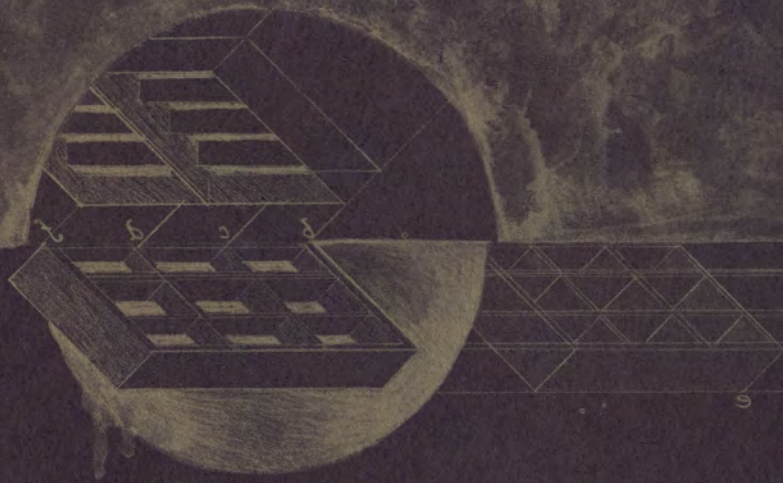


POINT OF VIEW



POINT OF VIEW, A MAGAZINE OF
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NINETEEN SEVENTY-TWO

Cover Design
by Tom Ryan

Calligraphy
by Tom Ryan

Etching 1
by Keith Peterson

The Kindling and the Fire 2-3-4
by Tomas M. Brock

Serigraph 3
by Tom Ryan

Serigraph 5
by Paul Fletcher

Photographs 6
by Jim Anderson

If James Dean Were Alive, He'd be 41 6
by John Whalen

Stained varnish 7
by Christopher Ledig

Pen & ink drawing 8
by Leslie Ross

The Parade Was In Progress 8
by Arlette Savage

Charcoal drawing 9
By Haydee Ullfig

Sketches of a Realm 10
by Al Balaz

Ballpoint pen drawings 10
by Osvaldo Baerga

Graphic wash 11
by Michael Adduci

Xenos 12-13
by James L. Richmond

Lithographs 13
by Dave Wight

Pencil Drawing 14
by Keith Peterson

The Fortune Machine 15
by John Whalen

Photograph 15
by Rod Montgomery

Abandonment 16
by Keith Peterson

Pen & ink drawing 16
by Greg More

Etching 16-17
by James Starkey

Serigraph 18
by Vincent Sebastian

For the Old Warrior On the Reservation..... 18-19
by Ronald Robinson

Etching 19
by Vincent Sebastian

Etching 20
by Keith Peterson

Craig 21
Anonymous

Serigraph 22
by Tom Cvikota

My Daughter's Shoe 23
by Laura Williams



Etchings 24-25
by Joe Messina

The Diamond Factory 25
by Nancy Augsten

Prisoners 25
by Linda Budd

Widow's Waking 26
by Linda Budd

Oil painting 26
by Michael Erikson

Conte crayon 27
by Mary Everham

Lithograph 28
by Tom Cvikota

Pencil drawing 28
by Jan Heinrich

The Chameleon 29-30-31
by John Whalen

Enamel 30
by Christopher Ledig

Conte crayon 31
by Christopher Ledig

Pencil drawing 32
by Richard Rew

Thomas M. Brock

The Kindling and The Fire

The sun has long since deserted the city. Elongated shadows stand guard over every passageway. A tangible solemnity is in the air.

Inside a modest banquet room an enthusiastic group is getting on with their supper. They are quite comfortably filled with red wine. Their voices blend into a static level of humming as they converse with another.

One man is quietly talking to those around him. Some are pressing very close to him. A beardless youth leans on his shoulder. He has been their friend only a short while, yet they all feel they have known him much longer.

Snatches of conversation can be heard. The leader has made it known that he is to leave them shortly. Protests are made, asking him to stay longer. The leader looks slowly around the room. Strange, there is a discernible sadness in his eyes. Why be sad on so happy an occasion? This is a time for good cheer and company. He gazes directly at one of them, a dark-faced man. Something must have been exchanged between them, for the dark-faced one turns and skulks out of the room.

The leader again looks around the room with the same soulful look. His piercing eyes fall upon me. Oh, how I know that look! It is as though he can read my innermost thoughts. That gaze first settled upon me three years ago on a hot summer day when I was working . . .

. . . the sun melting my back . . . will those cursed taxpayers ever stop grumbling . . . one spat at me . . . I'd like to flay him . . . the fools . . . little unimportant flies . . . I'm better than they are . . . Matthew the Roman-appointed tax collector . . . house, oxen, servants . . . pay what you owe, you chattel . . . a bonus if I can finish this district by tomorrow . . . you there! what are you staring at? speak! . . . ignore him . . . sixty-five plus ninety-seven . . . are you still here? what do you want? . . . staring at me . . . making me feel uneasy . . . I don't like to be stared at . . . Matthew come follow me . . . madness! . . . what is he saying? . . . why am I getting up? . . . the money! someone will steal it! . . . he turns away and I follow him . . . why I don't know . . .

The din at the supper table breaks into my thoughts. The leader ever so slowly breaks a large piece of bread after pro-

nouncing some words over it. He passes it around to the others. Really, how can this baked dough be his body? Is he making a game of us? Yet I remember once on a hillside with him . . .

. . . he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him . . .

Can this be the Son of God? I've been with him now for three years. I have seen all the signs he has worked. My soul was shaken the day he worked the miracle of the winds. The others and I were babbling like children because of the waves threatening the boat. How ashamed I felt when the master got up and raised his arms, stilling the elements. I believe now that he was testing us that day. Give me another chance! I won't fail you!

Once they wanted to stone him. Stone to death a teacher who preaches love and peace. I wanted to kill them all with my bare hands! Yet he stayed my hand and led us away. His time was not yet at hand, he had said. He had made other references to a curious time in the future . . .

. . . only a little while am I with you . . . I am here to give witness to the truth . . . that is

why I have come into the world . . . soon I will destroy this temple and raise it up again in three days . . .

Everyone thought he was mad then. It took Solomon decades to finish the Temple of God. I believe that the master can do great things, but to destroy the Temple of God? His spirit cannot be questioned — he drove out the temple money-changers with the fury of a demon. Certainly I would not want to incur his wrath.

At times I grow furious with him. We live like beggars half the time. I have not seen my family for a long time. I want to go back! I will leave him! He has said we are free to go at any time. Will anyone blame me? I am no coward. But my first obligation is to myself and my family.

Why do the others and I follow him? It is supernatural, the pull he has over us. I have been inexorably drawn to him from the first. I have nearly left him five times, but I could never make the separation last. I have come back. I can't leave him to fend for himself. I love him almost as a brother . . .

. . . love one another even



as I have loved you . . . all days
am I with you, even unto the
consummation of the world . . .
you shall love the father with
your whole heart . . .

What is the truth? He has
preached to a motley group of
peasants about the kingdom of
God. But they only know when
there is no bread in their bellies.
What is gained by trying to win
over ignorant chattel? There is
no sense in the world. Damn
Creation!

Yet he knows just how im-
portant bread is to their wretched
bellies. I still marvel at the way
he fed that throng with bread
and fishes. I myself was passing
out the food in a basket. I never
reached the bottom of the
container.

The master is speaking
again. He says that his hour is at
hand. He gives thanks one more
time and then he leads us out. It
is a clear night. Over Jerusalem
a myriad of stars blaze their
cold light.

We trek to the Mount of
Olives. The master wishes to
advance before us and pray a
while. I don't know what is

going to happen. It has been a
long day and all I know is that I
am tired. All sensation leaves me
as I sink into a stupor.

Harsh, grating voices
waken me slowly. I become
aware of a faint ring of light near
my head. A hundred blazing
torches illuminate the entire
clearing. A familiar figure walks
up to the master. It is Judas!
One of us!

Judas hands the master
over to an angry mob. They are
armed with swords, clubs, and
knives! My heart pounds so
furiously within my chest I fear
it is going to explode! They are
starting to take him away. They
haven't seen me at all on this
side of the bushes! I can be a
man and follow him, or run.
Those three years — are they to
be shamefully thrown away in an
act of cowardice? What if they
turn on me? The rest are gone,
fled. My soul is being racked
with indecision! An innocent
man has been seized by an
unruly mob! No! I don't want
to die! I flee for my worthless
life. I catch a glimpse of a sheep-
herder's fire burning. He is
adding kindling to the flames.







If James Dean were

(1959 . . .

*Famous Flagg Flyers flew rhythmically
Across the steamy gym floor.
Linco-ed sweatsocks dazzled
Beneath tight black ivy-leagues.
Pink back pockets not quite buttoned
Over stainless steel combs.
Vitalis and Brylcreem drizzled
From swirling greasy ducktails
To mix with sweat and Clearasil
And the old man's Aqua-Velva.
Ponytails and pageboys
Bopped and strolled
And did the Continental.
Stolen lipstick and Woolworth earrings
Flirting innocently by.
Penny loafers shuttled and slid
in perfect synch.*

*The emcee's crinkly pomp gleamed coolly
From the bandstand.
Grinning, oily shill for THE TOP 40 BIG ONES.
A monster Wurlitzer metallicly blasted
The staccato mania of
Little Richard
And Bo Diddley
And Screaming Jay Hawkins.*

*And then the music softened
For a Ladies Choice.
Awkward children slowly shuffled
While Johnny Mathis lisped his love
and Timi Yuro shrieked for hers.
Brushing shyly and edging close,
Suprised at the sweaty pleasance
Starting to build. . .*

—Jim Anderson

alive, he'd be 41

(1971 . . .

*Desert-booted, flare-legged, body-shirted,
Razor-cut, English-Leathered, Playboy-keyed
Junior exec . . .*

Sit in air-conditioned, foamy-plush, 5.50

Opera House seats. Next to . . .

*Micro-minied, shag-sculpted, bra-less
Panty-hosed, Chaneled, semi-liberated
Redbook mamas . . .*

On stage, embarrassed ex-heavies

Grin and show their teeth,

Balding, girdled messengers for the latest super-hype.

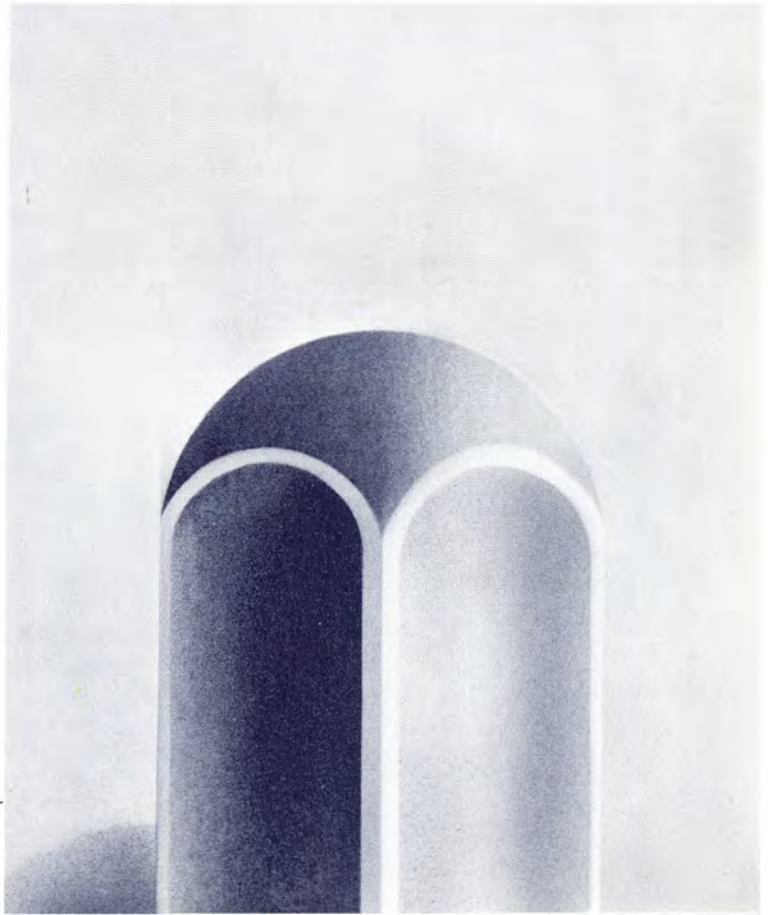
THE ORIGINAL (would we kid you?) ROCK AND ROLL REVIVAL

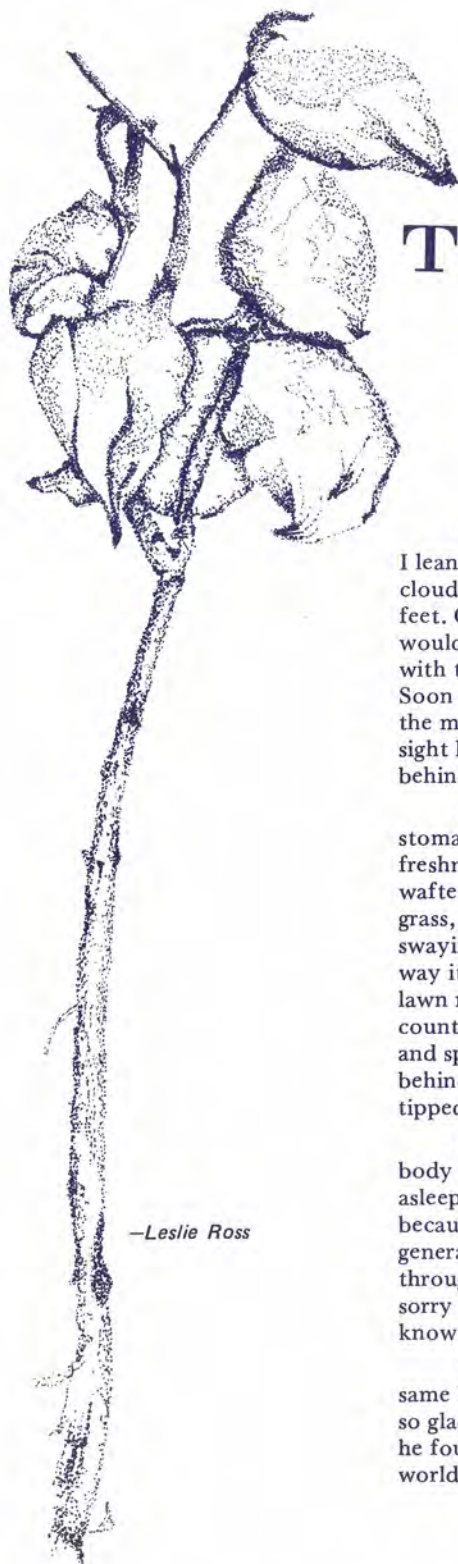
Plays to polite applause and puzzling discomfort.

Nostalgia is a downer.

John Whalen

Christopher Ledig





Arlette Savage

The Parade Was in Progress

The parade was in progress. I leaned back and watched the clouds go marching by with silent feet. Occasionally one of them would get out of step and collide with the cloud in front of him. Soon the parade was over and the marchers disappeared from sight leaving an endless blue sky behind them.

I flopped over on my stomach, and the damp earthy freshness of the young grass wafted around me. It was May grass, thick with long blades swaying free in the wind — the way it is before man's monster lawn mower can ravage the countryside chewing up grass and spitting the remains out behind it with only brown-tipped stubble remaining.

I glanced at the motionless body next to me. He was still asleep. I couldn't blame him because the bright sunshine generated a warm laziness throughout the body. But I was sorry he missed the parade. I know he would have enjoyed it.

I guess we think along the same lines. That was why I was so glad I had found him (or had he found me?) Anyhow our worlds merged and I had found

someone who had a similar way of looking at life as I did.

Only a half hour until my next class. I looked across the field at our school and all the people running back and forth. I was happy we had found this isolated spot away from the constant hum of voices and music in the union.

My attention was now directed on some movement in the grass by me. I detected an ant trudging through the jungle-like underbrush. His progress was hampered by the heavy load he carried — a piece of bread (probably from our sandwiches) five times his size. I admired his perseverance and strength, hoping he didn't have much farther to lug his burden.

My friend finally awoke and we gathered up our books to start for class. Then he happened to notice the piece of bread traveling across the grass. I watched in disbelief as his foot crunched down on it, robbing another living creature of its life.

So off I ran, alone and disillusioned. And his words kept pounding in my head, "but it was only an ant."

—Leslie Ross



Hayden Uffig

Hayden Uffig

Al Balaz

Sketches Of a Realm

Ah England! The small spot of green in the Atlantic that produced the villainous King John and then Winston Churchill. This is the land where a pharmacist is a “chemist”, and “lorry” is not a girl’s name, but a truck. And its truly capital city, London, is the only place I know where you can lose twenty pounds by walking down the sidewalk. All you have to do is wear long hair, carry twenty pounds in your wallet, and let the “skin-heads” jackroll you.

England also has a fine history of people wearing pentagrams who beckon you with a smile, and say, “Would you like a private tour, old stick? On our left we have . . .” The ruins of a castle at South Cadbury, where the present dissolves and a glowing, pulsating Camelot materialises, and Arthur loses Guinevere once more . . . A circle of stones on a plain in Southern England, where the ancient Druids worshipped Hecate and all manner of gods and goddesses, and studied the paths of celestial bodies on the journey through the heavens . . . To Westminster Abbey. Here lie

the shrunken shells of England’s finest moments: kings and queens, poets and generals, statesmen and scholars. All, all are interred in a womb of stone. And Big Ben stands on the corner, singing with a voice that rings over the city . . . The Tower of London, like a huge black “H” over the River Thames. If walls could speak, imagine the stories of despairing victims one could hear . . . a local playhouse, where Shakespeare’s long dead mind again comes alive and two lovers exchange vows . . .

All of this and more, is England.



—Osvlado Baerga





-Michael Adduci

James L. Richmond

Xenos

It is morning, the sun is up already. I guess the time to be after 9:00 AM. I have been granted the luxury of sleeping late this day. My morning meal is waiting. Surprisingly it is quite tasty. There is pork, four eggs, black bread with real butter, porridge and a full container of rich warm coffee. I am allowed to leisurely finish the meal, but alone. As of yet I have seen no one.

There is a small songbird in the bushes beneath the window. The air is fresh, as after a sudden spring shower. A few clouds are moving by on an almost non-existent breeze. All is as it should be. I am resigned to the inevitability of this day.

There are sounds in the corridor of two people approaching. A strange man enters the room carrying a small case. He is tall, muscular, about twenty-five, wearing a neat silk suit, pale lavender shirt and a dark grey silk tie. Silently he places the case on the bed and lays the contents out neatly along side. They are the clothes I had chosen a week earlier. There is a lightweight grey suit, striped tie and light grey shirt. There is also a small purse of silver coins.

I am dressed now and alone again. It is merely a few minutes now before I must go. Strange though, with all that has taken place here, I regret only that I must leave this room. Simple as it is with only a bed, table, three chairs, a lone print of peasants harvesting wheat on the wall and the thin persian carpet on the stone floor. How strange that these cold lifeless objects should possess the power to command such affection. Can it be that the answer is in this very fact that through their inanimate form nothing is expected save that they must serve. Through serving they are able to excel to this higher level.

There are sounds of activity again in the corridor. This time it is the sound of several people. One man enters the room. He is not the one who came earlier. Yet he has the same youthfulness, dress and even the same solemn unquestioning manner. All whom I see here are remarkably the same. But the most curious, common quality is that of innocence. The innocence of choir boys not yet in their teens.

He is standing very erect just beside the open door, waiting for me to pass through. As I step into the corridor I find four more men waiting. One steps forward and indicates that I am to follow. I fall in step exactly five strides behind. The remaining four form behind me at the same distance.

The six of us proceed through the long corridor into an intersecting passage, our footfalls sounding only lightly on the polished stone.

We are all dressed similarly except for my grey shirt and theirs of lavender. They are all arian whereas I am somewhat

darker. This alone does not distinguish me from them. It is that curious innocence which sets me apart.

That in fact is the most fitting circumstance of these past weeks. This innocence which surrounds me. The very thing which I can never again attain. Also the lack of which led me to this day. Thinking of it now as I have these seven days past, I can see each action, which when summed up, as they were by the people, form a mandate for action. I can see them as I displayed on a road map.

I knew that there must be a successor for I knew I would be stepping aside soon. Why I felt I should be entitled to choose him myself is unclear and immaterial. I who was taught the meaning of "noblesse oblige" as early as I can remember. I who never learned its meaning. I knew it to be an impossibility. I knew too, the end result should I fail. In fact even if I should succeed. Either way the end result would be the same.

There were plots and plans for the exclusion of other contenders. But the fates did not lend themselves to these actions. The end, being undesirable, did not result in any surprises, I do not, even now, regret my actions, only their lack of success.

We are now descending a broad staircase to a foyer. The light is streaming through the open doors casting patterns across the lower half of the stairs. We exit the building onto a broad terrace. At this time the one who had taken the lead steps aside for us to continue. This being my cue, I take out the purse of silver coins. I open it, take several and hand them to him as expected. He inclines his

head as he receives them. There is a hint of approval in his expression, for my having observed the conventions of this day.

The four remaining men follow my lead to a structure atop a grassy knoll. As we approach, another man meets us. At this point the four men depart. I ascend three steps coming face to face with the first person who is not wearing one of those immaculate grey suits. Instead he is wearing a snow white jump suit. He is neither young nor arian but extremely dark and middle aged.

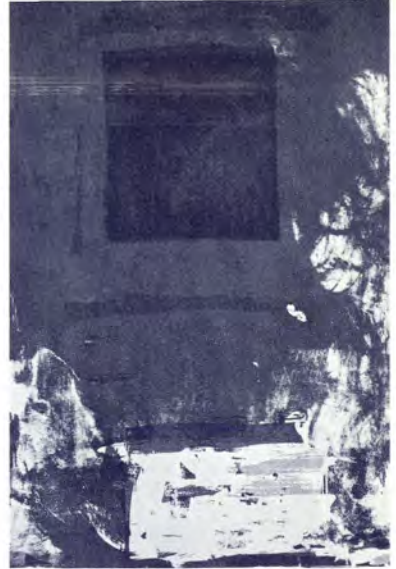
I open the purse again removing several more of the coins and place them in his hand. I remove the large signet ring and place it in his hand with the coins. The purse with the remaining coins I hand to the man who is still standing at the foot of the steps.

Suddenly I realize how weary I am. All morning I must have been terribly tense without being aware of it. Now that I have completed this last formal rite I feel somehow more at ease.

Looking around there is no one in sight except the three of us. This is the way it must be but in some way it is almost unnatural. Though who else would have any interest in these events, save the three of us? Certainly none of my former associates. The birds are still singing in the trees but they will soon go unheard.

I kneel in the straw at my feet bowing my head. I see the shadow of the blade pass over the straw. Instinctively I tense. I think now only of the lyrics, "Non je ne regrette rien".

Xenos is past.



—Dave Wight





-Keith Peterson

Rod Montgomery



The fortune machine

*Outside, a 3-story neon cowpoke tips his kinetic Stetson
In endless invitation. C'mon in and set a spell, stranger.
His electric shirt, open at the chest, reveals:
The correct time and temperature. Tho not all at once.
Behind him, a startling purple streak sears the desert sky.
Rocketing nowhere, it suddenly fragments. But . . . here comes another . . .
And another . . . and another . . . Forever.*

*Inside, a city block of electronic splendor spurts and flashes.
Synthetic air hums. Honest-to-God silver dollars clank and clatter.
Hysterical sirens shriek (GASP) ANOTHER JACKPOT FOLKS!!!
Lights everywhere. Cartwheeling and winking and whizzing.
Rock bands (3 an hour) assault their amps. Blank faces, stoned on fatigue.
Topless robots toss their silicone missiles out to the crowd.
And the orbit never varies . . . Never.*

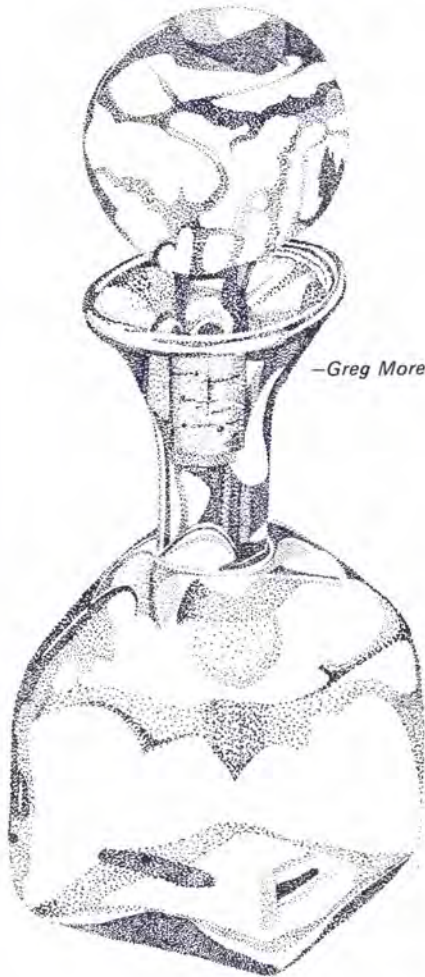
*Down in the pits, players careen from table to table.
Dice ricochet and skitter. Steel balls bounce and skip.
Cards skim smoothly across bright green felt.
Red glazy eyes watch hypnotic dealers. Every move.
Magical clickers summon food and drink. On the house, friend.
But no clocks. Money is time. Nothing ever stops . . . except losers.
And they can be replaced. They are, too . . . Always.*

John Whalen

Abandonment

*When I think of abandonment
I think of a movie star, female,
Maybe a bit past her peak
Running away from
An old Hollywood Western set
With all the wooden falsefronts
Wrapped up in a handkerchief.*

Keith Peterson



—Greg More

James Starkey





—Vincent Sebastian



For the
old warrior
on the
reservation



—Vincent Sebastian

*Stern, straight-backed,
the old man
watched his land being whipped
into dust-devils
by the companion wind.
Only the eyes
in the furrowed face
showed the remaining
signs of love,
silent
in retreat.*

Ronald Robinson



—Keith Peterson

Craig

To write a theme on the most influential person in my life, knowing that it will come back to me with punctuation corrections and a large red grade scrawled across the top, is a little painful. Yet I can't pick another topic because I know I have always wanted this chance to write about him.

Him refers to my older brother, Craig. It's a typical thing for a younger sister to idolize her older brother, but Craig was never typical. From the time he finished nursery school, he was a rebel and an outcast. I remember when we were children, how he horrified the neighborhood mothers, as if he were the personification of communism, sex education, changing neighborhoods, and everything else that was threatening in the 50's. And they would have been more shocked if they had ever seen the terrific imitations Craig did of them and their not-so-angelic brats.

Craig was more like a wild animal than a typical child. Though he read all the time, he seldom attended school, preferring to roam the streets and the small woods near us until late at night (usually coming home with a slimy something to drop in my

bed). Now I'm afraid he's beginning to sound like a spoiled brat himself, but there was always a sadness behind Craig's pranks, as if he felt forced into the role of the "undisciplined trouble-maker."

I don't think that it ever was a blessing to Craig that he had so much insight into the people and things around him. Though he had a hard time explaining and I had a harder time understanding, he would tell me about the hypocrisy, conformity, convention and prejudice he saw around him. I remember Craig startling me when he was about twelve years old by snapping off the radio and saying that I shouldn't listen to the radio because it was all propaganda. I didn't understand what he meant then, but I do now. And I remember the look on his face then, not smug and sarcastic, but lonely and confused. This was never the face people considered when Craig got in trouble numerous times for running away or getting thrown out of school; these things usually recalled the flip-pant, sarcastic Craig, but I know it was his hidden sadness and confusion that caused his rebelliousness.

But Craig wasn't always sad; most of the time he was fun. Nothing was too sacred or so dull that he couldn't make it seem funny. And if either my little brother or I was in trouble or depressed, he would make us laugh at ourselves for taking things too seriously. No matter how down things were he could make us laugh. When he was in the hospital we were all pretty miserable, but he would cheer us up with stories about how he convinced some lady he was Mick Jagger (and gave her his autograph), or how he answered the hospital phone, "Mental ward, sex maniac speaking," or how, when he "escaped" one day, an orderly chased him down a busy street yelling "Wait a minute, Craig, we can talk this over." He had a talent for imitating people and accents and my friends and I would listen to him for hours. His funniest was his New York accent, "Why don'cha go t' woik, ya joik."

What I remember best about Craig was his realness, whether laughing or crying. But I hope this paper doesn't sound too pious, because then I haven't described Craig accurately. He was more devil than saint — but at least a sincere one and asked only sincerity in return.

Anonymous



-Tom Cvikar

My daughter's shoe

half
a pair
of old canvas shoes,
mars floor harmony
in the well ordered room.
she left it there
under the dining room table.

by anchoring back
of offending shoe
with toe of missing mate,
and with persistent
upward wiggle
the many-miled shoe slips off.
ah!

mottled grime upon gray,
with laces tied tight and
a small hole starting
in the uplifted toe
(as though her toes were still inside),
it forlornly waits
for her foot to bring it to life

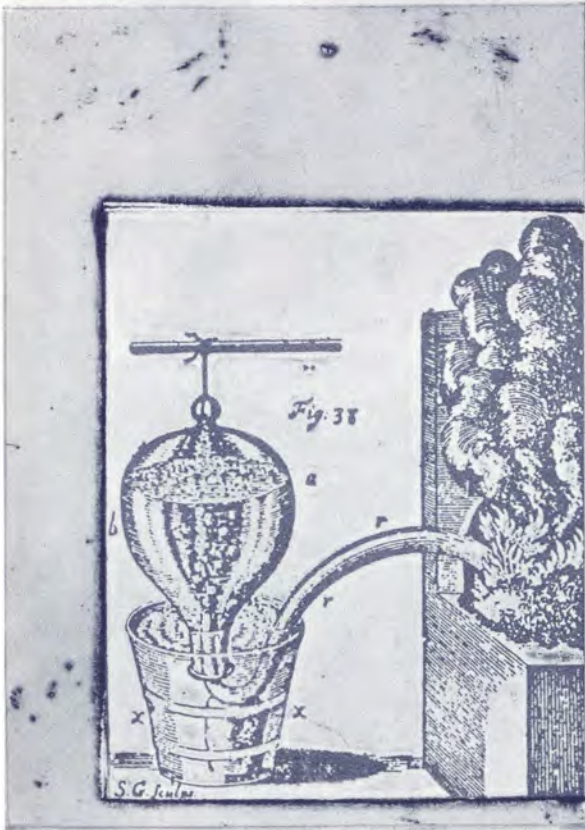
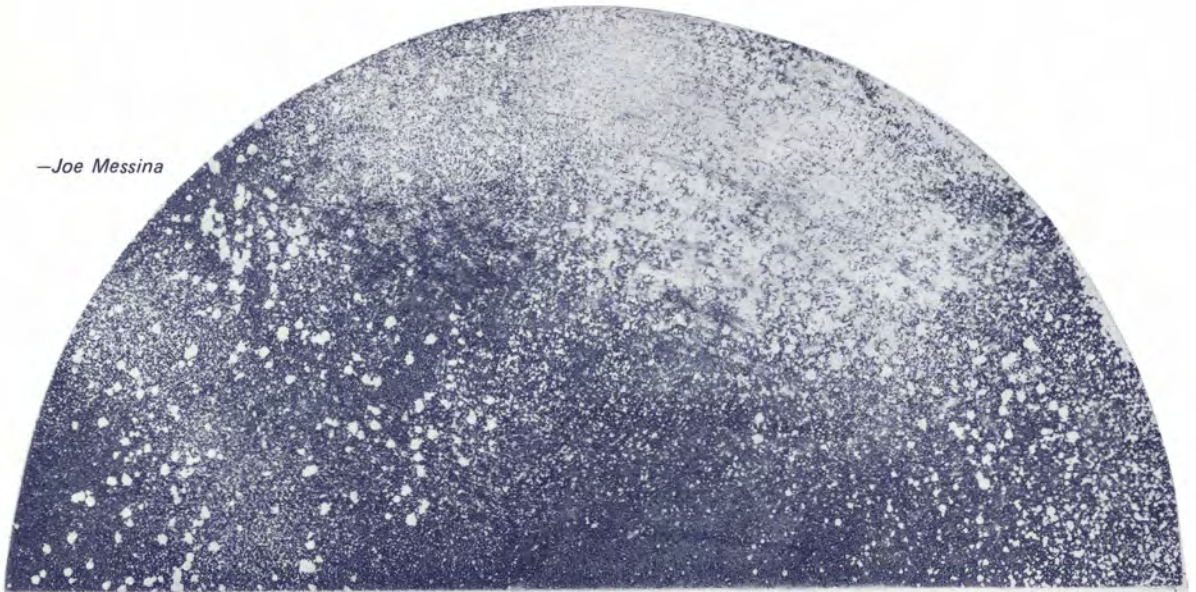
.to run the hot race
jump the chalk squares
skip the rope through
skate the cracks over
trudge the long walk
scout the dust hills
fly over soft grass
sneak through prairie weeds
stand itchy, and wait

and finally quiet,
(though tipped on edge),
with scissors and tape
spread among books and papers,
to labor over a science report
and Paper Mate pictures
on the back of her hand.
And wiggle her shoe off
(while in deep concentration),
and never be aware
what she did.

and later,
to walk rocky to bed
with one shoe on,
and never care
that she left the other one there.

Laura Williams

—Joe Messina



The diamond factory

*The white March sun
Bounces against the treetops
And becomes a spectacle in glass —
glistening across the valley, transparent and infinite.
A diamond factory.*

*A commuter train flaws
the miracle with a trail
of smoke,
And I am back on the concrete going home —
another diamond factory passed by.*

Nancy Angsten



Prisoners

*The pale winter sun moves
Down rows of grey clouds
Like the jailer's lantern
Swinging from his hand
As he walks the stone corridor
Bolting our doors for the night.
Evening's slow sun is all we know.*

Linda Budd

Widow's waking

*Now the day is coming.
The sun's first light shining through the river trees
Severs the fog into smokey beams
And covers the spider's web with
Fiery diamonds of dew.
It holds no memory of the night,
As she wakes there on the summer porch.*

*But was there not something . . . ?
Had she not lain there in the dark night,
Swathed in the thick fog,
Listening as it dripped from the leaves?
Had her eyes not searched through the mist,
Finding only the lamplight at the end of the lane?
Had her ears not strained to hear something along the road
Until the candle had gutted out,
Leaving her finally asleep?*

*Later, there on the flagstones along the ivied wall
And coming up the steps
She heard his footfalls.
She lay very still as he quietly stepped from his shoes
And lay beside her,
His rough woolen suit against her,
Murmuring, "Soft, so soft."
Then as he abruptly rose to go,
He turned, knelt beside her bed, and whispered,
"You know I cannot stay."*

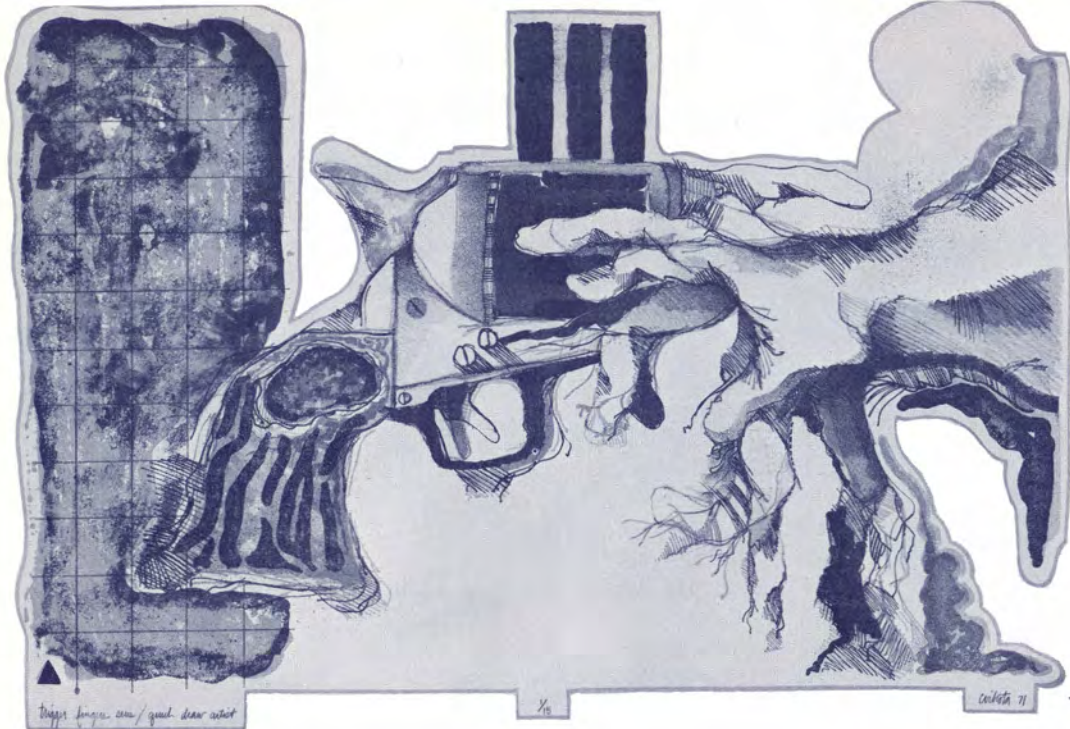
*Had it all been a dream?
Is she dreaming still?
Surely these streaming pink clouds of fog,
Pierced only by yellowing leaves,
Are not of the real world.
From the bedroom the child calls.
She reaches for her robe,
The full light of dawn washing over her
As she stands and stretches.*

*Then,
On the floor beside the bed
She sees his footprints
Pressed to the floor
In wet leaves.*

Linda Budd



—Mary Everham



biggs finger, can / good dear artist

1/2

cvikota 11

—Tom Cvikota



—Jan Heinrich

John Whalen

The Chameleon

Timothy Rancke, ace heat-exchange-ratio specialist at Callan Aero Space, retired from his \$14,000.00 job at age 26. His reason, as stated on line 17, FORM ABX 64, TERMINATION REQUEST, VOLUNTARY, was: "I have enough". Enough referred to the \$8500 Timothy had saved by living with mommy, and eating hundreds of baloney sandwiches for lunch.

The personnel man was very thorough, and Timothy had to explain everything to him twice. When the exit interview was over, and Timothy had gone forever, the personnel man reached for the vial of little white pills he kept in a bottom drawer.

The other engineers at Callan were also relieved to see Timothy go. They considered him strange and possibly dangerous. For weeks after his departure, they spent their lunch hours examining all the aspects of Timothy's weirdness.

For openers, there was his appearance. Timothy always wore bright stripy Levis over his combat boots. And silky puff sleeved shirts of at least equal brilliance. (Red and orange were Timothy's favorite colors.) Apparently the only tie he owned

was a skinny black one from maybe 1960. September to May, Timothy topped everything else with a floor length blue leather overcoat, an indeterminate number of scarves and gloves bulging its pockets. A guy in circuit efficiency had heard Timothy bought all his clothes at a place called Smoky Joes, down near Maxwell Street. It was true.

Timothy's hair was another object of wonder, It was erratically arranged, Harpo Marx style, but crinklier in texture — more of a blonde Brillo pad. Except for color, not unlike the NATURALS worn by the blacks at Callan. There weren't many — and they all worked in an obscure, hopefully fenced-in area, nown as the "DOCKS".)

Then, too, there was THE CAR. Timothy's car was a 1959 T-Bird, with no discernible muffler, one operational windshield wiper (on the passenger side) and a faded CARLSBAD CAVERNS sticker not quite covering the worst rust spot. The back seat contained four pairs of gym shoes, a basketball, and a pile of clammy sweatshirts. The floor in front was littered with dozens of parking tickets. Took a lot of nerve to park that car in

the executive parking lot.

The well-groomed industrial thoroughbreds remembered Timothy. And snickered. Or giggled. The guy was, after all, a goddamn cartoon.

Timothy's retirement wasn't anything spectacular, actually. Mostly it involved moving his stuff out of mommy's and down to Freddy's cheap apartment near Navy Pier.

Navy Pier was Timothy's favorite place ever since the university moved. That was when the gigantic gymnasium was turned over to Richard J. Daley's friendly firemen. If you didn't mind the two-story poster of the smiling, multi-chinned mayor, you could play basketball 12 hours a day, unmolested. Which was about what Timothy had in mind.

Every morning, Timothy would get up and stack a pile of records on Freddy's stereo. He'd attach 10 lb. weights to his legs, and do 30 minutes of painful exercises. It was important that he jump higher.

He would then walk over to the gym, and play basketball until he got tired. Most of the other players were black, but since Timothy figured most good



players were, he preferred it that way.

After awhile, he became adept at what the “brothers” called “jungle ball”. Meaning he crashed the boards aggressively, and had mastered the favored playground moves — staccato, showboat dribbling, behind the back (or between the legs) passing, double clutch layups, and so on. He became friends with most of the regulars, who called him “Tyrone”.

After the games, Timothy would usually stop at Vito’s Pier Inn and pick up a leaky brown bag of hot, greasy shrimp. Then he’d walk out to the end of the pier and watch the lake. Or observe the traffic-jammed Outer Drive from a safe distance. If it was warm out he might swim at the small uncrowded beach. A few hundred yards away he could see close-up the sweaty, irritated drivers lurching toward Evanston. It was a good retirement.

At night he and Freddy would sometimes hit the body shop circuit along Rush Street, although not very enthusiastically. Timothy couldn’t always handle the swinging singles deal. The casual elegant crowd seemed to spend too much energy and

money trying to impress each other with exhibitionist posturing and \$25.00 blue jeans. Sometimes, though, the band sounded good or a girl seemed funky enough for the effort required, so he would play along.

Most of the time he and Freddy stayed home and watched T.V. And maybe got high. Timothy liked Perry Mason reruns, while Freddy preferred “Gilligan’s Island”. Women who found themselves still there come morning were encouraged to stay as long as they liked, as long as no hassles developed.

One night, Timothy and Freddy went to one of Cosmo’s parties. Cosmo, bland as milk of magnesia, floated easily through all layers of what he considered “society, man”. It amused him to concoct haphazard party mixtures of straight and hip, black and white, radical and Fascist, real and plastic . . . etc. (he sometimes mixed in a chicano contingent, or maybe an Oriental or two. Peppers and soy sauce for his little stew.)

It never worked. What Cosmo ended up with was six or eight separate parties, blending superficially only when everyone got wiped out. That night was no exception.

In the kitchen, a chubby grey hippie hovered over the beer keg and demanded that everyone take off all their clothes and kill their parents. People threw radishes at him.

The Drug of the Month Club traditionally congregated in one of the bedrooms. Which is where Freddy headed immediately. The selection that night was file of greenie fermented in typewriter eradicator fluid. (The guy in the purple sunglasses promised Freddie ‘it’d knock the wax right out of his ears’).

Timothy copped a bottle of Thunderbird and went into the living room, where several clusters of guests glanced suspiciously at all the other clusters of guests. He slid to the floor near the stereo. Relaxed, he sucked on the wine bottle and waited for things to loosen up. Santana’s Latin-jungle rock rippled the floor beneath him.

Then he noticed an attractive black girl dancing with Cosmo. Her interaction with the music was very pleasing — a lazy invitation of some kind. Timothy eased over, was introduced, and ended up sharing his wine.

Her name was Lois. She had a fine smile, a soft raspy

voice, and a husband and two kids. By the time she took the el home the next afternoon, an interesting understanding had begun to develop.

The relationship disconcerted Timothy at first. Unbidden, but pleasant Lois images occupied his mind, as he cooked an egg or crossed a street. Once, in the middle of a jump shot.

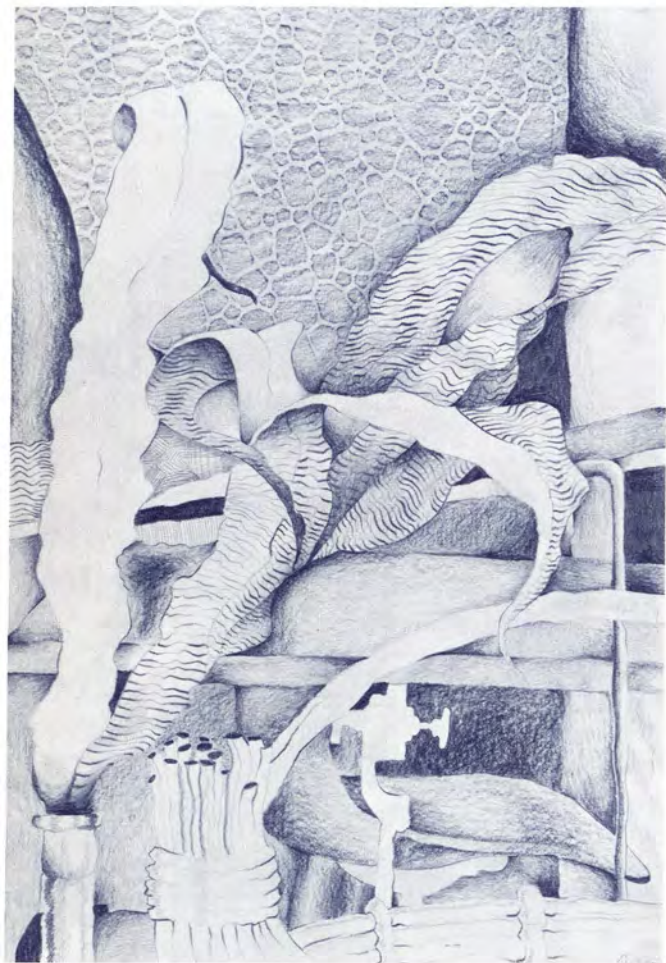
A few weeks later, Timothy pulled a Hertz Rent-a-Truck into the alley behind the project where Lois lived. After the husband left for work, Timothy moved Lois, the kids, and all the furniture to an apartment near Hyde Park.

He got a job as a mail sorter at the main Post Office, but it was so easy he considered himself still retired. He played guard for the P.O. team in the Industrial League, and they tied for first place.

Everything was ducky. The kids, who hadn't dug the projects at all, decided not to hold Timothy's looks against him. They like him fine.

Timothy feels good. He smiles often and seems to have no problems. The only thing is, his black colleagues at the P.O. They think Timothy is a little strange. And possibly dangerous.





—Richard Rew

—Michael Erikson



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