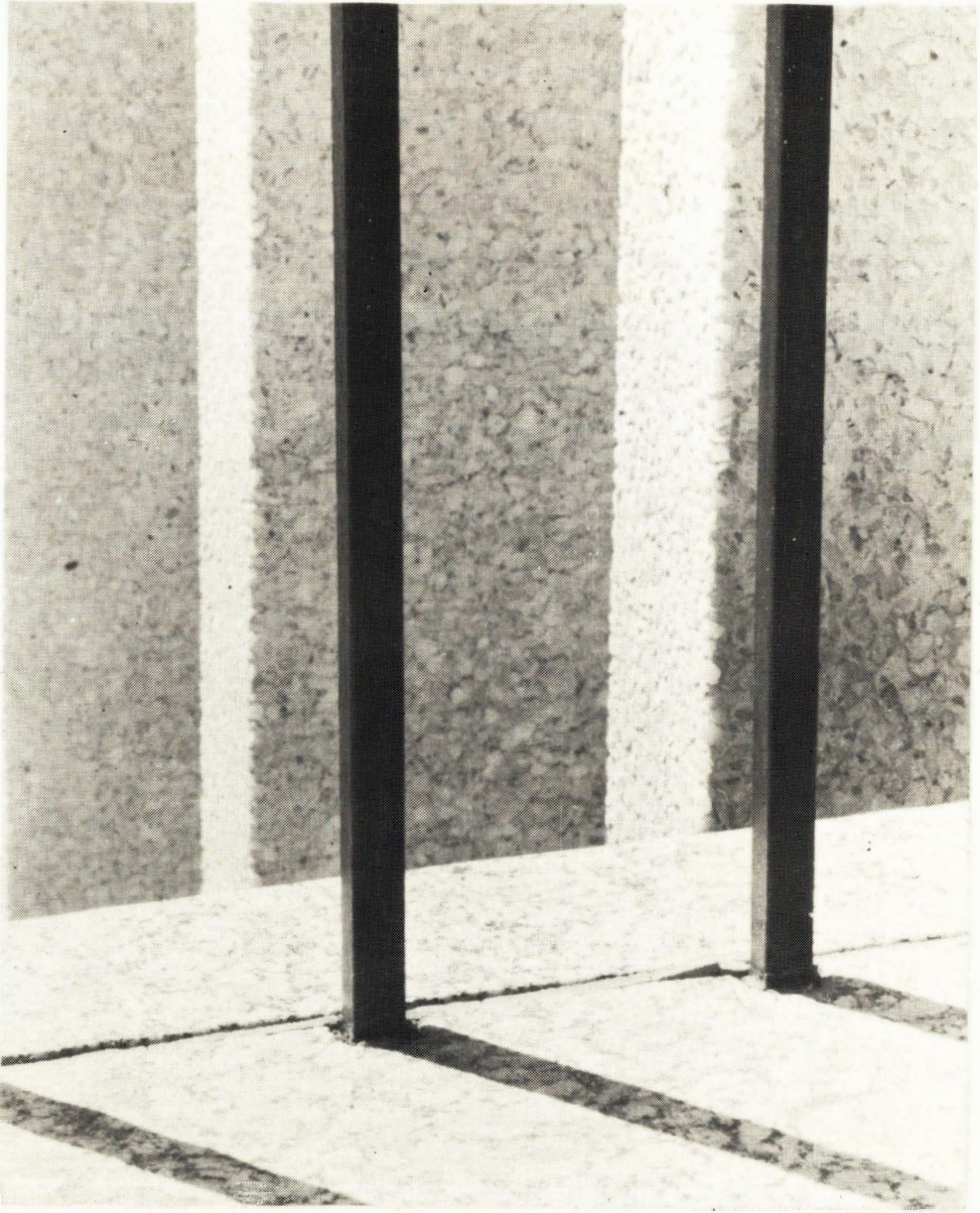


et al.: Oakwood



OAKWOOD



OAKWOOD

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We dedicate this 1980 issue of
Oakwood to a new and promising
decade of creators.

Lynne Waters
Editor

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et al.: Oakwood

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Photo by Barbara Mader

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Drawing by Darlene Snoozy

That's Your Grandfather's Watch

Grandfather carried this watch
gold polished smooth by nervous fingers
and countless passages in and out
of some small pocket.

Grandfather would tell the mileage of trains
by this watch.

It was given for his years
of shovelling coal
face burning with fire heat.

He always wore the watch
smart gold chain, elk's tooth fob
draped over his coveralls.

The watch was put in a drawer
after his death-
too much a part of him to die.

Now it rests under a glass bell jar
sitting on a corner shelf.

Grandmother picks it up
rubs her thumb across the
worn back
and watches the trains come in
at five to five.

-Robin Ruark

HALLOWEEN

He had no words,
no sack for candy.
He just stood there
under our porch light--

bigger than any child,
in a pull-over mask of
an old man's face
but regular clothes.

Then he was dancing
all over the porch,

stepping close to us and away,
tracing a made-up rhythm
with his hands,
swivelling on a light foot,
nodding,
his old-man look not changing
but we heard him
breathing hard
inside his rubber face. . .

until he suddenly stopped.
And backed down the steps
onto the half-dark sidewalk
and disappeared.

-David Allan Evans

In winter
The tree branches
Outside my window
Are gypsy lace.

-Beryl Younger

Sunday Afternoon at the Basic Skills Center for the Developmentally Disabled

Carol searched **Seventeen Magazine**
For boyfriends,
One for her
And one for me.
Joan says she's bored
At this house.
She drinks coffee
At home.
Paul plays the phonograph
And listens to **Elvis and**
Beautiful Isle of Somewhere.
Connie helps Paul
And sings along
In tune
And garbled lyrics.
Deb pages through **Glamour**
And looks for herself
100 pounds slimmer.
Donna mutters her anger
In a staccato monologue,
And sleeps
A phenobarb sleep.
Out on the porch, Linda
Swings in a measured
Arc and spaces out
In her private world.
Glen tinkers with his mower
To get it in shape,
And dreams his dream
Of self-employment.
I ache for quiet solitude
And for the impossible,
For the Sunday paper,
And the comics.

-Meta Brandl

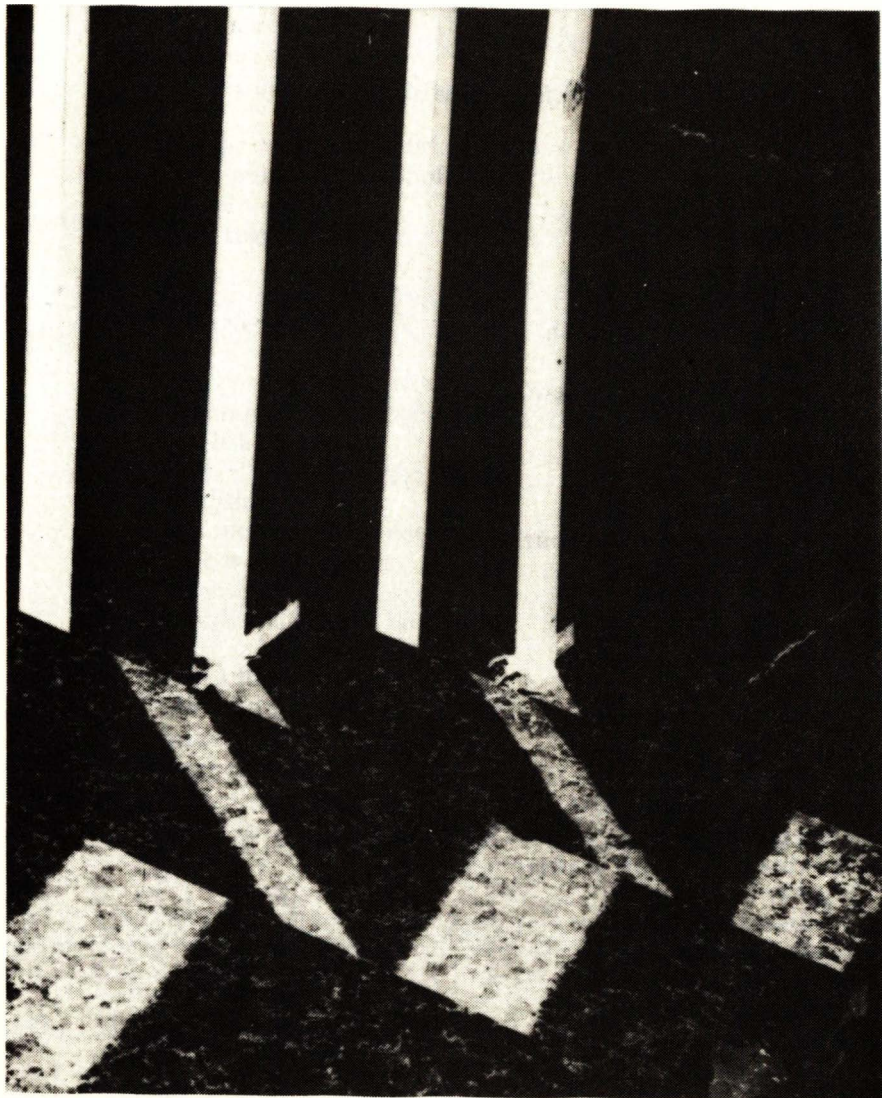


Photo by Verle Vander Ploeg

Sounds from Below

Coming in and yet
not in,
noise only.
I hear the breath
of a beat
and clap
Of a cymbal far.
I know
only bits
And even bashes as
It lilts
and leaps
For the ceiling that
cages
It.

-Lynne Waters

Flash!
of color.
The sun
was caught
in a prism.
Magnified color
spilled through the
frozen tear
of
an
icicle.

-Carrie Chesnik

SOMETHING

There is something in western S.D.
That goes on and on,
But it is not the roads which
Go into the sky nor the telephone
And electric poles and wires left in straight lines,
And it is not what you think it is either.

-Leon Tetzlaff



Painting by Dorothy Morgan

FULL SERVICE

-James Marten

"Can I check your oil?" asked Lloyd Flowers as he wiped the green '78 Impala's windshield clean. The squinting driver shook his head and held out a credit card.

"Sorry, we can only take company cards," Lloyd said, tossing the chamois into the bucket between the pumps. The man exhaled shortly, impatiently, withdrew the glinting plastic card and handed Lloyd a twenty dollar bill. Lloyd dug for and took from his pocket a roll of bills and a handfull of coins.

He counted out the change. "Thank you, now. Stop back."

The man in the Impala said "Yeah," as he rolled up the window and started the car. Lloyd could hear the safety belt warning buzzing until the car reached the driveway, where it slowed for the stop sign and turned toward the Interstate.

Lloyd put the money in his pocket and walked to the office. He rang up the sale on the cash register that sat on the dusty, half-filled candy counter. As he drank from a fizzless Coke, the boy he'd hired for the summer came back from his supper break.

"Hi," the boy murmured as he ambled into the office. He sat in the squeaky leather-backed chair and ungathered his long legs onto the stack of newspapers, parts catalogs, and price books scattered on the desk. "Business pick up?"

"Had four or five for gas," Lloyd answered. He reached above the one cent gum machine near the door and tore May from under the red-lipped, yellow-bikini'd blonde on the Lee's Auto Parts calendar. "By the middle of June it'll get better. That's when the tourists start comin' out. And they get meaner as the summer goes on."

The boy was looking at a week-old sports page spread across his knees. He looked up, puzzled, and said, "Who does?"

"The tourists." Lloyd drained the Coke. "They're always in such a big damn hurry. They barely let you get the nozzle out of their tank before they take off. They act like there's a line behind 'em, just pushing to get 'em back on the road."

"So?"

"I don't like it."

"What difference does it make?"

Lloyd stopped to put the empty bottle among the Nesbit orange and Hire's root beer bottles in the wooden case beside the purring pop machine.

"They make me feel unimportant. Like I'm worth about as much as one of those gas pumps out there."

"Yeah, well." The boy slapped a fly with the paper. "They probably

aren't trying to."

"They do." Lloyd sighed, and wiped his face with his shirt sleeve. "Sticky as hell, ain't it."

"Hasn't cooled down at all. Have you heard any more weather warnings?"

"Haven't heard." Lloyd, hands in his pockets, walked to the door and surveyed the sky. "We could use rain, long as it don't hail."

Lloyd turned back into the muggy closeness of the office and looked around at the various tools, rags, gloves, cans, mufflers, floor mats, rear view mirrors and filters stacked on the floor or on shelves and spilling through the door into the work area. "I'm going to supper. Why don't you clean this place up--get those quarts of oil put away that come in this morning, fill the pop machine, straighten the place up. Oh, yeah--Gary Lawson brought in a tractor tire he needs in the morning."

"Front or rear?"

"Front. Make sure you get it smoothed down good and don't be shy with the glue."

"Right."

"See you later." Lloyd, his hands still in his pockets, wandered out the door and around the side of the building to his pickup.

Lloyd sent the boy home at 9:00, when the sun, crowded by black low-hanging clouds, lay red against the horizon. Half the northern skies were filled with the clouds; since they'd appeared in mid-afternoon they'd crept through the sky slowly and silently like so many glaciers. The distant awoosh of cars and the deeper roar of trucks rolled up from the Interstate a mile away. The few trees scattered near the station hung suspended in the air; the month-and-a-half-old leaves seemed each in the middle of its own breeze-blown wave.

Lloyd was hunched over the desk, fanning himself with an orange fly swatter and paying bills with a pen labelled "Lloyd's Full-Service Texaco, Poldike, South Dakota." Sweat stained the sides and back of his green uniform shirt, and trickled and glistened below his short, curly, gray-flecked hair. Bifocals were tipped on the end of his generous nose, the bows resting three inches above his ears. Perched on a shelf just above his head was a Zenith box radio, squawking and rattling country western music and weather bulletins through buzzing static.

A sudden, close roll of thunder startled Lloyd; he got up and went outside, idly clicking the pen in and out. The sun was covered by clouds; the air was frozen. A few mosquitoes and gnats circled under the lights over the pumps. Lloyd noticed wisps of light clouds moving like scouts into the clear sky to the south and east, followed by the ponderous thunderheads. Occasional sheets of lightning stretched across the north, with smaller flickers jumping from earth to sky as between filaments in a light bulb.

Lloyd turned back to the station. He rolled the big shop door loudly into place, turned off the radio and all the lights but one in the rear of the shop, took the money bag he would drop in the night deposit box at the bank, and locked the front door. He awkwardly scratched the middle of his back against the door frame, then trudged around the station to his

pickup. He opened the door and was suddenly outlined against the building by a pair of headlights turning into the driveway. The car behind them glided past the pumps, thumping the rubber hose that stretched across its path and ringing the bell inside. The engine stopped, leaving a soft hiss and the spatter of liquid on cement.

The driver's door of the station wagon opened and a man stepped out and demanded over the car roof, "Are you open?"

Lloyd, still standing by his pickup, said, "Just closed up."

"Well, I'm having car trouble," the voice came back.

"Sounds a little hot."

"Just got the damn thing fixed about fifty miles back."

"Uh-huh. You from around here?"

"No. St. Paul."

"Oh," Lloyd said. "How far did you drive with it?"

"A mile. Maybe two, I don't know."

Lloyd shut the pickup's door and walked around to the front of the station. He unlocked the door, reached for the light switch, and said through a deep breath, "Raise the hood and I'll be out soon as I call home."

Lloyd joined the man in front of the steaming radiator a few minutes later. The man was dressed in a wrinkled sports shirt, shorts, sandals, and socks gathered at his ankles. He leaned on clenched fists over the engine, peering into the belts and hoses and metal as though they comprised some mechanical crystal ball. Lloyd bunched a rag over the radiator cap and loosened it. Steaming green water boiled out from under the cap and over the radiator, streaming over the fan and belts and puddling on the cement below.

"You said you got it fixed somewhere?" Lloyd asked. A sharp clap of thunder punctuated his question.

"Yeah," the man said, glancing over Lloyd's shoulder to the thunder, "back in Preston, or Purdo . . ."

"Presho?"

"Whatever. Gave me a new fan belt." Lloyd nodded and leaned against the top of the raised hood.

"Goddammit," the man spat, still hunched sweating over the car.

"Dar," the wife said. She rested against the driver's side of the car, sunglasses hanging by a cord around her neck, fanning her sunburnt, plump face with a green U.S. atlas. Hugging one leg was a little girl, blonde hair still more or less in pony tails, right side of her face red from sleeping against the vinyl car seat. "Hello," the wife smiled apologetically to Lloyd.

"Hi." Lloyd looked back at the engine and tugged at the various belts and checked for oil leakage. "It's the fan belt," he said.

"How the hell could that be?" the man said, tugging at the belt himself.

"It just is."

"Did you check everything else?"

"Yessir, I did. What did you want me to check?"

"That jerk back in Purdo said it was the belt, too."

"If you don't want me to fix it, I'll go home. I think it's the fan belt."

The man reached inside the engine but jerked back suddenly. "God-dammit, that's hot."

"Let me check it out," Lloyd said, walking toward the shop for tools.

When Lloyd came back carrying a crowbar, a couple wrenches, and a cardboard encased fan belt, Dar rose wearily from his seat on the ram-like bumper.

"Are you sure now?" he asked.

Lloyd looked at him and then at the engine. "Yeah." He chose a wrench and got to work.

After a few minutes the woman asked, "Is there a rest room?"

"Yes," Lloyd said, turning from the bolt he was loosening and reaching into a pocket. "Around back, to the left." He found and handed her the key dangling from a cardboard square marked "LADIES." She smiled and walked heavily toward the building, the little girl's head and arms draped over her shoulders.

The nagging thunder from the north was the dull, heavy, nearly constant rumbling of an oil barrel rolling across an empty room. The spasmodic lightning didn't correspond to it; they seemed to be separate functions.

"What the hell's with the weather?" Dar asked, lighting a cigarette and half-leaning, half-sitting on a front fender. Lloyd glanced northward.

"Looks a little wicked, don't it. Buncha warnings out. Looks like we'll get something."

"Jesus," Dar said, exhaling a screen of smoke. "That's all we need."

The humid, quiet air pressed down on the men and the car and the cement, holding them in place, curbing the flow and swirl of the cigarette smoke. The traffic on the Interstate had lightened; the redundant bass in the north was the only sound besides the clink of wrench against bolt and breaths of exertion.

Just before Lloyd tightened the last bolt, the lights in the station and above the pumps blinked, blinked again, and faded. The black framed the streaks and tongues and walls of lightning clashing in the north and west and nearly above them. Almost immediately a young cry erupted from somewhere in the dark. Lloyd saw the cigarette glow rise and make its way toward the station.

"Kris," Dar called, the orange dot extended like a tiny beacon, "It's OK. Mom's there." The cry kept hesitantly on. Before Dar reached the crying, the shadows returned, and then the light. Lloyd finished, stretched, and walked toward the station. He glanced at his watch; he might still be home by 10:00.

The wet heat was worse in the office. The walls pressed in; the squeezed-together molecules of water saturating the air seemed almost visible.

Dar stood against the pop machine, spinning a quarter on top of the candy counter, squinting through cigarette smoke. His wife slumped nearly asleep in the chair, one hand on the arm of the little girl, who leaned against her mother's leg, holding a sweating bottle of orange pop by the neck and eyeing Lloyd suspiciously.

Lloyd stopped just inside the door, put the tools and the slightly used

fan belt on the counter and switched on the square fan that sat on the window sill near the door. It hummed, slowly increasing speed, pushing the heavy hot air at Lloyd's face.

"Is it fixed this time?" Dar asked, twisting the coin in his fingers.

"Far as I can tell." Lloyd picked up a pen and started writing out a sales slip. "We'll let it cool a little more, then give it some water and try her out. The fella back in Presho put on a belt a size too big. He tightened it as far as it would go, and when the belt stretched, it quit working. You gotta allow for it to stretch in the first hundred miles, then tighten it again. I don't think anything happened to the . . . dammit." The electricity went off, cutting the lights. The fan's purr slowly quieted, and Lloyd heard the pop bottle hit the floor, bounce, and roll into a desk leg. The little girl sniffled and whined, but didn't cry. Lloyd found a flashlight under the counter and flipped it on.

Suddenly the humidity exploded into drops and rain beat on the roof and slapped the cement outside. Lightning washed over the station and pumps and light poles and clung to the cement and lit sheets of rain dancing in the streaming puddles that drained to the driveway. Thunder pushed through the ponderous air and drove the rain before it. The sound and light obliterated the station and the four people standing and sitting in it; energy eclipsed everything.

And then it stopped. It was quiet, except for the now-flat rolling thunder and the drizzle of water draining from the roof and the whimpering of the little girl. The lights came briefly, startlingly back on, revealing wide eyes and frozen figures--but went dead again before the fan reached its top speed.

"What the hell?" The glow from Dar's cigarette dropped to the floor and disappeared under his foot.

Lloyd heard it first. He'd read of the sound many times in newspapers; he remembered his father's stories of the sound; he may have heard it himself on a hot, humid night six years before. They said it was like a train--louder, and faster, granted--but like a train speeding toward a crossing in the night. He could almost hear the clank of the couplings, the rattle of the track, the--

"Get into the shop. In the far corner," Lloyd shouted at the lightning shadows that were the family from Minnesota. He thrust the flashlight at Dar. "Quick!" he hissed. They followed the flashlight's beam into the shop, both parents comforting the crying child.

Lloyd stepped outside and felt a hot breeze in his face. The lightning revealed or concealed shapes--the building and trees and hills and clouds seemed all parts of the same shadow. But the sound was there, somewhere to the west, or north--somewhere. Through that sound Lloyd heard the dwarfed wail of the tornado siren in town. Wet dust stung Lloyd's face and the roar bore down on him and surrounded him and he ducked inside the station.

The door was torn from its hinges behind Lloyd's reaching hand. He made his way through the office, where papers were already exploding around the room, through the lightning-lit shop, bumping into a pile of tires and tripping over the hydraulic lift. As he staggered up from the oil-

spilled cement three or four of the windows high in the shop walls were shattered by a branch or the wind and glass cascaded into the room, bouncing and sliding on the floor and the workbench and tools that lined the north wall.

He found Dar and his wife sandwiched around the girl under the workbench, and crouched under it to huddle with them against the whitewashed cement-block wall.

The din was tremendous. Besides the racket of the wind and the echoes of thunder there was always the soprano crash of glass falling. Outside, empty oil barrels crashed against the building or scraped along the sides. What must have been an entire tree slammed against the building and scratched and fought its way up the side and over the roof. A light pole was torn loose and thrown against the big shop door, banging a twelve foot horizontal crease into it. And through all this could be heard the shrill ringing of the telephone until something blew into it and knocked it to the floor.

Lloyd couldn't see the others, but he could feel the sweaty tension and fear. He felt it in himself: his body jerked involuntarily at every crash, his ears rang from the howling, his fingers gripped his knees tighter and tighter.

It was over in two minutes. The roar died, leaving only dull claps of benign thunder and the patter of slow, calm rain.

The little girl was the first to stir; she shuddered and sobbed quietly into her father's shoulder. All of them stood up warily, working the fear-stiffness from their bodies. Dar held his wife and daughter and tried to calm the girl. Lloyd felt his quivering legs and short breath and listened for a twin; he'd heard his father say once that like wolves, tornadoes sometimes travel in packs.

When he thought it was safe, Lloyd led with the flashlight, picking his way through the glass and branches and other litter scattered over the floor. The round beam of the flashlight found the office floor carpeted with papers and pages and calendars from the desk and walls, and glass and wood from the windows. The ceiling leaked a steady drizzle over everything, and the doorway was blocked by the crumpled hood that had been ripped off the station wagon.

Lloyd and Dar stepped around the hood and ran hunched through the cool rain to the car. It had sustained no other damage, though soggy, broken branches were draped over it, and barrels and other debris were lodged against and under it.

"Should've thought to've lowered the hood," Lloyd said, shaking his head.

"Oh geez," Dar groaned, rain streaming down his face and around his mouth. "What's this gonna run me?"

Lloyd exhaled heavily. "I don't know. Let's get it covered up."

Dar followed him around to the back of the station. "What the hell are we supposed to do, then? We were supposed to be in Rapid City tonight and we sure as hell aren't going to get there."

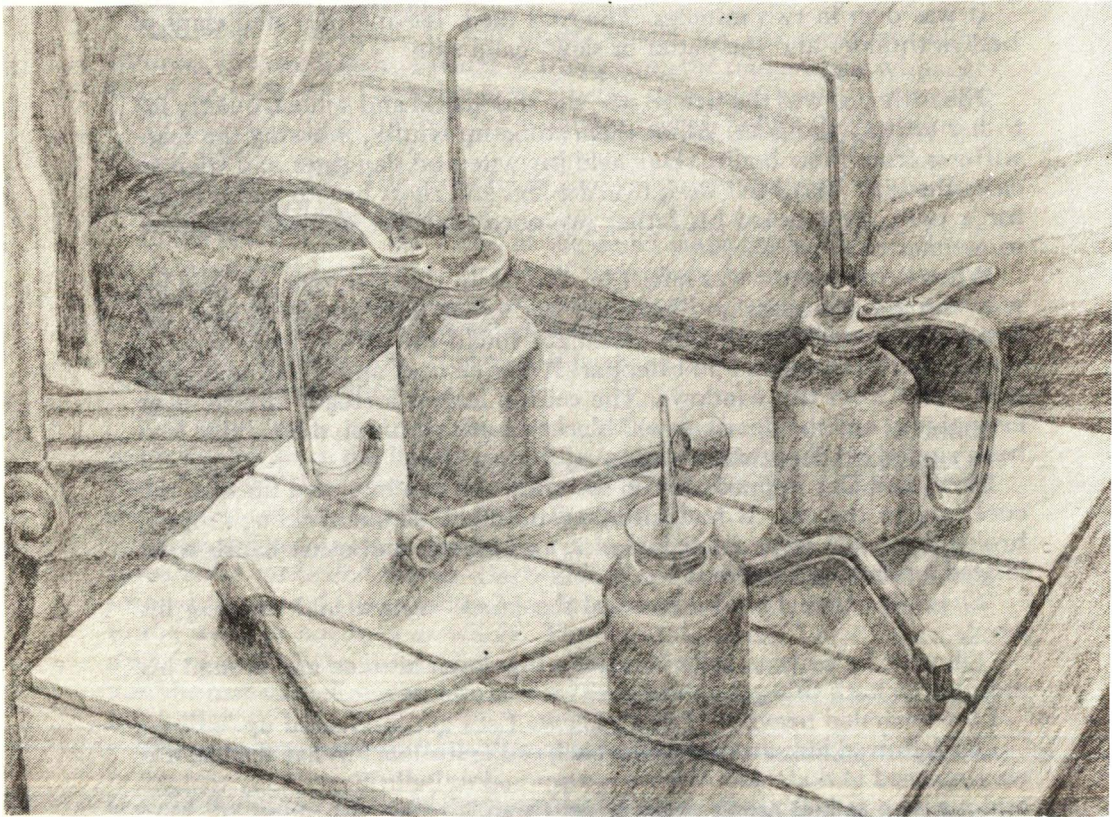
"I don't know," Lloyd said again, rummaging through a muddy pile of

plastic for a large enough piece of tarpaulin.

“Is there a place in town where we can check in?”

Lloyd pulled a substantial fragment from under the heap of mud and branches and plastic, spilling water over his shins and shoes. “Yeah. I’ll call in a minute.”

They got the tarp tied onto the car and hurried dripping to the office, where they saw in the flashlight’s yellow glare Dar’s wife rocking squeakily in the desk chair, cradling in her arms the girl with the grease-stained knees and orange-ringed mouth. Lloyd found the waterlogged county phone book under the desk and picked the phone up off the floor. He cradled the receiver between his cheek and shoulder and started paging through the book, then slammed the phone down when there was no dial tone.



Drawing by Kathy Kitzmiller

“Agnes closes up the office and turns off her hearin’ aid at eight, anyway. It isn’t exactly the Holiday Inn.” Dar’s wife looked at him, resting her chin on Kristin’s forehead and stroking her hair. Dar drummed his fingers on the candy counter, funbling through his drenched clothing for cigarettes.

The lights burst on and the pop machine and the fan kicked in. The little girl jumped, startled, but snuggled back into her mother’s shoulder. Lloyd clicked the flashlight off and sighed, “You know anybody around here? A cousin or something?”

“No.”

Lloyd yawned and sniffed. He knew it was a helluva a night to surprise Ellen with company, and he knew this character from Minnesota was probably going to be a pain in the neck before they got his car cleaned up and on its way. But, hell, he thought, they don’t have a place in town and don’t know anybody, and it’s my fault the damn hood got tore off, anyway.

“You’d better come in with me. There’s room if it didn’t blow away.”

Dar looked at him curiously, and his wife began, “We can’t do . . .”

“Come on,” Lloyd interrupted. “I want to see what happened in town and I’m tired. It’ll be OK--it can be my wife’s good deed for the month.” He walked out the door and switched off the light.

Lloyd’s pickup had suffered only a few dents, so after fastening a make-shift door onto the office, Lloyd, Dar, his wife, and the sleeping girl squeezed into the front seat and rode silently through the still night to Poldike.

WHEN ALL IS STILL

Leon Tetzlaff

At dusk when all is still and stopping,
There are birds which sing on . . . so clear.
After the sun has gone they still see the light
 which stays.

The land and sky meet in vespers.
The grass offers up its wet secret all night.
Children sit or lie down with their eyes wide open.
In the moment before sleep there is sharing
 which makes oceans become still.
A hyacinth may cover miles and miles of air.



Painting by Dorothy Morgan

sisters sweet

they were two little girls resplendent,
perfect in every way,
with parents who dare not chastise them
for practicing excellence at play.

when kitty tracked Cindy's bed with mud,
it was a terrible way to behave.
so they tried him, and tied him, and left him to hang
while they laboured an immaculate grave.

no tears for bad, bad kitty
who has gone to a wonderful place,
(tho he didn't deserve to, they let him)
howling like the demons possessed him
see how he died, with a smile on his face.

their Mommy & Daddy knew nothing
all their brains must have gone to their girls
who deserved everything that they wanted,
like kittens, and ribbons, and pearls.

but, when Daddy discovered his killers
he spanked their perfection away,
so they plotted and planned beneath covers
how they could live very well on their own
with servants to obey their commandments;
yes Queen Cindy, and, yes Princess Joan.
they wait, and they wait, till the whole house is sleeping
and creep through their home as they oft did in play,
from gunrack to the room where their parents rest,
and shotgun the sleepers away.

now neither will think of the other
gone, as deserved to their doom,
but to each are the doctors, as servants
to rule, from the castles of their little rooms.

-Daniel R. Phen

FARM KID ON ROLLER SKATES

for Shelly

David Allan Evans

There goes a red
batch of hair,
there goes the gliding
bib overalls of
a tall skinny kid
in from the farm
gliding untouched
(swaying to a song on
the record player)
right through the slack
spaces and beyond
the fringes of
the crowd on wheels,
now and then
criss-crossing his
skates in double-
time rhythm,
now stepping out in
a swan-smooth
walking glide,
now suddenly
turned around
going backwards
looking over his
shoulder (as if
checking his back
in a mirror)
for spaces to
needle through and,
reversing one skate,
going forward again. + +

coasting into a curve,
leaning on it,
his skates in single
file grooving its
edge. . .

he levels out on
the straightaway,
swaying. . . Look!
he can make the crowd
go faster by dragging

a toe behind him,
then slow it down by
speeding up, even
stop it--
like a picket fence
with a lath
glittering across it--

later (between songs)
he gets himself lost
inside the slow-
flowing roar;
he pretends to
lurch, pockets his
hands, hunches up
his shoulders;
looks down, studies
the moving dots of
light on the floor
(reflected by the
ceiling lights). . .

but when a new song
starts up, he's gliding
and needling through
the slack spaces and
beyond the fringes,
stepping out in
swan-smooth power,
grooving the curves,
swaying. . .
as the crowd on wheels
keeps lurching and
looking down at
its skates,
as the rink's
domed ceiling--the sky
with the moving
lights on it--
keeps wheeling
wheeling
on his untouched
shoulders.



Photo by Barbara Mader

you said honey
don't ever forget
the way i hold your wrists
hard in the circle of my hands

you said honey
don't ever forget
the way i kiss your breasts
as they nestle in my hands

you said honey
don't ever forget
the way i touch you
till you're flooded by the waves of my hands

but
all i've never forgotten
is the way my heart flowed
thickly into your hands
at the way
you said honey

-Julie Stroup

et al.: Oakwood
DIRTY BUCK LOTUS

Dirty Buck Lotus—10-B
“Young Ideas in Shoes”
“14.00” still pencilled
on the dusty
box

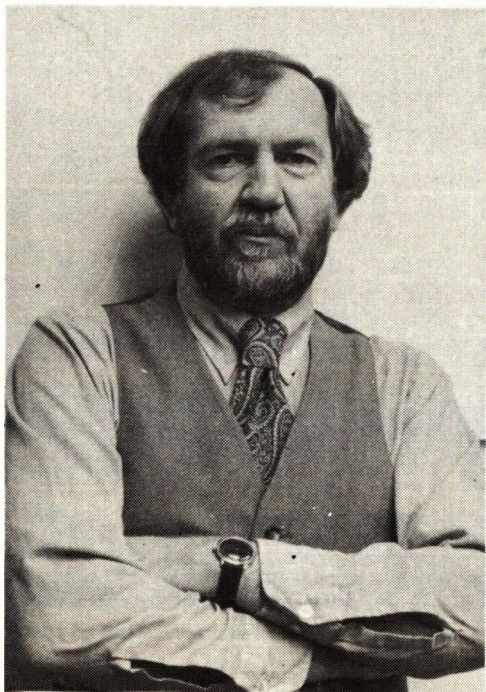
Bought for a son
who walked away
in other, tattered shoes
to be my son
no more

-Emma Dimit

F R E D D I E

My son lies dreaming on the swing couch.
His nostrils lift,
his brows open,
his lips move as if in a speech of love,
his legs run in slight slender quavers inside his trousers,
his fingers shape a hand.
He lies dreaming.
His brows and his eyelids form
 a fallen V,
His open lips form
 a lifted V.
My son lies dreaming.
Seventeen.

-Frederick Fiekema Manfred



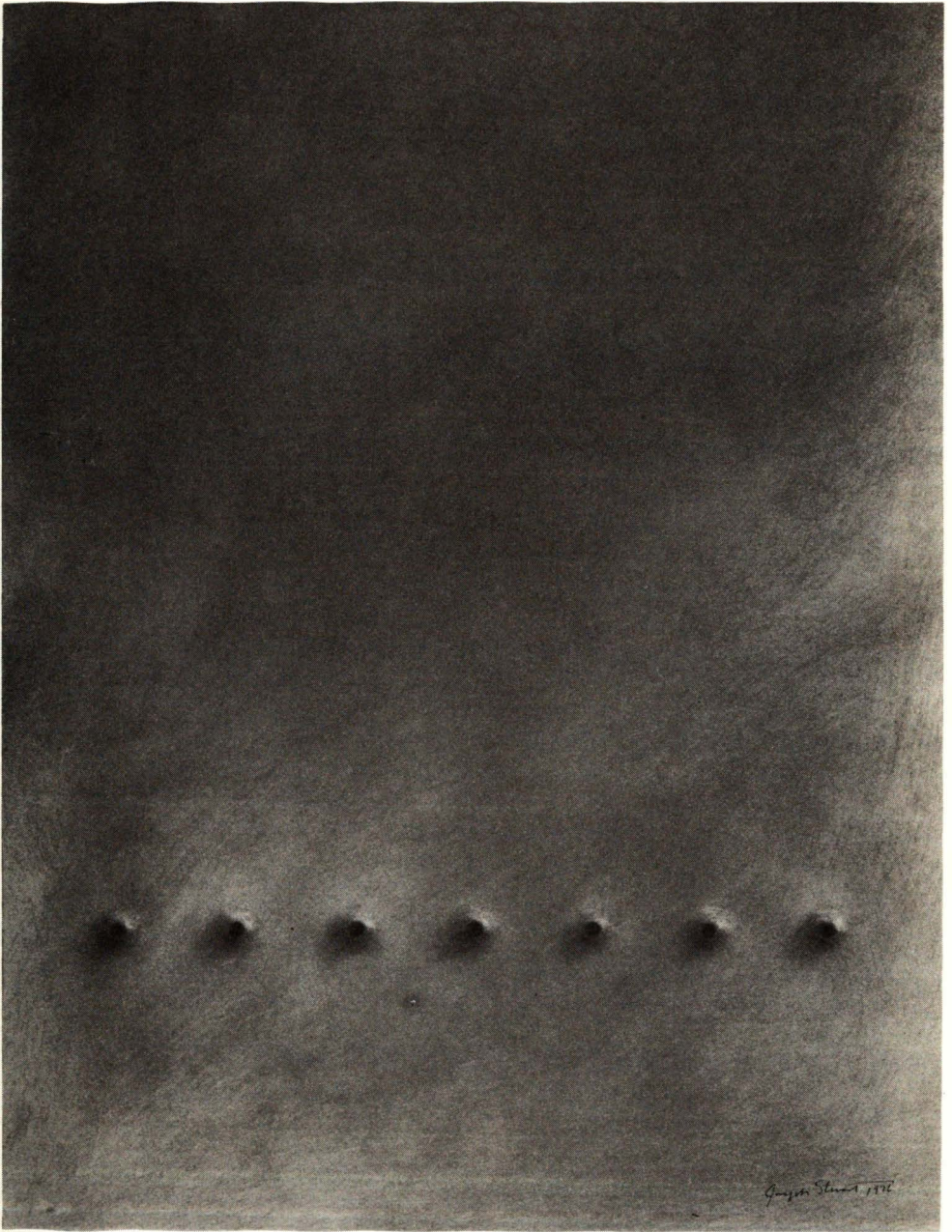
Joseph Stuart

Born in Seminole, Oklahoma, 1932

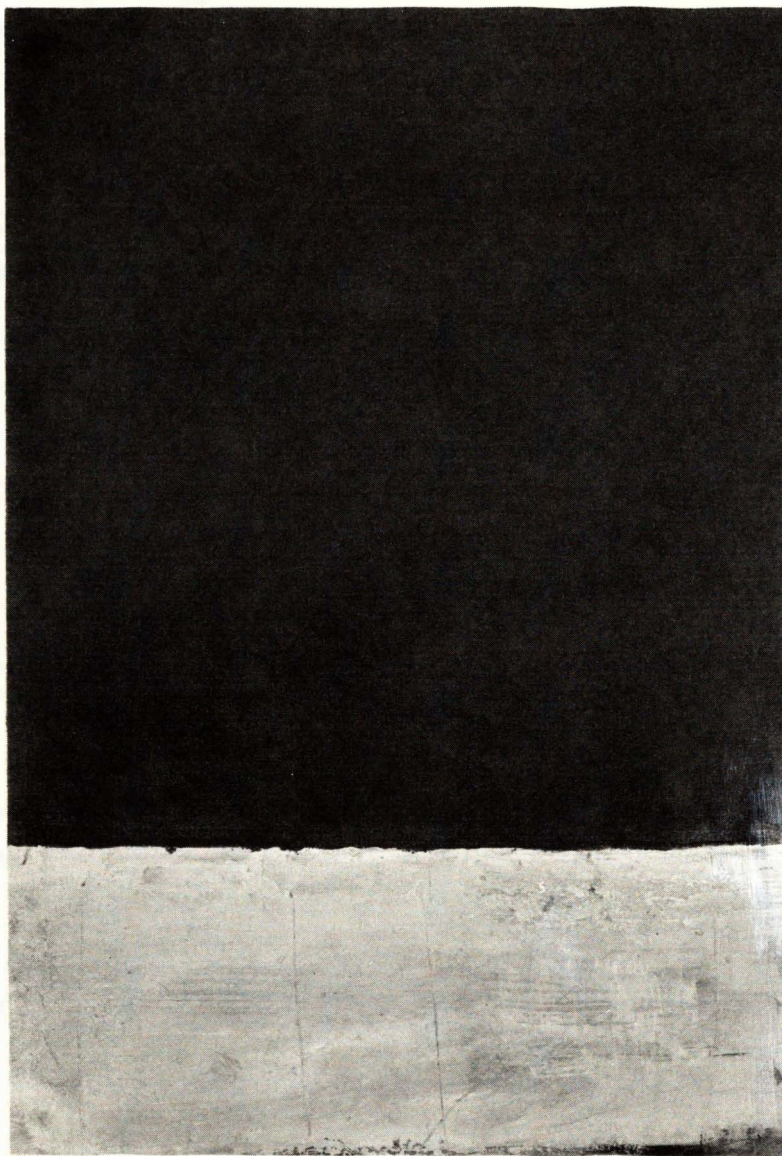
Study and Training: University of New Mexico, B.F.A. in Art, 1959; M.A. in Art, 1962. Emphasis in painting and design.

Current Position: Director, South Dakota Memorial Art Center, and Associate Professor of Art, South Dakota State University, Brookings, since 1971.

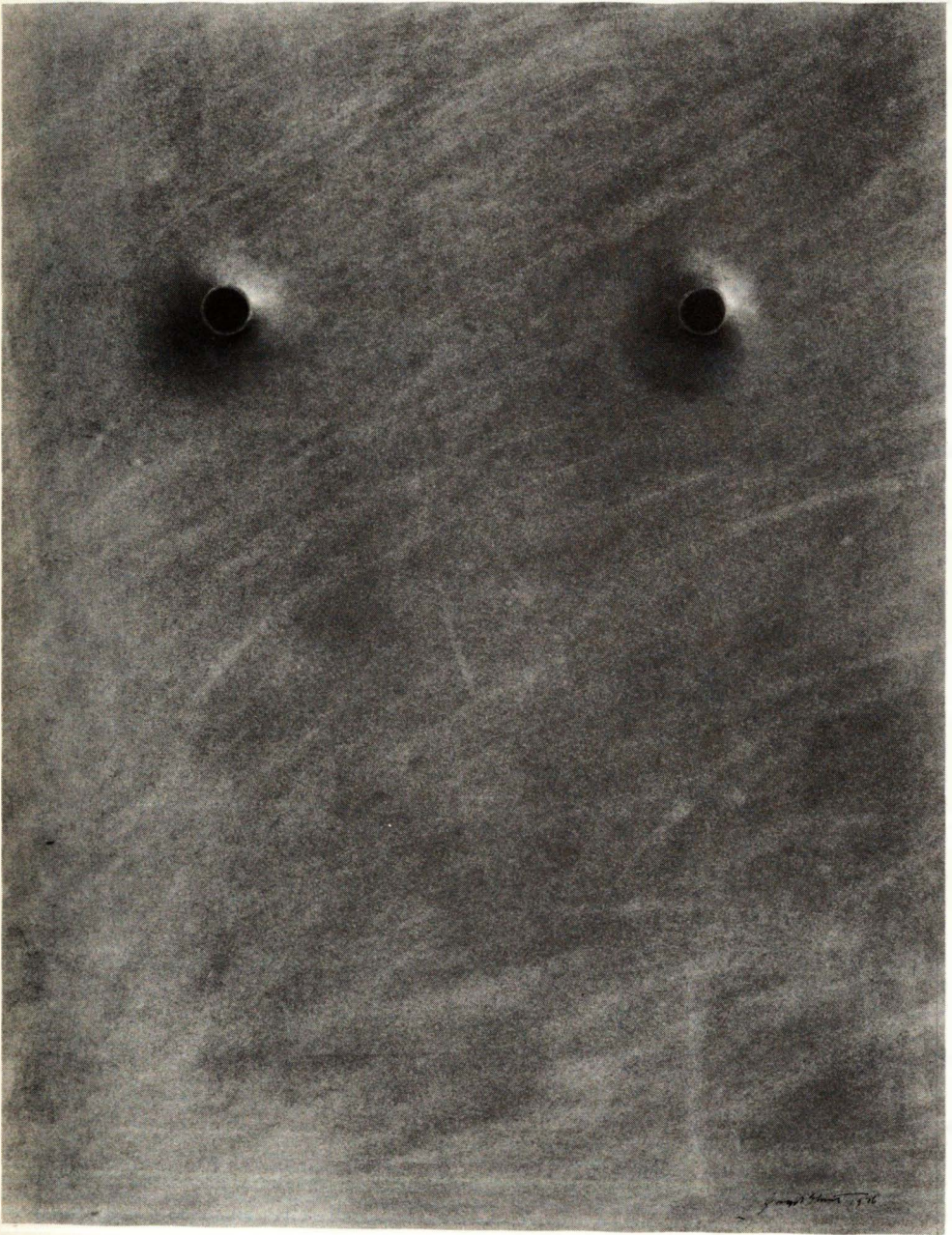
Works in Public Collections: Jewett Gallery, College of Idaho, Caldwell; Mellick Library Collection, Eureka College, Illinois; Salt Lake Art Center, Salt Lake City, Utah; Sioux City Art Center, Iowa; Art Museum, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.



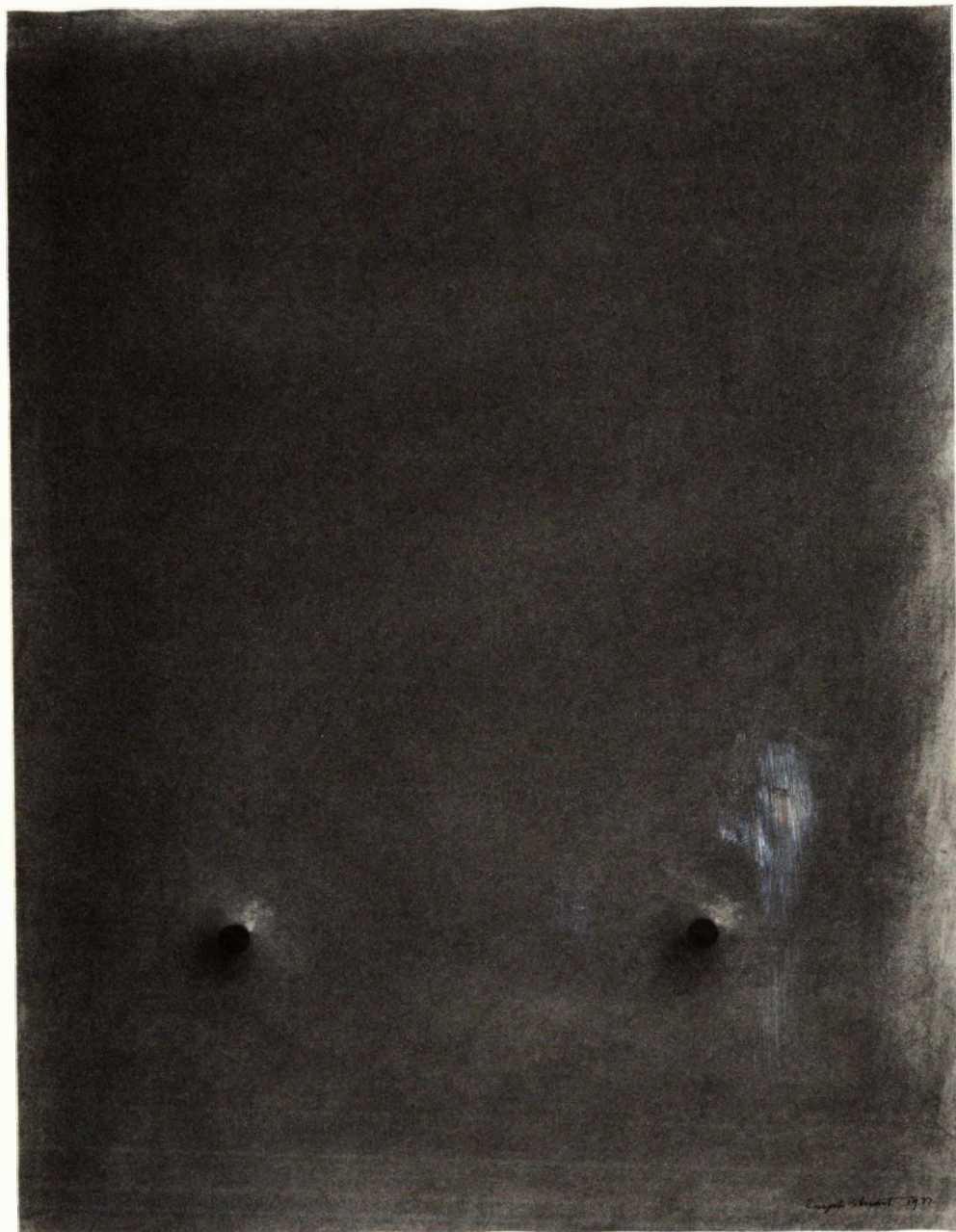
Drawing by Joseph Stuart



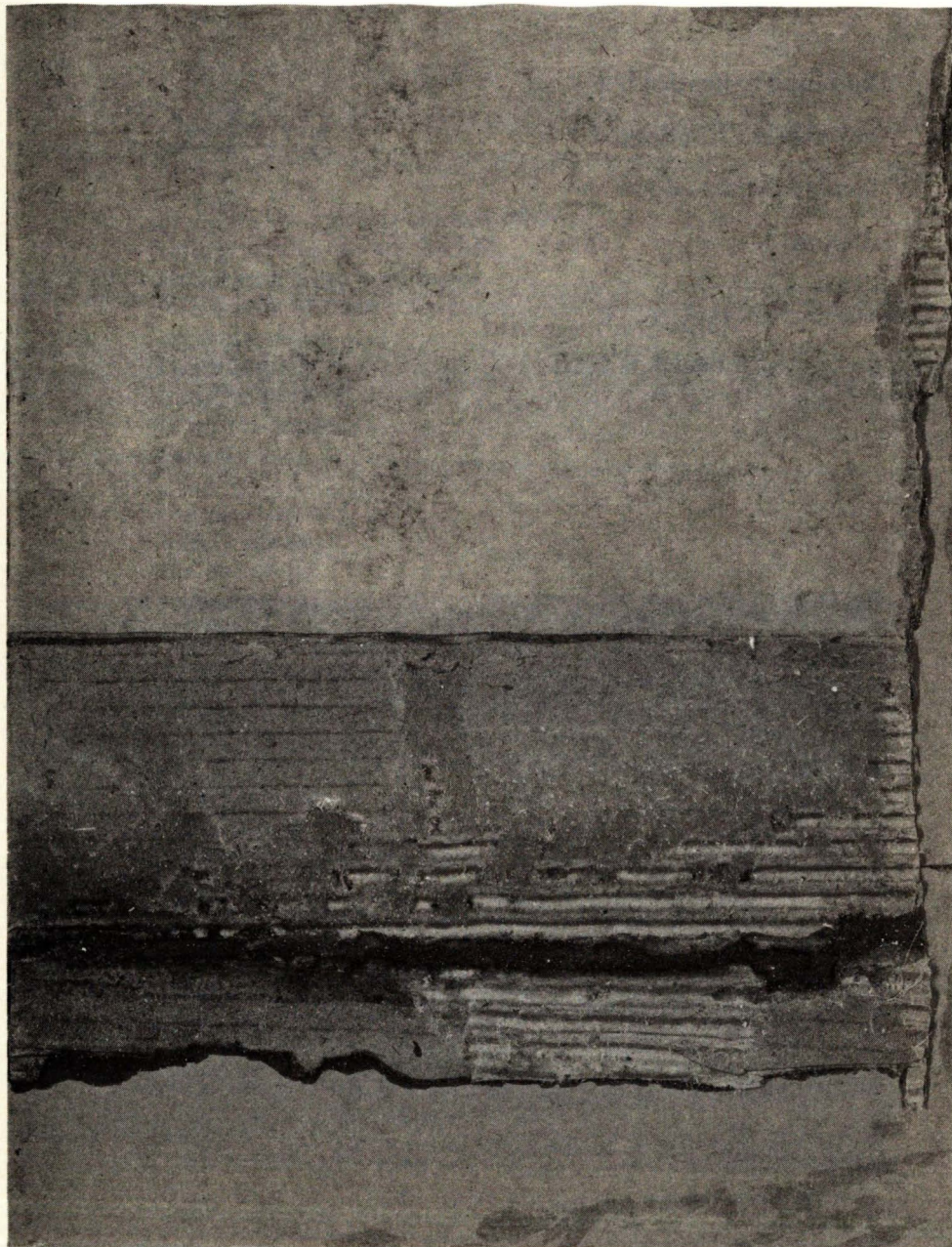
Drawing by Joseph Stuart



Drawing by Joseph Stuart



Drawing by Joseph Stuart



Collage by Joseph Stuart

YOU MUDDY

You muddy-headed but
nevertheless frog-legged
lovable python of our
dreams.

-Deb Seaburg and
David Wigtil



Photo by Linda Hanson

sledding

two children on top of each other
riding, sliding down the hill
faster and faster and faster
into a row of tires
on main street
bouncing off
into the path
of an on-coming
car

the swirling car
barely misses
the car stops
with arms
waving
a warning

the car
drives away
into another day
the sled riders
go back up the hill
to start life down again

-t.r. maves

In Fall

In elbow-aching fall
I search for the Canadian geese
On their southern flight home.
Fall brings the tangy smell of cider
And cinnamon and frosty pumpkins
And the dusty soil beneath my fingernails
Of Autumn's last harvest.

This season that I hold for
Only an instant
With the cold bright mornings
And its warm glow of leaves
Embraces my lungs and heart.
Doors slam against the damp night air
And I hover by warm ovens
Of fresh-baked bread and
Protest the cold but
Welcome the Autumn.

-Jomay Steen

Daddy Long Legs

I don't know he is there, until he whispers,
"Can I make it over Mount Mammary?"
He starts over Mammary. He webs to the waist, repelling twice.
He creeps down Thigh Thruway and tours Patella Park.
He slips sideways on Soleus.
He trudges over Tarsals and turns at Phalanges Range.
He starts his return trip up the Tibia, through Femur Forest and
crosses Crotch County Line and
Whack.

-Wendy Howell

At a quarter to five

At a quarter to five
the geese fly.
They rise in asynchronous waves
to head east
then they turn and cross the sun
where they are purified by its whiteness.
Wings beating hard against winter air
Honking cutting the silence of a wheat field.
Along the horizon the incessant motion of geese
looks like the chromatic aberrations that rise in
the heat of a summer day.

-Robin Ruark

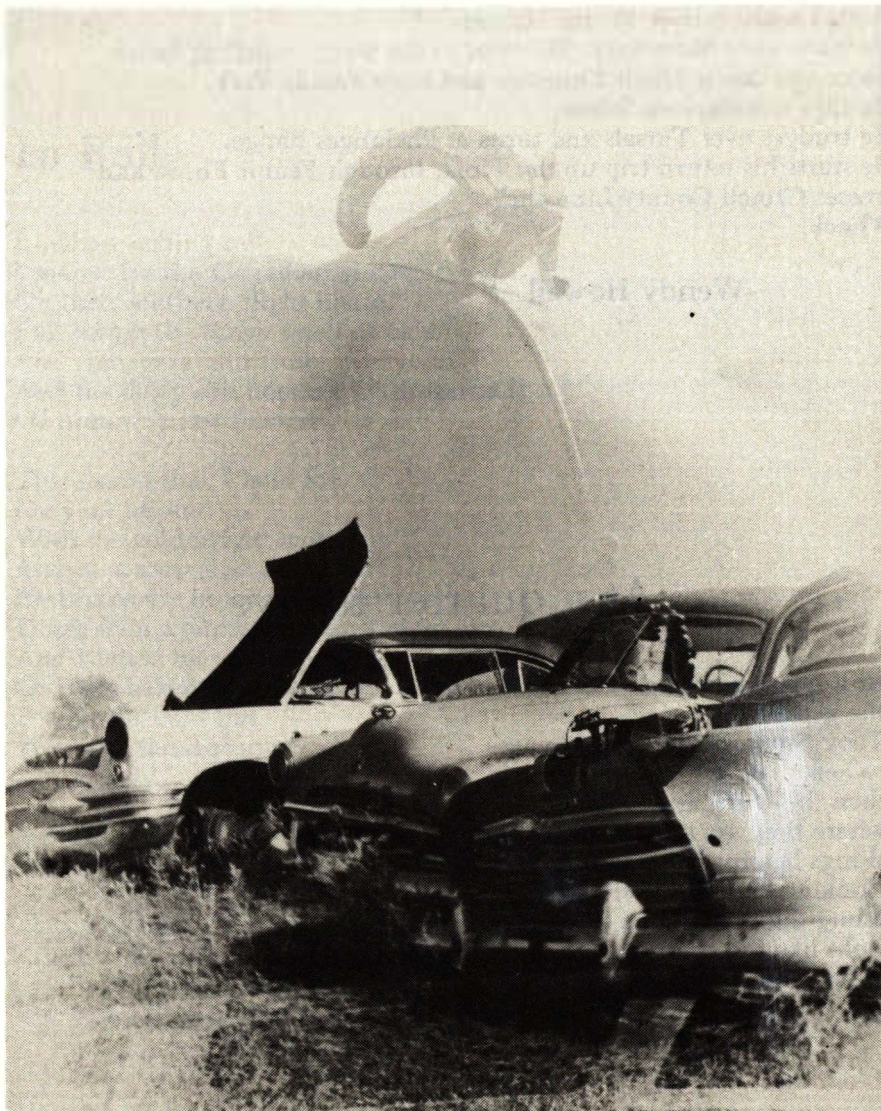


Photo by Linda Hanson

stickmen
drawn with black crayolas
lay flat
against the paper
never planning to get away
for the weekend.

-Linda Faye Hanson

A Spinning Wheel Fairy Story

I Love you singly, as the tinkers do, with the sound of chandeliers
ringing together
on the windy afternoons of that stubborn century,
when animal noses left some of their warmth near the hand hewn houses,
and human beings slept on through the long nights, rolling down the hill of sleep.
In his dreams an angel visited an old man, and a monster wept for his sins
then helped to repair the spinning wheel.
Later the spinning wheel had children, and joined a pilgrimage
to St. James of Compostela, walking on two furry legs no one had noticed.

-Robert Bly

BEFORE I TEAR THE MEDICINE CABINET OFF THE WALL

I slap cold water
on my face and
take another look
in the mirror,
but my image
is still

gone, nothing
but silver
clearness.

I rap the side
of the cabinet:
an Indian War,
complete with
on-rushing cavalry,
gunfire and war whoops
comes on.

I swing the mirror open;
only the clutter of bottles
and pill boxes are here. I
close it; the show goes off;
I grunt.

I swirl my hand
over the glass
and peer in:

I see a town in here
and in this town, a book
on Main Street, open,
my book, its pages flipping
like a calendar in the wind

just before a truck
runs over it, followed by
a marching band and all
the poems float up
and land on the sidewalks.
People start reading them,
begin to mingle, cross-
reference and look up--

I start waving to them
and yell, "That's me!
Me!", but
their faces darken;
their images fade.

I reach in for them,
bump the cabinet
with my fist
--a hand pops out
and twists my lips.

I start shaking
the cabinet like crazy then
and a buffalo strides up,
turns and
farts in my face,
walks off to the hills,
growing smaller
and smaller.

I bang the glass
and see pictures
of father; bang it
and see grandfather;
slam it one more time

and see Ireland, the
graveyard, the
ancestors:

a baby strapped
to an animal
crossing rivers:

my mother's
mother's mother's
mother's welcome
here . . .

**There must be apes
throwing sticks in here;
there must be
mirrors of bronze, iron
or gold after them:**

slam it;

Mesopotamia,

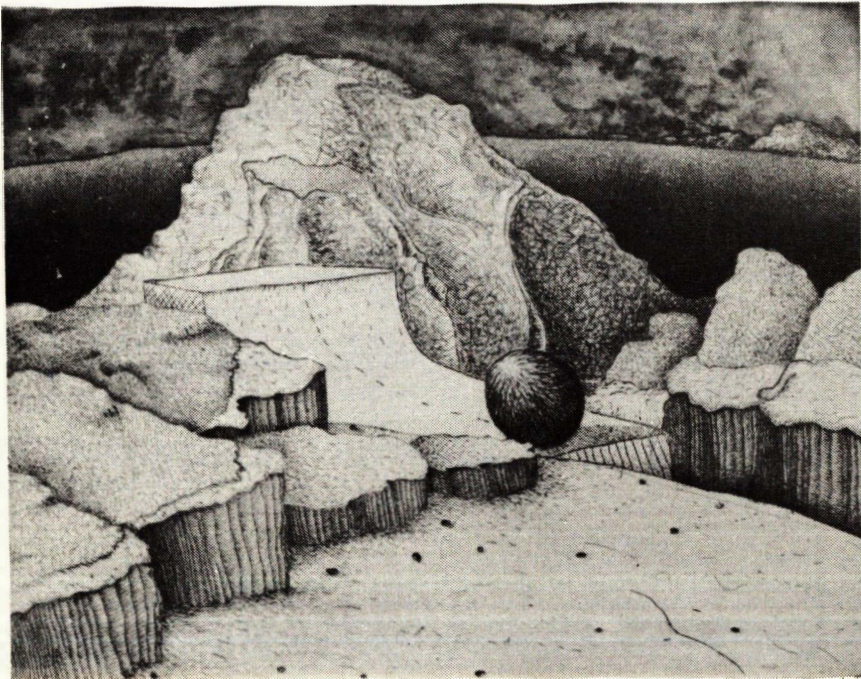
slam it;

Ur, a voyage,

slam it.

**An orbit, a lost star
here.**

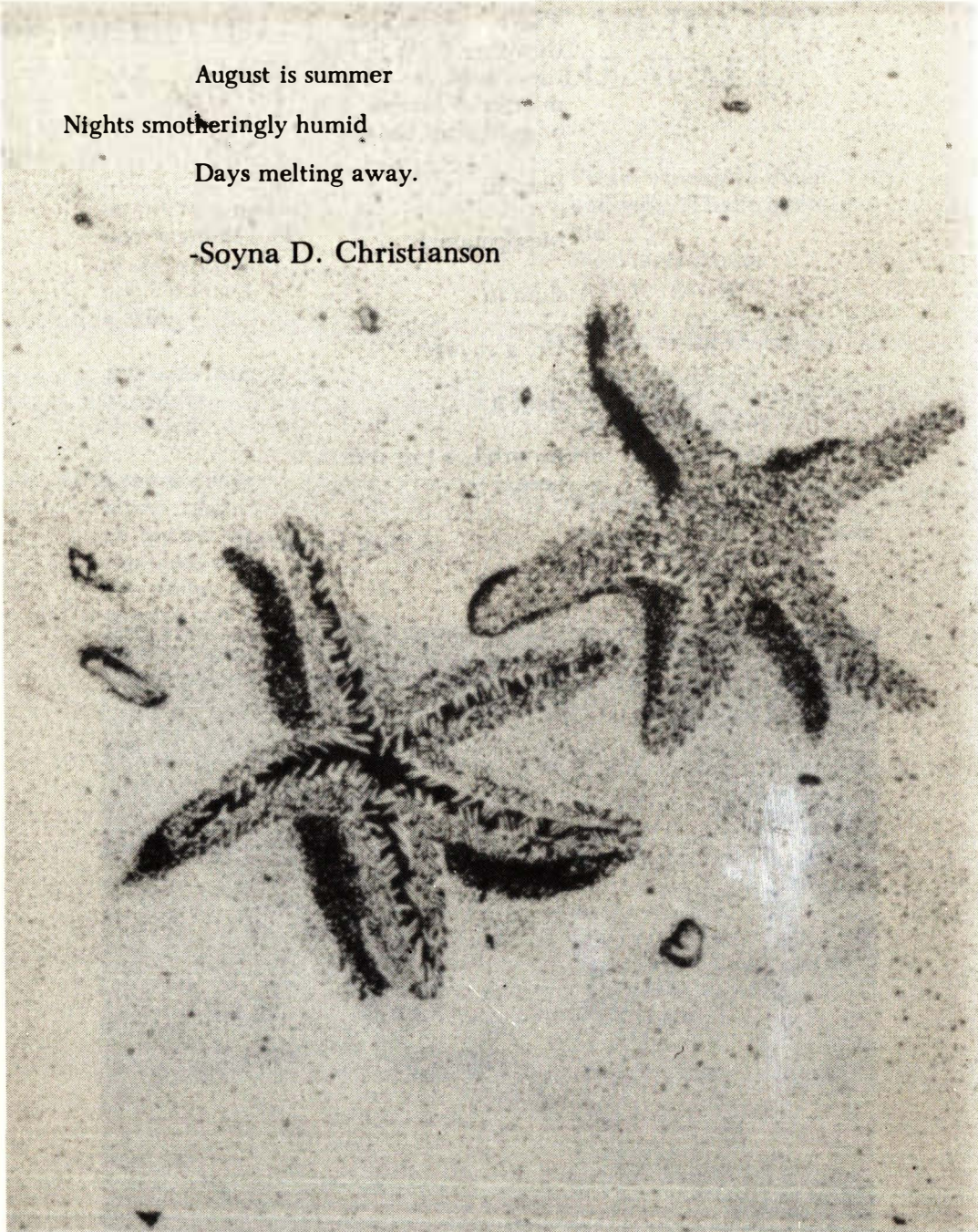
-Doug Cockrell



Etching by John McCarthy

August is summer
Nights smotheringly humid
Days melting away.

-Soyna D. Christianson



Drawing by Kirsten Opland

WALKING INTO ELVEN WORLD

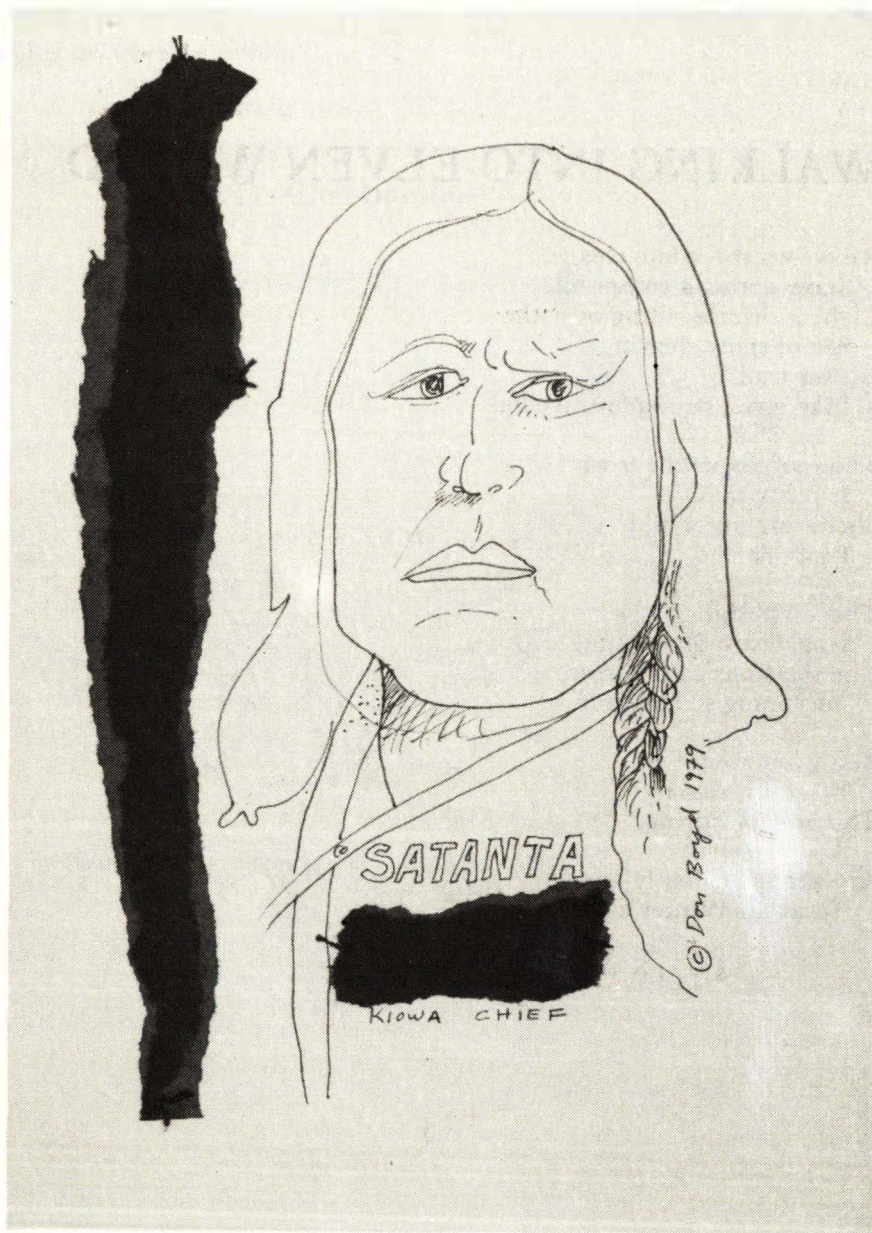
Ice covers the white-clean
Snow across a corner lot.
Light is drizzle-sifting over the
Sea of snow, leaving
Glitter trails
Like elves' streets untravelled.

The roof above the town
Is misty-mauve,
Sheltering my world
From Spring,

The VFW sign shines
Half-heartedly around
The skeletons called trees,
Beckoning strangers in.

Yet, even now
Winter is fleeing
The heat of Spring,
And the elves
Are slipping silently home
To await Winter again.

-Lynne Waters



Collage by Donald Boyd

Tumbleweed Crossing in Codington County

I cannot see the wind.
98 tumbleweeds are herded through the soilbank,
driven up the ditch,
bounced across the highway,
rolled down the ditch,
and headed North across the alfalfa.

-Wendy Howell

One Saturday, we raced horses
on John Althen's dirt road

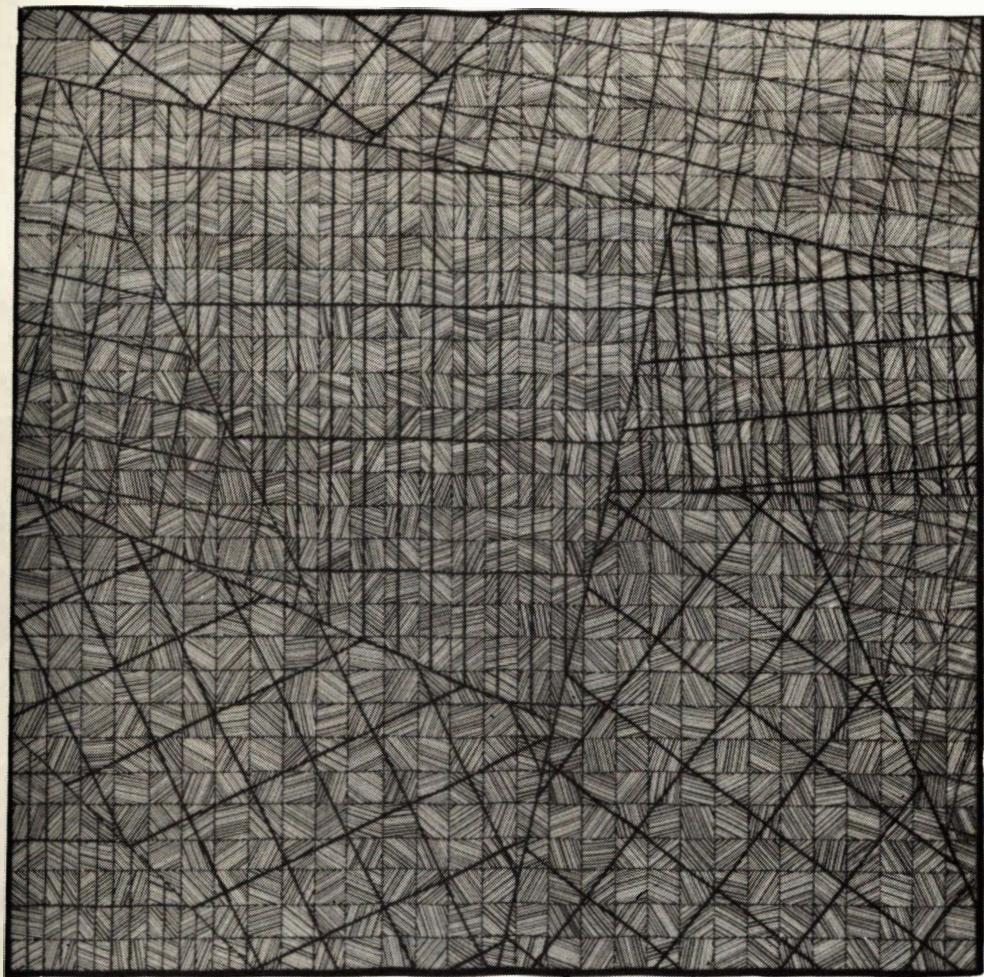
Denny Oberg, 13, fleckled and sunburnt
dropped the red flag
my pony laid flat
and raced the horizon west.

-Linda Faye Hanson

overhearing window to door

so
there's this guy I know,
see,
sends this woman he admires
a friendly letter,
like wishing her good luck
and maybe
a bit of free advice too.
and jokes go round
and gossip.
and one day he comes home
and thru the door
and into a rollingpin
that breaks his nose,
and a divorce suit
what breaks his heart.
the poor bum.
as is turns out,
the goodlookin' bim what he wrote to
(maybe in hopes of knocking off a bit),
thinks he's a schmucko sucker too.

-Daniel R. Phen



Painting by Dennis Guastella

Sunset

the day you left me
the sun fell
to earth and
 broke
died
slowly
in a pool of bloody sky
leaving
the night filled
with splinters
of shattered life

-Julie Stroup



Painting by Theresa Fischer

