a 2 ply cold press illustration board.

Nancy Donlan

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FOREWORD

There is a universe of stars in everyone's life — a galaxy of potential light in the spirit of each of us. Some leave their lights fragmented and dim, while others hold their stars, nourish them and let them grow into warm radiant suns. This book is dedicated to those who pursue life and thus strengthen their dreams, their spiritual light, and share the intensity of the human connection by basking in one another's light. In a world where luminous stars seem fragile and in danger of growing dim, allow the world of vision — words, pencil, paint and film to strengthen your star. Consider these pages fuel. Let it burn.

DAN RICHARDS

March, 1983



Jeff B. Donlan, Beginnings

INDIGO

From acid he rose
Etched free of frailty,
Strong and clean.
In indigo inks
He burnt his palms,
In negative spaces
In inverted places.
I raced behind
In hope to touch but a shadow of his face.
He withdrew —
In indigo walls of blue.

I glimpsed a crown
Of thorns, or leaves, or lace
At his brow.
But he had stolen away.
In haste, erased his sticky smudges
Erased the inky prints
And lost me,
In the smeary traces
Of your eyes.

Laurel Stalder

In the soundless, echoed
Eye-full sigh
See I a mind full,
Seeking
Shareful souls
Remembered.
Revolving door-eyes
turn away,
turn! turn!
You think to hide
Yourself inside
While I stay out and play.

Cynthia Darrach

THROUGH THE YEATS COUNTRY

Do not ask me to cast a shivering eye
on the heathering hills
of Sligo.
I've an amethyst eye found on the strand
and a topaz one
for the kelp and sand left by the tides
at Bundoran
a sapphire streak for the sea.
Rider may pass
but reader if wise
and poets
because of their keen and kaleidoscopic eyes
will pause.

Fanny Ventadour



Kirsten Chalker

GYPSY DREAMS

Acres recline
from sea-burnished sapphire sky
to my naked toes: over there,
smooth, tawny thighs secret
their dewed valley — here,
a racing swimmer's wide, sinewed back arcs.

Voluptuous colonies of sand
Appalachian solid to my eye blinked
today. But from tomorrow's tomorrow,
a sea of liquid dunes: gypsy grains
reborn in wild placental waters —
licked by rough tongued winds.

If I had lived a Bald Cypress,
I could have dreamed a mountain's measure.
But I am too fleet
for feldspar amassing —
ever-sculpted sand the quick inch
of dunes is a better metaphor for man.

Bruce Aufhammer

THE FLAGSTAFF TRAIN STATION

The train to Los Angeles was late. Beth shifted uncomfortably on the worn wooden train station seat and wondered if it was the close, overheated air or the late hour — it was nearly midnight — that added to her sense of feeling exhausted and dull.

She turned to Mark and he flinched, startled, when she touched his arm. They hadn't spoken more than a few words, either in the car, or since arriving at the station.

"I'm going outside for a while," she said. He started to get up, but she put her hand on his shoulder and pressed him back in his seat. "I'm just going out for a minute . . . to smoke a cigarette. I'll be right back." She left him sitting at the end of the row of seats, his hands clasped tightly in front of him.

Beth pushed through the heavy doors, and zipping her jacket against the cold wind, walked out onto the empty platform. She lit a cigarette and stood staring into the darkness beyond the dim glow of light that carried only as far as the tracks. Again she regretted not driving her own car from Los Angeles. If she hadn't been afraid of crossing the desert alone she would have left Flagstaff this morning and been home by now. They both knew it was over — again — and this time the mutual caring and guilt seemed almost harder to bear than the furious recriminations of a year and a half ago when Mark first tried to leave his wife, Jean. Now it was happening again, the same circumstances, but this time in a different place, with a different response. This time they were gentle with each other.

When they had heard that the train would be late, Beth had urged Mark to leave, to go back to his apartment. But he stayed, and she wondered that they both were willing to sit, not speaking, each absorbed in the hurt they felt for themselves and for each other.

Beth dropped the cigarette from the end of the platform, lit another, and continued staring into the dark. A wavering movement across the tracks, just beyond the range of light, shaped itself into the form of a heavy-set Indian woman dressed in the long skirt and full satin blouse of the Navajo. The woman walked unevenly into the thin light, the wind billowing the long skirt in front of her. She carried nothing; neither a purse nor a suitcase. She crossed the tracks and approached the steps at the end of the high platform where she gathered the folds of her skirt in one hand, clutched the hand rail, and climbed unsteadily toward where Beth stood in the shadow of the wall. The woman's black hair hung separated into heavy knotted strands across her shoulders. Without noticing Beth, she moved along the platform toward the doors, where she hesitated a moment before pushing forward into the station.

Beth assumed the woman was drunk rather than sick. But where had she come from? Where was she going? She put out her cigarette and went inside. The woman was walking slowly, with concentrated effort, across the room toward the row of seats facing Mark where now two other Indians, a man and a woman, were sitting.

Mark sat as she had left him, his elbows on the armrests, his hands clasped in front of him. Other people had come into the station. Some stood at the ticket window, others sat in the farthest rows of seats. None sat near the Indians.

The slow movements of the heavy Indian woman attracted attention and several people continued to watch her as she stopped at the seat next to the Indian man. She groped for the armrest with one hand and then lowered herself, slowly at first, but finally crumpling heavily into the wooden seat. Her head sagged to her chest and her heavy hair swung forward to cover most of her face.

Beth continued to stand just inside the door watching the Indians. She wondered that there was no recognition or exchange between them. There was something unnatural about them, something vital lacking in the space they occupied. It gave her an odd feeling to be able to stare at them while they seemed so unaware.

The Indian man seemed to be about fifty years old. His body was long and thin inside denim jeans that were faded to white-thread patches at the knees. His denim jacket was torn at the shoulder and a misshapen grey cowboy hat sat tilted to the back of his head. He leaned forward, his elbows on his knees, staring at the floor. The other woman was small and extremely thin. She wore a soiled and oversized yellow pantsuit. One side of her coarse hair had come loose from a bun at the back of her head and hung just past the level of her jaw. She looked impassively off to one side, toward the ticket counter. Beth could only have guessed at her age — she could have been thirty-five or fifty-five.

The fat woman had fallen asleep. Her large breasts rose and fell with slow, heavy breathing and her square-looking hands lay limp in her lap. All three looked exhausted, almost hunted. They seemed to be resting only momentarily.

Mark jumped when Beth touched her hand to the back of his head. He didn't say anything, but his hands gripped each other even more tightly. Beth sat down, also without speaking. There was nothing to say, really. They had said it all. Still, she wondered how it had come to this again, to the same wrenching denial of what they both wanted. She knew Mark had loved her, still loved her. She had first been attracted to his voice and his hands. His voice was even and soft, often with a questioning inflection even when he wasn't asking a question. His hands were almost delicate for a man's hands, and he gestured with them continuously, as if to reinforce what he said. After they had started seeing each other, Beth

often would hold onto his hands to make him be quiet. She would kiss his palms and the inside of his wrists, feeling if she possessed his hands first, then he was her's if only for a while. The first time Mark had tried to leave his wife, Jean had gone to pieces and Mark stayed. Then they were transferred from Los Angeles to Flagstaff. After a year and a half, Mark called. He had taken his own apartment. He couldn't come to Los Angeles just now, he had said, not right away. He would come as soon as he could. He just wanted her to know.

So, of course, Beth had come to Flagstaff. His wife was phoning him constantly. His company was laying people off. He had lost weight, his hands shook. Beth tried to hold him — to hold them — together. Their lovemaking had an intensity that left them exhausted and wondering, a desperation that told her he was slipping away, again.

In the train station Beth continued to stare, fascinated, at the Indians in front of her. The fat woman's mouth hung open as she slept. Beth saw that the man's dark hands were dry and cracked, the fingernails broken and split deep into the thin fingers. The heels of his boots were worn almost flat. The small woman wore white sandals held together with frayed straps and bits of string through the buckles. She continued to watch for something off to one side. Then she turned to the man beside her, lifted one of his hands and held it, examining it almost as if it should remind her of something she couldn't quite remember.

Beth looked in the direction that had attracted the woman's attention, wondering what it was that she was looking for. She saw only the line of people at the ticket window and, farther along the same wall, the door to the ladies' room. An elderly woman with a small child approached the ticket window and spoke to the man behind the counter. He nodded and leaned forward to watch them walk toward the restroom. As the woman reached for the door handle, he pushed a buzzer behind the counter that automatically released the lock in the door. At the sound of the buzzer the Indian woman looked around, dropped the man's hand and got to her feet. She hurried toward the restroom door, but it closed with a snap-lock sound before she could put her arm out to stop it. The man behind the ticket counter glanced at her indifferently and went back to his work. The woman hesitated in front of the door and then turned back.

Beth leaned closer to Mark. "Why doesn't she go up to the counter?" she asked.

Mark looked at the Indians as though seeing them for the first time. "He wouldn't let her in," he said dully. "So many of them come in here ... to stay warm, sleep ... they're usually drunk. It's gotten to be a problem."

The Indian man hadn't looked up when the woman left, but now as she shuffled and turned in front of her seat, he lifted his head and looked not directly at her but off at an angle, past her. For the first time Beth saw his

eyes and she felt a heavy turn in her stomach. They had the same opaque look she had once seen in a blind dog's eyes.

The woman sat down and again picked up one of the man's hands. Holding it in both of her's she ran her fingers across the callouses and the wide silver band on his ring finger. The man looked toward Beth and Mark, but Beth knew he couldn't see them. The woman continued to look over her shoulder toward the ticket counter. Then, still holding his hand in her's, she leaned back wearily and shut her eyes.

"My God," Beth breathed. She had never seen people who represented such despair. And yet the hands of the woman holding on, needing the touch of that man . . . It should have been grotesque, but it wasn't. Beth looked at Mark's hands. They held on to each other, gripped tightly in front of him.

The train whistle sounded, growing louder as it approached the station. Beth felt the ringing clarity of it inside her. It was reality, the reality of now and of the future.

The Indian man stirred uncomfortably in his seat, his hand securely held by the woman beside him. Beth stood up and turned to Mark. "Come with me," she said. But Mark didn't move. He looked up at her with a confused and remote pain in his eyes and Beth felt an intense pity for him. For the first time she saw clearly that Mark would always be overwhelmed, that no matter who he was with, he would be alone. And she knew that being alone, his kind of loneliness, was something she wouldn't accept for herself. She kissed him goodbye and boarded the train to cross the desert.

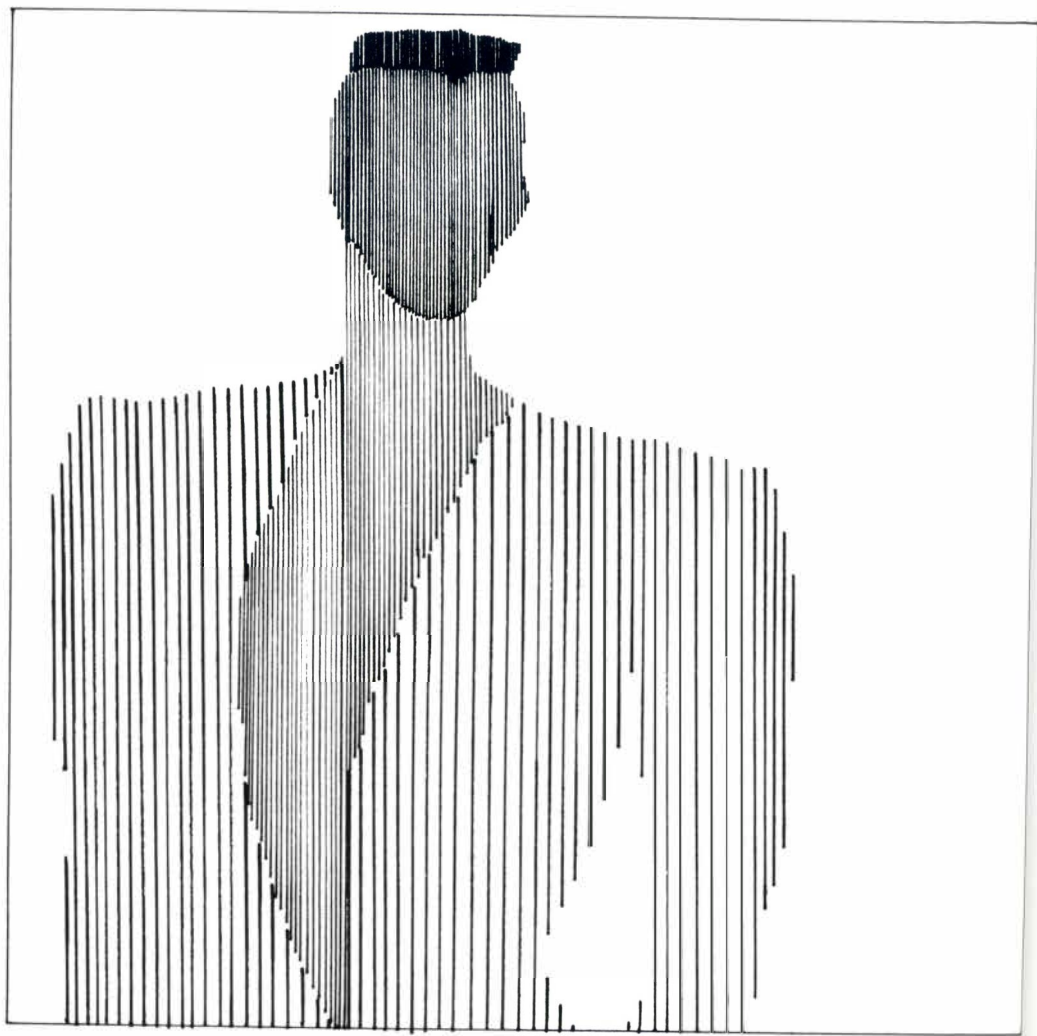
Karen Chalker



Karen E. Murphy, Unicorn

The horned head in my lap
I hug closer,
though mixed with the scent of Eden
there is treachery.
The fragrance
of the thousand virgin dreams
that it has touched
overpowers me
 like rotting roses
the sweetness of the few
it has fulfilled
still leads me on.
In the silver mirror
of the unicorn's eye,
I am enthralled
in his torn soul
there is my own.
I, too, ensnared,
subjected by myself,
taste the world
of man.

Jina Mullett



John Nareta

Whose is the voice that's buried
in the moist and fertile field of me,
That germinates in darkness
and struggles
in the morning
toward the light?
From whence, the voice
whose life I harbor,
whose pulse I feel breathing
warm and green and growing,
undirected,
Like a symphony
whose rampant passion
swallows its conductor?

Nancy Wilson

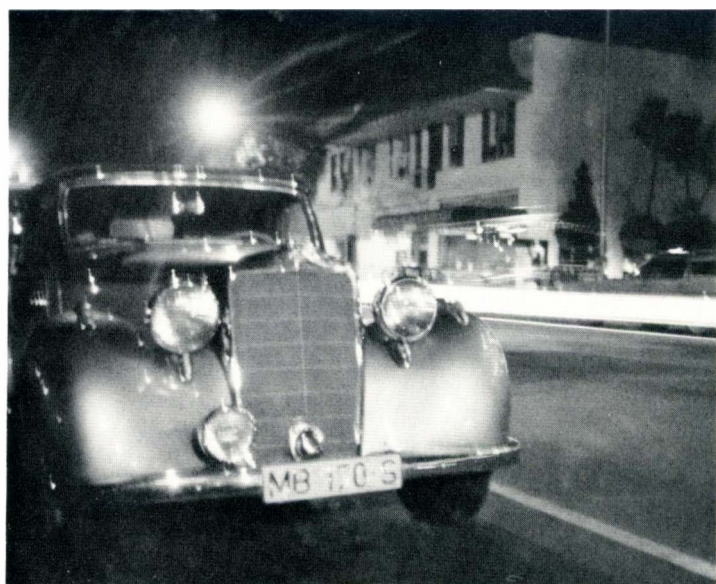
A PARABLE

My car's like a sprung, unexpected trap
where I sit caught by a sudden storm.
Without the motor running, the radio off,
the rain so heavy it blurs all the outside
I feel isolated, and yet perhaps pleasantly so,
After all I'm content, sheltered and dry,
but not quite in control, I find, as when
each time I think it has almost eased
enough to jump, break out of this hold
and run, it intensifies, actually dumping
down wild waves over the dull windshield,
daring me to spring and be instantly soaked,
suit, shirt, tie, shoes and all, drenched.

Or if not that, I could drive aimlessly
with delusions of action and self-direction.
No, better to sit still, simply to wait.
The strange thing is there's nothing to do,
not only about the rain, but with myself.
Think; here's a chance moment yielding
opportunities to ask why we are apart,
to reflect, find threads in old lubrications.
Why isolation? Why now, why quite alone,
unplanned for, unprepared for, surprised?
It's only natural, you say; things happen
of course like these heavy Florida clouds
anted up by the tropics out of azure deeps
and drop down capriciously, where by chance
one happens to be, not necessarily by design.

While crystals dance ironically on concrete
at least there's this much worth noting:
the back of a laundry bill and a golf pencil
can be used to trace an old treasure map,
and playing with words becomes a possibility;
there is choice (to be wet or not to be):
that I can tolerate my thoughts afterall;
and finally there's certitude — as the car's clock
ticks in time with the steady rainfall —
I know the scene will eventually change
and after darkness, dismay, and a deluge
I predict I'll come running toward you.

Bob Duvall



Elizabeth Robinson, Night Shot

EVE'S WEAR

(for my daughter on her 12th birthday)

My Heidi-of-the-mountains,
Rebecca of the fabled farm,
Primeval Pollyanna —

Your course charts but a dozen years,
And in that brief and carefree span
You've bridged the female's wide self-seas;
You've plumbed her depths and found the pearl.

Lavender child — Aquarian violet
Otter among orchids
Balancing between softball and earpiercing,
— Jezebel in jeans
Teasing a 'narrow fellow' by campfire,
— Cleopatra in calico
Reading brother's love note,
— Pandora in plaid
Coaxing soft brown hair into an attitude,
— Delilah in dimity.

Girl
Woman
Eve

Nancy Hoffman

KOOL-ADE RINGS AND OTHER THINGS

She sweeps the boiling water with long spaghetti noodles. He sits on the counter-top beside the stove. The band-aid on one knee puckers and stretches with each swing of his legs.

"Boy, do I love spaghetti," he says, rubbing his tummy and licking his lips. "In fact, I think it's my favorite food in the whole world."

She lifts the hair from his forehead and kisses the only clean spot on his face. He accepts her affection as casually as he does his lot, his life and his world. To him she is Muzzo, Maude or Sweet Polly, whichever nickname suits his tempo. When he engages her in a confidence or needs her, she is Mother.

"Did I tell you about The Hardy Boys in the Tower Treasure, Muzzo?" he asks, holding his legs out straight while she fumbles in the drawer for a wooden spoon.

He tells the story as the ground beef sizzles beside him. A bubble of grease pops and nips his arm. The salt shaker spills when he jumps.

"You okay, honey?" she asks.

"Sure, Ma," he laughs and wets his finger, touching it to the tiny burn.

The Hardy Boys' plot and the spaghetti sauce thicken while he draws designs in the spilled salt. She holds out a spoonful of sauce.

"Blow," she says, "It's hot."

"The best I ever tasted."

"Thank you, Marcus Aurelius," she says, using one of her many names for him.

He jumps from the countertop and runs off with band-aid flapping. She sponges the sand, left from his jeans, into her hand.

I wish you the joy of knowing him.

He is every ten-year-old boy. The culmination of a whirlwind decade of development; that exquisite moment of unselfconsciousness as adolescence and manhood loom in the vista ahead.

She is every woman who has been loaned, too briefly, the most precious of unpolished gems. She longs to hold him close but loosens her grip to a brushing touch of fingertips, knowing he rushes into a future of which she can only dream.

Elinor Cleveland Sullivan



Euphorbia pulcherrima (Poinsettia)

Abby Ober

The rain plummets,
Pummelling me as I lose my grip
And my passion wanes.

Dreary gaze does not want hope —
not now.
It only searches for absence
of color,
Which the synthesis of lake, horizon,
and overcast sky readily gives.

As I sit like lead on the grabbing
brown earth,
My toes mingle with the watery drab
Asking not to be dry
Until my raintears recede and my
sopping grey attitude turns to white,
And until I can again see color
in the forms that now devastate.

Todd Barton

Your pardon, Sir,
I beg,
I don't mean to stare,
but I'm sure I know you
from somewhere ...

I don't recognize your face,
your shape,
the turned-up corner
of your smile,
yet,
all the while
I've been sitting here,
dancing

on the edges
of your shimmering energy,
on the fringes
of the line
that separates me from you,
and I know
your spirit
is mine.

I can't see,
my eyes close
against your white light
as it splits
and
reaches
to wrap about me,
a silken sheath
drawing me to you, you to me.

Tell me now
the pull isn't there
and I'll question the existence
of the cool sea air
that touches my face
and lifts my hair.

Come too close
and we'd break
one upon the other
like Tsunami waves,
speak,
using just our fingers,
live on whispers for days ...

But then you're the gentleman
across the room
whose pardon I crave.
There are others nearby
and our faces to save.

So,
we'll shake hands,
say a cordial goodnight
and whenever we meet
I'll stay just outside
your white light,
dancing,
on the edges of the magic,
on the fringes of the line
that separates me from you,
your spirit from mine.

Candice Critchfield

MOUSE LOOSED IN HER HAIR

The forest floor is spread
 with needles mooned and pined
 and far far off
the crashing sound of waves.
Between the trees a quarter moon
 and here and there
 a star.

He bit the stars and crunched them one by one
the spikes a taste of ginger to the tongue.

He fancied a little mouse loosed in her hair
and told her doffodils and buttonwoods until
 she burst into a thousand tingling bells
softening the night with honey
 and with bees.

The forest floor
 A crashed wave
 needles pinned within her hair
a quarter moon
 and there
 and there
 and there
 a star
between the trees.

Fanny Ventadour



Cindi Cross

CITY WOMAN

Lola ducked her head in pleased acknowledgment, her smile brightening the kitchen corner. "Yes, it is. It's a real nice funeral. Thank you so much for coming, Mr. Birdsong. Mother Boren would have loved it, wouldn't she?"

It **was** a nice funeral. The house was full of people, and the yard, too. Nice people. Neighbors from Hornettown and Helmsburg; church folks from Morgantown and Nashville. Why, even snooty old Mrs. Brown had come down off her high hill long enough to bring in a pie and view the remains. 'Course, the pie was store bought. Lola sniffed. Money, after all, don't make folks all that great, she decided.

"Why, hullo there, Miz Ellis," she said. "Ben and me sure do appreciate your bringing that e-NOR-mous pot of beans. Why, we could have fed every **single** one of our company with just what you brought. Lou would have been tickled to see them men light into that ham, too. You're just gonna have to take me in hand, Miz Ellis, now that Mother Boren's gone." She permitted herself a tiny tear and turned her head, dabbing at her eyes. Her brave smile returned, dazzled.

"Why, Miz Ellis, you got the quickest eyes in the country! I swear you do! 'Sfact! You don't miss a thing! Nobody else has remarked that I'm carrying Lou's favorite handkerchief. She wanted me to have it. Said so just before . . . before . . ." Lola's voice trailed off into a small, strangled sob. Her bony shoulders shuddered pitifully beneath the flowered jersey dress.

*Miz Ellis was to chastise her husband later — and roundly — for daring to say Lola Devore Boren 'looked like a regular chippy' at her mother-in-law's funeral. The magenta and purple flowers on the black jersey **did** strike her as a bit gaudy, but then, "Can't fault her for that, Charley. Poor little thing hain't had a new dress in — can't say when. **Used** to look right in style all the time. 'Perkiest dresser in the County.' That's what Lou always said."*

*Charles reminded his missus that when Lola had first come to the Boren farm, there had been some as 'lowed Lola Devore was too fancy for Ben Boren **or** the farm. And 'perky' wasn't what the local wimmenfolk had called her dresses then.!*

Lola let a red-tipped hand flutter at her Ben, who was winding up the Victrola once more. Instantly, he was at her side, anxiously inquiring what he could do.

"Why, nothing, Ben, dear. I'm holding up real fine. It's you I'm worried about, Benjamin. Your own mother!" Her wide brown eyes brimmed with tears. "Oh, Ben!" She clung to him weakly. "Whatever am I gonna do without Lou?"

He hugged her gingerly, mindful of watching eyes.

"Be all right," he said gruffly. "Be just fine."

Mr. Birdsong reported — with a trace of wistfulness — the scene in minute detail to his good wife at suppertime. "Hanging

on him like she was about to drop," he said. "How long they been married, anyway?"

Mrs. Birdsong reckoned it was unseemly and wanton for a grown woman to be lallygagging on a man's neck thataway. Married thirteen years! "It just ain't fittin'," she clucked.

Mr. Birdsong sighed.

Lola paused again beside the polished wooden coffin set on straight chairs in Lou and Cal's big bedroom. Her hand reached out, hesitated, then darted into the grey silk puffs.

"Looking for something?" Her sister-in-law, Ruth, stood there, eyes flat and hard. Ruth, the ample. Ruth, the rock. Ruth, the jealous and unforgiving.

"Why, no." Lola recovered quickly, dabbed at her eyes with the square of white lawn edged in intricate scallops of blue tatting. "No, Ruth, dear. I was just keeping a promise. A promise to Lou — to Mother Boren. She said to me, she said, 'Lola, whatever you do, don't let them put me away without my weddin' ring.' She said, 'Lola, I ain't never felt right about giving up that ring. You're my only daughter ... in law, and I love you more than anything, but I shouldn't have let you wear my wedding ring all these years. Ben should'a bought you one of your own.' "

"She said all that?" Ruth said wryly. "Mom?"

"Yes. Yes, she did. Hard to believe, ain't it? Just — just — just **achin'** to say it all these years, I 'spect, and worrying about hurtin' Ben's feelings. There now, don't Lou's hand look just **natcheral** once more!"

"She never did want that ring," Ruth grated out at milking time.

"Not good enough. Wants a diamond, I bet. She'll have one, too. Quicker'n you can say Jack Robinson!"

Skelly nodded absently, snared the milking stool with his foot, and bent beside the next beast. "Lotsa things old fashioned about the farm," he said, oblivious of his wife's angry stare. " 'Spose there'll be some changes now."

"I ain't gonna change a thing," Lola was protesting to Preacher Oliver. "Why what **would** I change? Mother Boren practically brung me up. Why, she said herself I was no more'n a **baby** when I came here. Why, I would'a been plumb lost without her. I wouldn't have known what to **do** with a place of my own. Teaching me to cook and bake on that great, big, old iron stove. And puttin' up things! I made **all** the jellies and preserves last summer, Reverend. She let me do it all by myself! 'Course, I ain't never gonna learn to **clean** the way Lou did. Why, her heart and **soul** was in this house. She had me scrubbing and mopping and washing windows every day of the **world**!"

"And don't it all just look **exactly** the way it did the day her very own husband's **grandmother** came here to live! You just bet that every **stick** of furniture is **precious** to me!"

The Preacher was to remark at his regular circuit meeting in the Maple Grove Schoolhouse that Sunday that honorin' one's own mother and father is blessed, indeed, but them as honors their in-laws —and he looked directly at the drooping head of Lola

*Devore Boren — why **them** folk are practically guaranteed saints.*

"Oh, just getting a breath of air, Freddie Land. It's stiflin' in the house, even with the windows open, and so many people all day long. My head's fair to **bust**."

Lola smoothed her bobbed hair and leaned wearily against the smoke-house wall. "I'll surely be glad when Emerson Clark comes to get her tomorrow. It's been a nice funeral, all right, and everyone has been so good, but I'm just plumb tuckered out . . . wore out, that's what I am. Sleepin' in the house with a corpse for three days is awful tirin' on the nerves."

*Freddie Land, having a quick one at the White Front with his buddy Alvin Stinnett, swore that it wouldn'ta taken no more than **that** to kiss Miss Uppity-Ass right there and then.*

"S'truth! I could have! Been acting for years like I ain't alive! Her and her Big City ways! I tell you, Alvin, I know that look when I see it, and I think maybe she's had us fooled all these years."

Alvin allowed as how Freddie might be right about that, but still and all, Lola Devore Boren wasn't as young as she used to be.

*"Woman's never too old for **that**!" leered Freddie, and jabbed his friend Alvin in his mackinawed ribs. Freddie Land was not known for being a gentleman.*

"Not tonight, Ben. Cal's still awake. I can hear him tossin' around down there," Lola whispered to the pitch black night of the attic. "Ben, would you think I was just **awful** if I wanted to move us downstairs? Oh, not right away. Maybe not 'til next Sunday even. I know Ruth'll be mad as a wet hen. She's bound to have something to say, but Dad — well, he asked **me**, Ben. He did! He wants that little bed in Great Grandma's old room. He says he always **did** want a room off to the side, away from noise and traffic and all. He says he hates to **think** about that big, old feathertick without Mother Boren.

"Ben, he's just so — so pitiful! We gotta be real nice to him, Ben. You hear? I'll put Lou's best quilt in there on the bed, and he'll have that nice, old press for his clothes.

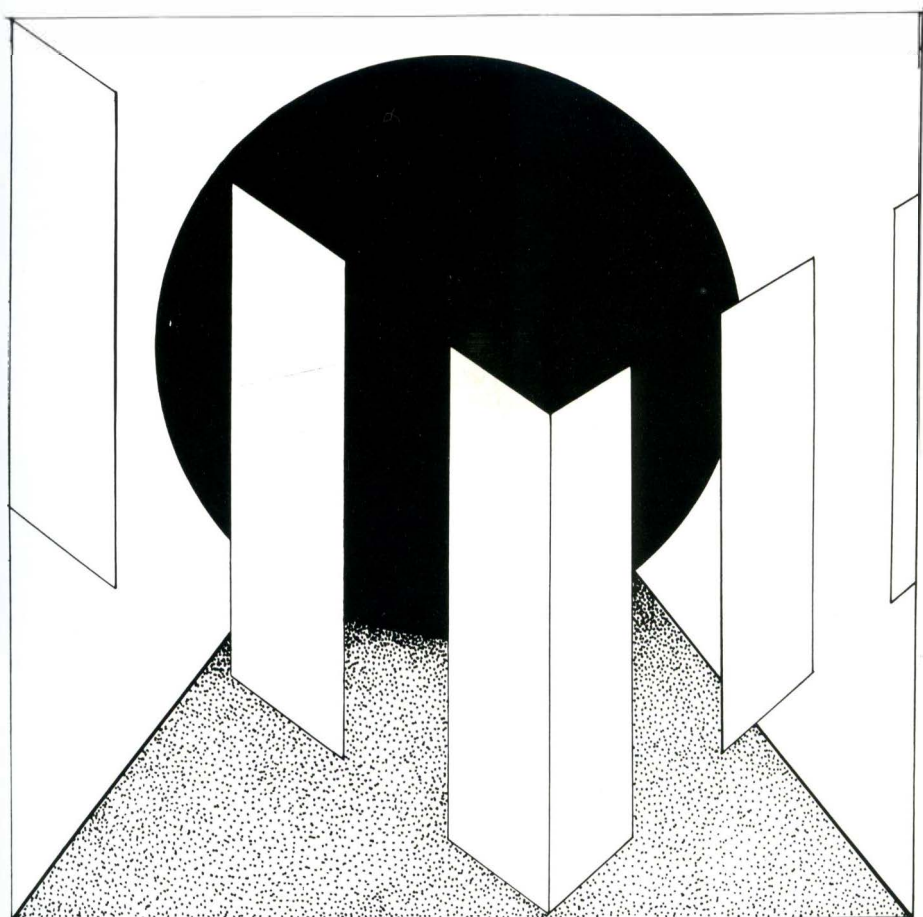
"I'm gonna learn to shave him just like Lou did, Ben, with that straight razor and all. 'Course, he might rather do it for himself. A man **ought** to shave himself."

Ben, used to a hundred nights of deferred or cautiously silent lovemaking, grunted sleepily and burrowed deeper in the straw-tick, settling.

Lola, her heart and mind afire with possibilities, eased from the bed and tiptoed to the window. She pulled a Lucky Strike from the pack secreted behind the loose lath and struck a match on the sill. In the eerie glow, her pointed face wavered on the pane, eyes enormous, mouth pouted seductively for the cigarette and as red as the scarlet satin pajamas she wore.

She wanted to throw open the window, jar the countryside awake shouting her new freedom, her new possessions, her new person. Instead, she drew her breath slowly, luxuriously, and exhaled a pale, perfect "O" into the mouth on the windowpane. Tomorrow, after the burying, she would take her Lucky Strikes downstairs. She would put the glass ashtray on the table by Lou Boren's chair. It was hers now.

Constance Kakavecoss Riggs



John Naretta

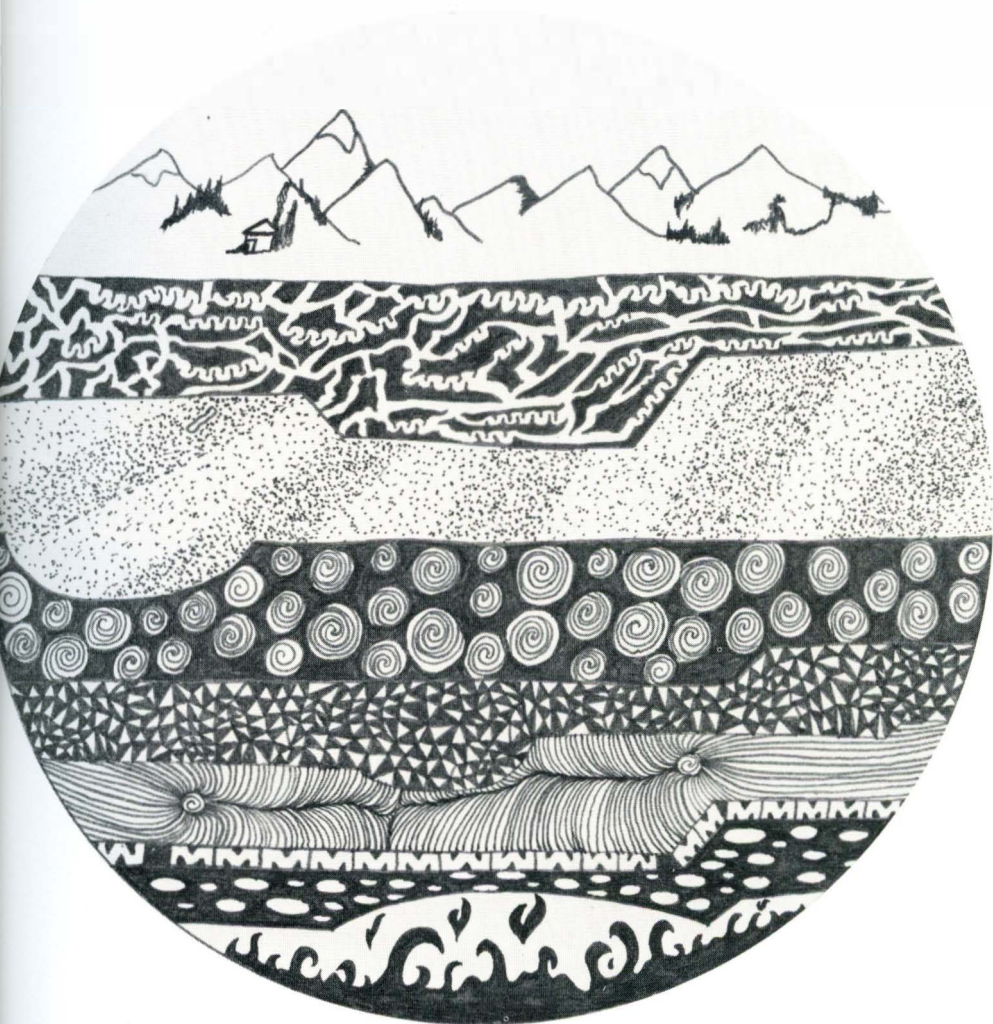
Burning Tower
Balanced on a Table
Twisting between two restless fingers
Breathes upward
Steady wreaths and funnels of fume.

The face behind the fingers
Puffs sporadic rings,
Of smoke
— Signals —

Together they burn,
Squeezed, moved, consumed
By some sporadic source,
Some fire-hungry dragon.
Drawn down, down, to thin, brown base
That ignites and consumes
— Itself —

A ruin of airy ash rests
In some communal tray
Bleak desert-grain,
Bleak deserted vessel
Damp with a woman's tears —
Ever spinning passionless globe
Of passionate fear.

Laurel Stalder



Dottie Wilson, Just My Imagination

10 am

The rocks thru my flipflops
popped thru right thru
to my sole
It wasn't bad
until the whole damn
place had gnawed bits
and pieces of glass
all over and especially
right thru my shoes, breaking
my sole

Hazy sun

stretched among
underbrush
dangling fabric
Drying
bitter blooms
spider bee
bite me
chew skin
bathe yourself
focus yourself
just right
forget and hide
watching yourself

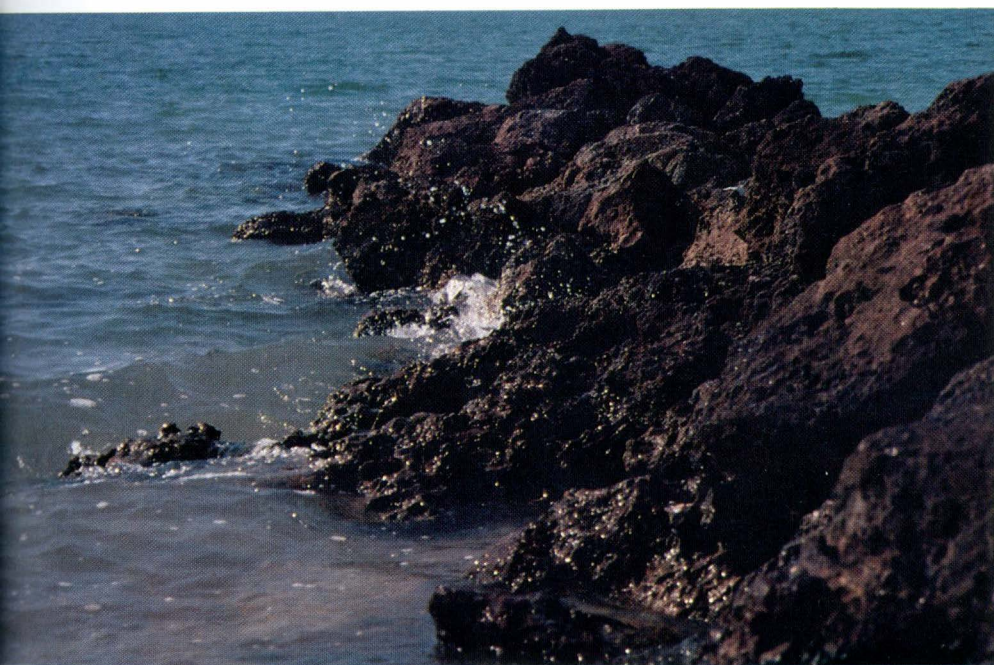
Dusk

Cool water drips off me as
I emerge in air my heart
rapidly beats inside
the water fish nibble my
legs feel their kisses and I
know
I'm alone
Here with water life surrounding
my soul understanding
that I can only move my eyes
and see love and feel the
water and my skin making love
in this lake.

Dan Richards



Karen Chalker, The Mara



Carlinne S. Meyn

THREE PORTRAITS OF LAUGHTER

- I. He trickles through tight cracks on voiceless air, seeping between crooked teeth. If the soul is in the laughter, then his is a skelton, spitting out the last drop of marrow.
- II. Laughter for her is only an excuse. The clenching of chest and throat, the spasm, the tremor of vocal cords all try to deceive with a laugh — which only in the harmonic overtone of the last echo becomes the sob of a lost child.
- III. His dark laughter thunders down the peak, tumbling into crotch and crevice. The climber follows the laughter, but finds the dark sound always sloping away from hand or foothold.

Melody Shahan





SPRING BETWEEN SNOWS

The fullest breath of spring
Is not contained in days
Within the grasp of summer's reign.
But, rather, on the warm spring days
Thrust suddenly between the cold
Snow pages when old king winter
Has not yet delivered up his
Kingdom to the sun.
Days when the daffodil and crocus,
Lured by false hope, peek forth
Only to be found at dawn
Shivering bloom-deep in snow.
When robins, leather-lunged, loudly
Prophesy of spring on sunny morns
From still bare limbs,
And sit in abject silence, lifting one
Cold foot from whitened branches
Ere the day is done.
Such days, when spring sweeps in
With all her babble sounds
And breathes her honeysuckle breath
Upon the earth, and then is gone —
These days have more of spring
Than spring herself.

Edward F. Sintz



Karen Chalker, On the Riverbank

BROTHER STASH

My poor hands
nicked and sore
from hopeless
exploration,
They never felt
worse
swollen knuckles
march across
formica surfaces
in the diner
we sat alone
can you spare
some time brother
stash my stuff
in your pockets
my life and wife
are yours
to hide your words
and rotten apple cores
you pierced our ears
and flood our minds
with oatmeal
waitress Beverly
— at the Diner —
serves to
satisfaction
hot or cold
can you spare me,
brother stash?

Dan Richards

LONG DISTANCE

Heavy space descended
with your voice.
We laboured at
some form of conversation
as all the while
the noisy questions in your mind
accused my wandering heart.

Judy Provost

IMPASSE

Your face was pressed
against the window of my dream.
Come in, I wordless cried
but realized that pane
was like your impasse —
Alas, transparent barrier —
A silent-movie agony.

I memorized that face
then dreamed you
and that space
a peaceful purple to heal
what I could not touch.

Judy Provost



Karen Chalker, Samburu Moran

AFTERWARDS

I come home.
The room is
a dark candle,
ten huddled roses,
a mute toy,
a blind bed.

Your spirit circles
like the goldfish
behind glass,
a flashing shadow
slipping
between fingers
of memory,
stirring hidden
among shivering fronds
of still green
moments.

Melody Shahan





The dimly orange lights
Gleamed through hazy night drops
That glazed the narrow car-rimmed streets
Before the double-fronted tan bricks
Mounted into wreckaging homes
Welcomed by popping lighted booms
Our place for now
A three long-roomed cubicle ...
Wooden floors set off
by white peeling plaster
and wavy glass
A cat sleeping on the electrical box
Entranced by the turning 60's blackness shine.
Hanging batiks
Over lopsided covered chairs.
Lampshade table dimly lit
The window looked over a
Symmetrical sand leveled alleyway
Where a girl got her head smashed in
Among the screams of intrusion
Where the man chemically screamed,
"You'd do it too if your husband was
Sleeping with another man."
The man who hammered nails
through his nose
was earning his beer
The lover ... who lived in decapitated murder
That wasted lank of nothing
... no good ...
Just as the one still in Vietnam,
Separated from the past
Having fallen into the whirlpool
Of evil where leeches sucked at her honesty
This woman
That poet ... so received ... so questioned
must break out
Before she is drained
Too early
So unnecessarily
She remains
and sadness reflects from her eyes
Giving away herself
Without anyone to noticeably receive.

Margaret Hall



David J. Shaskey, White

PRE SNOW TENSION

Magritte's brush
delights in todays
horizon
we await
the coming of
our snow.

plastic and gray
we wait
and watch running
to the bathroom
wonder why we're
sweating while
we await the snow.

p.g. year of 1,983

APOCALYPSE

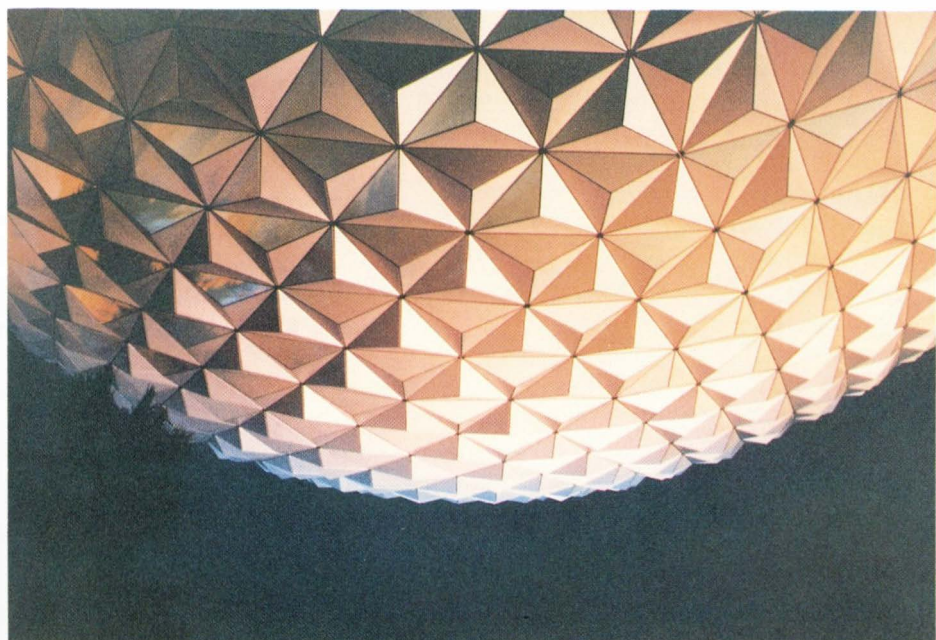
Refracted companion
Return to solitude,
Gaps are noticed
in joint obsession.

When the lights dim
Depart soundless,
Tears wait
when blinds are closed

Margaret Hall



Nancy Donlan, Floating



Dave Colage, Globe



Becky Klammer, Contemplations

With the sun setting behind him
And the cold air in his face
He leans defiantly into the wind,
Straining to recall a trace of youthful passion,
Ambitious dreams, ardently sought,
But seldom consummated.

His eyes are wrinkleed circles of solemn resolution
Peeking outward
From a wounded soul.
He is serving out his solitary sentence,
A victim of his own commitment.

Nancy Wilson



Alicia Leatherbury



homilies

fat cardinals preach
sacrifice to lean doves with
open beaks to fill

Elinor Sullivan

I love these days
when the trees rustle
through my hair
and whisper sweet secrets
of long days, cool nights
grey shores and glassy lakes
as the breeze brushes light kisses
on my neck
and I am held tight
in the arms
of the sun's rays.

L.S.

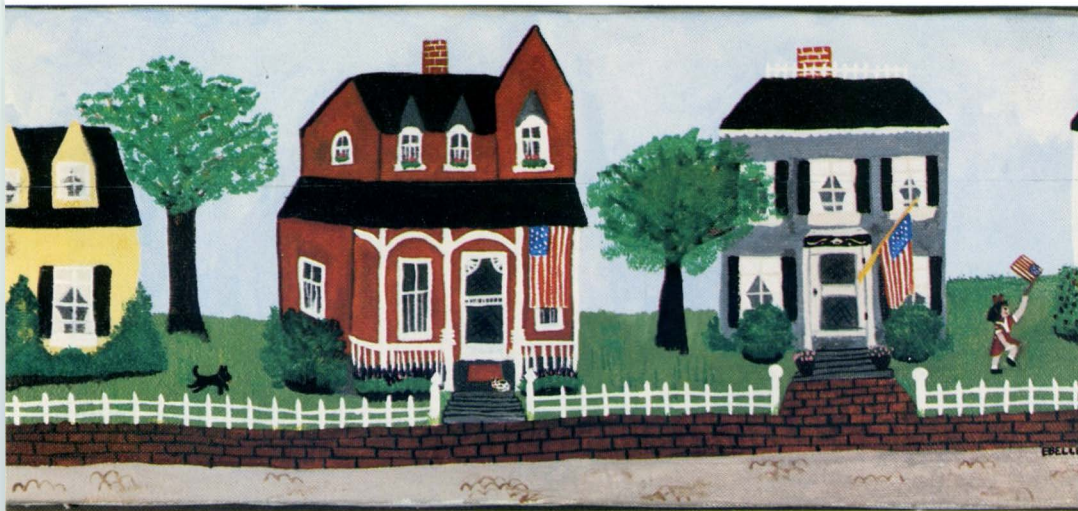


John Naretta, Beauty and the Beast

WHO HAD A LITTLE CURL

Some daemon tongue
stung her april soul —
spelled her —
to iron the sky smooth,
to press wonderful wrinkled hues white,
to level its sweet dome board flat.
She is a good girl:
now no faun hooves
clatter the unruly shale of her path —
her unicorn
lies neatly smothered in the untangled wood.

Bruce Aufhammer



Elizabeth Robinson



Cynthia Darrach

COMPACTION

Letting my time
slip out of my hands
tumbling down
and under illusion
Before I catch my breath
my hands forget
leaving me to question
this direction,
this plan.
missing future
assured of just
 so
 much
I continue.
concealing wonder
and doubt.

Dan Richards

CONTRIBUTOR'S NOTES:

FANNY VENTADOUR — lives in Winter Park, Florida and is the author of two collections of poetry, **Blue is Recessive as in Irises** and **The Centre Holds**.

BUD UFFELMAN — photographer and student of Rollins School of Continuing Education. "Photography is personal, allowing everyone to enjoy the form, the image, and the method in his own way."

CANDICE CRITCHFIELD — "A frustrated oral interpreter/actor who, when fast in the clutches of performer's anemia, can be found reading poetry to the walls."

KAREN CHALKER — "There is real satisfaction in working toward the poetry possible in both words and pictures."

CYNTHIA DARRACH — "D'ye think th' colledges has much to do with th' progress iv the wurruld?" asked Mr. Hennessy. "D'ye think," said Mr. Dooley, " 'tis th' mill that makes th' wather run?" — F.P. Dunne

JINA MULLETT — who has finally become a part.

L.S. — is very happy, many thanks to Donna and Edward.

JUDY PROVOST — works as a counseling psychologist with Rollins students and plays at tennis and writing.

CONNIE RIGGS — As a child, spent her summers in the hill country of Indiana where city people were "foreigners," the dead were "laid out" at home, and "pieced" quilts were the farm family's most treasured heirlooms.

ELINOR CLEVELAND SULLIVAN — I think I'm most proud of being a survivor, and a happy one. Which is a nice way of saying I'm an alley-cat who lands on her feet.

NANCY WILSON — From Merritt Island — has written short stories and verse for magazines before. She is the assistant director of the Winter Park Artists' Workshop as well as one of the originators along with Sloan Wilson (no relation).

PAT GARNER — On the outside, the most you can be is a positive statistic.

BRENDA SALYER — Senior, feels like a hamster on an exercise wheel.

LAUREL STALDER — But the world goes on.

BOB DUVAL — is a utopian daydreamer posing as a college administrator; sometimes hidden behind a grey flannel suit is a would-be Wallace Stevens.

NANCY HOFFMAN — As secretary for the English dept., sometime instructor of English, and contributor to this magazine, I take pride in all of these activities principally due to having known and learned from one of our most esteemed and loved colleagues, the late Wilbur Dorsett. He cherished this institution; his teaching was irresistible; and he encouraged me to submit a poem to **Brushing** for the first time.

DOTTIE WILSON — Is a rare Earthling who enjoys life.

NANCY DONLAN — Enjoys people, art, and is growing in as many ways as possible.

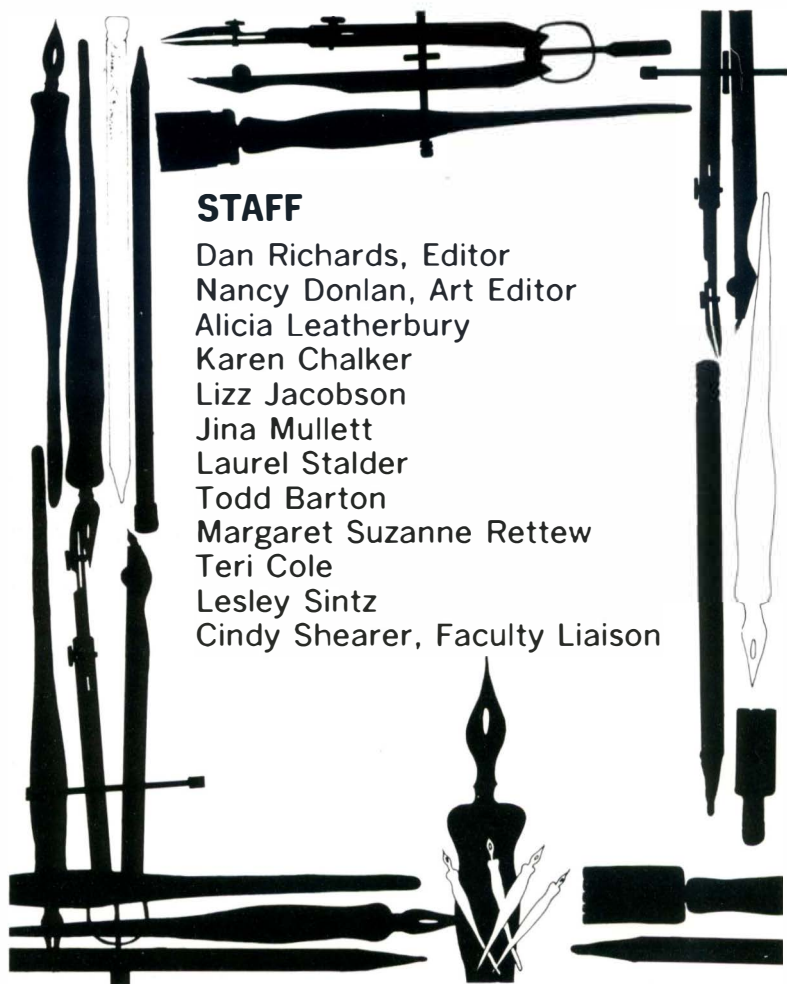
ABIGAIL OBER — A studio Art major with a will to discover all processes of creative expression and a desire to reach into the depths of that expression.

JEFF DONLAN (Nancy's brother) — Is an enlightened Martian who descended to Earth to bless us with virgin views of our nature, which we rarely take time to ponder.

DAVID SHASKEY — Is only closed-minded about one thing: closed-minded people.

ELIZABETH ROBINSON — "Like anything, though, with practice, time, and continual study, improvements will come." Clare Walker Leslie

DAN RICHARDS — Draw a right angle. I haven't reached my hypotenuse universe yet. But, I am homing in — I know where to go.



STAFF

Dan Richards, Editor
Nancy Donlan, Art Editor
Alicia Leatherbury
Karen Chalker
Lizz Jacobson
Jina Mullett
Laurel Stalder
Todd Barton
Margaret Suzanne Rettew
Teri Cole
Lesley Sintz
Cindy Shearer, Faculty Liaison

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