

Denali

LCC

Art and Literary Magazine

SPRING 1999



The left side of the cover is dominated by a complex, abstract graphic design. It consists of various letters and symbols (including 'D', 'Z', 'W', 'E', 'N', 'A', 'L', 'I', 'S', 'M', 'T', 'R', 'A', 'N', 'S', 'P', 'A', 'R', 'E', 'N', 'C', 'E', 'S', 'I', 'S', 'M', 'I', 'S', 'M', 'I', 'S', 'M', 'I', 'S', 'M') rendered in different styles and orientations. These elements are overlaid with a network of thin, intersecting lines, creating a dense, layered visual effect. The design is contained within a rectangular frame that is partially obscured by other elements.

DENALI

● *Art and Literary Magazine*

A horizontal band of thin, parallel lines, creating a textured, striped effect, located below the main graphic design.

*Laure Community College
Spring 1999*

A large, bold, stylized graphic element consisting of thick, black, overlapping shapes that resemble letters or symbols, possibly 'i', 'n', 'o', 'i', 'k', 'i'. The shapes are layered and partially obscured, creating a sense of depth and movement. It is positioned in the bottom right corner of the cover.

*in
no
i
k
i*

a note from the editor

There are both adequate and inadequate solutions to problems. My solutions, as far as my personal life goes, are usually those of the latter sort, and tend towards extremes. More notably, however, my "solutions" often solve nothing and can actually cause more problems than they solve, as evidenced recently ... i won't go into it, except to say that i was overwhelmed with all the things going on in my life and didn't quite know where to start putting things right.

So there's some background information. The "foreground" information is somewhat prettier, and involves the people i work with. It is thanks to the initiative and self-regulation of Heather, Jessica, and Eli that this publication came together so well. Their continuing dedication to the magazine kept it (and me) afloat. i want (need) to thank them for all they've done ...

Also, Dorothy Wearne and Bill Sweet deserve a great deal of gratitude. In the last three years i've worked with the magazine, they've provided continuous support and guidance to me and others, above and beyond the call of duty.

Now that they have my heartfelt thanks, i can tell you what a great issue we've put together here. Beautiful artwork from Galen Pehrson and Stockton Swing are featured in this issue, as well as work by other wonderful artists. We're also welcoming back one of our featured writers from last term, Erik Kraven, who's turned out some more astounding work. He's in good company again this term, with William T. Sweet and John Garmon. Both are nationally-known poets ... We hope you enjoy this issue. Be looking for the next one this fall!

the editor, amelia arianne

cover: *Untitled Pretty Girls* painting 2'x4'
by Galen Pehrson
oil paint, grass, magik marker on wood.

Denali

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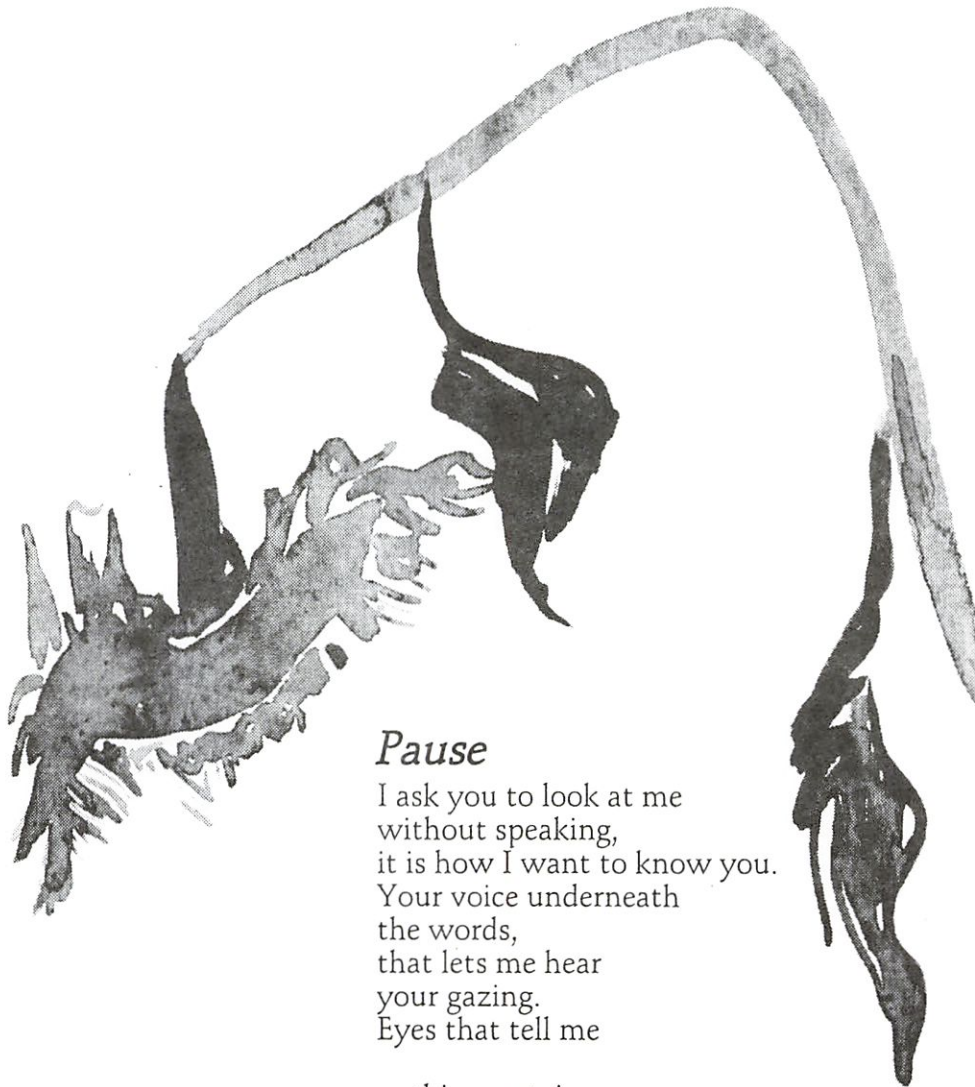
untitled

with a head full of foolery
and a pocket of music, he
stood in acceptance of everything
— a whole lifetime of rain
turning its back on believing.

by Forest Bauers

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		poetry by Eli Trompeter



Pause

I ask you to look at me
without speaking,
it is how I want to know you.
Your voice underneath
the words,
that lets me hear
your gazing.
Eyes that tell me

nothing certain,
only questions,
a reflection of
my waiting.

Look at me and leave
your language behind:
I am beautiful without
your words for beauty,
and there are many stars

that have never
been named.

by Tess Evenstar Elliot

Sunflowers artwork by Emily Semple



haiku for companionship

precise and balanced
are these waves when wind blows on
them, and in stillness

by Tedd Pomaski

30th Anniversary • 5

June 21st

Sun glittering on the pavement
The sordid sexual tales we weave on the steps
With the creak of the swing and the cups of coffee too hot
The smoke hangs overhead refusing to leave
Sweat pooling in the circles of my ankles
I can see my own eyes blink
And the day moves on into the continuation of night
The leaves have an acrid smell
The rough concrete
The chattering of birds make me edgy
I need to get away with my lemonade on a hot day
In the summer
Neighbors with children tears spilt over
Over into the grass where the mud collects in clumps
Where the sprinkler sprays too much
The wilting rose bushes on their 25th wedding anniversary
Silver I think ...
The memory slips and fades
Sometimes trips over that summer
Many summers passed
Many yet to come ...

by Jessica Parsons

Stumbling Clarity

I found myself getting off early.
Walking through the city,
across the banks and credit unions,
I stumbled.

Balancing on a thin line of concrete,
I crossed a bridge and found
myself in the green.

The river lay below me.
It kind of carried me,
let my thoughts ripple through
the uneven shadows.

Gave up to my never ending pursuit.
Gave up to my hopeless wants.
Gave up to my mind's incessant wandering.

The river blended my ideals,
melted them.
Until all I saw was water.

by Eli Trompeter



Photo Copied Faces 8x15' by Galen Pehrson

haiku for loneliness

Whiter than light sits
a heavy snow who turns to
ice at warmth's approach.

by Tedd Pomaski

Mama Rosie

When i was 15 years old, i woke up one morning and walked out of my home carrying an army-surplus duffel bag crammed with clothes and a battered briefcase crammed with words. It never occurred to

nappy hair and ever-nasty tongue providing her with many evenings exiled to her room to read the Bible and write profoundly mature and revolutionary poetry.

"On the weekends and during the summer, i was charged with providing stringers of catfish or carp from the wire-mill-polluted water that sluggishly made its rust-red way through 'Darktown.'"

me to return. i took a bus downtown, got a transfer to the better of two ghettos, (ironically called "Whitey"), and appeared on my friend Bishop's humble, crumbling doorstep. When Mama Rosie came home from her job at the post office, a cot and a blue-enameled dresser with two drawers missing were installed in Bishop's tiny room, without question or comment.

Mama Rosie was five feet tall and three feet thick, a proud and generous woman, cruel, but fair. She would send me down to the riverbank every day after school to pick wild poke and mustard greens from amongst the nettles. On the weekends and during the summer, i was charged with providing stringers of catfish or carp from the wire-mill-polluted water that sluggishly made its rust-red way through "Darktown." Often i was bid to go to the back gate of the local slaughterhouse and cadge buckets of "chitlins and cracklins" from the black employees. These activities constituted my "rent," which i gladly paid out of love, gratitude and terror. i found an evening job as a janitor for a restaurant, and, of course, my paycheck was handed over to Rosie religiously. Had it not been for her acceptance of this white boy under her humble roof, i would have been in jail, in an institution or a grave. She asked so little and gave so much that i would have been mad to resist or refuse.

My friend and brother in survival, Bishop, was her younger son, a darkly brooding biker, his constant beret atilt, his relaxed hair cascading to his waist, a magnificent Fu Man Chu moustache spiking the silver studs on his leather-jacketed chest. His younger sister was Sally, a ten-year-old full of piss and diss, her ever-

Rosie's domicile, before my intrusion, (or "adoption" as she corrected me), was completed by her oldest son, who was simply referred to as "Miss Pete." He was a twenty two-year-old drag dancer in a local gay bar, dedicated to the family unimpeachably, but genetically volatile and prone to flamboyant tantrums and emotional eruptions. He/she spent most of his/her time screaming through the house, bitching beneath huge pink hair rollers, after which he/she would go to work and fetch home a goodly check to add to the family soup.

One hot summer night, with the TV blatting at Sally in the shoddy-but-immaculate living room, i surveyed the tableau: Miss Pete ruining his/her nails in dishwasher, (whining all the while), Bishop slowly smoking Kools at the kitchen table as he studied the electronics texts he had bought for his upcoming journeyman's exam ... Rosie sipped her only evening glass of Irish Rose wine and listened to her scratchy Magnavox dishing out Mahalia Jackson, Aretha Franklin, Ray Charles and B.B. King. (If for nothing else, i will always be indebted to Rosie for showing me the vast, evangelistic, stultifying range of music ... this widening of my eyes, ears and soul have saved my life innumerable times).

[One previous afternoon, Bishop and i had gotten majorly stoned together and — with Rosie at a church planning meeting — had cranked up the old manaural phonograph with our latest acquisition — Jimi Hendrix's first album. We sat in the kitchen with our hair blowing back and eyes aboil, flashing, rolling. Could music possibly be this fantastic? Could a mere mortal ever command this

mind-blowing intensity? We sat with tears in the eyes of our frozen, rictus smiles and listened on:

“... but first, are you experienced?
Have you ever been experienced?
Well ... I am ...
Here ... let me prove it to ya ... “

When Jimi went into that reverse feedback solo we held our heads and shivered ...

Bishop and i looked like a couple of old junkies that had found a stash of Ultimate Aural Ultimate; nothing we had ever heard compared to the screaming excellence that made the little clapboard house flip and flap on its foundations.

Suddenly, a shadow fell across the smoky sunlight streaming into the kitchen ... Rosie was home. i scuttled over to the phonograph to turn it down, but as i scuttled back i knew it wasn't about the volume.

“Don' NEVAH play dat niggah in dis house no mo;” she intoned. “He be too DAHK!”

i looked at the album cover on the table at the haughty haunted visage of my new mentor and replied, “Look, Mama ... he's no darker than Bishop ... “

“I don' mean his skin, boy,” she replied, “I means his soul!”]

On this particular night, she granted herself a second glass, (after all, it was Friday), and played a record by Jimmy Smith, his hot, hard, funky organ spewing punk, balanced sonically, so sweetly by the cool, wise, soothing guitar of Wes Montgomery. i sat entranced by the musical juxtaposition of fire and ice ... my head swam loosely as i surveyed my family: the earthy smell of boiled potatoes, junebugs ricocheting off the screen, jazz and flicked lighters and running water in a sink and the Addams Family echoing from the next room ... and then the firebomb came through the window and exploded on the linoleum next to where Sally lay ...

A tangerine colored flashbulb popped in the adjoining room, the high silver clatter of shattering glass combined with a cartoonish sound and suddenly everything kicked into a slow-motion mode. Bishop erupted out of his chair, the ashtray and yesterday's paper and his textbooks sailing in odd trajectories across the room ... the table rose and fell onto its side, skidding across the floor and crashing into the refrigerator with a splintering of wood. Rosie's wine glass arched

through the atmosphere, bleeding red droplets and landing absurdly in the sink. i leapt up from my now-solitary chair and grabbed Rosie, who slapped me away like a gnat as she steamed toward the eerily-lit living room. i remember a faint cry and a much louder stream of invective issuing from the orange glow, Uncle Fester's voice drowning along with the canned laughter. A scream unlike anything i have ever heard ripped out of Rosie's bountiful breast as the chintz curtains combusted into a wall of flame. Bishop, his ponytail flailing and singeing, was wrapping the struggling, cursing Sally in a blanket ... i remember seeing smoke coming off of her tiny, tight body. i

grabbed Rosie once again and she acceded, allowing me to guide her past the whirling eddies of fire through the door, into the yard, onto her knees, behind he now-enraged ululation of defiance and despair.

Miss Pete careened around the corner of the tiny tract house, resplendent in gold lame moomoo and a burnoose,

his well-manicured hands expertly slamming a shell into the chamber of a sawed-off twelve gauge pump. I ran next door to phone an ambulance, as Miss Pete keened “Come back, mothafuckas! Come back here ...! Oh, sweet Jesus, show me your triflin' asses ... mothafuckas ... I'm waitin' ...”

The roof exploded like an acid rush ... and we sat in hugging silence in the stubbly yard awaiting the ambulance, awaiting the walls to fall, awaiting the end of madness ...

by Erik Kraven



The Descent artwork by Linda Chamorro

In May

In May, I sent off my father

The sky was heartily blue

The train swelled from rush hour

He was swallowed into the mass

How can I forget his back?

A year later, I saw him again

The sun's last rays came into the room

He was trapped by the medical monsters

The lingering agony of life

How can I forget his eyes?

Time to leave this world

The moonlight poured onto his face

His soul wanted to be free from his body

In silence, I prayed

"Naturally let it go"

"Just let it go"

In May, he obtained absolute freedom

The tide on ebb carried off his soul

The star-filled sky resonated

As if wind chimes rang

As if it celebrated his discharge from life

by Junko Uchida

“three minutes”

you lace the shoes
tie the knots
slip into the jacket
and trace the familiar trail
of a sidewalk
fondling lucky stones
even though luck
seems obsolete
the eyes dart and
return
the nomadic crowds
gather just for you
hesitating your awareness
eyebrows in a V
entering the beer aisle
which you have
seen a hundred times before
cramped between others' observations
and holding the stance
opening the cooler door
saying “excuse me”
to someone you don't give a
fuck about
watching the door close
walking to the counter
draining the wallet
pocketing the change
before the exit
empty hands sticking
out like knives
more V-browed stares
guided by the trail
key in hand
the other
fondling stones

by Aaron Braaten

Root Canal

The room blurred around her,
the voices lulled her
into a memory of strong perfume,
spicy food and rough hands.
The moment felt like a day.
The hands were heavy.
She squinted her eyes as the
dust from the drill burned
her nose.

by Gail Stevenson



Dance Surf Pacific artwork by Stockton Swing

i swing

becoming a rope i swing the truth
all life my curling shoots
holding swinging leaping boy
into the sky

by Ross L. Andrews

ARTIFACTS

He thinks she likes tea-cups, so at noon, in a shop of manufactured charms, he finds a demitasse, pale blue with decals of tiny violets — an imitation of perfection.

Actually, it's tea-pots — exaggerated, baroque. Grotesque renderings of pandas, macaws.

His offering comes sheathed in imported cardboard — musky with cinnamon, cool as damp earth. There have been such things between them before: the toothpick holder from Yellowstone, ash carvings from Denali. Seashell soaps — fuzzy now on the bathroom shelf.

Together they unwrap this new artifact, irrevocable as history.

by Nancy Carol Moody



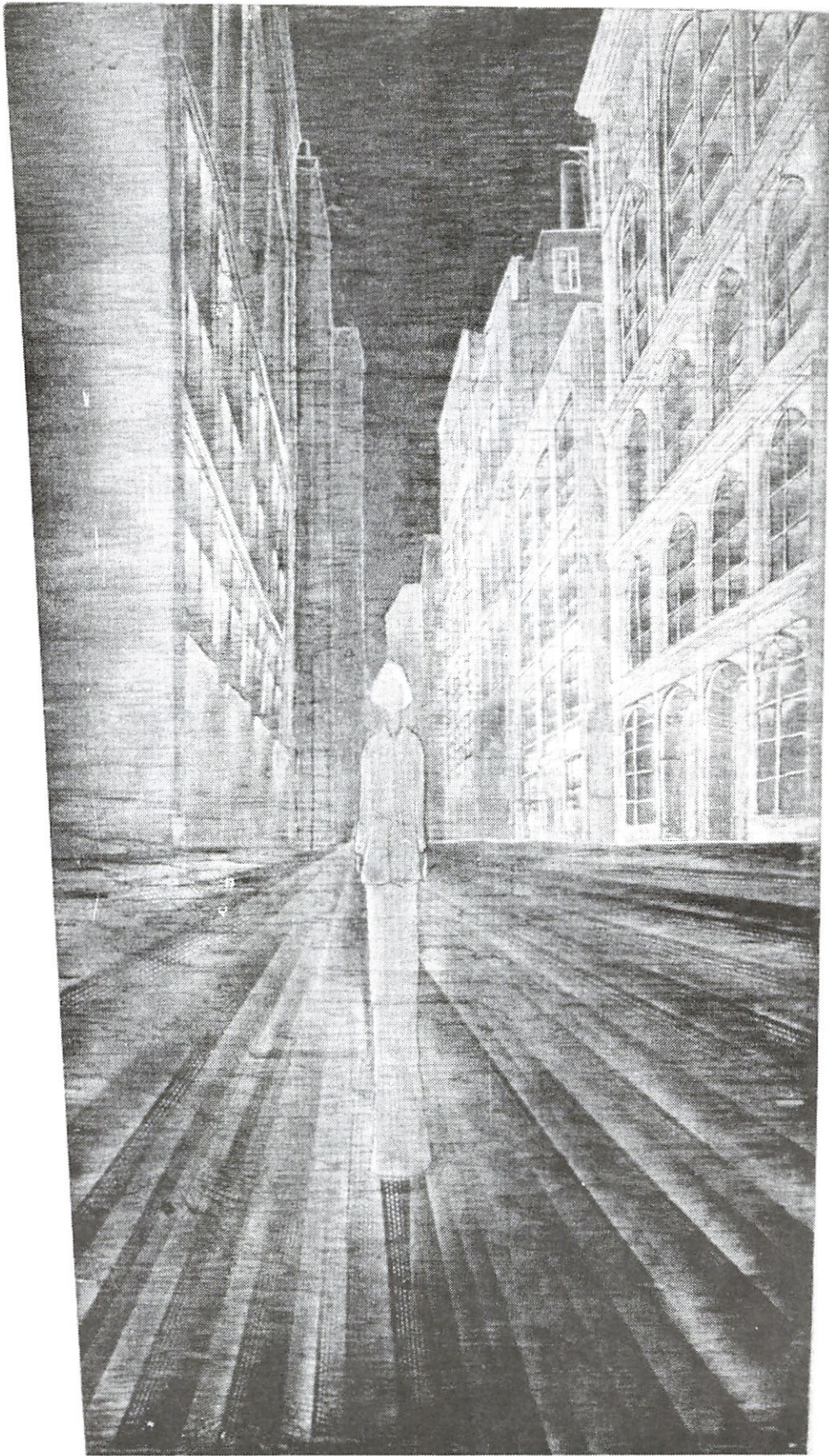
Ideas for Canvas artwork by Stockton Swing

My Old Man Days

I don't think I want to know
how I'll turn out ...

It will be some humble fate
I will have my little studio
I will have my unimportant job
I will have my small circle
of friends who
do nothing
but sit and play chess
in a park
or in a coffee shop.
And all day I will think about
nothing important
and I will dream
about little balls of lint
blowing around deserted hallways
Life won't be so bad,
It will be Life,

by Walt Norblad



Dad's Beard painting by Galen Pehrson

Americana Pie: Albany

She's been double shifting for fourteen hours
so the kid can buy a new tuba.
And she's seen it all:
The ladies from the *Early-Lutheran-Late-Saturday-Night-
Bazaar-and-Moonlight-Dance Committee*
sit fat and gray and plotting.

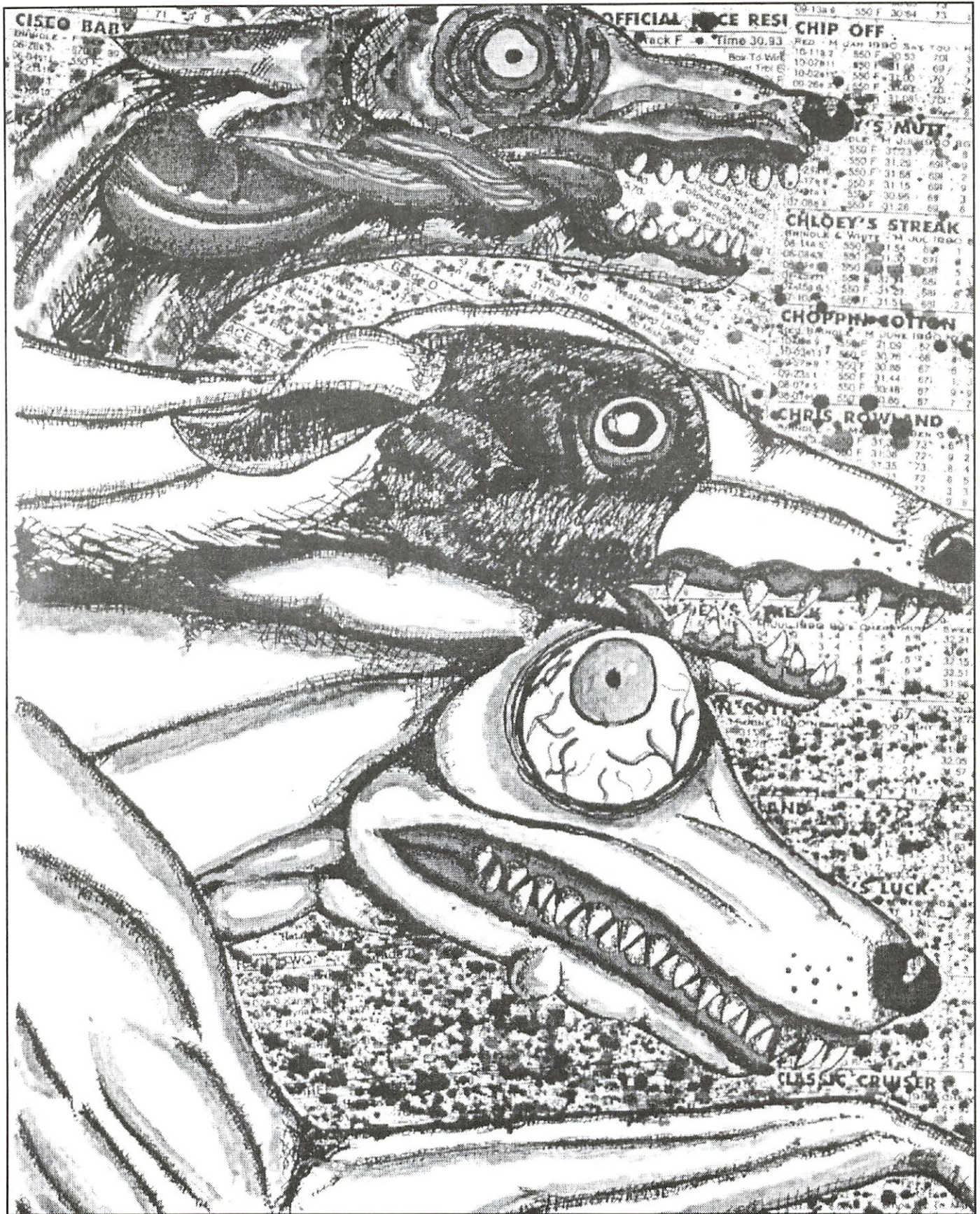
For once, they don't even notice the forty-six-year-old "floozy"
who reluctantly drinks coffee, laughs at jokes so inane
her current lover sometimes forgets to finish telling them.
She was a "trucker's girl" once, a long time ago
when her hair was really red.
But years of booze and dye hide only the color of her hair.

The waitress/cook stretches her arms straight up
then out.
Her orange and black (school colors of the boss) T-shirt
tugs from peak to peak.

Two hours to go, a balding man comes in.
"Hello," he says. He's grinning too much.

She turns back to the grill.
Between the scrambled eggs and home fries,
her rigid face reflects on the wriggling, hot grill.

by William T. Sweet



Hounds artwork by Daniel Morgan

DIGNITY

How long has it been? How long have i been lying here under these cold, damp stars? My babies will waken ... alone in the woodchips beneath the shed. Their shared warmth will run out and mine will be missed ... my maternal flame, my slack belly and sagging teats a cushion for their blindnesses no more. Oh, their little tails, their precious little naked tails snaking and reaching, writhing in the shadows ... curling and grasping for mine, a tree trunk by comparison, tiny muscles and sinews striving for coordination for remembrance, for purchase. The little fingers and toes climbing through my fur ... my broad resilient fur, so impervious to rain, so absorbent of blood.

Their father ... (what a rank and randy outlaw!) ... muzzle greasy with the spilled good of hairy backyard dogs ... his long pink fingers slick with pilfered worms from how many compost heaps ... his coat clabbered with

" ... some will feed the cat and some the crow and some the sorry starving earth we crawl and plow and prowl and preen ... some will survive to turn their tail, to mount and multiply ..."

spit ... his eyes and his cock swollen with lust! He sat atop the cedar fence, his claws torn and ragged as his breath ... he approached in the yellow moon, pissing and grunting and sniffing my trails, his phallus glistening, his whiskers atwilt. No, i confess he didn't need to persuade me much ... i hissed and tugged my tail aside ... he mounted me and chewed my nape like a moldy cob and he filled me with his seed ... Oh how i loved his ivory teeth, his casual thrust and thrash and thrall. And then gone, forever, like the stars at dawn.

My babies -- oh, my poor chilling babies -- so far from me now on this shattered Tarmac ... no longer in my pocket, no longer at my breast, never to twine their tails with mine and wander through the darkling world. All the lessons that must be learned, but not, it seems, from me! But we are a resilient lot: some will feed the cat and some the crow and some the sorry starving earth we crawl and plow and prowl and preen ... some will survive to turn their tail, to mount and multiply ... it was only a matter of time ... of days to use up my utility and yet, so young, so slow and stupid they are in their innocence ... i can do no more ...

A quiet night, humid skyscapes and muted moon ... frogs acroak and crickets fucking like satyrs in the sedges and unmown grasses ... a beetle as big and bulbous as a mouse, scuttling across dewy asphalt as blinding blazing lights roar around corners frozen for that fatal moment futile leap and crush of studded fate ... waiting the end, watching the stars stew and fade and faint away before the grey.

i am not. i am not anymore. Yet i am everywhere and nowhere and no-why but to be. i learned well. i loved well. i would have taught well. i wish to leave well, but it takes so long, it takes so cold, it takes so alone.

It is brightening now ... almost as bright as the green fire beyond my nest where my children shiver and circle their world. A boy walks by and stops to watch my eyes dim with sunrise; he picks up a stick, a magic wand staff of life, and touches me. O the pain O the perfect perfectly positive pain O heal me child smell the baby-spit at my nipples probe prod me into beinghood the pain opaquing pain and he says in my fading ear:

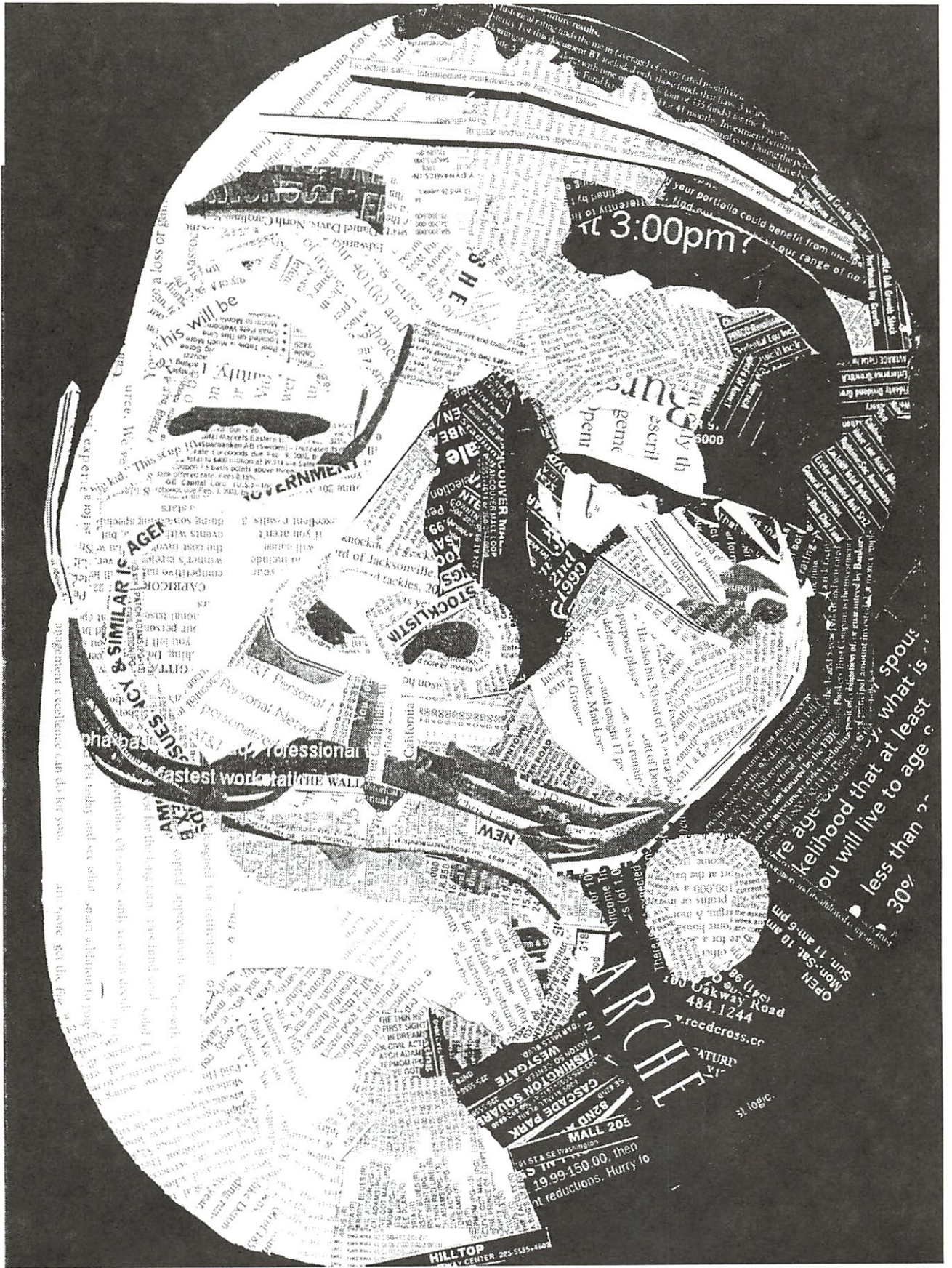
"ooh ... gross!"

by Erik Kraven

Mirror of Nageen

Up top, a thin white hides a passive blue.
A lily littered lake laughs, dances, shouts, and sings
with more of its own
A thick gold waits,
honoring the final moments of the day.
A light's last.
A fade to grey, effortless, west to left,
and on through to an early evening blue.
The spectrum's careful collage bends back,
towards gravity and the gold from which it sprang.
All the while falling short of the longest,
strongest lights and a green too true.
All from Kashmiri carvings, and all to Akbar's appeal.

by bsb



untitled portrait of Salvador Dalí by Ron T. Bush

All to Fall

In the same boat,
from different shores
we cross distant seas to see.
Caught up and confused,
in a timeless world,
where the clock ticks.
With little time,
and less to waste,
we do our best in haste.
Making mere moments matter.

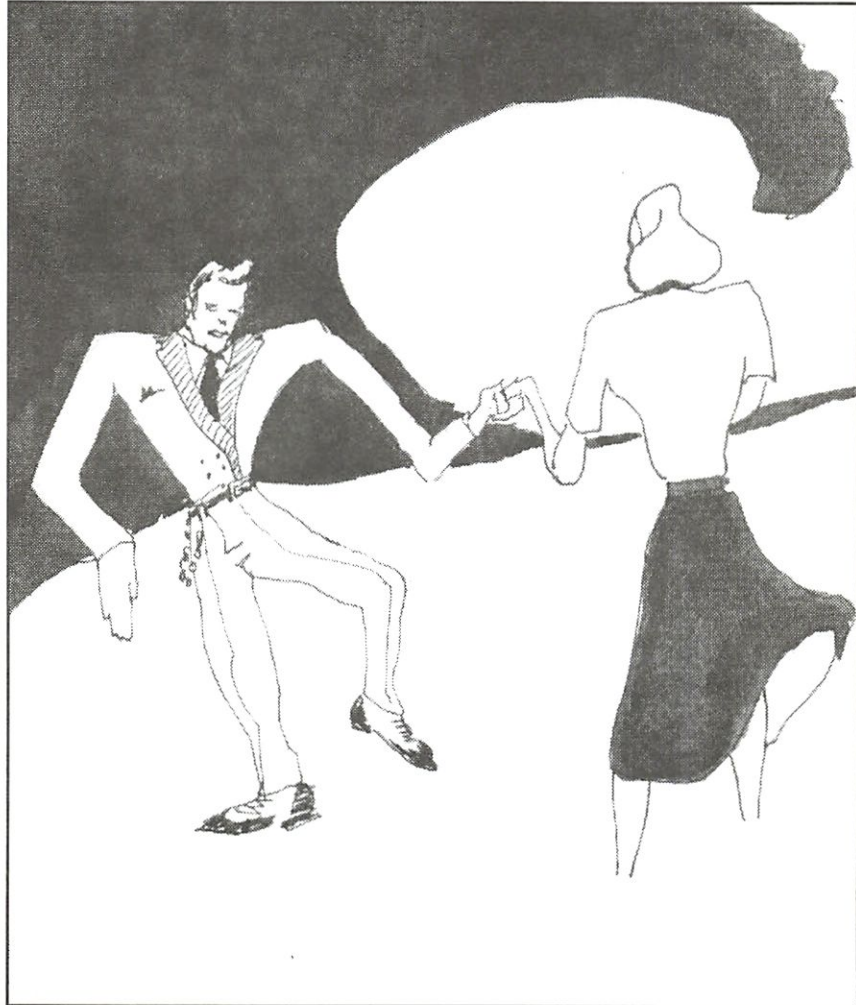
Looking up to the cold familiar distance of the stars,
from warm sands of change.
Lonely and lost,
yet forever finding home.
We begin to begin again,
with open eyes all our own.

This old world is ever unfolding,
always revealing its limitless love,
eternally, presently.
Sorrow, sadness, signs from a dove.
Heart breaks, soul aches, weary and full.
New knowledge, laughter and love.

Fear of change conquered by its own constant.
Heavy boots, heavier hearts, innocent eyes and ears,
due to many tranquil years.
All to fall.

Life on a postcard doesn't come easy.
Nights alone.
Thirsting for roots.
Hungry for home.
Forced out from familiar,
into the loving arms of the unknown,
with a glide in my stride,
and a shudder in my call.
With joy comes sorrow,
and with love comes its lack.
To fumble is to find,
to trip is not to fall.

by bsb



Swinging in the Pacific artwork by Stockton Swing

Diner Ballroom

Smoky dragons rise
from a grave in ashes played
Darkness long and settled
broken by the street lights' dance
Dishes clatter in happy arrogance-Ignorance? —
While people chatter, in a mindless murmur
Meanwhile,
I sit in sullen mental prisons
unlocking all the mysteries of life
everyone else has answered.

by *Daniel E. Conner*

THE ANCIENT MARINER

You say you want to hear my tale
but not to jab my finger at your chest;
such a gesture won't make you listen.
So I make my rage softer
like fire through sunglasses
knowing how talk is cheap
but the whole cosmic conversation
keeps its relentless deliverance.

I can't force you to understand
this tragicomedy of my dissolution,
how I got myself brought down —
all my silly impersonations, lies,
impotent jokes and empty fantasies.
We humans disappear like this.
Banished by our peers, we gab
incoherently to timid strangers.

You should have more courage
to tell me your disgust. What price
is blood already shed? The pain
once felt and now collapsed
like an empty vein? I know
in another lifetime this could be you.
But that's not a good excuse.
Turn deaf. Be on your way.

I've a wedding of my own
to attend as an interloper
who wasn't supposed to show
and speak "I do" when asked
"Is there anyone here ..."
That bride is not a virgin.
I pity the gullible groom.

by John Garmon

Warning

A poem cannot be held
like you hold your bowl of rice,
asking for another serving.
A poem cannot be held
like you hold last year's columbine,
pressed into a clean plastic page.

You cannot hold my poem
like you hold your daughter,
so close she loses
her breathing in yours
and you hope she is wishing
to never grow old.

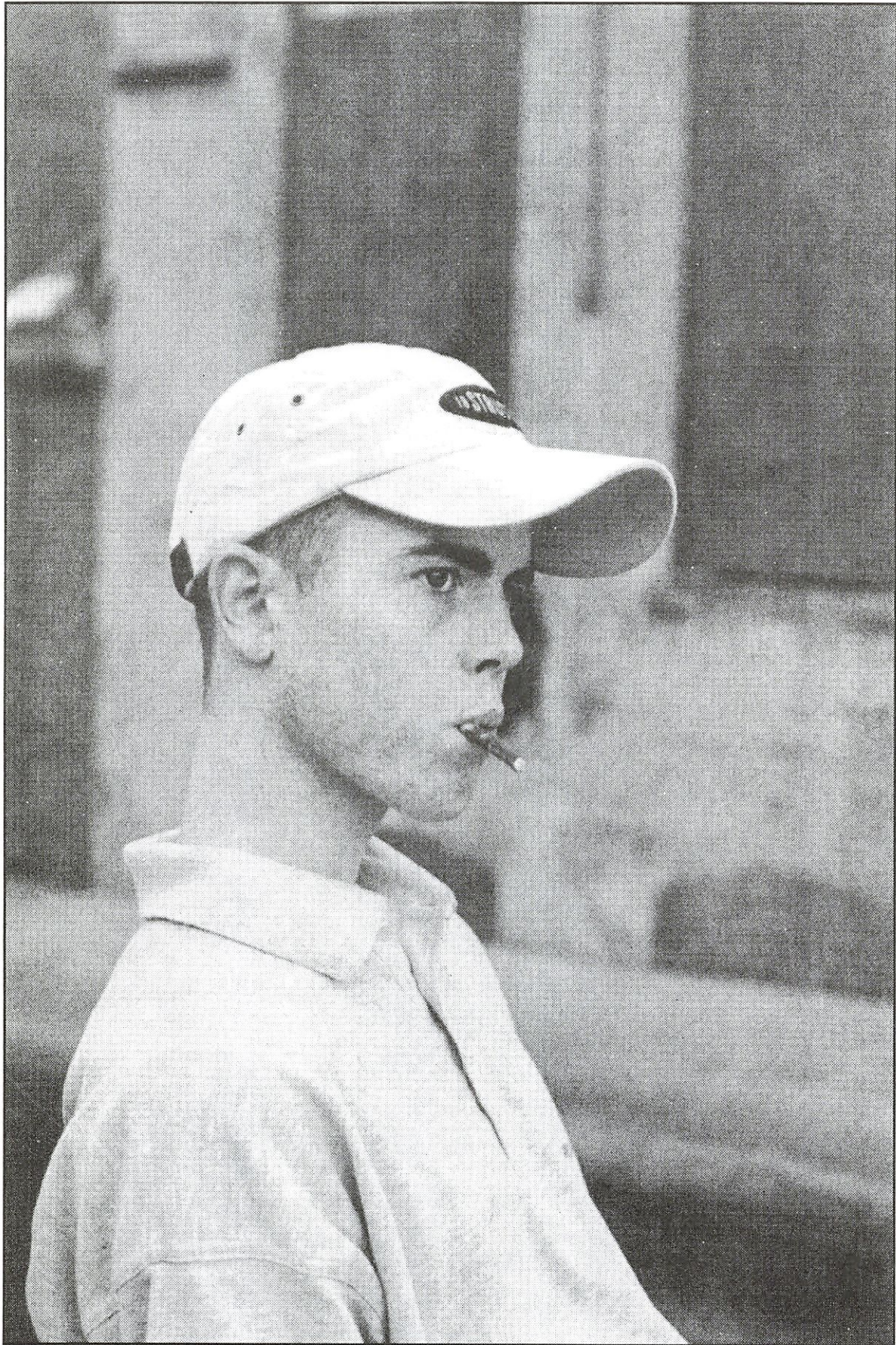
If you bring my poem flowers
it will pretend to die
or at least will strike
and shout at you.
If you try to give it
a pretty name
it will stick out its tongue
and toss the mirror
at your face.

A poem is born
in mystery,
in the land of no eyes
and no language.
It is unapproachable
and already
passed.

That is why
you should never
look at a poem,
but sense it shifting
in the grasses
at the far end of the garden,
and avert your eyes,
and appear not to notice.

Only later
in midnight bedclothes
stepping out
to the barefoot floor
will you open wide to praise
its coming
and the desolation of
its leaving.

by Tess Evenstar Elliot



G.Q. photography by Leif VanWagenen

THE CONTEXT OF SAINTS

If she appeared to Them on the steps
of a cobbled church
her tunic rising from the quarry rock,
eternal rose blooming in her hand,
They would believe, quite suddenly
in miracles,
or worse.

If it were the brink of dawn,
or dusk — that Magnificat of days —
in a venue not quite likely, or
a stage less than
hospitable,
They would bring symphonies —
the horns and strings, hallelujah chorales —
and sell candles with her image
bracing the flame or small
ashtrays with her visage
decalled to the bottom.

But should you, fortune's gull,
in your small-walled room
on your rented mat
behold her before you, so close to tell
of counting the haloes, or
touching her
briefly,
though your hands pass through,
They would bind those hands
and salve the wounds
with sacred unguent.

And though you would know
that saints don't labor
for canticles or
water made
holy
by a cross of hands,
They would tuck beneath your fettered arm
a small hard statue
of a woman in a robe, a flower bound
to her outstretched palm.

by Nancy Carol Moody

Tracks that Conspire

It's still too close to feel
This thing they call love.
Let it pass
Let it glide on by
I don't want to be picked up
don't want a ride
let it leave me behind
with all its promises.
flash of colors, laughs,
but all along its
buckets of tears
that it uses in its
cruelty to wash its
windshields of glass
as it still cruises along
on its tracks to pick
up even more passersby
who have no idea whatsoever
of the ride they're about to
take — it's supposedly free
But the ticket — an invisible price —
runs quite high —
They might lose themselves
in this mess of color and
light that runs so quickly
that even the swiftest passengers
have problems keeping up.
And the price? It's free —
Free to take
Free to leave
Free to go along
with whatever transpires,
builds, breaks, falls,
into the arms of
a newer, cheaper
type of transportation
with truer, brighter
trails of color that
gets left behind in
the dust in the
trail of ex-transportation
that watches and
waves goodbye as you
travel more quickly
than you ever have
before
and can't even see
the scenery
go
by.

by Tara Christin Chala



G.V. 2000 artwork by Galen Pehrson

Powder Monkey: Lookout Point

He stopped being funny about the time he lost his eye and jaw.
It wasn't about being angry — and godforbidpity —
more like in one blinding blast he saw the universe and all.
He was young — nineteen — but woods-wise by four years.
Yet, the Bull Buck should've known the challenge he had flung.
"Dynamite's not a kid's game.
You don't crimp caps with your teeth.
And he gave the kid primer pliers — two sets, damn it!"

Anyone with an eye for plot could've seen it coming.
A boy, scarcely past hair — immortal, running free and late for lunch
forgets (as all boys must) — forgets twice
and is caught out somewhere on a ridge that needs blowing,
and down there,
below
near the crew shining in the sun are the pliers
which in the long run are only comparatively safer.

So, as his tongue tastes sweet brass acid
and his teeth grind into the cap's metal mouth,
he remembers.

He remembers the Sunday pick-up baseball game.
He remembers knowing even before the ball left his fingers
that the batter would be fooled into swinging wide at his high inside pitch.

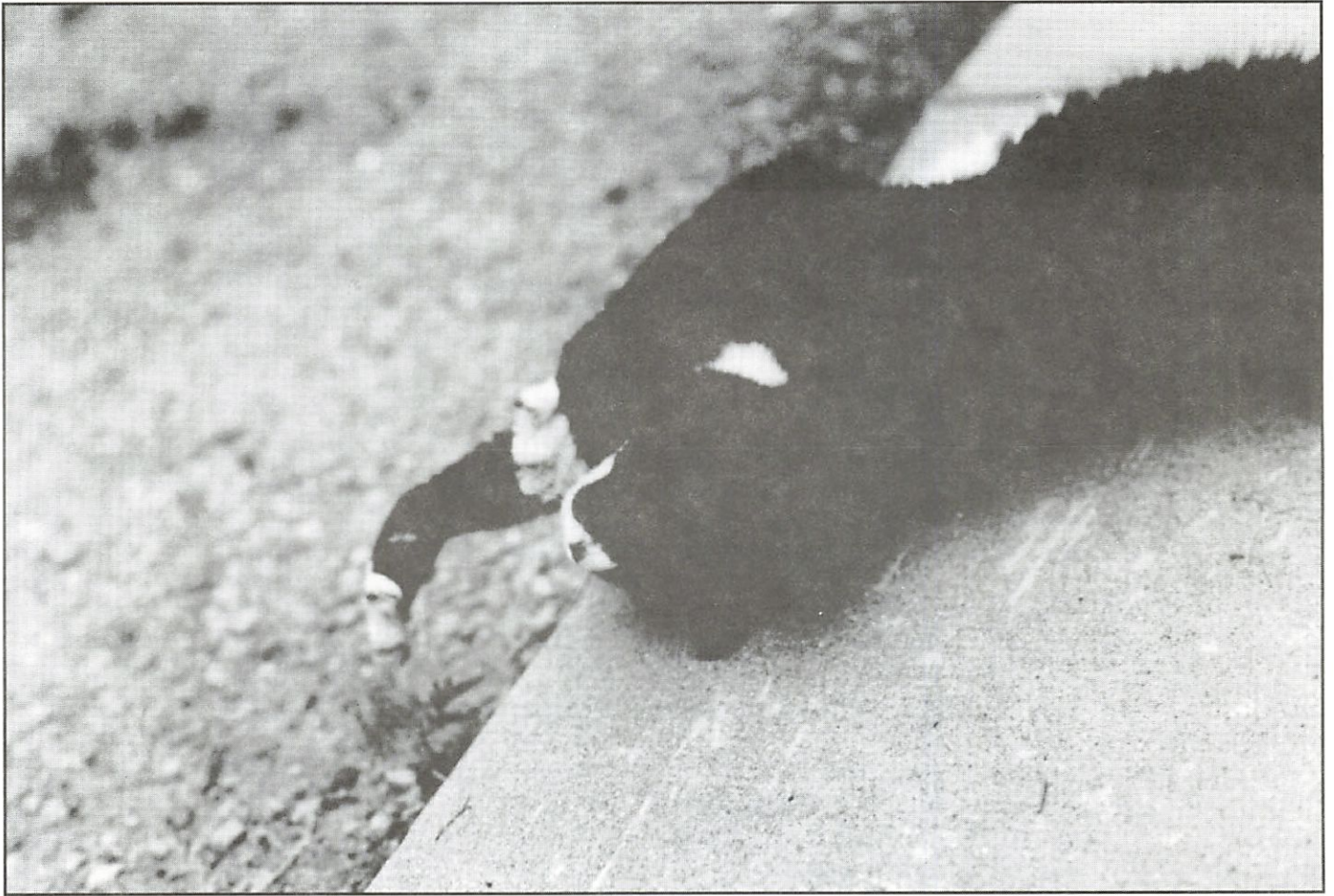
He remembers the air flung back by the speeding ball.
And, he remembers the Bull Buck saying,
"Only a damned fool ..."
Then he remembers nothing until much, much later
when his blood and bone rattled down.

Sliding down the stump he was about to blow
(surely he must have thought he was dead)
he had to have felt how much was gone;
fingers, face.
How could he live after being blown
almost to hell,
coming back with half a head?

Yet, within weeks
he was sipping all manner of things
through a straw he could hold with his good hand.
And by summer's end
he was back at the ballpark,
wildly watching the pitcher
while we were peering at him,
peering at his remaining,
openly weeping,
sympathetic eye.

by William T. Sweet

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Neighborhood Prowler photography by Leif VanWagenen

CRIMINALS

The cats in this town are hungry for sparrows.
They'll settle for robins or hummingbirds.
They eat bird guts and tiny speckled eggs.
They swallow hatchlings whole.
Cats are sleek murderers, nasty politicians.
Elected officials, they play with their prey.
They yawn and appear not to notice.
They come home fat pretending hunger.
They smile their cat smiles and sleep.
No one knows how many birds they've eaten.
Their whiskers protrude innocently.
Cats are sleepy prophets, lying thieves.
They lick their fur with satisfied tongues.
They sleep all day and dream of killing.
We let them out at night.
We know what they will do.
We are a species indifferent to murder.

by John Garmon

Coffee Shop

The world slips away
as the hidden sun retreats yet deeper
into his disguise.
Walking slow, I speed up.
A crazy green neon blaze explodes down the block.
I walk to it. It beckons.

In front, I stand with
my face buried into
the warmth of a much loved coat.
The implied whump-thump of music too far away
urges me into a hole I know
for a little of the acrid-sweet syrup of caffeine.

There is warmth inside ...
 but I choose a chair outside
with friends
and the gentle whiffs of cloves, tobacco, and cold night.

This hole is my home.
And my home, a forgotten dream.
So, with whump-thump all around,
I settle into the business
of discussing additives in peanut butter
with a brown/green shaggy old man of fifteen.
He is a shrub —
 Destined to be a tree.

My cup is empty.
It has been for over a year.
I command my legs, "STAND!"
 but I am stopped by the intrusion of
 warmth from a not-yet-familiar hand dissipating the cold
I sit.
I'm glad she's here.

by Walt Norblad



Withered artwork by Jerome Alphonse Paradis

This Is What My Job Does To Me And Other Heart Warming Stories

I'll smack feminism till she's black and blue
And my bra straps can't hold me no more

In a room full of "no big deal"s
I fall over into a cleavage of my own

Will you let me catch myself
Even if I don't land
Like a good girl should?

Watching you move away
And don't hold my hand
'cause I never asked

Glide to the groove of the moving TV exploding
With the dirty mess in the kitchen sink

Maybe we should take a break
So I can wet your bed in salty tears

Hating everyone before me
And every girl after

You'll never know who I really am

I could aspire in front of the fire
To become better than I ever was
But wouldn't it be a lie?

Reaching for the doorknob to slide under
A dream she had about us

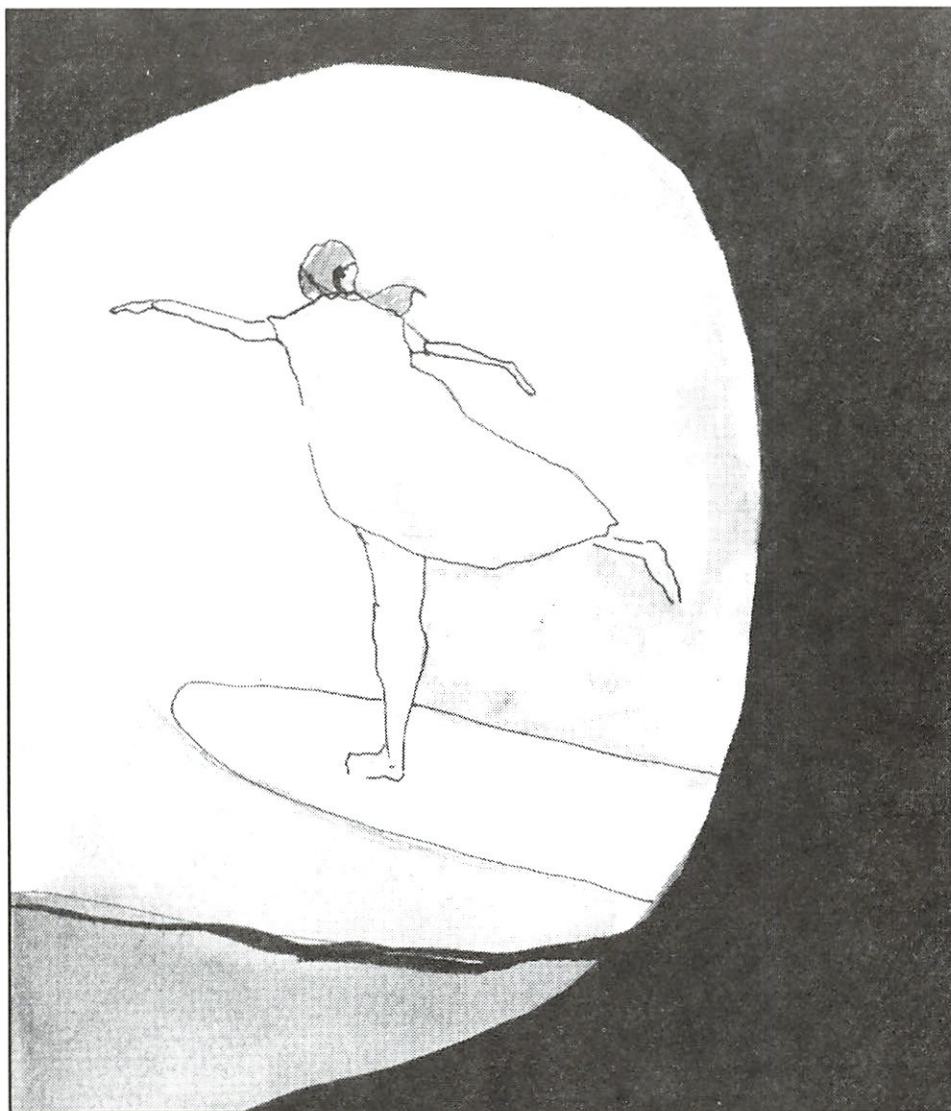
In a transition of patience
You know I never found it

Executively execute a mission
I'll never really find
In something I'll never trust

The jacket is too tight around my hips
And that means exactly
What we'll never compromise on together

A bug's life always goes unclaimed

by Jessica Parsons



Night Swing — Pacific artwork by Stockton Swing

On the Month of May (A Meditation)

To wrestle with a spring night like this is exhausting, especially when spring is coming to an end. This is a thick, heavy opponent, weighed down by change. I peer out to the street and the dimly illuminated buildings, and out to the trees that malignly bear their new leaves in the shadows; I peer out from my apartment window, and I can feel the night looking back and challenging me. It has just rained heavily with flashing, pale blue lightning. The streets are wet, and the passing traffic cuts through the new water as it speeds along. The rain has stirred up the old dust of the past week. The air smells fresh and hesitant. A glass of ice-tea sits sweating beside my typewriter.

Spring rain. Spring rain is sober and swift, and it comes sporadically and often. It crystallizes into clear drops that hang from green leaves. It soaks the soil and the concrete sidewalk. It can sprinkle or it can pelt, but it does nothing in between. And most importantly, it is touchy. Give the sky the wrong look, make the wrong comment, and it will become offended and turn cruel. It doesn't much care for us, I don't think — it cares only for the green, living rebirth of the world. Spring rain is often accompanied by the spring breeze, but that breeze has a mind of its own too.

(continued on page 36)

That breeze is apt to sweep out over the fields and parks, and wherever there is green grass, and it comes at right about mid-afternoon, carrying love. If you are young and living, the breeze will dance across your skin and get into your bones. It will make your heart stir and flutter, and you will long for kisses and trips to the ocean. The breeze will chill and tantalize your flesh.

And a thousand birds occupy the happy boughs of the newly resurrected trees. Their chirruping and fluid song carries along in light couplets. They are seen everywhere, chasing each other and giggling. The birds of spring are the little swallows that could fit right into the cup of a young girl's palm.

Indeed, the earth is bombarded by seeds and lilacs and squirming creatures. This is spring, and it is now ending. And so is my childhood. I turn twenty tomorrow.

For one reason or another, the month of May always makes me painfully aware of my position in life. I wind up feeling torn between some set obligation and people or places or love. At the same time, I am belittled by seeing the whole city get out of doors without me, oblivious to me. I feel suffocated and churned up. Out of school, without a job, without any new friends because I have spent the winter brooding again, and waiting for the great upheaval that will tear me from all of my attachments — this is my position at the end of May.

And during all of this, sum-

"Indeed, the earth is bombarded by seeds and lilacs and squirming creatures."

mer is gaining. The looming, intolerable shadow of summer spreads itself out over May. It crouches hungrily like a gigantic lioness; like the sprawling multiplex movies of that year. It seems like I always knew, but I had hope, and now that hope is gone — the hope that summer would not be disastrous. Perhaps that is one difference between childhood and adulthood.

There have been a few good summers, I suppose, or moments of summer. Out in the blazing, humid heat of Florida, there were times of adventure and joy and danger — but then, the whole year in Florida just seemed like one long blur of summer, so who can say? Those were lazy, innocent times. More recently, summer has been a mind-numbing, white fog. It is heavy and insurmountable. It reminds me more of bleak and meaningless death than of release or freedom.

What kind of freedom is summer, if all we can do is repeat sad rituals and wait and wait and wait in the undying, dead heat? Barbecues and amusement parks and water-skiing — these are the suburbanite dreams of summer. Wading in chlorine-filled swimming pools and staring through sunglasses, the suburbanite is

trapped in his own mind. He is condemned to a perpetual unfreedom and a shallow sense of being. Yet, he is the true symbol of summer, in his exploitive and endless pursuit of mediocrity, in his ubiquity and in the way he wishes to impugn us with his demoralizing values.

Summer is as impossible to escape as it is suffocating. It is a weight that is too heavy to bear. It squelches the will. It becomes manifest in those wrenching emotions of loss and obligation and inability. And a man is made to carry those emotions as he plods along uphill on the sun-beaten sidewalk of summer for months on end.

So here I am, trying to fight with this last spring night and force summer and the march of time back. I keep a vigil late into the night, hoping for a reprieve. But the air is tangibly thick and doubtful. It wafts in through the window from the steady night. I love an open window in spring. It brings me back to the secretive night air of the beach that came in from off of the whispering and seductive sea. It brings me back to times of sneaking out after midnight or later, when my mother had gone to sleep and wandering the empty streets and meeting up with friends and girls. I had my first kiss on such a night. It brings me back to summer-camp and the beautiful Hannah Hoekstra.

The chill of the spring air upon my cheek throws me back to yearning adolescence and it leaves me wondering. I wonder if I will ever escape into such open, wild nights like those

again. I wonder if I am now forever divided from such ecstatic and tentative and unknown experiences — experiences of fearful darkness, experiences of flesh and lips. Will my quiet, cloistered bones ever awaken to those live adventures again? Is the expansive excitement of true discovery lost to me? And where are my friends now? Where are all of those intentions and dreams we had?

One departure after another, summer after summer, has brought me to this. My mind is filled with those times and places long gone. A memory of a person or a place that is lost in the past must inevitably coexist with the heartbreak and longing for old times. These two things, memory and longing, dance together in a sad waltz; a waltz at the end of the night when the dance floor is being swept and the lights are going out. Such old days and months sting the heart and scar the mind.

Some musty boxes are stacked in the hall. Another May is coming to an end and I am preparing for another cross-

"Over the last several years, I have ripped up my roots at the beginning of every summer and moved on down the road. This year is no different."

country move. Over the last several years, I have ripped up my roots at the beginning of every summer and moved on down the road. This year is no different.

But as I consider these things, the night, with the spring following, slips away from me. Time, in its gentle deviousness, has eluded me again. Time moves along unheeded. In her verdant robe, Persephone is descending. The lucid, bracing air of spring is already being replaced by the simmering weight of summer. The flowers will burn off, they will litter the earth. The squirming creatures will retreat into

the shade and the heat will make them sluggish. The birds will find mates and their songs will become uninspired. The suburban masses will flood the theme parks and the chlorine-filled pools.

This is why the month of May always brings me such anguish. May stands precariously at the end of spring and I am always a year older by the end of it. In May I must face, all at once, the burden of summer and the terror of change.

But I can already feel the months rushing by. And maybe this year summer will not end up being so bad. Maybe it will bring with it a few moments of pure freedom, pure joy. And perhaps I will make it out to the beach this summer. Perhaps I will sneak out late at night when everyone is asleep, and I will wander the empty beach and feel that cool, secretive air, like I did so many years ago. Perhaps that silent breeze will touch my skin and get into my bones, and I will find the dream that will sing in my memories forever.

by Eric Nelson

“fighting defecation”

I remember as a child
each morning had the
opportunity to rise
into something more.
There was hope without
a mere concept of hope,
there was emotion thick
as geese in the sky of Wisconsin
but best of all
it all meant something when I
wasn't concerned about meaning.
And now
twenty some odd years
have imprinted spells of
cynicism, countless hangovers, and
daily rituals of stagnation,
yet each morning
just before the eyelids pull
back and consciousness
reminds, there is a moment
not concerned
with anything,
and when fumbling earthward
and a trace of that still lingers
and the tiny differences
are recognized
that might just be
all you need
to keep the worms away

by Aaron Braaten

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: _____

• Contributors •

Ross L. Andrews is Poet Laureate of the Northwest Youth Corps Outdoor School located on Augusta Street near Hendricks Park in Eugene. He is on a migratory pattern from his home in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia and North Carolina. Finding Eugene mossy and hospitable, he hopes to blend in and become as hip as the natives.

bsb, like most, didn't give a damn how Stella got her groove back.

Forest Bauers is a *Denali* contributor.

Aaron Braaten has actually *hitch hiked* across 30th Avenue to get to school on time.

Ron Bush is.

Tara Christin Chala does all of her best writing in back of her new, little blue car, Shelby.

Linda Chamorro — Originally from Florida, I was born in Miami the last time it snowed there. Been in Oregon 2 1/2 years now. Currently taking art classes part-time at Lane.

Daniel E. Conner is a student struggling to find classes that fit into his schedule at LCC. It would help if he knew what he wanted to be.

Tess Evenstar Elliot doesn't believe for a second that Poe's writing was a product of his impotence.

John Garmon is chair of the English, Foreign Language and Speech Department at LCC. His poetry has appeared in many national magazines, including Southern Poetry Review, Prairie Schooner, Ploughshares, Midwest Quarterly Review, New Mexico Humanities Review, and Poet Lore. In addition to division chair, Garmon teaches one writing class each term.

Erik Kraven is outta here.

Nancy Carol Moody — I have been a student for more than forty years; sometimes I take classes.

Daniel Morgan always remembers to check under the bed for monsters.

Bethany Morris dreams of one day riding the rails.

Eric Nelson is a *Denali* contributor.

Walt Norblad — I have been published twice by accident by companies that no one has ever heard of. I am a full-time student at LCC. I was born in Salem, OR, or rather, So-lame bored-again. My name anagrammed is Wad Born Tall.

Sunao Shirase is the *Denali* Art Director.

Stockton Swing — There's an itchy hair on my backside that moves me to create artwork for illustration.

Jerome Alphonse Paradis is the original trailer-trash jumbo-daddy of them all.

Jessica Parsons has no dreams of being famous.

Galen Pehrson paints like that because he wants to be a machine.

Tedd Pomaski — No bio statement, please.

Eli Trompeter wishes for no biographical statements.

Emily Semple longs to walk on the sunny side of the street. She exercises her dogs in the dark and continues to look for green lights.

Gail Stevenson — This is my first attempt at boldly stepping out of my snug, secure, safe, isolated little poetry writing closet. Be gentle.

William T. Sweet (better known as Bill) is an English instructor at LCC. He has had his poetry published in journals and anthologies such as Northwest Review, Bantam's Intro I & II, Sands and Coral, Tweed, and The Nation Within in the U.S., Australia, the Philippines, and New Zealand. He also has published some fiction and non-fiction. Some of his poems in this issue of *Denali* are from his manuscript, After the Fall, which won an Oregon Literary Arts Award for a Work in Progress.

Junko Uchido is an international student from Japan.



untitled photograph by Bethany Morris

Relief

I cast aside a life
lived for someone else.
I open my eyes
to a sunshine reality
and live for myself.

by *Eli Trompeter*