



Barnard Literary Magazine
1974

The Barnard Literary Magazine

1974

"... this is the beginning
Of music afterwards and refreshments."

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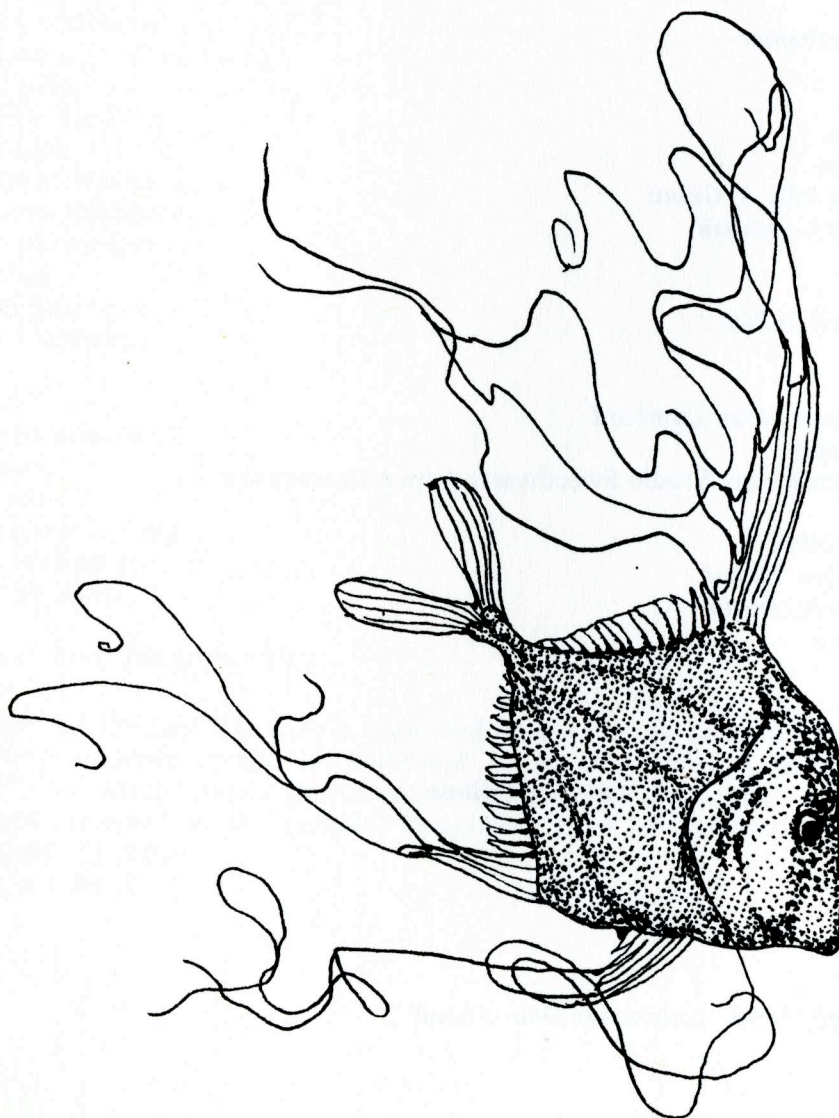
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Roshanna Rothberg

¿A donde vas?
—Santiago he said
biting softly on the edge of a conch.
The ground is dry
The wheat is dry too
When I said the dust rises,
He said this is Spain in my lungs.
The conches are as fine as bone behind his eyes.
Sheep from the ground
Stars from the sky
The mountains hunger us.
Fish swim with movement
the color of their bodies.
We eat them out of the sea
They are very small
and we are as thin as paper



Lois Adams

The corn grows heavy on scrawny necks
as she stands thin
and ripe with grief.
Tall mother
sifting the coves of darkness
for a glint
of her young son.
He's the air's boy now
running always
through lots grown ragged with flowers.

The restless coaxing of his feet
on such a drowsy night.
They pause in the shadows
an inch beyond touch.

She stands thin in the doorway,
with her skin stretched tight,
weatherproof as the coats of white paint
thin and routine on houses
set flat in the palm of Ohio.
The house is strongly anchored;
it will not be swept away.
At the center of her neck,
travelling like grounded lightning
she feels
a current of trusting weight
from the upstairs rooms.
Two more dream there.
Two curled pink shrimp
caught in night's fine mesh.

Two blond sons
with tears putting spin on the baseball.
They carry their brother's looks
between them bright as a mirror,
and it destroys the skill
of the other neighborhood team.
And their mother's eyes at breakfast,
it destroys them, too.

With their young knowledge
of seasons
the two boys watch the sky
for purple martins,
knowing their dark, returning flight
knowing their brother's care for these birds.

But even these
clumsy touches of comfort
burn their mother's skin
when she compares
their coolness
to a brush of wind.

It is a weightless caress
she is in need of
as she stands a nightly ritual
at the door.

Quick firefly,
lick of spark;
his glimmer eludes her.

Larry Weiser

Below Wounded Reeds

Water-logged, the ten fingers,
Dare aerially to touch

The underground pink, sleek
Petals, a pink

So delicate (white) so cool—
Icebergs melt at the thought of it.

A salted peeper / swirls
And lightening, unbends to pound

Out in echoes
Immediate like a tree ignored: O

Sandstoned hands a-sighing
“vapor.”

Carole Post

the waitress from Park Avenue

in the beginning, I termed her my booty,
spoke with locker room swagger of the supple rape.

then she usurping time, events
unnerving all my proffered gifts;
yet still I cringed at a confession of passion,
stuttering on the locus of love. . .

and like Hamlet with his pants down,
I blankly shuffle through Sheep Meadow,
a wilted rose in hand.

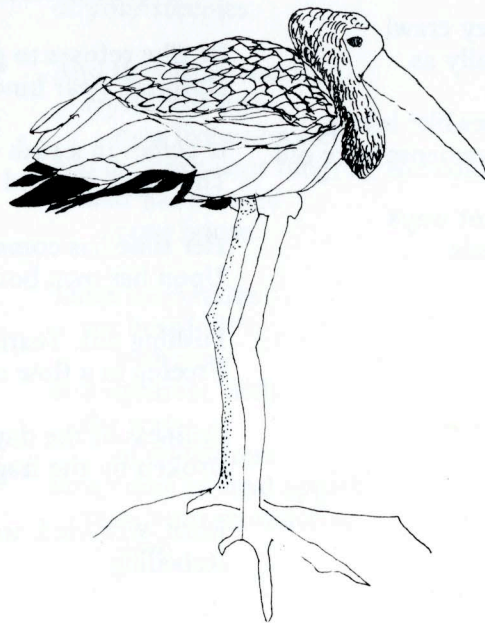
Lisa Shea

Myth

We inherit the unknown dabblings of an intimate music hall.
We carry its song around with us under the pretense of being
informed. We call it a success. We don't know what else
to call it.

A bird walks right into our fortune and announces that it has
a tuning-fork for a head.

We include it in our report thinking, Here is the explanation
on page four.



Jeannie McManus

1

It was the faint pastel colors of those
One-room shacks which make ya kinda wonder

What it looked like inside. The cold sun cast
No shadows, just cruel jagged pieces of

Albino whiteness cutting those haunted
Red eyes deep into my skin. It was the

Scream hanging about the tar-paper roof
That finally drew me closer. No mist

Swirls here absolute stillness cracks the air.
A strange dryness breaks the earth into fine

Powder. No smell of life caught behind closed
Doors.

2

Black bodies crawl among the indistinct
Houses, elongated bodies, their bones

Piercing distended skin: like ants they crawl
Around pastel mounds placed carefully as

Gravestones. Their voices made noises like leaves,
Like whispers, like leaves. Their movements were old

Like broken sticks arranged in ancient ways
On familiar ground. Communal urinals

Jolt you.

3

Breath comes quickly, sticking in her dry throat
Ripping its way out of her dark guts. Faces

Start, at the screams of a woman struggling
To give life. Sweat, streaking arms, strong arms

Unable to touch the pain they all have
Felt. She screams again; an attempt at

Silence. Her door closed, a plywood barrier
Shutting out nothing. A thin flowered house-

Dress pushed up revealing unceremoniously
The mystery of dark thighs. Tight sleeves wet

With effort hold back strength which has no place
In this room. Pain holds her face roughly as

She seeks the eyes of her mother. Their white-
Ness plead an escape. Denied they grow proud

And her body abandons its consciousness
To the dance of childbearing.

4

Her eyes query from an unlit corner;
Surrounded by upright slats pieced together

From discarded wooden boxes; a fence
Torn from different puzzles. She is lying

In. She refuses to go to the Man's
Hospital. Fear binds her to her corner.

It comes in a rush of sticky darkness.
The smell is blood and the taste is salt.

Her time has come. No breath as she bears down
Upon her own body. The tenseness is

Pushing out. Tearing unused muscles.
Freeing in a flow of blood. The absolute

Stillness of the day is momentarily
Broken by the fragile cry of a new-

Born. Wrinkled, wet, a tiny black miracle
Rebelling.

Elizabeth Saenger

We are the whispers of an Echo-maker,
the second-hand shadows of our own
substance at twilight,
the wisps of smoke that linger around a
dead candle,
the hope before the final
letting go. . .
Vainly trying and dying to fill a void,
Masking muttered curses with joyful noises,
We fade with our own dreams.
Wavering and waning and waiting for
Nothing.

Roshanna Rothberg

Ivy has crept out
unzipping its clothes on
the skeletal remains
of your steeples.

And the lattice work
crystals of light
now live unbroken
For they are kept long; by the cold
that has entered
your house.

These mountains
are bearded
with pine
and squirrels, with
the way
of all winters
now come to steal apples
from your mouldering
sleep

Amy Friedman

But I Don't Know What

Grandmother, Tom, David, Becca and I sat on Aunt Joan's bed and reminisced; not too much about Grandfather; but I told the story about Tom and David. When the three of us were young and shared a bedroom, they told me that when they counted to three, they would turn on the lights. I was to lift my nightgown, and they would pull down their pajama bottoms; One, Two, Three. The light went on, I lifted my nightgown, and looked in horror at the two of them, still fully clad and looking at me. They laughed and I ran out of the room.

The day is gray and every time I turn my head it throbs. Stephen stands in the kitchen cooking eggs and thinking about everything but me; and I am thinking about nothing but, but I don't know what. I want to do nothing because I feel sick and tired. And tomorrow or tonight I will feel worse for having done nothing. He sits then at his desk typing. His jeans are as faded as his feelings for me. A bare light bulb lights the room that is littered with cigarette butts and glasses with tea leaves on the bottom. I watch his flannel-shirted back and turn pages of *Moby Dick*. He sniffs and I blow my nose; we have shared a bed and now we share a cold which we fight with tea and honey and feed with cigarettes.

On the stereo: "Don't Interfere with My Mind." I look at his flannel-shirted back and pretend he will hear me. Don't, please don't interfere with my mind. He had said to me at breakfast, "You never make decisions." I gulped. Yes, it was true, when the decision was as unimportant as how many pancakes to eat, I truly did not care; none would be fine; I could lose some weight. A dozen would be fine too; they taste good. It all depends. But I had thought it was important to him; so he should make the decision. I want to scream at him: Trust me, even though I'm as confused as spaghetti. He continues to type.

I had decided not to go to class. I wanted to be warm and my professor was coldness with his glasses tipped down on his nose and his frozen glances. Now, I sit and listen to you type and watch your back ignore me. At least I am only warm, not hot like I felt in the library, in my bulky sweater, sweat clinging to my armpits and dripping between my breasts. I couldn't take off the bulkiness because I would be sweaty and improperly dressed for the library; my leotard would bare my braless breasts. I had thought there was a reason to be modest.

I like the song now playing on the stereo but he tells me that his roommate thinks it sounds like a Broadway play. His roommate says that Broadway



musicals are bad, bad, bad. But they always remind me of my panelled den at home and my green couch and the fireplace and my father with his pipe, smiling and teaching me all the ridiculous lyrics; we have memorized them all. But I am in his room now. I play my role; I am a woman, pretending I don't need your company, and that it is only a convenience. I smoke cigarettes and have bags under my eyes from not sleeping enough. I am afraid. I'm afraid of all the nothingness in the room. I've always been afraid of feeling nothing. I feel, sometimes, I am wrapped in an enormous past, but then, I feel nothing. It's funny; he knows I've never been afraid of monsters, or the dark, or thunder, or lightning. Strong woman. But I'm always afraid of having none of that, of having nothing tangible to fear. I escape to my own room to shower, to wash away something. I want to be enveloped by something, and he is enveloped in his typing.

While I take a shower, I try to find the lump in my throat that was there when Mother called yesterday to tell me Grandfather had died. I can't find it anymore. The shower is warm, I start to feel less tense, and suddenly a spurt of boiling water spits at me and I burst into convulsions of tears. I cry for myself; and I cry because that man who taught me to love the ocean, who taught me never to be afraid of anything has now left me all alone. I cry because he was so warm and passionate and he always caressed me. I would climb on his thick, sinewy knee and kiss his cheek and make him laugh and smile and look at me. I cry because if I feel so alone, so deserted, how is Grandmother to feel?

Last night, my flannel-shirted lover wanted to talk to me, last night after Mother called. He had noticed; we hadn't talked for days. Now, when I ought to think about my grandfather's death and on the funeral, he became so compassionate. His blue eyes became so blue. I couldn't look away from those blue eyes because they were looking straight into mine. I was intent on the blueness, like the surface of the ocean, and I tried to focus my attention on it, and on his interest. I wanted to reach that blue surface, but I kept struggling and could not. He asked me, "Why do we concentrate on our differences?" Somehow though, it wasn't concentration; they kept slapping me in the face, like pounding ocean waves. But then, his blue eyes penetrating me made me feel warm, like the sun penetrating through the surface of the water; they made me feel warmer than his penis penetrating me, though sometimes I tried to settle our differences by making love.

I wonder if he knew I felt guilty sleeping with him the night before I went to visit my grandfather's grave. I woke early and felt the warmth of his body beside me; I thought of Grandfather's cold one. He touched me and I turned; it was easy to leave the bed because I felt so guilty.

It was sunny and bright and piercing cold, and I thought of Grandfather, unable to feel the sun. It was useless to dwell on death and exhaustion and fear; Grandfather never had. He was the only one who had never been too tired to race with me on the dunes and plunge himself into the cresting waves. He never sat still and sipped lemonade, and he never tasted like lemon; always like salt and sand. But the sun outside then only made me feel sad.

On the subway people crushed me, but I only remembered one face. A girl with painted white skin pursed her lips and cooed into her boyfriend's (husband's?) ear. I followed her off the subway, her companion stayed behind. She had kissed him goodbye and now was strutting, maybe to work, then later she would go back to him and cook his dinner and sleep with him. At the bus station she left me, and the sliding silver staircase slipped me, all alone, along its long ramp, slowly, up to a cold blast of wind and an unsmiling bus driver. I never looked up from my lap the whole way to New Jersey. I watched the folds of my skirt and wondered whose faces I would see when I got there. My family was there. My mother and I cried, and it struck me that her father had died. So, I clung to my father; I kissed him and I held his arm like I hadn't done for so many years. He joked with me; he said I probably just wanted money from him; I thought perhaps he shouldn't joke, but I stayed by his side. I tried to remember my mother and my grandfather, I tried to remember the way she had yelled at him to keep him from throwing me in the ocean; he had laughed then too, like my father laughed now. And I loved him for laughing, I loved them both for laughing.

The night before I had told Stephen of memories of ocean spray and grandfather; I had tried to bring the distant past to the present; I had felt the nearness of salt on my skin and sweetness on my lips, and strong arms tossing me, then small, into all that cold strength. Stephen and I had shared memories and come to no conclusions. We both felt sad, and we clung to each other. I had no answers. But then I pushed my feelings of warmth in being with Stephen away to recapture the idea of my grandfather's cold. That left me feeling nothing.

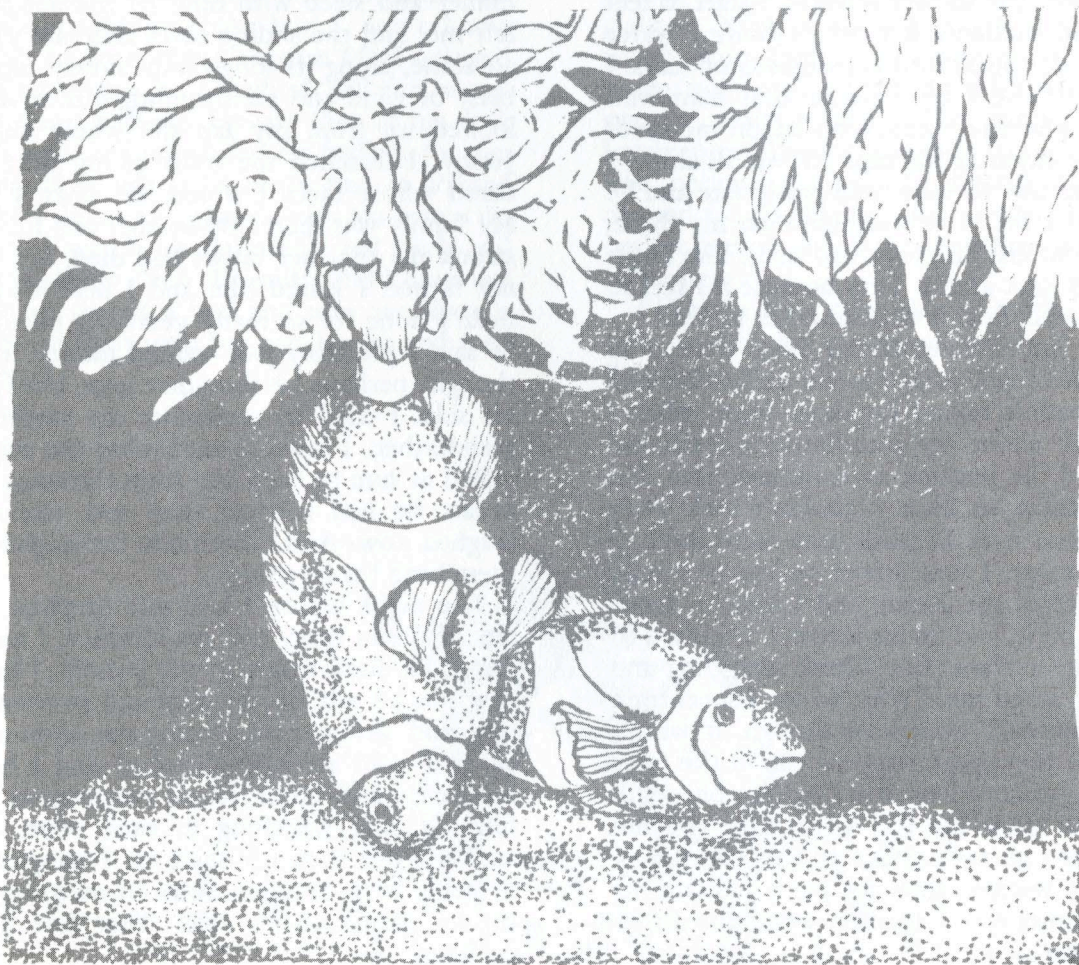
I didn't know what to say to Grandmother, so I carefully avoided being alone with her. I helped Aunt Joan serve coffee. I was jealous of Becca's ease; she and Grandmother laughed together in a corner of Aunt Joan's living room. But Grandmother caught me alone, finally. She was just my Grandmother; we talked and laughed, but I don't remember (really) anything we said.

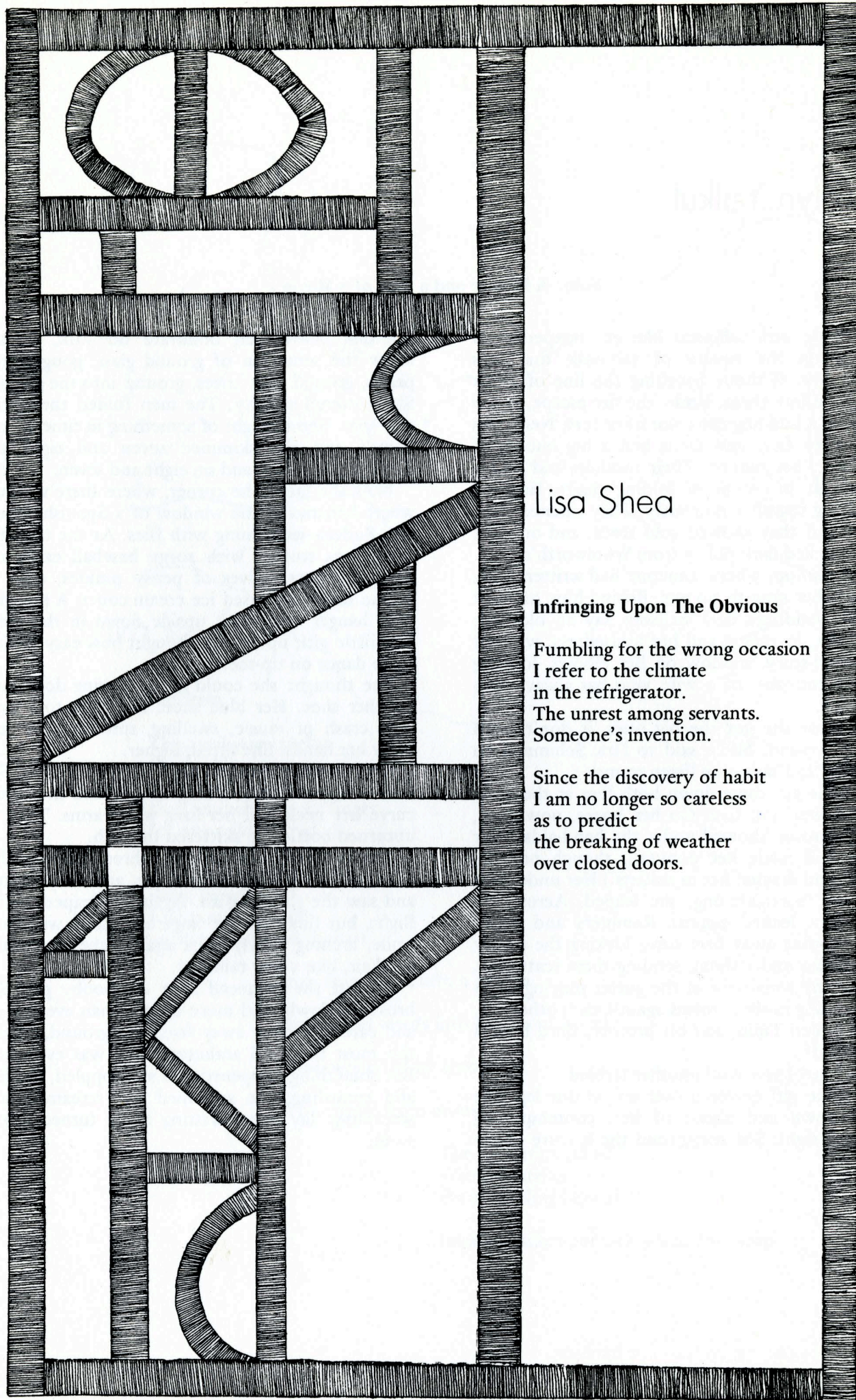
Ridiculous memories seemed appropriate. I told my father, when he and I sat alone, I still holding his arm, about my taxi driver that morning, from the bus station to the funeral home. The driver had smiled; and then he had tried to sell me toys. (Miss, I sell toys on the side, he held up a box, here's a doll in a box, only \$4.50. No, I'm sorry, not today sir. Oh, that's okay, have a good day.) I couldn't believe he thought I was apologizing. I wanted to laugh but was afraid of being sacrilegious. My father laughed. And later everyone laughed when I told the story about Tom and David and how they had tricked me. Tom and David blushed, but I

smiled because Grandmother laughed. Sometimes though, in between reminiscences, she would start to cry, her very controlled tears. Mother hugged her and Grandmother said, "It all seems so anticlimactic." It was so anticlimactic.

Mother and Father drove me back to school, to my apartment. I made my parents tea there, and I cried again. I didn't want them to leave me; my apartment was cold and it was empty. I loved my parents; I did. I admitted that for the first time in too many years. I hoped they would believe me. And then they left, to go back to Grandmother, and I stayed behind.

I went back to Stephen, to his room to watch him type. I wrote on a pad "You so preoccupied with time and existence, I set up barriers with silence and distance." I crumpled the paper. I walked to him and wrapped my arms around him. I told him I needed him and was afraid. Strong woman? He turned to me and smiled. I was happy that I told him that. He stopped typing.





Lisa Shea

Infringing Upon The Obvious

Fumbling for the wrong occasion
I refer to the climate
in the refrigerator.
The unrest among servants.
Someone's invention.

Since the discovery of habit
I am no longer so careless
as to predict
the breaking of weather
over closed doors.

Carolyn Yalkut

Solo: A Minute and a Half of a Movie

The little girl balanced like an inexperienced flamingo on the square of sidewalk that was marked two. Without touching the line of chalk she hopped into three. Under the fire escape, in the shadow of a building the color of ordure, Nelly was talking very fast, and Delia had a big bubble of Bazooka in her mouth. Their mothers and grandmothers sat in groups of folding chairs, laughing and talking together raucously. They opened their mouths and they showed gold teeth, and on their hands, cracked dark polish from Woolworth's.

On the stoop, where someone had written fuck, a grandfather sang to no one. Behind him, halfway into the building's dark hallway, lay an old dog. Mrs. Edith, in rollers and her housedress, was out the second-story window on her elbows, looking with the curiosity of a wife who has always seen everything.

Just cause she got the big ones, it don't mean she's no woman, Millie said to Mrs. Schimmel on the street. So I says, you lissen to me—

The little girl came down both feet at the same time on four and five. On her knees, now bent, mercurochrome showed under the band-aids. (Her mother still made her ponytail, though not the cowlick, and dressed her in anklets.) Her undershirt stuck out. Straightening, she leaped. Across the street, men leaned against Ramblers and sooty Fords, flipping away beer cans, kicking the empty Coke bottles under them, sending them scattering. Their skinny sons were in the gutter playing stick-ball, shouting in shrill voices against each other.

Out! yelled Tulio, and his brother, third base! I got to third!

I saw you! I saw you! another trebled.

The little girl quivered over six on one leg. She looked down and ahead of her, contemplating seven and eight. She recognized the texture of the

sidewalk below her, obdurate sidewalk, for she knew the sensation of ground glass, gouged into palms, ground into knees, ground into the ground. She tottered slightly. The men folded their arms and spat. She thought of something in time to save herself and she skimmed seven and eight and jumped around to land on eight and seven.

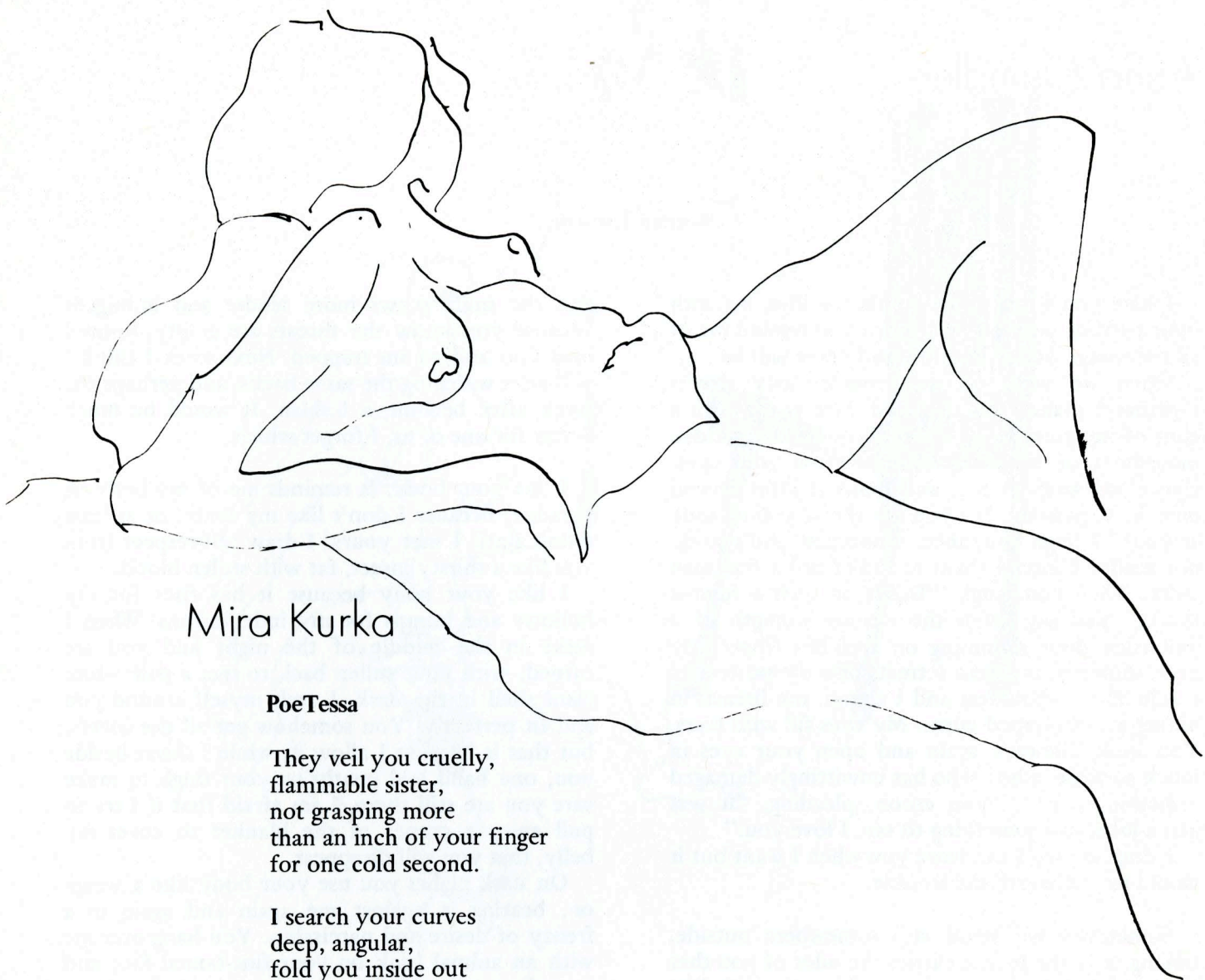
Now she faced the corner, where there was sun, where bananas in the window of a Spanish-American Bodega were hung with flies. At the curb the sewer was stuffed with soggy baseball cards and gum wrappers, halves of pensy pinkies, ends of Italian bread and used ice cream cones. A mangled wire hanger was stuck upside down in the mess. The little girl, up on six, thought how easy it must be to dance on tip-toe.

She thought she could do it. Staring down, she saw her shoe. Her blue shoe. She grew to a great long crash of music, swelling, spreading out and away her hands. She lifted, higher.

She pitched forward into five and four. She knew everyone was looking at her—and she would curve her neck and her long white arms. Then an upturned bottle cap skittered through.

The little girl made it onto three. She took her time and thought of her costume, and her perfume, and saw the glittering air. Again she leaped, taking flight, but this time she lingered, with a wondrous smile, arching slowly back against the stage-darkened air, like a new rainbow.

At last she balanced over the bobby pin. She breathed slowly and more deeply than ever before and carefully came away from the ground, tracing the most beautiful arabesque that was ever seen. But something happened and she toppled, she fell, and sprawling, she screamed and screamed, and screaming, lay there waiting to be turned into a swan.



Mira Kurka

PoeTessa

They veil you cruelly,
flammable sister,
not grasping more
than an inch of your finger
for one cold second.

I search your curves
deep, angular,
fold you inside out
until every thread flickers. .

you draw a line into a garden.

you knead words into lungs and muscles.

You, wounded by ignorance,

You curdle from misuse.

The sardonic trail of
your eye stalks
the crumbling labyrinth.

I crawl inside your web when you sleep.

Anna Quindlen

Woman Lament

I hate you when you trample my illusions with your narrow, pointed feet, when you remind me of all the things we are not now and never will be.

When we walk on the crowded city streets together I make men turn and stare at me with a glint of my green eyes, a toss of my head, a sudden movement of my body. You narrow your eyes, glance sideways at me, and demand after several men have passed, "Do you see the way they look at you?" I feign ignorance, innocence, and you do not realize I intend them to look until a few men more. Then you laugh. "Don't be such a femme fatale," you say, with the vicious strength of a limousine door slamming on a child's finger. My neck shortens, my head retreats into the protective cradle of my shoulders and I slump, my breasts in hiding in a C-shaped curve. My eyes fill with tears. You look sideways again and open your eyes in mock surprise, a boy who has unwittingly damaged something. "But," you croon, pleading, "it was just a joke, just something to say. I love you."

I despise you. I can leave you when I want but it would not be worth the trouble.

Sometimes we stand still somewhere outside, talking, and the breeze carries the odor of you that I know from closer contacts and I can see little bits of diamond at the back of your eyes. We do not touch, but both of us are thinking of last night, and the breeze dries the residue of last night's sweat that is never quite dry.

Sometimes when we are standing girls walk by in tight pants or short skirts; you follow them down the street with your eyes and give their backs invitations that they never see. For a long time I used to ignore that, looking away and humming, or staring up and then down to compare the blue of the sky with the thin blue veins intersecting on my wrists. But I decided last week that it would be better for one of us, I forget which one, if I spoke of it. So now I make feeble witticisms about castration, and you smile at me tenderly, indulgently. I threaten to leave you and go back inside

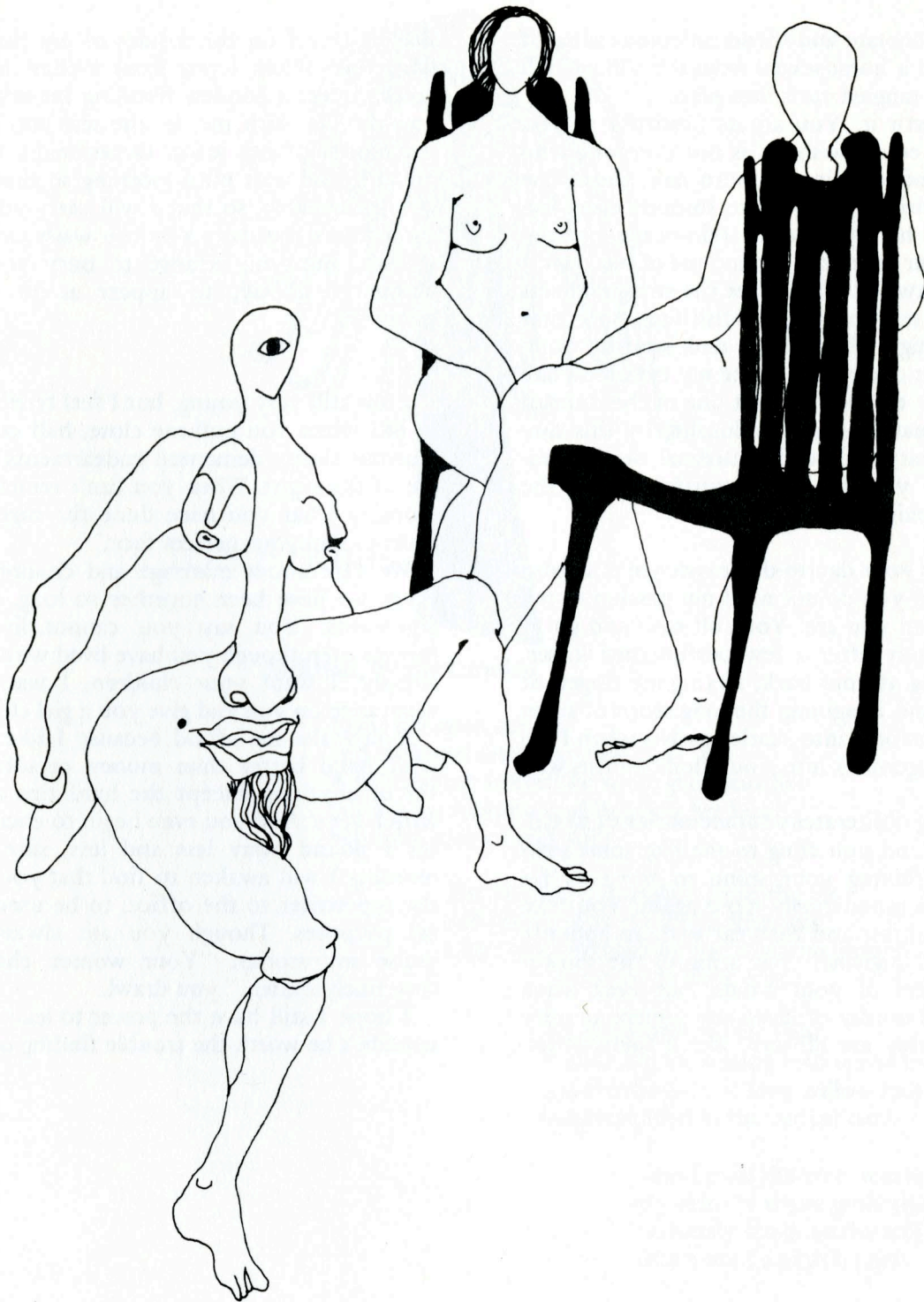
and the smile grows more tender and indulgent because you know the threats are empty, know I love you and so am trapped. Next week I think I will start watching the same backs, and perhaps the week after become a lesbian. It would be much better for one of us, I forget which.

I like your body. It reminds me of my body. A paradox, because I don't like my body, or at least didn't until I met yours. I draw self-respect from you like a thirsty insect, fat with stolen blood.

I like your body because it has rises for my hollows and bumps for my indentations. When I wake in the middle of the night and you are turned, with your sullen back to me, a pale white clam shell in the dark, I arch myself around you and fit perfectly. You somehow get all the covers, but that is because I allow it, while I shiver beside you, one hand laid gently on your thigh to make sure you are still there. I am afraid that if I try to pull away a corner of the blanket to cover my belly, that you will disappear.

On dark nights you use your body like a weapon, beating it against me again and again in a frenzy of desire and narcissism. You hang over me with an animal look on your fine-boned face and pound at my childlike frame unceasingly. Your breath begs for release and your hollowed groin pulses, waiting for a sign of reassurance from my body, the affirmation of your skill and masculinity. I fashionably refuse to let you open doors, and I make you fry your own bacon, but I will willingly abdicate my independence here and make the muscular reaction, real or shammed, that you desire. My breath quickens, I groan and shudder, I shine in a shower of after glow. But after you roll off into sleep, I sometimes have a fleeting feeling of suffocation. I have been swallowed whole into the belly of a great white whale.

Don't you think that I know that, despite my constant presence, your most precious possession is still your face?



Ah, but I do know. When we walk down the city streets with bouncing steps, intent on impressing the older men and women around us with our vitality and youth, I tactfully pretend not to notice the glances you surreptitiously steal at your reflection in store windows. Not as colorful nor as

satisfying as a mirror, or my eyes, but those reflections will do as an everpresent reminder of your own appeal. When you pull and prod your pimples in the half dark of subway cars, I always know that you are thinking of those reflections, and of your changeable beauty. Your face makes

you give up chocolate and spend ridiculous sums of money to have a homosexual from the Village pull and prod your tangled curls into place.

It is all worth it. You are as beautiful as you think, as you could wish. It is not everyone who has that halo of sunshined auburn hair, those fine bones, those bright eyes, those smooth even features. It is not hardly anyone, and not me, certainly. Though your face does remind me of my own. I look at those awry curls and see the straight sheets of hair edging my doughy, childish face, so coarse beside your high cheekbones and straight nose. Mascara cannot contrive to make my eyes look like yours. We have escaped at least one of the traps of a traditional man-woman relationship by this simple quirk of nature; like the cardinal or the peacock families, you are the beautiful one, I the plainer of the pair.

Some nights your day-to-day existence is satisfying enough and you do not need my passion to tell you what a man you are. You roll over and go to sleep immediately after a few perfunctory kisses, and I lie staring at your back, flexing my fingers at the knuckles and imagining the long strips of silver skin I will transform into scarlet gashes when I dig my painted fingernails into your flesh. In this way I fall asleep.

The morning obliterates your memories of worldly fulfillment, and you cling to me like some soft, slow animal, flexing your spine to bring us far away and then tantalizingly close again. You take me before breakfast and then eat with an appetite and leave until nightfall. The sting of the shower replaces the feel of your hands, but even when dressed I smell musky of sleep and semen, an odor which stays with me all day, like a faint, heart-

shaped brand on the insides of my thighs, on my fingertips. When I rise from a chair in the afternoon, I feel a sudden flooding between my legs; you are yet with me, in the seal you have set on the crotch of my jeans. Occasionally I have wondered if you wait until morning so that I will find you inescapable, so that I will carry you inside me throughout the day. You can wash me off with a shower, but you arrange to bury yourself deep within my body, to appear at an unexpected moment.

I am still very young, but I feel terribly, strangely old when you pull me close, half conscious, to murmur sleepy demented endearments in the middle of the night. When you can't remember in the morning what you have done the night before, I want to slap your perfect face.

We talk about marriage and children now, because we have been together so long, but only in arguments. You say you cannot live with me forever even though you have lived with me forever already. I want your children; I want to wreak vengeance on you and give you a girl child.

You make me afraid because I like the feel of your hand better than money or soft fabrics or fur or anything except the hard tips of my typewriter keys. And you even begin to encroach there, for I pound away less and less, sure that some morning I will awaken to find that you have taken the typewriter to the office, to be used for practical purposes. Though you are always quick to praise my stories. "Your women characters are very finely drawn," you drawl.

I hope I still have the power to leave you, but it wouldn't be worth the trouble finding out.



Lois Adams

Nightfall, North Carolina

Light between sunset
and darkness settles as grey dew.
A willow tree seems like some grandmother
pulling the hairpins and bending her head
behind a mist of grey hair

The thin light is soaked from the air
and the air is as empty as churches.
Light being soaked by the tree, the ground,
is drawn to their core.

All things follow the light.
Insects are burrowing into wood marrow
and the threads of long willow hair
hang stranded in the vacant dark

I am inside the tree, where the light hides.
My skin: a white grub abandoned,
carelessly stuck to the willow bark.
Don't send a search party tonight.

R.S. Levine

On The Road

Power brakes lack power.
Dog
guts
stain the tires of my new Ford wagon.
Laughter runs through Markie's teeth.
Wifie screams, smacks my belly, says, "Really!
Stop the car. Carve the guts off
the tires of our new Ford wagon."
I need a sharp edge,
a razor blade: Gillette.
And soap water.

First I extract the lungs
delicately.
A balloon to be filled with Helium.
I give it to Markie and he plays
"Balloon Game".

Wifie wants the toe nails
because they're "cute".
Here Wifie, here are
dog nails.
Gleefully she weaves a Persian necklace.

Squished between seamless steel radials,
the heart,
a red ribbon.
This I extract carelessly for
what good is crushed heart of dog?
"Licorith?" says Markie.

Daphne Merkin

Ripe & Ready

You make a tasty dish,
my love.
Picked out from the bunch,
clumped together as you were.
Perhaps it was
your sallow skin
bruised darkly from mis-
handling that whet
my sympathy.
Now, curved in one hand,
I begin to undress you.
Green yellow brown
slips away so easily
to disclose that
tender cream flesh.
I bite into you
deeply: desire so sweet.
You will not suffer
much again,
I see to that.
You diminish in
my grip as I
bite deeper.
Part of you clings
to the skin
you are leaving,
but the best of you
has gone to me:
Soon all that remains
is your hide
severed and dangling.--
Ah, resilient one.
But I am not full.
I go to find more
where you came from.
Or did you think
your brand was
one of a kind?

Barbara Thomsen

Visitor

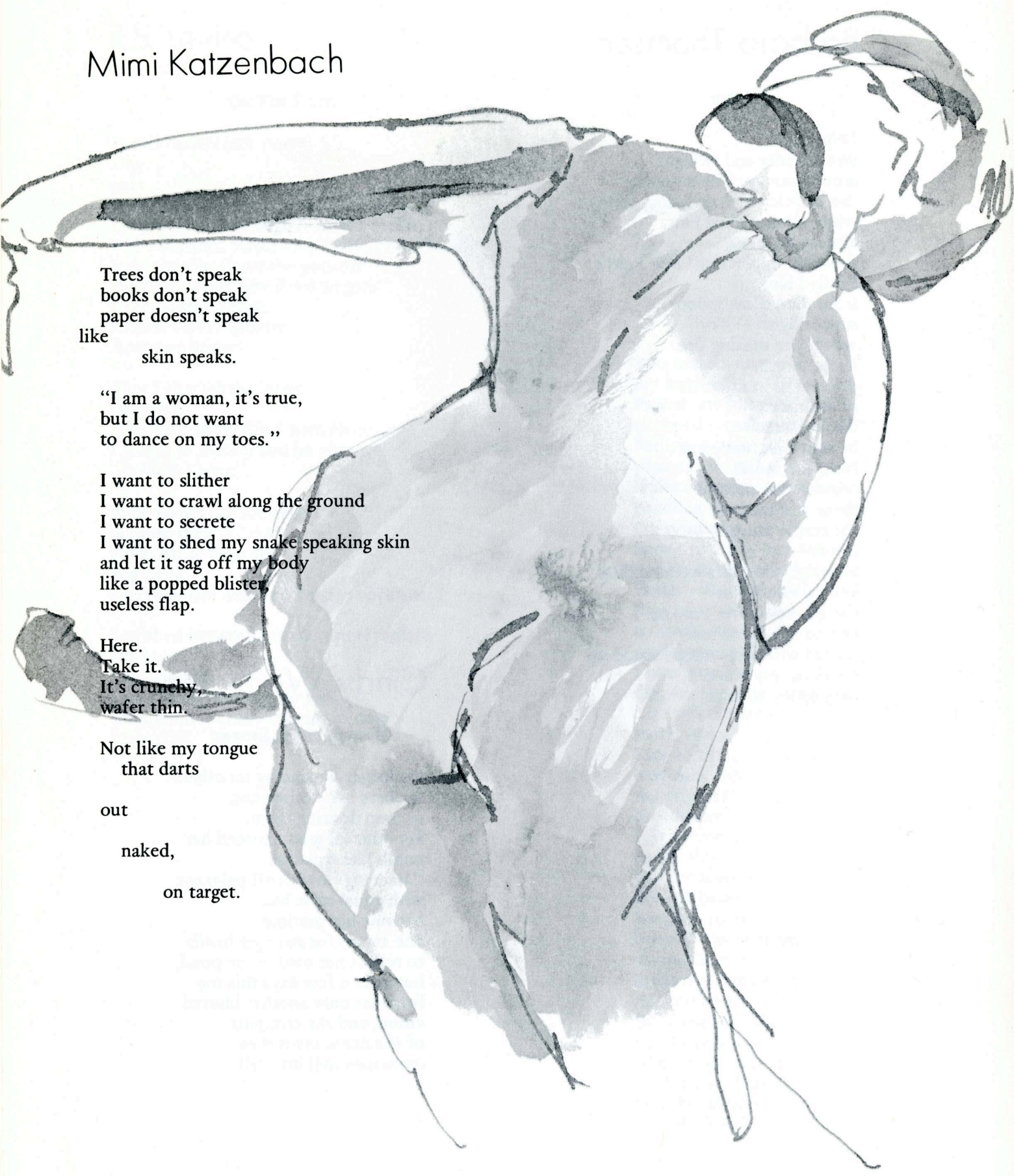
Dripping
wet thunder and twilight
around our back door tools,
the bicycles, and the ailing plants
white cloth soaked tan
against his chest
showing nipples tight like a girl's
I called him,
from the yellow indoor
supper light
which was missing fire
in the storm,
dousing us in intervals
of darkness.
We had already
brought the fuel lamp
from the cellar,
heavy, urine-colored
globe and wick
the rescue lamp,
I lit it
although the lights were holding
and called to him
though he couldn't see me
behind the drenched
misted windows where I stood up
speaking, my voice
naming me to him.

Cindy Werthamer

Woman of the Stones

No longer depending on others
to share her excitement,
or even desiring them,
her ethereal graces turned her
numb like frostbite.
Careening flowers off palazzos
with equal style has
become her pastime.
She awaits for stronger hands
to reflect her own in the pond,
but after a few days this too
becomes only another blurred
vision, and the cropping
of the dense sea-rushes
continues well into fall.

Mimi Katzenbach



Trees don't speak
books don't speak
paper doesn't speak
like
skin speaks.

"I am a woman, it's true,
but I do not want
to dance on my toes."

I want to slither
I want to crawl along the ground
I want to secrete
I want to shed my snake speaking skin
and let it sag off my body
like a popped blister
useless flap.

Here.
Take it.
It's crunchy,
wafer thin.

Not like my tongue
that darts

out

naked,

on target.

Norma Klein

The Loan

"Do you think you could possibly lend me some money?" she said, leaning forward and lowering her voice. "It's just I think I might be—"

"How much do you need?" he said quickly.

"Two hundred? Is that too much?" Her eyes, fixed on him, reflected a momentary trace of anxiety.

"No, not at all." He lit another cigarette and stared out beyond her for several moments. They were in a Chinese restaurant and had finished eating. The waiter having cleared the plates, the table was now empty except for two round tea cups, half filled with tea. Deliberately, to distract himself, he watched a stout woman in black reach for a coat hanging on a rack and struggle into it.

When he turned back to her, he found her watching him, frowning slightly. "What are you thinking?" she said.

That directness had appealed to him originally. He tried to meet it, coolly, feeling at the same time as though his face were sunburned; it was so difficult to stretch the sides of his mouth. "Who is it?"

She was silent. Examining her face, he thought: she looks ugly. No one would guess she was an attractive woman, even a beautiful one at times. He derived a perverse satisfaction from this. Yet, it was true, not just his own imagination and he studied her more closely to feed this feeling. Yes, there were dark rings under her eyes. Her face, normally thin, was downright haggard, the skin drawn tight in a way which made her look older. Her hair, usually rolled into some kind of a twist, was loose down her back, drooping carelessly forward, as though it had been neither washed or combed for weeks.

"I'm in love with someone," she said slowly, touching the tips of her fingers together.

"Yes, so I gathered," he said dryly. "With which someone?"

Without warning she looked up at him and met his gaze. Her large grey eyes seemed to widen and become momentarily luminous. "Greta Szabo," she said.

He leaned back in his chair. "I knew it was that," he said, almost to himself.

"Did you? How did you know?" She sounded genuinely curious.

"Various remarks you've made about her . . . I suppose I'm not completely insensitive, you know."

"Are you shocked?" she said, half humorously, half as a challenge.

"No." He would not give her that satisfaction. He took a sip of the tea which, cold, was curiously bitter. "You'll be hurt," he said.

"How do you know?"

"I have that feeling."

"You've never met her."

"True . . . Well, perhaps I'm wrong. Am I?"

He had only seen Greta Szabo once in a photograph. It was on the theatrical page of a newspaper where she was being interviewed about a play she was directing. She was a small woman with a thin, sinewy, athletic-looking body. With her pointed features and arched nose she resembled a line drawing of a Florentine prince. There was the same regal and imperious quality, accentuated by a faintly sardonic smile. But what had caught his attention especially were her eyes. A hard, bright, intense blue, they had stared out of the photo with an expression which could not be dismissed as merely cold because of its intelligence nor as merely arrogant because of its strength.

"It's different from what you think," she said. "I lied to you about how I met her. It wasn't at a party."

"Where was it, then?"

"Nowhere. I just called her."

"Without knowing her?"

"Yes. I looked up her name in the phone book. I said, 'Look, you don't know me, but I wanted to talk to you.'"

"So, you really wanted it," he said, unable to keep the bitterness from his voice.

"It wasn't that specific," she said hastily, her eyes fixed on him intently, as though pleading with him to understand, "at least consciously. I just wanted to meet her. I'd admired her for so long. She was everything I've always thought a woman should be. I'd seen her picture in the paper and on t.v. I liked her looks. . ." Her voice trailed off.

He put his fingers around the edge of the teacup and revolved it slowly in his hand. "And are you happy with her?" he said. He tried to make his voice sound as detached as he could, although a cold feeling seemed to be seeping into him; his fingers actually felt numb.

She smiled slowly, painfully. "Not really. For some reason, since I met her, I haven't been able to act at all. I was just terrible in the Chekhov. Just as I had the feeling I was getting the part, understand-

ing it, suddenly it all went away. I just mouthed the lines. It was the most frightening feeling I've ever had. I couldn't even understand what I was saying—it could have been a cornflakes commercial." Touching her hand to her forehead, she brushed back a lock of hair. "I'm sure they would have fired me if I didn't have the Equity thing . . . Now I feel I can't do anything at all. It's as though I was paralyzed."

"Why should that be, though?" Without thinking, impulsively, he put out his hand to touch hers. Then, remembering, he drew it back.

She sighed and lightly traced a design with the tea on the scarred table. "I guess it's that Greta seems so much better than me in everything. Next to her I feel like nothing, like a worm." She looked meditative. "And then, somehow, I don't really fit into her world. I don't know what world I *do* fit into, but there's something alien in it to me—"

"What do you mean?" He lit another cigarette, partly to keep his hands occupied and prevent another gesture.

"Well, for instance—the other day. We were together in her hotel room, smoking pot. She'd gotten it from some friend. We each had a little. Actually, I was feeling lousy. I didn't even feel like taking it at all. I was tired and well—I wasn't in the mood, I guess. But she suddenly decided to have some more. She kept saying, 'I've never really gotten high before. I've never let loose. Let me do it.' As though *she* had to ask *me* for permission!" She laughed but, seeing his expression, stopped short. "So she smoked another one."

"Two isn't that much." He was trying to concentrate, although it was difficult.

"Maybe in a general sense. I guess it depends on the strength of it. I don't know. Anyway, she just went to pieces, completely hysterical, laughing in this manic way, saying all kinds of incoherent things. I got terribly frightened. I just had no idea what to do. I'd never been in a situation like that before. I tried walking her up and down, talking to her, but it didn't help. In fact, she got worse. She began turning on me, accusing me of all kinds of really strange things, like—wanting to kill her, betray her. Maybe she didn't even know who I was. I couldn't tell. But the thing that bothered me was her kids were due back from school—she has these twin daughters from her first marriage, you know?"

"They live with her?"

"Yes. She's a good mother, really. I know you won't believe it, but she is. . . Anyway, finally I called this friend of hers, Jim, he's a homosexual, very fond of her. They've known each other a long

time. I thought he'd know what to do and he did. He drove right over and waited downstairs for the girls in his car. Then, when they came, he just made up some excuse, said they'd have to spend the night at his place. It all went off completely smoothly. And by then she was calming down a little. Finally she even went to sleep."

Silent, he stared off just beyond her at a small waiter, hurrying by with a stack of plates.

"Well?" she said.

"That must have been very strong pot," he said flatly.

She frowned, evidently disappointed. "Don't you—is *that* all you feel about it?"

He leaned back, unable to keep a cold, angry edge from his voice. "What do you want me to say, Katy? She sounds like a great choice. Congratulations."

"But she's not *all* like that," she protested. "That's just the point. That's why I told you that—because it's an exception. It's only one thing. Usually she's rational—and brilliant. She's the most brilliant person I've ever *met*. She—"

"Brilliant! Cut it out. She's a sick woman."

"But, even if she—"

He felt his anger getting out of control, like a heat rising inside him. "Maybe I was mistaken, but I had an image of you as someone who saw *through* frauds, who put them in their place, who wouldn't just grovel before every famous phony and yet here you are, debasing yourself before this psychotic woman. It's mad!"

Her mouth became mournful. "You're taking a stand," she said. "You're not trying to understand."

"Of course I'm taking a stand," he said furiously. "Why the hell shouldn't I?"

"You're jealous of her."

"That's irrelevant."

"You should see," she said again in that pleading voice, "the letters she gets, asking her to direct. One man came up to her after one lecture and said, 'I feel like you're trying to castrate me.' She feels terrible when people say things like that to her."

"I can imagine."

"She does!" Her voice rose high in an effort to persuade him.

He leapt up from his seat, unable to sit still any longer, and picked up the check. While he paid, she stood beside him, mutely, head hanging, like a scolded child. He was not, even then, unaware of the line of her body in the limp cotton dress, the back of her neck and the long, graceful legs.

Outside it was hot. Rumbles of heat lightning flickered back and forth, competing with the neon

lights. "I want to tell you a funny story," she said.

"All right," he said tonelessly, searching in his pockets for the car keys.

She touched him hesitantly on the shoulder. "You don't want to hear it," she said gently.

"No, I do," he said, still looking at her. "Tell me the funny story."

"It's this. When I was appearing in the Chekhov, the night it closed, Greta came to see me. After the performance, she was standing at the back of the theatre, talking to me. Harvey Lubish, you remember, the guy who played Vershinin, saw us and when she went backstage, he came racing over. He was so eager to meet Greta! You should have seen him! I said, 'O.K.' and told him to come around to her hotel in an hour or so."

They had reached the car. He went around to one side to open the door. Her voice became somewhat fainter as they were separated momentarily. He just heard her say "—thought he was a total ass."

When they were both seated in the car, he said, "Greta thought he was a total ass?"

"No, he *was* a total ass! It was so awful! He was so eager to make an impression on her, he almost burst a gut. But the funny thing was someone evidently saw him leaving Greta's room and two days later someone else came up to me and said, 'Have you heard? Greta Szabo is having an affair with Harvey Lubish!'" She laughed. "Isn't that crazy?"

He nodded, but his expression did not change. "Yes, that's very funny," he said.

He started the car and began to drive toward her apartment, keeping his eyes on the road.

Once, when they stopped for a red light, she touched his arm lightly. "You're upset," she said.

"Good guess."

"Don't be. If only you'd meet Greta, you'd see—she's such a fine person. So many people in the world are just crazy or deceive themselves in one way or another. She doesn't. She fools everyone."

He had reached her building and pulled the car over to one side. He took out his wallet. "Do you still want the money?" he said.

She looked hesitant. "Will you give it to me? Still?"

"Yes."

She was silent a moment. "Yes, I'd still like it," she said.

"In cash or a check?"

"A check's okay."

He wrote out the check and handed it to her. "What's the money for?" he said after a moment.

She hesitated. "It doesn't matter."

"No," he said, "it doesn't. I don't care how you use it."

They sat in silence a minute, each looking forward.

"I'm pregnant," she said with an odd smile.

For the first time that evening he smiled too. "Really? Well, I guess I didn't give her enough credit. If she—"

"It's your child."

He stared at her in disbelief. "Don't joke, Katy."

"I'm not!" She put her head to one side. "You wouldn't have wanted it anyway," she said, "so this doesn't change anything."

He said nothing.

"Would you have wanted it?" She looked at him anxiously, her eyes suddenly uncertain.

"There's no way of knowing now, is there?" he said.

"No, I guess not. . . You can have the money back, if you want. I can get it some other way."

"No, keep it," he said.

"You're sure?"

"Positive."

"I'll pay you back part of it," she said, "when I can. I'm not sure when that will be."

"There's no hurry."

Again she hesitated. "Anyway, meanwhile, here's a number you can reach me at. . . Do you have a piece of paper?"

"No."

She took out a pack of kleenex and removed the cardboard from the bottom of the pack. On it she wrote a number in small, neat letters.

He took it and put it in his pocket without looking at it. "That's her number?"

"Yes. You can reach me there—oh, most days, I guess, after six." She smiled in a friendly way and started to get out of the car.

He almost let her go like that, but an impulse perhaps of cruelty, made him add, "Why should I *want* to reach you?"

She looked surprised. "Well, but this isn't *permanent*," she said. "After it's over, we can—"

"We can what?" he said.

"Don't be like that." Her voice had such an urgency that he could only stare at her, amazed. "Things will be the same as before. You'll see." She leaned over to open the car door, then hesitated.

He bent toward her—her face was very close to his—and then deliberately, with what seemed to him a tremendous effort of will, leaned back and away from her. "I'll call you at that number," he said.

Barbara Thomsen

Chrisom Child

Small as a foot
stirring
among the large brown children.
I don't want to touch you

my face resists
but the womb would like
to swallow you

How have they
kept you alive?
wearing a skin
like the top of
warm milk
It will pull away
on the spoon edge of my hand

webbing my fingers,
some huge sea bird

I care for the others
who need nothing.
They move their eyes
to me

blue oyster halves
upturned.
The sun cares for these
jewel bones
herself,
she will kill you first

you stretch
seeking water

crawling
so slowly
it would make me scream
There is no more baptism

I can't keep watching
I let you drown,
fizzing like an insect
around the edge of the tub.

Mira Kurka

For the condor
my graced and sleekly
cunning
first of the flight

For the perch and glide
of your latticed wing
you voyaged proud,
reigned the thinner skies
dizzy
above smaller wings. . .

Lord Condor, you spurned
the heavy earth,
the hunted
heavy with fear
running
in the shadow
of your triumph.

For you, airborne majesty,

My pride,
my fury.

A. Gelmi

The Fifth of Ten (thou shalt not kill)

A sea of tangled babies met the shell-stained sands.
No mommies were there, just
Star-Ripened-Sky.
Moonkissed little soldiers never given the alphabet.
Ripped-Ago. Thirsty little soldiers, rainbows.
Don't quench. . .
Don't fight. Your battle is over. It never began
Seized from sweet, Mother-of-Pearl
By ugly, Mother-of-Sin
Torn from honey-glazed cradle-of-God, made
Just for you. Warm and more warm.
Don't complain about being a number, Ever.
Were you ever a fraction???
Red, Red
Flicker of tomorrow. Tossed in a garbage can by a
Nurse with closed eyes.

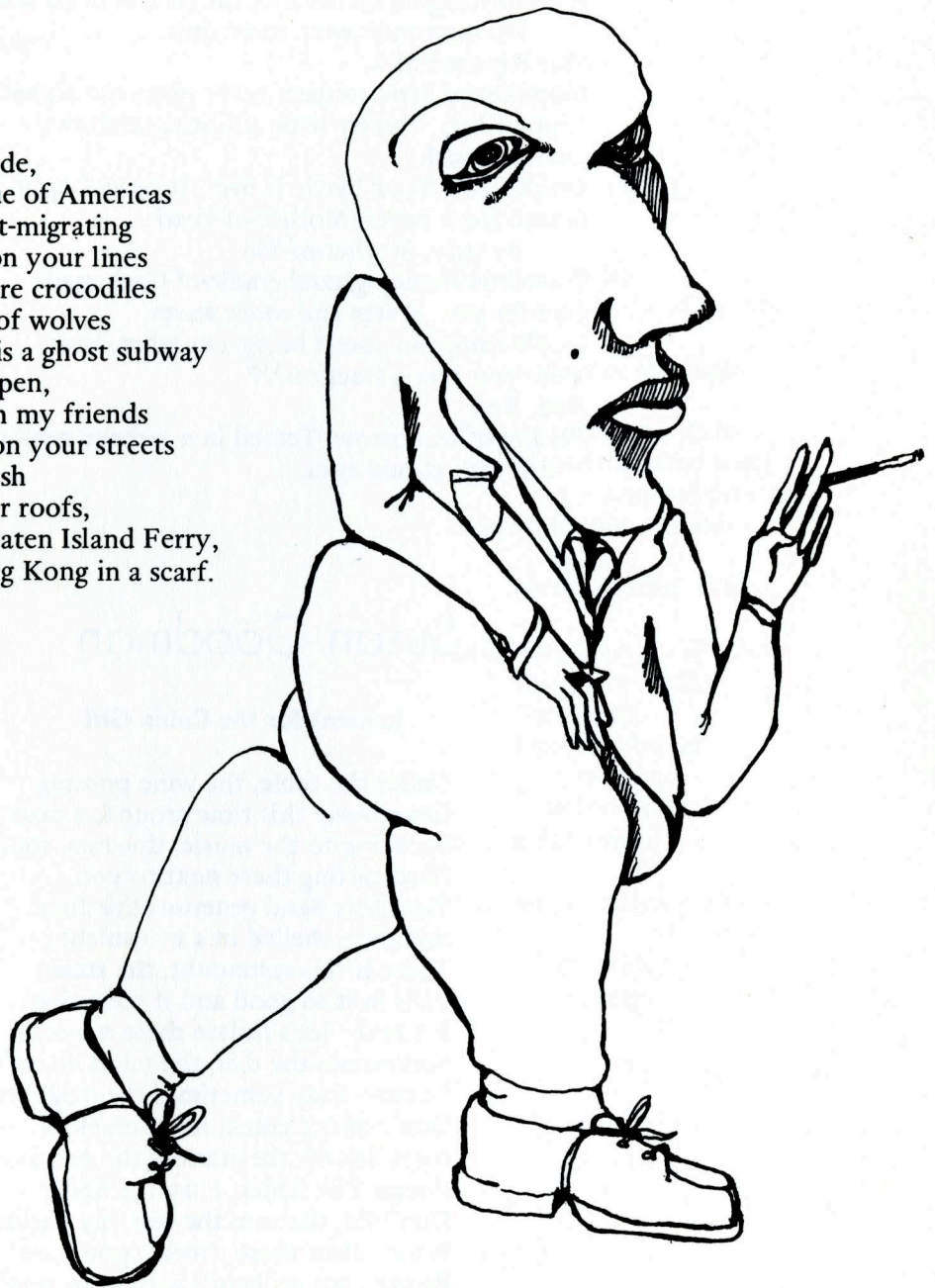
Susan Goodman

Lament for the Cabin Girl

Under the table, the wine pouring
Generously this time around, a man
Speaking to the music, this may sound
Hard, sitting there next to you,
Your soft hand generous this time
Myopic— shelled in a mausoleum.
There is this restaurant, the steam
Pulls in it so good and it seems like
It's real— let's isolate these musics—
Sometimes the dial, the mind doesn't
Focus— I say sometimes the neighbors
Don't miss a crack, not a crack of
Inspiration— the station, the mind don't
Focus. The lieder, I say the lieder
Don't lie, the sun, the sun, my darling
Is nice after these chords; you have
Painted the grillwork with your small
Toe— it's made me see love
Like stages with a fadeout, manilla
Envelopes of piano music— it's made
Me, it's made me look quiet at the end
Of a day— I know you're not coming.

Geoff Jullich

O New York! I miss you like a bride,
in this white. You have the Avenue of Americas
for a nosegay, and that trail of out-migrating
birds makes me think of waiting on your lines
for something. City of Myth! where crocodiles
roam the sewers, and men dream of wolves
in Central Park — They say there is a ghost subway
that cruises in, empty, no doors open,
and pulls out. I am on it! and wish my friends
could ride it, to where the white on your streets
is as immodest as a go-go girl. I wish
I were shepherding images on your roofs,
and I would call down, like the Staten Island Ferry,
and everyone would think me King Kong in a scarf.



Lisa Shea

The Violin Dream

A shelter of trucks memorizes my name.

I lodge a toothpick between my teeth in an effort
to finish dinner and don't consider
the possibility of young violinists
in a place like this.

The thought of someone's radio playing
while upstairs, sonnets of your laughter
approach my island.

The trucks unload carbon copies of myself
onto the rug. You sit down with one of me
and repeat the joke you have just heard
over the radio. I see my name for the
first time and it is not my name.

Here the violins are readying for their lesson,
their new book of disguises.

Geoff Jullich

In Answer to Rod McKuen,

A picture frame hanging just a spiderweb
is not empty. The face of a sailor,
who is a clay lamp, is.
Empty is the chique coach with three people in it.
The frond popping out of a vase-neck,
like a streetpost, is empty.
When the baseboards exasperatingly
do nothing
that is empty. Empty is a "poem"
which only mentions things you already
knew. A prize-winning photo of a man
on the beach is empty.

Larry Weiser

Swiss Night Story: Mistily, Waking / Spare The Spear

part I where in the Shade they Shed their ShedS

X
WITH A sHOULDERsHAWL sHE sHEEPiShLY
sEDUCED ME sEXiLY TO sLEEP sLEEP
sIDEWAYs AND sLOW
sHOULD sHE HAVE?

"You scare me / shshsh"

—steam—
—steam—

y
WITHOUT A sINGLE sTRAND OF sHAME HE sLAViSh
sTRUNG ME sHIN TO sHIN
sPURRING, sHOWING, sTRAINING
sHOULD HE HAVE

"please. . . spare me / shshsh"

—scream—
—scream—

part II where in the Shade they (Skeletal) Shred their Shed

**

when SparkS of a Sudden Stripped
when Sparring Scarred and Stayed them Separate
when Sliced to SlitS and Stooped SleuthineSS
when Still they'd Step up StopS then Snip

(SuccesseSive Sporting StarS though they Surely Saw
Sigh) a Scarcely SparSe few couple of SecondS
a SunflowerShower Startled Securely and Stirred
Such StarkStone StareS to Shoot

themSelveS the queStion: who who? (or) which?

—stream—

Munich in a fever 20th72



Pam Jarvis

Inland Sea

Though it is very pleasant here, I find
 The music boring. In a field of mud
 Puddles, the ruts become lovers, and blind
 To greener wheels and silk hats. A flood
 Is what I'm looking for, or maybe just
 A bath. The children play mumblety-peg
 With a butter knife, and between the rust
 Blown bed springs, they plant a garden. The egg
 Which is an elevator starts to break.
 If I ask you where you live, will you tell
 Me your phone number? We eat coffee cake
 And wine for lunch, and sit and start to swell.
 From under the piano I can hear you play
 "Will you love me in December As You Do in May?"

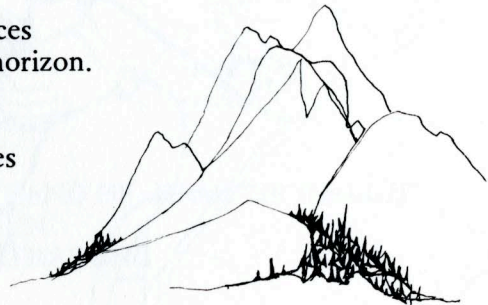
Susan Lumbard

George Washington and His Troops

George Washington at Valley Forge
The grey soldiers assault him with their sleep
George take your awards back we're gonna tuck in

The snowflakes sizzle round
they sizzle round dancing
dropping partnerless to gather forces
and out dashes a snowline to the horizon.

Up and down and down
Soldiers march with the snowflakes
sloughing clothes sloughing fat
white bones
tucked in to the nose by Mother



Mother and her white blankets
can't put your sneakers on them
and along into manhood you will go
in your sneakers and take off your sneakers and put on your boots and
learn to tie the laces on the boots.

The men happy, men happy
freezing starving in the snow
smoking with the guys
five guys, that is
Us real pals who fought with them all

George Washington at Valley Forge
Was not tucked in by Mother that wintry night
But ever so unruly held
A dance with Martha in their roomy rooms
The bending plumes and backs
Gold swirling on the lower sleeve
George poised on highness for Martha's twirl
He is poised in his hat.

Cindy Werthamer

Sabbath Morning

In solitary events, usually pertaining
to a single loss of life, eulogies abound
from grandstands set above the multitudes
where second and third graders
sit in mock silence and squirm.
No theory behind their presentation
exists, no planning,
no simple surrounding sunlight,
a halo of post-partem dissections.

To date, there has been but one trauma.
At the equinox, a suggestion of leaves
left behind by some long gone but
prophetic adventurer, finds its
way to ground where the smooth warm
soil and absence of stones is only deception.
If I was ever there, I have forgotten it by now,
and as spring approaches the wild oaks
form bridges over stranger streams
than those bent under their refracting
light. The tragedy is there, in swirling
eddies and contradictory flames,
a creation too complex for childrens'
minds to grasp, composed of
inquisitive histories and others too long dead.
A simile of paradise lies unawakened
underneath, dramas of cellos and ethics,
wooden horses and primitive sculptures,
wails and missing teeth.

It's surprising that the act of being is now,
escaped from vacuumed jars and ancient molds,
at a time when voices are all nothing
but prepared speeches.

Adrian Karatnycky

Sestina: Stars of the Silver Screen Are My Studio Sweethearts

'I'M not facing divorce' says Constance Bennett,
second only to the Great Garbo
in popularity among the readers of Screen Book.
Meanwhile, rumours are flaring concerning Benita Hume
and Ronald Colman's romance.
And what about Tyrone Power,

That symbol of virility, potency, and power?
Has he been seeing Connie Bennett
or her sister Joan? Or are rumours of the romance
inflated for publicity's sake, like the one concerning Garbo
and Leopold Stokowski. O Benita Hume,
like David, you are a favourite in my book.

I've never seen any of you in person, only on the silver screen
or in a book
about Hollywood. But Tyrone Power,
how can you have rejected a girl like Benita Hume?
I'm sure she'd leave Ronald Colman for you. And Ronald could
have Constance Bennett
who lied about divorce. Why has Greta Garbo
never married? What is her current romance?

I find that I'm caught up in my romance
with you stars of the silver screen, and I'd like to write a book
about you, especially about my true favourite, Garbo
of Stockholm; what power
radiates from her eyes. It puts the Bennett
sisters to shame. But Benita Hume

stands indifferent to all this, reading 'A Treatise of Human Nature'
by David Hume,
no relation. In spite of it all, I wouldn't mind a romance
with Connie Bennett
whom I'd also include in my unwritten book
on my studio sweethearts. I love you too, Tyrone Power
and you Marion Davies, even though my all-time favourite is the
Great Garbo.

When she was born, Greta Garbo
was destined to be greater than Benita Hume
could ever be, for she commands the power
of love, and is my greatest romance.
I cut out all her pictures in Screen Book
and paste them in my scrapbook, next to Connie, Joan and Barbara Bennett

O Connie Bennett and Greta Garbo,
studio sweethearts of my scrap book, tell Benita Hume
to leave Ronald Colman and romance Tyrone Power.

Mimi Katzenbach

Breakfast

ENTRY 10/1:

It was strange to wait to wake up. When I was five-years-old I would keep my eyes closed because I was afraid to see my own room. It might have changed during the night. Or, the reverse, I would postpone dreaming, afraid to close my eyes, afraid that my eyelids would stick together in the morning, gummed by sleep, and I would never be able to open them again. There were the blank spaces, too, between the dream and the account of the dream, when to move would disturb everything, but to lie still communicate nothing.

Laura stepped out onto the sidewalk. Early, the shadows shaded the other side of the street, and the heat of the sun had not yet diluted the early spring blue. Michael was sleeping. He had stayed up almost the entire night with Professor Gao. A big breakfast, Laura thought.

The streetlight changed. She crossed the street to the small grocery store on the corner. A cheese omelette, English muffins, with butter and marmalade, and coffee—no, not coffee, tea. Tea appealed to Michael's scholarly image. And sausage because it reminded Michael of his red-headed grandfather in West Virginia, of ten-years-old, of hunting along the Blue Ridge.

"Good morning, Miss. May I help you?"

"Good morning," Laura smiled. "Beautiful day, isn't it?"

"Looks like spring might stay this time."

"I'd like some cheese," she said. "Do you have some cheddar?"

He weighed out the cheese, cutting a piece with a large dull knife, catching it in the center of his palm, and then in one movement placed the wedge on the scale. Hands on hips, he calculated the cost, and wrapped the cheese in two layers of white paper. Laura always wondered how one could wrap something the first time but never the second or the third or any following time in exactly the same way, along the same creases, after the wrapping had been once unwrapped. He handed her the cheese.

"Will that be all?"

"Do you have any homemade sausage?" Laura asked.

"Let me see." He smiled as he handed Laura the soft package of sausage. Laura looked around the

store: a triangle of oranges. She picked out three large ones. English muffins . . . there was some butter already in the refrigerator.

As the woman at the cash register added Laura's things together, she sensed the gathering up, she sensed how she was gathering a harvest of the morning, fresh and carefully chosen. And taking the bag in her arms she thought of Michael and he, too, was gathered up, but in her mind, a bright coherent image. Remembered in the same way that later, suddenly, a childhood ambition makes sense and one feels that one never really let go of the wish, Laura recalled every line of Michael's body as she had left him sleeping, each wave of his red hair—not out of a careless sensuality, but swift, intimate, and hidden. She selected out the details of his movement just as she had selected the oranges in the store. And as she walked home she felt the morning nudge her as it moved toward noon, bringing into the circle of memories a new drop of drink.

Michael watched a speck of light bounce into a shady corner: the sun against the window. There might be a way to predict its rate of motion, a mathematical equation.

There. The speck had moved over to the wall opposite the bed, changing its shape as it passed through the corner. Physics.

Blue. The dead limb of the tree (crippled, Laura said) shone black against the blue. A beautiful day. Michael reached his hand to the open window: cool air in a thin layer left over from the night. "It is the first day of March," Michael said to himself, "like a lion."

Outside a combination of curves, running about 135° relative to the slope of the bank. Not complete. A dome, Michael thought. Geodesic. White. Color would only complicate the landscape.

A bird landed on the dead limb, and started to chirp. Song—he missed it when he was in the studio shut off from light and sound. Words, too were strange to Michael.

Immobile on the dead limb, the bird altered the proportion of the lines. But the field, the field rolls, like a cushion, like curves which develop out of the lines above them.

Lines into curves . . . they were deceptively mobile, thought Michael. And the light—apparent

transparency in spirals moving upward around a cylinder, a cone, a silo, a tower: A tower with free form windows curving around a fixed axis, worked out in two dimensions with a compass. He rejected plastics in favor of concrete.

Michael looked at the clock: Still early.

Last night—who had won the game? Gao, by revealing less, as usual. His perpetual smile, brilliant. They played a communication game with strict rules. Michael put forward an idea. Gao then chose to build by synthesis or antithesis. But unlike the direct dialectic, at any point either could present a novel idea. The less one said, the more oblique the possibilities, and the more one guided the trend of thought. The game demanded a mastery of the Yin principle:

By many words is wit exhausted.

Rather, therefore, hold to the core.

ENTRY: Tuesday, May 26

I have been walking and I cannot remember it. So much escapes that I want always to be clear—How did I learn to walk? What was it like to step, to make contact with the ground the first time?

Here, then, I am learning to walk again. But this kind of walking does not proceed by steps, the foot does not reach out to the ground, the heel does not force itself against the ground, and the toes, naturally spread apart, do not grip the sand as they must have originally.

I have been walking and I cannot remember all that I have seen: the shape of the elm today, watercolored by this permanent fog. The disappearance of the hills as the beach replaces them. The color of the empty bottle, its fluid green, the rooftops wavering as I look through it. How the bottle alters their architecture, just as the fog changes the trees.

I am a bottle. I am a womb.

The womb's time is the morning. I am pregnant with the night as I give myself over to the day, give birth to fog. I don't ask how it happens. I am a sponge at night in my womb, and the hand of the sun squeezes me dry, the daylight cleans the pollution of the night out of me.

I have arrived in the morning. The room is not yet finished except for a bed, a desk, a deep set window. I step into the light and it washes me clean in preparation for flight, and the light wraps me in clean bands, wrapping around me, wrapping around me in a rhythm I recognize as my own. I am tumbled out onto the day like the new wave tumbles over the still bubbling foam of the old wave, returning and mingling they roll together

onto the shore, are sucked into one wave, and a new wave rises up over these two now sucked into one.

If I do not move I can still recall it perfectly.

But I open the door myself.

Laura opened the door, slowly. Michael was not asleep; he was lying on the bed, flat on his back, thinking. She hesitated, deliberately.

In a moment he would know she was there. But before that moment when he would roll over and see her in the morning light, she wanted to anticipate it. The anticipation was more exciting, it defied physical laws. Now, he was just out of reach, now, his sex did not intrude and she could suspend the blind chemical balance between them.

She stood at the door, not ready to let go of the doorknob, not ready to drink though she was thirsty, and wanted to drink something as cold as what was between them, wanted to fill her body with a liquid that tightened all of her muscles, that pulled her in on herself, that heightened all of her receptors. She wanted to gulp down the juice of their difference—not just his way of thinking, but his look; not just his way of moving, but his position. In a moment this clear liquid which held them, biological, would confuse all of her senses, she would lose the clarity of dry sight, and like a nerve would send out an impulse, he would respond, and they would charge each other with a new chemical, the negative pulse would release all of the potential out into the nervous pathways, and the knowledge of what she was would change as they made the connection.

He rolled over. She let go and the door closed.

ENTRY: March 1

I open my eyes; I close my eyes; I take in a breath; I let out a breath; I am lifted up; I am placed down; I step in; I leave.

Laura went into the kitchen with the food. She heard Michael turning on the shower—wonderful noise—while she set the stuff to make breakfast out on the counter. She took a blue bowl from the shelf and cracked three eggs into it. She put the sausage in the frying pan; it sizzled. Then she filled a kettle with water. She set the table: a dark blue and white plate, a yellow teacup, fork knife spoon, and a mug for her coffee. She unwrapped the cheese, and started to cut it into tiny pieces for his omelette. She could hear Michael singing in the shower, then the shower stopped, and she heard only his singing. As the omelette cooked she

realized that she had forgotten about the English muffins.

Michael walked in, wet, with a towel loosely wrapped around his waist. "Quick, Michael," Laura said, "fix your English muffins, I have to watch the omelette."

"Is that sausage?" Michael asked as he stood breaking the muffin apart.

"Yes, it's homemade." Then Laura flipped the omelette, pleased that it didn't break, turned it out onto the plate, put the sausage next to it, and with the teapot put it all on the table.

"Michael, where's the butter, I don't see it?"

"I have it over here," he said by the toaster. He brought over his English muffins dripping with butter, losing his towel as he sat down. He looks ridiculous, Laura thought, sitting at the table naked, wet, with a towel on his lap like an oversized napkin. She went over to the stove to make her coffee, noticed she had left the oranges on the counter. She took all three with her as she sat down with Michael.

As she drank her coffee she watched Michael eat. Even when he ate, Michael did not lose his sense of proportionate movement. He did nothing superfluous, he moved with minimal exertion, cut-

ting his omelette quickly, precisely the size of a single bite, and biting into his English muffin with a single crunch. He spilled crumbs only on his beard.

Michael reached for an orange. "Here, let me peel it for you," Laura said. Michael handed her the orange.

Laura held the orange in one hand while with the other she carefully stripped off the skin, trying to keep it in one piece. She managed to pull it off without breaking either the skin or the orange. Then, taking it between her fingers, she pried it open with her two thumbs, splitting it in half: tiny bubbles appeared along the surface, bursting through the membrane. She watched the way the drops quivered along the core. Then she handed one half to Michael, and then she handed him the other half, too. She returned to her coffee and sat still for a moment.

"I love you," Michael said. She turned to look at him. He popped an orange section into his mouth.

"Thank you for breakfast," Michael said.

"You're welcome."

The sun entered into the room obliquely, making a wide stripe across the table between them.

Carolyn Yalkut

My Grandfather Dies

Cancer's quiet,
(The doctor said)
Your blood is white—
Dust what once was adamant.

Said the mountain
I will not blanch
I'll go down
Silently as an avalanche.



There's nobody here. I asked,
Please, I pleaded, and started taking off my clothes.
I called—I almost cried.

I ran through every room
I tried the fire escape, of course there was no ladder
but I was climbing the walls.

Just to hear myself
I let the water run and shouted in the mirrors.
I put on the old gal's heels

And nearly slipped off the windowsill
what with the lipstick and all the other junk
hanging on the clothesline like red lights.

But it's all right; it wouldn't have been any good anyway
They told me that the girl who puts on everything
can't necessarily pull it all off.

Robert Havely

An Afternoon's Love Song

I walk by myself along a heavy, breathing carpet,
Along a quiet cathedral floor under living towers, sun-vaulted towers,
of redwood and oak.
Inside these spectacular reaches, upward and outward, I feel the giant
dimness stir and whisper as showers of sunlight cascade around me.

A fountain, startled, shocks my intruding toes with icy reproof;
But I did not approach its hidden pool by accident. . . . nor do I come here
with anger, disdain, or confusion in my mind:
I come to trade my business for the deep stillness of the autumn afternoon,
for the slow majesty of its unhurried strength.

I smash the brilliant mirror of the pond. . . . I churn its lazy ripples into
tiny roaring tempests. . . . I fling the liquid sunlight in all
directions.
My laughing body tears frenzy from the hush, churns the deepening green
into fragrant, intoxicating foam. . . . I smell it, drink it, roll
and splash and laugh in it.
I soak it in through my naked skin, absorbing it, feeding on it.

Do you calculate the physics of calmness?
Do you measure concentric rings that reverse and collide, that spread and
rebound; circles that cancel and calm each other?
I lie beside my luscious bath and watch as its mirror reappears, unperturbed
and inviting. . . . inviting me to look into it, touch it, cup it in
my hands and splash it onto my laughing face. . . . let it run down
into my laughing mouth.

Let your body measure calmness. . . . its own and that it needs; let it take
you to the living stone, the little spring, and the talking wood,
to drink from the strength of the world.
Let it leave behind the reckoning and figures for a quiet time, to make a
fresh trade. . . . the din of production and haste for some easy
contemplation.
Let it bring you to my side, and we shall sit quietly and listen as the
distant, reverent choir resumes its quiet song.

Geoff Jullich

The old man's lips shape dumb consonants
what he would say if he went back in by that chatty salesgirl
his only words all week
but he walks on down the street instead
to poke his head in the Christian Science Reading Room
wave to Mrs. Cooper at her Bible
and go home to reread his daughter's letter.

What will the modern poet write
in this town, out of key with the times
morals and his mind?
where teenagers still dress well,
girls are appalled if you say "hell",
and 16-year-old boys play baseball, all afternoon.

Norman and Jane
down at the shoe store
bores who like to give tikes licorice-licks
and stick up proverbs from The Reader's Digest,
and if you mention Phedre
they ask, "Racine? Racine? Racine, Wisconsin?"

A people who haven't seen Albee,
or accepted Freud, never read Sartre.

Art among the artless.

He sends off complaining telegrams in French,
& sits down by shopping bag-ladies and pigeons
on the bench, to write a one-act play about that "wench"
he met & bedded on the Rue L'Odeon,
and he has missed it all.



Easter

Saturday nights are a drag, thought Evvie as she dumped the remains of her dinner into a garbage pail that sat at the far end of her dormitory room. The meal, which had consisted of an apple and some stale cheese that she salvaged from a dinner with her parents the night before, had not been very satisfying, but then she never particularly enjoyed eating alone. Since she had been in school, her habits had been shaped more by necessity than desire, and solitary weekend meals (the dining hall was only open on weekdays) had become routine. Evvie finished reading the magazine that had been her dinner entertainment and settled herself on her bed with her school work. First order of business: John Donne's Holy Sonnets. Actually, she was fascinated by these poems; through them she had become intrigued by Christianity. It was the dark lure of forbidden fruit, for she was Jewish and could not in all good conscience believe in Christ. Still, she played her interest like a game, and whenever she became too absorbed in it, she could always remind herself that her involvement was merely the exercise of a very sympathetic imagination.

She read carefully and seriously. But she was tired, and the weight of the sonnets exhausted her. The words began to spin and blur. She put the book aside and buried her head in the hollow of her arms. Her thoughts became unfocused, a soft haze. She felt her body become light, floating, formless, she moved imperceptibly into the last phase of restfulness that precedes sleep.

A sharp knock on the door jarred her. She felt herself suddenly fall, as if she had been flying, a sharp awakening that made her realize that she had indeed been falling asleep. Now she had fallen out of sleep. She turned her head toward the sound and raised herself up on one arm. "Come in," she called. The words seemed harsh and unmodulated to her, as if she were not accustomed to the sound of her own voice.

The door opened. Jane, Evvie's friend from down the hall, stepped into the room, tripping over her pants. Her clothes were a haphazard array of the slovenly and the decorative: old jeans, a lovely fading antique of a blouse, worn shoes, and a dark green suede coat. Evvie was hurtled into wakefulness by the presence of this startling apparition. She sat up and shook her head disbelievingly.

"What occasion's this?" she asked, pointing to Jane's outfit.

"Oh, it's Easter — that is, tomorrow is Easter. I wanted to go to midnight mass at Saint Paul's, and I wanted to know if you'd like to come."

"Me? Oh, Jane, I'd really like to, but. . ." She paused, looked concerned.

"But what?"

"Well, it's just that I would feel so out of place. I've never been to mass before and I don't know what to do. Or what I should do. I mean, here I am, a good Jewish girl who never sets foot inside a temple much less a cathedral, and it's Easter, of all times to go. Really, I'd like to go, you know, but I'd feel so. . ." Her voice trailed off. Hypocritical, she thought.

"Look. It's not a very ritzy cathedral, to begin with. It hardly qualifies as a church, I mean for God's sake, the Buddhists hold their meetings there. You know. And besides, the service will all be very ecumenical. Really. I've been there before. It's not high church, no Latin, but they hold pretty good services there. The priest is Chinese, believe it or not."

After a moment of rapid reflection, Evvie decided to go. What the hell. . . "Well, all right. Do I have to wear anything special, a hat or a veil or something?"

"Oh no. I've got a kerchief, but that's my habit, so to speak. Listen baby, just call me Sister Mary Magdalene Magoo," she said, evoking a name they had once discovered in a parochial school directory. They both laughed. "No, look, it's quite all right for you to go *comme ça*. Just relax, it will be fine, you'll see."

Jane sat down in a chair. "We have about an hour," she said. "Want a cigarette?" They sat and smoked and talked. Their conversation quickly moved, as was its custom, to the absurd and the comical, and they spent the greatest part of the hour laughing. Evvie had once decided that theirs was a smoke and joke relationship. All tensions seemed to dissolve in their laughter. Evvie often felt close to Jane at these times; only their shared comedy gave any clue to real feeling between them.

The jokes stopped as Evvie looked sharply at the clock. "It's time," she said. A sudden solemnity came over them, and they quietly prepared to

leave. They walked out of the dormitory into the night, which was cold and bitter for Easter season. Evvie buttoned her coat and held herself tightly. They walked in silence, the sounds of their footsteps measuring the syncopated rhythms of their walks. Crossing the concrete of streets and campus sidewalks, they finally reached Saint Paul's.

The church, inside, was no less cold than the midnight air, but Evvie felt the chill of the outside air disappear. Perhaps it was the soft glow of candles and gold that warmed the hollow darkness of the church. The church was round and domed, womblike. Evvie felt mute. She became the instrument of her eyes, looking around in slow reverent wonder. She took in everything with her open gaze. People walked in slowly; more appeared as the hour approached. The altar was the only part of the chapel that was illuminated. All the rest, the rows of folding chairs which served as pews, the columns and arches which circled the chapel, receded into darkness, into a blackness that extended beyond the circumference of the arches, out of the heavy doors to the nighttime sky.

"Isn't this beautiful," whispered Jane. Evvie nodded. She closed her eyes and listened. There were no sounds except for footsteps echoing in emptiness. The intervening silences twisted their way into contrapuntal knots, and Evvie thought of those late Beethoven quartets in which each note was like a momentary piercing of an ultimate silence. The silence in the church began to ring in her ears. She opened her eyes and realized that the priest had entered the church and was standing at the altar. He was Chinese, as Jane had said, and he was dressed in white vestments of striking simplicity. Without an outward glance at the assembled crowd, he quietly began the celebration of the mass.

"Lord have mercy," he intoned in hard flat English. What an awful voice, thought Evvie. They should have at least done it in Latin. To hell with the vernacular. There was nothing very mysterious about hearing these sacred words in ordinary language. She felt vaguely disappointed. But after a short time she fell into the repetitive spell of the words, listening not to the words themselves but to the reverberations of the priest's voice and the secondary echo of the congregation's antiphonal responses.

The mass moved swiftly and simply. Then the priest announced that communion would be offered to all who wished it. A large number of people rose and filed their way forward to the

altar. Jane stood up but Evvie remained seated. Jane pulled at her sleeve. "Come on," she whispered.

Evvie looked up. "But I can't do this," she said, shaking her head. Her voice, disturbed and insistent, strained itself out of a whisper. "Besides, don't you have to confess before you take communion?"

"Well, usually, but it's okay here. Anyway, I haven't gone to confession in months. Really, it'll be all right. Come on," she said gently. "Please . . . it's quite all right."

Evvie stood up and followed Jane. She was very frightened. She did not know what she was supposed to do. The priest would surely see through to her ignorance and realize the hypocrisy of this latest stage in her elaborate game. He would know. She wondered if she should not go back and sit down, but after glancing over her shoulder and seeing so many people behind her, she gave up the idea. She was nearing the altar; only a few people were ahead of her. With desperate attention she observed what the others were doing. First you approached the priest, who was now standing in front of the altar. You stopped before him, opening your mouth to receive the wafer which he placed on your tongue. Then you closed your mouth and he made the sign of the cross over you, and then you said Amen. After that you proceeded over to the end of the altar and took a sip of wine from an ornate gold goblet. Did you really drink it, Evvie wondered, or just pretend to, like the times at your parents' parties when you were little and you pretended to sip wine although you hated it so that the adults would think you were grown up. Maybe. And so this wafer was supposed to be the body of Christ and the wine the blood. What if they had only white wine? That would sort of miss the boat on the symbolism. She wondered how transubstantiation happened, whether she would feel anything, or, more terrible, whether she would be struck down for doing this. She was, after all, a Jew, and she felt a sting of guilt.

Suddenly she was standing before the priest. She trembled and slowly opened her mouth. The priest, scarcely looking at her, placed a wafer on her tongue. Evvie closed her mouth. The wafer was ineffably light; it began to dissolve immediately. Evvie felt her body shaking. With large eyes she stared fixedly at the priest as he made the sign of the cross over her. She could not avert her gaze. She blankly recorded the fact of the priest's height—he was not much taller than she was. His face was dull, almost ugly. There was a small scar etched on

his left cheek; his eyes were muddy brown. After what seemed like an eternity, Evvie cast her eyes down and murmured Amen. She looked up and saw that the priest's impassive expression had changed and he smiled at her gently and assuringly. His smile radiated into her and she felt warmed. She thanked him with her eyes, then turned and stepped over to the altar. With new certainty, she lifted the goblet and took a small sip. It was white wine, after all. She put the goblet down and made her way back to her seat. It was over.

Evvie sat down and waited. She felt no different, and decided that whatever was supposed to happen wasn't going to. No visions of angels, no lightning flashes, no booming words from on high. She reconciled herself to her immunity to things spiritual and transcendental, and glanced around the church again. At any rate, it really was a beautiful place, she decided.

The priest had finished with the last communicant, and he resumed his place behind the altar. "And now," he said, "in the spirit of Easter, will you turn to your neighbor and exchange greetings of Christian friendship." People turned to each other, friends and strangers, and shook hands and smiled. Evvie looked at Jane and offered her hand. Jane clasped her hand and, leaning forward, kissed her softly on the cheek. This surprised Evvie and for a second she wanted to cry, but she hung her head down and quickly fought back the tears.

"A very joyous Easter to all of you. May you go with the love of our Lord Jesus Christ on this holy day," said the priest. Jane touched Evvie on the shoulder. "That's the end," she said quietly. They got up and walked slowly out of the chapel.

"It's funny," said Jane as they started to trace their steps back to the dorm. "I mean it's odd that they should have us sip the wine. Usually only the priest takes the wine, but I guess the R.C.s are getting democratic in their old age."

Evvie smiled but did not look at Jane. The moon had risen in the sky. It looked odd — not quite full, a misshapen overgrown half. It was large and luminous, and the sky, in contrast, looked very black. There were stars out too, Evvie realized, millions of them, minute blisters in the sky. She shivered; the air was so cold and sharp that it hurt. She started to walk faster, and Jane hurried to keep up. They were nearly running by the time they reached the dormitory, and as they rushed inside the building their panting gasps turned into laughter.

"You'd have thought someone was chasing us.

Do you suppose muggers work on Easter?" choked Evvie.

"Sure, why not? There are probably plenty of Jewish hoods lurking around."

"Not many that I know of . . . though I did meet a Jewish ex-con once. His name was Sam Rubinstein and he wouldn't tell me what he had been in jail for. What a strange guy. He wanted to write his memoirs or something. I met him in a greasy spoon I went into for breakfast one Saturday."

"Weird."

The conversation had carried them to the elevator. They fell silent and waited a moment before the doors crashed open. They walked in, and the elevator slammed shut like forceful jaws. "Listen," said Jane, pushing the button, "do you want to come and have a cigarette or something to drink? I could see what I've got in my room."

Evvie frowned. "Well, I don't know. I'm pretty exhausted, you know, and I should really go to bed. Maybe we could have breakfast together tomorrow? Or later today, if you want to be technical about it."

"Why, what time is it?"

"Oh, about two or so."

"I didn't realize it was so late."

"Well, it was a midnight mass, after all."

They got out at six. "Okay, breakfast, then," said Jane. Evvie nodded. "Knock on my door when you're ready. I'll probably be dead asleep anyway."

"All right." Evvie paused. "Jane, thanks for taking me to mass. It was very beautiful."

"Yes, it was, wasn't it. I get very nostalgic about Easters. It was nice there."

They stared at each other deeply, then looked away, embarrassed. "Yes, well . . . thank you," said Evvie awkwardly. They exchanged goodnights and went to their separate rooms.

Evvie closed her door and turned on a lamp. She slowly removed her coat and placed it over her desk chair. She felt tired but wasn't quite ready to go to bed. What now, she asked herself. She looked at her books and didn't feel like reading. She did not want to hear any music either, not right then, at any rate. I should wash up, she told herself. There was a sink in the corner which gave the room the look of a jail cell. Evvie turned on the faucet, and filling her cupped hands with water, wet her face, her eyes closed. The water felt good, warm and soothing. Water, she thought dully, water, blood is thicker than water, blood is wine, red wine is blood, white wine is also blood. She was still

amazed, struck by the absurdity of it all. It's not real, she reasoned, it's all in your mind, it's a game, everyone plays the game, whether they realize it or not. Still, it had touched her, when love seemed to emanate from everyone at once. No, she said firmly to herself, it's only my imagination. Nothing really happened, after all, it's still only a wafer and a sip of wine. It's all a ceremony. There is no God and there is no Christ. I don't believe it at all, really, I don't believe.

She dried her face and began to undress. She did not feel quite right, somehow. An unquiet feeling battled with her exhaustion and would not allow her to collapse into sleep. Feeling nervous, she looked around for a cigarette, then realized that she had smoked her last ones with Jane. She cursed silently, then wondered what she could do to pacify the disturbance that vibrated inside her like a plucked string. Music, a record, something soothing. She automatically turned on the record player. On the turntable was a record that she had not removed from some previous listening. When had that been — she could not recall. Neither did she

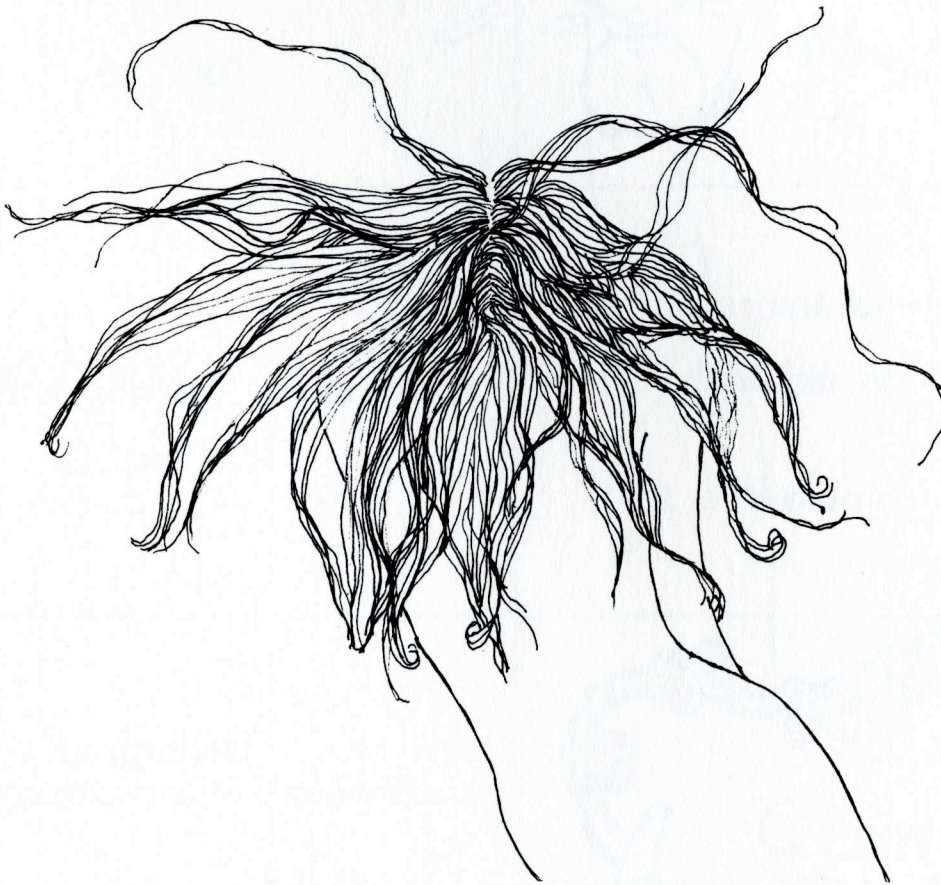
know what the record was; it hardly mattered. She only wanted to listen to something, anything. Her body was trembling now, and shaking, she lay down on her bed and turned off the lamp. The opening notes of the music filled the darkness of the room. Evvie recognized the music: it was the last Beethoven piano sonata. Its biting brutality echoed, perhaps too pointedly, her own mood. The bitter sensation of coincidence passed quickly. Then followed the infinitely calm and simple opening of the last movement, the shock of peace that was not repose, for the music in its variations gradually lifted itself into an ever quickening dance. The music surged forward in a frenzy of movement. Then, when it seemed that the music could not go any further, the fervent notes of the opening sang above the feverish rush. Evvie could not bear it, it was so beautiful, too beautiful, it rose in her, faster and faster, until she ached inside. Her heart was pounding violently; her eyes flooded with tears. She lay very still. A wave of darkness came over her, and she wept in the fury of her piety.

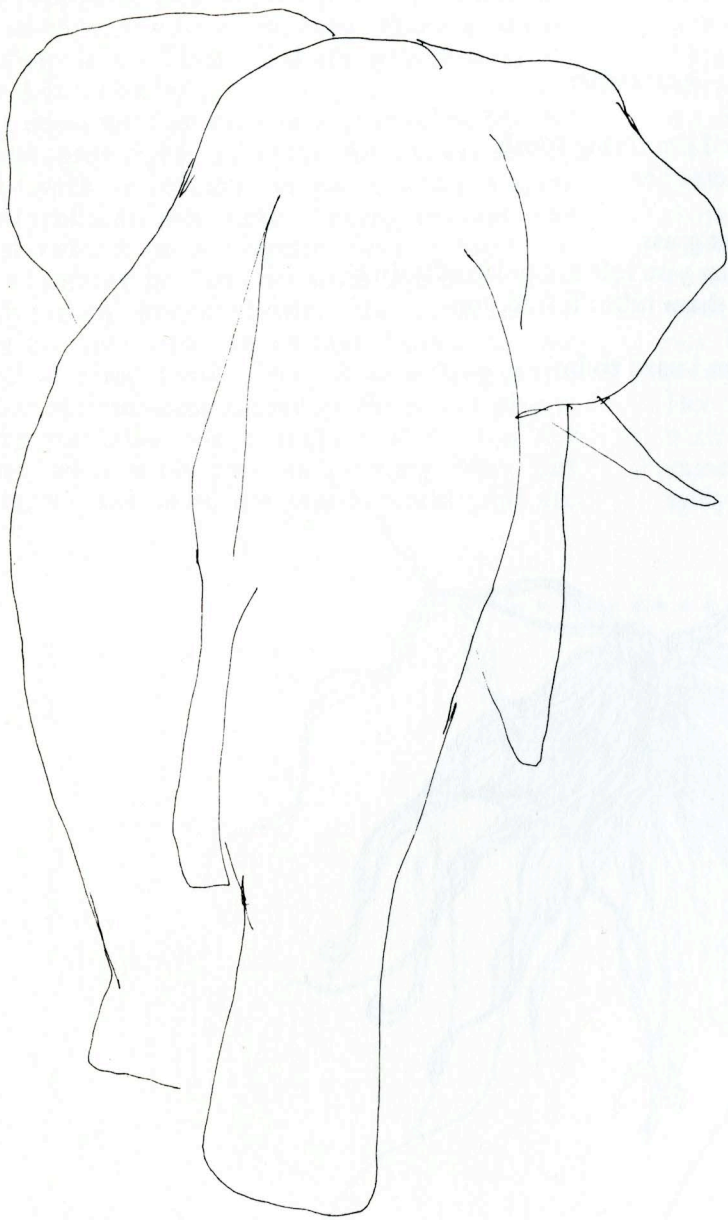
* * * * *

Julia Stein

dear walter

like a bat outta hell i'm flying south
looking for the memories
of your first toke
the fuck in the wet grass
the dirty underwear you left in my laundry bag
you can't hide in them hills i'll find you
watch out walter
i'm not the woman i used to be
here i come





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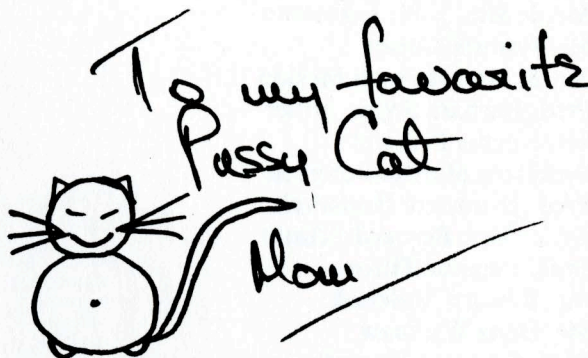
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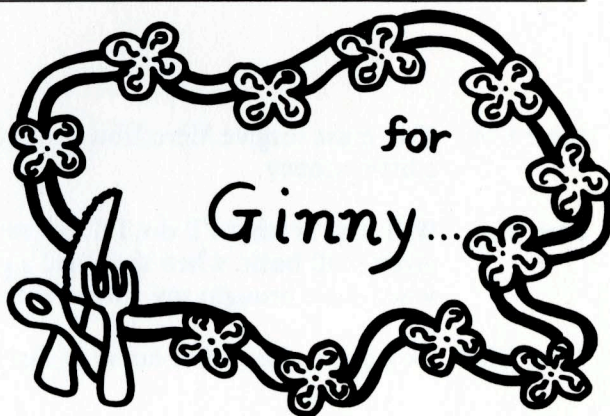
Watch that Hubris

Congratulations to
the Class of 1974

Dept. of Biological Sciences

Congratulations to the Seniors

Bernice G. Segal



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Mr. Edward Volchok
Ms. Dena Warshaw
Prof. Suzanne Wemple

Mère Ubu: You must forgive Mère Ubu for having side-tracked
a little money.

Père Ubu: Well, this is what I'll do; I'll forgive her when she's
given it all back, when she's had a good beating, and
when she's brought my financial horse back to life.

Mère Ubu: He's crazy about that horse of his!

— A. Jarry