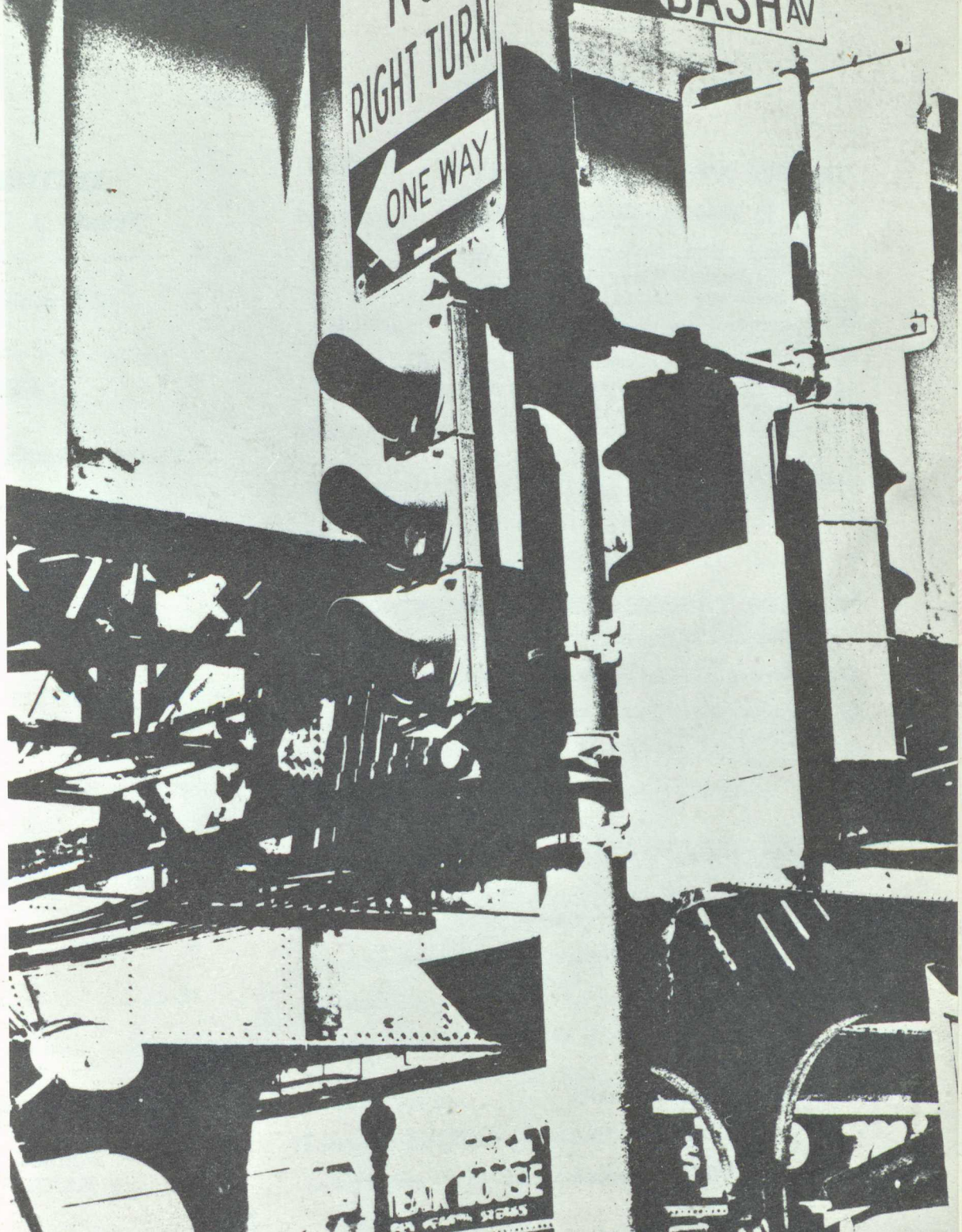


**TOWER**

**3**



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## Awards

### TOWERS AWARD FOR POETRY

S. E. Mitchell • black and tan fantasy page 5

Judge, Bink Noll • Beloit College  
Coordinator, Karen Yourison

### J. HAL CONNOR AWARD FOR CREATIVE PROSE

Steve Crowe • Cars page 14

Judge, Glenn Meeter • NIU  
Coordinator, Jill Miller

### E. RUTH TAYLOR AWARD FOR CRITICAL WRITING

Leonard Leff • The Cast of Johnson's *Irene* page 45

Judge, Mary Sue Schriber • NIU  
Coordinator, John Ferstel

### MAUDE UHLAND AWARD FOR FRESHMAN WRITING

Robert T. Donnell • Summer 1959 page 20

Judge, Edward Oliphant • NIU  
Coordinator, Russ Colman

### TOWERS ART AWARD

Bruce McDonald • Bison with Fruit page 24

Judge, Ben Mahmoud • NIU

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# Contents

## POETRY

S. E. Mitchell • black and tan fantasy .....	5
Joseph Bauers • October Across the Illinois River .....	9
Richard Steel • Hearse .....	10
K. H. Boyce • Untitled .....	11
James Minor • Orphan .....	12
Marianne Boruch • Untitled .....	13
Jerry Baccetti • To Lucien Stryk .....	19
Robert T. Donnell • Summer 1959 .....	20
Joseph Bauers • The Legend of the Piasa .....	21
James Minor • The Age of August .....	23
Richard Steel • Under Capricorn .....	25
S. E. Mitchell • intimate lightning .....	26
Jerald L. Collins • Grandmother .....	28
Dale Royalty • To The Lady Who Helped Me Teach The Judge Is Rich Enough .....	28
Richard Steel • For One Time and One Time Only ....	30
Paul A. Yohnka • If Walt Whitman .....	33
Jerry Baccetti • Hare in Hand .....	33
Gary O. Holland • Untitled .....	35
Paul A. Yohnka • Leg Kiss .....	41
Paul A. Yohnka • To Summit Up .....	43

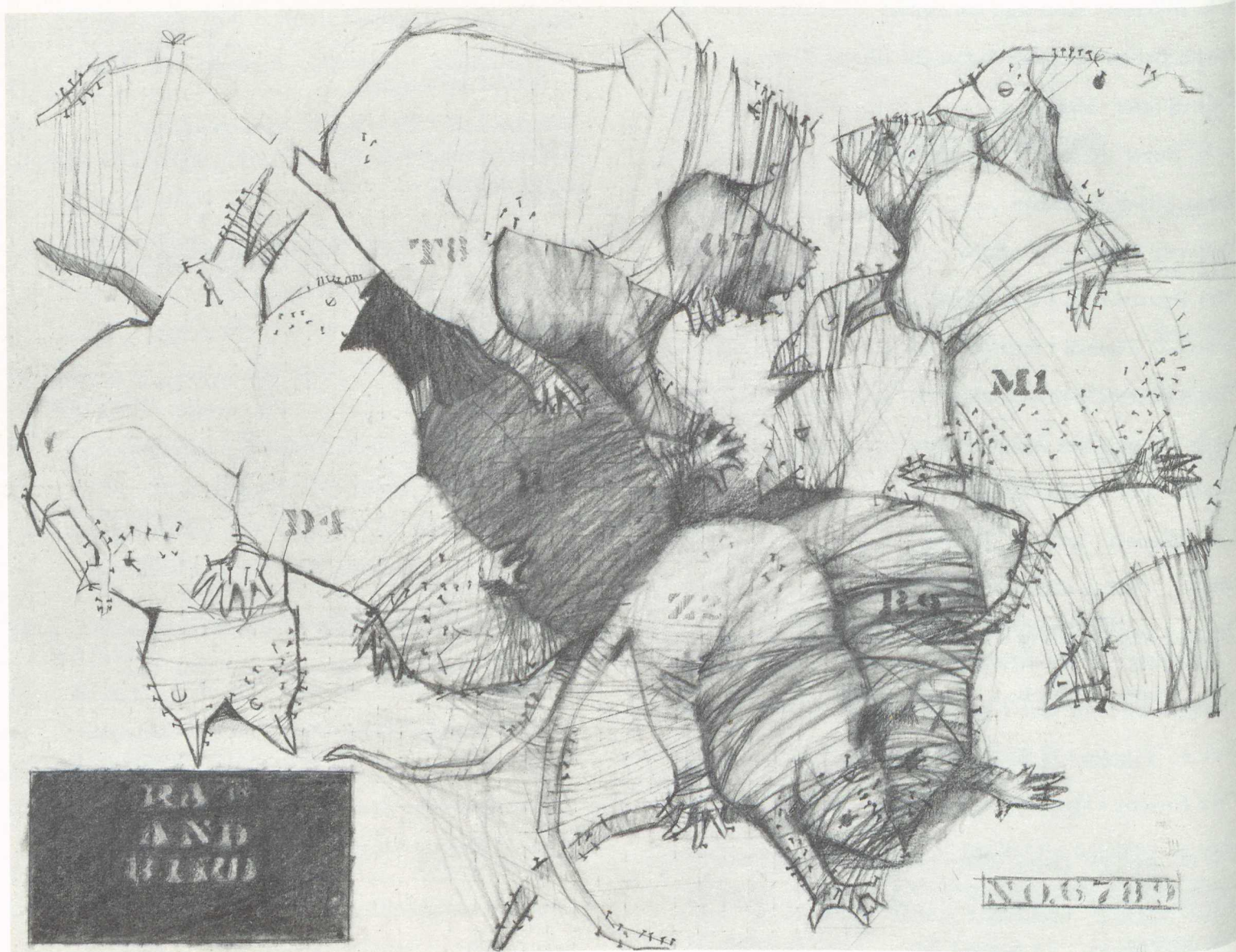
## PROSE

Wayne Roden • That Dreadful Tuesday .....	6
Steve Crowe • Cars .....	14
Dennis Dillow • Graswaldo Albusca: The Man Behind the Legend .....	37
Leonard Leff • The Cast of Johnson's <i>Irene</i> .....	45

## GRAPHICS

Susan Marks • Untitled Photograph .....	cover
Susan Marks • Untitled Photograph .....	1
Bruce McDonald • Rat and Bird (Drawing) .....	4
Terry Speer • Belt IV (Drawing) .....	8
Longina Kutchins • Untitled Photograph .....	13
Terry Speer • Man with Glasses (Drawing) .....	18
Ardine Nelson • Untitled Photograph .....	22
Bruce McDonald • Bison with Fruit (Drawing) .....	24
Jack Madura • Looking for Charles Middleton (Drawing) .....	27
Timothy J. Doyle • Light Source (Photograph) .....	29
Bruce McDonald • Typewriter and Dog Bone (Drawing) .....	32
Bruce McDonald • Dead Carrot Studies (Drawing) ....	34
Michael Scaccia • Untitled Drawing .....	36
Charles Rudolph • Untitled Drawing .....	40
Bruce McDonald • Table, Arm, and Dried Carrot (Lithograph) .....	42
Charles Rudolph • Untitled Drawing .....	44
Susan Marks • Untitled Photograph .....	inside rear cover





## black and tan fantasy

there was no mystery  
when we learned it was a girl  
that had been flayed  
who doesn't like a lampshade?  
the sun could do with one.

all thoughts of tracheotomy were nixed  
when we saw the throat,  
a complete sentence  
give an old-fashioned razor for christmas  
and a gun for punctuation's sake.

when we reached the alveoli (futile sacs of air)  
we found young flies sequestered there  
one little sister lay on her back—dead  
the others lived where they could  
they coated the whole diaphragm  
they made do with duodenum  
they drank the blood cold  
life in the wild had made the blood bad  
time spent in the sedge had cooled  
these rivers of blood

they died in a jiffy  
all at once  
all were tossed on a heap of brown leaves  
how they hissed to the end!  
dead language in pale fire!

*S. E. Mitchell*



# That Dreadful Tuesday

By Wayne Roden

Darius Winton Tuggles arose promptly at 6:45 that bright Tuesday morning as he always did on workdays. He walked briskly into the bathroom, turned the hot water in the shower on half way and then headed without a moment's pause to the kitchen of his tidy flat.

Ah, the kitchen. He couldn't help smiling with pride as he entered that gleaming, linoleum sanctum. And what woman, he would like to know, kept a neater kitchen? From the sterile floor to the orderly rows of pots and pans hanging from the wall — immaculate.

Tuggles moved rapidly but purposefully. Economy! Economy of motion in this case. He was a man of great economy, or so he took pride in thinking. In less than one minute he had the water for his tea simmering, the cup, saucer, small plate, spoon, knife, napkin, and butter, all set, and the two pieces of bread standing by to be toasted as soon as his shower was over. This accomplished, he strode, as before, with no hesitation but with no hurry to his shower.

His shower was a thorough, methodical affair — never any moments of idle contemplation or admiration of his body (small wonder). Five minutes at the most, and then a vigorous rubdown with a towel (fresh one every other day) from head to toe — good for the circulation. Then he put his pajamas, bathrobe, and slippers back on — at one time he had tried eliminating the pajamas at this point but it had left him feeling altogether too exposed — returned to the kitchen and put his bread in the oven to toast. Every cog in his routine fitted snugly against the next propelling his day smoothly on.

Now to dress. He walked to his closet and took out his gray suit (two black ones, two navy ones, and one gray). Next to his bureau where he removed one of the freshly laundered shirts from the top drawer. Then the underwear — the nice, blue, crinkly package of clean clean underwear that he had picked up with the shirts just yesterday.

Tuggles pulled the bottom drawer open — no crinkly package! Not even one stray pair of briefs. Impossible! He knew he had picked his things up at the laundry. But then there was no package in the drawer — or anywhere in the room. He stormed around the room looking for the underwear.

Tuggles grew more agitated as the seconds ticked away and no underwear or even solution was in sight. He was

already being thrown off his schedule. He dashed to the closet to look for even a dirty pair. But no — as always he had taken all his dirty clothes with him when he picked up his fresh ones.

Face flushed with frustration and panic, he jumped here and there looking desperately for the lost bundle. Where could they be? He had gone to the laundry — yes, there were the shirts. Some mistake on their part no doubt. But what to do? It's almost — a glance at the clock — ten after seven. Should be finished with breakfast by now — breakfast! The toast!

He ran to the kitchen in time to remove the two smoking, black crisps from the oven. Oh God — everything going wrong. He sank into a chair. Must stop and pull myself together.

Tuggles nervously coiled and uncoiled the sash of his robe around his hand. His mind tried to focus and pick up again the orderly process that was his life. Never had things gone so far awry for him. Well — he had to quit fretting and start acting. In seven years at the accounting firm he had never been one minute late (He was usually there five to ten minutes early). He had to concentrate.

No underwear. One solution — Will have to go to work without any underwear on today. No! Impossible, just couldn't — but must!

He marched resolutely into his bedroom, cast off his robe and pajamas and dressed — without any underwear.

By the time Tuggles entered the street outside his apartment it was almost twenty-five after seven. He usually left around a quarter after in order to catch the 7:30 train into the city. He jogged, as best he could, all the way to the station (Tuggles could not run well anyway, but especially in his new, unencumbered state he appeared more ludicrous than ever).

He reached the station with a minute to spare and it was then that he experienced his second shock of the morning. He had to go to the bathroom. He hurried to the men's room.

Incredible — I never need to go at this time of morning. What could be — ? Oh! Last night — the drink at Margaret's. That must be why!

The night before, he had visited his sister Margaret and she had talked him into having a gin and tonic. Ordinarily he wouldn't even have a glass of milk before going to bed, but he rarely saw Margaret and she had insisted on his having a drink because — "Darius, you're so nervous. You must have a drink so you can relax." But the thought of the gin and tonic caused a new realization.



Oh drat! Oh no! Yes, I must have left them — No! No! No! It can't be.

Poor Tuggles. He had just remembered the pair of underwear that he had worn the day before when he had gone to the laundry. Obviously he hadn't left those there to be cleaned too and so they had to be in his apartment. All the trauma of that morning would never had happened had he remembered that pair of underwear. But unfortunately, because he had been a little tipsy from the drink at his sister's and had dropped his underwear by the bed (he always put them in the hamper in the closet) when he had changed into his pajamas, he had been able to find or even think of, in his state of panic, his discarded underwear that morning.

As Tuggles sorted this all out and bemoaned the fact that he had taken the accursed drink the night before, he entered the squalid men's room at the station. The suffocating stench of urine, sweat, and God-knows-what-else staggered him. He always avoided these awful places. In the dim light he saw the urinals on the wall to the left. Two men were standing there, one on each end of the row of four. Tuggles shoved his hand hurriedly into his pocket to see if he had a dime so that he could use a pay toilet. No luck. As he approached the urinals, he noticed that the man closest to the door looked very dirty so he moved next to the man on the other end — a well-dressed young man. Tuggles felt awfully strange as he proceeded because he had never done this with no underwear on.

Before he had quite relieved himself, the 7:30 train rattled into the station and blew its whistle. Tuggles started. The train only stopped for a few seconds and he had to catch it. In his haste to get out, he hung himself on his zipper (an easy enough thing to do for a man who never hurried and always wore underwear). For the second time that dreadful Tuesday morning, he panicked. The pain of his predicament was bad enough without the further complication of trying to make his train. He worked diligently but could not free himself. He instinctively turned to the young man on his right but realized how this might look and jerked back around facing the wall. As he pulled frantically at himself, a strong hand grasped his arm, the impetus of which freed him from his zipper.

Tuggles looked up, surprised at what had happened, to see the all-knowing, stupid smirk on the young man's face whose firm grip still encircled his arm.

With his free hand the youth jerked a badge out of his pocket. "Vice squad, New York Police Department. I'm picking you up on suspicion of homosexuality and exhibi-

tionism. You have the right to remain silent if you want to. Put yourself back in, zip up, and let's go."

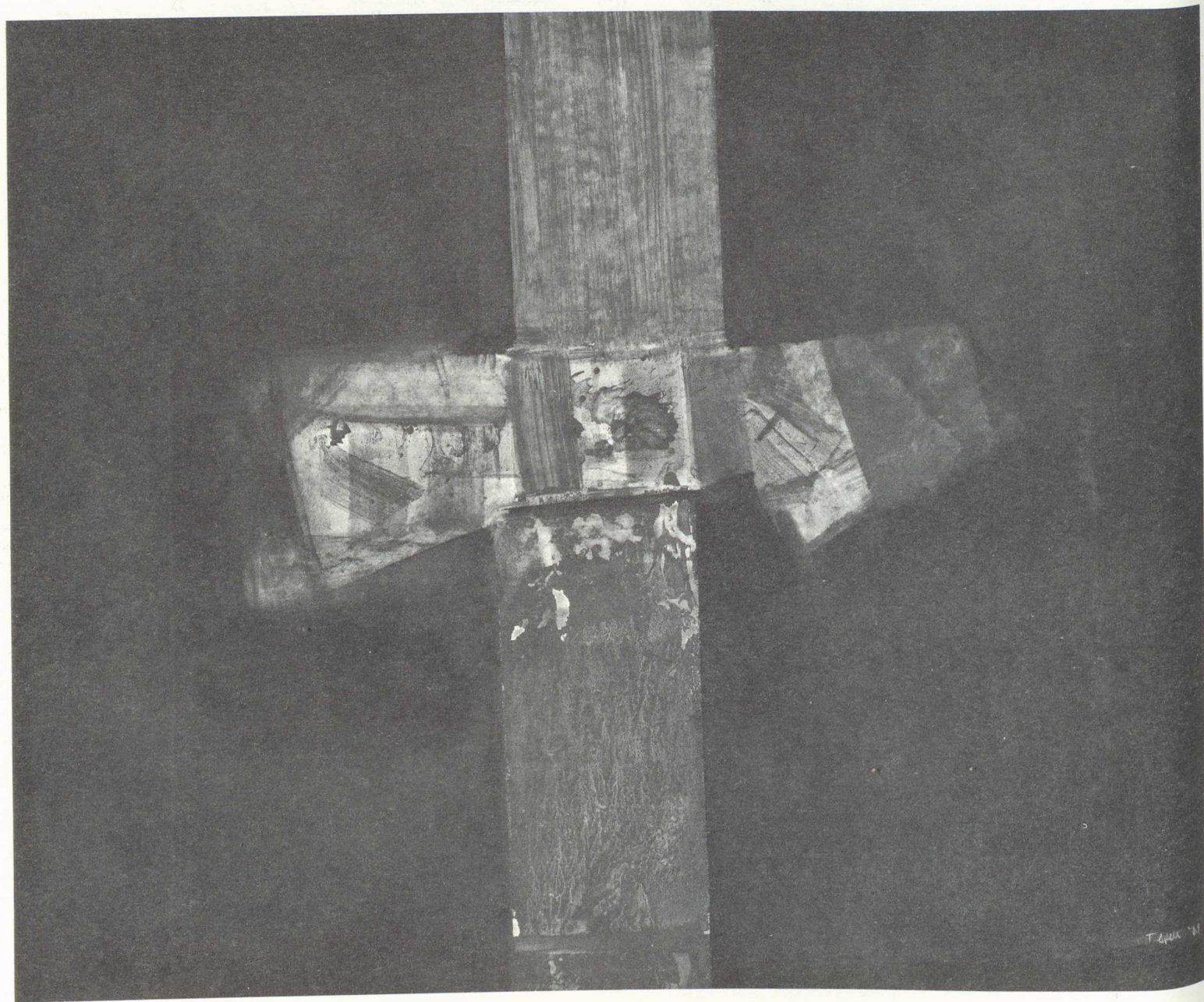
Tuggles almost fainted. He tried to talk — "But officer I was only —"

"Shut up and save your explanations for the judge. Come on!"

Tuggles obeyed. A while later, a devastated figure was seen being dragged into the local police headquarters by a young officer.

Fortunately things went better for Tuggles after this. The judge let him go, to the anger of the arresting officer, because of a lack of evidence, and the incident never reached the papers. He called in and told his employer that he was sick and would be out for a few days (for the first time in seven years). So things turned out better than they could have. But somehow the world of Darius Winton Tuggles never seemed secure thereafter.





## October Across the Illinois River

Early after supper  
Illinois and October  
Yawn all along the roads and rivers,  
And spread the feast  
Of sleeping lovers.

Soft-shouldered trees tilt melancholy  
Suns going home,  
And the few fields left over  
Whisper where they've hid  
And tow in all the weary children  
For their sleep beneath the snow,  
A subtle coverlid.

All things alive have gone to bed,  
Older, wiser, and really most discreet.  
And bubble-gum boys carry  
Music of a harvest in their cheeks.

As I drive toward home  
The scene is melody for her  
Who is, miles over my shoulder,  
The simple lyric of my loneliness.

It is now, toward dusk,  
That I have lost breath  
To wonder at what's left for me,  
Not nearly so discreet as all of nature,  
If I always were to have just  
No one to go home with.

*Joseph Bauers*



## Hearse

You spot it first  
And point it out to me.  
I turn about in time to see  
The sparkling hearse move  
Down the street in rain.  
We move on and you complain,  
Take time to make analysis,  
Of death and man. You curse,  
Grow sad, decry the cruel  
Logic of mortality.  
I with a shug comply.  
You see the car and feel  
A universal pain, I only  
Crouch against the rain  
And think about those turning wheels  
That spattered mud upon my heels.

*Richard Steele*

Pliny  
The Elder  
Climbed fire  
Seeking knowledge  
And probably  
Suffocated in ashes  
And entombed  
In lava  
Vesuvias  
Found the real answer.

*K. H. Boyce*



## Orphan

The bracketing of summer,  
ending,  
held an empty  
unending friend,

above tall castled night  
the yellow of sky  
shifted to island  
and sand,

children in a cry  
lie bracketed  
by bone  
and crippled beach wood,  
leaving  
on a hobbled crutch,

leaves fall,  
hustled away  
to the south  
in a shuffle  
of wind-rake.

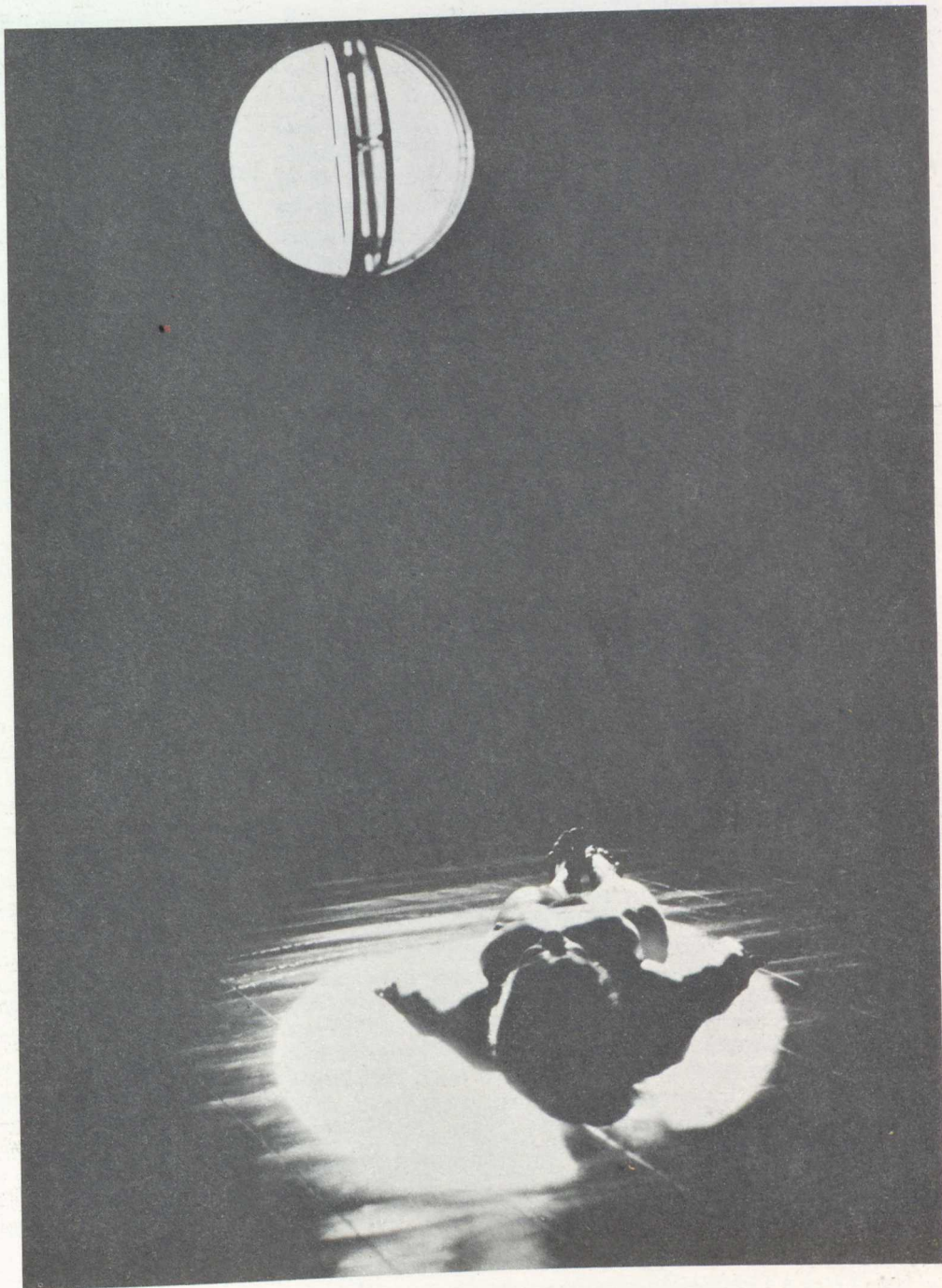
*James Minor*

I drown  
my face & hands  
perhaps too readily  
in the  
summer/ing of crickets.

Instead  
I'll ease my touch  
thru 2 a.m. moonlaughter  
blacknighting the scent  
of you,,,quiet eyes.

I'll watch the unwinding/yes/  
your inside  
to my outside  
to my inside  
so that/yes/  
we'll come  
to where  
we see only the whispers  
of our flight.

*Marianne Boruch*





# Cars

By Steve Crowe

Here's a picture of me standing by the Fiat that was taken about two weeks before I transferred to the university. It was during that summer that the polacks moved in across the street from us. They came while I still had the motorbike, before I got the car.

I can't say whether it was a break for me to get that car or not. I didn't have much money and I'd just quit the band. Craig wanted my guitar and amplifier and the band stilled owed me money so I took the car in trade. It was a good thing as far as my dad and I were concerned because we were really making it rough on each other over the use of his Chevy. I thought I was going to have to move out again and live at one of my friends apartments, like I had done the summer before that — not that I had had a bad time that summer but it was hard to get to where I worked from my friend's apartment and my dad kept calling me up and asking me to come home, which made me feel guilty.

Anyway, one weekend that summer I watched them move into the house for rent across the street. There was a father, who I guessed was around forty-five, his wife, and his two sons, around fourteen and eighteen. You couldn't help feeling a little sorry for them if you saw them move in because they were hopelessly out of place in this "fine old suburb." The men of the family wore leather jackets and these lumpy worn-out grey wool caps and the mother looked like something straight from the fifties and they all spoke Polish-smattered English.

But I don't want to give the impression that I looked down on them, at least not in the beginning. People on this street try even harder than the rich ones to look classy. Before the polacks came my dad and I were considered the black sheep of the block. Even though we have pretty much the same income as our neighbors we don't go in big for keeping up the lawn and planting flowers and things like that, you know. The old neighbor ladies complained that I had "wild parties" and "practiced with that noisy band" and said I "never got along with my father." The old lady next door was particularly vocal. She used to say she never knew how I stayed in college and she even had the nerve to tell my dad that she saw me leave our place at seven o'clock one morning with a girl — like he didn't know or something.

Anyway, it wasn't long until all four of them got jobs at the Terry's Grocery Market main outlet a few blocks

from here. They probably had the jobs lined up before they ever moved in. Every now and then I'd be in the market and I'd see the father and one of the two sons mopping away in the meat department, grinning like they were executive vice-presidents or something. I pumped gas, which is just about the same type job, but I wouldn't've smiled like anything but a gas station attendant. The hell if I'd ever let some patronly jerk think I was the sort of "diligent" that I thought they were.

But they faced the neighborhood. They didn't try to hide their Polish language at all, they wore the same clothes they always wore, and they went for these walks together. The father and the oldest son used to go on walks around the block all the time and have these big serious man-to-man talks. Jeff Benson and I used to laugh at how corny they looked, walking around like such comrades — once they even had their arms around each other's shoulders — but I'll bet you they made one of the closest families of this suburb, or any other suburb for that matter.

So one day, while I was fixing my motorbike so I could sell it and pay for part of the insurance on the Fiat, the youngest boy walked over and watched me for a while. I figured I ought to talk to him so I asked him if he liked motorcycles.

"Sure do," he said. "Me'n my brodder will build one soon."

He proceeded to tell me about the kind of cycle they were going to build, what kind of engine it would have, how they were going to build it where they would get the parts . . . he could hardly form a decent English sentence yet he knew the names of racing cams, bored cylinders, oversize pistons, and all the other mechanical gadgets that make a cycle go faster and use more gas. I finished what I was doing as fast as I could and went inside. All that mechanical garbage could interest me less — there's more worthwhile things somewhere to spend your time and money on. When I looked out the front window a few minutes later the kid was still there, staring at my motorbike.

That summer my father and I got along really well — not that we were really close or anything, in fact, I seldom have any real conversations with him because we can't find anything to talk about and when we do we still can't really get our feelings understood. But we did get along really well. He went where he wanted to go and I went where I wanted to go and whenever we met at home we were there because we wantd to be — so there weren't any arguments. This made it look like we were closer,



even though we weren't and that made him feel better, too. I suppose we did respect each other a little more anyway.

Actually I was more interested in Peggy and I than my father and I — most of the time when we had fought over the Chevy it was because I had wanted it to go see her. He wasn't being really unreasonable or anything. I just wanted the car so often. Anyway, that summer Peggy and I took the Fiat everywhere. On Sundays we'd go out past the west suburbs and have a picnic. We even took two days off one time and stayed at my aunt's and uncle's in Wisconsin.

I did have to invest a lot of money in the car, though. It didn't take hardly anything in gas and oil but something was always going wrong with it. It was never anything major at first — just window handles falling off and things like that (though even they cost quite a bit) but later I had to have the transmission completely overhauled and the clutch repaired and that set me back pretty badly.

Anyway, the first months of summer went along rather uneventfully for me, but the same could hardly be said for the polacks. One afternoon, towards the middle of July, a big change came to their lives. I didn't see them bring it home but the following day I was scheduled to work the night shift so I stayed home to relax and lay out in the sun and I saw them drive up in it. It was a brand new big fire-engine-red Dodge Charger. You know they'd probably spend the next six or seven years making payments on it. They were as happy as little kids and the father, mother, and the oldest son took turns driving it while the others got out and watched. As the summer continued they used the car more and more. The father and son didn't walk around the block anymore, they drove around it. On Sundays the family went through the weekly devotional waxing, rubbing each part of the car with loving care, followed by a Sunday drive — like Peggy's and mine. That car must've used enough gas on one trip to take my car across the state.

At first the car brought the family even closer together, if that was possible, but as the days went on I noticed them changing, especially the father and son. Their drives around the block were more frequent now but their faces showed disagreement which, in time, changed to indifference. On Sundays the wife no longer joined in the waxing ritual and there were nights when she would stand in the doorway and watch her husband drive away.

One evening around ten o'clock, after I had pumped over a thousand gallons alone, I stopped at a hamburger drive-in for a Coke and some fries before I went home.

While I waited for my order I watched all the high school kids standing around the driveway, leaning on their cars, yelling back and forth — they were all over the place, like maggots. And with them were their gods, the cars — polished like diamonds and rumbling and snorting like a hundred white stallions. I wonder if the Romans ever worshiped their chariots the way we worship cars.

As I started back to my car I saw a group of kids gathering around a car a few spaces away from me. I recognized the polack's Dodge's big smiling grill. I walked closer and saw the oldest son standing by the trunk and talking to some kids looking at the car.

"She does a hundert easy," he bragged.  
"Yeah? How fast?"

I looked inside the car and saw the younger brother looking for something in the glove compartment.

"Oh . . . about six seconds," he crowed.

This brought reactions which ranged from disbelief to one kid who scoffed, "It should do better than that."

"Well, I race on weekends you see," the polack explained.

I was pissed. It was none of my business but I couldn't stand to see the polack getting like the rest of them — all the goddam phony hot-shit suburban high school punks — he was acting just like them. It was rotten but I walked over to him and said, "I guess your dad's finally letting you use his car once in a while, huh?"

His face went red and some of the jerks he'd been talking to started snickering.

"W-W-What you talk about, wise guy? Dis is my car!"

"Sure I know. I just thought. . ."

"You jus shut up, wise guy!"

"O.K. Take it easy," I said.

With a little of his "dignity" restored he jumped into the car, backed up, and roared off, skipping stones across the drive.

A few mornings after that, as I left for work around six o'clock I saw the oldest son pull up in front of his house, looking tired but scared as hell, and the old man came running out of the house, his eyes almost popping out of his head, screaming Polish at the top of his lungs. In my rear-view mirror I saw the boy run for the house with his hands over his head, the father chasing him in and pounding him on the back with his fists.



Towards the end of July I started spending some of my days driving out to this spot that Peggy and I had found one afternoon. It wasn't too far out west, back by a woods. You had to drive down this dirt road, around the woods, and up a grassy slope and at the top you'd stop and get out. Just below the slope was a little creek and beyond that was a meadow. I'd come there every now and then and lie around, the only person back there, and read a book or a magazine or sometimes just sleep. It was a great thing for making you a little more optimistic if not just happier.

You can guess that as the days passed the polacks became more and more like most of the other families here. I mean I'm not trying to be the champion of the "good old fashioned-family" but it was what they had going for them. Sometimes on the hotter evenings I would sit out on our front porch and watch the two boys work on the Dodge. They had a group of friends now, all of them pretty seedy-looking: most of them second generation kids from other towns. They all wore sleeveless T-shirts and baggy green pants and had high pasty-looking pompadours. But you couldn't blame the polacks for having those kind of jerks for friends. None of the clean-cut jerks would have anything to do with them . . . and after talking to the younger brother I wasn't dying to spend my time with them either. They'd be out there almost every night with their new friends taking the engine apart, messing with new parts — which came fairly expensive and which I heard the father and son often argue about — and washing and waxing and polishing. They'd start the car and stop it, start it and stop it.

I was starting to prepare for school during August and trying to work as much as I could at the station to make up for the money I had spent on the car. On one of the hottest afternoons Peggy called me at work to tell me she couldn't go out for dinner after as we had planned. It was too hot for me to care one way or the other and I guess I was a little relieved to just go home and wait for it too cool off.

So around ten o'clock I went out to the steps with a Coke to watch the polacks making sacrifices to the great Dodge. There was thunder and raining to the west of us. I would be happy to get back to school I thought. I was pretty sick of pumping gas and I was looking forward to some special courses I would get to take at the new school. Anyway, the polacks weren't working on the car that night, because of the heat, I guess. They were just sitting on the fender with one of their friends. They seemed particularly restless and when the oldest son spotted me

sitting on the steps he snorted a few Polish epithets my way. He had never done that before. I paid no attention so he resumed talking with the other two. Then they all got into the Dodge and were starting to pull away when a big white Cadillac pulled onto our street and stopped parallel to their car.

"Hey man, lookin for a race?" shouted the driver.

"W-W-What are you here?" stammered the polack.

"I say you wanna race?"

"I shut you down, nigger!" spat the polack.

Somebody started to get out of the Cadillac but the driver stopped him and said he wanted the race. The polacks pulled the Dodge out onto the narrow street, less than an arm's length from the Cadillac.

"Ready? . . . GO!"

Both cars squealed forward but the Cadillac swerved in front of the Dodge immediately and in a split-second the polack had pile-driven his car into a parked Ford.

The Cadillac sped down the street. Porch lights went on all the way down the block. I ran over to see if anyone was hurt. The Dodge's front end was a total wreck, not to mention the damage done to the back of the parked car. The younger brother was sitting in the passenger seat, stunned, and his older brother was leaning on the front fender crying. The other kid ran off. Then the owner of the Ford came running out of his house and started saying, "Oh no! Oh no! Oh no!" and the other people on the block formed a little group around the wreck and mumbled. I managed to get the younger brother to scoot over and put it in neutral and, with the older brother and I pushing, we freed the Dodge from the back end of the Ford.

After that I made a half-ass attempt to calm down the older brother, who kept crying and muttering Polish. The radiator was hissing, water was running all over the street, and the engine was clicking like a big clock. Suddenly, with a blood-curdling cry, the father came thrashing through the crowd, when he saw the cars he stood speechless for a moment and then, grabbing his sons, he screamed one of the loudest screams I ever heard and with his wife shrieking and wailing and bawling and everyone else standing there like dummies, he punched his son twice full in the face and the kid slumped to the ground with blood running all over from his nose. The old man could've broken it for all I know. Everyone in the crowd still stood there speechless and the father started screaming so hard his throat hardly made the noises. The mother kept wailing



away and the Ford owner was trying to get the name of the polacks' insurance company. I went back to the house and called the police because I suspected none of the others had done it yet. Shortly after that it started to pour and everyone went back inside and the police came and then it rained even harder and all the lights on the block were out. It rained on and off for three days after that.

Shortly after the accident I broke off what had been a two and a half year thing with Peggy. All our friends in the back of their minds had assumed that someday we'd be married. Even I had thought it once in a while but somehow I knew in time we never would. Anyway, the day I talked with Peggy and we decided to untie ourselves I came back and drove out west to my place behind the woods. The dirt was so muddy from the rain that half-way down the road my car got completely stuck and I left it there and walked the rest of the way. I felt relieved as I threw off my muddy shoes and socks and walked up my sunny slope, dragging my feet through the grass and dandelions. I was mostly happy that what I had said and done up til now was over. I was all set to try to sleep for a little while when I reached the top of the slope and saw it. Just a few feet from where I usually sat was an old abandoned hoodless Plymouth, an ugly hulk of dull rusted chrome, broken glass, and battleship-grey metal, which someone had left to rot on its bare axles. The paint was blistered in spots and the grass around the car was scorched, as if somebody had tried to set it on fire and something had put it out. The engine was a mass of greasy metal with wires crawling all over like worms. I walked up to it and looked through the shattered windows. The interior was drenched. There were matchbooks and magazines and an old jacket and some pop bottles and some kind of shit all over the back seat. There was some old food or something left on the floor that made the whole thing stink like cat piss. It had ruined my whole place — it made me sick and tired and depressed. I sat down on the ground next to it and thought about everything that had happened.

I didn't see the polacks hardly at all the remaining two weeks I was at home, except once or twice when I saw the father and the youngest son walking to work, like they'd done before they ever had the car. My father and I were as fine as we could possibly be during the last few days and we both agreed it had been a pleasant summer as far as we were concerned. Then, about nine days before I left, I went to the university to see about having a student loan set up for me, since I hadn't quite managed to save enough money for school. Things didn't look too

promising for me since it was so late in the summer but there was a chance. When I returned home and started inside the house I saw the younger brother coming down the sidewalk towards me. As he got nearer I could tell he knew I was going to talk to him and I could tell he didn't much want to talk but he stopped anyway.

"What's happening with the car?"

"We'll probly not have it fixed. My father is in trouble."

"What about your brother?"

"Don't you know? He ran away from home when he cracked up. We don't know where he's at."

"Don't *you* have any idea where he is?"

"I think he's wit friends."

"Well what's happening now at home?"

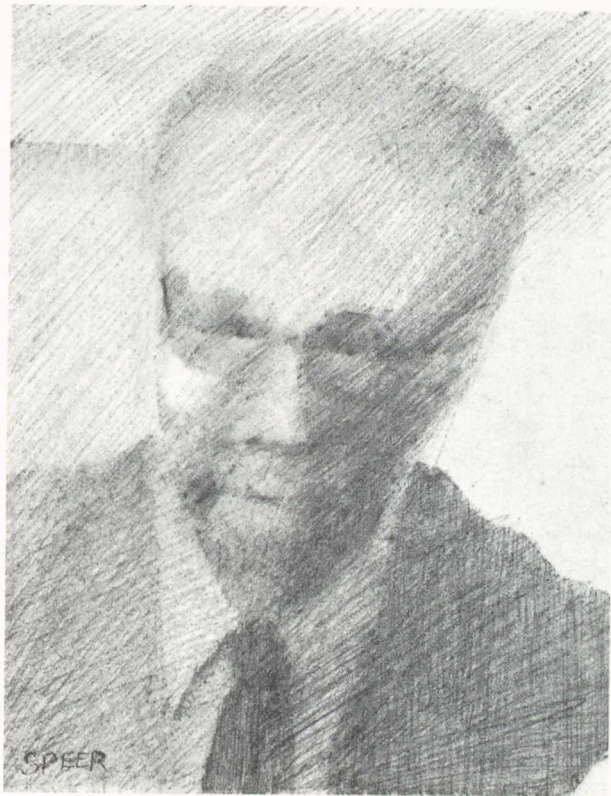
"Oh, I have a hard time. My pa, he won't let me do nuttin no more. An he an ma are very sad. If I could find the nigger's car I will smash it in pieces!"

"Are you still going to build your big fancy motorcycle?"

"Whaaa . . . hey're you crazy or something?" he snapped.

"No," I said, more annoyed by myself than I was by him.





## To Lucien Stryk

One pebble splits against another  
And another splits  
Before thousands, millions  
But after, no ships move  
Nor people saved,  
Just "nutless Nagasaki survivors"  
Watching Meru ripple  
Like the back of the garage  
When the garbage can is rusty hot

*Jerry Baccetti*



## Summer 1959

We were best friends by eight  
and you're never as best friends  
as eight,  
indestructable together,  
vanquishing the peach orchards,  
conquering every sand dune,  
timorous as an avalanche,  
demure as the north winds;

until the day he decided to fly  
from the old elm,  
cardboard wings and all, a  
slick push-off—I was sure,  
really sure he was going to pull it off . . .  
alone,  
and I hated him.

So instead of running to break  
his fall,  
I just stood there, really amazed—  
a twirl, a spin,  
a wounded bird.

He put his arm on my shoulder  
and limped to his house without  
speaking;  
it was never the same.

You're never as best friends as eight.

*Robert T. Donnell*

## The Legend of the Piasa

They are their father's furies.  
Etched in the stone on the bluff  
On the road to St. Louis,  
Each year is repainted  
An ancient Indian emblem  
Where once the area men  
Conspired to kill a beast  
Of gothic dimensions.

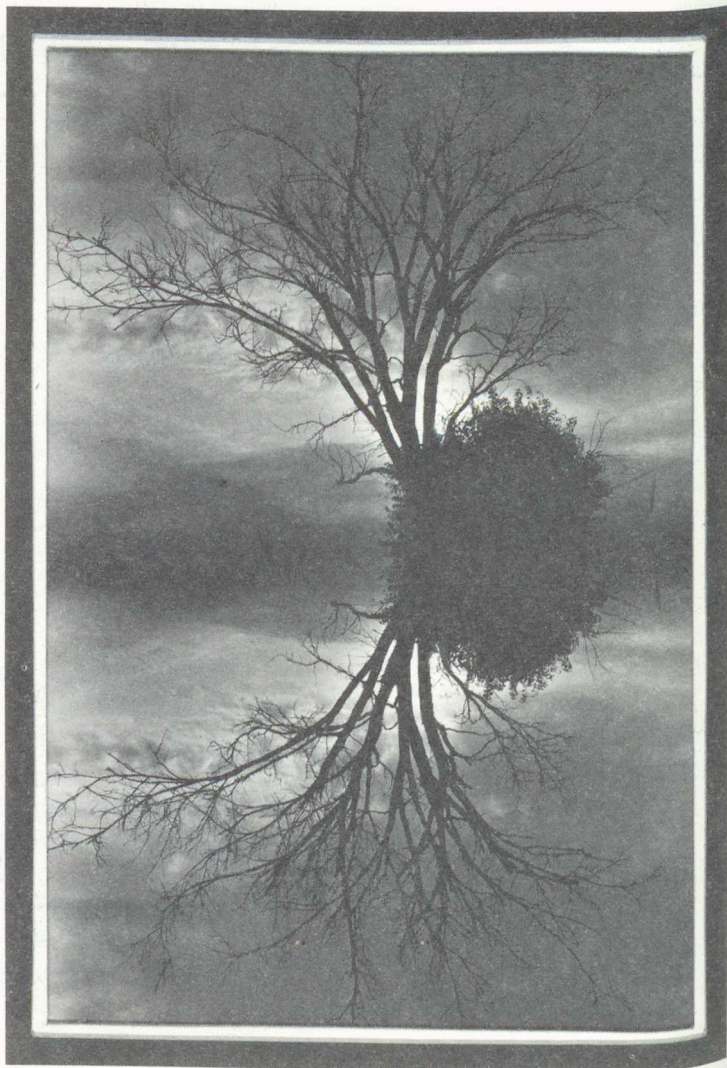
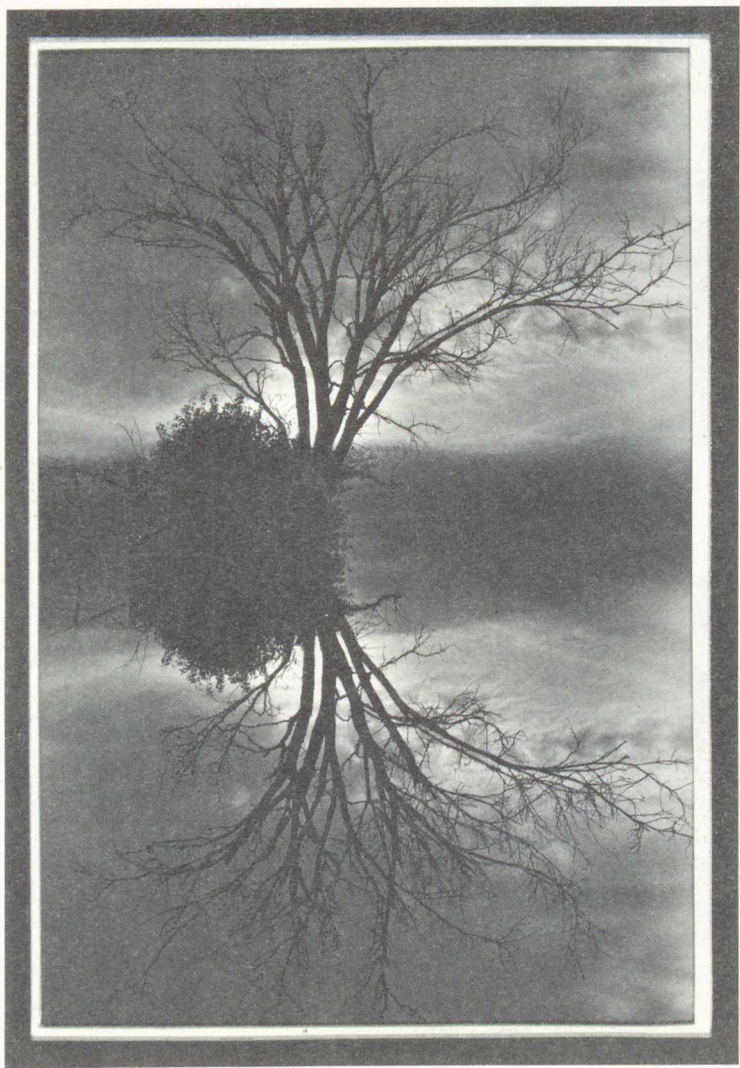
Here men race the river,  
But the river never loses.  
Roads are broken, widened, torn apart;  
The river lacks a motive to transgress  
Or depart its own eternity,  
As certain as the weather  
On the land.

Each Spring scaffolds hoist  
Men and sons to repaint the bird,  
And extend its legend, like the cross.  
But men must have a motive,  
The river knows, and whispers questions  
On its shores:

Great monolith,  
What do you wait for, and nothing else—  
A savior to save you from the beast,  
Or the beast itself?

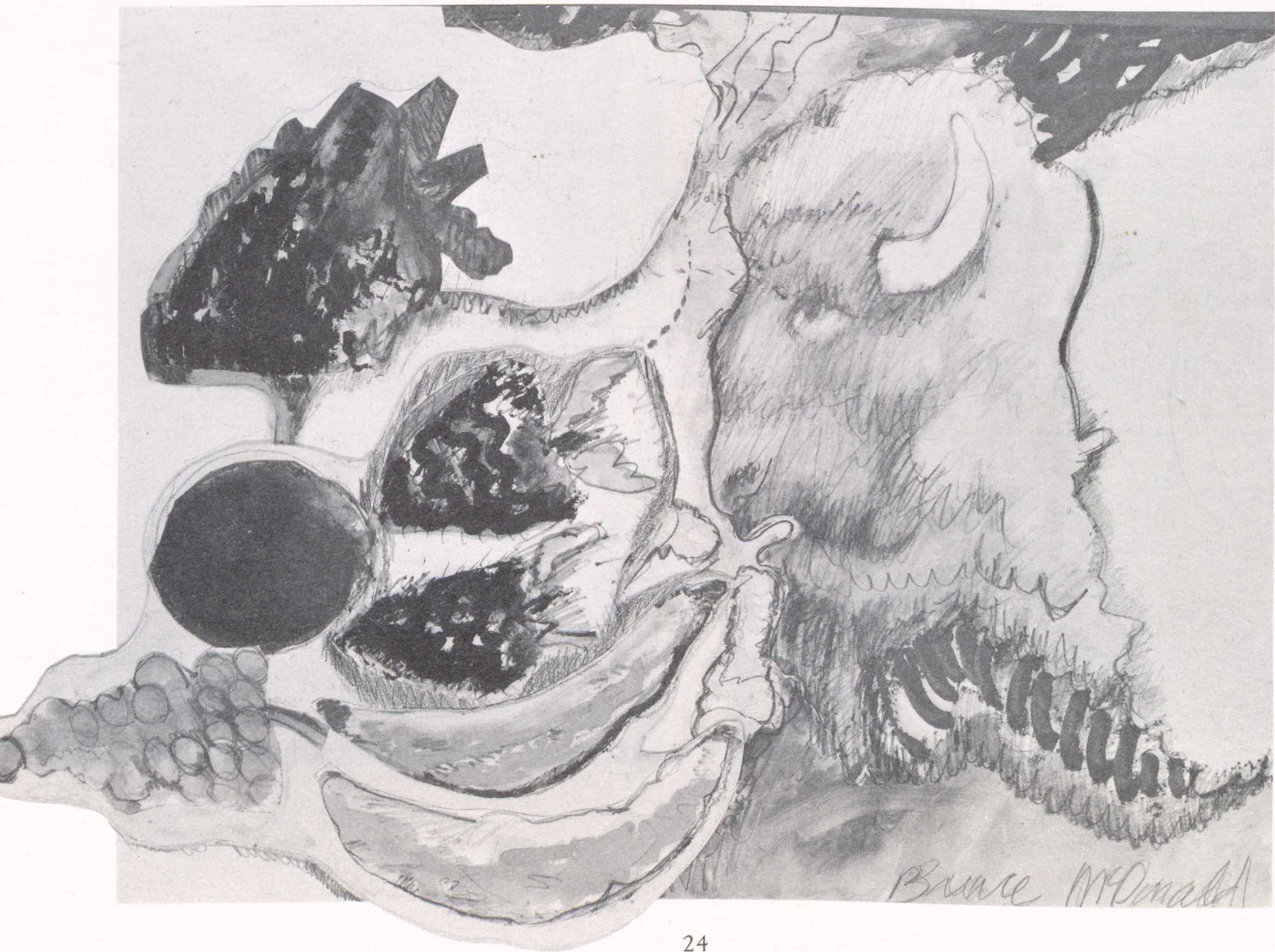
*Joseph Bauers*











## Under Capricorn

An unpropitious night for masquerade—  
Goat grazing at the door—the maskers  
Meet his eyes—afraid, passing quickly  
To the shout within . . .  
The goat is gray.  
It eats all day and every day  
The rose, the thorn—  
Omniphagous is Capricorn.

But now Blackbeard struts the floor  
His waistcoat rife with weaponry  
In his dark eye the fire of piracy  
All ember flashes at the sight  
Of Princess red-cheeked,  
Dancing lashes, miniature harpoons  
To prick the sad eyes hanging from the face  
Of Pallid Priest  
Skirts a lifted partner in impious embrace.

Fingering his plastic shooter there  
Cowhand revolves slowly contemplating  
Dustbowls in the punch, elsewhere  
Relived his hour enjoins the others  
To the fray, the Count with sword and Buckler  
Moves in upon the Soldier and his Maid,  
Indian feathers switching  
Stern Military epaulettes.

Dog takes note of all, whines experimentally  
Buries bone in Chorus Girl  
Across the hall, one pearl removed  
Permits the night deposit.  
White Hunter emerges in pursuit  
Of Peacock Feathers bristling from  
The kitchen as Caveman dejected  
Full of gin, drops his studded club  
To wrestle with  
The Queen of Scotch imbued.

In time the evening will be done  
And under Capricorn the old year die,  
The maskers will unmask  
And the faces they have worn,  
Their trothless faces, lie  
Crimson Pirate, Scarlet Whore  
And Pallid Priest alike  
In disarray across the floor  
In time the evening will be done  
The year close darkly under Capricorn  
The grazing goat—time then to mourn  
The passing of millenium  
The sequined fall  
Of Chorus Girl  
Et. al.

*Richard Steele*



## intimate lightning

the heart of a man becomes the murmuring of the world.  
are the martyrs of all time dreams done in by an opening Eye?

the honest torturer and the Friend eat at the same table.  
should i take my chinese sister to that well-lit room, the  
Astrodome,  
or just say baseball's an exclamation point?

a mayor orders kids shot in the leg for running with brown bags,  
for saying "no money now, no money never."  
can i ever call the hancock center the first letter in a cosmic  
alphabet?

a man with a club and piece of wool over his tit  
smashes the wine of strangers, creates countless bits of brilliant  
glass.  
ah, brave soldier, brother! go at the speed of light, fill the  
universe!

a man cleaning the roof-gutter falls on his head and tells the  
future.  
the opposite of uglify? kissableize.

three women huddle in a landscape of waste, a Mid-West ash,  
shielding a child from a lens.  
is it decent to refer to antonioni here?

a housewife, e pluribus unum, turns to afternoon high-rise  
whoredom.  
grocers and film directors debase themselves.  
has prostitution become the great leveller, the world-wide  
metaphor?

a voice on a phone prescribes happiness.  
can a square be empty if scraps of paper are swirling in it,  
are dancing in it?

intimate lighting spreads thru the street: the war is over.  
i can touch the ceiling, i can climb kilimanjaro, i can mount  
a question mark.

*S. E. Mitchell*





To The Lady Who Helped  
Me Teach The Judge Is Rich Enough

The windows rattle  
everytime you don't  
walk softly in our house.  
If they ever break  
I don't know what I will do  
but I will do it softly.

*Dale Royalty*

## Grandmother

Like butterflies in glass  
Grandmother sits suspended  
In a medium of lavender and rose  
And hangs on the wall unnoticed.

*Jerald L. Collins*





## For One Time and One Time Only

On the midway:

The barker touts,  
To curious country louts,  
"Bo-bo the dog-face girl,  
She walks, she talks,  
She wiggles, she giggles,  
She wriggles and slithers  
On her belly like a rep-tile,  
Sometimes she makes ya think  
She's almost human . . ." while

Under the big top:

The mottled lion makes its way  
Through jungles of un-design  
From tub to colored tub  
Breathing still—eyes burn—  
Dawn over the wide veldt  
From colored tub to tub  
Yellow teeth, meaty humid mouth,  
The south under the sun  
The run of gazelle, okapi,  
Antelope, caught and whirled  
Turn in the small brain,  
Rain falling, under heavy skies  
The cries of wild birds,  
Herds of heavy grazers—  
Slate Rhinoceros,  
The leopard and her cub,  
From tub to colored tub  
Sliced by black bars  
Stars glitter behind yellow eyes,  
Night skies dark, darker  
On the heavy lion brow—pacing, waiting . . .

In-tro-duc-ing:

A magnificent figure,  
Whip, lash, sash of gold,  
Epaulettes, cold metal,  
Sharp moustache—  
Is it you, Clyde?  
Your pistol and your chair?  
Oiled hair, black under white cap,  
Slap of leather lash, tap  
Of leather boots—all guaranteed  
Not to break,  
Flake,  
Rust, bust,  
Explode, Corrode,  
Chip, peel, or  
Crack at the seams—  
Fill our waking dreams!  
Silence!

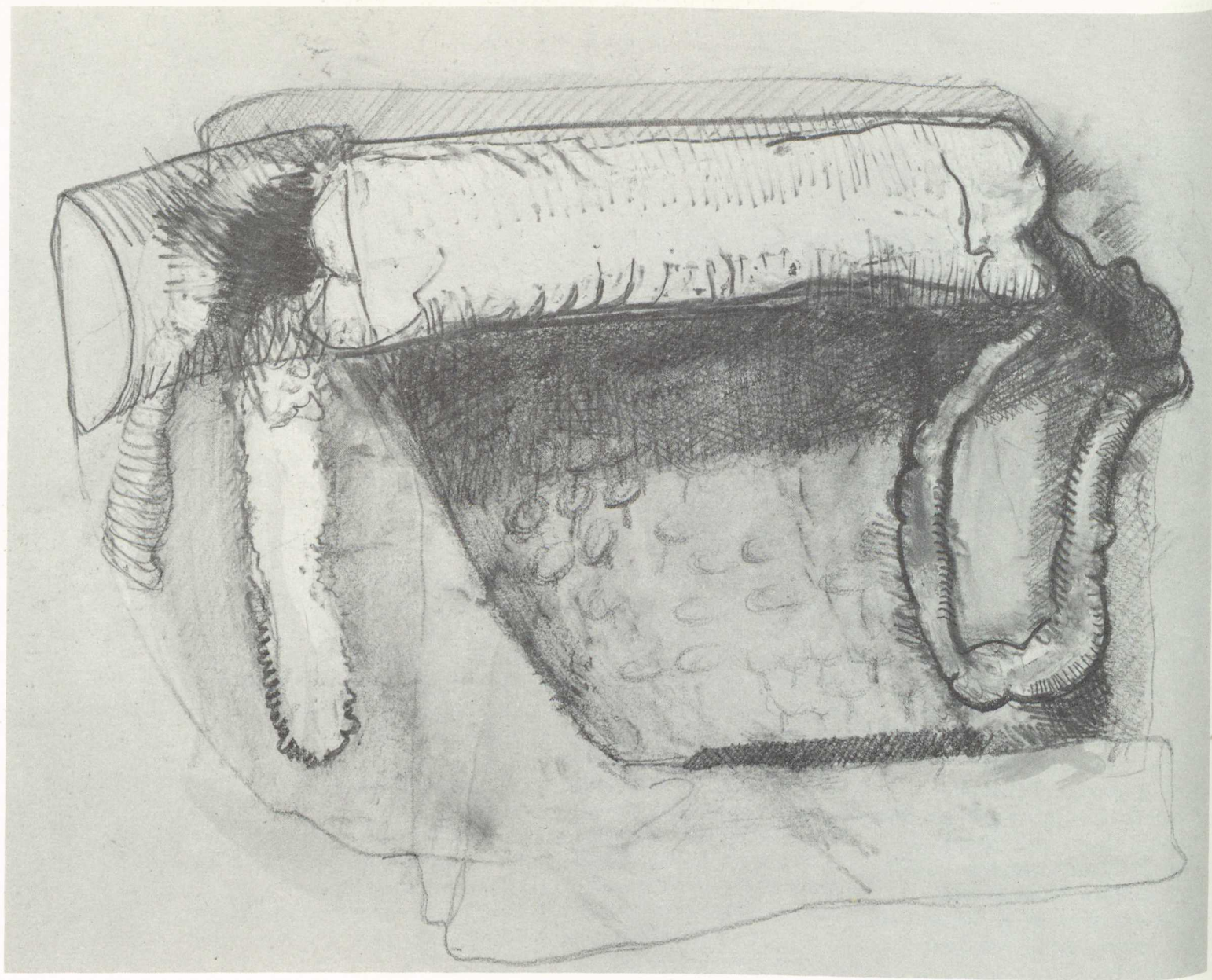
Coming in judgment out of the dark  
Where centaurs slay  
And a greedy Minotaur  
Threads his labyrinthian way,  
Sprung from the blood of  
The Dragon's wound—  
His shadow falls across  
Dark reaches of a bestial mind—  
His tawny head inclined  
To a side,  
Coming through dark corridors  
Of the mind  
From tub to colored tub  
Out of the grasslands  
Into the light, the tan beast—

A roll of drums:

"For one time and one time only . . ."  
Lonely in the spot—  
Squat before her primitive fire  
Scattering the bones of beasts and men—  
Bo-bo the dog-face . . . again  
Etched in light on rock  
In dark caves  
The antlered shaman waves  
His hazel wand,  
Beyond, the forest rings with the  
Roar of the tawny pride,  
And Clyde, bathed in light,  
His oiled hair black under white cap,  
Slap of leather lash, tap  
Of leather boots,  
Salutes the bright moment—  
The dark hour come,  
The last light trembling  
On the last struck drum.

*Richard Steele*





## Hare In Hand

Unconscious of her new birth  
Her wet fur drips through my fingers  
As she cautiously shakes her  
New found leg  
Diving into the next  
Moment of life  
For she hasn't any past  
To cling to

Yet, I could tell her  
Of her mother  
And how I watched  
Her game with the fox  
Her body like a furry baloon  
About to burst  
As she turned to  
The hot, hungry breath  
To feed other young

*Jerry Baccetti*

## If Walt Whitman

If Walt Whitman is buried in Grant's tomb,  
(with his shirt open)  
Then Pancho Villa must be the Unknown Soldier.  
If, he hasn't already been elected  
Chairman of the Board at Consolidated  
Amalgamated Co., Inc. or been sent to  
Prison by the jealous queen who  
Envied his naturally curly hair.

*Paul A. Yohnka*





the remembering of  
the vermillion demons  
that once danced in the sky  
near the lake:  
five floors down  
miniature men playfootball  
in the noon sun,

five floors down  
an ember glows red in your breath  
passing through me,  
then turns to ash

*Gary O. Holland*







# Graswaldo Albusca: The Man Behind the Legend

By Dennis Dillow

A few years after the publication of *An Ottoman For Spineless Writers* by Sir Howard Florey which mentioned *en passant* of one "G. Albusca" who had "hamstrung literary criticism" through his prurient writings, there appeared a short sketch in "The American Asterick" by a Mr. Dillow which seems to be as good as a synopsis as any on the author of such works as *Ha! Ha! A Mongoloid!* We have granted permission to recopy the sketch here.

\* \* \*

Graswaldo Albusca was a singular man, just as most men would like to feel themselves to be. But he was singular in a complex way, just as most men, etc. Indeed, he was one of the true great men. During the years of his life, many newspapers were burned, many Sunday sermons delivered, countless toilets flushed and innumerable man-hours employed in the making of such great by music as *The Tumblin' Tumble Weed* which was written by Fangulb de Coubler a few hours before his grandchildren set the remora loose in his bathtub. But enough with all this. Let us return to our sheep, as the bachelor mountain men say.

Some time after the "Glorious Revolution" (and here I suppose I should warn the unwary reader that this should not be confused with "Gloria's Revolution" of 1941 when Gloria Nuhcoapaleen revolted a crowd of New York citizens by telling them in a public address that their mayor had once had illicit relations with a she-hydra before he took the oath of office) and just a few moments after Haley's Comet flashed across the Ohio sky on that uneventful day in May, something happened which unfortunately has since been lost to mankind and posterity and do ordain upon the face of the Earth.

At any length, Graswaldo Albusca was born. Though not a formidable looking fellow — he never grew to exceed the height of five foot one — Albusca was destined to become something more than inconsequential in history. Someone once said of him, "If money grew on trees (Albusca) would stand up in court and ask for —" (here the quotation is illegible). Though not what one would call a hartshorn, Albusca does, in his own way, rank with the best of them (Shakespeare, Martin Milner, Joseph Stalin, Charley Starkweather, and so on ad infant's item). So we begin.



I would like to take this opportunity to dispell a popular myth concerning Albusca. It is absolutely unfair to attribute the gothic June 20th incident of Webb City, Missouri to Graswaldo. This is probably another one of Rufus Griswald's lies.\* Though an established misogynist, Albusca did not mix crushed glass, Diet Pepsi and lye, bottle it and sell it on the black market as vaginal foam. The ingredients of the concoction are listed authoritatively in Peg Bracken's famous book (pp. 26-29).

Early in Albusca's life (before the age of thirteen years, fantastic as it may seem, though it is now generally accepted by most students of the strange case) the future author of *Jesus Kriest: Fiction or Myth?* began to walk. Arlo Guthrie wrote the definitive work on this phenomenon entitled *The Jingle*, a hilarious satire on the corruption of early 20th century stockyards and the deplorable conditions under which men, women, children and others toiled knee-deep in their own sweat for sometimes more than twenty-four hours a day in and day out, sunrise sunset for thousands of years until the advent of the cotton gin invented by Eli Wallach. This ended a great tradition in American folklore. (Note: a folklore is a tale such as George Washington's "Rip Van Wrinkle" the hero of which falls asleep under a chestnut tree and his nose continues to grow for twenty years until it is stolen from him by a band of forty thieves and forty nights all alone in the belly of a whale.) Another important work of Guthrie's is *The Phlegm-Phlam Man* which theorizes on Albusca's last words — which, oddly, are never mentioned, though a humorous anecdote appears discussing the last words of Albert Einstein (no one actually knows what they were because he said them in German-talk or pig-latin and the only person present was a maid who did not understand such nonsense; she was also a deaf mute and a recidivist). Professor Retrograde, a custodian and part time lecturer at Bradley, would have us believe that the maid was not even present when Einstein expired. There is little validity to his theory, however, which purports her to have been "in the parlor eating bread and honey." Another oddity of Albusca's was dealt with in Thomas Mann's interesting little quarto which lashed out vehemently at Albusca's unpleasant body odor. Later Mann's work was padded unmercifully into a ten volume masterpiece entitled *Das Kapital* which was sent along with film clips showing the opening of the Red Sea to our armed forces overseas.

Like many noteworthy authors, Albusca was forced to struggle through the first few years of his career in the direst penury. His earliest existing work — *My Life and Autobiography As I See It* — was written with a

delicate hand on twelve rolls of toilet paper. There are some who believe the Albusca's *Autobiography* is a plagiarism of the long suppressed Tolstoy masterpiece *The Diary of Sammuell Pepys*. The publication of his *Autobiography* by Charles Scribblers and Sons added greatly needed impetus to Albusca's flagging ambition. He locked himself up in an unheated garage for two weeks, eating only the mice he could catch with his bare hands and licking the most from the windows and wrote undesperingly until he produced what since has been termed a minor work, *The Holy Bible Revisited*, a romantic interpretation of the life of Alphonse Francois de Sade, an 18th century dervish and religious reformer.

Putting aside his writing, Albusca attended a nationwide conference in Elco, Illinois of the Ecclesiastical Society at which he made his famous three hour lecture on his personal theory of the type of nails used to fasten the hands of Jesus Christ to the cross (Albusca swears that electro-galvanized gutter spikes were used while Cardinal Cushing believes that there is some evidence which alludes to the possibility of ring-shank pole barn nails being employed). Albusca's "Elco Address" struck a few religious phonetics as blasphemous and sacroiliacal. This handful of men, headed by Pope Alexander LXII, drew up several demands and presented them to Albusca to which he replied "Nuts."

The colorful and egregious Graswaldo Albusca, author of the incredibly original *Ha! Ha! A Mongoloid!* — the effervescent and effluvial Broadway satire of birth defects — began his famous state-wide tour of Montana shortly after signing a contract to write the screenplay for Twentieth Century Fox's epic saga *The Rare Cheese Hoax* which is based on an adolescent incident of Albusca's middle age which linked him to an international multi-million dollar swindle in which a ring of ingenious entrepreneurs sold thousands of jars of tooth tartar under the misleading label of "Hollandebb's Rare Cream Cheese." The highly successful movie features Percy Helton in the lead role as the dashing *bon vivant* Johnny Slate, Sterling Holloway as Hocker (one of Slate's thugs), and Tallulah Bankhead in the park of the disillusioned hunchbacked beauty queen (Gregory Peck appears in cameo as another type of queen in the classic 'men's room scene' — watch closely for him).

On August 11 of the Montana tour Graswaldo made his famous "Misquote Speech" before a packed civic auditorium in Butte in which he set forth his strange theory on sex education. Albusca later refused to admit that he ever made the statement, "Mastication causes blindness, insanity and acne." Facts have it, however, that almost two hundred



seventeen people within the next two days choked to death attempting to swallow their food whole. The results of the "Misquote Speech" are at once pathetic and uproarious. In later years Albusca could not think of it without smiling.

Ten days later in Havre Albusca addressed a group of world famous scientists who asked him to explain magnetism. His brief answer — "Magnetism is the belief in magnets" — revolutionized scientific study. At this same assemblage Albusca unveiled his three great inventions which have throughout the years have been unmercifully pirated by enterprising manufactures. It is not necessary to say how much our lives have profited from Albusca's steam toilet, scented lint roller and self-winding bobbin for stringy meat.

After the Montana Tour and the completion of *The Rare Cheese Hoax*, Graswaldo's health started to fail. He languished for months under the assumption that he was dying of a rare blood disease. Indeed, the symptoms of his conditions could warrant such conclusions from the layman: loss of weight, pallor and waxiness of skin, little or no appetite, progressive stages of fatigue. Albusca, always a great lover of sympathy, came up with the idea of having his actual medical diagnosis read at a press conference. Before two hundred newsmen and photographers, live air coverage from two major television networks, Albusca announced personally that it was his sad duty to inform "his public" that he had recently taken a series of tests at the Mayo Clinic to determine the exact cause of his late, lingering illness. Only the shuffling of reporters and jockeying of photographers broke the perfect stillness as Graswaldo paused reflectively. "I have here," he said, holding aloft a blue envelope, "a sealed statement of diagnosis from my doctors in Rochester. It has hitherto been unseen by *anyone* but my doctors, though its contents I have long suspected, being something of a self-taught authority in the field of pathology. Razzo, maybe you'd better read it." He surrendered the envelope to his aide, Razzo Vensciple, who arose almost tearfully from his chair as Albusca sank disconsolately to his, staring forlornly at his hands buried within the silken folds of his bathrobe. Vensciple tore the envelope with smart little hands in an affected tone of great solemnity read the diagnosis: *Ascaris lumbricoides* — worms.

The fact that Albusca was not going to die in a certain designated time did not solace the indignity of the news media. Graswaldo started from his chair, had a quick look at the diagnosis himself, tore the scrap of paper into shreds and stormed angry and abashed out of the press room amidst jeers and impromptu anathemas. The

"Worm Announcement" sent millions of the live TV audience rolling in the proverbial aisles. Albusca was to wear the scar of humiliation for the rest of his life.

Together with a few ardent followers, Albusca went into seclusion and formed an elite group governed by the Albuncian philosophy of priapism, the tenets of which are currently under investigation by the Grove Press.

Having become an object of contempt and ridicule, Graswaldo Albusca met an untimely end. Though his fate has often been said to resemble that of Ambrose Bierce whose death has to this day perplexed scholars the world over, it can firmly be asserted that Mr. Albusca, author, inventor, profound thinker, theorist in the realm of the armpit and the elbow, perverse and absurd as he was, lead a paradoxically incomplete life. His works, however, will certainly outlive the infamy of his ideas.

Public distaste came to a head when the President of the United States Himself ordered Albusca to be brought to justice for "various crimes wrought against humanity and Republicans" including the singular incident which had recently been uncovered by Scotland Yard which attributed a statement to Albusca while on a speaking engagement in Ireland. The statement Albusca had made, probably somewhat tongue-in-cheek, professed that he had come up with an important discovery that would do away with a certain type of cancer: *Lithterin, the only cure for Breath Cancer*.

The necessary people had been enraged. Because the statement had been made in Ireland, however, the legal prerequisite of extradition came up, and so for the sake of speed, a computer processed Albusca's papers. Unfortunately the computer made a fatal mistake. It extradited Graswaldo Albusca to a nonexistent country and therefore out of existence altogether.

\*Rufus Griswald took charge of Mr. Albusca's works (their compilation and editing) and produced a scurrilous biography which, fortunately, of late has been rejected by most of Albusca's other biographers. Griswald's abusive handling of the late author's life will, nonetheless, continue to cast a dubious shadow for years to come on the already controversial Albusca.



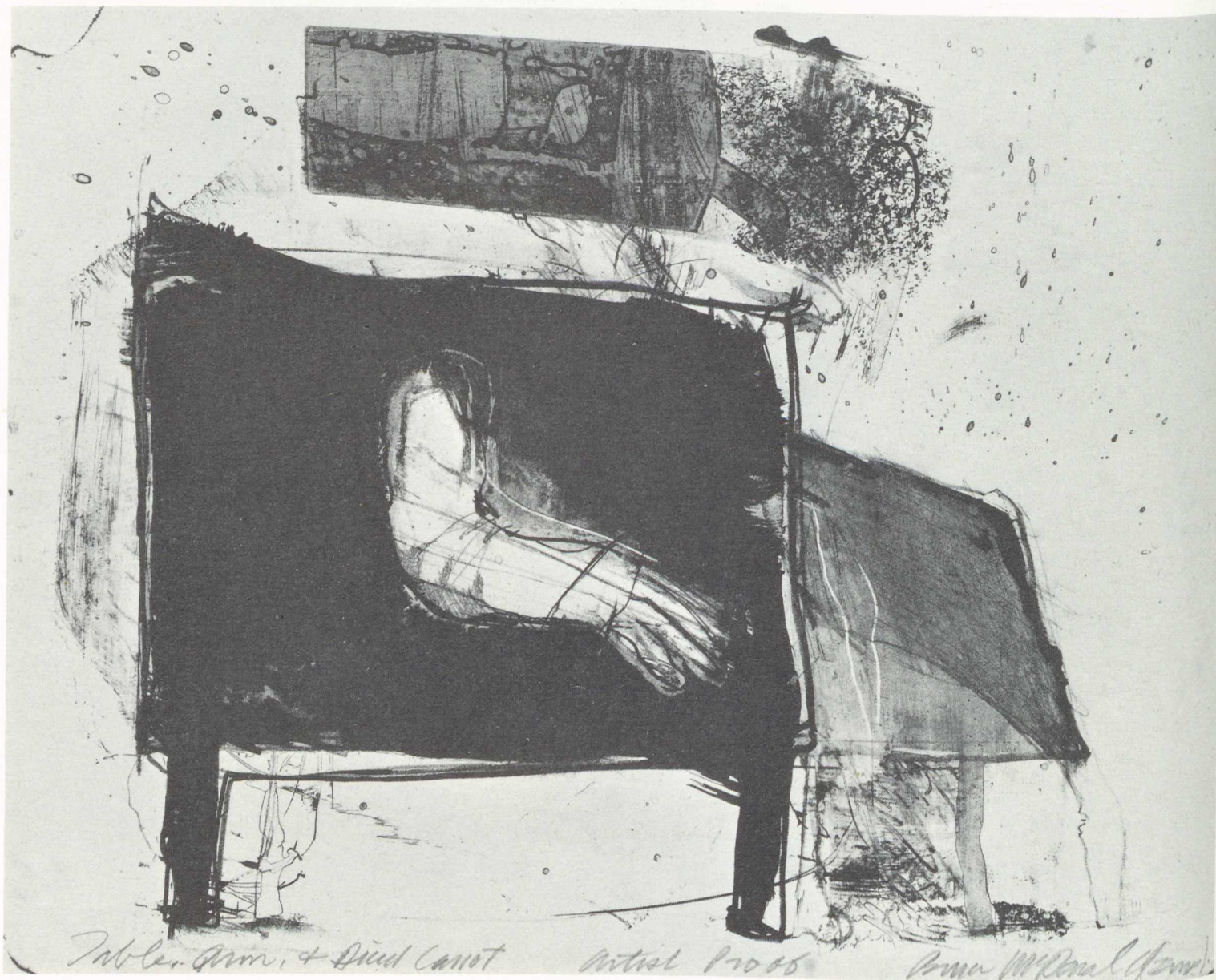


## Leg Kiss

Leg kiss  
Mind love like a bomb  
Unmind in pieces  
Struggling with fingers  
To explain, to shout  
I love you—I love you—I love you  
In darkness  
Sunshine horizontal  
Fond struggling  
Stealing and giving  
Trying to cause no pain—  
A knee pulses near a thigh,  
Shouting its cap off.

*Paul A. Yohnka*





## To Summit Up

Rumor has it that the planet Earth  
Has a pop top cap  
Someplace & someone knows  
Where it is—now—  
Several noted geologists  
& world leaders are engaged  
In frenzied search—and—  
With all the shaking done  
We could spray carbonated foolishness  
Clear to Jupiter—well—  
The authorities would like to locate it  
And put a white picket fence  
Around it for protection—so—  
If you have information  
Leading to the apprehension . . .  
Be apprehensive  
But please don't shake the planet

*Paul A. Yohnka*







## The Cast of Johnson's *Irene*

By Leonard Leff

Johnson to Garrick: "I'll come no more behind your scenes, David; for the silk stockings and white bosoms of your actresses do make my genitals to quiver."

The very few critics who have bothered to write about Samuel Johnson's only play, *Irene*, have examined it as dramatic literature and concluded that it is of limited interest in a study of the Johnson canon or eighteenth-century theatre. Bertrand H. Bronson's approach in *Johnson Agonistes and Other Essays* (Cambridge, 1946) is rather typical of the way most modern scholars — including David Nichol Smith, Robert Metzdorf, and Marshall Waingrow — treat the play.<sup>[1]</sup> Beginning with a lengthy examination of Johnson's debt to Knolles, whose *General Historie of the Turks* (1603) provided most of the inspiration for *Irene*, Bronson proceeds to a summary and indictment of the play. Undeveloped dramatic interest, lack of conflict and emotion, and a weighty moral couched in a moribund if not rigor-mortised declamatory style are the appropriate charges. Not only appropriate, the charges are also familiar because nineteenth century stage historians Genest and Doran and eighteenth-century biographers Boswell and Davies also detail them.

What every critic mentions but does not detail is the reason for the contemporary success of the drama: its production. If one leaves a performance of Peter Weiss's *Marat/Sade* or Michael Butler's *Hair* in, respectively, a state of catatonia or effulgence, he has probably reacted to the play as its producers, directors, and actors intended; that is, on an emotional (theatrical) rather than intellectual (literary) basis. Undoubtedly, the first person who saw the principal dramatic flaws in Johnson's *Irene* — its cold tone and outdated, heroic style — was its producer and co-star, David Garrick; and it was he, capitalizing on the staging possibilities at hand in Drury Lane, who made the production, not the unwieldy play, a success. Indeed, as a revelation of the ingenuity of the eighteenth-century theatre manager and the imagination

and sensibility of eighteenth-century actors, *Irene* is a subject of more than negligible interest.

Garrick became manager of Drury Lane in 1747 and "seemed to embrace the interest of [*Irene*] with a cordiality which became the friendship which he professed to the author."<sup>[2]</sup> Though the attitude of Johnson toward his former pupil was in truth rarely beneficent, Garrick put a great deal of care into *Irene*, rehearsing it for well over a month. Furthermore, he provided new scenery and costumes for the production. Davies called the costumes "rich and magnificent" and the sets "splendid and gay, such as were well adapted [sic] to the inside of a Turkish seraglio; the view of the gardens belonging to it was in the taste of eastern elegance" (I, 120). Providing new scenery and sets for premieres was not a common practice until the 1760s; in 1749, the year *Irene* was staged, most theatre managers believed that anything in the storeroom was sufficient for a new eighteenth-century drama.<sup>[3]</sup> Garrick, however, recognized the necessity of making the drama into something larger than the words. By violating a theatrical convention, he, paradoxically, enhanced the theatricality of the play.

But it was in the casting of *Irene* that Garrick was most careful. Davies remarks that "in the giving out of the parts, he was extremely accurate, to a degree of anxiety" (I, 119). For the principal characters, Garrick chose the finest quartet in Drury Lane: Spranger Barry (Mahomet, the tyrannical Turkish conqueror), Garrick (Demetrius, the Greek patriot conspiring against Mahomet), Mrs. Susannah Maria Cibber (Aspasia, Demetrius' lover and maid to Irene), and Mrs. Hannah Pritchard (Irene, the Greek captive struggling between religion and glory).

Cast as the leading man in *Irene*, Spranger Barry seemed preeminently suited to the role. Joseph Knight's criticism in the *DNB* that the actor's career was "marred only by his attempts to play heroic characters" is disputed by many eighteenth-century drama critics. Everyone, however, accedes to his striking good looks and well-shaped physique. "Tall, without awkwardness . . . handsome, without effeminacy" (II, 244) is Davies' description; Arthur Murphy remarks on his graceful movement and his symmetrical frame.<sup>[4]</sup> His playing is frequently described as being from the heart rather than from nature, meaning that his technique was that of the impressionistic or declamatory, not individualized (now Stanislavski) school. Though not subscribing to a naturalistic style, Barry's debt was to nature: "his person was noble and commanding, his action graceful and correct, his features regular, expressive and handsome; his countenance naturally open, placid and benevolent."<sup>[5]</sup>



Since contemporary accounts of his ability are at best fragmentary and no evaluation of his portrayal of Mahomet exists, it might be fruitful to look at Barry's enactment of Othello, his most famous role. Attracted to the fair woman of another culture and enraged by her apparent perfidy, Othello is not wholly unlike Mahomet. In fact, many of the emotions expressed by Othello are duplicated by the Turk. Comments on Barry's London debut as Othello might well apply to his portrayal of Mahomet: "his noble person, his harmonious voice, his transition from love to jealousy, from tenderness to rage, enchanted the audience."<sup>[6]</sup> Such transition can be found in the final act of *Irene*.

Regretting that Irene, "smiling mischief," has been put to death before he was able to "heighten tortures by reproach" (V. xi. 1 and 7), Mahomet empties invective upon the wicked, now dead Irene. J. Bernard notes of Barry's performance in a similar scene in *Othello*: "You could observe the muscles stiffening, the veins distending, and the red blood boiling through his dark skin — a mighty flood of passion accumulating for several minutes — and at length bearing down its barriers, and sweeping onward in thunder, love, reason, mercy, all before it." When he discovers the innocence of the slain girl, Mahomet, like Othello, is overcome by love and remorse. Barry's manner could not have been too different in either play; when he could not bear the love he felt, he paused, then spoke his lines falteringly and gushed tears.<sup>(7)</sup>

As fine an actor as Barry appears to have been, his career was eclipsed by Garrick's. Though while at Drury Lane Barry alternated parts with Garrick, sometimes even appearing opposite him in the same play, there was a continual sense of professional jealousy on Barry's part. Neither Garrick's letter nor his biographers confirm such a notion, but it is possible that Garrick cast Barry in the leading male role of *Irene* to relieve mounting tensions between them. Even substantial roles, however, could not keep Barry in Drury Lane, and at the end of the 1749-50 season, he went to Coven Garden, taking Mrs. Cibber with him. In 1750, the rival theatres featured rival Romeos.

The inevitable comparisons, as odious on some points as they are, help to distinguish the special talents of each actor. In summary, though Barry had physique, looks and voice, Garrick, it was conceded, had intellectual subtlety, a quality not really necessary for the portrayal of Romeo, much less Demetrius. For example, the little emotion existing in the Greek patriot is reported rather than experienced. When Leontius, Demetrius' fellow conspirator, describes Aspasia's possible treatment in Turkish hands, Demetrius replies: "Dear hapless maid — tempestuous

grief o'erbears/My reasoning pow'rs — Dear, hapless, lost Aspasia!" (I. i. 77-78) The lines are a description, not an expression of his emotion; rather than being torn by grief, he seems to depict the same condition in another person.<sup>[8]</sup>

Though not especially handsome, Garrick had a commanding physical presence which added much to a character so flatly conceived. His black eyes were "penetrating and brilliant"<sup>[9]</sup>; according to Murphy, they "looked the very soul."<sup>[10]</sup> Furthermore, he used them hypnotically, with prodigious play.<sup>[11]</sup> Lacking the mellifluous quality of Barry's, his voice was, however, "clear, melodious, and commanding . . . equally intelligible, even to the most distant parts of an audience."<sup>[12]</sup> His body was adequately proportioned, and he carried himself well. Always a graceful man, he knew how to fence and how to dance.

Garrick was a superior technician. One note in the October, 1742, issue of the *Gentleman's Magazine* affirms his stage discipline and in addition comments inferentially on the less-than-professional behavior of other eighteenth-century actors: Garrick "is attentive to whatever is spoke, and never drops his Character when he has finish'd a Speech, by either looking contemptibly on an inferior Performer, unnecessary spitting, or suffering his Eyes to wander thro' the whole Circle of Spectators" (XII, 572). Though Johnson disputed him on other matters,<sup>[13]</sup> he ultimately credited the actor's dedication to his art: "Garrick left nothing to chance. Every gesture, every expression of countenance and variation of voice, was settled in his closet before he set his foot upon the stage."<sup>[14]</sup> And to succeed as a strangely detached, often uninspiring patriot, Garrick had to prepare for the role with special care.

Mrs. Susannah Maria Cibber was Garrick's most illustrious leading lady. Many contemporary writers note the brother-sister parallel between the two actors who were so similar in size, complexion, and feature. Garrick, Davies notes, was "though short, well made; she, though in her form not graceful, and scarcely genteel, was, by the elegance of her manner and symmetry of her features, rendered very attractive" (I, 79). Her career began as a singer,<sup>[15]</sup> and her "silver voice" must have given much appeal to the tender arguments Aspasia offers to Irene. In his very biased, very sympathetic *Life of Mrs. Siddons* (London, 1834, Thomas Campbell cites a letter from Miss Seward commending Mrs. Cibber's "'sweetly plaintive'" voice, but regretting that it was pitched "'in too high a key to produce that endless variety of intonation with which Mrs. Siddons declaims.'" Campbell himself censures the "chant" in Mrs. Cibber's elocution which,



while it appealed to the ears of her contemporaries and even seemed to harmonize with Garrick's acting, would have been unsuitable for modern (early-nineteenth-century) audiences (I, 135-136).

Few critics found her beautiful, but most remarked on the pathos and sensibility of her various performances. "There was in her person little or no elegance; in her countenance a small share of beauty; but," Davies concedes, "nature had given her such symmetry of form and fine expression of feature, that she preserved all the appearance of youth long after she had reached to middle life" (II, 109). Her forte was obviously tragedy, with Ophelia and Cordelia her most memorable roles. Where anger, contempt, despair, terror, and resentment were required, she excelled. Likewise, her expression of ardent love, overwhelming grief, and helpless rage, each required of Aspasia, "never failed to draw tears from the most unfeeling" (Davies: I, 80). When Garrick learned of her death, he said: "Tragedy is dead on one side";<sup>[16]</sup> tragedy and Mrs. Cibber were synonymous.

Unlike Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Pritchard was known for her comic roles: Lady Wouldbe (*Volpone*), Mrs. Flareit (*Love's Last Shift*), Doll Common (*The Alchemist*), Mrs. Termagant (*The Squire of Alsatia*). John Doran praises her "natural expression, unembarrassed deportment, [and] propriety of action,"<sup>[17]</sup> but her size — even at the time of *Irene* — was a distraction. "A large imposing figure" and the tendency "to blubber her sorrow"<sup>[18]</sup> flawed her acting. Indeed, when Villiers' *Chances* was revived five years after *Irene*, Garrick sought an actress who would evoke memories of Miss Macklin, who created the leading role of Constantia. For her vivacity, stage presence, and sense of humor, Mrs. Pritchard was the obvious choice, but she had become so "bulky," Davies says, that a comparison of the two actresses was ludicrous (I, 187).

Her most famous tragic role was Lady Macbeth. Many contemporary stage historians maintain that Mrs. Pritchard read only her own part in *Macbeth*, that which was copied out by the prompter and given her. "She no more thought of the play out of which her part was taken, than a shoemaker thinks of the skin, out of which the piece of leather, of which he is making a pair of shoes, is cut," said Johnson, who referred to her playing as "'mechanical.'"<sup>[19]</sup> Of her private life, he thought worse. In 1783 he referred to her as "a vulgar idiot [sic]."<sup>[20]</sup>

Johnson's long-standing opinion of Mrs. Pritchard was formed on the opening night of *Irene*. Among the changes Garrick had made in the script was the inclusion of an on-stage death for Irene. Discovering her supposed treachery, Mahomet orders the Greek girl strangled with a bowstring, after which she is to speak a few lines, then die. An audience, inured to Desdemona's suffocation, was unaccountably insensed by Irene's death and cried out "Murder! Murder!"<sup>[21]</sup> The end of the play was changed, but Johnson seemed always to link Mrs. Pritchard — rather than the action causing the mayhem — to the disruption of the premiere. Yet even Campbell, who alluded to the "sluttishness" of her craft, called her a "diamond" (I, 140); Leigh Hunt termed her a genius in high or low parts; and Walpole refused to allow *The Mysterious Mother* to be performed after her retirement (24 April 1768) since the role of the Countess was so much her own (*DNB*). The role of Irene, however, was not especially suited to her talent. Aaron Hill's evaluation, quoted by Davies, is one of the few pertinent commentaries of any of the four actors in *Irene*: "Mrs. Pritchard deserved the highest praise for sustaining a character not very well adapted to her form, and one which had the disadvantage of maintaining the cause of ambition and apostasy [sic] against that of virtue and religion!" (I, 122).

The contemporary critical and public response to *Irene* was generally warm, yet it was the production of *Irene* which succeeded, not the drama itself. In his last years, even Johnson, whose statement to Garrick about ceasing to come behind his scenes was probably his curtain line as playwright, saw the dubious worth of Irene. During a reading of the play in 1780, he abruptly left the room. Questioned why, he said: "Sir, I thought it had been better."<sup>[22]</sup> No doubt Garrick's ability to give the play nine performances was the reason for Johnson's mistaken notion of its success; after all, nine was the average, perhaps even the exceptional for a new play. *Irene*, a rightfully forgotten part of the body of Johnson's work, exists today as a testament to the appeal and versatility of the eighteenth century actor who could infuse a cold, lifeless play with a certain warmth, relevance, and animation.

## NOTES

[1] Smith and Edward L. McAdam, *The Poems of Samuel Johnson* (Oxford, 1951); Metzdorf, "Johnson at Drury Lane," pp. 57-64 of Frederick W. Hilles, ed., *New Light on Dr. Johnson* (New Haven, 1959); Waingrow, "The Mighty Moral of Irene," pp. 79-92 of Frederick W. Hilles and Harold Bloom, eds., *From Sensibility to Ro-*



*manticism* (New York, 1965). Smith's and McAdam's one-volume work contains *Irene* as well as its first draft; in the present essay, all references to the play are from Smith's and McAdam's edition with act, scene, and line number(s) appearing in parentheses following each quotation.

[2] Thomas Davies, *Memoirs of the Life of David Garrick* (London, 1780), I, 119. Subsequent page references to Davies' *Life* appear in parentheses following each quotation.

[3] Kalman A. Burnim, *David Garrick, Director* (Pittsburgh, 1961), p. 69.

[4] Murphy, *The Life of David Garrick* (London, 1801), I, 114.

[5] John Genest, *Some Account of the English Stage, from the Restoration in 1660 to 1830* (Bath, 1832), V, 570.

[6] J. Doran, *Their Majesties' Servants* (London, 1897), p. 183.

[7] Bernard, cited by Brander Matthews and Laurence Hutton, eds., *Actors and Actresses of Great Britain and the United States* (New York, 1886), I, 134.

[8] Bronson, *Johnson Agonistes*, p. 125.

[9] David Erskine Baker [continued by Isaac Reed and Stephen Jones], *Biographia Dramatica* (London, 1812), I, 264.

[10] Murphy, II 178.

[11] Grimm, cited by Doran, p. 258.

[12] Baker, I, 264-265.

[13] See the *Rambler*, No. 200, for Saturday, 15 February 1752.

[14] Sir Joshua Reynolds, "Johnson and Boswell," *Portraits* (London, 1952), p. 105.

[15] Though she sang the contralto part in Handel's *Messiah*, she should not be thought to have a rich, full voice of considerable power. The eighteenth-Century contralto was more like a mezzo-soprano or "short" soprano. Her singing voice, called by Burney "a mere thread," had negligible volume; but since she never sang in large auditoriums, the voice was wholly satisfactory (Eric Bloom, ed., *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* [New York, 1954]).

[16] The remark is widely quoted but rarely in context. Garrick went on to say: "Yet she was the greatest female plague belonging to my house. I could easily parry the artless thrusts, and despise the coarse language, of some of my other heroines; but whatever was Cibber's object, a new part or a new dress, she was always sure to carry her point by the acuteness of her invective, and the steadiness of her perseverance" (Baker, I, 125).

[17] Doran, cited by Lewis Melville, *Stage Favourites of the Eighteenth Century* (London, n.d.), p. 121.

[18] Campbell, *Life of Siddons*, I, 138.

[19] Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, George Birkbeck Hill, ed., revised and enlarged edition by L. F. Powell (Oxford, 1934), II, 348. The first criticism is remarkable since Johnson himself "had a peculiar facility in seizing at once what was valuable in any book, without submitting to the labour of perusing it from beginning to end" (Boswell, I, 71).

[20] Boswell, IV, 243.

[21] An anonymous critic of the finale writes: "I doubt not, but some of our *Connoisseurs* expected, according to the old story, to have seen her Head taken off by *Mahomet*, at one Stroke of his Scymitar; which, when perform'd to the Height of Expectation, cou'd have been

but a *Pantomime Trick*, and beneath the Dignity of a Tragedy; unless you cou'd suppose, the Hero was bred a Butcher. — As to the *Trick*, perhaps, some of our tender hearted Countrymen, wou'd have eas'd that Objection, by having her head cut off in good Earnest, and so have had the Pleasure of a *new Irene* every night" (cited by Robert F. Metzdorf, "A Newly Recovered Criticism of Johnson's *Irene*," *Harvard Library Bulletin*, IV [Spring 1950], 267-268).

[22] Boswell, IV, 5.



