

Doug Payne

Goodnight Kiss

Shyly, softly, slowly reaching
and just barely
touching

her lips

fluttered like

moth wings, leaving

dust on my lips

as

she

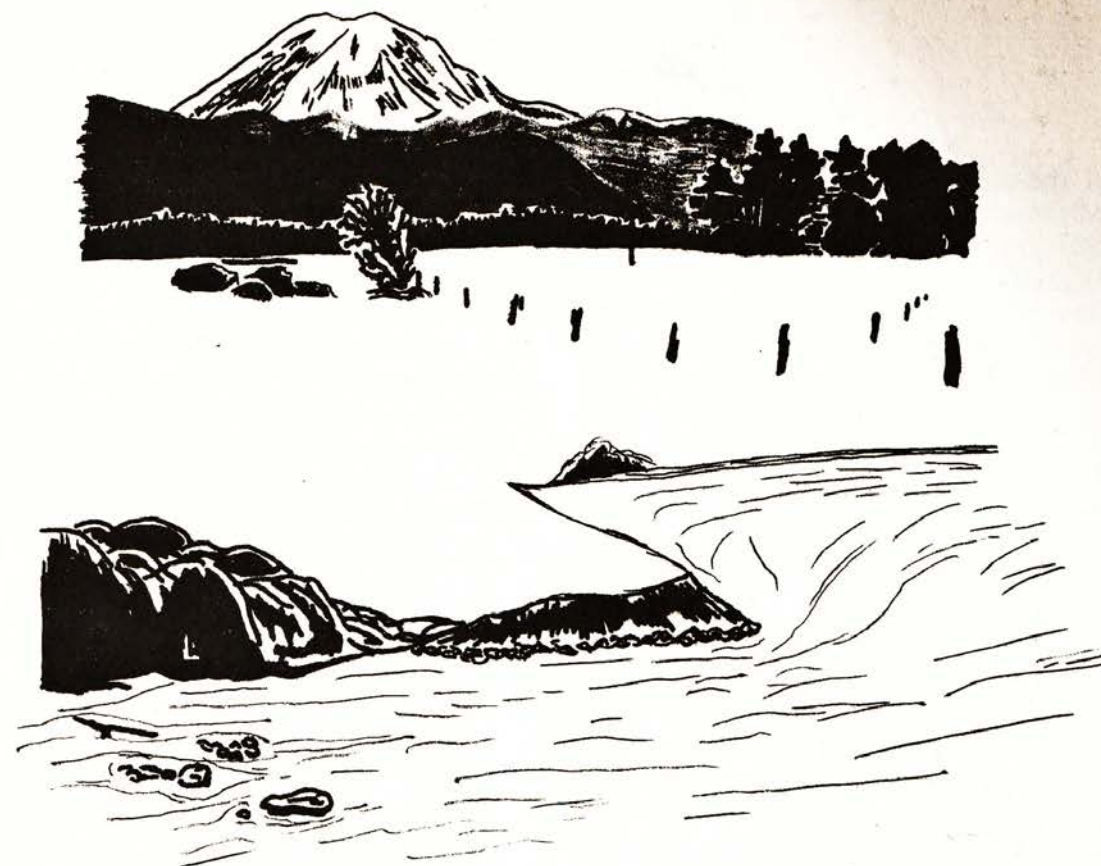
slid

through

the door

!

Berry Carraher



"BEGINNINGS"

Newborn blades of grass
danced timidly
amid last year's tall survivors,
and the brown grasses,
Which had not lasted
through the last winter,
blanketed the earth.
with their warmth.
The thinnest branches above
bowed to the passing breeze
outlining the hollow sky beyond.
A pale yellow shine
breathed into the air,
yet too young
to warm the hill.

Maggi O'Keefe

BAD HABIT

The demise of Biff Masters would be a loss to no one, unless to some insane bounty hunter. There were few men who would risk eternal absence for the official benefits of securing Masters alive.

Martin Wayne hesitated and then laughed silently to himself. No, there was no way he could collect the reward on Masters. But with thirty million credits worth of stolen drugs in the spacecraft's small hold, there was no need. Thirty million was a monumental number. In credits, it could last more than one lifetime.

Wayne had been pretending to sleep for three hours. He carefully regulated each slow inhalation, each gentle fall of his chest. He was certain Masters was asleep, but he waited longer. No mistake could be tolerated. On the cot next to his, facing the other way, Masters slept comfortably.

Wayne's hand crept under his pillow to settle on the metal contours of a small wicked blaster. He slid the pistol along the sheet while easing the blanket away from his body. Soundlessly, his heels touched the floor, and he stood in the half dark of the room. He was fully clothed, a deadly gleam of silver gracing his right hand. Wayne put a booted right foot on Master's shoulder and gave him a nudge. "Biff," he said softly. A little louder, "Biff, boy."

Masters put his head up groggily to face Wayne and the lethal handgun pointing directly into his chest.

"Just wanted you to know," Wayne said, and with a soft pressure of his finger, he turned Masters into a cinder. The flash of heat warmed Wayne's set features and dispersed itself into cold walls. Charred smells and wisps of smoke rose off the cinder and were carried away by the ventilator.

Wayne pursed his lips and gave a little puff which he immediately regretted. Masters floated all over the room in powdery black flakes.

An expression of mock concern settled on Wayne's face. "Oh. What a terrible accident!" He sighed and shrugged his shoulders. "Well, Biff, boy. I suppose it was for the best. After all, the Patrol is looking for you, not me. I mean, they didn't even know I was in on this." A realization then seemed to trouble him, and he turned to address a particularly large ash.

"I guess I'll have to sell your half of the drugs. And keep the money, too... I know you would have wanted that."

Wayne's face broke into a smile, and he let the blaster fall fall warm onto his cot. He threw back his head and roared with laughter and relief. "You're dead you goddam dirty bastard! Now I don't have to put up with your ugly face, your mental incapacities, your goddam finger snapping..." Wayne cringed at the thought.

Some people muttered unconsciously; others chewed their nails. Biff Masters snapped his fingers. Wayne had been needled to a ragged edge by that regular, irking, appalling, popping sound which had been a constant accompaniment to Masters' speech and thought. And when Masters hadn't been talking, he'd been thinking.

Wayne smiled again, broadly, as he thought about it. No more.

Wayne leisurely scooped up all he could find of Biff Masters and sent him jetting out the waste push tube, neatly machine wrapped, into the airless fabric of space. The ship automatically compensated for the slight push of the disposer and began to pull ahead and away from the slower jetsam. The spacecraft soon left the cold and lonely package behind, a dark fleck spinning off toward the remote stars.

The single space pilot checked the ship's course to be certain that he was still heading for Mars. He then gave a snappy salute to the waste disposer. "Biff, boy, you couldn't have died at a better time."

He turned his back...and then he heard something. It was a small sound, but clearly audible. Something familiar...It happened again. And again. His head jerked around. The sound was coming from the waste disposer. A popping sound...His mind iced over, and he could feel a sticky layer of sweat encasing his blanched skin. SOMEONE WAS SNAPPING HIS FINGERS!

He drew the back of his quivering hand against his mouth. This couldn't be happening. Something was wrong. Impossibility...unreal...

Wayne's mind instinctively latched onto the only explanation and fought its way slowly up from the depths of sleep. And he was on his cot. A dream. He had waited too long and gone to sleep! A goddam dream! With a tense effort at ease, he turned his head to see Masters.

Masters was on the other side of the room, not oxidized in the least, but slouching easily in a chair; facing Wayne.

Wayne felt drained. Masters would just have to die another time. Then he remembered his clothes. "Man, was I blown out last night," Wayne grunted. "I didn't even take off my boots." He swung his feet to the floor and sat up.

Masters said nothing. The long fingers of his left hand worked in easy, unhurried motions, producing loud irritating pops at the end of each.

Wayne grimaced. "Do you have to do that every eeking hour?"

Masters said nothing. The snapping rhythm of his fingers increased in tempo.

"You bastard, I hope your hand falls off."

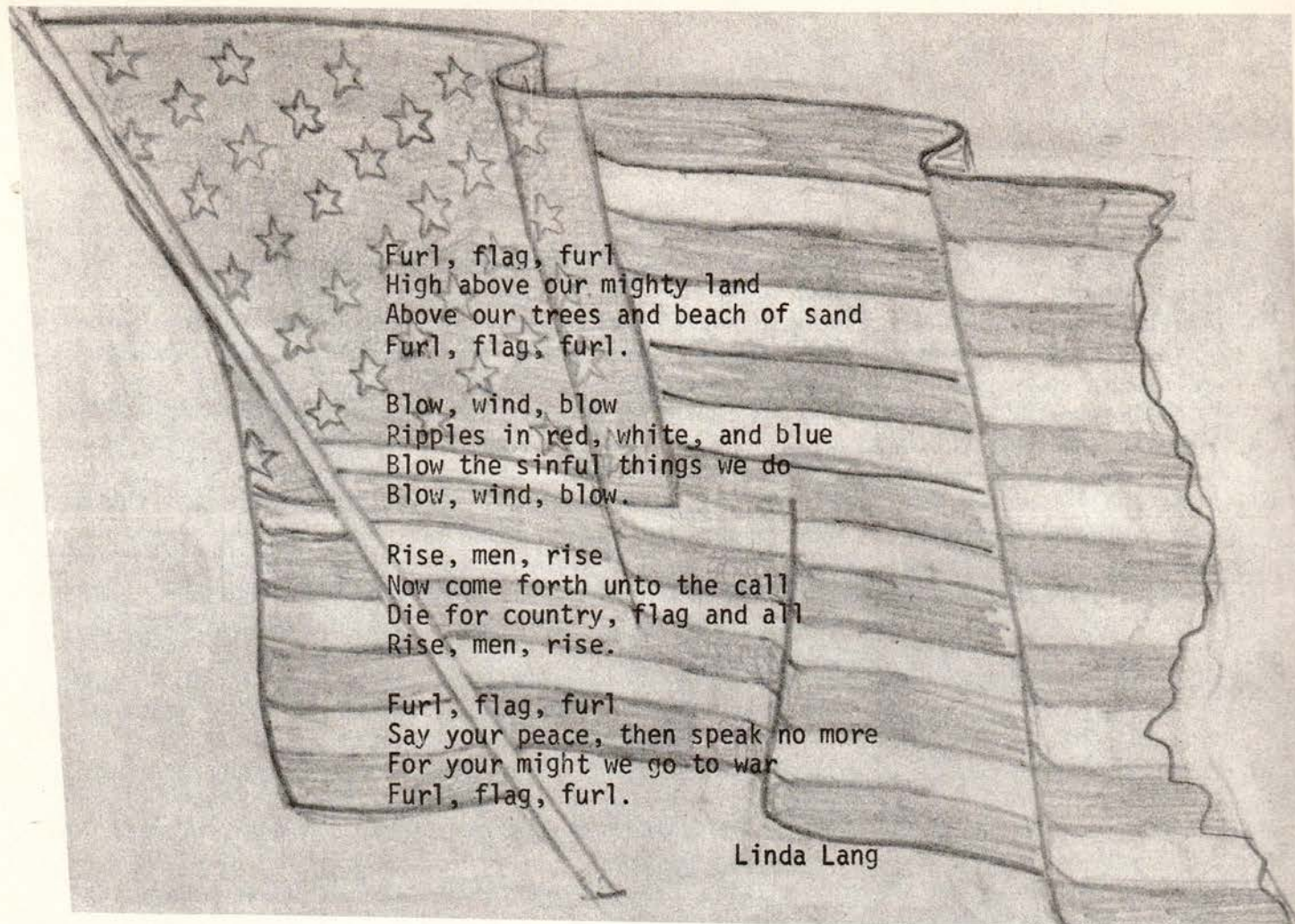
Masters sighed and condescended to speak. "You know what, Marty?"

"No," Wayne said. "What?" His mind chilled as he saw for the first time the tiny blaster cradled in Masters' other hand.

"You talk in your sleep."

Martin Wayne's horrified expression dissolved into ashes.

Steve Matsumoto



Furl, flag, furl
High above our mighty land
Above our trees and beach of sand
Furl, flag, furl.

Blow, wind, blow
Ripples in red, white, and blue
Blow the sinful things we do
Blow, wind, blow.

Rise, men, rise
Now come forth unto the call
Die for country, flag and all
Rise, men, rise.

Furl, flag, furl
Say your peace, then speak no more
For your might we go to war
Furl, flag, furl.

Linda Lang

I HAVE LOVED YOU

I have loved you
through sunny afternoons,
rainy Septembers,
and busy streets.

I have longed for you
through lonely nights,
empty summers,
crowded buses.

I needed you
understanding could have
helped us,
a little more time.

something.

You are distant now.
I still long for you,
in crowded buses,
sunny afternoons,
but most of all,

In my arms...

LEAF

Canals outstretched;
diminutive patterns
etch themselves
On the backs of
velvet green.

Elaine Ko

Janet Ell

MISTAKEN

He was not Protestant,
Nor was he Catholic
But, he was Irish--
And that was enough for death.
He did not care for politics
Or the independence of the state
But the death bomb did not know.
He was only one man,
On a sooty, gray street
Dead in a moment's blast.
His wife cried bitter tears.
His name was in all the papers
but never read.
His children clung in bewildered silence,
His gravestone was starkly simple,
But the memory quickly erased.
He was no martyr or hero
Just a man that died.
And no one missed.

Debby Bohringer

you
are voiced by each the winds
and lay them soft
within my mind
on velvet there.
you
may sing and each the carols ring
on mountains leveled deep
with morning's gaze.

you
that bring the morning
with you step upon the winter grass
turned green
in springlight--

you
are part of me
as nameless as the love we shared
together
and, apart--

janney figg

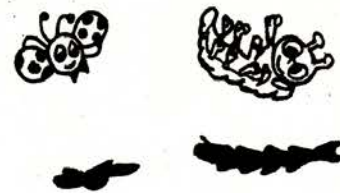
on the corner
where the man with the dog used to stand
there are only winds
now
the bar where saturday night people laughed
is closed on tuesday afternoons
now
people i used to know
followed the laughter
and left me here

janney figg

DEATH OF A SUPER-HERO

In his light blue and red leotards
That were ripped
He shuffled among the bodies of the
Dead
Villians...
Madmen
His face did not show expression
His teeth did not grit...nor face contort
He shuffled
No more parades for victories
No more killing
No more reason to save
He shuffled...to the edge of a cliff
He threw his weapon...
Down
the deep canyon...
He jumped
No sound
No movement
No convulsions
As his body hit the ground
He died upon
His shattered weapon

D. Rieksts



I FLOAT ALONE

Hey help! I
shout.
I grasp at
the air.
Coldness fills
my veins
As no one
answers.
Fear now fills
my thoughts.
I perspire,
the salt
Water stings,
inflames,
My cut lips.
I cry.
And I float
alone.
No one ever
answering
My pleading
shrill voice.
In my soul
I ask
Of myself,
Why live
If life does
not want
You? Why die
if you
Are already
in Hell?

Jay Sumsion



Diane Carpenter

Lawrence Worth slowly opened his unwilling eyes in answer to his mother's insistent demands.

"Larry, do you hear me? I said, it's almost eight o'clock. You're going to be late for school again. Now get up, immediately!"

He opened his mouth in a half yawn, half sigh, savoring the fast diminishing traces of a thrilling dream. Closing his mouth, he remembered to cover his two protruding front teeth with his inadequate upper lip. He wistfully tried to recall the whole dream, but could only remember the last scene. Just as his mother's calls had finally pricked him to consciousness, Larry had been about to smash his herculean fist into the face of a huge ogre, caught in the act of kidnapping. This deed was being viewed by the adoring, grateful, baby-blue eyes of a maiden in distress. Strangely, the ogre had had the leering face of Ralph Murdock, the class joker, while the fair maiden bore a striking resemblance to Carol Lacey, the prettiest girl in the entire fourth grade.

"Oh well," Larry thought wistfully, "If I really had punched him and Carol had tried to kiss me like in the movies, what would I have done with my teeth?"

He morosely climbed into his too-short pants, mismatched shirt and socks, and high-topped converse tennis shoes.

"To protect your ankles," his mother had said of the shoes when he protested against them. "Besides, they were on sale."

"But mother, nobody wears high-topped shoes!" It was useless to argue. As usual, his mother was too busy to try and understand a ten year old boy's feelings. She had her own problems.

As he raced down the stairs into the kitchen, tripping on the bottom step, Larry glanced hurriedly at the clock. Eight twenty already. There was no time to eat, since his mother had decided he was old enough to fix his own breakfast while she caught a few extra minutes of sleep. Well, he was used to going without breakfast. He grabbed his lunch pail, thankful that he had remembered to pack it the night before, and dashed out the kitchen door. He sighed in relief at having escaped a continuation of his mother's early morning reprimands. Not having to listen to her made up for going without breakfast, Larry thought. Then he set to work trying to cover half a mile in less than 10 minutes.

Puffing energetically, Larry slid into his seat just as Miss Anderson began roll call. For once, he was thankful that his name was at the end of the alphabet.

"Hey Lawrence, your shoes untied," hissed Ralph Murdock from the desk in front of Larry.

Larry ignored him.

"It doesn't matter anyway," Ralph whispered. "With those high tops your shoes will never fall off!"

With a pang, Larry heard Carol Lacey giggle from across the aisle. Ralph stopped his whisperings as Miss Anderson gave out assignments to the reading groups. Carol and Ralph were in the fastest group, the Jets. Larry was an Ox cart.

Silence dropped over the class except for the sound of rustling pages and shuffling feet. Deep in the mysteries of fourth grade reading books, everyone started suddenly as Ralph leaped to his feet with a cry of pain.

"Miss Anderson, Bucky Beaver, I mean Lawrence Worth pinched me!"

"I did not, honest I didn't, Miss Anderson," Larry protested in a shocked voice.

"Sit down Ralph. If you boys won't behave, one of you will have to take a trip to the principal's office."

"It won't be me," Ralph stage-whispered out of the side of his mouth.

Those closest to him heard the comment, and giggled again. Larry stared at his open book, but his eyes burned and stung and the words ran together in a blur.

"I'll show 'em some day," he thought bitterly. "I hate 'em all. Some day they'll be sorry for the way they treated me. I'll have lot's of money an' I'll take boxing lessons, an' come back and smash 'em all."

His feverish rage included everyone, innocent or guilty. He burned to strike down his mother, his teacher, Ralph, Carol, the whole school, the whole world. The printed words and their story of sweet friendly children danced before his eyes, but he saw only dreams of revenge.

Outwardly, peace reigned over the class as they continued from reading, to spelling, then arithmetic. During the morning, clouds had gathered overhead, and rain gushed down from the sky. Recess was spent in the classroom, playing 7-up and Eraser Tag. Larry sat silently, moodily staring out of the window at the gray, empty playground. He sat hunched into himself, alone, and the tight knot of bitterness inside of him grew larger and heavier.

The rowdy mood caused by being unexpectedly forced to remain indoors stayed with the class throughout the rest of the morning. The children whispered and giggled behind the teacher's drooping back. Ralph, in particular, made jokes and wisecracks for Carol's giggling enjoyment. He made sure, though, that Larry could hear the jokes, as he was the subject of most of them. But Larry sat immobile, silently enduring the taunts and jokes.

"Hey Bucky, why don't you say something? I know you hear me 'cause your ears are red!" And Ralph shook with laughter.

Larry couldn't take it any longer. He knotted his fists and spluttered in helpless, tearful rage. "Ralph, if you don't shut up, I'll... I'll..."

"Lawrence Worth, I warned you once this morning about disturbing the class. Now will you please be quiet?" The teacher spoke wearily, too wrapped in her own worries and feelings to notice the tears in Larry's eyes, or Ralph Murdock doubled over in laughter. The rest of the class noticed, and they eyed Larry, snickering.

The shrill clang of the lunch bell stopped Larry's tormentors, as the children began a mad scramble for lunch bags and money. Larry slowly picked up his lunch box from behind his desk where it was out of the way of Ralph's feet, and started toward the door with the others. He stood alone, the last in a line of chattering two's and three's. The class filed down to the cafeteria, pushing and shoving, talking loudly. Inside the room, they slid into chairs, scraping them against the tile floor, and set their bags on the long metal tables. Then commenced the daily process of trading off whatever was packed in their lunch bags.

"I'll trade ya an apple for an orange."

"Want my chocolate cake for your apple pie?"

"Turkey for ham?"

Larry set his box, the only one in the whole cafeteria, on his lap, hoping that no one would remember it and make another wise-crack. His mother had decided that a lunch box was more economical than paper bags. A box would last all year. Again it was useless to try and make her understand; to tell her that only babies took lunch boxes to school. Everyone used bags. Everyone except Larry.

Today, Larry was left in peace. With a sigh, he opened his box and took out the two peanut butter sandwiches. No jelly, just peanut butter. He ate slowly, to make the sandwiches last longer. It had been a long morning with no breakfast, and his stomach was a hollow pit. Just as he finished, with the empty feeling still inside, the boy next to him jumped up and ran over to some others on the opposite end of the room. He had left a half eaten cinnamon roll sitting on a crumpled wax paper bag. Larry eyed it hungrily. The boy obviously didn't want it, so why shouldn't he eat it? He glanced furtively around. Everyone else was too engrossed in their own affairs to pay attention to Larry. His hand darted out, and he grabbed the roll. He gulped it down in a few mouthfuls, relieved that no one had seen him.

The bell rang once more, and the noisy group fell into a disorderly line to return to the classroom. At the end once more, Larry trailed behind the others. As he reached the door, Carol's voice floated back to him.

"...and he grabbed David's cinnamon roll after David had already eaten off it. And then Larry ate the rest!"

Larry listened in horror. Carol had seen him!

Then he heard Ralph declare loudly, "Well, I sure never knew beavers ate cinnamon rolls! I thought they only ate trees!"

Carol giggled in reply, and at the sound, a blind rage swept over Larry. Why did she tell? He never hurt her. Why did everyone pick on him? Choking furiously, Larry darted over to the unsuspecting girl, and slapped her.

"Shut up," he screamed. "Shut up."

A stunned silence fell over the room. Carol stood motionless, too shocked to do anything. A few nervous titters broke the quiet as Miss Anderson strode over and grabbed Larry. All rage and feeling drained out of him, leaving him limp and defenseless as the teacher shook him like a rag doll.

"This is the last straw, Lawrence! You have continually disrupted the class all day. Your actions are unforgivable. You'll have to be punished." And the teacher dragged Larry over to the sink.

She grabbed the bar of scrubbing soap, used after art class, and shoved it in his face.

"Bit it," She commanded.

Larry hesitated. The class was astonished and again shocked into a guilty silence. He stared at the gray, gritty bar, inches from his mouth. His mind screamed out in desperation.

"Why is it always me? Why does everyone hate me? Why am I different? Why...Why...?"

A sob tore up out of his throat and his chest heaved. He couldn't do it, he wouldn't! Larry jerked blindly out of the teacher's grasp and turned, stumbling. He caught his balance and darted past his open-mouthed class mates. Before anyone could make a move, he was out the door and down the long hall. He lunged through the doorway of the main entrance and out into the cool, moist air. The rain fell on his contorted face and mingled with the burning tears. He stumbled through puddles and gutters of rushing swirling, mud-thick water. His heart pounded as if it would burst from his heaving chest. Still sobbing, he slowed his mad race to a trot, then a drunken walk as the fresh air he drank in gulps cleared his senses and the school disappeared from view. He longed to run to a safe, warm haven of peace, comfort, and security, but instead, he headed towards home.

such soundless sounds and amber light
a listless stir as grasses might
and songless songs on summer nights--

remembered melodies that balance
'twixt the stars, prepared to dance
or burst with sound--explode by chance--

yet strangers meet with trusting eye
and strangers still shall kiss and fly
and be no more in love than i--

so shall we love, then, for a time?
your secrets yours, my treasures mine
and meet tomorrow without sign--

just let me run then, on my own,
without a love, without a home
past whispered grass and "lover's" drone--

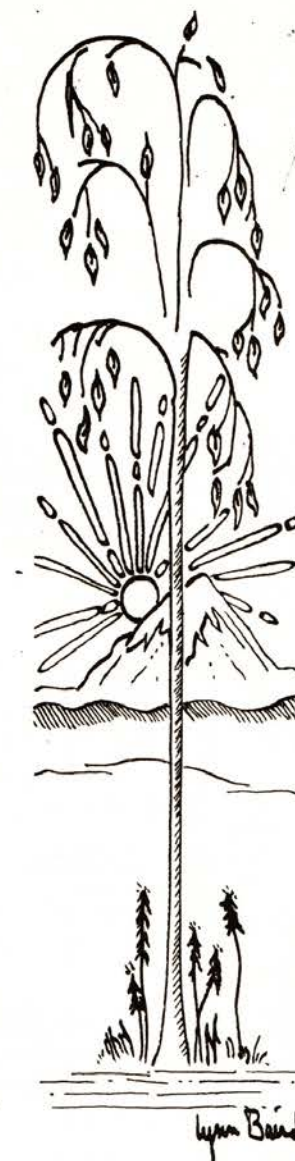
to soundless sounds and amber light
a listless stir as grasses might
and songless songs on summer nights.

janney figg

REMEMBER EARTH

Yesterday, long ago, it came,
A long agonizing defeat.
Destroyed by those she loved,
Those of whom she gave life.
For so long had she given her all,
That her children should prosper.
For so long had she watched,
As slowly they retrieved her gifts.
But all she gave them was misused,
And what was once her beauty, became her plague.
She died before her children, as many mothers do,
Yet her children died slowly after from her illness.
'Twas a sad day when Mother passed away,
Leaving, not her dream, but a never ending nightmare.

Ken Hall



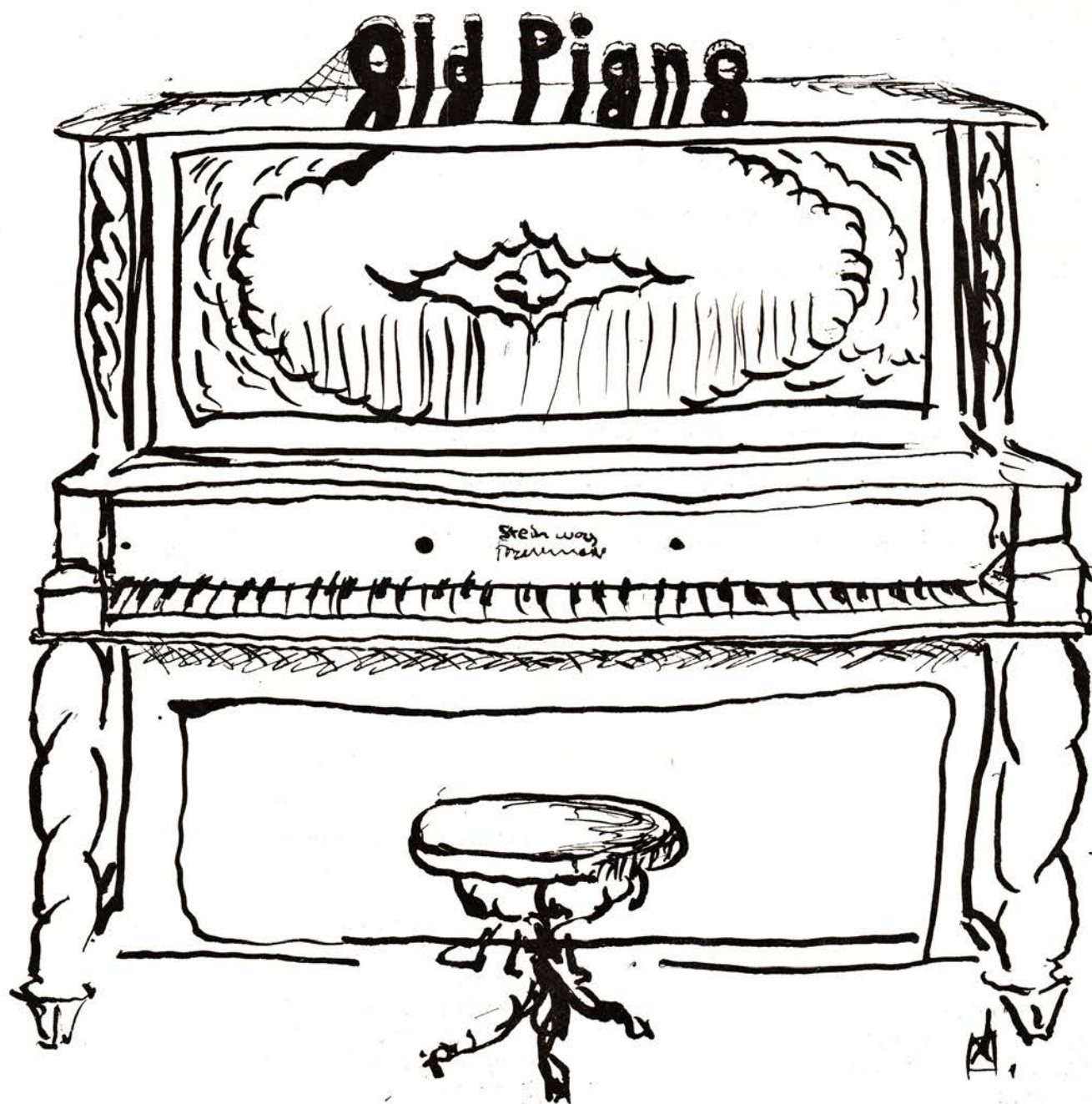
GUERNICA (as painted by Pablo Picasso)

One day gone
Another to blossom
With a smile of sun
And with
Knowledge of
Care.

Gregory S. Shipler

Scattered fragments;
Dismembered body parts.
I hide.
Artificial sun seeks my refuge,
throwing reality in my face.
People are dead, yet
I am alive.
I hide my face in shame.
Luckily a mass of dead humanity
Soon decays.
And even the ubiquitous light
Burns out.
And I am left
Hiding.

Kerry Carraher



The rich walnut is bleached blond now.

The years of morning sunlight passing through the sitting-room window have mellowed the color.

Nine feet of tuned, polished machine; lines soft and flowing.

A flawlessly formed keyboard stretches across the front.

Ivory keys, dulled by time, lay in perfect order like old marble grave markers.

Black, polished ebony rises defiantly; daring to contrast the perfect uniformity of the splendid whiteness.

Above the keyboard, in rich gold inlay, reads the single inscription, "Steinway."

Intricately carved legs support the awesome body; strong, but amazingly graceful.

Brass foot-pedals hang motionless, fixed in position by more finely finished walnut.

The top is open, revealing the inside of the piano.

Eighty-eight strings reach across the sounding board.

Eighty-eight hammers, each padded by soft, white felt, poised, ready to strike at the slightest command.

Eighty-eight individual systems, no two exactly the same, none indispensable.

The old piano waits in silence.

Practiced fingers that once shared skill and knowledge with the piano, are now old, too.

Jay Pugh

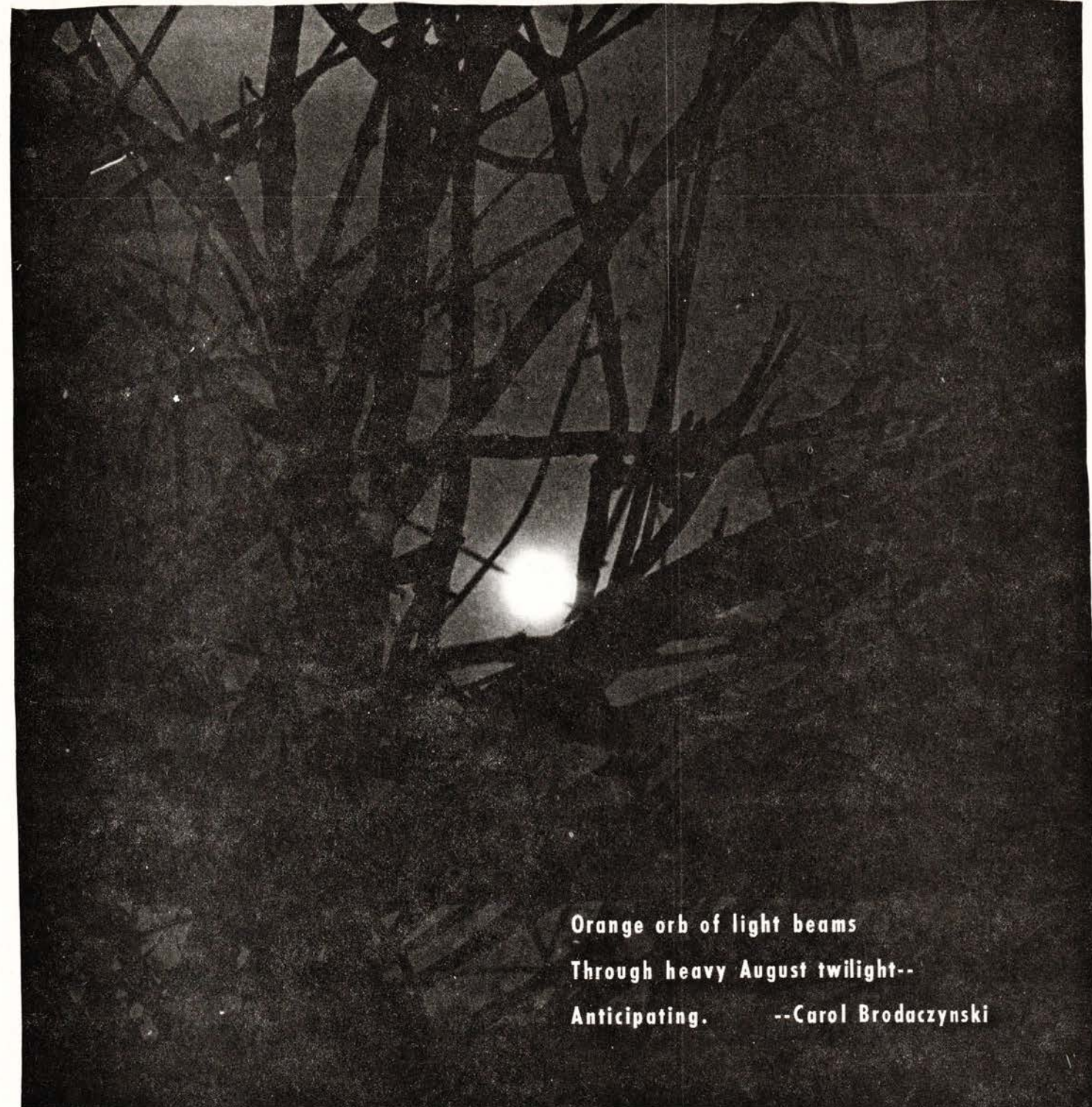
"War Pigs"

You send men,
Like the masters of faithful dogs.
You value your yellow gold,
More than you do your brother.

You sit in your chair in comfort,
While your puppets walk fields of flesh.
And while they fall, one by one, onto
blood stained sand,
You stash your gold in large vest pockets.

Sit back little man,
And smoke your big cigars.
Someday you will be on strings,
And dance for the devil in his inferno.

Ken Hall



Orange orb of light beams
Through heavy August twilight--
Anticipating. --Carol Brodaczynski

The Strange Disappearance of Homer Krotz

I.

homer krotz was a humble person who was mostly quiet at times. "i don't like noise," said homer krotz. he would spend many hours sitting on a sidewalk curb in downtown Mahoo, Nebraska (which was where he lived), simply listening. "how ridiculously noisy" he would say (to himself).

homer lived on the very outskirts of Mahoo, Nebraska, in a small cave by the Mahoo River, or just above it. many people would come up to homer krotz and say, "why do you live in a cave?" to which homer always replied, "why do you live in a house?"

homer lives mostly alone in his cave, with only his cat (whose name was Friend) for company. "Friend," homer would say (all the time), "it is very lonely here."

no one ever came to visit homer krotz because everyone in Mahoo, Nebraska, thought he was mentally deranged. "anyone who lives in a cave," they would say, "and sits on a curb all day has got to be some kind of a nut." homer wasn't a nut. he was just a humble quiet person who liked caves.

II.

one day a strange man came to Mahoo, Nebraska, whose name was Hephzibah Jones. "i'm from omaha," he said, "we're going to hold the State Fair in your town this year, so you'd better get prepared for lots of new buildings and a whole mess of tourists." the people were very excited. "now we can expand," they said.

so the people of Mahoo planned and planned and planned and discussed constantly. finally someone thought of a problem. "what about homer krotz?" that someone said. everyone mulled this over in their minds for awhile. "who is homer krotz?" asked Hephzibah Jones. "he's a weird little guy that lives in a cave by the Mahoo River," replied the Sheriff, "he comes into town all the time and sits on a curb." "uh-oh," said Hephzibah Jones, "we can't have

any nuts around here. it wouldn't look good." the people agreed. "we'll have to get rid of him," they said, "but how?"

III.

homer and Friend had watched the town and the people prepare for the State Fair for many days, "how ridiculously noisy," said homer.

homer wondered why everyone was so excited. he knew it was just going to get noisier and more crowded. "Friend," he said, "it's very lonely here."

IV.

on the next tuesday, the entire population of Mahoo, Nebraska, went out to the cave by the Mahoo River to get rid of homer. "we'll drive him off by making lots of noise," they said. they surrounded the cave, the Sheriff counted to three. "one, two, three," he said. the entire population of Mahoo, Nebraska, began to make all kinds of loud noise, shrieking and yelling and even singing, and continued for five minutes. nothing happened. "he's probably hiding in there with a pair of earplugs," said the Sheriff. "yeah," said the corner druggist, "let's go in and get him." so they went into the cave. it was empty. "it's empty!" cried Hephzibah Jones. the people were amazed. "wonder where he went?" they said.

V.

homer krotz and Friend found a very nice cave on the outskirts of Ma Kenney, Kansas. the people of Ma Kenney thought homer was mentally deranged because all he did was sit on a curb all day. homer wasn't mentally deranged. he was just a humble, quiet person who liked caves. "Friend," he would say (all the time), "it's very lonely here." and it was.

The End

Kerry Ballowe

THE DOWNEY QUILT

Drifted by the ruthless wind
The silent snow lies deep,
But underneath that downy quilt
next summer's roses sleep.

The flowers of the summer past
our eyes will see no more,
but greener leaves and brighter blooms
are well worth waiting for.

Life's great span is like a garden
where a thousand green things grow,
we live and work in this garden fair
our stubborn row to hoe.

We coax and nurse our dreams along,
we welcome every bloom,
and when we think our garden's best,
cold winter winds his broom.

But tho' the flowers are swept away,
and the snow lies white and deep.
Beneath a cold and frosty quilt,
next summer's roses sleep.

Shelley Horne

WORD CINQUAIN

Eyes
moody, changing
laughing yet crying
beneath their surface hiding
secrets.

Kerry Carraher

SYLLABLE CINQUAIN

Always
is a long time
filled with promises of
a tomorrow which will never
happen.

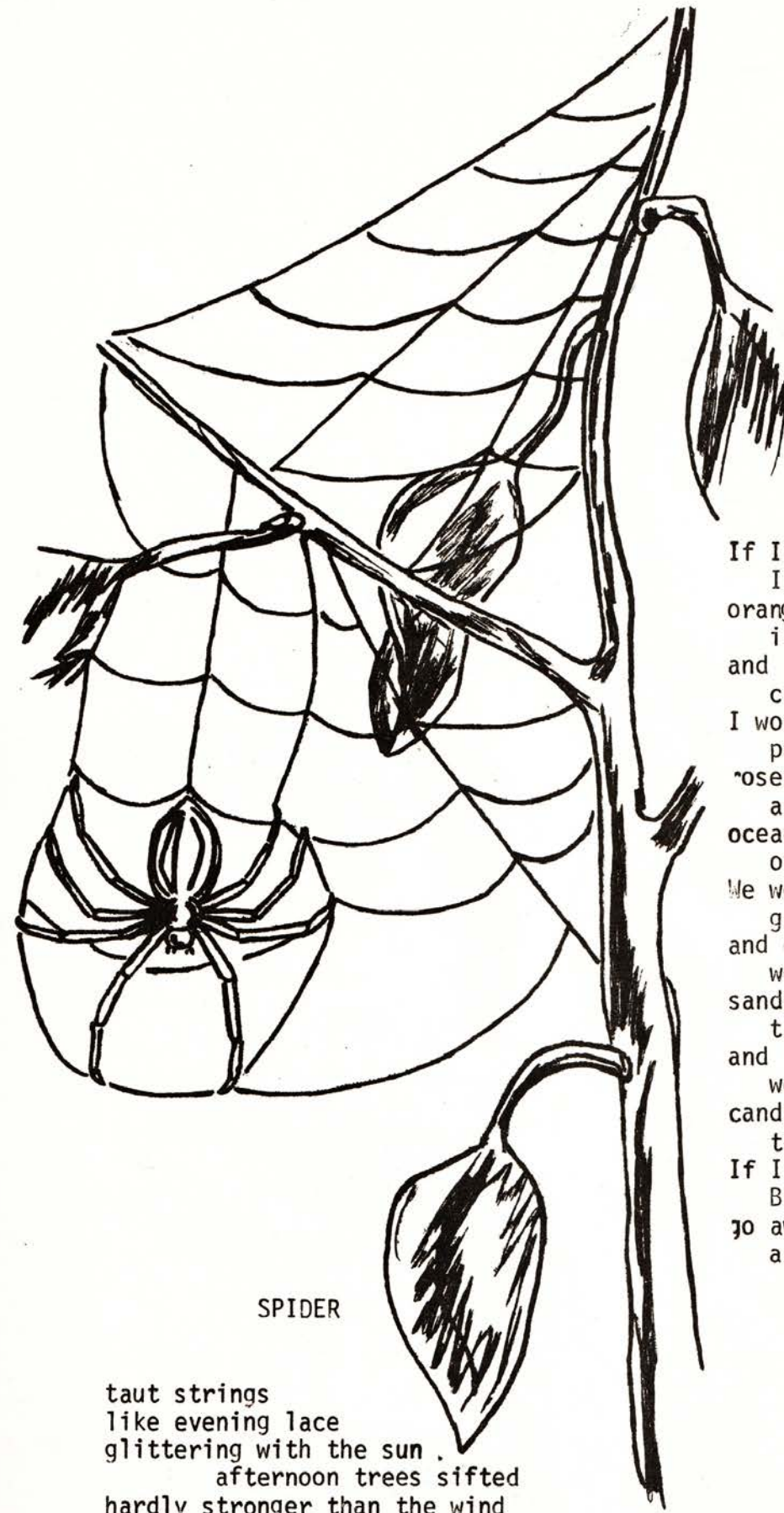
Kerry Carraher

You, who raise the symphony
with chords and promised tunes
have tumbled 'neath the master's
fallen hand--

the music stops
yet chords shall ride the air
unheard and somber in its light
and echo thoughts that only you
have heard--

the music whispers

janney figg



SPIDER

taut strings
like evening lace
glittering with the sun .
afternoon trees sifted
hardly stronger than the wind
a frozen acrobat
is clinging
no doubt, wide-eyed and
somehow defiant

janney figg

If I could find you
I would bring you
oranges and avocados
in a brown bowl
and pomegranates in
crystal.
I would grow you
purple iris and yellow
roses
and bring you the
ocean in a goblet
of ruby red.
We would live in a
gray stone house
and on Saturdays we
would build
sandcastles with
the clouds
and in summer we
would burn black
candles, listening
to the dawn.
If I could find you. . .
But then you might
go away again
and I would cry

-Carol Brodaczynski



BEAUTY SOCIETY

"thing which gives pleasure to the senses"
"social order"

the wide open spaces...
fences and roadways crossing the plains.

miles and miles of evergreens...
naked trees carrying electricity.

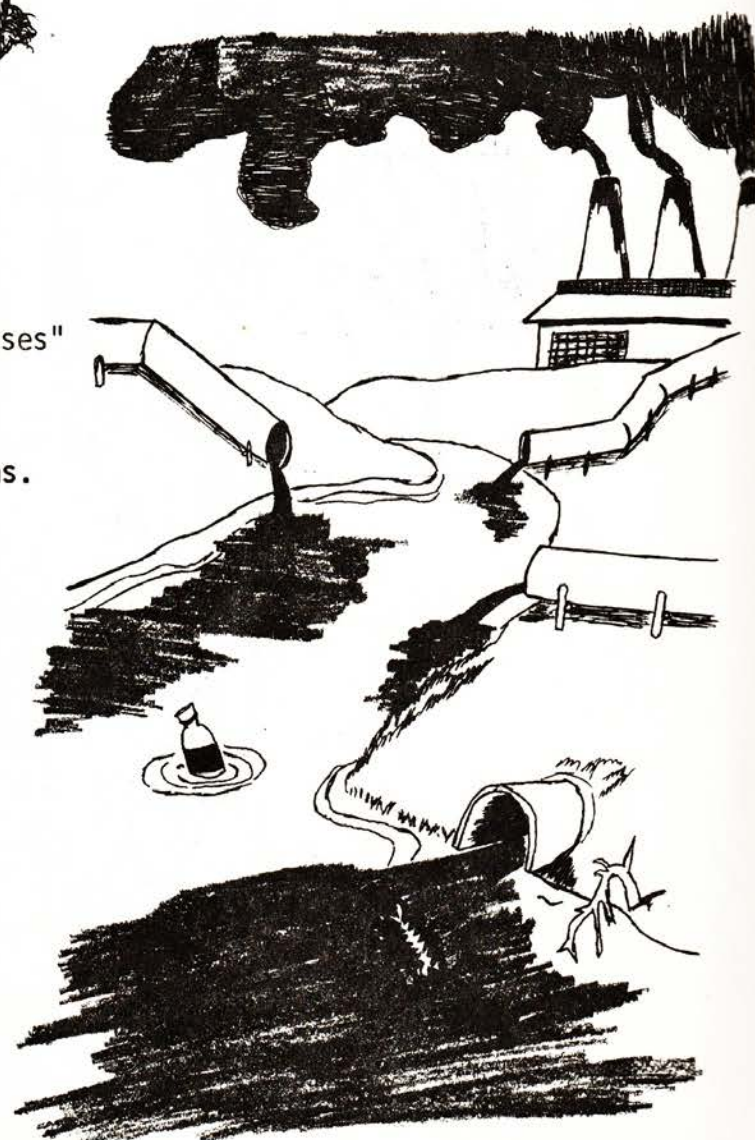
the expansive desert...
a coyote trapped in teeth of steel.

a deep dark forest...
the cement jungle.

wide, crystal clear lakes...
foaming with filth.

children playing in the sun...
children who rarely see the sun.

nature...
technology.



Myron Pugh

Cotton against a parched blue background

Wisp of white obstructing the sun,

Allowing only pinpoint rays to pass

To illuminate the desert stage beneath.

Caught by the sun's spotlight,

The dramatists begin their act.

J. Chapman

jennifer
had a smile
that was made
for summer
evenings
(very quiet).
jennifer
liked music very loud
on very quiet
(very quiet)
spring mornings
(frosted).

she liked kittens
that never turned into cats
and
someone else's
poetry
and cherry-color
balloons.

jennifer
liked giddy days
when no one
knew
what was making her
laugh
(at all).
she liked dimples
and even
(sometimes)
lonely friday afternoons,
long-awaited letters,
and almost-summer
mornings.
jennifer
had a smile
that was made
for summer
evenings,
(very quiet).

janney figg

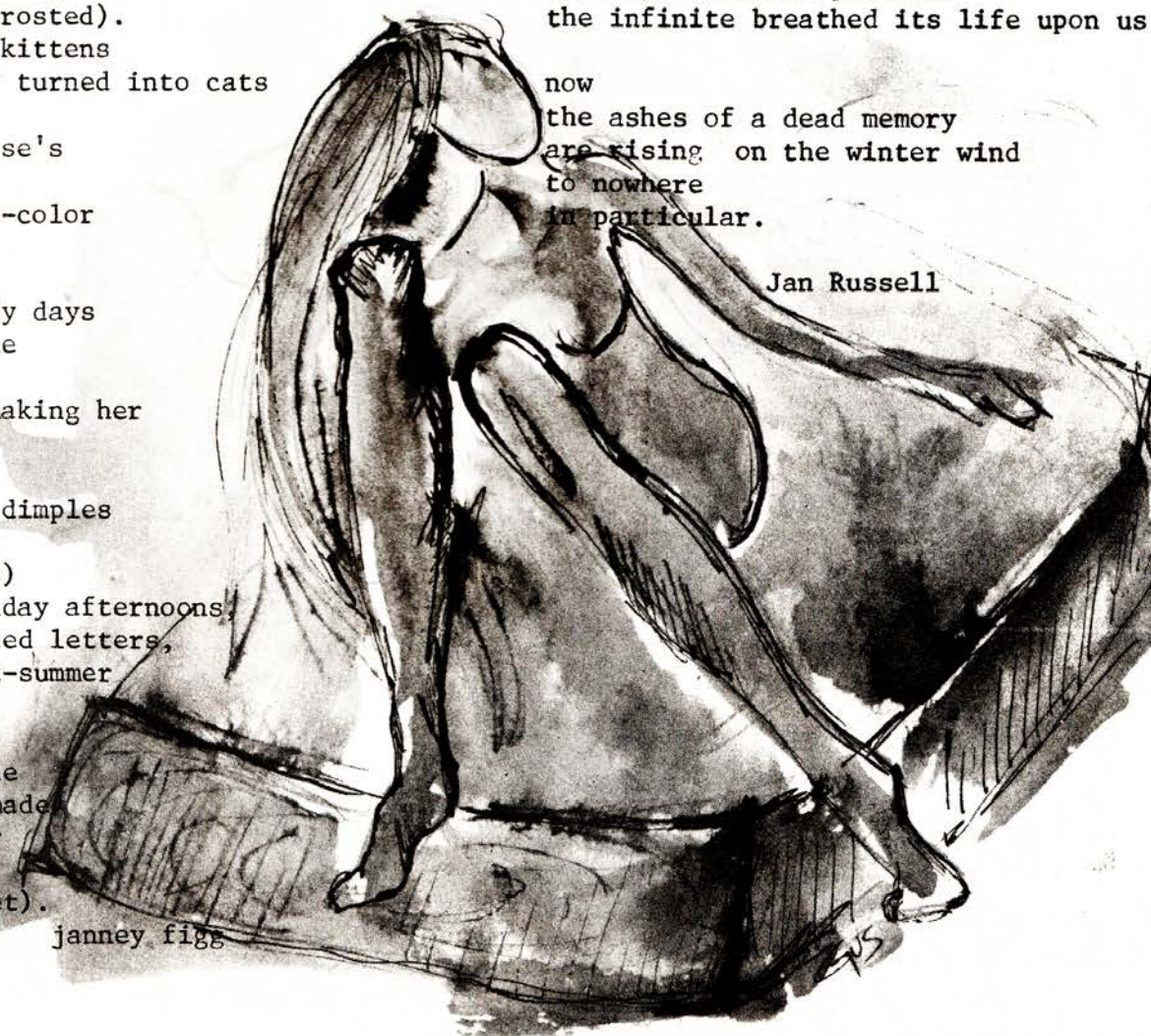
Bones of a frog...
Squares of pi...
conjunctions...
Ayn Rand...
N. Bohr
Will live on
in the brown plastic
garbage can
in my
2.395 G. P. A.
Head.

D. Rieksts

Once
our hearts touched
our lips caressed promises
the infinite breathed its life upon us

now
the ashes of a dead memory
are rising on the winter wind
to nowhere
in particular.

Jan Russell



Tennifer Miller

misplaced, little jewel, glowing,

hidden in soft folds of velvety

blues, blacks, and ambers.

* * *

Just before the sun dies

in supernatural bloody reds and purples.

comes an unearthly bath of pure clear sunlight,

not like daylight,

It has a glow as if the world was captured within

the glow of an incensed

witch's candle.

NATURE

The day was so still

so quiet,

It was as if some protective person had poured
a huge vat of paraffin over the countryside
preserving every blossom.

Gleaming, Odorless, Springtime.

Condensed air, morning heavy, embalming sleep.

A sharp fly cuts through, Buzzzzzzzzzzzzzz

And you're awake.

Raindrops fall slowly, gently,

large drops wrung from a giant, dirty-white sponge
by a strong dark arm.

Trees glisten, bushes too, lacquered heavily,
they shine.

The sun peeps from behind clouds.

Tans fade, the carpetings on the docks dry up like old parchment skin, and the river turns from clear blue to a steel, cold, grey, flowing, taking with it memories of a summer past. Crowded, excited voices are stilled by the shrill blowing of summer winds through naked trees. Bare, shining, flesh, laughing, sliding through the water is chilled by the ice clinging, scratching the shore. Muddy banks cake and crack dry; damp clinging reed grass turns hard, straw-like, dead fingers reaching for a cold sky. The sea gulls caw, swooping down for bits of food, they break their beaks against the ice-maiden land. Autumn has fallen, it burns, throwing out a fury of color. Yet, sharp stabs of cold icicles soon kill autumn too. Winter has come.

SELF-REFLECTIONS

Sometimes I feel like a sand dollar.

buried obscurely

in the sands of a deep, blue-green ocean

concerning myself only with survival.

* *

The girl in front of me in the line.

Is still drinking, drinking, drinking.

And I stand here waiting, waiting, waiting.

Sometimes I wonder what would happen

If time would stop and I would never
Get a drink of water, or of life.

*

*

*

I dropped the mirror--

it shattered, breaking my face

into cracking, distorted, mimics--

a reflection of my true self.

Crazy smiles smiling, and crazy eyes thinking of
seven years bad luck.

TRANSITION III

Go there; breathe it. Enter its room; step through its musty
interior. Feel the moss blossom upon your back; feel the mold you breathe
mushrooming inside. Lie upon your back, trace the draining feeling in your blood;
strain your eyes to pin-point the last glimmer of light. Feel the draft
end as the door is finally closed. This is death's room.

PEOPLE AND THE WORLD

Sometimes people are like lemmings

Going, going, going,

but not knowing

To their final naive destruction.

Is it really instinct?

*

*

*

Hazy, blue-green, indistinct,

a color strained through gauze--

the color of the lakes,

hemmed by vivid greens, a huge midsummer lawn.

Gray, infected spots near the lakes--

the cities,

spilling great billows of fog, dirt, smog,

the buildings and streets indistinct,

muddy watercolors.

Parchy bird claws, skinny, grasping the lakes--

the docks.

Tiny, tiny bugs, the ships, crawling across the vast

blue-green asphalt.

Everything is dull, dingy.

The boards of all the houses have been weathered and worn until their dusty
color becomes the same gray as the asphalt houses. The street blends into the
endless gray-blue sky: Gray-blue asphalt patched with sooty tar--gray-blue sky
blotched with sooty smoke.

The only brightness is the trash. The hard glint of beer cans, gaudy, color-
ful candy wrappers and coke cartons--just speckles like chalk on a child's black-
board.

Everyone, everything is wornout, used-up. People peer out of houses, their
eyes as glazed as the windows that frame them.

The sounds--

a lone tin can, kicked by a lone skinny boy.

TRANSITION IV

Musky, speckled light spills in from under the closed, heavy door. Lying, waiting
for sleep in the dark, lonely wafts of long-forgotten tunes come floating in above
the bed. Crazy notes, drunken spiders, memories crawling through a musty brain,
using old cobwebs of thought. The toes quiver, as if to spring to dance, the ex-
cited heartbeat pours electric-shocked blood through a numbed body. It strains to
gain control, it struggles to relive experience, but it loses, and all is dark again.

THE ENGINEER

marianne saved an
afternoon
to follow the railroad
until it came back.
but she came back,
bewildered,
and the railroad stayed the same.
she used to sit for hours in her yard
to watch the trains
that rose so quickly with their
one eyes
unafraid--
and watched until they'd sunk into the tracks.
and they never were the same.
we'd wondered if the sound would ever reach her
if the clanking-grinding-screaming
ever reached her--
for they passed like sudden ghosts
that whispered secrets and were gone
before her gaze

one afternoon i sat with her--
they spied me from the turn
and halted silently.
or maybe they weren't there at all
but marianne just smiled.

janney figg

RUNAWAY MEETING

A guitar - a bench
a beautiful day
Music floated soft on the river
and rolled back with the waves.

Us - you and me
sitting on the bench
talking - singing - playing
but mostly talking.

And the words mingled with the music,
and the music grows faster and louder
- almost angry.

A cool breeze came up-
Us - you and me,
but mostly me,
me, alone.

Kerry Carraher

SILENCE IS OUTSIDE

Cold air rushes through me,
Clutching me with icy claws,
Chilling me inside.

Cars rumble in the distance,
Groan, and roll gravel nearby.

Lights shine in the sky,
Globes, floating, hooked onto
Tall, straight and narrow poles
Colored lights frame windows,
Blinking, flashing their eyes.
Off-white, glaring lights
Shine down the streets for cars.
Overhead, the stars shimmer
In serene silence.

The world is dark, and black,
Yet color is still seen.
Dark angry clouds kill the stars.
They are unable to fight,
Yet, in their infinite wisdom,
They shine in eternal peace.

Wolf shadows swell in the voices
Of distant, invisible canines.
Distance roars a waterfall,
Doors slam, tires roll stony die.
The rustle of leaves, as a cat prowls,
Blends with the baby's squall.
The silence is good to hear.

Doug Payne

Where once the musical joy squeaked from a rocking swing
Where once the sun played on a laugh dancing from a young mouth
Where once a tiny patter of young feet livened the ground
Now only the low heavy clamor of rain is all around.
Where once a playground was full of life
And the innocence of a child at play
Exploded into a vision of rapture and light
An empty slide now fills with mighty tears from a sorrowful sky.
But soon will come a heavy splash
A small black boot stamping in the mud
A damp seat of pants that slid down a slide
And beauty around, as I watch
A child at play
On a rainy day.

Linda Lang

AIRSHIP

Violet, now gold, now green as it turns,
in the midst
of a chosen collection of sunrays,
a fragile craft of dust,
not made by human hands,
drifts aimlessly in the clear window light.

With a figurehead of finest spider silk,
to insure safe passage
across the room's ocean of air.
Mast and rigging of delicate powder
and keel the same,
slowly,
in an eternity of time,
my ship floated to the floor,
once again becoming undesirable dust.

Wayne Wallace

Lately it would seem that I've been losin,
Standin from the out and lookin in,
Even now emotion changes daily,
Fighting with my feelings I can't win.

Lucky me, close to you.

Join with me and maybe we'll discover,
All the doubts of negative descent,
Reaching for the answer to the riddle,
Hoping all the remedies not spent.

Lucky me, wanting you.

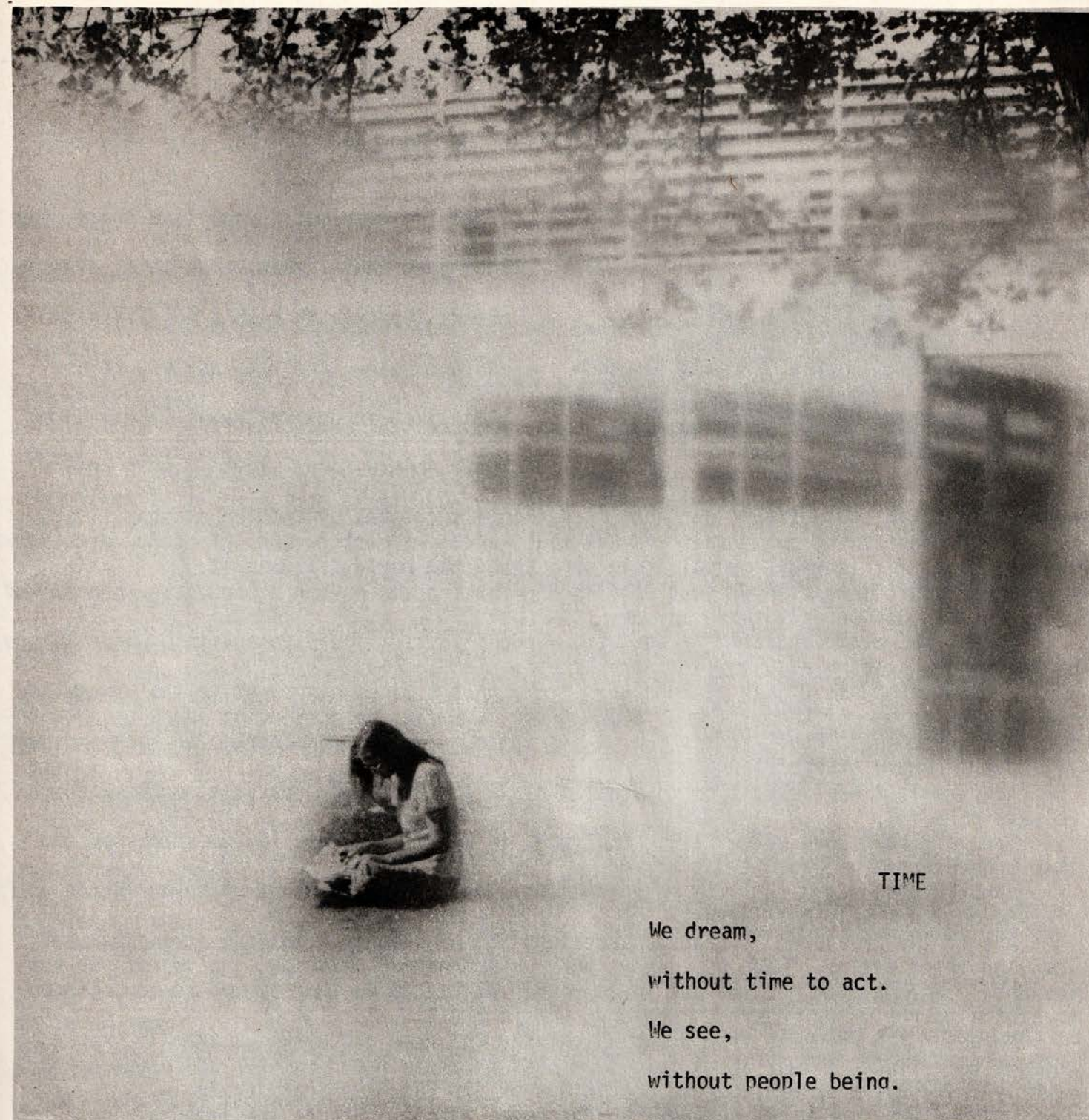
Listening my wisdom speaks not pity,
Only of my own remorse and blame,
Even knowing that I might have lost you,
You'll be gone before I bear my shame.

Lucky me, loving you.

Dan VanDerBeek

were i to find escape in that so simple
as a song
i'd fill the chambers of my mind
with symphonies and tunes i'd thought
forgotten--
yet find myself no closer to a someone,
or a someplace
that i'd lost along the way.
and so, perhaps
i'd sing my own--

Janney figg ..

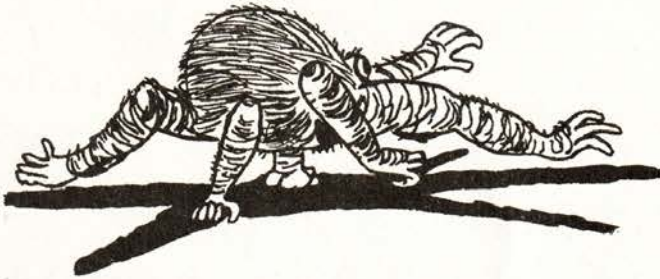


TIME

We dream,
without time to act.
We see,
without people being.
We know,
yet our mind has not the knowledge.
We act without the knowledge
and see without the dream.
Time is not for us.

Gregory S. Shipler

PLEASE DON'T LITTER THE LANDSCAPE



If you've ever met anyone like Arnie, you know just what I mean. The thick glasses powerful enough to burn a hole in a two-by-four board, the thin ankles, skinny arms, just in general built like a Momma Zoppa Noodle. But smart; I mean real

smart. This kid could figure out what made things tick just by looking at them.

The dumbest thing about this kid was that he was my best friend. I don't quite know why yet, but, well anyway, my pal Arnie once saved the world. I mean it.

Arnie and I were kind of just walking and talking and having a good time when all of a sudden, we just weren't there anymore.

Honest, we ended up inside a box with windows in it. There were little wirey things by the window staring at us with huge blue eyes.

I'm not dumb, so I just clammed up. Arnie on the other hand went to the window and stared back at one of them. Then, in one quick movement, he jerked his hands at the window, and screeched, "Hah!" at the top of his voice. The creature scrambled backwards and fell over. Arnie started laughing.

About this time I caught on to Arnie's plan, to scare the creatures so they thought we were powerful.

Then a gargantuan voice filled the room, in English. Arnie looked surprised and then concentrated on what it was saying.

"Ahoy, boys! Come out with your hands up; Ahoy, boys! Come out with your hands up."

We couldn't help but laugh.

One of the creatures looked as surprised and annoyed as a talking stringbean can look and tried again. "Give up. We've got you surrounded; Give up. We've got you surrounded." We could do nothing but laugh harder at the words that seemed to be intended to strike terror in our hearts. Hoo-boy, what a blast!

Three of the refugees from a ragmop entered the room and asked us frankly why we weren't terrified. I just about told them that excerpts from gangster dialogues don't exactly scare us, when Arnie broke out in one of his fabulous ideas again.

Looking very noble and supreme, he answered, "Because we are the immortal ones, and we never get frightened. Should something peeve us, we merely destroy it."

"Then where are your warriors?" asked the small one. At this point I realized this was a battle of bluffs, that we had to win or risk perishing.

"Do you have a viewer?" I broke in. Arnie looked annoyed but soon he had the same thing in mind. The 3 o'clock movie.

"Yes, how do you think we learned your language? We captured one years ago." They brought us in front of an old beat up TV set that looked as if it would fall apart if you changed channels. Arnie fiddled with the set for awhile and suddenly the voice of Orson Welles filled the room. About five minutes of H. G. Wells War of the Worlds convinced them of our invincibility.

All but one of them.

The short squirt.

"If these monsters are so powerful, why don't they show themselves? Why do they hide?"

I was instantly stymied, but not Arnie. Didn't I tell you Arnie had an answer for everything?

"They don't hide; they just stand still. Come with us to where you picked us up, and I'll show you."

We all went back in the room with the windows and, zap, we were back, the stringbeans beside us in a type of air boat. I looked frantically at Arnie but he was so calm I popped out of my near hysteria and grinned at him, even though I didn't know what was going on.

Arnie told the runt driving where to go, and we stopped about five hundred feet from a power-pole.

The alien driving gasped and ducked. I looked up and sure enough, these huge metal structures looked like the monsters we had just seen on TV.

The one short alien still didn't believe us. "Why don't they move and spit fire?" he queried. "Because you don't ever threaten him," answered Arnie.

This short dude called into a box and another empty air car appeared beside us. The runt pushed the driver out, and yelled that he was going to call our bluff. Arnie smiled at him and wished that the "monster" would kill him painlessly.

Tiny hesitated a bit and then sped toward the "monster."

As he hit it, there was a flash and the stuff they use for fuel exploded.

The other stringbean creatures were obviously very shocked that the "monster" hadn't even moved yet their friend had perished. They tried to set us down and get away, but Arnie called them back, and they didn't dare refuse. Arnie made them sign an agreement never to return or even attempt to return. The creatures tried to be polite but Arnie was deliberately cold to them as they left.

When they had gone the two of us couldn't decide between laughing and fainting. Arnie explained to me that the creatures had built a false assumption upon fictitious material device. I didn't quite get it, but I guess the idea was that the creatures had watched many old television movies and had taken us all for dump dwellers. According to Arnie, the creatures had intended to conquer earth merely so they could use it as a place to ship garbage and dump sewage, as they were convinced we thrived in it.

Steve Nechodom



I wouldn't ask your smile
if it weren't to be
real
but that I might be able
to give you a real one
is enough

Janney figg

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