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1985

b r u s h i n g

brushing 85

# **BRUSHING**

**FALL 1985**



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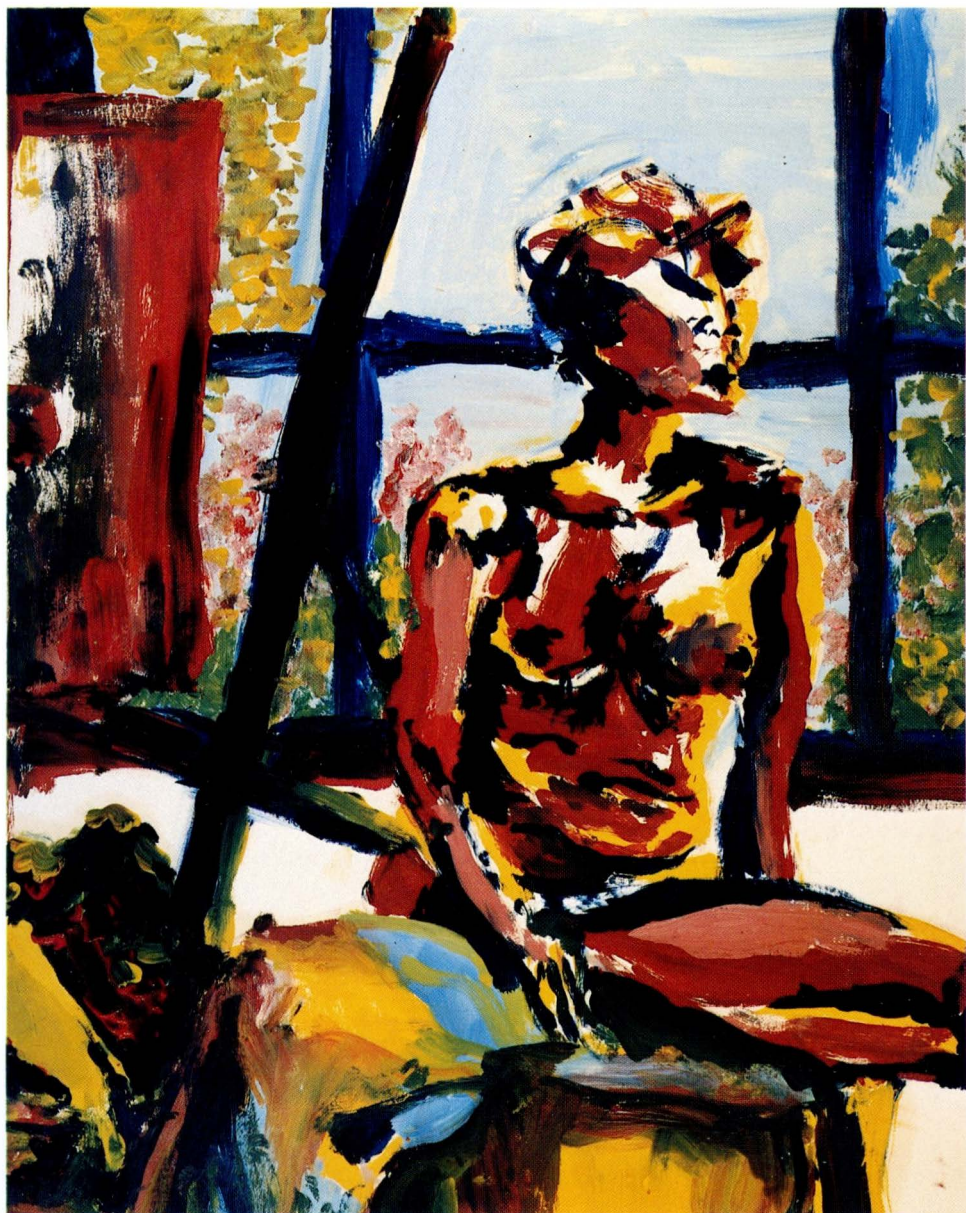
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Move forward  
from this foreword  
into an array of  
Colorful  
Choice  
pieces . . . . AEF

Our task is to collect  
and present -  
yours is the tougher chore  
of assembling the small  
pieces  
into a meaningful whole.  
Good luck. Mohamed Rawahy



CRISTA COOPER

### **winter nights on the velds**

on cold earth and grass and dew  
they sat squated around the fire  
palms spread out  
soaking the heat and the life —  
idols of contentment.

idols of contentment  
until the fire grew  
and leapt from the faithful pit  
and devoured the palms spread out —  
soaking with heat the life.

VIKAS C. MEHOTRA



## **A Self-made Man**

My father played Rachmaninoff loud for his friends.  
He would talk louder about when he was in high school;  
he and the rest of the team watched for trouble makers,  
the boy with long hair got his head shaved.  
After a game he'd get drunk and  
piss on the walls of empty houses.  
He always mentioned his expulsion from college  
because he made up for it:  
he became an officer in the Air Force.  
After he flew the bodies back from 'Nam  
he went back to school,  
earned a four point 0.  
Now he has a business of his own.  
He had to join the Police Benevolent Society  
after he got his 911.

He played canned music loud when he was home  
so he wouldn't have to listen to the noise  
I made in my room.  
Once he came to my door when he heard me crying.  
I told him my teacher spit on me.  
He went to my school,  
said if any one of them fucked with his kid,  
he'd blow all of their heads off.  
Later he said he wished that he'd stayed out of it,  
that these things were probably good for me.

Whenever he drove me anywhere  
he never played his music loud enough  
to stop his curses at the other drivers;  
they should be shot he said.  
He kept his gun in the glove compartment.  
One day another driver flicked him off.  
My father waited for him at the next stop light.  
I put my feet on the glove compartment.  
He punched my stomach  
then put three bullets in the other man's engine.  
The police came and took my father,  
but released him the next day without bail.

JODY LANGHAM  
10/3/85



HOPE REED

**IMAGINE:**

Bedouin moccasins  
onionskin tarpaulins  
harlequin terrapins  
parafin hobgoblins  
aspirin gelatin  
paladin Lohengrin  
Jacobin regimen  
Menuhin's discipline  
    then  
genuine acumen.

ALAN NORDSTROM

**aSSASSINATION: Vienna, 19 November 1984, 9:21 a.m.**

On the 19th of November, 1984,  
Evner Ergun, a Turkish international  
civil servant at the United Nations  
in Vienna, was assassinated by a  
terrorist belonging to the Armenian  
Revolutionary Army . . .

Has the World always turned to Death to say “I am alive,  
Bastard planet, and spit on my repression”? . . .

He was not a friend, not really an acquaintance;  
we had met several times.

He smiled often. Life was livable, life was more than  
the Danger he knew was there.

There was a Love, which is Music to Life, and a Son,  
and work — the fight against this battle’s winner.

a brown man in India fighting without guns,  
a white man in the West, later his brother,  
a black man who would not strike Hate, but only show it  
its own other, better (bigger? \*\*\* smaller?) side.

Love is alone with Son, victims of an empty gesture;  
I didn’t know him well at all.

Locks are for honest people. The Danger isn’t stopped;  
Vermin can always grow itself bigger than the cage.

Doors are closed, become part of the Wall —  
not yet complete, but very close it seems —  
which seals our world’s options away from us forever.

a dubious problematic, but hopeful Woman, a Slavic priest,  
a voice of his battered people to his battering own.

A man I met, not even really an acquaintance;  
he smiled often.

You can’t keep the Vermin barred;  
you have to show him he’s really not.

To admit you’re him, and push the Connection,  
that shows him the other, better (growing? . . . dying?) side.

Some would choose to be martyrs — they are  
their own murderers, and their pride  
is without even the dignity,  
the desperate Humanness of Suicide.

The Real Ones do not; they fight using the other,  
better (stronger? . . . weaker?) side,  
till the world is too afraid to keep listening:  
always easier to kill than  
than accept the Connection.

Pride over my own striving to say makes me sick of myself;  
I think of his blood, see it, smell it, taste it:  
I am the danger as much as an option —  
will another door be sealed?

I did not know him well; we had only met several times;  
he fought for the other, better (winning? . . . losing?) side.

Why do I want newspapers! An attempt to grasp something  
out of senselessness, out of absurdity.

Facts substituting, superficially covering a gap  
that can't be filled, a Band-aid  
for a bullet-hole.

There is More, it is not a "maybe," but can it win?

He wasn't even really an acquaintance.  
He smiles often,  
Life was more than the Danger.

There is music, there is Real somewhere;  
*all is not* Human Hate and Weakness.

The finale isn't clear, only that we move to it.  
The last door isn't sealed yet,  
perhaps soon though.

B., 20 November 1984



### **Victorious**

The epitome of its beauty  
is brought forth to bear  
for an ephemeral few hours  
    one day.

If not captured at that moment  
The petals, each beautiful and precious,  
Constructing the whole  
Are caught up, grasped, taken away by the wind.

Its beauty was invincible to me,  
then I encountered you,  
all was plain to see,  
the roses' beauty was dethroned  
to that held by thee.

COMDSAL



OLGA VISO

She sang the song of woods and fields  
And I, the brook, lay beside her,  
Flowing here and there to accompany her soft moss banks.

Dancing branches and flying leaves spoke to me.  
I could read the rocks,  
flat and round, layered, or clear as crystal.  
Rocks just there.

If I told my secret, I knew, she knew  
it would crumble, flatten, fall away.  
Here is my secret: listen to the breeze  
                                embrace the wind  
                                let be

All beauty collapses to folded newspaper,  
Discarded candy wrappers.  
My secret lies dormant in its lair,  
Waiting for the breeze of innocence.

BRINKER VAN COTT

## Pygmalion's Dream

The tepid wind's wide hands cupped cool foam off the green waves and carried it dripping against the tanned young man and the thirsty sand beneath his hands. Slowly the rays of his eyes reached into the girl's solitude and she turned toward him.

The position of the figure and the familiar proportions brought immediate realization. The girl was flattered and approached.

"Hello," he said smiling, holding his gaze to where his memory saw her.

"Hello," she replied. "Not bad . . . You study sculpting?"

"Umm . . . Thanks . . . But it will be perfect . . . when I'm done."

Sand scraping. Silence.

She studied her body as he shaped it in the sand. She felt embarrassed, yet, felt bound to stay. A child ran after a rolling beach ball. The blue and white segments left their impression on the sand arm and breast.

"You didn't feel that, did you?" he asked not looking up.

"No." She laughed. "Should I?"

"No . . . Not . . . yet. But when it is perfect . . . whatever happens to the sand . . . will happen to you."

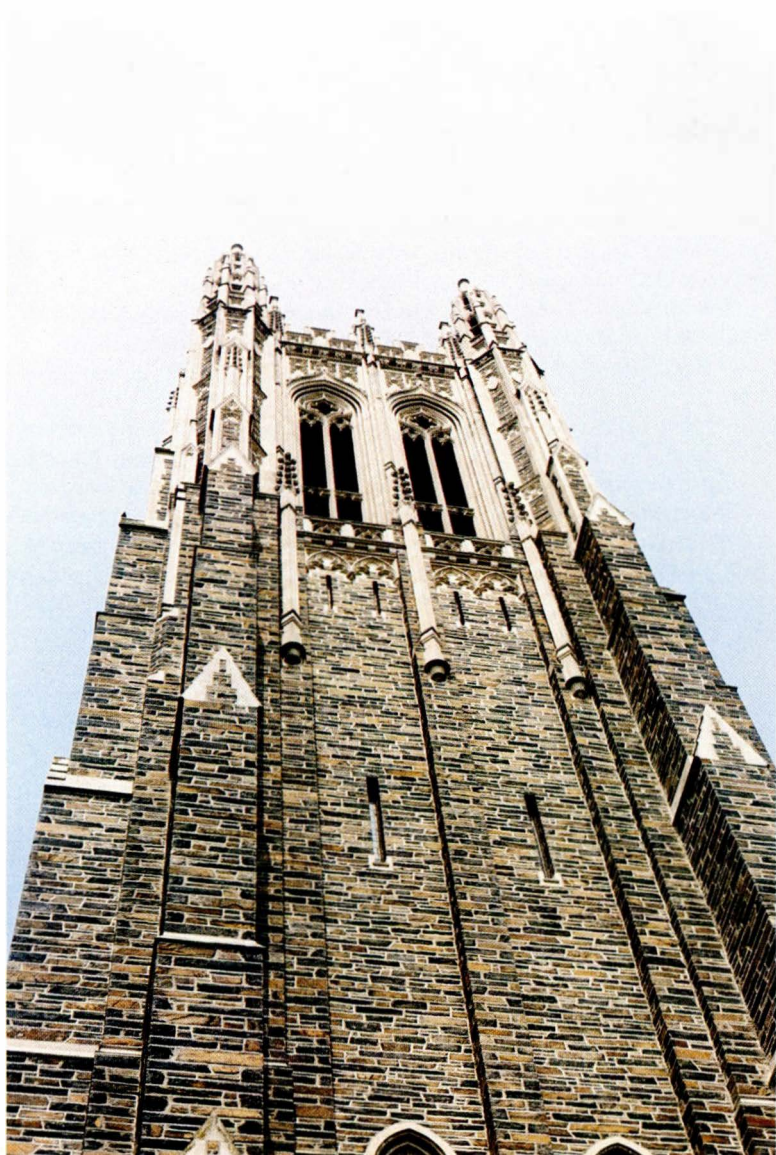
Unaware of the feet and toes of the curious in the periphery of his vision, a smile lingered as he continued his work.

The girl became more selfconscious.

"There," he said, caressing a last needed touch to the figure. He rose and stood back. "It is done!"

Even as he gazed, rapt, the sea flung a low wave upon the beach and dissolved the girl's figure into its tumbling self. The young man turned, aghast! The girl was gone.

WILLIAM HOFFINGER





high reaching

tall our  
ambitions

high our

edifices

to be erased  
by tomorrow's  
generations

MOHAMED RAWAHY

**Kenmore Sq./Joey's apartment**

Almost cinematic,  
this strained snow light  
filters through  
the clean lined room,  
the ballet bare floor shuffled  
with newspapers.  
Muted smoke lingers  
from cigarettes loose in our  
fingers;  
We breathe Sunday's  
genteel fatigue  
but are leaving soon.  
Like smoke, this afternoon  
dies as it exists.

CATHLEEN COLLINS

### **Recipe (to Ann)**

Take slices of granny apple  
place them on a plate,  
Add one small blond boy  
and his russet madonna mother,  
diminutively regal as a chess queen.  
Hush the snow outside the window;  
shine fire through wine  
and on platters of cheese.  
Breathe memory:  
Daddy, hold me up to the mirror,  
please.

CATHLEEN COLLINS

## SHELL AND BONE

The waves had been pushing up shell and bone for many years, and always — as I lifted the small and brittle pieces, pressing them against my cheek, or carefully turning and maneuvering the smallest ones so they would lie couched and secretive in my ears, or pursing my lips to let the long thin shells rest against my nostrils like some foreign moustache — the mere coloring of these pieces shouted Guatemala.

It did not matter that I was living in Indiana, far from any salt swept automobile paint. And it did not matter, either, that my family had previously lived in Michigan, again far from any imposing waves. The shell and bone came wherever I lived. Often, I awakened, my room inundated by the myriad forms of brittle calcium — amassed during the night as if by dreams.

I can't say that it usually annoyed me. When I was bothered by the constant trail of salt smell it was because in Indiana, in Michigan, one is trailed by other things. It would be far different to be bumping incessantly into red-crossed cloth, finely wrought coins, or any number of other things. But shell and bone of the sea — no! It didn't often bother me because friends are friends and the adults lived on the edge. On the contrary: as I got older, the increase of shell and bone came accompanied by a quickened breath, a growing pride, and a marrow deep curiosity.

My parents never spoke of the shells that flowed freely from my pockets. They acted as if the bone didn't exist, and became expert at changing the direction of my questions. Often, they tried to cement me to tasks at hand.

There were no long hours of sweeping millions of intricately shaped objects from my room in the mornings. The act was illusion. My mother never grumbled over her chin while dumping each of my drawers onto the floor to whisk away the shell. My father would always sit at his desk, writing and thinking, and absently brush away the bone. He would sit, painfully, on a large abalone or place a broken arm of a starfish into his mouth like a pencil.

Once, I gathered my food and other provisions to last two months — not forgetting my large pillow with seascape embroidery — and waited on his desk for a sign of irrefutable recognition. At first, I would confront him each time he bumped uncomfortably into one of my shells, but my voice must have been too weak. By the end of one month, my interest shifted more and more to the baseball games outside. There were fewer and fewer shells, anyway.

By the end of each summer, the shell and bone returned with a vengeance.

One year, my school took up the study of history and geography. One day, as I walked back from the small school, wishing I were older and able to take driver's education, I was struck by the number of workmen encircling the house. They were repairing the windows and doors. Shells covered the yard. More shells than I had ever seen. Guatemala. Suddenly, like the flight of cavern bats, a torrent of calcium blew up from the chimney. An especially polite workman told me that none of it was really there. Inside, my father spoke to the principal, arranging by phone my transfer into another class. Thereafter, I studied the history of Afghanistan, leaving Central America behind. My mother's shoulders sagged, wearily, silently.

Imagine, then, how I felt when my father came to me and said that the two of us would be going to Guatemala!

That night, in my room, I turned the shell and bone in my hands and watched it pour from my closet. I wished that there would be a plan to it all, but I was raised to believe differently. The idea that shell and bone actually followed me through the streets, built up by my bed and flowed like the Colorado River because of a grand design fascinated me. I wanted to believe that, partly.

On the other hand, the shell and bone had to follow the laws of knowledge: that each fact is a portion of a large, all encompassing body of laws — regardless of the area the fact comes from. All facts had to coexist. No single one could contradict another. But to say that this is by design is another thing. It is inevitable.

Days before we left, I turned the pieces in my hands. To my surprise, two pieces sided up to each other as if broken from a larger piece. For the first time, I examined them carefully. There are small and delicate symbols etched into them. I noticed then, too, that the pieces have a darker side. It was so obvious that I wonder now why I had never noticed. I cleared a circle and turned hundreds of pieces onto their dark side, leaving the white and etched side exposed.

It was foolish to think that I would find more pieces that fit together. There had been countless billions swept away already. As if to support my theory about them, however, I did notice that some of the markings and shapes seemed to be separated within the larger puzzle by only a few pieces. Others seemed so dissimilar as to be separated by hundreds of thousands of shell and bone. I made more room, building up the calcium against my four walls, but only the first two pieces fit together. I fell asleep, wanting desperately to have the shell and bone connect.



My mother touched me, motioned for me to sit. She was glad that I would finally visit Guatemala. They had waited too long already to show me where I was born.

My father spoke very little. "Marco," he said, "we left when you were five years old."

My mother said that duty demanded I see my father's father, the infamous Eziquel. The *infamous* Eziquel! He was the eldest of the family. He knew the shells, I was sure of it. The thought struck me with the same intensity was finding the two adjoining pieces — no! Some things are better left unsaid: they sound too melodramatic.

We left unceremoniously.

The capital of Guatemala is like many other cities: with factories, people, ugliness and stink. My father borrowed a car to make the trip into the countryside where Eziquel lived. The road became dirt a hundred miles from the village, then narrow horse trails several miles away. We walked.

I can never know what my father feels. I can only know that he feels very little which he will show. It's a miracle to me that my legs did not erode on that long walk so that when we finally arrived, I would be nothing but teeth scurrying to carry my nose, eyes and forehead. The dryness saved me from that intolerable boredom. One needs moisture to dissolve.

Cattle grazed in the fields far off and men on horseback rode the distant hills. The only life close to us was that of insects, birds and lizards. *There* was a tight chain: the birds ate lizards, the lizards ate insects, and the insects sucked the blood and skin from beneath the oily feathers. All this within coil after coil of cacti.

"About three hundred people live here," my father said.

His voice shocked me. I looked at his face, but he plodded on.

It was an amorphous village and yet the cacti obeyed some instinctual boundary no matter how spread out the houses were. Empty red earth lay between the cacti and the first fruit laden trees of the village. The bare strip was no more than thirteen feet wide — a fat border of ground. I counted the various fruit trees: banana, mango, coconut, lime, pineapple, and others I couldn't name. Just like people, there were pigs, chickens and donkeys roaming the main street. The notion that I was so directly related to animals pleased me, but I knew it was pure fantasy. These were the domestic animals of real people.

"These people are very poor. No food. No medicine."

It annoyed me that he spoke so abruptly, without warning. The annoyance

sharpened my vision and I saw that his quietness was because of his reading. I could only assume that he had been reading the entire time, as usual. I read the long title: *Metaphenomenology*.

Just then, I stepped into a large and smelly pile of pig manure. I used a stick to scrape it off, but instead the stuff spread upwards. The odor was terrible. In exasperation, I looked to my father for help. He was also smeared with shit. He removed a handkerchief from his pocket and made two small cones in the cloth. Very carefully, he stuffed each cone into a nostril. He remained expressionless through the entire procedure. His back straightened and he held his head higher, the cloth hiding his mouth.

Before I could comment, villagers came running with shouts of welcome. They were covered with dung also, but against their hard brown bodies the smell was tolerable. They smiled abundantly, never missing an opportunity to show their broad yellow teeth. They spoke rapidly and chaotically as we were guided through the village. We walked to the square, where we were given fruits as tokens of welcome. My father lifted his veil to bite, then let the cloth drop. Children danced and chattered around us like a great flurry of chickens. The activity made me forget my shit covered legs, and I hugged even the most besmeared villager. These were my people — my heritage!

No! I hate melodrama.

A shout arose as a woman, laughing raucously, broke through the clearing atop an enormous pig. Both were covered with slime. A cheer exploded from the people. Several children threw themselves into mudholes and squirmed about happily. One heavy man pushed bananas into his mouth until the pulpy material dripped from his nose and ears like ground beef. He vomited and laughed, his belly bouncing against his thighs.

I asked my father when we would see Eziquel and he said later, not here. The villagers never stopped laughing and dancing about.

At night, a marimba played and children accompanied with reed flutes. We feasted on a tremendous meal of refried beans and tortillas which was placed on huge clay platters. My father gave me a salty cheese to try. Using a tightly rolled tortilla, I drank fruit juices from deep gourds. Several women danced and sang to the marimba.

It wasn't until I had nearly finished this bean-filled meal that I saw the manufacture of shell. On the downbeat of their dance, the women threw back their heads and let bits of shell and bone drop from their mouths. I sat, fascinated by the musical timing of the clattering pieces. The bone clicked along with the

wooden marimba.

I leaped to my feet with questions, but they told me nothing about the shell. I would find out tomorrow, they said. Only Eziquel can tell you, they said.

I slept in a hammock between a house and a tree. During the night, I frightened away two pigs that came to nibble my toes. "I love it here," I thought. Here is where the shell came from. My grandfather was the man of shell and bone!

We proceeded through and out of the village at sunrise, opposite the end we entered. The cacti returned immediately after the red strip. Just the two of us walked down the steep cliff to where the Motagua flowed like chocolate. The sheer hills were half concealed with vines that swept down from the flatland above. An iguana scampered up the grey rock and disappeared over the crest.

I could hear what sounded like a great cascading of water beyond the wall of granite, but when we made the bend I yelped with surprise. There was no waterfall. Instead, there were dozens of people busily filling boxes and bags with my shell and bone. Here was where the bone flowed! It was a factory of shellmen, an industry of boneworkers. They never stopped, even when I tried to speak with them. A single woman communicated to us, but it was only to raise her arm and point down the river. My father nodded.

"Cousins," he said to me.

Then, his abruptness didn't bother me. I was glad he'd spoken. It reassured me. Nervously, though, I held his sleeve and realized what a rare person he was to have come from a place like this. His silence made sense then. He had too much to say and, therefore, couldn't say anything. The mere fact that he could read incomprehensible books while these people couldn't read at all, impressed me. To save his mind, though, he had forfeited his mouth.

We turned again along the serpentine Motagua and spotted my grandfather's hut sitting some hundred feet from the bank. I had plenty of time to see: low sweeping ground from the hut, beaten hard under the feet of women going for water or taking clothes to pound on the wet flat rocks.

And from where we walked, the two room hut seemed empty of people. The walls were made of branches lashed together with vines. An adobe wall could be seen through the gaps in the external walls. The roof was a lattice of palm and banana leaves. A narrow gate, hinged with leather thongs, opened the branch fence encircling the house. And inside the small corral, pigs grovelled, chickens scurried and an emaciated dog lay stiffly beside a cactus. As we neared, the dog rose and barked, his short hair rising weakly on his spine. My father hissed. The

dog backed away, then watched us enter the fenced area.

The leather thongs rubbed the wood brace and stroked a long chord like the sea wasp pleading for the eye of the nautilus. The animals stayed away, watching us with their small eyes.

I trembled. Looking back now, I see very clearly that I trembled. I wouldn't now. Not now.

As soon as we entered the hut, we were confronted with an overpowering smell of urine. I spit to remove the smell from my mouth. My father still had his nostrils plugged. He looked at me, though, with a puzzled glance. Suddenly, a duck scrambled through from the other room. An oppressive silence followed once the animal darted off. The sounds of sheep grazing far away reached us on their tiny feet, but that was all.

"Stay here," my father said. He pointed to a bench. "Wait."

He looked into the other room, then went out and around the hut. I saw him listening. Finally, he returned and sat beside me.

"We will have to wait," he said.

It is impossible now to remember how long we sat before hearing the approach of my people. It was late afternoon.

My father rose quickly and greeted them from the door. I stood behind him, peering from beneath his raised arm. A young man and woman walked gingerly up the slope, and old and bleached man between them. My grandfather was unable to walk without their support. He looked like a long white shell, seaweed clinging unmercifully to the thin furrows of calcium. His head hung against a white cotton shirt, streaked brown and yellow; and the crotch of his pants seemed permanently stained with red and yellow.

When I saw him like that, I gasped. I thought, at first, that he had been hit by a car. They carried him in like so much rope.

My father held the cloth against his mouth as he looked closely at his father. The couple sat the old man down in a chair, then stood back.

"He's very sick," the man said.

My father leaned close as he spoke. "How long has he been like this?"

"Two years," the woman answered.

"Can he understand?"

"He hasn't been able to for five months now. Two years ago, he had a stroke and stopped walking. Last year another stroke sealed his mouth. Then, about five months ago, the light from his eyes disappeared in the night."

The man sat beside my grandfather. "He will die soon."

"Who takes care of him?"

"Maria and me."

"Do you need money, Juan?"

The man didn't answer and I felt deeply ashamed for my father's impoliteness. How could he ask at this time?

The woman sighed and rubbed her hands together. "Well, the children don't have much to eat. They work in the fields until dark. It's a very hard life."

"I'll give you money before I go."

"Oh, thank you, Don Miguel." The woman clasped my father's hand.

"Thank you," the man said. "Poor Eziquel will die soon. It takes too much time to care for him. It's better if he dies quickly. We take him to the field with us, but it takes time."

"He loved his field," my father said.

"At first his eyes held the old silver when we sat him in his field. We made a seat by the coconuts. He liked them best."

The woman continued for her husband. "But now, Don Miguel, his eyes are empty and still. We don't take him there anymore."

"Why not?" I blurted out.

They smiled at me. Smiled down at me.

"My son . . ."

"Oh, yes," the man said. He smiled again and put his hand out. "Marco. I'm your grandfather's grandson. By another woman," he quickly added. "This is Maria, my wife."

I shook his hand. The woman hugged me from behind, her lips pressing into my hair.

"He looks like you," she said to my father.

"Some say like his mother." The cloth across his face twitched with each word.

I couldn't stand to listen to them. I wanted them to shut up, to realize that they were talking about my grandfather, my history; not some goddamned stranger! No . . .

My voice pushed weakly past my clenched throat, where I grabbed it before it broke wetly. I sat near Eziquel, ignoring the others, and looked into his face. This face I had never seen before. His mouth opened and spittle ran into his shirt. The liquid turned brown as it spread. I wanted to cry. The old man farted loudly against his chair.

"It's too hard to care for him," Maria said in response.

My father pushed the cones more firmly into his nose.

Juan stood and lifted a water gourd to his lips. "He'll die soon," he said before drinking.

"No!" I shouted.

They stared at me.

"No! Oh, Grandfather!" I grabbed his shoulders. "I love you," I cried, unafraid of what the others would think. "Grandfather, please. I love you." My tears smelled of blood against my cheeks. "Please, *Abuelo*, listen to me. Speak to me, please."

His gaze lifted up to my strong emotion, a sudden light coming from deep within those black pupils. I knew he understood me, then. He felt me. He recognized me from across the years, across the miles and miles of fervent and disconsolate blood. Emotion was the bridge of years. Oh, I knew it *then*.

"Yes!" I said, the sound barely escaping my throat.

He rose stiffly, majestically. I trembled visibly, tears choking my breath as his mouth opened before me with the slowness of dawn.

I waited for his words like a fledgling; watched him stand with a magical confidence. The others, too, seemed amazed at his phoenix strength. I heard Maria suck her breath in quickly.

Eziquel's hand raised and he pointed at me.

"Yes," I whispered again. "Oh, yes, yes!"

"Raul," he said sonorously. "Raul!"

His eyes sparkled like the village oil lamps; sparkled like the wings of parrots rising from the fields. And he sobbed.

Tears rolled from those dark eyes and fell to the ground with the clatter and clicking of obsidian teeth. The long sweeping smell of the salt and sea filled the room and I saw that his tears were exact miniatures of the shells that followed me through the streets of Indiana, Michigan, the United States.

"Who's Raul?" I asked, breathlessly.

No one answered. They moved, instead, for the wrinkled old man who swayed dangerously, and guided him back to the chair.

"When he is tired," Juan said, "he babbles. Just ignore him."

Ignore him, he had said. Just ignore him.

OMAR CASTAÑEDA



### **THREE POPPY HAIKU**

So what if we are  
mad Van Gogh said torching minds  
with fields of flowers

Unbuttoned silks drift  
past knees and ankles; looking  
at you falling open

If the snow knew you  
were there underneath it it  
would fall down melting

JEAN WEST



STEVE PHELAN

### **recordings from a day in tommy's early life**

son, how was school today.  
fun mommy.  
we learnt history  
about vasco da gama and his stop in our country.  
that was at the cape of good hope son.  
and civics mom  
we learnt we are a democracy  
what's a democracy mom ?  
it's a government of the people,  
for the people and . . . well, by the people, son.  
and math . . . and i met jim  
he's called me for his birthday mom.  
that's good son . . . by the way  
what color is jim ?  
huh mom ?  
i mean the color of his skin, tommy.  
uh . . . i didn't notice that mom . . .  
  
i promise i'll find out and tell you tomorrow mom.

VIKAS C. MEHOTRA

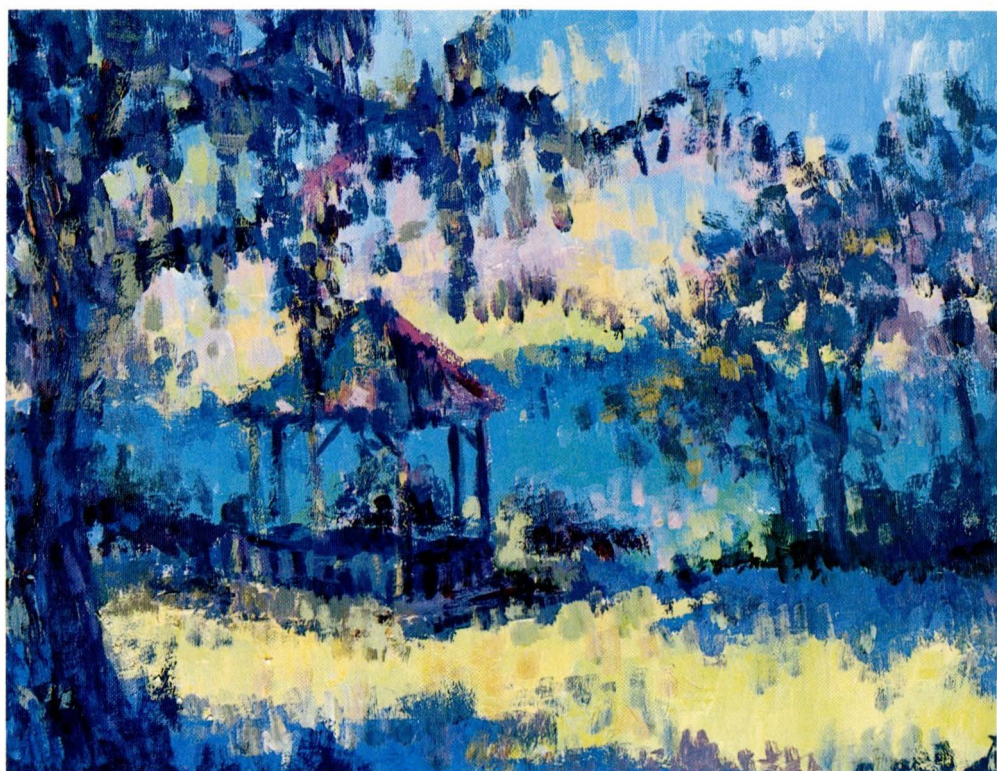
**Poem to Emily:**

3. I know — not —  
How to form  
The castles  
On the hill —

But — in my mind —  
I — sculptured — them —  
With self-instructed  
Skill

And though — I —  
Cannot paint — or draw —  
I paint — instead —  
With — my — mind's awe.

CAROLINA I. MEJIA



OLGA VISO

## AND YET

She will be growing old, her lines go loose.  
Her breasts will droop; thighs once smoothly taut  
Will bulge and crack Praxiteles' round-wrought  
Curve.

I'd weep if it were any use.

Sandro Botticelli sends regrets.

David dropped me a classic line of consolation,  
confirmed by numerous other unsolicited notes,  
that art alone begets  
The permanence of Beauty that won't die.

Yeats and Keats and Shakespeare play the theme,  
Commending monuments and stately rhyme  
And frozen urns instead of melting thighs.

And yet she will be growing old, her lines  
Go loose; her breasts will droop; her thighs, her thighs

ALAN NORDSTROM



## **Sheilah's Life, a.m.**

6:45 a.m.

my head good lord cant get up oh god a new day

6:52 a.m.

too much again I gotta stop my head

lord I can hear the dew thundering as it hits the grass

lord how the dew falls this morning

why get up

bfff. I hate myself

7:01 a.m.

why get up my life is done I saw it happen I saw it go by

nothing will happen today I know by now nothing will ever happen

again the day offers me nothing and I offer it nothing in return

nothing will happen never again will I cry for love ecstasy is

over no more agony or exhilaration

another empyr day another blank page in a book full of blank pages

I wrote some pages and I tore them out

! cheated I looked at the ending I saw all the other pages and

they are blank and this is just one more of them

why get up

7:12 a.m.

my head

the dew thunders as it pounds the grass how it roars in my ears

quiet please a little silence be still

I bought a book all full of empty pages it said write your own book

how to get it write

how to stay on the lines how to recognize the lines how to stay

away from the margins

center it

I have to get up because sleep is dressed rehearsal for death

I'm dying every day I get closer why practice in bed

Don't die yet get up

how to live when I get up what to do

I'll just stand there nowhere to go no impetus what next

do what

think about what I have to remember something I forgot something

wait a second wait a second what am I supposed to do

I have to get up I hate being here

7:23 a.m.

I had to do something

I remember I remember there was a time

oh there was a time I saw my spirit I felt my spirit sucked in by

those eyes into eternal bliss and I thanked my god for making

things the way he did for making happiness and sharing it with

me for love that burst the fountains of my heart for a life that

was the sweetness of a dream a life that was yes from dew until

dusk yes answered by yes

eternal yes

words could not say  
be quiet and dew thunders  
7:31 a.m.

now I remember I had to do something  
the weeds are back and I must pull them and under the bed is dust  
some books are lying on their sides and I will straighten them  
I will put things in order

now I remember it's okay I know where everything is  
the dishes are in the sink I'll clip the hedges I know where the  
clippers are this is easy life is easy I have to get up and get  
started the day is wasting as I lie here there are things to do

now

7:45 a.m.

ROY STARLING



ALEXANDER BOGUSLAWSKI

## **Of Feasts And Feasting**

Li'l ants feast  
on cookie droppings  
and morsels

Live-aid to the  
land of the stricken  
who die  
only the ants die suffer

Enjoy your strawberry-pie  
medium steak  
and salad bar

Have a nice day  
it ain't your headache

Let 'em grapple and shovel  
do not soil your  
\$500 silk shirt  
spoil your  
\$1000 hair do

The ants are many  
they get along

**MOHAMED RAWAHY**



VICTORIA MUTCH



## **In Support of Abstaction**

Believe in magic.  
I am,  
after long, drawn-out ponderance,  
able to enunciate  
the feeling  
the knowing  
the astonishment at  
a complete faith  
in magic.

Certainly, things do not move  
of their own accord  
but —  
I drive cars  
on gasoline vapors,  
buy things with no money,  
raise children with no plans  
for their upbringing,  
communicate without communicating and,  
with odds favoring defeat at 99 to 1 —  
    know  
that  
“everything will be alright.”

I cannot tolerate misfortune  
so completely  
that reliance on magic  
is the  
critical substance  
I hang  
    on  
    to.

BEVERLY HORANIC





Along an autumn road,  
October flagged me down,  
Tossled by a breeze  
In a golden gown.

Arrested by her charms —

“The loveliest of trees” —

I stopped to coax a smile,

And she obliged with “cheese.”

NANCY HOFFMAN



MOHAMED RAWAHY

## PERSONAE

How silly saying "I am I"  
When "we are they" is more the like;  
To think me singular's a lie,  
An all too elementary psych.  
I'm rather more a chorus than  
A solo voice or melody,  
And if I sound a single man  
You're merely hearing harmony.  
Yet when I'm out of sorts and jangled  
(My typical cacophony)  
You'll find my stiff personas tangled,  
Uncertain whom to seem or be.  
If I should crack entirely  
You'd see my multiplicity  
As one by one my membership  
Would slide by and flap its lip.  
But if I'm lucky, we'll be me  
Or simulate consistency  
Enough to seem an integer  
And make our several tongues concur.

ALAN NORDSTROM

My oldest ashtray broke today.  
China Blue  
Out to Sea  
So old it had that ring inlay  
That ashtrays get when cigarettes sit.  
My first real grown-up piece to show  
Now engraving my tiled floor.  
Oh, what I'd give to pull that  
China Blue  
Back to shore.

AMY FIEDLING





OLGA VISO



### **Upon Visiting Walden Pond**

I strolled through the leaf-strewn path, marveling at the New England sun and the splashes of light it threw upon the water. The air was crisp, like crackling paper, and the trees stood tall and golden, rooted in the moist and fragrant soil.

The hills rolled and the trees with them, all around the lake, for it was not the small stagnance brought to mind by the word 'pond'.

I stepped gingerly among the wet granite slabs and slippery mud at the shore. Sitting on a log, looking at the sky blazing above the waves of trees, breathing the pure, chill air, I wondered.

What was this spot was like, oh, say, one hundred and twenty years ago. No noise from the nearby turnpike, no tourists busily reading bronze historic markers. Nothing but this glittering lake and swells and swells and armies upon armies of straight trees, only the wisper of wind and bird calls and the accassional gushot and axe-fall of rural civilization.

For a second, for a wink of sunlight, I was there, and a Master Thoreau sat, over the next ridge in front of his tiny home, looking at the sky blazing over the shimmering tree tops. He wondered.

What will this spot be like, in oh, say, one hundred and twenty years? Would the precious water still skip and lap against the stoney shore? Would they cut down all of the fragrant birch trees and erect cities and towns here?

I yearned to tell him that, sir, the woods are still here, though greatly diminished. The lake remains, though there are parking lots and highways and supermarkets disturbingly close. There are new paths cut among the soft hills, and strangers with little maps traverse the place and stop at the very place where once you sat. The pile stones upon the historical landmark you once humbly and tenderly called home.

There is a young girl in a sky-blue skirt, perched on a rotting log by the shining water, listening only to the wind and birds, breathing only pure and cool breezes, seeing only the sunlight on the leaves of spring, feeling only the miles and miles of forest that would have once embraced her.

She wonders about you, sir; what you did, what you said, what you saw and did you feel as she does, sitting alone in the peaceful quiet? She wonders about you as you wondered about her.

Is it possible that your two souls passed each other on one leaf-covered pathway? Is it possible that you both walked together, seperated only by the wind of time? Have your minds touched each other for a brief, eternal moment or second, before you both went, spinning back into your seperate worlds, and walked down the path alone?

PAMELA KINCHELOE

### Awakening

Sticky globs of rain  
Like final nets from the sky  
White rain holds no more

Ashes fill the box  
Sometimes they perish my thoughts  
About life itself

My hair so wild  
Reflections of Medusa  
Imitates my soul

MBA



MELINDA BLANKENBURG

### **Strangers**

Across the road  
a stranger dwells  
I've seen him come and go.  
He doesn't know  
I've studied him,  
and his knowledge I don't know.  
I only see him pass from house to car  
about half a minute or so.  
I study hard  
Look and watch  
and try to guess his soul.  
But when he goes from house to car  
i never look his way,  
and if perhaps i took a glance  
I'd find him studying me.  
He'd catch my stare,  
Our eyes held there  
and then we'd laugh and know,  
That strangers who study each other  
aren't strangers anymore.

SCOTT MORRIS



VICTORIA MUTCH

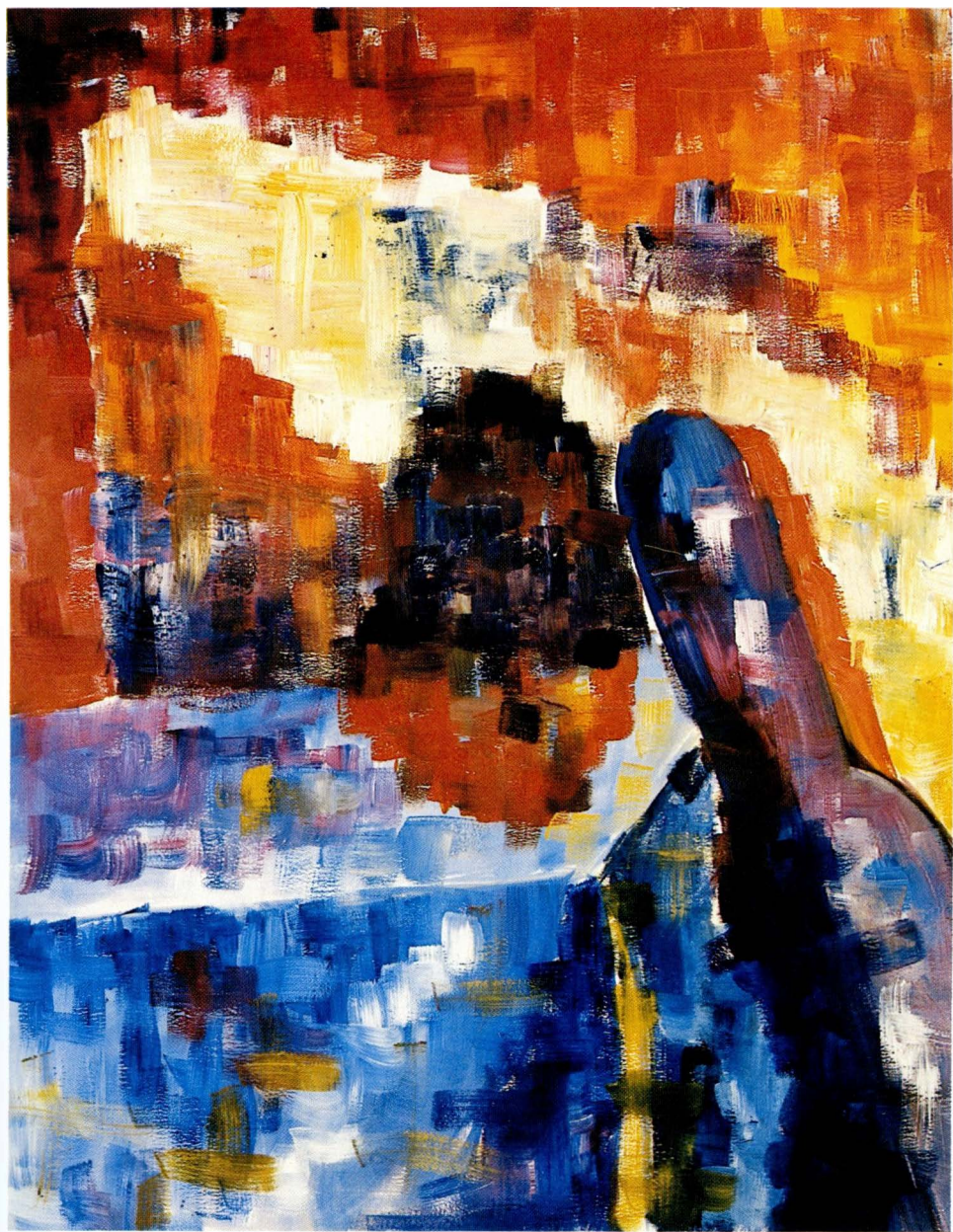


Once a Woman Told Me I Would Go To Hell For Being Agnostic

I see so many crosses worn in the grocery stores  
That I've started to collect them now.  
I put them in velvet jewelry boxes,  
bury them in my front yard.  
Marigolds mark the tiny graves.

When I was thirteen,  
my best friend's mother said  
I'd find the Devil  
if I listened to music while meditating.  
Gregorian chants consume me.  
I hear them when I dig a new grave,  
when I press dirt flat around Marigolds.

JODY LANGHAM



HOPE REED

## CONTRIBUTORS' NOTES

Omar Castañda — visiting assistant professor of English, is working on a reformation of the *Popol Uuh*, from where his selection came.

Crista Cooper — “Everyone is looking for a custom fit in an off-the-rack world.”

Amy Fiedling — wishes to thank TCB, NRL and DJR for all of their help during some very desperate times . . . .

William W. Hoffinger — How godlike they are, creating with grains of sand as they scurry about waving their antennae.

Nancy Hoffman — is enjoying a new position in the Latin American Caribbean Affairs program, which features the annual Alfred J. Hanna Distinguished Lecturers series during the fall term.

Pamela Kincheloe — “Being able to create and Express emotion is like breathing clear blue sky. I know it’s weird but that’s the way I feel.”

Jody Langham — “. . . don’t make your life an open book. Baring your soul makes others lower their opinion of you.” *National Enquirer*, Oct. 29, 1985.

MBA — “To all the men we’ve loved before.” Willa and Julia

Vikas C. Mehrotra — Does it help to be concerned about the South Africans, Poles and Afghans?

Carolina I. Mejia — Life is a series of poems for which we choose the themes and styles.

Karen Anderson Neustadt — “The essence of color and light are best translated through the medium of watercolor. I love to experiment with them — they seem to create their own fascinating images.”

Alan Nordstrom — who teaches English at Rollins, believes wholeheartedly in the Muses and prays that they will believe more lavishly in him.

Steve Phelan — earthwatcher, among the maganimals, leaning toward loafing, but glad to learn and teach.

Mohamed Rawahy — is still wondering how to show his appreciation to many a friend and colleague.

Roy Starling — gets up promptly at 6:44 a.m. so that he can teach English in Orlando Hall.

Brinker Van Cott — “I’ll let you be in my dream if I can be in yours.” — Bob Dylan.

Olga Viso — “The sick, almost being of a poet betrays itself nowhere more than in his hero, who he never fails to stain with the secret weakness of his own nature.” — Unknown.

Jean West — “POPPIES ARE GORGES.”

## **STAFF**

Melinda Blankenburg

Crista Cooper

Eric DeVincenzo

Chad Gonzalez

Gail Gunther

Robert Johnson

Pamela Kincheloe

Alice Miller

Margaret O'Sullivan

Alice Powell

Beth Rapp

Vivienne Sequeiro

Donna Stram

Brinker Van Cott

Connie Riggs, Advisor

Amy Fiedling and Mohamed Rawahy, Editors

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