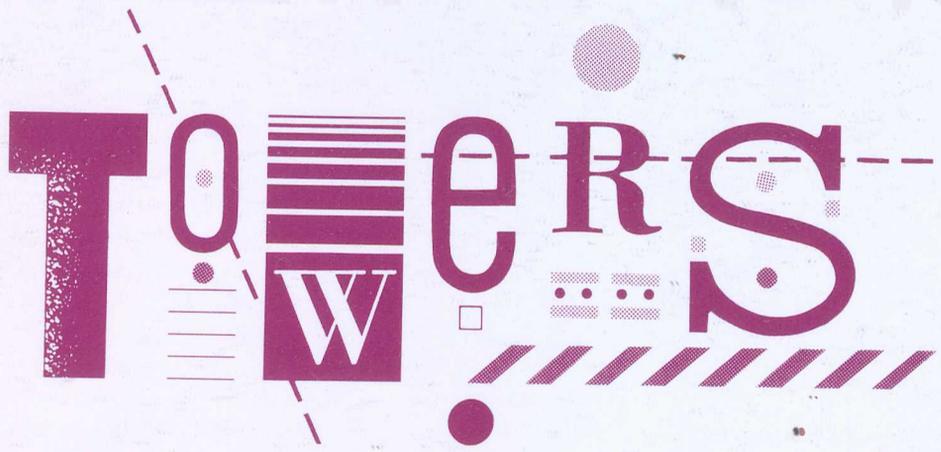


# TOWER S



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NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY'S

FINEST  
CREATIVE  
WORKS

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So I'm faced with this internal conflict and so being I can hardly cooperate with my cohort Dan who wants to keep this so-called tone setting document semi-traditional

MAKE IT NEW Jeanne says like she's Ezra Pound and we leap into this back and forth conversation thing but what's it have to do with TOWERS

And I say it's mer-e-ly a reflection of anything creative Dan. This constant bickering/These tired interpretations/I mean what is this thing

Is it or is it not:

- A Bible for the pretentious
- OR A chronicle of hopeful writers and artists
- OR A book of revelations
- OR A political document
- OR An impetus for change
- OR A cause for alarm
- OR A bunch of naughty pictures
- OR Flowers and bunny rabbits
- OR An embarrassing waste of SA funds (Thanks!)
- OR Damn Good Creativity?!

So we don't really know if you want to know and so we basically avoided the issue and well, here it is

Thanks to: Mary Ball, Laurie Evans, Diana Jackson, Panda Kroll, Amy Poskin, Mark Rattin, Joan Schultz

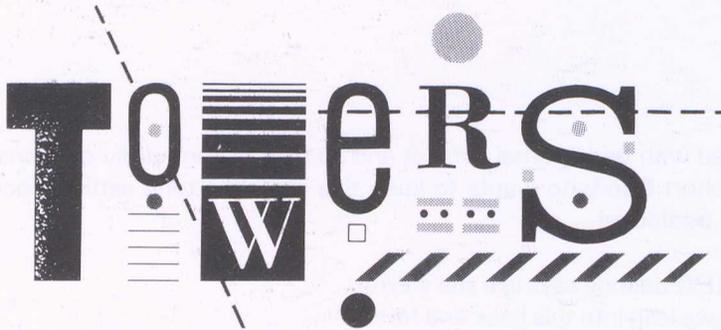
Also to faculty advisors Janet Heller and Ben Mamoud

Enjoy!

Dan Bingley

Jeanne Forst

Co-Editors



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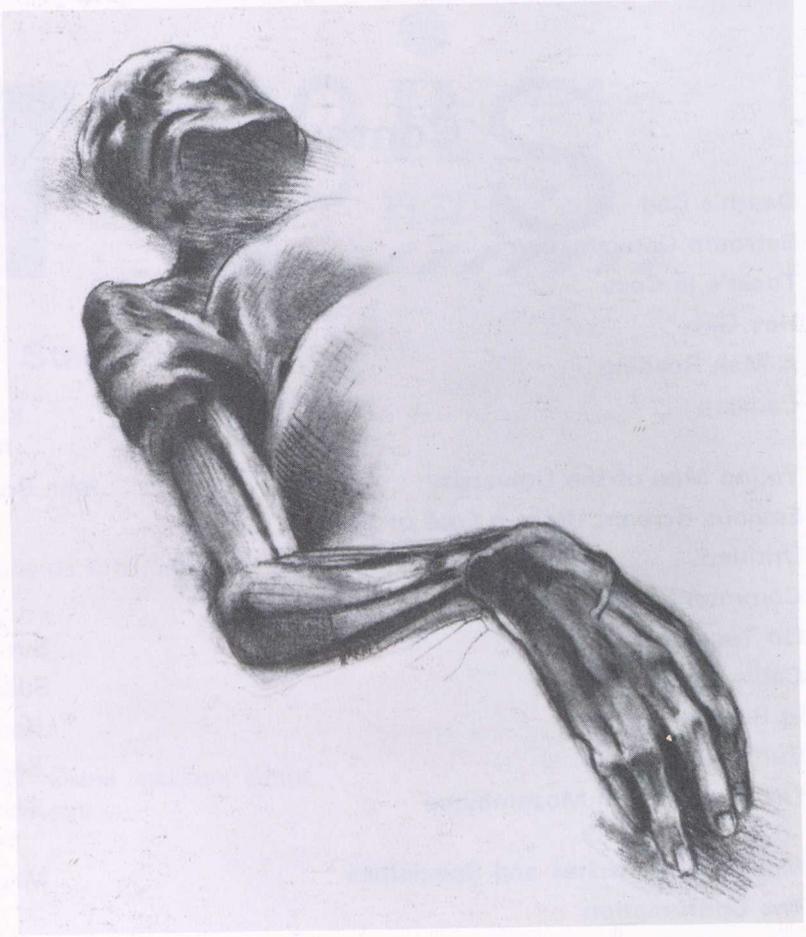
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The editors apologize to Judy Ham, whose poem, "Wasted," was published under the wrong name in the Winter 1987-88 issue.



Heather Kraft  
Death's Bed  
Charcoal

# *Barroom Conversation*

(for Thomas McGuane)

Bill Covey

I drive a Ford truck—a Ranchero.  
I've only ever driven Fords and  
don't plan on changin' now.  
Yeah, I'd like a wife someday for sure  
but I'm usually alone like now.

Some folks are here for fun and  
some need to wet that dry spot.  
You see, I take in a few Pabsts  
every once in awhile just  
to help the nerves or to get  
a little look at our  
community.

Yep, I always wear Levis, these old boots, and a  
flannel shirt. I'll never own a damn pair  
of jeans that don't have that cardboard label  
stapled right into its back pocket.  
You know that stapling shows that they're good pants.  
That's God's truth cuz you know I don't lie.

For today,  
the best any of us can do is to  
remain right here with  
one cold Pabst—

Hank Williams  
on the juke—

and a warm  
place to sit.

# Tocar's la Cosa

by Karole Bolin

So to the Fair and there saw several sights; among others, a Mare that tells money and many things to admiration; and among others, came to me when she was bid to go to him of the company that most loved a pretty wench in a corner. And this did cost me 12d to the horse . . . and did give me occasion to besar a mighty belle fille . . . that was exceeding plain but forte belle (*The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, Sept. 1, 1668).

Samuel Pepys was always one for attending fairs, plays, and other public entertainment; always one for marveling at natural mysteries and scientific discoveries; and, as the mare at the fair sensed that day, always one for loving a pretty wench in a corner. In Pepys's *Diary*, it is not a rare occasion when he—as in the entry about horse-tricks at the fair—proceeds from one jade to the next in the same sentence. From 1659 to 1669, Pepys meticulously recorded his life in a diary which now reveals an astonishingly steady procession of women with whom he was sexually involved. These women, who differed greatly from each other in age, character, and social status, were the objects of Pepys's compulsive caresses, secret seductions, or long-term liaisons.

Aware of Pepys's obsession with women, readers of *The Diary* are easily tripped-up in disbelief of Pepys's statement, "There is nothing more taking in the world with me than the play" (July 28, 1664). Pepys's audience must then consider that he attends hundreds of plays in *The Diary*, and that he fondles probably under one hundred women. It is likely that we are no more surprised or curious about Pepys's promiscuity and insatiability than Pepys himself is in *The Diary*. He

seems entertained by recalling and recording the results of his sexual appetite, as though he is recording scientific observations of his own behavior:

Thence to Westminster to my barbers; and strange to think how when I found that Jervas himself did intend to bring home my periwig, and not Jane his maid, I did desire not to have it at all, for I had a mind to have her bring it home (July 28, 1664).

As a married man of high social standing (Pepys rises from Clerk on the Acts on the Navy Board to Secretary of the Admiralty), Pepys, of course, states some feelings of guilt and shame for seducing pretty young servant girls, for groping under the petticoats of actresses backstage, and for "having his pleasure" with the wives of acquaintances or co-workers in the corners of blind alehouses. Yet Pepys's conscience seems not to bother him as much about his sexual encounters as about his attending too many plays, spending too much money, or not working hard enough. Though he constantly makes vows to limit his visits to the theatre, to be more thrifty, and to spend more time at the office, Pepys seems to be out of control of his "evil nature" (as he calls his libido), and seems to rather enjoy his position of surrender. He writes in his diary after eying "a couple of pretty whores" in Fleete Alley:

God forgive me, I could scarce stay myself from going into their houses with them, so apt is my nature to evil, after once, as I have these two days, set upon pleasure again (May 29, 1663).

And another night, after a rendezvous with one of his mistresses, Mrs. Lane, and after bickering with some prostitutes over their fees, Pepys writes, ". . . and then home and to bed, weary of the pleasure I have had today and ashamed to think of it" (July 23, 1664).

In *The Diary*, Pepys is "ashamed to think" of his own behavior on many occasions. He is not an introspective writer, but an observer, a record-keeper who jots down specific details of current events, conversations, dinner engagements, clothing, make-up and musical compositions. Still, through his descriptions of the various women in his life, Pepys describes himself. Between the detailed lines describing his numerous relationships, we can read what Pepys did not write.

Pepys's longest relationship with a woman was his fifteen-year marriage to Elizabeth, whom he married when she was only fifteen. Their marriage is often considered a unique, almost modern love relationship—unusual for the seventeenth century because of "much mutual love" between them (Sept. 27, 1662). This viewpoint is feasible when the Pepyses "lay long in bed" in the morning, talking and "sporting" together; or when they pleasantly discuss household matters; or when they become "good friends again" after a quarrel. But when Elizabeth disagrees with Pepys or independently does something of which Pepys disapproves, the mutual, "modern love" concept is clouded over by Pepys's selfish, domineering personality. He is a man who likes to control women (sometimes violently); and, if he once considered his fifteen-year-old bride to be a lump of clay he would shape into the perfect wife, he is surely disappointed. Elizabeth has a mind of her

own, and on this cold morning in December she speaks it. They are quarrelling in bed about the way Elizabeth commands her servants. Pepys writes:

. . . she giving me some cross answer, I did strike her over her left eye such a blow, as the poor wench did cry out and was in great pain; but yet her spirit was such as to endeavour to bite and scratch me. But I cogging with her, made her leave crying . . . and friends presently one with another; and I up, vexed at my heart to think what I had done, for she was forced to lay a poultice or something to her eye all day, and is black—and the people of the house observed it (Dec. 19, 1664).

Later that day, Pepys is so "vexed at his heart" that he stops to see his wife on his way to a meeting—a meeting with one of his mistresses, Mrs. Bagwell, the poor wife of a ship's carpenter to whom Pepys subsequently gives work advances.

In 1663, at the age of twenty-four, Elizabeth is bored and lonely, having only house servants to talk to, so she asks Pepys if he will hire a woman to be her live-in companion. Pepys admits his wife's loneliness, but argues against the idea because he fears Elizabeth will become spoiled by having a "woman" and will spend a lot of his money. He attributes Elizabeth's discontent to her "wont of work," since their home reflects her poor housekeeping. Pepys refuses to hire a woman at first, but later agrees for his own selfish reasons: ". . . the gentlewoman being pretty handsome . . . The truth is, I having a mind to have her come for her musique and dancing" (Nov. 12 and 14, 1662).

This servant stays only four days, so, a month later, Elizabeth reads a letter to Pepys, explaining her unhappiness and need of companionship—a letter she gave him two months ago, but which Pepys never read.

She now read it, and was so picquant, and wrote in English and most of it true, of the retirednesse of her life and how unpleasant it was, that being writ in English and so in danger of being met with and read by others, I was vexed at it and desired her and then commanded her to teare it . . . (Jan. 9, 1663).

But Elizabeth will not tear it, so Pepys takes the letter, along with a bundle of his old love letters to her, "and tore them all before her face . . . she crying and desiring me not to do it . . . a paper of so much disgrace to me and dishonour if it should be found by anybody" (Jan. 9, 1663).

Pepys is evidently more concerned with his public image than with his wife's feelings. Unlike in "mutual love" relationships, Pepys does not often show respect for Elizabeth. He controls her by preventing her development as an individual. Throughout *The Diary*, he refers to her as "my wife," not as "Elizabeth," and seldom takes her seriously. Pepys frequently treats her like a feisty pet, as he does on the day Elizabeth is in a "dogged humour" because Pepys did not come home for lunch. He gives her a "pull by the nose and some ill words." Pepys tries to leave the room, but "she fallowed [him] in a devilish manner . . . [he] got her into the garden out of hearing, to prevent shame" (July 12, 1667). Elizabeth may appear to be over-reacting to a broken lunch date on this dog-day afternoon—until we find out

a few weeks later that Pepys has not made love to her in six months (Aug. 2, 1667).

By no means is Pepys celibate for a half-year. During this time he is enjoying frequent encounters with various tradeswomen, servants, prostitutes, and acquaintances. One such acquaintance is the vulgar Mrs. Margaret Lowther, or—Pepys often calls her by her maiden name—Peg Penn. Appropriately for her name, she is a dirty housekeeper. Pepys describes Penn as "homely," "old," and "ugly as a heart can wish." He writes in disgust about her "sorry dinners" and her "foolish, sorry" paintings (April 12, 1666 and Feb. 22, 1667). Most repulsive to Pepys is the woman's pride in her pretentious taste and social position. Penn wears "a bracelet of diamonds and rubies about her wrist and a sixpenny necklace about her neck"; and she rides in an "exceeding fine coach with mean horses" (Sept. 11, 1667 and May 24, 1667).

During the time of his neglecting Elizabeth, Pepys jumps at a chance for some playful handling of this same Peg Penn. They are alone in the house of her father, a friend of Pepys:

This afternoon I had opportunity para jouer with Mrs. Penn tocando her Mamelles and besando ella . . . and she fort willing (May 23, 1667).

In his state of acute ambivalence toward Penn, perhaps Pepys writes in his garbled French-Spanish-English polyglot in order to avoid facing his own behavior, which later disgusts him. Or perhaps he does it simply to keep his wife from finding out. In either case, the desired end has been grasped: Pepys has knocked Penn down a

few pegs—to the level of sixpenny-slut where he knows she belongs.

Obviously, Samuel Pepys does not approve of confident women. Backstage at the theatre, he crowds in to speak to and, perhaps, to touch the beautiful and talented actresses he admires so much. "But Lord, their confidence, and how many men do hover about them . . . and how confident they are in their talk." Full of ambivalence, Pepys hovers about for a while, kisses a lovely new actress, then picks up his old actress friend, Knepp. On the way home in the moonlight, Pepys is frustrated when he endeavors to "tocar her con [his] cosa," and Knepp "strives against" him. Pepys says, "I was a little moved at my offering it and not having it" (May 7, 1668).

Pepys offers nothing and receives nothing at a brothel in July, 1664. He is confronted with "the wickedness of those houses and the forcing a man to present expense." In the same sentence of this diary entry, Pepys "plots with" Mrs. Lane to meet him at "the old house" across the river, where he "has his pleasure of her twice"—and pays her "5 or 6s" (July 23, 1664).

It is no wonder that Pepys—loathing arrogant women who paint their faces or have their trains held up by pages—is attracted to his long-time servant, Jane, an excellent cook and housekeeper, who is so harmless that she refuses to kill a turkey. Pepys writes, "My wife could not get her maid Jane by no means at any time to kill anything" (Feb. 4, 1660). Jane is so harmless that she does not protect herself when Pepys "took a broom and basted her till she cried extremely" (punishment for not having things "laid up as they should be") (Dec. 1, 1660).

And it is no wonder that Pepys, in 1667, falls in love with his wife's servant, Deb Willet—a pleasant, intelligent and pretty girl of seventeen. One night, when Deb has been with the Pepyses six months, Pepys writes in his diary of a tender moment of intimacy between him and Deb. Pepys has been dictating to Deb a list of jobs to do, and Deb starts to cry because she is not writing as well as she can:

. . . and her mistress construed it to be sullenness and so was angry, and I seemed angry with her too; but going to bed, she undressed me, and there I did give her good advice and beso la, ella weeping still; and yo did take her, the first time in my life, sobra mi genu and did poner mi mano sub her jupes and toca su thigh, which did hazer me great pleasure; and so did no more, but besando-la went to my bed (Mar. 31, 1668).

For seven months, Pepys records similar encounters with Deb in his diary—sometimes depicting Deb as "striving against" his amorous advances, and depicting himself as not minding it much. Pepys usually calls her "Deb" in *The Diary*, instead of "the maid" or "the wench" or even "Willet"; and he several times expresses that he does truly "love her mightily." Then, Elizabeth discovers their affair, and there is no peace in the Pepys house—which becomes the stage of a nightmarish play of jealousy, rage, and shame—until Deb is fired and Pepys vows never to see or speak to Deb again.

After Deb leaves, Pepys is obsessed with his desire to find her and is genuinely concerned that he may have ruined her reputation. Five months

later Pepys breaks his vows and seeks her out in the city. He meets with her and caresses her passionately again, but Deb's heart seems not to be in it (April, 1669).

In April of 1669—one month before Pepys stops writing his diary due to failing eyesight, and seven months before Elizabeth dies of an illness in France—Pepys sees Deb on a London street. It is the last time he sees her in *The Diary*.

And just at the Temple-gate I spied Deb with another gentlewoman, and Deb winked at me and smiled, but undiscovered, and I was glad to see her (April 25, 1669).

Pepys, Samuel. *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*.  
Ed. Robert Latham and William Matthews.  
Vols. I-II. Berkeley: University of California  
Press, 1970-83.



Steve Tritt  
Hey Girl  
Etching



Steve Tritt  
A Man Reading . . .  
Etching

# Cadillac

by Keith Nyquist

With its peculiar shape and a paint job that looked like frosting, it was just like a wedding cake. Huge and red, easily the biggest car I'd ever seen. His 1956 Cadillac Eldorado convertible had just been refurbished. He wanted to take it out for a ride.

"Oh, my god," I said when I saw it. He had just pulled in front of my flat and started honking the horn.

"Whaddya think?"

"What can I say? It's a monstrosity."

"You bet it is. If I run into a train with this thing, the train would be doomed."

He was probably right. If the Eisenhower era left us anything at all, at least it left us a few big, obnoxious cars to drive around. But Frank's car was something else, a perversion. Huge tailfins stuck out from the back like the wings of a prehistoric bird. In the front, three pointy chrome humps reached straight forward like giant fists, threatening even the most cautious pedestrian.

"So when did you get this thing fixed?"

"Just today. The shop called and I picked it up."

For the past three years Frank had been moaning out loud whenever the Antique car manuals came out and the cost of the 1956 Cadillac convertible rose like a hot stock. The rumor had it that there were only twenty-four left in the world. At last a few months ago Frank got a tip on one for sale downstate. It could be his for seven thousand, another two or three thousand if he wanted it to run. Then a few thousand more for chrome.

"It sure is a beaut."

"Yeah, I really love it. How about this weekend the five of us take it out for a cruise? We can go to Wisconsin or something. Maybe buy some cheese."

"That would be great."

"Then, my friend, I will see you later."

As he drove down the street, all the people on their porches stared at it, his new used car. In my mind, I saw realtors and nervous homeowners discussing property values.

The three of us, Frank, Ed, and I, had been buddies since high school. Frank was three years ahead of me, Ed two. They had good jobs downtown. Frank barely had to save to buy the car. I was still struggling through school, but I had a summer job with the parks. I looked up to them. Things just seemed to come easy. I'd never seen a Sharper Image catalogue until I'd seen one at Frank's. And I'd certainly never known anyone with a car like that before. I didn't hate them for it, though. They were my friends. Ed got me this apartment for the summer through a friend of his. It had always been this way.

Saturday morning came, cool and bright. It was June, so it would be warm later. They said they'd be by at nine. I was ready at 8:30. It was half-past nine when I heard the horn, like a cracked trumpet, from the street. I was out in a few seconds. Wendy and Jane were with, Wendy up in front with Frank, Jane in back with Ed. I took the corner seat in back.

Frank gunned the engine unnecessarily and the car shot down the street, heading for the Interstate. The rows of apartment buildings rolled past casually as we made our way down Fullerton.

"So where are we going?" I yelled.

"Wisconsin."

"Yeah, but where?"

"Anywhere, it doesn't matter."

He was right. The only important thing today was having a good time. The sun shimmered in the windows of the passing buildings as the wind blew through my hair. I dangled my arm outside the car and kept quiet. Wendy hung on to Frank's elbow as she rested her head on his shoulder. She was beautiful. They made small talk, impossible to hear over the sound of the wind. With the top down, her hair blew free. When she looked out straight ahead I caught her reflection in the rear-view mirror. She put her arm around him and gave him a squeeze. I looked across the street just in time to see someone's car being towed away.

After navigating through the neighborhood we were finally on the freeway. The Cadillac commanded the center lane like a bully fish in an aquarium. Every car we passed drew stares. The tenements rose up against the expressway from both sides, curtains flying from the open windows. Grass sprouted out on the small patches of lawn that lined the embankments that rose up to the concrete walls lining the road. It roared around us as we passed under the viaducts. With

the top down, the road seemed bigger than ever before.

The city faded into suburb. Frank and Ed were laughing back and forth about some incident they were involved in back in high school.

"Yeah, Ed, but how do you know he found out?"

"Don't you remember the look on his face? He wanted to beat the hell out of me."

"Why didn't he?"

"Because he knew better."

Ed was right. Picking a fight with him wouldn't have been too smart. He had always been pretty strong. Once he clocked a guy who threatened him for talking to his girlfriend. Split his eye open. The guy said Ed was wearing a ring but he really wasn't. The rumor spread that Ed was a dirty fighter, but we knew better than to care. Ed didn't even know the girl that well. He was just giving her a buck so she could take a bus home. He'd do that for anyone.

We'd been in the country for some time and were getting hungry. We had pulled off the Interstate half an hour before to see some scenery besides the billboards that told you the mileage to the next McDonald's. The trees were everywhere. Some fifty feet below and a quarter mile away a river curved along the sway of the road. It flashed in the sunlight. Up ahead along the roadside was a diner. We pulled in and stretched our legs in the gravel lot.

"It's really beautiful out here," said Wendy, reaching her arms high over her head.

"Sure is."

"I wonder how old these trees are."

"I don't know," said Ed, "a hundred years, maybe."

"It would be so nice to live out here."

We left it at that. The restaurant was empty except for a young man who was at the counter finishing up a cup of coffee. As we opened the door some bells jingled and a waitress popped out of the kitchen.

"How are you today?"

"Fine, thanks."

"Sit anywhere you like. I'll get you some menus."

We sat down at a table by a window that looked out into the trees. The diner was dim and old looking. The stuffed heads of deer were lined up on the walls.

"Looks like the goddamned French Revolution in here," I said.

"Yeah," said Frank, counting the ice cubes in his water.

"You can only trample the rights of those squirrels for so long until the next thing you know they'll rise up and . . ." I dragged my index finger across my throat, laughing at my own joke. Wendy was laughing. I smiled at her.

The waitress came back and took our order. She said it would be a while for the food to come. Frank and Ed were talking about some hot investments as Wendy and Jane complained about

their landlord. I sat reading the back of a sugar packet when I noticed the waitress talking to the man at the counter. She smiled at him as she took away his cup. I could barely hear what they were saying from across the room.

"Be back by five," he said, "I've just got to go to town for awhile." She whispered something back and gave him a quick kiss. She stared out the window as he left, looking out the whole time as his blue Escort took off.

By now, the conversations had merged and they were all talking about next weekend. Something about going to the beach.

"Yeah, that would be a lot of fun."

"I need to work on my tan."

"Don't you know it. I hope the water isn't too cold, though."

"It shouldn't be."

I seized the sugar packet, ripping it open and pouring the contents down my throat. They were all staring at me.

"Oh, gross."

After a few minutes our food came. We ate quickly because it had taken so long for it to come and they wanted to be back on the road. I had pancakes. They were delicious. The waitress came by with the bill. Frank picked it off the table and counted it up.

"What do I owe you?" I said.

"Nothing. Forget it. It's on us."

"Thanks, but . . ."

"I said forget it. We're all employed."

"Well, so am I."

"Yeah, but you'd better save your money. We'll take care of it."

"Thanks."

I really did want to pay for it. It was nice for them to help me out, though. School was going to be expensive.

We left the waitress a tip, paid the bill and left. The noontime sun was shadowless and high above us. We piled into the Cadillac. The road was narrow as it wound up a hill. The forest was deep on both sides, the sound of insects poking through the hum of the engine. Frank put a cassette into the tape deck.

Slowly, the road began heading downhill. A curve here, there. Bending, always bending. As it straightened out there was something in the road ahead of us. Big.

"Oh, Jesus."

A deer. A tan and white tripod straddling the yellow line on the road. Bewildered, unable to flee. Its rear leg hung uselessly on its frame. Someone had hit it and kept on going.

"Oh no," said Frank, stopping the car.

"What do we do?"

"I don't know. I guess we'll turn around and call the cops and have them shoot it."

"You sure?"

"What else can we do?"

He was right. It must have been in pain.

Something caught Frank's attention, down the road a bit and past the tree line. He jumped out of the car and started running.

"What is it?" I yelled. I couldn't see. I ran after him and it was then I saw the blue Escort rammed against the tree.

We were too late. Blood and glass were spread out against the giant maple. It sparkled like scarlet in the muffled rays of the sun. The car was crushed. The young man's hands still gripped at the wheel. He'd never let go. The wind blew the gasoline fumes in our faces.

"We gotta call the cops, Frank." By the sound of my voice, I might have been crying, I wasn't sure. Ed and the girls were running down the road toward us.

"What is it?"

All at once they saw the wreck. Wendy screamed.

"Is he okay?"

"Stay back," said Frank, "get back in the car."

They kept coming. It was useless to tell them otherwise. They knew. They saw. He was dead.

We walked back to the car, saying nothing. Going back the other way Frank was driving at least fifty down the narrow, winding road. A few miles down was the diner. He drove into the parking lot and locked the brakes, throwing up dust.

"Come in with me," Frank said, pointing to me. "Ed, stay here with Wendy and Jane." By now they were crying. Ed was a little pale.

"What are we gonna say, Frank?"

"Don't worry about it. Just talk to the waitress for a while."

I knew that Frank would take care of it. He always did. We opened the door, tinkling the bells, and the waitress came out of the kitchen.

"Back so soon?" she laughed. "Someone forget to go to the bathroom?"

"No, I just forgot to make a call," he said.

"Where's your pay phone?"

She looked at Frank. "Is everything okay?" She must have known something, the way she looked at him.

"Yeah."

"It's in the back, around the corner."

Frank walked back to the phone and I looked at the waitress. I wasn't going to say anything stupid. Better to let her be happy for a few more moments. What could we do?

"Your friend looked like he was in a big hurry."

"Yeah, he always is."

"Are you okay?"

"Oh, just a little thirsty," I lied.

"Here. Let me give you some water."

She poured a glass and gave it to me. I gulped it down too quickly. After a few moments Frank appeared from the back.

"Thanks, miss," I said.

"You're welcome. Come back again."

He tugged my shirt and dragged me to the door.

"Hey, Frank, aren't we gonna tell her . . ."

"Just be quiet."

"But . . ."

He pushed me out the door and we were gone. Back the way we came. A squad car was flying down the road from the other way after we had gone a few miles. As Frank drove on the wind buzzed angrily in my ears.

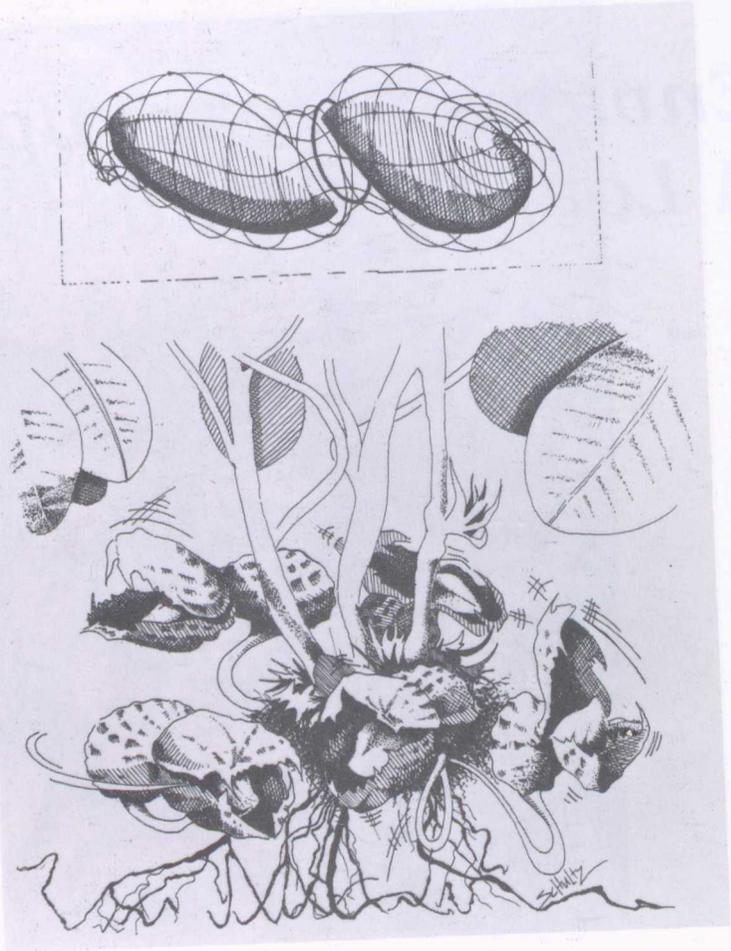


John Boyd Brandon  
Young Men of the University  
Woodcut

# *Envious Scream Up To A Loaf Of Bread*

cab

I hate you!  
You were kneaded  
And you rose  
To The Occasion.



Jeff Schultz  
Untitled  
Pen and Ink

# Common Folks

Mark Thomas Colby

Bright in the dark  
Through square windows,  
Flashes of light  
Come from a hearth  
In wood and clay  
Adobe hut.

The furniture  
Rugs made by hand  
Interlaced tread  
With color lines.  
Like waves repeat  
Or tree bark breaks  
Sunlight and green.

On the floor lie  
Woman and man  
Of ninety-ninth  
Generation,  
Carrying life  
In corpuscles.

They spill their blood  
Onto clay floor  
And mold children.  
With red caked hands,  
To each other  
They look in eyes  
That reflect fire,  
Reach together  
Intertwining  
Hands and fingers  
So hard they hurt.

In the morning  
They tend desert  
Flowers. Kneeling,  
They pray to God  
For His flowers  
And His children.

# *On Tuesdays*

Susan E. Stemont

We meet now  
on Tuesdays  
wearing our best  
behavior  
Share a meal  
and talk of films  
or books

How is your daughter?  
What are you doing in class?

But sometimes  
there is a glass of red wine  
that brings January back  
against my will  
Or a tart apple taste  
full of last October  
When you smile  
it is May 12th  
And if you touch my hand—  
it is a rainy afternoon  
in April  
Listen:

Carmen is playing—  
"I am dangerous to love"

# Cabin Fever

Susan E. Stemont

Snow again this morning

The body

I woke up with  
can not be mine

There is some mistake  
and I don't know who to call  
to fix it

A red-tail hawk has embedded  
its talons in my stomach  
All night it hung tight on me  
This morning I sat  
on the cold tile of the bathroom floor  
with a mouthful of feathers  
crying  
because I could not throw it up

For the third time this week  
I have lost my keys  
Searching through the desk  
like a rat on amphetamine  
I find instead  
the phone bill I forgot to pay  
I ask God  
when it will all be over  
and I can sleep—  
oh sweet sleep—  
like a child again

A crack in the winter sky  
shows a streak of blue  
and sun passes the venetian blinds  
spilling gold bars  
across the hardwood floor  
A sparrow hits the window—  
snow blind—  
and the sky seals itself up again

Snow again tonight



Ron Laxamana  
In Relation of . . .  
Charcoal



# Buffalo

Shelley Wilson

a buffalo  
in a New York City museum  
stood challenging  
daily guarded silence.

I, being four and hovering alone  
was caught unaware  
and stood perspiring,  
cautious and still  
with love and terror  
as if, on a pony on a waving plain  
I had come across him with a new bow  
and arrow  
and only a pony's tail trailing behind me.

his glass eye,  
fiery, a sphere aching said:  
anguish, yes I am sky huge  
but dead, humiliated by your closeness  
and your eyes;  
for you my stance was beaten into me  
by men on ladders drilling wire and nail  
up through bone  
I am a prison of no motion.

I cried and ran around the platform  
on which he languished  
I was carried home on a slow, dim train  
moving at the speed the buffalo roams.

# *last letter from Mozambique*

Shelley Wilson

out the window the snow  
is pretending to wave like trees

the cat mistakes my face for images  
of you asleep under an African moon

she tells me about your  
Angel of Travel  
who loves you  
and occasionally becomes a gazelle  
standing on fire, thinking of your cooking  
but who gazes beyond your shoulder  
past the eyes of your hot skies  
searching for clean linen  
and water

she trembles in the desert womb  
of hidden diamonds and blood  
mapless as myself  
aimless, a door ajar—  
a room with open windows  
under the same traveling moon

# Marie's Sandwiches and Specialties

by Margy Ortigara

"Why you want to write about me? There is nothing to say. I work hard. I like my shop to run." But there is more. Marie's penetrating green eyes reveal much more than her embarrassed words of denial. Today she's self-conscious and does not want to talk. My notebook and pen inhibit her.

I can remember clearly the first time I ate at **Marie's Sandwiches and Specialties**. Early last fall, intrigued by the quaint building, my roommate, Andrea, and I decided to give it a try. We knew nothing about the restaurant, not even that it served Lebanese food. Marie eagerly helped us pick out what type of sandwich to try, discouraging us from ordering a traditional hamburger or gyros. While waiting for our order, we sat at one of the ten round tables set up in the room. The tables are covered in wood-grained formica, with four chairs placed around each. Covered in deep red leather upholstery, the chairs' legs are made of a brass-like metal. They seem almost regal, with decorative figures on the backs where the brass structure ends. I wonder now if this exotic model appealed to Marie because it was reminiscent of her homeland. The walls of the restaurant are deep brown wood panels with alternating rows of brick. Three large windows look out onto Lincoln Highway and Fourth Street, in DeKalb, Illinois. Several mirrors hang on the walls. The frosted glass flower lights, reminiscent of the 1920's, are attached to the wall with brass handles. The windows let in much light which reflects off the mirrors, but despite this there is a dark quietness about the room. It is a peaceful, warm retreat from the surrounding hectic streets and businesses.

After she brought us our sandwiches, Marie sat down and talked with us. At first the conversation was somewhat awkward, as neither Andrea nor I are very adept at small talk. Marie began to tell us about her family and past, while the two of us listened in amazement. She had moved from Beirut twelve years before, after the death of her oldest son, Michel. She seemed to feel somehow responsible for his death because he had warned them of the dangers of remaining in Lebanon during the war, which was growing more violent. Marie and her family moved to DeKalb where two of her sisters had settled. She had wanted, for many years, to open a restaurant, and they had now saved enough money to begin. Several years earlier, she and her husband, Mitri, had bought this building, which was an abandoned gas station. After time spent in renovation and preparation, **Marie's** was ready for business in late August of last year. Marie admitted, sadly, that they were not getting many customers, however.

We did not know how to react. Andrea and I sat quietly, unable to respond. Marie seemed relieved to talk with us, and had taken us into her confidence. I was overwhelmed with all she had told us, with all she had experienced. In my naive view of the world, it seemed that there should be some type of fairness or justice in our lives. Here was a good person who had, through no fault of her own, a life full of difficulty. She seemed to bear always the thought that she was responsible for the death of her oldest son. Her excitement in opening the restaurant was apparent, yet she was forced to stare at the empty tables.

At the time I was writing for the **Northern Star**, and I thought an article about **Marie's** could

help the business at the restaurant. When I approached Marie, she began shaking her head.

"No, we have no money for this," she said dejectedly.

I explained that she wouldn't have to pay for it at all. In fact, I would get paid for writing the article. We arranged a time to meet and I came back to interview her. That night, Marie was beaming with excitement. She couldn't stop thanking me, and made me dinner. The article ran and many people tried **Marie's** as a result of it. Ever since then, I am treated like a daughter in the family. Marie refuses to let me pay for my meals. "What is a sandwich? You are my friend, you help us so much. You are always welcome."

I am a little nervous, now, about writing about Marie. Since that first time we talked with her, she has never spoken too much about her past. Walking into the restaurant, I am unsure of what to ask her or how to start her talking, but know that she has much to say. "Hello Margy," she says, stressing the second syllable of my name. She speaks French, and her English is a mixture of Lebanese idioms and French pronunciations. She speaks English fairly well, but is very self-conscious of her mistakes. "How are you?"

"Great Marie, how are you—how is business today?"

"Thanks God, today is good. If every day is like today, would be better. It's a long time you no come here." Marie proudly points out the hanging brass pots on either side of the counter. "My daughter Nancy, she sends these from Greece. She marry a man from Greece and live there

now, for—four years." She looks at me inquiringly, "What you want to eat?" Marie, a mother before anything else, insists on preparing a sandwich. As she prepares my meal, I wait alone in the dining room. The radio is playing top forty music. Marie's youngest daughter, Desi, a sophomore in high school, must have been here today. Sometimes Mitri has Middle Eastern music playing, but Marie turns it down when there are customers. She is simultaneously exemplifying and denying her past.

The conversation at the next table interrupts my thoughts. "But this idea that the purity of the process is the most important thing . . ." Two carefully disheveled college boys are sitting with one similarly attired girl.

"It's not the most important thing, but . . . the completeness of the process must be pure."

"But most of the composers that Doug and I are studying wouldn't agree . . . When you hear the music you are not hearing the process . . ."

Purity of the process. That reminds me of a conversation I had with Marie a few weeks ago. Rather than discussing the creation of music or paintings, though, we were talking about her cooking. "I cook healthy food, not junk food—no preservatives—everything fresh from fridge to fire—to cook. Same I cook for my home, my family—same for son, daughter, husband."

"It's commercial music, it's the 'in' idiom. You can be a commercial success. If you write minimalist music like Phillip Glass or Steve Reich . . . But they invented their medium. They are not debasing themselves."

The conversation seems so out of place here; although I'm sure Marie's does draw a creative, artistic crowd. How ironic, that this hardworking woman with very practical, straightforward goals and beliefs serves a crowd of people who discuss at length and with much emotion whether or not Phillip Glass is selling himself out as a commercial success. This makes me remember another talk with Marie and Mitri, when they explained how hard it was to leave their home, to come to a place where they couldn't communicate well. Marie was not worried about "selling herself" out but protecting the rest of her family.

"After war come, I lost my big son—better to run away. All my children like America, study English. Now it doesn't come in my mind, English. People hard to understand you—no, we are educated people. We live there in Lebanon comfortable, happy. But I lost my big son."

"Turn everything upside down," adds Mitri sadly.

"I don't know what I want to do. Now, we are in America, twelve years, everybody loves America. I miss my country, we happy. Thanks God. My sister she is here." Marie often says "Everyone loves America," but with a hint of disdain. She accepts the idea reluctantly, thinking more of her children than herself. I hear, rather, 'Everyone else loves America, so I'd better learn to adapt myself to it.'

After a few more minutes of my unintentional eavesdropping, Marie is finished preparing my meal. It is my favorite—kaafta, ground beef with Lebanese spices served on pita bread. She comes out from the kitchen and greets me with a bright smile. Mitri and Marie sit down to talk with me.

Mitri is a short, slight, dark-haired man. His slightly sarcastic humor is a contrast to Marie's sweet but serious personality. He begins describing the beauty of Beirut. Situated on the Mediterranean Sea, the city is close to the mountains. He speaks wistfully about the warm sunshine and mild winters, while looking disgustedly out at the fall-gray DeKalb sky.

"Someday, I will go back there. I do not want to stay here forever. After we can retire, another ten, fifteen years, Marie and I can go back. Maybe by then there will be no more war."

"They maybe don't want to hear about Lebanon," Marie interrupts, waving her hand towards the window. "They don't like it—think only of fighting and Americans being killed." She turns to me. "There was a customer in here, eating. He ask me about my country. He wants me to talk about it," shaking her head, Marie stops short. She seems a little upset, maybe the man was harrassing her. Whether or not he meant to, Marie certainly perceived it that way. She is very sensitive about how she is judged by the people here, and avoids giving opinions about her home to possibly hostile audiences.

Not knowing much about the culture of Lebanon, I wonder how Marie sees the differences between Americans and Lebanese. "There it is my people. Here they are good, too. All from God, all are the same. Every finger same," she says, pointing delicately to her hand, "all different.

"We lived ten years in Saudi Arabia, Mitri worked with an American oil company. We had three children there. Then we move to Beirut, he work with Middle Eastern airline. There we make the

shop. I put my children in English schools, it cost lot money but I know it's good to learn English. Everybody loves America.

"It was a beautiful shop. We have liquor, coffee, sweets, cigarettes. I like it. The coffee—is good coffee, Lebanese. Like I make it here for you. I like to come to America, but children all small. I had six children. Maybe if I came here I save my son, Michel. Very good English, Michel, he study for all America. He tell me 'One day I take you to Los Angeles. I buy you white Firebird.' God, He take good people.

"My Michel, he was my oldest boy. Smart, he was, and so good. I loved him so much. One day, he was at the shop. He say to Dimitri 'I be back in a minute.' But he never come back. He cross the street, and a bomb it hit him. My Michel." Marie's eyes begin to tear, but she continues to look at me imploringly, begging me to understand her pain. While this is such a difficult thing to talk about, she seems relieved to tell her story again. The love she still holds for her son is so strong, so beautiful. "Michel, he always say 'Mom, we have to go away. It is dangerous.' But we stay there, because with all the children is so hard to leave. Then we know we have to go. Maybe if I listen to Michel he would still be here." Mitri sits next to her, silent. I can't believe how much suffering they have endured, yet still view the world with optimism and hope.

"I go to the priest. I ask him 'Why, why does God take my Michel? He a good boy—you know that.' The priest, he tell me is like when you go to pick an apple from a tree. You always pick the most beautiful apples right away, for yourself.

Just like God, when He take people, He takes the best." Marie smiles through her sadness, finding some satisfaction in this thought. The silence is broken as their son, Eli, comes in with two of his friends. Eli is nineteen, a freshman at Kishwaukee Junior College. He shakes his father's hand with a grin.

"Hi, beautiful," he exclaims to Marie. Eli's voice betrays no accent, although he speaks Lebanese with his parents. A tall, gorgeous, olive-skinned boy, Eli has bright green eyes. Although his manner is very American, his looks are distinctly foreign.

"Beautiful no help anything—there is work," Marie responds, giving him a reproachful look.

"How is business today, Ma?"

"Today, thanks God, is good. If everyday like today, is good." Eli turns to me.

"You know, Mom thinks that because you're back, business is better." While I was studying in Rome last semester, Dimitri suffered a heart attack. Marie was forced to close the restaurant for several months while she cared for him. Opening again was difficult, and business was slower than before. When I came back in August, Marie was elated to see me. She sees me as some sort of good luck charm. Eli leaves with his friends after talking for a few minutes.

"Eli—he is not like Michel," Marie comments, looking rather sadly after him.

"He is—American," Dimitri agrees with a hint of disdain in his voice.

"For Michel, everything was family. Eli, no—Michel, always ask if I need help. Eli doesn't want to work here. But I love him—all the love I had for Michel is for Eli—all."

"You see," Dimitri jokes, "there is nothing left for me!"

Marie and Dimitri immediately begin to amend their harsh statements about Eli. Watching their children grow apart from their heritage must be so painful. They are proud of Eli's Americanization, realizing this is necessary if he is to succeed here. Yet they resent the divisions in the family that the cultural changes cause. The conversation turns back to Michel.

"Tell her about your dreams," Mitri suggests. He looks expectantly at Marie, waiting for her to begin. It is hard to believe that Michel passed away thirteen years ago—from the way they describe him I could almost expect him to walk through the door at any moment.

"Michel, after he passed away, I cried for days, day and night. You could not see my eyes. Mitri he tell me, 'Your son is with you.' Just like Michel always said: 'Don't cry when someone dies. The body, it is nothing. But the spirit lives on, the spirit is from God.' But I cried.

"One night, everyone is asleep, but I cry. I walk to Michel's room. There is the Virgin Mary with a candle. I always light it. If I forget to light it, Michel lights it. I go back to my room, it is 4:00, 4:30. Finally, I sleep. Deep sleep. I see Michel, but it is like he not dead. He walk up to me and say 'Mom, I wanna go now.' He with a beautiful girl with long blonde hair and white dress. They

walk away, into the sky. They walk up by beautiful trees, all with flowers. The trees are called—I don't know what you call them. I no see them here. But their flowers are all white, beautiful. In my dream, I think, 'Oh, Michel found a girl.' I say to Michel 'Don't be gone for too long.' I do not know it is a dream. I wake up then, and I am shaking. Michel, before he die he tell his father 'I'll be back in a minute.' I want to say goodbye to him, and I know that he came back to say goodbye."

Marie turns to me with a slight smile on her face, her eyes looking deeply into mine. I don't really know how to respond. Her faith and love are so inspiring, and I feel that I have been given a special privilege to share in her past. The expression on my face must have been all Marie needed to continue.

"Then, we decide to come to America. It is too dangerous. So, Mitri he has the tickets for me, him, and all of the children. The plane it leaves at 1:30 in the afternoon. Another night, I was crying. I could not sleep. Same like crazy, the tears. Maybe better I am here. In Beirut there is too much—how you say—Michel is everywhere. His room, his clothes. I fall asleep, deep sleep at 4, 4:30. I dream that I am in the kitchen with Michel and Dimitri. I make coffee. The phone, it rings. I say 'You sit down, I get it.' I catch the phone. Someone say 'Be at the airport before 10:30.' Slow, say every word. I say 'Who is it?' Nothing. Then I hear again 'Be at the airport before 10:30.' I walking back to the kitchen, saying 'They said the door.' I say 'Should I go early to the airport?' He does just like this to me (she nods her head slowly). I wake up and tell Mitri. So we go early

to the airport and we get on another plane at 10:30. They open up the plane just for us, put down the stairs. When we arrive in Germany I call my sister. She told me that in the airport at 1:00, the war he come. Everyone dead. They shoot everyone." Marie speaks in a calm, determined voice. Her eyes seek mine, as I listen in amazement, watching her closely. Her long auburn hair is pulled gently up in a loose bun, and intricate gold earrings dangle at her neck. We sit in silence for a few seconds. I am paralyzed. Her words fill me with hope. From deep anguish can come deep joy and peace.

Marie's unfolding of herself to me seems, now, almost like a dream. I am not used to knowing so much about a person who I barely know. For some reason she sees in me a sympathetic listener, a friend in a country of foreigners. I can understand how frustrating it is to try to communicate in another language. After spending time in Italy, I realized how deeply linked my personality is to my language: I felt the people I spoke only Italian with could never really understand who I am. It is not as difficult for Mitri. He speaks English much more fluently than Marie, and he is, somehow, not so intricately and painfully linked to the past. She has created a restaurant here that seems very exotic to me, with sounds and flavors different than I have ever encountered. It seems ironic, though, that what makes Marie so exotic here are the same things which are very common in Lebanon. Looking back, I can understand her asking why I would want to write about her. Thanks God, I did.



Nicole Beck  
The Confirmation  
Collage

# Mountain View

by Dale Stephens

Flies came in from the road with the breathless, humid night to drag themselves through the stinging wetness of the bar, over the sticky necks and lips of bottles, into the stale folds of beer-soaked bar rags and then to fly among the crowd.

Touching off faces, tracing down bare arms like drops of sweat, tingling into ears they buzzed and scribbled. They were attracted by the condition of those in the bar. Skin pulled loosely away from eyes and teeth and flushed with color like bruises. Matted hair and clothing. Makeup softened to white paste. A thickness, a stiffness there. Watching from the surfaces where they tasted of the room, they lifted described patterns, lead black and tightening around the languid figures.

The man tipped and swallowed from a bottle, spine curving to the drink. He felt bloated but still did not have enough of the alcohol. It had been a bad day. Work had been bad.

Behind the lines of bottles, he could see the reflection of all that went on around him. His eyes swam into the mirror, lingering on faces, forms, darting away from other eyes that filled the glass like small, timid fish in a long, shadow filled tank. Another man floated beside him, pale in the dark green. His black hair and beard were untrimmed, oily. Cutoffs and a sleeveless shirt showed powder white, skinny arms nearly bone and skin with a few twitching chords of muscle. The sunken features of his face made his eyes appear abnormally large, and the man noticed now that they were staring fully into his own. He dropped his eyes from the mirror. A large fly lifted from his bottle, buzzed thickly as it circled his head, touched the back of his hand, bobbed again, slowly in front of him, now near his

change. He brushed at it, but the fly returned to hover over the money. The man brushed a little more excitedly and left his hand clapped protectively over the coins and bills. The fly landed on the curved, stainless steel lid of the beer cooler that swelled out from under the counter, sweating condensation, thrumming like the alcohol through his body.

"You want another?"

"Yeah," he told the bartender, "another Coors." He moved his hand, fluttering it at the money. "Could I cash a pay check here?" The big man looked at him warily.

"How much is it for?"

"Ninety-seven." He unfolded the large blue check from his pocket. The bartender braced himself over the bar with straight arms and closed fists.

"Yeah, O.K., sign it."

"Payday, huh?" The voice had come from beside him, but the man glanced first in the mirror. The bearded man seemed to be whispering in his ear, his bloodless face stretched close on a stalk-like neck.

"Every Friday."

"Where do you work?"

"Templand Foods."

"The bacon bits factory?" The man thought he sounded amused.

"Yeah." He picked up the money the bartender brought for him, counted it, stuffed it in his pocket. He started to push away from the bar,

but the bartender sat an open bottle before him.

"You wanted another Coors, didn't you?"

"Just putting my money away." He had forgotten the beer. He had wanted to leave. Now he'd have to finish the drink . . . quickly. His skin started to prickle as the stranger leaned toward him again, pulling his upper body along the bar with spindly arms, inhaling thickly to speak.

"Whaddya do there?" With a hesitant reply the man tried to show some of his annoyance. He took a long drink from the bottle and set it down carefully before turning, shrinking away from the closeness of the stranger's face whose large eyes seemed unreal, glazed over dark, plastic and unseeing.

"They usually just have me bagging bacon bits."

"Like what I do. I mean it sounds just as easy."

With a strong bite, like into an apple, there was the first scoop every morning. For eight hours he drove the white plastic scoop into the totes of bacon bits, filling plastic bags until his mind was numb with the repeated actions. He did it until he lost track of what he was doing. Only automatic motions. He could've been bagging dog food or coffee grounds and it would have been the same.

"I'm working down at Frye Machine," the stranger continued. "They make round metal pieces for all kinds of things. Right now they got me laying this one piece on top another, then the conveyor belt takes them to the welder. I don't have to think when I go into work. I just listen to my Walkman and fit the discs together.

"Doesn't it drive you crazy?"

"It's work. That's why they call it work." The pale face shook back and forth loosely on its stalk with a smile. "It ain't supposed to be fun. You don't get an hourly wage trying to get laid."

The bartender picked up the empty bottle and raised his eyebrows questioningly.

"No."

"You quitting already?" complained the bearded man.

"I have to work tomorrow."

"Tomorrow's Saturday."

"It doesn't matter."

"Lemme buy this round."

The man did not want to go back to his apartment, to sleep and wake for another day that could offer nothing. It waited for him: the alarm, five minutes in the bathroom pulling on stiff greasy clothes, cereal, making a lunch of peanut butter and bread, an eighteen minute drive, hair net, rubber boots, white coverall: Work. At seven the first scoop would bite into the first tote of bacon bits with the crisp smack of a bitten apple. From there the time clock crumbled the day away between his glances.

He took the full bottle of beer and raised it to the stranger knowing tomorrow would come and that it would come again. For eight months it had remained with him. All but a few hours of his every day resulted in a froth of residue in a draining tub. In five or six hours he'd be in bed again waiting for it all to start over.

Lying there, the unpleasant closeness of long, matted strands of shag carpeted walls, the gurgle of water swallowed down pipes beside his head and the darkness made him feel as if he were in the wormy full belly of a fish. Shadowy ribs of wood slanted down the roof so he could touch the rough beams from his bed, the only piece of furniture within that airless closet. From the single dormer window of the attic, no light or breeze penetrated the sagging lining of green and brown carpet. He squirmed and sweated before sleep, brushing against cysts of dirt and stickiness.

The stranger's presence was as unpleasant as the annoying green flies in the smoke thick air. He didn't like the thought of sleep and what it would bring.

"How long you been working at Frye Machine?"

"Oh, man, I don't know. I got the job right after I quit high school. I was eighteen then. Hard to believe it's been that long. When you get out in the real world it's all over." The stranger's hands gathered on his beer bottle, lifting it awkwardly. He wiped his mouth and sweating forehead with the back of his hand. "Work forty hours a week ain't much time left to be messin' around."

A sudden uproar of laughter jarred the man's attention. The violent clamor was sustained like the second crashing repetitions of another rock song straining the air. He felt a sudden seclusion, uncomfortably paired with this stranger. As if a joke had been flashed on a screen only they had missed. It had been quieter, the stranger had said something, then there was the roar of laughter. What had he said?

*Life is over when you get into the real world.*

Lizard lady. She used to sniff at the gas jets in the biology room. Herbie Straker found some joints in her purse and they giggled together because Herbie smoked the stuff too. Whenever she got upset with the class she'd get these sad eyes like she was seriously trying to warn us about something and she would say, "Wait until you get into the real world." Leaving the room he had laughed with the others, making lizard sounds.

Now he heard it again and there had been the laughter, but the man turned back around to the bar for no one was looking at them or listening.

To his right, outside the open bar door, the man could see mountains beyond the shadows of the orchard covered hills. They rose up huge and pale like ghosts over the dark, solid shapes of the town. Formless, hovering souls unhappily drawn to the stone markers below them. They seemed to be only gasses or clouds of pollution floating above the foundries and businesses of the valley.

Since he'd arrived in this town, although it was the mountains that originally brought him, he had only risen above the valley once to explore them. The memory of that day passed through his thoughts now with painful clarity, bringing the familiar sense of remorse for all the other clotting days surrounding it. A day he'd followed trails from the edge of town for miles along a mountain stream. The clear, yellow-green water of the stream, calm in pools, rushing over smooth round painted egg stones, pouring softly from grooves in the rocks like water over the lips of porcelain pitchers filled the cool air with a hush, like wind

in the heavy-soft boughs of the fir trees. The leaves of aspen saplings, growing beside the stream quivered like a catch of yellow fish milling and fanning, stringer-tied, in the dark green water of the surrounding forest.

Now in the darkness and confusion of the bar with its thickness of flies and people and with the alcohol that now embalmed his senses that day seemed animated. Over the memory of so much graying time ran that instance of color. Shaded recollections filled his thoughts like the sad, muffled remembrances of an old man, and where there was no color there was remorse. Leaden, rainy years gathered and swelled in his past from directionless moments. The years grew from sighs, and were marked by nothing. To remember was to stare back at sleep or at the dull eyed masturbatory, thoughtless hours and years spent in bed he's grown that old in. The man swallowed the warm remains of his beer. He did not want to look back on empty colorless memories.

The crowd was bumping against his back now, shifting in the gray reflection of the mirror. In the haze the people were discolored and seemed to roll from shadowy corners into the softening light from disturbances around them. He knew his movement out of the bar would be like a drag going through a depth of water disturbing the settled bodies, and in the mirror, like through the glass of a Mason Jar filled with formaldehyde, the pale, shell-less specimens would swirl and sink again.

The stranger faced the crowd. His arms and legs flailed with gesturing as he shouted drunkenly at a woman. His body was balanced on the stool,

his thin, veiny legs half useless by now. He would have to crawl over the sticky floor to leave. All the while gesturing, his hands and inner legs brushed and touched over the woman's skin. She tensed and seemed ready to hit them away. But he would stop, wipe the sweat from his face with the insides of his elbows, then go on again. He appeared to be gathering her nearer with the wispy, jerking motion of his little white arms and legs. The scene was repelling to the man. Standing away from his stool, he meant to leave without speaking.

"Hey, wait, I'm buying another round." With the confusion and clumsiness of a roused sleeper, the bearded stranger twisted around, knocking over his glass with an elbow, but before it could run over the lip of the bar, he braced himself with delicate arms, hands on each side of the spilled beer and began mopping at it with his mouth and beard. On his stretching neck the veins thickened and deepened in color while the elastic cartilage of his throat slid delicately with his swallowing. A sucking sound, the knock of his chin on the top of the bar. The man wanted to smash his face into it. With a dripping, goat-draggled beard, the stranger leaned back in his chair, wiping his face with his forearms, licking luxuriously at the whiskers. His head hung limp to the side, face expressionless. His body seemed to shake from laughter. His words bubbled and hissed as if from a stroke-softened looseness in his mouth. "This is what makes it all worthwhile. Drunk. Maybe get laid if you're lucky. I love this." The stranger lifted his hands as if to embrace. The man brushed them away, and they fell limply again to his sides. "All we need is some women to crawl on

top of." The shaking of his laughter increased. "The rest of the week don't matter."

The man turned from the bar and started to push his way through the crowd. His anger and panic increased as he heard the stranger start after him. Struggling through the tangled drove of people, he envisioned the desperate stranger following, perhaps unable to stand, perhaps crawling underneath or even over the press of the crowd. He saw the scene as if it were an image in the silent green depth of the mirror's reflection, and as he passed through the entryway, he felt a tingling on the back of his neck as if from sweat or from the touch of a fly that had brushed across the sensitive skin.

Beyond the screen door he noticed the buzzing hum of a cloud of insects that swirled in a wash of neon light outside. He ran along the gravel road under deep shadows of the encroaching orchards until the sound of voices and music was itself only a distant, indistinguishable buzzing.

Between the bar and town the orchards crowded in hilly, unfenced lines. They were heavy with apples. Above them the distant mountains were white from the moon as was the dust he kicked up on the gravel road before him. The road seemed somehow connected to the mountains. He slowed his pace as he covered the short distance to the edge of town.

The shadowed area between road and mountain took on a different aspect as he neared it. Only a blackness at the edges of his eyesight. Thoughts, heavy and discontented, of returning to work that morning caused the mountains also to melt from his sight. The darkness that surrounded him now

was more of a graveyard than an orchard. The necessity of being swallowed by sleep before the repetition of his workday was sickening.

Tomorrow had already dressed him in greasy clothes and led him to a factory where he would be hidden from the day. The sun would pass over without entering the building, only discoloring those thick cubes of glass that served as windows through which the outside looked smeared and unfocused. The promised day was already divided up, used before he could enter it. He would draw in his morning breath from the hot greasy exhalation of machinery, thoughts would be clogged with repeated motions. Tomorrow waited for him in expectation. It gathered from so many previous days all that it had to offer.

Stumbling to the roadside, perhaps from the alcohol, the man grasped at two low branches of an apple tree to steady himself. A part of him seemed detached from his actions, the part that was doubting the sincerity of a cry that rose within. He clenched his teeth, strained to hold back the pain and confusion of tears but the gasping increased. It repeated itself over and over, inside himself, unvoiced. The unspoken words echoing inside would not be released except in a prayer to the night and to the white mountains that blurred softly from the moisture of his eyes.

Above him, surrounding him in each of the trees of the orchard, pale shapes like lanterns hung to protect the harvest. They seemed attentive like interested souls so he prayed toward them. From each a buzzing, mumbling repetition of his prayer seemed to issue. A thousand hopeful voices were

at once lifted to the mountains. From the plastic containers at the heart of every fruit heavy tree could be heard in the perfect silence of morning a tapping of little wings. The containers caught the first yellow blush of sunlight, a darker sediment could now be distinguished in the water filled bottom half of each. From all the entrapping, thin necked jugs came the liquor-like smell of vinegar that even the sweet red odor of apples could not overcome.



Nicole Beck  
On The Way  
Collage

# Alone

Terry J. Fox

He never calls  
He's probably laughing  
his Kafka laugh right now  
over an imported beer  
having an existential  
good time  
while I'm sitting here  
like an empty philosophy glass  
on a high shelf  
in a downtown cafe  
that's practically bankrupt

# Fate

Terry J. Fox

He took a Greyhound to Chicago  
She hitchhiked  
to a small town in Vermont  
They never met

# *The History of Fresh Fruit in America*

James Tolan

The first experience of the new born banana  
is to be sliced of its skin at the very tip,  
so as to keep it clean  
and diminish the pleasures of blindness  
an imposed blessing to be fondled and kissed,  
Squeezed & Boffed  
until it droops all puckered and brown  
into some patient mother's desert bread  
and is served to the blue haired ladies of the bridge club  
in memorium of their long lost Carmen Miranda dreams  
of fruit topped Chiquita dancing to exotic Latin rhythms  
before the big one, WWII, the good war,  
where the men who were men fought far away  
and dreamed of Betty Grable thighs  
and the creamy white children that slid out  
all shiny and scrubbed into our brave new world  
of Ford & Roosevelt & the Actor Reagan  
Three Stooges' fingers in your eyes  
until they made you laugh  
at Protestant work ethics and Catholic morality  
checked at the door of Birdland  
and filtered through Beat San Francisco hookahs  
into the rock-n-roll, love and drugs of Haight Ashbury  
menage a trois, fucking in slow motion, with Vietnam and Charles Manson  
until my dad wanted a new Vette more than me  
and my mom saved her displaced Roman soul by giving her first born to the nuns  
to grow up in some confused Medieval circus of free love and guilt,  
tracing Bob Marley out of death  
back into adopted Harry Belafonte records of white folk Calypso  
singing, "Yes, we have no bananas today."

# *Another Wheelbarrow*

James Tolan

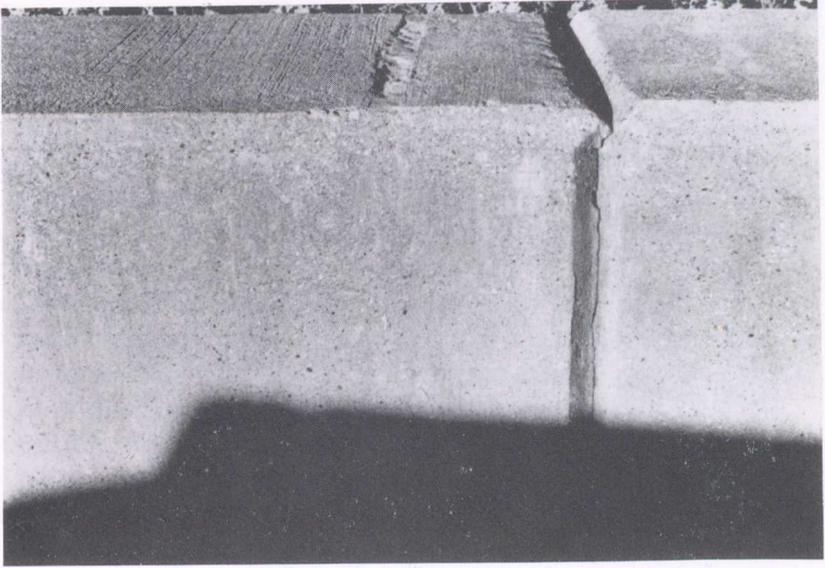
so much depends  
upon

a pouched faced  
old man

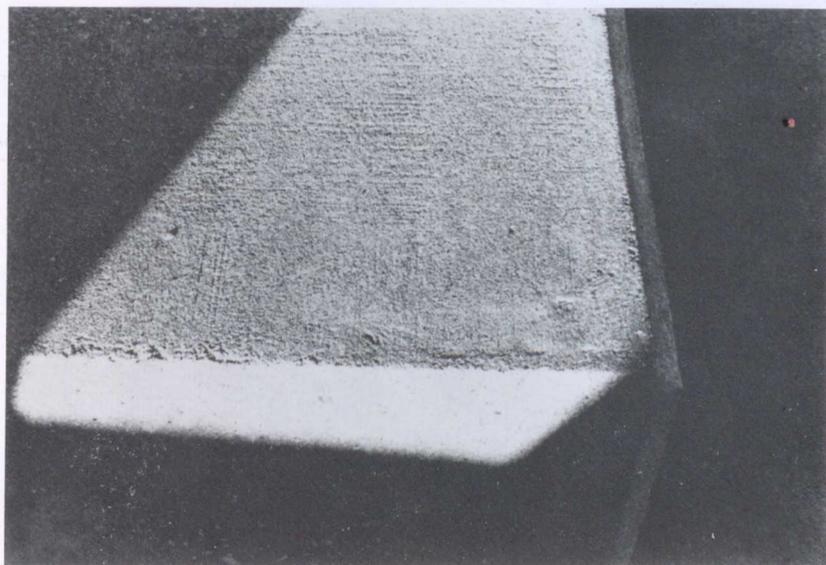
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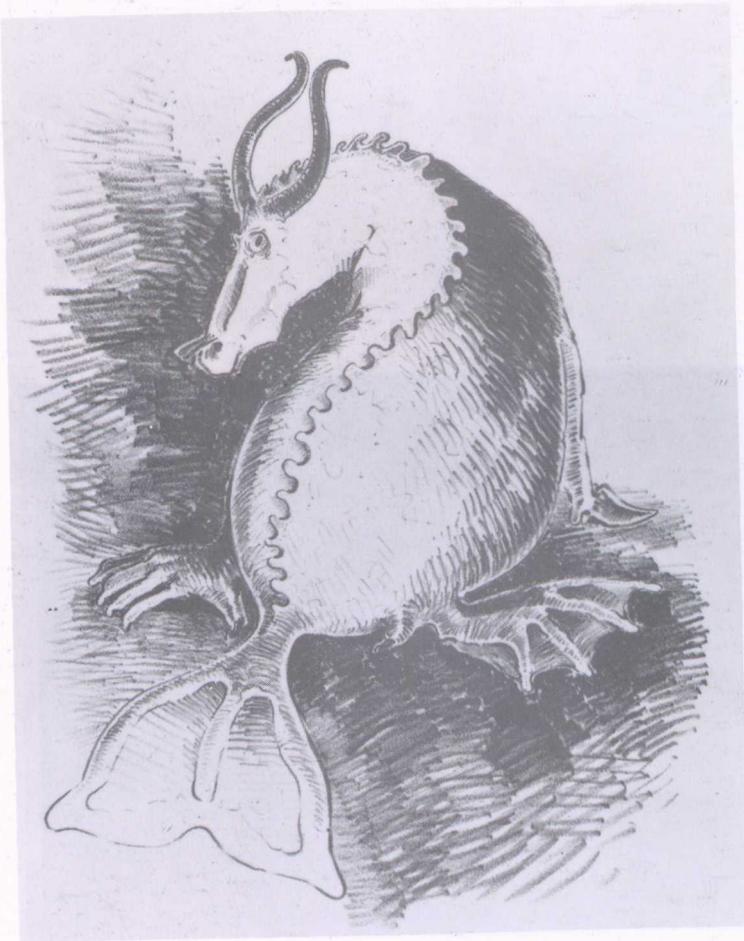
THE HISTORY OF THE  
FRUIT IN AMERICA



Michele Giffune  
1-88 (1/10)  
Silver Gelatin Print



**Michele Giffune**  
**I-88 (2/10)**  
**Silver Gelatin Print**



Heather Kraft  
Extinct  
Lithograph



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