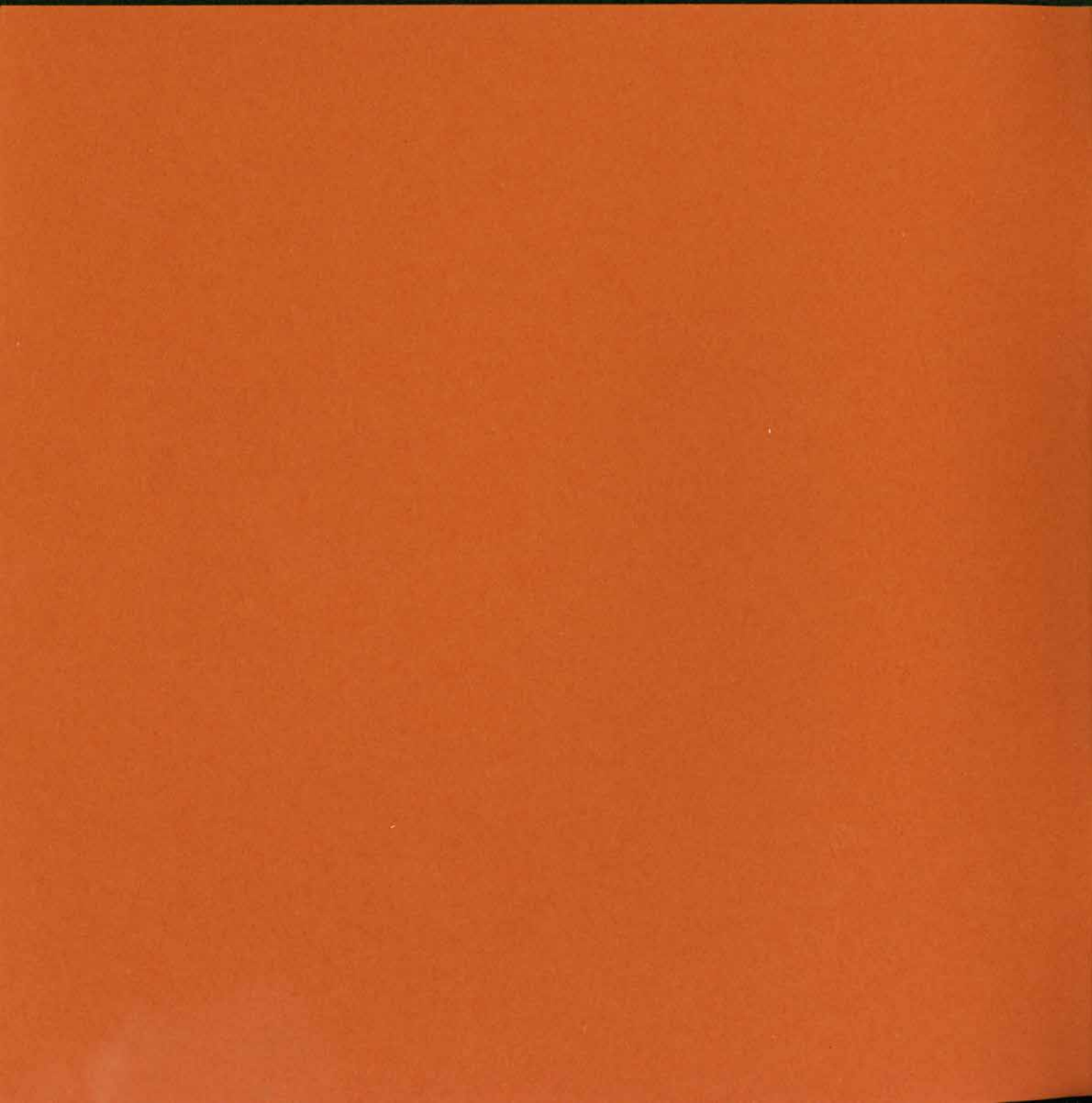


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A CELEBRATION OF ART & LITERARY WORKS AT
ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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WELCOME

RIT has always been an interesting place. Throughout the lifetime of this institution, writers and artists have given a voice to their times.

With the institute commemorating 175 years of life, it is important not only to celebrate where we are, but who we have been, and those who came before us. As a tribute to the long history of outstanding literary and artistic work by RIT students, we present this chapbook.

In working with "Signatures" magazine this past year, the important opportunity presented by the anniversary celebration seemed too good to pass up; this is an ideal chance to recognize those alumni who have shared part of themselves with

us in creating the works contained herein. So, along with other members of Dr. John Roche's "Editing the Literary Magazine" course last winter, I began investigating the RIT archives for samples of past student work. This research formed the basis for the present chapbook, made possible by the generosity and assistance of the many campus constituencies listed on our acknowledgements page.

Though what is presented here is most assuredly only a small sample of the many accomplished writers and artists of RIT's past, we hope this publication underscores the role of art and literature in making RIT what it is today.

KEVIN PTAK | Editor

PREFACE

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The first student paper, as far as we know, was "The Athenaeum," which appeared initially in September 1894, edited by E.R. Andrews, Charles H. Wiltsie, and William H. Briggs. Its Prospectus, or editorial, had little touches of French and Latin. The issue contained drawings of grandiose institute buildings that were never built. In May 1909, the institute's "Breeze" appeared, published by the students "to foster," it explained with slight sarcasm, "what spirit there is" of unity in the school and to break through sharp departmental lines. It seems to have lasted about a year. It was an attractive magazine with very professional line drawings on the cover. In May 1910, the "Breeze" staff produced a senior annual called the "Athenaeum" with separate, that is, loose, photographs of the various departments and groups. By current standards of yearbook pictures, they are very good. Perhaps the men's stiff collars and the women's floor-length skirts added presence to what were clearly carefully posed portraits. The "Athenaeum" continued as a monthly until 1914, by which time the institute yearbook had been in existence for two years.

In October 1914, a student biweekly appeared at five cents a copy entitled "???" which became less enigmatically "Question," then

"The 'Question'," then "The Question," and finally "Question" again. It lasted until 1918 and so provides a record of student life during World War I. "Question" must have sold well because there is plenty of advertising, particularly by the Avon Theatre which presented "superb vaudeville and pictures of quality" for 10 cents. One of the last issues carries an article on the trials of a co-op student whose first professional job as a freshman engineer is sweeping the floor.

"PDQ" was also the name of a biweekly published in 1917. Somewhat like "The Question," one of its first editorials, if not the first, declared that what the institute needs is more social life. "We have by far too few dances and parties." As if to speed the process, the paper included a Matrimonial Bureau and eight pages of jokes and facetious articles. The serious information had to be underlined as genuinely serious, "fact not fiction." In 1921, the Student Association published "The Siren," but apparently it was too tame for student taste. The fifth issue, dated February 1922, described itself as "The Bolshevik Number." The cover was printed in red and there were several gently sarcastic comments about those members of the older generation who deplored the fox trot,

kissing and wicked vamps who pursued innocent boys, and how there ought to be a Mothers' Protective League. In between there were articles on metals, postwar disillusionment and a fine arts ball in New York City.

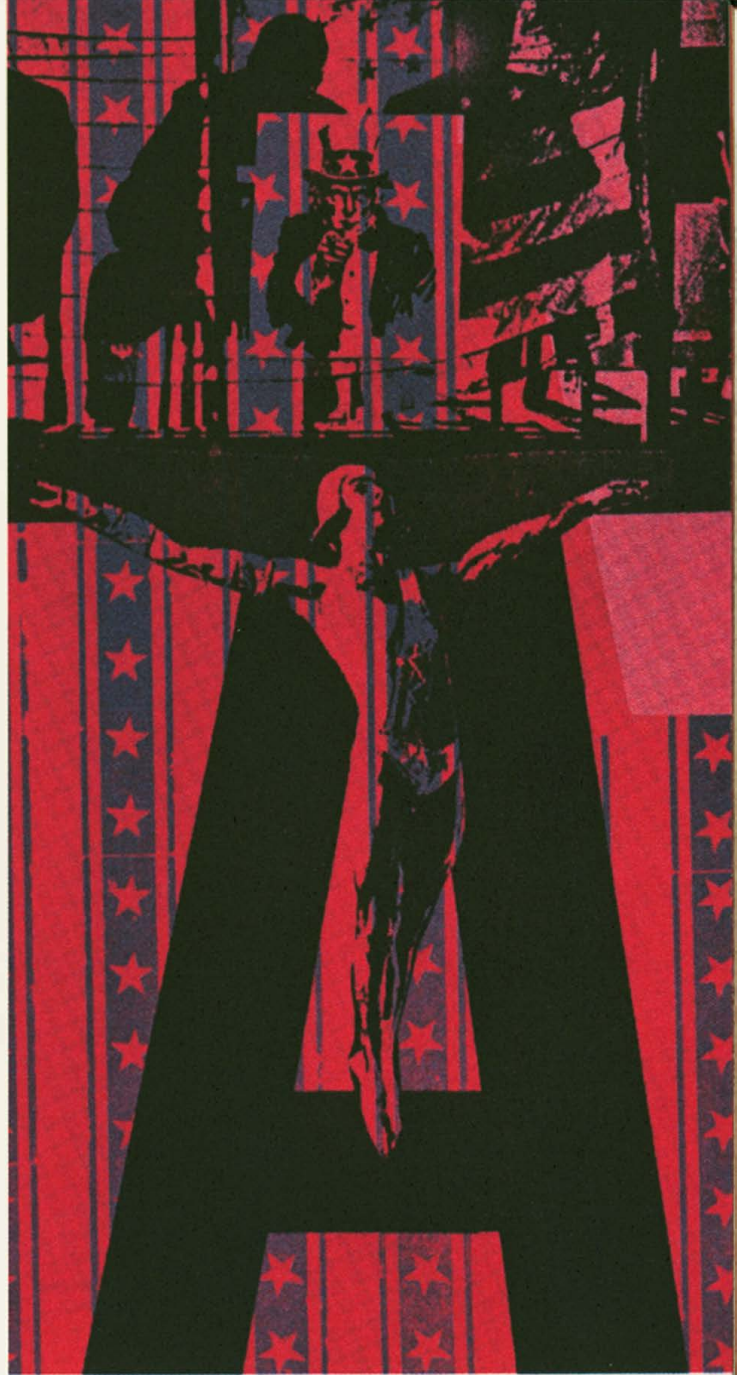
DANE GORDON | RIT Historian

The direct precursor of "Signatures" magazine, "Symposium," first appeared in the 1960's. The name was changed to "Signatures" in the mid-1980's. Two current RIT faculty, Sam Abrams and Mark Price, were among the advisors, who also included, at one time or another, Robert G. Koch, Erik Timmerman, Norris Shea, Robert Golden and, in 1985, the visiting poet Joel Openheimer.

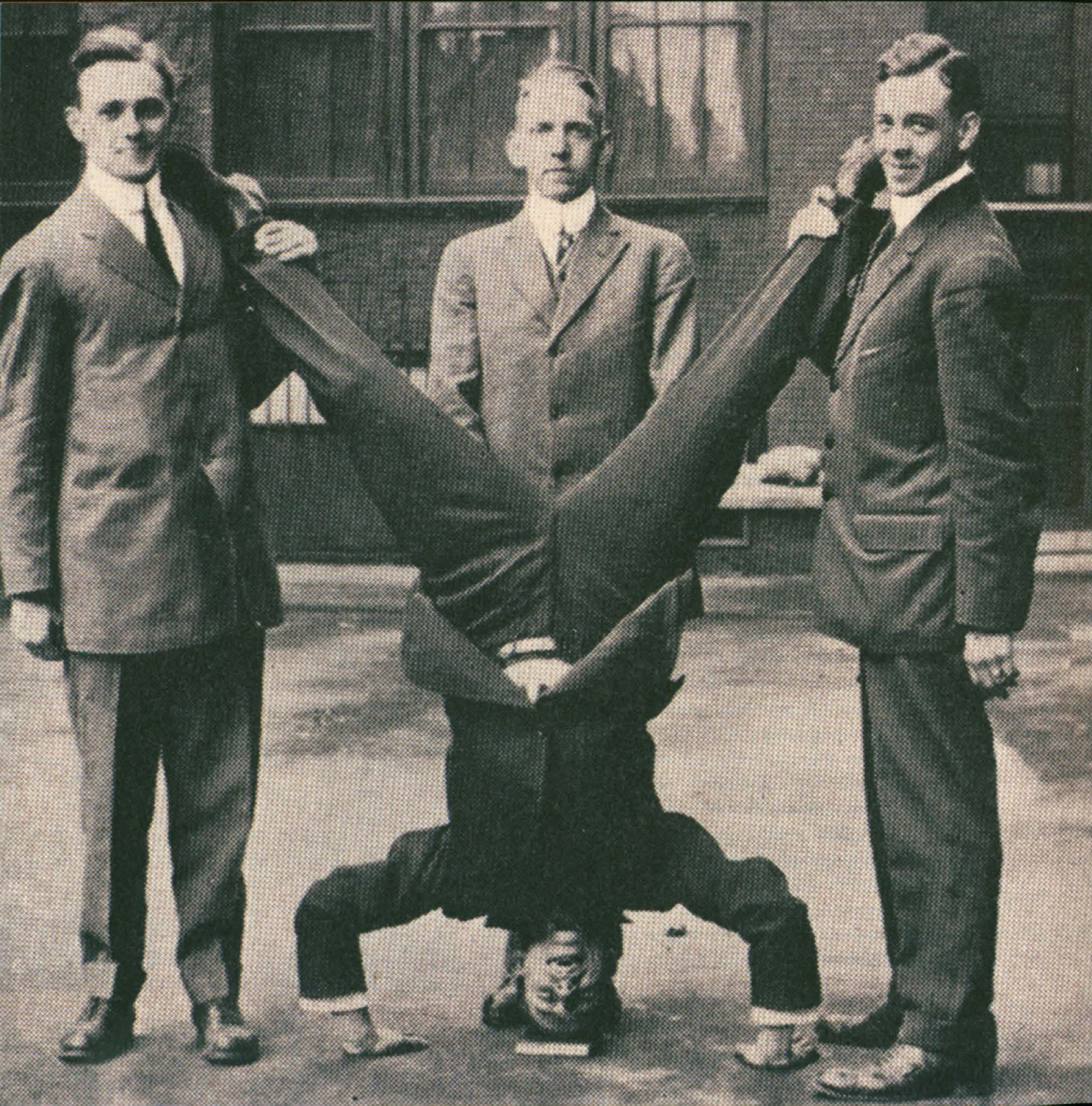
The last several years have seen a growing technical sophistication in the production of RIT publications, as students take advantage of the revolution in digital print technologies. In recent years, "Signatures" magazine has been printed on campus, at the College of Information Arts and Sciences' Printing Applications Lab, and has been accompanied by a CD-ROM, showcasing student film, animation, drama, and music, in addition to the writing and visual art long featured in RIT publications.

JOHN ROCHE | "Signatures" Advisor

1969 "SYMPOSIUM" COVER ART



SYMPOSIUM



THE LUNCH ROOM

A rush, a hurry,
A terrible jam —
Voices are shouting
For sausage and ham.
The crowd at the counter
Is yelling with might,
And swaying and pushing,
A hand to hand fight.
“Give me some soup, please.”
“Here, hand me a knife!”
You just get your luncheon
At risk of your life.
Getting it out,
You are jostled some more,
And spill half your food
On your clothes and the floor.
You get to a table
When lunch time is by.
The pleasure of eating
Is great at M.I.

UNKNOWN | “Ramikin” 1913

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ARNOLD GOLDSTEIN

Rochester, N. Y.

The only reason that the girls come to the noon dances.





I'd rather be a Could Be
If I could not be an Are;
For a Could Be is a May Be,
With a chance of touching par.
I'd rather be a Has Been
Than a Might Have Been, by far;
For a Might Have Been has never been,
But a Has was once an Are.

UNKNOWN | "Ramikin" 1913

ANTONIO TOSCANO | "Portfolio 74" 1974

COLORS

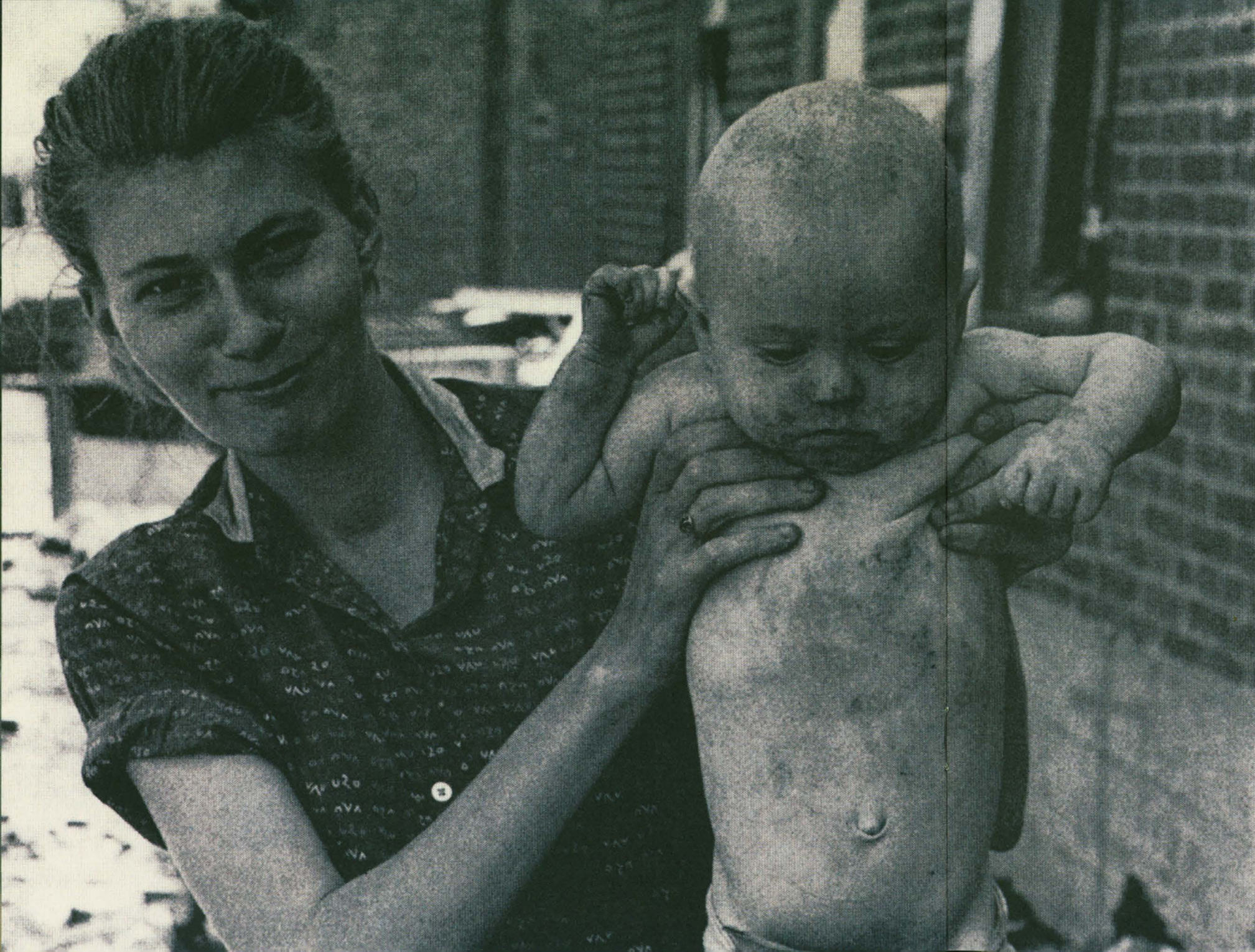
Yes
I have ridden in a
Yellow taxi-cab
With white wall
Black tires
Driven by a
Black man
With
Graying hair
And we stopped
For a red light
In the amber dusk
And we both
Looked through
Our brown eyes
And saw a blind man
Standing and staring
Into a colorless void
And as timely as a clock

Every seventh second
SHOUTING
"Night papers here"
Then the red light
Turned green
Against a
Darkening sky
And the yellow sun
Settled
Shading the city
Till shadows
Became so black
They were indistinguishable
In the darkness
Then the entire tiring city
Transformed into colorlessness
Except where illuminated
By numerous
Man-manufactured
Glowing globes
Casting their unnatural
Aura
As commonly
As the injustice
That colors
A man's mind

D. LAWRENCE BROWN | "Symposium" 1968

ROBERT FRENAY | "Symposium" 1968





HERE AGAIN POEM

Sitting in the Canadice Tavern
drinking beers with gun shooters
and deer eaters.

I watch layers
of cigar smoke clouds swirl
through the mental haze
of this sluggish Sunday.

The man with the blood stained jacket
downs double shots of bourbon
and tells tales of courageous encounters
with wild rabbits
to his snoring friend
whose head rests upon the broken skeletons
of a dozen hard cooked eggs.

Pinkish light
from a silent television screen
flickers on these nameless faces
of extremely rural america.

The bartender harvests my crop
of empty bottles
and I stumble into the fading afternoon.

TOM WEBER | "Symposium" 1978

ROBERT BROSAN | "Symposium" 1968

IN
six tens
four and four
time's lost
two won wars
not withstanding
fallamour

Spirals spinning
widow's webs
torn to tears
for distant dead
warns returning
the deathly drone
men of stones
are cast to moan

Captured crescents
bearing
numbered names
swarming divisions
climbed to claim
soldier's souls
calmed by bombs
upheaving
ceased
sigh
gone

D. LAWRENCE BROWN | "Symposium" 1968

"Memory of the Spring Wind"
MARY LITTLEFIELD | "Symposium" 1968





Robert Erickson

ROBERT ERICKSON | "Portfolio 74" 1974

A POEM ON YOU

swimming in the bluegreen of your eyes
onward and into the orange of your mind
I climb the hills

and hidden valleys
sliding down the soft skin of your side
and jumping from toe to toe
or clinging to your ankle
the journey is long

pedaling softly on my bicycle
across your stomach
then running swiftly over your shoulders
and walking from ear to ear
then sitting on your nose
I rest

should I not drown
in a bead of perspiration
or be thrown off
by a tremendous sneeze
I will travel onward
seeking your soul

DAN SZABO | "Symposium" 1978

THE GREAT SENTINAL

so much debate
about

the big steel
statue

streaked with brown
rust

inside the admin
circle.

KEVIN PTAK | "Signatures" 2004

GIRL





SHUMWAY COMMONS

Ten, twenty young men and women
in and out of glassed doors
up and down stairs.
Passing Passing
Silent
keys click in silver mailboxes
laughter from beyond the turning stairs.

Here students are still
in this brick-tiled common.

Look
Hands are not silent
In motion
like mixed flocks of birds

Pouring messages
only guessed at by
those who do not know
their powered language

Swift varied fingers
animated face
as Hands punctuate
the Flying Words.

MARGARET SANGREE | Athenacum member 2004

CREDITS

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