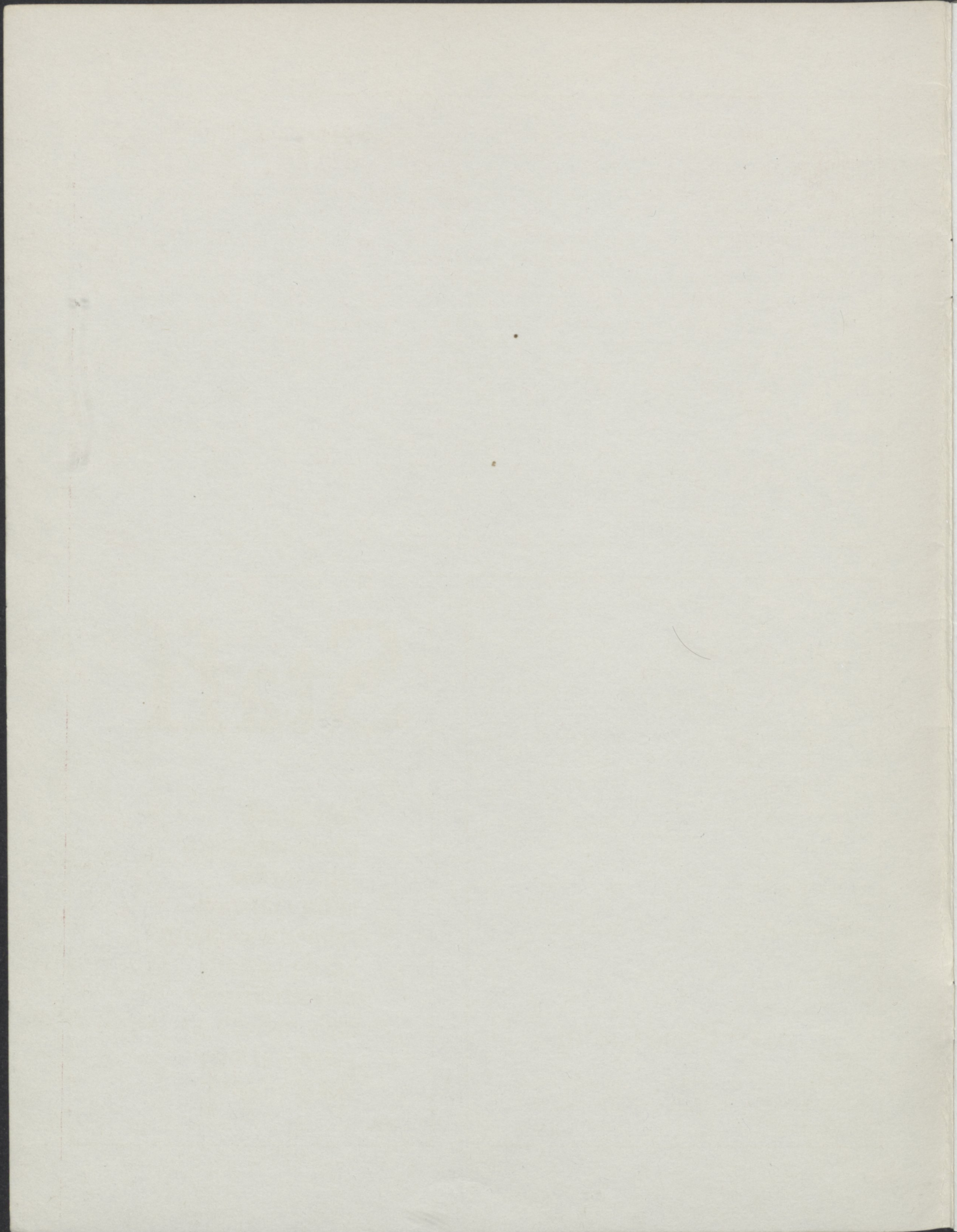


rebel

SUPPLEMENT



This magazine is the first **Rebel** supplement to be composed of works done by high school students. The poetry and prose included here were chosen by the staff as the best material of the Albemarle Area Arts Council Writing Contest for high school seniors and the Washington High School Fine Arts Festival. The staff is composed of students who participated in these two events.

The Supplement was made possible by a literary grant to the **Rebel** from the North Carolina Arts Council. It was conceived to give young writers a chance for publication of their art and to inspire them to continue their creative efforts.

We emphasize that the magazine was done entirely by these students—from selection, editing, and proofreading to final decisions on layout. The **Rebel** staff was present only to give advice based on experience. We feel that they have done a superb job.

We give our deepest appreciation to the North Carolina Arts Council, without whom this magazine wouldn't exist.

Rod Ketner
Editor, the **Rebel**
1969-70

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Art & Photo Credits

reflection . . .	4,5 . . .	annette marsh
untitled . . .	11,12 . . .	jack owens
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Staff

beth butler

paula weatherly

jack owens

laura inabinett

rebecca woolard

karen colvard

billy armistead

sally mcorrie

steve baxley

bekki wilson

IN THE JUNGLE...

In the jungle
crawls a man,
sniffing

scratching

growling,

tracking the spoor of his elusive prey;
his belly is empty,
and he must eat. . .

Stiffing, he turns a hairy ear
toward the thunder of the jungle drums,
booming their omens of death
to the rhythm of his pounding heart.

Crouching low on his hams,
he sniffs the air,

and resumes his hunt,
never understanding

that the spoor he follows
is his own,

and that there are no drums in the jungle,
only men,
sniffing

scratching

growling. . .

My life

A maze of paths

And i the rat that runs

the course in endless search of cheese

That's stale.



KALEIDOSCOPE

Intimations of formlessness, confusion,
Such a state as
Before creation of the cosmos,
Before conception of the creator.

Nebulous nights known only to
Parents of God.

Whirling lights, twirling bright
Clouds through the haze—
Intimations of chaos.



**I SUBMERGED AND SITTING BY THE
DAYSIDE SEE**

A waterfall of flame
A roaring blaze of spray
The sun through setting waves

WHEN MY FATHER WAS DYING WE ALL PRAYED, BUT HE DIED ANYWAY.

The rescue squad gave him oxygen for an hour, but he had a heart attack while he was sitting on the toilet. They dragged him into my room, and he died on my carpet. We all cried. Then people came, bringing food and touching my clothes and cleaning up my room after he was carried away.

I was eleven and the lady next door hugged me to her bosoms and said, "You poor boy. You are so young. My father died when I was seven." I cried.

We had been to church that morning. It was Sunday and I was dressed up. I went to the plum orchard with my neighbor Jeff, and we sat on the edge of a hole we dug in summer. It was October, and there were no plum flowers or plums, but it wasn't cold. The limbs of a plum tree scratched my face.

"When my father had his attack," Jeff said, but I wasn't listening. It was too hot to be outside in a tie. I went inside to change. My room was full of people, mostly old ladies with blue

hair, who were moving my things around and kissing my mother. My piano teacher brought something with meat and nuts inside, and I ate lunch.

There was a pan of half-cooked custard on the stove. My mother had been cooking it for ice cream, and outside somewhere a bag of ice was melting and running to the bottom of the driveway. The funeral director was sitting on the red living room sofa with my mother, writing and obituary. Someone had put a white spray of flowers on the door. Ladies walked past me with handkerchiefs and kissed me. Many cars had gathered in front of the house.

I did not know where my sister was. She was fifteen. I saw my father's cousin, his only local relative, standing in the hall, and she was crying. She was fat and blonde and usually smiled, but now her face was not so pink as usual. I saw the dog walking between people's legs, and I was afraid to touch her because she was blind and snapped at everyone but my father. Her eyes were covered with blue cataracts.

My sister was in the kitchen pouring coffee grounds into a big pot that was not ours. The light was out, making the room dark. She was not crying. I was crying and I was trembling. Someone set a podium in the hall with a book on it, and people signed it. I went into my room and lay on my bed. On my desk was the Superman comic book I had been reading when my sister said, "Mama, come here, Daddy's sick," and it had happened. Poor Lady, the dog. What had happened to the custard, I wondered, but to my ears came the voices that said nothing from many people all over the house. I wondered where they had come from; it had not been that long. In her room my mother was on the phone. It took a long time. My hands were shaking. "Martha," she said, "I want you to drop everything and come here." I could not hear much that she said as I lay in my room, because she was far away and people were roaming past and looking in. I hated for them to see me. At the foot of the bed on the floor was the place where my father had died, but it was not as scary as it should have been maybe. I saw my sister passing through the hall. The bathroom with the deadly toilet linked my room with my parents' room.

I saw my sister go in to my mother. She sat on the bed and listened as I watched the ceiling, wondering how it would be to live life upside down. I would enjoy stepping over door frames and light fixtures. My sister was crying. The ceiling was blank, and I wanted to shut the windows and doors. The dog jumped on my bed and I touched her fur and she growled.

"I was eleven and the lady next door hugged me to her bosoms ..."

A neighbor came into the room and touched my hand. She said, "Cheer up." I acted as if I wasn't unhappy, but I was. Through the door I saw my mother and sister crying. I saw the maple trees outside blowing in the sunlight. I touched the dog again, but she jumped off the bed. The neighbor went to put her out.

The same things kept happening until nightfall, with people touching me, until I was hungry again and went into the kitchen. Food was on all the counters, and I ate casseroles from under tinfoil. The same things happened again. I did not see much of my mother or sister, and I went to bed.

"Get up," my mother said. All around her stood her relatives from Illinois, a thousand miles away. They moved me to the couch.

It was morning when I woke up again, and I saw aunts and uncles asleep in cots all over the den. Some I had not seen in a year or more. The sofa was crampy. I got up. I walked barefoot on the cold linoleum floor, and I looked around the kitchen. It was dark. The custard pot was no longer on the stove. I peeked into the refrigerator, and things nearly fell out because it was stuffed with other people's china. I could see the double boiler with the custard in the corner. Mama came into the kitchen.

"Did you sleep all right?" I asked.

"I never closed my eyes," she said.

"What are you going to do today?" I asked.

"We're going to see about the funeral."

"Can I help?"

**"The same things kept happening until nightfall,
with people touching me..."**

"I want you to."

"When is the funeral?"

"Tomorrow."

"Mama, what's going to happen?"

She began to cry and I began to cry too. The kitchen was dark, and I could not see her face, but in the next room the rising, falling chests of many bodies were in the sunlight. In my bed were my grandmother and Aunt Martha, both on Daddy's side, and they seemed tiny and sad, like me. I heard the perk of coffee. Soon my mother drank some, but mostly she sat with her head in her hands. The relatives said hello and kissed me. My mother's father made a joke, but it was not cheerful. Aunt Martha cooked breakfast. The eggs did not taste like my mother's. They had all come past midnight, they said.

Aunt Hester said, "You don't remember when we got you up last night, do you?"

I said I didn't, but I did, and I didn't like her. She was ugly. They all sat around and made jokes, and sometimes my mother and sister laughed, but I never did because our relatives from Illinois told jokes about things that weren't funny, mostly bathrooms.

All of us except my sister went to the coffin store on the second floor of the funeral home. Mr. Dean, the mortician, showed us all the coffins. Everyone was smiling. The coffins had linings of something like whipped cream, and in the corner of the shop there were little ones like tool boxes.

"What are these?" I asked my mother.

"These are for babies that die," she said.

She was already dressing in black. Her face was white. All of the coffins were tacky, and they cost six hundred dollars or so. Most of them seemed to be made of fiberglass. I liked one made of wood.

"No," my mother said, "we want one to match Daddy's suit."

I thought of Daddy taking off his suit. He had bought it in Richmond the Christmas before, and he had gone into my bathroom to read a mystery novel. Now he was going to wear it again. He was somewhere in this building. I would never be able to touch him, because I had seen death before when my mother's stepmother died and I touched her face and it felt no different, only I knew she was dead, and I felt pale and sick inside.

I saw him that afternoon, stuck in the jaw of the whipped-cream coffin. The room looked like a motel. All the furniture was sharp and pretty, and the walls were orange. Daddy was dead, and I did not touch him. Neither did anyone else. We sat on a couch and my mother talked to Mr. Dean. He had once been our neighbor. Daddy looked very fine. He was fifty-seven years old and not so fat when half of the coffin lid was closed. I wondered if there were really shillings under his eyes.

At home people were everywhere. I went outside to get the paper. His picture was on the front page and it said, "Local Physician Dies." His picture there was the one on the piano. He looked too young. He was made of little dots. Mama cut out the story and put it in her funeral book on the podium, with Scotch tape.

I was missing school. My teacher came to see us. The funeral was the next day, and I dressed again in my Sunday suit. I was tired of sleeping on the couch, but even my mother shared a bed. The funeral home had a big auditorium and a little one that shared the same stage. The family sat in the little one. Through the side I heard many people coming in. Everyone was talking in loud whispers. I could not see them, but I knew I had seen them all before carrying food in Corning Ware. My sister held my mother's hand. I was next to my sister. The auditorium quieted. I could not see the coffin, but I knew

it was there. I remembered the florist talking about the flowers to my mother, but I couldn't see them. I knew they were like a blanket, what color I didn't know.

The preacher was standing up in front of us, and he began to talk. The words must have come from the Bible because they were full of "thee" and "hath," and he yelled them. Then he began to speak of my father. Did the preacher know he drank? I wondered if my father had gone to heaven, not that he drank all that much. The room was dark. All around me my relatives were crying, but neither my mother nor my sister nor myself cried, until he said a poem about crossing the bar. My mother's head fell on my sister's shoulder and she cried. I cried and so did my

"Everyone was smiling."

sister. A sister touched my mother's back from behind. She spoke words that were like soft pellets, but the poem went on. My mother's glasses were in her lap, and her eyes were dull and wet.

It ended at last, and I saw something pink as someone carried the coffin away. There was no funeral parade, because my father was to be buried far away in Prince Edward County, Virginia, where his mother lived. My mother, my sister, and I rode in a car with my mother's brother and his wife. I took off my tie. I sat by the window. The town passed us, and then the country began to pass us. I looked at a speck on the window and moved around to make it hop over the telephone poles that passed us. The graveyard was two hundred miles away. I hopped the speck over telephone poles for a long time. Then the talking began. I saw barns and dinky farms under pecan trees with dusty black children in front. The sun was shining. Far away in front of us there was shiny water on the road. It shrank away from us, and I wondered where it came from. I listened to the talking. They were talking about Illinois, I felt as if I had been here before. The same people had been in a

funeral car when my mother's stepmother shot herself.

About half-way we stopped at a service station and bought Coca-Colas. My aunt and uncle talked about their neighbors in Chicago. My mother laughed at their stories even with dried tears in the corners of her eyes. My sister and I did not speak. We did not care about Illinois. I held my coke too long and it got warm. We started driving again. We were in the hills now, and we passed a trio of buzzards in a circle above the road. It made me think of a piece of black tape. I saw the sign of Madam Olga, palmist, and some restaurants I had passed many times before. At last we were in Prince Edward County, Virginia. I had been in the graveyard many times to see the headstone of my grandfather. Many people were there around a tent with red and white and yellow flowers, all the women in coarse-meshed veils. The car rolled in on the crunchy gravel and stopped.

My father's brother had died years before, and his widow came to the window crying. My mother had seemed all right, but she started to cry again. They both held onto the windowsill. My aunt had her handkerchief out. I did not feel like crying. We did not get out. I looked at the tent with "Dean Funeral Home" printed across it, and I saw a water faucet sticking out of

"...stuck in the jaw of the whipped-cream coffin."

the ground. I wondered what needed to be washed. The gravestones everywhere were soft and old and dark. There were no trees in our part of the cemetery. I saw my mother crying again and looking out the window at people. I began to cry too and I looked at the coffin and the stones and the ground.

We spent the night at my grandmother's, and we were not so sad the next morning. I ate Kellogg's Sugar Frosted Flakes and grapefruit for breakfast. My father's aunt had not come to the funeral. She was ninety and lived in the

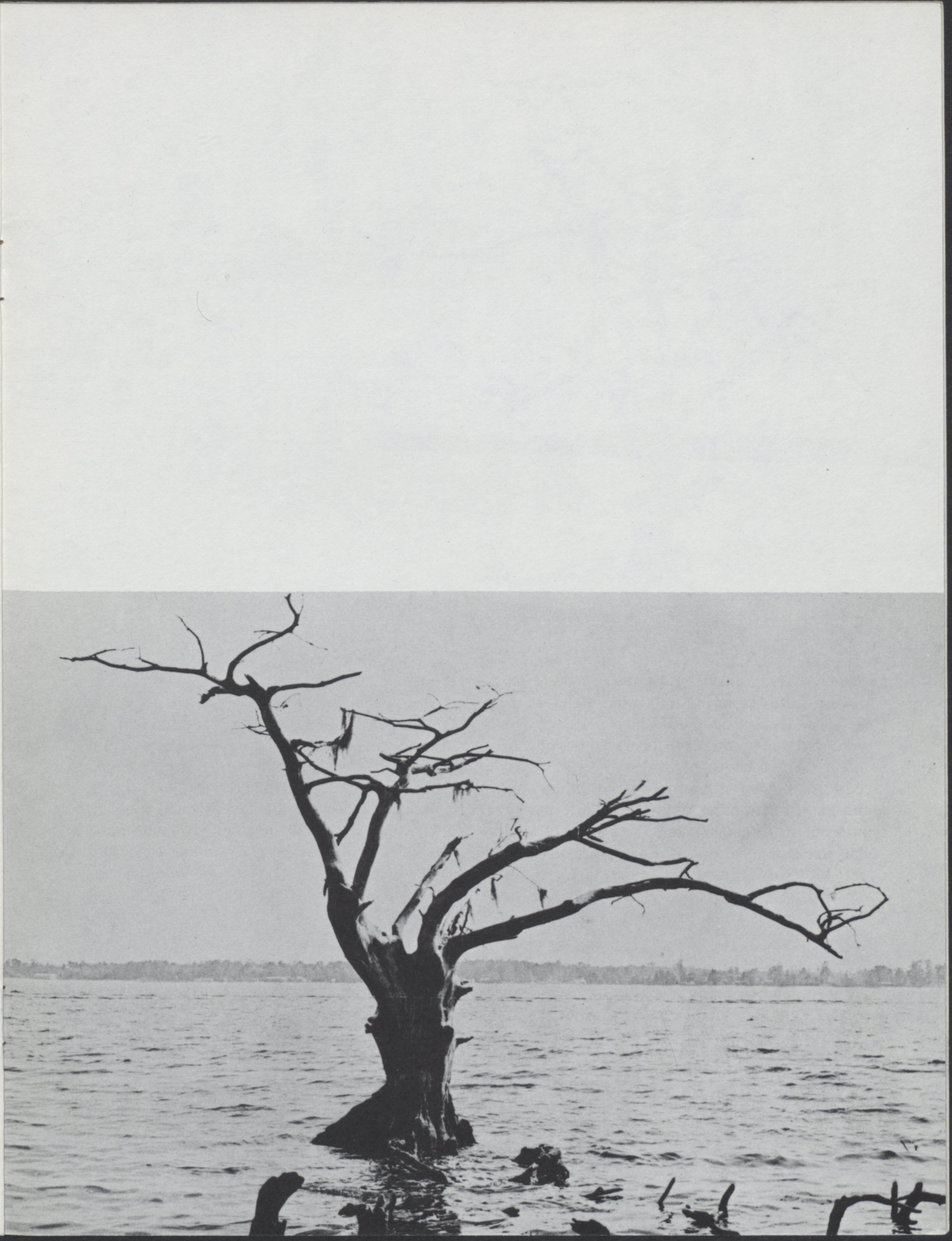
country. We all got in cars and went to see her. Her farm was beautiful and hilly, and some of the trees had turned red. She acted old. Her niece, our cousin, took us down into the pasture where there used to be horses. It was full of cedar trees. My sister said we ought to take one and plant it at home. We tried to pull one up, but even the little ones stayed fast in the ground. The weeds that scratched against our legs were wet. My sister went to the stable for a shovel. We dug up a tiny seedling. At the house we wrapped up its roots in newspaper and put it

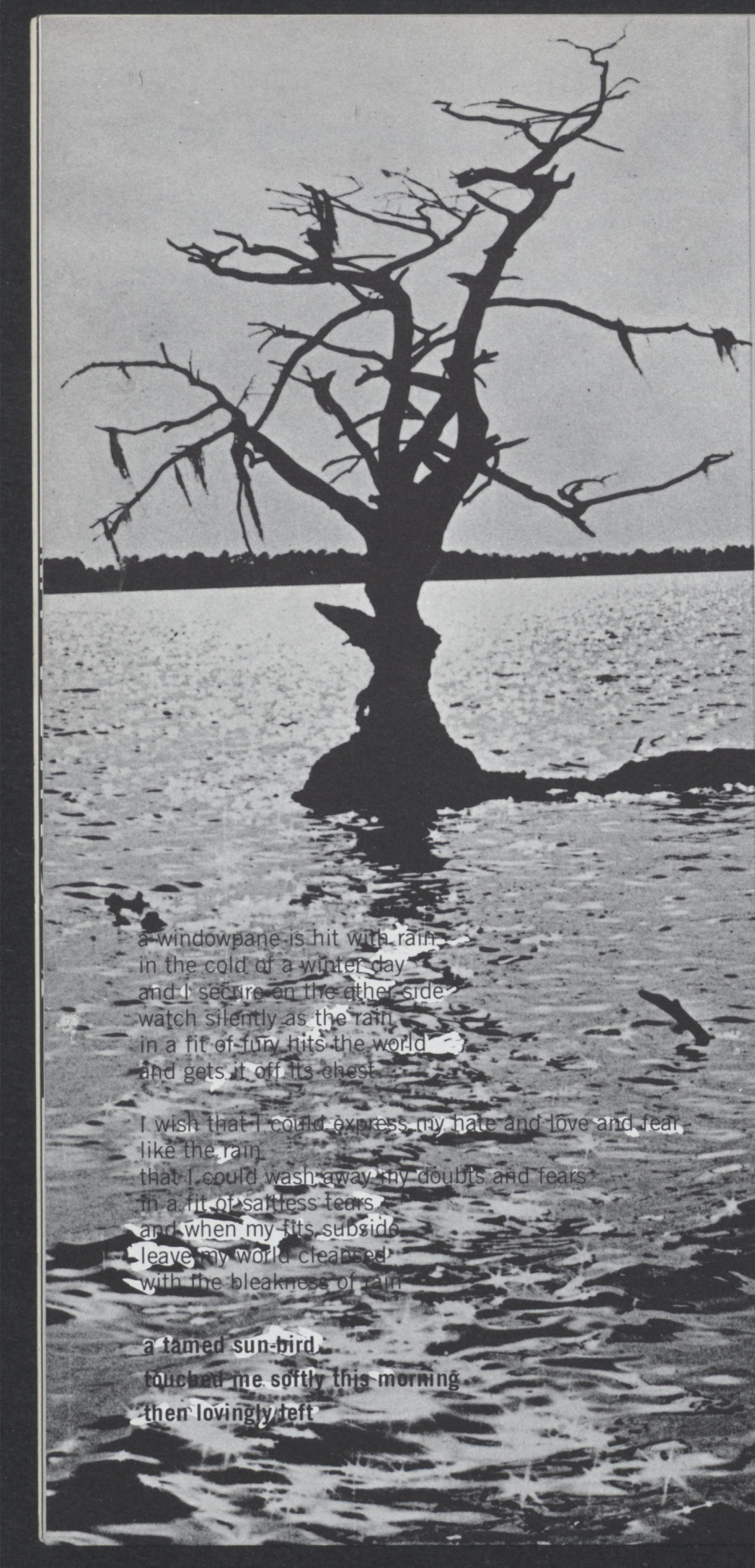
in the trunk of the car.

We went to the cemetery again. The dirt on the grave was in a low mound, and the tent and the flowers were still there. It made me think of a sad circus. My mother cried for the last time.

When we were home again my sister, my uncle, and I planted the tree. My uncle put a tin can in the hole. My mother said it wouldn't grow, but it did. The next Christmas we put colored lights on it. Later it was so tall we had to chop it down.

A SAD CIRCUS by billy armistead





a windowpane is hit with rain
in the cold of a winter day
and I secure on the other side
watch silently as the rain
in a fit of fury hits the world
and gets it off its chest

I wish that I could express my hate and love and fear
like the rain
that I could wash away my doubts and fears
in a fit of saltless tears
and when my fits subside
leave my world cleansed
with the bleakness of rain

a tamed sun-bird
touched me softly this morning
then lovingly left

In Silent Vigilance

Last night, the moon was shining,
And the earth was bright;
But the cold abyss of darkness
Covers the earth tonight.
The weary mind of the world,
Squandered by the deep
And overwhelming darkness,
Now begins to weep;
As it watches all its children
Dying needlessly,
It waits in silent vigilance,
Lonely, silent vigilance,
For life to come to be.

qnihtn9794

I wanted
 To play house
In the church altar
 When I was
A little girl.
 It was so cozy
And smelled so nice
 But I didn't ask
Because I knew
 They wouldn't let me.
I couldn't see why
 They wouldn't let me.
They played
 Christian
In the congregation



and then went
out another
horse that was
red: and power
was given to
him that sat
to take peace
from the
earth: and
there was given
to him a great
sword

REVELATIONS

Strange Fingertips

Coffee stains on midnight pages,
spider webs in moonlit mazes
shadows shudder in candlelight,
the house is humming in the night,
steeped in deep, electric dreams
of innocence and faith.

But I, the wide-eyed voyager,
drift in sleepless wonder and bewilderment,
back to the beginning,
deep into the cosmic womb

the cosmic tomb . . .

And suddenly,
I have no eyelids

no dreams

no faith:

only death awaits me now,
with calm, caressing fingertips,
to soothe me in my sorrow.

