

THRESHOLD



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THRESHOLD

Creative Arts Magazine
1990

The creative arts magazine presents poems, stories, photographs
and works of art created by Yavapai College students.
The layout and design were produced by Graphic Design,
Production and Illustration classes.

Photograph by Jeanette M. Roney





Photograph by Bryan Gerdes



Photograph by Jeanette M. Roney

Memories of Grandma

White briefs drying in the summer sun,
Satchel brimming with clean linen hankies,
Navy blue silk, ecru lace,
Corset with covers, lisle stockings, rigid gait,
Silver rimmed glasses, cloudy blue eyes
White curls surround a crinkled face
Tortoise shell hairpins held her bun in place.

Married late, widowed young.
Had eight children
Lost three sons,
Seven, twelve and twenty one.
Taught piano to reluctant students
Played the mammoth church organ
Disdained to teach the unruly chorus.

The scents of English lavender, camphor, Listerine and rose water
The feel of velvet, cashmere, winter woolies, kid gloves
Steaming soup, coffee with cream,
Apricots, graham crackers, cheddar cheese.
Fur collars and galoshes.

Gleaming copper bowl, red carnations, lemon polish
Metronome's beat
Music surrounded her
Classic to Grand Old Opry
Must not miss important concerts on the cathedral radio.

Cloudy morning, garbled speech
Months of feeding, turning, loving
Milky skin, insulin shots, antibiotic that did not stop pneumonia,
She slipped on while we slept
Hallelujah, free at last
May the circle be unbroken
Rocker caressed, feeling her safe
Deep in our hearts, we knew it was best.

C.Q. Cronin



Photograph by Linda Sharp

Checkmate

Illustrations by Candis Cantell



Slithering past the fractured ribs of dusty Venetian blinds, fragmentary sunlight pierced the surrealistic grayness of the room. The striping of light held Tom Wilson a prisoner in a cell with all the bars going the wrong direction.

Tom scanned the room searching for answers. Through eyes that lay placid as black pools in a hillside cleft, his mind groped, willing to accept anything within the realm of

reason. But the well of rational explanation was dry. If there were answers, they remained as specters, evading detection, hidden within the dark side of the half-light.

He slumped in an overstuffed chair of gray corduroy pulling foam tufts from the lacerated arms with a plucking that sounded like feathers being ripped from an overdry chicken carcass. The corners of his bloodened eyes drooped; his brow ridged.

Thick veins bulged from corded muscle as his sun leathered arms crossed and uncrossed between assaults on the chair. His build was that of a laborer; a man that worked too hard and received too little; a man not quite thirty, yet aged. Chalky crescents marred the underarms of his black T-shirt and splatters of ivory paint freckled his work boots. His jeans were faded and ripped at the knees.

Sandy hair furrowed between his combing fingers as he staggered from the chair like a drunken scarecrow and winced as his knees popped audibly in protest to the movement. He stretched skyward in mock surrender, attempting to loosen his knotted back, then leaned against the door staring blankly toward the slivers of afternoon sun.

Huddled beneath the window a scar mauled oak table balanced a pot-bellied vase boiling with wilted daisies. Blue and purple squared the floor, flanked on all sides by unadorned lavender walls that were so highly polished Tom knew they would squeak if he ran his finger across them. The floor tile reminded him of a bruised chessboard. Not unlike the computer chess game his wife, Carla, had given him so much hell for buying last Christmas. But this was not a game. At least, not in the traditional sense of the word. And he was not comfortable with the role he was forced to play.

'Damn,' he spat, 'I hate the smell in here.'

An aroma of disinfectant and alcohol clung to the chill air, stirred into lethargic movement by the creaking blades of a slow-wheeling ceiling fan. Humming whirs, staccato clicks, and alien bleeps sang to a tempo provided by the sucking breath of a respirator. The music was rhythmic, mechanical and dirge-like. A computerized monotony. A too loud clock above the door marked time.

The machines were squat and thin with pale green faces, bodies of gleaming silver and spindly legs spread in a posture of arrogance. Much like the pawns that open a chess match, Tom knew the machines only congested the middle of the board. They prolonged the game by getting in the way. His gaze dropped and, once again, contemplated the single black cord that lay less than an arm's reach away. The conductor, the power that spurred the machines; the source of the music. Balling his fists, Tom returned to the chair by his wife's bed.

Carla Wilson lay quiet, buried beneath cotton sheets. Her eyelids were closed, not even showing the twitching spasms of uneasy sleep. A skullcap of gauze bound her head fringed by straggles of blonde. The machines hunkered around her like mourners reaching out to touch the guest of honor at a wake. A single midget spotlight accented the pallor of her face, etching shadows in all the wrong places.

An emerald line snatched Tom away as it streaked across a monitor screen hurdling unseen obstacles at regular intervals. Amber numerics flashed in the eyes of the pawns, constantly changing, unable to settle upon an acceptable digit. His mind stalked from the machines to his wife and from his wife to the machines and came back blank. No brilliant strategy remained.

His opponent had breached the pawns and captured his queen. But the pawns held her prisoner, not allowing her a graceful exit.

As salty streams traced well used trails down his cheeks, Tom made his move. Shaky fingers closed upon the black cord and pulled. The music stopped. The room collapsed into silence-- no longer a jail, but a mausoleum for the ghosts of time and the tears of a lonely man.



Stephen R. Mehrwin

THE STORM

The hot sun bursts
the yellow melon
crouching in its dark tendrils.

A fresh wind blows
'neath ominous clouds
The pregnant seeds are scattered
by the gale.

The old house leans;
The bastions bulge.
Hands clasp hands:
Visions unfold.

by Harold Shortridge

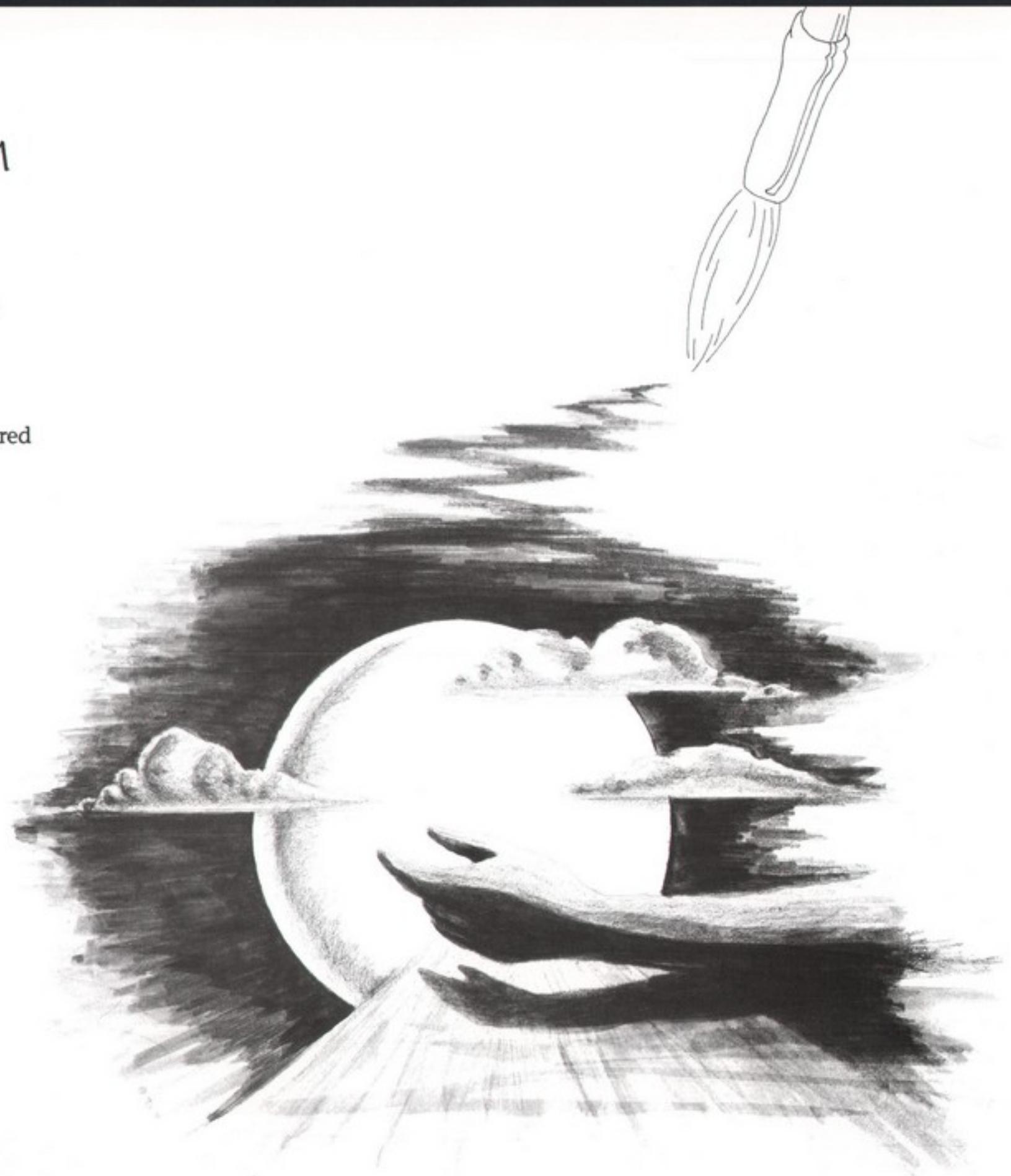


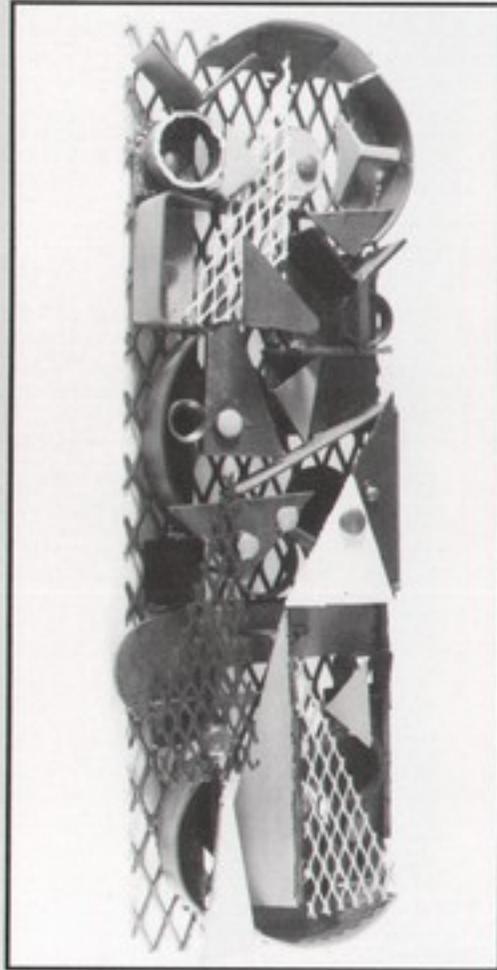
Illustration by Candis Cantell



Blown Glass by Tanya Persello



Blown Glass by Charlie Phillips



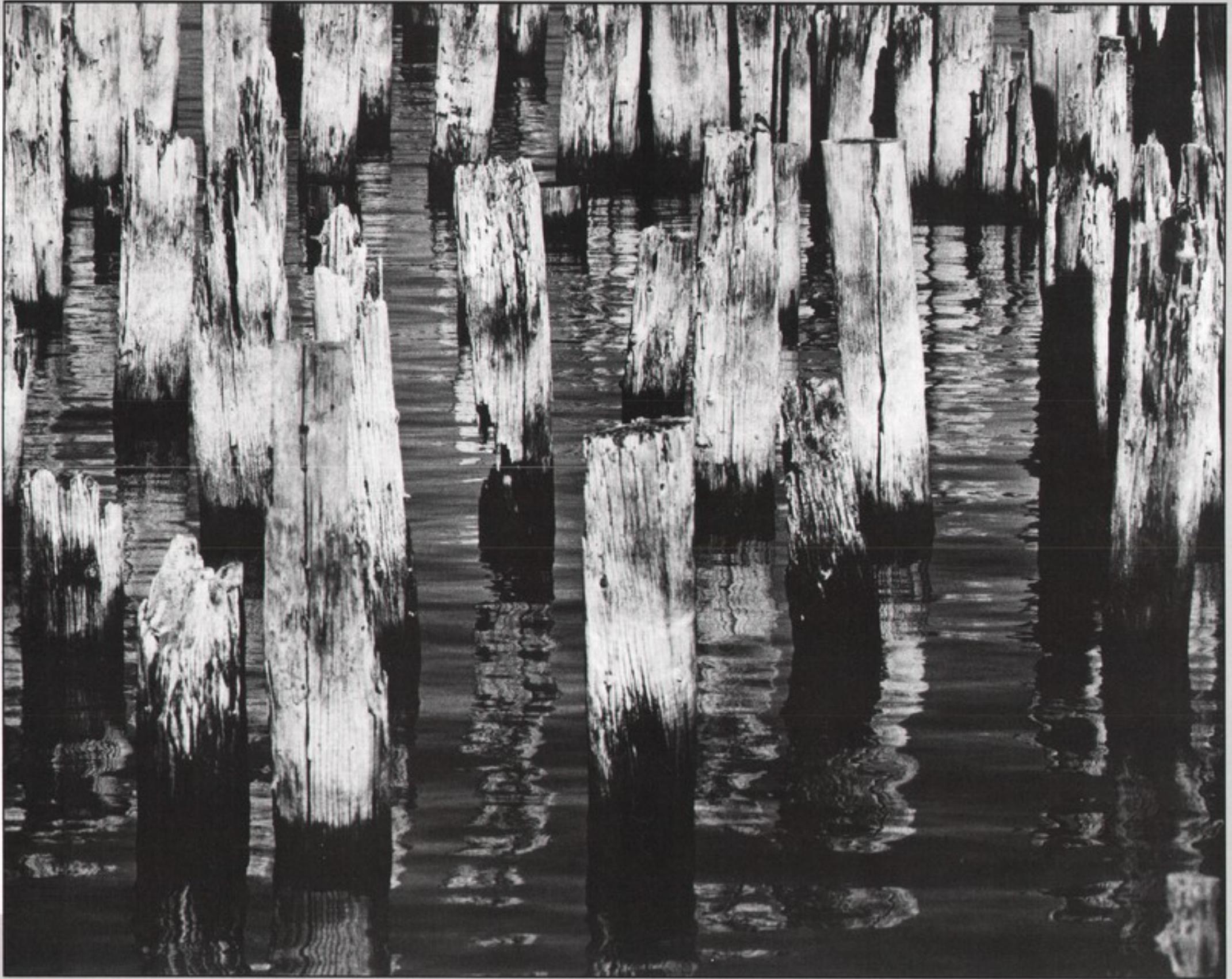
Metal Sculpture by Maggie Nowlin



Jewelry by Sue Jernigan

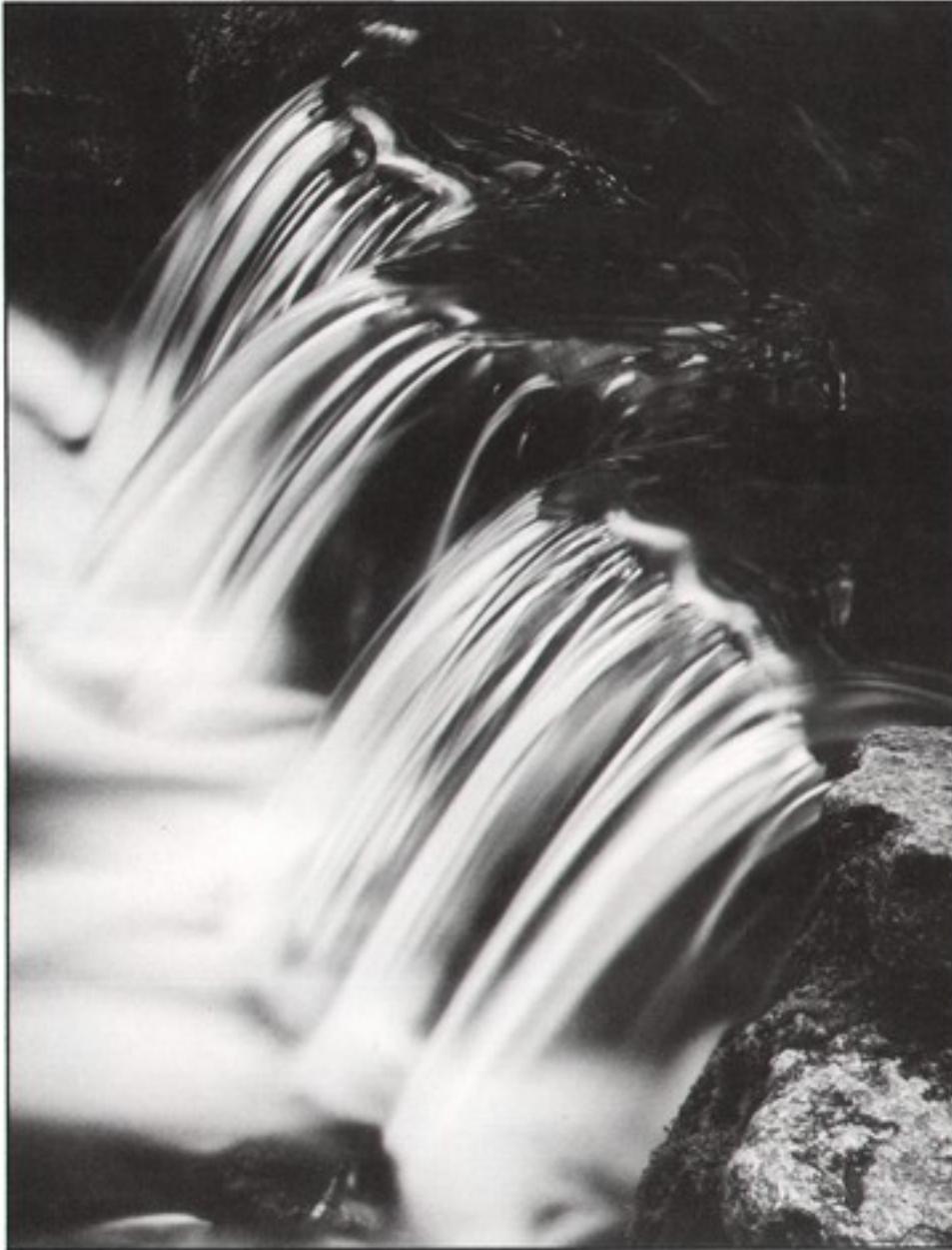


Wood Relief by Dana Klaas



Photograph by John Bracchi

Photograph by John Bracchi



HAIKU

juniper pine tree
bluish green berries fall
on the moonlit platform

blue waves flow across
the ripe ocean on the prairie
flax falls to swather

raindrops creep along
the edge of playground slide
where do butterflies hide?

by Shannon Olson

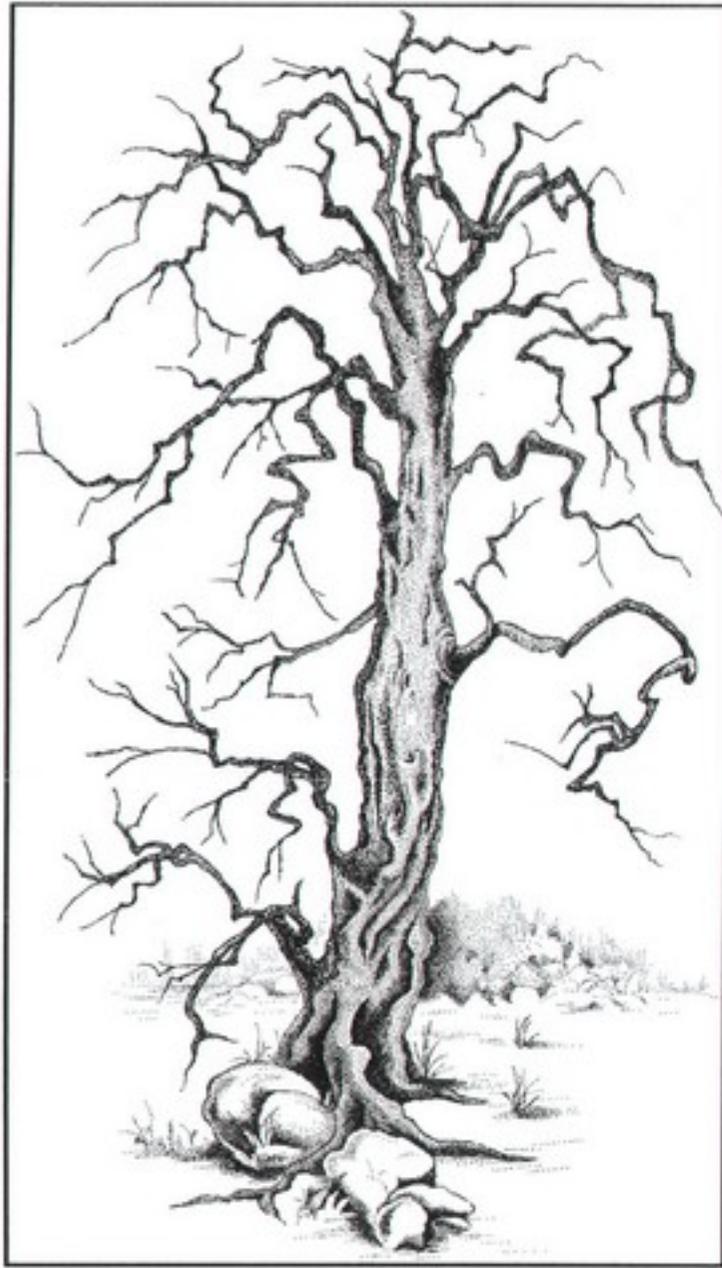


Illustration by Candis Cantell

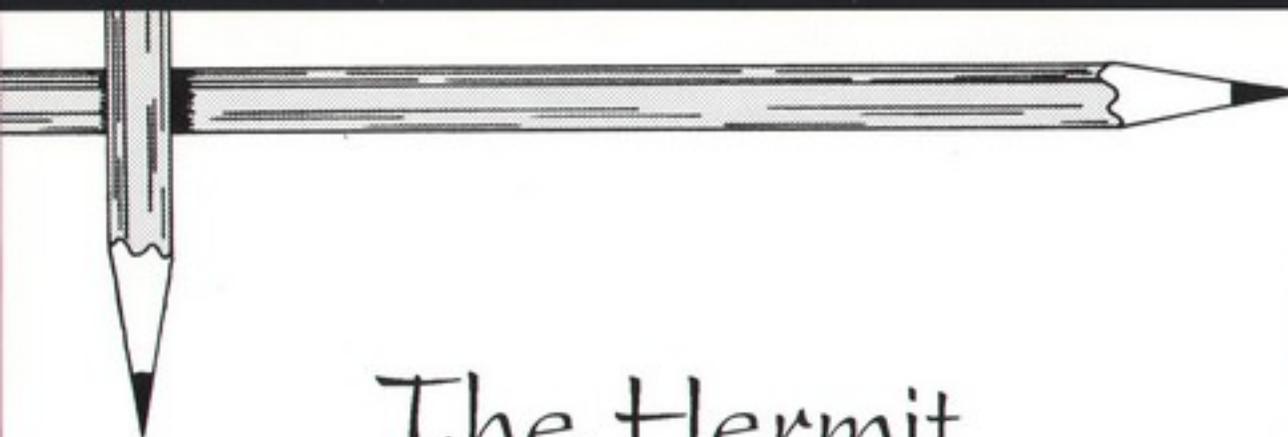
Tree

Green leaves turn to brown
Showing sturdy naked limbs
Tree stands cold in sleep

Barbara Wegge



Photograph by Kathleen O'Leary



The Hermit

by Rick Taylor



Photograph by John Bracchi

I was not at all pleased when, on the third day of my vacation, I heard the distant but distinct sound of a human voice. It irritated me that I could encounter people so far out from civilization, when I'd been anticipating a solid week of solitude. Nevertheless, my curiosity and perhaps (though I have to admit it) my involuntary need for companionship got the better of me, and checking my compass, I set out in the direction of the voice.

There was just the one voice, and it was a man's. It was deep and loud, and alternated between shouting, singing off-key and unintelligible muttering. It led me down the side of the ridge I'd been following and through about half a mile of pinyon and juniper forest, across a dry creek bed, to a heavily-wooded hillock. As I got closer, I could make out what the voice was saying, but was hard-pressed to make sense out of it.

"She'll be comin' 'round the mountain when she's damn' good and ready!" the voice sang, "So don't wait around like a jackass for her, Freddie! She'll be--"

The song abruptly ended in a shout. "Thief! Thief! Get away from there, ya long-eared, bushy-tailed, side-eyed varmint! Damn' tree rats. Yer nothin' but a bushy-tailed country rat, ya know that?! Aw, don't look at me like that. Don't... you know I hate that. What? Fine. Take 'em. See if I care. See if I care, ya varmint! Shut up! I can be louder than you can!

"Water. The fool on the hill needs more water! Who's gonna fetch it for me?... Fine. No bird baths this week, either. I hope your little armpits grow moss. No, I don't, either. It's all right, guys, I'll get it. Again. "Poor old Bill went down the hill to fetch a ton of water!"

I reached the hillock and began to circle it. From the far side came the sharp cry, "Look out, below!" accompanied by a dull thunderous clatter I couldn't identify. I ran, trying to ignore the jarring caused by my 45-pound backpack, but all I found on the far side of the hill was a narrow dirt track and a cloud of settling dust. It appeared the track ran from the top of the hill down to a ravine perhaps a quarter of a mile away. The dirt was hard-packed rather than loose gravel, and relatively free of bumps, but in the top layer of dust I could detect thin, shallow wheel ruts.

The hill was neither steep nor high. I followed the path up towards the summit, and discovered near the top a small cabin. It was, it appeared, part house and part cave, and it seemed to grow right out of the side of the hill, as naturally as a nose on a face. The "front yard" was cleared of brush and devoid of man-made clutter, save for an axe and chopping block and a small mound of rocks and clay, which I took to be a kiln. A "long-eared, bushy-tailed varmint" chattered away in one of the oak trees. On the far side of the cabin an empty clothesline was strung, and beyond that was a small garden.

The cabin itself faced south, and was built of stone, with clay chinking.

The broad porch was made of hand-cut timber and clay bricks. A wooden bench with a foot rail sat underneath a window with open shutters, but no glass, and beside the bench was a table on which sat a dirty ceramic bowl and cup, along with a collection of wood carvings: a squirrel, a rabbit, a deer, and several birds. One of them seemed to be a work in progress.

The door of the cabin stood open. I fought off the urge to go inside and look around, but did take a peek through the door. There was a table with a single chair, a shelf containing more wooden figures, a low bed in the corner with several animal skins for blankets and what looked like leather straps in lieu of a mattress. There was a large cooking fireplace built into the east wall, over which were suspended handfuls of drying herbs.

I hadn't come out to the wilderness in search of a story, but I had found one regardless, and an intriguing one, at that. I was anxious to know more about this modern-day mountain man. Did he live here year 'round, or was he just on vacation? Did he build this cabin? When? How? What brought him out to one of the few remaining wilderness areas in which neither a sound nor a sign of civilization reached? I shrugged off my pack and sat down on the porch, and waited for the answers to come back up the trail.

About fifteen minutes had passed when I heard the huffing and puffing and muttering of the hermit. I looked, and saw him towing a wooden wagon full of clay jugs. The man himself resembled a red-headed grizzly bear; he was big and powerful, with long, shaggy hair and a beard that began on his chin and continued on down his bare chest. He wore long pants that appeared to be made out of deerskin, and sockless moccasins on his feet. I rose as he neared the cabin, and called out a hello.

He froze when I spoke, then looked up, panic-stricken. It wasn't difficult to believe that he hadn't seen another human being in years, possibly, and here I was standing on his own porch as if I owned the place. He didn't move for a long moment, but his face performed a myriad of contortions as his brain raced to grasp the situation, perhaps replaying old, nearly forgotten memories of past contact with members of his own race.

"No!" he wailed suddenly. "No! Leave me alone! Go away!" He jerked the wagon off to the side of the trail, then picked up a jug and hurled it, not at me, but down the hill. It trailed an arc of water like a rainbow before exploding against a tree.

"Whadaya want?!" he screamed. "I didn't do nothin' ta you!"

"I just--"

"No missionaries, no peddlers, no government men allowed!"

He ran up onto the porch and stood toe to toe with me, hands on his hips, and glared. I backed away.

"I'm sorry to disturb you. I was out hiking, and I heard--"

"There are no hiking trails out here!"

"I know. That's what brought me here."

"Why?"

I had grabbed my pack and was trying to edge toward the porch steps, but I found that the hermit was blocking my way. His tone of voice still told me I wasn't welcome, but he appeared reluctant to let me leave.

"Probably for the same reason you're here. I needed a vacation away from people."

His glare softened to merely a stare, which he held for a few seconds before leaping off the porch and bounding over to the wagon.

"You need some water? I got plenty. Gallons and oceans of it!"

He lugged two jugs back up to the porch, and thrust one at me. "Take it. Take it! I got plenty more." He disappeared into the cabin and reappeared empty-handed a moment later.

"I don't want any neighbors," he said, picking up two more jugs. "Humans are all jackasses. Even me. But they put up with me," he waved a hand, but I wasn't clear as to whether he was indicating the wood carvings or their living counterparts, "because I'm the only one. They come to see me when I'm sick. They steal my food, but I steal it back when I get better."

I was at the wagon when he came out again. "May I give you a hand with those--"

"I don't need your help!" he screamed, yanking his own hair with both hands. "I don't need you I don't need anybody, go 'way!"

I shrugged, pulled the stopper out of the jug he'd given me (which I was still holding), and emptied the contents out on the ground. "I don't need your help, either," I said. We stared at each other silently over the stream of water.

"I can't grow cotton here," he said finally. "I can't make cotton shirts or socks or underwear."

Then he was off again, before I'd had time to digest this odd revelation. He didn't object when I followed him into the cabin with the last water jug.

"Nice place," I commented, as he stored the water in a small cellar accessible by trap door.

"I made it. I made all myself. Nobody helped me."



"How long ago did you build it?"

"When I moved here."

"And when was that?"

"I don't remember! I don't care! Time is another useless human invention. Why should I count the minutes, the hours, the days, the months, the years?!"

"I was just--"

"It was four minutes to midnight when I left. If time has gone forward or back, it not my fault. I had nothing to do with it."

"I didn't intend to anger you; it's just that I find your lifestyle fascinating. By the way, my name is Ken Grandison, I'm a reporter for the--"

"A reporter! A mad watch dog! What have I done? Who have I wronged? Which rumors are told so often they become true? Go away, with your guilt!"

"I don't understand. I--"

"Guilt by association! White Anglo-Saxon Protestant Males are the rapers and pillagers of civilization. But you can't! blame! me! I quit!"

He was stomping around the cabin, flailing his arms in random directions, kicking the wall for emphasis. I didn't wish to further aggravate him, but I felt that I should defend at least myself, if not my profession.

"Speaking of 'guilt by association', you've just accused me of rumor mongering, simply because I'm a reporter."

"I don't wanna play anymore! I don't wanna talk to you! I don't know how to talk anymore. I just wanna be left alone!" He pushed me outside, then stood in the doorway watching as I put on my pack. He seemed caught in a double bind, wanting me to leave, but wishing I would stay.

Just before I stepped off the porch, he said quietly, "There were two hunters, once, a long time ago."

"Two hunters came by here?" He nodded. "Were they your only visitors since you built this cabin?"

"Them, and Ken Grandison."

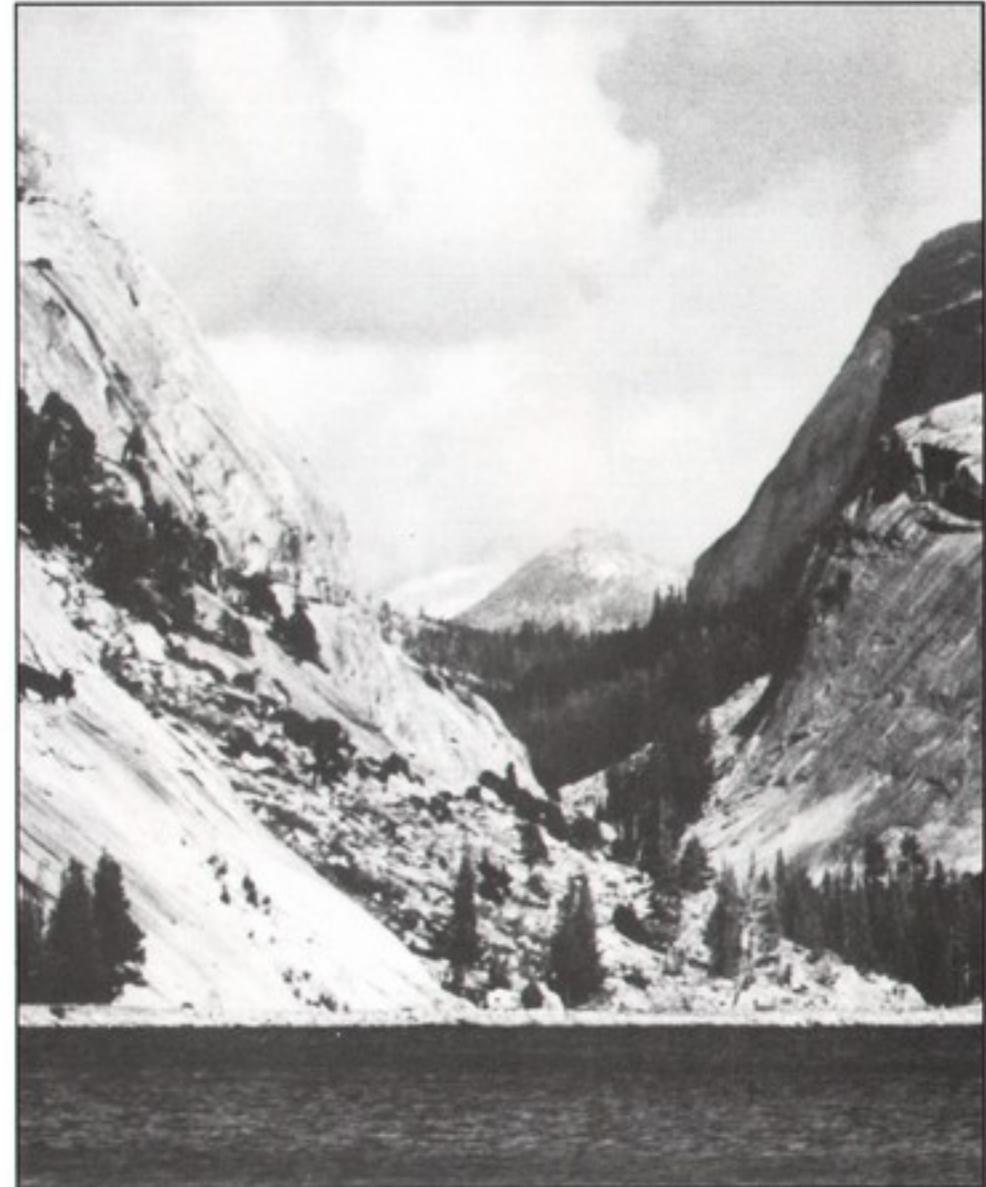
"You never did tell me your name," I said.

"I left it behind, too. I don't need it here."

A psychologist might have diagnosed the man as a manic-depressive sociopath, but I could only admire his independence and his survival skills. I too have, on occasion, mused that I would prefer my own company

to that of most other people, but I simply lacked the boldness and belief in myself that is necessary in order to leave the civilized world behind. I wished I could have interviewed the hermit; I expect he had much to tell and to teach. However, it seemed more important to respect his privacy, and to allow him to continue to live the life he had chosen, without my interference or anyone else's.

Still, before leaving, I managed to talk him into trading two of his wood carvings for a couple of my cotton tee shirts.



Photograph by John Bracchi





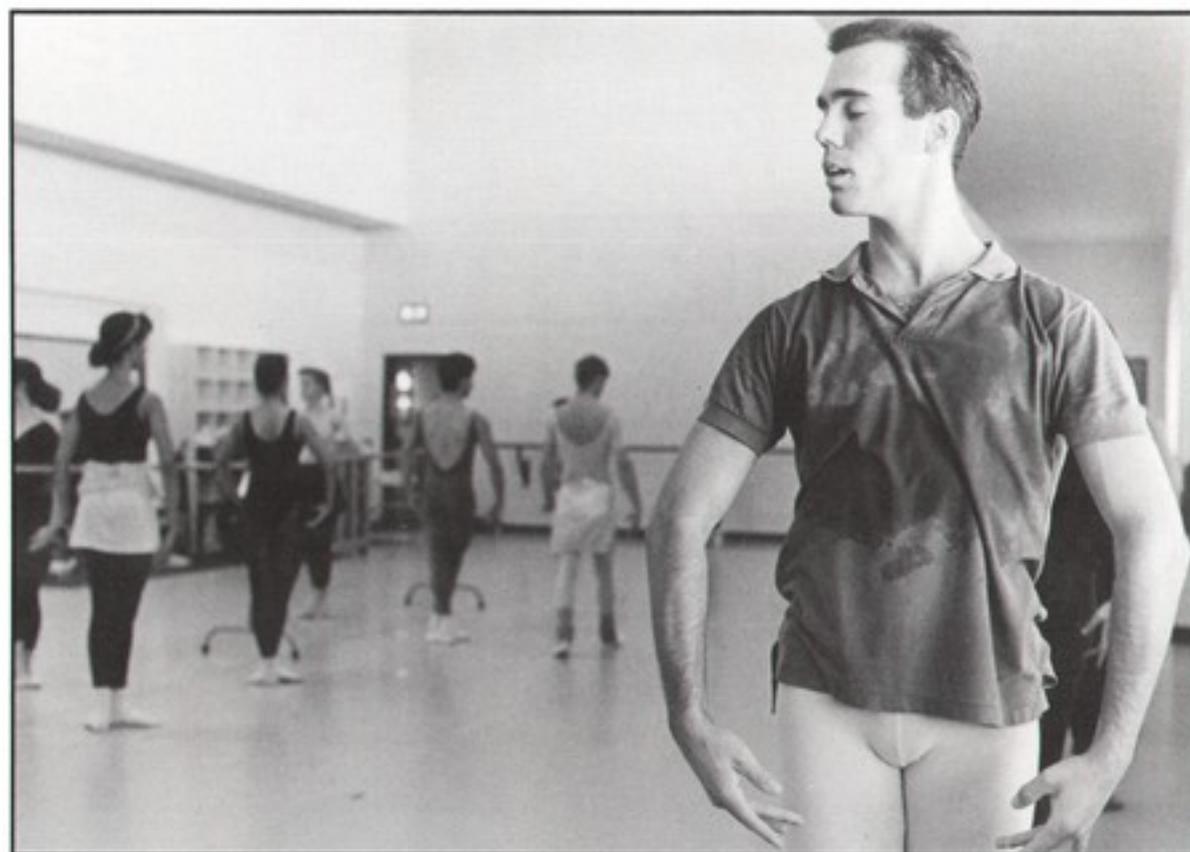
Drawing by Ramelle Gilliland

Aftermath

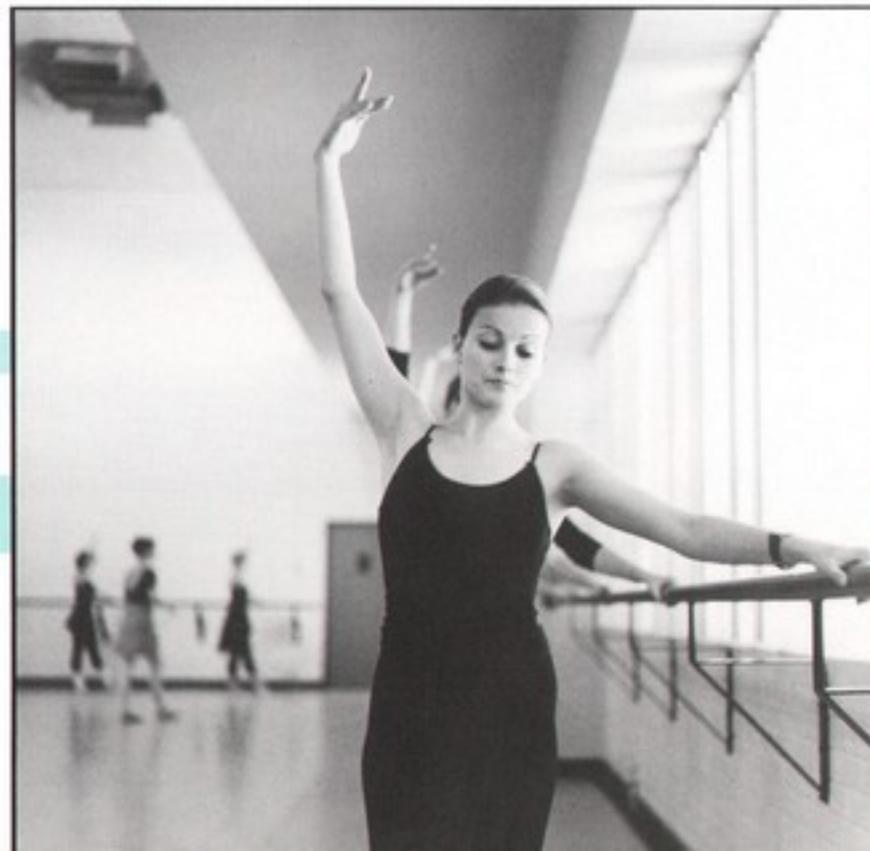
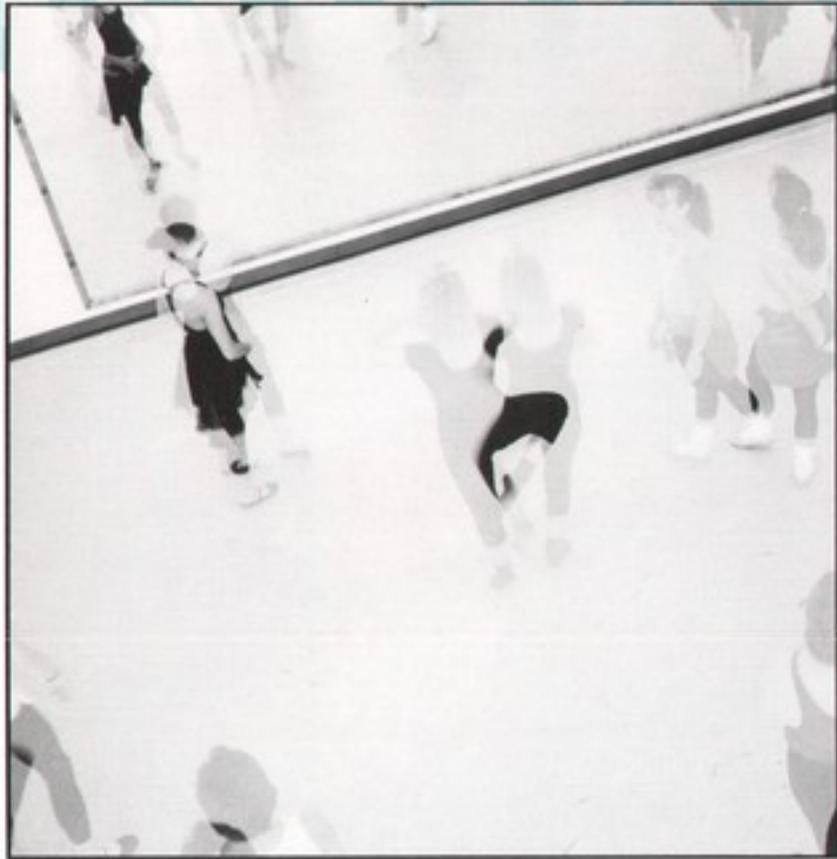
In the garden of the poet Li Chan,
the cicadas are silent.
The fountains in the courtyard
of the jade peacock are dry.
Water lilies lie drooping
in the stagnant fish pool.
Over the marble tiles
of the moon-gate courtyard
the north wind has scattered
the crimson leaves of the maple trees.

The poet Li Chan lies in his grave
on the western hill.
The last sound he heard,
just before he died.--
the crackle of rifle fire
on Tienanmen Square.

Wallace Bastian



Photographs by Marrianna Dougherty



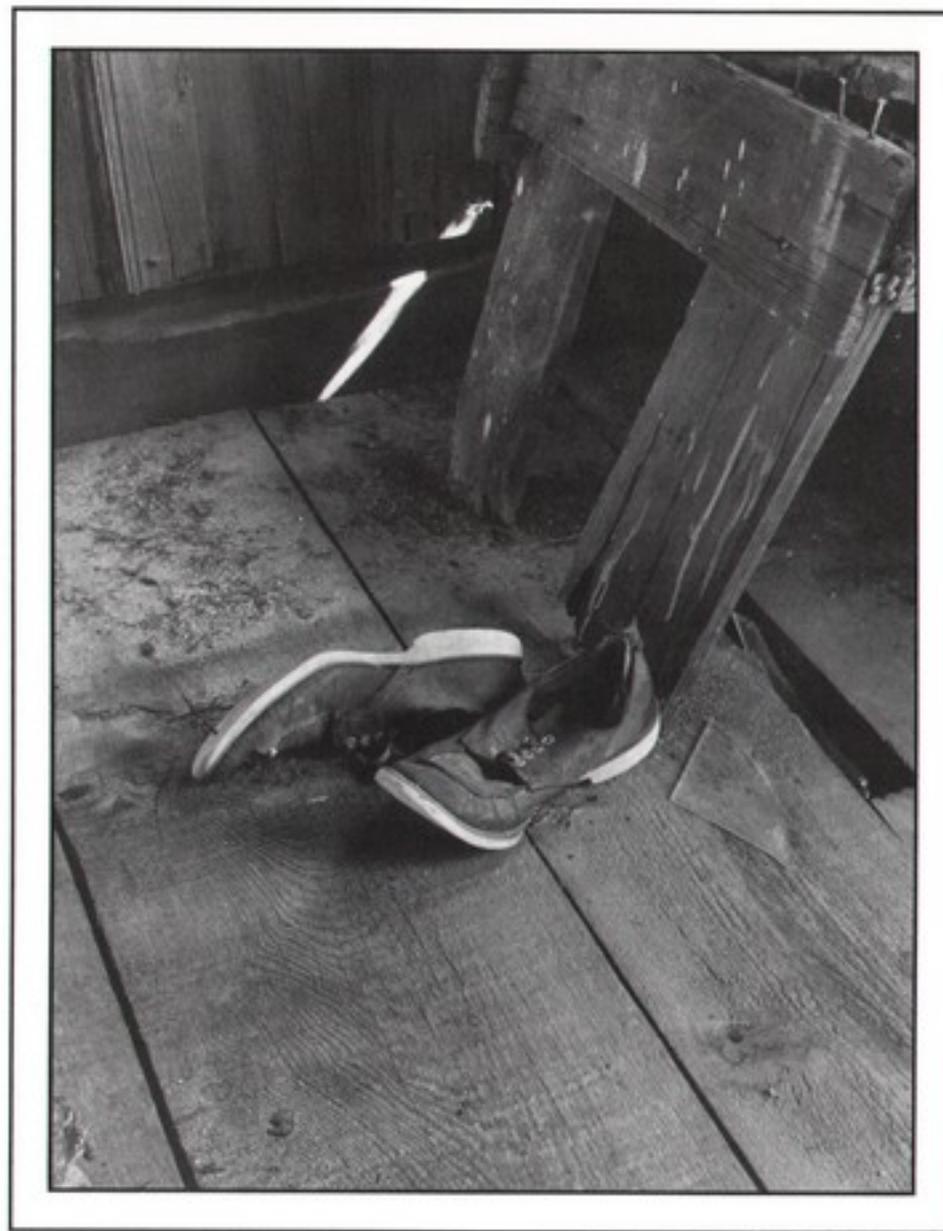
After The Funeral

Some Hopis told the grieving widow
Those Kachinas were angry.
That's why Jimmy's plane crashed
In storming snow of Oak Creek Canyon.

I didn't want to believe it!
One year later Jane called
When the time came
To pack his clothes and let go.
We held each other in tears.

I forgot how he smelled.
His flannel shirt
Waiting in the closet
Worn only an hour
Before he left us.

Johanna Leigh



Photograph by Linda Sharp

So Silent

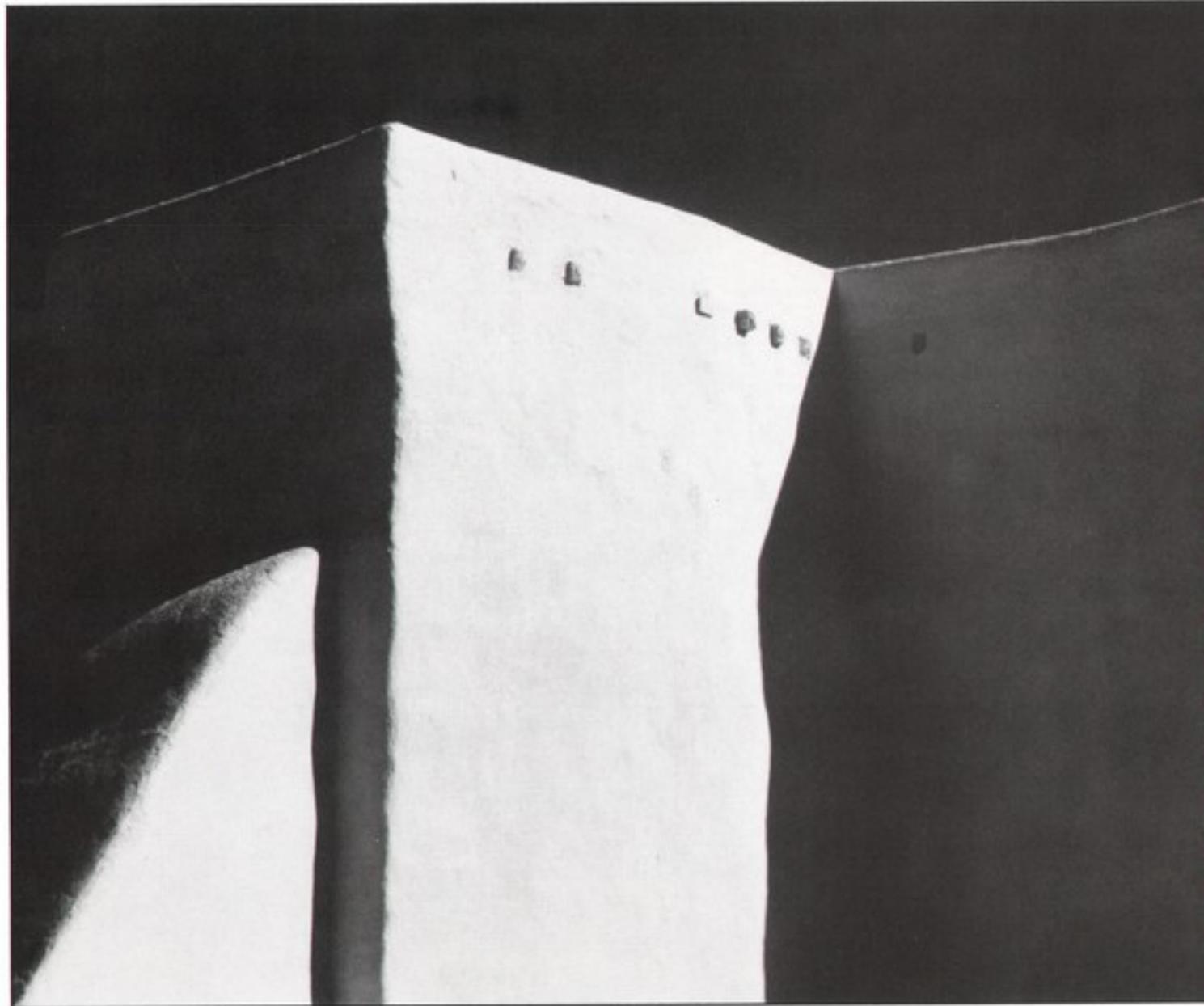
Life expectancy affected. Why not will he die?
The vulture has my insides ripping them out.
Cool composure I show, WHY?

Gathering wood for a campfire.
Laughing as we play in the snow.
Seeing a granddaughter still bloody from the womb.
Falling asleep, gently nestled in your arms.

Brain cancer, God I hate you!
No more gentle caresses, paralysis takes over.
No more to hear you speak,
and to think at times I had wished you to shut up.

I sit and listen to your labored breath,
the nurse says it will probably be tonight.
I sit and watch and wait, so silent it comes.

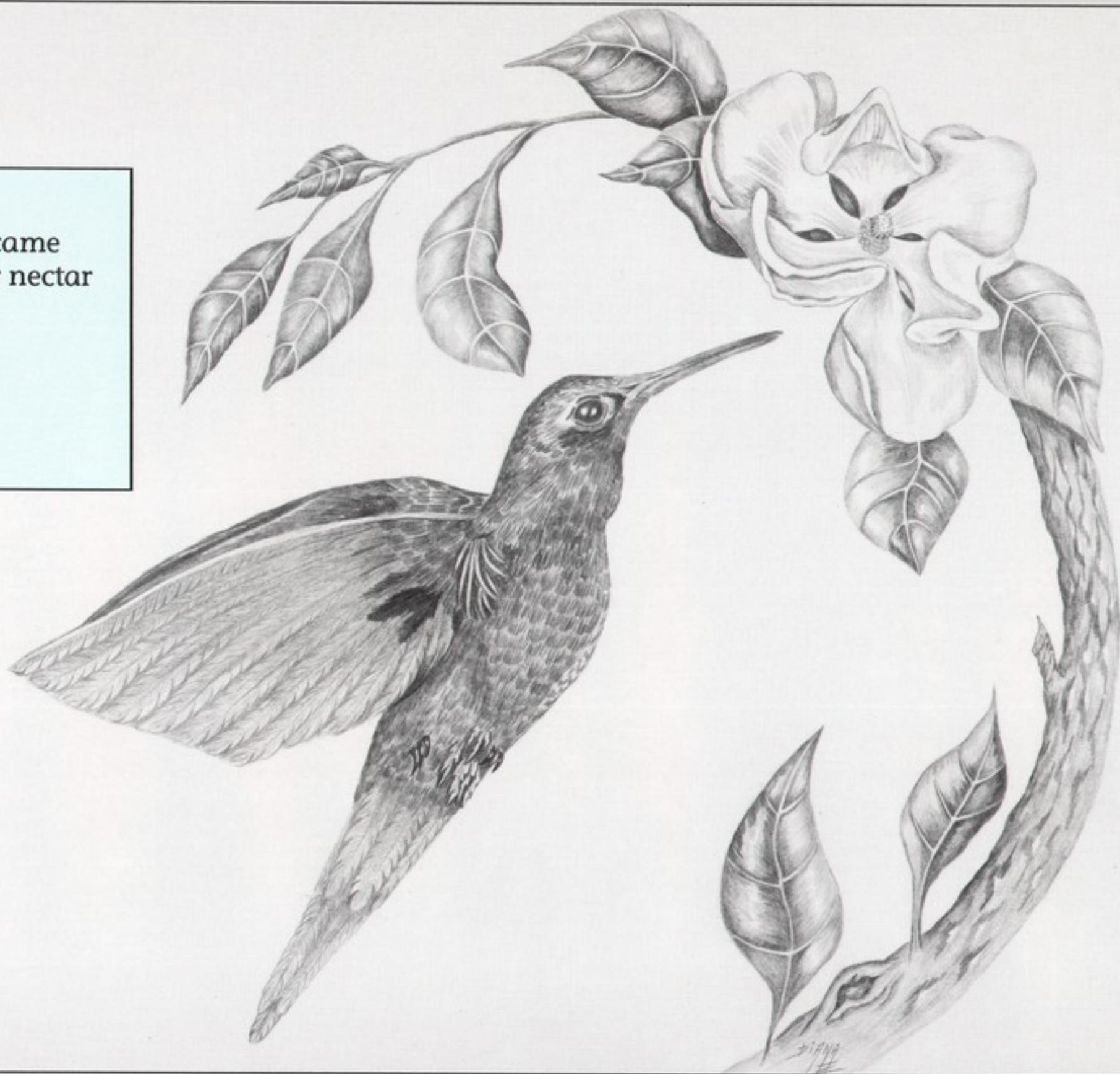
Susan Crook



Photograph by Gary Olsen

The humming bird came
Looking, in vain, for nectar
From my red t-shirt.

Albert Lovejoy



Drawing by Ramelle Gilliland



Drawing by Ramelle Gilliland



Down Is My Sound

Up is my nature
Down is my sound.
Heavy the ropes
That weigh and pound
Outweigh the threads
Of mirth's delight.

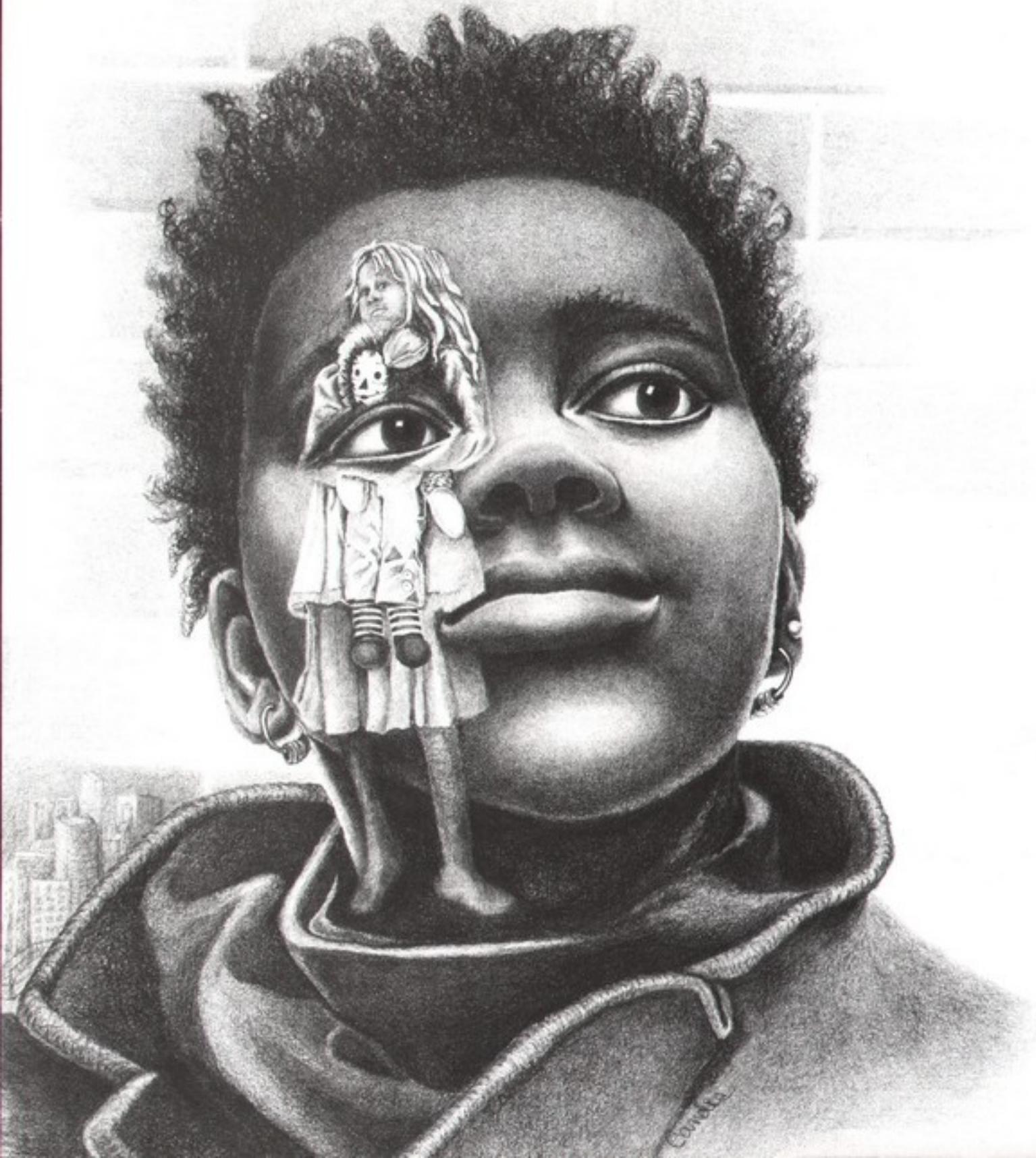
Outweigh the thread
Of joy and peace,
Of wrens in flight,
Young lovers' caprice,
A hero honored,
A God Revered.

Intense in my heart
Is the wrench of life's stings
While the flirts of flight,
Light butterfly wings,
Put no demands
On my written lines.

The beauty of song
I fail to extol
But death keeps on grieving
My ravished soul.
I laugh and love
But write of loss.

I live a life
Of natural cheer
But deep, dark and down
I write of fear.
Up is my nature
But down is my sound.

by Elizabeth Connelly



IN THE CITY

In the city
as always,
there were echoes in the night,
Gunshots they were.

I had to get the children in.

They knew the routine.

We crawled the floors
as cats stalk birds
keeping our heads below the window.

The blades of a helicopter
came beating through the sky
hovering over the war below and
vibrating down to me,
grabbing my heart.

Then suddenly,
like a bomb exploding,
Shots.

Soon after, banging.
The police came in
searching.

This was not unusual,
to some, a ritual
and still for others,
a litany of death.

Regan Moreno

Photograph by Michael Jones

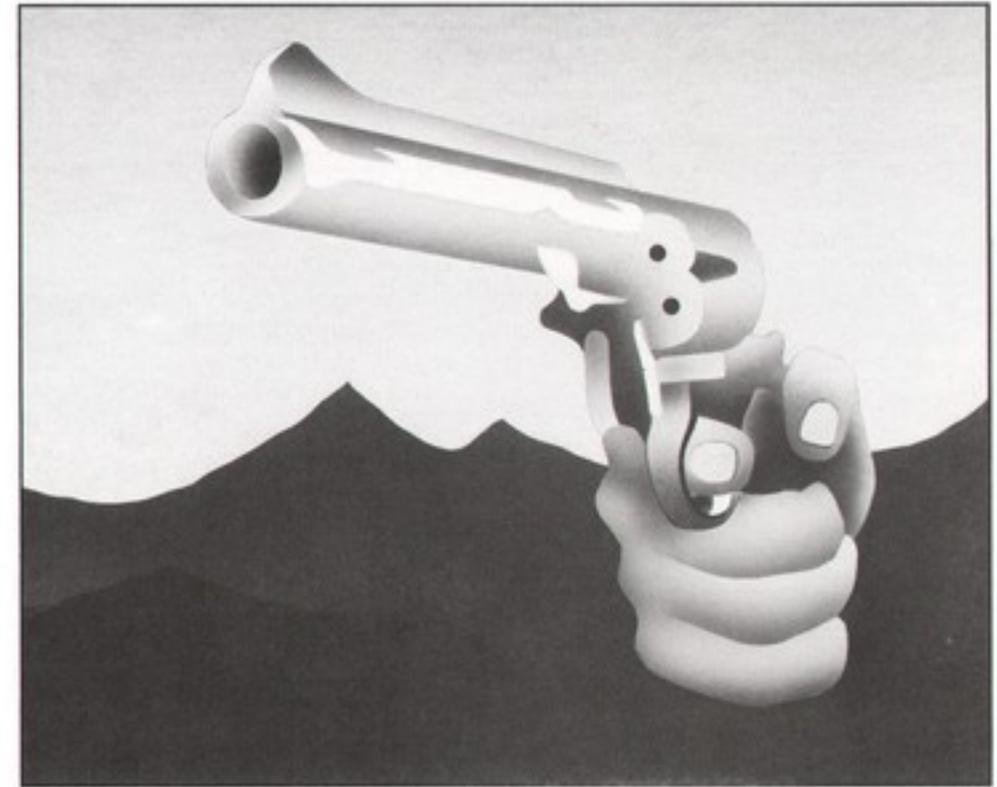
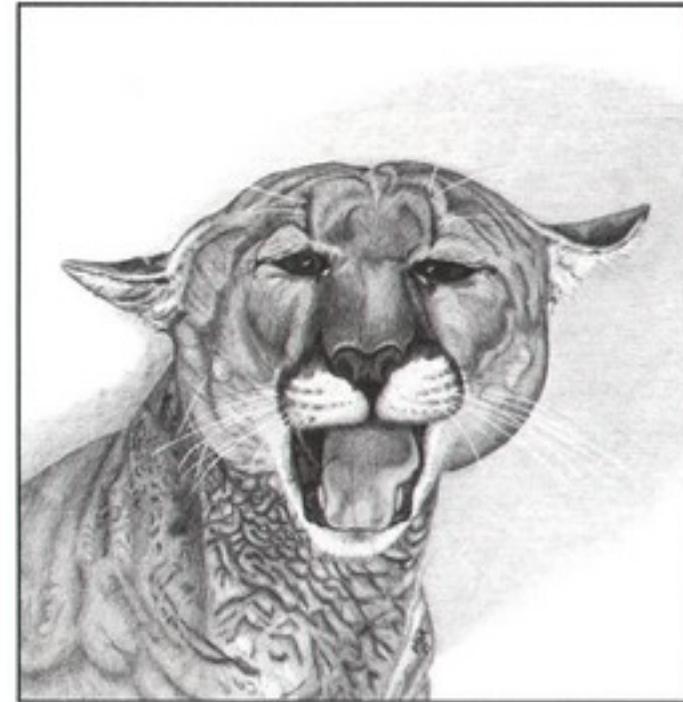
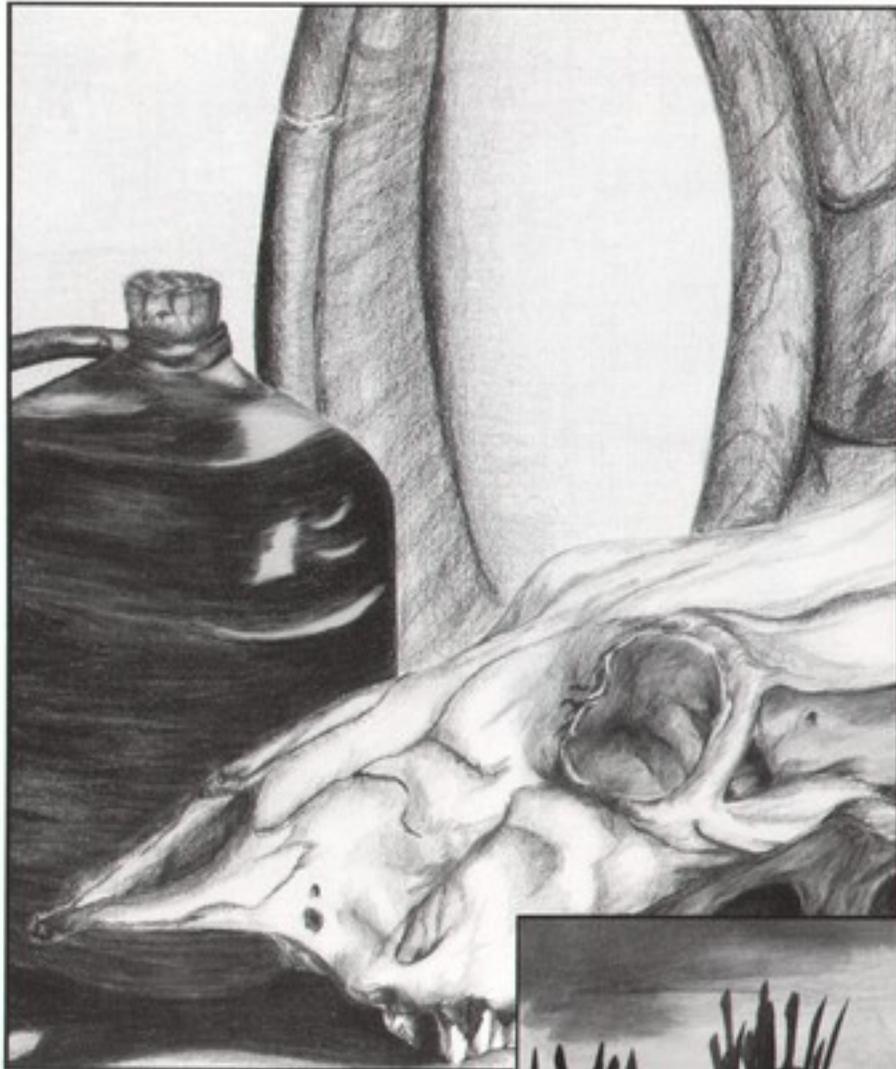


Illustration by Rob Folkman

Drawing by Jana Lunt



Drawing by Dana Klaas



Illustration by Warren Unger

*cool slide and wander
around the moss covered rocks
a lily pad floating.*

Shannon Olson

Calligraphy by Darcy Scott

Stepping Stone from My Childhood

My early childhood was a time of happiness and security. I will always have fond memories of the very early morning hours. Mom got up around 4 a.m. and started the fire. Soon I could hear her flopping out fried bread or tortillas, and I could smell the aroma of bacon and fried potatoes. I don't know which smelled the best, the fried bread, the bacon and potatoes, or the wood smoke from the wood stove.

Then when the sun was just ready to come up, Mom would get us up and we, my 2 brothers and 2 sisters, would run 1/2 mile toward the rising sun and 1/2 mile back home. Having completed our run, we attacked our breakfast with ferocious appetites. We ate on the floor in a circle. We were very happy, close and the food was delicious.

After breakfast, my brother and I would go after the horses. We would hobble them the night before so they wouldn't wander more than 2 or 3 miles from our place. We would catch them, ride them home and saddle them so we could ride them as we herded sheep.

The sheep were allowed to mosey along at their own pace, so as to allow them to eat their fill. Once a day they would be herded to the pond to have a drink.

We entertained ourselves in various ways while the sheep poked along, nibbling here and there. Sometimes we brought along our matchbox cars to play with or we'd challenge our friends (they were herding sheep, too) to racing our horses against theirs. This was a safe challenge for us since we had a young horse that loved to run and show his heels to other horses!

Lenora Black Calf

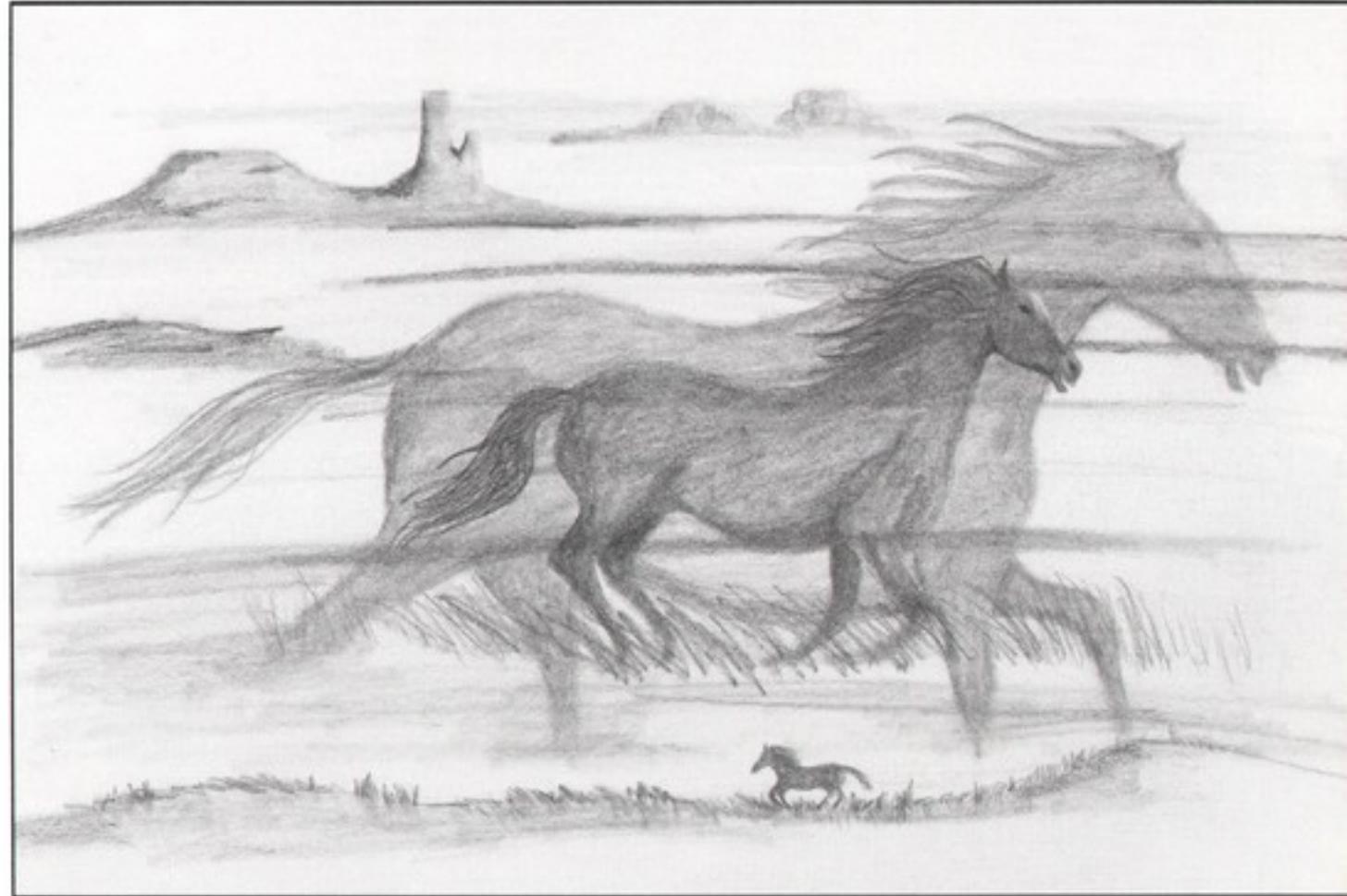


Illustration by Brenda K. Phelps

Catcher

What happened was
I dropped the ball...
so to speak...
a pop foul, I sprang
from behind the plate,
flinging my mask away,
the ball going way up
over the stands
no way anybody
was going to catch it...
not even Allie could
have got to it...

Stradlater was up:
he's hot hitting 450
or something astronomical
and all...then the
old ball started to
drift back in...
I knew if I got him
out we had a chance
to get back in the
old ball game...
I had momentum and all,
I knew I could snag it,
I mean I'm actually quite
athletic, if you really
want to know the truth...

If I could get my mitt
under it... and I did...
the ball went right
into the old pocket...
I caught it, then
my feet got balled up
in this funny divot
in the turf...I tripped
and the ball just skipped
out of my mitt and all,
it just flipped out
for chrissake...

I mean it was a case
of the little ball
getting fouled up
with this big one,
it's called Earth
if you really want
to know...

I'd tell you how the
game came out and all,
but I'm not in the mood...
you have to be in the mood
to do that kind of stuff.

(after J. D. Salinger)

Ray Spaulding



Photograph by Linda Sharp

For a Woman With Dark Eyes

Sometime during the night
You slip out from my bed.

As I turn on my shoulder,
You stand motionless
In the dark.

Your naked flesh
Zebra-striped with shadows
From the blind.

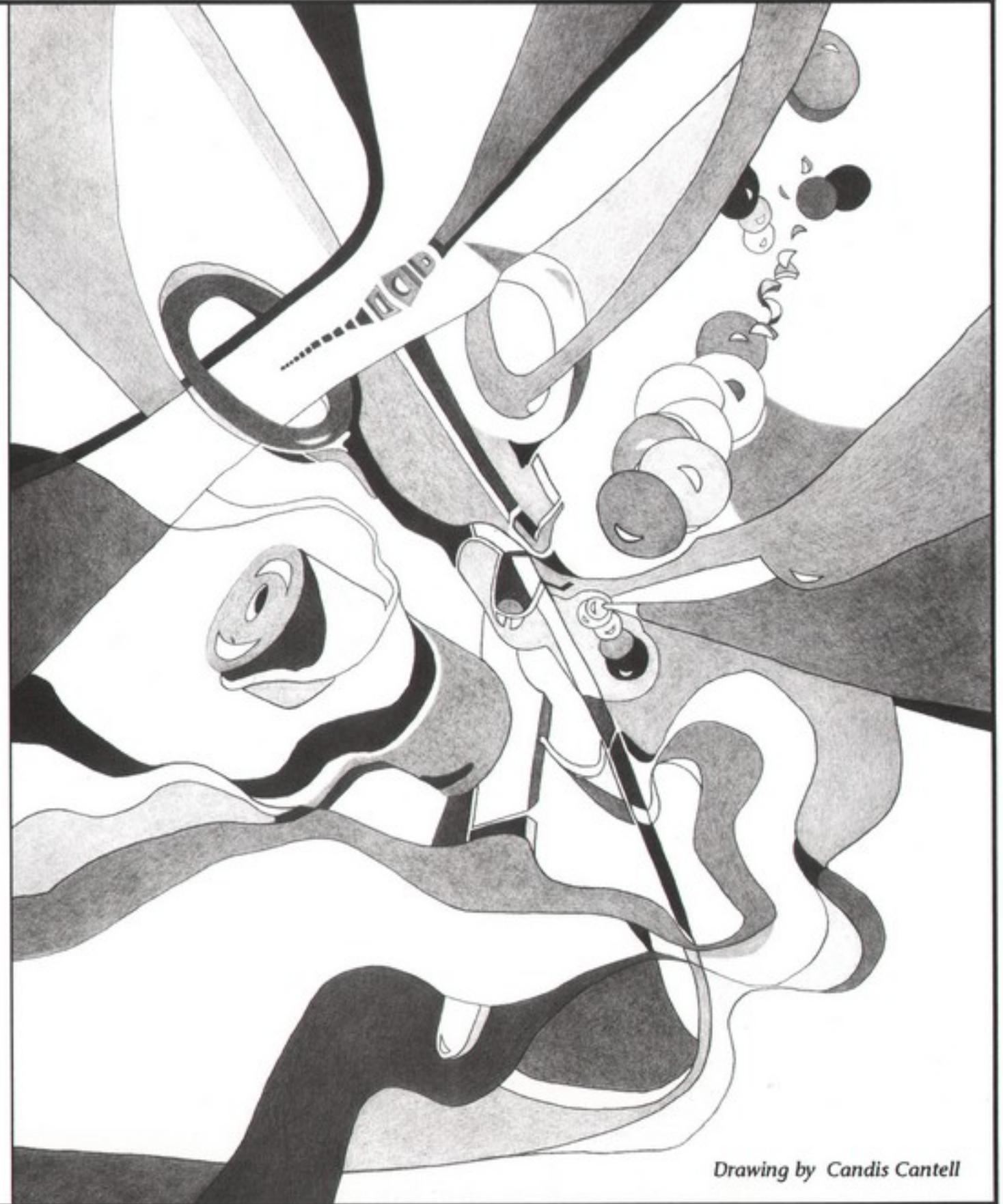
Softly I touch
Your animal flank,
Fearing at any moment
You will go galloping
Over the plain.

Steve Aurzada

The Water Slide

I had to wait
an unbearably long
time for my turn
to arrive.
But the wait
was a pleasant one
and I was well cared for.
Toward the end I got
restless, anxiously
nudging ever closer
to that point where
I would let go.
My moment arrived so
with my eyes closed
and breath held
I toppled head first into
the yawning chasm.
I started moving,
suprisingly slow
considering the angle
of descent. I cleared the first set of bumps
and started picking up speed.
With heart pounding and face contorting
I hurtled down through the tunnel.
An impossibly short time later
I skidded to a halt,
opened my eyes,
took a deep breath
and let out my first scream.

Karl Siegfried

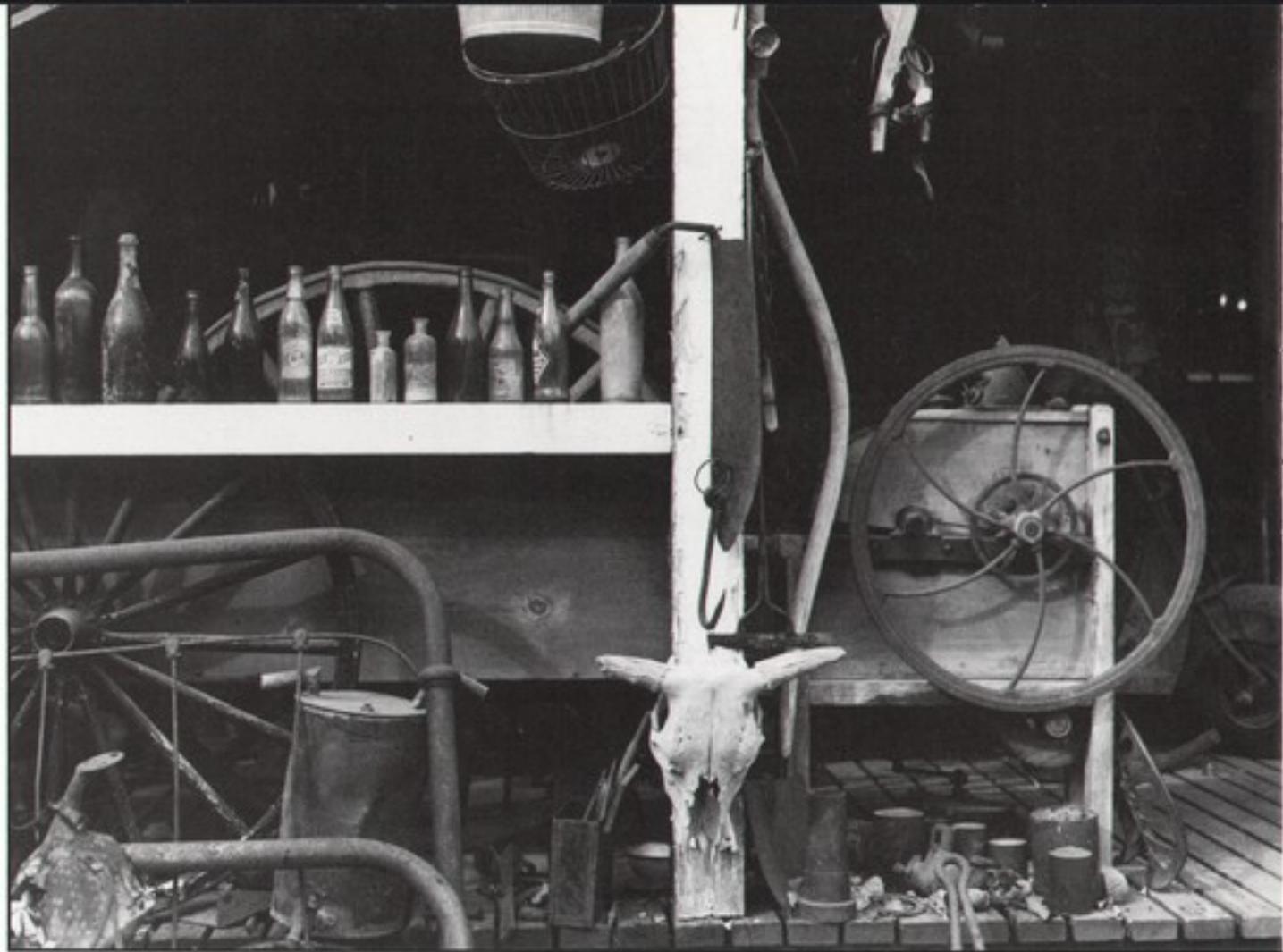


Drawing by Candis Cantell

MY TOWN

My town is small and quaint,
with similiarities comparable to none.
Attributes of my town are, its people.
Who play only when work is done.
The weekend brings a game, all will attend.
It is our noon bell, and time to be a friend.
Maybe we'll win, another glorious game,
or we'll just dream of that name of fame.
Then for the young it's a time for fun,
a time on the town, a time on the run.
Some will go and park on Ice Cream Shack Hill,
and some will just drive, and get their fill.
To all, there is a well known friendly wave,
and your name is well known, for all that you gave,
For my town of Bagdad, whose streets are well paved.

Ernest A. Camp



Photograph by Linda Sharp

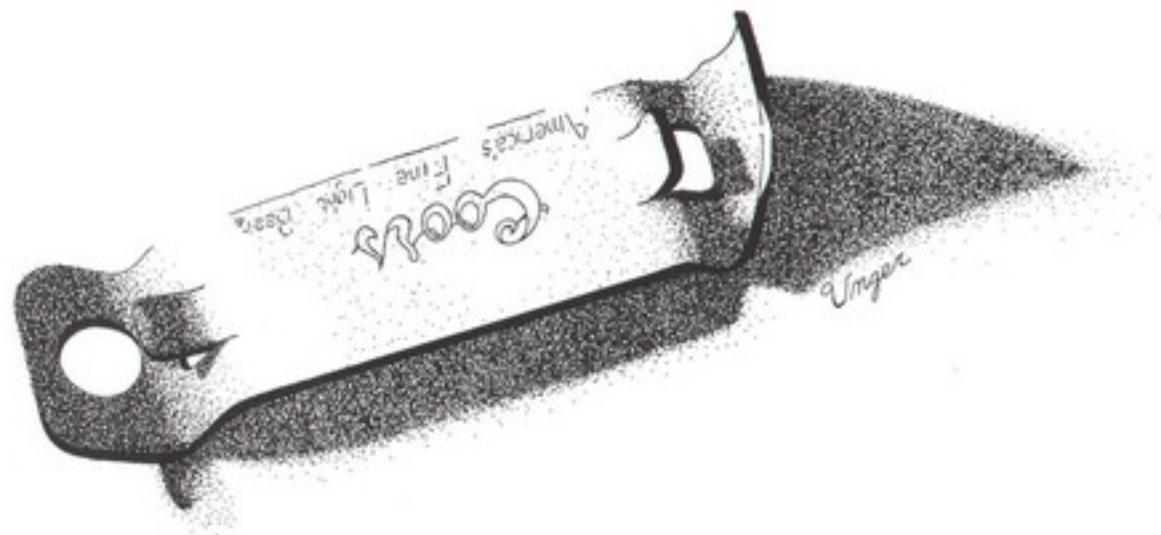


Illustration by Warren Unger

musty dusty loft
harvesting equipment sleeps
weary shadows creep

Shannon Olson

Illustration by Peggy Schuler



PEGGY
SCHULER © 1990

Sometimes My Soul Remembers

A swish of skirts
About my ankles.

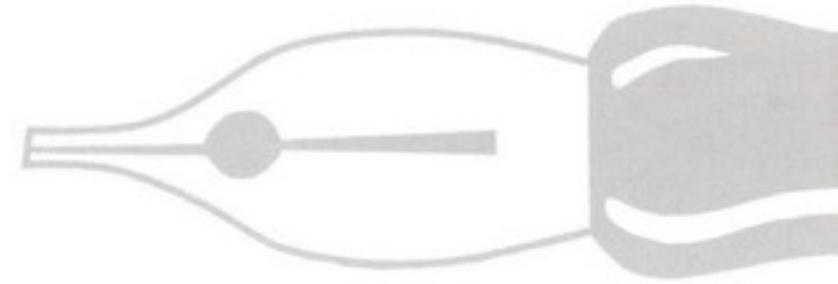
Lace up dresses
Left untied.

Heeled boots upon
Wooden floors.

Popcorn in a
Wired basket.

Pointed boots that
Pinch my toes.

Gathering skirts to
Climb the stairs.



Print by Diana Lee Brunson

Doc

A minus tide
in the great tidal pools
out on the tip of land
called POINT PINOS

Through the lowering mist
I thought I saw him,
Doc Ricketts
with buckets and
collecting gear...

Old slouch hat
down over his eyes...
fishing vest pulled
over a leather jacket...
green waders hitched
up to his belt;

He trudged from pool
to pool... in his quiet
water world.

He knelt down
to pick up a small
denizen in zone four,
his designation for
the lowest inter-
tidal...

Studied the lovely
little mollusc named:
Hermissenda crassicornis
for a long moment...
gently dropped it
into a small container,
and placed it in one
of the buckets,
filled with sea
water.

He stood and
paused, his head
tilted slightly...
as if savoring the
smells of iodine, lime,
brine and powerful
protean of the sea:
smell of sperm and ova:

The smells of
life and richness...
death and decay...
and birth.

The distant muffled
roar of a comber breaking
on the barrier reef...
outside the whistle buoy
and scream of sea birds...

He roused from his
reverie...
picked up his gear,
moved off
in the coolness
of morning air.

The off-shore breeze
stirred shifting wisps
of fog
to obscure him,
for a moment...
and when it cleared...
he was gone.

(thanks and apologies to
John Steinbeck and Ed)

Ray Spaulding



Photograph by Linda Sharp

Relationships

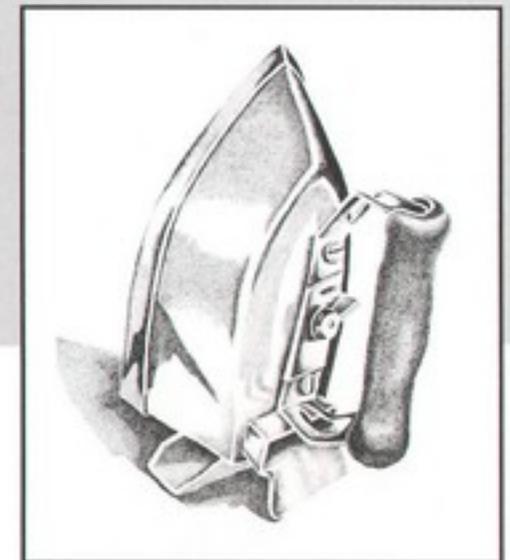
I have gone through life
Trying on relationships
Like oversized dresses
Sliding off one shoulder
Sagging below my knees
But one dress is so beautiful
I take it home
Put a few tucks here
Raise the hem a couple inches
Finished
I have a dress
That looks like a hand-me-down

Kathleen Hood

Illustration by Candis Cantell



Illustration by Cindy Cartier





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