



The Piper

The Fall 1985 issue of **The Piper** included the inadvertent publication of part of the poem entitled "Reality," written by Barbara Perry, previously published in the September, 1980 issue of Seventeen magazine.

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"Oh, do not ask 'What is it?'
Let us go and make our visit."

T.S. Eliot

The Piper



Spring
1986

You Paint For Hours

You paint for hours and
still the canvas
is an empty square
When the colors dry
they disappear
this is perfect art
you say and
your smile pulls
me in till I
disappear as well

Demetra E. Gates

How to Play Pirates

First
Establish who is the pirate
who is the slave.
Only men can be pirates he explains
so you are the slave.
Run till he catches you
Get dragged to his ship.

He insists you be naked.
Remove your T-shirt and shorts.
And since you are a prisoner
Let him tie you down

When he stares
Do not giggle.
Lie still
Look distraught.
Plead to be rescued
because you know you can not.

“Time to drown”
shouts your pirate.
You’re untied.
You get dressed.
“Stand here at the plank’s end.
I’ll hold your hand
while you jump.”

Amy Hurka



Neil Davis

Basic Trust

It began
with a vase
of newly-cut flowers
in the corner
of a dimly-lit room.
The light fought
through the curtain
sporadically enough
to discover a poem

inside she knew
what she wanted-
curious but not agile
tight but willing
surreptitious visits
with alcohol shades
for the evening

That was how it started.

Both newborn & womb-ridden
we raced
to find ourselves
& in each other
something-
but neither knew what.
There's something
romantic about birth though.

We both needed
we both needed
to express
to be held & caressed
to move in & out
with care or ambivalence
& attention paid
because we both
felt a spark
which our windy
rainy pasts
were trying to
blow out
from between us.

We needed to taste
truth in eyes
in hands
incognito.

Phil Polo



Jenni McInnes

This Time

This cold is different from before
I didn't notice the leaves fail to hold their grasp.
A stranger had to point out to me that the trees
had shaken off their fringes leaving them to browse
downwards taking to the ground
like shovels at the burial, disregarding the stones.

I no longer want to open the window's shade
early evening to watch the day go blind,
turning women's pink to a black that can't be seen.

This winter my mother will force out
pictures of Monaco, and me melting cotton candy in the ocean.
I will smile wanting to thank her for remembering that
I am still just picking the lock of womanhood.
But instead I will leave her room with the usual door
slamming after my back.

This season I want no strength to leave
the chill of days warmed by invented heat. I fear to believe
once more that summer's lie of a holiday makes all things warm.
It is sleepy here in the shadow of your tread.
I do not want to learn that life is death in the living.

Suze Kleiss

The Desert Road

My father and I
on a western highway
Dark empty night
that cold lonely highway
My father
half gray beard
Solemn man, lonely father
The only souls
that night
Lonely souls
father and I

Seth Hassett

Dinton

Dinton walks becauseway home
forging whenupons knocked softly over
and between a flattened scattering of dreams,
the old oak fell but no one heard it sound,
tongues he dare not open wrench
in colloquial castigation's justified ramifications
fighting blind faith of contemporated masses
sparring with minds behind tortoise shell glasses,
in a smile he catches the day's last ashes
pocketed he calls them his own.

Steve Rubinstein

One Trek for Thought

All sailors dare to and fro
While the sailing wind still blows
So as to drift upon bays maroon
So as to view an unknown scene
With its locality and being.

And one sailor claims in his last letter
How he's seen these shingles standing better
This he wrote for me to grief.

And I see him and I do understand him,
How he drifts and lands
On lame blanche muddy shores
When he kneels to cry and throw a fit
Then rises and curses the bore
A new feeling this new stage has lit.

Yet, when he is sad . . .
I tell him how minds germinate
From the feeding experiences
That shores like these can bring.
And that most people carry on like this;
Some on a battered raft,
A floating Alcatraz, that holds
One sun bitten manimal
Lightly clawed to the mast
Of this cruising raft of rags
Carrying his mind alas
One sign of thought at last.

And years. . . by days. . . in time, we have hunted.
We have now our hunter, the prize winner of thought
And the farmer of knowledge
The Crusoe we so describe.

Carlos Mijares



Why I Stopped Sleeping Under the Guns

Robert Herring



Donna Coleman

Shadows, and Dreams

The lights from next door
shine through the window
casting dancing shadows of spirit
bringing life into this otherwise stagnant air

I see silhouettes
of embracing lovers
this comforts me with
shades of reason

Images turn to voices
comforting my fear
lifelong voices help
me find tomorrow

This passion assures me
there is life after death
all this goes on
with you dreaming at my side.

The light disappears, and takes my visions
your scent is all I know
I pull our bodies closer
and wonder if you look any different in
The dark.

Tim Savidge

fundamentalist father

"Be like me"
Roars the mad-man
Over his bruised, shivering son
 he must be me
 I must live

"Like I am my father
Like he his father. . .
Be like me"
Child like a clam pressed
against the shells of wall's corner

"I do this through my love"
—slashes belt—

I cannot love him,
if he is not me

hysterical, suppressed,
pragmatically powerless
the child looks deep within
himself

asks: why does father fear me so?
then realizes: I am his life blood
He shall die without me
I must not conform
I must kill the mad-man
If he wants to live he must be me

Brad Chance

The Birth of Gerald Critch

Perfectly transcendent . . .
Where snow stretches
On for miles; a pure,
Soundless unconsciousness.
Alone with his footprints,
A man lies down,
Knees pressed tightly
Into his chest. He closes
His eyes and smiles.

Amy Ardison

Mornings at 328 West

Elliot sat munching his toast,
The noise grated like
long toenails rasping under clean sheets.

“Elliot- ”

the New York Times is shifted.

“The dog needs to be let out.”

“Fine” A cup lifted to lips.
The door to the patio lies
behind Elliot’s situated frame.

“Elliot?” Pleading now.

He doesn’t move
All is stillness, the sun
waits in calm brilliance.

This man, my life —
if he doesn’t do it, I’ll leave him.
A hand flutters, a mournful
exhale.

Elliot looks up,
“George, really, you can be
such a bitch at times.”

I smile—turning quickly to
dab a tear. . . .This man.

Kelly Clark

Façade

Is the profile of a home to see,
When the blinds flutter and billow up like sails
And the dusty hovering sky awakes.

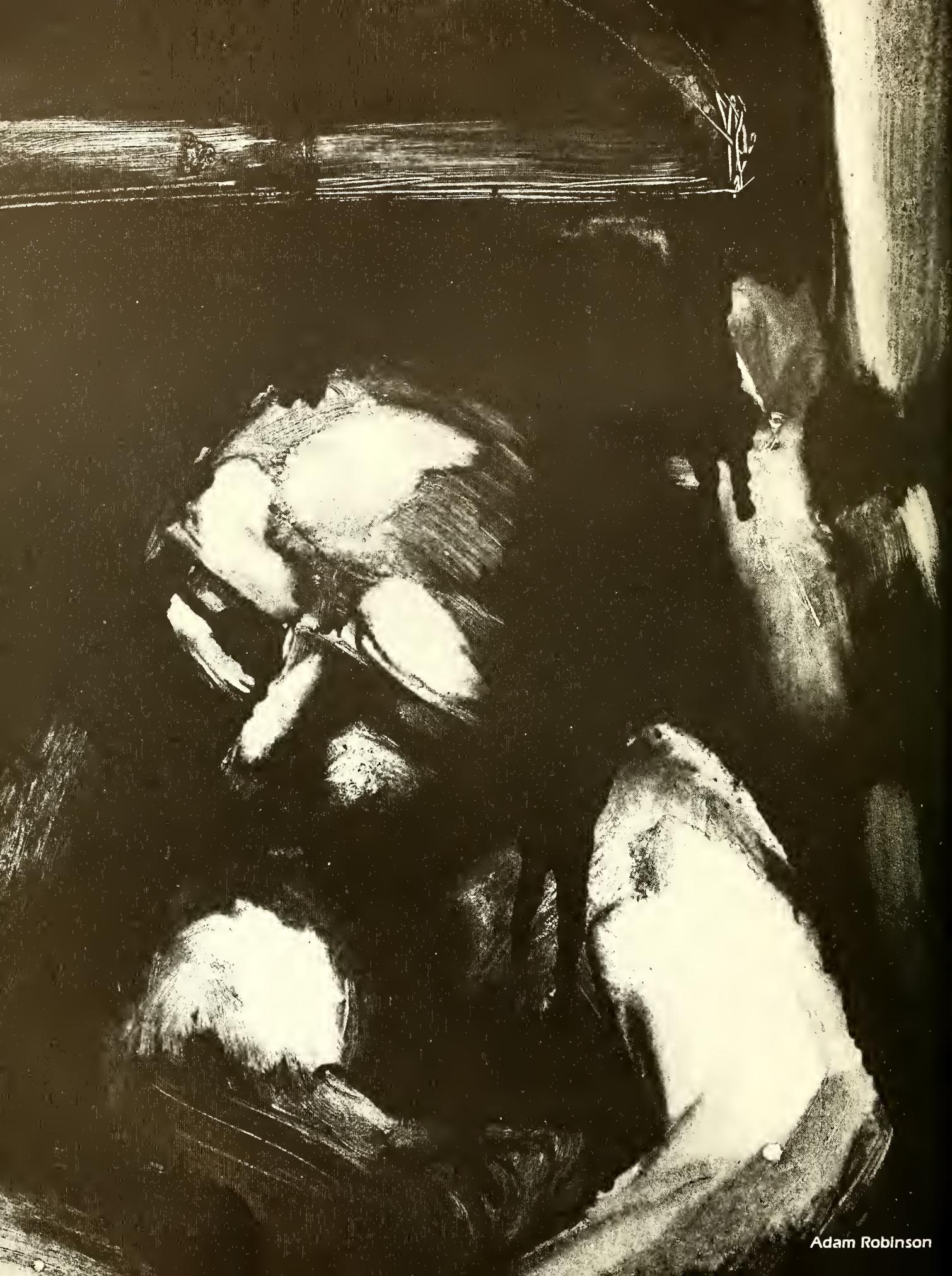
Façade is a city’s jagged horizon
That frigidly dilutes with the piping fog.

And so it is the picture frame
Of the pavement streets, an artwork so cold
That I reminisce
As the place where I grew up to love . . . sidewalks
And neon lighted gutters,
The front lawns of urban homes
Where people live hidden . . . by this old façade
A veil of stone.

Carlos Mijares



Fred Jernigan



Adam Robinson

Ode to Fear

precariously perched
on the razor of reality
or is it insanity
i have to avoid arguing the rights and wrongs
to think is to lose
to talk but a vanity
the path i must choose
plummets in peril
to darkness unknown
through a gorge gale-blown
stifling heat
dizzy heartbeat
sicken me enough to cry
“it’s time i left
this female cleft
and closed my traitorous eyes”

downstream and away
from the nervous light of day
to believe in oneself
is to float without help
out of the womb of yesterday
out of the tomb of considered ways
into silent maturity
skirting cursed insecurity

John K. Cox

Death By Male

The letter lay, pale and unopened.
She, also closed, picked it up
and with a shining blade
cut across
the thin blue lines
of her wrist.
Fumbling fingers with blood spotted
pearly translucent nails
slid the letter out
of the envelope white
and read.
He was coming
after all.
It didn’t matter, she
wouldn’t be here -
to greet him.
Only an official letter
would arrive.

Death by mail.
Death by male.

Kelly Clark

When its November outside
a cold chill breezes
through me to abide
remembrance of hazes
in the shadow of a dream
of one no longer seen
When the leaves have gone
and day reflects night’s loss
at the break of a dawn
past pain to toss
in the shadow of a dream
of one no longer seen

Jenni McInnes





Dogma I

I awoke to the sound
Of five thousand
Crying
Of five thousand
Screaming
Then, with the sharp bark
Of a small, thick bell
He appeared.
He was naked, with powerful veins
In his neck and forehead
And small, stout horns like a young sheep.
His skin glowed a rich autumn orange
And his movement
Utterly effortless,
A genius at dance.
He approached my bed
And I could not move.
His hand flowed out with perfect control,
The long fingers radiating softness,
Gently recoiled,
And I was lifted in peace
By the air about my chest.
Floating with ribbon grace,
We passed through the wall of my room.
He led with the quickness
Of an automobile crash,
Like all of time was new.
Then a tiny feather dropped past us
And we followed it in a downward spiral.
It came to rest on the edge of a metal chalice
And we dove into the black liquid it contained.

Suddenly, I was alone,
Flying backwards
Then on the ground,
Set down by a white rainbow.
A woodchuck in a tree,
Smiling and dealing cards,
Pulled a butterfly out of his fur
And killed it.
He dropped a six of hearts,
And on the back was written green words
That kept changing,
"The octopus ran through spring
And spring screamed.
The stream streamed."
I tried to speak, but when my mouth opened
It was full of flowers
That tasted like coffee grounds.
The card then folded in half
And became a snake
That writhed to the ground
And became a well.
I jumped back
And tripped over a tombstone.
As I landed the land rang with the full sound

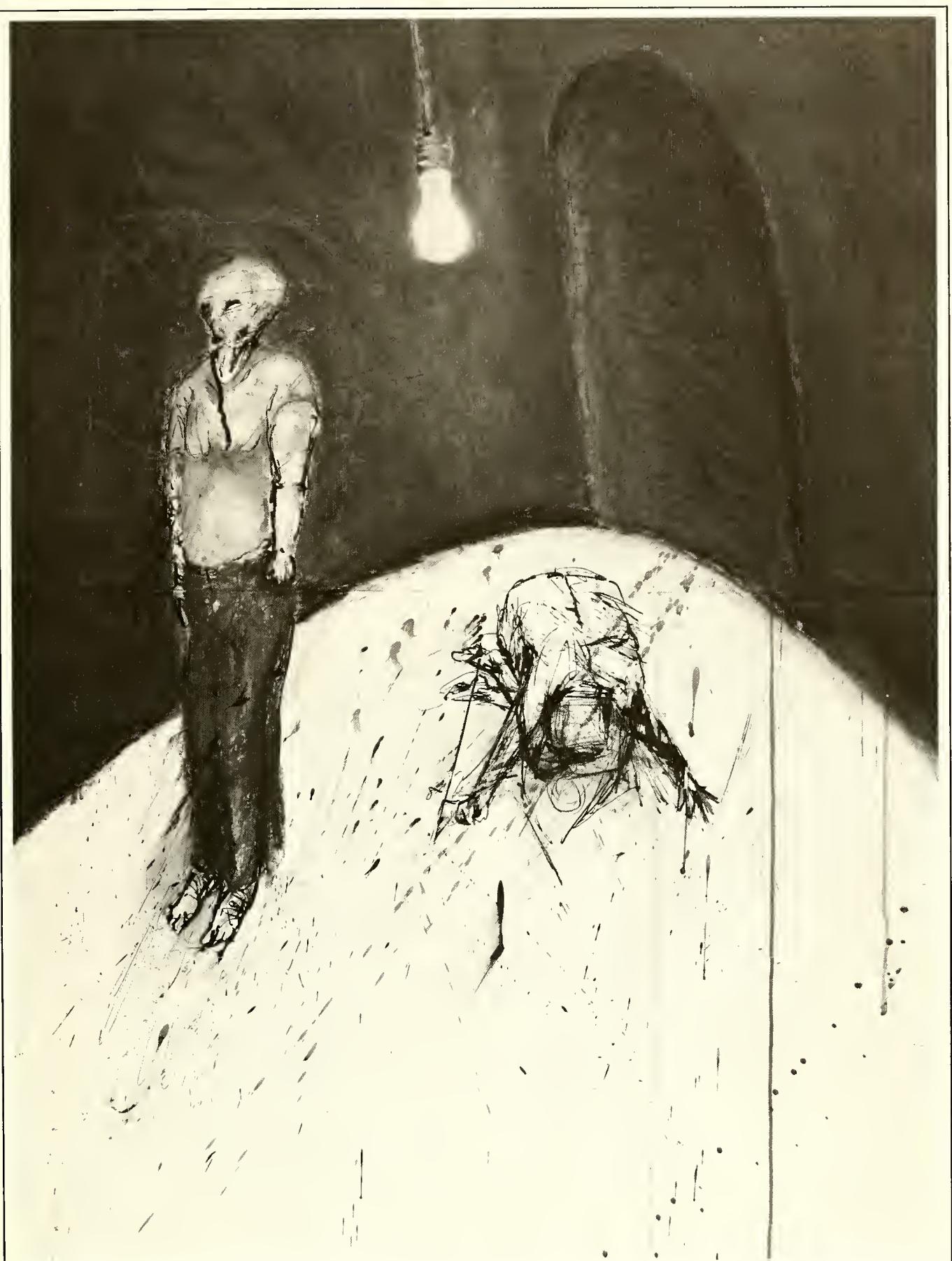
Of a bass guitar chord.
I shut my eyes
And saw a young girl
Who spoke with the voice of a man,
"The candles of experience
Are glasses of water here."
I laughed at the simplicity,
And opened my eyes.
The tombstone became a sunflower
With ears for leaves,
And I heard scratching in the well.
I climbed in,
And far below were the night stars.
I let go,
And the walls became blood.
Wind breathed through,
Smelling of bread.
I swam in the air toward the stars.
I climbed out
To find the man from my bedroom
Urinating into the well.
He spoke with the voice of a young girl,
"I can only pee here."
And flung dirt into my eyes
Like lightning.
I fell back
And landed in the tomato garden in my back yard.

Sam Longmire

The First Time The Sky

The first time the
sky opened,
I did not listen
I ran from the field
threatening to
burn my eyes
and fill my ears
with boiling oil—
I did not want
to be an oracle
but it was
no good—
So I sit here
in rags
close to your
bleached bones
and write
my dreams
in wax—

Demetra E. Gates



Adam Robinson

Sibling Rivalry

I tried to crochet
your long walnut hair
into a green border
for the painting.
Jealous of your hair
and unsuccessful
I stopped,
Realizing old hatred is
tough as hardened
tar to remove.

Amy Hurka

Haiku

opalescent blue
chalk edges the board. Quiet
dust sprinkles the air.

Barbara Ruby

Old Man Blues

the old man has seen a lot in his age
you can tell by the way he sings
his crisp but jagged voice cries
the sounds of soul seasoned with time

that paint cracked and splintered guitar
has been in his hands at every urge
when he couldn't find the right words
the guitar always had them

he digs his fleshy fingers into its neck
right hand hammers life into the wires
as left hand clutches, pulls, bends
and wanders across up and down.

he arches back, shuts his eyes, cringes
you can tell when he gets inside those notes
sweat slips softly down his brow-
there's a puddle of blues on that dusty stage . . .

Paul Dillon



Steve Reichert

Garbage Can

Anthropologist I am
investigating the steel cylinders of city streets.
poised beneath the black fire escape
that casts a queue of light upon my face.
crouched into the cold corner of a dark secluded alley
subject to the elements
I purge the alleys of my mind
to find some sort of refuge.
a culmination of odors
that invites me to depict its ingredients.
Hf . . . Hf
a diaper, a sock.
Hf . . . Hf
blueberry double bubble, newspapers and cat food.
two days old
the particulars have not fully blended yet
to form a universal stench.
rose scented letter
smeared like jam with running pineapple juice.
big brown boot
bore the brunt of city pavement.
pencil shavings
sprinkled like tinsel among the unwanted items.
empty can of peas
abandoned by its inhabitants.
I speak words of substance;
a cool white mist
invades the deaf ears of night



Kitty Hubbard



Sin?

A multant flash simmered down from the heavens and woman and man were instantly created in the glorious garden of Eden. There they loomed like a mobile portrait before the eyes of God/ess.

However, in all their splendor Eve and Adam had the identity of plastic. It was said that freedom was in their midst, but they never entered "Situation" — the land of freedom. Instead, they remained in Eden — the land which dressed them within the tightly woven garb of fundamentalism.

One day the first couple got tired of being mere performers before the stage of God/ess. As a last resort, they journeyed to the forbidden tree. They clenched its fruit, examined it, and detected something new in its texture. Knowledge. They sunk their teeth deeply into its tough, yet juicy flesh. And at that moment, a second spark of creation flashed down from the heavens. They were instantly released from their ideological chains, and thrust into the realm of identity — the realm of flux.

At this moment the collective ties of the unconscious became clouded. Eve turned to Adam and muttered the first words, "Who are you?"

Brad Chance

Going Back

There's a place I know
On the Eastern Shore;
A certain point
Where waves roll in
Gentle as tears. If
You go there—At sundown,
On the eve of a new moon—
You must drop clothes
And lies like dead skin.
Wait, and the winds
Will wrap you in a lullaby
Step into the sea and
Keep walking. You will face
Out of yourself, so to
Speak. When this happens,
Lie back
and close your eyes.
If you are real enough,
The waves will rock you home.

Amy Ardison

Eula

I used to cringe every time
She hollered
her empty cries echoing
from the caverns
of her bottomless soul.

I'd sit in her room nights
watching her, waiting . . .
with a shadow (masked) which
hovered above growing larger
each day feeding on her flesh.

As the days passed the scent of
decaying skin grew stronger
and stronger. Most characteristics
considered human were traces of
years past, and mattered nothing

Stiff in a fetal position
ready to re-enter the shadow's womb.

Though long gone from reality, Eula still
knew fear, a bloodless cry as
the mask lifted . . . She looked at me
one last cry, a "Praise God"
and then . . . only flesh

I leaned over her, and
kissed blue lips, her body
cold as my heart. I turned
and walked away, to play a
game of tennis, mad because I was late.

Tim Savidge

Opium

You came to me last night
with your lonely dream
slow, sticky smile.

I wanted your warm fingers
wrapped around my mind.

Are you a good lover, sad sister?

You are wicked
dark eyes glowing too hungry
You gloat when I beg for your kiss.

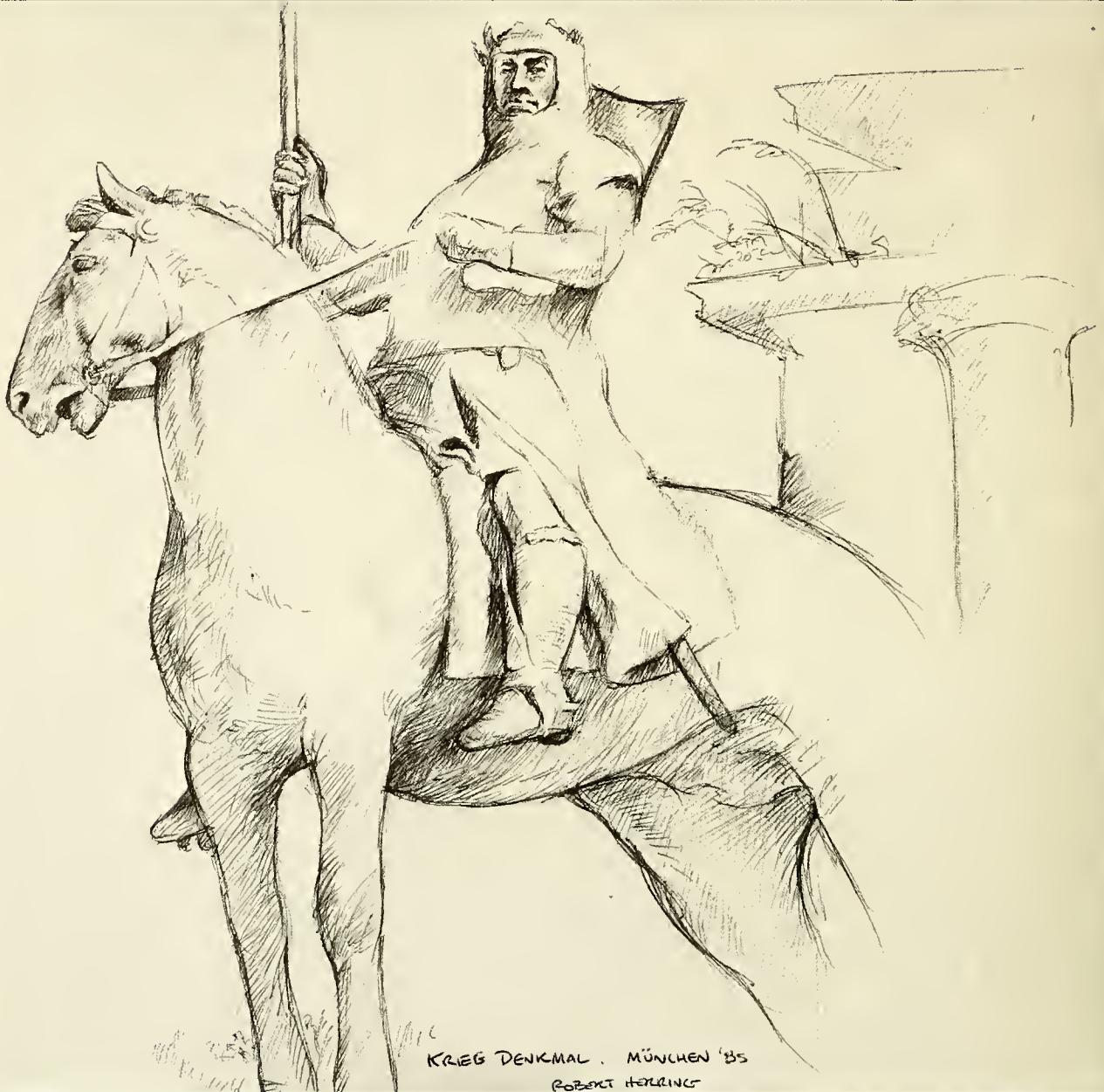
Stricken, I cannot move
when you touch.

Your perfume is too heavy
lingers to long it's
sweet stench.

I've never trusted women like you.

Amy Hurka





Krieg Denkmal

KRIEG DENKMAL . MÜNCHEN '85
ROBERT HERRING

Robert Herring

Experimental

Because

I heard once that rats are the only living beings besides
humans who kill their own kind for sport.

On Monday,

autumn's breeze came haunting
wearing a child's 60 cent plastic mask.

Turned Tuesday,

somewhere between the sheets and the weather
the radio announcer yawns the report about the
end of the world.

Which

begins next year. The whole earth becomes
a giant teapot set on the stove to warm
by nineteen-eighty nine
we'll be whistlin'.

Gray Wednesday,

some guy screaming God
begins picking women and children off
from the roof of the A&P.
I hear the shots,
and continue to knit an unnecessary sweater.

It was Thursday.

raindrops hurtled like
fat babies out of tight wombs
they splatter, drowning
the born-again and his rifle.

Shy Friday,

she tags behind.
but comes finally carrying winter
who knocks enough to ruin the back door screen.

Saturday,

I'm not frightened
there's nothing to fear except the rats.

Suze Kleiss

Golden Archway

Leaving the Golden Archway
I empty my tray.
I feel the greasiness of conformity
coat the outside of my body.
My heart has no variation.
Its rhythm is like yours
and yours
and yours.
Ronald's plastic smile
makes me feel like
he's been in control for all these years.
Like he's had me right where he wanted.
Now I look at him and I feel its too late.
He knows there's nothing I can do.
What really stands behind that guise?
Is everything a presentation to make society gell?
For once I would like to catch them offguard,
and find that loophole.
The Big Mac is processed, packaged
and slides down to be consumed.
Is there any taste bud stimulated on contact?
Or are we all just conditioned to the taste,
and have no need for new stimuli?
Let me really taste this hamburger,
this ketchup,
this onion,
this pickle,
this sesame seed bun.
Please, let me taste it, just once?

Jon Zimmerman



To Heidi arts painter, I see you everywhere even in winter.
picture two women walking
Not only in Boston any blue place will do.
No shoes, twenty toes spread and fatten on pavement
Like women mother told you never to be.

They point at unseen pictures inside
Summers open windows.
One passer-by stops to search.

Hear men call greedy words meant to choose one or other
Hoping to come between,
And tear those mamas down.

Notice the friends
pass a joke not spoken
lips bare back though not in laughter shapes.
More riddle than joke, you'd think
If you didn't know it too.
The one about two girls standing
in the darkest hall wearing halloween
All others wear sleeves pink-puffed.
Old story.
Remember them now.
Two barefoot women each have ten lovers in her purse.
Recognize those mother told you never to want.

Grant Reed

Suze Kleiss



Trey Vinson

Ragdays

When sound blasts in a big fuzz
& sight lapses into day-dream
& thought plays a broken record
you're in it, chained,
a sickly cornered child.

When you are your favorite obsession
& your bed straitjackets you shut
When fear drips hot off your face
& you know five seconds is too long.
When you're on the underside of a trip
& nothing glows through but the pressure
When you've got to write papers & get A's
but can only sit squealing out poems—

you own—
& hate them all one day later
When people think you're kind of a star
& you let them pretend for a while
'cause they trust your smile implicit
& they, so surprised by a last note—
a melody discordant & sick
no impulse, no pulse that matters

When stars come too close to the truth
& moons come too cold to be fake
you see your place for all that you've earned
you see your face if you fork up the courage
& magnum the mirror to pieces.

Phil Polo

Seduction in D Minor

He seduces me at the piano,
fingers burning Mozart
into the cool, surrendering keys
with the gentle, voluptuous
power of a phrase which
touches the chords of my soul.
Tenuous, I am strung
through each movement,
trembling inside the vibrato
and bursting out of the shrill cry
of his brilliant, demanding hands.
Borne down into the deep resonance
of his desperate reprieve,
then drawn up tightly into space,
I become music;
dropped breathless and aware
beside the man,
I am dissolved within
the anxious and exhausted
silence of the piano.

Martha J. Barnett



Martha Kissel

