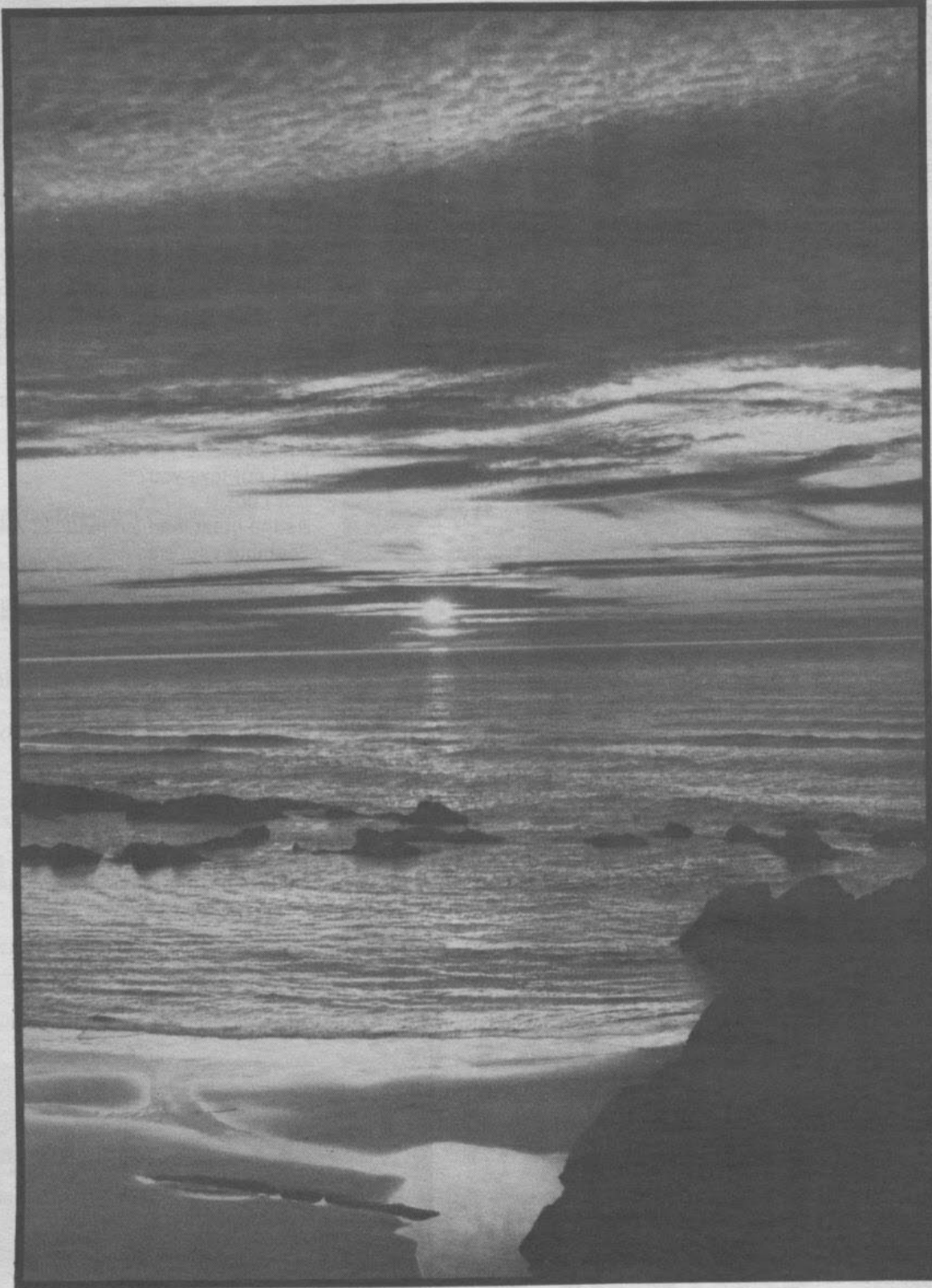


TABLEAU



Masthead by Cathi Davidson

Photo by Sharon SeaBrook

LINN-BENTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE
WINTER 1986

Beachwalk

We trudge over rocks.
You climb
 with the trust of a child,
Leap from jagged rock to flat stones.

Thoughts of leaving
 carry me away from rocks.
I stand over the ocean
Looking for stars.

We plunge deep into the jetty's edge
Reach for orange and pink
Six fingered creatures
locked against rocks.

Careful not to fall
We lean at an angle,
Return our stars to the sea.
A grey mist cries over the ocean.

by Linda Hush



Photo by Sharon Seabrook

The Beach

Stretching far as my eye can see
No telling of the destiny to which it leads.
Cresting on high ridges,
Wallowing in valleys of depth.
Waiting for the repetitious surf
To wash upon itself.
A lonely vigil, the beach stands,
Keeping watch on the restless ocean
And craggy rocks
Immersed
By the water's demand.

by Jackie D. Cherry



Photo by Sharon Seabrook

My Love

Am I driving you farther away?
But how can I explain
This feel of the ocean in my heart
Whenever we talk commitment?

Do I not love you?
But I do!
As the great marbled lands of Arizona have stood
Seemingly forever
So sure is my love,
But must we go the distance together?

I know what you want
But I'm not a Cracker-jack of entertainment
I get hurt feelings too,
Didn't anyone tell you not to play with knives?
Oh darling,
But the blood is so warm
And full in my hands . . .
I can hold you closest
From this span of the universes and—
My love has never been stronger.

by K. Marsh

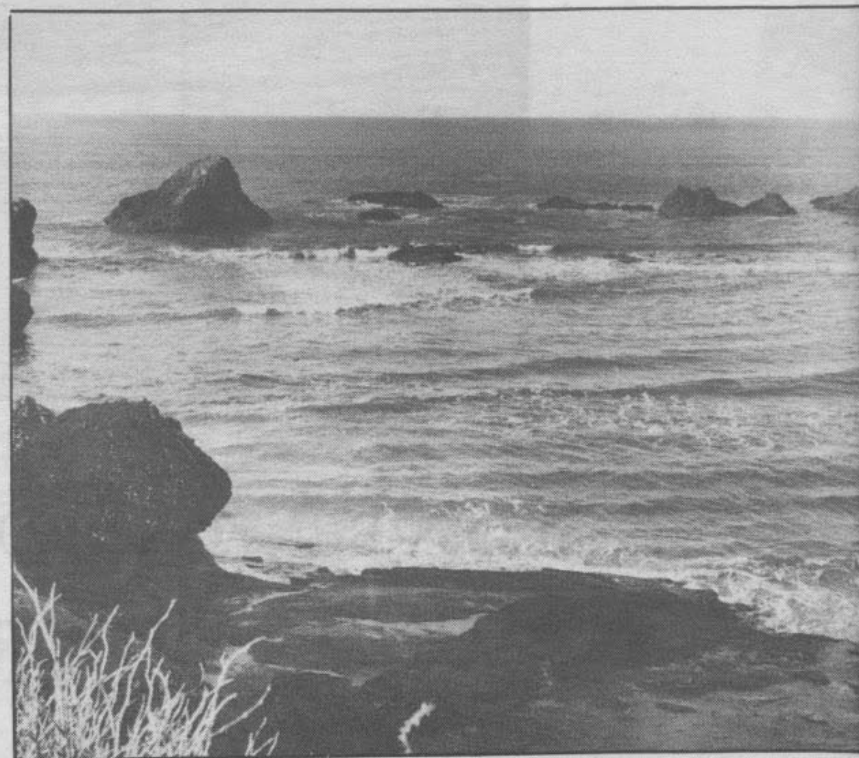


Photo by Sharon Seabrook

Warranties

The other day I was awakened early by a steady faint clunking noise. The dog had heard it too and was barking nervously. I looked accusingly at the alarm clock. I hadn't found any need to set it in some time. Still the sound persisted.

I looked out the kitchenette window. The back alley was clear of garbagemen, workmen, boys with basketballs. I tried the door bell. It still didn't work. The phone was on its hook. Still that quiet thinking. I knew that I knew what that sound meant but I was at a loss to remember why.

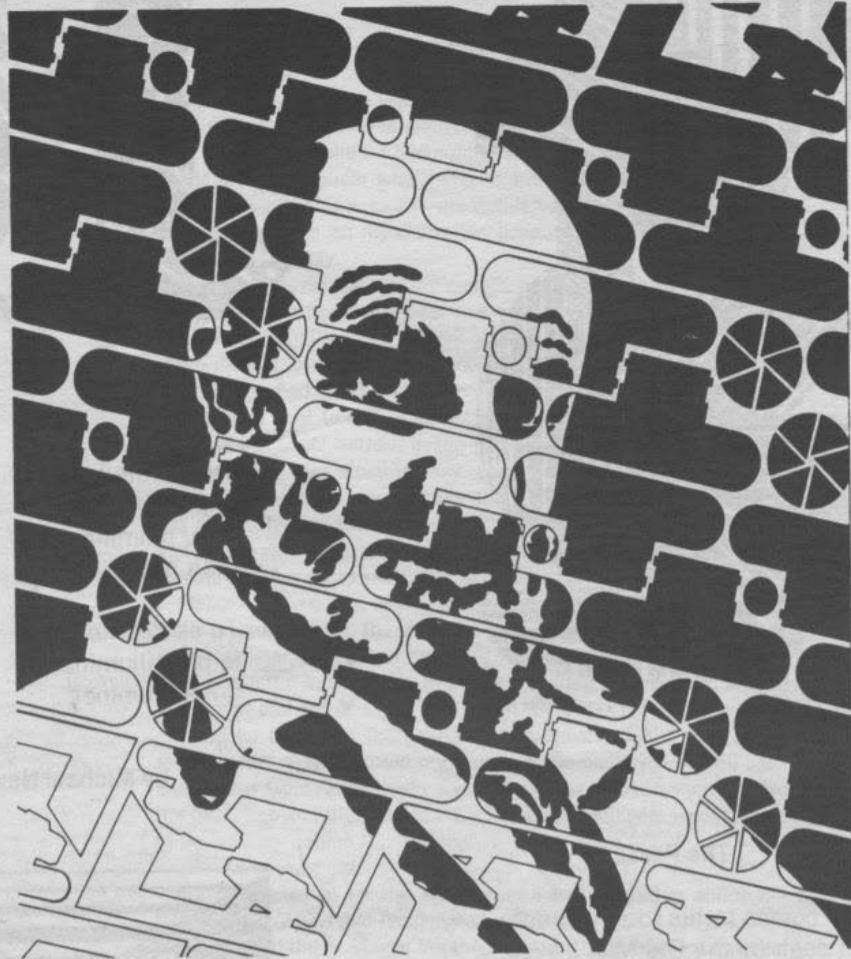
It wasn't until I had taken my medicine and finished my breakfast that it came to me: the smoke alarm. My son had given it to me last Christmas. He was concerned, he said, about my safety. He had spent more than an hour attaching it to the ceiling outside my bedroom door. I had helped, handing up the screws and screwdriver, holding the ladder steady.

It was the first time in a long while that we were easy with one another. I almost thought that when the chore was done he'd stay for another cup of coffee—like in that commercial. But, no, he had things waiting. He looked at his watch and seemed surprised that he'd already wasted half the day. That's what he said, wasted half the day! I smiled and gave him a smooch and a hug as always when he left, but, oh, was I hurt. But I should be used to it by now.

He's grown up, he's got a family. Why should he come around here more than he has to? I have my own life to lead too. But I wish sometimes, not all the time, but sometimes, that a faint steady clunking would start in my children's hearts. It would remind them that they have a mother who sometimes gets run down and lonely from non-use. Maybe people need a little flag to pop out of their heads when they are lonely so others can see the need. Maybe I'm going potty with all this thinking too. Don't mind me.

The alarm? I had the delivery boy for the paper come in and fix it. I wasn't going to sit around until next Christmas waiting for my son.

by Suzanne Thayer



Artwork by Charles Richard Clarkson

The Fourth Hapless Daughter

The iron hand of my daddy's
Mid-western principle
Rakes against my face
Like a sigh
Slashing arroyos in my brain:

be good
be proper
be like a woman

The cobra recoils for another strike
But why bother?
You have rendered me helpless with the first
blow
As I lie here
A pliable mass of nerves and fears
Wondering:

daddy, will i ever be good enough?

by K. Marsh

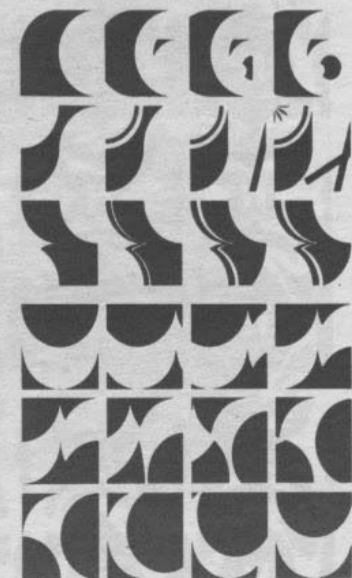


Artwork by Diane Sanderlin

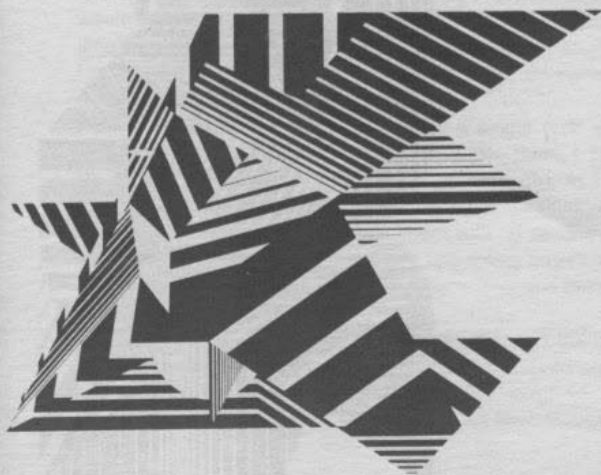
The Man In The Gray Suit

Speaking at you, wearing gray,
He doesn't want your doubt;
He wants your full attention,
And he wants to take you out
To the world of disbelief
transformed into belief:
Silence! Hear him! Droning on . . .
He scoffs at being brief.
So then, will we buy his wares?
Trade in our precious souls?
He's selling us our faith in him
To cast before the ghouls;
To merchandisers,
Enterprisers,
Wolves with withered faces.
We seem so distant from their greed;
We only are allowed to see
The blinds that take their places.

by Alice Brissenden



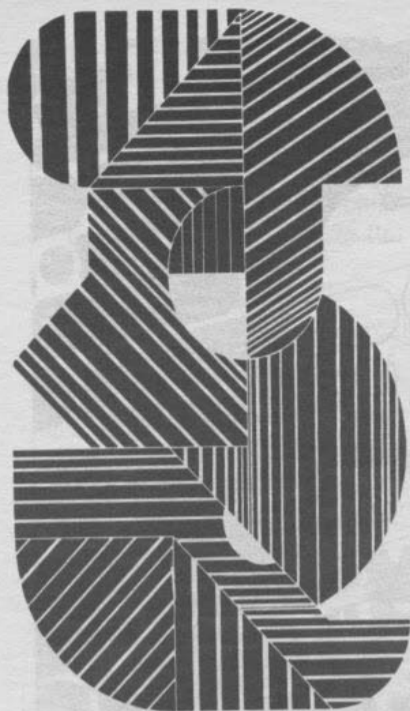
Artwork by Matthew Barger



Artwork by Stuart Sloan

ameria
earhart

Artwork by Charles Richard Clarkson



Artwork by Wendy Yoder Holub

The Passage

She comes to his room unseen,
yet seen by the Old Man's eyes.

Beauty borne of ageless Grace,
She carries love cupped in healing
hands.

His soul rises,
rebirth given to heart long dead with
neglect.

Smiling, she beckons to feet
useless with age's corruption.

He is young again,
An Eternity of living yet before him.

With hands in hers,
he slowly rises to begin
The Last Waltz.

by Virginia Johnson



Artwork by Wendy Yoder Holub



Artwork by Lynn Powers

Tu es l'etoile
la plus illuminee,
et tu illumine
mon nuit.

Tu es l'etoile
la plus illuminee,
qui a illuminee
ma vie.

by Michael Newton



Artwork by Heather Blair

A Deal is A Deal

Cradling my favorite doll in my arms, I swung lazily in the sturdy rope swing suspended from the lower branch of one of the twin maple trees in our front yard. It was a beautiful black porcelain doll. Although I had never seen a Black person, and never would until I left this secluded Canadian rural area many years later, I had a special attachment to this doll.

It was a hot summer afternoon in late August. I watched my dad place baskets of freshly picked peaches along the front edge of the yard in the shade of the trees. He hoped to attract some of the city folks that drove down our road on the way to their lakefront cabins.

A shiny, black car pulled up. Two women got out and strode over to examine the fruit. They spent some time visiting with my dad and talking about whatever adults talk about.

As they started to load some peaches into their car, a little girl about my age jumped out. She wore the most beautiful dress I had ever seen. It was frilly and white. Next to my bleached cotton dress, which hung limply on me like the flour sack that it was, hers rustled with crispness.

But what interested me more than her dress was the white paper bag she held in her hands. Every once in a while she would take something out of it and eat it. It was more than I could stand.

Timidly I walked over and asked her what she had. She opened the bag and showed me. I still did not know. She laughed and said they were peanuts. I had never seen peanuts before. She gave me one to taste. It was delicious. She laughed again. She could not believe I had never eaten peanuts. She did not offer me another one, but something inside me said I just had to have more peanuts. So I picked up my little black doll and asked her if she would let me hold her bag of peanuts, I would let her hold my doll. The deal was on.

One after another those delicious little nuts disappeared into my mouth. Then suddenly I realized the bag was empty. I walked back and handed her the empty white bag, expecting her to hand me back my doll. But she clutched it and ran to the car. My four year old heart broke and I started to cry.

The adults stopped their visiting and asked each of us what had happened. The little girl's mother scolded her and told her to return the doll to me at once. But my dad quickly and firmly intervened: "No, a deal is a deal. My daughter has the peanuts, your girl keeps the doll." Grief filled my heart. The peanuts were gone and so was my favorite doll.

Over the fifty plus years of my life my dad's firm, unrelenting voice still echoes in my ears whenever I am about to make a bargain. Although sometimes, like that child of four, I do not always foresee the consequences—but a deal is a deal.

by Ann Marie McCarty

ELEANOR
ROOSEVELT

Artwork by Lynn Powers



Artwork by Marcy Herring



Photo by Sharon SeaBrook

SQUASH-WISH

As I stood on the flat, white, sharp-edged gravel roof, I leaned my chubby body against a chest-high handrail. I could see the women crossing sunburnt grasses, setting long wooden picnic tables below. Grown-ups, giants in my world, looked small from where I stood. Their voices were softened wafts of conversation, blown to me by the evening breeze, but it was nature's evening sounds that caught my ear. As birdcalls quieted and the daylight faded, the day was cooling down. That soft breeze was a cool caress against my rosy, hot, cherubic cheeks. It was peaceful on the roof.

But although the softening light and breeze and sounds brought me a sigh of peace, still my stomach had a lump of consternation. For in the kitchen was a wonderful, dark, rich, chocolate layer cake, standing high and iced and satiny-shiny perfect on its serving plate, while outside on the picnic table was an awful pot of squash. Squash—yellow, mushy, slimy, gagging, smelly old squash. So aptly named, that loathesome dish—squishy squashy squash. And the family rule was clearly known, even by chubby eight-year-old girls: "No dessert until you eat your vegetables." My very most favorite dessert and my worst, most hated, unswallowable vegetable.

As I stood on the roof dreading facing that sloppy blob of squash, in the quickly darkening sky the evening star appeared. I wished upon that far away star, tiny and brilliant and sparkling its light out just to me, as alone in its deep velvet sky as I was alone on my roof. I wished upon that star with all my might and hope:

"Star light, star bright,
First star I see tonight,
I wish I may, I wish I might,
Have the wish I wish tonight."

For a long moment I stood silently gazing at that star, strengthening our bond, that star and I, sealing my wish.

And then in the near dark we were called to dinner, the children from our games and hideouts and explorings, the men from their chores, as the women served and passed our paper plates. On the picnic table, candles flickered, dancing light on happy, well-loved faces all around me, but there in front of me was my plate, of meatloaf, and salad, and squash.

Now, some people eat the worst thing first and save the best for last. Not me. My mother said maybe if I ate vegetables still warm they wouldn't be so bad. But why let good meatloaf go cold and sweet jello melt down to eat a yucky vegetable still warm? I ate my meatloaf. I slowly ate my jello. My squash leaked cold, drippy squash juice clear through my paper plate.

Suddenly my plate was snatched by a single gust of wind, and tossed face-down on the ground. I burst into tears. I didn't eat my squash; I couldn't have dessert. Oh careless girl, to have wished upon a star not to have to eat the squash, but not thinking to include that she still wanted her dessert! There was no second chance; the hateful pot was empty. But the grown-ups said it wasn't my fault, and I could have dessert. And the sweet breeze blew and the cheery stars twinkled.

And now when the evening star comes out, and the breeze fluffs my hair about my face, I feel again blessed and loved from far away, and am very careful of the power of a wish.

by Marc Slaughter Kemper

My Cousin Roxie

Smiling triumphantly I looked in my rearview mirror at Roxie sitting on the backseat. She was almost hidden amidst the mops, brushes, and cleaning supplies. I had told everyone on my sales route that Roxie was my cousin who came to live with me after she had a serious automobile accident which left her partially paralyzed. She accompanied me on my deliveries because she didn't like sitting home alone all day.

However, Roxie was not my cousin, but a mannequin robot that I had constructed over the past five years since I left my computer engineering position in Pleasant Valley, Oregon. There would be a ready market for her clones as travelling companions, especially for women who had to drive alone into high crime urban areas.

Reaching over to the small control box on the seat beside me, I pressed the SING button. In the rearview mirror I could see Roxie "come alive." Her electronically wired mouth and jaw moved synchronously with the words of the song. The padded rubber mask fitted smoothly over the angular mechanical face, and stretched and contracted with the jaw movements, giving her a life-like appearance. Beautiful! Who could want a more pleasant backseat driver?

Mabel's home-based bakery was my first stop. I left the car running while I dropped off the supplies. As I emerged from the shop moments later, with a flour-smear check in my hand, I saw a short, dark man jump into my car. In the next instant it screeched around the corner and out of sight.

I dashed back into the bakery and dialed the police station. My mind rushed ahead. I could not tell them the passenger in the back seat was a robot. They might shoot at the car in an attempt to stop the thief. I could not afford to have the robot damaged. I would have to keep to my cousin Roxie story.

The alarm went out.

My briefcase! In all the excitement I had forgotten about the remote control unit that I had installed in it last night. It had a limited range of eight miles. Maybe the thief was tied up in traffic; maybe he was driving in circles trying to avoid the police. It was worth a chance. I opened the case and watched the green phosphor screen flash back the words as I typed the commands to activate Roxie's voice synthesizer.

"Return the car to Mabel's bakery and you will be released without charges."

I waited. It seemed like hours.

Suddenly a screech of tires came around the corner. My car halted in front of me. Police cars appeared from all directions. They jumped out and surrounded the vehicle. The trembling driver slowly slid out from behind the wheel and stared at me with wide eyes of disbelief.

He gasped, "Who is she?"

With sudden relief I couldn't keep from laughing, "Why, she's my cousin Roxie."

by Ann Marie McCarty

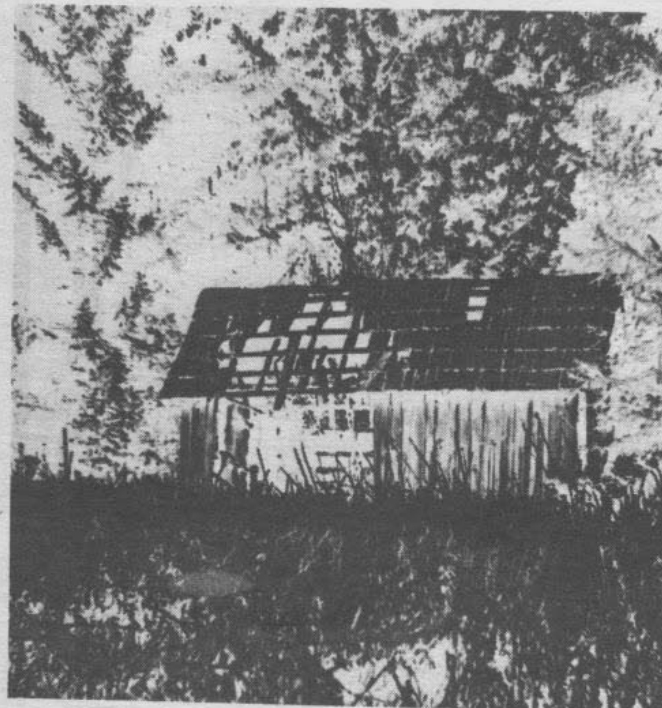


Photo by Sharon SeaBrook



Photo by Rich Bergeman

Seasons

In fading light
the old Woman and Elm stood,
sharing common bonds.

She gathers from the tree
amber leaves,
as if to hold its life, longer.

Hers soon to be spent,
mingled with the Elm,
she sips the calming peace,

Knowing . . . Woman's fruit born
will last
in ageless splendor.

by Virginia Johnson



Artwork by Connie Owston

If Only

'If only' is an empty phrase
that holds no meaning, and no hope,
for it implies what might have been,
if 'this or that' had taken place.

It pulls upon a wondering heart,
though naught can change what's gone before.
And precious energy is lost
through beating on the memory door.

And so, 'today' just slips on by . . .
each moment precious, bright and new,
as futilely you try and try
to see a portion lost from view.

But life goes on, and people change.
And attitudes become undone.
For many days have come to pass.
And here you are, another one . . .

As fresh and new as drops of dew
upon the early morning grass.
Ah yes, you are another one,
for many days have come to pass.

'If only' tries to reconstruct
the past, to stop the setting sun,
while golden moments newly born
are cast aside . . . unseen, undone.

Waste not one thought on last year's dream.
'Twas spent. Each coin, first thought upon.
Behold, the yestershade is drawn.
'Tis long since gone! 'Tis long since gone!

Though now perhaps, you'd change your view
though seen through eyes of now and new,
'Twas sent, 'twas spent the best you knew.
Remember, 'twas another you!

by Dee Dahl

The Uniform

My uniform
Doesn't fit,
Still
It's not as worn as the one
Before,
But sometimes
That's all you get,
When they take it
From them
And give it to us.

War is like that.

by K. Marsh

The Roses To The Left Have Wilted

Flag-draped coffin holds
grampa.
Grandma is wearing
her ugly scarf over her head.
Daddy cries in public . . .
His uniform fits great . . . still.
The tissue in Amy's hand
is drenched with tears.
My nose won't quit running.
The open casket shows
a weary, familiar face.
The roses to the left have wilted.
Song, sung in German,
brings smiles of remembrance.
If only it were on key.
Grandma touches his face . . .
Fingers see what eyes cannot—
caressing familiar features.
Her worn coat safely wraps
her in warmth.
Daddy hugs her.

by Joyce Quinnett

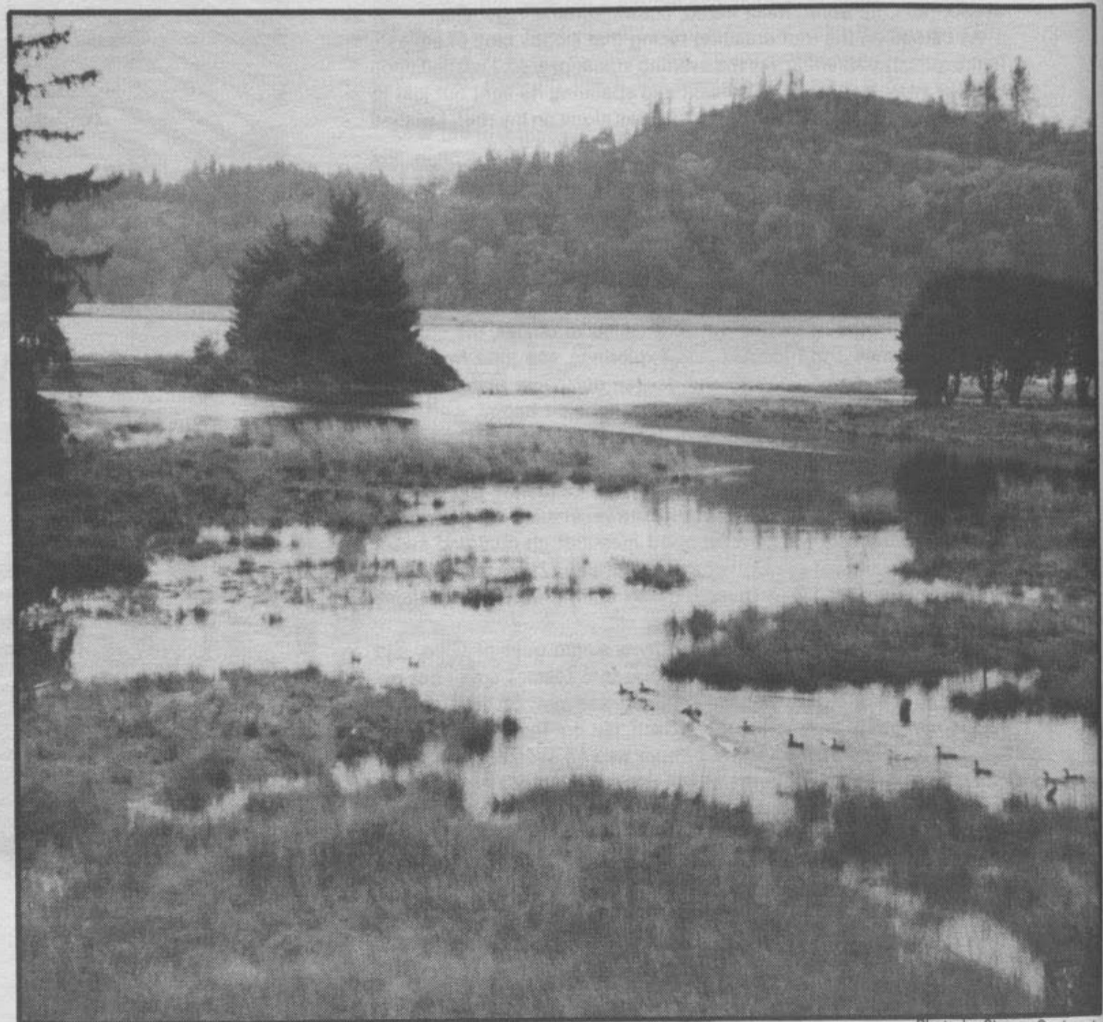


Photo by Sharon Seabrook

First Snow

I stayed home from school
my insides danced . . .
waiting for you.

It snowed
before you left.

Later . . .
my mom found footprints
in the snow.

by Joyce Quinnett



Artwork by Steve Burkey

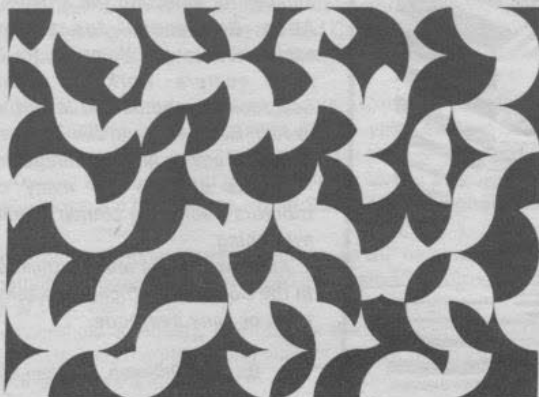
Lost, But Not Forgotten

It's here . . . somewhere . . .
misplaced . . .
overlooked with busy eyes.

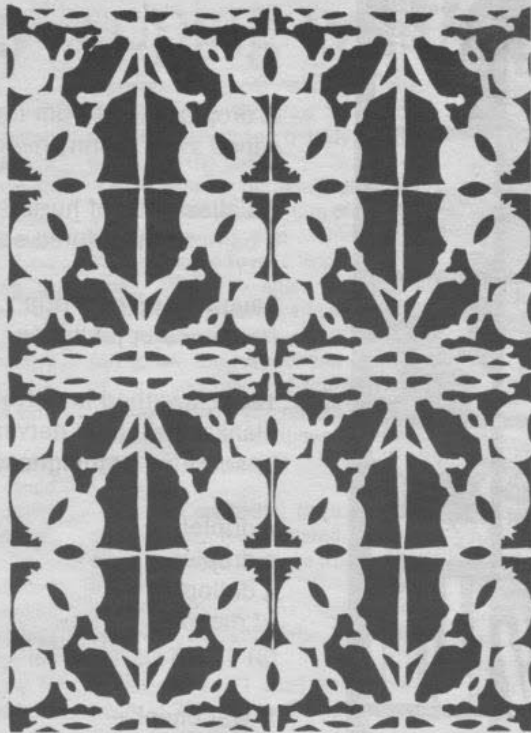
It's here . . . somewhere . . .
hiding in lost silence
away from the struggle.

It's here . . . somewhere . . .
peripheral vision spys
in small corner . . .
MY SANITY!

by Joyce Quinnett



Artwork by Connie Owston



Artwork by Chuck Buchanan

Inner Core

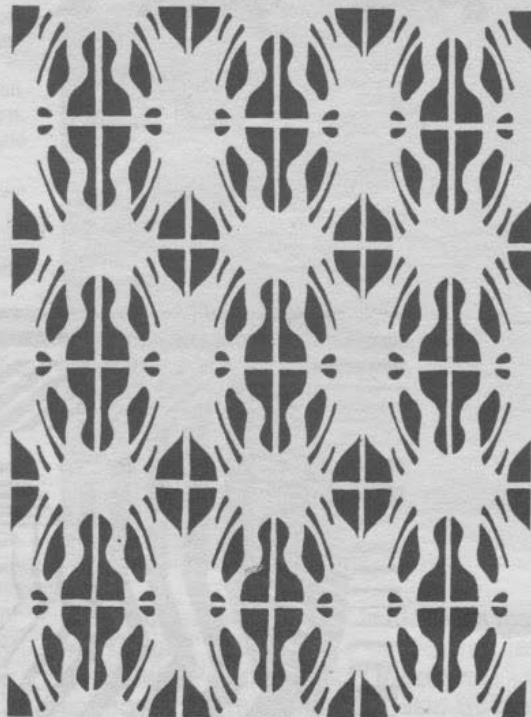
Desperately seeking my inner core,
Where new life abounds and the
Fruition of happiness lies.

New horizons long past due
Await to be looked upon,
Where new color, vivid color,
Is shining brightly for the longing eye.

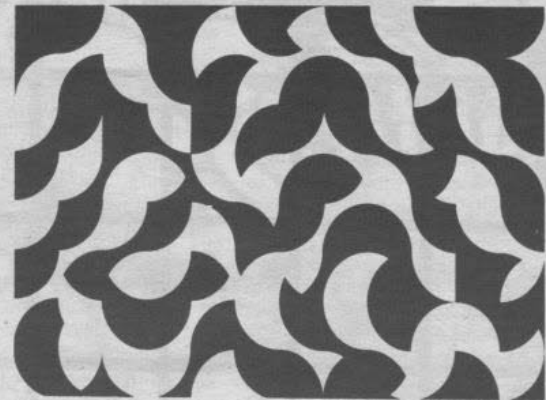
Freedom from everyday obscurities
Is deep within this core. Digging,
Digging deeper I briefly see this new
Freedom, that is for now beyond my reach.

One day I will find this inner core.
Each day I will dig a little deeper
Until I reach that nucleus. That
Nucleus of eternal life, happiness
And fulfillment.

by Dottie Dupee



Artwork by Ron Kitterman



Artwork by Charles Richard Clarkson

Wanting

Do you hear it?
It's the throb and hum of the restless
throng
Going
They know not whither;
The unseen noise of desire sought;
Yet found, not really wanted.
Dashing, groping, sightless,
And all for seeking secret bread:
Eden without chastity, integrity, or
Vulnerability.

Their wanting has made them blind
To the need that truly is,
So that a
Magnificent swirl of
Pixie dust drifts down to their
Demanding hands
And melts amid the
Sterile sands.

by Alice Brissenden

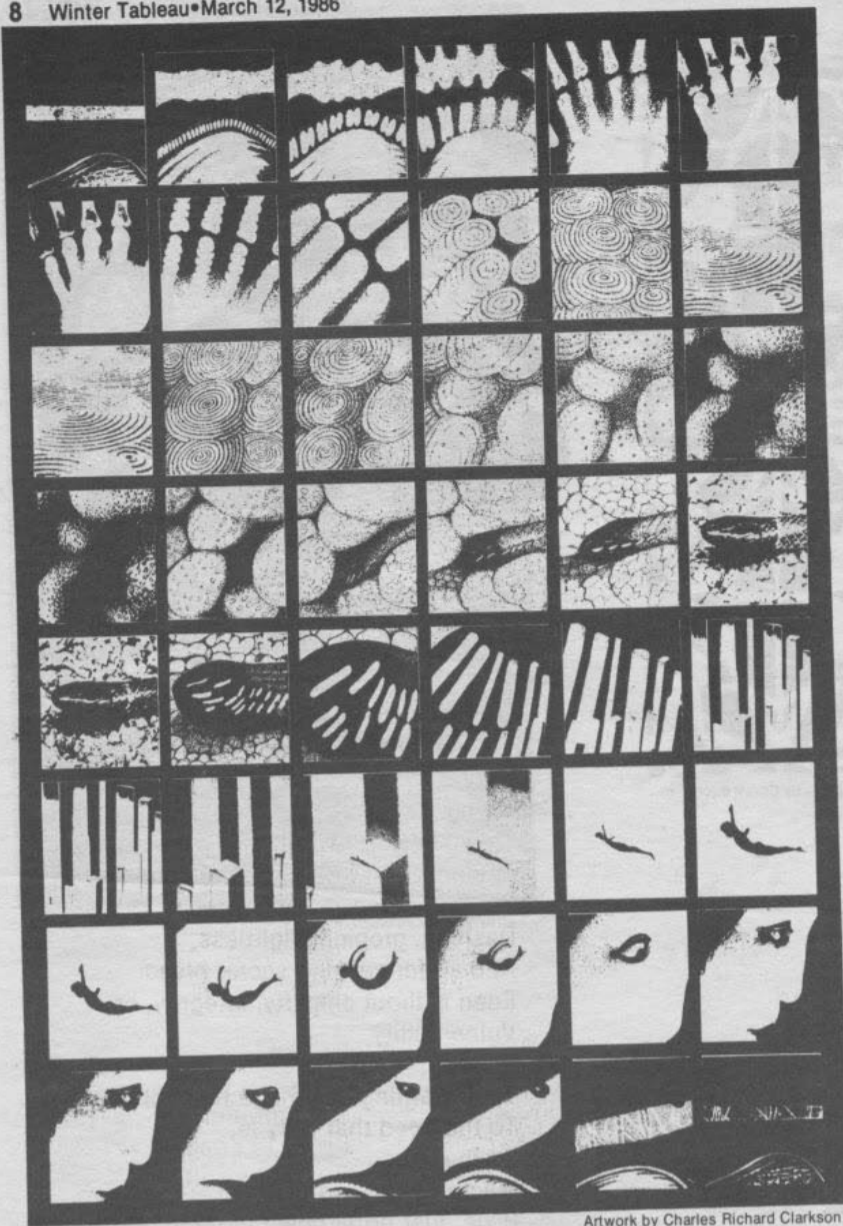


Artwork by Siobhan DeCoster

Illusions—ness

The music from the phonograph
(make me laugh! I cannot laugh!)
Is sad beyond all thought.
It does not lend itself to dance
(I cannot stand or sway or prance)
For sorrow sits in stillness.
Sorrow not for me
(I think I read that in a story)
Laughter can't be bought.
I like my frown and wet, wet grief
(A lie! a temeritous belief)
And pretentions to illness.

by Alice Brissenden



Artwork by Charles Richard Clarkson

Tears

A drop of liquid from the eye,
wiped away by tiny hand.

An alleviation of hurts
a balm to the injured soul.

Laughingly, tears drip
from eyes in jubilation.

Tears, swathed in cotton,
blanket twitching nerves
in soothing nothingness.

a driplet
a droplet
a dollop
of damp
on cheek.

A wet cheek—
concrete proof
of feeling,
a reality check.

by Joyce Quinnett

Juxtaposed

Two tattered leaves
cling to the barren branch,
hanging stark
against the steel sky.

We sit . . . staring
into faces . . . steel
shows what is gone.
Was it ever there?

The leaves fight
the wind for position.
Battle to hold the
little strength still possessed.

I strain against your gaze.
Tears fight the fall ahead.
My chest tightens.
My coffee cup is cold.

Weary, the leaves
release their grip,
waft downward . . . gently . . .
to the emerald bed below.

Slowly, in unison, we rise.
Silence signals the agreement reach-
ed.
Your hand grasps
cold doorknob.
Mine—the emptiness of
the cup before me.

by Joyce Quinnett

A Phase of Life

Don Johnson was a guitarist
On the stage of life
In a bar
In my dream.

I synthesized his Crockett persona,
Placing his policing role
In subtle context
In my dream.

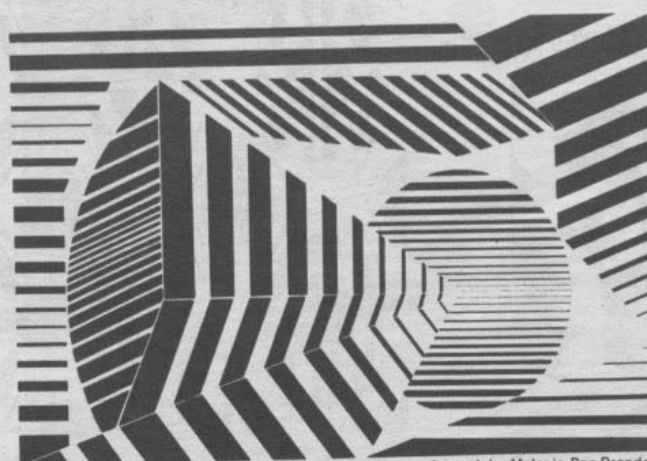
He was Miami Vice
And I was stoned.
I joked and laughed at him
Hysterically, rubbery and transparent;
But he frowned, concerned:
"Your face is so expressionless," said he
In my dream.

My malleability was limited,
Entrapped in drug-oriented awareness—
I was powerless over my laughter;
And Don was my angel:
"Move on to your proper stage of life," said he
In my dream.

by Alice Brissenden



Artwork by Jim Hampton



Artwork by Melanie Poe-Brandon

Acknowledgments

Thanks to John Aikman and Sandy Zimmer for selecting the artwork, to Alice Brissenden for editorial assistance, to Jim Hampton for process camera work, to Sharon Seabrook for photos and layout, and to Rich Bergeman and Jim Tolbert for technical advice and encouragement. Thanks also to our many contributors—sorry we couldn't include everything.

All submissions may be picked up in the Commuter office this week and next, or early next term.

Brian H. Pearson, Tableau Editor