

THE WILLIAM AND MARY REVIEW



MENTAL FLOSS



Elizabeth Rucker

Dreamscape

Watercolor

THE WILLIAM AND MARY REVIEW

The William and Mary Review
Volume 28, 1990

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Michael McCarthy

Untitled

Photograph

If I must dial a number to call you,
you transform yourself into a number,
you arrange your features
to answer that combination.
The three which repeats itself,
the nine which comes third,
suggest something of your face.
When I search for you
I must draw your figure
I must bring to birth the seven digits
analogous to your name
until the strongbox of a live
voice unlocks itself.

All at once, while I'm on the telephone,
interference distorts the conversation,
multiplies it, opens a perspective
in the dark space
of hearing.
I see myself upright, sleepwalking,
balanced over a fugue of voices,
twin sisters, tied to each other,
astonished by the contact.
I hear the language of underworld creatures,
the horrible tresses of words, phrases, the many-headed
and deformed monster that calls me
out of the depths.

Valerio Magrelli

(Translated, from the Italian, by Dana Gioia)

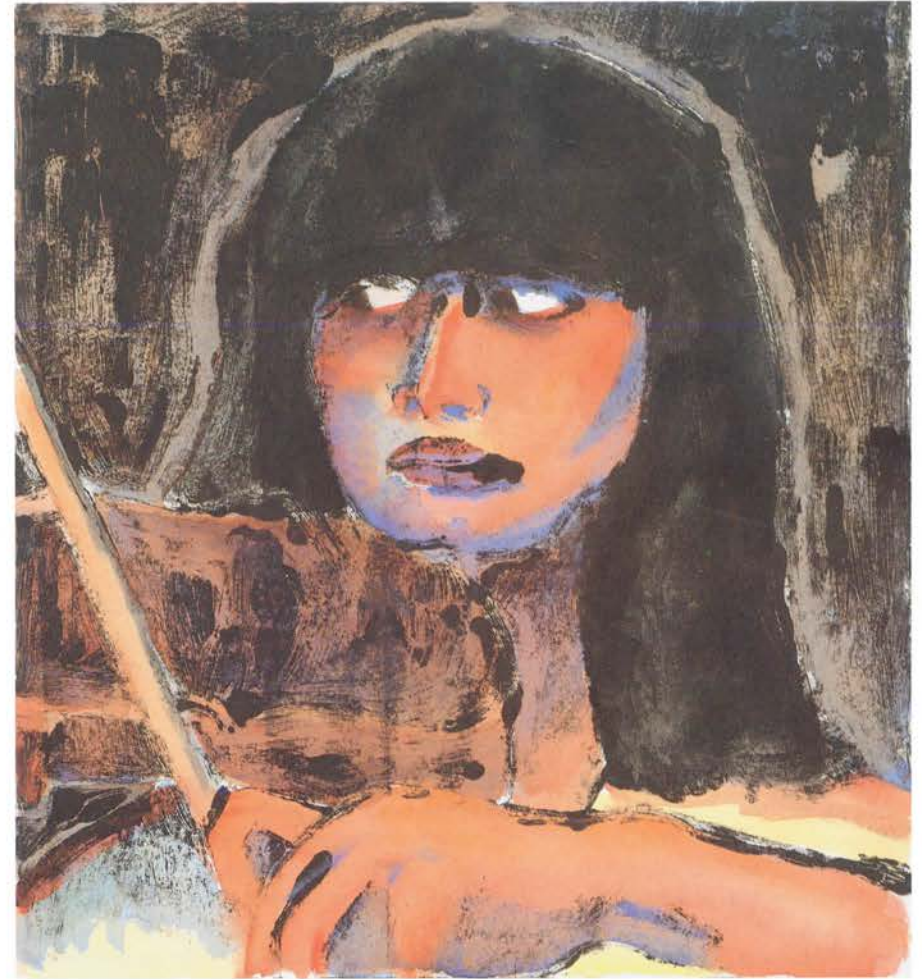
We do not accept those entertainments
which sadly shut people up in a dark
room, keeping them awe-struck and
immobile in silence and inertia.

—J.J. Rousseau

I sit, in treatment, at the movies, devoted
to a quiet physiotherapy,
the exposure to reflected brightness.
The exchange heats up,
I seek recovery,
I am the screen on which the screen projects,
I yield the vast presence of my body
to the lunar action. Present, absent,
I am the patient of my passion.
Steady in the codivided dark,
I watch the light sloping
in its retreat.
Pausing in a wood
I watch the membrane of snow
fall on the landscape, on the crib
of this artificial night, curved
over the mute hall
in the current of the story.
I gaze at that lighted window
and notice who passing behind the glass
signals me,
signals these people
infirm, sick, placed in poses
for a group photograph.

Valerio Magrelli

(Translated by Dana Gioia)



Paul Bonelli

Belle

Monotype/Watercolor

Pompeii

First there is hard, burning light,
the long weeks of outward flight,
Out 70 for aphelion,
by the orbit of our earth,
Out from perihelion,
inside the inner rim
where the hull plates sing.

—from "Space Man," Wendell Mayo, 1949

I cannot myself see that this step is likely to clear up the mystery: because, in the first place, no one will believe a rather unpleasant story, and, in the second, it is well-known to every right-minded man that the gods of the heathen are stone and brass, and any attempt to deal with them otherwise justly condemned.

—Rudyard Kipling, "The Mark of the Beast"

A certified copy of my birth certificate indicates I was born in Corpus Christi, Texas at the naval base on the Gulf of Mexico. It is my understanding my father and mother were pitifully poor at the time of my birth. Mother has been known to describe my birth in some detail: *You came into this world bare and wet, kicking and screaming.* I am told I was her first child.

Reportedly, my father was a sailor in the Navy. He was away in a foreign land when I was born. He toured Italy, the whole of the Mediterranean. The only artifacts Father brought back with him from his tour were several postcards of Pompeii. As a boy I looked at these postcards often, seeing in them only smooth-shaped sandy stones set under a wide blue sky, ancient streets, housings and the volcanic castings of human form. The idea of Pompeii always excited Father. He explained that the stones were the outlines—this is how he precisely described them—*outlines*—of past lives. The notion that people could be preserved in the particulars of their lives for ages—covered in the plastic issue of Vesuvius after the terrible eruption—at the very moment of death—transformed Father. He lit up. He lectured me each time he came up with the cards. His conclusion: *Nevertheless, they are only stones now—it's what these people were before they were stones that is something, really something.*

Now, often, I can see the outlines of people in the stones, the way Father described them. One figure is partially reclined on a bed; the shape is half-risen from sleep; it holds its head in one hand. The hand is melded to the face, and

the elbow supporting the hand rests sharply on the stone bed. White light shines through a small window behind the figure, through a triangle whose points are formed by the elbow, the hand where it meets the face, and the pit of the arm. The face—or what might have been the face—is smooth, partially shaded and turned upward, as if in alarm. The face is flat and featureless—rubbed out; one cannot determine from any of the shapes if they were men or women before they became worn stones.

Mother stashed the postcards of Pompeii in places Father was least likely to find them—yet when he did come up with them, on those rare occasions of discovery and, for him, pleasure, the fear of boring others abandoned him like a disease in remission. It was catching. I never saw his penchant for the cards quite the way Mother did. She grew impatient with him when he talked about the postcards; she would cut him short—and later, she would hide the postcards in a new place. Over the next few months—or sometimes years—Father would carry on a part-time expedition to recover the postcards once more.

The verifiable part of our family history seems to begin and end with Pompeii—that is, the part of what happened to us as a family, as directly told to me by Mother or Father. Events which occurred before and after Pompeii are sketchy. Only the postcards of Pompeii remain so clearly factual, so irrefutable.

I've patched together a lot of things about the family into which I was born, mostly by experience and sound investigative methods: testing hypotheses, positing new ones, making discrete inquiries, checking with Mother, then Father for corroboration. Years later, when I was trying to put the pieces together, I realized that the matter of my research into the times before and after Pompeii had been vastly complicated by the birth of my sister, then my brother. Mother and Father hadn't time to respond to my queries; then, after a long while, after my siblings had reached the ages of consciousness, I had to sort through certain permutations of the many absurd stories told to me by *them*. None of my reconstructions of the basest material I received from my siblings ever fit. This was an aggravating and unproductive period in my life, until I discovered ways of planting specific inquiries into the young, developing minds of my sister and my brother. I sent them on many missions; they were innocent enough, and they elicited many more answers from Mother and Father—yet their innocence often got them innocent, even idiotic answers. For example, on the subject of nationality and ethnic origins, the best my siblings could extract from Mother was . . . *why . . . we are Americans, all of us.*

Most of the information my siblings had gathered for me was thin; but one fact seemed worth pursuing—Father's education. From what I can make out, Father moved us to Austin, Texas in the fall of 1954, when I was one year old. Father rented a converted garage and attended the University of Texas on the GI Bill. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa in Physics. Yet his academic success seemed improbable when I tested it against the other evidence I'd come to possess: as a boy, Father had been pitifully poor; legend has it he had picked cotton to help support his family and he had barely graduated from high school. Once, pretending to be interested in entering the study of Physics myself, I asked Father why he had chosen it. Father told me when he first registered for classes the line for Political Science had been terribly long, so he had hopped into a shorter line . . . the one for Physics. *Pure chance* he added.

That's all I could get out of him regarding his chosen field. It was patently unbelievable unless you asked Mother: *You better believe it buster*, she'd say, *your father is a brilliant man*. Then Mother would look off somewhere far away; usually she stared a long while out the kitchen window, far out to nowhere. After I watched her awhile, the nowhere seemed like it was somewhere. Once, I imagined she focused on a point across the street. Other times, her gaze seemed to find the high wires, or the faucet fixtures over the sink.

I'm very vague about the next part of our lives; this is not alarming; it is only not entirely confirmed. After Father graduated Phi Beta Kappa in nuclear physics, he moved us north to Marysville, Pennsylvania. Mother told me we moved north because people were jealous that Father was such a smart man; but that was all I could get; Mother was busy with my brother at the time, she told me, pasting a muddy substance over a nasty, swollen wasp bite.

I gathered from Mother that we lived a short time in a *bona fide* log cabin on a hilltop near Marysville, a short distance back from a country road; we had no neighbors nearby . . . I know for a fact that we—my mother, father, brother and sister—lived at least one winter in this place: there are three black and white pictures of this in the family album. These are the only ones extant. The photographs show my brother and sister standing chest-high in snow with blotched white coats, patching up a lumpy snow man, and me, with rubbers as long as hip waders, unsnapped and floppy—and wearing an ill-fitting, large hat covering the top half of my face—leading several dozen footprints up a small white rise. In the photograph Mother is in pursuit of the vagabond me; I have deduced that Father remained behind to take the photograph—in fact all of the photographs were presumably taken by Father. The family collection of photographs is meager, and Father is not in any of the pictures of our family. Mother said: *Your father wouldn't let me use the camera; he says I hold my thumb over the lens when I shoot, and sometimes I cut off heads*.

Although it is singularly odd that my father was never photographed, this is not why I am so vague about the time we lived in Marysville. It is this: I am not sure what we *did*, living there. I have not found one shred of evidence that Father or Mother held a job. In fact, the whole time we lived in the *bona fide* log cabin seems like a fairy tale, and the best I've been able to reconstruct remains in the realm of fantasy: the log cabin itself, fires burning in a huge stone hearth day and night, Mother knitting, our pale blue Ford Galaxy which exists in only one very rare photograph. I am told the Galaxy ran two hundred thousand miles before Father brought the air-cooled Corvair. So I must surmise that our family took hermitage in this peaceful, nearly non-existent world, and whatever brings it to memory is unconfirmed and insubstantial, perhaps a romantic fiction—something odd, yet pleasurable in its siege on the emotions—that is if any of it happened at all.

My father's first confirmed employment was with Westinghouse in McKeesport, Pennsylvania. He worked there several years, doing whatever it is nuclear physicists did at Westinghouse in those days; this was *most secret* Mother used to say. We rented an apartment in McKeesport in a large complex: the details and features of the complex are quite clear to me; it was like a brick and mortar beehive. The configuration of our lives there borders on true recollection, and required little

cross-checking with my brother, sister—or Mother. The particulars of our next move to, and subsequent habitation in, Cleveland, Ohio are more clear. Father found a job with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). He worked there thirteen years, designing, as best as I have been able to ascertain, small nuclear power plants for travel into deep space. Mother said Father needed security clearance for this job as well, but not *top* security clearance, only *most secret*, so she didn't see any real harm in divulging some information to me; it is my guess, however, that she had revealed Father's most secret work to me in a moment of weakness—or perhaps pride for what Father was working on, as if deep space travel would be the preferred mode of transportation in several months—something as accessible to the common person as a stroll in the park.

In those days we thought quite a bit about space. The family was enjoined by Father to watch the first man set foot on the Moon. This happened at an ungodly hour, a quality of the moment that isn't depicted in the photographs Father took of us sitting around the television. Yet it was a miraculous event—man conquering space: father sat as close to Mother as I had ever seen him; he put his arm around her; Neil Armstrong's voice cut in and out of the television; then Armstrong made that extraordinary footprint in the grey dust of the moon; Father kissed Mother long and hard on the mouth, not at all like the hundreds of discrete and discontinuous pecks I'd witnessed at the beginning and end of each day he'd spent at the office. But this was one long kiss, then a second.

The time Father worked for NASA was eventful, as things are eventful to a boy coming into his teens; at first I thought these events were not of any general or specific importance to my continuing line of inquiry about the time before Pompeii; yet these events seemed remarkable: when I had reached the age of thirteen, Father began to teach me things, the most bizarre and unusual things considering I had no need to know them. One day he produced a razor, a soap mug and a brush. He dropped the razor and bent the blade; the lather he made was runny and cold. He was awkward instructing me to shave. At first I thought this was because it must be difficult to show another something that is so natural to do yourself. But there was something else about his lesson: he seemed to have the steps all twisted around; the whole process seemed foreign to him—in fact the operation and maintenance of the twin blade razor itself seemed to baffle him. He seemed in a state of despair, but soon he snapped out of it; he lathered me straight away; I shaved one side of my face; I complained to him that the razor pulled painfully at whatever tender stubble I had grown by that time. Father stopped, thought a moment, soaked a washcloth with steaming water, wiped the other half of my face and asked me to try again. After the sixth iteration, and as many cuts to my face, we had shaved one side of my face. For Father's sake, I lathered the other side of my face and shaved it myself, this time with better results. Father immediately proceeded to hang a necktie on me and to fiddle and flip it end over end until he'd fashioned a lopsided knot.

Later, I learned from some of the older boys at school that Father's knot was the "farmer's knot," yet when I proudly proclaimed that my father had taught me to tie the farmer's knot, the older boys laughed and jeered at me. I realized that Father's knot was not acceptable, even for young boys. I was shocked to find this out, and not just shaken by my *faux pas* at school, but that Father had always worn the farmer's knot himself, everyday to work.

I cross-checked with Mother to confirm the terrible truth about the farmer's knot. Of course I couldn't ask her directly about something so delicate, so I put on my best bright face, found her in the kitchen and asked her if she knew how to tie a necktie. She worked on me a long while, and finally came up with an impeccably beautiful half-Windsor; she paused a long while, admiring the knot, as if she were surprised she had done it, then she said: *Don't tell your father I showed you how to do this, okay?* I told her of course I wouldn't tell Father, then Mother paused and turned to the kitchen window and stared off to a point beyond the circle at the end of the street; eventually, she spoke: *Your father is a brilliant man, but he never had a father to show him some things.*

What had happened to Father's father?

Mother rubbed the top of my head with her hand in the way I hated by that age. I especially despised the way she rubbed and patted me since I knew it meant I would not be getting an answer. I ducked from under Mother's hand, went outside, snuck out to the railroad tracks behind the house and made some smoke bombs.

In that interval with her hand on my head, Mother had said this, almost proudly, of Father: *In a way your father still needs a father.* There was, I surmised, at the heart of this brilliant man, a boy needing a father; and I knew Mother's feeling about him was somehow more the essence of a mother's love for him than a wife's.

This was a new twist and it was touching. But even more importantly it began to illuminate the essentials of my long childhood inquiry: all available evidence began and ended with Pompeii. Though I had snatches of information about Father, they seemed unverifiable. I had not uncovered a single artifact suggesting that Mother or Father had ever existed before Pompeii. There were no old boy friends or girl friends, no second or even first cousins, no high school yearbooks, no yellowed newspaper clippings . . . nothing to suggest prior lives. I had never met my grandparents; Father had had no father.

Will we ever go back to Texas? I asked Mother once, when her mood was free of the kitchen window, when I felt that her boredom had pitched and that the mere suggestion of a conversation might set bells off in her head; but she was not to be tricked. She said in a sleepy and careful tone, half-smiling: *Texas is a long way away.*

There were cutbacks in the space program. Father was laid off. NASA gave him a certificate, a color photograph of two astronauts standing on the Moon saluting the American flag, and a limited edition gold coin. One side of the coin was inscribed, "One small step for Man"; the other side read, ". . . one giant leap for Mankind."

Father looked for a job. He bought an electric typewriter from the J.C. Penney Company and set up camp on the dining room table. Many nights he typed letters of application which he mailed in the mornings. The remainder of the time, he lay upstairs in his bedroom waiting for replies—reading and rereading *Time*. Later, he subscribed to the *US News and World Report*.

During the time he was not working, Father couldn't seem to get enough of current events; he studied the country—in fact the whole world—as if he were a visitor to it for the first time, as if now that he wasn't working on most secret things he could take the time to study the whole of his habitation. Father took

the morning and evening newspapers, the *New York Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *LA Times*—and a number of other newspapers written in Chinese—perhaps Japanese. More magazines arrived: *Sports Illustrated*, even *GQ*, and *Esquire*. Father bought a leather jacket, dress cowboy boots, very tight Levis and dark turtlenecks. Sometimes he laughed as if it weren't truly *he* who behaved so strangely, like he only played a small part in some grand experiment, like his whole life—everything he did—was part of a special mission or most secret project. When I asked him about the barrage of periodicals, he told me he wanted to know how the *other half lived*—the other half of what? We children were stupefied; at first Mother was noncommittal, then her reaction to his behavior changed from mild objection to near complicity.

Father attended job interviews unfailingly, regardless of distance, and regardless of Ralph Nader's warning that the Corvair was unsafe at any speed. After a time, Father had collected the most complete assortment of clip-on times I imagined existed. Apparently, even the farmer's knot had been too much for him.

As for our existence before Pompeii, I was completely stonewalled, and my general line of inquiry slowed as I helped Father look for work. I fetched paper, tape and stamps for him. My brother and sister were not much help to Father or me. They had attained the ages of suspicion which I had only recently passed through. They were petrified by Father's behavior; they looked at him oddly; they kept a safe distance; they backed away when he drew near—his arm extended—to ask them to find a piece of apparel, his attaché—or the car keys; they simply pretended not to hear him; they were positively mulish—but not I—I was too intrigued by all of this, like the scientist who knows he's on to something. The anomaly was perfectly clear. My parents' behavior was fascinating to observe—but what did it mean? I felt I was getting close to an answer. My crucible was full of the substance of my investigation. The crucible was hot and I expected some great energy of activation to be achieved, a great pop and stupefying reduction to elemental metal. Yet which combination, which precise combination of fire and the corrupted elements would bring me closer to the pure metal, to the truth of things? I sought pure truths, even truths which might be outlandish, strange and creepy. I searched for incomprehensible things I could never have imagined existed, or which did not exist, but were made up by the highest authorities—imagination—gigantic brains and hearts living in people, transcending things, elemental things. How—really—did one such as Father go from picking cotton to splitting atoms? Had Father's father been some megabrain who had met an untimely death at the hands of a jealous husband? Had Father been the illegitimate offspring of a genius who had left he and his mother destitute in south Texas? What ills must have befallen my apparently prestigious, yet now obscure, begetters? Or had Father's natural predisposition to science and miracles just surfaced? Was he a freak?—a break in the great chain of being?—a single mutant, soon to start a new order of cotton-picking physicists? I imagined, I investigated, I teased out every possible thread in my mind. I tested all that I knew against the available evidence as well as other facts as they surfaced. As I came to know these facts, as they whirled in my brain like pieces of debris in a Texas dust devil, as I had spent my whole life collecting them—the correlation became more and more monstrous and unrealistic. *My father was a brilliant man*—perhaps. As Mother put it, Father might be

the top man in his field. After all, small nuclear power plants for travel into deep space were not easily imagined or realized by common people. Indeed, Father might be the top man in his field in the country, *perhaps*, as Mother elaborated on one of her rare occasions of disclosure, the *whole world*.

Yet this was all too hard to believe. Father was smart—no crime—Mother was loving, although a little spacy at times. Our lives were so ordinary, pervaded with the usual cares of ordinary people: had our dreams really died with Kennedy? The Vietnam War was dragging on forever. Would I—a boy of thirteen—get a student deferment when I went to college?—but I kept finding myself going back, back over the facts, back to Pompeii, to those stony and grey walls, those figures, those limbs which were not limbs; those faceless, appendageless shapes; that triangle of light formed between the tenderest and most disparate of human parts: elbow, face, the pit of the arm . . . and in time the reason which most fit all I knew about my family was unmistakable; the reason we seemed to live as we did, with no visible heritage, cut off from our forerunners, people utterly without a past, the reason we seemed to race in some unique and undetected orbit around an unnamed planet, became clear to a boy of thirteen, yet perhaps laughable: we were *aliens*; my brother, my sister—my father and mother—had simply dropped from the sky: we had crossed a time warp, barely escaped a fiery crash landing—and now Father, of course, with his NASA security clearance and access to the latest advances in deep space exploration, was simply trying to get us home—somewhere, out there—to where? And the government, knowing that we were aliens, had been tapping Father's brain to—to what? But why had they fired him from NASA if that were so? Or *had* they fired him? Was his firing real? Had they fired him as a front for something else?—something more intensely secret than most secret or *top* secret?—something *dreadfully* secret?

Six months after formulating my most viable hypothesis about my family's origins, Father was still looking for work—or so it seemed. Since I was sensitized to the reality of alien life, it came to my attention that a number of new science fiction shows populated the television networks: *The Twilight Zone*, *One Step Beyond*, *The Outer Limits*, and others. UFO's, it seemed, were reported daily in the news, and people who had been beamed into these ships and given galactic joy rides, were commonplace. But Father, with uncharacteristic sternness, forbade us to watch any of these shows or accounts of alien encounters. He said: *What you are watching is simply not true*. Father himself preferred alternative viewing: *Mr. Ed*, *The Beverly Hillbillies* and *My Mother the Car*—shows which Father was particularly fond of, and about whose premises and underlying truths he never complained. But how did he know these science fiction shows were truly fiction?

More and more the evidence supported the incredible theory I had developed: we had been blown off course by solar winds and crashed on this outrageous planet. Had Father and Mother been injured in the crash? Did this explain the strange tick Mother had in her neck and the long scar Father had on the back of one hand? Had my brother and sister sustained brain damage? I had long thought this was the case concerning my siblings, but until this point I had not been able to ascribe a cause for their behavior. Why hadn't Father or Mother ever let us see them even the least bit unclothed?—Much of the time they kept the bedroom door shut and locked; they took such care in such matters. We never exposed our

bare bodies to one another. We never kissed like other families. Mother and Father had never embraced passionately, except once during the Moon landing, an event which rocked the whole century, and must have been exceptionally romantic to Mother and Father since they were space travellers anyway—in fact, I despised kissing families, but why not, being my father's son?

Despite being unemployed, Father bought a new car. He bought a speed boat. He had a new garage built. Where was the money coming from? He bought a huge reel-to-reel recorder. At Christmas, Easter and my sister's birthday, we performed the traditional earthling rituals—all with the recorder running. Father played the events back to us; he enjoyed the playback most of all; his face lit up when he heard the sounds of our modelled, human, celebrations. But why had he made such scrupulous recordings? He played them over and over and over as if he were studying the tapes so our next celebration could be even more authentic.

Then something equally puzzling and terrible happened at school. I was chosen to represent the Junior High at the State Science Fair. I had, quite innocently, demonstrated the electrolysis of water into elemental Hydrogen and Oxygen for my Science teacher. This was something so simple. I never dreamed anyone would be impressed. Father was ecstatic about my appointment to the state contest. My friends, in fact the entire school, found out about it over the public address system. The embarrassment was overwhelming. There was no doubting it now. I was my father's son—from Planet X.

With time, I won even more Science contests; yet it became apparent to me that my success was less a factor of the narrow field of competition and more a factor of my imagined heritage, however strange and bizarre it might be. After all, which self-respecting Earthling would walk around school all day with a slide rule slapping his thighs? I did. So did a few others. But not many. Had other aliens arrived?—Did I belong to an insidious, disconnected conspiracy?

Three astronauts were killed. They were burned alive in their capsule in an Apollo checkout. More calamities beset NASA. There were more cutbacks in the space program. Father found work again with Westinghouse in Pennsylvania. So my family moved back to Pennsylvania, which disrupted my Freshman year of High School. But this was no loss since my popularity with my friends in Cleveland had diminished as my scientific prowess had emerged, unchecked and out of my control.

At Westinghouse Father again worked on most secret things; he made two trips to Washington, DC, to talk to the Atomic Energy Commission and this was most, most secret, though Mother confided in us that he had gone to Washington to discuss fast breeder nuclear reactors. I conjectured that Mother's lapse in security had been innocent enough. She probably saw Father's involvement as trivial. Nuclear power was probably obsolete and no longer interesting on her home planet.

I graduated from High School. I was accepted at Penn State in the School of Engineering. Before I left for college, I quizzed Mother once more about the times before Pompeii. I thought, somehow, that the moment of my leaving would make her weak. I sensed that she had softened up in the weeks before my departure—and this was the time to strike. I felt there had always been a soft part in Mother—a glow in the center of her stony edges—the palpable manifestation of a bare soul—though perhaps an alien soul—in her long-off gazes into the high wires.

But I was wrong. She was unrelenting: *Why do you always ask me about such things?* She ran her hand over my head, stopped at the base of the cranium, and squeezed my neck hard: *You worry so much about the past—you have your whole life ahead of you.*

I had graduated from college and I was working for McDonnell Douglas Aircraft when Father died. The doctors thought the cause of death was a hardening of the arteries. The heart specialist felt that an infarct may have cut off the supply of blood to the right side of his heart. The specialist said this was a common cause of heart failure. But he wasn't sure.

I flew home for the open casket ceremony and the interment the next day. I used the four days granted me by the company, two weeks vacation, and two more weeks without pay to sort things out for Mother. She took Father's death very badly—worse than any of us could have imagined; I didn't know how I felt about this. My sister cried profusely, which, in terribly emotional situations always seemed to set things right with her. My brother went back to work at an oil refinery in Texas City in less than a week. I stayed behind for a time, yet not out of grief, not out of a grief that can be felt, or one that has its terminus in a blackness of incomprehensible, limitless sorrow—but out of curiosity. I observed. I waited. Mother slipped deeply into depression. It was as though she had spatially projected herself into those nowhere places she had stared into over the years. Still, I observed. I waited. I offered all the practical help I could to mother in those few weeks. I ran errands, closed accounts, took inventory of Father's box at the bank—and I waited for my chance.

The day before I had to go back to work I found Mother with a stop watch in each hand. She was kneeling in the living room, over the coffee table. She raised one watch to an ear and listened intently to it. At the same time she stared at the face of the clock in her other hand. After a short time, she reversed the watches—listening to one, and gazing deeply into the face of the other. Had I been an Earthling, I might have rushed out of that madhouse—or—I might have clutched at her and stripped the timepieces from her hands. I might have raged at her as if my words could banish that point in time to something forgotten. I might have gone mad myself thinking about the faint, unsynchronous ticking of the two clocks—the awful, tinny knocking in my ears telling the passage of time but never marking it. Yet, I asked Mother—I asked her without removing either of the timepieces from her hands, without interfering in any way with her ritual:
. . . *did they do an autopsy on him?*

What? she whispered, still intent on the watches.

Did they find out . . . precisely . . . how he died?

She placed both watches in one hand, sighed, then set them on the coffee table. She sat a long while with her hands folded on her lap; then she picked up the watches, pressed both of them to her ears and spoke:

There was an open air market in the center of town. Some nights, especially nights when the days had been very hot, he would take me to the market. He would buy me peaches and apricots—sometimes honeydew melons. Some nights we would make our way slowly along the rows of upturned crates overfilled with fruit . . . we walked with bare feet . . . I was heavy with you and I fed you as we walked . . . even as we walked. You can't imagine how wonderful the fruit tasted.

When we came to the east end of the market, we walked until we came to the breakwater, the piers, the ocean air stiff in our faces, the moon swimming in the steamy, dark sky . . . we were happy, that's all, just happy.

Then what happened? I asked her—the words ran out of my mouth; I heard them as if they had been spoken by a third person in the room. She looked at me, or rather straight into my eyes, in a way I had never known her to do. *That's all?* I asked. *What about before that? Can't you tell me anything? That's all?*

She set the watches on the coffee table and she stood up; she looked at me angrily, then sadly, then angrily again. She rubbed her hands over her face, then she stared back at me once more—not into my eyes this time—but somewhere else, coldly, indifferently.

That's all she said.

A certified copy of Mother's commitment papers indicates she was admitted to the ninth floor of Westmoreland Hospital on June 3, 1978. It is my understanding that she undergoes periodic evaluations so that someday she can re-enter society. If the time comes, her doctors have informed me that she will be on a closely-monitored outpatient program. Anything I can do at that time to assist her in her adjustment to normal life, they tell me, will be appreciated.

I visit Mother sometimes, when I can get away. The strangest part of her—the part I can only surmise has been with her even before Pompeii, is still there. It is sans expression, sans communication of any kind; it is a light, a glow that I don't think anyone or anything can rob her of; the light is unparceled; it is profuse; it is hidden; it has stony edges; it is the spirit-form that one senses when light strikes an object in an elusive aspect, like the stony outline of elbow, face and the pit of the arm in the postcard of Pompeii. This is not pain or pleasure. This is naught. Even the stony edges in the postcards, the appendages, the protrusions of shoulders, neck and face, those shapes which are most like human form, are smooth and hard and show no agony in this light.

Once I touched the palm of my hand to Mother's forehead as if, somehow, I could feel all of this in her mind; it was cold and dry.

I have heard people say that when you are dying, in those last few seconds before you expire, you can recount or visualize all the things known to you about your life. I suppose, conversely, that I have spent most of my life recounting the things I don't know so I can have this same simple human solace when my time comes to die. Solace? What sense does that make? The particulars of my life flash before my eyes over and over . . . and I am not yet dead.

I tell you, it is the verification of particulars which is such a grave responsibility and a sorrowful job. For example, it is my understanding that in July, 1969, two Americans entered orbit, landed, and walked on the Moon. This was televised. Many beings on planet Earth watched this. I have also heard that the year before the American craft landed, a Russian ship landed and a Russian walked on the moon—yet this is not commonly known since the cosmonaut came back injured and the Russians did not want to be embarrassed about it. But can any of this be proven? Imagine how bold the feat itself would be to absolutely, positively verify either of these facts.

I guess you have to accept some things, and these become the things you know. But of course none of what I know or think I know is true. There is no planet X. We were not aliens—yet, all the time, in the back of my mind, I felt that Father

would someday make the announcement: this would be the happy day we would return to our true lives, the happy day we would be with beings of our own kind, or return to a place and time before Pompeii. Planet X.

I had these hopes once—and more. Then I lost them. Or they lost me. Or they are so dreadfully secret that they are of no use to anyone. So I set them aside. I am no space man, though I am, no doubt, my father's son—whatever that is. For the time being I expect it doesn't really matter. I am here; I am here and now—and I have my whole life ahead of me.

Wendell Mayo, Jr.



Lara Taubman

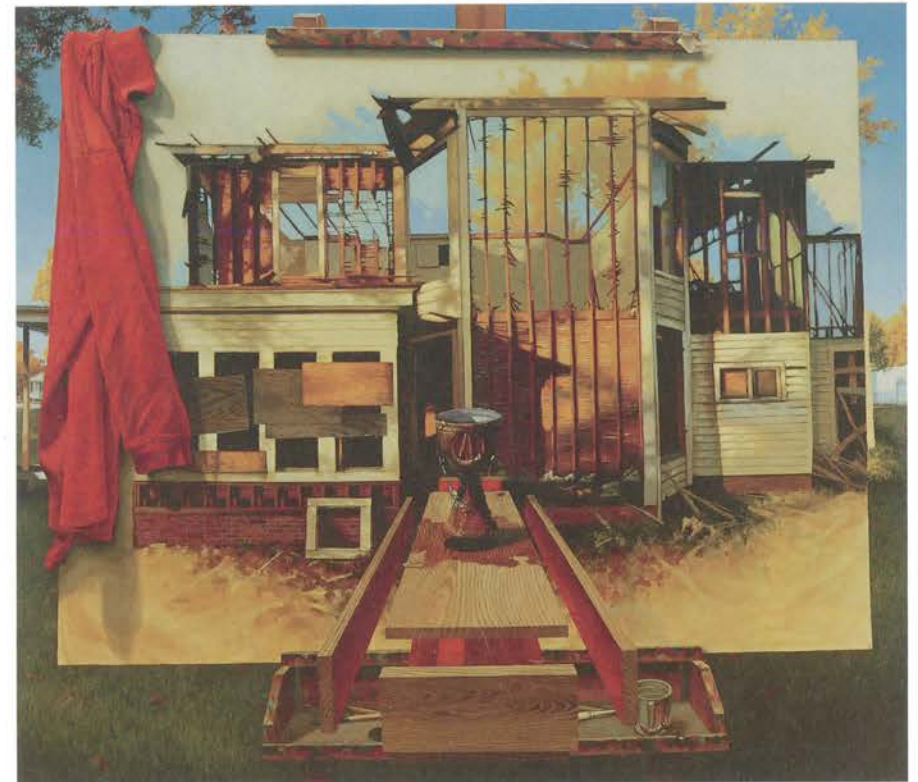
One Funnel

Print

Classic

After the cows were gone and the pasture
flooded with weeds and then weedstalks
and briars overtaken by yellow
pines brimming into the sun and
the haulroad and cowtrails blotted
by honeysuckle, the gates torn
away by hunters and the fence
turned over by the weight of vines
and all furrows blurred by rain,
healed over with needles and mulch—
years later what surprise to thread
the musky soughing thicket and
find right where it stood on the old
boundary for decades the plum tree
putting out its amethysts of
honey, such enormous cleft
berries of the first orchard like
an ancient hidden text still
shining in original language
among the profusion and hurry
of the present vernacular.

Robert Morgan



Nancy Witt

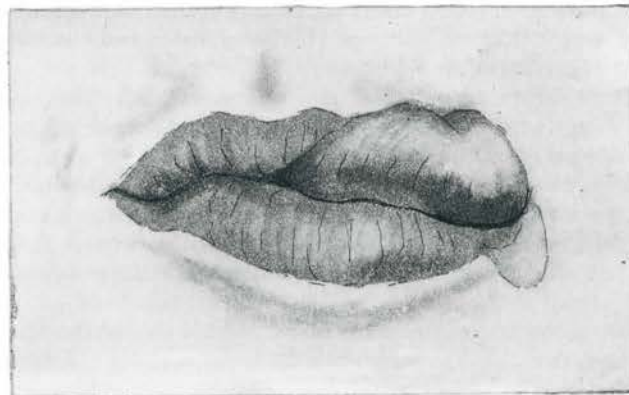
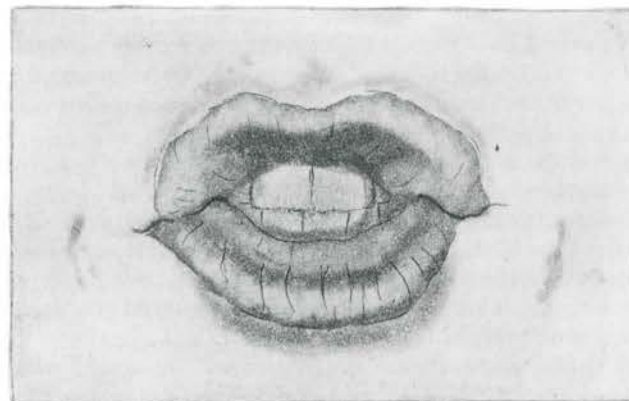
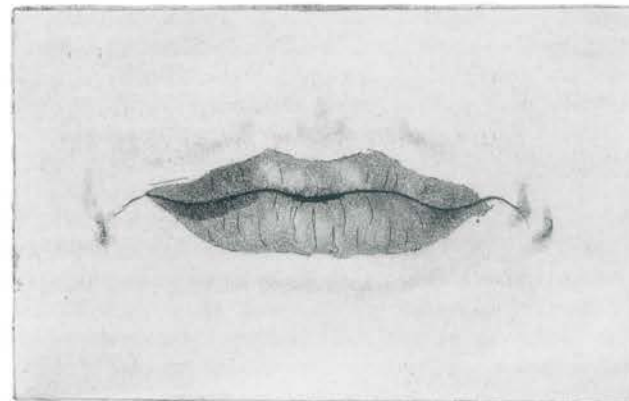
Requiem

Oil on Linen

This World

Ancient world, your new world is ready.
The shadows of birds move along the road.
There is a young girl on the road.
Her hair is wet and slick as a head of lettuce.
People say she lives in the shadow of her mother.
The farmers pull down the scarecrow
and carry him off like a worker
who collapsed in the field.
In town, the John Deere salesmen
stare out of the showroom window
at a roe tied to the hood of a car.
These scenes are not real
but shards of glass
that fall through the sky at night.
I am lifted out of the sea
to which I have been anchored—
its glittering heart groaning with freighters.
St. Simon stands on his pillar,
his heart becoming a figure of speech.
My reflection wavers in the mirror.
It reminds me of this life which I place
beside you like a copy of the Persian letters.

Sam Kashner



Paul Robertson

Lips

Monoprint

Tutti Frutti

When I first saw its outline backlit by the sun, Uncle Roy's seafood restaurant seemed to dance and quiver. My stomach shifted, and something acidic came up.

I sensed Mother's eyes upon me hoping for some gesture or word that everything was all right, but I wouldn't give it. Oyster shell crunched as she idled the DeSoto across the parking lot and stopped the car at the long pier running out to the restaurant. My Uncle's Chevy truck was in its place. After she turned off the ignition, my Mother sat for moments, hoping for words to come, hers or mine. I was determined not to give her mine.

The water was so flat and the sunlight so absolute, I could see the restaurant mirrored in the Laguna Madre—tall pilings and weathered cypress and tin roof canted at each eave like a seabird's backswept wings. No sign designated the restaurant. People who cared to know where it was, found out, and many found out, for it was a very successful enterprise that became the first in the chain of Roy's Restaurants.

Then, people knew it simply as the restaurant owned by Roy Steptoe. *Chez Roy*, my new French teacher from Norwalk, Connecticut said, who *had* found it. In class she gave a comedy routine of my Uncle as a gallant Texas redneck. I laughed with the class. I didn't identify him as my Uncle. She had him about right, the sweeping gestures, the corny affected language. My new French teacher thought everything in Texas was a real kick, but I could see that despite the caricature, she'd been seduced like everyone else.

Mother went through instructions once more. I rolled down the window because the air conditioning was off. The odor of marshy shore at low tide made my stomach turn again. I gazed across the lagoon at Padre Island and cultivated a bored, suffering look that got results. My Mother cursed me under her breath.

"I'm sorry, Momma, I couldn't hear that," I said in a thin, self-pitying way.

She redirected the rear vision mirror in order to settle her blue sailor straw hat more perfectly upon her head. "Though you may have missed the words, Janice, I think you got the syntax."

I didn't hate my Mother that morning. Or ever. I hated what she was doing. Leaving me. Going begging when she needn't. For my Mother was a pretty lady, a shrewd provider, an organizing presence. At that time three years less than my current forty-four. Now I see that I am she, with the same small-boned girl's body, round plain face with brown hair, straight brown eyebrows, clear brown eyes, unblemished straight lips, slightly tucked chin, slight overbite. A little brown wren. Which may seem faint praise unless you know that brightly energetic little bird.

I didn't then, however, see myself as my Mother. I simply thought that I was irredeemably ugly, probably worthy of abandonment, and that the sailor straw hat made my Mother look falsely little-girlish.

She insisted that I show her, once more, the paper she'd given me on which she'd typed without error the addresses and telephone numbers where she meant to be in Corpus and Houston. Then we got out my stuff: the big suitcase, the overnight case, my school dresses on hangers, my bookcase, and my violin. Love the violin as I did, it was only by Mother's command that I brought it at all, for I had no intention of practicing within earshot of my Uncle any of the pieces my teacher Mr. Fuchs had assigned me.

Mother hallooed the restaurant without response. This was not surprising. The breakfast cook Mrs. Hernandez, a Pentecostal, refused to work on Sundays, and Uncle Roy usually slept late with a hangover or whoever had agreed to spend the night with him. Unlocked, the restaurant echoed vacantly to my Mother's calls. The owner's quarters lay empty and, unlike the spotless restaurant, in their usual grime and slovenly disorder but thankfully without a strange woman occupying his bed. The skiff missing from the dock told us he'd likely gone to meet one of the local fishermen who provided his kitchen with mullet, flounder, and blue crab.

Because the big suitcase was stone heavy with volumes of the *Britannica* I thought necessary and because I had been unable to decide which dresses I wanted to wear and so took two for every one I would actually use, we had a weighty excess of baggage which required two trips over the long pier to the back of the restaurant where I was to have the tiny second bedroom. The room stank of mildewed curtains and sheets. I wondered if Uncle did stuff with his girlfriends in this bedroom, too. Carrying my things over the pier frightened me, for there was no guard rail, and the sun, the marsh smell like a chemistry demonstration gone pungently wrong, the distance to the water, my queasiness of stomach, and my anger at being forced to spend the week with my Uncle when I was certainly able to care for myself at home, all conspired to afflict me. "Go on, silly!" Mother scolded me once when I stopped, overbalanced by my school dresses in their plastic covers which had begun to seize me rather than I them.

But where was Uncle? Mother fretted, then wrote a note which she folded into privacy and taped to his liquor cabinet before kissing me goodbye. I said it was all right that she was leaving me for a week, I'd be okay, and we hugged, and felt teary and she did too I could tell because of the abrupt way she turned and walked resolutely out of the restaurant, over the long pier, and drove rapidly away. I read the two-sentence note to Uncle: "Janice has where I'll be when. I'm going to knock heads. Serena."

It was a comfortable, spacious restaurant which in its seeming forfeiture by the owner became altogether mine. The length of the building made a crossed T to the long pier. On both eave ends of the T, floor-to-ceiling glass gave a view of sky and lagoon and the open-air tables beneath the hovering seabird roof. For dancing, a jukebox rainbowed the primary colors in one corner of the large main hall and in another corner lay the setup for the bands that played on Friday and Saturday nights. The television over the bar gave me Corpus and Houston stations, but only church services and evangelists were on, including Brother Justin Carter Lamar, from the Justin Carter Lamar Radio and Television Center for the Justin Carter Lamar Foundation. Mother called him the Weeper, because he begged and moaned and wept in his drama of salvation. Seeing him always angered her.

Then I heard the wasp buzz of Uncle's outboard.

I hurried through the kitchen onto the deck outside, where a walk-in cooler and along cleaning table were used to prepare seafood. Uncle Roy shouted up to me as he slowed the skiff to the dock: "Haylo, Yanice hawney, how you was? Uncle Roy, he be so glad you here! Why don you gimme hand?" Uncle's tongue was in its sometime Cajun when not redneck or Tex-Mex mode. I didn't censor the smile I gave him. I was glad to see him. I always liked doing what he now asked, rotating the small boom and tackle over the skiff to winch up the iced box of mullet and two of blue crab. Then Uncle hurried up the wooden ramp to embrace me. It was muscle and love and mullet stink and wet not yet soured perspiration. I liked it, and I didn't like it.

I followed him into the restaurant, where he scooped ice and poured white rum for himself. "You want?" he asked. I nodded. He knew. He dipped vanilla, dumped milk, slopped a gob of Hershey's into the shake glass, tipped the rum bottle minimally, then slapped on the machine, dancing a little bit with its tiny roar. "We don tell our Momma bout no rum ain dat right?" he asked, handing me the milk shake. Scowling, he turned off Brother Justin Carter Lamar, who had now removed his jacket and tie and worked himself into a moaning, raging sort of weepy harangue. The sick stood before him, awaiting his quickening touch. They would be done with their cancers, paralysis, flaming birthmarks. The blanked screen foreclosed resolution. "A backassward shittingforward sack of fish guts," my Uncle shouted.

At eleven Mrs. Wise and fat Marie Shiflet came to work in the kitchen. For the Sunday noon crowd, their one meal eaten out in the course of the week, Uncle cleaned mullet on the kitchen deck. He sliced fillets, excised backbones and the tiny black nuggets of mullet gizzard with practiced, rhythmic movements as if he were a dancing surgeon. From time to time, he hand-cupped heads and guts and tossed them into the lagoon, where grunts and pinfish rose to feed. A small lemony and white sand shark cruised through to scoop the fish leavings.

At eleven-thirty the white-bloused and black-skirted waitresses arrived to set up the table services. Mostly they were young women in their twenties, wives of farm workers or truckers looking for extra money. At twelve the busboys, also in white and black, came in to start the water heater for the dishwashing machine. Only when there were extra heavy rushes of customers did my Uncle work inside. Then he would put on white and black also and wait or bus tables. Otherwise he wore cutoffs and prepared stuff for the kitchen. He may have been the first person I remember wearing cutoffs. I don't remember others.

At twelve on Sundays the doors opened. That was family day, with the stair-stepped generations in clean, crisp dress. The big rush didn't begin until twelve-thirty or so, because the Baptist and Holiness churches always ran overtime with the preaching and all. After the spiritual exercise, the people needed good solid Texas food, which the Sunday menu was strong on.

After the rush was over, I went into the kitchen and asked Mrs. Wise for lunch. She'd been chief cook since the restaurant opened on his part of the money Mother and Uncle Roy inherited from Grandmother Steptoe. Mrs. Wise embarrassed me by commenting on how good my lip looked and how she knew the next operation would make it perfect. Given my underdeveloped social sensitivities (for after all she meant well, she was a simple, hardworking woman), Mrs. Wise generally embarrassed me. Each of her eyes found a different focal plane, and I could not

look at her in conversation. Her short red hair, never combed in my observation, sprang in tight Brillo-pad ringlets, so that she seemed an elderly Orphan Annie. She wore light green work dresses often missing buttons down the front, and with too much flesh and too little underwear beneath, she tended to fall out of her clothing as she flopped between stove and refrigerator and preparation table.

"Here, sweetheart," she said, handing me a plate heaped with fried mullet, crab cake, french fries, and jello salad. "There's tutti frutti when you're ready." I handed her back the plate and asked instead for boiled shrimp and some of the fresh sliced pineapple I'd seen in my morning kitchen snoop.

I ate in the privacy of my room, where I spent the early afternoon reading and taking notes from the *Britannica* volumes for a paper on "The Two Koreas" for social studies. Then I memorized French verbs. Then I wrote a descriptive paragraph for English I. Then I used the bathroom, which was between Uncle's and my bedrooms, making sure first that Uncle was not present in his rooms and that both doors were locked and that I urinated as quietly as possible, though the explosive flushing of the stool, I felt sure, reported to the diners in the restaurant what I'd been doing and destroyed my efforts in matters of personal hygiene, as in all else, to achieve anonymity.

Then I looked through my school dresses and chose the one I would wear in the morning, a blue shirtwaist dress with white rick-rack on the collar and false buttons and lines of white rick-rack to the waist. I laid it out, with fresh half-slip, panties and bra, white socks with lace around the tops, and the black ballerina slippers Mother had bought me at Garfield's in Houston to cheer me up after my last operation.

I couldn't decide which necklace to wear. That would depend upon how I did my hair, on which would depend which earrings or if I wore earrings, on which in turn would depend the choice of necklace or no necklace. Or I could go the other way, beginning with the necklace, the pearl-cluster pendant, which would mean the pearl earrings, which would also mean my hair up and back, held by a barrette. But maybe that would all be too dressy.

No customers were on the south dining deck where Uncle Roy sprawled. He'd removed his tee shirt and sat arms and legs extended like spokes from a bicycle hub in order, it appeared, to tan the undersides of his arms and insides of his thighs. His position was awkward and, considering the gaping cutoffs he wore, nearly indecent. Wearing red treader pants and an unmatched green bikini top, a blonde woman sat next to him.

Now Uncle was a good-looking man, attractive to women to this day and at that time in the best decade of his looks and virility. Thirty-eight, and my Mother's kid brother. He was a sort of version of her, only male, and one of those men who always look boyish, yet not effeminate. His skin glowed with this sort of pink blush beneath the tan he cultivated. His hair was sun-streaked and freely natural at a time when most men wore holdover flattops or Vitalised ducktails. His cleft chin was the period to the rising exclamation mark of the smile that flashed and flashed and flashed toward any unattached, suitably pretty girl showing an interest in him, for he was no predator bee but the willful waiting flower. I have seen women within minutes of first meeting touch the cleft in his chin. This woman, whoever she was, idly traced the scar along his stomach that remained from his encounter with a land mine on Anzio beach.

His eyes opened, and he saw me. I felt embarrassed, as if I had broken in upon some intimacy I shouldn't have.

"Hey, sweetheart," he said. "You finish your school stuff? How bout a boat ride, you like that?"

I wouldn't. The sun was too hot on the water, but I did sit with him as he requested. Secretly examining his companion, it came to me that the face behind the dark glasses and the body inside the red t-reador pants and green bikini top belonged to my new French teacher, Miss Balcom. Probably, my mouth gaped. Uncle did not introduce us. She didn't seem to see me. Perhaps she'd had too much rum, or knew me but ignored me, or simply didn't recognize me in jeans and peasant blouse. I couldn't tell. I wanted and I didn't want her to recognize me. In fear of eye contact, I observed her feet, which I'd never seen naked. They blushed from sunburn, probably from a walk on Padre Island, for I thought I remembered hearing the outboard earlier. Both my teacher's big toes bent inward and down in a terribly ugly, deformed way. I wanted her to cover them.

"You startled me, baby," Uncle Roy said. "I was just about to meet myself in sweet dreamy dreamland, and now I'm back here, suffering from undue temerity in China."

"I see," I said. I didn't. He laughed. Miss Balcom snickered from some small place inside herself. I thumbed my inner lexicon fruitlessly.

Uncle would listen to a weatherman say that hail fell somewhere as large as golf balls, and Uncle would shout out: "No, man! 'Twas as big as musket balls or cannon shot!" Or Mother would urge him to go shopping with us in Corpus, and he would reply: "Huh-uh, Serena, for I am not at home when I am abroad." So here he was, suffering from undue temerity in China on this Sunday afternoon, twenty miles south of Corpus Christi, Texas, on the south serving deck of his seafood restaurant, with Miss Balcom, my new French teacher from Norwalk, Connecticut, a city I knew only as a dot on the map.

And I wished she weren't there. I wished she were taking in a Sunday afternoon movie in Corpus, maybe *The Three Faces of Eve* that I'd seen advertised, and with Mr. Barnegat, the assistant principal, who was unmarried and young and uncomplicated. And yes, a good catch, unlike my Uncle Roy.

In my bedroom I found the word *temerity* in the dictionary which it now appeared I'd brought from home for just such emergencies as this. Which didn't help since how could one suffer from reckless boldness? I mean, I could see how you could be hurt from temerity, but not how you could *suffer*, which for me is something else.

When this thing happened.

I didn't see their arrival, and I don't believe many others did, or certainly not all that claimed. A hot Sunday afternoon on the Texas Gulf Coast guarantees a dreamy connection with reality. Fat Marie Shiflet in the kitchen with Mrs. Wise could not have seen. The cashier Faye Walker, just leaving the women's room when I came out into the restaurant, could not have seen. Yet they and everybody else claimed to have seen the arrival of Brother Justin Carter Lamar and his staff in the four identical, showroom new, cloud-white Cadillac Eldorados with little white pennants fluttering the image of a fish on the radio antennas, the cars driven at high speed, bumper-to-bumper, turning into the oyster shell parking lot and braking to a halt in a tight side-by-side formation, like a caravan of Joey Chitwood

Daredevil Drivers on "You Asked for It." It seemed that Brother Justin had cared to know and found out Uncle Roy's seafood restaurant.

Then the white-Stetsoned, -suited, -cowboy-booted men and the white-hatted, -gowned, and -slipperd women abandoned the white, sun-spangled Cadillacs parked on the white oyster shell.

It was white on white on white flowing toward the black pier and restaurant, cowering darkly.

Like angels come down, Mrs. Wise said later in the kitchen.

But Uncle Roy and the waitresses knew that it meant something more worldly, for it was well known that Brother Justin lived in the kingdom where treasures are stored up for the Lord's workers in the sweet here-and-here. Uncle hustled to the refrigerators to make certain there was enough Gulf lobster, large shrimp, conch, scamp, grouper, and snapper for the profitable special ordering they would do. Shamelessly smiling like Miss Texas candidates, the waitresses put together tables into one festive board, and for the tips they knew were coming reparteed like Porter Shiflet buttering up Mr. Anderson in sixth period study hall.

I myself couldn't not look.

When the waitresses began to bring in the orders, Brother Justin gave the words of grace, calling for His special providence at Falfurrias, where they were carrying His Crusade. The brother appeared pleasant, had little of the mournful intensity he possessed on TV. Then the Minister of Musical Praise Brother Albert Finley Whitebread, an old man of sweet but grave countenance, sang a musical grace, and the rest, who were musicians and the Counselors for the Spiritually Concerned, sang amen. Then all ate.

Their pleasant faces and kind words to the hovering Miss Texans seemed to emanate from a special force field. Maybe it was the late afternoon sun coming into the main hall that gave their white on white a glowing aura, a spectral allure. Toward the end, Mrs. Wise brought Brother Justin her copy of one of his foundation books, a collection of meditations, prayers, and spiritual consolations which she'd always kept in the kitchen with the recipe books. Foresighted, I guess, as I had been with my dictionary. Looking directly into her crossed eyes, Brother Justin autographed the book, then rose to bless her, his right hand raised skyward, his left hand like a mask across her eyes.

When they were leaving, Brother Justin saw me standing with Faye Walker by the cash register. "Hello, little darling," he said, and bent to kiss me on the forehead. A warm and slightly damp contact. He didn't smell like Uncle, and he didn't smell like some fruity cologne as I expected. Varnished and waxy, sort of.

After the Crusade people left, the waitresses dropped their Miss Texas smiles and divided among themselves the fifty dollar tip Brother Justin left and talked over who'd done what and who'd said what, like Elvis groupies, giggly, excited, aroused.

From the time of his fleeing to the kitchen, Uncle had remained absent from all this. When I looked for him on the kitchen deck, I saw he'd taken the skiff for a ride. To avoid the Justin Carter Lamar caravan, I guessed. But maybe his leaving had something to do with Miss Balcom, whom I found dead asleep in my bed. Mrs. Wise woke her. She was startled and pale, and she said "Oh!" upon seeing me, and I knew that she recognized me. I was afraid that she would throw up in my room or the bathroom, but she saved that for later, when she was feeling

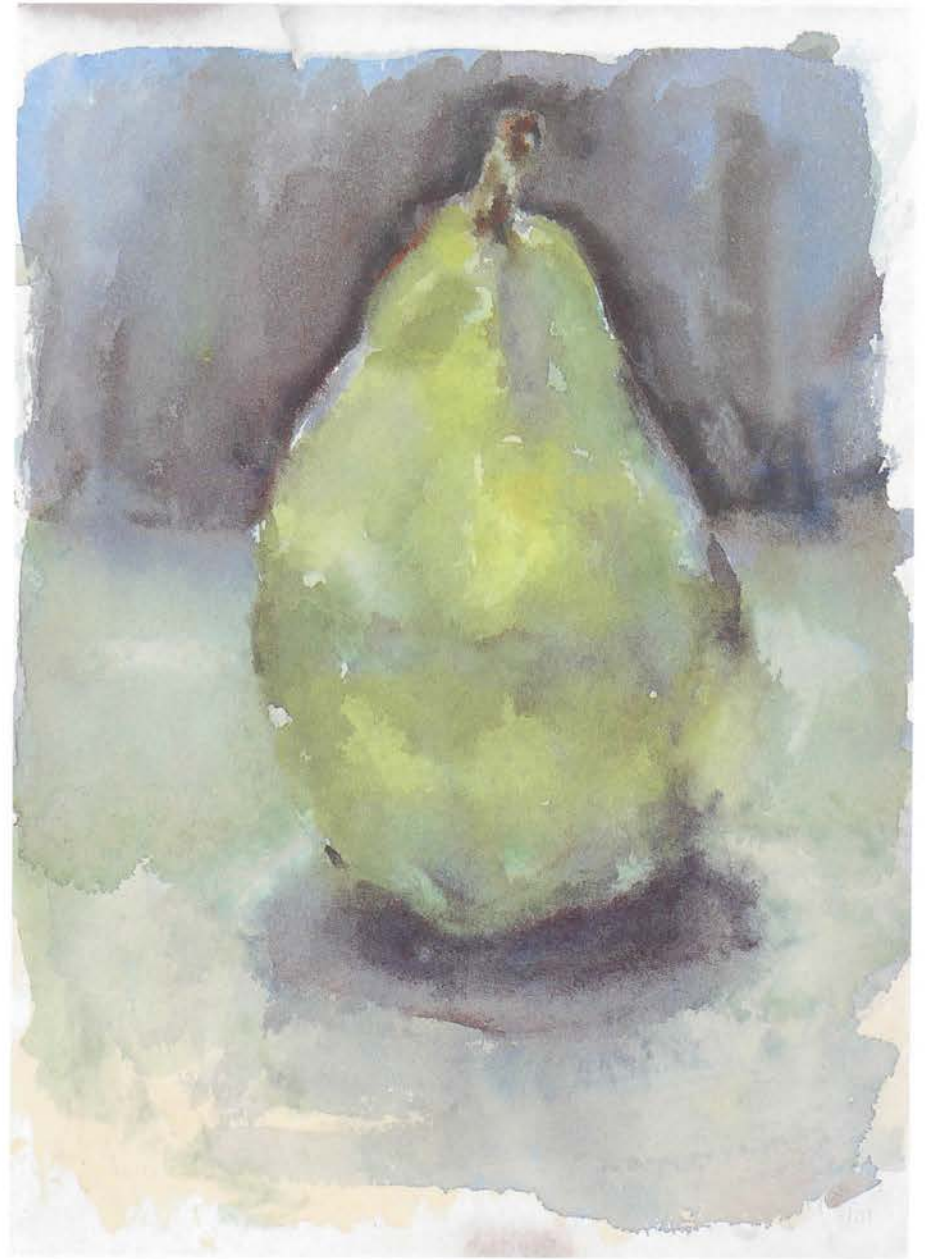
better and Uncle Roy had returned from his sullen retreat. She saved it for the passenger's side of his Chevy pickup while he was taking her home. Which didn't surprise me. Stinking so of gasoline and exhaust, it was the final insult her stomach couldn't take.

In the kitchen Mrs. Wise and fat Marie Shiflet were gearing up for the evening rush. I snacked on leftover lobster and tried some conch but didn't like it. Mrs. Wise borrowed fat Marie Shiflet's compact and put lipstick on. She peered at herself for a long time. I wondered if what she saw with her crossed eyes was different from what I saw. I couldn't tell she'd been healed.

I went to bed early because I meant to get up before Uncle in order to have the bathroom to myself. I had had enough of Sunday.

This was the end of the first day of the week I stayed with my Uncle Roy Steptoe in the last week of September, 1957. It had been a day and was to be a week of really very scary stuff, not like horror movies, but ordinary human terror. I composed myself for sleep by rehearsing inwardly my preparations for school. Rise. Bathroom. Make bed. Little O's. Brush teeth. Shower. Odrono. Dress. Wear hair back for pearl earrings and pearl pendant necklace. Thirty-five cents for cafeteria. Descriptive paragraph for English I. Meet school bus at 7:10. I went through the steps several times before the pleasant release of sleep took me.

Bill Brubaker



David Lasky

Small Pear

Watercolor

Fireweed

A single seedling, camp-follower
of arson—frothing bombed-out
rubble with rose-purple lotfals

unwittingly as water overbrims,
tarn-dark or sun-ignited, down
churnmilk rockfalls—aspiring

from the foothold of a London
roof-ledge, taken wistful note of
by an uprooted prairie-dweller,

less settled in St. Martin's Lane
(no lane now but a riverbed of
noise) than even the unlikely

blackbird that's to be heard here,
gilding and regilding a matutinal
ancestral scripture, unwitting

of past devastation as of what
remains: spires, finials, lofted
domes, the homiletic caveat

underneath—*Here wee have no
continuing citty*—by the Dean
whose effigy survived one burning.

Amy Clampitt



Lewis Cohen

Night Portrait

Black Ink/Gesso

Splitting the Difference

"I am afraid we are not rid of God because
we still have faith in grammar."

—Nietzsche

Neither kamikaze nor sambo. Is this mean good? If not mogul, drone. *La cigale est la formis*. Seventy years ago, Freud stumping for masculine hysteria. Female sons. The play of difference out to lunch. In a pickle. Picked a peck. Arnie on WBAI listening to DSOC Barbara go on about the need for jobs. Shunting desire to the ground like lightning rods. "But Barbara, jobs kill." The historical record ("break my heart"): economics is the dismal science.

From the Shanghai Theatre in 1935, their Nora (Jiang Qing) warned: the revolution is not a dinner party. Tanks and troops face open fire on people on bicycles. Automatic weapons tear through the glass of the Kentucky Fried Chicken on Tiananmen Square. Their best soup is made from leftovers—Lady Liberty, the Internationale, We Shall Overcome, Jimi Hendrix tee-shirts, red flags waving. Hot and sour. Without a center. The opera "Nixon in China" plays on CD. The Hong Kong stock market plummets. Exemplary workers are sentenced to death, blindfolded, on their knees, shot with a gun held to the base of the neck. Business as usual. Every mouthful of Chinese take-out now chewed with the sauce of sibling sorrow.

And it isn't a subway car either. Where one beggar follows another with such regularity that occasionally two come into the car at the same times from opposite ends. And there's a stand-off. Or they follow one another, sometimes evoking each others' comments: "See that guy. He's not really sick. He's too clean." The Empire's new clothes. You try and bury your nose deeper in the book on your lap. They're stumbling crazed through a subway car half-naked in winter, demanding money for a version of the same story: Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Sorry to disturb you. I'm homeless, and needing your help." The women are in worse shape. Battered. Having to listen to these stories, barely able to put one foot in front of another to get herself around the city to the next job or the next friend. Public transport.

Remembering a recent faculty dinner. Where the self-absorbed young economist sitting opposite her in the Italian restaurant sandwiched his comment that it was the interest rate that determined how many people starved between the bravado of his wily charging his roommate five times what he paid for his rent controlled apartment ("How can you do that?" "He's desperate; for him it's a good deal.") and his crowing about an upcoming trip to Nepal. She had laughed before asking if he was serious.

Lear's line catches in the throat. "And worse I may be yet: the worst is not so long as we can say 'This is the worst'." Shaherazade. A veil of tears.

Baudelaire imagines Don Juan with a son. Row, row, row ya boat. Gently down the scream.

The first coffee house opened in London in 1652. Fifty years later there were over a thousand. Playgrounds for deaf-mutes. The now-dead poet turned to his hosts with a piece of sun-dried tomato dangling from his fork: "It's not the first time that I've lost a year. I'm getting so old that now when an age, a number, is held up to me, 26, 31, 39, I can think of no specific identifying characteristic. Nothing. Not one thing."

A group's definitiveness about sex, or the shrillness with which they denounced the definite as repressive, she noted, was directly proportionate to the number of penises present. Representation out just as women and other marginals are beginning to get a glimpse of themselves.

Acknowledging the market finally, at the end of the eighties. And the need for working out some relationship to it. She'd ridden the subway enough to know. Denunciation not enough. Simultaneously marking her (late but definitive) exit from modernism (glory days) and belief in Archimedean outsides, she began to earn money by bed-and-breakfasting her second bedroom.

Textured topography like a New World beyond the flat horizon of a seventeenth-century ornamental map. Unlike nineteenth-century container theories of space. Which everyone had to call in their coordinates on to figure out where to stick in the pin representing himself. Hello, do I exist? She considered the in-between: the eighteenth-century Boston of religious fanatics, social misfits, and petty aristocrats looking for a class to lord it over, Indians a dead issue. No taxation without representation. Forefathers.

One of her students had turned her on to bed-and-breakfast. Except here you made your own breakfast. None of this Vermont-style pancakes at 8 a.m. in the maplewood sunporch with blue-and-white-checked placemats. Just her hundred-year old Manhattan kitchen with the framed Greens poster above the kitchen table. Where signs on the toaster oven and coffee maker warned guests not to operate both at the same time or the fuse would blow, and the problem was that the fuse boxes were located in the basement that the greedy landlord had turned into studios he was renting to punk fashion designers after slapping down a coat of paint and putting up a wall and a door that now sequestered the tenants' fuse boxes. And no, there was no super, just a tired immigrant woman who came in the middle of the night to slowly move some dirty water over the once beautiful marble stairs of her walk-up once a month after night cleaning in some midtown white collar tower. And her guests could be found photographing her little signs, taped to the coffee maker. Or each other, posed smiling in front of her toaster oven. For the folks back in Europe or California, to be labeled: New York: People live like this.

For the first six months' people came through an agency. But then someone ratted that she'd suggested they cut out the agency's one-third the next time around and split the difference. Fortunately, her San Francisco friends put out gay and socialist magazines so she began to advertise in the radical press, and word-of-mouth referrals carried the rest. Socialists, feminists, assorted eccentrics. She was as booked as she wanted to be. It varied. Her introduction and handshake:

"In the eighties, if you run a commune, you take money for it." There were Puerto Rican poets doubling as sculpture curators, rural Minnesota voter registration workers, Portuguese toxicologists, Barcelona costume designers, Australian architects. Who came bearing gifts: Nicaraguan coffee via Oxfam, catalogs from their writing programs, Swiss muesli from Germany, posters from their women's programs, copies of their alternative magazines.

Her most interesting guest, however, was the Soviet playwright. Who came through a top-flight local repertory theatre. His stay with her a trifle overdetermined. A playwright, a Soviet, and it quickly became clear, a heterosexual male. One without a woman in tow. It's freezing cold, production's low. If not bored, looking for trouble.

Gender. Play. Work. Wok. What? Hot. Rot. Stop. They talked for hours over every breakfast. By his second morning the table was strewn with his favorite foods: cinnamon babka, miniature apricot danishes. There you get this. "Where you get dis?" "The Jewish bakery." They laugh. Polish and Austrian cheeses, the yoghurt with a layer of cream on top he said was better than Russian yoghurt. His balky English. Their hands gesturing nonstop. She learned to see the American abundance through his eyes. The sprawl of the Korean fruit and vegetable stands fattened with twenty-four hour produce from other hemispheres and seasons. The Viennese chocolates, ginseng teas, and individual vitamin packs crowding the checkout counters. At the same time he could watch from her window the steady trickle of those outside the prosperous mainstream—some violently wired on ups, the sound of bottles breaking and the aggressing scream: I'll kill ya, mothafucka, or staggering, slow-motion, strung out on nod, the ones that lie down in the doorway for two days. The homeless, the mad, counterpointing it home to the Soviet playwright who saw from her fifth-floor window what is only allowed to surface in the liminal spaces of the urban maze. "I like eet downtown," he told her over and over. Inner cities.

She worried when one of them sounded like the other's state department. His insistence it was "vorse" in his country. Yes and no. A crow with blue eyes. He told her she was "intelligensia." Which she had never known. One night she took him to her friend Bill's wonderful direction of "Midsummer Night's Dream" in a converted Brooklyn garage. Where on the walk from the subway, fires burned in trash cans poised in rubble-strewn lots. Finally, in his seat on a folding chair at the "theatre," he turned to her and said, surveying the space, "Vorse dan my teeter."

The rest motored by denial. *Radix* means root. Mandrake. The Sunday comics. The Chinese herbal pills were full of it. Her mother read *The Mirror*, her father *The Times*. At twelve she read the one with all the pictures in the centerfold: firemen hauling children out of flaming buildings, workers trapped in fallen debris, industrial accidents, the occasional (it was only 1960) serial murderer handcuffed to a fat guard. Class without the struggle at the breakfast table. Her undereducated mother had married up and out of her blasted class into the traumatized petty bourgeoisie so she looked up. "Listen to your father. He's a smart man." She'd nod silently, thinking, this isn't smart, this must be the "man" part.

In the gold days, famous trials were political: people were found guilty in pairs. Sacco and Vanzetti, The Scottsboro Boys, Ethel and Julius. In the sixties', groups were tried as political theatre and acquitted: Soledad Brothers, New York Panther

21, Chicago Seven, Catonsville Nine. The Watergate bunch on the right were pathetic. She could hardly stay awake. And the eighties' trial preempt the soaps. The political is the personal: Baby M., Steinberg, Meyerson, Chambers, Tawana Brawley. And there is the all-female cast of dead actresses, new brides, former girlfriends, mothers, joggers, neighbors who are murdered at home, at work, or while visiting their next-door neighbors.

But you don't have to know your executioner. Women get it either way. Females who stray from the family, keep odd hours who detach long enough to be found alone, working weekends. A little girl riding the elevator in a project, another jogging alone, staying late at work are picked off by passing strangers. She remembered one of her students: "Feminism is just the complaining of women who've had trouble with men." The common denominator of gendered torture, rape, and sexual violence never mentioned by the press.

She echoed Queeg to Ishmael: We cannibals must help these Christians. Good polemic is the opposite of (and rarer than) bad transcendence. "Do you want to split a baklava?" When juxtaposed with Schoenberg, the Bartok sounded like a love duet. Intertextuality.

The local supermarket, a misnomer actually, since its entirety could fit into two aisles of any self-respecting real supermarket outside of New York, like many other commercial establishments, was sealed shut at closing time with metal shades that rattled down. But graffiti splayed itself across the metal ridges of its rippled iron: Eat Shit. This is not a landscape.

Take me out to the ballgame. In living rooms, kitchen tables, and bars across the land, they asked about the good. She discerned a divide. Those among them who were much published defined it by the good life, those who were not by the good work. *Pace Croce*. And everyone wanted money. In the west red means stop, and left means gauche. "I think we're alone now."

"Giving life is not so easy," her sister and brother-in-law's rabbi (Columbia, 68, whom she'd found for them through a student; they'd wanted to get married in their living room on a Saturday evening) had said at their marriage, "It doesn't mean allowing the living dead around us to eat us up alive," Thinking back on the many she had been with then. Wasp Michael. A freon doppelganger. She'd had so many of those mini-marriages. "I cooked, they talked." A generational inability to imagine a future.

The choice seems to be between insecure but overblown fascists or grudging ambivalent wimps. In the end, though, the wimps turned out to be fascists too. Never nurturing. Emotionally constipated. They confined their knowing to the head because then they were afraid of cultivating the field of feeling. So bottled up that the mere hint of feminine connection sent them running out the door, even when they lived with you for years. Interesting how one half of a couple can have checked out years before a relationship is over.

She wondered as she watched them with her. One after the next. Where do they go when their faces freeze, their tones even, honeyed, their glance far off, their disembodiment evident all along. Explaining one version or another that they didn't want to be in a couple: "We'll have to find you a boyfriend," one had said after weeks of good talk and skilled emotional escalations, to her protest that his intimacy was episodic, her assertion of a need for continuity. "Why don't you get laid elsewhere? I'm being well fed." he said of the presence of the two other

lovers he'd managed not to tell her about for seven weeks. Performers disconnected from the implications of their words. Ambivalence no excuse.

At the time, neither notices. Comas for the soul. When people absolutely can't take pain any more, torture, survivors report, they black out, faint, go comatose.

Hope was in the air in October, pushing against the sense of loss that accompanied the inevitable trade of warm days and bared arms for another cycle of cold and heavy wools. The weather seemed a little like the body. Something there in some way before this house of cards. Giving us something to do when we picked ourselves up from all fours, gun-ho displacement to endless fights over meaning. Weeping for resolution that sees salvation in Club Med for those who do not dream the Amazon every night. *Saudade*.

Split screens. Spread sheets. Bats and coms. She can't believe they've replaced beloved Robin with a Barbie doll, cowed by implications of boy-sex. She searches "form" and gets "conformism", "street" gives her "tree". A help of sorts. Clerical. Don't knock it. Beats burning at the stake. Or terror. Which she has only really experienced when facing break-up with a man she thought she loved. But over the years has managed to survive one after the next. In a moment of fatigue she leans her cheek against the cool glass of the monitor, consoling herself. "There is a referent." she thought at moments like this, though claims of inclusiveness exhausted her. The map is not the territory. Where the streets (or trees) have no name.

She had made it through Thanksgiving without the bird, feasting on salmon at her sister's in New York and then lamb chops with Nancy in Chicago, where it was quiet as a Sunday night on the drive from the airport. The next night they go dancing after Thai food with Nancy's colleague Stan. Who orders his drugs long distance from New York for his agoraphobic lover, a poet. Saying things like, I hear there's something excellent for starting work. A user's dream. Wearing his new wolfskin coat even though it wasn't quite cold enough, he tells of calling Omar, chief of psychiatry, about Roy because he was already successfully treating Wayne for manic depression via Lithium. Stan picked up the phone. "I've got another." "Well, bring him over." In the end he agreed with Stan. Roy was manic depressive too. "You've got to watch him like a hawk; he's on automatic to nowhere."

Betrayal depends on fidelity. Loyalty, some would say. Commune-de-fe. The hour of the wolf given way to the quotidian inelegant: insomnia, commuting. Woyzeck carnivalized. The west's seventeenth century drugs are with us yet: coffee, tea, chocolate, sugar. All ups. And one of them constipating. The one that looks like shit.

Her hard disk drive sounded like a freight train, the night before it broke, exactly one month beyond its one-year warranty. She'd carried it to the computer store the next morning, wrapped in a down vest, placing it like a newborn in the middle of a purple nylon carryall which she held to her body like a birthday cake. A man came out of a back room and told her nonchalantly that he didn't know if he could save her data, but he'd try. The new disk drive would cost \$450.

They are offering undergraduate walking tours of the university library. Brochures urge: Know your library. How to tell the difference between one book and another, between history and fiction. They made much of that one. No one has yet jumped to their death from the twelfth-floor balcony. A sure hit. Onto the florentine marble floor. Higher than the Met's 80 feet.

A line courts a dot. The dot digs the line. This scares the line off. The dot rolls on. She's scared too, but never has to let on. Let us have the old poets . . . and Robin Hood.

In high school her friends had fallen into two groups of unequal sizes. Most of them were good by default. Or at least confined their getting into trouble to reading the wrong books (Kahlil Gibran, *Catcher in the Rye*) or taking the wrong positions: choosing to commit a mortal sin necessitated temporary insanity, given the spiritual stakes, so prosecution was impossible. There was even a class atheist. Others ricocheted between religious zealotry (of the Vatican II-liberal variety) and giving up on religion altogether. But they all read a lot, having discovered books, particularly forbidden ones: Marx, Freud, Bertrand Russell. And besides, sex scared them, so she sat smoking her first cigarettes and talking for hours with her girlfriends over lemon Cokes and french fries slathered with salt and ketchup in coffee shops that tolerated their sitting for hours, spending little, and tipping less. More than twenty-five years later, her niece asked of pictures in her high school yearbook: Why do you all have your hair combed like the Supremes?

Many of her friends, she realized one day, letting their life-in-high-school stories flood her mind, had acted out their alienation. Not just run-of-the-mill fly on the rump intellectual threats but concrete trashing actions that would be called "terrorism" today. And all of them had gotten away with it. No one had been caught. Ever. Years later, they almost convinced themselves that they made the stories up. Like Lenny's.

In a western Massachusetts town, a quarter of a century ago, gym money had been collected on Friday morning, three dollars from each of the middle school's twelve hundred students. A small fortune. Theirs for the taking. After school that Friday night, they finalized their plan to rob the school, bent heads almost touching across a marble table in the leather booth at the ice cream parlor on Main Street. "Tomorrow is perfect," Lenny said, smiling as he slurped his coffee ice cream soda. "There'll be a full moon. Everything's all set," his best friend Ricky added. And tomorrow was Saturday. With heads bent over their sodas and spoons pursuing bobbing scoops of half-melted ice cream, they raised their eyes until they met each other's gaze and smiled. They sensed that they had better bank down their pleasure in each other's company, the shared secret of their smartness, so they sucked on their straws in silence enjoying their complicity.

At one a.m. they set out, duffel bag packed with lantern, flashlight, crowbar, and other tools they'd need. They had time to consider the importance of what they were about to do. School was run like a jail and stealing the gym money was the largest blow for freedom (disguising self-interest) two fourteen-year-old boys could strike. All their planning only reinforced their sense of being as valiant as French Resistance fighters. They were Honors track, almost square, though they liked sports too. But they knew they couldn't say what they wanted or ask about things that mattered. The name of the game in high school was regurgitating the diet of slops they were force-fed by teachers gone numb from believing their students inferiors to be controlled with little tricks and meaningless busywork. Refusing to be stuffed, their food stones. The Hunger Artist. Abdominal gutters. Loaves and fishes. History contracted to memorizing kings, laws, battles. English was harder to keep the lid on because some novels just burst their packaging.

In the cold January night they heard only the sound of their footsteps crunching through the thin crust of ice coating the snow as they cat-walked across the large yard leading up to the back door of the school. In the early sixties schools didn't have twenty-four hour security guards or electric eyes. Just simple locks and windows a crowbar could open. They pressed themselves flat against the building and waiting for the sound of human presence. Nothing. But the wind and the sound of their own breathing. They stopped to rest, observing each other in the shadows, exchanging looks that reassured. They took their tools out, the window easy. The school corridors eerily lit only by dim nightlights, they stood in front of the locked door to the principal's office. They would break the glass. Lenny lifted the crowbar and swung it with full force against the glass upper portion of the door. They could still recall that sound at will twenty-five years later. When they needed to feed on its power. A deafening pop. The slow-motion shattering crack of the frosted glass.

At the Oakland Colosseum twenty-five years later with Ilene and Michael, and an impressive group of the friends, she looked around while Joanie sang "Blowin' in the Wind" to kids who weren't born when it came out. We all love Bruce because he shows that straight white boys have feelings they can work up a sweat about. And alone, on acoustic guitar, Tracy belts out revolution across the land, unsung since choked-up Lennon.

Always the generous lexicographer (she worried this was a consequence of his tendencies to non-committal universalizing), her friend Tom defines a fascist as someone who has a lover (whoops, for want of a double "u"), no a lower, level tolerance for liberty and equality. Empiricism for empire, statistics for the state. Apposition sometimes gets one off the hook on Latinate pile-ups. A donkey miscarried by its masters. Way to go. Dale Carnegie and the fundamentals say have a nice day. Jesse jives: Read my hips.

Like black skyscrapers, glass catching the light and bouncing it back. To the east, electronic sweatshops. The new microcircuitry especially designed for her trim little hand. Whereas the south fats its fascists on government aid, rigged elections. Panama, offshore banking center, our modern pyramid, supplies five thousand dead. Her dealer sold Noriega Red, finance his Achilles' heel. Mental over manual. Remote control.

Work for me or die. Which was how Tim (Tom's friend) experienced contract. History tracks that progress. Getting others to work for you. For a song. Nada. Her best friend worked full-time editorial with low-key liberal arts types. She defined a good office as one with co-workers who were bound to each other as deeply by their alienation as by the daily service of their common sentence: Have a nice day.

She'd put in a decade in midtown herself before teaching bed-and-breakfasting. And appreciated Napoleon's insight: You can do anything with a bayonet except sit on it. There is no end to backsliding into the liberal quagmire. *Mira mira*. Egg on the Samsonite a brand of luggage. Travelling light. Bringing the house down. *Pace Hegel*.

The New Salad Bar was born after a spontaneous city-wide boycott after the poisoning death of over seventy people. An adventuresome owner decided to try and encourage a renaissance of business by promoting security. The extremity of his measures succeeded in luring back those hungry for the well-prepared dishes:

curried chick peas, tortellini in pesto, green beans dijonnaise, seafood linguini with lemon mustard vinaigrette, basil chicken legs, lemon-artichoke bulger salad. Democratization through proliferation.

Home is Mom. Work is Dad. Or is it dead? Is there a difference? Daffodil. "Sit up straight," they all had said. In sixth grade, in a supermarket, she would pull out her new glasses that she really only needed to "see the board". (They put the tall kids in the back.) She'd put them on, pretending she needed them to read the label on the can. Another little girl trying to be grown-up just like her Mom. Except deep down she knew and couldn't believe that her mother was so fucked up and unhappy that she was the house sadist.

The perimeters of the salad bar were greatly expanded to accommodate a center space for a raised lifeguard-like chair on which the armed sentry sat. Video cameras scanned all areas, every surface. Patrons knew that their wrists wielding serving spoons or tongs were permanently recorded and stored in the video memory of the surveillance agency. Never again would anyone tamper with a salad bar with impunity. Gone was the crime of the moment, the passionate instance.

She knew her heart by heart by now at forty, and she damned well should. About as much statistical possibility of marrying (god, who would want to?) as being shot by a terrorist. Every man she met was either attached or a critical care nursing case, and she'd come to recognize the limits of rehab—especially on the comatose. The Nazis seemed to be already paired off. Now everyone wonders what her corporate worker-students had: "Why is she here? She could be earning money." She wanted to clear the decks, the air. If not looking for trouble, bored.

Riding the crest of a four-year wave that began two years ago, her numerologist friend Ursule who had been her nominal teacher, refusing the enthusiasm-dimension of the role, let fall over her fourth drink after the last class two weeks before Christmas, which she decried as disgusting, in a bar on the last night of the just-finished course. They became friends.

Cano, can I, sing of arms and pricks droning mantras—kill or be killed. Tracking back from NATO to Plato, worried about metamorphosis, the wrong hands. "I haven't seen one since I've been using Combat." In one corner of the cave we are surrounded by the glow of painting. Video beats pulse off a ticker tape charting the random ups and downs of the stock house daily stats. "I should like to look at my old haunts," says Socrates at the beginning of the *Charmades*.

El Cerrito, guacamole, Embarcadero, El Sobrante, Picante, Sonoma, Calistoga, Tahoe, Taco, a road by any other name. Her California friends could discourse on the relative merits of specific chefs: Jeremiah Tower, Alice Waters, Rich O'Connells. Ilene recollected that she and Michael saw llamas on a hike in Wisconsin in 1972. "We are social llamas." Ilene said in her kitchen.

She was a pieceworker, adjunct faculty, in a division of continuing education, the step-child of a dual career (daddy money, mommy maid) administration, too busy to nurture its precocity. Five student credits paid a teacher's salary, and each course was four. Cowardly terrorists, the administration, they call it politics to shoot a loudmouth in a wheelchair. Cows in clover. All they asked was to be left alone to do their volunteer work in peace. Teaching them to turn on their disciplines.

An optimist invented the calculus while improving on the nail, suturing structures like never before.

At Christmas time, her tree twinkled from the far end of the living room, perched on the stereo speakers slung on their sides. You could smell it even outside the apartment door. Lacking the family but not community, she thought as she appraised it. Shimmering and bedecked with all the precious miniatures collected from her travels. There were tiny wooden sleighs, piled high with colorfully-wrapped boxes, drawn by leaping red-nosed reindeer, little crafted wood toys, blocks, shepards, tops, paper maché boys and girls, glass snowflakes, painted churches, and delicate pine cones.

Sitting at yet another interdisciplinary curriculum committee meeting, she wanted to shout, "I'm interested in expropriating the banks, not in another interdisciplinary liberal arts program." The investigator as the perpetrator. Some of us, when we hear the word "power," reach for our guns and aim for our feet.

Before tricyclic antidepressants, the fatal anxiety of the modernist will, eulogizing poetic language as the medium through which recalcitrant theoretical problems are resolved. The "last class" is always a little sad. Capitals can be letters. Owl of Minerva. Shaggy dog. Ann, in Amherst, her outrageous friend, country living in Leverett, Massachusetts, had gone all out on the rural exemplar routine by putting nasturtiums in the salad (picked half an hour before the meal) she thought, as she balanced a mélange of quivering red and yellow petals on her fork. A stand of trees.

She met one of her former students (whose graduate school admission essay she had written) whom she had not seen in years for lunch. The student was the same as ever, a helpless class act doing all the talking, despite her graduate degree in social work. She told of her divorce from her abusive and loving money market husband. The settlement was \$48,000 a year for five years and \$75,000 when she left. If this was the community of women held in common by the bourgeoisie, how could she get in? One daughter is a beat at Clark in Wooster, the other is back from a runaway stint in L.A., the son graduating from Yale, and the money marketer still calls every week.

Although the remains of a tooth and a clump of hair found in his car had been definitively identified as his missing wife's, and although early on during the period his wife was first reported missing, he rented a wood chipping machine, capable of grinding up a hog in minutes, a tidbit urban *Times* readers won't know without being told, rural food processing, he denies any foul play, claiming she has staged her own disappearance. But unbeknownst to him, the disappeared wife had hired a detective to stalk his adulterous affairs. When the private eye could no longer reach her, he went to the police.

Late sixties, early seventies were the years of the trip. A mirror, a candle, a flower. No chemo in my veins; I've still got both breasts. So why am I terrified every night.

Judy, a pediatrician chief-of-staff poses a dilemma over grapefruit sorbet and mint tea. A seventeen-year-old male hemophiliac with open sores has the AIDS virus. He was never asked about his sexual activity. When he tells his attending physician that he will be away for three weeks visiting his girlfriend's family in Michigan, the pediatrician says she didn't know he had a girlfriend. How long have they been sleeping together? Nine months. Do they practice safe sex? Yes. Sure, sure. The girlfriend it turns out is sixteen and has lupus (a disease that destroys your auto-immune system, making you super-vulnerable to infection).

What should the medical team do? They decide they must not only advise the couple to stop sleeping together, but also tell the girl's grandmother in the hope that she will prevent the girl from seeing him. The dinner table mumbles somber agreement. She is the only one to protest.

Not from concentrate. Betty Boop is back. White is black. Right to Life. Contrasts. "Oh, Bluebeard's such an unusual name, so gentle, furry." It's what up front that counts. Lucky Strike.

Ginger is telling the story of Roslyn's third husband, a Great Neck physician whose dead wife killed herself, or so he says. It gives one pause that the spouse (and child in this case) were no seduction out of whatever despair sparks a suicide in a 32 year-old. And perhaps the cause of her death. Now he marries a nouveau princess. Who has a good time in bed because she is a selfish bitch who likes pleasure.

Sound, thickness, and number, Plato says, are appearances, whereas measure, selection, and standard are absolute knowledge. Gordon waxes philosophical: I dabble full time.

Last New Year's Eve, an old friend's ex had shown up at her place after midnight. They'd kept in touch over fifteen years through mutual friends, bumping into each other at celebrations and dinners. His ex had dumped him because he was an actor with zip earning power and she wanted stuff. Nearly fifteen years later, he was doing drama groups in homeless shelters and still writing music. She'd always been on his side. After several lines of coke, they were alternately kissing and laughing: What if it's bad? he said. What if it's good? she said. Calling it. They decided not them, so he left, and she slept alone.

Long walks on the beach were the centerpiece in the succession of aimless sunny days. There were unusual shells and an expanse of sand that made her meditative. She would think about the world and her life. "How was your walk?" her friends would chatter at her like covered wagons pulled into a circle against alien attack. "I like to think." The wind chimes she secretly resented hung from a porch rafter, making her aware of elements she preferred to ignore.

Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Verlaine, Black, Poe, Freud, Shelley, Byron, Coleridge, Baron Corvo, Valleho—took drugs in the grand tradition. Spinozist luggage ad: Everything either contains something or is in something else.

Bourgeois intelligence she was able to appreciate at its best, mild, honest, and lovely. The clean hands of modernism. But she craved the sear, the whip, and confrontation it could never rise to impose. Forget the banana, remember Chichita.

Mostly she went to cities she had friends in: Berlin, Paris, Rome, and Marakesh. San Francisco, Amherst, Cincinnati, Saugatuck. Bringing quixotic gifts. Like domed bubble watches whose second hand was a tiny airplane circling a colorful map of Manhattan. From those hearty but ultimately pitiable inner city souls was expected the exotic: the latest in socks, perhaps a black and white Vasarely pattern, the freshest of bagels. So she carried nova to the coast from which it came, on ice, in a vomit bag.

On her second day in Paris one year, the *lapin* did her in. Dysentery. Running to the bathroom to fart our explosive diarrhea every twenty minutes while the plumber banged and hacked in the next room, pausing to tell her when she came out of the bathroom holding on to the wall that she should drink some anise. She hated the taste of alcohol so she suffered until she was able to crawl to the pharmacy.

J'avais la diarh e. Vulgar American. Seven-story city, if you don't kill us, you make us fall in love with you.

Another year, it was the carbonara cooked by communists, friends with maids and marble floors. Attila no longer on their heels, they took to making fragile glass with dolphins and swans embedded in the base. In Venice she rode the vaporettos, breathed in and out softly and listened, bought glass threaded with gold. Firenze, now gelato capital of the world, puts her gold in paper, inlaid angels' wings, madonnas' halos, birds, and swirls of leaves.

And *Roma* spells *amor* backwards. Piazzas like rhizomes. Ruins sunk two stories, *tutta la citta*. She walked it in a week of days. Dirty, fast, traffic treacherous. Supermarkets with aisles of pasta. Carla looks taller by a foot. When she tells her Carla says, "It is you who have shrunk. Because you are away from your language."

She asked the Soviet on his first day at her bed and breakfast: How did you like Florida? And loved his answer: "I kees Mickey Mouse." The next day, when she dragged in the door from a five-hour marathon, having spent the day lining up to cross the bridge, waiting for the Port-o-Sans, and running-walking the 26 miles, getting post-race massages, he asked her: "Vell, did you vin?" He tells her, echoing Bahktin: "American people love happy ending. Like Soviet bureaucracy." They talked for two weeks of breakfasts. He flies home to Moscow.

Her old friend Jim deadpans in her living room: "My sister's gonna become a priest." He knows she remembers that his sister is an Episcopalian nun. "It'll make it easier for me to become an author." "Wow, great." "What's new with you." "I'm seeing an acupuncturist." He leaned toward her with interest "Is it working?" Her friend Jim was enigmatic. Glancing around the room that was his study, she recalled his telling her: "There is nothing here but words; the entire apartment is built of words."

Now wait a minute. "That's not all," she protests. You're a class act. Another fucking inheritance. We have all read Canetti. Paint your walls fucking periwinkle or cinnamon. Alternating uptown Chinese with downtown Thai. Jim's was the first computer she'd ever used. He'd encouraged her, showing her, talking about how they are aids to writing.

She began to write theatre reviews. On *Androcles and the Lion*, "Brecht for liberals. Wanting to die for stories and dreams, but not having faith."

Another old friend, a Ph.D. in economics, a Marxist, is temping as a word processor. At Merrill Lynch, he reads documents that detail the expenditures for sending 44 couples to the Super Bowl (in Miami): \$180,000. Later that week, at the Federal Reserve on Maiden Lane, he notes they are faxing documents all day from one floor to another.

She'd like the audience's gentle hesitant laugh rippling across the hall in Chekhov's *Platonov*, joining in.

"It's come to an end, Sophie."

"Meaning?"

"Meaning."

Dion Farquhar



Michael McCarthy

Untitled

Photograph

The Wall

1.

We lived in a garden
walled off from what?
What was behind the wall?
We had been warned and yet
imagination could not imagine it.

2.

Often I watched them as they slept,
watched breath enter and leave
their bodies' bright covenant,
untouched by death.
I waited, choosing my moment.

3.

We were watched from the beginning
by a dark intelligence
that troubled our dreams.
We were afraid and would not admit
to each other what we had seen.

4.

It had a narrow head
and narrow eye, a body
sinuous as fire. Its voice,
needling, thin and high,
sang like a lyre:

5.

*Evil, I live
without end or beginning.
I know one thing.
Come. Taste of my knowledge,
Know my sin.*

6.

Its body climbed the wall.
It was no dream at all.
We followed hypnotized,
and looking in its eye,
we saw what we despised:

7.

We recognized our lives.
It turned, fell back, and screamed:
Ignorance is the cause of the world!
And as it screamed,
the wall disappeared.

Elizabeth Spires



Nancy Witt

Birth of Time from Chaos

Oil on Linen

Civilization Comes Out of the Sea

The maitre d' mistook us for someone else

and gave us the best table in the house.
The truffle sauce was good, the Hungarian burgundy
still held the taste of a burnt casket
drowned in the hull of a ship.

We walked home under the stride of Orion
tilting into Lake Como—the air was sharp,
tasting of apples. A fire was lit
in the *salon de musica*; we retired to its solitude

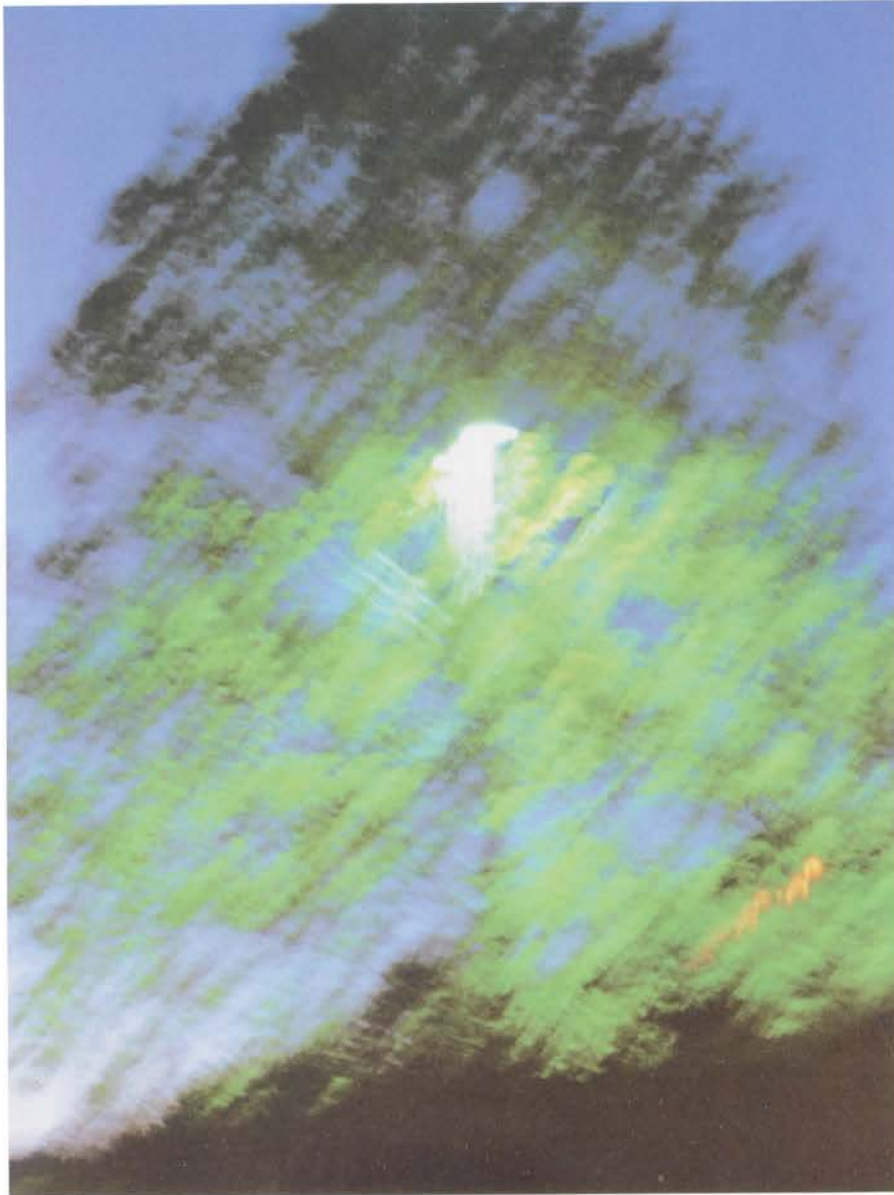
and amoretto. In the deep tapestry of my room
I shifted into sleep, letting the light
of a chilled moon exchanging glances with the lake
enchant the walls. The stillness was icy and true.

Vladimir coughed in the opposite room.
Under vaulted ceilings where tiny cherubs
commiserated with one another
through the long decades

of changing chambermaids, I dreamt
of a large white hand, entirely filling
the basement of our house, whose fingers
we rode in the enduring moonlight.

Meanwhile, the immense and glacial lake
remembered its origin; deep under its surface
glittering like cutlery, the green head
of a god rose up through the centuries.

Nancy Schoenberger



Michael Tan

"Viola, Frank, Minnesota!"

Photograph

Imperial Gown

You lusted after it: giant silk bell
red on yellow-threaded bliss.
With its bat-winged ampleness
a body could shrivel or swell
or blush, we'd have to guess.
You wanted the robe for its haughtiness,
belittler of fashion and time.
But today is a poor-coat day.
Pick up your jacket and cotton pantaloons.
How they limp along your skin,
how they suck your legs. Sway
into the sea of leggings—it's noon,
and your throat rumbles: where's the man
could ease a heart like a yellow satin gown?

Sarah Gorham

The Empress's Fan

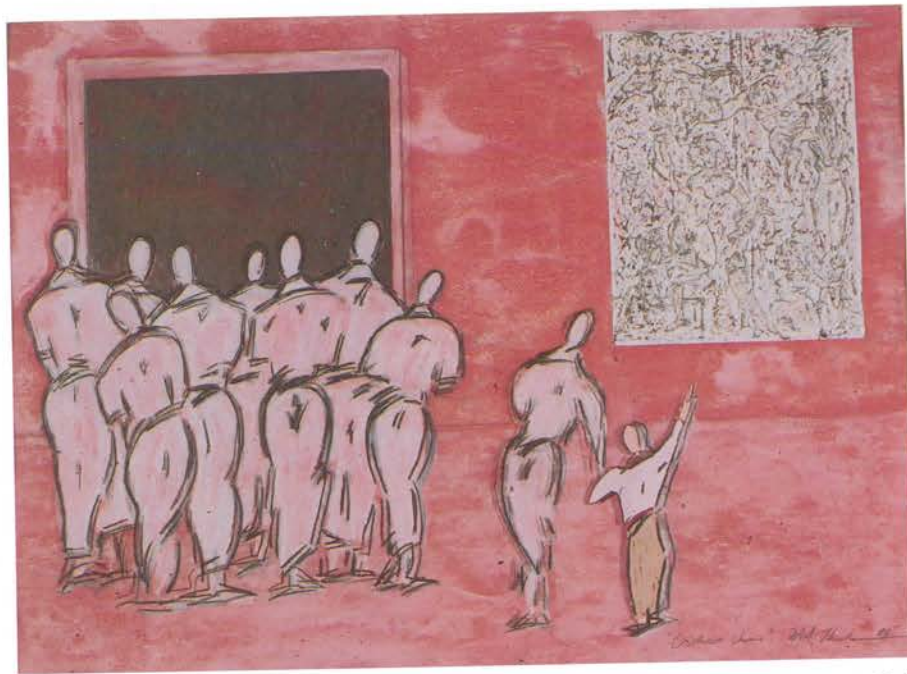
Look at the elders stumble in.
Their honesty leaves them papery skin,
tearing eyes. She's wise to flutter
dried coral spray—every utterance
a half secret, gifts she keeps
partly for herself. My deepest
thoughts are black, swimming
creatures better left clinging
in the dark. Let's quit the requirement
to make our souls transparent.
Lower the blinds, raise our fans
against their outstretched hands.
World, accept some mystery!
In time you'll have all of me.

Sarah Gorham

Last Request

The dead cannot shout so let me
show you the way to honor.
Build me a paper house crammed with money
paper lutes, bells and jugglers.
Burn them all quickly. Smoke
is a kind of heavenly translator.
I cannot choke.
I will be without breath, my heart
vacant. So fill up that cardboard flask
and double my portion of rice.
In return, I'll bless your marriage bed.
Don't hesitate to ask
for more. Our need connects us.
It's freedom I dread.

Sarah Gorham



Mark Allen Henderson

Critic's Choice

Oil

The Impropriety of Trees

for M.D.G.

Resist the impropriety of trees
 —you say—which rise haphazardly through the air
 from where their gentle father, some kind breeze,
 once dropped them, from where they had to tear

through roots, through earth, through heavy weeds, to stretch
 odd limbs. A simple order, friend—you say—
 the story with a human sigh, will fetch
 the fullest understanding and display,

a weather we can all converse about
 with strangers just as well as intimates.
 Dark clouds may threaten us, strong winds may flout
 the way we occupy ourselves with bits

and pieces of emotion, such as love
 and other overrated miseries,
 but avert that chaos you've been thinking of.
 Resist the impropriety of trees.

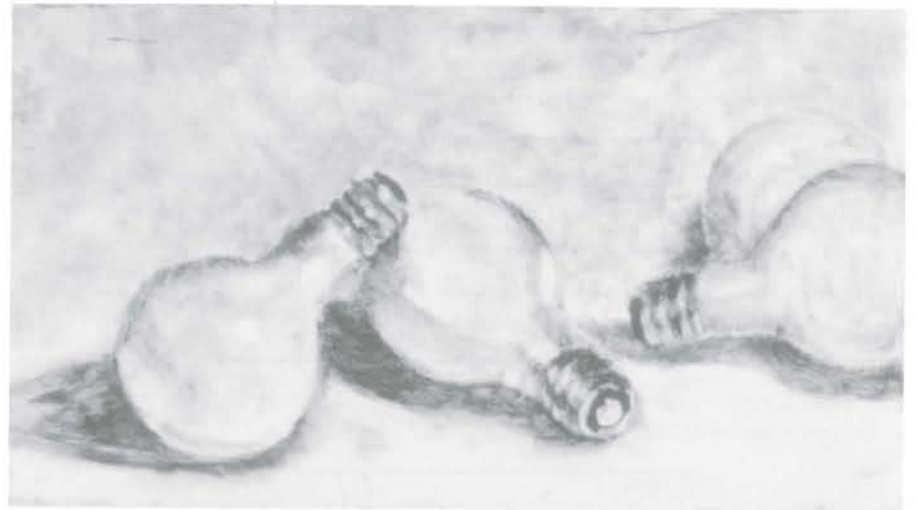
Still, Dana, even as you urge, you wonder
 if my incompetence, not unlike yours,
 is as much a consolation as a blunder.
 Each gnarled branch which first, it seems, obscures

later unravels naturally on
 the same dense sun we tend to with such ardor
 and bend to as our god. I'm sent and drawn
 by arbitrary aching toward the border

of sense and nonsense, where the smallest leaf
 might doubt its own uncurling as it grows,
 where stories of our complicated grief
 can suddenly unfold, like the repose

after the storm, refreshed yet commonplace,
yet still a trace unshaken by the breeze
that brought about this quartz contentment, grace
enshrouded by proprietary trees.

John Gery



Paul Robertson

"Light, Anyone?"

Monoprint

Shorter Stories

When the fraternal twins finally arrived, one of them looked much like her husband, the other even more like her boy friend.

She swung his body with the agility of a woman half her age; only the lines on her neck revealed how old she was.

Women who put nail polish on their toes were to be avoided; those who painted their fingernails were to be feared.

When I was young and good-looking, I had no confidence in approaching women; now that I have gained plenty of confidence, I'm no longer so good-looking.

Every man who tried to kiss her wondered whether a description and analysis of his seductive strategy would show up in her fiction.

He wrote a multi-voiced opera that exists only on audiotape and was never meant to be performed live.

He could not introduce her life without identifying her distinguished professional passion; it was reasonable to question whether, even beneath him in bed, she could be experienced apart from her job.

It took her years to undo her mother's admonition and now she always arises from the dinner table with something left uneaten on her plate.

Cracking open an egg, he found a small chicken.

He was writing short stories about a protagonist who did nothing in life other than author short stories.

You can tell by looking at me that I regard food as more seductive than women.

He wakes up every morning drenched with sweat, not from making love to his wife but from wrestling with his sheets.

Like all men who gracefully accept a great amount of responsibility, he appealed to women whose self-image depended on the cultivation of incompetence.

Why should he bother with "writing novels" if whole stories could be told in single sentences?

Richard Kostelanetz



Pamela Anderson

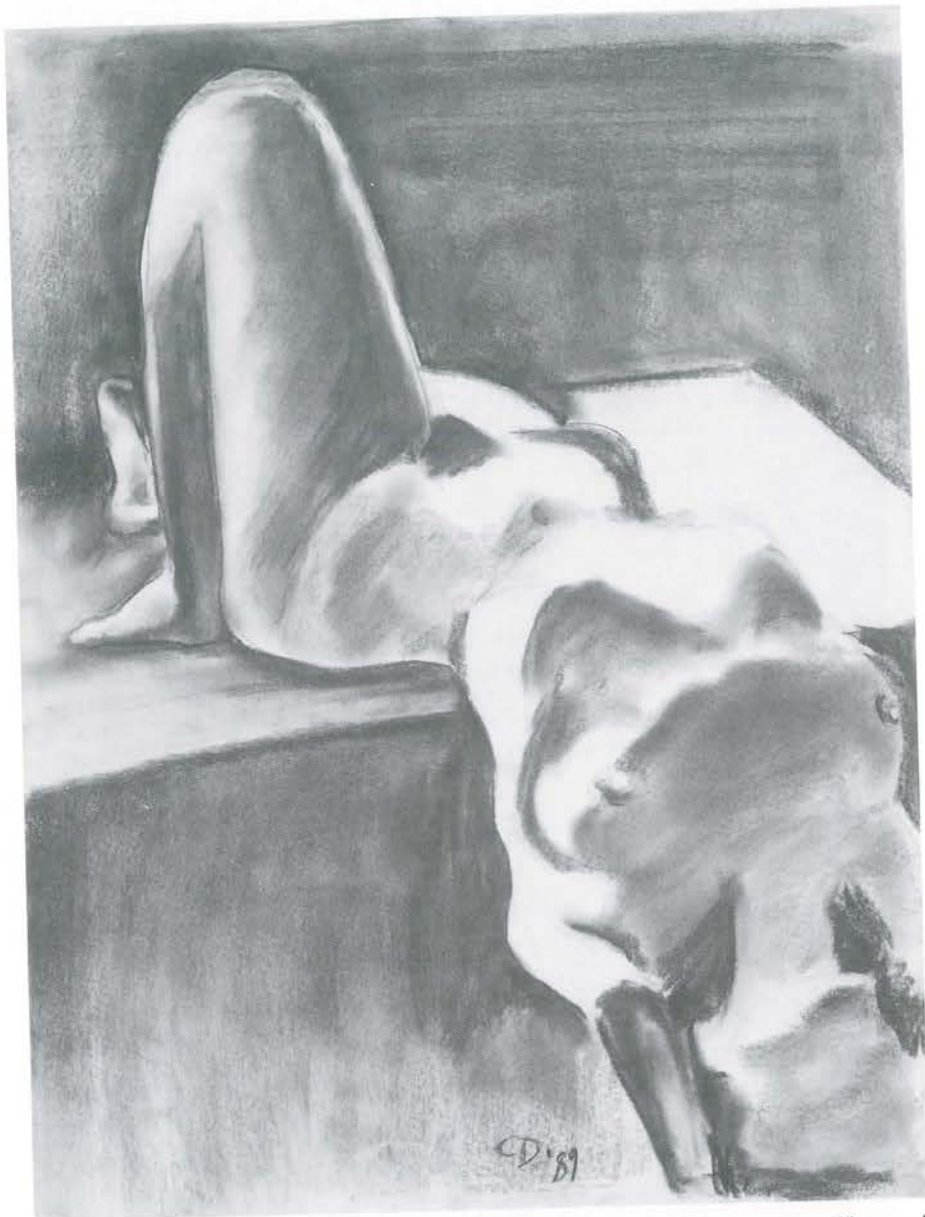
They All Start with "S"

Oil on Canvas

If you melt some lead
and drop it into water,
you get monstrous figures.
The red-hot metal
gathers itself into shapes
as it falls straight to the bottom.
The material crosses the flame
and the cold composes
the form along the route.
Objects are born
irregular and mobile
fossils and comets, evidence
of domestic geology.

Valerio Magrelli

(Translated by Dana Gioia)



Christine Dixon

Inclining Nude

Charcoal

Subduction

The hills are young and the river
of earth itself passes away,
ashes to ashes, fire to fire,

in rubble tide and boiling tremor
spread from cracks in the hot rift clay.
The hills are young and the river

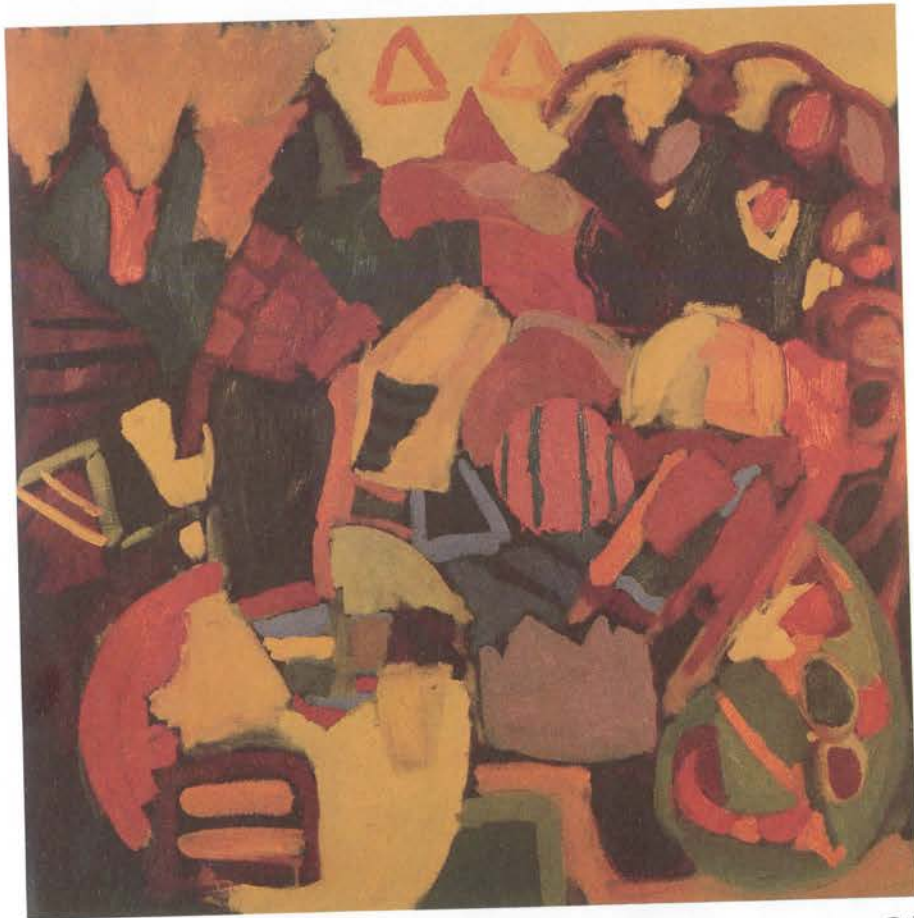
feeds on new mud from the interior,
as land pushes the land away,
ashes to ashes, fire to fire.

Skull plate on skull plate grinds over
rock and continent, then gives way.
The hills are young and the river

slips beneath the wrinkled shore
sliding back to the womb each day,
ashes to ashes, fire to fire.

The many tongues of earth that pour
back into the birth country say
the hills are young, and the river,
ashes to ashes, fire to fire.

Robert Morgan



Lara Taubman

Junk

Oil

Exhibitionism

All those paintings—the scary
Crash of Munch, Cezanne's color piles,
The infinite Seurat. How very

Delicate that it tumbles down the miles
Toward the dead end of portfolio
Resuscitation and retrospectives. Meanwhile,

Back at the ranch, we watch movies. Oreo
Cookies dance on our dreams. Seurat
Missed the point. Images flow

And we drown. I like it a lot.
Images move like pistons through
The cylinders of thought,

Land on a gallery catalogue. Blue
Fingers smearing paint in your hair.
Postmodernism, baby, has no clue.

What we need is the chaos of process. There
Is the transition between movements.
No longer must we shoot the flare

Of avant-garde across the moment.
Entire artists fall under the dead foot
Of the artifact. Stasis. Apartment

By apartment the painters, in cahoots,
Leap from their balcony railings. But
They bounce back up. The critics, hungry for loot,

Are lined up on their backs in the street.
Their soft, empty stomachs make a cushion.
Movements need to move their feet.

Christopher Vitiello



Lara Taubman

Eco

Oil

Bread

When the lushness hangs heavy
in the husk-opening wind
and sheds to blindness, we attend
the gold perfection, sun's lethargy.

On the swept floor big grass
is beaten for its ripeness;
a fine precipitate
is shoveled on the air to let

wind pluck and choose, its eye do
the fine work. The carats brought
to stone and sharpened into
dust are touched again with water's smart

and the ashes sour whole.
A minute demon conjures in
the mire and breathes it full,
and alchemy's corruptions spin

lace from the dust and breath,
a cloud of flesh woven
from luminous earth
to be healed by fire again and broken.

Robert Morgan



Drew Dervavich

Telephone Buttons

Print

Dregs

I was drinking, quite serious about it after age twelve when Father, drunk as usual, I'm sure, walked naked into a Minnesota blizzard and wasn't heard from for months. That required his spinster sister, Marion, to move into the hovel where Father and I lived—Mother, with reason, having deserted us for sanctuary at her family farm in Anoka.

Somewhere near the heart of these wasted years was my silly love for Missouri Hamm. Direct contact with Missouri began and ended in sixth grade. Whether after that I drank more because of unrequited love, or my drinking fueled the torch I carried, I'm not sure.

Aunt Marion tried, and God knows she hadn't come into an easy situation. But there wasn't much companionship for me, especially after Robert Enquist moved away. After Robert deserted me. So I extended the routine I'd followed before Father sailed off into the storm: Drinking the dregs from his bottles of beer, wine and whiskey. Incidentally, I never saw Father spill any booze, and I've spilled precious little myself. Almost always there was something drinkable clenched safely in his hand at the moment he passed out.

After Father left, and his liquor ran out, it was natural to take my routine out-of-doors. Swanson's Bar and Grill was next door. Hardly a night went by that patrons didn't bump into and rearrange the jerry-built wood fence separating Swanson's parking lot from our backyard. There were always broken boards where I could slip through.

I never went through Swanson's empties without salvaging enough of something to start my day. Since all bars closed Sundays, it might seem that Mondays would pose problems. But in fact Saturday nights were unusually busy, and Sunday mornings I'd recycle enough leftovers to last for two days. Before long I was a full-time drunk.

I'd get to Swanson's garbage early, and be back for breakfast with Aunt Marion. Calibrating wake-up to Daylight Savings and sunrise, I'd set my Mickey Mouse alarm clock, Father's present to me on my eleventh birthday, and spring out of bed. It would still be dark. I'd put my navy jacket on over pajamas, slip on black galoshes, and umbrageous as the thief I was, sneak out the back door and confront Swanson's inky trash.

"Early to rise" was the key to successful recycling. In the dark I could do pretty much everything by touch and smell.

I believe Old Man Swanson himself and most of his help set things out so they wouldn't break. I almost said "set things out for me." They also kept things separate: No deep-fry fat in almost-empty vodka bottles. Whether they knew it was *me* who'd be there the next morning or only that *somebody* was making good use of their leftovers, I never found out.

My favorite drink was whiskey mixed with almost anything. Whiskey and beer

was a staple. I also developed a taste for whiskey and sweet wines, a sort of scavenger's Manhattan, and for whiskey with anything like brandy or liqueur. I'd make up my bottles, tasting as I had to to get things right, stash my leftovers under the back porch, and be eating hot cereal before sun-up. Aunt Marion loved fixing me hot cereal, putting an inordinate faith in the powers of Ralston Purina or Coco Wheats to help me grow up straight and strong.

So year-round, half-drunk, I ate her hot breakfasts, a smile on my face, my head spinning through conventional sixth-grade topics—Missouri Hamm's budding breasts, Sonny Priest's bullying, and whether Robert Enquist would let me work on what seemed his endless reserve of model airplane kits. He and I were nuts about planes. Then school days, through sixth grade anyway, I'd go off to Ramsey Elementary.

Looking back I know why we went to school: to be with Missouri Hamm. I worshipped her long golden hair, was mesmerized by the smile that I learned to describe as enigmatic. Sometimes she seemed to be smiling because she didn't comprehend what was going on. Then, just as I'd have her pegged for stupid, Missouri's smile would flash at something so witty or subtle that only the most worldly of us sixth graders were privileged with understanding. Other times her smile was just plain sexy, no matter what awful thing Robert Enquist or I would say: Robert asking her to meet us in the boys' room; me telling her that dumb joke about the Virgin Mary. She would grin until her face was all honey, sunshine, and lust.

On the playground I often punched her with love; indoors, whenever I could, in cafeteria lines and during spelling bees, I'd nudge up close. Both Robert and I would maneuver to be on her team so we could be close.

Still, in all that time, I only got one kiss.

In spite of my passion for Missouri, I began leaving school that winter of sixth grade. Even Missouri wasn't worth the price you paid, going to school. Once free of its drudgery and monotony, I educated myself through reading and booze. Aunt Marion would leave for work, and I'd settle in with a bottle of leftover and a library book. Eventually I read half-way through adult fiction and well into what Dewey classified as "the social sciences." I was living the good life. When Missouri and the rest entered junior high, I didn't even enroll. Mrs. Enquist had reasonably come to the conclusion that I was a bad influence on Robert, so he and I met secretly while Mrs. Enquist shopped or played bridge. Once in awhile he'd cut school. Other afternoons I'd drift over to the Ramsey playground where Robert and I and others would play the seasonal sports—marbles-for-keeps, touch football, tin-can hockey, baseball, and then marbles, again.

Was it because I dropped out "between schools"? Not once during those years did the city schools send a truant officer around. The possibility that they might worried me, because I was content with the way things were. Surely Missouri would soon realize what a terrific catch I'd be and Robert would give up his claims to Missouri. And how long could it be before Father would return from Africa or Peru with a chamois bag full of diamonds? Finally! A house with a working furnace, good storm windows, servants, plenty of model airplane kits, and—not many years off—the Deussenberg I'd drive to take Missouri to some ball.

The fantasy went smash that afternoon around Easter when the sun came out and things started popping up through the melting snow. An old tire. A mattress.

Magazines. But mostly bottles—green, amber, brown; clear tall vodka empties, oddly-shaped, densely-colored liqueur bottles.

It was a drinking man's backyard, featuring Father's and my empties. Then up through the snow-drift melting in the southwest corner of our yard came Father's right hand, reaching out but bent like a claw. The next day, a Thursday, Father's forehead appeared, and the tip of his nose.

I knew who it was right away, even before the snow melted down just to the sure shape of him. But I saw no reason to tell anyone. What good would it do? My explanatory myth had Father, suddenly out of booze and forgetting he was naked, plunging into the storm in hopes of finding a few dregs in bottles he'd flung out the back window in ampler times. That scenario proved prophetic as further melting confirmed Father's identity. A couple of days before he was fully revealed I set a garbage-can cover over him so there wouldn't be any embarrassments.

I was loath to report Father's reappearance to Aunt Marion, who seemed oblivious to the drama playing outside what was now her bedroom window. Except that Missouri wasn't making any overtures, as I often fantasized that she would, life was tolerable. Might not confirmation of Father's death throw a monkey-wrench into my pleasant scene?

Not to worry. Neighbors noticed; word got around. Once the Health Department had hauled Father to the morgue, Marion and I relished three wonderful weeks. Months later, Missouri sent me the valentine I later thumb-tacked over the head of my bed; it was laced with the printed message "Be My Valentine." She'd printed "Robert says youre father dead, Im sorry." Neighbors we scarcely knew brought fresh fruit, a bag of peppermints, two macaroni and tuna casseroles, and tons of leftovers. Old Man Swanson sent his son Goofy over with a bottle of sparkling burgundy. A blue-faced man from Aetna Life came by for conversation with Aunt Marion that resulted in her establishing a \$2000 trust fund in my name.

Exactly where that fortune eventually went I cannot say. But years later, Swanson's held a sort of informal celebration for the entire month of my twenty-first birthday. I vaguely remember being driven to the bank in a Model A one day. My associates then were men with names like Oley, Fuzzy, and Buck. I feel sure I contributed that trust fund to the ongoing celebration, else where did it go?

Trust fund aside, I held enough get-by jobs to keep myself warm and in booze. I was never one of those desperate or hopeless drunks one finds in institutions or lying in alleys alongside their brown paper bags. One job was sweeping out Swanson's, an arrangement I took to be a recognition by Swanson of my imaginative use of leftovers. Then, when I was eighteen, Swanson died, leaving the operation of the bar to his widow and retarded son; things got even better. Mrs. Swanson saw in me the normal son she never had, and Goofy—we were cruel in those days—believed I was his best friend. They gave me little money, but let me play unofficial host.

A drunk I was at twenty-one—amiable, ineffectual, and still burning quietly with love for a girl I'd last seen close up in sixth grade. Missouri Hamm. Hardly any less I ached for Robert Enquist, but he had long before moved—abandoned me—for Moose Lake. Also, a fact that complicates what was probably my quite ordinary sense of low self-esteem, Robert took Missouri's love with him. For in sixth grade, in the coat closet at school, Missouri, sober-faced and lovely, had

told us she preferred Robert to me—and gave me that one kiss—a loser's sisterly peck on the cheek.

A moment that ruled my life for years.

One fall, years later, events forced me to wonder whether that Robert Enquist who had been preferred by Missouri Hamm was also the civil servant about to become the famous Reform Mayor of St. Paul. Moose Lake was out there somewhere, and if I was thirty-five, so was Robert. Without any doubt someone named Robert Enquist was running fast and hard. The night before that election, as I sat in Swanson's Bard, awash in Yoerg's Cave-aged Premium Beer, my friends Quincy and Hooper's shuffleboard game growing heated and the tv flashing, I let myself believe that it was indeed my old pal Robert who was about to become Mayor of St. Paul. So what if a hundred Robert Enquists lived in and around St. Paul?

Everyone eventually called this one Your Honor and he went around participating in civic affairs. Most people called me Shiftless, although Hooper, Buffalo and Cue, with what I took to be affection, began calling me Dregs. Two years later the Boy Wonder was re-elected, and the Loyal Order of Moose, whose dance floor I now swept each Sunday morn, made Robert Enquist their Man of the Year. Early in that second term, in his Meet-The-People program, his Mayorship visited Swanson's and other bars. Alas, he chose that very day us regulars had begun at noon to buy each other shots of Four Roses in floral celebration of Ground Hog Day.

With two aides he approached the booth where I sat with Buffalo, Hooper and Cue. He moved to me familiarly, hand out, smile stuck to his face. I grabbed his hand and pulled him down onto the bench. "By God, Robert Enquist!" I said. Hizzoner seemed glad to be seated. "My new best friends," I said. "Hooper. Buffalo. Cue." They shook hands soberly.

"Honored, your honor," said Hooper.

"It's a great day in my life," said Cue. "One of your strongest constits . . . constits . . ."

Cue retreated into his beer. Then this Robert and I conversed easily, me talking along in my alcoholic glow as if Missouri's ancient treachery had been yesterday, as if of course it had been this Robert and me there in the coat-closet with Missouri, and actually as if we were still together in some coat-closet, which in some ways I was and perhaps always would be.

A couple of times the Mayor started to rise, but I eased him back onto the bench. One of his aides kept looking at his watch. "That sweet girl, Missouri," I said, finally, Missouri's sunbeam face shining in memory like burnished gold. "Whatever happened to her?"

"Where?" the Mayor said.

"Missouri, Robert. That day in the coat closet. How could I be mad? She chose my best friend over me."

"Well listen," Robert said. "That was her first name? Jesus." He got up before I could stop him, but I grabbed his arm. "You're—?"

"Robert, it's me," I said, empty as a drum.

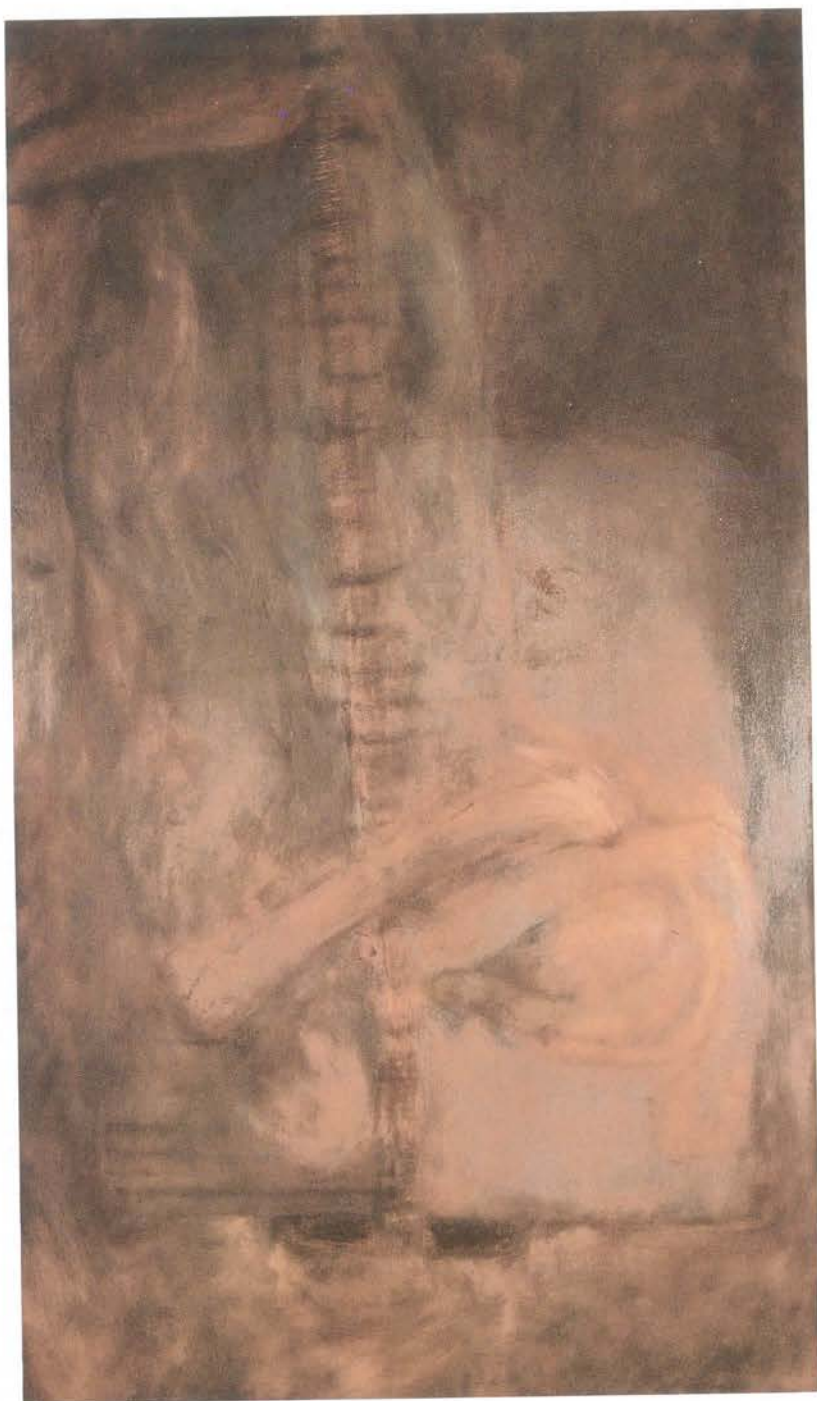
"Missouri," he said. "Missouri Hamm?" He took his handkerchief from his coat pocket and dabbed at his face. It hadn't changed all that much. "Never knew anyone named Missouri," he said, pulling his arm free.

I nodded, letting it go. "Doing a terrific job," I said loudly. "We talk about it all the time."

"Happy Ground Hog's," yelled Hooper. One of the aides turned around.

"Hey, shush," I said so everyone could hear. "Don't talk that way to Hizzoner."

Stephen Dunning



Pamela Anderson

The Two Sides of Every Bed

Oil on Canvas

Landscape with Girl

The girl that stopped at the gas station
drank the cold Coke down
as if it were an antidote.

A measured amount of America
showed in everything she did:

her smile, her thighs,

her clothes adjusted just so you could
tell the differences.

As she closed her eyes and
leaned her sweaty forehead and palm against
the Coke machine, the sun

rifled through her hair

as if it were looking for something.

Christopher Vitiello



Elizabeth Rucker

African Allegro

Charcoal/Pastel

The Trick

It took us forty minutes
to push the car up the hill.
We often set the brake
and listened to the radio.
Only in the mountains
there were no stations.
So we really only
turned the dials.

If there had been some cadence
it would have gone much faster.
The trick is to be finished
before you get started.
If only we had listened
to the signs along the roadway.
But we were busy being busy
avoiding the task at hand.

Christopher Vitiello



Patricia A. Takach

Narcissus

Photograph

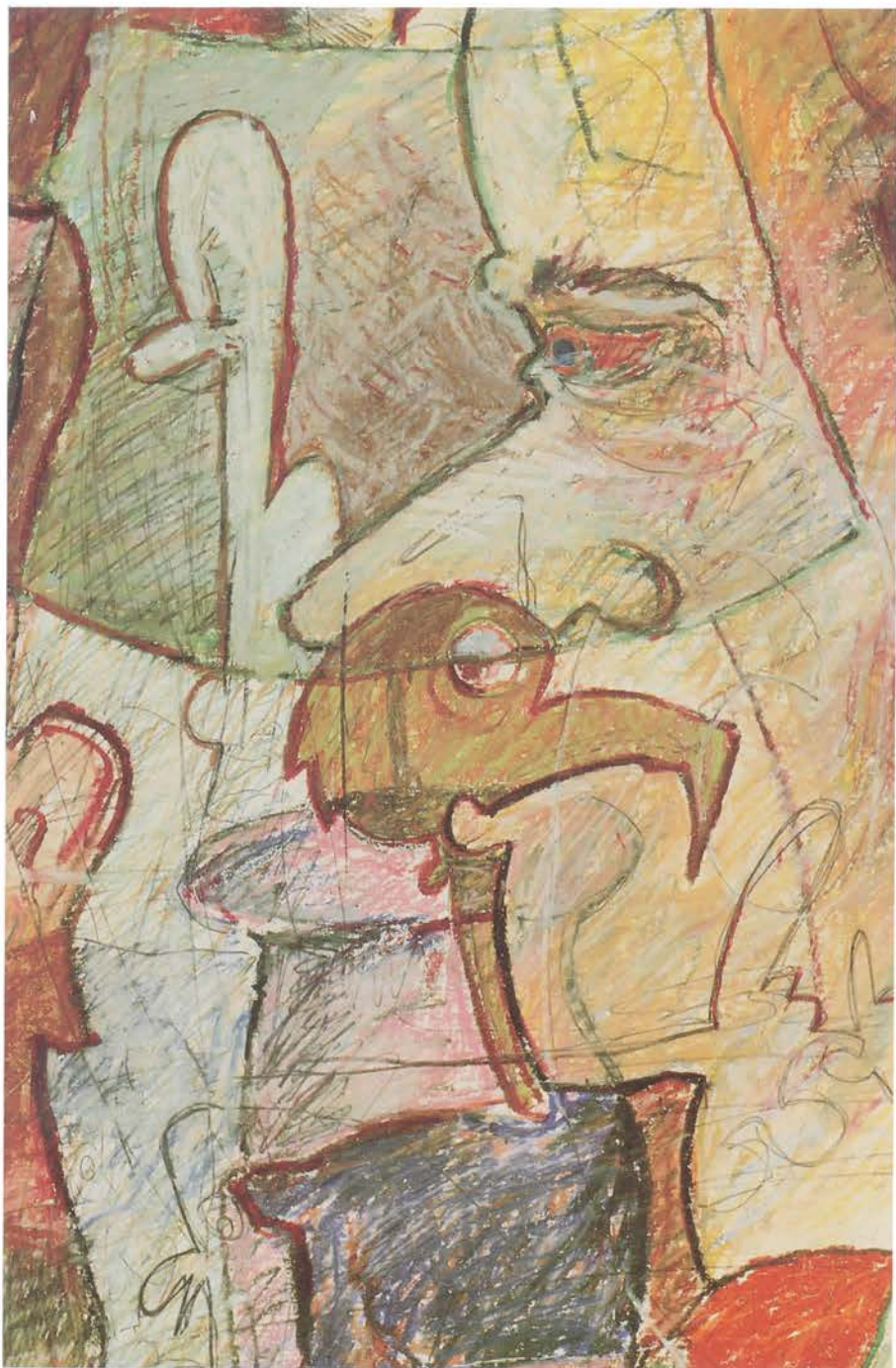
Contention

The base stones tow a rugged line.
Moss-stained and spud-round
from eruptions of weather, the upper
rows hold, steadied by chinks,
a dignified mass. Four tons of stone
contract to four feet of wall.
Start at the pine, move north,
up-grade, there, to the narrow ones,
bark-stripped and dead.

My heartbeat rises and leans
its heavy jaw against my rib;
knocks bone and builds. I shrug it off
and lift another stone. Nothing
can break my will. The sledgehammer
shatters and bites
off perfect chunks to fill
all space. No light! No light!
The light that can be seen,
that should be seen, will be seen,
and gapped with stone. I knock
space off to fill space in.

The grey night, green-tinged,
cracks against this earth.
I'll work all night, beyond
it, if it takes, beyond time.
Each thing lifts, hauls,
and rolls directly into place.
My muscles ache; my spirit, walled,
still loves. Love, with all
its waste, stacks
its labor against my work.

Edward Nobles



Timothy Wilson

Birdmouth

Oil Pastel

Bethune, South Carolina

Barbara Johnson was the first Catholic girl I had ever known. Based upon rumors circulated in Baptist Sunday schools I imagined her taking part in Latin rituals as fantastic and arcane as the Klan gatherings I had occasionally spied upon as a boy in Johnston County, North Carolina, heart pounding and eyes as big as silver dollars. It was September, 1965, and she was a freshman at Duke, back when college girls still dated soldiers. She and her roommate, a girl from Spartanburg who was seeing a squad-mate of mine named Danny Holland, drove down to Fort Bragg to watch one of the Hollywood jumps the division occasionally put on for visiting dignitaries and the folks back home. After the jump Danny and I bigtimed it for the girls, dusty fatigues redolent with the sweet smell of burnt castor oil from the C-130's, Zippo lighters and Lucky Strikes, eyes shining and cheeks flushed. At the end of the day I made a date to see Barbara the following Saturday in Durham. We did little more on that first date than sit in the large reception area of her dormitory and talk. Although the conversation was somewhat strained, our lives touching on too few common points to allow shared values or interests, we nonetheless agreed to see each other again the following Saturday, both of us wondering, I'm sure, why. Our second date began, as our first had, with small talk in the dormitory reception area, but ended with Barbara sitting on my lap under a sycamore tree not far from the dorm asking me rather urgently not to ejaculate inside her. Afterwards, we sat on the stone wall which guarded the Women's Campus and shared a cigarette as the whistle at the Irwin Cotton Mill across the street signalled the end of the second shift. I didn't find out what ejaculate meant until the next day when I borrowed the first sergeant's dictionary and looked it up.

Without giving it a great deal of thought I became a Saturday night regular at the Rebel Yell Motor Court on the Durham-Chapel Hill highway. The owner, Buster Mason, was a disabled veteran of the Second World War with a Screaming Eagle and the barely legible words *Ste. Mere Eglise* tattooed on his right forearm. As a measure of support for a strong America he gave me what he called the armed forces rate, five dollars and fifty cents a night, fifty cents off the civilian rate of six dollars. He always had a chew going and kept a small Dixie cup in his shirt pocket into which he spat when he was indoors. He courteously offered me his plug of Brown Mule once and I told him that although I did enjoy a chew every now and then I preferred Red Man or Beechnut to cut plugs. He told me that he had once heard of a fellow who discovered a human thumb embedded in a plug of tobacco. Said he sure wished he could have seen that.

By leaving Ft. Bragg as soon as possible after Saturday morning motor stables and inspection in the ranks I generally made it to the Rebel Yell by one o'clock. Buster kept a case of Miller's chilling in the back of the Coke machine and usually insisted that we drink a couple before collecting my money and giving me a key.

Barbara and I would spend the rest of the afternoon and evening cloistered in one of the tattered and ridiculously out-at-elbow cabins, door locked and shades drawn, cast-iron bed frame noisily protesting our otherwise silent couplings. She was always passive, accepting me with little outward enthusiasm yet never denying, never complaining. Once, early on, she asked me if I would like her to fellate me. Trapped without the first sergeant's dictionary for guidance I cautiously nodded assent. She must not have enjoyed it too much for she never asked again.

As much as anything I remember the wonderful silence, the hours spent laying next to each other as the light faded inexorably away, leaving only the filtered neon glow of the VACANCY sign to pierce the gloom, a low-rent aurora borealis dancing over the bed. Back at her dorm our goodbyes were mostly limited to a confirmation of the desire to meet once again the following weekend. Sunday mornings I'd get up early and steal away to Fayetteville, unsure of whether or not this was how things were supposed to be. By Monday reveille Saturday was no more than a vaguely titillating memory, as faded and colorless as Buster's tattoo.

I'm pregnant. I was not so much surprised as resigned, having grown up knowing that marriages generally got started in roadside tourist courts or the back seats of '49 Fords. *I asked you not to ejaculate inside me.* Ignoring what I assumed was an essentially rhetorical accusation I stated the obvious: *I guess we'll have to get married.* Like shadow boxers dancing in a darkened ring we began to spar, feinting and jabbing, bobbing and weaving, moving in separate spheres, each unaware of the other's words. *A girl at the dorm knows an intern at Duke who'll take care of it.* I felt a heavy, although not yet uncomfortable, sense of adult-ness, of responsibility. *I'll take two weeks leave and we can drive up to Michigan so I can meet your folks. We could even get married up there if you like.* Barbara sighed. *The only problem is money. He wants five hundred dollars to do it.* I looked at Barbara. *Or we could get married at Bragg. That way it wouldn't cost us hardly anything.* Barbara sat on the bed and hugged her knees to her chest. *Can you get five hundred dollars?* I shook my head, puzzled. *Five hundred dollars? What in the world for?*

Now let me get this straight. Danny Holland was speaking. *This girl wants you to come up with five hundred dollars to take care of her problem?* Four or five of the guys were gathered around my bunk in the squad bay, listening as I explained why I needed five hundred dollars. They laughed. Danny spoke again. *Now ain't this a bitch. It may not even be your kid. Have you thought of that? Man, you need to tell her to fuck off, but quick.* Danny lit a cigarette and glanced around at his audience. *My motto has always been 'drop your load and hit the road.'* More laughter. *Hey, come on man, I've got to do something. I just can't walk away.* Danny grabbed his crotch. *What you better do is get down to the dispensary for a short arm inspection to make sure she hasn't given you a dose of the clap.* As everyone drifted away, cheered by the realization that for once someone's problems seemed worse than their own, I sat on my footlocker and despondently began spit-shining my jump boots, depressed by the knowledge that I had no more chance of raising five hundred dollars than the man on the moon. Unseen, someone stepped up behind me. *Have you got a hundred dollars?* Startled, I turned around.

Bill Robey was a weasel-faced little bastard from Bethune, South Carolina. He was short, not more than five foot six or seven, with scarred and lumpy hands and small feet. His nose lay at an unseemly angle against his face, the cartilage, save for a single defiant protuberance midway down its length, had long since

been defeated by on too many insults to its integrity. He had bad teeth and a mean disposition that he wore like a pinkie ring, a walking challenge to anyone, drunk or sober, who might be inclined to fuck with him. Few were. He sat down next to me on the footlocker. *Have I got a hundred dollars?* I asked, repeating his question, not immediately connecting it with the group discussion that had just taken place. *Didn't you just say you needed five hundred dollars to fix your girl's problem?* I nodded affirmatively, repelled by the fetid smell of decay on his breath. *I can get the job done for a hundred dollars.* What the fuck, over. I hadn't exchanged more than fifteen words with Robey in the past six months and here he was offering salvation for only a hundred dollars. *How?* I wanted to know. *First,* he responded, *do you have a hundred dollars?* I nodded again. His lips spread into a thin smile which the rest of his face refused to acknowledge. Leaning in closer he began to speak, his dark, hooded eyes holding me transfixed, his words at once frightening and exciting.

Barbara set everything up. I was to pick her up at the dorm on Saturday morning and drive her to the Hotel Durham, a three-story monument to changing times and hard luck across the street from the Greyhound bus station. We were to go to room 12 on the second floor, pay the money, and get the job done. Afterwards I would take Barbara back to the dorm and presumably that would be that. I didn't need Robey to tell me not to say anything about the change in plans to Barbara, figuring, number one, she already had enough to worry about, and, I kept reminding myself, number two, it was my goddamn money. As I had hoped, her preoccupation was such that she didn't notice Robey sitting in the back seat until we were actually in the car and pulling out of the parking lot next to the dorm. Explaining that he was the friend who had helped me with the money I drove off immediately, hoping to forestall any protracted questioning. Robey said nothing beyond a polite *How do?* when I introduced him. Barbara began weeping quietly as we drove across town, holding her hands in front of her face. I felt sick to my stomach, wanting to comfort her but unable to do more than concentrate on the road, hands glued to the wheel. In the back seat, Robey sat calm and serene, smoking a cigarette as he gazed out the window.

The desk clerk knew what we were there for. He didn't say anything but he knew, his leering eyes an accusation broader than words. *What are you looking at dickface?* Robey paused at the counter just long enough to intimidate the clerk, his dominance complete when the young man, refusing to meet Robey's eyes, quickly mumbled a non-specific apologetic negative. I gripped Barbara's arm tightly as we climbed the stairs to the second floor, assaulted by an odor that made it clear that the hotel's threadbare carpeting had long since lost the battle between bodily waste and industrial-strength disinfectant. Robey was smiling, humming a tuneless song, his brief encounter with the desk clerk having pleased him to no end. We stopped at number 12 and knocked quietly on the door. *Who is it?* Robey nodded at Barbara and she haltingly identified herself. Neither Robey nor I made a sound. The door opened just enough for us to see an eye, part of a nose, and half a mouth. In less than a heartbeat Robey was in the room, slamming its sole occupant against the wall opposite the door. I quickly followed, dragging Barbara, and closed the door behind us. *Are you the doc?* Robey's voice was different, had changed, become thicker and lower, and carried a chilling undertone of menace. A black pebbled-leather physician's bag, faded symbol of the avuncular country

doctor, left no doubt that we were in the right room. Having not immediately received an answer to his question Robey abruptly slapped the doctor across the face openhanded and very hard. A scant second later, with still no response, Robey struck again, the impact of the blow causing spittle to fly from the doctor's mouth as his head jerked to the side. Dread filled the tiny room. The doctor, slumped against the wall, watched Robey as a small mammal might watch a cobra approach, the paralysis of hopelessness flowing outward from its central nervous system. A knife blossomed in Robey's right hand, and he moved, reptile-like, over to the reclining figure of the doctor. Pressing the knife against the doctor's throat Robey bent down and put his lips next to the doctor's left ear. He spoke in a sibilant whisper that neither Barbara nor I could make out. As he spoke Robey drew the doctor's terrified eyes into his own, wherein I have no doubt he saw Death loitering on a darkened street corner, cigarette in hand, beckoning. Barbara was clutching her rosary beads and hyperventilating, sucking in great mouthfuls of air, unable to comprehend what was happening. I quickly moved between her and the violence taking place against the back wall, trying in vain to assure her that all was well. Fortunately, all *was* going well. Out of the corner of my eye I saw Robey slowly take the knife from the doctor's throat and help him roughly to his feet. For an instant the four of us stood silently looking at each other, strangers caught up in someone else's nightmare. Finally, an impatient Bill Robey snapped his fingers loudly to get the doctor's attention and then handed him his bag, saying brusquely that it was time to get started. As the doctor organized the remorseless instruments of his trade, lining them up on a towel spread on top of the chest-of-drawers, he indicated, more with gestures than with words, that he wanted Barbara to disrobe and lie down on the bed. Although he gave her a shot of something to help with the discomfort, it did little to ease the humiliation. When Barbara began to undress I looked over at Robey and motioned with my thumb towards the door. He shrugged and said he would just wait outside, looking pointedly at the doctor as he spoke. The procedure itself was short and painful. I sat on the bed and held her hand, trying not to look and yet morbidly fascinated, unable to reconcile the wonderfully indolent afternoons at the Rebel Yell Motor Court with such unpleasantness. As Barbara moaned I giggled nervously, thinking *here's another fine mess you've gotten me into!* The doctor looked up from between her thighs, amazed, I suppose, that I was laughing. Rather than meet his startled gaze I looked up at the water-stained ceiling, biting my lip to keep from smiling. It was like someone slamming their bare toe into a footlocker in the squad bay. You know it must hurt like a sonofabitch but you can't help laughing. Fortunately, the operation ended shortly thereafter and I helped Barbara get dressed as the doctor explained what was going to happen in the next twelve hours. I didn't sound like the most pleasant thing in the world.

Raleigh, Smithfield, Goldsboro, Kinston and New Bern. The loudspeakers at the bus station across the street were announcing departures as I got Barbara settled into the front seat of the Plymouth. Watching her slowly swing her legs in I felt a sympathetic twinge in my scrotum and barely resisted a sudden urge to rub my balls. *Goddamn*, I thought, *what's keeping Robey?* He had sent us on to the car saying that he wanted to take care of business (he pronounced it *bidness*) with the doctor. Leaving Barbara in the car I walked back up the stairs and down the hall, wondering just how many business transactions as such we were concluding had been undertaken in the sanitary confines of the Hotel Durham. Robey was coming

out of the room just as I got there. *I hate a smart motherfucker, I swear I do* he was saying to no one in particular. Through the open door I could see the doctor laying on the floor, his face battered and bleeding. *Jesus Christ, Bill, you didn't hurt him too bad did you?* Robey laughed and handed me two twenty dollar bills. *Fuck him. Here. That's all he had on him. Our deal was for the hundred bucks you already paid me so you get to keep the extra.* He looked back into the room and suddenly spat on the groaning, still supine, doctor. *I hate a smart cocksucker* he repeated truculently, hitching up his pants. I tucked the two twenties into my shirt pocket. Back at the dorm I told Barbara I'd phone her the next day to make sure everything was ok. After dropping her off Robey and I bought a six-pack of beer and drove back to Fayetteville.

I never did phone Barbara. Every time I started to call I froze up, knowing that there were no right words to say, no easy way to make her feel better. It would have been like getting a postcard from the beach. *Having a great time, wish you were here.* Yeah, right. Fuck you. Years later, after I was out of the army and working for a welding supply company in Charlotte, I passed through Bethune on a sales trip to Camden, South Carolina. Stopping for lunch, I asked the waitress if she knew an old army buddy of mine from thereabouts, a fellow named Bill Robey. *Robey, Robey*, she mused, *they used to be some folks name of Robey lived just outside town, But I believe they either up and died or moved away. Look here, sugar, you want that barbecue sliced or minced?*

John A. Miller



Drew Dernavich

Reclining Nude

Pencil

Little Haiti

In my hometown Haiti Street runs
downslope the courthouse; I seldom go
that way, preferring the flatness of Main.
Haiti is saved for blue evenings when I
want to go outside my lonely biography.
The luminary clock glowers at six
when I imagine girls stop clattering dishes to
tap out the chimes, go back to setting clabber
and snapbeans on the counter. Out front the
house terrace, bickering children invent play,
something they now call, "Madam, I'm Adam."
Hydrangea blooms alongside the railing where the
seamstress scolds the girls, "Come, comb my hair to
soothe my nerves." They climb the grade to the
library lending them the marvelous story of how
cool and correct Toussaint L'Ouverture
led his fighting tigers to drive the demon-
French away from the islands. Today Haitian girls
stroll the streets singing his name: Toussaint,
Toussaint, Toussaint L'Ouverture. Their
chorus brings his ghosts to haunt my
hometown, shaking the treetops.

Ed C. Lynskey



Eric Chang

Open Balance

Pencil

Contributors

Pamela Anderson graduated from the College in 1988. She is currently attending Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia.

Paul Bonelli graduated from the College in 1989. He is currently enrolled in the MFA program at Montclair State College.

Bill Brubaker's short fiction has been published in *Cimmaron Review*, *Southwest Review*, and *Southern Humanities Review*, among others. "Tutti Frutti" is the "Sunday" chapter of a novel-in-progress entitled *Tutti Frutti*.

Eric Chang is a sophomore at the College. He plans to study Architecture.

Amy Clampitt's third collection of poems, *Westward*, will come from Knopf this Spring. Her poems frequently appear in *The New Yorker*, and elsewhere. She is currently at work on a play about the Wordsworths. Her poems have appeared in previous issues of the *Review*.

Lewis Cohen is a professor of sculpture and drawing at the College.

Drew Dernavich is a senior Fine Arts major at the College.

Christine Dixon is a senior at the College with a concentration in Physical Education.

Stephen Dunning currently resides in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Dion Farquhar's poetry and fiction has been published in *Hawaii Review*, *Asylum*, and *Boundary 2*, among others. She is a contributing editor for *Central Park* and is currently working on material for a collection of short stories.

John Gery is associate professor of English and coordinator of Creative Writing at the University of New Orleans. His books include *Charlemagne*, *A Song of Gestures* and *The Burning of New Orleans*. *Three Poems* came from Lestat Press in 1989.

Dana Gioia is a businessman in New York. His poetry, essays, and translations frequently appear in *The New Yorker*, *Poetry*, and *The Hudson Review*. His most recent book is a translation of the love poetry of the Italian Nobel Laureate, Eugenio Montale. His work has appeared in previous issues of the *Review*.

Sarah Gorham's poems have been published in *The Nation*, *Antaeus*, *Ploughshares*, and *Crosscurrents*, among others. She is the recipient of many awards, including fellowships from the Connecticut Commission on the Arts and the Delaware State Council on the Arts. Galileo Press published her collection *Don't Go Back To Sleep* in November of last year.

Mark Allen Henderson began painting in junior high school and resumed work in 1985, when he graduated cum laude from Virginia Commonwealth University.

He has since worked as a mental health worker and Neuropsychological Remediation Specialist. In 1989 he opened the Mark Allen Gallery in Williamsburg.

Martin Johnson says of his work: "To know the art is to read between the lines. Find the gray matter—including the black and the white—as the points of time we suspend from, and the language that grounds us."

Sam Kashner has poems forthcoming in *Mudfish* and *The Harvard Magazine*. His first collection, *Driving at Night*, was published by Hanging Loose Press in 1976. He worked as an editorial assistant to Allen Ginsberg for a number of years, before moving to Virginia, where he currently resides with his wife, Nancy Schoenberger.

Richard Kostelanetz has published over a dozen works of experimental fiction. *The Old Fictions and The New* is his collection of critical essays on fiction. *The New Poetries and Some Old* collects his recent essays on poetry. His latest book, *On Innovative Music(ian)s*, came from Limelight Press. He has recently been producing literature on videotape, audiotape and in holograms. He lives in New York City, where he was born in 1940.

David Lasky will graduate in May with a concentration in Fine Arts.

Ed C. Lynskey's poems have appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* and the *American Poetry Review*. *Tree Surgeon's Gift*, a collection of his work, was published by Crop Dust Press. His work has appeared previously in the *Review*.

Valerio Magrelli was born in 1957 in Rome. Trained in philosophy, Magrelli has been active as a translator and critic. His two books of poetry have each won major awards. He is widely regarded as Italy's premier young poet.

Wendell Mayo, Jr. is a Ph.D. candidate at Ohio University where he is completing a collection of short fiction. He work has appeared in *The Dickinson Review*, *The Onionhead Literary Quarterly*.

Micahel McCarthy hails from Ithaca, New York. He has studied in Paris and is interested in experimental photography.

John Miller received his law degree from the University of California. *Bethune, SC* is his first published work.

Robert Morgan's latest collection, *Sigodlin*, came from Wesleyan University Press. His book of short stories, *The Blue Valley*, was published by Peachtree Publishers. A professor of English at Cornell, Morgan was the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship last year. *Green River*, his selected poems, is forthcoming.

Edward Nobles's poems have appeared in *Boulevard*, *Crazyhorse*, *The New Orleans Review*, *American Poetry Review*, and elsewhere. His stonework has been seen on the PBS series *This Old House*.

Paul Robertson is a senior at the College with a concentration in Fine Arts.

Elizabeth Rucker will graduate from the College in May with a concentration in English and a minor in Studio Art.

Nancy Schoenberger's collection of poems, *Girl on a White Porch*, won the 1987 Devins Award from the University of Missouri Press. She has poems appearing in *The River Styx* and *Boulevard*, and has just completed a second volume of poems, *The Wood Corpse*. She is currently Writer-in-Residence at the College.

Elizabeth Spires lives in Baltimore and teaches at Goucher College and in the Writing Seminars at Johns Hopkins. Her third collection, *Annonciade*, came from Viking last year. She has poems forthcoming in *The Kenyon Review*, *The New Criterion*, and *Best American Poems 1990*.

Patricia A. Takach is an Anthropology major at the College.

Michael Tan is from Richmond, Virginia. He is a senior at the College and a co-founder of *Banjo Literature*.

Lara Taubman is a senior at Bennington College, where she began painting as a freshman.

Christopher Vitiello is a junior at the College and has served as poetry co-editor of the *Review* for the past two years.

Timothy Wilson is an artist from Richmond, Virginia.

Nancy Witt is a Virginia artist with more than twenty-five one-woman shows to her credit.

A black and white illustration of a young girl with dark hair, looking upwards with a curious expression. She is wearing a light-colored, textured garment that looks like a blanket or a heavy sweater. The background is dark and textured, with some light-colored shapes that could be leaves or fabric. The overall style is expressive and somewhat abstract, with visible brushstrokes and shading.

VOLUME XXVIII

Poetry

Amy Clampitt, John Gery, Sarah Corham, Sam Kashner, Ed C. Lynskey, Valerio Magrelli (*translated by Dana Gioia*), Robert Morgan, Edward Nobles, Nancy Schoenberger, Elizabeth Spires, Christopher Vitiello

Prose

Bill Brubaker, Stephen Dunning, Dion Farquhar, Richard Kostelanetz, Wendell Mayo, Jr., John A. Miller

Visual Arts

Pamela Anderson, Paul Bonelli, Eric Chang, Lewis Cohen, Drew Dernavich, Christine Dixon, Mark Allen Henderson, David Lasky, Michael McCarthy, Paul Robertson, Elizabeth Rucker, Patricia A. Takach, Michael Tan, Lara Taubman, Timothy Wilson, Nancy Witt

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MENTAL FLOSS