THRESHOLD

A CREATIVE ARTS MAGAZINE

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Cover Art:

Relief Sculpture by Ben Owens

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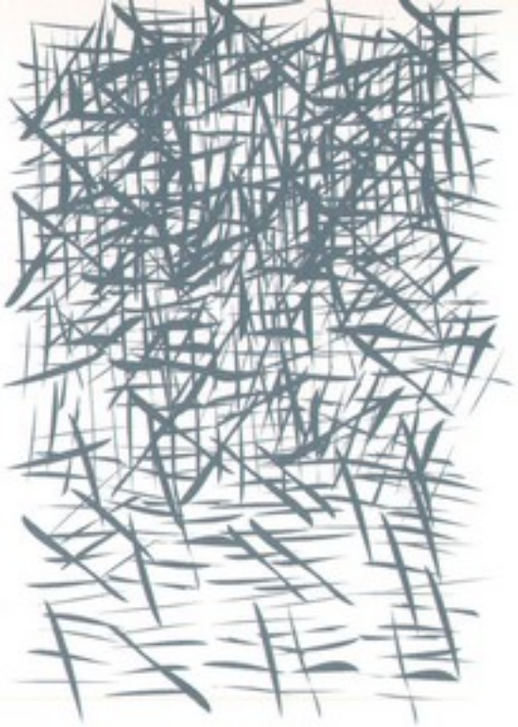

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The creative arts magazine presents poems, stories, and works of

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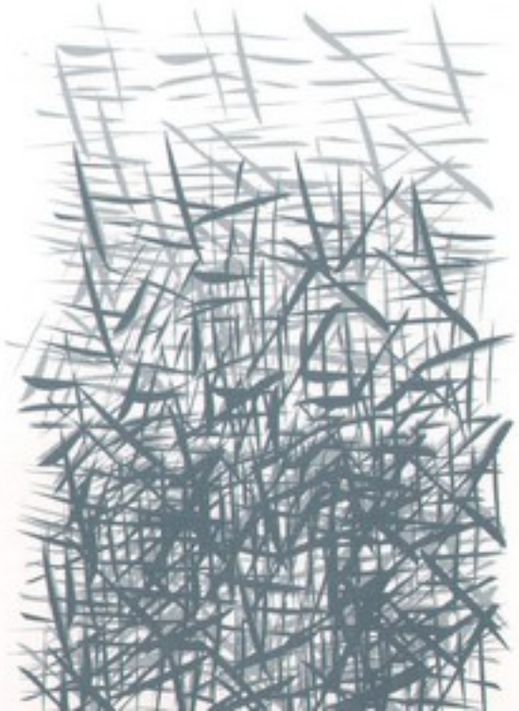


TEARS

by Barbara Angier

Tears

jiggled
loose

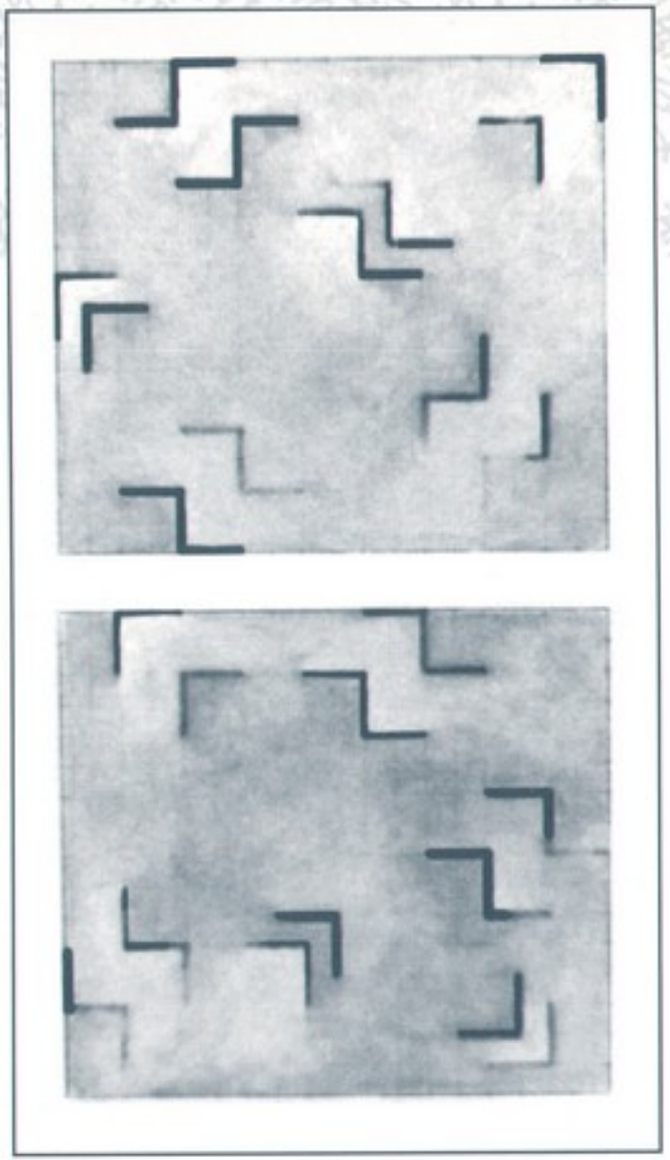
from
years
of
silence

tumble

down
my
face

pausing

at
the
wrinkles



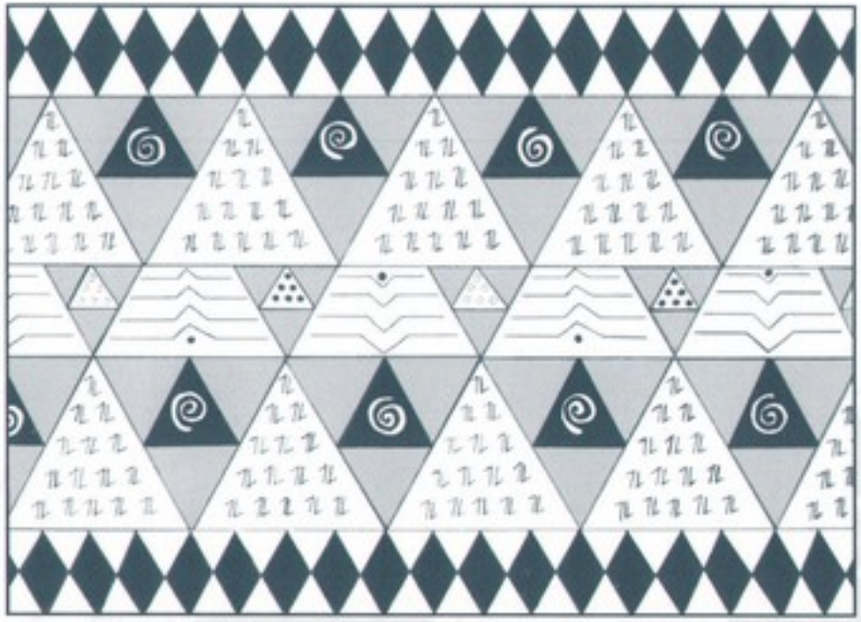
Rhythm Design by Gerald Walters

A Measure of TIME

Lulled by the squeak and sway of the rocking chair, I stare at trees in black silhouette along a skyline reddened with sunset. A chain hangs from my hand, lightly taps my leg. I lift up the worn gold watch attached to it, press on the stem. On the face are old fashioned Roman numerals. The second hand marks time as memories cascade across my mind.

A child, so proud, I look up to see Dad on El Mokkaddam, his Arabian stallion, cowboy booted, bat-wing chaps, western shirt and Stetson. Bigger than John Wayne. One leg thrown casually over the silver-mounted saddle, he smiles down at me. From the pocket in his Levis he pulls out the watch, opens it to see if we still have time before the parade forms. There are a few minutes left for my adoration and hero worship. I stand tall and look around, hope everyone notices he belongs to me.

Well after midnight, a single light in the house still burns. Resentment builds inside. I have stayed out past my teenage deadline. Guilt from my broken promise rocks me, shame searches for justification. Sullen, striding through the door, pushing it closed hard, I am the chip on my own shoulder. Dad rises from the chair, his silent command brings my eyes to look into his. I see his disappointment, relief that I am home. From his vest he lifts the watch, reads the lateness of the hour, then returns the timepiece safely into place. Without words his love touches me. I look away. He leaves the room with heavy tread, down the hall I hear the bedroom door close.



Rhythm Design by Karen Winton

An old man, sitting sunken in the chair, hair snow white, Dad hasn't shaved for several days. White stubble masks the face the years have changed, and eyes once sharp now stare vacantly. How could the years have taken wing and with them all my opportunity? I could have done more, had I tried. He raises his head, and from eyes red and rheumy, recognition struggles to regain a mind once bright as sunrise on a mountain. He reaches out his hand; taking it I feel the sting of tears, grateful that he knows me, even if for a few precious minutes. We make small talk, the recognition fades, returns. His hand goes to the leather watch-pocket I made for him since pants-makers no longer do. A final time he consults the Roman numerals, then closes the watch, unfastens the chain. Clasped in hands worn and thickened by work and age, he holds it out to me.

The sunset and the afterglow have gone. Carefully, I close the watch with reverence, savoring its warmth in my hand.

by Warner Dixon

The Old Man

by Warner Dixon

The old man, toothless and wizened, squatted before the shouting South Vietnamese captain we called Roo, so scared a wet stain spread in the crotch of his pants and made a puddle on the ground. Roo, who we named after the baby kangaroo in the Pooh stories, seemed convinced the old man was Viet Cong, and that he knew the location of a stash of weapons and food. The old man pled with him, then with us. "No VC," he told us again and again. He shook his head and looked alternately from us to Roo, who suddenly cuffed him hard on the ear.

I wasn't sure what to do. Our squad was there only as advisors, supposed to train the South Vietnamese Army to fight a "modern war." We had been trying, unsuccessfully, to train this captain and his men for a month. We were certain the South Vietnamese Army officers badly over-inflated their reports of contact with Charlie, reporting body counts higher than the actual number of kills, and inflating the number of captured weapons. These unverified reports, and the favoritism their government showed the units reporting the fewest South Vietnamese casualties, determined how U.S. aid was passed out. Captain Roo, like many of their officers, always had luxuries--a staff car, liquor and cigarettes--even hand-tailored uniforms--and women to admire them. I wondered how much of the material from the U. S. was traded by these officers on the black market.

Roo's blow knocked the old man on his side. He dragged his legs up through the mud of his own urine into a fetal position, and started to whimper. Roo yelled and kicked him in the ribs. When the kick produced no results, Roo grabbed the old man by the front of his blouse and hauled him to his feet. As soon as Roo let him go, the man slumped into a kneeling position.

I wondered why he was so quiet, and what Roo had told him. Just as I was about to ask, Roo drew his pistol, cocked it, and pressed the muzzle against the old man's head. I yelled for him to stop, and I reached forward to grab the pistol.

Everything skidded into slow motion. I could see my hand moving forward, toward Roo's pistol, as if it had severed diplomatic relations with my brain and was intent on its own course of action. Roo looked up, meeting my challenge with all his pride and authority. I realized I had made a mistake. He glared contemptuously, raised the muzzle of his lethal, American-made pistol. For a moment I was afraid he was going to point it at me. The details of the pistol stood out clearly--the worn edges, the machining marks on the slide, and the front sight, which I thought I would see between my own and Roo's dark, angry eyes. My arm returned to my side like a wayward child come home, guilty of some mischief. I froze.

Roo seemed to weigh his options and pointed the pistol back at the old man. Then abruptly, he holstered it. I started to remind him about the agreements our governments made about the way to treat civilians, the Geneva Convention, and how to question suspected Viet Cong. He stood there, feet planted wide, hands on his hips, and gave me and Sgt. Kenelley the most contemptuous look I had seen since I faced a drill sergeant in basic training.

"You Americans are fools," he yelled. "You know *nothing* about my country--or how these people must be treated! Your methods of interrogation are *useless*! You know nothing about how to *fight*!" His face was flushed, and was turning a deeper shade of red by the minute. "You are all *fools*!" he spat at us.

I thought the confrontation had ended with this tirade. Then suddenly, as if words could not express his frustration, Roo drew his pistol again, placed it against the old man's head, and pulled the trigger. Roo stood over the body and glared at us, the .45 huge in his small hand. His men were standing behind him, my squad behind me. If someone makes a quick move, I thought, we're going to have a firefight with the South Vietnamese Army.

Slowly Captain Roo holstered the pistol. He made a crisp, military about-face. Then, standing erect, his small chest pushed out, Roo strutted off to his car.

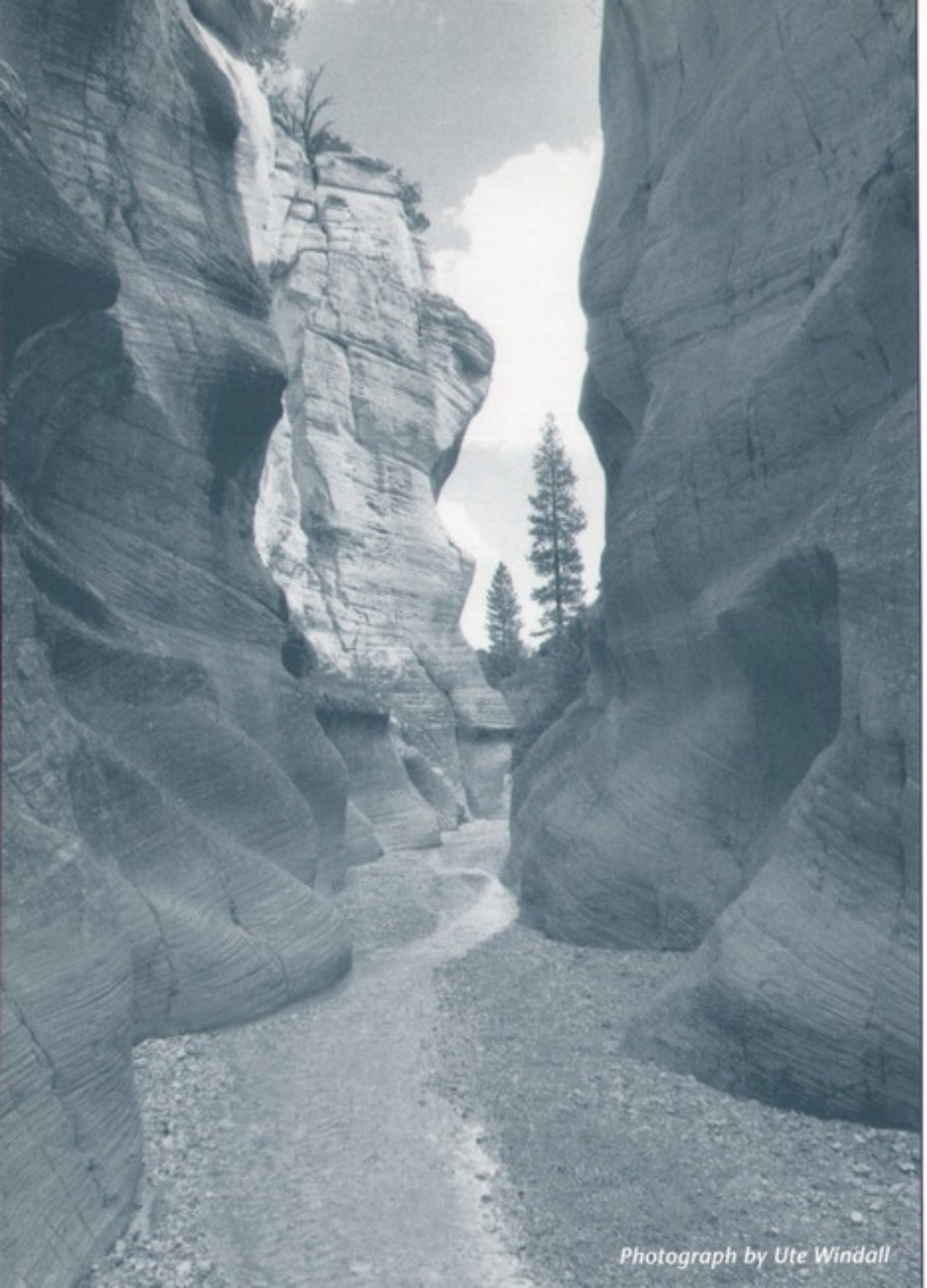
Ceramic Pot by Susie Moll

Just for the Articles

by Matt Fredlake

I stand in line, leafing through Rolling Stone
The Beastie Boys body movin' on the cover
in my mind
in the aisles of the airport terminal
in forms of blue and black suits
ugly ties
Starbuck's coffee in environment safe cups.
Inside the book stand
Quiet.
Elder gentlemen toward the ends of their business era
Solitaire
unrushed
stare into glossy pages of magazine
cleavage
s h i ft i n g to glance around nervously,
a d j
u s t their manhood
dare the clerk-who-hates-her-job to demand payment for their lust.
Poor lost boys,
Felled from beauty,
Unable to preserve attention once received.
I pity these sad consumers
Hidden behind love's slick illusions.
I smile, false, of course
Then join the flow
Body dodging to my plane

Photograph by Steve Hoover



Photograph by Ute Windall

I Know Why

by Kathy D. Hellman

"To the woman He said... your desire and craving shall be for your husband...." (Genesis 3:16)

I.

"Forget the hiking trail. Let's head up the mountain,"
you say, as you press into a thicket.

I comply without a word,
push my way through manzanita that closes over my head.
The earth hides so I feel my way one foot at a time.

Glimpses of your blue-denimed legs or
army rucksack mark your progress
and I hear you hacking at the brush
with a stick you found.
I lean into the incline as
branches entangle my bootlaces,
threatening to send me tumbling backward.

Thorns tear their own trail through my flesh,
my shins strike unyielding branches of scrub oak.
With the crook of my right arm shielding my face
I bulldoze onward, outside the wake of your enthusiasm
slapping branches in my face.

And I wonder —
Why do I follow you?
Like a captive Greek trailing a Roman.

You are solid, practical, strong
meeting reality head on.
Your strength is your glory-
A challenge to your muscles to conquer this mountain.
Your success is your beauty–
Sweat dripping down your face marks your endurance.
You are a soldier on a mission to conquer.
That is all, it is enough.

I am a mist chasing clouds,
dreaming of places of peace and beauty.
Glory lies out beyond–
Winter sun washing my face,
the mountains flying and dipping through shifting blues.
Beauty lies inside my soul–
In feet that stop to look when I am only eyes,
in ears that listen from the inside out.
I am a poet on a quest.
That is never all, it is never enough.

And I wonder why I follow you,
how long I will follow you, and where next time?

II.

On top the mountain
Greece makes up to Rome.

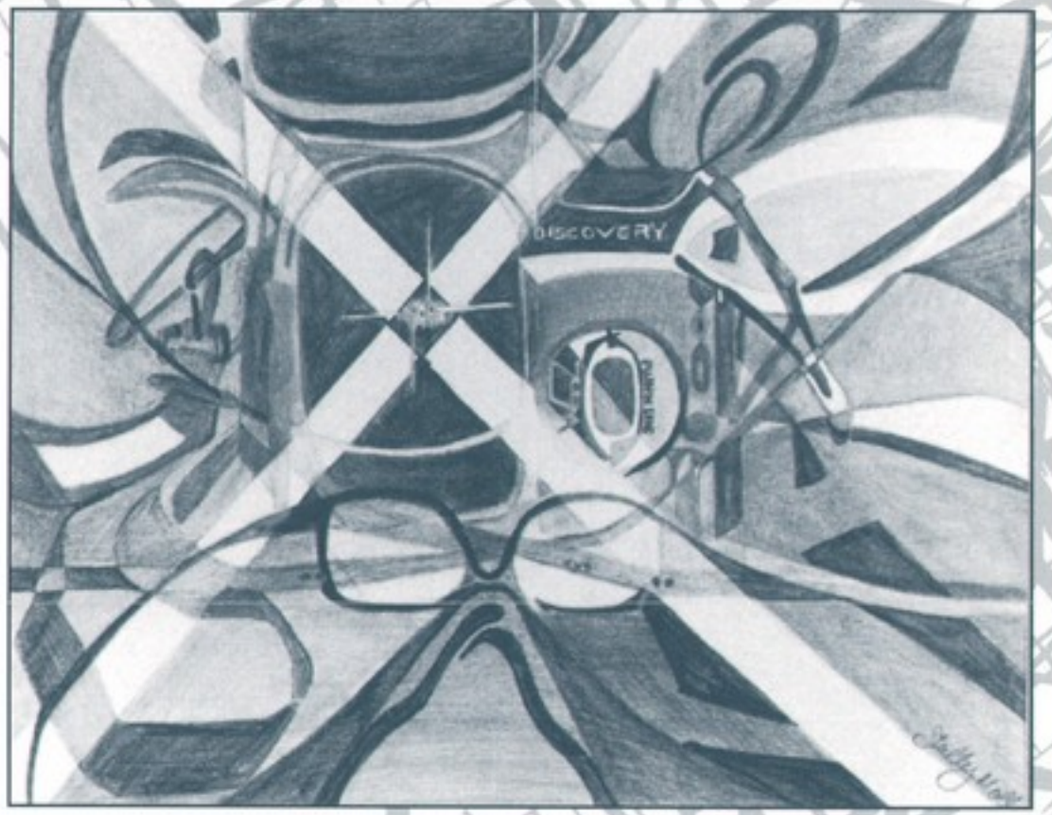
We sit outside forest shadows
overlooking muted shades of Oak Creek Canyon.
Lingering in the view out there,
glorying in our strength that brought us here.

When we kiss, I remember why I follow you.
When we love, I swear I would follow you anywhere.
You are an aqueduct carrying water to this fertile ground
In my view, through your arches. There is no one but you.

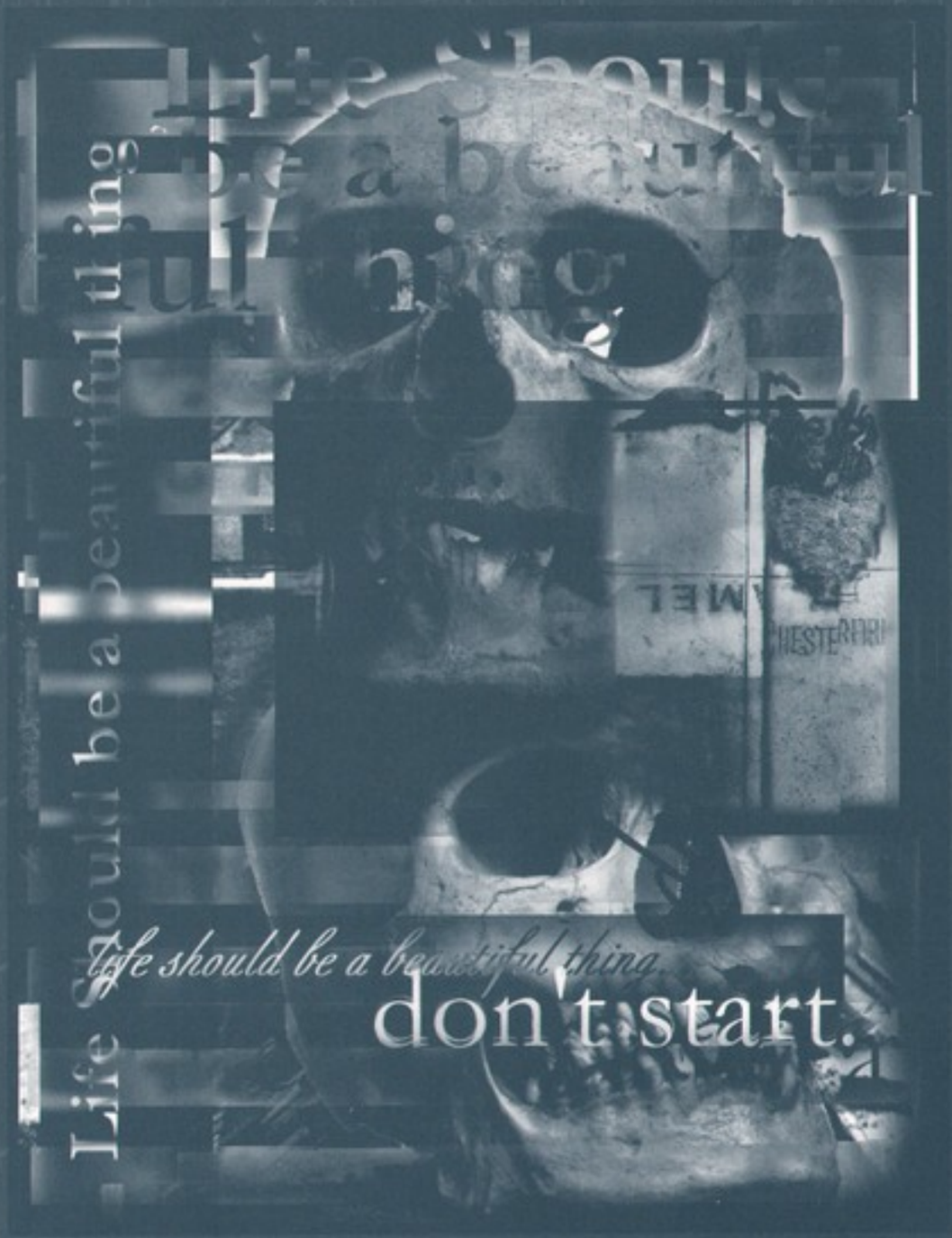
Our flesh lies pale, flaccid in the afternoon sun,
puckered with goose bumps from mountain air.
Not much to look at after all these years, but
there is a passion in married love,
pure and promising as pine boughs against blue sky.

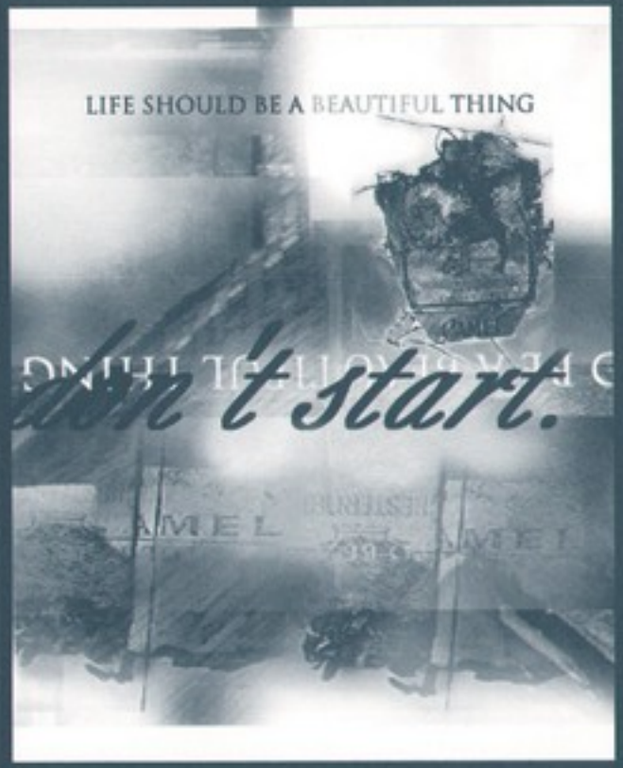
I feel the satisfaction of loving you–
the goldness of heaven above and earth beneath,
the pleasure of God's sovereign wisdom and creative beauty.
Intensely.

And I know why I follow you.

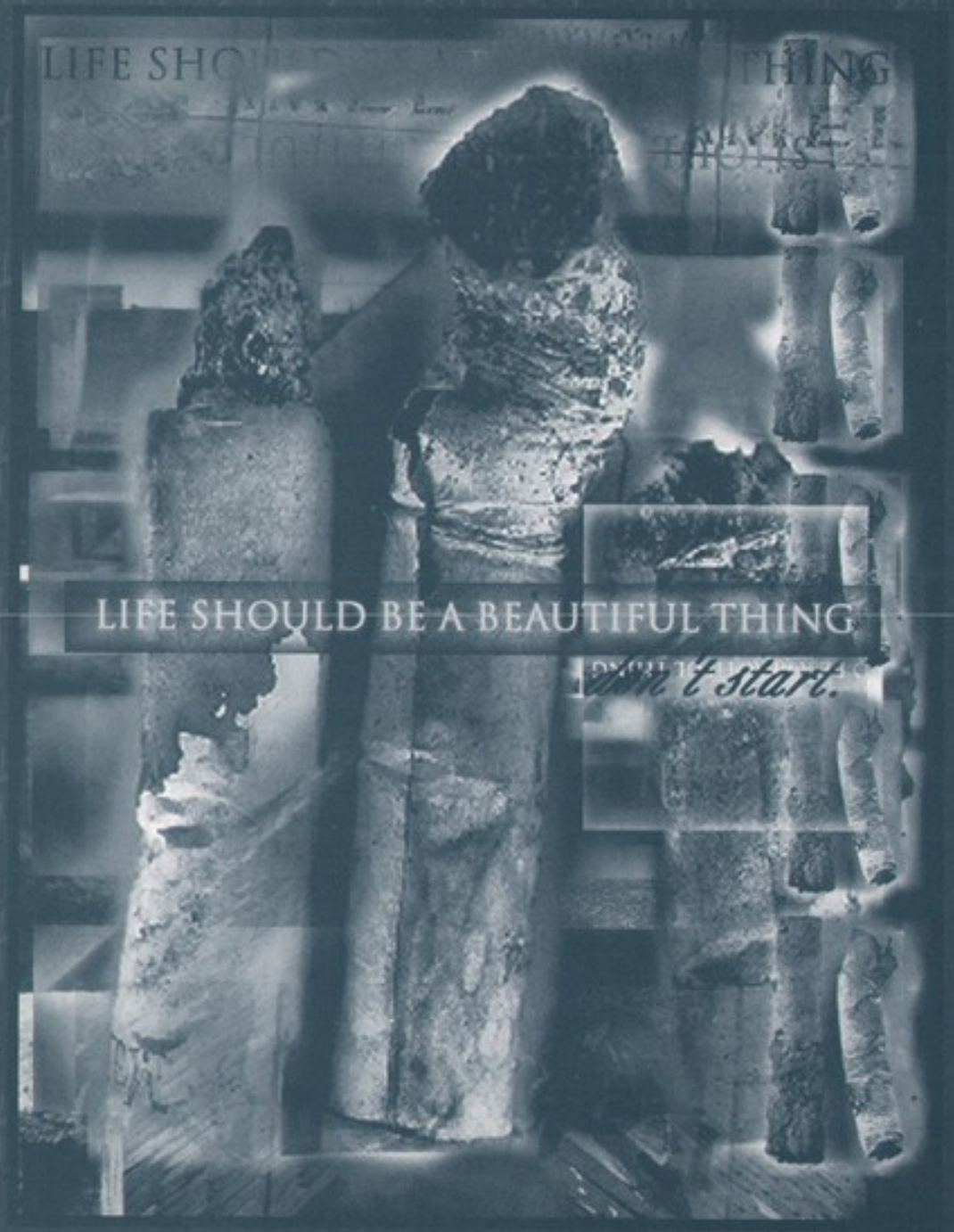


Drawing by Shelley Moll





Computer Collages by Todd Anderson



The Reaper

By Elaine Olsen Thompson

Come now, your time has passed.
Hide your fear; bank your anger;
quiet your struggle;
all must surrender.

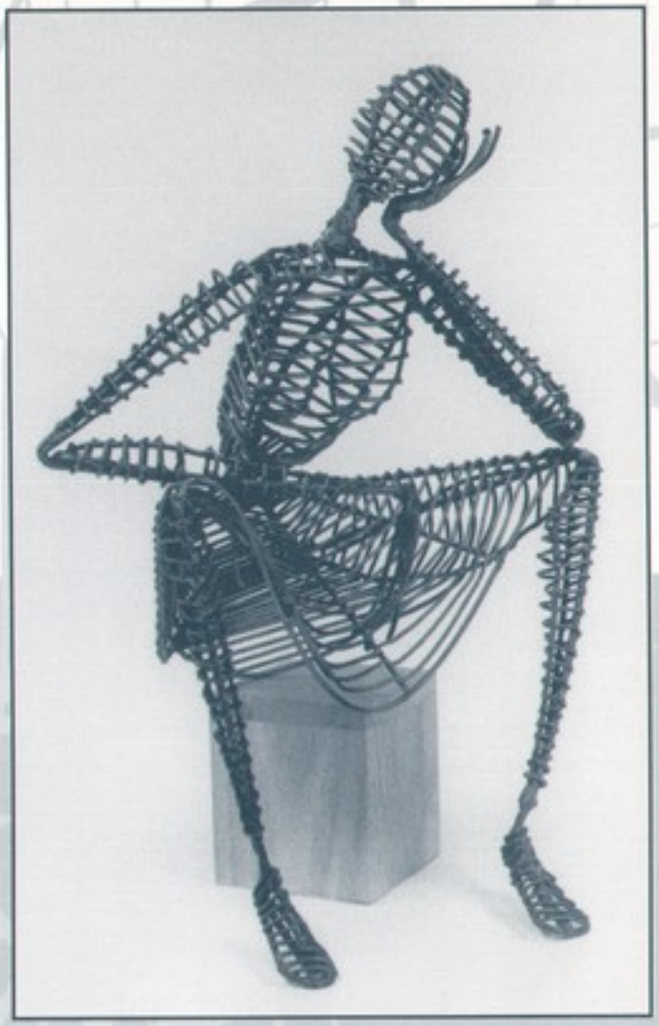
The Reaper,
who picks off your friends at random,
will kick you when you're down and stop-up your breath.
No use crying.

The people whose presence once filled your life
have turned to shadows and stirrings in the wind,
the cry of a hawk,
a vague disturbance in your sleep.

You tell yourself, be grateful for past laughter,
drunken bouts when you thought you'd stolen wisdom from the gods,
the crusades you waged,
the speeches you gave,
the love affairs,
the jokes.

You run to the morning sun for warmth and reassurance
or to other gods.
What else can be done
as the Reaper moves with flawless stealth
and all crumbles before you
like dry husks
fallen from corn?

Illustration by Wallace Cates



Sculpture by Barbara Andrews

Motive for Murder : a 100 Word Novel

by Carolyn Dunn

Ed Smith swivelled his chair to push the intercom button.

"Get Richards on the phone. And I want that contract. Now!"

The click of acrylic nails on the keyboard stopped.

Smith couldn't understand the muffled response from the other end of the receiver. Figured it wasn't important. Little of what his secretary said or did was important.

"Can't there be one unpredictable case of murder in here?" he grumbled, returning his attention to the manuscripts stacked on his desk.

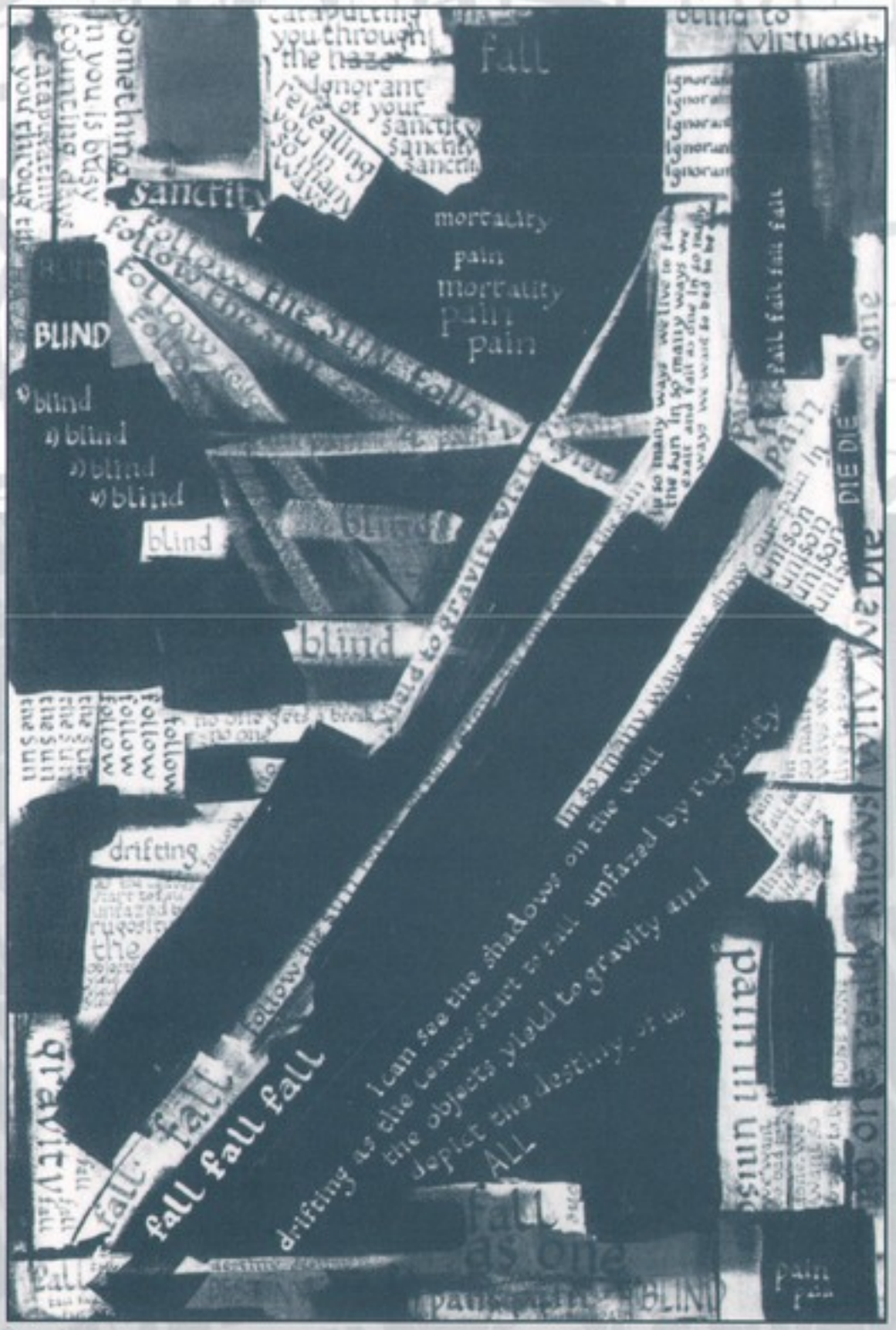
As his office door swung open, Smith looked up over reading glasses. "Just give it to me," he growled.

She did.

EMPATHY WITH THE DEVIL

by Monica Diehl

My flavor is the scent of sweet perfume
or diseased flies,
fuzzy, sea green, and
slightly pink,
the exotic taste of
moulded tomato paste.
Lumpy and perfectly plump
pillow soaked with the urine
of your favorite feline.
My flavor is the hailstorm of steel
stilettoes pounded into your spine.
The smell of malodorous melon
so pungent it hums
(slightly off key)
Subliminal messages and
inside jokes-
keep you outside,
slanderous secrets familiar to all.
My flavor is your flavor,
deep within,
waiting to get out.



Painting by Nate Gibson

Photograph by Dennis O'Reilly

IKTOME'S WEB

Two Buck had watched TV all afternoon. He looked around the living room, finished off the last of his ice tea, and shook off a feeling that he was caught in his chair like a fly in a web. Then he remembered that today was "washday." He mused over the Lakota word "washday" which meant "good," a contradiction of the task he was getting ready to do, which was to actually wash clothes. But at least it gave him somewhere to go.

Gathering up his laundry, he walked out to his pickup. The sky was cloudless, the heat intense, easily a hundred degrees. After four years in Parker, he still hadn't gotten used to the heat, still missed the South Dakota plains. At least the landscape opened up here, as it had on the plains and he didn't feel confined, not outdoors anyway. And a job was a job; it was here that the BIA had stationed him. When he opened the driver's door of the cab, trapped air gushed out like hot water as he tossed his bag of dirty laundry onto the passenger side floor and threw his box of Tide on top. Sliding in on the driver's side, he started up the motor and flipped on the air conditioner. When he began to feel the refreshing cool air, he rolled up his window to enjoy its full effect—which made him decide to break free and stop off at Canton Café.

The drive to Canton's took only a few minutes. The parking lot was almost empty since the dinner crowd hadn't appeared yet. Two Buck walked into the empty bar and sat at one of the stools. Pat seemed to appear out of nowhere; "Hi Two Buck," she said. "What can I do for you today?"

"A double shot of bourbon, straight up with a cola back," he replied. The woman's body was a little on the plump side, but she wasn't too bad to look at. With her Asian features, she reminded Two Buck of an Indian woman. Besides, she had a pleasant feminine voice and laugh. They talked about the new casino, the political conflict between the Colorado River tribal government and non-Indian city government, how her daughter was getting ready to go to head start school, and the incident when her husband was sucker-punched by a humongous Indian guy. Two Buck ordered a second drink. By this time he and Pat were swapping juicy gossip. He finished off the drink with a slight buzz, but reminded himself there were clothes to be washed, so he excused himself and left the bar to continue on his clothes-washing mission.

The laundromat was relatively empty. A middle aged Mexican woman, dressed in a brown and yellow flower print dress, was sitting at one of the orange plastic chairs reading a magazine. Others must be waiting somewhere for the weather to cool down a little more. Separating his clothes, Two Buck deposited them into two washing machines and added soap. As he put four quarters into each machine, he envisioned the two machines racing in competition like horses, and deliberately pushed the coin slide on both machines at the same time.

The racing machines began their cycle, and he sat in the row of chairs to watch, remembering the horse races in Sacramento last year. Everybody from the parking lot moved in smoothly like a rug dragged towards the horse track. He had enjoyed the carnival-like atmosphere, everyone busy talking to each other. Once inside the stadium he'd walked down to the lawn area bordering the track, a place set aside for those who wanted to be closer to the action. He played the horses the whole day—each new race more exciting than the previous. Two Buck liked to watch the powerful muscles on the animals, making them appear to be just about to break free and run wild like the ones he knew back home. When the last horse crossed the finished line Two Buck left exhausted. He had played "the

game" and although it cost him all the money he had brought with him, the feeling he had was like coming to an end of a thrilling roller coaster ride.

He reached for the cigarettes in his shirt pocket and found he'd left them in his pickup. He was outside pulling open the truck door when he heard a woman's voice call, "Hey Two Buck!" He looked around to see Dinah and her son, Poky, driving up in an old yellow Chevy sedan. "We're going over to BlueWater and play some pool. Come over and join us."

"Sure," he said, "But I have to wash my clothes first. I'll be there in about forty-five minutes."

"See ya!" Dinah called out as they drove off in the direction of Blue Water, the tribally owned restaurant and bar. Two Buck sure loved the way Dinah looked, with her dark eyes and soft brown skin that glistened in sun. Her smile was the kind that could light up a dark night, and the invitation made him wish he could somehow speed up the washing cycle.

His clothes finished, Two Buck marched out to his pickup, trying not to act hurried or overly anxious as he anticipated the pool games, the laughing and the attention of Dinah. What started out as a regular Sunday afternoon had unexpectedly escalated to quite a higher level—with a definite potential of romance. Who knew what the rest of the day and night might lead to?

He recalled the first time he met her. She had come into his office, where he worked as a tribal operations specialist, regarding enrollment documents. His secretary was out sick that day, so he was having to function without her. He remembered Dinah had on a black blouse and a tan skirt, and her long black hair seemed to gently flow over her shoulders before making its way down her back. Though she was middle-aged, her body maintained its delectable curves. She looked like she had just stepped out of an Indian woman's fashion magazine. He wished then he could touch her, but he had to be satisfied to just observe. Then, a couple of nights later, while he was at Canton's, she came in with one of her sisters and sat next to him. To Two Buck's surprise they hit it off, like ducks taking flight—talking a little, laughing, dancing, and at the end of the evening she let him take her home. Even though he didn't go to bed with her that first night, Two Buck sure wanted to.

Two Buck drove out of the parking lot onto the highway that led out of town. About a quarter of a mile down he turned left onto Riverside Road, an old country road that led directly to the Blue Water Restaurant.

It wasn't easy being an Indian on another tribe's reservation, Two Buck thought to himself. Way back when, he would be riding like the wind, instead of being cooped in a truck worrying about driving on one side or the other of the centerline markings, or within a set speed limit. The absence of a centerline on this stretch seemed like an open invitation to drive in the middle of the empty road. The dirt shoulder on either side of the road being rocky with rocks as big as softballs, he thought it would be even a better if the narrow road was a one-way anyhow, a road heading out of town.

A quarter of a mile away a wide down hill curve began. Seeing a patrol car coming in the opposite direction he moved to the right and continued on, recalling the night he later spent with Dinah. She was every bit as soft, warm and beautiful with her clothes off as with them on.

It wasn't until he pulled up at the Blue Water Restaurant that Two Buck noticed the lights flashing behind him. What in the hell did he do now? Could it be the same cop car he just passed? He took his driver's license out of his wallet. By that time the officer was at his door side. The policeman stared hard him, "May I see your registration and proof of insurance?" he said. This was not a request.

Two Buck opened and reached into the glove compartment to pull out a thick cloth folder. He realized he had never prepared for this type of occasion and hoped he would find the right information. At the moment he wasn't sure what a registration slip looked like. He handed the police officer what he hoped were the right documents.

"This is the registration for last year," the officer said, pointing at the date on the slip. At least now Two Buck knew what a registration was, but the door to the restaurant and heaven was still ten yards away.

The officer walked back to his patrol car. Two Buck frantically pawed the glove compartment again and came up with the current registration slip. When the officer returned, he fixed his gaze on Two Buck's face as he handed back the registration without saying a word. "I can smell alcohol. How much had you had to drink?" he said.

"A couple of beers."

"Would you please step out of your vehicle Mr. White Horse."

Another patrol car pulled up and parked about twenty yards away. Two officers got out and stood next to it, watching. Two Buck didn't understand the need for more policemen. Maybe they mistook him for Russell Means or someone like that, a real militant hero and thought they needed a backup in case of trouble. But why for a DUI? What was the worst that could happen, he wondered? Get cited for DUI and then join Dinah in the bar. Two Buck stepped out of his pickup. The sun was

dipping below the horizon, and Two Buck's dream of a warm and a fun evening seemed to be disappearing with it.

The officer demonstrated each action as he spoke: "Stand straight; hold your head back; close your eyes and; extend your arms; then alternating, touch your nose with the index finger of your hand; do this three times." God, this looked silly, Two Buck thought. Dogs must feel something similar when being trained to do tricks. There was no choice but to perform, though it was degrading to know that someone in authority had so much power over him. He remembered back at Stuart Indian Boarding School—his first confinement—when the shower matron would briskly rub his wrist raw with a washcloth because she thought she saw dirt—but it was really his skin. She would make him return and shower again. Two Buck did as instructed, and the officer stood like a statue, observing. When he finished, Two Buck thought the officer could at least have patted him on the head and said, "Good boy, good boy."

"Stand on your left foot with your arms at your side. Now lift your right foot about twelve inches from the ground and hold it in that position for ten seconds," the officer said, again demonstrating.

On Two Buck's first try the loose rock beneath his left foot seemed to shift, and he didn't hold the stand. He tried a second time, visualizing another incident at Stuart where at midnight he and the other Indian boys were made to get up and stand in the hall, holding up their shoes above their head until someone confessed stealing some personal item of an instructor.

This time the officer drew a line in the dirt. "Walk this line one step at a time, and with each step touch the heel of forward foot to the toe of the back foot," he said. Out of the corner of his eye Two Buck saw Dinah and her son come out of the restaurant to see what was going on. He quickly glanced away.

The officer made the exercise look so simple, but it wasn't. Two Buck started out OK, but on his second step his foot didn't come down in the right position. In trying to correct, he stepped off the drawn line. He stepped back on quickly and continued walking up the line and back without making another error, so he was shocked when the officer looked at him and said, "You are under arrest for driving while under the influence," and began reading the Miranda the way Two Buck had heard it on TV. Two Buck kept his eyes on the ground when the officer barked out the command, "Put your hands behind your back."

He felt the cold metal clamp around his wrists. Escorting him to the patrol car, the officer directed him to sit in the back seat. He clamped his hand on top of Two Buck's head to guide him into the back seat and Two Buck felt his face grow hot. It wouldn't be so bad if he had been uncooperative, very drunk, or even mentally retarded. But he was none of these. The officer acted like he had just bagged a four point buck and couldn't resist touching the antlers.

Two Buck wondered whether his Indian status would help or hurt him in this case. Being under the jurisdiction of a tribal government, as opposed to a state government, had its good points and bad. Just after moving here four years ago he was stopped by the non-Indian city police for going thirty-five miles an hour in a twenty-five mile an hour zone. The first question the police officer asked him was "Are you a tribal member?" A tribal member of what? he thought to himself. The question bothered Two Buck. If the officer would have said, "Are you a member of a federal recognized tribe?" his answer would have been yes. He answered no. He wondered if the next question might be whether he knew how many angels could stand on the head of a pin. The officer issued him a traffic ticket. But because he was a member of another tribe, the tribal judge had the case transferred to the Indian court and the charge was dropped.

He heard there was such an abundance of police force in Parker that it wasn't unusual in the evening hours for patrol to cars outnumber civilian automobiles on the two main thoroughfares. Like vultures waiting for the death of a victim, they sat on side streets as they monitored passing traffic. Traffic tickets issued on the reservation were considered misdemeanors and not reported to the state.

As they drove away in the patrol car, Two Buck looked back over his shoulder towards the restaurant in time to see Dinah and her son reenter the bar. It was a bitch with his hands imprisoned behind him, so he slid the cuffs downward under his butt and around his legs till he had his cuffed hands in front of him. Then he could lean back more comfortably. Still, he could feel the interior of the patrol car close in around him. Then he had the sudden idea that if he spoke about his situation to the officer, Indian to Indian, or at least, human to human, the guy might let him go, so he began his story of how he washed his clothes and how he was invited to play pool at the Blue Water Restaurant. No response from the wooden Indian head outlined through the metal screen.

He decided to try a more direct approach. "Where are you from?" he asked.

"Here," replied the officer in a monotone voice.

"How long have you lived here?" Two Buck said.

"All my life," replied the officer in the same

tone of voice. That could mean that the officer's tribe was either Fort Mojave, Chemehuevi, Hopi or Navajo, but Two Buck didn't feel like pursuing the conversation further. The officer's personality seemed to fit the wooden head.

At the police station, the officer escorted Two Buck inside and unhandcuffed him. Two Buck's anxiety was to the maximum in this totally alien world. There were four blue-uniformed people in what appeared to be a crowded one-room area, desks close together--some stacked with paper. Intermittedly, he could hear blaring police calls coming from somewhere.

"Do you have an attorney?" the officer asked him.

Two Buck shook his head. The officer handed him a piece of paper and instructed him to sign in a designated place. When asked to take the breath analyzer test, Two Buck said, "Sure," hoping the two double shots of bourbon didn't put him over the limit.

He was told to take the chair next to a box-shaped machine about the size of a large IBM typewriter that sat there with the finality of a judge in a court of law. On the front of the machine was an illuminated screen, and two yellow hoses protruded from the bottom: one for the user, obviously, but Two Buck wasn't sure of purpose of the other hose. Perhaps to beat him with if he failed the test.

Another officer demonstrated what he wanted Two Buck to do. "Blow steady for five seconds," he said. Two Buck tried, but the officer snapped, "You're not doing it right. Try again."

Two Buck did it again. "You're still not doing it right," the officer snarled. "Look," he said, "if you don't do it right this time I'm not going to test you. We'll just classify you as uncooperative and suspend your driver's license."

On Two Buck's next try the officer seemed satisfied. "Your percent alcohol is 0.12," he announced with satisfaction and glee. "We have to keep you."

Two Buck was escorted to another part of the room and told to take off his boots and watch, empty his pockets and remove his belt, along with his cigarettes, and give them to the jailer. He was handed a plastic covered mat, a wool blanket, then taken through a large metal door that opened into a narrow hallway. Two Buck shuddered as he looked down the hallway at a large open jail cell. Beside it was a metal door with a small slit, then another large open cell. Opening the metal door between the two cells, the jailer told him to enter the tiny room. The lock clanged behind him like the final blow of hammer on the last coffin nail. He swallowed hard. He was alone, terribly alone. The feeling took him clear back to the day his mother left him standing at Stuart Indian School.

He remembered staring at the closed door that locked his childhood away from him forever. As a boy he could still allow himself tears. After that, the free life he had lived as a boy on the plains became nothing more than a dream to him. The new life imprisoned him. He understood now that his mother only wanted a better life for him, a life where he had shoes and clothes to wear and was never hungry. But the old life disintegrated behind him with his mother's death, and he was left trapped in the new life she had given him.

The cell looked about fourteen by sixteen, about the size of his office cubical at the BIA, with a one-piece metal scudzy toilet and sink at the far end. The gray paint cement floor was covered with a thick layer of dust, except for an area marked by a path leading to the toilet and to a place against a wall where previous occupants had put their mats. He spread his own mat on the floor and dropped down on it, shivering, despite the heat. He might as well be on the moon. He could hear sounds from a TV coming from another jail cell, and every so often he heard guys talking. A TV sure would help. He focused on the writings, pictures and initials written into the floor and wall and tried to guess what kind of person put them there. One was a statement that said, "Everything has a beginning and an end." There were initials which said, "LH loves BJ." Then he saw that the head of a horse had been etched into the wall, but without the muscular body to help him break free of this coffin. Two Buck wished he had something to write with so he could fill in all that was missing.

He spied a small grass spider walking across the floor. "Hi Iktome," he said. "What are you in here for?" The spider disappeared under the entrance door without saying a word. He remembered that the spider trickster could change into any shape. If only Two Buck had that power, he could leave this place. And what spider, he wondered, had woven this metal web he was in. Perhaps, it was Iktome. Some tribes had a female spider who wove a decent world for others to live in. It was just his luck to be born to a tribe with a trickster male spider who could not be trusted.

The next morning, when they let him walk out into the burning desert spaces in time for work at the BIA, Two Buck knew it was only another short trip between confinements. And even as he stepped into the brown office cubical where he spent so many of his daylight hours, he could feel Iktome's web wrapping around him. He was already planning his next escape to the Canton Cafe.

by Kenneth M. Taylor

"Wood is a highly personal medium - warm and organic to the touch. The artist must work in cooperation with this material to subtract the ideal form from the available block of wood. Wood growth patterns, the tools used, and structural limitations of the material dictate compact contours when carving wood. Here are two fine examples:"

-Dick Marcusen

Sculpture by Claire B. Lautenberg

Sculpture by Jason Connell

Sermon on the Phone

by Matt Fredlake

I spoke with God on a cell phone in the Forum today:

I'm guided to a joint where Dante sold me a book of poems,

Served caffeine ecstasy in ceramic cups,

While I shoot the breeze with Virgil.

"Observe," he mutters over drinks.

"A painter sits, alone,

Eats olives, sips vino rosa,

Sketches the dish maid through condensed glass.

She sweats

Holy Water,

Pushes back indigo hair,

Wipes soap bubbles from her sun-neglected skin

Painting by Annie Lindberg

and slides the spaghetti strap of the spring dress back to her delicate shoulder

Continuing her work so the painter may continue his."

Jealously builds dire thoughts,

I leave Virgil the tab,

escape,

and take God off hold.

He leads me through a piazza of outstretched arms,

past the crowds,

past Michelangelo's Pieta,

To kiss St. Peter's feet

Smoothed by the lips of time.

I stare at Jesus until all mosaic blends to flesh,

Enclose myself in a wooden closet and

Try my hand at Italian confession,

Pray I am not subject to years as a hypocrite.

I bid "Arrivederci" to God,

Long distance,

and end His sermon,

cleansed.

Painting by Annie Lindberg

Wannagofur Bagels? By Rene Girard

Texture Design by Lisbeth Graham

They were sitting there
at the table next to ours, the end table in a long row that ran
the length of the plate-glass windows separating the bagel shop
from the rest of the world.
I couldn't see him,
but she was in plain view
dressed
in red synthetic best, so fitted to form I imagined it to be
her skin,
not unlike the skin of a balloon:
holding firm against the pressure inside, yet
easily popped by the slightest
prick.
But then, she was not light and filled with air.
I looked at her dress,
vacuum packed against nylon undergarments
dense–a bag of cement
no space between
molecules.
Motionless, paralyzed,
I don't think she was breathing.
Her hand,
disassociated,
a mechanical feeding device,
moved from her plate to her mouth as she picked apart a sandwich
hoping no one (most of all him) would notice her chewing
the tiny sliver of cheddar
gleaned from between the tomato and the ham.
Her blue eyes never straying from his
unblinking,
vacant,
numb.
"How long were we married? Ten years?" he asked,
not minding my shoulder only inches from his.
"Nine." she squeaked, a little girl's voice,
painfully aware of their lack of privacy.

Weaving by Kitty Newell

He did all the talking.
I noticed for the first time how young she was
and younger still (an easily persuaded child) in the presence of his
condescension.
I turned my head in his direction as if to check the soda case,
so I could get a look.
Here sat a little boy
intent on having his way.
Puffed-up
image of a man
feigning maturity,
who brings his wife of nine years to Biffs
to talk about their
divorce.
I knew she had no idea
how good this would be for her.
I saw the prison from which she was being
released.
The lifetime of unexpressed feelings,
meticulously
bound,
like her body,
suffocating.
Only the color she chose to wear
warned of what would surely come.
I prayed for the quake that would shake her core.
I imagined the Armageddon of spirit
that would send her concrete chrysalis crashing
to the ground.
I could hear her raging voice
strong
and deliberate.
Naked she would stand in the aftermath,
light
free of restraint
flaming polyester
and fallen tears
confetti
at her feet.

Prophecy of Hands

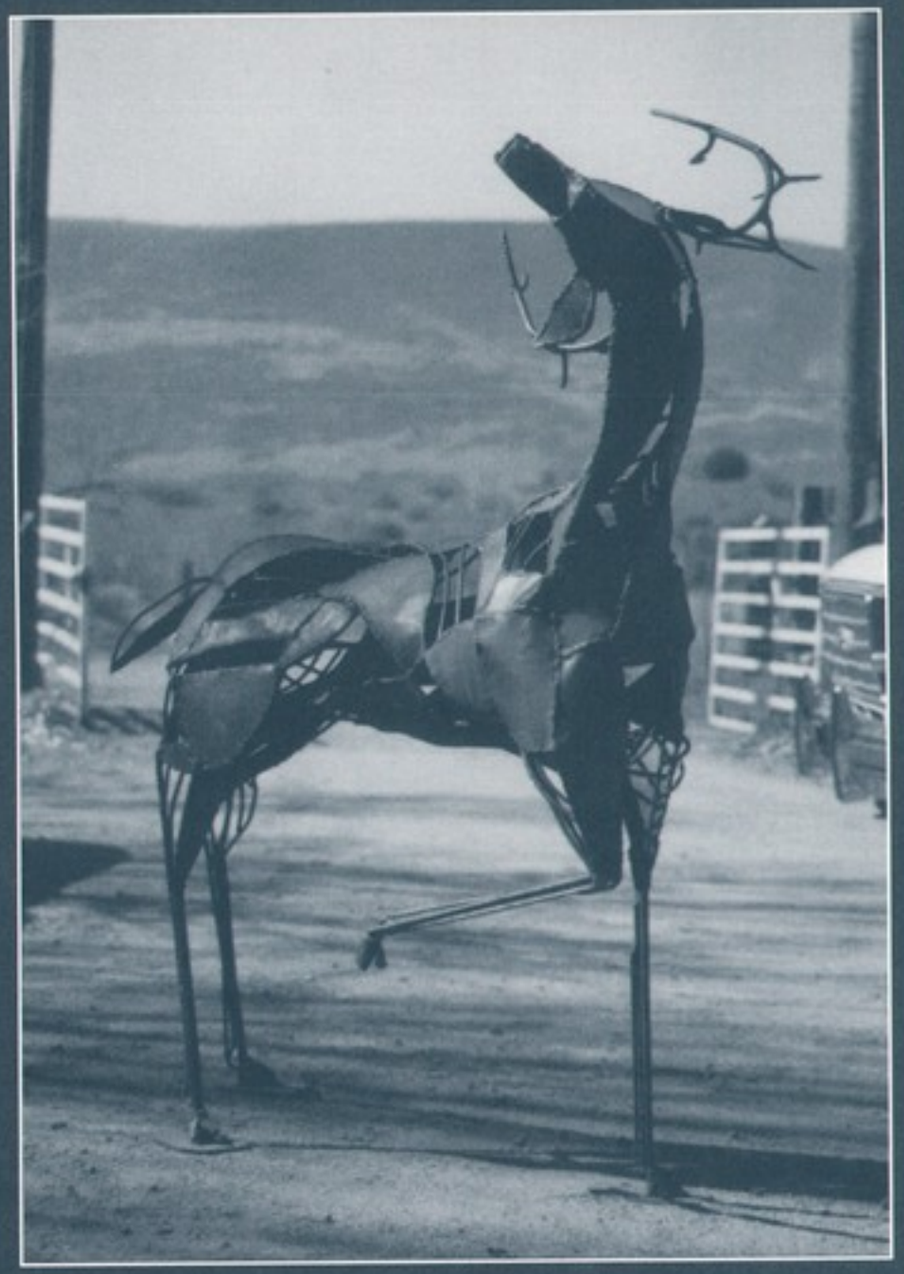
by Margie Austell

Like engraved prophecies
creases inside fists
become auguries
Futures carved in flesh

My lifeline has a double:
Death led me
from a barstool
blurring down a back country road
at ninety miles an hour
flipped me over like a pancake
tapped me on the shoulder, then
walked away without me.

Aligned with the fates
a lineage has begun
I follow the lifeline of a hand
fitting loosely in my palm
The wrinkle reaches the wrist
I smile at its longevity

Flesh is not stone
Time smoothes off etchings
defying the soothsayer.



Welded Sculpture by Jean Kelton

AT THE CIMMARON BOOKSTORE RIDGWAY, COLORADO

by Christy Hart

They are sleek racehorses
these women
waxed and bronzed
legs shaped and muscled
beneath their jeans shorts
rolled up tight and high
on their gorgeous thighs.

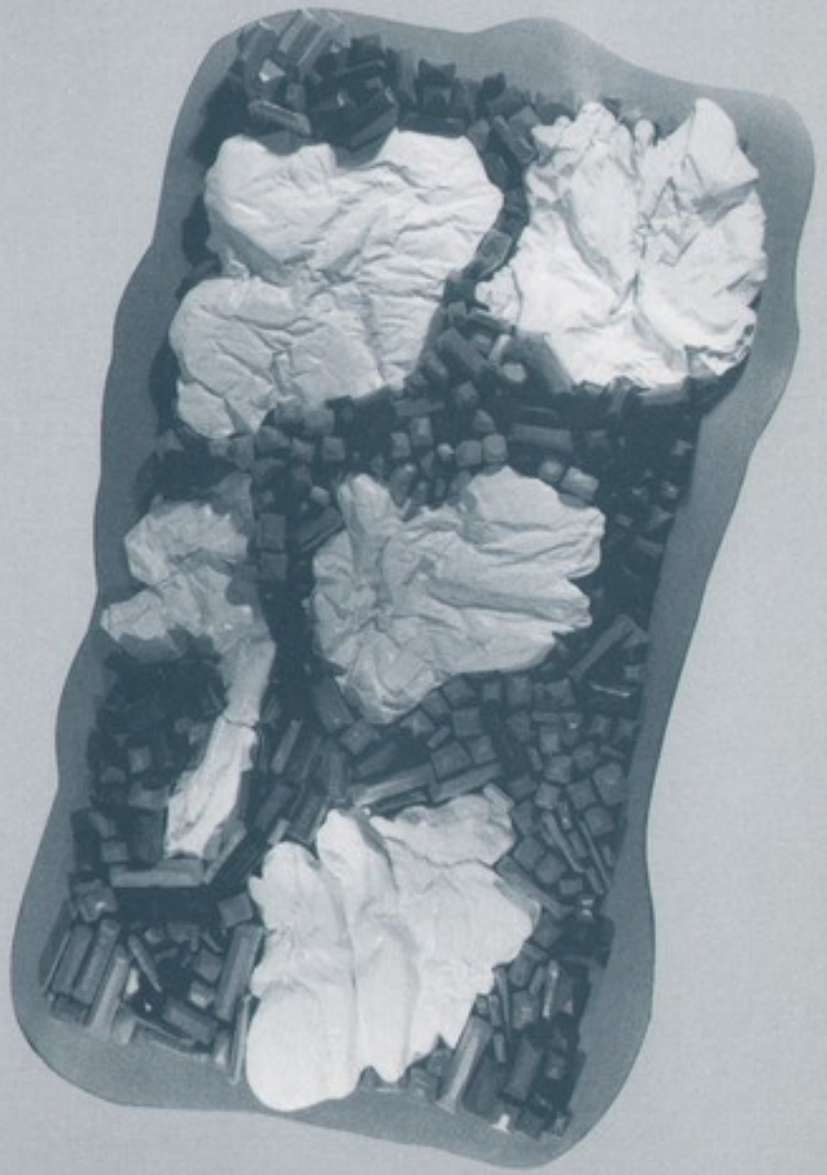
Trophy wives adorned
with gold and diamonds
hair shimmering
with bottled colors.
They descend among us
plastic in hand
we all fall silent
while they buy
and buy and buy.

We need a realtor, they say.
We are looking for forty acres
a quiet place
we need to
get away from it all.

We smile politely over our cups
and stare out the window
at their four-wheel drive
bright red for city streets.
They carry it all out
the store owner delighted
now the day has been good
she could close and go home.

The air has lifted and we are all laughing.
Disgusted and envious.
But who would cut that hair?
Not a person around here to do those nails.
Not a gym between here and Telluride!

Their world of plenty has crashed
into our morning coffee.



Texture Design by Cynthia Morton

Apple Medley

by Kathy D. Hellman

"...the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." (1 Samuel 18:1)

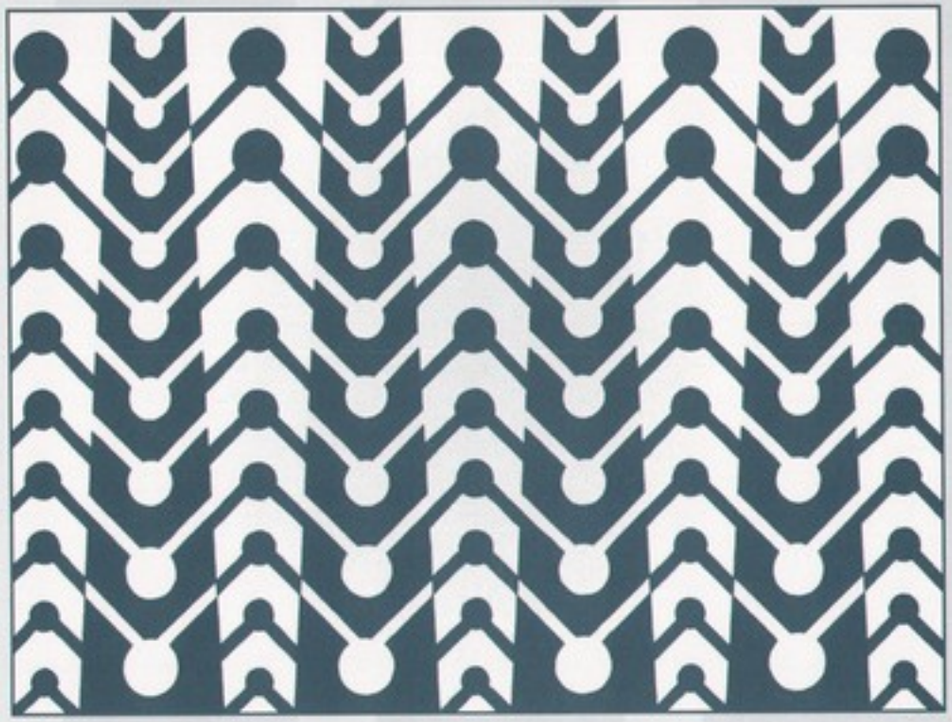
I wander into your circle
with a pocket knife
and help myself to a slice of your life.

Can't resist eating sun-warmed apples
out of doors in Autumn air.
Tartness that teases the tongue,
cylindrical peelings falling crisp and clean.

Cross-legged afternoon,
stippled orchard overcast
cutting to the core of me–
paring down to seeds of love
in simple settings.

Who is the Jonathan in this duo?
Hybrid soul grafted to the seed of David.

Rhythm Design by Steven Hammes



My feelings for you
are as unrehearsed as
the sky's opening show –
another cloud's debut.

If Spring is the time of young lovers,
Autumn is mature, tangy-sweet morsels
of friendship offered unexpectedly
on the end of a sticky knife.

Late Summer Evening Love Song

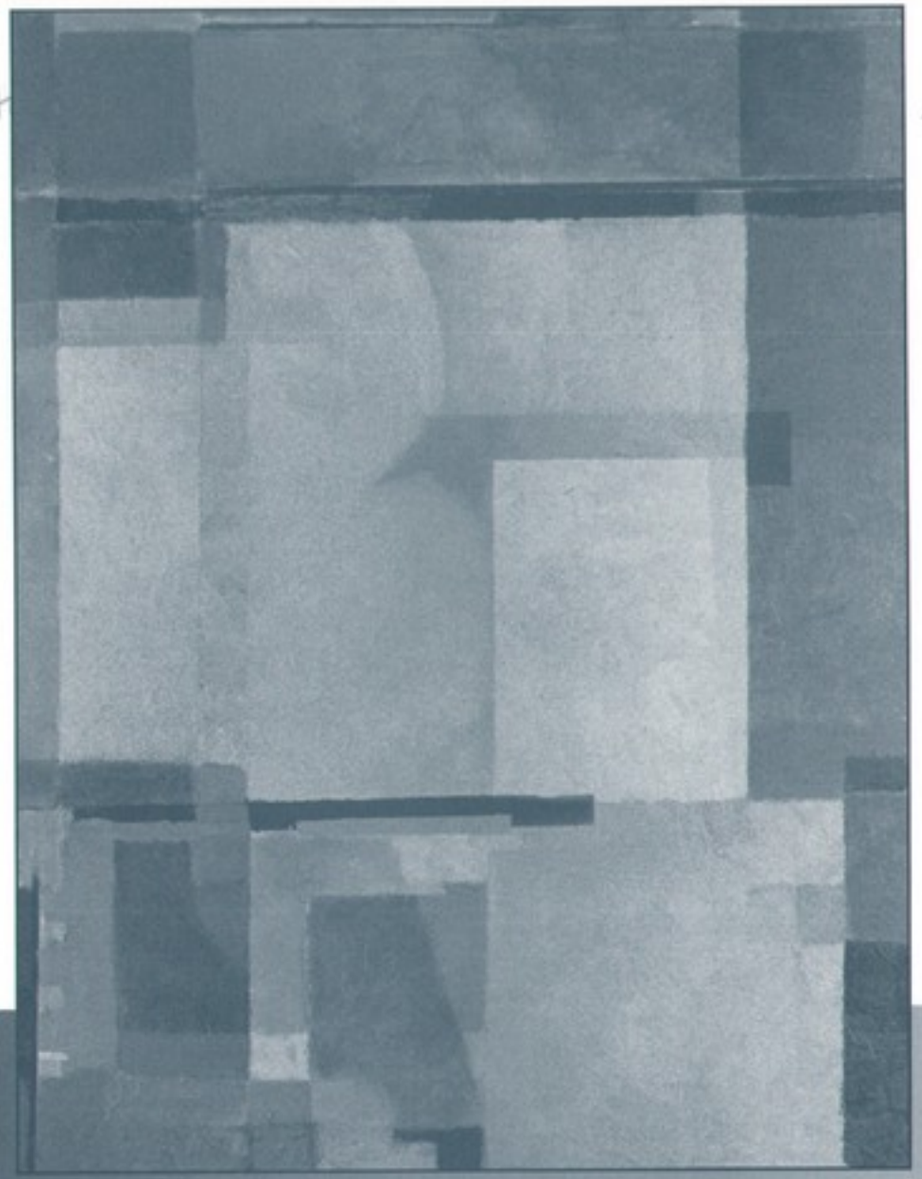
by William J. Riley

Monsoon green grasses
yellow golden gingers
attend sweet scented foothills
swelling, breathing
gently fragrant, feather swathed
        Fall's sunlight, soft twilight
        brushed in fluorescence, vivid
        colors
        pastel and passionate
infused red-orange
deep blushed purple in cleft
                on pinnacle
                gentle tongued and
                piquant

Poised over hope-moistened earth
paradise gated turquoise sky holes
glisten
aurum-lined brilliant white billows
blue bellied summer thunderheads
        throw hundred mile shadows
        stretching and subsiding
        hushed and setting
onto the soft tummy of
moment
into
        quiet time
        Evening

Watercolor by Jean Kelton

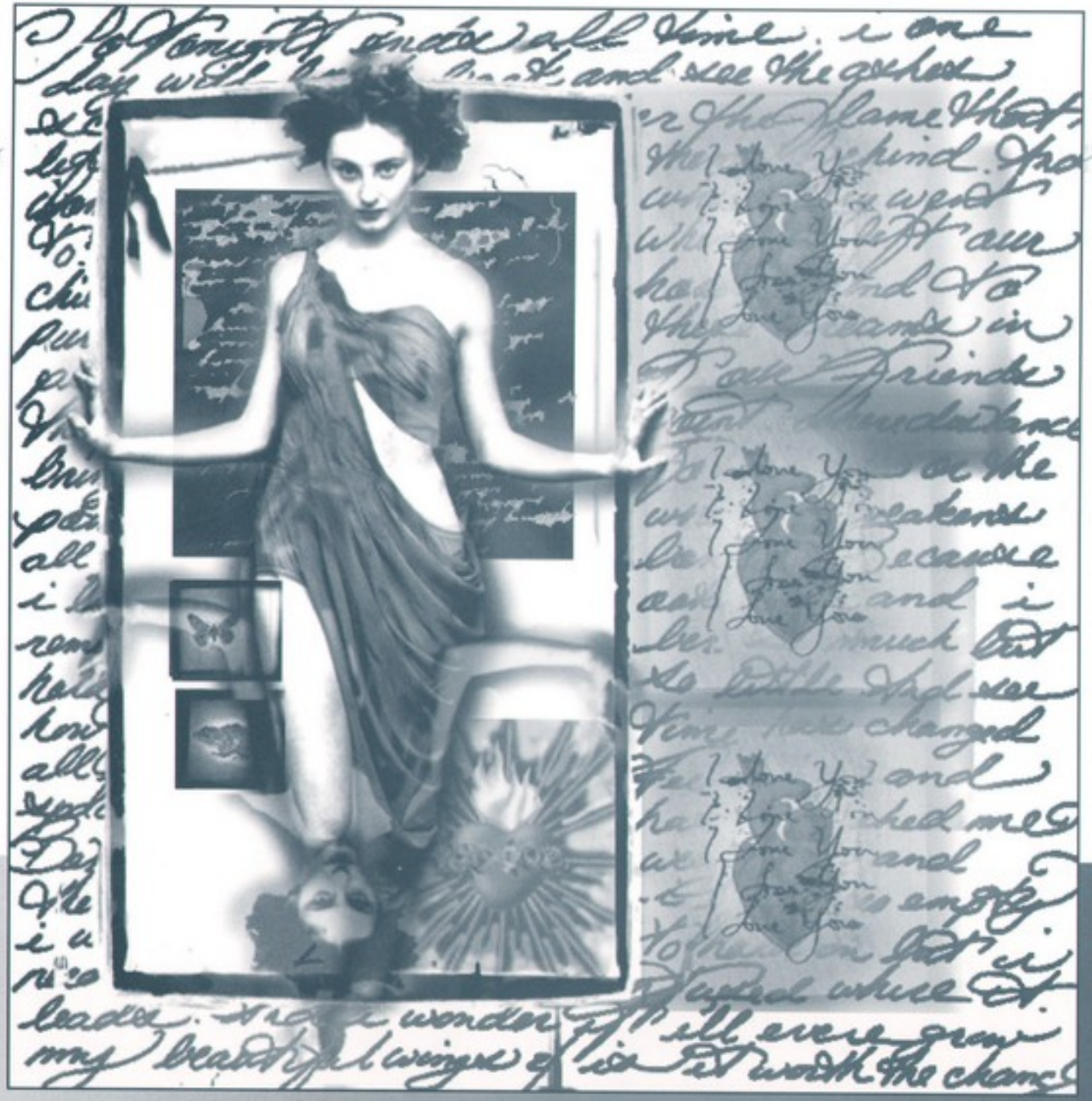
Painting by Martha Lee



DARK *Love*

by Donna Mae Baxter

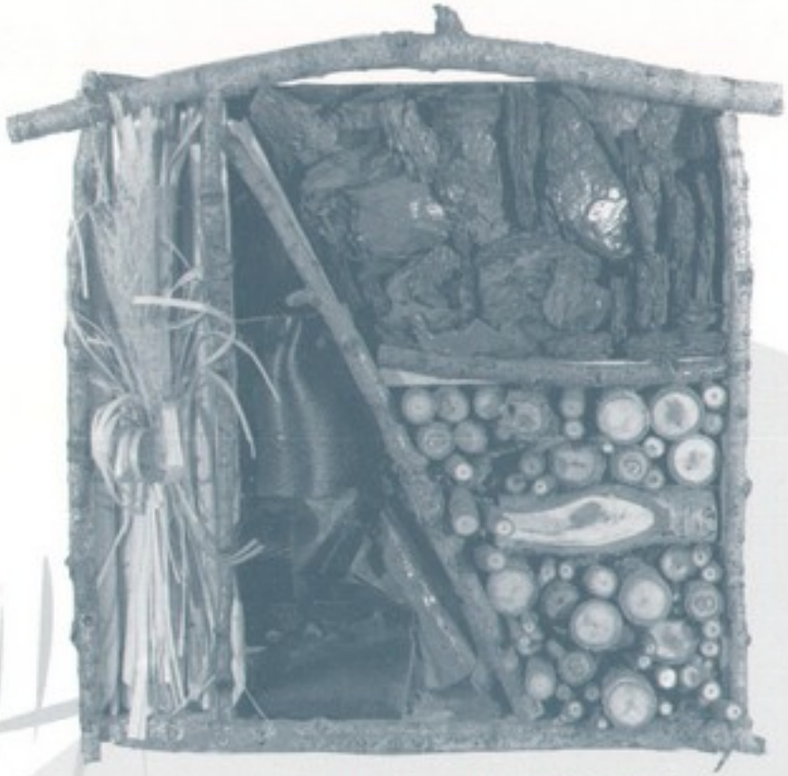
Melting sweet
I am complete
as with pleasure
Twirling romancing
soothing-tongued
languid succulent
delight
I bite
bursting flavor
jubilant joy
ecstasy overwhelming,
senses peaked,
coruscating passion
flying
soaring above it all,
sublime release,
of dark silky smooth
flavor in my mouth
ever more to savor
my soul lifts to its
bursting touch
Oh the glad tidings
tickling inside
as I give in,
to chocolate.



Computer Collage by Todd Anderson

N. M. S. T. E.

By Tamara Larson

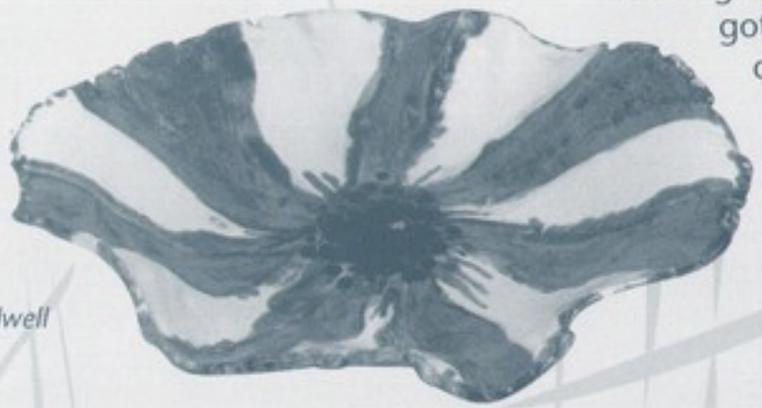


Texture Design by Shelley Moll

An arrangement of letters, not a word, unextraordinary. Picture this series of characters on license plate in a bank parking lot. The car is early eighties, shaped somewhere between a pinto and a rabbit, and the color is a brown, resembling gutter-sludge, but with a touch of orange. It is a window to the secrets of the universe.

The letters stand for Namasté. The deepest, truest, most real part of me recognizes the deepest, truest, most real part of you. It's a Hindu expression used in greeting or when leaving someone, and is for the benefit of the person saying it and for the person it is being said to. It is a perfect example of mindfulness practice--seeing that everyone is a manifestation of Brahman. Everyone *is* the ultimate being. The God in me greets the God in you.

When I saw this remarkable vehicular vision, I was rushing back to my retail job after getting change from the bank, tired and stressed. I paused. I felt the peace of the meaning in that assertion rise through my body, feeling it in my face like a flush. Just for a second I really got it! I was a manifestation of the ultimate. The owner of the mindful car was too. The hoards of materialistic consumers I was about to encounter were no longer a faceless clump of gluttony, but Gods!



Ceramic Bowl by Charlotte Caldwell

It lasted only a moment. The enlightenment was too much to maintain. The inspiration in mind/body flashed through, zig-zag.

I get regular glimpses of intuition about once a week, a ritual happening, like doing the dishes after a meal. If I'm in an accepting mood, it just happens. I know when I'm grasping something huge, it jumps to the bridge of my nose and stares at me--I see it, I feel it, I can even articulate it. Especially if I'm in the car alone and there's nothing to talk to except the dirt on the windshield. I figure everything out then, I solve some serious issues, and then, just as quickly, I forget and return to the non-thinking doctrine taught to me since grade school. It gets so tricky, that I don't even feel bad about forgetting these vastly relative tid bits–because much of the time I'm not even aware that I've lost something.

But it's okay for me right now--I gain in my reveries a reflective moment, a reassurance that my life has multiple dimensions. Each time I come closer to comprehension, more open to inner knowledge that I am unaware of, but that stays with me.

Namasté

Ceramic Box by Bill Parr

WAITING

by Christy Hart

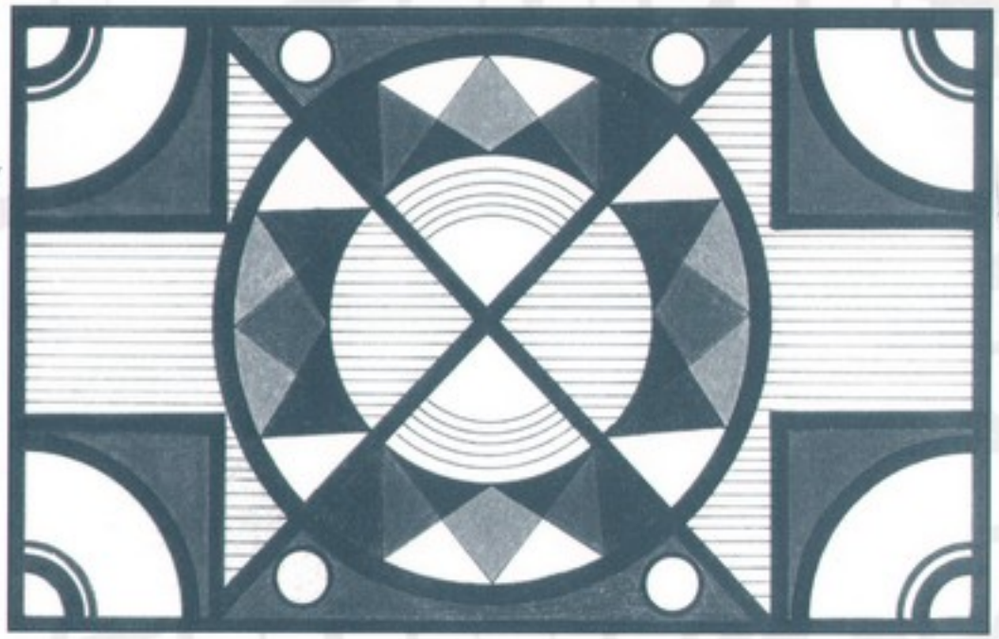
The corner room on the second floor
you said you would find me here
and I am waiting.

The shine of your hair
in the crowd down on the street
your hand on the door
I turn from the window and
find there is nothing to say
but goodbye.

You belong at home
kissing her, the one
who stays for you.
The one who survived
your silence
and your Vietnam.

This room, all these rooms
cannot bring us closer.
The dope we smoke
the wine we drink
doesn't make it love.
And the lust is
never enough
never enough
never enough.

Photograph by Carolyn Dunn



Design by Marian McLean

A Love Affair

By Elaine Olsen Thompson

I want to go back to the river,
the convoluted wildness of the Verde
where eagles nest in lacy lava
covered with bright green lichen
and the river roars over riots of rock
into chaos and white swirling power.

I want to go back to where
I met the river guide
who taught me to kayak the Verde
in winter snowmelt that rages
and rants between walls of lava
and cares not one whit for me
or my well-being

This river guide had a nonchalance about him,
a comfort in his body
(so easy with the water) and
not a care for time, TV,
city pretenses or anybody's bullshit
and like the river, he seemed
untamed
and I wanted to tell him that
he reminded me of a saying from Spain:
Viva Yo, they shout
and to them it means: *I live,*
and I pee in the snow to prove it.
But I didn't tell him.

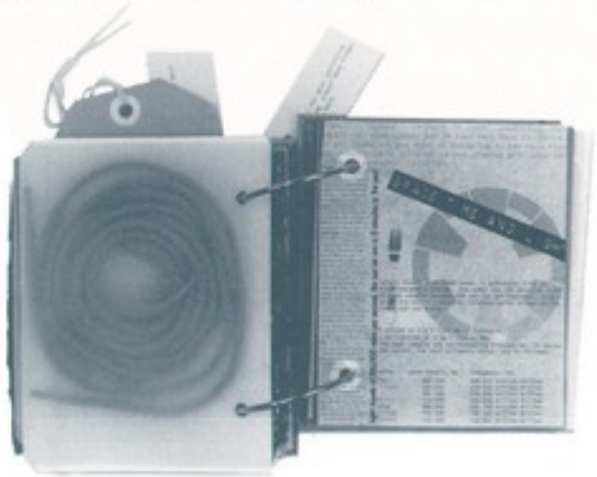
Before a rapid,
he put his arms around me
and whispered, Now don't screw up,
and his words and ways would tease my fear,
feed me with his playful power
and make my adrenaline rise
as if his foolery could enter my veins
and make me take the waves
with the same indifference as
his own unfettered ease.

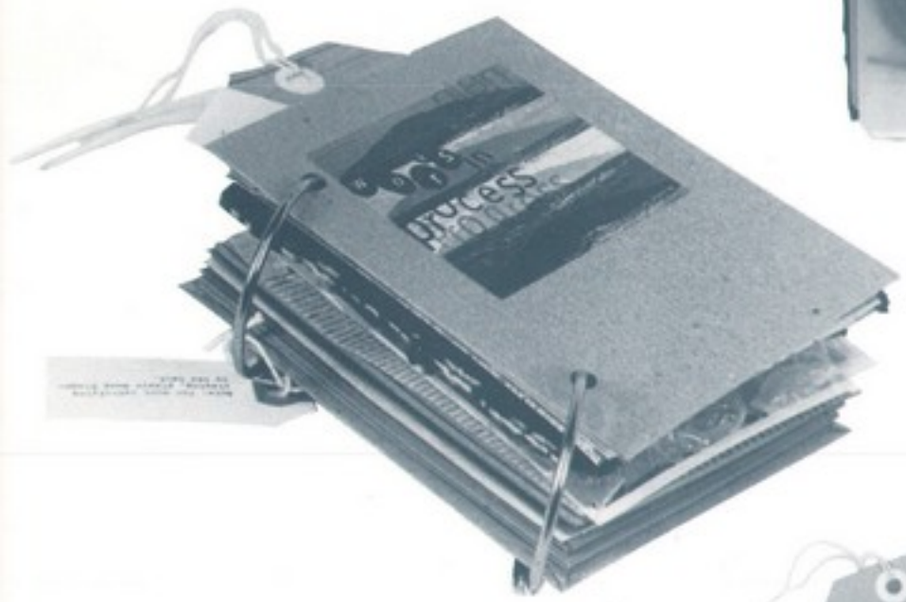
I want to hear that roar again
feel my excitement soar as
I make those pinpoint decisions
going down the surging waters
that hit and soak
and pummel
and pull
and laugh at my puny effort.

I want to bang into anything that confronts me, vie
with this brutal sport,
let us see who will win
in the waters of a river running
wild in spring
and caring not one
whit for me
or my well-being.

But if I lose
(and everyone does sooner or later,
so the river runners say)
I'll know that I have lost while
living.
So let me shout, *Viva Yo,*
to my friend on the river and
Viva Yo
to the birds and the sky:
I live and I . . .
Well, you know the rest.

Book Design by Martha Lee and Annie Lindberg





This issue of *Threshold* (1999), which marks its twentieth year in production, is dedicated to Dr. Glen Peterson who is retiring this semester. With the help of writing instructor Joan Zumwalt, Dr. Peterson directed the design and printing of the first issue of a creative arts magazine in spring 1979. It included poetry, short stories, and art images produced by Yavapai College students. It was designed and prepared for printing by the Graphic Design class. Since then, the creative writing and art departments have combined forces each spring semester to produce this award winning publication.

Over the years *Threshold* has won several awards for creative writing and for its unique layout and design. Most prestigious were two awards given by the Community College Humanities Association in 1993 and 1994: 2nd Place in the Literary Magazine Competition in the Southwest Division.

Threshold has been successful partly because of its progressive use of contemporary production techniques. Desktop publishing software has been an invaluable learning tool for design students. Last year, for instance, the whole magazine was produced electronically which gave students complete control over its overall "look."

Recently, Dr. Peterson commented on the magazine's history and future: "I anticipate viewing and reading at least twenty more issues of *Threshold* magazine produced by Yavapai College students."

The Threshold Creative Arts Magazine is published annually by the Art and English Departments. It presents poems, stories, and works of art created by Yavapai College students.

For more information about courses, call 520/445-7300 or 520/776-2121.

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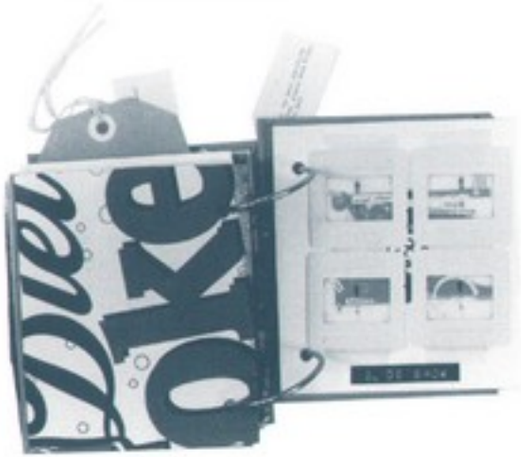

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A CREATIVE ARTS MAGAZINE A CREATIVE ARTS MAGAZINE A CREATIVE ARTS MAGAZINE A CREATIVE ARTS MAGAZ

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