

# *Point of View*



# SPRING 1979

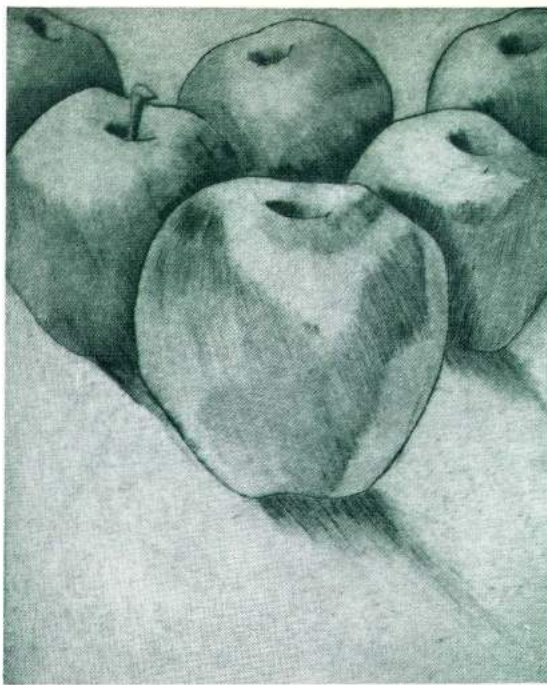
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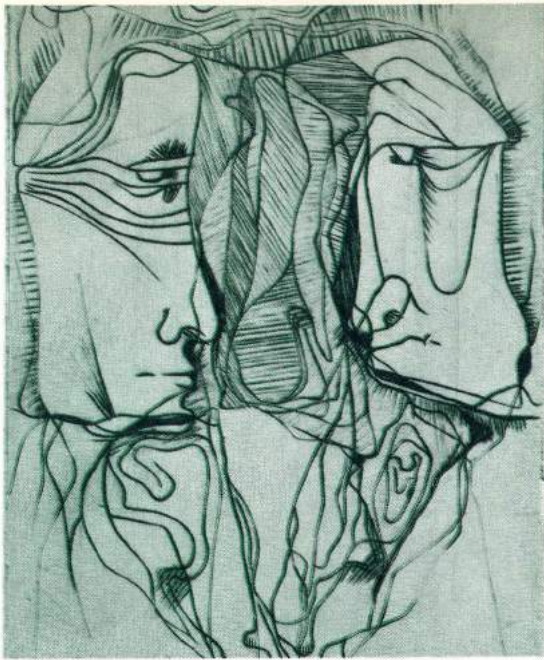
"Apples II"

Mike Kelley

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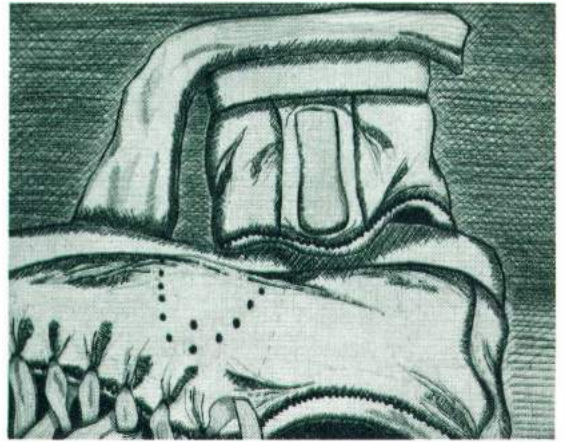
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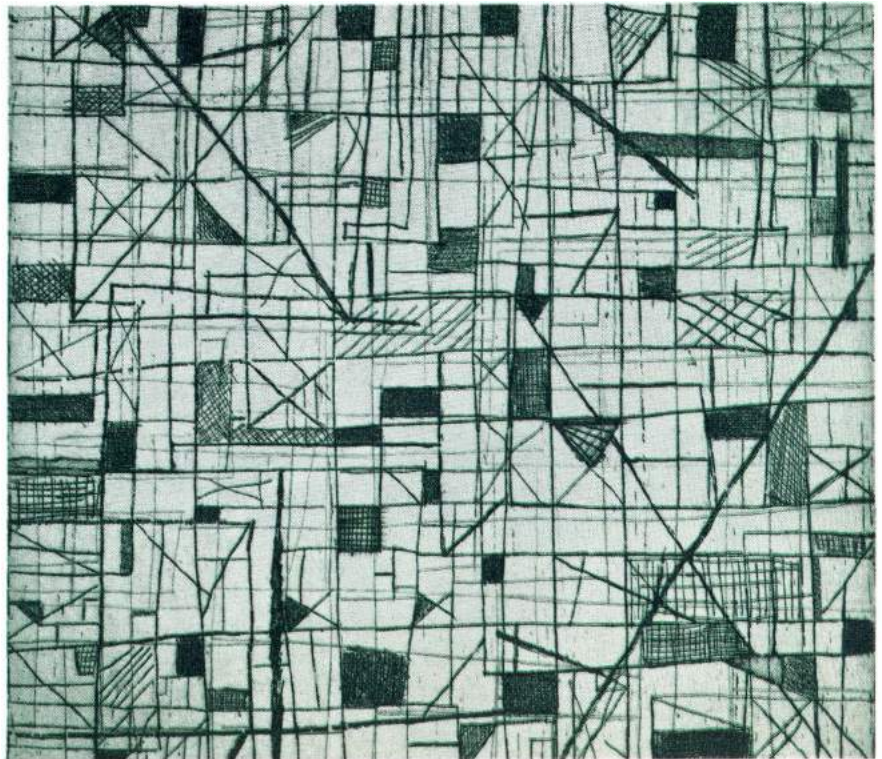
"Two Men"

Jeanine Hutchins



"Gym Shoes"

Dennis Vernon



"Brush Strokes"

Matthew A. Romanello



# Mommy's Gone Crazy

— Steve Howard

Brad told the children that their mother was very tired and had to go rest for a while.

"You see, sometimes grown-ups work too hard, and then they have to rest for a while. Your mother was very tired and so she couldn't remember how much medicine to take, and she took too much accidentally."

His children watched his face closely, making him shift in discomfort. How much did they understand? Lee, the eight-year-old, asked, "Is it like a vacation?"

Brad thought about that a moment and said, "Yes, sort of. Mommy was tired and she's taking a rest at a kind of resort."

At the mention of resort, Amy, the six-year-old, asked, "Will she have to clean the fish?"

Brad was a little flustered at that one. "No, it isn't a resort like that, honey. Mommy just has to rest and talk to people until she doesn't feel tired any more, do you understand?"

Amy nodded, not understanding but trying to be helpful. "Daddy, is Mommy hurt?" she asked.

"No, Amy, just tired, not hurt, why?"

"Because Wendy P. says that Mommy is broken and the doctors have to fix her. She says they'll make her smaller. Will they?"

Damn people's vicious talk, he thought. Wendy P. was Wendy Porter, the daughter of the next door neighbors and one of Amy's classmates. Why couldn't people be a little more careful about what they said in front of their kids? He picked the little girl up and sat her in his lap. "Amy," he said, "Mommy is not broken, and she's still the same size, and she will stay the same size. Mommy's my big girl and you're my little girl, but while Mommy's resting you're going to have to be a big girl and help your Aunt Joan when she comes, okay?"

Amy looked at her father, he looked tired, too. "Okay," she said, "I'll help her."

Aunt Joan arrived the next day, Saturday, and set right in to getting the house straightened away.

"The strain certainly shows around the house," she said to Brad that afternoon. "What happens when she comes home?"

Brad sipped at his drink before replying. "We've already discussed a separation. I think this was her reaction to it. Lately she's been so wrapped up in herself that she's let the house and kids just go to pot. She spends most of the day reading some hip book or making plant hangers and crap, while dinner gets forgotten and the laundry goes undone. I swear she thought she was back in school again with some of the bull she came up with lately. At any rate, there's no way she'll get custody of the kids now, but it's costing me plenty to keep her on that fruit farm." He leaned on the table, shaking his head in disgust. "I don't know where she even came up with all of it. She's really changed since

we got married. From the way she talks now, I don't understand how we ever got married in the first place. It's the damn media coverage of these libbers. She sits here all day watching these insipid talk shows, doesn't get anything done around the house, and then talks about going out and looking for a job. Can you believe that?" Joan shook her head sympathetically and said nothing. Brad threw his arms out to the side and snorted, "She can't even get the things taken care of that she's supposed to be concerned with." He slapped his hands down on his knees and paused, shaking his head at the floor. "How does she expect to perform on a real job?"

Joan shook her head again. "I don't know, Brad, I just don't know," she said pursing her lips.

Brad sighed and sipped his drink again. "You know, I wish you two had been closer, Joanie. If you had, maybe some of your common sense would have rubbed off on her. She'll have to move back to Ohio with her folks when she gets out, I imagine. She won't be able to take things on her own. Speaking of folks, what do Mom and Dad have to say about all this?"

Joan looked surprised. "Haven't you seen them yet?" she asked.

"No," he said chewing his lip, "I drove by the house the other night, but it was late so I didn't stop in."

She nodded. "Dad says it's between you and Jean and that the only part we should take is to support you in what ever you decide, and you know Mom. She always said Jean had a 'strange streak in her.'"

He nodded to himself thinking of Jean's vehement and irrational refusal to let his mother come help with the housework after Amy was born. Two babies in the house and Jean insisting that she'd take care of things herself. His mother had worked around it by stopping in for coffee frequently, until Jean began to act put out by even that. "Yeah," he said, "There were warning signs a long time ago. Mom was right, I just wish that I had seen them sooner."

His sister shook her head. "Brad, you can't blame yourself for Jean's weakness. This is none of your doing. Jean just isn't the type that can handle things well. We all know that."

"I guess so," he said, "but I feel so foolish. I wouldn't listen to any of you and now I wish I had."

Joan laughed. "Love is blind, especially young love."

He smiled across the table at her. "Thanks for coming to help out, Joanie; it restores my faith in your gender."

She smiled back. "Some women still know which end is up," she explained. "And don't worry, you still have time to find another one who does."

The front door opened just then and they heard Amy calling from the living room, "Daddy, Aunt Joanie, come see!"

They went to the living room where Amy stood with her brother and grandmother. His mother's bulk loomed over the two children seething with protectiveness. "I thought while I had the two little angels, I'd stop downtown and get them some things for Easter." She was beaming. Lee stood stiffly confined in a gray suit, and Amy was enveloped in swaths and billows of pastel lace and ribbons. Jean would have hated the dress and Brad felt something strangely satisfying in that. He had to admit it seemed a little out of date. Amy looked like Alice in Wonderland but still too pretty for him to be critical.

"Don't you look like a little Princess now," Brad said swooping her up from the floor.

"Daddy," she asked softly, "when will Mommy come home to see my dress?"

Before he could answer, his mother took Amy from him saying, "You mustn't bother Daddy about when Mommy is going to be back. We must help Daddy like a lady should, and Grandma and Aunt Joan are going to show you how. Won't that be nice?" The old woman smilingly waited for a reply which came in a silent nod. "All right now, you two run along upstairs and play. Grandma has to go now, and Aunt Joan has to fix dinner, but I'll come over again tomorrow evening to see you."

The two children kissed the heavily made-up cheek and trudged dutifully up the stairs.

The next afternoon Amy came in from playing and found her aunt ironing clothes. "Do you like to do that?" she asked.

Joan looked at her and smiled. "I don't really enjoy it but it has to be done, Amy. There are many things you may not like, but you have to do them anyway."

Amy thought a moment, then asked, "Do you have to do things even if you don't like them and it makes you tired?"

"Well, yes, most things make you tired." Joan was puzzled by the serious way Amy was looking at her.

"Aunt Joan, does Mommy have to do things now that she doesn't want to do?"

Joan felt panicky. "I really don't know, honey, why?"

Mommy likes to make things, and Wendy P. says that she's making baskets now."

"Sometimes people do make baskets when they're resting, but don't worry about what Wendy P. says." Joan was wishing that Amy would go out to play again.

"Mommy doesn't like to iron but Daddy gets mad when she doesn't, and when she makes things he gets mad, too."

"Uh, yes, sometimes they disagree," Joan mumbled.

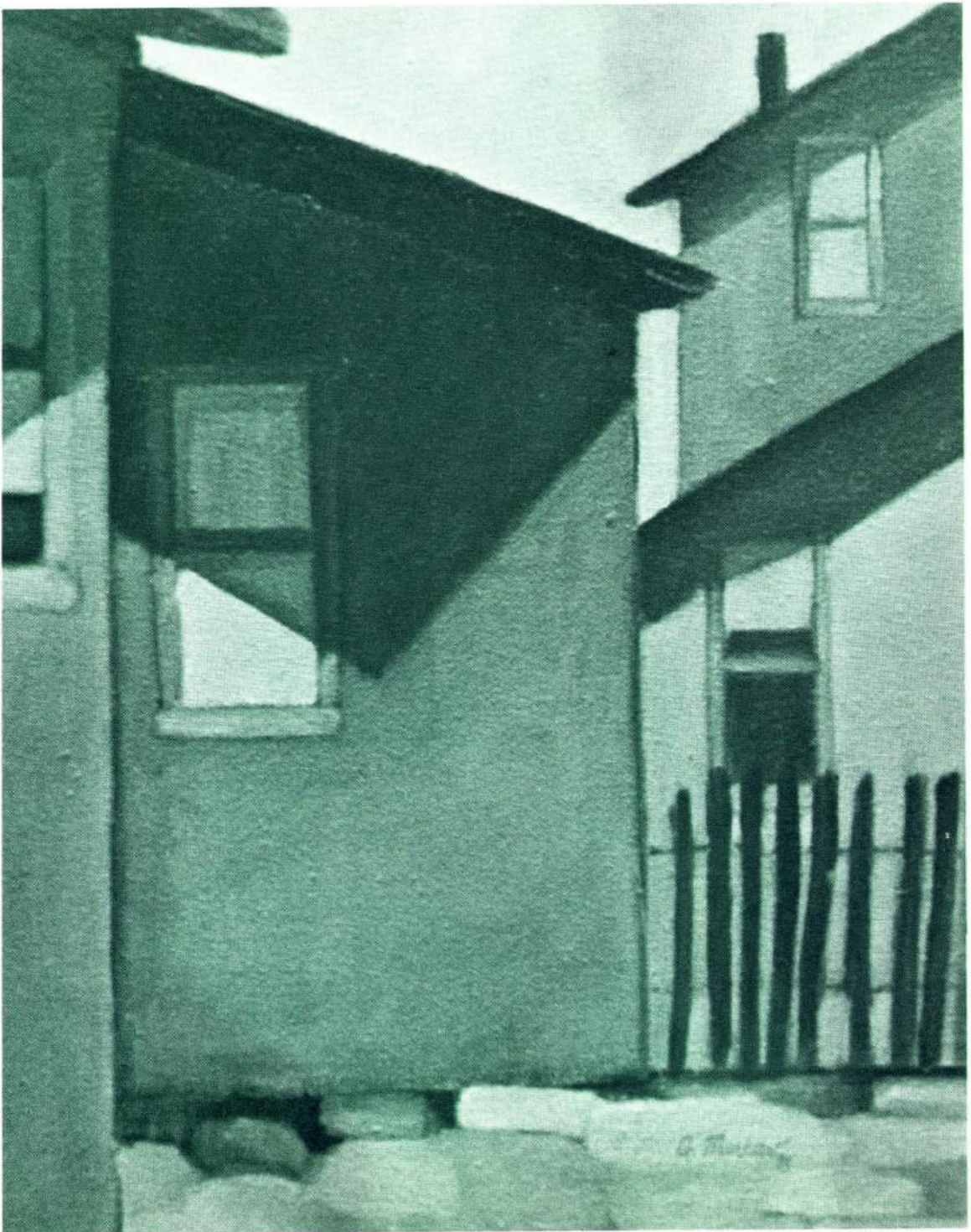
"Aunt Joan, I don't want to do those things when I grow up," Amy said.

"What do you want to then, Amy?" Joan asked.

"Wendy P. says Mommy gets to make baskets and not iron and stuff now because she's crazy, and that's what I want to be, too."

Before Joan could make a reply, Amy ran back out to play.





"Houses"





"Untitled"

Kwangmi Kim





"Untitled"

Nancy Cullerton

## Pas De Deux In Fine

— Barbara Bastian

The eleventh hour surrounds us now —  
For once I am grateful for Time's progression.  
How many times I have demanded — in vain —  
That Time stand still to hold us eternally  
In the spotlight's radiance (or was it our own?)  
To do our dance in the slowest of motion —  
To savor the exquisite detail of each glorious move.

But now our pas de deux approaches the final steps —  
And the beauty of our flowing moves is underscored in pain.  
How well we knew the dance would have to end  
Yet I am ill-prepared for that which I knew must be.  
Were Time to stop now I could not bear the agony —  
So let the curtain fall quickly and the music cease.  
I will sit in the darkened wing till our time to dance again.



A Victrola plays softly in the background. The man, small framed with slightly thinning Hair, utters a feeble proposal to the woman Standing opposite him. The woman, whose long Locks are carefully combed in a bun, suppresses A giggle. She nods her head in a rabbit-like Fashion, acknowledging her acceptance. His Name is Don and hers Addie. They are young And as the story goes, in love.

The engagement ring is gold with six small Diamonds set royally in the center. It cost him a Coal miner's weekly wage of twelve dollars. But She was well worth the extravagance. ————— Now a fan hums lazily in the distance. Addie's Hair is long and gray, hastily done in a braid. Don rarely laughs, except at himself. They are Old and alone with their past. The ring, now Tarnished from age, sits calmly next to Addie's Teeth.



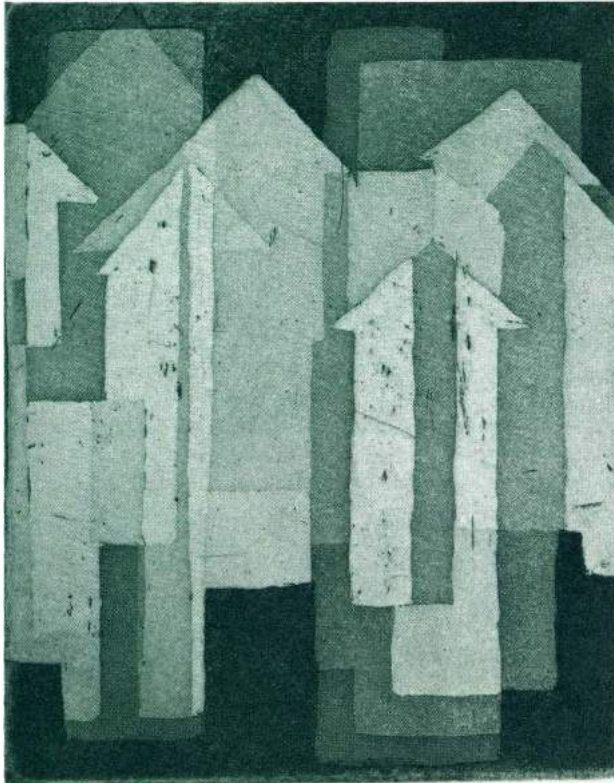
“Fire, Burning Bright”

Beverly De Velde

— Suzanne Ginger

He lies beneath the  
Dusky Iowa loam  
Somewhere I know  
The marker is gone  
County doesn't care  
Their bulldozers  
With impatient clanking treads  
Clamor to begin destruction  
Withered corn stalks  
Slump prostrate above  
    his grave  
He's been gone a year  
My brother hung himself  
And County doesn't care  
They want to strip the field  
They own his land

He's found a peace  
    from his life  
Of creeping desperation.  
"Thou art dust and to  
Dust thou shalt return"  
His cycle is complete  
But County doesn't give  
    a damn  
They will carve a black winding scar  
    through the field  
Where my brother lies  
There used to be a marker  
I put it up in September  
    But it's gone now  
The bulldozer devoured it.



"City II"

Mary Ellen Klotz

# Pet Project

— Christopher Brady

A grating voice, reminiscent of the screeching of chalk against a blackboard, was heard echoing through the dingy flat. "Arthur," called the shrill voice, "Come out of that cellar right now. It's almost ten and you haven't touched your dinner yet."

A half hearted "Yes I'm coming" filtered up the stairs followed by Arthur's shuffling footsteps. As Mary set dinner on the table, Arthur made his appearance. A thin, frail looking man with a receding hair line, he was certainly no Adonis. By the same token, Mary was no beauty contest winner either. However she and Arthur seemed to make a good couple.

Arthur seated himself and cautiously asked, "What's for supper?"

As if in silent answer to his question, Mary ripped away the aluminum foil from his plate to reveal a revolting mess she called "meat loaf."

"It doesn't look too appetizing," moaned Arthur.

"Neither would you if you'd spent five hours in the oven on 'keep warm,'" she shrewishly replied.

Arthur's only answer was a meek, "Yes dear."

What were you doing in that cellar all night?" she asked suspiciously.

Arthur answered quietly, "Why I've been working on my pet project of course."

"Of course," she mocked. "You've been working on that pet project of yours for almost two years now and where has it gotten you? No where, that's where! Every night of the week you go into that cellar for hours on end and work on of all things, a robot. Are you crazy Arthur?"

"Actually it's an android . . ."

"I'm not finished yet. This has been building for a long time and you're going to hear me out!"

"Yes dear," was all Arthur could say.

"You make a moderately good living Arthur, and yet, all we can afford is this dump! And do you know why? Because you squander your hard earned money on tools and parts for that pet project of yours!"

"But dear," interjected Arthur.

"Shut up," she screamed. "Why don't you just accept the fact that you're just a simple computer technician and let it go at that. This dream of yours is just that, an empty dream!"

"No." Arthur's voice held surprising strength. "It's not just an empty dream, it's not!"

Again she screamed, "Shut up! When I married you I thought you had some potential, that you were going places. I didn't realize you were nothing but a worthless dreamer. Sometimes Arthur, I don't think you'll ever amount to anything. Well, if I have my way you'll stop this foolishness at once."

"I'll do as I please," retorted Arthur.

In a fit of rage Mary flung a dinner plate at Arthur, striking him on the forehead. The plate shattered into a hundred, tiny, jagged pieces, leaving a sizeable cut on Arthur's head, but with a small detail amiss. No blood oozed forth from the gash. Instead all that could be seen were electronic components, like those found in a transistor radio. Mary was, for the first time in her life, shocked,



but far from speechless. "Arthur what is the meaning of this?"

"I'm sorry you had to find out the truth this way. Things were going so well. You see, Arthur left about a year ago and before he left he explained his situation to me. I was to be his replacement. I was to allow him to have a life of his own, without your being any wiser. You see, after fifteen years of your nagging he had decided he had enough."

"Why the nerve of that little creep," fumed Mary. "Well he won't get away with it. I'll have you dismantled piece by piece and then I'll track that worm down no matter where he's gone."

"I'm afraid I can't allow that," replied Arthur's replica.

"What do you mean?" yelled the now startled Mary.

"Arthur instructed me that I was not to harm any human beings under any circumstances. However, he was able to instill a certain amount of self-preservation within me. It is evident that you are now a threat to my existence. Therefore, it has become necessary for me to terminate your life functions, so that I may continue to exist."

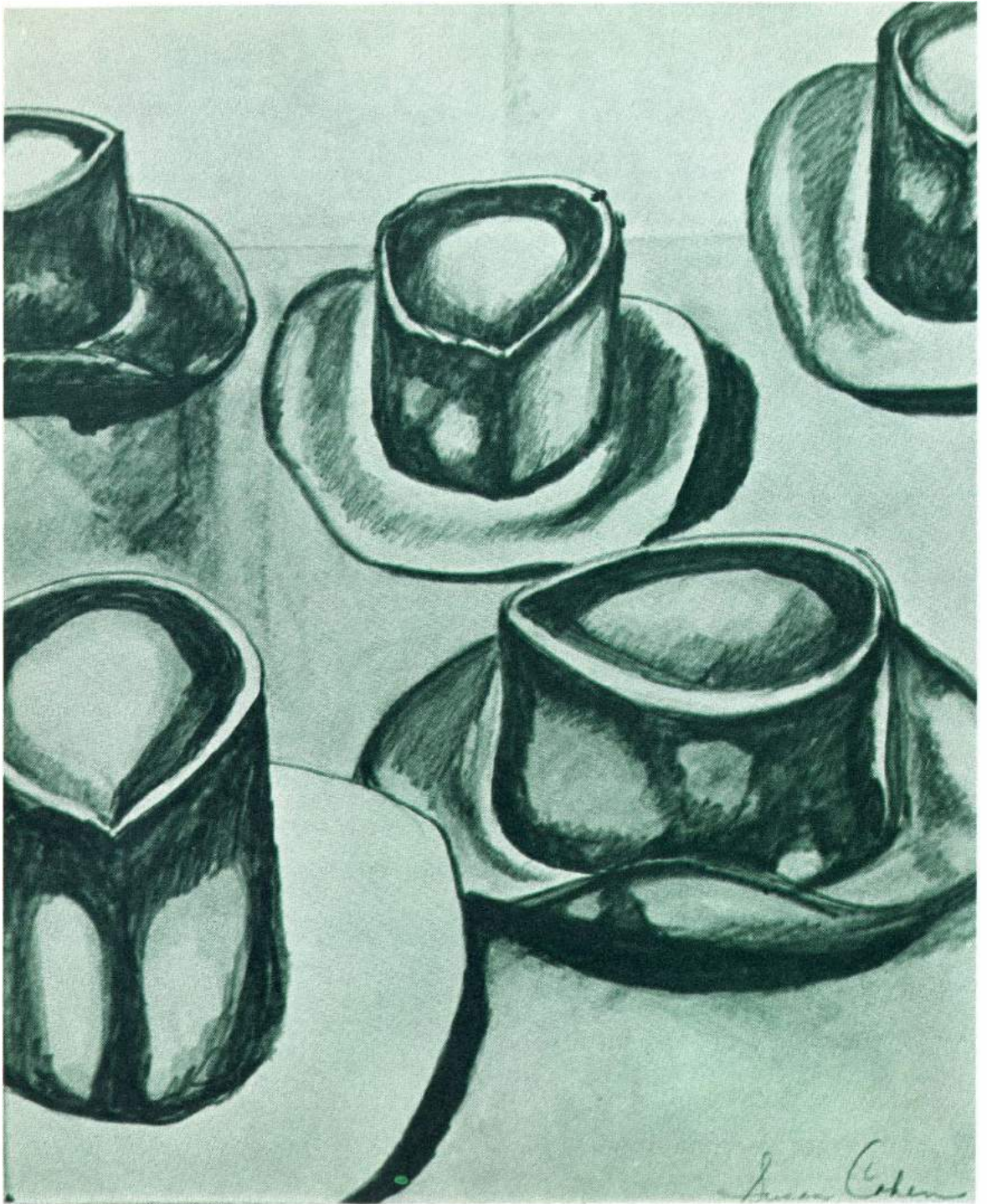
"But if I disappear suddenly," she shrieked, "people will suspect you had something to do with it. Eventually they'll discover your true nature."

"No," he replied coldly, "Arthur foresaw such a development. In case my true nature were discovered by you, and you had to be eliminated, he furnished me with a replica of you. Once it is activated it will be quite indistinguishable from the original. Arthur was quite providential in this area. You needn't be afraid of me. This is the way things were meant to be. I believe Arthur called it 'the law of the jungle.'"

As the pseudo-Arthur began to move towards her, Mary found she was paralyzed, unable to move or speak. She felt his fingers grasp her throat like some bizarre vice.

Suddenly Mary awoke, clutching at the non-existent hands clasped around her neck. Then it was all a dream. She felt an overwhelming relief, and yet, a sudden fear began to gnaw at her just as she had nagged at Arthur all those years. As he slept soundly next to her she wondered. Was Arthur capable of such things as she had imagined in her nightmare? It was impossible and yet seized by an irrational impulse she made her way silently into the cellar. There she found three large trunks containing the sum of Arthur's experiments. The first trunk contained nothing but some tools and some electronic components. In the next trunk she found what appeared to be some sort of rudimentary robot which seemed only half completed. "Apparently," she thought to herself, "Arthur is not quite as far along as I had imagined."

Yet, Mary was possessed by the same kind of irrationality as the person who always checks under his bed for a Communist. There was still the third trunk. She had to check that last trunk for her own piece of mind. Tearing the lid open she gasped. There, lying like some kind of vampire in a makeshift coffin, lay an exact replica of Mary. It was almost like looking into a mirror. Then, without warning it opened its eyes, smiled coldly and said, mocking, "Arthur will never amount to anything."



"Hats"

Susan Cohen





"Untitled"

Mike Kelley



# The Weeds That Spring Up in My Rose Garden

— Suzanne Ginger

County Jail Accused Of Massive Fraud  
when i called city hall last week  
i asked to speak to a man in charge  
i told the girl i had a problem  
and she put me on hold  
Nine Councilmen Found Guilty  
but she never cam back  
so i hung up and tried  
the next day  
i got the same girl and  
i said i had to talk to the man  
cuz my heat is off and its  
twelve degrees and the rats  
are all over my flat and  
she put me on hold

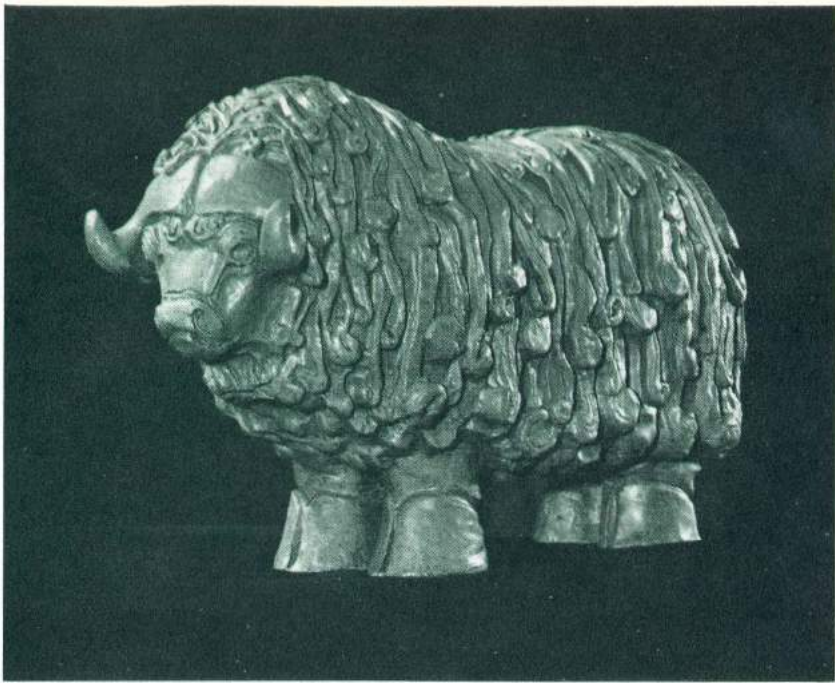
Seventeen More Are Indicted  
the noisy silence made my ears ring  
so i hung up and tried  
the day after  
this time i rushed to tell the girl  
my check was due three months ago  
and the high street lords beat up my boy  
and i need a job bad and  
she put me on hold

Twenty-one Sentenced For Fund Misappropriation  
when she come back she  
said no one is here right now  
please call back later  
but i think if i do  
maybe she won't even be there.



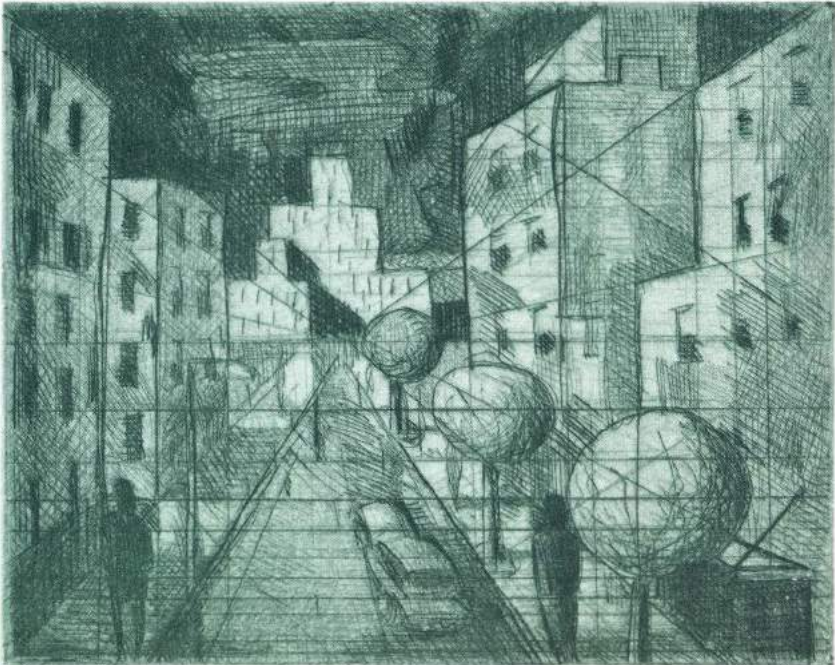
“Untitled”

Nancy Cullerton



"Musk Ox"

Cindy Markow



"Untitled"

Robert E. Esbensen



# Alone With Thoughts

— Mary Caltagirone

Play me a song of little care,  
And drink with me the wine  
Of vintage leaving me no despair.  
Why I talk to no one  
Is only a mystery to those I'll never know,  
For in the mystique of an empty room  
I've found a friend in loneliness.  
From the flame of a single candle  
Have I discovered a tranquility  
And beauty that can never be undone.  
The golden glow covers my walls,  
Until I alone say stop  
And with a breath,  
End the shadows surrounding me.  
The need to find myself is ever with me,  
And I only hope not to pass me by.



“Figure Sitting”

Thomas Cwik



# “Gramps”

— Margery M. Munn

He grunted slightly when the screen door tapped lightly against his frail frame as he shuffled slowly out onto the front porch. The door then whined tiredly as it closed behind him. He stopped, waiting. Click. He always waited for the click. For some reason, it made him feel secure, that click. Always had. He always waited to hear it.

His feet felt heavier than usual today, his legs, a bit wobbly. He made his way over to the railing. He'd sit here today. The sun, though not yet very high in the sky, was shining on this end of the porch, and its warmth beckoned to him enticingly in the fresh morning air.

He looked disapprovingly at the new cushions on the porch furniture. The family had been so excited last night when they'd brought them home. At least they'd had enough sense not to get a new cushion for his chair. It had taken him years to get his cushion just the way he liked it. Maybe he was really just a bit put out because they hadn't asked him to go along. He didn't like being home alone — not at his age.

He eased himself down. A deep sigh escaped his lips as he made himself comfortable. Ah, he thought, the day showed promise of being a good one — good day to doze a bit.

He loved the early morning; he always had. You'd never have caught him wasting time lying around while the joys of life and new experiences awaited outside.

Not much doing around here yet this morning, he mused. A breeze blew gently across the long porch, carrying with it the smells of early morning — dew-covered grass, a blending of lilac and wildflower scents that were intoxicating to his nostrils, and just a hint of a possible early afternoon shower.

His gaze encompassed the neighborhood. His neighborhood, at least that's how he thought of it. He'd been born in this house, never lived anywhere else, and chances were very good that he'd die here. He'd seen people come and go in this neighborhood, made friends with almost all of them, or at least had a nodding acquaintance. He'd watched the various children grow and witnessed Nature's seasonal changes numerous times. He knew every inch of this neighborhood probably better than anyone else. He'd made it his business to know what was going on. Nothing had escaped his probing curiosity.

The sun's warmth crept slowly through his tired body and worked its way to his brittle bones. His eyelids drooped. The breeze danced playfully through his soft, white hair. He dozed.

Suddenly, the screen door shot open! He jumped! His heart fluttered wildly! Out raced a boy eight or nine years of age, his face mirroring the excitement that a new day brings. “Hey, Gramps!” the boy shouted as he jumped the four steps leading up to the porch and landed effortlessly on the sidewalk below.

The tired old eyes flashed momentarily with love and longing. Love for the boy, and longing for the bygone days when he, too, had jumped the four steps just as effortlessly. Oh, Lord, just to do that one more time! Just once! The door whined shut. He waited. Click.

He watched the boy run across the lawn and then on across the street and behind the Alberts' house. It used to be the Harding's house, but now it was the Alberts' house. He prided himself on remembering these little details. He sighed deeply. The boy used to come often to sit with him and talk to him about his day, but he didn't come much any more. He shifted his position slightly. His legs stiffened quickly these days if he stayed in one position too long. He dozed once again.

Memories flitted through his head. Faces and voices of long ago, and places where he'd gone hunting. Often he'd taken his boy, Peter, with him when Peter had been old enough to tag along.

Voices from inside the house wakened him. Someone was asking where he was. He heard Peter's voice answer that he was probably on the front porch. Smart boy that Peter.

Suddenly, out of the corner of his eye, he noticed a slight movement. Turning his head with exaggerated effort, he spied a robin perched in the evergreen at the far corner of the porch. They stared at each other for several minutes, neither of them moving. Then the robin suddenly darted off, only to return a moment later with what was, obviously, his mate. Apparently he had realized there was no danger here for them. Gramps laughed inwardly at the thought that a little bird considered him too old to be a danger. The two birds began building a nest.

The old eyes watched intently. The birds' rapid activity and excitement only served to point up his own lack of mobility; but he felt no malice. Momentary, fleeting regret perhaps, but that soon passed and he became absorbed in watching the nest building.

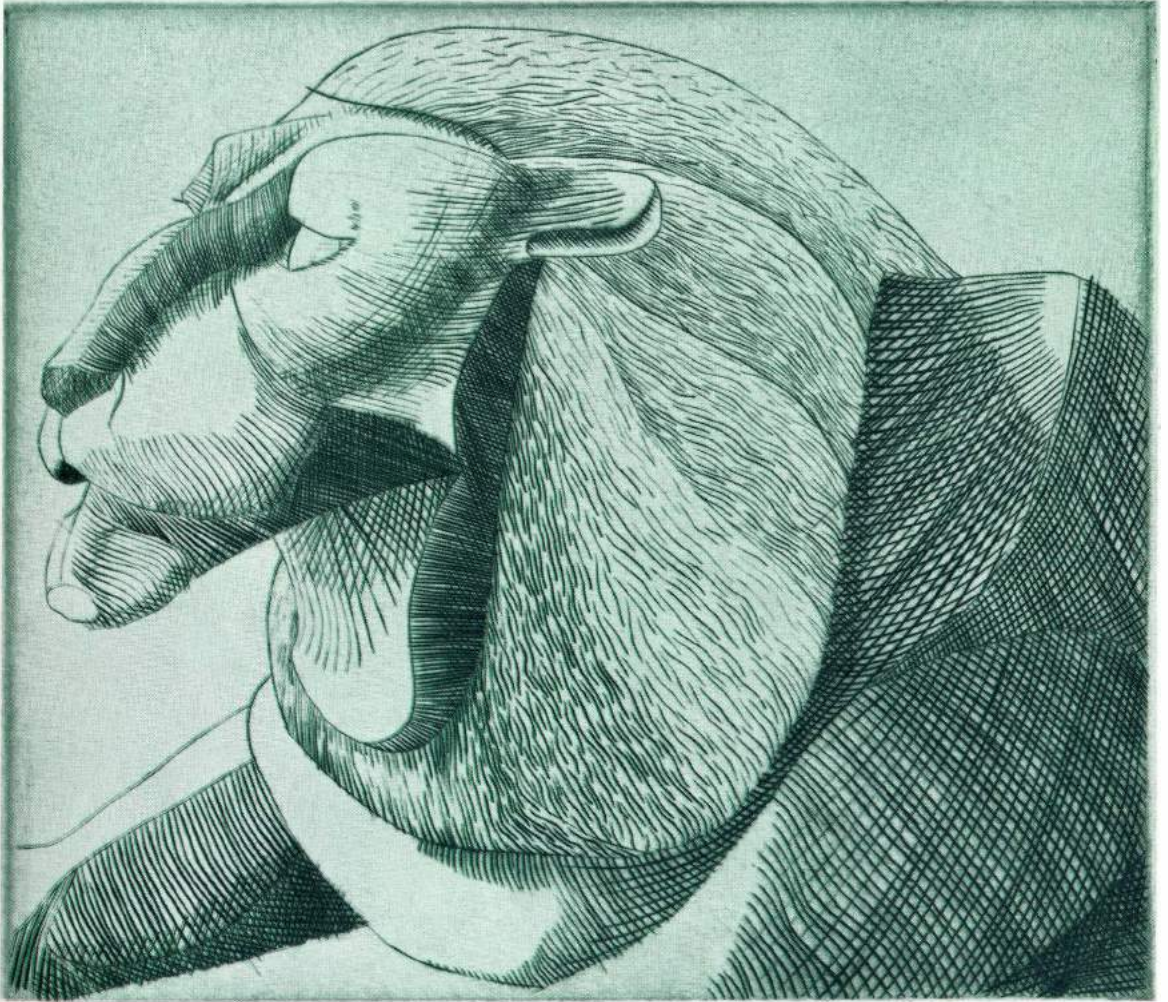
Soon the comings and goings of the two busy birds was rudely interrupted by the newspaper boy who rode past and threw the paper with surprising accuracy onto the front porch. "Hey, Gramps!" he called. "How's it goin'?" Without waiting for an answer, he rode on, lobbing papers on each porch or front step.

Gramps looked over at the newspaper lying rolled up on the porch. He should, he supposed, tell the family it was here, probably even take it in, but it seemed too great an effort. He closed his eyes. He felt warm and content. He'd had a good life, a full life, he thought as he listened to the morning sounds. Nothing to complain about really.

Noises and smells from the kitchen disturbed his train of thought, and he heard Peter moving toward the door. The screen door squeaked loudly, protestingly as it opened and Peter said, "Gramps, your breakfast is ready."

The old dog struggled painfully to his feet, his tail wagging happily at the sight of his young master. He walked stiffly over to where the newspaper was lying, lowered his head, and picked it up. Carrying it carefully he shuffled slowly through the screen door that Peter was holding open for him.

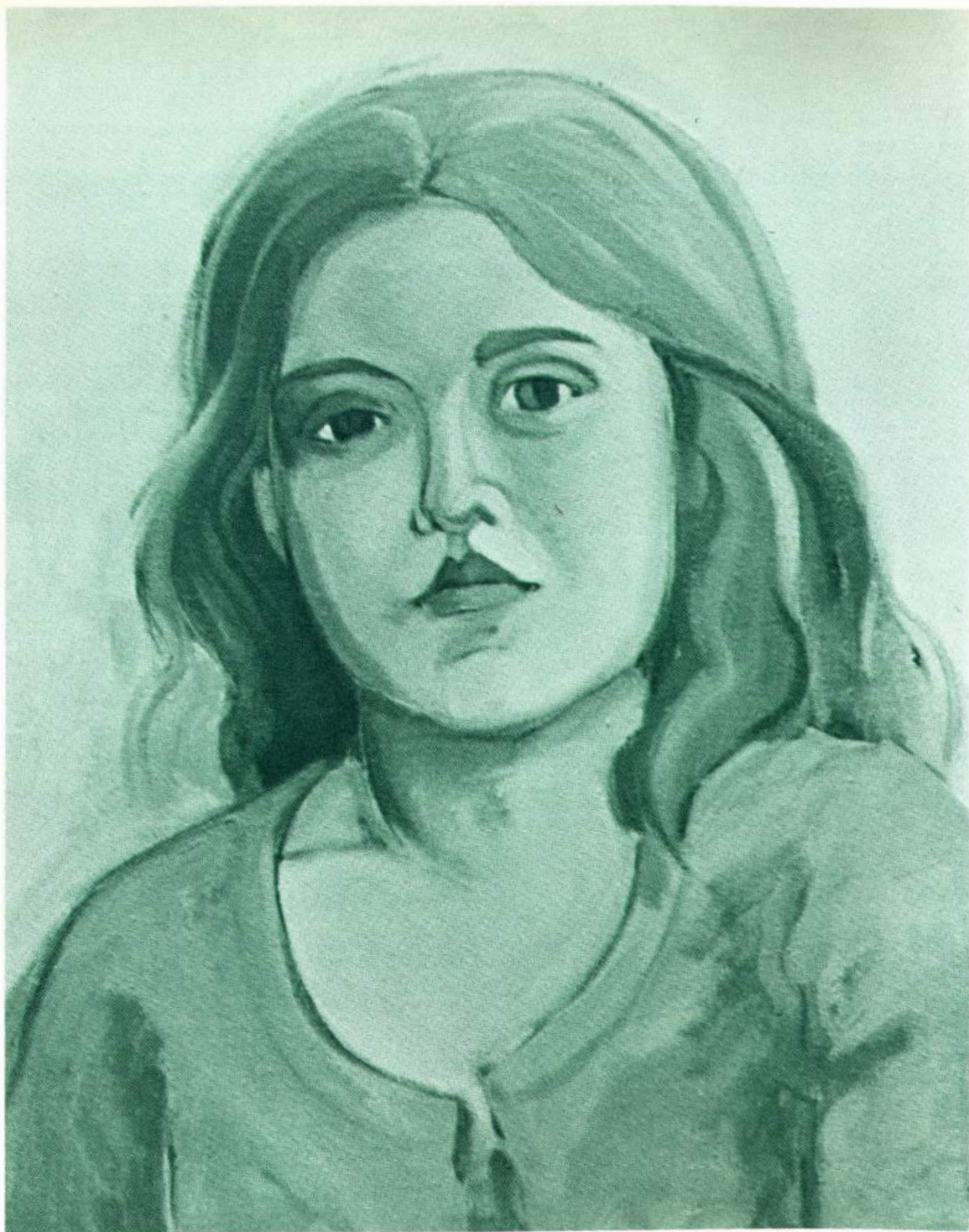
The door whined tiredly as it closed behind them. He waited. Click.



"Lion"

Randy W. Korschake





"Young Girl"

Katherine Tootelian

— Anita Christine

it's so simple  
don't you understand?  
to catch a sparrow  
just open your hand

## Cuckoo's Nest

— Jill Jackson

Between walls of white  
He wanders,  
Carried by  
Cavorting clouds of his subconscious  
To a wonder world.  
Wonder Boy.

We wonder, boy,  
Just what it was you flew to,  
or from.

In lands where  
Fantasy is fact,  
Troubles are helium-filled balloons,  
And liabilities can be limited  
To just one  
Wonder Boy.

We wonder, boy  
Just where it was you flew to,  
or from.

Maybe we'll join you there.

# The Awakening

— Bernard Lucansky

In my haste to  
slay the dragon  
and rescue my  
princess  
I have forgotten something.

And for this gross error  
I will not apologize profusely,  
nor will I get depressed,  
for it is just another difference  
between you and me.

The something I forget  
was your own individuality,  
maybe I left it  
on the night stand  
when I drifted off

to slay the green felt dragons of the East  
to return my princess to her rightful throne  
to be her knight, at her side, always.

Then I awoke to the alarm  
of your tears  
and found you by the night stand  
clutching your individuality  
as I tried to make it  
mine.

That was when I remembered  
the dragons were only a dream,  
that my fantasies  
might not be the same as yours.

I never realized until now  
that perhaps you could get  
a little tired of being  
a princess.

So will you simply be, my love?







# Moon Child

— Jill Jackson

We've met for weeks, now,  
Slammed together by our ignorance —  
Yours, mine, the world's.

Thrice my age, your pain is thrice mine.  
And in this culture of youth,  
Fixed incomes and inflation,  
Longevity becomes burdensome enough without  
This, too.

Each time I see you I think back  
Of that green caterpillar,  
Insatiably being sucked of its life fluids  
By diminutive ants too numerous  
To defend against.

Like you, it became shriveled from within —  
Though your dwindling  
Is caused by rampant cells  
Even more merciless than those ants were.

We glance at each other  
And make our eyes smile.  
But I think of how you're  
Too old to have to go through all this,  
And how you should be allowed  
The freedom of death.

And I catch the sorrow in that  
Feeble smile and know  
You're thinking of how I'm  
Too young to have to go through all this,  
And how I should be allowed  
The freedom of life.

And we both dream of days long past,  
Before This happened —  
When the offender was not real to us.

Back then, cancer was just another sign  
Under the Zodiac.

Untitled  
Ron Green



"Forest Preserve"

Robert E. Esbensen



# Sentiments of Spring

— Steve Howard

He said she looked pretty in the morning. She blushed, bowing her head and slightly closing her eyes.

“Why does that embarrass you?”

She tilted her head slightly, still blushing. “I’m not wearing any make-up.” Her voice rose slightly in bewilderment as she explained.

“You don’t really need any,” he said considering her.

“If I don’t wear any eye shadow my eyelids look all red and puffy.”

He looked closer. “Maybe a little, but it’s kind of cute, like a baby mouse before it grows hair.”

“Oh thanks, I look like a hairless mouse. Get out of here.” She punched him on the shoulder and he grabbed her by the waist and began tickling her, which she responded to with screaming laughs and kicks.

“Oh stop, stop, I can’t breathe.” He released her and she collapsed gasping against a couch.

He grinned. “Are you ready to go yet?” he asked.

“No, you got here too early as usual.” She pursed her lips in a mock getsure of smug disapproval.

“We said nine o’clock and I got here at nine.”

“I know, but I’m always supposed to be late, you know that.”

“Okay,” he sighed, “go get ready, huh?”

She leaned forward and kissed him quickly, then smiled at him for a moment, the tip of her tongue between her teeth. “Be with you in a moment,” she finally said in an overemphasized way. Then she jumped up and ran out of the livingroom, long blonde hair bouncing down to her waist in a way that didn’t seem quite natural. Sometimes he thought she had more mannerisms and motions than anybody he knew. She reminded him of shampoo commercials.

The local newspaper was lying in an armchair and he picked it up to kill the time. It was open to a section with a listing of high school honor rolls. One name was underlined out of all of them. It was the name of a boy he knew vaguely from an English class his freshman year. No other names were underlined, none of her friends or neighbors that were on the list, just the one. Something shifted around in his stomach quickly and was gone.

He folded the paper over and tossed it back into the chair. Outside the Saturday morning was filling with sounds of people celebrating an end to winter. He got up and went to the window, feeling good at the sight of buds and greening grass. On an end table by the window sat a small wooden box covered with painted flowers like the little dried ones ladies put in vases and glass covered boxes.

He picked it up and opened the lid. Across the inside of the lid was painted an inscription in sky blue. It read,

De,

Hold in here your earthly treasures,  
but remember that the treasures of  
real friendship like ours need never be  
guarded.

Love,  
Claire

His face wrinkled and he shook his head. He stood looking at the box until she came back into the room.

"How's it look so far?" she asked. He knew what she expected to hear.

"Fine, really great."

She had her hands jammed thumbs out into the pockets of a bleach-faded pair of jeans. She went up on her toes, pulling her head down into her shoulders, wrinkled her nose and squealed, "I'm so surprised at how it's turning out. All that's left to do is the varnish."

His mood was falling. "Are you going to put it on thick?" he asked, looking at the box.

"Do you think I should?" She was looking critically at the box.

"A few heavy coats might be the perfect touch," he said.

She was looking at him now. "Is it hard; could I do it?"

He smiled, more to himself, "I would think you might be pretty good at it. It could take some time though; are you sure you'd want to go through that much trouble?"

"Trouble, it isn't trouble to do the best job you can on something like this. My dad always says that, and he's right. The job you do reflects what you are." She was giving him her wide-eyed amazement look. It never failed to appear when she wanted something accepted at face value.

He sighed. "I meant, why do you want to go through this much trouble for De Ann. You gave me the impression that you were fairly fed up with her, and then you even put that corny inscription in there."

"De Ann does give me a pain, but she's the only girl I know that I can even tolerate, so things like this help keep things smooth. Besides, I like to do crafty things but I need a reason to keep me going." It was her smug tone and it never failed to get to him.

"Why the hell don't you just make it for yourself then? Isn't that a good enough reason?" He hated it when she played her social games.

"No, it's not!" She was irritated and it made him nervous enough to make his stomach jump again.

Her mood shifted again, her tongue made a quick appearance between her teeth. "Besides, if I kept it for myself, it would be in my room and nobody else would see it." She walked slowly around the armchair towards him, stopping a few feet away, feet apart, head back and to the side, with her hands on her hips. He felt the fluttering again. "Maybe you'd see it, if you're good," she said, then flopped into the chair, wrapping her arms around her knees and giggling.

"One of these days you're gonna slip with something like that in front of your folks and give 'em the wrong idea." His face was red now.

"Maybe it wouldn't be the wrong idea." More giggles.

"Yeah, right. Listen, are you ready to go yet?" He was becoming more edgy by the minute.

She stuck her legs out and wiggled her bare toes at him. "Just have to throw on my sandals." She sucked in her bottom lip and sprang out of the chair, the folded newspaper in her hand, and went to her room. A moment later she was back holding her sandals in place of the paper.

"Reporting for duty, commander," she saluted with the sandal, snapping into a burlesque version of attention.

"What did you do with the paper?" he asked, trying to sound puzzled.

She looked for just an instant shaken, then said, "Oh, I have to put something under the box when I varnish it, don't I?"

Maybe it had been his imagination. He would be leaving for school in a few months and he was probably just overreacting. As they went down the walk towards his car, she took his arm and said, "I have to think of a going away present for you in the fall."

"Don't worry about it now," he said.

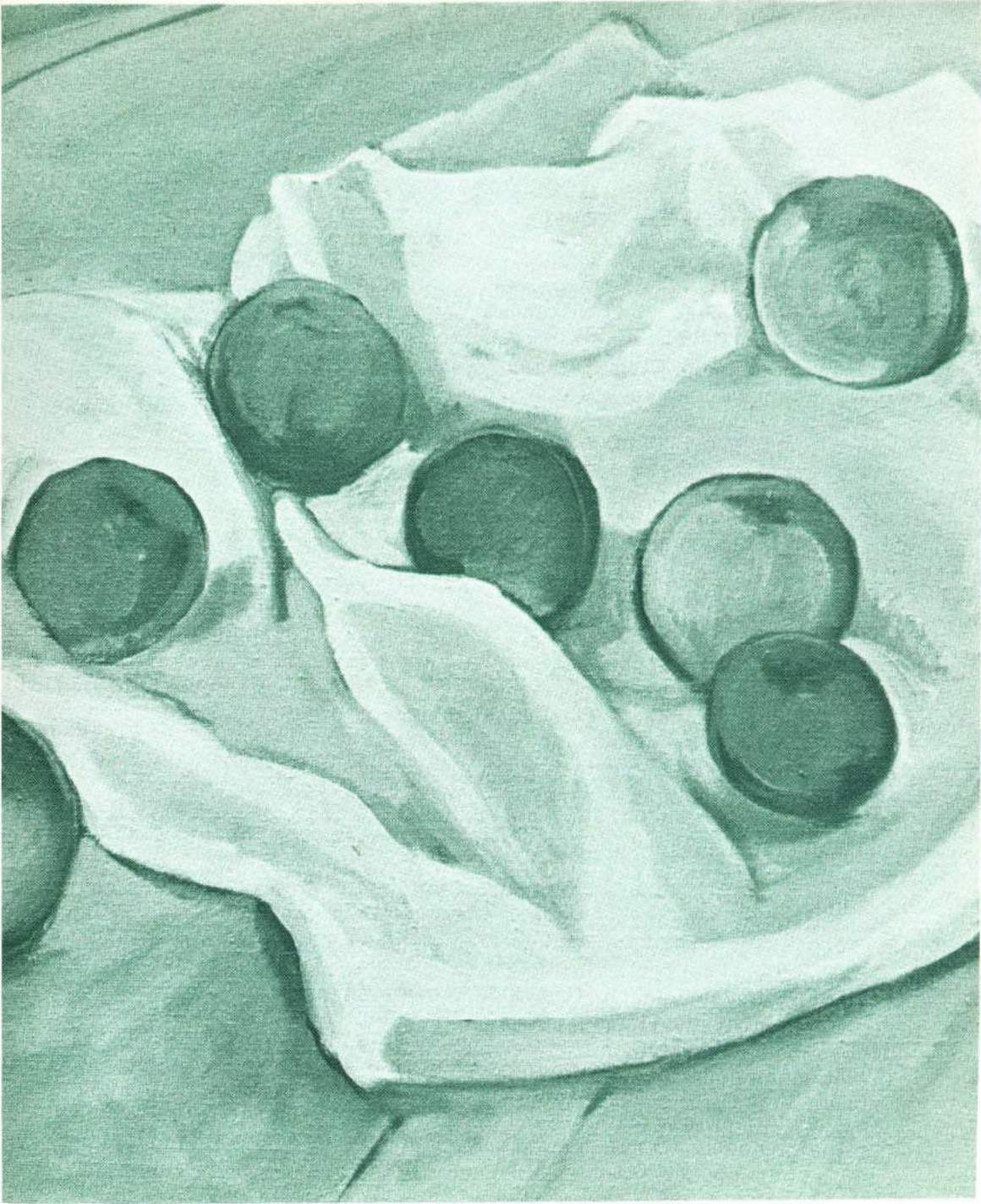
"Well, I want it to be something special, not just anything, you know?"

The wide eyes looked up at him. Flutter. "Surprise me," he said.

She thought for a second, then said, "You have cufflinks and stuff. Maybe I'll make a box for you!"

As she climbed into the car, the flutter became a quake.





"Apples"

*Katherine Tooteljar*

# Green Milk

— Barbara Bastian

The world is spinning again  
Out of control — and my mind along with it.  
Changes and frustrations no matter where I turn.  
I can't find any peace — nor can I cope.  
Maybe a good night's sleep will help.

I'll drown my senses with wine  
So the pain will ease — and my soul can rest.  
Memories and feelings for you are all I need.  
I'll take them to my bed — and into my sleep  
Because maybe you'll come to me in my dreams.

And when I enter my dream world  
And you join me there — I will sleep peacefully.  
I will be safe and warm once again.  
The world will bother me no more because  
Then maybe I'll awake to find you beside me.

And all the days that have been  
As dark as nights — I'll need not curse again.  
Everywhere I turn there will be you.  
I will laugh at changes and ignore frustrations  
And the dark will vanish and the sun will shine at night.

Maybe a good night's sleep will help  
Because maybe you'll come to me in my dreams.  
Then maybe I'll awake to find you beside me.  
And the dark will vanish and the sun will shine at night.  
And maybe the cows will give green milk.

— Anita Christine

I cried in a room  
with no walls  
A man entered  
told me of a  
Princess in an emerald  
green dress  
Who loved a  
scoundrel  
Another man rambled  
on about  
Lines, slopes,  
and graphs.  
I could not see  
the relevancy  
Of the two

Hoping it would  
fall into place  
I sat back with a  
dizzy head  
And cried some more





"The Process"

Susan R. Braun



# Mary Therou

— Elizabeth Surlin

*This play has only one visible character, Mary Therou. Mary is about thirty-five years old, slim and attractive, very high strung — a chain smoker. She is divorced and has two children. The play takes place in a psychiatrist's office which is set up as follows: center stage there is a chair with a floor stand ashtray next to it. Stage left there is a long "psychiatrist's couch." Mary enters stage right, very quickly and nervously. She is carrying a purse.*

Mary: *(Animatedly)* Hello, Dr. Gusenheimer. I'm Mary Therou. *(Shakes hands)* Oh, certainly. Thank you. *(Sits down in the chair nervously)* You'll have to excuse me, I'm a little nervous. I've never been to a shr- a psychiatrist before. *(Pause)* What brought me here? Well, my best friend, Elaine Carver, recommends you highly. *(Lights a cigarette)* You know, she's the one that comes on Thursdays at one. Has a fear of crowds and large sunflowers. Paranoia, too, I think she said. *(A little slower, leans forward in chair, as if gossiping)* She told me that you said it all started when her mother was toilet training her and — *(Stops abruptly)* Yeah, I know. That's not the real reason. I'll tell you why I'm here. I'm divorced. It's as simple as that. I've been divorced for almost a year, and I thought I was doing great. I was truly joyous when it happened. My best friend, Elaine Carver, you know — she's the one — *(Chuckles self-consciously)* she even threw me a Happy Divorce party. My kids didn't even realize he was gone until Christmas. We were getting along great. Until last Sunday. An

incredible thing happened to me. *(Gets up from the chair to speak directly to the doctor)* I went to a wedding. My best friend, Elaine Carver — her daughter was getting married. Well, I went to her wedding and do you know what happened? I cried. I got hysterical. I don't know why, I just did. It wasn't happy crying, either. I used to love weddings, but now I find funerals more joyous. *(Extinguishes cigarette. Dramatically, acts out wedding scene)* I mean, here was this lovely young woman, clad in virgin white, taking small, hesitating steps toward her soon-to-be husband. The minister was speaking mechanically, asking for sworn vows of happiness and love, taken in the name of God. When he got to the part about "Does anyone object?", I almost got up and screamed "YES!" I wanted to get up and yell, "You're crazy if you marry him! He'll ruin your life! Better you should marry a tape recorder, at least you can talk to them! Marriage is the worst thing a woman can do!" *(Mary collapses on the couch, exhausted from her tirade. She assumes the classic position on the couch, ankles crossed, hands clasped on her stomach. She takes a big breath and reaches for the ashtray, which is still next to the chair. When she realizes it isn't there, she self-consciously rises to get it, brings it back to the couch, and re-collapses on the couch, assuming her former position)* That's why I'm here Doctor, I can't go to weddings

anymore. If I see a couple holding hands, I want to tell the girl to let go and run, there are better things that she could be doing. I vomit every time Edith brings Archie a beer. My problem is . . . (*Sits up straight, speaks thoughtfully, as if she had just made a great discovery*) My problem is, Doctor, that (*Emphatically*) I know something that no other woman in the world knows. I know that men are a hazard, they're dangerous, irresponsible and messy. They're stupid and cowardly. I know this and I want every other woman to know. (*Rises, speaks dramatically*) I want to preach my philosophy throughout the world. I can't stand to sit back and watch a happily married woman, because I know that it's wrong. I've made a discovery! (*Triumphantly*) You'd better write that down. You'll be able to tell everyone that you were the first person to know. (*Picks up her purse, starts to leave*) Thanks so much, Doctor, you've been a great help. (*Stops short just as she reaches the exit*) What? You want me to talk about my marriage? (*Slowly starts to walk back to the chair as she's talking*) Well, I really don't think it's necessary. I mean, I feel much better now that — OK. (*Sits down on the chair quickly — the "OK" should be comic* *Lights a cigarette*) I guess it started out like any marriage. We had our first argument over where we would go for our honeymoon. I wanted to go to

the French Riviera (*Strikes a pose, one hand on her hip, one behind her head, bats eyelashes*), and Joe wanted to go camping in the Canadian Wilderness. We didn't have a lot of money then, so we compromised. (*Disgustedly*) We ended up in Topeka. We spent the first night in the motel's cellar, because there was a tornado. Joe got hysterical. He started screaming for his mother. I suppose I should have realized right then and there that it was wrong. (*Sighs*) When we got back from Topeka, we had to find a place to live — and fast. (*Sits up on the edge of the chair, speaking excitedly*) I wanted this gorgeous two-bedroom apartment on the 54th floor of Farina City (*Stands up to get the ashtray, which is now by the couch*), but Joe wanted to get this one-room studio smack dab (*On the word, "dab," slams the ashtray down on the floor next to the chair, but remains standing*) in the middle of the Puerto Rican neighborhood, because he was studying to be a sociologist. We ended up in the studio. (*Extinguishes cigarette ferociously*) He did buy me a postcard of Farina City, though. I hung it over the kitchen sink (*Gestures sarcastically*) and pretended I lived there whenever I did the dishes. The only thing Joe ever talked about that first year were the sociological problems in Uganda, and the only thing I talked about were the sociological problems in our one-room apartment. He never listened to me, and I never listened to him.

*(Sits down on the couch)* We disagreed from the start about who would do what. Joe wanted to work from nine to five, and wanted me to stay home and keep house. I reminded him that he didn't have a job. I wanted to have my own career, and have Joe stay home and take care of the kids like those people in the Sunday paper's *Wifestyle* section. Joe reminded me that we didn't have any kids. *(Lies down on the couch)* Well, Joe continued school, which his parents paid for, and I spent my days looking for stray children. *(Reaches for the ashtray, which is by the chair. Gets up, lights a cigarette, remains standing)*

I'll never forget the time we were going to get the apartment decorated. It was a birthday present from him. He sent me out for the day, and promised that when I got back, the place would be entirely different. Do you know what he did? He stuck two Humphrey Bogart posters over the sofa and called that decorating! Do you believe it? How could anyone be so ignorant? The neighborhood was getting progressively worse. People kept breaking into our apartment. They even stole the Humphrey Bogart posters. We decided to get a watchdog. I think that was the first thing we ever agreed on. We named him Moe. *(Smiles, expecting a reaction from the doctor)* Don't you get it? *(Slowly)* Moe Therou. It rhymes.

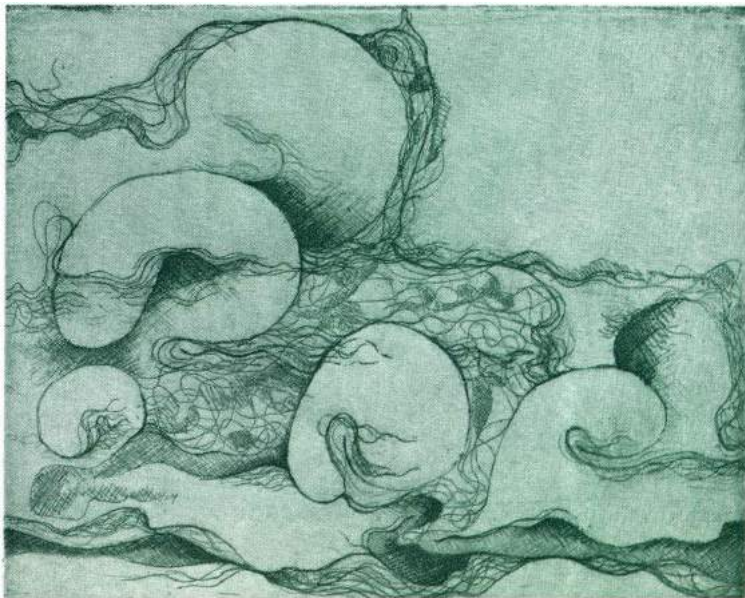
Anyway, by then I really wanted to have a baby, but Joe thought that a dog was enough, so I took up dried

apple sculpture. Well, one day Moe got run over by a cement mixer, and I really got depressed. *(Pensively, takes a long drag from her cigarette)* That was definitely a low point in my life. You'd better write that down. I can't believe that I didn't get divorced right then and there. *(Extinguishes cigarette violently)* *(Sits down on chair)* Well, finally things got better. I had a baby. *(Proudly)* A boy. We named him Robert, but call him "Bo" for short. Get it? Bo Therou. Isn't that cute? Then two years later we had a girl and called her Mary Jo. My husband became the director of the sociology department at his alma mater, and we moved into a big new Schrafft home in Smokie so that the kids could have a good education. We adjusted to the suburban life quickly. We got a station wagon to be practical, and a Cadillac to look rich. We built a swimming pool in the backyard. We made a lot of friends, and went out every weekend. I hired a maid and went bowling with the P.T.A. every Tuesday and met my lover on Thursdays. Joe got a raise and met his lover on Fridays. *(Stands up, paces)* The kids were just like any other average American kids. They beat each other up all the time, and Mary Jo started ballet lessons, and Bo went to the orthodontist twice a week. *(Lights a cigarette)* Mary Jo did start smoking when she was ten, but we knew that it was just a phase she was going through. All the



little girls in our neighborhood were just crazy about our son! When he was twelve, he did get a girl pregnant, but we gave him money for the abortion. We got a St. Bernard, and named him Slow. *(Stares wistfully into space for a moment, then sits down)* *(Slowly and thoughtfully)* You know — I really don't know how it ended. We were doing so well. I guess I just got sick of schlepping the kids around and making dinner every night. I wanted to be independent. That was around the time when my bowling average went down. I guess Joe thought that I was getting dull. I guess I was getting dull. I didn't have anything to talk about. The kids started acting weird, too. Bo broke up with his girlfriend and started spending his Saturday nights with his boyfriend Vidal. Mary Jo gained forty pounds, and developed a fear of science teachers. *(Extinguishes cigarette)*

That's when we got divorced. I got the house and the car and the kids, and Joe got an ulcer and apartment at Farina City. It's as simple as that. And, I'll tell you, I'm a lot better off now without him. Marriage is for the birds. I gave him the best years of my life, and got nothing in return. *(As she is speaking, starts to get up to leave. Picks up her purse, and, inadvertently, the ashtray)* Thank you so much for listening, Doctor, I feel so much better now. I guess I just had to sort out my thoughts. I'm sure I'll be able to go to weddings now. *(Almost reaches the door, then notices the ashtray in her hand. Slowly looks down at the ashtray, then up at the doctor. With a sigh, puts the ashtray down, walks over to the couch, and plops down on the couch, ankles crossed, hands clasped around her stomach)*



“Line Etching”  
Jeanine Hutchins

# Ode to the Antique Quilt

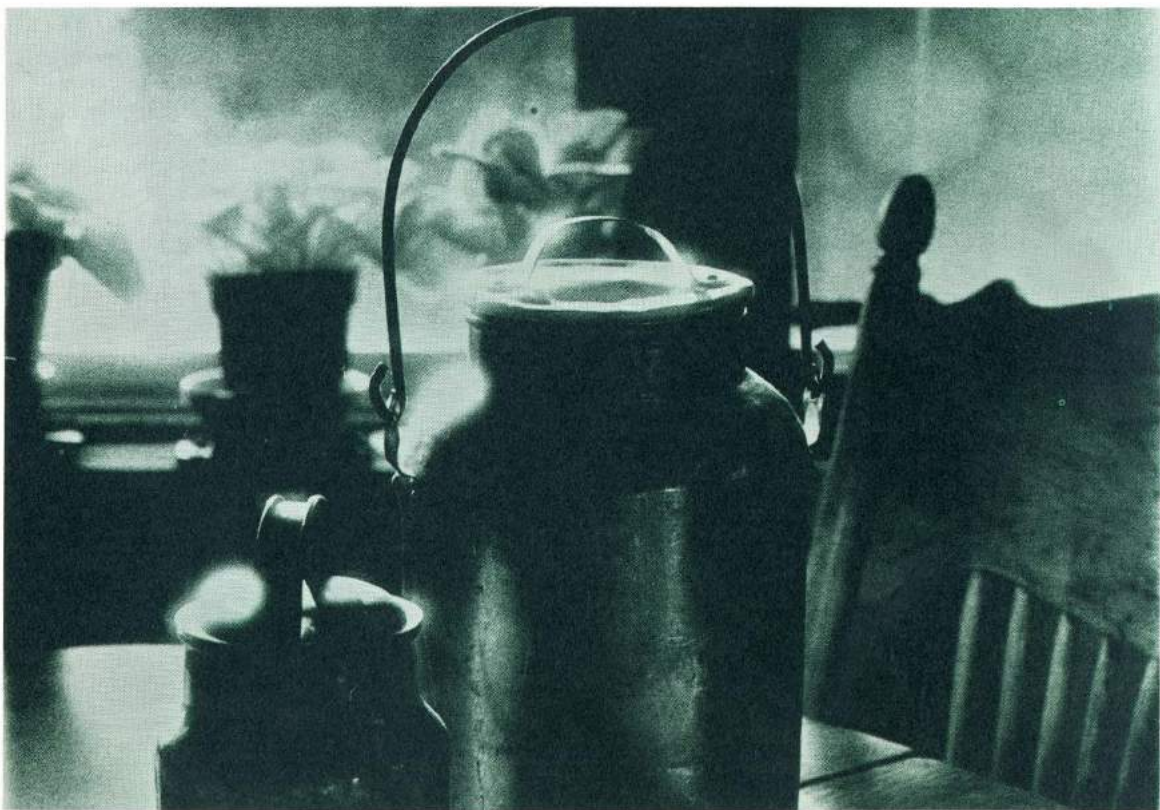
— Carolyn Gorr

Incalculable hours  
Miles of fine, strong thread  
Stitched by precise and caring fingers  
Design and pattern harmonize  
Creating pleasure and comfort from  
geometric bits of colored cotton.

Recorder of history  
Visually patching the drama of frontier life  
in a Log Cabin  
on the Rocky Road to Kansas  
amid harsh surroundings

Domestic heirlooms that line the nest  
A legacy of love to her family  
Piecing together her hopes, aspirations,  
and struggles

Patchwork, true American ingenuity  
Spread like paintings on the family bed.



"Still Life"

Carolyn Gorr



*Alice Billings*

Alice Billings



# A Decade

— Kathleen Brown

Oh Promise Me  
White dress  
Red roses  
Champagne

Broken promises  
Yellowed dress  
Withered petals  
Empty glass

# Last Day In Paris

— Elizabeth Surlin

They told me to bring a raincoat  
But I wouldn't listen  
And now the rain pours down

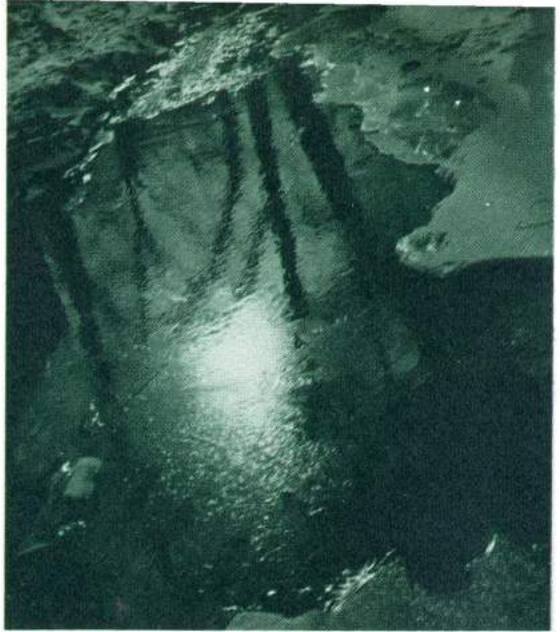
Drenching the sidewalks and cafes  
The chalk madonna on the ground  
Is smeared beyond recognition

While the waiters scurry  
Like threatened ants  
To bring in empty chairs

The T-shirt vendor  
On the corner  
Is swearing audibly

I am alone with the gargoyles  
Water spilling out of their mouths  
Makes me think of vomit

The tourists are all inside  
But I'm ready to go home  
And get my raincoat.



"Sun 'N Ice"

Vicki Masucci

# Waterfall

— Barbara Bastian

The thundering waterfall pounds  
Powerfully into the once tranquil pool below.  
The pool fills, grows, overflows.  
The cascades send their message  
In never-ending concentric circles.  
The power pounds within me.  
The message fills my ears.

A million droplets of water —  
Each beautifully enhanced, intensified  
As they catch the sun and never let it go —  
Come together, bound in a common destiny.  
They plummet laughingly — splashing forth life.  
My eyes behold the beauty.  
My soul is refreshed by the spray.

My life was once a tranquil pool,  
Still and calm — the smooth surface  
Concealing the deep, dark silence —  
I could offer no song to share —  
I was only a mirror for the beauty around me  
Till you gave me your dimension.  
Now I am a waterfall.

# Driving Lesson #1

— Elizabeth Surlin

Hop in the car  
Ego is flying  
Parents scared stiff  
Neighbors my-my-ing.

A confident smile  
Appears on my face  
Dad's turning into  
A real basket case.

"Make sure it's in park  
and then turn the key.  
Why's the seat so far up?  
My chin's on my knee!"

"I'm short, Dad, remember?"  
I say with a grin.  
Neighbors now whisper,  
"Sure glad I'm not him."

Engine starts humming  
The thing really works!  
Dad starts his sermon:  
"There are so many jerks

Out on the road now  
(It's that time of day)  
So be very careful."  
He then starts to pray.

"Can I go now?" I ask  
In an impatient tone.  
"I guess so," he answers.  
Did I hear him moan?

I put it in drive  
(Boy, I feel cool)  
Just like Doc Katzman  
Taught me in school.

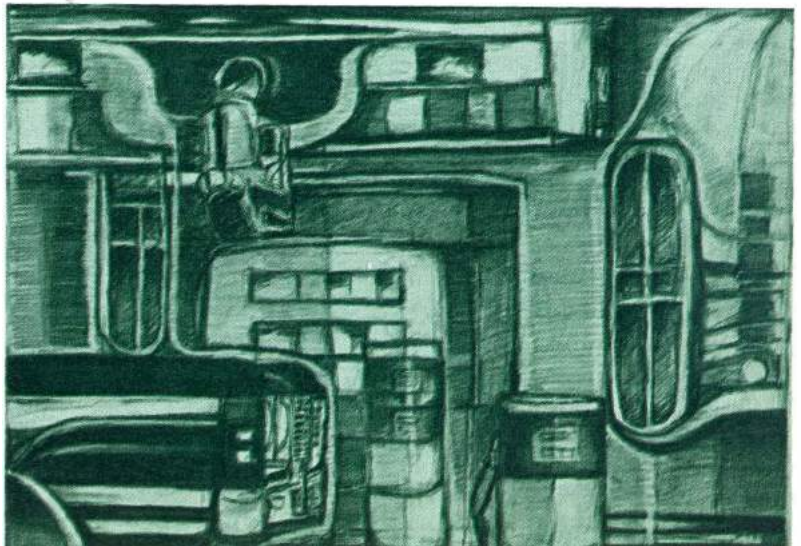
I finally make it  
Out on the street  
Very slow, very cautious  
Dad's heart skips a beat.

What a feeling of power  
To be driving a car!  
I want to speed up  
Go faster, go far.

What a feeling of freedom  
To be out on the road.  
Just then the car stops  
We have to be towed.

"Pumping Gas"

Scott Kuykendall





"Fennville Barn"

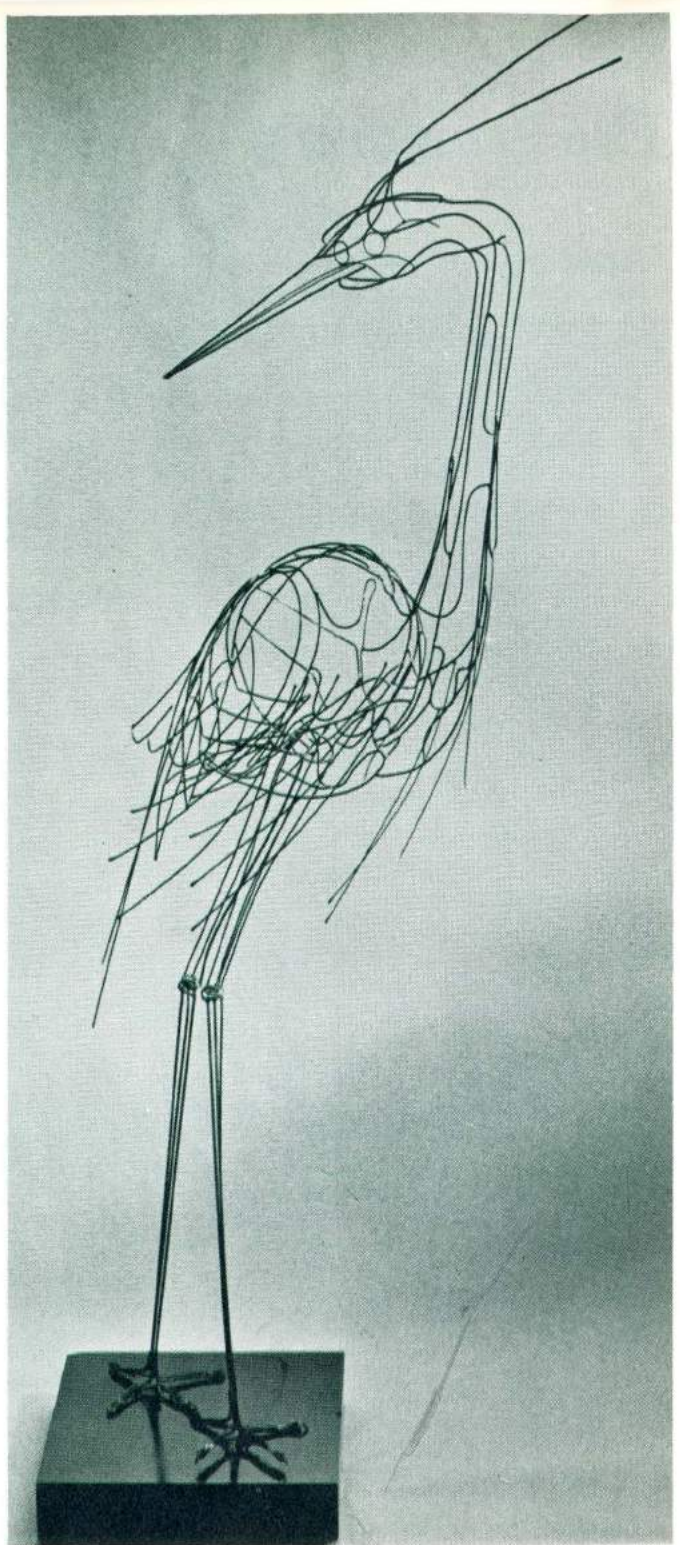
Carolyn Gorr



# The Spider

— Terry Morgan May

I spun  
my tiny  
transparent  
web around  
you  
thinking  
foolishly  
it would  
keep you  
from hurt  
and pain —  
But actually  
I spun my  
web to keep  
you for  
myself.  
Easily you  
thrusted  
your hand  
through my defense  
leaving it  
unprotected  
and without  
my care.  
Soon you began  
enjoying your  
new found freedom  
so intensely that  
you burst  
out completely . . .  
And when I  
turned you vanished  
leaving long  
silky threads of  
my tattered life  
suspended in  
midair.  
Slowly,  
and cautiously  
I sewed back the  
delicate strands  
of my  
soul —  
Only to find  
that another  
had spun their  
web about  
you.



"Heron"

Ilse Bolle

# The Friendship

— Barbara Bastian

*Split level stage — higher level is kitchen, lower level is family room. Scene opens with Helen in robe pattering around in the kitchen — family room is dimly lit — with the clatter of dishes, Ann rises from the sofa bed in family room, slips into robe, and goes up stairs to kitchen.*

Ann: *(Cautiously, questioningly)* Good morning.

Helen *(Continuing to work, not looking up, coldly)* Good morning.

Ann: You been up long?

Helen: A while. I gave all the kids breakfast and they're getting dressed to go outside.

Ann: Thanks for taking care of mine. I thought they'd come wake me up.

Helen: I told them to let you sleep.

Ann: I could have gotten up.

Helen: *(After a long pause)* I'm going to take a shower and wash my hair before Jean gets here — she said she'd stop by early before you have to leave to go to your parents. Help yourself to whatever you want to eat.

Ann: Thanks, but I think I'll just have coffee though. I usually don't eat too much first thing.  
*(Helen leaves kitchen. Ann sinks in a chair for a moment. Leans elbows on table with hands on head — shakes head, then gets up to get coffee. Knock on kitchen door. Ann opens door.)*

Ann: Hi Jean! *(They embrace briefly)*

Jean: Hi! Howya doin'?

Ann: Well, the socially acceptable answer is "fine." But I'm not so sure right now.

Jean: What's up?

Ann: You won't believe it. Want some coffee?

Jean: Sure.

*(Ann pours two mugs.)*

Ann: Let's go down in the family room.  
*(They go downstairs. Jean takes a chair. Ann talks as she folds blankets from sofa bed and then puts couch back together to sit on.)*

Ann: This visit has been strange. I don't know if it's me or Helen. We always have so much to talk about and laugh a lot. But it's been different this time.

Jean: Like what?

Ann: Well, I didn't think much of it at first but not long after I got here she seemed to be laying into me. First she seemed to be critical about my resuming my maiden name. I don't really know why — she knew me first as Swanson.

Jean: Maybe you just misinterpreted what she was saying. Maybe you're being defensive.

Ann: Well, I guess I've been known to be defensive, but she said she knew me longer as Latimer and that it would take some getting used to. So I started figuring it out — there is only one year difference — 11 years as Swanson and 12 years as Latimer. But I could hardly get it out because she nearly screamed at me "I don't want to know how many years it's been!"

Jean: Oh — well — maybe she's just feeling old lately — that happens when you get past 30. Don't you ever feel old some days?

Ann: (*thinking — twisting her face — looking upward*) Hmm — old? No, I don't think so. Tired sometimes. Not old though. Sometimes I feel like a kid — I really look forward to birthdays. I've never dreaded them yet.

Jean: I take it there's more though.

Ann: God — is there more! She also ridiculed me for using Ms. in front of my name.

Jean: Good grief! Why? You're not a MISS or a MRS anymore.

Ann: I don't exactly know why either. She said something about it being so affected.

(*Ann gets up from the couch and picks up her clothes. She dresses and packs up her overnight bag.*)

Ann: Did you know Helen is coming up to my place next weekend? She's coming by herself. Ray's taking the girls on a trip and they won't be home next weekend, so Fred said he'd have his mom watch their girls while Helen came up.

Jean: Really? It'll probably be good for her to get away. You and I had such a blast last month when I came up there by myself. I really enjoyed the change of pace.

Ann: Yes — well, she's not sure if she can handle it — after you telling her all we did.

Jean: Why Not?

Ann: She says she's beyond going out all night and not getting enough sleep — that she went that route in college. In fact, she has backed out of coming on Friday night. She said one night was plenty for her and she didn't want to "cramp my style."

Jean: She really sounds up tight about something.

Ann: Yeh — me! This sounds dumb and trite — but she doesn't understand me. I don't think she can relate to me anymore on any level except motherhood.

(*Jean shakes her head — indicating she doesn't know what the problem is either.*)

Ann: Like I said — I didn't even think so much about that stuff at first, but things got worse.

Jean: E-gads — what else?

Ann: You know how Helen and I usually sit up talking all hours of the night long after Fred goes to bed?

Jean: Yes — like you and I do.

Ann: Yes — well — would you believe that about midnight Helen began dozing in the chair? Fred and I kept talking. Then he very sweetly went and swooped Helen off the chair and carried her to bed.

Jean: That was nice of him.

Ann: I thought so. She's mentioned her back had been bothering her lately and it was exhausting her. So Fred told her he'd get me all the blankets and stuff for the sofa bed.

Jean: So what's the big deal?

Ann: The big deal was that he came back in the living room and we kept talking and drinking wine — not even realizing how late it was getting.

Jean: I still don't see anything wrong.

Ann: After a while he came and sat on the couch with me. There I was — mid-sentence — and all of a sudden he lunges forward, pulls me toward him and starts kissing me!



Jean: Oh my god! Are you kidding?

Ann: No! I wish I was. I really didn't know quite how to handle it. He caught me so off guard!

Jean: So what did you do?

Ann: As tactfully as possible I pushed him away and said, "Do you realize your wife is sleeping down the hall?" And you know what he says? "You wanna go down in the family room?"

Jean: *(Laughing)* Oh wow! I don't believe it!

Ann: *(Laughing)* Yeh! It's easy for you to laugh. It should have happened to you!

Jean: So then what happened?

Ann: Well, he went on to tell me how all these years he's known me only as "Helen's friend" but in the last few times I've been here he's really gotten to know me as the beautiful and interesting woman I am! Etc. He laid it on me for a

while and I finally got him to talk about other things. Amazingly, I found out he had begun majoring in journalism and literature in college before he got into business and accounting.

Jean: I didn't know that!

Ann: I didn't either. So we started talking about writing. He rummaged around and found some writings he'd done and I was showing him some of my poetry.

*(Meanwhile, Helen re-enters kitchen and begins thumping and banging around — sort of slam-banging dishes into the cupboards and dish washer.)*

Jean: How was his stuff?

Ann: Really good! I enjoyed it. I wondered out loud why Helen had never mentioned any of it to me and he said he didn't really think she understood some of the things he was trying to say. Anyhow — next thing we knew — there was Helen in the living room



"Figure Lying Down"

Cindy Markow

- announcing to Fred it was 3:30 in the morning and maybe she did dumb things like that sometimes, but at least she didn't have to work the next day.
- Jean: She doesn't sound too friendly up there in the kitchen now — do you think she heard him saying those other things to you — or knew he made a pass?
- Ann: Oh no. I really don't think so. That had happened a while earlier. I think she was upset because he had to get up early to go to work.
- Jean: Well, he didn't go. Both of their cars were in the driveway when I got here.
- Ann: Oh no! She's really going to be upset now.
- Jean: Maybe we better go upstairs — she probably doesn't know I'm here yet.
- Ann: Yes — I may as well go and face the music.  
*(They go up to the kitchen — Ann takes overnight bag and puts it by kitchen door.)*
- Jean: Hi.
- Ann: Jean got here while you were in the shower.
- Helen: Hi.  
*(Silence except for Helen moving around opening refrigerator and cupboards and such. Jean and Ann look at each other helplessly.)*
- Ann: Why don't you sit down, Jean — want some more coffee?
- Jean: Okay.
- Ann: What some Helen?
- Helen: I guess so.  
*(Ann gets everyone coffee.)*
- Ann: *(To Helen)* Why don't you sit down? *(Helen doesn't — turns around only after Ann later goes outside.)*
- Helen: I guess when I have something on my mind I don't sit very well.  
*(She continues to putter.)*
- Jean: Ann was telling me she and Fred sat up till 3:00 in the morning yakking and she thought you were upset about it.
- Helen: *(To Ann)* I may as well tell you — I was furious with both of you. But I guess I'm madder at Fred.
- Ann: Why?
- Helen: Well you're good at sitting up talking all night, I certainly know that. But you don't know what it's like around here at tax time. I can't ever get Fred to talk to me — he works 10 or 12 hours a day and he's always too exhausted. He should have known better than to pull something like that. Besides — if he doesn't go to work, it's money out the window.
- Jean: You can't really begrudge him some time to relax and forget about his work for a while.
- Helen: Why can't he do it with me? He did the same thing when my sister was here. Then I end up looking bad.
- Jean: Why?
- Helen: Like yesterday — Ann comes in here straight from work — all dressed up in some fashionable knit dress, her hair perfect.  
*(Ann looks at Jean — hurt and confused.)*
- Jean: Helen, she has to. She has a job that requires it for one thing.

Helen: But even when she's in jeans everything's perfectly coordinated. She never looks bad! My sister's the same way when she comes. Sometimes I just don't *feel* like being all dressed up and making sure my make-up is on and my nails manicured!

Jean: If you were out on your own you'd probably be the same way. Look at me. I'm "just a housewife" like you are. When you are home all day chasing kids it's different. I don't think you should feel intimidated.

Ann: Excuse me a minute — I better go see if the girls have their stuff in the car.

*(Ann goes out kitchen door.)*

Jean: You know, when Ann and Ray first split up I was paranoid about leaving George in the same room alone with Ann. I think I'd heard too many stories about divorced women going after any man around. But I either kept it to myself or we all laughed and joked about it and I eventually worked out my feelings. I think maybe you're a little jealous of Ann.

Helen: *(Loudly, furiously, indignantly)* No I'm not! I wouldn't want to live the kind of life she's leading.

Jean: Hey! I didn't mean that so critically. It's probably rather normal actually. I just hate to see you having this attitude toward her after all the years you've been friends. You should try to understand her position a little more — even though you've never actually experienced it.

Helen: I said before — I'm really not so mad at her as I am at Fred. I mean there he is sleeping away and nursing his hangover when he is supposed to be working. I just

can't believe he pulled a stunt like that. But I don't understand some of the things she's doing now. This changing her name business and all. It just seems like we're losing common ground. I don't know what to talk to her about any more.

*(Ann re-enters kitchen.)*

Ann: Well, the girls are in the car and anxious to get to Grandma and Granddaddy's. I'm sorry we couldn't stay longer, but my parents planned this family get-together — and you know how those are. Anyway, we'll have plenty of time to talk next weekend.

Helen: About next weekend . . .

Ann: Yes — we really didn't get too many plans made yet.

Helen: I've been thinking — I just don't think it's going to work out too well. I hate to impose on Fred's mother when he is working so many hours. And maybe it would just be better if I come some weekend when your girls are home and I'll bring mine — like we usually do.

Ann: Sure, Helen — that's fine. I understand. We'll pick a time a few weeks from now. Thanks again for having us last night. I really have to run though. *(They very briefly, very stiffly embrace. Turning to Jean)* Drop a line — and if one of us feels rich we'll call, right?

Jean: Right! And Hell is going to freeze over too!

Ann: *(To Helen)* I'll be in touch. *(To both)* Bye now.

Helen &

Jean: Bye.

*(Ann exits as lights go out.)*





"Portrait of Jane Oliver"

Frances Kosac

# Natural Selection

Kathleen Brown

Sadness was reflected in the young child's face. Too young to understand, and yet not too young to be able to sense the feelings of rejection that echoed in the home.

Precious were the few quiet moments shared between mother and child. Mother would sit withdrawn into her own fantasy. Even more precious were the moments shared between father and child. Father would sleep after a night of working hard, and a day of drinking demonic brew.

No family visitors, no friends allowed . . . Why?

Fear! Loud noises . . . it was so dark, so cold and lonely in the all too frequented hiding places. Why did they fight so bitterly, so often. It hurt.

Quiet now! The frightened child's face questioned . . . the child wanted to be held close . . . felt rejected. Mother was too worn, too tired, escaped into fantasy. Father too angry, too full of regret, escaped into liquid destiny.

Would the child's army be strong . . . Would it remain strong unlike the mother's army with few soldiers left, unlike the father's army that was weak.

A speck of hope was seen in the beauty of flowers, was felt in the warm rays of sunshine. Happiness was the song of a bird, the smile on a friendly face, the sound of a soft voice. Strength was found in the faith of a friend.

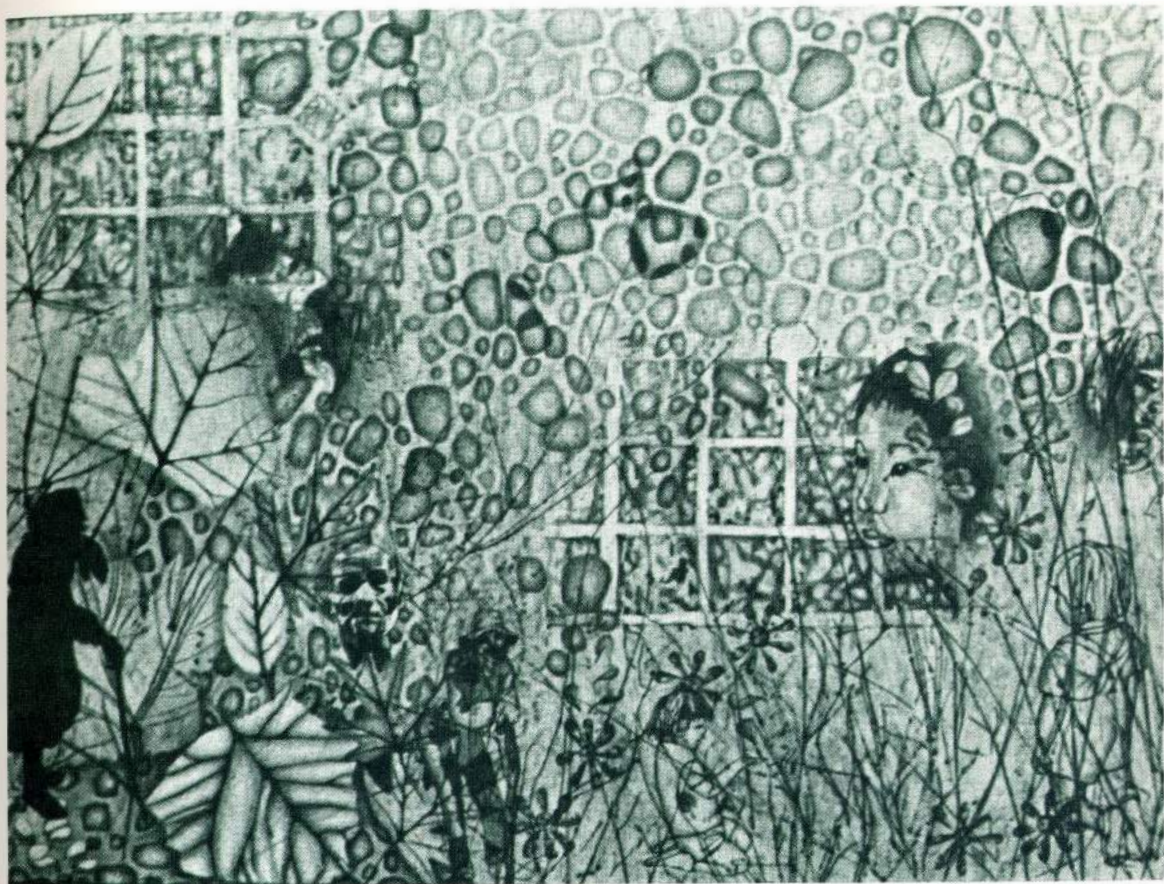
From day to day, from night to night. The rations were placed into the survival kit, the armor was determination.

Survived!



"Hands"

Jeanine Hutchins



"Innocence of Old and Young"

Frances Kosac



