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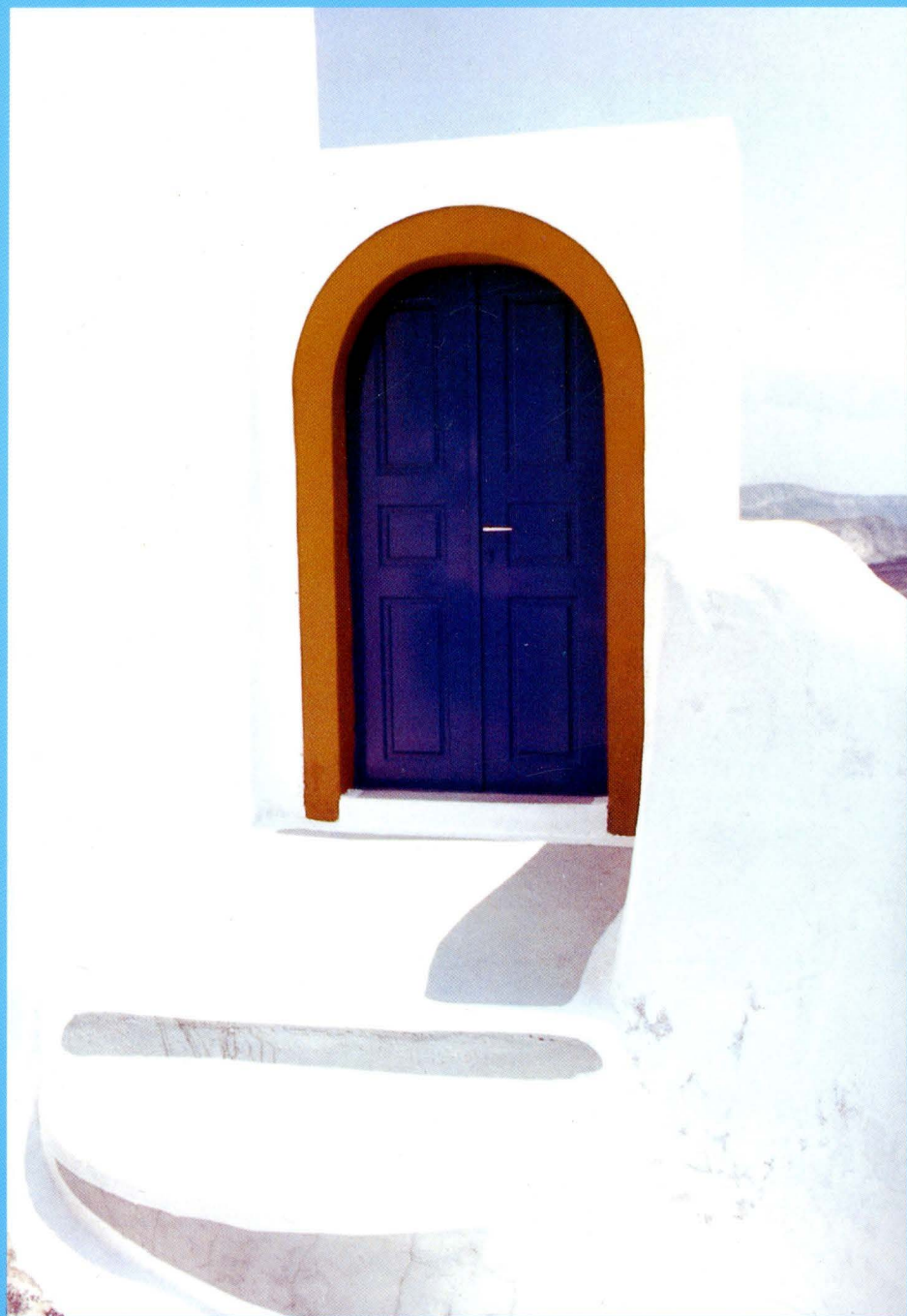
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BRUSHING



BRUSHING
WINTER 1987

Rollins College



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(*Indicates artwork/photography.)

REVELATION

Art is the attempt
to express the unexpressable.
Life is the chance
to live the unattainable.
Truth cannot be contained
in any syllable.
Love is silent
and deep truth is imageless.

THE EDITORS



UPDRAFTS

At just that time in the morning
when the sight-seeing balloons
are drifting over our trees
heading for the lake
catching the dawn's updrafts,
I like to sit with pen and paper
waiting for my soul to rise
float and drift
on inspiration's updrafts,
catching a current
of thought.

ALAN NORDSTROM

A GOOD WAY

Sometimes I just want to give up
on all the little stupidities that
comprise the great unequal struggle.
A good way to go crazy
would be to do just that; give up,
suspend thought and pointless action
and have someone send you to a nice
white sanitarium somewhere that used
to be a summer mansion, overlooking the sea —
with a porch where you could just breathe
salt and dream of peace
and stare uncaring over the variousness
of the ocean.
Not quite daring suicide
(because what if Dante knew something)
just existing, smelling the sun-warmed wood,
and having fantasies like Blanche
of ocean journeys and unwashed grapes.

CATHY COLLINS



RICK CONGER

AMERICAN DREAM

Whatever happened to the American Dream?
Does it lie forgotten
 somewhere along the endless miles of crumbling
 pavement highways
Where twisted railroad tracks lie in
paraplegic silence (perhaps they were once men)
Among the piles
 of burnt-out, rusted automobile skeletons
 (the fossilized souls of the elite)
 of broken cigarettes
 and smashed bottles of oblivion
Among the pools of dirty oil
 which reflect an invisible hope
The triumph of industrial suicide.

Whatever happened to the American Dream?

Perhaps it lingers on a song

in a rooftop apartment

the last surviving remnants of a day-glo,

Woodstock mentality

there is nothing to breathe but the sticky-

sweet hashish atmosphere

on a Hooka planet

where LSD manna falls from the skies

and reality is a far-off nightmare.

The old guitar has cancer;

its strings snap, and it dies

and the song evaporates

along with all the unheard basement music.

Is it buried, along with the souls

of countless, unsung heroes

under the infinite acreage of cold grey concrete

under a burning red sky with more than one sun

which sears our sweat-stained karma.

Whatever happened to the American Dream?

Does it sit on shelves in neurotic grocery stores

in a bright and shiny cellophane wrapper

without Sacharrin, which causes cancer in the

white laboratory mice.

Everyone who's anyone must use it to clean the furniture.

Maybe its on sale today!

along with Happiness, Sex Appeal, and Instant

Friends on Fifth Avenue.

Whatever happened to the American Dream?
Does it march, in perfect formation,
 an olive drab robot,
 unable to wind itself up
 whose camouflage consists
 mainly of an observer's inability
 to distinguish it from its millions of
 comrades.
It will do absolutely anything it's told to.

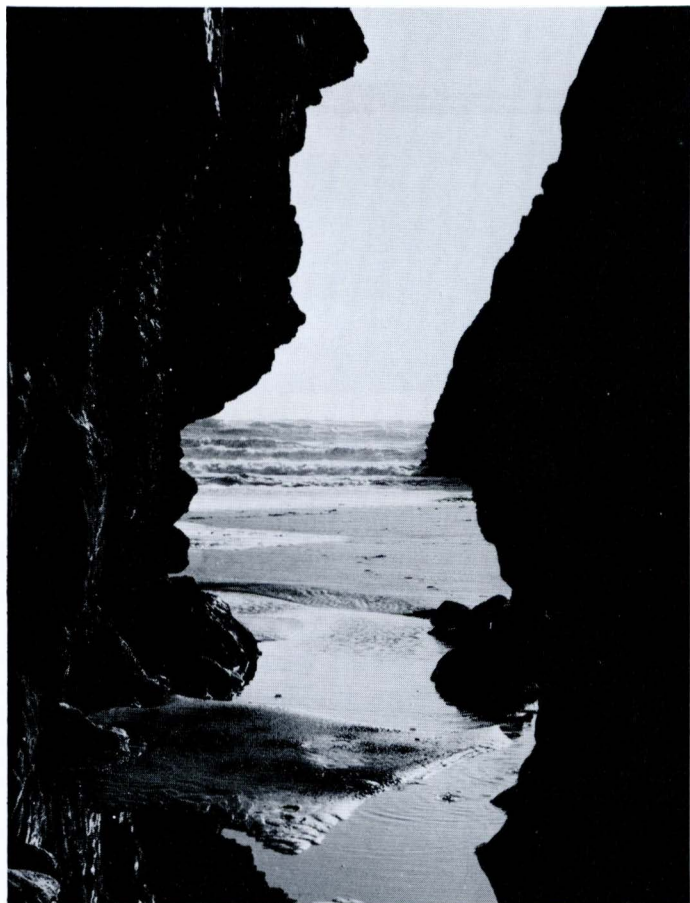
Whatever happened to the American Dream?
It burns brightest on the boats
 emulating the shining lamp
 which lets forth light, even amidst the
 the rotten fruit
on the way to the immigration office.
But, does it begin to falter,
 its energy sucked away to become part
 of the factories in the blue-collar
 world of tired feet.
I guess
 I must have taken it for granted
 and so did not notice its presence
 which, incidentally,
 I still cannot distinguish from the
 colors on the wall.

KENNETH R. AVERETT

WAITING

Waiting for the sun to come
And dry up the rainwater on the streets . . .
Waiting for the time to pass
And finally mature . . .
Waiting for the useless
and knowing that nothing will come . . .
I'm just waiting for you —
And those wounds to heal . . .

ELIZABETH CLECKNER





DON GATANIS

DIVIDED WE FALL

Mirror, mirror on the wall,
why is it that you don't fall?
Is it such a simple thing
as the presence of a string?
Will the precious mirror drop,
if it's severed from its top?
Or will the imaged people stand,
minus an elusive strand?

ROBIN LOXLY

SANDSCRIPT

When twilight lay upon the earth
and hushed the weary feverish day
I ambled down unto the shore
to glimpse the sun's last setting ray

Damp silence calmed the hollow night
as beach birds skipped along the shore
my breath released a heavy sigh
to compliment the salty roar

Just beyond the water's reach
a crusty reed clenched in my hand
plucked from 'neath a starfish shell
I sketched your name upon wet sand

Thoughts of you flowed back to me
while I watched the ebbing tide
knowing that the foamy waves
would soon erase you from my side

Eternity perched on a sea gull's wing
intensified the lonely air
waiting for the fluid life
to wash you from my longing stare

Oh indeed your stay was swift
my hold on you was very slight
persistence brings me back again
to write your name another night

LEAH MASON

FOOTPRINTS

Whenever she left my room,
I could smell her on my body.
Vanished like a bird.
She would climb through my window
And leave those footprints behind in the garden.
then in the morning,
I would get up and look
At those lillies-of-the-valley,
With their heads bent down
As if to say "What did I do wrong?"

LISA CLARK

UNTITLED

Grey-black lumpy clouds
have been moving in all afternoon,
vaguely menacing.
A blue-shirted jogger glances gratefully at
the gathering blanket of clouds,
Anticipating refreshment.
Two preschoolers hurry
apprehensively before the rolling
thunder,
Clinging to their mother's hands.
The rain begins to fall deliberately.
Within minutes, the shower of droplets
accelerates and coalesces,
Creating a waterfall curtain outside
my window.
Landmarks blur and then fade away —
the lake, the trees, the boathouse —
all disappear.
Finally, nothing exists beyond
my window — the world outside
has been quietly obliterated,
And all that remains is the small island of my room.

DONNA JEAN HOUGE



RICK CONGER

FIRESIDE CHAT

In a far away land
in a hole in a hill
lived a very old man
with a very long will
in a rage of disgust
at the number of heirs
he slipped into the pattern
of "Gee, I don't care."
so he sent all his money
to people in need
and left not for the heirs
save the lien on his deed.

DAN REID



KATHI RHOADS

**ODE TO TAKIKO:
"NO SUNSET FOR DAWN"**

I can't cry outside, never have been able to make a decent go at it, yet within me rests an eternal well of tears. It's been so long; it's said and done. I feel so old at twenty-one. I wonder no more how a youth can have so much to say; never will I have said it all. And if the cork flies skyward, who shall catch it? I miss her friendship, what I thought had been our friendship. I want to call her; though I'm not sure if she'd laugh, or scream, or patronize and then gossip me into further oblivion. More likely, she would probably just hang up and give me another day to mark down in nostalgia to keep for the day I write a book, a book of our story. Yet I have no ending, no honest one, none I can feel warm about. Worse, I've already been searching for a sequel; and I feel so old, so very old. Things don't seem to have been righted yet . . . I remember how it felt after the last time I saw her.

The ship left once warm shores, as I left behind my home and family, and what I thought had been my, well, you know. I wish that ship had been nautical in nature so I could have watched that land gradually fade over the horizon to offer me a gentle departure. Yet it was an airship that yanked me skyward, a plane with narrow and unforgiving accommodations. Quite unlike the generous deck of an ocean liner that allows one to remember, reflect, and make noble expressions amongst salt laden wind and an endless panorama of living sea (and the freedom to contemplate hurdling overboard); the plane did not extend these comforts. Despite the setting, my heart remained unbridled for questioning. The story seemed over though I knew it could not be so, even if it would only continue in my mind. The questioning continued. I could not silence it's cries, and wasn't even sure that I wanted to. If this was not the end for me, when would

it come? Will I find a short ending, an ongoing cliffhanger, or will I find a continuing story of permanence of which this is but a chapter?

Regardless of the outcome, will it be good? May I find at last breath, a happy ending? I remember what the illusionist said: "To every multiple choice question, add 'none of the above' to the list of options."

Now, in my new abode, it is late at night. The sandman serves as a stranger to me, I lie awake wondering what to say about it all. I, the lone participant in a one sided friendship. "The Lone Stranger", a really funny guy, "what keeps this guy rockin'?" I doubt that anyone really cares about all this besides me and those inanimate objects to whom I attribute personalities; but now that I'm putting this in print, I'm hoping that it will stay there as if in a safe, unable to haunt me.

I understand she won first runner-up in the State pageant. If for some reason the winner can't fulfill her duties, she'll compete for Miss America. What a comforting thought. Mutual friends say the mention of my name brings the anger of ordered silence. They say "... at least that shows she still cares", but to serve her only as a source of anguish is not what I wish for.

I can't help but wonder if all these thoughts will one day fade as with tears in the rain, or continue on like the takiko, Japanese for waterfall. It seems I cling to this pain as a matter of honor. For with the slightest change in my morality, it could be left behind, clouded by a sea of iniquity. Nonetheless, I strive to hold on to each virtue; for the moment I were to loosen my grip to release one, there would be no stopping. As brass tarnishes in the jungle, so I would be consumed in blackness. All hope would be dashed across the cliff-side rocks forever. Wash after wash of thunderous sea would not

remove the stains of my smoky iced possession. I laugh in nervousness of the thought of it.

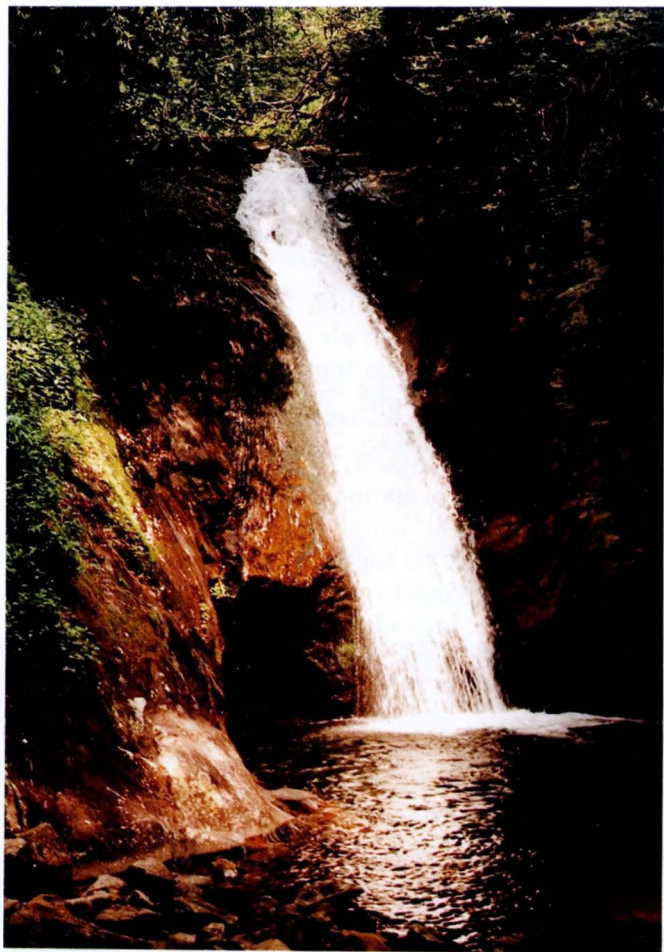
I think it's hard for any person to believe they are strong and courageous. We spend much of our lives denying it, and it is so much easier to be weak. At land's end I found myself gathering what bravery I could to do the hardest thing: absolutely nothing. I would harm no one, nor appear or call where I was not wanted, or fall from grace in the delusion of substitutes. The noble path of chivalry, I convinced myself, would be the best in the end (if it ever came). Trusting in the powers that be, I hoped that I was on the wise man's path.

My flight was nearing its conclusion; the landing would take place at night. Raising the window shade, I saw the glass. Looking at the sadness in my reflection, I decided that the intelligent man is so because he knows he is something more in comparison to all the other creations on this earth. He knows he has an expansion of mind somehow different from those of his fellows. Yet over and above all else, he knows he is nothing. He knows he is nothing next to what an intelligent man could be.

I still missed my friend . . .

Is it "better to have loved and lost than to never have loved at all"? At 18, I didn't know. At 18 love was a stranger to me. Now at 21, I don't think it is; because now . . . I know what I am missing. Nevertheless, though I have felt the sharp bitter pain of love's furious strike across my face, and feel in the dark its lingering scar; I still turn my head willingly and offer for its consumption . . . my other cheek.

IAN OAK



MARY
ELLEN
BERLO

DOVES WINGS

I sit and watch
without a sound
doves so graceful and
so white

They raise their wings
to walk the air
and rise so high til
out of sight.

I ask myself,
with twinkling eyes,
if I had wings
to fly so high,
if I could reach
the lacy clouds
and walk the winds
like they do now,
I would be free to fly away
and to golden islands stray,
Go back to lands I
saw before,
renew my heart's
love forevermore.

Within this island
I would roam
and stay within
and call it "Home!"

*UNISTAR (M.M.A.)
DEDICATED TO MY GRANDFATHER, JESUS.*

GLIMMERING WATERS

Glassy, untouched, except for the small ring
that grows larger and larger
enveloping all blueness around,
it slowly diminishes . . .
we step back from our still reflection,
from untouching mirrors
to discover the stillness in our hearts
that bonds us together,
just as the sun bonds to the horizon
slowly discovering new colors
the blueness of the lake flows into the purple sky
pinks, tinted rosebuds
uncovering newness
as the sky and heaven grow as one
the land, water and sky grow as one
discovering untouched waters edge
trinkle up to low shorelines
to show the brown touched green shorelines
where two swans intertwine as one.

ALLISON TEGER





RICK CONGER

BLIND CURVE

The key to an anger inflamed
is this misunderstanding
over female "feline-powers"
capable of situating me perfectly framed.
Frustration inherent to the question I pose:
"Is my guitar the better life-mate when
I'm caught in a phase underwhich
I feel dismayed in asking her for a date?"
'Twas *she* who walked into *my* life!
Had she unconsciously turned about a different passage —
I'd feel this way with a different girl?

But I'm glad you chose here,
since in this place I think I need you
and, *just so*, what is yours I too belong to.

But when you won't take an effort to
have what this choice hearth hath to offer . . .
. . . where *instead* you linger with whom
your past has grown accustomed!
A raging storm of flaming tongues,
growing heart-wrenching and entropic in nature,
scorch the eyes I see you with.
And so your image burns in my memory's sight.

Then I think of how
we have related to each other:

The time I spent on you —
it seems so costly and wasted when
unequaled from you
is the adoration I hold for you.
What ever it is that is so uniquely yourself
and that binds me to you:
Your mark is branded upon me,
And you know it from my emotional recital.
Nevertheless,
I sense your mockful cunning
whilst I pour my heart's truthfulness.
(Ambrosia to those who seek the beauty of being in love;
A potion of hemlock to you who withholds the search.)

We have got along
to the extent of getting better along . . .
Alas, it is so:
Reciprocation is the truthful gift
and what must be drawn from you
to save the "we"
in our relationship
and continue what we once began.

My forgiveness alone
cannot rekindle
the plea.

You and I and
Our unseasoned love
are like the particles of plankton —
microscopic yet heard and felt
even in the ocean's enormity.
All the little things that sheltered me
in a harbor of comfort
have washed away with the tide of discontent.
And I look at those attributes
which make me *know* I'm alive:
Love's distasteful battles are essential, it truly seems,
no matter how trivial.
Though you may not realize what they are,
the things you do and say —
having done much for my yesterday —
Now only pain my vulnerable wall of emotion
behind which I crumble
to pieces
to bits.

It would be fictitious to say
that I've *not* been poisoned by the sudden
indifference you've shown me.
I'm not a machine
which, when sluggish and rundown,
can be adjusted simply by changing a fuse
and pressing a switch.
Despite my valued God-given talent
at resilience,

I'm a man vulnerable
to irreparable harm
— a far cry from youth's illusion of invincibility.

Unaware as you are, you leave me
to drift into the lonesome cold.
Because of you, I *will* wallow in this inharmonious mire
— attempting to revive what is truly
supportive of me.

Shattered I lay this moment.
I tell you now something
that perhaps
will make you see
the depth that's inside of me.
The sting of love was joyful
for a happily long time;
till the curse of fate
coldly ripped my love from my life.
To have lost my 'first'
to a drunken state
and a blind curve
is something which if you knew
may sail the ships of hope
to our love's safe port again.

The calling of the memory
revives the scenes of contrast —
between a smooth, hilly street
bending round the dastardly rocky
protrusion into the crashing
singular wave formed within

the sheltering bay of Lanikai.
The inklings of this memory
and her death that I had seen
leaves a choice for me to make
but not for me alone:

To return to her spirit
in that land I had once known,
Or to stay here with you
at a time so unclear.

All this remains to be seen.
Revealed in how I feel about you
is
the reason why I've told
these secrets of my soul.
To make you understand?

This is hard for me.
But you may just be my long-awaited miracle.

I miss you way too much to turn away.
I'm looking your way now once again.
I'll tell you what I mean
from what I see.
Every time the radiance
strikes the golden strands of your hair,
the warmth of my love for you
fills me with delight.
You could be lost in an infinite wilderness
— nooks and crannies filled with
a myriad of concealments.
But you would always hear my voice
calling out for you;
So strong is this longing I hold for you.

I may just kneel to pray
that only temporary
is your short-sightedness.
But if not, I *may* turn away.

O Love,

*before the distractions squelch my fire,
Keep me burning for your desire!*

RICHARD STOCKTON CONGER

11/X/86



RON MALONEY

A Letter: To Someone Gone

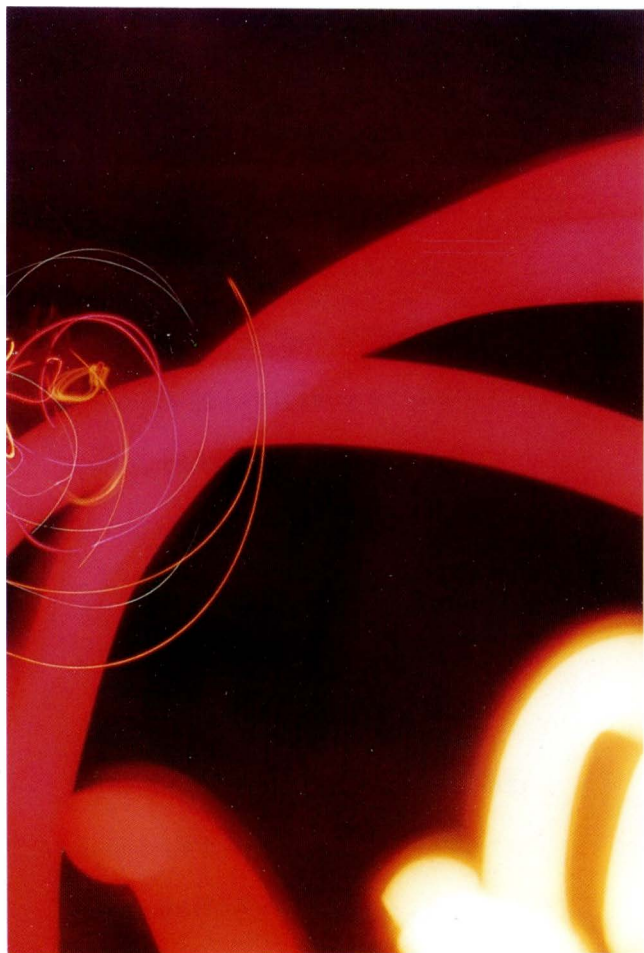
Don't you dare feel noble
that I'm better off
without you.

Now I listen to music that
means more than it ever should
and hope that you,
in the wake of dreams,
leave a tangle of sheets
and go outside and stare
at the night and
smoke cigarettes down to the filter
dropping them, spent,
into a full ashtray.

CATHY COLLINS

Fire for ice
Ice for fire
Allow me to show you
My desire
Tell me your dreams
Explain your position
So I can find a way
To destroy this partition
For until it is gone
You cannot see
The ice in my heart
And the fire that is me.

KATHI RHOADS



ROB ISNER

DEAFNESS

Silence
absolute stillness.
No words.
No music.
My head is empty
My ears
hear nothingness.
Echoing absence
ringing incessantly in them
an eternal roar of an eternal wind
a wind with no voice,
only existence.
What is it like to hear
real voices, real laughter, real songs,
real winds?
To me, the trees just shimmer and wave,
they don't 'murmur' or 'rustle'
You may speak,
but I see movement only,
and cannot capture your thoughts
as they float in the air.
It is scary, this stillness, this
emptiness, this vast breathlessness
within me.
Living in a world of light and shadow,
devoid of music, absent of sound
The whisperings of the world are
unknown to me, they are
imagined flutterings in the dark.

PAMELA KINCHELOE

PREMONITION

Seagulls scream overhead as the sun sets over the blushing waters. Two figures walk silently along the coast, the wind gently caressing their bodies. Together they had often come to the living shore, discovering new pleasures each time. but today is different. They are not here for the colored shells or dancing crabs; Today one of them has come to the gleaming shores and majestic waters not to play, but sadly . . . to die.

Darkness has consumed her body, making it weak before its time. An illness has invaded her deep within, slowly draining her strength, causing her pain and anger. Anger for being left so little time; anger for the final proof of her mortality. Together they faced her anguish and now it is finally coming to an end.

Walking along the beach she leans on him for support. He sees how tired she is and sits her gently onto the sand. They listen to the waves' roaring song, as he holds her to his chest. His tears fall on her cheeks and she tastes his hurt. With a soft smile she whispers her love for him and seemingly falls asleep, a sleep from which she will not awaken. The quiet tears which fell from his eyes unbidden now come forth in great wracking sobs, while he holds her still warm body to his own.

The stars shine brightly as night drapes its velvet cloak upon the world. The waves have already welcomed her form to the sea and he stand alone. The moon illuminates white, gleaming sand around him while the wind sweeps back his hair, displaying a fine brow now filled with pain and sorrow. As he stares out towards the great black water, a single droplet slides down his cheek and falls silently to the sand.

Abruptly he awakens, shouting her name with pain in his heart and voice. The woman sleeping next to him is startled awake by his cry. She gathers him in her arms and holds him till dawn.

The next day, seagulls scream overhead as the sun sets over the blushing waters. Two figures walk silently along the coast, the wind gently caresses their bodies . . .

KIMBERLY AVERETT



KATHLEEN



WHO ARE YOU

Staying up late tonight
In a mood that won't let
Me sleep. Fabricating fantasies
To soothe my soul. I drift
Peacefully with images of
You and me on sunlit
Beaches. The redness of the
Dawn starting us on our
Way through a day full of
Laughter and love. The violet
Sky of dusk closing out
Reality and letting us dream
Together.
I don't know who you are,
But I know I love you.

JULIE DOBSON

Spending time
Not thinking of you
And me, because
You're not here, and
I'm not with you.
But that doesn't make
Anything easier.
I can't even say
That we're partners
In this crime,
Because the crimes
I commit,
I do alone.

R.K.

PUMP PRIMING

Behind the old beach cottage
we rented for the summer
when I was seven or eight,
just after the war,
was a rusty iron water pump
above a well still sweet.

At first when I played with it
I could rock the bowed handle
all day long
up and down
fast or slow
and nothing came
but dry rasps and wheezes,
never water.

Then Dad showed me priming:
bring a can of water,
pour it down the slot
at the top of the shaft,
then work the handle more,
feel it tighten,
the pressure build,
the handle get harder to push down,
then water
and more water
gushing from the angled spout that flooding
joyfully in a marshy puddle on the grass.

So it is still:
I prime myself with morning tea,
I write and write and write
till finally an image wells
and poetry spills over me.

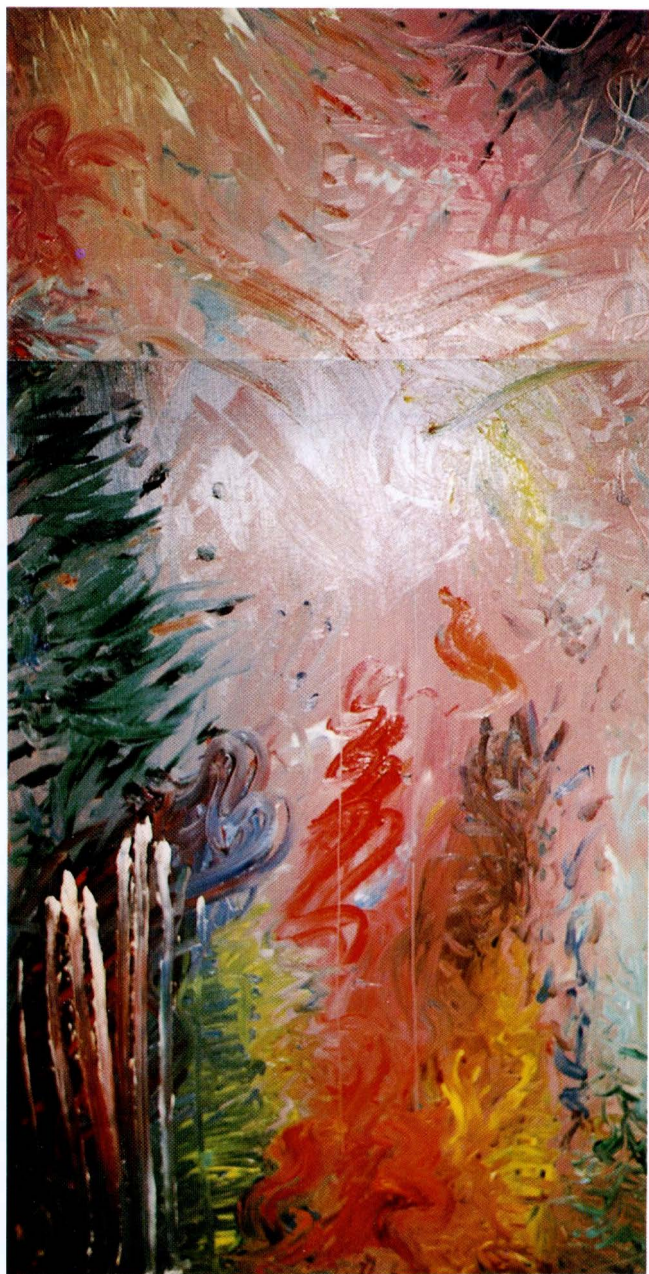
ALAN NORSTROM



oDE to oZONE

dISTANT blueness of vast sky
guarded by bastions of cloudcover.
But over this vaporous facade
hover our unseen agents
with velocities streaming outward to
this innocent lifeless
lifesaving vastness.
Gaseous aerosol daily penetrates.
Production-minded degradation
and loss of qualifiable consciousness
masking the most devious attributes
we dwellers as humans hold.
Felt, though invisible, evils of greedy
aerosol-madness and subliminal hubris.
Enemies to naturality!
Yet yOU wish to rely on our unseen spirits
to counsel our consciences
(so it is reasoned) and
cancel the dread away from
aNOther loading ZONE.

R. STOCKTON



KATE ROTH



ELIZABETH CLECKNER

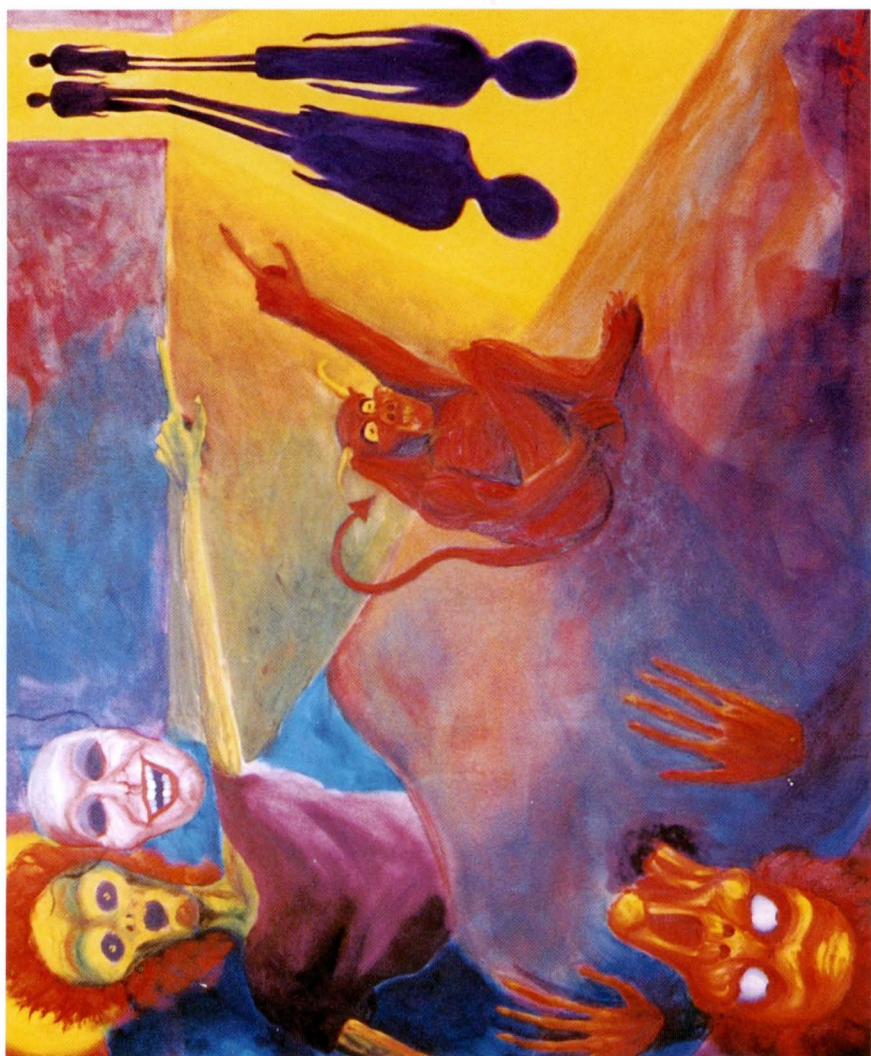
In a hole you don't see,
'cept for light-headed bees,
and you won't play with roots
'cause you don't have your boots
and it's easy to scream
from the top of a beam
that there's really no room
on the head of a broom
to be drinking your afternoon tea.

PHIL ZIES

LOVE

A love I do not tempt
To go much deeper in,
For I don't know
How long, how far or deep it is.
T'is love, a word
I do not dare describe,
For I shall no longer
Dig deep into this well,
For it has sprung up,
And covered me with happiness.

ELIZABETH CLECKNER



JACK TOEPKE

THEM

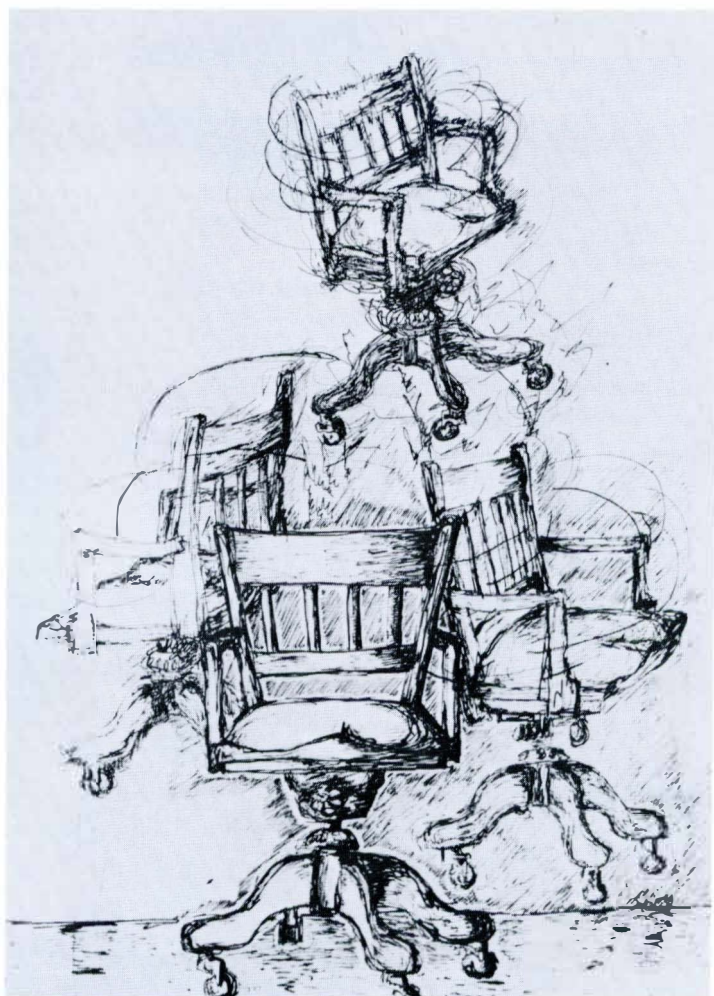
Moonlight
glows from inner walls
trees nod gently
shadows criss-cross the room.
The dark corners
glare at me from all directions.
Watchfull eyes under my closet door.

I pull the covers around my chin,
and tuck in the edges
so the goblins can't come in.
There was something moving
under my bed.
Watchful eyes under my closet door.

The bed creaks and I freeze
because there is something
breathing behind the curtains.
There are fingers groping
around the top of my dresser drawer.
Their long nails scratch and screech.
Watchful eyes under my closet door.

The darkness is oppressive
it's closing in on me and
pushing down on me
I start; when car lights hum
past my window,
red eyes looking in.
I pull the covers over my head.
I drowse into eternal sleep.
Watchful eyes under my closet door.
Smile.

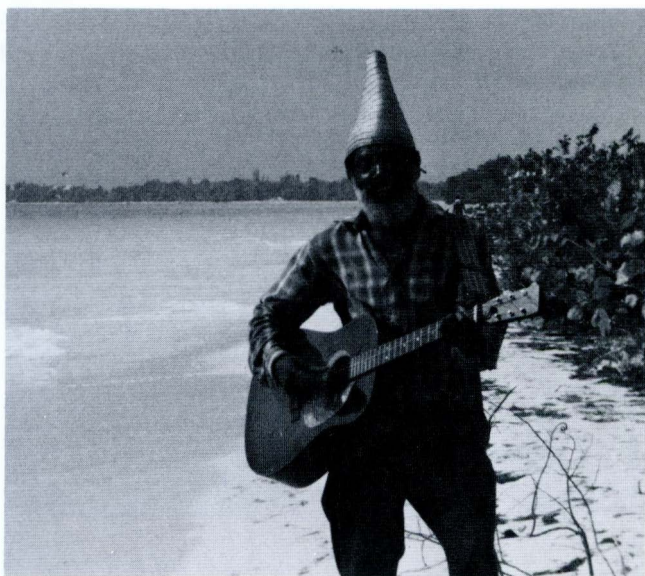
PAM



CRISTA COOPER

His hair array in oily curls from years of bathless nights,
the buttons on his heavy coat gleaming in the light.
He lurks in screening darkness, his climbing boots in hand,
his cautious footsteps muffled by the ever present sand.
The grappling hook is ready, to strike against the wall,
the evening's silence broken by the midnight watchman's call.
No more the chains of tyranny to weigh upon his heart,
the midnight watchman calls no more, his throat is torn apart.
The nightmare's almost ended, his freedom's near at hand,
if fight he must he'll make it here, this'll be his final stand.
Now's his chance to scale the wall, to make his freedom real,
and deep inside he regrets the blow that he was forced to deal.
As he climbs, charges he planted reappear in his mind,
even if they find him out, them they'll never find.
Now his cause has finally won, he smiles in shameless glee,
What happens to him matters not, his people are finally free.
The first of the arrows strike the wall mere inches from his head,
the morning heralds spread the news, "The Rebel King is dead!"

G. PHILIP ZIES



MALHAR GORE

RAINDROPS

It has been raining all day and my boots are wet.
I stare into space, into the infinite, while everything around me is so definite. So many raindrops, why are they coming, where are they all going? They hit my window, trying to hit me and look like emigrating birds.

Not one drop is like the other, each one hitting the ground at a different time. I see their light and their colour, at night they look like little gold fishes trying to escape, or like bombs speeding down from the sky. What is a fish without water, what is a bomb without explosion or a raindrop by itself?

The music is beating inside my head, the raindrops hit my hair. Many notes, all looking alike, but sounding differently. Do you know when they will come and the music stop?

I have traveled a long way, but still I am in the same place.

Please come, I am cold.

LISA LOUISE



DON GATANIS

ENDURING LOVE

Vain beauty cannot help but fade,
The blaze of lust is bound to die,
And passion from which bonds are made
Cannot time's rending force defy.

True love need not depend on these
And will be wrought of softer stuff —
Of tenderness and sympathies,
Of compliments and care enough.

Thus when the gilt of passion's peeled
And beauty's charms are all dissolved,
Enduring love shall be revealed
As that from which our strength evolved.

ALAN NORDSTROM

Looks, glances
Sideways dances
Never to come to rest
At a point of no hesitation.
Always willing to test,
Eager in participation.

But if put against the wall,
Will he crumble
Will he fall,
Or come to your side?

KATHI RHOADS



OLGA VISO

A VIGNETTE

"What does love smell like?" asked the little child. His mother smiled, and with a far away look in her pale blue eyes, answered,

"Oh, I think that love smells like grass, all crumpled up and dried by the sun; it's sweet and bitter and fresh."

The boy thought a bit, shut his eyes tight, took a deep breath, and sniffed.

"So, what do you think?" asked the boy's mother, as she cut up more carrots.

"I think," said the child,

"that love smells like toast and lavender soap."

The door slammed and the child ran to play in the yard. His mother watched him through the kitchen window, a slight smile curving her lips. Then a tear fell from her pale blue eyes, and disappeared into the onions.

P.K.



E.M.

BEAMS

When the stars above look down at night
What do they see?
The fairies, the gnomes, the unicorns, the fates
But, I wonder, can they see me?
Do they know what I dream, what I think, what I feel
Do they know what I wish every night?
While I sit and ponder of Knights in armour
And that beyond all other's sight.
Oh stars look down with your glowing beams
And tell me of stories we share
For I wonder sometimes if the stories and rhymes
Are the dreams that are always there.

STH

Ice cubes weaken lemonade
As we, exhausted, lay in the shade
Hunggrily the famished heat sapped
The vitality of our bones entrapped
Limbs entwined, ravaged sheets.
Out the window we see the street's
Shimmering from the oppressive heat
But perhaps again we'll meet
You and I
In the angry sky
To where it is inconsequential
whether Omaha or Presidential;
Water falls or snow fly;
If it's too hot or dry
And where we can admit
without saying it
That perhaps there is
Something in life.



MARY TO MARTHA

Dear Martha,

After receiving your most recent reproachful letter, I am perplexed as usual. Why must you be so cruel in your letters? Are you trying to hurt me? It seems that you despise the fact that I use my imagination, that I muse and daydream. Martha, don't you see, that's an important part of my life? I have so many dreams and fantasies. I love and nurture them, as if they were a child at my breast; I nourish them with the sweet milk of hope. I dream so often of future career possibilities, of love, of a refuge where I might hide away.

In my mind I am like a painter: I paint and repaint my images of ideal life constantly, adding color and dimension with each new experience. Then, when I have nearly created a masterpiece of imagination, you come along: the critic! You criticize my paintings, ruthlessly, down to the last romantic detail. You scoff at them, cynically, and do not allow me to have the slightest illusion. And then, Martha, you seem to take pleasure in my defeat.

Love, that which is so desired and yet feared, that which is infinitely rich in meaning and yet indefinable, that which seems so intangible — does it really exist? When I experience an exalting warmth fluttering in my heart and sweetly drifting through my body, after just one glance, one mutual flash of secret recognition, I am sure that it does! I feel as if I were floating among the clouds, drunk with all the happiness of a beautiful day. Like the birds in the spring, I want to sing with rapture, so that the whole world might hear me. It is as if I am glowing with an untamed energy. Soon I will simply catch fire.

But then you come suddenly, without warning, and you interrupt my sweet day dreaming. You are dark and scolding. You do not let yourself become intoxicated. You do not participate in such foolish behavior as dreaming and hoping — it is unrealistic. You appear unaffected, nonchalant; but I know you: you are afraid. It is dangerous to make yourself vulnerable, isn't it? You might have to break down all those walls you so carefully built around yourself. And yet, that is what you desire, isn't it, Martha? To become vulnerable, to trust. You will insist that I am incorrect in my judgment of you, as you do every time we have this argument, whenever you come to rescue me from my dangerous romance and to transport me back to the "real world."

But it is in this "real world" where I do not fit, where I am afraid.

the people are so indifferent and unfeeling, as if they were numb. These masses of people are like a big city, a metropolis made of cold metal, sharp glass, and hard concrete. They are productive and efficient; they speak of money and politics. Even their entertaining is done in masses: it is more efficient that way. In such a world, to be alone would be deadly. One would freeze to death. Metal, when in contact with other metal, makes heat and sparks, but alone it is icy.

In this world, I am awkward. I am alive and human, and I refuse to deny it. So they try to fit me in as best they can; they give a purpose, even. I am like a tree in their city: I am allotted two feet square, in which I should be able to grow and function. I breathe in all their dirty smog and exchange it with refreshing air. I, the creative one, am expected to purify their stale, rational ideas and make them pretty. But, inevitably I am abused, there in my two-foot plot; all the dogs come by and piss on me.

In reaction to this "real world" of yours, I create a refuge, a little hideaway in nature, far away from the treacherous life of the big city. In my mind I picture a little cottage in Southern France, where I could live peacefully, tending my garden and my animals, and doing my crafts: living simply amidst the countryside. There I would be carefree. Oh, I can hear you already, telling me: "Mary, such a place does not exist. Wherever you go, you will have, if nobody else, yourself to reckon with. You have, as everybody does, problems and imperfections that you will never escape, because they reside in your mind; and wherever you go, your mind goes with you. And besides, you will never get rid of me!"

And, of course, you are right. But can't you, just for once, let me have one beautiful illusion? Just as you need all your responsibilities and productiveness to distract you from your true emotions, that dangerous realm of the uncalculated, so I need my illusions, or at least a place in my mind where I can go, to escape the relentlessly callous world, which I not understand, the world of the rational.

We are in opposition, like North and South. You are the realistic, stable, chilly, and responsible North, and I am the romantic, whimsical, hot-tempered, and irresponsible South. We are in opposition, yet we need each other to survive in perfect balance. We incline to each other for support, but we still cannot reside peacefully together. It seems that we are always in a struggle, each trying to prove to

the other her superiority.

So, my dear sister, I think it is time for us to meet on neutral ground, as friends. You mentioned California, more specifically Los Angeles. That should do. L.A. is the "real world" for some people, but it's also a southern city. It may be quite productive and efficient, but at the same time it has a very creative impulse. The art world thrives there (probably due to the large market for art), and the climate is beautiful. It sounds agreeable, don't you think? So then, I'll see you there in the beginning of June. Write to me soon.

Love,

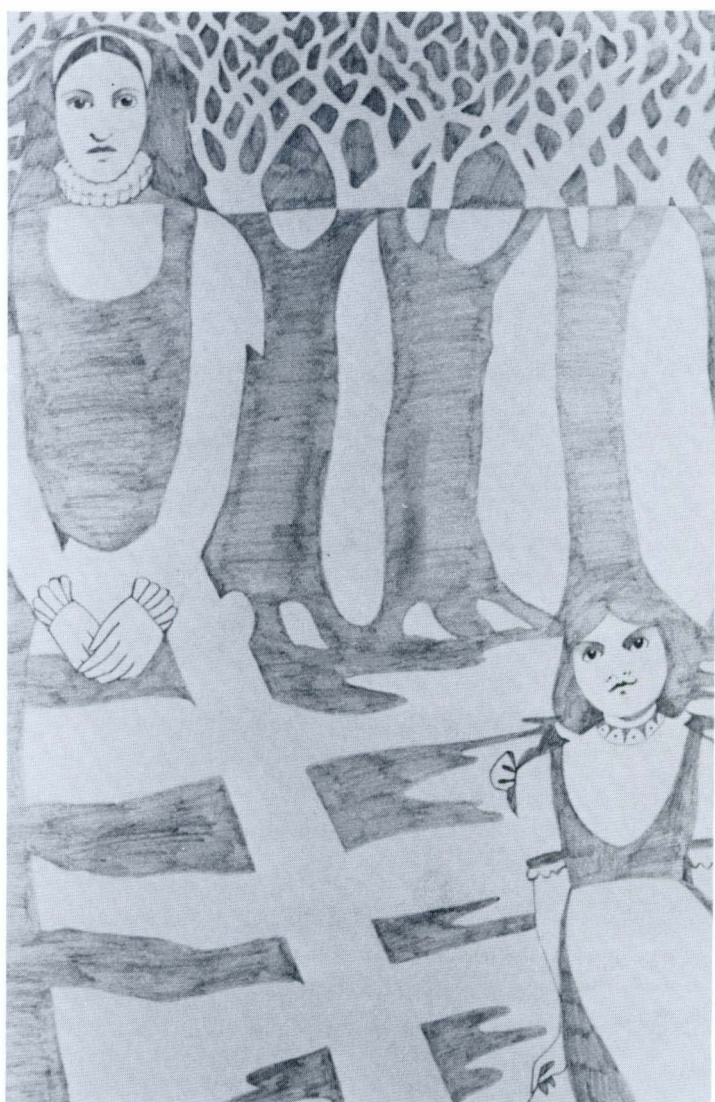
Mary

ELIZABETH MAUREEN CLECKNER

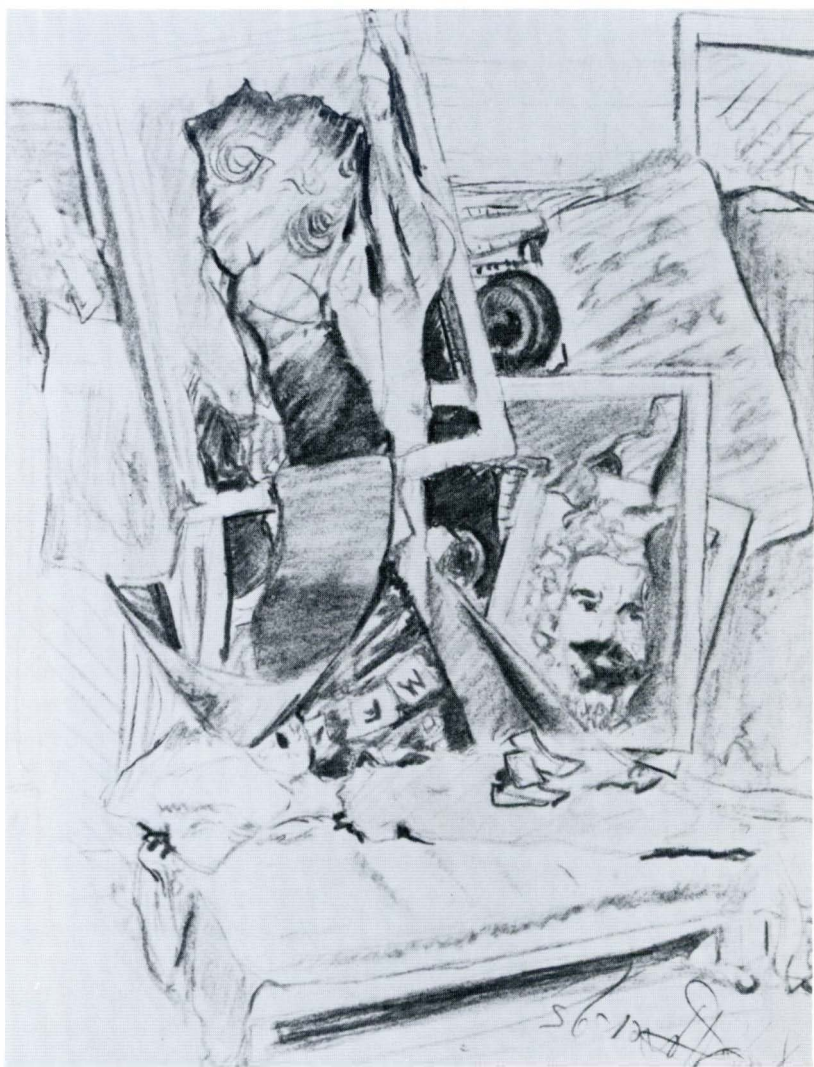
PARODY

Dream a dream for six pence
dreams that you can buy,
buy yourself a dream cassette
and stick it in your eye.
When the dream is over
your ears begin to ring,
and now you know the folly
of inventing such a thing.

PHIL ZIES



PAM KINCHELOE



KATHI RHOADS



KATHI RHOADS

THERE'S NO TIME

There's no time
For time alone
There's no time
For no time at all
For your time is now
Don't even wonder how

What we once had,
Is gone
Days of sorrow
There seems like no tomorrow
I gave you back
What you gave to me
A symbol of non-reality

This is my last calling
I'm afraid we will never be
Even friends it seems
Why this had to happen
Is this your fate or mine
Thinking of you sometimes
Time in and out of time.

JIM SUTTON

ANSWER BREWING

I felt an answer brewing in my brain,
the question however, was not fit.
The inquiry had not been clear or plain
and my mind was quite lost in it.

To all of you who came before me,
blood of my blood, carbon of my ever
unchanging matter, I say hello and
many thanks for making existence possible.

Without your eyes, hands, minds,
and words, my world would be white.
Blank as the empty page. For every
poem needs an author.

To all of you still to come,
descendants of my flesh, heirs to my
dust, I say hello and good luck in
all your doings.

To you, I am a faceless, nameless
nothingness and I am forever gone.
Let me tell you: I was born, I learned,
I bled, I cried, I laughed, I dreamed.
I was as you are.

Though I am a face in the dark
to you, I once felt the sun on my cheeks,
breathed of the same atmosphere,
stood upon the same sphere.

I lived, and live, as my ancestors
and your ancestors lived. But I am
worried. I have mentioned a sun,
an atmosphere, an earth. Do you,
my descendants, know of these?
Are they still there? Am I talking
to nothingness?



DON GATANIS

LEAVES

The leaves have changed,
And so have I.
Twenty times,
How many more?
The sky is blue
The wind is still
Still. Something rushes through my mind,
I try to grab it,
But I cannot catch it
Maybe the wind is blowing after all.
I am lost and far away. Let me . . . fall.

ELIZABETH CLECKNER

WHIMSY

The sand is so sugar

glassy, pitted, rough, chalky.

The sea is so salt

black, churning, foaming, creamed.

The sky is so velvet.

black, swirled, veiled, eternal, empty, embroidered.

The stars are so blue

twinkling, falling, constellation, consideration.

The moon is so money

flat, silver, shiny, glowing, smiling.

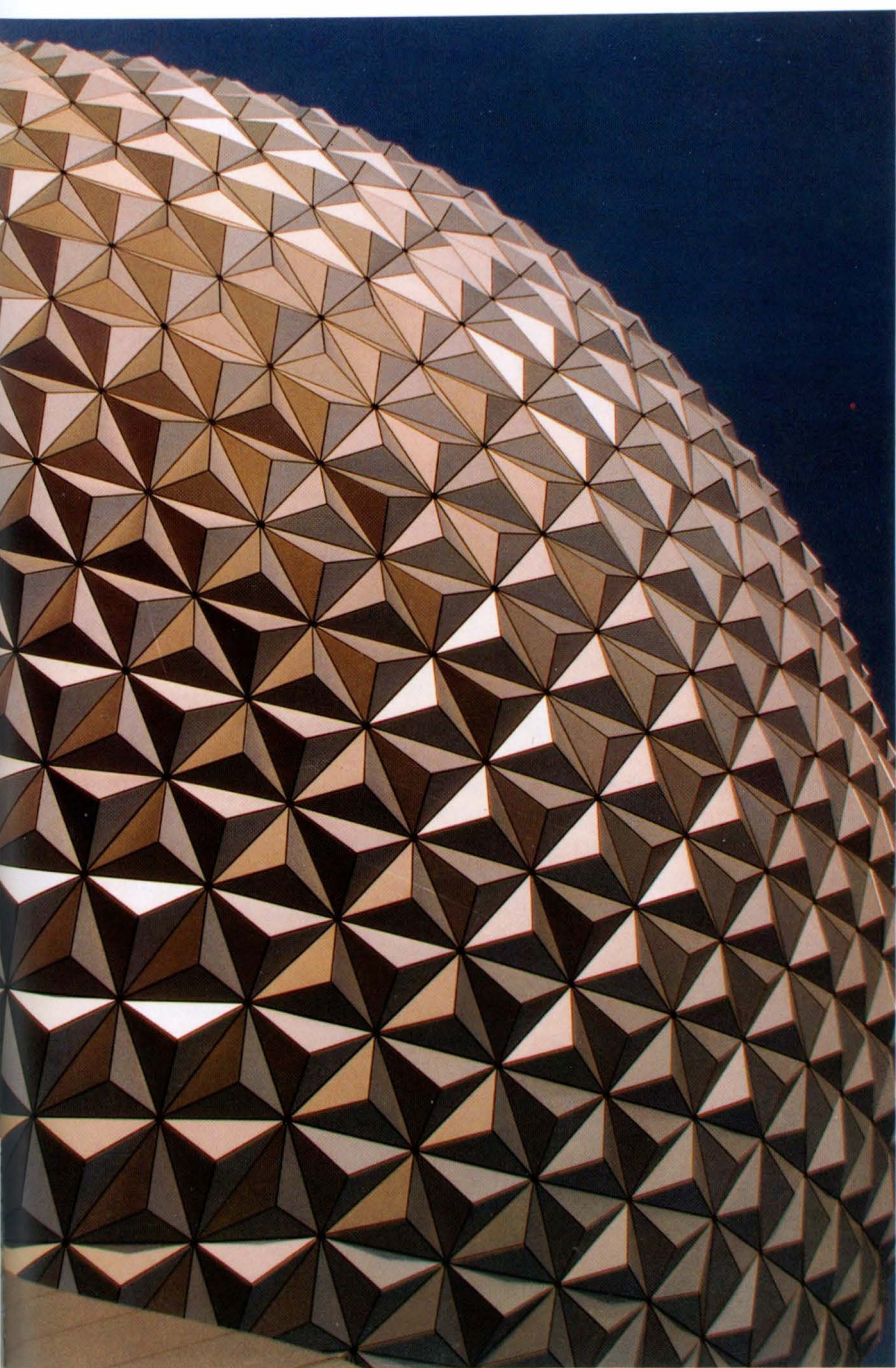
The wind is so deep

whispering, pulling, breathless, edged.

The soul is so bright

abundant, full, happy, free

PAMELA KINCHELOE



ROB BEALL

“Stay tuned for the six o’clock news.”
And the man on the tee vee looked up and said
“I will control you.”
And the voice on the radio pulled at his ear and said
“I will dominate your thoughts.”
“I will be the one who gives you morals.”
And his face turned green and he entered his stomach
As he watched his face spinning on his shiny new CD
And he said, “I gotta get outta here fast.”
“Into the neon. Into the night.”
He went through the kitchen, stopping only to check the roast in the
microwave oven.
And he passed his mother posing stiff behind a whurring blender moving
only her lips to say
“Don’t go down by the waste dump.”
“Stay away from the river.”
“And don’t go near that Bobby Joe Character.”
“Do you hear me? I’m talking to you.”
“I want you to be be be be . . .”
But her voice whirlpooled down with the whurr of the blender into the
depths of the chocolate chip batter.
And the screen door swayed. Open. shut.
Admitting ghosts of souls once loved.

With hands shoved down deep into his pockets
He scuffed along the sidewalk.

The ring of a telephone in a boardinghouse hallway
Didn't care at all about interrupting his thoughts
While that professor who flunked him leaned over his chest
And leering over

thick

ugly

tortoise shell-rimmed

reading glasses

Shook his finger, slowly pronouncing "You Fail"
And raising a fist in judgement: "I now condemn,
"I now condemn you to dumbness."

He thought of going to the pits at the waste dump
Or to the river's highest bridge
To throw the image to his death
But he sat down on the curb instead
And tickled a tin can with his toe.

"Imagicide!" he said and giggled.

"Hey there boy," a voice boomed out.

"Pick it up. Move it along."

The cop posed, sweating, hovering over his head, shaking a finger.
And he and the sound of the whurring blender
Got up to move it along.

Through the neon.

Down toward the waste dump.

CATHY HOLLAND

COMPLAINT OF THE REFORMED POET

It's come to this: that duty urges me
To work, more than mere pleasure prompts me play;
My swelling sense of ought preempts the glee
Of spontaneity and damps my day.
What rigid duty so severely binds
Me to my work? What work is this I do
That merits such denial and nearly blinds
Me to delights I lusted to pursue?
But this: to write about those pleasures that
Before I would indulge, in careless hours,
Pleasures of wine and food and growing fat,
Of sleep in bed and love in blissful bowers.
Now that I've grown ascetically thin,
I wonder if such duty isn't sin?

ALAN NORDSTROM



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