

# Denali

Spring 2005





COVER:

## WE ARE WARRIORS

OIL PAINTING BY

JARRETT ARNOLD

LEFT:

## AURELIA

PHOTOMANIPULATION BY

CICI BROMLEY

DENALI Literary Arts Journal is a publication of Lane Community College. We publish thrice annually. Denali accepts original submissions from all residents of Lane County at any time. Submissions and contact information may be sent to:

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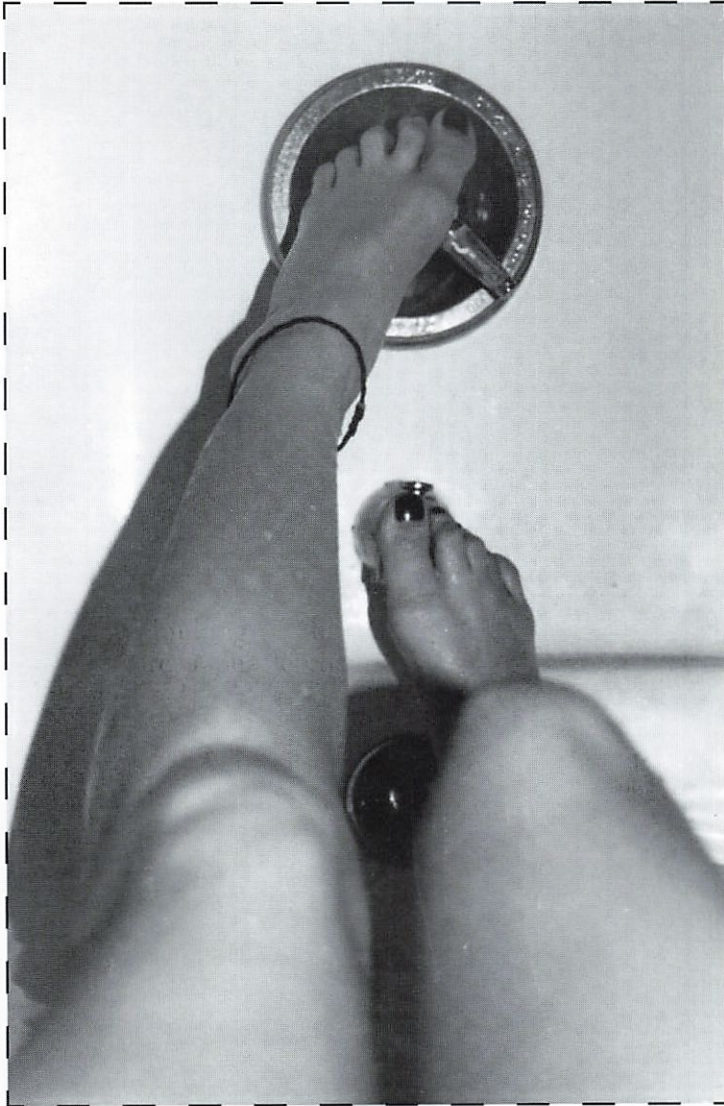
# 4th Grade, San Roque School

DIANA PALMER

Sister Clementia drones on . . .  
rubber production                  Amazon River.  
Hot afternoon sun slants  
through venetian blinds,  
casts golden stripes  
across my geography book and  
the back of the boy in front of me.  
I'm in the photograph on the page,  
thousands of miles away.  
The nearly naked Indians and I  
sit outside their thatched hut on stilts,  
lazy in the green jungle afternoon.  
Crocodiles and snakes glide past  
in flickering sunlight.  
The chatter of a distant bird  
barely penetrates the humid air:  
Sister Clementia,  
high in a banana tree.



Self Portrait  
JENNA WILLIS



# Hen Stretch

MEGAN LARSSON



# Shame

ROBERT COWELL

My secret house of knife-sharp cards,  
built with selfish rationalizations  
and self-delusion,  
collapsed, tumbled down and cut deep.

I don't get to be the hero,  
the One-Who-Makes-It-Better.  
I'm the source of the hurt.

Self-loathing and strength-sapping despair  
insist I hide my face and run  
from my supreme shame, but

I can't get away from myself.





# Closet to Be

YULIYA GOLOSOV



# Bioluminescence

KATHARINE M. EMLÉN

We stand there  
at the brink of midnight,  
letting the warmth flow through our connected hands  
as the cool water brushes over our toes.  
“The sea,” you tell me, “holds a mystery  
that she only releases at night.”  
You let go of me,  
and slowly I let the ocean reach my knees.  
A few sparks light up, here and there.  
Curiosity leads me further.  
I swim.  
Gentle waves brush over my breasts, shoulders,  
and dampen the tips of my hair.  
A green aura starts to shimmer around me.  
The sea lights up,  
sparkles, glitter, everywhere ignite  
and flow through the water  
as if God  
had spilled sequins into the ocean.  
I stop. They stop.  
I move, and they light up again.  
I can’t feel them; only see them.  
“Isn’t this beautiful!” you say,  
making waterfalls between your fingers  
as you run your hands  
through the fluorescent mystery.  
I float on my back  
amongst these dancing fireflies  
and gaze up at the sky.  
It sparkles. And now, the sea answers:  
we were swimming with the stars.



SHAWN@BEAUTYBENEATH.COM





# A Dream

SUSAN WAHLBERG

I am in love with the idea of you,  
your hands and back and hair,  
your lips and tongue and eyes,  
the way you touch me.  
I am in love with the dream of you,  
with the words you say and  
the things you do,  
with how you always want to be near  
with every breath you take.  
It is silly to say, I know,  
because you are no more  
real than a sunbeam,  
no more permanent than the  
space between raindrops.  
But I love you still,  
because this lonely heart  
does not know how  
to stop hoping.



# Contemplation

CAROLYN (LINA) STAUB



## ANDREA SUMMERS

When finally my contempt can only shrug  
and rancor rubs its eyes in yawning languor,  
I will be a droop of syrupy morning light  
puddling in through wavering pane.  
I will be anonymous  
as hotel towels; taut  
as hospital corners; simple  
as a piece of paper.  
I will be a bedsheet gaping on a clothesline;  
a pale orchid posing sunward on a windowsill;  
a nascent black-dotted iris  
tracing stitches of flinching sail  
wed to aching scrim of sky.





# Thoughts That Live and Die

MICK GAEL

I am astounded  
by the things that remind me of you.  
They travel in flocks—  
or swarms, even.  
“Moonriver”—  
Holly Golightly, she could never do you justice  
or—but that’s not the right thought—  
compete.

What is a girl to say to a woman,  
but to stand there, mouth agape,  
eyes exploding to keep from imploding  
because there’s nothing behind them?

And I am just that—a girl, awed in the presence of a queen,  
her posture a small reminder of what it means to not be me.

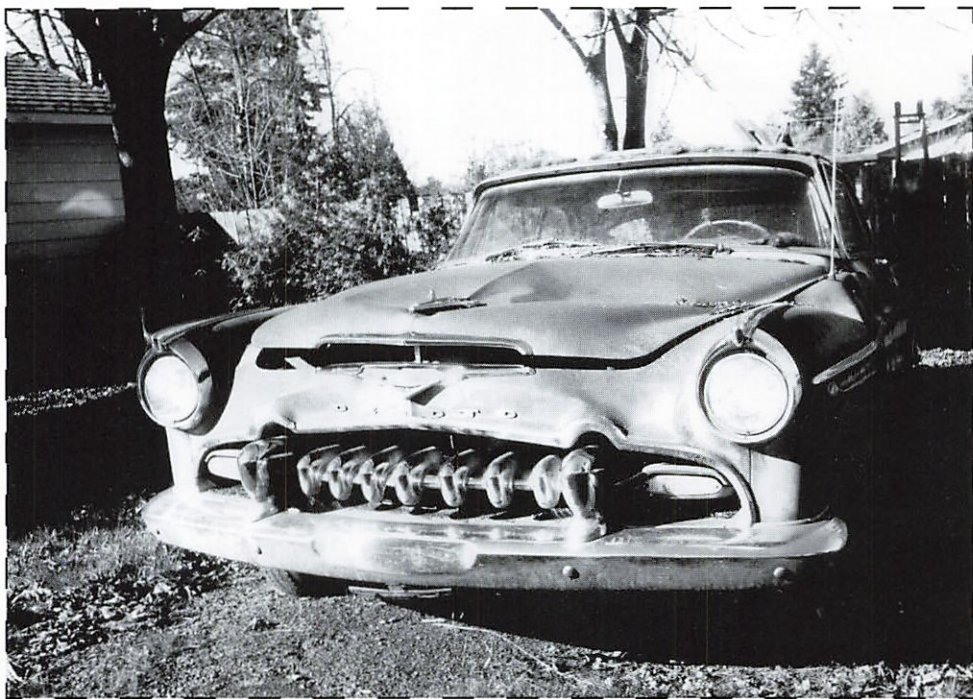
When this crude, clock-ruled world is fragmented  
and future  
blends with past  
so these memories I have  
are not what they purport to be,  
but true visions—  
perhaps then I will not be ashamed  
to think of wine unimbibed,  
waltzes unwaltzed,  
whispers unspoke,  
cries unheard,  
letters unwrote,  
tangos undanced behind doors not yet closed,  
and a sweet, deranged passion of living  
that still burns unseen  
in your heart inside your eyes  
where emptiness does not exist.

Untitled  
JENNA WILLIS



# Dream Car

RAMSEY TAINTON





# Aesthetic Ascetic

ZOE KEROUAC

I earned the family name. Jack Kerouac's Punk Little Sister finally had a traveling experience worth thinking about.

Of course I wasn't on the road when it hit me. I was at a bar in the cowshit town that spawned and occasionally continues to define my existence. I was sitting across the table from an underage friend of a friend who continued to smoke menthol cigarettes as I downed my characteristic rum and Coke. It was an exercise in openly consuming that which the other would have greedily devoured if invited a single drop or drag. It was an expression of our wicked streaks. He was my kind of kid. It surprised me because most of my friends have outstandingly shitty taste in companionship.

So as we sat, me drinking, him smoking, my friend describing the "fuck-me" boots of a mutual friend who was not mutual to me, the universe skewed a little to the left and dropped the realization in my lap. It occurred to me that my back of the hand home town was littered with a new breed of boy perfectly engineered to break the hearts of strong-willed fragile girls like the one I had been not so long ago.

This new uberman is deceptively ambiguous in age. He looks like he could get a woman like me thrown in jail while at the same time looking well old enough to have learned how to get a woman like me to beg his name in a whisper as

he simultaneously tears my resolve and my heart in two. The race of reckless distraction hides shaggy box-black hair under any kind of cool cap. You can't see but you can sense the bed head beneath that betrays a look of innocence. It's not the kind of hair that accompanies high school slackers. It's the kind of hair that late night friends with benefits always return with. They wear cool shirts that say nothing or reference obscure bars, bands, or shows. They have silver hollow plugs in both ears that aren't outrageously stretched. Just big enough to notice. Just big enough to catch my eye and draw my attention to those extra soft hairs that litter napes of necks and dance on indecent confessions.

They're emo style boys who listen to hardcore punk and AC/DC. They drink whatever you offer and smoke menthol cigarettes. Their stories are always good and their sleepy laughs are deadly. They don't have to grin or smile or scowl to entice an infatuation; their blank responses are enough. The night before as I sat in a different bar with a different friend, the same breed of man served my drink and had a 12 second relationship with me in which he kissed me softly, fucked me roughly, and left his smelly shirt as a souvenir that caught my tears every time I caught its scent.

I am reluctant to admit that one of my



best friends, the boy around the corner who I dated for 2 days 22 hours and 22 minutes has become the 23 year old local who high school boys hang out with and high school girls long to talk to. He's hairy, shaggy, smoking, drinking, playing firehall shows, having parties at his house. He's still a wannabe badass with a skateboard to me but I see now that he's likely party to this social revolution I'm witnessing as I sit across from the friend of a friend who is ashing a cigarette that doesn't quite smell like my bestfriend-lover but would satisfy my mouth's mourning just the same.

Later, in the sky—not on the road, big brother—as I looked down from a plane onto little villages that decorated tiny dry valleys and spawned kids who were just as hungry for a cultural revolution as their parents' crops were for a good rainy season, the realization occurred to me that the west coast home that I was returning to was not touched by the social revolution that dominated my attention in my misguided outings in Cornfield Pennsylvania. Then again maybe the west coast emo hardcore boys are serving drinks here too. I just don't know because

I'm not  
a public lush  
on this side  
of the continent.

I'm not a public lush on this side of the continent. I drink behind locked doors from large plastic cups rather than in smoke-filled bars from short glasses that cost five bucks to refill.

Life here doesn't revolve around ass-backwards outings to four bars in one night to meet people who won't ever know that name that no one ever yells. West coast world is dominated by a literary revolution that I, pet to all the stars that I am, have become more than simple party

to. It's an orgasmic wave washing over a little town that calls itself a city and I'm surfing near the back watching my fellow addicts laugh with maniacal satisfaction as they birth offspring who wreck them. Our *elektric* creations. These fellow in-patients guess they know me rather well despite their lack of knowledge that my name is in fact a noun, an adjective, an adverb, and on rare occasion, a full on verb. They know that I have loved (in a biblical sense) one man alone but do not know that he and I lead nearly separate lives that nearly always stay separate and that we merely double ourselves with the identity of our union. They are not aware that I have never seen him in a social

situation that wasn't mine alone. I have never met his friends nor have I ever accidentally/unexpectedly bumped into him. I am a stranger in the Pacific home because they do not know the person. I'm a stranger in the Atlantic home because they do not know the soul.

All of this is terribly ironic as you now look at me awaiting the stereotypical sap of the girlfriend smitten with a man who kissed her on his own the night before. Someone begs me write that *he* is home. And although my eyes tear on long treks when I remember the electricity of his breath on the crook of my neck, although relaxation deepens post meditation when I collapse by his side, I am a stranger in his land as well. He is merely the fuzzy warmth of a familiar bed. He comes complete with the intermittent stark realization that I am Goldilocks and he is Papa's too-hard bed.

Thinking of him. Thinking of him and me and how we are a puzzle that

sometimes never completes the picture. Now I want the cigarette that my friend offered to me from the friend of a friend's pack. I want the Kerouac smoke to curl and I want the chilling noncomfort of a tinkling glass in my left hand. I want to close the curtains and die on the living room floor a stone on rainy Monday.

She begged me to tell her that I was happy with my fake marriage and nearly six years with the yogi of brutal honesty let me only answer, "We are a complicated creature." We are enough. We may be strangers in each other's worlds but the warm fuzzy beds-too-hard are the closest either of us will ever come to home.

At the end of the page I find that this was more than the Kerouac faux-fictional travel's rehash.

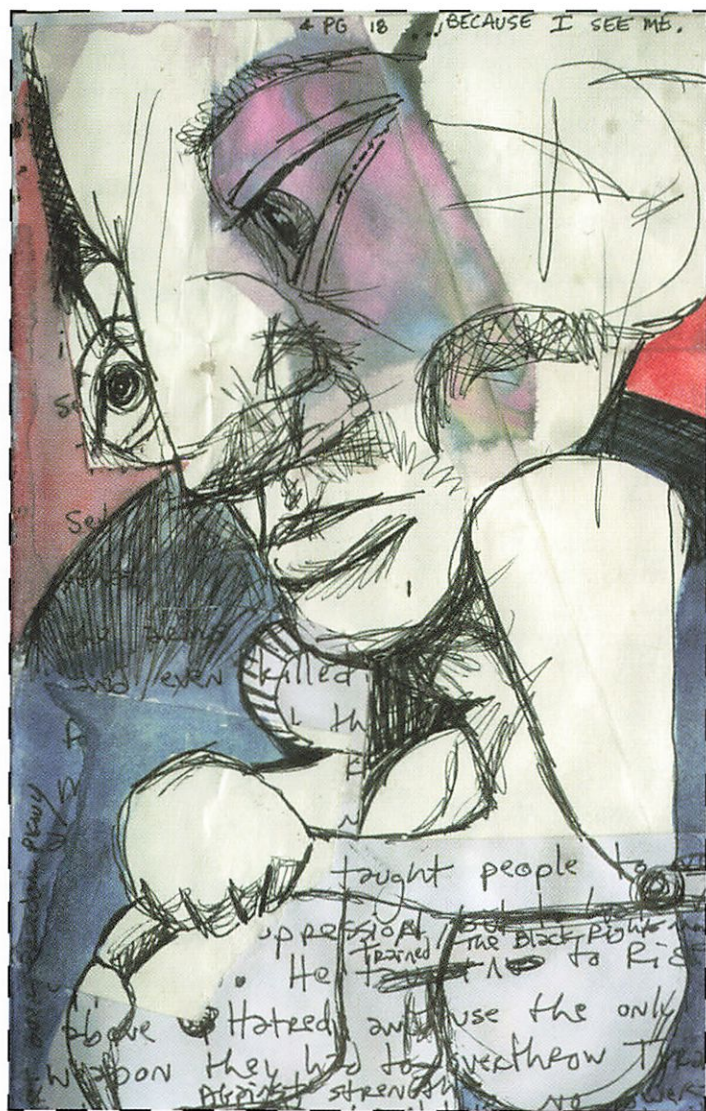
This was Jack Kerouac's Punk Little Sister trying to earn the family name only to fall short and hard into a diatribe about going home. ✕





# I See Me

JARRETT ARNOLD





# Revelations in D Minor

MELISSA ROBY

Dewy Saturday before light graces,  
intoxicated on a whim;  
tied by cognate vacant spaces  
“How did we end up *here*?” she begs of him.

His lips tell her *settle on intuition*.  
A color of compelling—Shaded Green Eyes bring resolve,  
Stern Blue abandon amid dithering stimulation  
discomfited presence taps a dance of resolve.

A confessor to a Majestic Honeybee, raised spirit to poise  
a native to amorphous certainty.  
Her Curled back, a bitten lip of exquisite noise  
begets his quaintly incited mystery.

A Prince of Keys can't find peace in a low-locked land of ordinary.  
A high-ceilinged life, melodic moor—  
his pillow isn't made of Solace until reaches are Silk Woven incredibly  
*revelations* in D minor.

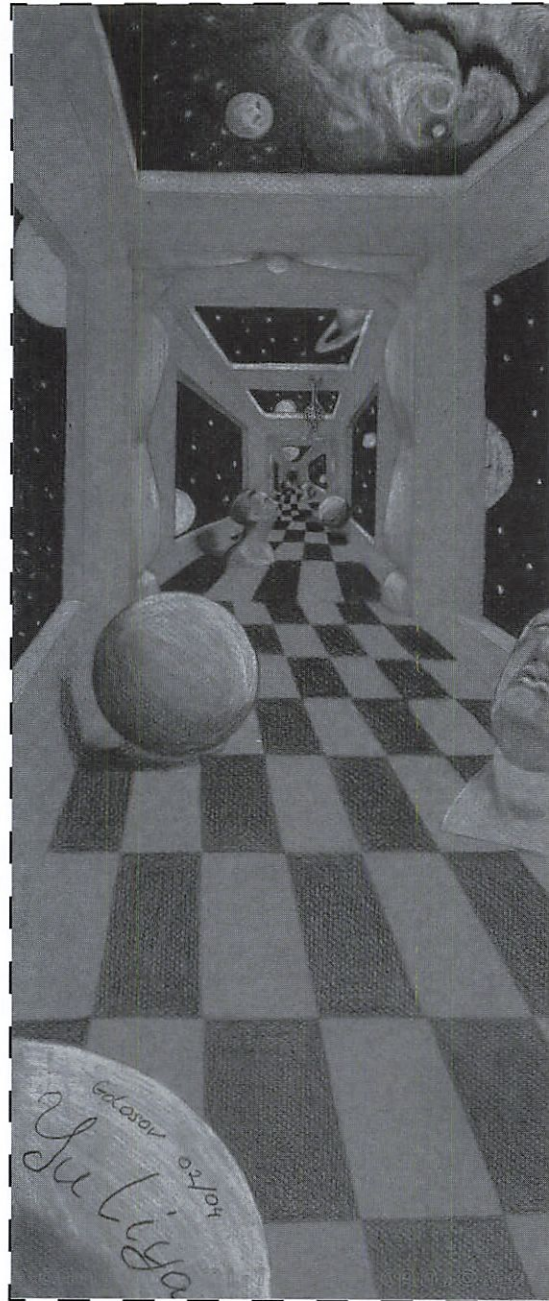
The Spell of Concord has tied a violet lace through each one,  
knotted fervently slightly involved in  
a no gain-no loss, bet not made to be won.  
Of a time that imprints fluid footprints as strangers drift rhythmically akin.



# Mary Jane

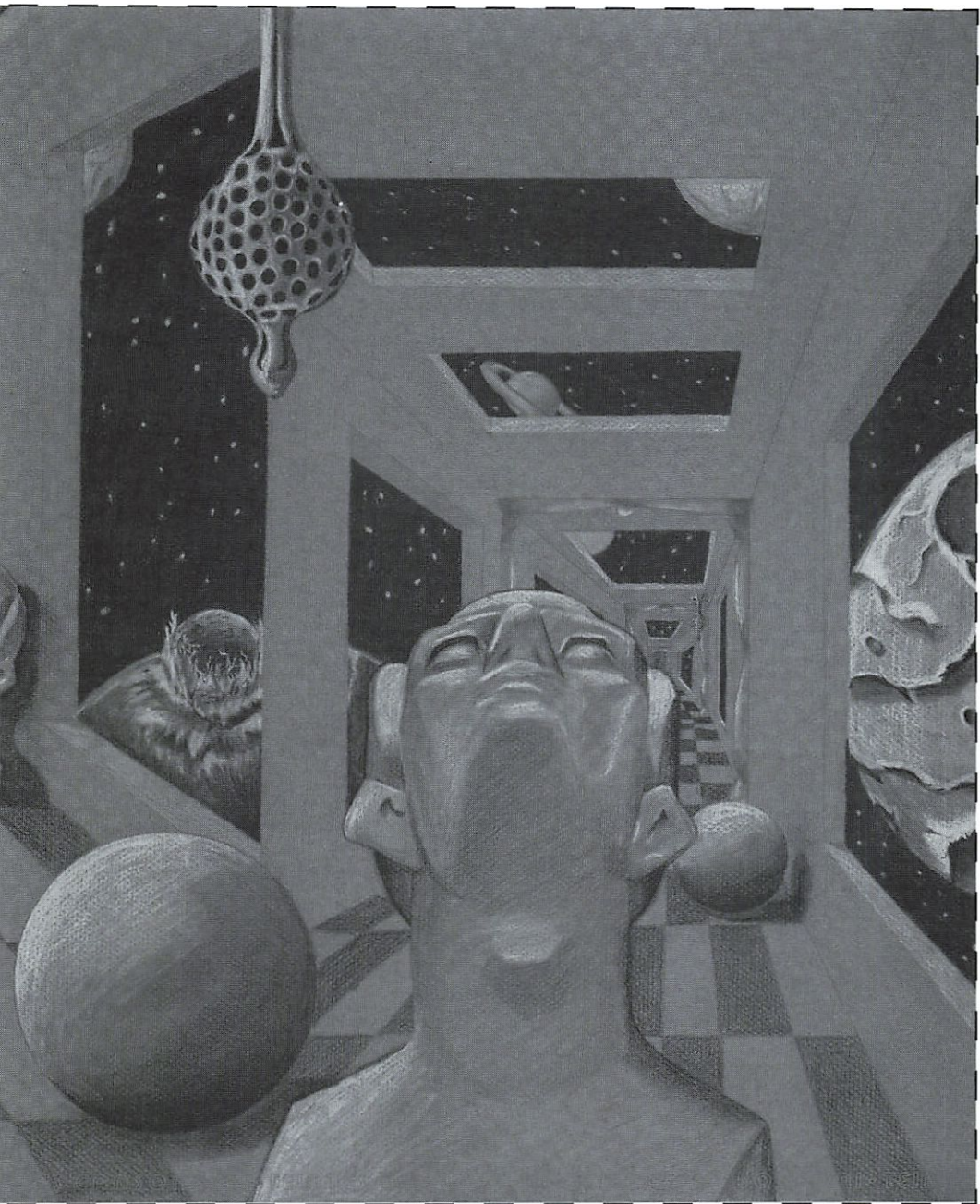
**MAISIE DAVIS**

You spit in my eye,  
Deeming me unrecognizable.  
Oh how I love you now,  
Deep inside  
Knowing that you hate me.  
Murder me with a pencil  
Or a pen—either will do nicely—  
Because I can't stand the  
Torture you bring me  
On a silvery platter  
By your everyday  
Lies.



# Unconscious

YULIYA GOLOSOV





# Sur le Pon d 'Avingnon

DIANA PALMER

My third grade class  
from parochial school  
performed a little French song  
for the Poor Clare nuns.  
They were cloistered in  
a walled corner lot  
with trees and a garden  
near the Old Mission.

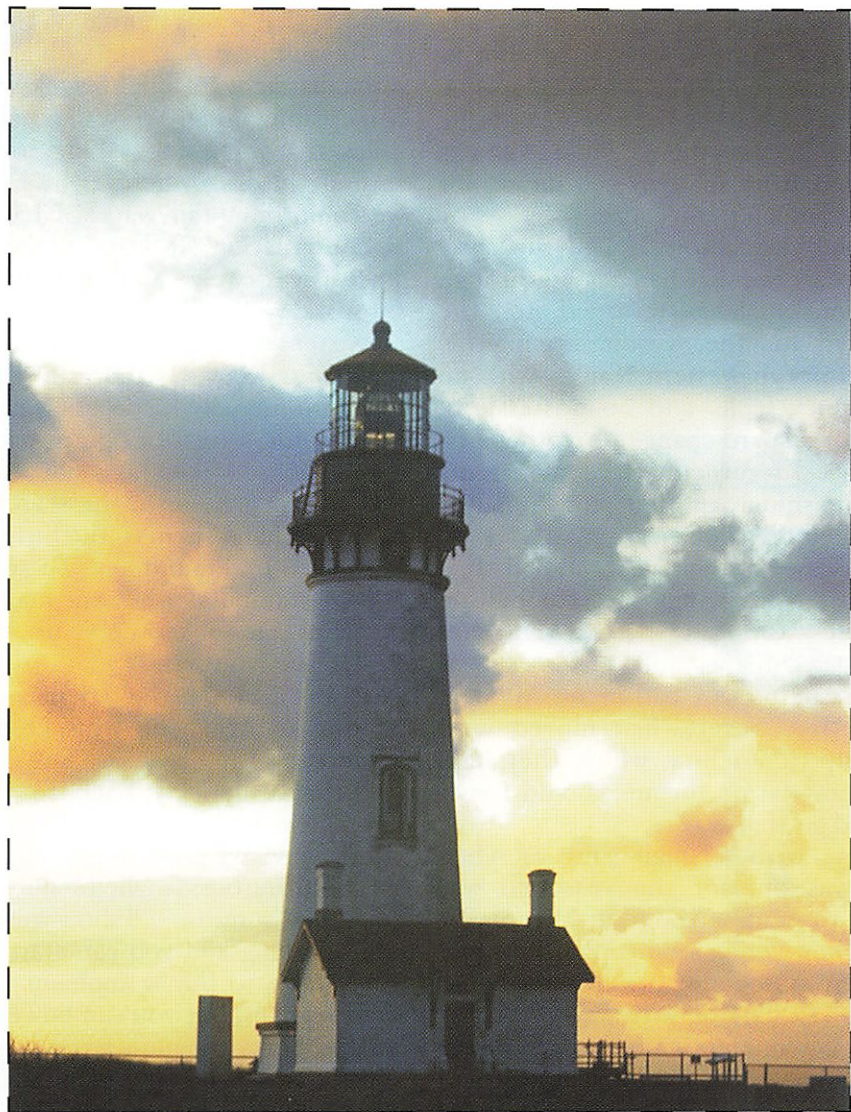
We took our places before them  
in a sunny room of soft yellow air  
on a floor of black and white squares.  
Twelve smiling faces  
like pretty pale roses  
shone in a field of black robes  
seated on two rows of chairs  
in an alcove behind a barred grill.

Sixty years later,  
behind the same garden walls,  
twelve cloistered nuns  
pray especially for me,  
give me back  
a little third grader  
singing in French  
in a sunny room with soft yellow air.



# Yaquina's Winter Sunset

ARLETA M. MOLES



# Impetus Interruptus

## LIGHT

Sixty-six began for me much as any summer that came before. It got hot in the midwest following a windy spring. The plains of Kansas were just as boring as the plains of Oklahoma. Human beings ran to and from in their self-important daily lives, much to no event.

Just the year before, I had run away with the carnival that had passed through my hometown. I had returned after the job ended for the season, leaving me high and dry in western Kansas with no money, no vehicle, and no possessions, except for a spare change of clothes in a paper sack. I returned to face my parents who astonishingly did not punish me for having “fled the coop.”

This was another year, and I had already tried my wings the year before. Home life was not any better. My father and I still fought, and I felt just as worthless in ‘66 as I had in ‘65. My best friend, Mike Severt, had moved with his family to Wichita, where they held an open invitation for me, should I ever leave and go that way.

I came with a small suitcase when school was out for the year and was allowed to rent a room in the Severt house. They were good people to me and were even kind enough to listen to what I had to say. The Severts were probably the first genuine entire family of friends I ever made on my own. I respected them

and felt that it was mutual on their part.

To fulfill my rental obligations, I immediately went out to seek work, and Mike came along. We walked about five miles that first day, asking for jobs at several places—wherever we thought we could draw fair wages. I had worked at construction sites and grocery stores since I was twelve and knew how to ask for work.

We entered Koch Products, recently replacing Rock Island, at the time. Koch industrially made fiber-glass pipes, mostly for irrigation purposes. Taking applications, Mike and I filled them out and returned them to the secretary who turned to hand them to the hiring boss as he walked up behind her. We stood for a couple of minutes while the man scanned our apps. He looked up at us and asked, “When can you start?”

It was a Friday, the day half over, and looking to Mike, he whispered to me, “Tomorrow?”

I turned quickly back to the boss, hoping he hadn’t heard Mike and said, “Right now. We came dressed to work.”

The hiring boss laughed at our eagerness and said, “Come on, I’ll show you what you will be doing and you can start Monday. You’ll have to buy a linoleum knife and some goggles, but you can buy them here and we’ll take the money out of your first check that you’ll get next Friday.”



We went with the boss, excited at our luck and genuinely interested in the plant. Spun glass fiber strands spooled down to weave onto wax-coated mandrills, mixing with epoxy-resin, forming pipes that were then cooked to hardness against large, standing ovens.

Monday, at work, Mike coated mandrills with wax and wheeled them to the looms where he took the sticky racks full of unhardened pipes to run back to me and the ovens. I hooked them onto the oven faces where they rotated and cooked at about 450 degrees. I checked them periodically for doneness. When finished, I cut them off with a hacksaw as they spun against the ovens' heat.

The work was hot and demanding and the more pipes I cut, the more fiberglass was embedded into my wrists and forearms. Each day, after work I showered and scrubbed, but never could get enough of the glass out of my pores to be able to sleep comfortably, the fiber tufts constantly poking my nerves and keeping me long awake. The bed sheets that Mrs. Severt starched were like a press that made certain that each and every fiber of

the glass made known its prickly domain in my body.

There was one perk and one perk only to working at Koch. She was so blonde. Long, full hair that bounced just above her low-cut neckline where the competition of bouncing was then excelled. Tapering in at the waist, her full hips ground together as she walked past. She always returned a saucy smile to all of us men who stood at attention as she passed by. She looked closely related to Bridget Bardot, sex goddess of the day. Her daily passing was the driving force that kept me at Koch, shy as I was, hoping over hope for her to de-virginize my status.

The day came when she didn't pass by. She always came by at lunchtime, just before the break whistle. I was dismayed, and looking around saw that many others also seemed distraught, apparently at her absence. I ate lunch gloomily, as did Mike at the apparent loss of benefits at work.

Working into the afternoon, at about 2:17 the boss came walking by, closely followed by the luscious blonde and a fellow worker who had also been missing

We walked  
about five miles  
that first day,  
asking for jobs at  
several places . . .



## Impetus Interruptus continued

since just before noon. He grinned as he passed as if he had just been promoted to foreman though the truth of the matter was that the blonde and him had just been fired for spending the last two and a half hours in a parked car in the lot.

To this day, I'll never forget the wink that she gave me as she passed by. Her red lips parted in a silent and sultry farewell as if to say, "Silly boy, this could have been you and now you'll never know how much I was worth getting fired from this dump over."

The head boss at Koch reasoned with me to stay and work part time through the coming school year. He said that he hated to lose workers like me and that he

would shift a schedule around high school in Wichita for me. I thanked him and said that I had made up my mind to return to Oklahoma. He shook my hand and wished me well, promising a job, should I ever need one near one of his plants.

A couple of weeks later, I was back in Oklahoma and getting school supplies in order. I got a nice letter of recommendation and a Coleman water cooler from the boss at Koch. I missed Mike and his family and I missed living out of the nest and earning my own way. Mostly though, every day at about 11:30 when the lunch bell rang, I saw again that sultry wink and those parted lips and missed the blonde and all that she implied to me. ✕



SHAWN@BEAUTYBENEATH.COM



# Shelikoff Dreams

CICI BROMLEY



# Fighting the Galaxy

MICK GAEL

"Shit. Even the Mona Lisa's  
falling apart."  
... and on fallow ground.

That's what you didn't say—  
why d'you always have to be such a bitch  
about what is right and wrong.  
It's all relative when you're in the family,  
and boiling points are just a token  
of all the whats  
that remain between your lips.

I wish, just once,  
someone would call me *fag* again,  
just like home,  
except the memories aren't nearly as sweet.

"I thought some daisies  
might cheer you up."  
... but if they do, then  
that pretty much means that—  
truth or charade—  
this (!)  
is all over.

And I'm not sure I like that.

Is it still a *façade*  
if it's what you see  
every time you look in the mirror  
and in your head  
even if you don't close your eyes?



# Quality Time

ROBIN MCKENZIE

"Holy crap."

I stood in the doorway of the Magic Tower, a popular porn shop, and watched my mother practically run in, like she'd been let out for recess at elementary school.

Inside the double oak doors, generic white tile accented the antique white walls. The store felt like a warehouse of stolen goods, where shady dudes came to discreetly purchase the products. No one made eye contact in the quiet atmosphere.

I passed a discomfited couple examining lubricants, and circled around a Dungeons & Dragons nerd. The nerd gave me the willies. He looked passive-

aggressive: someone who'd gotten a lot of shit in high school, and now could smother offenders in their sleep.

Mom wandered farther into the store, absorbed in her quest, and passed the rows of video racks that featured improbable dicks and silicone stacks. Displays of lingerie, games, and magazines were organized in the middle of the store. She giggled over the greeting cards that

edged the magazines and were sectioned off under "Playful," "Naughty," and "Get Well." Greeting cards? My mind boggled at the thought of a pop-up penis equipped with a speech balloon, wishing the viewer good health.

The southwest corner of the store specialized in alternative sex devices ("Double Delight," "Yankee Doodle Dandy"), soon followed by columns of bright boas and brilliant strands of beads. Exhibits of lubricants and body sweets

were stacked across the aisle: gummy thongs and whipped cream, tasty body frost and gumdrop nipples.

But the walls—oh, the walls!

Dildos covered them. Every shape, size, color,

and texture, and the antique white seemed an odd contrast to their content. Some were small as a pen, and others the size of flashlights. Glow-in-the-dark, neon, metallic, textured—truly, the variety overwhelmed me.

Mom made a beeline for the dildos.

"Wow!" she exclaimed. "Look at this one!"

To my horror, she didn't keep her voice

"Light blue?  
No, it looks  
like it was sawed  
off a corpse."



low. Instead, she grew louder and insisted that I look at this one. She held up a six inch dildo shaped as an elongated silver bullet.

Gleeful, Mom tittered. "Looks like a Thermos."

My eyes widened in shock—I made a silent vow to get rid of my own Thermos at home. Mom flitted back and forth between the fake penises, like a child in a candy shop who can't decide what to buy with her limited pennies. She held up various specimens and debated about what she fancied:

"Oooh, green. Oh, wait, it looks like gangrene."

"Light blue? No, it looks like it was sawed off a corpse."

"Eww. Red looks infected."

"I don't suppose hot pink would be so bad."

Aahhhh! It was a nightmare come true. Customers crept by and gave my demented mother a wide berth while she made her selection. Mom grabbed a shopping hand-basket and rifled through the body sweets ("Check out these gummy penises. Aren't they hysterical?"), and lingerie ("Sweetie, what about this one? It's not quite like butt floss").

I wandered after Mom, dazed by the sex-crazed whirlwind she turned out to be, but

careful to keep a certain distance between us. After the sudden metamorphosis, I wasn't ready to be associated with her. Furthermore, I couldn't reconcile her excitement with how I'd been raised. As I grew up, we didn't talk about sex. My mother's idea of sex education hadn't even broached the birds and the bees.

Instead, when I turned eighteen, she belatedly asked if I had pubic hair yet. Totally normal development, she assured me. And I knew why I bled monthly, right?

A college course in human sexuality cured most of my ignorance, and personal experience fixed the rest. However, I didn't expect my mother to follow up on a friend's recommendation, and was surprised when she decided to browse the Magic Tower on our way to a movie.

Mom had finished shopping, and I loitered by the cash register, where she paid for her items. Laid-back and genial, the clerk grinned knowingly at Mom and her pleased smile. The total for the hot pink dildo, some lingerie, and body candy: an astronomical \$126.12.

As we left the Magic Tower and approached the car, Mom turned to me.

"Honey, why didn't you buy anything? Didn't you find anything interesting?" ~~X~~



# A Human Resources Person

HOPE THOMPSON

Your words are full of ice;  
your gaze oppresses me in my soul.  
I do my best to ignore you but  
you make your presence known.

You suck the life out of my brainmeats

with your contemptuous glares and disdainful sneers  
and your hideous fake makeup and hair.  
In the interest of harmony,  
in the interest of peace,  
I pretend you do not exist, but  
still I shudder internally when you draw near.  
You remind me  
of a shit I once took.  
It was long, and painful.

# Lakeview

KATHARINE M. EMLÉN



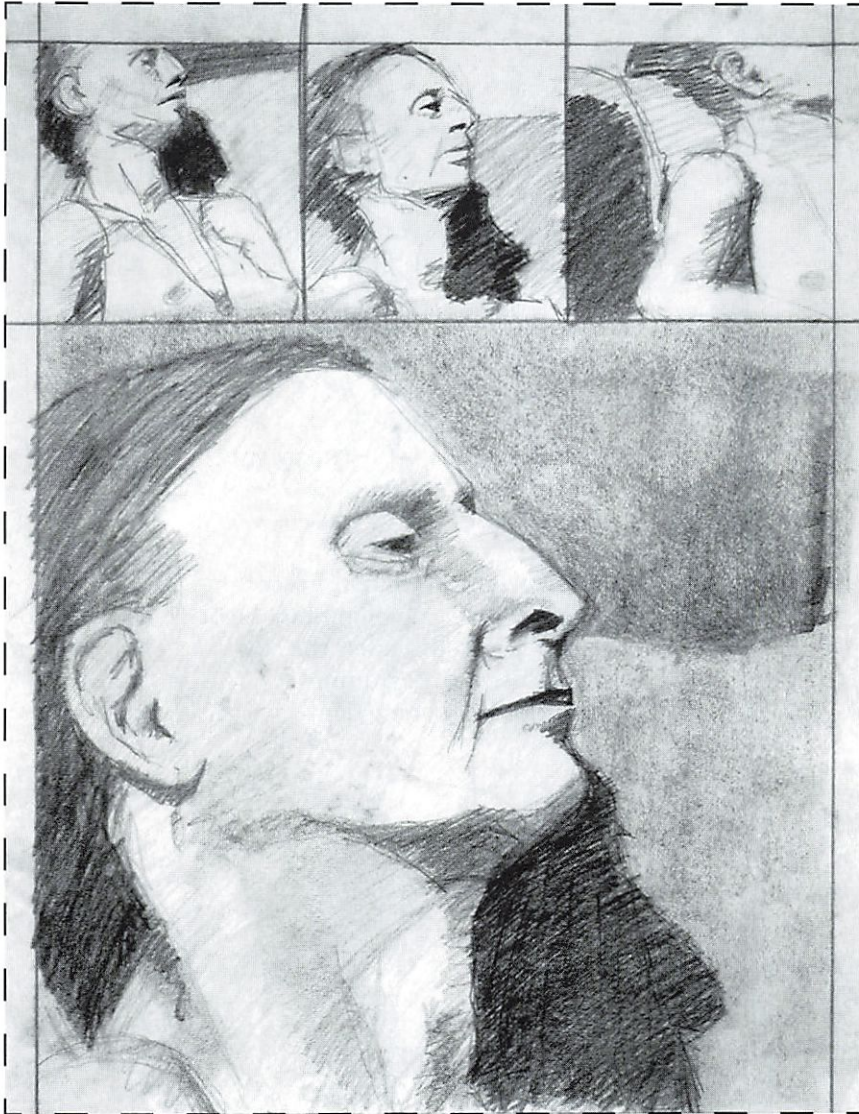


# Dream House

BARBARA COOPER



Untitled  
LUCAS SPIEGEL



# Sunrise

DIANA PALMER

I fill the kettle with water  
for coffee to begin my day.  
When I look out the window,  
I could be in wonderland,  
Alice in a rabbit hole.

Crimson ribbons sweep  
low on the horizon  
while high above,  
the vast sky is  
delicate pink and soft feathery gray,  
like doves among roses  
and roses upon roses.

Silhouettes of tall, bare trees  
stand out in black tangled branches.  
Hymns scripted against the sky  
praise the beginning  
of a brand new day.



# Young Owl

MEGAN LARSSON



# Footsteps

CAROLYN (LINA) STAUB



# Hope 2005

## ERIC BURMEISTER

Youth runs away in the mirror,  
and the dreams of a just world  
that would manifest like magic  
end up at the bottom of a bottle.  
Dreamers are fools now,  
and thieves are heroes.  
Yet I hear there are still Lakota  
who ride to remember Wounded Knee.

The struggle they knew worth fighting for  
went on too long,  
and all the warriors were slowly lost.  
But the resolve those left  
grew even stronger.  
Their spirits knew to honor sacrifice,  
so they starved and froze.  
The few children that were left  
were thrown into the wind like ashes.  
Yet I hear there are still Lakota  
who ride to remember Wounded Knee.





# A Night on the Town

BRANDI ALEXANDER



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Spring 2005

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### WAR

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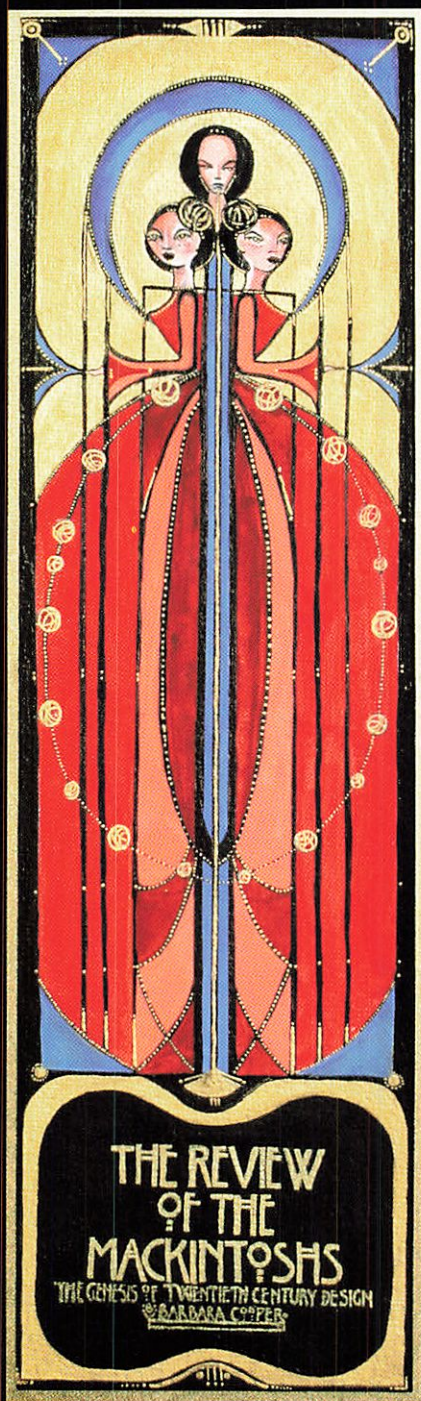
*ERIC BURMEISTER*

### THE REVIEW OF THE MACKINTOSHES:

THE GENESIS OF TWENTIETH CENTURY DESIGN

PAINTING BY

*BARBARA COOPER*



# War

The eyes of all orphans look the same.

The sobs of mourning—  
of mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters—  
is in no language.

The blood that soaks the earth  
always runs red  
while big little kings  
forever speak with God.

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