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Winter 1988

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BRUSHING

WINTER 1988

ROLLINS COLLEGE

Featured Writer: Jean West



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FOREWORD

"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."

This small book reflects the efforts of the people which make up Rollins, as they try to find some kind of sense amid the bizarre bombardments of the world. Apologies are due because this sampling of work merely skims the surface of a deep pool of talent and creativity.

PAM KINCHELOE, editor



IN BETWEEN GRAY

there

the stillness in the room
was like the stillness in the air
between our bodies standing
heavy in my throat
I felt
nothing
in eyes fixed blue
past my shoulder

not here

a scribble on the wall
trying to be
not so permanent
in sun and rain
I breathe my colors deep
and turn a step
away

RORI GONZALEZ

"CONFESSION AND EXPLANATION"

I can not claim to be wise
I don't think I have read enough
not as much as he has at least
but somewhere he lost it
some mental virginity
corrupted by the rapists of rationale
I can't write beautiful things or things that don't make sense to such
an extent
that when one reads it, he thinks he's best off nodding and gasping
and playing
as if it has changed his life
but I can write me onto paper
which is more than many can do into life

Sitting on the curb outside Maxine's

She is a beautiful woman
and he a handsome man
I watch him open a door for her
I see him take her hand
He carries himself like a noble
and she like a courtesan
each tall and groomed and elegant
blond, chic, and with a tan
and I sit here on the curb again
my shoes upon the street
they have their Rolls and Diners Club
but I'm the one complete . . .

I would be the first one to turn the other cheek
but they'd probably hit that one too.

LAURA HOPE-GILL

A POEM WITH A LINE FROM KENNETH ROXROTH

As I shout perverse expletives to you
at the top of my lungs
I hear the first time
you confided your drab middle name to me.

As I thrash my pillow
enraged by your, inability to even write
"Hello" from across the sea,
I am touched by your words
of laughter on my shoulder.

As I hear sickeningly possessive stories
from your best friend (and mine!)
Who uses your middle name much too lovingly
Who talks to you
across that fathomless sea much too often

I know I have a secret of Key West

Where when evening came
you were explaining everything to me

The abandoned olive grove
The walls older than the Romans,
And the twilight darkening
around the stars.

And now
As I cry, unheard,
I can only dream of how it may, someday, be.

When we, weary at the seas of distance,
Shall sit under the blossoming trees
And mingle awhile
In our own shaft of moonlight

*TALLEY HERBSTER
MARCH 23, 1987*



KATHLEEN DODDS

Set apart by glass
She cannot hear
the deep silver melody
Dancing alone
behind walls of ice
Translucent touch
Animation passes her by
Without a tear
Reach
She can only see
the pianoed rain
on the other side
No control or contact
Pictures remain framed
She screams a piercing crystal
As animation smiles
Knowing she will never smell
the tenderness she desires.

DOMINIQUE D'ANNA

TWO LEAVES

I have watched them for days,
the last two hold-outs of fall.
They are like lovers
unable to let go.

They cling so tightly
to the withered knuckle of their branch
that I am moved to laughter
by their stubbornness.

Two leaves.
Overnight they will change
to the delicate waste
that crushes underfoot.

Tonight, feathered with hoarfrost,
they are stars in their own orbits.
Tomorrow they will be anonymous —
lost in this city of leaves.

JONATHAN HARRINGTON

SEASON'S SYMPHONY

Returning once more . . .

The first dandelions of Spring

An orchestra of butter yellow

brought together as they wave their reeds and bows

Having withstood the crescendos of the season

As ultimately, the cold onyx notes transform

into translucent spheres

With each fresh verse

A flurry of frosty inverted parasols

are scooped up by a sparse muggy breeze

and lofted into the blue

In one soul blink, the melody has vanished . . .

LAUREL ANDERSEN



ANNE BOLLING

BOULEVARD

How many nights have I strolled
along this boulevard?
Alone, contemplative,
each globe of light from the streetlamps
illuminating some human drama
either sad or poignant.
The lovers enclosed in their hermetic embrace,
the drunks, staring blankly at some inner vision
and the blind with no vision at all
seeing everything in all its glory.
This boulevard stretches
from one end of the world to the other
and I shall never traverse its length.
But at times I like to stop
at the bench littered with acorns
and sit down with the woman who sits there
in her own thoughts.
Or go into alleyways
with bruised old men
reeking of alcohol and pain
and drink from a communal bottle of fire.
Or stand on the street corner
with my eyes extinguished
seeing without them
looking right through
the world
to its core
and having some vision
of where the boulevard ends.

JONATHAN HARRINGTON

HOME ROADS

Most roads go
Nowhere; they
Float over countrysides,
Roam in cities,
Then make their way
Home again.
Our trained eyes
See this.
Our trained minds know
The world does not turn in a circle!

But the roads know in their
Bones to wander
In a farm glow and
Retreat from a cold wind
Blowing home again.

MICHAEL SCOTCHIE



GAIL GUENTHER

REINCARNATION

The bird plucked from its wing
A feather of inconvenience
Which fell through the air
Unable to use the wind to soar
Until a little girl's
Blue eyes
Found the colored tickle piece
For her diary
Before the young boy
Snatched it from between dusty pages
For his handmade trout fly
Till an old man's quivery fingers
Intercepted it from the sprightly stream
Bringing together the past, present, and future
By dipping the waxy white stalk
Into the dark indigo
To write his will

LEAH MASON

NIGHT

I can smell the blood
and death from here.
Night approaches.
He brings with him
blood-thirsty dogs and
their insane brother-jackals.
It is in the small deaths,
a child here,
a mother there,
that the scoundrels take over,
that the filth comes to life
to crawl along the floor
for nothing.
The many small deaths
of the once abundant good.
Soon there is more night than day.
All that is left of the light
is in the tiny stars which
one by one are snuffed out
by the breath of some demon
or another. Slowly
all is dark.
Nothing is left of
Mother-Day,
and the Night itself
is extinguished
as it no longer has
anyone with whom
to mate.

JULIE DOBSON

OF ENGLAND I DREAM

Of England, I dream
Tender green velvet dales and glens
And white apple blossoms, among emerald droplets,
To granite houses, where chimney stacks puff
From shiny slate roofs, and curtains wave from windows.
Roads meander, weaving like the tail of a high kite,
Smooth, rolling hills, tip-toed by plucking ewes
And stocks and stiles, and forgotten scenic foot paths.
I want my cedar fencing, and clawed barbed-wire,
Clear blue skies, and those whimsical cotton clouds.
Even telegraph poles, towered further by pylons,
Medieval churches, rainbows from stain-glass windows;
A cohort of headstones, marching by a great flint wall.
And from the high muscle of a hill, a young brook bleeding;
Desperately holding onto the other side, a farm. Corrigated
Tin buildings, and yet another graveyard!
Oh more bottle-top trees, more Beech and Horse-Chestnut,
Yet, on the surface of this pea green soup
Lies a single carrot,
A red telephone box, to call up Amanda.

DAVID ROOFTHOOF



BETH RAPP



ROSS FENSKE

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY FEBRUARY 14, 1929

What were you thinking of that day?
You pulled on your overcoat
and grey felt hat
locking the door of the butcher shop
behind you.
Your breath froze in the air
and you lit a cigarette.
Were you thinking
of how you could get your cold fingers
under Mother's bodice?

Chicago shivered
and you turned up Clark Street
digging your hands into your coat
heading home.
Were you carrying a Valentine
that said: Honey bee mine?
Did you think someone
had lit a string of firecrackers
in the warehouse
across the street?

You were nineteen years old
and you were hungry.
Did you see the blood
sliding from beneath the door
of the warehouse?
When you heard the sirens whooping
did you think of Capone?
Of how he used to send
one of his soldiers to the shop
for Italian sausage?

Or did you keep on walking
and go upstairs
and kiss Mother on the lips?
Were you lying in bed beside her
listening to the radio and smoking
when the guy said in a 1920's voice
that fourteen members
of Bugs Moran's North Siders
were shot to death in a warehouse
on Clark Street?

JONATHAN HARRINGTON

Tis God's world
Earth
gold Sun
crystal Stars
emerald Trees
silver gazing Moon
ivory floating Clouds
Ground of tricolored jasper
Horizons of ruby Sunsets
glimmering Oceans, Seas, Streams of pearl
rare diamond aloft in silent splendor
Tis God's world

MARIA MAGDALENA AGULLO'



ROSS FENSKE

YELLOW JASPER

Yellow jasper pulverizes my skull.
Decrepitness flake chunks of this
rock hard marble. In the light, shiny
beams reflect, then strike me.

Thin silvers of lemon wait
for time to remove them. An icon
stolen from an Egyptian Dynasty.
The remnants of a previous life

exemplifying old-world craftsmanship.
Each scrap reveals a troubled past history.
Artificial finishing glosses extract its
natural beauty. Instantly, curiosity

overtakes me. I possess a desire to
feel its smooth texture. Someone, please
get this yellow stone
off my head!

CAROL KOSTICK

Its hard to explain really . . .
Why the seasons have to change,
The way the leaves crumble beneath my feet,
While all the while the steaks are grilling . . .
And knives and forks clank against the china plates.

There's a television fading off into the early evening chill.
The sounds of dying summer locust electrocute me . . .
While all the while an even sweeter lullaby fills me.
Its bed time in the neighborhood; I thought I heard her sing.
Story time, school day, lights out now!

But not for me she seems to say.
Its just a picture that burns forever above the mantle,
An image of the love I knew in the welcome of my youth.
I turn and leave the darkening street behind;
Knowing the scene will never be again,
And wishing I were young once more.

SUSAN E. BASTA

THE CHILD'S DELIGHT

I walk a shadow through the nursery of my youth,
With its charred walls and razed carpets
 and packages still shrouded in steam.
Outside ashen snows fall tender from the heavens
And settle a red-grey blanket upon a fevered earth.
The children are unplayful, all snug and bundled
 in the winter of their lives,
And from above it seems an empty cradle is caressed
 by a slight and sable wind.
Through the inky fabric there comes a single hollow cry,
Shattering the crystal, and releasing the sands
 in a furious storm;
But it falls upon the giant's ear as but
 a whisper in the night.

STEVE BERRY



STYLE AND SOCIETY AFTER EMILY DICKINSON

the PAIN of
death

There comes an inner wailing
Deafening my brain —
Recollecting dearest sharing
Memory's pain.

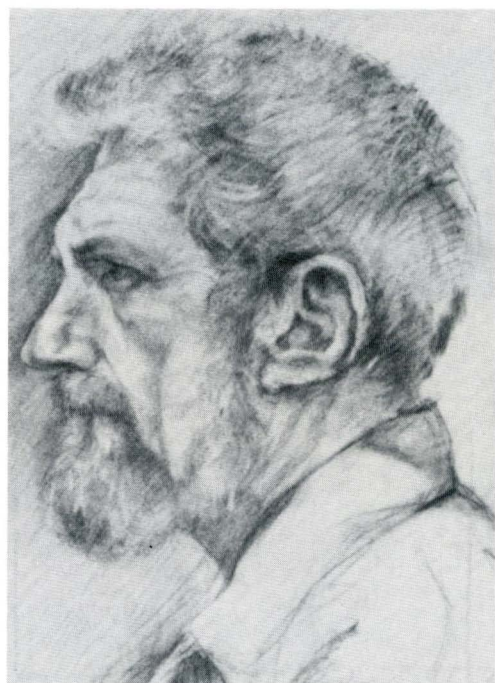
Loneliness

Pity the aimless soul
Without the stuff to fill life's hours —
Though it lies in infinite variety
Under his nose!

NANCY HOFFMAN

Photographs: *GAIL GUENTHER*





**FEATURED
AUTHOR
JEAN WEST**

JEAN WEST was born in Delaware; went to schools and college there and later received the MFA from Cornell. She began her writing career by publishing stories for young people in such magazines as *Highlights for Children* and *Ingenue*, but soon turned to poetry. Since that time her work has been appearing regularly in a variety of literary and poetry journals. A group of her poems is in the current issues of *Kalliope: A Journal of Women's Art*. Irving Bacheller Professor of Creative Writing since 1981, she first came to Rollins in 1972 from Ithaca, N.Y., which she considers her spiritual home and to which she returns each summer.

INTERVIEW

Q: *First of all, how would you define poetry?*

A: I've always admired A.R. Ammon's observation that "poetry is a verbal means to a nonverbal source." I like this definition because it reminds us that no matter how much we talk about a poem some part of it remains unspeakable, that mystery is at the heart of the creative process.

Q: *There is a lot of seasonal and natural imagery in your work. Would you call yourself a poet of the outdoors? Do you find your greatest inspiration in nature?*

A: Well, I grew up in rural Delaware surrounded by fields of grain. My parents loved the land and I think my writing has always been informed by that consciousness. Later, I moved to Upstate New York and encountered a new landscape and new weather. But for some time these changes did not appear in my writing. Other forces were at work. However, since I've moved to Florida I find I miss the drama and the variety of a more northern outdoor atmosphere. Therefore, I store that sort of imagery and renew it through visits, and I do certainly find a kind of inspiration in it. But I wouldn't call myself a poet of the outdoors!

Q: *You speak frequently of the transient nature of the world — is art a defeat of transience?*

A: I would say so. Art is a connector. It connects us to the past and to the future. There are many powerful testimonies in literature to this theme. We recall Keats' address to the Grecian Urn: "When old age shall this generation waste/thou shalt remain."

Q: *You seem to be concerned with human beings' ignorance of their own fate. Would you say that not knowing is a blessing or a curse?*

A: I am pretty much with Jocasta who begged Oedipus not "to inquire further." I'll go along to Casadega for the ride, but I'm already spooked enough!

Q: How does the poet fit in an academic community and how have you managed a career as a teacher and poet?

A: First, I think that poets and artists, generally, have a great deal to contribute to any community. What hasn't been discovered, perhaps, is the method or procedure which would allow the exchange to take place as naturally and as productively as we might wish. Speaking personally, I have to say that poetry as enterprise disturbs me. Unfortunately, that has been one of the results of bringing poets into the academy. In the last fifteen years there has been an amazing proliferation of creative writing programs that "train" writers to "teach." I was one of those who completed a degree and joined the already overcrowded market for a college or university position. Not only does this process deflect from the pure calling of the poet, it puts poets in an unnatural environment of competition and politics. Some individuals handle this with more grace than others. But I have come to feel that the big loser is poetry — we lose the poet as a creative force for a tenure track slave. To add to this, teaching is a public activity and therefore, confrontational, and most poets and artists are not; certainly not on a daily basis. So the drain on energies is significant. As to how I have managed this dilemma, it depends when I'm asked! I have tried different things, and I pretty much refuse to "compete." I try very hard to keep my creative process separate from the hoops and the loops and the bad manners that can result when poets go public. I write as much as I'm able under the circumstances and try to place it in the world lightly and if something "remains" that's a bonus!

Q: How has your technique/inspiration changed throughout your career?

A: I think that reading the letters of Vincent Van Gogh and thereby being drawn much more fully than before into the world of art has had a very real impact on my own work. I love exploring the processes of painters and sculptors — we are all of one company, anyway. I actually feel very attached to the work of some artists, almost painted into it, and I think, as a result, I have become visually deepened. To add to this, I might say that recently I sense a change in voice in my work. It's too soon for me to understand it. I expect it has to do with the soberness of the times, generally, and with being older and thus *hurried*. My response to the latter has been to put my life in slow motion; to go through celebrating moments and nuances, to try to refuse to be hurried or agitated, to be tough enough to be the judge of what is essential!

Q: Do you have favorite literary figures?

A: I cannot now imagine life without the presences of Virginia Woolf, Vincent Van Gogh, Emily Dickinson, George Eliot, Wallace Stevens, Edna Millay, W.B. Yeats, Vita Sackville-West (that great gardener-poet!), A.R. Ammons, May Swenson . . .

And, what about Keats, Cummings, Camus, Rilke, Sartre, Sexton, Bachelard, Chagall, Morisot? And sweet Henry James? Who could forget Beatrix Potter! And Sappho! And Ovid!

Q: Who or what have been your major life supports?

A: I had lovely parents. Goodness began with them. Next, when I was a young adult and single parent I received much encouragement from friends and teachers in Ithaca, where I went to school. This was a time of some insecurity and those people were steady, significant presences — and still are. Then, I would mention the good fortune of having a companion of great generosity and good humor. Delightful. A blessing.

GAIL GUENTHER



**NATALIE
MURRAH**

TULIP HAIKU

tulips forcing on
the sill; pink-tipped, set for
ejaculation
the tulips open
between our legs; we sink to
their field of force
purple-tinged petals
splatter the floor; love shucked
pistils, semen pool

JEAN WEST

SONG, WITH MATISSE NOTES

How will you leave me
when you go
will it be
waving
5 feathery fingers and
5 purple tulips

How will you leave me
will it be
luminous
when you go waving
5 feathery fingers and
5 purple tulips

How will you leave me
when you go
luminous will it be
love's ghost
waving will it be
to clouds
with couples waving
5 feathery fingers and
5 purple tulips

How will it be
when you nude and starry
leave me
to go waving
airily 5 feathery
fingers

How will I live
embracing airy
you waving
tulips

no!
when you go
it will be
a marrying of
love's ghosts
ascending airily
waving
love's fingers and
tulips purple and
feathery barely
leaving



KARIN RENO

JOHN THE ICEman

I am, because I am a filter and a filter aware of itself, that I bear witness to ICE and beautiful things. I am John, who is not a word, but a witness to comfort and am comfort, that whosoever believeth not in me but the One to come, that through following ICE, shall fulfill all the law, and find eternal life through Jesus Christ, the Saviour. Jesus Christ shall rule and reign through ICE, and He shall come back, and during that time we are to follow ICE, to accept the fact that the brain is a filter and thus we are filters to our fellow man. Through Christ's power and resurrection, He has given unto me a foreshadowing of days and weeks, and Love shall be bestowed through God and ICE. In earth terms, I bear witness to judgement, for the kings of this earth are judged, to sin, for the saying "NO" to something that will cause you to follow ICE, for ICE is the method of redemption, and righteousness, for your Father taught you ICE. Through ICE shall the method of sin be redeemed, and sin shall not be allowed in the farthest seasons of the Earth, and the Earth shall let loose its filter, and Sin shall not be sin, anymore.

Through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ am I allowed to speak to your heart. May Christpeace be with you all the days of your lives as you struggle to follow ICE. May the Lord keep you, in your struggles for internal and your outreaches of external, and may the control rest in your heart. And keep you, brethren, in the love Jesus had for you.

The hardest thing to do is to accept.

JOHN BAJAK

CHRISTMAS MORNING 1977

"What did I know of love's austere and lonely offices?" — Hayden

My father smiles to me

But I'm busy watching Mom
Open the big pink box
That I had dragged in for her.

I laugh as my mother
Squeals with joy over her soon-to-be-forgotten gift

And from the other side of the room
My father looks on, emptyhanded.

Still smiling, my mother leads me downstairs
To the pile of presents
Waiting for me beneath the tree, while
Alone upstairs, my father hears us laughing
And starts picking up the shreds
Of torn pink paper.

STEVE SMITH

MISTRESS IMAGINATION

We lay together in the darkness
Frail words synonymous with trust
She spoke of wanting things
That seemed far away
Covered and smothered with dust.

Her words struck me sadly
And for some reason I was ashamed
She said "I've lost all my dreams in the dormitory
and those torrid lives I've dreamed"

She turned and looked away from me
She covered her eyes and she began to cry
Then my forgotten friend
Killed by disuse and abuse
Closed her pretty eyes and died

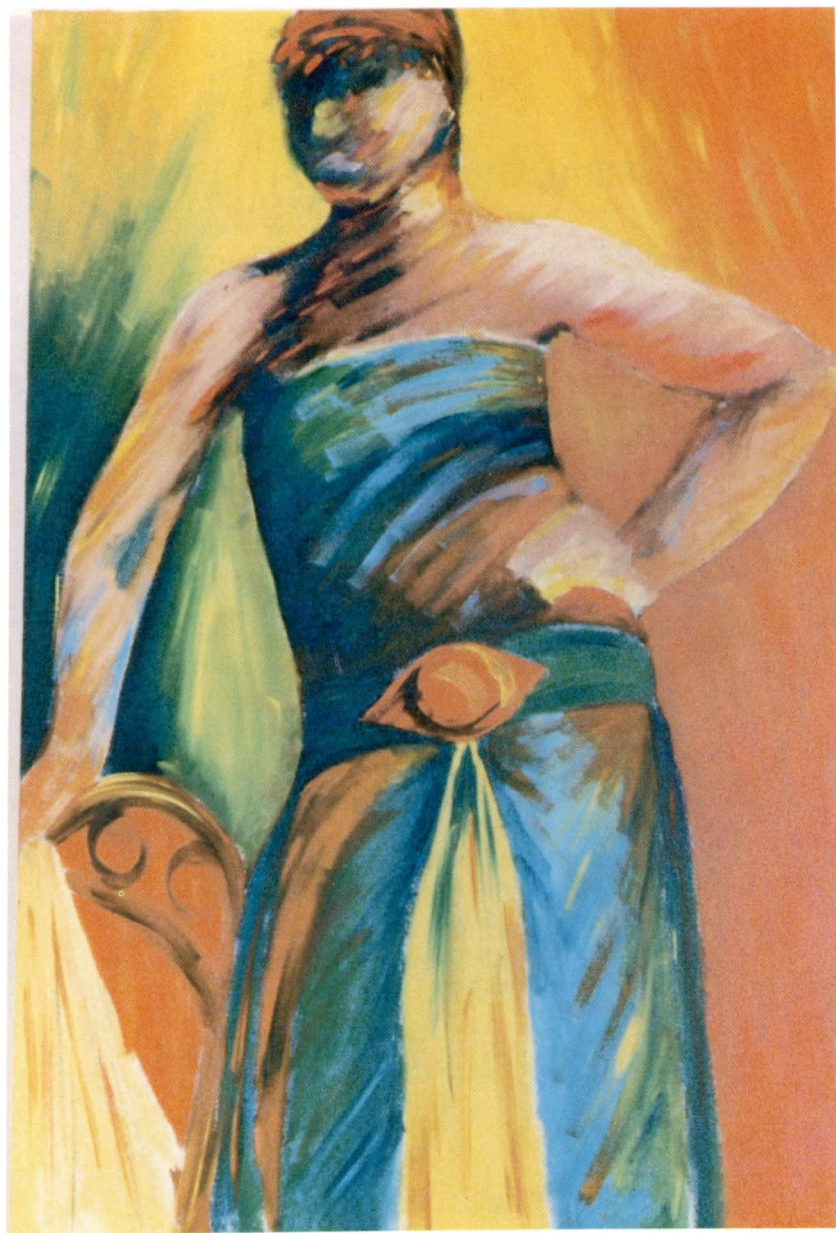
I reached to touch Imagination
As her hand in mine went cold
How quickly my thoughts turned to desolation
From what was
Alabaster and Marigold

It's a tragic loss of creativity
Everything becomes just what it seems
Tonight I'll sleep
This empty sleep
But I'd give my life to dream

CHRIS BEARD



LAURA DOLL



JENNIFER STONE

SPIRAL OF ME

Spirals of reality and the dreams
I soar
 to float
 then walk
Touching tomorrow
 from yesterday
My mind wins the race
 finishing last
And I have yet to catch up
 with me
There is no direction here
 no down nor beyond
My eyes close
 spotlighting a shadow of what is not
Once again
 me is caught
 and seen
But not found
There is no guide
 to the four white walls
 enclosing the absolutes' uncertainties
No guide . . . but me
And I am not here
 to take me there

ELIZABETH E. HURT

Bark is peeling skin
on my sunburnt nose.
Squirrels slip
on bark's
dew-moist surface
I write my
innermost secrets on a
smooth page of bark.

Bark is chipped away.
It flakes off
leaving behind
bare, vulnerable pulp.
Crawling beneath
rotted layers of bark;
I am trapped.

Like a fortress,
bark protects against
the elements, the enemies.
Rain, like bitter
tears on my cheeks,
trickle down a split trunk
and drop to drenched earth.

CHRISTINE A. LOOK

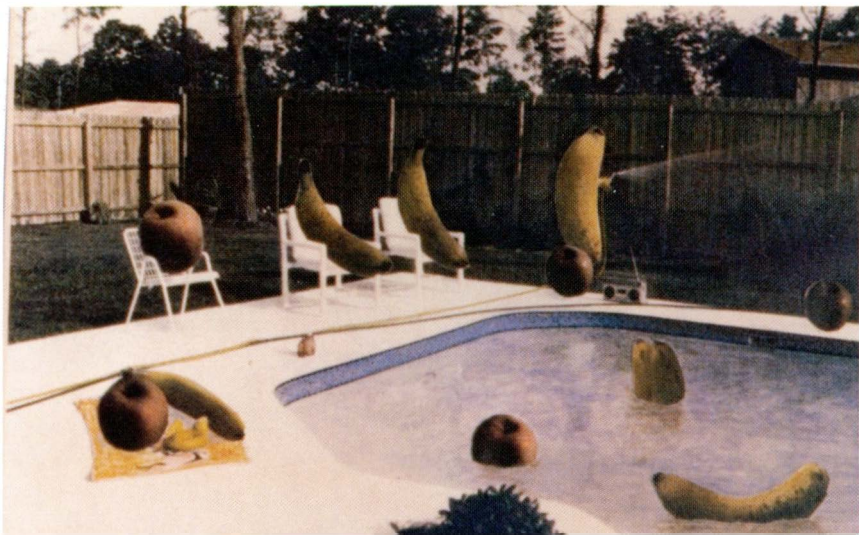


PAMELA KINCHELOE

EXTREMES

I sing a song of edges,
I have been there and back.
The lines are vaguely drawn,
Those who look see them clearly.
And a voice, taunting,
Whispering, and urging —
One step, take it!
The lines are alive,
Creating an illusion to fool.
Not cold hot,
Not high low.
Dealing the cards
And placing the bets.
You owe me,
Pay back time.
One step!
Life and Death,
Merely sides divided.
All is dark — All is light.
Together at once,
Divided by intangible lines.
And the lines
Extremes.

MARVIN FLEMING



BOOK VII OF THE *REPUBLIC* AND DOGS

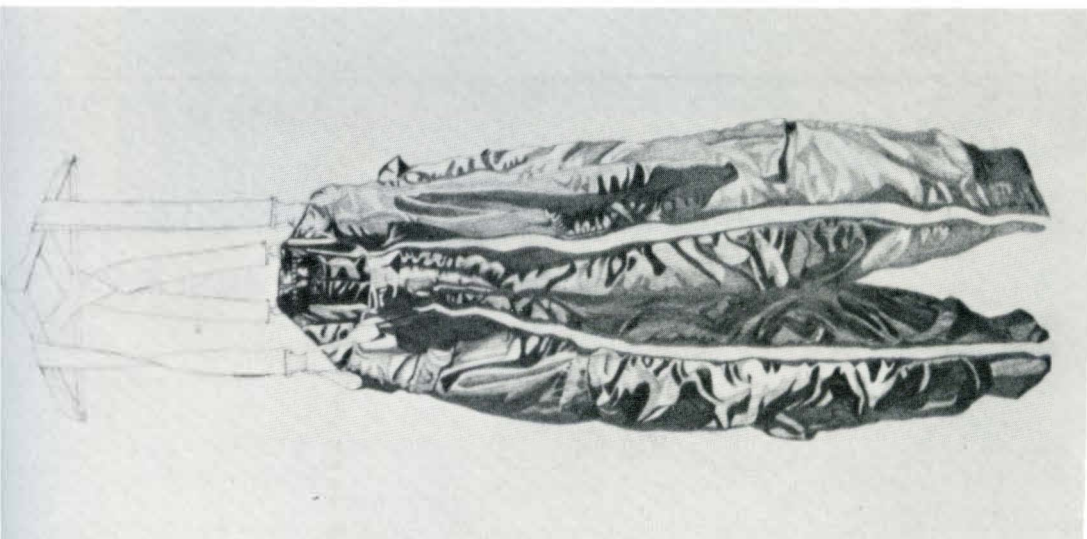
And up the basement stairs come
the dogs, surging upward to
an open door long closed to them.
So long locked in the silent dark,
so long yearning for the light
they've never seen.
Only a dim memory, this light,
a glimpse of it as the door
to their Stygian chamber closed
by the hand of a shadow above them.
They howled for the shadow above them.
They howled for the shadow to return
the light to them, until
their throats ached with futility,
and their longing became a knot
in the depths of their souls.
They could hear the shadow
moving within the light beyond
the door, but always passing by,
until finally their ears caught
the symphony of a lifting latch,
a creaking hinge, an opened door.
Yet in their joy to revel in the light
they realize that the darkness
has blinded them to it,
so that when they think they've
finally escaped the sunless clutches
they bring their prison with them,
living in light, seeing only shadow.

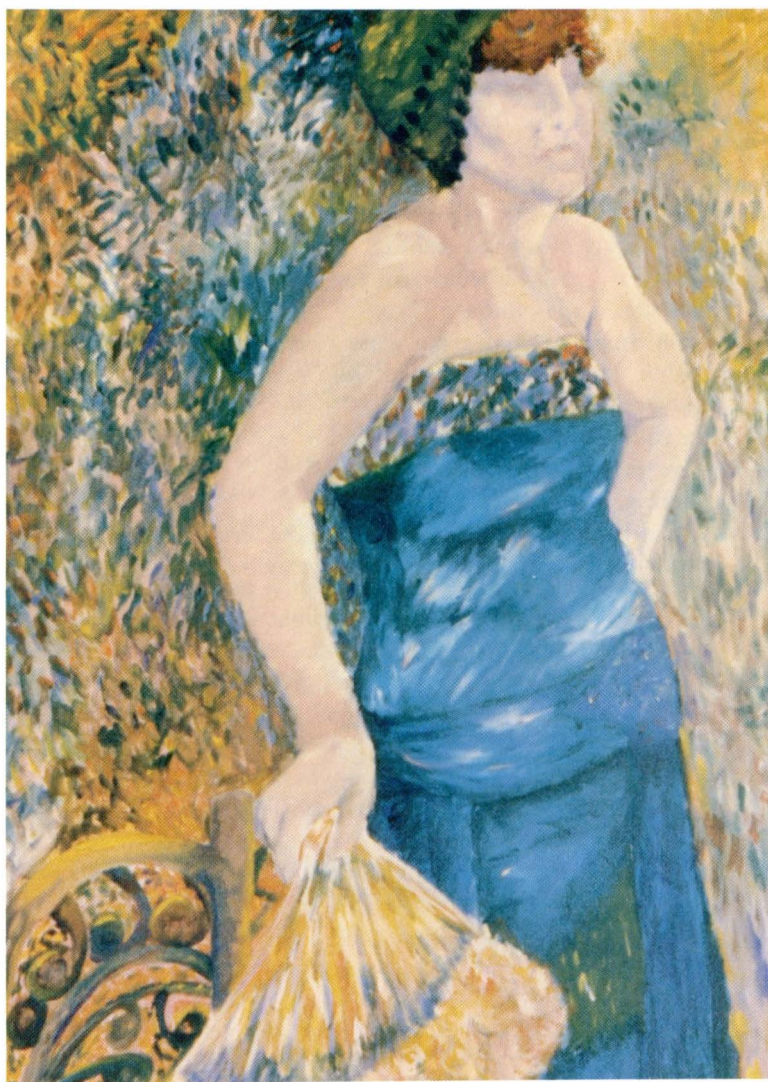
RICHARD DICKSON

HERE LIES MY FATHER

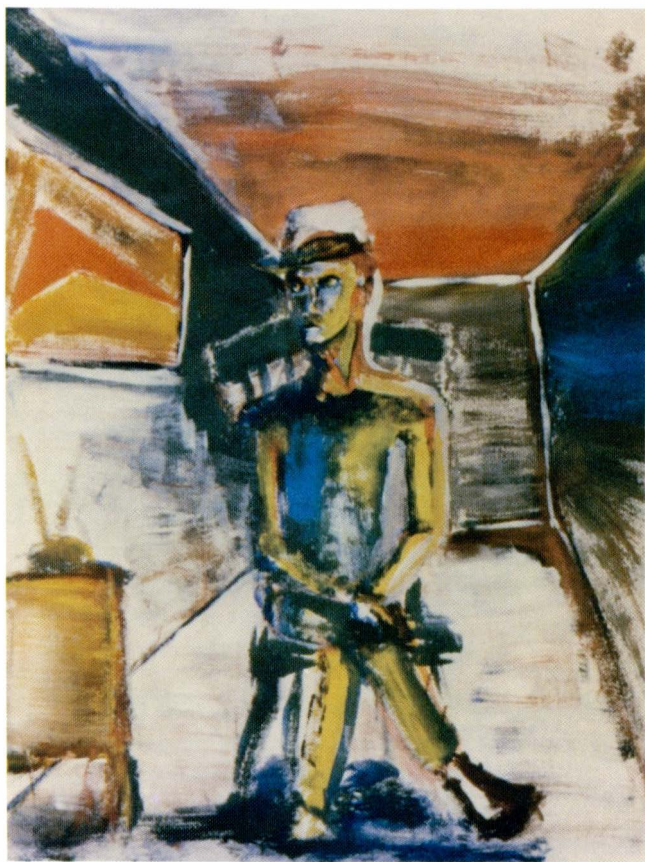
My father lies in the back of a shiny black car of death
And still smells like the cigarettes he smoked for 55 years
Very acidic,
Just like his sarcasm.
And his body feels as rigid as bone and ice
The antithesis of what I wanted it to be.
I'm afraid if I grip his cold arm too hard
It will crack and splinter
Like the sound of shattering glass crashing.
And while I bite my lip to stop from screaming
"I hate you, I hate you for dying," I see our love
Like a rainbow in the smooth colored opal pin
He gave me, which was his mother's.
Wondering, Oh father . . .
Why couldn't I have sat upon your shoulders forever
In love with the earthy clean air fragrance
That once was your hair?

LEAH MASON





MIMI BERG



MARK CAMPBELL

A BLADE OF GRASS

A Christmas-green toothpick whose square of cheese
has just been eaten

A microscopic view of a positive medical culture

A whisker of the Jolly Green Giant

A bed of needles walked upon by natives
in bare feet

A wall of painted steel to a tiny ant

The hair of dirt

A worm's periscope

Warmth to a flower's feet

A butterflies' perch

SUSAN HEIDACHER

THE SLAUGHTERING

The frigid breezes peel my chafed skin,
as Alaskan winter rays reflect from
from impending icebergs. Reapplying
creamy suntan lotion as

fatigue weighs heavily on my frozen,
malnourished body. I now yield to
sleep's encumbersome blanket
hurled upon me.

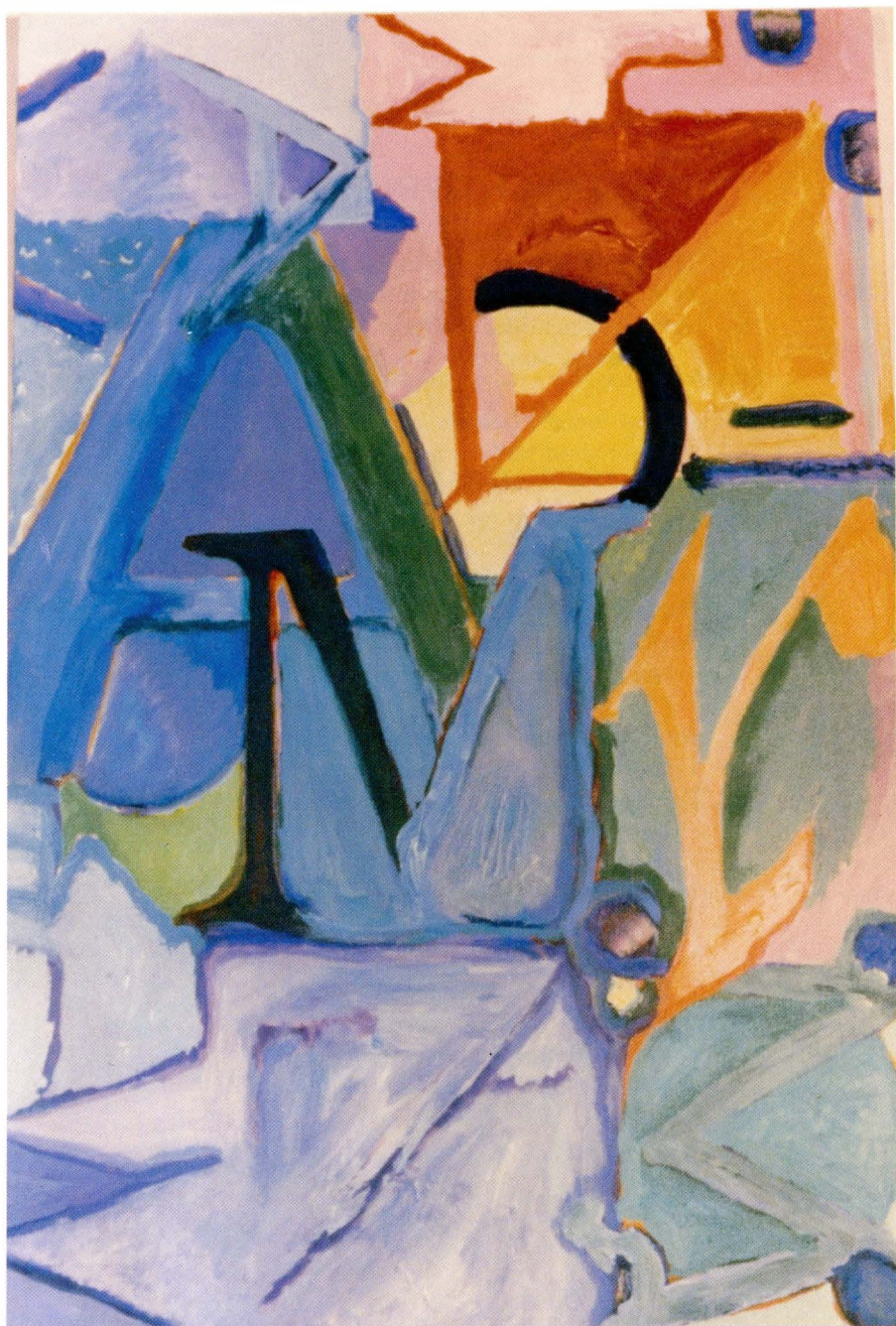
A thunderous explosion of air shocks
the placidity of the milieu. Settled
Arctic currents ripple by a gunshot. My
fearful screams incessantly

shatter the invisible silence barrier.
I navigate my capsule by the roaring wind.
Finding the sight, confusion and agony
empty all my ephemeral strength.

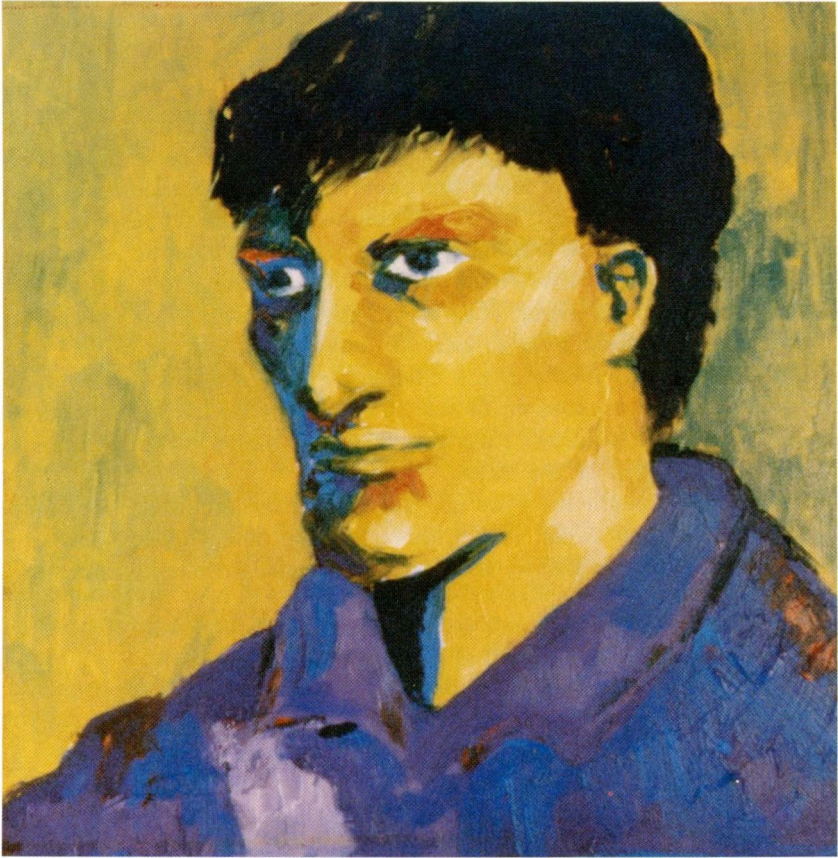
Blood split on the iceberg like strawberry
topping on an ice cream sundae. Clearer,
the enormous black submarine rose
lifelessly from the abysmal depths.

Civilization, four hours away; help-
lessness tastes wretched in my mouth.

CAROL KOSTICK



TERI COEN



PAMELA KINCHELOE

THE COLONEL'S HANDS

In the great training hall, Colonel West's fingers paused above the complex war console, his eyes obsidian.

Even while waiting for his move, the other trainees tasted defeat. He was the star of the training games, their unfailing general. Over time, each had made the challenge first by pretending to be undaunted by his reputation, then by bravely stepping into the arena. But the order had already arrived for the colonel to leave the camp and take a position with Headquarters. So, on this eve of his actual command, all the trainees had come out, their breasts ribbon-wild. There were others who boasted about having played the colonel, but these men, these men, would be able to say they had lost in that great *last* game. They would speak knowingly of his skills, his nerves and try vainly, over drinks, to comprehend his intuition.

Within that brief moment, the colonel's eyes ignited with his favorite dream: the world a cauldron of war, a vast pyre honoring his valor; the unlucky survivors lamented their hero's death — and his fingers, instinctive claws, dropped to the keys.

The cheers brought his eyes up, found his cherubic smile. He stepped down into all their arms, into their adoration, then strode across the marbled hall wondering to himself how many more heroes he could dream himself.

OMAR S. CASTANEDA

SINUSITIS IN THE LIBRARY

A Tale in the Manner of Edgar Allan Poe

In response to the horrible tale I prepared to tell, I expect no sympathy — not even belief. Disgust and revulsion shall be more appropriate reactions to this loathsome account. I am compelled, nevertheless, to unburden my soul. I shall endeavor to relate a series of events, in a manner precise, succinct, and objective. The secular authorities of this land have passed judgement upon whether these acts were committed by a man in possession of his sanity or not. The issue is irrelevant now, for in a few hours my life shall be no more.

Five years ago, I was a young and enthusiastic graduate student of comparative literature at the esteemed University of _____. I have devoted innumerable hours of solitary speculation upon the cause of my actions and have only succeeded in tracing the origin to my colleague's congested sinuses. You may think me mad, or just evil, but I aver, had it not been for the unfortunate condition of his sinuses, I would have no tale to tell, and I would not be hanged at sunrise.

He was studying the influence of an obscure post-Kantian philosopher on Coleridge and Goethe, working feverishly on a translation of this philosopher's ponderous treatise *Eine Unanstandige and Ekelhafte Theorie uber Ontologie und Romantische Dichtungen*, and I was attempting to make sense out of the *Biographia Literaria* by experimenting with the influence of opium of my interpretation of Coleridge's *Principles of Poetry*. The university having taken note of our thesis being somewhat related, we were assigned neighboring carrels, deep in the bowels of the library. We were together every day from noon until the deep quiet of the early morning hours. Young and eager scholars both, we discussed with ardent fervor our work that we were convinced would firmly establish us in the hallowed realm of academe.

It was towards the end of October that my colleague caught cold. He would sit at his desk, his back not three feet removed from mine, and expel the contents of his nasal passages into his already saturated handkerchief. My senses reacted as to a violent blow to the back of the head each time I heard him. And it continued unremittingly for weeks. It was a curse. Whenever I was on the verge of ordering Coleridge's jumble of thoughts in a revolutionary way, he would blow once more, and my plan would tumble down like a house of cards assailed by a violent blast. Gradually, I came to the decision that he must die.

I waited not long for an opportunity to be rid of this disgusting nuisance. It was toward midnight on a long and intense evening of study. For hours, the only sound to be heard was the always unexpected, yet by now inevitable eruption of my fellow scholar. Suddenly, I noticed that there had been an abnormally long interval since his last outburst had shattered the calm. I turned and saw him with his head on his desk, in a restless, fitful sleep. It was quite simple to wrap a rope around his neck and end forever his laboured breath. I had already planned perfectly the concealment of my crime. Adjacent to the basement in which I had spent so many tortured hours was an abandoned room, used in the pre-microfilm era to store thousands of back-issues of academic journals. I dragged the corpse into the storeroom and deposited it in the crude grave I had prepared. I had spent days considering various plans of dismemberment and removal of the corpse, but, upon finding the stone slabs that made up the crude floor readily removed, and the ground soft and easily displaced, I created a cavity under the floor for the disposal of the body. An observer would indubitably have admired my methodical and complete removal of all evidence of the heinous deed.

I have never been able to explain the actions of the rest of the evening. All that I can ascertain is that the following morning I was driving north with all of my possessions in my car. And on the seat beside me: my dead colleague's nearly-completed dissertation! I need not go into the details of my assumption of a new identity and matriculation as a graduate student at another university, hundreds of miles away from the dark, dank library where I had spent so many tortured hours. It was quite a simple matter to assume the guise of the earnest scholar that I once was, and pretend to write my dissertation while I was actually preparing for publication in my name the revolutionary work on Coleridge and Goethe and my deceased colleague. I was received with tremendous critical and scholarly acclaim and, not to my surprise, I was offered an appoint at P_____ University.

My first months were idyllic. I wandered through the ivy-bedecked campus, chatted with young and eager students, spent afternoons in my office, pipe in hand, feet on desk, casually perusing the latest issue of "The New Republic." It was not until late October that I first heard it — the sound that would drive me to my destruction.

I was at work at my desk, grading mid-term examinations. It was a dark and chilly afternoon, an overcast day in which the passage of the sun from east to west was undetectable. The weather had recently changed abruptly from summer to fall. A bleak rain had fallen most of the week, with the

effect of dampening the spirits of everyone on campus, and inducing an epidemic of colds among the student populace. I was midway through the essays on Coleridge and Imagination when I was distracted by the faint sound of someone blowing into a handkerchief. I swiveled around, expecting to see a forlorn student, come begging for mercy. No one was there! I turned back to my work, passing off the incident as a product of my overworked senses. But again, I hear the low, yet distinct, noise typical of a sufferer of congested sinus cavities. It was a muffled sound, as if coming through a layer of dirt. I threw on my coat and headed for the pub, chastising myself for overworking so early in the term. I was unaware that this was the start of my complete destruction, that this sound would haunt me unceasingly and drive me to despair and to the very limits of human sanity.

At first it happened only in my office, when I was alone reading or marking exams. I was maddened by this torment. Unable to concentrate, I defaced student's essays with incoherent marginalia. But whenever I sat down with a stack of essays, I would hear it — the unmistakable sound of a congested nose being blown. I had been subjected to this disembodied noise for about a week when the event happened that I still shudder to think about.

I was lecturing to my Romantic Literature students, discussing with inspired profundity nature and Wordsworth's "correspondent breeze," when gradually, but unmistakably, the class erupted in a terrible cacaphony of snivels and nose-blowing. I reacted with an overwhelming sensation of dread, my breath grew short, yet still I lectured with great eloquence, vainly trying to ignore the hideous sound of the chorus of nose-blowings. Alas, this was a pathetic attempt to ignore the terrible import of what was happening: they all knew that I was a murderer and a fraud! How they discovered me and why they revealed their knowledge in such cruel fashion I knew not. All I knew was that the chorus of condemnation was increasing in intensity and horror. Louder and louder it grew. I lectured on, my voice shrill and harsh, trying to drown out the hellish noise, yet knowing the effort futile. Why were they taunting and tormenting me? I could not bear the agony. The horror of it! How could they have known? Gasping for breath, I fell back against the blackboard and shrieked, "Cease your torment! I admit the deed! I am a murderer and a fraud!"

WILLIAM BARTLETT

OF WOMEN BORN

It is cold in space. The vast darkness only adds to the illusion of a great wasteland. Stars are dotted against the black velvet; Cold diamonds, white-hot to the sight. The mystery of space is almost tangible to the minds of men, yet none know its secrets or limitations set. Far removed from other galaxies and planets is a universe with nine planets known. Each planet revolves around one great star. This star has been loyal to the planets, burning intensely, sharing its power.

Beyond the farthest planet, moving at the speed of thought, enters into the universe a beacon of light. It is swift as it flies past the planets, moving to one in particular — the third closest to the great star, the planet of water. Approaching nearer, it develops form; The form takes shape and the shape becomes a woman — a lissome shape made of beautiful light. A silver aura encircles her golden form making her complete.

Her face is that of a child, yet there is no innocence. Her colorless eyes show a wisdom only acquired after many years have passed and gone — as many years as there are stars perhaps.

Her long arms reach out as she streaks towards the planet of water. A picture flashes in her mind and she recoils as though struck by an invisible force. She slows as more images flash within her mind. Her hands move to her head, holding it as if it may burst. With unconscious thought, her body moves into a fetal position. Burning brightly, she floats in space on the verge of fear and the unknown. The images streak by like an incoherent movie within her, only her role is as yet undefined. She sees a dancer, a woman with long arms and delicately muscular; An instant, and before her a mother is holding her infant son to her breast; A moment and there in front of her is a child standing on the verge of nowhere looking lost and bewildered. The pictures stop and the siege ends. Looking up, the planet looms before her and there is fear on her face and in her eyes.

Again she is moving towards the planet, but this time she moves against her will. Revulsion fills her and she resists. Something has caught her, and she keeps hurling towards the planet. It is drawing her nearer while she resists with equal force — it is not enough. Her eyes open wide and her mouth follows screaming a resounding “No!” — Silent in the vastness of space. Faster her body flies, heading towards the unknown.

“No!” she shouts again.

“I am afraid” she cries out to the invisible force. As she speeds into the planets strange atmosphere, she discovers that it is stealing her light. The silver of her aura has dimmed to gray and her gold a sickly yellow. Her fear is heightened and she puts forth all her energy to keep from dispelling into the clouds. Bringing her knees to her chest, she wraps her arms around them and her body. Tears, as colorless as her eyes, fall freely. There is no pain, only fear. Her body accelerates and she knows instinctively she is close to her destination. With little strength left she gives into the pull. Now there is a quiet acceptance to her fate. A smile plays upon her lips and she realizes that fear has been replaced by anticipation and understanding.

Strange sounds and smells fill her ears and nostrils and she feels a pang of fear, but it is just a pang, and it leaves just as quickly as it came. She is at peace once again. Flying faster, there is no time or space. Flying, speeding, shooting star — she is heading towards her destiny. Abruptly she halts and her light is almost gone. She throws back her head and a scream is torn from her throat . . .

Footsteps echo softly in the room as someone walks over to a lone figure laying on damp sheets caused by sweat. The figure holds out its arms and into them the doctor places a crying female infant.

KIMBERLY AVERRETT

YOU AND ME, KID

You think you've gotten rid of me, don't you? You think I can't influence you any more, can't whisper in your ear, pinch you, make you squirm.

You just wait. I may lay low, but I don't leave. I'm with you, kid, for good.

Today, for instance, I know what you're planning. You've been up all night drinking and stewing about it. Don't think I don't know.

It's 4 a.m. and you've been slouching in this rustbucket fumigator of a Chevy, parked on this dark sidestreets for hours. And I know you have a Saturday night special in your jacket pocket.

I'm perfectly aware why you've finally fired up this clunker and are chugging into the drive of this deserted 7-11 on Corrine, why you're looking up and down the street before you pop your door.

Don't think you can hide your shaking knees from me or the sweat sliding down both sides of your ribcage, while you slink along this aisle stacked with diet Slice.

I know you don't mean to buy that Louis L'Amour western you're thumbing through, Mr. Casual, Mr. Everso Cool.

So, how long can you stand here snitching glimpses of old baldy in the tan and red checked shirt, polishing his Big Gulp dispenser?

"That be all, sir?"

That's all right, kid. Milk's better for your liver. Buckle up.

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