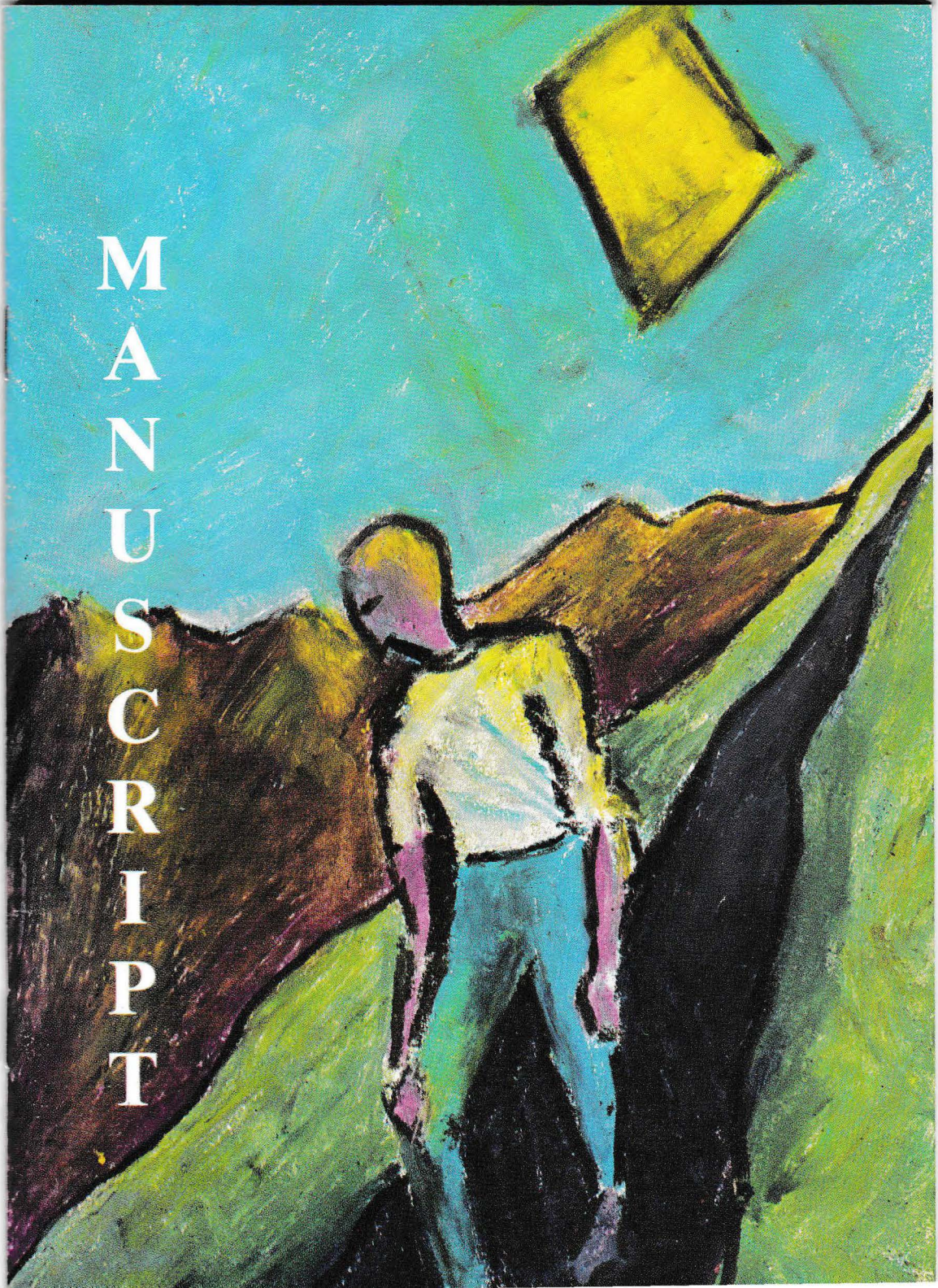


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MANUSCRIPT

In my solitude
I speak blinding thoughts.

Larry Thomas

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NEON

From behind the lace curtains and tar-shingled walls
Of a century's chestnut timber
The smallest daughter of five generations
Watches
As a glass-harnessed unicorn's soul of pink vapor
Promotes itself beside the highway.

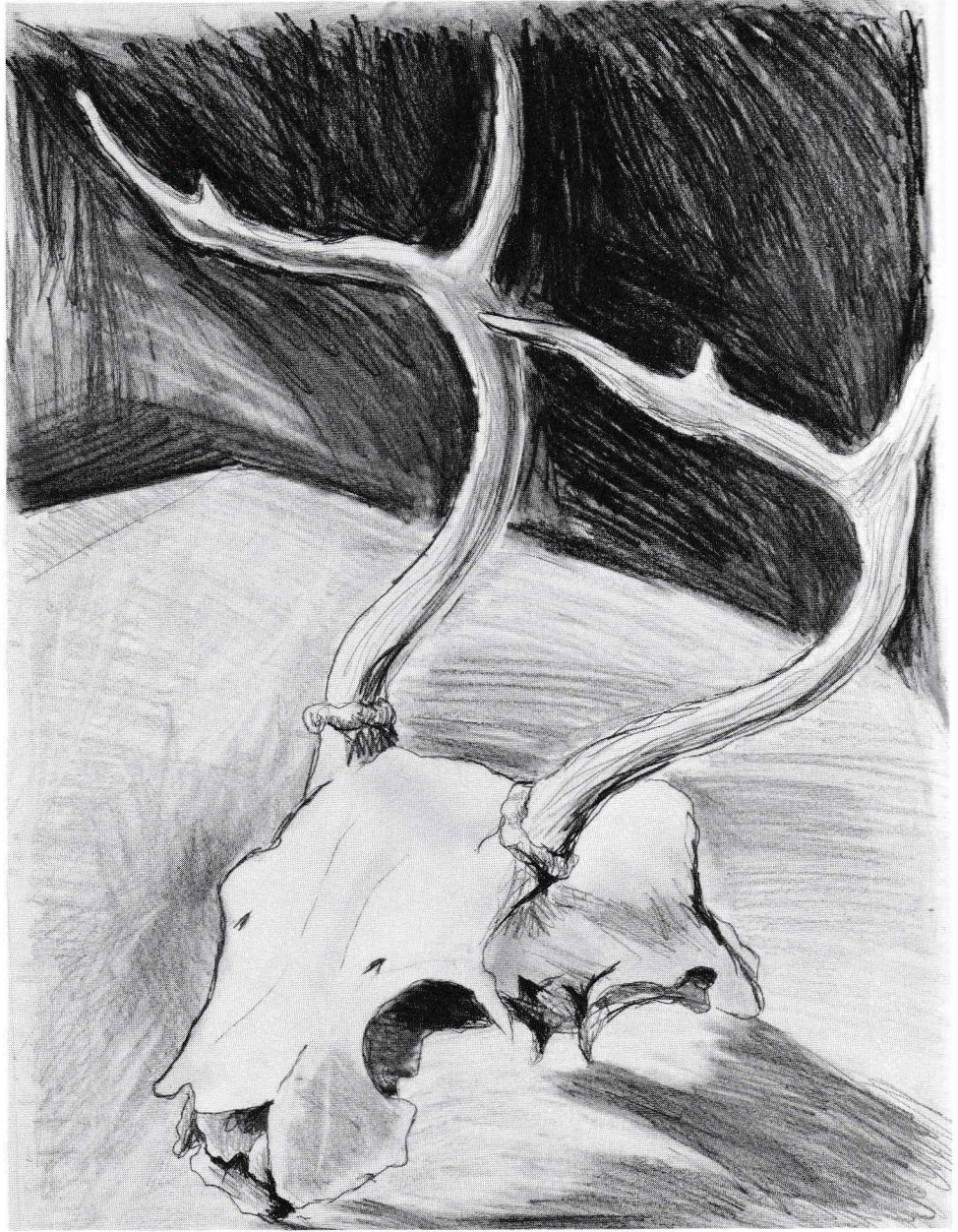
Darlene Miller



Lawrence Kopenis — Student

There she sits—over there—
In the corner of my living room,
Wrinkled old prune that loosens the bowels of my fury,
Pretending to sleep, while moist eye
Follows my food from plate to palate,
Whose crippled leg is suprisingly swift
On stair or rug when news is at hand.
Her colorless, spittle-pasted lips spew acid
That singes the hair in my ears
And permanently scars my soul.
Oh, wicked beast, who walks on three legs
And whose name is Aged,
Who clings to life as vine to wall,
Yet despises every breath she takes,
They will board you up in box of pine
And vault of stone, someday.
Even then, the shuffle of your crippled feet
Will echo through the antechamber of my mind.
Even then shall you sit
In the corner of my living room.

Murnal Abate



Bruce Lanning — Untitled

Compassion

His sunken eyes
cried
isolation tears
that never showed
long before
they dripped
back inside.
Enveloped in a misery
cloud,
he was disease
designed man.
Hair-matted
hands; arthritic claws
at the beach
he sifted
hot sand
spectators picked him
out like a rough-edged beachstone.
The flawless crowd
flung
sharp arrowed laughter
at Him
who hadn't
gleaming eyes, sparkling hair,
the blessing to be
blemish free.
Still, he sat grazed by hate bullets
shot
from
their heart
guns.
I turned to the tortured
who flashed
a smile, toothless
but quickly lighting up
rotten flesh
inside those shells
of human perfection.

Sheree Zigman Klemow

Threshold

It's a bleak day,
and lonely,
but how can a twenty-four hour cycle of
light and dark
be lonely?

I wonder why.

Razor blades
of social ways,
everyday daggers and
calm surprise,
this is the way we live our lives.

It's not worth it.

There are scenes
and there are motions
when the alone inside
opens like a great maw
and swallows me whole.

And if I close my eyes and dream,
peel away the onion-skin of personalities,
I can be reduced to myself.

It's nice to die every once in a while,
crawl inside myself,
become my own cave.

It's good to give in,
no longer walk the path so well
(poorly?)
worn.

It's easy not to try,
let apathy reign, leave effort behind—
forget it all.

And I feel that way sometimes,
that nothing I have said
or done
has been worth saying
or doing.

And sometimes the world is so confusing
and I am so confused—
(or is it the other way around?)
and sometimes I am the perfect
Me
(as perfect as I can be,
or can be expected to be),
and I am drunk with the wearies of living, sometimes
and I try to soothe my battered ego into submission,
sometimes.

And sometimes
not just anytimes
(not anymore)
the universe coalesces into
nebulous clouds of pain
and smothers me
(and I let it—sometimes);
I feel worthy to live, sometimes.
And sometimes, I slash myself to ribbons.
Other times, I write poems of helplessness,
and other times I cry.
But when all the pain makes us
merrily void
other times
I wonder why.

But most times I'm not a hero;
for it's a whole world out there,
every inch a sin,
and every mile a crucified man who has led his crusade:

Most times, I give in.

Joseph Lieb



Sandra Long — Star Wars

WORTH PURSUING

Isn't false love—
Great?
We pretend we are at times
In love, that is,
In the morning we still do,
Perhaps even till we step out—
Of the car, that is.
Is false love—
Great?
We pretend it is at times
Love, that is,
In the morning, do we still?
Till we step in the door
Of the church, that is . . .

Michele James



Chris Brownawell — Untitled

Once
pigs. The
little pig
tually pl
little pig
little fri

Now it
relocates
their res
Big Bad
of surfab

The fir
tiful abou
and be

The se
grow on
wooded
little pig

The th
approvin
by the w
to ask o

"The
fashion
will stan
mend th
improve
be so h
minutes
reply, th
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The Three Little Pigs Visit the Thesaurus in the Vale of Redundancy

Once upon a time (quite a very long time ago, actually) there were three (3) diminutive little pigs. The first of these pigs considered himself to be something of a fife player. The second little pig thought that he had a talent for plying the fiddle. This is not to be confused with actually playing the fiddle. Plying and playing are two entirely different concepts here. The third little pig was a very industrious sort of chap who had little time for such unnecessary useless little frivolities as playing the fife and plying the fiddle.

Now it came to pass (as it always does in these silly stories) that these diminutive little pigs relocated themselves in a new area of the forest to which they moved. They were warned by their real-estate (as opposed to false estate) agent that a certain **Immense Malevolent (a.k.a. Big Bad) Wolf** was lurking stealthily about, and that they should commence the construction of suitable housing without further procrastinatory delay.

The first little pig built his domicilic dwelling place out of cured hay, which lay about in plentiful abundance. He figured that he would save money by using a substandard building material and be done with the job by lunch time.

The second little pig constructed his residential structure out of oaken sticks (the kind that grow on trees) which were also in a plentifully abundant supply, as they were located in the wooded forest. The second little pig quite literally threw his house together and joined the first little pig for a carefree and joyous afternoon of song and dance.

The third little pig fabricated his abode (not adobe) out of bricks and had even secured the approving consent of the F.H.A. He was laying out his patio when his two idle brothers sauntered by the wayside and paused to chat. "Why must you always go to so much fuss?" they inquired to ask of him.

"The infamous, notoriously ill-reputed **Immense Malevolent Wolf** will proceed in such a fashion as to **Huff** and **Puff** and thoroughly blow your little shanties asunder, but my fine house will stand fast amid the blustery gale," intoned the third pig. The third brother went on to recommend that the other two siblings return to their shelters and proceed to make the necessary improvements on their respective homes. The first and second brother found this advice to be so humorous that they found themselves thoroughly convulsed with laughter for quite some minutes afterwards. When they had recovered sufficiently enough to make vocal a coherent reply, they declined their brother's suggestion, saying that they would be much too busy singing and dancing to worry about home improvements.

Later that afternoon, the local Civil Defense siren sounded its **Wolf-Warning** and the three diminutive little pigs hastened for their respective houses like greased pigs (or greased lightning if you prefer). The **Immense Malevolent Wolf** came up to the house of straw and said:

"Little pig, little pig, grant me entrance to thy chambers!"

To which the pig replied, "Not by the beard which emanates from my visage!"

"Then I shall proceed to **Huff** and **Puff** and blow your house to oblivion!" The wolf did this with great facility and then proceeded to devour the pig. (Now you know why he's called the **Immense Malevolent Wolf**.)

I.M. Wolf, having enjoyed his appetizer, came upon the rustication of the second pig and bellowed,

"Little pig, little pig, let me come into thy foyer!"

The pig responded, "Get thee to a McDonald's, you villain!"

The **Wolf** retorted, "Then I shall **Huff** and **Puff** and desecrate your house most thoroughly!" The little stick house surrendered quickly to the **Wolf's** violent exhalations.

Thus having devoured two pigs, the **Wolf** went along until he happened upon the handsome little brick Cape Cod of the third little pig who was the owner and principal resident.

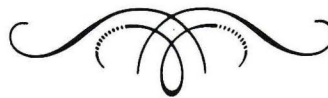
Once more, the **Wolf** asked, "Little pig, little pig, let me come in!"

"Hit the road, you vagrant!" was the pig's terse rebuttal.

The **Wolf** lost his patience and growled, "Pig, you have sealed your doom!! I shall **Huff** and **Puff** and blow any trace of your fine house many miles from here!" (This was a rather windy **Wolf** to be sure!) The **Wolf** drew in an **Immense** quantity of air (for he was an **Immense Wolf**), but before he had time to **Huff** even once, he keeled over, stone-dead (how dead is a stone anyhow?).

The coroner determined that the **Immense Malevolent Wolf** died of trichinosis, caused by the consumption of too much raw pork. Thus justice was finally served, and the two little late pigs were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor (posthumously) for helping to rid the neighborhood of a dangerous murderer and source of high wind.

Francis Carroll McMullen



After nineteen years
I met you.
You buckled;
I bent.
We met halfway
With love,
And questions
Of how we've been —
What we've gone through.
Dad, I'm glad we met.
Through the years
I've grown to be a person.
You knew me only as an infant;
I knew you only as a picture.
Painful memories of hurt held
Mom's tongue
And my questions.
Now I'm with you and
Painful memories of mom's hurt
Hold my tongue
And her questions.

Michele James



Joan Chisarick — The Forest

Protean Poetry

Ru^mblⁱng, an^gry,

bl^ack cl^oud^s ga^ther

an^d so^{ft} pu^ffⁱne^{ss}

gi^ves wa^y to veⁿge^ance
as raⁱn sla^shes downward

and lands

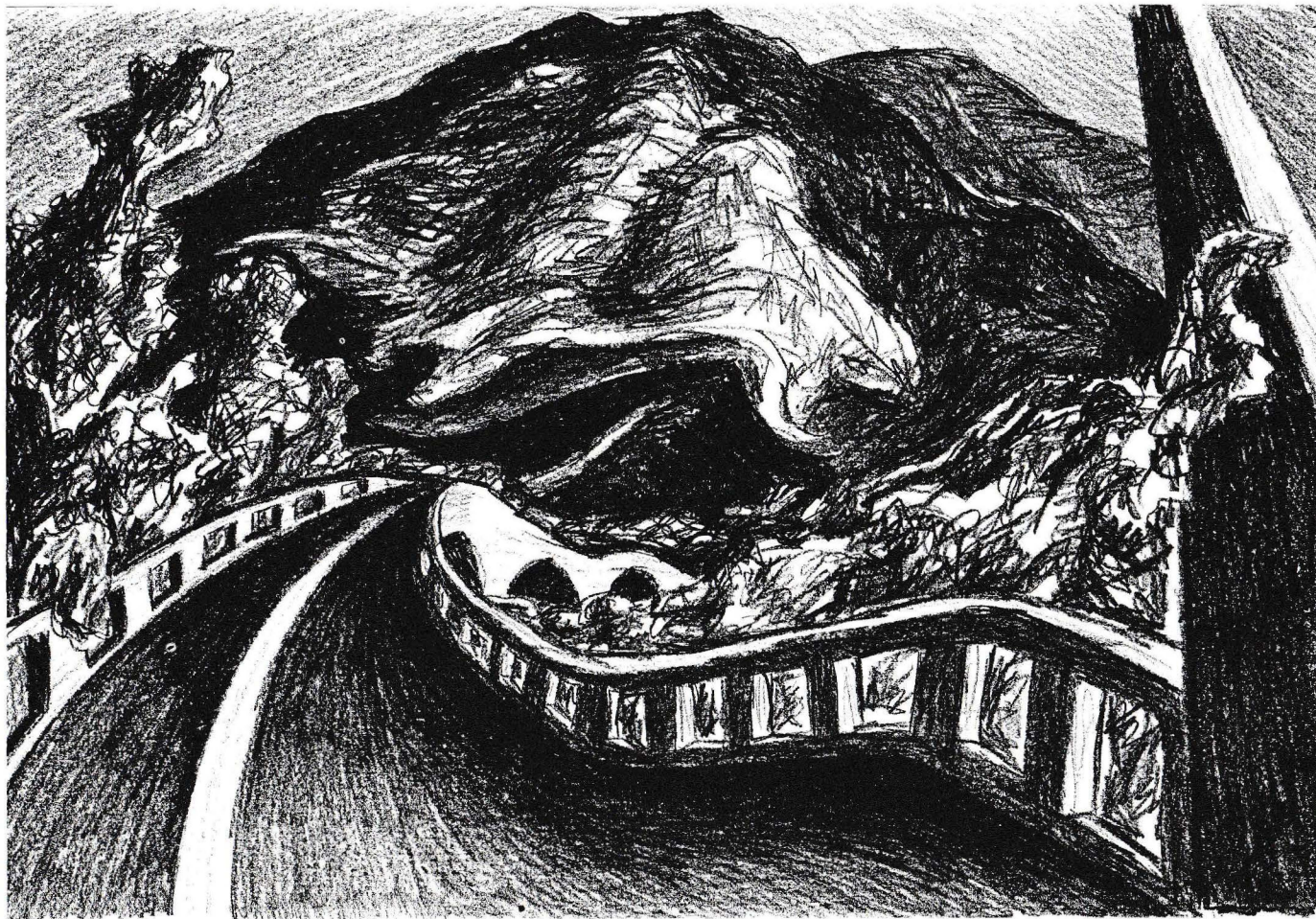
spⁱsh spl^ash,

pu^dd and t^rick^les in^to st^orm draⁱns,
se^l

was^hing the grⁱme from the st^reets and theⁿ

f		s
a	into basin, stays	e
l	and waits and	t
l		a
s		r
		o
		p
		a
until nature must		v
Purge its world again		e

Joseph Lieb



Darlene Miller — Arc of Release

Winter-born night, ice-fanged and brittle
Drawing black lashes across lapis eyes,
Draped cloaks of darkness, frost-heaved and frigid
Convulse and contort, shroud a chilled steel spine.

Ribbons of roads around cartons of towns
Stars in the palm of a valley's dark hand.
Daggers of rubies spike a tiara
Stern on a mountainous granite-veined brow.

Lava-orange warmth forms a linen-lined womb
'Neath knot-tangled miles of dyed worsted wool.
Spiced with the flavor of cedar and ginger
Unconscious, uncaring, unworried, unborn.

Darlene Miller

i need this city right now.

i need her winter—
the war of it—
to combat an
unavenged love.
i've got to fight
this because i'm
tired of fighting
what's inside.

let the intrinsic
quell as the elements
wage against the
boards of this greater
house—the soul.

i need the wind
off this river to
rip me to rags.
i need the sun
to come scab
the wounds.

ask the old ladies
on the square for
a story, some bit
of their history
to quilt this heart.
something to wrap
around a cold, lonely
lover.

i need the winter
here to martyr me,
for your sake love.
let the cold air
rasp my throat
and force silence
to be my best
advice to you.

like Christ had to
take on the cross,
i need this city to
ravish me of a self,
of a vice, for you.
some falls are fortunate
in that someone else
will benefit.

i need you to know
i am no saint.
at best i am a forgiven
sinner who knows
better than to think
i know at all.

Kim Supper



Murnal Abate — Shadow City



Lawrence Kopenis — In Line

Critics

When dawn skies break—grey and cold,
And screams resound off granite, high,
When icy winds beat from monstrous wings,
Will you and I meet eye to eye?

Nay!

For you, whose heads protrude from frozen waste,
Of higher art desired;

While I, of honest soul and truth,
Was roast upon your fire.

But now your frozen tide is spent,
I'll leave you second best.

My journey's long—I shall press on,
And take with me the rest.

So fools who sit on Judgment's throne,
Your minds in sparkled sleep,

Thus heed my words, for now you've heard,
Shallow waters off' run deep!

Murnal Abate

Last, Will?

Will,
you left
Thought, a piece of mind;
an atom
from the flow of time
was you;
and now you are gone.
Will,
manuscript remains
smeared and mussed,
they lasted, Will
but you are dust.
Will
left cursed all those who'd dare
to move his bones;
the epitaph can still be read.
Will can't even see sky
looking rootside up
through stones.
Will, don't feel alone;
another man left too,
another piece.
Quixote text exists;
Cervantes somehow is gone.
Dreams can't wash off
with raining time tears
but their men can
drip
 splash
 they're
 gone.

Sheree Zigman Klemow



Bruce Lanning — Deacon's Shed



Bruce Lanning -- Man On Limb

LITTLE JACKIE SHATTER

Laser-light
and golden glow reveal
fractures of rational emotion;
world will turn,
illusion must
Shatter.

(Jack be bloody
Jack be sick
Jack's wish be fatal
but his wit be quick)

One touch
sweetly sweeps
in nightspeak,
sliding sympathy
and grinding passion;
Love is Touch and Go:
touched, gone,
nothing gold can stay, but
False must
Shatter.

(Jack will be ripped
and screwed and fought
but when Jack turn Ripper,
Jack be caught)

Days cannot be and must be
nothing more and nothing less
than the capsules of our time.
And we ingest
with no relief of pain;
enough days will be total
Overdose.
Life wraps and writhes
like a thing alive,
like a serpent it
slithers about my feet
injecting venom when trod upon; and
Rage roars in a lion,
leaves a slaughtered lamb
Louder and LOUDER
and meek and futile.

But Futility has an
identity of its own,
schizophrenic to the last.
With cringing confidence
and cocksure cowardice
it comes flogging its tambourine;
I collect my fragments
as best I can,
must force them back together,
must persevere (why?);
and Hope is a zombie
who stumbles blind with rotted eyes
and drops all-over the pieces
of shattered instance

(Jack daily dying
Jack be gone
but you sing for Jack
he sing along)

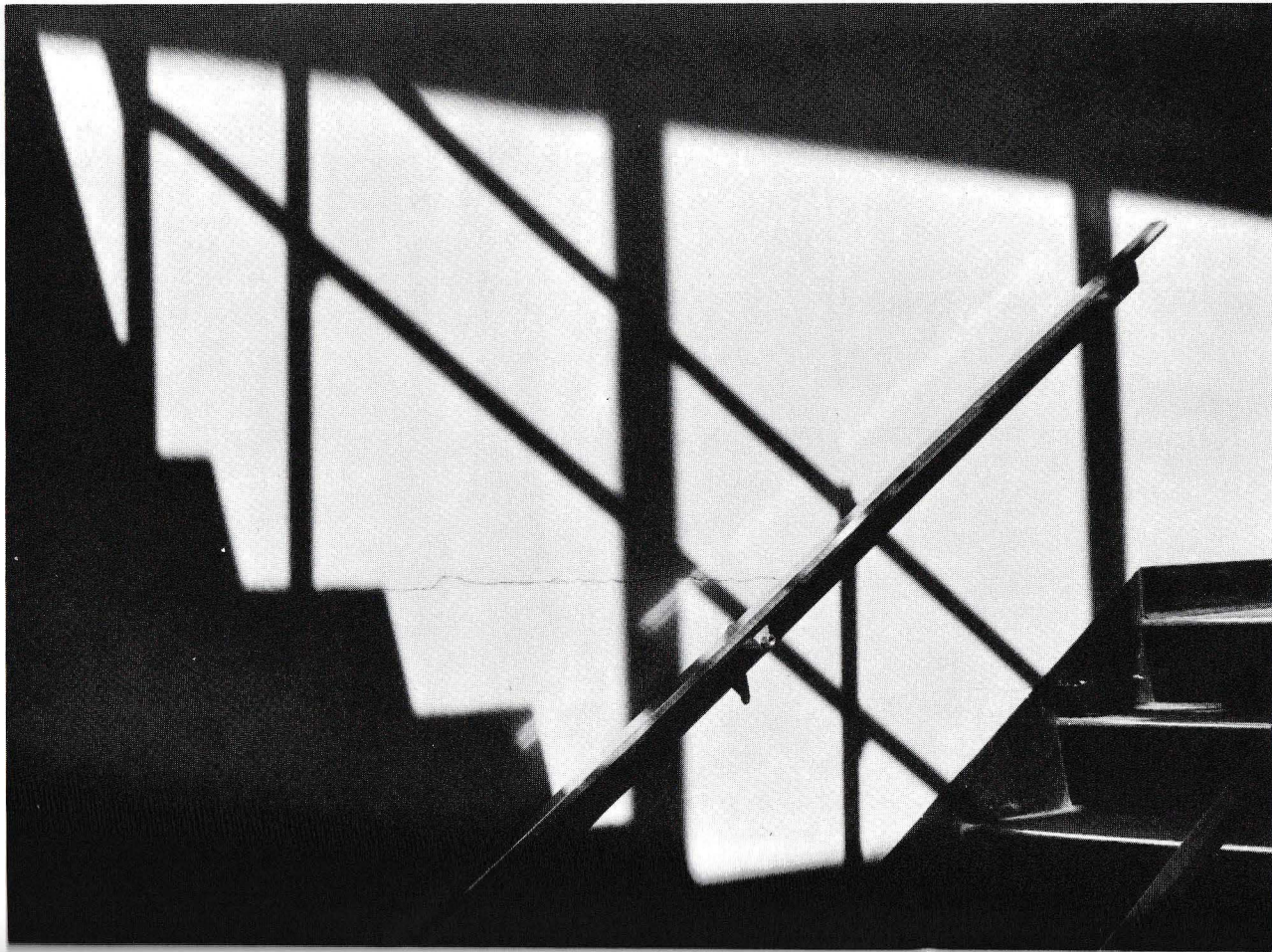
and gropes for them
in his own blackness.
Life must be lived (why?)
Day by Day,
but here I stay,
I'll go
I won't
I must
must not

I
m w
u i
s n
t o
t t

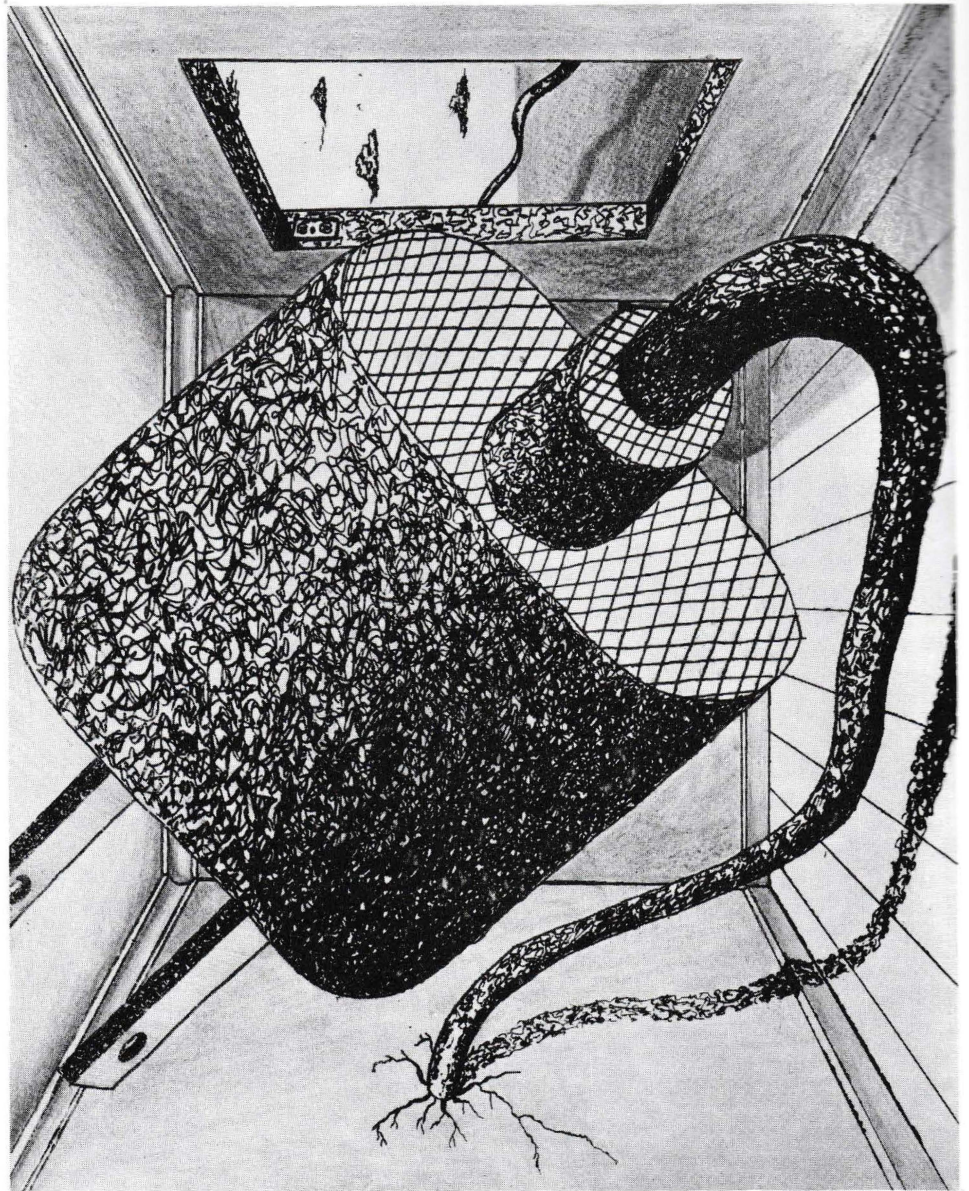
I
know
that
I
will

SHATTER

Joseph Lieb



Mural Abate - Fractured Staircase



Michael Stone - The Ministry of Magic

A Game of Chess

She stares at the tiled, checkered expanse, black on white on red, smooth squares of inlaid wood, and shifts her gaze to the man sitting opposite her. His faded blue eyes, narrowed at the corners, meet hers across the game board, hold her gaze with an implicit question, and, after a seemingly interminable time, slide unwillingly away.

She laughs softly to break the tension, a laugh which prompts a terse, muttered question. In answer, she merely shakes her head quietly, smiling.

"It's your move," she whispers, almost inaudibly.

He looks up quizzically, pushing his fingers roughly through his short hair—a nervous habit—but nevertheless moves a carved black pawn from the first row, beginning the game.

"Your turn."

She, too, moves a pawn, mirroring his action. He takes a swallow of his drink and grimaces. "It's too strong. What did you do to this?" No answer; she doesn't look up. He shrugs and moves another piece. Not concentrating, she moves another of her white pawns, placing it in a precarious position. Capture! His fingers lightly brush the back of her hand, and she looks up at the touch as if shot but doesn't move. For a long moment, neither does he.

But then he picks up the discarded chess-piece and drops it at the side of the board with a soft "click." She lowers her gaze quickly, studying—or pretending to study—the tiles of the chess-board as if expecting to find the mysteries of the universe outlined in the runes carved on the board's edges. Still staring at her bent head, watching the light glint off her hair, he chides her: "It's your turn now, remember?"

The game continues. His hand again brushes her arm, but this time he leaves it resting there, curious. She doesn't move, doesn't speak, remains still. Her eyes flicker up to meet his; she smiles briefly, quickly, fleetingly.

The board is now nearly empty; almost all the stone chess pieces have been captured and lie in a jumbled, uneven heap at the edge of the board. From time to time, another piece is added, clicking as it falls to join the rest. The pile is balanced only precariously; too many more pieces and it will topple like a stack of children's building blocks.

She shifts position slightly while concentrating; their legs touch under the table. Their eyes meet—his cool blue eyes softening, warming, facing her already soft brown eyes, the gaze returned, a question answered.

The game is almost ended. Only her white king remains, guarded by a single rook and two pawns. In addition to the black king, he still possesses the black queen and several knights. All these are grouped in one small corner of the smooth impassive chess-board.

He moves. The small stone fortress, the rook, falls to join the other discarded pieces. Crash. The stack of blocks topples. She is left without defenses; only ineffective pawns remain to guard the king.

She shifts the pawns around in vain, attempting to find a defense. He toys with the chess-pieces, makes an unnecessary move. Brief respite. She again tries to shield the king. His turn.

His eyes meet hers and hold her gaze. No questions now. He moves suddenly, swiftly, like a sleek cat.

"Check."

She moves again, futilely, but succeeds only in backing farther into a corner. His move. Mate.

Elizabeth Mazzullo

My mother
Flew rainbows under the earth
Each morning around noon.

In her hand she clasps
Yellow string; above
Her eyes, I am inflated.

Larry Thomas

Woods Hole

Gushhh of salty froth,
sprinkles sugar-like on beach,
a melody of ocean air,
symphony beyond compare,
strange — I hear it still . . .

one thousand miles out of reach.

Away from tagging breezes,
sofa and study replacing surf,
a dismal serenity, a stifling, boring lull.
I'll daydream for a second,
spirits screaming, laughing, calling, gliding
in flight, like an airborne gull.

Are the bays and harbours churning still?
Do their waters flow clear and fast?
One thousand miles away from there, and I've no doubt they last,

One thousand miles away from there and I've no doubt, they last.

Yes, in my mind they'll last.

Sheree Zigman Klemow



Angels Bucht - Innocence



Barbara Miller - Canyon Gap

**Sir Richard Francis Burton and Philip José Farmer
Interface on a Distant Planet**

When I awoke on the bank of the river Lethe,
Hairless and naked, I was alone.
Memory stirred ripples in translucent mind-mirrors,
Reflecting what was then and what is now.
Yet, I guard knowledge of a third, sleeping existence,
Wherein I was not meant to awake.
This treasure is mine, and mine alone.
Who controls our fate on these grassy plains,
Rising to granite mountains on east and west?
Is this the true Resurrection?
What kind of Hell, or Heaven without purpose,
Sees one man die, only to be reborn
Somewhere down the River?
There is a purpose and I will find it.
With every breath in my soul (saved or damned)
I will wander the course of this River,
In search of Truth at its source.
If need be, I will lay down my eternal life
Time and time again.
For death is ebb and flow
In this Netherworld of neither rhyme nor reason.
Onward, oh fragile human souls,
"To your scattered bodies, go."

Murnal Abate

And the Two . . . Not Meant to Be One

You stood statue
 outside St. Mary's
As if you were a
child affixed in front
of a toy store window;
As if you heard angelic
voices leaping out of
the snow-licked stones.

'Twas the season.

You knew every word
 to every hymn
as Satan knows the
scriptures and trembles . . .

What piece of your
brief 23 year history
had been forgotten?
What volume of your
life had blown its
leaves to the windy
vacuum of time?

And I could not ask
 you to leave . . .
I would not interrupt
the angels calling you
home.

The nights will be silent
and lonely from now on,
without you.

Kim Supper



MEDITATIONS BY THIS OPEN FIRE — A CHRISTMAS POEM FOR S

It's Christmas Eve and my
Chestnuts are roasting by this open fire.
Christmas is a feeling that you
Want to die
In honor of his Honor. I'd be honored
To die for you on Christmas Eve.

Chapter Two—Mistletoe.
I love Mistletoe because my Holly blushes and
My chestnuts roast here by this open fire
While Jack Cross nibbles at my
Stiff, frozen nose.
My nose is Roman and is as Greek as could
Be.
But Greeks freeze my chestnuts, even here by
This open fire. The fire has died.

Chapter Four—Chapter Three
Did you ever sip wine on Christmas Eve
With Eve?
I don't know Eve, so I have to drink alone.
I feel so lonesome, I could cry.
It rained rather softly this Christmas,
Eve.

Chapter Five—Percy Presents His Presents
To the Lonely Man on the Hill.
Awright.
Silver Bells, Silver Bells
Trade with Gold at a ratio of 16:1
Gresham's Law is preventing me from giving the King
A gift of Gold—overvalued you know.
Maybe I'll just pour him a glass of wine.
Please Jesus, just don't drink it alone.

Chapter Six—At Midnight All the Barn Animals Talk.
Let us speak in hushed whispers to each other
Like lovers 'neath Satan sheets,
Or like the snow spoke to me the night that
I sat on the Lake of Sky—I could see the trees.
I really could.
I could have conversed forever except
My buttocks would have melted a hole in the Ice.
And had I fallen, Ass first,
What a mess it would be.

Chapter Seven—There Was an Ass in the Stable
When Christ was born.
And He didn't say a Word,
He just lay in the hay and decided to stay.

Chapter Eight—Stopping by Bedroom on a Snowy Eve
Where is Eve? I believe that Eve
Is buried under all these
Flaming clothes.
I used to sleep in my grandmother's room
In my flame-retardant jammies, and do you know what?
I never caught fire.
That is the gift of my grandmother that
I carry.
Grandma—I'm grown now and I miss you.

Chapter Nine—Now Where Has Scott Put His Eyes?
Does he really need them anyway?
His fingers play his chord-organ, and
His ears hear the Echo of his Bedroom Door.
Open or Closed?
Ec-ho, Ec-ho . . . Ec-ho, Ec-ho . . .
"I listen good and eat real slow."
Scott, play "Poor Boy Shuffle" for me.
I love you.

Chapter Ten—How to Keep Sane While Writing a Book.
Drink cheap whiskey,
Smoke funny cigars and
Sit with your back to the Wall.
Always face that Door, Son
Cause that's the way that you're gonna leave.

Chapter Eleven—Why Do Tears Have to Be
So damn wet?
You're all wet, and I laugh
How come I'm not laughing now?
Because I do not cry Diamonds or Sand . . .
For that would really hurt.

Chapter Twelve—Tonight's the Night.
He's a Man of Our Time, a Man of Our Time.
And I'm an Orphan with a runny nose and
A pissy attitude.
After all, are you gonna live with people
All your Life?
No . . . I'd rather die.
Besides, who really needs a second-rate Economist
Who dresses in fire-engine red tights,
And loves little blind boys?
I'll love your little sister, too, if you
Give me a Chance.
I must go now, I hear Santa slithering down my
Smoke tube.
And I must clear the Reindeer Shit from
My front lawn.
Merry Christmas.

Murnal Abate



Dorlene Miller - Muhammad's Eye

The Fire

I find myself
cowering and destitute
in the Valley of Shadow
without reason.

I find myself
unknown and alone
in a realm where not even
Phantoms
can disappear.

I find myself afraid,
but I do not find myself.

And I sear
like the laser;
like the razor
the knowledge knifes me
cerebrally.

And then there is you.

You are in the place
being neither alive nor dead
and this puzzles me;
you whisper of love,
yet I know
there is no love
no faith
in this,
death's dream kingdom;
and you burn,
like agony.

But then
you touch me
and I shudder
and I consume
with the velocity
of desire;
and you burn
like passion.

You live me;
You die me;
You found me
garbed in shreds of naked,
in a pool of innocence,
drowning under a whim
of bitter recourse.

You saved me,
killed me,
mixed joy with terror
skill with emotion
danger with security
love and hate
in apathetic position,
detached from repercussions;
You offer salvation
with insidious implication
but of course I'm blind to the evil I know;
and all I should do is let go,
feel the motion turn —
and you burn

you burn like Heaven.

Joseph Lieb



Alone with a camel
Inching from my mouth,
Reflected in a pane,
Two feet removed from
The lights of the city,
Below South Street Bridge.

Larry Thomas

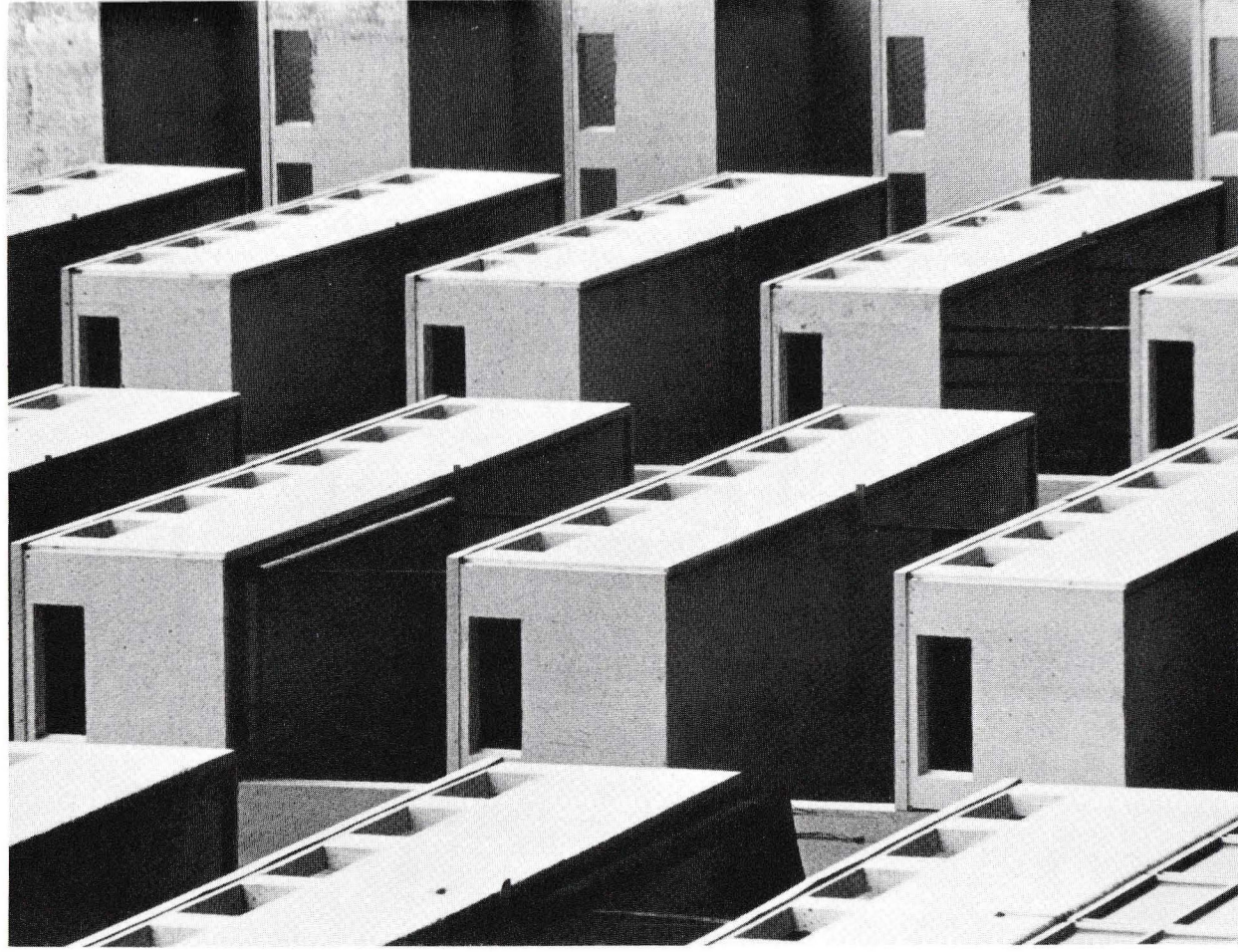
the moon bathes blue
the slates of
this roof.

long it echoes
with that same hue,
and the memories of you.

I bask midnight
silver still, and
satiated on yesterdays.

Oh round button
clasping heaven,
open tonight
and pour down
your blessings
on me.

Kim Supper



William F. Kinsley — Untitled

True Love 1985

My living space saddens me,
A cubicle of tears, overlooking
Rooftops of asphalt bodies, lying
Upon my wife, who is crying
For her soul.

Larry Thomas

BLACK DIRT

Black dirt.
It smells so good.
It looks so good.
It feels so good.
Love the black dirt
As you would your ancestors; after all
They might be in your toenail.

Michele James

Sun breaking concrete
Piercing rays of love
And delight, create.

Larry Thomas



Michele Herstek — Untitled

Oswald (not his real name) sits immobile, head cocked, staring out the window of his photo kiosk, while the grey skies glower their disapproval in return. His attention is riveted on a small, yellow aphid clinging to the dusty lip of his service window. The aphid, seeking shelter from the threatening storm, clings for his life to what appears to be a battered aluminum track to Oswald, but what must resemble a pock-marked war bunker to the aphid. Feeling a strong bond between himself and the bug, Oswald idly searches his memory for a suitable name for his adopted insect pet. A gentle rain begins to fall now as Oswald christens the bug Odysseus, and thus having completed this chore, he sighs, and gently shuts his window.

Murnal Abate



Darlene Miller — Exodus

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The Sun Is A Diamond!

