



a magazine of art and literature - 1993

SIGNATURES

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How Far We've Come

I arise to the concerned voice
of a disc jockey describing
the fatal results of a racial crime
who then in a carefree manner
updates me on the weather
Yet, we've come a long way

I enter a class room filled with
people whose complexion
and name are the only things
familiar to me
There's Laura White near the window
Chow Chi in the right corner
Emanuel Brown in the left
The left suits me just fine
Yet, we've come a long way

I stand at the bus stop only
to hear this exchange of voices
"Watch where you're going, boy!"
"Yo, what'd you call my brother?
What'd you say, 'boy'?"
I turn and close my eyes
opening them only to find
a man much paler than his assailants
covering his face with his hands
as he remained in the dirt where
they had left him
Yet, we've come a long way

I enter an empty bus and proceed
to the rear
Yet, we've come a long way

I pick up the remote and turn on
the TV
The exact words and time are
unclear to me
but as the strong, claim, proud
tone of his voice reaches my ear
The message could not be missed:

I am not free until my
people are free
And yes, we've come a long way

-Shelley Pitter

she was sitting on the other end
waiting with answers that i don't have
questions for

much to her disappointment i failed
to make some more small talk,
refused to ask about those
all (self) important details

i failed to reassure her

i refused to make things all better

dead air.
we sit listening to each other breathe
again
as usual.

"it must be the instrument"
we try to reason, only half
convincing ourselves avoiding the
truth

maneuvering around the void with the
emptiness
that dead air filled by
my lack of questions for your

answers.

-John Hutchison

At All

A tree that grows only
Part way
Is not a tree at all
For it has been held
At bay.

A beautiful flower that
Doesn't bloom
Is not a flower at all
For it radiates
Only gloom.

A horse that does
Not run
Is not a horse at all
For it's lost the meaning
Of fun.

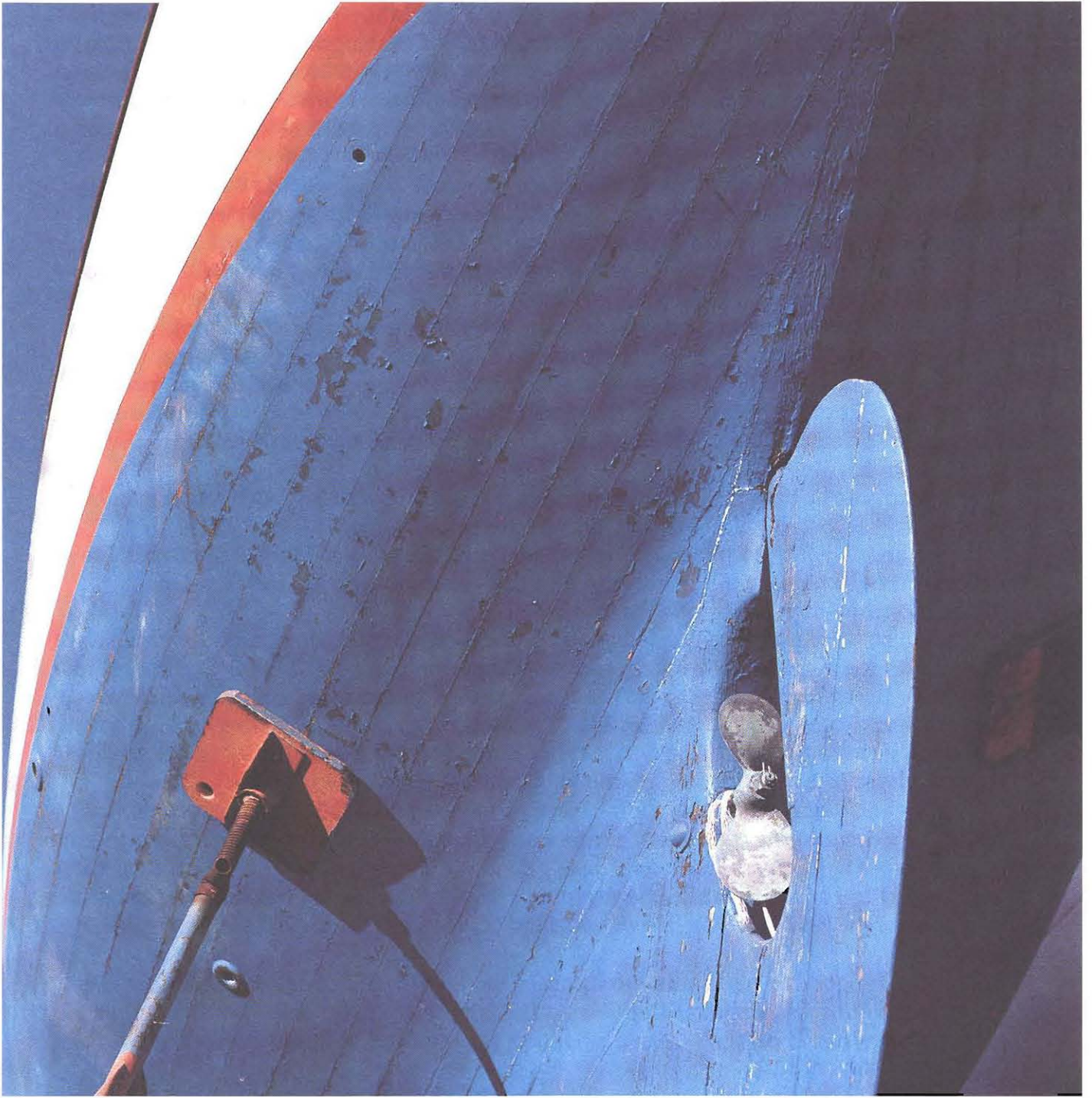
A man that does
Not lie
Is not a man at all
For he cannot really live
Only die.

-Eric Bartlett

Sea of Doubts

Here I sit by the waters that glistens, listening and watching the rippling and rhythms of the waves, dashing against the shore. I gaze around the area and dream, remembering the days I played on the warm sand. I turned to look back at my footprints in the sand to where I started from, leaving behind me a city of confusion. Now, I sit on the warm sand wishing I were religious. I don't mean church religious. I wish I could believe in a Supreme Intelligence to help me steer the boat, to let me know what's right and wrong. As it is, I am drowning in a sea of doubts. Suddenly, as I look out to the sea, there comes a splash of light crackling in the darkness of the night sky. Then, comes a cool breeze creeping upon the shore, causing me to embrace myself. The sky lights up again, then darkness comes back. Lightning flashes again. I stand now, watching the patterned streaks of light reaching out to touch the earth. It lasts only a second. I now feel serene, quiet, and almost devoid of my future, realizing how damn lucky I am just to be alive.

-Patricia Schneider



-Trent Siegel

The eyes were open but they didn't see. Could they have seen, they would have been disappointed with their surroundings. A cardiograph displayed the red, constantly moving graph of his pulse rate. A needle penetrated the forearm, allowing fluids to come forth from the plastic tubes and feed his still form. His artificially controlled breathing seemed to mock him for his inability to breathe on his own.

He was encompassed by the light covers of his hospital bed. Wires protruded from underneath them, connecting the various sensors on his chest to the medical equipment that monitored his every function. His motionless form looked pathetic in the cold, stale, white light. Underneath the covers he wore the usual shapeless, white cotton garment common to hospitals.

And these sickening conditions were the same every day. He wouldn't make a miraculous recovery. For five months the only thing to change in the room was the small clock, its red second hand coming around again to announce the passing of another minute. "Well, Gus. Another minute that we've enjoyed one another's company," it might have told him, were it animate, and he awake to know the duration of his stay.

And, could it speak, the IV might have added, "Hey Gus! Do you remember your cousin Frank, who's been married for a year on a low income? Well, his children aren't going to get much help with their education. He just spent his life's savings to help pay for my friend the Breath Regulator, over there. Say, Gus, he might die in poverty before us machines will let you die!"

On six separate occasions his body had rebelled, trying to escape its unpleasant bonding to the world of the living and be released at last. But Doctor Smith and his assorted nurses had continued to keep him alive a little longer each time. When one of them realized how pathetic his condition really was, he'd simply tell himself that each grueling second that Gus's spirit remained chained pitifully to the useless body was a victory for medicine: medicine one, humanity zero.

He was their challenge; their objective: to keep him alive. He was was the victim of a senseless experiment. With every bleep of the cardiograph, his soul cried out in torment. "Let me free!" it screamed. But his helpless plight fell on deaf ears. Ears closed to the truth while the mouths worked overtime to iterate comments on how they were *helping* Gus. How it was for *Gus's* sake that they were doing this. Thanks a lot.

On the bed lay an inanimate lump of flesh with electrodes connected to the brain to monitor its electrical impulses. The response these high-tech machines were getting wasn't on the positive side. He wasn't dead, but he was far from alive.

Another minute.

"Gus 'ol buddy, did you leave your grandchildren anything in your will? At this rate, *their* grandchildren will have to collect. Just think, they might keep you alive for another ten years. Not that it would serve much purpose, except to give all those scientific journals something to talk about."

Then the red light flashes. "Attention!" shouts the calm, monotone, heartless voice. "There is a code red in room 321. Dr. John Smith to 321 immediately." Several lights flash on in the room. There is a notable pause before Smith arrives, as it is 2 a.m. He takes a moment to observe the situation before

going to one of the machines in the room and pressing some buttons. He orders nurse Jane Doe to get some special equipment, using the calm, controlled voice essential to his profession. The artificial respirator makes some bleeps, and the cardiograph picks up speed. But there is still a chance to save Gus! The equipment is used once, twice, again and again. Then there is silence, broken only by the high-pitched wail which indicates that Gus has no pulse. The red line flows smoothly across the monitor.

At last he is at peace. If they listen they can hear his shouts of triumph. But they don't listen. Deaf are they, who worked so hard to save him, to the squeals of exhilaration of a soul at last set free. Free at last.

-Adam Schaff

An Afternoon in Alabama

well, the sun rose quickly this morning
sharing its light with green grass
 blue sky
 white picket fence
black shoes on my feet
the dark color of my hair
the many people sitting on warped porches
the mottled pond
 down yonder
but i can't see

the crickets began chirping
while the tractors crawled to fields
and people gossiped
 maybe about me
 about the news of late
 about chores to be done
some talking, some singing
a choir of operatic ladies
 sway to the organ in the church
but i can't hear

i can feel the heat
beating on my face
i can touch the cool grass
i feel no disgrace

the voices warble in the air
and then i can sense
i believe in myself you know
there is no pretense

 tell me
what do i need my eyes for

i speak many words
and let them be known
i speak my opinions
and let them be shown

 tell me
what do i need my ears for

come with me
i'll show you things you've
never seen
never heard
before

(To Helen Keller 7/19/92)

-Kevin Hulsing



-Michael Shampanier

Shattered Mirror

I sit alone, in utter silence.
I am enshrouded in darkness...
Cold, empty darkness
Save for a single harsh beam of light,
Which glares in my face.
I sit alone, staring.
I see a reflection of me
In the spider-webbed pattern
Of a shattered mirror.
Me,
Broken, irregular, uneven
Many faceted, confused.
This is me.
Not a reflection of my face,
Not an image of the physical me,
But a reflection of *m e*...
All that I am,
All that I have been,
All that I will be.
I sit alone, trying
To fit the pieces into place.
One day my life, my soul
Me...
One day it will be whole.
One smooth, flawless image.
I sit alone, trying
To piece my soul back together.

-*Angelique M. Armstrong*

i am alone in the universe

when God created me
he forgot to remember
that man is only half
and he did not make for me
a soul to meet my own
and when i finally meet him
in his heavenly abode
i will be sure and ask him

why?

-Alexander Michaels

We Were Almost Twenty Three

"Call me up on Sunday"

I trembled to hear her say

"You've been going with the wrong people..."

I wondered what that meant to me

"...you should try going with me..."

she said as her voice faded, eyes to the floor

"...call me up sometime and we'll go!"

she smiled at me with warmth in her voice

We would ride along the canal

to a park in Pittsford and who knows what?

(she didn't say)

"yes, that would be nice"

I answered with great restraint

"...(TOOOO <gulp!> nice)..."

concealing shock and sudden icy fear

Such a cold reaction I had

to such a warm proposition

All I had done was carry her bike upstairs

I worked on her brake

she held my glasses to my face

which kept slipping off my sweaty brow

she was amused she smiled she was bubbly

we were almost twenty three

we were almost too close

We talked and we talked and we talked

with uncanny ease

among the rows of tapes and films

a celluloid jungle

in which I was hunted

"Where were you for three hours!?"

he bellowed but not too loudly

"I was in the MRC," I stammered,

"I was fixing equipment"

He smiled and said Okay,

and then he walked away...

We were almost twenty three

-David A. Gianna

Untitled, U1992-05

I hold the sword of confidence and the shield of solitude.
Never have I been so strong or visionary, a whole new attitude.
I used to follow, oh so hollow, now I lead myself.
Fuel abounds in nature and the workings of my innerself.
Opportunity has found me, as I returned to a place of mental transition.
Here I go into the unknown, through profound and wondrous exploration.
Experiencing loss, I gained a freedom never felt before.
Hanging on, to bones and shadows became a burdensome chore.
What comes next is up to me, I cannot wait to get going.
Let me venture forth to a world anew, my prophetic mind prevailing.

-Dan Hower

Your Silent Sigh

I know you hear me—
Hear me when I quietly cry—
I listen to your breathing,
And I feel your silent sigh.

I feel your love.
I know it's not for me:
There's pain surrounding my pleasure
Forcing my heart to cry silently.

There's a power you possess over me—
Something I just can't deny—
You pull the strings with a quiet
Smile, or a simple little sigh.

You make love to me,
But there is no love involved.
Your love is a mystery to me—
A mystery that I'm afraid I've solved.

I think I finally understand my
Tears in the pouring rain.
You love a man who doesn't love you,
So you give me your pain.

I can no longer love you
Until you can finally love me.
That's just how it is—
How it has to be.

I know you hear me—
I feel your silent sigh—
I listen to your breathing,
And I know that you quietly cry.

—Eric Bartlett



-Jeremy Sniatecki

It's a Doll's Life

Once upon a time among the list of my favorite dolls was a doll named Deidre Callandra. Deidre was a cabbage patch doll and when she was made she was given a name and a birth certificate. Being named and given a birth certificate should entitle a special doll the perfect place to be enjoyed. Well, it is not necessarily so according to doll stories. The most retched, unbelievably awful things can happen to a perfectly made doll because a doll cannot choose its own home. It just happens that some wonderful day you become someone's gift forever.

In the doll factory where I was created there were all kinds, sizes, and colors of dolls. Some were fancy and some were plain, but all of us were treated in the same manner. We were created, dressed, boxed and shipped to anyplace in the whole world. We would arrive at our destination, then we would be displayed and sold. It was the selection process that became painful for us because some would be chosen and some would not. Parting was always masked by the joy of being chosen.

As for me, Deidre Callandra, I became very good at saying goodbye. After all the other dolls were chosen, I was left all alone on the shelf. I began to worry that I was too blond, or my smile was crooked, or maybe I was too plump. I would ask myself over and over again if my nose were on straight, or did I have a cute expression on my face. Why, oh why, was I not chosen to be someone's gift.

Then it happened! One day this very elegant man chose me for his daughter's birthday gift. Wouldn't it be lovely to finally be loved and hugged by someone. But, oh the realities of doll life! Love and care were not to be found in my new home. I was a gift to Susan Jane who was six years old, and she was not a happy child.

At the very first moment I thought she was happy with her gift, but I was soon to discover otherwise. The house was certainly beautiful, and the people looked nice, but the atmosphere was oppressively taut. The family was only play acting. I wondered what existed behind their masks? I wish I didn't have to learn.

It wasn't long before I learned that merely breathing could cause a verbal uproar. Any action could trigger a response like, "You're stupid", "You can't ever do anything right," "I wish you had never been born," "You only cause me trouble and pain." If the father were not yelling at the children for being, the mother was criticizing them for how much of a burden they were and the trouble they caused her. There was no peace or family contentment, only borrowed politeness to hold the pieces together. Day after day they bullied and harassed the children until one day the children broke the treasured Grandfather clock! That was the straw that broke the camel's back. The children were packed up and sent off to boarding school. Now it was quiet. There were no more bad words or yelling and screaming, just absolute silence.

I sang to myself, I talked to myself, anything to keep going. I felt so very empty. Being a doll isn't always perfect, but must it be lonely? Thankfully, it wasn't to be forever. I found myself packed and shipped away somewhere. Oh please, please let it be special for me!

Well the next thing I knew I was being hugged by a girl who looked just like me. Alycia Leanne had blond hair, blue eyes and peach skin just like me, and she

loved me, I could tell by her hug. Oh joy, oh joy so far so good! Please, please let it be real! Oops, what a noise! What a ruckus! What happened! It was laughter! The family was playing a game together, talking to each other, and and having fun being together.

A doll's life is only "a doll's life". However, people can help a doll to have a life that is full and completely off the shelf or a sad, lonely and miserable life.

-Ann Gottorff

Flower Girl

The flower had grown to love the boy.

Every day he would come home from school and walk around the garden to survey his prized plants, the horticulture of his heart. Often, he would gently water them, giving them their fill of the much-needed liquid nourishment. When it proved necessary, he weeded out the rare interloper by hand.

But she was his favorite and always had been so. He would stroke her gently, talking softly to her, urging her to blossom into beauty. His smile as she grew from his love was incentive for her to push herself to new heights, to strive even harder to please him.

Others would come and admire her, but they dared not touch her. Once one had and gotten bitten deeply by her thorny teeth, so now they all knew better. She was no tramp – only one man could ever touch her in that manner. Therefore, they had to be satisfied to simply look at her radiance and smell her aroma.

As the sun went down, she would pull her blanketing petals in tighter and prepare for a long night's sleep. Even while he was dreaming of school and his friends there, her sleeping thoughts were only of him. She could not escape the affection that she felt for the boy.

The day came when he didn't come home.

She felt her leaves quivering with fear for him. To no more hear his caring, loving voice... to never feel his hands upon her body again... to never blossom for his eyes only...

The others laughed cruelly, as she began to wilt away with sorrow. Only she knew it was no dew upon her flower in the morning, but tears of mourning, tears of loss of the man that she had loved.

Strong pincers ripped her in two, rending her at the waist. As her life drained slowly, painfully out onto the ground, she felt herself thrown mercilessly into cold, lifeless hands that could only be his...she knew it must be.

In death, as in life, we are together, my love...

-Duane Martin

Dandelion

The night sky opens, turning white with hazes.
My brothers and sisters, awake to another day.
We nurture through our mothers breast,
as the breeze causes us to sway and sway.

All is calm in this forever garden.
Mothers neck reaches high and hardens.
Look yonder!, see my generation's bouquet,
as we all flourish in the first days of May.

Soon mother of all, will fulfill her needs,
color will dim, our souls will bleed.
We all must journey, childhood's end.
Mothers milk will no longer feed.

For our destiny is set, death comes to all,
in order to permit life's wonder and awe.

-Steve Frate

she likes to open her mouth in wind
the pressure of fast air inflating her lungs
she likes to eat the sky
 would like to eat her way out of it someday
you can see the empty space around her already

this girl can hold her face towards the ground
eyes shut
and walk feet step step precise measured going nowhere but away

this girl ties her hair
makes knots in & out of everything
she kisses with confused fright coloring the smolder

her lips curl softly with mine
but they always hold back
 just pause enough
 i listen to
 the singing sadness she hides herself in

her teeth smile easily
but the laughter is guarded

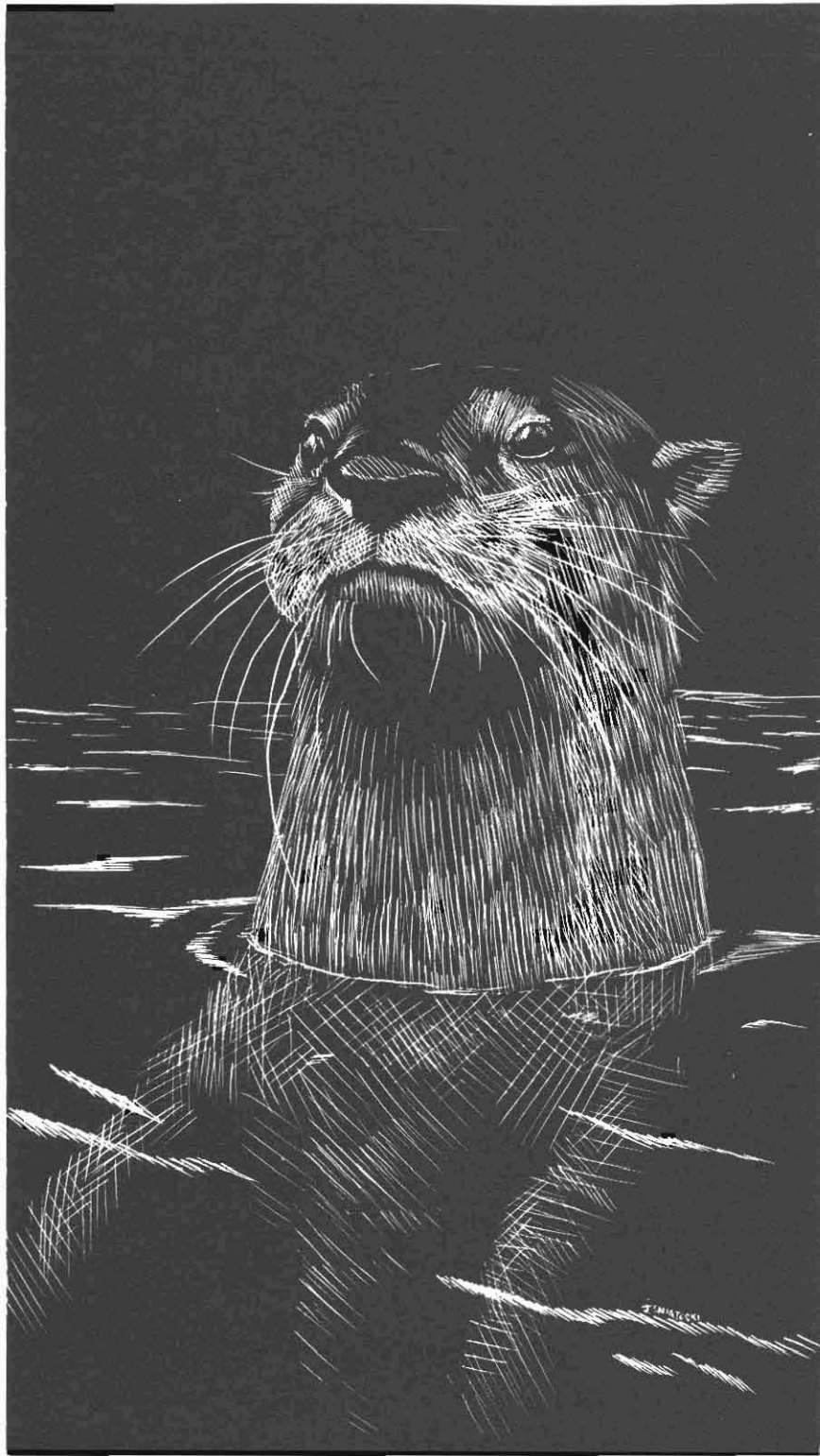
i know a girl with ballet slippers
who does not like to walk in the woods
she talks of dirty plants
and slimes and stinks
makes her life out of sparkling white tile
and lies cold clean and alone

 i'm in love with a girl
 and she thinks she loves me
 and we are afraid to say it
 because of what if it's not true
 what if it's only the consumer love
 of i love what you do for me, not you

but this other girl, the one i'm describing
she despises love and the trimmings tremblings and staring
and she likes to sit in her room
behind her door curtains sheltered
cutting paper dolls
one arm at a time
they all have two arms
they all hold two others

they were made to hold each other's hands
all the but the two on the ends
she made them hold her hands

-Chris Losinger



*-Jeremy Sniatecki
Black-and-White Winner*

Oasis of the Mind

My mind is a lonely place.
Unlimited like a void, forsaken like a desert.
Thoughts amass with the dunes of time.
I roam the sands of image and ideas.
My conscience is an oasis in the wasteland.

Out of need, a respite requires reflection,
an inward search for reality.
Something solid, something secure.

Isolated among the sand and trees,
within a cocoon of deliberation,
I sit alone.

—Ralph F. Donatelli, Jr.

Windows

Man walking down the
street

 “What ails you?
 What brought you here?”
you lice coated, drug addicted,
stinking, alcoholic, dirty,
filthy piece of social garbage.

Man walking down the street

 “What is it you want, money?
 Here’s a dime, make it
 a quarter, how about a dollar?”

Man walking down the street

 pulls out his fat, crammed
 overflowing, bulging wallet and
 pulls out a new bill.

Man walking down the street

 “Go buy yourself a cup of
 coffee.”

Man walking down the street

 enters the cologne filled,
 green, yuppie cafe’, coffee
 costs a buck fifty.

Man walking down the street

 has already forgotten about
 the beggar dog man peering
 through the window.

All man sees is the bottom

 of an empty coffee cup.

Man sitting in a cafe’

 “Hey waitress,” 65 years old,
 hard on your luck, got
 pregnant at 16, “bring me another
 cup of coffee!”

Man sitting in a cafe'
"What is it you want, a tip?
Here, here's a dime, make it a quarter,
how about a dollar!"

Man sitting in a cafe'
pulls out his crammed, fat, bulging,
overflowing wallet and pulls out
a new bill.

Man sitting in a cafe'
lays it down on the cold,
hard, marble table.
"Here's a dollar, bitch."

-Tracy Avgerinos

so how's laura
she's very far away
are you two still an item
yes, but she's very far away

out of everything she is
i could list but won't
what she mostly is right now is
very far away

and i'd like to be able to remember
how waking up next to her feels
but i've forgotten what she looks like

and i'd love to be able to remember
her particular smell
i've commented on it to friends, baby powder
but it's been two months, and

i have trouble remembering what spring smells like
i've known spring off and on for many years, wonderfully
and now i can't recall even the smell of lilacs

once in a while, because i am digging
i can find a memory of her undressing or sleeping
the funny thing i keep
how she jumped on the couch for a little bit one day

but i don't know what she looks like
i have no photos
i only guess what she feels like
and hope she doesn't notice when we see each other this friday
that i stare and hesitate and
put back together, remember, what she is

-Chris Losinger

"Free" she thought. "At last I can be free." She stood beside the darkened road. The bridge lay just ahead. The bridge to the other side—to freedom. She had come so far for so long. She had endured so much pain. Now here she stood near the end of the journey. Her white breath hanging in the air, her swollen feet bare in the frosty earth, she eyed the bridge. Just beyond lay freedom. They could never reach her there. They could never hurt her again. All she had to do was reach the other side.

She drew a breath. Her heart was pounding. Her feet were numb. The time was now. She walked on the road as silently as she could in the dark, dead night. If they could not hear her—if they could not see her—she would make it to the bridge—and the freedom which lay beyond. She walked—the longest walk of her journey. Her heart raced, but she kept slow her pace.

From out of her past, from far behind, she could hear the distant shouts. She could hear the clatter, the horror. She walked faster.

The bridge grew nearer but the sound grew louder. She walked faster still—she had to reach that bridge!

She broke into a run—she turned looked behind—as the light grew brighter. She was running now, fast as she could, as she could hear the horses rounding the bend in the road. She could see their fiery torches blazing with across the night sky. They burned across the road, coal black horses with fiery breath thundered from behind.

The bridge—lay just ahead. The was freedom, shimmering in the silvery moonlight over the silent murmur of the milky waters. She was running.

She was there—she was at the bridge. All she had to do was get across—to the other side—she could taste the freedom, smell the torches, feel the hate, the heat, the breath of those horses in the raging blackness of the fiery night.

She could feel the bridge quaking under the thundering footsteps. SHE WAS SO CLOSE—she had to keep going!

She heard the shots echo across the night—across the bridge. She felt the bullets plunge through her flesh and travel through her body. She saw the red blood upon her white dress trickle down her black leg. She felt the pain. Freedom was so near.

She could not stop now. She came too far too long. She was still running. She had to make it. She had to be free.

She felt pain shatter through her foot and travel up her leg. Fear ran cold through her icy veins. She fell to her knees. She could not run. But she could not stop.

The bridge grew near to the end. Freedom was so close—so near. She had to keep going. She crawled—she could not stop, not now! She crawled with all her might.

She reached—for the end of the bridge—and freedom. She pulled herself to the other side.

She lay there, under the silvery moonlight that danced over the shimmering waters and under the sounds of the hooded men retreating from the bridge.

She knew, as she drew her last breath, and the world in its strange aura began to fade around her, she knew—at last she was free...

—David A. Gianna

The Betrayal of Transcendence

I wish I could return to my shell
The safe cocoon I'd built before...
That surrounding wall that protected me.
But no, I had to try.
I had to change, and be a part of the *outside*.
So, away I flew, to seek my fortune and fame.
Alas, there *is* no return to the shell-
My wings have spread...and dried in the sun.
I am who I have become-
With all of my colors, every swirl and dot,
Every curve and point.
Fragile, unsure, vulnerable
Always to be admired from afar,
Yet never to be held, or caressed-
Or loved.
I just had to change,
Never happy with what I was...
Oh, for the comfort of my solitude,
Of knowing I need only myself to survive.
Allowing no space for disappointment,
No room for betrayal...

Now, I could not *ever* hope to return.

-Angelique M. Armstrong
Poetry Winner

In the distance the sun sets
Among the last rays of light
A cocoon hangs off a branch
From a rotting apple tree

Below the tree sits a man
His hands are calloused
His eyes are lucid
And his face is wrinkled

He remembers a time
When word was truth
And truth was reality
Where elders were respected
Not forgotten and neglected
Where morals and conscience
Were believed and followed
Not just an escape for those
That have been swallowed
By greed and power
And now look for guidance
In their final hour.

These times are long since past
Yet, in the distance the sun rises
And in the light, a butterfly dances
As a seed is carried away in the wind
From the dying tree.

—Joseph Cantor

Fragments of Thought From a Neurotic Entity

A fresco of an orgy in the Sistine chapel
Blasphemy!
No, says the almighty,
It's what the world could have been

A dim red light falls upon the room,
silence
perceived whispers
the man walks forward
sounds of loud music faint in the distance
a sense of desperate chaos

Let The Trial Begin

You have seen the truth

You have seen what lies beyond the thought and expectations of man and mankind. You have seen the origins of man, mankind, life, matter, thought. You have seen the true religion.

Reality is pierced
All that is ingrained in the back of one's mind
is shattered into a million holes
with beams of impossible alternatives

consciousness lingers between here and not here
competition between reality and the real
total confusion

Tell me, my dear friend
why do you seek a mate?
to occupy your time,
parade success,
vengeance,
image,
diversion,
lowliness,
A dear friend,
partner in crime,
good unwholesome fun?
"What if he said all of the above?"

He turns and walks away
A sound
A sensation
A pressure
An explosion

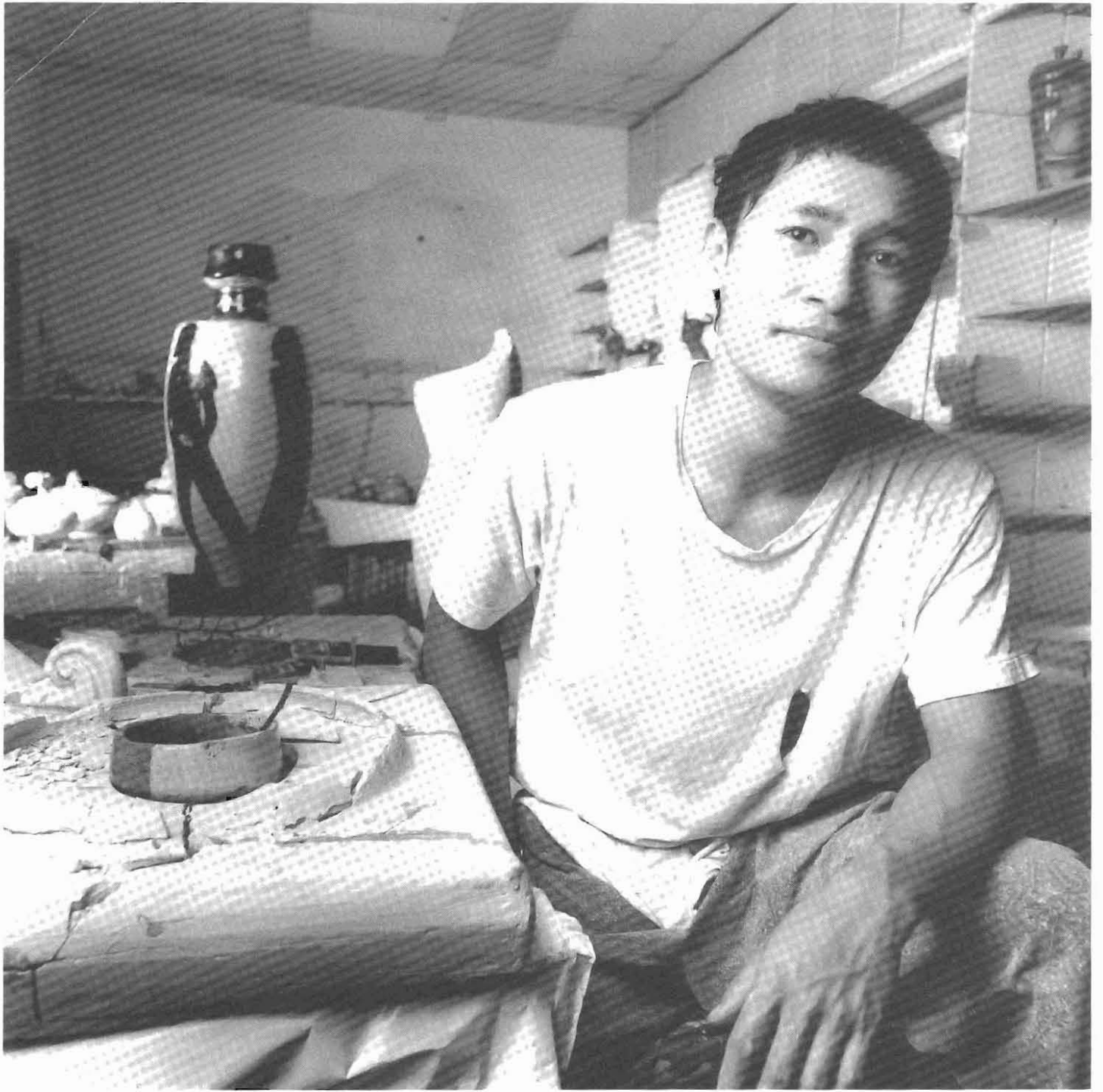
Pushed forward
Sideways view of the world
Filled with laughter and laughing faces.

There are no absolutes,
No fears,
Only regrets.

Let us now rest our heads
and dream the unthinkable
We have been to hell and back,
Welcome to insanity.

The World Is And Always Has Been Motivated By Greed And Lust
Ain't it grand.
?

-Marc Moisa



-Michael Champanier

market poem

severed flesh, sleek and gleaming,
that once knew the ways of clean waters
complacently cool in diamond beds.
glassy eyes, unseeing;
white sinews fall in flaked chunk, waiting...
cold flash of silver
hard gray glint of the knife,
crackle paper package
worn money changes hands i
walk away from the fish stall, slightly hypnotized.
(you want it, we got it
at the market!)
a small boy clutches a large list, he
waits expectantly
in line. nearby
a woman feeds her husband a golden bite of pastry.
wiping the sugar from his lips he
smiles. i
am
moving, pricing brocolli,
bananas, carrots, cabbages...
"gotta great deal (wink) on dese ruttabagas, darlin!"
(the bike loads already planned out, no room!)
smiling shake of the head...
"thanks anyway!"
and here's little Ali of the shop across from the pyramid
at village gate. sellin' foreign cheeses and wedding cookies.
he's not wearing the red fez that makes him look a bit
like an organ grinder's monkey, no, today,
he's got on a little blue cabbies cap and
a big toothy grin. further found,
glamorous flats whisper to one another
swaying in the musical cool.
Saturday morning breeze
conducts pansies, begonias, coleus...
struttin their stuff, neighbors of the gardens-to-be.
"these here's hot, those 'r nice sweet bell peppers, an'
the tomatahs 'r six f'r a dollah"
(you want it we got it at the market)
corn crate cornucopia finally
bunjeed to a wobbly bike.
the sun bathes us all in love.

-Eileen d'Esterno

Skyfloater

Like a feather, aahhh
Like a petal of a daisy
Like a yellow balloon let loose...free

I float in the sky and dream of possibilities and not of missed opportunities. I dream of lovers who can soothe my burning imagination. I dream of an audience who will read my prose. I dream of people who talk of dreams, and most of all, I dream of you.

Now, I am standing among clouds singing with someone. I know not who. An angel? Maybe. I float because I am tired of the world and its burdens that are placed on my shoulders. And I float because of you. And I am happy.

But, really, I am...

Like a leaf of an age-old tree, aahhh
Like a cloud
Like a mist in the wee early morning... cry

I float in the sky and see the land and water below me. I see the wars being fought and I see the peace being sought. I see lightning cutting a path before me. I see light where darkness should be, and I see lovers where darkness. I see my dreams somewhere in all that darkness trying to shine its light, but most of all, I see you.

Why don't you float too? Don't you want to be with me? Everyone should feel like floating. Dreaming. Seeing. Believing.

Now, up here
I am but a soul.

Down there, you can't dream and your vision is impaired. You can't hear all that goes on. You have to float, don't you know? You have to come up here beside me and sing.

And pray...

Pray, so I must. Then I don't feel like floating anymore. I am lost in a heavy rainfall. The truth you all speak of is too harsh. I must save this and that over seas and in between, I must save and conserve. But, what can I believe in now? What must you all force upon me?

No, leave me be. I want to stand before the sun again and

Like a balloon

Like lovers in the meadow
I want to float, but no, I wake.

I wake from my dream of dreams. My dream of floating.
I wake back to you, the society, the norm.
I cry.

See what you did? You made me cry.

-Kevin Hulsing

Night Journey

Pushed by providence
I go across the bay
To where ocean meets rock
And there, up high
Rests a tiny cottage
It's chimney smoke
Lost to the stars

I ride the ocean spray
A tiny molecule
Among millions
I rise, I'm there

The door I find open
In from the cold
I'm invited
We share the fire
We share the night

She wakes
In the morning
To enjoy the sunrise
But I, evaporate

-Robert Parker

Schizophrenic America

America, land of the free.
The speech is free,
the press is free,
tell me...is the propaganda
free too? Or do we pay
for that at the front
register along with our
Ice Tea?

Does your store sell 2 Live Crew?
Madonna and Andre´ Serano,
are they still in the library
or were they burned yesterday?

The chains of censorship are
without number.

Today it's Playboy,
tomorrow it's Snow White.

The door between the porch
and the kitchen is the dividing
line between craziness and
insanity. Obscenity, it's a
feeling not the law.

-Tracy Avgerinos

A Friends Letter

Right now, I'm sitting here trying to put my thoughts into words. It's funny that I should remember this when I forgot most of my childhood. It was sometime in the afternoon. The weather was warm. It could have been summer or spring. I remember being very angry and not giving a damn about the world in particular. I thought that it would be a very good time to die.

The kitchen was dark since the light was off. I did not have to worry about anyone stopping me since nobody was home. I opened the knife drawer and took out a long, sharp knife. It had a brown handle and the sunlight was shining down on me through the exhaust fan. The things I remember, funny isn't it? I held it to my wrist again but I knew I could not do it.

I'm a coward. I was not scared to death, but of the pain. I knew it was going to hurt until I bleed to death. I cried after I put the knife back, I was sick of the life I was living and the pain. I was too much of a coward to end my life because I was unable to inflict it upon myself.

I can think back to that time when I was only a little kid, and everything that happened: the accident, the hatred, the darkness and pain. Who would believe that a child, eight years old, would want to die? I just had to write this since it is haunting me after so many years of a blank childhood with flashes of memories. It's like playing with pieces of a jigsaw puzzle - only this one has jagged edges that makes you bleed when you touch it.

My family does not know, and I don't want them to know. I want you to know and understand.

*Love Always,
Jenny
forgive me, the pain!*

"A tear smudged the word 'pain' on the original letter. It was found next to her body, and addressed to me. She died of an overdose of sleeping pills - a painless death.

She is buried on top of a small hill in the cemetery where a person can see the sunset. Her last wish it was - to watch the sunset in memory of the happy times in her life. Yet, why should it matter to you? It is only a story after all. Isn't it?"

*-Jennifer Wong
Prose Winner*

I am nothing
but my long road,
my gains are your losses,
words and silences,
refusals and coerced agreements

A stumbling marionette
downed between acts,
A bumbler
seeking answers with a chalk-tipped cane,
A drowner
struggling in a dry sea,
An insomniac
pecking the dust for dreams.

Will you love me
for my yeses
though they are a fantasy
Need me
for pretending
there are no nos?

I awake
eyes full of your dreams
only to hear you say goodbye

-Tom Catalano

Death

The curtains on stage
The darkness of a blackout
The tornado that comes to conquer.

It watches for a while
waiting
waiting
to swallow its choice.

In its
huge
black
cape
It finally takes you
and off you go with it.
Beyond the barrier.

-Aileen Pagan

Does she realize her beauty?
I think so
Seems her special duty
Natural for her

Sunshine, Colors, Harmony
My eyes do agree
Certainly irresistible
To a hungry Bumble Bee

Hovering unseen
The moment stolen
Stupid Bee!
My finger swollen

Natured dominion
Pray mysteries unfold
Cry mercy fate
Let truth be told

Can one change
A path once chose
Forever to look
And never hold

The Wildrose

-Robert Parker

Media Murders

TV used to be my friend
I could laugh or cry
without being told I was acting stupid.

I sit warm in my comforter
watching the world go by through
the tubes.

Now my friend the TV,
shows me life down the tubes.
It no longer satisfies me with fulfill stories,
only stories it leaves me with doubts, fear and uncertainty.

Now I can turn my friend off
but who do I turn to, books are now
becoming repulsive, so are newspapers.

The good old days are gone,
All we have are freedom of speech,
but what price do we have to pay.
Children are restless
with the negative themes of media

The media of books, newspapers and TV
Shame on you for corrupting our minds.
We have learned many behaviors,
and some store it in their mind which can be
effective and ineffective.

Advertisements on TV, you see people
drinking, smoking, killing, crying and suffering.
Some are cool and rich- its not really that way.
The picture is not bright.....

-Patricia Schneider

Twenty Cents a Pound

Labor day afternoon.
Sun angles sharply
over tops of rural barns,
sculpts farms, brush fields, hills.
Queen anne's lace lined
french linen road unfolds, river of light.
Southern tier vineyards are
cornrows in an african's hair
graceful lines of a japanese garden
...thoroughfares for generations of insects!
"U-pick": we turn;
circumnavigate
ramshackle trapezoid
chicken coop, well-kept
farmhouse, rusting mementos of tractors.
'Round the inside of the last
mysterious turn in the drive,
a cap, violet, shades the crinkly blue gaze
smiling from the tan face.

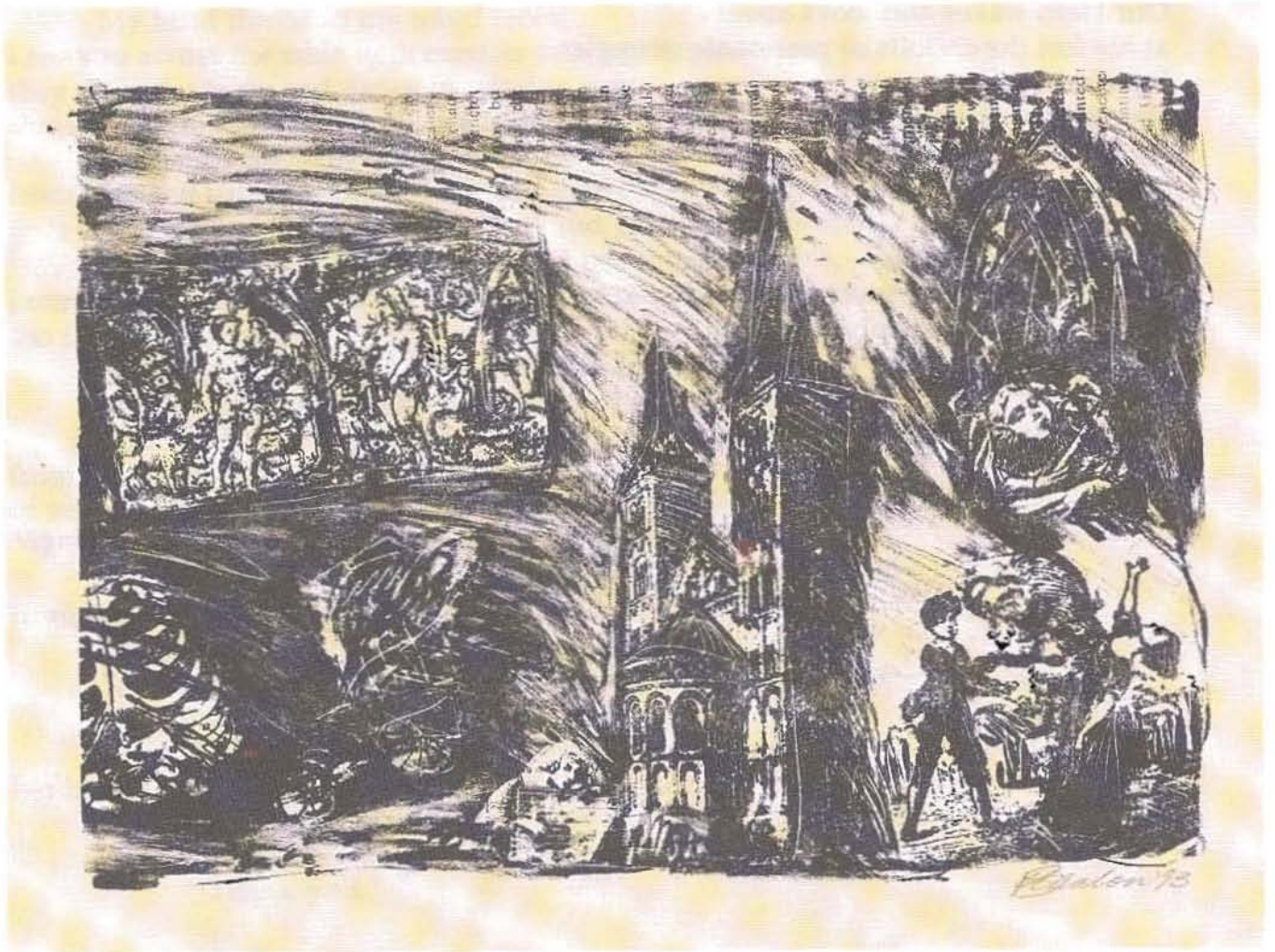
"Needin' a basket? And here's some shears,
the rows 'r marked. Taste 'em all, if ya like."

Of course the nearest grape is
always the first in the mouth, when
the subtleties of bouquet
are overrun by childish glee.
It's only later, when you've gotten past
eating them because each is more
beautiful than the last,
(translucent
globes of crimson, violet,
pale yellow, rose-red...
magnificent, torpid bunches suspended
by strangely graceful gnarled vines)
only later that the question arises:
jam, or wine?
or both?

-Eileen d'Esterno



-Jennifer Kerrigan



-Karen Scanlon

Our Hero wakes and looks about
at his feet the castoffs of passionate struggles
bundled-up lie
significant [of] nothing
the fallen lying beside
unaware of the day

with his head reeling
virtues counted in anonymous fallen armors
holding himself limply
in aftermath

one knight stands

-Chris Losinger

My head throbs as my mind races,
I see you across the table with candles dancing in your eyes,
they cross the table and dance in mine as well,
shining up through me, from my heart.

My hands tingle as my breath speeds
from between my moist lips. I see you there,
your thoughts radiate from you, reflect and glow on the walls.

Our feet, both bare, dance between us, under the table,
bouncing off the legs, coming close together, but never penetrating]
too far into our spaces.

My heart pounds and desires to be near yours.

My lips are now dry, my wine glass empty again.

I can't help but be lost in you as you stand and walk
from the table. Your confidence flows off your body, waves
of sexuality and arrogance pool around your feet.

You are back, my glass is filled.

Our hands touch, caress off each other as the glass is taken
from her hand. Does she touch mine the same?

My mouth is still dry, my chest and face hot.

The meal is over and the plates and bowls are abandoned where they lay.

She disappears behind me, out of view.

I feel her there now, near me, a hand on my shoulder.
her breath in my ear, on my neck.

All she says, all she could ever have said,
the only thing that could have been perfect, was,
"Thank you."

-Tim Certel

Here I sit, absorbing like a sponge
Equations, Formulae and the such
We hold these truths to be self evident
That all men are created equal – evidently not.

True knowledge does not come from a book
True knowledge is within the soul.

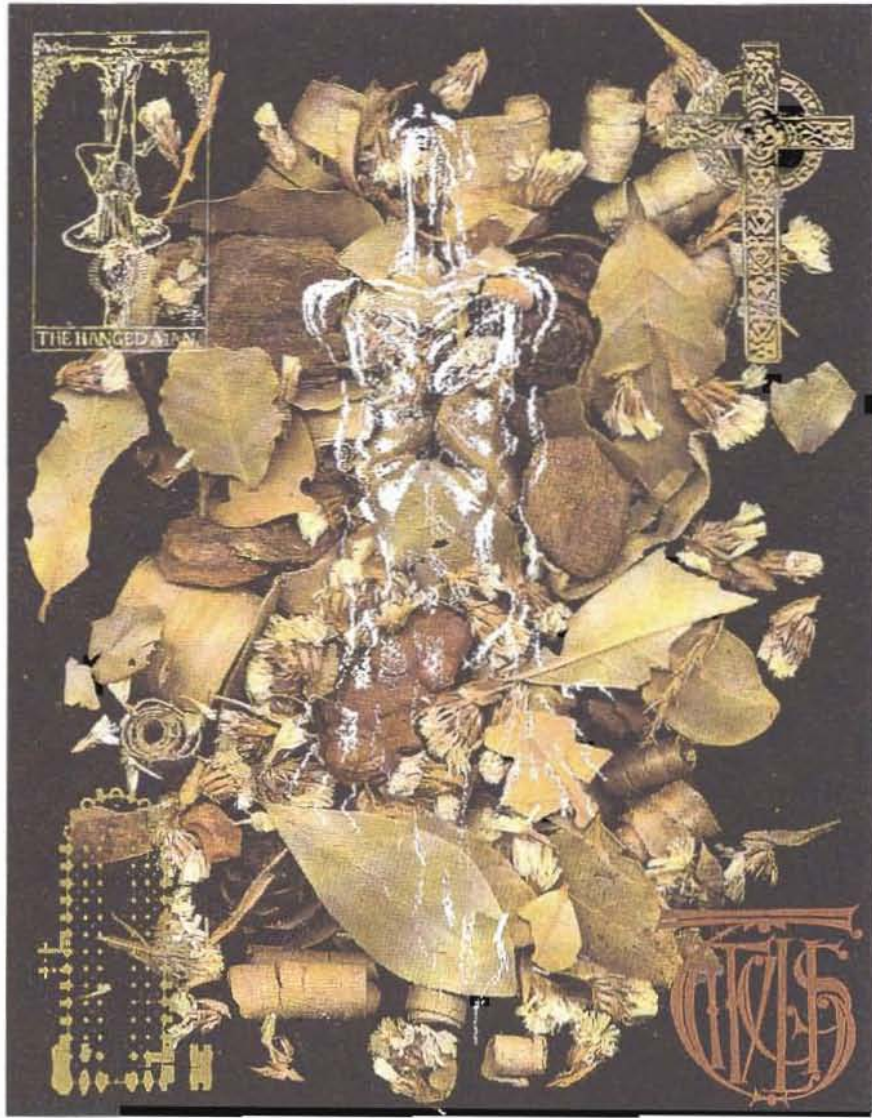
Seek not in the library
Seek not in the classroom

The answers have always been there
Just open your eyes and see them.

Look to your heroes and role models
I do not mean the athlete who plays a game
I mean those who have given you a name.

Sit and be still, listen and be patient
The true knowledge of living is within your grasp
All you need to do is ask.

-Joseph Cantor



-William Colgrove

Skeletons in My Closet

You cannot open *that* door, my friend,
It is kept under lock and key.
I hide that key beneath my pillow,
For that closet belongs to me.

Behind that door are secrets
Tales that are best kept untold.
I would hope to never open it
Until I am wise, and frail, and old.

Inside that room are memories
Too awful to bring to mind,
Events of unimaginable grief...
Stories of the most frightening kind.

At night those stories haunt me
Their skeletons frolic and dance,
Nightmares and terrors would engulf me
If I gave those skeletons that chance.

Every day I hear them pounding
Longing to be set free,
I hear their voices taunting...
And calling after me.

I know some day I should really try
To sweep that closet clean,
But to face my mistakes and fears again...
Such a terrible risk that would mean...

I haven't the courage to confront my sins
So here I will sit and stare,
Trying to forget those skeletons
And the secrets buried there.

So stay away from my closet
Don't you *dare* unlock it in fun!
I'd sooner kill *you* than see it open,
And add yet *another* skeleton.

—Angelique M. Armstrong

Protect The Seed

A wilderness of sweets,
in which all is well.
protect the seed.

It was made a blossom unscathed by the breeze
stainless,
with the innocence of tender youth.

The seed, it can be found again,
hidden amongst the young.
No mystery lost,
found.
hiding in the foothills of a castle.

Enchanted, the bud watered
the life that framed her blush.
liberty.
and a sparkle of candor to porter the past.

fleeced in a blanket of painted leaves,
youth was placed in bed
to be guarded,
diversity.
the innocence in value,
protect the seed.

-Chris Weirs

Silver spurs, well beaten leather
West wind blows o'er sun baked hills
The light fades, the horse waits
Mount on hanging stirrups

No time for rest now, time to reconcile
Only time to ride the dusty trail
That winds to heavens gate
Rise in the hills as the light drops

Ride by night, warm breath, cool breeze
Silver moonlight beats down upon my face
My steed and I, alone in the night
Time to ride, to follow the wind...

-David A. Gianna

Winner's Page

Angelique M. Armstrong is a fourth year student from Buffalo, New York. She is an Air Force ROTC cadet who enjoys volleyball, singing, bicycling, and writing poetry and short stories. Currently seeking a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work, Angelique will also be commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in May 1994. She has been writing since the eighth grade, has had poems published twice, and was a city-wide Black History Writing Contest Winner. Angelique is an intramural volleyball player, a member of the RIT Singers, and a member of the Arnold Air Society service organization. Angelique is the poetry category winner for SIGNATURES 1993.

Daisei Konno is a second year Imaging Science major who enjoys painting in his spare time. His talents include watercolor, airbrush, and colored pencil artwork. Daisei also enjoys writing poetry, composing and performing music, playing sports of all kinds, and in his own words...dreaming. Daisei is the color category winner for SIGNATURES 1993.

Jeremy Sniatecki is a second year Illustration major from Pendleton, New York. He is a member and co-founder of RIT's "Odyssey of the Mind" Team. He enjoys exploring other worlds through science fiction movies, his favorites being the Star Wars Trilogy. Jeremy has had work published in SIGNATURES 1992, as well as this year's magazine. Jeremy is the black-and-white category winner for SIGNATURES 1993.

Jennifer Wong is a third year student from New York City, New York. She is currently seeking a degree in RIT's Social Work program. She plans to be a family violence or child abuse counselor. Jennifer has two previous publications, one in SIGNATURES 1991, and one in the Young Writers Guild 1992. She has been writing for about four years, and her other hobbies include Tai-Chi, Greek Mythology, esoteric studies, and topic researching. Jennifer hopes to be a novelist and to obtain a Master's Degree to enable her to do in depth therapy. Jennifer is the prose category winner for SIGNATURES 1993.

CONGRATULATIONS to all our winners!

-SIGNATURES 1993 Staff

Letter From the Editor

Another year has passed, and another collection of some of the finest poets, writers, artists, and photographers has been compiled. SIGNATURES 1993 represents some of the best talent RIT has to offer. Congratulations to all of those published in this year's edition of SIGNATURES Magazine. We thank all of the people who submitted work to the magazine, and hope you all will continue to do so in the future.


The judging process this year was not easy. Many terrific poems, short stories, photographs, and pieces of artwork passed through the hands of the SIGNATURES staff this year. All submissions were judged 'blind;' names were unknown to staff members involved in the voting process. After careful consideration, we assembled what we considered to be the finest collection of poems, short stories, photographs, and artwork from the talented RIT community. We feel this year's magazine is the best to have been produced in many years, and we hope you enjoy and respect the work of your peers presented here.

Personally, I would like to thank the SIGNATURES staff, for the many long hours and late nights that were put in to bring you this fine compilation. I also thank Mr. Mark Price, advisor to SIGNATURES 1993, for keeping us on track and helping us along. But the real credit goes to all of you out there...the poets, authors, artists, and photographers of RIT. Congratulations, and thanks for another year of beautiful work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian J. Hafner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "B".

Brian J. Hafner,
Editor, SIGNATURES 1993



AN EMPTY HALL
A FAMILIER GIRL
I HAVE SEEN HER
B E F O R E

SHE STARED AS IF
I WAS THE ONE
STARE FULL OF FEAR
AND DOUBT
DRY OF TEAR

A CAUTIOUS WAVE
SHE GREETED ME
A GLIMPSE
OF HER WRIST
BLACK AND
B L U E

SHATTERED GLASS
PIERCING SHRIEKS
AFTER THAT A
C R Y
H E L P H E R
S A V E H E R
T H E W A L L S
C R Y

I IGNORED THEM
A L L
FOR SOME MEASLEY
S L E E P
I M S O R R Y
I M S O R R Y
I JUST LOOKED
A W A Y
DREAM WELL
SLEEP FOREVER
SHE WILL BE FINE
N O W
ALL WILL BE
F I N E

