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A Note on the Cover

The drawing which appears on the cover of this issue of *THE REBEL* was executed by Edward Reep as one installment in a series of drawings he has done which were inspired by the tiny Japanese verse form, the Haiku. Consisting of only 17 syllables, the Haiku is sub-genre in which poets have been working for centuries, and which is still enjoyed by all classes of Japanese. Illustrated images of the Haiku are known as Haiga. However, Mr. Reep's drawing departs from this definition in that there has been no attempt to "illustrate" the poem. Instead the images are used as a point of departure and pursues a course parallel to the Haiku. The staff would like to thank Mr. Reep for allowing us to lift an image of the Haiku from its original position as an integral part of the painting; that image is given below. Its occasion was the death of the poet's 12 year old son:

Today's moon
is but a darkness for my eyes

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introduction

Experience and occasionally a colleague might remind us that projects such as this, executed during one's student years, should not meet with an evaluation hurled down from the stern and unyielding critical summit of Arnoldian 'high seriousness'. For regardless of the difficulty one encounters getting contributors to see the fact, this is not serious business. For the most part this is apprenticeship and, as such, it wants a liberal attitude and a soft treatment from the reader. The very fact that *THE REBEL* is a university publication implies a certain naivete and thus necessitates a conscious loosening of one's critical standards to allow for the blunders of the inexperienced. After all, it is in the nature of youth to be emotionally excessive, full of wrongheaded idealisms, and overly fond of trampling artistic decorum to the ground in pursuit of a single vision. Indeed, the art of restraint is as alien to most young men and women as the dove is to Indochina.

Living tends to breed caution in the intelligent individual, and for this reason the mature reader is likely to anticipate confronting material herein which is morbid and suicidal, so much so as to indicate that it had no cause to be either of these; he may rightly expect to confront material which is innocent and naive, as only those who have not yet lost their innocence can be; he may anticipate that *THE REBEL* will cry to him of death and dying in that noisy shout which could belong only to one who has never known death or consoled the dying. He may anticipate all of these excesses and still not expect *THE REBEL* to be a serious creative effort.

Indeed youth tends, rather paradoxically, to be as ignorant of life as it is full of it. But there is a germ of condescension festering somewhere in this attitude which I cannot help but think unhealthy and unfair. Such an attitude presupposes two things: first, that the essential questions to which youth addresses itself are questions which will be substantially altered with age; and secondly, that youth lacks the skills of artifice and craft which characterize the work of more seasoned veterans. Hopefully, both of these presuppositions will be tempered if not dispelled after a close reading. It is also an attitude which is fundamentally mistaken in this instance. At a glance the reader will discover that the list of contributors to this issue spans the continuum from young to fully mature, from eighteen to fifty. The themes of love, death, the death of

love and the love of death are treated by a variety of artists who incorporate an equally varied treatment of these ancient themes within their work. Herein will be found the familiar states of innocence and experience recast in distorted images indigenous to the modern situation.

To mention only a few of these contributors and their works, two poems by Jeff Rollins "The Palm of Darkness" and "To Roberta" offer some insights into the subtle yet beautiful intricacies of pre-fall existence, when indeed we have more innocence than we can trade. As transitional pieces, those most painful situations in which one is witness to the death of innocence are treated in poems by Theresa Clark and Sara Van Arsdel. The strange and haunting mixture of memory and desire, so characteristic of the April of which Eliot spoke, is considered in poems by Thomas Walters and Lynn Carrol, taking such liberties with this theme as is necessary to reshape it around a post-waste-land milieu, and perhaps to sow some seeds of resolution where there were no avenues for such. Those neurotic fragments of the American domestic experience which disarm even the best of us occasionally are the subject of poems by Teresa Speight, Diane Witkowski and Judith Ellsworth. In much the same vein Bentley Shatterglass' "Heavenly Eyes" and Jeff Rollins' "Remnant" confront us with a mushy corpse and too many cigarettes respectively, and still the reader is forced to surrender a twisted smile if only because he may share some uneasy identity with the protagonists.

As to the question of topical relevance, this issue of *THE REBEL* offers "One of the Flies" and "Things in General" by John Robbins, both of which loom even larger in the memory as South Vietnam suffers through its last bloody days as a nation. It will take very little urging to convince the reader that she will linger many more days as perhaps the most horribly mangled limb of the American conscience. Undoubtedly Mr. Sexauer's illustrations convey much the same impression with alarming precision and clarity. Likewise, "What Price Sex?" by John Alexander and "To the Great L.F." by Bob Wallace usher a problem familiar to cocktail conversation into the realm of art.

As a final note, I would like to thank my staff, Glenn, Phillip, David and Carol for the vast amount of energy and talent which went into production of this issue of *THE REBEL*, and to offer my special thanks to Dr. Norman Rosenfeld for his advice and assistance. I would also applaud the students and faculty of the Art department for their overwhelming support and encouragement as well as their contributions, without which this magazine would remain lost somewhere in the realm of possibility. As for the principle of organization which structured and attempted to mate the written with the visual arts, tone served us best. What we have here is an arrangement. It is left for you to decide whether we have arranged angels.

28 March 1975



Palm of Darkness

We are in the palm of darkness,
where young men drink themselves
to less than stone, and shudder,
too much, too much coming back in surges.

We are in the throat of August
where passion paces his room, and
loneliness lies unblinking
among the sleeping shadows.

Moonlight slides from a crescent of
shoulder, giving itself to
the lambent colors of touch.

A broken gasp,
spilt drops of madness cool,
The airy sound of time
is stilled upon sensation.

We are in the palm of darkness;
and lucky,
being born with more innocence
than we can trade.

WOLFE

A boy walking university brickwalks,
mind teeming, mouth open.

A leaf: the books moldering on the shelves.

A stone: the smell of their pages.

A door: ideas and people between the covers.

Drool over the delicious Jewess.

"Oh, my god, listen to that will you?"

Hunt, hungry, through all the

Autumn burnt patches of the world

Altamont Brooklyn Monk

voracious nicotined saint:

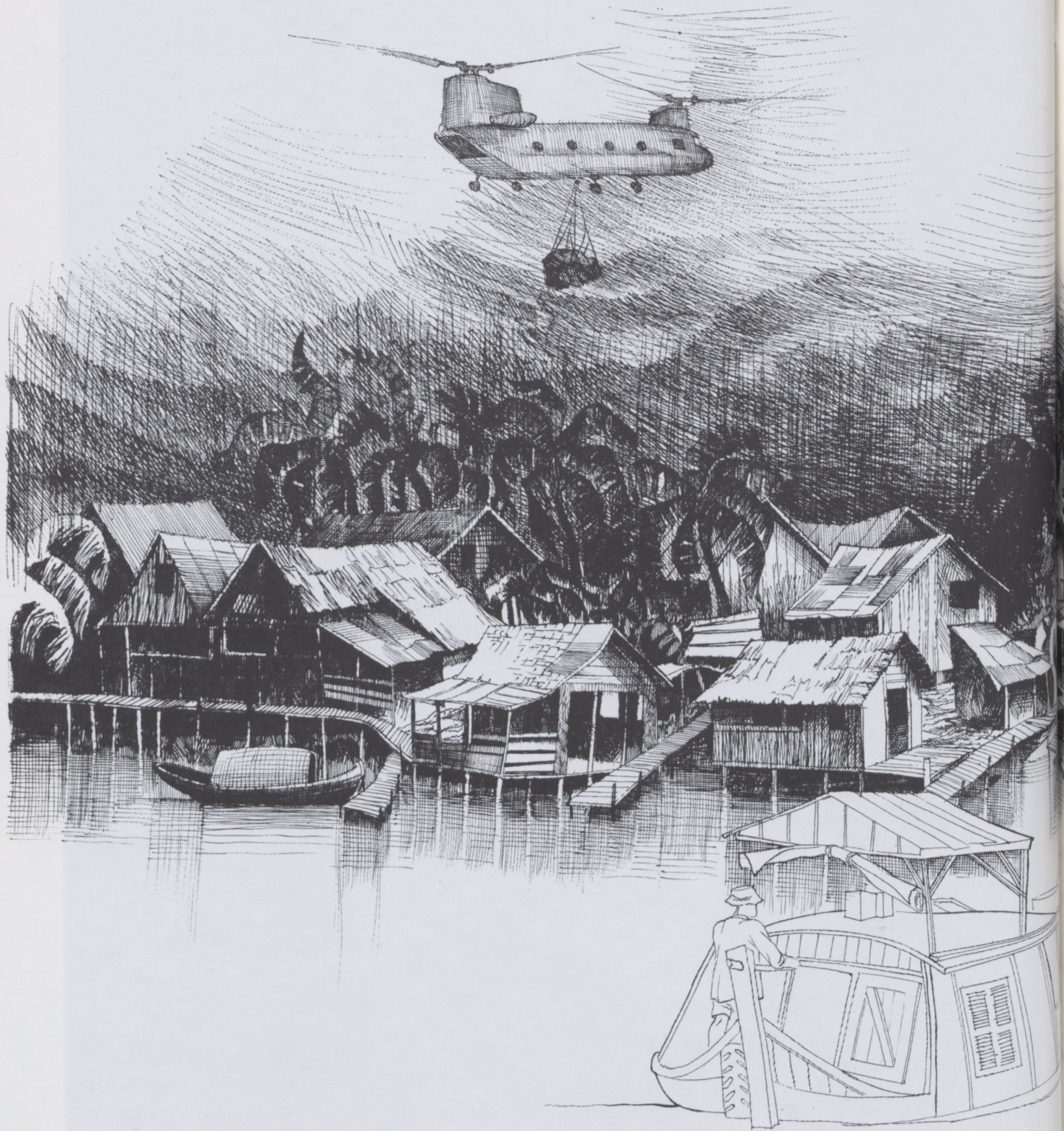
And lesions waited in the lungs.

SUMMER: 1941

And children playing in the dirt:
kicking it up into clouds, imagining
it to be

thousands of things.

Fires and fogs and poison gases.
Little boys gasping in the dust,
pretending death
and laughing.



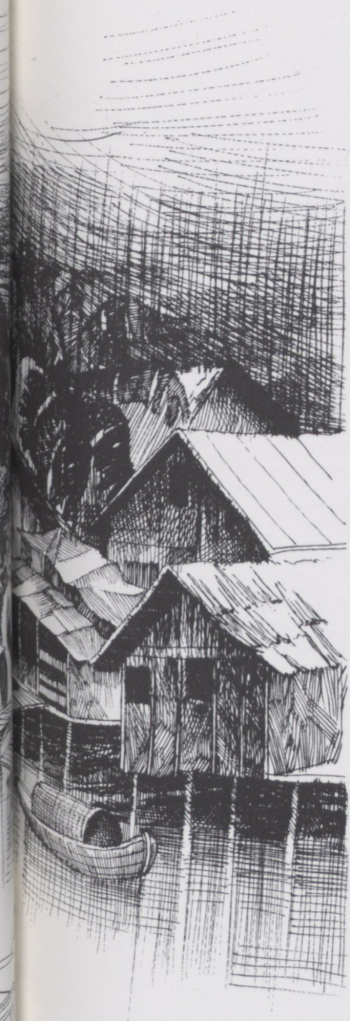
ONE OF THE FLIES

*As flies to wanton boys are we to
the Gods. They kill us for their sport.*
King Lear (IV, 1, 36)

The body lay on the knoll, curled around a scant bush, a fetus awaiting a birth that would never come. Its head was missing. The boy sat looking at the body, amazed by how undramatic a man with his head blown off really looked. There should be more. More ... blood, maybe. What blood there was had dried in the late-morning sun; it looked like maroon road tar, and there wasn't enough of it. Maybe some had run down the incline of the knoll and was under the body?

The boy reached for the dead man, to roll him over and see if there was more blood; but as his finger tips made contact with the fabric of the dead man's uniform, his hand stopped. He smiled at himself, and leaned forward, but he could not force his hand to take hold of the dead shoulder. Humiliated, he glanced around to be certain none of the guys were watching as he pulled away from the body.

"This is stupid," the boy thought, "nothin' but a dead slope head."



Sweat started to issue from the boy's forehead; he picked up a corner of the green towel around his neck and wiped at it. Sitting in the foreign heat drained of energy and emotion, he toyed with the corner of the towel and pondered. Why had he hesitated? Why had he not just rolled the body over? Who would care? The yellow dust and dirt? The sparse vegetation? The fuckin' flies? No. The entire hill top, protruding from the jungle like a jaundiced man going bald, would not care.



He would look for the blood later. He wanted a cigarette first. The boy lit a cigarette from the crumpled package in his pocket.

He inhaled the smoke and held it in his lungs, trying to understand why anyone would want to smoke in this heat, and deciding not to look at the body. What did he care anyway? He had seen bodies before, maybe not as many as the guys who had been here awhile, but enough. The other guys never paid much attention to the bodies; they were too busy talking about hamburgers, beer and pussy. They might think he was weird.

The boy sat there sweating and fumbling the crumpled cigarette package in his fingers. "Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health."

"Mommy, it's my turn to read the cereal box this morning! Charles had it yesterday, mommy. Mommy! I want to look at the pictures. Make him give it to me, mommy!"

"Charles, give the box to Sherri Lynn."

"There take the fuckin' cereal box."

"Don't say fuck at the table, Charles."

"Thank you, mommy ... mommy ... mommy."

The boy threw away the cigarette package and inhaled more burning smoke. His neck was starting to ache under the weight of his helmet, so he took it off; laid it at his feet and watched a fly land on it. Then another fly, circling,

smaller and smaller circles, circling and landing there too.

A rivulet of sweat ran down the boy's cheek. He wiped it away, watching the flies walk around on his helmet as if they were scouting for the best the hill had to offer. He looked from the flies on his helmet to the hundreds jiggling about the mutilated body, then turned back and swatted at the two on his helmet with his hand. One of the flies left to search some other sector of the hill; the other merely circled a few times and returned to the helmet.

"Now young ladies and gentlemen, today we start on the subject of diptera. Flies. We will be concerned primarily with the common housefly, which we shall have to capture for use in our projects. We will be drawing and dissecting them."

"Fuck!"

"Charles, don't say fuck in the classroom. Now then, the secret to catching these evasive little creatures is to hold the hand above them as you grab. This way the fly, diptera, flies up into your moving ..."

The boy held his hand poised for the attack. He knew all about flies; he had drawn them, their intestines and everything. He knew the fly wouldn't hesitate to roll the body over; the fly would eat the body. How was it ole Mr. Able put it?

"Many species act as scavengers and do much good in the reduction of carrion ..."

The boy relaxed the perched hand and sat back.

"Go get it," he whispered so none of the guys would hear him talking to a fly, "Don't let them screws have it all. Look at it!" Indicating the decapitated body, "It's a Goddamn'd feast."

There was no evidence of a brain, at least nothing that looked like his idea of a brain. There was just the lower gum and some teeth in a gunky montage. There were eight, nine . . . ten teeth, but one of them stuck forward at a right angle to the others and didn't look much like a tooth. He counted it anyway. Ten teeth on a lower gum, everything else missing . . . gone.

It wasn't all messy and spread around like it should be. Just the montage of reds, pinks, browns and purples of varying degrees. The boy made a frame with a finger and the thumb of each hand and, trying to push the reality of this art work from his mind, held it up to block out all but the colorful debris. It was wrong.

There should be more. Maybe it should look softer? He reached out; he would just touch it very gently to see how soft it was. He stopped. What would he wipe his hands on if it was softer than it looked? He didn't want to use the green towel around his neck; he wiped his face with that. He didn't have a handkerchief. He pushed the hand closer; it didn't look all that soft anyway; just short of contact the boy's hand stopped again; he would wipe his fingers on his trousers. A little gunk wouldn't show in the jungle dirt on his trousers. The hand began to shake. He leaned into his shoulder to drive the hand forward; it wouldn't hurt the trousers, but the harder he forced, the more the hand shook.

"What if I fuckin' puke?"

"Charles, don't say fuck while you're pukin'."

He pulled the hand back and sat up.

"That would be great if the guys saw me puke."

He had not been able to force his hand close enough to frighten the flies feasting there; he was being silly. It was entirely possible that he had killed the body, that he shot the head away. It was silly not to touch it. But then, why should he touch it? A man could be in a jungle fighter without touching the bodies. Couldn't he?

The boy turned to the brave fly strolling around on his helmet. He swatted again. The fly lifted, circling toward the body to land in the technicolor montage, the boy watching, hating, feeling the fly laughing at him. He looked away, but immediately snapped his stare back. He wasn't going to let a fly stare him down.



He stared.

His eyes began to water and the lids jumped to ward off a needle of sunlight reflecting from the dead man's buckle. It was one of those chrome buckles with a big red star in the center.

"Wonder how many fuckin' nations use stars?"

"Charles, don't say fuck in front of the stars."

He looked at the buckle, then quickly back at the fly. It was one of those collector's items. He looked back at the buckle. He had seen some of the guys wearing them; and now, here he sat with one of his own. Right there! Where he could reach out and touch it! Couldn't he?

Most of the red had flaked away from the star; the buckle was generally pitted and scratched; the belt was worn and cracked. It had character. It certainly was a collector's item.

"Wasn't much, he would say to the big-titted blonde on his lap, running her fingers through his hair, "They jist come a-runnin' at me, see, with this belt shinnin' like a baby's ass, and I shot off his fuckin' head."

"Charles, honey, don't say fuck in front of mah big tits."

The boy wiped sweat from his face and wanted a cigar. He had never smoked a cigar in his life, but he wanted one now. He would need practice if he was going to smoke cigars in front of the big titted blondes. It wouldn't look right if he lit one and got sick in front of the girls. All alone in a circle of tits, puking his guts out. That would be worse than puking in front of the guys, and besides...

What if there were no stories, no girls; he could touch it? Couldn't he?

He looked around to be certain none of the guys were sneaking up on his prize while he was thinking. It was his.

The guys were starting to clear the balding, jaundiced pate of bodies, wounded, weapons and usable equipment. The fight had ended a few hours before dawn, everybody had rested some, and now the aftermath, guys dragging dead buddies and stacking them like cords of decayed wood, other guys gathering weapons and usable equipment, and still other guys rumaging through the fruits of their labor for boots, or trousers, a watch, ring, camera, a canteen, or anything which could be sold, or was better than what they already had, especially a belt with character.

The helicopters were starting to arrive, circling, awaiting their turn to drop into the diarrhea and decay, large knives cutting through the stench waiting for a cargo of death or deformity for that other world behind the tree tops. The boy wished they would hurry. The sun was high now. It was getting hotter; the shade had been blown away; the bodies were beginning to stink.

The boy looked at the flies feasting on the brainless body, disgusted than even a fly could find sustenance in the gunk and decay.

"If the body had won," the boy thought, "it wouldn't be laying there. It would be getting on a chopper to be delivered to a respectable grave. It wouldn't have to lay there in the fly shit and stink.

"Notice how flexible the ear lobes are. Just feel them," Mr. McGauhey said over the drone of mourners in the next room.

"Yes, I see."

"Your brother looks very natural and content."

"Yes, sir, you sure done good for Uncle Paul. Don't Uncle Paul look good, Charlie?"

Charlie didn't answer.

"We try to mix our powders and blend them into the flesh so the subject doesn't appear quite so?"

"Dead?"

"Well, yes. We feel it makes it easier on the family and loved ones if the subject appears less . . . shall we say deceased."

"Well, sir, you sure done that, an' I want you ta know we appreciate it. Don't Uncle Paul look good, Charlie?"

"Looks fuckin' dead ta me."

"Charles! Don't say fuck in front of Uncle Paul."



A body in a grand box, or . . . this. The boy would like to see the fleshy powders make ole ten teeth look less deceased. But that was the fly's job. That's what flies were made for. God's gift to losers.

Somebody laughed.

The boy turned and saw the only prisoner taken by either side. He was seated in the middle of a circle of the guys. He was laughing, and the guys were laughing with him. The only prisoner, and he was wounded, but not bad.

"Look at 'em sons a bitches laughin'," the boy thought, "like ole bosum buddies talkin' about a damned ball game." The boy's hands curled into fists, "They ought ta shoot the greasy little prick, then they'd have somethin' ta

laugh at."

An interpreter was telling the guys how the prisoner's outfit had been lost and had not known anyone was in the area until the unexpected contact. So what, the boy and the guys had been lost too, and were just as surprised by the contact, but they had won. That was the difference. The enemy had only killed forty-five of the guys, but the guys had killed over two-hundred and sixty counted bodies. God knows how many others. One of the guys had said that if you counted ten bodies, you had probably killed twenty-five of the sneaky little pricks. That would mean the guys could report enemy casualties as two-hundred and sixty actual, and, say . . . three hundred probable. The reports would show five hundred and sixty dead rounded off to six hundred.

The reason for this was the meat hooks. Everybody knew the enemy carried meat hooks. After a fight, they would hook their wounded under the arm and their dead under the chin and drag them out. The boy didn't know anyone who had seen them do it, but one of the guys said a prisoner told him that was what they did. Besides, it was common knowledge.

"Anyway, we won," the boy whispered to the flies, "that's the important thing. We won."

The flies were not impressed.

"I bet there ain't one fuckin' place in this whole fuckin' world that a guy can go without bein' bugged by fuckin' flies!"

"Charles don't say fuck in front of the whole fuckin' world."

"Fuck!"

The boy swatted at the flies, this time his hand came close enough to set them to flight. He continued striking as they bobbed and circled and buzzed and disappeared, except one. The one fly continued to bob and circle until the boy sat back breathing the heavy air of fatigue. The fly returned to enjoy the brainless feast alone.

The prisoner laughed. The guys laughed too.

The boy's eyes stared hate and disgust at the fly. Thinking of diarrhea, without looking away, he let his hand glide down his leg to the rifle laying on the ground at his side. The hand crept down the rifle, to the soundtrack of laughter, until it found the familiar grip just behind the trigger. The boy lifted. Not too fast, very careful, patience until the butt of the weapon was fitted into the

natural pocket of his shoulder, and the laughter tapered off.

The boy pulled the weapon tight into the pocket and laid his cheek across the synthetic stock. His finger reached for the trigger as his eye located the fly through the rear sight. Careful. He adjusted the alignment until the fly appeared to be eating on the front sight blade.

Now. He would do the right thing. Now he would make the world a better place to live. His finger tightened on the trigger. He sensed the recognizable slack before the sweet explosion, and stopped.

The fly just sat there, eating.

The prisoner and the guys began to laugh.

The boy held the rifle, held his world in that rear sight. He would kill that son of a bitch. He would. Wouldn't he? A fly? Sure he could. But he might get in trouble for it. How could he justify killing a fuckin' fly?

"Oh Chaaaaarles?"

The boy's arms began to shake under the strain of holding the rifle. He tried to hold the fly on the front sight blade, but the shaking looked like major convulsions through the little hole in the rear sight. He would do it! He could do it!

He could do it!

Couldn't he?

"Bang," his eyes burned to the pain of salty sweat.

Couldn't he? Oh Beautiful . . .

"Bang."

Couldn't he? For spacious skies . . .

"Bang . . . bang, bang, bang."

The boy threw the rifle to the ground, tears streaming through the jungle dirt on his face, as he reached out and grabbed the chrome belt buckle with both hands. He jerked the body. Bits of pink and maroon fell to the ground; the fly held on.

"God's gift to losers!"

The boy's fingers were trying to move too fast. He was fumbling. He stopped, took a deep breath, poised his hands, firm, deliberate, he disengaged the buckle, and placing his hand flat against the dead hip pulled the belt through its loops.

He was a winner. He would have his prize!

His grip tightened on the belt as he laughed at the fly, joined by a chorus from the circle around the prisoner. He grabbed the body by both shoulders and lifted.

"Do your stuff, baby!"

There was more blood.

"You're the only family this fuckin' screw, this fuckin' loser's got."

It was dried and clotted like brown clabber.

"Do it to him. Yeah, man. Do it to him," the boy encouraged the fly, through the laughter lodged somewhere between his stomach and throat.

He shook the body and the tooth that reached out at a right angle fell and hit his arm. He stopped.

The fly was still there looking him square in the eyes.

"Fuck!"

He shook the body again, but the fly held fast.

"Fuck!"

He let the body fall and stood up. The fly was still there. He dropped his prize belt and released the buckle on the one he was wearing, pulled it through the loops, put the buckle in his hand and wrapped the belt around twice.

He would have the big-tited blonde, and he wouldn't puke. He wouldn't puke!

"Charles don't say puke while you're fucking."

He whirled to the body, swinging the belt into the pink, purple and maroon. Meat fell to both sides of the belt tip as it rebounded revealing a faint black spot where the fly had been.

"Sherri Lynn, look at Charlie's new belt!"

The boy let himself drop back into a sitting position in the dirt and grinned at the faint spot.

He leaned forward against his knees and rubbed his chin with pride which rose higher at the feel of the soft nap made stiff by the dried salt and jungle dirt in his beard. He looked down at the arc of salt around his arm-pit already darkened by the moisture of a new day. A good day. He grabbed the towel from around his neck and covered his face with the green terry, wiping away the sweat. It felt good. It was good. The sweat was good. The dirt was good. It was good being a winner!

"Sherri Lynn! Charlie is to have the fucking cereal box every fucking morning for a fucking month, and I don't want to hear one fucking word about it!"

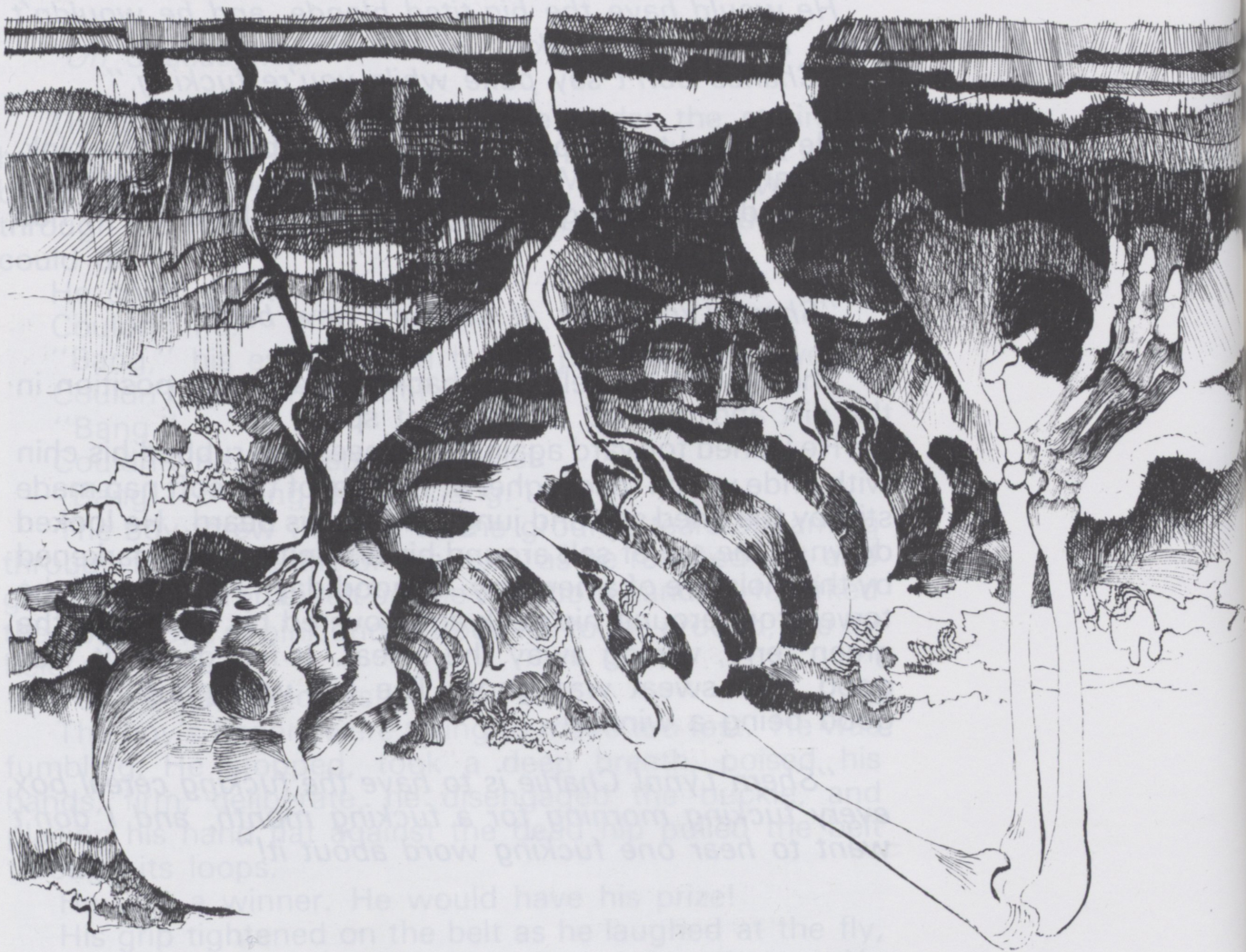
"Did anyone see him fall?"

"There's a shoe."

He could hear coins rattle and click.

"Nunn-Busti."

Another hand moved under the pile of pants and mush that had been his hips.



There was more blood.

heavenly eyes

"Alive?"

The voice was above him, the face not in full view, only the forehead and eyes.

"Is he breathing?"

Someone's hot hand was on what remained of his chest, pressing only slightly. Another thumped his stomach, the over-ripe fruit. He knew his chest would not rise. He also knew it would not fall.

"He seems dead."

"It was a major conversion," he had thought looking into the mirror. Felix had been talking to his image, singing "Baby Face" perhaps, or whistling a Bachian fugue. He had finished his shower, was preparing to shave when the Angel had spoken to him. He was watching the quick-soft ooze pile upon his palm when a voice, winging out of the drain, had said:

"Felix Culper, you are chosen."

"It was a major conversion," he repeated into the blurred image.

"Did anyone see him fall?"

"There's a shoe."

He could hear coins rattle and click.

"Nunn-Bush."

Another hand moved under the pile of pants and mush that had been his hips.

"There's no wallet."
"Lookin' th' streets."
"Why me?"
"Call th' police, somebody call th'..."
"Does that matter?"
"Not now."

*But chosen for what? he asked the image.
He would find out.*

He had left his wallet at the apartment.
"No identification?"
"None."
"You can hardly make out his features. Except for those eyes."
He felt something warm and thick in what must have been his mouth. It tasted like nails.
"Should we cover him?"
"Wait, just wait."
The eyes, just the eyes left?

Father Fulman's eyes had kept their steady gaze as he explained his major conversion and his plans to salvage what few souls were left in the human race. The good Father had smiled at Felix, picked up the phone quietly and dialed the police.

Felix had left before they arrived.

"Where are they?"
"We need to get 'im off th' street at least."
"Someone cover him for Chrissake."
"I don't think I can..." Someone's feet clicked across the concrete. There was a gag and a cough, something wet scalded the hot streets.
"Week stomach. Someone cover the lower parts."
"Watch th' glass there."

Felix had paused outside the glass doors of the A&P, paused and smiled and pushed through them. He walked quietly to the bread counter and began opening the loaves, tearing slices of white, wheat, and rye bread and handing the pieces to the customers who strolled by blinking in confusion.

The manager had quickly called the police and the sirens whined outside the glass doors.

Felix had left before they arrived.

A throbbing, red light brushed across his eyes now. The hum of voices and opening doors. A rattle and click of an

aluminum stretcher. Hands were on him again. Smoke from cigarettes and the smell of alcohol and white lines. They began tugging at his pants.

He had tugged on the little girl's polka-dotted sleeve. The sleeve was embossed with the morning's breakfast yolk.

He had whispered in her ear: "Suffer little children, come unto me."

A pair of silver-rimmed glasses and red lips turned upon Felix.

The lips coiled into a rage.

"What th' hell do you think you're doing?"

"Mama?" The little girl's voice rattled in her throat.

Felix tugged and whispered: "Suffer you come."

The lips flapped and coiled. A fat, freckled hand began motioning for a policeman who stood near the corner.

Felix had been chosen.

He left before the policeman could reach them.

It must have been an ambulance. His eyes stared up, into the lights lining the sides of the vehicle. The voices were muffled. An occasional outline of a clean, cleft chin was drawn by the flare and shadow of a match to a cigarette. He could see the cheeks puff and collapse as the attendants smoked.

He could not hear his heart beating. His eyes remained open. Why had they not brushed them closed?

Chosen for what? He could not think. He had stood quietly in the park beside a statue of Socrates thinking. He watched two flies mate on the philosopher's furrowed brow. As the flies climaxed he made a resolution. There was only one thing to do. He left the park and headed for the nearby skyscraper. Socrates continued to stare into his knuckles.

On the ledge, the wind blew across his face, tilting the paper-clip crown down over his eyes. Voices and hands were frantic and waving. Soon the air would vanish and there would be no light.

On the slab, staring into the arcs of ceiling lights, he listened to them rustle in their green gowns. They were untangling his clothes from the mush and bones. There were slight giggles which punctuated the hum of the archlights.

Someone suggested, "Close his eyes."

A hand brushed over, blocking out the lights.

It was the necessary darkness and he ascended.



Things in general

"General, my magazine is concerned over reports of a drug problem amongst our fighting men. We would be interested in your reaction to this."

The general thought for a moment, "To what?"

"The drug problem, general."

"Oh, well, I think today's black soldier is the finest fighting man this country has produced."

"Your squad leader tells me you don't want to walk anymore," the captain said looking down at the black soldier seated, barefoot, at the edge of a jungle trail.

"M'feet hert." the black soldier mumbled without looking up, standing, or caring that it was his company commander speaking to him. Why should he care? This wasn't his war. He knew he would die in this jungle and it would still require an act of congress for his ole lady to crap at the court house.

"Get on your feet, boy!" the platoon sergeant yelled as he ran up to stand beside the captain, "An ah best be hearin' some 'sirs,' passing' 'tween dem fat lips!"

Eubanks neither moved nor spoke.

"You know you could be court-martialed for this, private." the captain said, motioning the sergeant to silence before he had a chance to speak again.

"M'mo-fukin' feet hert."

"This man's been askin' fer it fer a long time, sir." the sergeant said with insight, not feeling narrow, but aware; he had served with enough niggers to know how they were.

"You, want to go to jail, private?" the captain asked struggling to keep his voice calm.

Eubanks looked at the captain's familiar feet. This was

his war. The black soldier felt he had spent half his life squatting scared at these feet, "Mister Charlie" towering over him with those ivory voices ringing in his black ears.

"Ah don't giv' mo-fuk wut yo' do. M' feet hut, an' ah ain't walkin no mo'," he said, too tired to care, and too disgusted to be afraid.

The long, awkward Smitty and his tail, Reickard, had stepped off the path and were sitting in the underbrush against a jungle tree enjoying a chew of Smitty's Red Man tobacco and observing Eubank's confrontation with authority. The tobacco was hard to get in the jungle, so the two soldiers did their chewing discretely. That way, the screws, who didn't really chew anyway, wouldn't be bumming their tobacco.

Smitty spit. "What'a ya think da Captin'll do?"

Reickard spit. It wasn't as pretty as Smitty's, but Reickard was just learning, "It would be difficult to discern at this point."

Smitty's voice rolled around the large wad in his mouth as he pushed it from one jaw to the other, "Won't do much, not ta no nigger. Not no more."

"I hardly think the captain's inclined to tolerate such disobedience," Spit. It was still mediocre, "no matter what the man's pigmentation."

"Whal, he might be a nigger, but he's tall as anybody." Smitty let fly a beauty, "Sides, 'Banks's a good gunner and good gunner's hard ta find."

"Shit." Reickard slobbered on his chin, he rolled his eyes toward the tree tops, embarrassed by how strange the simple word had sounded coming out of his mouth.

"Boy! You better get off'n yer ass! I wanta see some 'tentions! I wanta hear some, sirs! Off'n yer ass, boy!"

"Think about what you're doing, son," the captain said remaining calm, "You could be putting a black mark on your record that will plague you the rest of your life."

The soldier looked at the black skin on his feet amused by the captain's ignorance and mumbled, "Fuk it."

"You ain't talkin' to no captin' like dat, boy!"

"Goin' ta jail anyways. Fuk it."

The Sergeant First Class grabbed the lapels of the soldier's shirt and jerked him to his feet. "You ain't gettin' away with yer shit! Not while yer're wearin' that uniform!"

The black knocked the sergeant's hands aside, "Den ah'll tak' da sons a bitch off! jus git m'on a choppa, baby. Sen m'ta jail, but git m'ass outta her'!"

"Donchu call me baby." the sergeant retorted, his mouth moving faster than his mind as he snatched out his

pistol, pulled the slide to the rear, and let it go home with a live shell, "Take off that uniform, boy, yer jus one mor' of da enemy out her'. I'll send yer fuckin' saddle home."

Eubanks looked to the captain's expressionless face, but the officer just looked at the sergeant, then turned his back and walked a few feet away. The soldier looked at his sergeant, the gun in his hand. That goddamn gun! This goddamn jungle!! All the fucking guns!!

"Motha-fuck ya and yo' mo-fukin' warin' shit!"

Smitty spit. "Think that sarg'll shoot'm?"

Reickard decided to wait. Maybe his wad wouldn't look so small if he didn't spit too close behind Smitty, "I'm rather inclined to doubt it."

"Shit. Bet's first time he's had dat howg-leg out in years. Ah doubt he 'members howta use it." Spit.

"Our sergeant has a role problem. He is so busy trying to be what he thinks he should, he has forgotten what he is." Dribble.

Reickard reached up and wiped his mouth with the back of his hand as Smitty tilted his head forward and cocked it to look at his squat friend, wondering how he could see through the dust and sweat caked on his glasses, "Reick, yer fucked up."

Reickard looked at Smitty and smiled as he pulled a dirty white linen handkerchief from his pocket and wiped off the back of his hand.

"Listen, son," the captain said walking back to where Eubanks was standing, "My feet hurt too, all our feet hurt, and our backs ache, and we're on edge, but..."

"Doc said m'feet's too bad fo' dis shit."

The captain studied his young soldier for a silent moment remembering a voice from somewhere in his past telling him how even a harmless snake will strike if it is cornered. The officer didn't want to hurt this black boy; he didn't want to hurt anyone. He was tired, tired of hurting and fighting and killing. He just wanted to go somewhere quiet, lay down, and make babies, without making noise.

"Sergeant, does this man have a light duty chit?" the captain asked trying hard to remember where he was and wondering how he got there.

"No, sir!" the sergeant answered, offended that the captain had felt it necessary to ask. "He's had one for two months, sir. But I brought that shit to a screechin' halt. I went to medical and talked to them myself, just before he shoved off. They said they were just honoring his complaint, but said they couldn' find nothin' wrong. He's returned to full duty, sir."

"Fuk it."

"Smitty, did you by any chance read in Time magazine where the general said 'that today's black soldiers were the finest fighting men this country had' ever produced?"

"What da shit does he know? He ain't seen no fightin' men fer thirty years, cept maybe on da boob tube." Smitty spit, beautiful.

"Perhaps you're right." Reichard leaned forward and decided to just let it fall to the ground between his legs.

"I think the gener'l as generalizin'." Smitty said transferring his wad.

Reickard laughed his own peculiar small laugh, "Why, Smitty, you... I do believe you made a pun."

Smitty looked at his giggling friend, trying to figure why he had picked him, out of all the men fighting this war, "What da fuck's a pun?"

"Oh, why that's a..."

"And will you clean dem fuckin' glasses."

"Oh, goodness, "I didn't realize they were so..." He took his dirty handkerchief from his pocket and started wiping the glasses, "But you know, now, Sergeant Jackson was pretty good, and he was a negro."

"He'as a nigger," Smitty said as he leaned back against the tree, "and he'as damn good."

Reickard held the glasses up to check his work, not satisfied; he spit on the lens and winched as he was visually reminded of the tobacco in his mouth. He was afraid to look and see if Smitty had seen him. "Why, the day he was killed," the small soldier continued, trying to undo his damage, with the dirt-saturated handkerchief, "He was on his feet, running back and forth behind his platoon, directing fire as well as any platoon sergeant, and..."

"Bang." Smitty spit.

The captain spoke with a strained voice, his lips taunt like the sound would waiver if he opened his mouth to speak freely. "Private, there isn't going to be any helicopter," the officer's patience was gone, and his civility was following close behind, "You're on full duty like the rest of us, and you'll walk like the rest of us; only, you'll walk to jail."

The captain looked to the sergeant for silent confirmation of the order, then turned, and walked away.

The last time Eubanks had seen his company commander tight like that, the captain had shoved the barrel of his pistol through a prisoner's front teeth, for spitting on the interpreter. The captain had told the prisoner he would answer the questions, and the prisoner

had. Eubanks decided he would not push anymore just now; he sat down to put his boots back on.

"I...I'm...Ah'm gonna be right on yer ass, boy!" the sergeant stammered, waving the pistol in Eubank's face, "You miss one step, you even so much as hesitate, Ah'll shoot you right in yer lazy ass, yer lazy good-fer-nothin' ass! You got that, boy!"

"Don't miss, motha-fucker!"

"I'd feel lot better'd dat phoney cock sucker'd put dat howg-leg 'way for' he fuck's 'round an' shoots somethin'," Smitty said getting up to move out with the rest of the company.

"You can't seriously believe he would shoot Eubanks," Reickard said getting up.

"Eubank's ain't who ah'm worried 'bout."

"Well, possibly more expedient than sound, but one must admit that the sergeant and the captain did solve their problem with Mister Eubanks," Reickard said as he tried to improve his range with the standing position. It didn't help, his effort was too intense and the tobacco flew out of his mouth leaving brown saliva streaming through the stubble on his chin.

Smitty just closed his eyes and shook his head, "Reick, you are really fucked up, I don't know why ah let you foller ... yer as fucked up as hogan's goat."

Reickard wiped his chin with the back of his hand and reached for the handkerchief. He hesitated, thinking, forming each syllable before he spoke, "Least ah ain't a phoney cock sucker."

"I am," the General answered, "Yes, I am convinced. Why, I have discussed it at length with my staff," he scratched his crotch, "and I am convinced there is no problem.



(untitled)

dazed by her own distored illusion
taking stock in her green virginity
she bought a diamond dream
with an affirmative
when he spouted oiled words--
the poetry of prosperity

soon the wedding wrings her marriage to the millionaire
the two impaired in the playful act
when the heiress declined no royalty
but now prisoner of a platinum palace
the weasel woman in mink is clawing her cage



untitled

I died in the winter
and from the sower's bag
was planted as seed.

Within the bleak and silent chamber walls
the black procession
shed enough tears to turn my fingers
into roots
and hold me to the earth.

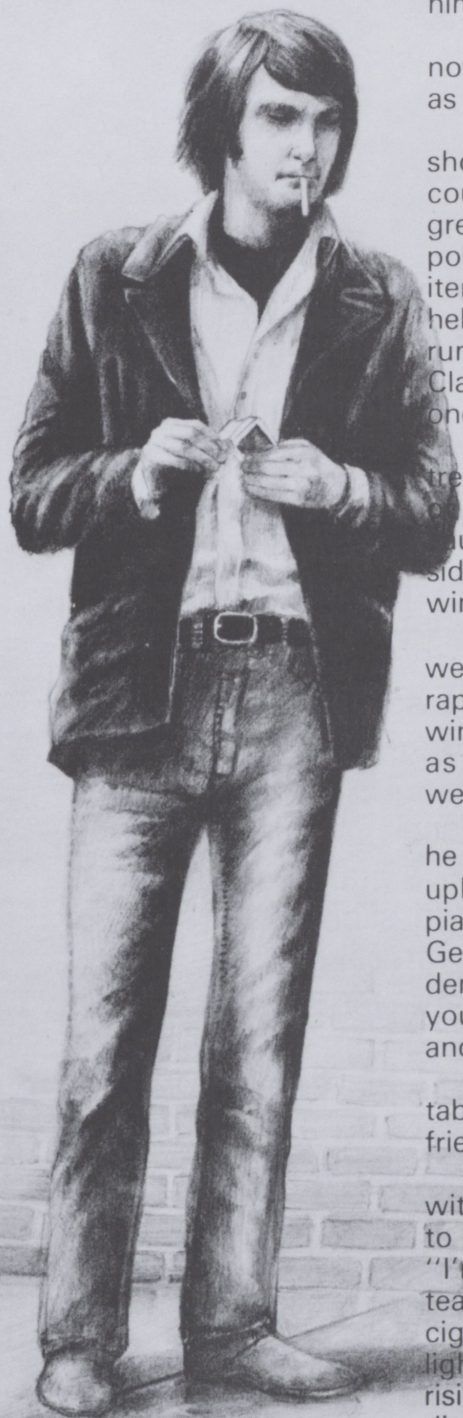
they cut the earth
and laid me in my bleeding bed--
my ears fell silent to the promise.
Thawing rains came,
turning my eyes to glass to see no stars,
and the cheating worm
went beyond my guarding hands
and ate my heart.

In spring the land from the tree of life
came knocking at my chamber door--
it came in and took what it could find.

When all was gone
I took my box of earthly treasures,
kissed my moulding lips,
and I went home.



REMNANT



He walked outside the restaurant. An hour for lunch was too long, he thought. He had forty minutes left before he had to be back to the publishing house. A boring job—he looked at the wet pavement—at least it expected little of him. Nothing like the newspaper was, no, nothing like that.

It was a chilly day. The night before it had rained but now the sky was clear. A small white cloud remained, light as a memory, spoiling the absolute blueness of the sky.

Clay wandered downtown, stopping by a little junk shop. He walked in, a bell tinkled. The man behind the counter turned and seeing Clay his eyes lit. The man greeted Clay as if he knew him, "Hello!" Clay smiled politely. Everything in the shop looked dry, faded. The items had the look of discarded stage props that had once held magic of a wonderful play but were now left to ruminate in disuse. The old boards in the floor creaked as Clay walked about. A thin, blue scarf floated irritatingly on one of the counters. Clay looked the other way.

The sun shone unevenly, falling lightly, playfully on the trees; yet glaringly onto the buildings, leaving the symbols of so much human effort with a gaunt, pale look. A leaf, caught in a whirl-wind, danced for a second and fell to the side-walk. Clay tried to stop the leaf with his foot, but the wind took it again. He walked back to work.

There were nights when Clay would read, and there were nights when he would get blind. He could spend long, rapt hours buried in Drieser, or Gide, sitting at home near a window. He also loved Dostoevsky; the ashtray would fill as he read. Afterwards he'd go to bed feeling well-read. How nice to be well-read, he poked himself.

Clay was going out. There was a bar downtown where he often went. It was too heavily carpeted, too heavily upholstered, a place for the climbers to feel successful. The pianist on seeing Clay would always begin to play Gershwin. (Once on a drunken, happy night Clay had demanded to hear "Summertime" three times.) "By yourself tonight?" the pianist called. Clay smiled politely and sat at the bar.

He drank. Groups of twos and threes sat laughing at the tables, speaking the languages of office, and school, and of friends newly married.

Clay was on his third drink. He started a conversation with a high school geometry teacher who was sitting next to him. "I never was too good in geometry," Clay offered, "I'm sure it's interesting, though, Plato liked it." The teacher went to the rest-room. Clay, alone again, lit a cigarette, his reasoning beginning to leave. A song drifted light and slow through the air, the notes playing on the rising smoke of his cigarette. The melody was warm in the dim orange light—warm in the orange light, he stroked her brown back, got her hair in his mouth—"Another?" asked the bartender.

"Yes, please, and get one for the math, I mean, geometry teacher too."

The next morning Clay's cigarette tasted like cotton, and he made his coffee strong.

Envy

Look at the shape of your fear.
Touch it. Polish its features
with the anxious knowledge
of the blind,
but do not compare.

When envy snaps the spine,
and sparks short hate,
remember
what waits in the space
of two notes, coiled,
what strikes in that red silence.
Like a lizard on the water,
lie and wait.

untitled

Six years of your talking to me, very excitedly.
yadda yadda yadda
words skip from your mouth.
Your eyebrows charge up, hands flutter:
all signs of interesting conversation.

Only I'm not listening.
I'm not noticing how much
your long hair looks like a wig--
a piece stuck on your face.
Your face a puppet's--
jaw moving up and down,
wood knocking wood.

I try to believe that you're real (as you once were)
but I can't get beyond the little dance you do.
Smiling, laughing, shaking your head.
You think I understand you.
I cover my face. You must not see
how completely love has left.

sound

bird fluttering in the distance
mistaking my lamp for an early sunrise
cigarette smoke burns images in the dark
my thought races towards tomorrow

dear mother: i am fine
i know that you were wise
coming home soon...

a word upon a line

my ashes fall into yesterday's coffee
symbol of my independence
like the empty bottle of wine
yet i am going home
bringing back all the ties
wondering why i ever left

my cheek falls against the windowpane
eyes probing the vacant night
knowing it exists somewhere beyond my sight
the unicorn, the phoenix, the paper tiger
dream of no dimension

i turn out the light
tears threatening to overflow my eyes
quiet bird, the sun's gone down
i am going home

The hazards of Modern Life (A Contemporary Nursery Rhyme)
with Apologies to Mother Goose

ten little cocklebirds swinging on a vine
one took a whif of smog then there were nine
nine little cocklebirds sitting on a gate
one ate some lead based paint then there were eight
eight little cocklebirds flying towards heaven
one got hit by a sonic jet then there were seven
seven little cocklebirds sitting on some sticks
one fell in the Potomac river then there were six
six little cocklebirds making a sky dive
one fell down a factory smokestack then there were five
five little cocklebirds decided they were poor
one tried to get a welfare check then there were four
four little cocklebirds watching color t.v.
one sat too close to it then there were three
three little cocklebirds wondering what to do
one got knifed in the New York subway then there were two
two little cocklebirds watching the setting sun
one got hit by a drunken driver then there was one
one little cocklebird , "all alone," sighed,
"what kind of world have we birdbrains made,
that all my friends should die?"



COFFEE POTS AND MIRRORS

Coffee pots

and mirrors--

Can I avoid them?

can you?

Towel rack and images

await each day.

Everyman:

two aspects--

one creased, one whole,

Faces something

he calls Truth.

It is the bandage

he uses to repair

the nicks of time.





A POEM ON MYTH

I thought
casting you
meant laying
old myth aside.

But absence
and silence show:

You were not maker,
merely scribe.

Chris

I lost my eloquence
on the path to womanhood
lost with virginity
between white sheets
and common words,
the hairy shoulders
snoring next to me
I shudder

Talking four letters
one word goodbyes---
the hundredth time
my mouth burns with no-words
no questions,
looking for gushing
orgasmic phrases

I will remember the time
when I was young.
My parents and I spent summers
at the shore in a house called "the weed".
And how, when running from the sea, I fell,
set my sailboat shaped scar upon my cheek.

and how I sat with my airplane bandage
and watched my parents pout amber-bitter juice
into their glasses and dance upon a wooden floor
beneath a bare bulb glowing.

oh my father was full of my mother
he kissed her neck, held her closer
and how I watched them dance
through the amber-bitter juice
and my barefoot mother became an amber lady

for now I'll remember the sea has "the weed".
and how people in white stopped talking
and lowered their knowing eyes as I passed.
how my father held nothing
and I only knew my mother for her long hair
and how kind words hit the sterile walls
and hardened in my throat
and how my heart fought
the clinging hands that ripped it open
as I walked down the hall
beneath a bare bulb glowing.

PATHETIC HUMOR

How subtle,
the oppression, the force
in the expression
of such philosophy.
The vagueness of words,
deceitful
as the showers at Dachau.

Banners will fly;
children will play;
people living, straining
for desires to be met.
The contemporary savage
secluded by himself,
for himself,
to remain a slave
to himself only,
a pill for ulcers
flaming in his belly.

Sublime suggestions demanding response,
dusk comes only too soon for some,
but for us,
she hides her smile in my neck.

Eulogy to Tomorrow

The seas have floundered
a billion years hence,
and man has floundered
in night's glacial extinction;
Death's parade ever paces life;
Man hurries to the seas
to witness a greater folly than himself,
and perishes in the star-burnt moonfall.
The seas linger, mesmerized,
waiting for Man to arise at dawn
proclaimed self-made savior anew.
A night-clad Demigod
born of insanity
and New Year resolution.

God
or Ahura Mazda or Krishna
grin down from their skies,
counting the eons and the seconds
waiting, to silence the clocks of earth,
to fragment a billion years into snow,
the rhetoric of History extinguished.

And the seas shall flounder
a billion years hence--
mesmerized
silent in what they know,
homesick and lonely
for the comradary of Man.

The sun
breaks open the horizon
while a god sleeps,
unconscious
to the blustery boots
of the unknown.
The sounds seek the old man
working in his basement,
protesting the doors
that shut him in.
He views the chimney draft
and hears the belching hells.
Meanwhile,
shaving the last whisker
from his face,
the god pauses
for the old man to dream
of screaming eggs
and the birth of a world.

WHAT PRICE SEX

Sex. This story is about sex. Sex in the South on a warm, but not too sticky summer evening. The boy has ridden mules, shucked corn, and driven tractors. The two men, although friends, are unlike. However, they do share the South. Square rosewood grand pianos, plaster ceiling grape clusters, and twisted banisters are as much a part of the men's lives as the cobwebs behind canning jars filled

with peaches or pickles, and women who, to this very day, sweep their dooryards around while lilacs seldom bloom.

Bubber's house sits closer to town than it did eighty years ago, for the town has grown closer to it. Bubber's house probably never possessed a Chickering grand with bulbous cabriole or octagonal legs, but in all likelihood contained at one time an upright piano with a modicum of ornamentation and a soundboard whose resonance, although not perfect, lay beyond the realms of criticism except by only a few people whose ear had been wonderously trained in some conservatory or musical institute up north.

In this house, from which that probable upright had been removed in the 1940's after the war, the source of entertainment is now a color television set, a large 25 inch RCA portable. Beneath the brown cabinet on the wrought iron stand is a small highly glazed vase with orange, yellow, and blue plastic flowers, an acquisition of Bubber's mother's impulse, or a gift from some church occasion. A couch, two upholstered chairs, and other loved-out-of-necessity, objects fill the room. Beige walls and beige curtains cover the large counterbalanced windows.

Humanity, intelligence, and sensitivity are oblivious to surroundings. Yet once these qualities are developed in a person, and especially in a man, they are not qualities that reach necessarily for the stars, but are qualities that content a man with starry nights and flights of feeling. Bubber is one of those men, now in his late twenties who is resting his large body in one of the overstuffed chairs, his legs propped on the worn leatherette hassock. Bubber is a man of vision for he sees the difference between what is and what could be. Bubber is amused at the wonders of time-lapse photography with its racing clouds and exploding blooms, yet he prefers to watch his camellia buds open and exhaust themselves in their own time, to watch the sky flow into night, sunlight, or rain.

And it is with this view that Bubber knows the plastic flower beneath the television will someday be replaced; the beige walls become appropriately pastel; and, the drapes, period swags and flounces. This is Bubber on this evening. Earl, his friend, sitting across from him, is older. Earl is contemplating the quality of another potentially lackluster evening with his episcopal austerity. Earl is of the cloth. He is thin and fashionable, and inwardly feels that these two qualities will protect him from any of the trials and tribulations reserved for "other people." Bubber, for all his sensitivity, never detected that underlying attitude in Earl, for Earl, much like the interiors of a great many Roman Catholic churches, appeared pleasing, if

not somewhat excessive to the eye, until one looks behind the statues, organs, and altars and sees the debris of unenthusiastic cleaning and the accumulation of disuse.

The thin Earl began prodding Bubber with "Let's get something going."

Bubber twitched his buttock feeling more a part of the chair than a part of Earl's proposal. Bubber contemplated nothing pretending to contemplate everything, looking around him with a false determination. The stimulus proved to be too positive, for Bubber knew from the workings of his internal sensitivities that excitement is given to humans with undetermined irregularity.

"What do you want to do?" Bubber replied with only the slightest hint of enthusiasm in his voice.

"Get some action going."

Not being moved for less than an almost sure thing, Bubber threw the weight of invention on Earl. "We can. Where do you want to go?"

"Let's go on over to Langton," Earl suggested with little originality.

"You know nothing has ever happened over there."

"I don't want to stay around here." Earl pronounced, permitting his Sunday morning imperialism to creep into his voice.

"Yeah, I guess you're right," Bubber offered, scooting his massiveness farther down into the cushion.

"Why don't we call Phil? Maybe he'd want to go riding over there with us."

At this point Bubber knew the two of them were going out, regardless of what might happen. An indefinable moment or two passed and Bubber replied, "Are you going to call, or do you want me to call?"

Bubber knew what the answer was going to be, but had asked the question anyway, merely to bring an evenness to their responsibility for the evening's plans.

"Why don't you go ahead and call since it is your house. Besides, they might recognize my voice," Earl proffered.

Phil's family had nothing to do with Earl's church, but Earl's excuses were Earl's excuses.

Bubber called Phil.

"Un-uh. Phil's not chere."

Covering the mouthpiece haphazardly, but uttering nothing that would have dared offend anyone anyway, Bubber whispered somewhat uninspiredly to Earl, "He's not in." Earl uglified his mouth. Bubber shrugged his shoulders. Petite crisis. Bubber spoke into the phone, "Just a second," and put the receiver against his well-padded stomach.

Earl asked, "Who are you talking to?"

"The next younger brother-- the one that night the four of us went off and..." letting himself trail off.

With computerized quickness, Earl clicked out, "Ask him to go."

Bubber spoke into the phone, "Earl and I are thinking about riding around some, and we was wondering if you might like to go with us."

Before the question had time to register in the boy's mind, Earl blurted out, "Shit!" Bubber's free hand hit the mouthpiece. Earl continued, "We can't take a damned fourteen year old out with us."

Bubber shrugged, for the boy had just leisurely finished saying, "Ah wouldn't mind goin' for a ride."

"We'll be by in a little while then. Bye," Bubber concluded and hung up.

Earl pretended halfway disappointment. "Shit. What are we going to do with a fourteen year old kid? He's homely as sin. Shit!"

"Shit. Shit me," Bubber smiled. "It's got a dick and you've done it. You did it that night his brother took him along."

"I couldn't get you away from his brother," Earl retorted lightly.

Bubber smiled.

"Get that shit eating grin off your face."

Bubber quickly riposted, "We don't have to do anything with the kid, just drive around for awhile and take him back home."

Bubber knew his defense was a purely conventional social statement, but he wanted to believe that there was some truth in it. Bubber pulled the front door to, not locking it, and followed Earl to the car. They got into the four door sedan whose metallic blue, oxygen and sunshine had eaten into chalk. The same oxygen and sunshine that peels the paint off white houses: those large hollow houses that sprout magnolias and wrecking crews. Deserted American, lolling its evening activity between the TV, the kitchen, and the bathroom, tired of the monotony of recurring bills, recurring weekends, and work.

Bubber and Earl drove on in search for Phil's younger brother and their need for excitement, their search for a trick. A "trick," at once the most promising of creatures and the most unfulfilling. A "trick," the magic that may be turned into something regular, and short of regular, something that hopefully is interesting enough for conversation when the only diversions are reminiscing, polaroid photographs, and someone's oily paged, overviewed collection of professional pornography.

A trick fits precariously into the middle class system of soulless order. The search for the trick and the acceptance of the need for that kind of diversion are hastily condemned by people who suffer other people to be unhappy much in the way they are. On the long road from material success to spiritual collapse, Bubber and Earl have decided to take a detour, for they are hardly without spirituality. Earl's spirituality is incongruously conventional in comparison to Bubber's whose humanity flows from an overflow of the heart.

Regardless of their own shortcomings, Bubber and Earl see the conflicts in others' lives. They see and have seen in many young men the longing for a different life, the unhappy tension between impulse and conformity. They both have had long talks with young men who became young married men who came to despise not their wives, but the loss of freedom their wives eventually came to represent.

However, Bubber and Earl don't announce to society what their proclivities are. That men invariably link their names to those of their mothers and other young men seems a satisfactory resolution to their circumstances. Involvements with fourteen year olds do not enter the imaginations for their straight friends, for digressions of that magnitude are shared only with the initiated-- those who have waited in tearooms compromising their aesthetic standards for the thrill of a dick, or those who have risked criminal prosecution in public parks for their private acts.

Bubber and Earl had lived in big cities, but like those birds who rely solely upon instinct, they returned to the less hectic intersections of their childhood, having faith in the possibilities of a small town. Bubber drove his car with the abandon and territorial restrictions of a roulette ball, hoping his automobile would find the most rewarding resting place and multiply the investments of his time and efforts.

The car sluggishly stopped in front of a small white dying house. Inside was a family whose sons, though not specimens of nature's greatest achievements, were creatures who felt the pleasures of the body in an extremely selfindulgent manner. The sons in early puberty had developed an affinity for mutually experiencing the sweetness the body offers. At night the brothers had initiated each other into the secret mysteries of the flesh.

In the family, the older brothers had not forced the younger brothers to satisfy their desires through subjugation or humiliation. The older boys simply wanted pleasure. So in their beds, the boys contented themselves with reaching naturally between each other's legs and fingering the hidden penises, bringing them to an exciting

under the covers erection and then to a sock filled orgasm, for their mother would complain if the sheets were noticeably spotted.

Bubber tooted the horn.

The front door opened and closed. Earl got out of the car and the boy got in between them. They drove off. Bubber and Earl exchanged empty comments as they rode into the unpopulated country.

"Do you want to?" Earl directed toward Bubber with everybit of insinuation his voice could manage.

Bubber paused for he still maintained a sense of morality even in the sleeziest of circumstances. He could not consent with his lips, and yet he could not reject Earl's and his own secret desires, so Bubber once again shrugged his shoulders, which was to say, "I don't think we should, but on the other hand I can't see any real harm in it if the boy's willing."

Earl spoke next. He spoke flatly to the boy, "Take your clothes off."

The boy looked at him, reached down and began unlacing his large shoes. A not too great distance later with the shoes in the footwell and the clothes in the back seat, Earl ran his hands over the boy's body. Bubber let his free right hand join in the exploration of the child's nudity. Earl then ran his hand up on the boy's neck and pulled the boy's head down onto the hard Earl offered him. The boy, although not practiced in that oral activity, had some time before mastered the rudiments that brought pleasure to the recipient of his mouth.

Bubber had found a deserted road and had stopped the car. Bubber undid his trousers and slid them down to his ankles. Then Bubber took the boy's head into his lap. Bubber and Earl exchanged their young acquisition with regularity until he was no longer needed.

After the tissues were extracted from the crumpled box and thrown into the ditch at the edge of the adjoining field, Earl stated, "You can put your clothes on."

Bubber started the car amid the twistings and turnings of the young passenger. They began to drive back by a direct route. No one spoke. When they came to a state illuminated intersection, Bubber cut his eyes to Earl. Earl passively responded with another uglid expression. Bubber felt awkward and unctously overflowed with "Is there anything you'd like to do?"

A quick silence.

The boy spoke. "You could buy me a ice cream cone."

Bubber drove straight to the Dairy Queen, purchased the largest chocolate dipped concoction, and took Phil's younger brother home.

For the great L.F.:
robert paul smith,
an hommage



A story, you want me to tell you a story

YES, YES, YES

WHISPER, WHISPER YES

A funny real story
freed of details and quickly shortened
The young boy not pretty
who pretended smiles were touches
and so he sowed laughter everywhere
casting forth his seeds on every soil
and his life grew strangely in other hearts

He was alone so many nights
but a laugh, always laughter
running into the morning sun -
He winked at everyone knowing
he knew, and only nineteen, too
Nor could I love him
in any way I thought was love
It's not getting funny for all the nights,
and days we rode in his Pervertable
shouting and his telling people I wrote
and would one day be

This is afterall a real story
Tired so soon, so you want another

YES, YES, OH, YES, ANOTHER

About the frog who defended the marijuana patch
against the armies of Ulysses' men
To save the five pronged plant
Using amazing ingenuity
Writing signs and carving stelae
placing them strategically
while the ship hung in a bay suspended
between Zeus and Poseidon

"Beware Invisible Gods"

"Once touched, forever mad"

"No heroes here, just dreams"

Ulysses could not keep them back

but they saw no one

just the signs from the fabulous frog

Another, so soon

*WE DO NOT LIKE SERIOUS STORIES
AND YOU INSIST UPON TELLING US
SERIOUS STORIES*

Should I defend, or should I do?

You hear what you want to hear

I see only people

I know, you want the one

about the girl with red Repunzel hair

who flowed with nervousness into her boyfriend

who lay back amid

his stacks of books and future plans

and disapproved of everything

except his pleasure

How she loved, she surely loved

small breasted (Many a girl's envy,

but not her own)

But his body stiffened

and she loved that cold indifferent shaft

because she felt the world

and hugged everyone

She was forever getting over everything,

OR the one about the couple who

forever as anyone can remember were friends

and one day (with more tact than I)

admitted in their forties

"We are tired of living alone."

And so shared the plans of future sharing

The house will have everything

to accompany the large Waterford
Scotch glasses
But the girl with her Titianesque hair
has given up, if freed from that
Lawrencian hero Lawrence would have loved
and scorned, never like poor sweet Genet
who worshipped nature's profuse and littering gifts
If we were to address a different group, I'd say
Approach/Avoidance
The serpent snakes of Lawrence would be lovely
and would harm no one
slithering into the holes of pleasure
and the couple, Chippendaled into
("Christ what are") patterns (for?)
will live happily ever after

The sweet redhead will find someone new
Her dream from whom she demands
intelligence, indifference, equality and love.
I do not know if these things are compatible

Another story, you really want to hear another story

I will tell you about a beautiful man
a hero who was touched by Athens
more than Sparta
No hollow man but a grand eastern Greek
who is not Greek at all
but who like the sweet Narcissus
blooming between the pavement and the sidewalk
never sees himself
But mind you, he is Olympian
and like father Zeus arranges lives
and visits secretly
for a kiss, a smile, or a phone call
your heart
His sweet curse, blind Oedipus saw
and lived under twenty years,

is that no one saw his beauty
and those who did like those
who heard Cassandra's words
chose not to believe
But I have told you nothing of his life
the details
But the Greek, ancient, momentary 410 B.C.
Greek beauty
he could not see himself
And this is what they never understood is beauty:

Those marble and lapis eyes
staring into the marble soul—
The athlete never knows the beauty
others see in his race, his running—
The others come around, wanting to touch
but held back by some ribbon
Not all laurels fade
Rest my handsome friend upon your pillows
Call the gods and visions into words
Keep telling and telling when they ask

I cannot tell you another story for
Stories are of Gold

WE, WE, WE WANT ANOTHER STORY

Is there ever one last story?
Well, I suppose one, anyway

Once on the shores of alien land
Armies fought in lengthy wars
over things such as honor and blood—
Yes, those abstractions
amid many more abstractions,
and death occurred,
ever present death with its mysteries . . .

On one night, alone with the armoured body

of his lover, Achilles, in torchlight, cried

In you, I have died

You lie still, . . . Do you remember
the night, that first night?

I awoke many hours before sweet Aurora
kissed her god adieu— when Artemis
still rules the stars— when silver
paled that flesh, not death.

Desire came to me, quivering upon your lips,
Your sleeping lips—

Boys, we were boys pretending,

like all youth, to know
we knew ourselves—

Such foolishness we played to keep our hearts
protected. . . .

I boasted then, how brave!

But that morning you lay there
my fears dissolved in love—

O my friend, my lover

stand before me in death as you stood
beside me in life—

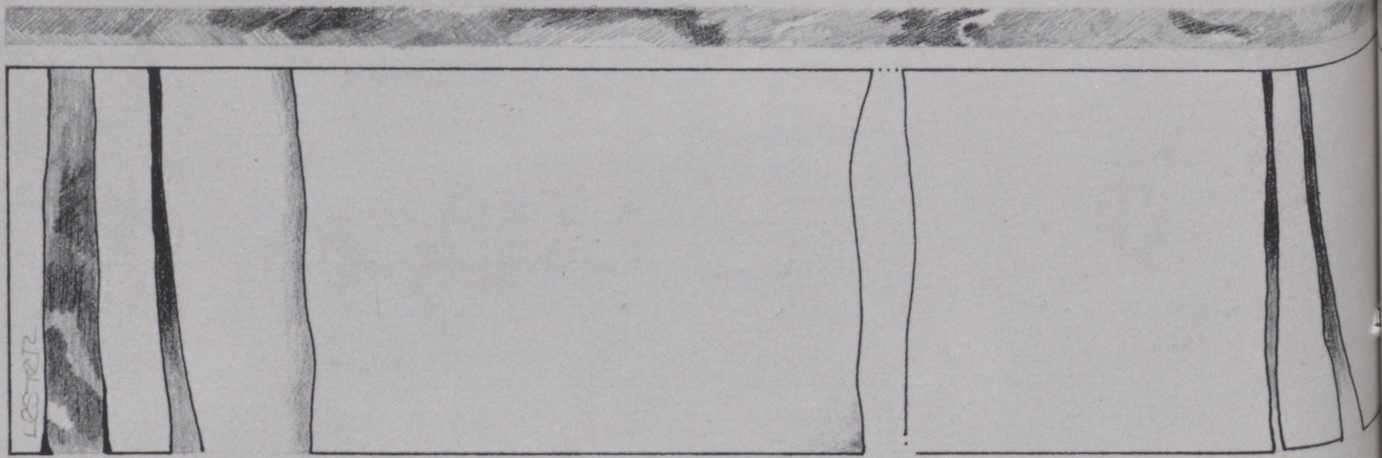
O sacred divinities, who call every mortal
to your shores, greet him with favor
and when you deem it just,
permit us in the realms of Morpheus
to meet.

My early death will join us quickly,
for against eternity, this grief is like
that desire of the first morning—
Swiftly dispelled, when both we touched.

In you, I have died

and in you, I shall live—

Sweet Petroclus, I await our union
in the Gods.



LESTER

October Beast

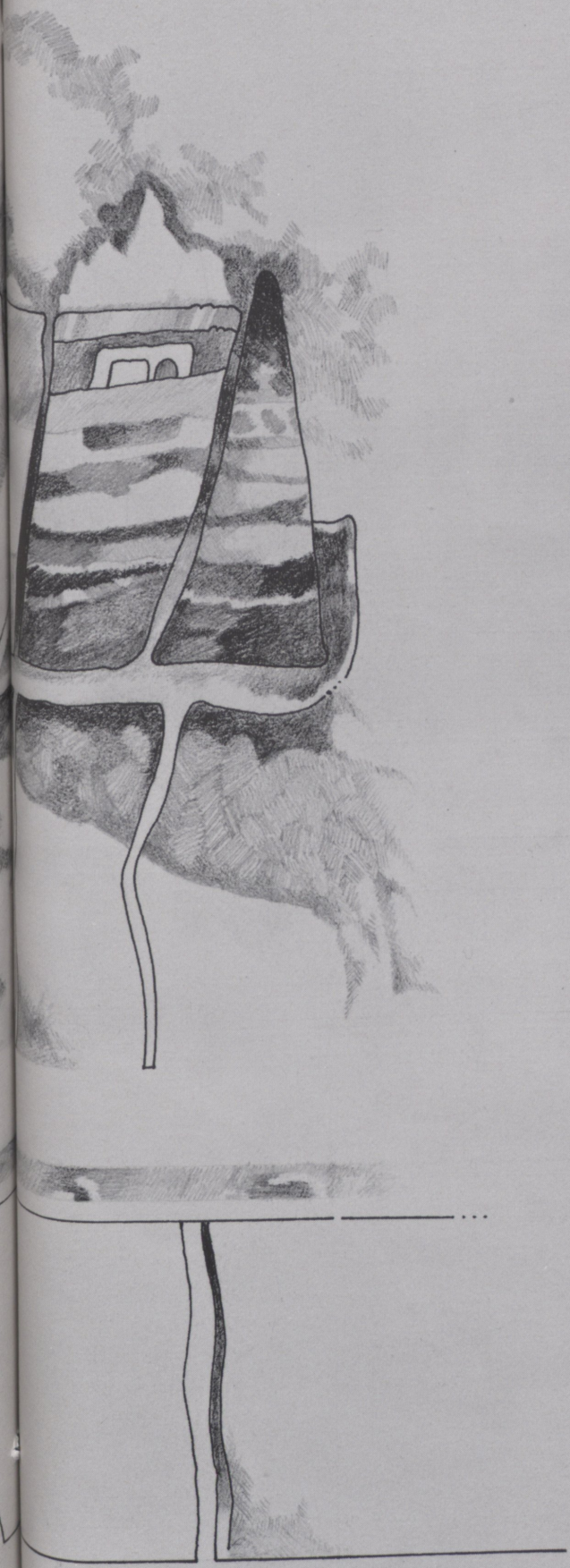
It would have done,
not the cry for more of you,
the teeth that tore a Hamlet's heart
to pieces of persuasion.
A legend glances from behind the fan,
an hour's dark breath
argues softly
its own endless theme.

Too soon you let her hear
the heart's pathetic pace
in and out of light.
She could not slash the mask,
you could not slave the face.
So repelled at the logic's conclusion
you knew more languages
than you had tongues.
The towers babbled for you in twilight.

An applied remorse,
a disciplined disaster
dangled from the eye's painted delirium.
You could have dropped you coat
in the foyer,
returned to stub the ashing cigarette
and wave away the haze,
you could even have hesitated by the door
describing a garden of regrets.

It would have done.
It would have held you
from an exit's completion,
the resolve's twisted walk.
From the golden hair in wet
and unhooked straps of fingers paused
came the elastic acceptance,
the pliable heart's paradox.

Tucked inside the gowns
of what was gone,
an enigma's ice
burns to clip the year.
And it was there,
coiling in starkness
like the wire's refusal;
struck,
you will reel to ruin
among the fangs and claws,
the unleashed laws of fall.



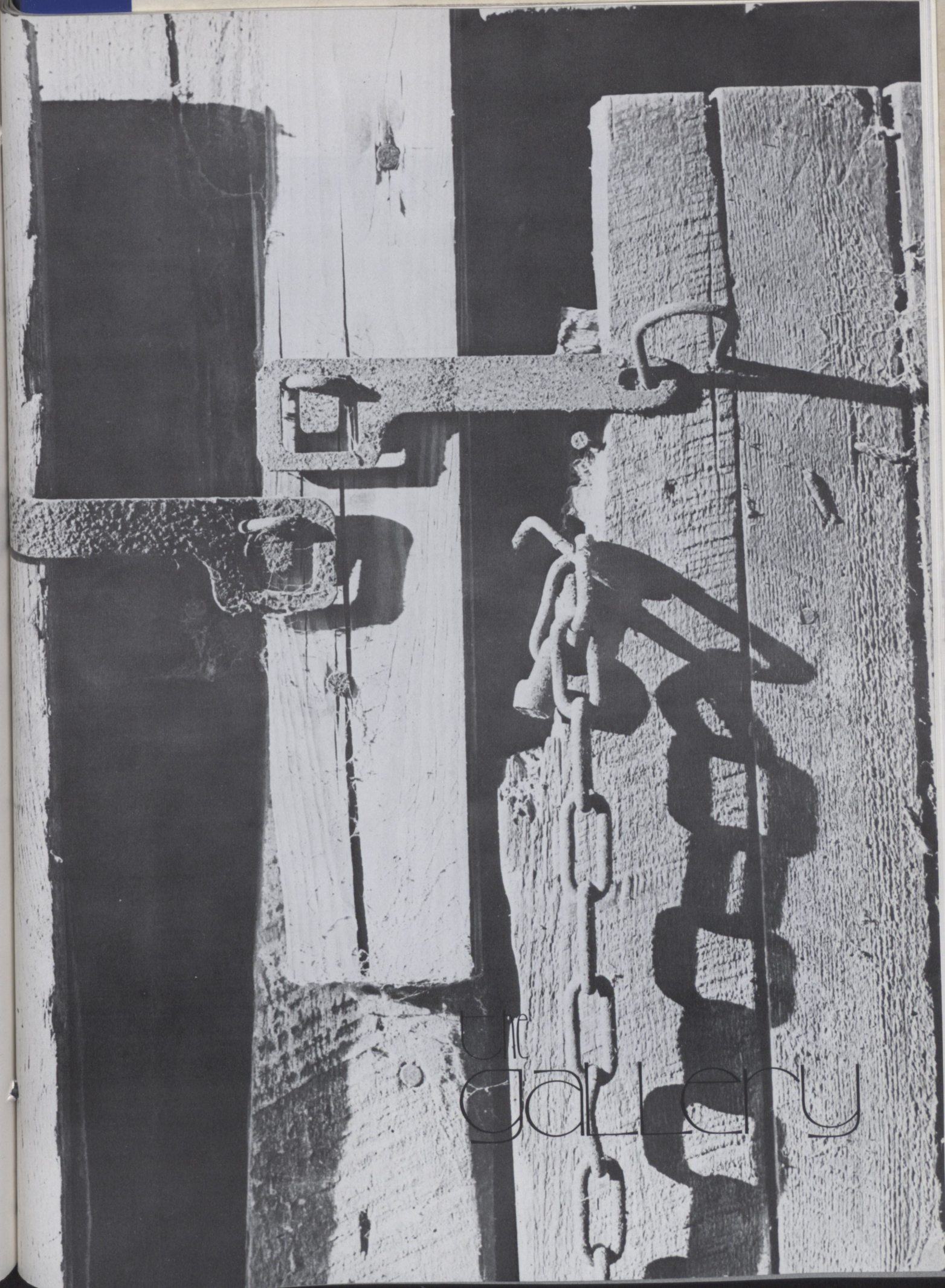
wishing well

the sonnets are growing stale
bowed are the silvered scalps
of hunchbacks posed like questions
before the sentence of life

once death's embossed expression
was a counterfeit conclusion
boxed in the cellar
when fools danced upon their graves
until the threat of purgatory

then the culprits yelped to the archangels in the attic
answered only by the auras of the Anitichrists
the brass-heads spoke of no wall
to damn the onrushing Armageddon

now pitted desires purchased with the pitched coin
past hope submerged in ridiculed regret
the Pardoner shakes his saffron seaweed
against the stench of rotting relics
the hunchbacks awaiting Elysium
heave and hold noses

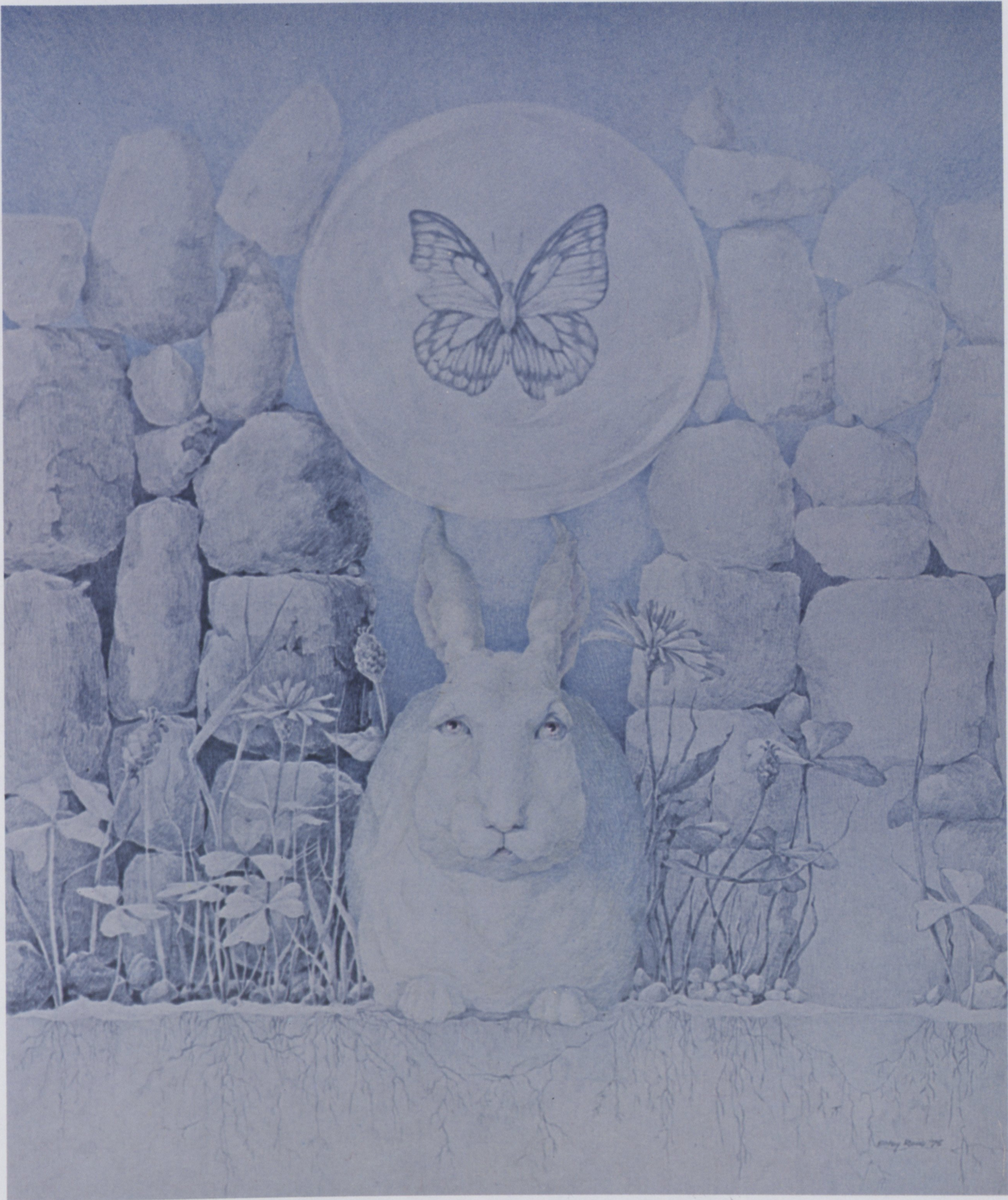


the
gallery





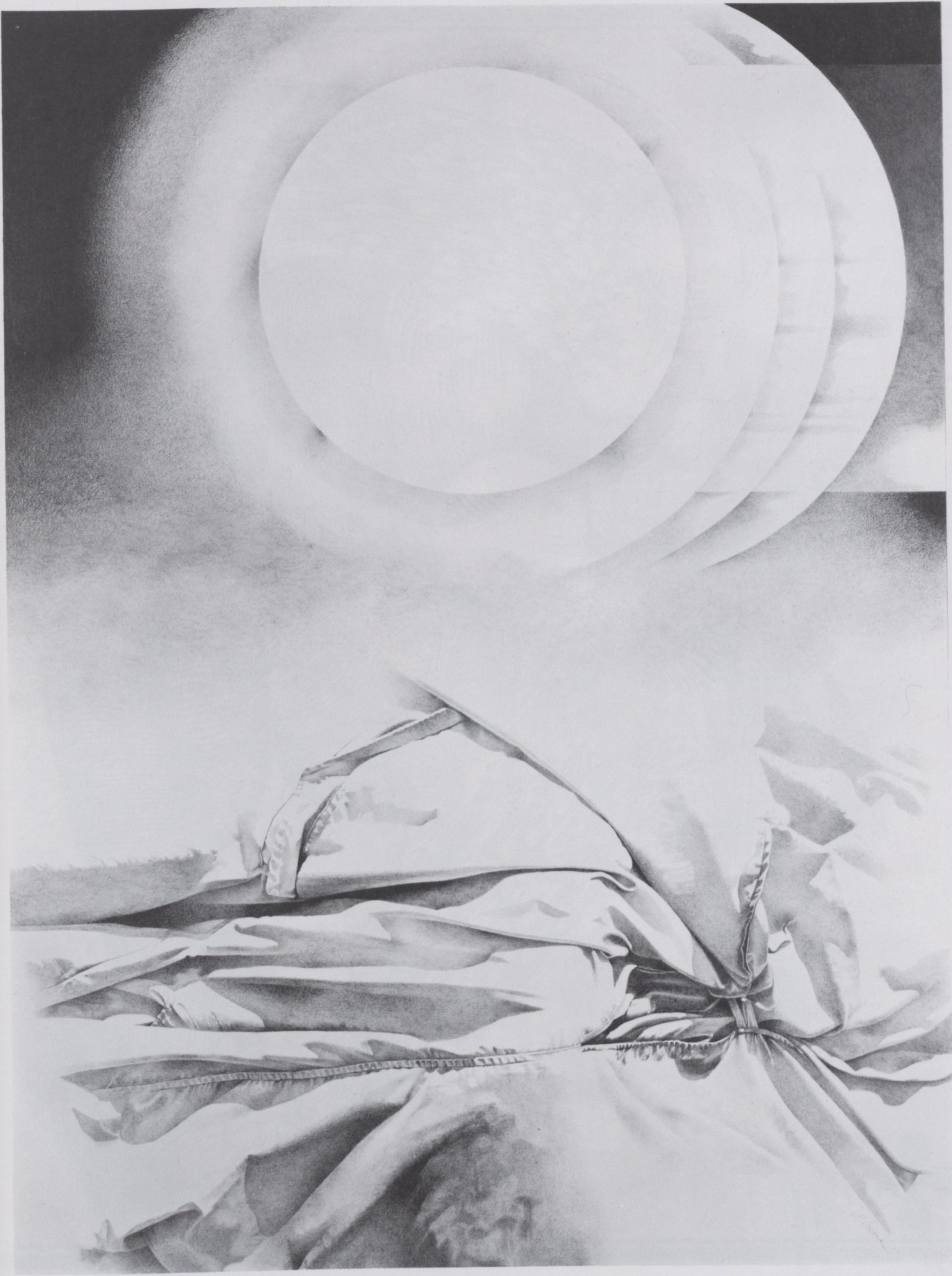


















TO ROBERTA

You came to me;

well-versed in the
knowledge of sunset,

knowing well the quiet
language of shadows.

We saw;

a wet spider's web, itching
with light in the shade,

and the moon once, white
as a brushed tooth.

Each standing weed
gave itself to melody,

softly,
in the wind-sculped silence.

We drank stinging liquor
and fought,

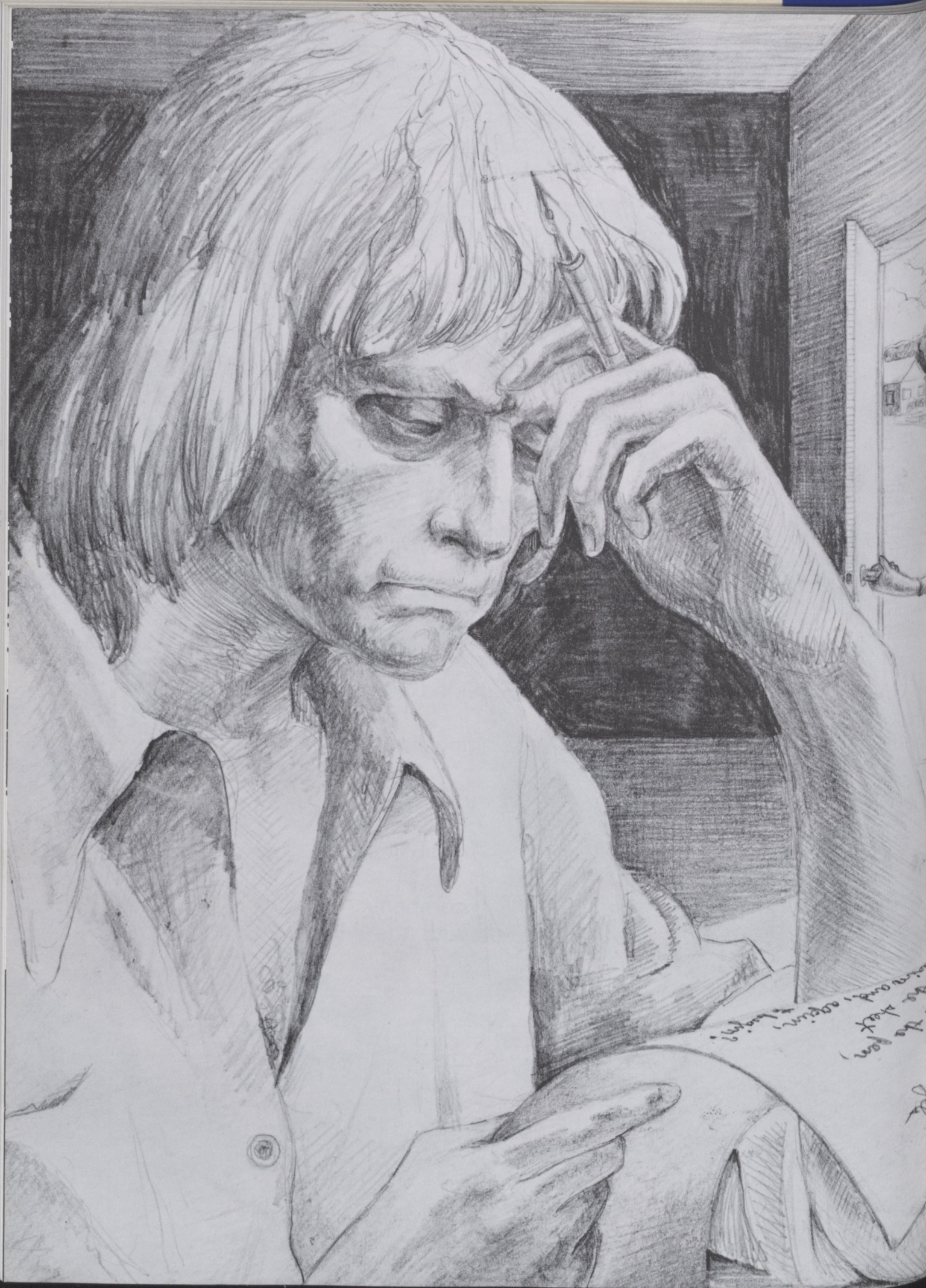
loud, harmless,
like two birds in dry leaves.

What pleasant company
your hair kept with the wind!

You left;

as quietly as a cloud,
as honestly as summer,

like the essence of music
not leaving at all.



the pen,
the shot
and, again,
light?

De



an arrangement of angels

Terrified,
you pull out the pen,
rip out the sheet
to begin, and again
what is there here to begin?

There is no woman by the window,
only a chair,
ghosts of flowers,
a yellowed curtain
nailed to the facing.
But you will write:
A GIRL STANDING BY THE ROSES...
you will not believe this is enough;
it is never enough.

Outside,
the door opening, a dog scratching,
birds laughing over warm eggs,
voices from rooms
drawn in and out
and the eye opens only to close:
if this would do,
if only arranging would do.
You will nod,
you will bow your head in acknowledged prayer,
smoothing out your wrinkled words,
nodding and knowing:
only an arrangement,
it is an arrangement,
that is all.

You have written poems
gorged with but's of cigarettes,
withdrawn glances,
hands poised in the dark
as strangers talk into mirrors,
dialogs of imagery conspired,
not quite sufficient for truth.
And all of these come before you,
come walking naked and kneel before you,
portraits of a doubted symphony.

You order;
you arrange;
the lines are drawn,
hands struggle to connect;
but only for a moment,
that moment
the stars stall
and you chance your own breathing.

Yes, it is an arrangement.

At least you have the relief of design.
You have brought them together
and for just that one moment
an angel's laugh leaps off the page;
your silence will ask,
"Where are your wings?"

Biographical Sketches

writers

John Alexander
Phillip Keith Arrington

is a *nom de plume* who has previously been published in *THE REBEL* but who, despite our pleas, refuses to openly acknowledge his true identity.

was formerly the Editor of past *REBELS* as well as contributor who, regardless of warnings to the contrary, repeatedly expresses himself through a literary genre he claims total ignorance of. His poems have also appeared, surprisingly enough, in the *NATIONAL POETRY ANTHOLOGY*. At present he is applying for a grant from *THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES* to work on a large volume of poetry which he will attempt, unfortunately, to have published.

Sarah Van Arsdel

is a senior and an anthropology major which constitutes the bare bones of her biography.

Lynn Carrol

has recently published articles in *THE SOUTHEASTERN COMMUNITY LITERARY MAGAZINE* and *ARIES1* and is presently struggling with his first attempts at prose fiction.

Teresa Clark

is a senior music major who started writing at age eleven. Coming from Charlotte, N.C. to EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY, she now describes herself as a writer becoming more serious in her intent.

Judith Ellsworth

is from Alexandria, Virginia and currently a freshman here supposedly majoring in Special Education but has other diverse interests such as dance, water sports, etc. She claims that her poetry is not vague but fairly simple to understand.

Nick Maddox

is a graduate student in EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY'S History Department whose poems have also appeared in *SIGNET*, a literary publication at QUEEN'S COLLEGE, Charlotte, N.C.

John Robbins

is from Crawfordsville, Indiana and veteran of the Marine Corps., who took a B.A. in Drama at EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY and is presently enrolled in the university's graduate program in English. He has had a campfire drama of his performed on the outer banks and is presently working on a novel based on a series of experiences and impressions of war entitled, *HIND SIGHT: AN ANTHOLOGY OF MEMORABILIA*.

Jeff Rollins

is a freshman from Hickory, N.C. and consistent reviewer for the *FOUNTAINHEAD* and a regular and contributing member to the *POETRY FORUM*, directed by Mr. Vernon Ward.

Ruby Shackelford

teaches creative writing at Wilson, N.C. at *ATLANTIC CHRISTIAN COLLEGE*. Her poetry has appeared in *BITTERROOT*, *ARIZONA QUARTERLY*, *THE AMERICAN*, *THE REBEL*, and other magazines. *ASCEND THE HILL* is her current volume of verse.

Bentley Shatterglass

is another mysterious fiction writer whose existence after much investigation, remains in question.

Teresa Speight

is a senior at EAST CAROLINA from Kinston, N.C. whose poetry has previously appeared in *THE REBEL*, *TAR RIVER POETS*, and *THE BUCCANEER*.

Bob Wallace

has been a past contributor to *THE REBEL* and has numerous reviews and stories published in many journals and magazines. He is currently completing his thesis in English at *EAST CAROLINA*.

Thomas Walters

teaches at N.C. STATE UNIVERSITY and has published poetry, fiction, and criticism in a wide number of journals. He is an associate editor of *SOUTHERN POETRY REVIEW* and has published two books; one, a volume of poetry about movies called *SEEING IN THE DARK*, the other an anthology called *THE SOUTHERN EXPERIENCE IN SHORT FICTION*. Currently he is working on a novel under the aegis of a grant from *THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES*.

Elizabeth Diane Witkowski

is a nursing major at EAST CAROLINA who has diverse interests such as plants, painting, and reading.

artists

Raymond Brown

graduated from ECU in 1972 with a B.S. in Art and entered graduate school at that same university in the fall of 1974. He is presently working towards a M.F.A. degree in printmaking with a minor in painting. His future plans are to continue creating intriguing visual experiences for other people. Work found on page 64.

Jan Cooley

graduated from EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY Winter Quarter 75 BFA Communication Arts. To end her college career on an impressive note, Jan was a winner in Mademoiselle Magazine's Nationwide College Board competition for a cosmetic design entitled "Color Wheels." Work found on page 58.

Ray Elmore

has his B.F.A. and M.F.A. from Maryland Institute College of Art and the University of Michigan, respectively. He taught various classes in ECU's School of Art and has had numerous exhibitions at Pennsylvania's Academy of Fine Arts and in the New Hampshire Art Association. He has had much experience in critiques for various publications, including Harper and Row, and has served as a judge in many local art exhibits. Work found on page 66.

Gerald Johnson

is a printmaking major with his M.F.A. being taken in 1971. He has served as a teaching assistant in several courses here and has had exhibitions in Charlotte's Mint Museum of Art and in Raleigh's North Carolina Artists Annual Exhibition, to name but a few. He has permanent collections here in Greenville's Art Center, UNC at Chapel Hill and at the University of Toledo in Ohio. Work found on page 61.

Joan Lester

now a third year graphic arts student at ECU, was born in Connecticut and lives now in Raleigh, N.C. She acknowledges past teachers as well as attending North Carolina's Governor's School as strong influencing factors in her artistic development. Work found on pages 49, 55.

Robert Rasch

is an associate art professor at ECU, having taken his degrees at University of Maryland. He is currently Chairman of the Communication Arts Department and has exhibits and several films to his credit. Work found on page 35.

Edward Reep

born in New York, is Artist in Residence at ECU, having been a war artist-correspondent in Africa and Italy. He has received the Guggenheim Fellowship, served as Chairman of the Painting Department at California Institute of Art, and author of "The Content of Watercolor" in 1969. His work has appeared in *LIFE*, *FORTUNE*, *NEWSWEEK*, and *ART FORUM* Magazines. His collections and awards and special shows are too numerous to mention. Work found on cover, page 59.

Betsy Ross

received her Masters Degree from East Carolina University and upon graduation joined the faculty there as a member of the Painting and Drawing department. Recent Exhibitions have seen her work at the North Carolina Artists Festival in 1974, at the Mushroom Gallery in that same year, and at the Gallery II, Western Michigan University, in April of 1975. Work found on page 62.

Donald Sexauer

born in Erie, Pennsylvania, is currently a distinguished professor of Art at ECU. His teaching experience, like his exhibits and other credits, are too varied and extensive to be fully mentioned. He does have permanent collections in the Boston Public Library, the Ithaca College Museum of Art and the New York Public Library just to mention a few. He initiated the Small Hand Press in 1968 and has done several works in series based on the writings of Nietzsche, Melville, and Chaucer. His series of intaglio prints entitled *Vietnam Fragment* were based on his personal observations during that war and served as the source from which the pieces presented in here are taken. Work found on pages 5, 15, 19, 24.

Matt Smartt

is a 20 year old junior from Hopewell, Va. majoring in printmaking with a minor in drawing. His work has appeared in group shows at the Greenville Art Center, the Kate Lewis Gallery and the Rocky Mount Center. Work found on pages 25, 27, 68.

David Smith

having attended Texas Christian University and lived in Thailand for over a year, is presently working on his B.F.A. in painting and photography. His work has received awards in Kingston's Spring Arts Festival and has appeared in *The Buccaneer '74*. Work found on pages 1, 71.

Dale Versall

having graduated in 1973 with a B.F.A. in commercial art, is now doing his graduate work here and plans to teach. He had past experience as an illustrator with Graphics Group, Inc. in Atlanta, Ga. Work found on pages 65, 67.

Brian Wines

is a sophomore art student from Fayetteville, N.C. who had several of his works premiered in *The Rebel '74* of last spring. Work found on page 69.

Nancy White

received her BFA degree from East Carolina University in 1971 and is currently working towards an MFA degree in Painting. She is a member of Delta Phi Delta, National Honor Fraternity for Art students and has had her work exhibited in the N.C. State Traveling Show this year, at the Kate Lewis Gallery and at the Seaford Country Club in Seaford, Delaware. Work found on page 60.

Francis Whitehead

is a 21 year old senior from Richmond, Va. pursuing a B.F.A. in printmaking with a jewelry-making minor. His work has appeared in the Pennsylvania State Arts Festival, at the Rocky Mount Art Center, the Greenville Art Center and the Kate Lewis Gallery. Work found on pages 33, 63.

