CORADDI

The Magazine of th

rts at UNC-G Spring

Beth Atwate

staff

EDITOR Dawn Ellen Nubel
ASSOCIATE EDITOR Mark A. Corum
ART DIRECTOR Chris Clodfelter
BUSINESS MANAGER Lisa Morton
ADVISOR Jim Clark

CORADDI

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Chris Clodfelter

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JAPANESE PRINT IN THE SEMINAR ROOM

I often look at the horses
in the room with the three white walls
and one of peach color, to match the coat
of the groom that pours their feed.
Some of the horses are pale-grounded
with watercolor spots of sorrel,
some all dark
approaching the trough with distant mouths.
All their hooves sharp brown,
turned against the matte
like stiffened fern fronds against sand.

Once, they had run on a farm
where monkeys cried at night
but birds made gems of air.

Or they were the emperor's horses
he rode to a lather, the sun
beading his back.

Now, they are thronged by walls,
the cumbersome sounds of western words
colliding in the space between.

Elizabeth Rochelle Smith-Botsch

BACKYARD REVIVAL

In the fierce pulpit-grip of summer
preaching that sultry gospel of humidity,

cicadas rasp
up in the dogwood choirloft,

prudent four o'clock gasp
as crepe myrtle struts her stuff.

The back-porch cat, oblivious,
sprawls in the shadow of the coiled hose,

the tent meeting of the clouds. Above
the blazing lawn, gnats congregate.

The sizzle of brimstone briquettes,
the chuckle of cubes in the beaded glass;

penitent in lawn chairs with fans, we
await the startling redemption of breeze.

Jon M. Obermeyer

INSECT

Softly plastic city is stuffed in a big gray trashbag.
Street lights wink against the thick carapace.
The gift floats in stellar regions,
Incomparable collection of magpies, long sunlit rays,
Miami-bound hips on streetcorners, tiny trees, buses,
Jeweled hearth fires, supermarkets full of bread and milk.
Drunken robberies, ashcans, girdled horses,
And churches with carillions still making a mad cracked sound.

God, sending tearful snowflakes
Freezes the thing as a remembrance;
It lies against the nose of a cow browsing away among
Snowy grasses,
And is revived by a warm tongue.

Geoffrey Fraser

MOLINA MEMENTO

From where Alex sat painting, the road between the trees
Ran straight behind the barns. The sun was cool, and
Shadows eased to rusty red tin roofs.
The sunburnt road was dry as snakeskin,
But flowers glistened from the rough. The painting
Dries as Alex spoke awhile about his native island.
Cuba's beaches, white as milk, could blind a camel,
Others black as tar and mile-wide. He'd blistered
His feet before he reached the water.
I thought age had enriched his memory;
My years were not enough to know that
Most men are always twenty in their own minds' eyes.
His eyes were dying. Cancer's rising tide
Reclaimed the sandy fringe of life. Alex, always
The *bon vivant*, advised me to wear tight shoes
So I would make a graceful dancer. His feet were beautiful;
Like Christ's feet, they were slender as a woman.
He and Jesus danced for God and man,
But the painting was for me.
It hangs beside a picture of young Alex
Tending burned feet on a broad black beach in Cuba.

Mark Thomas

Grand Prize

)ialogue With Peter Agostini

Interview by Homer Yost

"Whoever interrupts, whoever arranges, whoever lets his human deliberation, his wit, his advocacy, his intellectual agility deal with them in any way, has already disturbed and troubled their performance. The painter (any artist whatsoever) should not become conscious of his insights: without taking the way round through his mental processes, his advances, enigmatic even to himself, must enter so swiftly into the work that he is unable to recognize them at the moment of their transition."

—Rainer Maria Rilke

eter Agostini, born in 1913, has been making for well over fifty years.

ı 1959, Agostini was "discovered" (uncovered) the art world, after working in solitude for re than 25 years without an exhibition or public ognition. Within two years of his first show, was considered one of America's foremost lptors. All the major museums in this country v own his work—including the Metropolitan seum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the itney Museum, the Guggenheim, and the Hir- rn Museum and Sculpture Garden.

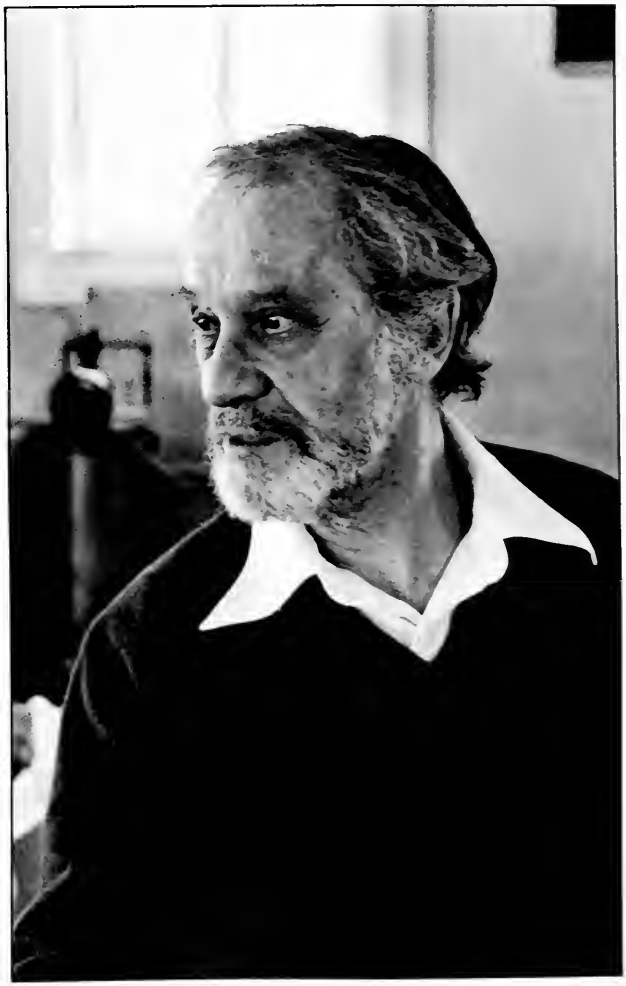
n the 1930's, Agostini was working in nymity with artists Willem deKooning, Ashille rky, Franz Kline, and Jackson Pollock. Some them came off the boat from Europe; others ne to New York City to be in the art capital. t Agostini came from the heart of nhattan—Hell's Kitchen (now Paradise Alley), barrio made famous by Roger's and Ham- rstein's "West Side Story."

Agostini is not a product of educational insitu- ns or art schools. He is a full professor at UNC- eensboro but has no degree except for a high ıool diploma. He did, however, read books, visit iseums, and study the streets. Trial and error s a big part of his personal search.

Agostini's history is one of private detours ıen his inner visions bumped up against the flow outer reality. This interview is a personal rney through historical landmarks—the Great pression, the WPA Arts Project, and post- orld War II Abstract Expressionism.

For eighteen years, Agostini has been teaching ılpture, drawing and watercolor at UNC- eensboro while also teaching at the Studio hool in Manhattan, alternating his work bet- ıen North Carolina and New York in ten day ints.

Agostini retired last summer, but continues to ach in Greensboro during spring semesters.



Coraddi: Peter, how did you first become involved with making art?
Agostini: Well, I never went to school. That's number one. My older brother Bill was an artist. He was a painter. A good one. I can still remember him giving me crayons and paper, you know, like you do with kids? I just loved art, that's all. By the time I was eight or nine I was involved. When you're involved, you start searching the world for it. And I spent a good part of my youth reading, for the simple reason that I was broke. And the library was warm. And I was lucky because I lived in New York City, so I had the Met (Metropolitan Museum of Art). It was all there. They had plaster casts of the whole Renaissance. I could see Rossellino. They had the horse of Donatello, the horse of Verrocchio. All of these fantastic plaster casts of everything; the whole floor was loaded with them.
Coraddi: So you think that it was to your advantage that you never went to art school?
Agostini: Well, when you look at all this fantastic stuff in the Met, and then look at somebody doing something else, you knew it wasn't *it*. You didn't have to be intelligent. When I didn't see any guy getting it, what could I do with him? What is he going to tell me? What can anybody tell me? But what they could have told me which would have helped me was how to draw. Instead of struggling the way I did. Then they would have forced me to start from scratch, instead of jumping into creation before I'm ready for it. Which is what happened. I was trying to be creative, excercise this essence before I knew what the heck I was looking for. I was like a blubbering idiot, let's face it. I never wanted to know *how*, I wanted to know *what*.
Coraddi: But you did spend a year at the Leonardo Da Vinci School of Art. How did you end up there?
Agostini: I was about twenty. And I was lonely. I needed artist friends. So I walked in and said to the guy, "I don't want to be taught. I just need a studio. I need clay and I want to work. I've got no money. I'm not going to pay you." So I went there every night. I had a job, but I didn't have any money because I was supporting my brother. After work, I'd do my poetry from 5:30 to 7:00. Then I went to the automat and ate. Then I'd go in to the Da Vinci School and work till late at night. It was a routine.

I remember some instructor came over to my work once. And he was going to say something. So I put my hand over his mouth and I said, "Don't, don't. I don't want any criticism." I was scared. I met him some years later when I had already gotten a reputation—I'm talking about 25 years later—and he remembered. He said, "Do you remember that figure you were doing? It was terrific. I liked the idea." I told him, "If you had told me that I would have been wiped out because I worked on the figure another year after you saw it. But you would have made me satisfied. But as it was I kept at it because I didn't get what I wanted." So praise was as deadly to me as telling me I stink. I couldn't afford praise and I couldn't afford criticism. So I was in no position to be even looked at. I wasn't that good. It's as simple as that.
Coraddi: So you had no training, no teachers?
Agostini: No, I can't say that because—let's face it—if you have eyes you learn from what's around you. What do you think African art was all about? Observing the guy that was doing it. The reason they had such simple answers was because they had *arrived* at that point. Like the Egyptians—they watched and they'd *do* it. We all do that. It's aping. We all ape in the beginning. The only thing is that if I hadn't gone to the Met, I would have accepted a teacher. But when I saw what these guys did in the past—Jesus, it blew my mind. That they knew so much. When I come across a guy working today and he's trying to simplify all that, and he doesn't get the power that these guys in the past got so easily. So what in the hell should I go to him for? It wasn't their fault. There just weren't any modern-day Michelangelos floating around....Who could make me feel like I was learning something? I had a lot of talent, you know—I could do it. I could draw. If you say draw a head, I could draw a head. You say draw a foot, I'd draw a foot. I had no problems with drawing. It was trying to figure out *what for*. I did't like the idea of just doing something. It was a bore. I had to be going somewhere in my head.

I wasn't just trying to be cute because if I were I would be s ing it to somebody, right? But I never showed my work to anyb I wasn't interested in getting accolade. I just wanted to know v the hell I was doing in the first place. But I did have an opi and most of it was that I didn't like what they were doing. I wouldn't say well, the reason I don't like it is because I k the answer. I didn't. So I wasn't going to show them my wor prove the point, because I didn't like what *I* was doing eith thought it was very....nothing. I never thought much of my w believe me. And when they accepted me...hell, I was walking d the street with a box of my stuff. I was moving and Gusaman friend comes along and he says, "What do you have there?" I said, "Just a bunch of junk." So he took a look, and says "W about this?" And I says, "You want it, take it." That's wh thought of my work. Another guy came to my studio once an said, "I don't like the figure, I like the head." I knocked off head, gave it to him, and threw away the figure. I had no ego a me at all. I knew what had to be gotten. And if I didn't get was a flop. I had to try to get essence.

Coraddi: You didn't even show your work to other artists?
Agostini: For a long time I didn't show my work to *anybo* was scared to. If a guy had said, "Peter, you should learn to dra it would have knocked me across the room. I was vulnerable. I di want somebody to come in and say, "Yuccky," 'cause I'd drop d Because in my own heart I was hoping that it was better t yuckky. But I wasn't sure, see?
Coraddi: How did it happen that you finally had your first sh
Agostini: It was an accident. There was a woman who own print gallery on 10th Street. The Grimaud Gallery. She want sculptor—she didn't care who it was. Just as some decorative ment. She wasn't really interested in sculpture. To her it something to take up floor space. You know, for people to v around when they looked at the prints on the walls. So she as somebody—I think it was Earl Kerkam—if he knew of any sculp He said, "Well, there's this guy, but I don't know what he's to, but I heard he does sculpture. His name is Agostini. Why d you try him. He doesn't seem to be with anyone." So she came and looked. But she didn't want to pick up these crazy head mine. She was French, so she probably had good taste. But as far as I was concerned. Good taste she had. And she had all modern abstract artists of the French who were famous at the ti You could buy their prints from her—very expensive. This wa 1959. My brother Bill had just died. I wouldn't have shown my w if he had been alive. That I'll tell you right now.
Coraddi: Why not?
Agostini: Because he was better than me. He was the real art I knew it. He had essence. What are you going to do? When see it, you don't fight it. He was *good*. I was just his kid brot Anyway, she told me she wanted my burlesque queens and ot sculptures I had around. She says, "I'll take those things but drawings, please. I don't like your drawings." But later she interested because people asked about my drawings. She everything—all my drawings and all my sculptures. And couldn't believe it. Even abstract artists bought my work.

So by then Tom Hess came into the picture. He called me up says, "Peter, can I talk with you?" I says, "Well, who are yo So I called up a friend and said, "Who's Tom Hess?" And he sa "He's the editor of *Art News*. Why?" I said, "Well, he want see my work?" He said, "Jesus, do you know who he is? He's of the most powerful figures in the art world." I said, "Really? what does he like?" He says, "Peter, he doesn't like realism, don't give him any of that nonsense." I said, "But that's all ever done. I don't do abstractions." I just had a bunch of plas figures and drawings in my studio. So when Hess came ove threw them on the table and I said, "That's it. And what's do at the gallery." And he said, "Oh, you're having a show?" So looked at my work, and you know what he said? "You're a gen You're good." I said, "What? From this?" And he says, "Ye You're going to need money, Peter." And he gave me a thous

ks right then and there. I never saw that much money in my
. I wasn't making that much in a whole year. Then we went to
gallery. He had a photograph of my "Ariel" piece taken and
it in the March issue. And *he* wrote about me. Tom Hess. You
w, he usually sent somebody to review a show. He's the editor.
at then made me a star overnight. I had a sellout. I didn't make
ch money because they were going for extremely low prices.
t I couldn't believe it. And then somebody wanted one in bronze.
at blew my mind.
hen I was sitting in this place one day and a guy walks up to
and says "I'm Stephen Radich." And I said, "Oh yeah? Do you
w me ?" And he says, "You're Peter Agostini, and I like your
rk." And I didn't know who he was, but he was a big dealer on
dison Avenue. So he came over and looked at all my drawings.
picked a certain batch, and he sat down and wrote a check for
r thousand dollars. He said, "This begins it. Now, here's the
l. I want a contract for life. I will support you. I don't what
to worry about anything. You just do your work." Then I had
how with him and it was held over for an extra month, by con-
sus of the artists. Isn't that something? What happened is I was
ing high. Everybody was after me.

raddi: How did Hess hear about you in the first place?

ostini: He said that deKooning and Pollock and Franz (Kline)
ed to mention me.

raddi: You met a lot of these guys in the '30's during the WPA,
n't you?

ostini: Yeah, the WPA was the best thing that ever happened
this country. And to artists. That was the closest thing to what
y did during the Gothic and the Renaissance. They were doing
paintings on post offices and everything. But what did they
? They killed it. The birth of America was in the WPA. There's
ere the beauty would have been coming from. Competitions for monumental art. Not a monetary thing, but a spiritual thing. The pay was the same for everybody. The model that posed for you got the same pay. The guy that was making the plaster wall for you to work on was getting the same pay as you. It was an honor to do a piece...at $21.80 a week. You were a worker. And you still lived like a king. You'd do your work. You got free models, paper, plaster, marble. That was our age then. What happened?

Coraddi: We could use another WPA now couldn't we?

Agostini: I don't know why they didn't continue it. Do you know what the WPA did? They fixed all the farms, all the trees, here in North Carolina, planted by the WPA. They built the roads. Not only that—they sent somebody around to record the whole music of North Carolina. Went into the mountains and wrote about it and recorded it all. A whole book about North Carolina. They did that in every state. Central Park was built by the WPA. You see all those beautiful statues they have there, the bears and everything? All WPA.

Coraddi: What did you do with the WPA?

Agostini: I had lots of jobs at that time. For a while I was knocking out posters, with Pollock and everybody. They'd pick one of the lot and print it. That was an honor. But everybody would make one. They'd tell you the theme—like anti-Nazism.

Coraddi: What else did you do during the WPA?

Agostini: I was teaching for a while, night classes for the public. Who is that famous comedian who was in *The Producers*?

Coraddi: Zero Mostel.

Agostini: He was my leader. We had groups teaching during the WPA. And Zero Mostel was head of our group. He was teaching too. He used to imitate everybody for us. He used to make us l-a-u-g-h. I knew him very well—an abstract painter. A lot of people were abstract then. But I'll be honest with you, deKooning and I and all the rest used to think he didn't know what the hell he was do-

ing. That'll tell you where we stood about abstraction. Who's kidding who?

Coraddi: What other jobs did you do to survive before you made it as an artist?

Agostini: I made manequins. They wanted me because I could make hands. That's how I really learned to make moulds—and fast. I was a ghost sculptor. That's where I got my schooling. Like when somebody wanted a reindeer for a mountain in Pennsylvania. And I had a week to do it. Lifesize. Plus the fact that it had to look like St. Francis of Assissi, which I didn't know what the heck that meant. But when the nun came in and saw it, she said, "That's *it*."

Coraddi: You did Elsie the Cow too, didn't you?

Agostini: Yeah, I did lots of those things but I was purely a ghost sculptor. Whatever somebody wanted, I would do it, they'd pay me my money, sign their name to it, and that would be the end of it.

Coraddi: When was this?

Agostini: In the early fifties. After the war. We had to get jobs to pay the rent. Survival was difficult. They should have kept the WPA. The world would have been so different. But the war eclipsed that. You saw what happened to the artists. They eventually were lost. That's why they got into abstract expressionism. Meaning was gone. There was no world anymore. Nothing. Nobody wanted you. You didn't exist. So you had to just do all kinds of jobs. I even had a Charlie Chaplin job. You know, where you keep feeding a machine. That was unbelievable. I went crazy after two weeks. I had to quit. I couldn't cope with it. I couldn't even get to the bathroom. I almost peed my pants. The birth of an artist.

But I was lucky, I always had a job. Even when I was a kid. I remember I was a messenger boy for an advertising agency. Then they gave me a room by myself and made me a file clerk which is what I liked because they left me alone and nobody knew what I did. I could do the whole day's work in an hour then the rest of the day was mine. I used to write alot of poetry then. This was a funny place to work because the president of the company Frederick Cone adopted me. I remember one day I came into work with a pajama top on. I got up late, so I just put a tie on over my pajama top. There was this vice-president who was the kind of that could be described as spiritual vomit. He went into the p dent's office and said, "Do you see how he's dressed?" Mr. (said, "Yeah, I see how he's dressed.?" "Do you approve of th "Whatever Peter does I approve. What's your problem?" The president said, "I think you should fire him." Cone said, "You answered my question. *You're* fired." And he fired the other You see, he adopted me.

Coraddi: Peter, you rarely talk about your father. Why is t

Agostini: The reason I never talk about him is because I n knew him. I once asked my father about his life and he told "I've lived my life, you'll live yours. There's nothing I can tell that would help you one bit. It's not important what *I've* do My father was an anarchist. You know what he did? He said, " is your room, I don't want to see you again." He didn't even k my name half of the time. He'd make a pot of stew, leave i the stove and I'd take some to my room and eat it. I can't remen ever sitting at a family table with everybody and eating din I do remember one thing he did. My brother Chris and I v fighting over a wagon. My father picked up the wagon and sm ed it. He said, "Now I've destroyed the bone of contention." he walked away. You see, he was from Dalmantia, what use be Ragusa, on the Adriatic Sea. They were independent pec Dalmatians aren't prejudiced; they are very open people. But t owe allegiance to no one. They don't mind being alone. They v shepherds. The men would go into the mountains alone for mo with the sheep. Being alone was not a stigma. Loneliness was a word in their language. Bernard Shaw said that the Dalmat were beautiful, powerful people. Proud. That's why my father di impose himself on me. I was always alone.

Coraddi: What did your father do for work?

Agostini: He owned an employment agency. The American La Employment Agency. He wouldn't work for anybody else. Bel that he owned a market, but he went bankrupt because he g so much credit to a lot of poor people. I never heard him pass jud ment on anyone.

raddi: What about your mother?
ostini: My mother died when I was four years old. She was on-hirty-seven. She had influenza. And my step-mother didn't want be bothered by a bunch of brats. So I was put in homes. I iember being in a French convent. They called me "Petit rre." My brothers and I were all split up because the houses re divided by ages. It was like a boot camp—beds all lined up. had to take baths at a certain time—lights out, go to bed. My ther Chris didn't like it in his house so he just ran away. He s eleven then. I'd run into him on the street and we'd talk. He ays seemed well-off. He was like a con man. He always had a of money and he wouldn't work. He married an actress when was fourteen. But he died at twenty-two. So I was always alone. d I always dreamed and I always found interest somewhere. I er got bored with being alone. I wasn't happy, but I wasn't appy. I was in a constant state of freedom.

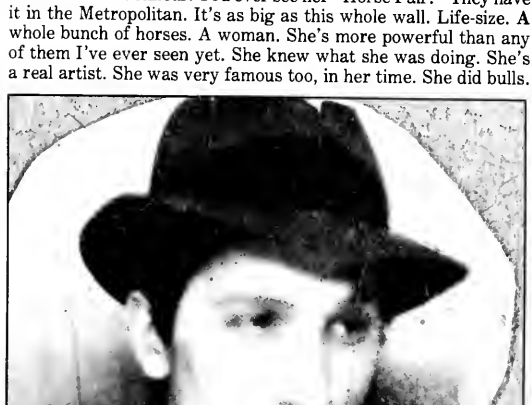
raddi: What artists in history have been important to you?
ostini: One person who really motivated my mind was chelangelo. Raphael was another. And Botticelli.
raddi: What about their works?
ostini: I have no idea...The essence—the life-force—that they bued into their pieces. They made what was, real. I'm not talk- about realism. I'm talking about creating a reality.
raddi: What images in particular do you have in mind?
ostini: The "Moses" of Michelangelo. And the "Night" and ay" from the Medici tomb. "Night" and "Day" because that is poet in me. And because the sense of sleep is very important me. The reality is more in "The Moses." The power of com-teness of the person. He was a complete actor. I didn't feel that the "David." I liked the "David," but the other ones really *got* me. And then "The Three Graces" by Botticelli. The was a com-te act, a complete truth, a pure statement. I don't think *anybody* the world of art has equaled it in its purity. That to me is one the most powerful frescoes ever done. The most powerful essence womanhood that I have ever seen in my life. It's like that an-ent bull done 15,000 years ago on the cave wall. That bull is the sence of all bulls. The same with Michelangelo's "Moses." The sence of Moses. And Raphael's "School of Athens." A *complete* formation center, done with such complete simplicity, that *erything* holds its weight.
oraddi: What other artists and images?
gostini: I've looked at where the horse is personified. I found wer in Donatello's horse and Verrocchio's horse. But the horse its essence was made during the Tang Dynasty in China. When ou look for essence you don't stay in one particular am-itheater...My world deals with the power of essence—the real uths. You can't argue with them.
oraddi: Your horses are not done from life, are they?
gostini: No, I don't look at living horses when I am doing one, ecause it would interfere with what I'm trying to capture—the sence. The same with the human figure. I find it very difficult translate what I'm looking at into what I feel.
oraddi: I've noticed that when you are working on a figure in our studio without a model, it seems to come. But it seems to be real torture for you when you have a model—a standing figure—in ont of you.
gostini: That's because I can't cope with the present, because doesn't exist until I perceive it later. When I'm doing a clay sketch f the seated model, I'm just drawing, just absorbing. But when ne is standing there, she is in total existence. Then she becomes ymbolic, and I am dealing with the essence of woman. And that's verpowering. You've seen me when I work from a model in class. can put it up fast, but all of a sudden it goes beserk. I'll capture , and then I lose it just as fast. I could draw you a tree, and make at tree come alive—I can do it right from my head. But if I'm iced with a tree, it's abundanceness drives me insane. I can look t your standing figure and come and change it into the right posi-ion. But when I try to perceive that myself, I can't do it because 'm looking one step further. I'm looking for essence. If I had done hat woman with the beads—that the Weatherspoon owns—from

a model, I would never have done it. The same with my Old Man. I put them up very fast. But if I were looking at models, I never would have finished them. The contradictions of what it is and what I assume it should be interferes with me.
Coraddi: Has Rodin's work been an influence for you?
Agostini: I like Rodin. He was really looking for the same damn thing I've been looking for—the essence of woman. Men were not his important battle. His men are hopeful images that he would appear to women as. That's why we make our Apollos. We hope that will transmit back to us and we will get the charisma of attraction....And I like the power of being in his "Balzac." And I like Gaston Lachaise. I like some things by Despiau. And as I keep looking back I like things by Clodion. That's one person I've always had in my head. There's Belleuse. And don't forget, Donatello was terrific. And there's Duquesnoy.
Coraddi: What about Degas?
Agostini: Degas was extremely good. But he didn't have the power of Ingre. But he is *extremely* good. But I don't know what is. His things still stay on the edge. But an excellent artist—fantastic. But it stays on the edge, just like Toulouse-Lautrec.
Coraddi: How about Giacomo Manzu?
Agostini: Manzu is very good. But he's more a professional, than getting essence. He's too good for his own good. He's like a lot of artists—they're so damn good, but their work lacks the essence.
Coraddi: How do you feel about Egon Schielle's work?
Agostini: I like it very much—he was exellent. But it needed something else. He needed time. He should not have died when he did.
Coraddi: How about Kaethe Kollwitz?
Agostini: She was very good. She was equal to alot of them. But

she didn't have the essence. I'm sorry. But she was a fantastic artist. You see, these people were great. I'm not going to take that from them. But if you're talking about that other thing—that's the rare, rare thing. And that's why when you look at a Rembrandt, you just *look*. Right? The power of the eyes in his portraits are unbelievable. Those eyes just pop out at you.

Coraddi: Let's talk about some other women artists. How about Malvina Hoffman, Paula Modersohn Becker?

Agostini: They're alright. I'm not saying that women can't be great. But I'll give someone who was really great. As good as any of them. Rosa Bonheur. You ever see her "Horse Fair?" They have it in the Metropolitan. It's as big as this whole wall. Life-size. A whole bunch of horses. A woman. She's more powerful than any of them I've ever seen yet. She knew what she was doing. She's a real artist. She was very famous too, in her time. She did bulls.



She was fantastic, that's all. You don't hear about them. Bu
starting to see a lot of artists from the past. I have a little dra
that I picked up done by a student of Eakins—she was fant
Coraddi: I like Eakins. And Sargent. How about you?
Agostini: Yea, I think they're very good. But they lack.....
Coraddi: Essence.
Agostini: Whatever the hell that is. I mean, I think you should
be very good. I don't think you can *get* the other thing. I think y
either stuck with it that puts you in a position like deKooning, w
he just keeps pursuing this crazy thing. I mean I'm sure he w
have loved to paint a figure the way it was, but he just can't.
like myself when I push a figure. If I just do it, it doesn't n
sense to me. I just can't. I know where everything is, but tl
not enough. There's something else that has to take place, t
just is.
Coraddi: Let's talk about contemporary artists. Are there any
ones now? Is there art with essence being made now?
Agostini: Well, I like deKooning. I don't know what the hell
I just like it. I like his Women Series of the '50's. I like wha
was trying to think. He was trying to find something. And for
reason I prefered him to Pollock, even to Franz Kline. Franz K
was like a jazz musician. He was dazzling in his non-caring. DeK
ing couldn't do that.
Coraddi: So what is essential about deKooning's images to
Agostini: DeKooning was trying to experience himself—he di
try to go far. And if you notice, in the beginning, he was invo
with Botticelli. You see, he used to call me Botticelli. *He* was
ticelli. DeKooning really wanted to *know*. He stayed very sim
He was always trying to make whatever existed look out to
Whatever was in there was coming out to you. I think I ider
with him because we are in pretty much the same world.
Coraddi: How about other contemporary artists?
Agostini: I think that there's a lot of beautiful work going
Beautiful explanations and ideas. But the power of essence is l
ing. Beautiful work—I can't argue with it. Even when they tr
do grafitti, it's fantastic. But it doesn't make power. You
explain—you can throw a big word on a canvas with such powe
understanding that it absorbs the canvas. I still won't be the po

iat other thing that is essence, that you find in Michelangelo, tticelli, in Raphael, and in a guy like deKooning.

ddi: What about the other present-day superstars, such as iburg, Dine, Pearlstein, and Segal?

tini: I think they do very well but, for me, they don't have ce. That's all. What I consider essence, they don't have. They have what I see when I look at a Michelangelo. Ingre was er. Compare the others to him, and they just don't stand up. se is beautiful. And Picasso is powerful. No matter what they hey made an essence. Matisse is very real. And so is Picasso. g all the reasons doesn't prove the point. I believe that you e the most intelligent person and not even make one scratch sence.

ddi: Do you think that Giacometti was dealing with essence?

tini: Oh yes, he did get something. But it was not big enough. 't mean volume, but it just was not big enough. Meaning is s a big problem. Like in art, you don't really know how to . But when it happens, it's already enough. The power of mean- s a very, very difficult thing to approach, as you know.

ddi: So there are no artists living today dealing with essence?

tini: I don't know. I haven't seen everything, so you never ay that. I may find it lurking in somebody. There's little pieces n everybody. It's just the idea of bringing it to frutation that ave to think about. When a man lives in his time, and then ook back on his time, that's where you're going to have to the decision. I said this to Ad Reinhardt, "You can't talk your nto existence. When you are gone, it will either be there or n't." You see, this is something I can't figure out. Some peo- ay that right now deKooning is doing something very power- ut in ten or twenty years he won't exist. I don't know. I may pprove of everything he does all the time. But I do under- d what he's hitting for—for essence. And he does it more so the others. He wants something to happen. They do something ffect.

ddi: What do you think of Henry Moore's work?

stini: I can't put him down, but I can't speak very highly of He's very good. But he wouldn't be what I would call a man essence. Everybody says he has it, but I don't see it. I think orced. Very good though. They're all good: Tony Smith, David h—they're all good at what they do. Some artists do a good f illustrating. They represent the fashion of the time, but they conviction. Like Warhol and Segal. Warhol would agree with pinion of him.

ddi: Tell us what you think about the larger 'art scene,' the ry system and marketplace.

stini: I think that there's a search for this thing that we're ng about—essence. They're aware of it. And they're going to at anyone who *seems* to say,"I have essence." And you know n well that's what they're trying to do. They push up those anvases where they're not trying to draw, they're not trying int—they're trying to make whatever should exist. That's simp- hat they're trying to do. But it doesn't work that easily. That's it's like a graffiti world, where the naturalism to express self is all that's needed. "I am an artist. For that reason, what press will be art." That's what they're trying to say. I look at stuff in galleries, but most of it evaporates. The attempts are . Maybe somebody will pull it off. I don't care if they do the ng. That's always going to exist—they're always hyping. rybody is hyped. They've hyped Michelangelo. But he doesn't l it, see?

ddi: But are the galleries even looking for essence, or is it a market?

stini: They don't even know what they are looking for. They w that vitality is an important factor. They don't want the nces, the modulations, the tonal explanations. They don't want world of inner and outer search. They want to "let-go...There's nner or outer—it's *you—now—that.*" That's what they're say- That's all. "Don't submerge. Don't even go into the water. water has nothing to do with the world. What exists is ningness, and it doesn't matter." It all comes through the experience not only of drugs but people trying to make the *mind* find an answer. And that's what you're stuck with. Whether they use drugs, drinking, or anything. And those factors have worn out. But you know, the '60's wasn't a waste—it was then that they were planting their little bomb to explode. "What the hell. Why?" And then somebody says, "fuck why. It is." Then we got into that stage of Nothing's—going—to—change—but—change—itself. The *force* of change, not *trying* to change. Before there was "this is modeling our times. They don't want the tonalities, or its subterfuges, or its intellectual understanding. They just want "truth"—whatever the hell that means. That means "just let go." Don't have reasons for letting go, just let go.

But I can't put a man down for whatever he is and how he gets there doesn't matter. You see, every man is honest, everybody is honest with what they do, even if they try to fake it, that's not faking. What they're really trying to find out is 'Why this, why not that?' There's no real criticism of art. The truth about art is that every artist is not pretending. If a guy works, he's doing it. I don't care. You can say you don't like his work. That doesn't mean anything. If he's working, he deserves the respect of being viewed, whether he's doing it for the crowd, or for art, or for love, it doesn't matter. Same with a student. When he's in there and he's working, that's all I want from him. Everybody is an artist until they prove they're not. It's not the other way. Everybody can be an artist if he says he's an artist, and time will be the thing to decide what he really is.

Coraddi: Peter, how do you feel about art historians and critics?

Agostini: Art historians don't get to the juice of the truth. They just explain, and there is more to it than that. But intellectual doesn't make the point in art. When you read Shakespeare, the intellect doesn't come through. It's the feeling that bowls you over.

He doesn't ponder the meaning, he captures the flow of life, the feeling. That's why his work is so liquid. That's why it moves us. I don't like intelligence. That intelligent goobly-gop is a lot of crap. It's got nothing to do with art. Its a barricade of art, of feeling.

Coraddi: Tell me about the various themes in your work, the various kinds of work you've done over the years.

Agostini: Well, one is the burlesque queen. The burlesque queen I think is a Venus theme really. Because I feel that she was like a burlesque queen too. We're just kidding ourselves when we think it was anything different. They just made a goddess out of an idea. My burlesque queen is not a put-down of women; to me it's just like something where they all exist. You know, with the beads and the shoes. It's like children, the children in all of them. I've done Venuses in many ways but they all end up in child play, with crazy shoes and big hats. Like this figure I'm doing now. It's much like a person I once knew. She's like a grown-up baby. What I have to do is re-create the memory. I'm trying to capture the baby in her. It's voluptuous in a way, and there's joy in it.

Coraddi: You've done horses throughout your entire life as an artist. Why?

Agostini: I love horses, that's all. I don't look at them when I sculpt or draw them, but I *know* them. They capture an essence of form and movement. When I make a horse, I don't give it much of a tail. The tail is a decorative element, like hair on a head. You notice my heads are basically bald—even the women—because I want to tighten up the skull. The form is the essence, not the surface decoration. See, I don't put much of a mane on the horse either, I just suggest it. The horse doesn't need a tail or mane, and a head doesn't need hair. I'm more interested in large volumes. Like the flanks.

Coraddi: When I see your horses, I want to feel them, especially the rear.

Agostini: DeKooning recognized that in my work. He said to me, "Peter, you are the greatest ass-man in the world. When I see your horses' asses I feel a woman's ass."

Coraddi: What are your other themes?

Agostini: Old men. I did a whole series of old men's heads. And Apollos, old Apollos. And heads that generate a sense of portraiture. Often they are kind of beat up, and I leave them that way. I like that beat-up kind of state. So I leave a lot of pieces the way they are when they dry up. And I usually do them from the memory of a person, not with a model in front of me. It's to capture a moment. Same thing with the horses; I capture a moment when they are working, moving. But not with too much flying out—it's always contained, very quiet, gesturing.

Coraddi: During the 1960s, when you were at the height of your popularity with the critics and your work was selling, a lot of your sculptures were abstract. Do you see these images as essentially different from your earlier and later work?

Agostini: No! These pieces are not abstract. They are about nature. I was thinking about wind and tides—natural forces. Like the "Summer Breeze" pieces, and the "Winter Wall" where cloth is frozen solid in the wind. And the "Clothesline" that I did in 1959. That was from a drawing that I did in the '30s. And "A Summer's Day" that I did for the World's Fair in '63 or '64. It has a quiet flow. That came from listening to the buzz of a bee. Like a musi listens to water or wind to find a sound that he can use. I was listening to nature.

Coraddi: And your large "Hurricane" piece of '72 is about the s thing, I suppose.

Agostini: Same thing, listening to and watching the force nature. And describing her effects. That one too came from ar drawing. I've been regrouping all my life.

Coraddi: You said earlier that you try to make sense out of the p

Agostini: You can't see things instantly. So you record, ma biography for the future. Later you give meanings to your perience. The things of the present are seeds for possibilities. La moments drop into place, but when they are happening, it's a l So you make a garden. I keep absorbing. We all do that. W sponges.

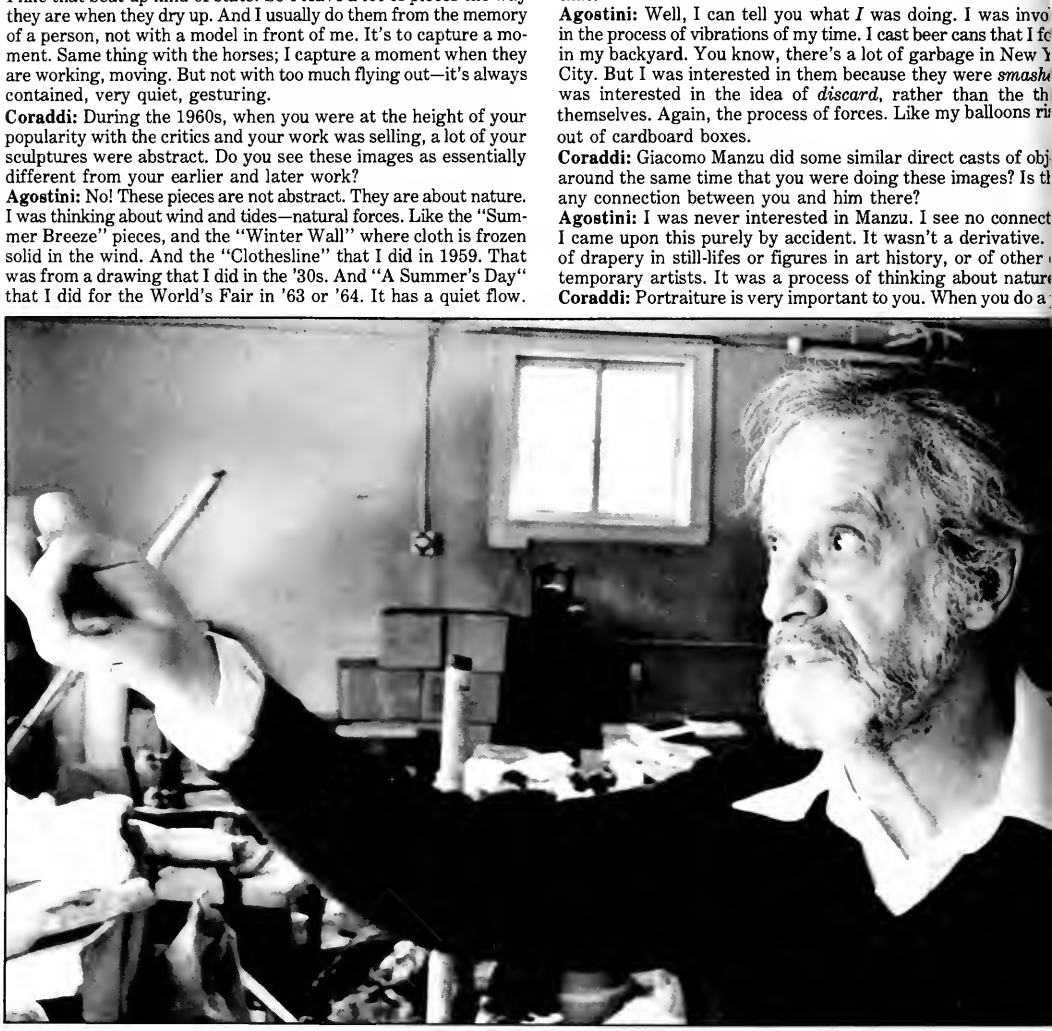
Coraddi: When you were doing direct plaster casts of found jects, you were grouped with pop artists such as Andy War Jasper Johns, and Robert Rauschenberg. How do you feel al that?

Agostini: Well, I can tell you what *I* was doing. I was invo in the process of vibrations of my time. I cast beer cans that I fo in my backyard. You know, there's a lot of garbage in New Y City. But I was interested in them because they were *smash* was interested in the idea of *discard*, rather than the th themselves. Again, the process of forces. Like my balloons ri out of cardboard boxes.

Coraddi: Giacomo Manzu did some similar direct casts of obj around the same time that you were doing these images? Is th any connection between you and him there?

Agostini: I was never interested in Manzu. I see no connect I came upon this purely by accident. It wasn't a derivative. of drapery in still-lifes or figures in art history, or of other temporary artists. It was a process of thinking about nature

Coraddi: Portraiture is very important to you. When you do a



ait, is it of a specific person?

gostini: I'm working on one now, an image of someone I knew ng ago. I'm trying to get it to look like how I remember that per-n. Not realism or naturalism, but how that person looks, feels me. And if you saw that person on the street, you'd spot that was her. And I leave them in a state of happening. And I can't ll you why, give you a *reason*. It just ends up that way. When m doing a portrait, I'm feeling it out. And when a person exists it, then I stop. That's the way I work. I want you to *feel* her when ou see it. They have to be full of life.

oraddi: Throughout your life, you've done a lot of very different nds of images. But is there, or are there, any theme or themes at are consistantly in your work?

gostini: Yes. One is the idea of elevation. That is the prime ing—to generate 'up'—leverage, elevation. The balloons rising, othes on a line being picked up the wind. I did the "Hurdy-Gurdy," did the "Carousel," and the "Lolli-pop Roller-coaster," the Mickey Mouse Airport." All these are long ago. Then I did lots f standing figures, with high heels. Why? To make them elevate, rise up. Some of them are holding birds, one with a bird on an utstretched arm, about to fly away. Again, flight. I did the unflower, the butterfly, the sunbursts, moonscapes.

oraddi: Was the reoccurance of this theme a conscious thing on our part, or did it just happen?

gostini: It just happened. The same with my horses. Whatever lse they are, my horses are about flight, bursting out. And another hing that's important to me is sleep. I'm very involved with the tate of sleep. I've done sleeping figures sitting and lying down. nd my "Winter Wall" is the *long* sleep. And a lot of my heads re sleeping. Portraits at rest. What I want to do is make a subtle ituation become real. Why don't I make dancers? I never think about that. I don't need to make dancers, they all dance when I'm through. The main point in my work is to try to get the implosion and explosion. The implosion is to get the thing to beat from within the skin, and then to get what you call the 'life-force' to expand. If you get both those two things working, you look at it and say, yea, it's real. Is it right or wrong? It doesn't matter, if it generates a sense of life. Do I know anything about anatomy? I don't give a damn about anatomy—it's what fits the purpose. So I'm between the worlds of things in flight and things at rest—elevation and sleep. And making things jut into space, rather than just be in space. I want to activate the space I'm putting something in.

Coraddi: Peter, the Coney Island piece that the Weatherspoon owns seems somewhat unique to most of your other work. Could you talk about that image?

Agostini: Well, that one was actually done in 1960, but they have it dated wrong—I think they have 1966 on it. But that's when they bought it. I hadn't finished it. I just added a little more to it then. I did that piece when my wife died. She died in 1961. She was dying of cancer, and I used to go to the hospital day and night, so I slept very little. So the only way I could keep myself awake was to do a thing like that. It gave me a reason when I walked to the hospital. I'd pick up little pieces of paper. It's really a homage to her in a way. I'd pick up all these pieces of colored paper, like match covers, walking through the streets looking for certain colors, like red or yellow. It was like a dirge, and a comedy of errors, if you want to call it that. It's trying to get back before when death happens. It's one thing you do when you see someone approaching that. You have the memory of them before they even knew what it was to grow up. You get the experience of the child back again, the wandering alone. When someone gets near to death, you feel the lonliness of them. Like everytime I hear ragtime music, it throws me back to my own birth time because it was around my birth time that ragtime music was—in 1913. So that still rings in my head.

Coraddi: What other works did you do during that time of your wife's death?

Agostini: I did another image, which was of New York City, which Hess bought. It was about five feet by four feet. That's a big area to cover with tiny pieces of paper. I started in one position, and did the City in pieces of color. I got Harlem in there, I got 42nd street, I got the Battery. But you can only sense it with color. I had to do those images because it was the only thing that would keep my mind free of my anxiety of what was going to happen. I was hoping that I could turn the table. I was trying to group all my forces to say that she was going to get well because I say so. The color released the morbidity, it released anxiety, it released joy. What I was looking for was the power of being a God; I said this person should not die. I will look at her and concentrate on the fact that she will get well because I said so. There's no need for her to die. She's too young. I was trying to reconstruct the world with bright colors, to control something which I could not control. But it was like slamming at something, without using my fist. Slam at it some other way, try to bring joy into the act, and not to let the other thing take over.

Coraddi: How did you get involved in teaching art?

Agostini: My first teaching job was at Columbia in 1960. That's when I had the first big exhibition. Everything just popped up at once. At first I wasn't supposed to teach any classes. I was like a spectator—like Motherwell and the others. Just come in and review the graduate students' work. Critics for the MFA. But Nivola had to leave and they asked me to take his class. I said, "Look, I don't know how to teach. What the hell am I going to tell them?" They just wanted me because I was Peter Agostini. Since I was a star, anything I said would be considered interesting. Even if it was stupid. You know, when you're a star, stupidity is considered profundity. But I didn't want to be a fake. I had no technique to give them. So I was just going to let the students work. But the kids put me on the spot when I criticized what they were doing. Remember, this was at the height of abstract expressionism. So they were doing all these big sketches. But I told them it just didn't make any sense. One guy didn't even look at the model when he drew. They forced me to show them how to draw. And that's when I started discovering things. That's the first time I worked with a model. And remember I was forty-seven years of age. And that's when I came up with the idea of making little sketches of the figure—drawing with clay. Like I still do at UNC-G.

Coraddi: I found that the best way to learn from you is to watch you work.

Agostini: The truth is that I feel that if I'm working, my energy is pushing you. I want to create energy in the students. I'm not a teacher. I'm a catalyst. I want to give the students possibilities, give them choices. Like when I'm talking to you, I generate something within you to be an artist. Hopefully something will rub off when we interact. The same is true if I am working in class. I feel like I gave this school a kind of essence. I made everybody get involved. Only by doing what I do.

Coraddi: You must feel a bit uncomfortable teaching in an institution, having avoided them most of your life.

Agostini: I am basically like my father—an anarchist. I hate bureaucracies. And I hate bureaucrats.

I'm not interested in art students. I'm interested in artists. In those who want to pursue the idea of being an artist. But if a person doesn't want to, it would cut short my conversation with them, because it is better that they be what they want to be. If they want to be a salesman, or sell art, you know, be a professional, I can teach them to be a professional. But let's not confuse that with art.

Any situation that you set up in school can make a person better at what they're looking at. So most of the people really want to be good *professionals*. They're not interested in *art;* they want to make a living. It's a living. They want to be what you call an artist who lives off of what they make. The only reason that doesn't work today is because at the time that was done in the Renaissance people were hired to do things like frescos. People could do that and still be great artists. You know, searching. Looking for essence. But today commericalism has done something else to art. It makes you a pretty good professional—you can do book jackets. You c make somebody be pretty good at something if you keep after the *But that isn't art.* You can train people to see, but if you are rea searching, you hope to find what it *means.* That's the differen But you can train people to see. And that's the condition that tak place in every school. So we'll give them a diploma, make the professionals. That doesn't bother me.

But if a guy is serious about being an artist, then I will tell h these other things, like I tell you. If you're serious, there's the oth thing. Essence. There it is. But what does it mean for you to g there and do something with it? Two worlds: being an illustrat and the search of being an artist. Two different worlds.

Coraddi: Why did you come to UNC-G in 1966?

Agostini: Carpenter asked me to come down and give it a try. I met me through Noah Goldowsky. But I told Carpenter if I didr like it, I'd just leave on the spur of the moment with no hard fe ings. At that time I really didn't want to teach anymore. I was e hibiting at a lot of places, like the Guggenheim. But I came dov to North Carolina. In those days, as soon as my classes were do on Wednesday I would fly back to New York. And I wouldn't cor

back until Monday morning. I'd walk into my class right from th plane. But then I got involved with UNC-G. I liked the people her And I found a nice source of search for me here. From this plac I produced all the shows I had from '66 on.

Coraddi: So, are you a North Carolina artist?

Agostini: I really am. From the sixties on. Some of my mo forceful pieces were done here. The Old Man series, my woma with beads, my horses, series of portraits. I really grew here. I wa growing up in New York, but then I grew something different her But they never understood. You know, one critic here called on of my heads a "potato." They had a goldmine here, and they didn even know it. My studio at the Sternberger House is packed fu of my work. Just sitting there. What a mess. The debris of a los dream.

Coraddi: You still comute between North Carolina and New Yor City, ten days at UNC-G and ten days at the Studio School. Wh do you do that?

Agostini: It makes me see *here* better. And it makes me see Ne York better. I'm not caught up in either world, see? I'm an observe of both, which is better than being an inmate of either. You ca see that people like Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns are New Yorl I'm *not.* I'm not North Carolina, either.

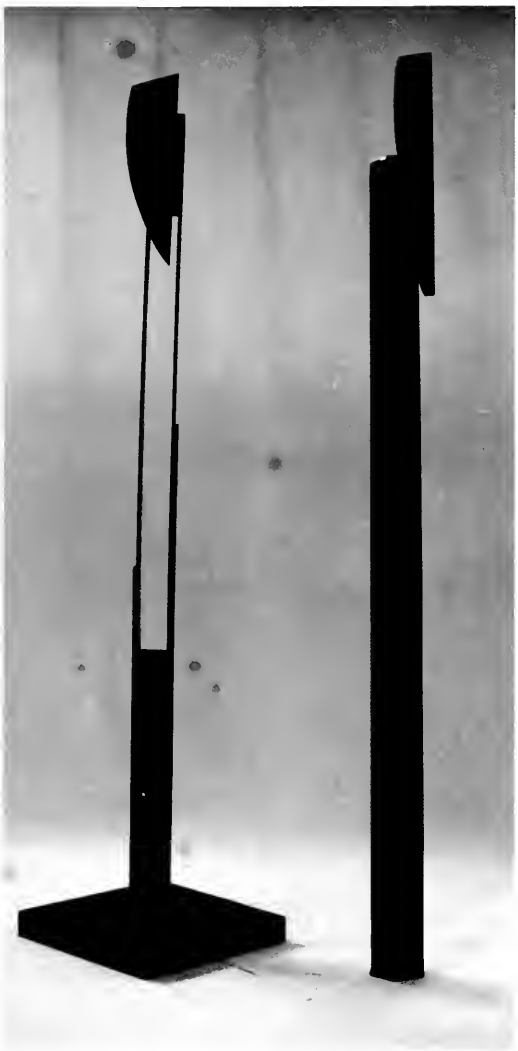
Coraddi: Do you think it also has something to do with the fac that you, as you said, have always been alone? That you never ha a nest. And you shun growing roots?

Agostini: Basically, I would give me credit for one thing. I'm pa tially a gutter-snipe. And I'm a first-class hobo. I don't belong t anyone. It makes me belong to myself.

The interviewer has been studying sculpture with Agostini fo four years.

Bill Rankin

TOM SEVERA



MORNING CLOUDS FROM RUE D'ASSAS

An early morning's fiery sun
Battles through a patchy cloudiness.
Its fierce look sets the Pantheon in blazes
And rules a helpless blue.

Then a pushing wind out of the west
Begins to bank the greys against themselves,
To load the winter skies of Paris
And blow away the light.

Now a colder, finer, whiter cloud
Is floating with its loneliness
Somewhere between these heavy, vaporous masses
And all the other worlds.

L.L. Fox

SUMMER

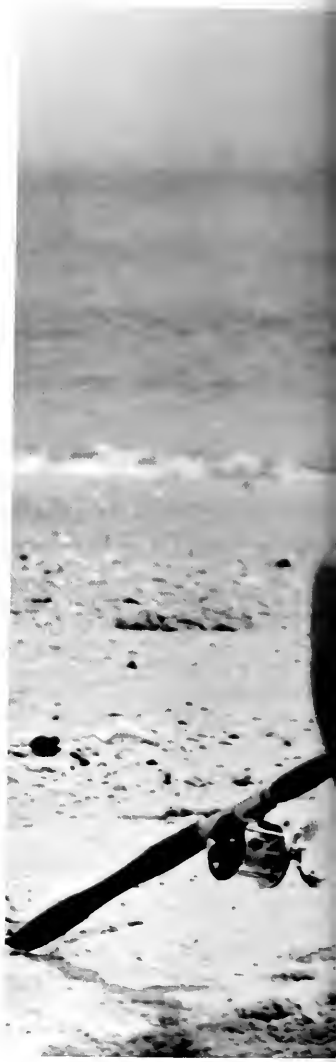
And I'm goin' swimmin' in the river
with its clear, cold water reflecting the sun
and the golden star-sprinkled bottom
with fishes dancin'.

I'm gonna leave this
sit-still-do-nothing-sweat-anyway land
where the grass is dried brown crunching underfoot
and the jarflies rasp on in the still heat of the day
while it's too hot for bird's song.

I'm ridin',
Ridin' down a road with the humid blanket over me
makin' everything slow...heavy
Damn! It's too much to talk, almost too much to drive...

But I'm goin' to the river where I won't see
slick-faced, glass-eyed folk draggin' their heels
mumblin' about...who cares?
I'm goin' swimmin'!

Geli Klimek



Third Place

Lynne Faulk

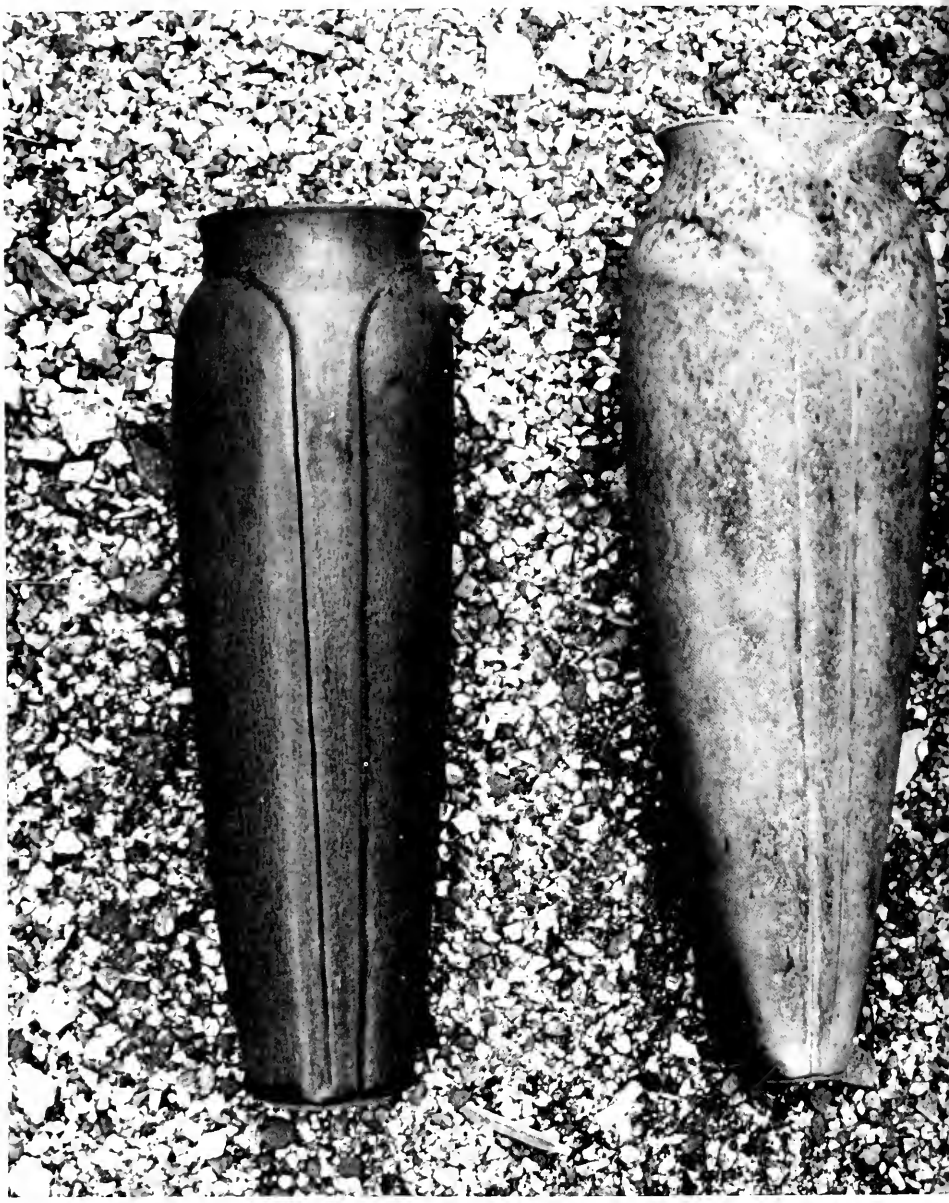
TO MY HUSBAND IN THE EARLY MORNING

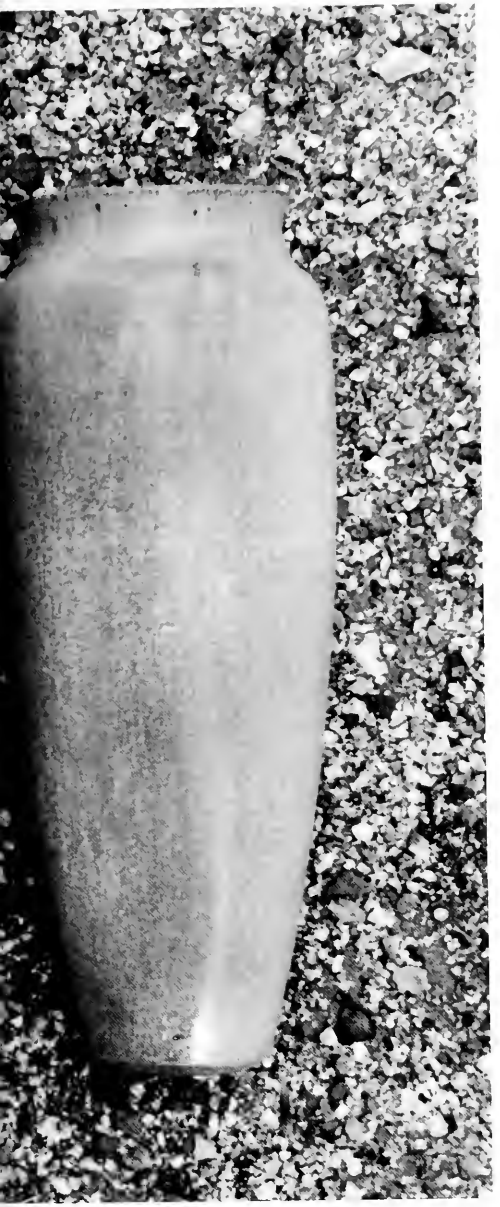
Six o'clock ticks in the new, punctual light
and dishes, crept out of the cabinets, sully themselves
before the astonished bare face
of the know-it-all kitchen clock.
Forks, unwrapping from dull tines
the hours of darkness, are splotched underneath
with an armor of old red food.
And I, having dreamt like a wife all night
of toasters and nylon spatulas and love,
waken to the remote gray glare of the television
across the bedroom.
I remember the late show,
those people on the flat curved screen
making love loud and nimble
between dull talk scenes. Because of this
we went to sleep with trite phrases on our tongues
but our cliches are so complex
they would fool anyone. Today
there is dishwater to be drawn
and wine to be drunk. The ring warm on your finger
you float on a blonde sea over which the sun is about to break.

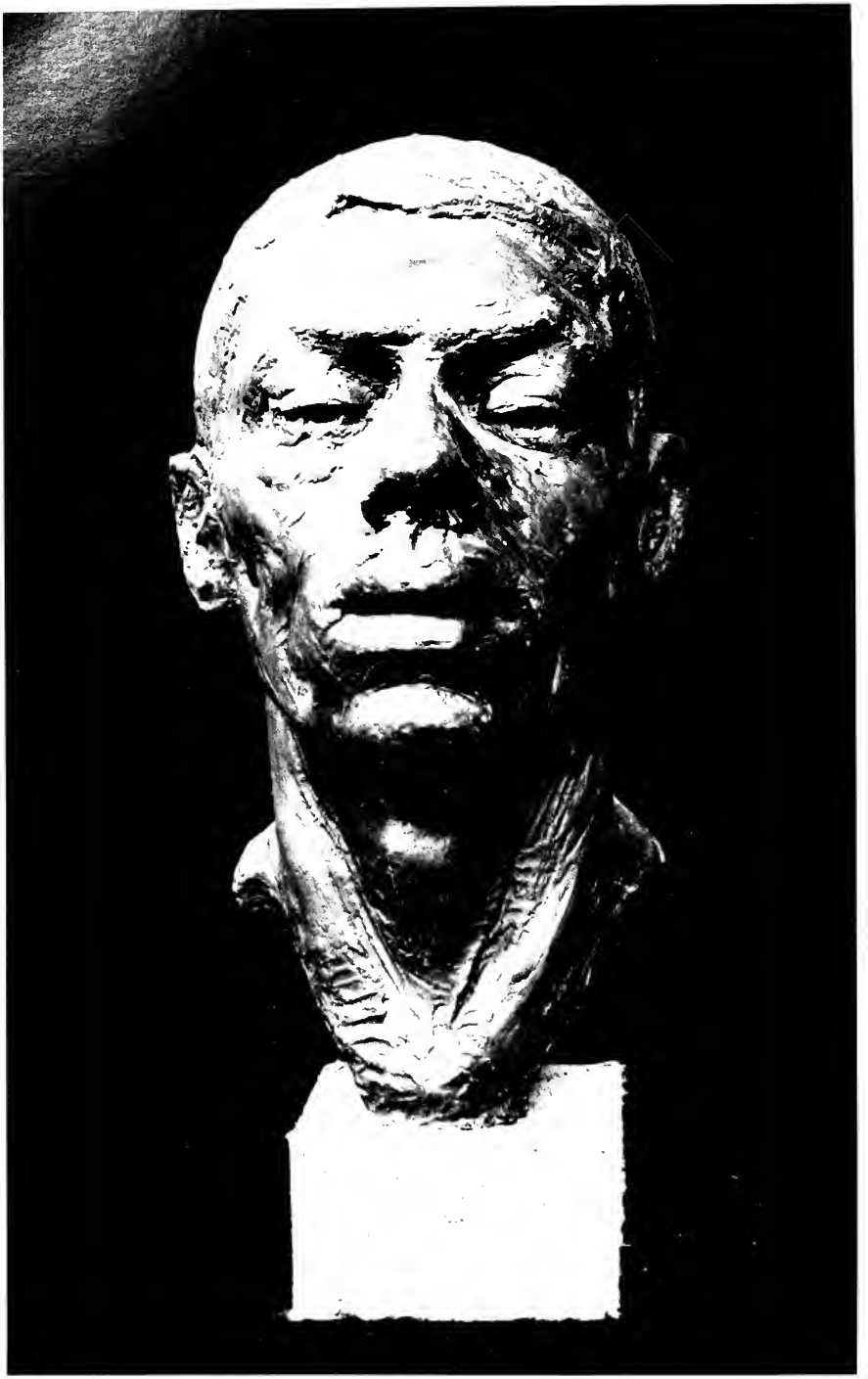
Elizabeth Rochelle Smith-Botsch

Beth Atwater

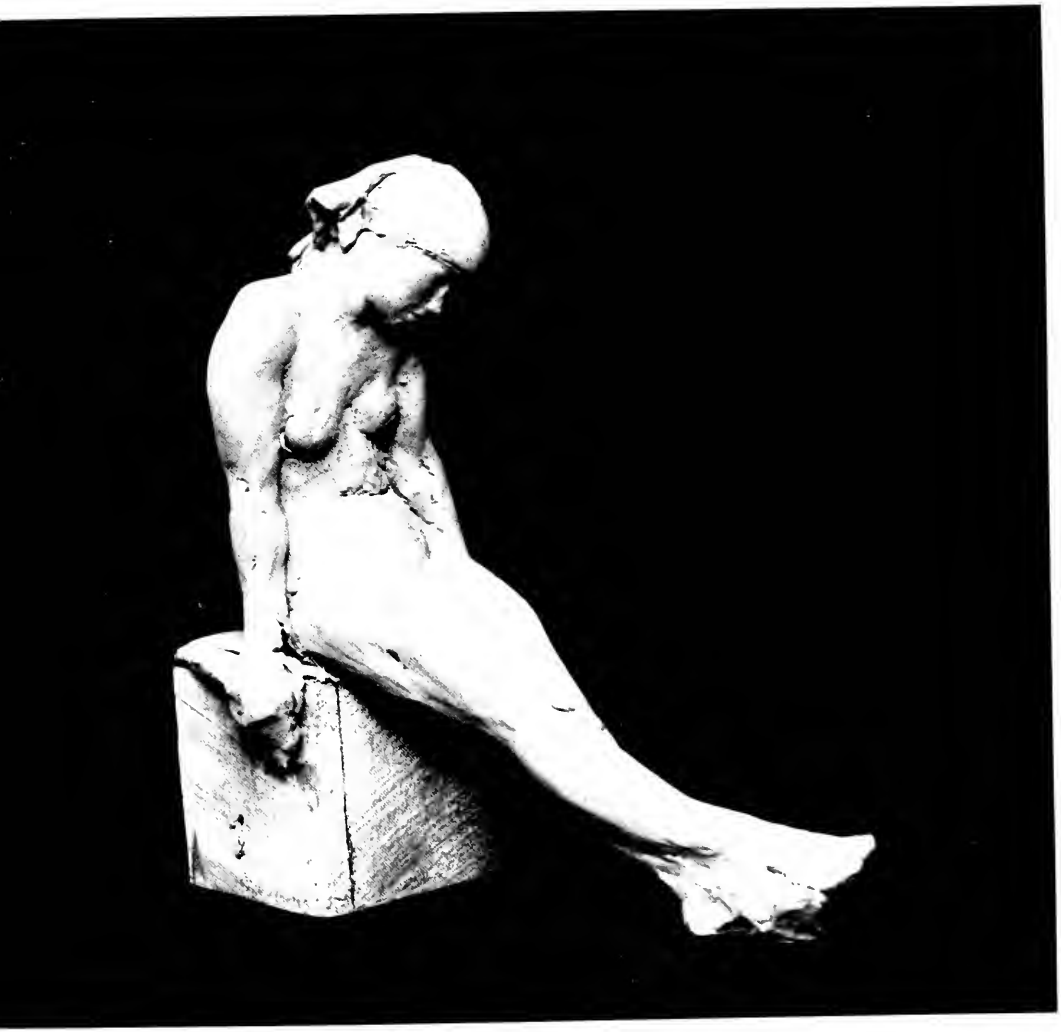
ULI SCHEMPP

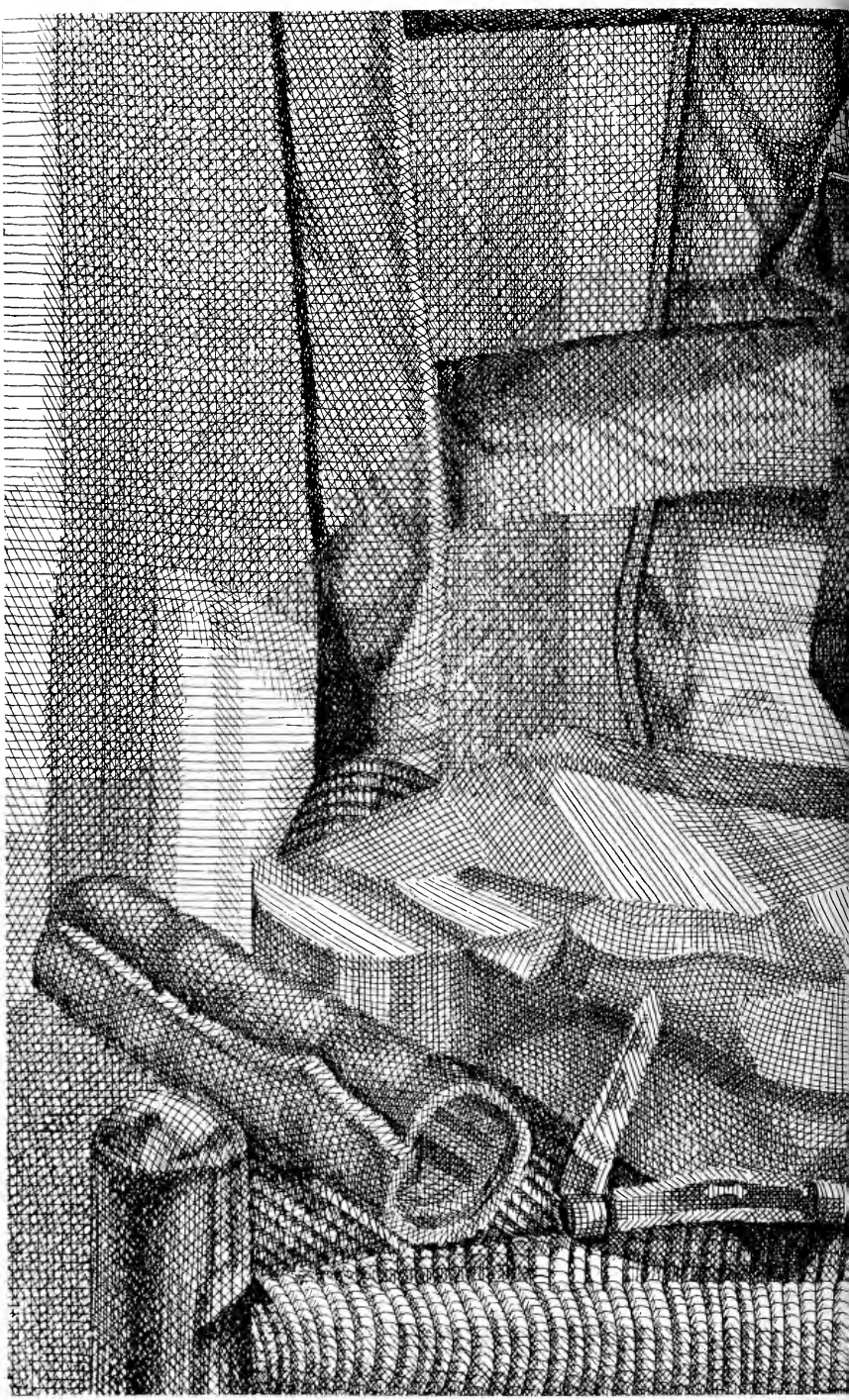


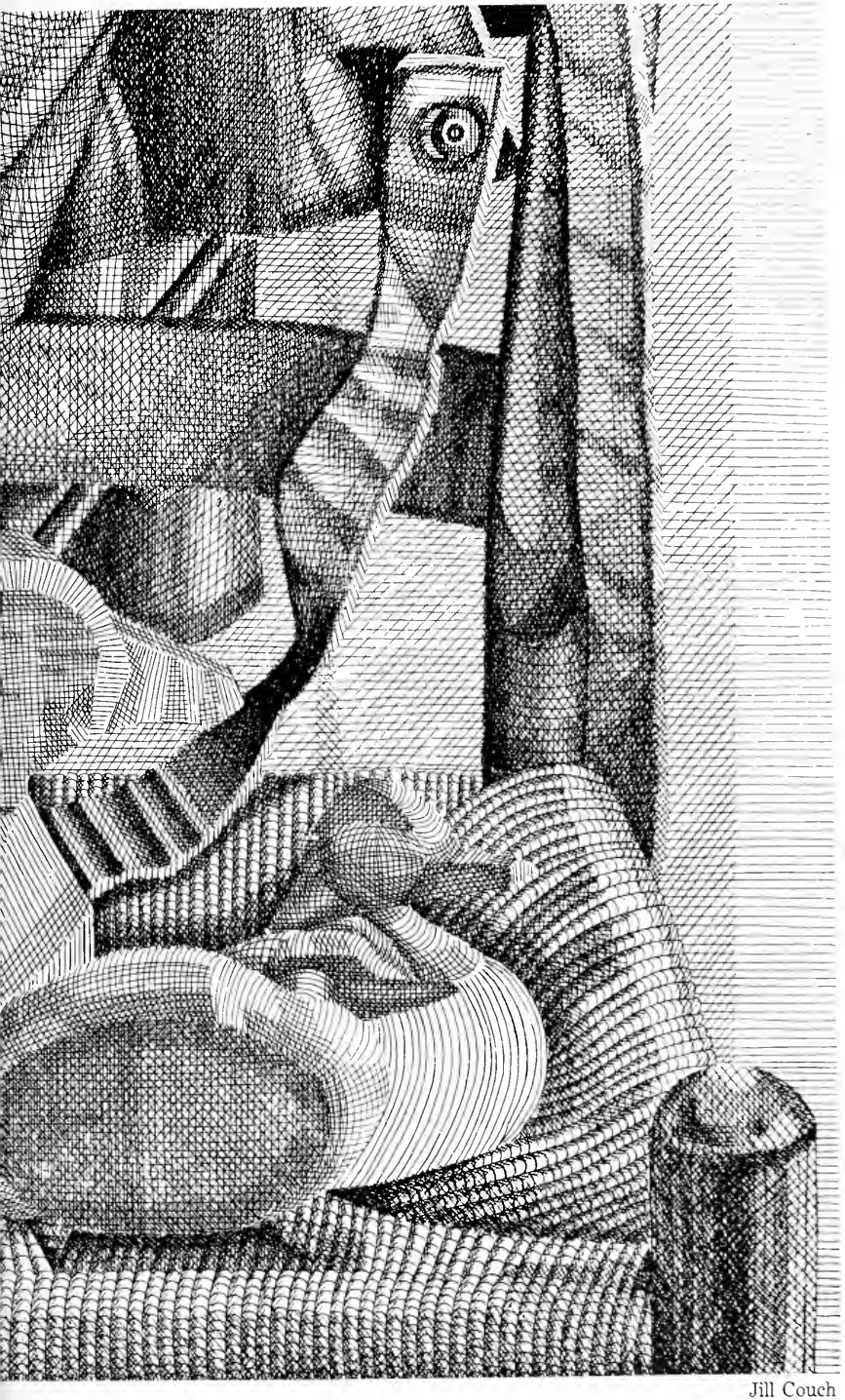




BILL RANKIN







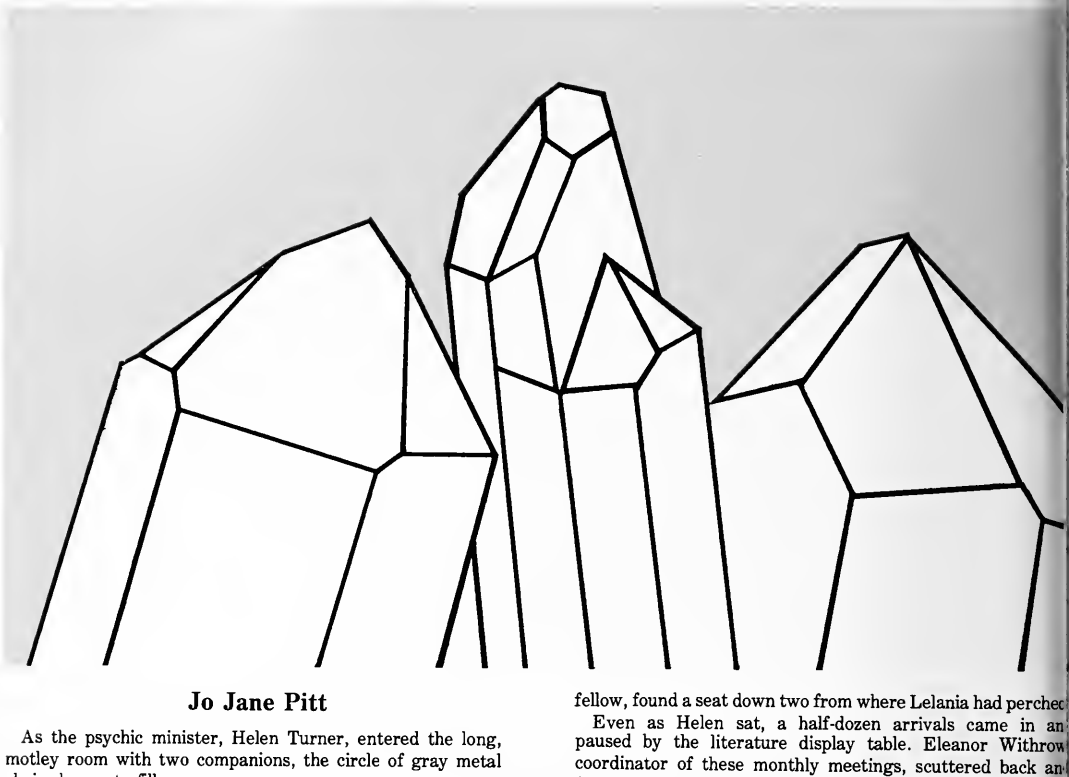
Jill Couch

OCTOBER COTTON

She would drive us outward
past the slipping houses,
into the hills.
The final nothing
when she stopped the car.
She would pull her arthritic
old body from the seat
and proclaim,
"The heart of the Cotton Belt."
My brothers and I would run,
boundlessly through the October fields,
brown with harvest,
pulling the bolls from their stems
and running the whiteness
through our harsh fingers.
She would simply watch her
grandchildren, alive and young,
and knowing death was near.
Still her lips curved back
in a smile as she laughed
inward to the sky of her being.
We fell into the stupor of wonder,
the kind only children know,
the kind my grandmother must have
felt in a different time.
This was her home soil,
paid for as the cotton passed each season.
But we, not knowing the secret
of the clay-red land, were awed.
It pleased her
(we could tell)
to see her own second generation
walking on her own.
And today, even after death,
I recall the beckon of the red dirt,
of the hills, the whiteness of cotton,
and grandmother's timeless face.

Eric Hause

Gregg Balkcum



Jo Jane Pitt

As the psychic minister, Helen Turner, entered the long, motley room with two companions, the circle of gray metal chairs began to fill.

Susan tried for a deep breath around her chest pain. She released it long enough to ingore for awhile.

Helen Turner walked quickly down the scuffed hardwood floor, smiling and waving at old friends.

Susan moved along the curve of chairs to the left, murmured "excuse me" to someone already seated. She looked around for Lelania, who seemed to be in intense conversation on the other side of the room. Just as she wondered whether to save a seat for Lelania, someone took the chairs on each side of her. She hooked the wood heels of her clogs over the chair rung.

She forced herself to look around. This night she would not think of Mike and their separation.

Not quite behind her was a long table. Two short plump women in their sixties, in grandmother uniforms of thin bouffant hair and polyester pantsuits, were unpacking cans and packages from cardboard boxes. The one in the bright rust suit never smiled. Susan watched the women fret over the placement of small bowls of cookies and snack foods. Apparently she was one of the regular attendees of these with Helen Turner. Why did she look so grouchy?

The old women picked up a pitcher of magnolia leaves and shuffled to the top of the circle at the far end. She set it on the floor.

Helen and the pregnant girl with her stopped to speak to a young woman and admire her baby in an infant seat on the floor. Then they sat at the top of the circle, feet behind the magnolia leaves. The other companion, a red-bearded fellow, found a seat down two from where Lelania had perched

Even as Helen sat, a half-dozen arrivals came in an paused by the literature display table. Eleanor Withrow coordinator of these monthly meetings, scuttered back an forth unfolding chairs from a stack against the front wall Helen Turner slid forward on the seat and in a resonant voic said, "Welcome, come on in, friends. We're just gettin started. Everyone slide back and open the circle." A her arms did a breast-stroke through the air, chairs scraped On the other side of the room, the chairs in front of a tabl draped in black velvet could not move.

"Mother-Father God, we begin with gratitude for ou friends gathered here." People still wandered in after Hele Turner offically began with a prayer. "We send only prais to you O Father for all life on this planet, the Great University."

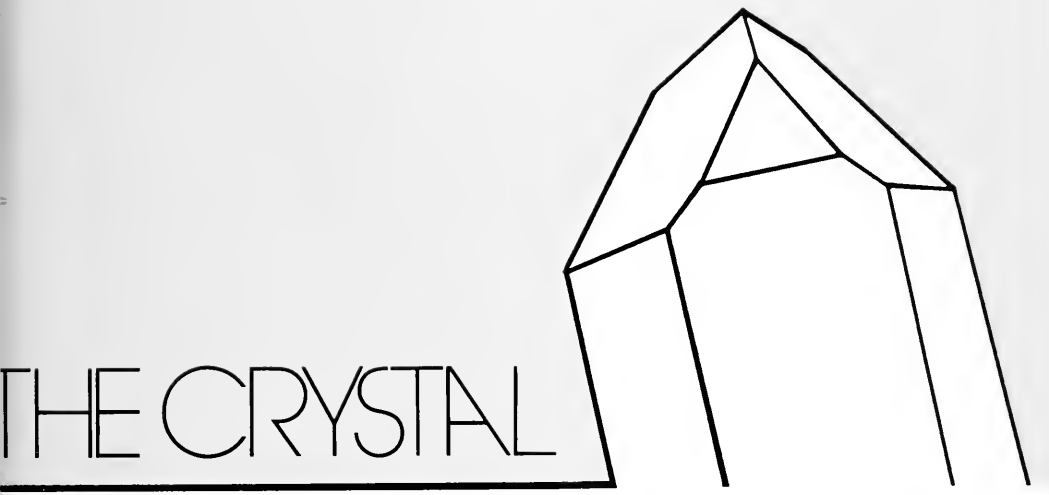
Susan was a person who usally opened her eyes, a littl guiltily, during prayers.

"We ask that you clear the room and our hearts of al negatives dear Father-Mother; that what Spirit channels her tonight, and always, be positive energy only."

Helen Turner, a little overweight, looked about fifty five, possibly older, though her smooth skin did not indicat it. Her short fluffed hair was probably tinted to maintai its apricot glow but was effective. She wore a white pantsuit a royal blue scarf around the neck, and sapphire dangle earrings

"We're especially thankful for your unceasing care Father, for our little brothers, the dogs and cats, sent t enrich our lives with their special lessons."

Lelania was an explorer. She was one of those wome who, at age thirty in the midst of conservative dress styles could drape herself like a flower child and pull it off She wore her hair in long curls, and was dressed in thi yellow socks turned down at the ankles, sandals in February



THE CRYSTAL

blue ruffled skirt and purple poncho.

Susan thought about their arrival here. Lelania greeted ople. Susan, feeling awkward, stopped just inside the door side the literature table. On it was a display of pamphlets, ssettes, miscellany like UNICEF cards and No Nukes bumper ickers for sale. Lelania went from hug to hug. Susan etended interest in an "I'm A Vegetarian" button. Lelania's outh and forehead both, however, seemed to concentrate into tense pucker, unawares.

"—grateful for our ministry and these many gathered tonight share and recieve Spirit."

Susan considered these many, from the baby to a man in rim mustache and designer knickers, to the one black guy, student-type, to an affluent couple in knit suits, to the ndicapped man, head fallen to one side, flanked by a licitous older couple, to Helen's companion with the reddish ard and droopy mustache. He did not look at all like Mike t might be interesting. She would have lingered on him hile but Helen Turner said, "In the Christlight and Energy d Divine Love of All and the One, Amen."

There were the usual end-of-prayer coughs, chair shuffles, d latecomers.

"Welcome, folks," said Helen Turner. "Try to open up e circle. And if not, Eleanor, we may need another row." eanor, distressed, helped unfold the few unused chairs. elen continued, "First, we're going to talk about the crystals night. Quartz crystals."

Susan was amazed by the synchronicity of the topic and r attraction to crystals.

"—stopped me over at the crystal mines in the Southwest, the way back from California. Stand up, Donna and Larry, r a minute." A young hippie-looking couple stood.

Susan realized she was holding her breath. She felt self-conscious about the multi-faceted, shiny, pear-shaped glass that lay against the dark green of her crewneck sweater.

She wondered if everyone were staring at her because this was crystal night with Helen Turner, and she was already wearing one.

The tightness in her chest was fenced by pain. She had been able to forget that pressure for a while tonight. She had not been obsessed with Mike since coming to this place.

Then she heard Helen's voice. "—here on the table at the back. They are not inanimate rock as you might think, but living, breathing beings. There's a crystal deva that helps them grow. Yes—you have a question, Becky?"

A woman in a knit suit, who looked more like a campaigning politican's wife than a mystic, said, "Helen, I've heard you mention these devas before but I'm not clear as to what they are exactly."

"Oh, good question. There is a Spirit, a life force behind everything. As trees, flowers, every growing thing has its own deva in the nature kingdom to help it grow, so do quartz crystals. The crystal deva gives them their life force. The crystals are solidified light."

Part of Susan registered data without listening as Helen continued, "A quartz crystal has special healing qualities. But it needs proper purification to cleanse it of negative vibrations. It's been handled a great deal you see, in the mining process. To cleanse one you soak it in a glass of distilled water and sea salt. Set it in sunlight. I put mine out on the sunporch."

Susan thought it seemed expensive to buy one of those gallon jars of special water to purify one crystal. Maybe she could not afford a crystal.

But she was being told about a piece of solid God.

She had to have one.

"Would you explain how these crystals help heal?" The elderly gentleman cupped his palm behind the ear with the hearing aid.

No, Susan had a feeling that if her crystal lay on that table over there, somewhere, then she would be able to afford it. She fingered her pear, looped with blue fishing line onto a thin silver-plated chain.

Helen Turner went on. "—different crystals for different purposes. It's important that the one you have for your own use be different from the one you intend to use in healing someone else. This is my own personal one." She held it up. "Energy flows into me through the crystal when I hold it in my left hand. In my right hand I can wave it all about and cleanse the room with it. Send out energy."

"Helen, for those who don't already know, I'd like to interject that the left side is the receiving side and the right is the giving, the sender forth side. It takes an unblocked flow through the body to create a healthy balance of energy." This was the redheaded guy.

Left side, right side. Susan's heart was hurting.

"Yes, and the quartz crystals help keep our energy flowing," Helen said. "The smaller ones can be worn for jewelry but should be worn pointed-end down, like Donna's and Larry's. If you do wear one, it needs to be on a chain long enough for the crystal to rest against the solar plexus, one of the most vulnerable spots in the energy field. A crystal worn over the solar plexus is a shield against negative vibrations from others, the environment, even unfriendly entities from other realms."

She looked around for more questions. "After we're through, if you decide you're interested, go look at the crystal display. These crystals are reasonably priced. Also, take a look at the chain and metal cap that Donna and Larry had made for their crystals." Then Helen Turner shook her finger. "Never, never drill a hole through one to insert a chain. Remember this is a living, breathing being. Solidified light. The way to care for your crystal is to keep it in some soft fabric. It likes velvet, does nicely in silks. There are some lovely little pouches stitched with love by friends of Donna and Larry, if you'd want one of those. But never put it in a metal container or keep different crystals together. Does anyone have any questions?"

"You said—uh—to put the crystal in the sun—I was wondering how long you leave it there," said a man with a booming voice.

"I left mine in sunlight, oh about two or three days ought to do it. Also, these crystals, being light, take on the properties of the color they're stored in. I know a young man who was feeling low-energy and wanted to revitalize himself. So he put his crystal in an orange container of water and left it up on the window shelf for three days. Then he drank the water and felt immediately renewed."

That did sound a farfetched to Susan.

But so did a lot of things. After all, drinking orange sunlight didn't seem strange. What was strange was her husband replacing her with a woman she had thought a friend.

When the hurt in her chest did relent sometimes, a pressure remained. The pressure was a weight specifically between the breasts. It made a barrier her breath would not go through. She wanted it out. Now, on top of that, she figured she must have an extremely vulnerable solar plexus considering all the negatives that had lately penetrated her energy f

"Helen?" The old woman in the bright green pant who had helped unpack boxes, raised her hand. "Would speak a little about what some of the different colors s for?"

"Of course, dear. Green is the healing color. Yo probably noticed that many hospitals use green. Yello the color of teachers and teaching; gold for wisdom. Lave and the shades of purple are for the New Age, the transmu violet flame."

Susan contemplated the deep green of her sweater, gray of her corduroy slacks. Neutral.

Helen said,"Blue has the quality of selflessness you're having trouble with self-will and want to brin into alignment with God's will, then use blue."

Susan had been having a great deal of trouble with self- Even though she knew thou shalt not, she wanted to kill M

Did she need help most with self-will or div forgiving?

"There's the right crystal for each seeker. Any plans to take one, hold several, one at a time, feel the energy. I'll read the crystal you select as l as my own energy holds out," Helen offered. "After aw with so many, I get sort of muddled messages. But my crystals have been such an important source of healing me, I wanted to share that with you tonight. Now, I've b getting letters from all around the country. People concerned. They hear about universal love, and serv peace, brotherhood. And yet, when they look around t see more global wars than ever before, and two-third the world hungry. Friends, at this time we're getti closer to God. It's time we grew up, recognized we co-creators with Spirit. As we come nearer the light it shines on our dark places, we see the garbage in corners and the—"

What did crystals look like growing in the earth, Su wondered. Light shining in the good dark within the ea She considered the spectrum. Mike's favorite color green.

"—and oh yes, before we close, one other announcem For those interested, there's New Age Survival Food display at this other table back there. And thank you coming. You are blessed."

They all stood, joined hands, and chanted, "We are We are one. Thank you Father-Mother. We are one. We one."

Susan forced herself to go to the table which displa crystals in cotton-lined boxes. There were large clust for ten dollars. Singles were priced according to size seven, five and two dollars.

Consoled about the cost she went to Helen Turner. young mother bounced the baby on a hip as she chatted w Helen.

Susan blurted, "Will you help me find my crystal?"

Helen Turner smiled at her and held out her hand. you have it yet, dear?"

"Oh," said Susan. "No."

"Well, you go pick one. Fold it in your palm. W it warms up, you'll feel the energy pulsing up your a When you find the one that's right, bring it to me and see whether its energy matches yours."

"I knew when you started talking about crystals t mine was over there. I've been collecting prisms a cou of years—see—I wear this one." Susan leaned forward

ɔd the glass pear.
Yes. Very pretty. I've always liked these, too,"
l Helen, "but now it's time for us to get the real thing."
usan nodded and stepped aside. She realized she had
ken into a line in front of Helen.
mbarrassed, Susan stood alone in the middle of the floor.
he table of crystals was crowded. It was draped in
ɔk velvet. On it were rows of white jewelry boxes,
erent sizes, lined with white cotton. Nestled in those
es were living spirits.
he wondered why the quartz crystal contained more
nity than this sparkling machine-cut prism she wore.
ɔre was divinity in everything, even people. A human
operated the machine, had packaged the crystal, and so
down to her. Nearly everyone who saw it was attracted
t. Was that because it was a reminder of the light?
ɛlania leaned an arm on her shoulder. "Well, what
you think?"
It's—it's amazing,"said Susan.
It is?"
Yes. It can't be an accident that crystals are here
night I am." She dangled her necklace. "I've got a
ection started for the children. You know, snowflakes
ɔheir Christmas stockings, hearts for Valentines."
Hmn. You're collecting them anyway. But I question
this selling. And the dependency on things to save us.
ɔugh Helen doesn't usually sell anything, so she must
ɪk this is important."
And she's helping out her young friends," said Susan.
ɛlania said, "Let me know when you're ready to leave."
t was Susan alone looking at the New Age Survival Food
ɔducts and the two old women guarding them. The grouchy
ɛ sat with legs crossed behind the table. The softer one,
green, stood at the end of the table. "Try some of the
ɛese spread on a cracker," she offered.
Thank you," Susan heard her voice respond as a polite
rp. She dipped a small griity cracker into a little bowl
ɛd with yellowish custard. The two women stared at her.
re these whole wheat crackers?" Susan asked.
I don't know." The woman fumbled brown-spotted swollen
ɪds toward a package in the display.
Susan had only meant to be conversational. "Don't go
any trouble, please." She bit into the cracker. "My
ɔdness, this is delicious. A healthy alternative to
eez Whiz. My kids would love it." As soon as she said
she knew they would hate it.
Here." The woman read the ingredients from the cracker
ɪ. "Whole wheat flour, soy flour, hydrogenated palmseed
..."
A thin-faced woman came up to the table and dipped a
ɪcker in the custard. "Good."
It is, isn't it? I was just saying my children would
ɛ it."
This isn't all natural, however," the woman said out of the
e of her mouth. She held a can toward Susan, tapped a finger-
il on "artificial color" and said "I guess you add water and
r for cheese. When you're in—whatever—when the holocaust
mes—if—if the continent cracks down the middle or the
clear reactors leak—whatever—"
The woman in green pulled brochures from a folder and came
the front of the table.
Delicious, dear." The thin-faced woman touched a green
ɔow as she moved on.
Susan watched her go. She admired the ease with which the others had sampled, touched, and left. She stayed, trapped by the brochures.

"Helen recommends these survival kits only to her friends. It's a co-op. Helen doesn't get any profit herself. Most of this you prepare with your own bottled water, see, because all the other water will be contaminated in a disaster. But it's good for emergencies like ice storms when you can't get to a store."

"I see," said Susan. "And how much are these kits?"

"The ninety day for four—runs about three hundred dollars." The woman flipped pages in a pamphlet. "If you break it down per meal, you see, you have powdered eggs, powdered yogurt, powdered chocolate pudding—"

"It sounds like a wonderful deal," said Susan, stepping back to the cheese and crackers to stand beside the man with the red beard. "Good isn't it?" she asked him.

He smiled.

"Stocking up for emergencies is probably a good idea." A lady in a jumpsuit stepped to his other side, reaching long nails into a dish of nuts and sesame sticks. "But I never plan ahead. Too disorganized. Did you drive down tonight with Helen?"

"Yes. But we were late getting started so we came in with her in a flutter and her aura all jagged. How have you been?" He walked away from the table; the lady's hand possessed his arm.

Susan stared at the can of powdered pudding in her hand. The grouchy woman's jerky movement forced her to focus. The old woman picked up the bowl of nuts and sesame sticks and whisked it to the floor next to the wall behind a cardboard box. Susan watched sideways only.

From the end of the table, the one in green whispered, "What are you doing?"

The corners of her grouchy mouth were even further down as she mouthed without sound, "It's got bugs in it."

Her friend nodded once. The incident was closed. They scrutinized Susan.

Susan coughed. She did not want them to be embarassed that she knew. "I'll certainly keep New Age Survival Food in mind if I can ever afford it—"

"Here honey, take this with you." The woman in green stuffed pamphlets and brochures into her hand. She crammed them into the outside pocket of her shoulder bag and headed for the crystal table, where she had wanted to be in the first place.

She decided her crystal had to be in the five dollar box. He held one. Then another. Then picked up a third one. It was about twice as long as her thumb and twice the diameter. A big flaw was chiseled into one of its sides. Its point was carved lopsided. One of its facets had a groove as if a mining tool had slipped. Little shapes were suspended inside it. She put it back guessing that it was the right one. But no extraordinary sign was given to affirm that.

All of the crystals had flat bumpy ends where they had been cut from a cluster. Those ends were murky inside.

She held a smoother-sided one. No flaws. Nothing strange contained within it. she thought she would take the one more carefully mined. Yet she put it down and reclaimed the one with the flaw.

She went to the end of the line of people clutching quartz crystals waiting for Helen Turner to read their selections.

When it was her turn, she handed her crystal to Helen. She knew she had the right one. Still she could be wrong.

Helen smiled, held the crystal as if her palm were listening to it, studied Susan, and said, "This one is strong enough for you." She held up the crystal between thumb and finger. "It looks like it has a phantom in it."

Susan took the crystal. "You see, when you're talking I think you're speaking straight to me and when you were talking about the heart—I have this constricted area around my heart chakra and sometimes it hurts—and I didn't know whether to go with the blue or pink."

Helen took her hand, looked down into her palm, deep, as if seeing all the way through it, and then deeper. Then she looked straight into Susan's eyes. "You can never go wrong with pink." Helen's hair did catch and send out light. Was this an aura?

Susan hated pink.

She nodded and moved on. Helen had said to keep these crystals separate from others and stressed how they took on the quality of the color they were stored in.

Susan was going to wrap hers in pink.

She splurged and bought a tiny two dollar crystal to wear for jewelry. When she ever found a cap to fit it to hang from a necklace, she too could guard her solar plexus from negative vibrations, the environment, and even unfriendly entities from other realms.

She dropped the smaller crystal into her change purse with an apology and a promise that it was only temporary in case polluted coins were bad for its spirit. But she did not want to lose it. The large, strong one she put in the left pocket of her jacket, which she pulled on as she motioned to Lelania.

Lelania had bought a quartz crystal, too. In Susan's station wagon, the engine running in front of Lelania's house, her friend said, "I thought it would be warmer, today was so sunny, so I put on my yellow socks. Too soon, I guess. I don't know. I'm questioning everything these days. That's why at first I didn't even go over to the crystal table. Then I thought I'd at least look at them. And when I picked it up and felt it—it does feel good." She unpuckered her tense mouth to smile as she tossed her crystal from palm to palm.

Susan wondered whether she should pull to the curb, cut the engine. The muffler was puffing exhaust fumes into the car. She checked to see that the window was cracked. "It's possible to become a New Age junkie."

Susan said, "Yeah. There are limits."

"I get this Aquarian Explorer newspaper—it's free—and I was noticing the other day how it's changed over the past several years." Lelania shopped for words. "Ads are all over the paper—more and more things to buy—from peacock feathers like gurus whack you into enlightenment with to tote bags personalized with your mantra. Seems like the counter culture's not so counter to anything."

"I guess so. But my friend Marie gave me this book by this real spiritual man. He says we don't have to merely acknowledge the material world but we've got to see the divinity in it and transform it."

"I already know about all that," Lelania interrupted. "I'm looking at my own life; I want to live even more simply. That's all."

Simplicity. Susan considered it and considered single-parenting her small children, living on child support and the minimum wage teacher's aide job. He life stretched ahead as endless, hurried, irritable, and guilty. She could say that she, too, wanted to live life more simply. But she did not know what that meant. They were quiet, then Lelania said, "Anyway, goodnight, Susan. Thanks for the ride."

"Goodnight." They hugged across the car seat. Susan lit a cigarette as soon as her non-smoking friend got out of the car, and waited until a light came on inside the dark one-story house recently rented by Lelania.

She drove off with the car doors unlocked. Nobody would jump into her car. That was not the kind of thing that happened to

When she helped Lelania move into the house, the remode kitchen reminded her of Mike's carpentry work. This was kind of job Mike did and it shouted greetings at her. The bro patterned vinyl floor edged with plain unfinished molding m her chest ache. She kept forgetting to ask Mike, when he p ed up the children on Sunday afternoons, whether he had b subcontractor for that job.

She was learning in counseling that she was the source of own feelings. No one could hurt her unless she allowed it

Still, her heart did not feel like she had broken it. It felt Mike had done it to her.

"Utterly. Totally. Completely. Absolutely," she said alou the windshield. "You bastard. I could—I could—Okay, Sus breathe."

She turned down the deserted wide-lane parkway. Wires trees outlined the trail through the park where she used to w home after junior high school. Driving to her mother's n where the children were sleeping over, she knew that she wanted to go back there to sleep because she did not wan go home. She was going to sleep alone at her mother's, in old room long since converted into a guest room. She was ing to sleep in the bed she and Mike had slept in when they sta there occasionally over the years. The crystal was in her pocket.

She locked the front door behind her and went through living room where the children were sleeping on the sofa b After she closed the bathroom door behind her, brushed teeth, rationalized the unpleasant aging mirror, she went i her room and dropped her jacket on the desk chair.

She undressed and took her pajamas out of the tote she l left when she brought the children over. They were clown pajamas, bought with Christmas money, bought since Mike l The bottoms were bright blue with red knit cuffs. The top w fuzzy with blue and white stripes. It was baggy with red k wrist cuffs and a wide red band around the bottom which reach almost to the knees.

Then, under the shaded nightlight clamped to the headboa left on for her, she held the crystal and looked at it.

"It looks like it has a phantom in it," Helen had said.

Susan looked into it. Would the deva be here, watching o this piece of living, breathing light? Or would the crystal de be down in the earth, near the crystal mine, where the growi process happened? She lay down and pulled up the cove thought-drifting. It was not a question of either—or. It was y and yes. The crystal deva, being without form, could be he and there at the same time.

She slipped the crystal, warmed in her hand, under the bl and white striped pajama top and placed it over the hard sp in her chest, between her breasts, and held the crystal, t solidified godlight there.

She turned out the nightlight and practiced breathing. S had been a chronic breath-holder ever since she could remembe

She began to hear her heart. When she was small she w afraid to feel or hear her heart. It made her think she was d ing, and so to stop it, she held her breath.

Tonight she listened, through the fear, to the heart thud. S breathed long and deep. A tremor ran up from her solar plex to her throat. She prayed that the pressure in her chest wou melt.

I've really gone crazy.

But she held the crystal against her warm skin, wondered wh qualities it might take on overnight from this silly pajama, a curled up and slept with it between her breasts all night.

Jan Couch

HOMER YOST

PLATO

What were you thinking
when you saw the scrub pines
wind sculpted on the rocky shores of Greece,
or on a bright night watched the moon
infuse the olive trees with it's spectral light;

or did the branches shape the moonlight
and give it form, and send it dancing
on the floor of the desert night?

When you watched a fish
flicking its fins beneath a riffle,
waiting for whatever the stream sends down
or a stone, breaking the stream's flow,
were you sorrowed?

Did it sadden you to watch, by a pool, at dawn,
as the first pale light
bloomed from the East,
a face float from the night's smoky water
then burn away?

David Robinson

NOW AND THEN

The scent of your
    skin warmth
lingers,
    surrounds,
pulls me back into
    the days
we pondered politics,
    resurrected the Renaissance,
    argued academics
        hour upon hour,
our palms sweating
    side by side on desktops—
always close,
        never touching
(with such intensity,
        the shock would be great).
Chased from a dream—
if we went back now,
    would we find our fingerprints
        blending?

Teresa M. Staley

LETTING SLEEPING DOGS BREATHE

It's not often I get to lay in bed
And watch my dog sleep, dreaming dog dreams
With four paws tucked together, he forms a furry
    triangle.
As the pace of his sleep-life changes
His breath wheezes to a crescendo
He jumpstarts! and yawns,
Cocks his head, checks the vacancy of the bed,
But somewhere in his mind he decides to ignore
The fleeting mischevious idea of leaping onto
A sleepy scribbing form of the guy-who-feeds-me.
Rubbing his head into the paws slightly, taps his tail
    on the floor;
Soon the orchestrated dog breaths begin again.

Byron Emerson

MALCOM: LOW, WRY

Despair descends around the clouded head
Which in the maelstrom of depression sinks
And, bowed, has downed a moody round of drinks.
His final conscious thought is of the dead,
Locked in land. His lonely, liquored sleep
Is much like theirs, except it will not keep
Him dry. He urinates on a borrowed bed.

Despair descends the web. It waits,
Then settles, weaving round and thorny crowns
For this melancholic apostate
Who laments his wounds with dying sounds.
There are others whose chasms crossed were wider,
But, unfallen, did not contemplate
The maw and ominous jaws of the nether-spider.

Then joy ascends, as in the sky the sun
Rising loudly the sounds of airy day
On rolling water glistens. Blue eyes run
To water, and swells glide lightly in the bay.
The afternoon bus, and Margerie's arrival,
Accompanied by the chattering gravel,
His dogged dreams of travel allay.
He knows this place. He has made his home.

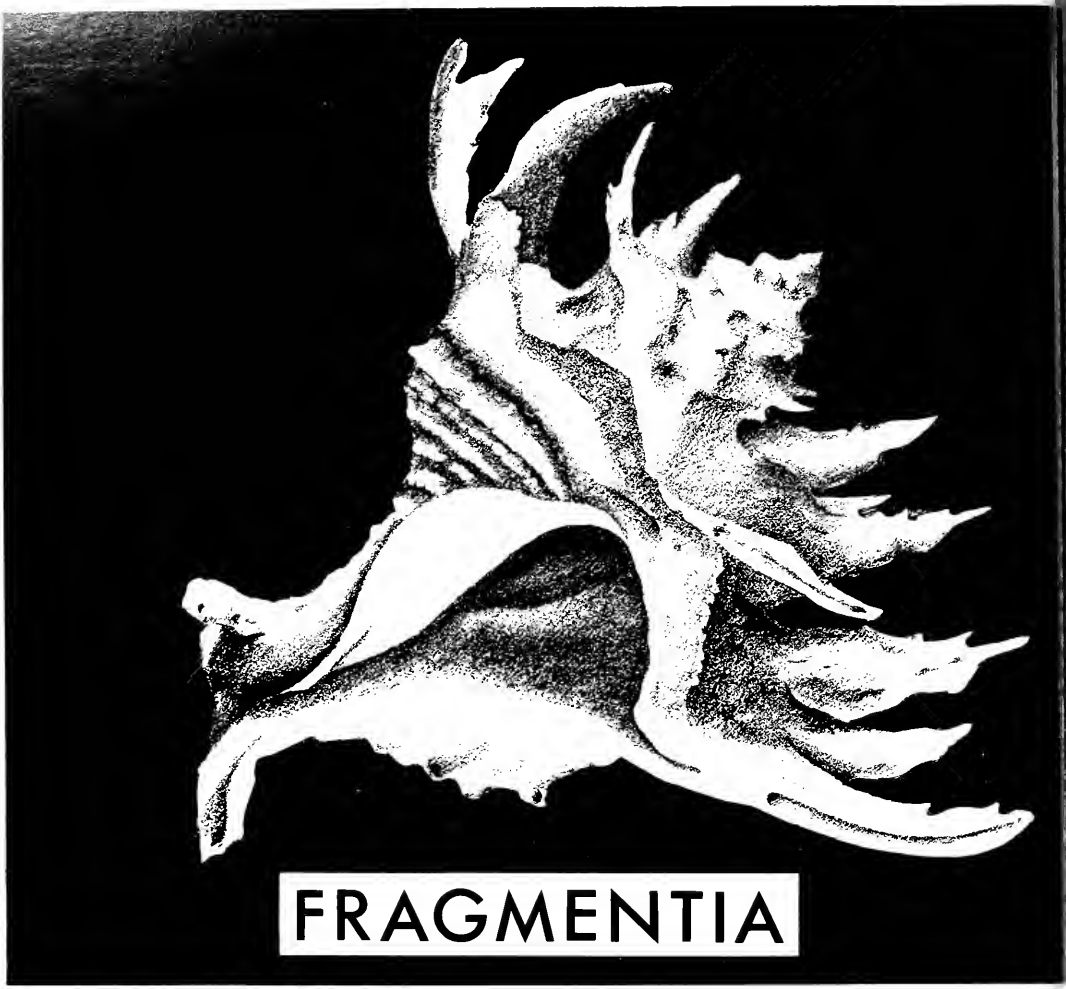
Mark Thomas

Second Place

KANDINSKY'S LA LIGNE BLANCHE NO. 57

It is the poet's sorrel mare
with one disfigured eye.
She prances the field
through the misty red of dawn
and proud,
dances in the morning air.
Then she escapes,
and carries him
on paths that leave the road,
that undulate
through thick, primeval stands,
penetrating white.

L.L. Fox



FRAGMENTIA

Mark A. Corum

Kevin was all alone on the beach, running along the edge of the water playing tag with the waves. The long stretch of white sand, the million-and-one shells, bits of driftwood and all the other assorted flotsam tossed up by the early morning high tide, they were his now. His father was out deep sea fishing and his mother had gone shopping—they couldn't understand that no simple orders could keep a boy and a beach separated, even in January. Gusts of wind blew out of the blurry grey to rush through him despite his jeans and Spiderman t-shirt, but he hardly noticed. His attentions were focused on the sights around him and the distant figure of someone else walking on his beach.

He had no fear of not finding the way back to his family's cottage—a short post, all that remained of a long-vanished pier, marked the pathway up and a big shell on top of it made sure it couldn't be mistaken. When he'd come by on his way down the path, he'd found the shell knocked off the post and half-embedded in the sand. It was a great, curling conch that his father had brought back a few days earlier and set on the po as a decoration. Kevin had seen it through the window of th cottage, but never close up. He picked it up and looked insid at the whorls of pink and red and the shiny surfaces that loo ed almost wet. Then, remembering something his mother ha told him a few days earlier, he placed it to his ear and listene to the same rushing sound of water that came over the dune at night. Then he stretched up as high as he could and place the shell on the post where everyone could enjoy it before co tinuing on.

The sun was starting to break through and warm him whe something distracted him from his play. Ahead, just a few fe above the waterline, there was a hole in the sand that looke like a giant footprint made by something that had taken on step out of the surf, looked around, then changed its mind an returned. He walked towards it, but just as he reached it, a wav washed up to its edge and a mass of silvery fish that had bee trapped there half-swam, half-squirmed their way into th breakers through the mixture of water and wet sand. He ra

er them, but they were already long gone. All that remained he hole were a few strands of seaweed and some broken ces of shells. He noticed another glint coming from one edge he hole and immediately pinpointed his quarry—one tiny fish l failed to make the break with its companions and was now pped without any possible exit. It swam around the way his ther paced when she was nervous or mad. He stepped on the d beside the hole. The fish jumped from side to side, stop- g only when it hit the walls of its sandy prison.

Kevin felt a little funny—knowing he was controlling life and ath, if only for a fish. He took his hand and dug a tiny canal ning down towards the waves from the side of the hole. The xt wave stopped short of the hole again, but it washed up the le channel he had made and into the giant footprint. In an tant the little fish was gone back into the breakers while Kevin t sat there in his soaked Nikes, trying to watch it as it swam ay.

He continued down the beach, watching how the sand dried for a moment around his feet each time he took a step. He nped along in long strides, looking down at the marks he made the sand, and didn't stop until he almost tripped over a big een box full of shiny metal things and plastic fake fishes. He oked up.

In front of him was a tall man with grey hair and a scraggly ard. He wore blue jeans and a torn blue and red shirt that vealed dark hair on his chest that didn't match the locks that ick out from under his black fishing cap. Kevin watched as e stranger picked up his fishing rod and heaved one of the g lures out into the surf. He then placed the rod into a tube at stuck up from the sand next to two other rods that trailed es out into the waves.

"You live 'round here?" the old man snapped at Kevin without en looking over at him, his eyes remaining fixed on the lines.

"No," Kevin replied, realizing a nod wouldn't work here.

"Then what're ya doin' out here?"

"Just watching."

"Then come over here and get a real look."

Inquisitive to a degree that overrode the fear his parents had ied to instill in him, Kevin walked over and stood by the old an, alternating glances between the rods in the sand and the an's face.

"Watcha doing?"

"Fishing. You ever fish?"

Kevin nodded no.

"Wanna learn?"

He nodded yes, eliciting a tobacco-stained grin from the old an. "Okay," he said, holding up a piece of curved metal for evin to examine. He spoke with none of the baby talk that most the grown-ups Kevin met used on him. "This is a hook...and ou stick your bait on it like this (he demonstrated) and then row it out there and wait for them to bite."

"Why?"

"Why what?"

"Why do they bite?"

"Cuz otherwise I can't reel them in."

"Why do you reel them in?"

"Cuz they're damned hard to fry while they're still swimmin' round out there. Don't your dad fish?"

"Sometimes, but mom says they're not clean and I don't think he likes giving them baths."

The old man laughed for a second before the rod to the far eft took a hit and the reel screamed. "Got one!"

"Where?"

"Believe me, it's out there, " the old man said as he cranked the reel tight and started to pull the fish in. "Looks like I got me some lunch after all."

A moment later a silver form was pulled onto the sand, still flopping violently and trying hopelessly to get away. The old man stepped on top of the fish, deftly removing the hook from its mouth, then tossed it back beside a big green cooler when another of the rods jerked with a strike.

"Must've hit a school of 'em," the old man said as he wrestled with the second rod. "THAT'S how you fish!"

Kevin knelt by the fish on the sand and looked down at it. It wasn't pretty like the fishes he'd seen in the little pool down the beach. It bled from the mouth and opened and closed the little cuts on the sides of its head like it couldn't breathe right. As it moved more and more slowly, sand stuck to it and all the shiny silver and rainbow colors that had painted its sides turned grey and dull like cement. Even as he watch, it changed into something ugly.

"Damn," the old man said from behind Kevin, who turned just in time to see him reeling in what remained of a broken line. If there had been a fish on the other end, it was gone now.

"What does he do now?" Kevin asked with a worried look the old man wasn't ready for. "I saw his babies down there," he added, pointing.

"He goes in my frying pan now, after I've cleaned 'im," the old man laughed, his voice strained because he didn't know what else to say. "I'll have him for lunch later."

Kevin looked down at the grey and drying thing—all dull now except for the shiny ebony eyes that glared up at him. As the old man reached to pick the fish up, Kevin spoke again.

"But he wants to go back like the rest of them. He's lonely."

"Its just a damned fish—fish don't get lonely. They're for eating—just ask your dad." Then, as if to prove his point, the man pulled out his knife and stabbed the fish through the head, ending its movement to begin the process of cleaning it. Blood dripped from the knife blade onto the sand.

Kevin stood there, watching with impossible eyes. The old man tried to answer as Kevin turned away and ran back down the beach, pausing only once to pick up a shoe he'd stepped out of.

"Why else would I be fishing?" the old man yelled after him. He stared after the boy for a moment, then returned to tending his lines.

Kevin didn't stop running until the old man was a speck in the distance and the post that marked the path back to his house was almost upon him. He didn't know why he'd been running—he hadn't been scared, just a little dizzy. His insides felt warm and thick like hot syrup had been sloshed around in his stomach. As he sat down and pulled his shoe back on, he kept thinking about that fish...*that* was what his father had been out doing all those days he was gone. Why?

Sitting there, he picked up a shell, then, bored, dropped it in favor of a handful of pebbles. He hurled one out and watched it as it kerplunked into the face of an incoming wave. Then he turned without even looking back and started up the path to his parents' vacation cottage, hoping they hadn't returned to find him gone without permission. As he climbed the path, he flipped the rocks at invisible enemies, previously unnoticed, hiding in the windswept sea oats that covered the dunes. He passed the post and headed for the screened back porch of the house, then stopped when he discovered two small stones left in his hand.

The second one he threw shattered the shell on the post—scattering forever tiny, shining fragments that could not get back to the sea.

HER CHORUS

She was here once—
her laughter composing its way
through greener days,
singing of daffodils and lavender,
of patchwork color and cool sand—
offering lullabies to blue-eyed ringleted
girl and rosy-cheeked baby boy.

She was here once—
her knitting needles harmonizing
in time with the pull of her rocking chair—
and the slow hum of her smile blending
in time with pumpkin-colored days
and noiseless crescendo of twilight.

She was here once—
her melody grand and proud,
sweeping over measures of pain,
of empty days, and her eyes—
reflecting echoes of moss-grown songs
with frost-bitten tempos—
all fading into gentle silence.

I will bring her yellow, dancing flowers.
She is still virtuoso in my dreams.

Mary Beth Ferrell

MANHASSET BAY

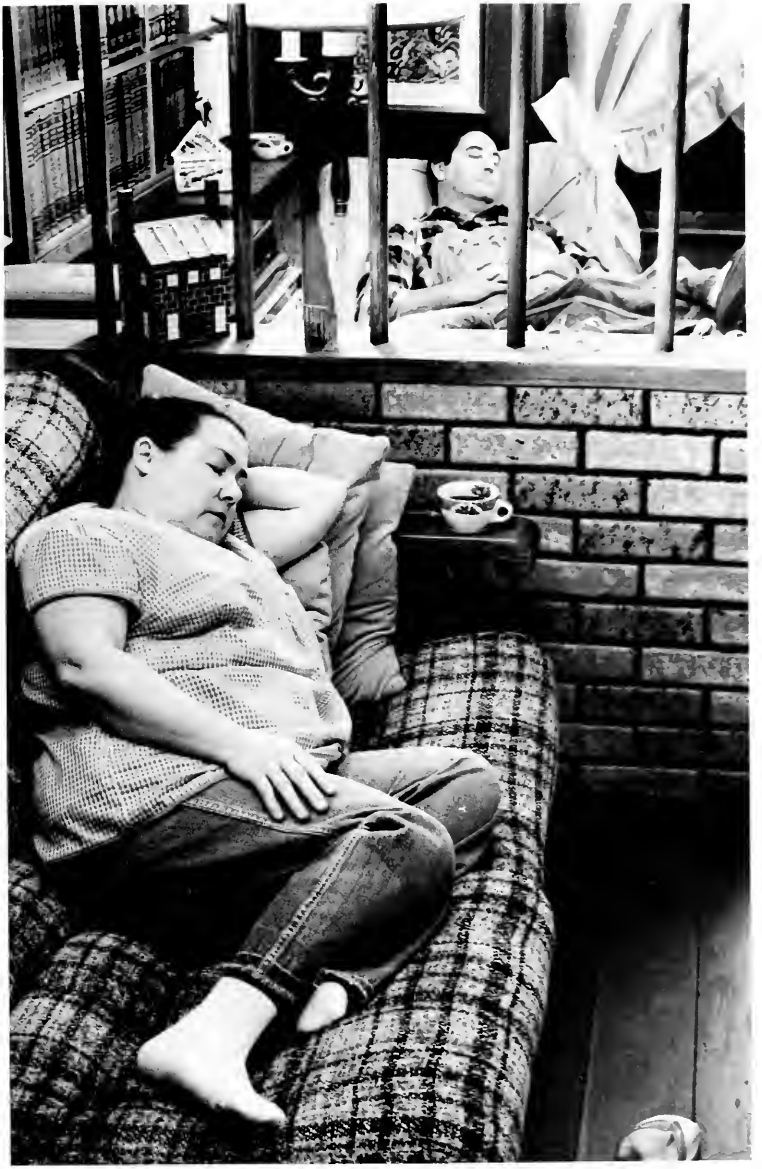
the present like a dream seemed a memory with premature beginning
P.J. snugly clothed in a blue snowsuit and red rubber boots,
hand-in-hand sauntering to the beach, the sun staring omniciently
about the modest remnants of the morning rush, the stillness like
a blank slate to be gingerly filled full of laughter and play
remembered by two or...realistically one; the moment, the hour
a retreat from the cyclic tedium- we passed a kitty, trying to
outguess its next move, we stood for a moment wondering, waiting,
entering the inquistiveness of unbound youth, then, as we ap-
proached the beach- the blacktop defiled with cigarette butts,
beer cans, and broken glass- disgusted, I lifted him into my arms
rebuking the evils of the world and feeling a knot-like cancer
settling in my gut as I faced my powerlessness to protect P.J.
from polluted men, we continued toward the peppered sand where
the earth again became worthy of his boots, the dancing seagulls
edged up the shore from a panorama of cottony clouds in the
lightened distant sky, the graceful birds made a love offering
to innocence, forgotten a month later, the impression of purity
leaves eternal favor to a generation so camoflaged by damned
neutrality.

Alison Kimmelman

SWIMMING IN LATE OCTOBER, OCEAN ISLE, N.C.

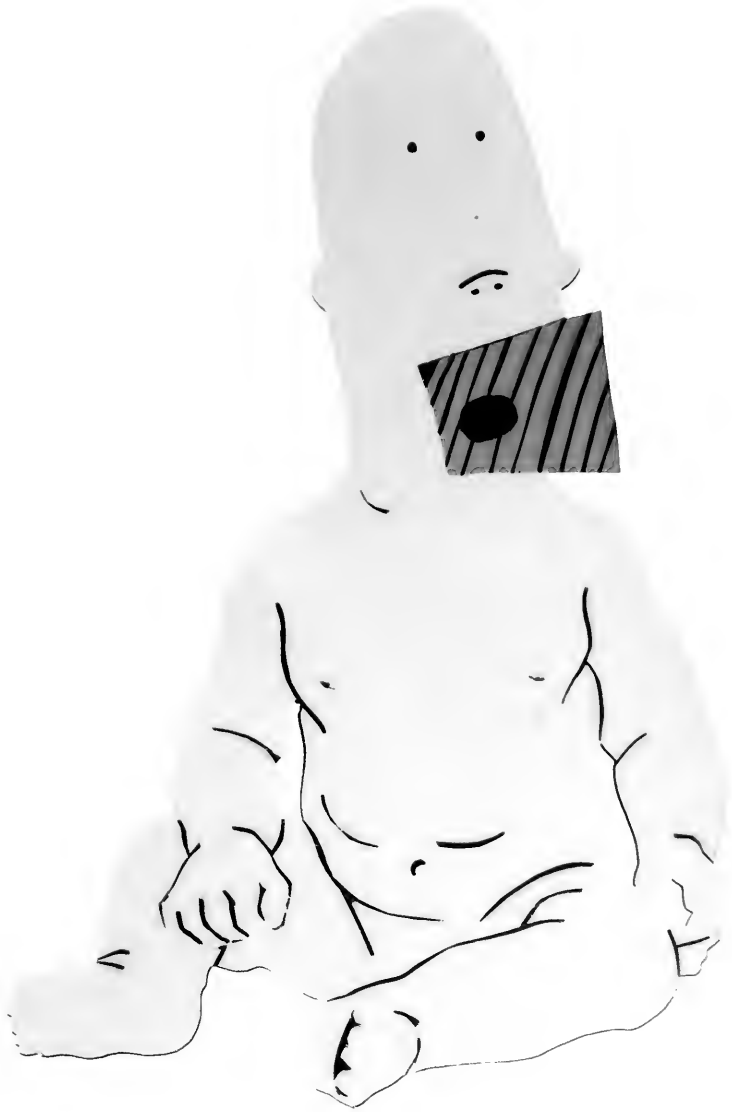
The setting sun makes silver on the ocean,
far as my eyes can see,
pink and purple cumulo-nimbus skies,
in the Fall on Ocean Isle,
after the Oyster Festival.
The crows watch from the shore
as I wade slowly, tentatively
into the sea, toes curling, flesh goosing.
And the breakers, white caps
slapping you in the face
and salty breeze and undertow
always there tugging, pulling
as your legs wobble.
The seagulls aren't bothered or intimidated,
nor the crane and pelicans
flying low, swooping up high
looking for easy prey;
then diving straight down
for their catch, one clean shot...
But it's cold to me, until
I let go and dive in, giving myself over
to the sea,
head first, cutting a wave in half
and then coming up for air,
floating like a jellyfish,
or on my back,
crawling, butterflying like the pros.
Now its easy, I'm on a roll,
riding the waves like a porpoise
until the roar of sun, salt, song and wind
carries me one last time
to shore.

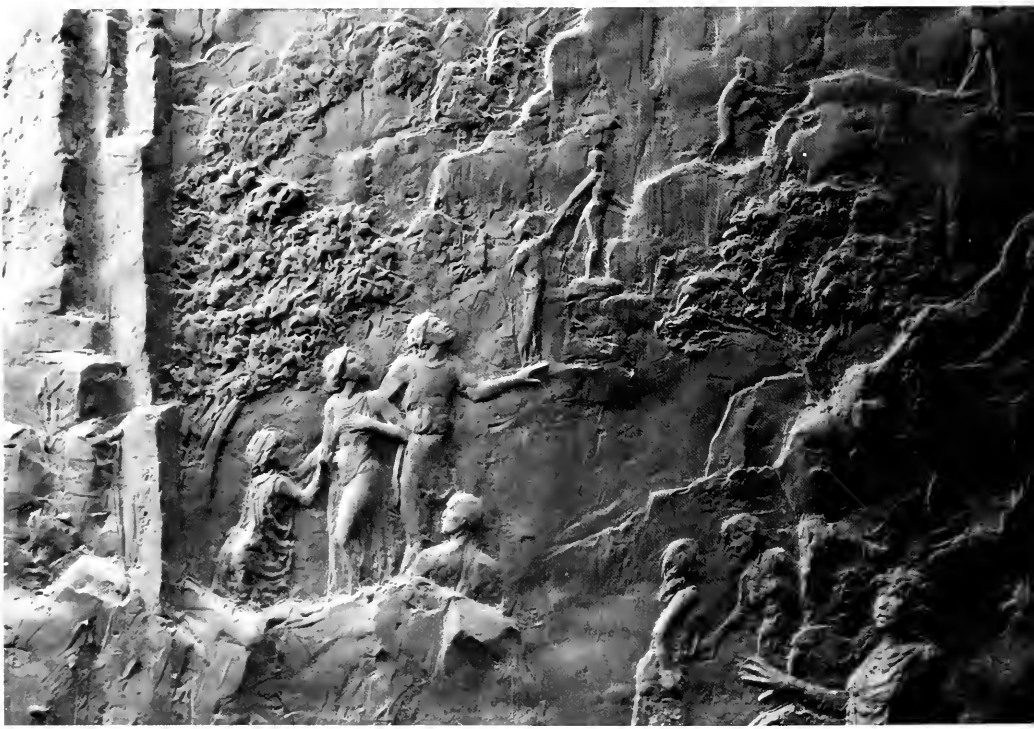
Bruce Piephoff



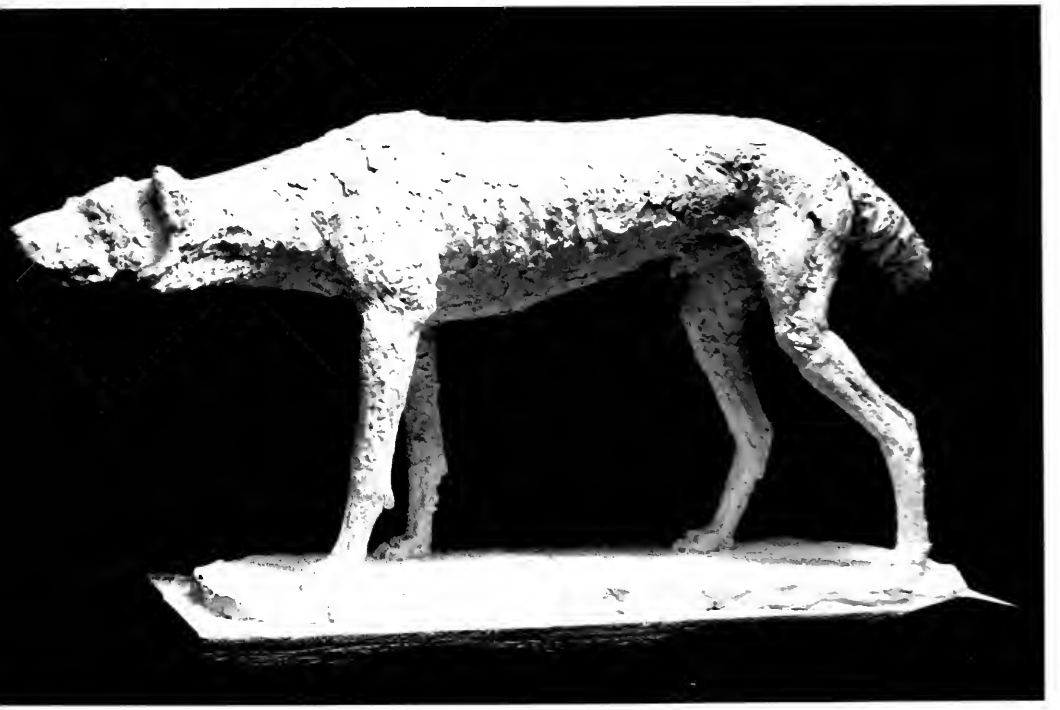
Jill Couch

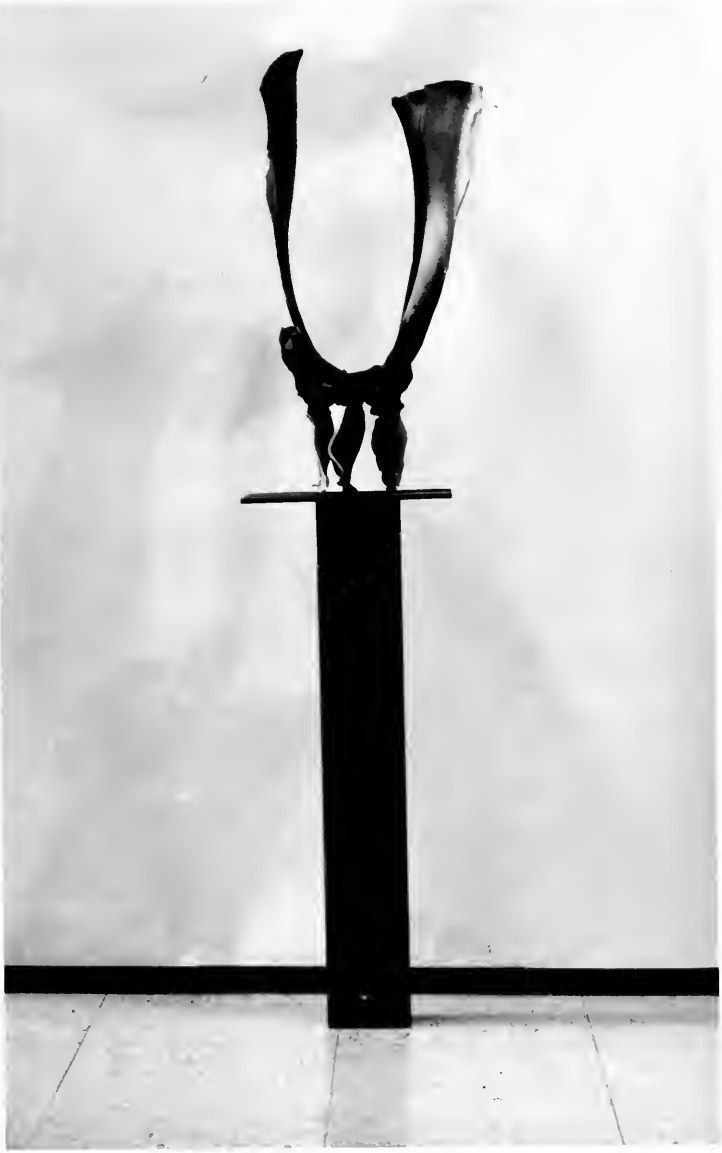
CHRIS CLODFELTER





CHARLES STIGLIANO





SARA GRAY

LITTLE JOHN'S LAMENT

He blew his horn
As weakly as a dying soldier
Whose lungs are full of blood,
And when I heard that sound
Not Jesus, God, or Mary
    Could have kept me from his side.

I'd not hurt a woman in my life
'til the Prioress barred my way
And out went my fist
And on her arse she went,
Squawking like a puffin,
    Her face all blood and angry tears.

I broke three doors and my shoulder
And then I finally found him.
He'd come for a bleeding of his ills
And by God's wounds they'd bled him,
But like a pig and not a man.
    For he'd turned all his linens red.

Unable to stop the leak the blooding iron
Had opened in his wrist,
Too weak to flee, dying there,
Behind those stout oak doors,
He'd blown his horn
    Knowing I would come.

"Master, there is one boon," I said
As I held him in my arms
Upon the bloody bed. "Let me burn
This place, these cursed nuns,
This stinking hall. For that,
    Hell would be worthwhile."

"Nay, nay, friend John, not ever that.
For I've not hurt woman in my life,
Nor any man in her company.
Now give me my good bow
And where the arrow lands,
    There may you dig my grave."

His fingers quivered on the string
Which I had to help him draw.
Then he died,
And the arrow missed the window
And rebounded from the wall. My tears
    Were the first I ever shed.

I'd followed Robin half my life
And loved him more
Than God
Or the Blessed Virgin
Or the lop-eared dog I'd owned when I was six
    Or any woman I'd ever touched.

Now I, John of Lancaster,
A big man with hands like shovels
And no more brains than a bony-plated turtle
Wander through lost and broken places
Under a sky
    As empty as I am.

Ian McDowell

In the Medieval ballad "The Death of Robin Hood," Robin, suffering from an unnamed malady, visits his cousin, the Dame Prioress of Kirkly Abbey, to be bled for his ills. The Prioress, however, has become the lover of the Sheriff of Notingham, and she uses the bleeding iron to open a major vein instead of a minor one and then leaves Robin locked up in his room. Dying, he blows his horn to summon Little John to his aid.

Honorable Mention

PENLAND WINDOW SERIE
Elisabeth Pric

THE BOUDIOR

He knocked
and the sound of your timid feet
in white cotton socks hurrying into the closet
didn't come near
all he could hear
was the snore of the fan
and the ringing of the phone.
He unlocked
the door, *your* door (so long ago
you gave him the key can't
remember did he ask for it?)
and glanced around in his
morgue-silent way.
He was shocked
to see your party dress
of pink satin
and your freshwater pearls
and your ribbons
on the bed in anticipation
and the letter on the desk
with the ink barely dry.

Ronda Messick

ELECTRONIC MUSIC

well first off its good
there
and the people who make it look japanese
and they work late at night in dimly lit laboratories, surrounded by banks of synthesizers, sequencers, digital recording equipment, amplifiers and speakers
the dimmer the light the better a synthesist they are
the best ones work in the dark
interrupted only by the twinkling lights of the equipment that surrounds The Chair

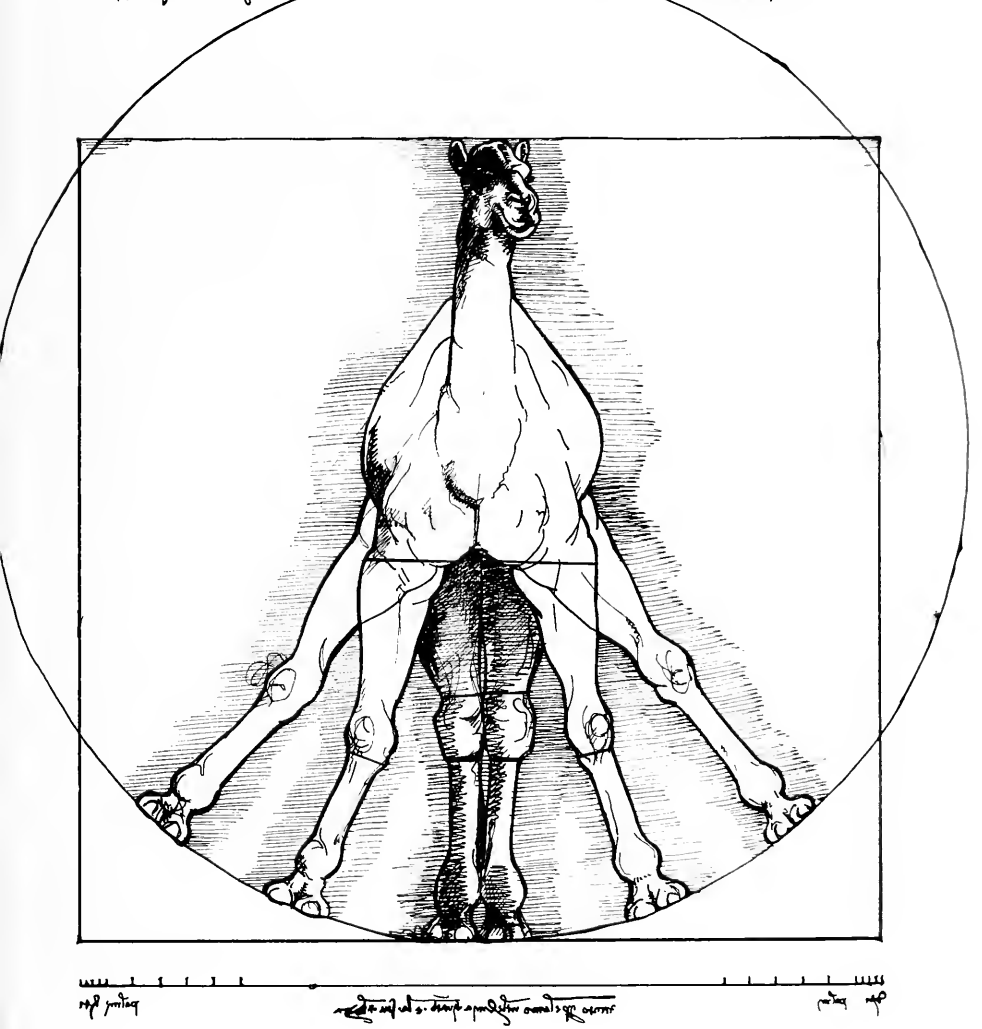
one time a synthesist disappeared
they found the studio in complete disorder
windows shattered they were made of thick glass too acoustic paneling scorched pieces of things all over
there was a reel of tape still running on a recorder in the corner
they never played that one back

they actually found the synthesist later on in the middle of an african rain forest, playing with cheetah
he didn't know either

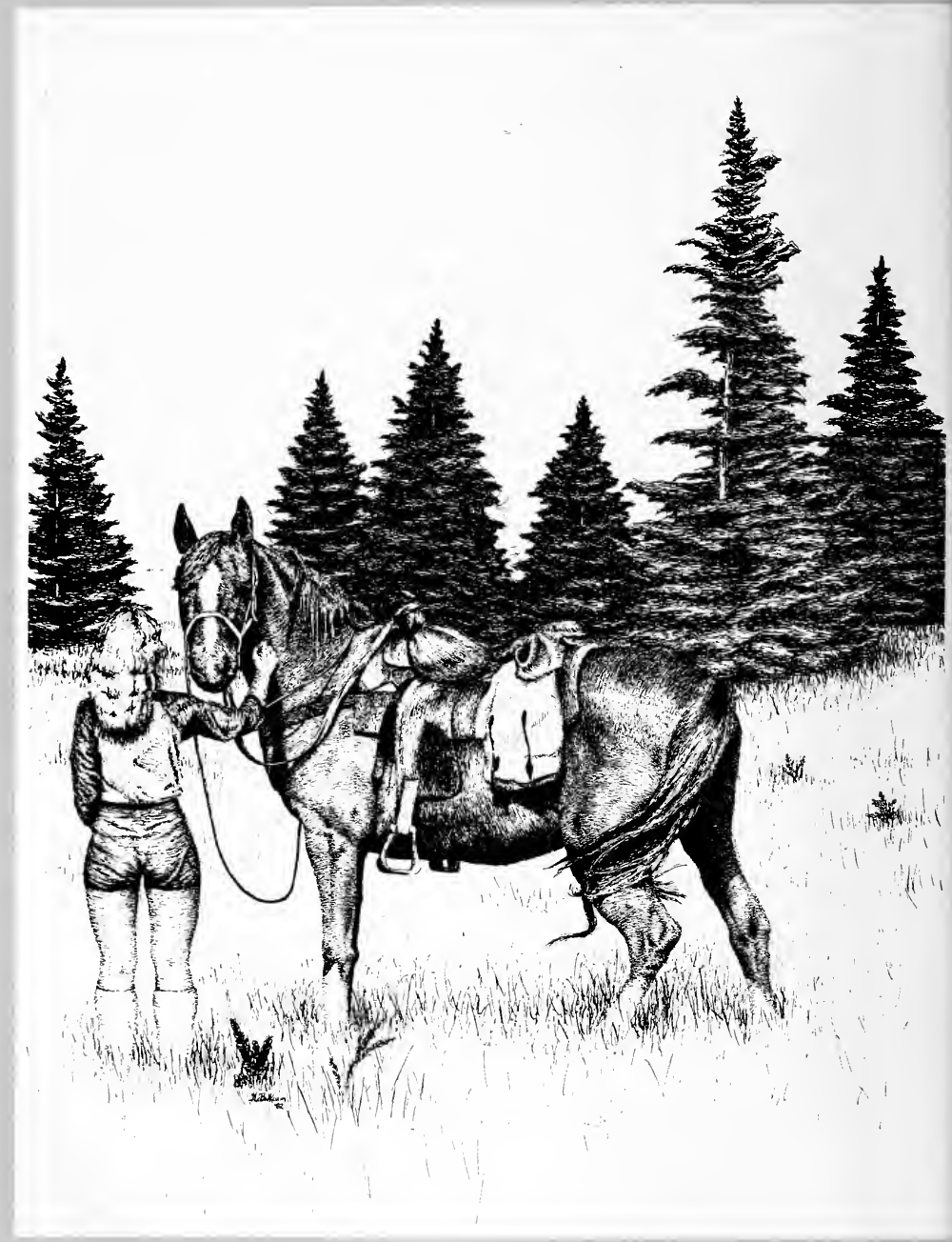
that tape still exists somewhere
nobody's ever played it

not yet

byron woods



Charles Stigliano



Gregg Balkcum

CONTRIBUTORS

Beth Atwater
Gregg Balkcum
Chris Clodfelter
Mark A. Corum
Ian Couch
Jill Couch
Byron Emerson
Lynne Faulk
Mary Beth Ferrell
L. L. Fox
Geoffrey Fraser
Sara Gray
Eric Hause
Alison Kimmelman
Geli Klimek
Ian McDowell
Ronda Messick
Jon M. Obermeyer
Bruce Piephoff
Jo Jane Pitt
Elisabeth Price
Bill Rankin
David Robinson
Uli Schempp
Tom Severa
Elisabeth Rochelle Smith-Botsch
Teresa M. Staley
Charles Stigliano
Mark Thomas
Byron Woods
Homer Yost