



PERSPECTIVES

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Editorial Board

Dan Davis

Randall J. Gates

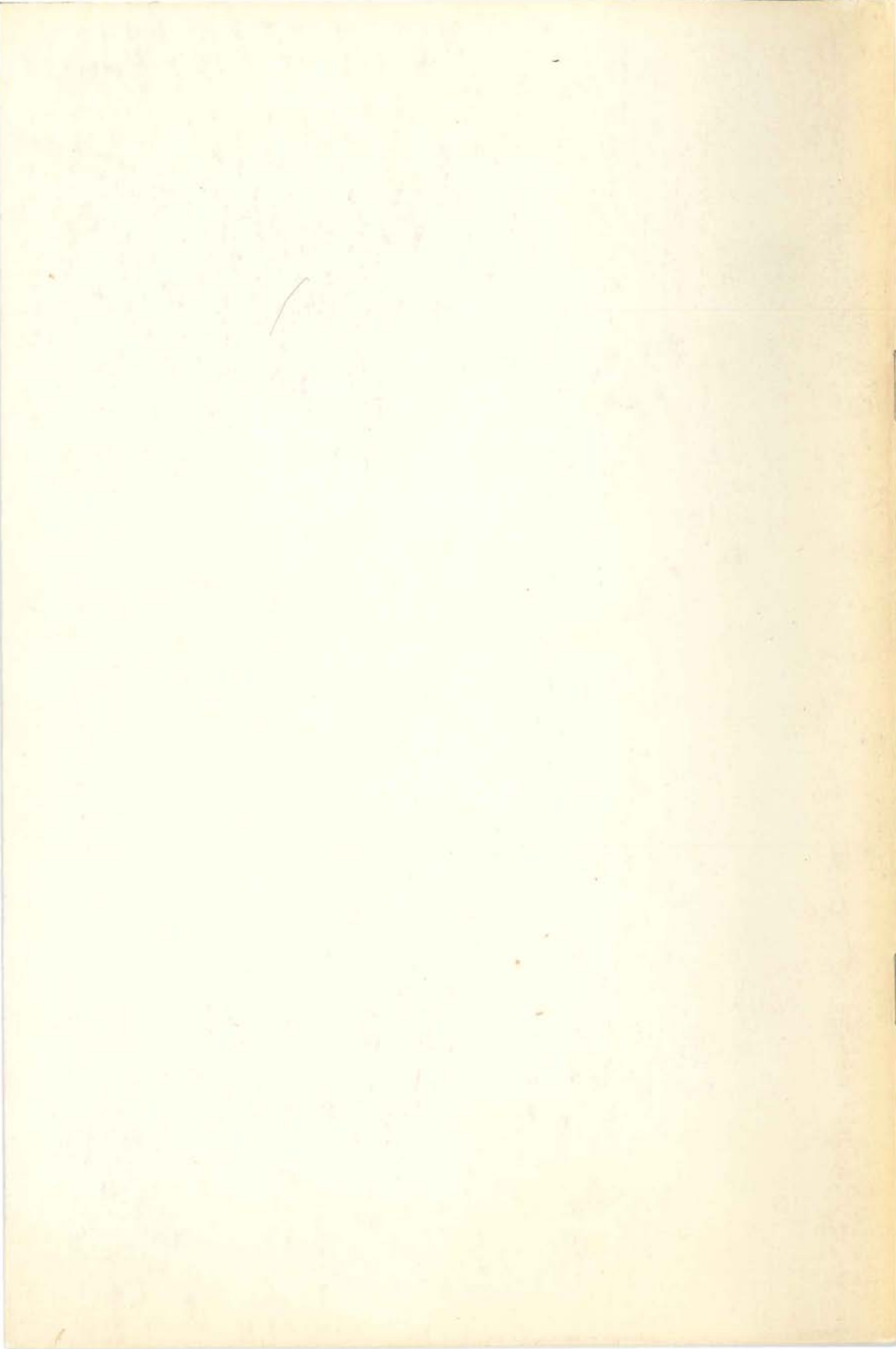
Jane Johnston

Sally Knopp

Art Constultant Stan Sutter

Faculty Advisor Ruth Meyer

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The Playground

Sally Knorpp

Every weekday when I get home from school where I'm in the fourth grade Ma takes me to the playground. Some days I get the feeling she would rather not go, but she won't let me go alone and since Father always asks about it, she always goes. The playground is down to the end of the block, then up halfway in the next block, across the street, and we're there.

The first thing I always zero in on is the horse-shaped swing. I push it up real high and holler, "Look, Ma, I'm flying!" She always nods and gives me her littlest smile.

After the horse, I ride the best swing — the grown-up kind. It has thick, twisted chains suspended from iron cables, but the seat is the truly special thing. It is a big, black, leathery rubber strip that sinks down, closing in around me. I pump up high as I can 'til I'm really flying, then the engine always gives out and I yell, "eject, eject, losing altitude fast!" Shutting my eyes, I leap into space and land on a deserted island or in the middle of a big jungle. Ma always hates to see me jump, but Father patiently explains to her that it is good training and no harm at all for me.

The next stop is the little wide slide. It is up four steps to the canopied platform. I start my slide, but always forget to put down my landing gear or it sticks or something happens, and I crash land. My feet go out from under me, and I skid through the dirt on my you-know-where. Ma always gets upset. I guess she worries about me getting my jeans all dirty.

Then the best, the most wonderful thrill of all — the giant slide. It is no ordinary shoot-de-chute kind of slide. It's huge — the biggest slide in the world. You climb up just hundreds of steps to the teeniest platform in the world; the slide is all curved and exciting. Then halfway down is the real clincher. A big iron canopy fits over the fattest curve and when you get that far you are plunged into the most absolute darkness you can imagine. It only lasts for the fat curve, but by then you are going so fast, if you aren't careful you can sail right off the end of the slide.

Ma always pleads, "I'll catch you at the bottom." But she

knows I never need catching. Father taught me how to slide and I am really an ace, too. I tell her, "Father says you're scared to see me go down this. He says you're an old scaredy-cat about lots of things." Ma turns all red, but she doesn't say anything much. Just shakes her head and stands looking up at the slide.

Once I talked her up the steps, but when she got to the top she couldn't go any further, and she wouldn't bend her knees to sit down on the slide; so she had to back down the steps. There were five or so people behind her and were they ever mad. When Ma got to the ground, she had sat right down. And she always scolded me for sitting on the ground. Her face was kind of funny, sort of pasty with lots of water dots on her forehead. She never climbed the steps again.

Today she again stood looking at the slide. I ran up the steps and in a second was swooping and whooping down the slide. "Mayday, mayday — crash, crash!" I screamed. Then I grabbed for the canopy part and called the radio tower. "Help, help . . . last chance . . . hold growing weak . . . aaahhh!" And I let go, sailing down through the dark, landing with a plop, plop, plop rolling over in the grass and laying still. Ma really got mad at me. She screamed, "Quit those silly games. It's make believe — just pretend." She put her hands over her face and I heard her mumbling, "Please quit, please give it up."

"Let's go home now," she ventured, when I got up, "No," I said. "You go down now. Father says you have a 'phoby' and if you weren't so silly you'd go down the slide just to see what a thrill was." Ma twisted her hands again. "Please, let's go. We'll come back tomorrow and you can play some more." I went down three or four more times then we left. Ma sure acts dumb about that old slide.

When we got home, Father was there. He asked about the playground as usual, and laughed at Ma again. He told her if she was that scared, she should come to work with him someday. He'd cure that in a big hurry. Ma got that funny look again and almost dropped the skillet she was holding.

Father has a good job; all the guys at school envy me. He drives new airplanes — jets, fighters, and all kinds. He told me once that it was his job to test the planes to see how high they

could go and how fast they could get there. Once he even let me sit in a plane. Father is always telling me all kinds of exciting stories. The best ones are about times he ejected or really had to use his head to keep from crashing. Once he even did crash a plane, but he was only a little bit hurt.

For some reason, Ma always acts funny when I say it, but I'm going to be just like Father when I grow up.

The Party

Gini Roberts

to Pierce's

The party hovered over the small apartment, rhythmically sustained in drum and banjo sounds. The kitchen was a jungle of empty whiskey, gin and coke bottle, melting ice and smoldering cigarette butts. People roamed aimlessly from room to room. A drink floated through the crowd propelled by a girl in a long imitation leopard skin dress. As she teetered, dribbling gin on the soiled carpet, a black hand reached out to steady her.

"Hello, Sambo!" her dark eyes flashed between streaks of dry mascara.

"Sit down, leopard lady, relieve the load. Baby, you are lookin' downzie!"

"Downzie and outzie, black boy." She relaxed into a spotted heap on the floor. "Are you new?"

"Old as the hills, baby." The Negro lowered his eyes silently to his drink. "You?"

"I'm black!" she giggled hysterically.

He looked at her intensely for a moment, then his expression melted into mild amusement. "You too, baby?" he sighed and looked away.

"Inside," she whispered smiling, 'black as death.'

The Negro turned to a large man sprawled against a chair. who was beating out time on a foot stool. "Hey, Elwood! What's your bag?"

Elwood peered over rimless glasses without raising his head. "Happiness, dad!"

"What's happiness?" a voice, half asked — half declared, from across the room.

"I'll know when I got it." Elwood's voice trailed off into a series of lip movements.

To vehement voices shattered the drums and gained passive attention.

"The point is, Thomas, where were you?" Rob Franklin's voice was like a piercing arrow. His eyes were large and intent upon his victim.

"That's not the point! What difference does that make?" Thomas' face was flushed and the blue veins in his neck protruded as he pressed a probing finger against Franklin's chest. "The point is, Franklin, what are you gonna do? What if the ugly war wants you?" he paused to catch his breath, then shouted, "What if it means your wife may be left a widow? What then . . ." he scrambled for an open penknife on the table. "You, Franklin, what if a man comes at you with a knife?"

Both men stood tense, jaws tight and eyes flaming. Thomas lunged forward, pressing Franklin against the door casing. "What if a man pushes a knife into your gut!" his lips moved over gritted teeth, exaggerating each word.

Franklin's voice climbed an octave as he pushed Thomas away, "No man, not even a friend puts a knife in my ribs!"

"But that's it, Franklin! I'm not your friend! I'm not Joseph Thomas! I'm just a guy; a guy with a knife in my hand. And I . . . want . . . YOUR . . . GUT!!!"

A fat man in the corner burst into a fit of uncontrolled sobbing.

"You son of a bitch!" shouted Franklin. "Put that knife down!" He swung and sent the knife spinning across the floor.

Their voices relaxed and were drowned by a stanza of "Three Chartruse Bussards," sung by two girls in winged dresses. One of them was immediately drawn to the wailing fat man. He rose

to proclaim the world — mad, then sank into an archair to be consoled by the rosey-cheeked angel.

“You’re a child of God!” the fat man leaned forward to stroke her hair, “What are you doing in Hell?”

The music rose, pounding all sound into one low roll of drums. A voice came from the bedroom followed by a stumbling girl, “I’m pregnant!” she bubbled. “See how fat I am.” A trail of laughter followed her toward the bathroom.

“I loved her!” shouted the fat man, “But it doesn’t make any difference. No one understands!”

“My husband’s going to jail,” she angel’s face grew pale, “he won’t go to war. Do you understand? He’s willing to go to jail!”

“I’m a unicorn,” said the other angel to her sleeping husband, “see my golden horn, Gabriel.”

“Don’t try to stop me!” Thomas’ voices echoed from the stairwell. “I’m a peace-creep, see, Franklin, and I’m on my way to San Francisco!” their voices faded off toward the parking lot.

The Negro leaned forward. “Is it true — what I’ve heard about you, leopard lady?”

“It’s all true, Sambo. I’m a bitch-kitty and you are a two hundred year old grandfather.”

“Look, Sambo, the angel’s crying.”

“Amazing!”

Untitled

Randall J. Gates

He crawled from the bed and walked slowly across the room to the window. His unsure hand pushed back just enough of the curtain to reveal the certainty of the world outside that one room. His face wore a puzzled look and his eyes barely sensed what he saw. The backyard below the window was quiet in the early evening; toys and worn lawn chairs lay on the grass. The driveway was still empty.

The silver of twilight which pierced the room patterned the walls with shadows. On the bedstand sat a picture of himself. The rest of the room was dim in the autumn evening glow. He felt out of place in the small, cluttered room.

"Lou?" called a whispering, shy voice from the bed. "What's wrong with us?"

Lou didn't turn around. His head was turned down as he played with the curtain cord, then dropped it from his hand. The darkness was complete. "When are your folks coming home?" His voice cracked in the stillness.

Cindy sat up, wearing a sad face. "They'll be late; they always are. You know that. They probably went to the club, or maybe over to Sampson's."

Lou turned toward her. Looking at her was difficult, and he strained to say, "I'm sorry." Then he faced the curtain again. "I don't know what's wrong, Cin."

"Honey . . ." Cindy shook her head.

Lou hesitated. "I don't want to hurt you, Cin."

"Lou, don't . . ." she pleaded. Cindy spoke awkwardly, too.

"No, listen," Lou spoke up. "I mean it, really." Once again he turned to Cindy. She sat with her knees folded under her, leaning against the wall. He remembered how often her mother had

frowned at that posture, correcting her for the girlish fault. Her messy brown hair had fallen to her eyes. "She's cute that way," he thought. Lou couldn't decide if she looked young or old. "It can't be like this, you know that." He wanted to say something, but the apology was forced.

"Yes, I know." her face bowed, too.

Lou returned to the bed and sat down facing Cindy. "I guess I should say thanks," he said meekly.

"For what? For stopping you?" She sounded bitter.

"Yes, I guess so."

"Lou, you've said that before. Why do you keep pushing me if you don't want to hurt me?"

Lou turned to a blank wall. "I don't know it was just me doing all the pushing." The remark startled Cindy. Lou, too, knew he had said more than he had intended. He remembered the many times at parties, in parked cars, here . . . He knew this room, its darkness, and the warmth of his girl. Before there had been love words, not the helplessness he now felt.

Lou had been dating Cindy for two years — this was no new development, no fling. He remembered troubled times, too; but this seemed more troubled than before.

"Lou." Cindy was crying. "Honey, I'm sorry. I try to give you what you want, but I just don't know."

"Maybe you're right," answered Lou slowly.

"Do you believe that? You've got to really believe it. You've told me these things before, Lou. Why?"

Lou was unsure. Her pleading eyes, full of tears, were begging him. He wanted her, he knew that much. He knew that he had made excuses before, though he didn't know why.

"I want to love you, Lou, and I want you to love me. But God, it's got to be real. And it's got to be more than just this."

"I know that," answered Lou.

"Then why are we here?"

"We've been here before," he reminded her.

She smiled slightly. "Yes, I know. And I've wanted that—but no more."

"Does saying 'I'm sorry' help?" he questioned.

"I don't know." She paused. "Lou, I don't know anything. I don't even know what I'm going to wear tomorrow."

"I only want you to be sure about one thing, you know that. Is that too romantic?"

"No, I guess not," she responded. Now the smile came easier through the tears. "But I've got to stand my ground; it can't always be like this for us. We've got a lot to think about — our folks, your future. And you're going back to school. There's so much to know yet."

The shyness and insecurity which seemed so out of place with the young lovers faded. Cindy smiled in apology, then she moved back into his arms. She was uncertain, as though she were close to him for the first time. Slowly, though, the warmth returned. "I don't want to hurt you," he whispered into her hair. "You know that, don't you? I want things to be good for you."

"You don't understand, Lou." Her words became lost in his kiss. Lou stretched back onto the bed; Cindy leaned and stretched out with him. "You don't understand, do you?" she repeated.

"No."

She pulled him closer.

by bill russell

once
i was a cow
and
in a barbwiresurrounded pasture
grazed i
and chewed my cud and was
content
anopen gate
... hesitate ...
/abitoffear/
and
boldly
travel
through
and then above them
I was and flew
a bird soared
and I
and knew
a cow I could be nevermore
(for I had tasted the sky)



Gords
Nancy Burgin

No. 31

Harley Johnson

Like moths and
flies
To an open flame
I am drawn to the
lamps
That dash me by,
Going for where
I am going from,
Knowing not yet
What I don't know--
Hoping to learn
As I hope no longer.
Like moths and
flies
To an open flame
I was too close
To see the fire
Slowly lapping up
my life
Until I'm left
Helpless to follow
the lamps
That dash me by,
Knowing not yet
What I hoped to
know,
Knowing only I'm
burned
And blind.
I am going from
The flame itself:
Burned and blind
And wise
In my going.



Weed Shirleen Marsh

A Private Poem To J.

By Randall J. Gates

The sounds and touch of our world
Send Shivers down your back,
Send worldless smiles through my mind,
Make our nights a pleasure of discovery.

We breathe together in those close moments
When our lives are close.
It's a lightness of giggles and smiles,
The puzzle of inquiry, holding you close.

No harsh words, no non-love world
Find us then. We fear the others
And hide, but only to hold
The moments, and each other, close.

Words aren't necessary for our sharing.
I hope it can be that way for awhile.
It's a quiet summer, tangled only
With two bodies, happy, not wanting to harm.

Haiku

By Carole Schmidt

How nice to be young
and have no qualms when squishing
Mud between the toes.

Yesterday! *Tomorrow?*

By Jean Anderson

Howl the night winds
"Gone"

I weep not
Knowing what I know
I cannot

Sigh the dark skies
"Love"

I love not
Caring as I care
I dare not

Wail the long street
"Despair"
I feel not
Understanding as I do
I shall not.



Weed

Sherril Garahan

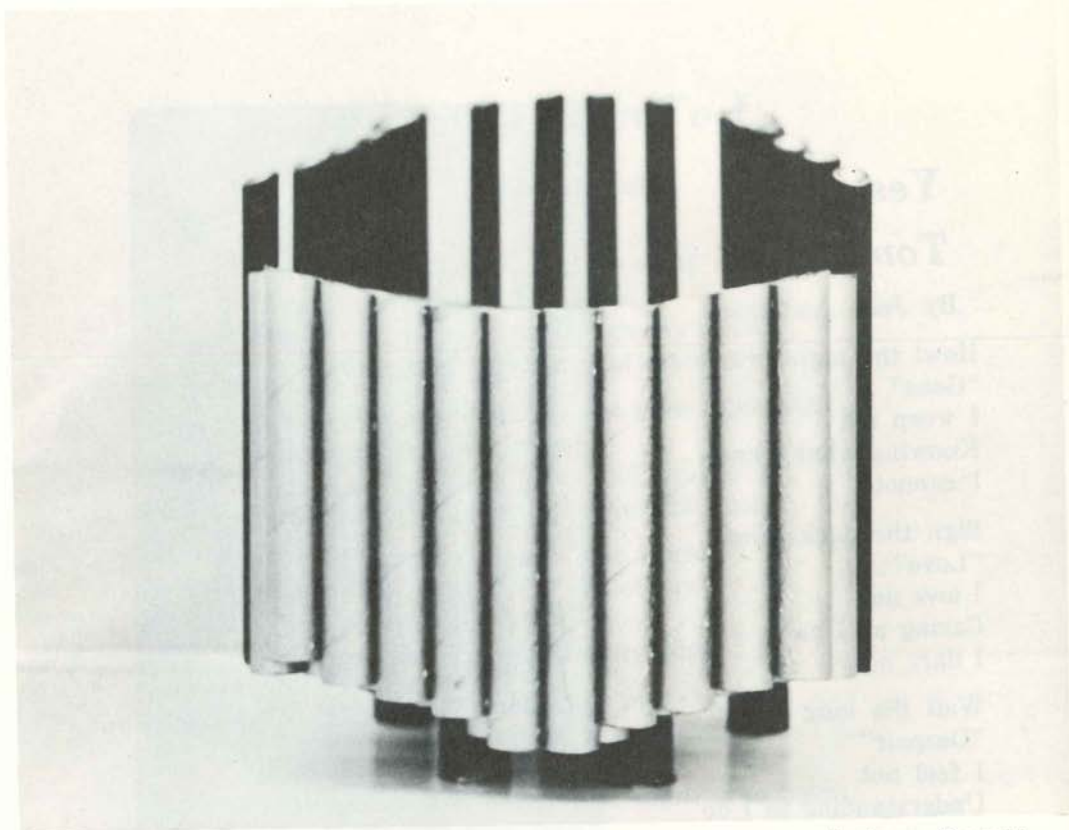
No. 30

By Harley Johnson

With so much to say
That can't be said
In the time we have
If it were forever
The silence of a coming-on
The silence of a passing-through
The silence of a having-been
Accomplishes all
In the mother-tongue
Of Never-said.



Seated Figure
Patty Cook



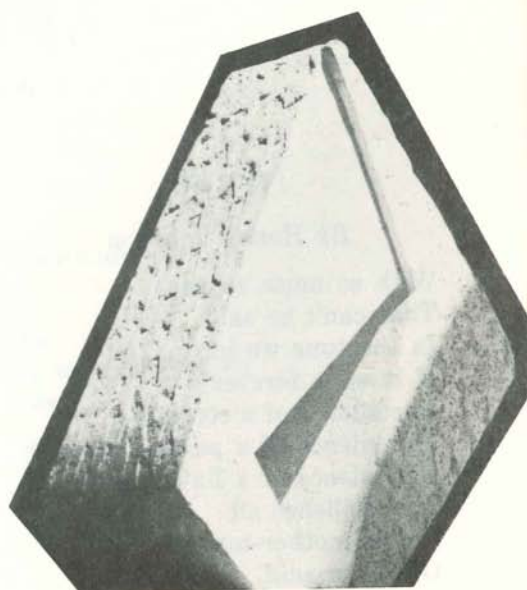
Sculpture

Andrew Barner



Chair

Joy Johnson



Sculpture

Ann Greenzweig

No. 29

By Harley Johnson

No more footsteps echo mine
Running through the
One-tracked snow
Soundless
No more does another breath
Break the clear
Wall of air
Transparent
No more do I see myself
In other eyes
Seeing me
Deeply
No more do I touch
The flesh softness
Of always
Gently
No more does time pass
As it should
In the dark
Softly
No more tomorrows
Draw me on
Just today
Slowly
No more do love sounds
Heartbeats
Drown me
Alive
No more can I think
Of anything to say
It's been said
Before

Haiku

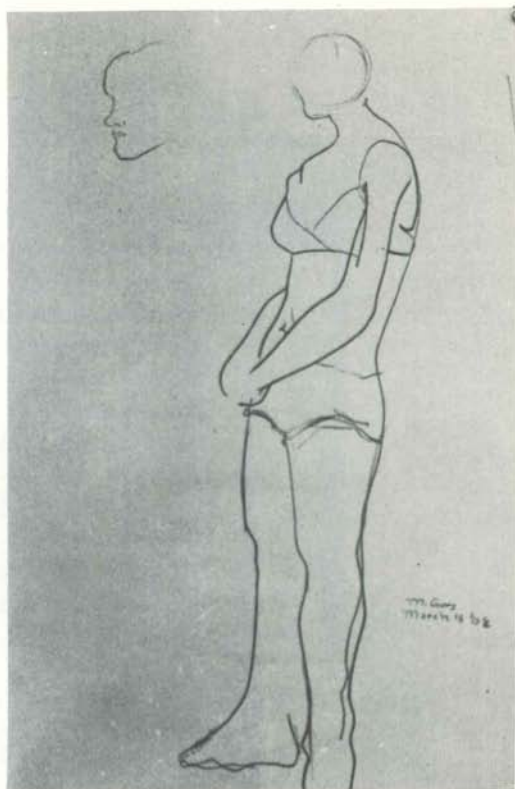
By Michael Wood

The first showers of
Spring brings to life a world starved
And beaten to death.



Seated Model

Fran Cook



Standing Figure

Margaret Gors



Standing Model

Fran Cook



Seated Figure

Dan Brygger

By Gini Roberts

a young one
at a party
encountered a circle of older people
all laughing hysterically
he endeavored
to find the source of their laughter
but no one could
stop laughing
long enough to explain so
he began laughing with them
later he
stopped laughing long enough
to discover
with sweating brow
all eyes on
him
then laughed on

E Is For Effort

By Paula Hilgenberg

If I could say just what I want to say
About this mass confusion that I feel,
I'd speak; and words would march in sure array,
And state precise descriptions, and reveal,
But since it has no mass, and can't be weighed
And measured and degreed, I'd just blurt out,
"It feels like mint, and kirsch, and restless shade —
A springy giggling riddle inside out?"
And so I won't, for if I could you might
Not understand; I'll just remain a mute
And smiling clown, and try to speak in spite
Of words with winks and blinks. And substitute
A somersault for syllogism pure,
And twitch bewildered, joyfully obscure.

The Night It Stormed

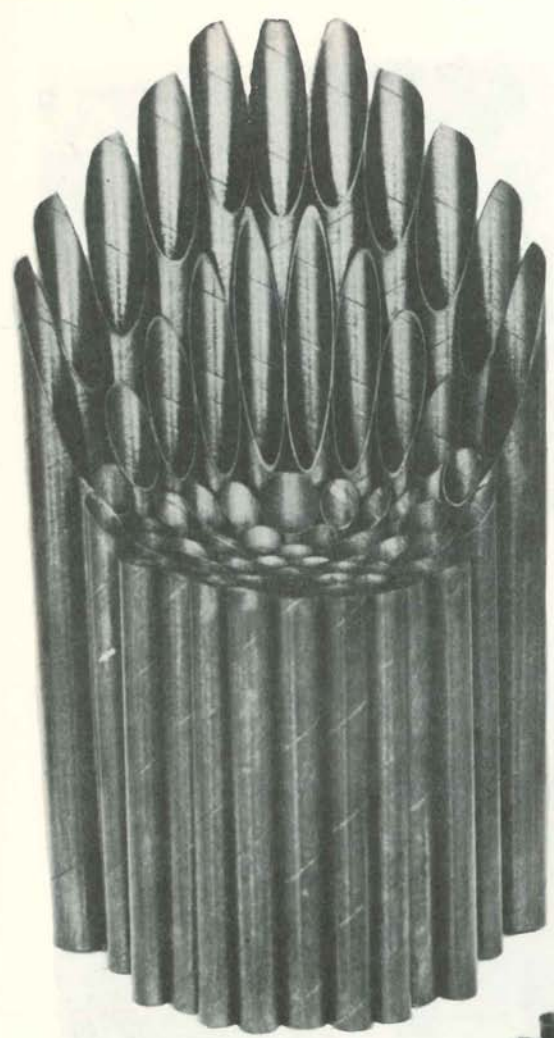
By Pam Woods

When all the earth was sound asleep
Their minds all fogged in dreams so deep
I heard dem angels walk last night;
I saw der torches flashin' bright.
Der steps was few and far between
But dey know how to make a scene.
Der thunderin' boots shook all the earth.
I witnessed magic at its birth.
Shore 'nuf der black crowds gathered 'round
To watch the sights and hear the sound.
They must 'a had a holiday
Or else a fight, so some folks say.
I heard dem angels walk last night
And pulled my covers up in fright
For they ain't gonna tell on me.
I won't be bad no more, they'll see.

Untitled

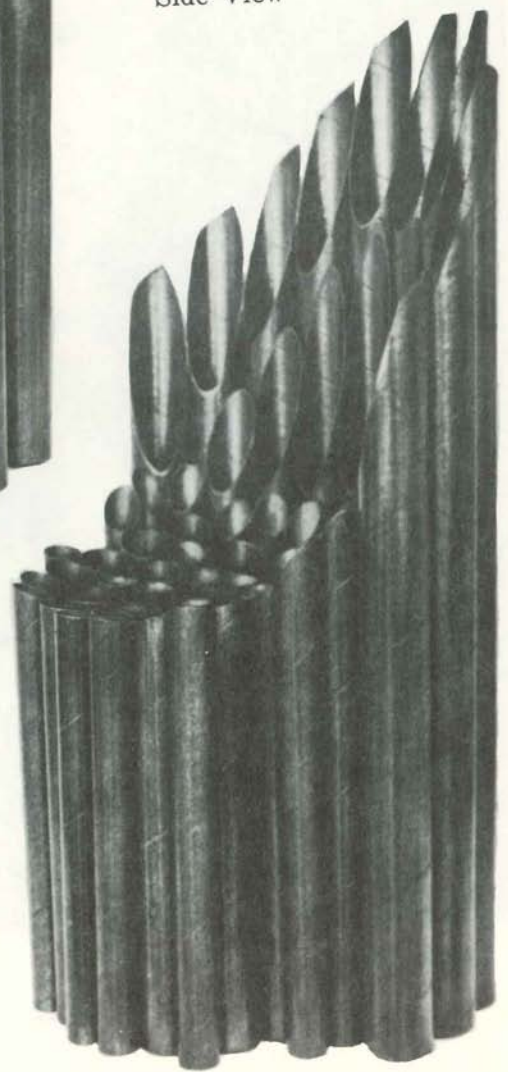
By Randall J. Gates

Grace Methodist has candles, too.
But those flames show no mood of me;
Those candles of stage,
Of pretended, removed quietness,
Show nothing which is me.
But maybe Grace Methodist is not alone;
Neither is its pretended, removed quietness.
Yes, even the pretended poet,
The one removed in mood,
Sees his companion here.
That piety is foreign.
It breeds hatred for greater candles
greater poets.



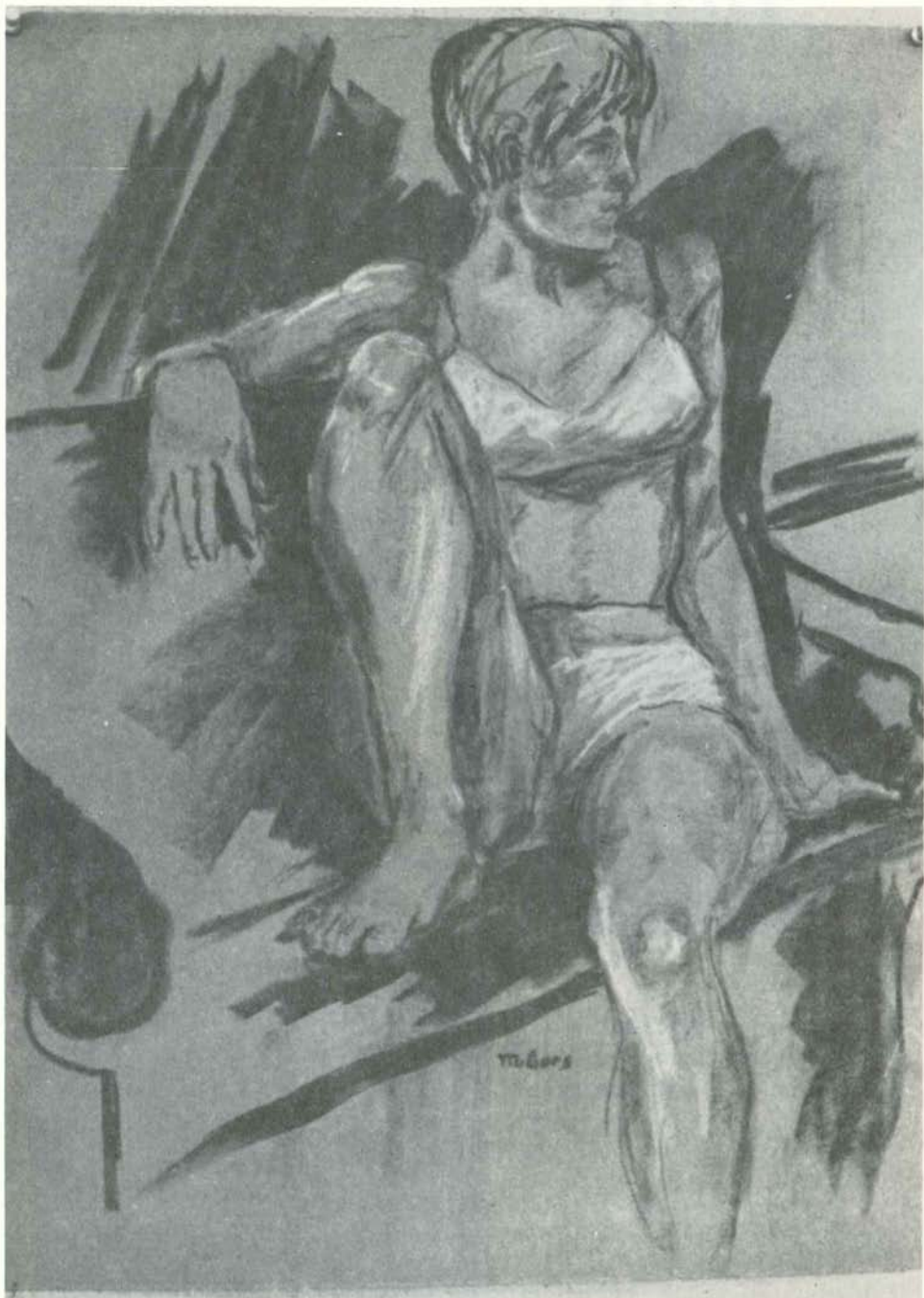
Front View

Side View



Design Problem:
Usable Furniture
From Mailing Tubes

Solution:
CHAIR
Sue Boman



Seated Girl

Margaret Gors

Universal Love Chorus

By Jean Anderson

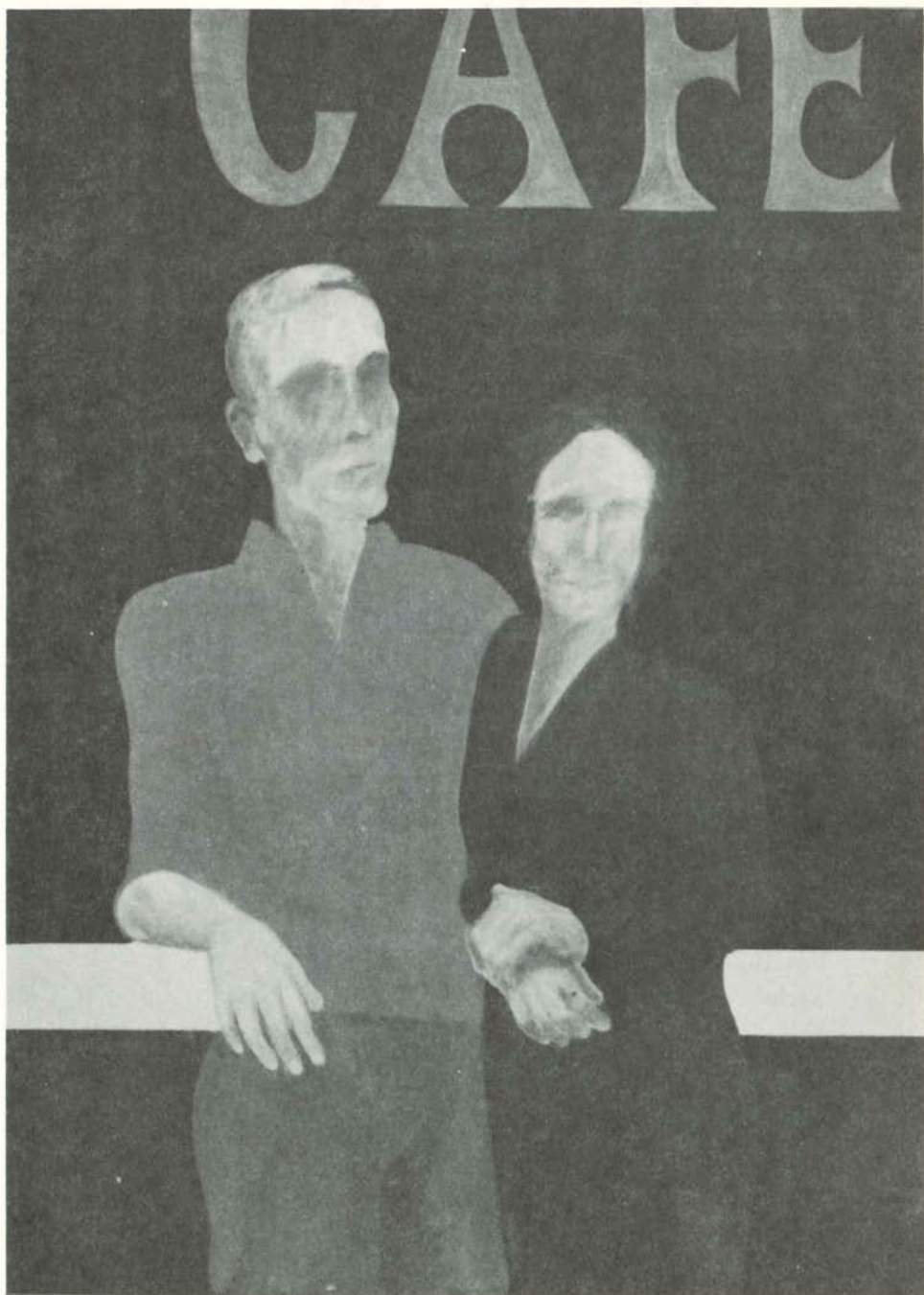
In your love-affair with Cool
It takes a longer time to come.
And still you pass the clowns and cuddle-dogs
And laugh at their perverted pleasures
Blind in that split-second lifetime
Your own reflection in their eyes.

Cool burns your horny heart
She seeps and sucks
And sanctions all the funky phases of the act
The binding force for fact
The penalty for failure.

But it comes harder every time.
The story's dead
And all the lost injections waste away
In withered cells and dusty blood
The first and only time you really come together.

Forgot what you were looking for
Or never knew for sure
But looked for none-the-less
And found
And lost
And found and lost again
But can't remember how or where or when it all began
But then again what difference does it make
As long as Cool commands.

Except, the Phony Freak!
The clowns are looking back
And laughing too
And in your own eyes
They see you.



"Young Couple"

Terry Sanford

Young Face

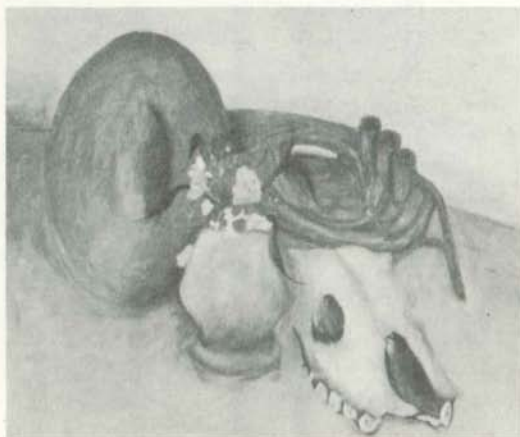
By Randall J. Gates

How deep in the eyes of earnest youth, unsure,
Alive in wonder, still in hopes and fears,
Long-dreaming of new worlds and restless in old,
Sit secrets and knowledge, smiles and tears.
Wild patterns play like beacons from those young eyes;
And pictures move in worlds unknown to age.
In darkness, stillness reigns; the monarch Silence
Reveals unknowing youth as sage.
His tongue yet still, his ears on guard, alert,
His thoughts still slow behind the guise of frowns,
Display the puzzle found complete in him:
The one who feels, who hears the sounds.
In greater measure does the youth avow.
What only in part does age know now.

Haiku

By Linda Liljegren

Shuffling slowly
Through layers of red and brown
Memories bring tears.



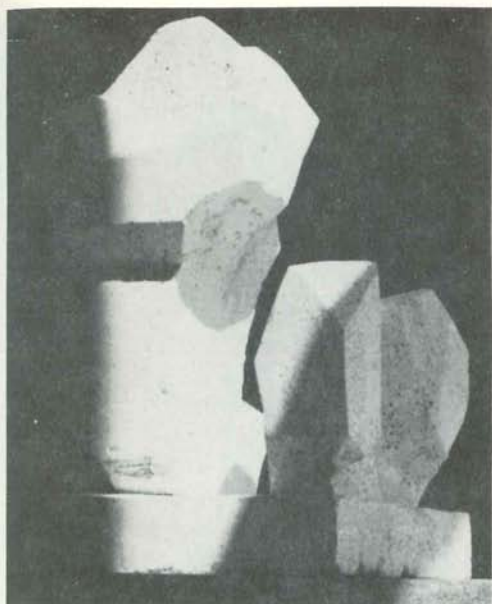
Still-Life

Sheila Johnson

J' ai ete

By Harley Johnson

In the spring of time
I am
As spring is
I have it
And it has me
As I am —
A time that's now
And won't be
When it has been
In the spring of time
You are as I am
We have each other
As we are
As time would have us
Be the spring
Of one another
Each spring is now,
Will never be again
In the summer of time
We'll have each other
As we are then
As then will have us
Be the summer
Of one another
We will be
Not as we've been
And may not be again
In the summer of time
I will be
Yet not as spring
Not as I was
But as I'll wish
I were
And have been
When I have summer
I have been



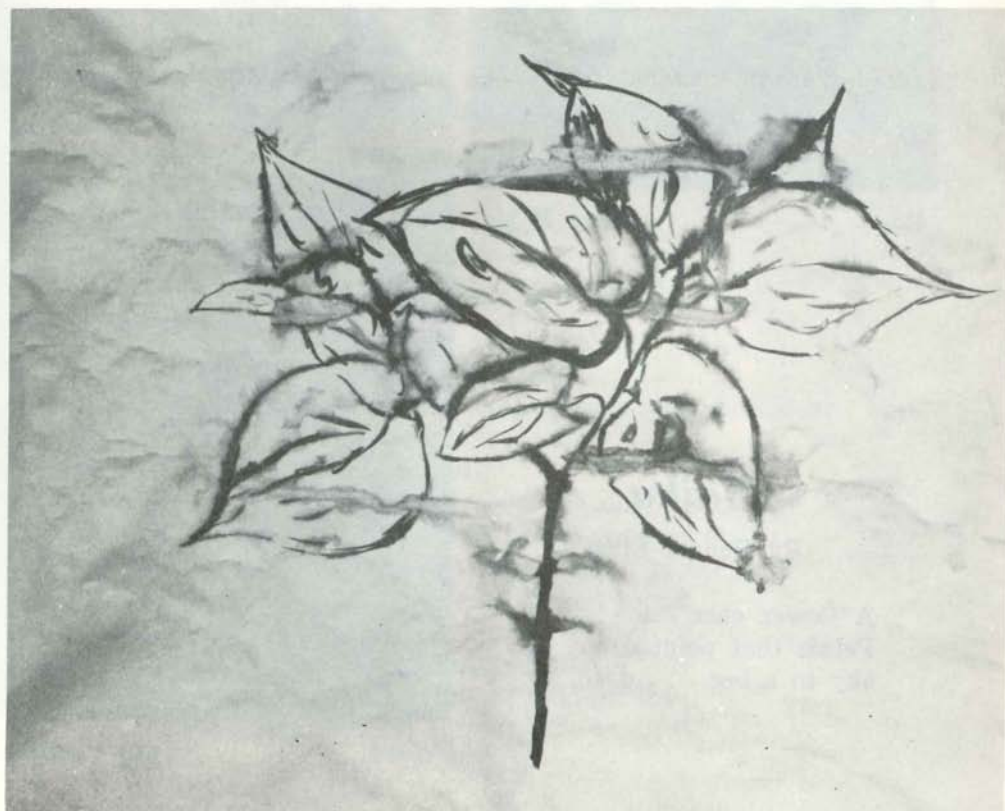
Sculpture

Margaret Gors



Sculpture

Fran Cook

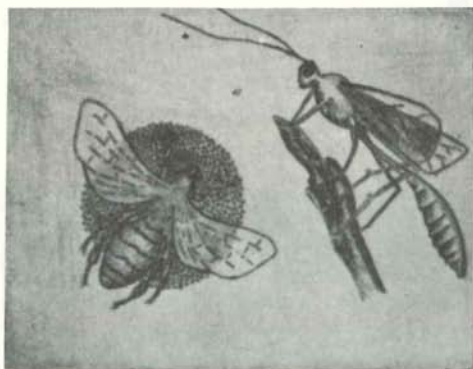


Weed Drawing

Haiku

By Larry Hillman

Drying leaves on trees
Detach, drift softly groundward
Becoming snowflakes.



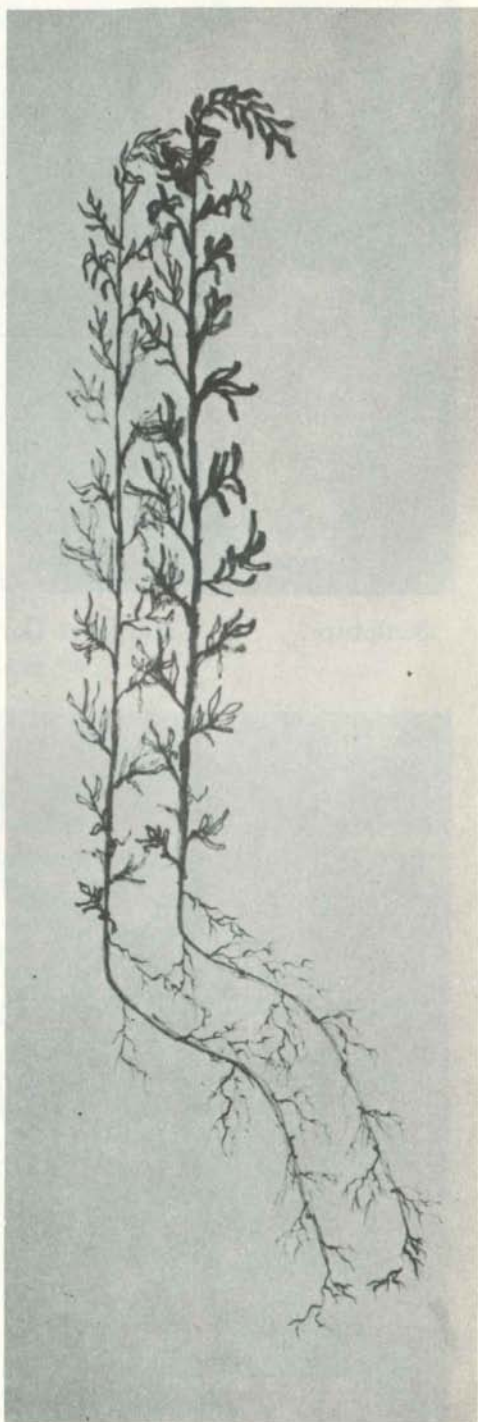
Bee

Jerry Baker

Haiku

By Donald Etzel

A flower once red.
Petals that pointed out the
sky to a bee . . . dead.



Weed

Jean Peterson

The "L" Ride

By Susan Anderson

To City of Gay Gaudy Gifts I plunge,
Through walls that press the tracks and pry the sky —
To trees in pots in parks, all green, I lunge —
Rush past a factory with grim glass eye,
And past a boy who bikes across debris.
A skeletal black child in soiled blouse
Leans from her home and waves her hand to me.
Her face repeats the shadow of the house.
A man is holding ties and iron stakes.
Wedged, as two trains shoot by his platform,
The man dissolves as mist in the train's wake.
Ahead, City, you now appear as Form.
Just Shape, you run and flow and twist and blend
To Haze of Black Children and Misty Men.

x2

By Davy Johnson

The light of day fades
as the gentle wave smoothes the rough, kicked up
sand.
The light of day eases
its perspective on the day past.
It melts into dusk as the white foam of the
crested wave slips wanton in the
sipping cracks of large battered rocks.
The heat of rushed rays
hurled earthward quells silently
and day concedes to night the
honorable truth of time.

No. 21

By Harley Johnson

With mud on my feet
I carry the child
Over the mire
I laughingly call
Life —
With stones in my pockets and heart
I try to tell him
Not to stub his toes
On my mistakes —
With bloody hands
I warn him not to reach
Into the dark that fascinated me
Too much —
Can I let him down
Before he learns
The motherhood of mud
The warmth of stones
The taste of blood?

Thoughts at a barbarity called funeral

by bill russell

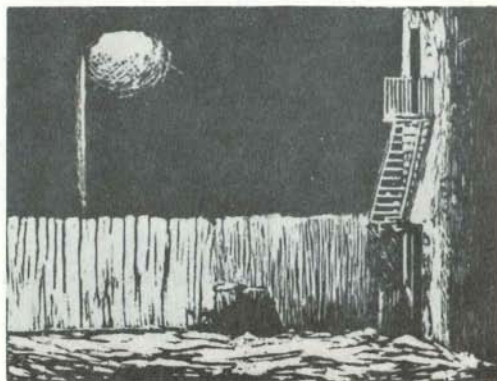
The coffin stands, display unmarred, each quilted square
of satin placed to give the seem of tiny soft
and fluffy pillows (dream, oh dear departed, dream)
around his head (now who is dead?) And sweet, such sweet
carnations fill the just so solemn air and yes
the people stare (but do they care?) Oh must you play
this mockery? In life he slept in muslin beds,
there were no flowers near his head. And soon you'll tell
(to those unable to attend) in reference to
the waxen shell, "My, but he looked natural."



Drums

Jerry Baker

Night Alley
Terry Sanford



Untitled

By Randall J. Gates

Jump right in, World,
And scare the hell out of the birds,
Man, what a bashing, crashing
Powerful sorrowful
Gutty gutty world.

Sorry? No, not sorry.
Be quiet and Know . . .
Just Know.

No. 27

By Harley Johnson

Someone's always chopping down
That big tree in your front yard
And dragging it away —
Postage paid —
To the garbage heap of memory
And tomorrow leaves every morning.

Someone's always smashing your fingers
When you begin to play with beauty
Telling you it's evil —
How would they know —
To touch flowers or breasts
And tomorrow leaves every morning.

Someone's always castrating your snowmen —
Screaming through your dreams
Drying up your mind
Like a sponge —
Leaving you to babble "What the hell"
And tomorrow leaves every morning.

Someone's always shoving clocks,
Stuffing them down your eyes
Blinding out your sun
That never shines in time —
And tomorrow leaves every morning.

No. 22

By Harley Johnson

If I could capture
A girl-child spirit
I'd touch her hair
And call her my Miranda —
I'd take her to an unknown land
And with my magic
Wash her face—
In laughing tears;
I'd let her touch
The clouds' blue bellies
And taste the sunshine
And know the grass as I do;
And when she heard the thunder
Of a flower petal
Falling,
As flower petals will,
I'd wish I didn't have
To take her home.

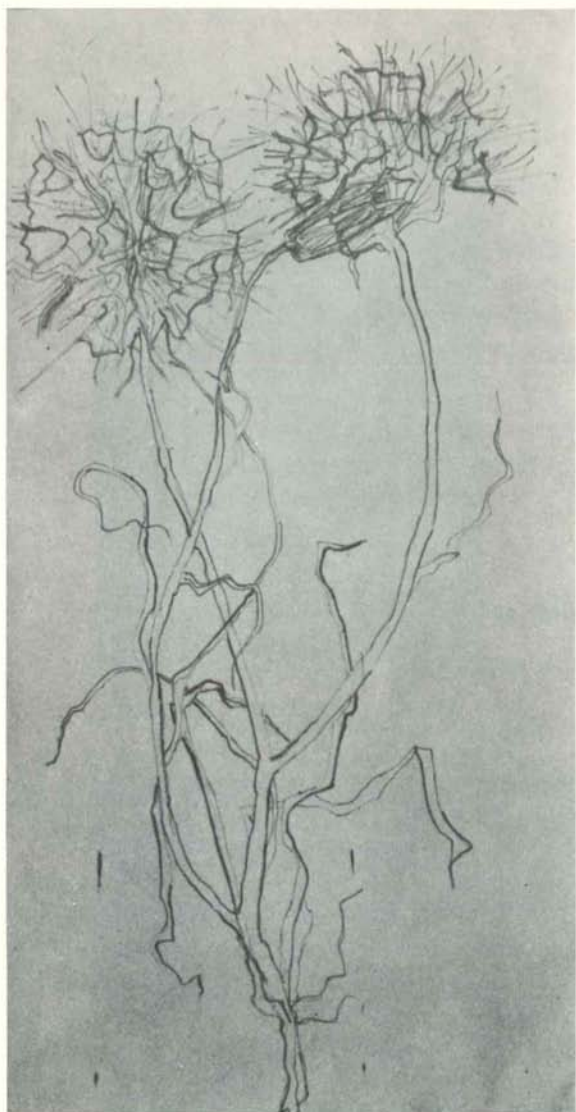


Weed

Terry Sanford

Girl With A Horn
Patty Cook





Weed
Diane Mumm

Empathy

By Merlin R. Mather

One may sit and gaze
Upon the beauty of the stars,
And wish the lovely from afar,
In all most certain ways.
Then the infinite spread above
Extends a golden thread,
Which with shy warmth is led,
To one who sits and wonders alone.

No. 23

By Harley Johnson

Kicking frozen ashes of burned-out hours
I spend my days like wooden nickles —
Taking Time for trips up empty walks,
The two of us are lonely —
Liking little,
I'm likened to less —
The tune of Never on my lips,
The song of Always on my mind,
The sounds of Now all about me.

The Phantom Smile

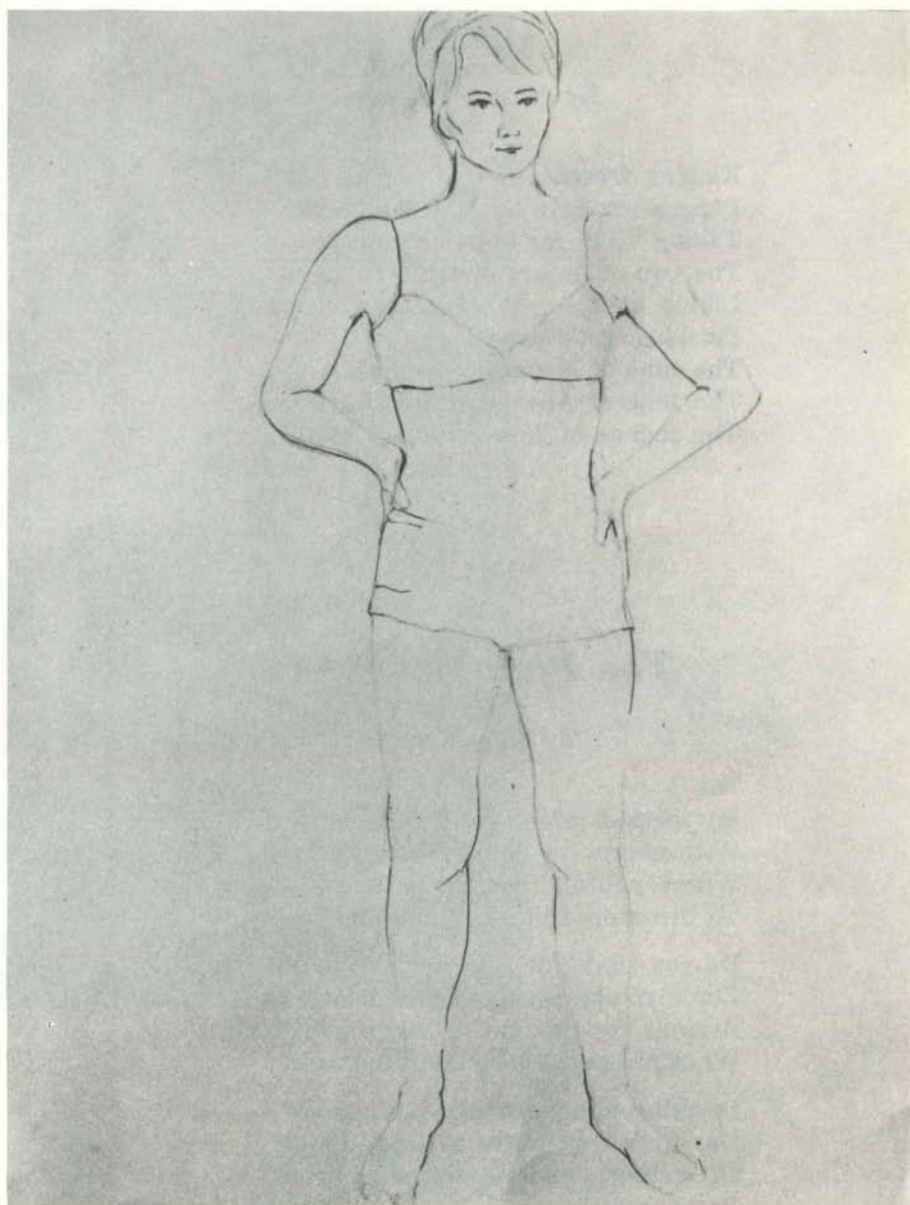
By Sally Knorpp

My blessed infant child of dreams
With cherub smile of strange delight
Whose willful, fleeting smile does seem
To bring me thither in the night.

Do you smile for fun that day may bring,
For toys and joys and a childhood gay;
A smile for thought of songs we'll sing,
What message sleepy smile convey?

Is smile sublime for times we share —
Our happy mem'ries of times at play
Of mother, child — beyond compare,
Perhaps now 'called at end of day?

Or — God forbid — does smile foresee
A future time apart from me?



Standing Figure Study

Patty Cook

Sonnet To Old Age

Pam Woods

There was a day when I still knew that all
I owned I could control. I was no slave
To man nor beast, no strings could tie! none, save
Those which I chose to bind. I would not fall
Neath hand nor yoke. My mind was steady, sure
In course; unswerving, only yesterday.
When night came, I could rest assured and lay
Away all thoughts; a mind all cleansed and pure.

But now the sphere has ceased to spin; no past,
No night, or day. They drift into one whole
Unending blue from which this slave is not
Allowed escape. The shackles time has cast
Clamp tightly over me. Day sets the toll
That night collects; then dawn, the fatal lot.



Still-Life

Terry Sanford

Untitled, No. 2

Randall J. Gates

It was a hot July afternoon in San Francisco. The ocean clouds floated slowly in the dreary sky. No one seemed to notice the clouds, though; the only "up" that anyone was looking was "up" Market Street. This was the day of the mammoth Shrine parade.

Expectant children waited for those funny men in the red hats to climb down from the hills which led to the bay. Mothers were less excited than their children and wore tired and impatient faces.

"Bill, slow down," gasped a middle-aged woman.

"Oh, come on," called out her husband.

Deep into the clogged sidewalk of people plunged the late couple. The man, a stocky Shriner, wobbled as he pushed to the curb.

The big, brown eyes of a four-year-old boy stared at the big man who brushed next to him. Earlier the little boy had been uncontrollable in his excitement for the big parade and the clowns and the candy. Now he was knocked against his mother's leg and shaken from that excitement.

"Damn it, Martha," growled the red-eyed man, "if you want to see anything you better get up here."

"Bill, be quiet," panted the wife as she dragged herself into the foreground. "You know, a person could really get upset with a husband like you. Can't you just settle down?"

The big Shriner ignored her, crossed his arms pompously above his great waistline, then half-saluted the approaching color guard.

Shyly the little boy stared at the big man. The big man caught the stare and glanced down at the boy. Then he smiled. "Hey," he said, "don't mind her. She always wants me to be quiet — to behave, she calls it. Just don't you mind her at all now. We'll just watch the parade. OK?"

The little boy said nothing. The lady hadn't bothered him,

but he didn't know what to think about the big man. The parade wasn't very exciting with that man hollering above him. Then he saw horses coming down the street.

The man stared down at the boy. "Hey, my name's Bill."

"Bill, you're drunk," interrupted the wife.

"Quiet. Hey, kid, ya never seen a man in a silly red hat?"

"Jimmy," called the little boy's mother. "Come here."

"Oh, lady, I'm not hurting your kid." The mother didn't look convinced. The Shriner's wife was scarlet with impatience and embarrassment.

"Bill . . ."

"Shut up, Martha."

Jimmy's eyes shifted from the man to the woman to his mother. His hand griped more tightly to his mother's.

"What? None of you ever seen a Shriner before? We're all over this town," railed the man. Others glanced at the intruding Shriner.

"Be still, Bill."

"Why should I?" retorted the wavering man. "I remember you having a pretty good time yourself last night." His wife turned her face sharply away. "Hrumph," choked Bill.

The surrounding crowd was well aware of Shriner Bill. Then down Market Street came relief in happy clowns and loud go-carts. Children squealed and the crowd turned back to the parade. Jimmy's mother, however, wasn't turning back to the parade. She reached for Jimmy's hand and pulled him away from the curb — and from the big Shriner.

"Oh come on, lady," pleaded the Shriner. "I didn't mean no harm, lady."

"Mommy, the clowns," begged the little boy.

"No, Jimmy." She could feel the eyes following her as she led Jimmy through the crowd. Jimmy started to cry.

"Was that absolutely necessary?" demanded Martha.

"Oh, what did I do?"

"Isn't being drunk enough?" She turned to the parade. "And take off that ridiculous hat before you scare some other little kid!"

The Man Who Played Santa Claus

A Short Story

Lee Swendsen

It was a small shop. Not a very good looking one either. The front was a dull brown, and "TOYS" was written on the window in chipped paint. There was a crack which ran from the upper left corner of the window, through the "Y" in "TOYS", and finally disappeared behind a sign that read: "SANTA IS IN!"

Inside, save for the empty shelves that looked down on the aisle, the shop was bare. The lonely light shown dimly through the smoke that leaked in through a crack from a pool hall next door. The entire room was steeped in cigarette smoke, and its contents seemed blurry and indistinct. Way in the back, on a secondhand throne, reading a newspaper, sat Santa Claus. No, it wasn't the real Santa Claus, but it was almost as good. You see, the man was the typical eccentric millionaire who delighted in giving gifts to children, and what better way was there to do it than by playing Santa Claus?

All day he had been talking to the children of the town and placing orders for the toys they had asked for. Now, it was almost nine o'clock and closing time. Abruptly, Santa put down his paper. Standing in front of him was a small boy of six or seven years. It startled Santa because he had heard no bell as the boy came in, but there the boy was with his serious, dark eyes looking up eagerly.

Staring dumbly, Santa put aside his paper; and, without a word, the boy climbed onto the huge lap. Recovering swiftly from his surprise, Santa quickly switched to the usual script; and with a hearty laugh, asked the boy if he had been good.

"Yes," said the boy, "I have been very good."

The boy's eyes were beginning to make Santa feel very uneasy. They were dark, a very dark Navy Blue, and they looked at Santa with an unblinking stare. Santa squirmed a little and asked what the boy wanted for Christmas. For the first time, the boy dropped his eyes and said imply:

"My mother."

Santa, who had expected a truck or set of pistols, was a little taken aback. He asked where the boy's mother was. The boy leaned against Santa's chest and said:

"They took her to the hospital one night and never brought her back." He looked up at Santa with those eyes — those eyes that seemed to fill his whole face, "Will you please give her to me?"

Suddenly, the boy felt much heavier on Santa's lap; and the room became very hot. Again Santa shifted nervously, and he tried to ignore the question. He asked if there was anything else the boy wanted.

"No," said the boy, "Just my mother." Then pleadingly, "I've been so good since she went away, and I've saved my money and everything."

Finally, Santa couldn't avoid it any longer. He looked down at those eyes. For a long time, a minute or more, they looked at each other. The small, hopeful eyes looked into the older, saddened eyes and gradually filled with despair. Slowly, Santa shook his head. "I'm sorry," he said, "a mother is the one gift I don't have in my bag."

The boy's eyes slowly drained of the last shreds of hope and clouded over with tears. "They said you could do it. They said you could give me anything I asked for," he screamed almost hysterically.

"Anything, anything at all," said Santa, "but I can't give you something I can't make or buy. I can't just give you a mother. She's something special, one of a kind; and when she's gone there's no man that can give her back." Santa dug into his bag frantically. "I can give you anything else. Just ask!"

The boy slipped off his lap.

"I'll give money, toys, candy."

The boy ran down the aisle.

"I'll give a house, I'd give the world . . ."

The door slammed.

Hopelessly, Santa finished, "but I can't give you a mother," and then as an afterthought, "or a mother's love." But there was no one to hear. The boy with the Navy Blue eyes was gone.

Wearily, Santa packed his lists, his chair, his clothes, and what toys he had into his limousine; and closed the shop. Kicking at the snow in frustration, he climbed in amongst his 'happiness' and drove away.

At No Price

Dennis Gray

I was looking for places to hang my as yet uncreated candidacy posters when I first saw Bill. He was sitting by the lounge door of the man's residence hall. His face, at least the small part of it that was visible through his hair, was unfamiliar to me. He could still be a voter though if he were a sophomore transfer from somewhere. Thus I decided it might be advantageous to befriend him.

I sat on the bench next to him, trying to avoid sitting on his misplaced shirt tail. "Mind if I join ya?", I said in my most folksy voice.

"No, I don't mind at all. Please do. I'm William Dewey. Call me Bill, if you would please.

"I'm Jim Lands. Where's your home, Bill?"

"New York City. I'm a transfer sophomore from the City College."

Ah, paydirt. It's time to really cozy up to him.

"How do you like it here so far, Bill? Met many people?"

"I think it's great, although it is a little lonely. You're the first person I've met, other than the Deans." A slight pause. "But I really enjoyed the Talent Show last night. Did you see it?"

"Yes, I did." I watched his increasingly excited expression and, though I wanted to mention my candidacy, I decided to play it his way a little while. "I was real impressed with a few of the songs."

His right hand jerkily pushed the hair back away from his eye — once, twice, then three times. His lit cigarette, forced to take an active part in these movements, did a maddening jig, "What did you think of the Dylan song, Jim?"

"I thought it was pretty good, though no one can sing 'em like he does."

"Dylan is so great! I saw him once at a Negotiation Now meeting down in the Village." All the time he talked he stared right into my eyes, something that has always bothered me.

"Bill, you've been to a Negotiation Now meeting? That's really great. I've always wanted to go to some of those radical meetings." Thinking he might object to the term radical, I qualified myself. "At least they seem radical to someone nurtured on Iowa Puritanism."

He threw his cigarette to the floor and attempted to smash it. He didn't get the job done however, as he wouldn't take his eyes off mine and couldn't find the cigarette without looking. "Oh, I've done a great number of things like that. I've been in peace marches, anti-capitalist demonstrations; I was even thrown in jail once for dispensing birth control information at a parohial school. Say Jim, if you've got an extra minute, I'd like to show you some buttons I've gotten from demonstrations."

"Sure, John. Where's your room?"

"The buttons are in my car. It's not far from here. Do you still want to see them?"

"If you don't mind the walk, I sure don't." We went out the door, him not sure whether to go before or after me. I solved his problem by going first. He threw his old cigraette away, reached for a new one, then changed his mind and placed the pack back in his pocket.

He stared at me all the way to his car, talking of his experiences with the SDS and his time in jail. I responded occasionally just to keep the rhythm going. I couldn't figure out how to get around to mentioning my candidacy.

It was his fourth try that he found the right key. I could see that he needed a course in opening car doors, or at least one in not getting so shook.

Certainly now was no time to mention my candidacy. Later.
Seon.

The right visor had at least twenty buttons on it, far exceeding my expectations. I read every one of them, enraptured by everything from "Make Love, Not War" to "Hari Kari with Barry." I listened to his short and emotional explanations of each of them and how he was involved.

Bill spoke of the poor, the disenfranchised, the hungry, the persecuted. He sympathized with the napalmed, with the victims of religious intolerance, with conscientious objectors and made others feel sorry for them too.

It struck me that maybe John and I could really become friends. Maybe I could learn something from this young, inspiring idealist.

"Well, I've got to be getting home, Jim. I live with some distant relatives off campus. Do you mind if I maybe drop in and see you tomorrow night. I've got a couple of really great Phil Ochs records I want you to hear."

"That'd be great, Bill. Thanks alot for letting me see the buttons. See you tomorrow."

He left, yelling goodbyes. Hell, I'd completely forgotten to mention my candidacy. Somehow it didn't seem to matter so much when I was talking to him. He had filled me with idealism, who knows, it may be a marketable commodity.

