

Au Verso. Au Verso. Au Verso. Winter 1984.

The Divine Comedy ~ Dante
An Aria based on Purgatorio Canto XXX 132-141

Beatrice:

N'el im petra-re is-piraz-i on mi val-se,

con le qual-i ed in sogno e altrimen-ti io ri vo-cal si

poco a lui ne cal-se! Tanto giu cad-de

che tutti ar-go menti al-la sa-lu-te

These empty pages shall be filled. For note,
Their whiteness is a glove across my face,
And if I love yet cannot speak when smote,
Frustration and dishonor own the space.
—Robin Davis

I have chosen the above poem, taken from Miss Davis' notebook, to begin this issue of Au Verso because I feel it expresses the concern of all writers, especially poets. It speaks to the reader about the purpose of Au Verso and its contributors, who have submitted many well-filled pages this semester. Through this issues students communicate their thoughts and feelings about diverse subjects. I hope that they will be perceived to speak well, and that they and others will continue to do so in future issues, overcoming 'frustration' and averting their own 'dishonor' and that of this college community.

—Bruce Johnsen, editor

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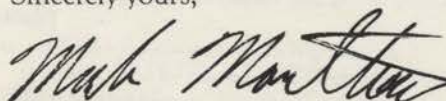
Dear Reader:

We hope this issue is the first in a new and substantial pattern for *Au Verso*. Considerable effort was invested in its compilation, design, and physical production. Over the last half semester the Literary Board met an average of six hours per week in an attempt, not only to understand and appreciate received submissions, but to become personally involved with them. Therefore, the final vote deciding whether or not a certain price would surface through this publication came as a distasteful anticlimax, a necessary footnote at the end of our discussions.

Roughly half of our received submissions will not be found in these pages, a statistic which does not deserve much attention in itself. However, we can promise that a sincere and enjoyable attempt was made to appreciate all of them by experiencing them as the author did. For such a privilege, we are grateful. It is the unknown contributors, with their continued efforts, who are the backbone of *Au Verso*. They are the ones to whom this first effort is dedicated.

I hope you find the spoken, as well as the unspoken, threads of our community as they are manifested in this magazine to be both enjoyable and instructive.

Sincerely yours,



Mark Moulton, Chairman

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MERRY CHRISTMAS

We extend our warmest gratitude to Bill and Kathy Christison, without whose unpaid good will and diligence *Au Verso* would surely have foundered.

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Concerning the cover: Appearing is an aria composed by Carrie Krokeck in early 1984. It was awarded a prize by the St. John's Prize Committee. Cindy Hobgood, an old student of the College, was responsible for the calligraphy. We are deeply grateful for the painstaking care of both artists.

The aria is a treatment of a speech by Beatrice, in which she explains her relation to Dante. Dorothy L. Sayers translates it as follows:

"And by wild ways he wandered, seeking for
False phantoms of the good, which promise make
Of joy, but never fully pay the score.

With inspirations, prayer — writing for his sake,
Vainly in dreams and other ways as well
I called him home; so little did he reckon.

And, in the end, to such a depth he fell
That every means to save his soul came short
Except to let him see the lost in hell.

For this the gateway of the dead I sought,
And weeping, made request of him by whom
He has been raised thus far and hither brought.

It would do violence to God's high doom
If Lethe could be passed, and ill-doers
To taste this blessed fare could straightway come

Without some forfeit of repentant tears."

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U.S. 1941



And by wild ways he wandered, seeking for
False phantoms of the good, which promise make
Of joy, but never fully pay the score.

THE ROAD UNWINDING

Liza Hyatt

There is so much—
there is the timeless beginning,
there is the world who is a green embracing friend,
there is the wonder and the fear and the freedom,
there is the freedom—
the freedom that I am growing wholly,
that is wild and quiet and deep from me
like walking the old road and believing the world will never
show me a repeated vision,
like holding yesterday in me and believing life will never
give a repeated moment—
there are the green leaves, everywhere, inside me . . .
(there is such wonder)
there is so much to say, so many people, a friendship to be
cherished and respected for its limitations, and there is the
freedom to move beyond, far beyond . . .
(there is such fear)
there is a great field of gold flowers that I want to dance in with
nothing on and no unsurity . . .
(there is such freedom)
there are tears and there are wings,
there is a woman walking alone at midnight when the lights are
unusual sparks of calm fire and the moon is more than full
who begins to dance yet protects herself with thoughts of the
man she could have been, and finished math, and simple jazz,
there is the question—Am I old, or young?
there is the solitude, and there is the deepening lover that is
all the world,

There is this woman who is coming to feel like the lighted window
in an ancient church—
a powerful mix of spiritual vision and old bricks—
as if her heart is open and touched by the air,
the walls of rib and flesh melted from its
growing internal fire,
and the red blood joining the earth . . .

EMBRYONIC THOUGHTS

Jeffrey Lawrence

Hurry up, faster, hurry up, got to get to that sound, where is it, quick...something I have to remember...hurry up...something I've been wanting to remember for a long time...faster...what is it? Don't forget to think, now. What was it I had to—yes! yes, that's it, I'm alive again! I'm alive! Thank God, I'm here! It worked and I didn't die! Me, Walter Hauptmann—I've beaten death just as I've beaten everybody else who stood in my way. Ha! They always acted like they were better than me, called me inhuman, and...Ha! They were right, I'm more than human! This is the best joke on those worms yet. What was all that jostling around and hurrying that woke me up then? Must be that stupid girl I got to carry me.

But slow down, Walter, you've got another world to get ready for. That fool Watson said the womb-time was going to be rough—"difficult to maintain normal mental equilibrium with no sensory input, my dear Mr. Hauptmann." Ha! 'my dear Mr. Hauptmann,' indeed—I owned you, you insect. The only thing keeping you in that Institute of yours overlooking the sea and out from behind bars was me keeping my mouth shut. And that lovely daughter of yours, too, she kept you out. Ha! Such self-sacrifice will be hard to do without: "Whenever I want, Miss Watson, unless you want your poor father hounded out of the scientific community forever." She hated me so much she was a regular hellcat. Delicious, that sweet taste of power!

But stop, Walter. You've got to take stock (and take it under market value, as always, ha!). The projection must have just taken place; Watson said a week before delivery. What's this body like, anyway? My arms don't feel very long yet, and I can't seem to move my feet by themselves. Well, hell, man, these muscles have never been used before, so relax. It's funny, though, it feels like I'm still breathing through those gills, and the doc said that stopped after the third month. Ah, relax, you can't feel your lungs yet if they aren't filled with air yet, right? Take a breather, ha! and enjoy the start of a life of ease. You're going to have to start growing up fast once you get out of here. What was it that woke me up, though?

What is that girl up to? Some kind of exercise? She may be healthy—she'd better be, I had her checked out by the finest gynecologists money could buy—but I didn't think she was a health nut. Oh well, I guess I can live with her dancing around for a week, but I sure would like something to look at, or suck on.

Well, you can start relaxing right now, 'my dear Mr. Hauptmann,' you've got years of leisure to keep on being yourself, now. You hustled to get rich the first time; now you can finally take it easy—all that pack of dogs you out-hustled last life (Ha!) will die off before you're even full grown again. Ha, that Watson was a smart little twerp, though. Who else believed brain wave patterns could be focussed enough to be projected into another body? A lot of stupid soft ideas, though, just like all the others. Wanted me to try it first, after the animals. Stupid is the word, all right; if you can afford it, you let others take the risks and do the work, while you sit back and pull the strings. The whole point is to make sure you're top dog, and you can tell that by how many dance when you whistle. Ha, no way was I going to play lab animal when a mistake would leave me a vegetable!

I wouldn't have missed those first human tests, anyway. Not for the world. They were even better than those ludicrous gulls trying to grab things like the monkeys whose minds we projected on them. Ha! That was rich! Those stupid tramps who volunteered for the first human tries, though...ha! The money they were doing it for just happened to be enough to pay for keeping their bodies in an invalid center, apparently live bodies with just enough random brain activity to keep them from being officially dead. Pity to waste that cash. But it was worth every penny, though, to see those ridiculous babies with bum's minds, scared witless at first, and then trying to ask for a drink before they could even talk. They thought they had another life—time to be a bum in, too, Ha! They would have had to wait decades before they could even buy booze. Oh, but I gave them more than enough to drink, Ha, Ha! Maybe they were able to swim before, but I guess those baby muscles just didn't have the stamina. What a joke!

What was it Watson said? "The neural pathways must be developed sufficiently to function before the brain will allow you to imagine even the sensory input they will provide." Well, I can certainly feel that girl with her infernal squirming. Can't see much, but that's no surprise. My hearing seems good already, almost as if I'm underwater; that's the effect of the amniotic fluid, I suppose. Watson did say the amniotic fluid would conduct sound better than air. That must be why I can hear those squeaky screams from outside. Why the hell does that girl never stop slithering about?

Relax, Walter, you've got a life of ease in front of you.

You can't expect this flotation chamber to be like the ones you trained in. Ha! But I sure do wish she'd lie down and take a rest. Maybe it's just that I drift off to sleep when she stops? Be nice if my arms would grow strong enough to wiggle my fingers, though, and I wouldn't mind feeling my legs, either.

* * *

Damned if that girl gets a nickel of the dough I promised her! It's like she's running a marathon forever, with sprints thrown in for variety. She's gone through that dash-towards-the-screams routine three times, now. What if she miscarries? Well, that's why I threatened to close hospitals if those doctors weren't here around the clock. They'd better be taking good care of her. Why do they let her run around so much? I'll shut down their lousy hospitals anyway, by God!

* * *

Feels like a goddamn life sentence in here, even though Watson said it'd be a week maximum. He did say it'd be hard to keep track of time, though. I would sure go for a nice cold beer, now.

* * *

How can I think so clearly when my body is so far behind? I can feel my upper body fine, and can even move my arms a little, but can't feel any toes to wiggle. Or fingers either, for that matter. I bet I could move my butt, though. Let's see how much—ouch! That wretched girl, what does she think she's doing squeezing down on me like that. At least I know she can stop that damned marathon race when she wants. Damn! She did it again. But it can't be labor yet, I haven't got any legs and my arms aren't finished yet either.

It'll sure be good to get out of here—I've had quite enough of this endless swaying back and forth. Might as well relax, it'll be a couple of rough hours and then nothing but relaxation for old Walter—Ouch! If this is what she's doing just to get back at me for making her carry me, delivery is going to be no picnic. They say the uterus muscles are the strongest in the human body—I'm glad she's not going to pinch me out with the ones she's working out with. That squirming along—it's got a familiar rhythm to it, some song I can't remember that she's dancing to? None of that kind of exercise for this boy, though; he's ready for a lifetime of vacation.

It sure is irritating to be under her control. But Ha! I'm here because I put myself here, because I am who I am, and there's not a damned thing she can do about it. Well, she's not going to louse up; she needs the money too bad... not to mention, she is my dear old mother! Ha!

Damn! she's squeezing me again. Harder, too. Ouch! O man, I'm starting to slip out... and headfirst, too—that means the bitch won't even have to have a caesarean. Too

bad! Ouch! I'm moving and not slipping back again—thank God for getting me out of here. Nothing could be worse than being crushed by someone you've bought and paid for. Man, that hurts—but hang in there, Walter. (Don't really hang in there, old buddy, Ha! you wanna get out of here, don't —) Ouch! I'd like to kill that bitch when I get out of here.

How can she keep squirming in between these spasms? It doesn't make sense, it isn't right, it just—ow—but I'm getting somewhere, finally back where I belong, back where I'm me—ouch!! I'm getting out, out into the cold. The cold? At least she's not crushing me anymore, but... I still can't see anything. Am I blind? Something's wrong. I'm just hanging, nothing's touching me. Floating? No, I'm sinking, but it feels so good to rest, to be away from that awful wiggling around all the time. Ah... but wait, I'm choking. Can't I even lie still for a minute? God, I can't breathe, got to move, got to move just like that damned mother! Ah, that's better, that cool thick air sliding through me, clearing my head. Jesus, something's wrong!

Where are those damned doctors?—they should be around shining lights and slapping me, but where are they? There's just me and water. Oh Jesus, water all around... what's that sound? That squeaky whining sound, got to find it, got to get to it—why am I going that way? I don't want to, but got to hurry, can't stop. What, am I insane? It's closer, louder, got to get there faster, get it first. Where is it—right in front of me, why couldn't I see it sooner? It's a fish, and ah, I need it, got it. Ah! Oh God, can't even taste it, just swallowed it whole, just like a god-damned shark.

WESTERN SPURS

Edith Updike

Against the horse, iron willed to cross, the dark
expanse of my country with construction,
understood not by the untried who hark'd
fore but not warned that these brought destruction.
When pale-minded men by darkness were bought,
by poured out hearts and warm protecting arms,
like flora and fauna they were untaught,
the way of salvation from beneficent harms.
Thus considering civilization,
the inescapable trap we are in,
I cry without tears for race and nation,
engendering pleasures to lead us to sin.

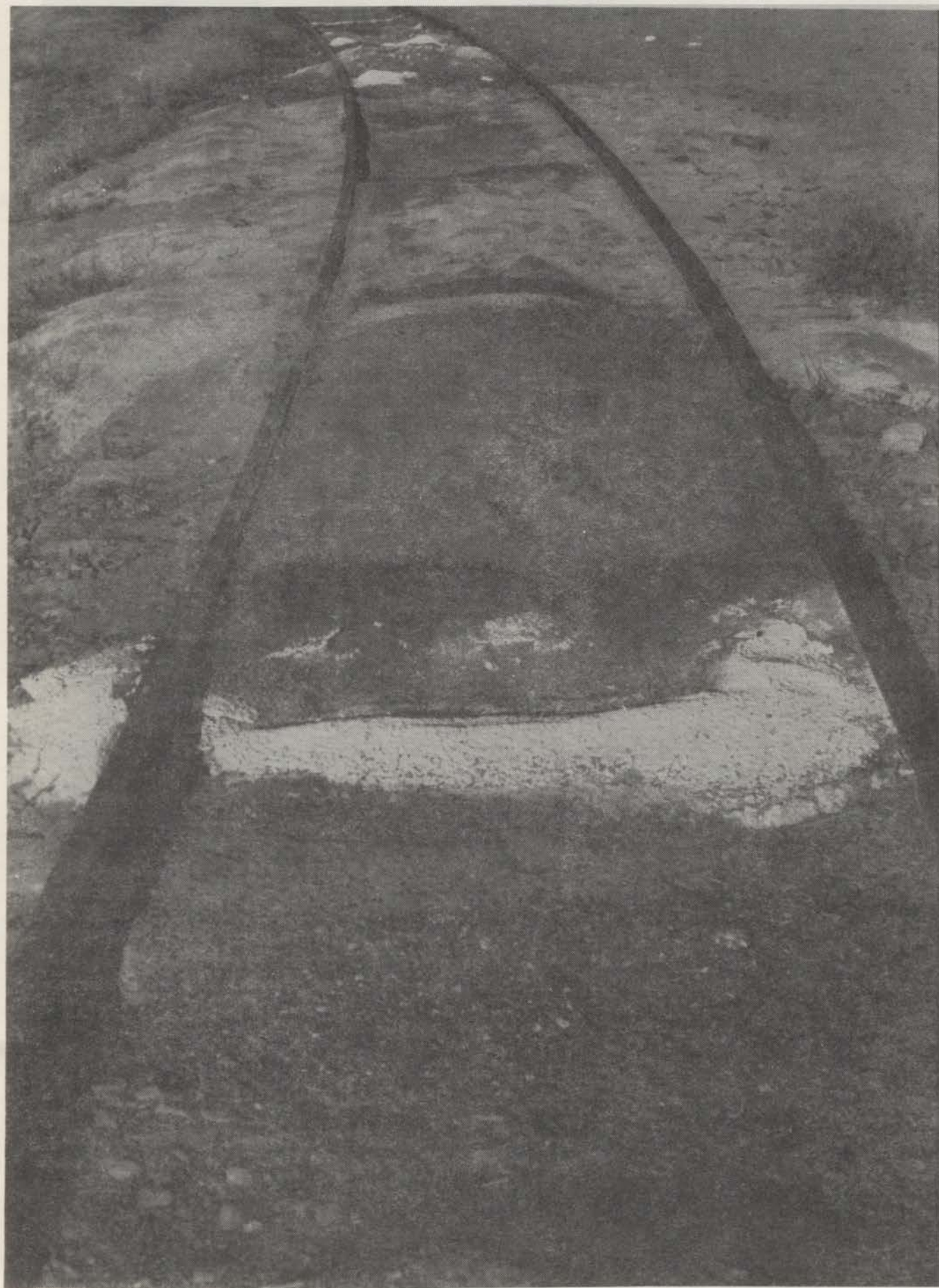
PATRIOTISM

Jana Giles

In a dusty canyon are clustered
"Homes"—
Mobile, they are called.
Surrounded by aging cars,
Wood piles of mountain stature,
A Profanity of junk
Covering
Bone-bare
Earth.
Above one of these,
Stapled to a broken broom-handle,
Hangs a
Dirty, bleached
Fragment of a flag.
Crimson it was, I think. And
Perhaps Royal Blue,
And the purest
Gypsum White.
I cannot be sure.

The colors
Are almost gone
Now.
Shreds flap
Listlessly
In the wind.
I do not claim
It.
I wish it were not
Mine.
But I cannot disown
It, I am afraid.

The flag is
Dead.
From
Poverty
And Neglect.





A DREAMLESS, ENDLESS WENDING

Chris Eavenson

Somewhere upon a ledge
upon the wall
upon the face of a cliff
deep within the Canyon of Storms

There I waited for you
each flash counting
moment by flame-frozen moment
poised upon the edge
of night and night forever.

Midnight.
Dawntime-with-no-dawn.
Midday.
Duskttime-with-no-dusk.
Timelessness.
Waiting-with-no-end.
Oh, my friend—
Lama Sabachthani?*

**From Matthew 27:46. Aramaic, it means, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" These words were spoken by Christ on the cross, being a quote from Psalm 22:1.—Ed.*





With inspirations, prayer—writing for his sake,
Vainly in dreams and other ways as well
I called him home; so little did he reck.

DIERDRE'S DREAM

Jana M. Giles

"...I will find out where she has gone,
And kiss her lips and take her hands;
And walk among long dappled grass,
And pluck till time and times are done
The silver apples of the moon,
The golden apples of the sun."

The Song of Wandering Aengus
—W. B. Yeats

She dreamt of a rocky green hill covered with wet, spongy turf and heather, and herself, Dierdre, seated upon a grey stone with a poem in her heart. There was a book in her hand, but she did not read it and instead watched the mist creep slowly down the valley, flowing about the houses of men in a stagnant way. There was no sound save the gentlest blowing of breezes, and her breath, which flowed mist-like from her mouth. Then there was a bell-toll that came muffled out of the fog, and the book stirred in Dierdre's hand and it flew open to a page. She stopped and read it and it was the poem in her heart. And as she read, the sun broke the clouds as if they were bread, shining feebly in upon the green and greyness. And still she sat upon the rock of Aengus, watching the sun dappling the earth with rounds of gold. And Dierdre reached down to put her hand on one, and lo!—it was an apple, goldier and greener than any king's treasure. For it was a magic apple, and she knew it and would not eat it.

By and by the sun rolled the mist away, and she rose from the hard grey stone and followed the path along the hill above the village. She looked down and saw that no children were playing in the bright sunshine. Thinking that odd, she caressed the apple, and it gleamed up at Dierdre, as if telling her not to fret, that the children would be out by and by. So she walked down to the village, where there was a Clock below the Bell which had Rung, but it was only five past six. Then she hid the apple within her garments, where it made not a lump, and went into a little shop that stood on the right. Inside was a little counter with a blue top and green painted stools. Behind the counter were shelves, many of which were bare, but others held tins of tea or biscuits, and boxes of cigars. There was no one there at first, but a door opened and a wizened old woman came through with the smell of

baking bread. The old woman silently served Dierdre blueberry tarts and buttery turnovers, and hot tea with the gentlest hint of mint and honey and blackberry leaves. When she had finished, the woman went back to get a warm loaf of bread wrapped in brown paper sacking; when Dierdre smelt it, it made her think of childhood and things long lost. Then the gnarled face disappeared, and she was alone save for an old owl perched high in a dark corner with a wizard's eyes. The owl rasped that it wanted a bite of the apple, for it saw it beneath her clothing. But she said no, that it was a magic apple, and offered it a bit of bread instead. The owl took the bread greedily, nipping her finger. And her finger shed a single drop of blood which grew into a blood-red flower with an orange centre and a green stem. She stepped outside onto the cobbled street where the sun shone, but no children played there. She took the apple out to ask it where the children were, and it replied that she might hold it up to the sun and see. So Dierdre held the apple up to the sun, that it might shine upon it; with that, the children came out the doors of their cold, square-stone houses and tumbled onto the street, laughing, and she laughed with them in the warm sunshine. But she saw a little child sitting on the curb shyly, so she gave the child the blood-red flower, and he leapt up and laughed and ran to play with the other children. She saw that the church had changed from cold grey, for a sunbeam had struck it, and now it shone brilliant white in the sun. Then she broke off a piece of bread that was still hot and ate it, and left the rest in its brown paper on the church steps for the children. Now all she had left was her golden apple, so she went out of the village and down the muddy, rutted road that dried quickly under the sun. But before she rounded the bend, she turned back and saw the children laughing. She looked at the Clock, but it was still five past six.

She kept on walking. Day turned into night without dusk, and it was black, and the moon shone brightly but the apple did not. Then Dierdre was on a hill, her own, but now there was water flowing from the Aengus stone, and there were brambles where before none had been. And the moon shone strongly and dappled the earth with rounds of glowing silver, and when she reached down to put her hand on one, it became a white shining silver apple. The night was warm, so she took off her garments and lay down with the two apples in the cool

stream and slept. While she slept her spirit crept out and sat on the stone to watch a glistening woman fly down from the moon and alight on the black grass. The woman was beautiful, her hair far blacker than the night, with glowing skin and a white robe. And Dierdre's spirit saw that blood-red flowers had begun to flow about her body in the stream. The moon-woman beckoned with long, luminous fingers, and Dierdre's body rose from the cool spring waters, and together they flew up to the moon. Yet her spirit did not go, but sat upon the rock, watching the red flowers flow about the apples.

In the pale morning her spirit was still there when the people came looking for Dierdre. But they never found the body, only the little cluster of clothing, and the two apples, and strange red flowers they had never seen before, withering in the bright daylight. Her spirit watched them take the bundle and the apples to her cottage, where her husband took them and told the

people to leave; but Dierdre's spirit stayed because he did not know she was there. And the man smelt the clothes and cradled the apples, and cried until the sun rose and fell three times. But her spirit felt no remorse, only a deep sorrow, and she whispered to him through his soul: Find your own Journey, for then we can be together again. And the man heard it, though he did not know what to do. Dierdre's spirit knew that someday he would understand, for he had known pain; she would have to wait a long time. Her spirit left then and flew up to the moon, watching fog-fingers creep over the night lights of the village as she went.

On nights when the moon was full, the blood-red flowers would begin to flow in the stone-stream, and the man would sit upon the rock and watch the moon. And Dierdre's spirit would fly down and sit with him, stroking his fine black hair until the night began to fade and he could continue on his Journey.

In this complex poem portraying at once seemingly conflicting passions, Mr. Johnsen has elected to use double or triple spaces instead of punctuation to indicate pauses in reading. An ambiguity of meaning has thereby been preserved, preventing any one meaning from being clearly primary and allowing multiple interpretations.— Ed.

FARE WELL MY LOVE

Bruce Johnsen

I in a veil not sounding the alighting cold
Arrayed that shivers these eyes anon would hold
The lidless amaranth centre petaled crimson dight in love—
For sabled austere night now wafts enshrouding even the morning dove.

In sands encompassed moist affection of the deep—
Bestowed an ebon pigeon tarred ashore in silence weeps.
Then, fetal erose grin in oath he bares—
Embalmed intoxicating memories extent upon his cares.

A quiet cooing seeps last from a salient second smile—
Not fleet as erose feathered arc intended to beguile.
It softly blushes the countenance that tender love had bade,
As i drift in sanguine slumber seeking solace in the shade.

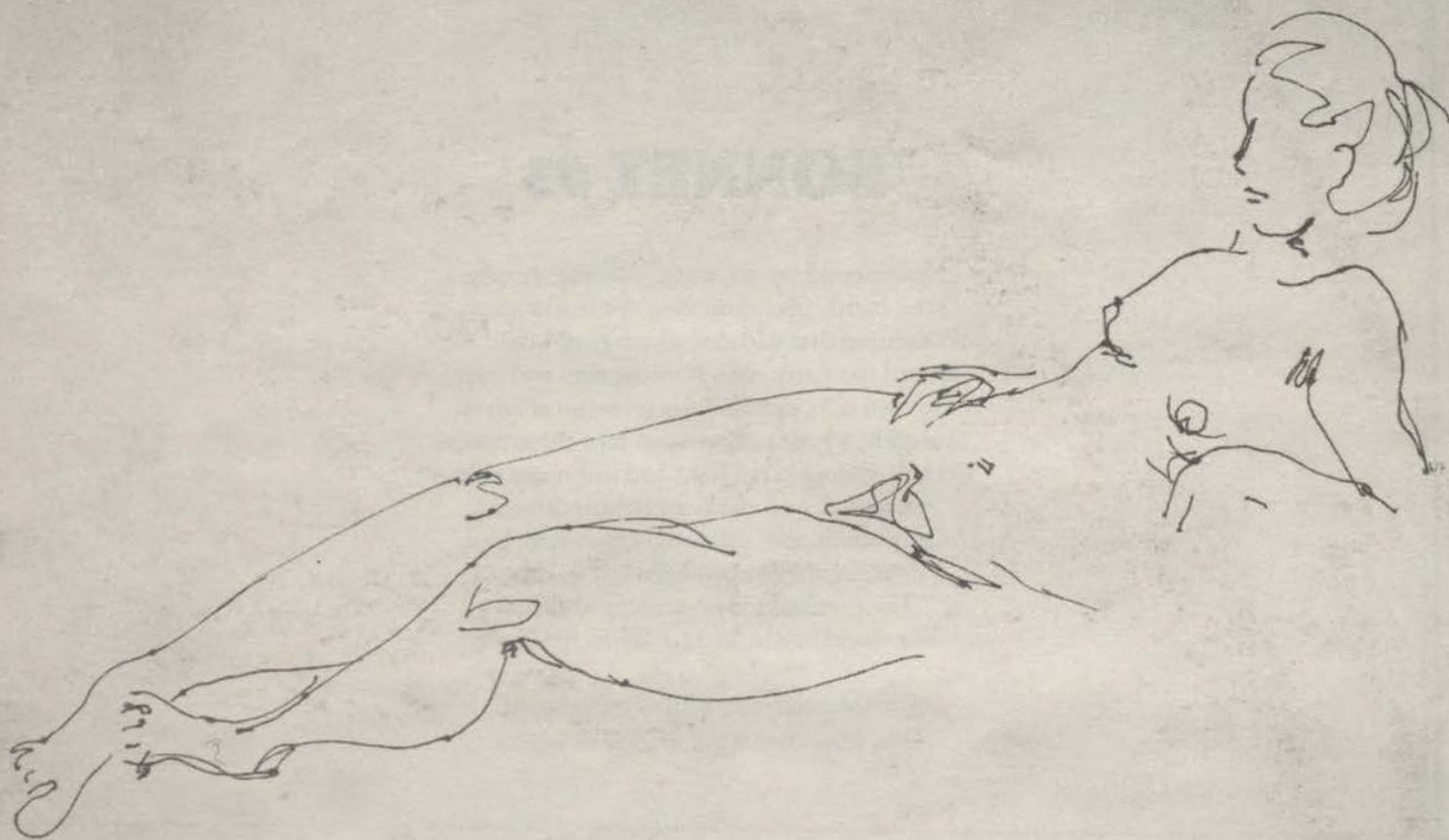
Two of Miss Davis' sonnets together were awarded a prize for excellence in poetry by the St. John's College Prize Committee last year. Written in late spring, all are fine examples of formal poetry in the Shakespearean, or Elizabethan, mode. — Ed.

THREE SONNETS

Robin Davis

We shall not call thee virtuous in thy Love,
For then we should presume that we do know
What Lover's virtue is, how it doth move,
How innocents may recognize its show.
Yet vicious, cruel Lover thou art not.
Dost thou desire to take away my health,
My money, family, friends? Or is there aught
Of grace which thou wouldst have from me by stealth?
Nay, nay, my Love, we shan't attribute these,
But call as ship to ship which, tempest-tost
On self-same seas, no longer speak of enemies
Or boast of strength which both have lately lost.

Let not upcoming calm alter thy face,
Nor turning cold withhold at last thy Grace.



SONNET #2

Blind Cupid's kiss well placed had chased me there,
To such as Dido and Aeneas had come,
A cave so dark that she could dare lay bare
Her fev'rish breast, and he lose sight of Rome.
So there I was, and thou wert then inspired
To hold and boldly love the one thou faced,
For shameless gods, which had thy passions fired,
Did steal the strength which else had held thee chaste.
O Lovèd One, how happ'ly I'd have stayed
In thy embrace, have known th'unceasing touch
Of gentle voice and virgin lips, have laid
Aside all fear of loving overmuch.

But lips had ne'er converted thee. Instead,
A shaft had pierced thy heart, and pierced thee, dead.

SONNET #3

How blessed are the wings of those that fly,
That highly placed do view the world apart,
Yet sighting that without which they would die,
Toward the Earth with burning eyes and heart
Do turn. Oh, certainly such creatures' wings
Are gods, whose strength can take them down
To Hell, where filtered light and unknown things
Are found, and clarity of sight is drown'd,
Or upwards, into gracious skies, where blue
Ethereal spirits both yield and embrace
The prodigal sons returning to review
The world below, and spy again the chase.

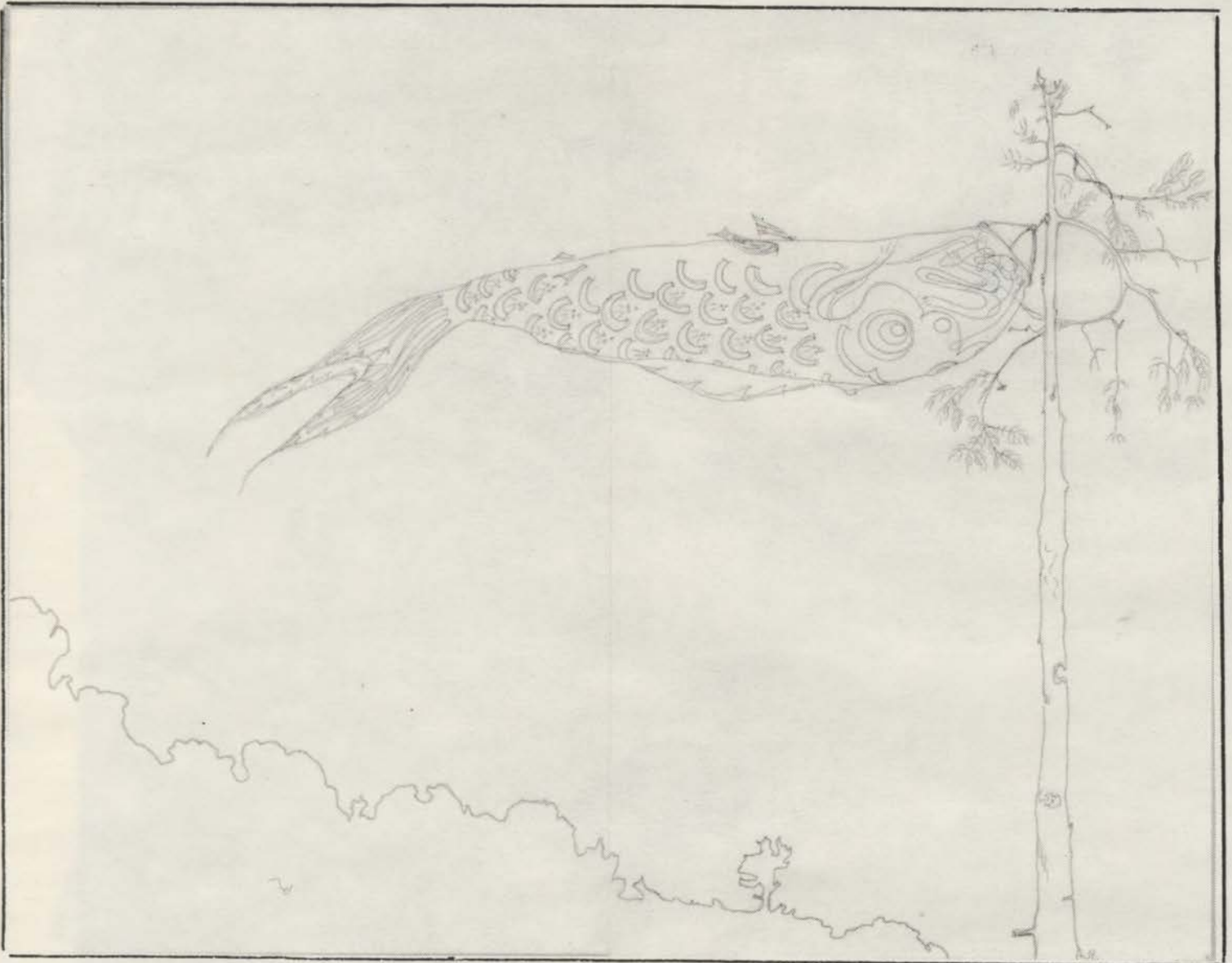
Oh splendid, airy soul of mine, await!
My wings give leave my lips to satiate.

THE DEATH OF A NURSING HOME RESIDENT

Julie Spencer

Riding my bike in the rain last night,
I passed a lone dead bird.
It rolled in the wind like a hollow rock;
Its feathers gleamed, absurd.

My soul drained down through the rolling tires
To lie down with that bird.
And you rode away on my bike, singing
The sweetest song I've heard.



The success of Miss Giles' ambitious attempt in linking eight haikus together in one poem truly distinguishes it, manifesting great care on the part of the authoress.—Ed.

LAVENDER HAIKUS

Jana Giles

Standing gently green
Near the corner of the house
All secret purple.

An older woman
Potters quietly nearby
Water can held hand

Plucking blossom sprigs
With which to adorn within
Intoxicating.

Flow of life broken.
Bursting bright green liquid vein
Brings peace to other.

White vase sits darkly
Upon glossy table there
Shadow is waiting.

Cool water gurgles
Secret purple smelling green
Thrust through dark-white hole.

Face smiling happy.
Cool water stops out-wither
But not that of soul.

One has, now giving.
Other takes selfishly not
One from one: Zero.





THE FOREST EXHALES

Mark W. Farr

The Forest exhales
A thick thick fog.
All vision is priceless
Under the sea Under its depth.
The light drowns and dies.
Then leaning skyward
Gets up and walks away
Enlivened
And sweet.







Philip Horne

And, in the end, to such a depth he fell
That every means to save his soul came short
Except to let him see the lost in hell.

Poem One

it is the night
which leavens
and leaves me obscured in warm
and hollow darkness.

Poem Four

Ghosts come across this bed
candle shadows
in lonely nites; sleeping together
with lonely unknown men
faceless and loveless—
those ghosts haunt recollections
and hold
like the glow around a flame
squeezing and releasing
kissing the nite
tonguing the dark room
with dark shadows.

Poem Five: A True Story

A woman
in San Jose, Ca.
tired of nursing
her spastic husband
shot him in the head
with his own gun
over and over again
till she had no more bullets;
she dismembered
and roasted
his body
which twitched no more
and ate of his arm.

The judge at her trial
said she was the coldest woman
he'd ever seen.

Poem Six

I

WORLD!

is it—imperturbable
this—Joy?
what will the evening bring
with its blazing dusk?
i have fallen
into this brilliant sky
that-now-knows no limit
& no solid earth.
that horizon
where the grey-eyed ocean joins
with the gorgeous blue of the humming summer
afternoon;
will there never be an end—
Forever?

Do Not stop flowing, cloud!
it is the wind which lives
& gives you its life!
Forgotten in this bliss—
Forgiven—by eternity!

Tomorrow comes with darkness but this spirit—
this Spirit holds forth the fire
against the nite
of tortures
of sufferings
of solid sighs
between the tears of the kingdom of man.

Hold forth Spirit!
Hold Yourself Aloft!
Agamemnon's beacon fire
to the wild world
the Holy Vacillating World!

II

closed in.
closed down.
suffocated—
suffering:
a feather pillow over the face
pressed—
a cotton sustenance
white
as the writhing of the corpse—
stops.
the erection
of the hanging man
bursts
with a seering orgasm
the final
and greatest
Joy
that this life this world
that this suffering
gives.

III

the crystalline
shatters
and the shards stop—still,
frozen into place—their place—
to aimless places
and held by some hidden force.
the moon thro the window
makes grey shadows and rainbows
pass among the crystalline schisms
moaning—
a lonely voice in a cold room.
The sun comes. . .
the light creeps upon the walls
& dances among the shards
shimmering color onto the walls:
vibrating fingerprints of the Holy sun.

Falls the day—
w/ final flash—
Beware the New Moon.

IV

Hold forth Spirit—hold forth,
graze against the world w/ love
a cat's tongue
warm and wet and rough.
Smile spirit
w/ the strength of teeth
bared for the fight;
a soft open smile
a canine sharpness.

The new moon comes
to uncover what is hidden
w/in the sun's light
full & hard by day
insidious by nite;
the new moon comes
to show the glow of the World
For—Itself!



PENSEES

Neal Van Scoy

1. Happiness is merely an attempt to mediate pleasure and despair.

2. If happiness is the ambition of our Will, then what we will has no life.

3. Everyone is a sceptic.

4. If you understand why you love, then you do not love.

5. Should you add together all the pleasurable moments in your life, they would account for merely a fraction of that span; your disposition is only dependent upon what you choose to remember.

6. If God and the Universe are infinite, I have no place to go.

7. Since everything worries us, should we worry about anything?

8. Pascal would have been a priest had he not been a cynic.

9. If you doubt your own existence, point a loaded revolver at your head, pull the trigger, then ask a similar question.

10. The most essential question one may ever ask in life is what brand of contraception one should use.

11. After twenty beers and the most brilliant conversation in your life, whoever leaves the bar with you will probably be your wife.

12. God created man in His image; man is the image of God; God is a very frustrated being.

13. Liberal education was invented by a Catholic.

14. The only true form of immortality is death, so God is dead.

15. Morality is not justifiable on the plains of human paradox; here good and evil, right and wrong, left and right, battle to become the other.

16. Religion is the grand masquerade party of the self-righteous tithing to their vanity.

17. I am vain and ridiculous, but there is nothing more pleasing than the satisfaction received when I make someone smile.

I LAUGH

Richard Lass

I'm surrounded by strangers
Everywhere I go—
I hope to be liked—
So I laugh

Perplexing, unknown nightmares
Haunt me every day—
I forget my fears—
And I laugh

Confused, my growing up tears
Drip down my youthful cheeks—
I hide my feelings—
When I laugh

Can I still laugh?

VITTUM HILL

Grant Henry

Insistent rays
call forth to parade
in guise of the diurnally dutiful;
the jarred-jangled trek
as each phlegm-clotted neck
sports twin pricks—jewels
of the vampire duels, as what
is is eaten as question.

Ah! And the passions!
The lure of the fashions!
The spinning! the grinning!
The fog for the few!
Those reeling moments,
the foment of ferments,
the implicate distillates,
Seek poison anew!
Bursting with thirst
to suckle, "Me first!"
til dawn's flight, for daylight
do vampires eschew.

Wresting my life
from the maw of the ethyl;
trusting the grave which
sought my true breath, 'til

trading shuffle for stride
in albuminous tide

no longer question but clue.

Betsy Williams

THE PARTY

"Come on in," he says. And I drag my body to the foreground.
The masses follow their eyes that follow me.
Here I begin to wonder, "What is his image of common sense?"
He gets me a drink and the drink gets me.
I dance all alone with music—for that is when I touch the future, with my feet.

THE DE-PARTURE

She looked at him in the chair, sitting. "Are you indifferent?"
He shook his head spasmodically.
Then he rose, saying, "Wait, please, this is my body which is shed for you.
Don't you leave until you've seen me in my green trousers."
—The rest has been forgotten temporarily—
She left, with or without regret.

BLACK SCAVENGERS

Hoski Schaafsma

The mist falls
Slowly the black scavengers pick
through notes lost and forgotten by
dead musicians
Trash cans clang invisibly in the
cold, swirling mist
All is still; that is deceptive for
quickly the mist parts, revealing black
shapes in the trash.

The sun burns slow people as they live
their death; waiting, waiting for the death
which will relieve them of the death they now lead
On and on the mist cuts them apart, further now
and still further they drift picking up what is
dead and gone, calling it theirs
They have something for a minute, but it slips and
is gone; they have nothing.

Their death, for which they wait so long will end this
misty hell in which they live their death so long, all alone
they will die as the mist in its hellish way has separated
them beyond that which is life or even death.

The black scavengers walk on claiming all the emptiness of the
world as their own, the empty blackness which they claim slowly
wraps them up and it is all they see as they wander aimlessly down
empty corridors of their own hell; they pursue it endlessly never
realizing that it is that in which they are wrapped.

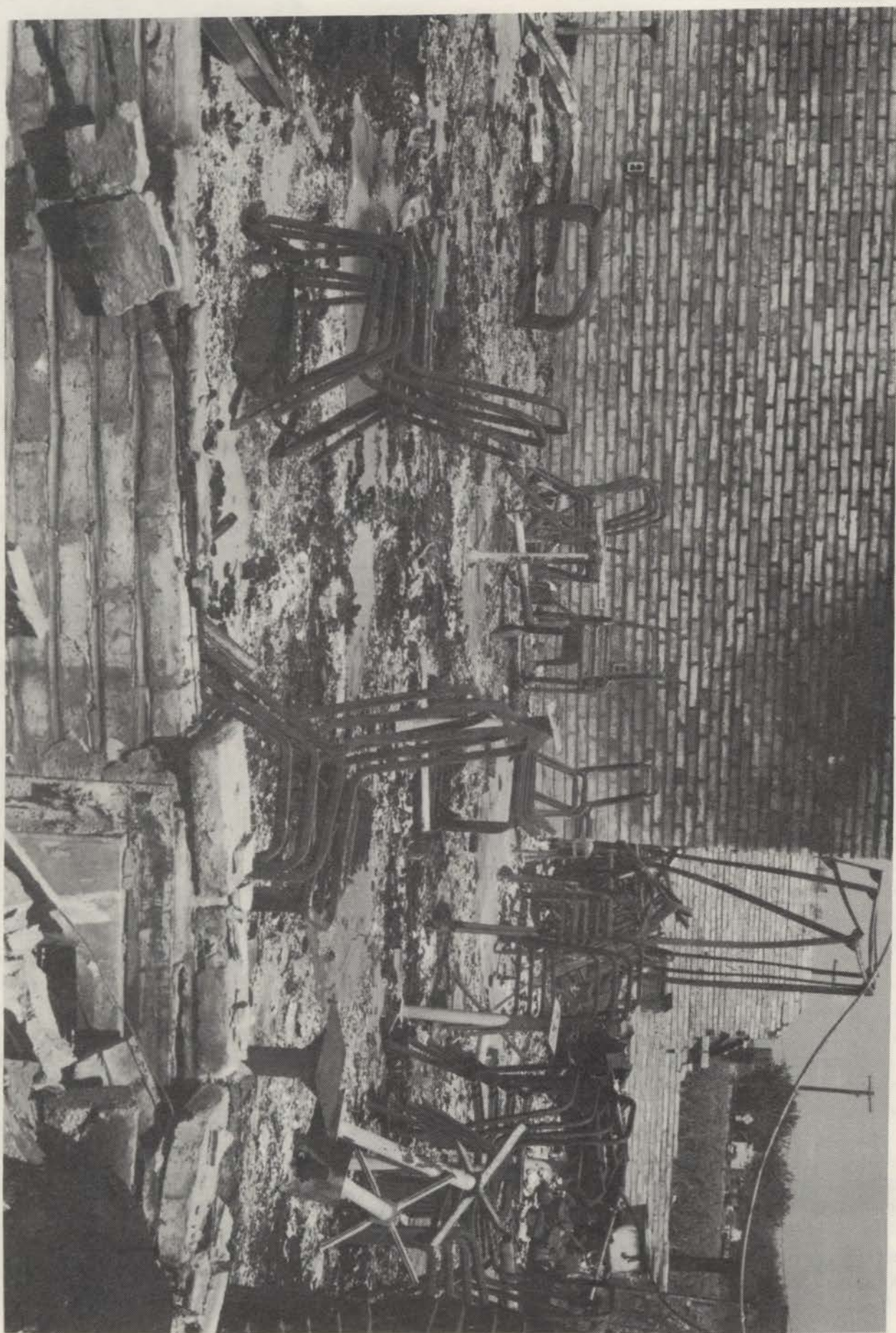
Mr. Cote, a student here in 1982-83, mailed a large
collection of fragments, from which these were selected.—Ed.

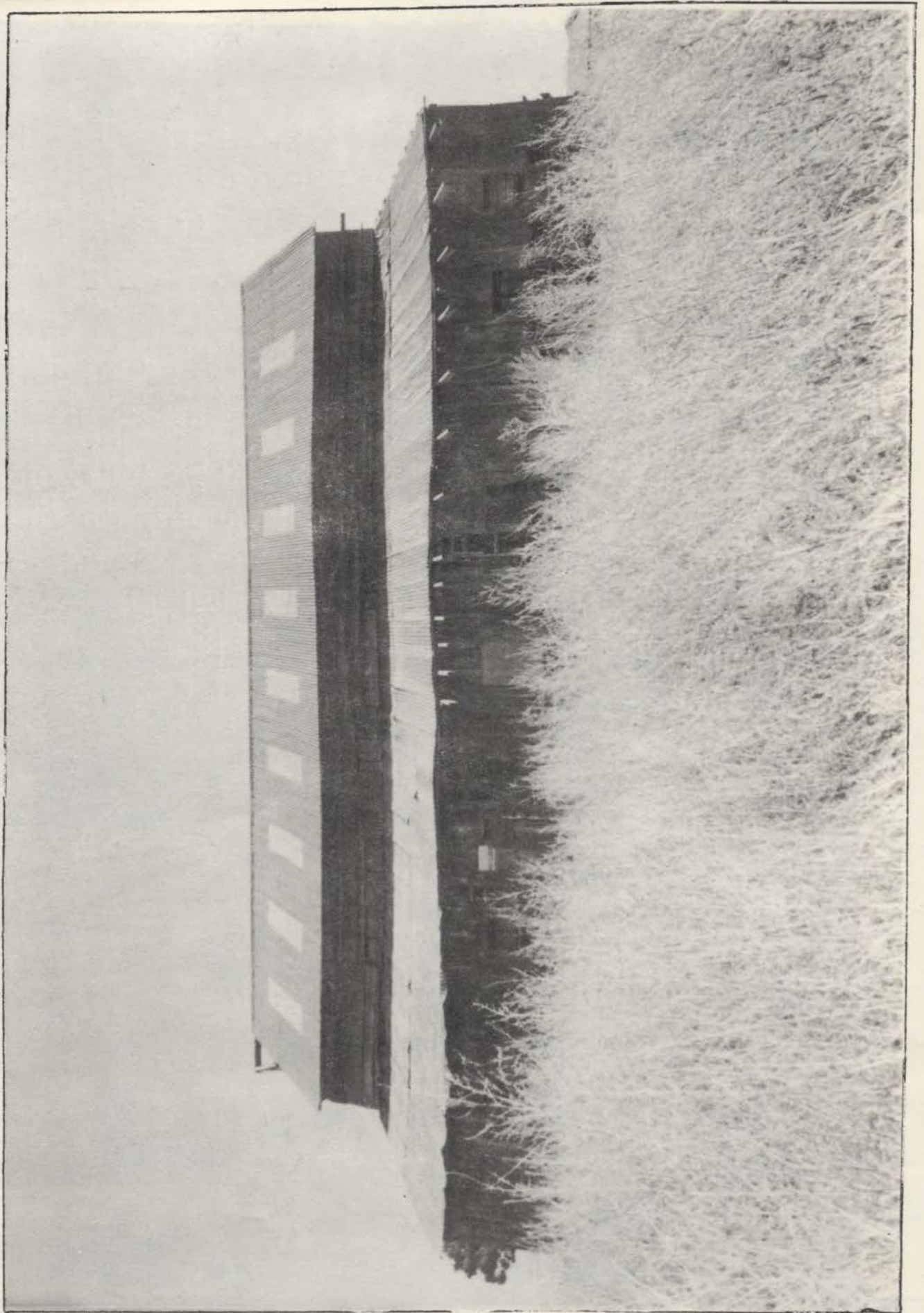
TWO FRAGMENTS

Marcel Cote

What passes for wisdom within these walls would die
a feeble death when exposed to the piercing intelligence
of a housing contractor.

A rat that feeds on gutter sludge
becomes sick. A sick rat spreads disease, becomes a source
of suffering to others, becomes hated and feared. The rat's
source of integrity—its life force, its ability to survive—
is what makes it dangerous. A rat that tries hard to
survive in twisted conditions only hurts itself, and others.
A rat that gives up trying is a dead rat, but at least the
damage stops there.





THE DIVINING ROD

Andrew J. Krivak

The woods were still. The only sound came from the leaves and twigs bending and breaking under their feet. The boy pointed to the tree as if to say, "There! That's the one." The man stared at the giant Cherry and all the limbs that grew like children from its trunk. The boy looked anxiously for an answer. The man only nodded and said, "Good," as if to say, "Yes, this is the one." He cut a limb from the tree and trimmed a V-shaped stick clean of twigs and knots. When he had finished he held the ends of the stick in his hands and wrapped his fingers around the wood. His knuckles began to turn white from the grip. "It's here," he thought. The boy watched as though daring to look on from a distance.

The drought was like a plague, leaving men lawless and dusty and believing they were being punished for an evil they had done; each man carried secretly his own guilt, sweating in silence. They prayed and begged only for water, their eyes squinting, dry as the dirt, red as hell as they looked up day after day waiting for the skies to open, the rains to pour, and the ground's gaping cracks, like mouths, to melt shut, and in the wetness live again.

Jan Magda left Austria-Hungary before the first World War. He had lived in Vitaz, a village east of the town of Presov in the land that was to become Czechoslovakia after the war. He came to Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania to work in the coal mines that were thriving at that time—palaces of black gold that only the immigrant knew existed under the city, digging downward, always downward like graves, for his life. Jan married and moved to the back of the mountains west of the Susquehanna River, to a small town that was named Dallas long before the land of Texas was found by the miners from the East who had ventured West. Dallas lay like the first place you come to, the last place to stay as you move through a mountain pass on your way to somewhere further north, or somewhere further west.

Jan's wife gave him a son who would never speak. Jan loved the boy in all their silence together. Matthew was nine years old the year the rains never came. Four years ago, Jan had left the mines to spend his life farming in Dallas. He and his family had secluded themselves on a hill that rose steadily but steeply with woods of Maples, Oaks and Hickories. Jan plowed seven acres of rich soil, turning up the layered rocks that graced and shaped the mountainside. At the edge of the woods Jan had planted a small orchard of Apple, Peach and Pear trees.

Matthew was always somewhere near his father, distracted by his own imagination, or watching intently and wanting to help whenever he could. "Like a bad

penny," his mother would say, somehow knowing what the expression meant. It was the only English she knew, hearing it in passing from a joking merchant at the market place in Wilkes-Barre. She would smile at Matthew then and say, in Slovak, "My golden boy." Matthew wished he could say "bad penny." He liked the sound it made as it rolled slow and articulate off his mother's broken English tongue.

The calends of August that year was a Saturday. Jan and Matthew left in the morning for the mill in Fernbrook to get feed for the small livestock Jan kept, and materials—twine, bushels and burlap—needed for early harvest crops. The morning rose like any other that summer. The air was dry and already getting hot, the ground brown, cracked and dewless. Jan hitched his horse to the wagon. She was a black Morgan, not yet old, a strong animal Jan was proud of. He got onto the wagon and helped Matthew climb up. He grabbed the reins, took his hat off, and put it on Matthew's head. It covered Matthew's eyes and nose, leaving only his mouth showing, breaking into a smile.

"Gid'up!"

The creek that ran past the feed mill had dried up weeks ago. Rocks covered with a grey, once-green algae lay dull and bare on a floor that should have been mud. When they had come here in early July, Matthew ran down the bank to the dead fish lying in their waterless suffocation, some still flapping about in inch-deep pools. He threw rocks at them from the shore, then dared to wade in the mud to touch one. A rat ran from under the bridge with a fish in its mouth like a bear feeding in a salmon run. Matthew gave up the desire of so easily violating a fish out of water, threw one last rock in the direction of the rat and ran to meet his father. Now the lifeless creek bed held no fascination, and Matthew followed his father into the mill.

Inside the mill were sacks of brown burlap bags of feed and fertilizer stacked along the walls, a museum of seed suspended in potential, waiting to know the ground and to grow. The store always smelled like a dormant barn in January, the frozen dews and stinging frosts long gone, waiting for spring.

On this Saturday morning there were five people in the store. Jimmy Bogdun, the owner of the store, lived across the street, and was behind the counter at the register. Frank Dylan, John Krespin, Seth Keller and Nicky Lamoreaux stood in a group, purposely setting themselves off to the side, but taking up a complete space in the store. As Jan approached the men, the smell of the feed mill

gave way to the smell of an entire unbathed town. The smell hung about the men like a holy medal around their necks. The sweat of their broken farms was the only precious water they were entitled to.

Frank Dylan was a tall, broad-shouldered man, dark haired and tanned. He was younger than the others by a year or so but held his youth as strength. The others never knew him to be foolish. In fact, Frank was a rather smart young man, and they never thought of him as being younger than they were.

John Krespin was a big, red-headed farm boy, outspoken and a work horse. He took pride in having the most of everything. He'd worked for it—the land, the house, his family—and no one ever denied that he deserved it.

Seth Keller never said much. He thought a lot, and if he thought you were asking because you really wanted to know, he'd tell you what he thought. He was not short, but he had a stocky, bull-like strength about him. His face had a hard handsomeness to it; his eyes, Jan thought when he had first met him, were as deep as the mines and as black as the coal in them.

Nicky Lamoreaux was an almost fat, silver haired man who always laughed and could always give you a reason to. The t-shirt he wore exaggerated his round belly. His face was silver shadowed with whiskers that seemed to grow with a Saturday morning earliness right before your eyes.

"Morning Jan," they all said as Jan and Matthew walked into the company. Dylan put his cigarette out on the floor.

"How ya doin there, Matt?" Dylan asked him. Matthew smiled at him.

"Good morning gentlemen," Jan said.

"Morning, Mr. Magda," Jimmy Bogdun said from behind the counter.

"Morning, Mr. Bogdun."

"Come in here to cool off, Jan?" John Krespin asked.

"Came in for some feed for my chickens and rabbits and that horse of mine."

"You got chickens left?" Dylan asked. "Christ, mine died two weeks ago. They couldn't eat anything without water. My rooster was the last one to go. Probably just got tired of playing with himself, right Nicky?"

Nicky Lamoreaux laughed like a madman at Dylan's joke.

"There's a boy here, Frank."

"Ah, it ain't hurtin' none, is it Matty?"

"How much you want of each, Mr. Magda?"

"Fifty pounds, Jimmy. I've got the wagon outside. And I need some twine, bushels and burlap too."

"What the hell you got growing up there, Jan?" Lamoreaux asked, still laughing some.

"Just getting ready for some early harvest, Nicky."

Dylan had rolled another cigarette and was lighting it up.

"No one's harvesting anything but dust this year."

"It's been dry," Jan said, "but things have been growing."

The smoke masked the smell of sweat.

"What are you growing without water?"

Jan moved to the counter and the four men moved around him.

"Jan," Lamoreaux asked again, "did you hear what I said? There ain't nothing growing. What are you loading your wagon with stuff that's 'bout as good in the ground now as dirt and rocks without water?"

Matthew grabbed his father's wrist. Jan put his hand on the boy's head as though only making sure there was still some silence on his side.

"There's water," Jan said.

"What? What the hell are you talking about?"

"I said there's water," no louder, his eyes on each of them.

"Where?" Keller asked.

"The ground. Under the ground."

"You've got to be crazy," Krespin said. "How far under do you think water's going to be these days?"

Jan could smell sweat again.

"I know it's very far under." He stopped, but the men said nothing, waiting for an explanation. "It runs down from Ondish Mountain under all those layers of rock that are on that hillside, even deeper than the creek will ever seep. Now the water's mostly trapped between rocks, but it's there and it's moving."

"So there's water," Dylan said, dragging on his cigarette. "So there's water that runs deeper than Hell. What can you do about it, Magda? Do you have the goddam devil bring it up to you in a bucket?"

"You think I'm crazy and you think there's no good in it. But I know how to track it and trace it."

"You're a goddam gypsy, Magda," Krespin said, his red hair and sunburned face looking like they would burst into flames at any moment. "This is all some gypsy magic story you heard over there," he said, pointing with a wave of his hand to an ocean he'd never seen and all the land beyond.

"It's not magic," Jan said. "It's in the wood, the water, . . . and the man. All a man needs is the power to concentrate. It's called a divining rod."

"A bunch of shit stories," Krespin said again.

"I'm not asking you to listen to me. C'mon, Matthew," Jan said, turning to leave.

"Wait!" Keller said. Jan stopped. "Tell us about this divining rod."

Jan looked at the four of them. They looked like some strange judge, or a bunch of children who had asked to

hear a story that you knew they wouldn't sit still for. He wished Dylan would smoke another cigarette so he could smell something else besides stale sweat.

"It has to be the wood of a wild Cherry tree. You have to cut a V-shaped branch from it and hold it a certain way."

They were listening. Jan felt as though he should have gone, but he would tell them.

"The position is awkward. Both ends of the stick must be held in the palms, thumbs out and the fingers wrapped over the stick. With your arms in that position," Jan held his arms out as though the branch were in his hands, "your elbows and shoulders want to form a 'V' pointing to your heart. Like this. You hold the stick with the tip pointing away from you."

Frank Dylan started rolling another cigarette.

"So what. You can hold any stick like that."

"Through the center of this diamond area, between where your elbows are pointing and the point of the stick, flows the power, if you have it." He tried to explain what he knew by another sense. "It's not so much the stick being some kind of water magnet, but the spirit of the stick wanting to go in the same direction as your arms whenever water is moving beneath you. It's got to be moving water. But any good water will move the slightest—especially underground—and that's enough."

Jan put his hands to his sides, finished with his demonstration. He thought of what it was really like to hold a divining rod. He looked up at the men.

"It feels like this stick is really trying to kill you, to turn on you and cut your heart out to let your blood flow into the ground."

There was silence for longer than a moment.

"You still haven't told us how to get it to the surface," Dylan said.

"You dig," Jan said. "You dig and the water comes to you."

"Where'd you learn about this?" Keller asked. "Have you ever seen it done before?"

Jan remembered the village when he was a boy, when the old woman stood with her eyes closed, the branch in her hand quivering and pointing to the stream that ran beneath the dirt.

"In the old country. In the village where I lived." Jan's eyes were blacker now than Keller's would ever be.

"There was a drought then too. She was an old woman. She seemed to have come from nowhere, and told the whole village that she could find water for them. No one listened to her.

"She went up to the hillside where some of the men from the village were walking, expecting to find work I suppose. I followed her and watched her. She broke a

branch from a tree that I knew was a Cherry. I watched how she held it, . . . then she started walking across the hillside. At one point she stopped. The stick was moving, and she started walking up and down the hill. The stick looked like it was trying to rip itself out of her hands, and I remember not being able to see her eyes." Jan stopped.

"What happened?" Jimmy Bogdun asked from behind the counter.

"The men that were in the fields tried to stone her. One man threw his pitchfork at her, and it stuck in her chest. She dropped the stick and pulled the pitchfork out by herself. She fell on the ground and just lay there, bleeding. She never cried out or said a word. She died later. No one knew who she was or where she'd come from."

"What happened to the stick?" Keller asked.

"It was just lying on the ground. But one of the men grabbed it, broke it in half, threw it down and crossed himself."

"Holle Christ," Krespin said. "You look here, Magda. Don't you go fooling with any of that devil rod magic around here. We all thought you were a good, quiet man."

"Maybe too quiet," Dylan said, stepping on his cigarette.

"It's just water," Jan said. "It's just water that all of us need to survive. All of us. If it's there and we can get it, then it's a blessing, not a curse."

"It's where it is and how you get it," Lamoreaux said. "We don't live on water from Hell dug up by some magic stick."

"It comes from the earth. God's earth, Nicky, not Hell."

"Mr. Magda," Jimmy Bogdun said, "your wagon's ready."

Jan took Matthew by the hand and walked towards the door. Outside the sun was nearly overhead but already hot enough to be unbearable. Jan put his hat on. He wiped a bead of stinging sweat from his eye, knowing that he was sweating before he had left the feed mill.

* * * * *

The moon was just rising, huge and orange on the night's horizon. Jan and Matthew walked out of the house and onto the porch.

"Have you got it, Matthew?"

Matthew handed the branch which they had cut earlier to his father. Jan moved it from hand to hand, staring at the divining rod, then held it tight in both hands.

"Let's go," he said to the boy, almost in a whisper.

Jan and Matthew walked through the orchard toward the woods. To the other side of the house the moon shined bright on the fecund hillside, thirsty but alive. They walked into the woods where the moon cast on the ground long shadows of them and the trees.

They had walked about a hundred yards up the mountainside when Jan asked the boy to stand still for a moment.

"I have to go up a little further. You stay here so that I

know how far left or right to go."

The boy shook his head yes. Jan touched his shoulder; the boy faced West, his back to the moon, his shadow running long up the hill. The moon flickered in Jan's eyes. He turned and walked another hundred yards up the hill. He was easy for the boy to see.

Jan held the ends of the stick in his hands and wrapped his fingers around them. He began walking across the mountainside, then turned and walked back in the other direction. He repeated this, each time going further in the opposite direction.

Matthew saw the stick begin to shake in his father's hands. Jan had felt it long before. "It's here," was his last thought. Now he must concentrate on the water and his power.

When he had traced the width of the underground stream he began to walk down the hill towards Matthew. Matthew could see his father straining as the stick pulled toward the ground. Jan held the stick so tight the bark began to break and peel from the bend of the stick.

Matthew should have heard them coming, but they were still very silent. He saw their shadows rising in front of him. When he turned around to face them, Seth Keller and Nicky Lamoreaux grabbed him and held him. He wanted to yell or scream anything to his father, but he couldn't make a sound.

Jan was walking down the mountainside, his eyes entranced on the stick and the ground. Frank Dylan and John Krespin stopped, not believing the sight of the living branch, the intense strain of Jan's muscles. John Krespin ran at Jan and brought the butt of his gun across the side of his face. The stick flew from Jan's hands and he fell to the ground quick and hard. He couldn't move or make a sound. He felt pain coming on, his head burning. A blurry figure of a man stood over him, blocking out the moonlight through the trees. Jan turned his head and saw the divining rod lying out of reach on the ground. He thought it looked like the legs of a skinny woman whose bony womb would never bear a living child.

FROM: MINUTE APHORISMS

Bruce Johnsen

1. A wise man is a man who can speak better than I can listen and listen better than I can speak.

3. Maturity is like life. Before one has it one does not miss it. Only long afterwards does one realize its importance. Thus none remember how they attained it.

4. Aristotle says that something is natural if its principle of motion is within itself. Thus a plant is natural only if it is able to grow and does, and a man is natural only insofar as he grows. Naturally, then, he always outgrows himself. This is the maturation process known as life. Without it he is a corpse.

5. Love is like maturity. If one lacks it, one cannot know. Hence, forming a notion of it, anything new is perceived to be it. Thus before long the strangest parodies are termed love, and everyone possesses it or possessed it.

6. Only those are capable of being loved who already are.

7. Why does anyone strive for love? Why does anyone strive for maturity? Is it so difficult to see that neither is possible without the other?

9. A man finds a woman and learns to apply his love to her; a woman finds her love and learns to apply a man to it.

12. Why fear strength in a lover? Otherwise his yielding is a testimony of impotence rather than love.

14. When you say, "That would be nice," yet do not act, you damn me. Either you lie or you hold me in contempt or both. Your hatred would comfort me.

18. The claim that it is a man's world—In order to become a woman, then, it is necessary to learn that one is not a man, and how one differs. Does that make it harder to become a woman, for more must be learned? Or easier, for one has a place to begin?

19. Maturation is a long process which is like a long run. It is tiring, but if one stops it is harder to begin again than to continue in the first place.

22. Scrutiny—If you would escape the piercing of my eye, do not pierce my heart.

23. Emperor's clothes—The goal of man in society is either to wear a fine costume or be nude. Thus most believe nudity a good costume and good costumes nudity.

24. Why men never look at themselves—All men assume themselves the model of beauty. However, upon looking closely in a mirror, one discovers deformities. Have you ever noticed a wart on an incredibly beautiful face? Soon your attention is drawn only to that wart, which becomes more hideous the more beautiful the face. Thus one's warts would be so ugly as to obscure one's face. The choice, then, is to lose the self in one's own beauty or one's own ugliness.

27. How can you presume to desire anything if you do not tell me what it is? Even God said, "Let there be . . ."

28. If you engage in fish dances, expect to be hit by a tuna.

29. The error of virtue consists in mistaking the experience that the acquisition of wisdom is painful for the belief that the acquisition of pain is wise.

30. The passions are deadly, consuming fires. Yes, but they are warm and shed light, while your only alternative when they would rage is to suffocate in a dark closet or to plunge yourself into the waiting abyss beyond the window.

31. The strong man fears only the weak, for they are so easily blown about that they buffet him indefinitely.

33. The man who tells you what he knows does so only because he does not know what to tell you.

35. A wise man has many regrets, for he has learned better; a wise man has no regrets, for so he has learned.

36. Love is like athletics. The amount of pain endured is a constant. It is merely a question whether one has the courage and foresight to inflict it upon oneself before beginning, thus improving performance.

37. The malady of man is that he must always climb mountains, yet it is so much warmer in the valley.

40. Knowledge is like a cave. It reaches deep, incites one to become lost in it, and leaves one alone and cold in the dark.

43. "There is more than one way to skin a cat."—A comforting thought if I ever find a cat with two skins.

44. Anyone who writes aphorisms is exceedingly vain, for he imagines others wish to listen to his folly; anyone who doesn't write aphorisms is exceedingly vain, for he believes his folly too sublime to be read by fools.

45. A critic is someone who is sure this is my worst aphorism.

46. A good politician is a man who can find the longest distance between two points.

47. A pessimist is someone who believes himself an optimist; an optimist is someone who believes himself a pessimist; a sceptic is someone who doesn't believe himself.

48. An accomplished historian is someone who has learned to look both ways while crossing a one-way street.

49. Logicians are a valuable sort, for who else professes to teach you something while asserting that you already know it?

50. A cynic is a man who tells you how selfish everyone is. Yes, but he tells you for your own good.

52. My love for you is constant. It only seems to fluctuate as there is more or less of you.

54. We consume people as we consume food, perceiving both to be vital; except we usually forget to digest. No wonder we are always hungry.

55. Crying in one's beer only makes it taste worse. Yes, and one must swallow more.

57. Only the man who knows how to be alone seeks company. Others seek not to be left alone. Those who seek neither do not know how to be themselves.

58. Why hyenas laugh—Humor marks the death of an idea. A funny man? A mortician.

59. You don't have to be proud to be a father.

60. I hope I've not impressed you. After all, man is always impressed with God, yet look how miserable we make him.



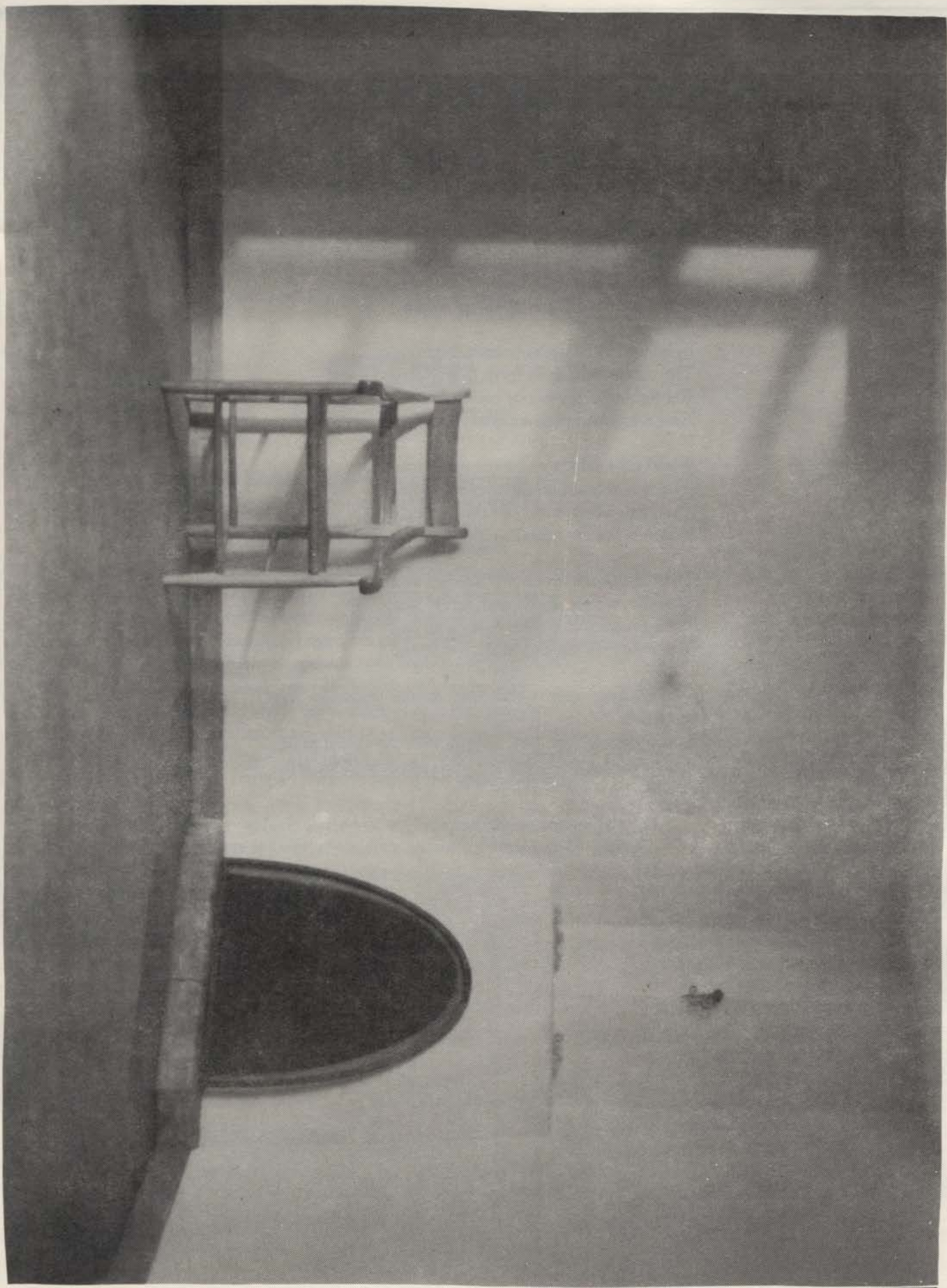
THIS MORNING THE SUN SHONE

Mark Moulton

This morning the sun shone
red on cinder walls as white
and cool and hard
as virgin marble carved to call
Security. It offers
recollections of Sunday mornings past,
of stained windows chaste
with panes
that spit a crucifix
across a marble altar.
To be the crucifix, hair dyed red by rising son
was glorious
in my passion play.
But I was the altar.

This morning her hair shone
red against the cinder walls as white
and cool and hard
as the cinder of my soul

Was earlier. Once ago
the walls were bleeding crimson wine,
and breathing, heaving, spitting out my face; and crying,
I do not well remember the day of my birth
but I am beginning to believe
it was painful. Fortune
I drank your blood and ate
your body and cried outside
for the first Time;
this morning the Sun shone.



For this the gateway of the dead I sought,
And weeping, made request of him by whom
He has been raised thus far and hither brought.

THREE EYES HATH LOVE

Michael Goldman

The rose's eye whose scent entreats the air,
Whose arrows heat the cord with springtime fire
Sees clouds for mountains, sod for sandy fare,
For blossom's imagery does oft' inspire.

Indifferent as Diana's eye may shine,
The yellow light spills forth from heaven's gate
To brighten every silk or cotton line,
And even shadowed souls to penetrate.

But blindly cold remains the inner tomb
If no love sees the stone unto the stone;
Darkened weeds withhold the rotting womb,
In tatters lies the gossamer alone.

Three eyes hath love with two ope' and one closed,
That flit and spy about each lovely head;
Their business like three Fates is all engrossed
In sewing life's tapestry with one thread.*

**The Fates were Greek and Roman goddesses who controlled human destiny. The first, Clotho, spun the thread of life; the second, Lachesis, determined its length; and the third, Atropos, cut it off. — Ed.*

LETHE

Michael Goldman

On blackest night all stars were rendered blind
When unwashed, to an ebon fate I lent
Myself and to the river Lethe went;
A silent swim did I have on my mind.
Amid the eve I paced on to the shore
When bluest buds abrupted my full leave;
Through my rummaged mind they long did weave
The misted mem'ries that my eyes once wore.
This spell of thine did faintly soothe my soul,
For saddened at the water's edge I peered
Across the mirrored pool that I had neared
To cast the clothes that kept me from my whole.
Eyes closed I knelt to taste the bidding brew;
I cupped the darkness to my lips and drew.

The River Lethe was, in Greek and Roman mythology, the river of forgetfulness. It flowed through Hades and produced loss of memory in those who drank from it. —Ed.

It would do violence to God's high doom
If Lethe could be passed, and ill-doers
To taste this blessed fare could straightway come

Without some forfeit of repentant tears."

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per questo vis ta ,luscio de. morti e.a co lui che l'ha

p pp

qua su con dot. to li preghi mi.ea pi.an. gen.do fur on porti.

by Carrie Kropack

Au Verso . Au Verso . Au Verso ... Winter 1984.