

CAULDRON



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# CAULDRON

## Kalamazoo College

### 1985/86

#### THE CAULDRON STAFF

- David Bowers
- Chris Coon
- James Combs
- Janet Lee
- Nolan Gaudin
- Beverly Gaudin
- Col. Kibler
- Harbor Lanyon
- Kate Murphy
- Shawn Phipps
- Liz Salant
- Jane Slay
- Tim Stockin
- David Towner
- Tim Webster
- Suzanne Whitney

*And I  
Am the arrow,*

*The dew that flies  
Suicidal, at one with the drive  
Into the red*

*Eye, the cauldron of morning.*

—from "Ariel" by Sylvia Plath

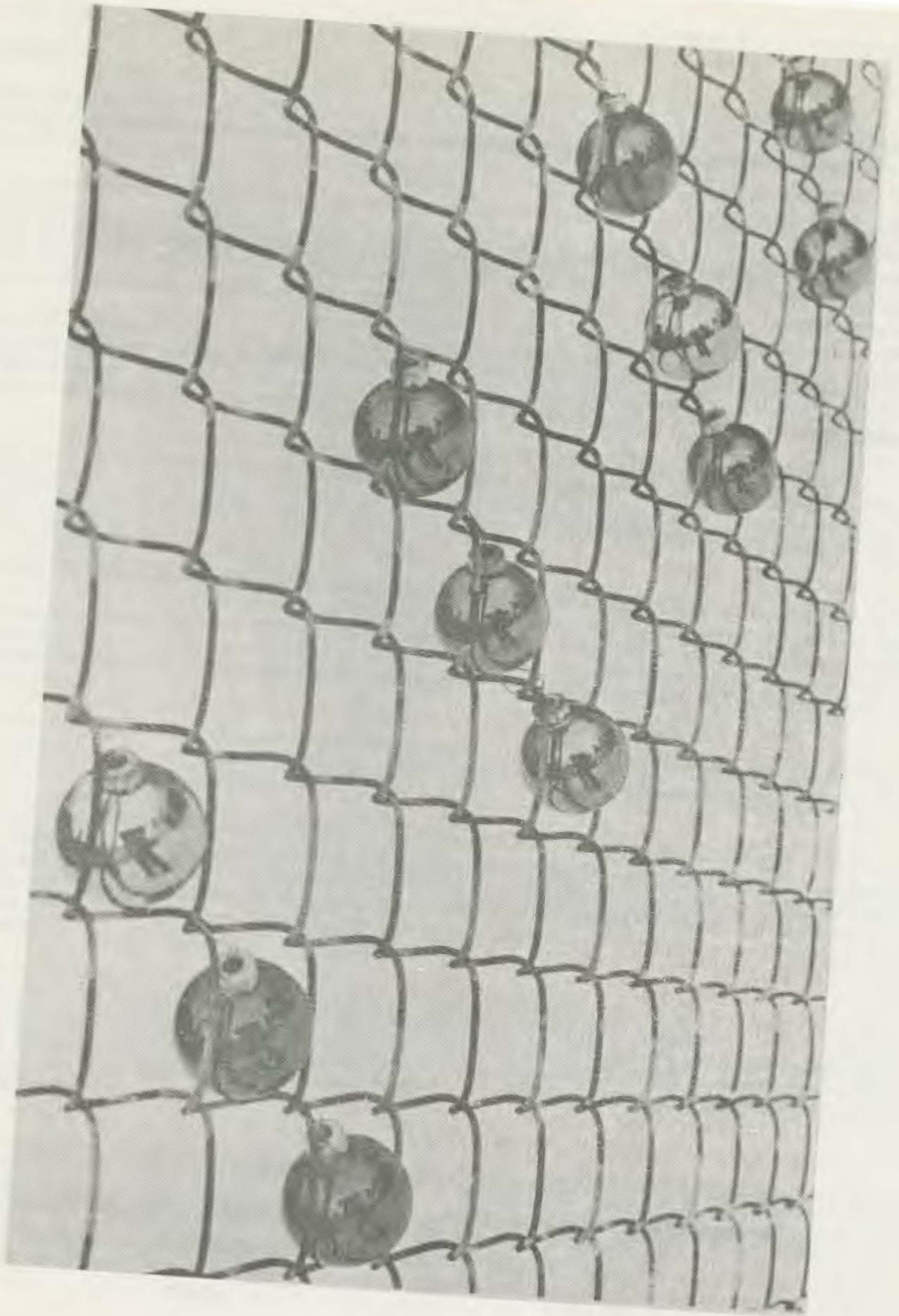
#### **THE CAULDRON STAFF**

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Chris Corcoran  
Jennifer Ciemiega  
Janette Foss  
Nathan Guequierre  
Beverly Gustafson  
Gail Kidder  
Heather Laymon  
Katie Murphy  
Susan Priller  
Luis Salazar  
Lynn Staley  
Tina Stoecklin  
David Torresen  
Tim Webster  
Samantha Whitney

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*Gail Kidder*

je ne sais plus  
ce que j'ai dit  
j'ai cru  
avoir dit  
quelque chose  
mais je n'ai  
rien dit  
sauf  
ce que j'ai dit  
mots vides

*Gail Kidder*

Can I go swimming in your stream  
(of consciousness)?  
splish  
splash

## Intimations

I don't like funerals. Maybe I should clarify that a little better. I don't like tombstones, plastic flowers, the smell of white lilies, formaldehyde, or dead people. Some people hold their breath when driving past a cemetery; I shut my eyes. I've always been meaning to take that religion class offered each spring on death, but it never fits into my schedule. Maybe next spring.

My step-mom is big on cemeteries. I mean, her idea of a fun afternoon is to drive eighty goddamn miles somewhere and walk through a cemetery. She really gets her kicks out of that. Last Christmas, when I went to visit my cousins in Fairfax, West Virginia, and my cousin suggested that we take a walk and we ended up in some two-hundred year old cemetery, it was all I could do to keep from getting ill as Karen Boked around and said things like, "Oh, here's a new one. Gee, she really died a young age. Oh, what a nice little saying." Make me sick.

When I die, I'm going to be cremated. I can't stand the thought of taking up a square inch of room in this world when a living person could be using it. My dad was going to be cremated too, that is, when he dies, but my step-mom talked him out of it. Something about he'll probably die before her, being that men die earlier than women, and she wants to be able to have something to remember him by. And look who's in the hospital all the time with bunions or bowel problems or something; she is.

I guess you could say that my first official funeral I've gone to was for my grandma. I don't remember it all that well, you see, because I was only seven years old. When you are just a kid, you can only comprehend things like Kool-Aid and coloring books and recess. You don't understand coming inside when it's too dark or cold out to play, the importance of eating green vegetables, and death.

I remember the craziest details of grandma's funeral. When we got to the church, it was open casket, which dad had told me ahead of time. It didn't even faze me. I mean, grandma didn't even look like herself in that opened box. Her face was caked with that awful orange make-up that those caretakers think gives you a healthy glow, and she was so stiff. That just isn't the last way I remember grandma. I remember her as coming over on Sunday afternoons, when I wouldn't be doing much at all, and bringing me those little sampler boxes of Russell Stover chocolates. I always ate the coconut one first, and then tried to pass the other three off on my dad.

The service was your basic funeral, I guess, but what really hit me was when grandma's women's church group all got up to sing her a farewell song. That was pretty touching, to see about forty really old ladies getting up and croaking out a song for grandma. My step-mom started bawling then.

We rode in a limousine to the cemetery, my step-mom, dad, some aunts and uncles, with the hearse right behind us. I sat in the back, reading some comic book. I think of that now and it sounds so sick, reading a comic book, when you're driving to the cemetery to say your final goodbye to your grandma, but like I said, kids can't comprehend those kinds of things. All that really happened at the cemetery was a prayer said in the building there, and grandma's casket was brought in, now all closed up. The whole family was getting pretty whipped by now, having been crying for most of the morning, so it was a good thing it was time for the reception.

We got in our car now, and drove to some restaurant in Warren Woods where the basement was reserved for us. I remember sitting with some of my cousins, eating cannelloni, drinking Pepsi, and getting hugged and kissed and pinched by all those relatives that you see about three times in your life. It was kind of dark down there, but everyone was in better spirits, laughing a bit and more relaxed than during the morning's activities. The owner of the restaurant came up to my Aunt Margaret at one point and said, "You must be relieved, dear; it's all over now." I still wonder how you can go to your grandma's funeral and eat cannelloni in the same day.

Another funeral I have been to, and I don't even know if this would qualify for a funeral, was for my sister. It was closer to a memorial service, I guess. Sal would've been thirty this past March 14th, and you know, it just doesn't seem real. I mean, she could walk through the door right now, and it would be right and normal to me. Sal had called home a few weeks before she died, just to say "hi" and talk to the family. I was the only one home, so we shot the breeze together for a half-hour or so. I'll always remember that. She had met some new guy, Rob, and school was going really well. Sal was one of those people that had to struggle for B's and C's. We're really different in that respect. I seldom crack a book, and I get by OK. Well, back to what I was saying.

It was one of those Saturday afternoons in March, you know, the kind that are a little muddy, but there's always a great smell of things growing outside, and that really gets everyone excited, that is, that spring's coming and no more salt crusting on your shoes. Anyway, dad and my step-mom were out back, near the dog pen, which the dog refuses to ever go in. They were fighting about something really stupid, like taking in the garbage cans or where the tomatoes were to be planted. I had been cleaning the guest bedroom which had previously been the family dumping ground for things we didn't want, but didn't have the heart to throw away. The phone rings and it's for my dad.

I run out back and wait for a good time to interrupt the fight. "The phone's for you, I finally yell, and eventually he runs inside and gets the phone. I make my way into the house, to hear him scream, "Get a pen, get a pen." He's sounding sort of hysterical, but that's normal for my dad, so I slowly make my way into the family room, where he's standing, tears running down his face, uncontrollably, like a May snowstorm in Michigan. I then scream, "What is the matter, what is the matter," but he waves me away and keeps bawling and blubbing over the phone. I run for my step-mom, telling her that something is wrong. I hear her dash into the family room, the click of the phone falling back into the receiver, and my step-mom's scream as my dad tries to control his voice and state to her, "Sal is dead."

I didn't even move. I didn't even lose a beat. I mean, the words sounded sort of normal to me, like "the waffles are burning," or "you be careful, young lady, when you go downtown." Sort of empty phrases that don't really sink in. I guess that's why Sal could walk through the door and it wouldn't faze me a bit.

I spent most of the next five days in my room. First of all, I couldn't handle the smell in the house. Lilies and pink azaleas all over the place. It looked like some sort of greenhouse. Second the phone wouldn't stop ringing, and some calls weren't bad, like calls from relatives, or well-wishing people calling in their condolences. It was the calls from the papers that made my stomach turn. You see, Sal was murdered. In broad daylight at one in the afternoon in her Baltimore apartment. Raped and stabbed while trying to study for an econ exam. She used her last strength to crawl to the phone and dial 911. The murder was so gruesome that it made national headlines. Can you imagine your next-door neighbors vacationing in Hawaii and hearing about Sal's death on the six o'clock news? She must've put up one hell of a fight, because furniture was ripped in half; a flowered sofa of my great aunt's and a couple of wooden caned chairs. I don't want to go on with the rest of the details. Dad has put all the newspaper articles in a brown envelope in the top shelf of his closet. He has forbidden me to ever read them. He didn't need to do that; I'm never touching that brown envelope.

So anyway, these reporters are calling up and asking questions like, "What do you wish for the court to decide, if the two suspected men are captured and put on trial?" How the hell are you supposed to answer a question like that? "I sincerely hope that all efforts are being made to apprehend the culprits and I am convinced that a jury would award them life in prison." I wanted to say something like "I hope to high hell I see them first, because I want to hang them by their fingernails for starters." Even if I had said something like that, you just know what phrase would be printed. I'm so glad I could just stay up in my room, unless some relative I hadn't seen in six years came over. Then I'd have to go downstairs, but basically, I could ignore everything.

I didn't shed a tear during the five day ordeal, and many times I felt so goddamn sacreligious for not doing so. You know, when all of the family would be over in the living room, eating walnut cake that someone in the church had brought over for us, remembering Sal's curly eyelashes, or how she used to sneak into the church to play on the organ, I would just sit there and pick out the walnuts in the cake while everyone would start sniffing. Even at the memorial service, God, everyone was around me bawling their eyes out. I just stood there and stared. It was like one of those Greek tragedies by Aeschylus, or whatever his name was, with everyone getting all dramatic and upset. All the local TV stations were there, and I just kept up my sitting and staring routine, as my dad jumped out of his pew, in the middle of some hymn we were singing, screaming at the cameramen to get the hell out of the church. Those goddamn reporters; anything for a little news.

All that we had for Sal was the memorial service. My family had her cremated and buried out near the lake, by a church Sal used to go to when she was young. You know, the same one she used to sneak into to play the organ in.

Looking back on this whole deal, I guess I can say that Sal's death has changed my life, and the lives around me. Now, I'm not saying my grandma didn't mean anything to me. I mean, I loved her, in my seven-year-old way, and she isn't here for us to go over to her house for Easter dinner and get chocolate rabbits in purple foil anymore. Now, my dad cries every Sunday morning during church. We just kind of brace ourselves during the service, waiting for him to cry, so we can hug him or squeeze his hand. He'll cry during the movies, my step-mom has told me; it's dark and no one can see him there. And last December, when step-mom was adding the orange slices to the cranberry sauce she makes each year for Christmas, she just broke down and ran to her room. So I stood next to the stove for an hour, stirring the cranberries by myself.

Last month, a good friend of mine's step-dad died. I didn't really know Jimmy's step-dad, but Jimmy's my friend, so I decided that going to the funeral would be a good, supportive, friend-like thing to do. Sam was seventy-five when he died, and had already had two heart attacks or so. He swallowed so many pills each morning, it's really amazing he didn't choke to death. So, I mean, we were all kind of expecting it, but that doesn't mean we wanted him to die or something. Jimmy flew in from school; he goes to U.C. or Loyola or Northwestern, one of those Chicago-area schools. I can't keep track of those sort of details. Well, hell, it's not the details that matter in life, anyway, it's real things.

The service was no big thing, really. I was fine. We all then drove to the cemetery where a last prayer was to be said. So we're standing around the flower-covered coffin while the priest is saying the last prayer. Jimmy was up in front, and I was several rows behind him. And then out of the clear blue, or what seemed the clear blue, Jimmy just broke down. He was standing up there, and just couldn't take it any longer. I stood back where I was, observing this whole thing, watching Jimmy's hands start to shake, flopping like two fish lying on a dock, and I found myself crying. Crying, with the smell of chocolates and cranberries stinging my wet nostrils.



*Andrea Petrini*

**Käthe Kollwitz Study**

Gail Griffin

**The Woman I Lost**

“112 pounds—do you realize you’ve  
lost a whole person?”—Melinda

I turned just in time to catch her  
disappearing around a corner,  
the edge of her coat, her left heel  
vanishing. There is no point  
in pursuit; she is already  
through a revolving door,  
heading for the cosmetics.  
I have seen her before, I think:  
as I stepped from a subway car  
she slipped into the one behind it—  
slight, not a hundred fifteen dripping wet,  
her face hidden by a headscarf.  
There is no following her now.  
But sometime today, in a buzzing street,  
I will turn suddenly, caught  
by an image in a store window,  
next to the bald unnippled mannequin  
whose haggard eyes scan her detachable hands,  
and there she’ll be, watching me.

Gail Griffin

## Running Uphill

for Cas  
1960-1982

Now, three years later, I see what you mean  
about the hills: they draw you in and up  
with the slow pull of gravity, reversed.  
Even the hurt runs clean along the thighs,  
gripping the knees. Even the strident breath  
yanked in, forced out of taut, belabored lungs  
sears like some rarer, finer air that others  
do not breathe. I finally understand  
your wide foreknowing smile when you explained  
about loving the hills.

I watched you run  
up past the body's dead weight and the ache  
of muscles, past the tired necessity  
of breath, the heart's absurd redundancy;  
and I have followed, losing you in distance,  
plugging upward, looking back to see,  
falling away behind me, my own flesh.  
And as I run, I comprehend.

The question's  
one of baggage: when you shed the load  
of fate, when you can ditch the years that trail  
behind, tripping you up like untied laces,  
and run on, lightened, pain becomes a thing  
to run through, like the rain or wind or cold,  
a medium toward something else, a force  
inside you, to be trusted, like the heart,  
whose thrumming is an anthem to the hills.

*Johnnie M.-A. Stroud*

**Harpo's Memoirs**

I remember the look  
on your face  
as you discovered  
I whistle  
while making love.  
I shrugged my shoulders,  
flashed the eyebrows,  
and kept on loving.

Anticipating an orgasm,  
I gigglesnap  
a photograph of your face,  
spilling flash powder  
all in your hair.

I then throw off the sheets,  
scramble to a corner of the bed,  
turn a complete flip,  
land on my feet,  
grab my hat,  
take up a bottle of seltzer from the night stand  
and spray you in the face.

Stepping over top of you  
to get back in bed,  
I honk twice,  
toss a cream pie in the air,  
produce from my raincoat  
a reuben on rye  
and offer you half.

Neal Peart Entre Nous Laurin Buchanan

Just be-tween us, I think its  
time for us to re-al-ize, the  
spa-ces in be-tween Leave room  
for you and I to grow.

David Bowie Shake It Laurin Buchanan

I feel like a sail-boat a- drift  
on the sea Its a brand new day,  
so when are you gon-na phone me?

# Meditations .VI. Christos

Laurin Buchanan

The first system of music consists of three staves. The top staff is a single treble clef line with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. It begins with a whole rest, followed by a half rest, and then a half note G4. The middle and bottom staves are grouped by a brace and contain piano accompaniment. The middle staff has a treble clef and the bottom staff has a bass clef. The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

The second system continues the piece with three staves. The vocal line in the top staff moves to a higher register, starting on a half note G4 and continuing with eighth and quarter notes. The piano accompaniment in the bottom two staves provides harmonic support with chords and a steady bass line.

The third system features three staves. The vocal line in the top staff has a melodic line with some slurs. The piano accompaniment in the bottom two staves continues with a consistent rhythmic and harmonic texture.

The fourth system concludes the piece with three staves. The vocal line in the top staff features a long, sweeping melodic line that spans across the system, ending with a fermata. The piano accompaniment in the bottom two staves also concludes with a fermata. The word "rit." is written above the vocal line and below the piano accompaniment to indicate a ritardando.

Tina Stoecklin

## Here There is Bread

Nested  
between the fishmonger  
and the flowershop  
it is small,  
crowded  
with the virile smell  
of yeast. It pushes  
out the opened  
door into the streets  
gleaming with morning  
and wet, momentarily  
stronger than the day's  
first catch being slapped  
wide-eyed onto beds of ice.  
And that same cat who  
waits all night  
for that fish thrusts  
its nose instead  
to the warmer draft,  
that draws it  
as it draws the old women  
who still rise before  
everyone else, their  
swollen ankles,  
their baskets on wheels,  
rocking on uneven legs,  
touching elbow and shoulder  
and wig, filling them  
with gallego rounds  
shaped like breasts  
nipples erect and powdered.  
And the baker smiling  
with no teeth and leaning  
with his thumbs on the counter  
blows tobacco smoke  
into their ears.



Marie Ellavich

A ladder outside the window  
Bushes winning hide-and-peek for me  
Bushel baskets full of apples that mature  
    in reverse and become pink blossoms  
A self-conscious looking glass  
That voice in the crowded room that keeps  
    calling your name but is connected to  
    no face  
The act of turning to the last page of a book  
    before reading it  
A clear glass of water  
The first word you ever spoke  
Men with no legs frying fish at the V.F.W.  
Bells on Sunday mornings  
    from church steeples  
    on bicycle handle bars  
    hanging over the front porch, blowing  
    in the wind  
There is something in every person  
    that incites a particular interest in  
    ambulances going by  
And refuses to let us take our eyes from that  
    balloon that falls deeper and deeper into the  
    sky until it is swallowed  
By some tiny mouth

*Christopher Tower*

**And There Is No Moon**

My mother is the wind  
my father the rain  
and I am Endymion seething in sleep  
while my new lovers chase your taunting  
spirit through the halls of this house.

When night finds me in empty houses,  
when sleep is a distant cousin  
I search cracked attic boxes  
for a forgotten shrine,  
a medallion, once worn daily—  
for the moon.

Moondust settles beneath a blank sky  
winding down the night.  
Endings to my story loom in the sky  
but never break the horizon.  
Nights measured, like my life,  
in wind-up clocks  
yield only emptiness.

Time freezes after midnight.  
Loitering in diners edged  
by coffee yawns and morning stains  
we waste our frozen minutes  
uncovering the archaeology  
of intimate conversation  
with our touching buried in the web of sleep.

There is no moon.

Sounds and sights  
swirl in sleepless night's  
wind and rain. When I hear  
dust thicken on tractors in the barn;  
when gentle thumps and unseen footfalls  
haunt the sickness in my soul,  
this depleted home. Visions of making love  
—lights on, crawl under my skin.  
And neither bring rest or answers.  
The stars testify to our madness

but there is no moon.

Late night coffee binges  
unbalance our lives—  
revelations unclocked and unspoken  
overwind our sight.  
The listening of whispered truth  
on night's wind tempts me  
to sleep and wonder:  
why we were struck down  
by hit-and-run years.

Samantha Whitney

**An Artist's Life**

Poor  
 artcrazed photographers  
 take  
 crusty loaves of french bread and brie  
 to parquet floor houses  
 with leaded windows  
 and no furniture  
 they eat  
 imported gelato  
 and sushi  
 smoke Dunhills  
 in the blue and gold box  
 and clip coupons  
 out  
 of the yellow pages  
 for Burger King

Christopher J. Taylor

**And There Is No Moon**

My mother is the wind  
 my father the rain  
 and I am Bachman waiting to sleep  
 with my new lover  
 across your hands  
 spent through the halls of his house  
 When light falls in my eyes  
 when sleep is a distant corner  
 I search through the house  
 for a forgotten dream,  
 a musician, once worn deep  
 for the moon  
 Moonlight settles beneath a blank sky  
 shining down the night  
 looking to my feet from the sky  
 but never break the horizon  
 Night revealed like my life  
 in white light  
 you only remember  
 This house after midnight  
 looking in doors ajar  
 by coffee jars and morning stains  
 we waste our hours  
 uncovering the exclusivity  
 of intimate conversation  
 with our bodies joined in the web of sleep  
 There is no moon  
 Sounds and signs  
 lead to elusive night  
 wind and rain. When I hear  
 that distant horizon in the dawn  
 when gentle breeze and unseen foliage  
 hunt the secrets in my soul  
 the distant home. Visions of melting love  
 —light on, crowd under my skin  
 and never long rest or answer  
 The stars waltz to our madness  
 but there is no moon

*Justin Lahart*

**Machias**

The license plates scream "Vacationland!"  
but no one here listens to them. Only  
the gray seals act as they should—  
dancing their waltz around these granite islands—  
Thunder Crag, Sleeping Witch.  
In summer the men haul in lobster pots  
with frayed hands as their wives  
and children sink beneath the sun  
in fields of dust as they pull berries from  
bushes with metal rakes.  
Those that do vacation here play croquet  
on lawns that hang over the sea  
and talk about the hardscrabble charm  
that the locals with the tar paper houses  
have. In winter, ice grips  
the land like a glove and a man  
has nothing to do but drink  
and lay down upon his wife.

*Benjamin R. Clarke*

**Sassafras**

**(After Stanley Plumley's "Peppergrass")**

Tasting the woods, by sight, by smell  
by our touch, tasting we remember  
Indian-Cucumber, spring buds, mint—  
wipe the dirty part away  
from your find as if the dirt the grime  
wasn't bitterly delicious, this tree  
lustrous, tea merchants gold, tasting  
what is free: blue afternoons as we pulled down  
fleshy leaves, chewed, smiled like boys . . .

Tasting we held on to  
the child song days, free as breathing.

We were Indians in a Red man's land  
tasting, tasting sassafras  
combing the grass, talking to the wind.



Jean Roberts

Lynn Staley

### Bertha

That was not me.  
I was always crafty  
a witch  
some say  
waiting for Gracie to fall  
asleep, dead drunk  
taking the key.  
You wonder why I laugh.

Perhaps I hired  
a stunt double.  
Too modern, you say  
but I was a woman  
ahead of my time.  
I am the archetype  
and the example.

They wish him back  
his eye  
maybe the hand  
but they never wish me  
back my life.  
I paid the higher price.  
I always did.  
I am mad,  
a witch  
some say  
waiting . . .  
waiting for him to call me  
to call me by my  
rightful human  
name.  
And if I had but lived  
my last word  
very quietly  
would have been "Edward."

It is lucky  
that I did not  
for instead  
among the flames  
aching behind me  
another name swells  
into the darkness  
and choking on smoke  
and crackling, dancing sparks  
I set you  
all  
free.

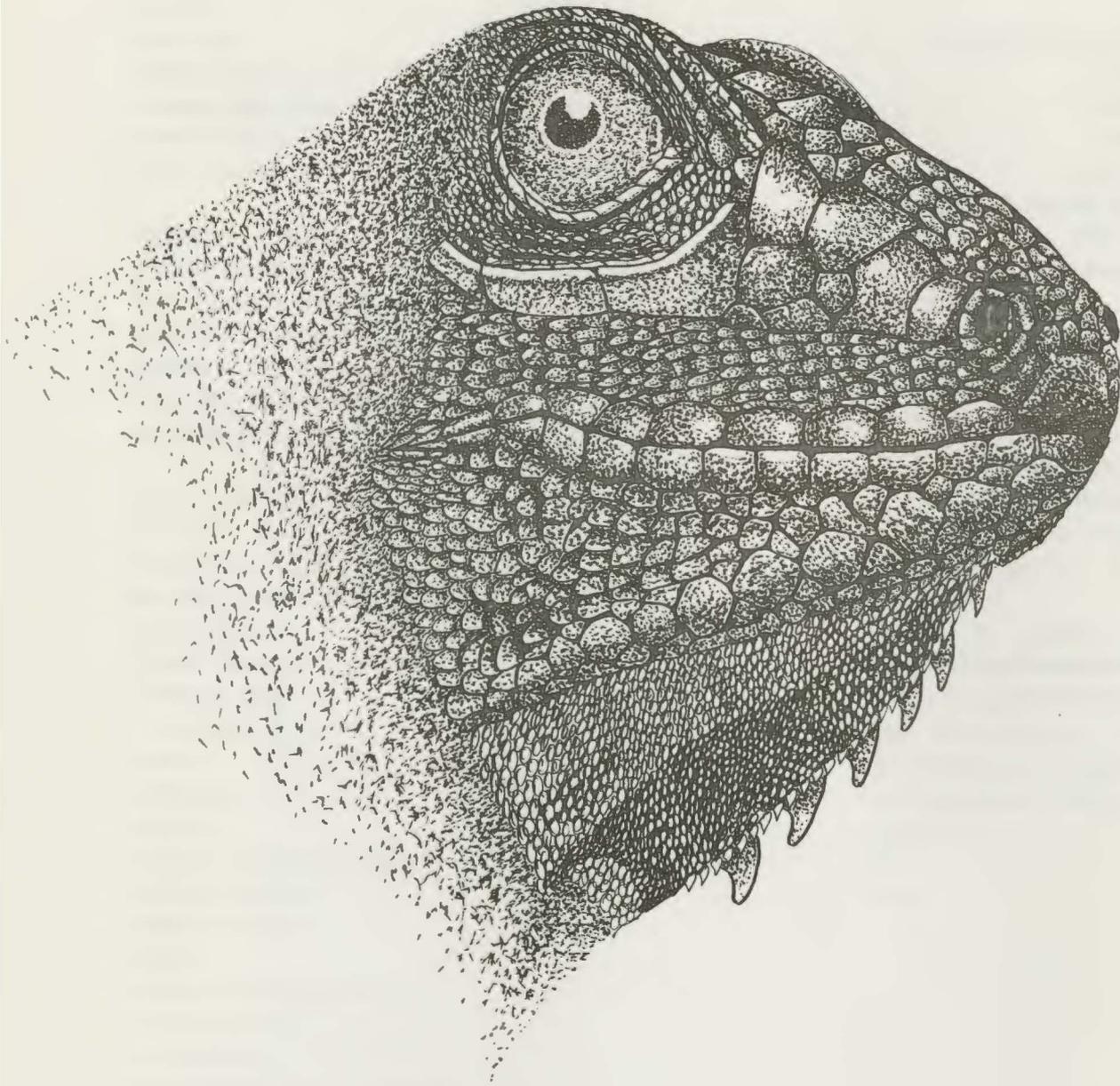
\* Bertha is Edward Rochester's wife, from Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*.

Lynn Staley

**Tattoo**  
**(from U.P.)**

She is not  
a bright  
woman, beyond knowing  
who gets  
what, and at  
what table.  
And her name  
is Alice or Helen or  
Sally and she  
is not proud not  
young.  
She has never left  
her home more  
than fifty miles  
behind her.  
But around her wrist  
as she reaches  
to pour your coffee  
you see a  
bracelet  
of roses in red  
full-blooming and budding,  
leaves and thorns,  
tattooed.

So close to death as it was in  
the  
a creature black and  
slimy  
has taken into our hearts.  
And now it's dead  
dead as a doornail  
and we miss it.



Brian Messner  
Scott Sitner .

## Ode to Spring

I

Oh Spring, Spring, Springs,  
How sweetly thy name rings.  
The trees are green  
And long to be seen;  
The sun smiles down on all,  
As bat meets ball.

II

The flowers are colorful  
And ever bountiful,  
And happy chirp the birds.  
The clouds are white,  
The light is bright,  
The children run in herds.

III

Oh Spring,  
You're pretty keen.  
Oh Spring,  
You want to be seen.  
Oh Spring,  
How nifty you are.  
It's good you're not too far.

Scott Sitner  
Brian Messner

## Ode to a Fly

Death came so quickly for  
our little friend  
wings flapping  
body shaking  
and spinning around.

So alive in death as it was in  
life  
a creature black and  
slimy  
has fallen into our hearts.

And now it's dead  
dead as a doornail  
and we miss it.

As the Sun Set

She laid the pills out carefully on the table.

"All ready," she said.

He came in and closed the door quietly behind him.

"Hello, Jane. Everything under control?"

"Soon," she said. "Very soon." She swirled the water around in the pitcher. The ice cubes clinked softly against the glass.

"Is the water cold?"

"This could be straight vodka, Nick, and you'd never know it."

"That cold, huh?"

She put the pitcher down and stared out the window. "Actually, I never considered vodka. Well, too late now."

"Is it?" he said. She turned to look at him.

"Yes." A helicopter flew by outside. The noise was frightening.

"They're coming to get us," she yelled, waving.

He sneaked up behind her and put his arms around her waist.

"Don't joke," he said, kissing her on the ear.

"Sorry."

The helicopter was gone.

He sat on the sofa with his back to the window and watched her walk around the room.

"They kind of scared me," she said.

"Not me."

"They scared me. I'm easily scared, though, you know?"

She sat at the table and began silently counting the pills.

He leaned forward. "Could you count aloud please, Jane? It soothes me."

"Read a book. You're bored."

"There are no books. Except Gideon's Bible." He picked it up off the end table. "And I've already read it."

"So write one."

"Ah." He stood up. "That brings up a very interesting subject."

"What's that?" she said, smiling, but not looking up from her pills.

"Time."

"Time, thyme is the spice of life. And it's rare."

"I guess I'll never write a book, Jane."

"Very good, Nick. You're learning."

"Yeah. That's another one."

"Learning?"

"Yeah. How about facts?"

"Yes, Nick. I'm weak in the arts, but strong in arithmetic."

"I used to play golf."

"Did you?"

"Not very well. My best hole was the nineteenth. Gee, I could sure do with some vodka. Is there time?"

She laughed. "Yes."

He stood up. "I'll run down to the lobby. Back in a flash."

He walked down the hall to the elevator. She wasn't terribly happy about the vodka idea. But one had to enjoy life.

He payed too much for a fifth of Commissar and went back upstairs. When he got there, she was fooling with some electric wires.

He put the bottle down, enjoying the gentle thud.

"What's that?"

"Tape recorder."

"Ah. Is there any ice left?"

"Keep your priorities straight, Nick."

"Jane, Jane. Can't you enjoy life?"

"She stood up and looked at him. "No," she said. "As it turns out, I can't. You know what I mean?"

"Yes, Jane. I'm sorry. That was the wrong thing to say."

She took his hand and kissed it. "Forget it, Nicky. Pour me a drink, will you?"

"Certainly, my dear," he said.

She went back to her electrical stuff. He unwrapped two plastic cups from the bathroom and stuck his hand in the water pitcher. He grabbed a couple of ice cubes and put one in each glass. She was looking at him.

"I washed my hands," he said.

"Testing. One, two, three, testing," she said. "This is Jane Henry, testing."

He opened the vodka and poured it.

"Pity we don't have any lime juice," he said.

"Testing, one, two, three . . ." the tape recorder said.

She knelt on the floor and unplugged it.

"It works." She wrapped the cord around the machine and put it in the dresser drawer.

"What's it for?"

"A souvenir. Looking at it depresses me."

"Here." He handed her a drink. "health and happiness."

She smiled. "And long life." She tossed it back and coughed.

He took a sip and handed her the bottle.

"How long till sunset?" he asked.

She checked her watch and looked up at the ceiling, calculating. "About twenty minutes, maybe less."

"Well, bottoms up," he said.

"Yes." She poured herself another.

"I have an idea. Let's turn the couch around to face the window."

"In a minute."

He leaned against the desk.

"Can you smash that mirror?"

He looked behind him. His own puffy face stared back at him. He looked around the room.

"Sure. Why?"

"I'm afraid it might interfere," she said simply.

He picked up a suitcase rack and folded it.

"Stand back."

"Wait." She tore a blanket off the bed and draped it over the mirror's frame. "Now."

He stabbed at it with the aluminum legs. There was a muffled crash and the glass fell heavily into the blanket.

"Seven years bad luck," she said.

He put the suitcase rack on the desktop to keep any of the glass from falling on the floor.

"We didn't really need to break it. Once it was covered with the blanket, I mean."

"Yes." She closed the bathroom door. "But I feel better all the same."

There was a knock at the door.

"That," he said, "will be the porter, wondering if everything is all right, saying he heard a noise."

She opened the door a crack. He couldn't see who it was.

"My husband sneezed," she said. "He has a bad cold."

"Atchoo," he said.

"No, that won't be necessary. Thank you very much."

She closed the door and leaned against it sensuously. "He wanted to know if he should call a doctor."

He laughed. "I'm not dead yet."

She hooked the safety chain into place and jumped up on the bed.

"You'll get it dirty," he said absently.

"Big deal," she said, hopping down on the other side. "Help me move this table."

He got hold of the other end and lifted. A few of the pills fell on the carpet.

"Damn," she said, and knelt to pick them up.

He leaned over and watched her. She counted them quickly and put them all in her shirt pocket. He thought briefly about her breasts. Then they lifted the table and set it down between the bed and the desk.

"We're trapped," he said.

She was laying out the pills again. "Use the bed."

He leaped onto the bed and started bouncing. "Trampoline artist, Nick Watford, was confined to bed earlier today," he shouted, "due to a table in the way."

She looked at him and smiled. "Time to move the couch, you funny man."

He jumped off the bed and landed with a flourish. "During the Depression, Mr. Watford was forced to make a living as a moving man."

"Careful. You'll knock the pills off the table again."

The couch was not as easy to move as the table had been. He knocked over a lamp, but they finally managed to turn it around and he picked the lamp up again.

"I think the bulb's broken," he said.

"We won't need it." She was banging the pillows with the palm of her hand.

"Mmm."

She stopped banging and looked out the window. "What's that you said about depression?"

"I don't remember."

"You must remember. It wasn't more than thirty seconds ago."

"When I sat on the couch, I made a depression."

"I took care of that."

"I know, but is that it?"

"What?"

"What I said."

"I don't know. You said it."

He picked up the bottle in one hand and his glass in another. "Shall we sit down, my dear?"

"Of course, my dear. The bottle?" He held it up. "Oh, you've got it."

"Your glass is on the dresser." He pointed.

They sat down. The sun was just beginning to set.

"It's still very bright," he said.

"Give it time," she said.

He laughed. "And a pinch of salt."

Slowly, the glare faded and they could look straight at it. The sky was light purple and about half of the orange ball was gone. They sat and watched it disappear, sipping their drinks as darkness closed in on them. When it was quite dark, she spoke.

"Switch on the lamp."

He tried it. It didn't work. "I guess I broke it."

"Damn." She got up and turned on the reading lamp by the bed.

"It's time," she said.

"I didn't hear a knock," he said.

She took the tape recorder out of the dresser drawer and began unwrapping the cord. "Don't plan, just let it happen."

He sipped his drink and poured her a refill as she plugged the tape recorder in.

She sat down again with the tape recorder on her lap.

"Damn," she said, "I forgot the light."

"I'll get it. Don't get up."

He walked around the couch. She sat straight, staring at the city lights. He turned off the lamp. All he could see was her outline, framed against a flashing Coca-Cola sign. She didn't move.

He sat down without a sound. She didn't look at him. For a long time, she just stared. Then, finally, she blinked and turned to him with a sigh.

"You ready?"

He grinned. "As ready as I'm ever going to be."

"You have to be really ready. If you're never going to be ready, then you'll never be ready."

"Yes."

"I've started recording." He looked down and she moved her finger, exposing the little red light.

"Condenser mike. Just talk in your normal voice."

He couldn't think of anything to say.

"First let us introduce ourselves," she said. "I'm Jane Henry." She elbowed him in the ribs.

"And I'm Nick. Um . . . Nicholas Watford, trampoline dancer and furniture mover."

"Not so loud," she whispered.

In the silence, he could hear the humming of the machine as the wheel turned, recording nothing.

"This is a souvenir," she said. "A calling card of sorts."

"A sort of 'un-calling card,'" he said.

"The view is great," she said. "And so is the vodka. We're on top of the world." She was getting excited.

"And the countdown for lift-off has begun," he said.

"I would like to end with the words of the great American poet: 'Let what will be, be.'"

"And I, furniture mover and smasher of mirrors, would like to apologize to the management and suggest that you sell the tape recorder to cover the damages."

She switched it off with a click.

"Not very elegant," he said. "But sincere."

"Yes." She put the tape recorder on the ground. "Shall we listen to it?"

"Not on your life."

She smiled. "Why not? How will we know it worked?"

"Faith, Jane. Faith."

"Fill the glasses up." She got up and walked over to the table.

"Can you hand me the water pitcher?"

"No. We'll use vodka."

"Yeah, but the ice cubes."

"Ah, yes." She handed it to him. The outside was wet with condensation. He grabbed the remaining ice cubes and put them in the glasses. Then he slowly filled them to the rim with vodka. There was about a quarter of the bottle left. For the porter who wanted to call a doctor. He put it under the couch.

She was beside him again.

"Put out your hand." He did and she counted out eleven pills into his palm.

"You're heavier than me. I gave myself ten."

"It's enough?"

"Plenty. Trust me."

"Oh, I do."

They swallowed the pills and finished their drinks.

"Any more vodka?"

"All gone," he said, wishing he hadn't broken the mirror.

"Take care, Nick."

"I will, Jane. You too, you hear?"

"I've only just noticed that Coke sign, Nick."

"Cool, huh."

"Yes." She lay down with her head in his lap. He stroked her hair.

"I'm falling asleep, Nick."

"Sleep tight, Jane."

"See you soon, Nick." Her breathing was easy and she didn't say anything.

He felt tired. She began to snore quietly. He slipped out from under her and jumped on the bed. He bounced up and down to the rhythm of the flashing Coca-Cola sign.

He could see her on the couch, being lit up by the sign every time he jumped. The neighbors would hate them.

Luis Salazar

Shortwaves

inside

London Taiwan Bangkok Berlin  
sounds broken, slung to the horizon on a wave  
crested and rushing to background noise  
in the stutter of sunspots, echoes of  
the big bang, the pre-bomb to the bomb.  
I can hear specks of lead punching through people  
in the crosshair of Beirut,  
through a curtain of comment; Andromeda counting  
centuries, turning in the cradle.

above

Some photos return, unable to find peace in a blanket  
of eons, the thoughtless chatter of moons. They  
find an unwary antenna, fill it with news of  
Cuban missiles, Tet offensives and statistics  
of napalm and tropical fruit. Taiwan  
mutters rainy rhythms, four tones more than  
I can hear. But I listen.

below

In the tower, at night with the bells, I tune, crouch, and  
fog the heavy glass, wind sucking at the panes lit  
from below, from headlights, bedlights, cigarette glow.  
They all talk, in the moth music of a dial unable to stop  
turning about its axis.  
But I listen.

Heather Laymon

### Experiment by a Genius

He has chosen to use his sabbatical for an experiment. The Economics professor is cohabitating with a pig colony his deranged uncle runs.

Peeling off his three-piece suit, he sinks into the mud. Snorting in chorus, the pig colony welcomes a new body to rub their snouts against.

Sharing his life with the pigs, he begins to snort in his sleep and his white skin turns pink to match his companions'. He follows the pigs everywhere, carrying his legal pad through the mud, jotting notes.

Being a vegetarian, he decides against butchering his colony, and builds a manure recycling plant. Each pig poops down a chute to the basement. Pig committees scatter vegetable seeds into rich soil. By summer, huge exotic vegetables flourish, breaking through windows and bending the ceiling with their gigantic stems.

When the newspapermen come to take pictures of the phenomenon, he wonders what his ex-wife will say when she sees his pink buttocks on the front page.

**I Am a Word in a Foreign Language—Margaret Atwood**

At the window, I sit  
with my chair tipped  
and a picture book,  
*Yoruba Blue*,  
lying on my lap.  
The pages turn and begin  
to smell like the wind  
of August and night earth  
—the comfortable water

smell of old paper. Raffia  
must smell this way.  
A Yoruba woman must bind  
adire with this smell.

Blue is her favorite color because  
when she wears adire  
beaten upon  
the indigo ground,  
the material intoxicates  
her. Drunk, she sits  
and I sleep

wordless.



*Jean Roberts*

Jeffrey O'Brien

### Confession of a Grave Robber

Above the scruples of this mound—  
A breast left bitten by the moon.  
This night rides the back of my neck.  
I wrap my fingers in cheesecloth  
And rake for baubles in barefeet,  
Neglecting the novelty of poplars  
Scratching my intention.  
When I dig deeper  
The cypress quiver with delight.

Heather Laymon

### The Stranger

who drives this cab has a beard like Jesus  
wears a wedding ring because he's married to God  
is determined that you contemplate Christ  
forces healthy food on you (a child who  
only eats Pop Tarts and Captain Crunch)  
loves you and thinks of you constantly  
forgets your birthday  
buys you a silver flute  
hasn't seen you for a year  
sends religious pamphlets  
writes letters in beautiful calligraphy telling  
you how selfish you are  
gave you blue eyes, flat fingernails  
and an athletic build  
makes mom's voice nervous on the phone.

*Luis Salazar*

**Phonebook Wisdom**

He who shall purposely overlook, shall trip on the over,  
fall on the look, and thus become blind to gravity in the  
situation.

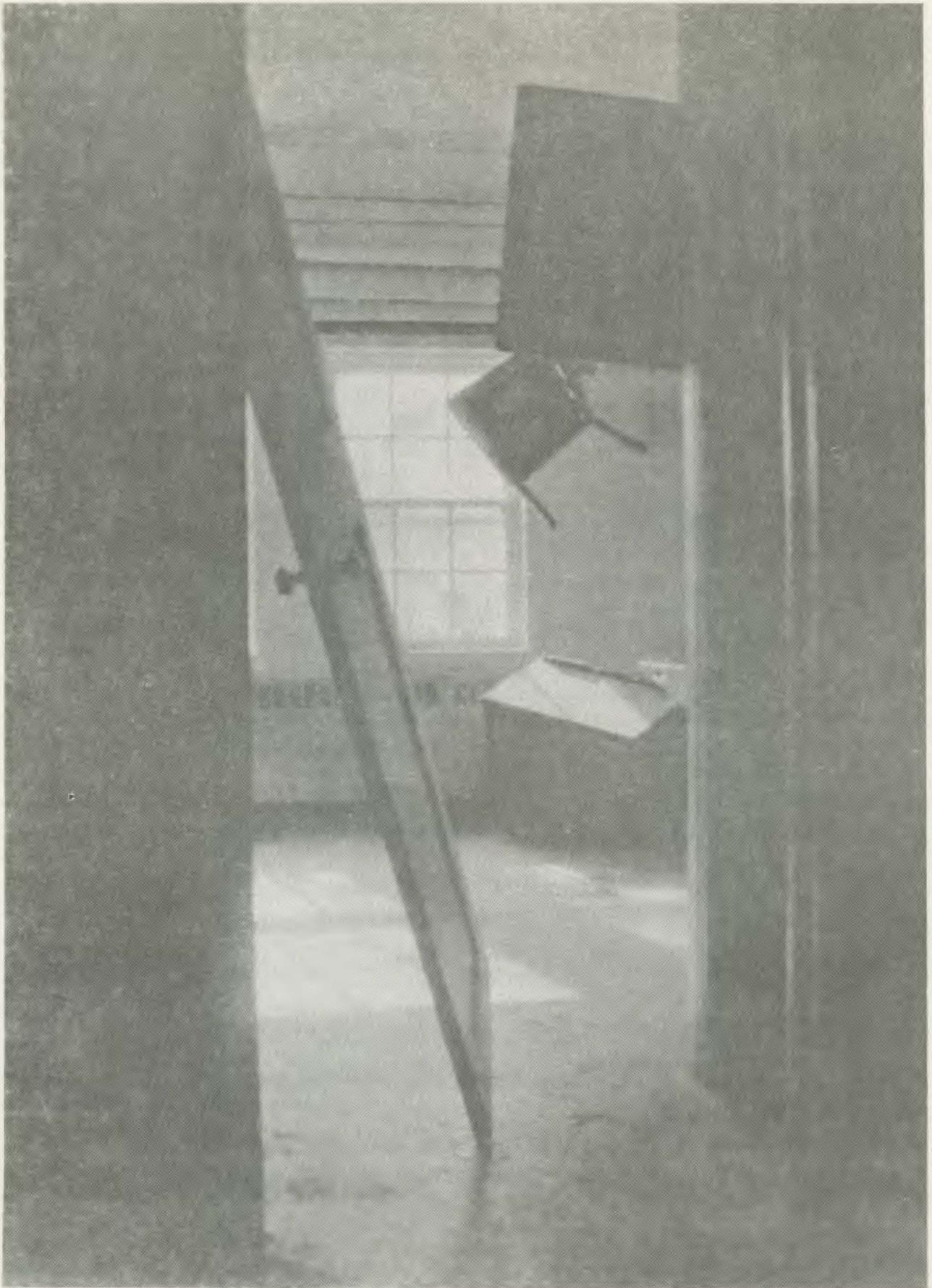
It happens to the best of us, bleary and hung  
on the horizon of sleep. And some awake.

Few realize that if God is omniscient, He knows how to make pineapple  
upside down cake, cheerlead, and that killing is killing, no matter  
how you cut it.

Some of us are at it again, though, the enrapturing  
forgetfulness in cobalt blue, stealing, pissing  
the time away, ensuring balance in the large eye. Everyone  
knows how many die each minute, how many cars drop their  
drivers off only to escape,

but no one has yet calculated how many moths elude the candle.

We are too busy flying.



*Nathan Guequierre*

Samantha Whitney

**You're in My Room**

You're in my room  
those mahogany wood closet doors  
no longer shut  
they overflow  
with dirty clothes

You're making love in my bed  
you read pre-suicidal poetry in my bed  
you probably eat  
cereal  
late at night  
in my bed.

I can't stand the dirt; your filth.  
Dust cloths are foreign to your hand  
my dresser is so covered  
in dust  
in it  
I can write  
all the names of the persons who lived in my room  
before you.

you have filled my desk  
with faces

I don't recognize

I barely know the walls

*Lynn Staley*

### **Ode to the Larger-Size Thermos**

A small bottle would  
carry two cups of  
coffee, and would  
last the morning, resting  
behind the cracked,  
black vinyl seat of  
the bulldozer.

But for Chuck  
two cups would not  
make the ride to  
the job, to the suburbs  
they were raising. So  
he carried his in  
an emptied milk carton,  
half-gallon size, spout  
paper-clipped shut.  
And he would cradle  
it in his hands as he  
drove, and pull in  
for work grinning.  
All day he would  
smell of sweat,  
of fresh dirt and  
coffee, morning-  
spilled.

*Barb Breeden*

### **Wet Letter Day**

Last week you sat writing  
With your back against a rock  
In the Peruvian countryside.  
Later you hiked in the rain.  
Your words are now slurred from the dampness.

Maybe this morning you saw a wheelbarrow  
Full of beans, dragging an old man.  
And at noon you feasted on something  
You couldn't quite pronounce, bought from an old woman  
With leather hands and big brown shoes  
Who wanted you to buy two.

This evening your feet will learn  
That the sand stays warm long after sundown.  
And your eyes will follow the comfortable seascape  
Until they reach an unfamiliar sky.

*Diane Harbaugh*

### **The Bus to Dachau**

The bus to Dachau is orange  
Like other buses and waits  
Like others in the same place for people.  
Its board only says Dachau though,  
Not streets,  
So everyone knows.

The bus driver is old enough,  
I watch his face for clues.  
My arm brushes a German's with bus motion.  
We shift away.  
I watch the driver.

Maybe he does penance hourly  
Driving Americans.  
Maybe all of the drivers take turns.

Did he live here, see the glow,  
Drop the gas?  
Does he feel that board above him  
Showing Dachau  
Like others feel their signs?

At night when driving's over  
He takes Dauchau off the bus  
and lets it rest.  
He carries the board away to sit  
While he traces the letters of the place with his fingers  
Over and over.



Nathan Guequierre

### **Magic**

Across from me, on the train  
sat a woman I didn't know. Her  
face was thin and pretty,  
and her hair held  
the sunlight that came in  
the window for a second,  
and let it go. She  
ate an apple and I  
could see her teeth as  
she opened her mouth.  
I wrote a letter,  
and she read a book,  
and outside the October day  
crystalized into  
an October evening. We never  
said a word. We kept  
going. Had she talked  
to me:

    You look thinner, she said  
What, I said, I bought a head  
of lettuce today for fifty cents.  
You always know where to look, she said.  
We never said a word, but  
she was pretty, and sometimes  
she looked out the window  
at the sun and the hills.  
And when we stopped  
and she got off, the last  
little bit of sunlight stayed  
and lit up where she  
had been.

Sometimes

    just before  
I fall asleep, I think  
of a poem. I don't  
write it down; I have dreams,  
by morning the moon is gone  
and my stomach is empty.  
And who am I,  
that everywhere I go,  
I expect magic at every  
moment? I who go  
places without even thinking.



