

Spring/Fall 1975



"THE PIPER"





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5.

Kiss me on the lips
and hear me smile

– *jon xagas*

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STEM ORIGIN POEM

It was in the closet.
A dry fragment,
a round smooth stick of cedar;
rich scent oozing from splintered ends
through time,
old chests,
and my own harbours,
to a child etched in an instant.
seeing the sun rise on a morning sea,
stirring smells of a weathered farm
in its first warm rays.
Always alone in the silent swishing morning
and the wet waist-high grass
that encroaches on bent buildings
and even hides the big spotted dog
with whom I share that past,
the hours on the misted rocky shore
waiting,
skipping heavy stones and waiting,
to begin, having begun
then,
now,
before the sanctuary of this pungent stick.

– *John Lamiman*

WOMAN

Dark and deep
Soil shifts
as the slender stalk
seeks light.
Creeping towards sun,
Opening tender green,
it unfolds a hiding bud.
Fearful foliage
it looks within,
until in courage and rejoicing
It explodes
into a velvet flower.

– *Sarah Ladd*

ANN'S INCANTATION

Burnt magic seized from her words
By my face and hands longing,
Longing to talk so good.
Pale scorched tongue mine is, stuck out
As a mockingbird tail, flit
From bush to anxious bush
Searching, wondering whether
To pause with a word, hop out
A phrase mixed by her metaphor.
My heart all nerves, exposed to
Her languid fire soothes me to
Know—there is always more to
Be said, another way to
Say it: “I love you” or else
“What you do touches me this
Deep.” By a feather impaled.
Waxen image transfixed and
Reborn from those pinpoints of
Light, she lays stars with her spell.

— J. K.

ENCOUNTER

My face was winter,
frosty and frigid;
Unmoving rigor
of grimace rigid.

Your face was spring,
melting me down;
Breaking the ice
and smiling my frown.

– *John Strickler*

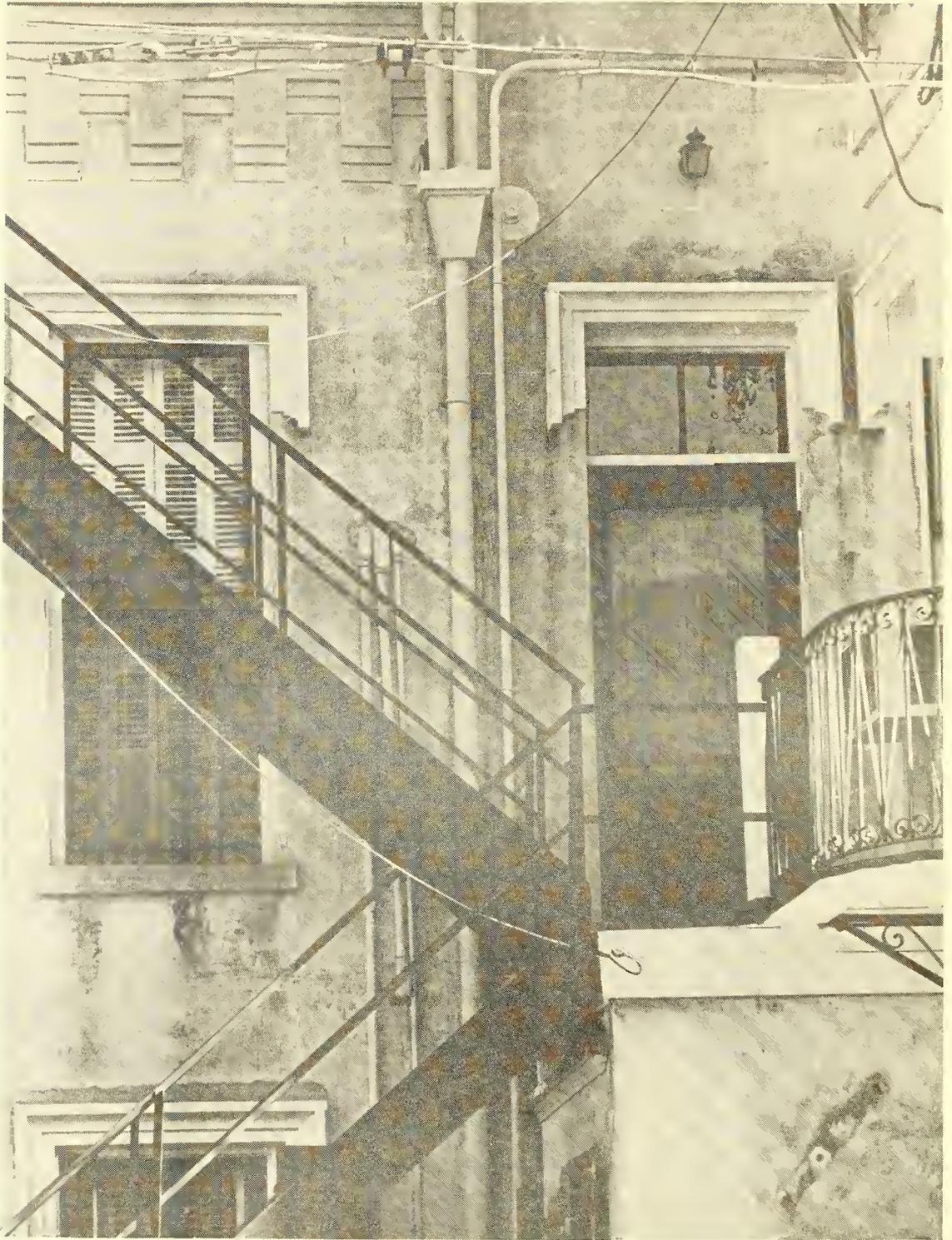


photo by Milton Colindres.

i am carving out a place in time for you

it began in sandstone,

 a portrait of your face

 but the lips were washed away by the tides.

it went on in rosewood,

 a song of your eyes

 but was turned into a chair-leg.

you fit in each corner of my life

so neatly i'm afraid i'll lose you

or misplace you

 or send you in an overstuffed sofa

 to the Goodwill store

it went into mahogany which was too hard

too stubborn.

 it wore me down to

 see the brutal, sharp angles.

 how will i carve your voice

 or how will i capture your ambling walk?

 i wish i was

 a good enough artisan

 to do this well.

this chair, this table,
this oil painting on the museum wall
contains your portrait.

everywhere i go i see small pieces of you:

a rug of your mustache-hair

a dinner plate of your smile.

the floor shivers for the sound of your heels.

it will stop at bronze,

hesitate briefly at gold,

and meander slowly between silver and pewter

ending up

in photographic blacks and whites,

framing your face

on my life constantly . . .

carving out a place in time for you.

– *Julia Blizin*

THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE
TO THE BLUE JUNGLES OF JOYFUL OBLIVION

play my soul fingers
to your spine
i feel a scalpel on my heart
put your lips to my mind
kill my momentary struggle
fight my atom bomb
blast thru
to your heartfelt sea

i found your eyes
like spikes
in my sky
your nails
slam to my cross
your mind
a slash in my back

you blame me
for your drunken orgy
and lips of steel cream
float in my bloody wine

throw me in a cage
with the lion god
i see his mane
golden
in the wild blue night

– James Finch Johnson

FROM SHADOWS OF OCEAN DEPTH

From shadows of ocean depth
I lifted the dimness of my eyes.
At some unspoken word
I fought my way upward,
shredding through searing tentacles of night's grasp.
Eluding,
with torn and bleeding scales,
I emerged at last to wavering light
of lesser depths.
Gulping air strange and frightening
but sweet to long encumbered lungs,
I emerged
and felt the tantalizing breeze of newer realms
beyond my liquid bonds.
Night-blinded eyes had opened—
longed to see beyond the haze of ocean-weaving forms—
and drew me to a different world . . .

Clumsy, hindered, I crept upon the shore,
each step carving fin to limb
with sore denial of the sea.
Trembling, yet sure, I claimed my right
to call this new sphere home.
And I was content . . .

Until one day I climbed above
the forest shadows of the land
and gazed across the strip of sand and stone
that challenged shadows of the sea,
and looking up with birthing eyes
I watched a silver osprey soar
upon a higher breeze . . .

— *Carol Inglis*

Rocking

I did

for one full hour listen to a myriad of footsteps up and down
the hall

What's the use

He wears sneakers anyway

– *Caryl Kuser*

A POPCORN ODE TO THE ILL
RECEIVED SONNET FORM

With wrenched words we decay thought
of what had moved before
and reel apart into a mode
of sequined countersign.
Shriek a shrivelled tune!

Our force of words rots
the power of meaning beyond
and all oozes down into Murk,
a one time great East River,
curdling the nameless masses.

Apart from you I sense a still
greater life transcendant energy
tacitly propheting doom
if within a poem iron force alone
be our only meaning mentor.

Once it pulsed and heaved in force and form
for us to come to know,
but then precisising form good-byed
leaving only force, the lesser.
That most sublime energy fled from feel.

Still it circles within out there
and waits to be contained again
in more perfecting actions.
Spirited in balance of force to form,
it's only earth life giving captors,
it will not be in your defecting tractions.

– *Jeff Pratt*

PORCHLIGHT WOMAN

The porchlight woman stands shadowed
in Sylvania sun,
embracing me with her heart,
memory drops bright
on kiss worn cheeks,
smooth from a hundred child kisses
a thousand weeks ago,
love full eyes shouting
good-bye, hurry home,
in the same silent, smile-crying stare.



photo by Milton Colindres.

SOJOURNS POSTSCRIPT

Today's letter – U
postmarked Portland
set me back in my chair
scribbling through an alphabet
of long gone places
come home to the end
of a well marked Geography
Where it was raining
over the mountains.
Familiar Somewhere always
the falling into
blonding vistas
leggy with tomorrows spring,
a gruff voice from the fireside
curling black upon itself,
my tongue thickening
with viscous names unlimbered
by a hard leaning toward,
and awkward with trying
new faces for the flight.
A different moonlight operation
for every midnight's truckstop
and every morning's madman
redefining his life's limitations
when the clouds are blacklit
golding over the mountain
and today's letter
always finds its place.

– *Sherri Sandlin*

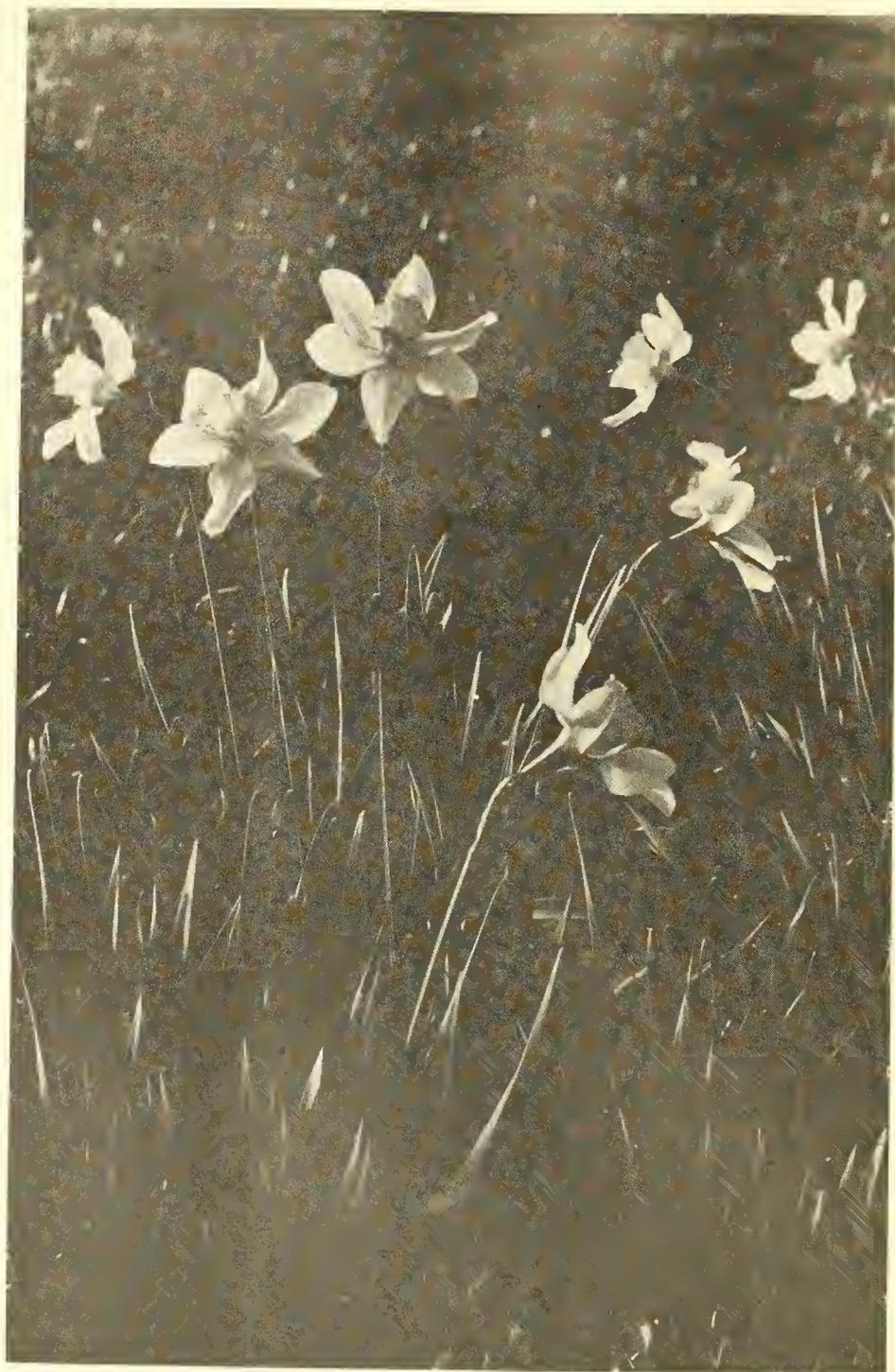


photo by Milton Colindres.

By my calculations,
The moon is as big as my thumbnail;
As I see it,
The sun is a little smaller;
The way I measure things,
Life is fuller than one-and-a-half;
In my (of course) opinion,
Death is emptier than minus all.

– John Strickler

Sealed: Locked in a living tomb
I wander
Searching for an opening to let
The world come in.

When I move
I see the ripples of reaction
Shimmering over the faces
Of those I cannot reach

my feelings are bled
into symbols
upon this page
but they are images
of the image of the
core of my being which
longs to be touched and
comforted

Those circles emanate ever outward
Away from me, away from me.
I must learn to lie still
And rock with the tiny waves.

ALIENATED

– *Danny Hoback*

ROMANCE HAS A FEAR OF ANIMALS

when this mouth finds itself situated
above a body striped and taut, prowling
in the wilderness of one large and silent dark bedland
there comes a sudden death to tenderness,
a loss of gentility bows down on battered knees
in deference to the stalker, in pity to the prey.

romance wears tennis shoes
creeps as quiet as wind through the underbrush
romance has a fear of animals
hides under every available rock and root, leaves
tenderness exposed and shivering in the wild womb
 who can defend tenderness?
 who can eradicate this animalism, frothing on my lips?
 gentleness folds as neatly as a dying rose,
 leaves me to the hunt, unadorned, unable to hold
 softness within

i know my cloven hooves, known my piercing eyes
have seen them mirrored in your terror, felt
an Afrikaaner tradewind along my sweating pelt
and knew tenderness as a childish lie

when this mouth finds itself situated
above a body as fluid as the light through the leaves, searching
for satiation, destiny
there comes a growing of tenderness's cousin, sweet sideline, love
and i slink through the lair, drawing
jungles along your timorous body, stamping my hooves into your
heart
then, death in the wilderness
 and who may qualify victim
 who can peg prey? shuddering in the aftermath
 as tenderness returns, tucks us into sleep,
 turns down the heat and hums gracefully until dawn.

– *Julia Blizin*

A REALIZATION OF FATHERS

I, we, roar again,
my outrage, my hidden pain
against his condescension.
I am not silly!
I am not.
I am not sure sometimes.
Before the specter of a hand
looming with thoughtless casual power
to reposition me,
return me,
to a place not far from my mother's trained loins,
I can only rise to affirm myself.

The fury is held,
it is useless.
It is not held,
still useless.
So fast
the white knuckled clench of my hand flies out.
So slowly
the panel of the old yellow door gives
splintering into the night
where snow settles quietly in the darkness.

The strange unfeeling hand unfolds there
before the serious eyes
in my foolish face.
I am untongued,
standing at a sudden edge
realized in surprised smallness
between light and night,
matter and space,
now and the soft settling of centuries.
Knowing here,
in this odd moment,
in our little order of doors and passages
before an order vast as chaos,
before the soundless uncaring settle
looming down out of the night sky,
how right and how foolish
I am.

– *John Lamiman*

SUBMISSION

Morning shines, the day comes dawning
Now you're walking in my eyes
Not really, but forever floating –
Like an illusion.

Noonday suns, the feeling falters
Songs for waiting come to mind
You echo in me, always mocking –
Like childish laughter.

Evening tides and cools the passion
Now you crest its rise again
Surging forth with no restraint –
Like a sea storm.

Midnight burns with silver prisms
Now you're climbing in my night
Your flames ensconce my being –
Like a hellfire.

– *Ellen Cashwell*

**a rain cloud appeared while sitting under
an oak tree near New Garden Road**

there is no hearth to sit by and watch
as flames flicker and dance
there is no longer a sun to smile at me
and keep me company on long walks
and wanderings
the trees have lost all leaves
and the song in my mind is fading
so goodnight, you faraway stars and skies
 i can only hope
the moon will rise again someday.
 there are now no voices
 with false soothing tones
saying everything will be Fine in the end.
there are no cirrus circus clouds left
to make me think of cotton pasted on pastel sky
and those smiling reds and blues
 the colors i loved long ago
are turning into gray.

so good night you misty-eyed dusk
don't let me get in your way
i have nothing left for you to see
except a glimpse of yesterday.

– *Patricia Lenihan*

DETAILS FROM BEARTOOTH LAKE

you are young & long –
 limbed, but not
 as tall as these wailing winds
or these elegant pines, dancing
 in the watermelon-light dawn
here on Beartooth Lake
 your photograph
 standing in the crystal shallows
the diamondstud streams trickling
 down along your
 supple lines
over by the small granites, the caldera
 blacker than the night-roof by Osprey Falls
 (having wiggler's races
 zipped tight in sleeping bags)
 wild columbine, dutch-
man's breeches, yellow adder-tongues
 & the hand that picks them
also
 tied the love-knot in me

– *Julia Blizin*

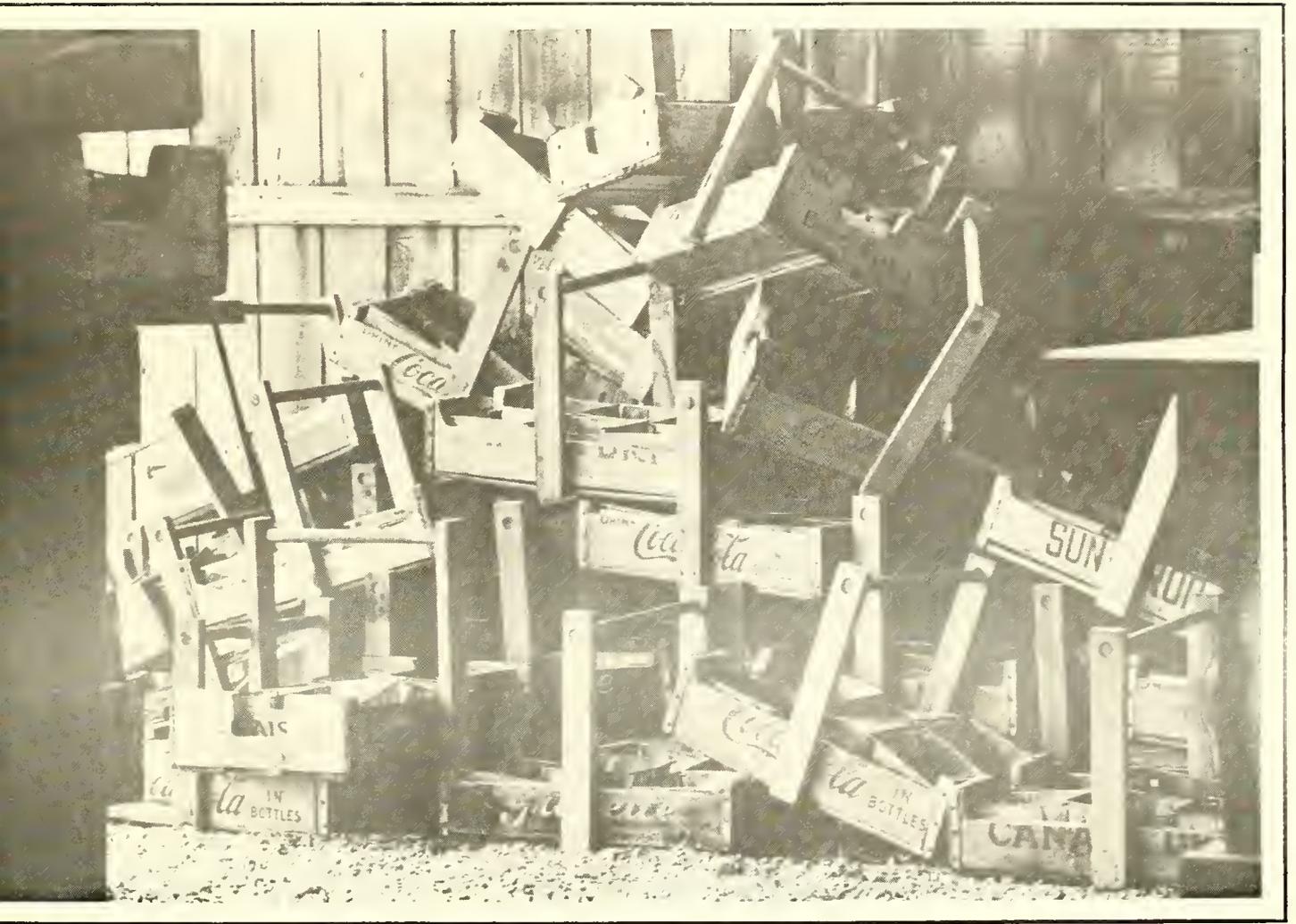


photo by Milton Colindres.

IN SEARCH OF THE GRAIL

(for Joanna)

The garden knew the way up, true,
had direction even to a seed,
bore the empty hull easily
till it dried and fell victim
of its own brittleness.

But you are not the polycotyledon
product of X and Y
nor I an amorphous annual,
We are women,
our tropic turning to continuity
and worth measured in marrow gain.

Today you watched television;
the men in fields sowing
bloody bits of flesh
by a filtered lens light,
mothers gathering the dripping harvest
rocked in crouched laps,
and pondered the distance—
your plants were stranded in pots.

In this new wilderness
we stand apart
for convenience and easy identification,
ciphers of silence
written in niggardly poetry,
rhetoric, some little blood,
and the thousand postures of Tantra.

Who can read Despair
across the face of a 22 year old beauty,
the “rich bitch” brain child

THE TODAY SHOW

the coffee gone
i
wait on Barbara Walters
slow calm grace
we face morning
together
through lazy smoke
of aloneness

could i but tie
those waves
nationwide
to you
embrace it all
so tightly
as to scourge
america of
its flatulence
then
on a foul
and turbulent
wind
eructed from those

blistering straps
i would
waft
my way
to you

little more
than
a scent
of memories
pleasant ones:
 pintos cooking
 christmas pine indoors
 clean and sunny
 well-lit rooms
 xeroxed poems
 my mother's dog
 cold that fused our nostrils

could i but
fly i would
be there
today
instead of her
on the air

— J. K.

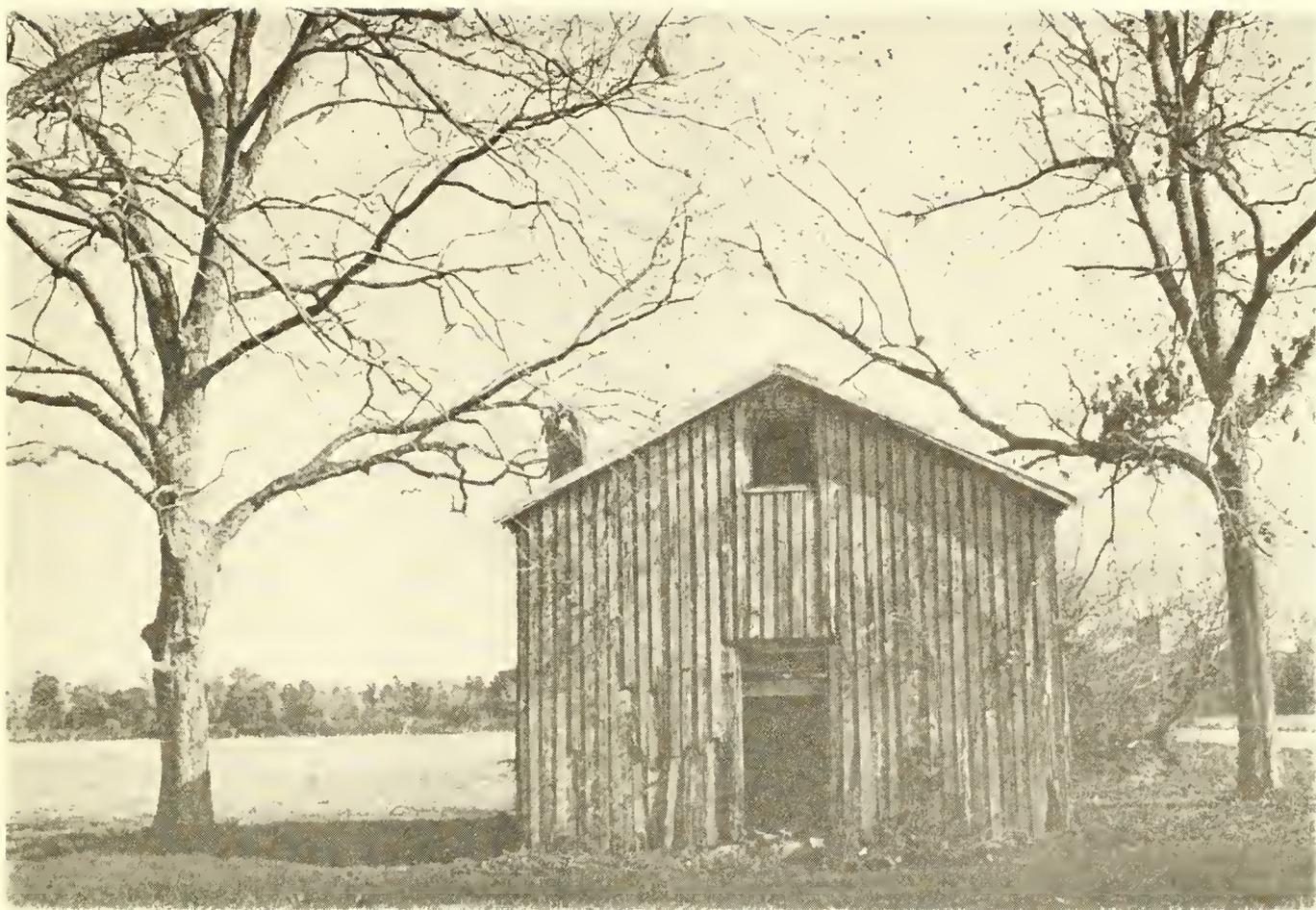


photo by Milton Colindres.

once again
through tiny windows
i caught a glimpse
of that peerless treasure
which was once
within my grasp . . .

soon i turned away
and wandered home
alone.

as moonlight peeped
through crystal trees
and i tripped over
injured glassy branches,
i sensed within my
splintered self
a loss
and yet
a gain . . .

— *K. E. Hood*

MELON GIRL

Helen
Eats melon
Till she bleeds
Black seeds
And splits at the seams
Dreaming watermelon dreams.

– *John Strickler*

Like a fallen
twig from a tree
a dead bird and his song
Sleep . . .

– *jon xagas*

