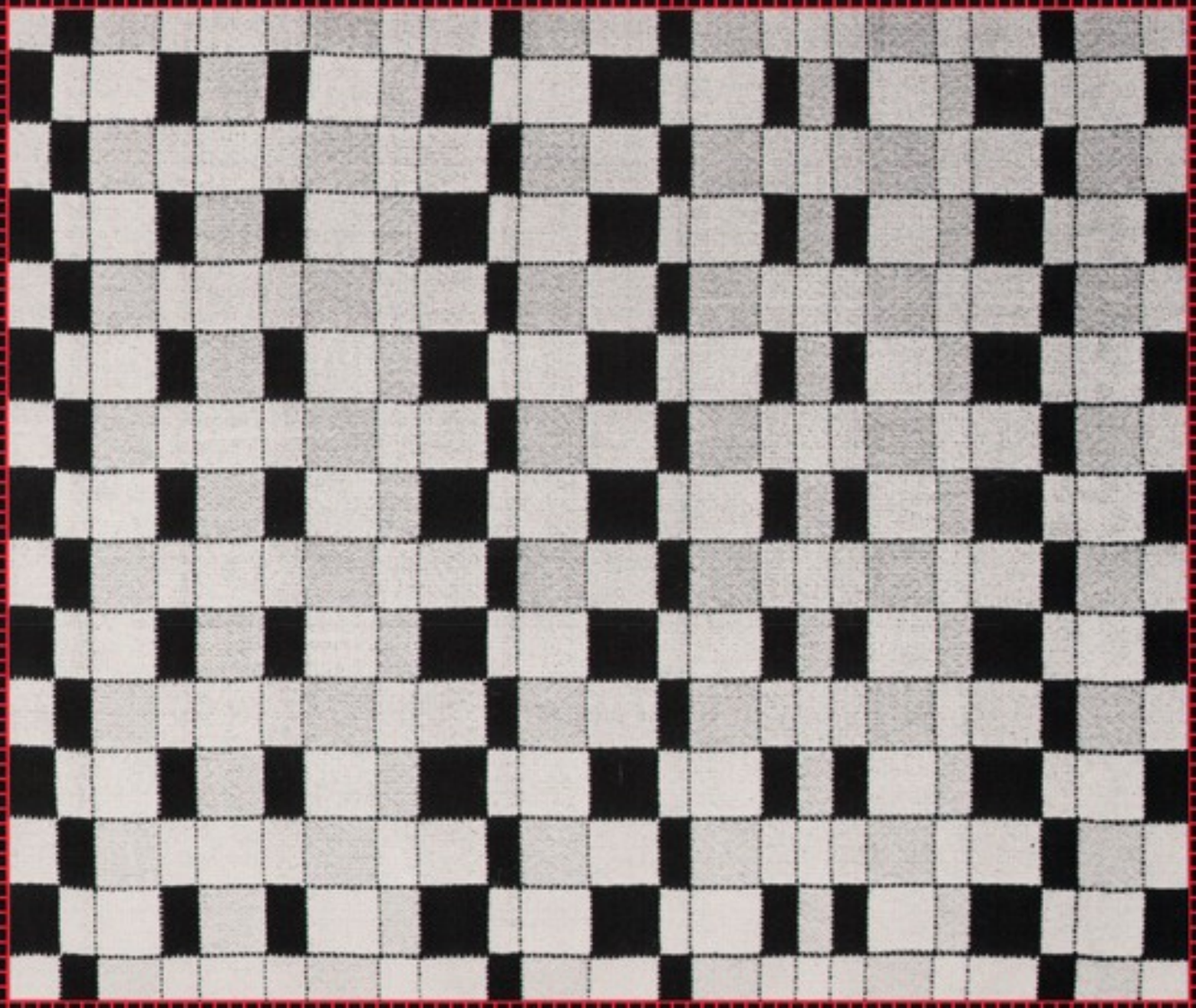
THRESHOLD



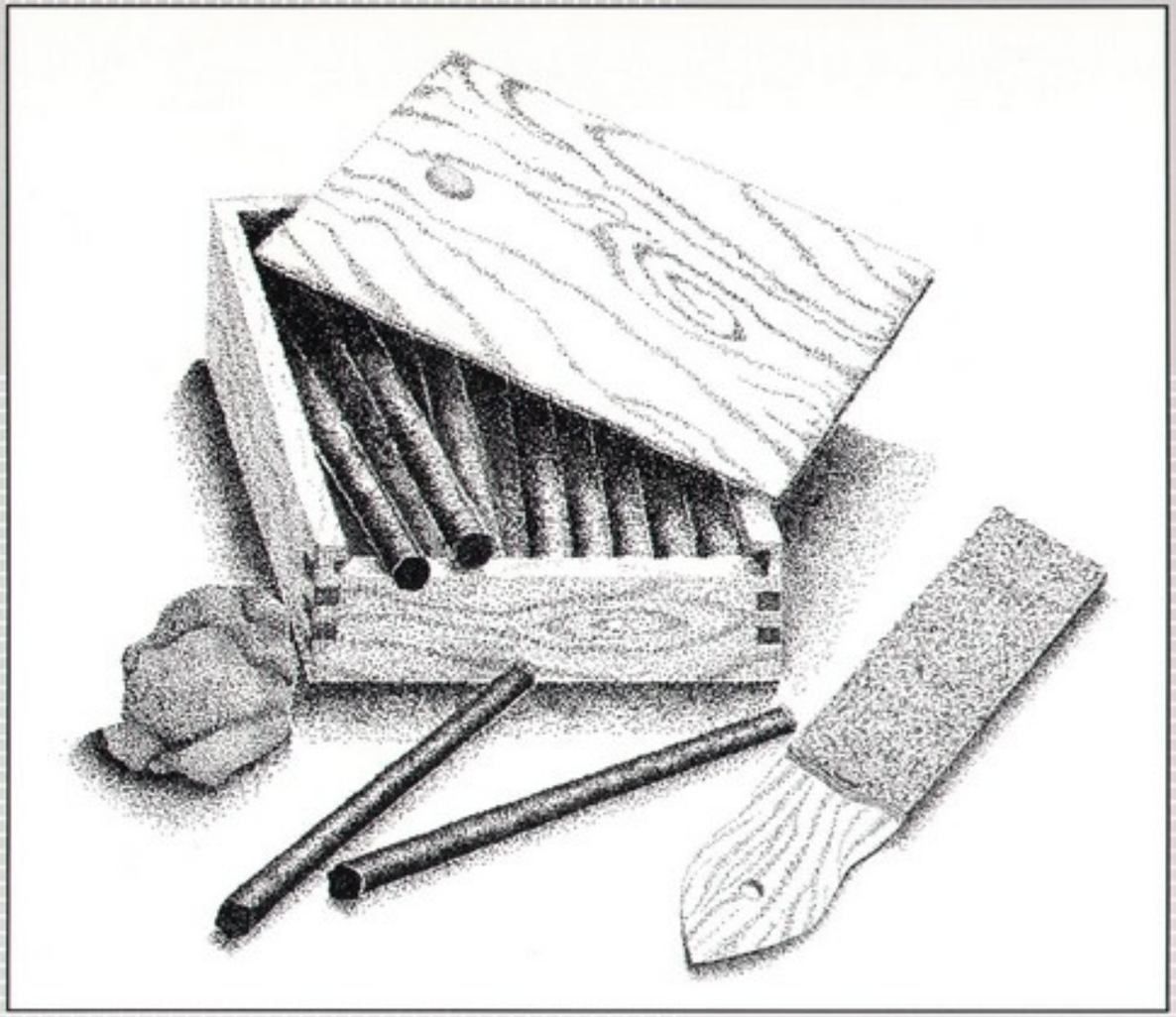


Illustration by Angelica Compton

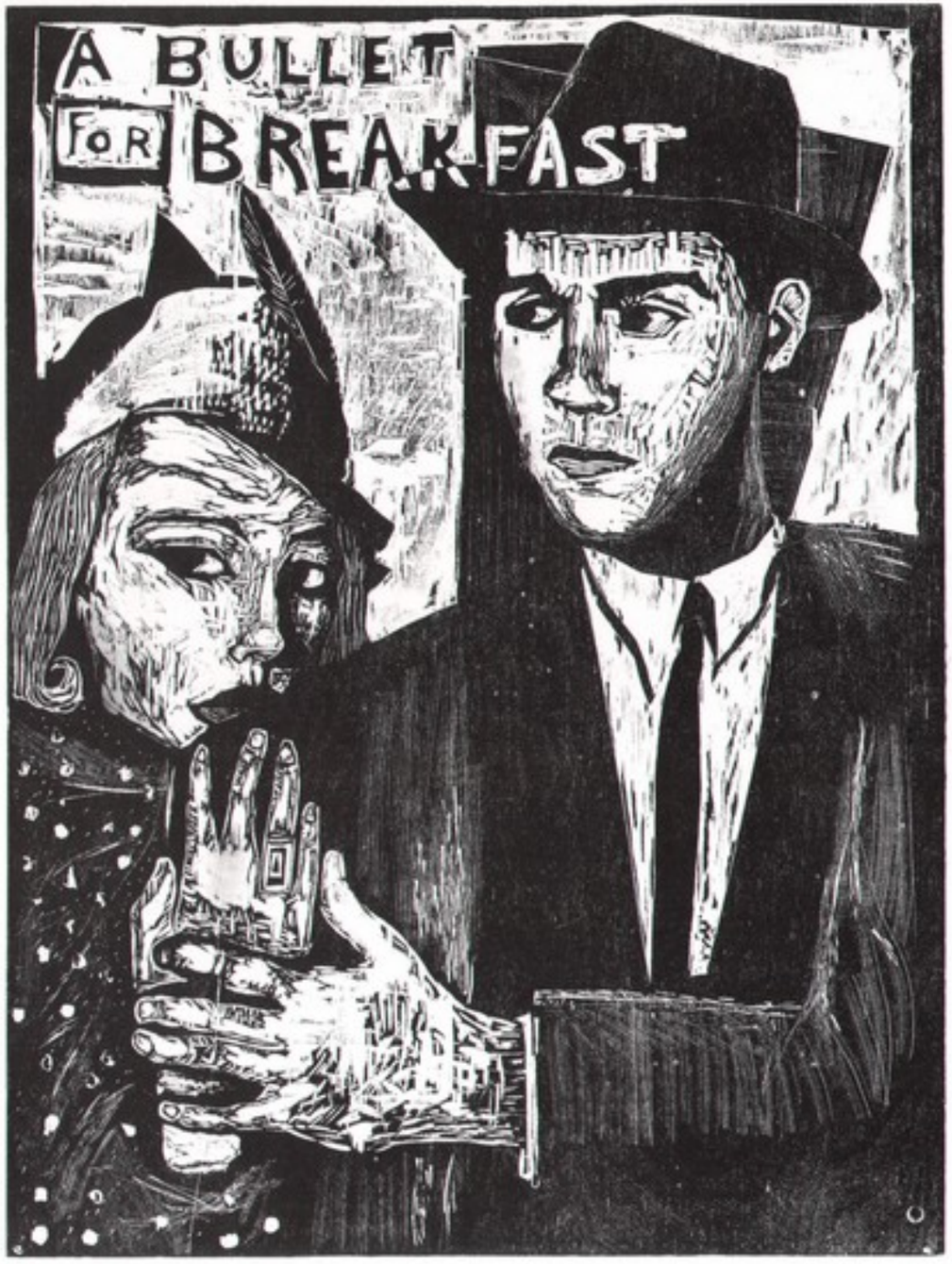
Cover: Weaving by Conné Graham

THRESHOLD

The creative arts magazine presents poems, stories, and works of art created by Yavapai College students.

The layout and design were produced by the graphic design and production classes.

The magazine was produced using Aldus PageMaker 5.0 and Adobe Photoshop 3.0 software on a Zenith 466xEh computer.



Print by Doug Weber

City Ritual

The pain is more piercing
in the deep black purple of the night
when the wind whips bitterly around every
corner
Undying sirens scream
and cry through the city like
hungry unsuckled babies

Bright neon lights
ignite the skyline's darkness with false hope
and gaiety
that only mask
emptiness
and shadow drunkards

Silent searching moments
shattered by the drowning drone of traffic
and alien souls
lost to the undertoe
and waves of dispassionate people

Sea of humanity,
crowds continue to crowd
into subways
and terminals
alone
alone

Jalynn Bacon

After the Fire

Here, among the ashes
I darken my hands
in the black flesh
of oak and pine,
as heat
winds in thick coils
around the fallen timbers.

Smoke rises sharp and painful
from the gutted frame
coating my face and hands
with soot,
and catches in the wind,
a writhing ghost.

My tears run warm
like city rain
that swept
the barren streets
but left no trace
upon that scar.

They mourn the dying phoenix
who chokes in the dust
of its own birth,
falls in black and burning cinders
to lie amongst piles of stone
and broken glass.

Shattered windows reflecting
a darkened sky.

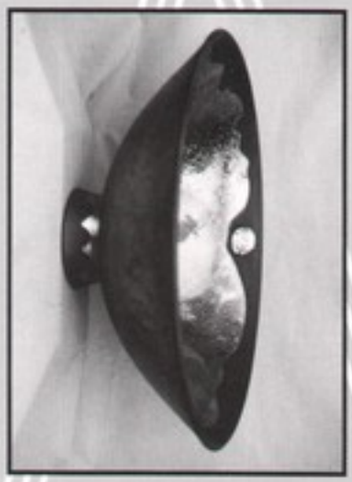
Photograph by Steve Hoover

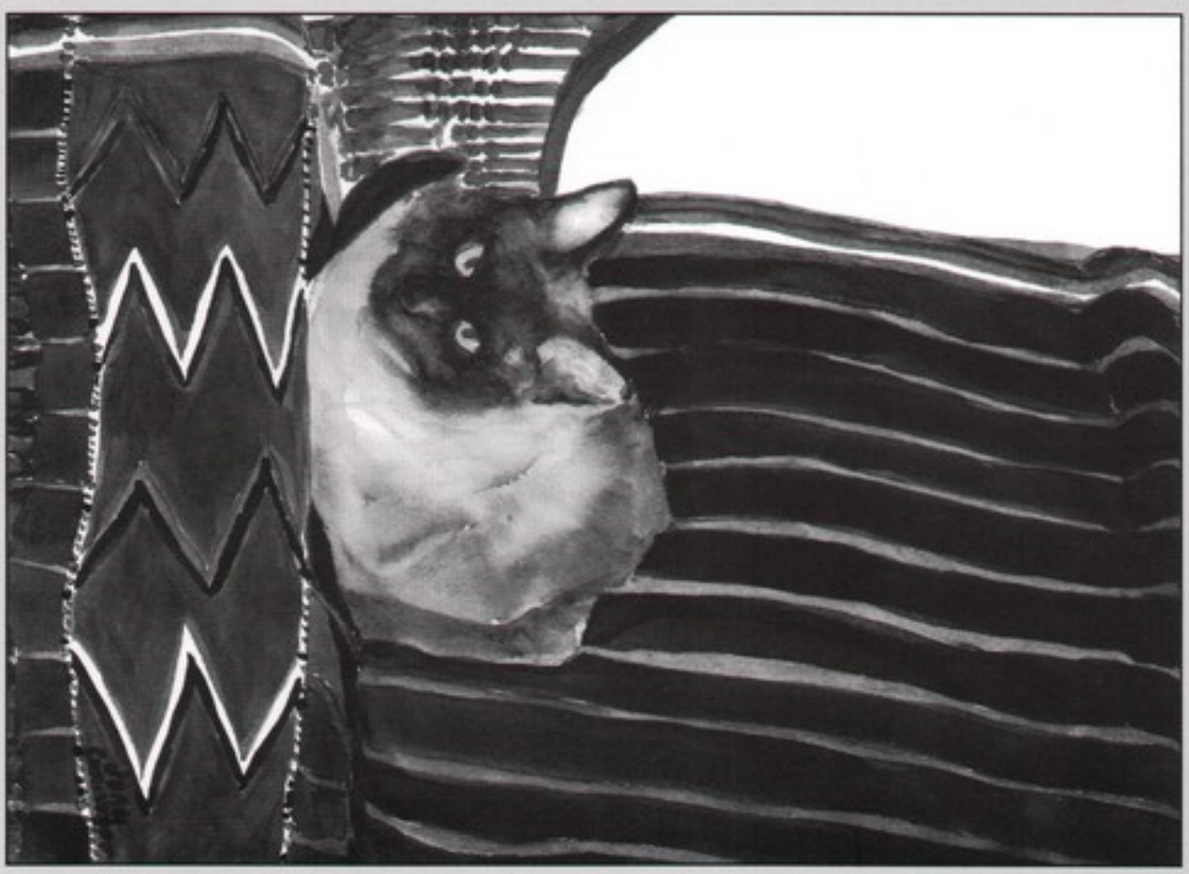
Photograph by Berni Crow

Renee Turner

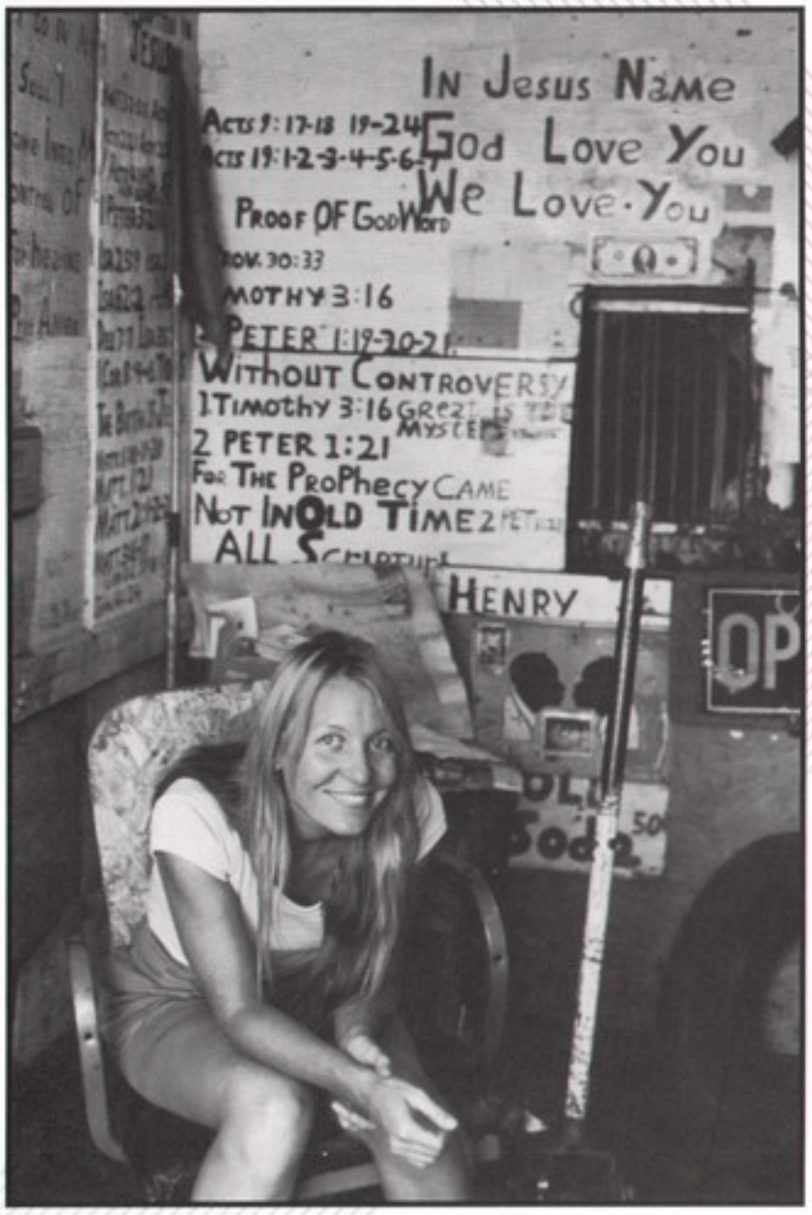
Photograph by Jay C. Robertson

Ceramics by Fred Schimer





Watercolor by Joan Christoff

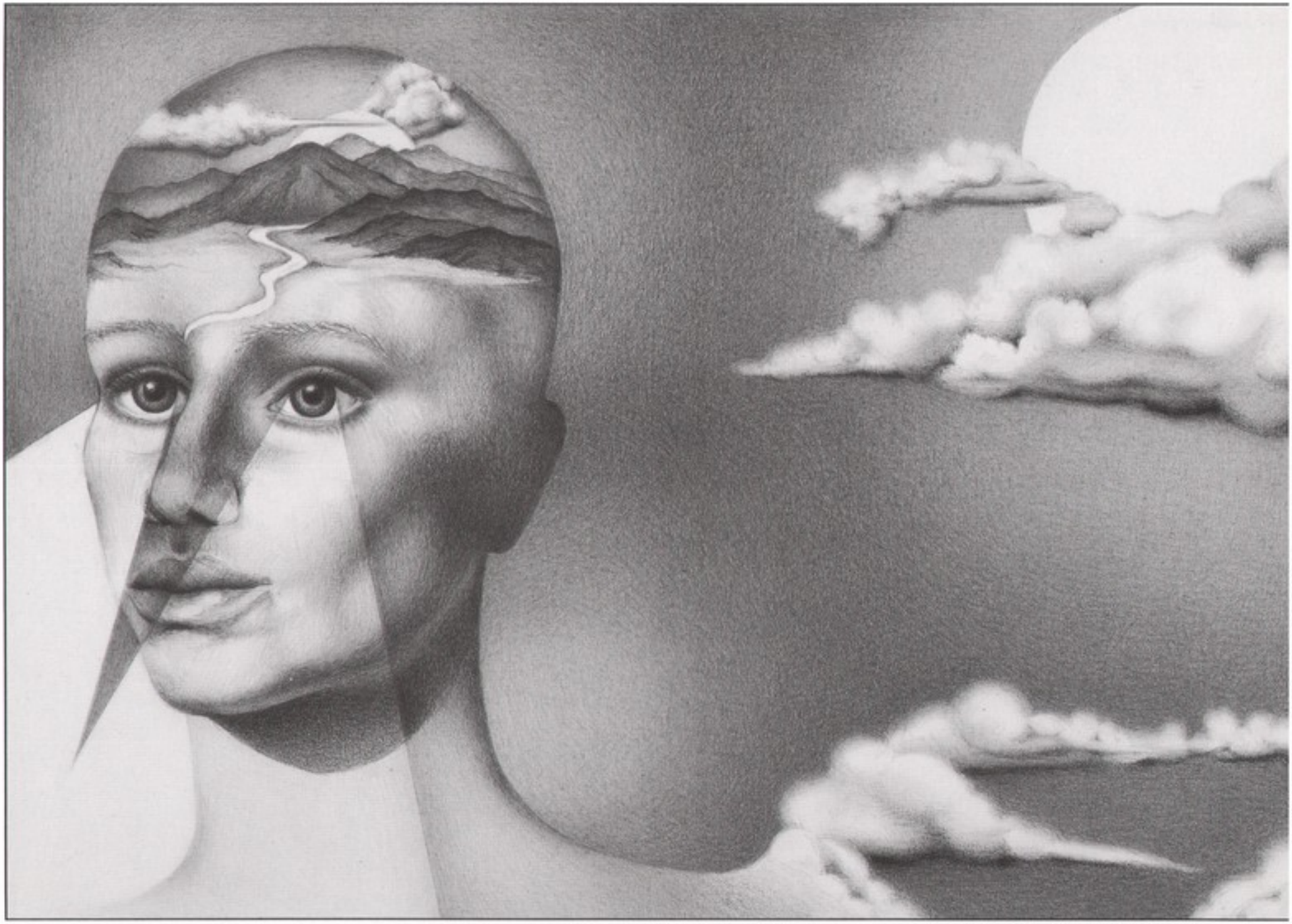


Photograph by Dolores Ashkar

Through the helpless sky
Streaks of light, thunderous rage
Plummeting to earth

Barbara J. Wegge

Painting by Carol Staples



Drawing by Karen Griffin Dumoch

The Enlightenment

...And its just like entering periwinkle doors
with brass handles,
yellow sun reflects the mark
of the burgundy leaf tree
Behind a fallen cherry
in the backward lane.

Lesley Glueck

Photograph by Dolores Ashkar

I Hate Fairies

Why the white powder?
What could it do for you that I couldn't

"Dust of fairies" you called it,
I hate fairies.

They killed you,
pushed you down a pit.

I tried to help,
but the pit was filled with hands,
hands stronger than mine,
pulling you down,
farther than I could reach.

I tried,
I wasn't strong enough,

I hate fairies.

Carrie McCoy

Photograph by Jacqueline Alvarez-Tingler

Watercolor by Alissa Kerr Harvey

Electric Fences

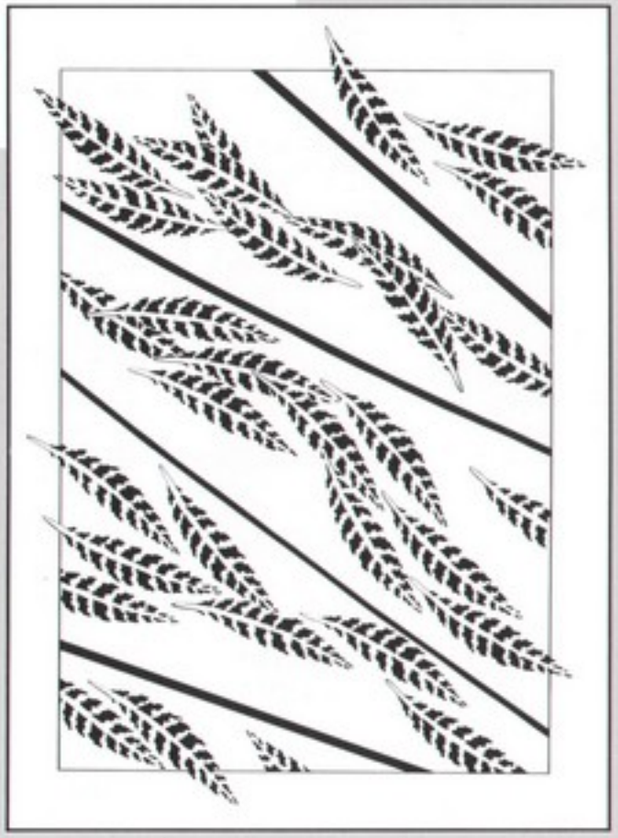
These shingles with painted trim
Bricks and stucco and unstained wood,
They turn our heads
From the pungent smell of yawning
Soil, rolling to its back in broken
sunlight

These silver boxes with gas caps,
Windshields, and headlights, and
Shiny hubcaps,
They shield our eyes
From sappy skeletons, unfolding
Leafy tendons for a sip
of pale blue coffee.

These windows with static and
Soap operas,
Volume and channels and remote
control
They hold us detached
From ninety-year-old neighbors
With butterscotch candies and
Pregnant apple trees

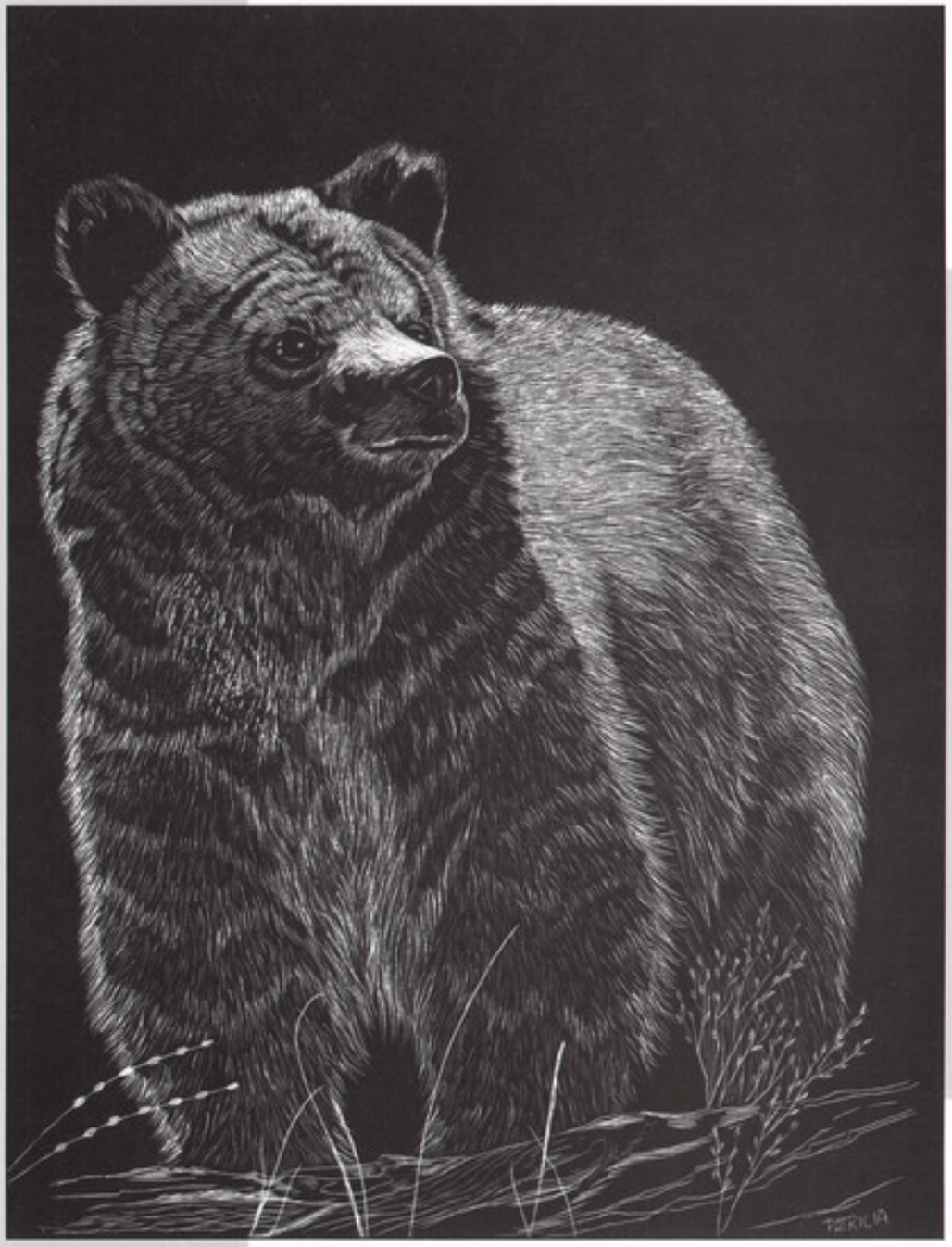
These prongs with strings
of rubber lightning,
Lamps, and alarm clocks and
microwaves
They smother us and scream,
Deep fry our backyards,
Make us forget our names.

Ashley Fine



Design by Renee Turner

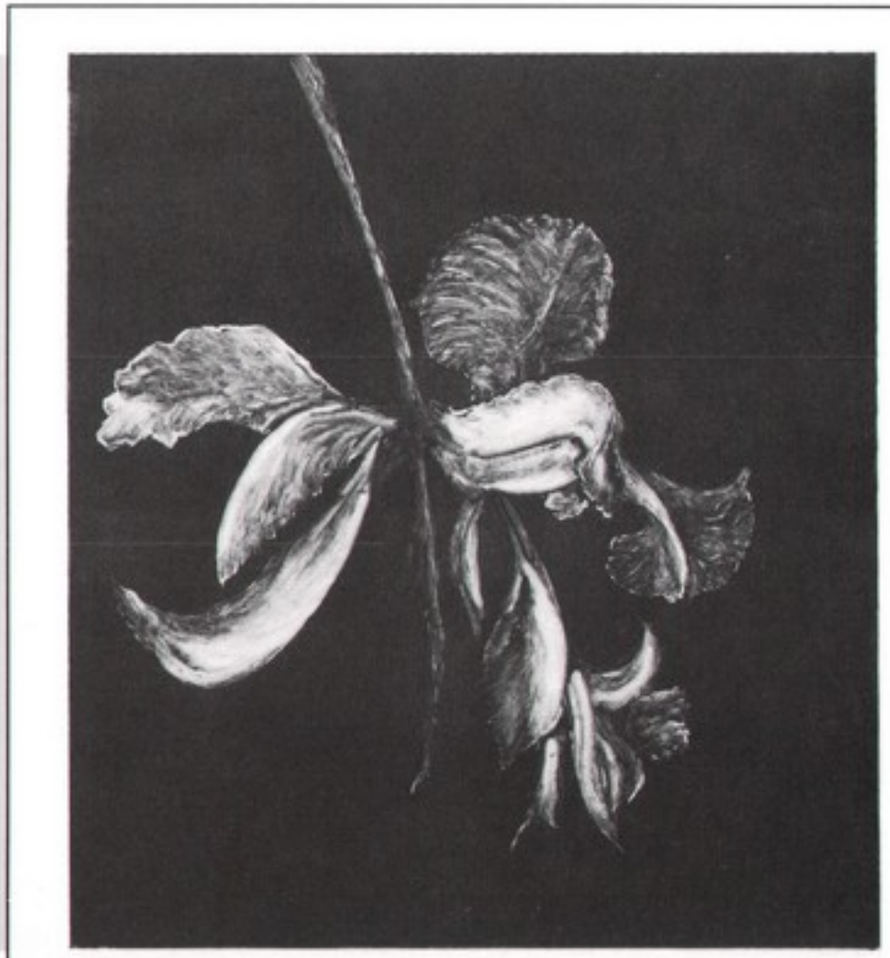
Scratchboard by Patricia Turner



Photograph by Jay C. Robertson

Furniture by Myrna Hutton

Monoprint by George Scrubb



A MEMOIR

Love and the White Horse

We began our retreat. The wounded who could not walk, and the dead who would never again walk, were carried in the lead. At the perimeter of the rice paddies, we stopped to consider our next move. A bad decision could mean we would never leave alive. But crossing the paddies would mean crossing one hundred yards in the open, in water and mud, under enemy fire. We quickly decided that since we were outnumbered, we would have to take to the ridge between the right and left sides of the inverted "Y" formed by the two branches of the stream. But to get up on that ridge, someone would have to stay to keep enemy riflemen from picking us off as we scrambled up through the bush. I knew he was going to stay. I looked at him and watched his smile tell me this was the hand he had drawn, the hand that he would play. "The finger writes..."

When I met him, I knew we were friends.

I knew him the moment I saw him, sitting three rows over from me the first day of our geometry class. He knew me too, and picked up his books and moved to a desk next to mine. We accepted our "ready-made" friendship, but never understood it. At our high school, we were not part of that group of students that was "in." Neither of us had the good looks of some of the guys who left girls swooning in their wake. We were not football or baseball or basketball heroes, we did not even try out for any of the teams. I was not interested, and he did not feel that he was good enough. Money was never a problem for us. It was the same as our social life—we had very little of it. We were friends beyond the hurts of high school and adolescence.

We had a common bond. Neither of us felt that we fit in. Both of us knew that some place existed for us, where we would fit, where we would find some purpose. We double-dated at the school dances, hung out at the city-sponsored teenage recreation hall, and shot terrible pool together. If he had a dollar, so did I. If his car was not running and mine was, we both had transportation. Once we were beaten up together on the way home by one of the local gangs.

We shared the good times, too. Drugs had yet to make inroads on our small town, so drinking beer was the current means of rebelling against the establishment. We were faithful to the rebellion. We dated girls who drank beer, and extended our weekend drinking bouts to overnighters when I bought a four-wheel-drive truck. We could now go where the sheriff could not find us. Eventually the drinking bouts lost their luster, and we started spending weekends at different pursuits. His was with the crowd he was trying to impress, while I took a rifle and pistol out into the wilderness.

He did not feel that he was special in any way. He could not see that he was special, and did not have to prove it. His fight was within himself, and I could only observe and hope that I might help sometime. I watched him try to be accepted by a group of other students who were almost as insecure as he was. He bought a new car, a flashy red convertible with a big, powerful engine. His

Print by Randall Platt

dad helped him arrange financing. The first night he had this new symbol of his importance, he wrecked it. The car was a total loss. Although no one was hurt, his self image took a real beating . He had no insurance, so his dad called in some favors. A friend who was an insurance agent wrote an insurance policy for the car, dating it the day before the wreck. He felt like a misfit, and for some reason I did too. I must have had sympathy pains.

One important weekend we went to see the movie *Lawrence of Arabia*. In one part of the film, the Arabs looted a train. The Arab chieftain was looking for "something honorable" to take home to his people, since the winter season was almost upon them. He found several bolts of embroidered cloth. "Ah, this is something of honor," he said. Then, realizing that all he had was some cloth, hardly honorable, he threw down the cloth and went on looking for "something of honor. " He found a clock, ran to Lawrence to show it to him, and discovered it was not working. He threw it down, too. In despair, he looked up and down the wreckage, seeing for the first time the railroad cars filled with Arabian horses. In one car, by himself, was a white horse. The stallion, of course, was something honorable that he could take back to his people. He had found it.

After that scene played, we both looked at each other. Neither of us said much as we drove home. The scene had spoken to my friend as much as it did to me. Finally, I said that it appeared that someone else felt like we did. He nodded, looking out through the windshield. I wondered what he was seeing. It was not too long before I found out.

The decision seemed spontaneous, but one of us must have spoken first, if only to say, "Yes, let's do it." We both knew we would go, almost as though we had no choice, almost as though at some other time we had agreed that we would make this trip. The anti-war movement with all its slogans seemed just so much empty, un-patriotic rhetoric. We both signed up, and that is how we eventually ended up in that particular little corner of Hell, that small strip of jungle and highlands in southeast Asia.

He seemed to find his own purpose in life in basic training. He worked at it as though he would be at the mercy of a legion of demons if he were not the very best of everything. He was more accomplished than I at the art of soldiering—except for shooting a rifle or pistol. I was a better marksman, but then I was the best in the whole division. He beat me hands down when it came to moving through jungle or bush or open ground. He could sit without moving for hours, then suddenly appear from behind a tree a hundred yards away. He could move like a ghost, and one day his capability to appear and disappear would save our lives.

No one who has not been there can understand what it was like in that land. I have read descriptions of the elephant grass that

Print by Randall Platt

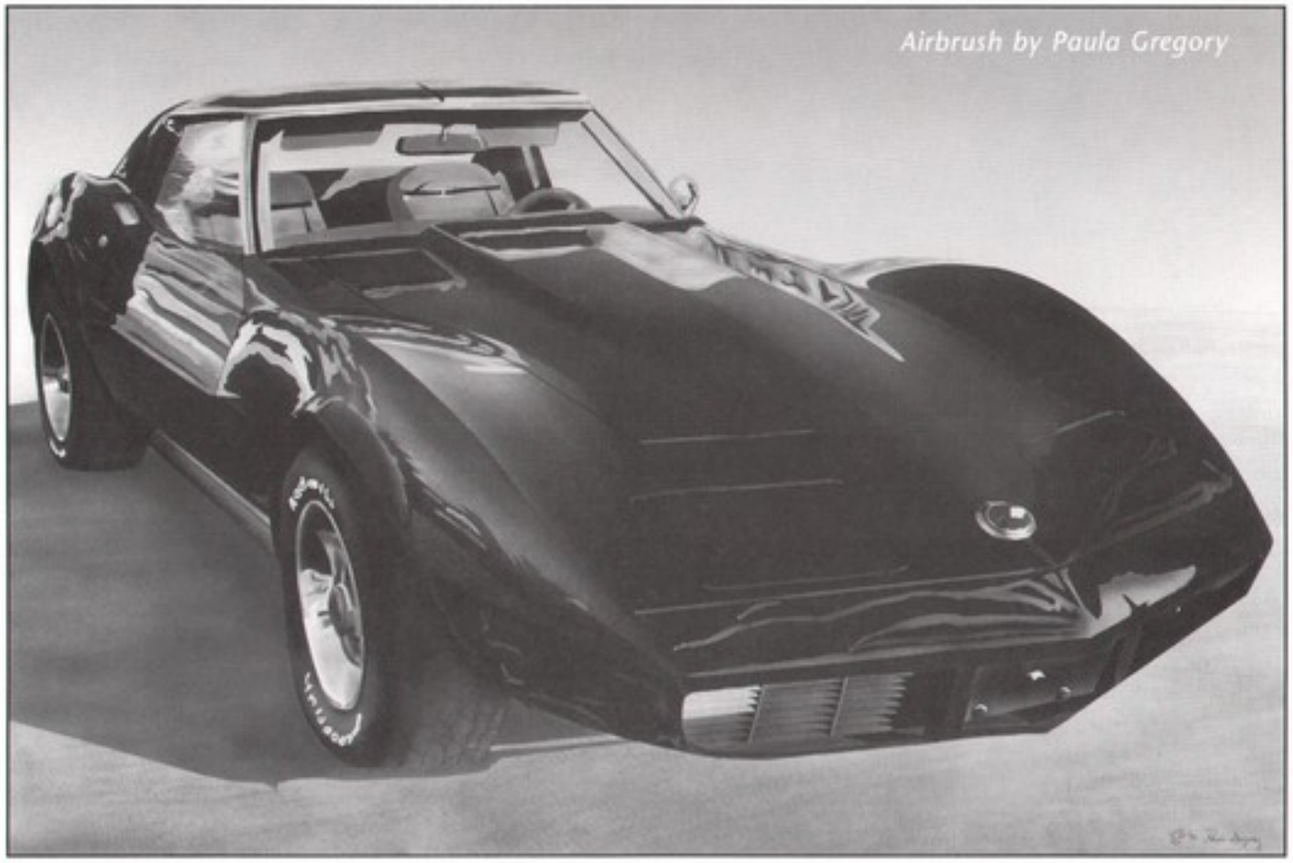
were eloquent and descriptive, yet fell far short of imparting to the reader the hostility of a plant that cuts everything, everywhere, anywhere, and always.

Our wet tobacco burned, not by normal combustion, but by will power. The axiom of the hot, wet jungle areas was that the whole body is always wet. Add scraped, abraded, infected, feverish, and infested with a thousand varieties of insects. It was as unusual to find a patch of healthy skin then as it is to find a sick patch of skin now. Men who would be considered too sick to walk in peacetime would end up running miles through the jungle because the enemy was chasing them and death, or worse, would be the result of their capture.

One of the common jokes was about the soldier who felt strange but could not say just what was wrong. He was sent to the rear to a

hospital, where he explained his problem to a medic. The medic checked him over, then told him it was simple, that right now he had nothing wrong with him, it was just that he was not sick. It had been such a long time since he had been well that he did not recognize the symptoms.

It is difficult to explain the relationship that can exist between men who share these conditions. We depended on each other for our lives. For the two of us, it was an expansion of our high school way of life. We shared everything from food to cigarettes and ammunition. There was not a man in our squad who would not do what he was required to do for the squad, even if it could get him killed. We could work so well as a team that we almost knew what everyone was thinking. We were seasoned and well trained, and our collective talents would be his undoing.



That portentous day we got a detailed briefing from our intelligence people. I knew that it was bad joss. I think he knew it too, for there was a fragility to his cheerful banter as we left. We were looking for regular troops who were supposed to be in the area, not just the locals who had arms, a limited amount of ammunition and a more limited amount of training. These guys would be tough. If we found them, trying to get out before being discovered would be difficult. If we got close without being detected, I was ordered to take out certain officers. I carried a Winchester bolt-action rifle with a telescopic sight for that purpose. Such a rifle is virtually useless in dense foliage, so I also had a .45 cal. Thompson sub-machine gun, and all the stick magazines I could carry. It was quite a load, but I would not have thought of letting someone else carry it. To be separated from my equipment if I needed it was unthinkable.

It was eerie as we made our way along the creek, each man moving as quietly as possible. Unlike the joke, everything felt wrong. We all had a sick feeling of apprehension. About three hundred yards ahead were some rice paddies where the stream forked, making an upside-down "Y." It was there that we found out what was wrong. Our intelligence was either bad or old, and we had walked right into the seasoned regulars that we were trying to find. Three of our men were killed and one was wounded with the first enemy fire. I saw my friend circling to the right and knew that he was trying to get to the wounded, or to the bodies if someone else already had picked up the

wounded. After seeing how horribly they mutilated the bodies, we always brought home our dead; there was no decision to make, we brought them back if we could.

We had to cross the open rice paddies and climb the ridge if we were to make it back alive. One by one the men moved out, then broke for a rocky spot in the middle of the paddies where there was cover. Then up the ridge. Only the two of us were left, and I had decided that I would stay with him. He looked at me and smiled as the bullets whistled around us. I had fired several magazines at heads and silhouettes when he said to me, and I can still hear his voice, "There's not enough honor here for us both." An eternity passed in that split second as I understood. "This is my white horse," he said. Our eyes locked, communicated, and he turned away. I ran as I have never run in my life. I felt bullets tear at the pouches I carried, pierce my plastic canteen, one nicked the side of my helmet. I heard him firing and knew he was still there as I started up the ridge.

The squad was gathered on top, several hundred yards above the rice paddy. As soon as I knew that my lungs were going to continue to function, I unslung the big Winchester rifle and dug in my pack for my ammunition. I was not going to leave until he got out.

I had a clear view of the paddy and a small area separated from it by foliage. That was where they would have to pass to get to him. I could see the canyon to the left, but not to the right, and it worried me. I wanted him out of there. I began to fire and they quickly realized that not only was the area within my range, but a target the size of an orange was large enough for me to hit. I could and I did.

For a long time I lay there on my belly, placing the dot in the scope, the death dot as we called it, on a torso, next on a head, always gently squeezing the light, crisp trigger. I had sixty rounds of ammunition for the Remington, but I knew it would not be enough. He would not come back with us. I felt the tears hot on my face and let them fall, knowing that no one would be able to tell them from the sweat and the dirt and the bugs. No one but us.

I was down to my last seven rounds of ammunition. "Lucky seven," I thought, hopefully. Suddenly there was firing from the right side of the canyon. I jumped up and ran forward, oblivious of the target I had become. Looking down on the paddy, I saw him move away from the right side of the canyon. He crouched and ran, and then I saw him take the hits. I knew he was gone. I stood there in the open, dazed and unable to move. I had done everything I could do, and it was not enough. Then someone was slapping my face, yelling, "C'mon, we gotta go!"

When I got home, I visited his girlfriend, as we had mutually agreed to do for each other if one of us did not make it. I had some of his personal things for her, and a sealed envelope. We talked about him and I felt the tightness in my chest, like someone had parked a truck there. She got up and came back with a pot of coffee and a bottle of good whiskey. A couple of Irish coffees took the starch out of my "stiff upper lip." Suddenly I was in tears, and she held and comforted me as I cried. I had no idea all those tears were inside me, but it felt good to let them out. My foolish male ego had thought that I would be the strong one for her tears, that I would comfort her.

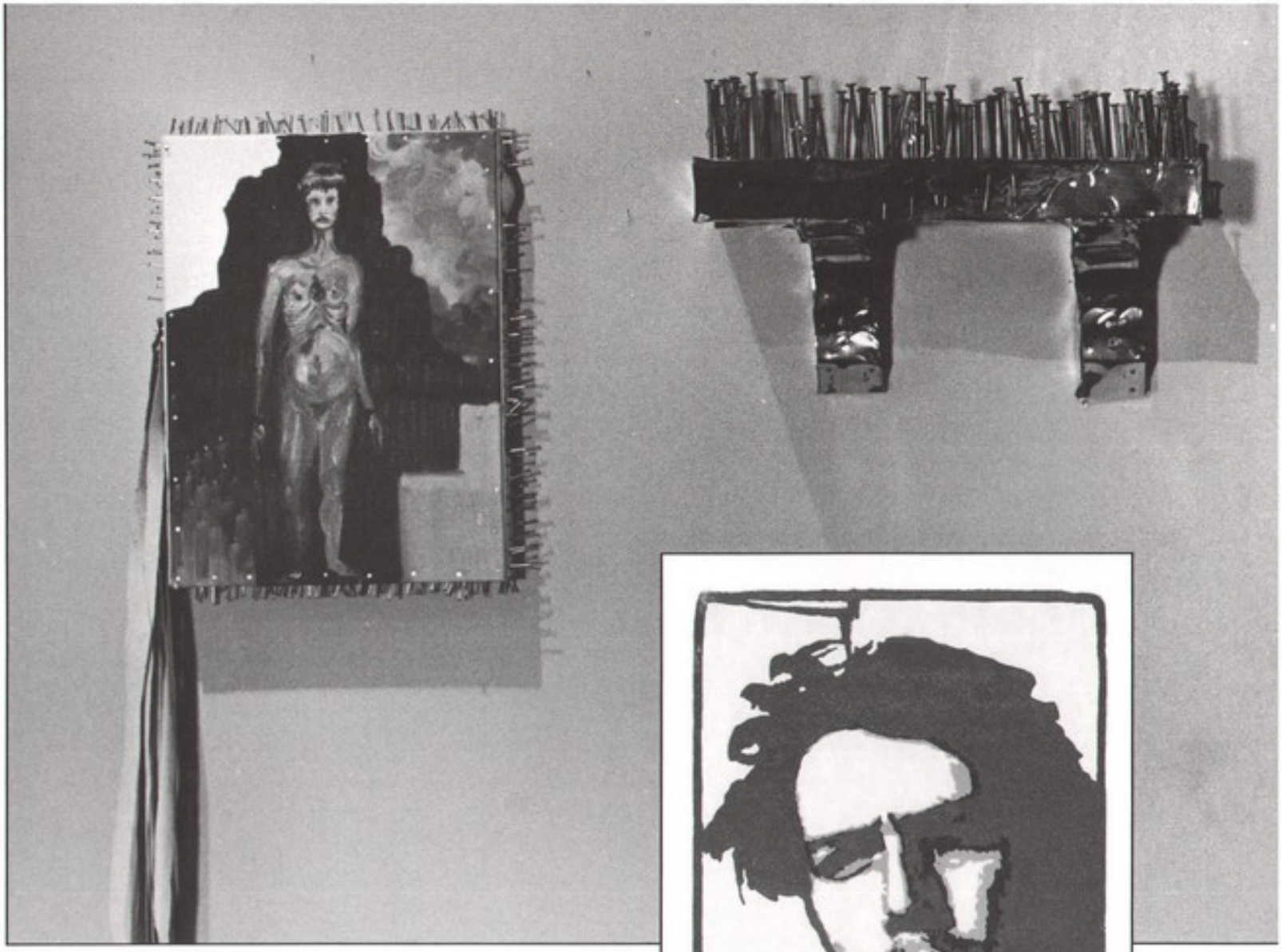
"You loved him," she said, after my tears had ceased to flow. I squirmed a bit, thinking of him, knowing I did, thinking that guys do not love guys, wondering if she thought we were gay or something. "No," she said, evidently knowing what I was thinking. "You just loved him. And that's beautiful."

I thought we were friends. We were far more than that.

I loved him.

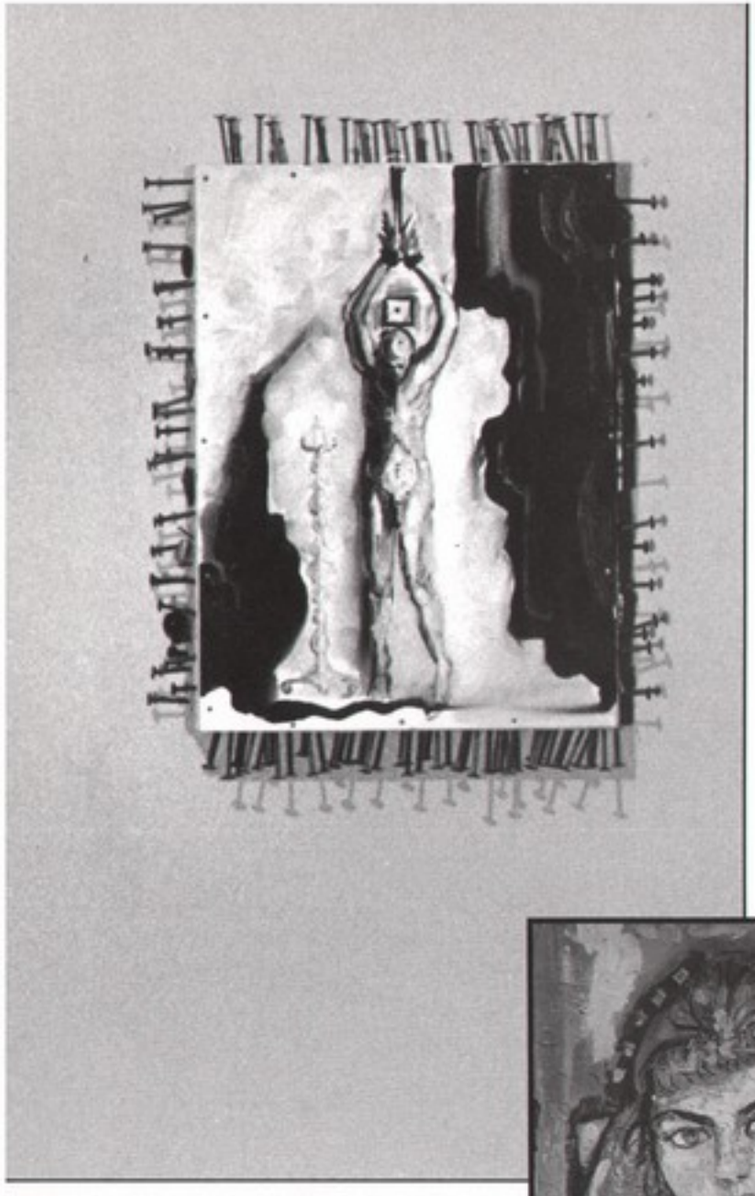
Warner Dixon

Sculpture by Norm MacDonald



Installation by Helen Padilla

Print by Randall Platt



Print by Randall Platt

Painting by Doug Weber

Watercolor by Carol Staples

Print by Randall Platt

Another day things went wrong

My dad
cut down the grass
including my flower garden
with a hand whip.

The mums
grew all summer
never to bloom.

Now
parts of stems
and buds
lie
on the ground

I said things
I shouldn't

I thought about my actions
realizing
he isn't whole
as he once was.

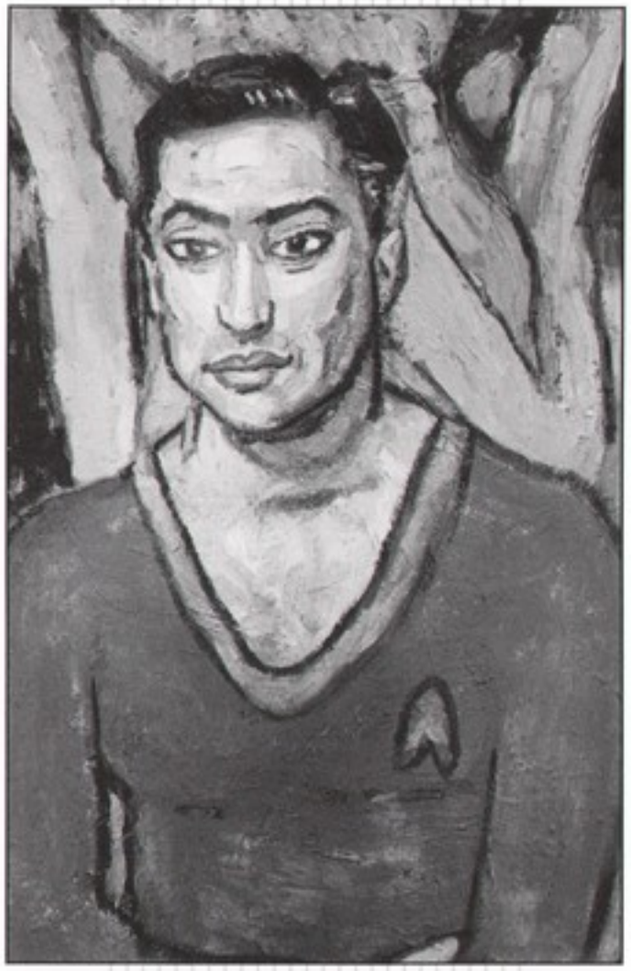
Disappointed
I try to hide my feelings.

A loving hug
from Mom
helped me realize
my father
really has it

Alzheimer's

Becky Farr

Painting by Doug Weber



The meeting of someone new—
The questions of the eyes,
Are you he? Could it be?
And if you are, will I run?
To you? Or away?

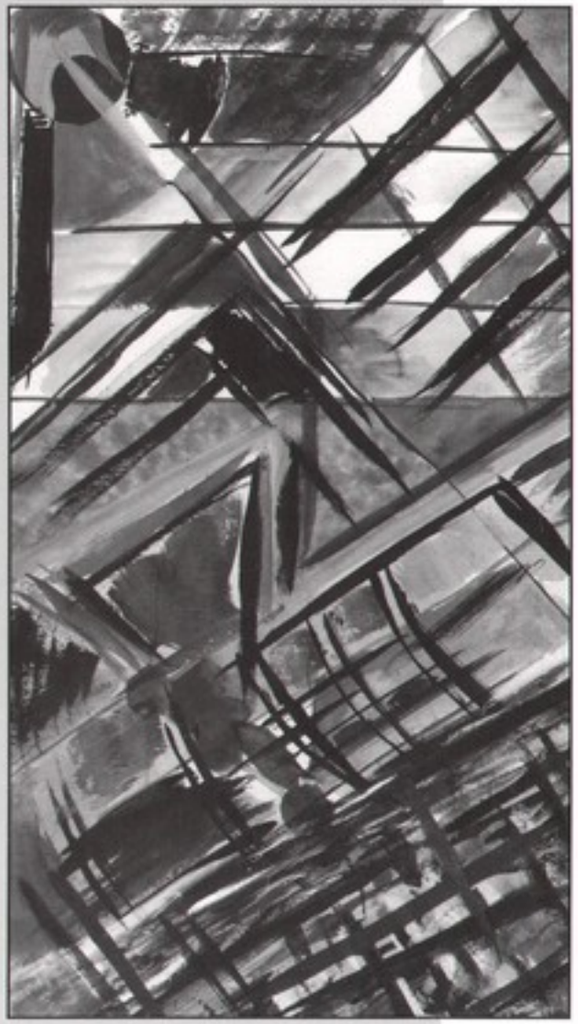
And my soul's cries for love
Are lost in the rustle of the sheets.

Katy O Day

Painting by Doug Weber

Photograph By Steve Hoover

Painting By Jake Clark



Jewelry By Ken Brungraber

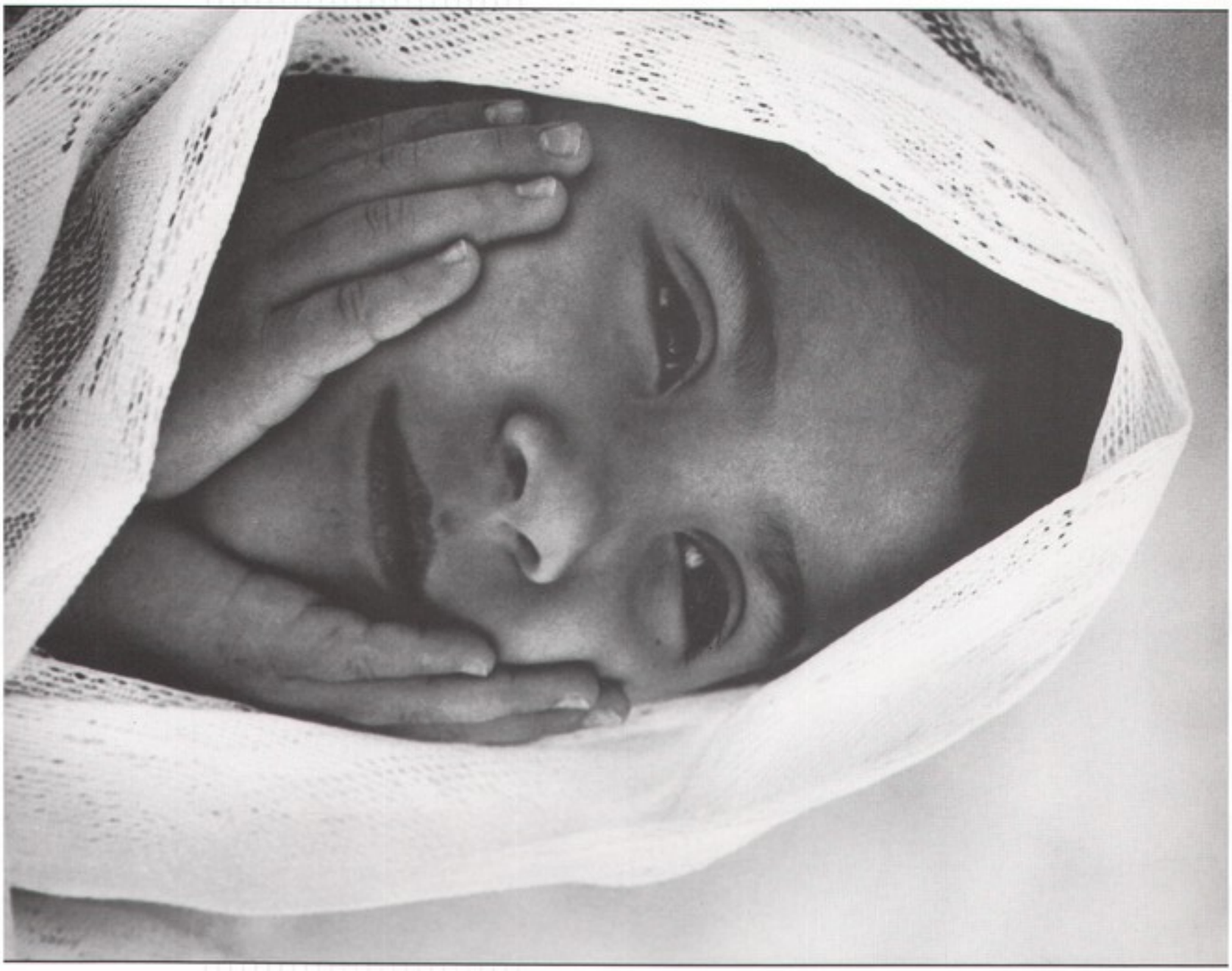
Coupon Queen

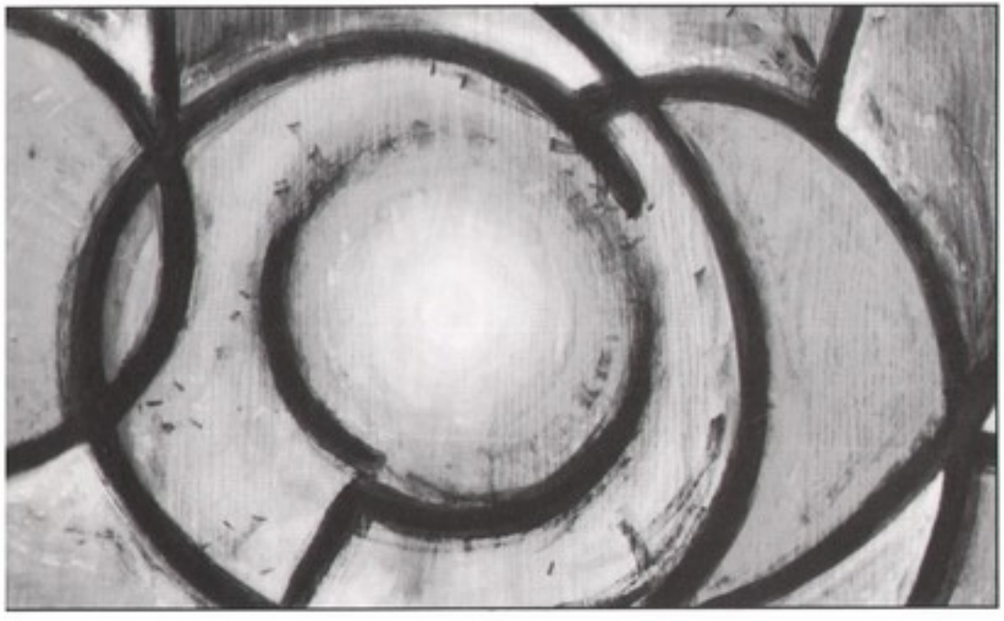
There, there she is
Crowned in all the majesty of a Domestic Princess
Clinging children and scraps of paper dripping royally in her wake
As she enters the market—
Up one aisle, down the next
Shuffling, sorting, rearranging her clipped pieces of pride:
Buy two get one free, mail in rebate, 1/2 off this, 20¢ off that,
A clipping addiction
Presenting them like an award at the check out
While the impatient line looks on.
Finally she emerges victorious, with laden cart
and 65¢ richer than
the peasant that follows.

Pamela Kraan

Photograph By J. Bethanis

Photograph by Jacqueline Alvarez-Tingler





Painting by Roy Wasson Valle

Painting by Roy Wasson Valle

Painting by Roy Wasson Valle

Watercolor by Joan Christoff

Building Bridges

I can almost see
The future
Gliding out before me
Vines and branches
Twining together,
A fragile bridge
Leading the way over.

A giant hand
Reaches down, shakes it,
An earthquake of assurances—
The comfort of continuity
Tumbles into
A heap of rotting garbage.

I dig
Through this mess
Of flies and
Maggot-infested hopes
To salvage something,
To build again.

Megan Gardner

Photograph by John F. Baker

Design by Eric Larson

Photograph by John F. Baker

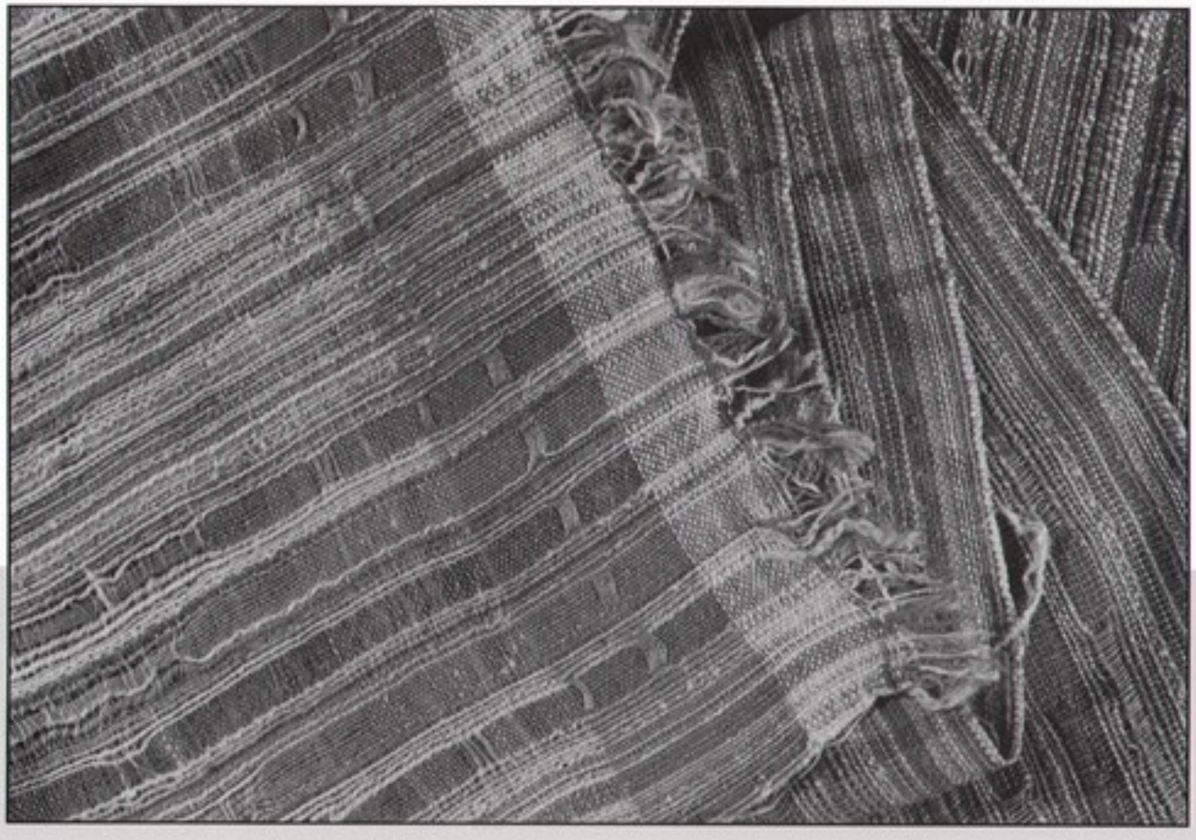
Finding Balance

Me and you
We lie upon either
side of a
wi de
w i d e
r i f t
We lie to each other
honestly and to ourselves
about each other to feel OK
We lie saying
that we understand
the other
when we don't
Me chirping
my French to your German
or Venusian to Martian
Female to Male
Doing our best
but missing so much
The ever-present gap widening
And now and then narrowing
down to just the
space between
B my words and yours d
a Cozy-like e
l c
a n
Then w h a m o ! A p a r t again!
Back to me being me and you being you
and struggling once again
over the
r i f t

Illustration by Jean Rossmar

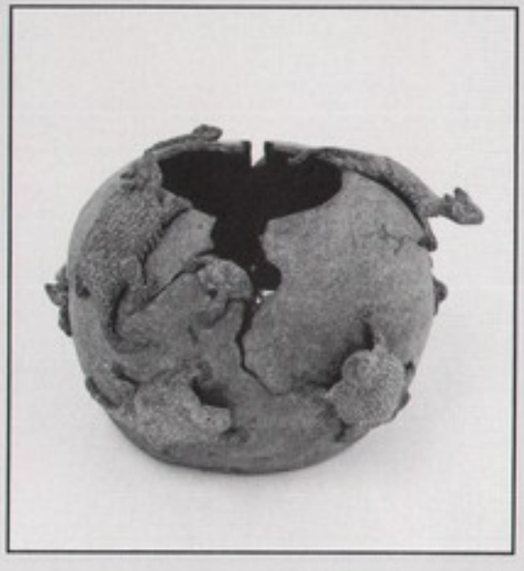
A. Hiles

Watercolor by Joan Christoff



Weaving by Annemarie Bellem

Ceramics by Red Levangie



The Irresistible Urge

She spied the male,
The lovely sight of whom
Caused her body
To ache with desire.

She signaled him
By waving flowers bright
Before his face.
Yet he remained unmoved,

Becoming bold,
She gently slapped his paunch.
Like stone he stood,
While in her fire raged.

More brazen still,
She tweaked his genitals.
Yet still unmoved
He would not yet respond.

A desperate move:
She clasped his curly head
And pulled him down,
His head between her legs.

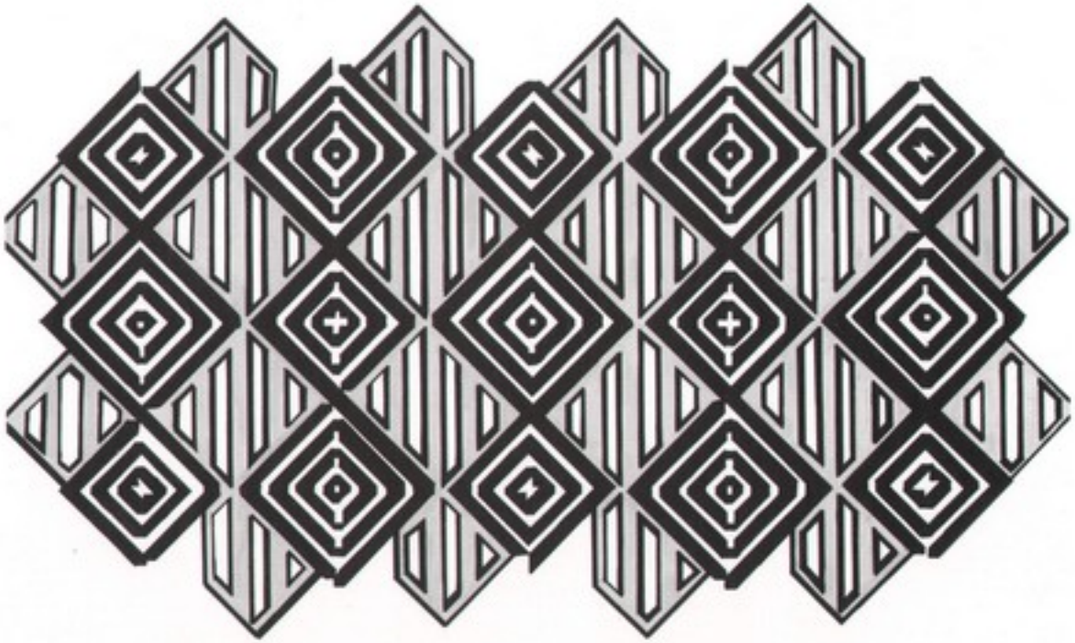
Her final act,
She let her urine flow
Upon his head.
It made a brilliant glow.

He stirred at last,
No longer could resist.
This mating rite
Would drive them both near
mad.

But in the end,
The female would give
birth.
A splendid babe,
A proud Orangutan.

Louise Ramsdell

Illustration by Jean Rossmar



Design by Russell Howard

Photograph by Jeremy Harris

Oh, Locust

Oh, Locust, I hear your music of life.
Like my life, your tune is
sometimes unhurried and gentle,
sometimes, deafening
as the constant roar of a thunderous waterfall.
Like you, oh, Locust, I'm going nowhere,
yet making a lot of noise.
You are happy making your sounds of summer,
but I have not made any melodies; I slumber.
Oh, Locust, your time is short, the summer gone:
grasp life, Locust, and sing until the end.
Don't let your life go uncelebrated.
Make your mark, sing your song;
continue your symphony till the finale.

Richard Bohlier

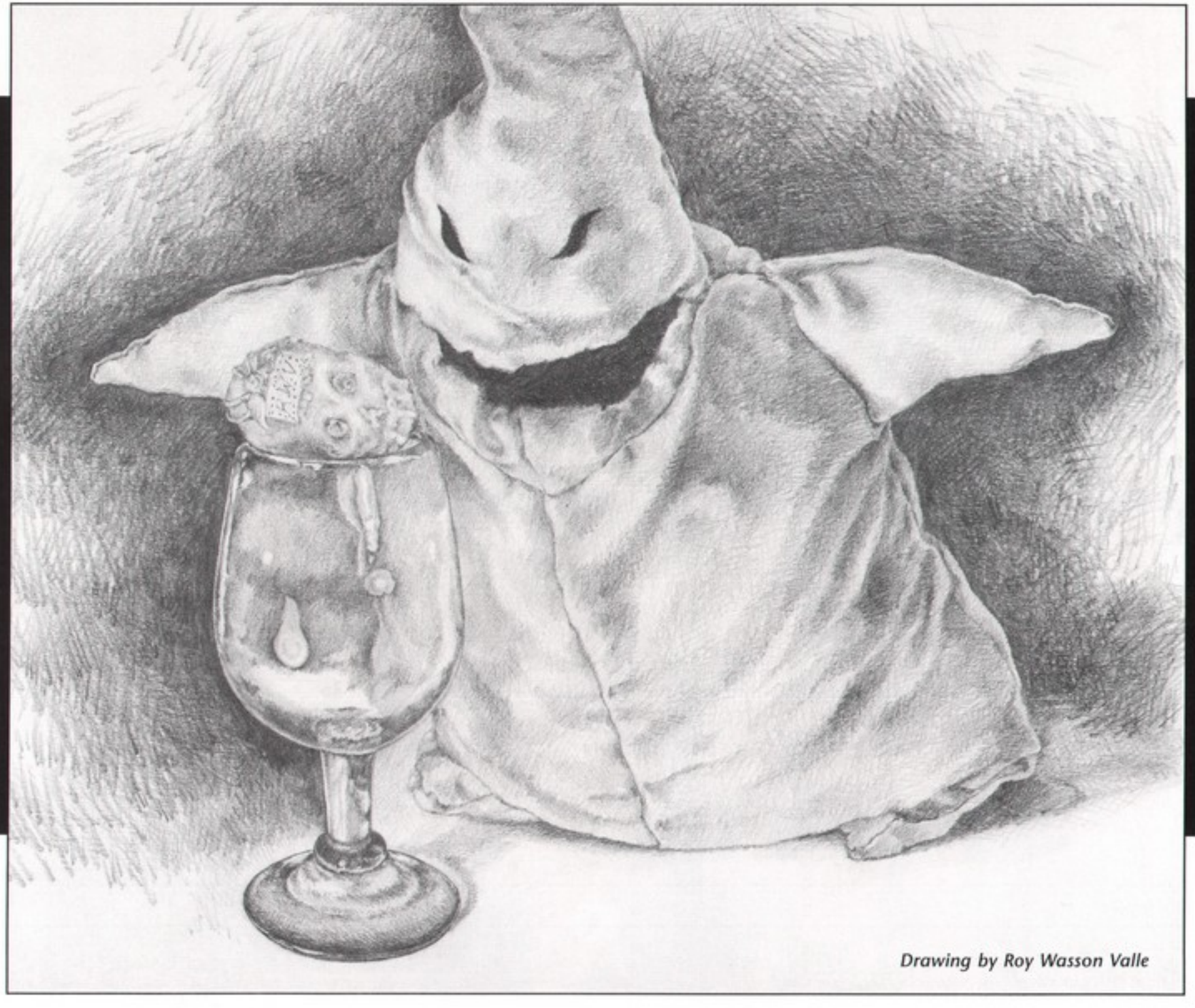
¿No Tienes Lástima?

Painting by Carol Staples

I can picture my mother sitting alone in her bedroom betrayed and abandoned. She whispers..."*Mamá, mamá*, why did you die?" A young child left behind to be tormented and abused...she cries into the night..."*Papá, papá*, please don't. *Soy su niña.*" She is alone, no one knows, it is her secret, it is her shame. Her disgrace lies heavy upon her tiny shoulders; she can not tell anyone of what goes on in the big empty house at night. But what no one knows, is no secret...*¿Papá, papá no tienes lástima?*" She is tossed from one household to another, mistreated and returned to the cold and empty house of her *papá*. The Church turns its face, has no sympathy for the lonely child. She whispers softly, "*Ayuda mé Diosito Santo, ayuda mé...por favor,*" hoping someone else beckons to her to help clean, scrub, cook, and change soiled diapers. A child of eight whose only dolls are the crying babies of demanding aunts and neighbors.

Photograph by Delores Ashkar

Jacqueline Alvarez-Tingler



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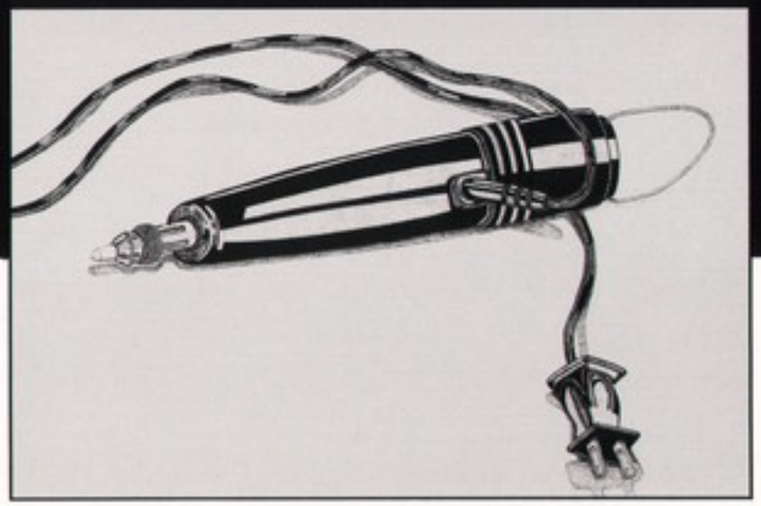

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