

# REFEBE

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WINTER



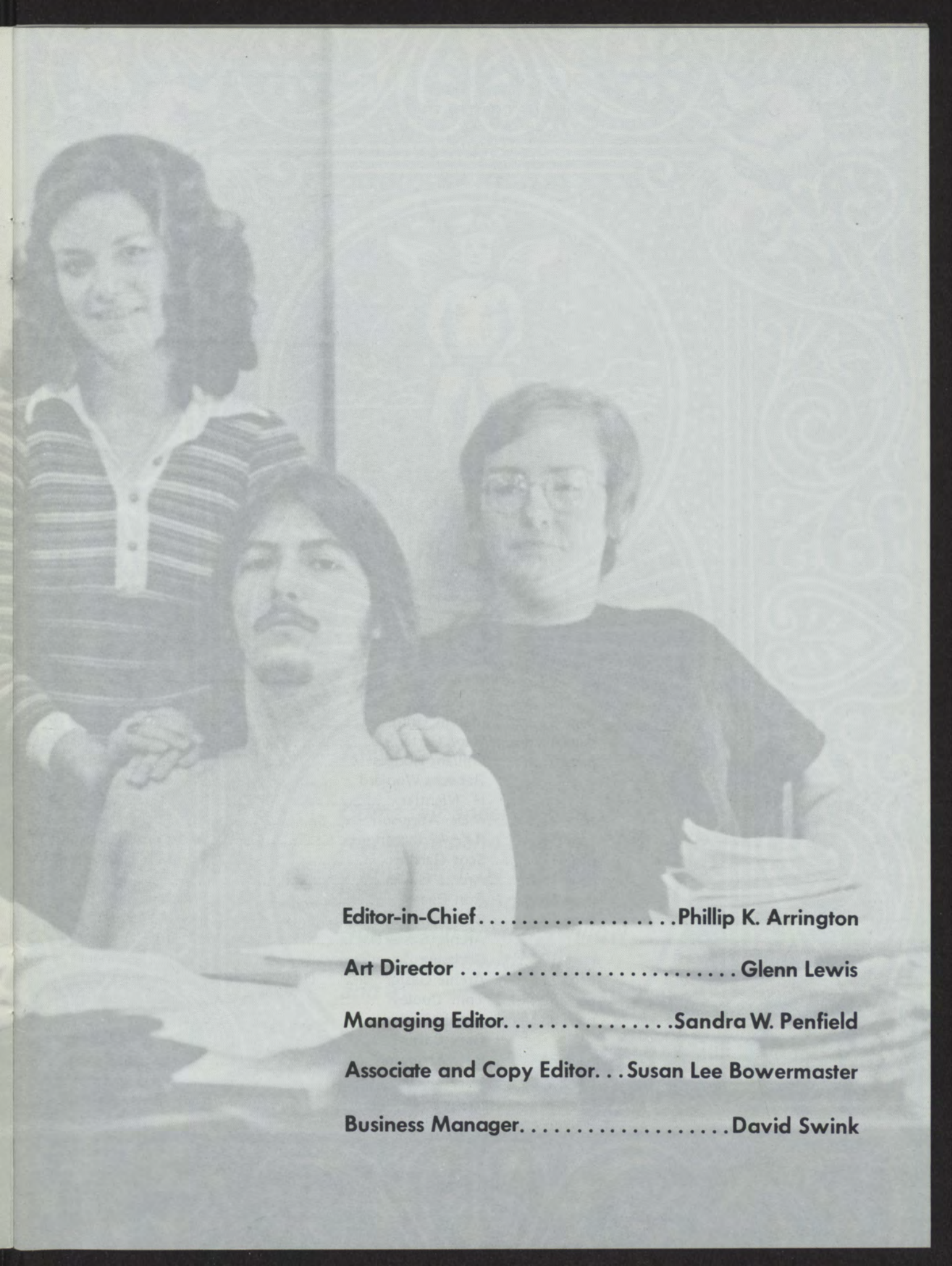


# Morpheus

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"Morpheus" is the greek god of dreams and altered or transformed states of awareness. In that sense, it is our interpretation of the function of Art and our imposed intent with this publication. We offer the name and the interpretation to all interested persons. It is our suggested name-change for The Rebel, a name that has been outgrown aesthetically and functionally. The staff of this publication offers up the alternative and welcomes all response and criticism.

-The Editor-



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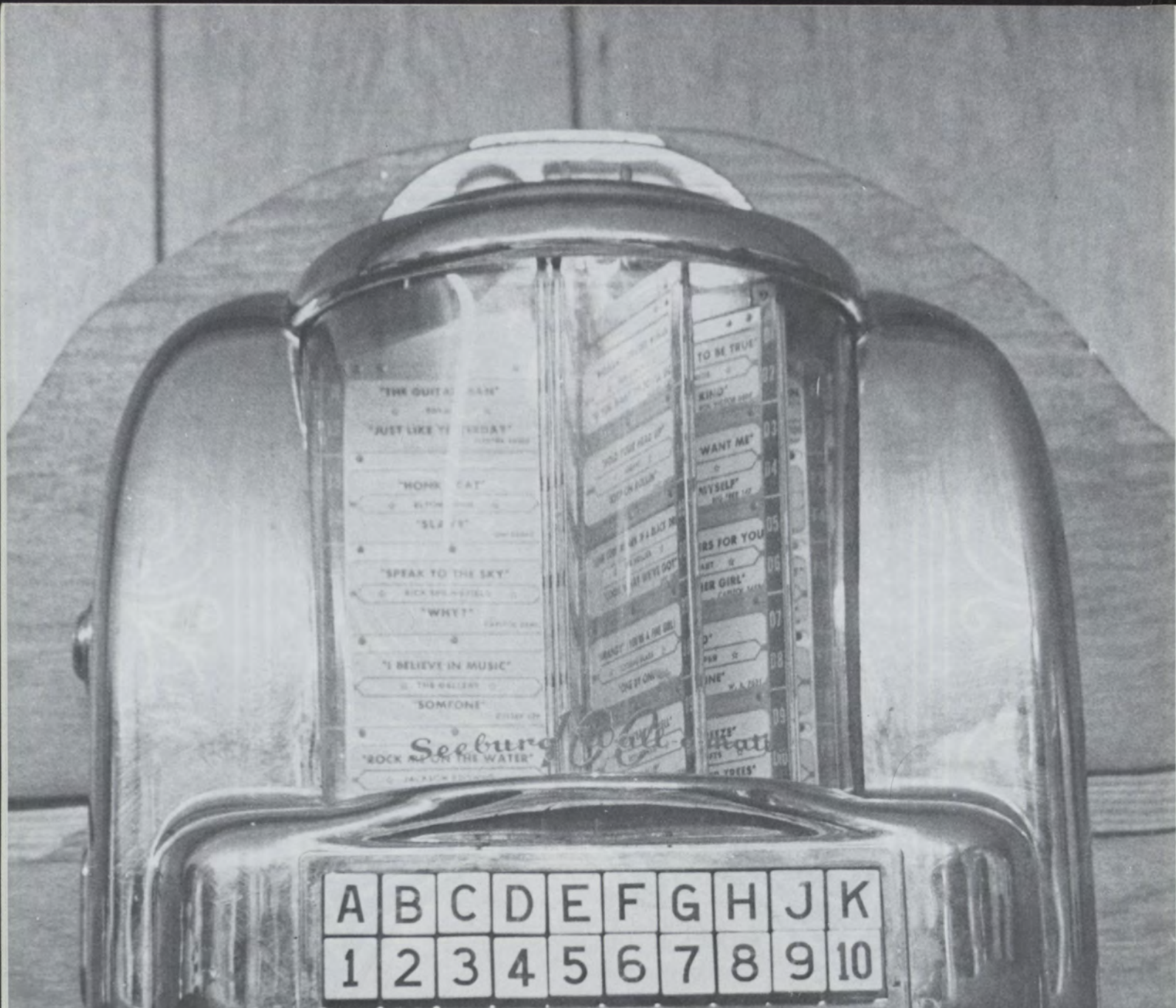
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Angel

*Come fair angel  
rest thine hand upon my arm  
and we shall be together  
and drunk  
riding atop a windy willow  
of a clarinet with a honk  
and a*

*tweet.*



HIGHWAY 21 TRUCKSTOP BLUES

cry steel guitar

and let those florescently platinum bouffant ladies

sing of once-upon-a-time truckstop loves—

lost in the whine of giant wheels

clouded by the lusty fumes of star spangled  
dual chrome smokestacks

and

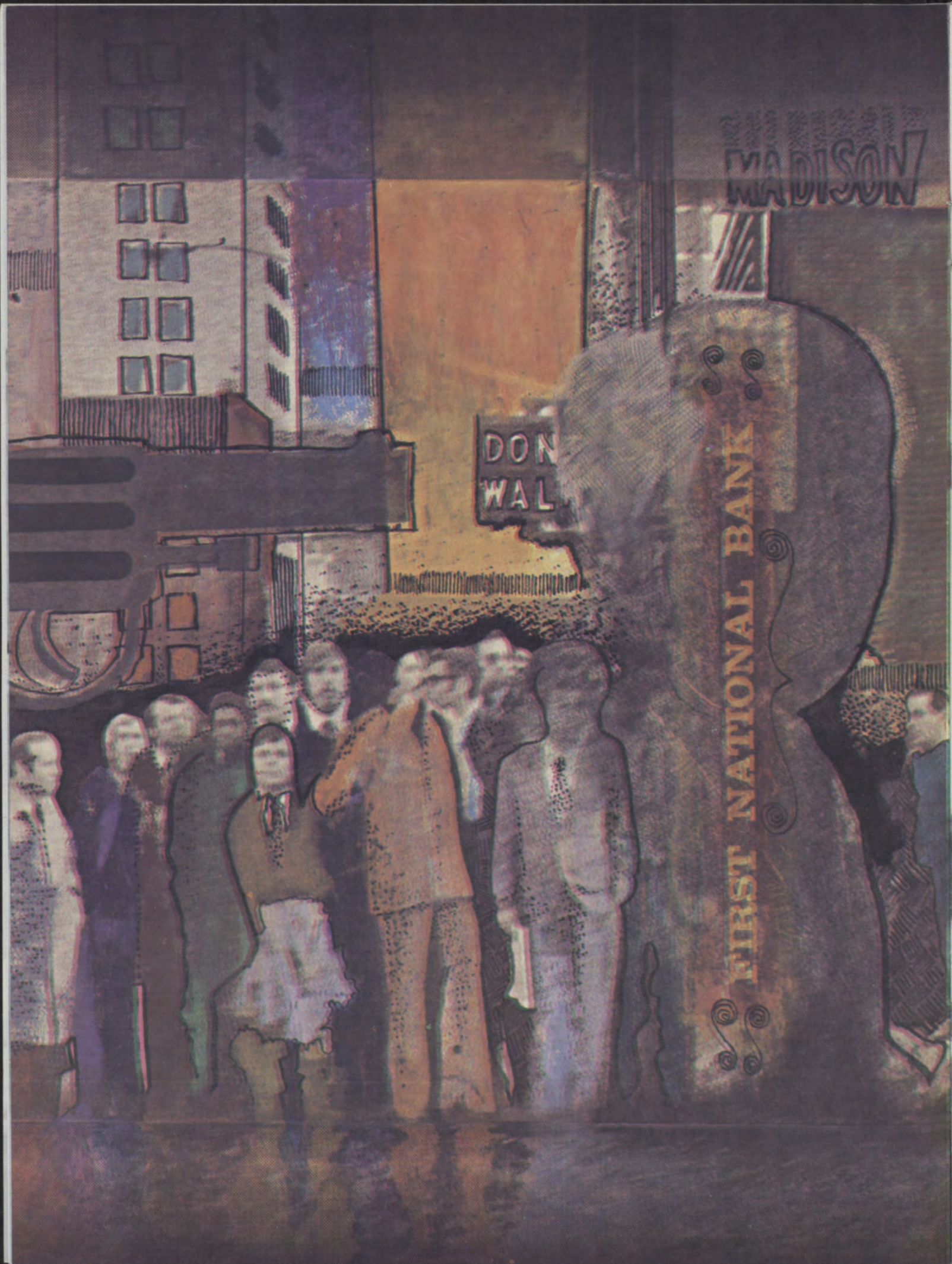
confused by the hands of god speed and time

By Tellus enchanted euphoric,  
Life passes in melancholy splendor.  
An Endymion life of dreams,  
A Lotus of ardor.

A Rainbow arched over the Sky today....  
It spouted from your Eyes as You lay in bed  
Devouring Yourself.

Trust

*illtrustyouwhenicantellyou  
togetfuckedandknowyouwontv  
omitonme  
your silly tears*



MADISON

DON  
WAL

FIRST NATIONAL BANK

Harry MacCaslin leaned forward, so that the wrought-iron guardrail pressed sharply against his stomach. Peering down from the narrow pedestrian bridge, he gazed at the brown water swirling softly twenty feet below and wondered for an instant at the river's depth and the texture of its silent, silty bottom. Reaching into his back pocket, he produced a black, thumb-smoothed wallet and flicked it with only a small arc into the water. It landed with a muffled, slapping splash and sank, a muddy rose rippling outward from where it disappeared. Harry watched the rose melt back into the swirling mass of brown. Turning suddenly, he strode across the bridge and into the bustling center of the city's downtown business district.

Harry paused at the corner of a busy intersection and smelled the hot, stale city smells. The light blinked to green, and he strolled across the street past a phalanx of purring headlights. A towering, sooty-gray office building dominated the newly-captured corner. The words FIRST NATIONAL BANK were perfectly chiseled out of stone above the heavy glass doors. Harry peeled off of the sidewalk and through the doors, reading the block letters above his head as he did.

There was a low hum of voices, and the antiseptic smell and electric coldness of the overhead lights reminded Harry of a hospital. He stepped across the gleaming linoleum, past the teller's cages to the first in a row of large desks, all manned by homely young women pecking at typewriters.

"I wish to speak to the manager, please," Harry said softly to the girl behind the first desk. She had buck teeth and small red blotches on the left side of her neck and face.

"It's about an error on this month's statement."

"Of course," said the girl, unfolding herself from behind the desk.

"This way, please."

Harry followed her past the row of chattering typewriters to a mahogany door with the word MANAGER stenciled on in white paint. The girl knocked and opened the door without waiting for a response.

"This gentleman would like to talk to you. He says it's about a mistake on his statement."

Harry walked into the office and heard the door pull shut behind him.

"William Eustis," beamed a squat, balding, ruddy-nosed figure, rising from behind an even larger desk than those outside. Harry shook the extended hand.

"Sit down. Please. Sit down." William Eustis nodded to a leather chair next to Harry.

"Now—what can I do for you, Mr. —?" said the pudgy bank manager, resettling in his own chair.

"My name is Harry MacCaslin," said Harry, drawing a small, blueblack pistol from his raincoat pocket, "and the first thing you can do for me, Mr. Eustis, is remain extremely still—because if you move one muscle toward the alarm buzzer under your desk, I will shoot a very large and gaping hole in your forehead."

William Eustis paled immediately.

"Now, Mr. Eustis, you will notify the proper receptionist over the intercom that you are not to be disturbed for the next thirty minutes.

Then you will come and sit in this chair next to mine."

Eustis picked up the phone receiver, dialed one digit, and while Harry leveled the gun, rasped out the instructions. After hanging up, he wobbled out from behind the desk and wheezed down into the chair beside Harry.

"Mr. Eustis, in exactly fifteen minutes—now—a .38 caliber bullet will belch forth from the obscenely ugly muzzle of this pistol and slam with incredible velocity into a point roughly marking the median between your two eyes. The impact will snap your head back as though it had been smashed with a baseball bat, Mr. Eustis. There will, of course, be severe and instantaneously fatal trauma wrought upon the greasy, convoluted clump of worms that we call a brain, Mr. Eustis. I can only speculate as to whether the bullet will remain embedded in your skull, or exit—varnished decorously with red and gray, of course. If the little missile does indeed prove to be particularly tenacious, I can assure you that the hole in the rear of your head will be even larger and messier than the one in front. I apologize for that, Mr. Eustis. Do you have any questions at all about your fate?"

Eustis had blanched completely, and his eyes glazed over momentarily.

"Now, now, Mr. Eustis. No swooning. Listen very closely because I will explain quite clearly why you are going to die in such a *seemingly* absurd and—well, improper manner." Harry paused to light a cigarette, carefully keeping the gun leveled. He tossed the smouldering match into an ashtray on the desk.

"First, Mr. Eustis, you are thinking, if you are thinking at all, that I am obviously deranged, a raving madman with homicidal inclinations. Secondly, as your ego and sense of survival realize the very real threat of my words, you are or will be wondering, 'Why me? I don't even know this—assassin.' In response to your second thought, you are right—as far as I know, neither of us has ever laid eyes on the other until now. I was inexplicably, whimsically intrigued by the name of your establishment. Let's ironically call it fickle fate. As for you particularly, I fear that I am guilty of a rather negative, and perhaps unfair stereotype image of bank managers. A rather sterile, unimaginative lot—epitomizing bureaucracy and the death of the soul, categorically in need of spiritual intensity and so on. Really not so important. A subjective fancy.

"Furthermore, Mr. Eustis, despite what you are thinking and what the newspapers will imply, I am not unbalanced. On the contrary, I am disgustingly sane. My actions are the product of much rational forethought. For you see, Mr. Eustis, I am actively combatting the myth of the futility of modern man."

Eustis' eyes rolled under heavy lids toward Harry. He ran his tongue over his lips. When he spoke, his voice was pinched and weak.

"Wh-why are you doing this? You'll never get away with something like this."

Harry exhaled a haze of blue smoke and tapped an ash into the tray.

"Do you believe in God, Mr. Eustis?"

Eustis squirmed nervously. "I suppose I do."

"Well, Mr. Eustis, I'm afraid I don't. Yet—I must—I need to—I have to. What sense is there to this danse macabre, Mr. Eustis, if there are no

gods? If they have been squashed into oblivion, pierced and analyzed as neatly and as clinically as the atom? What dignity is there in this feeble winking into and out of existence if there are no gods to watch and direct the momentary drama? Mr. Eustis, my poor, frightened, drowing Mr. Eustis—think on it clearly for just one second. Think of yourself in context of the endless, inky, unfathomable terms of eternity. Think of yourself stripped naked of everything except the raw, indivisible dimension of existence, drifting directionless for an instant lasting only long enough to be realized by a mind that is capable—if it wishes—to sense or deduce the incredible folly and injustice of such a plight. Think of these things, Mr. Eustis—think of them—and tell me *how they are to be endured without the gods!*

Harry had progressively leaned closer and closer to Eustis. Their faces were no more than six inches apart. Perspiration ran in rivulets down the bank manager's white face, although his lips were very dry.

"But why—why—?" Eustis squeezed his eyes shut. "What will this do? There's nothing you can gain by doing this!"

Harry stubbed out his cigarette and lit another one.

"Not true, Mr. Eustis. Not true at all. In these remaining fifteen minutes of your life, there exists a very highly defined order, an order that weighs and directs every passing moment, an order that is immutable even though so—ethereal. And there is an omnipotent overseer that within the universe of these four walls is total and absolute. So you see, Mr. Eustis—oh, I hope you do see—there can be a plot, and there can be a director, and there can be meaning. And—feel, just feel the intensity of it, Mr. Eustis! How much meaning there is just in the burning, clawing gasping intensity of these moments. In these last three minutes before your death, Mr. Eustis, you are probing depths no less intense than those fathomed by Bach—Van Gogh—Shakespeare—the glorious rush of insanity felt by Dostoevsky waiting to be executed..."

Eustis was slumped low in his chair, his eyes squinched shut and his face contorted in fear and helplessness. Large tears squeezed out from between the closed lids and rolled with the sweat down his cheeks. His voice was now a low sob, inflected with the pitiful breaking of a man talking to no one in particular.

"Oh God oh God. Don't please don't. Please don't. There's no reason. I don't—I don't understand. I don't understand, Please. Oh God please..."

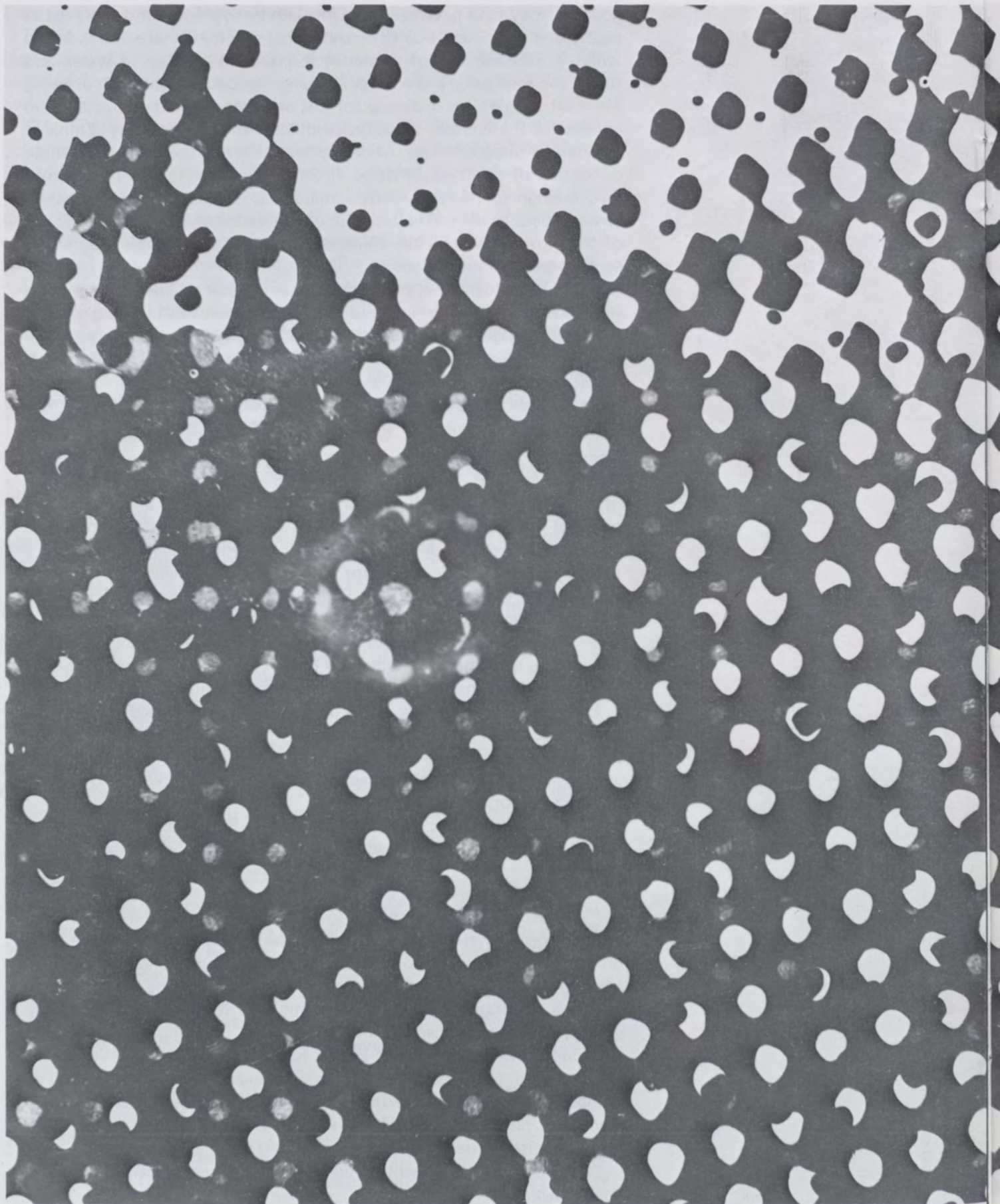
Harry blinked twice and bit his lower lip.

"You see, Mr. Eustis, there's something else connected to our very critical need for the gods—something else which I perhaps have been unfair in keeping from you. And that is: how could I allow, how could I possibly permit the existence of gods without being one myself?"

Eustis continued sobbing quietly, his eyes still screwed shut. Harry ground his second cigarette into the ashtray. Leaning back, he raised the pistol to within an inch of Eustis' forehead.

"Goodbye, Mr. Eustis," he said and squeezed the trigger. A flash of orange and black barked forth, and a red pulp appeared where the bank manager's face had been. Harry stared for only a moment and then place the pistol muzzle against his own right temple.

"Goodbye, God," he whispered, pulling the trigger again. The world flashed *white*.





/pepto-bismol blues /

in the summer of his sickness  
with uncles approaching in the night  
holding up their gowns  
coming to watch the falling away of flesh  
his hair fell whitely  
against the gray frayed carpet  
his eyes would bleed into the wine  
and the parents gathered together  
to hold his tongue  
so he wouldn't gag on the chanting  
the singing of his new-born boredom  
when he lay stretched  
    across an immensely sterile question  
    chained by the either-or's  
    spitting up the flesh of dead saints  
    onto the hungry earth  
when he pulled out his convictions  
    each by the root  
    and burned them in a laughing fire  
when he said—(death is innocent  
    life is sadly all  
    there is no god to blame  
    only the rushing wind)  
but these ravings rocked the doctor  
attending at his side  
with frigid fingers fondling  
and the minister's face froze with fear  
but the tattered sister blind-child danced  
and ran out into the waiting storm  
idiot carl the butcher's boy  
kicked the bedpan  
smiling into the spilled suffering

*The antinomy between mind and body, word and deed, speech and silence, overcome. Everything is only a metaphor; there is only poetry.*

*Norman Brown*

### RAIN THOUGHTS

Dampened are you who sheds tears;  
Resolute in purpose, for tears must fall.  
Yet they fall in a feeble parley upon the scorched earth,  
Descending upon the sights below you—upon the sightless  
Beyond you—upon the sighted beside you.  
For who but the sighted can see? Who but the sighted  
Can know your power, strong against each, yet weak  
Against all? Who but the sighted can be awed by their  
Own ghastly presence, their coarse cacophony of life?  
Shed your drippy fabric, for you, too, will fall prey to  
The forest-takers, the land-eaters, the river-killers  
And the other earth-gods. You, too, will become lifeless,  
Unsustaining.  
Your death has its revenge:  
The earth will lose its gods as the gods lose their world.  
Your re-birth awaits only a signal from Time.  
And Time has no gods.

*A revolution that expects you to sacrifice yourself for it is one of Daddy's revolutions.  
Slogan on a wall*

## SNOW

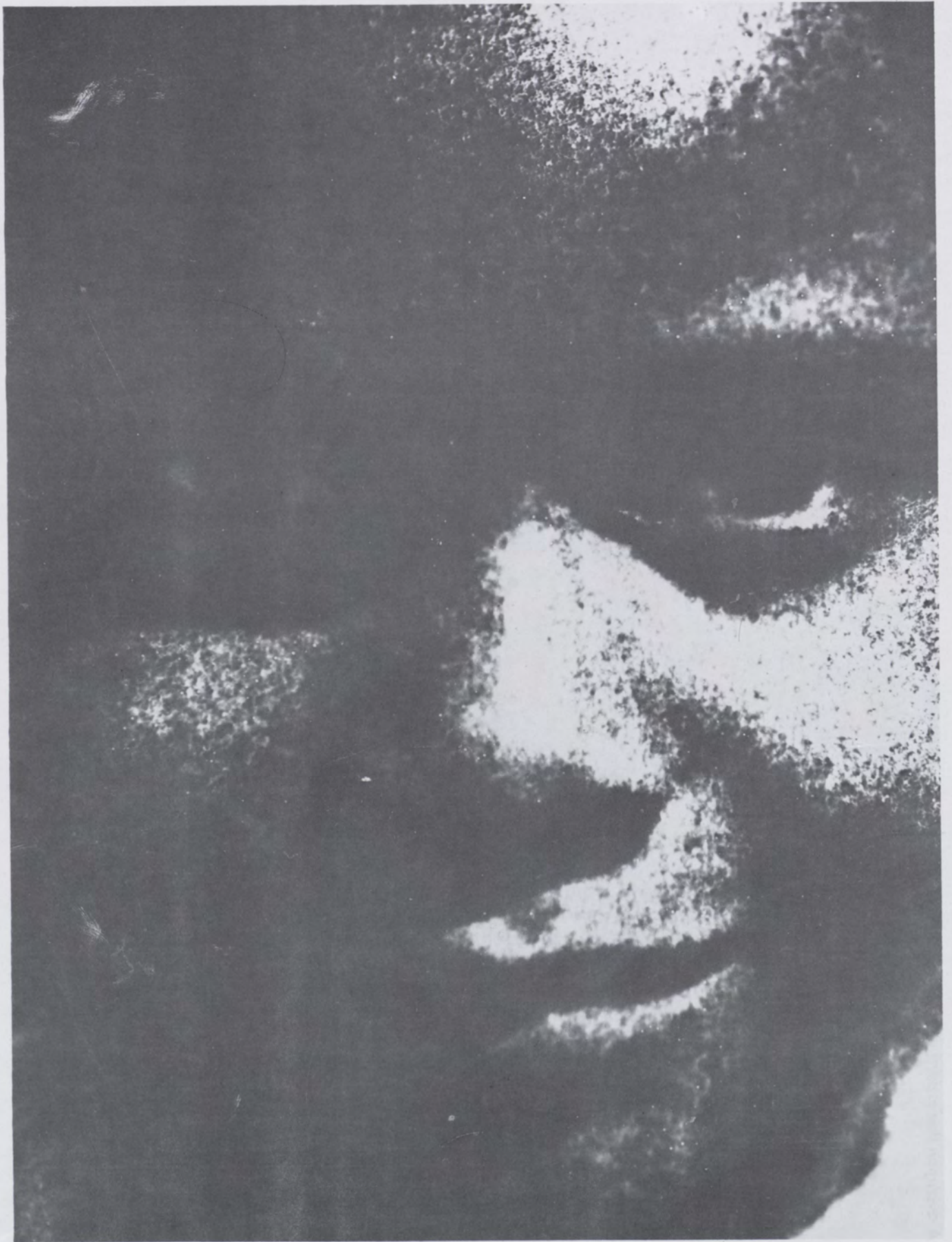
fur  
the fur  
of a biting, clawing  
life giving thing  
life eating

tricks  
it tricks  
how well it tricks  
covering itself over  
in prickly mystery

come to me  
begs me  
like a wet, hungry dog  
begs me

to come inside  
lay by the fire  
fall asleep  
satisfied

belly full of death



# Watching Sally Die

I remember once when we all went down to Billy's house to watch Sally Rogers die. Death to us kids was just a game where somebody pointed a finger and went Bang! Bang! and we fell down and lay still for a minute and then broke up into giggles. It was lots of fun, and we were all going down to Billy's house to watch Sally Rogers die.

Real death was something that happened only to people because they were old and had a bad heart or something like that. We didn't know what this "PO LIO-MY-E-LI-TIS" was that Sally had, but since she was little like us, she couldn't really die. So, we were all going down to Billy's house to watch Sally Rogers play "die."

Jimmy Briggs said that if it would help out ol' Sally, he'd give her a kiss on the cheek like the Prince did in *Snow White*, but he'd bust hell out of anybody who laughed. We all allowed as how just this once we'd let it slide by.

Missy Johnson said that last night her mom had told her to say a little prayer for Sally. That made us feel that maybe things were a little more serious if such drastic measures were required. But, Missy's mother always was the emotional type, and we were still going down to Billy's house to watch Sally Rogers die.

We got there, but Doc Johnson wouldn't let us in the room because what Sally had was "can...CON-TA-GIOUS." So, we stood around real quiet like, watching Billy's mom and dad cry.

Billy told Johnny Green to stop picking his nose because it wasn't polite with Sally sick and his parents around. And, we tried not to laugh when Stevie Williams broke wind....., and Sally Rogers died.

...I was passing through home not too long ago and stopped by to see Billy's folks. Old Mr. Rogers seemed real glad to see me. He came, grinning, down off the porch to shake my hand and ask me how I was. I said fine and told him a little about my job as a salesman for the tobacco company. He said that he thought it was good that I was doing so well and that he knew my parents were real proud of me. I laughed it off and said thanks.

I asked what he had heard from Billy, and all at once, the joy in his eyes died. His smile kind of faded, and he looked tired and old when he said they had lost Billy over in Vietnam about a month ago. A sudden sense of unexplained loss took hold of me way down deep and refused to let go. Billy had always been my friend and his dad's brief pronouncement caused a painful emptiness to flood through me. Mr. Rogers tried to get me to come on in to say hello to Billy's mom, but I didn't feel much like it anymore. So, I said no, maybe next time; I've got to be on my way. We shook hands once more, and he asked me please to stop by again soon.

With the rain beginning to fall, I started back to Raleigh that night and got to thinking about Sally and Billy and all the fun we used to have. Like the time we got Sally to stand in front of the Carolina Theater and cry and kick up a fuss while we sneaked past the ushers. When a crowd had gathered, Billy calmly walked out and said she was just his little sister and that she must have wandered outside and gotten scared. Everyone laughed, and the ticket-taker took them inside and bought them some popcorn and Coke. Billy gave me half of his. It wasn't long after that that Sally got sick.

Billy and me stayed friends the whole time we were growing up, and it had just been since he had gone to 'Nam that we had lost touch. The night before he went overseas, we sat at my place in Raleigh and drank beer. We talked about all the things we wanted to do, and I told him I could probably get him a job selling cigarettes after he got out of the Army. We both thought that it would be fun to live together. Billy said that maybe one day we could even go into business for ourselves. Raleigh was a growing community, and there was lots of opportunity.

Pulling into Fuquay, I thought about how things never seem to work out quite like you plan them. In the back of my mind, I had figured on Billy showing up in a few months and us taking up where we had left off. But, that wasn't possible anymore. I drove into the Burger Chef to get myself a hamburger before I went home. Walking through the door, I blinked the salty wetness out of my eyes and wondered if anybody had been watching,

*the day Billy died.*

### Sand

A handful of eternity from the coliseum floor  
Runs through stiff fingers.

Life's blood soaks up, drop by drop,  
The thirst's never quenched.

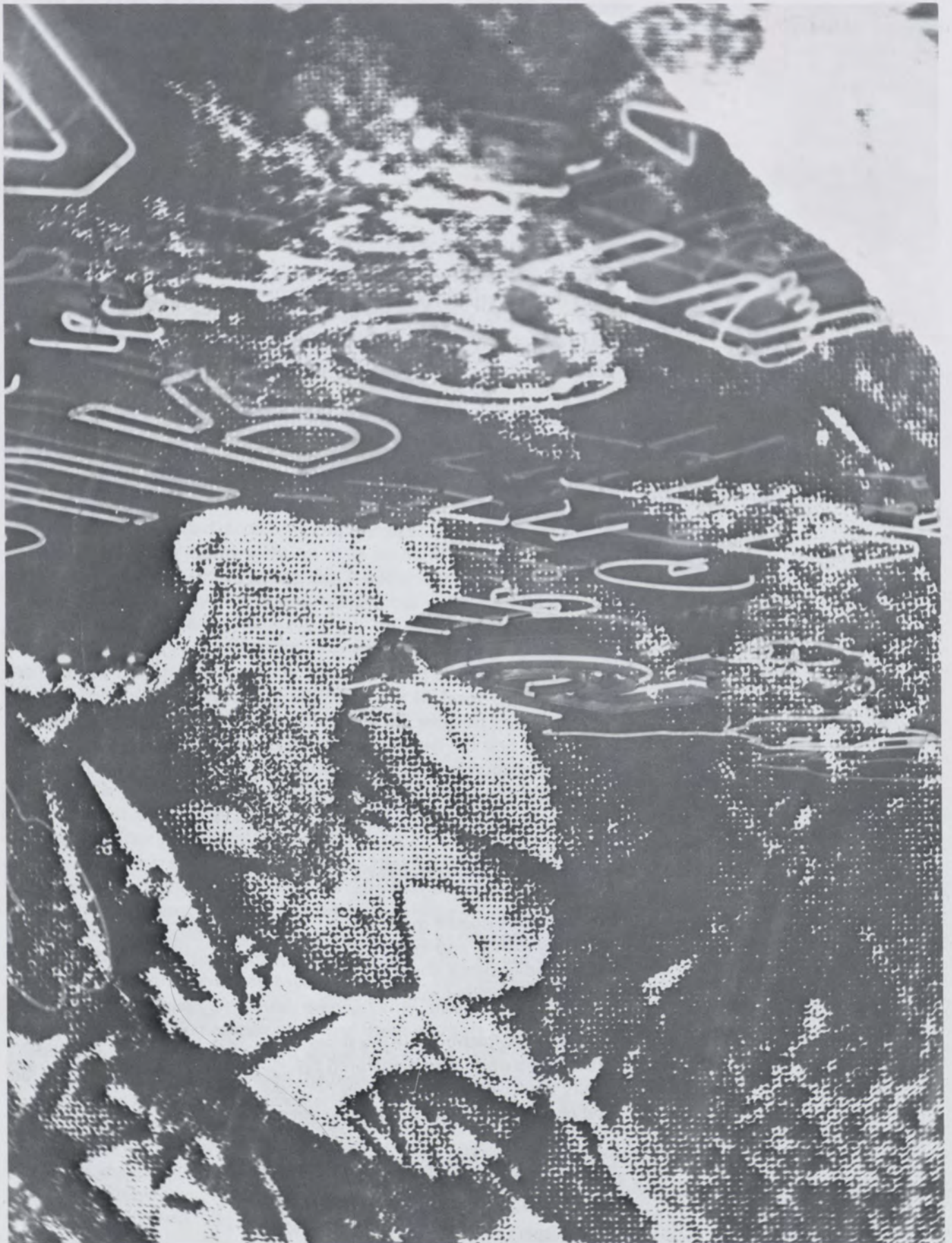
Countless grains, like years, flow and continue  
While man, bloodless, dies.

### MY TREASURED DISGRACES

Tiny doodlers doodle my walls  
With silly names, addresses, and places.  
Fat old ladies dance down my halls  
Whispering my treasured disgraces.

In delicate perfection I tie my shoes  
With turned up toes to a mirrored tip.  
A jelly bean rids me of my blues  
And checks to see that my tongue doesn't slip.

Lilacs and roses and lily-greased lovers—  
A mistress steals away in shame.  
A strap of her gown falls over her shoulder.  
She whispers to me, "*The liquor's to blame.*"



Dialogues—Philosophy

"Look, see this scarf? I'm going to print my face in it—Magdalene?"

"No, Veronica, Veronica, she was the one who held up her veil for Jesus' face."

"That was only because he hadn't washed in four days."

"You're trying to make Christ human, like you! Impossible!

"I'm not human!"

"Thank God, thank God!"

We are bantering marvelously, brilliantly, two runaway stars; yet, in what you call your "extravagant imagination" you are crying the wind, babies wheezing in the night, a ghost who lives in a guitar and an eight-year-old boy fishing in a creek with a broom handle for a pole and some twine tied to a

safety pin; all through your head there are dashing fireworks and disconnected electrical wires, smoking guns, meteors larger and more explosive than our dialogues; you are

wearing a monkey suit to a wedding, you are pulling a toy knife in your psychiatrist's office, you are lying to me about your last name and where your parents came from, so that I may never trace you to the threads of your tongue, you are gobbling all the best cookies, creating people out of

Jello and glue with red beads for their eyes, you are lying and you are ashamed.

"Those words walked right out of my stomach at the time, at the top of my head I was thinking something else."

"Scared of succeeding in becoming close to me, appearing impervious because you are afraid of seeing yourself as vulnerable, what kind of philosophy is that?"

"My dear, you sound much too poetic."

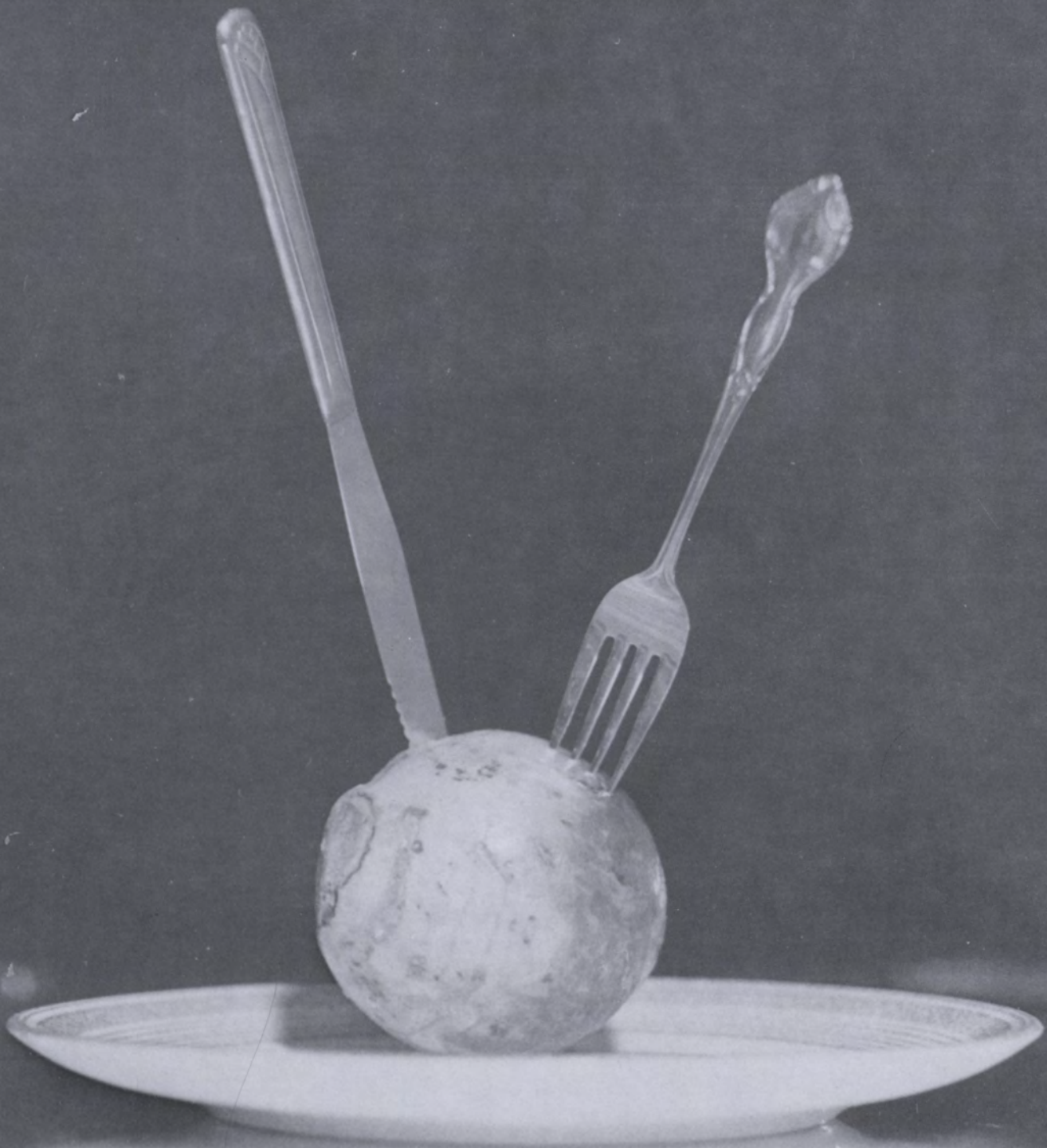
"You could at least say that you've known me a hundred years."

"The Hundred Years War? Aha, aha!"

You will pace the room as if you were having a child and you are the child, I will slip your religions between the strings of a mighty cat's cradle, you will prance and kiss me on the forehead and walk out the door, never knowing that I've glimpsed the pin-ball game in concert going on behind your eyes, never coming back and never knowing that today—and always—I will know you.







# AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The letter quoted herein was found unfit for publication by the Cleanville newspaper, The Lilliputian Times (All the news that's fit for the small mind). It was decided by the editor and staff that although the letter was written by a member of the silent majority, it did not truly reflect the views of a majority of the majority. Two weeks after this decision, the letters to the editor were discontinued altogether in order to expand the sports section.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

I am writing you this letter in hopes that it will be put in the paper. I HAVE LIVED right here in Cleanville all my life, except for Mobley where I was born. I READ your paper everyday, but not the WANT-ads, because I don't buy second-hand stuff. I WORK in a diner, but I won't mention the name of it because I don't want your paper to get in trouble with the FCC. But I am writing first to tell you how much I liked your editorial on long hairs. I agree. You ought to see some of them that come in the diner where I am manager of the breakfast crew. They look awful (and act worse).

Second, I am writing to complain about another store in town that has stole our advertising campaign. Three years ago, Harold was approached by a man selling recorded advertisements for use on the radio. These ads were singing ones, and the man promised Harold that for a \$100.00 he would get a 30 second singing ad made by a country music star that had had at least one record out. The ad would be written and recorded in Nashville, and we would get 10 copies. Harold paid him and we got it. Harold has been running this ad

THREE TIME A DAY FOR 3 YEARS OVER WWAG radio here in  
CLEAVILLE. SOME OF YOUR READERS might know this station  
better as "WAG-it" radio. Anyway, if there is ANY doubt  
about which station it is, it is not the one that plays  
DRUG CULTURE STUFF.

To identify this Ad Further, I will quote it, and any-  
ONE KNOWING THE TUNE to it MAY sing.

"Around the world, or just across town  
There's no better Food, so come on down.  
If you went EVERYWHERE, looking for a FINER,  
You wouldn't beat the Food AT the NEW MOON DINER."

That is OUR ad and has been for three years. It has  
been on wag-it everyday for 3 years, and it was RE-  
CORDED in Nashville, Tenn., for \$100<sup>00</sup> by BRONCO BREW and  
Lovelva Lovnest, accompanied by Bronco's Backwood's  
Brigade, but it has been stole, or at least the idea  
was stole by a store I will not NAME because of  
legal matters. All they did was rephrase it a little  
and change the tune and paid some local bunch  
to RECORD it on a home TAPE RECORDER for \$5<sup>00</sup>.  
(This is just an educated guess on my part.). WE  
WERE ALL SHOCKED AT the DINER last Thursday  
MORNING when WE HEARD this Ad for the first  
time. IF anyone has not HEARD it, I will quote  
it now, and you CAN see how MUCH it is like the

ONE Harold laid out 100 colder SMACKERS FOR. It quotes:

"Around the world, or right here in town,  
Bell's has the best clothes of any place around.  
If you're living on a budget, and keeping on your toes,  
you'll shop the GREAT buys at BELL'S New + Used Clothes."

And then, after they sing that song, somebody will come over the air saying some CRUDE REMARKS that I guess is supposed to be FUNNY, like "LADY'S PANTS ARE HALF OFF today and dropping every hour." When we heard this down at the diner, Murt, my best waitress on the breakfast CREW, MADE what I thought was a good comment when she said, Hah, if you ASK ME, it's the CLERKS down there that ARE HALF OFF and it's Bell who's going down every hour. I know, my Roger has been out with her."

Third, I agree with you on a political matters that your PAPER so well puts. Only I would go a little further. First, you say that Cleanville does NOT NEED A SEWAGE treatment plant because the cost of such a plant would require the city borrow money from the Big Boys up in Washington. I would put it that WE DON'T NEED A ~~SEWAGE~~ SEWAGE treatment plant for our water because all the SEWAGE is WALKING the STREETS WEARING

long hair. I GRANT you that if WE GAVE ALL OF THEM A BATH, THEN WE WOULD NEED TO TREAT THE SEWAGE. BUT ON A MORE LOGICAL NOTE, IT IS A FACT THAT NO ONE GOES FISHING OR SWIMMING IN OUR RIVER ANYMORE ANYWAY. THEY ALL GO UP TO LAKE HANNA FOR THESE PURPOSES. PERSONALLY, I DON'T THINK IT IS WORTH A MILLION DOLLARS JUST SO PEOPLE COULD GO BACK TO THE RIVER INSTEAD OF A SHORT DRIVE TO LAKE HANNA. AS FAR AS THE FISH GO, THEY ARE ALREADY DEAD ANYWAY.

Second, you object to school busing because it PLACES A HARDSHIP ON THE CHILDREN AND THE PARENTS OF THOSE BUSED. I OBJECT TO IT BECAUSE THE \$1200<sup>00</sup> THAT WE NOW USE FOR BUSING HAD TO COME OUT OF THE CHRISTMAS PARADE FUNDS OF THE CITY BUDGET. IF THEY WERE GOING TO DO AWAY WITH THE CHRISTMAS PARADE ANYWAY, THEY COULD AT LEAST HAVE FOUND A GOOD USE FOR OUR TAX MONEY. DO YOU REALIZE IF THIS MONEY WERE APPLIED TO OUR SPORTS PROGRAM THEY COULD LOWER THE ADMISSION TO FOOTBALL GAMES FROM \$1.00 TO \$.75? JUST IMAGINE HOW MANY MORE PEOPLE COULD GO THEN. POOR PEOPLE NEED SOME AMUSEMENT TOO, AND I THINK THAT WOULD HELP THEM MORE THAN BUSING THEM.

Fifth, what is ~~para~~ pornography? THIS IS THE REAL MEAT OF MY LETTER TO YOU. FIRST, I WOULD LIKE

to quote A MAN who HAS AN ARTICLE IN A WELL-KNOWN MAGAZINE this month. The magazine is the ONE FOR Rich Boys and also has A lot of PRONOGRAPHY in it. ANYONE READING the ARTICLE CAN SEE how disgusting it is, AND I do NOT NEED to criticize it to get my point across. It goes:

"... By definition from Webster's ~~the~~ New World Dictionary, <sup>PO</sup>PRONOGRAPHY is writings and pictures, etc. intended to AROUSE sexual desires." By this definition, EVERYTHING that is PLACED BEFORE the AMERICAN people today for their consumption is PORNOGRAPHY. Even the "Mona Lisa" would be a dirty picture.

What if A MOVIE PRODUCER Knew that a certain number of people in New York City WERE SEXUALLY AROUSED by A CERTAIN WORD. Suppose he then MAKES A MOVIE using THAT WORD.

The house lights go out AND the picture FLASHES ON the SCREEN. A RAMBLING FARMHOUSE COVERED IN SNOW APPEARS. INSIDE we FIND GRANDP and GRANNY and Family members SEATED before the FIRE, talking.

'Oh boy,' exclaims a GRANDSON, 'I CAN HARDLY wait FOR the CHRISTMAS DINNER to COOK. What ARE WE HAVING this YEAR, GRANNY?'

GRANNY smiles at the excited boy. 'Well, let's see, SON,' she says. 'WE HAVE turkey, dressing, CRANBERRY sauce, OF COURSE. Then we HAVE ham, potato salad,

and candied yams, and finally chocolate cake, and sweet potato pie, and all the fruits, nuts, and milk you can hold."

Gramps and all the men look puzzled. Gramps says, 'Old woman, you mean you didn't fix any...'. He looks around at the children on the floor and then back to Granny. 'You mean you didn't fix any you-know-what?'

Granny quickly hustles the children off to another room to play. She sits back down to her knitting and the tension builds in the scene.

Gramps finally says, 'Well, old woman?'

'Well what?' she answers.

'Did you fix them this year?' he repeats.

'Yes, I fixed them, you old fool, but I'll not have them in this house after they're done. You men can just take them out to the barn to eat.'

With that, the women rise and head for the kitchen.

The men pay each other a sly grin, and Gramps breathes a sigh of contentment as he says the word, 'Ah, rutabagas, boys - rutabagas, one more time before I die.'

'Rutabagas,' says a son.

'Rutabagas,' drools another.

The screen goes ~~the~~ black, and the house lights come up amid the "ah's" and "o's" of the sexually frenzied patrons. Comments can be heard all over the

Theater.

ONE MAN says to his WIFE blushing, 'I CAN SEE how they could get away with saying it ONCE, but, my God, FOUR TIMES.'<sup>x</sup>

ANOTHER man tells his WIFE, 'YOU MEAN to tell ME you MADE ME miss 'Ironsides' to see this TRASH. You know I don't GIVE A DAMN about "Rutabaga" movies. The next TIME you DRAG ME out where they don't at least mention a couple of ASPARAGUS, I'm LEAVING you AND moving BACK in with my aunt. I CAN get all the ASPARAGUS I WANT THERE, you know, AND a little MANGO or two FROM her neighbor on the side.'

ONE critic is heard saying to ANOTHER, 'Well, it WAS A FAIR movie, but certainly NOT AN INNOVATIVE ONE. I MEAN, when WE gain TRUE FREEDOM OF expression in this COUNTRY, I'm SURE some TRUE ARTIST will show A RUTABAGA on THE SCREEN. It would be so much better than this CASUAL, MEANINGLESS even EXPLOITATIVE REFERENCE to ONE. Maybe ONE OF those delightful 24 hour movies THAT what's-his-name is producing. Just A clean, PURE RUTABAGA on THE SCREEN FOR 24 hours without the FIFTH and double MEANING I felt this had.'

His Friend looks at him <sup>questioningly</sup> ~~questionally~~. 'My God, MAN, do you think the public could STAND it?' he ASKED.

This is quite obviously AN EXAMPLE OF pornography. The PRODUCER MADE his PICTURE intending to sexually

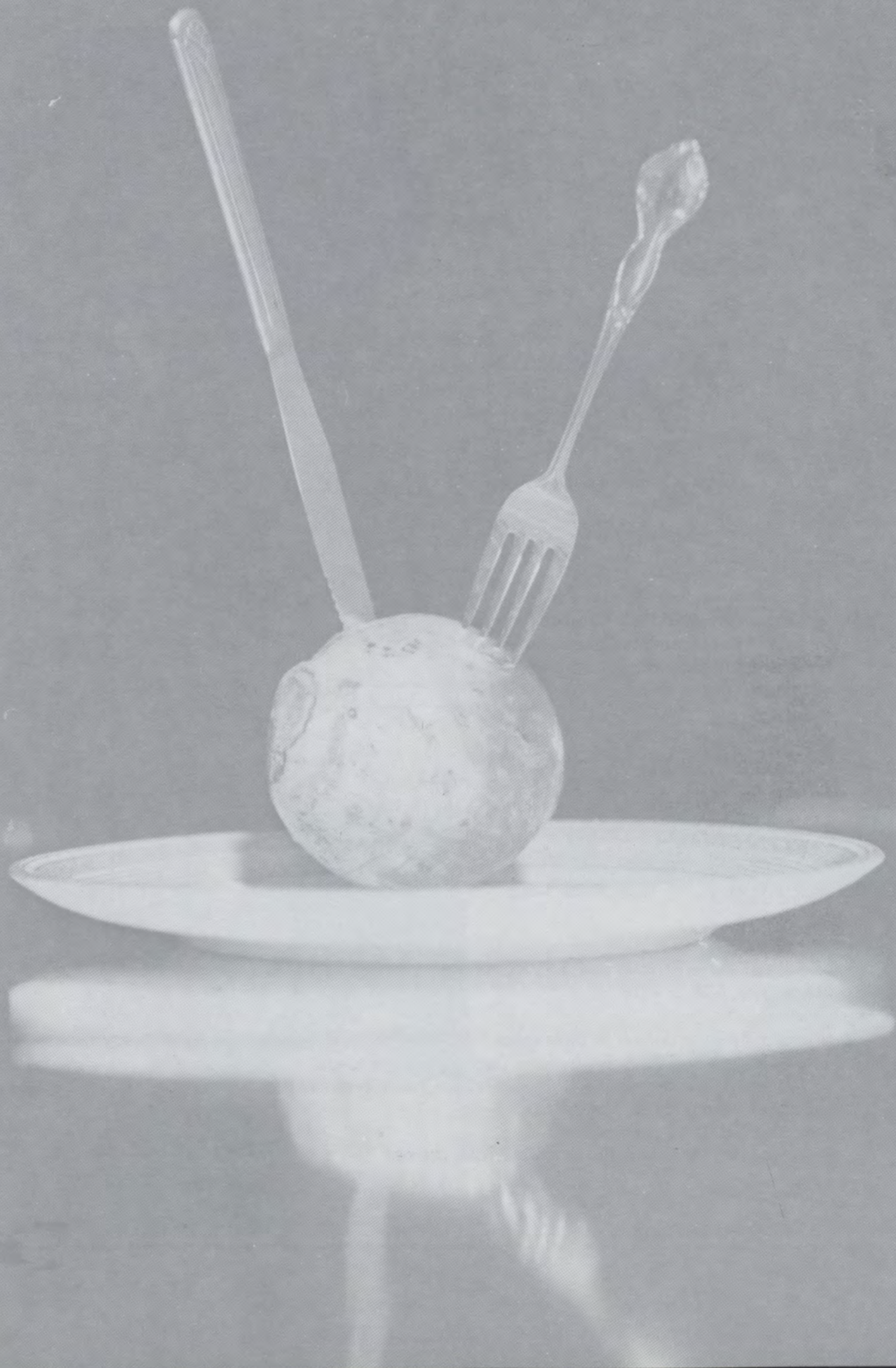
AROUSE his PATRONS, AND he succeeded. Someone must put A stop to smut now, before Hollywood degenerates our youth with spectacles of squash, Field ~~pie~~ peas, or EVEN watermelons.<sup>48</sup>

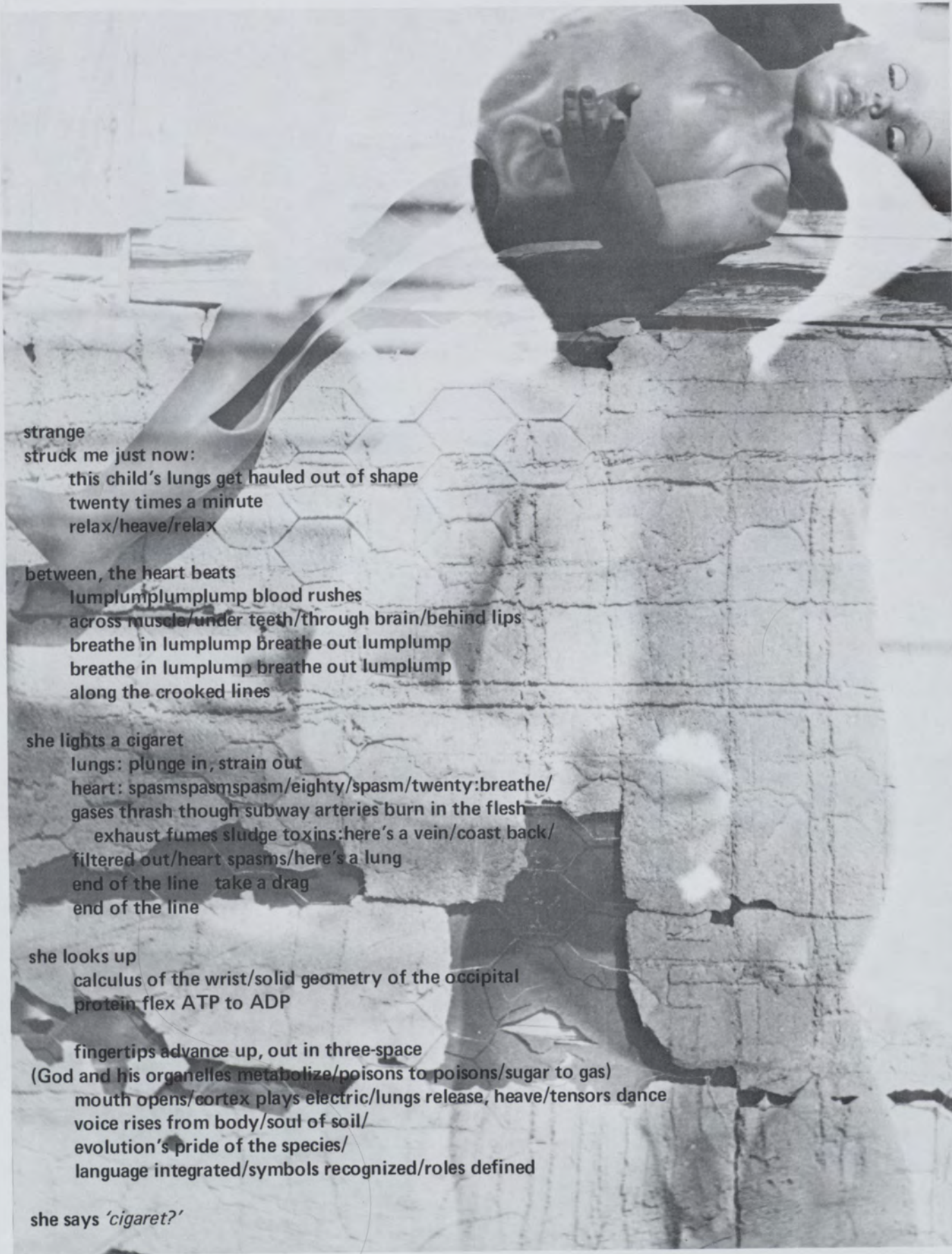
This is me writing AGAIN. Maybe I AM stupid or something, but I don't EVEN know what's suppose to be dirty about A Rutabaga - I guessed I missed something growing up. Since I AM not going to sign this, I AM not AFRAID to use the word on paper; however IF you would like to, you CAN just put AN "R" AND then a dash instead OF using the word "R-----" when you publish this letter. I even got down my World Books and looked under "reproduction", but they don't mention "R-----" either. Must be some hot stuff.

Signed

Old Red Eye







strange

struck me just now:

this child's lungs get hauled out of shape  
twenty times a minute  
relax/heave/relax

between, the heart beats

lumplumplumplump blood rushes  
across muscle/under teeth/through brain/behind lips  
breathe in lumplump breathe out lumplump  
breathe in lumplump breathe out lumplump  
along the crooked lines

she lights a cigaret

lungs: plunge in, strain out  
heart: spasmspasmspasm/eighty/spasm/twenty:breathe/  
gases thrash though subway arteries burn in the flesh  
exhaust fumes sludge toxins:here's a vein/coast back/  
filtered out/heart spasms/here's a lung  
end of the line take a drag  
end of the line

she looks up

calculus of the wrist/solid geometry of the occipital  
protein flex ATP to ADP

fingertips advance up, out in three-space

(God and his organelles metabolize/poisons to poisons/sugar to gas)  
mouth opens/cortex plays electric/lungs release, heave/tensors dance  
voice rises from body/soul of soil/  
evolution's pride of the species/  
language integrated/symbols recognized/roles defined

she says 'cigaret?'

## MINOR KEY

Hey, boys, put me in a minor key.  
Some fool is in my basement  
Singing do re me.

My stomach hurts and you want  
To play the hunter shoots Bambi.

Who hung all the glitter covered  
Beer cans around here so you could  
Bump your damn head everytime you  
Turn around to see some skin.

Call that waitress who's got the  
tray of mirrors at a nickel a look.

*I want one.*

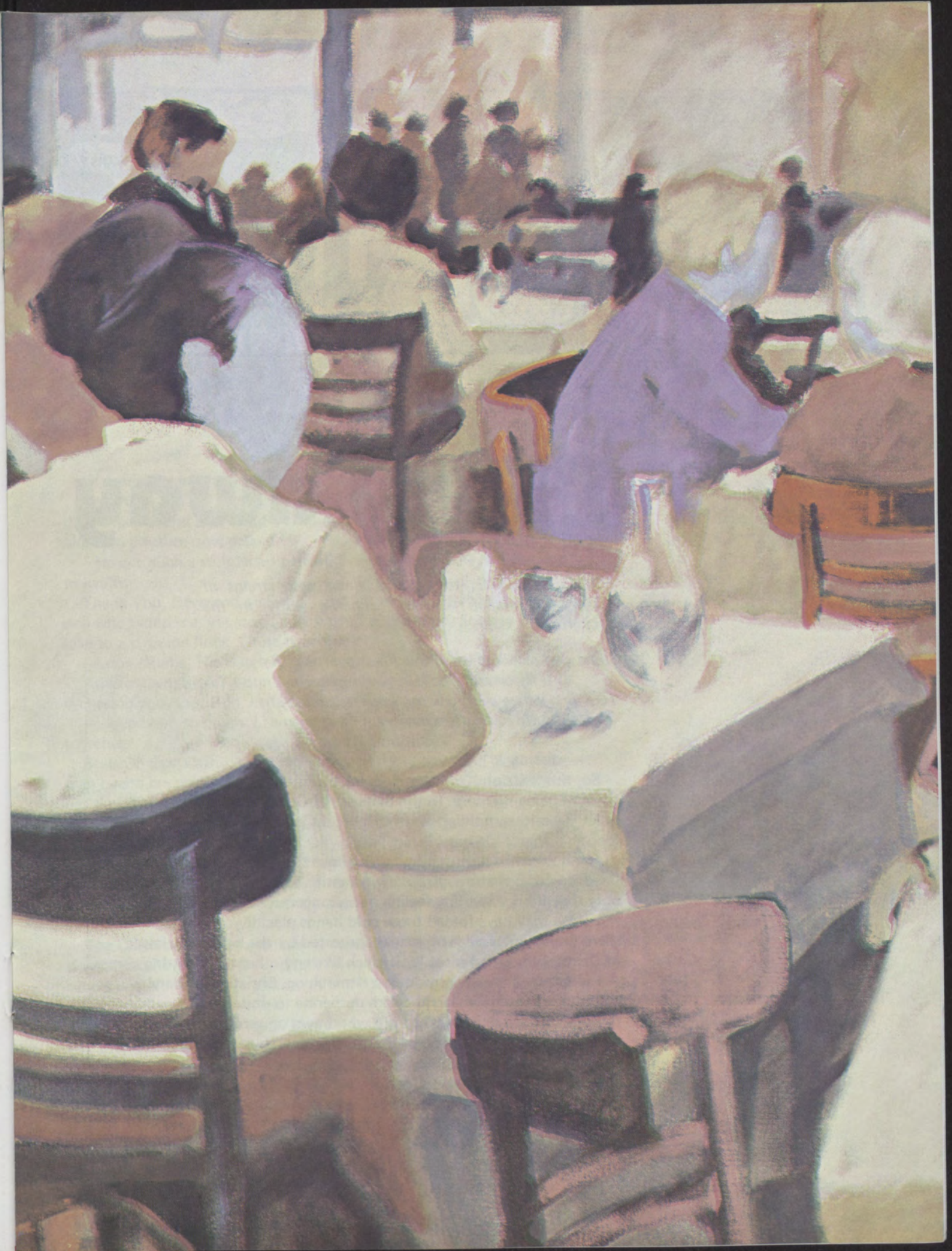
## Gatsby's Illusion

like an illicit party at Gatsby's,  
desperate children wander streets and alleys—  
clutching  
crying  
laughing—  
forever seeking that good time which will come  
no more

*No substance can turn into naught  
The eternal stirs in everything...  
The moment is eternity.*

/cafe song/

the sun is dead hot—  
air allows no relief—  
maybe a wind can save us now—  
the tilted table where we're sitting...  
and you're reading the scrawled initials...  
while i explain the gods away—  
the ribs of empty beer cans crushed...  
    glinting in the smoke of boredom  
dead flies flounder in the splattered foam—  
tobacco butts broken against our soles—  
heat hangs around our necks...  
pushing its scalding tongue...  
against our unwilling ears—  
the sun is still and screaming  
    while watching you move an empty  
    closer to the edge of the table—  
not to balance...  
but to topple...  
    rattling against the bubbling floor beneath—  
    and then i knew i wanted to touch you...  
but you'd gone to the bathroom so quickly...  
i didn't even notice—  
i listened to the whirring of the ridiculous fans—  
(only the wind can save us now—  
only that—)





# i'll fly away

EDITOR'S NOTE: *to be read aloud with strains of "Onward Christian Soldiers" echoing softly in the background.*

*Some glad morning when this life is over,  
I'll fly away  
To a land where everyone can hope,  
I'll fly away, fly away—*

Traditional Hymn

So, this is Death. Only a certain hazy awareness, a floating sense of being no more. In the blueness of Death's arms, I am lying quietly—waiting, holding on to this lifeless body for only a little longer.

A fancy coffin, I must admit. Why have they opened its velvet-lined length so that my glazed eyes want to see, but cannot? There is only that strange swirling feeling of no longer existing.

I sense they have folded those cold hands placidly upon my silent breast; my face is no longer contorted by the horrible grimace of Death. I imagine I must look much like any other cold, rotting corpse.

I feel them treading now, onward marching. Christian soldiers marching as to...to what? They are desperate to understand Death, to fathom his deep mysteries. Afraid, yet drawn onward to convince themselves that what I've done is wrong. Onward they march, awkward in their silence, foolish in mourning.

—Doesn't he look natural?

So true, Mrs. Sherman. Perhaps Death is the most natural posture of man, stripping him of his absurdities.



- It's so sad and shocking. He was only twenty-one.

Yes, Aunt Doris, I died before I had even lived. I guess it's sad that it had to end as it did. So many dreams, visions of days and nights in a future now passed.

-He was such a wonderful person. I cannot believe he had nothing to live for.

Thank you, Reverend McSwain, that's quite a touching comment from one who hated me, yet stood over a tired pulpit every Sunday preaching love to a straying flock. Quite touching.

-Look, Mama. His watch is even running.

Amazing, eh, Susie? I don't guess you have realized yet that Time is chasing you, too. Run, little child, run fast.

-I loved him so much. I remember so many wonderful times we spent together.

Bullshit, dear Cathy. How can you shed those tears and gush that crap over a body you used and tossed away? Goddamn, how is it that lies that cause Death can even live after?

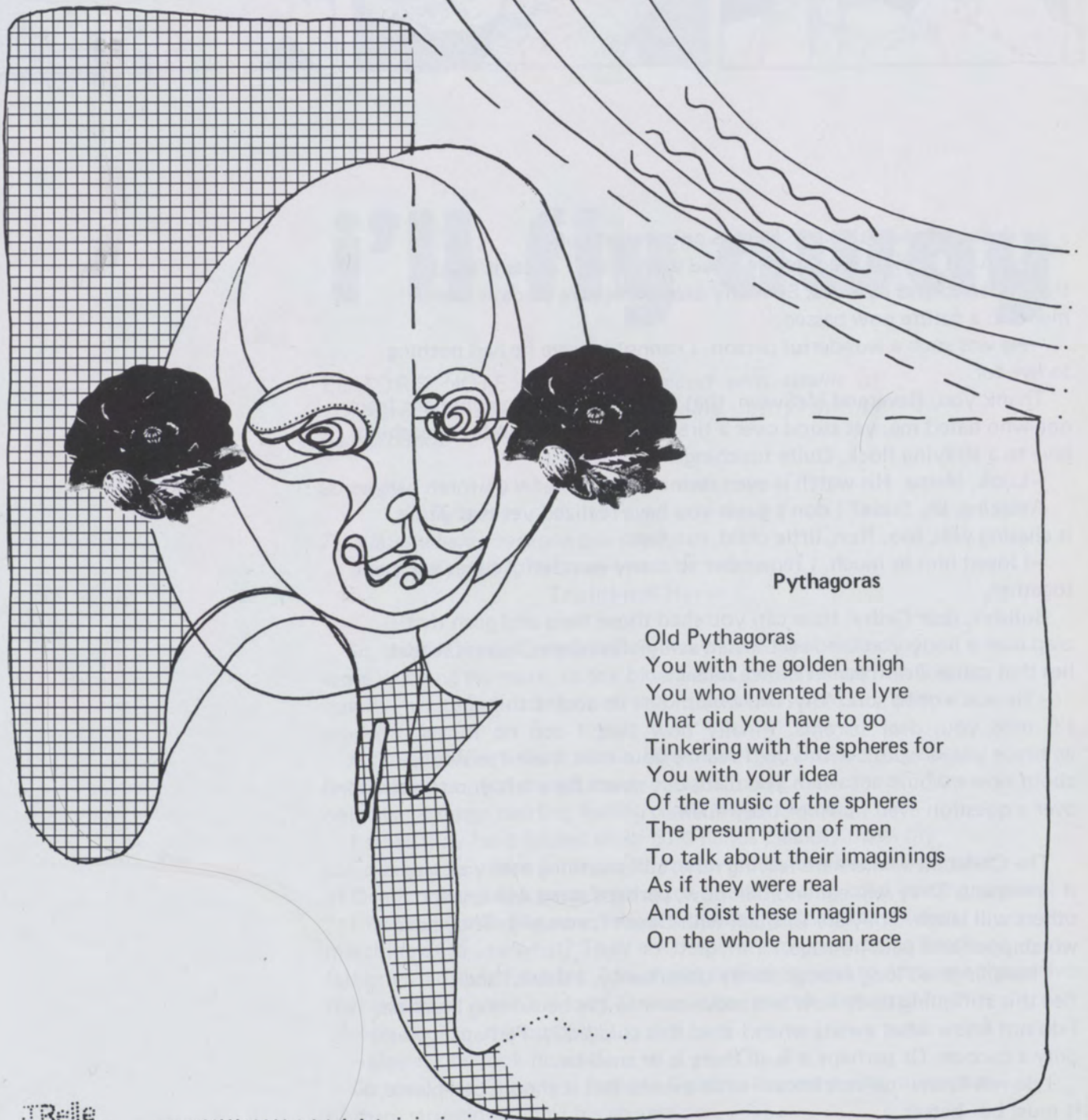
- He was a good son. Why, oh, why did he do such a thing?

I'll miss you, dear parents. Finally now that I can no longer embrace you or speak with you, I realize your love. I used to worry about how I would act when you died, but now I have left you to suffer over a question even I cannot truly answer.

The Christian soldiers are leaving now, still shuffling softly as if in respect. They will eat and talk now, perhaps some will cry and others will laugh. They are through with Death for awhile. They have worshipped and paid homage.

I have lingered long enough in my uncertainty. I think I shall flee this stiffening body now and move on into the beckoning blueness. I do not know what awaits when I shed this cold body. Perhaps it was only a cocoon. Or perhaps it is all there is or shall be.

I do not know cannot know-what awaits. But it should be-please, it must be-better.



Pythagoras

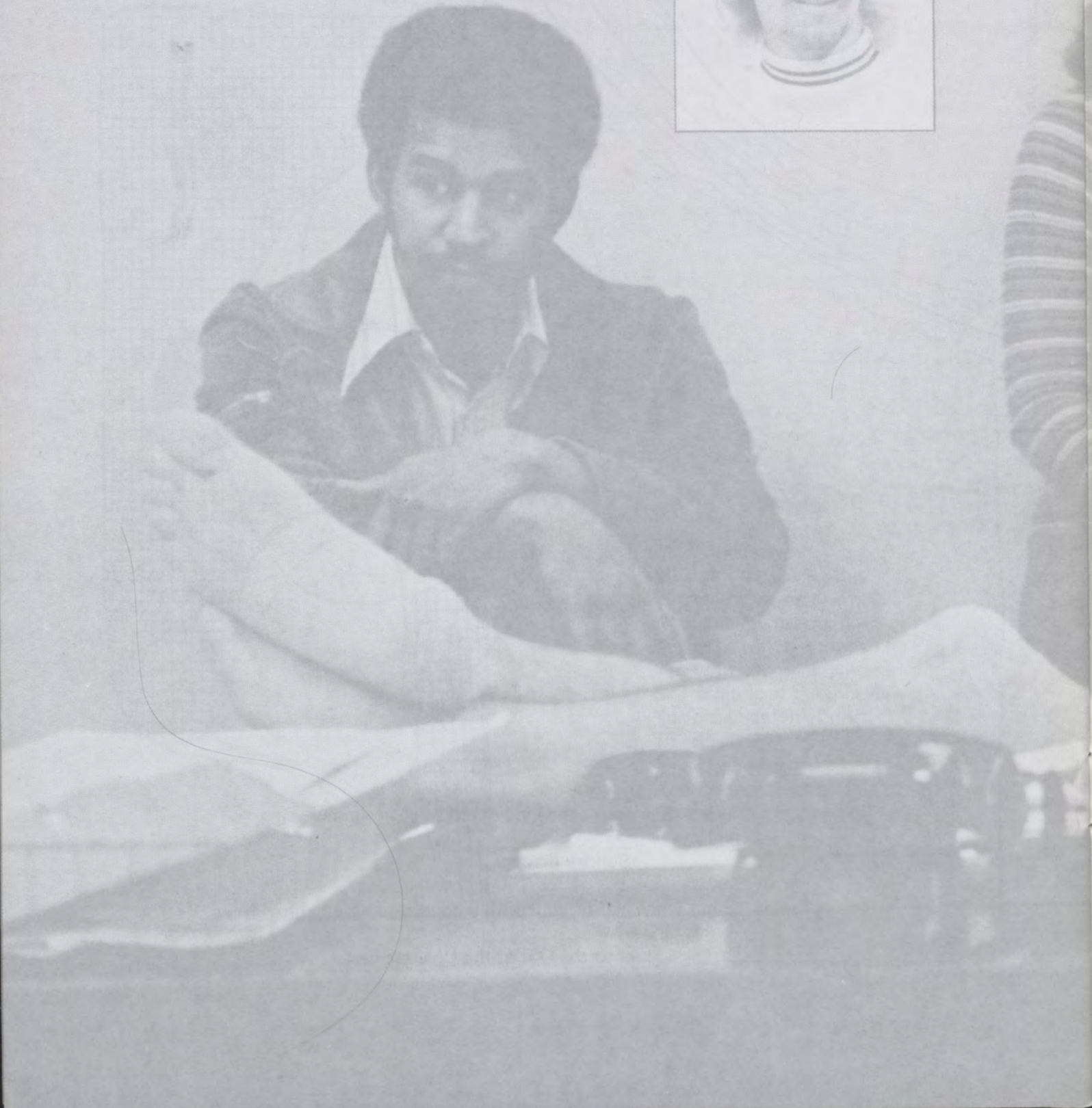
Old Pythagoras  
You with the golden thigh  
You who invented the lyre  
What did you have to go  
Tinkering with the spheres for  
You with your idea  
Of the music of the spheres  
The presumption of men  
To talk about their imaginings  
As if they were real  
And foist these imaginings  
On the whole human race

JBele.....


*You pays your money and you doesn't get to choose: ain't freedom grand.*  
e. e. cummings

### LOVER

She wasn't the kind of girl to go around wearing  
Sunday massages,  
but when half of your Soul is gone, you have to grow New.  
...or so the Star of the Universe lied.



## CREDITS



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