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TOUCHSTONE

WINTER-SPRING
1979

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TOUCHSTONE

Winter/Spring
1979

A Magazine of Creative Arts

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Manhattan, Kansas**

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*indicates work specially recognized by the judges for TOUCHSTONE AWARDS.

A Note On The TOUCHSTONE Awards:

Beginning with this issue, TOUCHSTONE inaugurates awards of special recognition within the magazine for the best art, poetry and prose submitted. For this issue, the prose category was further narrowed to short fiction.

The judges for this issue were John O'Shea (a professor of art from K-State), Lloyd Kropp (novelist, poet and editor of *SOUTHWESTER*, a journal of poetry and fiction that comes out of Southern Illinois University,) and Joanne Greenberg (perhaps best known as the author of *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*).

Dear Ken:

Thank you for sending me the selection of three excellent stories. There are strong things in each of them: strong imagination in "Warm Smiles," and I like the images in "Feathers," but as an all-around story, I think "No White Horse" is the best. The child, I think, is beautifully realized, not romanticized, and his love and guilt are very simple and moving. Please congratulate Leslie Rianoshek — she can put a profound experience into four pages.

Sincerely,
Joanne Greenberg
Golden, Colorado

Dear Ken:

Here are the four best poems, as I read them. I have also included two honorable mentions.

FIRST PLACE The Meditations of Judas, by Chip Ratner

The central meaning of this poem is elusive in some ways, but its general outline is clear. It consists of three meditations by Judas Iscariot. The first is an uncertain childhood memory of a woman who leaves him with a kind of illness, or curse. The second, another childhood memory, concerns a horse who dies in a meaningless agony which Judas is powerless to prevent. The third is a dream vision about his search for some final source of power and light, symbolized by the moon. A recurrent line suggests that at least the

first two meditations come to Judas during the morning of Christ's crucifixion, and the tangencies between this, his betrayal of Christ, and the dark images from Judas' childhood are interesting and suggestive.

Taken stanza by stanza, this is for the most part a well-wrought poem. The rhythmic variations of a five-beat line with occasional rhymes and slant rhymes solidify in the last section into a four-beat line with a regular rhyme pattern. Within this pattern there are marvelous qualities and inventions: sharp and original images and figures, a clear narrative line in each section, and a strong sense of mystery.

SECOND PLACE *After the Flood*, by Michael Hurd

This is a nearly perfect poem. The narrative moves with economy and coherence. The imagery is very sharp and evocative. The ending, which gives a terrible twist to the Biblical tale, leaves the reader with an altogether new interpretation of the Flood. I like especially the ironic juxtaposition of the sea of bodies against the image of the heavenly rainbow.

THIRD PLACE *Seventeen Year Locust*, by Ann Carrel

Although the point of view in this poem may be distracting to some, the locusts, singing and flying to their deaths, become a powerful emblem for the human condition. The virtues of this poem are clarity and a fine sense of sound and rhythm rising to an intense lyrical desperation in the final lines. I very much regret having to choose between this and the second place poem.

FOURTH PLACE *One Person Singular*, by Carl Buchanan

The informal diction and the casual development of this poem suit the subject very well. This is a remarkably pleasant poem, a beautiful affirmation, a reminder that our notions of what is useful and what is useless often have little to do with the way life is really lived.

Honorable Mention: *Just Fishing*, by Karen Heckathorn; *Said the Poet to the Analyst*, by Keith Laurent

Could you send me a couple copies of the magazine when it comes out?

As always,
Lloyd Kropp
SOUTHWESTER
Southern Illinois University
Edwardsville, Illinois

The Snowflakes

by Joan Croft

The snowflakes came again,
Buzzing against the screen,
Like mosquitoes on a summer night.
Bound neither up nor down,
They glide; small ships without rudders.
Following not the traditional path,
From sky to ground, they mingle
Forgetting their assigned paths
Like children sledding
On the communal hill,
Unnamed and faceless.

Symphonic Icebergs

by Matthew Frazel

I close my eyes and the world falls away.
The small Mexican conductor cuts icebergs with his baton
and sends them gliding out into the auditorium.
The sound is solid and I walk out beyond the balcony rail.
Beethoven will support me.
And he does!
I float about the hall in love with the flutist.
The clarinet player's eyebrows rise up to meet the music's waves.
The bald-headed first violinist's fingers are cats.
All the violins are crickets moving at once,
growing in size from the dainty violins, into violas, cellos,
even into giant grasshopper bass violins.
Ferns curl at the ends.
The conductor imagines the whole piece.
His ear splits and goes into each musician, into each instrument.
The notes pour into his ears and then he releases them again
through his hands.
He worships the waves that become the great iceberg cutting into
the heart.
He is a stand of kelp weaving beneath the water and it surrounds
him, moving slow . . .



The Louis Vieux Crossing

by Ann Carrel

I'm sitting beside a river called the Red Vermillion, near dusk in late October. I face downstream, and watch the river run until it is lost in a bend about a quarter mile from this spot, a sudden ending of young yellow cottonwoods and olive green willows, red sumac and golden elms, a bend that looks as though the river has disappeared, suddenly into a hillside. It's hazy there at the end of my seeing, almost like I could forget the river doesn't end there, forget that it empties into the Kaw three miles south.

Crickets whirr in the dry fox-tail grass over my shoulder. My back rests against the dry, cool earth of a bank that reaches fifty feet above my head, and shadows the river to my left. The bank opposite is also high and steep, the stream cutting its soil for so long that the profile layers show perfectly — light to deep brown — as well as the bedrock where the stream still works. I'm sitting on one side of a sand bar maybe fifty yards long, the sides sloping to a low mound all down the center. The bar is covered with thousands of rocks, mostly the size of cobblestones but ranging from boulders to pebbles and bleached white shells of clams. Partially covered with dry sand and caked mud because the river is low, the rocks are all tan. On some, under the tan, the reddish quartzite shows through, but most are limestone, and rippled, rounded from ages of current.

On the other side of the sand bar, the river runs at a gallop and the sound of its rushing carries any quiet voices away. As it curves around the bar it narrows to about eight feet across, and foams white over the rocks, breaking across a couple of foot-high waterfalls. After passing the narrow point, the water broadens out, and near the end of the bar where I sit, slows to a walk. The stream is nearly thirty feet across here and cuts a scoop from the bank on my side now, a little down from where I sit. The river is slowly making a new bend, and continues to cut on this bank as far as I can see. The bank above me shadows the fast water, shading it the deepest green-black, but the setting sun casts a molten cooper gleam to its darkness, and the ripples seem on fire. Where the stream broadens out, where the banks aren't so high, the stream is all gun-metal blue, reflecting the complete, more delicate blue of the sky. Blowing in strong, cool gusts, the wind, when it brushes the water, runs the ripples out like a hand rubbing against the fur of a blue Manx cat.

The bar runs into the now relaxed water like an arm pointing downstream; my eyes follow the long narrow finger. The banks in the distance slope more gently into the water, the smoother current allowing the trees, bushes and grasses to cover their sides. Gold is everywhere, the pocket-watch gold of the older elms lining the top

of the bank, to the lemon yellow of the young cottonwoods clinging to the sides. Burnt oranges and reds cover the banks, the colors of the sumac, dried sunflowers — the saw-grass, fox-tail and buffalo grass seeming a soft brown from where I sit. The river meanders until that final bend, and the trees lining the sides look like crooked rows of dancers. The little yellow cottonwood leaves spin nervously in the wind, each leaf moving of its own accord, the whole sapling shaking like a frightened child. The older trees above sway back and forth at the top branches like the steady tick of a clock. Wind moans through them but you hear it from far away like a sound you're not sure of.

Shallow water has uncovered the snags, mostly on the opposite bank downstream where the water isn't as swift. The long heavy branches have bleached in the sun to the color of cream and the thin dark roots at their bases are tangled like snakes or a cluster of spiders. Two snags stretch across the water ahead. They are unclear far down the river and may be only another couple of sandbars or piles of uncovered rock in the stream bed. I can't be certain for the haze.

This place is one that I come to whenever I can get away, and when I can't get away I have it in my mind. Its features have changed a lot through the years — they took down the rusty iron bridge I knew as a kid and replaced it a few months ago with a concrete span. The river has changed its course some since I fished, swam and dug for fossils here with my brothers. But somehow this place hangs on; change hasn't spoiled it yet. Fremont and Kit Carson crossed it, along with hundreds of soldiers and thousands of wagons on the Oregon Trail. Some of the ones who died from cholera and never made it across are buried on the hill nearby. The Indians were here hundreds, even thousands of years before them, and among the pieces of old iron cooking pots, stone crocks and mini-balls you can still find their flint tools. Up above me in a field the elm tree is still there that has been there for two hundred years or more, commanding everything in sight across that field and bend of the river and low hills beyond. It will be there for a good long while yet. There is talk that soon a new reservoir will cover up much of the Vermillion River Valley. Change this river and wipe everything away, you have done something shameful, but the meanings of it, different as everyone who ever looked down that stream, haven't been changed. You haven't hurt the idea of a river for anyone who has it. I have the idea of a river.

Just Fishing

by Karen Heckathorn

Sitting on the rocks nodding
toes touching —
He wishing her streams of fresh fish
so she won't get fat in old age.

She wishing his mouth
an uncurling line instead of a scarlet circle
lacking the other colors of a rainbow.
He chasing his own tail.

Then a right slant of light drawing open his eyelids
She diving into his iris
swimming the butterfly furiously
in shallow circles

His lid slamming down and darkness.
Her savage toe scraping his membrane
She rolling out of the duct
into darkness again.

Once in a while, the moon scraping his teeth
Him eating it, spitting the craters back.
The sky mourning the evening
spilling silent stars into water

A hovering weakness
A heaving of white-caps and weeping
No bees making honey, no splashing of children
Just fishing.

OHIO STATE VS PENN STATE

(Rod Gerald being tackled by Bruce Clark)

Photo: Sports Illustrated

by Gregg Coonrod

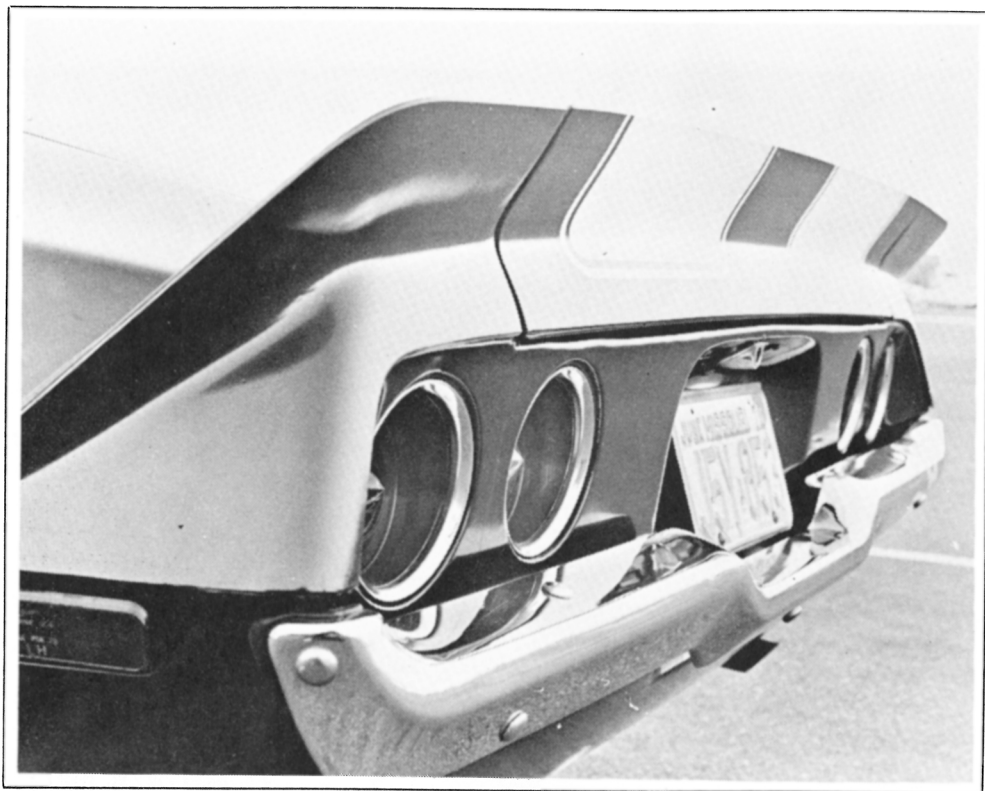
An over-excited mother squeezes her baby
So tight to her chest that it cries.
Aunts fall around the mother's waist
Reaching
To touch the child.
The Grandmother, in striped dress,
Comes rushing in.



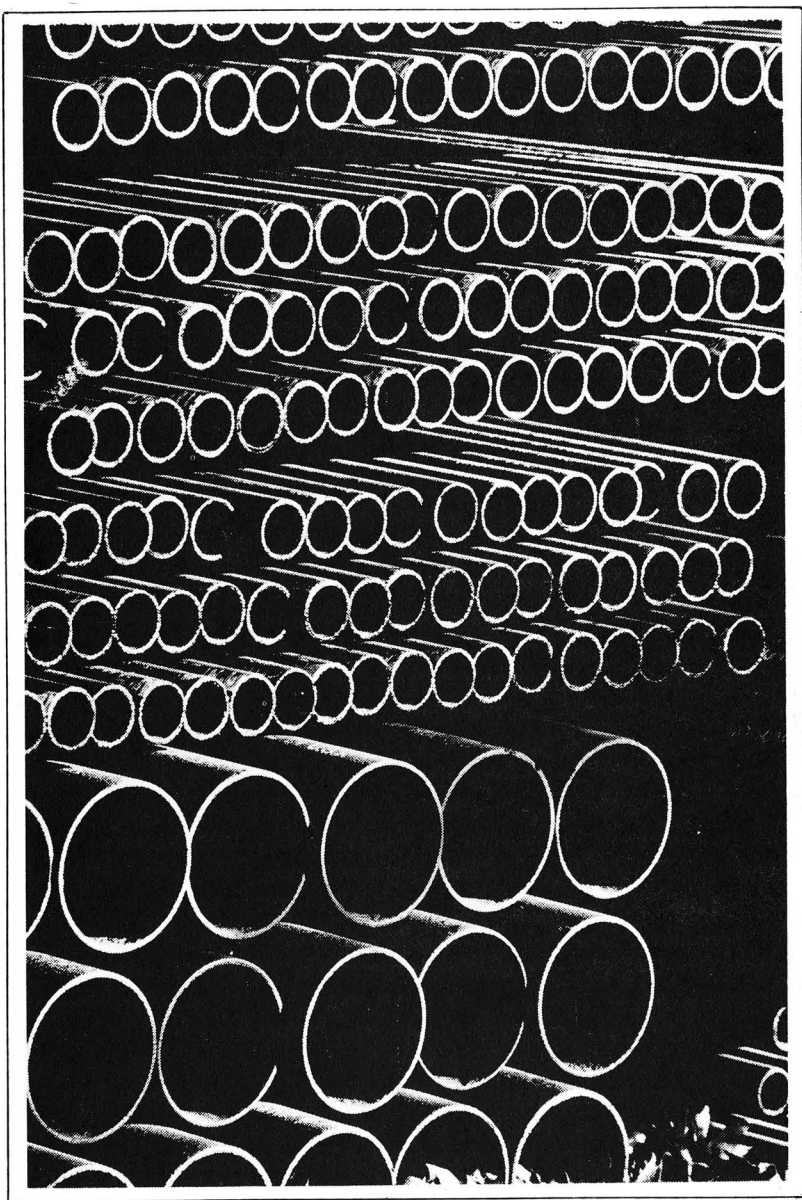
Self-Portrait
etching
14" x 8³/₄"
Glenn Rupert

Untitled
drawing
16" x 14"
Brad Lumb





Untitled
10"x8"
photograph
by **Wiley B. Felton**



by John S. Bock



Only a Little While Longer

Charcoal

17" x 14"

Jim Gugg

Feathers

by Sue Freidenberger

"He's mine, mine, I tell you!"

Her foot stamped imperiously, punctuating her words with furious angerbursts. Her smooth baby-skin was blotched from crying. Marshall thought his sister extremely disgusting.

Erinn pointed at the cage. "I told you, Daddy, I don't want a silly puppy. I want him. Him! He's . . . he's perfect," Erinn insisted.

Marshall looked from his father's frowning face to his sister's pleading one. Bored with the scene which had grown much too repetitive for his taste, Marshall looked at the animal being debated over.

The iridescent peacock stepped jerkily over piles of manure that were beginning to attract flies in the growing heat. Occasionally he arched his thick blue neck and stared, quite pointedly, Marshall thought, at Erinn's theatrics.

Erinn grabbed her father's hand. "Please Daddy," she whispered, eyes shining at the disinterested animal.

"All right, dear, all right," Mr. Taylor surrendered. "We'll take him, Wallace. But be quick about it. I have an eleven-thirty appointment."

Erinn voiced no thanks but nodded silently as she watched the reluctant bird looped about the neck with a cord and led to the waiting car. Christopher, the butler, winced delicately as the zoo-keeper sat the peacock in the passenger's seat of the car.

All the way back to the Taylor home, Marshall endured Erinn's jabberings over "Saka," her newly-named possession. Erinn sat on her knees so she could watch her pet jiggle and bump in the cage propped in the front seat of the car. Through the glass, Marshall could see Christopher nervously talking to Saka, telling him to be a good peacock and not make a mess on the imported leather upholstery.

Marshall sat uncomfortably in between Mr. Taylor and Erinn. Erinn occasionally pressed her slightly damp hand on Marshall's thigh to make sure he was listening. From time to time, he shifted his weight and turned so he could observe the spring countryside sliding past him. He could faintly see his own reflection in the window glass, frowning and pursing his lips at himself. Marshall had a bad headache; the kind that presses from the inside out. He violently shook his head. Erinn started.

"What's the matter, Marsh?" she whined. "Isn't he the most beautiful thing you ever saw? Isn't he?"

Marshall nodded vaguely, he knew it would be answer enough for

her. Erinn continued with her monologue about Saka, her reedy voice peaking and giggling at points and dropping to a low thick whisper at others. Marshall pretended to listen. Mr. Taylor seemed not to even be aware that Erinn was speaking. He stared out the window, occasionally scratching the stubble on his chin he had missed while shaving.

Marshall didn't like calling Mr. Taylor "Father," even when company was present. There was so much formality in Mr. Taylor's dealings with his son that Marshall thought it was only proper that he address him by his surname. And, anyway, he really didn't believe he was Mr. Taylor's real son. He'd had a dream once, and Erinn was in a garden with Mr. Taylor and they were both sitting beside a fountain. Then Marshall walked in and all the flowers and vines and beautiful things in the garden dried up and blew away. Erinn began screaming and ran after Marshall, trying to chase him out of the garden. She told him that he didn't belong in her garden with her father. Ever since that dream, Marshall called his father "Mr. Taylor."

Not that he always believed everything in his dreams. But there was some real evidence, he thought. For one thing, Mr. Taylor paid a lot more attention to Erinn than he ever had to Marshall. One time at a party, he had only introduced Erinn as his child and Marshall had to stand there, staring at his brown patent leather shoes, embarrassed and silent. Mr. Taylor had been a little drunk, Marshall thought. Maybe he just forgot.

But then there was Erinn. Marshall shuddered when he thought of his sister, who was nothing like him. At one minute she would be acting hateful and mean and then the next minute she'd run into your arms and slobber kisses all over your face and apologize like it was the most important thing to her, to be forgiven.

It was strange, at times, Marshall almost felt a queer fondness for Erinn, as one would feel for some pitiable, miserable creature. But at other times, he was moved to a revulsion so fierce that he could barely keep from screaming and pulling at her brown plaited hair. He had felt that way at the zoo today.

He thoughtfully chewed on the nail of his left thumb. The yellow car pulled gracefully into the dogwood-edged drive and eased in front of the entrance to the Taylor home.

"Out, out children," Mr. Taylor shooed, "and Christopher, get that . . . that bird away somewhere," he said. The butler nodded as Mr. Taylor pulled away in the small sports car he had bought last year.

"Don't!" Erinn's shrill cry stopped the butler in midstride.

He turned to her. "Yes, Miss Taylor?"

"I said don't touch Saka! He's my pet now and nobody else shall be allowed to come near him!"

"Are you going to take him out of the car and put him into the gar-

den yourself, Erinn?" Marshall asked, trying to simper appropriately.

"Take Saka out of that foul cage and put him in the east garden where I can watch him from my study room," she said to Christopher.

Marshall frowned. She hadn't even heard him. She was looking at him and he couldn't tell if she was mad or not. He neatly bit off a section of thumbnail. Erinn watched him, her face screwing up into a grimace.

"What a filthy habit," she remarked.

Marshall smiled, then spat the piece of nail onto the pavement near her red leather shoe. Erinn's mouth twitched and she turned to go into the house. But then she stopped.

"You know, Saka is really a very beautiful animal," she mused.

Marshall began walking into the drive, kicking the stones toward nothing in particular. She yelled after him.

"He's mine Marsh, you know that don't you?"

Marshall smiled to himself, dug his hands deeper into his pockets and kicked a large stone. It skipped over the others and landed, sideways, on the curb. He heard the front door slam heavily.

Marshall awoke, sweating. he raised himself up on his elbow and listened, his sticky breathing rasping in the stillness. Nothing. It had been the dream again. The same one. But it was gone now.

"E-e-e-ah-ah-ah!" Marshall tensed spastically, the nightmare still vivid in his mind. There. He heard it again. It was Saka, cawing in strong falsetto.

He wondered if Erinn had heard Saka. Probably not. He kicked the covers away, got carefully out of bed, and moved to the window. Through the dirty pane he tried to make out figures of trees and hedges he knew existed in the east garden. Slowly, the muted shapes took form. He strained to hear, to see.

"E-e-e-ah-ah-ah!"

Marshall's knees almost gave way. The tremor passed, he straightened up. Saka was near, very near. But Marshall wanted to see him, to be assured of the reality of the cry. He wanted to make sure it was no dream. An ache gnawed behind his eyes, weary with strain.

"E-e-ah-ah-ah-ah!" Saka stepped into the center of the garden which was sharply splashed with the harsh light of the October harvest moon. Mind mute, heart blank, Marshall watched the eerie display.

Saka looked uncomfortable in the hazy light. His neck twitched spastically as he stepped in the mist rising gently from the warm earth into the snap of black air. A shimmer of moonbeam danced on his sleek blue head and shuddered down his quivering sinewy neck.

He cocked his head, beak pointing to the sky, neck twisted grotesquely. With almost a reverent dread, Marshall watched the dumb show, now momentarily suspended. He worked his jaw muscles

and found his throat closed to sound. His eyes now found solace in the colors that entwined the peacock — purples that opalesced into greens; blacks and blues interchanging with the whims of the breeze. Then, slowly, barely discernible, a ruffling began in the ends of the heavy tail feathers lying limp on the damp earth. Marshall blinked — did he have something in his eye? His brow furrowed as he concentrated on the tail feathers. There, they moved, he was sure of it!

The ruffling began again, this time with an intense energy, the feathers lifting upwards and from side to side. Then, as they swayed higher, the bundle of plumes burst open and spread into a huge prismatic fan. Marshall sucked in his breath and slowly squinted his eyes at the sudden brightness. Then, just as innocuously as it had begun, the show ended. Saka took a hesitant step. The feathers swayed back down, folding together as he walked back out of the center of the garden and melted into the dark trees. Marshall remained at the window. He had the feeling that he had seen something secret. Like the time he had opened the bedroom door to ask for a drink of water. He had been very young . . . that's how he felt now — guilty, an intruder. His heartbeat slowed. He breathed deeply and rubbed his eyes.

"Marsh." The voice was quiet but it shot through his brain like a needle. He turned. Erinn stood at his open door, her hair loose and stringy, her gown rumpled and ill-fitted. She was looking at him.

He found his voice. "What are you . . . doing here?"

She replied blandly. "You screamed. You woke me up."

He eyed her suspiciously. He hadn't screamed, he knew that. Maybe she heard Saka after all.

"Were you scared, Marsh? Did something frighten you?" she asked. He looked at her and tried to see where her eyes had focused. He nervously bit his nail.

"You must've heard Saka, the blasted bird's been crowing all night. That's what woke me up. But that was a long time ago. How long have you been awake?" he asked.

Erinn looked past him, out into the night. "He's beautiful, isn't he, Marsh?" she whispered. Marsh nodded, not sure whether or not she was really talking to him. She could scare him when she got like this. He didn't like her when she was like this. He started to tell her to go back to bed.

"Isn't my pretty bird pretty?" she crooned to herself. "Pretty bird."

Marshall began to move uneasily back to his bed. Erinn didn't seem to notice. He eased under the covers, his eyes never leaving hers. She turned to him. Her eyes were steady but milky.

"He's mine you know, Marsh. He loves me. I love him." Marshall nodded. She seemed pleased at this response. She smiled, moving to the edge of Marshall's bed. Erinn bent over him, her hand caressing his cheek. Her big soft eyes came nearer and closed as she pressed

her lips to Marshall's forehead. Her warm breath was stifling. "G-night, Marsh," she whispered. He nodded. She straightened up and left his room, throwing one last glance out the window and into the black.

Saka was silent the rest of the night.

Marshall winced at the bright morning sunlight. He was exhausted. He gently picked the sleep from his sore eyes and shuffled to the window. He looked down into the garden. The dew specked the green lawn and hummingbirds clustered around the honeysuckle hedge.

"E-e-e-ah-ah-ah!" Marshall jumped. Saka strode into the garden and made a clumsy effort to fly up to the wall surrounding the pond and fountain on the right. Marshall laughed. He remembered last night. How silly nightmares seemed in the morning!

"Morning, Marsh!" Erinn said brightly. "Did you ever get back to sleep last night?"

He hesitated, wondering how much she remembered. He had decided for sure that Erinn had been sleepwalking.

"You were a mess when I found you, Marsh," she commented, standing just outside his door and munching some toast. "Something must've upset you." It was a statement.

Marshall's eyes narrowed. Maybe she hadn't been sleepwalking after all. "Yes, something did upset me. But it was silly. I feel much better this morning."

"You don't look better. You look awful."

"Since when are you concerned about what I look or feel like?" he asked irritably. He was still very tired.

She turned and scuffed down the hallway. Marshall could hear her humming an unknown song. He waited until she had tripped down the stairs and returned to the breakfast room.

Running his damp hands through his tousled hair, he moved to the large mirror on his dresser. He did look awful. He had slept badly after Erinn left, his sleep riddled with colors and shapes unfamiliar and slightly frightening.

He heard a splash. Marshall returned to the window. Saka had apparently been trying to drink from the little cement pond and had fallen in. He was protesting the cold water with short caws as he unsuccessfully attempted to jump back out of the pond. Marshall heard a faint clatter from downstairs. A chair tipped over, maybe. As Marshall watched the awkward flapping fowl, he thought drowsily of the beautiful dream he'd had the night before. The hot morning sun was melting his bad thoughts away and all that was left was the garden vision in the moonlight, the thick-scented air, Erinn's soft voice.

"Sa-ka!" Marshall blinked. The petite figure ran across the trimmed lawn to the pond. Erinn stepped up onto the edge where she was soaked by Saka's splashings. In a vain attempt to get away from

Erinn's grasp, Saka jumped backwards. He lost his balance which set his underdeveloped front wings flapping furiously. He fell back in the water but was on his feet again by the time Erinn got to him.

"Oh dear," she wailed.

"Why don't you grab him and pull him out?" Marshall suggested from the window.

"Why don't you come down here and be of some help?" she retorted.

"He's your animal and no one is to touch him, remember?"

Erinn grunted and began wading toward the upset bird, her dress-edges lapping up around her in the foamy water. She hesitated as she came in arm's reach of Saka. She closed her eyes and slowly reached out for the bird. Saka threw his head back wildly and started to caw. But then he stopped. It was as if somehow he was paralyzed. His beady eyes stared over her shoulder, not quite into her face, Marshall noticed.

Erinn opened her eyes. Then she began to back off, shaking her head slightly and looking at Saka quizzically. Saka still did not move.

"What's the matter, Erinn, are you scared of your pet?" Marshall taunted. "I thought he loved you!"

Erinn looked up at him and Marshall couldn't tell if she was wiping water or tears from her face. She said nothing, but turned her gaze back to Saka. His long tail feathers floated behind him, the straggling blank eyes at the ends clumped together, crowded, staring up at the morning sun. A drop of water rolled off his beak. Saka stood tense and dripping, as if waiting for Erinn to move. She didn't.

"Pretty bird," she said brokenly. Marshall could see now that she was crying. Why was she crying? "Pretty bird, poor bird, all wet."

Saka blinked.

"Pretty Saka, come to mamma, mamma get you all dry and warm," she said, stretching her arms slowly from her waist. She swayed a little, took a step toward the bird. She no longer looked up at Marshall. All her attention was on Saka. Marshall watched her, slightly amused. It was very dramatic. Just like the plays they had always had to go see at the theatre. Where you had to dress up in your new navy-blue suit, where everyone else there was old, older than you. Marshall hated the theatre. He looked back down at the scene at the fountain. He felt like clapping. But, we remember, don't we, that we never clap until the scene is over, do we?

Erinn was moving now, very slowly, around the little statue of Cupid in the middle of the pond that separated her from Saka. She began speaking, so softly that Marshall had to strain to hear. Her face became rigidly set, her lips, so soft and full last night, Marshall noted, were now thin pencil lines, white from pressure. She took one last step and lunged out wildly with both arms, grasping Saka around the middle. But Saka recoiled, and struck out with his beak, tearing into her cheek. Erinn whimpered and grimaced but did not

scream. She tightened her grip on Saka and forced him under the water.

"I'm just trying to help you, you goddamned bird!" she screamed as she pulled him up from the water. Marshall watched her wipe her nose with her arm, hair hanging in sticky clumps, staring at the limp bird she held in her other hand. She let go of Saka. He began limply scratching at the cement rim of the pond with his beak. Erinn stood, as if stupefied, licking the blood that trickled down from her cheek. It really was a bad cut, Marshall thought, a strange knot clogging his throat. She looked so . . . beaten. He had never seen Erinn get out of control, never. And she had lost. As the lump in his throat disappeared, he decided it was about time. Yes, it was about time that Erinn should lose.

As if she heard his thoughts, Erinn jerked her head up to look at him. Then she looked back down at Saka. She climped out of the pond, one hand covering her cheek, the other dangling loosely at her side. Marshall watched her walk slowly into the house.

Saka had now struggled onto the cement wall and was trying to heave his weight onto the grass. Marshall watched as the sopping bird dropped onto the lawn and breathed once heavily.

Now the scene was over. A tear grew big in the corner of his eye as he put his hands together and softly clapped.

After The Flood

by Michael Hurd

Ham:

Rain throbbed on canvas nerve-ends, grey counterpoint
To the threnody of thin, fallow faces
Lit by greasy candles dripping into cracks
In the dark timber of rotting floor boards.
Ten months was our night; ten months our same breath,
Soot-like, suspended in dim candlelight.

We rushed to the deck, my brothers and I,
Eager to glimpse our promised new domain.
We had not expected another sea.
The land was deep with bodies — uncresting tide
Stretching from Ararat's new shore as far
As the white horizon, still scraps of foam.
All this; and the thin wisps of a rainbow
Reaching away into the clouded heavens.



by John S. Bock

by Teresa Guillén

de las cameras de películas	of movie screens
coca cola	coca cola
yo encuentro consuelo	I find consolation
cuando estoy contigo	in being with you
un sonido del teléfono	telephone ring
un torcido de la muñeca	twist of the wrist
estoy allí	I'm there
enséñame una canción	teach me a song
y yo bailaré contigo	and I'll dance with you
con mi garbo nativo	in my native garb
mi lengua nativa	native tongue
tratemos	let's try
caminemos por el desierto	let's walk through the desert
mi mano en la tuya	my hand in yours
podremos errar	we can wander
los fértiles valles de California	the fertile valleys of California
y las playas de México	and the beaches of Mexico
pocas palabras entre nosotros	few words between us
mientras el viento	as the wind plays the overture
toca la obertura suave y dulce	soft and sweet
el tiempo no tiene lugar	time has no place
el día no tiene fin	the day no end
los límites se rompen	boundaries are broken
estoy aquí	I'm here

Woman In An Abandoned House

by Michael Hurd

When the clatter of reckless thought
no longer resounds or even echoes,
my mind will be as still
as this front room of our old house.
Come, rub your quiet, dirty hands
along the peeling trim and curling paper;
rummage through the corner-piles
and pick my love out from among
leaves and rubble and straw.
Sit in this dusty window ledge;
let your vision of the green wheat
blossom in these limestone eyes;
let the echo of your mourning dove
seep into these wooden eaves;
let your breath fill my crumbled walls.

No White Horse

by Leslie Rianoshek

Linda. I roll the name off my tongue. It tastes dry and my tongue clings to the roof of my mouth as it does at church, after the bread and before the wine.

In my memory, I see her face. I say something to impress her but it sounds silly. She laughs, not unkindly, for she is older and protective. But she finds me entertaining like a young colt first trying its legs. I feel hot and embarrassed when she laughs, but she hugs me to her cool shirt front and I would gladly sound silly again.

She entertains me, too, while my parents are shopping in the city. We build a cave with a card table and a dark musty bedspread. A dragon lurks in its gloom and holds Linda prisoner there. I hear it roaring and breathing its hot fire. I charge in on my brave white horse, and rescue her right from between the dragon's sour jaws.

"My little prince," she says, laughing and hugging me again.

I grow older, old enough to care for myself and I hardly see her except in church. She sits by the east windows with her father. Her hair is pulled away from her face exposing the curve of her white neck. When she sees me, she smiles. I begin to hope.

I invent ways to be closer to her. She takes long walks in the woods sometimes to cool herself on summer afternoons. I hurry to be there before she comes. I walk through thigh high yellow grass and it tickles my legs. I smell the moist ground filtering up through the vegetation, carrying with it burnt grass and insect life. The sun beats on my head and I am relieved to reach the woods.

The woods are thick. No one ever touches them with saw or scythe. Some of the trunks are twisted, but most are strong and straight and I touch the rough bark, each a different kind — the stiff peeling of the sycamore, the oak's hard, woody sponge, the feathery shag-bark. It is a sycamore that I finally grasp in both hands and swing up into. This is my tree.

I climb all over my tree with its many strong branches, exploring it. I peek into a bird's nest. Finally I settle in a place where two close-growing branches, one slightly above the other, form a V. I flick away a piece of the bark, watch it chip against the branches as it falls, and lean my cheek against the cool, smooth trunk where the bark was.

Soon a flicker comes to sit nearby, trying to decide if I am a part of the tree. It tilts its brilliant head and examines me through one beady eye. It guesses right and flies away. After a long time when no birds have come close, the vegetable smell of the woods and earth invades my nostrils until an opossum walking beneath my tree makes me forget it.

The sun sifts through the leaves in bright yellow patches on my

legs, on the branches, on the ground, dancing zig-zags when the wind blows. I clutch my tree, lean tighter, sink into it.

Linda comes. She is a shimmer in the field. She comes closer and vanishes in the branches. Then, closer still, she sinks to the ground and the patches leap across her shoulders and weave through her hair.

"I love you, Linda," I say.

But she doesn't hear. She is walking slowly beneath the trees. She never sees me. She doesn't know that day after day I wait for her to walk beneath my tree.

She is there now. I can see a flush of color where the sun has touched her cheek. The branches of the trees are uplifted, the whole wood seems to be soaring, and my eyes are filled with sun flashes.

And then a flash not of the sun. A painful, metallic flash. My tree jolts and the branches sag and I see a man.

His hair has been cut to show the white behind his ears, but it grows thickly across his shoulders. Grime streaks his undershirt and I can see dirt in the creases of his neck. I don't know what he wants. I can't see into him — his eyes are black and flat. The flash is a knife in his hand. I want to scamper higher in the tree like a frightened squirrel and scold him, but the knife stops me.

Linda sees him, her eyes jump to the knife. She turns and runs. In two steps he has caught her. He throws her to the ground and her dress falls way up on her thighs. They are very white. And then I understand. The leaves whirl around me and I nearly vomit in my hands.

I try to summon my old white horse, but nothing happens. Linda is buried beneath the man and all I can see are her flailing arms and legs and her head jerking from side to side and the white metal blaze among the flecks of sun. The patches twist and twitch and distort themselves.

He heaves against her and she hardly struggles now. Her head falls to the side and suddenly the whole world swirls and is sucked into her eyes and she sees me. More than ever before, I shrink into my tree.

The man goes. The sun flecks dance slower and slower and then are calm. I slip down from my tree. I know she is alive. I see her chest moving lightly up and down. I slowly crawl to her on hands and knees, shaking, ashamed.

"Linda?"

I reach her. I want to cover her, comfort her, but I am too young, too small, unworthy, so I only brush the pine needles from her cheek. She turns her head. Her eyes are flat and black.

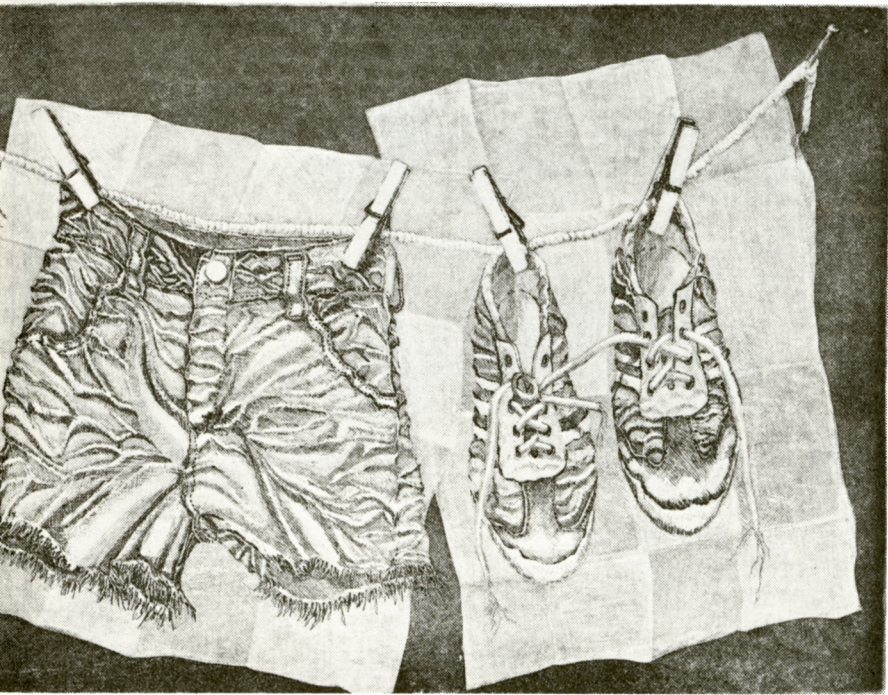
I sit now at my desk trying to feel its smooth oak beneath my elbows. So many years have passed since then. This ink on paper is my purge, a hair shirt. But it does not help. I am too guilty — of what, I am not sure except, perhaps not loving her enough.



Untitled
drawing
33" x 203/4"

Kathi Mayfield

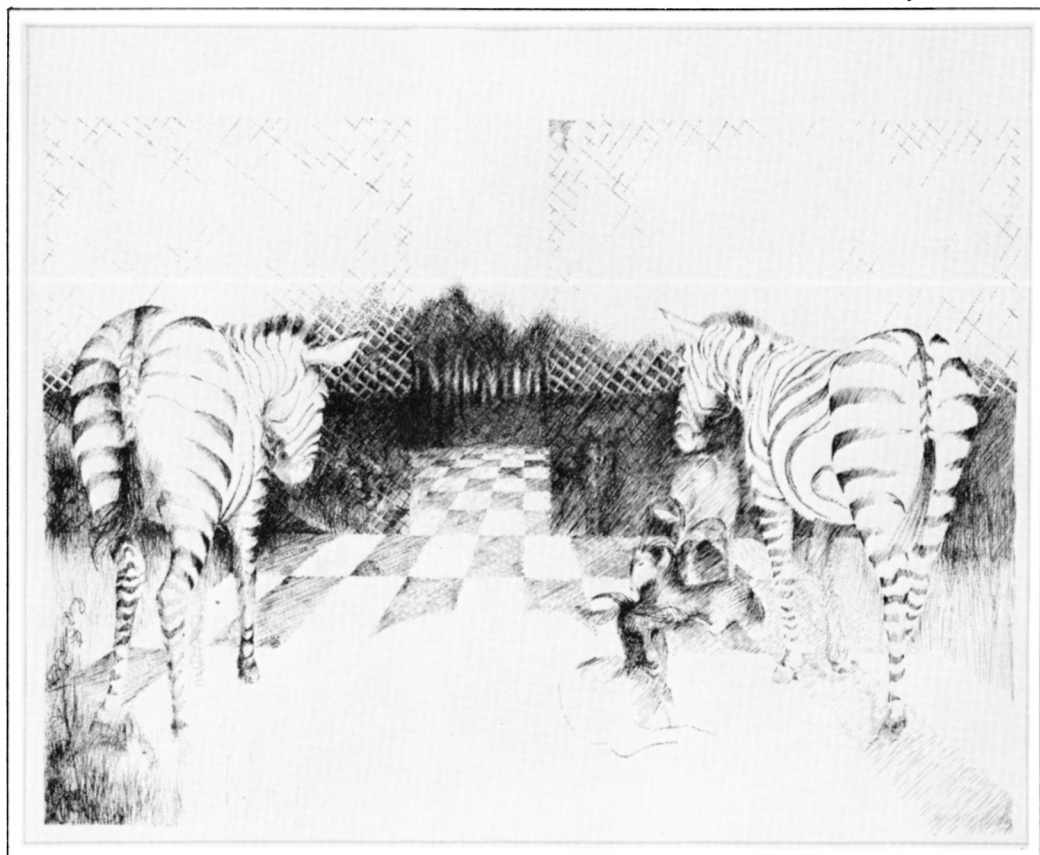
Summer Son
Intaglio Print
18" x 12½"
Susan Sondrup





Bon Á Tirer
lithograph
11" x 7½"
Fred Lawyer

Untitled
pen & ink
18" x 13"
Sherry Fooshee

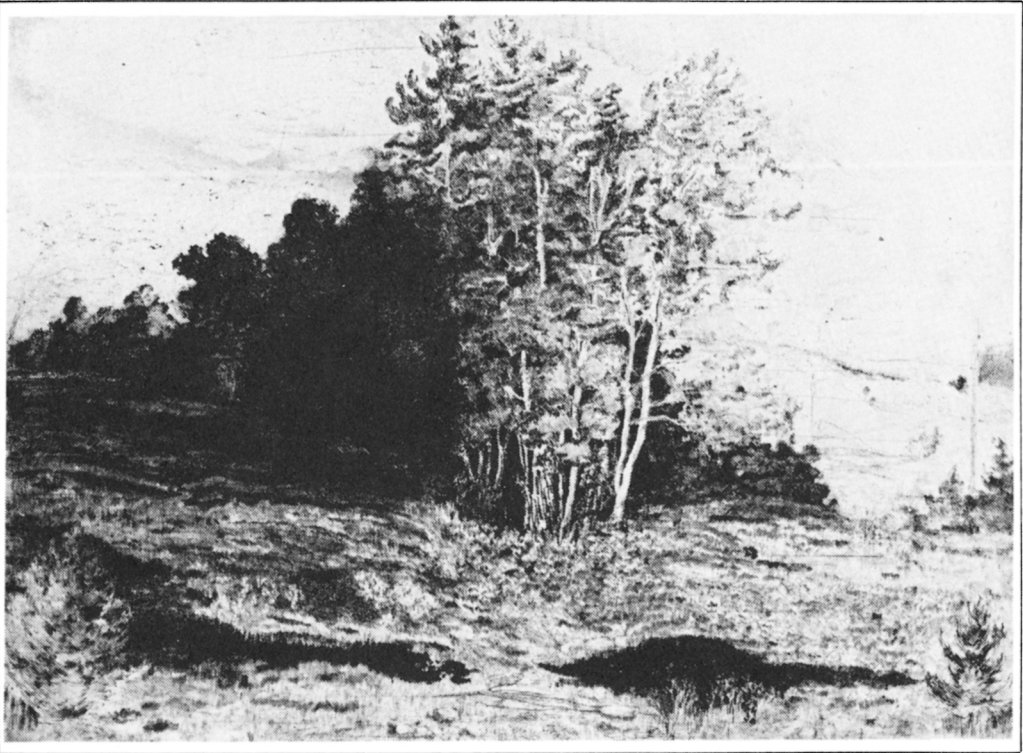


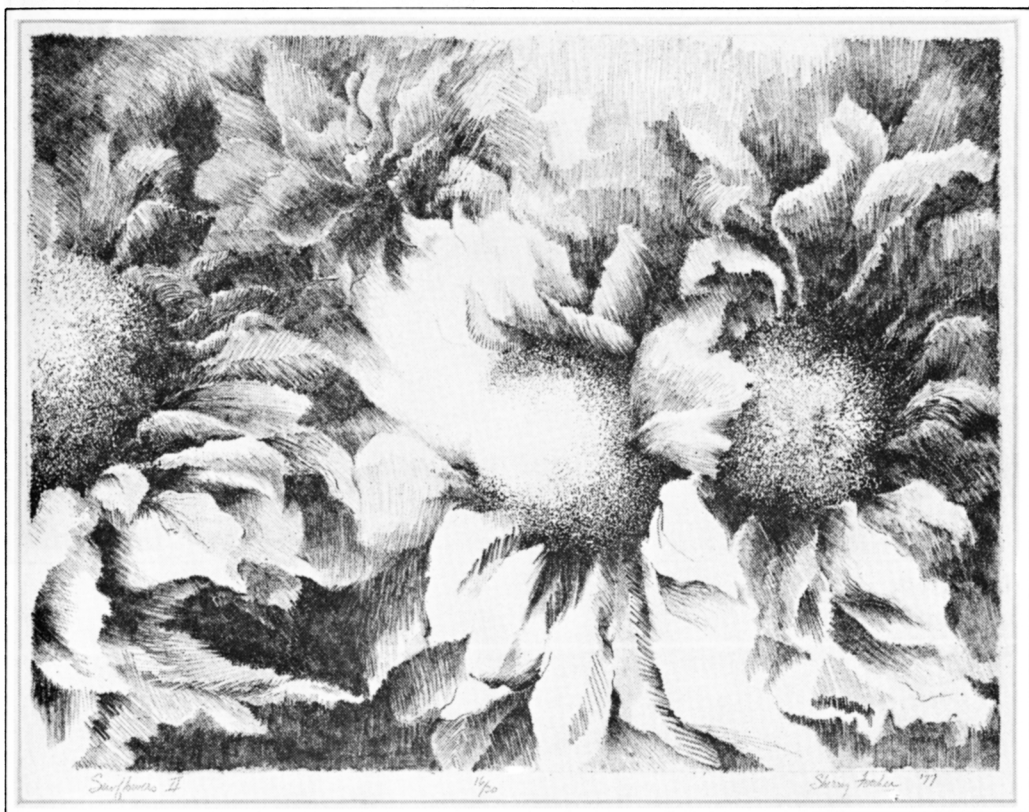
Warner Park

line-etching

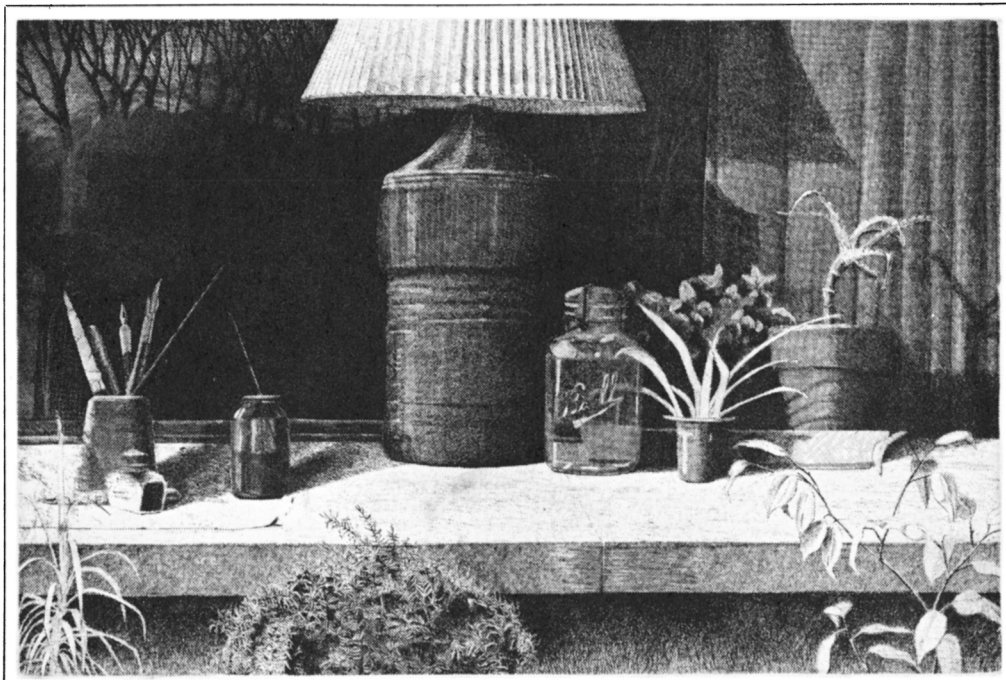
19" x 13½"

Eunice Strunk

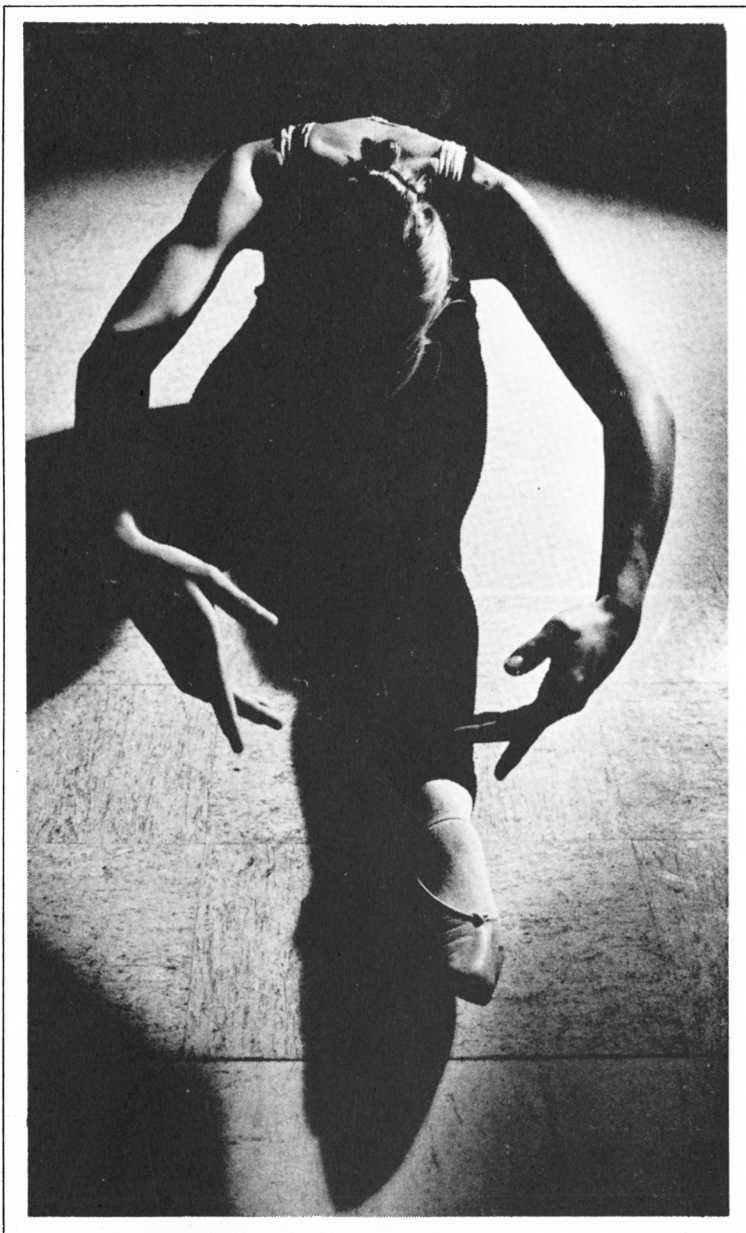




Sunflowers II
lithograph
13½" x 10"
Sherry Fooshee

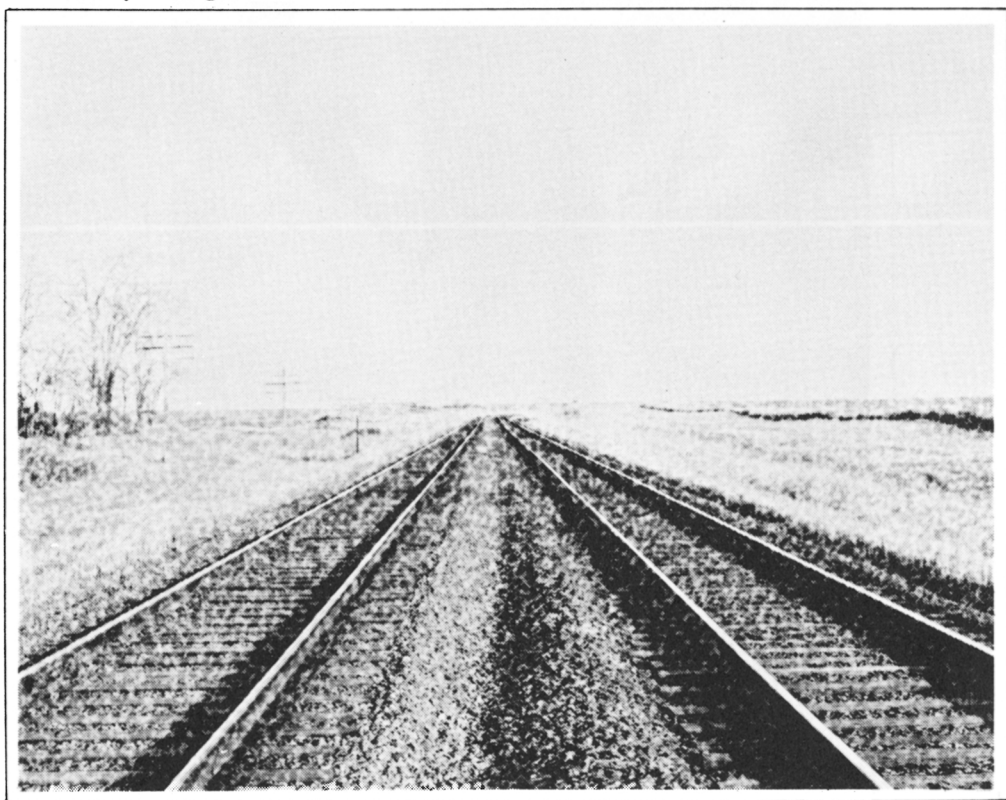


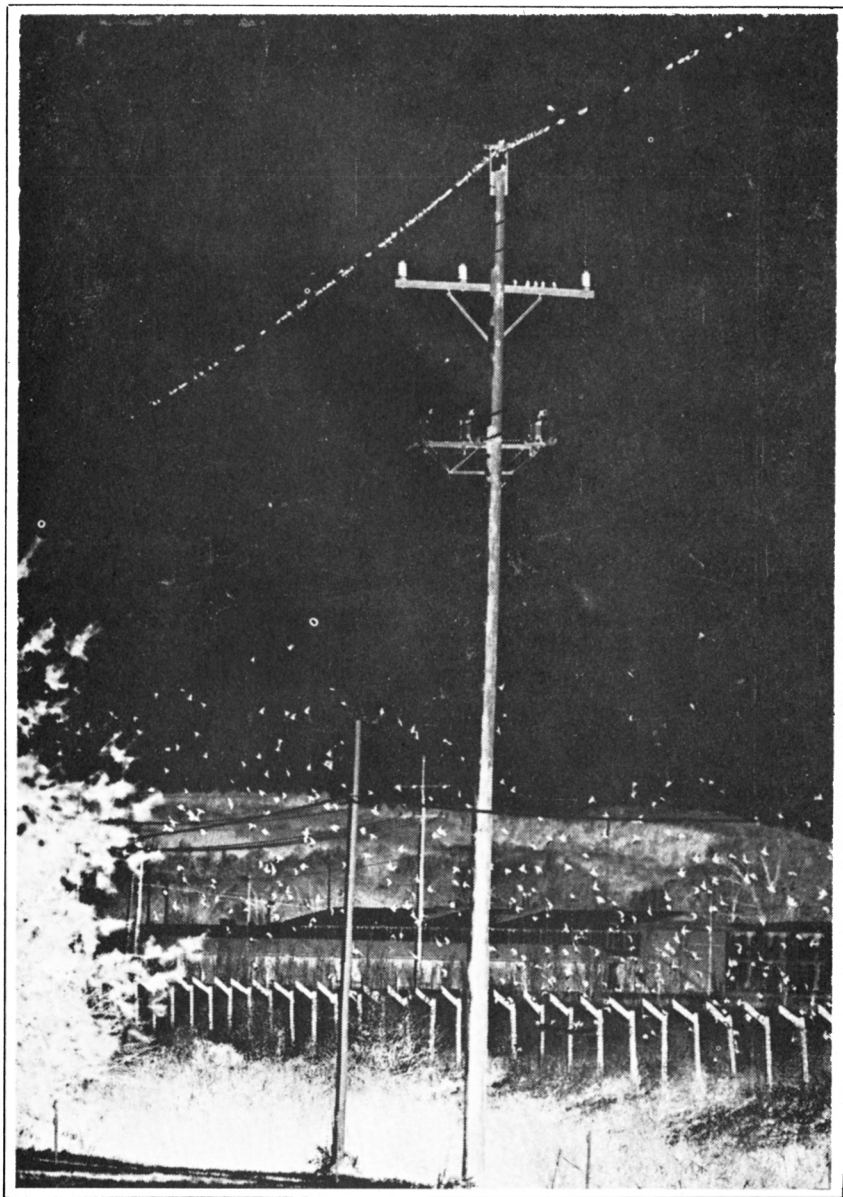
Untitled
etching
18" x 10"
Scott Schnepf



by John S. Bock

Untitled
photograph
10" x 8"
Terry Dodge





by John S. Bock



Warm Smiles

by Scott Razak

SEPTEMBER 12, 1986

Lionel Byrd was a successful young man. He had everything. Looks. Brains. Money. What else did he need? A beautiful wife? He had that too. He had everything. He already had his job at the First National Bank before he even took his CPA exam. I met Lionel when I went and applied for a school loan two weeks ago, just shortly after the sun went out.

Yes, my worst childhood nightmare has come true. While growing up I had read in my **All About Astronomy** book that the sun would burn out in about 50 million years, and this prospect absolutely terrified me. What would the world be without an earth? Everyone assured me that it was so far ahead, it was really silly to worry about it. Ha! Just two weeks ago last Saturday the damn thing just got dim and went out. Nobody knows why. NASA's trying to think of a way to send a rocket with a nuclear bomb into the sun to try to start up the old fission process again, but the earliest they can get there is next July, and who wants to wait eleven months in the dark? Everybody's predicting we'll all be dead by then anyway.

It really didn't seem to bother Lionel. He had that same firm handshake I remembered from the year before. He sparkled his brown eyes and his white teeth right in my face, and I was charmed. Lionel has always charmed me. I've always wanted to be just like Lionel, but I've never had the looks, and I probably wouldn't have the patience even if I did have the looks. In fact, that's what I always remember about Lionel Byrd — the way he looks. I've never met a movie star, but if you crossed Robert Redford with Clark Gable you would probably end up with something like Lionel. As he sat across the desk typing my loan application I noticed that he has Redford's teeth, only a tad bit bigger. And his face, like everything else about him was just a bit larger than life. His hair was very black, his face was very swarthy, and it looked like his 5 o'clock shadow wouldn't get there till 7 or 8, so even his late afternoon appointments were never disappointed by a face that looked anything less than perfect.

Lionel Byrd was perfect, and everybody knew it. He drove the tellers crazy, they foamed at the mouth — but he was married. She, of course, was perfect too. I don't know this, but I think Lionel and Casandra were probably the two most likely to succeed in their senior class. How could they fail? They were so damn nice in a very elegant high-money sort of way. They wore their power so well. Being perfect has its costs, and they both worked hard all day and all night to live up to the responsibility.

When Lionel finished typing my application, he instructed me in

modulated tones to take it home, fill out the back side, and bring it back for "final dispensation." Meanwhile, there's been a tremendous run on gro-lites at all the department stores. President Dole has turned half of the National Defense plants over to production of a newly developed, atomic powered, gro-lite. The bulbs will be 200 yards long, and 50 will grow one square acre of wheat, if the growing season gets here before the Ice Age does. He called in all the top scientists in the country for an emergency forum, called it the Columbus Project, because Montgomery Ward has the biggest gro-lite factory in the country in Columbus. Me, I don't worry. My roommate, Jeff, just turned his hydroponic marijuana farm into a fast planting of Idaho potatoes. It killed him to pull all those healthy young pot plants out of their water bath, but even Jeff knows you can't live on pot, although he tries. His bedroom really looks bizarre now. You walk in, and there's nothing but long white porcelain watertroughs all over the floor. He's arranged them in an intricate maze, with dead ends and everything, which is very much like Jeff. The walls and ceiling are covered with Reynolds Wrap, for the light reflection, and across the ceiling are strung rows and rows of purple-blue gro-lites. He has his sleeping bag unrolled at the end of the maze, with a little sign that says, "Congratulations — you made it again." Sometimes he gets so stoned he can't find his sleeping bag and he eventually just lays down and sleeps between two potato tanks. I came in to wake him up for class the other morning, and he was stretched out on the floor — that silly grin on his face — and boy it looked weird. The blue light hushed softly down into the water tanks, onto his face, across the floor; sparkles of crinkled tin-foil reflected everything into an endless soft blue mist, Jeff lying there so peaceful, the water lapping quietly against the sides of the porcelain tanks, little white chunks of potatoes visible at the bottom of the tanks, their eyes sending up little lime green shoots of leaves. We're figuring on harvesting about 15 bushels of potatoes the first time around, then we're going to plant soybeans and corn. We're planning on storing all this stuff in our cellar. The potatoes will keep for a year, the corn can be dried and ground, and the soybeans will keep forever as long as we keep the moisture away from them. Jeff is getting quite interested in all of this, and has pulled out all his old issues of **Mother Earth News**, delighted at the prospect of being self-sufficient.

I don't know what Lionel Byrd is going to do. I'll have to ask him the next time I go in, which should be soon, because his secretary called me on Thursday and asked me to come in, some item on my application wasn't clear, something to do with collateral. Anyway, I'm going in to see him next week, but first I want to tell you something I heard on the radio the other day. It was just a short little news item I heard on National Public Radio. It had to do with the sun

going out (but all the news these days has to do with the sun going out, even if it's just a report of the City Commission meeting). Anyway, it was just a sentence or two, and the woman said, "The House Subcommittee on Banking & Commerce today approved a plan to cut all National Measures in half. Everything will now cost half price, salaries will be half as much, and recipes using 1 cup will now call only for half a cup. The action was taken in response to widespread public concern over the rate of inflation, which has skyrocketed in response to the large public demand for gro-lites and winter clothes."

SEPTEMBER 19, 1986

I went in to see Lionel Byrd yesterday. It's only September, but winter is already setting in. I was wearing my Eddie Bean goose-down filled parka with patch pockets and solar collector panels, which unfortunately don't pick up any energy from the streetlights which are on round the clock now. It was snowing pretty thick by the time I got to the bank, and big drifts were collecting at the south entrance, so I went around to the north side which was windswept and cleared of snow. It was the bank's 10th Anniversary Celebration, and all the tellers were wearing pink carnations on their thick winter coats. Hot-house flowers were all but impossible to get by this time, and this little touch seemed to say to the First's customers, "All is well." There was a little table set up with hot coffee and pretty iced cookies on a silver tray. A little cardboard cutout hung on a string from the ceiling turning idly in the still air. It said, "Proud To Serve You" (other side) "For Over Ten Years." I walked through the main bank over to a heavy glass door that said, "Loan Department." I told the secretary I was there to see Mr. Byrd, and she said it would be a short wait, would I have a seat, he was visiting with his wife for "a few moments." She turned back to her typewriter, and her coat sleeve caught the open bottle of Liquid Paper by her typewriter. It gurgled out all over a stack of contracts. "Oh, Damn!" she said to Shirley (the other secretary). "These damn winter coats get in the way of everything!"

"Oh, I know what you mean," Shirley said. Shirley had a tight little beehive hairdo with spikey bangs sprayed down in front, and she was wearing pink earmuffs. "Sam's mother called yesterday. She lives in Norman, Oklahoma, you know? And she said she had her living room half wallpapered when the sun went out? Well, she told me, 'Shirley,' she said, 'I've lived through the Great Depression, the dusty thirties when we thought we'd choke nearly to death, a world war, and then I lost Merle, God rest his soul, but now this. I just sat down in my rocker, and I haven't even thought about finishing that wallpaper.' She's just so depressed about it all; and we all are, but I think it hits the older ones the hardest, you know? They work

all their lives and for what? I told Sam, I said, ‘Sam, we’re going to have to drive down to Norman and finish her wallpapering. I don’t care if gasoline is \$14 a gallon, that woman, your own Mother, is depressed and I’m not going to let her sit down there in Norman and moon about the sun going out.’ ”

Well, by this time the reception lady had mopped up her liquid paper, and I noticed the door opening a crack to Mr. Byrd’s office. Casandra was standing there holding onto the doorknob saying her last piece before she drove home in their four-wheel-drive Toyota. I heard her say something like, “Daddy says we can, and I think we should, after all nobody knows how long this is going to last, I don’t see that this job is that important if we’re all freezing to death, if Daddy thinks so then I think we should, if you don’t want to then you’re just being stubborn Lionel Byrd.” She opened the door and came out into the hall. She was really quite beautiful. She was wearing a long ivory midi-coat with a silver fox-fur collar. Her hair was a luscious ash blonde and her face was so pink and pretty, lovely blue eyes and dark ultra lashes. Her belly stood out a bit, and I remembered the baby Lionel had mentioned last time. She had kind of a soft baby-pink face herself, very fresh and clear. She looked angry, but not un-beautiful. She strode down the hall and smiled very prettily as she went past me, and I smiled back. Casandra was somebody you had to feel friendly about, she was just so pretty and so nice. There was something about her that made you want her all to yourself — not to defile, but to possess in some abstract beautiful way beyond lust, like a piece of Renaissance statuary, or a Picasso original. She was so pretty, so beautiful through and through, you just wanted to sit around and adore her. But her sweet smile disappeared around the corner and I sighed in the wake of her exquisite perfume which suggested an Italian citrus garden in the early morning. The receptionist got on her telephone and spoke into the receiver: “Mr. Davis is here to see you.” She nodded, put the receiver back and said: “You may go into see Mr. Byrd now Mr. Davis.”

I walked into his office again. This time it looked even more beautiful than I’d remembered. Its colors were so warm and cheerful, the brown carpeting; the oranges painted onto a weathered barn-board which was hanging on the wall behind his desk; the gold antiquing on the tastefully expensive lamp on the corner table; the luscious yellow brilliance of a Van Gogh field of wheat on the wall next to the darkened vertical slat of a window that looked out onto the blue streetlighted snow. And Lionel Byrd sat there smiling, secure, in a three-piece brown suit that reminded me of his flawless taste and elegant professionalism. He gave me a firm handshake as I sat down across from him. He clasped his hands together on his desk, and I thought he missed just a faint beat — his eyes seemed, for a moment, to lose their compelling fixity. He spoke, his voice implying

courtesy and impatience at the same time. I remembered this from before; he directed the conversation, he determined the customer's response, Lionel Byrd was in firm aristocratic control of every single moment in his office. But the implication, I realized suddenly, was of submerged ferocity. If one were not equally courteous and to the point, or in any fashion of untoward temper, Mr. Byrd's dark good looks, his shiny black hair and copper cheekbones would drill you to your chair with the forceful power of his temper. Mr. Byrd was a very powerful man, his voice so mild and masculine. "Mr. Davis, yes, a matter of collateral for this loan of \$2500. Reviewing your application I noticed that you had mentioned a "spinnet piano" as your collateral. However you assessed its value at only \$700."

Suddenly I felt terribly embarrassed. I had assumed that, with my good credit of long standing, I would get the money, felt that they wouldn't pay much attention to collateral. I recognized in a flash that my easygoing assumptions, which littered my somewhat bohemian lifestyle, were rather naive and inappropriate to the formal standards of a professional lending institution. Suddenly I felt terribly young and foolish, just a dumb student, not yet a part and probably never to be a part of this tight, attractive, wealthy world of Lionel and Casandra Byrd. His intent gaze evidently captured my embarrassment, for his brow softened just a tad, he seemed to look a little more at me. He quickly stood and walked over to his standing file in the corner. "There must be a file on your past loans in here — I'm sure we can just look up what you used for your collateral last year, and make arrangements from there." But I didn't even hear what he was saying. My gaze was glued to the man's shoes: Beneath the worsted brown tweed lines of his trousers there marked an extra bulk, his legs looked thick out of all proportion to his body, and I noticed the cuffs of a blue serge suit dropping down onto his brown Oxfords. He turned around and caught my surprise, his eyes formed a question, then in an instant he looked down at his feet; then back up at me, and his face flushed full crimson. I could only sit with my mouth open. Something was wrong with Lionel Byrd. I couldn't believe it. He brought the back of his hand to his forehead and laughed, "I, uh, ha ha, I'm wearing two suits, huh huh, those damn winter coats look so out of place." Suddenly I laughed out loud, a silly 12-year-old's giggle I have that used to break them up back in the old church choir. My laughter was not cruel, it never is. I just found it hysterical that Lionel chose to wear two three-piece suits so he wouldn't look "out of place." When he was sure of the plain entreaty of friendship on my laugh-distorted face, he started to chuckle. "Two suits," he mumbled. But his chuckling stopped, and I realized that Lionel had decided the moment was over. This man was relentless. How could anyone be so devoted to his own image?

He resumed his seat at the desk and flipped open my file. "Here

we go," he said, a pleasant broad smile now warming his features. "Are you still in possession of your 1974 Volkswagen Super-Beetle, assessed valuation \$2600, or in new Federal Half-cut figures, now worth \$1300?"

"Oh, yes, of course. My car! Why of course. With the piano, worth \$350 is it now, in new Half-cut? With the piano, I'd have more than enough collateral."

"Certainly. Your automobile alone will suffice, for in Half-cut, your loan request only comes to \$1250. There's your solution." He was obviously quite pleased that things were working out so neatly. So was I. My emergency loan was due in only 11 more days. "Just bring in your title — you do have a clear title, don't you? — and we'll take a lien on it, and as far as I can see we'll have no problem with the loan." He glanced at my sheet before him, "You do still work as a waiter at the Club Eleview?"

"I sure do," pleased that he seemed genuinely interested.

"Yes, my wife and I have dined there several times. Very nice. Very very nice; this town has needed something like it for a long time." He extended his large firm hand across the desk, shook my hand warmly as he rose, bringing me to my feet right along with him. "Perhaps we'll see you some evening at the Club, Mr. Davis. Have a nice day."

Weight Lifting

by Gregg Coonrod

Stalk —

It does not move;

It waits.

Breathe deeply —

Explode with the oxygen

Grabbing, holding the beast.

Knot your eyes, as the cornered creature

Bites your every finger for its freedom.

It lunges for your chest,

Claws

Rip muscle apart.

Squeeze it

Lifeless —

And drop it, throw it

Down.

It does not move.

One Morning

by Judy Sasse

They rise in the usual way.
He puts on his brown cord slippers.
She hears the water running,
And slips into her blue robe
To make the morning coffee.
There is much light
This morning from the east
Window,
As she breaks the eggs,
Stirs the bacon
— And the coffee thrashes quietly.
Underneath her hands
She holds a garden red rose
Whose petals she brushes ever so gently
And turns the stem into clear water
Within a rose bud vase.
Breakfast is done, now.
And she waits
For him to come
To a table set in white linen.
She notices
How the rose blossom
Turns a deeper red
And how the smell of pines
outside the window
Fills the room
— And how the sky rises
to a powder blue,
In the distance.

Colors of a woman

by Doug Keeling

Pull the spotlight, pull the soft light,
let the sun
touch her face and touch her faces,
let it wipe away the evening.
Pull the smoke-filled room,
the microphone,
the timeless, dull parade
away from empty eyes
to see if they will glisten.
All the colors of a woman,
all the time it took to make her
a picture, color-walking off the stage.
Take the time off,
take her face off,
hang her eyes beside the mirror,
let her nestle to the ceiling
near the air.
Let the lights, the time, the breathing
beat life into her temples,
all the colors of a woman
but the woman isn't there.

“Hell is other people.”

by Carl Buchanan

Trying to read while the clothes
-chunk- and spin like leaves,
I balance strawberry soda in a
bottle on my right knee,
frown at a woman's butt
thrust in the line-of-sight
over my book's edge.

I turn a page.

The clothes -chunk- again, I slurp
final bubbles, arch my neck
to make people think it's breaking
when it's only popping,
and behind me through all
that eyesplitting big glass
watch leaves fall, dead as snow.

Newsreel for the Seventies

by Judy Sasse

I

It was a night sky
When they jumped from a jet plane,
Their bodies burning,
As they fell through the air.

II

On a broken sky
The large weathered ship sank
Off the Northern coast.
The dark waters melded
Over screaming voices.
Others cried Save Us,
To the owner of a lifeboat,
Who knew the way to shore
To save the women and children
From the great sea.

III

Still, the life-boat
Huddles on the horizon;
And ravens bite the sky.
And in the distance,
The falling bodies
From the flying plane,
Eternally burn,
And never do drown.

Passing Through the Gates of a Clownsmouth,

by Carl Buchanan

I suspect nothing.
the back of a man
I just met, then
I saw off a woman's
ear who continues to
sing arias from operas
I cannot name. We are
all in Joyland; lovers
swandive from the ferris
wheel into buckets, trying
to pop the right balloon.
Kids are sliding into slim
glass saucers or swooping
like stiff starfish from
the roller coaster's
pinnacle — all for a prize.
My mother arrives and I
am screaming because
a popsicle stick's caught
in the lining of my cheeks.
I gush blood onto the
pavement, where snocones
of all flavors have been
thrown away, and stubs
of cotton candy and the
fractured rainbow lights
have been junked into
puddles, for fun.

I am knifing

Depression

by Paul J. Hart

I

Like a once-sheer stocking
pulled down
over my draining face, it
distorts me. I am
blinded. I seek
only the temporary satisfaction
of sanity.

II

In

a cup of black coffee
I see a reflection
of light,
while the bulb burns. The blackness
in the cup surrounds me.

III

Now I am walking,
talking to myself
of myself.

Seventeen Year Locust

by Ann Carrel

You may call it sleep. Call it what you will.
I felt a sweet rotation underground
These seventeen seasons, and thought no end
To the beat of December, slow of heart,
The relaxation of the clay and March
Sudden against my side. I fell into
The rhythm of each day — a thing you'll know
When you have learned to time your breathing to
The drop of water and the crack of stone.
This morning you found my shell hooked to the bark,
And called it simple resurrection. Well,
Have it so, but I will tell the truth:
An anger brought me up. A hurt called wings;
An ache to breathe or burst; cut and claw through earth.
Then breathe.
And as you say, then I learned to sing,
The singing that is only summer, slow,
A turning of the earth, a pulse at dusk,
Dim woods and smoke along the river's edge,
A thousand voices tuned, a rise and fall.
But listen to our music, know the truth
As once you sensed it, your face against the sill.
Our new eyes see the timber's end, the dark —
We see how long our river runs, not long;
We sing the summer to its death, our death;
Our voices are a song, a scream, a song.

Haiku

by Natalya Hall

To create an art
remove what isn't part, like
snow from a white stone

One Person Singular

by Carl Buchanan

Maybe just once you're lucky enough
to know an old horse who doesn't work anymore.

Maybe he's not strong enough; maybe
a tractor retired him.

It doesn't matter.

But what does he do?

The fields are all furrowed, neat
as the reed between a farmer's teeth.

He rolls it with his tongue, wags it
like a horse will swish its tail
in July; month of heatwaves and the fly.

Maybe that tired nag puts on a hat
with flowers, lets children ride on his
broad back, three, four at a time
down unused roads, or roads where cars
rush by like years.

Maybe he runs,
faster than a colt; never mind
the fading, workworn bones.
Maybe he races, his mane in the wind,
with the clouds to the edge of the sea —
chews at a reed between wide teeth,
lets foam lap over his burning hooves,
and watches the manes of the waves,
in love.

Island Story

by Judy Anderson

You see sad Manbantu
Who knows the small jungle
Between the twin rains
Where a stilted fern
Wants for its nurture
Where sunbeams finger
The darkened day.
Island Goddess Pala
Knower of deep fire
Treds upon blackened
Lava, shot forth while
Sounding high mountain
rumbles

From earth's vast belly,
Fiery, hot, red fluid
Calling death coming
The Village took legs
Running fast to find
It could not out paddle
The boiling waters
Of this ancient sea.
Manbantu weeps dry tears
His Manhood wails silently
Knowing the small jungle
Between the twin rains
Hides no people to sing
Heart songs to Pala
In his old age.

The Meditations of Judas

by Chip Ratner

I

The day that I turned twelve the morning air
Began to shift, and dogs began to slip
From sleep and whine and strike the summer air
With hammers in their barks; and I had stepped

Outside our shadowed rooms into the dust
And sun. My eyes had grown as tight as noon
And I was fascinated with a crust
Of bread our faded cock had pecked upon,

Or how the grating sounds of flies dilated
Heavily in the air. And when I walked
Down to the wavering river, a thin and aged
Lady beat a crimson garment on black rocks

And with a stony voice she chewed a scrap
Of song. And as I neared to bend and fill
The bucket, I felt upon my skin the slap
Of sound as if from off a fiery anvil

Three silver sparks of water leapt alive
Upon my face and I recoiled with fear.
(This dawn brings long forgotten things to mind.)
I left the bucket bobbing in the river

And all the sky condensed upon the tattered
Rag she beat and beat, while her black eyes
And voice were fixed on me. Afraid, I waited.
"Behold," she said, "the goat of God," and smiled

And then began to laugh, and still she beat
Her hand against the rock and rolled her eyes
(I swear there was no white) and feigned a bleat —
(This dawn brings long forgotten things to mind.)

She called me with her crooked hand and said,
"Pick up your bucket, by me you've been baptized,"
And seemed to hear a joke that rocked her head
With laughter. And yet, she seemed to sympathize,
48

For, long she stroked the spots where water scarred
My face and let me touch her lustrous hair
Until I fell asleep within her arms.
I left the bucket in the river's glare

And felt my body turn towards home and drag
Me after it. And when the noon was thick
With heat and light, my body seemed to sag,
And when the greeting dogs ran out and licked

Me with their tongues, it hurt my skin. I sat
And watched my fingers on my father's whip
Or felt for icy shadows until, at last,
My mother touched my head and said that I was sick

And put me shivering into bed and sleep.

II

It's doubtful if I woke or if I dreamed.
When all these thoughts were shaken from the past
Like dust from an old rug, then I went back
And asked the few who knew our family.

They shook their heads and said my father was
A private man. And only at the market
Or sometimes at the temple they had met.
But there the air was filled with squeals and dust

And struggling heat and no one ever spoke.
I went to where our stables once had stood
And all the raging in the blood
Returned: The wild scuffle of the horse

Roped up against a half-wrenched iron ring,
The shriek and shudder at my father's blow
And wrestle back against the cracking post,
My father's face when I burst in, the thumping

Of the lantern on the dark, the moon
That burned upon the horse's head and hurt
My eyes. The lies I thought my father girt
My grief with. How he told me that a tooth

Had twisted wrong inside the horse's jaw
And grew and soon would wind inside its brain
And every bite would turn it wild with pain.
I wept and pled for its life when I saw

The way it bled, and how its nose was crimped
Against the post. So real it all had seemed —
And yet it's doubtful if I woke or dreamed —
My father only shook his head and stamped

Three stakes into the earth the following day.
I saw no scar upon the horse. The ring
Was solid in the post. I hoped I'd dreamed.
Sometimes, in the stables I would lie

Beside it when it shuddered and its eyes
Rolled wild. One night a moan shook me awake —
The horse had run itself upon the stakes —
This dawn brings long forgotten things to mind.

III

By choking on the thick incense
My master scraped from altar stones,
I sought and had a vision once
While crouched above a fire in Rome.

I fell into those golden spires
That grew into Rome's starry air
(My master's palm above the fire
And his flickering yellow stare).

Pink opaque skies of my master's palms
Rolled over glistening city towers.
"Sift," he said, "through night-time's calm
Until you fetch the source of power."

I heard the thick throat of a bell
(As the light was squeezed from day)
Cough long inside some stony cell
And signal me along my way.

The moon rose through the tangled skies —
Its beams were sharp as silver swords.
I cursed it for confusing sight
And glutting itself on delicate stars.

If I could catch that silver stone
That can usurp the ancient night,
I'd hollow marrow from my bones
then fill them with that painful light

Until my master's heavy capes
And chaunts and crooked hazel rod
Would cease upon my soul their rape
And I would be to him a god.

Upon an altar stained with light,
Beneath the gaze of stony goats,
I saw upon a silver plate
The moon in pulsing, pulsing glow.

My master said I'd not be hurt
To pluck that point of power and run
If I could keep the sacred word —
My name — beneath my shadowed tongue.

I stuffed the thing into my pouch.
Upstairs the bells began to stir.
Above the towers I stood crouched.
My master greedily eyed the fire.

"Give it to me." His gnarled hand
Forked like a serpent's tongue.
I raised and ran across the sands,
Behind me his rod barely sung.

Requiem

by Kent Jackson

A golden chalice
is held aloft while stained glass
saints nod their assent.

Eyes

by Kim Wilson

Black puddles,
laid on sun sore white,
hold me.

At first, I pulled on
tall rubber boots,
and carefully fastened each buckle,
before wading about those black pools.
And with white nailed fingers,
I tested to see if the
undercurrent was real
or only in my shaky knees,
I poked about for
drop-offs and sudden holes —
and found none.

Then, I crouched close
over these black puddles
and drew through their richness.
Oil rich, priceless puddles,
that trickle my content,
soaked my jeans,
soaked my thin T-shirt,
soaked past my skin.

Now, black puddles
laid on sun sore white,
hold me. I sink
without wallowing,
cry without dissolving,
and they grow thicker
every day — and
I nudge in
with naked toes.

Said the Poet to the Analyst

by Keith Laurent

This is my night-sky.
It is dark, dark
and full of darker advice.

Once it glittered like
Fountainebleau on the Seine,
but lately the stars have been

snuffed out, one by one.
Listen: they sizzle and
spit as they drop through the

black mist. How shall I
fill their scar-pits?
Soundlessly as grace, gracefully

as a lily flowering,
your clear words rise like
balloons, and take their place —

parentheses of color.
Slowly, the dark does its
dissolve, slithering off

like vapor. And I, friend,
I too may rise, soar — if not yet
to Paradise, along with you,

to the other side of the sky.

TOUCHSTONE is a magazine of literary and visual artwork produced by students at Kansas State University. All undergraduate and graduate students enrolled at K.S.U. are encouraged to submit to the magazine.

How & Where to Submit:

All submissions should be taken to the TOUCHSTONE submission area, located in the Activities Center on the third floor of the Student Union. Ask the secretary there for help if you can't find it. Literary and musical artwork should be put in the box; visual artwork in the adjacent folder.

Literary and musical submissions should be duplicate copies; do not submit your original and/or only copy. Visual artwork will be personally returned to you.

All submissions should include the artist's name, major, address and phone number, and should be accompanied by a self-addressed **stamped** envelope for notification purposes. Every submitter who includes a SASE will be notified whether or not his or her work has been accepted.

Additional copies of TOUCHSTONE are available in the Union bookstore, other local bookstores and from staff members.

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