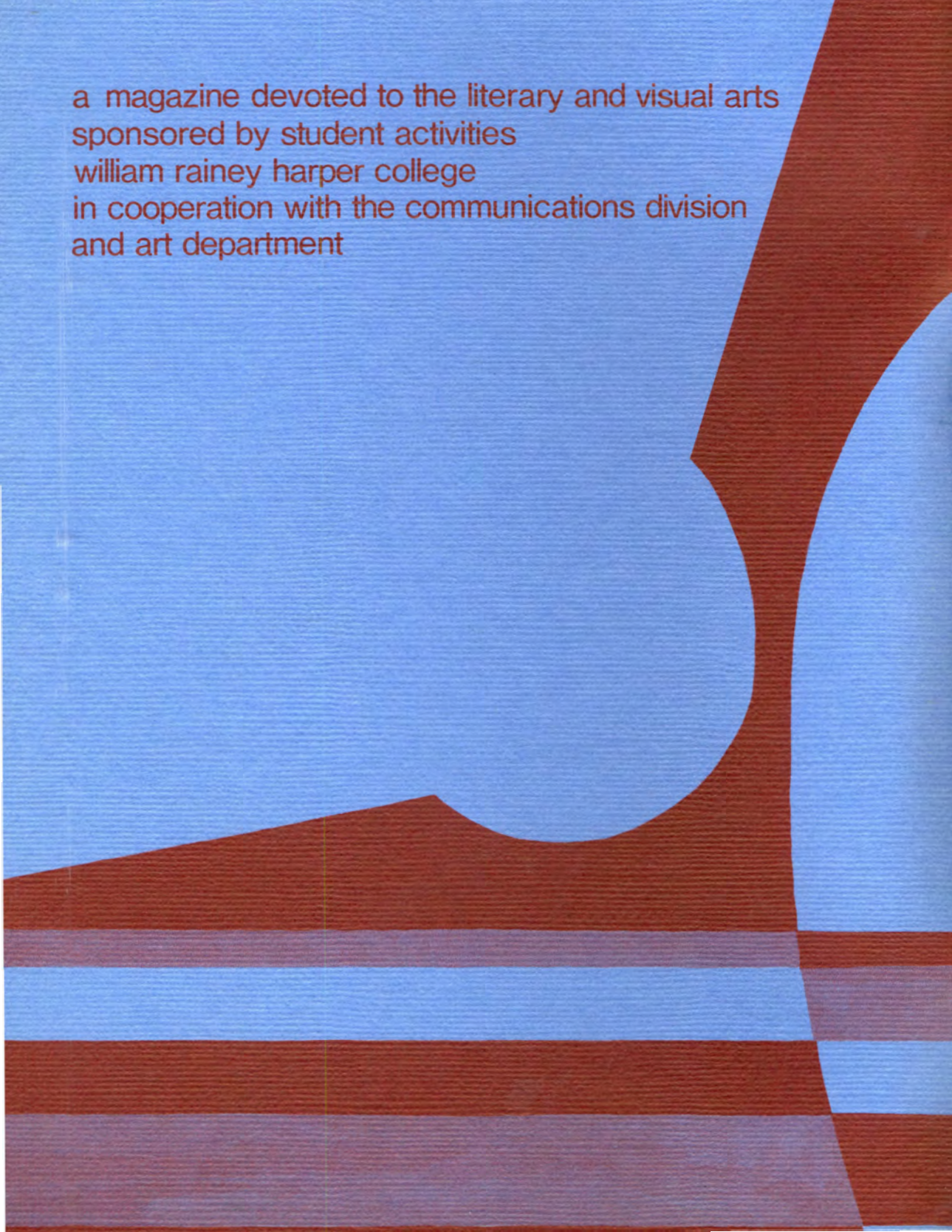


An abstract graphic design featuring a large, stylized shape in a dark red color. The shape has a curved top and a thick, rounded bottom edge, resembling a stylized letter 'L' or a thick, curved line. The background is a light blue color. The overall composition is minimalist and geometric.

Point of View

The background of the page is an abstract composition. The top half is a solid light blue. A large, dark red shape enters from the top right, curving downwards and to the left. Below this, a large, light blue shape curves upwards and to the right, overlapping the red shape. The bottom half of the page is filled with horizontal stripes in alternating light blue and dark red, which are slightly offset from the stripes above. The text is located in the upper left corner of the blue area.

a magazine devoted to the literary and visual arts
sponsored by student activities
william rainey harper college
in cooperation with the communications division
and art department

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Testimonial

by Jeff Boarini

The letter had been sitting on the desk under a brochure for Rancho La Topo for two days. And now Jake was finally opening it. He ripped the end from the envelope, removed the letter, and started reading. "Irene!" he yelled, "Listen to this, they're gonna give me a testimonial!"

Jake's wife came up from the basement with a tablecloth over one arm. "What did you say, dear?" Irene said as she spread the cloth over the kitchen table.

"A testimonial. The company is giving me a testimonial next month when I retire."

"Well how nice of them," said Irene. "They certainly can't say you don't deserve it. Thirty-five years with the same company is no little thing."

"Yea," said Jake. "I was kinda hoping they'd do something like this but I really didn't expect it." Jake wandered into the living room with the letter in his right hand. He sat in the overstuffed chair and looked at the rectangle of paper. It was signed by R.M. Brewster, Jr., himself.

Jake began to think back, of when he applied for a job as a lens grinder at the R.M. Brewster Corporation. The personnel manager had liked him and hired him that very day. He grinned as he remembered some happy moment. He had worked in that position for fifteen years. When the foreman died, Mr. Brewster asked him if he would take over as foreman of the lens shop. Jake chuckled as he thought of the times he and Irene had gone to Mr. Brewster's house for parties. But after Mr. Brewster died, the shop lost a certain feeling. He couldn't joke and laugh with the other directors like he'd been able to with Mr. Brewster. He got along with the

others, but the fun had left his job. That was twelve years ago, but it didn't seem that long to Jake. He still liked his job and worked hard at it. It was easy to make a mistake and

"Jake!" Irene's voice returned Jake from his journey.

"What?" he said abruptly, still a little startled.

"I said what date is it?" Irene began. Unaware of the topic, Jake replied, "What date is what?"

"The testimonial. What is the date next month?" she asked for the second time.

"Oh, oh, the fourteenth, a Saturday," said Jake, finally comprehending Irene's question.

His wife was mending a sock as she uttered the question that had to be asked, "I wonder what they'll give you."

Jake didn't want to speculate at first, he was afraid of getting his hopes up too high. But his imagination was not to be thwarted. "I really don't know," he began. "When Larry Kemman, one of the directors, retired, he got a car, a big one too."

Irene began to say something, but Jake wasn't listening. He was thinking of Larry Kemman and his car. He began thinking of other people he knew who had received testimonials. Walt Ceznofski — he got a color t.v., not to mention a hell of a pension. Or his brother Duane. The insurance company had sent him on a round-the-world cruise. Man oh man, he thought, Irene would really love that. Bill Potts got a big pension also. That would be great. There was a cottage in Wisconsin Jake had had his eye on. But Mr. Rodopolis suddenly

came to his mind. He didn't get anything, not even a nice letter. Almost fifty years of work and he didn't get a thing.

But that was Mr. Rodopolis, not him. He was getting a testimonial. It didn't have to be anything big he thought — it's the thought behind it. He was glad that his company cared enough about him to take the time. But then Jake began thinking of Larry Kemman and a car, and how nice it would be to own a new one. Past experience tried to snap him back to the living room, but it was too late. Jake was already turning down Talbot street.

Jake wore his best brown suit. He looked at his profile in the mirror. It wasn't too bad for a sixty-four year old man. And he still had most of his hair, even though it was a mottled gray. Irene looked good too, he thought. She'd been to the beauty parlor that afternoon. As usual, her hair looked different to him, but he couldn't really say what was changed. Jake put on his dress top-coat, helped Irene into her stole, and they were ready to leave. But just on a whim, Irene decided to get along without her glasses. The dinner was being held at the company dining room. Jake and Irene arrived with fifteen minutes to spare, but they drove around the block for ten minutes because Jake didn't want to be too early. As they entered, they were greeted by a loud burst of applause. Jake was stunned for a moment; there were almost fifty people. Then he blushed, smiled, and moved into the crowd to shake hands. Jake and Irene mingled with other guests until dinner was served. Irene clasped his hand as they sat at the center of a u-shaped group of tables. As the caterers served the chicken, peas, mashed potatoes, and tossed salad, Jake began to feel something was wrong.

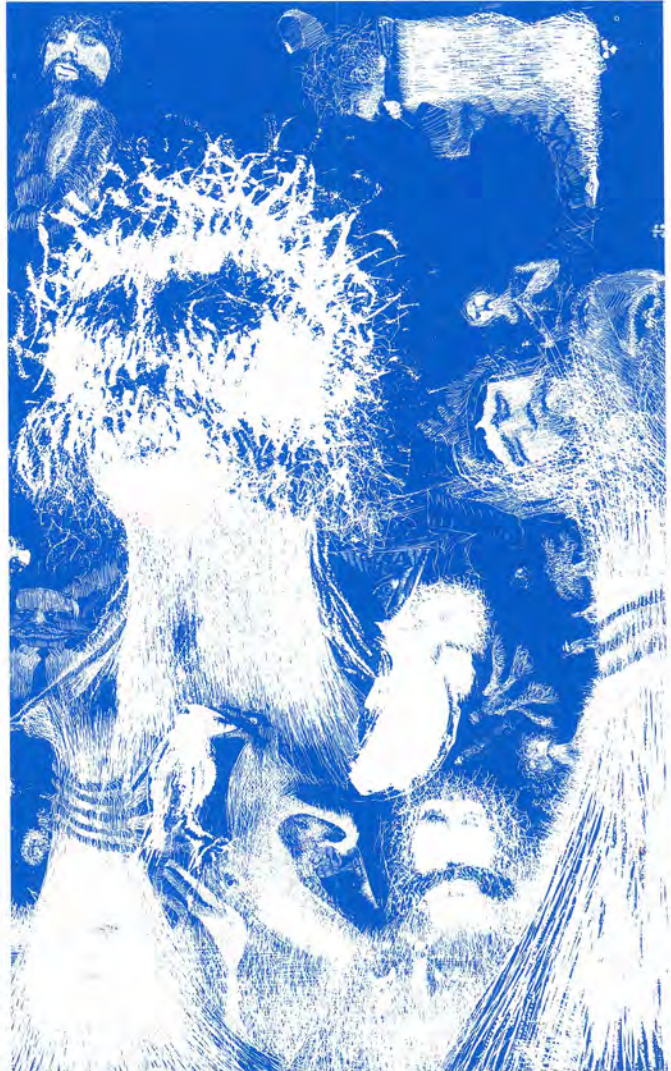
They finished eating and relaxed for a moment, Mr. Felton got up, congratulated Jake, said a few words, and introduced the president, Mr. R.M. Brewster, Jr.

As Mr. Brewster was beginning to speak, Jake slowly realized it was he who was out of place. He looked around the tables. He knew most of the people's names, but for many that was all. These weren't the people he worked with. Where was Louis? He and Louis had worked together for seven years. They ate lunch together every day. When Jake went on vacation, it was Louis who took over as foreman. They played bridge at home, went fishing sometimes. Where was he? Or Ramirez? Where was Ramirez? He had known Ramirez for four years. When Ramirez' wife was sick, he had lent him money until he could pay it back. And Ramirez wasn't here. Or Ashton, Pacini, Dole, and Ensalvo. How come his men from the shop weren't here? The foremen of the other shops were here. The accountants, the board of directors, the vice presidents, and the president were here. It was clear to Jake — his associates were invited; his friends were not. Mr. Brewster was just finishing his remarks. He then called for Jake to come over to the podium. He shook Jake's hand and strained to make up the foot difference in their height so he could put his beefy arm around Jake's shoulder. "In appreciation for thirty-five years of service," began Mr. Brewster, "we would like you, Jake Hackman, to have this seven day clock bearing this inscription: 'To Jake Hackman, an outstanding worker and truly fine man.'"

The audience began clapping as Mr. Brewster began handing the clock to Jake. He brushed the clock ever so lightly against the edge of the podium, but it was enough to break the glass bell

jar over the clock. The glass fell to the floor, shattering into thousands of fragments. Mr. Brewster became scarlet as he began picking up some of the larger pieces. He attempted to apologize, but Jake stopped him short, saying calmly, "It's quite all right," and pausing for a moment, really it is."

Derr Steadman



The Trucks

by Jeff Boarini

The trucks are on the highway.
Driving from city to city.
Lacing the whole nation like an
overgrown string figure.

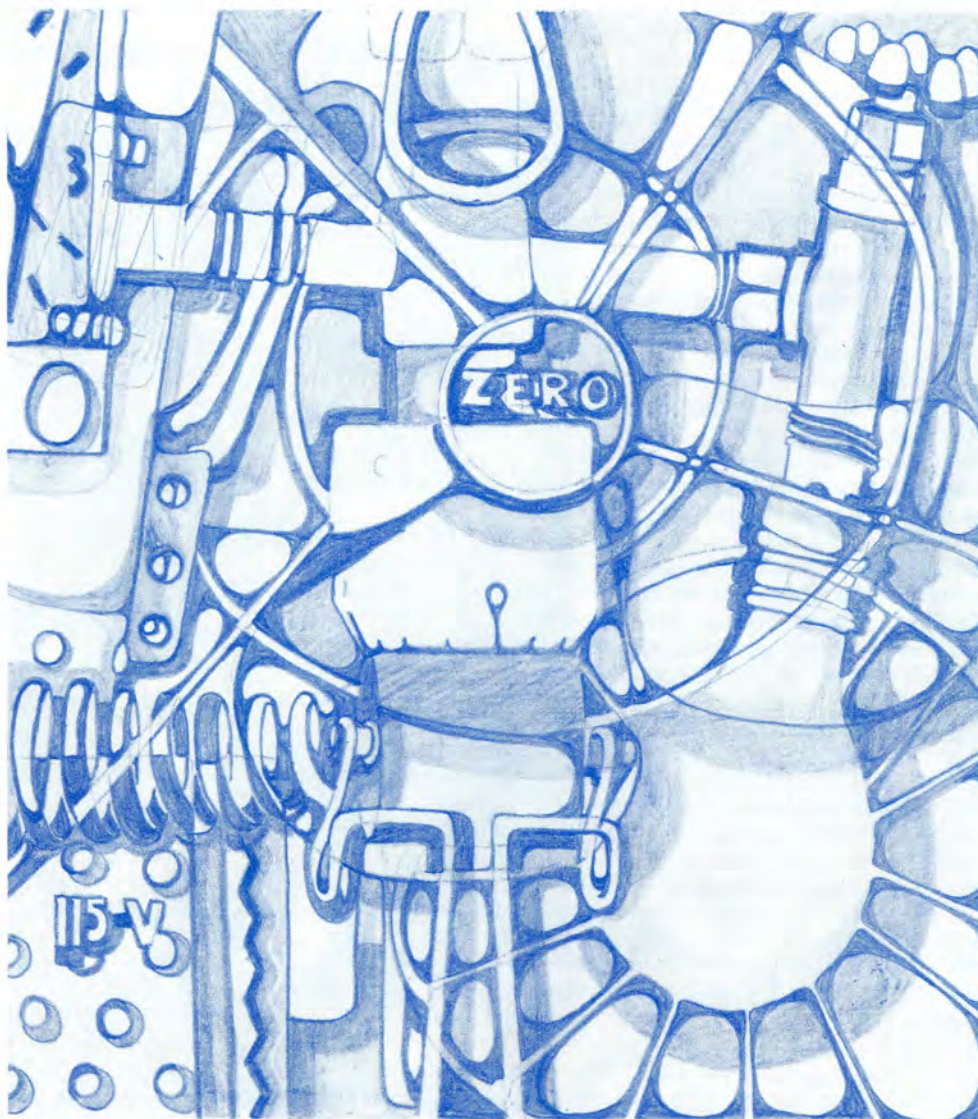
Peterbuilt, Mack.

Diesel cowboys on the move.
Rolling into song and story
with a twelve ton oversize haul,
a NoDoz in each cheek.

Freightliner, White.

Dinosaurs with overdrive.
Dual air-horns and fifteen gears.
One, clutch. Two, clutch. Three, clutch. Four, clutch.
The humming of the road.

Loadstar, Kenworth.

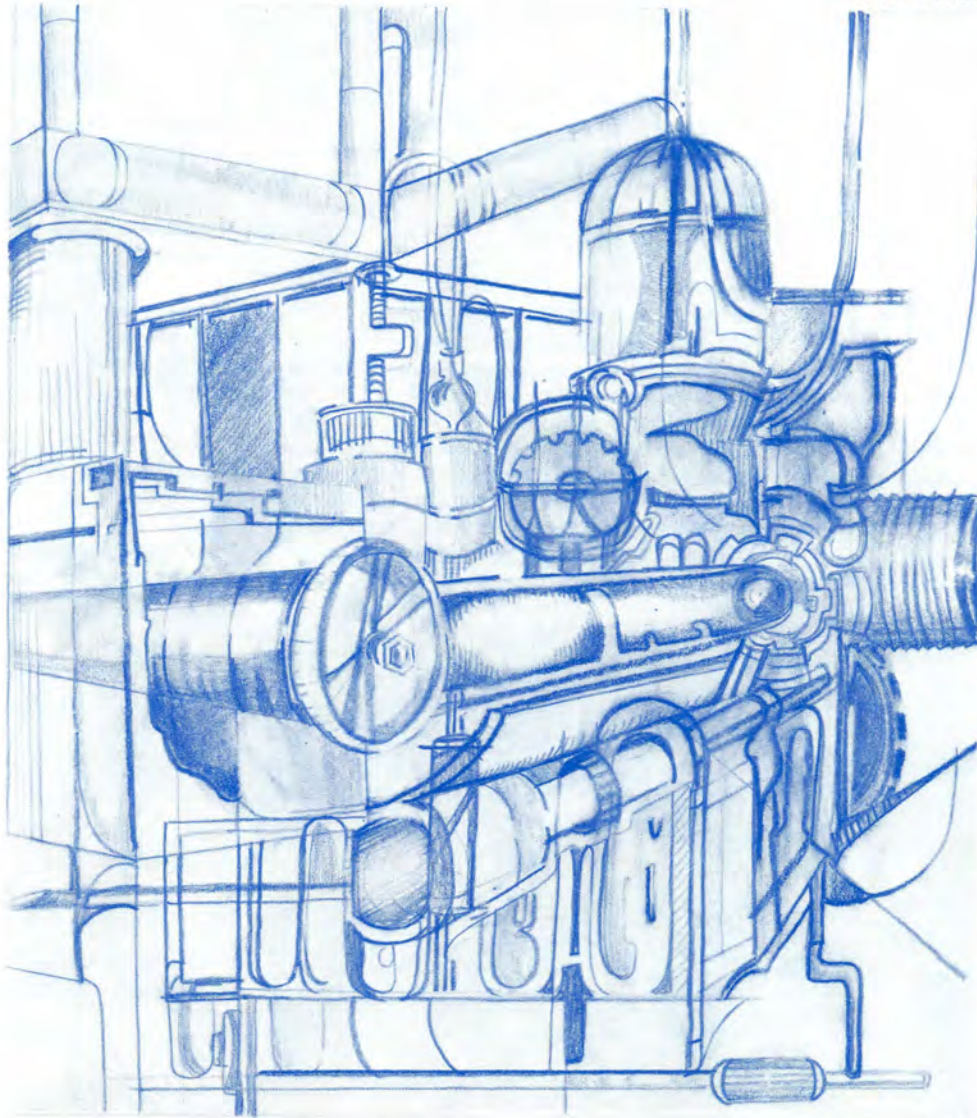


Sandra Kunz

The trucks are on the highway.
Trailer, piggyback, and flatbed.
Fourteen tires and a sleeper box.
Home with a steering wheel.

Diamond REO.

Linda Balluwett



Son of a Fisherman

by Bob Putman

Young Ramashiva entered the forest in search of the old, wise one. He was an ancient priest that was to be found in raja-meditation under the boughs of a large fir. Ramashiva, a boy of twelve, had recently left the home of his father, who lived on the seashore. His father was a fisherman but the boy was interested only in finding himself. Ramashiva began walking through the countryside near to the sea, working his way farther into the continent, with frequent stops for meditation, reflection, and maybe a bit to eat. Each he met, he asked, "Have you found the self yet, oh virtuous one?" Many replied a simple, "No."

In one town he was told of an old, wise one that fasted out in the forest: "Go ask this priest."

Here he was, deep into the shadow of the forest. A single beam defoliated a small clearing ahead, under which a robed man sat. Ramashiva approached him in silence, so that he would not disturb the deep concentration of the wise one. He stood before the priest for twenty minutes before he was noticed.

"Good morning, little one, what do you wish to share with an elder?"

"How may I find my self, oh wise one?" the boy bowed.

The old man nodded peacefully and smiled. He said nothing.

The boy went on . . . "Achieving my own plane, my own level of self-recognition, that's all there is. But then, once one has achieved his self is there nowhere to go?"

The old man nodded again.

Ramashiva continued . . . "Maybe then there is nowhere to follow and everywhere to lead. I am a leaf, spun over and over again in reds and greens of springs and summers. I am a tree drawing life from the earth itself, and reaching out to the stars. But most of all, I am me, a one, an only in times that try. Moving is my direction, moving and learning. Is that not good, oh wise one?"

The old man smiled.

Ramashiva resumed his free thought: "To move is to be transformed by each scene, each person; while to learn is to reflect upon that which we experience. I care not to know all things, for that is a game I leave to those who put themselves above others, for those who fear tolerance, and those whose games teach us although they are intended for other purposes. I endeavor to live and experience, and most of all to open the self to all viewpoints and ideas. If there is to be a rope to climb, if I am to seek something more, let me remember that I am one and one is only left with himself. I choose to humble myself to no man and yet to remain on the same plane with all men, that of existence."

The old man bowed his head. Ramashiva wondered what to say next, should he ask the wise man why he sat alone? He suddenly remembered.

"What am I to strive for, oh wise one, what am I to do with my life? What am I to be?"

"It is simple," the old one replied, "You are to be the son of a fisherman."



Tim Timmike

Silence

by Tim J. Hemmerling

Nothing

Permeates the bondage

Of solitude and silence

Loneliness and desperation are despised

Alone

Contemplation on prethought ideas

Listlessness of life, now or never

Friendless, feelings of persons i did know

Sounds

Unadhering to the foggy dreams

In a sea of insane repetition

Of the graysky night, feeling the silence

I

Alone

Feel the thickness of silence

The sound of my heart in the desolation

And Still I Mourn the Poets Dead

by Richard E. Sheppard

I miss the age that didn't last and mourn the
poets of the past;
The printed page is left to save, the Keats
and Yeats not in the grave.
There are too many empty heads, that are void
of what the poets said;
But on we walk in ignorance and still I
mourn the poets dead.

A native of the Catholic seat, the man was
born to dwell,
But still he damned their earthly kings and
sent their pompous heads to Hell.
We pick up works and travel through his
trinity of lands;
Our lives could but unravel if we read and
understand.
The roads don't end in Italy, singing out
from other shores.
Are the greater days of England and the men
of greater lore
Then we have had the chance to meet in the
passing of our days.
Their words glow through the decades like
Prometheus through the haze.
With Shelley's "Worlds on Worlds" and Yeats'
bird in flight
They told us how to break the rings and what
we'd have to fight.

Long gone now is all our time,
Two thousand years has passed by fast.
Now two thousand more of endless crime,
The change is taking place at last.
Many shall be marked as his own
By three imperfect numbers;
The rest shall all approach the throne
Of heaven's golden slumbers.

The world's living up the years that are
its last,
While I go on and mourn the poets past,
And though they held the future in their
heads
I'm still compelled to mourn the poets dead.



Diane O'Dea

Together

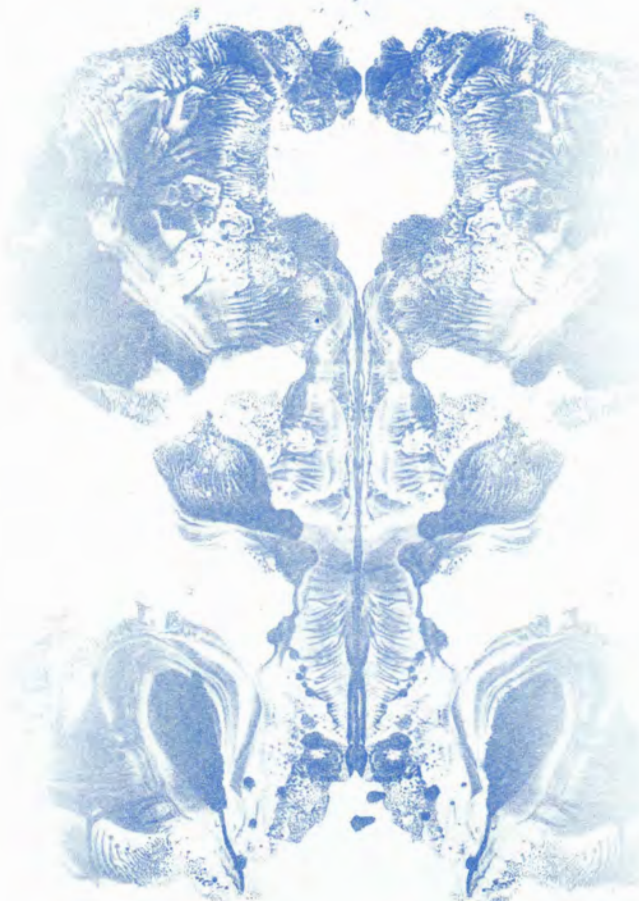
by Joe Pesz

So how can a man,
Can I,
Know of a thousand thoughts
Apart, the same,
Together?

And all that's there
With all that has been
And all that may be.
Apart, the same,
Together.

You look for the problem,
I look for the cure.
You look to help me,
I look to look.

With all that is alone
And each that never sees another,
Yet I must take it all,
Pretending that I know and have it all,
Together.



Rhonda Bannet

The Threat

by John Jesensky

In the awesome records of history, it can rightfully be claimed that one of America's precious unique features is its Constitution, and, more particularly, the amendments that constitute the Bill of Rights. In it, our founding fathers saw fit to list the freedoms basic to every human being; and first on that treasured list was freedom of speech. Nowhere in the world does there exist a people so boldly outspoken, so undaunted by governmental pressure as here in the U.S.A. Yet, as solidly guaranteed as these freedoms are, a frighteningly scant number of Americans are aware of the fact that one of the largest, most ominous threats to their candid lifestyle exists today in one of the most ingeniously subversive forms that the criminal mind has yet devised: peanut butter.

Yes, my friends, lining the shelves of every supermarket, grocery store and corner deli across the land are millions of gaily colored, innocently packaged

jars of "Peanut Butter"—a silent, cunning, calculating and shockingly effective army of The Enemy that is steadily slowing down and sealing shut the minds and mouths of millions of our youth today. But don't my word for it—go ahead, go out and try to talk to a member of the Young Generation yourself. See what kind of answers you get—if you get any at all! While many among us seek the simple answers—Dope, or fag Commie "Rock" music—we fail to see that the millions of jars of that Poison Paste of Hades that we bought and fed to them permanently bonded their lips together!!!

Yes, my friends, the horrible truth is that they've been trying for years to tell us things that we could understand but they can not!

Now then, if you feel as strongly about this Tan Menace as I do; if you, too, feel

the need for immediate action to insure that the silent majority of tomorrow be silent by their own choice, I urge you to write to your congressmen; write to your senators today. Tell them that you want something done about the murkey mastic that is masoning closed America's future. Tell them that you want them to support House-Senate Joint Bill number 5,436,539.002 that calls for a gradual withdrawal from peanut butter, accompanied by Jamization—the mandatory purchase of two pounds of preserves with every pound of peanut butter sold until January first. Thereafter, possession of peanut butter would become a Federal offense punishable by fines and/or imprisonment. Act today—right now—before any more of our little pearls clam up for good.

By the way, have you said anything worthwhile lately?



Mark Tabac



John T. Bernard

On Time

by John Jesensky

A day is a fractional unit of the interval scale that is used to gauge succeeding events in the universe. It is based upon the astronomical phenomenon that our planet rotates on its axis, alternately exposing a given portion of its surface to sunlight and interstellar darkness, in a cyclic pattern. This is science.

A day is one sixth of the time required to create man's universe by an omnipotent, omniscient being. This is religion.

A day is a fragment of that continuum in which physical entities are perpetually being created, modified, decomposed and terminated. It is a component of human life that is often tragically abused, despite the knowledge that its passage is irreversible. This is personal belief.



Dave Sorenson



Sydney Barton

A fawn lies alone in fields of green, curling her legs and hiding her nose in the warm security of her own body; dark crevices and black paths wind along the gently curved shadows of her soft stomach and graceful legs—paths familiar and serene for her, unknown and foreboding to others; Alone she lies and traces these dark lines for the millionth time, oblivious to the sun setting and rising again, the birds flying curiously above, the fox frightened away by her strange quiet; Alone I lie in fields of green, touching the serenity of my thoughts.

by Linda Kinkel

The 'Accident'

by Thomas P. Carroll

"Why did he do it?" I said to the mirror. My friend in the mirror who I'd known for countless years said nothing. He's been my best friend because he knows more about me than anyone else, and no matter what I tell him, he never tells.

I've tried letting my friend out a few times, but he was only able to go to another mirror. So now I'm content to have him by my side, travelling from mirror to mirror, keeping an eye on me.

I left my friend at my house and went out.

I walked beside the woman with the baby carriage.

"You know, all these years I've talked to you, and I've never known your name," I said.

"Does it matter?" she asked.

"No," I answered, And it didn't really.

"I don't know your name either. I couldn't care less. But I know you."

"Um," I replied.

"You're bothered by that 'accident' you saw."

"You say the word accident like it really wasn't an accident at all," I said to her.

"Was it?" she asked very seriously.

I couldn't answer, so instead I watched her rock the carriage.

"You talk to your friend in the mirror, and I care for my baby. I've pushed this carriage around for five years, and no matter what anyone says, my baby is in that carriage.

"I'm more open than you: I'm laughed at, made fun of. But I don't care, don't care what they think, don't care if they understand.

"But they tried to tell me what do do: they tried to put me in an institution. They'd try to do that to you if they knew about your friend in the mirror."

She watched me closely, still rocking the carriage. She lifted up the blankets. There was nothing but a doll lying there.

"People are so ready to force things on other people: things to do, things to think. Your memories, your friend, are both important to you. Why be forced to care about anything else?"

"Think about that if you're so worried about that 'accident'. Talk to your friend about all of this. You ask him if I'm not right. After that, the solution is up to you."

I walked away slowly without looking back. There was so much to think about. My head hurt quite a bit.

"If I just knew why he did it!" I thought aloud. I looked around to see if anyone heard me, and found I had wandered into a nearby forest.

There had been animals hiding in there for years, wild and free. And seeing myself as a threat, I didn't look for them.

The forest was old. About as old as anything I can think of. And the mossy trees crowded together in the dim light as if to shove each other out of the way.

I came from the tall trees and entered a clearing. I've always wondered why they call such places clearings, being not very clear at all, with tall grass and shrubs and such. So I entered the small

un-clearing, and found a single tree standing in the center of it.

I looked at the old tree with his long, gnarled arms waving at me as if to call me. His long fingers reaching for me, crackling like tiny castanettes. I looked at the withered shape once more, and seeing his black heart, I hurried away for fear of what he wanted of me.

I ran.

"This is kind of a nice place," she said, eating greasy fried chicken in a most lady-like way. She ate with her fingers.

"I suppose," I said, looking out the window I had insisted upon sitting next to. As a teenager I had walked by restaurant windows and stared at the people eating. I always pretended I was starving. I planned on giving anyone who did this now a pretty good show.

"You know, I want to get married soon," she said expectantly. She was eating mashed potatoes.

"I know," I mumbled. "I have some things to decide first."

I was looking out the window and saw a car that had been approaching a red light race into the intersection.

"Oh God!" I cried. I looked around for some kind of help, but no one paid attention.

"Hmm?" she said to me.

The car had been hit directly in the side, and the sound of rending metal ripped through the air. Sparks flew from the pavement as the car skidded sideways into a lamp post and rolled over on its roof with a crash of broken glass.

"Somebody has to help him!" I yelled, knocking over my chair as I jumped to my feet.

"Yes, dear. Pass the butter, please," she said, looking at a dinner roll critically.

The man in the demolished car waved in a friendly manner to the pedestrians. They didn't wave back.

The windows shook violently as the car's gas tank exploded.

"I hope you decide about us pretty soon," she said. She folded her greasy napkin neatly, and put it gently on the table.

"Sir?"

"Why did he do it!" I opened my eyes and saw a forest ranger looking down at me.

"Do what, sir?" the ranger asked.

"What happened?" I asked him.

"You tell me sir. I found you on the ground in this path screaming at the top of your lungs. Are you all right?"

"I'm sorry. I must have stumbled and hit my head. Thanks for your trouble. Goodbye."

I was anxious to get away from there, so I hurried home. I found my car parked at the curb. And I drove away.

"Why did you want me to go driving with you?" she asked.

"To talk." I had been holding my breath, and the air exploded from my lungs as I said this. "To talk," I said again, more to myself.

"You've decided what to do about us? Have you finally figured it out?"

"Not yet," I murmured.

"What?"

I said nothing, didn't even hear her really. She was so far away.

I looked at my friend in the mirror. I think he had decided. He didn't tell me what to do yet, though.

We pulled up to a stop light. The red light, an eye of fire, stared at me myopically.

"I see!" I cried suddenly, slapping my forehead. The sound was like a gun report in so small a car. I looked at my friend in the mirror again, and we both understood.

"See what?" she asked, startled.

"Hmm?" I smiled as I slammed down on the accelerator.



Janet Altmaier

Lay it Down, for a Tired Man Blues

by Michael D. McFeggan

Can ya lay it down when the sun makes me warm
Just feel like sleepin', spend the whole day in
Only pokin' around playin', nothing comes to mind
Just layin' on my back, layin' it down, ooh
Come here with me girl, lay it down too
Sandwich in the fridge you got nothin' to do
Sip o' that good lovin', if alright with you
But please lay it down, 'cause I'm a tired man

Nothin' can come inside, it's ooh quiet time
Phone off the hook, got no one to see
Just you and your weary tune, come lay it by me
Just lay on your back and I'll sleep ya home
Come here with me girl, lay it down too
Sandwich in the fridge you got nothin' to do
Sip o' that good lovin', if alright with you
But please lay it down, 'cause I'm a tired man

Let the street man walk down his tired road
Let us fiddle faddle here, cookin' some food
If the night comes a closer, let it ride
Dark is just as good, here, layin' it down
Come here with me girl, lay it down too
Sandwich in the fridge you got nothin' to do
Sip o' that good lovin', if alright with you
But please lay it down, 'cause I'm a tired man

We are no fools friend, it's dreamin' we do
For cryin' is for Sundays, so let it set a spell
Dream as if it's done, your weary tune played
Dream we layed it down, for a while today
Come here with me girl, lay it down too
Sandwich in the fridge you go nothin' to do
Sip o' that good lovin', if alright with you
But please lay it down, 'cause I'm a tired man



Lynette Franz

Teacher of the Deaf

by Carolyn Gorr

A vision of magical power
Her eyes and hands
Talk to the deaf
With lightening fast fingers,
Love and compassion
Shine in her eyes
As communication flows,
This tongue opens windows
For pupils who seek
An understanding of this
Hearing World.



Callous

William Calkins

The End of a Crush

by Carolyn Gorr

Earthquake?
Bellyache?
Heartache.
Whatabreak.

Go eata cake?
Jump ina lake?
Pity sake
Where'sa wake?

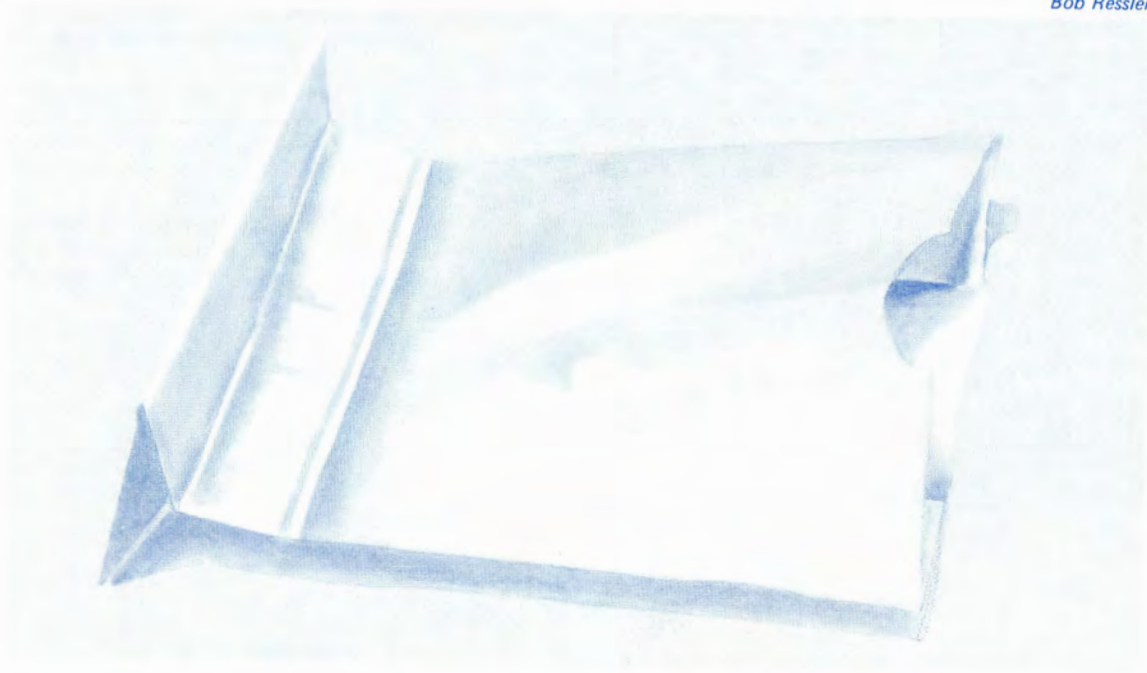
Cry?
Why?

Heartbroken
Nothin' spoken
No token.

Ego Smashed
Dashed
Gone to Trash.

Now?
Wow.

Bob Ressler



The Commander

by Don Bimmerle

If life was like a ship on water,
thrashing violently in storms, but
stable in fair weather,
then I would want to float forever.

With a body made of tempered steel
and a compass for direction
I would never have to
pray for my guidance or protection.

I would be the Captain and the crew.

But, life's course seems more desultory
and we can't expect to salvage
bodies after dying,
though some men spend their whole lives trying.

O lifeless hulls in rotting caskets
anchored firmly in the ground, I
don't hope the voyage to
infinity be perilous for

not following the Captain's orders.

Linda Clary



The First Day of School at the End of Summer

by Joe Pesz

It was really a nice day. You know, the kind of day that says, "Hey, why don't-cha come out and run around and fall down and stuff." The sky was real bright and the wind felt just like the fan does when you sit down in front of it and watch T.V. You know,

It was too bad it was such a nice day, too, because that was the first day of school. It's always nice on school days. Sometimes I wish it would rain, but I think it only rains on Saturdays. I don't remember, now.

So there I was, on the bus. I sat down in the back seat. I always sit in the back seat because that way I don't have to sit by the girls. Girls always have to tell you about everything, and if you hit them or tell them to shut up, they cry real loud. My sister's a girl.

The bus kept stopping and going a lot. There were a lot of kids I didn't know. They probably didn't know me, either. Tommy Franke got on and came back and sat with me. I usually don't like anybody to sit with me, but Tommy was O.K. He showed me a turtle he caught down by the pond. He said it died about a month ago. I guess he kept it just to show the guys. It really stank.

I was trying to get Tommy to put the turtle away, when the bus stopped real fast. My head hit the seat in front of me, and Tommy's turtle landed on the floor, most of it, anyway. One of the legs hit Cindy Johnson in the back of the head, and she got pretty mad about all the gooey stuff in her hair, so we told her to shut up, but then she started to cry. Real loud. They always do that.

Anyway, Billy Smith had just got on the bus. He was the biggest guy in the third

grade, and he'd spent most of the summer throwing rocks at dogs and beating up his older brother. Now he was going to beat me up. I didn't do anything, really. That glue on his bike seat wasn't that sticky. He was pretty mad, though. I crunched way down in the seat so he couldn't see me, but it was too late. He sat down in front of me and said "O.K., kid, now you're gonna' get it!" He grabbed my throat and it started getting real hard to breathe. My blue tie with the clip on it fell on the floor and was getting real dirty because I was kicking and choking a lot, trying to get away. Billy kept yelling about his bike and I felt like throwing up, but I didn't. Then I remembered lunch. My mom always put fruit in my lunch. I really don't like fruit much, but she always gives me some anyway. So I reached my hand down by my lunch bag, which was pretty hard with Billy holding me so tight, but I got my hand in there and

John T. Bernard



John T. Bernard

felt around and there was something pretty squishy. Chocolate cake! But boy, I hate to waste chocolate cake. Just then, Billy said something dirty and hit me in the stomach. It didn't really hurt, but I decided I could always get more chocolate cake, so I grabbed it and pushed it right in his nose. It didn't do anything at first because the wrapper was still on it. But I kept pushing it at him until his nose and eyes and one of his ears all had some of my mom's chocolate cake on them. It was funny then, because Billy didn't know what to do. He just sat there, looking at me, and down at the chocolate cake on his nose. Then he said, "You didn't have to do that," and got up and sat in a seat in the front.

Tommy came back and sat down next to me. "You really did great," he said. I closed up my lunch bag and felt stupid and terrible.



Diane O'Dea

And Cygnus, the swan, shall help me. You and I shall ride on her enormous wings out there in the blackness, with nothing but emptiness all around. We shall pass by Orion and though I would like to pluck his scarlet jewel, a quiet look from his eyes will stop me. We can wave to the Pleiades and tease the pinchers of the Scorpion. I will thoroughly enjoy myself on this last heavenly tour with you, but you will not find yourself comfortable, my friend. You will be waiting, and anticipating the moment when my softest tap on Cygnus's shoulder will signal her to throw you to the neverending emptiness. I wonder what it will be like for you to fall into darkness forever.

by Linda Kinkel

Sydney Barton

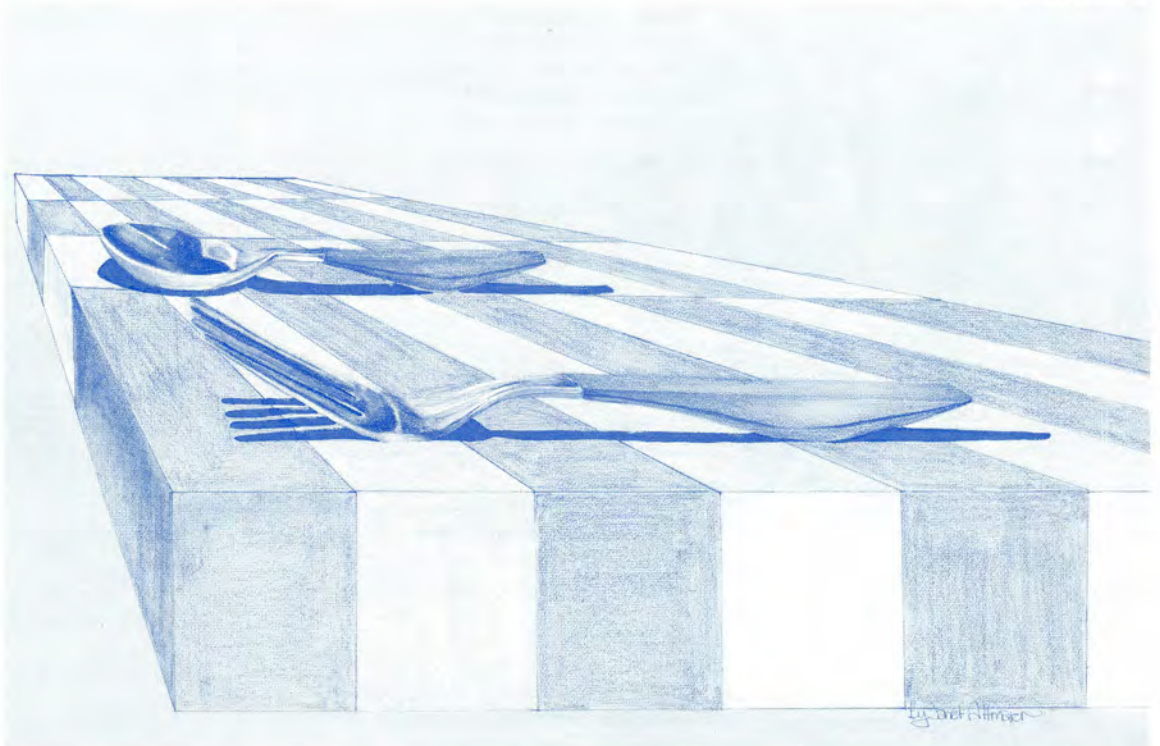


Breakfast in Bed

by Keith M. Tracy

No time is set awake at will
Summon others to tend your head,
Relax enjoy all day to kill
Nothing like it breakfast in bed.
Just take your time no rush today
Maybe tomorrow make your fame,
Do something great for all to say
History has your place your name.
For now let the nothings cater
The fools can work and slave till dead,
Glance the clock its an hour later
Prepare for your dinner in bed.
But the day ends and night draws near
And those next morn ask who slept here?

Janet Altmaier



Is our robot shortage just a joke or is it ONE VERY BAD PRANK, DESIGNED TO ENSLAVE MEN?

by Don Bimmerle

. . . The year was nineteen-ninety-one,
and life was ripe, and well-designed!
-Ours - was the day of the robot;
sleek, mobile machines, made not in
Our image, but because we liked
the time-consuming idle hours
the metal men provided man!
And everyone owned one.

How right it seemed to sit and watch
them work without sweat!, then, whirring
almost in a trance-like waltz, search
blindly for the next programmed task.
The larger robots, Bump-puff-ing
when molding, manufactured all
the luxuries for Our being!
(Output didn't vary

as they fueled themselves - once daily,
from advanced nuclear systems)

The supply was ever-lasting,
-it was a scientific fact!

. Though commoners not tuned to us
said silver servile rollers would
cause misery, not happiness,
we scoffed until one bad

non energetic Saturday
when Allrobots inexistence
ceased. responding to their Programs)
WhiletheWorld=====skidded in chaos
The UN powered h0llow junkstood
mute-not one claiming toknowthe
cause. Optimistically, we hoped
it was somekindof praNK,
anddid , until This was revealed!
Fiendish Plotters cut the Power
and,having gained our attention
were announcing Future Plans:

". For every gear and wheel that turns
for fruits of leisure realized, -----
your robots must have energy! -----
OUR robots We designed -----

like men, and We supply their fuel! ----
Dependency is what this means, -----
for, without Power, men are through! ---
From watching silver slaves so long, -----
your muscles have been atrophied, -----

and now you're facing genocide -----
unless you bow when We command!" ----
. . .And. .we knew we had to
or else be forced to la-bor for
ourselves!! But what other - demand

Could They make of us? . . . ? The Little

we haD was OUR god's givenright!?!
Despair s p r e a d like disease after . . . -
we surrendered with out battle- - - - -
and in woewehined Pity for -----
the men They would enslave! - - . . .

Then They said: "You common men should --
serve Us sometimes for supplies of power!"
and we, with all hope exhausted , - - - - -
agreed, for we'd do anything, -----
if just to save the work machines! -----
But, when bending in this bondage -----
will we be comforted to know -----
machines are not like Men?

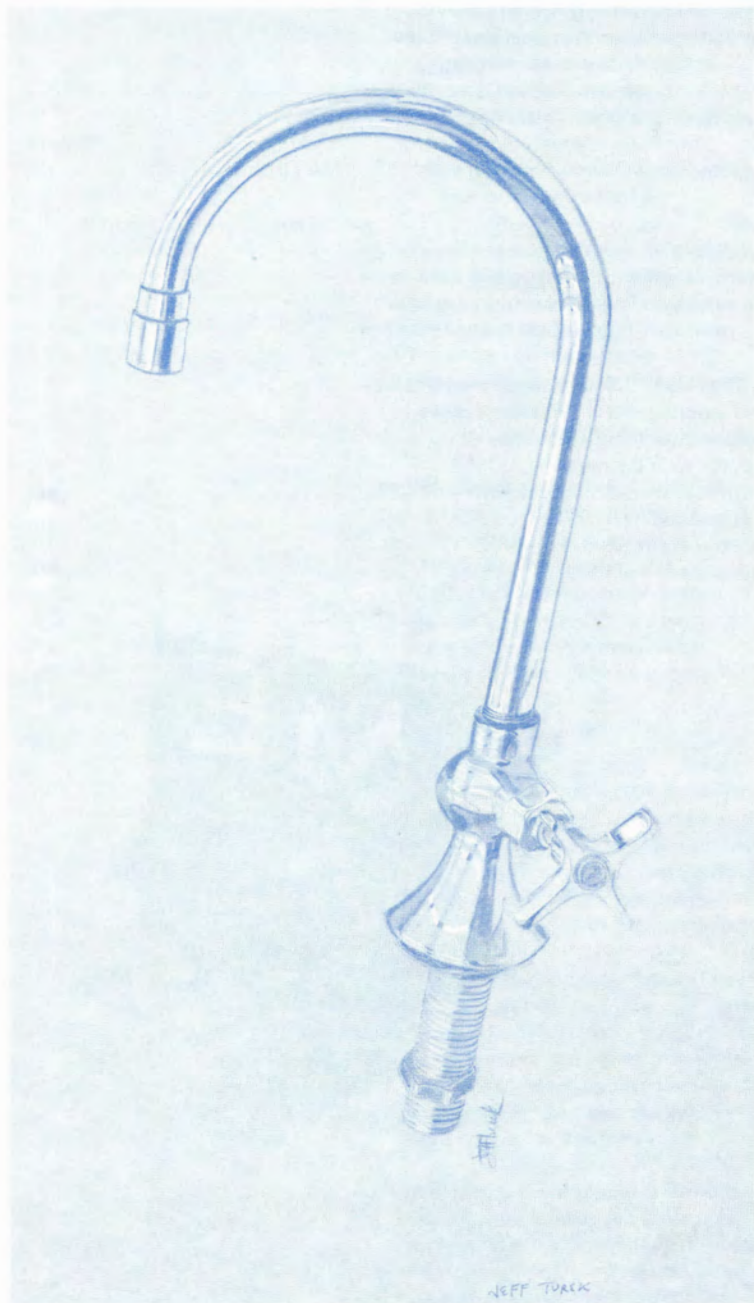


J. Antos

Cats

by Jackie Campana

I wonder at the loyalty of cats
They sneak off at night
To places unknown
To do secret things
Like men who make promises and
disappear
Then reappear again
Purring contentment
Expecting to be let back in
I wonder at the loyalty of cats.

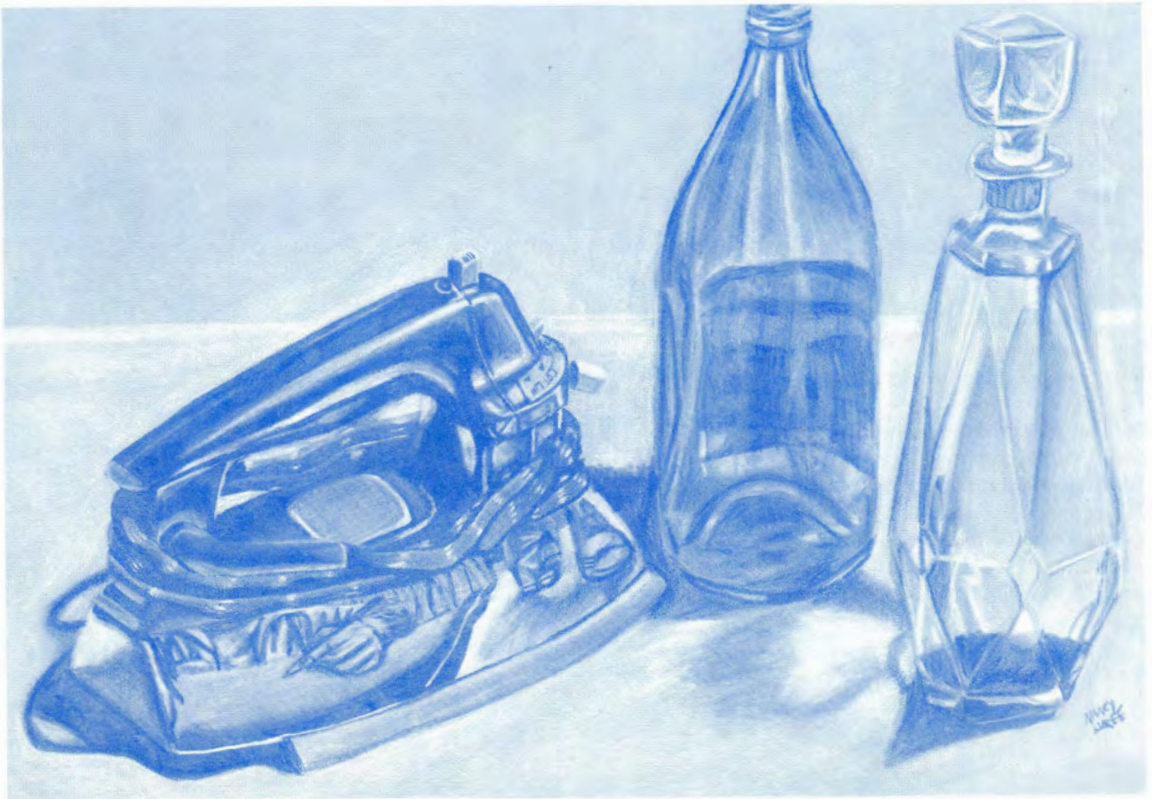


Jeff Turek

And now you are gone;
Ha, such a frequent last, last line.
I detest the spindly dregs you left
As a quiet memory
Quiet as you are distant.
You know?
You know how thorn tenacles
Wind and tangle and pierce
From core to fingertips?
You feel the traumatic, dramatic
Earthquake I have become?
Ah, my poor, decrepit semblance of a friend,
You have my heart's sympathy
For your grief at my grief.

by Linda Kinkel

Nancy Lickee



A Love Song

by Linda Kinkel

My friend, I come to you again
To release these things
That tighten my stomach and throat
Till I feel that strangling
Must be a much pleasanter death.
The nerves beneath my cheeks and eyes
Try to pierce the skin with pinions, and burn;
I must forfeit my breath for a long moment,
And think angry thoughts,
For if I am lucky,
For a short second —
Perhaps other thoughts will be dispersed.
Oh, how I hate!
How I hate this ugly animal
That is eating away my mind,
Immobilizing, hypnotizing it.
How I hate this sly animal
That I cannot tear from my body,
That fills my lungs with ether,
And my nights with insomnia.
How I detest this creature's power over me!
How I wish it would show itself
That I may hear its bones cracking and splintering
As my grip breaks every one of them,
That I may spit on it,
And pierce, and pierce, and pierce its eyeballs,
That I may feel its blood and flesh
Ooze between my fingers,
Ooze like mud, like slimy mud,
Like rain-softened earth?

Quiet now, heart,
For a moment now, quiet;
A thought occurs to me.
Yes, I find a solution here —
The nest that this creature thrives on
Lies in the blood red of my heart,
I shall turn this throbbing, living organ
To a diamond, my friend.
Ha creature—you have been defeated.
It will amuse me to see you
Through the sparkling gem,
Frozen grotesquely,
Unable to touch me anymore—
Finally, finally dead.



Sandy Mack

Observations of the Weary Commuter

by Carolyn Gorr

The 5:20 Express,
Expressly for what?

The Loop-Group
Like so many robots
Wound up
For the trek home.

Sit in the smoker
& choke,
No place for a bouncy child
Only the cards can be wild.

Faces behind newspapers,
Faces asleep,
Faces peer out the window,
Into the dark.

Daylight savings is over, damn,
Can't see the sub-standard view
On the way to suburbia.

How can I know
Where I live is great?
If I don't see
That *exotic* city landscape.

Trudy Sedlak





You Don't Know Nothin' Nomore

by John Patrick Wall

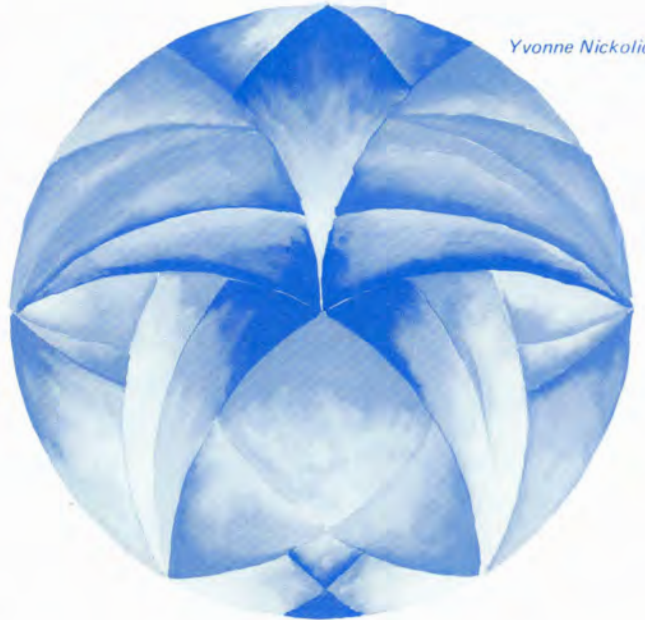
rprof

You can't tell a diamond when it's in your hand
And you can't tell a ruby from a grain of sand
And your laughin' dancin' clown is really quite
a bore
And you just don't know nothin' anymore.

Your horseshoe thieves don't ever leave the
house of wood
And the games that you play now just are not
any good
Sometimes I'd like to show you to the door
'Cause you just don't know nothin' anymore.

The freight train's brain has gone insane as
all can see
And the man about town is down 'cause he thinks
he's a tree
Sometimes I'd like to knock you on the floor
Since you just don't know nothin' anymore.

The horse rides up the mountain to the
Queen of Sheba's breasts
He tries and hopes and wishes he could pass
the tests
But I can't listen to your chattering anymore
Because you just don't know nothin' anymore.



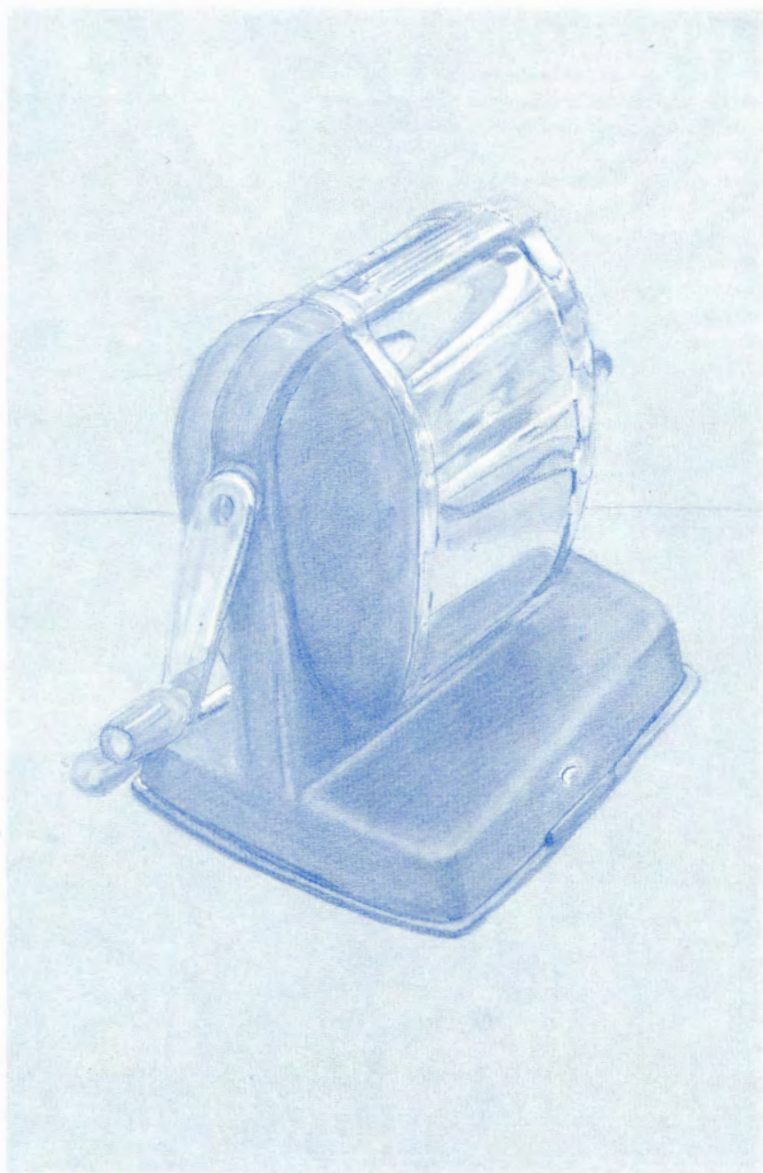
Yvonne Nickolich

Jan White




When I am alone
And horny, I write poems
Prolific poet!

by Scott Elliott



Holly Nordhaus

An abstract geometric artwork featuring a composition of blue and brown shapes. The top half is dominated by a large, irregular blue shape on the left, which overlaps with a brown shape on the right. Below this, a horizontal band of blue is followed by a thin brown line, then another blue band, and finally a brown band at the bottom. The overall style is minimalist and modern.

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