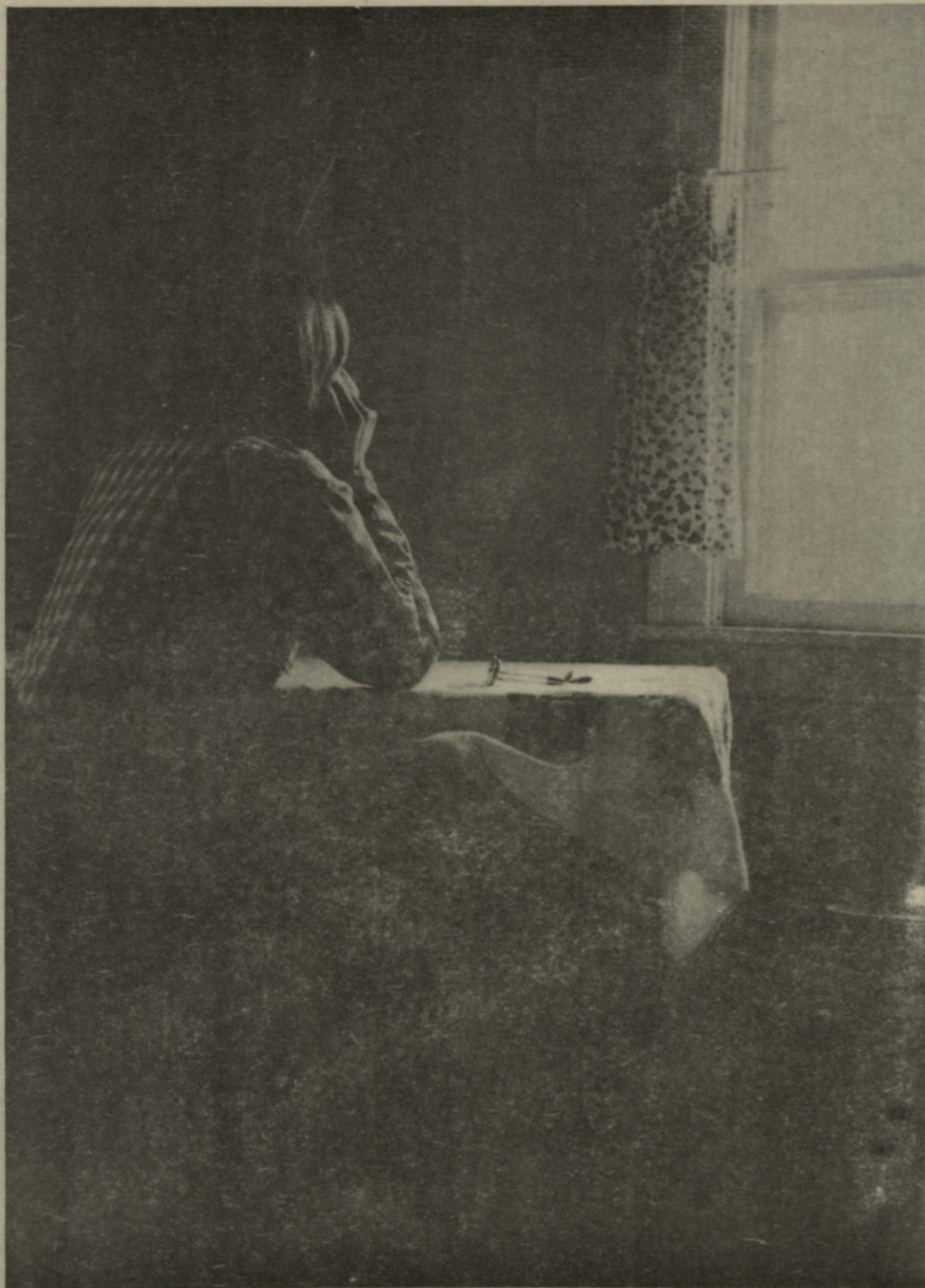
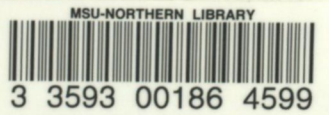


The Sagebrush Review

1989



The Literary and Visual Arts Magazine of Northern Montana College



Editor's Introduction:

The *Sagebrush Review*, Northern Montana College's annual literature and art publication, draws its staff from those who are interested in the cultivation of the fine arts and who have little or no power to resist coercion. Submissions are accepted only from Northern's students, faculty, or staff, or their family members, and residents of the area including all of the U.S., Canada, and other friendly nations. The works were presented to the staff *anonymously* for judging to prevent any elitist bias, thus ensuring fairness to each artist. This year, like last year, the A/V Center here at the college will have printed the magazine, after patiently answering all our questions, enduring our fumbblings, and resisting the urge to laugh at our request to have the printing completed "the day before yesterday."

I would like to give a most sincere 'thank you' to these people: to all those artists who submitted works to the magazine for their courage and willingness to share their art; to the staff for not only persevering, but also working hard; to Randy Waln and Joel Soiseth for allowing us to volunteer them to collect artwork; to the NoMoCo office for letting us invade their hovel; and to Bill Hoagland for the altruistic drive to spear-head this endeavor for the simple and dubious honor of having his name mentioned twice on this page (and, from me, for having the faith to invite me to be the managing editor).

The entire staff extends special thank you's to the offices of President Merwin and Dr. Ron Fischli for their interest in and support of the *Sagebrush Review*.

To all who turn these pages . . . enjoy.

Pamela J. Burke

Staff

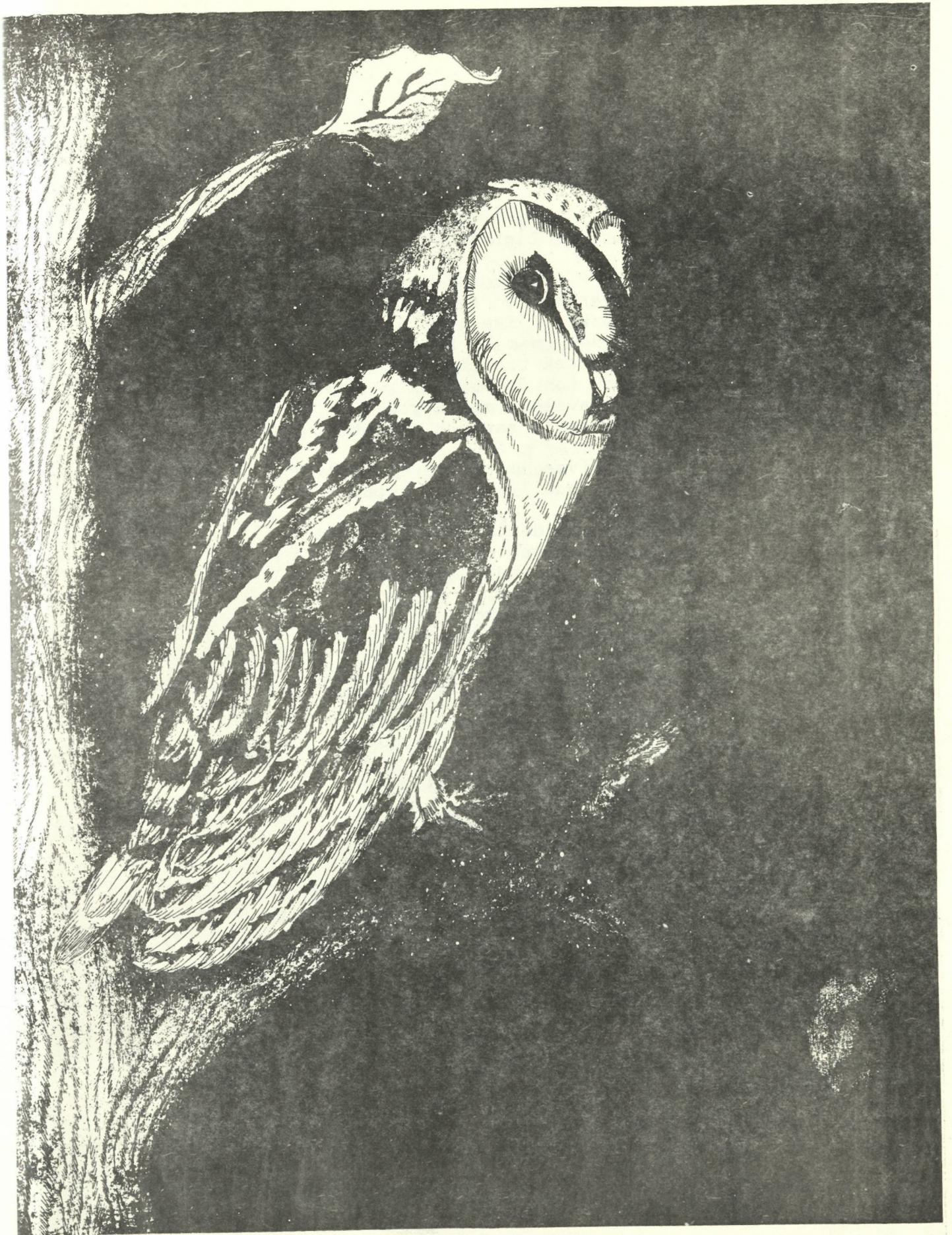
- Pamela Burke Managing Editor
- David Hayes Literary Coordinator
- Brenda Bakker. Visual Arts Coordinator
- Nick Marple. Publicity and Lay-out
- Bill Hoagland Faculty Advisor/Guru

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Table of Contents

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Untitled photo	Joel Soiseth	Cover
Winter's Lonely	Terry McGuire	1
Wolf Creek Banks	Suzanne Lighthizer	2
Concrete Lips	Kent Dolezal	3
The Barn	Bob Muth	4
Untitled photo	Joel Soiseth	5
Untitled pen/ink	Gary Madman, Jr.	6
Snowbound	Larry Warburton	7
Trap Line	Suzanne Lighthizer	8
Elk Thunder	Victor Fourwinds	8
Dream-Songs	Suzanne Lighthizer	9
Untitled pen/ink	Gary Madman, Jr.	11
Fairy II	Brenda Bakker	12
The Oil Drum Dream	Bill Hoagland	13
Watching Mother Write	Quinton Woepfel	13
The Kiss	Kent Dolezal	14
Desert Sprinters	David Hayes	15
Tracks	Lorene West	16
Untitled pencil	Ben Warner	17
Johnny's Tribute	Jim McRell	18
Untitled pen/ink	Debi Sadowsky	24
Sagebrush Priorities	Mary Franklin	25
Early Spring Climb on Mt. Reynolds	Bob Muth	26
Autumn Float on the Flathead River	Bob Muth	27
Sailboat at Dusk	Larry Warburton	28
I Hate Computers	Brian White	29
Untitled Photo	Joel Soiseth	30
Humanity	Thomas Thackeray	31
Since You Asked	John Ellens	31
A Young Boy...	Jay Pyette	32
Electric Baal	Thomas Thackeray	32
Monkey Meat	Michael Grogan	33
Untitled photo	Joel Soiseth	34
The Possibilities of Being a Millionaire	David Hayes	35
A Walk to the Post Office	Sister Mary Mebane	36
The Pilot	John Anderson	37
Untitled print	Brenda Bakker	38
The Titan	Susanne Lighthizer	39
Syntax	Mary Franklin	40
Guile of Innocence	Barry C. Coy	40
Untitled poem	Nick Marple	41
Untitled poem	Nick Marple	41
Reading Sylvia	Michael Grogan	42
Skulls	Brenda Bakker	43
Fiddling Forever	Mary Nault	44
Family History	Sister Mary Mebane	45
Crayons	Jay Pyette	46
Untitled pen/ink	Gary Madman, Jr.	47
Resistance Villanelle	Mary Franklin	48
Wedding Band	Corinna Ophus	49
When Snowflakes Fall	Corinna Ophus	49
Untitled pen/ink	Kay Azure	50
Chapter Four	Sidney L. Storm	51
Speed	Jay Pyette	55
Chapman Bench	Brian D. White	56



Wolf Creek Banks

by
Suzanne Lighthizer

Snowflakes melted from your Raven
hair, Father, like pine's youth
crystalized tears. Four days
of Wolf Creek trouting scented
your best tan shirt, and yellow
breath traveled before you
in carpenter's sawdust laughter.

"No one lives happily ever after,"
you said, but I misunderstood.

Braided rugs delivered your grip
on civilization, while dishes
tarnished beneath flowered,
paper towel scrub, and then
You blew the whiskey pipes
of harmonica wind upon the Wolf
Creek banks past Turtle Rock,
melting a cup of snow for coffee.

"Beware of men seeking space
in one room teepees of land."

The twenty years of you
taken away from me
by red-lined creek bottom,
left me waiting for themes
of your box canyon hermitage,
and finding none, I found: No one
lives after happily ever.

Concrete Lips

by
Kent Dolezal

His cool blue eyes
warmed me.
His concrete lips
cracked a smile.

His retreating hair
charged in waves.
His hard look
softened me.

He asked me if I knew,
What, he did not say.
I told him I did not,
but I had before.

He said, "If you do not,
then you already do."
His questioned look
answered mine.

His blink
took more than an hour.
His short glance
stared deep into me.

He looked at me,
not I at him.
He turned to go,
I left to stay.

I turned and faced
the mirror again.
His concrete lips
cracked a smile.

The Barn

by
Bob Muth

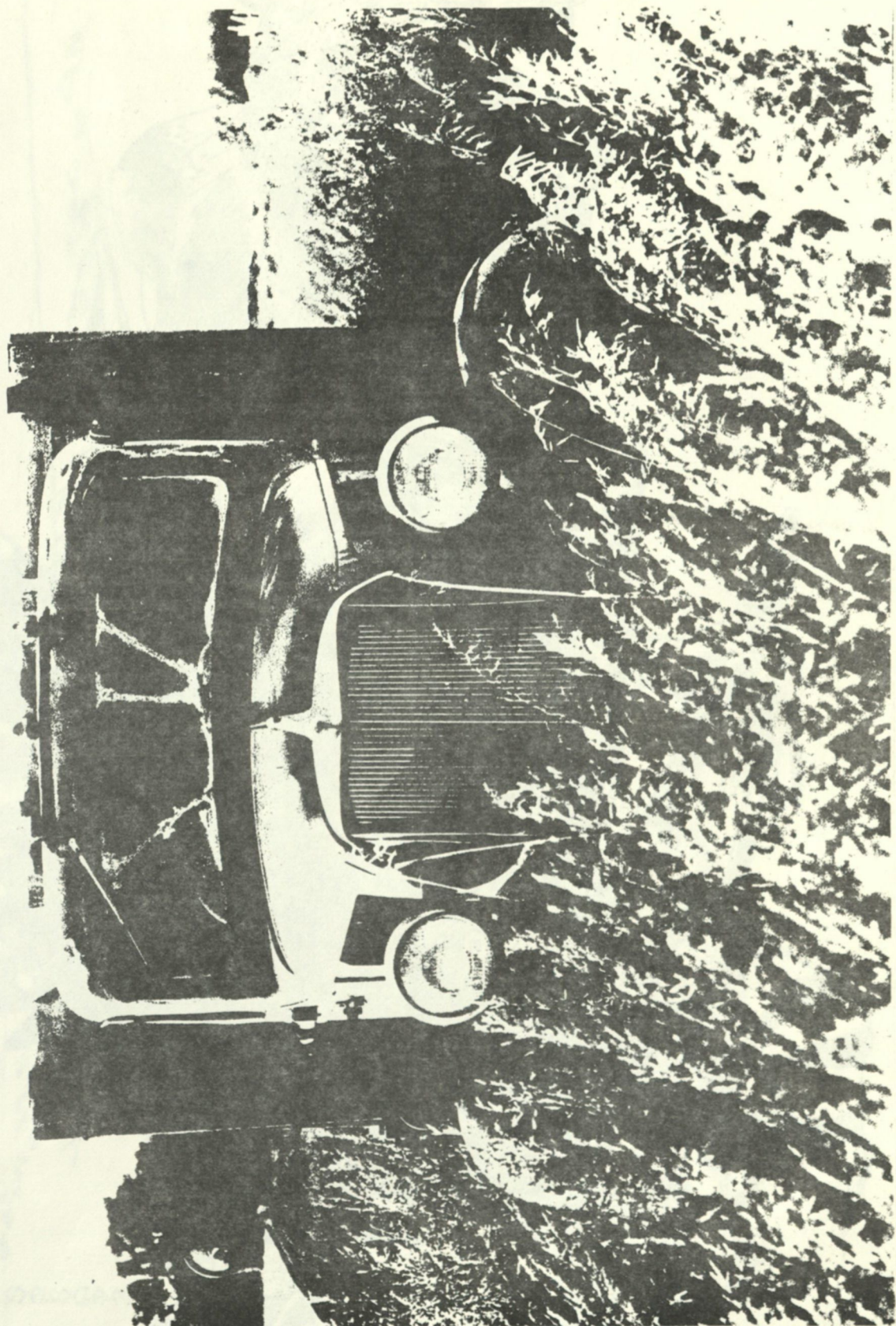
See how I'm drawn
To this barn.
My hand gropes along
The smooth log walls
Polished by almost a century
Of Montana winters.
No patterns.
No rough knot,
Or piece of bark
To grasp.

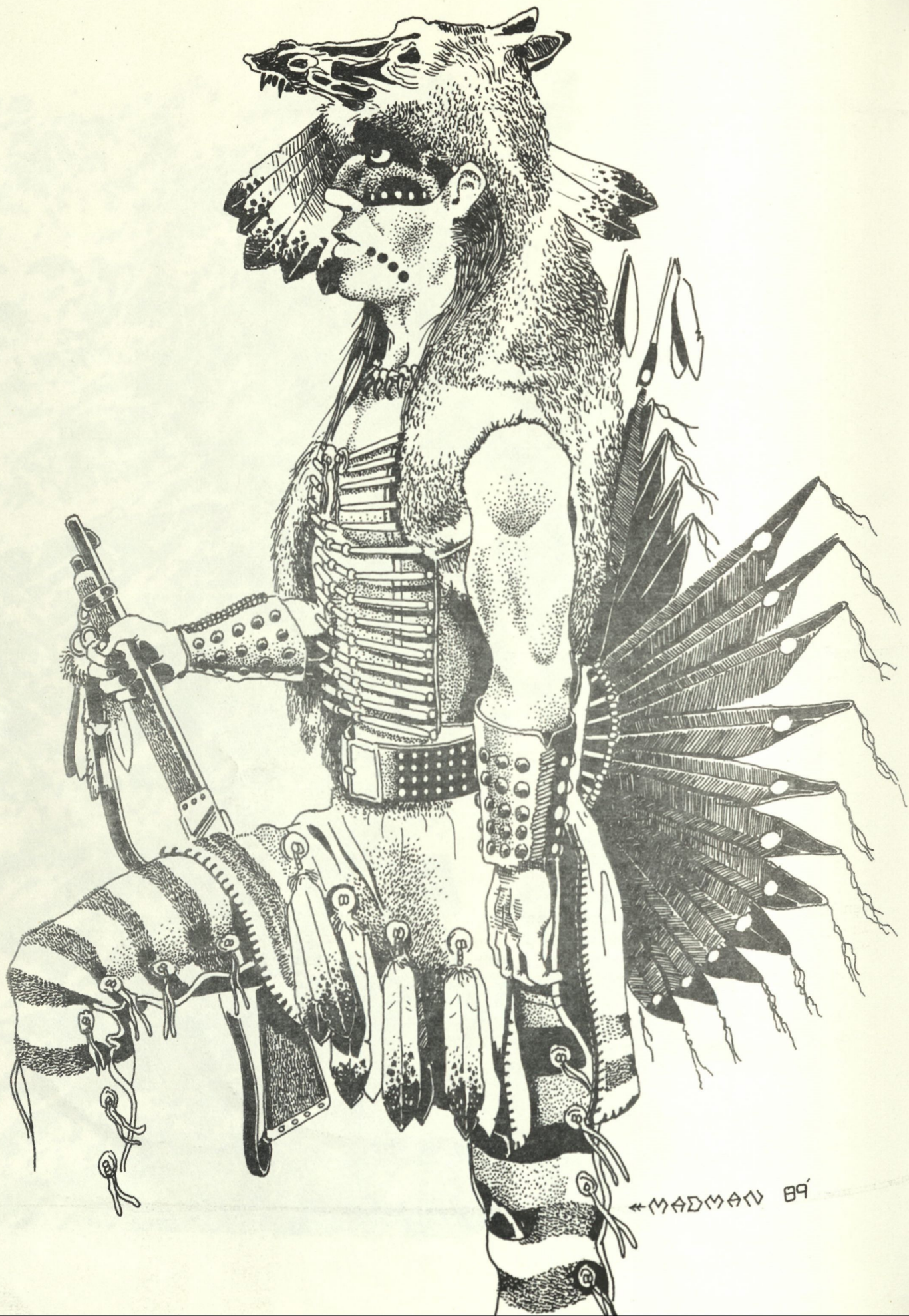
My hand finds
Her saddle
In a dark corner.
The pumice
From her leaving
Dulls every word
I ever knew.

Soon garter snakes,
Swollen with grain bin mice,
will sun on these logs,
and the barn swallows
Will return to the rafters.

And in November,
Snow.

for Denise
10/12/67--2/15/86





← MADMAN 89



Trap Line

by
Suzanne Lighthizer

Coyotes passed this way
when you believed in love.
Trap lines avoiding Turtle
Rock were stretched past
canyon walls and sown with
buckskin, drum tight. Your
children guessed the wind
lived there once, before
rivers carved boxed cages
and pines sturdied bars;
I remember seeing their
striped shadows spidering
down your snow-paled cheeks.
The colors of your voice
might have been as gray as
cracking kindling beneath
your moccasin weathered feet.
I heard you traveling winter
creek bottoms, Mama, snapping
steel jaws with fallen twigs.

Elk Thunder

by
Victor Fourwinds

1.
Elk Thunder is my spirit
My spirit is Elk Thunder
That is the truth
Come forward!
Come forward!
Elk Thunder is my spirit
My spirit is Elk Thunder
Ceremonially I thank the Grandfather

2.
Elk Thunder is my spirit
My spirit is Elk Thunder
That is the truth
Come forward!
Come forward!
Elk Thunder is my spirit
My spirit is Elk Thunder
My messenger tells me
So here is a song!

Dream-Songs

by

Suzanne Lighthizer

Near the border of People's Creek there lived a hermit-soul who spent his days clothed in the shadows of language and his nights blanketed in the nakedness of loneliness. Every night he would camp along the banks of People's Creek and sleep between the poplar trees where deer and antelope had lain, wedging warm cradles into the feathered softness of sweetgrass. Sometimes he would sleep upon the pebble-lined beach and sniff at the perfumes of the earth's gathered mosses, and when the dawn would stir him from the heaviness of dreams he would wake and sing poetry against the blank pages of his mind. After so many pages had been filled, he would stitch them together and forget them again.

Once he had thought to write the poetry down somewhere for there was a woman with a bastard son who lived against a hill on the other side of People's Creek. Her art form was the remake of paper and the carving of charcoal sticks. A mile beyond the woman's cabin, a village glowed at night and though the hermit did not go there, he had lived there once, and so had she. The hermit and the woman did not speak to each other and never had, so they did not know why the other had been banished from the community. They only thought of themselves, and each other as outcasts of circumstances they never really understood.

Before the man's raven hair formed the shades of silvered grey, the village people sent him beyond the creek to feed on lentils and trout because he could not sleep. For 100 days he sat awake in the village circle and sang the songs of muses they did not know and they called him a madman of words and considered him possessed of demon's poems. So he went to live in the first line of trees across People's creek and he became a hermit and a poet, making his shelter in a lean-to of branches and his bed beneath the constellations of paradise.

The woman had followed soon after him and made her home in a deserted log cabin. The woman was not beautiful and she was much younger than the hermit. He had secretly watched her bathing upon the creek bottom once, and the sunlight embarrassed her nakedness. Her little son threw stones against her reflection and sometimes they laughed. She did not mind being sent with the boy to the edge of People's Creek, for she could find no mate in the village and she preferred to live in loneliness than live in shame. She and her son had been cast out of the village, but not beyond the creek, because they had fallen asleep for 100 days; the village people called them useless, and they sent the two away until they could prove otherwise.

They gave the woman trade posters and newspapers that were collected often from the cities and she would soak and press the paper until the words faded into nothing. Then she would spread the pages flat against boards and leave them in the afternoon sun to dry. At night she would burn sticks that the boy collected each morning, pulling them out of the fire after a time, and then spreading them upon a stone bed to cool until she could carve them into pencils. Sometimes she and the boy would take a cartload of paper and sticks into the village and exchange them for supplies, and they would return with another load of paper to remake.

Although the woman and the hermit did not speak to each other, she listened intently as he sang his rhymes along the shore each day, and he, in turn, found conversation in the sounds of her press-boards rhythmically stretching blankness across the day, providing spaces for the music of his words to fill. And the boy listened to both of them as he perched himself like a lark upon a beam of driftwood and sketched patterns with charcoal on paper of their shadows almost touching across the water.

The hermit discovered the healing of sleep after he left the village and he was afraid to go near the woman and the boy, believing that to touch their humanness would be to touch again the torture of wakefulness that had overtaken him once before. He feared that they would some day want to cross People's Creek and that their presence within his private circle would disturb the muse within him and chase his sleep away again. His loneliness had conquered daylight by allowing darkness for his brain.

One day the boy and his mother did not stir from their shelter. The hermit sat rocking back and forth against a bleached stump on the embankment and he began to sing the songs, recording them upon blankness of his leafed mind. He waited all day for the woman and her son to come out of the cabin, but they did not and that night, the hermit did not sleep. When ten days had passed without sleep or the company of the two across the shore, he believed them dead and he beat his fists against his chest, cursing the muse of his sorrow. For ninety days the songs poured from his mouth as if to cleanse each stone on People's Creek, and the hermit discovered his loneliness in shades of daylight echoing darkness, and he understood the company of strangers and of sleep.

On the 100th day, the hermit fell with his face toward the blackness of the earth, and on the 100th day, the woman and her son rose with their faces toward the lightness of the sky.

That day, the woman and the boy crossed People's Creek and carried the hermit-soul across the water and laid him on a bed of woven sweetgrass inside the cabin. They waited a long time for him to wake up and when he did, it was night time.

In one corner of the cabin, the man watched quietly as the woman penned secret words to paper under candlelight, and then filed her pages gently into stacks within carved-out, birch-log boxes. When she glanced over at the man, she saw that he was awake and she gasped and hid her face in the shadows so that he could not look into her eyes. The hermit tried to rise but he was too weak and he fell back into the grass. The woman took a dipper full of creek water from a pail and walked over to where he lay and slowly knelt down beside him with her face toward the ground. He took a drink and let his heavy hand slide uncertainly down her dress. He fell asleep again.

When dawn spidered itself across the night, the hermit woke in a box-lined room. The little boy sat in a chair beneath the only window and was sketching shadows with charcoal against paper. In another corner, the woman sat sleeping, her chin rested against a wall brace. The hermit stood up and steadied himself against a chair so that he would not fall at first, and then he walked over to a row of boxes that the woman had been filling the previous evening. He took a piece of paper from one of them and began to read the lines while the boy continued to sketch. The hermit's eyes wildly scanned the page and he reached for another piece of paper and rapidly read still more pages, letting the scribbled sheets fall like feathery ashes to the floor.

When the man could read no more he lunged at the woman and shook her from sleep. She screamed as he pulled her to his chest and dragged her to the box where he had been reading. The boy didn't move as the man let loose of the woman and let her drop to the floor. With that, the man took more papers from the box and gripped them so tightly between his fists that the pages wrinkled and shook.

"These are my songs," he said in a trembling sort of whisper so that the woman could not tell if he was angry or sad. "My days longing for my nights."

And the woman reached down and brought one of the pages to her lips and wept, "These are my dreams. My nights yearning for my days."

And the little son continued to sketch, only more quickly than before, and the shadows he drew tangled and touched without effort until he could no longer tell the two shadows from one.



←MADMAN 89



The Oil Drum Dream

by
Bill Hoagland

I know when I leave the house
that it is my body.

I know when I pass through
the white rose arbor

that its small red roses
are my days and deeds.

I walk through long grass
until I stand on the earthen circle

where grass never grows,
and I feel the sag, the old dull chung.

Why did the old man bury that oil drum?
Why did he bury it on end?

In the dream it is always evening.
Cicadas and crickets

and the broad violet sky
are one with the height of summer.

When I raise my arms, the ground gives.
I can fly. I'm flying.

Watching Mother Write

by
Quinton Woepfel

So intent on a letter
Or a bit of paper work
So innocent seeming
Scratching out her thoughts
On a yellow legal pad
With spiral binding at top
Legs crossed and head bent
Soft hair and heavy shadow
Hide her face from my sight
Except for her pixie chin
And silent moving lips
That mouth the words
That her hand says to the page
That I wish she would say
To me

The Kiss

by
Kent Dolezal

Her hair
long as a snake.
Her eyes
violet as midnight.

"You have come for me,
unlike the times before."

Her movement
cold as molten steel.
Her legs
tanned as fallen snow.

"Come with me,
This is the time."

Her lips
crisp as paper.
Her voice
crushed like stones.

"Where are we going?
Who we to see?"

The journey was short,
we travelled for days.
I counted the hours
that did not matter.

"You will find out,
just follow."

She lead me,
but I knew the way.
When I was young,
I came this way.

"Shawn, is that you?
It has been so long."

He stood tall
like a liquid mountain.
His smile
was a deep frown.

"Yes, it is me."
"He is not ready, go back."

She turned pointing
to a forbidden object.
Her frown
was a deep smile.

"What is that?
Where are we?"

I objected
to the object,
darkening the light
and lighting the dark.

"You already know
what you have asked."

The object
was beside me.
It had not moved
neither had I.

"He is right.
I will go back."

The journey back
took seconds.
Her kiss good-bye
stung to the soul.

"I will come again,"
like this time before."

I awoke
with a clouded head.
With my lips stinging
from a Death Angel's kiss.

Desert Sprinters

by
David Hayes

1.
Nothing
any of us
could do
was good enough
for him.
Ever--
his voice
bellowing,
a Mexican
accent.
2.
And we--
straining
striding
sprinting
recovering
over and over,
again and again.
3.
I can remember
every day--
the times,
the distances.
Every interval
became
a personal race.
Against the clock,
against one another,
against ourselves,
we ran.
4.
Through the gym,
to the pavement
we left
our loose cinders
to the girls,
behind us
loud cracks
echoing
from the starting
gun.
5.
Beside
the cemetery
fence,
skirting
the community college
campus,
jogging.
6.
Continuing
into the Indian
colony,
Utes and Shoshoni
would stare
and mock us.
We--
edging
the tribal
basketball court,
speeding up.
7.
Finding our paces,
together,
we passed
beneath
Interstate 80.
Separating slowly,
according
to our speeds,
we spread ourselves
along
the dusty,
sage brush path
to Northridge.
Each step
bringing us
nearer
to our
objective--
a silver octagon--
the back of
a misplaced
road sign,
marking
our turning
point.
8.
The mind
blossoms
as the body
tires.
Songs emerge briefly,
to regulate
forced paces
back to
the gym
(and him),
and submerge--
sinking
into pools

of new tunes
and rhythms
rising
to the surface.

9.
Faces
of runners
not yet
to the turning
point
stare blankly
into mine.

I
am glad
I am
where I am.

10.
Fatigue
dulls
memory.
Nobody
mentions
the dog
carcass
out front of
the Ute hut.
We
are thankful
to be back
at Warrior Field.

11.
Weightmen
grunt,
putting shots
into sand.
Elko
General Hospital
looms
over the east fence,
spying,
waiting.

12.
Every practice--
something similar.
Not one
of us
failed
to complain
every day.
We
were,
all of us,
running

Tracks

by
Lorene West

The fog lifts--
The tides recede,
I find your tracks
And let you lead.

A broken shell--
A bit of tree,
Still your tracks
Along the sea.

Sleeper waves--
Reach out to me,
But I leave your tracks
For me to see.



R&W

Johnny's Tribute

by
Jim McReil

I was jerked out of sleep by the tickle, going from my nose, across my cheek, and down by my ear. I knew the origin of the tickle. Again, for the fifth day in a row, my nose was bleeding. I lay there feeling the warm ooze flow, gritting my teeth in hopes that it would go away. Finally, nauseous, I stirred enough to grab the salt-water solution nose sprayer out of my pants pocket, fight my arm up through the confines of my sleeping bag, and jam the sprayer up the bad nostril in hopes that the bleeding would stop. One good squeeze usually stopped it, but not today. The salt on the open sores inside my nose drew tears, but the blood kept on. I didn't welcome the idea of going to the doctor to have the sores closed, but it was better than waking up every morning with the urge to puke because of the blood in my gut.

Last night's shift had been a hard one. The more I woke, the more pain I felt in my joints. The hard, rock-laden ground would have no mercy on my body this morning. It poked and prodded at me to get up. I tried hard to move into a spot where I was comfortable, but to no avail. Unable to stand the pain-charged time passing so slowly, I got up. Rising too fast, my head spun and I had to close my eyes to keep from falling down. Once the tornado in my mind had subsided, I opened my eyes and looked around. The inversion had not yet lifted. Smoke and dust lay in the air. In spots it moved and swirled with the urgency of the wind gusts pushing it. But mostly, it just sat, oppressive, clinging to the ground, the trees, and me. My eyes stung and watered. My nose bled. My head pounded from the endless ringing in my ears. I coughed a few times, found my Visine, and poured some in my eyes to keep the sting down, snorted some more salt water, jammed my stiff, leather boots on, leaving them untied from lack of energy, and headed for the cooktables.

On the way to the cooktables I stopped at the information tree to read up on the advancement of the fire from last night. The information clipboard hung from a rusty nail left from some past unknown.

Riggins, Idaho 8-15-88

Whitewater Trail Fire: 28,000 acres

Estimated cost: \$1.2 million

According to Art Denman, a civilian crew boss and named information officer, the fire made a 2000 acre run last night. Crews work to keep the fire in the north drainage of Whitewater Creek.

Due to high winds and extremely smoky working conditions, crews were forced to pull out. Due to dry weather, heavy fuels, and rough terrain, the fire has no control date at this time.

It was the same shit every day. All that changed were the numbers, they always got bigger. I could see why the prices were so high with all the choppers, cats, and men the Forest Service brought in to fight the fire. I couldn't see any kind of organization to it all, but guessed that the guys in charge knew what they were doing. I wondered if that mad mess was what war was like, where the fire was the enemy instead of people. Whatever I thought, I know I was glad that it would all end for me in a couple of days, as I had been there nineteen days out of twenty-one, which was the limit they could keep a guy. I was burnt

out, too much heat, fire, and smoke.

Besides the poor working conditions, I had to see that son-of-a-bitch Johnny Storm. Just at a point in my life when all the bad memories had been sufficiently buried, he shows up again. I wanted to bust him up bad. Four years just wasn't long enough to forgive what he did.

"Johnny! . . . Johnny Storm!"

"Yeah?"

"When are you coming down?"

"I got ten more to go. Give me a few, would ya?"

"Going for one hundred again today?"

"Yeah!"

John Storm, you are one greedy bastard. I was always lucky to get eighty trees down a day, but not Johnny, he had to have his hundred if he could possibly get it. I guess we'd been sawing together now for a good five years and he always beat me. I suppose it was something in his makeup that caused him to over-achieve at anything he encountered. Before he started with me, he had run a skidder for some other outfit. His overzealous attitude had almost killed him at the job. There aren't too many guys that can survive taking a machine end over end down a hill more than four times at one crash. Even though he was pretty busted up, lady luck must have had something for Johnny. After that, even he admitted it was time to do something else.

As I waited for Johnny a breeze came up and chilled my back from the sweaty shirt that stuck there. Winter was coming on. The alder along the winding dirt logging road were golden. I could smell the moist rotting leaves on the ground. This morning there had been frost on the fallen logs in our unit. The limbless logs shone out in the morning sun. The shiny knots, where the limbs had been before the saws had lopped them off, looked like warts, frostless from the stored heat escaping from inside the tree. I felt restless. Something was out of kilter, but I couldn't figure out what. I listened and realized Johnny's saw had stopped. That dread I always felt when the woods were quiet jabbed at my stomach. A quiet woods for loggers meant two things, it was the end of the day, or someone was hurt. Relief came in a wave when I heard Johnny cussing about the damn brush and saw him come tripping out onto the road a couple hundred feet away.

"Well, it's about damn time you got down here. You're lucky I don't just leave ya sometimes."

"Yeah, yeah, yeah. Let's go get a beer. I got a bunch of that fur dust in my throat."

"I think there's one behind the seat somewhere if you can't wait."

"Damn Saw, don't mind if I do."

"Mind if we go by the spur B road to pick up Art? I guess it's his birthday and he wants to tie one on."

"You got the wheel Saw, I could use a drunk anyway."

We found Art Denman. He'd been digging road all day and he was covered with dust from the dry, powdery clay. When we got there, he was just finishing his nightly maintenance on his machine. I drove up too fast and when I stopped the truck the dust from the newly dug road enveloped the truck, Art, and his Caterpillar dozer.

"Jesus Christ, don't you guys think I ate enough of this shit for one day." He walked up to Johnny's side of the truck, leaned in, and scowled at us.

"Hey Johnny, you'd think this ugly bastard would appreciate us more than he does. Quit trying to look mean Art, you're making Johnny laugh."

"Oh shove it you guys. Slide over so I can get in this wreck."

Art got in and we all had a good laugh. I got turned around and we headed

for the Mint. Most all the loggers of Troy, Montana, hung out there. I'd be lying if I said it was nice. I guess I'd classify it more along the lines of old, beaten, and past due. The outside was made of that mortar-type stuff. It had been neglected for so long that it was covered with cracks and had fallen off in places. The door was made of white pine planks bolted together by lag screws. The latch on the door was busted so the door never did shut tight. At closing time the owner used a padlock that tied together two chains that hung off two bullrings welded to chunks of iron bolted to the door and the wall.

The inside of the bar was dark and hazy. It held a strange mixture of smells ranging from pine-pitch to stale beer. Every once in a while the smell of pot wafted by. The floor was covered with old tile with millions of tiny holes in it from the calked boots that the loggers wore. The bar itself must have been beautiful in its day because it was made of a large oak slab rough cut and covered with verathane. After too many years of neglect, it was scratched and the verathane was worn down in spots, exposing the rough wood. The loggers came in here because none of us really fit in anywhere else. We seemed to be always too dirty, too smelly, or too rude. We came in here for the wild stories mixed with whiskey and the fact that the townies stayed away. All the other bars had a sign saying "NO CALKED BOOTS" on their door and the loggers would be damned before they would take their boots off to go into a stinking bar. At the end of the day, the boots coming off meant sleep. It was too much to ask to put on other shoes.

The three of us walked up to the bar and ordered three Luckys. I also ordered three shots of Beam. We knocked down the whiskey while standing, then rustled up three stools to sit on. None of us could drink straight whiskey sitting down, ritual I guess.

After we downed the second shot I got that restless feeling again. I looked at Johnny and he was looking at me with a strange expression on his face. He almost looked apprehensive. I shook it off and went back to my beer.

"How old are you anyway, Art?" I asked

"Thirty-two, why?"

"I don't know, just making conversation I guess."

There wasn't much to say. The booze was hitting all of us pretty hard since we were tired and hadn't eaten in hours. I looked over at Johnny again and caught him looking at me with that same strange expression.

"What the hell is wrong with you?" I asked.

"Nothing Saw, want another?"

"Yeah, okay."

"Art?"

"Sure, what the hell."

We all stood up and drank the third whiskey down, then setteled into our seats, this time with a more profound hunching as the whiskey took us down. The whiskey buzz felt good and I started to relax, but then that feeling whacked me again. What the hell...

"Oh shit."

I just heard Johnny whisper before I heard the whispers of Art's wife, Sue, and my sweetheart, Renee. I turned around and there they were, standing behind us. Art turned around and they piled on him.

"Happy birthday, you hunk."

They yelled it to Art in each ear. He just smiled and gave each a kiss on the cheek. Art was already drunk so he wasn't quite with it at the moment. I could see that all he wanted to do was sleep.

"Jesus, Renee, your damn Saw and Johnny got him all screwed up and now he probably won't make it through dinner," Sue mockingly complained.

Sue gave me a playful slap and a dirty look, grabbed Art's hand and headed

him for the door. Art turned around and gave us a nod goodbye and then stumbled out the door in tow. He had a goofy look on his face right before he left and was looking straight at me. What was wrong with these people anyway?

I looked Renee over. God, she looked good with that white sweater and those faded 501's on. Her brown shoulder-length hair was pulled back behind her head, making her look very young and very pure. Her shiny green eyes looked into mine. Something was wrong. I could see the hurt in them. She looked away, her eyes glancing from place to place, then finally resting at my feet. I turned my head and there was Johnny looking at me again with that wierd expression.

"Saw?"

"Yeah?"

"I got to quit you."

"What the hell...." I didn't think I heard him right with the whiskey fogging my mind, but I knew what he said. Close friends can do that at times. I didn't know what I had done to make him quit and it scared me. Something was wrong.

"I'm going to college, I don't want to be stuck in this shithole the rest of my life. I'm tired of the woods. I got to get out."

"But we been at this five years together, and one day you just want to up and leave. I don't get it."

"Renee's been talking to me and she thinks it's a good idea."

I looked over at Renee and tears were welling up in her eyes, then one let loose and flowed down her smooth cheek, around her mouth and dripped off the side of her chin. She was still looking at my feet. She lifted her thin arm and brushed the tear away with her long, slender fingers. She then looked up at me and gave me a hard stare for a long time. She started to speak, but the words didn't come and then with more resolve in her eyes, they did.

"Johnny's going with me, Jim. I want him to come to Montana State with me."

A hot gust of wind nudged me out of my reverie. The clipboard banged against the fir in the wind. I couldn't remember what had happened after Renee told me that she wanted Johnny. I had lost my two closest friends in one night and it had just been too much. After that night my nickname, Saw, died. I quit sawing for myself, gave up all my projected jobs and went to work for Art, running his machine. After four years I still carried around that pain.

Just when I'd felt that those memories had been sufficiently buried who do I come in contact with but Johnny Storm. This job seemed like a jewel when Art got us on over here for the government. The pay was excellent and we got fed every night, something that didn't happen too often working for Art. Neither of us knew Johnny would be working for the Forest Service and on this fire. Art knew about Renee and him, but just couldn't bring himself to tell me. I didn't blame him. I don't think I could have done that job either.

"Hey, Jim."

"Morning, Art. You had breakfast yet?"

"Naw, thought I'd wait around for you . . . Jesus Jim, what happened to you?"

"It's this damn smoke and dry air, makes my nose bleed all the time. I'll meet you at the cooktables after I wash up."

"I don't think we better go over there right now, Jim. Johnny's in camp this morning and I don't want any trouble out of you. Sue and I need this job to last us through winter. Besides, I owe you for two months already and you won't see it for a while if you screw up this job for us."

"Damn it Art, we only got a couple of days left"

"They want us longer now. I gotta stay Jim or else the business is shot. You know that as well as I do."

"Okay, okay Art. I'm with you, but if I get a chance that son-of-a-bitch better watch out."

"You do it Jim, you better do it out of camp on the line."

"I gotcha. If he goes down, it's gonna be hard."

"Why can't you just give it up?" Art looked away from me and down at the ground. He pulled a rock out of the dirt with his boot and kicked it away. He looked back up at me with sympathy in his eyes.

"You know I can't."

"Yeah, I know."

Art looked pretty disgusted as he walked away. I went to the wash basin and dunked my face in a pan of ice-cold mountain water. My face tingled as I let the water run from my face onto my dirty shirt. I imagined I looked like one of those greasy cooks right out of a burger joint. Once I got the blood off my face I rummaged around in my pocket for my toothbrush. I found it in a wad of candy wrappers. It was dirty and had pocket lint sticking out of the bristles. I poured the government issue salt over it, and started brushing. I didn't care anymore.

I caught up with Art at the morning briefing. It was just ending and the high muckymucks were packing their shit and leaving for the day. I thought it must be nice to sit around on your ass all day figuring out what all us flunkies are supposed to do. Shit, they weren't even dusty. Bastards.

Art told me to go warm up the cats and that we'd be punching a line down the north flank of the fire. He gave me the map they had drawn up so I could see our line of attack. It was a contour map and by the look of the lines I could tell that the ground was steep, real steep.

I went over and started the two D6 Caterpillars. One thing about Art, he sure had good running equipment. Art came over about ten minutes later and motioned to follow him. He jumped on his cat and headed down the road to where we would start. I throttled up, feeling the wonderful power of the machine beneath me, listening to the steady roar of the engine, and watching the shiny steel tracks disappear to the front of the machine. It took us about an hour to get to our starting point. I enjoyed watching the birds and chipmunks scurry off as we clattered down the road. All the scrub brush along the road was grey from the ash, but the yellow bark on the pines still stood out. It was an uplifting sight in all that smoke and ashy dullness.

When we got to our starting point I could see that our ribbon man, the guy who marks the fireline, had already started down the hill. There was a bright red ribbon about every hundred feet. Art stopped his cat, jumped off and came back to mine. I stopped, throttled back, dropped the blade and waited for him.

"Looks pretty steep, Jim. Flip for who leads today?"

"Fuck that Art, I'm ready. Let's do it."

"Suit yourself."

"Hey Art, do you know the ribbon man?"

"Yeah."

"Is he any good?"

"The best old buddy, the best."

Once Art cleared my cat I pulled the throttle back as far as it would go, raised the blade a little, and turned to go over the bank and down the hill. Once in position perpendicular with the road I dropped the blade and inched over the bank. Holy shit, was that steep. My adrenalin pumped as the full weight of the cat sunk over the hill. I grabbed onto the mesh of the rollover cage, and put my feet against the firewall to brace myself as I went over. The nose kept sinking. My stomach churned, tightening as I dropped. Finally, the front of

the cat hit solid. All I could do now was get enough dirt in the blade to keep me from sliding too fast. I jambed the blade into the ground. The cat stopped. I gave a sigh of relief, let up on the decelerator, which worked opposite of a gas pedal, and started digging line down the hill. I didn't look back because I didn't even want to watch Art dump over that bank. It was bad enough doing it myself.

After getting off of the road, the digging was pretty good. The dirt was soft and there wasn't much debris on the ground to fight with. We covered a lot of ground in a hurry. Soon, we caught up with our ribbon man. I knew who it was when I first caught a glimpse of him. He was scouting as fast as he could to stay ahead of us. The good dirt that we had enjoyed digging was turning into more and more rock as we went down. The squeeling of tracks grated at my ears as I fought the machine through the rock.

The ground was getting steeper. Backing up was becoming a problem as the tracks would bite then slip, shearing rock away. It got too steep making backing impossible so I carefully worked my way over the now almost solid rock. I dumped over a large rock outcropping and had a runaway. The tracks on the rocks wouldn't bite, and I couldn't hold it back. Johnny had been right below me and I lost sight of him when the cat let loose. I let the cat go to full throttle hoping it would bite, but the tracks kept slipping. Finally the cat turned sideways and skated into a couple of small pines, uprooting them. The track caught the stumps and I went over. When everything stopped I was still lying in the cage, stunned. The cat was still running full bore so I reached up and shut it down. Hot oil was running everywhere as I crawled out onto the top track. Art was still a ways up the hill, but I couldn't see Johnny anywhere. I jumped off the cat and started searching. Finally, I saw a hand sticking out from underneath the top of one of the pines that I had knocked over. I ran down there and sure enough, there was Johnny, underneath the tree.

All of the anger, pain, and revenge that I had wanted to bestow on Johnny disappeared. This young man had been my friend no matter what. He needed me. I chopped him out with the axe in his pack. After a few minutes he came to. It was awkward even then.

"Saw, Saw?" He looked really tired and his eyes didn't have that "I'm bullet proof" sparkle in them. I had to look away while he spoke for fear I'd cry. His voice was so flat and lifeless, almost wispy.

"Yeah, it's me."

"Do . . .do you think we're alive?"

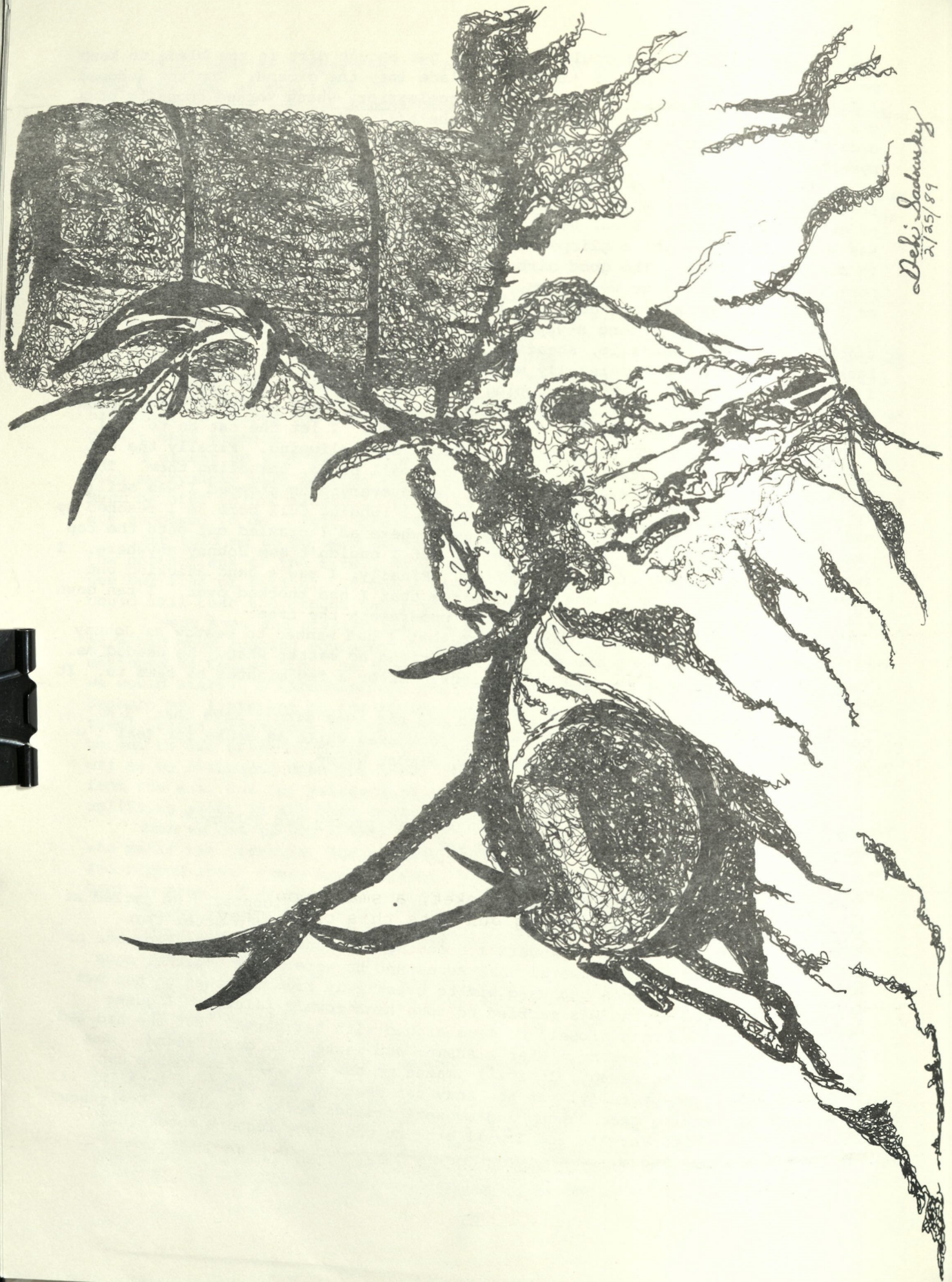
"Yeah, I think we are anyway. You're hurt pretty bad Johnny."

"I know, I know, but I ain't dead yet."

"You're kind of a tough old bastard."

"Yeah, yeah I guess I am."

Art and I watched as they flew Johnny out with a helicopter. He smiled at us as he was being lifted. I waved. I never saw Johnny again after that because he died that night of internal bleeding. I found out later from one of his school buddies at the funeral that Renee and he were never together once school had started. Renee had used him to break away from me, then go her own way. Someone told me she was married to some high townie faluter. I guess Johnny could never bring himself to mess around with her anyway, but she had led Art and others to believe so. What a shame, and waste of a good friend. Now, in the days of my retirement, it still amazes me how love and friendship can work together so beautifully, yet how they can destroy each other so totally. I find peace in knowing that Johnny and me were friends before he died. Every now and then at the Mint Bar Art and I will brag to the young loggers about the exploits of Johnny Storm.



Debi Saburky
2/25/89

Sagebrush Priorities

by
Mary Franklin

Last summer,
Working in a smokey Alaska bar
For money,
A friend gave me a paper packet of sagebrush.

The scent
Sent me to the smokeless plains of north Montana.

I could see...
Birthing cows hiding by the creek, sentinel hawks hovering overhead,
And blazing prairie sunsets.

I could hear..
Rattling seams in my old trailer, shrieking shrikes for my alarm,
And bellowing lost calvlettes.

I could taste...
Hot dust caked on my tongue, cold beans spooned from a can,
And crisp water dipped from a tin pail.

I could feel...
A wet calf freezing to my jeans, my eyes wind-dried with grit,
And the warmth of my horse on an ice-swept morning.

I could remember...
Working for love, working for life, working on bankers' holidays,
And sweating through a quiet smile.

I wondered...
What changed? My plans, my priorities, my paycheck,
And changed them back.

Because I stuck my nose
In a paper packet full of sagebrush
And breathed deeply.

**Early Spring Climb
on Mt, Reynolds**
(for Lowell)

by Bob Muth

Twelve years ago
I belayed her
Up this mountain.
She was too young
To doubt fathers
Or mountains
On that lemon-aired,
October day.

Today, the June sky
Is like a broken
Blue bottle.
Coarse white hair catches
On lichen-crusted rock
Where mountain goats
Rub away winter
With the world's soiled fur.

Bearhat, Going-to-the-Sun,
Clements, and Heavy Runner,
Ring this summit
Like a silent band
Of sunlit warriors
Against the four horizons.

Beyond their flashing swords
She now must wait for me
To finish climbing
The Seven Storey Mountain
I'm too old to doubt.

for Denise
10/12/67--2/15/86

Autumn Float
on the Flathead River
(for Mark and Connie)

by Bob Muth

Your canoe drifts
Past deserted rookery
And beaver lodge,
Over smooth stone secrets
Hard as river,
And salmon swimming
The only road home.

Two blue herons
Glide through October
Cottonwoods on wings
As old as eyelids closing.
Herring gulls shine
On Pristine Bar
Like they always do.
Mergansers still surprise
The quiet air
At each oxbow.
Even the red tailed hawk,
Turning in sun slant,
Has not changed.

You watch the new snow
On the Swan Range
Open a jagged seam
Between river and sky
You will never close again.

You follow the river
Where it flows.
Soon the mountains
Throw unexpected light-
More than snow-rock should.
(More like eucharist would.)
You drive your paddle
Deep into the cold
Clear water.

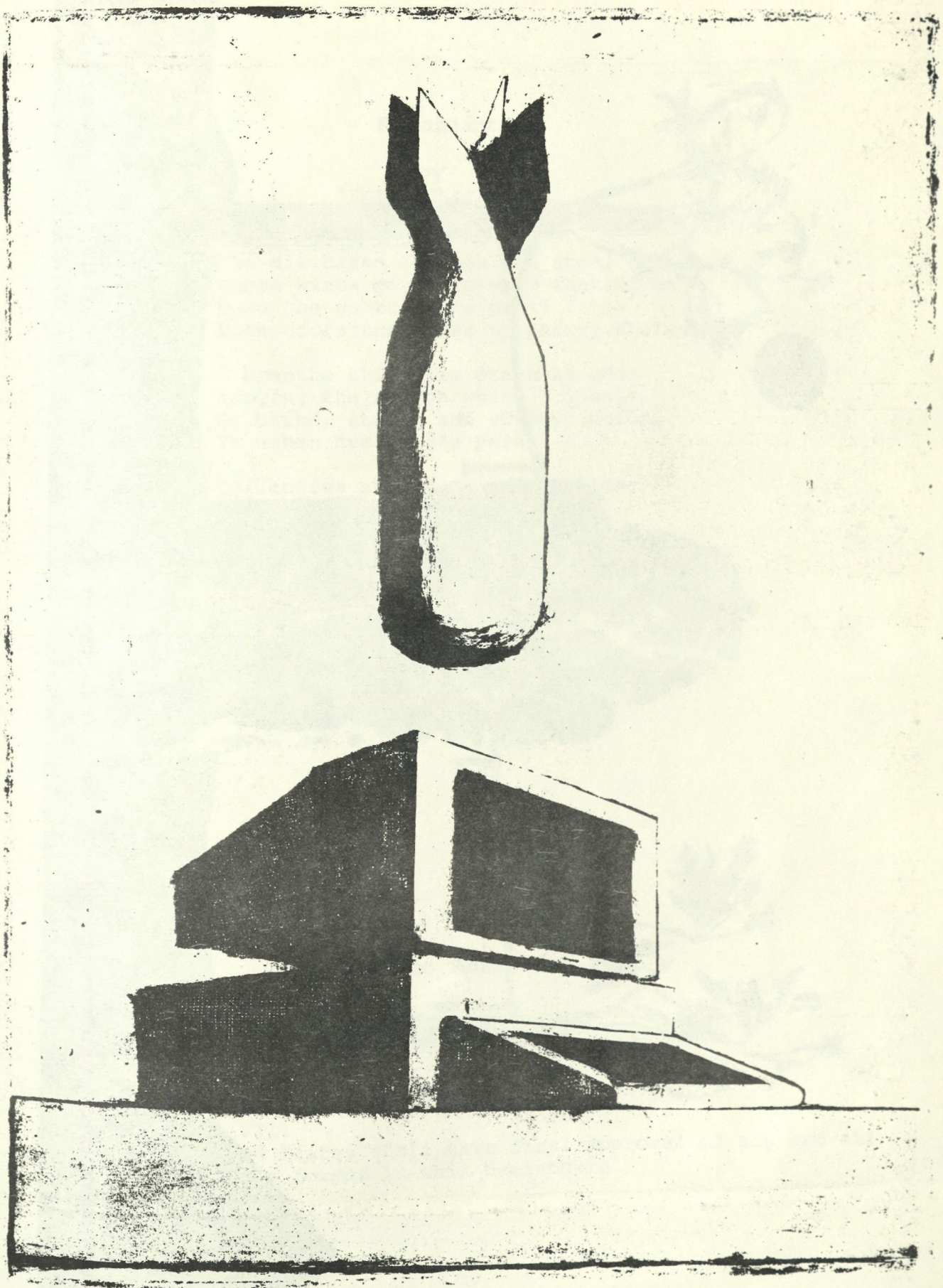
for Denise
10/12/67--2/15/86

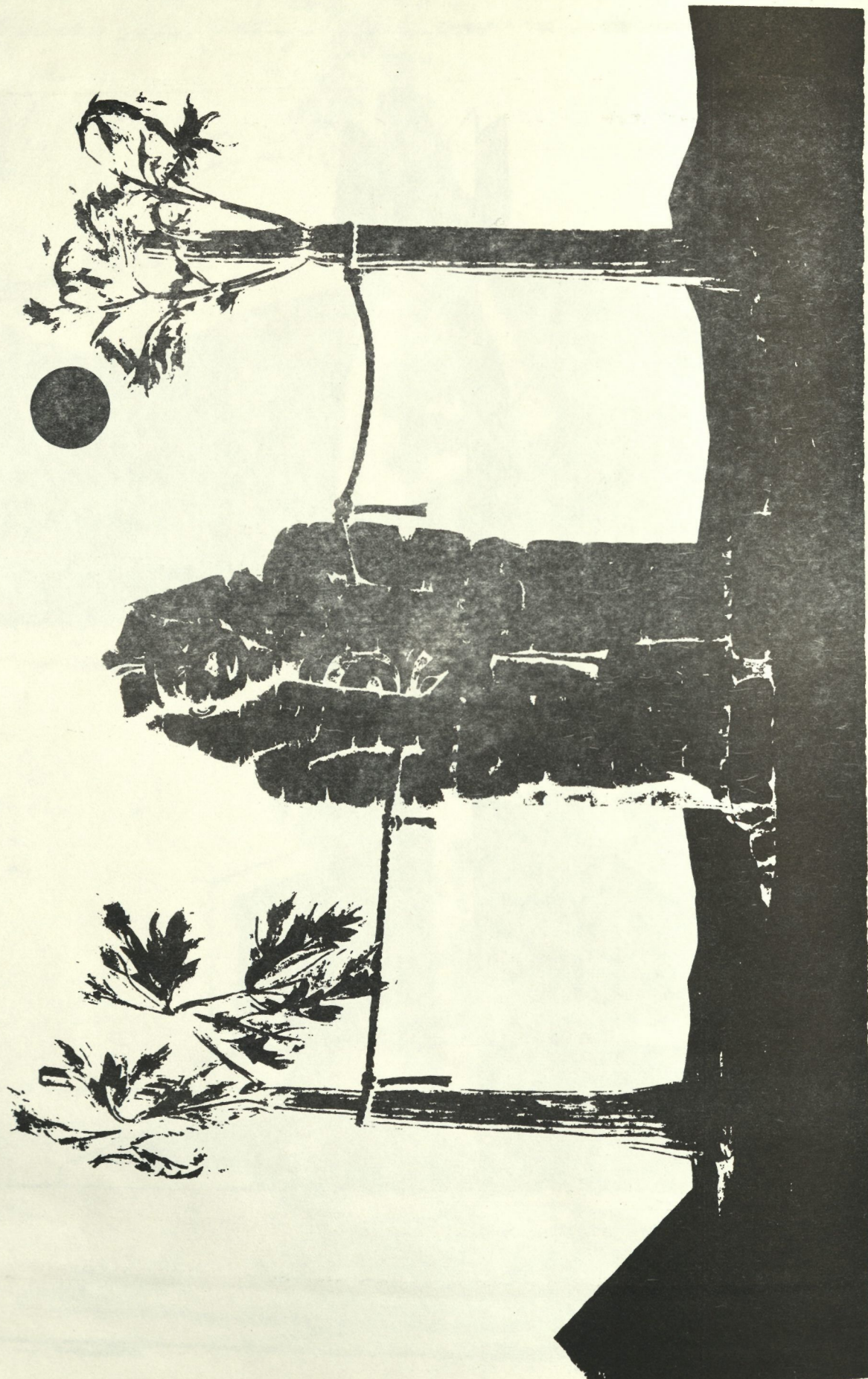


A.P.

Sailboat At Dusk

Larry Warburton
2/89





Humanity

by
Thomas Thackeray

The air rises through the steel grates
Where winos pause to warm themselves
When the weather and cruel fates
Lock doors and close up pantry shelves.

I breathe this warm stagnant odor
Knowing the stench which I inhale,
So bland, stale, and without color,
Is urban humanity's pale

Collective shroud made beautiless
Because of its neutral pallor
Of mundane decayed dreariness,
Forgotten emotions, and lost vigor.

Its ugliness is its absence
Of color and fertility.
I, though, savor these lifeless scents,
For these too are humanity.

Since You Asked

by
John Ellens

Constitution of the United States
Article VIII
The United States shall have final approval of any and all
governments formed in this hemisphere

A YOUNG BOY WHOM I DON'T KNOW, YOU
DON'T KNOW, NOBODY REALLY KNOWS, BUT WE
ALL ARE LIKE AND WHO SILENTLY PONDER
OUR WORLD AND EVERYTHING THAT IS
HAPPENING IN IT AND WHISPERS TO YOU AND
ME, BUT REALLY NOBODY, OR ANYBODY, OR
PERHAPS EVERYBODY.

by
Jay Pyette

STOP!

please.

Electric Baal

by
Thomas Thackeray

Passive we lie, prone before
the sightless eye, worshipping
the wasteland's graven symbol:
this ersatz bird of rainbow hue
at which, entranced, we awestruck
stare, mouths agape, mesmerized
by the holy deception on the
ever-changing multi-colored
gently flickering iconic face.

Monkey Meat

by
Michael Grogan

Through the barren,
stoic gates and across
the turgid stench of
the sluggish brown waters,
pausing briefly, I see the
children dive for pesos.
The young girls flash bared
 chests, flat, with yet
no promise of womanhood
to come. Give me a peso,
Joe, I show you my tits!
Across the bridge, Shit
river behind, the lights
hit me like a physical
blow. Life becomes an
illusory chain of fleeting
images, the hand at my back
pocket, nothing there, I
wised up long ago. The lovely,
gay and pathetic prostitutes
poke and pinch, feel for
private parts, they want a
peso too. Stop at a barbecue
stand to ease hunger, is it
really chicken strips this
time, or monkey again? Bitter
flavour, damn monkey meat.
Squabble with a sidewalk vendor,
a pretty chain, I talk him down
three pesos, my girlfriend is
fond of these luxuries, I spend
a dollar for her gratitude.
Down the walk, another hand
at my back pocket, a small cop
with a big gun gets this one. They
turn the corner and I hear the shot,
the next stop a bar to dull the sound
and slow my heart, kill the pain,
or try. Was the wallet I didn't have
so valuable? The price is high in
this place. Life, violent and brief
under Marcos, lived with earth-root
intensity, flows by in variant
streams as I sip iced beer and try
not to be philosophical (too much pain
in those thoughts). The night closes in,
suffocating, as I retreat the safe,
familiar barracks.



The Possibilities of Being a Millionaire

by
David Hayes

It was a wild night. That is an understatement. I had just won a million dollars on one of those slot machines where you have to line up the bars on all three lines. I was stunned. I just stood and stared at the slot machine. I had won on the first try; I had only spent seventy-five cents to be a millionaire.

I should have just taken the money, filled out the tax form at the desk, and left. Instead, I started drinking the miniature bottle of champagne that came with winning a jackpot. I didn't really know what else to do. Suddenly I was a millionaire, with a complimentary bottle of champagne. And I was popular, too. It seemed like everybody in the bar transformed into an "old buddy" and bought me drinks.

Before I had finished the champagne, I had thought of several ways to start spending my newly gained money. Buy a new car, take a cruise around the world, build a house, go back to school, and learn how to fly were just the beginnings of the list that was forming in my naive brain. Meanwhile, I kept drinking. After the champagne I and a few beers with some people I had never seen before. Then I became bolder. I started drinking mixed drinks, five or six Black Velvet and Cokes. At this point I should have quit, but this blond bombshell asked me to dance. I was never one to turn down the ladies. She was beautiful, tall; long, curly hair; blue eyes; slender hips; and a large bust. This woman and I (I can't remember her name) danced and drank for what seemed like hours. We drank shots - vodka, Jack Daniels, and peppermint schnapps. I had no concept of time, however. I was just having a good time. The lights were flashing, the band was playing loudly, and everyone I met was smiling and laughing. I wasn't even thirsty anymore, but my beautiful, blonde bombshell just kept holding the liquor to my mouth and I drank it. I do not remember the band quitting and leaving. I passed out before then. Still my blonde beauty kept pouring vodka into my throat. The next day was a peaceful, sunny day. The temperature was in the nineties, with a slight breeze blowing over me from the west. Those fluffy, round clouds dotted the sky; the kind of clouds that reveal secret shapes. I was lying on my back so I could see the turtles and the clowns float slowly overhead.

The grass was starting to turn green and the trees had just sprouted their first leaves. The lawn I had chosen to lie on was speckled with yellow-topped dandelions and white puffs of clover. Spring had newly arrived, and it came warm. Nearby a brook gurgled excitedly with its spring run-off in anticipation of the fantastic spring that was beginning to explode everywhere. Robins and sparrows chirped merrily from the elm trees that provided a border around me. And butterflies flittered from blossom to blossom. Even the ants that crawled over my legs and arms could not disturb me.

Later in the afternoon, more toward evening, several Mexican manual laborers intruded onto my field of dandelions and clover. They worked eagerly, sweating and grunting, as they built up a pile of dirt beside me. It looked like those man-made piles of sand found on any beach.

The laborers spoke to each other the whole time they were beside me. They spoke in Spanish, and I could not understand them. I began to feel alone,

isolated in my beautiful lawn.

When the hole they dug was finally deep enough to satisfy them all, they lifted me up and lowered me into it. Then they shovelled the dirt over me. The small clumps landed, each with a low thud, and filtered out the sunlight (and cooled off my hastily made pine coffin) until my world was completely black. And I became comfortable in my rotting, alcohol-soaked flesh.

A Walk to the Post Office

by
Sister Mary Mebane

Walking along preoccupied,
I heard them crunch and swish beneath my feet,
and lookin down,
I saw a blaze of opal fire--bright yellow and orange and
golden splashes!
Where did they come from--
all these jeweled leaves?

Amazed, I gasped.
Where did they all come from?
Summer was only yesterday . . . or
the day before.
I lost count of the days--
IMPORTANT things to do!

A sweeping glance upward: the fall rainbow arched over me.
It greeted my eyes like a feast--
a smorgasborg of Beauty.

While I sat starving at my desk
dining on dry papers,
Autumn had thrown her banquet and
I--I nearly missed my invitation.





The Titan

by
Suzanne Lighthizer

The best apartment I ever had
was a room at Red rock, Moab.
Thirteen weeks of slumbering
praying mantises prayed for us.
I rode the pastel journey of dust
with you, sniffing deisel fumes
and rust out of Montana down into
the brush of southeastern Utah.
You might have found me there,
beneath the desert cedar trees,
my blue jeans powdered red,
like yours, and cactus needles
laced between my boot seams.
And you, masked, filtering gray
particles of rock chips floating
air, stood captain at the helm
of a wheeled, Titan dinosaur,
moving lethargically over dried-
up river beds, and tracking the
Sheehan Exploration's civilization
to arches of plowed-up canyonlands.
Behind us, desert snow misted bull-
dozed trails and our jaws too frozen
for complaints. I readied dynamite
for your steady hands and
wondered if my own would cease
to ache for garden hoes and slips
of cracking, melting mud. If I
descended pin-flagged coulees whole,
something stayed behind upon
waking in the darkness and drop-
ping blasting caps down holes you
bore with steel. I walked behind,
like a son, above 1000 uranium pits
closed beneath sage centipedes.
Red bandana itched around my neck.
I would look at you sometimes,
shifting seismograph gears down,
believing that finding arrowheads
was easier than finding love.

Syntax

by
Mary Franklin

There are words that march on the page
Like columns of soldiers on the practice field

Words that float across a parchment
Like cottonwood seeds across a lake

Words that fly from conversations
Like heat-seeking missiles on assassination

Words that hop up from story books
Like grasshoppers up your pant leg

Words that sink through your guts
Like hot silver through cellophane

Words that drift over walls
Like violets tied to balloons

The words I like best, you paint on my threshold
Like a blind artist using braille
To color code the keys to me

Guile of Innocence

by
Barry C. Coy

Yet I wake, shrugging my mother's soft hush.
I breathe sleep's flowers, I pluck each thorn

What power is mine to will the world new?
The aroma of sleep, so I sleep

untitled poem

by
nick marple

paper trees
cast
paper shadows
on a
paper landscape
all
is effrontery
and
embellishment
it
is all lies
nothing
is real
yet
it is not
artificial
paper tears
fall
from a paper
face
my paper heart
is
torn.

untitled poem

by
nick marple

delusionary granduer
stupid fantasies
all memories from a life
i've never lived
i despise my meager existence
darkness with its icy grasp
envelopes me sweetly
all is calm
all is calm
count slowly backwards
from ten

Reading Sylvia

by
Michael Grogan

We sit in curved array,
Striving to reach
The sparkling clarity
Of the crystal waters before.
Each one striving to contribute
Some small token of self.
Some golden nugget, some
Jewel to match the azure
Depths above. And yet,
And yet the red brick behind
Reflects, refracts, disassembles
Thoughts, which then shimmer
On the ripples, achieving
Clarity of unexpected form.
Birdsong whistles through
Glimmering gold, noise of man
Intrudes, gently, unnoticed
Yet clearly hears. Thoughts
Wander, here, there I listen
Here, I wander across
Wavery golden fields, bouncing
Suddenly back, as a ball in a
Concrete court. The soft grey
Of concrete beneath pleads my
Recognition, service is all it
Knows. I'll plead its case.
The stones plead their own.
Interrupted by classroom points,
Thought returns suddenly, slowly
To jangled serenity, and warmth
In the cool breeze. Sylvia's
Clarity is not my own, though
Points remain, running beside
The pool's quiet reflections
Of eternity and truth. Vague
Conceptualities glisten, beneath
The drake and hen, and here--
Here in the warmth and glow,
I glean some small sensation,
Some inner inkling of lost
Innocence. The world of man's
Reality intrudes to interrupt
My reverie, my moments of
Unfolding consciousness. Must I
Refold myself and leave? Perhaps
I'll cheat and remain open,
Just this once.





*Fiddling forever
mnaull 1989*

Family History

by
Sister Mary Mebane

He was a daring doctor
and she his daughter fair,
and I will tell the truth of it,
for, Children, I was there!

Upon a quiet winter's eve
when all the world was still,
there came a knock upon the door
of the house on Farmer's Hill.

The door was opened by the maid,
(for the butler, Jim, was gone).
There stood a Yankee Captain.
His troop stood on the lawn.

"I've come for Doctor Gaut," he said,
(obviously ill-at-ease)
"I know we aren't Confederates,
but ask him to come, please!"

"Of course, I'll come," the Doctor said,
and grabbed his bag and ran,
mounted his horse in a single leap
and cried, "Go forward, Dan!"

The horse leaped forward, but drew up short
as a fair form he espied:
the doctor's daughter blocked the gate,
kept from opening wide.

"O, Father Dear, don't trust this man--
I fear you'll not return.
They'll capture you and capture me
then our dear home they'll burn.

Please trust me, M'am," the Captain said.
(his heart lay in his eyes)
"I'll bring him safely back to you,
and then I'll claim my prize."

Sweet Betsy let them through the gate,
(for him her heart did yearn)
and lingered long as hours passed,
awaiting their return.

Her father galloped through the gate
(alone it seemed at first!)
and then her Captain followed him--
she thought her heart would burst!

A moment alone was all they had,
beside the stable track.
He held her hands, her eyes, her heart,
and promised to come back.

She waited long, then came the word.
Her Captain had been killed.
It felt as if her heart had died,
her own blood been spilled.

The room grew hushed, the voice was still.
"Aunt Betsy, was that you?"
She rocked and smiled a sad, sweet smile,
and said, "The story's true."

Crayons

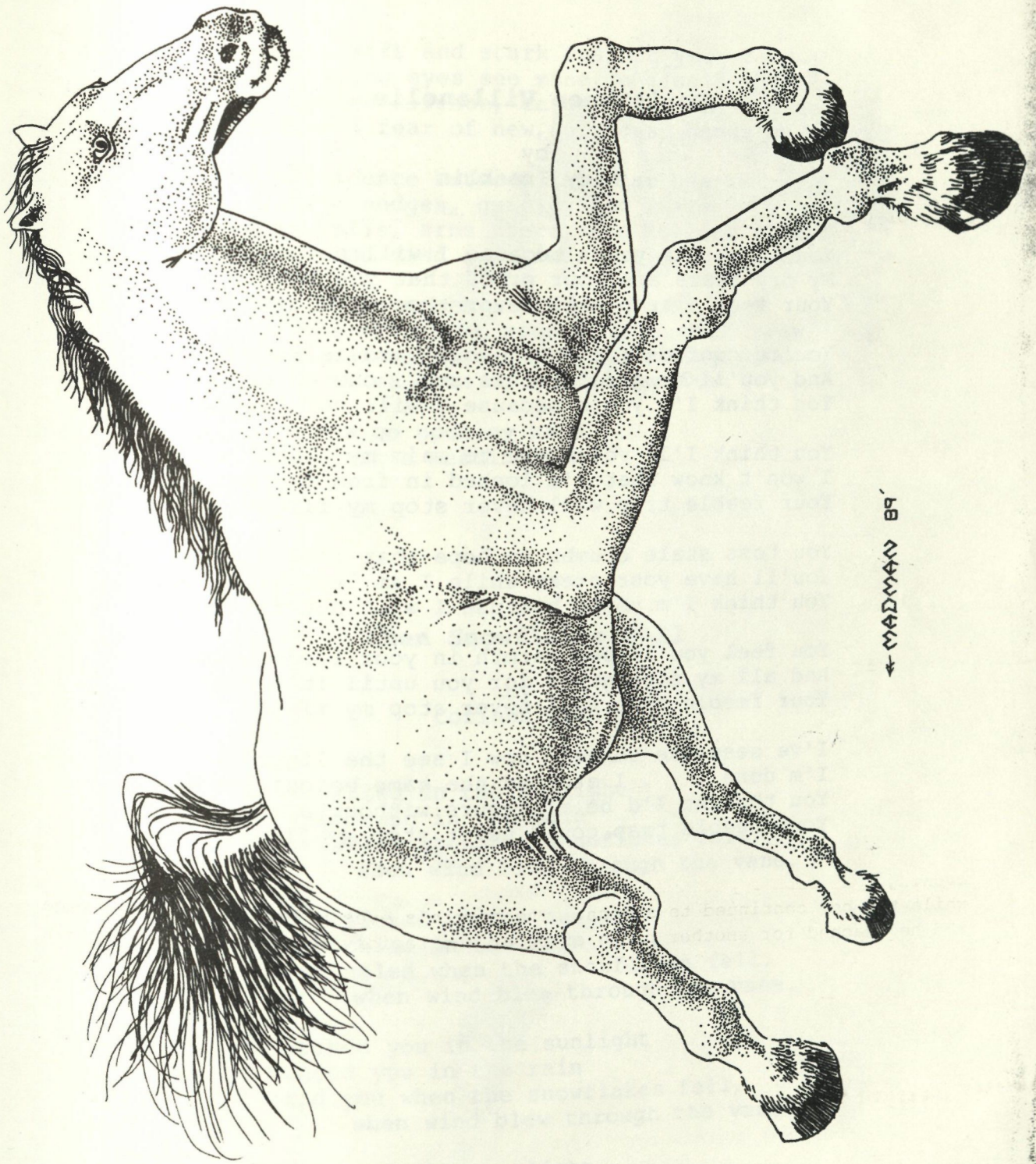
by
Jay Pyette

Broken and crumbled,
The bright crayola lay withered,
Crushed underfoot in ignorance.

The bright color of youth,
Vivid as a child's imagination,
Slips and fades with time.

With so many memories, yet
Still unable to evoke past joys,
I collect the shreds and bits
And shards of crayon and

throw them away.



← WADMAN BP

Resistance Villanelle

by
Mary Franklin

You think I'm yours because I will not fight,
My dry tears are your proof that you have won.
Your feeble trap will never stop my flight.

You're confident I trust your word is right,
And you'll be god for this small church of one.
You think I'm yours because I will not fight.

You think I'll volunteer to maim my sight,
I won't know that I'm locked in from the sun.
Your feeble trap will never stop my flight.

You toss stale crumbs in hope that I'll delight,
You'll have your cream while I am left with none.
You think I'm yours because I will not fight.

You feel you'll sap warmth in your iced-night,
And all my strength's for you until it's gone.
Your feeble trap will never stop my flight.

I've seen the tunnel; now I see the light.
I'm done . . . I stopped the game before you won.
You thought I'd be all yours without a fight.
Your feeble trap could never stop my flight.

Wedding Band

by
Corinna Ophus

Red roses, soft and stark against your face
Your twinkling eyes see mine, a tingle shivers
A tear breaks silence, caught by warm embrace
Such awkward fear of new, of loss, hands quiver.

Sweet confidence between familiar hearts
Such gentle nudges, guiding and aware
A tender smile, arms there when healing starts
And where one mind is blind, our eyes we share.

Ofttimes there comes a picture to my mind
Impressions of bright moonshine on your brow
Your eyes caress my face, because they find
Serene, soft shadows of our solemn vow.

These things go upon my hand
More than just a wedding band.

When Snowflakes Fall

by
Corinna Ophus

It sparkled in the sunlight
It shimmered in the rain
It crackled when the snowflakes fell,
when wind blew through the vane.

You frolicked in the sunlight
You chuckled in the rain
You snuggled when the snowflakes fell,
when wind blew through the vane.

I watched you in the sunlight
I hugged you in the rain
I held you when the snowflakes fell,
when wind blew through the vane.

The river in the sunlight
Your smile in the rain
Warm memory when the snowflakes fall,
when wind blows through the vane.



Chapter Four

by
Sidney Storm

INTRODUCTION: This is chapter four from a novel Mr. Storm is currently working. The protagonist, Turner, is in a cave waiting for a thunderstorm to pass. He has been floating the river for almost two weeks.

The fire had died down so Turner threw some of the damper pieces of wood on it and noticed he had almost completely dried off. He picked up his flashlight and decided to look around the cave some more. He got up, walked around the rockpile and tripped over something buried under the guano.

Turner pointed the light at the spot he had tripped and, to his amazement, saw a half-rotted boot protruding through the bat droppings. He pulled on the boot and the foot of a skeleton fell apart.

Turner jumped back a couple of feet, startled, still holding onto what was left of the boot. After collecting his composure, he knelt down and began to brush the bat guano off of the skeleton so he could get a better look at it.

It was intact, but some of the bones were very brittle looking and yellow with age. Turner figured the person had died in the cave a long time ago because some of the bones looked like they were ready to turn to powder and bits of unidentifiable cloth was still clinging to them. Time had worn away all but the leather boots on the feet. "I wonder who the hell you were," Turner thought as he looked over the remains.

By the size of the skeleton, Turner judged it must have been a man about six feet tall and would probably have weighed about two hundred pounds. Turner was curious about who the person was so he started brushing the finer bat secretions that had started accumulating the bones away to look for some physical evidence.

He ran his hand down the right side of the remains, from the head, and felt something solid about where the waist would be. Shaking, Turner carefully picked up the objects out of the dirt, held them up, and shined the light on them. The three coins were tarnished, so Turner rubbed them, one at a time, on his pants so he could see them better. He nervously looked at the dates. One was an 1822 gold half eagle, one was an 1825 dime, and the last one was an 1813 half dollar. Turner became very excited at this find, so he began to run his hand down the left side of the skeleton.

Again, where the waist should be, Turner felt some more solid objects. He pulled them from the dust and looked at them with the light, after he had rubbed each one on his pants to remove some of the tarnish. The five coins were all ten dollar gold eagles, dated between 1798 and 1804. Turner put all eight coins in his right pants pocket and kept looking for other belongings of the remains. Not finding anything more around the bones, Turner started to look around the rocks next to the skeleton.

The rock he was leaning on as he shined the light along the bottom of the pile fell off and Turner almost tumbled on top of the bones. He caught himself, and as he righted himself the light fell on some sort of leather pouch that had been under the rock that fell off.

Turner picked the pouch up and saw it was dark brown in color, twenty inches square, and in real good shape for as long as it had been there. Turner decided the rock that had been covering the pouch had protected it from the elements of time and the cave.

Turner slowly opened the pouch and looked inside. He was shaking badly and sweat beaded his forehead while he thought about what he might find. He had already found eight coins, six of which were gold. He was hoping that he would find more coins, of any kind.

Instead of coins, Turner saw what was some kind of book in the pouch. He carefully took it out to see that it was leather-bound and tied by two strips of rawhide. He untied the rawhide and carefully opened the cover. The first page was yellow with age and, as Turner lifted the corner to turn the page, the corner broke off and crumpled into powder. The paper was very brittle from age. He gently closed the book, set it down on the rockpile, and examined the rest of the contents in the pouch.

Turner picked twelve round, metal balls, about the size of his thumb, from the bottom of the pouch and examined them. Each was a navy gray, one side slightly flat with an indentation. Turner wasn't sure, but he thought they were shot for a musket he never did find.

The only other item in the pouch was another pouch that was shaped like a teardrop with leather drawstrings at the top. Turner loosened the strings, opened it, and dumped the contents in his hand. Shining the light in his hand, Turner was amazed to see two dozen gold nuggets about the size of marbles. "Gold," exclaimed Turner. "Wonder where you found it?" he said to the skeleton while he looked the nuggets over. "There must be twenty ounces or better here," he thought excitedly as he dropped each nugget back in the pouch they were in. He put the gold, shot, and book back in the larger pouch and went back to the fire.

Remembering he was hungry, Turner sat the pouch on top of his parka, which was still draped over some rocks, drying, picked up one of the frying pans, put some butter in it, took his knife out of the sheath that was hanging on his belt, cut the potatoes up, dropping them in the buttered pan, put some butter in the second pan, opened the pack of pork chops, put them in the skillet he had just buttered, scraped some hot coals from the fire, sat the two pans on the coals, picked up the pouch, took the book out and carefully opened it to check it out while the food cooked.

Not wanting any more of the paper to fall apart, Turner lifted the first page with as light of a touch as he could and turned it to reveal some writing that was faded, but still legible.

Turner threw some more wood on the fire to get more light to read the beginning lines:

"8 Jul 1817:

Dono wher I am. Lef St L two days
go. Crosd Misip R at sunup. Ben
ridin hard. Shud cros Mis R ta mara.
Getin nurvus. Many injuns in area.
Mus keep movn."

Turner looked at his cooking dinner, stirred the spuds with the knife, turned the chops over, and continued:

"13 Jul 1817:

Ben folowin Mis R north. Tok two
days ta find it. Staid with a trapr
las nite. Was nice takun to sumun.
Traper sed I coud reach a place othr
river meets tisun in sevn days."

Again Turner stirred the potatoes, turned the pork over, and went back to reading what was apparently a journal of the life of the skeleton:

"23 Jul 1817:

Arivd two rivrs bout sundown. Hos

most wor out. Be wakun for long.
Haint seen nuthun humun cept injuns
cence trapr. Wil camp heer fer two
days ta rest. Wil folw N rivr wen
I leev."

The food was about done so Turner sat the journal down and watched his dinner so it wouldn't burn. He was anxious to get through eating because he wanted to read some more of the entries. Turner wanter to find out who the skeleton was, why it was here, where it had come from, but mainly, what it ws doing here.

Turner sat the frying pan to the side of the coals, pushed the coals back in the fire, picked up the pan of potatoes, stabbed a chop with the knife, put it on top of the spuds, and used the knife to eat the food. He ate three of the four chops, half the potato, drank half the quart of milk, rolled a couple of joints, and picked the journal back up to read while he toked on the first doobie.

"15 Aug 1817:

Foun cave ta hide in. Pleny saplis
fer now. Lotsa game roun. Farly
safe from scovry by injuns fer now.
Wil tel how I come ta be heer."

Being very careful, Turner turned the page. The paper was plain with no lines and was very brittle. He barely touched the pages with his thumb and index finger as he turned it. Turner read on:

"I was proached by two very
stinguished getlmen bout ta
end of March 1817. They sed
they had a propsion fer me.
Bein spichus yet curus I decided
ta see wat they wer ta say. Ta
three of us wen ta a nerby pub
an sat at a tabl much moved frum
ta res. One of ta getlmen tuk a
letr frum out of his coat pokit
and giv it ta me. TA letr wus
a legl dokmnt tha sed one Mr.
George Winslow wud be cumun
roun ta tak sechun of a import-export
busnus ta two getlmen parntly
los in a game a chanc. They dint
wan ta giv ta busnus up so they
us lukun fer a entaprisun fela ta
hep um out. They ofrd me a thousun
dolurs in gold haf in vance if I wud
do way wit Mr. Winslow. I ast if I
cud tink it ovr. They giv me two days.
On ta secum day I cum roun ta tak ta
them two gentlmen an tol um I wud
hep um out iff n they wud giv me two
thousun in gold haf now. They taked it
over an gred. Afta I dun way wit Mr.
Winslow I clekd ta res if ta muny a

lef N York una fas hos I stol. I dint
no wer I was goin or wut I us goin ta
do. I jest wand ta git way."

"16 Aug 1817:

Slep vry lutl las nit. Wen ta smal crik
nerby fer watr at sunup. Saw injuns
in distunc. Hav ta be carfl so not
scovrd. at lese hos hos wont giv me
way. Los um ovr wek go."

Turner closed the journal, threw some more wood on the fire because it had burned low, put the journal back in the pouch, got up and walked over to the cave entrance to see if the rain had let up any. The rain was still falling hard. Turner stuck his head out of the opening to have a better look. Even though it was only about four in the afternoon, it was just about dark outside. It had been around one when he had landed on the small beach. Turner hoped the rain would quit by morning so he could get back on the river. "It really didn't matter," he thought. He wasn't in that big of a hurry.

While looking out of the cave entrance, Turner noticed it was quiet outside. All he could hear was a whisper of sound, like a bird flying close by the ear, the wings a faint swishing sound as it flies by.

Pulling his head back in the cave, Turner walked back to the fire, spread his coveralls on the ground, picked up the pouch and parka, sat down on the coveralls, put the parka behind him, leaned back against the rocks he had been sitting on, took the book out of the pouch and opened it to the end.

"13 Nov 1827:

Lyn in tis har cve bledn. Ara percd
ma ches sum thre weks go. Splis
runun lo. Cant las much logr."

Turner sat the journal down, got up, went back over to the skeleton, thinking, "I really hate to disturb you again but I really would like to see that arrowhead," as he carefully felt around the rib cage for it. A few minutes later, Turner felt something hard under the bones, pulled it out of the guano, and held it up. The arrowhead was three inches long, an inch and a half wide with sharp tapered edges. It was made of flint, the color of dried blood. "That would hurt," thought Turner while he looked at the projectile.

As Turner turned to walk back to the fire, he heard a faint rattling sound. He turned and looked at the skeleton. He wasn't sure, but Turner thought he saw the the bones shake slightly just before they fell apart. A cold shiver ran up Turner's spine as he walked up to the fire and sat down the way he had just been and read the last entries.

"14 Nov 1827:

Much wekr. cant mov nomor.
Very cold no fire cant rech
wud. Food gon. Be ded tamara."

"15 Nov 1827:

Finl entre. Bledn bad. Very
clod. Strength levn me bode.
Time ta sae farel."

Jacob Stone

Bornd 1788 New York

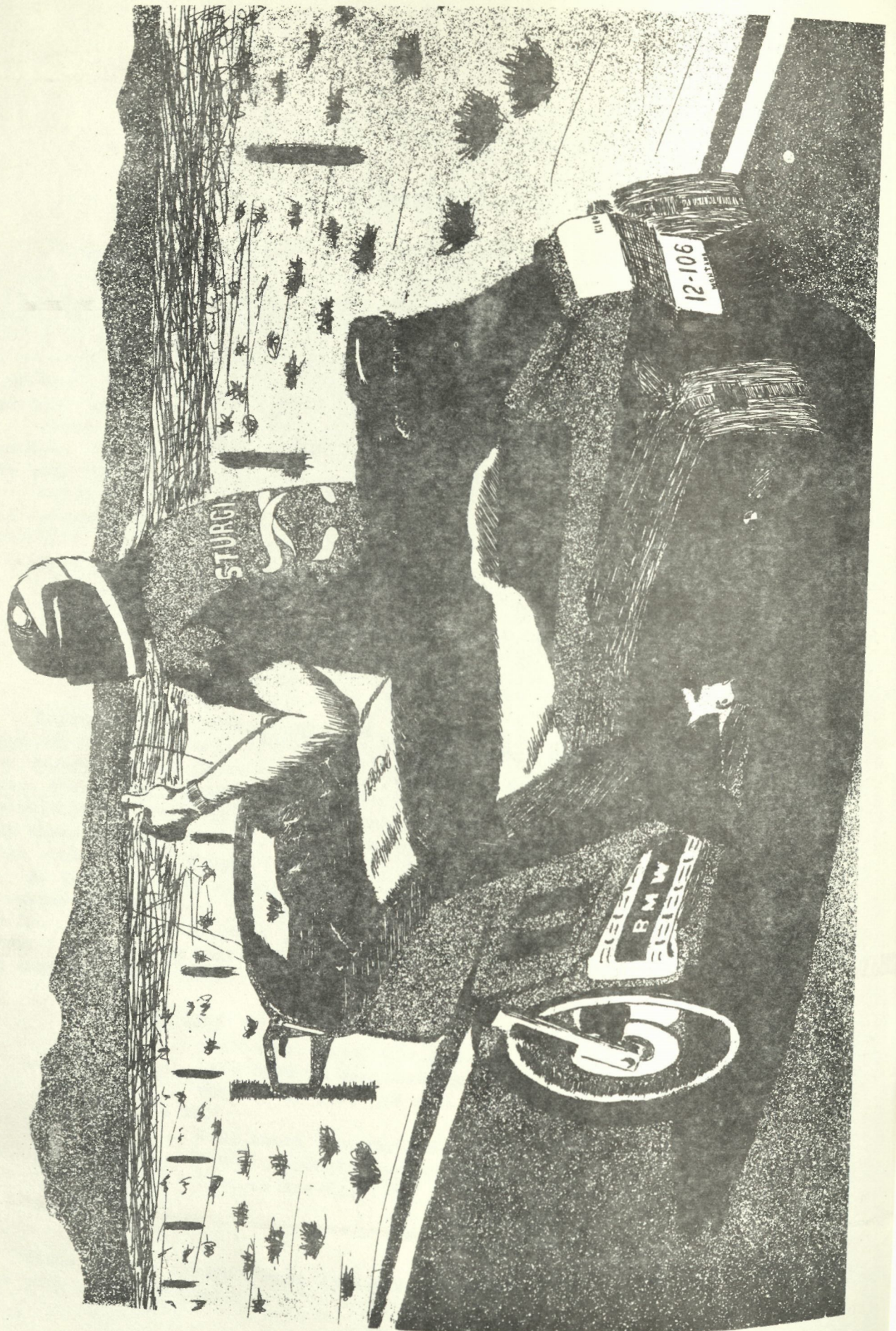
Stone, Turner thought, must have put the journal in the pouch and under the rock just before he died.

Speed

by
Jay Pyette

Do you know what it is like to go
speeding rushing flying barreling streaming dashing
down the
highway road trail interstate freeway street
and watch the
buildings posts poles pavement animals grass
go
whizzing blurring sliding slipping
by and to
suddenly quickly instantly abruptly
have a
small vulnerable innocent slight puny tiny
grasshopper
dive jump smack drop hurl charge
your windshield...

SPLAT! SMACK! THUMP! THUD! POP! SNAP!



Thanks . . .

To all those who contributed to this year's version of
the *Sagebrush Review*.

Patrons:

Margaret Burke
Dr. Ron Fischli's office
Bill Hoagland
Holiday House Restaurant
Dr. William Merwin's office
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