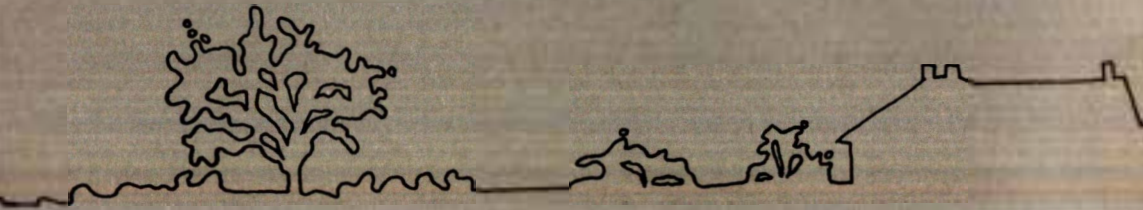


et al. **OAKWOOD**



—This issue of Oakwood is dedicated to the survivors. Especially to the survivors of this land and climate.

Sheryl L. Baker
Editor



OAKWOOD

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Sheryl L. Baker

Art Editor —
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Number 5, April, 1979
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Linda Hanson.

Beryl Younger

Changing Language

In childhood I turned a
Sommersault;
Now I do
A foreward roll.

T. R. Maves

SOUTH DAKOTA FARMER

With his rusty John Deere,
He had plowed from sun up
In the heat of a Dakota day.
The dust settled on the sweat of his brow.
With only three words to say,
He pulled in at ten p.m.
He asked, "What's for chow?"
In the dim-lit stranglin' hall,
The answer not heard while flakes of dirt
Danced in his beard, see the dirt fall.
Tired and hungry, he shakes his
Weather-beaten pants.
A ton of dirt falls.
Taking off his worn-out shoes,
He beats the caked dirt to the floor.
He hangs up the hole in his hat, opens the door.
Into the kitchen he goes and sits down to where he always sat.

Kevin Woster

Henry's Harvest

The Fourth of July was his spring equinox
and the days got longer.
He forgot the Red Sox, the news
and even bullhead fishing at the south dam.
He forgot everything but the harvest
and the perennial, ironic fear of rain.

Sixteen hours a day he pushed that old, cabless
John Deere, running it hot,
strong, greasy hands straining white on the wheel.
He hurried lunch, in the green shade of his machine,
pimento loaf and chips that came back sour
when a mid-afternoon breakdown
sent him eight miles to town in five minutes
leaving an unsettling plume of dust across the county.

He usually made it for 9 p.m. supper
to nod at the beets and scratch his dirty stubble
and later to catch my curves
under the yellow glow of the yardlight.
Barely with us by ten, he held on
for the weather. "Huh, 60 percent chance," he'd say,
"not likely in South Dakota." Then he'd move off to bed
and soon fill the house with sounds of heavy sleep.

Later, when low thunder rattled the tin grain bins
outside, I would listen from my bed
as he toed through the kitchen to the south window
and quietly parted the shades.

J. Alan Martin

Rained Out

The kid didn't throw a half-bad game. But when you have some bats backin' you up an all you gotta do is hold your lead, you can relax, throw junk at the corners. That makes lookin' good a helluva lot easier. But I gotta admit, the kid did all right.

But Judas, the way everyone carried on, you'd think his fastball coulda out-burned Bob Feller, or his curve—he calls it a “knuckle-screw” or somethin'—was breakin' off a table. Every time one of them batters would fish for one low an away, or watch a breakin' pitch sneak over after all, Ed Schlyter, our manager, would clap once and laugh his laugh which is a slow explosion of breath endin' with a “Sheewt!” and yell, “At-taboy, Bobby, way to fire.”

Hell, we had nine runs—we couldn't of lost.

After the game we packed the stuff and raked and drug the infield—we ain't got grass like some amateur teams or caretakers to do that kind of stuff. When it ain't my turn to throw I flick the switches in the dugout for the blue ball an white strike and red out light bulbs on the score board in left or help keep book or warm up our pitchers 'tween innings or give nickels to the kids who collect out-of-play fouls. But it ain't the same as layin' down a good bunt or makin' a hard slide. I don't like hangin' around ball players who worked up a sweat playin' if I only stink 'cause I shoveled manure that day or it's just hot.

I went home an listened to the radio an went to sleep.

The next night Jim Cazmowski come over. I was listenin' to the radio, but it was OK 'cause at nine they start playin' that stuff the kids like on my station. I listen to it 'cause every hour or so they run down the major league score, an I like to know what's goin' on, 'specially with my Yankees. I was a Dodger man like my Dad for a long while, but after they moved out to California I didn't like all them movie stars hangin' around the ballplayers so I went with the Yanks. Anyway, Caz is a Red Sox man, so we have some pretty lively discussions. He used to play ball—he wasn't a half-bad second base man a few years back.

We always talk about crops and weather, like all farmers shootin' the bull. He has a few sections north of town, part of it the place my Dad first worked after he and Ma started out. He—Caz, I mean—runs quite a few cattle, but he has to, with a wife and kids. His boys're ball players, too, an one of 'em plays Legion ball and can throw a not-half-bad game when his turn is up. Caz is a helluva more farmer than me but like I said, he has to be. I have my three quarters, mostly in oats an corn an a little brome-grass for my few head of cattle, and a few feeder pigs. It keeps me hoppin' some, since I work alone 'cept for harvesting, when I hire Caz and his boys to custom combine my small grain. But I like it—there's time to fish, an I can go play ball without askin' permission to leave like the boys who work in town have to.

Well me an Caz gabbed about crops and prices an how the hell could a man turn a profit with beef where it was. Caz said he was thinkin' about buyin' a new tractor, but didn't know if the banker, Thompson from over in Bartle, would let him, since he already owned most of the farm. I razed him some about buying a Allis Chalmers like he always does, me bein' a John Deere man. Like Dad always said, that orange on their vehicles makes'em look like damned carnival rides.

We shut up about that after while an just sat, nursin' the Grain Belts Caz brought over—that's one thing we agree on. We were sprawled out on the back steps with our feet restin' on some old nail barrels I have instead of them lawn chairs with the plastic rigging that's always torn up. The sun was just beneath the horizon, an the orange it set off come through my shelter belt west of the yard, outlinin' the branches an leaves clear enough to count 'em. The clouds that always drift out of the north-west in the evening floated sort of lazy up over the trees an my steel machine shed that sets just south of 'em. The wind'd gone down like it always does around sunset.

Caz belched after a long swallow, took his brown Zip feed cap off an scratched his head. His hair's more gray than black, and his infielder stomach has stretched out over his belt.

"Melvin," he said, takin' the wooden match he was chewin' on out of his mouth. "When are you gonna quit trying to be a kid?"

I didn't know what he was gettin' at an I said so.

He shook his head an shrugged. "What I mean is, you're gonna get hurt if you don't get those old bones of yours out of that baseball uniform you squeeze into every Sunday and Wednesday.

"I ain't been hurt in the thirty years I've played ball," I said. "An Ed don't let me play first base like he used to between turns, so the only time I play is when I'm throwin'." Gettin' hurt's about the last thing you worry about playin' ball.

Caz tossed his match into the yard and said real soft, "But you haven't thrown a decent game in two, maybe three years. And what about this year? You haven't lasted more than four innings in one game yet."

"It's only the middle of June," I said after awhile. "It's been colder than usual and you know I don't throw good 'til it gets warm. My arm'll come around in July when it warms up." You see, my arm gets stiff and I can't get it loose enough so it feels nat'ral when it's cold.

Caz acted like he was sorry he brung it up. He cleared his throat and spit, then put his cap on.

"Ed asked me to talk to you," he said, kind of sighin', like he figured I already knew it. "Some of the kids've been complaining about you always getting your turn. Ed figures he owes you a game every once in awhile, but he doesn't see how he can keep explaining it to the kids." Caz turned an looked at me for the first time since he started talkin'. He shifted around an cleared his throat again, but didn't say anything.

"Can't blame Ed," I said. "He's gotta keep the other ballplayers happy."

Caz straightened up a bit like maybe he had talked some sense into me. "We figured you'd take it pretty well," he said. "You've always been pret-

ty concerned with the team. Guys like you and me on the long side of forty have to leave the game to young boys like Hazlett who pitched the other night." He reached for one of the last two beers.

"Yeah," I said, as he handed me the other one. "I guess we all gotta quit sometime." It was dark now but a little orange still showed around the trunks of the trees. The leaves an branches'd disappeared into the blue-black sky. We sat quiet through our beers, then Caz got up and collected his empties and set 'em on the top step.

"Should I tell Ed you won't have to take your turn Sunday, then? He'll be happy to have you sit with the team, anyway."

"No," I said.

I could barely see Caz's face, just the outline, but I knew he was lookin' at me. The he said "See ya," an left. I stayed outside for awhile after his pickup had turned off my driveway onto the gravel road that runs by the place, listenin' to the crickets' racket an the hogs scroungin' in their big steel feeders, and hoped for a warm Sunday.

I had everything goin' for me. First off, the team we were playin' was only 2 and 9 on the year. an it was hot—about ninety, with a little breeze out of the southeast. I was loose, an my breakin' stuff was movin' out an down, an my fastball—my fav'rite—was stayin' right around the knees. That's the trick, keepin' the ball at the knees. When you get wild high, the batter's likely to poke it out of the park, or you might throw it over the catcher, lettin' a man on third score. But I was keepin' it right at the knees, all through my warm-up throws.

Ed didn't hardly talk to me—only to ask about my arm. He never has said much—ever since one time right after I came up from Legion ball when he tried to get me to lengthen my stride an useless elbow and more body an I told him I'd throw the way I always did. He never could understand how I ever won a game.

We were at home, so o'course we were out on the field first. While we waited for the Star Spangled Banner to get done—they always played the same old Kate Smith record on an old portable hi-fi—I could see that the cement grandstand behind the wood-an-wire backstop was just about full. All the regulars were there—Mrs. Miller who hobbles down to every game an sits right where she can look over the plate ump's shoulder and give him hell, Spike Horwitz who sits at the top of the grandstand an listens to Cardinal games through his earplug, an old Sid Martin who wears his gray suit and sits board straight in the front row leaning forward with both hands on his cane. We were all ready.

Their leadoff man grounded to short. While the infield tossed it round the horn, I stood off the mound a ways squeezin' the rosin bag. It always feels good to get that first man.

The second man worked the count to 3-2 and fouled a couple off. Then I walked him with a fast one that sailed on me. Next batter lined one to left, but our left fielder hustled in a good throw to third to get the man on first who'd tried to stretch it. I walked their cleanup hitter on four straight, but got out of the inning when the next man struck out fishin' for

one neck-high. The crowd clapped, honks came from the cars lining the fences, and Ed exploded and said, "Sheewt!"

I jogged into the dugout, an put on my jacket out of habit. I was sweatin' pretty hard—an it felt good. My arm was still loose, but I was a little worried about the way the ball was gettin' up on me.

The boys in the dugout were pretty excited. They told me all I had to do was throw strikes, 'cause I had a lot of help behind me. They patted my rear when we went back out—we went three up-three down in our half—an there was a lot of chatter out in the field.

"Whadayasay, Mel, fire hard."

"Rock an fire, babe, throw it by 'em."

"Shoot strikes, son, lot o'help here."

I heard 'em back there, as I kicked at the dirt in front of the rubber, gettin' it the way I liked it. As long as they were helpin' out, I could show Ed that I had a few more strikes left in me. I stooped down and squeezed the rosin bag, then wiped my hand on my leg an looked in for the sign.

"Chuck hard, Mel."

"Down the pipe, babe, throw it past 'em."

But my fast ones wouldn't stay down. I walked two in a row, then wild-pitched them to second and third. We walked the next guy to set up the force and get at the pitcher. Then he singled to right an our rightfielder (who played Legion ball the year before) threw it into our dugout. Three runs scored.

Top of the order again an no outs. The people in the stad were quiet, or goin' to the whitewashed concession stand behind the grandstand for Pepsi or popcorn, an most of the team had shut up, too. The infielders stood around, hands on their hips, lookin' at the ground an makin' lines in the dirt with their spikes. Ed was standin' at one end of the dugout, with a foot up on the bench with his elbow on his knee and his chin in his hand. The Hazlett kid was warmin' up down our side of the fence.

No, I thought, I'll get my fastball down an get this guy an the next guy an the next guy an then stop 'em the next inning and the boys'll get me a lead...

Their leadoff hitter took 'em until the count was full, then hit a double off the lathe-an-wire snow fence in center just to the left of the flag pole.

Ed straightened up an looked down at Hazlett. I stood at the mound, rubbin' the ball with both hands, feelin' the seams an the cowhide an the dirt an the bruises— and looked out at the scoreboard where the red out bulbs were all off.

I met Ed about halfway to the third base line and handed him the ball. He waved for Hazlett and said, "Sorry Mel." I went to the dugout, grabbed my jacket and sat down. I wanted to throw my glove, grab a bat and maybe show 'em I could at least still hit. But I got up and went past the guys sitting quiet on the bench, sat at the end, and guarded them damn ball and strike an out switches.

The game Wednesday was rained out. It was one of those slow soft rains that lets the ground just suck it in. All day the sky was solid gray from one end to the other. About all I could've done was mend fence, but

I didn't feel like doin' that, so I did chores, then stayed in the house readin' newspapers and listenin' to the Yankee-Oriole game.

By evenin' the rain had quit. I was sick of bein' cooped up, so I went out an walked around the yard. It'd cooled off since Sunday, what with the rain, an a real breeze'd sprung up from the northwest. The dark gray clouds had turned to a lighter gray with blue mixed in. The bottom of the clouds in the east, away from the settin' sun, was bumped like a roll of cotton bandage. The cotton dirifted west, grad'ly givin' way to thinner clouds with ridges runnin' through 'em like ribs. The sun showed orange-pink through the clouds low in the west, makin' the fields and trees and my machine shed and the gravel driveway glow like parts in a dream.

I stopped by the pump jack down by the feed lot and put one foot up on the wooden plank fence. I leaned with my elbows on the top board, thinkin' about how mad I used to get when we got rained out, I hated it, because I'd start thinkin' my next turn almost right after the last one, an would be all set to go by the day of the game. I'd listen to the weather, and watch the horizon an swear at them thunderheads that'd come no matter how bad I wanted to throw. It'd take me damn near a day to get over it, and then I'd start waitin' for the next game, just like before.

I wasn't mad, standin' by the lot watchin' my cows slog around in the new mud. I wondered if them kids were.



Dorothy Morgan.

Doug Cockrell

YOUNG FARMER SHOOTING POOL

Smiles only
when he misses.
Chalks up, tips
a cigarette.

Next time
will get more english
on the ball
because the table
slants a hair
north (put on
some more backspin)

and rub the felt down
there by the
pocket before he
shoots.



Dorothy Morgan.

Cary Cross

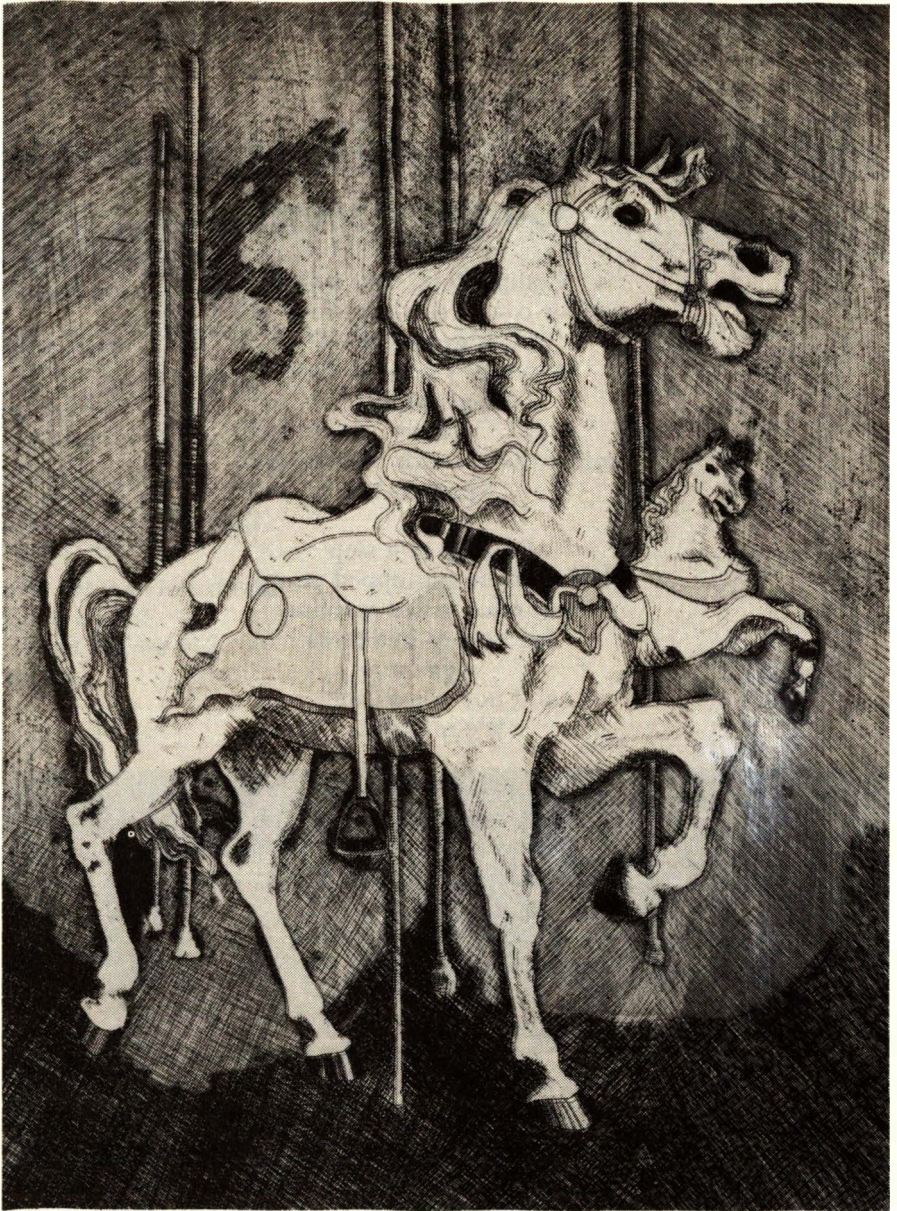
Country Store

Companions, You and I,
we roller-coastered thirty-four miles
of gravel to
Stoneville's general store
that stands
alone
amidst the ebb-tide of blue-stem
prairie.

Braking to a stop
before a crown-topped pump
that once issued gasoline
for twenty-five cents
a gallon
and now issues none,
We're there.

Being greeted by the howdy
of a twelve-hour-a-day,
sun-toughened cowboy
who eases into the
power
of his four-wheel-drive
we're left.
Smothered in dust.

The screen door springs shut
alerting the owner we're there.
Taking a place on the age-shined
bench
we share orange pop,
and I drink. Together,
among the country-store aroma:
old hardware-
worn wood.



Susan Hartenhoff.

William Kloefkorn

THE COWGIRL IN THE SALOON AT THE RAMADA INN

has removed the greenhorn's shoes,
and now, on the dance floor,

she can very nearly reach him,
her loose hands twirling lariats,

the greenhorn quick and devious
on his feet,

his hair like a shag mane
whipping its loose ends

against his eyes and ears and nose,
and he begins slowly to bend,

the shoulders to sag,
and by the time the music

rises to its last crescendo
she has him on his side,

his legs twitching
at the blue vibrant air,

the knot in the rope
so snug, so savage

he cannot choose but lick
the cowgirl's hand

beer after beer after
beer after beer

after beer
after



Linda Hanson.

David Allan Evans

DIRECTIONS

Devil's Hollow?

You see that blacktop road over there—
you take that, and turn right on the
first road you come to—it's gravel,
it takes you back into the hills
behind Soo Tools. When you get over
the highest hill and start down,
you'll notice some junk along the ditch
on either side of the road, even some
rusted-out car bodies dumped in the 50's.
You might see deer too, off to your right,
down in the ravine where there's a lot of
cottonwood trees, mulberry bushes, and,
you name it, any kind of flower.
When you get to the bottom of the hill,
the ravine turns into Devil's Hollow.
You can't miss it. Just take that blacktop,
turn right on the gravel, and keep driving.

J. Alan Martin

PEONY RIDGE

Peony Ridge
is a small town.

Where four-wheel-drive pickups
crowd the curb
and wives buy Wonderbread and Jiff and Clover Farm peas
with food stamps.

Where the only tourist attraction
is the unmarked crossing two miles down county road 18
where, in November of 1967
five people in a Chevy were blasted to memories by a seventy-
three car freight train.

Where talk
of tire ruts on old maids' lawns, overturned outhouses, Mary
Schweicher marrying a boy from Harland, (of all places)
and other community scandals
are nodded at over 10¢ coffee and caramel rolls
at Ramona's Cafe.

Where CITY is a dirty word
comparable to DROUGHT or GRASSHOPPER
and besides
who's ever seen grease under city fingernails?

Meta Brandl

The Wood-carver

He cut his life with his hands,
Intricate and beautiful,
Ugly and truthful,
From a solid piece of hardwood.
He gave it a hand-polished finish,
And caressed it -
Until he died.

Linda F. Hanson

THOUGHTS RUNNING THROUGH MY HEAD

Cantering thoughts
drop dead in their tracks

like the spotted ponies listening to
the whistles of the wild ponies running free
in the valley.



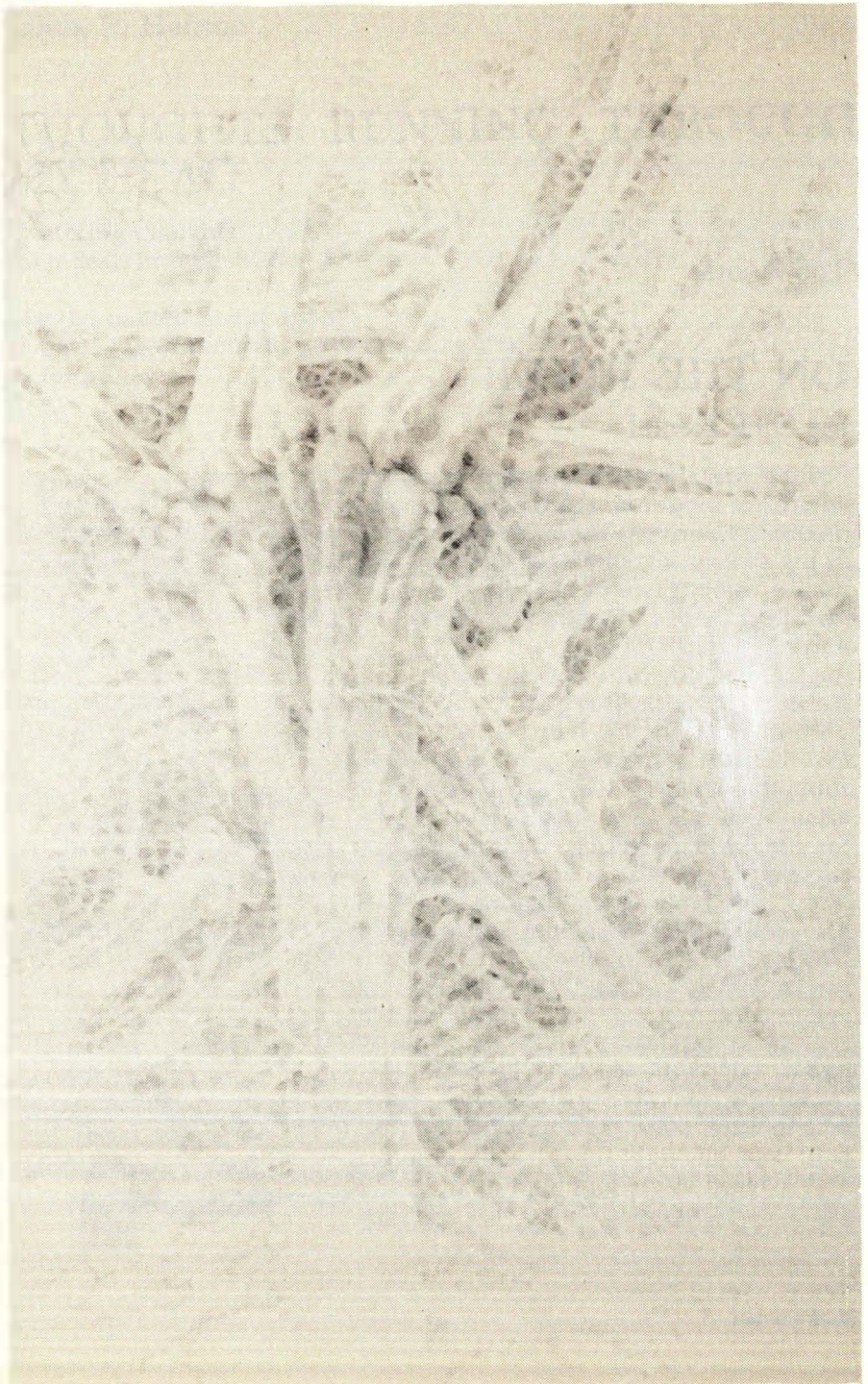
Patricia Rahja.

Ted Kooser

ON THE RIVER

for Dick Piersol

Fishing was always best at that spot
where the pipe from the rendering works
bled into the river. There, catfish
as big as your leg lolled in red water,
their eyes like those of bilious old men
waddling up to the table; fat carp, too,
and suckers like muscles torn loose;
dogfish and gar, all teeth and bone.
Never the frivolous blue gill
with its butterfly ways, or perch
like the flash of a dime, only those rough fish
rubbing each other like gray cadavers
afloat in a tank. Fishing was good there
for catching, not eating. Upriver,
the water was clear; a boy could catch
a few little bluegills and crappies,
have a good time pushing a log out
into the current and watching it
turn downstream. But if you were grown,
you had to wade out and stand in the blood
in high boots, smelling death in the air,
and watching the trucks come down the road
through the willows, with hooves sticking out
stiff through the slats. You waited,
held your line tight for the cold, deep tug,
and scowled at the logs floating down.



Dave Klemm.

Kevin Woster

ANOTHER DRUNK INDIAN

Martin Small Jumper is dead.
It came today, this news of a car wreck
of another drunk Indian.
But this is Martin Small Jumper
who told me when I was 12 I was the best
rabbit hunter he knew, who taught me to
dribble a basketball with either hand
and who wouldn't speak to me
the first weekend I came home from school.

I hated him for that, for his arrogant looks
his silence, but most of all because I knew
that it had started, the time for hate had come.
I told him he could go straight to Hell
with all the rest. And he did.

It says he laid all night pinned to a guard rail
and wouldn't die through surgery that took
both his legs and left him numb to the chest. It says
the doctors are the best, that he will live long
go to school in Denver and learn a trade. Shit.
Martin Small Jumper was born to his trade. It grew
as he grew and all the White Port and Muscatel
couldn't wash it out.

His trade was the hunt.
He could stalk a whitetail like a cougar
swift and silent relentless.
And sometimes in town just for fun
he would get about half sober and stalk
old Willie Smith coming home from Ray's Card Room.
Willie said he always knew it was Martin
but the hair on the back of his neck still stood up
like a horse mane in a lightening storm.

Now Willie can walk easy. and people around town
can shake their heads and forget another drunk Indian
crushed in his own car wreck somewhere out on the reservation.
But I cannot forget, at least not everything.
Martin Small Jumper is dead.

Leon Tetzlaff

Sauna

loneliness falls
like snowflakes
and stays
like winter

when the cold sets in
branches become brittle
and lose their memory
or perhaps
it becomes too sharp

three men and I
from north country
sit proud
where bare bodies and heat
are a testament

from rolling in snow
we return
exercising our lungs
with frosting on edges

through a warm-blooded screen
appear effigies
stolid and sensitive

when steam clears
there is cold

Harley Elliott

The Night the Magic Fingers Failed

Magic Fingers it said
on the box beside the motel bed
and finally the last midnight
arriving in its dark
blue winding sheet

involuntary pathos coming out
from undercover
the quarter went in.

Blood gathering curling the
length of my body
I waited for fingers
the long tapering fingers of the pincess
the princess who wipes away the
melancholy film

who always appears
just in time
confiscating the suddenly
attractive knife;

the bed kicked once
and died against my back.

And I am still waiting
for the Magic Fingers
to rise in the night of america
as coyotes wait beneath the moon

one eye crazed and one eye civilized.
And grocers are waiting wrapped in plastic
and astronomers who weep alone
thinking of the universe
and poets dead divorced and dying
sitting up late at night

in foolish agony waiting for
Magic Fingers in the night of america.

We have paid for Magic Fingers
in letters filled with pain
riding disappearing trains across the prairie
and with deephearted friends
suddenly coming up false
we have paid and waited

stupidly clubbed with self concern
for the royal pleasure of fingers
deep in the downy souls of our beds.
The bed kicked once
and died against our backs

and the Magic Fingers are waiting
in the night of america
closed together tightly into hands.

Sheri Hagen

J.C. Peanut

What would the US of A think
If Jimmy Carter flashed
His big smile
On nationwide television
And had peanut skins stuck in his
Teeth?

Wayne A. Jones

The '67' Mustang

The old Ford Mustang
had gone it's last mile,
for me.

Dad always said it
was a dog. I liked
the looks.

It had the squeaks
of a thousand mice
and rode like a boat
on rough water, but
I liked the looks.

Three water pumps, one
fuel pump, two sets of
air shocks, one transmission
overhaul, valves ground,
two distributor caps, two sets
of points and plugs and one
front end alignment-all in two
years. Still I liked the looks.

I sold it this summer
to some sucker. 450
bucks. I think he liked
the looks.

Wendy M. Howell

Piano Man

Edgar Stienstine had one hand,
and he was the best darn piano man.

He was playin' Liszt's Funerailles, (1894),
and he was tappin' time on the floor.

His hand was dancin' up and down the board.
It went this a way and that a way, it went sideways,
frontways, twistin', flippin, and finishin with a backward roll.

Edgar Stienstien, he is the best piano man a feller ever seen.
His one hand keepin' time for two.

David Allan Evans

THE FACE

I know a front door
with a diamond-shaped window
with a woman's face in it
that won't go away.

You name it.
The face has seen it.

Yellow moving raincoats,
the mailman on his route,
the guy with the cocked hat
from Western Union.
The Hillsinger boys
playing in the vacant lot
next to the brick house
with the white picket fence.
Faye Schwinck's dust cloth
dusting the levels of
Venetian blinds.
in the alley, dogs nosing,
or the deaf and dumb
junk dealer jerking his
iron-wheeled cart
over the cinders.

You name it:
the Nyreen boy rocking
on a porch swing,
Cardwell the fireman
stumbling home drunk from
the Blue Bird Inn.

You name it—
the face has seen it all,
and won't go away.



Polly Fladmark Hoffman.

Marcia K. Houtman

I See Her Sometimes

(Open with older woman bustling around in house dress and apron, straightening, but not doing much good/knock at door)

Woman-Just a minute . . . (does some more straightening, then answers the door) . . . Yes?

Salesman-Mrs. Simpson? Mrs. Walter Simpson?

Woman-Yes, but you can just call me Loretta. I like for people to call me by my first name.

Salesman-I'm David Morris, your area representative for the Mexona Land Development Corporation. . .

Woman-Oh, yes, I know. I've been expecting you . . .

Salesman-Of course. Well, may I say by way of greeting from all of us at Mexona that you have made a wise choice, a wise choice indeed, in deciding to purchase real estate through our company! (he's still standing outside) ah..May I come in and show you some of our brochures, Mrs. Simpson?

Woman-Please...Loretta.

Salesman-May I come in?

Woman-Oh, I'm so sorry! Of course. Come right in! You must think I have terrible manners, making you stand outside the door like that.

Salesman-That's quite alright, Mrs. Simpson. Perhaps we should get on with business. I've picked out a particular piece of land that I think will be just right for you. It's a lovely piece of desert property that just needs a little bit of work to become a beautiful oasis!

Woman-That sounds very nice. Please come in and sit down. I'll just get us some tea. Walter always had to have tea . . . every afternoon and it had to be at exactly three o'clock or...he'd get really upset with me. He was funny that way.

Salesman-Your husband has passed on?

Woman-Yes...ah...just a year ago.

Salesman-(with little feeling) I'm very sorry.

Woman-Why,...thank you. It was hard for a while, but I'm doing real good now. (she snaps out the of "mood"-and becomes the excited hostess again) Oh, the teal Excuse me.

Salesman-Please don't bother, Mrs. Simpson...(he gestures after her, but she's already gone. he rolls his eyes and sighs with impatience)

Woman-But it's no bother...really! (on her way out) Please let me...

Salesman-Well, you see, I do have other appointments to keep this afternoon. I'd love to sit here and chat with you and drink tea, but I just don't have the time. Now, let me...

Woman (she interrupts him from the kitchen) But it won't take me any time at all. I've got everything ready. Please. (salesman heaves another sigh of defeat and goes on getting his brochures and papers out for the woman to look at) (she comes in with the tea and is about to sit down) Oh, the cookies! I made cookies special this morning. (salesman opens his mouth to say something, but she cuts him off and he sighs again)(she leaves before he can do anything. she keeps talking) You know, when my Marty...I should say, Martin. When he got older he didn't like to be called Marty anymore. Anyway, when he and Louise were away at school I used to bake a lot and send them big packages of cookies. Care packages Walter called 'em. That Walter. what a sense of humor. (sets cookies down) Well, there you are, Mr. Morris.

Salesman-Thank you, Mrs. Simpson. Now, why don't you take a look at these brochures.

Woman-Of Course. I'm sorry. Say, I do get a calendar don't I? The ad said . . .

Salesman-Certainly. You'll get your calendar. Mexona always lives up to its promises! If you'd just take a look at this brochure, it will explain

Woman-Oh, this is Arizona isn't it?

Salesman-Yes, Ma'am. This very picture was taken on the beautiful, scenic property...

Woman-After he graduated, Martin got drafted and he was stationed in Arizona for a while. Why one time when he and his buddies went to Tucson, they almost got to see Raquel Welch. Isn't that something!

Salesman-Yes, I'm sure it was.

Woman-(going over and getting picture from shelf) This is Marty here.
We . . . lost him in the war.

Salesman-Yes . . . I'm ah . . . I'm very sorry, Mrs. Simpson. But could we
please go on. Now as I said, this picture was taken on the very property
that I was speaking of earlier . . .

Woman-(going to get photo album) There's some more pictures of him in
here, of all of them: Marty, Walter . . . Louise. Marty and Walter,
they're gone now. But Louise, she lives on the other side of town.

Salesman-Mrs. Simpson . . .

Woman-Please, Loretta.

Salesman-About the piece of land . . .

Woman-Of course, in these big cities the other side of town is miles away.

Salesman-Mrs. Simpson, are you interested in this at all?

Woman-Louise is real busy with her job, too. But I do see her sometimes
. . .

Salesman-Mrs. Simpson?

Woman-(not even aware of his presence anymore) She comes once a
month to visit and help with the cleaning. (salesman gives up on her,
puts his brochures away, closes his briefcase, and begins to leave-all
while she is talking. Turns once more as if to say something, but
realizes that it's futile and leaves.) Of course last time she couldn't
make it 'cause she had to work overtime that day. But I got it all done
myself. I get along real good by myself. It is nice to see people once in a
while. (turns and sees that he is gone, but is going to try to pretend that
it doesn't bother her) But you have to realize that everybody's busy. I
know I'm plenty busy myself; that's kind of why I wanted that calen-
dar. I could write things down on it to keep track. Hey, don't I get my
calendar? The ad said . . . (begins to fade out) that . . . you get a free
calendar . . .

Doug Cockrell

LATE NIGHT HORROR MOVIE

While writing this, this
wind is lowly laughing .

Before bed, I
switch channels

haphazardly
on the color
television

in time
to watch a
re-run of

a mummy
tramping
business-like

from his
subterranean
crypt:

he is
wrapped up
in plastered rags

scaring hell
out of drunks
in the woods
at night

stiff arming through
oak doors,
glass doors,
all other doors

to choke desecrating
archaeologists
to death

Then,
pulling toward a
black-haired
woman with
batting eyes

who looks exactly like
some ancient
sarcophagus-faced
priestess halfway
around the world

anyway,
she faints into
his outstretched
scooping arms

and the two trudge into a
sudden
mist

around the bend of
star-lit
trees
on the right hand

side of the screen
pitchforks, guns, men
chase after them

over there—

the mummy
and she
are oozing into a
purple moor

she wakes up
screaming
slapping
his gunshot-
holed chest

while the jeering
flock by the
quicksand
beckons her

to come
to them before
they shoot

once again

the mummy
raises in his
clamped hand

waving,

as he sinks,

the secret scroll
of life

(whose words conjured him)

into the

mud pit.

Connie Kirschenman

M A R A N A T H A

It was a cold day. The sky was one white sheet of winter clouds, and the bare tree branches clawed at it in the wind. dust blew into JoAnn's eyes as she plodded along the deserted sidewalk. Nothing else moved, and the only sound was the constant rushing of the wind. The darkened eyelike windows of the lonely houses stared at her blankly.

She knew spring was on its way, though. Looking up at the reaching boney fingers wile passing underneath them, she saw tiny green buds. It was dry and cold, but spring would come. Consoled, she smiled.

She reached the main street of the small town and turned the corner. As she passed the two bars, the sound of music and the stink of liquor filled the air. Although there had been drought since she could remember, and the land was barren, the farmers were celebrating. The new government promised better times and food for everyone. They liked the system. All was well again.

She went on, kicking an empty beer can. Clink-clunk. The can dropped into the gutter which was already full of litter.

Passing the bank, she stopped to peer into the window. It was dark inside, and the desk, behind which her father used to sit, was barely visible. Those were happy days. But now they were gone. What good were banks anymore? She pulled on the door handle, but it was locked. She had already known that. She had tried it many times before, and the results had always been the same. What good were banks anymore?

She entered the grocery store. Beep-boop-bip. the computer added the prices as the groceries of the young man moved past on the conveyer belt. The amount flashed onto a screen.

"Will there be anything else for you?" the clerk asked.

"No, thank you," he replied as he pressed his forehead to the detector. Three six-digit numbers now flashed onto the screen. Bip-beep. The computer recorded the number and amount and sent the information by satellite to the Beast, the largest computer in the world. Staring at JoAnn's ragged clothes, dirty face, and tangled hair as he passed her, the boy picked up his groceries and left the store.

The clerk was equally unfriendly. He glared at the young girl as she stepped timidly up to the counter.

"I'd like—"

"No!"

"Oh, but please!" she begged. "I'm so hungry."

"You wouldn't have to be."

"Couldn't you just slip me a loaf of bread? Nobody would know."

"Listen, Miss. You have to have a number." His face was cold stone.

But JoAnn was determined. She reached into her pocket and pulled out a ring. The clerk's expression softened to one of intense interest. It was a beautifully set diamond ring.

"It belonged to my mother," she explained. "You can have it, if you want it."

He hesitated, knowing what would happen to him if he were caught. Then glancing at the ring once more, he turned to punch the buttons on the selection board. Blimp-bleep-bleep. The conveyer belt began to move. JoAnn let out a happy sigh when she saw that there was not only a loaf of bread, but also a carton of milk moving toward her. The price of the groceries flashed onto the screen, and after that the three numbers flashed as he pressed his forehead against the detector. She relinquished the ring, and as soon as the treasure was pocketed, the clerk pushed the groceries at her.

"Now get out of her before somebody comes," he said gruffly.

Gladly she obeyed. Outside the door she broke into a run down the street, almost knocking over an old lady. Reaching the corner, she turned toward the park and didn't stop until she reached the first green table. She opened the bread bag, greedily ripped off a hunk, and stuffed it in. It tasted so good. The milk leaked from the corners of her mouth and dripped down her chin as she guzzled it as fast as she could.

Suddenly she stopped. "I'm sorry," she whispered penitently. Her head bowed and hands folded. The wind roared in her ears.

"Look! She's praying!"

JoAnn looked up. Two men, one young and thin, the other fat and elderly, had jumped out of a marking truck and were running toward her. The gaudy seal on the side of the big, white vehicle terrified her. She saw again her parents as they were thrown in to the back of such a truck and as the doors slammed shut. She was only seven at the time and could do nothing but hide in the bushes and watch as the white van roared away with them. That was when they still had asylums. She wished they still had them.

At first she was paralyzed, but as the men approached she was up and running, leaving the costly meal behind. Her eyes darted wildly looking for a place to hide. But there was none. Her heart pounded in her ears and her tongue stuck to her dry mouth. She heard quick steps on the pavement behind her and dared to look back as she rounded the corner back onto the main street. Only the young man was following her on foot. The other was bringing the fearful truck.

Out of their view, JoAnn slipped into the crevice between the two buildings and crouched there holding her breath. An eternity passed. Where is he? There. The man on foot had stopped running when he turned the corner and found no trace of her. Now he stood in front of the dark hiding place, his eyes scanning the street. The fugitive sat motionless. Surely he could hear the drum beating inside her.

The white van pulled up beside the curb, and the young man stepped up to the window. The driver's mouth moved, but his speech was inaudible to JoAnn from her place of refuge.

"I don't know. I turned the corner and I couldn't see her anymore," she heard the young man explain before he too climbed into the horrible vehicle. The truck moved slowly on down the street.

JoAnn sighed in relief. But where to now she had to get away. Suddenly she remembered the meetings her parents used to take her to where the people sang and prayed. She knew one of the farmhouses where the meetings were sometimes held. Maybe someone there could help her.

Slowly she got up, her legs shaking and weak from the scare. Broken glass crunched under her feet as she followed the brick walls covered with graffiti to the alley. She followed the alley to the edge of town, cautiously crossing each street, expecting to see a marking truck at every step. But her passage was undetected.

In front of her was a dry cracked field which would be safer than the main road. The fugitive quickly climbed the barbed wire fence. Rip. One of her pant legs and another hole, but she took no time to stop and look.

Dirt filled her shoes as she trudged over the rough, sandy ground. The wind whipped at her hair and clothes and threw dirt into her eyes and mouth. For a kilometer she plodded on until she reached a gravel road and followed that. The going was easier now, but the dirt in her shoes grew to pebbles, causing her to stop frequently to empty them.

It was nearing evening when JoAnn finally reached the small farm she had been looking for. The place looked forbidding in the dim gray light. The paint on the dilapidated buildings was peeling and the roofs needed new shingles. The bare tree branches made scraping noises against them.

She climbed the rickety porch steps to the house and knocked. There was no answer. She knocked again. Still there was no reply.

"Is anybody home?" Except for the scraping of the branches and the whistle of the wind, there was silence. JoAnn sank down on the steps and sat with her chin in her hands. A shattered and lonely feeling crept over her, and tears rolled down her cheeks.

Suddenly she jumped up and headed for the barn. The huge door was gaping wide open, and she stepped into its musty darkness. Her eyes adjusted and saw empty stalls and old rusty machinery. The old building creaked and rattled in the wind. A ladder led up to a loft, where she found some old dusty bales which she tore apart to make a bed for the night.

She had just gotten settled when she heard something. Was it a motor? The window was so covered with dirt that she couldn't see out, so she scrambled down the ladder. Yes, it sounded like a car, and it was turning into the driveway. The gravel outside crunched, brakes squeaked, and the engine stopped. Relieved, she ran to the door. Her parents' friends would help her!

She stopped short when she got outside. The white van loomed in front of her. She ran back into the barn and bounded up the ladder. Maybe they hadn't seen her and would go away. She peered down at the door. The silhouettes of two men filled the opening. One stepped forward and began climbing the ladder slowly.

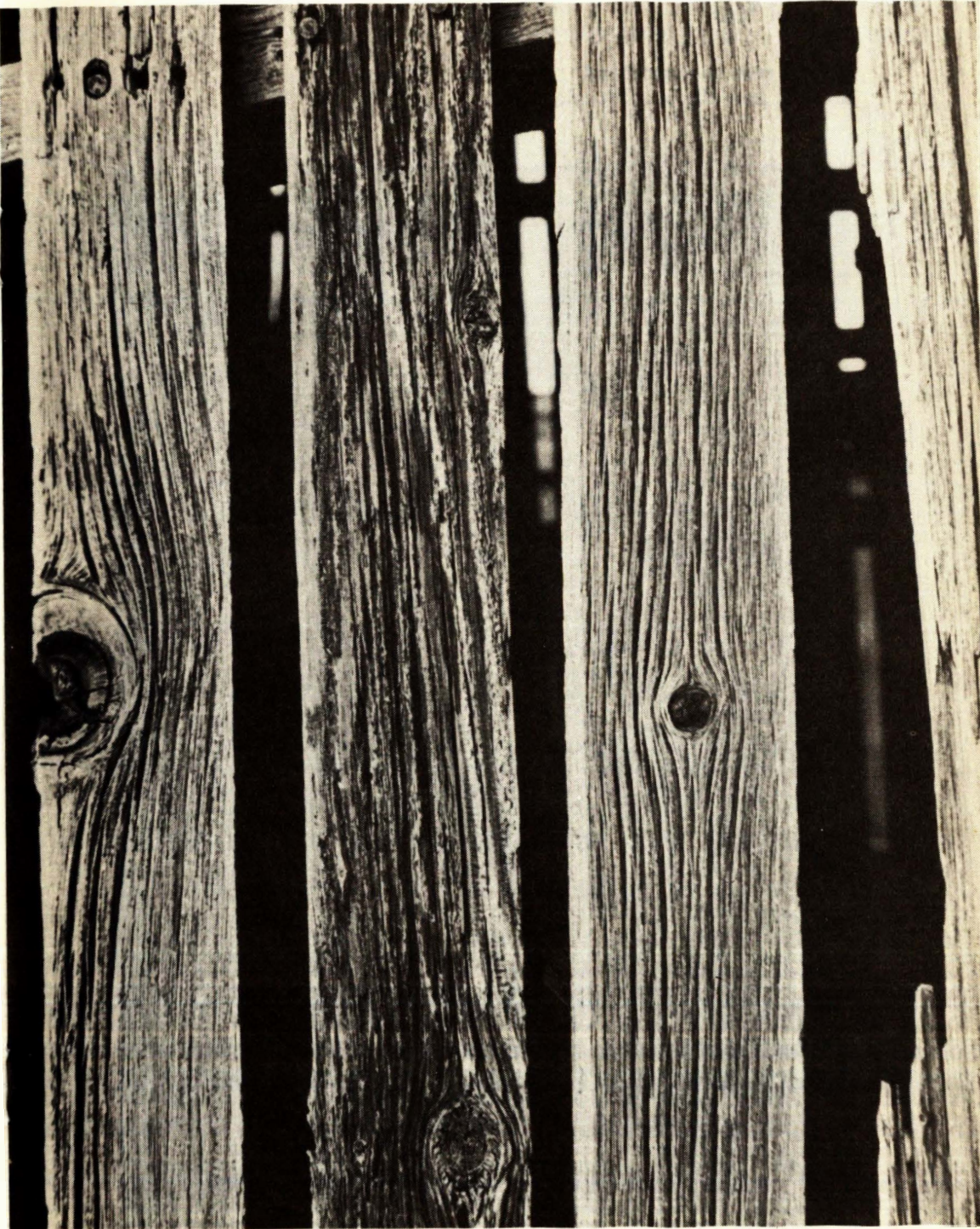
JoAnn looked about the loft, but there was no place to hide, and no earthly way of escape. She huddled in a corner and held her arms over her face.

Suddenly a hand gripped her wrist and jerked her up, throwing her halfway across the loft and down on her knees. She tried to stand, but the young man grabbed her again and pinned her to the floor. Kicking and screaming did no good.

The older man had now climbed up to the loft and was coming toward her with the marker. The instrument drew closer and closer to her forehead.

"Father!" The girl's scream rent the air, and she was gone. The two men, grasping air, stared at each other in disbelief as the wind outside moaned their doom.

"Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast." Revelation 13:18a



Linda Hanson.

Cheryl Hart

Take a ride on your mind
and see how the world could be.

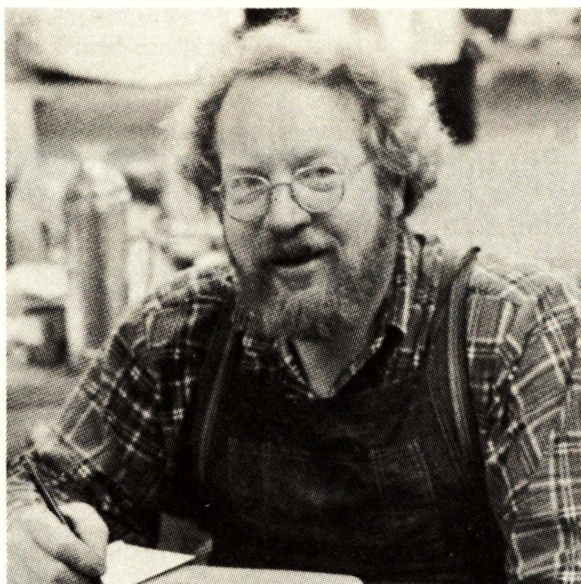


Linda Hanson.

Jack Dan Sherman

Table For One

The thoughts and after thoughts
Of the evening are my breakfast
Sometimes it's a meal
I wish I could avoid.
I feel like I'm being force-fed
But maybe that's what I've deserved.
I'm at a table for one
And breakfast is being served.



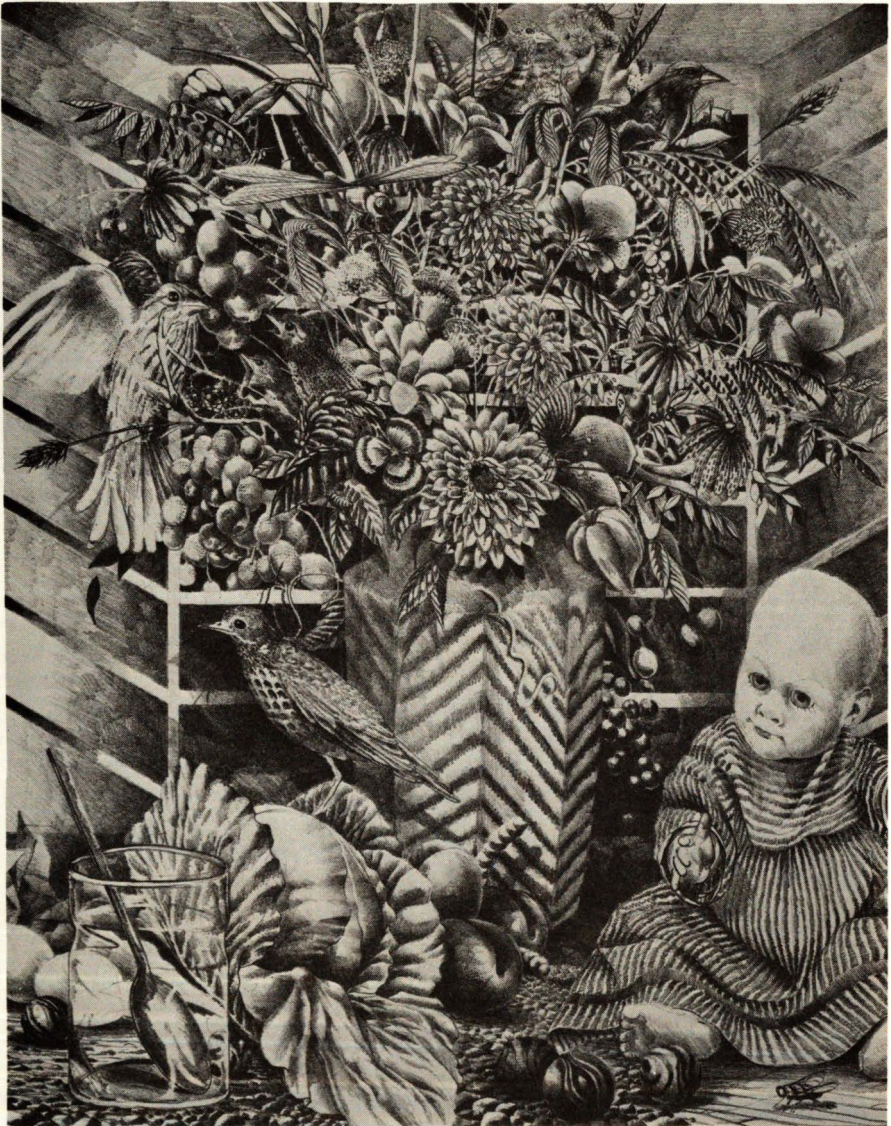
Carl Grupp

Born in Moorhead, Minnesota, September 11, 1939.

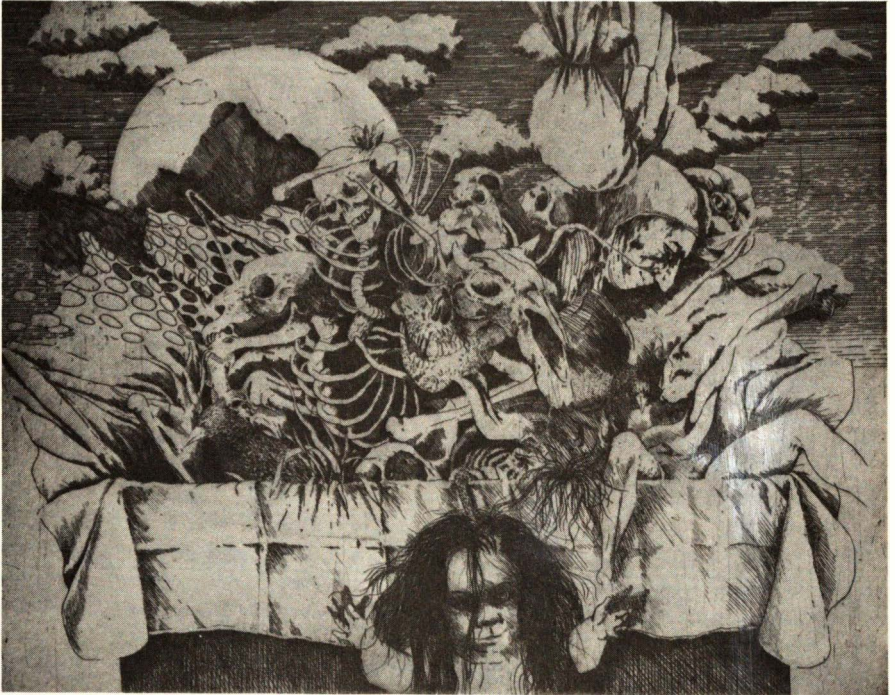
Study and Training: Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Minnesota, B.F.A., 1964; University of Indiana, Bloomington, M.F.A., 1969.

Positions: Assistant Professor, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, since 1969.

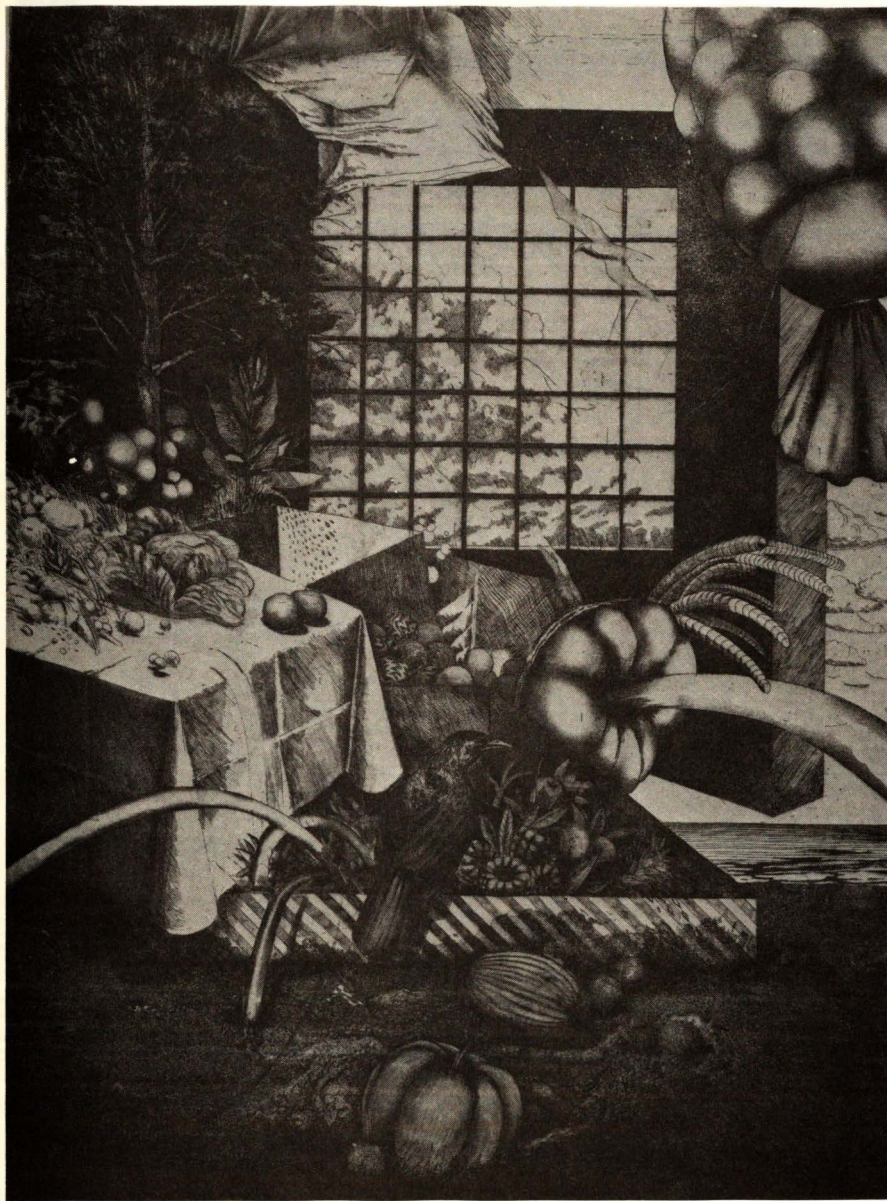
Work in Public Collections: South Dakota Memorial Art Center, Brookings; Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minnesota; Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota; Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota; Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington; Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Minnesota; American Embassy, London, England.



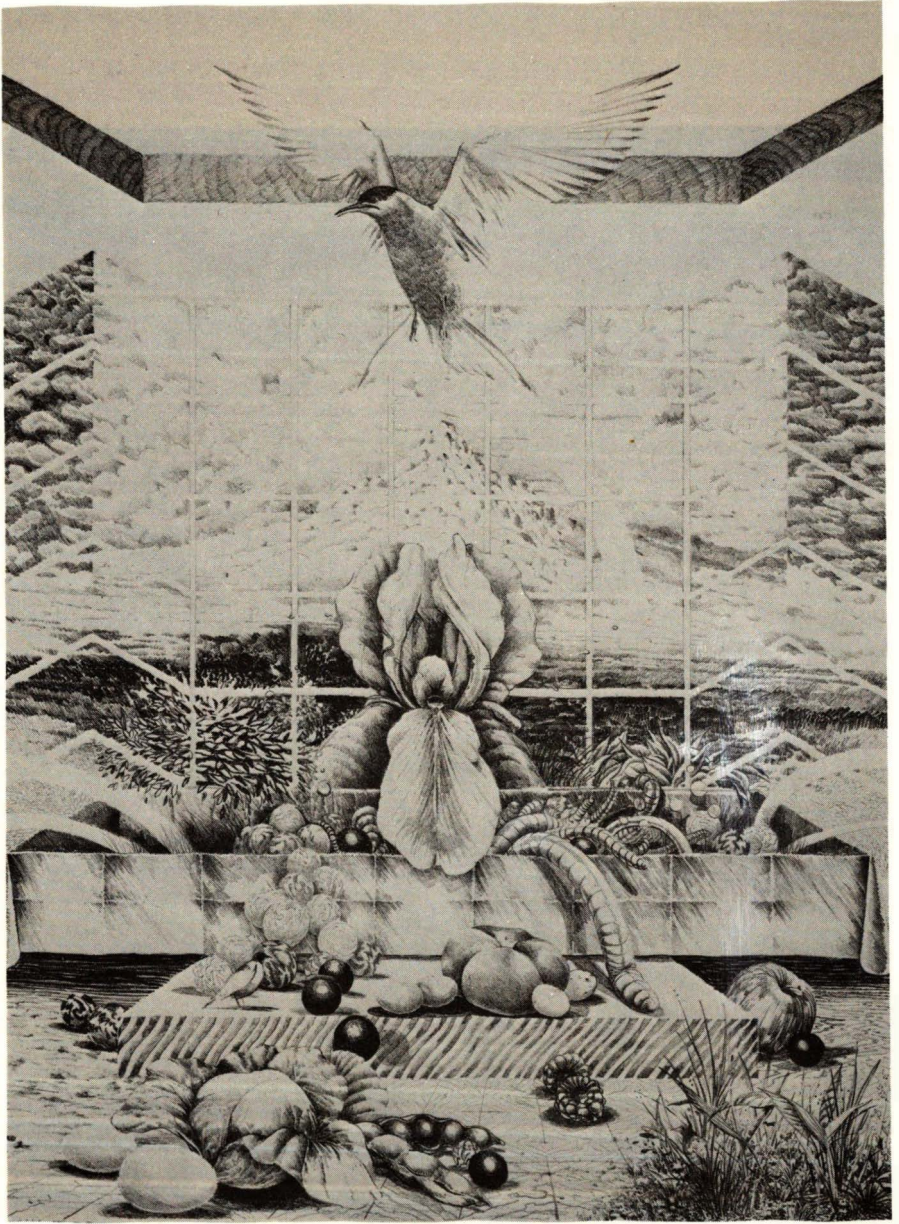
The Enchanted Window
C. Grupp



Pandora's Box Parable # VIII
C. Grupp



Roadside Rest II
C. Grupp



Genesis I:30
C. Grupp

Robert Richter

early-june

I walk the earth at the edges of the wheat I've sown, feel and hear the wind hum against the grasses, wonder at the weather I can't control.

At dusk last night a great storm suddenly rose up and blew in, a swirling bank of blackness, blend of dust and rain and nightfall. Savage wind. As it came up on the windbreak I climbed the windmill in the last light to see if there were funnel clouds, but I couldn't tell and trusted to my senses that the air didn't feel like it or the cloud color seem so. Down to ground again, I got the animals shut in just as the wind hit, smashing open the doors and tearing down trees with ease, screaming against the quivering windows like the death angel. Dust and rain-blast against grass, wheat bent in the submissive bow of homage to the raging, momentary temperament of the gods closing down the day a different way than yesterday, so no one, not even man, forgets these forces.

Then suddenly the sky to the deepest west is light again; brief flicker of sunset. The wind dies down and in a moment is still again. Dusk is full of shadow and the sudden dark flight of the prairie warbler in the last red light. The evening star.

Hurried through chores, wondering: Was this only in my mind, a dream displaying some secret discontentment? Is it me or the world at storm?

At the western horizon where the night and last daylight touch with the peace of lovers, clear across to the eastern rumble of thundershowers growing, going on; at the edge where no edges exist; the sound of my breath, the wind.

Kevin Woster

WINTER HUNT

At my approach
on a clay knob above the Missouri
a cock pheasant stands frozen
in December sun.

Crouching, I rattle
a clump of dried gray Yucca
and watch the bird melt
and run down the slope
in a winding dance to the river.

Denise Luken

When I think of New York or Chicago
I am reminded of a barn in Hazel, South Dakota,
Infested with rats; that when overcrowded,
Revert to cannibalism.



Patricia Rahja.

Patricia A. Rahja

It is rather quiet and secluded where I lay in the grass, except for the low, steady rhythm of voices and an occasional slap of a ball hitting the fence of a nearby tennis court. The leaves of the cottonwoods facing me quiver slightly in the breeze like crystal chimes and reflect many different shades of green and gold. The trees' structures, although quite sturdy, seem almost fragile and dainty as the air stirs among their branches. The ground's grassy surface is a light green color freckled in places by blotches of brown and yellow. The grasses sway and bend as they are coaxed by the breezes. The clouds appear like milky foam and melted butter being poured together as they spread out and unfold across the blue-tinted atmosphere. At first the clouds seem stationary, but as one watches more closely, these collections of suspended water particles weave and twist around and through each other as though playing some sort of game.

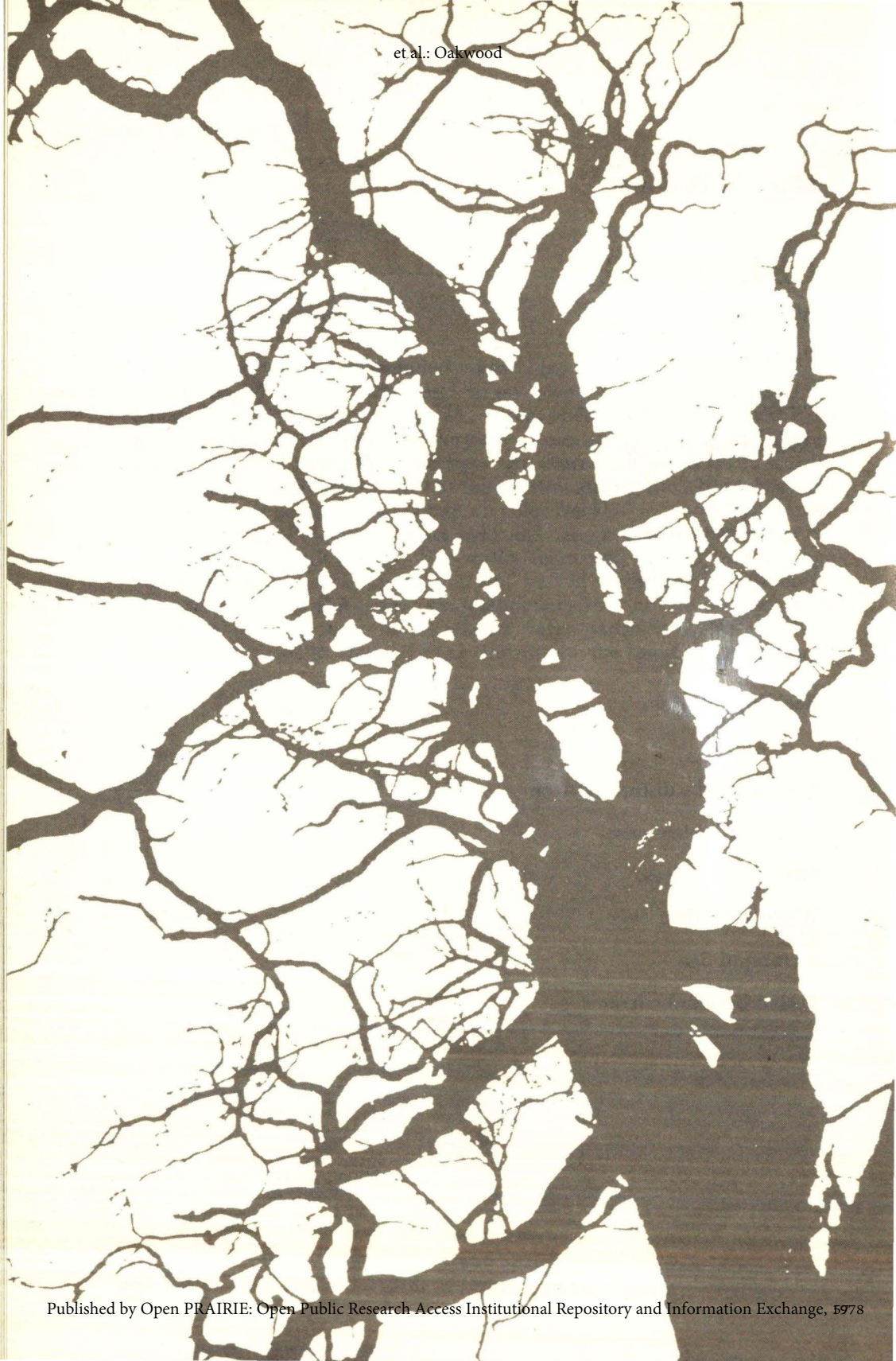
Mary E. Burkman

BREAKERS

Waves push out
Under bubbles of
Soapy white froth,
Cooling the pale sands.

A spray of treasures
Is deposited by the
Riding waves.
Sand crabs waddle
Back into the Sea.

Far off on the distant horizon
a minute fishing vessel
Sways on the Seas,
While gulls float over
A tranquil Sea
Tossed by wind currents.



Cary Cavanaugh

Bare Branches

The trees are empty,
and reflect my feelings.
They have lost their leaves,
and I have lost part of myself.
The trees are empty...
and reflect my soul.

Anita Olson

Cameo II

Slumping in his barroom chair, he had wrinkled the entire back of his striped, light blue suit. Raising his eyes to the level of the tiny table, he found the ice in his glass just winking goodbye. Oblivious to the noise and smoke mixing in the air about him, he plodded to the dance floor and, pulling coin after coin from his pocket, tossed each onto the empty platform. He followed the dimes, retrieved them, and returned to his chair.

Keith Brumley

An Eight Second Poem

A Horse

Turns its head

A man

Breathlessly waits

For him to boil

Out of the chute

And kick

At the one o'clock sun

William Kloefkorn

TANTRUM

I love you jealous and overblown with envy,
your hair a splintering of floss
among the teeth,
the words in your fists
eloquent for a way out.

I love to watch your eyes
roll up and into your forehead,
your feet, unshod,
go bloody at their dance
upon the rocks.

I love the twist in the arc
that describes your spine,
how like rosewood calcified
it dares even the meanest tourist
to break, or mend.

Because when you return
again to life,
you join me more than ever
in our living out this
sweet, ungodly plan,

and I am made alive to know again
how much we are
of wind and flame,
how much at last, at peace,
of earth and water.

Douglas Koehn

Acceleration

interstate stretching to anywhere
i push my foot down
signs and mileposts whizzing by
i feel free

Wendy Howell

AS

It is raining
as I take my life
off the top bunk bed.

The sky is batiking black
as I take my life
in the bathroom, to wash my face.

The ceiling is dripping
as I take my life
in the kitchen, to fix an omelet.

Gene Shalit is reviewing
Cat on a Hot Tin Roof as I take my life
in the bedroom, to pull on a sweater.

The thunder is clapping
as I take my life in the closet.

Michael Hall

Kelowna, B.C.

Kelowna in the moonlight
walking alone to the lake.
I left the others
downtown in alcohol bliss.
My mind filled
with smoke and road dust
Wandering the back trails
to the bridge
where there are tall grasses
on the edge of the reservation
near the fertile waters.

I thought I could sleep
with my head into the waves
Drifting back
where nobody goes.
But the trees shaded the moon
from my eyes
Searching in darkness
thru reeds and scrub brush
for a flat piece of dryness
in my shape.

Garbage of fishermen
and high school parties.
Too tired to move on
I fall down like a mop
on the damp ground.
Becoming thoughtless
like a clamshell on the beach.



David J. Feela

Patricia Rahja.

Coffee Break

The warm weather is fading back into the sun and leaves are prisms that capture the colors of a receding summer.

“Let’s go fishing!”

Quickly (before the phone rings again) I open the door of an army green pickup truck and my dog jumps unto the seat, turns to watch my ascent, and assumes a spectator position with two paws on the ledge of an open window; waiting. Turning the key, a startled engine rumbles mid-morning greetings and I urge her toward the road. We are moving; anticipating. Cisco remains motionless. His head and half of his wind-brushed body protrudes from the side of the truck as if he were pretending to be a badly off-centered hood ornament. I slap him approvingly on the end I can reach and settle back to watch the striped country fields pan by the dusty windshield like a fifty cent matinee.

Eventually the blacktop ends and gravel spits form the smooth rolling tires, slapping against the floor boards, recalling me from my theatre of thoughts. I spot the lake from the top of a hill stretched out in the sun, resting on a blanket of trees. Glistening water relaxes, resigning itself to a peaceful day. The location is perfect and this time I tell myself I am determined to leave the pile of overdue responsibilities stacked on my desk at home. The truck stops. The engine dies to stillness. (I wonder if I’ve got

enough gas to get back?) Cisco is no longer attentive to his window and he barks, pacing back and forth along the seat as if to say "Come-on, I've got things to do". I push open the door on the driver's side and Cisco, seeing his freedom, bounces to my lap and out the door; heading for the nearest grove of trees. I watch him as he disappears into the pastel background. His bark is diluted by distance and a new sound grows in my thoughts; my breath.

From the bed of the truck I retrieve my new fishing rod (I've had it for years but never seem to find time) and start down to the lake, distracting myself from myself with deliberate thoughts about fat little sunnies. Tasty and easy to catch with WORMS? (I suspected I forgot to buy something) So on my hands and knees I begin what ends in a futile attempt to find bait. The ground is dry and sandy. I stand up, slapping my hands clean, scanning the area for a more suitable spot when a voice behind me makes my eyes jump, spinning my head around.

"How ya gonna find fish if ya can't even find worms?"

The question is shot from a tiny blond eight year old who stands hugging a tin coffee can with a home-made fishing pole wedged under a bare arm.

"That's a good question," I reply.

Holding the tin can forward the dirty face peers seriously into my eyes.

"You can share mine, OK?"

OK, you got a deal" I said. "Lucky for me you came along."

The tiny mouth turns its corners upward and we begin to move side by side in the direction of the lake.

"My name is Alden. I live in the city. What's yours?"

"Hattie" she replies looking down at the ground.

So it was a girl. The patch-worn bibs seem to place her in the role of a Huckleberry Finn character.

"That's a pretty name" I said glancing behind to see if the truck was still there. It was.

"No it's not. It sounds like hell" she said quietly as she sits defiantly on the edge of a rock that juts out into the water. I sit down next to her. We prepare our hooks in silence and I take this opportunity to glance curiously at the little girl. Her tongue that flips from one corner of her mouth to the other indicates the energy which she devotes to the task of hooking a worm. She reminds me of a time so long ago that it seems impossible to reach out and touch the memory, to stroke its withered hands and gaze into its wrinkled smile. I used to walk to this beach, just like she does now.

I look across the lake. The resort that flourished when I was a kid on the south side had been reclaimed by the trees and all that is left to tell of that time is a weathered, shotgunned sign which fadedly says SAM'S as it peeks out from behind the underbrush.

"Do you want one of my hooks?" I said, remembering the girl next to me. "It will work better than that old safety pin. Tell you what, I'll trade for one of your worms."

"Nope" she replies, "I like this one. My mom made it."

Then she digs into her can once more and after a careful selection holds a dark fat worm triumphantly above her head and says, "There. That's the

papa. He's the biggest." After laying it gently in my hand she tosses her line into the water. I follow her example and begin this lakeside vigil. Several hours pass. Cisco returns a couple of times, but being easily bored with humans involved in unactive activities, he continues to roam the woods hoping to startle some adventure into participation. Somewhere between my shifting thoughts of autumn (and yards to rake) and winter (a neglected truck tune-up) I find a candy bar hiding in my jacket pocket which I divide equally into two pieces. Half for the tiny eyes that sparkle when it appears and the other half for my hands that need something to do. The chocolate is devoured and Hattie looks satisfied in spite of the fact that we haven't even received a nibble.

"How come you aren't having fun?" she asked, licking her fingers.

"I am!" I reply, pasting on a grin that should have made the sun look like a twenty watt bulb.

"I'm gonna go talk to your puppy, OK?" Hattie said, kicking her feet up and down in the air as if she was running though she hasn't yet gone.

"Oh yea...I mean sure, go ahead" I said.

She stands up and places her fishing pole in my empty had, firmly closing my fingers around the warm bamboo stalk.

"You watch my worm good" she says in a tone that is half asking and half demanding.

"Don't worry" I said, trying to appear reassuring. "Now go on."

Hattie smiles and turns away, running up the embankment, calling "Here puppy" over and over until her form disappears beyond the rise and her voice gradually fades to a different sound; a voice like the breath of the wind.

A breeze is pushing leaves like miniature sail boats across the sky and I force myself to be inside of a bright orange one, drifting aimlessly as it glides back and forth toward the earth; finally touching on the silver water. The touch sends pin-like thrusts into the brittle skin which separates me, for an instant, from reality. I crave to stretch my fantasy fingers, to pluck the leaf out of the water and tenderly lay it back on its shelf in the sky. Why did it fall? I watch it lying limp and powerless against the rippling water, spinning slowly at first and gradually, increasing intensity, turning violently into a blackness of my past. Faces of a neglected family and forgotten lovers smile invitingly but as I reach they fade into obscurity and recreate in the form of bold minted historical smiles surrounded by numbers that scream their denomination. Startled and afraid, I fall back but they laugh as they drift in widening circles, farther and farther away.

My eyes are closed tight. Under my hand I feel the warm flow of human skin and without opening my eyes I can see the little girl sitting next to me with her hand beneath mine. When I finally look at her, wondering how long she was sitting there, her position was exactly as if she had never gone.

"I like 'em" Hattie said, running her finger along the edge of her tin can.

"Hmm?" I reply.

"Worms" she said.

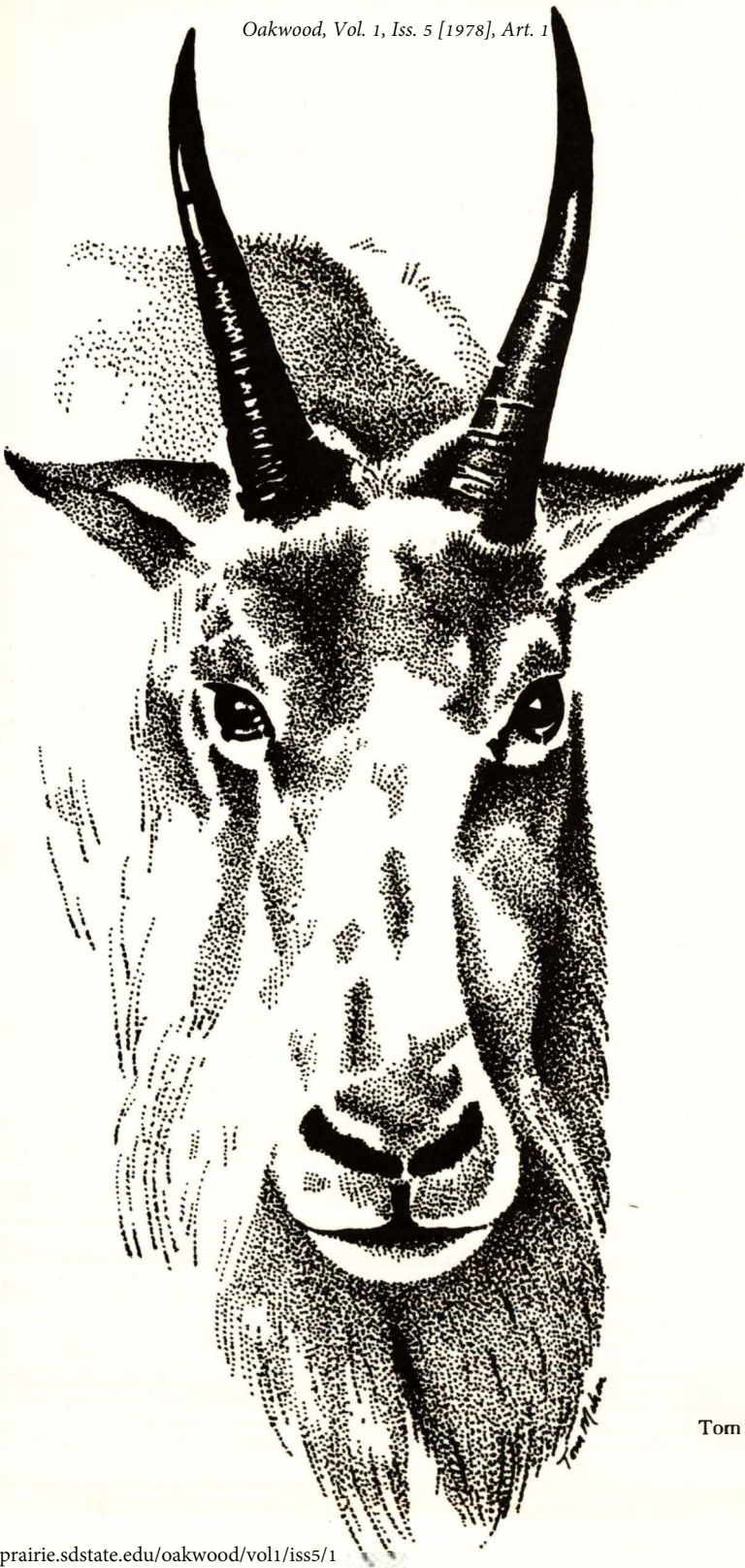
"You like worms?" I ask, watching her finger trace and endless circle.
"Yea" she said thoughtfully. "They eat dirt."

Speeding toward town on route fifteen, late for an appointment, my mind falls so easily back into an apprehensive state. Cisco is curled on the floor sleeping. I drive as if I were a madman afraid to let time pass while deep inside sensations are jumbled; feeling like I've lost so much at the expense of trying to gain so little—thinking about fortunate worms who eat dirt and are satisfied.

Leon Tetzlaff

Over-looking Mummy Pass on way to Fall Mountain

Sitting
on a mountain side
in the coolness
of the wind
a cloud moves
and the warmth
of the sun
reminds me
of you.



Tom Mohon.

Sheryl L. Baker

killing the rooster

Gramps held the rooster
with his left hand
and swung the
ax with his right

the silver edge
sliced clean
and whumped
into the elm stump
where it stuck
handle up

the red-combed
head lay staring
off of the stump
looking sideways across the garden

at the bronze body
flapping wings
lunatic hopping
spurting blood
and feathers
out among the rows of onions



Dave Klemm.

Kathleen Laird

Beauty is a thought, an image
that would be destroyed by
the very act of describing it.



Diane Nelson Mattern.

Emma Dimit

COMMON AIRS

Lacy lawn furniture sits under a tree
in the yard
of an untidy, square bungalow—
Two chairs and an overturned settee
Painted gold.

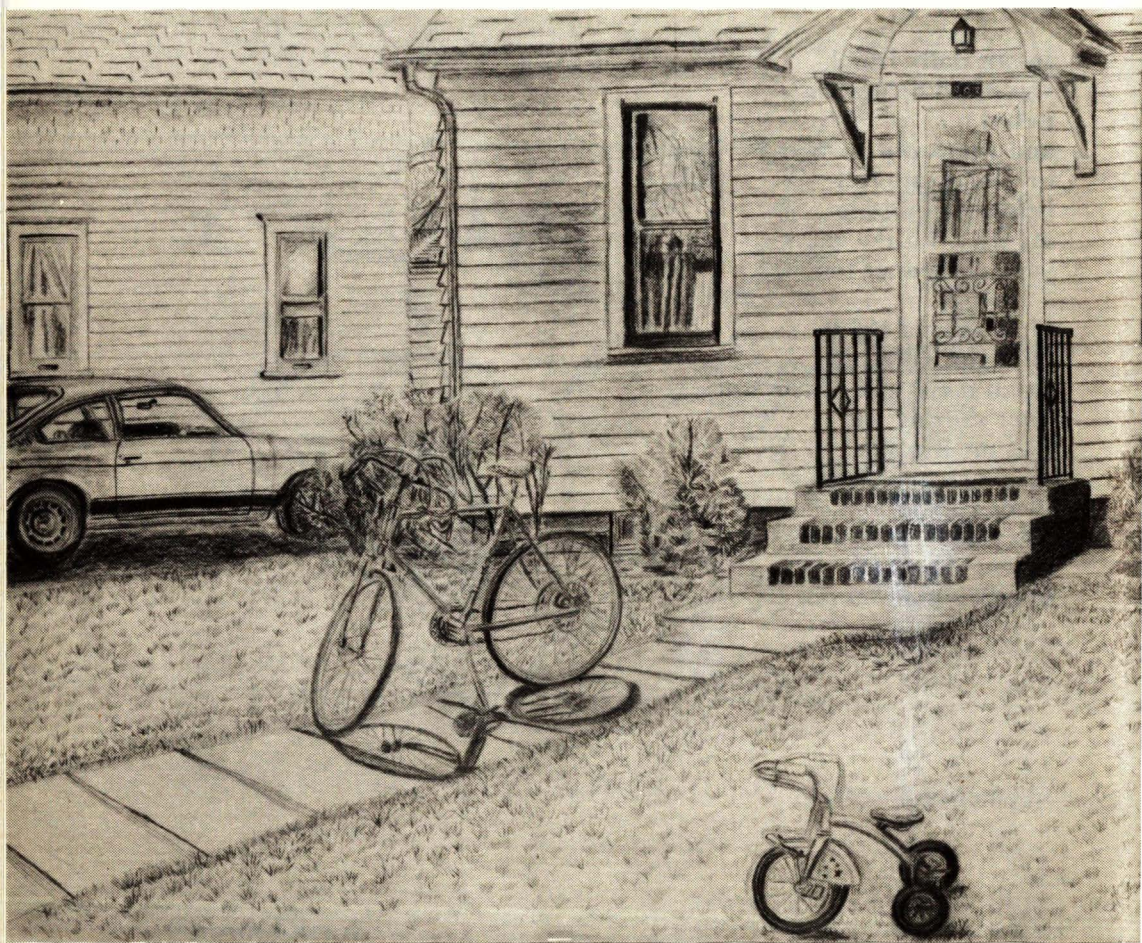
David Lias

OLIVE

In our daily ritual
you stand before me
naked
and wait until
my hands are full
before you nuzzle
my neck with
your sandpaper tongue.

Muscles held tight
all night melt as I
touch them with warm water.
Your shifting less
tells me it's time.

Black rubber and suction
rob your night's work
as you chew cud
to milk's mad music.



Greg Painter.

Jill Erickson

Home and safe
in the light of dawn,
Calm and tranquil
among the familiar.

Pete Balzani

Einstein said he could never
Understand—it all
Planets spinning through space
The smile upon your face
Welcome to the human race
My friend!

Douglas Cockrell

THIS POEM I BRING

is a dried glove
sent up
and fluttering back
to the pavement
on U. S. 281
Like loose cardboard,
the days wafer
it thinner.

Yet, never set
the glove in like
a puddled handprint
on a concrete
sidewalk.

For a wind is always
reaching into it . . .
nudging the glove across
gently to you.
-To David, Chuck and Sheryl