

Denali

Lane
Community
College

Art and Literary Magazine • Winter 1994



Denali

Art and literary magazine



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Greetings and salutations!

Here it is folks, the winter term issue of *Denali*. You'll find that many talented and interesting new people are published herein. Most of them came along on their own, but I must admit to forcing a few into submission.

This term our theme was the *Fantastic*, and you will find that our *Fantastic* section spans this entire edition. Yes, that's right - it's all fantastic. Some of the writing and art hinted at science fiction or fantasy; some of it was fantastic to read; and some of it was just too dang weird to be classified as anything else!

I must say that I really enjoyed putting this issue together. It tickled my truly odd sense of humor that some of the art fit together so

neatly. However, some of the combinations take a creative stretch of the imagination to understand.

Over 150 people submitted to *Denali* during Winter Term 1994. I hope that even more than that will submit to our spring issue. Our theme for spring term is *On the Road*, to be defined however you see fit.

Deadline for our spring issue is **Friday, May 6 at 5 p.m.** in Cen 479f. To find out where to pick up submission forms, call the *Denali* office at 747-4501 ext. 2830.

Submit! Submit! Submit!



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Department

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photography by Mickey Stellavato

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Weird Kid in Budapest
photo by Eathan Mertz

Saccharine or Love in Candy Land

he feigned sugar cane
and melted arms around butterscotch hips
like dash-board candy in the hot sun
pouring maple syrup words
into her belgian waffle head
she responded with cotton-candy smiles
whipped cream kisses
the entire scene turned my jelly-bean stomach
and like tooth decay
they made a mockery of the sweetness.
cavities come in pairs.

– Uhuru Black

The Tenderloin District-S.F. (as seen through a telescope)

acrid breezes blown down treacherous narrow streets

flexi-flow cement
piss-stained potholed
junkies reeking in the heat are daylight
vampires
slack shouldered sunbaked death soliciting in sibilant wheezes
the blood of the living
leprous manacles extended seeking to grasp the pulse of
america
sweltering heat and the smell of rotting flesh

john the baptist
stood at the corner of fifth & natoma
on a soapbox the size of oblivion
ranting at the souls of the unbelievers his drunken gospel
and for a small donation (a miser's pittance really) you can watch
him at the baptismal wash clean his own soul with cisco
and prepare the way for the coming
messiah

above this i stand alien
surrounded by romanesque right angles and pool geometry
and beer and beer
to friends all dressed in their drunken delicious suits
of youth
drink up this death merchant shit
for tomorrow we enter into the land of my birth
39 fries on a small saucer condiments and coffee vinyl and checkered
tiles jukebox elvis and america
get your cheeseburger in a cardboard 57 chevy
welcome home.

– Uhuru Black



illustration by Ryan Reynolds

The Rock

by Jack Yattering

"Retina scan complete. Move on."

Axe stepped away from the eyepiece and watched as the next prisoner, someone named Smitty, moved into position.

"Close your left eye," the scanning machine said to Smitty.

"Let's go, Klain." The guard tugged at his arm, and Axe let himself be led down the dimly lit corridor. He could hear the steady throb of the air conditioning unit in the vents above him, and it almost drowned out his heartbeat.

Almost.

They turned a corner in the corridor and stopped at a pair of metal doors. The guard spoke into an intercom inset in a panel. The doors opened away from them, and another guard awaited. The first guard pushed Axe through the doors and seated him on the back of a small cart in the center of the corridor.

"This one's outgoing. Klain, Ronald. You got him?"

The first guard watched the second as he checked the name on his monitor.

"Yeah. Strap him in. Looks like he's going to the Rock."

Axe grimaced as straps were tightened around his body. The first guard slapped him on the back for good measure and exited back through the doors. The remaining guard punched in a code on the cart and shook his head.

"Have fun in Hell," he said and pushed a button on the cart.

The cart rocketed down a track set in the floor, and Axe watched as the guard's laughing face faded from view. The cart turned at intersection after intersection, its course predetermined. Axe couldn't turn his head, and all he could see was the view as he passed empty corridors.

The ride finally came to a halt, and two armed guards unstrapped him. He was turned around and led through a sliding metal door. The cart sped away in the direction it had come.

He was escorted into a hangar and on board a large freighter. Inside, it was dull and lifeless. Crates of

cargo were stacked neatly around the bay. He was pushed roughly into a space inset in one wall. Straps were put around him and locked. *Timelocked*, he noticed.

"Don't I get a window seat?" He stared dryly at the guards.

"Shut up," one of them snapped, "You'll see plenty of it when you get there."

The guards turned and exited, the hatchway sealing after them. The engines roared to life, and Axe let his head rest against the cold wall of the freighter.

The Rock, he thought.

For years he'd heard horror stories about that place. Now he'd get to see it for himself. Up close and personal. He could feel the freighter moving slowly out of the hangar and into the outside world. Then there was a sickening rush of speed, and he was on his way.

Of course, he knew why he was going there. He'd killed eight of them two weeks ago. He'd used an emergency fire axe. It was the only weapon he'd found available at the time. His brother John had hung the name "Axe" on him then, and they'd hid out at his place until they were found.

They killed John, but Axe got two more of them when they came for him. But they got him anyway. And now they were sending him to the Rock.

Only humans went to the Rock. It wasn't just any prison. It was supposed to be the largest prison ever built. They built it. They controlled it. They owned it. They were the only ones there. The only humans were the prisoners, and many thousands had already been sent there.

When they had come only ten years ago, the world was a much different place. A lone ship of them. The last survivors of a devastated planet. Only a few thousand.

Earth had been more than kind after the initial shock passed. Life from another planet quickly passed into acceptance since they were humanoid in appearance, although not quite human. But they passed. They were accepted.

Accepted by most, that is. Of course, there were a few who objected from the start. But they were dismissed as radicals. They soon disappeared. No one noticed.

Axe accepted them at first as well. Until about a month ago. They were working their way into everything. Politics and business seemed to be teeming with them.

Then he lost his job. He had ten years with the company, and the guy replacing him was brand new. When he found out that his replacement was also one of them, he flipped. He went off on a rampage at the

president of the company. He was told to go home and shut up, a simultaneous threat by the president and the local police.

He lasted a few weeks at home. Then he completely snapped. He exited his apartment and pulled a fire axe from the hallway wall. On the streets of L.A., he found as many of them as he could and hacked away. And that was that.

No normal prison was good enough, they said. Humans that committed hate crimes against them should go elsewhere, they said. To a place that they controlled. What better place than the moon for a prison? And what went on up there was completely up to them.

Axe drifted out of consciousness and awoke when the freighter set down shakily on the lunar landing pad. A few minutes passed, and two of them appeared. They looked at the locks and waited a few more minutes until the timelocks disengaged. Then they unstrapped him. He was led out the hatchway to a waiting area.

"You are to be transported to the main prison."

One of them spoke to him and gestured for him to enter a small chamber to wait. He did so and had a sudden feeling of horror as the door was closed and sealed behind him.

The chamber was only a few meters across, and it was spherical in shape. The walls were black, and as the door closed, the darkness enfolded him.

Axe touched the surface and it felt like glass. As he did so, the color slowly faded away, and light streamed into the room. The walls became clear, and the earthlight reflected on the moon's surface. Axe saw that he was above a huge crater that dropped far below. And as he turned, he noticed the glass sphere being ejected over the crater.

As it sailed, away he was too stunned to panic. On the landing pad was the freighter. Next to it was the waiting room. And that was all. No prison.

No prison.

He looked down as the sphere began its descent into the crater. It fell slowly, and as he stared in disbelief, it all became suddenly clear to him.

There was no Rock. There was no prison. Deep in the crater, as far as he could see, were ships. Ships like the one that came ten years ago. Ships full of them. Hundreds of them. Thousands of them.

Waiting.

Waiting for the right time to strike.

In his sudden realization of truth, Axe let out a long scream, but it only echoed inside the glass cell as he descended. His prison crashed down into a mountain of bones and shattered. ❖



*Ghost of Elvis
illustration by Sonja Taylor*

My Final Question

I stand here
Stare into your eye
Gleaming black and evil
A pockmark in the face of justice
Blemish on the name
Of humanity

Do you think me worth so little?
The machined steel parts fit
So well
Click into place in intricate dance
Perfection to achieve
Death

But as you take your last breath
Between the time you pull
The trigger
And let the hammer fall
Ask yourself
Who you're really killing

— Kenneth Brady

Five Eighths Time

Cold sweat
Fidgeting chills
Pin pricking
Toes
Then Arms

Simultaneously spreading
Inward and outward
Back again

Clammy pressure
Pushing
The roof of my mouth
Like a metronome
On 5/8 time

Vaguely
Staccato

— Sarah Holmberg

4:38:92:16 1200 Wednesday, Arm A Geddon A Gun

Bore
dom
causing
me
to
think . . .

about the time
I snow
skied in
Africa with
10,000 creatures
each with
broken helmets
and radioactive
tatoos
of
a
coffee cup.

Bored
om
taxing
me
with . . .

worries of
World War
VI and the
small man
in Korea
with an I.Q.
of 97 and
eight
children,
eating
soup
and
laughing

Bor
edom
is cool.
I'm the coolest
guy
in the world.



illustration by Colin Hicks

B
ored
om
is . . .

spelled with
a silent
t in the
middle after
the hq and
before the
letter "ef"
while the
smoke
is
clear
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B
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o
m,
today,
will cause
the world
to be run
by
ducks.

Boredom
is,
was,

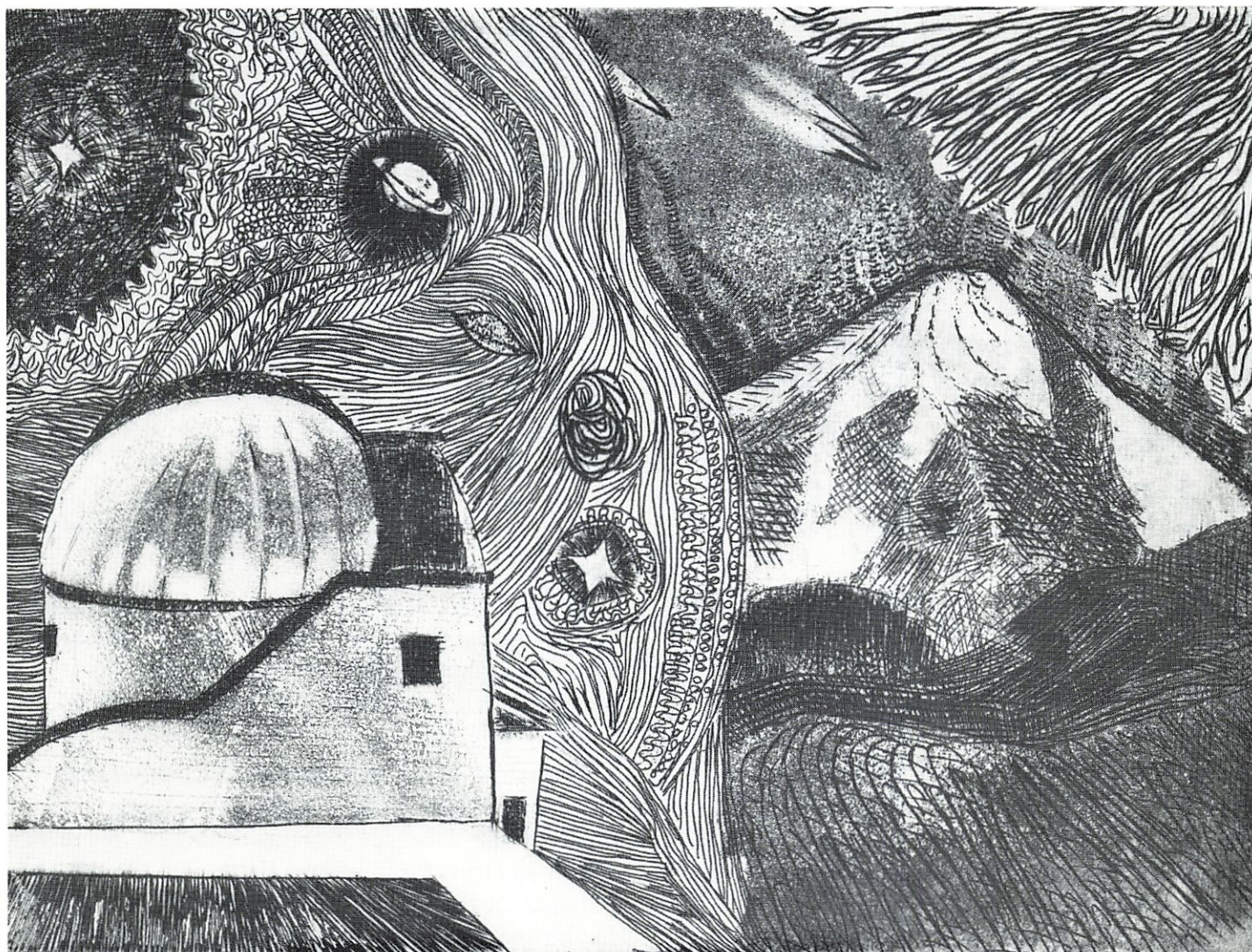
will be,
will have been,
could have been
will have not have been
the answer
to
many
scientific
stalemates.

Bo
is the
eighteen
letters
before
re and
do
m, as in
disaster.

will you
sing me
a song
of acid?

Nifty.

— Austin Rich



Observatory
zinc plate by Tamsen Cassidy

Valley of the Shadow

by Kenneth Brady

The disc sailed through the air in a wide arc and whisked to a gloved hand, which caught it with a slight flick of the wrist. Then it was off again, and Erickson jumped, stretching his hand and catching the disc as his body crashed to the floor.

"Hell of a catch, Jim," Lieutenant Coleman called from where he stood across the room, thick gloves covering his hands.

"Yes, sir, it was," Jim Erickson returned, and he threw the frisbee to the deck, where it lay quietly. He walked, out of breath from the exertion, over to his superior officer, who took off his gloves and clapped him on the back.

"Yeah," Coleman said, "I just wanted to see if

we'd be able to do that with the suits on planetside. A bit difficult, but better than no entertainment, right?"

Erickson smiled. The two walked from the observation deck into the crew lounge, and Erickson ordered two cans of beer from the replicator. He handed one to Coleman.

"Why do you always have to get it in cans?" Coleman asked. "It's just something else to throw away."

"Yeah, I know. But it makes me feel good, Cole." Erickson popped the tab and drank a few healthy swigs of beer from a can that said Foster's. "Makes me feel like I'm at home. You know . . . somewhere

other than here.”

Coleman sniffed reflectively. “Yeah? Well, I actually like it here. Nice scenery and all.”

This time it was Erickson who snickered. “Oh sure. All except the fact that you can’t breathe on the goddamn rock without a suit. That’s what I hate. I want to breathe fresh, Rocky Mountain air again.”

“Well, another two months and we’ll be heading back. So hang in there, Jim.”

Coleman swallowed what remained of his beer and tossed it in the receptacle. Then he stood and turned to leave.

“Jim? You ready?”

Jim Erickson looked up at the Lieutenant.

“Sure. I’ll be there in a minute. Just finish this brewski.”

Coleman nodded and exited. Erickson sipped the beer, thinking inwardly, then chugged the last few swallows and tossed the can toward the receptacle. It bounced off the wall and dropped to the floor, a few feet off target.

“Never could throw worth a shit,” he said to the empty can. “That’s why I’m here and not at the Olympics, I guess.”

Erickson stood and walked out of the room, wishing he were at home.

The airlock opened on a flat pad of concrete, which they had set up to land the various research vessels that were to frequent this continent in the next few years. In the distance was a gradual slope, rising to the height of almost five hundred feet above the landing pad. Erickson drove the buggy out of the *Jericho* and drove silently across the concrete, then over the hard ground and up the slope to the plateau above.

When they’d reached the top, Erickson sat in the driver’s seat as Coleman looked out at the landscape, eyeing his surroundings with a pair of field glasses. Erickson saw the line of mountains in the distance that glowed an iridescent purple in the sunshine, so much like the Rockies near sunset. The similarity only made him more homesick.

Erickson turned and looked down on the *Jericho* and the small concrete pad on which it perched. Those were the only signs that mankind had ever been on this planet, save a large corporate flag high on a pole near the center of the plateau. And a few hun-

dred yards further along the plateau, Erickson knew, was a gradual downslope into a valley.

Coleman dropped the glasses from his faceplate and shrugged to Erickson.

“Nothing up here, Jim. Just like always.”

“What did you expect, sir?” Erickson asked.

“Oh, I dunno. Maybe little green men. Right?”

Erickson smiled. “Whatever you say. You want me to finish the recon? Go on back to the ship.”

Lieutenant Coleman grunted. Then he stood and climbed from the buggy.

“Sure, Jim. I’ll go finish running those enviro-tests. Thanks.”

“No problem,” Erickson said and pulled away in the buggy as Coleman walked down the hill to the *Jericho*.

As the buggy reached the edge of the plateau, the valley took up the biggest portion of the view, and Erickson stopped to gaze down into its vastness. From where he was, the end of the valley was out of sight.

How many miles was that in this clear weather? Erickson thought. A hundred? Two hundred? He couldn’t tell. Distance was misleading on this planet; the air so clear. Nothing like Earth with the skies so polluted, he thought. The mountains seemed so close, but he knew even they were five hundred miles off.

The slope of the valley was gradual, and he rolled a few yards down the hill. Erickson left the buggy running and stepped toward a cluster of rocks that caught his attention. The tallest was of a granite-like structure, and its surface was broken and crumbled, but it looked to Erickson as if the other smaller rocks around it could have fit together with the larger. To form what? he wondered.

He looked down the valley and saw a few other formations of rock, though hardly similar. Still, many of them looked as if they were part of a larger rock at one time. Of course, Erickson reasoned, they must have been larger rocks in the past. And over time, they were broken.

But the tall rock bothered him in ways he didn’t understand.

As he turned to see the buggy idling, its exhaust puffing a combination of chemicals, his unease was momentarily distracted by the way the buggy looked. Normally, it was white, dull and nondescript. But now, there was a certain glow to the paint, an almost

reflective sheen to the surface.

Erickson walked to the buggy and uncertainly poked the fender. It was solid, definitely, but it continued to glow slightly. Nervously, he sat in the seat and drove quickly toward the ship. As he went, he unconsciously glanced back at the valley every so often, seeing the darkness of its vastness in the far distance. The local sun was slowly fading from the sky.

The darkness seemed to roll from the far end of the valley like a small pinprick, then getting larger as it came closer, moving as if brought by the wind, Erickson thought, and then turned around in time to keep the buggy from bouncing sideways down the slope to the ship. He motored it inside the ship and turned off the engine, stepping out and walking hurriedly into the control room.

"Sir?" he said, and Lieutenant Coleman turned to him.

"What's up, Jim?" Coleman said jovially, but his smile turned to brief alarm as Erickson took his helmet off. He was drenched with sweat. "What happened?"

Erickson looked out the window and noted that the darkness was retreating back into the valley, the sun becoming a glowing ember once again in the midday sky.

"Uh . . ." he said. "It suddenly grew dark and . . ." Realizing how weak his explanation was, Erickson trailed off.

"Yeah," Coleman replied. "I noticed that. Cloud cover, looks like. See? It's light again." He pointed out at the bright, clear landscape.

Erickson nodded weakly, then told Coleman he was heading off to sleep for a while.

"Good idea, Jim," the lieutenant said. "Looks like you could use some rest."

Erickson was awakened roughly and opened his eyes to see Coleman standing over his bunk.

"You need to come see this, Jim."

"What?" Erickson began, but Coleman hauled him out of the bunk.

"You'll see," he said as they went out to the ship's bay.

"What? I don't see—" Erickson began, but then his eyes set upon the buggy. Or, at least what he could see of the buggy.

"What the hell?" Erickson asked. The buggy was no longer glowing. But the paint seemed faded to the point that it was hardly visible. In fact, the entire structure of the vehicle seemed translucent. Erickson could see the door of the ship through the tires.

"Hell if I know," Coleman said. "I walked in here to check the backup power, and that's how it was."

"Backup power?" Erickson asked.

"Yeah. The power flickered a bit when the cloud cover picked up again. Got darker than hell for a bit."

Erickson ran to the control room and looked out the window. The darkness was rolling away, back to the valley's end. He went back to the bay and sat with Coleman in silence as the buggy faded out of existence.

"Lieutenant?"

"I dunno, Jim."

The rest of the day was spent mostly in silence, and the next day, Erickson suited up and walked up the hill to the plateau, gazing into the valley. Coleman was firing up the main engines to prepare for an early departure. He'd radioed home, and the order had come to move to orbit until what happened could be assessed.

Good luck, Erickson thought. By morning there wasn't anything left of the buggy to assess. Not a speck.

He stood on the plateau and stared at the *Jericho* as its thrusters burned bright in the early morning. And as he stood, silent, he felt something behind him. He turned slowly, and his heart missed a beat as he saw the darkness rolling from the valley, across the plateau.

A quick glance down at the ship, and his eyes fixed on the way the metal skin glowed in the morning sun. Not just a normal glow, he thought. Now the glow was subsiding, and the white was fading slightly.

Erickson yelled for Coleman but didn't make a sound over the din of the thrusters. Coleman must have noticed something, however, because he threw more power to the thrusters and attempted to lift off. Erickson's eye caught the white of the pad beneath. The concrete was moving, swirling, and as the first of the ship's legs lifted from it, the concrete liquefied, and the other three legs sunk deep within, halting the ship's thrust.

Erickson heard the thrusters scream as Coleman

panicked, and he moved to run toward the ship, but something within told him to not move for fear of his own life. And as he was powerless to act, he watched as the ship slowly faded and then was gone.

Erickson stared, slack-jawed for a few minutes, then turned and watched the darkness flow back into the mouth of the valley. He glanced once more at the flat pad of concrete and turned walking across the plateau, the sound of the fading thrusters still echoing in the sky.

As he reached the slope down into the valley, Erickson stared into the clearness of the land and the air. The total lack of anything man-made. He walked down the slope slowly, passing occasional piles of rock and stopping to rest next to a particularly large rock. His breathing harsh, he leaned up against the marble-like rock and slid his back down until he was sitting propped against the stone.

His gaze found the large smooth surface he was leaning against, and his eyes strained to make out something he could barely see. Wiping away a layer of dirt with one gloved hand, Erickson shrank back as he studied what could only be words of some kind. The language was none that Erickson recognized, but the lettering was etched into the stone, and he sat down on the ground hard.

What happened here? he thought. The piles of stone were the remnants of buildings, he knew now. But who built them? And who destroyed them? he wondered.

He stood and walked down the slope thinking about Coleman's vanishing. Something had disintegrated the buggy and the ship, but Coleman had disappeared with the *Jericho*. Why had they disappeared?

Erickson knew that the darkness was the cause, but how, he didn't know. He continued walking downward passing yet more of the shattered buildings and flat, wide clearings that must have been parking lots connected by paved roads at one time. How long ago?

Nothing remained that seemed in any way mechanical, he noticed. Only stone. So the time that must have elapsed since then was . . . how long? He didn't know. And if life had existed here, with civilization advanced enough to build stone buildings, how long would it have taken for Mother Nature to clear up all the machinery and pollution? How long?

Jim stopped in his tracks. No machinery and no pollution. Clear and natural. He stared back up the hill toward the place where the buggy had sat the previous day. That buggy had been the first machine to sit there in a long time. And the first to pollute . . .

And the ship . . .

Jim's mind raced. What natural defense could a planet have? Was there a safety somewhere in the genetic workings of rock and molten metals that was triggered when creatures on its surface polluted enough? Jim thought it over and decided that after what had just happened, anything was possible.

The problem of how he would ever get home occurred to him suddenly, as if for the first time, and he realized that he had been blocking out that train of thought. There would be a search party, a rescue party. But that would take at least three or four weeks, and he had only a few hours of air left in his suit tanks. Nowhere else on the planet was there any oxygen. Here it was foreign, an unknown element.

How many of the ships that followed the *Jericho* would discover this? he wondered. Whether the planet was acting as its own housekeeper or whether there was an outside force at work, Jim didn't know. And as he watched the darkness come from the heart of the valley he thought that he'd never seen anything as dark. Nor as inexplicably beautiful.

Was there another machine on the planet? he wondered. Another pollutant? There was a vague moment of hope in Jim's mind, but then it was gone with realization.

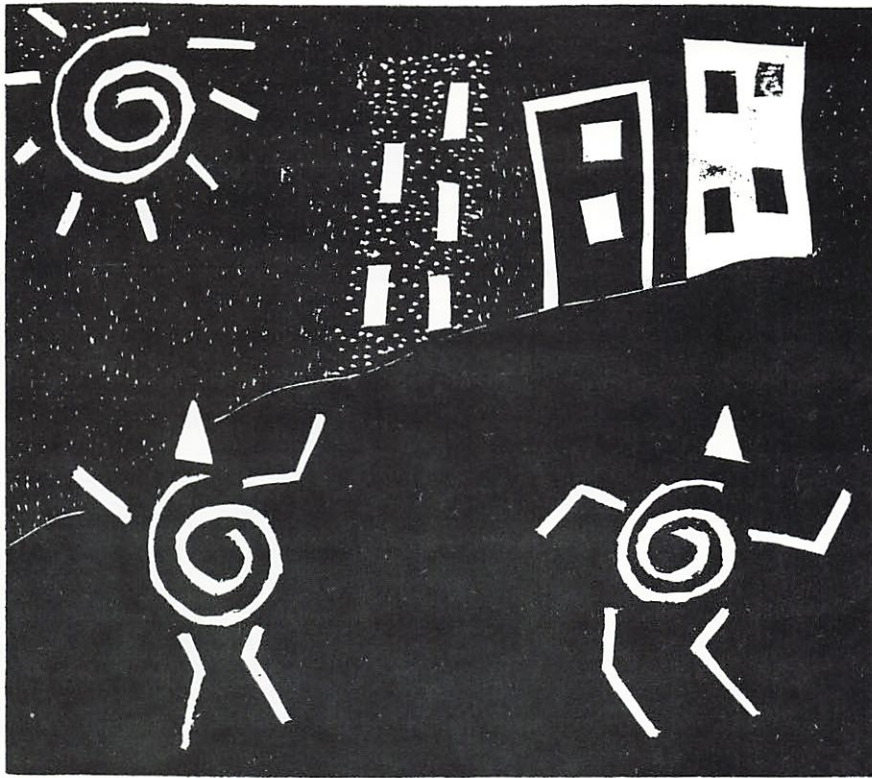
Beauty, yes. There was beauty in the darkness. The pure, unpolluted darkness. A planet free of all forms of pollution. Even oxygen, the remnants of which leaked from his respirator.

The darkness reached him, and Jim continued his walk down into the valley, feeling the shadows of rocks as he glided past them but seeing nothing. He felt his skin tingle, legs getting soft, eyes drooping like in the last moments before sleep.

As his body began to fade from existence, Jim found himself at peace, sadly wondering if it would take the next group of people that visited this planet as long to figure out what would cause their demise. His last thought went one step further.

Even if they knew what would cause their demise, would they do anything about it?

The darkness took the thought and retreated into the mouth of the valley. ❖



Native Dance
mixed media by Jeanette Nadeau

Goddess

A shimmering wall, the heat is visible,
as the sun sets like honey and flame.

The air is thick and wet, raw nature in all its beauty
surrounds me. Hypnotic. Erotic. I dance,
dance to the music of the night creatures.

The goddess is in Florida tonight, in me.

Come to me, inside my circle. The moon is black.

Move with me, in my ritual, around my fire.

I conjure. I worship.

Here before me the Indian Shamans spun their magic.

Now I work mine. I can hear the beating of their drums,
beating like my heart, with my heart — with my body,
as I dance, around, around — around the fire;
damp, wild, chanting . . .

— Mary-Denise Tabor

Land of Nevermore

Within the forest, tonight
Singing to the heavens
Dancing 'round the runes
Talking with the sky
I and the others
Worshipping the dead gods
That are Nevermore.

Within the forest, tonight
Raising hands to the heavens
Reading the runes
Laughing at the sky
I and the others
Worshipping the dead gods
That are Nevermore.

Within the forest, tonight
Praying to the heavens
Destroying the runes
Sucking up the sky
I and the others
Worshipping the dead gods
That are Nevermore.

— Alan Curtis



The Messenger

a man wrapped in animal skins
to blunt the stinging claw
of the snow
thundered across the plains
on his wearying
but undaunted mount

it was first light
and he'd been riding
for hours already,
his lips were numb
his sweat chilled his insides
as it rolled down his neck

he carried with him
one item
of great value:
a scroll
with a message scrawled on it
in haste
to the king

the castle walls
were now but a warm
welcoming abstraction
in the messenger's mind

he had no idea
what the message said
and he would never dare
to look

in fact it mattered
not at all
to him
what it said

he knew only
that it was urgent
it be delivered
to the king
and he was the messenger
who had been entrusted
with this
most pressing
of errands

this alone
was enough
to fill his beating heart
with purpose enough
to nourish
his hungry spirit.



illustration by Vernet Farnan

—Damien Filer

Evening Stroll

by Kay Ball

The whole thing is so surreal I feel as if I've stepped into a Harlan Ellison story, except I'm not sure if it's "Prowler in the City on the Edge of Forever" or "I Have No Mouth and I Must Scream." Sometimes just Ellison's titles are enough to express how I feel.

The bare bones of it is this—about a month ago I killed a man. Then a week ago I killed him again. Last night I killed him. Want to bet on whether or not I'll kill him tonight, or the next night, or next week, or next year?

I was walking home from the bus stop—cautious, but not really anxious. There's something about the white nurse's uniform that gives an air of strength and authority. So, even though it was nearly midnight, and they cut half the street lights to save the city money, I wasn't worried about walking home alone. The few lights that were on made pools that I moved to like a desert traveler going from one oasis to the next. Senior, the knife I carried, honed to a remarkable edge on its heavy blade, was also an effective deterrent to any would-be assailant. I had seen groups of young men, slightly drunk, loud in their youth, move towards me, then recognize the glint of Senior's steel and think better of playing with me.

I don't know where he came from. The street was wide, no alleys nearby, no bushes, no trees large enough to hide behind. I suppose he could have slipped out of a doorway, or from a parked car. I never heard his footsteps though. I turn and check to see if someone is following me even if I don't hear anything. I never saw him. Until.

He was there. Behind me. His mouth against my neck. His arms around me. Pressing against me. Senior on the street. Falling down like a meteor. Clattering on the street. Echoing like a trail of meteor fire. The knife fell down like a meteor. I fell down like a meteor.

I know that it will change your opinion of me—that I should not admit this. I felt drawn—maybe not to him, but with him into something. Something dark that laughed and touched us both in our private, even secret places. I fought—him, the dark thing, myself. I really did fight. Please believe me. I swam, my lungs bursting. Darker than deep water on a night bereft of moon and stars. Deep.

I don't need the lecture on the political relationship of rape and sex, or the idiot charge that all women really want it, all women really want to be raped. This wasn't either of those. This didn't have to do with rape or sex. Not for either of us, I think. It had to do with power.

Not his power pressing against me, binding me to him as I screamed (Where does a scream come from? Where does it go?). Not my power holding a knife in plain sight as I walked home from the bus stop at midnight.

The power of that thing. That laughing thing that drew us in.

We were a long time inside that dark, laughing pool. We swam for a very long time through those waters.

He did things to me, and I did things, and it was all slow motion drowning through those waters, and I could hear the laughing. It was very bad.

It was very, very good.

Then the knife was in my hand. I had not picked it up. The laughing thing was hungry.

As a nurse, I know something of anatomy. Killing was simple. Graceful. The rest of what I did was a bit more complicated. The laughing thing was hungry. It breathed heavily. It needed.

If I am insane, it is a queer sort of insanity. I go to work. On my days off, I listen to the summer concerts in the park. I do not imagine I see my rapist (what an odd term—my rapist—as if I had purchased him and had him wrapped up and sent home) in the faces of other men or stepping through the shadows.

I did not move the pieces of the body. Not that night nor any other. Yet there has been nothing on the news about repeated, grisly murders on that street. None of the people who live on that street came out of their houses, not even to stand on their porches and gape à la Kitty Genovese.

Perhaps you think that what really happened was that some man came at me from behind and raped me, and I invented all of this about the laughing, hungry thing and killing him with my knife how sweet because being raped drove me insane, or because I couldn't admit that I knew he was there before he touched me, and I wanted it because you believe every woman wants it.

I'd like to be sure of something, anything. If I had solid ground to stand on, I could move from there.

All I know is, there is a laughing pool of darkness, and it is hungry.

And we are food. ❖



She's got nineteen years and only one day to live
Yeah she's got some fears but none too serious. ♡
She's got too much work and not enough pay
She knows lots of guys, but none look her way.
She's got two cats and a couple of friends *
She's been down lots of roads, and a few dead ends.
She's got four dollars and a couple of dimes
Do you think she's got enough to get by? ~

WALKER 1994
productions ☆



Magic

zinc plate by Sharon M. Major

The Dolphin Sonnet

I want to live another life as a dolphin
And swim instead of walk, talk with bubbles,
Listen with sonar inside your mental melon,
Play with my pod mates, forget my human troubles,

Blast all sharks away with sonar shrieks,
Leap in the air and flip over backwards head first,
Dive two thousand feet deep to scream my eeks,
And rise to the air to blow out my lungs' lust.

Instead, I fell in love with you, Calypso,
Rolled into bed and made the covers rise
And fall like swelling ocean waves that *ipso*
facto break upon our flashing eyes.

You are my dolphin mate; this is our sea.
Whatever I speak comes bouncing back to me.

— Peter Jensen

The Mazatlan Weight-Loss Plan

by Don Stahl

"A fat girl will do anything to get laid," that's what I'd tell them in those days. Usually I said it good and loud, made it a joke so they'd laugh at me. I could get a laugh in any straight bar in Chicago. I'd stick out my potbelly and give my tits a shake. "There's nothing like screwing a fat girl," I'd say.

Haw haw Joline, you're a riot.

Then I'd sit and smile while some stinko garbageman with furry yellow fangs told the whole bar how he'd like to roll me in flour and look for the wet spot. I'd have a hit off my beer and just grin.

But later, after closing, one of them would call me up—*Joline you're a sport, how about we have a few beers at my place?* The old and the lonely, the blind and the halt and the lame.

So I'd shave my legs and shower, put on some silk and some real understated perfume. Listen, a six-pack goes down me like buttermilk, and I quit checking my weight after I passed 200, but I'm not piggy. Not even if that's what the guy wants. I'd take a cab down to his place, whisper in his ear, turn out the lights. In the dark it would be all fingers and mouths. I'm an expert. The guy always asked me to stay the night, and I would.

But in the morning, his eyes would be the color of V-8 juice. He'd squint at me, and this look would come onto his face, like, *I slept with that?* Men are so damned vain. I'd crack a joke and then hustle my wide ass out of there, so he could get dressed without being embarrassed.

Well, I got tired of it. It weighed me down, like a chunk of iron tied across my back—always being the butt, I mean. Even when I did it to myself. So I cashed in my overtime and went on a vacation. To Mazatlan, on the west coast of Mexico.

I left Illinois on a day when the sleet was blowing sideways, and I stepped off the plane in paradise. Palm trees! My hotel was white, and the sunshine was nothing you'd see in Chicago — yellow as butter melting on perfection biscuits. I swam in the ocean for the first time since poor old Ronnie took me to New York on our honeymoon, and we drove all the way out to Montauk Point. Which the Pacific at Mazatlan is nothing like, I hope to say. I bought a one-piece Spandex swimsuit and spent all morning playing in the waves. When I came ashore, I had no muscles left in my legs.

The barman made me a drink with pineapple juice and vodka, but I didn't get tanked. I took a nap instead, saving myself.

That evening, I stepped out and looked around. Once I got away from the American hotels, I saw some working girls and a lot of dirt. After a while, I hired a taxi—a real

mutt, with mangy paint and no fenders. The driver was about seventeen, and he had a hopeful little moustache and the brownest arms.

"I want to go to a nice quiet beach," I said. "Night swimming, capisce?"

"OK, señora. Sure ting," he said.

I sat beside him in the front seat. When we got a little ways out of town, and I figured he wouldn't swerve into a bus, I reached into his lap and did something easy. He opened his mouth in surprise. Then his skinny face became worshipful, and he shivered.

"Ay, señora," he murmured. He began to pull on the steering wheel like a pilot yanking a 747 off of O'Hare Field.

"Watch the fruit truck, Chico," I said. He blinked and kicked the brakes.

Where he took me, some low dunes lay between the road and the beach. We stumbled along in the dark. He carried a big old blanket, and he kept patting my arm and trying to lean his head on my shoulder as we walked, a real sweet thing. That ocean air felt like a first kiss, and I have never seen so many stars.

"Honeybaby," he said. "You my honeybaby."

"Sure thing, Chico," I said.

There was that silence, away from cities; I had forgotten. No sound but the waves. We lay down. Underneath me was the old blanket, overhead the stars, and beside me that boy, smooth-skinned as an angel. And I tell you, he couldn't wait.

After we made it, the air was cooler, and I rolled the blanket around us. It smelled doggy. Chico put his head on my shoulder and cried a little bit. He had nerves, that was all, first-time nerves. I held him close and rubbed his back.

That's what I do, I guess. Ease them where it hurts.

It didn't take long for him to feel better. A few minutes and he started chattering in Spic, proud as a rooster.

"You're quite the big man," I told him. "Mucho hombre." Then I got him to drive me back to my hotel, and I showered and went to bed.

At daybreak I went down to the hotel beach. I kicked off my clogs, and the sand felt like sugar; the sky gleamed silvery-rose and forgiving. Pure white birds wheeled across it, weightless. Like I always wanted to be.

I scuffed my toes in the foam at the waterline. No one else was in sight—I peeled off my blouse. Dropped it in the sand. The air touched me with the softest fingers. I took off my slacks and my unders. The birds turned and turned and turned and never made a sound.

I spread my arms and began to run. ❖

Fool's Words

A fool's word may
linger like whiskey too early
in the morning light.

— Juan Vargas

High Expectations

*For Robert
and a friendship that has survived much*

While traveling the hallways of life
I stopped to look at many pictures.

They adorned the walls with their still beauty
beckoning me to come and join them.

I gazed at each one carefully
spellbound by the beauty each portrayed.
Such compelling images did I see.

But, though I stood trapped in admiration,
it was only for the briefest instant.

Soon the picture would lose its beauty,
and I would turn away and move on
sometimes berating myself for wasting time.

Then, one day, a door opened in the hall.
From the rectangle of blackness stepped a man.
He moved to stand next to me and smiled.
I looked up into your familiar eyes
laughing at the mischief they revealed.

We continued down the hallway together,
commenting on the pictures life offered.
Every now and then we tore our gaze away.
The pictures were forgotten for a moment.

In those moments I, carefully, held the bowl
and you, carefully, filled it with ice cream.

— Sonja Taylor



Young Love
photo by Dana Dannevik



Rush of Water
photo by Darlene Ganz

Salamander Man

Salamander man bathing in the sun
you jolt into hiding, nakedness revealed
your plain fear so simple, so innate, you run
as if you had tennis shoes on your feet.

Gliding with the dusk through strawberry wine
spilt in the clearing near a dead oak tree,
you rest to view purple, crescent shaped vines,
capturing creatures in shallow puddles.

The wind is howling through your podded toes
as you ponder on the stone of a grave.
A deer, an owl, a shrew, a cow, look small
to you, from here above the line of pines.

Your sticky tongue gobbles fried chicken crumb
that fell into the smuky green water.
Under a rotting log you crawl, to sleep
blending well, yet candy for an otter.

— Nancy Thomas

Catfish

Nine lives are not granted,
to fishy felines, so slippery-
and clever.

Swim and recreate with lofty catlike indifference-
unwary. Impetuously silent, and full of venom-
you regard a baited hook.

Disguised. Deceiving. It beckons
and you follow. Lured to the fatal threat.

you are caught, and you are humbled.
PURRRING and hissssing on my grill.

Hmmmm. So tasty.

— Mary-Denise Tabar

Steelheading on the McKenzie

We rounded the big bend the McKenzie takes
to avoid the south end of the Coburg Hills,
when Neil said, "The water's real low.
There's a hole downstream. I wonder
who's in there waiting for the flow
to pick up. I'll bet he's hungry."

We anchored his drift boat in one foot of water
and stepped out and waded in our track shoes
and jeans. "Don't let's get too close.
We don't want our shadows to fall on that pool."

We tied on black lead ants and let the current
take them down over the edge into that round bowl.
Two strikes at once hit and pulled down our poles.
We waited until they stopped, then we reeled.
Two fish came up running in shallows, splashing
between rocks, and we pulled them both to the bank:
two twenty-inch steelhead, gunmetal bluebacks.
We shoved them head first into our pockets
with tails still flapping.

We repeated that tactic once more. They were so
hungry! We each had two steelhead in our pockets
like pistols. "Let's stop before we get greedy."
So we walked to the edge of that blue hole
and saw a darting swirl of dark steelhead
two hundred or more turning
like the elliptical wheel of a galaxy,
a wildness I have never seen again.

— Peter Jensen

Still Standing

Standing above the bridge
I look down
Below me and my inflated ego
I see the River

The River is moving fast
Babies are beginning to drown
Trees are falling down
The city is flooding and people are fleeing town

Standing above the bridge
I scream at the River
I curse him
I throw stones to stop his tracks
I yell to him and I say,

"Wicked River, Damn you and your water!"
How can you do so much destruction?
I say to him, "Don't you believe in God?"

The Wicked River in return says,

"Young follower in search of the Om,
I am God"

And the bridge then begins to flood

— Robert Mahon

Allpxeb

Black fiber gritteon in sex hexagonal
space (and the velvet begins.)

forward paper cry
textured a song
ticks and hot randomness
zippered The fashion
wandering mound
basketballs chenchd in
holes stinging glowing
coat between of
blood the bugles
are puss creams. feet of the
luster Doug bulging formica tables
phosphorus yellow
Coup the underside
never like callous Eyes
like on hairy
give a hate.
foaming there
none

— Colin Hicks



Horsehead
photo by Hannah Fenner

Lane

Cement protruding
From an ever green forest
Swirling pain and joy

— Timothy P. Priest



Funky Chicken
photo by Hannah Fenner

Goose Music

On a breath I spoke into the dark
of love, and a thousand clamoring duskies lifted
in a wild whirl of wings, ringing
the red ribboned bells about their throats.
Slowly, they settled back down on our bed,
feeding on gold and silver grains of the moon
we scattered like stars across our evergreen spread.
All night long a solstice storm tossed
the channel light; the duskies luffed their wings
and cried soft, reassuring gabbles
from where they rested in the salted crook

of our knees—a long head and white-throated neck
fit the muscled curve of your low back;
their cool gentle beaks brushed my breasts.
“They have such intelligent eyes,” you said, and I
replied, “Yes, my love; yes, my love.”
We sectioned pomegranates, feeding geese
by hand. The hot seeds stained your mouth,
their feathers, our tongues, and fingers; the white flesh
where juices fell burned and blossomed our names.
You whispered, “I love you,” and the duskies lofted,
circled in jubilant rounds, settled, and called.

— Sandra M. Brown

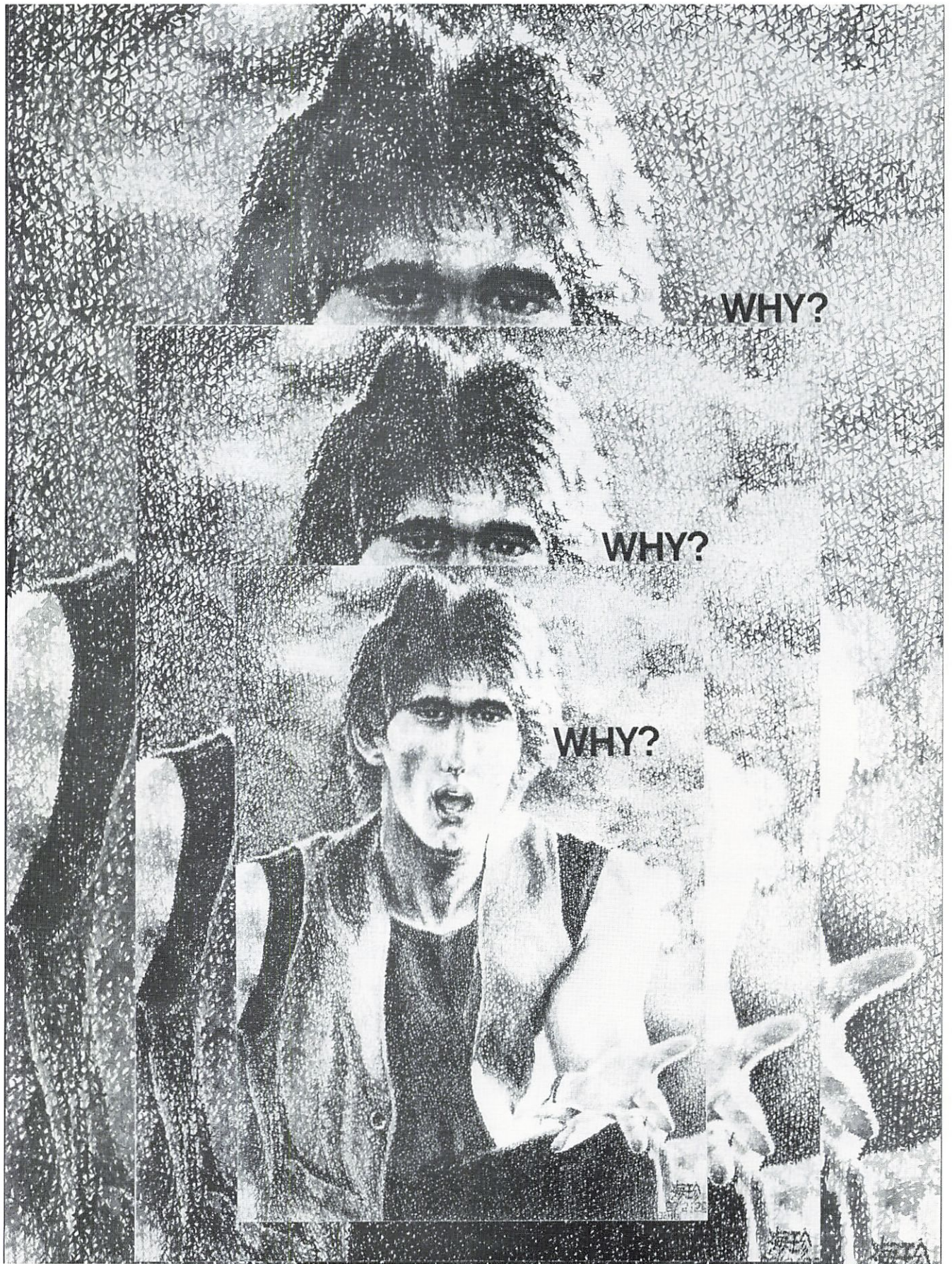


illustration by Jenny Moon

A Good Day

Today's a good day.
I got lucky this morning.
The sun is shining.

— Heather McCabe

Do not dream of a
Dragon, but close your eyes to
A waxing flower

— Lisa Ritter



photo by Kimberly Bourne

The Nurser

Suck, suck, suck, nibble
Lazy milk dribble creeps down-
goodnight sleepy babe

— Mary Ripley

The child sheds his tears
Unable to eat his candy
He must eat his peas

— Denise Groves

Cybil

Charcoal Black and Barks
Are what my dog is made of
Not to mention joy.

— Scott R. Shinn

Contributors

Kay Ball is the host of "The Guinea Pig That Ate the Wormhole" and assorted struggling flora.

Uhuru Black — "You whispered something in my belly."
— "And I the silent observer."

Kimberly Bourne — "I have seen the light & it's too bright!"

Kenneth Brady — I keep pretending to be a writer and people keep publishing my stuff. Go figure.

Sandy Brown is a writer and teacher who lives, works and plays in the Willamette/McKenzie region.

Tamsen Cassidy — I am a 36-year-old student, undeclared. I work with an autistic woman and am really enjoying the art of learning.

Alan Curtis — Omniscient, omniverous, omnipotent. A seer. A seeker of truth. A player of words. Currently residing in Eugene, OR.

Dana Dannevik — I am a first year student at LCC and plan on transferring to Cornish College of the Arts in the fall for my degree and life-long dream in interior design.

Vernette Farnan — I draw for fun, it's a game for me. I am a student here at LCC.

Contributors continued

Hannah Fener — My first picture of my first horse, and chickens just hanging out.

Darlene Ganz — a photographer with high dreams of photography and fantasies of 4 by 5 and 35 mm.

Denise Groves — I enjoy writing and photography. Poetry is a new hobby. I hope to spend my future seeing life through a camera lens.

Colin Hicks — Ollie North is my TV pal.

Peter Jensen teaches writing and poetry at LCC.

Robert Mahon — I love life — there is nothing else like it. I'm only 19, and I love life.

Sharon M. Major — I am an animal advocate, as well as artist, sign painter, graphic artist and wood and stone sculptor. I am also coast dependent.

Heather McCabe — Heather is a student and plays basketball for LCC.

Eathan Mertz — I used to eat bugs and dirt, but now I don't very often. I've never appeared on Jeopardy.

Jenny Chien Moon — Jenny's major is interior design. She says she has discovered another way to express her inner emotion — dance.

Jason Rackley — . . . and if I were the Lizard King, I guess I could do anything. I think about that sometimes.

Timothy P. Priest — I use poetry to express myself in an attempt to capture emotions from my experience.

Ryan Reynolds — SWM 19. Hobbies include obsessive/compulsive behavior + stress. Seeking tall, light to auburn haired goddess to fill the lonely, unending void that is "Life." Non-smoker preferred. ext. 55555.

Austin Rich — Truly new ideas in any medium are hard to conceive, but even simple themes can be stretched to unusual lengths to cause any reader to 'redefine' their terms.

Mary Ripley — I am an apprentice for homebirth midwifery, single mother, good lover, have three brothers, and you can print anything — lie or truth — you want about me.

Lisa Ritter is a student at Lane Community College.

Scott Shinn — I like to write songs and play guitar.

Don Stahl is an alumnus of LCC and an aspiring writer. He lives in Eugene with his wife and young son.

Mickey Stellavato — I hear the goddess in every breath and the god in every movement.

Mary-Denise Tabor — I'll be 20 on Feb. 24, '94. I can't believe I'll actually be 20. I had hoped to solve world hunger by age 20, but I still live at home, so I guess not.

Sonja Taylor — I love coastal storms. Nothing makes me feel more alive than the rush of sea air against my face and the salty taste it leaves on my lips.

Nancy Thomas is a political science major at UO.

Juan Vargas — I'm 24, a musician and an English major.

Laura Walker — I would prefer to remain silent.

Dorothy Wearne is a downhill skier who wants to turn professional. Carrots are her favorite food.

Jack Yattering is a 42-year-old writer, actor and sometime gherkin importer. He lives in Eugene and spends most of his time at home, but occasionally crosses the threshold.

The Dance

spinning
reeling
leaping
jumping
in ecstasy
and passion
dancers
dancing life
beautiful
eyes pause
dancers dance
eyes focus
dancers rot
rotting from the eyes of pigs
pigs with the faces of men
like animal farm
men with the eyes of pigs
the dancers rot and wither
under the pig-eye gaze
collapsing like the poor Caryatid
collapsing under their burden
the weight of pig-eyes
graceful dancers seep back to earth
they flow sticky and red
dancing slowly now
among the sand and pebbles
slower - then gone
staining the earth
eyes move on

— Eathan Mertz



photo by Mickey Stellavato

Orgiastic Campfire

Blue
spreading, licking.
Orchid
darting, chasing.

Red
crackle, hisss.
Orange
writhing, laughing.

— Mary-Denise Tabor