

kiosk



Kiosk

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Ads

(or--A day in the life of a cosmetic counter
clinger)

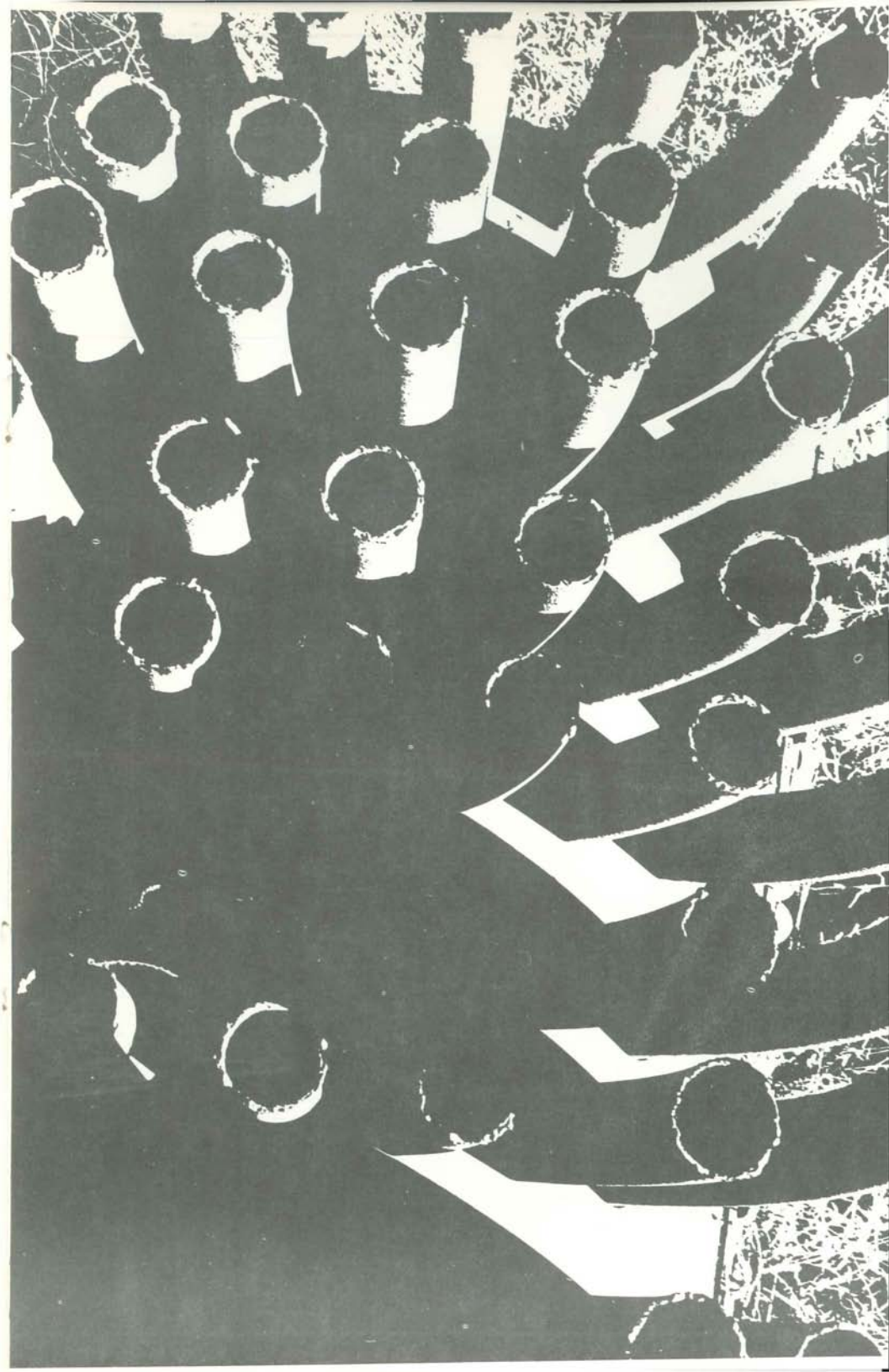
She peels down
a rubbery, green
mask--
revealing the
smooth-skinned,
blemish free
Cover Girl--whose
"natural look" sells
paste, powder,
blushes and glows--
and with careful,
vain artistry,
makes them into
empty China dolls.

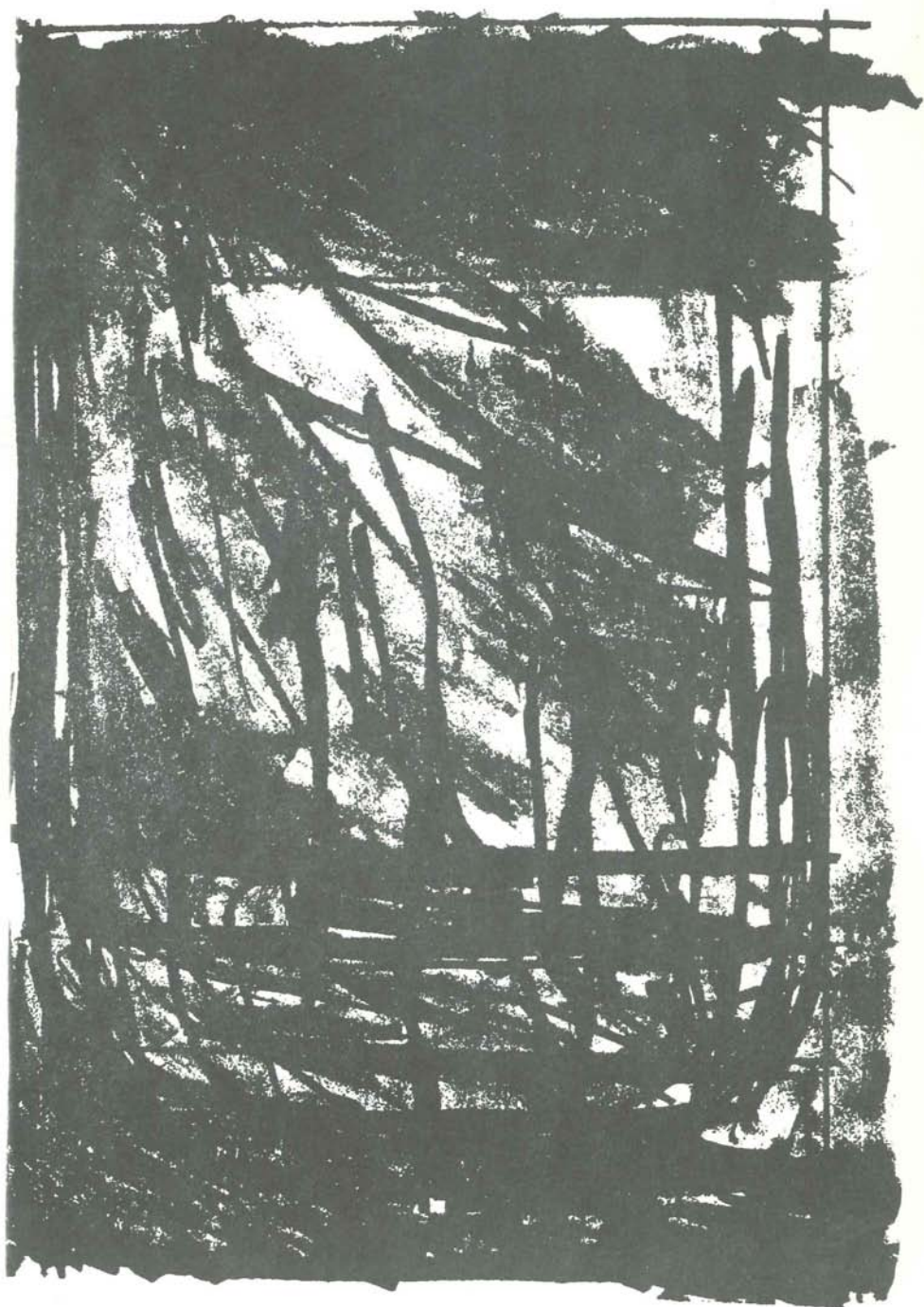
--Shannon Whitcomb

The Naked Eye

To see the truth in the naked eye
Without the sham of
Mascara and shadows
To hear the unvarnished truth
from pale, unglossed lips--
To shed, salty, natural tears
on rougeless cheeks.
To give from the unencumbered heart
the undemanding love.

--Shannon Whitcomb





On the Absence of Inspiration

Because my reluctant magician
Has taken himself away
I must stage my own exhibition,
Since true magic won't obey
I build intricate ribbon cages
For birds, stagy tricks for display,
While my magician strikes for higher wages
Than I can afford to pay.

--Meredith Cook

Progress

Brown distance stretches out on either hand
Further than sight will reach. Stripped of their
yields,
Looking like tacky carpets used too long
And wearing through in places to show
The dirty floor beneath, the stubbled fields
Undulate sluggishly past, waterspotted from snow
Barely gone. Branches on the intermittent trees
expand,
Deprived of their cover, twisting like men caught in
lies.
A small stream runs up to the road, but shies
And ducks down a culvert. Somehow it seems wrong
That no spectacular diversion occupies
A space whose vastness makes us small, and so
We nervously turn away, and using our autos as
shields
Haul on the asphalt lifeline, talk our way along
To the concrete aquariums whose proportions we can
stand.

--Meredith Cook

Untitled

How must I find you?
save the time
I know you spend
in a sauna bath
'for your health'
and just possibly because
your wife
can't satisfy you
anymore

I cannot see you beautiful
if all I wanted was beauty
I'd watch television

no
I find you
Quasimodo
guilty as charged
you are hereby sentenced
to be hung by the nose
till dead"

Untitled #8

...if anyone asks
I am lonely
I lie half asleep
on these cool musty sheets
dreaming of a life
that has passed
(wishing I'd realized then)
wondering
where are you
someone
my someone
who can tell me
your secrets...

--Jeffrey Lee Davis

I felt lonely tonight
so I went wandering
looking
for anyone
who would smile at me
but the butterflies were asleep
and fluttered away
when I woke them

even the tin can
that I kicked
out of loneliness
ran away
clattered down a manhole

...so I ran to a hill
and stood on
the grassy soapbox
shouting down

"Look at me
am I Quasimodo?
Does my mutant face
repulse you?
Make your supper gurgle in your
bellies?
Make you run
to your
lower fourth street whores,
begging them
to comfort you in their diseases?

stand still for a moment
stop acting
like Louis
the sixteenth beheadedchicken
playing headless horseman
in the execution yard
until he falls into a death-heap
emptying himself
like a wineskin

--Jeffrey Lee Davis

Observations Through the Fog

A Mobil sign peeks through the fog
And watches cat eyes opening
To view spectres' arms reaching out
Touching nothing.

--Noel Goulette

The Cabin, Besides in Summer

i'm
leaving
for Minnesota
again in January.
i've
planned
for a few days off
right around my birthday
and i hope to be there by then
to celebrate it with ny old friend
who can't make it home for Christmas.
he
needs
to be cheered up,
to be told to stick w/ it
'cause everybody
starts off in small towns
in the middle of nowhere
w/ no new friends for days.
he and i
are planning
to be in his folks' cabin
at the falls and to be
just plain drunk off our asses
when i turn twenty.
and you
and the baby on the way
he'll learn of later;
'cause i can't hurt him
by bragging in the slightest way.
he would jump to conclusions
and think that he has lost even me,
and
the thought
of leaving him
best-friendless
stirs me--
like when
at night, sleeping against you,
the baby will kick inside you
and wake me
to the reality of love
so far away from my best friend

who sleeps alone
at night in the cold
in Minnesota.

--Bob Lee

Days

like those dark times
at night
when i look harder
for friends
because i think
no one sees
me and my eyes
that can't cry

--Bob Lee

Nonsense

A fly crawls innocently up an arm.
It's dead, one. quick. easy. swat.
It is lucky we are so sure that they
are the creatures
and we
the beings.

--Rachel Lieder

Seminar

Words are swimming heedlessly
in
perfectly
symmetrical
circles.

The Mouth moves--anxious (non-stop)
phrases collide aimlessly
striking occasional ears.

Boredom sits, crouched in the
confusion,
mulling stupidly the
blank wall.

--Rachel Lieder

A Special Kind of Grief

The lumbering school bus eased to a stop. A young boy, aged ten, jumped off, crossed in front of it, and cautiously looked both ways before crossing the road. A mangy form huddled grotesquely at the road side. The boy approached it, slowly, then peered in disbelief. The bus rumbled on its way. He was vaguely aware of a dull distant thud in his head as he stared at his puppy, lying dead on the dusty gravel shoulder--its paws twisted underneath the plump body. The boy gently pushed it into the seclusion of the tall weeds alongside the road, then walked up the lane. His feet nudged a pebble, kicking it hard every so often, tousled hair lifting slightly in the warm breeze.

"Dave!" dazed eyes lifted to see his mother waving at him. He stuffed his hands into his pockets.

"Hi, dear, how was your day?"

He rammed his hands more firmly into his pockets.

"Don't forget you're to meet Linda when she gets off the bus. I'm so afraid that she'll get hit, she's so small, and doesn't look where she's going." Her brows puckered in worry.

"Let's see . . . Oh yes, I haven't seen Jack around, so if you see him, feed him--his puppy food's in the barn."

Dave started slightly, his glazed eyes stared. The buzz of the oven alarm.

"Oops! My cake's done. Don't forget about Linda." His mother bustled into the house, leaving Dave standing stiffly by the steps.

Walking to the barn, he picked up some old papers, a shovel, and made his way down the path toward the road.

Another rickety bus rambled up the highway. He quickly lay the shovel and papers next to the hidden dog. The bus stopped, a chubby, bubbly seven-year-old skipped across the road, and yelped a "hi" to her brother. Dave mumbled something and started up the path, with her two steps behind, jabbering all the way.

"I got a hummert on my 'rithmetic!! Miss Gleason says she's gonna put it on the bulletin board. . ."

For once Dave was grateful for his sister's non-stop chatter, for it allowed him no room to speak. She continued constantly until reaching the porch, where she smelled the freshly-baked cake, and charged into the house.

For the second time that afternoon, Dave shuffled down the dusty path towards the highway.

He gently lay the soft body on the papers, gathered it in his arms, placed the shovel over his shoulder, and walked along the road until he came to a rough wooden gate. He arranged his bundle, freed one of his hands and opened the gate. An endless sea of grass loomed before him. Thick. Green. He walked carefully, eyes downcast, looking for something. He stopped. The field stretched all around him. He set his burden down, picked up the shovel and dug a small deep grave. The puppy was laid in it. After having piled the dirt on top, he clutched the shovel and left, not glancing back. Carefully closing the gate behind him, he went up the highway and on to the house.

"My, you're quiet tonight, Dave," his mother remarked. Linda's spoon clanked noisily against the soup bowl.

"Yeah." His spoon swished aimlessly, eyes fixed on the blue-grey bowl.

"Did you see Jack?"

"Yeah." A peculiar flush crept up his face, eyes glistened.

"Did you feed him, like I asked?"

"Nope."

"Dave! I told you twice! I bet that poor puppy. . ."

"Jack's dead." His voice was flat. He pushed his chair back and ran up the stairs, two at a time to the solitude of his room.

--Rachel Lieder

Eyes

fragile blue buckets
now nearly full
today i have held them
without spilling

--Muriel Tomlinson

At a Recital

we were sitting there
you in dirty white tennis shoes
me, no makeup,
you said:
i've forgotten what movement this is
and my leg's asleep
and I:
yes, such wonderful music
but sometimes i just wish
you wouldn't take your shoes off at half
time

--Muriel Tomlinson

If, In Transition

- If the continent were divided
between brown and white,
despite the pleas of mothers
and the whining of babes,
and all the ancient contests
were revived again,
because I am brown
and you are white.
- If walls were erected
between old friendships
and distrust began to grow
like a wild fungus
on every heart, and faces
again slammed shut on outsiders,
because I am brown
and you are white.
- If we both should again
take up arms against the other
with full intent of gaining
back our rightful due,
and even if I knew
you would win again,
because I am brown
and you are white.
- If these happenings were eminent
and in my heart I knew
my people were ill-prepared
and destined for defeat,
even if I knew they were wrong,
I would go to them,
because I am brown
and you are white.
- If all this should be,
I would answer the call
of the round resounding drum,
and paint my face
and prepare others and myself
for an honorable death,
because I am brown
and you are white.

If this came to us

I cannot say that the man
who stands by me
will be as brown as I,
and those in your ranks
will not all be white-faced as you;
for who can tell a brown-heart
from a white-heart?

If the test were given to me

I could only answer in this fashion:
"Send me to those who know how to love.
Send me to those who are aware
of the Earth's heartbeat.
Tell me where the brown-hearts go.
Because I am brown
and you are white."

If I were able to give you

what I consider the greatest gift,
I would give to you
the power to go
where your heart says to go
because it is all we have,
and I am brown,
you are white.

--Donna Whitewing Vandall



Sand

Once, like high slowly beaten cliffs
glints of happy moments
occasional darts
in
a warm white sun--
but mostly the dulled cubes
of whitely-brown nothingness.
Walked through
Kicked
Sifted.

Sand castles--
of damp warm grains
built carelessly within
the tide's grasp,
Washed from the shifting shore
to the certainty of liquid infinity.

--Shannon Whitcomb

Twisting Time

Poets, who can grow blooms of rhyme
To stay the hummingbird of time
And fairy-like build ivory towers
To last the very language out, why do the hours
Dart silently past hidden under the shrieks
Of the too many things to fill them, and the weeks
Leave fossil footprints and frantically lumber on
Before it's known that they have come and gone?
The long hand whips around the clock, the minutes
run,
Things crowd 'till was/is/shall-be are as one.
I would that even briefly I might borrow
The skill to seize and crystallize a day
And keep the struggling "to" attached to "morrow"
And bar the mocking "yes" from "yesterday."

--Meredith Cook

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