

Oakwood 1984



Cover Art  
**Lilies**  
Sally Schwader

# OAKWOOD

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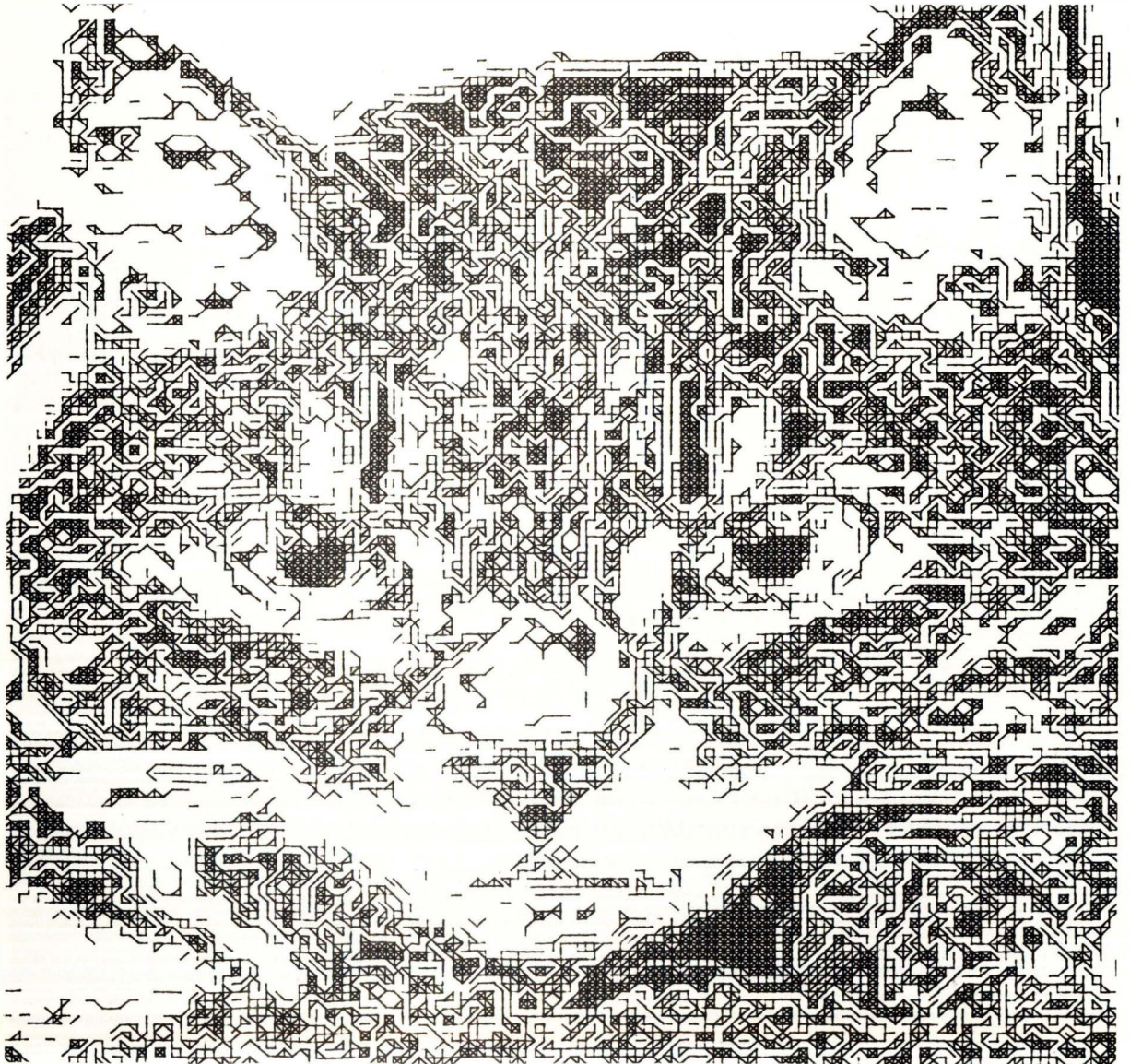
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Many thanks to the F. O. Butler Foundation  
for funding this edition of **OAKWOOD**

# OAKWOOD





**BEEP CHIRP BUZZ**  
Mark Steinkamp

Thoreau said simplify, simplify, simplify.  
In the library last night  
the silence was slashed  
by chirps, beeps and buzzes  
of twenty-seven function  
digital watches  
with tiny metal minds  
of their own.



## **Prairie Dreamers**

Karie Frank

We've grown with these flat, rolling hills  
And our dreams have risen higher,  
  Than the valleys below.  
Climbing higher and higher  
  As far as we can go.  
(Resting at each plateau)

We roam the prairie  
      My buddy and I.  
Lying in the tall grass  
                                (On our backs)  
Watching the clouds appear  
      Dreaming of the future  
This is where we like it— The Most.





6

Exp. #39 for Alibi Quartet David King

1st  
2nd  
3rd  
4th

GLISS  
RANDOM NOTES  
RAISE AND LOWER PITCH  
GLISS  
GLISS  
BEND EVERY NOTE  
WHISTLE ON TONGUE NOT IN 4th SCALE

1st  
2nd  
3rd  
4th

SHARP GLISS  
play G  
play F#  
BELL TOWERS (ALL REMAINING SUSTAINED PARTS)  
NO BREAK  
NO TIME STOP  
SCREAM  
Rise HIGH AS POSSIBLE LOW (PEDALS)

1st  
2nd  
3rd  
4th

WHITE NOISE (USE THROAT NOBAL NO LIP VIBRATION)  
WALK AROUND (HEAVY STEPS)  
SIT DOWN  
CLICK VALVES  
SUA. MOUTHPIECE WITH PALM OF HAND  
PLAY LOW LOOK IN MOUTH  
PLAY LOW "A"  
SCAN LOOK AT CEILING

1st  
2nd  
3rd  
4th

PLAY ANYTHING  
WALK OUT OF RECITAL HALL (PLAY SOME DISGUSTING NOTES ON THE WAY)  
PLAY LOW  
PLAY LOW A B  
GLARE AT AUDIENCE

1st  
2nd  
3rd  
4th

GLISS  
WALK BACK IN (SILENCE)  
SIT DOWN  
PLAY EXERT FROM ETUDE  
PLAY INTRO FROM SOLO (START AGAIN)  
PLAY OOM-PAH'S (CONTINUES)  
PLAY ANYTHING (STOP, START AGAIN)

1st  
2nd  
3rd  
4th

GLARE AT QUARTET  
drop off highest possible note  
GLISS  
Flutter tongue any note  
play gliss on piano  
very deep vibrato on any note  
GO SIT DOWN

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross







**Basement Apartment**  
Bernadette Scolaro

The Yellowstone shoestrings dangle from my Nikes  
like limp arms that have forgotten their purpose.

Another thirty seconds,  
and another splurt of water makes its dive to the  
sink's drain.  
The water's casual acceptance of what it is, and where  
it is to go.



## **WHITE SKULL CREEK**

David A. Evans, Jr.

I was expecting to find  
brown backward-jerking crayfish  
in the shallow pool beneath  
the heavy slick stone I lifted  
on the bank, near the edge of the water.  
Suddenly,  
a snapping turtle  
with a round spiked body  
and thick sprocket-like feet,  
a triangled iron head  
and hard hollow eyes, lurched,  
hissed, snapped, spun around,  
and then scratched its way through the  
damp sand into the warm muddy water of  
White Skull Creek.











## BLACKBERRIES

Cindy Kelley

Anna Gay strolled down the road, swinging a bucket from her arm, savoring the grit of sand beneath her bare feet. It was sweet to walk in the woods, the tall pines like fingers pointing toward heaven, just like Brother Brownlee had said about the steeple on the church house. The wind shushing through the trees reminded her of the murmur of gossip in church that went on until Brother Brownlee stomped to the pulpit and cleared his throat.

She was going blackberry picking. She got a nickel a quart for them from Mrs. Greenwood, who sold them to the town people who were too lazy to go out and pick them for themselves. There was a black gingham dress at Greenwood's store that Anna Gay was saving her money for, and she lacked fifteen cents having enough to buy it.

She needed the dress today, because Trey Fenton had asked her to sit by him at the revival meeting tonight. Not only that, he was going to pick her up, if Daddy said he could.

Her eye had always been on Trey, even if he was five years older than her. She first fell in love with him when she was twelve years old, the time he pulled the stinger out of her foot when she stepped on a bee in Colton's pasture. When he looked at her, a fire burned inside her. She had never even thought of looking at anyone else, not like the other girls in Stranger.

She remembered how the other girls had made a big fuss over Brother Brownlee when he first came. He was a big, handsome man. Essie Trumbridge even went so far as to claim that he was courting her. But it wasn't two months before he went to Shreveport one weekend and came back with a wife. That sure put Essie's nose out of joint, along with a few others. Anna Gay thought Essie was probably lying about Brother Brownlee being sweet on her. She'd never seen him treat Essie any different than anyone else.

Soon she was at the blackberry patch. The briars were still wet with dew and she thought they looked prettier than the diamond in Mrs. Brownlee's ring. She hurried her picking, trying to beat the hottest part of the day, but it was midmorning by the time her bucket was full. She rested under a huge old sweetgum. Idly, she took a handful of the berries and slowly ate them. They reminded her of the buttons on the dress. Her

skin was damp with the heat and humidity. She closed her eyes, vaguely dreaming and listening to the sounds of the forest.

“He just has to ask me to marry him this summer or Daddy’ll make me go live with Ben and Annie,” she thought. “But I know he will. Why else would he ask me to go to church with him? He wants ever’body to know.” She giggled drowsily.

She was nearly asleep when she heard a car coming. She didn’t open her eyes until she heard the car’s horn honk. Her stomach muscles tightened when she saw it was Trey. Brushing herself off, she walked over to the car and leaned in the window.

“What are you doin’ out here in this heat?” he asked.

“Oh, just pickin’ some berries. I’m all done now.”

“You gonna bake a pie?”

“No, I’m gonna take ‘em over to Greenwood’s and sell ‘em. I get a nickel a quart.”

“Why don’t I take you? I’m going that way.”

“No, I can’t. I gotta go by the house first.”

“I’d really like to take you. It ain’t no trouble.”

“I can’t.” She didn’t want him to see her new dress before she wore it.

“Well, why don’t I just take you on home, then? I gotta talk to your daddy, anyway.”

Blushing, she agreed to go with him and got into the car. They didn’t talk, but they did hold hands across the car seat. Before long, the car turned into Anna Gay’s yard and stopped. As she reached for the door handle, Trey held tight to her other hand.

“I’ll see you tonight a little before seven,” he said and squeezed her hand.

The way he was looking at her made Anna Gay’s knees shake, but she managed to smile at him as she got out of the car. Her face was flaming as she ran up the steps of the old cabin.

“What on earth is wrong with you, girl?” Mama was in the kitchen, holding a basket of dirty clothes. “You look like you got a fever.”

“I guess it’s just the heat. Let me take them clothes out for you.” She wondered if she should tell Mama, but decided the Daddy had better do it.

"Whose car is that out front? I don't believe I ever seen it before."

"Oh, yes you have, Mama. It's Trey Fenton's."

"What in the world does he want?"

"Well, he brung me home from berry-pickin' and then he wanted to talk to Daddy." Mama gave her a funny look, but didn't say a thing.

Anna Gay took the clothes out into the yard where the big black washkettle was sitting over the fire, and after promising to help with hanging up, she ran back to the cabin. She took down the Clabber Girl baking powder can from the top of the stove and shook it. The sound of the coins clattering was reassuring. It sounded like she was rich. Using a spoon handle to pry the lid off the can, she poured the money out onto the table and started counting. But the first time she got it wrong, so she counted again. Then again. There was no mistake. Seventy-five cents was gone.

She was sick. She had counted that money so many times, she knew there had been two dollars and fifty cents in that can not two days ago. What could've happened? If there had been a robber, he would've taken all the money, and the can, too, probably. She couldn't hve dropped it when she was counting, not that much money. Where did it go?

Carefully, she wrapped the rest of the money in her handkerchief, put it in her pocket and went looking for Mama.

"Mama!" Anna Gay cried. "Somethin's happened to my money! There's seventy-five cents missin'!"

Mama stopped singing and let go of the stick she had been using to stir the clothes in the washkettle. The stick kept swirling around and around in the kettle. Mama held her arms out to Anna Gay, as if she wanted to hold her close.

"Daddy took the money. He needed it for some parts. He said that times was hard and that the family needed it. I told him to ask you but he wouldn't do it. Said you never ask for the bread that feeds you and he'd be durned if he'd ask any child of his for money that was just as much his as yours. But he means to pay it back. He wouldn' borry without payin' back."

Open-mouthed, Anna Gay listened to her mother. Sobs came from deep inside her. Clutching the handkerchief, she turned and ran out of the yard. She saw Trey and Daddy come from around the barn as she ran past.

She ran down the road swiftly, not feeling the sand under her feet, not seeing the great pines, not hearing the wind whisper. She ran, feeling nothing.

She came to the tree where she had met Trey that morning, and threw herself beneath it. The sobs still came, but now she was able to think. Why had he taken her money? She'd been saving for six months and on the day she needed it, the money was gone. Didn't she matter to him? And what was she going to do about Trey? What would he think of her, running off like that?

After a long time she stood and shook her skirt, then used the hem to wipe her face. She had to go somewhere, and she wasn't gettin' there by sitting under that old tree.

She started walking down the road toward town, the same road she had walked down a million times. She wasn't the same girl, though, not by a long shot. It was nearly three miles to town and by the time she got there, she was wringing wet, hot, dirty, tired, and very hungry. She had passed several blackberry patches, but she couldn't bring herself to eat any berries. So the first place she went was Greenwood's.

Mrs. Greenwood looked up from the magazine she was reading and smiled. "Why, hello, Anna Gay. How are you today?"

"Oh, I'm fine, Mrs. Greenwood. Just a little hot."

"I know. Isn't it terrible? It's this darn humidity. The heat wouldn't be so bad if it wasn't for the humidity."

"Yes, ma'am, that's for sure."

"Now, what can I do for you? Did you want to try on that dress again?"

"No, ma'am, not today. I'll just have a Coke and a piece of peach pie. I been outside all day and I forgot to eat dinner."

Mrs. Greenwood served Anna Gay, who paid with a dime from the handkerchief. She added her money up as she ate. With the dime she'd paid for her dinner gone, plus the fifteen cents she'd never get for the berries she picked this morning (where did she leave those darn berries, anyway?), plus the seventy-five cents that Daddy took, she was a whole dollar away from buying that black gingham dress. She might as well forget it because she'd never save another whole dollar. Sighing, she finished her Coke and put the bottle in the rack beside the cooler. Better go see Brother Brownlee.

She was ashamed to visit the parsonage with bare feet and

a dirty face, but she couldn't help that. The preacher was supposed to be their shepherd, to lead them and guide them and care for them in time of need. And she was in need now if anyone ever was.

Climbing the parsonage steps, she tried to arrange the story in her mind. Timidly, she knocked on the front door. She had never been in the parsonage before, except for the time she had a bloody nose at Bible school and there hadn't been a rag at the church to stop the bleeding with. She wasn't sure that time counted, since she'd only been four at the time. Besides, they had used the back door.

Mrs. Brownlee answered the door, smiling like an angel. Anna Gay jumped a little. "Afternoon, Miz Brownlee. I'm sorry to be callin' when I'm so dirty an' all. I was wonderin' if Brother Brownlee was busy."

"He's in the study. Come on into the living room and I'll get him for you." She led Anna Gay into the cool, shady house. "You just sit down and I'll be right back."

The living room was the fanciest room Anna Gay had ever seen. There was a couch covered with brown velvet. In front of the couch was a rug with all colors of flowers in it. There was also a rocker and an easy chair with yellow and brown flowers on it. She decided to sit in the rocker so she wouldn't get the other furniture all dirty. There were a couple of small round tables that held little statues of dogs, and there was a big black piano against one wall, just like the one that Mrs. Brownlee played at church. On top of the piano were some pictures of people. Anna Gay wanted to get up and look at the pictures, but she didn't dare. She rocked, holding her feet out in front of her, hoping that she didn't smell too sweaty.

Pretty soon, she heard footsteps in the hall, the click-click of Mrs. Brownlee and the stomp of Brother Brownlee. She watched the doorway and was embarrassed when she saw the couple enter the room with their arms around each other. She was pretty sure preachers weren't supposed to act like that.

"Well, how are you, Anna Gay? What can I do for you?" Brother Brownlee sat on the couch, holding his wife's hand, touching her leg with his leg.

"It's my daddy! He don't love me and I don't know what I'm gonna do!" To her shame, Anna Gay started crying. She tried to hold the tears back, but she couldn't.

"Now, what makes you think your daddy doesn't love

you?"

"Well," she blubbered, "I been savin' my berry money to buy me a new dress. But Daddy took seventy-five cents and he didn't even ask. I would'a give it to him, if he'da just asked but he didn't. He took what was mine an' never even asked!" Then she was sobbing again, making an ugly, choking sound every time she breathed.

Mrs. Brownlee took Anna Gay in her arms and comforted her. Mrs. Brownlee smelled good, like some kind of flowers, with a little bit of sweat mixed in. Anna Gay didn't know that ladies sweated.

Brother Brownlee stood up, sighing, hands in his pockets, jingling his change and clicking his tongue. Mrs. Brownlee went over to him. "You'd better do something, Jim. This child isn't even sixteen yet."

He nodded, then kissed his wife on the forehead. "I'll go on over there and talk to him. I'm sure it's not all that bad."

He stomped out of the living room, leaving Anna Gay and Mrs. Brownlee alone. Gradually, Anna Gay stopped sobbing. She wiped her face with the back of her hand and was shamed by the trail of dirt left on her hand. Why hadn't she scrubbed her face better with her skirt tail?

Mrs. Brownlee spoke. "I bet you'd like to wash up, Anna Gay. Why don't I run a tub of water and you take a bath. I've got a wrapper you can borrow." So Anna Gay followed Mrs. Brownlee down the hall to the bathroom.

Mrs. Brownlee put the plug in the drainhole, then turned on both handles. She sprinkled some flakes out of a pink jar into the water and soon the tub was full of good smelling bubbles. They were beautiful, like snow. Then she went to get some clothes for Anna Gay. She brought back a towel, a wash cloth, and a change of clothes, including underwear.

"I thought you'd like some clean underthings, too. Sometimes I take two baths a day when the weather is like this, and I don't feel really clean unless I change everything."

Anna Gay's eyes widened in surprise. She didn't have that many changes, and she wouldn't waste water like that, either. But she guessed it wouldn't be right for the preacher's wife to go wading in the creek.

As soon as Mrs. Brownlee left, Anna Gay looked in the mirror. Sure enough, there was a streak of clean under her eyes. Despite her troubles, she giggled. "I musta looked just like a

coon.”

She peeled her clothes off and slid into the tub. The bubbles rustled like the trees in the woods. She played with the bubbles, making herself a beard, piling them on her head. She tried sliding down the end of the tub into the water, but that splashed too much. When she was clean, she pulled the chain that held the plug and let the water out.

The water drained away, leaving a mound of grayish bubbles and a tracing of fine dirt. She scooped the bubbles out with her hands and threw them in the toilet. Then she turned of the cold water and rinsed until the dirt had all gone. She noticed there was a ring of scum around the tub where the water’s edge had been. She rubbed herself with the towel, then used it to wipe out the ring. Next she dried the floor with the towel and folded it into a neat, soggy square which she left on the floor next to the toilet.

She used Mrs. Brownlee’s comb to get all the snarls out of her hair, then turned her attention to dressing. She pulled on the underpants, which were a wonder to her. All her drawers were made of flour sacks. These were silky, with lace on them. Most surprising, they were pale, pale pink. She decided right then that when she got to Heaven, she was going to ask the Lord Himself for a robe made of the same stuff.

She quickly slipped on the house dress Mrs. Brownlee had loaned her, then checked around to make sure the bathroom looked neat enough. As she opened the door, she heard Brother and Mrs. Brownlee talking.

“...said he wasn’t going to have any girl of his acting like that. She could just stay gone as far as he cared.”

“But what about her mother? Didn’t she say anything?”

“No, not then. She just stood there crying and wringing her hands. I don’t understand how a man can be like that to his own child.”

“Poor little thing. What are we going to do?”

“Her mother asked if she could stay here for a few days. She sent her things along. There is a brother in Shreveport who might be able to take her.”

“That will be fine with me.”

Then they moved, so Anna Gay couldn’t hear anymore. She shut the door, and her throat grew tight, but she wasn’t surprised by what she had heard. She was embarrassed that her daddy had cussed the preacher. He could be stubborn as a

mule sometimes, and he wasn't going to have some fellow from Shreveport tell him what to do, especially not a preacher. She must have some of her daddy in her, because she wasn't going to let Brother Brownlee send her off to live with Ben and Annie.

"Anna Gay, are you finished with your bath?" Mrs. Brownlee was on the other side of the door. "I've got to run to the store and Brother Brownlee would like to talk to you."

Anna Gay came out of the bathroom, her face clean and showing no sign of tears. She smiled at Mrs. Brownlee. "I feel lots better now. Thanks for these clothes. Can I wash mine out later? I'll need to wear 'em home."

"Oh, you'll have time to do that later. For now, you need to go to the study and talk to Brother Brownlee." She shoed Anna Gay down the hall.

Shyly, she opened the study door. There were shelves of books on the walls, just like the library at school. Brother Brownlee was sitting at the desk, writing. He smiled when she came in and put down the pen he was using.

"Have a seat, Anna Gay." She sat in the straight wooden chair that was in front of the desk. "I'm sorry, but your daddy doesn't want you to come home for awhile."

"I coulda told you that. He's that way when someone makes him mad. I wouldn't go back to him if you dragged me, anyway."

"Mrs. Brownlee and I have decided that you may stay here until you can write to your brother in Shreveport. Do you think he would take you in?"

"He prob'ly would, but I ain't too fired up about goin' there."

"What will you do? There aren't any jobs around here and I don't think your daddy will like you to stay here with us."

"I know that, You already done enough for me, just takin' me in like this. Maybe I'll go back to school or somethin'." She knew it would shock him if she said she wanted to get married. He thought the girls in Stranger got married too young.

He showed her the guest room, where she lay down for a nap. When she awoke, she smelled chicken frying. She lay still in the darkening room, pretending this was really her bed in her own house. She saw a flour sack on the chair next to the bed, which she opened. In it, she found her other dress, her



nightgown, clean drawers, a comb, and her mother's Bible. She started to cry. So they really didn't want her back. She sat on the edge of the bed, crying and combing her hair. When she was finished with both, she got up and went into the kitchen.

Mrs. Brownlee was busy getting supper on the table. "I was just about to call you. Go ahead and sit down."

"Ain't there somethin' I can do? I always get supper at home."

"I'll let you clear the table when we finish. Now I'll just go get Brother Brownlee and we'll eat."

They returned thanks and started eating. It was the quietest meal Anna Gay had ever had and one of the best tasting. When they finished, she cleared the table and put the dishes in the dish pan.

"Why don't you just let those soak? We've got to get ready for the revival meeting," Mrs. Brownlee told her as she was leaving the table.

Anna Gay didn't feel like going to the revival, but she didn't want to go against Mrs. Brownlee's wishes, so she went back to the guest room to change.

Sighing, she unfolded the clean dress her mother had sent over. It was pretty enough, but she was sure that Trey had seen it a hundred times. Then she remembered that she probably wouldn't see Trey, so it didn't matter what she wore. As she was dressing, she heard a knock at the front door and male voices talking. Must be somebody about the meeting tonight, she thought. She went into the living room to wait for the Brownlees and saw that the guest was Trey.

She just stared at him, mortified. Why had he come here? Surely he didn't know she was staying here, he wouldn't have come if he did.

"Hi, Pretty. You left your berries in my car and I brought them to you. You didn't forget our date, did you?"

"Oh, Trey. Maybe we'd better not...I...I just can't!" She was crying again and he was holding her in his arms.

"Honey, I know all about it. Your mama told me. So listen to what I got to say." He led her to the couch and sat beside her, holding her hand. "I been plannin' to marry you soon as the cotton was in, anyway. But seein'

as how you don't have any place to go, we'll just get married now. I got a little money saved an' Daddy'll let us stay at Granddaddy's old cabin 'til we can get our own place. I'll keep workin' for Josh Colton an' he'll pay me more now that I got a wife."

It was exactly what she wanted and she hugged Trey hard to let him know how she felt. Then he kissed her for the very first time, and it was exactly like her dreams.

Brother Brownlee frowned when he came into the living room and saw them holding hands. He really looked angry when Trey told him that they wanted to get married tonight.

"Her folks say it's all right. Her mama's even coming over after the revival meeting so we can get married then," Trey said.

"But she is much too young. She doesn't know what she wants."

"Oh, yes, I do, Brother Brownlee. I been in love with Trey nearly all my life."

"What about school? Don't you want to make something of yourself?"

"The best thing I can be is Trey's wife."

"I plan to discuss this with your mother, Anna Gay. For now, though, I have a revival meeting. I don't suppose you are coming?"

While the Brownlees were gone, Trey and Anna Gay made plans. She had never been so happy. And Trey kissed her three more times, which made her knees shake again. She couldn't wait until they were married.

The Brownlees came back in two hours, bringing Anna Gay's mother and both of Trey's parents, even though he was a grown man and didn't need their permission. Mama had on her black dress and the hat made of shiny blue-black feathers.

Without a word, Mama handed Anna Gay a package wrapped in brown paper. She tore the paper off and saw it was the black gingham dress. "Now, where did she get the money for this?" Anna Gay wondered.

"I brung these for you, too," Mama said, handing Anna Gay her shoes. "Can't have a daughter of mine gettin' married barefooted. Are you sure you wanna get married?"

“Oh, yes, Mama. More’n anything.”

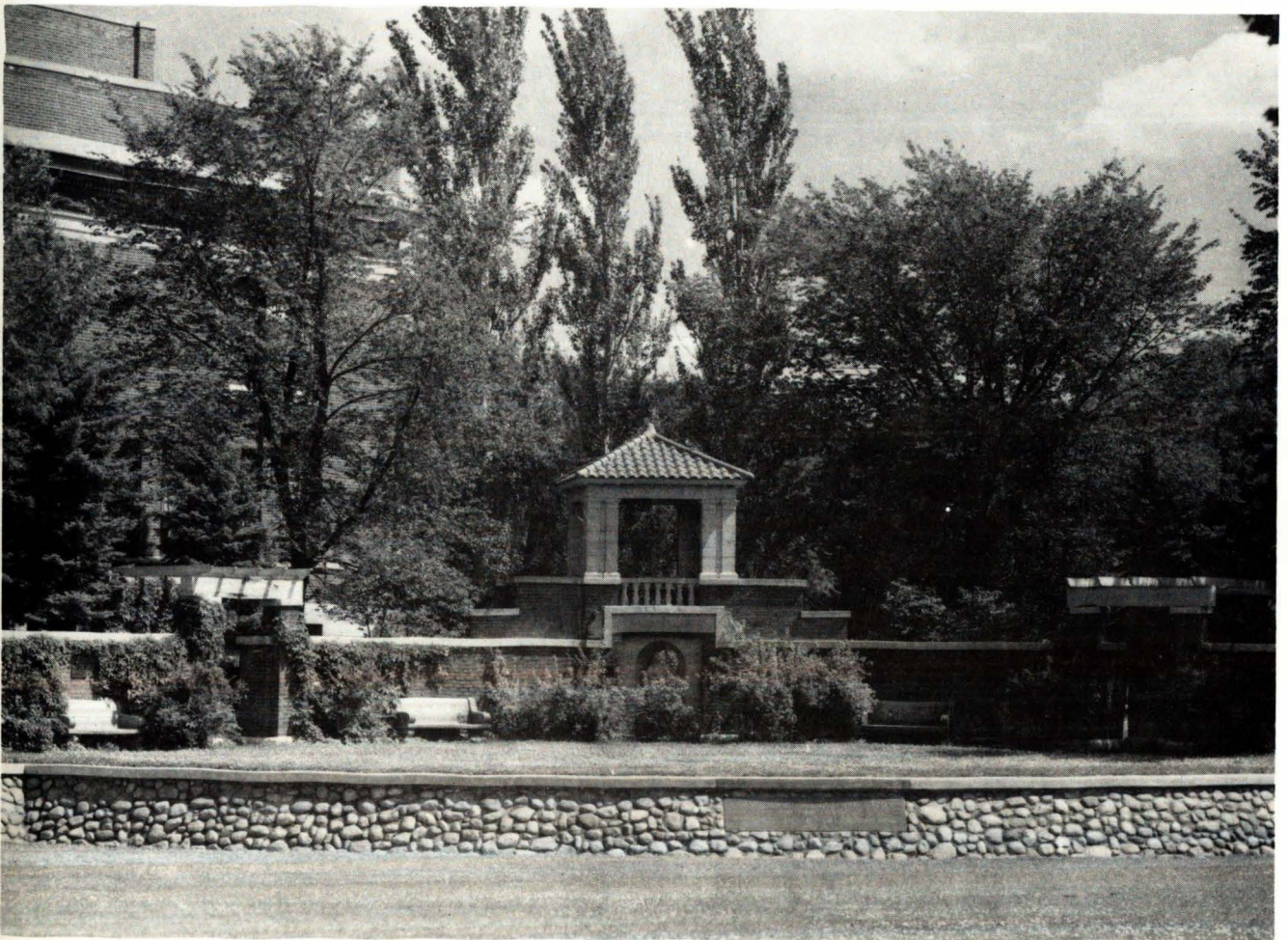
“So did I, when I married your daddy.” She gave Anna Gay a long look, but didn’t say anything else.

So Anna Gay and Trey were married that night. While Mrs. Brownlee was fixing Anna Gay’s hair and hemming the black gingham dress, Anna Gay’s mother was in the parsonage kitchen, baking a wedding cobbler with the blackberries Anna Gay had picked that morning.

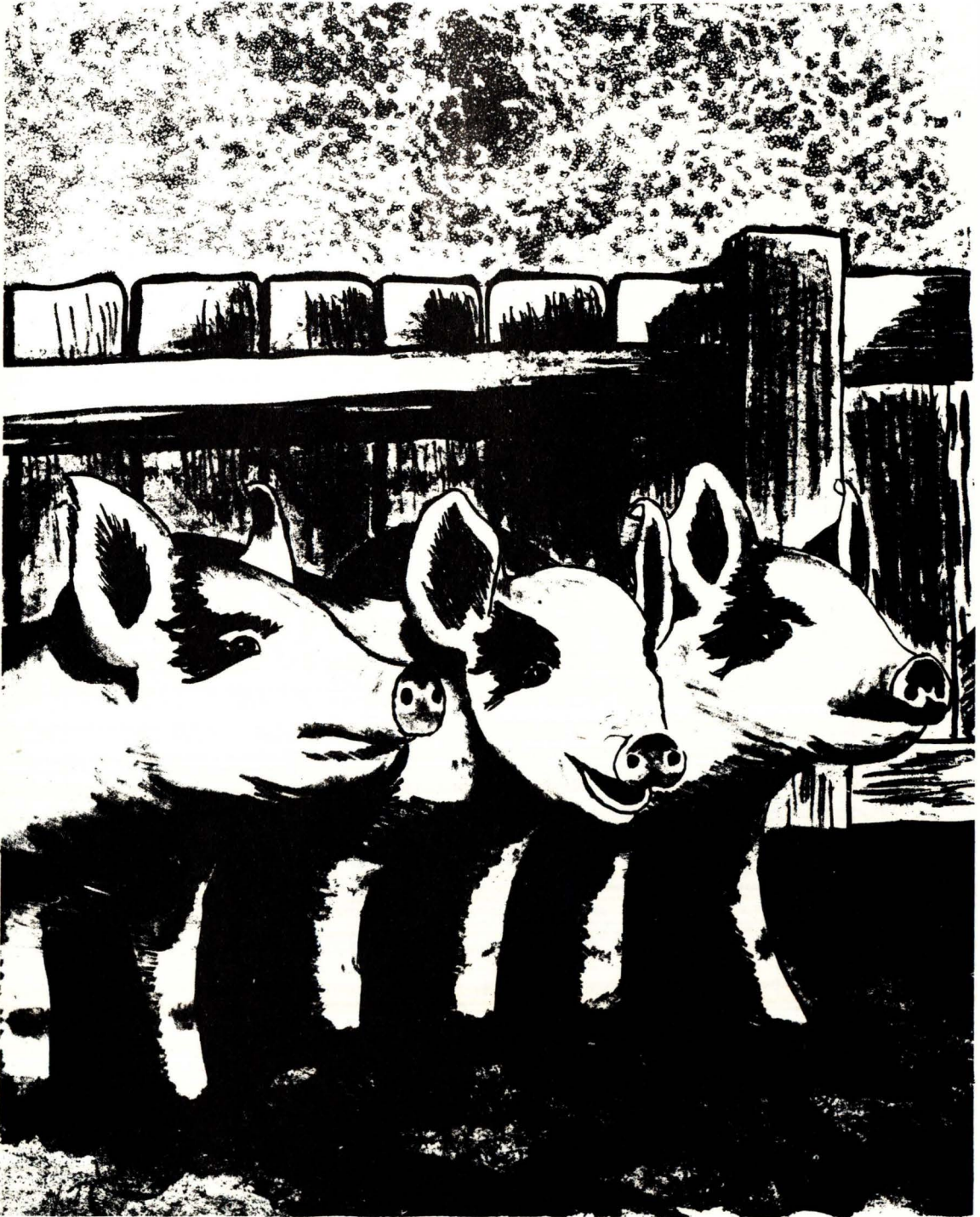


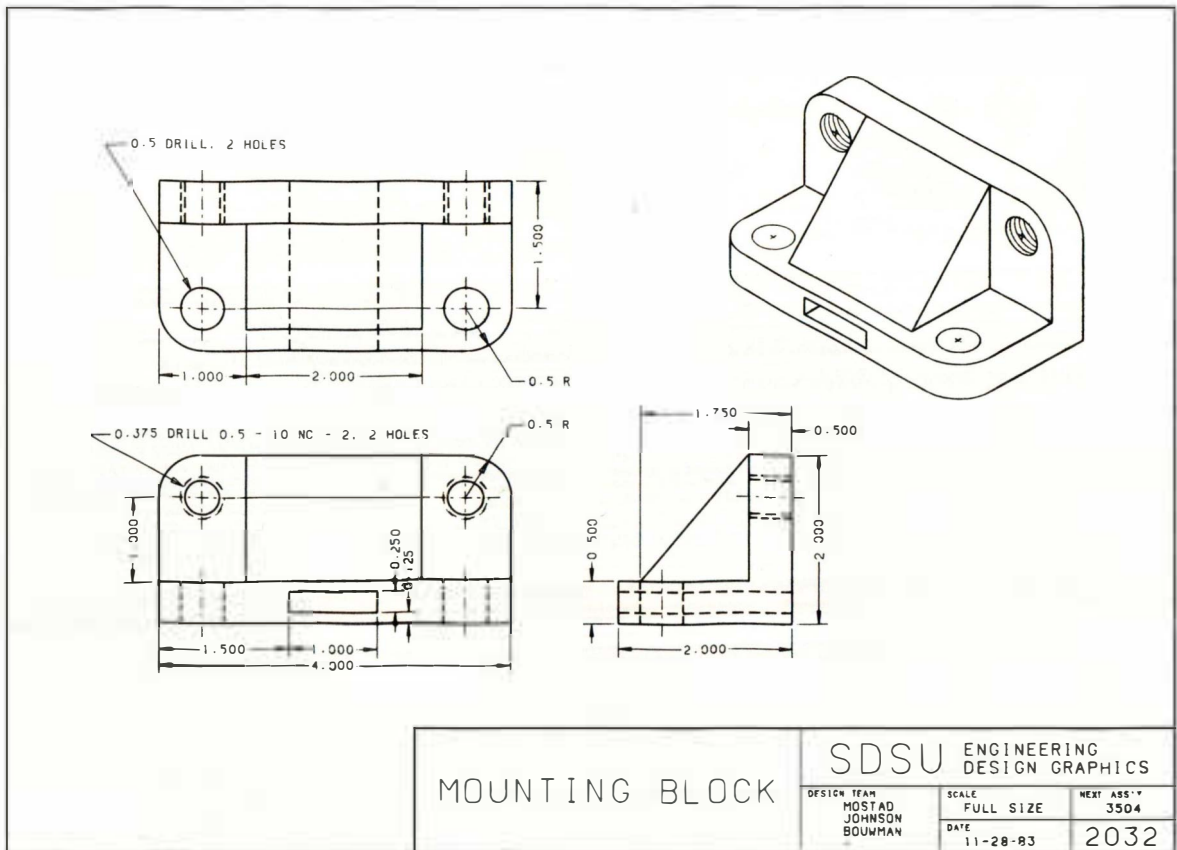
### Posterization

Posterization is a multicolor (multi-exposure) high contrast special effect utilized by the printing industry. Below is a black and white reproduction of the original photograph and inside the fold out section is a three color posterization of the same photo.

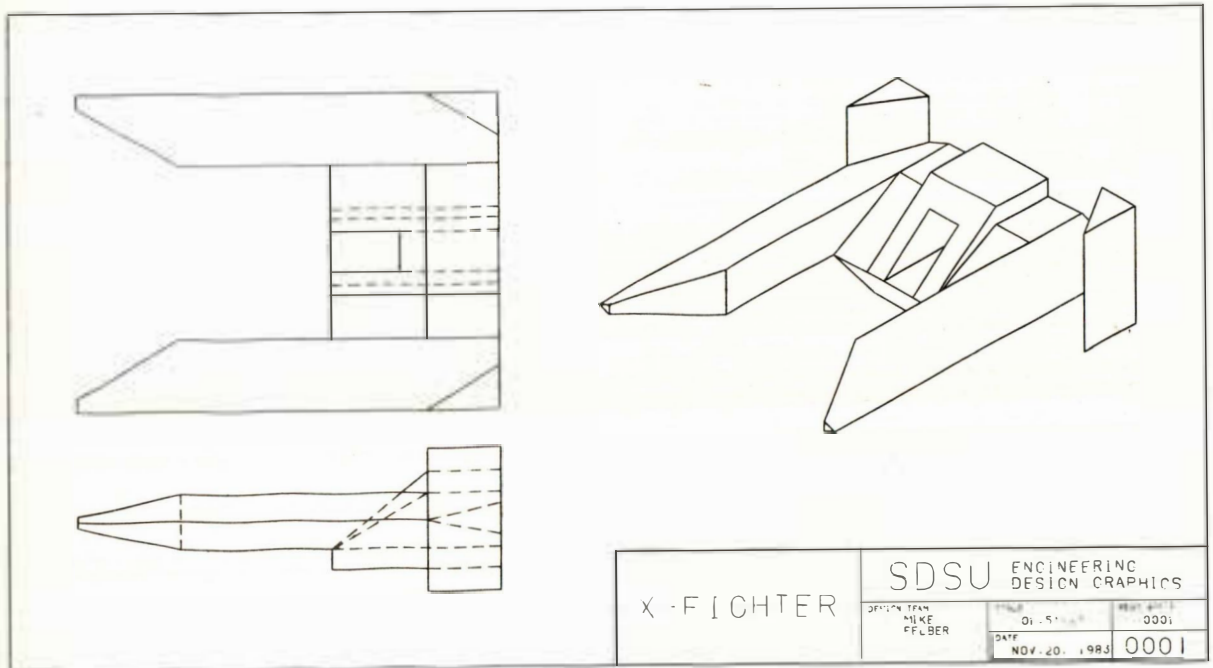






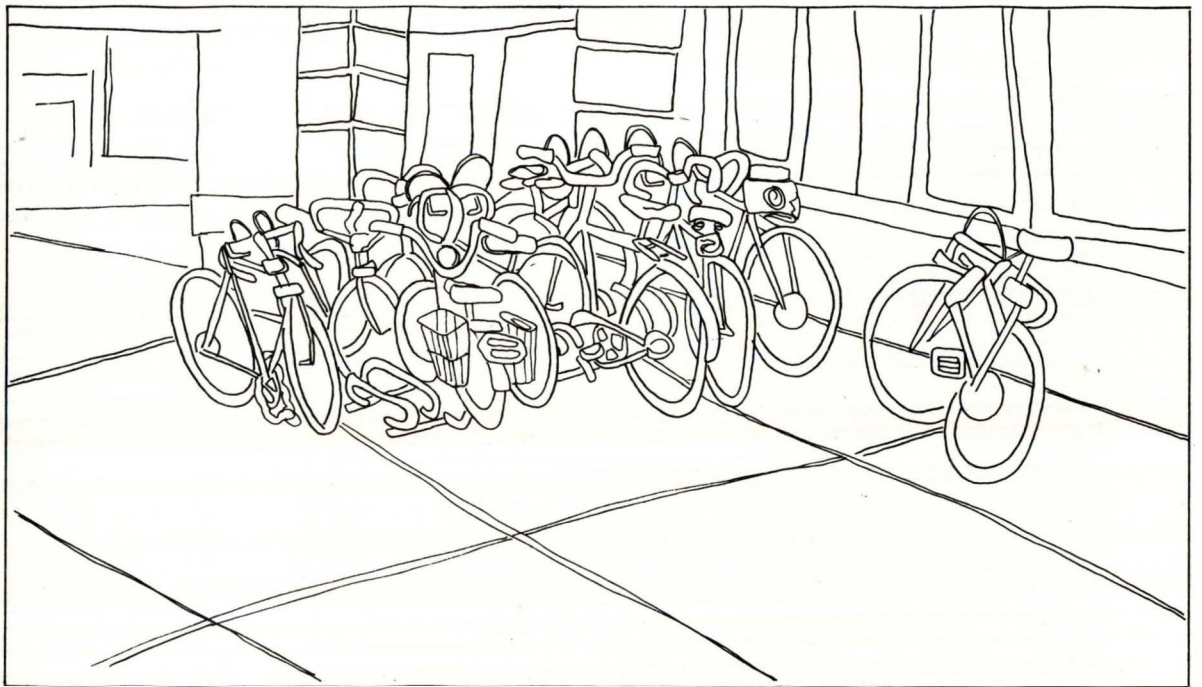






**Playground**  
Brenda Winter

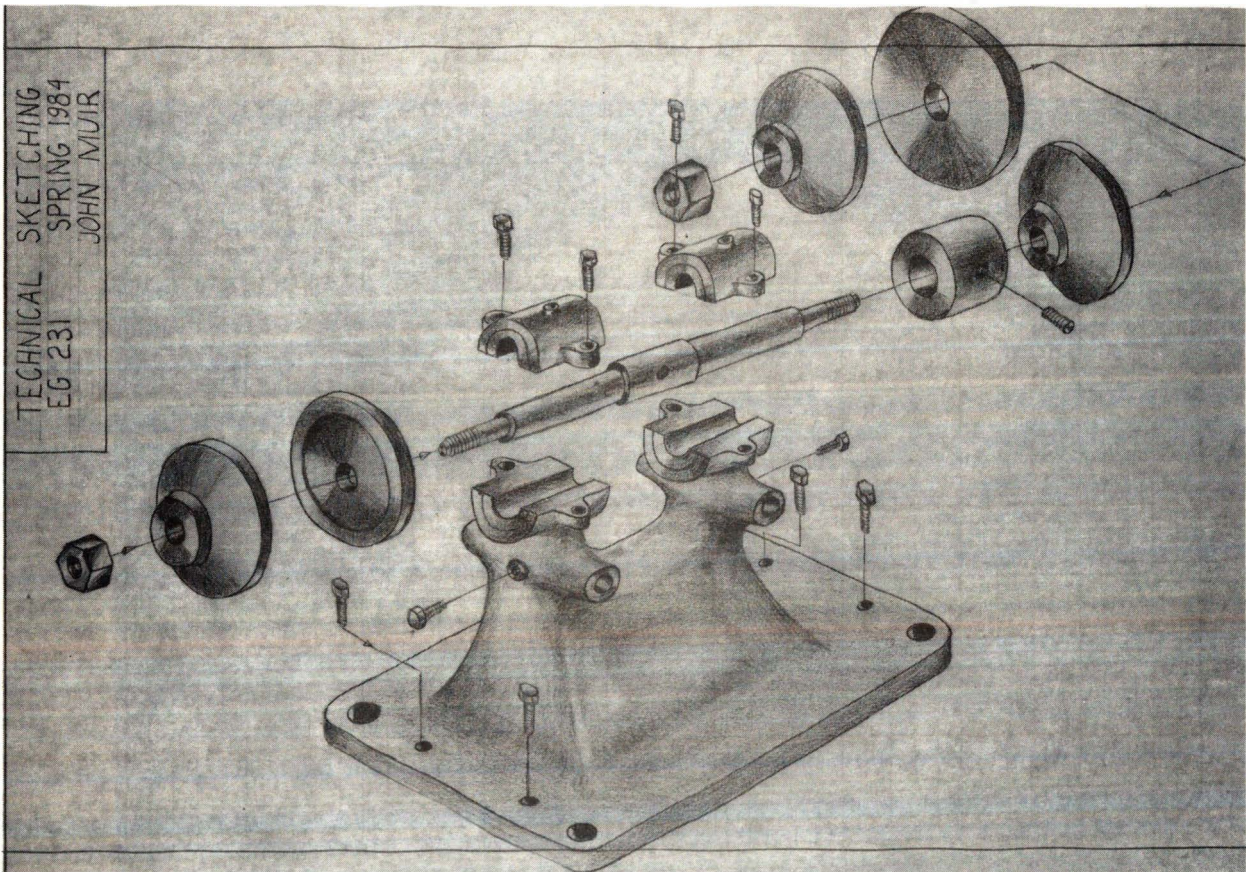
you're just a kid  
you made a playground in my heart  
skipping stones across across streams of tears  
                                you didn't know were flowing  
flashglitter in your brown eyes  
                                subtle as a puppy's tailwag  
caught my eye in a schoolyard park  
cool rush of the swings  
                                we flew  
bump of the 'totter  
                                we stopped  
you heard a voice and jumped off  
with a puppy tailwag smile  
                                you ran  
love now hidden  
a buried bone  
my playmate had to go home

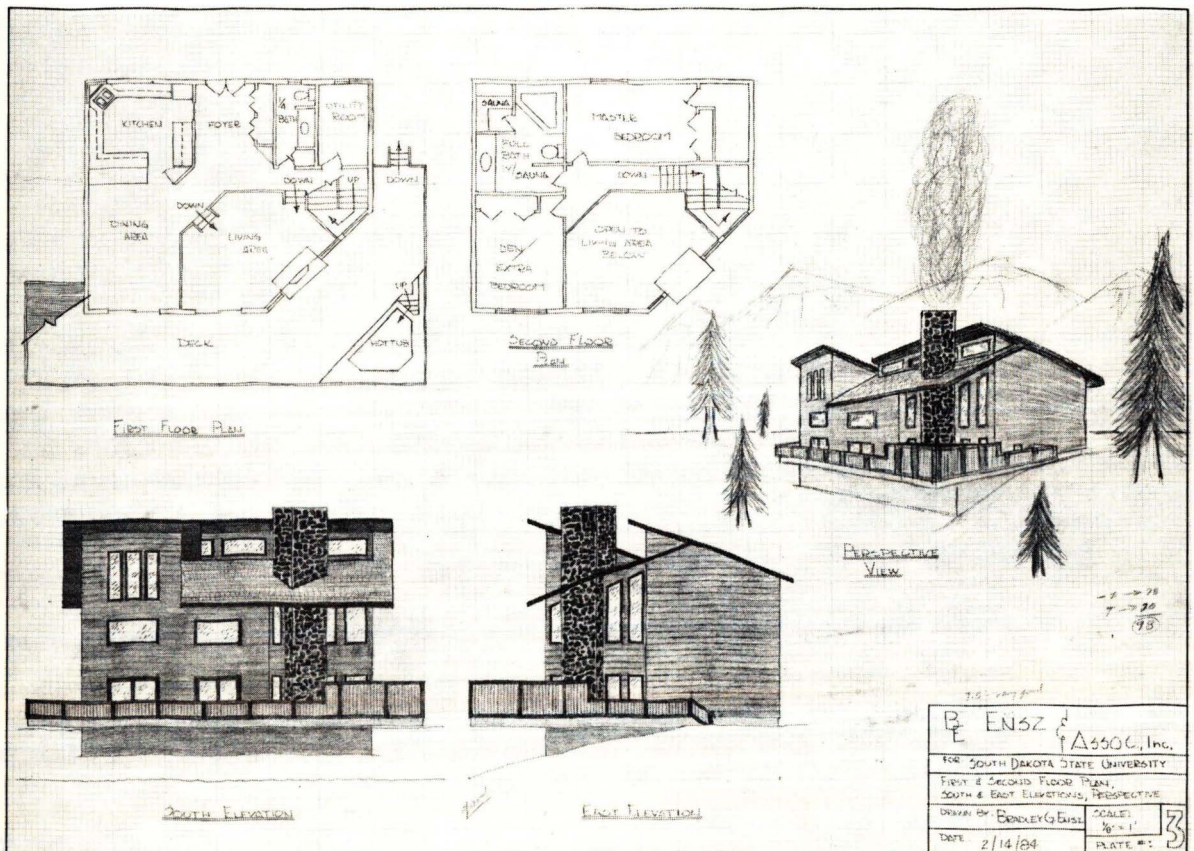


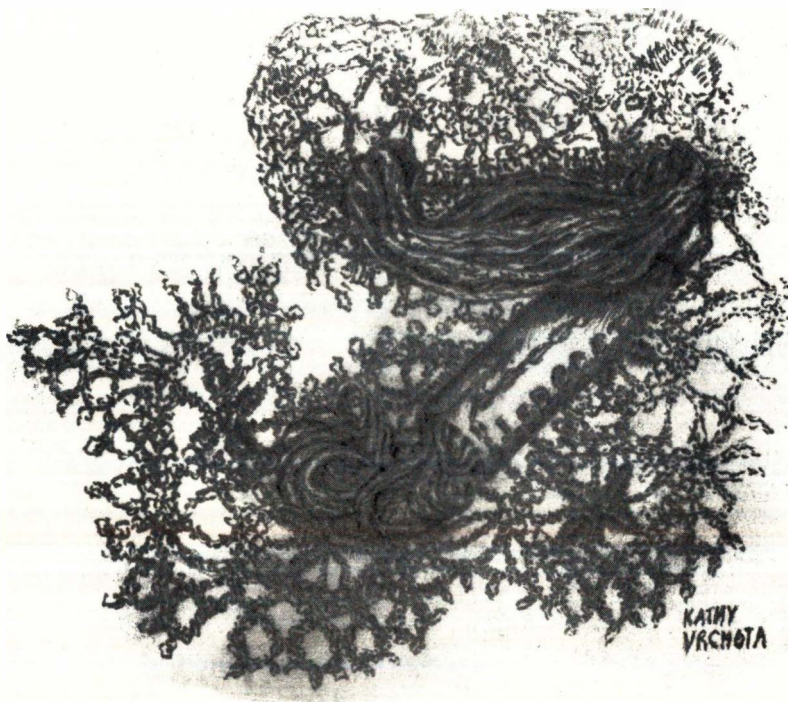
## **A Trip to Your Graves** Greg Nielsen

Fifty, sixty years from now  
They'll look at our memorials  
They'll laugh  
But perhaps become less derisive  
When they apply our misguided recollections  
to the important aspects of their advancing lives  
Some will consider future generations  
The scorn that will eventually  
Be directed toward themselves  
Then they'll try to decide  
The definitive ritual for disposing of moments  
And the flesh draped around them  
Perhaps they'll be puzzled  
So today I won't criticize  
These elaborately polished headstones  
Bordered by producing fields  
But instead search the names  
For someone to chat with











## BUT DOES SHE DO WINDOWS? Janice H. Mikesell

It's difficult to know how to respond to a person who, without formal introduction or proper amenities, loudly assures you upon your first meeting that it isn't true that she was a prostitute in Washington, D.C. between the years 1944 to 1946. It's particularly difficult when that person is in the manic-most phase of a manic-depressive disorder, not to mention being in the process of sobering up from a protracted drunk. She flitted everywhere, talking incessantly all the while. She dusted, rearranged furniture and straightened pictures. It was an amazing display of glittery-eyed high glee.

"Why did you stop taking your medication Katherine?," the doctor asked while, in effect, trotting after her.

"Because I wanted to drink." (Giggle. Giggle.)

"You haven't been off the wagon for a long time. What happened?"

Jim! What else? Jim!" ← "Jim?"

"My boy Jim." (Hoo-ha) ← "you have a boy, Jim?"

Shrieks of laughter. "The young man I took in. Poor kid, he couldn't find a job. Nice kid, like a son to me."

"What went wrong?"

"Says I was trying to get into bed with him. He thinks I'm a prostitute." (Hee, hee, ha, ha, ho, ho,)

"You're not a prostitute, Katherine." Indeed, she was not even a candidate.

"Yeah, and I wasn't one in 44-46 either! Do I look like a prostitute to you?"

"No," he answered honestly.

"I was just trying to be affectionate. Hell, he's like a son to me. I take care of him. I feed him, I give him a place to live, I . . . got a broom anywhere?"

"What does he do for you?"

"Well . . . he sees that I take my pills. He got so mad at me. I was just trying to be affectionate." She began to empty wastebaskets, but not before unrolling wadded balls of paper to examine their contents.

"Give it a try,  
Katherine" &  
interjected.

"Margaret, I'm going to give you this shot to relax you a bit."  
"Won't help doc. I have too much to do. This place is a mess.  
Looks like prostitutes live here."

→ "You give me the shot nurse, not him; because the doctor  
man must go away, before I show my boom 'te ay."

"When she settles down, let me know. I need to do her admis-  
sion physical."

There was something about Dr. Marston that I couldn't quite  
pin down. When the alcoholism staff gathered for our daily  
meeting to decide, in our godlike fashion, who was sincere and  
who was not, who was willing to take Antabuse and who was  
not, who would go to a halfway house and who would not; when  
all of these things took place, Dr. Marston seemed to have an im-  
aginary placard hanging around his neck, upon which the word  
"dumb" was printed in large and unmistakable letters. It was a  
feeling that I could neither illustrate nor justify. It was true that he  
spoke fondly of having once wrestled a bear (declawed) but that  
wasn't necessarily dumb; it was mostly strange.

When Katherine had quieted down, I approached her bed.

"Katherine?" I asked tentatively.

"Hi nurse, nurse!" she exploded in laughter, very pleased to  
have fooled old nurse into thinking she was asleep.

"The doctor is ready for your physical exam."

"What makes him think I'm ready for *him*? (Smirk, smirk,  
laugh, laugh.)

"I'll take you to the examining room." I gave her the inevitable  
paper dress and sheet. As I summoned, she clutched and bunch-  
ed and rearranged her paper wardrobe.

"Better set up for a pelvic too. The hospital wants us to start  
screening all females' admissions."

Are you sure, Dr. Marston, I asked with my eyes, are you really  
sure?

"We'd better do it.

It is not unusual, when giving a patient a complete physical, to  
examine her abdomen; it is, in fact, both reasonable and ex-  
pected.

"Oh'h that *tick-les!*" Katherine laughed hysterically, jackknif-  
ing her knees to whichever section of abdomen Dr. Marston was  
attempting to probe. Tears of laughter rolled down her cheeks as  
he tried to perform a breast examination. What he learned in-  
stead was that her hands were normally developed, sym-  
metrical, and free of lumps and nodules.

"Oh'h doctor, you *must'nt* do that! Shame on you!"

"Bring her to the end of the table." His tone of voice was grim.

"Uh, Katherine. . . ." I tried to explain the situation to her as best I could.

"Oh ho, no. Not that!" She eyed the steel speculum.

"Waddayou think I am, some sort of a prostitute?"

"This may be a little cold, Katherine."

"Whoops! Oh, ha, ha. Ho, ho, ho. Hee, hee, hee."

Her laughter became more and more paroxysmal as she reached new heights of hilarity.

The speculum would not remain in place. Time and time again, Dr. Marston had to chase after her very unco-operative lower section, attempting and repeatedly failing at reinsertion. Katherine was rollicking with laughter. Her nurse, who finally caught the contagion, cough-laughed as discreetly as possible.

"We'll finish the physical later," Dr. Marston snapped.

I escorted Katherine back to her room. "We'll leave you alone now Katherine, I promise. Try to get some sleep." She lay on the bed, still convulsed with laughter.

Jim came to visit several days later. The "poor kid" was about 35; there was a fat and smutty look to the man. Katherine sat opposite him at a table, clearly worried that he might not consent to live with her anymore. "You're like a son to me, Jim; I've really missed you these past few days." Jim was sullen and unshaven, and not about to strike a hasty bargain. He would settle for nothing less than food, shelter, money, sobriety and chastity.

"You gonna take your pills from now on?"

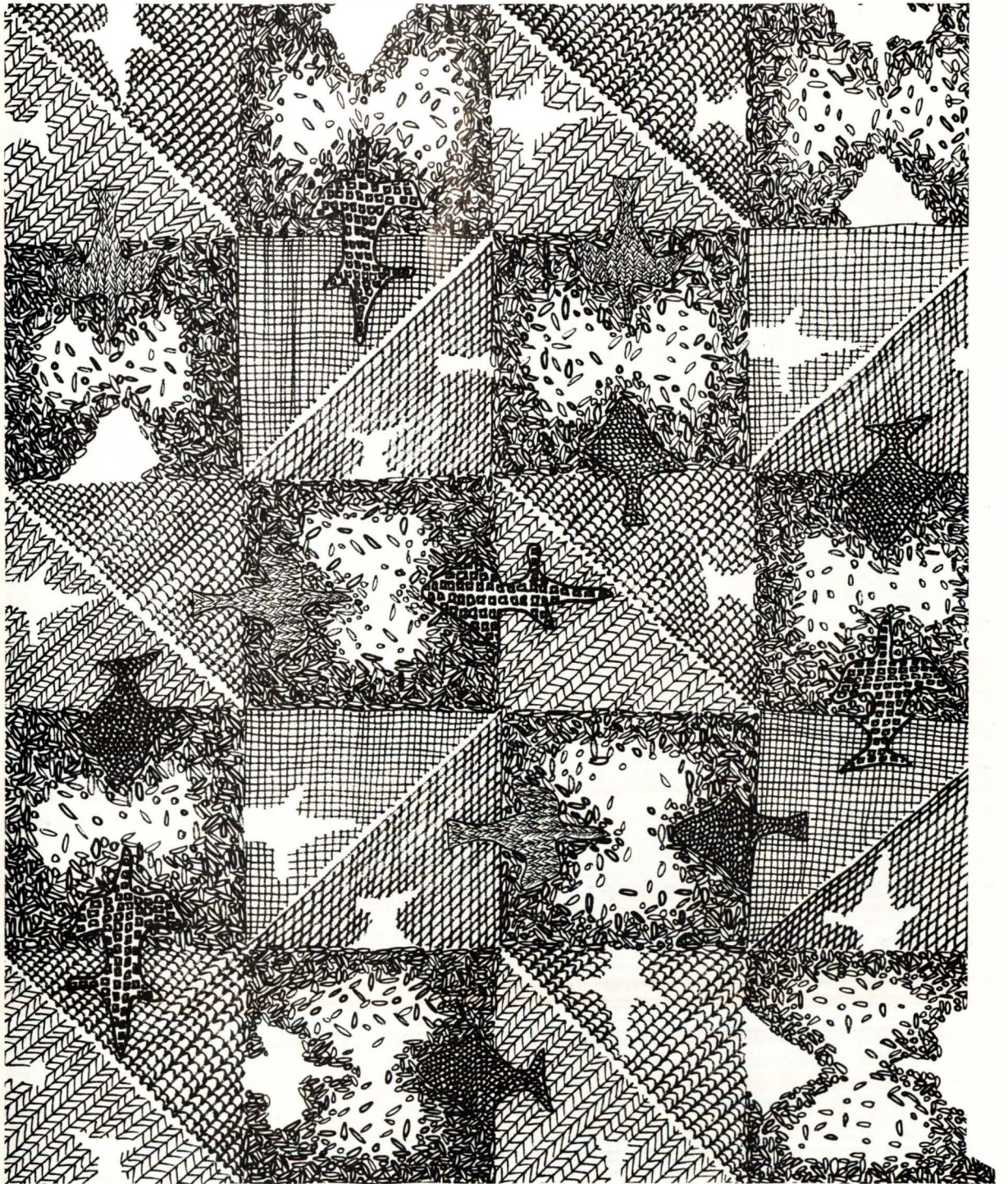
"Yes Jim, I promise I will. I promise."

The next time Katherine was admitted to the alcoholic ward, she was diagnosed, in addition to being drunk, as being depressed. The word depressed did not adequately describe her condition. She was starkly depressed. Her cheeks were sunken and her face, mime-like in its pallor, was gaunt. She had no expression; she simply stared. She moved mechanically or not at all. Jim, of course, had left, and precipitated this latest episode.

Katherine's future was as clear as was her recent past. She would vacillate between the psychiatric ward and the alcoholic ward, between alcohol and Thorazine, between unnatural glee and unnatural despair.

Even at that, I thought the lady had class. Furthermore, I was prepared to believe that, in those years between 1944 and 1946, in that district of the United States known as Washington, D.C., she had conducted herself with an unquestioned decorum.





## Butterflies

Renee L. Larson

When we walked through the park, alone after dark  
With the crickets scraping our ears, I thought  
I could draw stars on the Nothing of Time  
One for each movement I made.

If I could smell death in the back of my breath  
If the blood in me splashed like a brook  
If each lash of my eye were a separate butterfly  
And all of God's creatures at peace  
I would stand on a hill, unafraid and still  
And hold a drop of your love in each fist.



## Romance

Karen Peterson

Yesterday the old tire swing  
Invited me to his lap.  
He first rocked me gently,  
Caressing me with the breeze,  
Then lightly took my hand  
And we danced in the wind  
We flew up high and  
I hugged him tight  
Then he brought me slowly home.

Again today he called to me.  
As he lifted me up  
A breath touched my arm.  
Passing by branches, they  
Whispered secrets to me  
While he sang to my giggle.  
His arm on my shoulders  
Pulled me up to the summit  
And there we kissed the sky.

And tomorrow will he wisk me  
Up higher, over the top?  
Or will he jerk and let me  
Fall on blunt honesty?  
If I drop from the sky like  
A fallen fledgling, he will offer  
His hand, take me in his arm,  
And begin again, swinging softly.







In Front of Morie's  
Jackie Richardson

Near the alcoved fountain, where frozen frogs, studded in lucid emerald squat, bellhops bent, and doormen waved, she settled to swish the diamond droplets of water over the nude green statue's feet, onto the walk, distorting the puddles in rhythm. The tardy mid-afternoon rain had been too brisk; the puddles tapped lightly now.

The nude statue's frequent patroness pushed her leotards and sweater into her swollen canvas bag and sat limp. Her dyed pink worker's T-shirt raveled loose at her waist. From navel to ankle, tight denim criss-crossed and rested on the cool marble ledge. Her rest was well deserved she thought. The mist refreshed her firm skin; her raven hair fell wispy. She breathed deep the freed air that had been stolen from the studio at noon. Like it, she too, had escaped to this cool place in front of Morie's.

The doorman galloped through her rain puddles again and again; not to her annoyance, but because of his. He hadn't seen her on the corner before, and, after three more taxi emissions that would grease his palm, he vowed to call her time.

Time, punched on the card, expelled a penguin boy from the side kitchen door. Squelching thank-yous and promises to repay, his excited eyes targeted the bus stop. Running sideways, black tie and vest torn off, he hopped the bus, turning to smile at a closed kitchen door and the wide eyes of a skinny girl he thought must have posed for Renior.

He was gone and her smile, too late behind the snap of the dull accordion door, fell to the reflections on the walk, while, widow that it seemed, a black foot climbed atop her wet satin sandal. From the slight pressure, she knew it was not meant to hurt, but merely frighten. She lifted her head cautiously and brushed the straggle wisps of hair from her dark eyes.

"That man wants to know how much."

"How much what?" Her eyes searched.

Removing his foot, he placed his long leg between her bended knees, then, standing erect, took off his hat and rubbed the dull brass buttons with his sleeve. Her long soft braid crawled down her spine as her head tilted far back. She saw a gray suit, frayed maroon trim, and dull brass, hanging on a

thin frame. He didn't have a face until his head jerked, guiding her eyes to a late model automobile.

"The black limo." He placed his hat over his oily hair, dropping his white gloved hand over the flap of his uniform pocket. As he stepped back to glance at the doors, she pinched her legs together, snatched her bag and turned its printed "Amori" under.

"The amount?" he shapped as his white glove patted his pocket again.

"Of what?" Her eyes rolled to show her annoyance.

"Chickens in the pot!" he blurted sarcastically.

Looking up at him, she decided he must be new at the hotel. She stared bravely into his leaden eyes, fisted her hand on her hip, and looked away.

The limosine held a handsome, dark complexioned man. Leaning forward, drawing nearer to her, he seemed nervous as she studied his anxious face. His eyes were glistening like the backs of frogs in the pool. His smile slit, as his hand, studded with diamonds, groped the window's open frame.

"Delivered slum," she mumbled.

"What?"

"He looks goofy."

"So do you."

"I'm only resting. Why should you mind?" She brought up her bag and covered her chest.

"Come on, honey." Impatiently he pulled her up, purposely brushing his arm forward against the side of her ribs.

"You'll have to park it somewhere else. You're too green for this corner."

As she threw her bag over her shoulder, he slipped his white hand under it, and indignantly shoved her small buttocks toward the yellow pole on the curb. The green light pulled her across the street and before she could look back, the limosine blurred around the corner; the doorman returned to his doors.

Across the street, the burger sign threatened her last five. Hunger won over July's Vogue; greasy french fries over pumice stone. There was enough change for bus fare and the laces she would need for tomorrow's opening. A striped girl papered her food, landed it on a tray and shoved it with a plastic smile.

The scarlet booth at the end of the dirty blue vinyl aisle was cold and littered. Her tray skidded over the grit of salt and

soda; "Amori" landed in a waste of ketchup. Fallen back, sitting in what felt like the dregs of a small battle, she searched across the field for a clear view of her statue. Still there, not shoved or made a fool of, with obeisant frogs at her feet, the nude green statue remained tranquil and in control of her dominion. The soaked ballet slippers of the ballerina slid up under her buttocks. As her shoulders sunk, she began to give way to the cheap feeling imposed on her.

"How could he do that to me?"

The soft loudness of her voice startled her, and though no one heard, embarrassed, she pulled closer to the picture window. The beaded drops of rain on the opposite side costumed the black street in a flowing sequined gown. Intricate, but vigorous, the gown's peacock colors swooped and caught up the hurry of the streets. Dancing solo, its fouette kicked furiously in front of the hotel. Then, curtsying to the doorman, it requested his participation. Not able to do more than a simple two-step, he declined, and stepped inside the door, where he tapped his pocket on the off beat. Still, the evening gown continued, frolicking under the marquee. And when he returned to the sidewalk, it made a grand finale in between a puddle and a limo, leaving a splatter of muddy spots on the gray suit and white gloves of the thin man. Pleased with its performance, the rain resided for the night. The doorman turned and cursed the statue. The girl across the street stared.

From her garrison, she rested and watched. With hamburger flattened, pickles expelled, laying half dead, and cokes fizzling out, lumps somehow lodged in throats. She felt the expulsion more than threatening, but forever banishing. In the deep of the black night, where raindrops once fell hard, who would notice them running from her deep black eyes?

The doorman might. She spotted him watching her. Squirring to get out of the booth, she made her way to the door as a young man brushed by her.

"Hey . . . nice shirt!" He lifted it partially, exposing her thin abdomen.

"You like it?" An anger caught her. Her arms crossed in a flash; her long fingers tore the shirt off.

"Put it between your bun and eat it!" She wadded it tight, then flung the pink T-shirt into his face. Her eyes darted to the statue across the street, and regretting not having a sweater to share, she frantically pulled hers from her bag and over her

head. Just as brisk at the mid-afternoon shower had been, she burst onto the street.

“What a dumb broad!” the doorman said to the statue. He flicked his cigarette into the fountain, bobbed his head and snickered.

She watched him discard his butt, while searching for the change on bottom of her bag.

“What a slob.” She looked sympathetically at the statue.

The statue’s still eyes stared at both of them. Moments passed and in their triangle, they chisled at each other. The street was still.

Finally, only one statue remained.

He removed his hat, and allowed a sympathetic smile to cross his face as his gloves white-flagged across the field. Accepting, she shrugged, flung “Amori” over her shoulder, and ran to catch the last bus home.

## Forming Lines

Nancy Prodan

Wait--  
the line will form  
between you and me  
and we will do nothing but stare  
as it intensifies  
and defines itself.

I am not brave enough  
to step across it  
and you don't care enough  
to try and erase it.  
We will be as separate and distinct  
as two colors painted on a wall.

Even now,  
I see two points through which  
our line can be drawn.  
The fragile line will grow  
and become a crevice.  
The crevice will deepen  
and become an abyss.

## **MOTHER'S PURSE**

Mary Askren

Mother knew that being a woman  
was more than carrying a purse.  
It was carrying children and  
dropping blood and water mixed  
(like the side of Christ) month  
after month; it was making sacrifices  
in the name of love and crying  
out for the forsaken self.

Mother knew her daughter would carry  
private places within her and  
need private places to carry them,  
would carry ambition like a cross,  
wear love like a hair shirt, that  
it would rub her raw and the blood  
lost would cause the cross to trip her.

Mother knew. She gave me  
an empty purse knowing my life  
would fill it and I'd hide so much  
in it that at times I couldn't lift  
my eyes to Christ for the guilt  
hidden in my Pandora's box. She  
knew and prayed. And when she  
died, I opened her purse. She  
tumbled out like a jigsaw puzzle.  
I touched her brown wallet (mine is  
identical) and lifted her rosary.









**Cowgirl fom Venus**  
**T. R. Maves**

a liffle way fom the milkyway  
i use to ride my wocketship  
)between my legs(  
thinkin'  
of love

now lookin' for an angular  
angus-textured man with  
bawdyballs in his pants is my  
visualizzer in life  
i know i'd make a  
= salaey =  
cosmic velupsou  
uss'wife

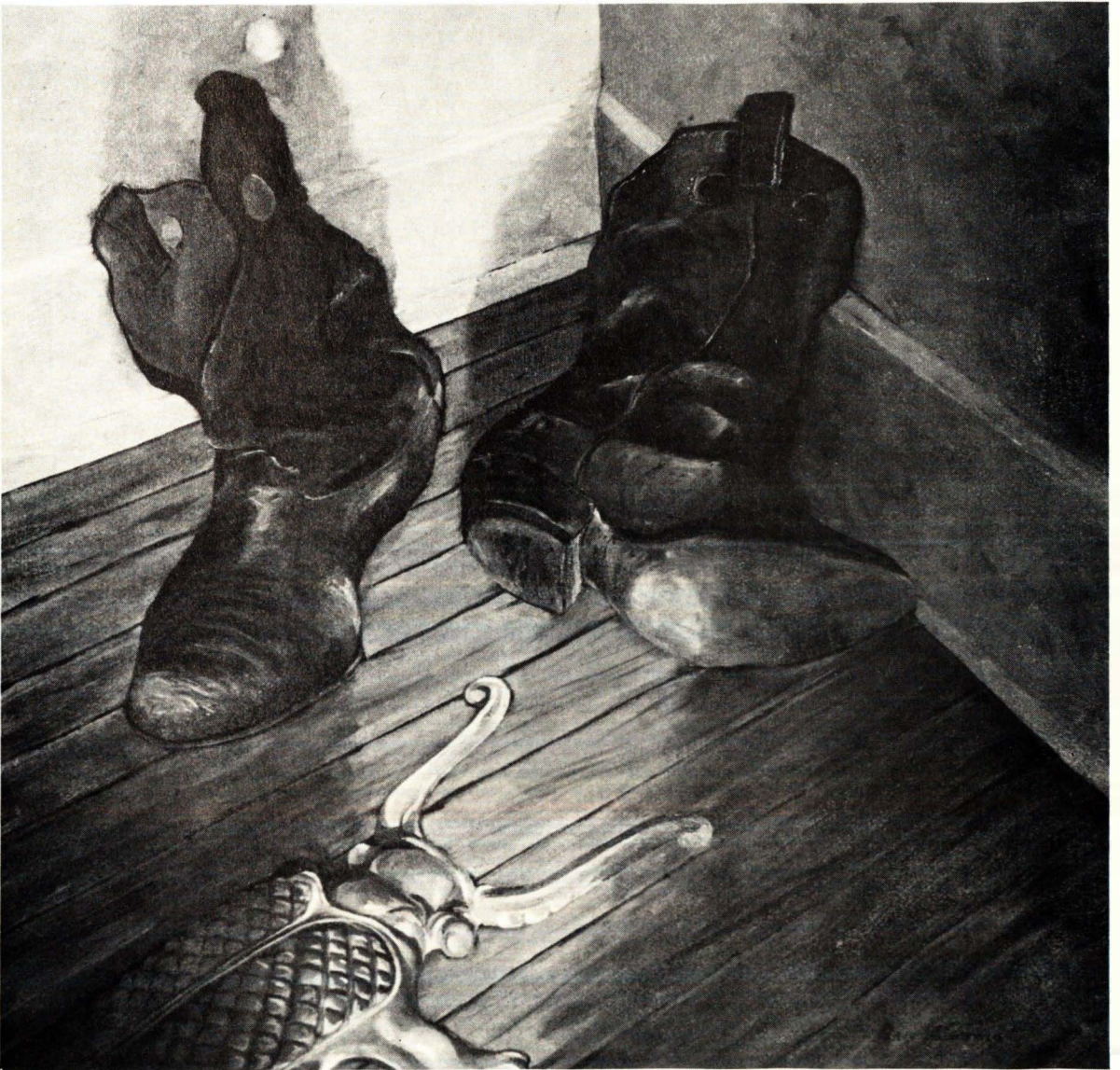
hey,hey, you rough racy ripe  
cowmanbull, don;tmake such-a-fuss  
i'm just a simple cowgirl fom  
venus

on a  
cosmic  
rush-----

lookin; for a  
bronco wocco buster  
to ride

this vot7vorney venishion

mare back home



**OAKWOOD** is the creative arts magazine of South Dakota State University and is open to all SDSU students to submit works. Production work on the 1984 **OAKWOOD** was a joint project of the printing classes in the spring semester of 1984. Many thanks to all of those students who put in long hours in class and out of class.

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