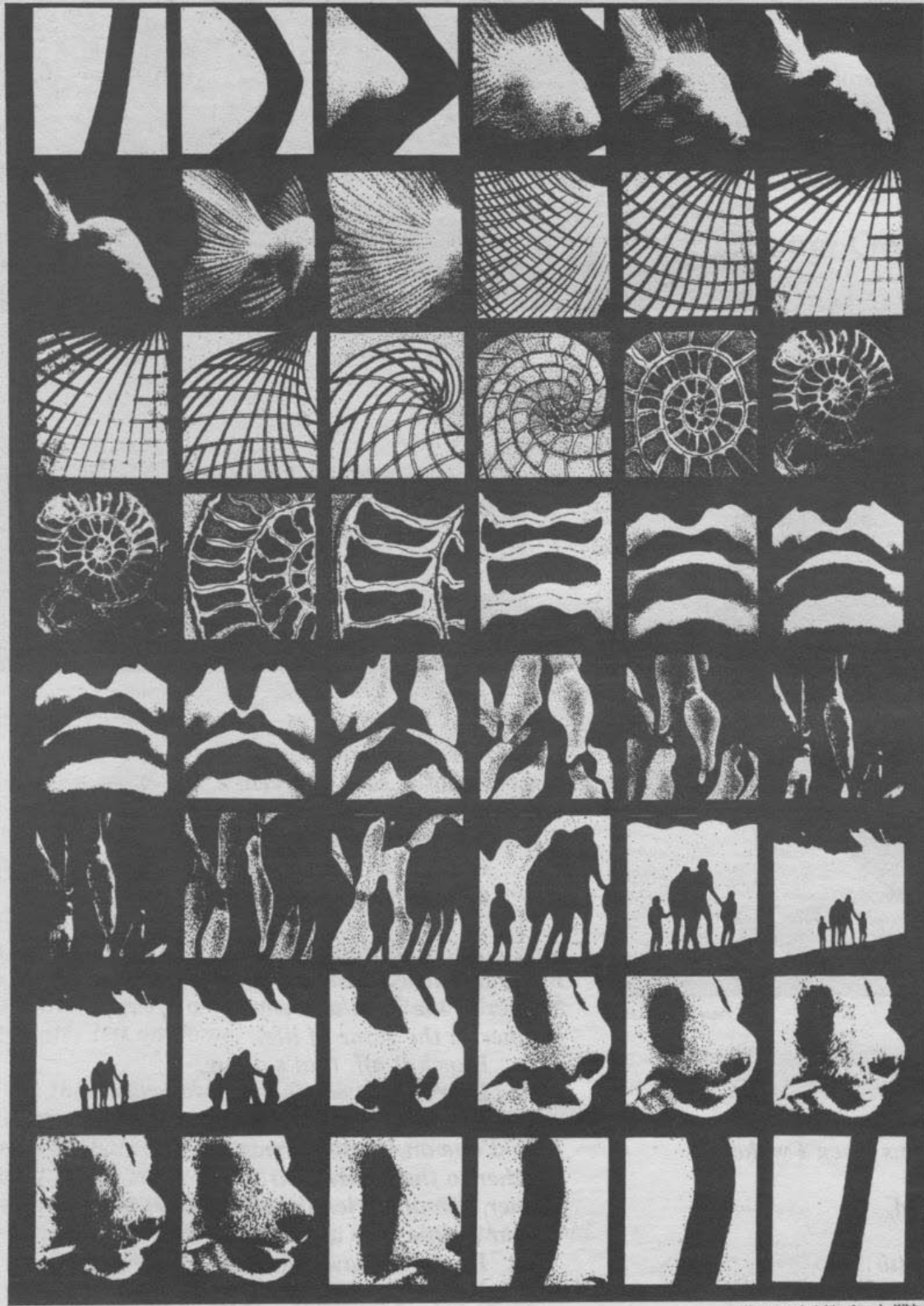


Tableau



'Metamorphosis' by Angela Kibby

fall
1983

Lines

*Lines on the mirror
drawing nearer
then gone.*

*Toots for the sweet,
shoots for the weak,
sweet song
of ecstasy, head for the peak
we love it, we want it.*

*Then down we slide
ungrateful for the ride
hating ourselves for the weakness inside
thoroughly rotten, we dispose of the cotton
and straws
and stare at each other as if we're not brothers
with flaws.*

*A glance at a timepiece, an uneasy peace
now unthaws. ...*

*Lines on a mirror
drawing nearer
then gone.*

Les Wulf

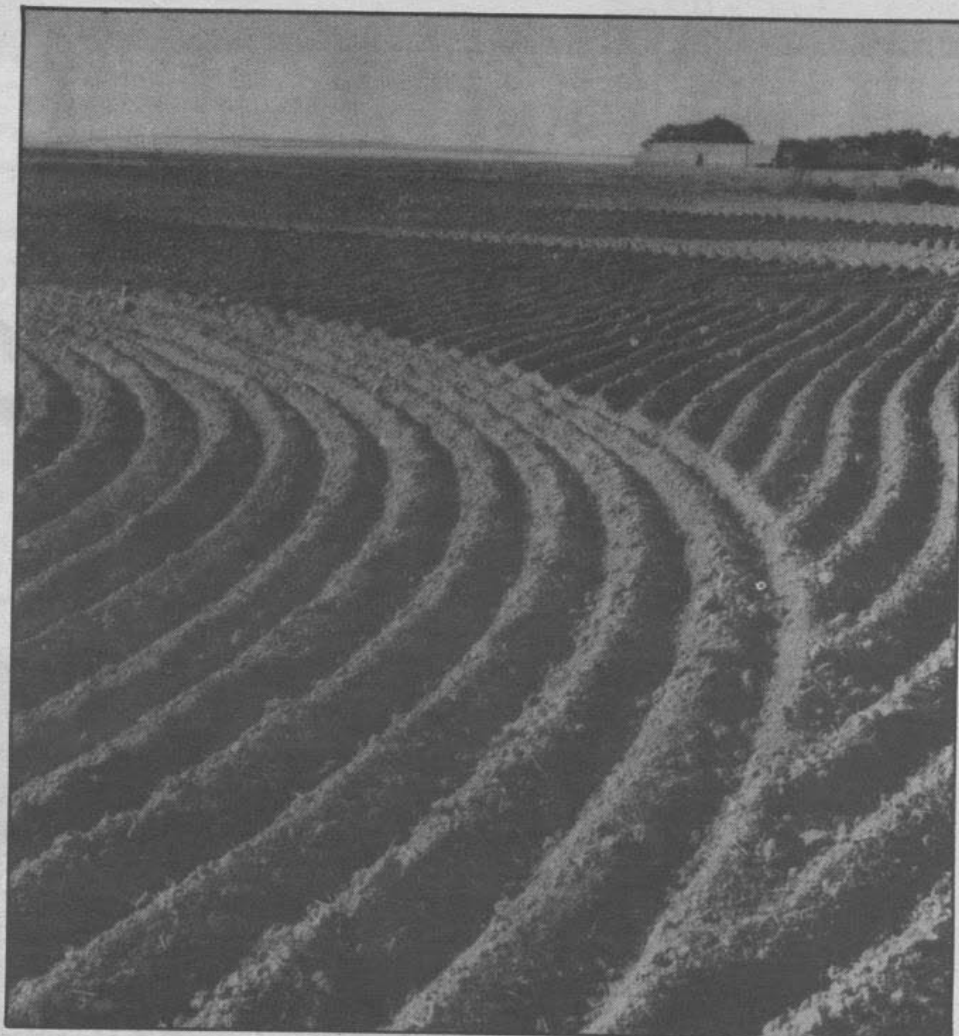


photo by Joan Wood



Photo by Sue Buhler

Cozy

*Cozy in the nest of arms when I wake,
Cold dark mornings,
Eyelids stuck, ears cold,
Burrow deeper.
When I roll over, you turn too,
And then I am the bottom spoon,
You are in my arm-nest,
We are so vulnerable during sleep,
So we hold each other,
Sometimes you, sometimes me.*

Bonnie Crossley

Ode to Josh

*Joshua, great gallant hound
First of choice, best of breed;
Great protector of the household,
Defender of the tribal creed.
Get off my foot, funny one,
I swear, you weigh a ton!*

*Strength in darkness and in sorrow,
Brave in battle, strong in strife,
Master of the hunt and chase-
Winner in the game of life.
Knock it off, that's a bug,
Don't try to eat the rug!*

*Love'd one and dear companion,
Brother to the lonely heart;
Father, son and friendly spirit
Of our fragile lives a part.
Damn it, leave that cat alone,
You can't chew her like a bone!*

By Peg Hatfield

The Abandoned Homestead

*The silent brown structures stand
Remembering vanished laughter
Desolate on the vast grassland.*

*The souging wind moans through gaps, and
Ruffles the straw clinging to rafters.
The silent brown structures stand.*

*Great barn doors, like open hands
Swing out and in, askew, unfastened,
Desolate on the vast grassland.*

*Home is open to blowing sand.
In vacant windows frayed curtains waft.
The silent brown structures stand*

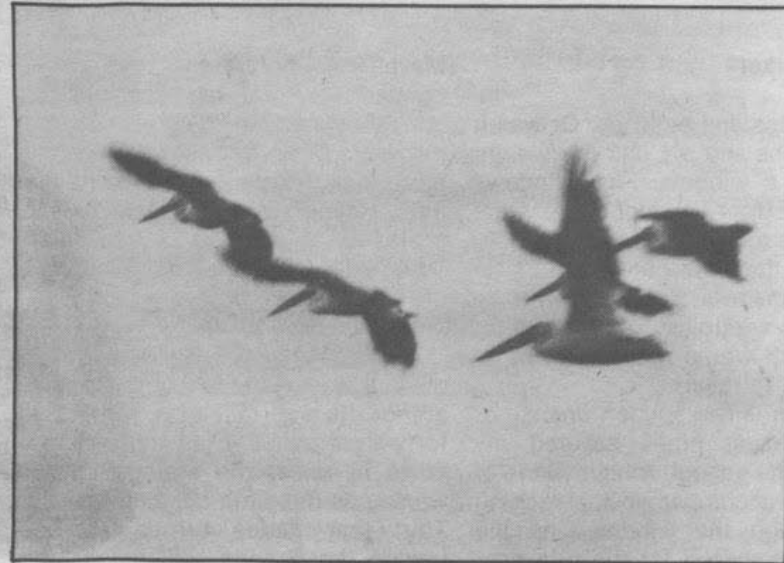
*Huddled sadly on the silent land
Forbidding those who would follow after,
Desolate on the vast grassland.*

*These lone monuments honor the past
Arresting even the casual traveler.
The silent brown structures stand
Desolate on the vast grassland.*

Velma Lemco



Photo by Pam Kuri



Photos by Pam Kuri

October Crow

*With black silken feather and tarnished beak
he wrested on a rusty loop fence
A whispering cool wind called him into flight
Crimson leaves floated in the breeze as he shrieked
into smoke gray skies
Downward, orange pumpkins scattered in a
golden field await silver knives to slice and scrape
their skins
Catching a cast iron gate with his talons he rests,
watching straw blow against the head stones.
Across the yard a church window reflects the
silhouettes of people tasting cider
Behind his black pearl eyes nothing is absorbed-
just flickering light and the chill of the wind.*

By Phil Weisbach

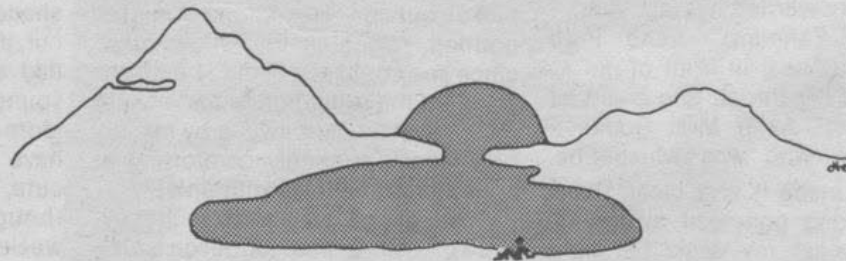
St. Catherine's Island

*This water is far from home.
This air is empty and this sand is pure.
Four hundred years of weather have not left the mark
Last winter left on home.*

*The life that moves this water is dangerous
But doesn't know my name.
There is no harboring here of rain and gale
Brought by the sea, the sea that made me.
I am alien here, the way I've learned to turn
From wind and ache and bend my back against the cold.*

*The Egrets cry and fly where I have never walked before.
This inlet beckoned weathered ships.
I see you from a distance, the way you move in heat,
And wonder at who we are here out of our storms.*

By Rosemary Bennett



He and Brownly were ready, with their aviator goggles and fake leather bombardier jacket, everything would be fine for—

Drill Number Nine

By Jim Parker

Six across and eight up. Or was it eight across and six up? Forty-eight panes to a window. Five windows across the front and eight across the side of the room. Thirteen in all. Thirteen!?! If they had put one more on the front, the total would be fourteen. Fourteen windows of forty-eight panes each would make a lot more sense, not thirteen!

"Braaaph!" The sudden crackle of tuned exhaust pipes severed my plans for the school. A high whine of an engine accompanied the rushing blur through the windows as the driver downshifted for the turn past the Grange Hall across the street. Heel/toe—the smell of exhaust tainting the Spring air blowing through the partially opened window, propped up by a worn copy of "World Geography."

"Didja see that Vette?" Brownly asked in a loud whisper, his stubby finger jabbing my back. Brownly was one of my best friends, even though he chewed his fingernails.

"That was a Triumph, dummy!" I shot back.

"Bull man, Triumph's don't have quad headlights, do they?" he retorted.

"Vettes don't sound like that, you jerk. Only an overhead cam four could change RPM's like that. You think everything that's red is a Vette or a Rambler American!" I kept my head bent, mouth cocked sideways, my phonics book held up to deflect my correction back to Brownly, his breath on my neck now, in rebuttle.

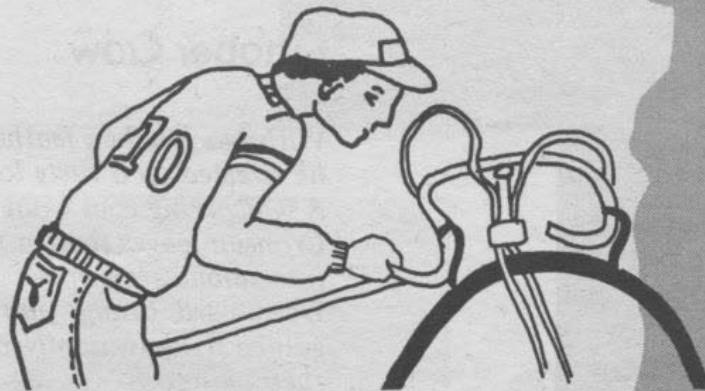
"Oh shit..."

The debate was cut short by Mrs. Goodman's swift stare in our direction. Brownly must have seen it too. She continued the math drill with the second graders, but there was no doubt who she was looking at or why. The slight tilt of her bifocals gave her away. She had to tilt them down slightly to see ahead. Sometimes when she was reading, I could see the hairs in her nose, it was tilted up so much. You could see her moustache then too. I don't know why that guy married her last year.

"Aarrph, Eahhem!" Irene Ford shifted in her seat in front of me as she cleared her throat. She could be such a snot! As if Mrs. Goodson didn't know who was whispering, Irene Ford made it very clear, thank you. Her long pony tail swung invitingly against my desk, her light blue blouse clinging to her shoulders, stuck by tiny dots of sweat curving up the smooth, pale skin of her neck, behind the auburn braid of the pony tail. How could she braid all her hair herself, I wondered?

Maybe her mother did it. She had braided hair too, and so did her younger sister Jan. Maybe those Pennsylvania Dutch people were supposed to look that way—the women and girls, I mean. She could smell nice, too! I don't think it was perfume though—her mom wouldn't approve of that. Whatever it was, she smelled nice today!

"Rrrroooooee..." The low dark rumble of a siren split the morning air like a shot. Its wail railed on, rattling all forty-eight panes in all thirteen windows at once, the strange chorus waning as the pitch climbed upward. Thirty-four heads turned as one toward the Grange Hall across the



'Rrrroooooee...' the low dark rumbling of a siren split the morning air like a shot.

street, the aging green siren on its roof rattling its tower like an angry bird, sprung to life by some unseen hand. Its wail echoed through the small town—the broad shoulder of the mountain behind it resplendent in hues of green and blue, the alder and birch vying for space on the forest floor with maples, fir and spruce. The warning tumbled down the valley, across the decaying log pond, across the highway and onto the flat expanse of blue that was the lake beyond.

"This is a civil defense drill class," Mrs. Goodson proclaimed, her voice calm against the incessant arpeggios of warning across the street. "Put all your books and pencils in your desk and remain seated and quiet until you are dismissed by class to retrieve your wraps and line up along the far wall." Mrs. Goodson's footsteps beat a steady rhythm around the room, her gaze diverting our attention from the racket outside. Her bifocals missed nothing, taking in the whole room, since she could see behind her (if she watched the reflection in her lenses). Her gray plaid skirt swung by me, her broad back strangely comforting as my stomach knotted with anxiety.

"You gonna stay next to Irene?" Brownly asked, Mrs. Goodson safely in the next aisle by now. His busted front tooth flashed through his grin, belying his concern for Irene's welfare.

"Sit on it!" I replied, my whisper risking detection as the siren's growl

wound down again. Sitting next to Irene was a good idea though. No telling how long this drill would last, or what would happen if it was for real.

"I got my sunglasses for this one!" Brownly explained. His short fingers groped in his shirt pocket for them, the nails chewed off to round, stubby ends. They seemed pretty tasteless to me, but maybe Brownly had to do that, to keep the cow shit out of them from his Dad's farm.

"Pick a winner!" I chuckled as Brownly picked at his short, stubby nose.

"Special delivery" he replied, flicking the grey gob my way. Ducking, it missed my head and landed

harmlessly in the aisle next to Irene. She swung around, her pony tail a half step behind her determined stare. "You guys think this is funny, I suppose!" she intoned, her nostrils flaring magnificently like those of the horses at her parents' resort.

"Fourth graders, secure your wraps. Brownly will you please close the window and latch the front door?" Mrs. Goodson had the rest of the room lined up, the little kids fingering their buttons nervously, Danny Ashton struggled to zip up his fly. I eased my fake leather bombardier jacket onto my bruised shoulder and scabbed over elbows to take my place behind Irene. With Brownly's glasses and my jacket, we were ready for this one, drill or no drill!

"Shake a leg, jerk-off!" Brownly muttered under his breath, jolting my rectum with the blunt of his knee. He was pretty classy with his bombardier glasses, his freckles highlighting the shades, capped by the stubby crew cut that fitted him so well. His Dad had a crew cut too, and so did his younger brother Petey. I think his Mom did them herself, but it couldn't have been too hard...giving crew cuts, I mean. She sure could cook though! I visited Brownly's the weekend before, to go bike riding. That's where I got banged up. In the crash. One hell of a crash! The old Indian my mom had gotten me at the rummage sale still doesn't know how to stop. On the way to Brownly's grandma's we hit racing speed com-

ing down his hill onto the country road, but the coaster brake wouldn't catch and the Indian and I sailed over the bank into a bunch of maples. Scared the piss out of me! And Brownly too. He said those old coaster brakes are harder to engage than the new ones, like his Schwinn. I guess that's why they don't make Indians anymore.

"We will proceed outside single file class, to take the position the government people showed us. There will be no talking." Mrs. Goodson's high contralto bit through the incessant howl of the siren, shaking my vision temporarily. I watched Irene Ford's pony tail in front of me, keep-

ing time with her white knee highs. Maybe she'd share some of her mints with me after we were in position.

"Hey Jack, think we'll see any jets this time?" Brownly murmured behind me. "I think the Air Force has some of those new supersonic ones based at Pease, to patrol for Russian bombers coming over the pole."

Irene stole a glance over her shoulder at us. A breeze caught some hair that wasn't braided as we stepped outside, whipping it around her neck, into her mouth. (She knew Brownly and I were going into the Air Force.) What a sky today! The morning sun hit us full as we marched across the southern wall of the school, down into the cavity that was the skating rink, to line up against the old cement wall and crouch down, knees bent and hands on our ankles...the way you do when you're camping, and have to poop.

The brilliance of the sun sent my eyes into temporary seclusion behind the high fur collar of my jacket. The heat inside sent balls of sweat down my back, tickling my buttocks as it inched under the nape of my jockey shorts.

"Hey cool man, can I borrow your shades?"

"Fat chance, beautiful!" Brownly retorted. "I got these for flying and for protection from those atomic flashes."

The government men had explained how even the flash from an A-bomb could blind people, and how

The One Who Waits

*Cast in darkness upon the sea I am the
last soul to subsist the peril
Clinging to a reef of coral and barnacle
I watch wreckage and lifeless men sway
in decimated silence
My fingers bleed holding on to the only
involute fragment of this watery waste
The angel of death would steal my breath
if not for my devoted thoughts of you
How could I leave this unkind world without
contemplation of your radiance!
Tender is the maiden that caresses my head
and strengthens me
Your voice sings sweetly over the shrill my
senses
I can taste those distant lips of honey
that overpower the vapid sea spray
I will cheat this deadly semaphore
and hold to your sublimity
Neptune soften your jealous heart stop
your trident and let me drift into the
arms of the one who waits.*

Phil Weisbach

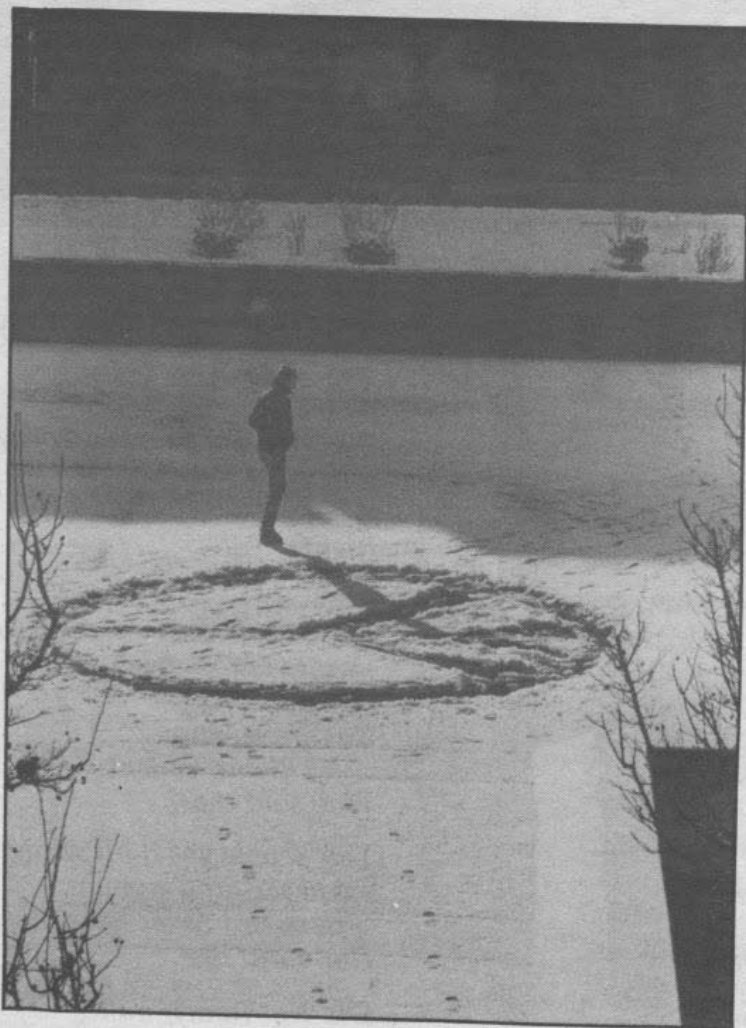


Photo by Rich Bergeman

That's Reality

*Let's stop all this killing, lets block that damn bomb.
Let's go have a pizza and consider whats wrong.
I just saw my cousin, "Hey let's go see a flick".
"Friday thirteenth in 3-D, with bloody red parts and your sure to get
sick."
"If you want gore," he said, "switch on the channel 6, Dan Rather, 10
o'clock news.
And get lifetimes salty taste of those Cold Dead Marine Blues."*

John Conrad



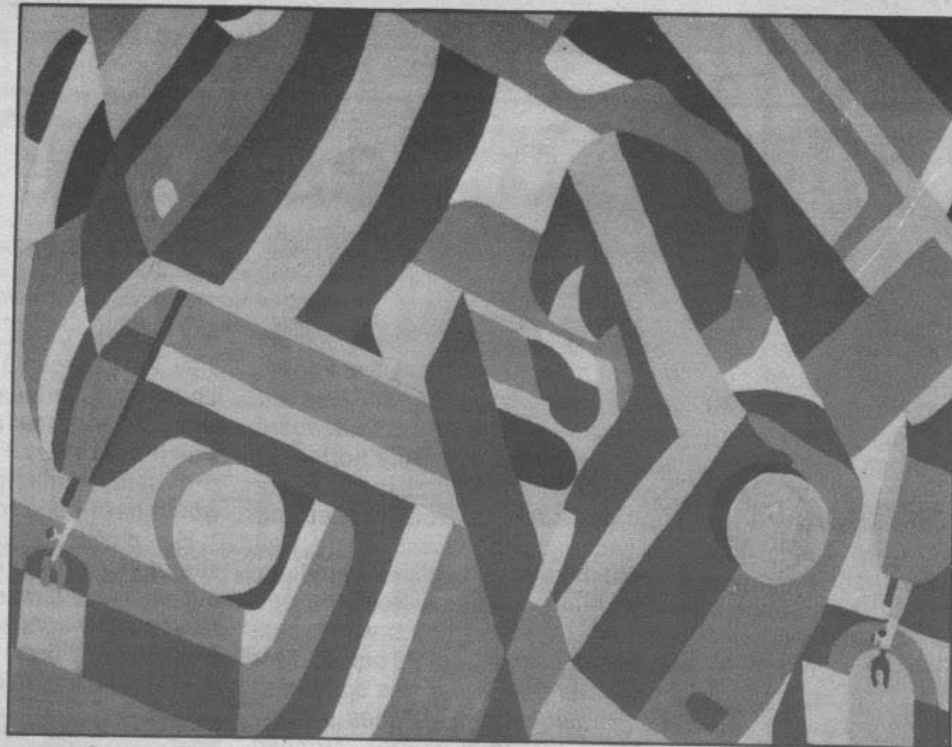
Photo by Diane Eubank

Sewing Surrender

*The physical riddle of threading
begins the battle in my brain.
Is it pull down, under and through?
Joins the bobbin that bobs out
empty, inches from the finish.*

*My sanity surrenders.
The blackish plastic pedal
resists my gentle touches
provokes a powerful push
and incites the needle's
lunatic stitching.*

LaNay Vinson



'Three view composite' by Laura England

Treadle Imagery

*Push-push Push-push
Faster Sewing
Push-push Push-push
Quicker Toeing
"...OR BUY THIS ELECTRIC ENERGY
SAVING SEWING MACHINE FOR THAT ONE
PUSH SPEEDY STITCHERY. HURRIES THAT
CLOTH RIGHT BY. YOUR FINISHED IN NO TIME. . ."*
*Push-push Push-push
Content To sway
Push-push Push-push
My age Relates
Push-push Push-push
Patience Creates*

LaNay Vinson

The Burping Lavendar Haiku Series

*Once upon a time
Fierce dragons frisked together
Burping lavender*

*In the long ago
Burping lavender was not
A rude thing to do.*

*Once, a long time age,
There were six, sick dinosaurs
Burping lavender*

*Burping lavender
Smelling green, crying orange...
Oh, what can it mean?*

*Once upon a time
Wicked witches cackled and
Burped up lavender*

*Cooking merrily
Boiling pots sat on the stove
Burping lavender*

*A few days ago
Wild gypsies passed near our home
Burping lavender.*

*Early morning dew
Bunnies nibbling clover
Burping lavender*

*In a purple haze
of burping lavender rhyme
Jimi Hendrix lives!*

*Three warty witches
cackled over their brew of
Burping lavender*

*And the angel said,
"Unto you a child will come,
Burping lavender."*

By Carol Diggs and Carol Vaeth

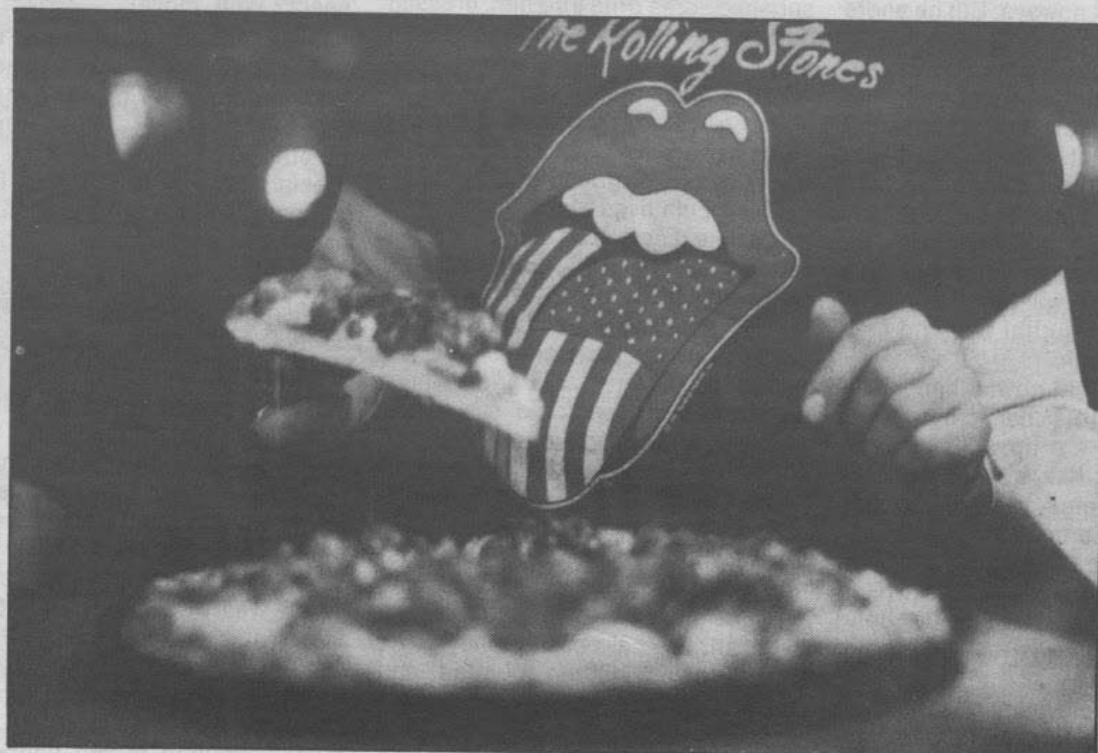


Photo by Pam Kuri

Yellow Roses and Yesterday

by Joan M. Sherer

"Durned critters!" Been at the berries again. Best be 'nuff left to put up!" She mumbled along the narrow path, shuffling in John Henry's old boots. Her sharp, green eyes looked like emeralds against her leather face and they missed little. She saw the little girl with red-stained hands and face cowering in the bushes, but she pretended not to. The town children were afraid of her. They called her a witch 'cause she was always so mean and sour looking. She talked to herself all the time too, and she dressed funny. And—there was John Henry.

Essie Mae was toting water to the yellow roses. The old, blackened buckets she carried seemed almost extensions of her weathered hands, grooved with years of business. Yellow roses, sunshine color. They'd planted them, she and John Henry, next to the small wood marker. "Mary Charles Howell, daid when birthed—1967" John Henry carved the words with the ivory handled knife his grand-daddy left him. There hadn't been any more babies though she'd wanted them. . . before.

"Best hurry along, Essie Mae," she said to herself, "John Henry wants tendin'." He'd been strong and pretty once, though most folks called him no 'count and warned her not to marry up with him. "Mebbe I shoulda heared what they all was a sayin'. He was no 'count. Never did much more 'an a lick a work noways. But he shore 'nuff was pretty!"

She'd been pretty too. Raven hair, green eyes, figure, ripe and lush. Her skin had been soft and smooth and she smiled a lot. . . then. She'd met John Henry on the road one day, Lord knew what he was up to, and they married a month later. She was fifteen, a grown woman with a woman's needs, and she wanted that pretty man with the beautiful body no matter what folks said.

He was different now. When it happened she'd told her only friend, black Eula, "He's up and left. The good Lord let him go somewheres else. Somewheres better than this here place. Somewheres where a body don' have to fight for every bit they all puts in their face. Yes'm, God done took what was inside John Henry's head an' jest ain't come for the rest yet."

Nobody knew what happened. Else they didn't care to say. He'd dressed in his finest one evening and gone into town, whistling. Next morning, Essie Mae found him, naked, in a corn

field. He'd called her "mama" as she led him home. Now there were some days when he knew who she was but mostly not. Mostly he just sat where she put him, staring at the nothing.

Hurriedly, she spilled the buckets around the spindly rose bushes and trudged back along the dusty trail toward the wooden shack where flour sacks hung crookedly from the one window. The building too was crooked, leaning toward an old oak as if for shelter. Its grey wood was splintered and splotched with patches of ugly moss grown from spores dropped from the oak. Someday, the parasite would destroy them both.

John Henry was awake and had wet himself. "Dang your hide, man! I gots no time to clean this mess! I gotta be gettin' to town an' get this here washin' to the folks!"

Essie Mae took in laundry and scrubbed it clean on an old washboard in a galvanized tub out in the yard. She did mending too, by hand, bending close to her work and squinting in the sparse light from the window when she couldn't go outdoors. She never lit the chimneyless lamp unless she had to for John Henry. Kerosene cost too much and even though she also cleaned houses three days a week for the rich folk in town, money was scarce.

Her heavy breasts brushed John Henry's wasted body as she cleaned him, but he didn't notice or care. She spooned some grits into him, dressed him and sat him by the window. He'd stay there 'til she moved him. "Prob'ly mess hisself too!"

Stooped from the bundled laundry slung over her shoulders, John Henry's boots carried her away.

Black Eula lived alone in a shanty, much like Essie Mae's own, on the rutted road to town. She stopped there to rest. They didn't say much. . . they never did. Their lives were separated by color and yet united by poverty and grief. There wasn't much they could say would change things. It was enough somehow just to be together, and, to know.

Essie Mae drank a dipper of water before she set off again. She had to "do" for Caleb Johnson's wife. Caleb was the mayor and his wife put on airs. But, she paid cash money.

The town children pointed and laughed as she passed the school yard. The little girl was there, still berry-stained but brave now. Essie Mae ignored the jeers and thought that her bleached feed sack dress

was at least, clean. "More 'n some of they all can claim!" She wondered what Mary Charles would have looked like now and how she'd have got on with these others. "Best she's gone!" she said, thinking how her child would have been treated.

Her physical burden lightened as she delivered bundle after bundle, but she was already tired when she reached the Johnson's. Seemed she was always tired though. It didn't matter. She had to do what she had to

"Night, mama."

Full dark, like age, comes swiftly in the hills. She upended the dented, rusty washtub in the moonlit dirt yard, and sat, legs splayed, boots unlaced, her hair loose and falling over her shoulders. There was an owl close by asking "who, who?"

"Bout likely to get answers as me ol' hooty owl. Ain't no answers. Jest, questions. I ain't even sure what day this here is. Lessee, I did for the Johnson's so it hadda been Monday."



Photo by Sheila Landry

do.

"You all's late! Got me company coming! Git movin' girl! Ya git what ya pay for. . . white trash, what'd I 'spect? Well, move!"

Essie Mae scrubbed walls, dusted massive furniture, and cleaned the fancy indoor toilet on her hands and knees. She beat rugs, changed sheets, even chopped and sliced special food to be cooked for the company, as her own stomach growled. Finally, when the sun hung low in the afternoon sky, she took the Johnson's dirty laundry and her two dollars and started back. Back to John Henry.

He sat where she'd left him. She fixed a thin soup with a few vegetables from her garden and some parts of a chicken Eula gave her. John Henry wouldn't eat. He spat and dribbled all over himself and her.

"Damn you, John Henry!" she said as the weary day stretched into evening. "You'd make a body cry ifin' they weren't all dried up inside." She washed and changed him, her fingers remembering there used to be muscles buried in the flabby flesh. He flashed a decayed grin at her as she put him to bed.

Her eyes narrowed. "Guess I done forgot by own birthin' day. Would been. . . Saddaday, I reckon. Ain't no never mind nohow."

She touched herself gently with her roughened hands. Her body tingled remembering John Henry and younger times. Times when he was still pretty. When his body was hard and firm. Sometimes, in the still dark of a night, she'd hear him breathing and her heat would rise. She'd touch herself, like now, and remember that she was a woman. "Gettin' on though." She counted her years. "This here birthin' day musta made me. . . why, Essie Mae Howell, you all is thirty-eight! Gettin on, shore 'nuff, gettin' on!"

Thanks for all the good contributions to this term's Tableau. I'm sorry everything couldn't be used. Special thanks to B.J. Williams and John Aikman. Submitted works can be picked up Friday, Dec. 9, between 10-11 a.m. or 1-3 p.m. in the Commuter Office, CC210. Works not picked up will be considered for the Winter Term Tableau.

Linda Hahn, Tableau Editor.