

Tableau



Designed by Josefa P. Wilks

Winter '83 Literary Supplement to the Commuter



Photo by Pam Kuri

*A Ancient virtue is alive
 N North, along the river drive
 T Touching moss upon a tree
 I Inspired the Bracken; soil free
 C Coy enchantress lifts her veil
 I Into the wind, still she's frail
 P Patient, the river flows on
 A And won't notice when she's gone
 T This moment of life glistens
 I In retribute one listens:
 O "Oh, spring" soft song
 N "No one has ever been gone so long."*

Patricia Ann Andres

Winter's Lament

*Winter hit sudden
 and blasted me senseless.
 In a stupor of cold
 I was trapped unaware.*

*my only comfort
 from screaming pellets
 of rain battering
 this crying soul—*

*an electric blanket
 tucked under my chin
 a fetal flower
 waiting for spring*

Linda Hahn

In My Neighbor's Yard

*Tethered to chain
 a spaniel lies in the sun
 all day panting
 until afternoon sun
 Falls through the maples,
 the leafy shade dappling
 the dog like kind hands.*

*Their car comes at dusk
 the dog's ears lift,
 he jerks up and jangles the chain,
 becomes pup, all circles and wags.*

*Doors slam—one by one
 the lights from the house
 cast yellow rectangles
 in the dark grass.*

*The old dog waits,
 thumping the ground with his tail
 all night.*

Barbarajene Williams



Photo by Lori Evans



Photo by Lori Evans

Armageddon: An Alternative

*The voice said, "Let them see."
and the veil of separation was lifted.
Each heart felt all human pain, all joy.*

*Terror, anger, grief rolled through each heart,
which felt another's pain as if its own;
the despair of old people in cold rooms,
of drunkards in doorways,
of prisoners locked in desolation.
The rich man in his rich house
felt the fear of the frightened child.
Among those who lived, (many gladly died)
a long stillness began.
All were as one. All were numb.*

*Yet the earth gave its gifts.
Snow fell in birch woods, wild geese came back.
Desert nights were full of stars, a slice of moon.
After the rain, the air was fragrant.
Who is to say where it began, the healing, the joy.
Perhaps a man walking along a road
felt the sun on his back, it gave him ease.
Laughter bubbled up from who knows where,
spread as rings from a stone thrown into still
water.
The laughter never stopped, nor the singing,
nor the courtesy, tender and profound.*

Frances Lavoie

Nature's Madness

*Nature still competes
in the struggle
for survival of the fittest,
Reproducing between
and amongst
the concrete barriers
that attempt to
conquer its growth,
Sprouting in cracks
the vines climb the walls.*

Pam Kuri

What About the Future?

*It is the near future that hinges me,
Tacks me to a point and swings my eyes in the
same
half circles*

*Half heartily will I open tasks
And close them
Down the corridor I know full well should lead to
our desires*

Hung, wary of the yawning near futurity

Gretchen Schuette



Photo by Lori Evans

The Game

"I think I'll take Barry and Kris to the trailhead on Saturday, then drive on up to Mother's house and see if I can't go through a few more things, maybe even get the whole house cleaned out. I might as well rent it too, if I can get it ready. I've put this off too long and this seems a perfect time to do it. Can you believe Mother's been gone six months now?"

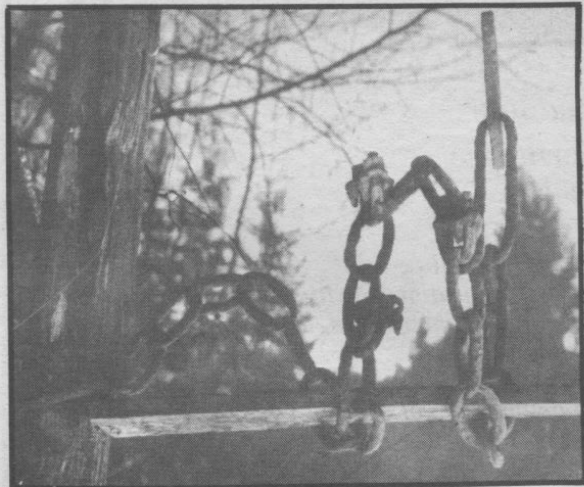


Photo by Lori Evans

Katherine didn't look at Bill as she spoke. She knew he would be adjusting his glasses and carefully folding the newspaper with that 'She'll never understand will she?' look.

"Sounds fine to me," he responded after too long a pause. "When do you think you will be back?"

After her carefully rehearsed speech, she began relaxing. He didn't give me his usual 'You could have at least asked me' lecture, she thought. I can put up with all kinds of games if I just don't have to listen to his lectures. He still wants to be 'Big Daddy who knows best, whose voice and smile say 'and you better listen and obey or else, Young Lady.' Things are changing, my dear husband, too fast for you and too slow for me, but they are changing.

"Well, I had kind of thought about staying until Barry comes back and just wing down and pick them up on my way home."

"That's two weeks! What woman in her right mind would want to be all alone in an empty house for two weeks! Especially the house where your own mother died. No phone, No TV. What will you do for entertainment in that little tiny town? Do you think you will be safe? The world is full of kooky people you know, or what if you get bored or by some great miracle, get finished cleaning out that house? What will you do then?"

Dear Bill, always doing my thinking for me as though I were a little child. I would like to believe you are genuinely concerned, but I suspect that you just do not want to allow me that much freedom, do not want to think I can live without you for two weeks and survive. But I can. And I will probably be very happy. I need to do a little soul searching, however you do that.

"The McKays are still next door and the Williams across the street and I've thought about taking the dog with me so I should be all right. If I get bored or frightened I can always come back home," she answered with a smile on her face, one that had nothing in the way of emotion behind it, but seemed to help keep the peace.

"Fine. Sounds like you've made up your mind. I hope you enjoy yourself." Bill went back to reading the paper while Katherine leafed through a magazine.

An uncomfortable few minutes later Bill broke the silence. "The kids said they wouldn't be home until late, nothing good on TV, you ready to go upstairs?" he said rolling his eyes and doing a rhumba action with his arms and shoulders.

So that's it, Katherine mused. I should have known. But, that's how the game is played isn't it, my friend? Half an hour in exchange for two weeks. Not a bad deal, really. Why not?

Because I hate it, that's why not. We've got this game perfected. Twenty two years we've played with unspoken but completely understood rules. Someday I will be strong enough to blow the whistle, but not tonight. I want these two weeks too much.

Unbuttoning the top button of her blouse she rose and started for the stairs, smiling.

Later as she lay awake in the black of the bedroom, Bill's voice cut through the thick air, "You could have at least asked me."

The final play, Katherine sighed back the tears, now I can go to sleep.

Lee Anne Hart

Handle With Care

The afternoon sun struck the window of the small shop that was sandwiched between Marvin's Arcade and Video World. The dusty, dirt-streaked, window reflected most of the light allowing only a small amount to penetrate; where it formed dappled and distorted shadows among the horns, swords, cameras, watches and rings on display. The light also fell on, and reflected from, an old dusty crystal ball set in one corner of the display window, off to itself.

Denny Martin, hurrying by, caught sight of the ball out of the corner of his eye.

Denny was a thief who preyed on old people and he had just made a score of three hundred dollars. If only that damn old lady hadn't put up a fight, he thought. Stupid old broad, you'd have thought she was trying to save three grand instead of three hundred, he complained, fingering the money in his pocket. If she had just given it to me I wouldn't have hit her; but no, she had to start screaming. Jesus Christ—and could she scream. So he hit her. But she kept on screaming so he hit her again. He hit her until his arm was tired and his hand hurt. Denny wondered if she was dead? Not that he cared; if she was she wouldn't be the first. There had been that old man over on 53rd who—at that moment Denny became aware of the crystal ball.

A stream of light pierced the gloom of the window and struck the ball sending fingers of colored light in all directions. He stopped and stared at it. The shifting patterns of light pulsed with the beat of Denny's heart.

He didn't know how long he had stood there but he suddenly realized he was leaning against the window; hands spread out, supporting himself, with his face only inches from the glass. He looked around nervously but no one paid attention to him. Noticing that his hands were sweaty he wiped them on his pants, looked again at the ball, then walked to the door of the shop and went in.

As the door shut behind him it hit the bell above it with a tinkling, making him jump. What the hell? If I didn't know better I'd say I was nervous. Nah, thought Denny, that's stupid.

"Hey anybody here?" His voice muffled by the cluttered, semi-dark interior of the shop.

"Can I help you?"

Denny jumped again. To his right, framed in a doorway, stood a little old man.

"You ought to wear a bell old man."

"I'm sorry if I startled you."

"Ha, you kidding? You didn't startle me," said Denny, glancing around in an attempt to see to the back of the store.

"Of course not. Was there something you were interested in?"

"Yeah. You got one of them fortune telling things in the window; I want to see it."

"You mean the crystal ball?"

"That's the one."

"Certainly."

To Denny it looked like a movie in slow motion as the old man moved away from the doorway and started toward the window. Turning his shoulders first one way and then the other the old man moved forward stiffly, his small wrinkled face showing pain with each rigid, foot sliding motion.

"Got arthritis old man?"

"No legs." The shopkeeper said as he reached the display window, reached in and slowly picked up the crystal ball. Cradling it in his hands he caressed its smooth flawless surface. Placing one hand against the window sill he braced himself and twisted his shoulders, while throwing his right hip in the air, making his useless right leg flop out, and slightly away, from his body. Still bracing himself he put his weight on his right leg, and with the same shoulder-hip motion brought his body around to face Denny.

Even in the darkness of the shop the ball caught and reflected light. And, as Denny looked at it, it began to pulse in the frail aged hands that held it.



"How much you want for it old man."

"It may be more than you are prepared to pay," said the old man as he looked into Denny's eyes.

Creepy old bastard, thought Denny, but instead he said: "You don't know what I can pay. For your information I'm pretty flush right now," again feeling the money in his pocket.

"Three hundred dollars." The old man's eyes never left Denny's, and with his words they narrowed and hardened into slits in the wrinkled, aged face.

"Three hundred? You've lost more than just your legs old man."

"Perhaps. But look how it catches and releases the light." As he raised his hands the ball glowed with a life of its own and Denny felt drawn to it.

"I'll give you fifty."

The old man shook his head no, and lowering his hands, twisted his body with the same shoulder-hip jerking motion, to slowly and painfully turn back toward the window. As Denny watched the ball move away from him, his throat tightened with an aching, longing, need. He hit the old man just under the ear.

The old man went sideways and down; his two wooden legs splayed in weird angles to his body. The ball fell out of his hands and rolled across the floor to come to rest against the wall. The old man didn't move.

"Three hundred dollars huh?" Denny said as he walked to the wall and bent over. The ball was warm in his hand as he straightened, and he turned, holding it toward the faint glow filtering through the display window. The ball began to pulse in time with his heart; he could feel it pulse as it grew warmer in his hand. As he looked at it a deep reddish color swirled into, and around, the inside of the ball.

The old man raised his head slowly; reaching down he straightened his legs in line with his body. He then reached up to the window sill, and grabbing hold, began to pull himself into a sitting position below it. Reaching high over his head he grasped the edge of it and started to pull himself upward; his two legs hanging limply from his straining form. His face contorted with the strain, he pulled until he was able to reach higher with his right hand to secure another hold. He continued his hand over hand movement, his small frame trembling with the exertion, sweat covering his pain lined face, till he could position his two wooden legs beneath him in a standing position. Breathing heavily, he jerked-limped his way to the wall, where he bent and picked up the crystal ball. He then slowly returned to the display window where he replaced the ball, lovingly, to its place. With a smile he turned, and nodding his head to the darkened interior of his shop, twisted his shoulders to walk stiffly; bracing, and supporting himself, on the overstuffed chair, and oak dresser, before passing through the doorway on his right.

The setting sun struck the window of the small shop, sandwiched between Marvin's Arcade and Video World. It's dying rays filtered through the dusty window to strike the crystal ball, which glowed a dull red, and illuminated the small figure imbedded deep within it.

Charles L. Watson

The Primeval Sea

In the vast, crowded Hall of Records, Erin coded into the terminal that was the umbilical cord to the first and last of the omniscient computers, KVM I. This machine knew it all and she needed answers.

"Why are there no pregnant women in Underport?" she asked.

"Women don't get pregnant," answered KVM I.

Erin had suspected as much. In the six months she had spent in The New Society of Underport she had seen plenty of families, but no pregnant women.

"Where do children come from?" she typed.

"The gestation tanks of biochemical research," returned KVM.

"How are they made?"

"By uniting male and female carriers," KVM said.

"Where do those come from?"

"From you."

"No, not from me."

In an uncharacteristic mode for a computer, KVM offered information without a question.

"This comment is similar to other information you have entered which is not in line with the normal response.

"All inhabitants know that their carriers are taken at birth and stored.

"Upon request they are united in a gestation tank. The human body is an unstable environment in which to grow healthy specimens.

"The incubation of the zygote in a controlled atmosphere guarantees maximum dispersion of all elements essential for optimum growth and development," KVM concluded.

Sometimes her friend took on very human aspects, but all too often he sounded like one of her textbooks.

She wrung her hands and peered thoughtfully into the structured which housed the "brains" of the machine. It had been her only friend since her stay in Underport and she felt she was deceiving him. More than that, she desperately needed someone to talk to.

She was an outsider, a refugee from one of the last villages outside the New Society. Answers did not come easily to outsiders.

KVM would answer questions she had about her new home others would not. He had been honest; incapable of lies. Now she had to test the depths of their friendship.

"I am pregnant," she stated.

KVM responded slowly. Clearly this was a new problem for the machine.

"That is impossible," he answered.

"Nevertheless, I am."

"It is against the law," he said after another thoughtful silence.

"That is my problem," she typed.

When her community in the Blue Mountains had been "rescued" by New Society authorities, they were unaware how different she was.

She hadn't been fixed. She was a product of her mother's body and was not defective.

She also had the gift, though she hadn't used it since she left the mountains.

In the New Society, the gift was a dangerous commodity, her parents had told her. When discovery of their village was eminent, they held their final communion and fled. Erin did not flee. At the time, she didn't understand their fear. Even though she could delve into the depths of their minds, some areas were not attainable.

The sense deprecation and loneliness caused by the inadequate communication by word of mouth drove her.

Without the mind-link, the oneness of souls, Erin starved. In confusion and desperation she settled for comfort from strangers. Before long, she was pregnant.

The new aberration in her body had given her a sense of peace she had not known since the mountains, and she wanted to keep it.

But she was alone in a foreign land, unaccustomed to the logic of fear the New Society bred. She had to determine if what she wanted was what she was able to get.

"Will you report me?" she asked KVM.

"No one has asked me about pregnant women but you," he replied.

Unable to think any longer, she went home. Studies were impossible, so she laid on her bed and communed with the new soul in her body, hoping to find relief. But it was too young and she was too tired.

From underneath her bed she pulled a momento from the mountains—a book of poetry written by the first villagers. She turned the worn pages to her favorite verse.

Silent Release

by Karen Masters

Fusing tendril's lacy boughs,
murmuring secrets across the tides,
the lapping waves of distant shores
ebb and flow on graceful wings.
The baying soulless ocean calls
to parting depths of unsung tunes:
the calm primeval sea of life
will rise tomorrow with the waves,
and crash the walls of history
with the silence of release.

...the book fell from her hand as she slipped into sleep.

The next step would be crucial, Erin determined that morning. She could run as her parents had chosen. She could admit her mistake and conform. Or she could stay and have a baby in a land that hatches them.

She skipped her morning seminars at the University of Underport and went straight for the Hall of Records. She had been spending a lot of time at the terminal and was noticed again by Dr. Ross, executor of the records. An ominously serious and aloof overseer, he was a force to be wary of, Erin thought.

She typed in her access code then asked for reasons for the gathering of carriers when it had been normal to contain reproduction within the female body.

Again KVM stated product deficiency.

"But I am a product of my mother's body and I am not deficient," Erin said.

"Where were you born?" KVM asked.

"In the mountains."

"The mountains were not poisoned like the valley," KVM stated.

"How was the valley poisoned?"

"Low level radiation contaminated air and water sources."

"Is there still poison now?"

"No. It has been contained and managed."

"When did this happen?"

"After the city went underground."

"Why did the city go underground?"

"Fear of nuclear attack."

"And was there ever a nuclear attack?"

"No."

"Then where did the radiation come from?"

"Nuclear reactors which service the underground deity developed leaks."

"How is the radiation managed now?"

"By computer monitoring of all facilities."

"Which computer does the monitoring?"

"The KVM I."

"Is that your primary function?"

"Yes."

"In what year did the KVM I first become operational?"

"March 6, 1983."

"According to the history you have helped me study that is 23 years before the Brain Drain and the following Reform of the New Society. What was your function before that time?"

"I cannot release that information without the executor."

"Okay, well then," and she paused to pick up another line of questions. "Since pregnancy is against the law, what will happen to me when I am discovered?"

"You will be helped."

"How will I be helped?"

"The problem will be taken from you."

"Where will it be taken?"

"To the gestation tanks."

"Oh yeah, that's great. Millions of years on land and still life is created in the water," and she caressed her own incubator. "But it is true though isn't it? The primeval sea is inside me. The consciousness floats in its own salt water sea, and doesn't emerge until it is fully developed...the silent release."

The pregnant pause passed, and locks which had been secure began clicking open.

"Your meaning is unclear. Please explain."

"Nothing a computer would want to know; just a poem," Erin mused.

"I would like to see it," KVM asked.

Surprised, she typed the melancholy, ancient verse.

As the clarity of each line was unmasked, signs of computer malfunction began to emerge within the Hall.

Dr. Ross monitored the problems from the confines of a security room, and quickly traced the origins to Erin's terminal. Whatever she was doing was diverting KVM access from normal functions. She had to be stopped. It was Ross' duty to see that balance was maintained. The underground city could not survive without the constant care of computer monitoring.

Erin typed, unaware of the calamity, and terminal after terminal went blank—except hers.

When the poem was finished, Erin smiled, and looked up to glimpse the stern figure of Dr. Ross approaching her desk. Then suddenly the lights dimmed, and silence filled the hall. Beeps and buzzes ceased as even Erin's terminal went dead.

An alarm sounded and Ross, who had been descending on Erin like a hawk on a mouse, changed his direction and headed for the computer housing.

Trouble, Erin thought. In fear of discovery, she started an escape, until a familiar hum echoed inside her head. The peace of communion mingled with lines from Silent Release. She stopped.

By this time every person in the hall was on their way out in fear of a radiation leak.

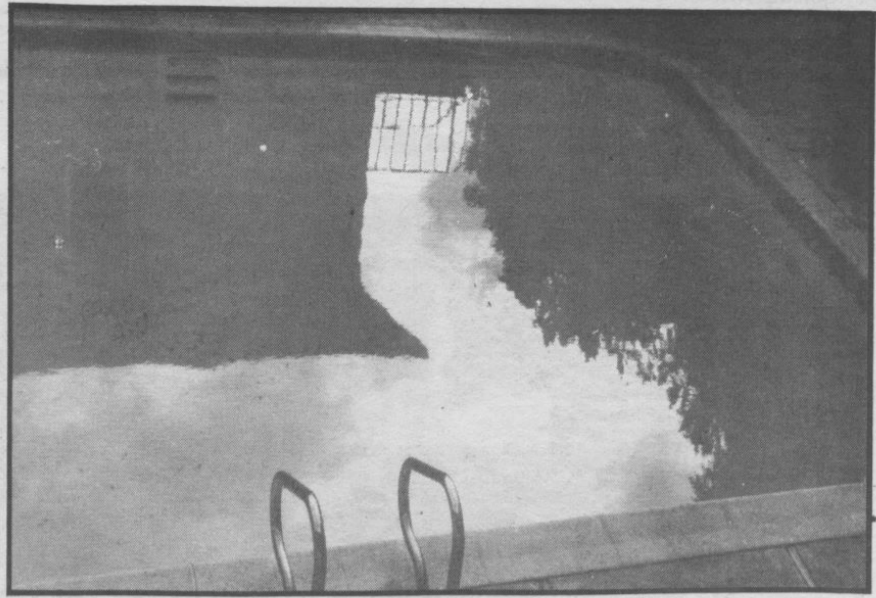


Photo by Lori Evans

A student from her computer class pulled her by the arm out of the Hall.

"That's the alarm. It may be a drill or it may be real. It's best to leave," he said.

But the voice filling her head pulled in the opposite direction, back to the computer. She released the student's grip and started to push against the flow of people, when abruptly the lights went out completely.

Immediately, dim emergency lights blinked on and the Hall was cast into shadows.

Panic struck and the hordes of people beat their way out of the Hall.

Erin managed to fight to the doorway of the Hall, but could go no further. She slid into a side door to wait for a chance to enter. The voice was still in her head, questioning and compelling her to find the source.

While she sat, waiting and listening, she began to notice the room she was in. It was scattered with books and had a small window above a desk. A security room, she thought. She went to the window and peered into the empty hall of dead terminals. It was dark and dimly lit, but she could detect movement near the computer housing. She adjusted her focus on the wall and saw Dr. Ross opening a door in the side of KVM I and entering the housing. Whatever was calling to her, was coming from inside the computer.

She left the security room and crossed the bank of terminals. She carefully opened the door Ross had closed moments earlier and stepped into the heart of KVM I.

She became enveloped in a blue haze while distracting neon yellow and red circuitry flashed to the pulse of a heartbeat.

Ross was twenty feet away engrossed in complex dials and gauges. He nervously fidgeted with the wall of instruments, occasionally casting a glance to a green vault on the other side of the room.

"What's wrong?" he said aloud. "The readings say you are getting all you require. What is the problem?"

He walked over to the green vault and leaned on the edge. He retraced all the connecting wires then disappeared behind another door.

Alone, Erin approached the source of the voice. She pressed her ear up to the cool green glass and heard the sounds of seashore.

"Oh my God, what are you?" she whispered. Silence.

Ross returned and Erin cringed in the shadows. A glance from him in her direction and she would be caught. Her heart raced and panic welled at a feverish pitch. And still the voice repeated the lines of discovery and lament.

Now is not the time for tears, she reminded herself. I have to get out.

The path to the door was blocked by Ross. She needed a diversion.

She pressed her forehead to the green vault and pushed her thought into its center.

Now is not the time for tears. Help me.

Intuition caused Ross to slowly turn towards Erin. She drew back further into the shadows and watched the reflections of flashing circuits slowly expose his face.

He did not look mad or insane, she thought, but coolly rational.

Help me, she pleaded again.

Not a moment too soon, a circuit exploded—a plausible diversion for her escape.

Erin bolted out the door, fled through the Hall, crashed out the door and did not stop her retreat until she was home. Scared and weak, she threw herself onto her bed and stared at the ceiling in disbelief.

Fear was such a powerful force, she thought. It led to an underground city that created its own monster in the name of salvation, then enslaved itself to its perpetuation.

She was afraid but refused to run. She vowed to follow the voice that called her. She would return to the green vault and release its secrets, and maybe discover some of her own.



Photo by Pam Kuri

Priority

Saab
the most intelligent
car ever built.
It, we're told,
has a social conscience
has power without remorse.

freedom, a watch
fifteen hundred
made from platinum
(no less).

Stay dry, keep warm,
look chic,
in a raincoat of Santique
by dupont; one hundred thirty.
(no less)

Easy elegance,
a couch by Roche Bobois;
Catalog, six dollars.

E.F. Hutton talks.
Atari home computer.
Hyatt Hotel.
Maxwell videotape.
L.L. Bean (no less).
Los Angeles.
Hotel Meridian
(Paris, no less).
Aruba.

A pretty life.
Shiny new things for company
Diversions from hum-drum.

The price:
Crippled deaf children.
Aged eating catfood.
Spray can slum kids.
Teen aged infanticide.
(no less).
Crazy drooling transients.
(no less).

Ascending marble slab stairs:
ferns, falls, glass and silver
line luminous space.
White eyes glisten,
in a black, pocked face.
In shock, I listen.
Deeze be duh people
Dat be doggin all duh heat.

You came to me
murder on mind,
diseased from sex,
Charged with terrible things,
Laughing at the street.

I ache knowing
the silver knife slit you,
eye to ear.
Now that part is white.
Beautiful boy
now your just a nigger.

Carl Levin

Space Now

Whispers from space chant explore me
Why wait, you know your future without me
Millions and billions of planets await your new
touch
Your greed will die when you have everything
Over population will never exist
Land for everyones dreams
The time has come to plant the seeds of mankind
but still you wait.
You've created an end for yourself and I can put
it
millions of miles behind you
Listen now or your advanced stupidity will make
you a dinosaur

Phil Weisbach

Terminal Vision

From my window I command a world filled
with alleged humans who submit their minds
to the pale blue light of a 19-inch diagonal god
and worship its flickering images

They are the video legion, clones of my control
Who lost the Madison Avenue Wars
and surrendered with that cracked whisper of
"Subliminally yours"

They forget; it is I who become human
when people are programmed

Yet when some sub-titled Godzilla
Shatters the plexiglass void of my reality
Their withered emotions stir
Shedding tears that reflect hot neon

Curt Dewees



Photo by Lori Evans

Topical Thoughts

An actor, disguised as our president,
Was on the T.V. news tonight
Riding high on a thoroughbred in Brazil
Who probably eats better
than half of the population.
I wonder how much poverty you can see
from atop an English saddle
or from the window of the Whitehouse?

"Peacekeeper"

An MX test silo exploded
and buried four
in chunks of cement and debris
Is this what they meant
When they said "limited nuclear war?"

The Catholic bishops
have taken up preaching for the freeze,
and Reagan
thinks they are all communist sympathizers
Our fate lies on the future pages
of Reader's Digest

Lauren Mack

Report to Alumni Transsteller Observance Control Forty-first day of the year 4659 in the realm of Jon XIV, sibling to Auran Terra: November thirteenth, 1858 A.D. Humanoid Observance Technician 14618202 Reporting Special Interest Report

A group of emigrant humanoids entered my territory at E-hour eighteen today. As per routine an analysis of livestock, possessions, and food was made. The findings were slightly out of the ordinary.

The party consists of three men and three women whose ages range from twenty-five to thirty E-years. There are no children. (This seemed odd as the fashion of the day requires large families and on the average there are usually three offspring of couples of this age.)

There are two covered wagons drawn by four oxen apiece. There are two horses and two dogs also. These animals all appear to be quite healthy. (This provoked my interest further as the analysis also showed absolutely no food present, only drinking water.)

I find myself wondering why these people, who possess no food, are traveling in this fashion at this time of the year. Cold temperatures are predominant now and humanoids tend to avoid exposing themselves deliberately to the cold. Also the fodder for the livestock has almost disappeared and with no food they will surely die. Poor planning perhaps?

These questions intrigue me. I will therefore proceed with intense observation and report regularly.

Siemon 14618202

Terra: November 20, 1858 A.D.

The weather has become harsh. The wind blows up to 60 m.p.h. With this fierce wind the temperature has dropped to 0° F many times. However, these people wear no extra covering whatsoever. They have no coats and no blankets. They show no outward signs of cold, and, in fact, they behave as if it were balmy. Knowing a human's love and need for warmth, I am disturbed by this behavior. This, however, is not the only reason for my discomfort.

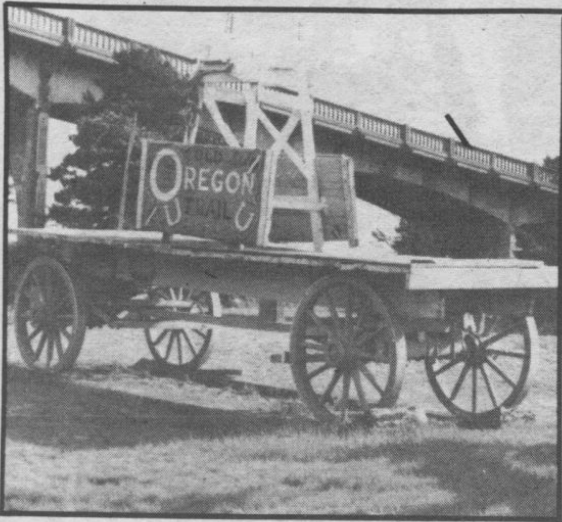


Photo by Sheila Landry

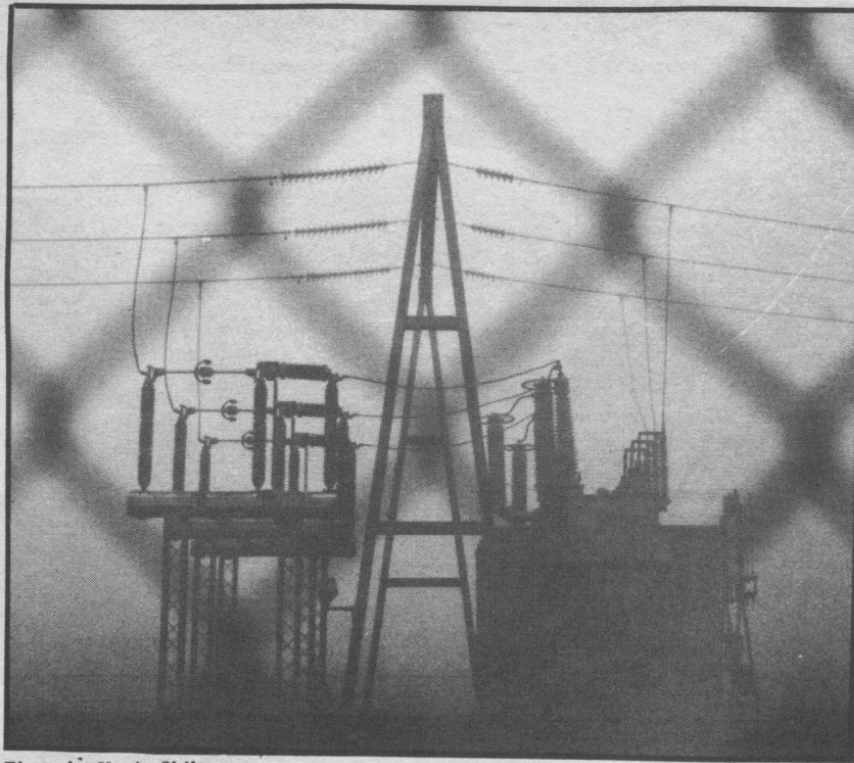


Photo by Kevin Shilts

Each night after the unhitching of the livestock, one of the women prepares a solution. This solution is made of heated water and a greyish powder which is kept in a glass jar. The solution is given to the livestock and is consumed by the party. This is the only nourishment taken. No other food is consumed and the solution is taken at this time and no other. Yet the humanoids and the livestock all seem in perfect health.

A predominant humanoid trait is that of verbal communication. These people seldom speak. They work almost automatically with no instructions from each other. The only time they speak is each night when they sit in a circle around the fire and chant or pray. (This chanting or praying is not in any known Terran language.) After chanting for around ten E-minutes they disperse to the wagons.

These people are not in any specific couples. They do not work in couples, there seems to be no personal preferences between them, and most importantly, they do not copulate in specific couples. Sometimes their sex is of a heterosexual nature, sometimes it is homosexual, and often it is both. They have sex each night but yet there has been no conception in any of the women.

In light of this unusual behavior I am requesting permission to perform a biological analysis. Continued observation will be maintained.

Siemon 14618202

Terra: November 27, 1858 A.D.

I am becoming greatly disturbed about my subjects.

On Terra: November 25, 1858 A.D. the party was heading west on a road or path referred to as the Oregon Trail. They were not far west of American Falls. The road passed between the Snake River and a jagged tumble of rocks. Atop a hill on the south side of the road is a favorite spot for the Shoshone Indians (natives of this country) to watch the road. As the party passed through this spot, the Indians rushed down upon the party intending to ambush them.

The party proceeded as if there was nothing wrong. No bullets or arrows hit them. The Indians could not get within a one hundred yard radius of the party. The Indians were understandably frightened and left as quickly as they could. And the party proceeded absolutely undaunted.

This event has served to increase my anxiety about these people. Obviously these are not ordinary humanoids. My biological analysis showed perfect humanoid characteristics in every respect but one; they are all sterile. My opinion is that these people are not natives of Terra.

I am hereby requesting complete review of this case by the Grand Council of Interplanetary Protection. If these people are of an alien world they could be intending to disrupt the cultural development of Terra, which is in direct defiance of the Supreme Law.

Observance will be maintained.

Siemon 14618202

"Come in. Come in my boy. Sit down. Care for a smoke? I imagine that your nerves are quite frazzled."

"Yes, sir, they are."

"And understandably so. It's hard to believe that the Samurians would so belligerently defy the Supreme Law!"

"Sir, I'm afraid I am a bit confused. Just what were the Samurians trying to accomplish? Perhaps I should hear the complete story."

"And well you should, son."

"As you know, Terra has entered phase four of humanoid cultural development. A democratic society has been established in a very promising area of Terra. The exploration and settling of the American continent is well under way, as it should be. The United States of America will eventually be the biggest and most influential power on Terra. That is if nothing hinders their development and nothing will as long as aliens are kept off of Terra."

"The strategy used by the Samurians was very good indeed. Instead of choosing the east or California, the Samurians decided to infiltrate the northwest where their certain idiosyncrasies would be less quickly noticed."

They chose the Oregon Trail because it would be an easy access to Boise, their destination, and it would do away with many of the questions that would be asked had they just appeared there. You know how spooky Terrans are."

"Yes, sir, I know."

"Well, the Samurians took on the human form, appeared in Bridgeport, Nebraska, and set off to Boise via the Oregon Trail."

"You know, I am deeply shocked that none of the other Ob. Techs. caught onto them. The Samurians had obviously been ill prepared for Terra. Imagine! How could any alien know so little about Terran behavior?"

"It's hard to say, sir. Didn't the Samurians know Terra was being observed?"

"Of course not! None of the sub-intellect cultures know of the Interplanetary Rule. They wouldn't understand and before you would know it we would have all sorts of uprisings on our hands. Sub-intellects must be controlled."

"But sir, doesn't that defy the Supreme Law?"

"Nonsense! We are not interfering with their cultural development. We're merely keeping an eye on them."

"Yes sir. Well, I suppose that I should be going. Oh. Just one more question. What were the Samurians trying to do anyway?"

"The Samurians are always trying to impose on others their high regard for life. They know as well as we do that America will end up destroying Terra. They wanted to infiltrate America in its beginning so that they could mold its society into believing as they do, that life is all important and that to destroy life is the ultimate sin. Boise was a beautiful place to begin because it is so young and unpopulated. From Boise they could spread out quite easily without being noticed."

When I think of the damage the Samurians could have done! The intellectual potential of the Terrans is hindered only by their selfishness. Take away that and we would have real trouble on our hands! Terra is doomed to destruction and that's the way it's going to stay!"

"Yes sir. Oh, by the way, what happens to the Samurians now?"

"Oh, we'll just let the Terrans kill them. This isn't the first time this has happened you know."

"It isn't?"

"Oh no. Countless numbers of so called 'heretics' in Terra's history who've been killed were Samurians. In fact, I believe Jesus Christ was a Samurian."

"Terrans will never believe the idea of life reigning supreme. Some will, but the majority won't. Terrans will always kill. And if Interplanetary Rule has anything to do with it, Terrans will kill each other before they have the chance to kill anyone else."

"Yes sir. Thank you sir. Have a nice day."

Stacy Rowan



Photo by Lori Evans

Keys

Eyes of emptiness deep with question
 Seeking endless realms of wisdom that
 never overflow, thoughts expand and burst
 into invention, Satisfaction lasts only
 seconds, Ideas span forever you have
 only to ask and the Keys of Tomorrow
 are yours.

Phil Welsbach

Will and Testament

DAZZLING in mute awe at itself,
 the clear night sky with nothing else,
 clearly, clearly,
 is enough.

To write what cannot be written...
 that cosmic sense of TOTAL AWE...
 at my own life and experience,
 so small,

yet built out of all the ages and
 universes,
 boundless teachings and numberless
 sentient being...

Just the colossal AWE,
 at the inconceivable beauty in
 EVERYTHING,
 in Nothing,
 even in me and my times...

If ever there is nothing else,
 it is enough.

L. Todd Sullivan

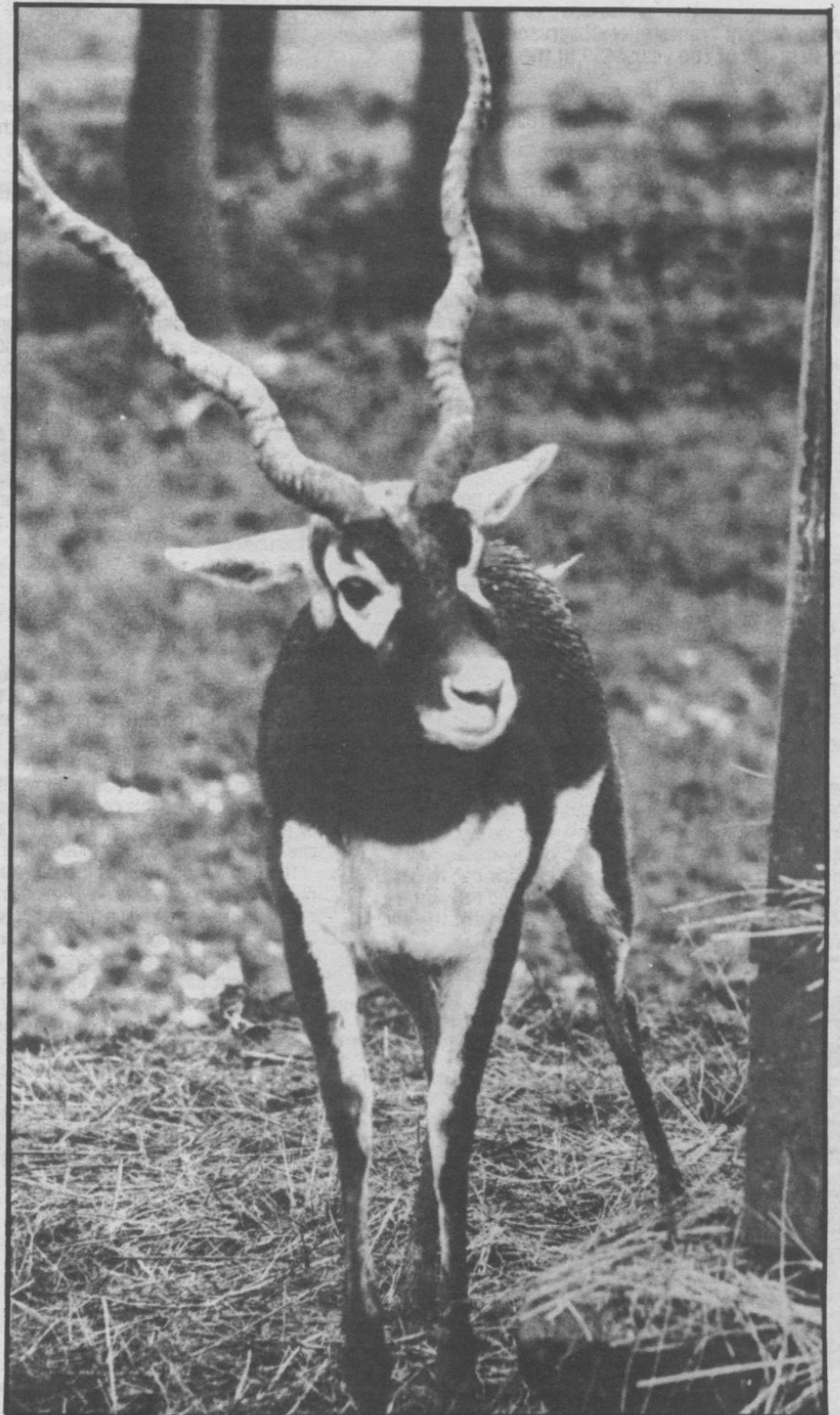


Photo by Pam Kurl

The Tableau editor, Shella Landry wishes to thank all the students who submitted creative works for the Winter Tableau. Not all of the submissions could be fitted into this magazine, however, there will be a Spring Tableau and could be resubmitted then. To pick up manuscripts and art work, contact Landry at the Commuter office, CC210.