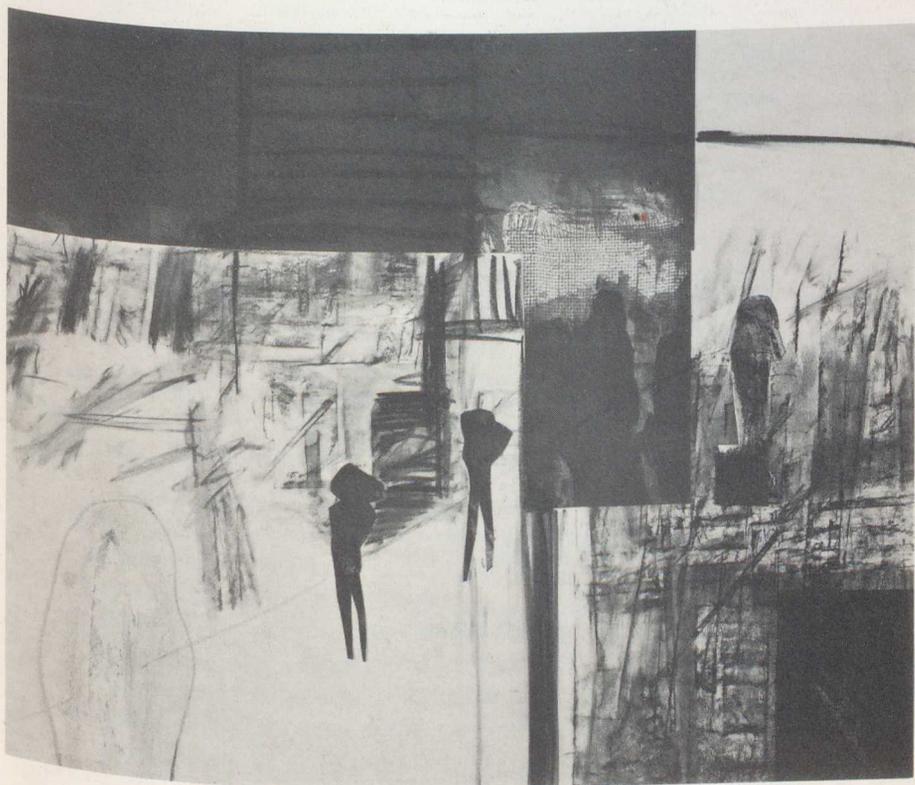




TOWERS

XXVII

TOWERS



DENNIS FRIEND • "COMEDY" • DRAWING • 16" x 20"

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
VOLUME XXVII

DE KALB, ILLINOIS
JANUARY 1967

AWARDS

POETRY

FIRST • GAZA WOMAN • JON KNUDSEN

SECOND • VIVIAN • ED MANUAL

THIRD • UNTITLED • PAUL YOHNKA

Judges

ARRA GARAB — JAMES McNIECE

GRAPHICS

FIRST • SELF PORTRAIT 2080 A.D. • PETE JONES

SECOND • UNTITLED, DRAWING • GWEN JONES

THIRD • A NATION SPEAKS • PAT SNYDER

HONORABLE MENTION • IRON WINDOW SHUTTER • BOB SWINEHART

Judge

ROLAND GINZEL — UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, CIRCLE CAMPUS

PROSE

FIRST • THE QUIET KIND • FRED ROSS

SECOND • LAND OF THE MORNING CALM • STEVEN M. OLDERR

THIRD • THAT BRIEF, MAD INSTANT • GERALD K. WUORI

Judges

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BEYOND THOSE STARS

You, bent antique Chinaman,
Said it's not like a corpse shut in a cavern
But I used to crouch in the coal cellar
Trying to see beyond light
Or lie in bed, thumbs against my eyelids
And watch those flashes,
And even this bright Sunday
I watch girls in spring swim suits,
Stretching like cats in the glaring sun.
Old man, I still wonder
And now long for your numbness,
Long to sit forever beyond those stars
Inscribing stone.

EDWARD BEATTY

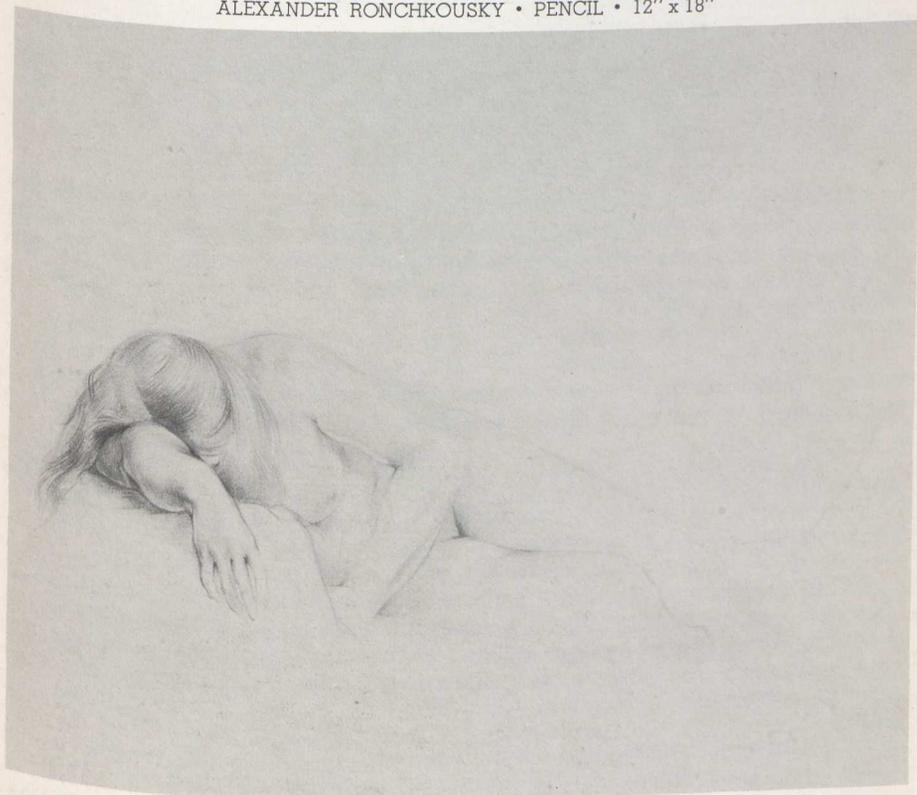
MARY MAGDALENE

To the prodigies go the bitches
The sweaty girls who can't show their sweat.
From prim and petite to hands on hips,
The lazy barbituates and snapping wish bones,
The greasy-mouthed habituates of smiling foam.

The losers take what's left of shyness
Kept inside a jar of years,
The girls who wear their
Pearls in dreams,
And kiss the boys because the boys are there.

JOE BAUERS

ALEXANDER RONCHKOUSKY • PENCIL • 12" x 18"



THAT BRIEF, MAD INSTANT

Walter Trachmann. Even now the name starts with a roll and ends with a sliding snap and I realize I can have the name anytime but not Walter. Walter's dead. No, not living dead, but friendship dead. I can't see him because of what I did while at the same time what I did isn't at all important. In fact, nobody is at all too sure of what anybody did, least of all myself, especially Walter, probably Hayden, and certainly **her** mother, from whom, by the way, things might have come much more clearly than they did. From the girl herself comes nothing, which is just as well.

I won't tell you about Walter Trachmann in a good, straight way because I don't think I can. He's too much a part of me so I'll probably lie a bit within my own blindness. But then, better a half-lie than nothing at all. Right? That is, without my own personal cutting and shaping you'd have nothing and these pages would simply echo in a dark, blank ignorance . . . Walter would be no one's dust of memory and even though he loathes me—as irrelevant as that may be to us right now—for what I did or didn't do, he deserves something more than oblivion . . .

Walter, Walter, Walter . . . you know, I can't even recall what I got from him, that one time, what from the others, and what out of my own damn head. You see, I saw none of it, as did no one except the two least willing to talk about it. This is really turning into an outside job.

Three years ago. Would the real Past please stand up? What a mess. He was an immigrant from Friedrichschafen in southern Germany which made his English somewhat shaggy and his falling in love even hairier though in the end he managed both and in the final end, for all I know, just as readily gave up both.

He met her Yes he did—it is a start—and seven months later, to jump ahead rapidly, he was to meet her at seven-thirty of a Sunday morning and they would go to church together:

"The rain had stopped during the night. Across the countryside the air was chilled and thick with wetness. To the east a thin sliver of dawn on the horizon was being pushed back into the earth as the soaked, heaving storm front rushed on," said I'm not sure of where I got all of this.

"But in the west the day came on with an even greater magnificence. The sky was clearing and still black with night, the millions of stars like drops of water frozen against a glass in the cold morning. A light breeze was beginning and with each insistent gust the water dripped furiously from bare branches and eaves and echoed on the streets and porches and slapped dully onto the hard ground," said Most likely from Hayden D. Hockensmith. The metaphor is richer than anything **her** mother would have come up with, though too rich for reality and probably a half-lie: A cold, wet winter morning, is good enough. He was excited.

"He awoke in a shroud of silence at five-thirty . . . a false, dusty peignoir of silence as though the world was on his bedstead in moist nobility, ready to roll into day with a thump, a crash, and a splatter of rainy wind, a quiet puffed with the white noise of ringing ears. He woke, dressed, turned on the gas heater, shaved, made coffee and sat, the thing begun, the day pulled off the calendar and pushed into time," said . . . Walter to **her** mother to Hayden to me. Actually, he'd never even gotten to sleep and simply gave up at five-thirty and sat and thought:

" . . . slow, doughy, gummed-up morning thoughts which made no sense at all and weren't worth a noon remembrance, though, jerked and flitty as they were, beneath the fog a web slashed about and tied them together and gave them shape," said . . . me; I did warn you about my intrusions, didn't I? There will be more.

He was frightened within his excitement, though his first, frantic little act of defiance that day made him grin when he thought back on it, standing there before the cracked and rusty shaving mirror and quite able to see that beneath the blown egg he saw in the glass the Styx gurgled and Charon grinned a dental, lopsided grin and Walter Trachmann thumbed his nose, feeling oatsey and good and still frightened because he was going to ask her to marry him and everyone knew about it.

He was on time and she was ready—a good match for handsome Walter (as variously related by Hayden, **her** mother, and myself): as tall as he but with a measure of greater, more sensuous fullness. Walter was hard at times, like banded jasper or iron pyrite, a polished ore, graceful yet jutting, gravel blond, green eyes, a mountain road with dazzling Norway spruce and sharp, fresh meadows filled with snorting range stock on the half-trot and gallop while she, "unrivaled merchant for his laughing wisdom was more of a morning yawn than an evening romp, of a wind of a warm summer, of heated air with the thick wetness of drowned wool, cautiously human yet fully alive, more than spirit and type but less than Walter in one way: she looked at him with eyes like two skies divided by tomorrow and in the generosity of an overburdened, phlegmatic passion was dismissed as simply unknowable," said Hayden. He has a knack for gush.

"Destiny's kitty . . . the cat . . .," well, it may be too soon for that. Anyway, the progression is often fuzzy. Allow me to intrude for a moment:

(We're watching, Walter Trachman. We left in an orgasm beneath a winter sky and now we're back—this signal jury, **her** mother, Hayden, and your narrator—learning more about you with every gnashing, scratch of the pencil (I could say, I would want to say that outside of **her** Walter and Hayden and I knew a love such as three men and three men only who have together scored and rent the sky could know. Days of long respect and nights filled with smoke and talk in the tavern and when we'd talked ourselves down to the bare bones of all the unsaid adjectives we found ourselves pointed toward the door and helped down the steps—great condensed clouds of beery breath—and God, Walter, sometimes during those long walks home I'd blast the autumn echoes with a monstrous belch and learn as you'd taught me the fantastic simple fun of guzzling down chilled air and wrapping it into me and thinking—thinking as I heard the wind, 'there is no wind that hasn't been blown before, no breath heretofore unbreathed'—and that was the real kinship with the past you taught me, us, though Hayden

kept ruining it by trying to express it while I was content to feel it and leave it alone. I think that during those moments, those walks, I touched upon something. What didn't you teach me, Walter?"

So Walter fell in love and ruined the trio, a positive, self-reversing sort of act which has occurred no less than too often in the history of the world. That could be what this is all about if it weren't for the stupidity of that damn, dead cat.

A tinge of Walter Trachmann drifts away, a color fades and he walks home with her from church . . . a different walk, a different shade of Walter, growing expansive and coy, nervous and proud.

"Oh God what a day! Though he never spoke such words to her. He didn't have to, difficult as they were, his mind tumbling off in German and grinding out his English like a head cheese. But she knew, naturally she knew, even if she couldn't see the clenched fist in the pocket and the sweaty ring hidden in the palm of the fist . . . she knew," said . . . **her** mother, and only **her** mother would ever speak that way.

Hayden: "He was dressed well for all his brushy tallness and generally uncouth relaxation: thick and even clean wide-wale corduroy sport coat, the sweater she'd made for him, a pale blue tinystriped sportshirt, clean pants and workshoes."

Yes, workshoes. The workshoes were a necessity well within the understanding of the Sunday congregation. The week before in another dirty winter rain he'd ruined his good brogan chasing her scarf up one wind and down another until finally he'd wound up in a pile of fine, fresh Holsteindung and decided he'd buy her a new scarf. He did, too, but the shoes were still, then, beyond his dignity.

Now, these several years later, whenever that Sunday is mentioned he seems to crawl in a nearly visible physical act down a jagged, windy tunnel into a hidden part of his self — perhaps that chunk of brain where the mind scoops its days like popcorn and shapes them into memory. He's changed. We all change but it's sad the way we're all still here and yet we no longer see each other. In that hole he crawls into sits a strange shame (he told me once, that is, in the only time I've seen him since then, that he'd compromised his honor and his pride though I knew he hadn't the faintest idea of honor: he simply didn't work that way and it seemed silly for him to draw on it as a soothing, worthy panacea to hide his, then, fear) where I imagine that gross, dead cat comes back again with all the furry coldness of a mass of Canadian air and wraps its claws into him for only a minute and then goes off to die again, yawning and stretching with a pristine coyness which for all its feline, deathwashed innocence is, to me, a dead cat and to Walter "a thunder, a storm, a monument to the elusiveness of routine; something so fantastic that it changed his life completely and he hasn't the vaguest idea why," said Hayden. Hayden saw Walter more often after that Sunday than I did because I was gone and when I came back I blew up at Walter's Sunday and without a word he calmly wrote me out of his life forever.

How terribly evasive people can be. There's Hayden and Walter and, of course, myself, perfectly willing to make those minute adjustments from the sometime drunk trio to the two friends of the new bride and groom

and then the adjustment wasn't necessary and everybody fell apart . . . except the cat, which is undoubtedly a rather dusty piece of carrion now, quite solidly flowing into the veins of a plant or a tree.

As far as I know the only written account of any of this is that long letter Hayden helped Walter draft to **her** mother to try in some way to explain his refusal to unite himself in something more than marriage with her daughter. In part, I'll set it down here, if only to show you how he did, and I'm sure still does, feel about her. It reeks with Hayden's touch but I think it's true. I think Hayden got through to her from him, Walter, in a way that Walter himself never realized because, as I said, he moved awkwardly in English:

For myself the day was grand, carved of a shining wetness from the early rain and then clear and beautiful in the morning sun . . . the day, the Sunday, and forever could warmly sink into death and I could never forget the heated richness I saw in her as we stopped near the edge of town and looked back to the small church and out to the farms and the fat clouds, everything gray with the autumn but gray with a shimmering, living cast of blue . . . She moved her arm . . . I saw it and took her hand with the long, glazed nails molded into the tips of her fingers and placed the ring and seeing her then for the first and last time looking at me with an inspired, lost, infatuated magnification and then she walked away and still I could not turn my eyes from her, could not admit that it was a normal Sunday and that we could walk quietly home and just as softly plan the wedding. I continued to stare, unmoving, touching her with my eyes and pulsing with the swaying gaiety of her walk, crawling with animate glory down to the time-washed beaches of her mind and owning her in this way. For she was easy to own and in this pure simplicity not the least of what had never been could tempt us; we wanted nothing, needed nothing so that what, then, in day was rounded soft and spilling over into beauty would be at night for the rest of our lives the whisper of dust on a leaf in a wind, a vivid light that bent and curved on a stream of time and swept furiously below us and above us but never within us for we had no use for it.

With obvious, jealous, bitterness I'll add that like lovers everywhere they thought they could excuse themselves from existence and nonchalantly wander off from the universe, gently bowing themselves out from this act to start their own theatre elsewhere. No wonder, I say, that

"Walter (it's all Hayden in this part — I'll excuse **myself** from any kind of gory interpretation) was shocked when he heard the cat roar. And roar it did, roar like a belling hobbled bull at a barn door as they passed the alley, roared in rage and anger and cheated hope and then died, but roaring first because he saw the two walking past and in his own tomcat way knew that just this damn once he'd have to get through the indefinite, effusive barrier that separated their two catch-crept species. So it roared as the toms roared at night in howling passion but here the passion was a walk on the edge of a world it had no wish to enter and the first thought that jolted Walter's mind was that they didn't usually roar in the morning. He looked down the alley and saw the cat and near the cat in Walter's own way Walter saw Death pulling a long rope (Hayden, Hayden, Hayden, Hayden!) and as the tautness grew things began to unwind inside of him

and for a brief, mad instant he stared and in the staring saw . . . saw what? Saw his fear, saw the whipping then slow and later heated, grinding rush of too many hours lost in sleep, too many days spent in waiting, saw himself at twenty-two too old to be able to do anything about . . . about what? About himself? No doubt it was shattering, no doubt he did see an expressly pungent something which absolutely forbade the step he so wondrously wanted to take but just how far can you go when you're on the outside looking in? (You've overshot the best division already, Hayden.

He'd made a mistake, that's all. Not five minutes earlier he'd accepted a charted sweep down into the next fifty years and he realized it was a mistake. He realized that someone, somewhere, at sometime had to flip a casual wrench into the casual gears and swim the other way, though of course he would have to swim alone since she would have nothing to do with it outside the prescribed form of documented procreation. We can explain it and he couldn't, can't because he's wrapped in too much of the inside that we're out of so for that matter I should be able to straighten it out better than Hayden. Let's look at it this way: Is it really possible, considering the way he did in truth feel about her, for him to beg her hand in marriage and not a half hour later to say, "I can't marry you" and leave her there alone by that corpse in the weeds?)

He stopped at the roar and she caught his halt and turned him on again and walked him down the alley in what was her first initiation of anything in their entire courtship.

"Oh . . . the poor thing," she said. They always say that, don't they?

Hayden: "I suppose it was a poor thing and by the time they got to it the moment had passed, the opportunity lost, the instant brushed away like so much messy, fallen sugar and they found themselves staring at a corpse, a cat corpse, but the corpse of a tough, brutal, furious, torn, weathered, wise and efficient kind of battlecat. One ear was freshly gone and the other was a tattered patchwork of scar and tufts of fur; the left eye—the smiling eye as Walter would remember—looked hard and saw nothing while the other hung stupidly from the socket on a gray cord and looked green and dusty. Against the mottled gray and black and brown dirt of the alley the cat was marvelous, a glorious banner of aggression, a pathetic, worn, salute to defense. Which? thought Walter. He couldn't tell. The town was thick with toms and they always fought but he'd never stopped to think that the fighting was serious, that no yards transgressed, no females dominated and lost were ever anything more than the harsh, clean hatred between the toms. Yards they wanted, females they wanted, but fighting they needed and death was never swift. The roar of the challenge was never more harsh, more proud, more alive than the final choked bellowing into nothingness.

"Walter was fascinated and modestly horrified. He wondered where the death blow had come and gently toed the cat until he saw the deep gash in the chest just below the throat but then this bothered him for there was so little blood. Had the gash come right before the end and the roaring? Had it been a final gesture by the now-confident stronger tom, a **coup de grace**, a scalping which finally tasted so bitter that the victor decided to leave the dying to die in a ludicrous attempt at communicating with something so foreign and so removed that the best it could do was pick it up by its indignant tail and toss it into the weeds . . . and itself walk away far more changed in life than the cat would ever be in death?"

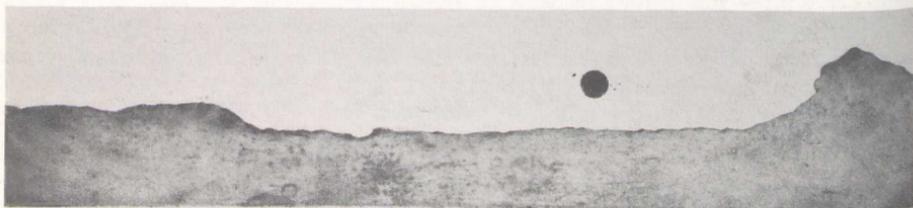
End of Hayden, end of Walter, and end of **her** mother. Only I am left and as you've seen there's very little that I actually know on my own authority. There's not much more to say, certainly very little interpretation that would be anywhere near correct. I can only guess and since you, now, have as much of the truth as I do I suppose I can venture a thought: venturing, that is to say, that nothing ever crashes through as suddenly as Walter would want to believe; venturing that he didn't know that he knows himself as only a minor chapter in a major story and that far more goes on within the direct sphere of everything he is than he could ever possibly hope to know. As I say, it's only a guess and even the guess is haunted because Walter believed the cat and only the cat ruptured everything and in that sense I imagine it did. You'll have to form your own conclusions. For myself, I just feel betrayed. I thought Walter was tougher than that.

GERALD K. WUORI

THE HARNESSED MAN

Tied around my waist
the world thread from unknown poles
hidden in the mushroom sun
streaming light on the fop's button
popped three-quarter time
in a garroting gasp,
I stand
cinched in a saddle,
heaving my chest against tomorrow
that today impels
until the choked world's button pops
and the sun turns toadstool.

TOM CARLIN



PETE JONES • "SELF PORTRAIT 2080 A.D." • INTAGLIO • 24" x 30"

THE YOUNG STONE-MAKER

A clever little boy
Sat cross-leg hands in lap
In the sand, staring at a stone,
Noting the difference.
And imagined making a stone,
Packing things together
That tight and hard.

A clever little boy
With mineral thoughts
And forty rainbows
All colliding in one
Terrible stone
So beautiful his eyes
Cracked and snapped shut.

The young stone-maker
Stirred the impossible,
Uncemented sand,
Felt his eyelids.

JON KNUDSEN

ENCOUNTER

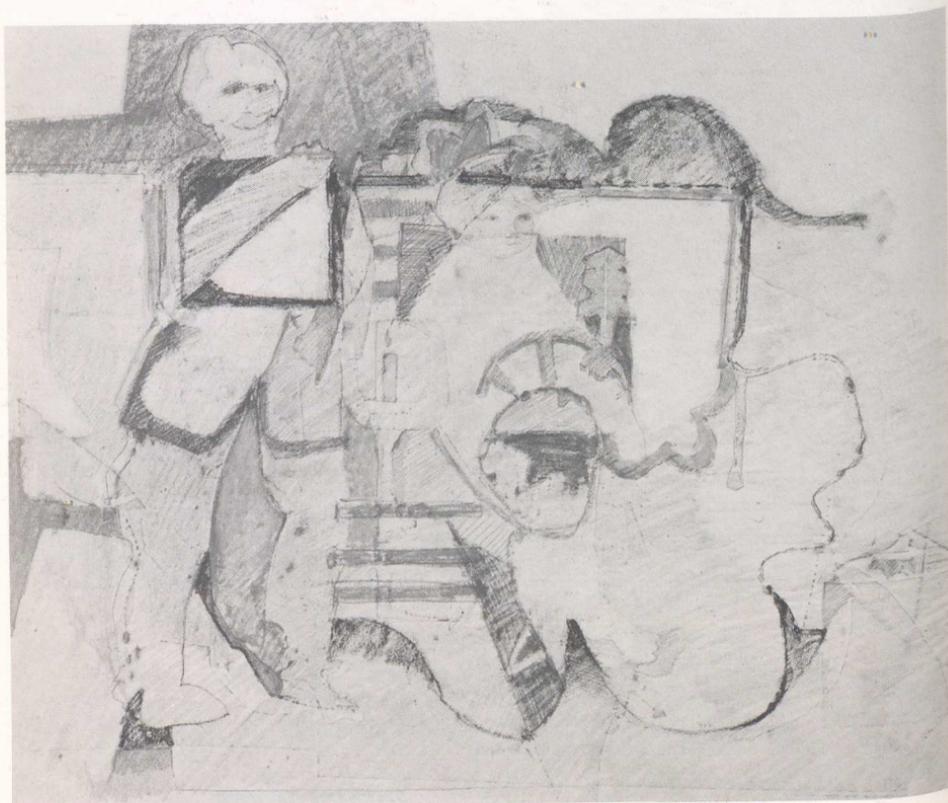
As a solitary figure moved
Slowly toward the horizon,
The sea reflected a myriad
Of primordial images in the sand.

Attracted, the man hesitated
To peer into the bright, crystalline reality.
And then fled suddenly toward shore,
Leaving only the small, dark stirrings
Of himself in the sand.

SHARON YOUHN

I'd like to find me a long-
legged
haired
armed
woman & just wrap myself
up in her &
not come out 'til noon
tomorrow.

PAUL YOHNKA



GWEN JONES • UNTITLED • DRAWING • 16" x 20"

POEM ON HER BIRTHDAY

(For Pascal)

She says she's from the Netherlands
My girl who steals my mind with eyes.
Though she knows where she's been
She can't begin to forget,
And, I, in my corner, can't cry.

She takes her time and thinks she's lazy
And I, lying by her, can't forget
My fingers around her eyes,
The park, the afternoons, the long country drives
Her hair in my face,
The laughter and barefoot feet
Tickling on a blanket in the park.
And I, lying by her, can't forget
My fingers around her eyes,
Her smiling all the while she knew what she knew.

She says she's from the Netherlands,
The Neverlands, my girl who thinks she's lazy.
When she sleeps I cannot wake her,
When she wakes she thinks I'm crazy.

And I, in my corner, can't cry.

JOE BAUERS

LAND OF THE MORNING CALM

The lights were on and some of the others were already up and getting dressed. I rolled out of the bunk and dressed too. God what a stench there was. Up on the deck it was just getting light, overnight the water had turned from emerald blue to a murky brown-green. There were fish heads and orange crates floating here and there. It would be two hours yet before we sighted land. I was glad to get ashore so that I could get away from the smell that I associated with the harbor area. That wasn't only the harbor area, that odor was as much a part of Korea as the 38th parallel, which was why we were there in the first place I suppose.

It took about a week to get used to the idea that I would spend a year there; then it became one of those things that had always been that way. And soon I became an "old China hand," used to the routine and very passive about the whole thing; then I just settled down for the long wait until I could leave. Like everyone else I kept a "short-timer's calendar" on which I faithfully marked off every day that passed. It was a point of pride to be able, at a moment's notice, to rattle off the number of days that you had left to go, and nearly everyone could do it. For a while I got a lot of kidding because I had more time left than anybody, but later on I got my blows in on the newer replacements.

Sundays were the days that went the slowest. You'd sleep as long as you could so you didn't have to get up, because there was nothing to do once you got up. Well, sometimes on Sunday you could go to the Buddhist temple which was about fifteen miles away, but after a while you got where you didn't care if you ever saw another temple again. If you were weak of character, you could go out to the village in the afternoon and get drunk, and then feel miserable because no one else was drunk, and if anything was going on you'd miss it because you were too fuzzy, and then you'd get sick and go to bed in your clothes. After several hours you'd wake up hot and sweaty and be unable to go back to sleep.

The weather was pretty decent there, except for the early spring when there was one five-minute deluge after the other. In the half mile walk to the village the rain might get you two or three times. We were pretty far south in Korea, so it was warm enough to work outside all year around. The warm days were the worst; the mornings would be cool enough for field jackets, but by noon we would be in T-shirts. We always had an endless supply of weapons to work on, and each weapon had its own container which had to be sanded down and painted by the ordnance technicians. That was us. The paint dust would stick to your sweaty skin and get in your throat and make it burn, and you kept trying to clear it but it didn't do any good. At mid-morning break you'd sit down with your sandpaper and look at the sun; it seemed like it would never move across the sky.

The storage area was guarded by an infantry company. They were all a little crazy because they had to pull eight hour shifts in the guard towers by themselves. Doyle fired eight rounds at a bush in broad daylight because

it was trying to get through the fence. Caton climbed down out of his tower and went to sleep in the grass because the weather was warm and sunny; he was busted for it. Davis shot himself in the foot, Rodgers jumped from the twenty foot tower and broke his leg, Patterson fired three rounds at the OD who was checking guard posts one night. The company had a guard dog platoon where they put all the misfits. The dogs did the guarding and their handlers answered the field phones set up at the posts. They guarded the sandbagged storage structures at night. They couldn't put Nye and Shaver on the same shift because they'd get behind the sandbags and fire back and forth at each other.

The infantry was always screwing things up for the rest of us. They threw rocks at the unarmed village cop and chased him into his little one roomed station house. The next night they did the same thing, and after he had locked himself in the station, they tried to tip it over, and would have succeeded if the OD hadn't arrived in the nick of time. The infantry always got their replacements in bunches of twenty or thirty, which was a lot for such a small camp. For the first week or two after they arrived you couldn't get a girl for under five dollars, even if you threw in a bottle of Aqua Velva after-shave lotion, which they dearly love, and a bar of Lifebuoy soap, which they didn't use often enough. One new trooper paid fifty dollars to get it standing up behind the enlisted men's club. Two guys in the dog platoon tried to get a girl to go for their German Shepherd guard dog, but she was afraid the dog would get excited and bite her. The village mama-san was furious when she heard about that. Mama-san was an old matriarch who was sort of a village monarch by popular consensus. She was the one who made the village a money-making operation. She saw to it that girls who habitually had VD and slicky boys who tried to roll drunken GI's were thrown out of town. That way the village was never declared off-limits, and the money kept rolling in. When mama-san called a meeting, everyone went, even the local officer of the national police.

Mama-san owned one of the dirt floored village bars. It was the quietest place in town. If she liked you, she adopted you and wanted you to call her "Noona," which meant "older sister." If you were nice, she said you were a gentleman and had a forehead like a prince. You were nice if you didn't vomit or urinate on the bar room floor, and if you said "may-an-haam-nee-da" when you said something particularly vulgar. It didn't matter what you said, only that you said you were sorry for saying it.

If you didn't get sick when you got drunk, you could go to Murray's and get something to eat. You got fried noodles to eat. Murray was a Korean and the only English he understood was "fried noodles." But it didn't matter because that's all the doctor said was fit to eat there anyway. The noodles were hot and greasy and were sprinkled with little black and red and green things that were bland tasting and rubbery. We never did find out just what they were; maybe they were Murray's little joke on us.

If you did get sick when you got drunk, there were ditches on the side of the road, and it felt good to lay in them because the mud was cool. And sometimes you'd lay in them and puke and wish you were dead. We always checked the ditches when we went in at night just in case someone had passed out there. Larsen passed out there on New Year's Eve and it snowed on him so we didn't see him, and he wasn't found until nine the next morning, hung over, but otherwise unharmed.

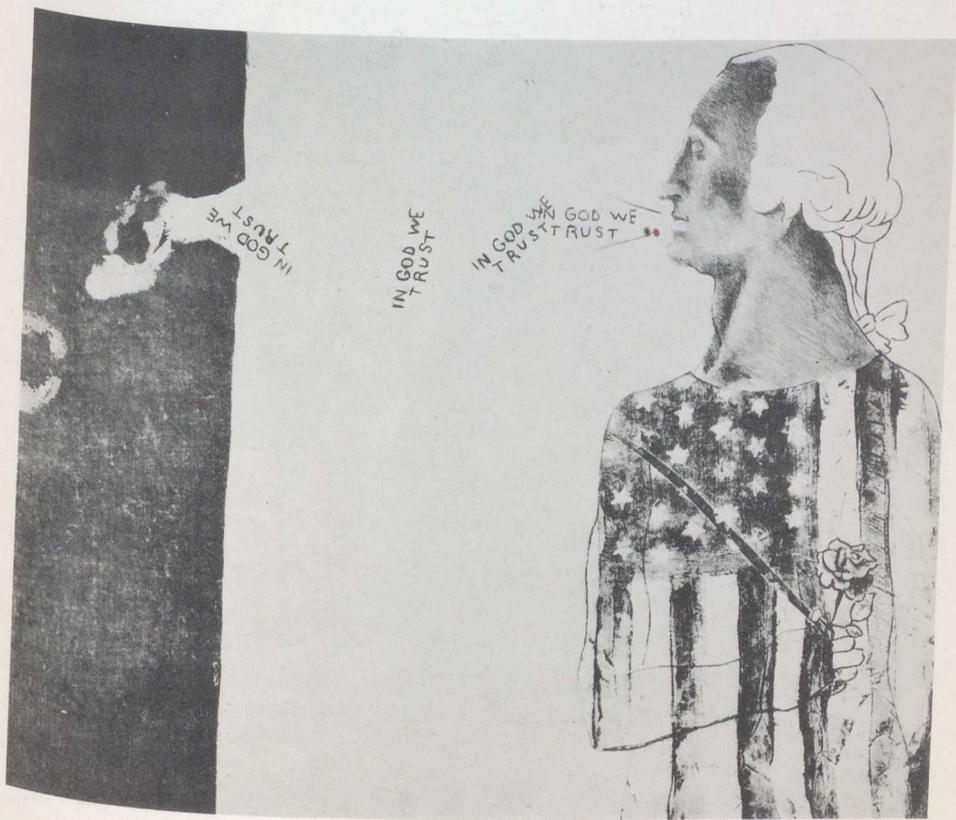
The big day had to come eventually: we were in a landing craft making our way through the fish heads and orange crates in Inchon harbor to the troop ship that lay waiting for us offshore. We were all leaning over the sides yelling things at our replacements who were coming in, in the other landing craft. A little civilian cutter caught up with us and there were two girls on the front deck. One girl was crying and calling "Martin, Martin," and the other girl was holding her to keep her from falling off the bouncing deck. We all ran to one side to watch of course. Everyone was laughing at her. "Martin, Martin, I'm love you!" We all looked to see who would answer. No one did. I saw one guy sitting on the deck, out of sight beneath the gunwales, I think that was Martin, and I guess he was glad to leave; but for me it was almost like leaving home.

STEVEN M. OLDERR

TOYMAKER

The noise
(not the thought
of dying for
a worthless cause),
the shuffling feet
of toy soldiers
carrying me
in ready-to-reassemble kits
to governmental hobbyists,
makes me think
there must be
some way better
to recover
than blow it up
and start all over.

TOM CARLIN



PAT SNYDER • "A NATION SPEAKS" • LITHOGRAPH • 13" x 17"



GWEN JONES • "INTERIOR: FIGURES & CHAIRS" • LITHOGRAPH • 16" x 24"

AT THE WINDOW

I have missed the golden bell
Its sound silent beyond the street
Hidden in the children's faces,
In the rising breeze.
The sparrows gather in trees
That spray the sun's burning
Softened across the concrete walks
And dampening grasses.
The young couples leaning, stroll
Over the walks, across the streets,
Their heels sounding with the sparrows
Entering evening.
The crickets' sharp beats of sound
Finally lose the golden bell
Forcing me away to my room,
The night settling.

EDWARD BEATTY

GAZA WOMAN

You always seem new sand:
I may fix no well-marking words,
Only send run-on
Sentences travelling over you
Like toy camel-trains,
Forever circling back
To orient.

A word is no monument;
It is the tent of a nomad,
Pitched as if to make
The desert believable.

JON KNUDSEN

THE ISOLATES

Father hated St. Tropez. Pampelonne beach wasn't crowded with soldiers, as he would have liked. Swimmers lay browning with a luxurious patina. "I can remember when Pampelonne was the vital bridgehead for the Allied landings," Father said. "Now, even General Patch couldn't storm through all those yachts crammed together against the docks."

While Father was absorbed in this fury, scowling, flaunting his Class A uniform against the sun and a minority of bathers (we were on a secluded section), I quietly put my bath towel over Secret's cage.

Father frowned. "Why don't you swim? And take that good towel off that idiot bird's cage. People will think you're a fool."

"I don't care. After all, tomorrow I'll be ten. Besides, Secret might get a chill. They can die from that." Secret was my bird—a parakeet. A small parrot, the man at the pet shop said.

"Since you're not swimming, we'll go."

Father pulled me by the arm all the way back to the hotel. Secret's cage flapped against my side.

I lay on the bed for the remainder of the afternoon. When evening came, I leaned out of the window and looked along the harbor where the lights from the yachts glowed with a soft, warm focus. An old man played a button accordion outside the hotel. Secret screeched and I lifted the tiny door so he could escape from the cage. He flew to my shoulder and clamped his feet to my skin. His soft feathered breast was a lonely curve by my face. I said his name, softly, "Secret."

The next morning we had croissants and tea for breakfast under the frumpy statue of Admiral Pierre-Andre de Suffren. I fed Secret a soda cracker, slanting it between the bars of his cage. Father would not talk. I finally had to order a plate of sausages so that I would have the opportunity to scrape the fork against my teeth. Father stiffened at the sound, one eyelid flying up to free a wild cornea. He began yelling at me, intermittently using words I usually heard only around the motor pool. (I was an expert on the motor pool. Father was always having me delivered at one place or another, and I spent a good part of my childhood leaning on taupe colored cars and trucks waiting for a PFC or maybe a corporal to finish a comic book or "GI" a cigarette before driving me off.) Father kept yelling, until a waiter, rushing against a morning breeze and walking fairly horizontally into the wind, swooped upon our table, cleared off my small plate, and effusively apologized for the inferior sausages. I was awarded a double order of sausages — **par excellence** — and Father made me eat all of them with my fingers.

"Why do you do this to me?" he asked.

"Do what?"

"Don't play innocent. I hope you realize you can't play innocent, with me or anyone. You're an **Army-brat**, so face up to it."

"Father." I licked my fingers. Juices stained my hands to the wrist. "Father, please, don't be mad at me. It's my birthday."

"Take your fingers out of your mouth."

"I'm just licking the juices off."

"Well, don't."

"I wish you wouldn't shout at me. It upsets Secret. He's delicate."

"That bird. Always thinking about the bird. Let's see if he can pay your tuition. Or buy you new ice skates."

"You just don't like animals. I bet mother . . ."

"Don't mention her." His voice became choked and he had to blow his nose.

"But I have a right to know something about her. Besides, it's my birthday."

I was only nine months old when mother got pneumonia. She died in an Army hospital, Father said, on an army regulation bed. No doubt a supply clerk somewhere was still issuing that bedding. After all, one did not throw away things in the Army.

Father had lowered his head. He considered the death of mother as his own private grief. He didn't want intruders.

"Did you forget my birthday?" I asked, diverting him.

"No."

"Good. Then you got me something."

"Have I ever forgotten!" Father looked up quickly. He was threatened. Birthdays, like retirement parades, were carefully observed.

"Where is it?"

"Wait a minute. There are some arrangements to be made. We've got to make the Luxemburg trip," Father said.

"Again?"

"It's that time of the year. Just before school begins, you know."

I knew what to expect on the Luxemburg trip. First we had to visit the United States Military cemetery just outside Luxemburg City. It contained nearly six thousand white stone markers, and Father always made me go along reading names until I dropped over from fatigue; or if there wasn't a name on the marker, I sang out the usual "Here-Rests-in-Honored-Glory-A-Comrade-in-Arms-Known-But-to-God" (I always suspected "known but to **Father**, too"). Then Father would give me a short quiz on pertinent information dealing with the Battle of the Bulge and the Rhine crossing (I did poorly on such quizzes, and the Swiss School got blasted because of it). We would examine the grave of General George Patton, Jr., and I would be forced to admire the modest marker of the general. It bore only a name and four stars.

On our first evening in Luxemburg, we had to attend **Fingerhackln** — finger wrestling — in a saloon, located ironically enough, beside the walls of the Benedictine Abbey. During **Fingerhackln**, I was allowed to nurse one stein of beer. It was fun to watch the saloonkeeper set out the large table with the white chalk line down the center. Sometimes the town band would pump through the **Fingerhackln Hym**. Two men would sit down at the table, and after the word "Auf" was given, they would proceed to have a kind of tug of war with their middle finger. Father loved such sport. After the match, I was invariably teased and goaded into trying the game with one of the men. Bravely I would wrap my legs around the stool and extend my finger in a leather loop and tug frantically. I usually got a nose bleed from the strain, and Father would hurry me home, disgraced.

"I don't want to go to Luxemburg."

"Don't tell me you don't want to go."

Secret screeched.

"I suppose he doesn't want to go, either."

"He doesn't care. Just as long as I'm with him."

"That could change," Father said.

"What do you mean?"

"Never mind."

But I was scared. "You wouldn't take him away, would you? You wouldn't tell the head where I hide him at school?"

"I'm not that underhanded. You know that."

Somewhat relieved, I pressed the issue about Luxemburg. "I'd rather die than go."

"You'll go."

"Why! Why?"

"Tradition. A family unit, however small, must have tradition. That's all one has left afterwards."

"Afterwards what?"

"This is no time for explanations."

"You mean because it's my birthday?"

Father hesitated. "Yes, I suppose so." He began writing out a transportation requisition. Then we paid our bill and left the cafe.

Father said we would have to make a short trip in order to pick up the birthday gift he had ordered. I left Secret at the hotel, first changing his water cup and filling his seed bowl. Father phoned in our Luxemburg requisition and ordered a staff car for the day.

We were on our way to see a Lady — royalty. (I started complaining, but Father said girls were supposed to like that sort of thing.) Her name was Lady Margaret Monton. She was descended from a Lady Crey, the Lady Elsbeth Crey who was once granted a "curtsy patent" by Henry VI. The

"curtsy patent" permitted Lady Monton's descendant the privilege of not having to bow before the king because of rheumatism in the knees.

Father met Lady Monton at a fancy buffet. The General got him the invitation. The General liked having his staff mingle with royalty; he said officers were democracy's "titled" men.

Father winced. I knew he didn't like telling me. His debut was crushing. He had gone to the buffet in a white silk dinner suit, and the servants almost refused to serve him. "You can't get by with that sort of thing in England. You may say what you want about London society," father remarked, "but they will not serve you at their tables in a white silk dinner suit. He laughed nervously. "No, ha ha ha, oh no. It had better be full dress with the wing collar, tailcoat, boiled shirt and dark pearl studs."

"I suppose they're all laughing about it at the NCO Club," I said, protectively. "You should have worn your uniform—fatigues."

"I didn't tell you this to get sympathy. Let it be a lesson. Now **you** know."

"But after that, why is she letting us visit her?"

"Breeding," Father said. "You can always tell good breeding."

Lady Monton's summer villa was located on a promontory with bright cliffs and winding little roads bordered with rosemary and scarlet geraniums. It was a villa in the old style, father pointed out, with mullioned windows and a facade covered with pargeting, colorful plaster-reliefs of what must be Renaissance heroes and feats.

The rooms inside were cool and dark as a church. A manservant led us through a passage-way decorated with bright chintzes and cheerfully painted panels in the ceiling. Father eagerly called my attention to everything. A directoire clock, partially hidden in the recess of a window, began to play a mazurka on the hour. Along the walls were gold and silver plated mirrors, great numbers of them set in stucco moulds and elaborate rococo scrolls.

Her ladyship received us in the "budgie" room. Chirps and screeches and chatter pinged in my inner-most ear. Platinum cages, about twenty of them, lined the wall, and trays of greens littered the floor. Lady Monton was sliding bits of kale, carrot tops and dark lettuce to the eager birds.

"So you're the birthday girl," she said.

"I'm ten today."

"Here, take Tuppence." She leaned over, and the parakeet hopped from her silk shoulder onto my bright cotton sleeve. "Poor thing does not talk, not as we know talk. But somebody or other from the Ministry of Education informed me once that Tuppence babbled in open-syllabication, whatever that is."

"I'm sure he's very bright," I said.

"Yes, they're all bright—all of them." She paused, shaking her gray head without a hair moving. Her coiffure, bouffant, back combed, was carefully sprayed into a slick back-twist. "They're little necromancers."

Father began to fidget. I could hear his shoes grating on the floor. He rattled the change in his pocket. He began to brush his trousers with loud smacking strokes.

"Hoyt," Lady Monton said to her manservant, "take the colonel to the terrace for a drink."

She gave me some broccoli and I lifted up the sprig to Tuppence. He nibbled hungrily, then turned away to peck at my hair. His feet were warm. The little claws tickled my skin.

We fed the birds silently. Greedy little heads poked out from cages. Having had their fill of greens, they dipped down gracefully for water, bending from their perches to the little cups below. They fluffed out their feathers and brought up tiny slick seeds from their throat to shed against toy mirrors. "They are feeding their reflection; sharing with what they think is another bird," Lady Monton said.

"Is there a Lord Monton?" I asked abruptly.

"Lord Monton, born Percy Healey Kenneth Turton-Pickthorne — holder of an ancient British barony and squire of a farm in Southern Italy. He died 10 years ago in Brighton — that beastly winter when all the birdbaths froze over."

"I'm sorry about Lord Monton," I said.

"Don't be. He was a **busted flush**. A bore, too."

Tuppence began to sing. He flew to the top of his cage and perched there pumping his head up and down. Then he bounded over the side, using his beak to descend until he flipped inside the open hatch.

"Tuppence has had quite enough of us." Lady Monton smiled and straightened the bolero jacket of her dress. Then she wedged her finger between the slate of a cage and petted a little bird around the neck. But a yellow beak snapped and she quickly pulled away. She sucked on her finger tip. "Not the same as parrots; a parrot has a three corner bite, like barb wire. Still, it does smart."

"I know. Secret bit me on the cheek once."

"Yes, they'll do that."

"But he's usually sweet. He whistles all the time. And he listens."

"They adjust beautifully to people. They can do quite well without their kind. Of course you know that once a parakeet has a mate, it won't bother with people."

Lady Monton pulled the heavy drapes and the room became dark. The birds, overly warm, pulled their wings away from their breasts. I helped cover the cages with velvet cloths; it was nap time.

"You really should get out more," I said.

"How hard it is for outsiders to understand. Men are actually the ruling force. We women use their titles and their wealth. Without the support of our husbands, we are invariably lost. A man gives support by presenting himself at a ball or garden party for a mere five minutes. He may be bored and disgruntled, as such, but those five minutes are invaluable."

"Not that I haven't tried," she said.

In Paris, Lady Monton told me, it had been fashionable to do needlework. She had ordered elaborate swatches of material from Atelier d'Anais and had planned to make an afghan. But when the small squares arrived, neatly arranged in cellophane wrappers along with the necessary wools, she knew it was useless. The needlework would only tire her.

At the **Le Circle** in London, she had tried gambling, playing chemmy at the large, kidney shaped tables, chewing on raspberry colored chips, sitting stiffly on small gilt chairs. But for what purpose? Where was the thrill when she had more than enough money for the set fee at the beginning of each **shoe**? And what was the tribute when old men slithered complimentary chips to her across the olive baize?

She could return to Spain where she had spent some happy days with her family, she said. Spain was a country of two or three days in one, depending on whether one slept in the morning or in the afternoon. According to a friend, the morning was one day, the evening another day, and if one were rigorous, the afternoon was still another. A person, so the saying went, could live three times in one day. But alone? Lady Monton asked.

"But come, we're only annoying the budgies," she said. "And the Colonel is patiently waiting for us."

Lady Monton led me through a dark hall to the sun deck. I sat at a table cluttered with soups and sauces. She walked to the railing along the terrace and looked down thoughtfully at the harbor. From her pocket she lifted out a box filled with lozenges, placing one of the shiny, yellow discs on the back of her tongue. I could hear the lozenge click against her teeth.

"It's going to be a dreadful winter coming up. Hoyt just received a letter from his brother in Swansea. The walruses are flaunting themselves boldly on shore. It's a bad sign. We're in for a severe winter."

"A bad sign," Hoyt repeated.

"Everything is getting impossible. Not just the weather. You have no idea how hard it is to get menservants these days. And when one has the good fortune to acquire superior menservants, then one dines at home. Restaurants are getting intolerable, quite intolerable. What do those six-waiter captains in restaurants know? The waiter hands **it** to the captain and the captain hands **it** to you. What? What, I ask you?"

"I'm sure I don't know," Father said.

"Bad champagne, that's what. A champagne bottle that's been plunged in ice water. Who can possibly tolerate it? Champagne must always be served on a mound of crushed ice. Now you know that. Even a child knows that."

I nodded, more or less in appeasement.

"Of course you know it. I would expect a colonel's daughter to know."

Lady Monton then began to complain about the injustice afforded English culinary arts. It was a crime that people on the continent, and elsewhere, did not know the proper British food. For my birthday lunch, she had the cook serve a sampling of English specialties: Bird's nest soup, plover's eggs and suckling pig. Stuffed to the limit, I felt very much like a toad, eager to wander off to a stump somewhere, sluggish and fat.

"Go out into the garden and let Imre cut you a fresh melon for dessert. The Colonel and I will be there presently with your birthday gift."

"Who's Imre?" I asked.

"The gardener. He's a Russian — a **real** Russian! Have you ever seen one? He defected only five years ago. I found him playing an accordion, with musette even, in a small cafe on the left bank. A marvelous find."

Imre was playing "solitaire" in the east garden. He sat on top of a round marble table, his feet tucked under him. The plastic cards were sticking together from the heat and he had trouble dealing. Patiently, he separated one clinging card from another, over and over.

The sun penetrated the garden, blinding even there among the lattice of shade. The water came from fountains, from the small duck pond near the boathouse, from the statues; the dripping cadences issued from all parts of the grounds, from the rock garden, so that there was never a moment when I did not hear water.

I lay upon the grass, kicking off my sandals and stretching out my arms. Lifting up slowly, anchored on elbows, I stared at Imre until he looked away from his game. But he only frowned, taking notice of me without interest and returning to his cards.

"May I have a melon?"

Imre calmly stuffed the cards in his shirt pocket. He brought me a fresh melon from the garden. He cut it open with a machete, and I ate it without a fork, pushing my face in the hollow and letting the generous juice splatter on my cheeks and down my neck.

When I had finished, Father and Lady Monton came down the walk. Father handed me a small box with holes in it. "Happy birthday, daughter," he said.

I already knew what it was. I didn't want to lift the lid, but Father made me. I got melon juice all over the sides.

"A little female," Lady Monton said. "A perfect little beauty. I shouldn't part with her, but it's your birthday. And the Colonel was kind enough to accept a buffet invitation for next week."

"How do you like her?" Father asked.

The female, with her wings clipped, fluttered nervously in the box. She was a beautiful blue, with a soft white head.

"You mean, how will Secret like her," I said, bitterly.

"Little Secret will love her," Lady Monton cooed.

"Wash up by the fountain," Father ordered. "Then we must be off. Packing to do for the Luxemburg trip. I'll meet you by the car." He followed Lady Monton down the walk.

Birds came to nibble at the seeds and rind which I threw near the brush — little sparrows, and a pigeon. They ate lazily, resplendent from a summer of plenty, breaking bits of melon and carrying it off to eat alone. My eyes began to sting, probably from the heat, and I closed them. When I looked out again, the pigeon stood on the rind, chasing away the sparrows.

"Cheater!" I called, tossing a stone at the white pigeon.

Imre jumped from the table, standing over me excitedly. "No! No!" He told me how it was in Moscow, the parks there with the blue fences to mark off pigeon areas, the signs everywhere — **DO NOT KILL PIGEONS** — the fines, even, for killing them, the women in stiff white coats who sold bags of grain and scraps to feed them.

"Why? Why pigeons?"

But Imre only shrugged. No one had ever asked him **why**.

I washed carefully by the fountain. I could hear Imre humming in the rock garden, and it pleased me to think he was happy, for surely he was, humming like that, working outside when probably most of his friends had dreary jobs in damp, musty places.

I carried the female carefully to the car. I put her on my lap, my fingers placed firmly on the lid, so I could shield the box from the winding curves and the rough stone roads. Lady Monton waved to us, but I wouldn't take my hands away from the box long enough to wave back.

LAVONNE MUELLER

VIVIAN

a wispy woman young and gray
had scarabs tattooed
on the insides of her eyelids
and lived alone, but kept
a peyote coyote for a housepet,
called him "My Karma";
they went places together,
but never left the house.

ED MANUAL



JOHN PUF AHL • "SPIKENARD & SAFFRIN" • INTAGLIO • 10" x 12"

Ann,

I loved you
'til my bones creaked
and my head caved in
and my hands dripped
My love poured from me
And I was young and flowing then
My love leaked and pooled and puddled
but you maybe just got your feet wet

and it dried up

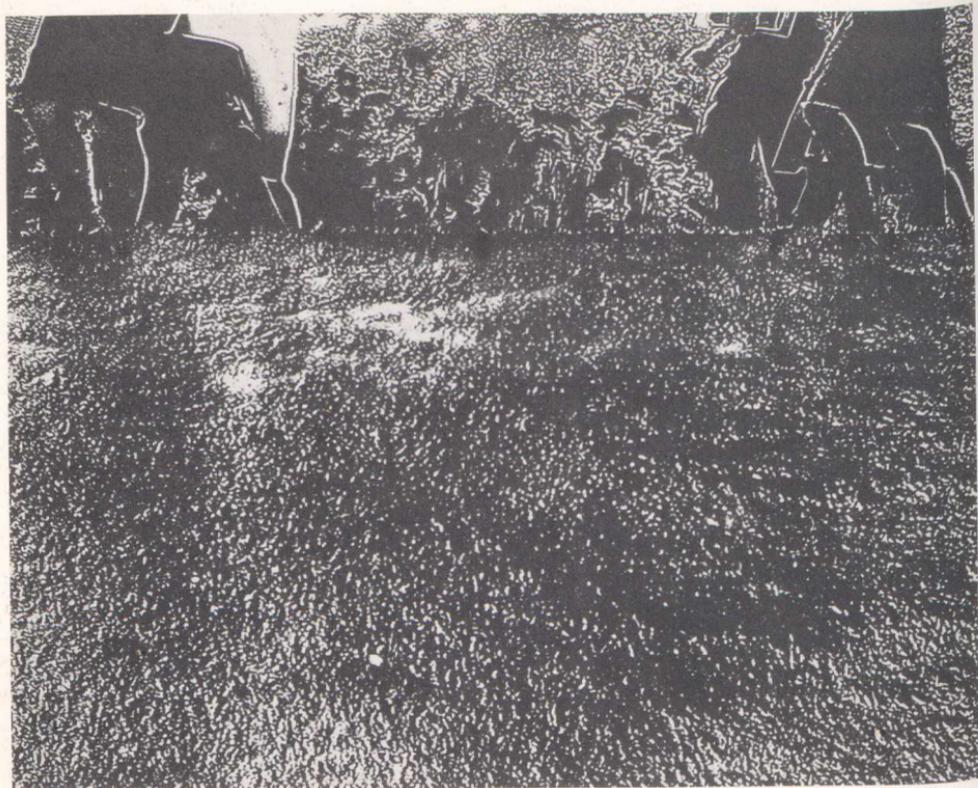
Now I am older and flood-controlled
and my bones are dry
and my head is filled with wet memories
and my chapped hands are mostly in my pockets.

PAUL YOHNKA

OBSEQUIY: THE YOUNG PROFESSOR

Well nailed upon pellucid themes,
Full caught: we mourn his stylish death.
While young, our mentor pitied schemes
Well nailed upon pellucid themes.
Though once our pampered tutor, now it seems
He works to err with every pensive breath:
Well nailed upon pellucid themes,
Full caught: we mourn his stylish death.

GERALD K. WUORI



BOB SWINEHART • "PEOPLE WALKING" • PHOTOGRAPH • 11" x 14"

AGNOSSOS

Three gentlemen were met a night
To share a rich, red wine.
The three wore hats; and, each to each,
These hats were suited fine.

Theos wore a miter —
For him made to the use.
He held the wine up, chalice-like,
And drank it all at once.

Atheos' hat was pointed,
Star-studded, tallest of the three.
Atheos had no taste for wine;
He spilled it carelessly.

The small, black cap Agnosos wore
Had not one gem or star;
But, by the way he wore it,
'Twas the finest hat by far.

Agnossos loved the wine
And drank one cup to Theos' four.
Atheos, careless with his cup,
Had, nonetheless, drunk more.

Agnossos had no wish to bow
To Bacchus' false elation,
For he knew the beauty of this wine
Went far beyond gustation.

The conversation, by this time,
Was growing most profound —
And pyramids of reason built
With each succeeding round.

From the bellies of two wine-soaked scholars,
Bold answers were presented
To questions that have plagued mankind
Since reason was invented.

Agnossos smiled and saw a light
Amidst the bleak confusion.
The other two he labeled "kinsmen,"
Their common name — Delusion.

By cock, the wine was gone;
The stillness like a tomb —
Except for rumbling, baritone snores
That echoed in the room.

As mourning light crept in the room,
Agnossos turned to go —
And saw himself as fortunate
For being one who knows

That wit, like wine, has native charm
Which leads to pleasant rest;
But drinking without tasting
Only leads to drunkenness.

WILLIAM HART

THE QUIET KIND

I

The water was rising, but it rose every spring so it didn't bother him, except that the muddy water made fishing more difficult. He was sitting on the edge of his beached boat untangling catfish lines when he heard the deep rumble of the wagon approaching on the muddy trail. He stood to watch it. He had had very few visitors in the fifteen years since his mother had died and he had moved to the cabin, which squatted, toadlike, on the forever damp shore, and which he had built himself, then, in his eighteenth year. When he was ten, his father, a back hills farmer, had been killed by a kick from a plow horse. He and his mother had kept the farm in a sort of order, sharing the heavy work until he was strong enough to do it himself. His youth and the harshness of the land made long hours of work necessary so it was only rarely that he was able to leave the farm and go to town, ten miles away, down in the valley. When his mother died the burial was arranged by some neighbors, whom he hardly knew. The farm, filled with reminders of his mother, became unbearable. He took what money was left after the funeral and started, on the horse, for the river. When he had found the spot on which he was now standing he had sold the horse and bought lumber for the cabin. Since then, not more than two or three people had ever come to the cabin. He recognized the man in the wagon as a neighbor whom he had met some time ago. The neighbor reined in the horse and spoke.

"I thought I'd better come and tell you. On the radio last night it said the river's flooding upstream and it's going to be here soon." When the neighbor left he tied the rope of his boat to a branch as high as he could climb on a Box Elder tree. As he dragged the boat away from the shore, his shoes, colorless and cracked with age and innumerable wettings, left shallow oval scars in the clay of the riverbed, while the cuffless bottoms of his grey-patinaed denim coveralls showed damp streaks the color of the cheap coffee the man drank. He returned to the cabin, his shoes sinking into the clay first a finger width, then as he approached the sawn-plank door, less than the thickness of the nail that served as a door pull. He moved about in the dim light carefully putting his possessions into a frayed burlap sack — the tick, emptied of straw; the hooks, coarse line, and scaling knife; tin plate and cup; the fork, the tines bent and straightened countless times; the pan; and the long unused kerosene lamp. With the quick gesture of a fisherman setting a hook into a catfish, he swung the sack to his shoulder and left the cabin. Not looking at the steel grey sky and its reflection on the rising water he started walking steadily toward the hills.

II

She opened her eyes, startled finally by the sound of wood being chopped. She had been half hearing it for some time. Quickly, she threw back the bed clothes. She slipped into her dress — a shirtwaist of cotton pat-

turned with small green flowers. It was clean, ironed but not faded, and a little too large. She put on her shoes and sat down on a white painted straight chair to tie them. On her way through the kitchen she took her grey sweater off the back of a chair. She stood looking out the glass of the back door as she buttoned it. Her blue eyes, tense and angry in the early morning, saw alternately the window's reflection of her own pale face with the wisps of brown hair across it, and the view of the man in the barnyard fifty yards away.

He didn't look up as she approached, walking carefully but quickly on the rain softened ground. She stood, five yards from him, while the ax rose and fell several times until the log split and the halves fell with a dull thud to the soft ground. Only then did he look up.

"Flood," he said, and got another log. She fumbled with the hem of her sweater as he began chopping again. Her mouth contorted, wordless, as if his concentration made it difficult for her to speak. Finally she forced out,

"Hey." The ax wedged itself into the concentric year rings of the log. He turned his head toward her. She spoke. "What are you doing?"

"Got no place else to go," he said. "Flood took my place." And she quickly . . .

"You can't stay here . . . There's no place to . . ."

"Slept in there." He motioned toward the paintless grey barn. He went back to chopping. She stood there fastening and unfastening the bottom-most button of her sweater. She watched the ax rise and fall a few more times and then went back to the house. As she approached the wooden platform that served as the house's back porch she noticed the bucket of eggs on the corner. She stopped short three yards from the oxide hazed metal bucket. After a few moments she turned to look at the swinging ax. Her quizzical expression remained for about as long as it took the ax to plunge into a log. She took the eggs into the house with her.

Half an hour later she emerged, carrying a china plate of eggs, bacon, and bread in one hand and a mug of sweetened coffee in the other. He ate quickly, using his own fork, since she brought none—going to the barn to get it while she watched the plate and cup propped on a log. Sitting on a log, she watched, immobile, and when he finished took the plate, cup, and his fork back to the house—still silent.

The third day it rained. When he came to the house she had the two plates on the kitchen table. He laboriously wiped his feet on the doormat then sat down at the place with his fork. She filled the plates then sat nibbling at her food while, she watched him wolf his down between gulps of coffee. When he finished he stumbled out of his chair and on the way to the door muttered,

"Thanks."

After that she served his meals in the kitchen every day. They sat across the table from each other, rarely speaking at all, and then only in monosyllables.

The hard rains and vivid greens of early spring eased into the slop rain and deep verdure of early summer. She watched him often from her windows as he worked in her fields—plowing—planting—cultivating. She watched him settle into the unfamiliar routine of work on her farm. She watched as if she expected to wake up from a dream some day. When she

found the eggs on the back porch every morning, her expression became a smile. None of the features of her face seemed to move, but, nevertheless, there was a smile of mild surprise and disbelief.

One day about three weeks after he had come she baked a fish. It was a very large fish and had been given to her when she visited a neighbor whose husband yearly went on pilgrimages to fish for trout. This was not trout though. This was bass.

When he sat down, drunk with hours in the late June sun and the smell of warm earth, she brought the fish from the oven. He looked at the fish, his eyes intent and searching. He looked up at her and down at the fish. Then he spoke. She watched as he continued to speak. Words poured from his mouth. She watched with an expression of increasing amazement, as though she hadn't realized he was capable of more than blurted monosyllables. He talked on, illustrating his monologue with broad movements of the fish specked fork in his right hand. He told her about his boat, about the fish that he caught, the big ones, about the best spots along the river for catfish and bass, about the line, and how to sink the hook, when to use worms and when bread. She sat back, wide eyed, as if overwhelmed by the torrent of words. Then right in the middle of telling her how to clean a bass, he stopped and said,

"Carlton . . . John Carlton . . . You?"

"Why . . . Ames"

"Pleased to know you!"

"Likewise."

After the fish dinner the mealtimes changed. They talked, or rather she talked and he answered. It was as if she found herself liking the fact that she had someone within listening range. The cryptic instructions she had given him on the porch as he left after lunch became, at the dinner table, general monologues on her plans and hopes for the farm. What before must have been private dreams or aspirations or perhaps ambitions she now put in words. And she did so with a fervor that made it seem as if she believed they became more concrete if spoken.

One day in the middle of August at dinner he began to talk about returning to the river soon.

"Couldn't you stay till after harvest? It'd be hard to find a man this late in the season."

"I don't know, I'll likely have a house to build and maybe even a boat to find."

"Oh."

But he smiled.

He stayed and nothing more was said, verbally or otherwise, about his leaving, until late October. This day was October 21st, almost five months since he had come.

When she opened the door to get the eggs the first thing that struck her was the cold damp air. The second was that the bucket was not alone on the porch. Next to it was a handful of small yellow flowers, the kind that grew in the ditch between the gravel road and her fence. The fragile

waxy lucency of the petals contrasted sharply with the damp grey solidity of the porch planks and the cold-warmth of the speckled grey-brown eggs in the bucket next to them.

This morning the features of her face did move. Her face (but not only her face, her whole body) assumed the expression of frantic and tragic disarray familiar to anyone who has seen a small mammal cornered. It was as if the flowers glowing there on the porch were a challenge, or better a threat. They were not part of her world. She stood there frozen in the doorway for a long time before she went back into the house to fix breakfast.

III

The man stood at the corner of the barn. His whole person looked stunned. His eyebrows knit, his mouth twisted and ajar. It was as if he had seen something that could not possibly happen. He blinked his eyes twice as if to clear away what he knew must be an optical illusion. But it was not. The bucket of eggs was not on the porch but the flowers were — a yellow speck on the grey, fifty yards distant.

Then he became calm. He went to the barn and packed his things into the same burlap sack he'd come with, and in fifteen minutes he was walking down the gravel road toward the river.

Two weeks later he had started his new house. His boat (not his old one, the flood had taken that, but one he had found where it had been stranded after being washed down from somewhere upstream) was tied to the Box Elder. It was just dawn and the smell of the two frying catfish in the cold air made him smile. He squatted in front of the campfire and turned the fish, using the shiny stamped out stainless steel fork. He frowned at its newness. He had liked the smooth familiarity of the old one. When, three weeks ago, he first realized he had left it behind, the calm, slowly moving surface of the river had echoed with his oath

"Damn, and she's got my fork too."

When he finished eating he began to work. The new house was to be just the same as the old one, and built on the spot where the old one had stood. The lumber came from the same place as the boat. He worked with a quiet kind of fury, just as he had more than fifteen years ago.

FRED ROSS

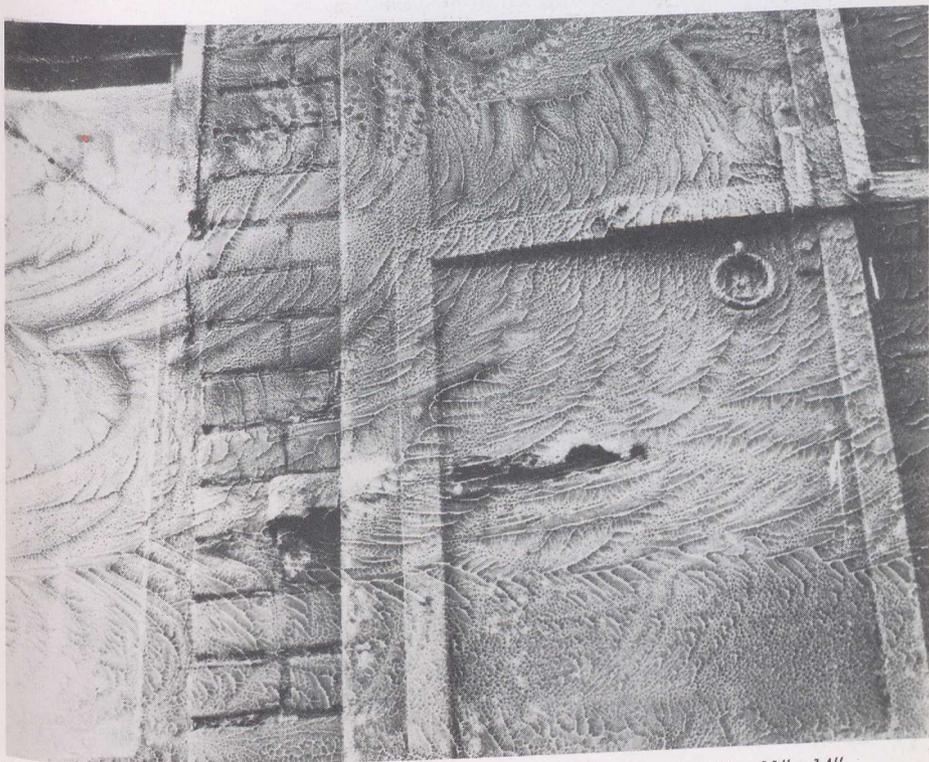
WAITING

A puff of smoke sends the moth away
A hum into the shadows, waiting
A moment from the light.
With a vague fear I let it back,
Knowing that moment blown
Cloudy and dry, burning for years.

EDWARD BEATTY

I was sittin' around wondering if organized baseball
would ever come back to San Antonio
When the Pied Piper came to my door
Wantin' me to go to somebody's wake
on the other side of town
So I got outside and I see he's got all these
rats and kids behind him so I say
"I'll take my car."
And on the way pick up this hitch-hiker with a
tattoo on his arm saying:
I love my Mom and Dad and my Flag.
And he tells me he's goin' to the wake, too
And has to be there early 'cause he's the one that's
dead and I said "Does the Pied Piper know
about this?"
And he said "No, but the rats and some of the
kids do."

PAUL YOHNKA



BOB SWINEHART • "IRON WINDOW SHUTTER" • PHOTOGRAPH • 11" x 14"



GWEN JONES • "LANDSCAPE" • INTAGLIO • 16" x 22"

The seeds of the past,
Hastily planted in
The dry ground of forgetfulness,
Sprout forth insidiously
Sending delicate tendrils of
Destruction into my tortured present.

I scream,
And run
Scattering more seeds.

SHARON YOUHN

HOMAGE

Candy nail, chocolate cross,
Where is the purple priest of Avalon?
Has the time corrupted my vision,
Or just the view distorted the hour.

We fly to Canterbury,
Masks on for the Mardi Gras,
Heart shaped and blood-like, dripping,
Maple sap and vinegar.

The agony of emergence flushes,
A side-twisted, upturned base relief of talc,
Covered part with wrinkled,
Spike-pierced claw,
Part a laurel of Hemlock,
And the rain burrows into the mud,
Seeking life.

Spit on the dust drenched casket,
Flourish French horns, stage rightly,
Exhume him once a year,
Then let the Man . . . rest.

NEAL MAC DONALD

A GAME

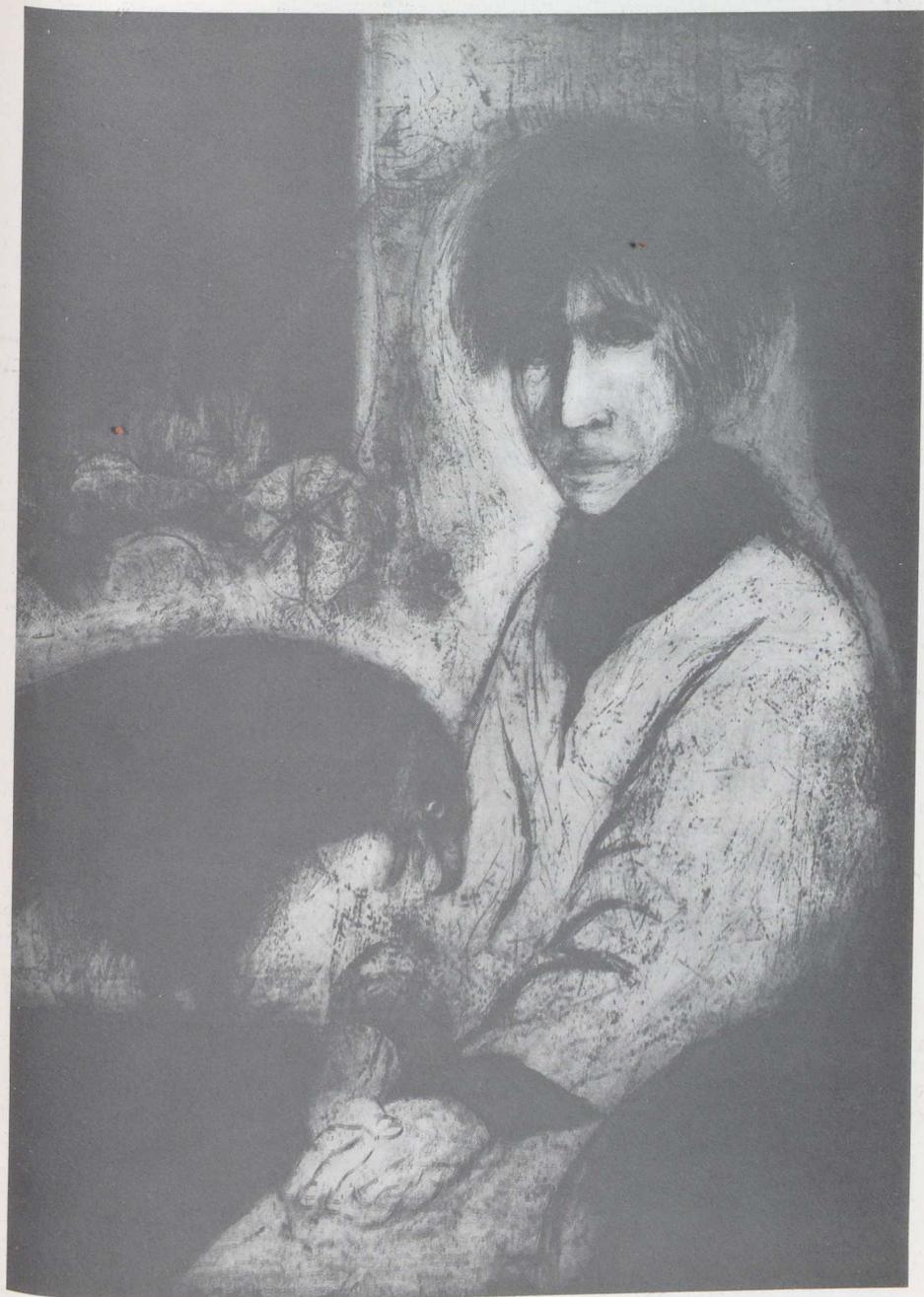
We sit at the Broadway Texaco
Watch cars slow, then make the turn
Allowing us endless comments.

Each takes it differently, the old ones
Slow, unsure, pass only once. The young
Barrel through, tires sounding their
Sureness and need for spectators.

Searching one another they pass here,
All kinds rolling on, hour after hour.

We sit and wait a crash or honk
From flashy girls. You laugh and point,
I toughly mouth a five-cent cigar,
So that we, and sometimes even
One of them, are aware of the game.

EDWARD BEATTY



NORM KNOTSON • "WOMAN & BIRD" • INTAGLIO • 18" x 24"

CASTRATED FLOWERS

Sometimes the way the veil fell it rested loosely on her shoulders, and when she lifted them, the fold of the veil sort of touched her cheeks. She shrugged the light caress of the veil to her face. Her folded arms hugged her bosom. There was the hurried sound of her skirt clinging about her ankles and releasing as she made a quick step around the corner; her rosary beads clicked. Then her steps became deliberate, the sunlight was bright and for moments the world became very, very narrow.

Across the hallway was the door: The oak slabs upon blackened ornate hinges that creaked when the magnificent shoulders pivoted from its guard. The first time she entered this hall was with twenty-seven other girls. And the stone walls, the warm sun from the long paralleling window-panes were exciting; there will be sixteen girls left today.

She remembered the time she was late for chapel, because she had been occupied by some task and had forgotten the time and as she ran down this hallway, unpinning her garments, unrolling her sleeves, she approached what sounded so pure a body of voices. Then she took her place (for everyone had an assigned place in an assigned pew) in front of Sister Anastasia's raspy voice and Sister Fidelius' perpetually tardy droning from the far back.

But there was the door, the door that never changed, that was never disillusioning. Every time she saw it, it stood as placid and virile as now: The incorruptible guard between the cloister and the everything else.

There were the Saturday evenings that were free for private rosary and stations and confessions. A few times she stayed late until everyone else was through and the priests had left their confessionals. Then she knelt with the one or two bulbous lights and cried for all her indifference — for being so anesthetic amid the mosaics that embellished the chapels and the chant that she was learning and the Mozart the organ played before Mass on Sunday mornings and the marble in the statues, altars, walls, through the building.

The door had one absurd little touch for being in a convent — the small square opening that too appropriately was overlapped by bars. It alone was a masterpiece which had never lost its beauty.

After evening recreation, grand silence began. And there was that night, like the other nights, when after the rare pleasure of outside entertainment, the inevitable hush engulfed the community at the departure of the performers. Then the lights began to go out and even movement was muffled. And disciplined lines and steps returned to the cloister. No sound, only the heavy heels, and the skirts. And the silence was so absolute, so sterile, that that night she deliberately raped the corridor with a sharp cough.

She stood before the door now. She reached into the deep pockets of the gathered wool skirt for the key — the classical skeleton key — the only

object to which the door yielded. Off to the side was a grotto: lilies ornamented the base of the simple Virgin statue, the stamens extracted to preserve their purity: like the time the gardener showed the novices how in order to keep the lily untainted the yellow pollen must be (in his professional fashion) removed. Castrated flowers.

The door had become the one completely male thing in her three years here: like a huge strong man who never deserted his duty, whose attention never relaxed; serving only his women. Seduced by no one. The door brushed the breasts beneath her coif, and turning, she read obliquely on the far departing wall: **Cloister: do not enter.** The huge shoulders swung easily, slowly; the black iron tongue above the handle flicked and the door locked. In the echoing corridor the skirts wrapped, unwrapped furiously about her legs, the beads jangled and thumped against her thigh for the last time.

SANDRA MORGENTHALER

perched in the
foggy corners
of my mind
(silent now,
shouting then)
sits a black thought
whose wings threaten
to spread
and engulf
the sparrow thoughts
which are
so much more
comfortable

DENNIS E. CORCORAN

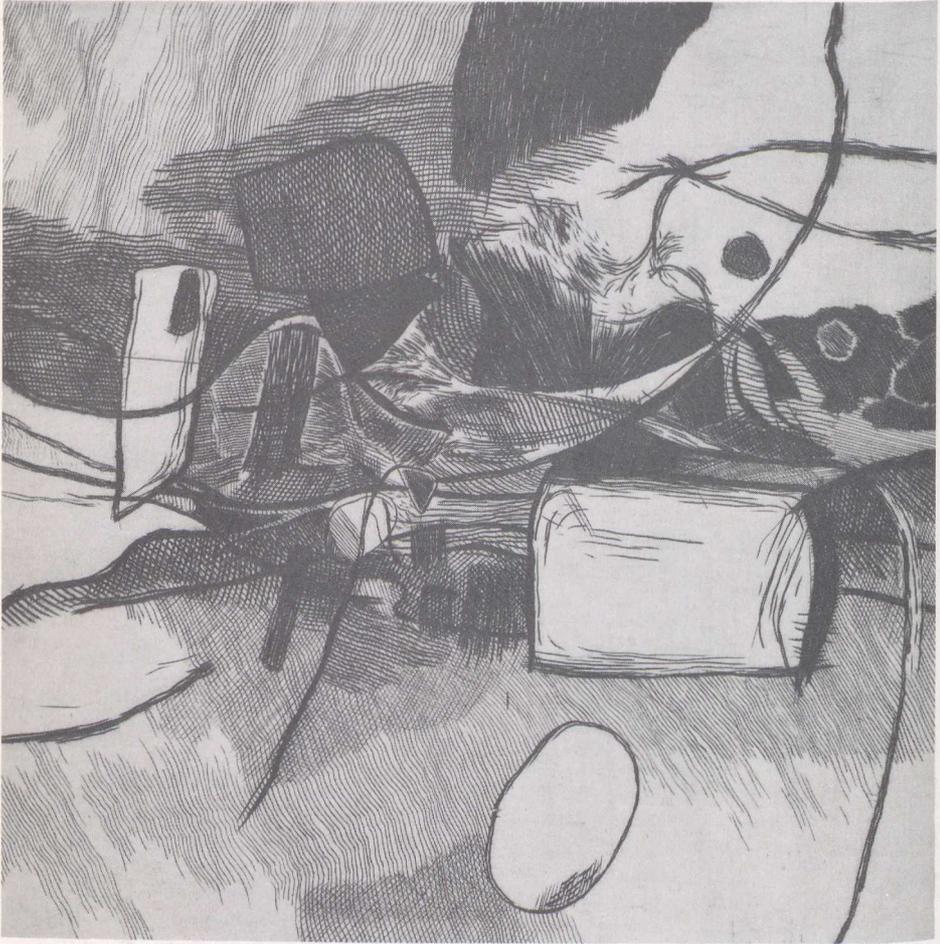


PAT SNYDER • "SEVEN BEEFEATERS" • LITHOGRAPH • 6" x 8"

THE PLAINS CONCUBINE OF EARLY KANSAS

The hills of the roamdown flatland plains
were below the sand
in lumpy wait
for the seams of the downtucked
lustful sky.
Flanked by the depth
of the nimbus pine
was love on a bush in a carved
garden, carved and etched
on river beds,
carved in green with musky smells
carved in a man of bonetight words
And the words came
And the hills upthrust
their rumps to the lustful sky.
Then the garden wandered,
the love carved across the sea
of grass and ash slipped across
the thighs of the legs of the rumps
by the sky and the hills winked
and shuddered and yawned
and coughed. The man:
shrugged.

GERALD K. WUORI



JOHN PUFAHL • UNTITLED • ENGRAVING • 8" x 8"

