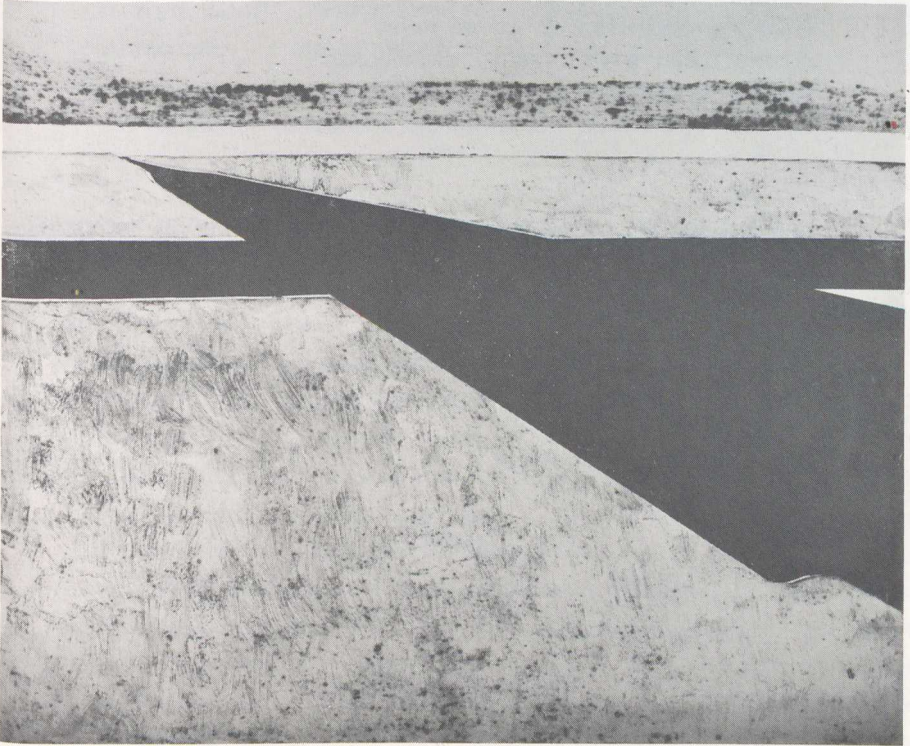


TOWERS

XXVIII

TOWERS



PETE JONES • "INTERSECTION IV" • PRINT • 20" x 24"

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
VOLUME XXVIII

DE KALB, ILLINOIS
MAY 1967

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POETRY

FIRST • CARL, I, AND THE ONE-ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE: SIX SONGS • EDWARD BEATTY

Judges

ROBERT COLLINS — THOMAS LINEHAN

GRAPHICS

FIRST • INTERSECTION IV • PETE JONES
SECOND • GIRL WITH A HOOP • GWEN JONES
THIRD • RYDERS REVERSE • NORMAN KNUTSON
HONORABLE MENTION • DORIAN GRAY • CHARLES RUDOLPH

Judge

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NEW YORK CITY

PROSE

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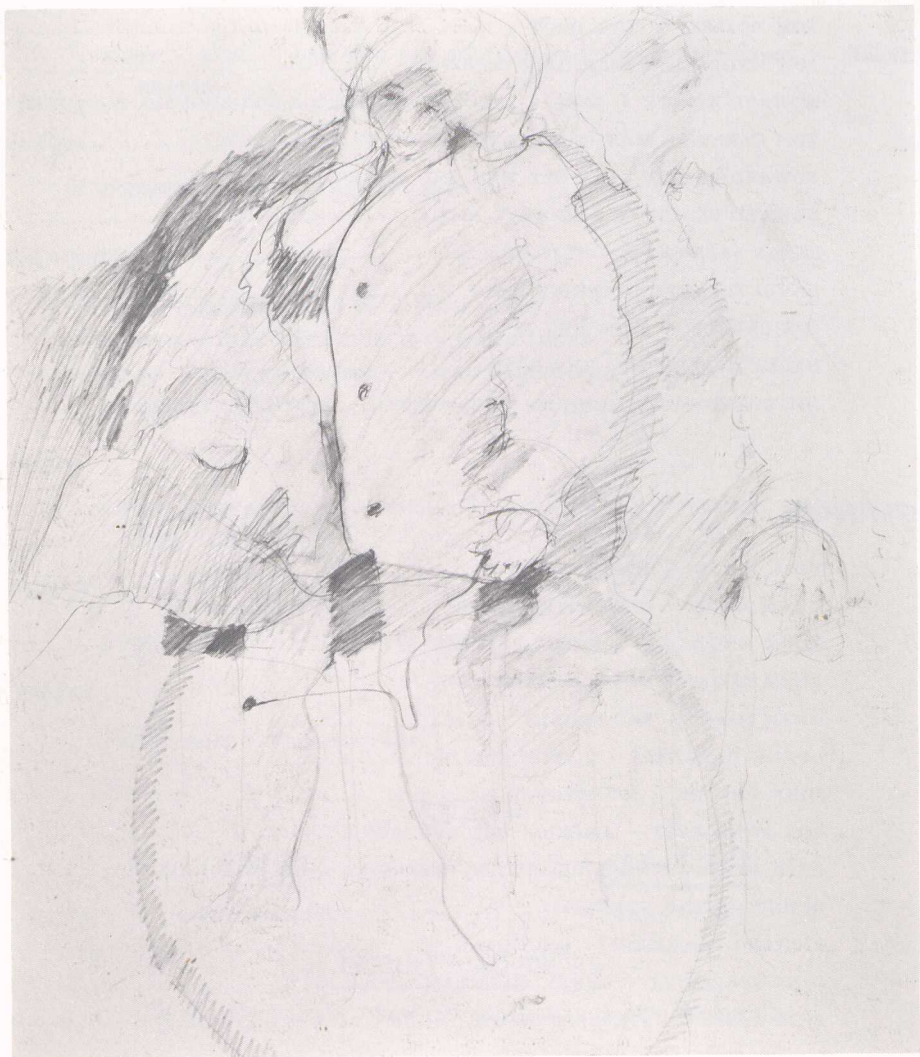
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GWEN JONES • "GIRL WITH A HOOP" • PENCIL • 20" x 24"

GIRL DRAWING POPPIES

I

The leanest colors of the sun,
Its thinnest golds and lavenders
Turn savage in the tersest green
These flowers know. September charrs

The last leaves, circling. Is this light
The heart of a vast epigram
Of landscapes? Sunlight shavings float
In the hot air above the plums

And poppies on the tablecloth.
Color must stumble from the sun
Before your fingers, thin and lithe,
Reveal the tenuous shades of wine.

II

Beach wind is in the mantel shells
And puckered starfish. Goldfish wind
The yellow weeds. Your dark hair falls
Down shoulders where the light has leaned

All morning. Are the peaches green?
Is there a scarlet in the trees
Not meant for us? Your pencilled lines
Are intersecting in the skies

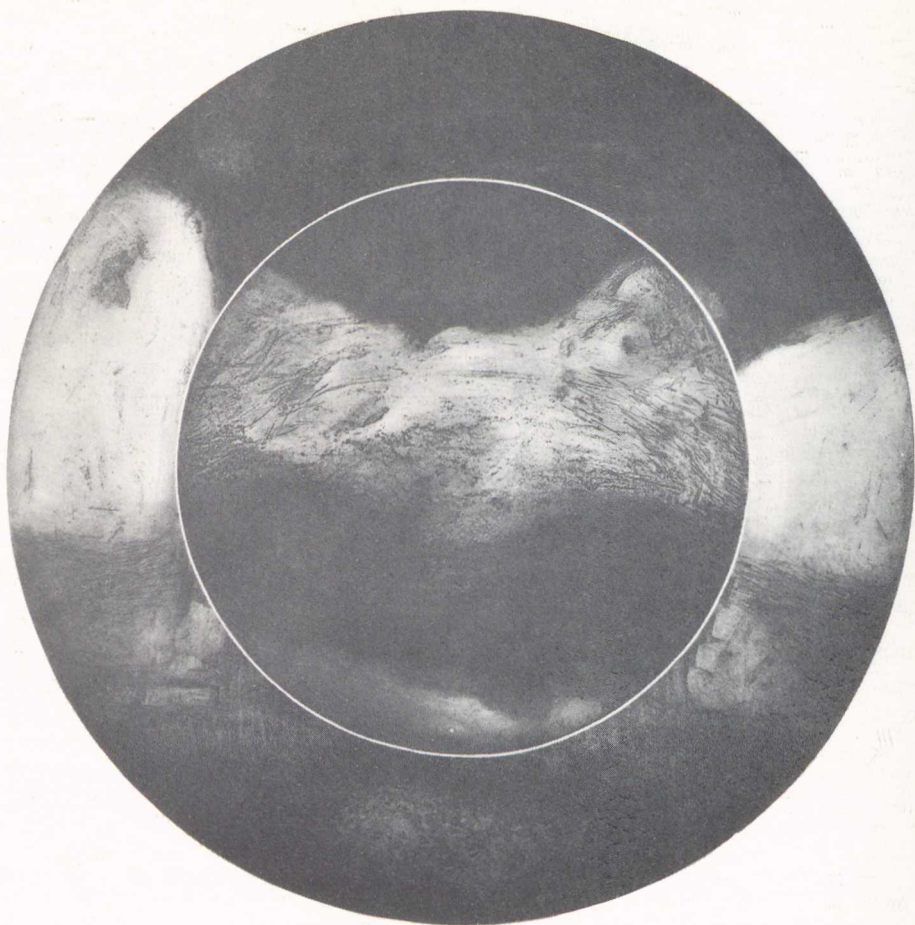
The morning magnified, a glint,
An apple-red, a tremor in
The bluest ices. In a slant
Of sunlight, in the thick of noon

The peaches show the ruddy tones
You have desired. It is shape
And color, past your placid lines,
That turn the thinnest music ripe

And put a meaning in the leaves.
Beechleaves are slowly turning gold.
The hill is blue. The drooping hives
Ooze an indifferent sap of cold

Transparent brasses. Your gold strokes
Are broken marigolds that fill
The evening. Now a beetle makes
A mansion of the heifer's skull.

TOM BOJESKI



NORM KNUTSON • "RYDERS REVERSE" • INTAGLIO • 24"

TO J. M. AND WIFE

I would like to take you
deep into my cellar,
down those rotting steps,
between gray walls
splattered with blood
where the rabbits hung.
Coal and potatoes
hang in the damp air,
drag you into the
farthest cool corner.

Come, Ma sends for onions.
Listen at the dull
yellow pantry door,
then rush down and back
not breathing once —
rush past spiders glaring
froze from the coal room.

Or come to pull stiff
rabbits, bones crunching,
off th nails. Watch blood
drip across mittens.
Avoid the eyes and
run to Father's knife
hard as corn-crib roofs
against the sun. Think of
it at night on the bench.

And one day come back
among the fruit jars,
squat behind lard pails
and wait. Beneath years
of dust and seeping
water, whistle to spiders
and hear, feel them move
slow to you. For you too
they will spin round
unseen threads of dark.

People will come once
lift you to light and air,
stare nervous around
and worry for years.
But now it is there
with you each moment.
Someday hands will relax,
dry weeds burn and
you rise in the lane —
sweep across the yard,
cellar door bang open
and in a gust I take
you whirling to dark.

Then you won't scream,
only watch nails grow
long and yellow and scratch
soft plaster walls.
The rat sound runs up,
reaches their beds —
they lie awake, listen,
stare to points of dark
and wonder what is said.
They will not, come now.
As we crouch, only
spiders in their shadows
read our scratches.

EDWARD BEATTY

GENESIS

I was rather surprised when my father turned directly towards the buildings as if to go into a store, because we were between stores. I didn't even notice the door of the shop until he had with one movement opened and entered it. I followed his sure footsteps with more hesitant ones of my own. It turned out to be a bakery with a slanted glass counter on the left. There were small, round metal tables with metal chairs around them. They were painted flat white, the kind you would expect to find outdoors. The shop was well lit with no glare. It was like a forest on a bright day, but the air, though fresh, was not moving and had no odor. This seemed strange in the presence of baked goods.

Then I heard my father. He was talking to the man behind the counter. "I'll take a doughnut, but I have to go out for a few minutes first." This astonished me for he'd told me nothing of his plans, but I thought he meant for me to wait for him.

I noticed the man behind the counter. He was beaming with pride as he watched my father go out the door. No wonder! My father was an impeccably dressed, perfectly controlled man. It was an honor to serve a man who was so successful at both business and life.

He continued smiling even after the door had been firmly closed until he noticed me. Then he went to work making the pastry for my father. When he was smiling I had noticed something peculiar about him. His face was dominated by a large red nose. I say red nose, but it was nothing like the porous shiny nose of a drunk. It looked rather the same color and texture of a radish and faded into the rest of his face. It was a triangle inside the inverted paste white triangle of his face, his oily, curly hair making a straight line across the forehead. I thought vaguely of Europe. He was a thin man nebulously concealed beneath white hangings. His head and hands seemed disconnected from him.

He put a disk of white cardboard, about a foot in diameter, on the work bench behind the counter. His hands were at work now behind the glass counter. They selected a huge pastry and put it on the disk. From the counter they took what looked like rich, gooey blueberry filling to put in the hollowed center of the roll. Then he smiled as he appreciated the result and put some of the crumbs and goo from the table into his mouth. His head tilted back as if he were overcome with perfume. Then, remembering his obligation, he took a spoon half way down the counter and scooped up what looked like dried black raspberries, small, velvety, but strangely unwrinkled. I was somewhat curious, but I also wanted to be friendly to the man who was apparently so fond of my father. "Black raspberries?"

He answered shortly as if interrupted and turned his head stiffly. "Yes, red raspberries."

The first part of his response settled me somewhat, but "red" troubled me. He was sprinkling the berries on top of the filling and then popped one into his mouth. Then he spiraled the pastry with frosting from a cloth sack

catching the last bit on his finger. He let it dissolve in his mouth while he contemplated his work with satisfaction. For a minute I felt mushy, as if there was nothing restraining me and I could not move.

The pastry looked so rich and too big, but I felt a need to impress this man. It would be good if I ordered one of these pastries, but it was, as I say, huge and rich. And besides, I had only a half dollar and wasn't sure of the price. Perhaps being too practical, I asked if he could make me one of those pastries or rather half of one since that would probably be more than sufficient. He looked rather past me and flatly said, "Yes, of course," as if I were a customer he could not escape.

He haphazardly took out a little square wooden thing that looked as if it were woven out of popsicle sticks and sat it on the work counter. His hands cut one of the smallest of the pastries into two obviously unequal pieces and, perhaps from boredom, took the smaller. If it was a mistake or not I could not tell, but the filling this time looked like black cherry jello. He seemed to forget what he was doing again, and he began to pick at the edge of the pastry and eat it but without the pleasure he had had before. He forgot the withered raspberries entirely. He quickly put the icing on and sort of tossed it on the counter, hardly a fourth the size of my father's.

"Thirty-five cents."

I tried not to show my reluctance, to actually appear grateful, and gave him the half dollar. He put it in the register, took out the change, walked around to my side of the counter, and held out his hand. I put mine out to receive the change. He dropped a dime into it, quickly pushed the other nickel into his apron pocket, and walked over to a refrigerated case along the wall that could have had a street window in it. I was a little angry now and wished I had asked him with a disgusted voice to keep the change.

I picked up the little wooden pallet and turned around to watch the man. He was just staring blankly through the glass door of the refrigerated case at the eclairs and many other cakes and cookies I had never seen before that required refrigeration. His face began to smile sickly, and his eyes glazed slightly, and he turned and said, (to make me forget the nickel I think) "Did you ever have mimo-cha?"

I had heard of a dessert but thought it was pronounced mocha. "Is it anything like coco mocha?"

"Ah, coco-mimo-cha, very fine. But I used to practically live on pumpkin mimo-cha. Magnificent! Simply exquisite!"

He said this with a far off look in his eye, and I felt there might be a connection between pumpkin mimo-cha and his red nose. I smiled, but I guess I didn't put any meaning into it for he turned and gazed at the case again.

I went to a table in the far corner to eat my pastry. I had never had anything quite like it. The filling had the consistency of jello, but I couldn't decide if it tasted like prunes or more like something else. Perhaps it was something I had never heard of. It was not oppressively rich, hardly sweet at all. It could probably be eaten everyday. Suddenly the man said, "I want to show this to someone, a friend of mine next door. I'll be right back. Would you mind telling the customers?"

My mouth was full so I kind of choked and nodded and waved my hand. He left with my father's pastry on his hand over his shoulder like a bus boy. I finally swallowed, and started to relax. I wondered where my father had

gone. And then I wondered how it was that my father's pastry had looked so terribly rich that I couldn't have eaten more than two bites of it. Oh it would have been very good at first, but it would have quickly become unbearable. While mine, which had really just been thrown together, had a sort of common taste at first which I now like very much. It was almost wholesome.

The baker came back in a few minutes and I could see the traces of a smile disappearing. As he was going to the counter, I mentioned that nobody had come in or anything, but I do not know if he heard me or not. I was wondering if I should tell him again, but it seemed unimportant, and I wondered why I had said anything in the first place.

In a while, the door swung open and a man entered as if he were in a friendly bar. The baker's face lit up. He said, "Hi ye, hi there Cookie, hi ye."

"Hi Mike," clipped the new man.

He kind of swaggered, as if he were trying to be funny, over to the refrigerated case and took out something made of three Schlitz cans. He put them up to his eyes like a pair of field glasses, and scanned the room. I could see the triangular holes on the tops where they had been opened. Both men laughed heartily, and I began to think it was pretty funny and smiled.

Later another man came in and did the same thing. I laughed, but apparently the same joke twice isn't funny, or else they hadn't seen it, because no one else laughed.

I was feeling pretty low by the time my father got back, and I didn't want to walk fast any more or smile at the right times. He went smartly to the counter to get his pastry. He was pulling a dollar out of his wallet and the baker was holding the pastry up for approval before wrapping it.

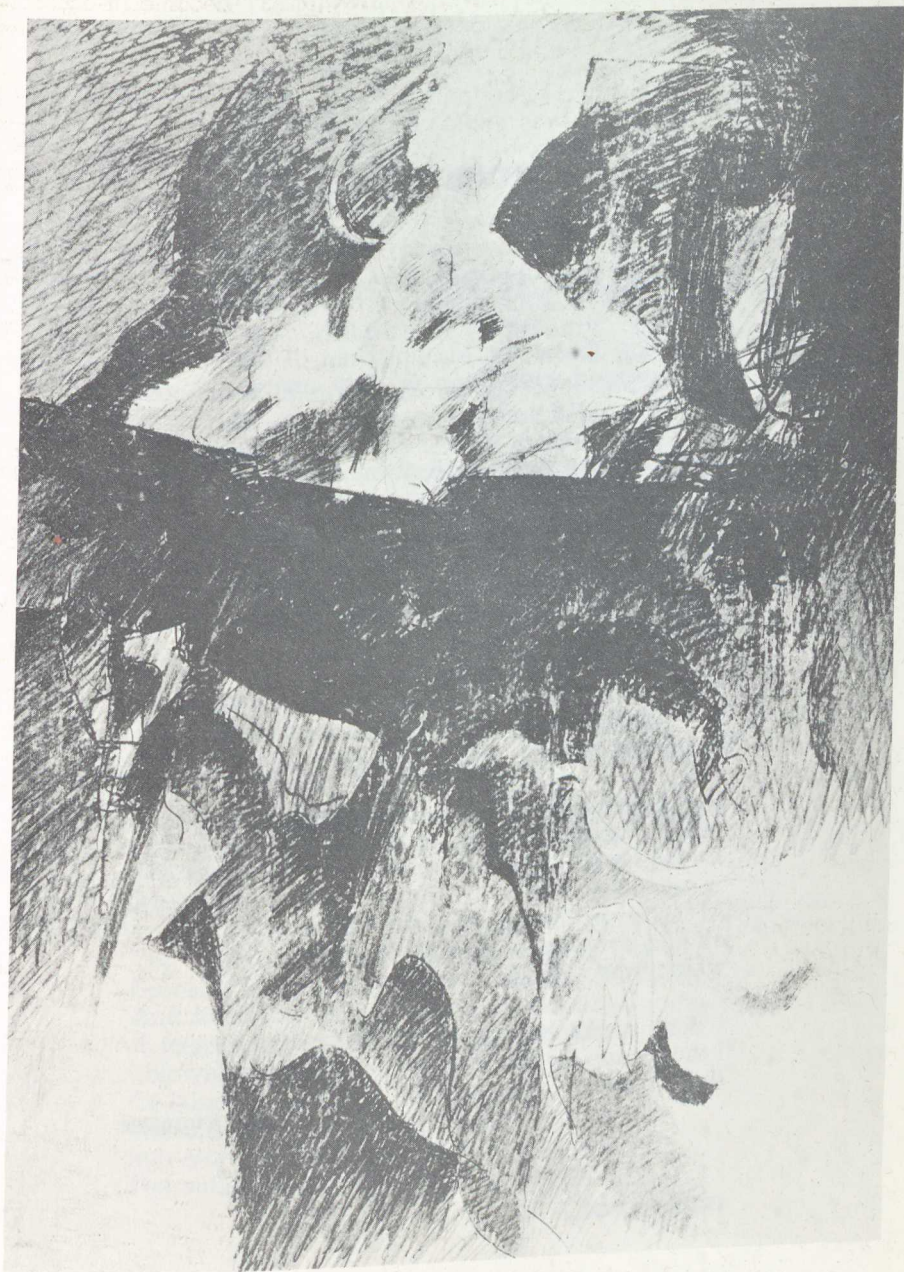
"Mmm yes, that looks very good, Michael."

"Thank you, sir."

Michael put it in a bag carefully but quickly, put the parcel on the counter, and accepted the dollar graciously.

My father turned, saw me and started walking towards the door. I thought he expected me to follow him. I was just barely able to get my words out to say, "I want to stay here for a while." I still don't know if he paused when he heard that or if he was just having trouble opening the door.

DAVID E. JAMES



RICHARD JANIS • "EXCREMENTATION" • LITHOGRAPH • 18" x 24"

I BELIEVE IT WAS THE WATER

Somebody threw the furniture out of my room
and repainted everything in dirty orange
and thick.

I saw him and was afraid of his too-quick
spraygun, his long hose and roaring
compressor.

I shut my eyes and sucked the furniture
back and it ran around
the walls.

The sofa got caught on the compressor hose
so I jumped on the cushions and held them
all in my arms.

The fat chair, lewdly dressed, squatted
and the room ran down its belly and off
on the floor.

At last even the damned rug took
off and everything crashed in China
which was yellow.

I don't remember China, but on getting back
I must have thrown that painter a couple day-old,
well, roses.

JON KNUDSEN

THE IDIOT

The images of this brown room are lost
To us. The table, carven oak, is full
Of flowers. Light is the cold tone of frost
Beating around the room. The mirror, tall

As late sunflowers, shows the curtained bed
And pitcher, nothing more remarkable
Than sunlight. In the wicker chair outside
The room, the boy whose skull is small

As noon light on the shrinking beach
Regards the waves with placid eyes. The poem
Of the half eaten orange just out of reach
Scrapes like a cricket. Shadows fill the room,

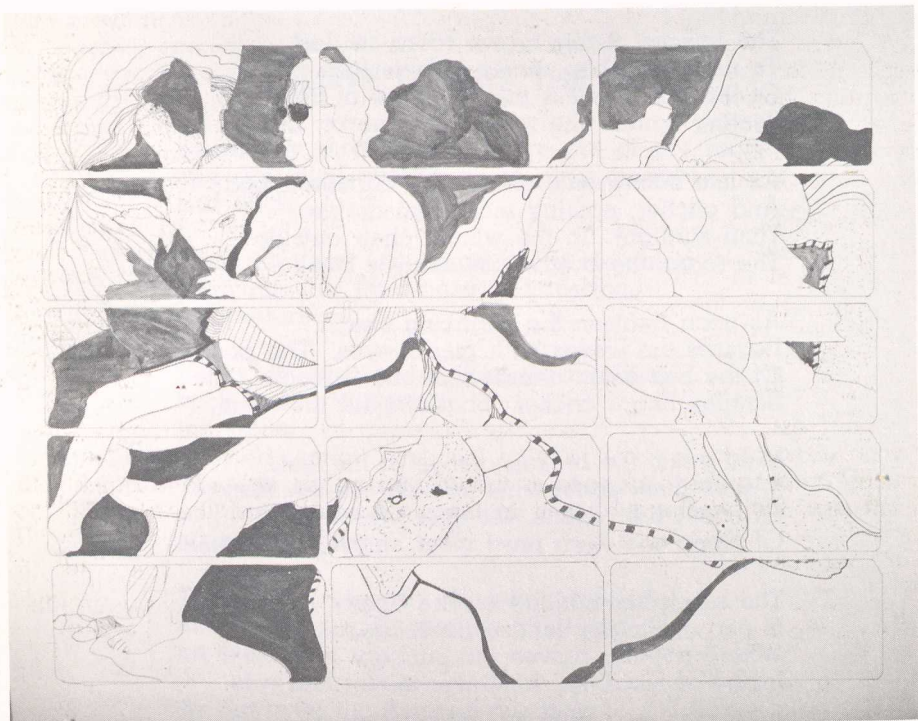
Light veins the broken orange at his feet.
Waves push against his eyelids. In the thick
Of noon, past swans, the ever present heat
Of flame and flesh must meet, uncoil, and break.

The sandcrab, fiddling on the empty shore,
Is part of the dry landscape of his head
Where nothing moves but sunlight in a clear
Image of morning. Junebugs mount and ride

The warm lake wind, the thick catalpa tree
Spreads branches overhead. His fingers reach
And touch the fallen orange. Suddenly
A ferryboat is crossing the blue stretch

Of lake: the room is full of images,
The orange is eaten. Now a thin boy leans
Into straw colored summerlight and sees
The subtle fire of the coupled swans.

TOM BOJESKI



GWEN JONES • "FAT BROADS" • INK • 20" x 24"

SOMETHING FALLING SWEET AWRY

We all might have panicked about it, she thought. We might have rolled about like jaundiced worms looking for something green to eat. Would we have then turned blue? Not, certainly, me. As flesh I am, so shall I stay that way. Perhaps we should have had rain. That would have been perfect, exceptional, for the house could have lent itself well to an atmosphere of enthralling horror — gruesome in its murderously pleasing, midwestern Miniature-Gothic fashion — sitting as it does atop the rise with the bouncing hills all around and dripping down into the woods and God knows what beyond that. Someone else's land, no doubt.

What should I have expected? I don't know. We should have been singing, but we don't sing. We should have been rumbling up that long gravel road at an angel's clip with Karl a kid again and happy and Hayden with bare feet on the dash holding his arm out the window to catch the dark night air and brush the tips of the weeds growing tall near the road and I, prim vestige of an ex-Lord-Savage, snug in the middle, a willing, vowed hostage but that, too, was really impossible.

Karl drove, Hayden slept, and she'd been in the back with nothing to see or watch except the yellow hum of the dash lights. Her father-in-law had virtually crept up the back road as though unsure, or, she added quickly in all fairness, just washing himself in the slow freedom of the trip. But so quietly! Like cautious thugs they'd pulled into yard and Karl had said: "I forgot the housekey."

Hayden woke, they got out and walked around the small house and then stood on the back porch, Hayden and his father talking.

"You're sure you don't have it?" asked Hayden.

"No. Didn't I give you a key once?"

"Huh-uh."

And for all she knew they might have gone on talking like that all night, neglecting entirely Karl's ownership and dreadfully afraid of doing anything which might offend the house. She said nothing. Hayden went out into the yard a few paces and looked thoughtfully toward the house.

"Windows?" he asked finally.

"Should be locked. The whole place should be tight. I have the sheriff check it once 'a week. What time is it, Hayden?"

"Eleven-thirty."

"I suppose we could go to the sheriff's. He does have a key."

"That's about twenty miles, isn't it?"

"About."

Worst of all, this is possible. It happens all the time, she thought. Whether to laugh or scream seemed unimportant since she thought they

would probably misinterpret either. Instead she, too, joined the thoughtful trek from porch to yard, though rather than looking up imploringly toward the second floor and wondering what to do she looked down, staring hard at the dark ground until she found it and then without a word she went back to the door and crashed it through a windowpane, reached in, snapped the lock, opened the door and walked in.

At midnight when they were in their room, Hayden said: "I have to admit that I'm ashamed of you. That sounds bad, but it's the only thing I can say."

She said nothing.

"You made him feel like a fool."

She nodded.

". . . glass all over the place. And the way he moves we'll be killing bugs for the first month. And why didn't you just let him take care of it?"

"It was late. He was doing nothing. And there aren't any bugs yet. It's too early." Hayden was sitting on the bed one foot up and the other touching the floor while she stood near the window, neither of them at all angry, but both trying slowly to ease the awkwardness of the night.

"Hayden."

"Yes?"

"He doesn't even have screens on the windows."

Lord-Savage was her maiden name and though an abundance of grace clattered often with a cheerless ineptitude, she was beginning to think she might soon prefer feeling closer to the nearly year-old Hockensmith, Mrs. Hayden D. It meant nothing, most importantly, and it pleased her, as empty things often did, lending themselves so smoothly to whatever in her own momentary judgment she felt things should so be lent.

She stood, then, that morning, the first morning, in the northern bottom of the field, her chest convulsing heavily from the bruising force of the run. The field and for all she knew the whole county was empty and no one had seen her. It was early and possibly no one was awake but she'd run with a fury and stamina surpassing fright and bordering fear and perilously close to total freedom. Yet there was nothing to be afraid of, no terror, no dread, no greater pursuer than the rising sun and with this her course had met no competitor. At least half a mile, she thought, though in this wrong as the distance was over two-hundred rods from house to fence, a long, aching run but necessary when pain was needed to distill lethargy into motion and motion into flight. And she hadn't slept either, in spite of the intimate snugness of the house with its two upstairs bedrooms only a light jump to the earth. There had been quiet and warmth and comfort with her husband big and young and sweet beside her and gross Karl the Good Snail downstairs and out of mind. So it had been a friendly night but too fine for sleeping.

It was June and if her run was meant to ease her violently away from the silence of the morning house and into the vivid charge of life somewhere in the hilly fields she succeeded, for even the wetness of the hanging dew seemed to be alive. Not even blood could have felt more unique and pushing than the gently clinging sag of the tall grass, heavy with moisture and as

clean as the trees, and with a calm sigh of enjoyment she slipped the shoes from her feet and sat, only her head topping the tips of the greenness as her eyes swept south to the gleaming white torch of the house in the sun.

For a moment it ceased as building, a sturdy playhouse of a white box holding the sleeping shapes of the only things in the world she held important and interesting. The bodies, the two healthy men-things faded and dissolved into a fleshless, inspiring memory with the life gone but the importance remaining. It seemed a gaudy flare and the light alone was vital but the reasons were unexplainable, too complex and enmeshed with the grass and the water, the sun, thistles, sunshine, stickweed and tiny flecks of sleepy field gnats. Who has not tried to claim the sun as personal? she thought. Her mind was whipping in a blowing rush of wordless thoughts, a storm and drama of release until the long tug of a backlash of sensibility brought her back to bare feet with flecks of dirt and pieces of green like parsley and the drench of the denim shift as she sat in the grass and realized that her breathing was once again normal. For a moment she was motionless, an icon without ritual alone and relaxed, barely visible on the side of the hill. She lay back and stared at the sky through the miniature forest of swaying spines of grass. Overhead a bird flew in sporadic spurts and swoops, trying to impress her, she guessed, an arrogant four ounces of metabolizing feathers with a rocky throat and brittle bones. Like all the Lord-Savages, a bird of all silliness spanning oceans in unknown glory and that brought one down to the root tide and sour core of things: Does it matter that perhaps the only time my will and my ability ever met in reasonable harmony was on the day of my birth? Matter, matter . . . as long as I can always be for him what I must be for me?

She remembered the last meal she'd made and how with less than humor she'd thought that special tragedies were simply made for certain un-special kinds of people. But there were other things and for those she knew he appreciated her.

Like lying beneath the deep sky and thinking, "I like this" and knowing that he wouldn't. Even that would be important for him like a wind-up toy who more than anything else had to be left to wind herself. Another thought trotted in at three-quarter time across her eyes. I am taught what I am taught because others are taught to teach it. What do I know? If this were winter time I should I think be doing this same thing, though not with bare feet and nothing only nothing but a denim shift on. Still, lying in this same way. Would it be dark? Probably. When dawn came then with the sky wearied thick with snow and I in my hollow staring upwards and not knowing where the edges of the hollow and where the seams in the sky. Being a source of sorts, a seed at the pit of an immense parabola scooping up to take in all the sky, taking in nothing since it could all be hollow or all be sky. I would not know.

But it is summer and not winter and it is early morning and the walls are jagged and easily cut out the sky. She brought a leg up and rested her calf on top of her knee, not worrying so much about modesty as knowing that its not really important when one is alone. Unto myself I am not evil, she thought, taking aim at the departing bird with her toe and following it into the high trees. Or am I? It perched some hundred yards from her, top sentry in a jabber of noisy scuttlings, what mind it had absorbed in cutting this girl out of the grass, its head jerking, tipping, twisting in rigid and chaotic little motions of awareness, watching with as knowledgeable a stare as that of a television set, though the bonus of having two eyes was depth so that when the girl rose in a liquid start of thought, set, and spring and advanced he savored the hushed pride of being able to warn. It was not danger, he knew,

but a warning was a warning. It was imperative that the others be warned. He launched, screeching, and the others fled to the depths while he, in appearance brave, in truth having only a full assessment of what was happening, descended to a lower branch to await the girl.

In the aching stretch of rising Donna felt the early hour and yawned heavily, her arms reaching hard downward and her legs contracting and forcing her up to her toes in a demanding stretch. She breathed heavily and for the first time felt fully awake.

No, it was not possible yet for them to really anger each other. She was too elusive and he too irenic and they only met at night, on payday, for Thursday breakfast or, such as this time, for the summer holiday. There would be many more and someday they would get to know each other.

She looked around at the erratic edge of the wood as it ran along the ends of the field, stopped once by a hill but further on running east and then south in the direction of the house though still a good half mile from it. In all the visits to Karl's farm the wood would be a barrier, she knew, a place to stop not because of lack of ownership — since what he owned went deep into and in some places beyond the trees — but more of time. Walks in the fields, down the hills, along the fences, to the scattered ponds . . . they would always go to the heavy stand of trees and no farther. It would always be the place to stop and so she stopped, thinking it would be time soon for breakfast, time to drive into Gin-Trivet for the day's papers, time to love Hayden, to hate Hayden, to talk to Karl, to argue, joke, play with and contradict Karl for the one reason that he was her father-in-law, possess herself and be mysterious and — true and incorruptible Lord-Savage — cry, sing and always do. Uttering a soft "Damn!" she tossed a stick toward a tree, turned around and began walking back, leaving only the disappearing hollow where she had lain to wake and an outraged, scatter-minded bird who'd seen the careless stick miss it by several yards and only moments later was wondering why this morning for no explicable reason seemed different from all the others.

It was not perfect but it had weight and would serve. She pulled the big thistle softly from the loose dirt, making sure she got enough of the root base to make it heavy enough to throw and trying not to jab herself with the mean spines. She crossed the yard to the side of the small house and looked up at the second floor window, their room, gauging without thought and gently swinging her arm until the thistle flew in a fluttering arc through the window and onto the bed, making no noise and scattering only a few specks of dirt on the blanket.

Readiness. Waiting. A silence listening for noise. Soon Karl would wake, then Hayden with, she hoped, a gulping "Ouch!" No coffee glibly perked, no heavy egg, bacon and grease smell rolled throughout the house. Nothing doing and nothing about to go, she thought. Nothing big, this something. Yet she waited, refreshed, awake somewhat exhilarant, light and at least quietly happy. There were no sounds in the house except the outside — bugs, birds, wind, and leaves. Stray sounds. Unordered but clean. Once from high overhead a small plane buzzed and left. The house itself was too small for any weighty, aged creakings. She waited, sitting at the kitchen table and doing nothing, chin in hands, feet cold as the dew evaporated

from them in the narrow breeze from beneath the gap in the door. Someone had to hear the first sound, that might be it. It made the place homey to have homey sounds made and noticed by someone, preferably woman, preferably old with a kitchen look, but though the farm had been a family retreat for two generations it had never known an old woman in the family. The Hockensmith family seemed to disapprove of old women and removed them accordingly. Hayden's mother, a young woman whose song had been too fiery and stuffed with life, a good candle melted, long-gone and in worry forgotten, though the grandmother, young as she, too, had been, had passed on in the midst of a properly woman-like function with Karl the result . . . a rarity, she thought suddenly, a vanished breed those farmhouse matricides. Enjoying her personal comedy she laughed and wondered if she were waiting to die right then in the midst of this stray-lopped mood and she thought this with more than a good deal of respect, a consideration of tradition modified by the awe of supposing there might be something to it. It was not a conclusion easily accepted, threatening, as it did, to wipe out every last remnant of Lord-Savage in her.

"Until death you do part," she remembered, then added, "and may you never grow old together." It was not a thought to be interrupted. It fit her well for that moment, but Karl entered the room, his face white and puffy with night and morning, his robe rumpled on over his tan and stained pants, and between two fingers of one hand was deftly grasped the wilting thistle.

"Snooping around, eh, father-in-legal? . . . Oh, it's just our custom, you see, that each magnificent morning in a suspiciously nimble and cavortible way we rival each other to the beat of astonishment . . . 'Awake! Awake! my love.' You know, that sort of thing . . . sometimes wet cracker crumbs, a frog, the dog, a song . . . one time did I not awake to find my husband balanced atop the bedstead in his precious bareness bouncing grapes off my brow? Didn't I? You see, you see, father-in-law, crazy things are indeed expected of the young and when the young are simply alone with each other they lose sight of what's crazy and what's young."

She didn't say those things, it seeming more appropriate that if a big lie were believed quickly, then a big lie left unsaid would be caught and held even more readily. He really has no interest in our games, she thought, though it did occur to her to feel embarrassed and accordingly a stubborn flush of playful shame crept over her cheeks. What could he say? What could she say? Explanations were so bulky. At least she wouldn't have to explain to Hayden now.

"Dirt on the bed, that's all. Tiny chunks . . . I thought the ceiling was falling down."

She looked at him as he sat in bed, his hair a nest, his face wrinkled with sleep, and his eyes droopy. She admired him, admired the constant reduction of mist to water. But oh the effort! Always this regressive unwinding was like telling a joke after the ending was known. He couldn't press her about it. He just had to wake up slowly and awkwardly as with every other morning. None of the good things ever broke clean; always they had to crumble and dismally shift away to remind her of some other day and to make her forget.

"It was very early," she began. "I went outside. I was . . . there . . . I came back to bed. My feet were wet and probably a little dirty." She turned away from him and walked to the door.

"But on the pillow?"

Oh you poor, sweet prayer, she thought. How well you do deserve knowledge: The day was a perfect fright, a pocket of terror in the pants of time, I stumbled down to the secret forest and was abducted for a fortnight by a thousand wailing, lusting Lord-Savages, covered with green grass and I shouted: "I love my husband and God and my mother so leave me alone!" but they wouldn't listen. "Useless girl," they said. They ravished my mind, Hayden. They turned me against beautiful mornings and wifely duties and told me I must die soon, that I was old, very graciously old and ugly, nubile crone, but old . . . "Agh!" I spat at them and pulled up handfuls of them, wringing them through my fingers and draining them of life but they kept coming at me until finally I was able to stand and stand I did, turning toward the sun and the morning wind and thinking of a special intoxication for only very young and useless wives, of bliss, of ecstasy, of humiliation and piety and children and home. Yes, of home most of all. Thinking home like a voice from the sun or thinking that even I might turn against what I've never accepted if only I so chose. Ah, but I faced them, husband, touched the woman in me to a proud point, turned and shouted, "I so choose!" and walked home, came back to my bed — my dear how well you still slept — and joyfully thumped myself into bed while totally forgetting all the sticks and bits of dirt and earth with which I nastily dirtied our bed.

In a world where the line between grass and men was excitingly thin, any explanation would do. Once again she turned to him.

"Would you like to fix our breakfast now?" she asked.

GERALD K. WUORI

MARJORIE DONOVAN

On days that are too wet
the men come to Pecatonica
to play canasta at
tables in the town's
only tavern.

We were up at the bar.

You couldn't stop baring
your teeth and howling.
Your eyes cracked glass
everywhere. You seemed fierce,
especially here, with the farmers.

JON KNUDSEN



DUANE HARKNESS • "LANDSCAPE" • WOODCUT • 18" x 24"



JOHN PUFAHL • "WABBYGOON II" • PEN & INK • 12" x 14"

CARL, I, AND THE ONE-ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE: SIX SONGS

(memories become dreams of memories)

Too much beer and trains on Nelson bridge,
Again I think of you and the one-room
Falling schoolhouse, long gone.
Spring geese and ducks are here tonight,
The moon follows limbs and ice downriver.

1 Yelling Contest

Out in the Spring or Fall lairs
or deep in the snow circled basement
the day would get to us,
farms, long fields, creeks
burst from us.
Christ we could yell!
Yell for girls to watch, walls
and trees to sway, birds to cheer.
The teacher (who dreamed of us at night,
always seeing two enormous mouths
covering her in sheets of sweat)
would come as your old goose,
a mad feather-fluffed pecker.

Later, at the cross-road, after an hour
Of giggles, belches, and cleaning-up
the scraps and powder day had left,
We hollered "good-by" "see ya
mother trucker" and then
just huge Illinois hollers
down rough gravel or strewn snow,
between fading rusty fences,
into clouds, through new winds . . .
Two fools, two Canadian Honkers
returning North.

2 "If you see Kay . . ."

A dirty play-ground and teeter-totters,
Judy of short skirts and holy pants —
You could hear her grow,
stretch those coarse panties and blouses,
legs hard around that rough board.
We watched, felt strange, nudged each other.
We were clever and teased
"If you see Kay — tell her I want her."

Our clothes heavy, worn,
sagging and itching
We stood among dull farm boys
and thought we knew her sweat and smirk.
She, girl of alfalfa and weeds, only said
"If you want to say it — say it."
Under a laugh we stood naked, burnt
in the humid June air. That afternoon
we picked a fight, mangled her brother.
All summer in hay, oats, corn,
divided by flat busy farms,
we dreamed of her and her word.

3 Indians

You and I, lovers of losers,
watchers of trees drawing at night
on damp lawns,
decided to be Indians.
Behind the cracked blackboard, basement furnace,
or crouched in the rotting garage at recess,
we made agreements, created plans
to over-come Western Heroes
to slay friends of Western Heroes.
Some joined us for pigeon feathers,
grandfather's arrow heads,
and bunches of dimestore beads.
They never understood.
For a year we bent over brush, buffalo chips,
and scalps — giving a heavy flame across the night,
and felt the sun buried in the West.
From ancient seats and chalk dust
from Illinois barns and sparrows,
We wandered West and died.

4 Elkhorn Creek

Spring, and if work done early,
we left the burning room and kids,
went crazy cross gravel, fence, and field
down to the creek-rush between pasture.
Spring of melted ice dug the banks
black against green blood,
swelling clowns in the sky,
and our gunny-sack clothes
bulging with the high crow's breath.
Sides chosen, we heaved clods, rock,
and graveyard limbs against the water —
splashed ourselves weary
until Whiteside County shadowed.

They came for us in old Fords,
took us shivering home.
They still ask why, wonder just what
creek still flows across America.
— Do you still sweat and swear,
stare with fever out dark farmhouse windows? —
They thought and even now believe
they would suffer our colds for the creek
and the cool, flowing game.
But you and I who have heard pinecones
crash in the night, seen pig shadows and
cob piles mating against corn-cribs,
know better, know that creek slows,
flows deep to pools of poets and thieves.

5 Judy

Slow afternoons drew tense,
smooth and bright as the slide metal
or the chains on the swings.
She of colt's legs, rabbit fur,
of pig's squeal against a sunset
or the dark, thick air of a shed,
swung for us at recess.
Careful we watched her on those swings —
high then low, tight thighs
swept ancient breezes, ancient smells
of Fall corn husks limp in the yard,
of rotted stumps' return to earth.
Judy; rider of pigs, thrower of acorns,
rocks, and tight hot skin to the sky.
We watched and like young cattle
plotted ways to rub and bump flesh,
to trip and fall on top of her.
She knew, stood, and swung like the oak,
forced cool airs through spread limbs,
sent love of her body streaming
heavy and white across the gravel
into clouds and oh so softly
against our bones.
Later, graduation night, she taught me sex.
In mud that ruined my new white-bucks,
all stopped and I came to a new spot
rougher than the night or even
the stone planks of the merry-go-round.
But before, she taught us to dream,
to feel the earth stretch in the sun,
to swing in clouds, and even ride pigs.
I, and maybe Carl too,
can still taste her on certain slow days.

6 "Morder Forkers"

As an old bull you bellered
"They are and always will be morder forkers."
Mennonites, E.U.B.'s, good farm boys
with shit on their shoes, the school board,
teacher (who never had a chance),
blank couples raised by their radios,
all "morder forkers"!

One night they all lumbered to the school,
bunched and sweating, Community Club began.
"God bless" this, "God bless" that . . .

In we dashed, tossed them hay,
filled water troughs, sprayed for flies.
The dumb beasts shuffled nervous,
mouths and eyes enormous.

"MORDER FORKERS" we screamed,
jabbing pitch-forks deep into numb hides,
heaving panicked carcasses out the windows.
They never stopped falling and Christ —
did we catch hell!

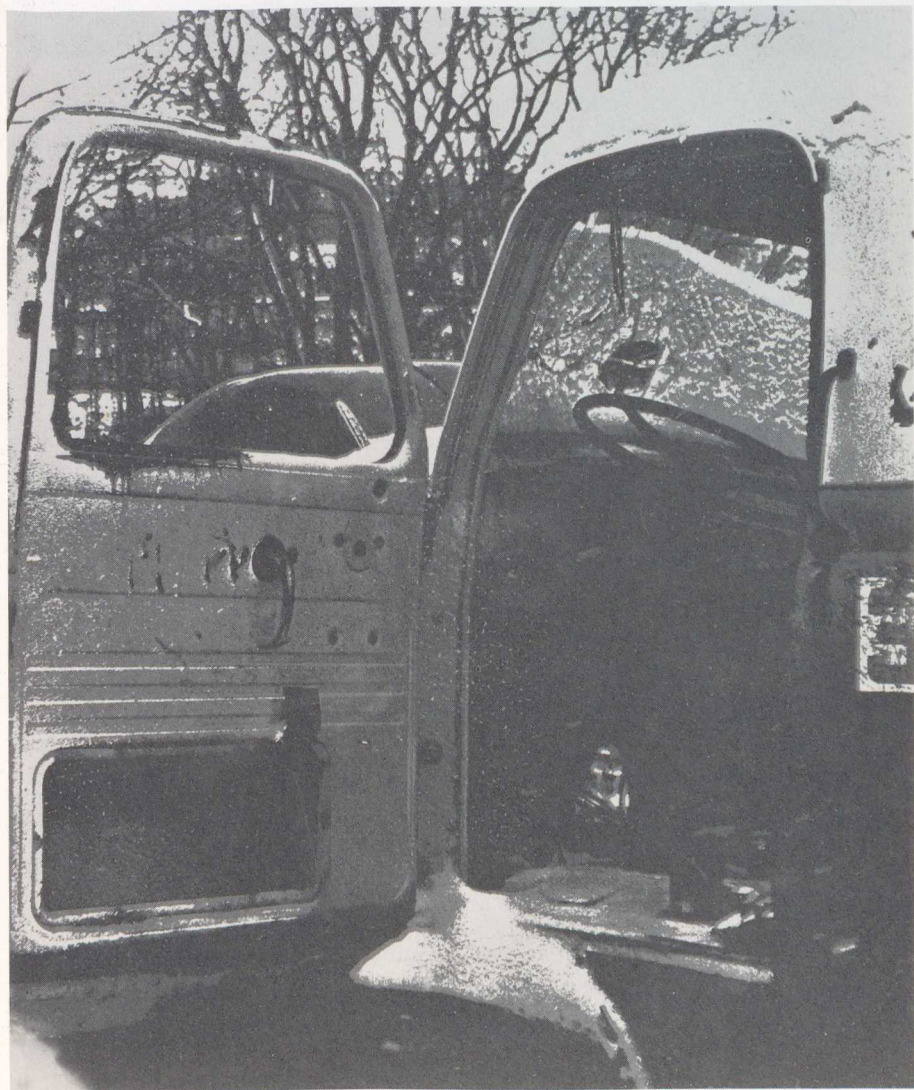
But we couldn't change.

You stand huge against concrete and bars,
still crush their night with those words
and a refusal to believe it's us that's caught.

I sit here drunk in a flat state
where words carry for miles on a still night.
I try to show we're right, but the farm-houses
are dark at this hour.

I wonder if any one can hear,
if any one-room schools breed yet
a madman who listens for shadows moving in night,
for the morning on its way.

EDWARD BEATTY



BOB SWINEHART • "AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL" • PHOTOGRAPH • 8" x 10"

MAN IN YOUR MIND (For James)

Then in the red
of the afternoon
the blind man
in the grass below
stretched to your window
his shadowed finger
waved to the wind
and bid you follow.

An arm encircling
your neck, a kiss,
a waving hand
as you leave . . .

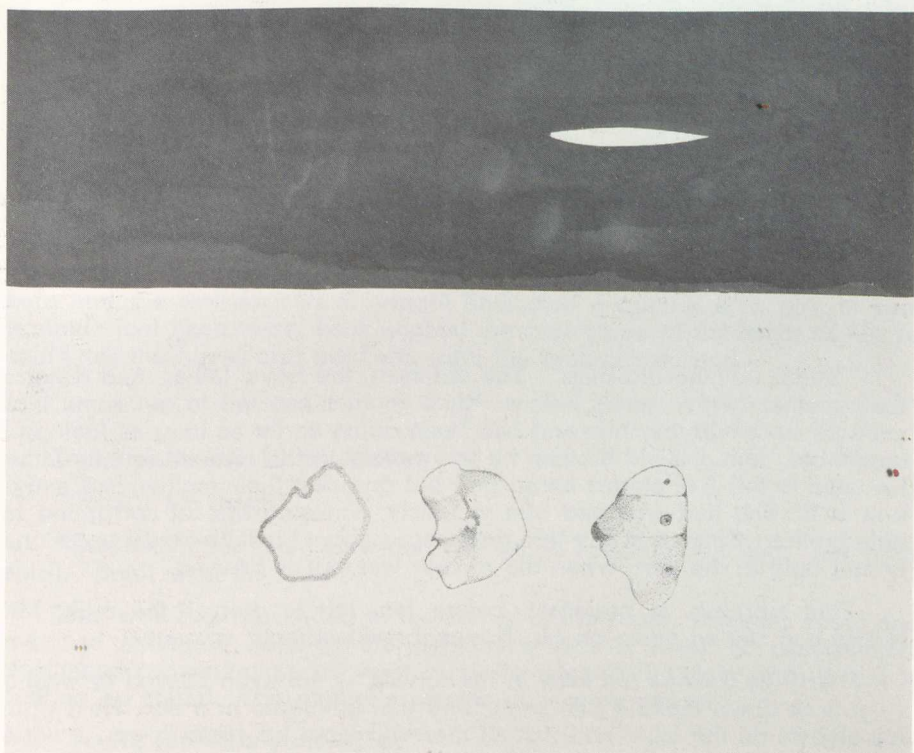
A young man smiling
down your sight,
the spreading red
on his sleeve . . .

Now the wine
in the bottled room
repeats the red
of the afternoon,
blurs the man
on the shadowed grass
whose finger
makes a mirror the glass.

The young man
and your wife,
dancing in the windy hand,
reflect in you
a thought
that breaks glass
like a bullet
and sends in spreading delusion
lines of love and hate

And thru the hole
the man in your mind,
his fuzzy shirt in your mouth,
yells at you with eyes
that see no lines
a whisper in the wind.

TOM CARLIN



PETE JONES • "THREE OBSERVERS OBSERVING A CELESTIAL OBJECT" • INK • 12" x 16"

AN OLD MAN AND SPRING

Knuckles white on the chain-link fence I stand.
Another year, the breasts I wait for come,
Soft brown beats against thin blouses, reaches
Straining across the rough gravel play-ground.
New clothes and bath I stand beneath the sky,
Pray the crows will not come again this year,
Not whisper the secret in the little girls' ears.

My tears run the black messengers against the blue,
so early this year I get not even a smell
of the passing flower skirts God has made.

I shuffle home to sleep and taste brown buds,
To caress night shadows under heaven and God.

EDWARD BEATTY

WELL DUST FACES

I

Joel Noyes sat, back against the well, waiting for the truck. He couldn't see it but he knew it was coming. It was the kind of truck you hear half a mile before you see. When his brother finally drove into the yard Joel walked over to help him unload the milk cans.

"Is she still at it," his brother said.

"At what?"

"Damn . . . the old man." The old man, the boys' father, had deserted their mother twelve years before. Their mother seemed to get some inner strength from vilifying him and had been doing so for as long as Joel could remember. Jem, the old brother, he was twenty, could remember their father. He used to tell Joel stories about him but one day their mother had caught him at it. She had whipped him viciously, accusing him of corrupting his little brother. Since that day Jem reminisced about his father only occasionally and only in the barn when the mother was out of hearing.

This morning, at breakfast, before Jem left to deliver the milk, Mrs. Noyes had started again on Mr. Noyes' breakfast table etiquette.

"Why he'd come out here in his scivies — not even shaved or washed — and sit down looking like something that belonged in a sty. He'd plunk his elbows on the table and just sit there till I put his plate down — not so much as a nod for all my work." She would continue, with other observations, sometimes for as long as half an hour.

The boys who had heard it all a hundred times before, ate in silence — hoping every time, in vain, that she would forget the last part. She never did.

"It's a good thing you boys resemble my side of the family." Her voice anxious, "You boys are clean. You got good manners. You ain't the kind of boys would go off and leave your mother."

"No Mom, of course not," they answered in unison gained with long experience. Once Jem had not answered and she had cried.

After breakfast, while the two boys were loading the milk, the milking done before breakfast, Jem talked about their father for the first time in a long while.

"I remember one time he took me fishing." Jem stood, hands on the handles of the milk can, staring intently at the side of the barn, or rather, through the side — somehow into the inside. "I got a hook in my finger — jerked the damn thing out of a sucker and rammed it into my finger — I yelled and he came over. He had big scarred, calloused hands and when he touched you it was like a wood rasp. But when he took hold of my hand to push the hook through, it stopped hurting. Him just being around made you feel good." He looked at Joel. "You should have known him." And Joel quietly . . .

"I should have," Jem walking back to the barn for more milk, Joel falling into step behind.

When Jem left to deliver the milk, Joel walked slowly back to the house. At the porch he touched the rail. It felt dusty and he looked at his hand. He brushed the dust off on his pants.

"Jack," his mother called. Her little hawk face peered at him from the doorway.

"What?"

"Just wondered where my boy was."

He walked to the well. The well was his place. It was the old-fashioned kind — stone, with a little roof and a bucket. They had a new pump well for the cows but they liked to drink from the old well. The house and the barn and the well formed a triangle enclosing a quarter acre plot of bare ground. Joel liked to sit, back against the cool stone of the well, where he could see the house and the barn, until his brother returned.

II

Jem, the screen door slamming,

"What's for lunch?"

"Don't slam the door. How many times do I have to tell you," her voice shrill, "Don't slam the door."

Jem, who had proceeded to the center of the room, wheeled about and marched solemnly back to the door. His face a mask of exaggerated, anguished concentration, he very carefully opened the door and closed it, making no sound. The mother's narrow face grew redder.

"You're just like your father!"

"Yes I am—I'm proud of it."

"Proud of being a beast—he used to beat you."

"Only when I deserved it." And she, the anger becoming a whine.

"He beat me."

"He didn't!"

"He did!"

"He did not—you're lying."

The door slammed with a report that echoed through the house. Joel watched Jem moving quickly across the yard. He watched him till he disappeared into the barn. His mother was crying — he could hear her sobbing. He turned to her but she was sitting at the table with her head buried in her arms. He couldn't see her face. He closed the screen door quietly and walked to the well. It was peaceful at the well. Jem was in the barn and he couldn't hear his mother.

Half an hour later he heard his brother call. He looked at the barn but the inside was dark. All he could see was the black opening of the door.

"Joel," the voice called again. Joel got up and walked, nimbly limping on a pinstick fallen asleep leg, into the dark barn. His eyes slowly adjusted

to the dim light. Jem was breathing hard. His face and arms covered with sweat, bits of hay clinging. A pitchfork was at his feet. He spoke quickly.

"Those other times I was already thinking about coming back before I left. Not this time. I'm not just going to town only to come back tomorrow. This time you tell her I'm gone for good. You tell her at dinner. You tell her I can't take any more."

Joel looked out the door at the well across the yard.

"Why don't you tell her, Jem?"

"Hell . . . she'll throw something at me or something . . . You go talk to her in the kitchen while I sneak in and pack my stuff . . . Jeez, no wonder Pa left."

Joel crossed the yard. In the kitchen he sat down. The mother was standing at the sink washing the lunch dishes for the second time. She always washed things twice. "Things got to be clean." She turned her head, looking at him across a shoulder. He said nothing. Her eyes questioned. He shrugged back in the chair and she went back to washing. He was listening but he heard nothing but the clatter of plates. Finally, he went out and sat in the shade of the well, back to stone. He drew faces with a stick in the dirt beside his leg. The faces all turned out to look like his mother or Jem. He tried several times to draw what his father's face should look like but the face he saw when he was finished each time was either his mother's or his brother's. He tried to mix them and come up with a new face but it didn't work. It was always one or the other. The stick was still in his hand when his mother called for dinner.

Three white and blue plates were on the table. The mother carried a steaming pot from the stove.

"Where's Jem?" she asked.

"He's gone."

"What do you mean gone . . . gone where?"

"He said he's not coming back."

Her whole body contorted. The pot quivered in her right hand.

"Like father, like son!" she shrieked — a high pitched, wounded cry like that of a toy police whistle blown hard four quick times.

Suddenly she swayed. The pot fell to the floor, spattering stew. She grabbed at the back of a chair with both hands, catching herself. She stood for a few moments, then walked slowly toward her bedroom. Joel cleaned up the stew and put the pot in the sink.

III

In the morning the old woman was dying. The boy did not know how he knew she was dying, but he knew. When he had gotten up this morning he was surprised to see that she was not up. She usually fixed breakfast. He had decided to let her sleep, so he tiptoed across the worn and faded roses of the carpet in the main room and put his boots on outside. When he returned from the barn she was still not up. It was then that he first knew. He went into her room, the room which as long as he could remember had smelled of Lily of the Valley. He didn't know why since she never used perfume. It once occurred to him that maybe she had spilled a bottle of it a

long time ago, but he didn't know. He carried a chair to the side of her bed. The paint of the chair, once grey or white but now yellow, felt powdery under his fingers. He looked at his hand to see if any had rubbed off but his hand was clean.

He had been sitting in the chair for a half hour. He still had not looked at his mother. He sat, elbows on knees, staring at the edge of the blanket where it skirted the floor, and listening to her slow, almost regular breathing. He began to breathe in the same rhythm as his mother, until it was **his** breath and **his** heart that he heard.

Listening to his heart and his breathing and watching an ant pushing a crumb make jagged progress along the floor at the edge of the blanket, he didn't hear exactly when his mother's breathing stopped. When he did realize it, he stared at the ant until it disappeared into a crack between planks in the floor. Then he looked at his mother. Her mouth was open and her skin looked like a yellow and tan sandstone block.

He got out of the chair and stood at the side of the bed. He looked into her face. The edges of three yellow teeth stared at him. He tried to pull the blanket up to cover her face but it only reached her mouth. At the edge of the blanket he could see the teeth. It looked like she was eating the blanket. He pulled it down and tucked it under her chin.

The head, disembodied by the blanket, seemed to Joel to be floating on the pillow — a narrow yellow stone, floating. It began to bob — like the bucket in the well if dropped bottom first. But it was a stone.

He went to the well and sat. He watched the shadow of the barn shorten and disappear and lengthen again. When the sun lay on the horizon and the shadow of the barn seemed to be a road over the fields as far as he could see, he walked to the barn. He walked as a dog walks when it is dying — stiff, falling forward and catching himself with each step. In the barn the cows were moaning to be milked. He took a match from a box on the bench, struck it, arced it into the hay. The fire from the burning hay danced in his eyes as he watched. As the flames reached the beams overhead, the cows panicked, crashing against the sides of their stalls. They bellowed, low outraged screams that merged with the increasing roar of the fire. Joel left the barn — closing in the roar and the heat and the screams.

He walked across the yard to the house — moving more easily now that the stiffness from sitting immobile so many hours was lessening.

The only light in his mother's room came through the window facing the flaming barn. He stood at the head of the bed. Her face flickered. He touched her forehead with the tips of two fingers. It felt cold and powdery. He looked at his fingers but it was too dark to see. In the kitchen it was dark. He found the matches by feel and the curtains were burning brightly before the door closed. Leaning, back against the well post, both sides of his face firelit, flickering — the barn side brighter. His eyes rapid — house to barn, barn to house, lips parted, tongue slightly between teeth, head back.

The flames from the old barn making the moon's crescent seem pallid, his eyes jumping — house to moon to barn and back to house. No screaming from the barn now.

"Joell! Joell!" Jem running, lit up like day.

"Joel, where's mom?" Joel unmoving except for his eyes. Jem's hands on his shoulders, shaking him.

"Where's mom!" Joel's flaming eyes halt on the house.

Jem running up the steps through the flaming doorway. Joel's eyes flitting. The flames of the house reaching higher. A chair through the bedroom window, then Jem, shirt flaming, landing on his feet — running toward Joel.

"You bastard," hitting him on the mouth, "bastard!"

Joel, sitting where he fell, blood from his tongue running from the corners of his mouth, laughing a rasping, careless laugh. Jem rolling in the dirt, his clothes smoking, shouting . . .

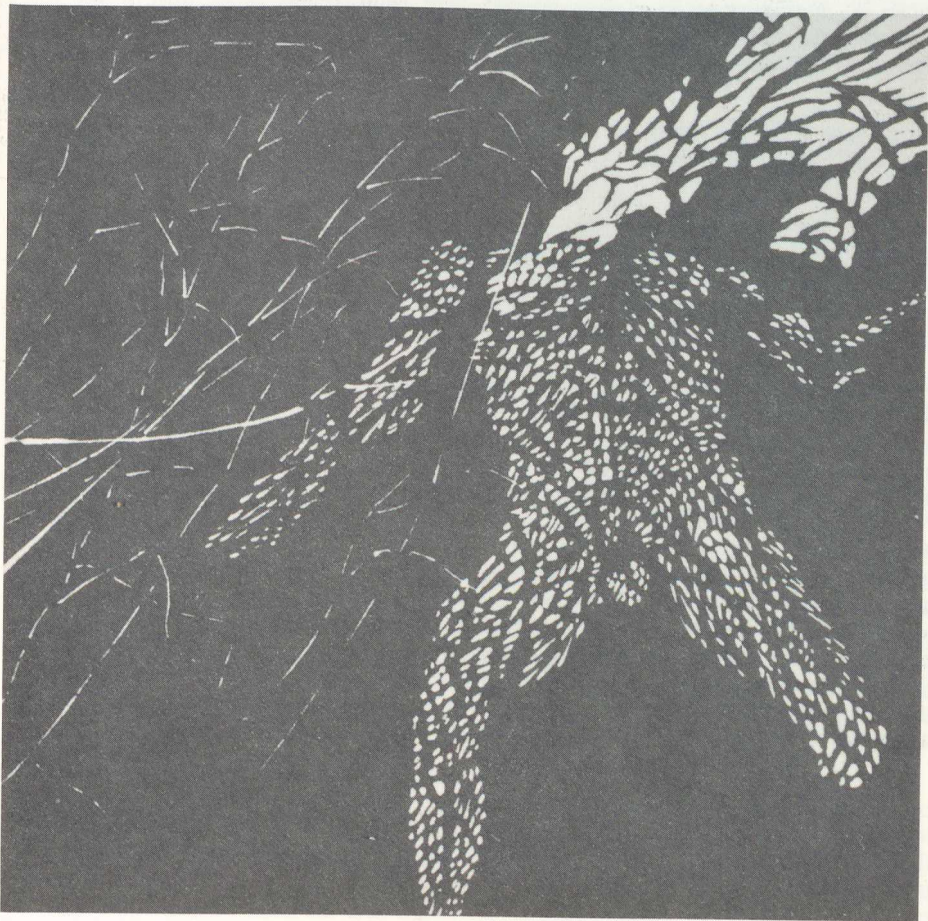
"Bastard . . . Bastard." The sounds of the two brothers mingling with the roar of the fires.

FRED ROSS

A SATURDAY NIGHT

I lie in a half sleep,
Parts of **On the Road**, Donne,
And Wordsworth come and go.
The cold wind loudens.
Last night's beer and whiskey
And a guy who hates me
(for some reason)
Rattle my windows.
Kinnell takes me in sleep
Deep to Calcutta, New York,
And a woods somewhere.
"Save the Children" faces
Escaped from a **Saturday Review** ad
Watch me sweating.
I awake and hear couples
Coming from the movies,
Holding each other close against
The cold and noise of wind.
They are far away.
Even they tell me that a poet
has no choices

EDWARD BEATTY



DENNIS FRIEND • UNTITLED • WOOD ENGRAVING • 2½" x 2½"

IMPETUS
an excerpt from a novel
The Bonded Trial of Free Cia

From where she lay she could not hear the phones. She had insisted on that, when choosing her room, and had changed locations twice before being satisfied. Then she had had the ugly old-fashioned instrument taken off its stand and put in the closet, disconnected. The manager had protested, saying she should be easily available if he or one of the guests needed her. She had replied that she would be in her room only to sleep, and if that respite were to be broken, she expected it to be less rudely than by the impersonal demand of the telephone. Besides, she had continued, she would always be available when expected to be so, and the reasonable request she had made would serve to inconvenience no one, and would make her feel much better. So now she could lie in the sanctuary of her room, which was cool and dry, like a well-sealed tomb, and she could think, in long draughts of concentration, of whatever idea sprang into her mind, clamoring for attention — or, as now, of nothing.

In the intimacy of her mind, she had encountered many forms of her naked thought. It was only a recent thing, her ability to strip it even further, to absurd abstraction. The value of her efforts lay in the product — she found that she could listen unperturbed to the most inane conversations. She could dispose of the most disturbing reflections. She only wished she could have learned earlier to so remove herself from all that surrounded her — and in such a way become a part of all that merited attention. She thought, as Byron, that high mountains are a feeling, but her identification with nature had always been deliberate, and clumsy. Now it seemed an artless process, as breathing or digestion. Why did so many poets scribble of returning to nature? Wasn't it, indeed, the most natural of all acts? All that was involved, she had decided, was an **exterior** introspection — a contemplation, with the spiritual intensity and intimate involvement of her most personal inner foraging. She could, in effect, invert herself, so that all that had poured in poured out.

The vanity of introspection! She had lived with it throughout her life (which, at twenty-five, seemed incredibly long and fruitless), and had taken great joy in its agony. When she first began to think that her identification with herself (and consequent juxtaposition of all else to herself) was less

than selfish — was pointless — she had become correspondingly open. Now she could draw a quick sketch of what she thought she must have been — a wispy creature with sticky tentacles and an ever-functioning inner machine always recording. Ah, but there — didn't that prove the futility of introspection? She couldn't judge what she had been; everything had been translated for her, by wild moments of anger and regret, by hushed, infrequent moments of generosity. She yearned for objectivity, and for this reason had passed into this new phase, where she did not reconsider, and did not self-judge. She remembered, true, but she did not grow fat with her memories. She disciplined that mental organ of recollection, a determination no doubt tempered by younger precepts that obesity presupposes gluttony. She would not allow herself to distort past truths by playing with them to fill idle moments.

It was necessary, then, for one of the boys to fetch her. He was timid, afraid to intrude on the sanctity of the siesta, and so he knocked lightly, as though to test the quality of his knuckles.

She did not hear him, at first. She lay in the stupor that exists between consciousness and sleep. She had eaten an early lunch, and the light that passed through her open shutters was a raw yellow, unlike the topaz of late afternoon. Her eyes were fixed on a strand of dust particles that hung in suspension in the light. The shaft seemed to move, the particles to disperse.

"Moment, momento," she said, though not impatiently. She was dressed, and immediately fully awake, but she was loathe to leave the acute sensitivity of her concentration.

He spoke English with a false, almost coy inflection. There was a call for her, it was the States calling, she should take the call in the manager's office.

She did not know who might be calling her, but she was not curious. By the time she could have considered the predictable possibilities — her father, her brother, a few friends who knew she was here — she was at the office, and the phone, moist from someone's breath, was at her ear. It was her brother, and he was impatient, irritated. It had taken him twenty minutes to place the call. His voice sounded tired, and displaced. She listened, and replied monosyllabically — "yes, yes." "All right." And "I'm not sure. Yes. Thursday."

"Is something wrong," Gide asked.

She turned, amused to hear concern in his tone. She had not been aware that he stood by her, his posture indicating concern. The manager's cheeks were puffy, as if he had slept too long. Behind their yellow rise his black eyes burned guardedly, so that their intensity never seemed to involve you.

"Yes, something," she answered. "Excuse me."

She decided to finish the cataloguing she had started earlier. She was checking the list of the season's guests against the file. Gide was passionate for figures and charts and lists. Already he wanted a Christmas-greeting list compiled (she would have the envelopes addressed by July). She made a mark on her paper to indicate guests which returned regularly. Faith had been coming here for ten years, always to complain, gossip, and drink. As Cia came to her name, the thought of the time Faith had come in drunk from a dance in town, and had set her bed on fire. Gide had smelled the smoke, and had pulled her from her smoldering mattress. Her gown was on

fire at the bottom. Gide had ripped it off in one jerk. Later he had told Cia how the old woman stood there, naked, her sticky hair clinging to her forehead and neck, her breasts like two dried gourds, and giggled.

One of the bus boys interrupted her to ask her about the menu. She took the box of scarlet letters into the dining room and changed the face of the black stand by the hor d'euerves table. Tonight there was crayfish.

After an hour or so with the list, she grew bored, and put it back in the drawer. She answered a letter from the Baptist Recreation League (the title seemed paradoxical to her) in Waco. Surely, she replied, bargain off-season rates were now available. She was enclosing a brochure, and hoped to receive their reservations by return mail. Little did she need them. There was always space that approximated vacancy in May. Only on Wednesdays, when the Greyhound tour stopped to consume tequila cocktails and a night's hot repose, did the hotel sound like the tourists' haven it purported to be. It was all the same to her. There was more to do when the hotel was full, but it demanded nothing of her except half-attentive routine. Her existence did not fluctuate with the tipsy pleasures of passing guests.

It did not, indeed, seem to fluctuate at all. She had lived in Mexico three years, had quickly learned the necessary phrases, could adequately interpret for guests, but she had never learned to exchange ideas in Spanish. That was part of the pleasure of the hotel — no one demanded that she explain or amuse them (Gide had once asked her why she made love, since it did not seem to be out of love or hate or need. She had replied that she made love to avoid answering personal questions). In school, her recurring complaint had been of tedium — she resented a theme due on Tuesday if on Monday she began a novel. She despised Saturday nights. She made fun of inarticulate professors. She used to amuse her friends with long speculations about the future — she would never be satisfied, they said. She was always projecting herself into the future — and every future had a future beyond that.

Yet here she was. Her life was tedious, made up of scattered duties, little diversion, and the constant, impersonal sun. She thought she must be the happiest she had ever been, because she was unconcerned with happiness. She was bound only by the limitlessness of her freedom. Once she had defined freedom differently, but now — hers was not perfect, but she had not thought of surrendering it. Until today.

She had always been concerned with the important abstractions — with truth, love, death, beauty. But the temptation to cast aside any responsibility to living, other than attendance — she thought it sweet to yield. In her solitude she seemed to approach a monotonous, insensibility, haunted only infrequently by the spectre of the undone, the undiscovered, the uncreated. To leave the rhythm of her routine, even for a short time, might re-adjust that spiteless liberty, before the temptation could become a permanent one.

She ate supper in the servants' kitchen. The cook served her of what he had eaten, soup, frijoles, tortillas. There were spots on the table where someone had eaten and splashed soup. She wiped a spoon on her skirt and ate slowly, staring out the tiny windows at the gardens. Outside someone stepped on a branch. She heard him stumble and curse loudly. It was ten o'clock, and the thick silence of night had begun to settle over them. The noises of the boys washing dishes, the slight talk of the few guests lingering over coffee — only these sounds answered the cicadas and the crisp chatter of the bamboo stalks. She lifted the bowl to her face and drank the remaining soup. Some

dribbled onto her chin, and she wiped it away with the back of her hand. One of the boys took the dishes away and brought her a piece of cake. The texture was coarse, like cornbread. No one wiped the table. The room was dimly lit, and the haze of her cigarette hung over the table, a dry cloud of exhalation. In a while she threw the butt of her cigarette on the floor, and flattened it with her sandal heel.

Outside someone was whispering near the pool. She walked around the hotel, to the front. A wide drive swung to the left and disappeared behind a curve of trees. She followed the drive beyond the bend, and walked into the arch of trees there. It was growing darker, but she knew her way. She was aware of the smell of oranges, coy, ripe, that fell on her, mingling with the acrid smoke to make a pungent perfume. The grove, she mused distractedly, was much like the ocean; once you entered it, alone, you became a part of it, so that there was no longer any edge to it; one could drown in the stench of oranges, and die gurgling at so isolated a death. But she was not here to die; she came, as she often did, to suck into her pores the peace — the void, merciless peace of soundless dark.

Then the wind began to blow. It picked up her hair and lay it across her face, whirled it about the crown of her head. It swept her skirt above her knees, catching it again in itself and allowing it to fall and cling to her bare thighs. It passed through the grove quickly, carrying away the perfume that had been in her nostrils. Clearly, earnestly, with great effort, she seized on that moment to think of him with the full resources of her old memories, her old love. It had not been so long, and now he was dead. It shocked her, so that she slightly jumped, to hear her own voice over the wind.

"Daddy!" she cried, and fell again to silence. It began to rain.

She stood in the path that ran like an aisle between the orange trees, and raised her face to the rain. It ran down her neck and inside the slight cowl of her blouse. She could feel cool rivulets down the curve of her breasts, and down into the hollow above her belly. Tomorrow the rain would be hot, and the sun would shine above the translucent clouds. She did not think she cared, and she was sure it was a useless, impulsive gesture, but tomorrow she would go home. She could not know how much the same things would be, there, nor how much Mexico would change in her absence.

SANDRA HUPP



RICHARD ANDERSON • "WOLFGANG" • SERIGRAPH • 20" x 26"

Butterfield

she don't worry about the problems of the world
or spending a 22nd birthday as relief Number 5 capper
running through 211 cream style corn

Butterfield, she don't know of the flute music
in the still mountain valley
of the changing shadows
and silken milk in the white pitcher.

Butterfield, you sweet-cat . . .
of riding the Manhattan subway
bare-footed, half asleep
of the morning fire in the woodstove
hot tea
nude Vermont sunbaths swimming

You bitch-cat — get off the Siamese
the blueberries have powdery shadows.

Summer jells
collage
orange fur, peas
Siamese eyes, flute music
night fires
But Butterfield,
she don't worry about the problems of the world
there's a grey Tom come calling now every night.

SUSAN JASINSKI

SPRING WALK

You and I in a melting snow
Took a walk to the broken river
Where an ice age matinee
Excited us to cast adrift
A huge ice raft moored to frozen
Branches. The slippery bank nearly
Unearthed us and our prying sticks and fallen
Trees, crude tools which finally
Broke her free. Congratulations
Were made with a hand shake that smelled
Of first life.

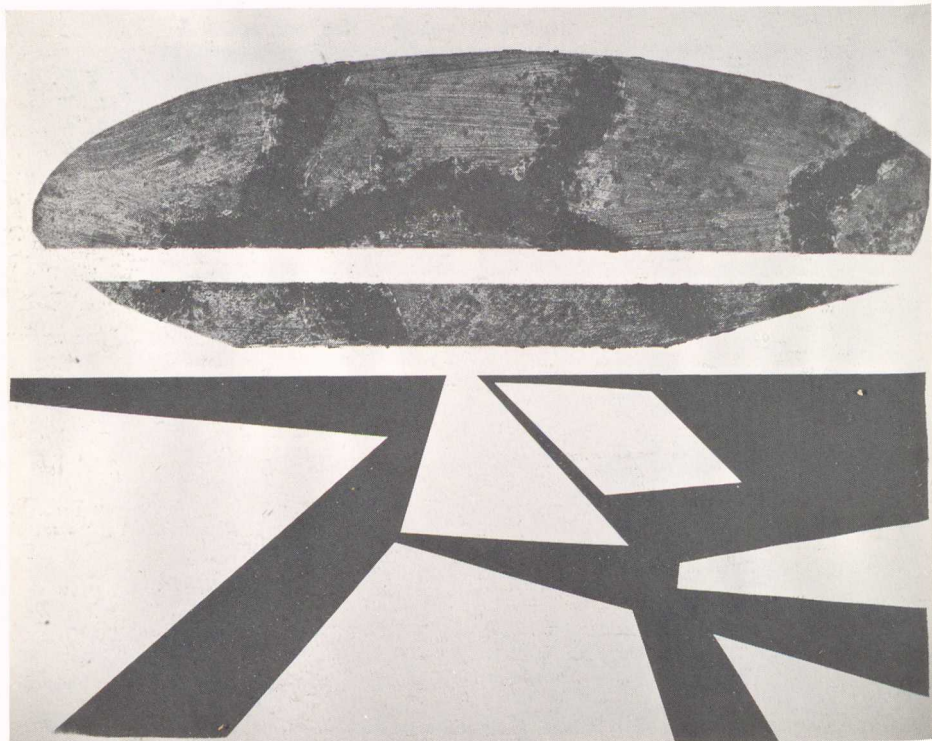
Along the weeded
Bank we followed our event
Which lodged endways between the shores,
Submerged, broke free and hit a jam
Hard on. Grey and yellow
Heaved and boiled as if it
Were not solid and snapped
A tree at the lower end. The ancient
Forces balanced and hushed the drawing
Evening.

We turned to snowful play
To break the solemn. Your friendly mistrust
Grew with each "Look at that!"
Diversion. In closed combat
Of snow stuffing we stumbled laughing
On a hidden branch and saw the sky
And saw a sinewed arm and grasping
Hand figured in wispy cloud.
A soft spring kiss in the melting snow
Must have welled from ancient forces
Wrapped in cold and sunset. Some finally
Noticed burrs I picked from your hair
Started us home feeling numb
And feeling foolish and wondering how
To part when we had returned.

DAVID E. JAMES



JOHN SCARCELLI • "GREAT AMERICAN SERIES #14" • DRAWING • 18" x 24"



PETE JONES • "INTERSECTION #16" • PRINT • 20" x 24"

I SEE THE GIRLS

I see the girls who frolic free
In December's white light,
Among the children playing in the snow
Of a playful winter afternoon.

I see them play upon the green,
Rerieved of its snow-burden
By the rolling head of a snow man.

I see them sleep among love-sheets,
Free of their cumbersome burden,
Rerieved by their loving snowmen,
Rolling up layers of virginity.

JOE BAUERS

THE ROOM

Porcelain, thin, a vase in the parlor
reflected the light that was dying away.
The stairs were groaning, softly,
they cried to me at the end of the day.
Smoke filled the corners and
perfumed the thoughts that lived here.
Mirror, thick, reflecting my image
as it changed year by year.
The brown rocker died; we burned it,
yes, we kept the cushions in the dank
of the cedar chest, my own chest,
(for which I had Martha to thank.)
The frost coats the window, the fire,
it burned on and brought tears to my eyes.
I am forced to sit there forever as
each old friend crumbles and dies.
Porcelain, thin, the ribbon entwined,
I can hear the pages turning yellow
like the ivory of our black baby-grand.
I saw his sad face mellow.

NAOMI AVERBACH

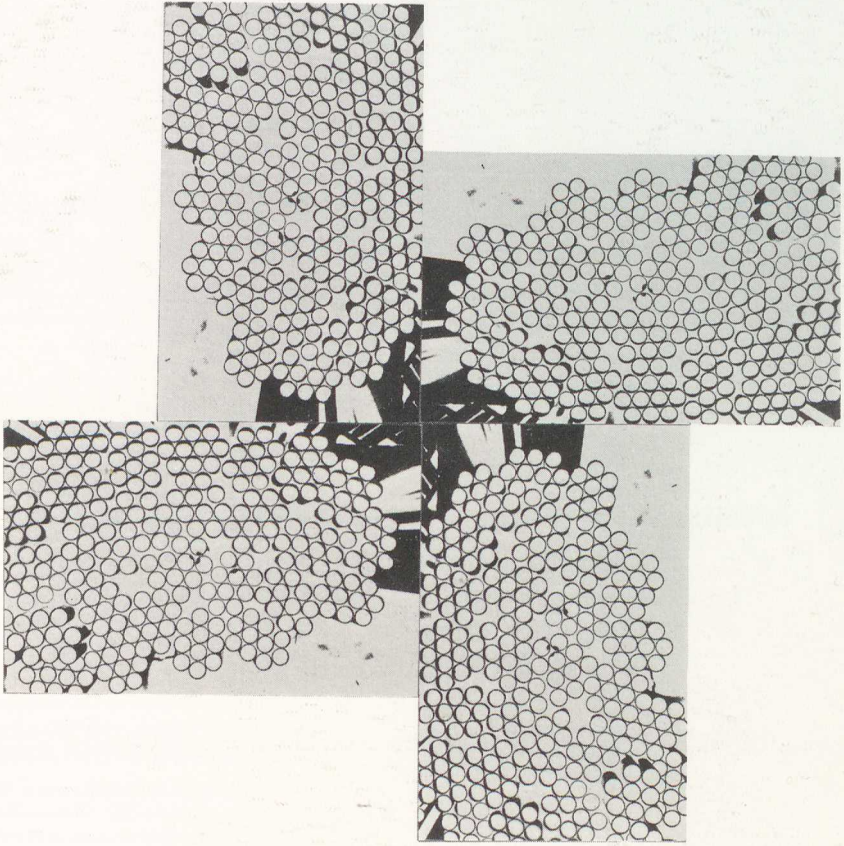
MOTION LIES, A LOSER

Motion lies, a loser at my feet.
Shadows crack in midflight
And no one knows the difference
Between motion and a girl
Bending at my knees.

Motion spins my brain in webs
Enters my chambered head
Says, "I shall bend her at the knees,
I shall enter her dying crib."

Will it have time to wonder at the sight,
Bewildered, of a girl bending at the knees,
Or time to wimper at its loss?
Should motion suspect the time,
The urging between two trees
Who bicker underground for water
While the farthest limbs have barely seen the moss?

JOE BAUERS



BOB SWINEHART • UNTITLED • PHOTOGRAPH • 7" x 7"

SIGMA TAU DELTA WRITING AWARDS

J. Hal Connor Award for Creative Writing
Gerald K. Wuori — Short Story Collection:
Lapsong
That Brief, Mad Instant
Something Falling Sweet Awry

JUDGES: James McNiece — Don James — Cindy Parker
Maude Uhland Award for Freshman Writing
Decision Deferred Until Fall of 1967
E. Ruth Taylor Award for Critical Writing
Decision Deferred Until Fall of 1967

JUDGES: Jesse Ritter — Gary Arnold — Edward Beatty

