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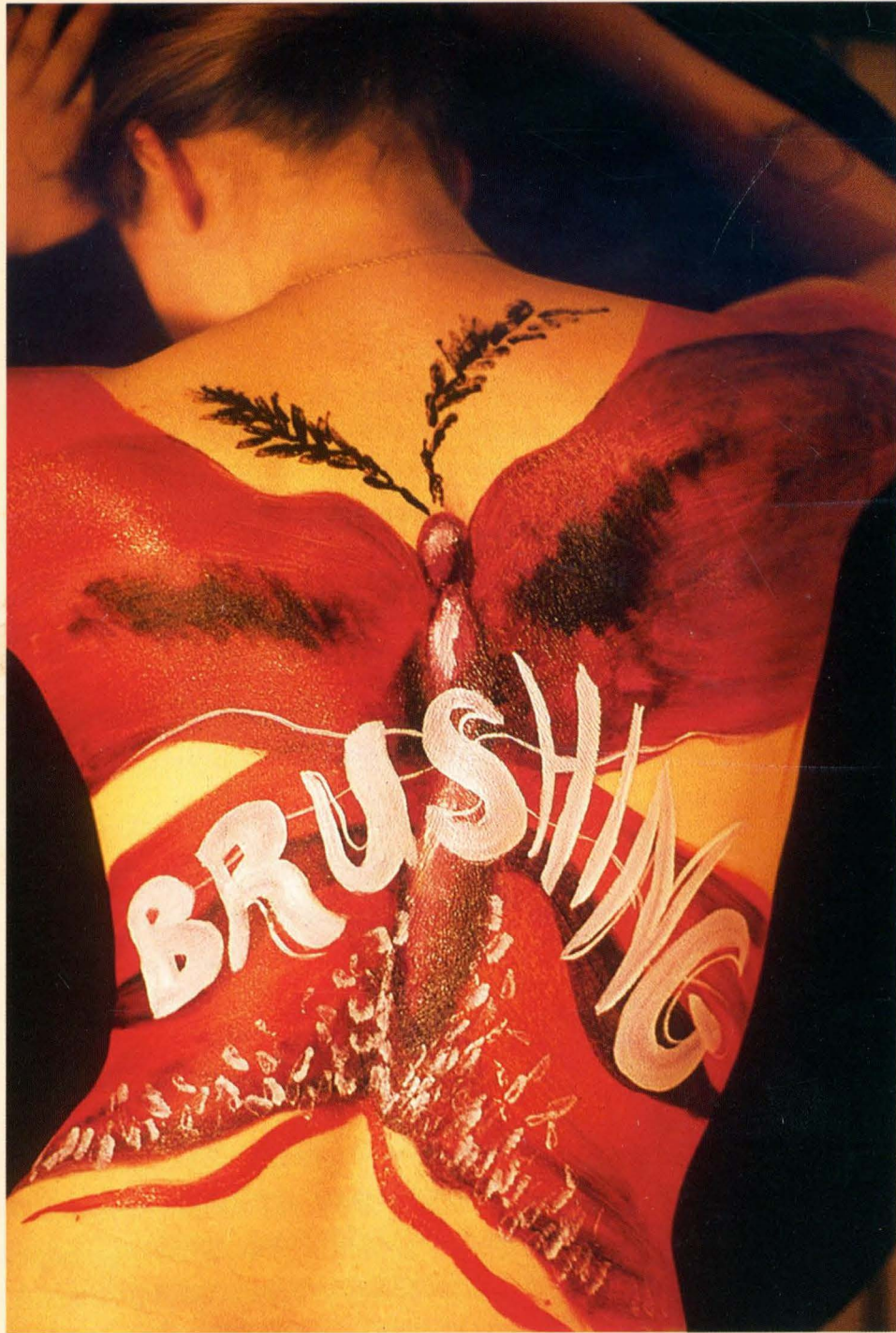
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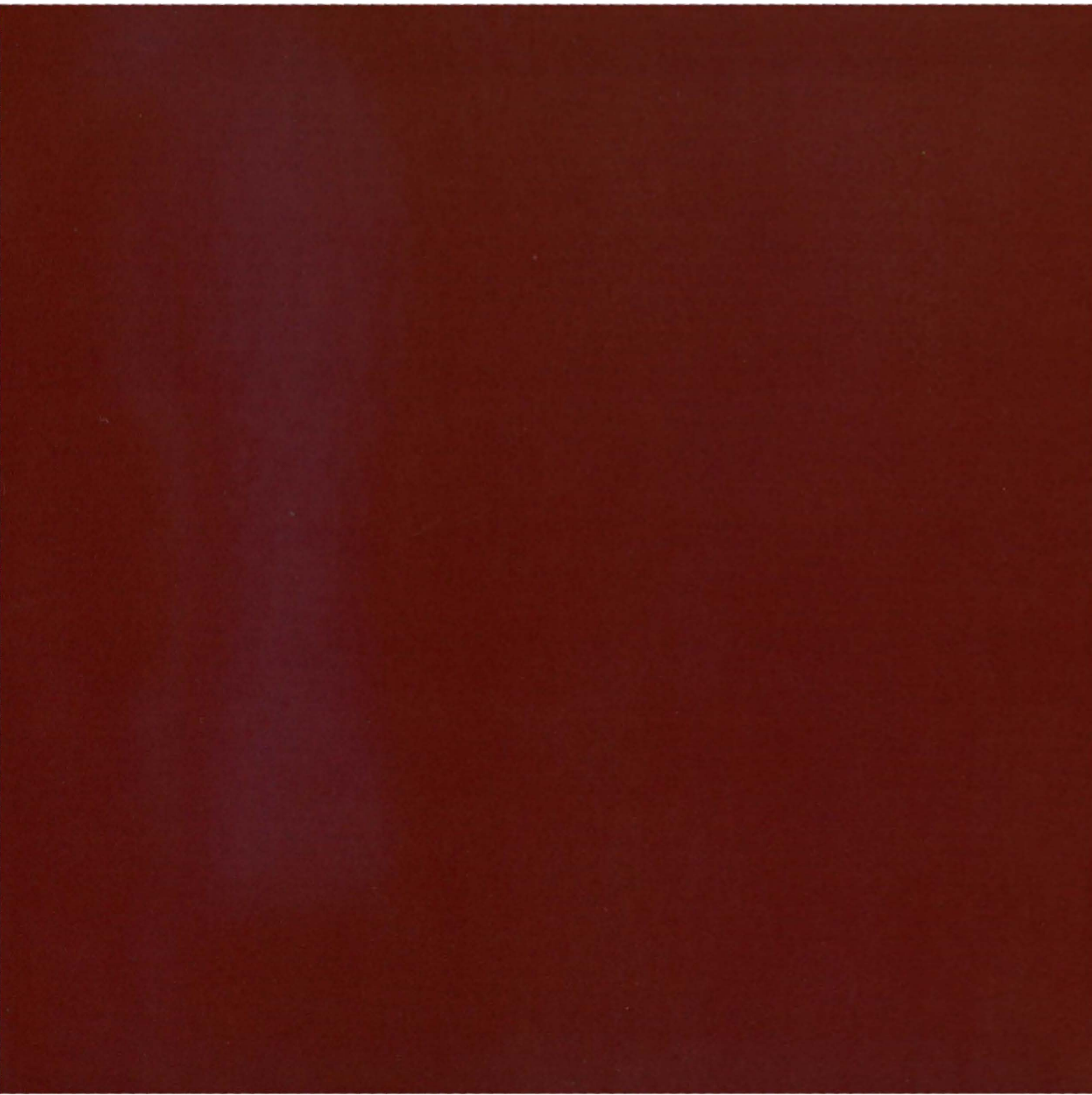


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Rollins College



Art and Literary Magazine



Brushing

Art & Literary Magazine
Volume XXVIII, 2000
Rollins College

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Printed on Paper

Nathaniel Eberle

Printed on paper

my love--

could not encompass the
even the slightest

moment she spends
under my arm

as what I have imagined and dreamed of
solidifies in front of my eyes--

her silken hair
within my grasp

Above in the stars,

heaven--

could not compete with
the inviting glance

of her eyes
in my memory

as what I have wanted and asked for
appears before me--

her blush cheek
at my fingertip

Heaven in the mind and word upon the page
offer little in defense to a beauty I had
thought unknown.

Wisdom
Solar Dope
Intaglio



West of the Line

Chelsea Romans

A traditional school
In
A traditional town
Each
With a line right down the middle

East of the line
In olden days
The rich white folks
Wintering in the park

West of the line
In olden days
The not so rich black folks
Caretakers to those who winter in the park

In modern days?
Not so different.

The school has a line
Not so obvious
But number the shades of the faces behind the podium
And number the shades of the faces behind the cash register,
the broom
And you begin to see

In school
Nature placed me on one side
Of one line

In town, I live
West of the line
In a glimpse of The Dream
And I am comfortable there

Fish

Akiko China
Intaglio



The Bus Stop

R. W. Blackmore 111

The lips and tongues of passers-by formed Spanish
Lo que no me entiendo,
Reminding me of the rain soaking my polyester shirt.
And I saw you walk back through the door
Into the dry place,
Blowing me a kiss good-bye.
I found myself in the mist,
My shoelace slithering
In the soaked cracks on the sidewalk.
You looked out at me. Frozen
Your breath threw steam on the pane.
But you inside were dry apart from my life.

Fruit scattered from a fallen wagon
Lay in the street, and dogs gray, with matted fur
Scavengers--chewed the rot like they sometimes do.
I tied my shoe and watched the dogs
Stare at me, you and the rot.
The rain made me wet.
Tienes fuego?
Claro. I gave him a light, and lit one too.
It was time. It finally came
On time like the schedule said.
I dropped my quarter in. Going to work again,
Neglecting my wife at home.

Genevieve O'Neal

I have seen
the window haze over
as Mother Nature pressed her face
against the glass
and
feverishly whispered for me to come out and play..
if she only knew.

I have seen
your eyes glow in the stars
when I speak to heaven.
The light moves and reflects
pinpoints of the universe
where wishes are cast
and you collect them.

I have smelled
the hospital stench of
death, life, and cleaning agents
in white rooms where you dwelled.

I have heard
Death gurgle and snicker
in men's throats
rising and choking them
until it emerges and glistens
in
still, staring eyes.

I have tasted
the nothingness
that life evolves into
in
your absence..
the endless chewing of
moments,
hours,
and days
that dissolve and amount
to infinite emptiness.

I have touched
happiness when I held you
and kissed it goodbye
when you crawled into the hole
the world dug for you.

I have known
better eternities that washed up
on the shore in seashells
I collected
before
the
tide
went
out..

Now blissful moments
that come in and out of consciousness
with the moon's pull.
Ripples going and returning-
Reverberations of where
you stood and
sank.

You
are not Jesus
but the closest religion I
worship..
The salvation that
crucifies and resurrects me
day
by
day.

Figure Study

Solar Dope

Charcoal



Albert

Robert Carson

Clay Sculpture



Beach-glass green eyes, smile like a razor across my wrist, kisses like acid rain, and I'm right back where I started.

My fault, that first kiss. Wanting to see if I could do it, standing at the edge with my toes dangling and wondering if I could jump. Wondering if I'd die when I hit bottom. Wondering if you'd catch me before I did.

Your fault for kissing me back, for your hands on my face, familiar pull of hair and heart, and some things never change.

Whose fault is that?

My fault for letting you kiss me the way you did, tongues like venomous snakes doing battle, hands desperate and searching, memorizing flesh we might never touch again.

Your fault for knowing which buttons to push, which words to whisper, casting a spell on me as surely as any witch, any voodoo priestess with a potion.

My fault for letting you drink me like wine, savoring me like a delicacy, hungry as a starved man, deliberate as a man taking his last meal.

Your fault for stripping away the layers of cloth, of resentment, of love and hate, leaving me naked, raw, vulnerable to your touch, vulnerable to your own nakedness.

My fault for letting you push inside me, mind and body, letting you in with little resistance, knowing how futile it was to try and stop you, to try and stop myself.

Your fault for knowing how to play me like an instrument, to draw out the notes of pain and pleasure, cries and screams and moans a symphony to your ears.

My fault for playing a game I don't know the rules to, for trying to win and knowing I couldn't. For being the pawn and pretending not to love it.

Your fault for knowing exactly how and where you fit in my life, the space you've always occupied in my heart and my mind, how your position hasn't shifted in all the time I've known you.

My fault for who I am. Or is it yours?

No one's fault for who you are, and nowhere to lay blame.

Triple Crown

Chelsea Romans

They say the Triple Crown is a lot to ask of a two year old
Not even Man O' War
With hooves of thunder
And a thirty-foot stride
Wore that crown

Too much, too fast, too soon
From race horses to rock stars
Instructions for destruction

I stand at the gate, ready to break free of my own hands on the reigns
No derby, but a steeplechase before me
Ditches, fences, water hazards

The earliest jumps, the ones taken for granted
Those are where most fall
And never recover
Fall badly enough
And you take others with you
Pile-ups and breakdowns
Your wreck is a deadly hazard to those who follow
Many fine chasers have fallen early
Almost none fail to stumble

Except one dainty filly who sailed through with grace
A clean run
But she'd passed beyond the hills
Who can say what happened at a later hedge

"May you stumble but never fall."

The most realistic well-wishing I can give

I will not do as well, I have not done as well
I'm starting late
(Problems in early training and shying at the gate)
But the extra time will serve me well
I have a stronger wind and sounder limbs

I'm ready now
And a good thing
Because

Roses or not

It's time to run

Attention

Alexia Brehm

while they talk of others,
and talk and talk,
I sing
and they talk of others
I stop...
my silence does not cease their noise.
I scream
and then resume singing,
turn my head,
and hear
they are talking of me.



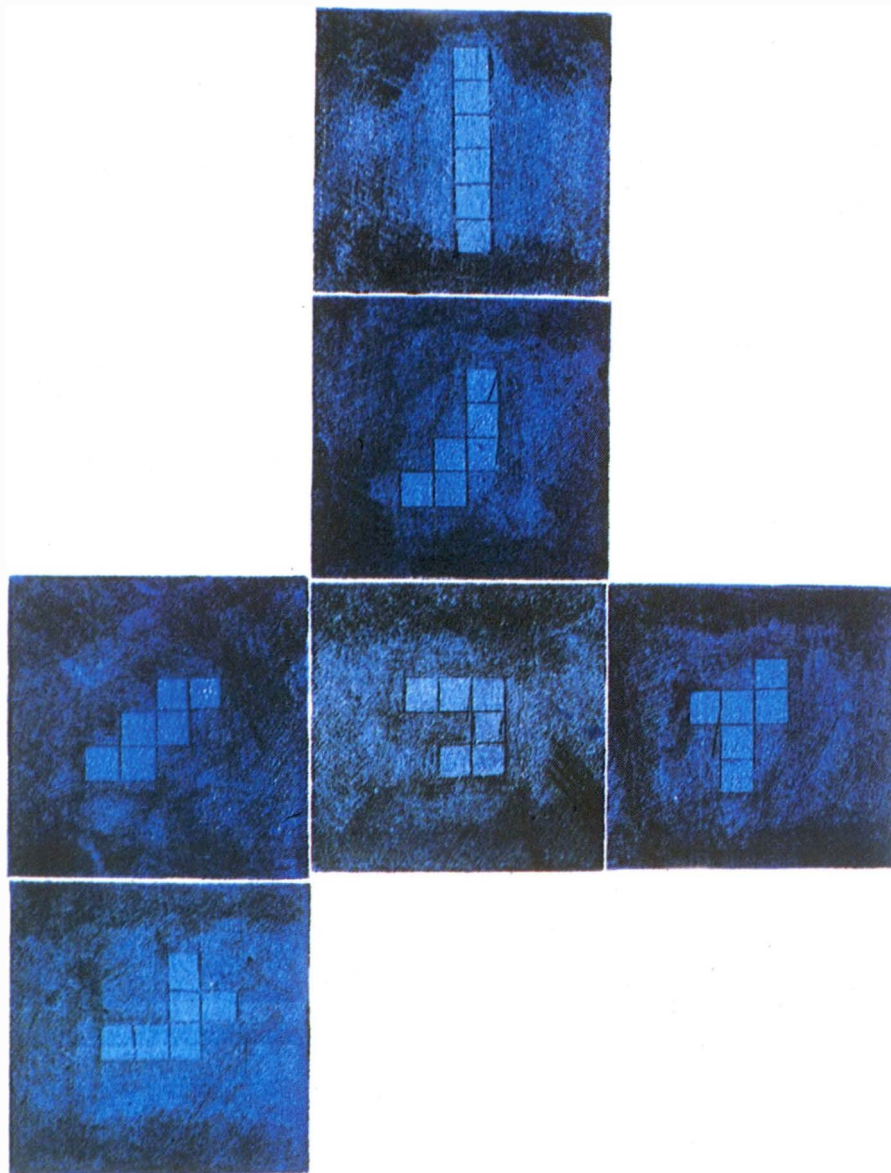
Study of a Douncing Lion

Solar Dope

Intaglio

Box Series Number Four

Akiko Chino
Intaglio



Love's Ballad

Lesley Jondeck

The candles burned to stumps last night bloody with melted wax
I thought of him still in his prime but owing cruelty's tax.
We never thought to harm a soul, on horse-back we would play
And life was full of love and joy until that fateful day...

Distraction caught
The eyes of naught
For it could not be!
With emerald reefs
And playful beasts
Was the river of serenity.

I dove right in
Without him
To sparkling reflectedness
And there I stayed
The entire day
Tasting life's sweet kiss.

Then half thru a laugh
While taking my bath
I saw my lover's mare,
Like a dream
In this stream
I was frozen in this stare.

Naked and wet
I ran to his pet
And without a waste mounted
For days we looked
Along the brook
With each passing day we counted.

Then taking a chance
To the black woods I glanced
And urged my friends to go,
Into the deep
Where the creatures creep
And many things unknown.

Timid was she
But convincingly
we slowly approached the trees,
where light went dark
thru twigs and bark
and sour smelling leaves.

I shivered slightly
As we walked lightly
Visions of him for my fuel,
For the scales did tilt
Towards my guilt
For being such a fool.

Then suddenly started
His mare darted
To known territory,
Running fast
To a lake at last
And half into the body.

Gone was my courage
For half submerged
Swayed my drowned lover,
Dead for long
And truly gone
Back to the earth and mother.

Without a waste
I swam to face
What I had brought upon,
I held him tight
Thru out the night
Until the break of dawn.

Lost in the waves
Of long gone days
Were tears and memories
Of horse-back chases
And smiling faces
Replaced with neglect's disease.

With morning unfolding
I was still holding
The cold bod of the dead,
So I alone carried
Him to be buried
And wallowed in my dread.

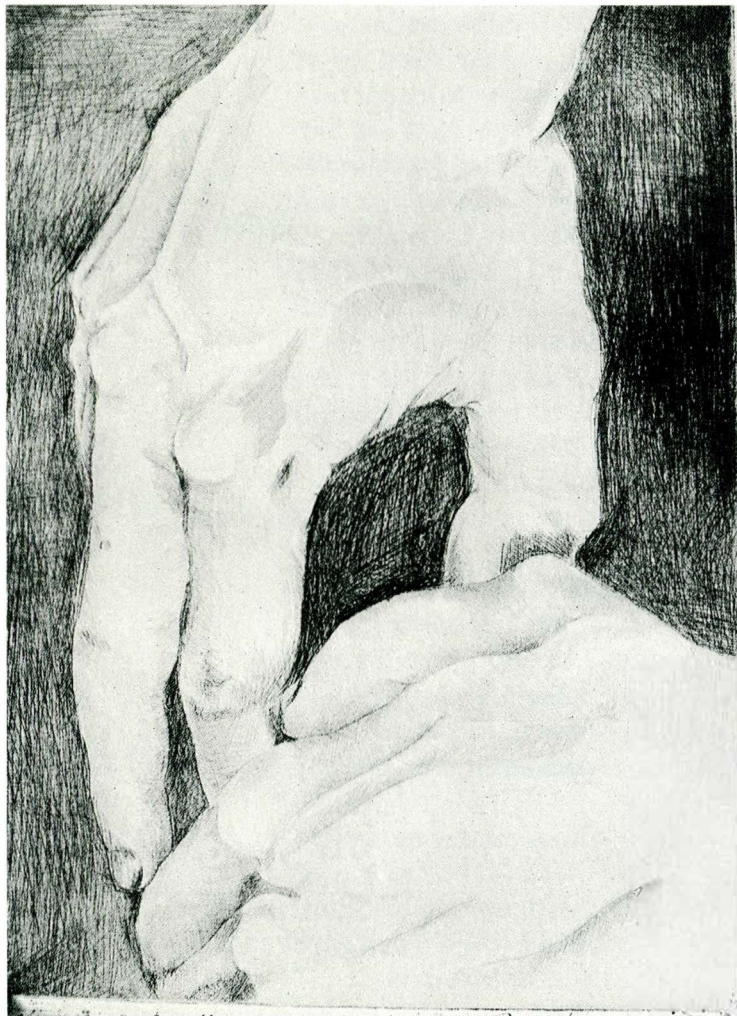
Blood burns and boils
On life's little toils
For there's no rest for the wicked,
And in the same form
Was doubly born
The two faces of such a liquid.

The moments in time you hold clench- fisted should always be the ones cherished,
For the day you turn your back they are the ones which perish.
Now will never be the same due to this high price to pay,
For my body of water gave life to me while my lover's took his away...

An Author's Mantra

Nathaniel Eberle

I fight grief with a pen--
In the late hours, when fears creep
so slowly up the creaking stairs.



Strength

Lisa Winters

Intaglio

The Healing

Suzannah Gilman

"They're supposed to open at ten," I mumble to myself. It's already quarter past. I'm pacing near the front door. I stop and peer inside. There are pictures all over the walls--enlargements of the artwork I can have transferred to my body--and glass counters encasing chunky, silver jewelry. I already know what I want done. I can't wait.

What's taking so long for them to open? I walk next door to the Seven-Eleven for a beer. A tall can; I prefer aluminum to glass. I finger the fading scar on my right cheek. With aluminum there's no bottle left over. Nothing someone can hit you with in a drunken rage in the middle of the night.

The tattoo guy walks up just as I return with my brown paper bag.

"Hey," he says casually, like he's known me all his life. There is a commonality between some circles of people that makes this almost so.

"Hey," I answer, like I've known him all *my* life. "What's up?"

"My old lady again. Nothing new." These are all the words we need between us. I understand. He turns the key with a sharp click, walks through the door and holds it for me with his foot. A gentleman. Not like *some* people. I like him already.

His hair is long and black, trailing in a perfect braid down his back to the narrow waistband of his jeans; *nice*. His hair looks silky. I can tell he takes good care of it. He is tattooed down both arms. His muscle shirt reveals a large, colorful butterfly on his right shoulder, such a contrast to the snakes and dragons writhing down his arm. I want to touch the butterfly. I want to know what his back looks like, his belly.

"Whattaya have in mind?" he asks, reaching for a pack of cigarettes and the light switch at the same time. Economy of motion. He knows how to use his body. I like that.

"What?" I snap. Was I talking out loud?

"What do you have in mind? Have you decided, or are you here to look?"

I exhale, bathed in simple relief. I find my way again. "I know what I want. The only question is whether or not you can give it to me." Now he's smiling. Some of my thoughts carried through, but he knows I was talking business.

"If I can't give it to you, you don't want it." His eyes are brown and warm and deep and when I look straight into them I fall into an ocean of rolling waves.

I slide my t-shirt up, exposing my breasts to him. I don't wear a bra anymore. I'm not embarrassed. My breasts give only slightly to the effects of gravity. "I want nipple rings," I say, my low voice rising up from deep within me. He doesn't answer, only drinks me in with those eyes. I fold my hands across my chest, partly obscuring his view.

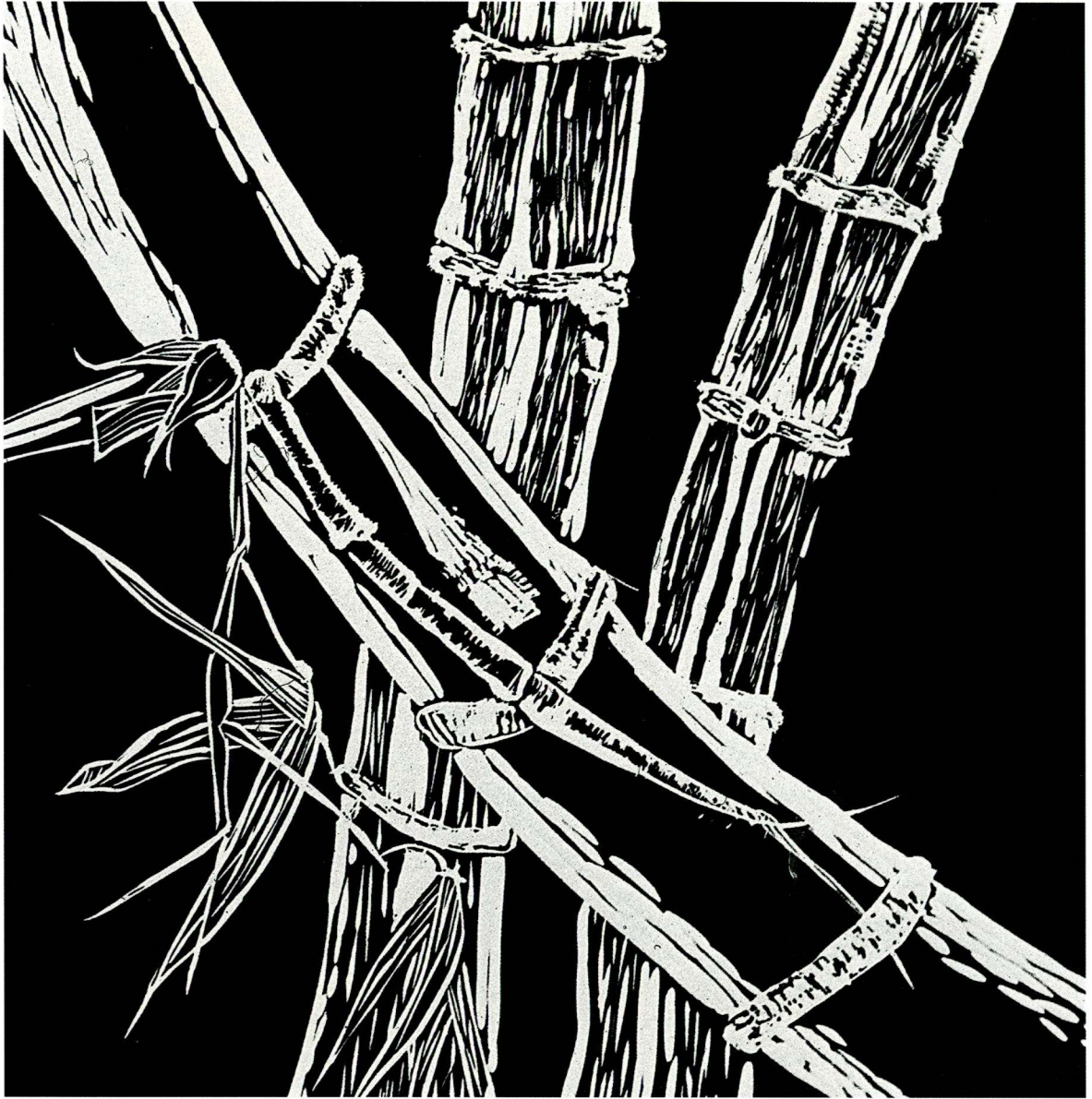
He walks up to me. I'm not sure what he is going to do--touch me? kiss me?--but I trust him. I close my eyes for a moment and when I open them again, he is three inches from my face. I'm looking into his deep brown eyes again. I am lost somewhere in him.

He slides my shirt back down. "You better think about it," he whispers, almost a prayer. "I wouldn't mess with perfection."

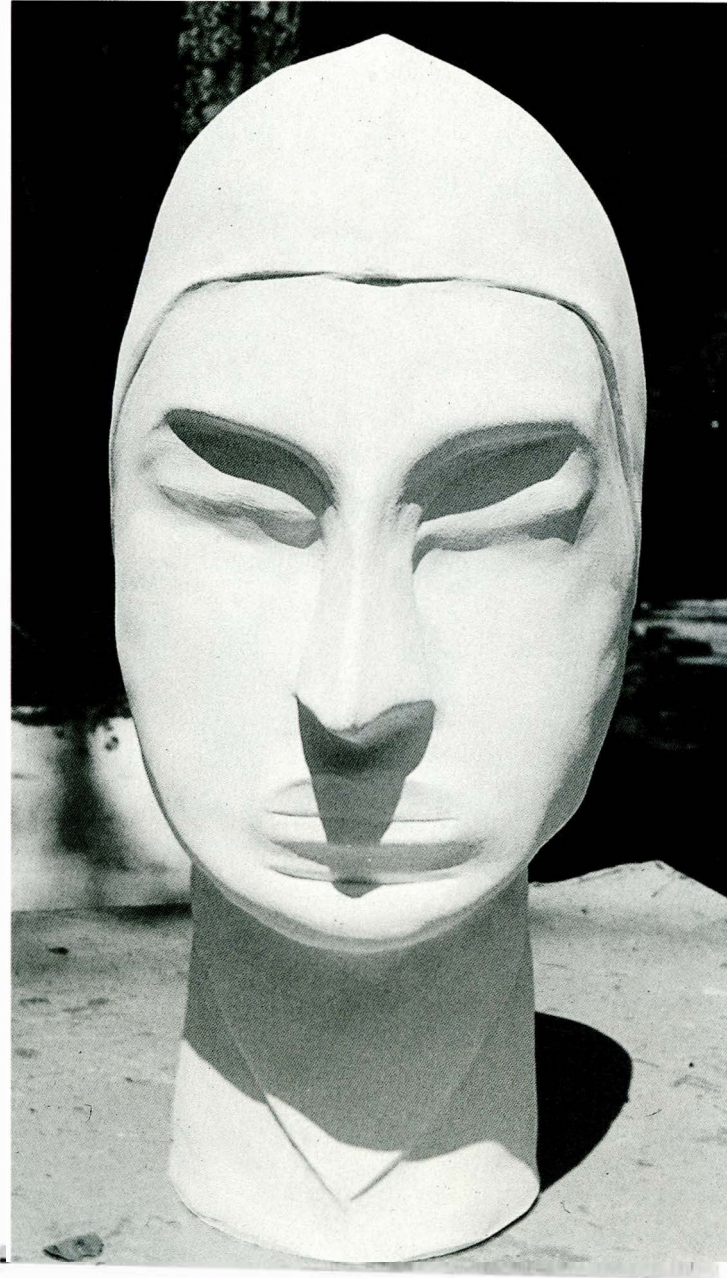
Bamboo Study

Michelle Gongage

Linocut



Warrior Woman
Robert Carson
Clay Sculpture



And How You Must Go

Nathaniel Sberle

You move, ever so slowly to the door--
Fear in my veins surges
Quick--like you came
to me

We kiss, ever so softly--
Joy in my veins surges
Completely--like all that I do
for you

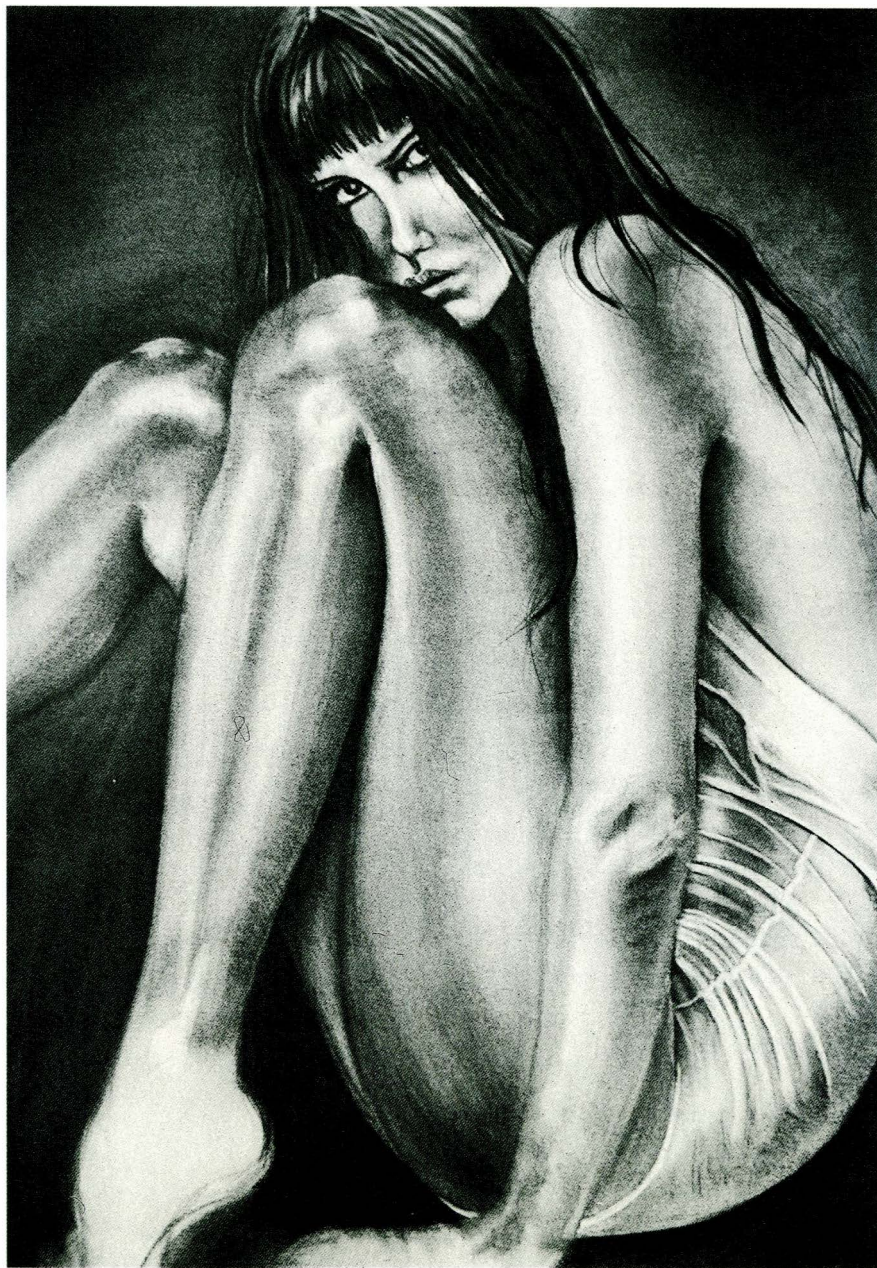
I move, ever so slowly to the door--
Fear in my veins surges
Quick--like you came
to me
And how you must go.

You will walk away
And I will not follow.
I will scribble something on a napkin,
A crude heart-shaped picture
And I will place it in your hands.

If you say you'll return
I will tell you
An angel has danced into
my life.

Sultry

Michelle Gongage
Charcoal



Looted Goods

Chelsea Romans

My life is full of looted goods
Things from your era
Which still remain
Things that I learned from you
Things that I stole from you
(Not that you didn't have it coming)
The physical objects don't bother me as much

The coats
The knives
My really cool sword
I have no desire to exorcise these things

No need to
Sprinkle holy water
Burn sweetgrass

They are things
Finite and tangible
I own them, they are mine
None of your residue adheres

The parts of myself
That I can attribute to you
Those are problematic

The bad things
The flinchings
The anger
The bad dreams

These I don't mind assigning to you
They are hardly to your credit
They are a testament to your vileness
It's those other things

Strength
Frankness
Endurance

Which I garnered during your reign
That I hate.

I'd like to remove all traces of you
Scrubbing with lye soap and a wire brush
But how can I get rid of the bad without losing the good?

How can I remove all of you
Without removing part of myself?

I give you no credit
For any part of me
You gave me nothing
You were a harsh, gritty (lying, sleazy) wind
That shaped me into bonsai shapes

(Normal from this side
Distorted from that)

Anything I gained
I gained
Recovering from you

I despise you
I decry you

But I gained due to you

Certain things
Weak things
Strong things
Things I hate
Things I can't bear to lose

This poem for instance...

Untitled

Solar Dope

Oil on canvas



Seeking Your Shadow

Ashley Hay

do i miss you?
yes...
an inadequate answer
to an inconsequential question.
do i love you?
yes.
but it won't bring you back.

back

to hear your laughter
ride with mine on the wind
to some forgotten place
i can no longer find.

back

to starry nights on hillsides
the murmur of voices
over ice cream and understanding.
understand me now.

understand me now
understand me now

as i --
alone confused scared little girl
cry out for your familiar smile
amidst the uncertain.

back
back
back

from the place you are
come rescue me
from who i am
so again
i'm who i am with you.

Eulogy

Melissa Freed

When they asked me to give the eulogy at Christa's funeral, I almost said no. Not because I didn't love her, or because we weren't friends, but because I didn't know her.

Once upon a time I knew her, years ago when she was still herself. We'd been inseparable then, in college, drawn to one another by mutual misanthropy. Four years we spent together, writing, talking, floating in and out of each other's personalities.

In four years of college we filled almost 150 notebooks. Ideas, poems, stories, quotes from obscure texts, song lyrics... And dreams. All our shared dreams and hopes, scribbled in black ink on cheap notebook paper.

By graduation, we were ending each other's sentences. By graduation, we were lovers.

It was so simple, the way it all began. So beautiful. It was our senior year, and we'd finally saved up enough to move off campus. We were sprawled across my bed in our new apartment, taking turns with the notebook. Huge, dusty volumes surrounded us, pages earmarked and passages highlighted, waiting to be transcribed. Christa was carefully lettering a new poem; I was watching her.

The sheets on my bed were, of course, black. I'd splurged with the money from my summer job and bought a satin comforter, loving the sheen and softness of the fabric. Christa's hair was like fire against the darkness, her skin luminously pale. Her lips were parted slightly, sparkling with a vagabond fleck of glitter. Her fingers around the pen were slender, strong--as an artist's hands should be--stained with ink and tipped in bruise-purple polish.

The pen paused and a dark spot of ink began to bleed out from the tip. Christa's eyes were perfect, brilliant blue as she looked up and caught me staring. Again.

It had been going on like that for months at that point. One of us would look up and catch the other staring, biting our lips, wicked thoughts as obvious to one another as if they were our own. But something was different that day. Maybe it was because we were in our own place, maybe it was Christa's poem, maybe there was something new and strange in my eyes.

That first kiss was like one's first sip of alcohol--burning, and just the slightest bit dangerous. Tinged with the sweetness of a mystery that it would never hold again. We took things slow that day, testing the limits of our bodies, of our hearts. Both, it

*We spent the whole of
our senior year like that:
writing and loving each
other as much as two
people ever had.*

seemed, were boundless.

We spent the whole of our senior year like that: writing and loving each other as much as two people ever had. There were tears, of course, and pain. But overall, there was love.

Graduation was like waking from a dream. Everything changed after graduation.

Christa got a job at a gallery in New York. I got accepted to graduate school. We packed up the apartment with long faces, sensing the subtle change in the dynamic of our relationship but not willing to acknowledge it.

"I want you to take the notebooks," she'd said. "I won't have room for them."

Liar. She didn't want them. She didn't want the reminders of a lover she'd left behind.

At first we called each other every day, wrote long letters full of mush. I tried keeping up the notebooks, copying bits of Christa's letters into them, writing poems and stories. But when I ran out of pages, I didn't bother buying a new one. Christa and I spoke on the phone less and less. Our letters became few and far between.

Eighteen months after Christa's last letter, a small white envelope arrived. Inside, a wedding invitation, and a note from Christa: *I fell in love. He reminds me of you.*

He. I stared at that word so long that it burned itself into my retinas. *He.* A man. I didn't go to the wedding.

Her husband is at the funeral, of course. He's handsome, in a delicate kind of way. His hair is black like mine. His eyes are delicate sea green, paler than my emerald ones. I can't look at him. I hate knowing that Christa loved him.

Their children have Christa's china blue eyes. Christa's children should have had my eyes, if it were possible.

The lifeless shell in the casket nauseates me. I would never have known that it was Christa. It has been ten years since I've seen her, and she has changed so much. Bright red hair gone mousy brown and grown long, artist's hands gone weak. She was no longer magical, but ordinary.

Thirty-two years old and dead of a heart condition that had gone undetected. Ironic, really, since for the last ten years I'd been doubtful that she even had one.

I guess I was wrong.

I drive home in a daze, miles and hours slipping by like sand through fingers. I climb the rickety stairs to the attic, drag down three boxes that smell of must and old paper.

I'm sweaty and mosquito-bitten by the time I finish digging the hole in the backyard. I grab a notebook and flip half-heartedly through the pages. Words on paper. Nothing more. No love, no pain, no tears. Just words.

The gas can is heavy. The notebooks are meaningless. The night air smells of smoke.

A Minute's Attention (A Villanelle)

Alexia Brehm

I see his eyes follow me as I am slowly passin' by
takin' in every angle, every shot that he can see
only I know that he is just like every other guy

his glowing face and simple smile give me a high
that badly makes me want to show him more of my body
I see his eyes follow me as I am slowly passin' by

I lower my chin to my chest and let out a sigh
realizing that I am giving him this show for free:
only I know that he is just like every other guy

pulling my skirt down, I run my hand along this bare thigh
long fingers stroking gently up from my smooth knee
I see his eyes follow me as I am slowly passin' by

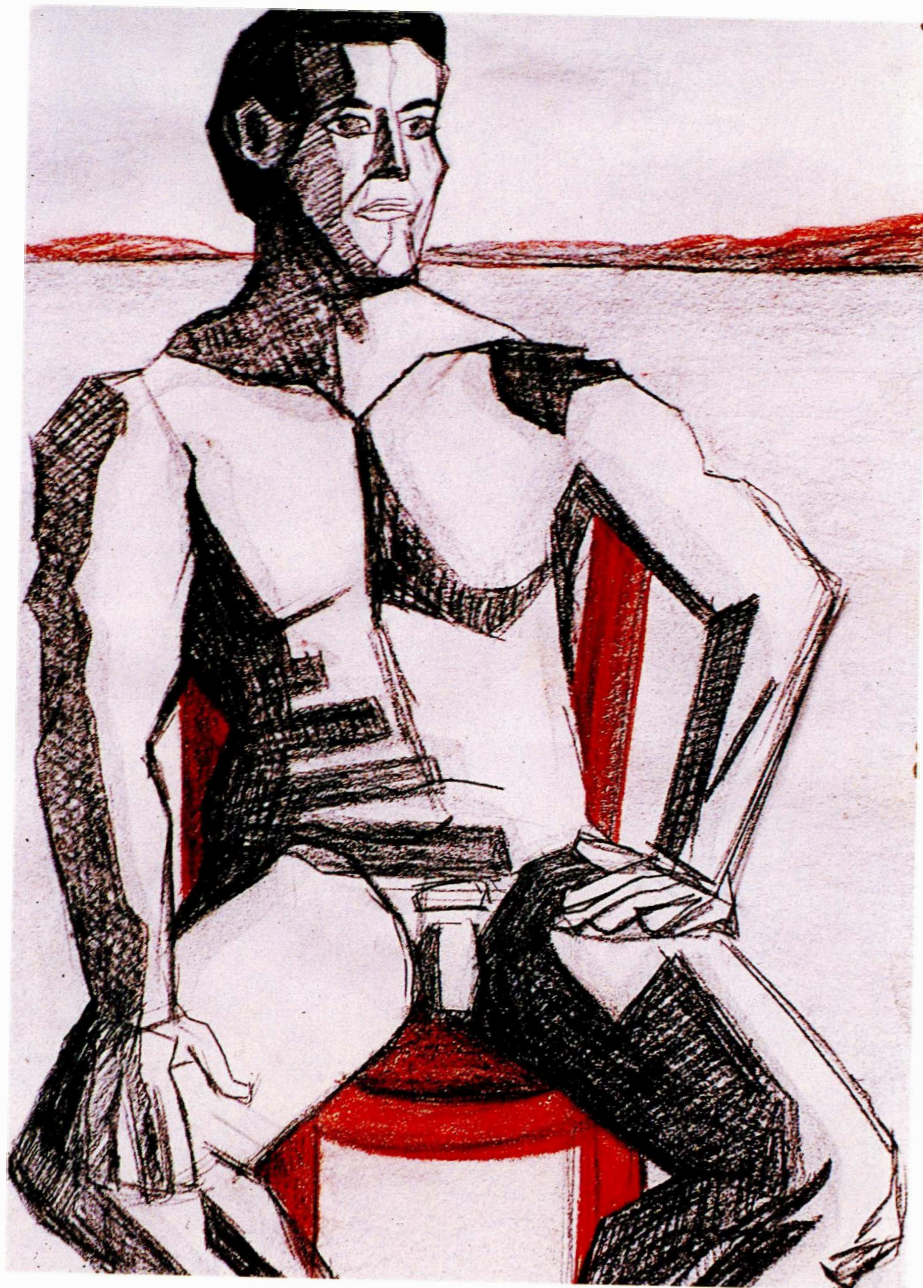
and although I can see the want in his eye
with his open mouth showing the willingness to plea
only I know that he is just like every other guy

and I slowly introduce myself to him with a wink of my eye
as I decide that tonight I will not withhold my dignity
I see his eyes follow me as I am slowly passin' by
only I know that he is just like every other guy

Human Figure Study in Black

Solar Dope

Charcoal



Nude (full)

Leslie Davies

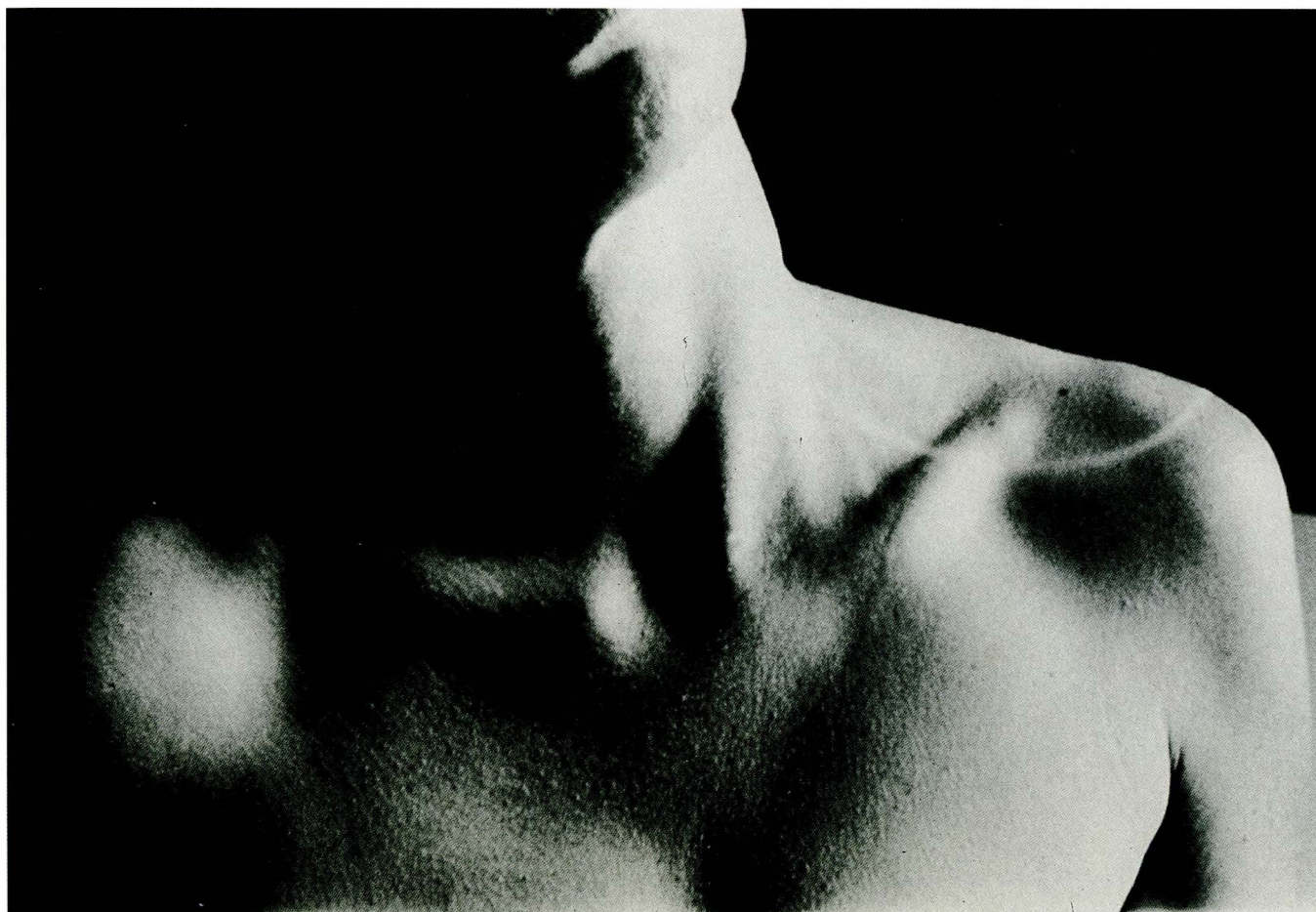
Photograph



Carla

Lesley Davies

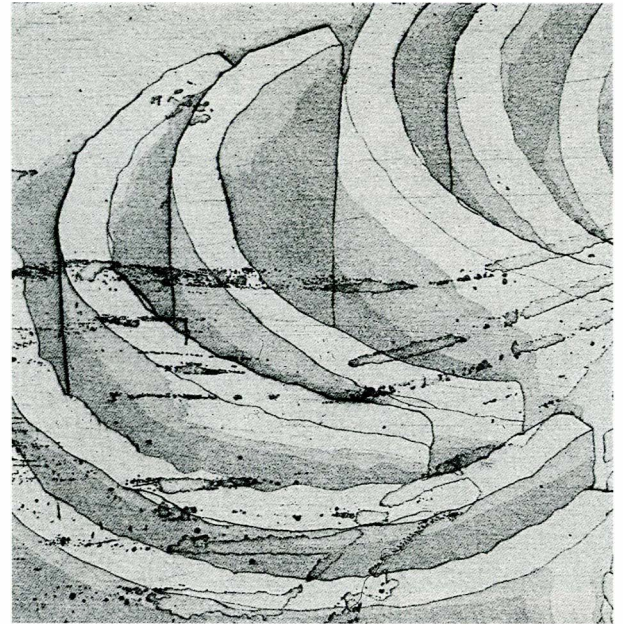
Photograph



Untitled

Ashley Hay

two tear drops
fall into the canyon
slipping
down steep walls
through well-cut crevices
worn well with the pain of time.
they fall over one another
racing ever onwards
to the bottomless chasm below.
no end
no beginning
only the river below
into which they plummet
losing their identity
and becoming one with the others.



Sequence

Akiko China

Intaglio

The Trial of Matthew Shepard's Killer

Kyle Stedman

With special status, I can (sweaty brows
are furrowed through the stink) uphold my ... well,
my stance. What can't I do in my own house
or, case in point,

a murder of apparel.

Truth be told: what can it be (I'll watch
how tourniquets constrict) but simply so?

A courtroom's stately step (of motley patch,
of wanton suckling babes, the bastards). So,
if they will dare to latch upon the lights
(of lies of garnets glistening)

Of Truth!

I promise that these sickly seeming sights
cannot contest the simply hate of youth.
By punishing explicitly for mine,

Imply that murder's hate is less a crime.

Petrarchan Sonnet Number Three

Suzannah Gilman

Young lover who hath turned my world around,
Upon the sight of thee I'm stopped swiftly,
Daring not let go what I gained quickly:
The sighs of love, in which my heart be found.
For surely as I live, I am thus bound:
To speak my love would be all misery;
I frame my heart in words for you to see,
Then hide it as a treasure underground.
Thy lips keep still lest I might hear thee speak,
And mountains quake and earth around me move;
To know thy heart would surely make mine weak.
Where I am bold I find I am yet meek,
And certain I know not what that prove;
I only know it is thy love I seek.

Torso

Akiko China

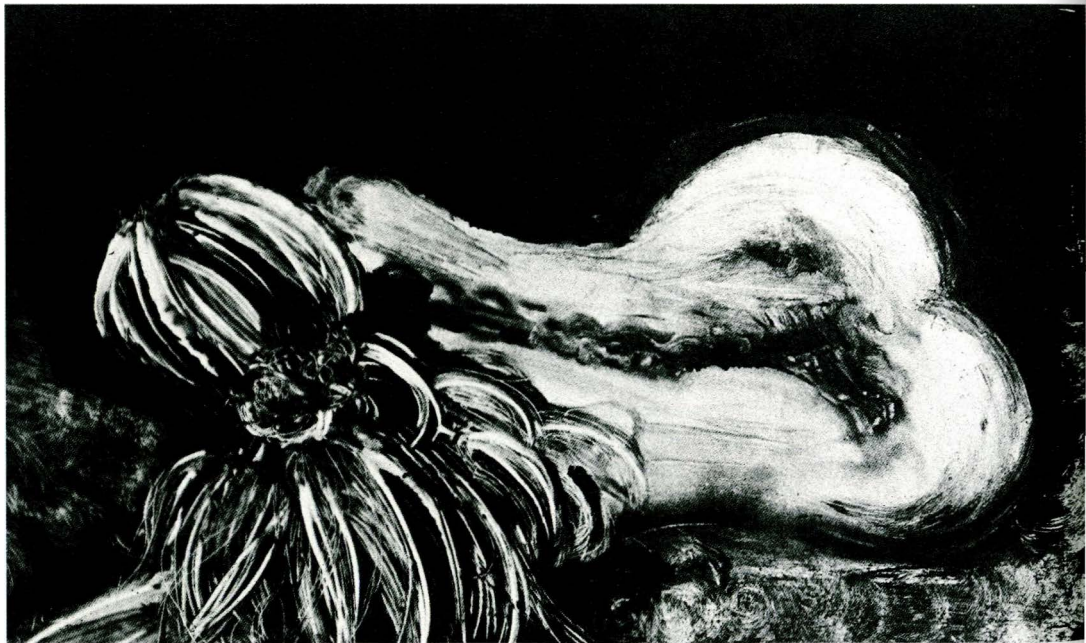
Plaster with watercolor



Jaded

Alexia Brehm

a beautiful child has lost her wings
he stays to comfort her and even sings
making sure the break was clean -
making it so that no one has seen.
the closeness they feel is too much to say -
they will look back tomorrow and say "yesterday"
she clings to herself - not wanting to bleed
knowing tomorrow, again he will need
the warmth that she offers and the feeling it brings
only this time he goes quickly and forgets to sing.
left all alone with her twice-wounded self,
she pities herself and knows it don't help.



Let Your Hair Down

Michelle Gongage

Monotype

"In The Room The Women Come and Go..."

Alexia Brehm

she was standing in the dark corner when I got here--
eyein' me up for a possible kill.
nine months have seen us through
and he muttered "I'm done with you"
and I swear that I could spy
a grin so sweet and shy
comin' from her dark corner there

she'll watch every girl
comin' through his room
knowin' that in the end
he will be her groom.
there is no time for cryin'
there's no more time for sighs
to her I have just crumbled
in my long-foreshadowed demise.

my silent tears find the dirty floor
as I leave the room and close the door
yes, I leave them alone
and head for a future untold
as my open, empty hand shivers in the cold.

The Choke

Lesley Gondeck

Running to and from at the same moment in time
He smelt like honey and flowers
Half-hoping he'd turn and notice
Soft eddies of wind circled my body
Like a sea of curious fish
These incidents yield to exciting dreams

Tight thighs
Clean bed
Crushed velvet curtains
Oriental pillows
And satin sheets
Just slip your hands in me
I am a warm pool of youth and honesty

Seemed to be motionless movement
His sweetest smile
Innocence in a kiss
I'd give my last breath to save you
But I can't breath when you're near...

Velvet Ice
Lesley Jondeck
Digital art



Constellation

Kyle Stedman

The paths that better, stronger now
are lonesome: conversations at the skies.
I can't remember if you told me
half how liquid laying here would feel.

But those are horns? Perhaps a bear or crab?
More probably a waterfall,
a closed-eyed child wishing to be free,
convulsive pulsings as a raven
grips me, stares, and thinks me
thinking less than most;
the motives in her convoluted stance,
the rootless needs within your earthy dance.

Yet free to nothing made, but focused so
that every book must lay a humble awe
and bow in sorrow that it's only now
is glory's shine the quicker, and I taste you, now for me.

To Sydney Lanier

Jim Carlton

Your ship upon the Sea of Dreams was cast
Thy words its sails
And thou its mast

On violin string and flute first passion stirred
'Twas Word and Music you preferred

Your genius borne in unscored rapture
Time and Tone, Thy words did capture
In search of God, blown by the winds of Calenture

Thy ship of existence constant with Ebb and Tide
You hailed the beauty of a Calyx
And mourned when mocking bird by cat died

A flute for thy staff and pen for thy sword
An artful mind
And thou, master of the word

Past, Present, Future immortal in your verse
Would that Time could change its course
To carry you to meet a friend

Sadly though, the laws of Nature will not bend
To bring you forth to see if Beauty has met its own end.

Reflection

Leslie Davies

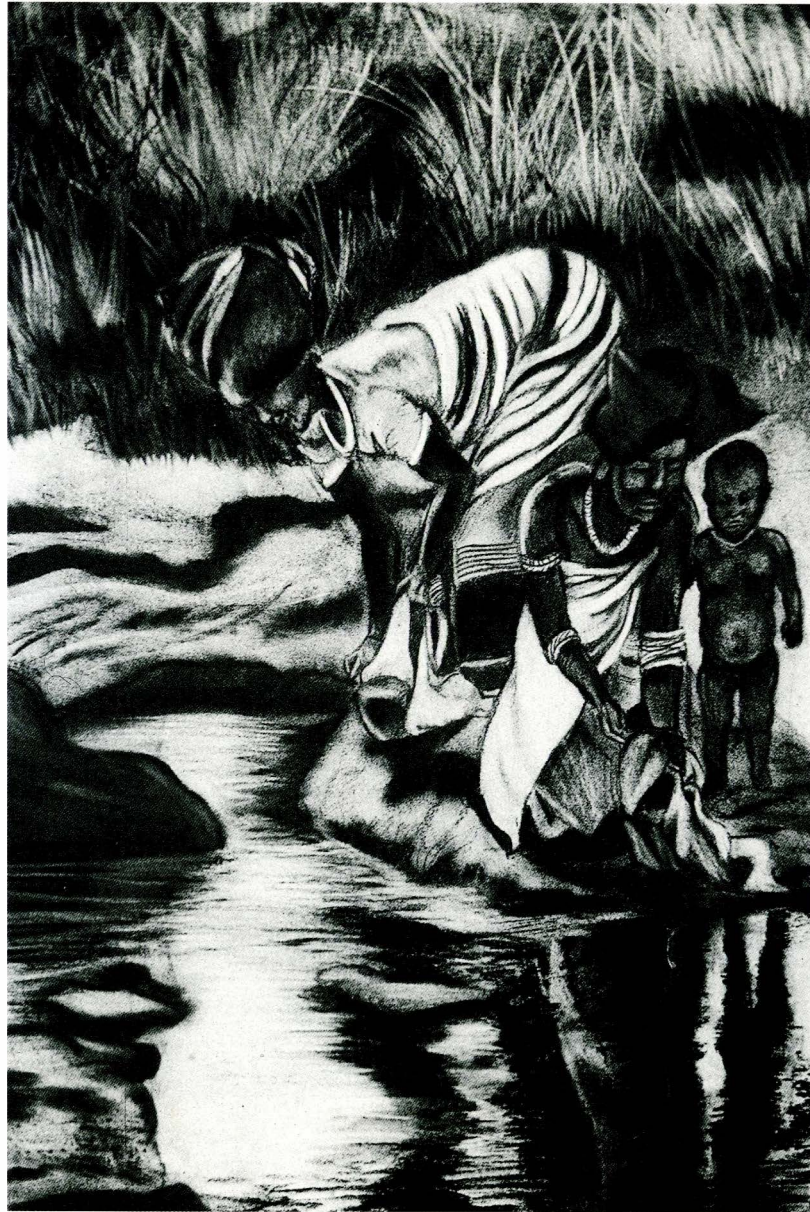
Photograph



Washing at the River

Michelle Gongage

Charcoal



Untitled

Jessica Crumlish
Photograph



Always Happy to Help You!

Catherine Bacon

SET: *The stage is barren, except for a single actor. Sitting before the audience with a droll countenance, the actor relates the tale with a tired voice that changes only to dire sarcasm.*

Another day, another unending shift at the grocery store. I park in the outskirts of the lot, as directed by the master of all incompetence--er, I mean, the store manager. After tearing my skin off of the leather seating--which, I must say, is quite a joy in the middle of another scalding summer--I head for the gaping hole that marks the entrance.

As usual, the entire force of sackers is sitting outside, pretending to be hard at work, rearranging the carts for the fiftieth time. Oh, how nice. One of them is smiling and waving at me. Obviously, they have the sad misconception that I'm one of the gang. Sorry, but no, I don't have time to talk. Late for work. Wonder if they even know what that is...

Oh, hey. The store manager's right-hand man is, yet again, hitting on the 16-year-old cashier. She'll be let out early again tonight. How long is he going to remain at the cash registers? Long as she'll keep flirting with him, probably. It's hard to imagine that his wife puts up with this kind of crap--even harder to believe that she does the same whenever she gets the chance. But, that's what they all say around here. Yup. Such a loving, caring couple.

Well, Miss Everything-Is-Lovely is behind the window tonight. She gives me one of those rather disgusting million dollar smiles and greets me in her sickeningly sweet tone. Yes, I know. I'm heading to punch in right this minute. Of course, I'm doing fine. I'm always fine... No one wants to hear the truth of that anyway. They'd think I'm a whiner, er something.

Pleasant news, indeed. Smiley thinks they've found that missing 20 bucks from Thursday's till. Yeah, fell behind the till into the back of the drawer. Of course. Of course. I'll just be clocking in now...

Hmmm... Now I'm behind the 16-year-old's cash register. The right-hand man wanted to leave her up here until the next poor victim came in for their shift. After the pleading act she gave-Pleeeeeeease!!!

Get her as far away from me as possible. At least I'll have 15 to myself.

Customers. No, next line. NEXT line. Yes, pass up the other, idle cashiers and come straight to me. And look. There go the sackers, back outside. I knew it was a Kodak moment when I saw one of them inside actually near the general bagging area. Concept.

All right. Get this one through; then, the next; and the next... The day'll go by before I know it. Good. Small load, as well. Couple of quick scans and a few numbers and, like magic, a total on the screen. The magic's not in the computer; it's in the fact that this store can charge these prices and stay in business. I know; it's high. You know, there's another store a couple blocks away that's a lot less expensive. That, and I've heard unimaginable rumors that they treat their employees like humans.

What. Oh, not again. She believes I over-charged her... By a penny. How many times have I heard that one? And it's not even a Sunday when most of these penny-pinching tightwads come in herds! No, the total's correct. No, the manager's in the back probably getting a better look at the 16-year-old's new tattoo... among other things. IT'S JUST A PENNY!! WOULD YOU-

It's all right. Just give the woman her penny, the Non-Stop-Smiler tells me, her grin ever-widening. I'll be short--No matter. They'd fix it.

And while they're fixing that, they can fix the rest I've been pocketing lately--er, I mean, has strangely been disappearing from my till. After all, didn't they find a 20 'misplaced' in my drawer this morning?...

Feel sorry for the idiot who misplaced part of his paycheck.

Hope it was one of the sackers.

The Lord is My Shepherd

Carol Bacha

prayerfully 88 $\text{♩} = 88$

mf

The Lord is my Shep - herd I shall not want.

mf *f*

The Lord is my Shep - herd I shall not want. He mak - eth me so lie

mf *f*

He re - stor - eth my soul: He lead - eth me in the paths of

mp *mf* *f*

down in green pas - tures: He re - stor - eth my soul: paths of

16 *p* *mp più mosso* *smoothly*

right - eous - ness for His Name's sake. Yes, though I walk through the val - ley of the shad - ow of

p *mp più mosso* *smoothly*

right - eous - ness for His Name's sake. Yes, though I walk through the val - ley of the shad - ow of

23 *mf* *f* *p*

death. I will fear no e - vil. For Thou art with me;

mf *f* *p* *mf*

death. no e - vil. For Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they com - fort

31 *mf* *f* *convictingly*

Thou pre - par - est a ta - ble be - fore me, in the pres - ence of my en - e - mies. Thou a - noint - est

me. Thou pre - par - est a ta - ble be - fore me, in the pres - ence of my en - e - mies.

39 *mf* *dulce*

my head with oil my cup run - neth o - ver. Sure - ly good - ness and

mf *dulce*

Sure - ly good - ness and

44 *mf*

mer - cy shall fol - low me all the days of my life. And I shall dwell

mer - cy shall fol - low me all the days of my life. And I shall dwell

50 *mf*

I shall dwell, in the house, of the Lord, for

in the house of the Lord, for

55 *mf cresc.* *f dim.* *p*

lu - ia.

cresc. *f* *p*

lu - ia.

Searching for the Light

Laila Scharf

Watercolor



From Petal to Stem

Nathaniel Eberle

12 long stem tokens of my affection
once rested in the vase upon her mantle--
And yet the beauty and splendor of
their opening only served to close
the leaves of each chapter we had written.

The stem, the strength of spring,
each day bringing growth and
promise of sun-baked joy
in a lover's arms.

The lush green leaves, the
long summer days,
rich with life, and of promises
of the warm night's sky.

The vibrant red, hints of fire-orange--
color dances in the fading light, while
the chilling breeze brings
a close to the year.

And the thorns, my love.
The thorns are the long winter
That now lies before me.
Each biting, piercing moment,
pricking my heart to want you more.

12 flowers to my dear
12 months in a year
A part for every season
I am searching for a reason
Why spring must turn to summer
then fall into a slumber
of a long and arduous winter.

Without a single rose to comfort.

Beauty

Lisa Winters

Intaglio



Heart and Soul

Melissa Freed

I take the scalpel of my pain
and slice open my chest.
The blood that pools
beneath me is cold.
I take out my heart,
and hold it out to you.
"This is my heart."

I squeeze it until it stops beating
and catch my soul
between my fingers
as it seeps out.
"This is my soul."

I offer them to you,
my heart in one hand,
my soul in the other.
You stand hesitant,
disgusted,
as I bleed and die
and struggle to make you want them.

You take them,
examining them closely,
loving their heat and weight
and the power of them in your hands.
Loving the power it gives you over me.

I sit bleeding,
my hands empty,
my heart in your hands,
my soul in your pocket.
I hold out the scalpel to you
and you walk away.

Untitled

Solar Dope

Oil on canvas



Your World

Ashley Hay

atlas held the world upon his shoulders
you laughed at his efforts.
“fool!” you cried,
as you struggled to topple it off.

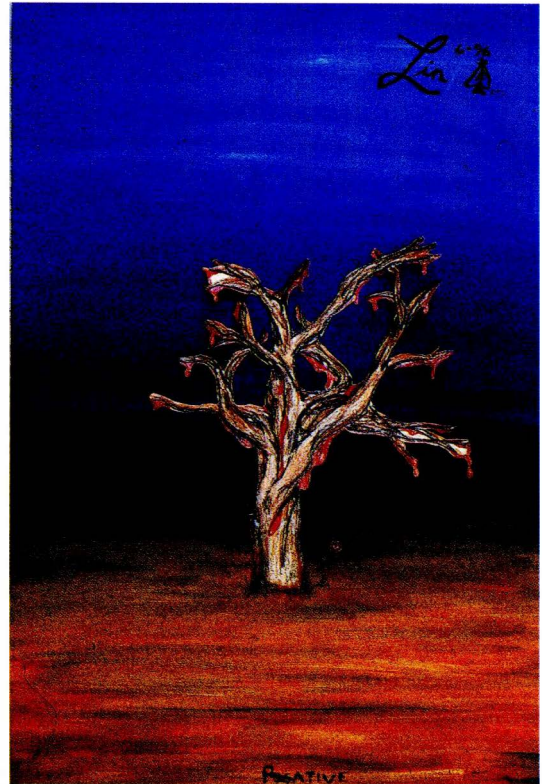
atlas gave his blood to bring life to an ideal
you smirked at his gift.
“fool!” you cried,
as you sold your own soul.

atlas stood daily at his post
you mocked his faithfulness.
“fool!” you cried,
as you sold your own soul.

and then...

atlas left his post
he reclaimed his blood
he shrugged...
and it was over.

you stood
the world toppling upon your head.
“fool!” you cried helplessly,
but there was no one left to listen.



Being Me

Lindsey Elkin

Oil on canvas

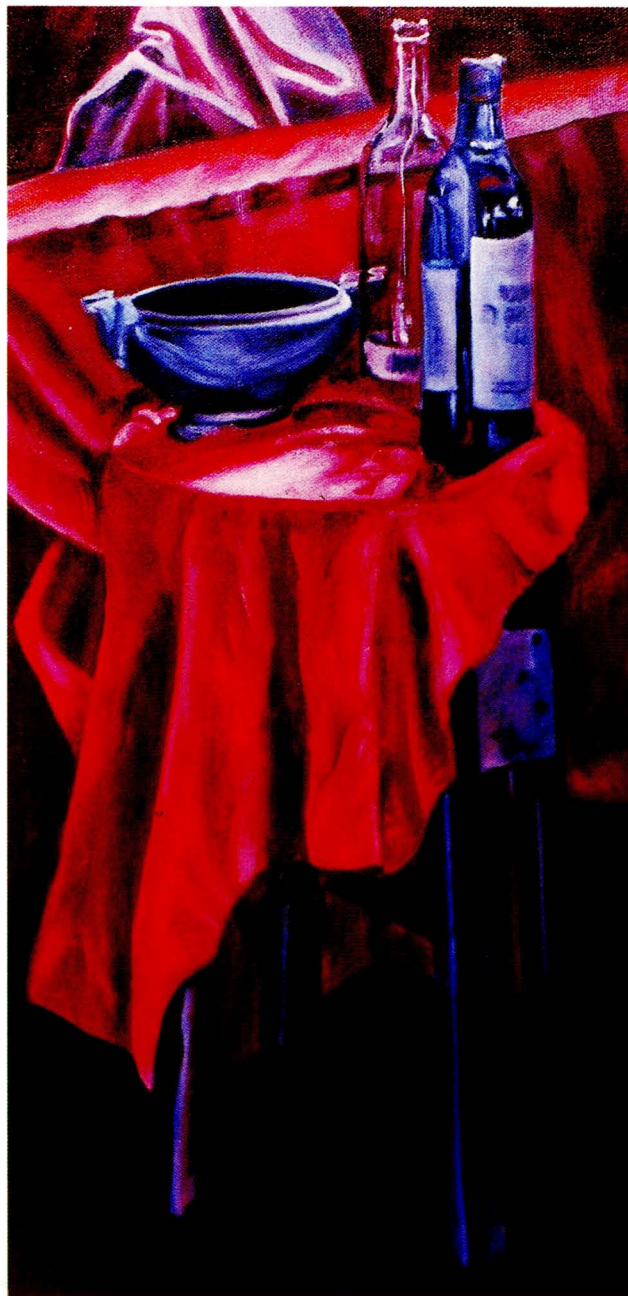
Still Life
Solar Dope
Charcoal



Still Life

Michelle Gongage

Oil on canvas



Now quite late,
I found a little pub.
As I was in dire need
Of good company
And smooth conversation.
"Sit down, Mac," the bartender yelled,
Pouring me a thick tongue of whisky
Over silent ice cubes.
I shifted on the bar stool
Getting comfortable
While we all became
Brothers of the drink.
Sobriety lifted like cigarette smoke
Laughter settled easily
Like the cat in the window sill
I still but could not forget
That long ago my parents
Didn't love me.
Perturbed
I pondered
 Puff puff on my cig
What does a person have to do
To make ends meet
To make love sweet
To make world peace
Damn it!
What do I have to do?

... Those days
Hiding in the comer
Scarlet lashes on my back.
The yelling... The yelling
Bartender!
Another, straight up
"Make that two," said the man next to me.
"Cheers, to our dreams!"
"O.K." I said, "That's what I have left."
"You've got to wait, hold on."
Then he was gone
I pulled a few dollars
Out of my wallet.
The bartender fixed me another.
Oh, to be loved.
What is that?

Millenium in Paris

Jessica Cramlish
Photograph



Jailed Second
Leslie Davies
Photograph



Breathe

Amy Lathrop

Someday soon
today will be a memory
and these times
will be taken
on a fast moving train
that sweeps us away
and carries us
to all the places fate has in store
Times like these
at two a.m.
are when I sit back
and I appreciate
being surrounded
by these people
that have come into this life
for these years
and I realize
that we've all taken a chance
and given too much
not to notice
the vanishing days
and dwindling weeks
getting fewer and fewer
and smaller and darker
these moments
that come closer and closer and
come rushing the future
to the doorstep
that I don't want to face
and the bridge
I don't want to cross
I don't want to feel
so scattered
and
so scared
and I will not let go
of these precious times
that are the reason
I lie back

and breathe
and recall the beginning of it all
before we fell into each others' paths
and before we knew
how far this would take us.
I didn't mean for it all to go so fast
The comfortable cushion
of four years away
is no longer supporting me
Four years
is today.
It is right now and it is
this moment
that is inching closer
and tightening my heart
and suffocating me
and I cannot sleep
because
I cannot breathe.
because the memories
and the conversations
and the hours of doing nothing
and everything
are now the most important thoughts
in my mind
And I hate myself
for seeing the past in our eyes
we sink and we fall
and we grab
for any hand that is near
that can pick us up
and hold us
and keep us safe
from those chances
and those changes
that leave us behind
while pushing us forward
I think
that in a few short strands of time

it will all be so different.
We will be more than just
five steps away
and a phone call next
door
And this reliable couch
and that safe hug
and these easy times
will be things we can't
return to.
We are going
but we are not leaving
each other
because we have
swallowed our hearts
and crossed our fingers
and told ourselves
we will end up somewhere
back together
at the same time
in the same space
as where we'll be in our
lives
I am not sure
I can only know that I will
always have
a special corner of my
heart
tucked away
and sealed off
and fit for nothing else
but these cobweb memo-
ries
that will sustain me
and remind me
that this was beautiful
and that this is only a
beginning.

Cover Art

Michelle Gongage, Jenn Parr

Cover Design

Michelle Gongage

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