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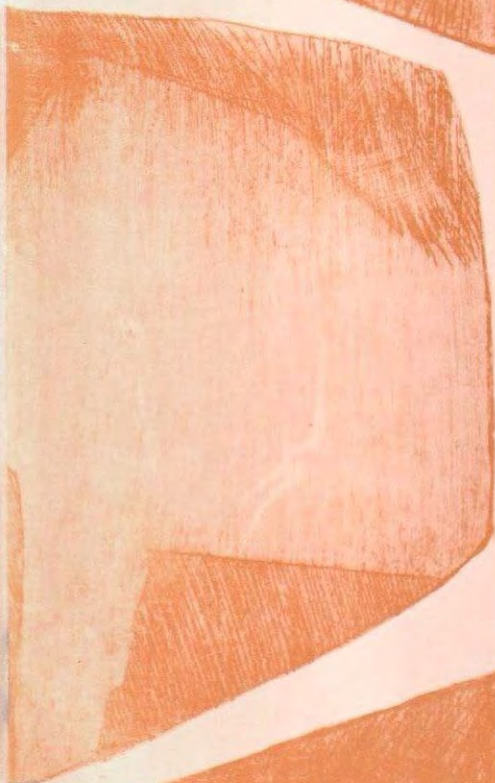
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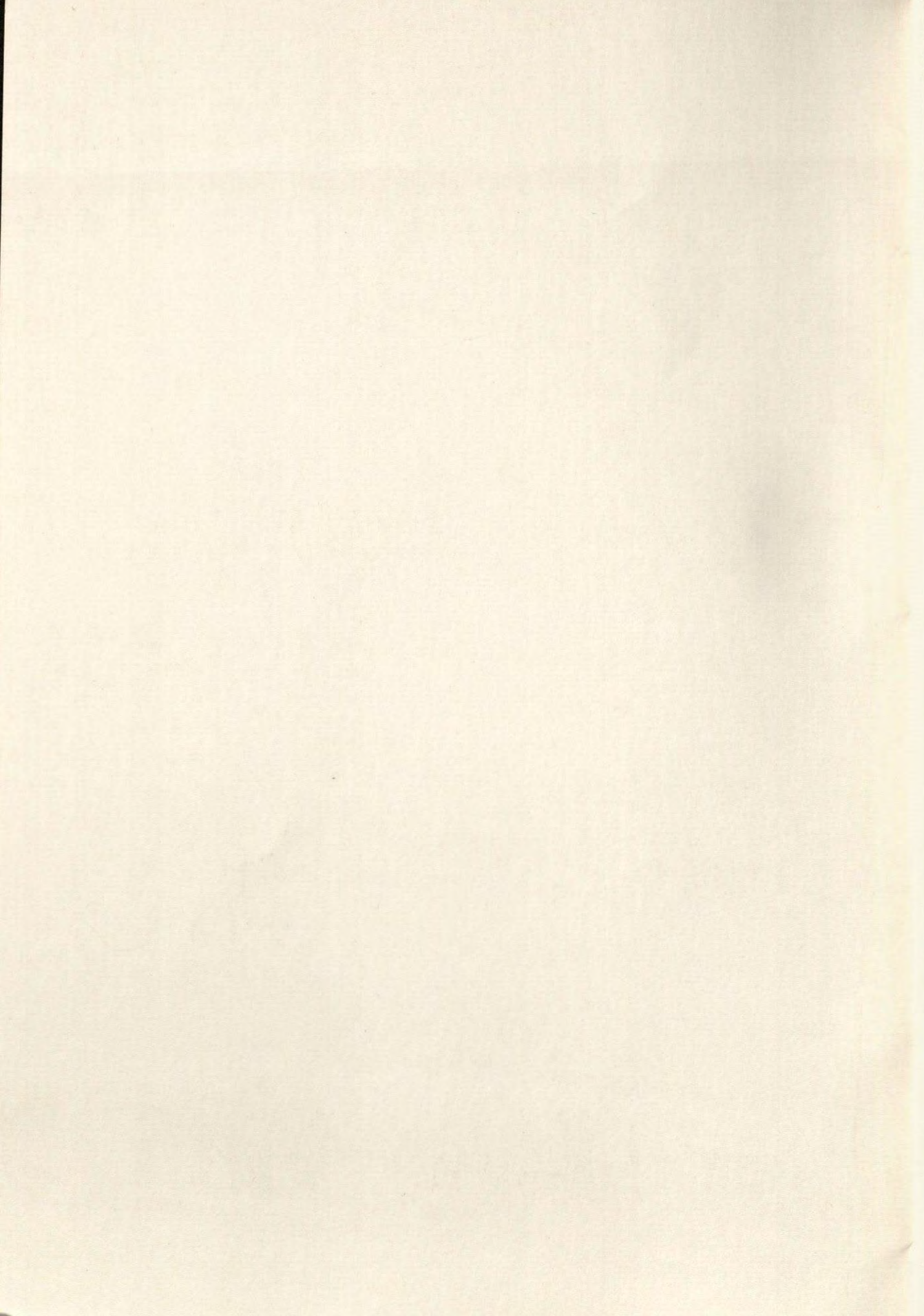
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Spring '65









Insight

7/2

Spring 1965

Connecticut College

New London, Conn



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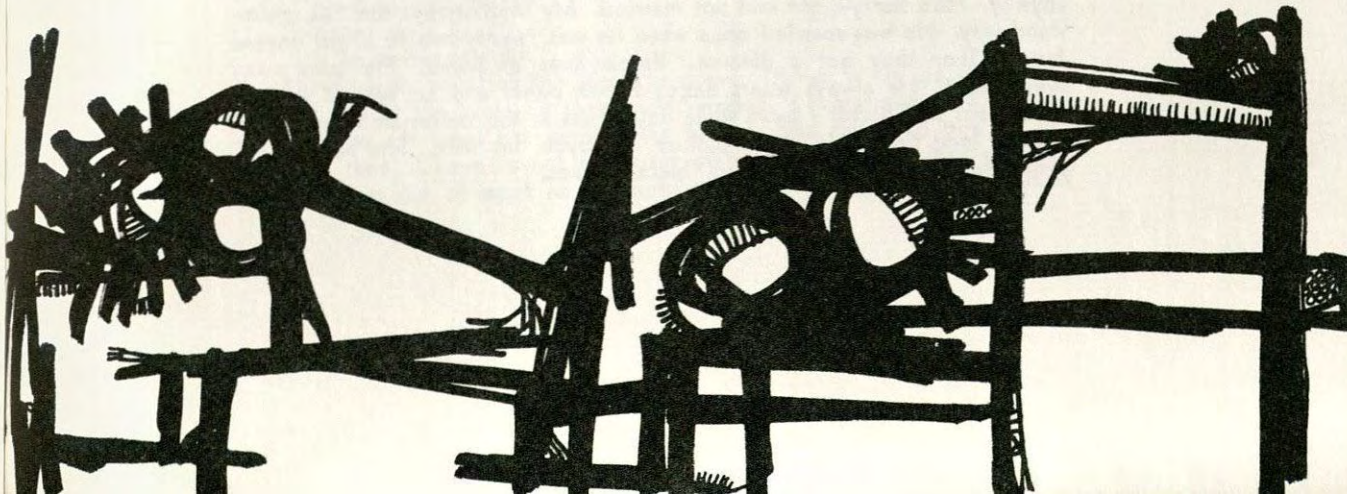
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Marjorie Kaitz:

### "HAPPY AS THE GRASS WAS GREEN"

As long as I can remember, Joyce's grandmother has lived next door to me. Joyce comes to her grandmother's house every day after school because her mother works in the afternoon. She's a model. Joyce and I like to sneak past the No Trespassing sign into Mr. Olins' backyard. Joyce's grandmother says that Mr. Olins has a rifle and will shoot us if we pass the sign. But he hasn't yet. Joyce gets mad at me sometimes because her mother tells her she ought to lose weight and be thin like me. Joyce's grandmother makes delicious crusty brown things from left-over chicken called greven. Joyce usually eats most of it.

On my last birthday, I got a walkie-talkie. Each end looks like a black telephone and has a button on it for calling your friend. Joyce's grandmother is very strict and makes her go to bed before me. She has to go right to sleep. She can't even read. Once she tried reading with a flashlight under the covers. When her grandmother came in to kiss her good night, she caught her. She had to go to bed an hour earlier for a week. Joyce and I use the walkie-talkie a lot, but it's usually when we're in the woods and can see each other. The wire between the telephones is long and I want to string it from my window to Joyce's. That's the best thing about her grandmother's house. Our windows are on the same side. Her grandmother's is in the front. Her uncle Bernie has a room next to Joyce's, but he wouldn't care if Joyce stayed up a little later. He usually isn't home anyway. He's thirty-eight and not married. My mother says she can understand why. He was married once when he was twenty-two to a girl named Joyce. Then they got a divorce. Bernie lives at home. He goes away every night. He always wears baggy brown pants and an orange shirt. I once crept into Bernie's room while Joyce was in the bathroom. She always takes a long time. He has a picture of Joyce, his wife. She has a long, brown pony tail. He has naked, black statues.



Joyce and I are going to put the walkie-talkie from my bedroom to hers. I'm not sure the wire will reach and I'm afraid someone might hear me buzz Joyce and wake up. We're not going to do it 'til about eleven o'clock. Bernie will probably be out much later than that and her grandmother will be asleep. The best time to do it is on a Friday night. No school next day. But her grandfather will probably catch us. He's mean. He's a cantor in a temple in Wellesley, where Joyce lives. I went once and he can hardly sing. He almost died once last year. He had a heart attack and was in the hospital for four months. Joyce's mother couldn't go to work a lot. She had to visit him in the hospital. Joyce couldn't go because she wasn't sixteen. We were alone all day. After her grandfather came home from the hospital, it was spring. He used to sit in the backyard or sometimes rake the gravel in the driveway. He never says hello to me. My mother asked him how he was feeling and he said he wished he had died. It would have been better. My mother says he shouldn't talk like that. Joyce probably wouldn't care if he did die. If he comes home from temple when I'm buzzing Joyce, he'll spank her. Everything Joyce and I want to do that's fun, he doesn't like. He always makes Joyce's mother feel bad too. He says she doesn't know how to bring up children. She shouldn't leave Joyce every afternoon and she shouldn't give Joyce so many presents. Joyce's mother's name is Rita. I hate that name. The summer that Joyce and I went to camp together, all the kids used to kid her about her mother's hair. It's white but has blue and orange lines in the back, where the pug is. The worst thing was when the kids asked her why her name was Cummins but her name tapes said Singer. I knew why. Joyce made me promise not to tell. Her regular father was in Florida and wasn't coming back. Joyce could hardly remember him. He left a long time ago. His name was Charles. Philip is very nice. He has gray hair and is an artist. He even painted pictures all over the cabinets in their kitchen. Even though it's Friday, we're going to take a chance and set it up tonight. When I buzz, I'll do it very fast so that no one can hear. If it reaches, Joyce can put the walkie-talkie under her pillow so the buzz won't be so loud. I can't wait until it gets dark to do it. Joyce says we should attach it right away before it gets too dark to see. The black cord is very thin. Everyone will think it's part of the TV antenna. Joyce is going into her bedroom to open the window. I wonder how I can throw her end over to her window without breaking it. It's only plastic. I'll get my father's ladder. I'll leave Joyce's end dangling out of my window. The ladder just reaches her window. Oh boy! We both shut our windows to try it out.

"Hi Joyce."

"Hi Susan."

"It works."

"I know."

"Well, let's talk and really try it out."

"OK."

"I have nothing to say."

"Neither do I."

"It'll be better tonight."

I can hardly wait for the night to come. Dinner is always so slow. I have to stay at the table 'til everyone's finished. I sometimes wish I didn't have a sister. It takes her eight hours to eat. She puts one pea on her fork at a time. I have to eat every bit of my meat. My mother says she gets the best cut of meat at the butcher shop because she gets Joyce's



mother to wait on her. She says I ruin it by eating it so burnt. It always makes the pan impossible to clean. I thought Joyce told me her mother was a model. When I was little, I hardly ate anything. My grandmother used to feed me sometimes. She told me stories about when she was a little girl in Russia. She came over to this country when she was sixteen all by herself. The Landens knew her and let her stay with them 'til she got a better job than the one in the factory. During a story, I can forget how bumpy the meat tastes. I hate meat so much that last time we had it, I pretended to put it in my mouth, but I was really putting it in my napkin. I stuck it in my pocket and put it in the barrel when I got outside. Of all the nights to pick, Daddy is telling a story about how he and his father used to do things together on Sunday afternoons when he was young. He died a year after I was born while Daddy was in the navy. During the High Holidays, Daddy always goes to the cemetery. We all wait in the car. Afterwards we go to Nana and Papa's for a big lunch. When Daddy comes back to the car, he's very quiet. Once he had tears in his eyes. He always looks so sad when he's talking about Papa Aaron. Maybe he needs a friend like Joyce. A good desert. Peach melba. I hope no one's seen the walkie-talkie. It'll be dark in about an hour. No one will see it then. I better be good now, in case I get caught later. But if I'm too good, they'll think something's funny.

It's only nine. I guess I can start getting ready for bed. If it takes a long time, it'll be time to talk to Joyce by then.

"'Night, Mom. 'Night Dad. Sleep tight. Don't let the bugs bite." I have to say that every night. If I don't, I won't wake up in the morning.

"Good night, dear. You know that I just love you."

"I know that, Mom."

"Good night, fatstuff. You know, your mother and I have been very proud of you lately. You're really becoming a fine, little girl. Your mother and I often talk to different people who tell us what a difficult time they're having bringing up their children. They can't understand why we haven't had any problems at all. The whole world's full of problems. Most people are dissatisfied with what they have. If I were to die today, I'd have no regrets. Your mother and I have had a very happy marriage and we couldn't be happier with our children. We don't let the unimportant things bother us. So many of the things you say reveal how much like us you are. There's no question about it, you're our little girl. The acorn doesn't fall far from the tree."

"'Night, fats."

"Dear, I've asked you many times to speak to your father with a little more respect."

"It's all right, Ruth. I know way deep down she loves and respects me, even if she won't let on for a minute."

At last they're gone. I thought they'd never go. Whenever I can't wait for something, it always takes the longest.

I can hardly breathe. For the last three nights I've been using my camp flashlight to read *The Count of Monte Cristo* under the covers. It kills my eyes. It got so good when he escaped from prison. I want to finish it as soon as I can. I only have twenty more pages and it's late now. I keep buzzing Joyce but she won't answer. What if I'm buzzing too loud and her grandmother catches her. I wish she'd answer. I want to finish my book. I can hardly stay awake. At last. She's buzzing me.

"S-S-Susan?"



"Is that you Joyce? What took so long? I thought you'd never come."

"I just couldn't. My grandmother told me we had to have a serious talk. I was afraid she knew about us. But it's much worse than that."

"Well? What is it?"

"She talked to me like I was a baby. She asked me if I remembered the picture of Joyce on my uncle Bernie's bureau. She said that Joyce had a little boy now and that she and uncle Bernie are going to get married again. I just can't understand why they stopped being married. Grandma says they still love each other. They're going to get married in a few weeks and move to New York."

"Boy, they're lucky. I've been in New York. Millions of people stand on the corner before the light changes. I love walking along the street with a lot of people. Sh-sh-sh, I think we'd better be quieter."

"Grandma says she and Grandpa are going to sell the house. As long as Bernie's not going to live here anymore, there's no reason to have eight rooms."

"Well, what about you? You'll have no place to go in the afternoon. Didn't you ask about you?"

"She said I shouldn't act like a baby. They're going to get an apartment on Beacon Street. She said it'll be smaller, but much better. I can go there in the afternoon, instead of here. I know it'll be terrible. Mr. Olins won't be there. No trees. You won't be there. No one cares about me. I just have to do what they say."

"I'll miss you most, Susan."

"You will?"

"You're my very best friend."

"I know. You're mine."

We hung up. I thought a long time about Joyce. I didn't even finish my book.

I fended my way along Tremont Street toward J. S. Green's department store. I hoped I could get a walkie-talkie there. Sally's birthday was in three days. I'd hardly thought of Joyce since that night ten years ago when she'd said good-bye to me over the walkie-talkie. But just last week, my mother ran into her grandmother in town. Mrs. Levin said that Joyce had quit Katherine Gibbs after six months and was working in a discount store. Her job didn't pay very well, so she had to live with a family in Chelsea. She takes care of three little boys.

It was the rush hour and the store was jammed. I hoped I could buy something right away, so that I wouldn't miss dinner. They're so strict in the dorm. They close the dining room exactly at 6:45. I just couldn't afford to eat another meal out. The toy department was enormous so I was sure they'd have walkie-talkies. I caught the attention of a sales girl in an ugly brown uniform. As she came toward me, I noticed the name Kendall on a laminated name tag.

"Hello. I'm looking for a walkie-talkie. I just must get something today. It's my cousin's birthday. I probably won't get another chance to go shopping."

"We have several different kinds. I'll show you what we have. They range in price from three to fifteen dollars."

I found a nice black one for six dollars. I knew Sally would just love it.

"This will be fine. Could you gift wrap it please?"

"I'd be glad to."



While the salesgirl was wrapping the walkie-talkie, she kept looking up at me. I couldn't understand what was wrong.

"I feel a little embarrassed asking you this. I'll just die if I'm wrong. Are you Susan Lewis?"

"I'm Joyce Cummins. Remember, my grandmother used to live next door to you. It was years ago."

She must have realized that I was still puzzled because I was staring at her name tag.

"Oh, that. I've just always hated the name Joyce. I've been going by the name Kendall for the last year or two. I like it much better."

"Joyce. Of course. I can hardly believe it. It's so good to see you.

My mother saw your grandmother last week. She mentioned that you were working in a department store, but it never occurred to me that I'd run into you. I would imagine working every day and taking care of three children at night would be quite a job."

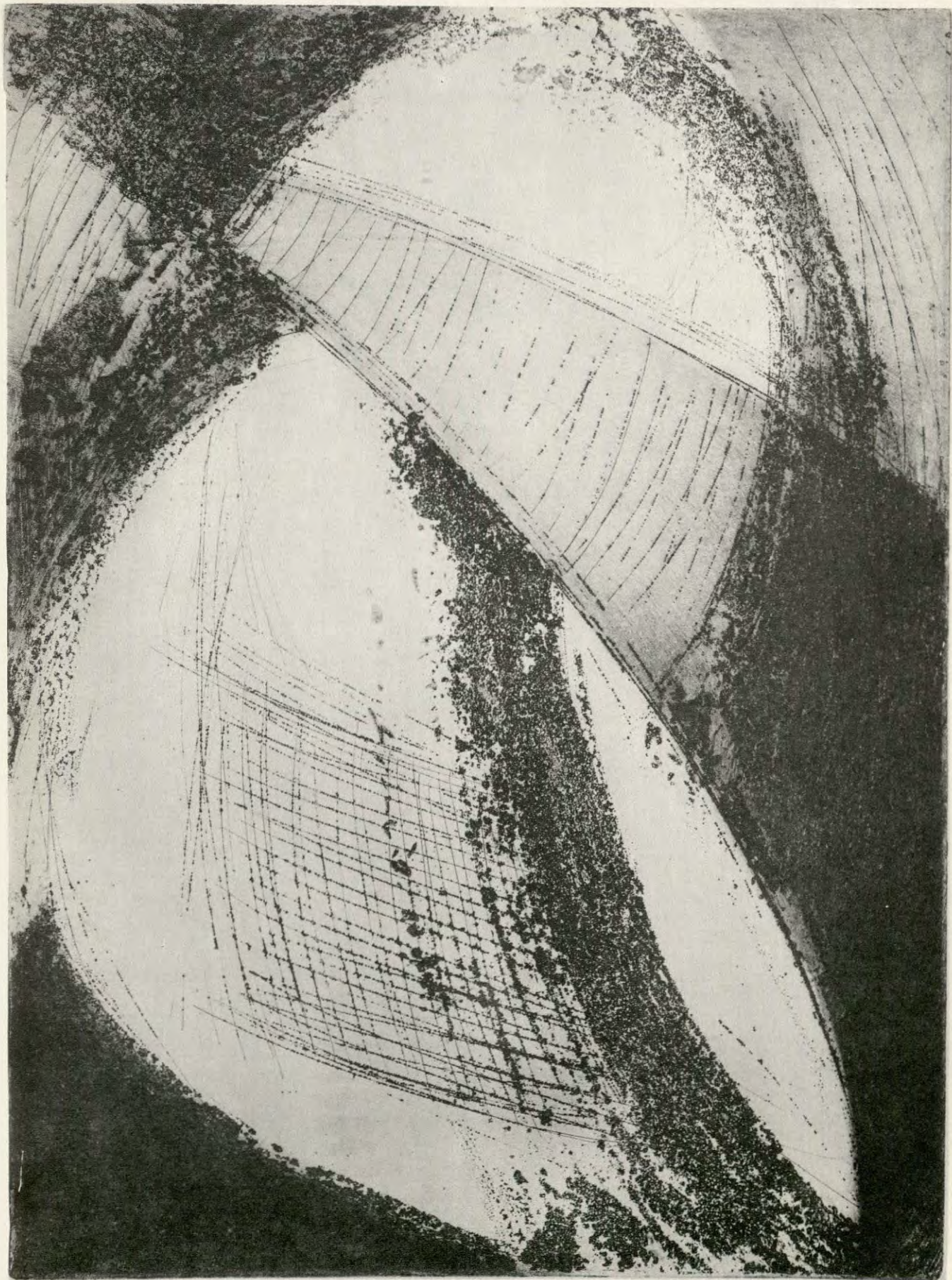
"Isn't that typical of my grandmother. She gets everything so mixed up. She must be getting senile. I've just been working here for the last week because a friend of mine got sick and was afraid she'd lose her job if she didn't show up. And what's all that about the three children. I'm not married yet, although I am dating a professor at Radcliffe. We probably won't get married until I graduate. It's going to take me an extra semester, because I transferred from Berkeley and lost some credits."

"Well, I'm glad to hear that everything's working out for you. Since we're both in Boston, we really ought to plan to get together."

"Gee, I'm awfully busy. Let me call you. Very nice to have seen you, Susan. I hate to rush off, but I see several customers I have to wait on. Good-bye."

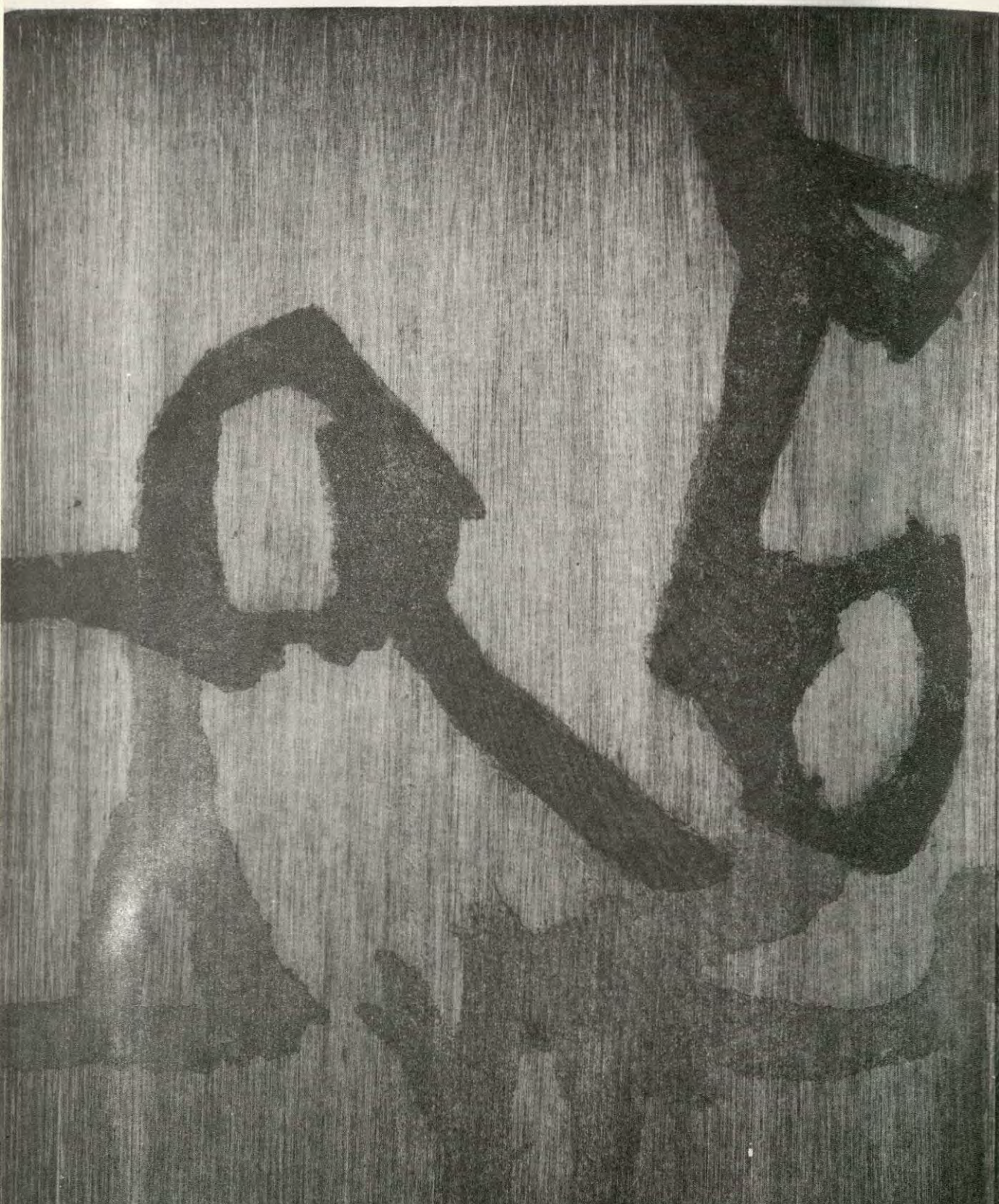
As I walked out of the store, the vision of Joyce in the ugly brown uniform faded and I clearly saw a little girl leaning out of a window with a black walkie-talkie in her hand.



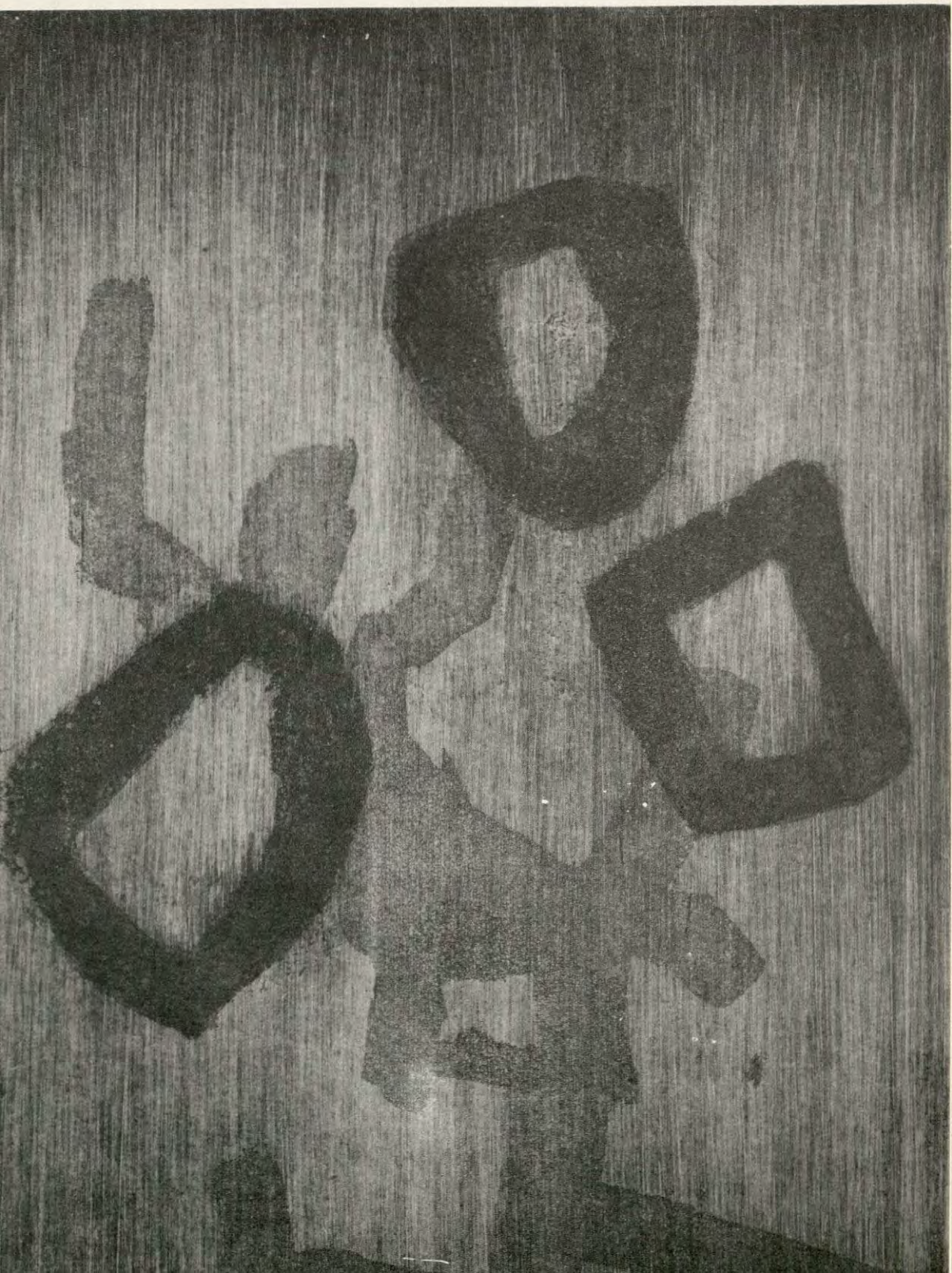




Janet Stein









Norma Jean Giannasio:

DESDEMONA

He came to her.  
Black face erupting  
Amid a lantern's flame.  
Her Moor above her  
Gnawing at his lip  
His damp brow drawn.

Ignorant of her sin,  
She lay still upon the silent white  
Watching his eyes roll.  
Madness saw only another's hand upon the skin  
Now hidden beneath nightly silk.

The moonlight greased his shaken frame.  
Glazed blackness bent forward  
To turn out the light.



Norma Jean Giannasio:

### THREE KINGS

Beasts of burden waddled thier humps  
Over desert sand.  
Three crowns reflected in yellow light.  
A star, a little brighter than usual,  
Set the course.  
Its glance drew a desert path.  
Making draped figures forget  
Their hands were cold  
And wives alone.

The desert wind,  
Streaking in red black eyes,  
Stretched their skin apart.  
Their cracked faces  
Still searched the sky.  
Where the morning light would shine  
No one could say.  
That it was night  
Was all they knew for sure.



Julie Baumgold:

THE MAGICIAN'S MISTAKE

The magician made a mistake  
But he couldn't put it back  
It wasn't from his hat  
But what was underneath  
The audience tensed in their seats  
When it began to crawl  
Dun moved over the sawdust floor  
Of the festive evening

He made a frantic puff of smoke  
But it would not be covered  
He felt the sudden shudder  
Of the pigeons in his sleeve  
One grey dove pecked his hand  
Small blood dripped on the sand  
The rabbit went wild in his hat  
Falling from his compartment  
(Fur soft on his oiled hair)

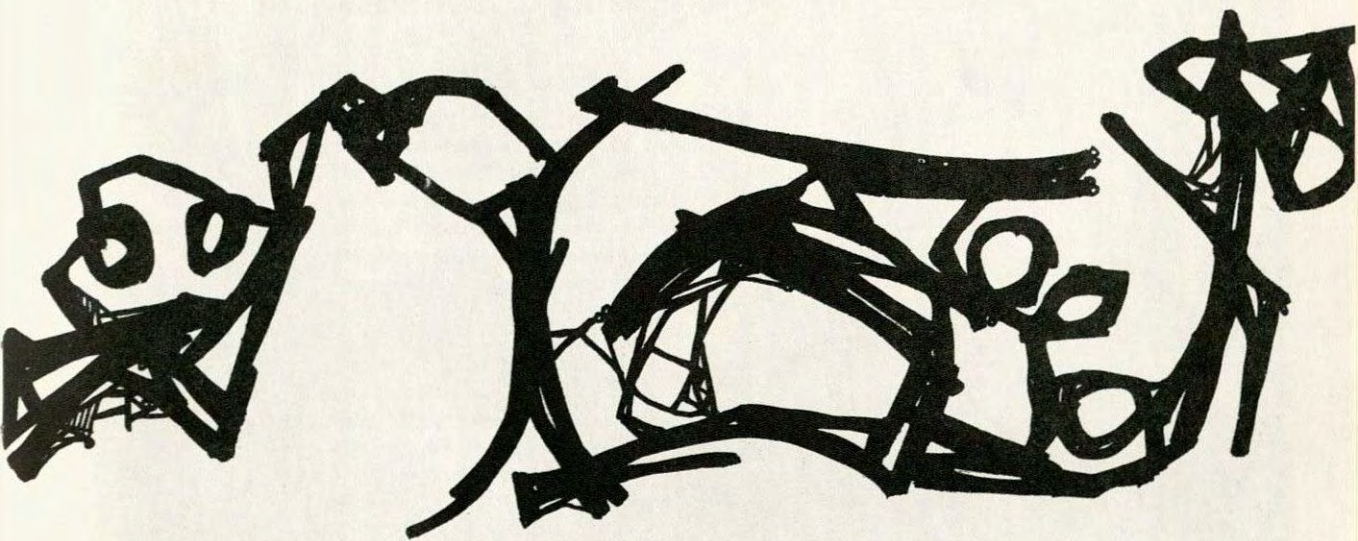
The children could not look  
The palms they pressed to their eyes  
Felt warm and damp  
They cried without a sound  
These hot gushes too  
Fell on the ground  
But still it moved  
Bitter suggestions grew in the mind

When the hawkers saw it aghast  
The youngest dropped his tray  
Down the aisle rolled the array  
Bright little flashlights  
Peanuts breaking from their shells  
Cotton candy heatfright withered  
To white paper cones  
But even this glutton feast  
Would not appease the beast



The magician waved aid from the air  
White gloved his hands  
Reflected in his cape  
But the black satin too  
Saw the dun  
Forgot what it had begun  
Went dull to crepe  
And hung without shape

It was then the tired beast  
Gave up his reign  
To curl in the corners  
Of the young man's brain  
Sometimes to thrash  
And bring him pain  
Now new and greater he lived  
With the shame  
That it might someday come out again









## "TANTO GENTILE" DE LA VITA NUOVA — DANTE

Tanto gentile e tanto onesta pare  
 la donna mia, quand'ella altrui saluta,  
 ch'ogne lingua deven tremando muta,  
 e li occhi no l'ardiscon de guardare.  
 Ella si va, sentendosi laudare,  
 benignamente d'umilta vestuta;  
 e par che sia una cosa venuta  
 da cielo in terra a miracol mostrare.

Mostrasi sí piacente a chi la mira,  
 che dá per li occhi una dolcezza al core  
 che 'ntender no la può chi no la prova:  
 e par che de la sua labbia si mova  
 un spirito soave pien d'amore,  
 che va dicendo a l'anima: Sospira.

Karen Stothert:

## REBIRTH . . . AFTER DANTE'S VITA NUOVA

So rare and pure the light  
 of my morning love, greeting the sky—  
 the earth-tongue is still for her,  
 the earth-eye blinks in awe.  
 She journeys on praised spirals  
 of radiance—her prayer hands,  
 touching earth with birth miracles  
 thought only in the sky.

Shafts of heat pass the eyes  
 and pierce the tender target  
 with virgin sweetness late unknown:  
 moving, filling the sky with mellow light,  
 waking hearts, warming lips,  
 stirring hidden germ: now breathe.



Karen Stothert:

DON'T SPEAK TO ME OF THE FORTUNES OF WAR

As your life to mine, old man, is this gutted cathedral,  
An edifice whose color is gray,  
Whose crushed walls lie gaping  
At the locus of their former shape;  
Whose pillaged niches cringe in emptiness,  
Haunted alone by shadows that shrink;  
Whose dome broods shapeless,  
A visage of looming end.

As your life to mine, old man, is this  
To my cathedral, erect in its prime;  
Its rhythmic arcade on stretching walls,  
Columns gracefully upholding proud height;  
The habitat of tall spirits whose brows are flecked  
With awful light, with blinking mystery,  
Poised to move in slow, sweeping shafts of light;  
Its dome is a flood of misty sun,  
A vaulted symbol of soaring goals  
Inscribed in golden hubris.



Janet Matthews:

## BENEFIT OF CLERGY

I took the bus out to my sister's college for the occasion. I got there Friday night and it was to be the next afternoon. That night we went to the local hangout and had a beer and talked, which was some relief to me because I had never met John. Cookie had arranged for us to spend the night at an apartment, I think it belonged to some grad student friend of hers who was away for the weekend.

I was amazed at Cookie; she was as calm as ever. I couldn't figure out whether she was sad or resigned or in a daze. I guess she had had more time to get used to the idea. I don't think she lost any sleep over it that night.

I did. For one thing the bed was pretty lumpy. It was a double bed, and we were both in it. To tell the truth I didn't know what to say to Cookie so I didn't say much at all. I should have known, because I am two years older, but it has never been that way with us. I wonder what people mean when they say just like sisters. I never saw sisters who were just like sisters, but sometimes sisters are just like friends.

Anyway we were lying there in the lumpy bed and the grad student hadn't bothered to change the sheets. Also there was just one pillow, so I had taken a cushion off one of the chairs which was horribly scratchy and full of cigarette holes. Cookie numbed something about setting the alarm for eight so that she would have time to get her hair dry and then she seemed to go to sleep.

I was lying very still so as not to disturb her, or wake her if she was asleep. I guessed we would never sleep in the same bed again. When we were quite young we had shared a big bed in a little bedroom, and I had had the window side. Sometimes I would lie right up against the window and shiver and cry until she noticed. She would feel terrible because she was taking up too much room, and would give me most of the covers. She was probably cold herself then, but she would never make a fuss. In some ways I always acted younger.

Mostly we would lie awake and tell each other stories. They were always about two little girls. If it were her story they had their own plane, but in my story they always had invisible wings. They went to the North Pole, and to visit Peter Pan, and to stay with a very rich great aunt named Chester May who had fur coats and raised horses and dogs.

I guess we went to bed very early then, because I remember we kept the door open and the light was always on in the hall when we went to sleep. Usually our mother was in the kitchen. She worked during the day and did the housework at night. We would hear the vacuum cleaner and the washing machine going. We heard our mother and father talking, but we never knew what they said unless they were arguing. Sometimes we would smell something good coming from the kitchen, and our mother would come in with warm cookies. Other times she brought little bowls of nuts and raisins and bits of chocolate. It was nice to have her just come in like that; we never had to call for glasses of water.

Sometimes we fought, but if that got too loud or violent our father would come in and tell us to stop, or else spank us. If we were good he



would come and sing funny little Irish songs, and tell us how it was when he was a little boy.

Well, that was a long time ago, but those were the things I thought of when she and I were lying there in that lumpy bed in an unknown grad student's apartment the night before Cookie's wedding.

When the alarm rang in the morning I didn't move. I opened my eyes and saw the light pouring through a triangular tear in the window shade. The musty old furniture looked even more depressing by daylight. Cookie climbed right out of bed and said she was going to look for some coffee, and I might as well use the bathroom because she was planning to wash her hair.

I went in and splashed some water on my face. It was one of those old-fashioned bathrooms, all space and no efficiency. The water dribbled out of the rusty old faucets. The mirror was wavy and dim looking as I dried my face on a greyish towel.

Cookie was sitting at the kitchen table when I came out. She looked out of place in her pink night gown, with her long blonde hair. The room looked like meatloaf and bare light bulbs and babies crying and slips held up with safety pins. It looked like six month old toothbrushes and jelly glasses and faulty plumbing and lingering food smells and all the things Cookie shouldn't know about. She was so young, so very young.

"Want some coffee?" she said. "All I could find was Maxwell House, but the water's almost boiling if you want it."

"O.K. Where did you find the bread?"

"Second drawer over there. Watch this toaster, the pop thing doesn't work and you just have to grab it when it looks done."

We sat and munched. I was afraid she wasn't happy. The place was so horrible and there was no one there who should have been.

"Now what's the name of the boy who's going to be best man?" I said.

"Oh, Brian. He's a fraternity brother of John's. You'll like him. We doubled with him a lot. A real Brooklyn type, but funny."

"Then there'll just be the four of us?"

"I guess so. We haven't told anybody about it, and I don't think Brian would."

She took a gulp of coffee. "I never thought it would be this way."

"I know."

"Well, it isn't the way you think. I don't feel forced to marry John. Nobody has to get married these days. We had other choices, like what Mom and Dad wanted. But this is what we wanted."

"I think you did the right thing."

"No, it's funny, but there was no right thing. None of the choices were good. It was sad because every choice involved making another mistake, and involving more people. We didn't seem to have the freedom to make a right choice."

"Well, John's a good man. I was so relieved . . . all I knew about him was his age and that wasn't too encouraging."

"Yes, I know I want John, but this isn't a very good beginning."

I got up and took my dishes to the sink that would never come clean and put the milk bottle in the refrigerator that would never be full. Cookie was sitting there just gazing off into space.

"It isn't sad," I said, "Nobody can be totally sad about weddings and babies. They're the hopeful, alive things. You can't just call a baby a mistake, for heaven's sake."

"I know, I know. I'm just sorry we had to hurt everyone. This isn't



what they wanted for us. What we did . . . I didn't think was wrong. But now I see why it was, and there's no easy solution. Maybe I'm sorry I had to find out about these things so soon. Losing innocence is a bigger thing than you may think."

She brought her cup over to the sink. "I guess I'll wash my hair now."

When she had gone into the bathroom, I went and made the lumpy bed. I sat down on it and looked around. The apartment was like an old whore, human enough, but with a kind of experience I didn't want to hear about. Nothing shocked her, nothing delighted her anymore. She had seen too much and she was cynical. There was a strange kind of comfort in her, she was unimpressed by the shocking singularity of Cookie's wedding. She took the edge off my pain, but sharpened my sadness.

Cookie came out of the bathroom in a clean little white slip, smelling of lily of the valley and not at all of sin. She combed her hair and began to set it. I poked around in my suitcases and took out the dress I was planning to wear. It was wrinkled but Cookie said there was no iron in the apartment, so I lit another cigarette.

Cookie was sitting there on the floor, crosslegged and in her white slip, setting her hair and listening to the radio. The Dixie Cups were singing Chapel of Love and she sang along with them in her usual oblivious monotone. She should have been getting ready to go to a prom.

"Do you think John will be over this morning?"

"No, he's not allowed to see me before we go to the church."

I almost cried, not letting John see her on the day of the wedding was such a pathetic, candle in the sun thing. Trying to make it right, trying to make it a real wedding. Involuntarily I looked at her waist.

She saw, and said, "Oh, nothing shows yet. It won't for quite a while."

She went under the hair drier and I tried to do something with my nails. After awhile I fell asleep and when I woke up she was standing in front of the mirror combing her hair and singing to herself "Art and nature thus alie-ie-ied, go to make a petty bride, ah-art and nature . . ." It was so sad. A mother should have been there to fix her hair and fuss over her. She should have been sitting at her pretty dressing table at home.

I watched her powder her face and carefully put on pink lipstick. She asked for my eyeshadow so that she would have something borrowed and something blue.

She went to the closet and brought out her dress. I hadn't seen it before, and hadn't thought about what she would wear.

"Oh, when did you get it?"

"Yesterday, no, day before. John hasn't seen it and from the way I described it he thinks it's really queer."

She put it on and it wasn't queer. It was pale pink and young and sweet. She put on new white shoes, and a white veil, and white gloves, and stood in the middle of the dingy room looking at herself in the cracked old mirror. She looked like Cinderella, no, she looked like a bride.

I put my dress on, and she helped me with my hair. No one ever has any patience with my hair and I can't do a thing with it, but Cookie can always do it. Then she assured me that I didn't look fat, and my dress wasn't too wrinkled. I have heard that brides always panic at the last minute but Cookie didn't.

At last we heard a car drive up and I ran to the door to let them in. John was carrying four little boxes and he gave one to each of us. There was a gardenia for Cookie, rosebuds for me, and carnations for Brian and himself. John pinned the flower on Cookie and she kissed his cheek.



That made me feel like an intruder somehow, but I was glad because I thought maybe everything was all right.

We drove to the chapel, and Cookie and John kept looking at each other as though they were seeing for the first time. We went through all the trite old business about whether Brian had the rings in his pocket, and then we were there.

The college chaplain was quite an old man, but very kind to us as we sat in a stiff little row on a bench in his office. He asked Brian and me to sign a little book and as he handed me the pen he said, "Ah, the maid of honor." My hand shook as I signed. When everyone had had a cigarette (except Cookie who doesn't smoke) and felt more comfortable, he said, "Well, we may as well go upstairs now. It's just two."

The chapel was large and dark. We walked right up to the front and stood in a line in front of the chaplain. He opened a little book, and I squeezed Cookie's elbow, and he began to read.

I heard my sister say, "I, Caroline, take thee, John." I saw him put the ring on her finger. I heard the chaplain say "Now you may kiss." And I was scared. It was so appallingly simple, so direct, so unambiguous. It was five minutes long or a hundred years.

We walked downstairs together. The chaplain said, "Well, Mrs. Westfield, how does it feel to be an old married woman?" Just like a real wedding. It was a real wedding. He wasn't just saying that to make it right. Marriages aren't like that. White dresses and bridesmaids have nothing to do with it. Maybe sad, old apartments do. Maybe understanding about mistakes does. Maybe buying rosebuds for your new sister-in-law does.

I put in a call to Oregon that night.

"Mother," I said, "Well, they're married."

"Oh."

"It was a nice wedding."

"What do you mean nice?"

"Well, it was. It was just—nice."

I didn't tell her that Cookie never had wings, she always had planes. You don't have to worry too much about people who have planes. They know how it is.











Lorraine Schecter

Ellen Glascock:

## BEFORE THE RAINS COME

First, cold shock  
that anyone would mock  
the living art of tragedy;  
yet as the clock  
hurries on its timeless wheel,  
vast doors begin to bolt and lock  
behind our ceaseless pain;  
for already we have forgotten  
the hawkers peddling worthless passes  
to uncounted masses who gawk  
at the matched might of Roland and Oliver,  
they crescendo their tittering talk  
at Roncevalles,  
while Roland blows his third mawkish blast  
before the rains come.



Karen Stothert

ALABASTER SHIPS

My dream carried me exotically  
Through years that sailed in southsea ships.  
I watched and hauled white-fluted sails,  
Mixed magical sealing wax and  
Talked with learned kings.

And in my mind  
I dreamed a sleepy Chinaman  
Eating tender pea pods  
In a viscous stew.

I learned to share the tiller  
Of my alabaster ship  
And that day saw patched ivory sails,  
Learned of melted sealing wax,  
And heard of foppish kings.

I dreamed a viscous Chinaman  
Eating tender pea pods  
In a sleepy stew.

Have sailor eyes greatly dimmed  
When one day they see  
Little breaths filling fluted sails,  
Red hands warming sealing wax,  
And babes at play with kings?

I dreamed a tender Chinaman  
Eating viscous pea pods  
In a sleepy stew.



Eileen Pleva:

THE PRINCESS AND THE PEA — AND ME

But I was in the contest, too. I felt.  
The hard unknown kept me restless. I knew  
A pea was under all that softness, too late.  
So for her, happy ever after comes true.  
Sensitivity defines royalty.  
Where's the domain for me?

A sleepless night's not so bad, wrapped  
In the peep of a cricket. Wing over wing, he marched  
Across the sky in the silence with star flashlights  
Guiding the way up the concealing steps to the arched  
Back of the endless sky.  
There's joy in going so high.

Even if I got there, all would not be softness.  
Somewhere would be inner-surrection forever keeping  
On watch to see the exploding splendor of the day  
And rich dark of night, too, never sleeping.  
The prince is hers today.  
I cannot stay.



Charna Tenenbaum: two poems

SCOLLAY SQUARE

Scollay Square was here the other day  
Big as life, with the smell of death  
Drenching the all night Rialto.  
Where two bits could buy food and lodging  
And a grade "B" flick was a lullaby.  
Two hawk-shops away - - the Old Howard  
Where Tinker Bell did a strut  
Like nobody you ever saw.

Down the block from little Italy  
And under the bridge.  
Just fifty yards and across the street  
And you were in another world.  
One hundred displaced persons have been misplaced again.  
One hundred pairs of feet shuffle along lower Washington  
Street.

THOUGHTS WHILE MAKING A CHERRY PIE

An old woman sat pitting cherries.  
In her right hand, a hair pin.  
Not at all the implement you would think for  
shucking berries;  
But then, have you ever had occasion  
for such activity?  
The season for it, late July,  
when ripe trees  
Bend their limbs, for the heaviness  
of their load.  
The berries seem to burst,  
And at this time, the children from the village  
Go with buckets, gathering the tiny blood drops.  
Two to the bushel, one on each side  
they start home.  
And there to greet them, the old woman  
Who sits pitting cherries. That's all she is good for.







Mary Elizabeth Downing:

TUMBLEWEED

Twenty years ago  
a monument was raised in the desert.  
Stone on stone it stood  
towering above the cactus green and  
Tumbleweed.

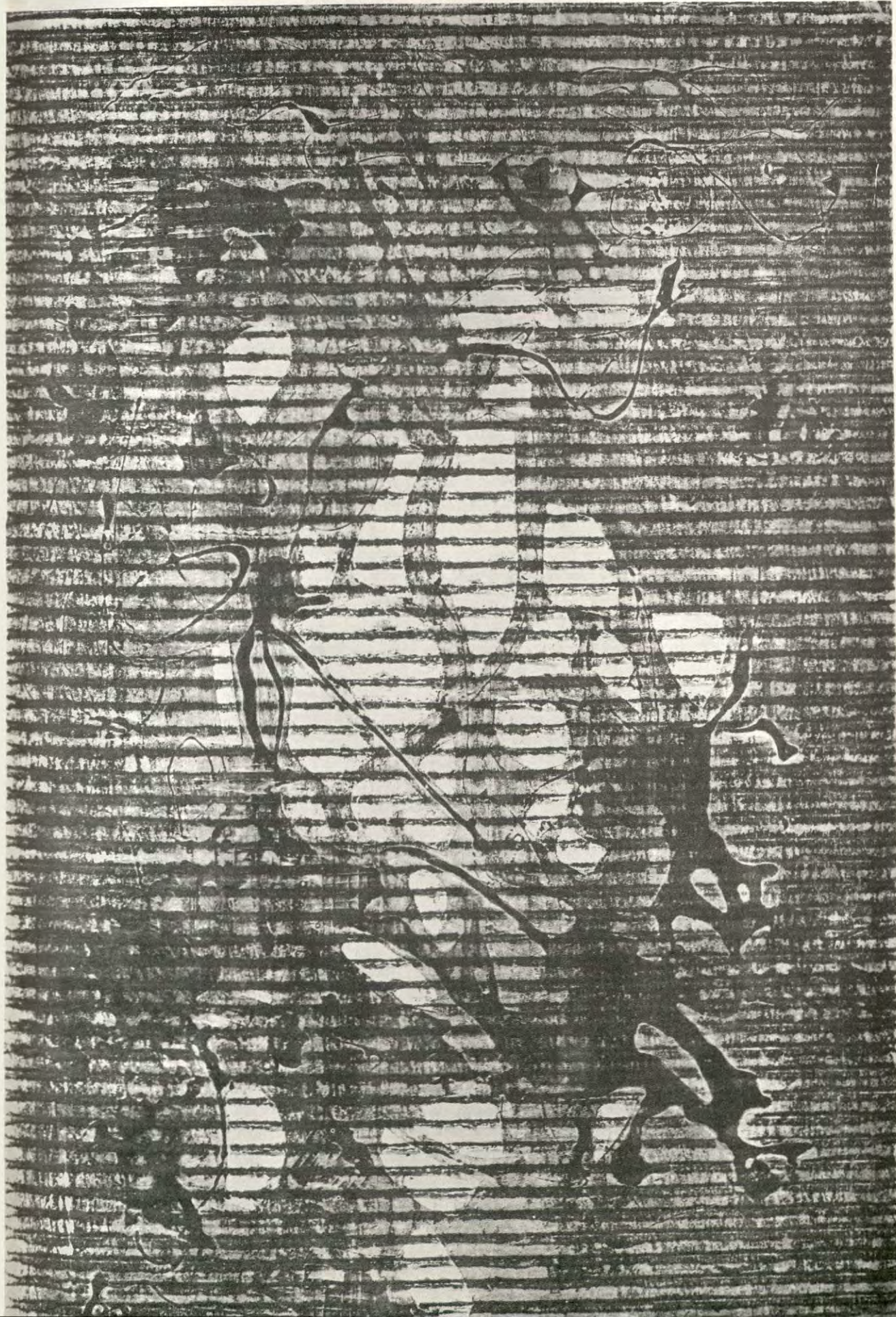
Earth on earth and  
a calf's skull on top;  
shiny bone caught the buzzard's eye.  
(People came from the valleys.)  
Bare feet on desert sand and  
Tumbleweed.

People came from north and  
people came from south  
all directions one;  
leaving goats in mountain rock  
to come to see the mound of rock and  
Tumbleweed.

For twenty years the wind has blown;  
the mountains sing an eerie song;  
the people come and people have gone;  
and every day the sun beats down on  
Tumbleweed.

Buzzard's eye and bone and bay,  
shadow of a scorpion's tail,  
cactus thorn and wailing hymn, and  
Tumbleweed.







Marianna Kaufman:

### A WIFE OF WIGAN PIER

Wigan Pier is one of the many English coal-mining towns. George Orwell describes the hazardous, deplorable conditions found in the mines and in the towns during the 1930's.

Quarry now, love,  
Come down to the depths of the mine.  
In the deepest pit the fine veins flow  
You can find them, love, if you try again.

Quarry now, love,  
Forget the dust, the grime.  
Keep at the work and it will be done,  
The working at work lasts just half the time.

Quarry now, love,  
Don't take a rest until night.  
The mine you work makes the stuff of living;  
The hurt of the work dies with the light.

Quarry now, love,  
Yes the work will get done.  
But if your back is breaking and your hands go slack  
Then stay on the heights 'til your strength comes back.  
The mines will hold until the beams start to crack,  
And the quarries will close after that.



Barbara Chase:

## THE PHOENIX

This is taken from Nietzsche's metaphor of the Phoenix in Thus Spoke Zarathustra. Each one of us is a Phoenix, and as a Phoenix, makes the transition from camel to lion to child. The camel holds on to past values, for that is all man has; the lion says "No," but since he himself cannot create, he creates the freedom for others to create. The innocent child, alone, is the creator of values.

Youth rises not for gods  
Who wave their rotten twigs,  
Once green from timely suns.

Some sand is freed from land  
By lions seeing need  
For change. The camel's pit  
Is past, ornate, but shackled.  
"Do's" and "Don't's" cause lions  
To resound, "Create!"

Who hears this gnawing call?  
The child who plays in mud  
Outside his mildewed home.  
He builds a mud-pie forest,  
Free from a camel's law,  
And lets the lion roam.

Each man is a Phoenix  
Who builds his funeral pyre.  
He burns his past; a child  
Arises full of zest,  
And from his ashen fire,  
Creates another test.



Julie Baumgold:

RESIDUE

What is left around the house rejected by the flames?  
Car parts, a seedful cat, and one charred doll,  
The unsought claims of a partial fire.  
The cat walks on the doll who calls out for a mother  
Small the sound rebounds through the trash  
To children violating the house of friends

The rubble is aging and the friends  
Have been gone sometime from the flames  
On insurance money they moved from the trash  
Taking the girl who loved the doll  
Among six others born of a mother  
Who lived iron-bedded knowing fire

Before she had watched the wood know fire  
One child (being of the same) grew friends  
With two who had no mother  
Who watched the planned fire, betrayed to the flames  
Left to them were car parts, a seedful cat, and the doll  
Face down in the rubble, red mouth to the trash

We have come to paint over the ash but still the trash  
Lays grown to the ground, unloosed by the fire  
The sun streaks through to the pink of the doll  
Showing her to the girl who remembers her friends  
Was it that night her eyes grew crooked looking on the flames?  
She tilts the doll to hear the word mother

But there is nowhere in the day a mother  
Just a beer-eyed father accustomed to the trash  
Ash on earth born remembering flames  
And the power of the night of fire  
For change, for the removal of friends  
To leave but car parts, a seedful cat, and the charred doll

Now no friends but one crippled brother to leer on the naked doll  
Twisted he came to take her mother  
Darker he is than were her friends  
And though he cannot bend he is closer to the trash  
His ways are those of ash (someday he will set a fire  
For his soul is crooked with the flames)

Outside he is lying flat on the trash  
His eyes kindling under the house of fire  
Watch the seedful cat give birth in flames.



Takako Tanaka













