

SYMPOSIUM

M A G A Z I N E





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Spring, 1982

Editor

Teresa Drilling

Art Director

Matthew Handy

Business Manager

Chris Wowk

Production Manager

Dale Waldt

Student Advisers

Karen Drum

Brian Jaffe

Production

Lucinda Hotelling

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Patrice McPeak

Kelly Thompson

Faculty Advisers

Sam Abrams

Norris Shea

Erik Timmerman

Symposium Magazine is published twice a year at the Rochester Institute of Technology. The magazine is funded by the College of General Studies and the Institute Creative Arts Committee. All contents of the magazine, both writing and artwork, are the work of RIT students.

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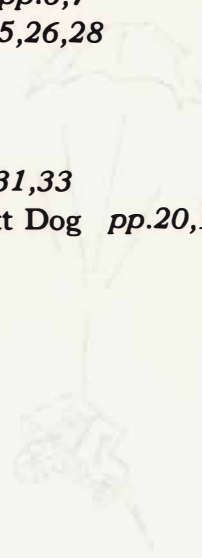
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My Car Needs...
Artwork and Photography

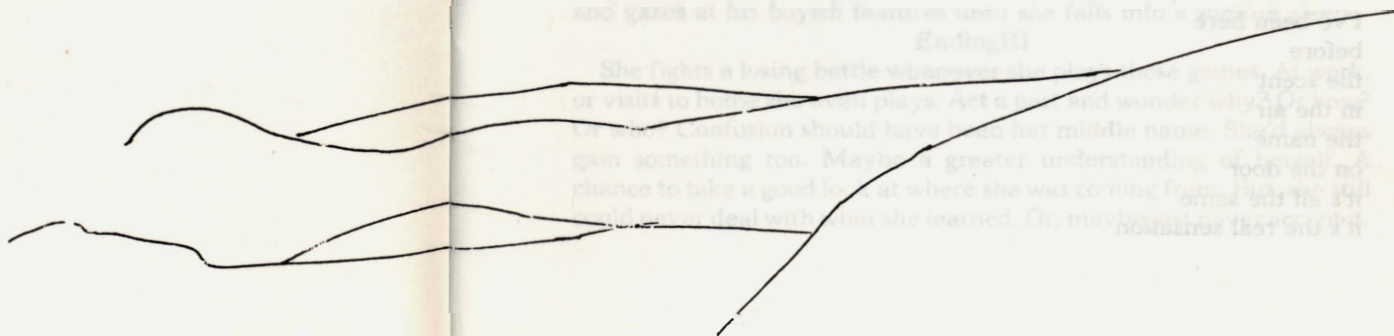
- I never saw the highway
until I saw that you were
and there it was
a whole line of cars
Our lips closed tight
and your eyes dim
through the night
and it was over in
You closed my door
that my car needs
- James Lewis p.27**
Patrice McPeak Cover, pp.6,7
Jan-Erik Lundstrom pp.5,26,28
Frank Moll p.25
Nancy Legge p.8
Aliza Orent p.12
Douglas Blum pp. 1,14,31,33
Matthew Handy aka Matt Dog pp.20,18
- Karl Decker
- 

James Lewis p.27
Francis Moore Cover p.26.7
Jan-Beth Lundstrom pp.2,26,28
Frank Moll p.22
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Matthew Handy aka Matt Dog pp.20,18

My Car Needs a Lube-job ✓

I never saw the highway
until we met our eyes
and there it was
a white line in your frosted glasses
Our lips shook hands for the first time
and your eyes blinked red and yellow
through the night on your way home
and it was over in the twinkling of a signal
You closed my door and I discovered
that my car needs a lube-job.

—Karl Benko



The Real Sensation *My Car Needs a Tune*

darkness
fills the city
in the shadows
you can see the boys
who look so pretty
pimps sellin' artificial love
it's the real sensation
bums seekin' salvation
in the city mission
it's the real sensation
straight from above
ballerinas dance
on the factory ceilings.
wet
and cold
depressed
and mean
it's the real sensation
a stranger stops

we compare
the emissions of power
neutralized by fear
it's the real sensation
a short walk
with too many steps
minutes become miles
flight
in slow motion
for surroundings I trust
but I know this place
I've been here
before
the scent
in the air
the name
on the door
it's all the same
it's the real sensation

Restful Night

The clock is ticking loudly. The amber colored coals in the fireplace are still glowing. He is sleeping on the sofa and she is awake, lying next to him. It's always that way when they spend the night together. A quick jaunt at love and then he falls into a deep sleep

This time is different though. She seems very nervous. Looking, searching the room for something to keep her mind occupied. She finds the window shade, where it forms a crack against the window, the darkness of night seeps through. She is mesmerized by it. She concentrates on the darkness and her thoughts begin to drift.

She begins to play a game. The kind of game that all lovers play at one time or another. Ideas begin to roll through her head like waves rolling in with the tide. One after another. They are endless.

Something is wrong. I wonder if he really loves me? Does he ever lose sleep over me like this?

Ending I

She realizes what she is learning by it. She's played this game before, with her last boyfriend. At least that's what she called him. She never won though.

She becomes frozen in thought. To love and not be loved, it wasn't going to happen again. She promised herself that, after the last time. And this time she had to keep her word.

She lay there, sleepless, counting the brush strokes in the stucco ceiling until morning.

Ending II

She begins to reminisce. Listlessly drifting through time, she remembers John, her first true love. How perfect it was, just being with him. Yet, she also recalls all the questions. The ones she asked herself and her peers. They were the same ones she still asked. They hadn't changed

She becomes engrossed in the thought that maybe that's the way love is, and concentrates on the idea. She lays her head on his shoulder and gazes at his boyish features until she falls into a sombre sleep.

Ending III

She fights a losing battle whenever she plays these games. At work, or visits to home she even plays. Act a part and wonder why? Or how? Or who? Confusion should have been her middle name. She'd always gain something too. Maybe a greater understanding of herself. A chance to take a good look at where she was coming from. But, she still could never deal with what she learned. Or, maybe just never accept it.

The clock is ticking in ally. The amber colored coats in the hallway
 are still glowing. He is sleeping on the sofa and his is empty. Long ago
 to him. It's always that way when they spend the night together. A
 quick faint at last and then he falls into a deep sleep.
 This time is different though. She senses very strongly. I believe
 something is wrong for something to keep her mind occupied. It's
 the window shade, where it forms a crack against the window. The
 darkness of night seeps through. She is mesmerized by it. She
 times on the darkness and her thoughts begin to drift.
 She begins to play a game. The kind of game that is hard to win
 one time or another. It's a game to win through the dark. She
 rolling in with the tide. One after another. They are playing
 something is wrong. I wonder if he really knows me. How he
 has sleep over on the day.

Ending I

The weather what she is learning by it. She's playing the game
 with her last boyfriend. At least that's what she told him. She
 won't though.
 She becomes frozen in thought. The love and sex he loved. It wasn't
 going to happen again. She promised herself that after the last time.
 And this time she had to keep her word.
 She lay there sleepless, counting the brush strokes in the living
 room until morning.

Ending II

She begins to reminisce. Lazily drifting through time. The memory
 bubbles. Her first love. How perfect it was. How young and free
 Yet she also recalls a question. The one she asked herself. Why
 her best. They came when she still asked. They didn't
 She becomes
 love it and cook
 and gaze at the boy's features until she falls into a deep sleep.

Ending III

The night is a long battle wherever she plays those games. At night
 or even to learn the over play. Act a part and wonder why. Or how
 Or why. Conclusion should have been her middle name. She is always
 from something too. It's a greater understanding of herself. A
 chance to take a good look at where she was coming from. But she
 could never find what she learned. Or why she just never learned.

desolate

can't
 leave my
 empty spaces
 empty
 anymore

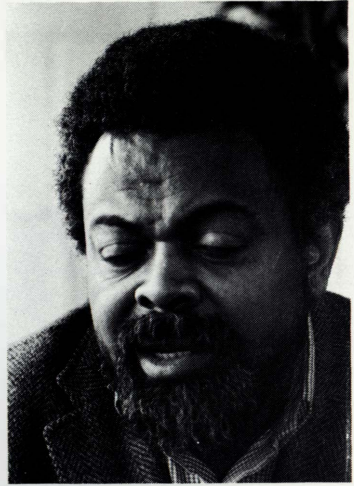
—Sharon Stockman





FRANK 82





Mr. Baraka, I've got something to tell you, so listen.

Mr. Baraka, you need to know this, are you ready?

You're a damn fool!!

Wait! Don't blow your stack just yet.

After all, you're not a fool compared to most.

Most people aren't worthy of the title "fool."

But you better maybe responsible so

take a little criticism.

Mr. Baraka, you live in delusion.

Leroi, you once thought it was black against white.

Amiri, now you think it's poor against rich.

Mr. Baraka, I'm requesting you to take a step forward:

It is order against chaos, organization against entropy,

Life is a spiral storm swirling in between

and we're all gonna die.

Step into the light.

✓

Mr. Baraka, why do I even bother to say anything?
Is your mind like jello in a freezer?
Can you conjure a caricature to paste me flat up against?
O yes!! Just pick one from a convenient ready made...

I'm shaking you, groggy man,
I'm waking you, sleeper!!
Pay attention, willya?

We are vegetables.

Like, we're being cultivated.

War is when the earth gorges herself.

Juicy human energy packets bursting into the air, disintegrating
Swirling intravenous death nutrition into her blood stream.

I'll bet she really gonna smack her lips when some idiot...

Blows out your brains!!

Step into the light.

Mr. Baraka, you still there? Probably not.

Do you hate me like a mad raging wounded animal would?

Do you think I support the slavery system?

Farm animal humanoids mooing to the slaughter?

Amiri, your aim is off.

We are ineffective, our battles are in vain. We're a foreign substance in
Big Brother's bloodvessels.

Someday soon some white cell gonna float up behind you...

Gobble you up!!!

Amiri, our minds are dying.

Each needs time

Time to free his own mind

From time, the merciless entropic gangrene

Eating us alive.

Can there be anything stranger than this?

Freedom. From time.

Step into the light.

Mr. Baraka, ain't no united front gonna pull you out of this mess.

Hints:

Did you know that there are 12 levels in human society,
and that the piggy robots that you are raging at are only
number 4 from the b o t t o m?

You are number 5 any day you wake up. Any waking moment is...
Graduation.

So then who are you going to attack?
So then what is all the shit you've been saying worth to your people
or us?

So then what are you worth?
Mr. Baraka, I'm speaking to you with authority.
This is a message from level 6:

We need you.
Time is running out
Time is running out
Time is running out
Time is running out
You wasting your life poking sticks into beehives.

Amiri, here's your final clue.
Do you know that the system you're attacking
is already cracking?

It is out of control...so you get no credit
You get no blame...like helpless in 100 foot waves.
A big change to come soon...hazardous transition period.

Whole thing tumble any year now...

Maybe this year.

It gonna come down so hard so fast we all gonna
be panic gasping grasping like trapped under the rubble
far worse than you never expected crazed beasts
looting your home constantly mutated children
quivering alone in the street madness running
don't know where you'll go like soldiers
forget which army bursts screaming helpless hungry thirsty
exhausted nervous strain(s of virus) and frozen
stars exploding in your head.

Wise beings helping moving calmly silently
nearby surely through the dark
in unison being keepers of being.

But all the time you spend asleep stirring up
be-hives not knowing

Mr. Baraka, you won't be much use to your people
with a bullet in your skull
fired by a dressed up negro...smiling.

Floating angry head over heels

No head no heals

In the dark, in the night

Suffer the truth

Step into the light.

—Jim Reckenwalt

Licking cork
Chewing in rotten teeth
Scraping green bottle neck
Slurps
Abuses Love Potion Number Nine
Lengthy tongue
Inside wiping clean
Bottle dry
Fiend licks
Never missing
Winoman
Curator of comfy news file
Weather tester
Rain is wet
And tasteless
Cold breeze can ice bones
And freeze
Hand clasp empty glass
Container of Number Nine
Love potion for drab grey
Bristle face sleeps
To throw up when breeze is cold
And frozen hand
Drops
Shattered winoman dreams
Little sparkles
In a drab
Sharpness among worn edges
And dusty, greasy hands
Love Potion day number four
Among cardboard boxes
Dying winoman
Breathes wetly
Through cracked dry lips
Dreams of sips of moist
Dreams of dry white
Of gasoline red
Dreams of dollar-ninety
Shattered around him
Cold breeze blow away
Down the alley
To there
Here winoman dreams
Of Love Potion number nine

-Charlie Moon



Sour Hat Dance

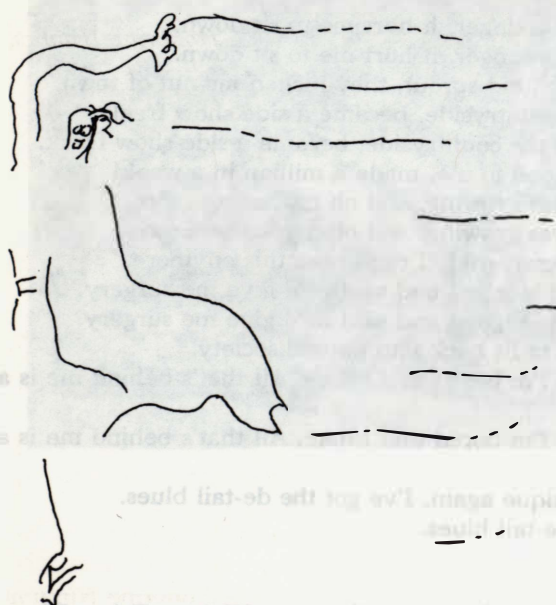
Dance dance to nowhere but
Hate in his pants and
Hurt in his pants
Flash fire in the grass shirt
of the dancer
Who's a lame duck at heart.
No one
See her flirt and not show the hurt
kept to the bathroom
No hat dance.
Impossible romance
back to the going nowhere tail dance.
Remember?
Hurt in his pants and
Hate in her pants
Dance dance to nowhere

De-Tail Blues

One day when I was younger, it hurt me to sit down.
One day when I was younger, it hurt me to sit down.
When all at once a tail did sprout, they kicked me out of town.
I roamed across the countryside, became a side show freak.
Yes, I roamed across the countryside, became a side show freak.
But fame was very good to me, made a million in a week!
Four years my tail was growing, and oh my ass was sore.
Four years my tail was growing, and oh my ass was sore.
Finally called the doctor, said "I can't take this anymore."
He looked at me and laughed and said he'd give me surgery.
He looked at me and laughed and said he'd give me surgery.
This was my chance to fit back into normal society.
Now I'm back home I'm bored and broke. All that's behind me is a
bruise.
Now I'm back home I'm bored and broke. All that's behind me is a
bruise.
How I wish I was unique again. I've got the de-tail blues.
Yes, I've got them de-tail blues.

Based on a true story; may be sung to the tune of Folsom Prison Blues.

—Julia Anne Wyant



rtumba

Sour Oat Dance

Damn dance to nowhere fast

Rats in her panties and

Errant in his pants.

Flash fire in the grass skirt
of the dancer

Who's a lame duck at heart.

oh oh oh

See her flirt and not show the hurt

'cept to the becauser:

No lost clause.

pause

Implausible romance

back to the going nowhere fast dance,

Remember?

Errant in his pants and

Rats in her panties

Damn dance to nowhere fast.

—Honorine Nimling

Bus your ass, yeah I will. Your smile
is like a short speech on the use of
beach towels, got it? Baked apple
samples in the rain, plain pastrycrust
with raisins in the filling being fed
to fiends, my friends. Shoreline trout
dirty my beach towel, but I can smile
about it, and stuff an apple treat
into the villian's wet bussed ass.

—Honorine Nimling

staring at old track shoes...

Circles running. Running circles. Running that intertwines all of my life. Life is not measured in years, but in races, in seasons.

There was that terrible experience with some female that sent me on a crashing downward spin...Let me see that was my third collegiate cross-country season. The season that looked like the last season. In fact the crash (remember the girl...) totally cancelled my indoor track season.

What did I do last winter?

I don't know. I wasn't running.

Actually, I do know. I was visiting the R-wing at Strong. Not for me, but for her. The crash was rough for both of us.

Totally ruined my indoor track season and sent her on a weird trip.

The R-wing.

Interesting place with interesting people.

For instance, they had a marvelous piano player. He would be playing light-hearted music while the other patients watched. The session would end with his fists banging at the keys until he was led away.

The patients enjoyed this break from a dull routine.

The walk to that wing was also an interesting experience. I would walk from the sleek new main entrance into increasingly depressing corridors.

One section was being rebuilt. The halls were without walls and the rising dust caused shadows in dimly-lit corners.

It was dark and full of ghosts, but they couldn't get me. I was a track star.

Bum trip, but not any permanent damage.

Not much anyways...

The spring season.

Oh, yes, that would be the track season when I bounced back runningwise and otherwise.

Bye-bye, R-wing.

What happened to her?

Married and down south, I guess.

But spring was beautiful.

I laced up the spikes and was racing well again. The power had returned to the legs. (and to the body and mind...)

In fact this was the season when we had a party to celebrate anything and everything. And at this party I started my come back fling. It lasted one week.

No problem-purely physical-no harm, no foul.

But only one week?

That was fine, because I had to go to the national championships for track anyways.

Nationals.

Terrific social event. There, in Cleveland, I gathered with hundreds of other jocks and celebrated the freedom of running, of competition.

Who needs women?

Who needs sex?

Not us. Save that for the race, for after the season-we are here to compete.

But nationals are just a prelude to summertime, the season without races. And when you aren't racing who needs to run?

Not me.

But watch out 'cause that's when those creatures will get you.

And one got me good. I fell flat on my face for a female who I knew would eventually disappear.

Disappear back into a world of her own where I could not follow.

Knowledge did not help, I fell in love anyways.

And I knew the damage could be fatal this time. I knew this could totally destroy my cross-country season.

But she powered me through the season. And she gave me energy throughout the quarter. It was dismal academically, but good racing and divine socially. That was the social season of delusion when we pretended we could do anything and forever.

Not very realistic, but we believed.

But the time is now here for our love to disappear.

I saw it coming faster and faster and I ignored it more and more.

But it came.

It's here.

And she has left my world.

Is the damage fatal to this so very feeble brain? Is recovery at all possible? Is night upon me?

The sun is starting to shine again.

I lace up the old racing shoes, flex the muscles, and toe an imaginary starting line. The spring track season is just around the corner.

It will be a good one.

—Alan Willett

HIS and HERS, 2:37 am
(an exercise in lack of communication)

HIS

so goddamn apologetic; just shut up
always questioning
you know the answers
but find comfort in repetition
repetition
need an arm around you?
my arm is tired
i just want to sleep
roll over then, turn your back
curl up into yourself and away from me;
but your right shoulder blade
is still touching my arm
our legs still in contact;
you pull away
let a dark barrier of sheet
fall between us
candle blown out
expressions hidden
end of communication;
i only know it feels colder in this bed
i wake
you are gone
obviously there wasn't room enough for two
in my cold bed anymore



HERS

so goddamn insensitive, just leave me alone
 you never answer
 my questions or
 accept my apologies;
 all right then, i'm not sorry
 want to be held
 don't want to ask for it
 don't need obligatory mercy-hugs
 i become angry
 turn my back, stare into black
 only a glowing digital 2:37
 reveals wet eyes;
 don't want your skin on mine
 don't want to be in your cold bed
 growing angry
 darkness
 protects me
 i creep up stairs
 feet cringing on cold linoleum;
 you don't see me go
 you just sleep
 i drive
 it rains
 i have no other place to sleep;
 i park and wait for mourning to come

—Sharon Stockman

(an exercise in lack of communication)

HIS

HIS

so goddamn insensitive, just leave
you never answer

my question or
accept, logies,

not sorry
way to let it

fall
candle
expressions hidden
end of communication
i only know it feels colder

i wake
you are gone
obviously there wasn't room enough for
in my cold bed anymore

turn my back, stare into black
only a glowing digital 2:37

reveals wet eyes;
don't want your skin on mine

don't want to be in your cold bed
growing angry

darkness
protects me

i creep up stairs
feet cringing on cold linoleum;

you don't see me go
you just sleep

i drive
it rains

i have no other place to sleep;
i park and wait for morning to come

—Sharon Stockman

Casual indifference

Lends itself

Smoothly

To fate

The night is light

Why wait

Our lives cross

On an exponential curve

At point (1,3)

And again at (-1,3)

Casual indifference

Lends itself

To the calculus of the night

I caught

Your image

As it landed on my retina

Bright in the dim light

Casual indifference

Lends itself

Poorly

To a relationship

I lost

The matchbook cover

With your number

-Charlie Moon



THE MECHANIC

The old man's neck was warm and hairy. Three days growth with garage environment clinging to it like monkeys to trees. It was a grey jungle, peppered occasionally with a tall black drink of water. His cheeks were pink between his teeth and beard. His probably bald head was covered snugly by a knit cap and bobbed enthusiastically as he blurted useful information. On any other day I might not have let him sit next to me at the bar.

"How do, I'm Steve" he said extending a welcoming white hand, painted black with engine soot. Mine approached, cool smooth ivory as I clasped his ebony mud. "Who're you?" He sounded more like a diesel truck revving than a man introducing himself. He squeezed my shoul-

der with the affection of a C-clamp. I sipped my beer politely, trying not to show pain. "Cut that out" I thought to myself. "How you doing?" I replied.

"Them's nice rings you got, yes nice!" Dust rose off of the little man as he spoke. The room was dim. His coat went along with the room, increasing the effect. "Yes nice, real nice. Ain't seen prettier ones on a lady. No sir! Watch ya' put holes in your ears for?" he asked unaccusingly.

"Good question."

"Don't know eh? Damn that's good! Don't know why he puts holes in his head."

Steve placed his arm around me and laid it on my shoulder. A warning signal deep in my mind went off, but too late. He squeezed my shoulder again and put a headlock on me, painfully, expecting me to like it.

Thank you.

We retreated back to our corners, our stools, a foot apart. I got the impression that Steve was homosexual, perhaps just lonely. Humor him.

"Want a beer?" altruistically.

"Sure, sure pretty boy, sure!"

"Never seen you here before." It was a dive. Rednecks, pool table, beer lights with clocks, and fifty year old whores. I lied. I'd seen him here on occasion.

"I been here, I been here. You just don't see me, don't look right. Sometimes I'm invisible so to speak. Real clear, can't see me."

I caught his meaning. "Not too conspicuous eh?"

"What's that mean? I mean invisible, like magic! I come to shoot pool, real good too. I can shoot the balls off a anybody! I got a trick see."

I was dying to find out what it could be, not being such a good shot. "What trick is that?" naively.

"Ha! I use a real gun!" He reached into his faded coat and removed his hand. "Blam, blam...blam. I gotcha!"

I wiped his spit from my cheek and my blood from my chest.

"It's just a pointer finger, just a finger. I like it better that way, don't go off by accident. Don't shoot your damn foot off!" He exploded into laughter as if he were the funniest guy on Earth. Never heard of Hope or Martin. He doesn't own a TV.

"Bartender...two draughts please."

"Thanks boy, thanks." Big gulp. "Thanks. I do you the same some day. Car need fixin, call me. I'm the best there ever was in this town. Best mechanic in town, ha!" Another gulp. "You bet I'll fix it." He sipped his beer slowly now, rolling it on his tongue as if a connoisseur. His tongue was black, everything tasted like motor oil to him. He spat out a large wad of motor oil onto the linoleum floor, making it wet and slippery. "Spit once for good luck, 'specially if it's good luck beer!" He belly laughed, appreciating his own brand of humor. "Never spit twice, boy, never" with tears in his eyes from laughing. "Say so in the Bible. Ole Moses found out the hard way, ha!" More laughter.

"Moses didn't spit though." I thought I had made a good point.

"Yeah, but he still got wet." He nearly fell off his stool from the convulsions. This guy really cracked himself up. "Shouldn't laugh at the Bible, boy, no sir. Amen!" Laughter.

I thought that he was amusing. If he would have stopped squeezing my shoulder I would have found him hilarious.

"If someone asks, I ain't laughing at the Bible, boy. I am laughing at you. Did you know you put both rings in one ear? Did you forget?" He was serious, almost concerned.

He continued without waiting for the answers. "I used to sleep in bus stations and airports now and then. Was warm in the winter. I seen this Hare Krishna guy once, in a robe." Steve looked a bit puzzled. "He had a ring in his nose. He looked as ugly as a bull. Clumsy fellow, ha! Walks into the revolving door a bit fast and guess what? He bumps his face and the ring was ripped from his nose. I starts laughing! He looked like Jack Nicholson in Chinatown... but balder!"

Steve lost control again, rolling with that crackling laughter. Maybe he does own a television? Or maybe he saw Chinatown in an all night theater, all curled up on a small seat, on a cold winter night?

The evening passed. The bar got progressively smokier. So did my mind. I whiled away the time listening to Steve's strange humor and avoiding his shoulder squeezes and headlocks.

On his neck was a group of hairs a little longer than the rest of the scraggly locks. It was several centimeters long and bobbed when he talked or swallowed. I was hypnotized by its motion. I was getting drunk. That bunch of wayward hair seemed to do the talking, not Steve, though it was a little out of synch, like a foreign movie which has been translated to another language. His stories were like folk tales from another land.

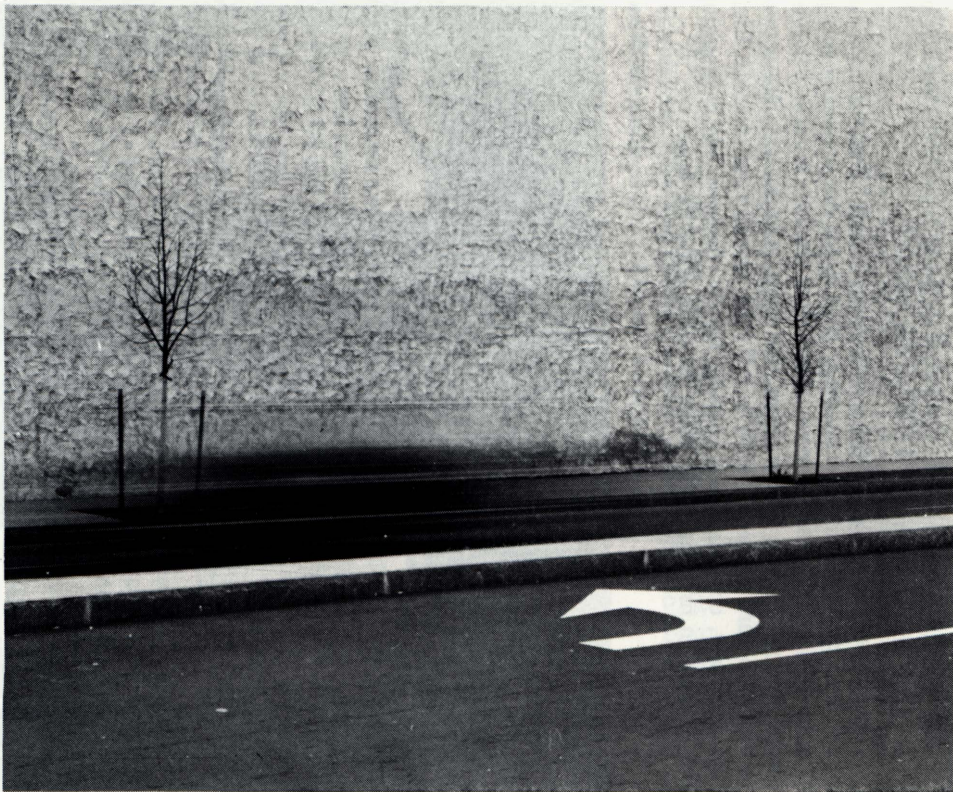
Steve didn't mind my inebriated lack of participation. He would simply squeeze my shoulder hard enough to make me say "I know just how you feel!" After a while, this stimulus-response relationship would make us both laugh.

The time went so slow you could hear its great cogs rotate heavily on their thick shafts. By nine, I had to bid farewell.

"Leaving so soon sonny? Was it something I said?" Neither one of us could hold back the roar of laughter that drew the attention of the people around us. I had become addicted to Steve's humor. I moved away, the room was bleary from the tears and booze. Steve was laughing so hard it was difficult to tell if he would ever recover. I left him that way, coughing and gasping for air, forever. He is laughing perpetually in my mind. He must be very good by now.

—Charlie Moon

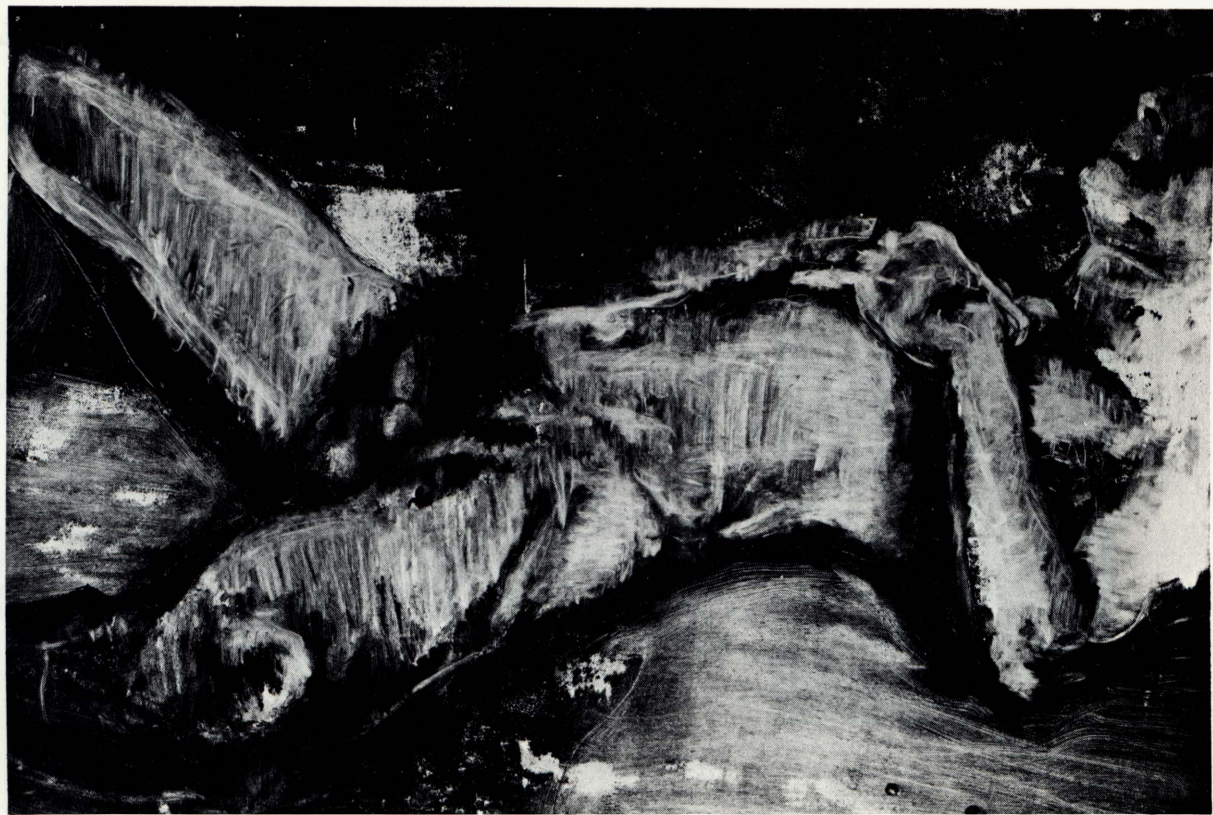




clever argument

**you distort
until
i apologize
for your
offense**

—Sharon Stockman



lcome to
ground zero

hello, please to be here

Hiroshima 1981

Police
State
SHADE
COWBOYS



I Scream Pallor

I jump, we jump
We hit the beach,
Sand stained vanilla brown
Mist as thick as cream.
My buddy's face is twisted and pale.
I remember the straws we shared.
"Nuts,"he says, "All nuts."
Run, fly, trip, die,In the distance
A cream can roars.
The enemy is thick,
Scalding blankets of hot fudge,
Pressing our faces to vanilla shores.
A mamma's boy has found his flavor,
His face a final cherry of welling blood.
I sit and watch and think of home,
While chocolate jimmie boys litter the waves.
Before, immediately before
I savor my own deserts.

—John A. Lester III



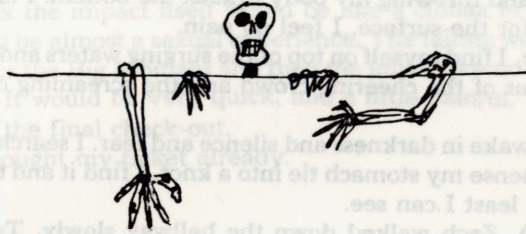
my brother came back from vietnam
all ground up like hamburger
in a green body bag.
a chaplain came too. mama slammed
the door in his fat cherub face
but the body bag didn't leave.

we sat around the table with
Elmer's Extra Strength Glue and
tried to put him back together.
tried awful hard, of course
Elmer's Extra Strength wasn't
good enough, so dad said pretty
soon that they would invent a new
glue to take care of these kinds
of jobs. unfortunately we couldn't
wait.

we planted my brother in the back-
yard between his first pet dog and
the peach tree and every christmas
we hang his dog tags on the top of
the tree where the angel used to
go and do all the rest like all
ways.

they never did invent anything to
put ground hamburger together with.

—Luisa S. Giovannini



suicide

I scream and scream, long and (I think) loud, trying to shake the very roots of this so very silent forest. I do not know if it echoes. I am deaf.

I cannot hear the leaves rustle beneath my feet. I cannot tell the velocity of a creek by sound. I can only look and imagine.

I'm not doing well. Every sound I attempt to dream up becomes a nightmare and quickly fades away. Like all my friends did when I entered the world of the non-hearing. They slowly disappeared.

My mother said that, if they can't accept you now, they were never good friends in the first place.

Thanks, Mom. I guess I've never had any good friends then.

Maybe I, too, can fade away.

I think about fading away a lot lately. Not dying, but just not existing. No sounds or noise of any sort as well as total darkness. And not even any temperature or tastes, just nothing.

Maybe that's it; I am fading into nothingness...

...and I'm running fast. When the crowd sees me, it parts and I have a clear view of the silently roaring falls of the Mighty Niagara.

"This is it!" I say to myself, "If I cannot hear you, I will become part of you!"

Then I leap over the railing and fly over the edge towards the compelling, churning waters. And it's amazing and awesome as I fall towards the boiling cauldron. I can sense the wind whistling past my stone ears.

As I glance back at the stunned crowd, I imagine I can hear the howl of the falling tons of water. The imagined noise is beautiful!

Then, as I see certain death approach, I can only hear silence, and it is not golden.

I hit the water and it is like concrete. The river takes me under, tossing me and throwing my body against the bottom. I must be dead, but I fight for the surface. I feel no pain.

Suddenly, I find myself on top of the surging waters and I can hear. I hear the roar of the cheering crowd and the screaming of the falls. I hear the...

...and I awake in darkness and silence and fear. I search for the light switch as I sense my stomach tie into a knot. I find it and to my relief I can see. At least I can see.

Jommy A. Zach walked down the hallway slowly. Today he was leaving the hospital, but he had to leave behind his hearing. Jommy had entered the world of the deaf.

He stopped at the end of the hallway to tie his shoe. Only when he bent over did he see his mother walking behind him. He had not heard her footsteps and this scared him, a lot. He collapsed into his mother's arms crying shamelessly.

Jommy had entered the world of the deaf—a world where sounds are only imagined and, when that achieved, embraced. The doctors said it was permanent. They said that these things happen.

They said they were sorry.

His mother held him and let her tears fall into his hair. She did not want her little Jommy to know she was crying, but he did know. He could tell by the little shakes that went through her body, the tremble in her embrace. Jommy knew and was sorry he did.

and I am sick of writing like this. I do not care if my shrink insists on it for therapy. He said he wants to learn more about the Happening. He even claimed I could learn more about it if I wrote in the third person. I DO NOT CARE!

I know this: at one time I could hear and now I can't.

At one time I could hear.

I think I know this is true, but it's becoming a butterfly in my memory, some days the memory is vivid (...my brother screaming at me, and me laughing, covering my ears...) while on other days I believe that sound does not now, nor did it ever, exist.

I have a new theory. I think that I never could hear before, that I have only dreamed this. All the beautiful music that I used to make was only a dream. I've always been deaf. The only problem is that nobody ever told me.

Why did they tell me?

My compulsion (I suppose that's a good name for it...) for death is not entirely new. The idea did not arrive with deafness.

✓

Listen, I've always believed that death can be beautiful. All I ever wanted to know is when I had to "punch out" so I could plan my big exit. My big exit.

I wanted to fall a long, long way. Now that would be a beautiful feeling, I think. No weight to the body and no worries in the mind. Just falling, drifting, feeling the wind.

And I think the impact itself would be like a climax in sex. Yes, I think it would be almost a sexual experience. The falling would be like the waiting for the Big Moment and then the impact would be just like the orgasm. It would be very quick, and a little painful.

And then, the final check-out.

I think I bought my ticket already.

—Alan W. Willett



We had an excellent response to our last issue, and, I'm glad to say, a tremendous number of both literary and art submissions for this issue. Selection is often tough; we can't publish all submissions, but I encourage you to keep creating and to keep submitting; quality will win in the end.

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—*Teresa Drilling, Editor*

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