

**M**

**MANUSCRIPT**



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## STRAY CAT

S

tray cat leaning against the museum wall  
shivering in the rain  
black hair plastered to your head  
dark eyes watching  
waiting to pounce.

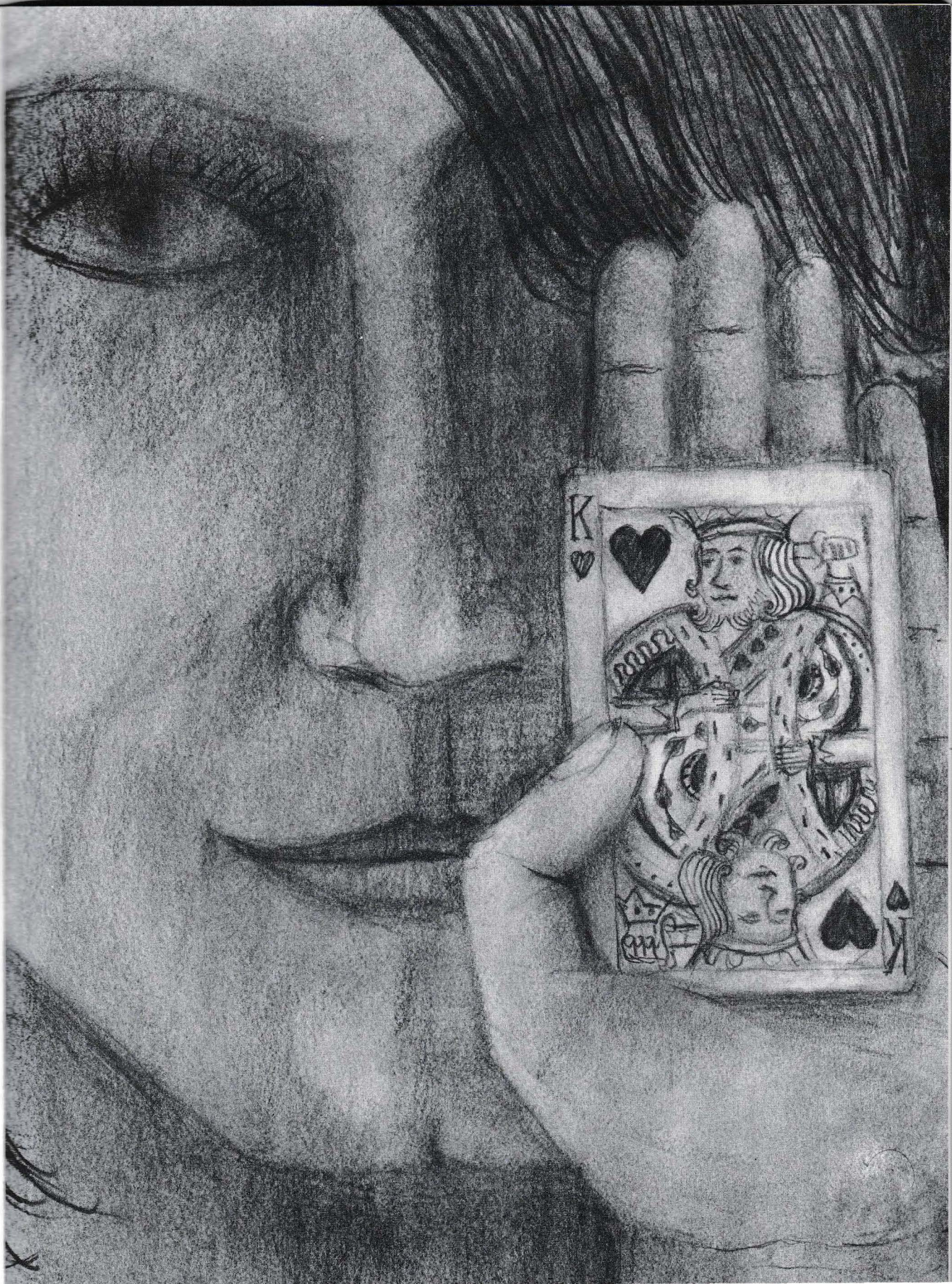
Crazy cat  
in tight jeans' too tight  
someone else's claws at your cheek  
a lady's stolen diamond in your ear,  
telling me lies I want to believe.

Velvet cat in my bed  
pawing at the pillows,  
my heart between your teeth  
all nine lives being spent.

Lonely cat back on the road,  
prowling the back alleys  
looking for love,  
but you won't come home.

Jo Anne Heen







## UNTITLED

I've had the same  
Jeans 8 years &  
I must have  
sandpaper legs or  
cloth termites, cause  
they're very ripped;  
holes from seam to  
seam, & some  
afraid to rip open  
all the way,  
but there's  
a bunch of soft  
leftovers hanging  
left knee that  
I twirl like a  
shy girl on  
her very  
first  
date.

Andrew Morrell

## UNTITLED

We touched  
the sky  
together,  
you and I,  
reveling  
in the applause  
of a hundred  
hands.

We came down,  
I turned  
to hold the feeling,  
and You . . .  
but you  
were already  
gone.

Michele Broton

## THE ACTOR

His fingers  
plow his hair  
with reason.

In the mirror  
he is so much  
more than himself.

I admire him:  
life's imitator,

too cruel for love,  
too wild for censure.

William Barber

## WAIF

Leathered Led Zeppelin boys and  
tough talking 10 year olds with  
chinadoll eyes,  
streetwise and naive  
tempted you once  
too often.

A dirty-faced waif, not as  
innocent as you would like  
made your Fagin corruption complete.  
Now hide in the darkness you  
created —  
among men whose touch  
is not gentle  
as your own and  
tonight when they reach for you,  
try not to scream.

Jo Anne Heen





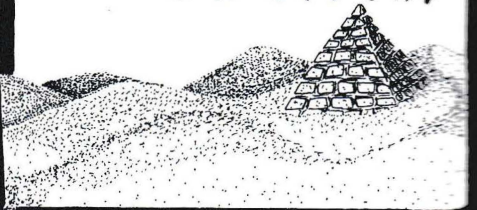
# Can We Talk ?

I know you don't know **Who I Am** but we're not as different as you might think. My life is just as confusing as yours but **We** can probably find the answers together. Let's look at life, shall we....

It's filled with many strange and peculiar characters



... and wondrous sights

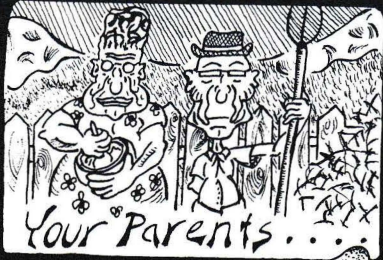


Some people hate their lives...



... Others feel lucky and fulfilled

Who's Right? who should we listen to?



Your Parents...



The Police...



Five Politicians..



I say, The secret To Life, Is not listening To anyone!!! It's finding out Who we are!!

It's NOT...



DRUGS... HATE...



It's US!! who are YOU Anyways?



## SEA MONKEYS FOR LUNCH

**A cursory background to the play:** *Sea Monkeys for Lunch* is a transcription of dialogue by the character Erik. The group is sitting in Bobby's dorm room one warm summer evening with three sheets of looseleaf paper. Their intention is to talk and have Erik take down whatever is catchy or seemingly relevant in order to have some sort of play when the three pages are used up. This is the fruit of that effort.

Dramatis Personae:

Bobby    Angela    Erik    John

A: (describing Bobby) He'll be the character with a touch of naiveness.

E: Naiveness?

J: Naivety.

B: She's obviously the smart one.

A: Bobby's the dramatic character . . .

B: Would you please hand me my wish dolls.

J: (handing them to him) Notice I didn't crush them.

A: . . . he makes a big production out of everything.

B: (to little doll) Lola Falana.

B: What's wrong with sea monkeys?

J: Nothing.

B: Who told him about sea monkeys?

E: Do I look like a sophomore?

A: Do you know what that means in the dictionary?

E: No, what?

A: Stupid.

E: Oh, wow. Impress me with your vast knowledge of the dictionary.

J: Angela 'Dictionary' Smith, they can call you Dickie for short.

A: Where's the dictionary?

(Dramatic monologue)

B: Wherever I live I'm going to put my bowling ball in the hallway next to a bowling pin to signal the end, because my brother led a very exciting life, and he joined a bowling league, and he got married and now his life is so different. And if I want to go bowling once a week it will not be a good sign. Bowling signifies an important change in someone's life and I don't want that to happen to me. I don't want my age to make a sport important to me.

J: I'm gonna cry.

B: (to Angela) Get your fuckin' smelly pigs off me, you know that's one of my most hated things.

A: Since when?

B: I've always hated your feet, look at how disgustingly ugly they are.

J: The mood has turned ugly.



(Angela is giggling uncontrollably.)

B: I'm glad you weren't at the crucifixion or you'd probably have giggled.

A: There you go trying to be dramatic.

B: I'm not trying to be dramatic.

B & A: (simultaneously): I'm trying to be quiet.

(She laughs.)

J: A dark cloud has descended.

A: I'm not trying to make him mad.

B: I'm not trying to get you mad. Now that I know I've ruined your week, all I'm trying to do is be quiet so I don't be the cause of any problems like youze guys said I was.

J: I am a saint . . .

J: Don't push the blame around.

B: I'm not pushing blame, I'm taking blame.

A & J: No one's to blame.

B: Let me remind you I'm on 300mg of phenobarbital.

A: I'm only joking around.

B: What about today when I said, 'Angela, I'm only joking around,' and you said, 'No you're not.' Now I'm going to be quiet.

(There is a moment of silence.)

B: Oh — party's no fun without me.

A: That's cause we're afraid to say anything 'cause you'll take it the wrong way.

B: (to John) That's what makes you involved 'cause you listen to her when she talks.

J: Cut my ears off! We'll saute' them and serve them with hollandaise sauce for breakfast.

A: What about the wax?

J: My ears are clean.

B: (covering his face with a black ceramic decorative mask) Are you saying mine aren't?

J: (aside) O my god, how did he know? I'm so embarrassed!

B: It's fun to be an actor, but I don't have time to act . . .

A: (under her breath) Being an epileptic and all . . .

B: (to Erik) Don't put the epileptic part in.

A: Yeah, he didn't say it.

E: But you did.

A: I know, but we're not putting it in.

E: Yes we are; it's indicative of the sarcasm which underlies the basic irony of our friendship.

B: Look at the pictures.

A: Don't look at the pictures.

B: It'll be sad when I pack them up 'cause I'll never put them in my apartment. (Getting iced tea from the fridge.) Let's put Miracle Whip on Erik.

E. (whining) Nooooo.

A: We saw a turtle in the road by our house and it comes back every year. It's the same one every year because my father painted its back — my father spray-painted it. And we always see it when we're together — the same one every year — my dad, mom, and me.

B: I'm sure it's proud to walk through other towns, too.

A: I can't say anything anymore.

B: You smell like shit, go wipe yourself.

A: Your acting's going downhill since the accident.

B: Y'know, I'm drinking Nutrasweet.

A: It's not good for you.

B: Good, I hope I have a seizure right here and you don't know what to do just watching me writhing in pain.

A: I'm sorry.

B: Well stop the epilepsy stuff. Want me to start picking on you?

A: (starting to laugh) No.

B: I'll have you on the floor spitting blood.

B: I feel like I should be put away.

A: Bobby, what's the matter?

B: It's the drugs . . .

J: (loud and parental) It's the drugs, where have we gone wrong?

B: You guys want a drug? It'll make you feel good. Are you getting this down?

E: (writing quickly) No.

B: He's probably still back on Sheila E.

J: You've crushed him (pointing at Erik); he's nothing but cinders.

E: Why don't you guys give John and Erik a chance to say something before the three pages are used up.

B: Oh!

E: Why don't you and Angela take a breather and let us talk.

J: Yeah, and we can say . . .

A: (to Bobby as he turns and faces the wall) Is this mad or is this acting?

J: Chiropractors are quacks so please don't go to one.

E: Let me get this down.

J: Write that down, it must be worth something. (He picks up a wooden toy) Let me look at this.

B: You look with your eyes, not with your hands. Where'd you get that?

J: I don't know, I blacked out and when I woke up it was in my hands.

B: He's making fun of me.

Bobby pulls a picture of Jesus from a drawer and holds it up.

A: (to John) You're Satan.

J: I am not.

Eddie Lupico



## CHURCH

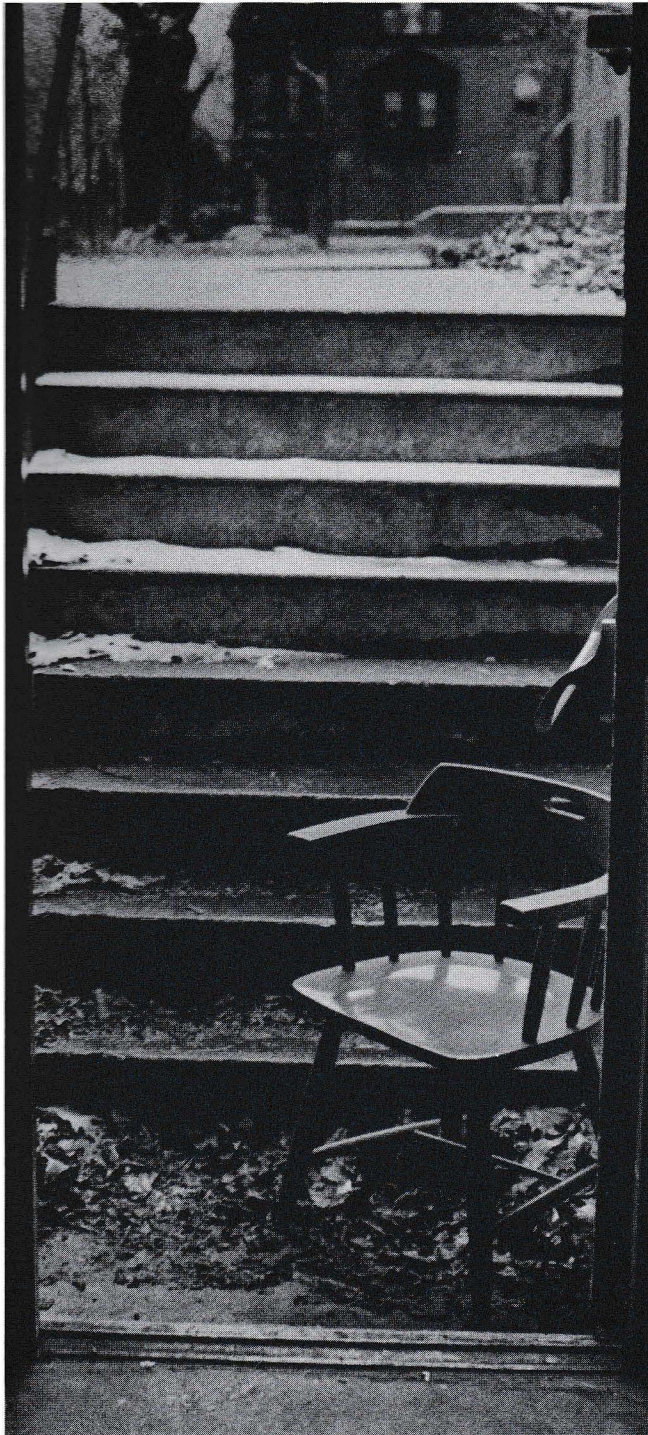
The solemn cleric places Jesus in  
my mouth and then tells me I'm a sinner.  
Martyred eyes stare at me from the walls as  
the acrid incense swirls around my head,  
forming a halo. Stained glass hands praying  
to save the soul of the heretic that  
contaminates their sanctum sanctorum.  
Clasping rosaries as I enter the  
confessional to purge my transgressions,  
I stumble and fall, becoming tangled  
in the hallowed strand. Never receiving  
the proxy damnation. Somber voices chant  
discordant Gregorian hymns as I  
struggle for existence. Enveloped in  
a maudlin shroud, I am baptised with the  
saintly wine, tainting my sovereign thoughts.  
Forsaking my redemption, I denounce  
the piousness that has seeped into my  
spirit, writhing in the resurrection.

James Evelock

## UNTITLED

Feelings enter my heart and penetrate my soul.  
They find their way into my thinking, so that  
Logic passes from me.  
I keep these feelings so deep down  
That they confuse me, and their meanings  
Are lost within me.  
My feelings tell me to go ahead,  
Yet they bring me back to where  
I first started.  
If only I could decipher these feelings,  
And chase them from the confines  
Of my soul,  
Then logic could return to my mind  
And reality could begin  
To grab hold.

Amy Schukis



## UNTITLED

The trees moaned  
as they surrendered their leaves  
To the wind,  
While in the pond  
Armies of ripples  
Advanced on the shore.  
Nature had attacked  
So strong,  
Yet so delicate.  
I threw a stone in the water  
To save the shore  
And the armies became confused  
And scattered,  
Only to regroup  
In minutes.  
Such is the balance of nature.  
And though I bought some time  
for the shore,  
I could never stop  
The wind.

Carolyn Swalina



## I DON'T CRY MUCH ANYMORE . . .

I don't cry much anymore . . . these days lumber  
by, and I sink farther into oozing  
soft muck, plow my feet through stagnant pools  
thick as cold oatmeal, sucked in deep . . . swallowed.

I'm distracted easily, these days,  
by papers due and money owed, blank words  
passed with people I'll never touch, by sleep  
or lack of it. I've grown a shell, hard and waxy,  
like the skin of old cheese, scratched,  
but not sliced into. I've become a good forgetter.

But some of these nights, my dreams grip my arms,  
haul me from the mud's live sucking, spin me  
through transparent black to solid light that  
startles . . . sends electric needles of heat  
to the roots of my hair, pricks holes through my  
squeezed eyelids, and stabs quick-dead fists where I  
am weak, finds the forgotten hollow — the  
only soft flesh in my jewel-crusted armor.

Here, the thrill . . . rush of the vine's flight through woods  
sweeps a path in brittle leaves, sweaty grip  
on ragged, biting bark, tilting sideways at the peak,  
held, over sun-washed wheat fields  
a thousand miles down.

Here, surging, sentimental comradery of  
brothers and sisters, of us. Stick forts  
leaning, sagging, like tired, soggy porches where we see  
castles. "Never leave the mountain," blood-sealed vows of  
six solemn, pudgy, look alike faces,  
grimy with sweat and shadows of fire's glow.

Here, chaos . . . wild, thrashing battles, tangled mounds of  
wrestling, struggling bodies, chubby babies  
waddling on the edges with bemused eyes.  
My father, in a comfortable seat with  
a good view, "Nice shot, Lizzie . . . damn, she  
throws a mean punch," . . . then, purged, stroking calm returns.

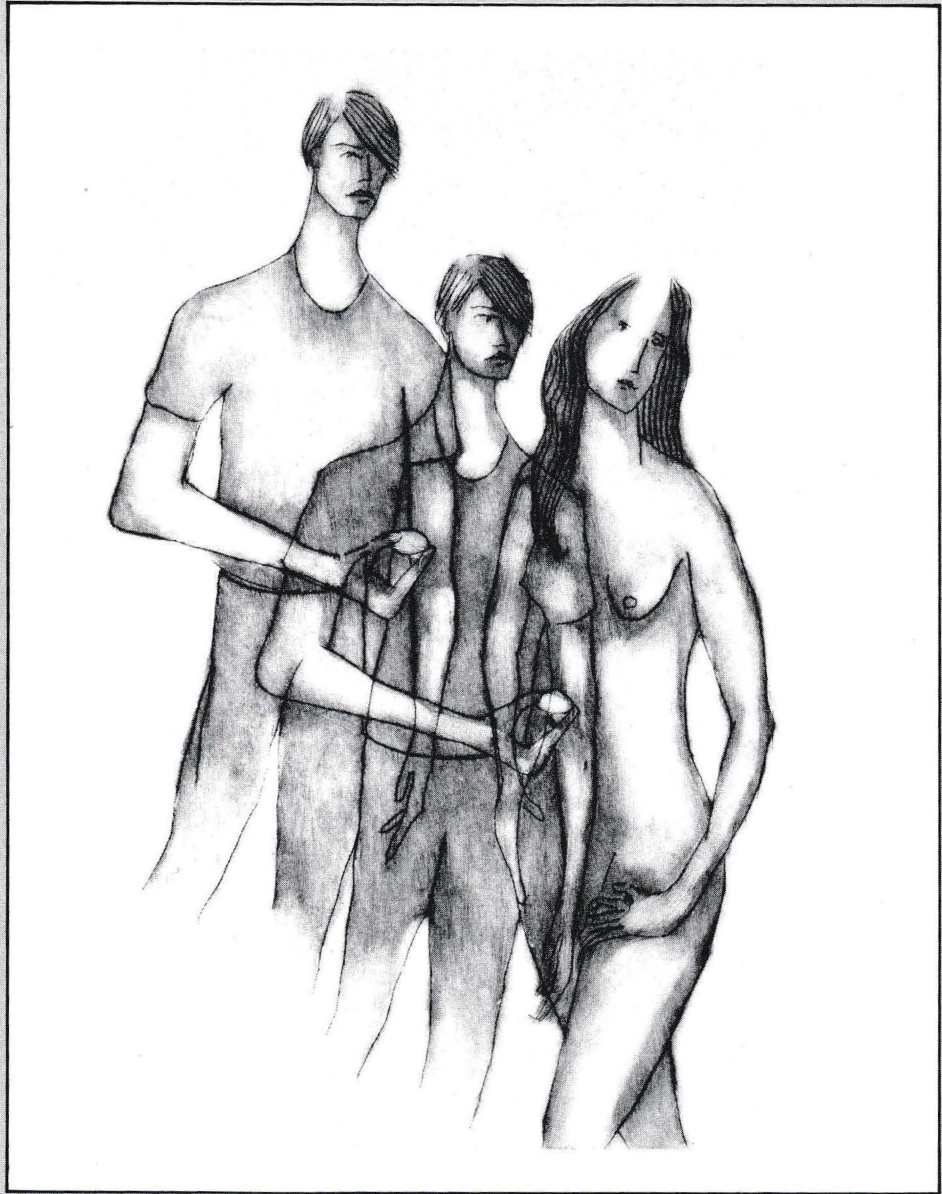
And Here, forgiveness . . . Leenie's tough little face  
with tangled black finger, surly round eyes  
cast down, sweaty, stubby paw thrust out imploring,  
"Shake, TD."

Here . . . peace . . . a cold quiet rock, flat on the mountain's peak,  
sun-warmed hair blankets my arms and  
I can see the whole valley, Serpent Susquehanna,  
the spread of the mountain like a great,  
upturned bowl of broccoli — maybe a little Indian kid took  
refuge in this very place . . . peace . . . or climbing into  
the old ample crib at dawn to soothe Sarah,  
her dough-dimpled hand curled on my neck, sweaty,  
as I lean against the hard wooden crib slats, soaked  
in the sweet warm smell of baby.

But Here, here . . . the helpless, writhing rage,  
the horror of a crashing world . . . running hard  
from knowing, feet pounding, pulsing on the  
dirt path, breaking, buckling into dust, face  
smeared with bloody tears as I claw ten  
crimson threads down in penance for a place  
where babies are sliced and ripped from their  
mother's wombs like rotting teeth, where  
chocolate-eyed children chase salvation  
through mine fields, where ragged old men huddle  
in spaces between billboards and buildings, stuffed  
with newspapers and whiskey. Horror  
pounding slamming grinding numbing and no,  
I don't cry much, anymore.

Theresa Kelley







## SUMMER LAKE

**F**or as long as I remember  
And the days I don't remember, you were there  
When playing in the sand  
And swimming were all that mattered, you were there  
Skipping stones across your surface  
Swallowing them at the end of the flight, you were there  
A place to play tricks and pranks  
I grew up with you and you stayed the same  
To enjoy a boat ride  
Cutting through your great body, you were there  
Helping me find love  
By sparing some of your beauty for me, you were there  
Waiting long days for me  
After a long day for me, you were there.

Now I am leaving, to let you be,  
You have to let go of your children  
Now they are free.  
Many, you shall never again see  
Except for me,  
I will return someday,  
When the people who fill your body  
And build around your presence  
Don't remember the years past,  
A time when you were there for me  
and your giving was generous,  
Yet now, it is spread too thin.  
Let me come to your side  
And replenish your spirit with my memories.  
Our minds one and our smiles wide.  
I will refill your thinning presence.  
I will be there for you.

Eric Sullivan



## WHEN I PLAY . . .

A secret night drips in and breathes  
its moist caress upon  
my neck. The mouth of Spring, petal  
velvetwarm, licks it soft

a veil of dew that settles on  
the wood. And I can feel  
the curve of metal, cold and thick  
against my foot, cold as

stone on a greenhouse floor — until  
I give it flame. I slide  
my fingers to the keys and stroke  
their slick white faces, pulse

the heavy, damp black night, mingle  
music with its sounds. Ivory  
gives beneath my fingers, swells  
of color splash the air

and slosh around my ears. The blood-  
filled moon is high tonight,  
but I can pull it in to touch,  
blood throbs in my temples,

hot, to melt the brittle spears  
of ice that cling above  
the sill. What can't pass through  
the window's crack, I'll bring

alive inside this room. The walls  
will melt to flesh and hold  
the throb of life this womb enfolds.

Theresa Kelley



## THE DARKER SIDE

Step into the night, he is transformed.  
The evening watcher is the night.  
He becomes the danger.  
Aroused by fear, savors the feeling.  
Too soon do his lusts turn bitter, attention shifts.

There's a danger in the air.  
Windy feel of despair.  
Alone in the city,  
Every noise sounds of beware.

The night stalks the watcher.  
Lights follow and voices swallow  
The once dominating being of the night.

Drawn to the night.  
Without a reason . . . Why?  
Forces pull, crying to be known.  
He is afraid of what he will be shown.

Still hasn't found what entices  
To delve in the darkness.  
This strange world which feeds on moonlight  
Is so different from real life.

As he listens more and more  
He hears the subtle voices (of the night).  
Screaming eyes are upon him as he walks by,  
But to anyone else, it is silence.

Eric Sullivan



## UNTITLED

I tried to slip the  
cover off one of them  
old wooden  
bridges with the town  
name on every one (both sides)  
But rusty nails have  
a solid way of saying  
No.

Andrew Morrell

## SNOWSTORM

General warmth  
Satisfaction  
feel  
of white  
out side  
Quiet hush encompassing  
all.

Andrew Garcia

## CIVIL WAR

Southern comfort  
Northern guilt —  
guess it's gonna be another  
long night.

Jo Anne Heen

**A**

## DYING

gentle breeze upon my skin is warm  
and soothing. Dim light. My half closing eyes  
are slowly sinking lower. I receive  
the kiss of death upon my faded red  
velvet lips, parted. Sighs of life escape.  
The curtains billow, surging waves across  
my body, lulling senses to accept  
the virgin blade inside my tainted flesh.  
The ecstasy of fulfillment echoed  
in droning beats of an affected heart.  
Sheets drape and fold over my sultry skin  
as scarlet honey drips and stains the cloth.  
A chilling sensation slides down my spine.  
The throbbing pains rip through my body, filling  
me with agony. Leaving me stricken  
as perspiration drips from paralyzed  
limbs. Serenity overcomes me as  
mon paramour departs, leaving me bereft  
of life, and searching for an uncertain nirvana.

James C. Eveiock











## CHILD

You gave me orange sweetness and  
then you mixed it with reddish spark.  
React? I? Never! I don't react. I am  
coward. I am stone! I am anything you  
make me . . . I know that you used me for  
paper to draw on. To draw upon me, draw  
from me what you desired. You wrapped  
those fat hands around every crayon at once  
and pressed upon me rainbows I wasn't able  
to handle. Now I am both soiled and bright, relying  
only upon the blankness I see inside my head,  
. . . hoping you won't steal the only white that remains . . .

Amy Braun

## PLAYGROUND

i am a child again  
you've made me that confused  
i ride the merry-go-round  
till all i see is a dizzy blur  
and even when i stop  
the blur goes on  
inside  
because it's reached that far down  
when i try  
and walk away  
i stumble  
and scrape my knee  
suddenly i'm old again  
no one's there to  
kiss the pain away

Michele Broton

## THE HUNDRED ACRE WOODS

At times I  
feel like  
Pooh Bear  
(as in Winnie-the)  
I want to  
take a Big  
Blue Balloon,  
fly to the trees  
and steal some honey.  
But I need you  
to be my  
Christopher  
(Robin, that is)  
and catch  
me when I fall.

Michele Broton



## BUS RIDE WITH A STREET LADY

Her bags are spread around her feet which swing above the gritty floor. Her bags are starched and crackle, rattle, clink with secret things — a broken clock and water paints, but parched

and cracked like clumps of broken desert sand and clinks of stolen spoons from Arnold's Bar and Grill that click against a plastic hand— a broken doll she rescued, battle scarred,

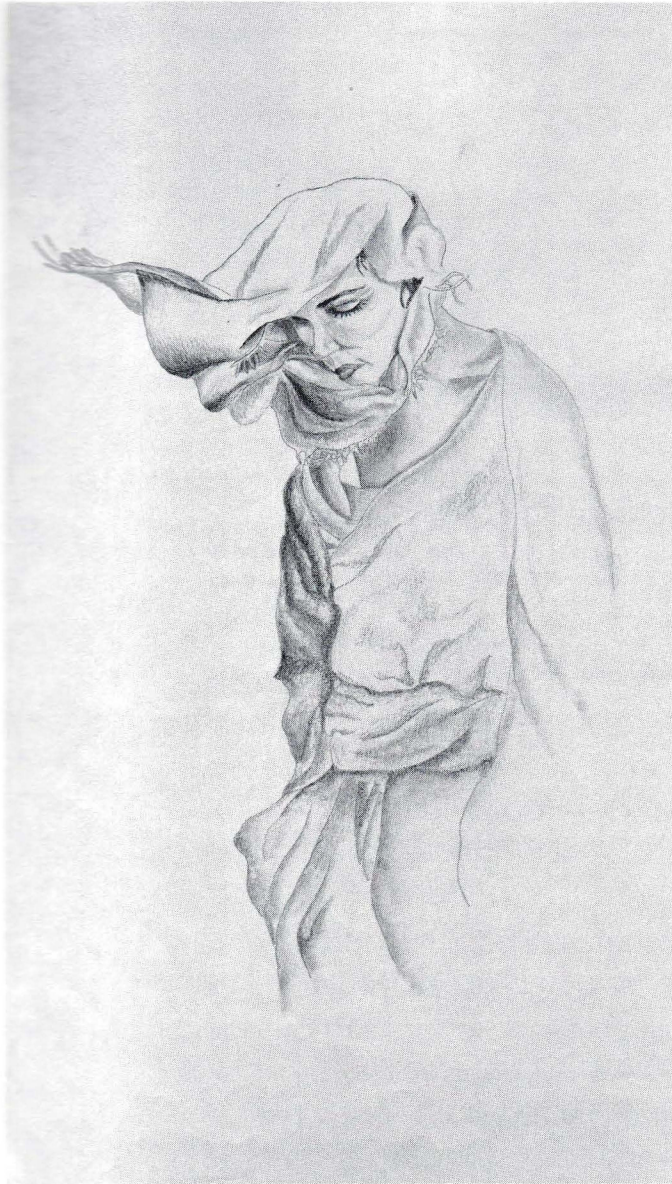
she rescued from the city dump. She hums and swings her woolen legs, her tattered woolen legs that float above the gritty floor. Spun hair spewn on coats of counter-plaids, smells of sweat

and rainy clothes, she rolls her coldpink face to look at me, "Hey, girlie, whatcha starin' at . . . aincha never seed a old woman?" . . . creased, uncertain eyes . . .and no, I never have,

not one like you I never have. But once there might've been a hand that knew the lines of your face, stretched its fingers out to touch the moon-bathed softness of your cheek, curved against the night.

Her dangling feet don't reach the floor. She hums and swings her pencil legs and grins at me through toothless gaps and tells me that her son, the Pope, don't never come to see her.

Theresa Kelley



## GYPSY FIRE

Beware, my love,  
beware,  
as night is  
drawing on.  
Watch how much  
you love me,  
as I'm of  
gypsy blood.  
Around the fire,  
together  
we'll dance,  
our passion  
will burn like  
flame.  
But have care  
not to lose your heart,  
I go to  
**anda l'thema,\***  
and gypsy  
is my name.

Michele Broton

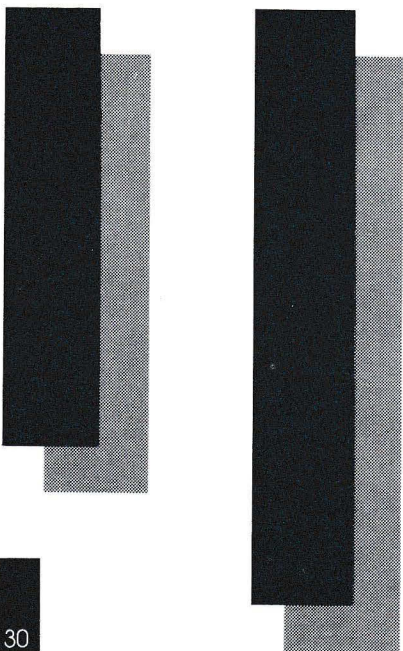
\*Romani for the lands beyond.



## EXCUSE ME . . .

Excuse me if I'm too forward, but  
may I bear my cross to you?  
Or if you are embarrassed by the  
nakedness,  
then don't trouble yourself.  
It's just that, well,  
Simon's shoulders are busy . . . and  
please don't misunderstand,  
I really do appreciate  
your shrouding me  
from the initial burst of cold.  
It's just that . . . well,  
I didn't want you to see me hurt  
is all.  
It's too much to ask.  
I'm wrapped up tight . . .  
No, I'll be fine,  
but it was nice of you  
to offer.

Maureen O'Hara



## TECHNOLOGICAL LOVE AFFAIR

Black phone,  
touch-tone dialing,  
rips apart the miles.  
3 hours  
shrunk to  
three rings and  
"Hello"

Black phone,  
long distance package,  
love after 5  
is cheaper.  
Save it 'til 10,  
the first minute  
is free.

Black phone,  
call waiting,  
makes reaching out  
a science.  
Fake the feeling,  
wires make  
it real.

Michele Broton



**SALUTING THE SUNSET**  
**for Artie Bresson, Jr.**

Airborn at dusk white gulls are sailing  
on Pacific winds.

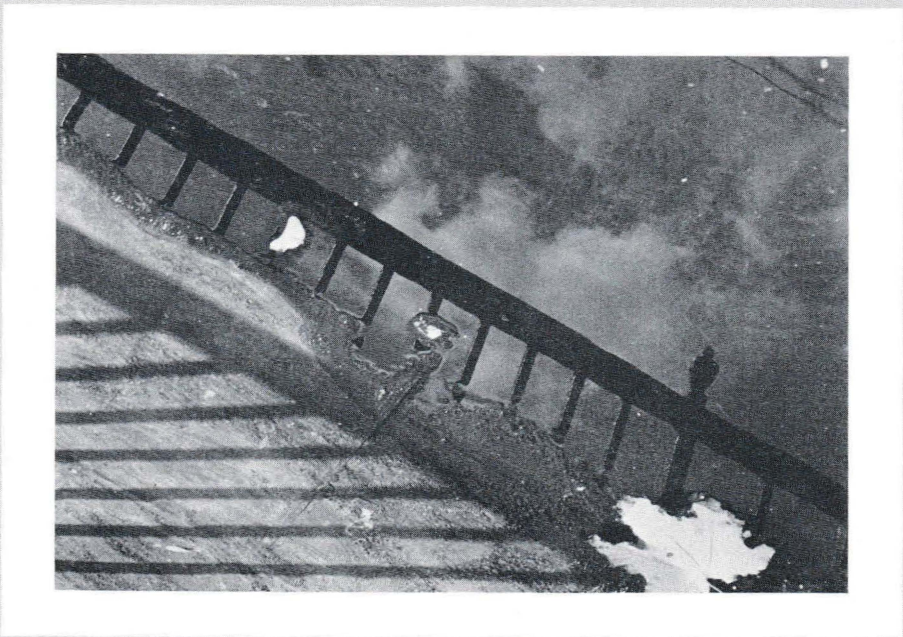
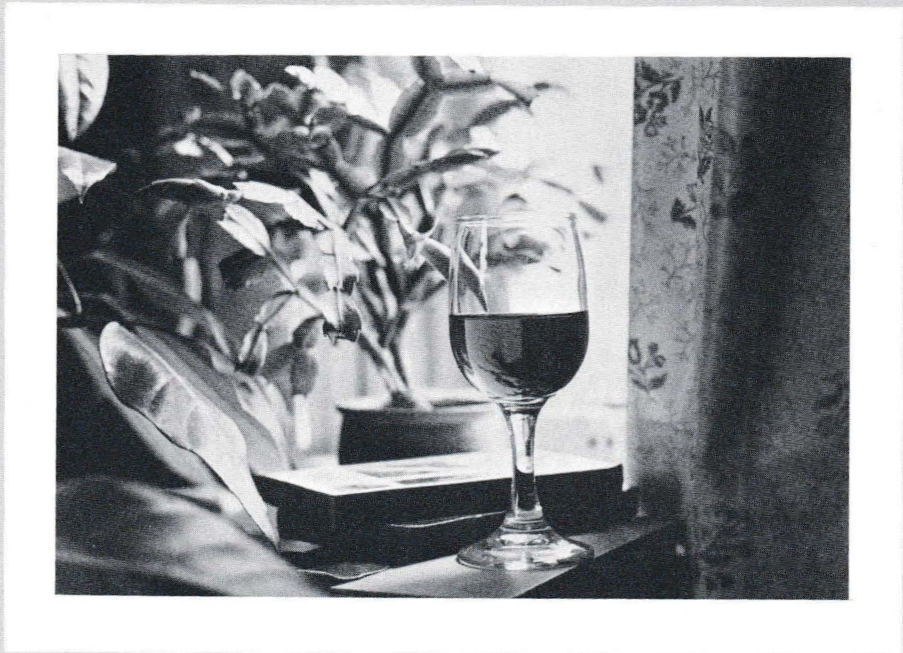
Beyond a cragged searock wavespray  
yawls of fishermen roil the mauve horizon.

Earth's whirling synchrony  
spins through a void of darkness.

Lost Friend, owner of death's wet secret,  
I relinquish you this gentle passage.

William Barber







## JAZZ & ASSASSINS

Boppin' down Basin  
with crazy Charlie Mingus, old black  
cat, who's playing me  
with black spider fingers like  
he'd play his bass.

Sat with Al Capone  
who'd sway with jagers then  
get up and spatter your  
soul to hell with  
a case that holds no brass winded  
instrument —  
blew a different tune,  
that cat did!

Kerouac loved it —  
heard the sound and  
drove all the way across town  
to find the beat even  
South of the Border. He  
broke my heart and  
died.

Write me a noise  
soft on the piano  
and a muffled horn  
and a black man to  
play it/sweat and  
a cool sounding sex.

Assassinate me with your weapon  
we'll swing all night  
and don't let me live to regret it.

Jo Anne Heen



## LAND

by Eric S. Gundry

I was fifteen, and being fifteen meant growing up. At least to my father it did, so as I entered the summer of my fifteenth year he made plans for my step into the mature world of adults and money, of growth and understanding, of being fifteen.

In order to begin my passage into adulthood, my father felt I should start my first real job that summer. Not delivering newspapers or walking dogs like I did in the days when I was still a child, but a real job with hard work and responsibility. Sweat, dirt and life.

My father, like all fathers I suppose, wished only the best for me and passed his infinite wisdom down during long conversations on the back porch of our home, the sun melting into the new coolness of the evening. I would sit at my father's feet listening to stories of his life, his brothers' lives and his parents' lives, imagining with great detail the scenes he described. I envisioned the youthful appearances of the people I knew and invented faces for those that I didn't, a personalized movie spectacular, father's mouth to my mind. I knew most of the stories by heart, but was never bored by another telling, or surprised by a small change in the plot.

There I would sit, hour after hour, long after he had gone back in through the kitchen door and think of how good it must feel to be an adult like my father, able to know so much and understand the world around him with such ease and expertise. I would watch the birds flying in the sky over our backyard and wish I could fly with them and perhaps see all the grand things that my father had seen. I thought that my father getting me a real job would give me a taste of this unknown world, to fly on my own. I counted the days until summer.

The job he arranged was in a warehouse on the outskirts of town that stored dry-goods and materials for a large string of shopping centers. I had never been inside but I had seen it from time to time when going to visit my aunt who lived in that direction.

It was enormous to those eyes and I wondered how anyone could work there without losing their way.

When my first day arrived my father brought me through the front doors of the building, down a long shiny corridor and into a small office filled with busy secretaries and ringing telephones. He introduced me to a man there who led me away from my father to another man who left me in a room still farther down the corridor. There I met Wayne, my

supervisor, who brought me to the place where I would spend most of my summer vacation. I was surprised to learn the building was not what it seemed. Instead of a series of rooms like the corridor, it was one giant room under a long flat roof. There were only fluorescent lights, except for the truck docks, and it was all very still. The warehouse was as big as three football fields side by side, filled with rows and rows of numbered aisles of food and products. Every type of canned good and paper material you could imagine from spaghetti to soup, napkins to plastic forks, rice to bleach, detergent and disposable diapers. I felt I was in one of my father's stories, seeing the outside world at last.

The warehouse resembled my foreman in many ways. Wayne was a big man, tall and wide, who always wore a grubby growth of whiskers. His face was simple looking and his eyebrows tilted up in wonder as if pointing at the scraggly mat of curly hair that sat atop his shiny forehead. "Your job as a selector," he explained, "is to take orders from the shipping desk, load the items from the order onto a pallet and prepare it for packing on the trucks."

My first few weeks were spent learning the system. Heavy on the bottom, light on top. Rice on the bottom, pasta on the top. Straight. Square. Move. The heat was stifling and my clothes were soaked and filthy by day's end. Most of the other selectors were blacks and Puerto Ricans who had been there for years and would be there for life. I couldn't imagine it, and still can't. They hated Wayne, who pushed them like animals. They had nothing. I asked my father why this was and he told me that it was the only work that they could find and I should be quiet and not complain. I should be thankful for what I had and just be quiet. Be thankful. Be quiet.

When you were outside the warehouse it was loud with the sound of eighteen wheelers and latino music from the workers' cars. Inside it was deathly quiet. The only sound that pierced the heavy air was the faint chirp of birds that flew in the truck holes and fluttered about the ceiling. As you went about selecting your items you would see a bird from time to time, perched upon a box that had been damaged, pecking at loose cereal or Pop Tarts. I never disturbed the birds. I knew the broken boxes were only thrown away anyhow and didn't see the sense in scaring them. They took my mind off the sweaty hours.

Days passed quickly at first, the newness of my experience and the rapture of maturity blurred my vision, but when I began to focus things looked differently. The men I worked with were blank, machine-like in



their motions as they moved from box to box, selecting their orders and filing down the dim and dusty rows. The warehouse seemed to numb them, or perhaps they numbed themselves.

I really don't know.

One day at the start of work I was paged to the desk at the front office and sat waiting for Wayne to come. I figured I must have selected an order wrong or damaged an item, but was not worried since I was a hard worker and my mistakes were few. Wayne came in and sat at his desk. I thought of how silly he looked, his eyebrows pointing to his sweaty shock of curls, so ridiculously simple that a pencil would break in two if he ever tried to manipulate one to words.

"You're not fast enough yet to keep up as a selector," he said flatly, "and since you're only here for the summer there's no sense letting you work at it."

I thought for sure that I was to be fired and wondered how I could ever tell my father, to make it up to him.

"So I've decided to let you help with one of our sanitation problems."

This didn't sound bad at first since the sanitation men at the warehouse only had to pick up the pieces of wood and cardboard from shipping crates and never dealt with selecting items or loading trucks.

"As you've seen we've got all sorts of birds flying around the warehouse. They eat the food and crap all over everything. Management thinks they're a health hazard and wants them out."

Wayne picked up a bag from behind his desk and put it in front of me. It had a strange smell and the sides bulged with greasy stains.

"This is bird-feed mixed with rat-poison," he explained slowly. "I want you to put it in pans where we don't have edibles and wait for the birds. When you see them eat, you can follow them and clean up what's left."

With this Wayne broke into a laugh and slumped back into his chair. This was the only time I had ever seen him smile and his teeth were ugly and yellow as his lips slid back over them.

"I bet you never thought you'd get a cake job like this, didya?" he asked me. I shut the door.

Going to the places where Wayne told me, I filled flat silver pans with the poisoned seed. Then I waited near the wall, crouched down with my arms around my legs, knees to my chest. The whole day passed, minute by minute, as I sat waiting. Birds flew by occasionally and my heart would stop. Once one even landed nearby, but I was so scared and nervous that I hissed quickly at it, scaring it away. At the end of the

day I put the seed away and went home. All night I wanted to tell my father what that horrible man Wayne was making me do but I didn't want to disappoint him after working so hard all summer. I didn't want him to think I was fifteen and still a child, so I remained silent.

I went to work as usual and got the seed. Finding my spot, I crouched down again, waiting silently. After a few minutes, or perhaps hours, a bird hovered by and landed near the pan. It did not see me or perhaps it knew me well enough not to be scared, but it approached the pan inquisitively. It was a pigeon with a full white chest and brown and white streaked wings. Its back was jet black from the tip of its tail to its neck where the colors faded from brown to a beautiful tan crown on its head.

Carefully it examined the food before it, getting closer and dropping its head down. I bit my knee and sucked hard on the sweaty denim. Tears filled my eyes and I tried hard to jump but my father's hands gripped my shoulders and kept me still.

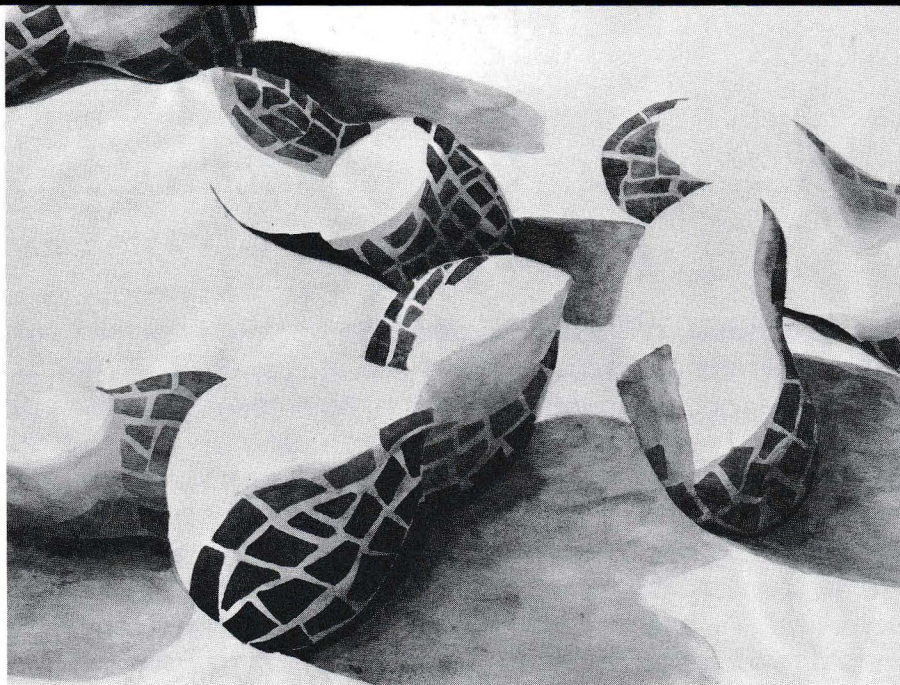
The bird ate. First one seed then another, then yet another. It pecked quickly and evenly until a small dent in the food was gone and it stopped. It jerked its head up and stepped forward only to stumble slightly to the left. It stood still for what seemed like an eternity before spreading its wings and taking flight. It bobbed a few feet above the ground, pulled at the air, struggled to remain aloft. Its wings battered the air until it was ten feet high and I closed my eyes tightly as one wing stopped and the other fluttered helplessly. Then it landed. I did not see the bird fall but heard it hit the cold cement floor not far in front of me, still and quiet.

Quiet.

I finally stood, placed the bird in the bag, collected the seed and the plates, walked to the front desk and quit my job. I walked home that day and told my father I had been fired for not working hard enough. He wasn't angry but very disappointed in me and said that I had behaved like a child and not like the man he hoped I would be.

I never sat at my father's feet anymore after that day and I never watched the birds in the sky over my backyard. I knew that being an adult wasn't like flying with the birds and seeing all the wonderful sights. That was for children and the child on my back porch died with the bird in the warehouse, where I saw the real world and the people who lived there. I'm not fifteen anymore but I still remember my father and the stories he would tell me.





## PAINTED PONY RIDE

Stop the  
carousel,  
my head is  
spinning  
with thoughts  
of you and me  
and forever.  
But you are  
a carnival  
clown,  
riding to tomorrow.  
I ride a  
wooden horse  
always going —  
getting nowhere.  
And forever  
is pink  
cotton candy  
that dissolves  
to nothingness  
on my tongue.

Michele Broton

## DON'T FALL APART ON ME

Don't fall apart on me tonight.  
I just don't think I could handle it — Bob Dylan

Don't lean on me so  
dead-weight-dependent.  
There were times I never  
told you of  
when T-61 would rush  
through the almost no pump  
dry well veins of a parvoed  
doberman and, twitch, he'd  
fall half off that black glossed  
table we euthanised on  
into my chest with a thud.  
Sometimes I'd think that  
the spirits of dead dogs  
could crawl right through  
my clothes and inherit my body.

(It was different with cats somehow.  
If I held their necks tight and  
ran my elbow down their spines,  
they couldn't wiggle away so much.  
Even if they did, Teresa would have  
me lay them open and stab their  
hearts "quick enough" to let them die comfortable.)

But dogs weren't like that.  
You can't just flip a newfoundland on  
its side, pry its leg up and expect to find  
the dull pulse under years of matted fur.

So please, even if you think you're dying,  
don't flop on my chest that way.  
See, i didn't always let go immediately.  
Even when the urine slid out slow and  
inoffensive, I held on just in case the heart  
might still be blinking dim.

Kim Marie Supper

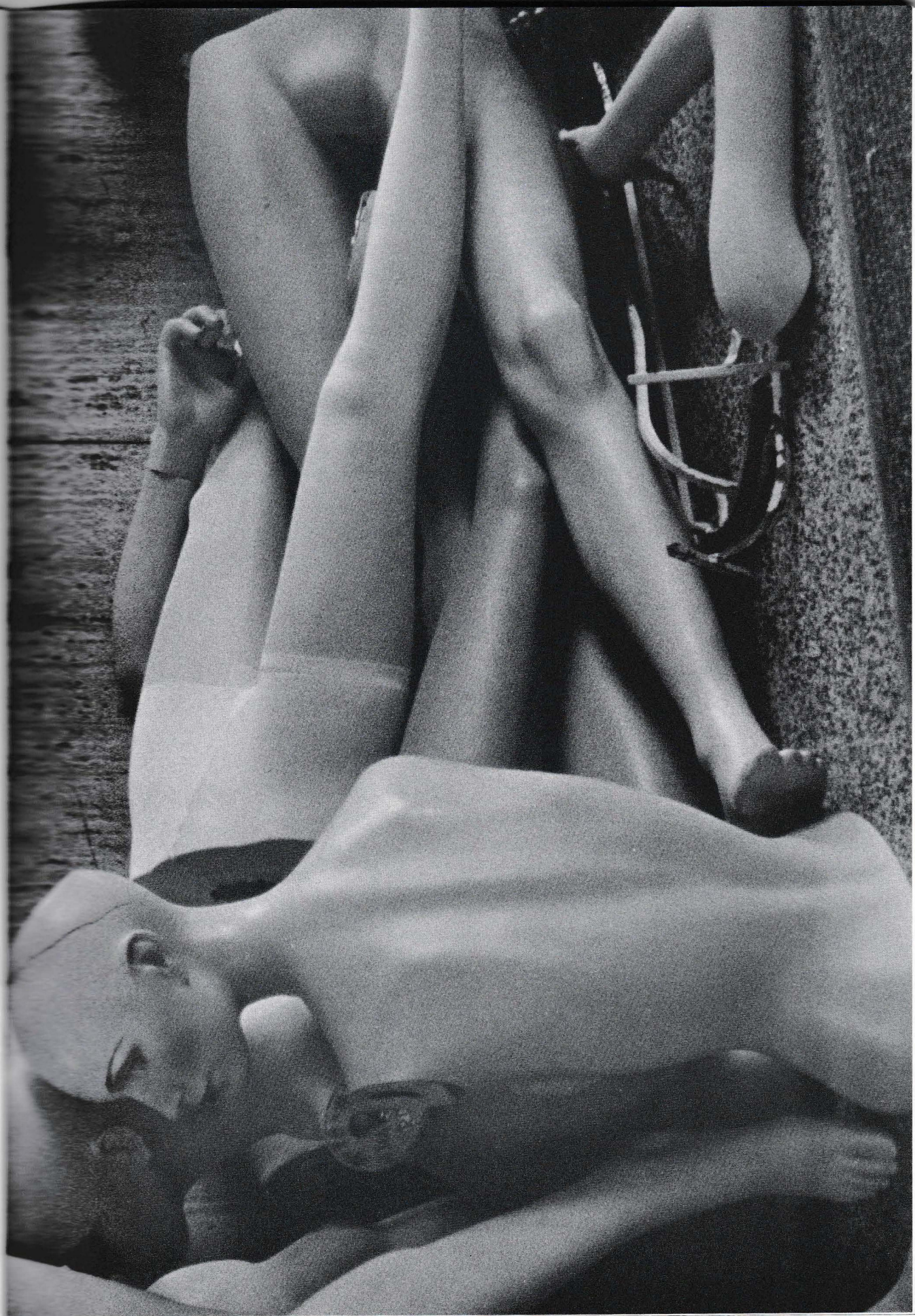


## UNTITLED

H as it been 8 years or  
a drop of the hat  
since you died;  
I know I dropped my  
hat rounding third, but  
never made it home;  
neither did you, which came  
as a big shock; they  
all said you were  
o.k.; so silly to  
believe them, now anyone;  
I'm believing that if  
I ripped a tube from you  
& put my breath into  
it maybe you'd feel me  
in you & my new jacket  
that starting first basemen  
wear over torn bodies  
& hearts;  
But I went to pick  
up the hat somewhere  
between third & home  
got lost saying good-bye,  
never finished,  
never started.  
I carry a burden  
that I refuse  
to release.

Andrew Morrell



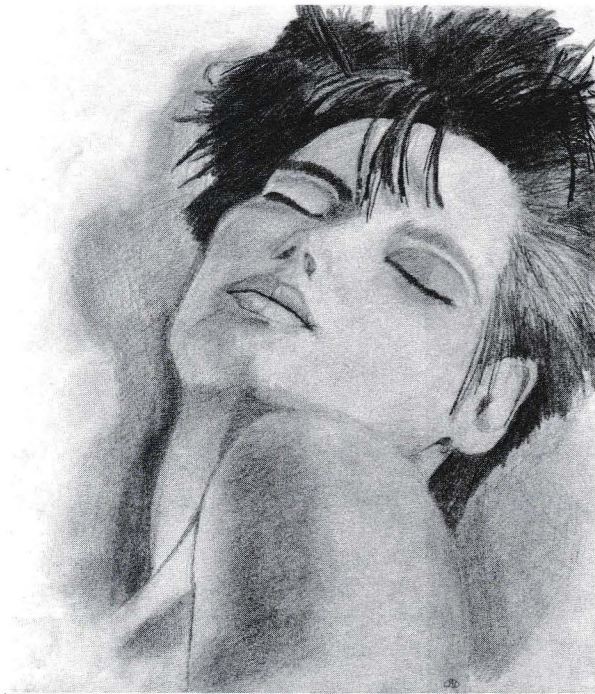




## UNTITLED

in that moment  
when she would play  
violin no more  
what was he thinking  
what a wonderful world  
it would be  
in that moment  
did he look away  
did he shut the door  
when the train left the station  
hope you guess my name  
when her flesh  
meshed with juicy fruit  
and concrete  
and the bone  
and the blood  
on the tracks  
became lipstick stained  
cigarette butts  
what did he say  
in that moment  
when her eyes closed  
and she could bring pleasure  
from her pain no more  
when the lawyer's fists  
violated her  
as he took her life  
into his own hands  
what was he thinking  
what a wonderful world  
it would be  
in that moment  
when he would play  
guitar no more  
when the long and winding road

became the long  
and lonesome highway  
when the high road  
became the road less travelled  
and the low road  
meshed with strawberry fields  
and clay  
and the bone and the blood  
of the rose  
became the blood  
of the lamb forever  
and everywhere  
where mary went  
the typhoid lamb  
was sure to turn  
when will they ever learn  
in that moment  
while the armies  
of the night slept  
bulldozers crept  
no one ever heard  
the voice of palestine cry  
let my people go  
when will they ever know  
in that moment  
when you knew  
all you need is love  
could never be  
when the lamb  
said to mary  
don't know much  
about history  
mother mary  
said to me  
what a wonderful world  
let it be



## UNTITLED

I sit alone,  
Still the tears will not come.  
I feel loneliness —  
Inexpressible.

It is deeply rooted,  
So hidden it remains.  
Telling my new friends —  
Impossible.

I am alienating myself,  
But no one knows me.  
If I did cry  
No one could share my tears.

Alone I will stay.  
My eyes will remain dry.  
And my body,  
It will just go through the motions.



## EVENING WATCHER

Walker, stalker, evening watcher  
Damp, dreary, dark is the night  
Wet streets shine under misty lights  
Damsels in distress, crazy in the head.

Windows look in from outside  
The night has everything to hide  
Damp, dreary, dark is the night  
Walker, stalker, evening watcher.

## REVENGE

The night exposes the possible  
And conceals the shadows.  
Friends and the dark come out  
In misty London fog, fulfilling their thoughts.

A church steeple pierces the sky  
In an aura of lights.  
The devil's wings circle the masses  
Preying on the weak and the rats.

Eric Sullivan

## THE FINAL

The clock's hand staggers  
In its forever forward motion  
Minutes here seem like millenia.

Pens scratch across  
Reams of dittos.

Students trying to regurgitate  
A semester's worth of information.

The bell rings,  
Bluebooks march to the front  
Of the classroom.

Into the waiting hands  
Of the stoic proctor.

The exam is over.

Kathy Flinsch







## FOR MY GRANDMOTHER

No tinsel for the tree this year. We forgot. We all made lists, made sure to write it down. Oddly enough, that makes me miss you more than if you had simply refused to come. Christmas Eve my father, your only son, would bring you home. You would sit in the corner chair, putting hooks on third generation decorations. (They were from the rooms on Bailey Avenue — where my father grew up tough.) You sat there and directed us, said we had not the touch that tinsel took. You would yell when we would clump a bunch on. Later, when we had all gone to sleep, you would do it over again “strand by strand.” We would bring you Sanka and tea biscuits just like the Magi brought gifts to Jesus. You, your hospital slippers tucked under like ragged bookmarks we grandchildren made for you in kindergarten arts and crafts. Tissues crowding feet like petals unlatched. You would sit, crusted like patina and stiff as bronze, but no gloss to your German stubbornness. You know what, it took three days family to gather, gaze and get it all over with. You cut yourself out of this family so precisely and so evenly between the holidays. You cut this season in half like a velvet ceremonial ribbon opening a renovated courthouse. Snip. Snip. We celebrate you with pain and with relief. Glad you know something else than what we do. You being dead and Jesus being born, I slump out of December unreformed.

Kim Marie Supper



**This issue of Manuscript is dedicated to  
Dr. Stanley Gutin**

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