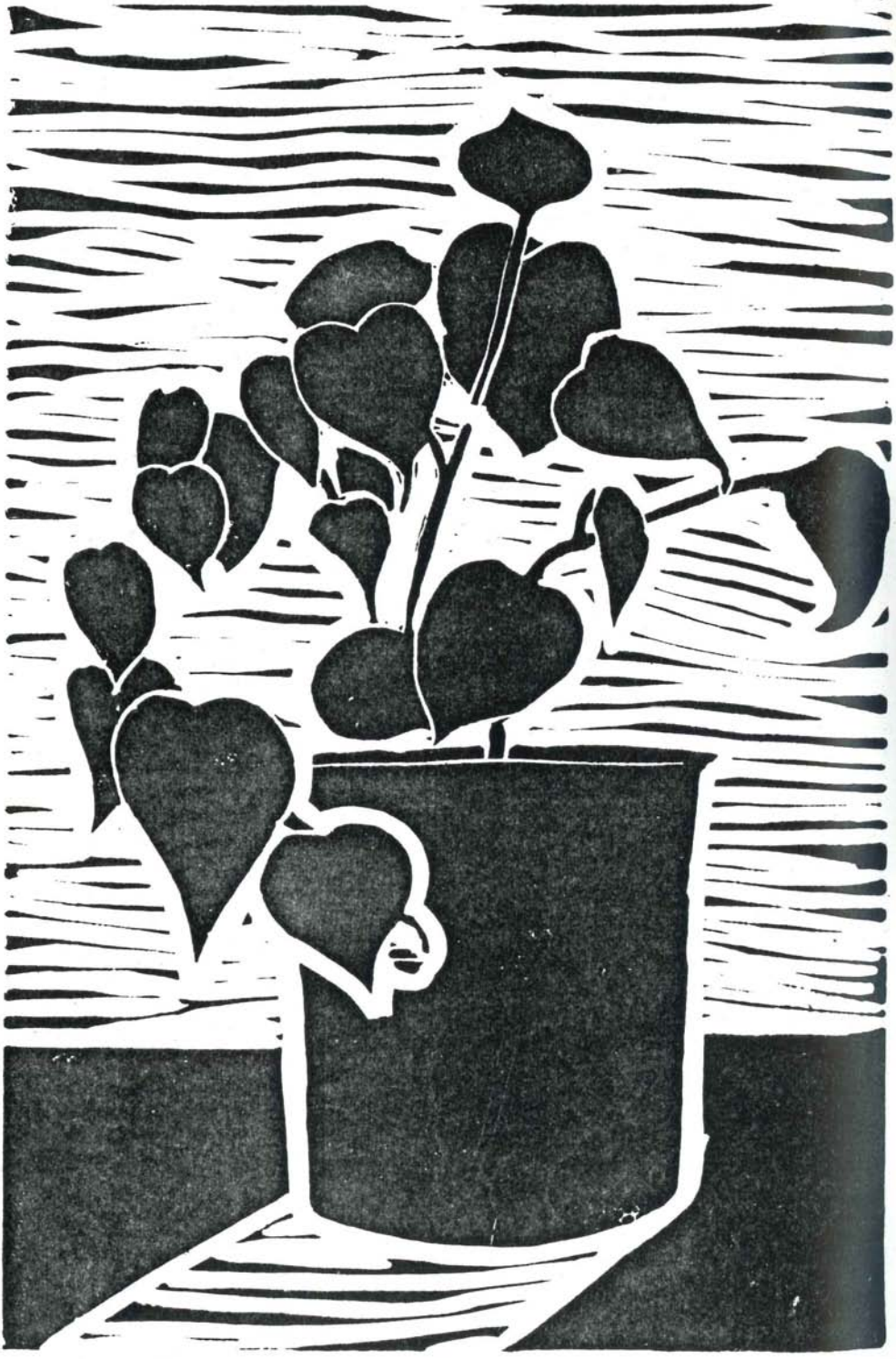


KNOSSA

1979







# KIOSK

Morningside College  
Sioux City, Iowa

Spring, 1979

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## **The Coffee Cup**

On the breakfast table she set  
A hot, steaming cup of coffee.  
He gulped half  
and swore  
Because it burned his mouth.  
They sat silent while he ate  
And then, silently, he left.

The noon sun's rays shone warm  
On the half cup of cold coffee  
When he didn't call  
To say he'd be home late.

Dull, gray dawn  
Had just arrived  
When he stumbled home.  
Her note  
(On yellow lined paper)  
Was held down by the cup  
With the dried brown ring  
In its bottom.

## **Into Your Hands, I Commend My Poem**

Delicately, ruthlessly,  
You reached out and broke off a bit.  
"That looks MUCH better,"  
You said.  
My sculpture of words  
Crumbled.





*Art is like  
a game  
played  
over a  
cup of  
coffee*

## **Ode To A Side Order of French Fries**

Golden crisp and crunch  
Bursting into  
White fluffy potato-hot  
With here and there  
A sparkle of salt to surprise my tongue.

***Jan Herzberg***

## The He Drunk

He sits alone  
At a table  
With a friend  
The friend chatters with his "Buddie."  
Buddie buys the drinks.  
The music grows louder  
Their mumbling slurs swell.  
    The polish from the shower is gone.  
    Their breath is sour  
    From belching and drinking.  
Their tongues have been numbed,  
Senses dulled,  
Both Jekylls turned to Hydes  
    The friend grabs the waitress,  
    Apologizes  
    Buddie laughs loudly,  
    "Bring him half one and three,  
    Whatever he's drinkin'. Bring me  
    A Blue Ribbon.  
    Ha! Ha! Ha!"  
After another, the friend  
Grows weary and leaves.  
Time for home and Bed.  
    Buddie sits with a glass,  
    A half empty-can  
    Chattering to his friend  
    Who is gone.  
He claps to the beat  
In his head  
Not the music,  
Stomps his feet,  
Shakes his head  
All to the rhythm of the glass.

The waitress quits  
Serving the table.  
He waves madly at her station,  
Both hands flying over his head.

She hesitates,  
Whispers to the bartender,  
Moves to the table.

"I'm sorry, I can't serve you  
Any longer."

He nods in assent,  
But tightens the grip  
On the half-empty glass.

*by Kimberlee McQuown*

## **Grandma**

In a metal box she lay  
Her shriveled body even smaller  
Her face old and beautiful as ever  
She looked tranquil

I recalled all her stories about the  
first white missionaries  
She taught me how to be a tough black woman  
Even taught me to love myself.

The call that knows no time  
The strange call of nature  
She had to go. Go without anyone.

*—Spiwe Y. Kachidza*



Frank  
2.1.77

## **Substitute**

Up, up the miles of school steps to his cage  
of a class room,

Where he stands, naked.

The pack of animals wait for a weak spot, unguarded,  
To slip into view—

Then rush, tear, shake him limp and battered.

He offers a feast:

They take only the scraps unfit to digest,

Or they suck the chocolate coating and leave the fruit  
within

Untasted.

He cracks the whip and lunges with the chair:

They laugh.

The whip and chair crumble to dust within his fingers.

He reaches for the cage door, but it will not open

Until the bell's buzz whines down to his ear,

Like a fly searching for a carrion feed —

School's out.

***Dawn Anderson***



Gerry Brunick     Untitled

## The Drowning

*Tina Decena*

"I can't seem to get going anymore, Doctor. I'm real tired and worn out all the time." A white-haired, tan faced man sat staring at me with piercing brown eyes from behind his desk.

"Why are you so worn down, Miss Comstock? Do you know?"

"No." I lied. "If I knew why, don't you think I'd do something about it?"

"I don't know, would you?" I sat staring at the big turquoise ring on his tanned hands. He'll never get money out of me to pay for that lousy tan.

"Doctor Felix, I have tried sleeping at regular hours, eating right, exercising. . . nothing seems to help." We sat staring at each other. Finally he set the pencil down he'd been playing with through the whole interview.

"Alright Miss Comstock, I'm going to give you a prescription that can be filled at any drug store. . ." He wrote while he talked. "Don't drink while using these pills, and if you don't snap out of this depression I suggest you go for help." I stood up taking the prescription from his hand. "Miss Comstock. . ." I waited, my hand on the door knob. "I don't mean more pills. . . I mean a psychiatrist."

"I don't think. . . I won't be back." Lousy bastard. The hot sun on my back and legs felt good after the cold of the doctor's office. The glass door of White Drug slid open in front of me. I strode past the rows of diapers, nipples, shake toys, and rubber pants. The high drug counter loomed up in front of me. Mr. Pharmacist, take my blues away. A plastic vial of nice green capsules appeared before my eyes.

"That will be \$7.28, please."

The cash register bell rang total. I'm going to be so high I'll float above the rows of rubber pants and pretty satin ribbons. Screw the world I'm going to be high.

The cement buckled in the hot sun, making my passage to freedom dangerous. I hurried my pace past the dilapidated houses lining the streets. Hiding. . . hiding behind new coats of paint. . . Hiding like I was before I knew I had to end the ugliness. We're too old and too ugly to try to fix up the ugliness. It would be a waste of time I thought, smiling up at my friend — my apartment house. The steps creaked as I ran to my apartment. The door swung closed,

locking me into the cool darkness. A glass of water to make the medicine go down. Dishes lay stinking in the sink. All I want is one lousy glass. Is that too much to ask. A glass skids to the floor and shatters at my feet. I rinse out another glass and sidestep the sun's mockery of color on the jagged mess. I push aside overflowing ashtrays and set the glass on a coaster. I must remember to clean this up. A red rubber hand ball bounces to the floor. Brown cardigan sweaters, blue jeans, and sweatshirts get pushed aside. I pull the vial from my purse and light a cigarette. Droplets form and slide colorfully into the cork base, sunlight plays off the drops, orange, red, blue and green. Smoke curls making patterns over my head. I feel cold. I pull the tiny, pink and blue bunny blanket around my shoulders. It's warm and soft and powdery smelling. Emily would have grown up to be so beautiful. She didn't stand a chance. The cap of the vial falls to the floor. My hand is full of green and shining capsules. Water sloshes on the floor making a puddle at my feet. I swallow the last drop, laying back against the couch.

My cigarette lays smoking in the ashtray. Powder. . .sugar and spice and everything nice. . .pretty. . .pink. . .powdery . . .pool. . .full of water. . .She's gone down town to smoke her pipe and she won't be back till Saturday night. . .Falling. . .can't catch. . .she's so far away. . .my pretty baby. . .stay away from the water. . .stay. . .stay. . .don't go in. . .the water. . .The glass crashes to the floor and explodes into a thousand different colors. Bursting off the walls. Shattering everything, smashing, destroying, killing. . .killing everything.

## Lost

High up in the sky  
Flying, Soaring, until  
A shot pierces it.

*by Marla Hinders*



## **Two A.M. and Fading**

It's late (or early)  
and my soda bottle is half empty  
(or half full). . .

Thinking:

The washer is filling  
and I need an introduction  
and like clothes in the machine  
    words should be churning in my mind  
Incorporate the soap, get the process going  
And after rinsing, and writing the body  
    both jobs are more complete than not  
Then spin, and finish; make a final statement . . .  
    finally.

Then:

the quietness of reality  
at this late early morning hour  
as the machines quit their work  
makes me think again:

At least the clothes are washed.

***Allison Averill***

## To Lucille in the Concession Stand

You would set up for the night—  
scan the ticket sellers' arrival  
count cups and regard  
the fat-assed blonde,  
    her dress a second skin,  
who readies the Daily Double windows.

Pausing, you repeated eternal racing anecdotes—  
to the vulgarly thin cashier from downstairs  
nicknamed "Olive Oil"—  
    her greased black hair  
    pulled into a tight sequin-ringed bun;  
or to "High-hat Mary,"  
as you secretly dubbed her—  
    in view of that orange cotton-candy hair  
    spun straight up from her forehead.

In spite of the customers' complaints  
of the stale popcorn  
the flat beer  
or the old grease off the hog-dog grill  
in your finger-nails—  
you would laugh and philosophize:  
"We don't need no pressure up here—  
leave it to the rest of 'em."

You, Lucille,  
your dyed-red hair stiffly curled  
    (which by closing on Sunday afternoon  
    would look slept on—  
    smashed flat in back)  
could gossip,  
    elbows attached to the counter,  
and smile news with your false teeth.

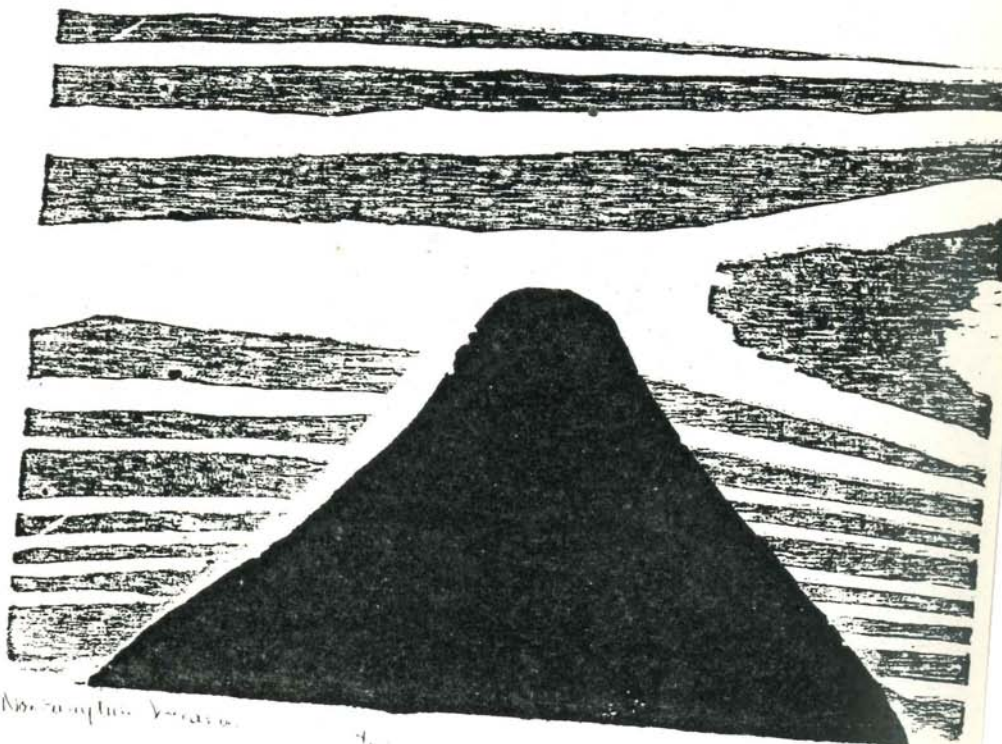
Some grey-headed man at the counter would ask,  
"Lucy, old girl, who do ya got fer the Double t'day?"  
You invariably chuckled,  
"Try the 4-8."  
Turning to me you'd advise:  
"If they ask you—just give 'em your age—  
it's their business if they're dumb enough to bet it."

***Mindy Nelson***

### **To W. Harry Christy**

A friend once said  
"Morticians are the nicest people.  
They have sympathy and  
Show such concern."  
And I agreed.  
Until I heard  
"Reason #41 Why You Should Bury With Us:  
Bearing in mind that  
One can  
Never really tell  
Exactly what will become of one's  
Skeleton  
Rest assured that our friendly and efficient staff  
Can lay you out with comfort and low cost."

***Cindy Rosene***



Washington, D.C.

1912

George F. Johnson

## II Hesitations Chapter 17

*Myron Erickson*

Now Raamon was a man of great stature, in both size and the eyes of men. Singlehandedly he could wrestle the largest of his cattle to the ground; and these animals were numberless, stretching the entire width of the Homarai Valley as they grazed. The beauty of his wife Tamar was known throughout the valley, and she bore him a fair-skinned son called Zinadab (that is, "one with light skin.") Those whose cattle grazed next to Raamon's herds looked upon the great beauty of his wife and the fair skin of his son and declared, "Greatly blessed is Raamon in the eyes of the Lord."

One night, as Raamon lay sleeping at the side of his beloved Tamar, an angel of the Lord came to him in a vision and said, "Arise, Raamon, for the Lord requires your service. The Cauldeans of the north are preparing to swarm down upon the Hamarai Valley to establish their evil worship of Baal in this place. The Lord has appointed an army to go into battle against them, and at the head of the army he has placed you, Raamon, for only you among the Homarai people are great enough to secure a victory for the Lord."

Dawn approached, and Raamon was greatly distressed at this vision. While Tamar slept peacefully at his side, he remembered his fair-skinned son and his multitudes of cattle which covered the land for great distances and said to himself, "I cannot leave the side of my beautiful Tamar or my son Zinadab for a single day. Who could tend my vast herds of cattle? Surely another of the Homarai people can lead the army against the Cauldeans and their Baal." With this he fell back to sleep.

Now a sickness descended upon the cattle of the Homarai Valley and caused them all to die. They died so suddenly that their bodies could not be disposed of quickly, and a terrible odor of rotting flesh filled the valley, Tamar and Zinadab took the decaying air deep in their chests, and grew ill, and died.

The grief of Raamon was immeasurable. He rent his clothing and shaved his head in mourning and at night he lay on the floor of his dwelling place, turning restlessly in sleep. And the angel of the Lord came again in a vision and said, "Arise, Raamon, for the Lord requires your service. The Cauldeans are preparing to enter the Homarai Valley with the idol Baal at their head. The Lord has appointed an army to go into battle against them, and as its leader he has placed you, for you have the greatest stature of any of the

Homarai people."

Raamon awoke from his vision and moaned, "How can the Lord ask me to lead an army against the Cauldeans? Can he not see that my soul is too troubled to command men against this mighty foe? I cannot do this; the Homarai people must be spared from having me take them into battle." With this he fell into exhausted sleep.

Now at this time a horde of grasshoppers came down upon the Homarai Valley and left the fields of grain in ruin. The plague of insects was so terrible that even the Cauldeans could not make their attack for a time. Soon the stores of grain that the Homarai people had saved were gone and famine swept the valley. The men in the army had no food, and many starved while others left to find food for themselves, so the valley was left without protection.

Raamon became very weak because he had no food, and as he lay near death at dawn, the angel of the Lord returned in a vision and said, "Arise, Raamon, for the Lord requires your service. The Cauldeans of the north have seen that this valley is now defenseless, and this very day they are crossing the mountains into the head of the valley. You must fight them with everything you have, lest they bring their idol Baal into this land."

But upon awaking, Raamon was filled with anger at this vision, and he cried out, "Cursed be the name of the Lord and all things that come from him. I once had his blessing but he has taken it away by causing the death of my cattle, my beautiful wife, my fair-skinned son, and my neighbors in this Homarai Valley. Why should I fight for him now? It would be better for me to destroy what I have left and join the Cauldeans in their worship of Baal."

At this Raamon went outside and set fire to the ground surrounding his dwelling place. The flames spread quickly and engulfed the wooden walls he had built to hold his family. Now a great wind began to blow from the south, and it pushed the fire toward the north until the land and sky were filled with flames and smoke. The Cauldean army had crossed the mountains into the head of the Homarai Valley when in terror they found that they were trapped by flames in front of them and the mountains behind them. Because they could not make a quick escape into the rocks, not a single Cauldean who worshipped Baal was saved from the fire and smoke.

And in this way, the Lord won a great victory over the Cauldeans and their idol Baal through his servant Raamon.

## Thirty-Two Verses In Her Mouth

We met that day in the dentist's office;  
She was in for an alignment,  
I was there for a checkup and polish.  
She was the only senior who wore braces,  
I was the one with tin-capped front teeth.  
We discussed our advantages:  
I got the heavy in our class play,  
I had a natural evil look;  
She got 10% off her dental bills,  
For being such a good customer.  
She'd been a thumbsucker, "Saved on blankets."  
I'd zigged when I should've zagged in gym.  
We grinned toothily at each other.  
Flourescent gleams on jagged molar metal.  
Later, we shared a sandwich  
It was love at first bite.

It was such a beautiful love;  
She would never brush me off.  
We always flossed from the same roll.  
She even gave me an engraved toothbrush,  
"May you never have another cavity."  
We enrolled in the same dental school,  
Studying bicuspid quizzes late into the night;  
Our lips meeting and teeth gnashing.

Then one day she appeared unbraced;  
Unflawed flouride purity!  
She no longer saw the gleam,  
Reflecting from my eyes.  
Enraged, I donned porcelain caps,  
And returned the toothbrush postage due.  
We smile viciously whenever we meet,  
Precise white tombstones in cold red fields.

**Tim Orwig**

## Hamilton Boulevard

"Hamilton Blvd., Next Right."  
Night was the only time.  
I'm back cruisin' in my Ford,  
Restored . . . accelerator floored,  
Toward the speed trap!  
Rap with the radio,  
"Lady O lady I love you."  
Above, through the haze,  
Blaze the electric stars.  
"Jars fulla' fireflies!"  
Wire-eyes Willie called 'em,  
(Steel-columned street lamps).  
Damps and fog up from the river,  
Deliver us from the haze.  
Days have no meaning here.  
Beer and Rock beat the time,  
Cheat the time, Hamilton Beloved!  
    Gloved hands grasp the wheel tight,  
Squeal right out at the green light.  
Might even get me a ticket.  
"Stick it!" I'd tell the cop.  
Stop at my old school,  
Toadstool Flats  
(That's our old playground).  
Stay 'round here? Man, no way  
Can't go play basketball  
All of my life.  
Wife, kids, and the Shur-King job  
Working slob, nine-to-five.  
I've gotta sell this beat-up Ford.  
Bored of cruising,  
. . . Losing time.  
I'm not coming back. Damn  
Hamilton Boulevard!

*Tim Orwig*





## Guitar Player

Always you're quiet  
Head bent slightly, a Dekalb hat to keep that hair  
Off your face.  
Mouth slack, legs outstretched  
Life only in your hands and the corners of your eyes.  
Halfway through the movement  
You glance up and grin  
Glimpse of a carnival beneath that calm  
And it's springtime in November.  
Chaucer can go to Canterbury without me.  
I can't move  
While I watch your hands love your guitar—  
Question why I brooded—  
Satisfied—your song's concluded.

## Saturday

The afternoon's half-spent and we're still in bed.  
The sun through the blinds makes a checkboard  
of your face.  
I plunge beneath the quilt  
Hide-and-seek  
And you pursue—  
A hound chasing a quail in desperation  
And the quail laughs.  
Toast and honey and orange juice later  
We tear apart the morning paper  
Scrambling to make up for hours spent in love.

*Maggie Fritz*

## American (superman) Bandstand

Goodnight from NBC news  
(we haven't really talked for weeks)  
Truth, Justice, and the American Way  
(we've become clark kent and lois lane)  
Who's running the **Planet** . . . Jimmy?

Jump — Shout — Boogie —  
(so we change the channel)  
I like the words but I can't dance to it . . .  
(you've never danced with me)  
I'll give it a seventy-five, Dick  
(clark?)

*Maggie Fritz*



## The Bar of Soap

**Bob Lee**

They were quarreling over which pocket to put it in; she was very hesitant to give him the responsibility of a five-dollar bill.

"I won't lose it," he said.

"What about the time I sent you to the store for eggs with just one dollar. What happened then?"

"I lost it," he said, bowing his head, scuffing at a spot on the rug with his foot.

"You what?"

"I lost it," he said louder.

"I'm sorry, I didn't quite hear you."

"I said I lost it!" he shouted.

"Don't you ever scream at your mother like that again, you hear?" she said, slapping him across the face.

He was small. She only needed to hit him half that hard to make him cry.

"Honestly, I don't know what I'm going to do with you," she said, turning from him walking away, throwing her hands into the air.

Suddenly she had an idea. Rushed out of the room, came back with her purse, and took out five one-dollar bills.

"Now here. Take these and put each one in a different pocket. That way if you lose one, you won't lose the whole works."

He took the bills, put them in his pockets, started buttoning his coat.

"Now do you remember what you're going after?"

He paused. Bit his lower lip. Tried to think.

"Not even out of the house yet and you've already forgotten what you're going after!"

He rattled off a list: "A loaf of bread, some tissue paper, a can of string beans, and . . ."

"And a bar of soap," she shouted.

"Oh yeah, and a bar of soap."

He asked her to write it down, make a list so he wouldn't forget. She said the idea was stupid since he wasn't old enough to read. Then he mentioned how he could show the list to someone else and have them tell him what to buy if he would forget. She tossed that idea aside also, saying that the child was a bad judge of character and that he would probably pick some young punk who would send

him home with a box of rubbers as a practical joke.

The child asked what rubbers were. The women started complaining about the way he had buttoned his coat.

"Just look at you. Now start over and button it right. Do you want the neighbors to think that you don't have a good mother?"

He had no answer.

She buttoned the coat, adjusted his scarf, sent him on his way, and looked at the clock after he had left.

He kept checking his pockets and repeating the list all the way to the store. It was a supermarket and had automatic doors. He went in and out several times. Finally, he rushed around getting the things he had come for. The bread, the tissue paper, the beans, and the bar of soap. There was a half an aisle filled with soap; he had no idea there were so many kinds.

He thought to himself that bread was bread and tissue was tissue and beans were beans, but soap — that was something else. The kind mattered.

He looked at all the bars of soap, remembering several that he had seen at home before. He asked an old lady what kind to buy. She recommended one. Then he remembered what his mother had said about his bad judge of character and decided that it would be best for him to call home and ask what kind to buy. He just knew the kind was important. He remembered his mother being mad once before about a bar of soap.

He put back the bread, the beans, the tissue, and went to a check-out counter, slapped down one of his dollars and asked for change. The lady told him that the gum machine was out of order. He told her about the bar of soap. She agreed that the kind mattered and gave him the change.

He dialed and dialed, each time using different amounts of money, but could get no answer. Finally, he decided that if he stayed much longer, he would get in trouble for being gone too long, so he gave up on calling home.

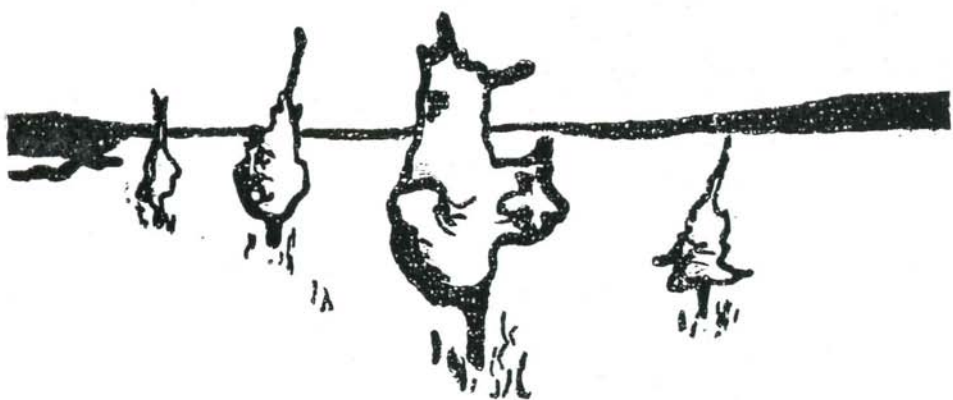
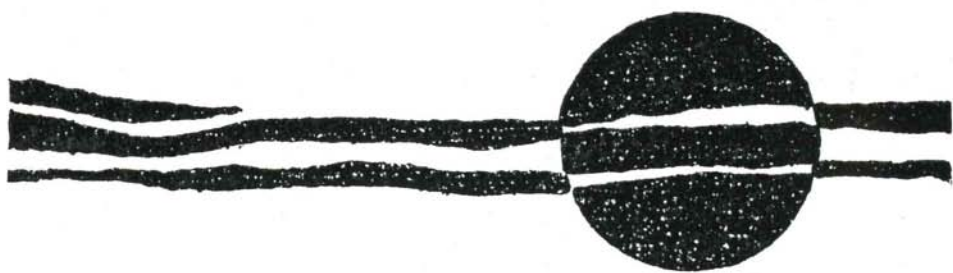
He ran back down the aisles, grabbing a loaf of bread, a can of string beans, and some tissue paper, as he thought to himself that since soap was so important, it would be better to come home with no bar of soap, rather than come home with the wrong bar of soap.

He made his purchase and left the store.

At home, his mother had just finished cleaning the house, wanted to shower, needed the bar of soap.

The boy started explaining about not knowing what kind to buy and she slapped him in the face, called him an irresponsible idiot. Then she went on for several minutes talking about how the neighbors must think that she was a failure as a mother.

"Where's the change," she asked the boy. "Where's the change? I suppose you not only didn't buy the bar of soap but you probably lost the change too. . . Honestly, I just don't know what



*Design 1948*

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I'm going to do with you." She turned from him, walked away, threw her hands into the air.

He had the change. Held it out to her in both hands. She hit his hands from the bottom, causing the change to be scattered all over the room.

"Now pick it up," she said. "And then go to your room and wait till your father gets home."

He stood there silently. He did not like his father.

A few minutes after the boy had gone upstairs, his older sister came home from school. She made the mistake of using the front door and the boy could hear his mother yelling at his sister about the cleaned rug and cleaned house.

Finally, the woman decided to send the daughter to the store for the bar of soap. She gave the girl a dollar, told her the kind to buy, and sent her on her way, telling her to hurry since the store would close any minute. The mother reasoned that the girl was old enough to read and wouldn't have any problems in getting the right bar of soap.

Half an hour later, however, the girl returned home without the bar of soap. She said the store had closed. The woman started screaming again. The young boy, still upstairs, could see without looking: his mother, turning from the girl, walking away, throwing her hands into the air, and then the line about her honestly not knowing what to do.

Finally, the girl was with the boy in his room. Both of them waiting for their father.

He was late in coming home and the children heard the parents arguing first about his being late and then about the bar of soap.

Then silence. Footsteps up the stairs. A jingling buckle; the father loosening his belt.

The children started making up possible solutions to the problem as their father approached them with the belt. The boy said something about everyone getting into the car and driving to a different store for the bar of soap and the girl said something about borrowing a bar of soap from one of the neighbors.

No use. The father beat them with the belt. The boy tried not to cry in front of his sister.

A few minutes later it was over. The father back downstairs ordering the woman around, telling her to get her coat and purse. The mother screaming up the stairs at the children, telling them that she and their father would be back in a few minutes. The front door slamming; the children's relief. The man and the woman going out into the night to buy the bar of soap.





## **A Fable**

A tiger  
who vowed  
to put out  
the sun

hid itself  
in shadow.

## **Vignette**

If  
dreams conceive  
each crystal moment  
moored in twilight  
borderland,

nothing  
mirrors Truth  
so deftly as  
fantasy dovetails  
with desire.

***Charles Magruder***

## Sagetown

*Mike Cummings*

Bright suns explode, white dwarfs condense and black holes suck up galaxies. And every once in a while they'll suck up a universe. Planets float along amongst it all, while within it all earthquakes dream, volcanoes scream, tornadoes skip all day. But hurricanes play along the shore as the blue sun shines violent violet rays all the days.

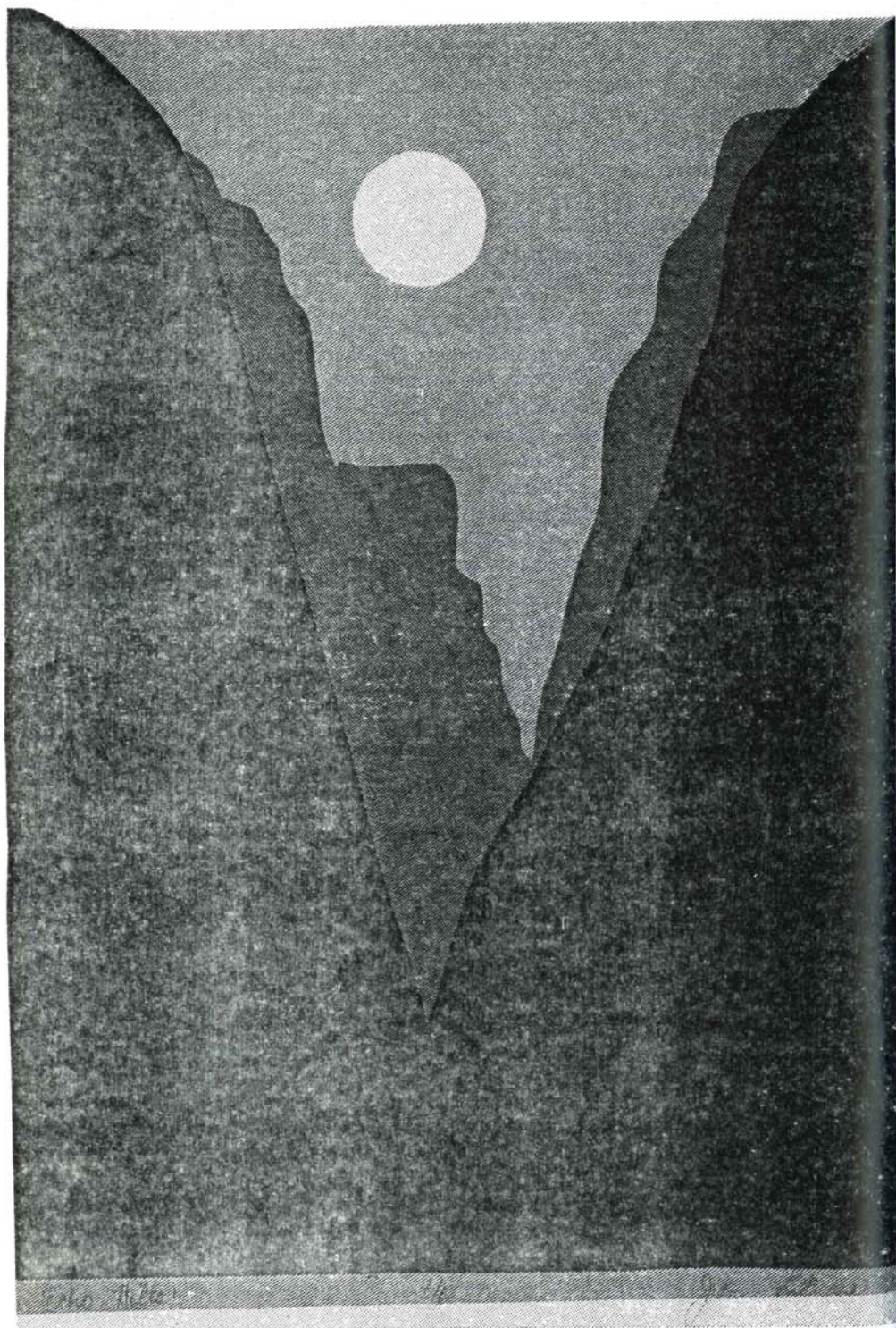
And amongst it all, just south of Freeville, off the highway numbered 77 and hidden from the everyday traveler oozen-cruisen down the bumpity-thumpity road, is Sagetown. Sagetown exists strong and uncomfortable on a bluff overlooking the Snake River. The road to Sagetown is unpaved and worn naturally. There is no sewage. Outhouses dot the countryside. A single pump serves the entire population with water (all two-hundred and some). The people contribute to the scenery weekly. The road twists and turns around empty beer cans and broken wine bottles scattered about, twinkling in the morning sun. As the road straightens out and comes closer to town a tangle of ruined automobiles appear in natural configuration. The houses are aged, unpainted battered structures which are close together. And there are inhabitants. Betwen two old houses and the garbage scattered neatly by the wind, a foot, covered with an old, untied, brown shoe, a white dirty sock smeared with chunks of dry pink puke, hangs out the window of a broken down abandoned car. An old man sleeps, dreams. A white kitten, except for the black tip of its tail, sits on his unshaven face licking its paw after enjoying the wine puke. Before leaving, the kitten once more slides its scratchy pink tongue across the man's prickly black face. A black-haired, dark-skinned, eight-year-old boy walks by and laughs, then runs to tell his friends.

Insensibly drunk, a young Indian girl stumbles out onto the sun shiny porch and immediately covers her eyes with her forearm. She begins screaming "Where's my baby, Gumby, Gumby, where in the hell are you?", she starts to slobber and mumble, saliva runs down her chin; tired and weak she staggers back into the house. As Gumby pulls his head back away from the corner where he's been watching her, he looks up while sliding his hand down from above his head. A piece of dry chipped paint falls into his white wet eye. The sensation is a burning one as his eye flickers out of control. Gumby sits down in the shade and begins to cry. The tears wash him

free of his pain, he runs off to play. Inside the house Judy starts a fight with her father, Same; more sober or less drunk, he punches Judy in the eye knocking her to the floor with the rest of the drunk, passed-out bodies. Same then kicks her in the ribs before he leaves for his girlfriend's house.

Slow and cautious Same bumbles down the middle of the street with a half empty green bottle of wine in one hand and an unlit cig between his thick brown fingers in the other hand. He holds the bottle to the sun and green rays go everywhere. A greenish tint covers the world. He salutes the sun one more time, then his head goes back, and the warm grape wine rolls down his throat, while a bump in his neck goes up and down. He drops the bottle to the world and starts to sway. Making his mind up to go on he takes a deep breath and begins to walk. After a few Sagetown blocks, his face beads with sweat. He pulls a crusty handkerchief out of his back pocket, pulls it apart, then wipes his hot face, and crumbles it into his pocket again. A little girl, a relative, walks toward Same and she's drinking a pop. Same is thirsty, and for a moment he thinks he wants her pop. But, she is so pretty and innocent—just like Judy used to be. A magical guilt touches his thought for a moment. As the girl passes by, he doesn't notice and keeps on dream walking. Same reaches his girlfriend's house, walks up on the porch, knocks twice, pushes the door open, stumbles in and passes out on the couch. Most of Sagetown is sleeping it off today. Except for the kids who are out walking around eating candy and drinking pop. And the sun that blinks between the dark green leaves in the tall green trees. The river flows, taking the land, undisturbed. The day is blue sky, yellow sun. Night is slow in coming for the next day will bring regrets as usual. The crickets' songs are long slow ones. Down by the river the bullfrog bellows in a monotone voice. The animals cling to the last bit of sunshine as it fades out. Life now listens to nighttime shadows being painted on the earth. Everything sleeps in Sagetown and there are a million dreams in the dark air. The bright pearl in the black sky shines on. Hangovers and regrets are in the making under the precious light of the pearl.

Judy wakes slowly with a black and purple eye swollen about the size of a plum. Her ribs are sore and bruised. She cusses her father with dirty hangover words and makes promises to leave Sagetown. Gumby is already awake watching cartoons on a small TV. He looks at his mother, searching through her purse while holding an ice cube on her eye, as she takes out her unspent welfare check. Gumby believes his mother's promises about leaving the room in which he sits. After a beer and chili breakfast they begin to pack what little they have. The day goes fast for both of them, selling everything they can so they can travel light. Relatives who are happy to see them go are visited and unpaid debts are collected. Debts are few and packing is easy. Judy has some money saved and she can



live with her brothers, Rajo and Dodge, in the city where she lived before, while going to secretary school.

The last stop is Grampa Chatto's house. Grampa is an old traditionalist who is of the Peyote religion. He is thought of as a holy man with healing powers. And during the meetings he shakes the loudest gourd, beats the fastest drum, and sings the holiest songs. Chatto talks to the spirits, they listen and talk back. He is sitting in a chair when Gumby comes in the house. He has a big smile for Gumby. They walk in to Grampa's room. Chatto looks into Gumby's eyes and sees cold, golden rain falling horizontally to the dry, soft, sweet earth with a sound of a million tiny mustangs stampeding, soft, loud. Each drop a time, tunnelling from the creator of the sky. They hit the ground and immediately change form, only to take another, bud, sprout, rock. Thunder babies jag the black sky as they crawl home to mommy. The storm is over. Gumby blinks and the vision is over. The old man speaks in Omaha tongue, "young boy, my grandson, your presence is strong in my heart today. I pray for you every night. We have talked in your dreams many times. You are strong being and I believe what you say. I will give you this sacred cedar and my best eagle feathers. Burn the cedar when you pray. We will be far apart, but we will talk when you pray. That is all I have to say."

Gumby understands. The boy puts the sacred pouch in his suitcase. His mother is unaware what he and Grampa talked about. Grampa sits down in a wooden chair near a window, from which he can see the bluff overlooking the river and the sunset. Judy kisses Grampa goodby, then she and Gumby walk out the door.

A friend is waiting in an old blue Ford with broken shocks. The car sags and the bumper bounces off the dirt with every shift. There is a bumper sticker on the back saying, "Boxers make better lovers because they stick and move." Eddy, the driver, has black sunglasses on that he doesn't take off, greased black hair and a can of Budweiser in his hand as he brags to Judy about the city life, which she already knows about. Eddy tells her where all the Indian bars are and of a fight he had with a Mexican last Saturday night. Gumby sits in the back seat alone reading a comic book. The car takes off. His ears perk up when Eddy turns on the radio, a newscaster voice, "John Gacy and Jimmy Jones have won the Presidency and Vice Presidency by a landslide, and now for tonights and tomorrows weather forecast." Gumby wonders about tomorrow, then falls asleep.

After a few hours of traveling Eddy talks Judy to sleep. Eddy just keeps on driving and throwing his empties out the window. They hit the cement with a ting and roll endlessly. The beer cooler is swishing with cold ice waer and a few beer cans.

The road is starting to swish like the ice water so Eddy pulls the car over and goes to sleep.

The sun is shining before everyone wants it to and wakes up

everyone with its brightness. Judy knows the way to the city so she lets Eddy go back to sleep and she drives. Gumby hops in the front seat as Eddy stretches out in the back. After traveling awhile, Gumby is thirsty and wants his mom to pull over to a gas station so he can get some pop. Orange is his favorite for right now, because everything he sees is orange. Orange Judy, orange gas pumps, cars, people, and pop. Everything has fluorescent glow. The orange gasman leaves lagging images of himself as he moves to squeeze the gas handle. Orange gas fumes wiggle their way into the sky, nothing. Gumby looks to the hood of the car and sees little flames holding hands, dancing in a circle. Then he sees a breeze blow them out. He shakes his head and rubs his eyes.

Gumby's mind is opening up to the world all by itself with no peyote. One, he is the One, the chosen One. The car zooms on. The world is orange today; Gumby thinks he must test these powers. But what if these powers are testing me?, he wonders.

A fly lands on his nose and its buzz grows louder and louder. It's the only sound he hears. The fly's eyes are staring at him, big hairy and ugly. Gumby thinks of a lizard tongue, then has one. He flicks it out several times, just nicking the fly's eye. Gumby laughs at the fly. He pulls a hair from his head and touches the fly's leg with it. The hair wraps around the fly's leg into a tight knot. It tries to fly away but can only fly in circles as Gumby holds on to the hair between the tips of fingers. Gumby lets go and the power is sucked out the window and tumbles over and over in the air, left behind for now, as the blue Ford speeds down the highway. Gumby sleeps.

Judy's eyes are glued to the road and Eddy is still fast asleep. Many songs go by before Gumby finally lifts his head up to see the edge of the city. Skyscrapers touch the sky. He confuses bigness with greatness and thinks the city is Godlike. Within minutes the car is swallowed in the giantness of swaying rock. Gumby feels small amongst it all. A cab driver skids in front of them, then squeals off cussing them as he goes. Gumby smiles. Instead of thudding off the dirt back home the car clanks off the cement prairie.

A couple of blocks pass by out of focus. Gumby points his fingers at one of the big city store windows with a man behind it dressing a large white doll. A lady is looking in the window from the street to see if her hat is on crooked. By the time Gumby's a block away the window comes crashing down, and the lady falls to the sidewalk with a thud. A young city boy runs up to her and bends over the lady, then grabs her purse and is off at full speed to some alley. Gumby doesn't see this but feels he's done something wrong. Suddenly he sees his grandfather's face. From the look he gets, he knows he's done something against the religion, but it was an accident, wasn't it? He doesn't know. The face leaves and leaves Gumby in thought.

Gumby crawls into himself like the dirt of a footpath that twists

and turns endlessly into the darkness of space.

His thinking is jibbed when his mother slams the car door. He gets out and they walk into Rajo's and Dodge's house. Gumby goes to a room already prepared for him and prays. Hours later he is called down from the room to eat. At the table Judy talks about Gumby being enrolled to school. And before Gumby knows it he's been in school for six months. He meets a friend named Poncho. After school Gumby and Poncho take a bus out to the country. They walk for a couple of miles toward the lake. The sun is going home for the night so they make a fire. Gumby tells Poncho secrets. Poncho doesn't believe Gumby. Gumby says he will show Poncho. Gumby makes the fire light dance to his finger. He sticks his hand in the heat light and it burns it to the marrow. So he grows a new one right away. Poncho is stirred to madness and doesn't believe. . . . Gumby brings Poncho back. He then tells him that he must go back to a place where people understand him. Poncho walks the dark country to a farm. Gumby begins to pray; "Ho ye moon, sun, stars and heavens I implore you. O heavenly One, heal me, hear me. I speak from the depth of my being." He can't go on. He falls down to his knees with his hands covering his face and weeps. He pounds the ground. He hears drums beating calling him to come home. He stops crying. His heart is one with the pounding of the drum. He flies, in the form of a magpie. He flies for the rest of the night, a day, a night, then the morning. He senses that he is close to home, Sagetown. He looks for it, but doesn't see it. It must be there. It's the only place that he'll be safe. The only place for the realm of sanity. He doesn't see it but feels he's right above Sagetown. At the moment of his thought a falcon swoops at a full speed and clings to Gumby's magpie back. The falcon squeezes tight and it's talons sink deep into the magpie's lungs. Gumby feels his life oozing out of him. He tries to flap his wings desperately but can't, he is paralyzed. The will is there but there is no way.

The mighty preying bird loosens its grip and sends the magpie falling down to the fast coming earth. The bird hits — thudding, bouncing off the sweet brown earth. Gumby lays in the dirt with his feathers blowing in the wind. When the sun is red and touching the earth, ants crawl through the open hole of where a bird eye blinked with moisture. White, dusty maggots change form to become a group of flies which cuddle to the magpie for the night. Drums beat fiercely in search for a soul.

Great suns explode, white dwarfs condense and black holes suck up galaxies. And every once in awhile they'll suck up a universe. Planets float along amongst it all, while within it all, earthquakes dream, volcanoes scream, tornadoes skip all day. But hurricanes play along the shore as the blue sun shines violent violet rays all the days.



## **A Dog and The Frog**

A dog  
Came Along  
One Day  
And Ate the  
Frog  
From Iowa  
(A frog from Iowa is always sought after)

***Frank Breneisen***



## **For Marilee, In Memory**

Eary snow  
robbed autumn of its gold  
and a deep, settled cold  
wrongs the season.

Her fingers are still  
that used to dance music from keyboards,  
and an uneasy quiet of discords  
disturbs us.

The heavy pause  
waits vainly for her laughter  
that used to burst after  
old jokes and cascade them with love.

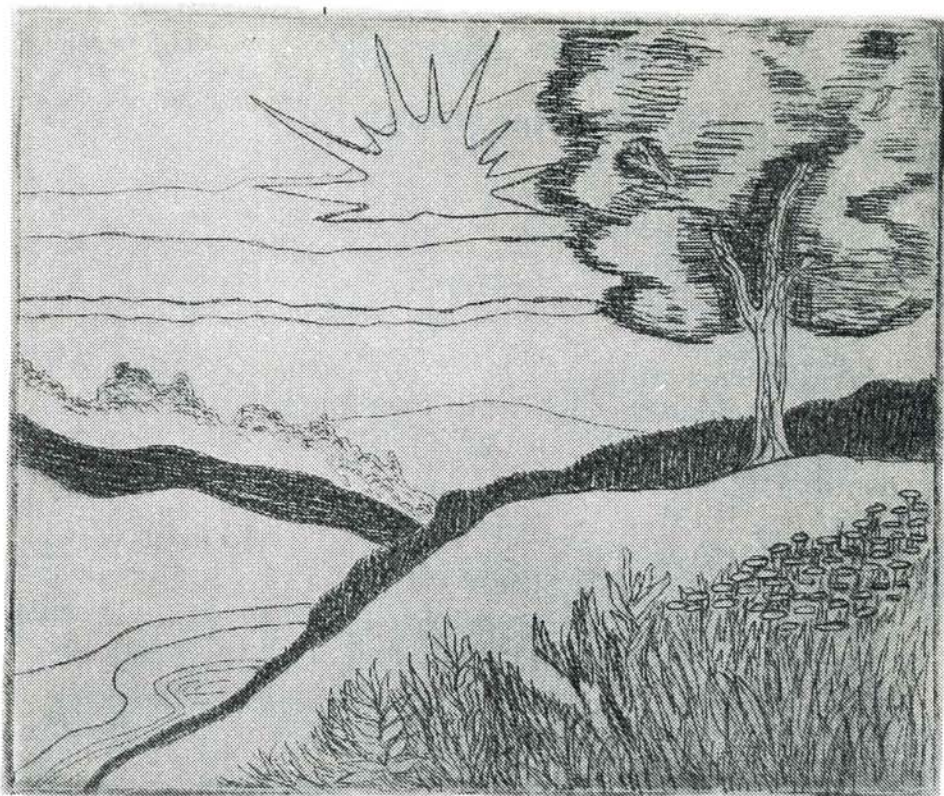
Death most wounds the living  
when its impertinent glance  
summons to its dance  
those most wholly alive.

At first,  
reluctant to give in too easily,  
she resisted the authority  
in its overture.

But the courage  
that so long wrung smiles from pain  
could not hold out against the strain  
of that alien music.

Time must gentle our hurt  
before we find the necessary ease  
to celebrate her best with a reprise  
of song and laughter.

***Jan D. Hodge***



## Contra the New “Charismatics”

They'd have my mind to whitewash in their sink  
of Ivory liquid dogma,

Brillo pad

its eccentricities,

then pull the plug

and watch it clockwise circle down the drain  
like so much expunged scum or fallen hair

to re-emerge aseptic, trite,

confessed

and cowering before their idol Creed.

Christ, I pray not . . .

Keep me mad.

*Jan D. Hodge*

## **A Warning to the Yellow Emperor**

We are taking only a few at a time:

A woman puts on clothes  
in a department store. She poses  
front, sides, back before  
the mirrors. For a moment too long  
she sees her reflection each time  
smaller and smaller. Her skin is pale.  
She falls into the mirrors. We have her.

Listen, Yellow Emperor  
we have crocodiles  
which can take a man's soul  
by eating his reflection off the water.  
Snails which can suck the blood  
of your cattle from their shadows.

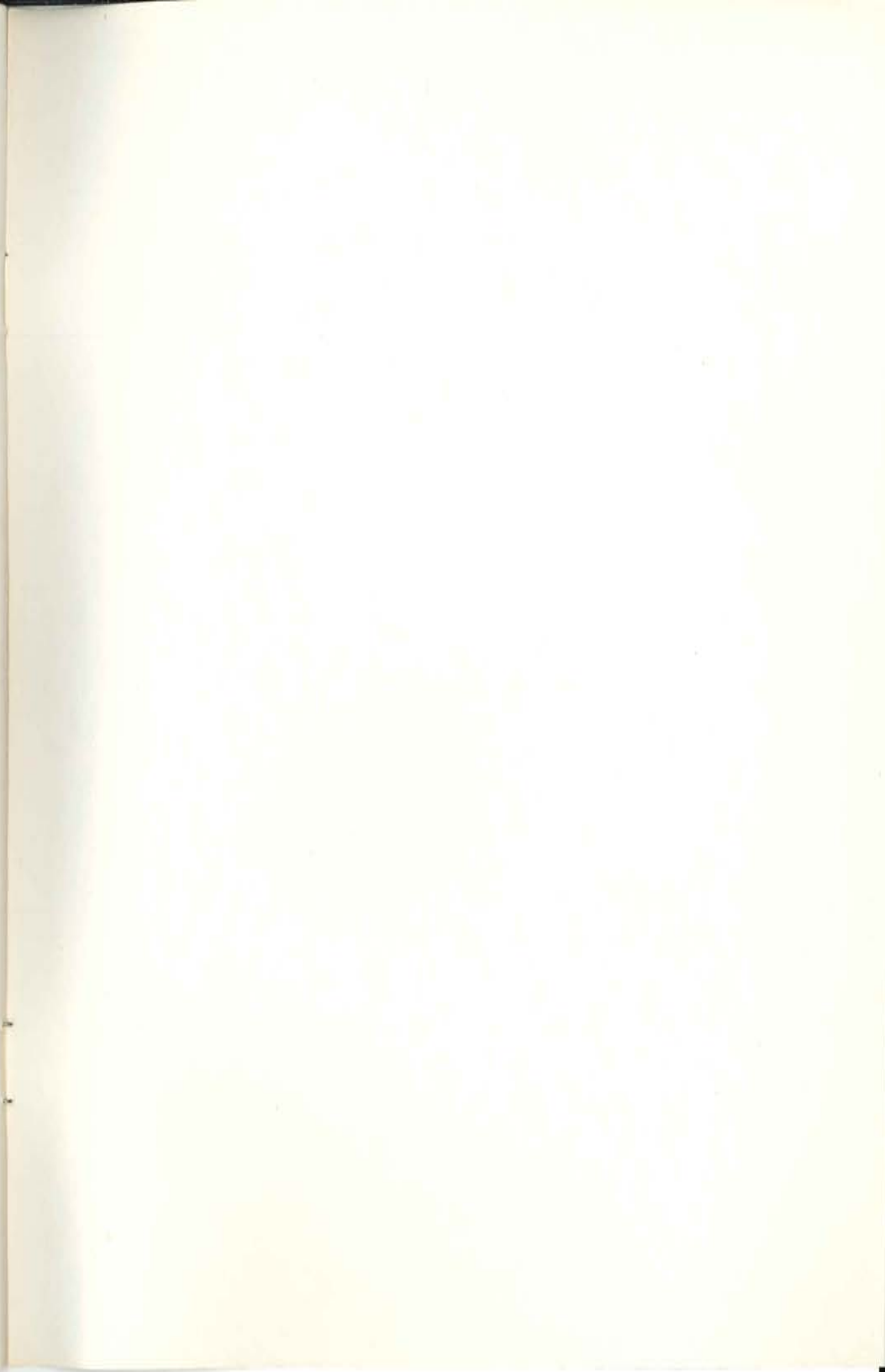
You will not want to have your picture taken  
or have new coins minted in your image.  
But there's nothing you can do.  
One day you will look  
at your shadow on the floor  
and we will have you.

***Scott Simmer***









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