

# Manuscript

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### - NOTES -

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## The End of the Cold War

Joe Barberio

**F**ury unfurls flesh  
Under the charge' d'affaires  
Lying for a minister of state.  
The lovers embrace  
While the mortar shell  
Careens apocalyptically outside  
Carpet bombing the populace.

Hands trembling over  
The kitchen sink  
She is only a product  
Of what society has made her.

*Men. . . what a headache,*  
She sighs staring blankly  
Out her kitchen window  
Her bare stomach softly-touching  
The cold white edge of her sink.  
*All men are assholes,*  
She curses under her breath.

The cup slips loose  
From subtly shaking hands  
Shattering upon impact  
With the porcelain basin below  
Igniting like the charges outside  
Like the quiet explosions going off  
Inside the heads of lovers  
Locked in orgasmic embrace,  
Conforming to each other's contours  
Like lime jello to a  
Waving American flag mold;  
As water responds to a barrier. . .

[cont.]



The press report states  
The high-level meeting  
Was carried out in a frank and productive manner  
Which in all reality means  
Diplomats in French cuffs bound with  
Gold monogrammed cuff links  
Screaming at each other.  
*That course of action, young man,*  
The president said  
*Would not be prudent at this juncture.*

*A kiss should not be planned or  
Requested, she said disdainfully,  
It should be spontaneous.*  
Meanwhile a *toe-popper* mine  
Impulsively kisses off  
An infantryman's foot.

He envisioned himself as a  
Fat, grouchy general wearing  
Brown camouflage fatigues  
Agitated from too much caffeine and  
Too many grandiose ideas.  
Inside the theater of operations  
He envisions an end run  
Around her impenetrable Maginot line.

A moment that will live in infamy  
Sometimes a great notion.  
They're just words  
Slogans spray-painted upon the  
Grey brick walls of the mind.  
We will bury you  
Brilliant tactical military strategy  
Nothing to fear but fear itself  
I have not yet begun to fight  
Don't shoot until you see the  
Whites of their thighs  
This town isn't big enough for the both of us

[cont.]

Old soldiers never die  
They just fade to grey  
The time has come to start  
A new world order  
Thems is fightin' words  
Draw!

*Human nature hasn't changed  
All that much in the last 2000 years,  
She says, We're still just petty,  
Jealous and ridiculous as people were  
in Greek and Roman times.  
Yeah, except now we have high  
Technology annihilation, he countered  
Instead of spears and slings.*

The news report crackles on cable television  
Flak and anti-aircraft fire sound out on the horizon  
Ambassadors and rulers issue edicts  
Eyes glance up from the floor toward each other  
Then quickly back downward again.  
Wonder why we need a war to be patriotic  
Couldn't we just fly the flag because we're  
Happy to be alive?  
A cold hand cracks across a warm ass  
With a mixture of affection and aggression;  
Compassion and contempt.

## **Date Night in the Barrio**

Joe Barberio

**J**ose Jesus Rodriguez pulls up to the curb in his  
chartreuse  
Chevy Caprice low rider. He honks his horn  
impatiently:  
*How-oooh-gah, Hoouuw-oooh-gaaahhh*  
As he waits he fondles the fuzzy pink dice

[cont.]



Which hang suggestively from his rear-view mirror.  
Meanwhile a droplet of drool  
Sullies down his dun-colored chin as  
He catches sight of Maria; the kitchen door  
Swings open and slams shut behind her  
All in one motion wafting the smell of  
Baked corn tortillas and refried beans in Jose's  
direction.

His motor is still running as she saunters  
Off the dilapidated porch  
Attached to the rear of the project stoop.

She is like Venus descending upon  
A molten stretch of Highway 61 in  
Wide Open Spaces, U.S.A., during the dog days of  
August.

She is Aphrodite spread eagle nude  
Upon the green felt table in the smoke-filled  
Neon-lit pool room.  
Maria Conchita Malendez leans over to kiss Jose  
Through the Caprice window and  
As she does her left breast pops defiantly out  
Of her black mesh tank top  
Her tongue flashing out suggestively  
Like a Bazooka Joe bubble gum colored, (half chewed),  
serpent  
Peering and leering out of the charmer's brunette  
basket.

They take off together as Jose pumps the accelerator  
In rapid succession hurtling toward oblivion  
As they drive it's the silence between them  
Which creates the loudest sound  
The tape deck does its part pounding out  
*Los Lobos, Ritchie Valens, and The Cruzados.*  
Maria thinks, *Thank Senor'e for music to get me*  
*through*  
*Times like these.*

J. J. quickly careens the car onto a moist dirt road





by Richard Zeszotarski



The sudden turnoff causes his sawed-off shotgun  
To hurtle around randomly in the trunk  
Maria, coincidentally, is packing a pair of 38's.

In the back seat: where most of the  
Crucial decisions in life are made  
Jose mounts Maria, the ceremony now begun  
One hand cradling each buttock  
Jose sees himself as an obscene demigod  
Like Ezekiel in the saddle of the chariot of fire.  
So far afield from the comments and attitudes  
Of the rednecks, peckerwoods, and numb nuts  
Who berate those who think, look or act  
In any way differently from themselves  
*Life is a loser's game, she thinks,*  
*The deck is stacked against you.*  
Jose pauses in mid thrust  
*Love is a loser's game, he thinks,*  
*This woman is stacked against me.*

Maria cries out, *Jesu's Christe!*  
Jose picks up the rhythm again  
He grunts, closes his eyes and  
Thinks of the glory of Imperial Spain  
The Armada sailing in the 16th century  
A smattering of sweat droplets form a  
Beaded Cross on his forehead  
He climaxes in frankincense, myrrh and golden dro-  
plets  
As the vernal equinox rises.

## **A Game-Show View of Life**

Bonnie C. Bedford

**I** wait by the silent telephone in my shimmering chrome  
and glass apartment and wonder why no macho man or  
upwardly mobile male calls me, Gail Spadinski. The  
latest manual for becoming an instant success in clubs

[cont.]

and singles' bars lies creased and well-worn in my lap. Midnight on a Saturday night.

I put on the lace negligee purchased in a store in New York. The boutique claimed to be the "Frederick's of the East." I bought the black designer fashion to impress the man I would lure into the private domain of my boudoir; the truth is that no man, but my father, has ever stepped foot inside the front door.

I put the manual aside next to the creams, oils, perfumes, and make-up strewn about my dressing table—all the magic potions of some Fifth Avenue Wizard. "These delectable elixers will pave the way to a life of romance and intrigue and they can be yours for the incredibly low, low price of \$59.95!"

CHERYL TIEGS, COME ON DOWN!

I lie awake and ponder the situation I now face. A product of an older way of life, I wonder if I'm destined to be an old maid. A member of the now, New Age generation, I wonder why I sleep alone. A twenty-five-year-old virgin who feels both proud and yet appalled because she's never made love.

I have the latest styles in my bulging wardrobe. I have a luxurious apartment in the most desirable section of Long Island. I have a nice, tall, slim figure, I watch what I eat and exercise, and I take One-A-Day (with Iron) everyday. Yet, I sleep alone. Working in the most bustling populated (more than half of which are men) city in the country, I come home each night to a lonely striped cat.

DR. RUTH, COME ON DOWN!

My boss says that I'm one of the sweetest, young paralegals he's "ever had," but he makes no passes at me. Neither do the other four partners of the ancient firm where I'm employed. The median age of the fractious five is sixty-one. My boss is the junior partner at age fifty-five. His wife Tina, a gorgeous brunette, aged twenty-one, calls for him everyday at five.

She plays golf and tennis at the Club. "Tell Charles I'll meet him for drinks by the pool," she coos into the phone at me. She hobnobs with the designers from

[cont.]



Madison Avenue and does tennis and lunch with Cosmo editors. I read it to discover I will probably be struck by a cab before I find an eligible, undamaged male partner unless I hit the jackpot before age thirty.

When answering the phone, I pitch my high shrill voice down into the imitative depths of Tina's resonant alto. My mother calls and tells me to take more Vitamin C.

MASTERS AND JOHNSON, COME ON DOWN!

Glamour has a new spring diet this month (it's January). I really can't afford to lose two pounds, much less the twenty promised, but I'll prepare the delicious gourmet treats guaranteeing a healthier, wealthier, and sexier me. I have all the latest gadgets and non-stick pans hanging from the wooden beams in my Better Homes and Gardens flavored culinary center. I imagine myself serving dinner to my yet-to-be found hero and wearing a bunny costume.

MARABEL MORGAN, COME ON DOWN!

I joined the Executive Spa just a few minutes from my office, but I stopped going after an encounter with a male client. He was playing racquetball with another man while I watched from the glass observation window high above the courts. He saw me and waved. I found a spot above his head and riveted my gaze upon it, ignoring his overture. They continued to play.

I watched his taut machine-produced leg muscles ripple and swell. His face beaded with perspiration. My loins felt an unaccustomed tug as I gaped at the swollen aspects of his grey T-shirt. His blonde hair curled at the edges where the dampness had darkened the glow of his crown.

I imagined the struggle below as a courtly duel between two maddened suitors, both intent on gaining the prize, me, Gail Spadinski. My princely Lancelot slammed the final telling blow into the wall. His opponent lunged and collapsed beaten on the floor, unable to salvage the point or the game. Arms outstretched, my Adonis flung his head back in an exclamation of glory as

[cont.]

I panted, pressed against the glass above. He turned and nodded and flashed an even "Crest" smile as I quickly pretended to pick some lint from the jacket of my "Cling Free" reeking sweat suit.

What if he comes up here? What could I say, "Hi, sailor?" Not quite subtle, Gail. I recoiled at the image of myself with my leg thrust over the railing beside me, vamping away as he approached. He would be dressed in the most expensive royal blue "Nike" jogging outfit, looking like a page torn out of the latest GQ while I looked like an idiot.

Well, how about acting shy or aloof? I've managed to perfect that air. Play hard to get, maintain some distance. I heard this approach a long time ago on the Phil Donahue Show. Go to bed with someone and arise the next morning and say, "Wow, that was great! What was your name again?"

OPRAH WINFREY, COME ON DOWN!

I know, I'll wait for him to make the move, play it by ear, see where the chips fall and all that jazz.

I'm sure those sun-stroked lips of his will only allow the passage of the most suave opening lines. No haven't-we-met-before, come-here-often, or what's-your-sign for this man. He will be Kevin Costner with the genteel charm of a Gregory Peck. Oh, his approach will be smooth, for he knows what to say and do. When our eyes meet, the sparks emitted will light the dark smoldering recesses of the saunas below. The whirlpool itself will pause in its rhythmic flow from the passion of our stare.

The door leading to my perch is opening. He's easily over six feet tall (another prerequisite of my dream lover). Here comes Narcissus now towelling his golden locks. That easy smile and limber athletic swagger are coming right at me. He's stopping, my heart is racing, and his lips are opening.

OH, GAIL SPADINSKI, IT'S YOUR TURN TO PLAY!

And a voice just two mpitches below my own stammers, "Yo, Babe . . . you?" Those hazel eyes stare

[cont.]



into my own while the aroma of sweat and gym floors  
dissipate the visions dancing in my head.

"No. Never." I reply and turn and walk away.

I have no idea what the game is anymore, but I  
do know the price just isn't right.

## **Metal For Animal**

Chris Bilardi

**G**rind your axe  
metal boy  
half naked on the stage

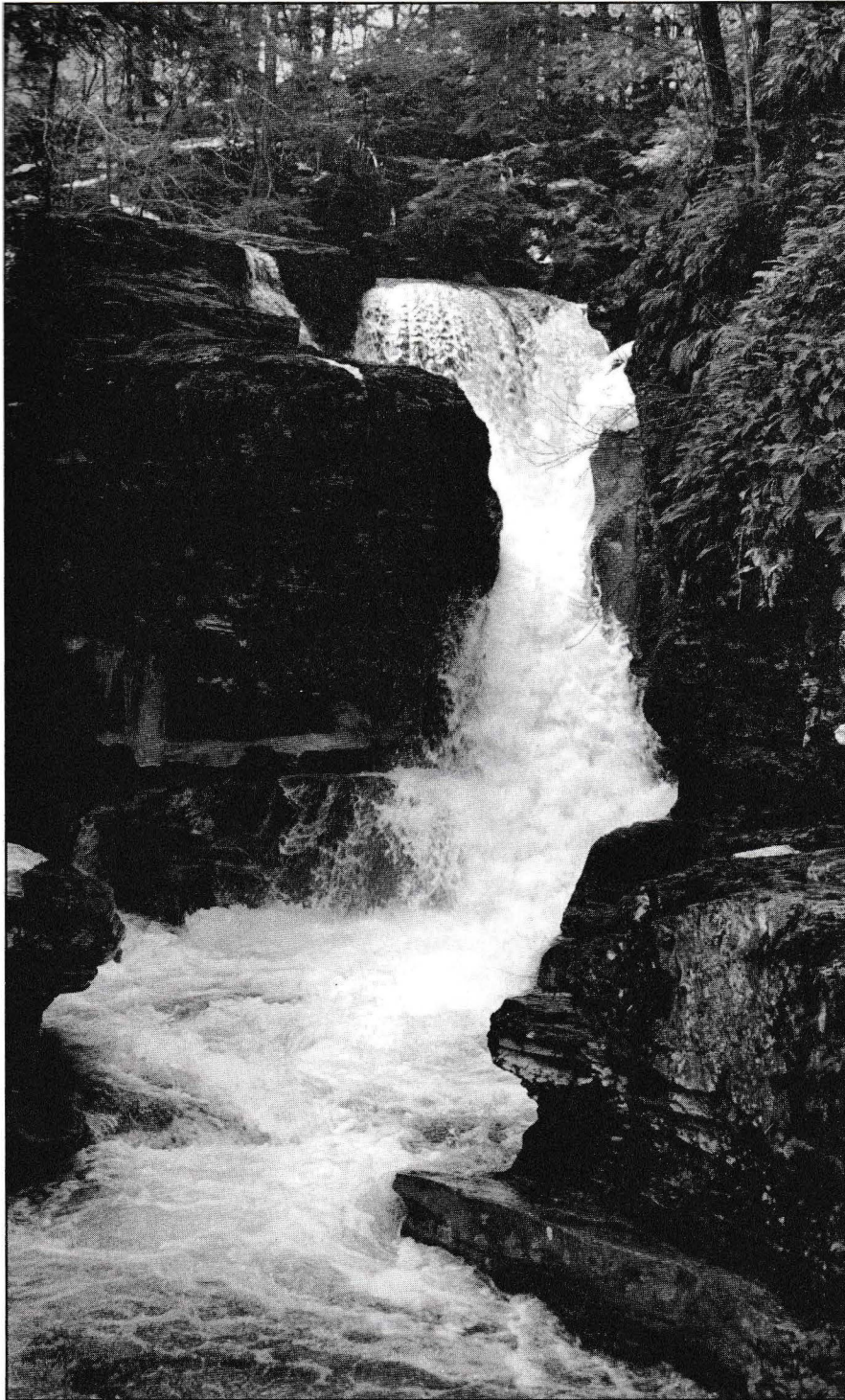
Sweat slicking  
your leather and denim,  
long-haired boy

Young animal  
off the broken chain leash

I know your scent  
and stroke the mane  
that lies tacky on your back

Pant and push me  
close to your mouth

And petting you gently  
I grasp your chain tight



**"Waterfall 1" by Pat Hozempa**



## Sonnet of a Mystical Park

Chris Bilardi

**A**s I walked in the park there was this tree  
All knotted-up, I believe it was an Oak  
With coiled branches whose loftiness were the free  
Arms of God wearing His Green Cloak  
Stretched from earth heavenward in wonder  
As Her Eye shone on the lake's waters deep  
And whose breath drove the Beings of Thunder  
To the mountain's edge beyond the park asleep  
And Holy Night spread Her mantle-creation  
Of blue and purple, starlight pinholes  
Of Supernal Fire and divine elation  
The Eye of God followed with a million silver coals  
And whispered Her name through the Tree  
We understood and walked hand in hand with me.

## Wind Walker

Chris Bilardi

**T**he old Indians whisper tales  
woven with smoke  
and dying  
  
embers of the communal-fire, there is  
no moon this night  
only ancient stars  
  
to guide the way  
And they whisper  
tales of Things  
  
without shape that take  
forms and shift in darkness  
And bend the eye

horror shot

[cont.]

with black-fire and shadow  
and the ululations of They  
without Names

and whispers caught  
in midnight tree  
canopies

There was a motion  
— they spoke  
softly not  
to disturb the Thing

which moved  
through Unknown Spheres  
and consorted with totems

in the dark  
And the sorcerer lurched  
the Contorted Shape

Shifted *Wendigo*  
they whisper,  
their hearts collapse into smoke

and ash,  
In the fields and forests  
it rose

And the Thing moved  
in distorted zones  
of transmogrification:  
They screamed

...  
Raven took flight

...  
And it shuffled in darkness

...  
the fire died



## **“Sometimes I like to Lie Naked on Humid Summer Nights (Beneath a Sheet)”**

Amy Braun

**I**t didn't take any keys to start Tony's truck. People used to say the thing was a real eyesore, but Tony thought (and I gradually started to agree with him) that it had character. It was green except for the parts that were rusty, and they were brownish-orange (kind of like a rotting pear). When I sit here on the bank of the Susquehanna like this, I usually think about the truck. I have so many memories of the thing.

But after we lost the keys, Tony had to work out another way to start the truck. Well, you know the metal part of the steering column? Tony fixed it so you'd just turn it (with no key, you'd just use your hand) and the engine would wake up and start to yell; when I say yell, I mean yell and grumble and sputter and growl. The hood even shook sometimes. So we could start the thing without keys, but we weren't allowed to lock the doors (because if we did, we couldn't get back in). The truck was bumpy when it rode too, it had worn away seats (the foam hung in chewed-up ovals around the springs), and the shocks absorbed no shock whatsoever; they slipped through inspection seven years in a row. It's the guy on the corner of South Franklin and Wood Streets that always let the truck pass. His name is Louis, but don't tell too many people, because he told us his name confidentially. He really shouldn't have passed it though because the window on the driver's side always fell in when we went over railroad tracks too fast, and water used to splash up through the rusted out patches in the floor when we went through puddles. The rust kind of looked like those noodles they give you with duck sauce in chinese restaurants; especially the pile of pieces he broke off and accumulated in a bucket in his garage. I

don't know what he planned on doing with them... maybe he was sentimentally attached. But looking back now I suppose it is good he kept those pieces of rust.

It's funny how we lost the keys. They're buried in the mud kind of near the Market Street bridge at the bottom of the Susquehanna River. It happened in... guess it was the Summer of... let's see, I guess it was the summer of '86. Tony and I were tubing. It was a very drippy and sticky summer. A summer when the sweat makes embarrassing dirty rings gather around your neck and you find you have to peel the back of your thighs off of the seat of the bus. That kind of summer, you know what I mean. The only good thing about a summer like that is being able to leave your bedroom window open so you can listen to the crickets play their tiny violins at night. I also like to lie naked on humid summer nights beneath a sheet; it makes me feel less grimy. I read once that it improves your self-esteem if you spend a lot of time naked, so I try to do it as often as possible. Because self-esteem is one of those things I want to work on. Clothes can be very constricting; did you ever notice how socks cut off the circulation to your toes and how jeans make your thighs uncomfortable? Without clothes I guess I feel free; although being naked is best when I'm alone.

The river was pretty murky and shallow that summer. I don't think it rained more than eight times during those humid three months. Our tube got turned over and we lost Tony's key chain. I don't know why he brought it along—he should have known we'd tip over; I kept telling him too, but I “don't know what I'm talking about”, so he didn't listen. On the key chain there was a picture of me and him on the “East Coast's biggest ferris wheel” at Six Flags Great Adventure, and a piece of genuine anthracite coal on a gold hoop. I thought it was funny when we dumped the tube. Tony wasn't able to laugh about it until later. Our clothes were so drenched; you could see my striped underwear through the white shorts I had on. The water was as thick and brown like a glass of chocolate milk (the powdered kind you mix

[cont.]



yourself- when all the chocolate isn't mixed in and it looks like mud at the bottom), and there we were actually diving to the bottom and opening our eyes to look for the key chain. It was cold near the bottom of the river, and the current would pull on you too. I cheated a few times because I just dug around with my toes in the mud when I swam down; I told Tony that I opened my eyes because I knew he would be mad and say that I didn't try hard enough. He'd say I never try hard enough at anything. But I just couldn't do it because I was afraid I would get something in them like a stick or mud or a water creature. I don't have a stomach like Tony does I guess.

That was the summer Tony and I first slept together. I was a virgin and he didn't know it; I think he knew after we did it because I was pretty nervous and I bled a lot. I wasn't good then but Tony says I've gotten better. We couldn't do it at my house or his house so we did it on a sleeping bag in the flatbed of the truck. It was the fourth of July. We drove to the top of Sullivan's mountain so we could see the fireworks, but they were cancelled because it was raining. It was strange... when I used to fantasize about sex I never imagined I'd first do it in the rain. It was okay though. Even though I ruined my pink shirt with the black buttons on because it sat in a puddle next to us for awhile; an orange puddle; orange because it had rust streams flowing through it. And God, I had a bad flu the whole following week. I hate to be sick in the summer. I feel greasy when I'm sick and not as good about myself. And it seems that the only way to get rid of a cold is to bundle up and sleep a lot and that gets boring.

That summer was when I started to like the truck; like Tony, I became sentimentally attached .

Tony's truck was an automatic, but he liked to pretend that it was a standard (it really sounded like one too... he did it with the gear selector —you know, the thing with the P R N D 2 1). He did this mostly early in the morning when there was no traffic and he said it was best on Washington Street because the lights were all

synchronized as long as he went the right speed. When the truck was waiting eagerly for the green he kept it in neutral and floored it, and when the light changed, he'd drop it in low (he replaced the drive shaft three times). Tony could get it up to 95 mph in two lights (the parked cars, poles, and street signs whizzing by), and then he'd stop at the third red light to do it all over again. When I was sober it was fun, but I found that I was more relaxed if I had at least two drinks. Tony liked it better if I was buzzed too, because I didn't slam my foot down onto the floor or grab the door handle.

"Watch this one Mag-pie" (he called me Mag-pie because he said it fit me more than Maggie did—I like Maggie myself, but oh well). He was like an eight-year-old because he'd make rumbling noises in his throat along with the truck. He never said it, but I think he pretended he was in the Indy 500 or something like that. He would laugh loudest right before he'd switch gears; right when the engine was at its loudest he'd laugh and then drop the selector. The truck would yelp and squeal and we'd wake up half the neighborhood. Sometimes I'd feel a chill right above my ass at the base of my spine, or a couple flips in my gut. It was scary.

People in sports cars used to stare at us. Sometimes it bothered Tony, but I just kept reminding him that they didn't know a great form of transportation when they saw one; in the truck we had plenty of foot-room, the insurance was cheap, and Tony paid for the truck all at once... in cash. Nothing I said really made that much of a difference; the only thing that made him feel better was when he beat the person and their sports car to the next light.

Tony used to say you could tell a person by the car he drove. I wonder if it's true with him; the thing is awfully rusty. But Tony isn't homely like the truck was... he shaves close when he shaves, he always tucks his T-shirts in, and lint doesn't pile up between his toes. Then again, I guess the truck was like Tony... the floor was always vacuumed (he had one of those portable vacuums





**by Richard Zeszotarski**



that you could plug into the lighter), and the stereo had good sound.

But what is rust after all? I think the rust on the truck gave it personality. Think of all the rain storms the thing had to sit through. Rust on a car is kind of like wrinkles on a fifty year old woman's forehead or scars on a veteran; the rust shows that a car has been beyond and back— the car has stories to tell. Every year they move the power window switch on the sports car or change the place where the solar clock should go, the "old" model will go down in value. And sports cars are so common... trucks like Tony's are few and far between. Yes, I like the rust. Well, quite frankly I like rain now. If I were a car, I'd probably enjoy being rusty just so I'd seem like I had a story to tell.

Tony didn't keep too much in the truck: he had a metal hanger under the front seat (he said you could never tell when somebody may lock their keys in their car), a book of Shakespeare's Sonnets in the glove compartment (he knew what Shakespeare could do to me), a couple maps, and a tin of butterscotch candy. It wasn't cluttered, but he had the necessities in the truck.

Well... I guess those things are gone now too. There are few things in the world that are easily replaceable. Objects just seem to carry memories inside of them. Sometimes I suppose it is good to strip yourself of possessions; kind of a chance to start over. And you may even learn to appreciate your belongings in a fresh sort of way. On the other hand, if it is not done voluntarily, losing those objects can be really hard to deal with. Like I have a blanket that I have used since I was 14 and I have wrapped that thing around me so many nights, with so many thoughts dripping from the corners of my mouth while I slept — that blanket could never truly be replaced! And I have a pair of Nike sneakers that I have worn (God only knows all the places I have worn them!), there is a hole on the left one right above the big toe... can't be replaced.

It's the same with Tony's truck. I mean if the thing

[cont.]



were to “die”... I suppose the best place for it to do so would be in the Susquehanna. It would have been degrading if Tony’s truck had wrapped itself around a pole or collided with a sports car. I think in a twisted kind of a way, Tony’s truck volunteered to sink into the bottom of the river, like an old dog that knew he was going to die so he goes off somewhere to fall asleep.

It was the brake cable I guess. Tony said it rusted. We were eating McDonald’s take-out with our feet in the river; my socks and loafers were on the dashboard. The truck was parked on the incline next to the dogwood tree (you know the one near the Connecticut settlers sign that talks about the history of the city?) We heard a snap, and it started to crawl toward the marshy, shallow riverbank. I didn’t move, but Tony did. He stood up and pushed his stiff fingers through his corn-colored pony-tail. Then he struggled with the door as the truck rolled down the incline. He thought he would be strong enough to make it stop. I thought he was going to get pulled underneath it. He was drenched to his waist, his jeans splashed with black mud and constricting his thighs. We both watched as the headlights, like eyes... submerged themselves.

But I just sat there. I guess I couldn’t believe it was sinking.

“Jesus-fuckin’ Christ... Jesus! I can’t... What happened? FUCK!” He was standing in the water pounding his fists on the surface—there were leaves and sticks floating around him—he was splashing himself and I could tell he was getting even angrier. He was kicking too; he was kicking and pounding on the roof of the truck. It continued to sink.

We lost something in the Susquehanna that day. I mean I can’t quite explain it but I lost more than my socks and loafers, and Tony lost more than a book of sonnets and a tin of butterscotches. Something very important to both of us was in that truck; our memories, living bits of our relationship were still in that truck when it sank. I mean the steering wheel was still warm from his sweaty grip, and there’s the rusty spot on the platform

[cont.]

outside the passenger-door where I scratched my ankle (in fact, I still have the scar). Yes, we should be able to keep the memories in our minds, instead of relying on a pile of rust to hold them for us. But I can't help but feel that a part of me is covered with mud in the bottom of that river! We were stripped of the truck. It should probably make me feel free, but I feel deprived.

Tides in the Susquehanna change as the year moves on... (it was last April the truck fell in), and when I jog by the river I like to peek at the roof (it sticks up a little bit). Less of the truck is visible in August than in February, and the part that shows seems to be lower and lower all the time. Tony's truck is more rusty now than it ever was; it's completely orange now; there are no more traces of green. The truck was always more comfortable rusty.

As I sit on the riverside now, I can barely see the roof below the murky water. It reminds me of that aluminum can (my brother Shawn said it had been baked beans at one time) that was stuck in the mud in the creek behind my house. I don't know who put it there, but nobody ever pulled it out. Every year it deteriorated, browned, and rusted more and more. It probably faded away because finally one summer we couldn't see it anymore.

Tony got a \$7,500 loan out of the bank to buy a Honda. It looks nice from the outside, but the seat gives me a stiff neck and I can't put my feet on the dashboard... but I don't say anything.



## Salvation

(with apologies to Langston Hughes)  
Derek Buffington

I was saved from heart disease when I was going on thirteen. But not really saved. It happened like this: There was a big Thanksgiving dinner at my Auntie Reed's house. All through the meal there was an abundance of proper dining etiquette most of my relatives had been saving all year for that day. Everyone was politely asking who wanted what to eat.

Near the end of the dinner, my health-conscious aunt asked everyone if they would prefer butter or Parkay for their potatoes. She told us that when you ate them with Parkay they actually tasted better because you felt you were doing something wonderful for your body. Then she said, "Won't you use Parkay? It does a body good!" Some of my relatives were swept away by my aunt's moving speech and chose Parkay at once, but most of us just sat there too confused to act.

My aunt began to break down in tears at the thought of the rest of us destroying our bodies by eating real butter. Soon everyone had chosen Parkay but one boy and me. He was a big boy named Westley. My aunt would not give up, and everyone else began to try to get us to choose Parkay. It was very hot in the dining room and it was getting late. Finally Westley said to me in a whisper, "God damn! I like butter, but I'm famished! Let's be healthy and pig out." So he chose Parkay.

Then I was left all alone as the only one who hadn't yet chosen. My aunt came and begged me to pick Parkay as my relatives wept. They were experiencing unbearable grief as they thought I would surely die young if I chose butter. After all, the Surgeon General said so.

"Langston, why don't you use Parkay? Why don't you use it and save your life?" my relatives cried. Now it was really getting late. I began to feel ashamed of myself,

holding everything up so long. I began to wonder about the lifespan of Westley, who was now satiating his ravenous appetite with sheer delight. He hadn't died yet.

In a final effort, my aunt let me taste test a small sample with Parkay, and a small sample with butter. She asked me which one I liked better. "Butter," I said. My aunt fainted at this point and my family's sorrow overcame me. "Parkay?" I proposed.

Suddenly the whole clan broke into a sea of shouting. Waves of rejoicing swept through the room. Women leaped into the air. My aunt was now recovered and threw her arms around me. Everything quieted down and we ate our potatoes with Parkay.

That night, for the last time in my life, bar none — for it was my final night—I cried. I cried in bed alone, and couldn't stop. My aunt heard me and told my uncle I was crying joyfully because I now knew the secret to long life. But I was really crying because I couldn't bear to tell her that I had lied. She had asked us which we preferred, and I had said Parkay although I really preferred butter. I didn't want Parkay, and because I died of a heart attack that night brought on by stress, I don't believe in Parkay anymore, since it didn't help me that night.



## **Anchors in the Park.**

Jim Dee

**T**onight, I sat on the ship anchors, in the park  
And said that maybe sometime, if I sat  
On the ocean floor, and a warship came over,  
I would take my seat on its anchor,  
Hold onto a giant chain link  
And if it could just hang midway in the water  
As the ship moved across the top,  
I'd travel along if I could for a while,  
Relaxed on the heavy iron and  
Soaking in all of the green,  
The same way that the park is green,  
But the grass is algae, the trees kelp,  
And exhalations are bubbles rising  
To the blurry stars at the top.  
Perhaps the river over the next hill  
Has changed into a long shale current,  
The Susquehanna current, they might call it,  
A fluctuating current — now thick, now thin,  
Here fast, there slow. Even the concrete bridges  
Aren't man-made anymore, rather natural wonders  
Like giant coral or settled petrified glaciers,  
So abstract now that it would do just as well  
To say that someone built the distant mountains,  
Or the stars, or else to say that no one built  
These anchors I'm sitting on. I've become  
A fish who doesn't contemplate the  
Broken bottle which makes his home in the river;  
A part of the nature is all it is,  
Same as these anchors are part of the river commons  
park,  
And I am a part of their new ocean.

## Knott's Berry Farm

Jim Dee

**D**anny takes out the Knott's Berry Farm lighter.  
He's out in the vines with his girl,  
Pointing far off into the richer fields,  
And he's pulling her and her red face close in,  
Lighting up a Camel, prying his way through pickers  
For more berries to pick, better berries—  
He squeezes the red and purple fruit,  
Selective as an old man with a bushel of plums,  
He rubs the red front of his lighter for luck.

Later they're on a roller coaster and it's something  
About the silhouette of a ferris wheel in the  
background,  
Something about the powerful machinery,  
About how the wooden frame bends just a little,  
And about the sparks on the fast curves  
Where she wants to float out of the car  
With him and back into the fields;  
This makes her scream and sink her face

## The One Who Never Falls

Jim Dee

### *Part 1:*

**Y**ou get caught up in walking the tracks,  
As if the Earth was still until you walked  
Straight up a track on a meridian—  
Now the Earth starts to spin,  
Pushed behind by your feet.  
The more you focus on the rail,  
The faster the world goes by,  
Without peripheral vision.

[cont.]

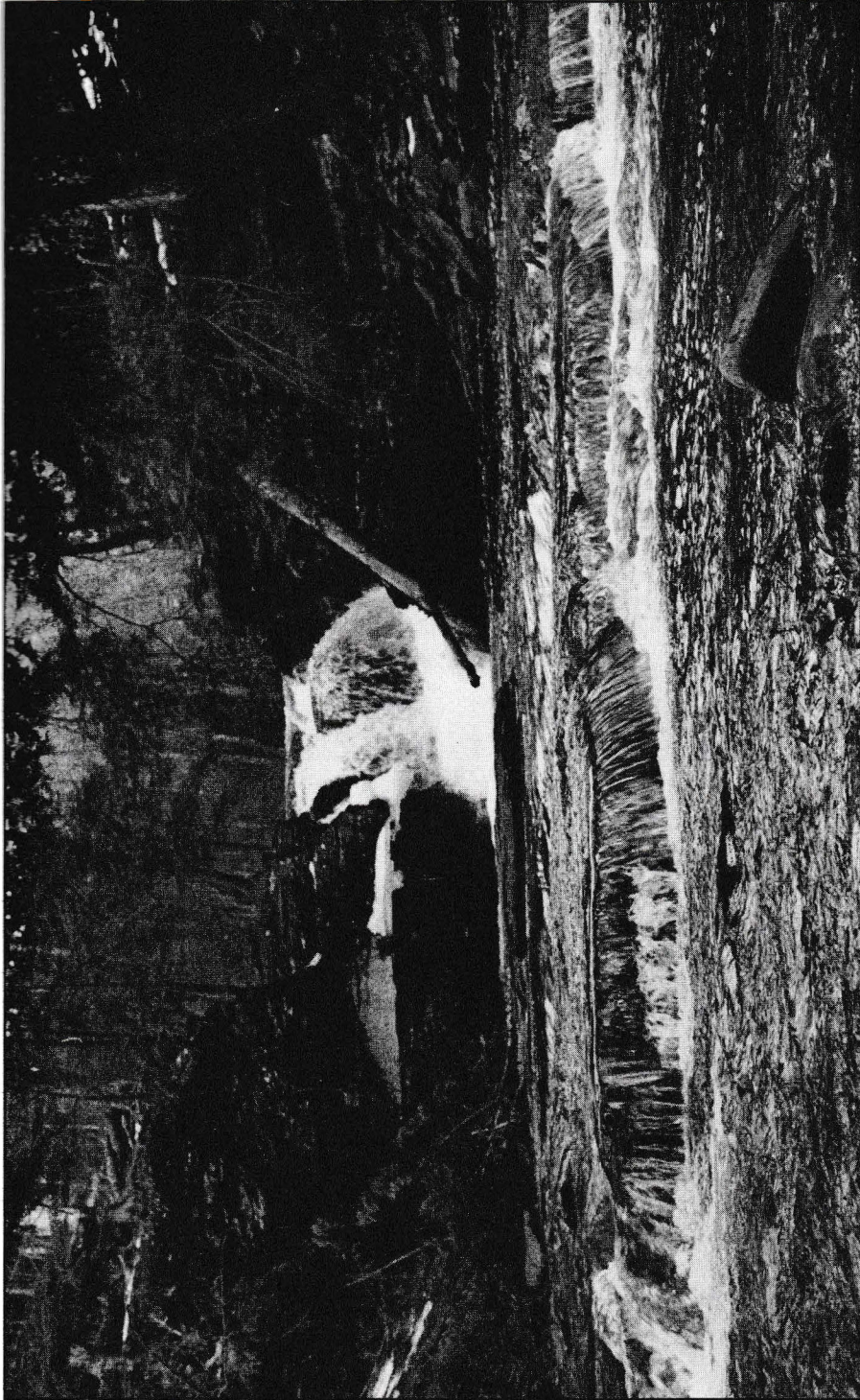


You see one rusty rail,  
An earth sized tread mill  
And just the lateral railroad ties—  
You've passed the equator again,  
The ties are like huge balance beams  
And you need one so you stretch  
Your arms and suddenly you're carrying  
It on your shoulders and your arms  
Become nailed to either end and you are  
Walking towards your crucifixion.  
You look around and there are others  
On the next track walking, trying  
Not to fall as if falling would be the  
End of the line and someone will  
Shove you, railroad tie and all under  
The rails to support trains. Every tie you pass  
Is someone else who didn't make it.  
Maybe cracks in the wood really are a  
Language that says *Hier Ruhe*  
Like old tombstone inscriptions in your  
Town cemetery, and they say  
This is where he gave up  
So they shoved him under the rails  
To hold the engines and boxcars.  
So you walk on, wondering always  
If the far off whistles are warnings  
Of things to come. You start to feel  
The creosote oil in your blood and  
You wonder if maybe you should get off,  
Put your ear down to the iron  
And hear something far off.  
You wonder why some stretches last miles  
And then suddenly  
A slip, you almost fall,  
But twist and contort yourself  
Wildly as if nothing is as important as regaining

Balance -

[cont.]





**"Waterfall 2" by Pat Hozempa**



Part 2:

Once, after a close call, your body  
Is a perfect curtsy;  
Left knee bent, right leg extended back  
And to the left, your back bent and head looking  
Up to an imaginary lady who is pleased  
To meet you and she applauds and so does  
The crowd and certain others wipe away your sweat—  
You are infallible after this,  
The One Who Never Falls.  
*Save yourself*, the others say, *if you're*  
*So great*. But you don't;  
Because nothing is so important  
As finishing,  
To keep on walking,  
To keep the world in motion.

## Underwater

Jim Dee

**U**nder a Pennsylvania lake, where people  
Don't breathe, where it's motionless-  
Black and everyone lies still,  
Sometimes, every hundred years or so,  
Someone is struck by a sinking nickel  
From lovers on the shore, or old fishermen  
In a boat, or a tiny Japanese boy wishing upon  
His faith — someone wishing for luck, let's say,  
And you've wished to take me there,  
Where a heartbeat is not important  
And only happens once a day,  
Too deep for the tiny waves, for the skipping  
Of shale rocks, too deep for the color of a trout,  
Much too deep to know about rain.  
Those people aren't dead and haven't yet drowned,

[cont.]

They are exploring the old coal shafts,  
They are even eating fist-sized chunks of coal  
As if to say that when a person becomes too cold  
And senseless, he must eat such things;  
Become so hungry for such things that he'll  
Glide mouth-first into a cavern wall,  
Suck the Earthen nipples of stalagmites.

## Poem C, Poems Without Numbers

Christine Garrahan

**F**reckled naiveté  
with a baby-eyed chagrin.  
To his mind,  
all those drawings  
he so painstakingly rendered  
are still lifes  
compared to the one before him now.  
Visionary, elusive, disturbingly passionate,  
this is  
the ONE  
he needs me desperately  
to approve.  
I try to play earth mother  
to this tawny naked lion cub,  
hot wired as he is with creative juices.  
But all I can wonder  
is how good he would taste  
as he hovers near my lips  
in patient expectation,  
like a damn puppy dog,  
begging me only for my  
opinion.



## Poem J, Poems Without Numbers

Christine Garrahan

**N**o god-mother-fairy wish  
for anyone,  
so if she would only  
*Look a little harder, girl!*  
the ball gown  
might be  
there.

Wearied by the years  
she spent cloistered in her closet  
trying to find it,  
she held her own masquerade instead—  
invited all the hideous skeletons  
she'd been struggling to dismantle,  
propped them up  
in her dark and ugly hand-me-downs  
and mismatched opportunities,  
stood among them naked,  
her brittle teeth affixed  
in a permanent mock,  
as calm as a little girl  
having stuffed bears  
to tea.

## Poem U, Poems Without Numbers

Christine Garrahan

**T**attered black skin  
gleaming wet  
upon broken metal bones.  
The man discards  
the inverted skeleton,  
clutches his collar  
into a fist against his throat,  
and he leans into  
a storm.

## Cycles

R. G. Haywood

The steel glinted brightly in the moonlight as she moved slowly and carefully through the alleyway. The knife that turned nervously between her fingers had been handcrafted by her father and passed on to her.

As she approached the doorway, that she remembered to be her destination, the dagger swiftly disappeared. At the slightest touch the door creaked and gave way to a dark corridor. She stepped in and moved softly down the passage. At the end, in the shadows a set of stairs grew up into the darkness. Gently she climbed, feeling her way as she went. When she reached the top she saw a light flickering a few feet away. She moved toward it.

The door was opened only a crack but she could see a man. Although no longer young, his body was muscular, he moved lithely and impatiently about the dimly lit room. In his hand was a thick glass filled with an amber liquid she knew to be scotch.

She attached a sly smile to her lips and pushed the door open in front of her. He just looked at her, she could sense that he was angry with her.

"I know I'm late but I couldn't find this place. I never remember the way here," she lied. "You missed me though didn't you?" she asked coyly.

"Yes," he said gruffly and pulled her to him.

His hands moved all over her as they kissed and her hands worked at loosening his tie. That done, she started unbuttoning his shirt. She felt rather than saw his hand move her dress up and he squeezed her thigh roughly. She knew his routine well.

Until his breathing slowed to an even pace she remained next to him, then without waking him, she slipped out of the bed. She crossed to the pile of clothes she had left and pulled out her dagger. It felt good as she



weighted it on her palm. Moving back she called his name softly.

He didn't open his eyes, he just smiled and patted the place next to him on the bed. Instead she climbed on top of his chest with only the sheet separating them. He rested his hands on her thighs and she set her left hand on his chest, while her right arm pulled back, ready to strike.

She drove the blade into his chest just inches away from her left hand. His eyes opened in shock but he made no sound. She stared into them as they began to glaze over and became absorbed in the sudden pain and sorrow pictured there. She didn't feel pity but a completion of a cycle and reveled in the part she played in it.

Brought back to reality by the thrill of warm blood flowing onto her hand, she pulled the knife out slowly and stepped into the bathroom. She washed it meticulously, cleaning him from her mind. Then she took a scalding hot shower to clean him from her body. It was a personal thing with her to take this time to put herself back together. It soothed her while her juices raced because she found death exotic, especially when she was the cause.

She pulled on her clothes slowly without looking toward him. Then, pausing before she slipped on her soft-soled sandals, she turned to the bed. It seemed as if he were just sleeping except for the red stain beginning to darken the sheet. She was never fully aware of the finality of her actions. She didn't remain long enough for the memory to become real rather than an opening scene from "Miami Vice" or "Cagney and Lacey."

Crossing to the door she stopped, pulled on her shoes, and listened but she heard no sound so she turned the lock and moved out into the eternally dark corridor. Remaining unseen, she appeared back on the street as the first rays of dawn began to glow across the sky. A cool breeze stirred her hair.

## Mirrored Blindness

R. G. Haywood

Shadowed black sockets,  
mirror-covered,  
reflecting me back  
at myself.

Your cruelty  
is what  
you can't face  
not me.

Watch me  
blind man,  
I am running  
away.

## The 90's (Decade of Healing)

Eddie Lupico & Robert Kressly  
*For Ronald Dahl*  
*il miglior fabbro.*

Laura Palmer is Dead!  
Who did it?

Bart Simpson, we bet.

Or was it Julee Cruise,  
weighted by vanity—  
career fostered by falsies.

It is a decade of regret,  
not of things passed, but for  
things not yet experienced.

Artists, pull down thy vanity.<sup>1</sup>  
*Married With Children* has outdone your Genius.

[cont.]



Andy, pull down!

Freedom to KISS my star-spangled  
asshole.

shanty      shanty      shanty

This is what the GOP has condemned our brothers  
to live in.

Let not sister earth be  
raped with man's technical dildoes.

We address thee:

New York, Los Angeles, Moscow, Warsaw,  
Paris, Munich

Has du etwas gegen mich?  
Ja oder

nein?

Ich,    ich,    ich,

saw Your smile, so false.

Your stomach, bloated with excess—  
fingers gripping the window sill.

Cities of earth!

Your rivers run black with the waste of  
techno-pop-life.

Your streets caving in from the weight of  
Your forgotten generation.

You will answer for my generation's death!  
You who in Moloch generate madness.



**"I Wept Because My Eyes Were Opened To  
Reality" by Colette Elick**



Sybil Danning does not have the answers.  
Madchen Amick is more ephemeral than a Noxema  
commercial.

Dinah Shore will soon pass away!      Nevermore!

We implore thee!  
Herald us a new Era!

The River

flows

—a prophet in a basket,  
—a cheese wheel on the brink,

a drip from mother's  
kitchen sink.

Do we still devour that glass of water?

Cafe Angelica, after the War:  
*You take cream in that?*  
The reply: Vortex, the black emptiness of space.

Like Madonnathon leaves a hole in the intellect.  
Like Rachel Ward screaming:

*Help! My Hair is on fire!*

More than a prettyface, Johnny,  
Winona,  
Sheryl Lee, and  
Tom Cruise.

Now, to my father . . .

I breathed easy when fishing with you on  
the River,

Paradise.

The Blue Heron against the mountain, which  
your face outdid in Wisdom and Beauty, still  
flies there perhaps.

[cont.]

Is heaven really there on the big screen,  
or will it fit into our television?       Where?

Basil Bunting  
Basil Bunting

How does thy garden grow?

Jessica Hahn has popularized the era of the  
ultimate Jism!

Don't blame her. Blame Heather.

I saw a new  
record by New  
Kids on the Block.

I bought it.  
I played it over and over and over, memorizing the  
words . . .

In the beginning there was God and the word,  
and the word was God, and the word was without  
form,  
and darkness was (?) upon the face of earth.

Positive action!

In the library, on the tennis court, under the stars,  
You are singing that old familiar song.

---

1. For the phrase "pull down thy vanity." and for  
the general framework of lines 5-15, we are  
indebted to Ezra Pound; lines 146—162 of Canto  
LXXXI.



## One Night, Arriving Home

Robert Kressly

**O**ne night when I come home, stare I will,  
at vanity.  
In the mirror, staring, concentrating on  
me, me.  
Laughing, saying,  
renouncing  
these addictions which build caskets.  
Staring at  
me.  
Hands as white as mine thrust from  
the mirror; catapulted,  
wrapping around my laugh  
worn throat.  
Handling me, shaking my form,  
making me dance like a  
pagan in a storm of charisma.  
Forced to the floor by hands,  
me.  
Choking and ripping at lust and rock.  
Beginning to end, having faced the soil.  
Shattered, half existing,  
but unable to mirror Salvation.

## Two Undo Haiku

Robert Kressly

**B**listering summer sweat; on her  
reflecting, flexing chest.

Heat and riverspray; I sit down,  
my nuts on a baking rock.



**"Dali's Women" by Colette Elick**



## [arrange the colors and. . .]

Craig K. Larimer

**a**rrange the colors and  
revolt against the rules which  
tell you to do things

for all the wrong reasons  
or for safety's sake.  
revel in the joys which you

alone can understand.  
rest not until this  
task is complete.  
spend hours at work

searching for solutions  
asking questions  
keeping this in mind  
escaping reality each day.

## Fields

Kevin McDonald

**H**e put the car in park.  
She watched him  
Turn off the lights,  
But not turn on the radio  
As was the custom.  
Three years after  
Since they first stopped  
On the edge of this field,  
Trees are growing  
Over the abandoned farm.  
Before,  
His face would light as he stargazed,  
Now,  
There was a growing tension on his brow.

[cont.]

He leaned out the window,  
Surveying the empty field  
Where fertile land once provided.  
She could only sigh  
And see the trees and weeds  
Invading and scarring the field.  
She fumbled through her purse  
Looking for a light to her smoke,  
He thought of the lighter in his pocket,  
But he didn't offer.  
He thought of their dream,  
To buy this land,  
But large trees are hard to clear,  
The roots are too deep.

## My Brother's Chevy

Kevin McDonald

**N**ow only a shell, your  
Old Chevy rusts down  
The edge of the yard.  
Saplings shadow  
The quietly crumbling  
Machine; slowly fading  
Paint, memories.  
Two years after,  
The primer fender remains  
Unrepaired from our icy  
Night scare. Back seat  
Rips from the pooch  
That followed you home.  
Your jean jacket still  
Waits like a co-pilot  
For a Friday night drag.  
Sun stained yellow pack  
Of Marlboro's and the engraved  
Lighter I gave you last Christmas-  
Tossed on the dash, left



From that night before.  
More dead leaves stick  
To the windshield and  
Soon the woods will bury it,  
But no one will move it.

## Near the Susquehanna

Kevin McDonald

**F**amily of four walks down  
Franklin Street, pushing their lives  
In a grocery cart. I watch two gay  
Street people panhandle for a Nightrain  
Evening under the stars.  
Thirty year old toothless war-pigs, with a perfume  
Like the Susquehanna in hot August,  
Tempt me with flesh pleasure. Dreg-  
Locked Jamaicans jabber to me about  
The grass of Heaven,  
For \$200 a 1/4 ounce.  
Charlie the bum offers  
Assistance to underaged  
Rebels if they slip him two bucks  
Or a couple from the case. Skin  
Head heroes look to take  
On the niggers in the shadow  
Of town hall. Under  
The South Street Bridge a  
Young fool hangs  
Ass a sign of dealer's justice. His  
Sins are carved in his chest. There's  
.44 caliber truths in O'KT.

## Skunktown's Death

Kevin McDonald

**I**n primitive pursuits of  
Black Gold, Skunktown scarred  
And stripped itself. Sixteen

[cont.]

Hours and debtors to the  
Company Store.  
Home-wives picked over culm  
Banks and canned tomatoes, sent  
Children into the mountains for  
Blueberry ingredients.  
Soot covered homes remind  
Of the two year mine fire,  
Black laundry proof of miners'  
Lung cancer that always  
Caved them in at last.  
Once Welsh Hill, Irish Patch,  
And Polish Streets divided. Now  
Opened to the colliery's cold  
Shadow. Boom town cafes became  
Low income apartments, dance hall  
Dry rotted and burned last year,  
But the bars still do well here.  
Until I-81 paved over rail yards  
Skunktowners had to stay. Now from the  
Highway exit I see the dilapidated  
Colliery—the Blue Coal Monument  
To my grandfather's grave.

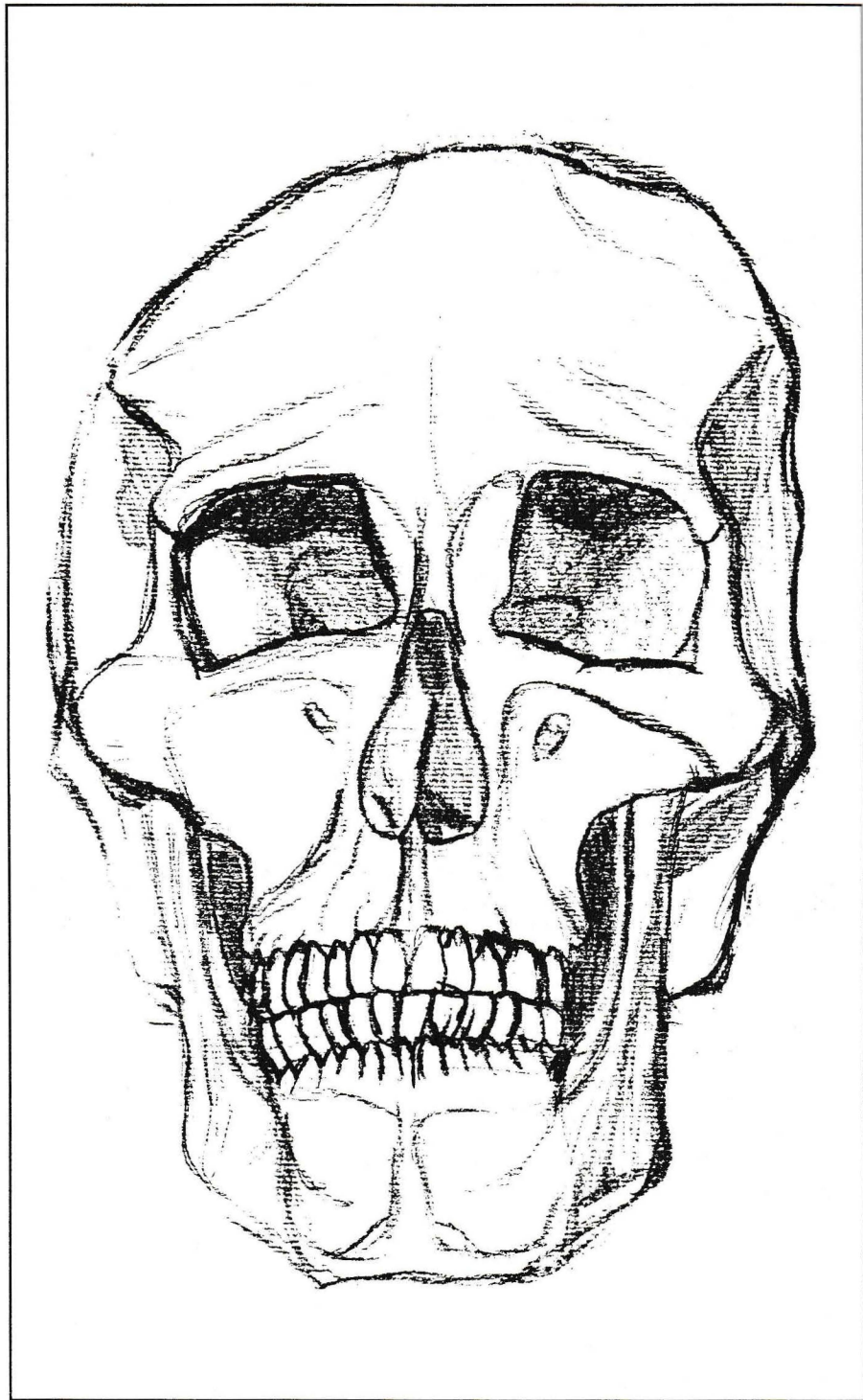
## Death

Ed McGinnis

**W**hen, I ask, has death occurred?  
The line twixt he and life has blurred,  
Once breathless bodies were cover'd in the grave  
Whose unfortunate souls may have today been saved.  
Did these ancient undead scream unheard?  
Not long past, beatless hearts meant death assured,  
Victims of diseases, who today would be cured.  
A stethoscope, with certainty exclaimed  
That death another life had claimed.  
Now a brainwave drops, and a man has died,  
With science today he is not revived.  
How low the activity and how long the wait

[cont.]





**"Skull" by Richard Zeszotarski**

Till death is declared differs in each state.  
But tomorrow would even he have survived?  
Life and death, death and life that game  
Of who is alive and who does death claim  
Plays, 'till in eternal night we fade  
And mix with the creation God has made.  
Then will we find that life and death are the same.

### **IT'S A GIRL MY LORD, IN A FLATBED FORD**

Ralph W. Middaugh, Jr.

**T**he radio squawks from the speakers  
Dust-covered and beaten behind the door panels  
Spewing the harmonies of a band that couldn't stay  
together any longer.  
They're trying to convince me to take it easy.  
But no matter how much she slows down  
She throttles her Ford away when she's done looking at  
me.

Maybe it's the rust that used to be a car;  
Or maybe it's the face that shows it used to smile.  
To hell with the load I'm carrying,  
And damn who's on my mind.  
I'll be long gone before I run out of road  
And the wheels sound encouraging from here.



## The Eyes

Melanie O'Donnell

Tonight I saw the eyes again. They were looking down at me, from outside that high, high window after THEY turned the lights off. I like the eyes. They are big and yellow and look something like flashlights only they are not flashlights because they blink. They don't blink very much, mind you, or very fast, either but they do blink. Also each one has a dark pool inside it that gets just a little larger after each time it blinks. But then it gets smaller again.

Sometimes when the eyes come they remind me of the other place, the place of chalkboards and desks and notebooks and children. The children come in my dreams like thin tissue paper, memories of Jennie and Nicholas and Solomon and Moses. I told them Bible stories. If only they listened. Jennie had flaming red hair. She would be beautiful. I liked the other place when she was there. I do not like this place. My pillow is too soft and my floor is too soft and no one ever comes to visit me and everything is so SOFT! SOFT! SOFT!

But I like the eyes, because they remind me of the fires. And I liked the fires. Sometimes I would see the eyes dancing in the fires, dancing with a little black body that would hop and hop and hop all over the place. And all you could see was its big, yellow eyes. And then sometimes it would laugh, yes, it would *laugh*, and then you could see its white fangs and its red, red tongue. And I would laugh with it, or at least I would smile, until one night I laughed too loud and THEY came and took me away. And I did not see the eyes for a long, long time.

THEY put me in this room and every night THEY shut off all the lights so I could see NOTHING for many, many nights, I think it has been years, but now the eyes are back.

They come almost every night to look in on me. I love the eyes.

The eyes came tonight, but this time it was different. This time they were in the room with me.





**by Richard Zeszotarski**



## For Tommy

Melanie O'Donnell

**S**ometimes

As she slides on past our table at the pub,  
You can almost see her glance at you  
Just to see if you're watching.

She drinks dry martinis and flirts with all the men  
And though your face stays pale, I can feel you boiling

hot

Mad—

Jealous—

Humiliated—and—

Definitely

In

Because she seemed like she really did

Love you once

And you believed her.

Now, drowning in your cheap beer,

With only me for company,

You try convincing yourself

That she's not worth it

That

The flashy clothes, the refined talk, the expensive  
habits

Were not a part of

Your way

And could never be

That

Your mother doesn't approve of the girls with red  
fingertips

And \$200 purses.

And now she laughs, sounding as if

There were a wind chime stuck deep in her pale  
throat—

And the boys at the bar

[cont.]

Were producing the wind.

For a moment I saw the glance—

Are you looking?

Are you watching?

Do you see?

And I feel she really did

Love you once.

But

You know that,

Don't you?

**Geese**

Petunia

You fly south for the winter  
And north in the summer  
Both times leaving behind the life you made.

Although you give no warning of your departure,  
I will never forget you, or the way you rise  
So softly from the air below your wings.

I impatiently wait for your return,  
To hear your language only you understand,  
To see if your colors still shine as bright as I remember.

I sometimes wish I could fly beside you,  
But would your life accept another?  
An intruder in your free flight?

I ask questions, impatiently waiting for an answer,  
But before you reply,  
Southward you fly.



## Birth of a Decade

Vito Sebastian Quaglia

**R**adical 60's w/his

Racial riots raped

Disco 70's

Their illegitimate she-male is the 90's

Forcefully from behind

Psychedelia mounted glittering bell-bottom

After ten years of stillbirths

The wicked infant is born

Listening to the White Album in vain

I know the Beatles couldn't save us

## Haina

Vito Sebastian Quaglia

**C**huck the mechanic

in a barstool pose

w/Jack in hand

and weed

Roofing contracts and

Maryjane

Splitting his shifts among

da two

High school sweethearts

hurt the most

icy-veined

and strong

Scrant'n

w/its coal glow beauty

da stadium

an' da Barons

Roofing contracts and  
the baby daughter  
He hasn't seen in months  
Chistmas gifts  
but no child support  
5.00/hr

## **The Last Stand**

Eric M. Sullivan

**T**hey stand tall and proud in the battlefield  
Below burning suns, numbing blizzards, and drowning  
rains.  
Always in their battle fatigues, they wait  
Wait in helpless despair of the upcoming slaughter  
United in their universal cause.  
Armed only with might courage and strength  
They wait in line for the assassins' guns.  
Guns that appear life-like with grinding teeth.  
Bellowing, taunts of horror spew from their frightening  
figures.  
Upon confrontation limbs tremble, bodies fall.  
The assassins move ever forward, deeper  
Into the heart of the ranks.  
Moving onward till no one is left standing.  
The assassins, brutal in nature  
Stack and dismember the bodies.  
A solemn silence saturates the air,  
As clouds weep above.

## **A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE 5:50 FROM PORT AUTHORITY TO SOMERVILLE**

Carolyn Swalina

**D**id you ever wonder what it would be like to go  
insane on a bus? I don't mean mumbling or laughing for  
no reason, I mean like full-blown gonzo yes-this-is-it

[cont.]



nuts. Like standing up in the middle of the bus announcing a hijacking. I thought about it, but I mean, where do you hijack a bus to? Provided I wasn't subdued immediately. I thought about that, but really, it's a New York bus. These people have seen it all. There's a woman on the bus right now being analyzed, and if she were to flip out, I think I'd tell her to quiet down 'cause I've got a hell of a headache and I'm too tired to be hijacked thank-you. Thirteen hour days do that to one. But this woman has been going on for almost twenty minutes. She sounds like Spacek. She just has this southern drawl as she says "From the day I first talked to him—it's spiritual, it's our sooulls (long and drawn out)." She reminds me of my old place in Pennsylvania. She's wearing my couch upholstery. No, not cliché plaid, but these ugly red and orange flowers/weedy kinda pattern. I hated that couch.

So say I successfully get everyone's attention. That's provided that I can get around this woman sitting next to me and get to the aisle. I've often wished I had enough money to buy two tickets, so when people say "Can I sit here?" I can say "No, this is my seat, I've paid for it."

So I'm in the aisle hijacking a bus. Where do you hijack a bus to? An airport? Eventually I'd be surrounded by a convoy of police. It's not like an airplane where you can leave the police on another continent.

I kinda wish this woman would completely lose it. I could use the excitement. I wouldn't care where we were hijacked to. Could you see me on TV leaning out the window of a police-surrounded bus saying "She demands a refill of gas and cheese sandwiches for all. Tom Brokaw, back to you . . ."

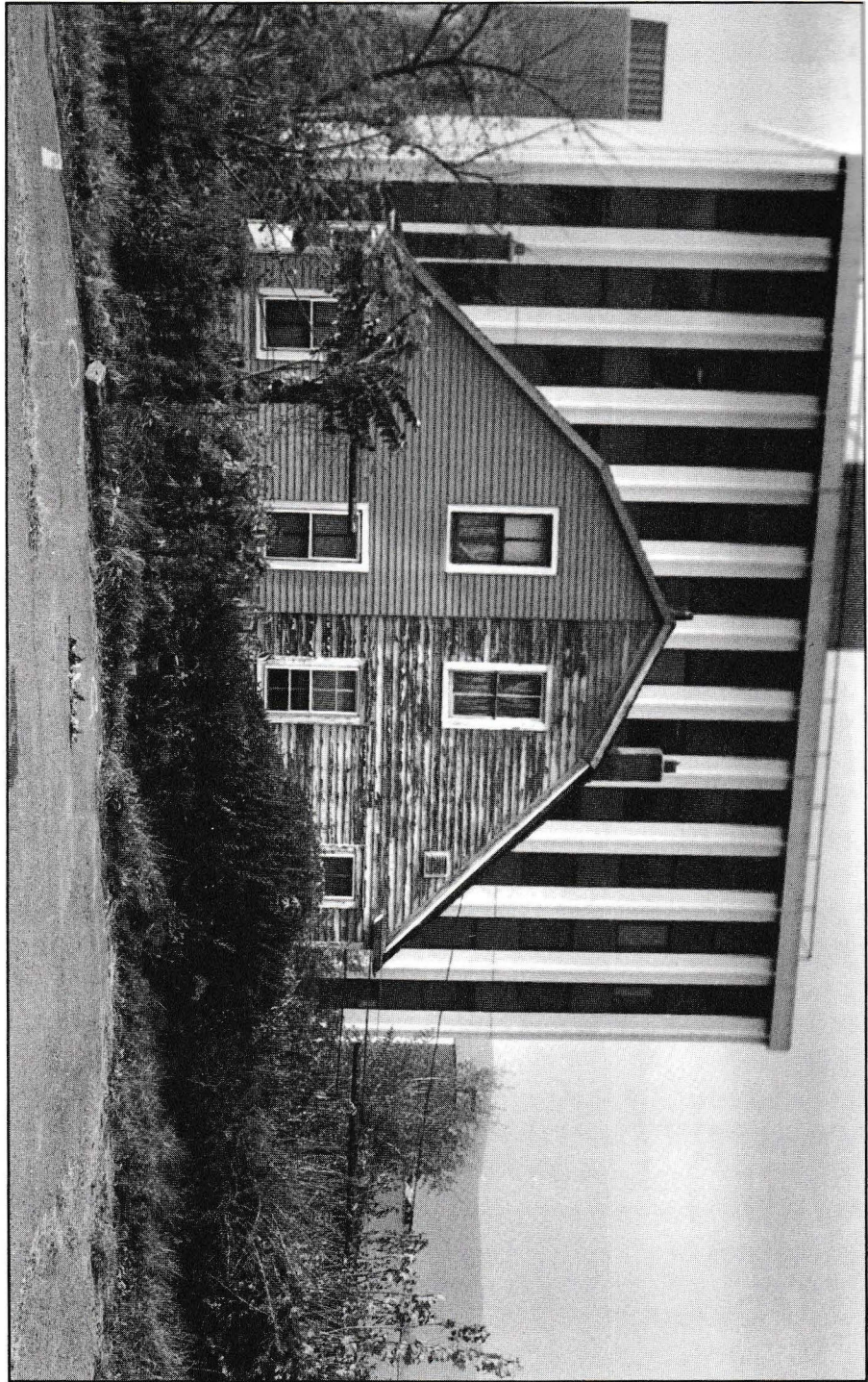
## Tuna Is A Ugly Fish

Carolyn Swalina

All I want is  
What I had  
I keep trying to remember  
Everything  
I am afraid that if I  
Forget  
It won't have existed  
The bridge by the  
Diner  
Used to have on it  
Spraypainted  
"TUNA IS A UGLY FISH"  
I remember when coming home  
I'd see it  
But they cleaned up the bridge  
A few years back  
And I forgot 'til now  
They tore down the diner  
Last month  
Carbide bought it out  
Moved it  
What happens when  
I leave  
And all the stuff leaves  
And  
Who will remember  
I want to go  
Back to the bridge  
With a can of black spraypaint  
And write  
"TUNA IS A UGLY FISH"  
Up there again  
I want to find out who  
Wrote that  
And what it meant

[cont.]





**by Richard Zeszotarski**



And tell him that  
Whenever I saw it I  
Knew the weekend was  
Over  
I was coming home  
But now it's changed and  
The diner is gone  
And I want what I had  
Is that too much  
To ask  
This time I'd  
Appreciate it

## The Nutcracker

Adrienne Tinney

September.

And once again I begin  
to prepare  
my stiff limbs  
for four long months  
of incessant bodily  
torture  
of twisting  
and turning  
and pirouetting

and

POUNCING  
into satiny-steel shoes,  
tearing  
the bloodied dermis of my feet  
simultaneously  
spinning s p

g i  
n n  
i n  
n i  
n n  
i g  
p s

[cont.]



and making love  
with music  
in the arms of  
my prince  
Just as Clara arrives  
with hers  
in a  
Land of Snow

and a  
Kingdom of Sweets  
greeted by a corps  
and soloists  
and primas  
and flowers  
and applause and

#### CURTAIN

out into  
real clothes  
real snow  
real life  
of winter.

### ?-1

Carey Toole

**T**ake a look around you.  
Take a look outside.  
Open your doors to the questions knocking.  
Invite them in;  
    Serve them tea and time.  
Come in, come in . . .  
You should hear yourself say.  
Take them into that little room that has long been  
forgotten.

Give them cake and courtesy.  
Lay out that paisley cloth, and spread it graciously on  
your table.  
Show them that you care.  
For they are, after all;  
Yours.

OR

You could turn skyward your volume of silence,  
And lock the door.

## Lament

Paul Winarski

**T**he summer moon has flown its flight  
The trees are damp and bare—  
The moon emits a shallow light  
And shows no thoughts of care.

As lakes turn cold and loneliness  
Strikes the soul of man  
I strive with discontentedness  
To do what things I can.

I look to days of merry tasks  
To comfort muddled thought  
And all the while, myself I ask:  
*Why be what I am not?*

As friends depart and lovers fly  
The lakes turn 'round and freeze.  
As birds seek nests and old men die  
The heather coats the leas.

Wisdom of ages long ago  
Continues through the years  
Some spirits high, some spirits low,  
Not one is free from tears.



## Liver Eating Lepers of Gosha

Tracy Youells

**M**y father told me how you come out at night  
and how you catch humans  
and how you eat our livers while the corpses are still  
warm  
to replenish your own decaying limbs.

Be still! What was that?  
Nothing. Just Nothing.  
I can not see, so my ears  
pretend they hear so my brain does not  
become bored.

Why oh why  
did I volunteer to get the water tonight?  
Stupid,  
you volunteered because your mother works all day  
digging, grinding, cooking roots,  
so your father can come home from working the  
ranch and rest.

I wish my father still had his cows,  
with their soft muzzles, and  
sticky tongues,  
I miss their milk,  
and the big, black bull,  
I used to call him *Mrembo*, the beautiful

one.  
Now,  
My brothers and father  
herd each other home late at night  
staggering.

The fire. I can see the fire.  
The village, home, for now.  
I bet my mother is still weaving the

[cont.]

brightly colored strands of  
plastic, much better than grass dyed with ochre.  
There is no singing tonight,  
not much ever anymore, for everyone gets up  
so early  
to work.

Hurry, there's still some darkness left.  
Sorry, lepers.  
I can still remember my grandfather's songs,  
and you can not have my liver tonight.

## Luxury

Tracy Youells

**F**irst thing I see when I wake  
is the back of your head.

My eyes travel the contour  
of your shoulder and ribs, resting  
on the hollow of your waist.  
Your skin is so smooth as I slide my arm  
around you. You moan, unwaking,  
as my fingers intertwine in the warm  
softness they were seeking.  
The brightness behind the curtain  
slowly spread over your side  
of the bed.

The coffee keeps.



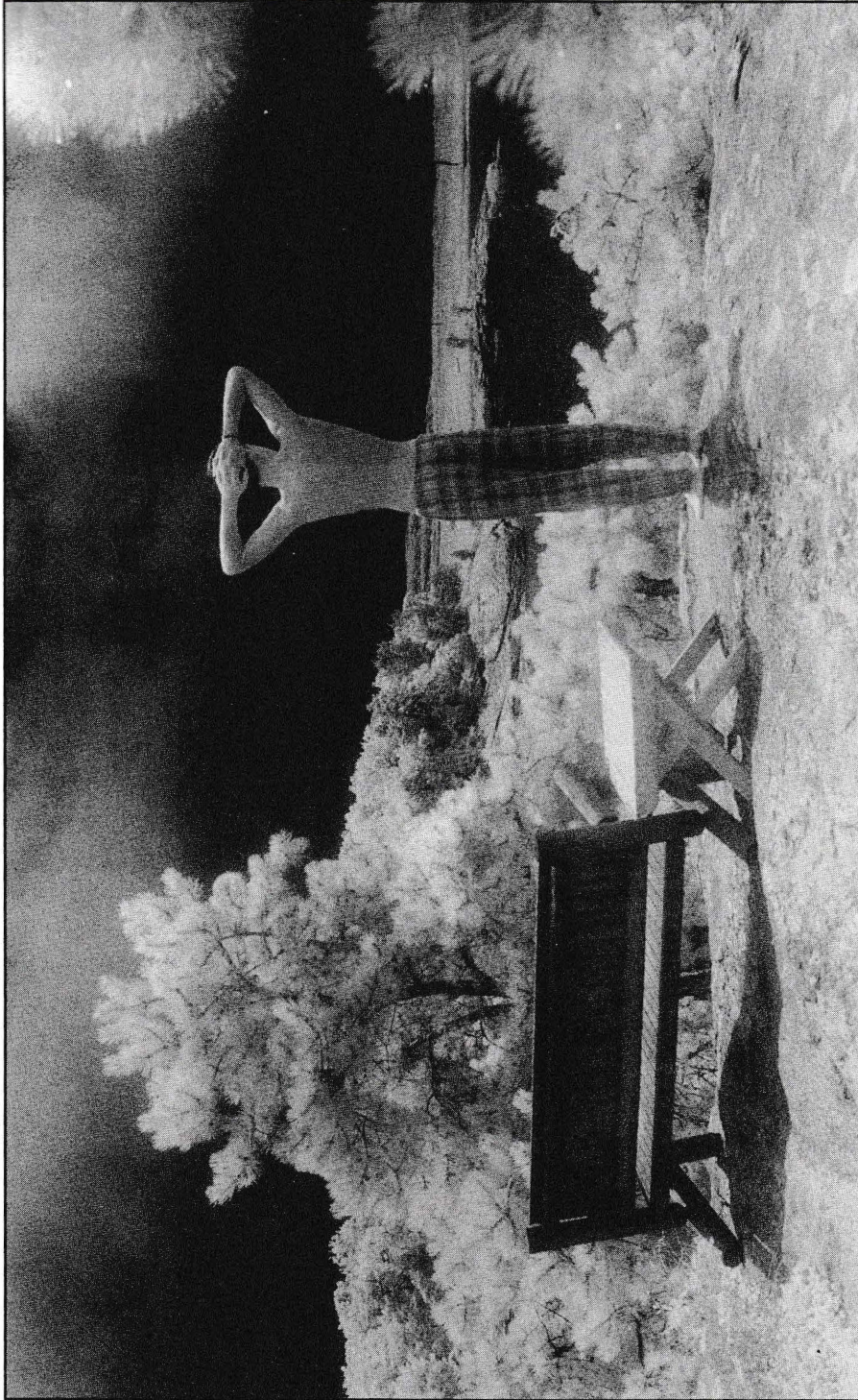
## Melvin's Music

Tracy Youlles

Surrounded on the couch by unfolded clothes,  
I can't keep the anchors and tanks in the screen  
Without the keys in your pocket pressing into my  
cheek,  
And their holographic images float out the window,  
Bouncing off the recliner; my usual  
Perch from where I watch you sleep.  
ABC and CNN cannot compete  
For my attention when your body  
Fills my field of vision.  
On the couch molded in your form, I  
Fold the closest things I can get to your  
Skin. I find the black  
Sweatshirt you wore on Wednesday that I  
Remember hanging from a tree with my  
Pink Playboys.  
The rush of the nearby water fall and the  
Low sustained notes produced by my  
Voice combined in a  
Delightful dissonance, a cacophony of ecstasy.  
The leaves protected my skin from the  
Cold, but they couldn't cushion the  
Small of my back against that  
Rock hard annoyance of a tree root.  
The sun approving  
Danced in your hair. I went swimming in the  
Blue of your eyes and drowned in the  
Sweat that collected in the closeness of our  
Bodies. The water continued to fall,  
Despite our leaving the earth. Smiling,  
We deprived the tree of your  
Sweatshirt, but the Playboys have become  
One less thing for me to fold.  
Everything folded, I return my  
Eyes to the TV and my hands gingerly place the stacks

[cont.]





**by Matthew C. Dugan & Donna Schou**



Of colored softness into the basket. Replacing the  
laundry on  
The couch are Oreos and Ding Dongs, Doritos and  
Wheat thins, Pepsi and Hersheys. Without  
You to nod approvingly across the table,  
I don't see much the point in cooking. My stomach  
Begins to repel the flotsam as the  
Hour of your arrival approaches. Its insistent  
Efforts to evoke an eruption of the contents ripple  
upward,  
Until it reaches my heart, throat, and  
Dizzies my brain. I surround myself in  
Silk, to cool the feverish qualms and  
Pull back the hair whose confused flight  
Contributes to the chaos  
Devouring my nervous system. I avoid the  
meteorological  
Messenger of doom, promising the snow that  
Buries me  
Under a blanket of stale anticipation, quiet waiting  
Repressing noisy desire. I search,  
Meaningless programming the quest at hand.  
Lulling me to sleep, expediting the time, my  
Kitchen clock speeding, darkness silencing  
Memories and imaginative speculations. I awake to  
your  
Hands, gently rubbing away the grease of my  
Chores, the ugliness, the tarnishing of my own  
opinions. The  
Healing power in your fingertips releases my  
Hair, awakens my breasts, teases my thighs until  
You become overcome by your own  
Gift, restoring our souls  
Transformed, polished into perfect Pythagorean  
harmony.







1129.

Tell all the Truth but tell it slant -  
Success in Circuit lies  
Too bright for our infirm Delight  
The Truth's superb surprise  
As Lightning to the Children eased  
With explanation kind  
The Truth must dazzle gradually  
Or every man be blind -

Emily Dickinson  
circa 1868







**Wilkes University**