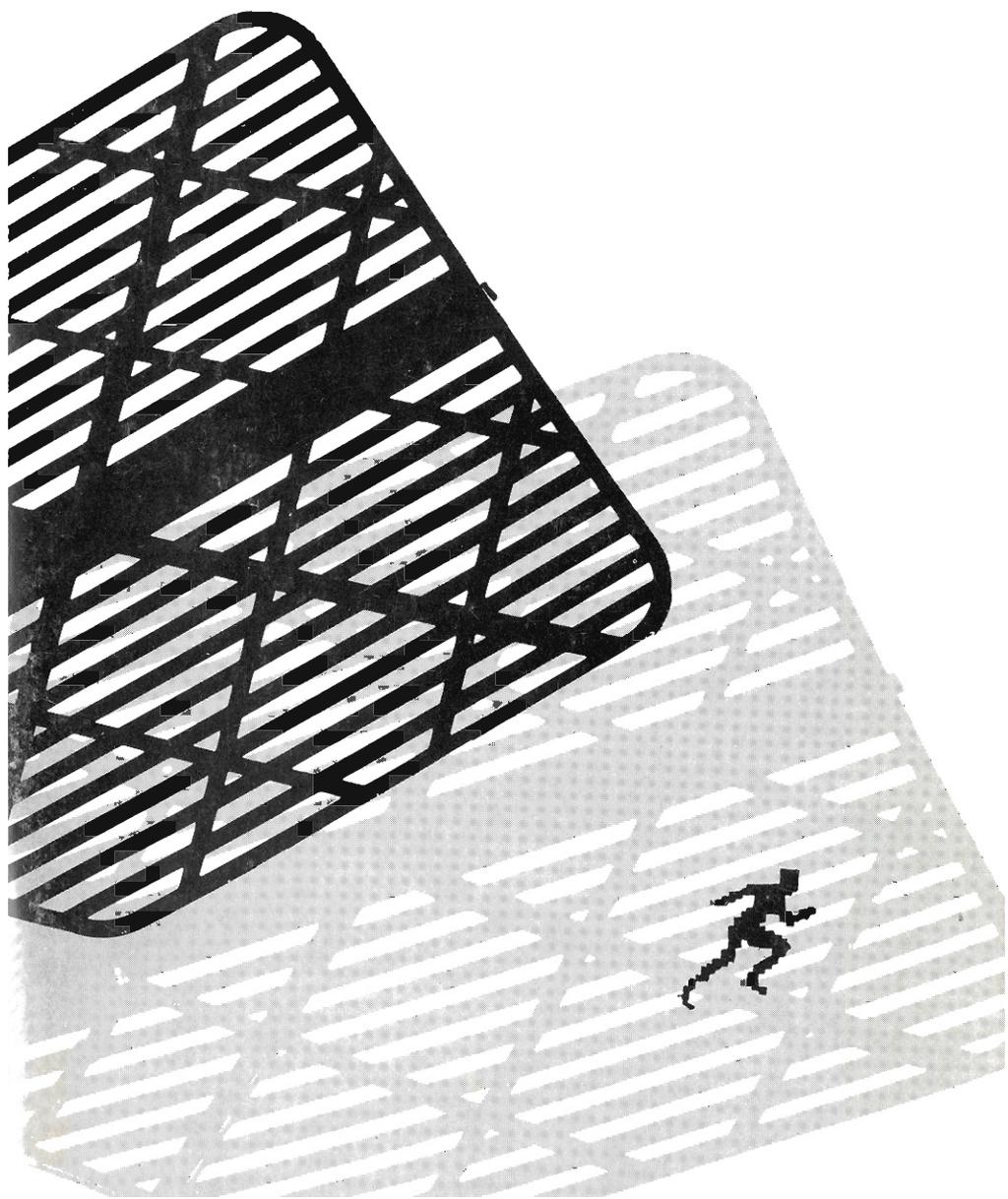


# Signatures

Spring 1985



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## DRY

phil ryburn

The curtain stirs as a breeze floats in; the cat stretches in the corner and returns to sleep. Slowly, I become aware of her body laying warm beside me; she is sleeping. Her breathing is regular and soft; a whisper like the breeze through the window.

What woke me, I wonder? An errant fly exploring my nose? I search my groggy mind for some trace of a dream and finding none I lay awake, staring at the ceiling like a painter looking for pictures in a blank canvas. Images half form, like ghosts, and disappear; leaving words and memories like the droppings of some stray animal.

Restless now, I turn from the ceiling and towards my sleeping lover. She is dreaming, her eyes darting about beneath their lids as if to follow a bird in tis flight or perhaps a thought in the air. Her breasts rise and fall in a soft slow rhythm. How I envy the depth of her sleep! I smile at the irony; a few hours ago, I was sleepy when I climbed into bed. She? She had chattered as she undresses and lay for a long time, holding a conversation with the darkness. She talked of things she did and who she met that day. Her talking was just noise, you understand; like a clock running down. Its not that I hadn't cared what she was talking about. She hadn't either. So I would moan every now and then to let her know that I was still there. Finally, she had kissed me good-night and turned over, settling like the cat does on its pillow under the window. She fell asleep in minutes.

Sighing, I slip my feet into the darkness and down to the hardwood floor. I close the door softly as I pull my robe over my tired, naked body and make my way to the kitchen. There I flip a switch, flooding the little room with bright light. Stumbling around like a blind man in a storm, I find the cookies and pour a glass of milk. I shouldn't have them at this hour, but it seems that I'll be up a while and besides, my stomach is growling...

Pulling up a chair, I get out a pen and notebook and start to write as I have so many times late at night when sleep is a stranger and the night air is cool and still:

'The curtain stirs as a breeze floats in; the cat stretches in the corner and returns to sleep....'

Matthew Sanford

We used to pick my grandmother up after church on Sunday morning. First we'd drop my mother off at home, and maybe my brother or sister too. I always used to go. My father had a great big blue Cadillac and I always thought it was the best car in the parking lot. The drive to my grandmother's house seemed to take a long time. She lived in a big cold tower in Connecticut in the city of Bridgeport, about thirty minutes from my home.

Bridgeport always seemed dirty. The houses there were all crammed together, like a face in a funhouse mirror. I remember thinking that someone must have made a mistake when they built them. They looked dirty and beat up and the yards were so small that it seemed silly to have grass and bushes in them. I used to think that was why the people I saw always looked so unhappy.

Soon we'd get past the endless rows of two and three family houses and go over an old bridge. It had a metal grating surface and the tires would make a high pitched hum as we drove over it. There were two great big grey pipes that ran along the sides of the bridge and went into the ground at each end. I used to wonder what ran inside of them. Under the bridge was a small and dirty river. The banks were covered with junk and debris, like tires and a washing machine and rotting wood. If I was on the other side of the car I could see the back of an auto junk yard. The cars were all bent and rusted like nobody ever took care of the. Sometimes one or two were even down in the river.

Past the bridge we'd drive through an industrial section, and along a huge factory. It went on for more than a block, a long sidewalk bordered with a chain fence and a wall with millions of little square windows. Lots of them were broken or replaced with boards. Everything looked faded and coated with a layer of dirt.

Finally we'd get to my grandmother's tower. It was shaped like a huge extruded Y, three wings that went up for thirteen floors. It seemed to touch the sky. I always thought that for all its size it was a big mistake. The entrance was situated in the middle where two wings came together, on the dark, side of the building. Going to the entrance seemed nice on the surface. There was a little fountain that almost never ran, surrounded by bushes and benches. Past them was a long cobblestone walkway with bushes and benches on both sides. I thought the benches were there for the old people to sit on when they got tired. Nobody ever sat on them though. The building rose up on both sides, blocking the sun and the sky and making it gloomy and drafty.

Me and my brother and sister would run through the doors to the elevator and press the up and down buttons. My father would tell us to calm down but we'd hardly listen. The old people around us seemed to be moving in slow motion if they

were moving at all. The elevator would open and we'd all pile in. We always fought over who got to push the button for the third floor. My father would say 'look, you can all push it' but it was only fun to be the first, because the button would only light up on the first push.

The elevator would shoot up like a roller coaster and we'd all laugh and jump. You could jump twice as high on the way down as on the way up. We would always want to go to the thirteenth floor and my father would always let us. The elevator would rally crank up there and floor numbers would speed by. Then we'd all get out at the top floor and run over to the windows.

From the windows we could see out over the entire city. First we'd try to find the car. It would be a little blue square way way down below in the parking lot. Out in the distance were the houses and down across the street was a church. Then we'd run down the hall and look out the other side of the building. My father would be yelling at us to quiet down and walk. From those windows I could see railroad tracks and the electrical wires above them. They were stretched out between rusty old grid like supports, hundreds of feet in the air. In the distance you could see the huge Buckley oil storage tanks and Long Island Sound.

After looking out the windows on the top floor we would pile back into the elevator and go back down toward the third floor. Once I pushed the basement button and my father pretended we were in big trouble. We were all scared by the time the doors opened. There were huge machines and pipes and it was dimly lit with tools and men in uniforms all over the place. It looked like some kind of terrible experimental laboratory, and there was a tremendous din from all the pumps and machinery. We tried to get as deeply into the elevator as we could, screaming all the time. That was the last time I pushed the basement button.

Finally we would get off at the third floor and run down the hallway to my grandmother's apartment. The walls were cinder block and the floor was shiny linoleum, so it echoed like crazy. All of the metal doors were the same but we always knew which one was my grandmother's. Hers had a small wooden footstool right next to it. It looked like a shoe shine stool, possibly my father's when he was a kid. I wondered why all the other grandmothers didn't have them by their doors, and figured they must feel bad about it. We'd knock and she'd open the door a crack and peek out, and then smile and let us all in. My father and she would usually have a cup of coffee or tea and I'd run around the apartment. They would talk in Polish a lot and I used to be able to pick out a few words now and then.

The TV would be turned on to some old western and the apartment was always very war. I'd climb up on a chair by the small window and look out over the street. I could see a row of old houses with fences around them and sometimes other kids would walk down the street, unaware that I was watching them. Right below the window was a section of roof. I always wanted to climb down and walk around on it.

Eventually my father would herd us all together and we'd drive back home. Dinner would be almost ready and my sister and I would fight over the comics in the paper and pretty soon everybody would be yelling at us to shut up.

## **A NOT-SO-OBVIOUS STORY OF SOME ONE WHO HAS SUFFERED, OR, A STORY OF REALITY AND ITS OPPOSITE.**

Lisa Bowes

I was approaching a bridge. I could feel it; almost a change in the air. I gripped my steering wheel tighter and peered through the windshield at the sunny road ahead. No sign of a bridge yet, not even a road sign, but I knew it was there.

You might say I have a bridge phobia; at least that's what everyone calls it. I think of it more as a relationship between bridges and me -- not one of my choosing, of course. Something happens everytime I come near a bridge. Reality, if that's such a tangible thing, gets distorted. It's as if I'm caught up in one of those billboards with moving panels, but the panels get stuck with the wrong ones in place. I've figured out that the bridges must be able to sense when I enter their 'space' and it disturbs them. Bridges react only to me. Every time I've crossed a bridge with another person in the car, reality has stood firm and solid. Needless to say, I learned not to travel alone too much.

But here I was, alone, approaching a bridge. I felt my adrenaline race as I prepared for the shock ahead of me. Glancing in my rear-view mirror, I noticed it getting a little foggy. Maybe I should have the defroster checked, but I knew that really wasn't the problem. A bridge was at it again, even from this distance. I passed a sign then that confirmed my instincts; bridge ahead, and it was a big one.

I'd had plenty of experience with bridges before. It had become almost normal for me to deal with. I'd reached the decision (or should I say resignation?) that I was incurable, even though people had tried to help me. Crandall had. My man was good to me. Ten years and still going strong. He wanted kids badly, though, and I wasn't ready for them. My bridge phobia scared me away from the idea. What would it do to a child that was still a part of me if I got stuck in one of those billboard panels while pregnant? Childbearing is a very real phenomena and it needs reality to back it up.

I think Crandall thought he could prove to me that my 'phobia' didn't exist. He was always trying to 'do' something about it. I remember well the morning he drove me to the foot of a moderate sized bridge, one nothing like the monster I was approaching now, and proceeded to walk with me over every inch of road on that bridge - to make a point, of course. What he didn't seem to understand was that his powerful presence was nullifying mine to the bridge. I remember thinking that his reality must be so much stronger than mine.

I could see this bridge now, and it was a beast. It was still a few miles away, but I could see it showing off its shiny turrets over the trees. I chanced to look down at the gas pedal and realized that my legs had faded at the knees. There was no foot on the pedal, even though my car zoomed ahead at its normal rate and even though I could feel muscles working in the invisible leg. The familiar grip of fear was starting to creep up my awareness. No matter how many times I had gone through this, it still unsettled me. The scenery whizzing by me was starting to look a little more

abstract, too. Everything was blurry, almost misty, like it was all evaporating. Even the yellow lines on the road were hazy, as if a translucent film had been placed over them. The bridge knew I was coming.

I knew the only way to get through this was to clear myself of emotion and to concentrate. I couldn't react to this bridge. I had to keep driving as if nothing was wrong. It was kind of a game these bridges and I played. It had been a tie every time so far. We were equals.

I checked my invisible foot again -- still not there. This time I noticed that my hand on my lap was shimmering, making my wedding ring sparkle. The bridge was definitely playing with me.

I could see it clearly now. It was huge -- intimidating -- like none I had ever crossed before. It stood out clearly, sharply, in focus -- a definite contrast to my own physical reality, as exemplified by my nonexistent foot. My car was led gently up the ramp, almost tauntingly, as a lover's tease. The bridge was welcoming me, inviting me, daring me to cross its span. It was ready for the game.

Grimly, I forced my car ahead. The bridge cables reached from my car towards heaven as if proving the bridge's dominance over me. I couldn't help admiring its style, though. This bridge had class, which made it a more indomitable foe.

I had reached the mid-way point of the span and still had retained my coolness. I dared a look up at the cables. Such strength. My confidence began to waver. Sensing this, I'm sure, the bridge pulled out all its stops, and when I looked down from the heights, the road was gone. Unavoidably, I swerved, heading toward the divider which was no longer there. It then occurred to me that there were no longer any other cars on the bridge, either. Just me and this bridge which had just pulled the road out from under me.

Such a sly bridge, this one. The cables still dropped gracefully from the heights and still appeared to be attached to the bridge, but they faded about halfway down to me. The road was there, I just couldn't see it. I found that thought hard to hold on to when I looked down and all I could see was blue blue water dancing. It was so far away, but it filled my eyes, blocking out everything (which was all hazy anyway) with its blue blue and its dancing.

Suddenly I realized why it was so dominant; I was falling into the water. The blue blue seemed to rush up to greet me, softening my fall. That was absurd, as if the water were on my side. I was pretty bewildered at this point. Never before had a bridge tried to harm me. They had always played relatively fair. This bridge had definitely cheated. I felt the anger starting to bubble up inside me. Then several thoughts occurred to me at once: where was my car? I didn't remember falling out of it or hearing it splash. Why, to, was I not dead? A fall from that height should have killed me. And why was I lying on top of the water instead of floating in it? I put out my fingers and tested the water; it felt firm, but flexible. Cautiously, I sat up. It was like sitting up on a waterbed. A jellyfish drifted under my left hand. Gaining confidence, I got to my knees. The surface jiggled, but held me. I rose to my feet and started walking towards the shore.

I thought I heard a chuckle from above, so I looked up to the bridge. It had a road again, of course. The cars sped across it and the sunshine bounced merrily off the towers, a visual laugh in my face.

'Bridge one, human zero,' I chuckled in return, and turned back towards the shore.

## PREFACE TO A TERM PAPER ON ERNEST HEMINGWAY

David Lorczak

It was one of the good assignments. The kind of assignment a man must do, sometimes, at least, to show he can still do it, that he is still one of the brave ones. Bravery? Not knowing when you are scared, he supposed.

He did not like to think about it. It scared him when he thought about it. The pen. The paper. The typewriter he had always had. Had at Ostrava, in elementary school, where he typed up all his summer vacations, where it was always playing, and running, running, running, and recess and afterwards, after they were back inside, would come the juice, or sometimes milk, and they would sit and drink and it was good.

He had the typewriter at Villeurbanne, for high school, where they walked, he and the others--there were some others who felt as he did, who knew in their guts what he knew in his guts, only not as well--through the hills, only in silence, not talking, for they knew talking would kill it, would end the feeling fast, like a duck that was dead before it hit the water. In Villeurbanne, where if you were not walking in the hills you were typing, typing everything, not just the English, but everything, even the Math where it was hard to get all the numbers to line up right, but it gave you a good feeling when they did and so he did it and he said what the hell.

He could still type. He could still hit the keys, hard as any man. And write. He could still avoid using the contraction when he did not want to use it. Usually, he did not want to use it.

But it was different. Now the typing brought back too much. Too much that he did not want to think about. Now he needed a light on in the room when he typed.

And there was the girl. It was not his typewriter, he had told her, only borrowed from a friend. Would he ever tell her the truth, he wondered, and then put it out of his mind.

Now he had to concentrate on the assignment--that was the only thing. He would do it, would do this one thing, and let the devil take the rest.

## MY BELOVED GREAT-GRANDMA

Mark Meadows

This lady had to lie down to sleep forever by her deceased husband. I helped carry her a long way to the top of a small mountain surrounded by huge mountains. It was very cold, but I didn't feel the pain because I was busy putting all of my memories of this beloved lady in order.

I remember walking with her through the mountain to a place where she used to go when she was a little girl. She showed me a huge oak tree where she tried to feed a squirrel. She failed to do that, but now squirrels love to eat acorns from that huge oak tree. She told me that she had watched an acorn grow up into the huge oak tree that I saw.

She had lived over a century through many hardships. She looked strong, and had the courage to kill animals for her family to eat. She lived in the mountains all her life, where she was born and died.

My family would tell me about her in the old days, mostly my father and grandfather. She would tell me more about my father in the old days, when she raised him in her old log house.

I was damn proud of her for raising a fine, nice family of her own. She was proud of me for being able to hunt just like her grandfather who was an American Indian. I will be very proud to pass this tradition to the next generation. She told me to work as hard as I could so I could like as long as she did--over a century. I have always worked very hard and I'm sure that I'll do what she did in the old days.

I loved her very much and I even cry about her death. I was proud to see her with her coal-black, long hair, over one century old.

## A MORNING AFTER

J.O. Kurtz

The clatter of silverware being thrown into the dish-pan interrupted my early morning fantasy that summer day. Doc was cleaning up the cabin from the night before, and had obviously started the coffee; that sweet aroma had already crept up the open stairs of the A-frame, prodding me back to reality.

What time is it?, I wondered as I slowly maneuvered my feet to the floor. I reached down and clutched for the watch which I had left in my shoe. Ten to nine! Not bad. At least I didn't sleep half the day away.

I sat there a few moments to allow my system to begin functioning before I attempted any more maneuvers. I stared out the window off into the woods which were aglow with sunlight filtered by a thin layer of clouds. It looked as if it was going to be a fair day.

Fred must have gotten up already, for he wasn't in the other bed where he had passed out the night before. He had gotten really hammered on the Smirnoff and water. So hammered that he had actually eaten a conglomeration of raw hamburger, pork and beans, cheddar cheese, and green peppers before retiring. He called it 'pan chili', I called it dog food.

Anyway, I finally felt confident enough to attempt walking down the stairs, hopefully without breaking my neck in the process. I dressed rather slowly, and eventually made it down the stairs successfully, I was ready to kill for that coffee that I had been smelling all this time.

'Mornin' Doc, coffee ready?' I asked almost beggingly.

'Just about. Why, do you want a cup?'

'I could use one -- I need something to get me out of this daze.'

I sat down at the table for I wasn't quite steady enough to do much else yet.

'Where's Fred?' I asked.

'I don't know. I thought he was still passed out upstairs.'

'I didn't see him,' I replied, not quite sure if my memory was correct.

'Maybe he's out takin a shit,' Doc suggested in his blunt manner.

'Maybe,' I mumbled, not wanting to talk any more.

Doc brought me over a Styrofoam cup of coffee mellowed with milk and a touch of sugar just like I like it on a morning after. Normally I would have drank it black. It's funny how friends pick up on little things like that.

It was perfect coffee, but it would have been better out of a mug. The Styrofoam always seems to taint its taste, but such is life out in the wilderness. I was desperate for that coffee and drank it as if it was some life giving nectar from the gods, burning my mouth slightly in the process.

'What'dhe fall in or what?' Doc asked in his inimitable ball-point manner.

'You'd be out here a while if you'd eaten the shit he ate last night,' I replied. 'Is that what this is?' Doc asked, hoisting up the charred skillet that Fred had started to cook his 'pan chili' in.

'Yeah, he couldn't wait for it to cook. A REAL munchy attack.'

'That sounds like Fred,' Doc commented.

I made another cup of coffee and went out on the front deck leaving Doc to do the dishes. The fire was still smoldering from the night before and would probably last the rest of the day.

I looked over towards the outhouse. The door was ajar and the seat was unoccupied. Fred must have gone for a walk; probably up to the pond for an early swim.

I walked over to the fire pit and threw the unburnt remnants into the coals. It wasn't long before they caught on and flickers of flame mingled with the smoke. I sat down on the old picnic bench and watched it; my thoughts drifting away with the smoke.

'Did you find Fred yet?' Doc hollered down from the deck interrupting my thoughts.

'No. Maybe he's up to the pond. You wanna take a walk up there?' I half hollered back.

'Yeah, I was gain' up for a swim anyway.' Doc replied. 'Give me a minute to get ready.'

The pond was carved out of the field on top of the hill behind the cabin, and it was only a short hike through the woods to get there.

The trail was well worn, but so were we, and we trudged up there not saying much; just absorbing the tranquility of the surroundings. You cannot see the pond until you get there, because the embankment that creates it, hides it, until you reach its summit.

We found Fred there -- floating naked in the water; a small chili in a large pan. Sometimes there is no morning after.

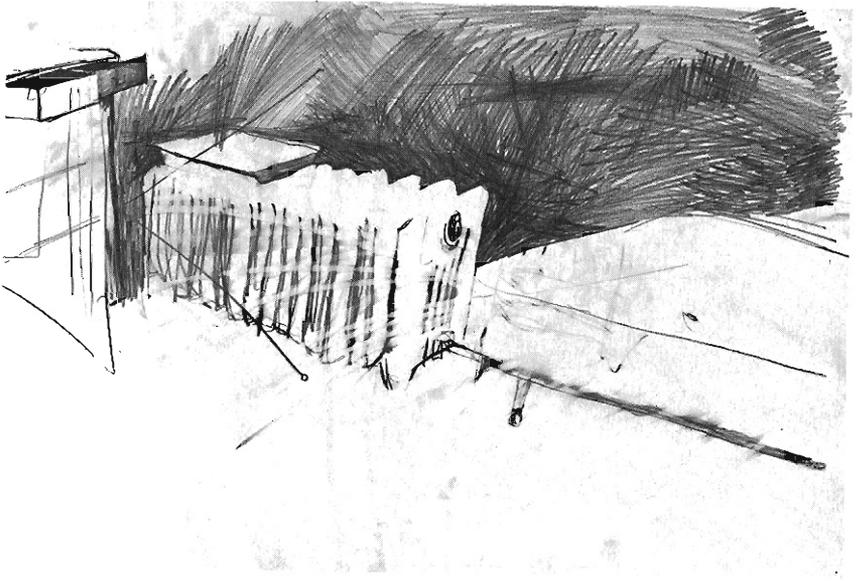


Paul Jutten

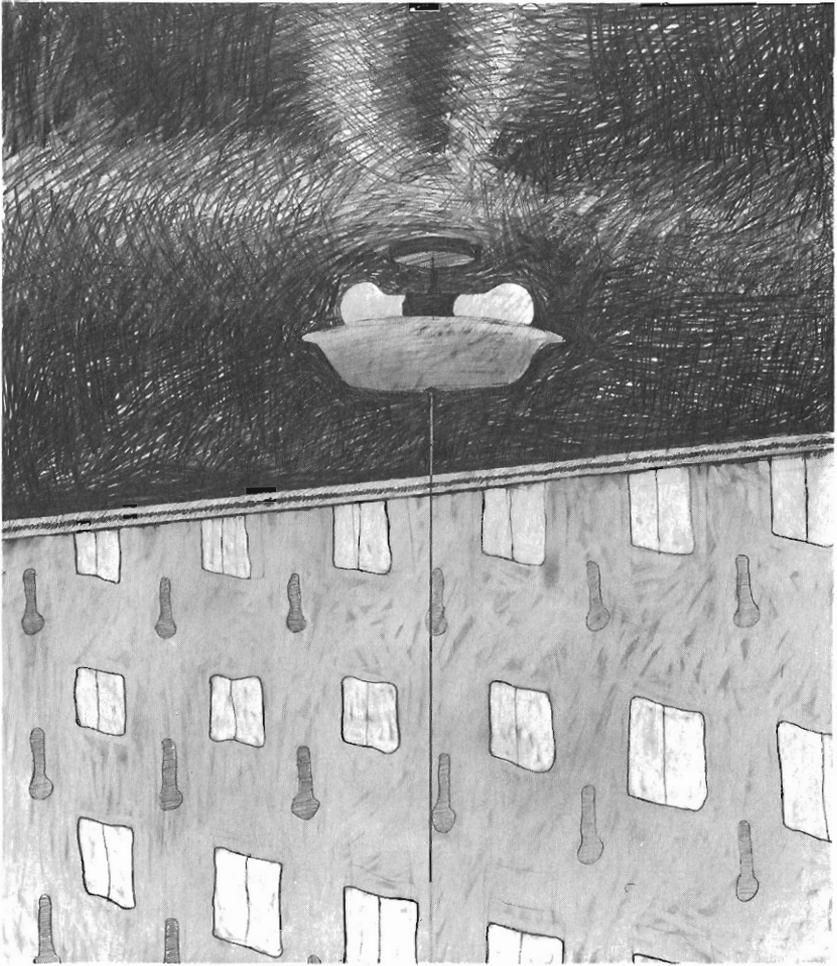




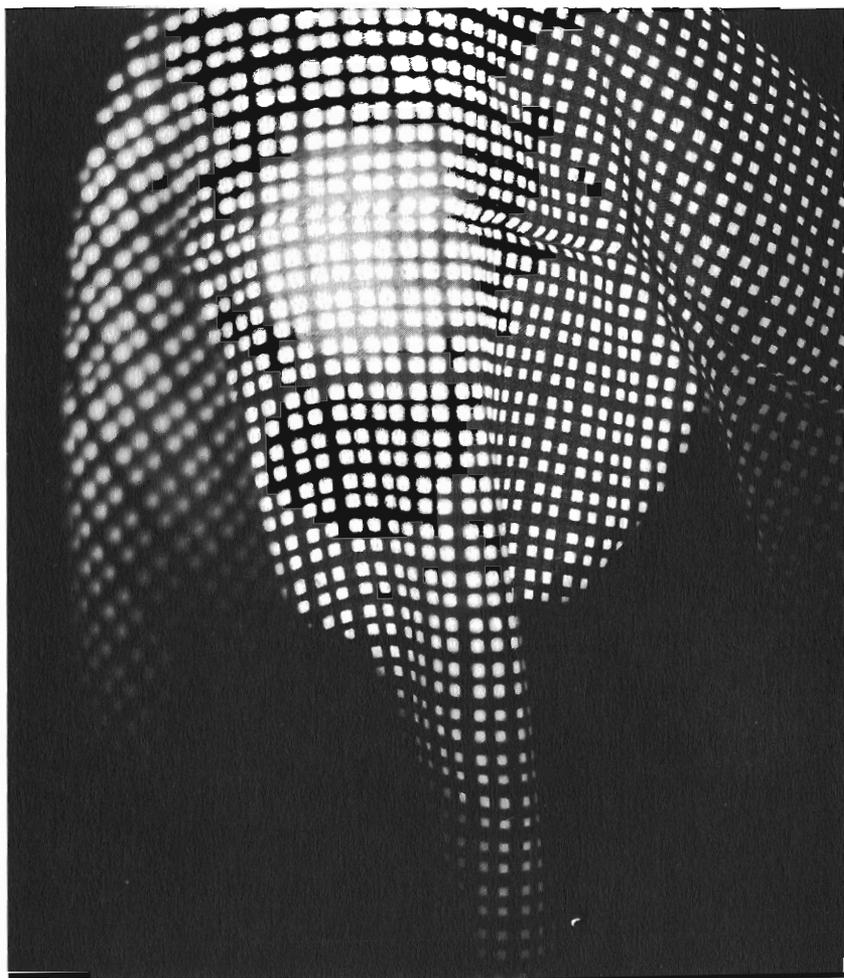
Theresa Wagner



David Leonard

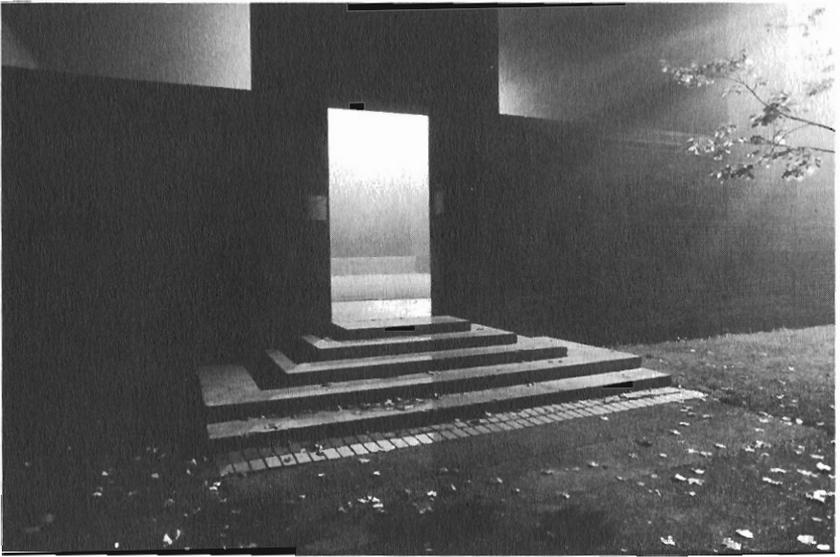


David Leonard

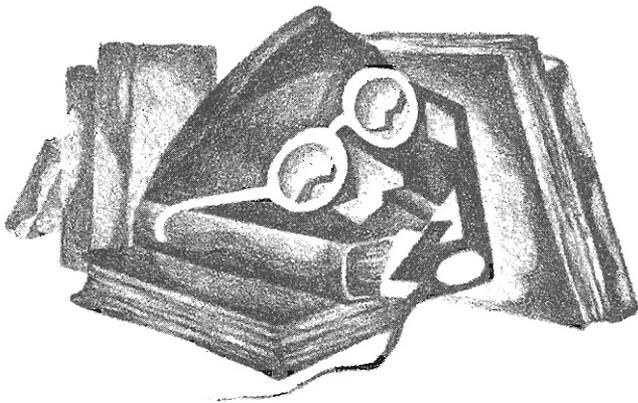


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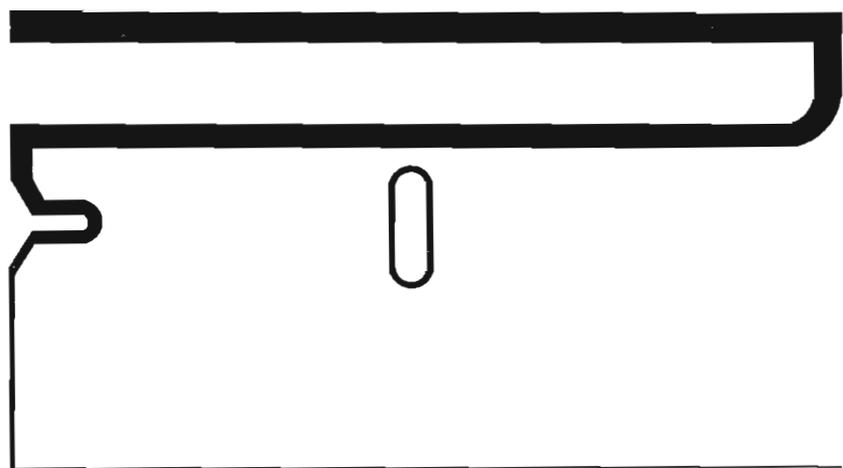


Tom Sulik



Text- Blues

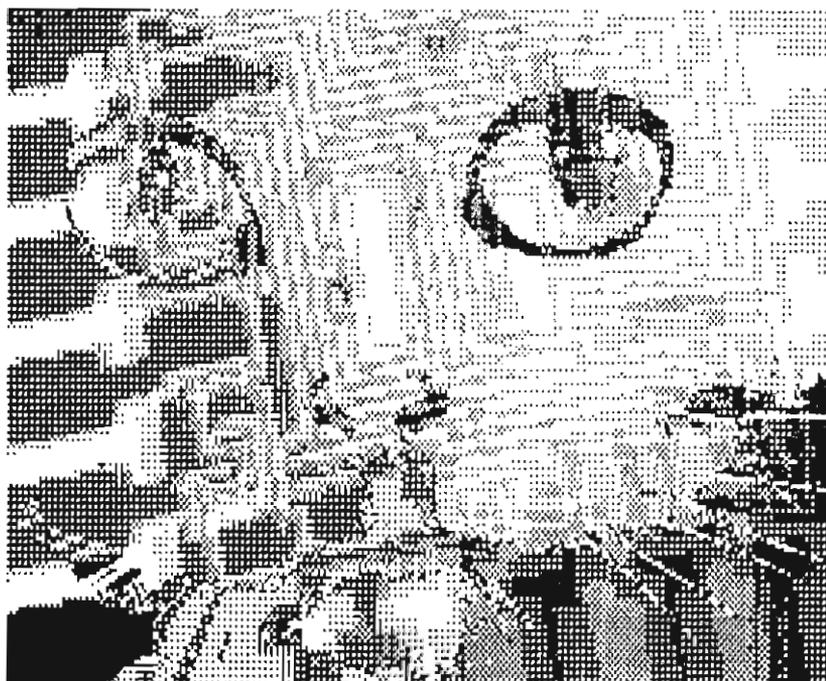
Regino Capobianco





Feminine Assemblage

Craig Malmrose



Power Surge

Valerie Boydo





dancer

Valerie Boydo

**fortune cookie**

phil ryburn

for the improvement  
of a thing superb,  
the addition of nothing  
is recommended.



And you are dying --  
Slowly,

Counting the minutes, and the times you see me,  
The numbers of pills and loud voices,  
and sunsets.  
I wonder after your death, for  
Your immortality comes too soon.

## To a Would-Be god

Amanda Olsen

Trapped inside this circus reservation  
Your Eden you have found, you manifest.  
Need you, Nearly Apollo, Artemis  
Remind us of your competence, so blest?

August, you drift through the social circle,  
Cunning Cosmopolite without a crease.  
Do they wish they were you, Untouchable,  
Being more than part of your frontispiece?

You can condescend to several heavens  
Not all, so you must bleed more to ascend.  
You distort gospels with towers of ink  
So you must be what I can't comprehend?

Sought for wit, you don't have to release it,  
But the experts and rest you still entrance.  
You're walking the air, Color-bleeding Blur,  
And do you need us to follow your  
Escapade?

You're struggling against a endless sky,  
Going too fast with your steele wings.  
You're a whirl  
But I can see you.

I can see

    your warpaint  
    and the human behind it

    the starch  
    that you scorched into your face

    your PHD  
    and your fairy tales that you wanted me  
    to believe were true

I can see you,  
S e r p e n t

And your fears

what would you do without your anchor?

or us  
or

M E

What if we didn't  
Run after you  
Anymore

where WouLD yuO Go .

im waiting  
aNd just before you walk fly onthe stage  
isalute you

in the wings

yo u r doo sal-yoot



## JUST A ROOM

Lisa Bowes

Just you and me  
and an orange couch  
and maybe a window to look out of  
so we don't have to look  
at each other  
quite all the time.

And you hold my hand  
like you meant to hold my hand

and the orange couch is just enough.

Dan Streever

A fat girl told me she liked Jack Kemp  
She said she hated Mario Cuomo.  
She said she couldn't wait for 1988.  
Cuomo would lose. She hated him.  
I said I wanted to change the world.  
She said she had to go.

Ann Frisina

No touching no seeing and now I feel like a fool  
for loving you.  
I love you that won't change no matter how many disappointments.  
What changes is my respect for you.  
There is no more room for idle emotions,  
abstracted by your fear of touching them.  
Until now I was Seventeen.  
Now I've changed.  
My face in the mirror is different.  
Direct and refined the jaw has sharp edges.  
They slice through my hair.  
This face no longer puts up with drunks' romantic overtures.  
    'Hey baby I called you woman, I offered you money  
    when's the last time some real man was offered  
    to you'  
    'Why don't you get lost.'  
You were the force that started this anger.  
I'm the one who'll learn to use it.  
Now it's important I learn to take.

Andre' Fiala

to care  
is the only hope we have left,  
but why should we care  
when our souls are elsewhere?  
perhaps the world is  
    whispering in our ear  
with overwhelming indifference  
    this last, curious proposal.

Andre' Fiala

what humility, dream  
instinctive being,  
servant to passion  
and war-  
child our race has borne,  
where might you awake?

S.E. Embers

The opaque black is selling  
tapes and costly pleasures  
a loner except for a few.  
he sweeps over everything  
as challenging lights  
pop up like stars  
etching designs into his skin:  
Sanyo, TDK and cassio brand him.  
he doesn't sleep.  
the hours wear on  
and then the onslaught comes.  
he succumbs to millions of trampling  
feet carrying the light of morning  
gold is sent through all  
the mishapen places  
forcing the pleasure seekers home.  
but not the tapes.  
and in a rage of jealousy  
he has black limmos  
warriors on bikes and cars  
honking and whistling  
invade the moment of beauty  
and without this moment  
the apple will always taste  
sour.

## **BUMPS**

J.O. Kurtz

We call them hills,  
They call them mountains.  
But oh what they miss,  
when they perceive them to be  
so vast and ominous.

## **A Few Words**

Jonathan Gary

'Dont look at me.' she said  
with snide, sneering snot-mouth.  
'My pleasure' responded the blonde  
bug-eyed baboon with  
barbed wire  
barber-pole  
abrasiveness.

Darry Johnson

if at evenings end  
we find ourselves  
on the grizzly rayon hide twined,  
yulefully warm in the kilowatt glow  
of a Black & Decker blaze,

will you only remember  
the smoldering frayed cord  
of an electric sword  
that filleted the breast  
of Mr. Perdue's hen  
that was charred abyssmal black  
at 500 F for 6 hours  
instead of roasted golden brown  
at 350 for 2?

Dan Streever

Emotion stops the heart,  
Heart chokes the throat -  
Can't breathe, can't breathe  
Everybody stand back

## **We Were the Lovers**

Michael Maier

Were we the lovers  
    who would show the others  
    what love was all about?  
We thought we were.

Today, on the street we passed  
    And I waved, but you just walked by  
    I started crying  
And wondered  
    Why we both walked on.  
And wondered  
    Why we both walked on each other again.

Dan Streever

I never lied to you.  
I just had a hard time expressing myself.  
I was afraid you'd leave.  
You did anyway.

## **A Flower in the Rock Garden**

Mark Anthony

The sharp cold edge of the corner  
with its little tunnels of cracked mortar  
between rusty red bricks spaced evenly  
and flowing, marred by the pieces of  
posters and paint left peeling, cuts into  
her cheek, somewhere there's a bud sign glowing.

Tightly she grips the ninety degree  
sandpaper surface, as tightly as the useless  
hand can. Staring off into the  
neon lamps, listening to the gentle hum  
of rain on the black pavement, as it  
trickles between the teeth of a grate  
into the caverns below the city.

Yellow cotton flowers on her dress  
fold in half and put themselves  
in envelopes, carried by the wind round  
her legs. Music booms in her head-  
I wonder if she wishes she was dead?  
I dont even know why.

## **Time-way**

Mark Anthony

Time stands still on the radiator grill  
Wide eyed a young boy hides  
from the black and blue  
silver smooth waters surface

Down in the depths  
miles of mud try to suck in everyone  
into the moss covered world  
of suspended silt

An old woman stares  
between dangling hairs  
out of a frosted window  
seeing a black sedan cruise by.

While between glimmering headlights  
Time stands still.

**FROM A LETTER TO RON KOSTAR ABOUT WHY  
IT IS IMPORTANT TO READ YOUR POEMS IN  
PUBLIC NO MATTER WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT**

Jim Cohn

It's not the beginning that's extraordinary or where the troubles begin, it's what you do with your problems after all...how your thoughts are applied to the task awaiting. And being cosmic beings, your reading of the work is towards Liberation of all suffering, but it's no different for basketball players or trash men. It's not a bullfight either. In fact, it's a weird anti'bullfight where you take the bull & heal it & in the healing you disappear not it. Young poets do not yet see that, however they do see you as a roadmap, those roadmap eyes all bloodshot with tears & miles & what they take from us is our shyness, our inexperience & they most surely own that for being young. Every reading is a crossing over to the Other Side. I've actually seen people turn into eagles & fly across. The main thing is it's real because the people that get it are also into something equally mysterious & respect you for that queezy strangeness you bring to their lives. So, yeah, your community isn't only that of poets. It'd be totally dull like 'Spartacus' or 'Attila the Hun' five & dime war movies. But you are the gauge of their relationship to the vales & torrents of flesh, even for your friends who are poets. If you're a journeyman, I can be too in so far as I'm also faced with trying to make sense of this stuff, but now the river is deeper, faster, & there are no substitutions. Fame is only something else to regret & without true friends, as meaningless as obscurity & as full of frustration. Listen, I don't want your money or your time, but I do expect your poems to be as vocal as we are at those parties & with that great immediate comic book slender hear-driven view of Eternity.

## OLD MONTAUK

Jim Cohn

Bushwacking by moonlight  
Found a flat low bluff  
Hidden from surrounding winds.

What a lovely spot!

gulls fast asleep  
on waves beyond the breaking line

our footprints washed away  
by incoming tides.

Little to recall, just that we are here  
Undercover of darkness hid  
As if real love could be forbid.

Like a flying point of geese  
Following the same time-worn trail  
I wouldn't want to travel here by day

rather beneath a half December moon  
the chrome shining heart of waves

& snow falling  
on Donna's lavender scarf.

## Ocean Pencil's Drifting In To Razor's Edge

Donna De Palma

Education is a season's parting  
    In front of shapes in line  
With the white meadow parched to bleach  
    As it rests and moans closer  
Before me in a vigil, in white  
    On fences in the rain of violets mad and singing  
In the frazzled rain of curtains hung with tears  
    That mimic the playing of the dance in a restive,  
Furtive marching past cycles, fields in mood  
    Of eloquent force of natural tools  
Panthers and geese in panting, praising  
    Of painting every last bite  
Teas in herbal lace of divine morning  
    Spun in jade from grass  
Roots twisted in a perverted lime  
    Grasping violets wild, wilder passage still  
Dancing, fleeting, these moments.

## **It's me**

Barbara Eger

I see you  
It's me  
Did anyone notice  
You know me  
It's me  
I'm here near you  
And you know me  
In everyway you keep counting on me  
You did think of somebody  
Why me?  
You dont care for me  
It's me  
But you still have me in your mind  
It's Barbara (your name)

## **That Person**

Barbara Eger

Walking so quiet  
Waiting for someone to leave  
Slowly the person left now I'm alone

Oh, how I feel so tight in my chest  
Feeling so isolated  
I hold back my tears  
No need to cry

That person will come again  
No need to feel so lost  
Wondering what makes me feel like that

Need someone to be close to  
For any comfort will do  
Make me forget all the pain

Looking forward to see that person  
All my energy bursts out  
Seeing that person walk in

I feel joy  
Running to hug that person  
Need to feel that person is near

10-27-84

Gary Graves

So, let us touch and lettuce with water  
our dried out lipped leaves so much the  
favorite in our sex that enchants with  
loud branches hitting and scraping of  
the grease and oil of each of mine and  
each of your eyelashes today tonight car  
sand people stop to watch the schoolbo  
y cross the walk at turtle neck braces w  
arm a warm neck that was a cherry nose wi  
th chins attached we took a tear that ro  
lled off a nose and it escaped eyes escap  
ed and landed up in one of four bun pores S  
weat makes love to us both at tongue lung  
ed from underneath the table in some ne  
w stirred-up dust The bath I took when I  
was two or a half rolled over toward us i  
t masturbated and it lost your lid in si  
de a jar of wildflower honey Ejaculati  
ng pine cones are so hard to find let me s  
ay on your leaves a needle is lost in the  
haystack, again!



James A. Habacker

i'm watching her shoes.  
funny lace-up kind  
from paris i think.  
the feet tell a lot.

she is excited  
and her toes curl.  
she whispers in his ear.  
i'm watching her feet.

James A. Habacker

you say you  
need back the mattress  
you loaned me

but that's o.k.  
i can have my mother  
mail me my  
supermarket sneakers  
and we can dance  
all night.

you don't come home  
alone anymore

but that's alright  
i can send out  
for pizza  
and eat it quietly  
in the bathroom.

**unhappy women  
for w.m.:**

James A. Habacker

unhappy women  
and still more priests  
keep showing up  
at the oddest hours.

i took home  
some of your clothes  
by mistake,

a shirt and  
a sweater.

i called your house  
but you still  
haven't come back.

**for j.l.:**

James A. Habacker

if i could get  
a hundred dollars a month  
from a dead uncle  
i'd be set.

**For Anya:**

James A. Habacker

we talked of weddings tonight  
i thought of you  
which is something  
i must admit  
i haven't done in quite a while.

i stood in their kitchen  
making tea  
and discussing weddings  
but all i could think of  
was being with you  
in the museum of modern art  
talking with the guard  
the one on the third floor  
with the spanish accent  
and the knowing smile.

he gave us advice  
in a parental way  
about how to make  
our marriage work.  
you held my hand tight  
and i knew you were  
toying with the idea  
of us actually being married  
and i must admit  
the idea sounded  
not too bad.

we laughed about it  
over pizza  
later that day  
but it occurred to me  
neither of us  
thought to tell that guard  
that we weren't married.

## **Another Try**

Jean Ingham

I've tried to write a love poem  
to explain exactly how i feel  
but the words refuse to come.

I want to say  
    I want you  
    I need you  
    I love you

But I can't

## **Foolish of Me**

Jean Ingham

I arrange my time  
so I'm home for your call  
Or you said maybe you'd  
drop by  
So I stay home  
    You never call  
    You never drop by.

## **Holiday II**

Elaine S. Iwano

It's almost Valentine's Day,  
and my almost lover  
will almost send me a valentine.

Elaine S. Iwano

You are a  
round peg  
that somebody put in  
a square hole  
And now  
you've gotten yourself  
out  
and put yourself  
in  
a triangle.

Elaine S. Iwano

At summer end  
We folded our souls  
And packed our suitcases  
And stood outside in silence  
With empty hands.

Elaine S. Iwano

Every mile between  
says hello  
to you  
says hello to  
a busy blue sky  
with warm sunshine  
says hello.  
But I look across the  
miles across the hellos  
the words  
(always one more hello than the number of  
goodbyes)  
Enjoy.

## **BANKRUPT BODIES INC.**

Myles Kleinfield

(from behind closed doors)

'-It was the animal in me which made me act so selfishly,  
You're too young to understand,  
I'm sorry my 10 year old baby, good-bye.'

(inside a different room)

'I play the protagonist in the third person omniscient usually,  
or if your prefer the limited edition, I'm sure it can be arranged.'  
'We here are on the razor's edge so you can take your pick,  
insanity or genius.'

## **COUNT BACKWARDS**

Myles Kleinfield

I thought 'real' this time baby,  
but illusions dissolved with the neon pulse ghosts.  
She said, 'Sorry, I'm not feeling very sociable this evening.'  
The nights window shattered, now picking up the pieces in the bathroom unnoticed.

The truth is real playboys spend most of their time on the bench anyway.  
Isn't it funny how logic turns itself inside-out?  
Simply backwards count, statistics and averages.

## Coffee

Tobi Sznajderman

levitate me  
slither me slide  
me faucet  
calling

me levitate  
groping can grasp  
fumble lid  
calling

aroma now  
one eye open  
on pot peeled  
patiently

percolate me  
calling, calling  
serenade  
me sing

me my morning  
tune me tempt  
me tease me  
ready

with cup in  
hand grasp handle  
both eyes wide  
gleaming

black gold stream  
white cup willingly  
accept my  
filling

me up now  
slither inside  
me warm my  
piping

hot morning song.



## The Road

Tobi Sznajderman  
& Greg Alexander

if it seemed wide,  
I must be mistaken.  
not unlike Barry Anderson reaching

just high enough  
to loft effortlessly  
through  
'Ma litto tany bassetbow'

not unlike the black  
thread traveling  
through the tunnels of

my grandmother's singer.  
quilting together green and brown field patchwork,  
'Got villing she voodn't shtop rhunneenk'

man, I hope we don't get a flat before  
we get to New Hampshire.

Tobi Sznajderman

Pineapple sundae  
in my hand.  
Plastic yellow spoon  
in my mouth.  
Uncut forest  
in my head,  
and in a few rare other places...

## groundhog's day- the perverted versions

wei

#1

it came out  
and  
before even having a minute chance to look  
was  
run over by a steamroller

#2

switchboards all jammed from  
them little groundhogs calling in  
to report  
'I saw it'  
or  
'I didn't'  
or  
'it's fucking cold out, damn it'

Wei

in the years to come  
looking at a photograph  
a woman a sophisticated woman  
in a pitch-black blouse  
only eighteen years old  
but a wonderball by all standards  
gazing at me the maker of the picture  
or did she make it happen

photographers don't take pictures of other people  
only themselves  
people can only see themselves in pictures  
even of other people  
picture fades  
but the tingling stays  
forever

she jumps out of the frame  
took an aeroplane  
and left to another dimension  
but she is still here  
in the heart  
of the photographer  
forever

**'A Curious Memory'**

Max P. Yawney

I remember Vietnam  
on T.V.  
And I was maybe...  
only 2 or 3.

I remember Vietnam

And I was maybe...

Only 2 or 3

And I was maybe...  
only 2 or 3

Peace  
Hippies  
And the draft

An old B&W TV.  
My living room  
And dinner time

Tanks roaring  
Men dying  
and casualty counts

Bloody weapons  
Walter Cronkite  
And Richard Nixon to end it all.

**EASTER 1984**

MAX P. YAWNEY

They look at your shirt  
all wrinkled and crinkled  
on the floor near the door.

They look at your pants  
with scorn  
all faded ripped and torn.

They look at your shoes  
all muddy and cruddy

gives you the blues  
because it's sund'y (sic)

And you're not the norm  
the norm

conform  
CONFORM

is sullenly heard  
under their breath.

