

Denali

Literary Arts Journal



Fall 1999

LCC



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Thank you to the LCC Torch for their support, accomodation and the use of their facilities.

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Denali is a student-operated publication printed by the LCC Printing and Graphics Department.
The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the college.

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Red Plastic Watch

The Metro doors opened,
A young couple stumbled in,
The car was crowded,
They stood in front of me,
In the crush of Paris.

She was short,
And,
Had a rough woolen look to her,
And a face -
Oh, a face,
(How do I tell you this?
It is so important.)
A large face
Not pretty,
But capable of infinite joy,

Her man was tall and in dark dirty jeans,
But what caught my attention was his watch,
A cheap watch,
Of one-piece molded red plastic.
A child's watch.

They swayed,
We all swayed,
As the train hurtled,
Rumbling and dancing,
Beneath the city,

The hand with the watch moved,
It crept upward,
Through the press of bodies,
He touched her face with the back of his hand,
And bent and kissed her hair,
She looked up at him,
her eyes glistened,
So full of stars,
I felt my heart stop

by Michael Hanner



September

He is moving out,
Out of the little house with the shady back yard,
Full, still, of the deep green nasturtiums.

I think they're still in love,
But I don't know.

Those white-hot summer skies are thankfully gone now,
The clear blue of fall is back,
Again.

Her voice sounds sad,
Distracted, coming from my answering machine,
Scattered leaves,
Blowing across the street.

Perhaps it will still work,
But now there is firewood to stack.

It seems a long way to spring,
When, again, anything is possible.

by Michael Hanner



The First Time: Kona

The rental contract was clear:
no coverage for this road.
The guidebook was clear:
black sand, blue sky, green water,
yellow fish.
We drove the red car down to the beach.

Wild, I undid my blouse.
You stole a purple orchid from the wet
mouth of a cave.
Afterward, we drank Pineapple Crush
from the same can.
Scratched our names with sticks in the sand.

Later, we found a room.
To our embarrassed relief —
separate beds.

That night the storm fell.
The wind took hunt. Rain slammed
against the window glass. Palms bent.
The power went down.
In the black you cried out,
believing sin
had made you blind.

By Nancy Carol Moody



Silk Screen by Sharon Braaten



WOOL

In fourth grade I learned to pray
grandmother into heaven —
No offense intended, Grandma —
with your M&Ms and candy
necklaces and laughter when I
muddied your new wool coat
I knew you were quite capable of making it
into God's Glorious Kingdom
of Heaven on your own but still
a bit of insurance never hurts and besides
what would it say about my faith
if I hadn't at least tried to bail
you out from a purgatoried fate?

Sister indulged us with the secret code
a hocus-pocus of prayer packaged
in a formula as simple as arithmetic
so Friday after school was done
I stepped into the hungry
mouth of the church
its dark walls brutal
with crucifixions and steam
from the incense that held heaven
aloft and despite my terrible
allergy to wool knelt
penance of the hem
of my uniform skirt running
twice through my chants —
just in case — until my knees
were ablaze and puckered
like fists and I scratched
my way home in that dress
I wouldn't be able
to shed for years.

by Nancy Carol Moody



Fall

by Angela Seits

Part One

A restless feeling settles in my bones
as the colors fade far away.

Fall bleed in my veins-
and tears dry up like leaves.

I see halos burning in their indifference-
and heroes fallin' from the ground.

Men walk on pitchforks
and gleaming white teeth rake what's not their own-
shattering in envy.

Indecision marks me with its steel arrow-
roots out my gut
and smiles

Part Two

Fall
with me
the leave
in the trees
I am
a
stirring wind.

I bring the rains
The soil drinks up,
and chill the fields
and the hungry pups,
born to nature's reaper.

An abundant
harvest
I ripen in the dirt,
for man's ivory teeth to devour.
I prepare the stems
for one more life,
the reincarnation of an hour
in Nature's time.



Smoke Speaks

Music patron, I'm the
rhythm of yesterday

My breath - vocalist croon
and my heartbeat's the bass
when the band plays in tune
mesmerized folk embrace
melodies of today
portray my soul's vast way

inspiring tomorrow
with surreal, silent smoke

smoke from cigarettes lit
metaphor's historic
Before the stage, crowds sit
exhaling rhetoric
silky, subtle silence
evidence of my presence

the remnant of what's gone
lingering, waiting
for my origin to be found

my soul - plantation chants
creating gospel hymns
rock n' roll, blues and jazz
inspired seeds within
saxophones serenade
smoke-filled sessions incense
the fragrance of my grade

by Cory Mainor

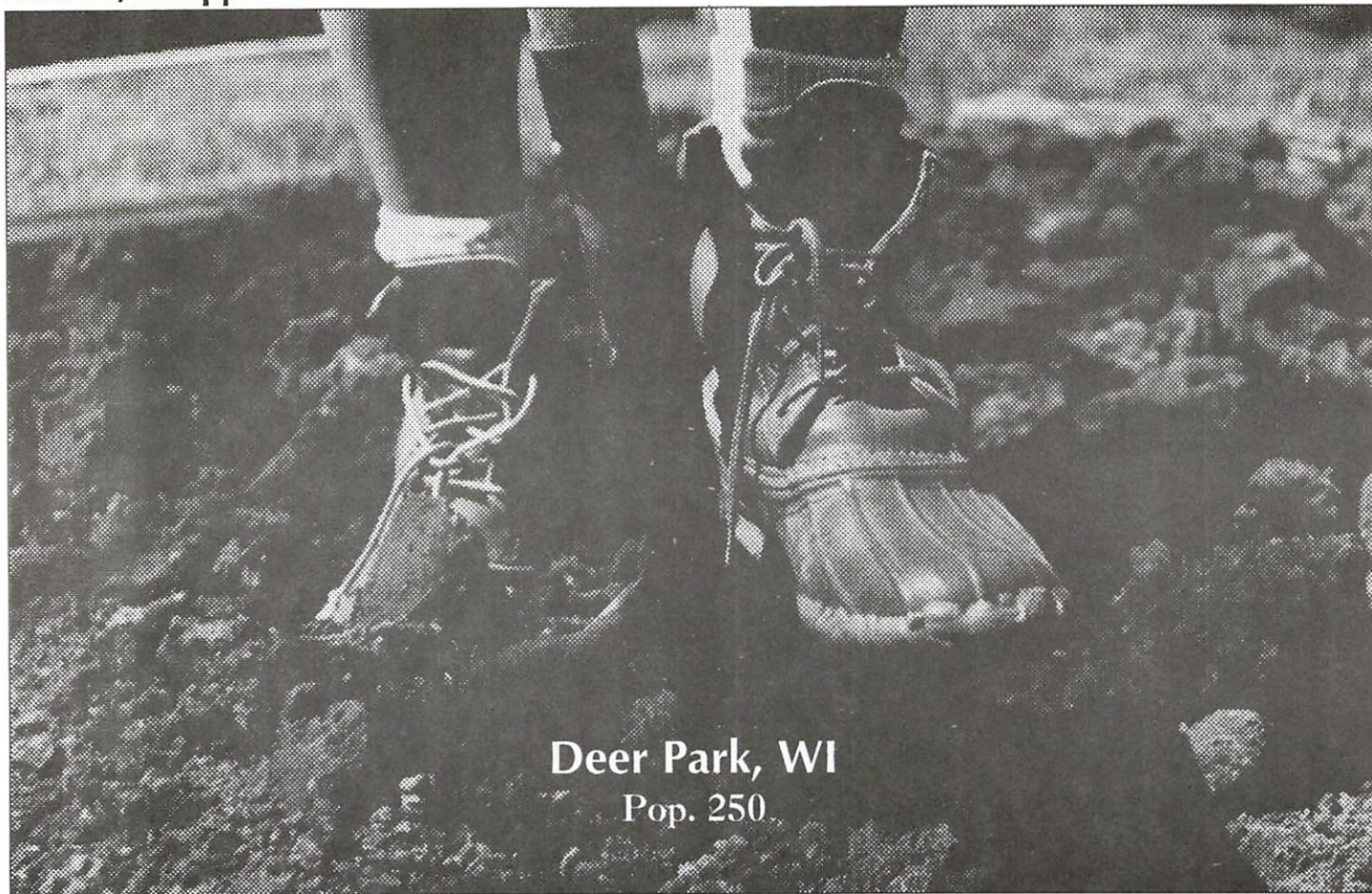
Life and Other Everyday Manifestations

It's one of those crazy nights when
a second father shows up
out of jail, sober, and motivated
to live stronger than you have known.
He is envious that I have worked
thirteen hours and can hardly position a beer in my lap.
He is proud but keeps practicing
his Bible throwing. The difference is
he lives for tomorrow and I
keep waiting for now to happen.

It's when a friend calls
he is almost crying from his wife's
mother's death, on their anniversary
where they were sleeping in the woods
or maybe gambling in Tahoe,
I don't know, I just feed the cat
things like "wow", not because
it's just a word that adds stimulation
to any drink. The saying anything
seems more appropriate than the silence.

That's when shock becomes more
abrasive than liquor, and what is found
in any next moment will be kept
and adjusted to — I explain this,
and in turn he comforts my thoughts
with a story of a dead dog on Sunday, choked
on a healthy pork bone, I am not
at all comforted by this, so we move
the topic to another form of cruel death
where I throw myself from a car window
and convinced there is no
suicidal attachment. He doesn't understand
where I am or where I have to go.
His blank stares make a common
madman out of me.

by Aaron Braaten



Deer Park, WI
Pop. 250

Photography by Kate Houppermans

Them boys knew no wrong,
must have been chewing
lead for weeks, maybe for
flavor, maybe for fun
but thirty bullets and Bambi
doesn't sound like sport to me.

You know the town got its name
from some meat packer.
He dug a trench so big
when them deer came runnin'
there was no need for a rifle,
no need for a brain.

Now the men are more orange
than their wide, cheddar-
stained bellies, showing off neon
camouflage with a fistful of Pabst,
celebrating the only three things
Wisconsin has to offer.

In the gas stations they're squeezing
a nozzle for all they can,
molesting time and gas tanks with
big chin and chest, hoping all the town
will admire a beefy twelve point and a
"no fat chicks" bumper sticker.

Deer's bar is full of them boys,
all deaf with echo and dumber with drink,
screaming attitude stronger than
the resonance of bullets still kicking at two,
in a morning where a wide-eyed doe
hurries to live even more.

by Aaron Braaten

god for sale

Sometimes I wish I could make it
through just one of those sitcoms or
Sunday night movies, and claim mindless
residence in the fold of a couch,
deaf to lips smacking on potato
chips and chocolate bars, gargling cola
fizz and chuckling at Budweiser commercials,
evaluating sports updates and
weather forecasts, sometimes I wish
I didn't always know what the sky looked like
but I know it too well, I've been watching it for years,
letting each morning make a fool
out of me with daylight, hoping tomorrow
I will bring her something other
than sore hands

with palms that bleed regularly, which
are rarely wiped clean, though when she does
I clench with a fistful of god and godamnit!
nothing hurts more than watching it
drain out the hand like water.
But maybe that's the price for your soul,
always panting at resemblance and
licking the glass. Sometimes I wish
I couldn't remember or cared
a little less, and lie content in the reflection
of make up tips and t-shirt brands
between reruns and laugh tracks
and to wake only feeling the cost
of sore thumbs

by Aaron Braaten



A Puking Pen to Page

“I’m sick with inspirationless liquor”

my illegible hand scrawls.

My illiterate eyes crawl,
across jaded bathroom walls.

My word choice trite.

So much to say.

So slurred.

Pen in hand,

I piss off,

a diluted,

disinfected,

night’s mystery.

My stomach unsettled by half-digested experience.

More misery,

as gravity,

and the weight of one, two, many,

beg me to kneel.

Pushing and pulsating at my flooded head

until emotions up and out,

like wine, whiskey, and spirits.

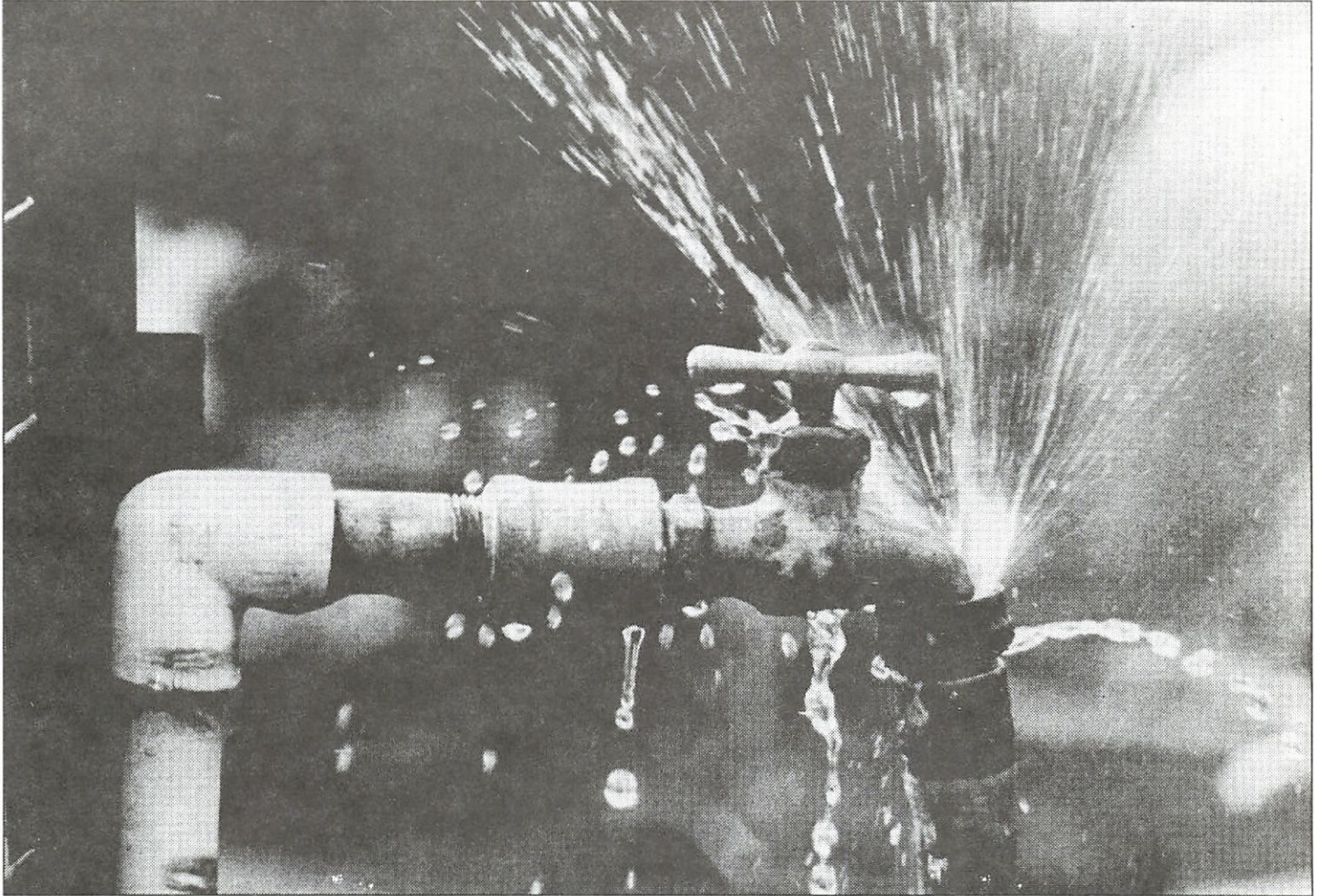
All the while looking forward,

to the fresh breath of a flush.

by brookstrongbergland



Photography by Kale Houppermans



“A well-written life is almost as rare as a well-spent one.”

- *Thomas Carlyle*



Photography by Gabriel Powell



Green is not Hate: Crescent Lake

For days I've heard my mother's voice soft as sand
sifting over the shoulder of a great dune.

She tells me what I know:

It is not death. Never death.

But the quiet of gulls. The shift of clouds.

The flow of rainbows melting in the base of a waterfall.

"Forget it," my father says, "Go back to when the air tasted of mint.

Find the glow of a burning pine cone. Listen to deer
as they whistle before they run from a meadow.

Forget it, forever."

Last night I watched my legs green in red water.

I thought of sand polished white by wind.

What is it I don't know?

Love?

Ice cream as sweet as cactus meat.

My father held my mother's hand twenty years too late.

Last year high in the high Cascades,

I watched clouds close and the rain become sand.

Still, I choose not to hold back the sea.

I come to life to dance,
not to watch flowers die.

by William T. Sweet



Dead Duck: Albany

The mallard drake was dead a week;
before anyone noticed
his oil spill ring of color.
Even then, no one tried to fish him out.
What passed for concern
were the lobs of stones of a couple of twelve-year-old boys
diddling away their time.

Then, there we were -
stopped on the north shore
looking at an island of feathers
diminishing with each wave's break.
Could we love here,
we wondered, trying to avoid
our reflected shadows stretching
and shrinking on the water,
The "o" slipped to an "i"-
the question becoming more imperative —
Could we still live
if we stayed?
The dead duck bobbed
in the gentle afternoon breeze
as the sun struggled
in a sky not even a cloud would touch.
We glanced at each other
then back to the water
the drake staying in our sight,
no matter where we looked.
That moonless night
while the dogs remained barkless
we slipped silently away.

by William T. Sweet

Field Burning: Halsey

I think our story should not end —
or go on in the dark with nobody listening.

—William Stafford

The furrow rolled black from the plow and when it was safely rimmed,
men in white T-shirts and blue jeans touched it off with torches
to burn the blight.

At noon I cried through billows
of rye smoke and watched while the house melted
into waves of heat.

Yet, it was there at supper with whole spuds,
corn on the cob, and butter melting
along the edge of a Blue Willow plate.

That night I got out of bed, walked to the center of the field
and watched a star fall
for hours until it was eclipsed by dawn.

by William T. Sweet



Photography by Gabriel Powell

Tango With Jesus

I'm told it is all about waiting.

Push me. My feet will search backward
for balance. Hold my waist like a stem.

When you knife-step to my right,
cauterize my poise,
I will try not to be afraid, try
not to look down. My feet
will search sideways for balance.

And when you force on me
the close embrace,
when I am a sightless bird
riding your ocean belly,
and mute sea glass upon
the deep sands of your infinite face,

I need you to remember
my arms and legs,
and also my heart's imbalance.
How strange and difficult
is the art in it.

I want you to call it good.
Will you call it good
even though I am weeping?

I'm told it is all about waiting.

by Gloria Biersdorf



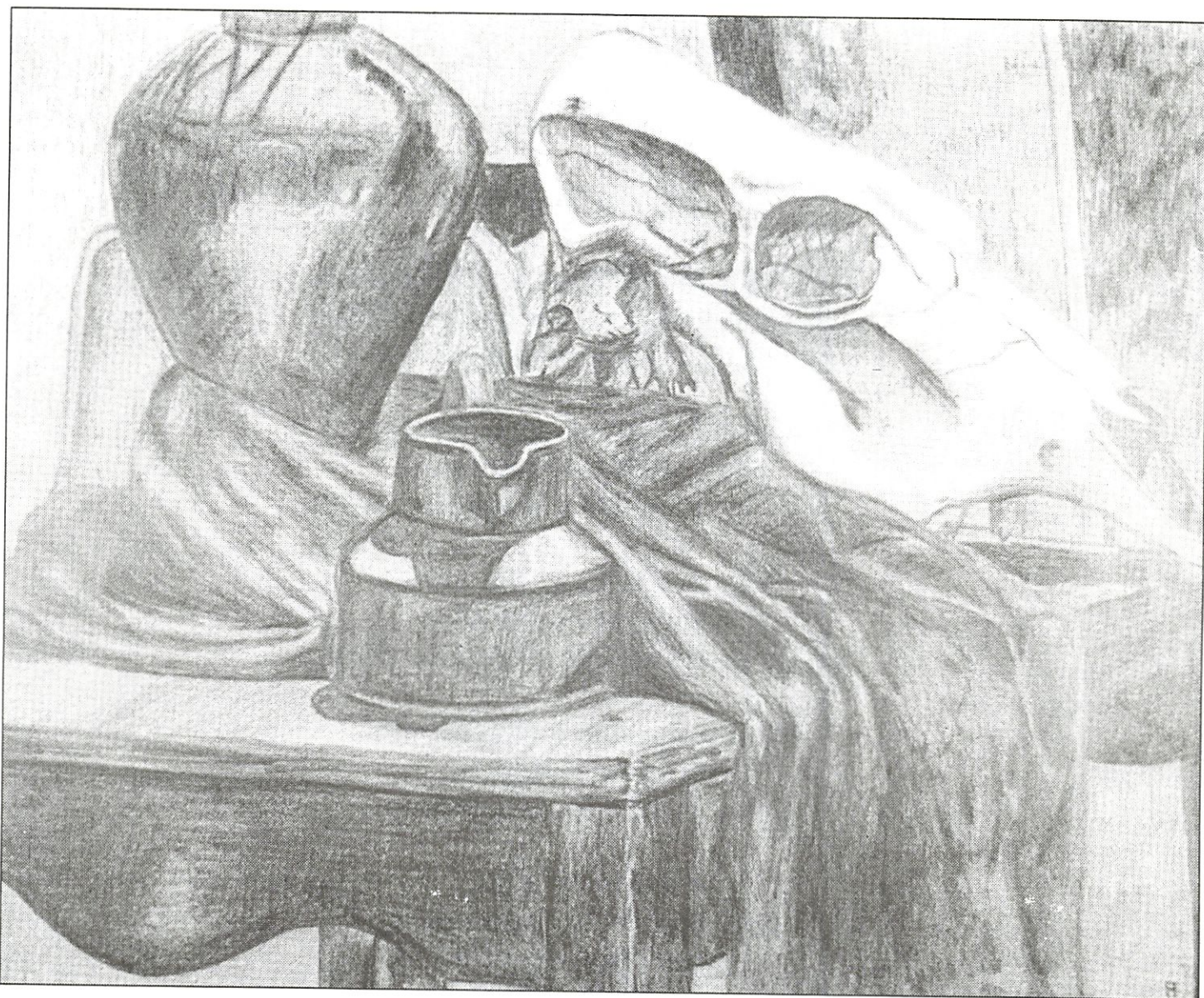
Planting Ranunculus

Yellow
I'm stroking threads of softest
Root
What gives me the right to?
I'm trying to seduce you
Into the dark earth
Because you are opening
Like some god
Onto my intemperate day
Your high, refining fires
Sing simplicity
I am wanting
I lean full into your
Sunburst kiss
Whisper a prayer:
You must live
Your verdant rage of foliage
Shoots of grace exploding
Refract my words into a choir
And I am listening

by Gloria Biersdorff



Still Life by Bryce Williamson



“Writing is an adventure. To begin with, it is a toy and an amusement. Then it becomes a mistress, then it becomes a master, then it becomes a tyrant. The last phase is that just as you are about to be reconciled to your servitude, you kill the monster and fling him to the public.”

-Winston Churchill



To An Artist

This is for the brightness in breathing,
and about limbs that do not hang limp,
for eyes that translate difficult colors,

And the warped teapot ticking
like the fifth street train,
reminding me it's time.

I'm going to sing (therefore)
into my poor computer,
dance outward across hospital skies,

Beat these stupid streets with
my good will, until
the dying rise. What else

Can I do? You,
pure lake in my wilderness,
what else can we do

but stay, and remember
we are sorts of dawn
in all this other.

by Gloria Biersdorff



menses

you made

love

and art form

spilling

red pigment

on the white stretched

canvas

of my bed

my brown hands

made

fine red prints on

the white stretched

fabric of your skin

by William Draft

McCollick Fire

I should say this tonight as I feel it.
We have the time,
your eyes are twins of mine, yet they seem
to glow brighter.
I have my shoes on your pillow and
everything is the same.
The demigods of tiredness yawn
in my throat;
let's ignore them.
I could stay here tonight
and nothing would be of sex.
As long as I can kiss your stomach
and you can kiss my head
I can love you alone.

By Jessica Parsons



Amid Midwest

Mommy's walking porn
daddy's up in her sister

rush home from school
lunch

friends delete copboards
leave fridge open

mother
notice their eyes as
she steps from the vanity
erect

attempt not to stare
ignore heat growing hard
peek(ing)

forget peeking at hair
under mommy's skirt

daddy

remember silence of
dad and auntie kissing &
her head bobbing
before she spies face at the door

his eyes spoke all
(shock, shame, ejaculation)
not catching, swelled crotch/hand movements

Silence remember

Silence

ignore social yadda...overheard
mommies had the block

remember

friends laughing over(heard)
taking turns in mommy
skipping class for
mommy's ass

Silence

Don't tell your mother
Auntie licks him
off her lips

married now
don't know how.....

by J. Matthew Tully

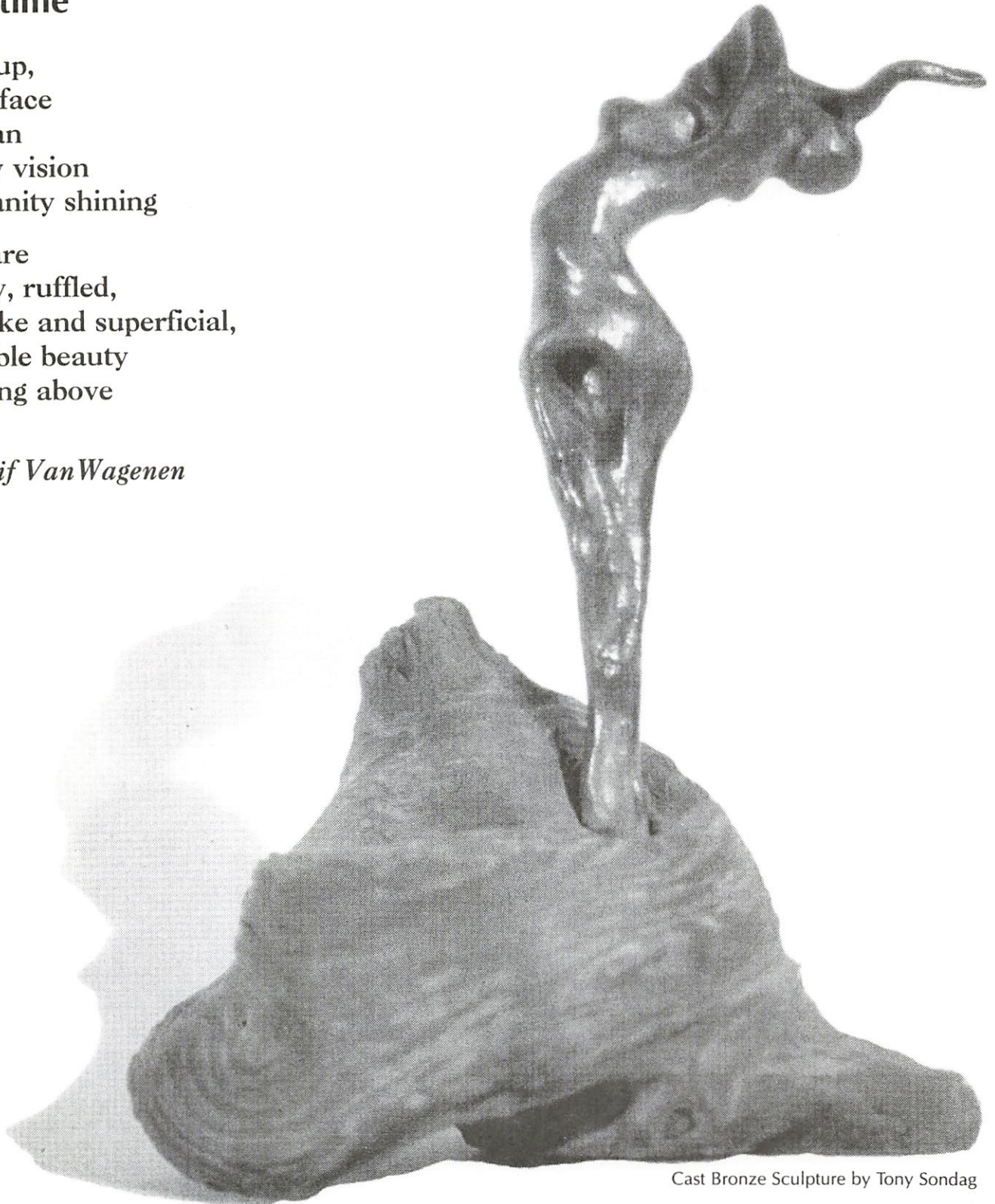


one time

look up,
your face
a swan
in my vision
humanity shining

you are
pretty, ruffled,
birdlike and superficial,
tangible beauty
floating above
me

by Leif VanWagenen



Cast Bronze Sculpture by Tony Sondag



the bar cage

you —
in the bar cage,
all strutting
like a pit-fighting cock,
some back-alley dog
or prize-fighting Irish,
there's something you should know —

before
you step up to the plate,
as you walk,
no —
saunter like a supermodel
with exterior confidence flexed,
basking in the shade of your ego,
ask yourself one time,
if you look at me —
is tonight worth dying for?

by Leif VanWagenen

The Sound of My Self

When I was younger
I used to try my voice on
like clothing
with an agenda.

I would pose in front of my self,
and practice -
the sound of its flight adolescent,
awkward as it stumbled through
teeth manacled and shackled
like jagged-sized slaves.

I listenend to it ease
as I aged
like wrinkles from a sheet,
shaken and slackened for perfection.

I used my voice like a device,
the clever weapon of a woman
with a heart equipped to change the world.

I would pour it like water for the ones I
loved,
(thirsty from their journeys)
as I dropped my hair
from the grip of chopsticks,
let it roll down my back like a yo-yo
uncurled from an invisible fist.

Now, I wonder only if
the one I love
will know it
like a memory of his own.

by Michelle McDermott



Chorus for Kimberly

It is my father's voice
like a determined pebble
 skipping,
 singing in my memory.
Hopping across water,
the soft notes rising, falling, riding,
 loosed from the machete
 of his own hooked arm —
 arced like his ever-present smile,
anchored in place by two dark dimples
hers — shallow reflections of his.

She is 19 now,
and 2000 miles from home,
she hasn't been a towhead
since we left Oklahoma.

I watched him
 watching his baby rise
from this nameless lake in his mind
 and become a woman,
 willfully naive.

It is the same song
his mother sang to him.

by Michelle McDermott



Treadmill and Ultrasound

I can see you beating there on the screen
in grainy black and white. Like a baby
in the amniotic sac, you turn and twitch
in the forever sleep of the body, pumping
your dreams through every part of me.

I have to shift my weight when the treadmill lifts
at one end, simulating a hill, the endless
upward climbing which is life. I turn back
to the screen, another simulation,
the whispered language of muscle and nerve,
overheard and turned to light.

I step faster as the earth whirls faster
beneath me. I have to jog to keep up,
gripping both guardrails tight. Breath
rises in my throat. I watch you throb harder,
half hidden in the sound-shadow of a rib.

The white-coated nurse points out
a flutter in the midst of your movement, a valve
flapping like a small bird in a storm,
but steadily, making headway, which
I am not, nearly running and getting
nowhere, panting hard and starting to sweat.

The nurse points her finger to a dial
where wires, pasted and taped across
my shaved chest, meet. 140.
“We’ve got to get you to 160,” she says,
and I groan, looking toward the screen again,

wanting to urge you on. Beat faster, strain
to match my straining legs, keep pace
with this dash I have to make stay standing.
When you finally reach your peak, I’m told
to hold for ten more seconds, counting
them down aloud. Three, two, one.

Then the treadmill abruptly slows
and I’m back to walking, then standing
death-still, watching as your image still
pulses on the screen, more slowly now,
calm and steady once again at seventy-five.

by Ken Zimmerman



Rag

Scrap of cloth, old diaper or ripped sheet or teeshirt,
I can't tell anymore, so worn full of holes, your true
colors fading towards translucence. Whatever hurts
you've endured, whatever you once were, I still need you.

You have dried my dishes, mopped the floor, even
wiped snot from my child's nose and the fever-sweat
from his forehead, sponged sticky semen
off my lover's thigh, and in a pinch, caught

and held her monthly blood. Like a little Christ
you have taken all the leavings of joy and sickness and pain
into yourself, carried them away from us,
to be washed off in the laundry, and rinsed down the drain.

I lift you from the drawer: soft, clean, smelling of soap. I owe
you so much, and this is all I give in return. You have taken
every insult, any filth, shamelessly as a saint, and not foresaken
me, and now you comfort me through this bitter, winter cold.
I can only thank you, as I hold you to my nose and blow.

by Ken Zimmerman



Things were working out, in a few minutes Kelley and the movers would be there with the furniture.

Pearl had worked hard, planned long and shopped tough for that sofa; it matched the drapes and rug. She could hear the ladies from the church, saying what a lovely home she has and now fortunate she was to have a man like Kelley.

The radio said it might rain, no matter, it was a beautiful day for Pearl. The kids were over at her sister Laura's house, thank goodness, they'd be underfoot.

Thirty-six years old, Pearl was a ball of energy, four-foot-eleven, at ninety-eight pounds she was a hummingbird. She was up at six this morning, cleaning and making sure the house was ready. All the while smiling to herself, feeling good about her boys. They knew how hard she had worked to get the house. My boys will be careful, they won't tear up the house, like Sister Sarah's boys, did her place.

One o'clock, she had cleaned her new house, she knew just where she wanted everything to go. Now she was ready to turn this place into a home for her boys. Letting out a little sigh she smoothed the front of her print housedress and waited. She was getting a little impatient. Pearl knew about patience, a dollar here, two there; she had scaped together enough for the down payment on the house. Just her and the boys since the divorce, three years of working and making to do.

Wonder what's keeping that man, she thought, wiping down the kitchen counter one

more time. Kelley's a good man, but if you want anything done you just had to keep after him. The real trick with Kelley, is not to push too hard, especially if other men are around. Wonder why some men are that way?

Everything looked fine, Kelley had done a nice job painting the kitchen, and putting down

the new linoleum. He'd found Pearl's favorite shade of sunshine yellow.

Picking up the broom she swept her way into the front room for the third time. Leaning the broom against the door-jamb she went into the front yard.

Blam, Pearl heard the bad muffler, seconds later the wrinkle skinned old moving van heaved around the corner, leaning to the left like a big red beast favoring a bad front leg.

Heavy gray clouds

muscled across the sky devouring sunlight in rapacious gulps. Pearl lost her shadow in the sunlight's retreat then her bare arm was hit by the first watery salvo.

"Hope they can get my sofa in before the rain gets too bad," she muttered, dabbing her arm.

Pearl felt good about Kelley, her almost new husband; he had taken care of everything: arranged for the movers, stayed around at the old place supervising the loading. Now he was riding over in the truck with the movers.

The old truck lumbered to a stop in front of the house, rumbled for a few seconds, then went silent.

A grinning Kelley hit the ground first, a large rough hand pushed his stained denim cap to the back of his head. A teamster's button adorned the crown like a campaign ribbon. "Well Suga,

The Sofa



William Draft

*"Dreams ain't broken down here,
they're just walkin' with a limp."*

— Tom Waits

so far; got everything in there,” Kelley said through a gap toothed grin.

“That’s good honey, I just hope they didn’t break anything or get my new sofa dirty.”

“Damn,” Kelley said, his smile losing some of its luster. “I wish you would quit worrying. Why don’t you just go in; let me handle things out here.”

“Kelley, you know I worked so hard for those few things, I don’t want some jack-leg mover messing something up.”

“Yeah, I know honey. I’m the man in this house now. You just move out of the way. I’ll look out for your things,” Kelley said.

Turning back to the truck, Kelley chuckled and winked at his helpers. “Damn woman’s crazy,” he said softly. The other men, Eddie and Scrappy, smiled along with Kelley, nodding their heads. Still grinning, Eddie pulled the big handle, swinging open the large side doors.

“Please, don’t my sofa get wet, that’s all.” Brows knitted, rubbing her hands she retreated into the house.

Pearl was everywhere making sure things got put where she wanted them and chastising any rough handling of her hard earned possessions.

The rain pinged against the truck’s tinny skin in a ragged paradiddle. Puddles parted and reformed around their boots of the men as they sweated and grunted their way between the truck and the house. For the most part they stayed on the newspaper paths Pearl had laid out on the floors.

Worried about her sofa, every so often Pearl would go into the front and look up into the sky as though catching the rain in the act would somehow shame it into going away. Each trip to the front plowed the furrow a little deeper into her brow.

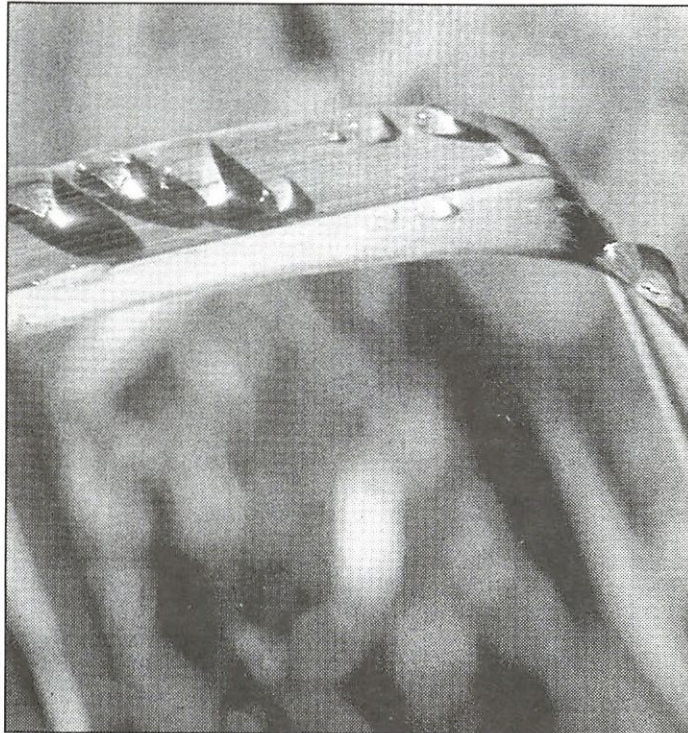
Boxes of dishes, chairs and tables, lamps and mattresses, everything but Pearl’s sofa was in the house, and the rain still beat out its rhythmic solo.

“Hey Kelley, why don’t we take a little break; see if the rain slacks up.” Scrappy yelled. “Besides I got a little juice.”

“Yeah, I could use a little taste myself,” Eddie said.

Pearl was working in the kitchen getting things together for the kids’ supper. They would be home soon.

Photography by Gabriel Powell



Kelley, Scrappy and Eddie planned to go to the Casablanca Bar and Grill after they dropped off the truck. Kelley would get something to eat there. Twenty minutes went by before the quiet got her attention.

Shelving the last of the plates, Pearl headed for the front. She sucked in the corner of her lower lip when she passed the spot she had chosen for her sofa. Standing in the doorway, Pearl folded her arms across her chest and looked across the yard at the truck. Her brow smoothed for a moment and her lips relaxed into a small smile. Looking up through the rain, Pearl offered a little thank you. Praise God, me and my boys have come a long way in the past few years. As quickly as it came the smile slipped away, and the furrow was back. Right now, she thought, I’ve got to get that sofa into the house.



“Kelley, Kelley!” ricocheted off the truck.

Picking up an umbrella Pearl marched to the truck. Slapping her open palm against the door, “Kelley, Kelley, don’t you hear me calling you!” She could hear laughter and chatting bouncing around the truck.

“Yeah, I hear you! Whadda ya want now?” Kelley sounded annoyed.

“When are you gonna finish with the movin’? I’m waitin’ for you to bring in my sofa.”

“Damn, can’t we even take a little break; besides I was hoping the rain would slack up.” She could almost see him wink at his buddies, “Go on back into the house, this is man’s work out here anyway.” Pearl backed away from the house of guffaws.

Kelley’s never talked to me like that before. Guess he’s just showing off in front of his friends. I’m not going to worry about that now, the important thing is to get this moving business over and done with. And that means getting my dusty rose sofa into my living room, up against the wall, under my beautiful bevel-edged mirror.

Back in the kitchen, Pearl found the smell of fresh paint comforting, as she put away the last pot and set the toaster on the counter.

Ten minutes later she looked out the window to see the men just emerging from the truck. She knew they’d had a little to drink, but that was expected.

“Doggone rain’s coming down a little harder, hope they hurry and get it in,” she murmured to herself.

The three men laughing and joking, took the sofa out of the truck and were halfway across the yard.



Photography by Eli Trompeter

*The gray day yielded to black night.
Streetlights reflected in the rain slick
street like stars gone astray. Comets in
the guise of automobiles rumbled and
hissed their way past Pearl’s brownstone.*

Pearl just couldn’t help herself, “Kelley, you all be careful with that now.”

Kelley and the men looked around, laughter stopped, Kelley’s lips changed from a good natured grin to a sullen pout.

“Goddamnit, who’s doing this job? I told you to get out of the goddamn way!”

Pearl set her jaw, folded her arms and watched.

As if it was trying to please Pearl, the rain slacked to a light drizzle. Scrappy on one end, Eddie on the other with Kelley supervising, they got the sofa to the doorway.

It’s going to be tight, Kelley thought, two doorways to clear, a ninety degree turn with only about three feet to swing that big thing around.

“Hey Kelley it don’t fit, looks like the legs are jamming it up.” Eddie said, trying to guide the couch around the turn.

“Scrappy, can you move your end over a little, to your left,” Eddie said, trying to guide the couch around the turn.

“Nah man, I’m scraping the wall now.”

“OK, set it down, let me think about this,”



Kelley said.

"Kelley, what's the matter, the rain's picking up again, how come you're letting my couch sit out there like that?" Pearl's edgy voice came through the window.

"The damn thing don't fit, Pearl."

"What do you mean it don't fit?"

Kelley's voice dropped to a tone, the words came slow and tight. "I mean the damn thing don't fit through the door. I am trying to figure out what to do. Now leave me alone."

"What do you mean! Leave you alone! I worked too hard for that ..."

"Listen, I told you the damn thing don't fit," he interrupted. "I'm going to cut the legs off."

"No Kelley you'll ruin it, don't cut it." Pearl's heart sank.

"Goddamnit, I'm doing the job. I told you to leave me alone." Kelley walked into the house.

The wind came up driving the rain; Pearl's dusty rose couch was getting darker.

Kelley reappeared with his handsaw, ignoring Pearl, he told Scrappy and Eddie to turn and hold the sofa. The saw in his strong hands cut deep with the first thrust.

"Oh, Kelley," Pearl's soft sound was lost in the gusty wind. A wind that sent rain slashing against the two men holding down the sofa, and the third man who was wielding a saw against it. The last limb fell away. "Okay, let's try it," Kelley said, putting down the saw and wiping the back of his hand across his eyes.

With Eddie and Scrappy on either end, they lifted it. They tilted it. They scraped it against the wall. Grunting and sweating they tried to wrestle the thing through the doors.

"The goddamn thing still don't make it, Kelley," Eddie grunted.

"Shit!" Scrappy said.

"God, Kelley, what are you doing? My sofa's ruined!"

Kelley looked at her, eyes expressionless, voice flat. "Eddie, Scrappy, put the sonofabitch

down." Carrying his saw, Kelley, disappeared into the house. Pearl followed him with down-cast eyes.

Stonefaced, he emerged. "Let's get out of here, I'm sick and tired of that woman's mouth."

They climbed into the truck and drove away.

Back in the house, Pearl pressed her forehead against the cool window glass.

Rain carried away the little mounds of sawdust.

The dusty rose turned a muddy pink.

Pearl held the sofa with her eyes. She ached from the inside out.

The gray day yielded to black night. Streetlights reflected in the rain slick street like stars gone astray. Comets in the guise of automobiles rumbled and hissed their way past Pearl's brownstone.

Caught in her own painful universe, Pearl went out and picked up the severed limbs and set them gently into the garbage can.

Back in the house she pulled the shades down to the sill. It still hurt. Moving her head slowly from left to right, she whispered, "No."

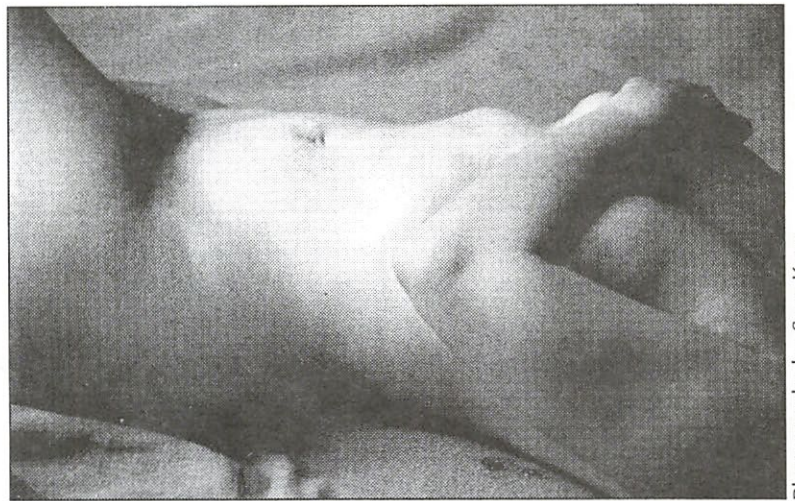
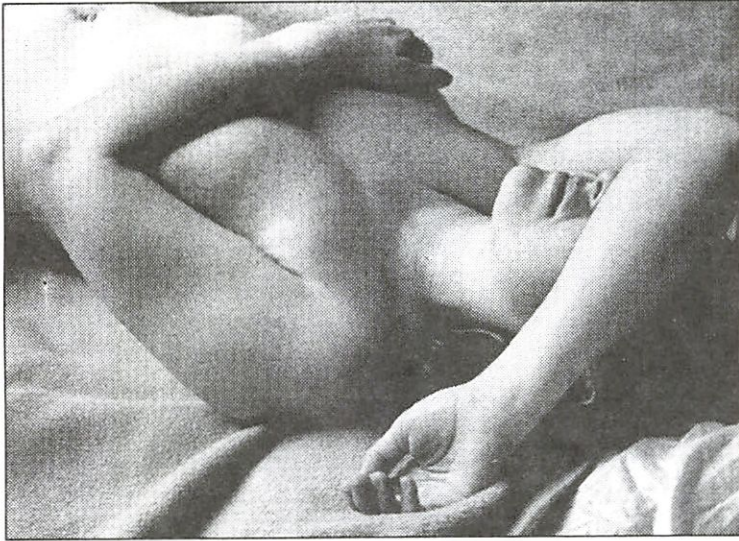
Averting her eyes from where her sofa should have been, she walked slowly through the house to the kitchen.

Better call Laura and ask her if she will let the children stay there until tomorrow.

Pearl rang the neighbors' bell. She asked to use their telephone.

"Can the boys stay the night ... No, there was nothing wrong ... Just a little something wrong with Kelley and getting the house together ... Everything was fine ... We can talk tomorrow ... Okay ... Tomorrow ... Fine."

The neighbors must have noticed her curious expression but they were polite and only asked if there was anything they could do. Did Pearl need any help? Would she like to stay for dinner? They knew what it was like to move. Shame about the sofa.



Photographs by Sam Karp

Untitled

Felt your slight tap on my shoulder yesterday
Found myself spinning to find out
I'm always spinning to find out
and it leaves a mark
that eats away at me
until I'm nothing but questions burning for answers
and soon burning to the ground
because by the time I've turned myself around
you are gone.

by Casey Jarman

denali submission form

Completion of this form does not guarantee publication. All works are submitted to an editorial board, which chooses works for a variety of reasons. These reasons include style, skill, statement, voice, creativity and originality. Pieces chosen by the board will be published and the magazine will acquire one-time rights. After publication, all rights revert to the author or artist.

• **Denali Magazine** considers all *original* submissions of art and writing regardless of medium, style or subject matter. Our guidelines are as follows:

- Submissions should be typed or submitted on disk (which can be returned). Essays and fiction should be double-spaced. Poetry should be typed *exactly* as you want it to appear in the magazine.

- Print only your phone number on the work(s) so that they can be judged anonymously. Your name should appear only on this form, **not on the actual submissions**. Submissions with identification will be returned and can be resubmitted when only the phone number identifies the author/artist.

- If you would like to be notified about the acceptance or rejection of your work, please make a note of it by your signature.

- High-contrast art and black & white photography work best for our black & white format. Art in color will be considered.

- Plagiarism will not be tolerated.

- Fill out the form below and include a short biographical statement on the back as you would like it to appear in the magazine.

- Turn your submissions in to our office in the Industrial Technology building, #213, (Inside the *Torch* office). The fall term deadline will be posted at the beginning of the term.

- Call or come to the office with any questions or concerns.

Denali Art and Literary Magazine, IT 213 4000 E. 30th Ave., Eugene, Oregon, 97405, (541) 747-4501 ext. 2897

name: _____ pseudonym: _____

address: _____

telephone: _____ e-mail address: _____

title(s) of work(s): _____

I authorize Denali to publish my work, *should it be accepted by the editorial board.*

Signature: _____

Date: _____



Photography by Sam Karp

“I don’t like to write,
but I love to have written.”

— *Michael Kanin*