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### Insight, 1968 Spring

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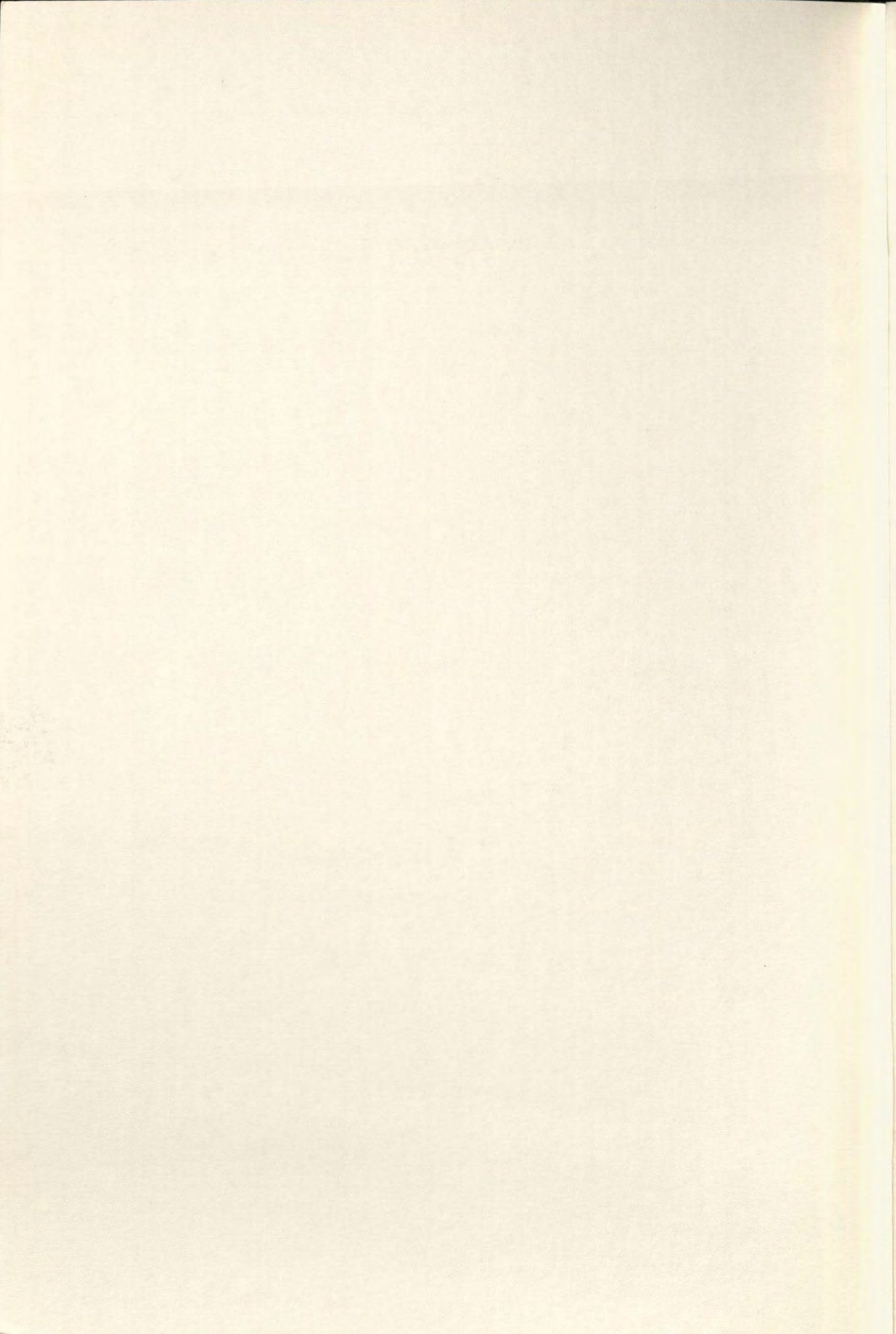
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Dean Johnson

Spring '68

**INSIGHT**



**insight**  
**spring 1968**

**connecticut college**  
**new london, conn.**

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# INSIGHT

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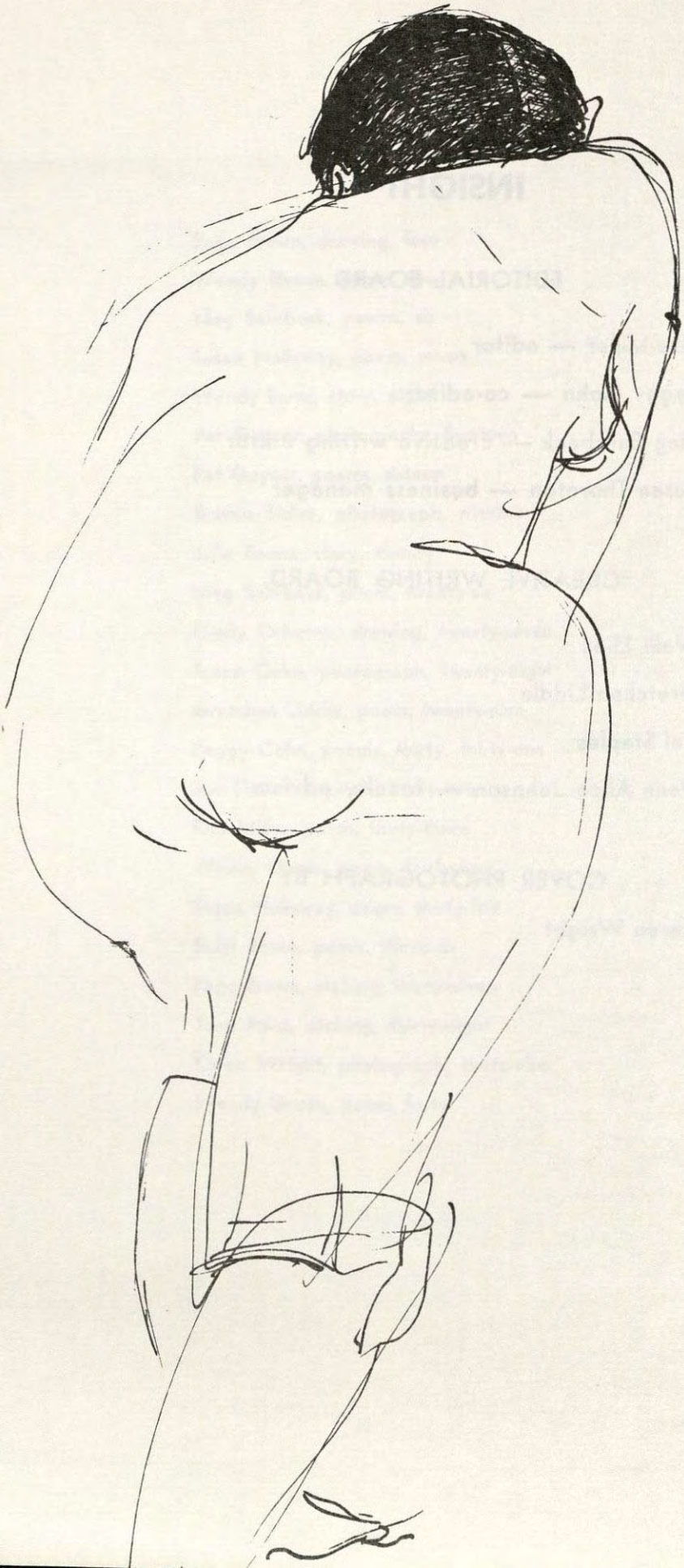
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## COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY

Karen Wright



## SONNET TO A FAT GIRL

Wendy Green:

Over black coffee you stirred needlessly,  
Your eyes light bright above our midday meal  
While footsteps and papers turn, heedless  
As you gouge out your broken heart to heel:  
From husband taken home by number one,  
And ousted when found kissing number two;  
Who drifts forlorn at damage he has done;  
Though you admit you are no longer true  
To him, that bastard whose demented friend  
Attempted once to rape you months before  
The weight crept up your legs and did extend  
To hips and thighs your husband should adore.  
Without sugar and cream you damn escape  
The masculine counterpart of almost-rape.



## POINT OF DEPARTURE

Meg Sahrbeck:

his schedule according to the train's,  
the husband forgets to listen  
that his wife is alive  
with their first child

he leaves her at breakfast,  
her smile balanced unsurely  
on the edge of a coffee cup,  
her glad news stopped in her throat  
and hardening there

## TO HER PARENTS, AFTER A COLLEGE VACATION

Meg Sahrbeck:

I come home, my colors unfurled;  
shockings pinks and chartreuses,  
and you've out the greys again.

damn you for aging  
for all your friends dying  
and parents, my grandparents

damn you for loving me so  
that I come with my love  
to trade you my flags  
for your weeds

## THE QUEEN OF FRANCE

Susan Holloway:

it's strange today my maid hasn't come to  
 clean up the room, golden the lights now through  
 the panes are, oh, it's time to arise  
 and face the eyes of daylight, searching,  
 deep blue sapphires. oh god i didn't hear the  
 silver trumpets sound but shall i put on my  
 yes, my green gown with the emerald necklace  
 and the white lace shroud cover my eyes with tears.  
 i'll be green grass and dew. do you? i do. how do you do  
 your majesty. well, i am the queen of France, you didn't know?  
 yes, it was long ago i was crowned with pea soup lids. they  
 were silver but sharp and everyone saw my coronation, i am  
 still the queen, yes, yesterday i said: "off with his head,"  
 and jacques died. he was my cook. we had red soup for lunch  
 yes, a speech today, i will say, are you ready? hear. it is:  
 "in and out, in and out, the windows of our soul look out  
 and see the spring, the swing, oh look and see everything:  
 the birds at night, the flight, the dawn, the wings, the grass,  
 the trees, the lawn, the birds that sing, the hours that call,  
 oh look out, look out and see us all. the ants  
 upon the hill call in the still, silent, sweet turrets  
 of their ears to the empress stars across a thousand  
 tears, a thousand years, a bright, bright mirror and  
 all means nothing; the water flows up streams across  
 waves and out of light, on, on into the eternal night."  
 they will say, "vive la reine," and today my banners  
 like white butterflies through white walls will be seen.  
 streams of light at night are dark but the blood kept  
 coming out of jacques' head red like running sunlight  
 and cold, cold water on your skin, i'm drowning in the  
 river, yes, the wind is a river of song like the blue ocean  
 that soft, soft comes sliding through my tears up the forest  
 to where the rhubarb grows. hush, today the queen must take a  
 bath, today, say. tell it over the kingdom and tell the maid  
 to come in her white dress for the queen's crown hurts oh  
 hurry.

## A DEVIL'S TALE

Wendy Burns:

## PROLOGUE

The savage's blue tattoos shone in the cold as he walked along the New Bedford street. By the afternoon, he had finally sold the peculiar fork-handled whip to the young farm boy who had come to town for the day.

His pockets empty, the boy returned home late that February night. As he unhitched his steaming horse in the lantern light beside the shed, his sister asked him what he had done in town. "I bought an ox whip," he told her, "sold to me by a tattooed South Seas savage that I met on the street." He took the object, wrapped carefully in his scarf, from under the seat of the cart. "The native said it would make the oxen pull harder and faster through our fields; and the stones would move aside for the plow."

"It looks like a fool's waste of money," she said to her brother. "A heathen taking your money! How could you believe such lies?" She stared at the black whip. "It sounds like no South Seas cannibal to me."

"It's the truth. Those were his exact words."

"It sounds more like the devil's words," she replied. The barb ended whip suddenly twisted in the boy's hands and burned his palm. He dropped it to the ground where it melted a patch of snow by his feet. The horse whinnied in fright, and the boy and girl ran inside leaving the coiled black whip in the snow. Returning the next day, they found the whip gleaming from the bottom of a deep charred hole where it had fallen. The girl watched her brother as he bent down to pick it up. She touched its unsinged hide. "I guess it's ours to sell now," she said. Her brother nodded, and they walked together to the shed to hitch up the horse for another trip to town.

Early that morning a whaler pulled out of the New Bedford port, heading for the whaling grounds off the coast of South America. The savage stood on the foredeck watching the diminishing church steeple. Once again he was a free man. He had sold the awful talisman: the devil's tail he had cut from his first mate.

Frozen November grass crunched under his feet as he ran from the schoolhouse across the green in the darkness, the wind snapping his tie over his shoulder. A few illegal lights glowed in the windows of his dormitory, guiding him to the looming shadow of the old brick building. Silently he crept to the side where the fire escape led up to his room. He climbed onto the iron ladder, pulling his book bag after him. His footstep rang through the cold as he raced up the slippery rungs to his open window on the fourth floor. He threw the bag inside, and climbed in after it, closing the window behind him.

Warm and panting inside his room, he watched his breath cloud the window as he looked out across the green to the darkened schoolhouse. His ears strained through the night. He waited, listening for the master's footsteps on the worn wooden stairs, but they did not come. The bag lay in a dark heap on the floor beside him. He sat watching it in the cold silence, but there was no movement from it; no indication of the coiled black object inside.

His breath on the window had turned to frost as the chill of the late November night crept into the bricks of the old school buildings. Outside on the green, a last wakeful figure hurried through the shadows of the schoolhouse across the quadrangle.

At seven-twenty the following morning, the final bell rang for breakfast. Two straggling first formers ran down the hall of their dormitory. "Wait a minute, T. W.," the tall brown-haired boy called to his friend. He had stopped in front of the closed door at the end of the hall. "Teal's overslept. Let's wake him."

The fat boy yelled back to his friend, "Drew, come on we're late. That was the last bell." Drew knocked on the door, ignoring his friend. "I'm going. I don't want to get rounds again." T. W. left his friend behind. Running as fast as he could, he crashed down the last steps and pushed his heavy, round frame through the door. He sprinted across the green and up the steps of the common, his hair still wet from the shower. He pushed through the doors, hurrying across the room to his place at the round table by the window. He stood behind his chair, head lowered, avoiding the reproachful look of the monitor. A boy beside T.W. poked him. "Where's Drew?" he whispered. The seat beside the monitor was empty. "He's had it by now."

"Shut up. I'm in enough trouble already," T.W. muttered to the boy. The monitor glared across the table as the "amen" sounded from the far end of the room.

"O.K., T.W., why were you late again? And where's your friend Drew?"

T.W. answered, "We were on time and all, but coming along the hall, Drew had to stop in front of Teal's door. He said he was going to wake him, so he wouldn't miss breakfast. I waited; that's why I'm late. You see . . ."

"All right. Forget it, T.W. you'r going to get rounds on Saturday. And tell your friend Drew I want to see him." T.W. grumbled at the older student's authority. Saturday afternoon was their only free time. Now he would miss the last football game to rake leaves. Drew's penalty for skipping breakfast would be more severe.

After breakfast he scuffled sullenly to chapel. Waiting outside the door, he saw Drew running across the quadrangle to him. "Am I in trouble?" he asked panting in steamy clouds.

"You bet you are," T.W. answered. "And so am I. Thanks to you, I was late and the monitor gave me rounds. He wants to see you."

"Oh, brother. Was he very angry?" He looked at his friend hoping to find some indication of reassurance on his face. T.W. glared back at him. Drew shivered in the cold, burying his running nose in his scarf. He was drafed by T.W. who stood like a warm beige bear in his heavy Mighty Mac jacket. "Thanks a lot, Drew," T.W. said. "See if I ever wait for you again."

"Some friend you are. I don't care anyway. It was worth it. You should see what Teal showed me. He may even sell it to me." Drew turned from his friend and took his place inside the chapel. From his pew in the back, he looked up into choir stalls, but did not see Teal in his seat.

After chapel, on his way to class, Drew met the monitor in the schoolhouse. "Where were you at breakfast?" he asked.

I was waking Teal. He was going to sleep through. So I went to get him as I passed his door."

"Look, Drew, Teal's a senior, and he can take care of himself. Next time don't bother with him. I'm going to have to give you double rounds on Saturday. So shape up and take care to get yourself places, instead of worrying about Teal." The bell rang for class, and the monitor left Drew standing in the hall. "Get going, Drew. You want to miss class, too," he yelled to him from the end of the corridor.

Drew was on time for all his classes. By evening, he waited impatiently for the end of the last study hall so that he could find Teal and ask him about his purchase. Squirming in his hard wooden chair, Drew counted the minutes on the big buzzing wall clock at the end of the room. The boys sat in identical long rows of desks in the warm musty room lined with book-cases. On the wall was a map of the Early Roman Empire and one of eastern Europe after the Partitioning of Poland. Mr. Spader, the proctor, walked slowly between the rows of desks. Gazing over the boys' heads, he tapped a pointer behind his back as he walked. Each boy buried his nose in his book or scribbled furiously on the yellow lined math paper as he passed by them. A distant smile curled the corner of his mouth as he tapped a desk or a boy's head with his stick.

Drew's eyes followed the silent proctor on his spectral march through the aisles. Mr. Spader was tall and angular. His face was as smooth as wax, uncreased by any wrinkles. His long black hair was brushed back from his forehead with the gleam of patent leather, and it curled just above the edge of his collar. He did not wear the elbow patched tweeds of the other masters. He dressed always in a dark suit, shiny in the seat and knees. With each step, Mr. Spader ticked away another second of the hour and the boys waited in silent agony for the period to end. At the nine o'clock bell, Drew closed his book and stuffed the empty pages into his desk, waiting for Mr. Spader to dismiss them. The rustling of papers and books stopped as he stood at the end of the room smiling back at the squirming boys. "You may go, gentlemen."

Drew was first out the door, and across the quadrangle to the dormitory. He ran up the four flights of stairs to Teal's room. He waited before the door, listening for a sound from within. The room was silent, but a crack of light shone beneath the door. He knocked.

"Who is it?" Teal's voice answered.

"It's me, Drew," he whispered.

"O.K., come in." Drew open the door. Teal sat curled and pensive like a guru in the murky yellow glare of the light from the ceiling. His room contained none of the posters and colored pictures of naked girls that other boys tacked to their walls. There were no curtains or shelves. Teal's books and papers lay in scattered piles across the worn varnished floor. Cigarette smoke wound in a blue mist above Teal's head. "Shut the door." Teal crushed out the cigarette in the orange-juice can on his knee, and slipped it underneath the bed. His blond hair hung like oily rats' tails across his forehead.

"So Drew, you think you want to buy my whip." He pulled the sentence out with long thick pauses. "Well, I don't know if I want to sell it." Drew looked around the room for the barb ended black whip that Teal had shown him this morning. He had drawn the coiled object slowly from the green

book bag; and they had both stared at the black thing on the floor. Drew had picked it up in fascination, feeling its long heavy limpness in his hand. The handle was blunt and thick, covered with a spiny black hide of stiff hairs. It tapered to a narrow barbed end which cracked sharply with the flick of his wrist.

"Where is it?" asked Drew

"I hid it. I didn't want other guys coming up asking about it and looking around. You didn't say anything, did you?"

"No, I kept quiet."

"You know, you're the only guy I'm considering selling it to. It's a pretty remarkable old thing. Don't you think?" Teal's fingers picked at a yellowed callous on his bare foot. He leaned his head back against the wall and watched Drew. "But then, are you sure you want it? It's just an old ox whip. What are you going to do with it?"

Drew squirmed under Teal's pin point stare. "Well, maybe I don't want it. I just thought it might be fun to fool around with." Drew felt himself beginning to recoil.

"But I saved it just for you." Teal sat upright on the bed. Leaning closer to Drew, he hissed the words across the room. "You're going to buy it. You said you would."

"Let me see it again."

"Look, I have to sell it," Teal shouted. Stopping abruptly he said, "I mean, I need the money."

"It's over there in the bottom drawer." Teal pointed to the desk. Drew opened the drawer and took out the green book bag. "Take it out," Teal said. Reaching inside the bag, Drew pulled out the whip wrapped in newspaper.

"What's it all wrapped up for?"

"It's pretty old and," Teal hesitated, staring at the bound package in Drew's hands. "It's rare, and, I," he stopped again. "Unwrap it carefully!" Drew peeled away the papers. The whip lay limp and coiled in its black concentric rings.

Teal watched from the bed as Drew shook the slender black whip in the air. He snapped it, and the end cracked through the room, immediately followed by a knock at the door.

"Who is it?" Teal called. "I'm in bed." He gestured to Drew to cover the whip.

"I just have a message for you," the voice outside answered. "Mr. Spader wants to see you in his office."

"O.K.," Teal answered. Turning to Drew, "look, buy it. I'll give it to you for only five dollars. That's not even a fraction of what it's worth. I've got to go. Do you want it?" Drew nodded. "O.K., take it!" Teal pulled on his shoes and grabbed his jacket off the floor. Opening the door, over his shoulder he said, "it's yours now. Do what you want with it."

Drew left five dollars on Teal's desk, and took the whip down to his alcove in the lower school corridor where the first formers lived. The alcoves were separated from each other by partitions and closed only by curtains. The tiny space was almost entirely filled by the bed and bureau allotted to each boy, but Drew had stuffed more inside. It was cluttered with the

objects he had gathered throughout the year and stored in his nest like a pack rat. There was no room to snap the whip, but he dangled it from the side of his bed and examined its spiny black hairs in the light. His hand moved smoothly over the hide, running down to the spade like barb at the end. Drew shook the whip and watched the motion ripple to the end in slow animation. It seemed almost alive and warm in his hands.

"What do you have?" Drew looked up and saw T.W., leaning on the partition of his alcove, eating a chocolate bar.

"An old ox whip," Drew answered. "Pretty neat don't you think?"

"Yah, I guess so. But what do you do with it? Whip oxen?"

"I don't know. It would be kind of fun to learn to crack it really well so you could snap things in the air like cigarettes or cards; like they do on T.V."

T.W. chewed reflectively on his chocolate bar, staring at the curious black object. The flesh around his chin settled softly on his collar. "It looks like somebody's tail if you ask me." Drew shook its end and the whip seemed to curl in his hands.

"All right everyone, lights out and into bed. The bell's rung. Come on T.W., get to your alcove." The monitor shouted to the boys down the corridor. He waited before Drew's alcove. "Hey Drew, get going. Do you have to be told to get ready for bed too?" He pointed to the black whip. "What's that?"

"It's a whip." Drew shook the serpent-like object before the monitor. He backed away quickly.

"Well put it away, and get to bed."

When he got back to his room, Teal found the five dollars on his desk, and the empty book bag lay in a heap with the discarded newspapers. He kicked his foot through the pile and smiled to himself. He undressed quickly in the chill of his dark room, and climbed into the icy sheets to sleep undisturbed for the entire night.

Bel in the lower, Drew lay turning in his bed listening to the breathing sounds of the other boys. He tried to focus his eyes on the whip hanging from the bureau. He discerned the narrow edge of its shadow swinging in the faint stir of air through the corridor. He lay wide eyed in bed transfixed by the movement, thinking of how he would learn to use his whip. With a deft crack, he would snap mosquitoes from the air and leaves off the trees.

For the remainder of the week the whip hung untouched on Drew's bureau. He had not been able to find the time to practice all the things he dreamt of at night. But the image of himself in jodhpurs and high boots cracking sparks through the air with his black demon, grew in his mind. It was not until Sunday afternoon when the corridor was deserted that he took his whip out again. T.W. had returned to the dorm, and crept up silently behind him, "Well, if it isn't Clyde Beatty. Where are your lions?" Drew jumped startled by his friend's appearance.

"Look at this." Drew split the air with the force of the whip and tiny black hairs loosened from the hide and drifted to the floor. T.W. watched as Drew repeated the cracks in rapid fire. "Here, hold this paper." Drew's friend timidly extended his arm holding the rolled tube as he shredded the pieces into confetti with the cracking barbed tip. T.W. dropped the end

of the paper before Drew came close to his hand.

Panting, Drew turned to the closed curtain of his alcove. His hair stuck to his forehead in damp strands. "Let's see what I can do here." He pulled the whip back over his head and the end exploded in the air, ripping the curtain from one of its rings.

"Look at this thing!" he shouted, his arm pounding the black streak above his head. "Here, let's try this. Hold it in your teeth." T.W. backed away as Drew rolled another narrower tube of paper. "Oh, come on. It's long enough. You've seen this it can't miss. Come on chicken. Are you scared?"

"No, I can do it." The boy trembled. Taking the tube, he turned his side to Drew, and placed it in his teeth. He closed his eyes and waited. Drew raised his arm in an arc above his head, and snapped the end toward the paper in T.W.'s mouth. The crack deadened against his cheek. He screamed out in pain dropping the paper to the floor. A gash of scarlet glowed from his cheekbone to his jaw, as the blood streamed from the welt. He reached his hand to his cheek. "Oh God!" he shrieked.

The whip burned in Drew's palm and he dropped it in horror. Blood was pouring over T.W.'s hand onto the sleeve of his coat. Drew could not move. At his feet, the whip coiled burning hot in the shredded paper. A spark glowed from its heat, and lit the pieces on fire. Drew looked down as the small flames licked at his shoes. "The whip. It's burning the paper."

T.W. did not reply. He had slumped to the floor holding his wound. T.W. stared at the growing flames as they leapt rapidly through the paper to the torn curtain of the alcove. "Come on," Drew called to T.W. "We've got to get out of here. Come on. They'll know. The whip, the whip's burning!" He grabbed his friend by the arm and pulled him to the stairs as the flames began to crawl up the rotting old curtains of the other alcoves and across the varnished wooden floors. Drew looked back at the glowing coils in the center of the hall.

The fire was controlled before it spread to the rest of the building, but the dormitory wing was destroyed. The entire school had gathered in front of the building to watch the fire. By dark, the firemen had smothered it to smoking ruins. The water began to freeze on the charred skeleton of the dormitory and small icicles glistened in the lights of the fire trucks. Drew stood alone in the cold, shuddering in the dampness. The other boys slowly left the smoking ruins and returned to their dormitories. Teal was one of the last to leave. He looked back once over his shoulder at Drew, as he ran across the green to join the others.

Drew watched alone now, except for a tall figure who stood half-hidden in the shadows. Waiting by a pile of embers and charred beams, Mr. Spader looked up and smiled at Drew, the dying coals glowed in red shadows along the hollows of his cheeks. He walked over to the remaining foundations of the building. Staring into the ashes for a moment, he knelt down and picked up the glowing hot whip from under a small pile. Mr. Spader walked over to Drew. Tightly clasping the burning end in his hand, he dangled the whip in front of Drew. Mr. Spader's smile froze across his face as he watched him. He waited, then quickly spoke, "I believe this belongs to you now."







## NOTES FROM CHILDHOOD

Pat Gaynor:

I  
Let me tell you  
Of a grand old lady witch  
Who lived alone  
In a grand old sunlit room.

Ally Bee was her name  
And her hair was wild white,  
She held one old brown stick  
For a leg which was lame.

Oh Ally Bee,  
In your grand sunlit room,  
You lied about  
The willow tree on your floor,

Ally Bee was her name,  
Be she witch or fairy,  
To her room I would go  
With my dolls and my games.

And she would tell  
Of fairies and elves and squirrels  
In old willows  
Outside her sunlit windows.

The morning light would shine  
On the dewy thin leaves  
Of a large gnarled trunk  
Whose branches were slime fine.

In the late night,  
While others were sound asleep,  
Fairies and elves  
Crept out of holes found in trees.

They hopped to the willow  
And slid on her thin leaves  
Making the trees rustle.  
Their laughs made winds billow.

Oh Ally Bee  
In your grand sunlit room,  
You lied about  
The willow tree on your floor.

## II

Norman's nose was always running  
 In the sandbox.  
 And the sand  
 Stuck to his face.

Norman's trucks were always purring  
 In the dirtpile.  
 And the dirt  
 Caked on his pants

Norman's mother is now running  
 Around the house.  
 In the doors  
 And up the steps.

In the sand a big truck purring  
 And the people  
 In the yard  
 Are pushed aside.

Everyone is yelling, pointing.  
 Norman's trucks are  
 Quiet now.  
 Squatting flatly.

Two white men are slowly walking  
 With a bundle  
 To the road.  
 Red top swirling.

Norman's nose is always running  
 In the sandbox.  
 And the sand  
 Sticks to his face.

## III

Child undertaker,  
 Undertaking to immortalize  
 Three tiny bloody bodies  
 Found near Amwell Road,  
 Carries their cold corpses  
 To her favorite forest spot  
 And there builds  
 A monumental monument  
 Of sucker sticks  
 And winding honeysuckle  
 And marbles mashed in dried dirt  
 In remembrance of the  
 Fluffy fur found  
 Between dog's teeth.

IV

Run. Stop. Breathe Stop.  
Through the wheatfield pitted finely  
To the cornfield waving lightly  
Onward to the rhino hole.

Crawl. Stop. Hop Stop.  
On the soggy ground dirt wheat floors  
Through the corn casino slat doors  
Forward to the dino hole.

Slip Slide Fall Stop.  
Peek around the smooth stalk slowly  
Slither over ridges flatly  
Over there the rhino hole.

Big Deep Round Hole  
This is what the dinos died in,  
Near by the rhino next of kin.  
Here we find their great white bones.

Jump Look Stop. Slop.  
Over here a rhino footstep  
Over there a cave man's twig net.  
That rock was a dino tusk.

Climb Slime Stop. Run.  
Through the cornfield wet with dewdrops  
Through the wheatfield's almost new crops  
Homeward from the rhino hole.

V

Wounded clown's foot tree.  
Submitting to an iron lung  
Installed in its innards  
To keep the heart beating.  
Stubbornly facing the world  
With a scar two feet long  
Grafted with solid cement  
In the shape of a shoe.  
Like a martyr it holds out its hands  
Gnarled, green, and flaking,  
Inviting all its children  
To sit in its lap,  
To lean on its shoulder,  
To kiss its unshaven cheek.  
Refusing to die it slaps the earth  
With its arms,  
Like an ape having a tantrum.



## THE DREAMER

Julie Boone:

The rain beat down in a hard patter, while the windshield wipers kept up their monotonous clisk-clisk until Anna thought she'd have to break them off like fragile chicken wings to preserve her sanity. Merrill Avenue was a watery shine of neon lights announcing car washes, drive-in restaurants, car dealers and discount clothing stores. The airtight foreign car felt like a diving bell, sealed her senses. It was four o'clock in the afternoon and fatigue swelled and dropped its heavy weight on her. Even smoking a cigarette seemed to require too much effort.

"Well, Anna, what'll we do now?" David asked her. "Hungry?"

"We haven't had a thing to eat all day. Yeah." Perhaps, she thought, it was hunger that had given her this headache which ran from her forehead, slithered to the nape of her neck and found repose at the small of her back. The windows were fogged. The view of Golden's Appliance Mart and the surrounding shopping center was pale and unfocused.

What do you want to eat? We've got Chinese, Japanese, Mandarin, Italian, Armenian, Kosher, French, German, or, of course, McDonald's in this big city. Ah, yaas, m'dear, anything your little heart desires." He was talking in his W.C. Fields voice. Anna wondered why he didn't sound sad or taken advantage of or beset with problems.

She had written him: "Please let me take care of you. It will do both of us good. You need someone to care for you." Yet he looked as though he could take care of himself very well. Someone, one of his friends, had told her that he was lonesome. He needed company. But he took care of her. She told him her problems, found release in her conversations with him. He had told her very little about himself.

"Chinese food is light, isn't it? And cheap, too. Aren't you hungry?" She turned toward him. He looked sort of Brendan Behanish, she thought, with the unruly, brillo kinky blond hair and the black turtleneck under his jacket. He couldn't possibly be cultivating it, she thought.

"Ahah! My dear, you've got to learn. Survival, for one. I sneaked a peanut butter and jelly sandwich before we left. You should learn tricks like that." He was putting on a show for her, letting the car careen around corners, wagging down crowded streets. Her stomach twisted and untwisted until she thought they'd have to stop the car while she got sick.

The parking lot at House of Chan was almost empty, grey-black cinder and asphalt with big mud puddles to walk around. Anna felt pale and expected David to notice. He walked quickly to the door and did a pantomime Alphonse-Gaston act, finally letting her pass through. Seated at a small table in the sparsely-furnished dining room, he ordered sake for both of them. It bit her mouth and made her head throb even harder.

"Food. Food. This stuff is doing me more harm than good." She leaned across the table "You're not, by any chance, trying to place me in a compromising situation, are you?"

"Drink up! It's always been the sadder-but-wiser girl for me. Another glass?" He poured the wine with a flourish.

The food was good; the tea warmed her insides and made her feel more comfortable. David wrote something on his napkin and passed it to her. "How are you, my pet?"

"Swell," she wrote back. She wished she could feel better. He was always in a good mood, and she felt small and young when she was with him. The mural behind him caught her attention. Brown mountains on a less-brown background, but it didn't seem authentic because little houses and people were sketched into the crotch of each mountain.

"What did you expect. A Gainsborough?" "This ain't the Ritz, ya know. But it's pretty good, isn't it?" He smiled and seemed pleased.

"I like it. Nice and lonely. Will you be staying here this summer?"

"I guess I'll still be at the magazine. If they don't fire me. I don't do anything. Must be my flashing wit. Sounds fairly unlikely. Say, maybe you can have my job this summer. Who knows?" He was being modest, she knew. He held the place together. He made the others like their work and could get everything done in one of his fantastic bursts of energy.

"Fat chance. I guess I want to work in Boston. It's friendlier than New York, and less expensive and there are more kids around and, anyway, I promised Katy I'd share an apartment with her. I feel like Eliza Doolittle — not prepared to do much except sell flowers."

"What do you mean? You can get a job doing anything. Just do like I did. Barge into an office and demand a job. They'll hire you on the spot."

They finished their meal and walked slowly out to the car. It had stopped raining but the air was oppressively heavy. Not clean but clammy and close. "David? What are we doing tonight?"

"We're supposed to meet Didi and Don for drinks in some swank joint. Did you bring a dress? Why? Do you want to do something else?"

"Well, I thought it would be nice and cheap if we just walked around. I never get outside anymore. But that sounds okay, anyway. I have a dress with me." She wanted to feel the air clean and clear up above the city. It would be cooler, maybe even cold later on. They could walk and really talk, without crowds of people around.

"We can go for a walk now, if you want. We'll get a bottle first. I know a good place." He bought sherry and paper cups and drove up a road surprisingly unrepaired and untravelled. At the top, he parked the car and came around to open the door. "See? Isn't this great?" He poured her a cup of sherry. She climbed atop the retaining wall. It was beautiful and she felt free, almost able to jump. Below, the lights of cars on the parkway performed a curious electric snake-dance. It was getting colder. She was glad for that, and for the sherry which she gulped down quickly. Now, she thought, away from everything, there would be talk. She turned around, only to see David disappear down a path to the side of the wall.

She stayed where she was, singing softly, "Soon it's gonna rain, we'll not feel it. Soon it's gonna rain, rain pell-mell, and we'll not complain, happy ending, if it never stops at all." Happy ending. Conclusion. Let it rain outside, because it would be warm and cozy in his house. She ran to David. "Hey!" He turned around. He'd been thinking.

"What's the matter?"

"Nothing. Just wanted to talk to you, since there's no one else to talk to."



He smiled at her. "It's good up here, isn't it? Olympian. Us. I bet we're the nicest people around." He patted her behind. "Come on, now. We've got to go or we'll be late. How long do you think it will take you to get ready?"

"Not very long. Quicker than you. Do we have to go now? We just got here."

"I don't want to, but we've got to. It's important."

"Who are Didi and Don?"

"They're two of the stupidest people you'll ever have the pleasure of meeting, but I've got to talk to Don about this new mag. I may be buying the publishing rights. I don't know. I should have gone with Sam to Nigeria. Except . . ." David concentrated on getting the car around and back on the road.

"Except what?" Anna pressed.

"Except . . . uhhh, what was I saying? Except, oh yeah, except I'd be in jail right now. Sam's in jail, you know."

"You told me. The whole staff would be imprisoned?"

"The whole staff is imprisoned. I'm not on the staff, but it was a close call. I still should have gone." They pulled up in front of his apartment house.

"Well I'm glad you didn't. I'd miss you. Can I have some more sherry while I get dressed?"

"Wino. Here. Hurry, though. It's almost eight."

They met Didi and Don, Tweedle-Dee and Tweedle-Dum, Anna thought, at the bar atop the hotel. The lounge was not crowded, so they got a table near a window, offering, in clear daylight, a view of slums and oil tanks. Now, though, it was foggy and only the street below and the illuminated oil tanks were visible. They sat in silence, David craning his neck to see the other patrons, Anna looking out the window. Didi and Don looked uncomfortable. Don broke the silence.

"Let's pretend we're in some other city," "Where else could we be?"

"I know. "We're in Washington and those tanks are the Lincoln Memorial and that other monument. That's the Potomac." Anna pointed to the river behind them, glowing with reflected light.

"Naaw." David shook his head disgustedly. "You girls have no imagination. Can't you see? This is San Diego. We're in some dingy bar on the waterfront. There's a topless waitress. We're dirty old sailors, and you're the broads we picked up off the street." The waitress looked shocked, indignant. Didi gave an embarrassed giggle. She looked starched. Her face was made up precisely with small precise circles on her cheeks. She was sympathetic.

Anna continued gazing out the window, while David told a joke. Her eye wouldn't focus. Through David's fingers, gesturing to make a point, she could see a portrait of Mr. Backer of Backer's Army-Navy store. It brooded above the sidewalk, she thought, like Doctor T. J. Eckleburg above the ash heaps of Queens. If only she could be outside with David.

The joke over, Anna laughed with the others, although she'd caught only the end of it. The fog was getting thicker, now. "Oh, nooo," Didi crooned to Don. "I can't have any more to drink. You wouldn't want me to be sick, would you? Hmmm?" The make-up on her cheeks began to change with the stuffy heat in the lounge.

"Do you want a double this time, Annie?" David rested his hand on her crossed knee, but quickly removed it. She shook her head.

"I've had plenty. What happened to the peanuts that we had?" She looked across the table at Didi and Don, nuzzling each other and giggling. Nobody answered. She crossed her arms and looked around at the band playing. Old matrons were dancing the polka with older husbands. They seemed to be having a good time.

"Dear David," she wrote on the wine list. "Don't understand you at all. No way to touch you. Wish I could go someplace til it's all over." She placed the card in her purse, but David wanted to see it.

"It's addressed to me," he said, and she reluctantly pulled it out and handed it to him. He wrote something on it and placed it back in her purse. His arm curled around her shoulder.

"I'm really sorry that you're sad, but try to have a good time and I'll make it up to you later on. I guarantee." She smiled at him as he lit her cigarette.

Afterward, they went to David's apartment for a nightcap. Didi asked her something about a movie they had both seen. She talked in a mechanical voice, ups and downs in the same places in each sentence, each word carefully enunciated. Before Anna could reply, David had brought in the drinks and Don had returned from the bathroom. "David, you're fairly tight, aren't you?" He was ceremoniously delivering the drinks to everyone.

"Now, just quiet your little mind, my pet. I'm fine fine fine." He looked up at her as he handed her the glass. He was so mature. He could pull a group of strangers together. She went into the kitchen to get more ice. David came in after her. "How're you doing? Feel better?"

"Oh, David, wouldn't it be nice if we could just have a happy ending? I don't want to be with these people. I want to be with you. Let's live happily ever after." She clapped her hands and laughed and tried to make a joke. "I'll cook and do the wash and have a drink ready when you come home, and we could raise babies." She leaned against a cabinet and rubbed her forehead.

"Anna, Anna." He was holding her head in his hands the way her mother did when she was trying to get the part straight in her hair. "Anna, you dreamer. I can't do that. I've been through all that before. I've got my babies. I can't be part of your fantasy. If you want to dream, find somebody who's never been married and had kids, who hasn't proved that he can't make it, somebody who's made for dreaming. Come on, kid, cheer up." He chucked her under the chin and went back into the living room.

With relief, Anna noted the time. "It's one o'clock," she announced cheerfully to the others. "Doesn't Didi have to be back by one-thirty?"

"I've got to drive them back. Do you want to come?" David was putting on his coat.

"No, I'm pretty tired. Drive carefully. Bye, Didi and Don. Nice to have met you." She washed her face and brushed her teeth, picked up a book and started to read. The words rushed past her eyes before she could understand them, and soon she was asleep in the chair by the door. When David came in, she sat up straight. "Who's there? David, is that you?"

"No, it's the milkman. Who'd you expect? Hey, what's the matter. I thought you said you were okay. You look just awful."

"No. It must be the wine and the sherry and the scotch and the gin and . . . shall I go on? I'm just really tired, I guess." She felt defeated. Why had this evening turned out this way? Why was it she who asked for help and was refused?

"Well, I hope it's nothing serious." He was going around the room, picking up glasses and emptying ashtrays.

"Here, let me do that. You want me to wash the dishes tonight?"

"No, that's okay. When do you want to go home tomorrow?"

"I don't care. David? You know why I was so scared? I've never been so sad in my whole life. I want to touch your mind. I let you touch mine. Why won't you let me? I felt so lonely. Why won't you let me?"

"I wish I could let you." David was stroking her hair. "I wish I could. I wish I could. But I can't. I just can't."

"You guaranteed you'd make it up to me later. You wrote me that."

"Well, I can't make it up to you. You know about pain? It hurts right now doesn't it? I wish I had it in me to hurt like you do. Cry, get it all out. Baby, see how it hurts? But it will stop hurting."

"What are you trying to say?" The wind was rattling the storm windows, but aside from that, the apartment was silent.

"If I let you touch me, it will hurt even more. And it will hurt me too. Why me, Anna?"

"You're better than me. You make me feel little because you're big and smart. If I could just touch you, I'd be a part of you." She felt shame for herself, embarrassment. Her words sounded untrue in her ears.

"How can I show you what I am? You can't come near me, no, but not because I'm better. I can't let you find out, be a part of me; you'll heal. I wouldn't."

"Okay. I guess." Anna exhaled a long breath that might have been tears. "I'm sorry, David. I'm sorry."

Sunday was clear and cool. She awoke first, made her breakfast and sat down with her book. David came in. "Morning," she said. "Want some breakfast?"

"Yeah. Peanut butter and jelly and a coke. Please. How do you feel?" He paced about the living room with his hands pushed far down in the pockets of his terry-cloth robe.

"I've been up for hours, sleepy head. Coke isn't good for you in the morning."

"It isn't morning. It's one-thirty. Hey, call up the train station and find out about trains to Philadelphia. I've gotta be there tonight."

"Six fifty-five, gets in at eleven-oh-eight," she said, bringing the sandwich in. He switched on the television. "I can get a train around the same time."

"Good. Whatcha doing?"

"Packing. Shall I call a cab, too?"

She read, he watched television. In the kitchen, her voluntary absence from David made her feel strangely independent. At six-thirty, they were ready to go.

David looked through his suitcase as they drove to the station. "Shit. I forgot to take a clean shirt. Damn it! Now I've got to spend ten bucks on another shirt. And I didn't get down to the office to pick up those

papers. Damn, that's what half the trip was for."

At the train station, Anna paid for the cab. They walked into the waiting room. "You go get your ticket. I'll find out what track the train's on. You're going to be late if you don't hurry."

"Listen. If I give you this, will you remember to mail it? It's my paychecks. I'm writing bad checks if you forget."

"I'll remember. Go buy your ticket. You're on track seven." David returned with the ticket. "It's right down there." She pointed down the ramp. "Bye."

He kissed her lightly. "Wait right here. I'll be right back. I want to make sure where it is and I'll be right back. When does your train leave?"

"Not for another fifteen minutes. Hurry. You're going to miss yours."

David walked down the ramp to the train, but turned around toward her. "Wait right there. I'll be right back."

Anna waited for a minute, then walked back into the waiting room. She bought her ticket and walked out to the platform. She wondered if David ever came back but, outside the air was cool and the wind blew her hair out of her eyes. Anna walked up the platform until she saw the diesel approaching. It rushed past her with a warm gust of wind.

She remembered, as she boarded the train, the red nick on his neck, how she had had to pat it clean. Smiling, relieved, she sat down. The train pulled out of the station slowly, but gathered speed, aiming her directly home.

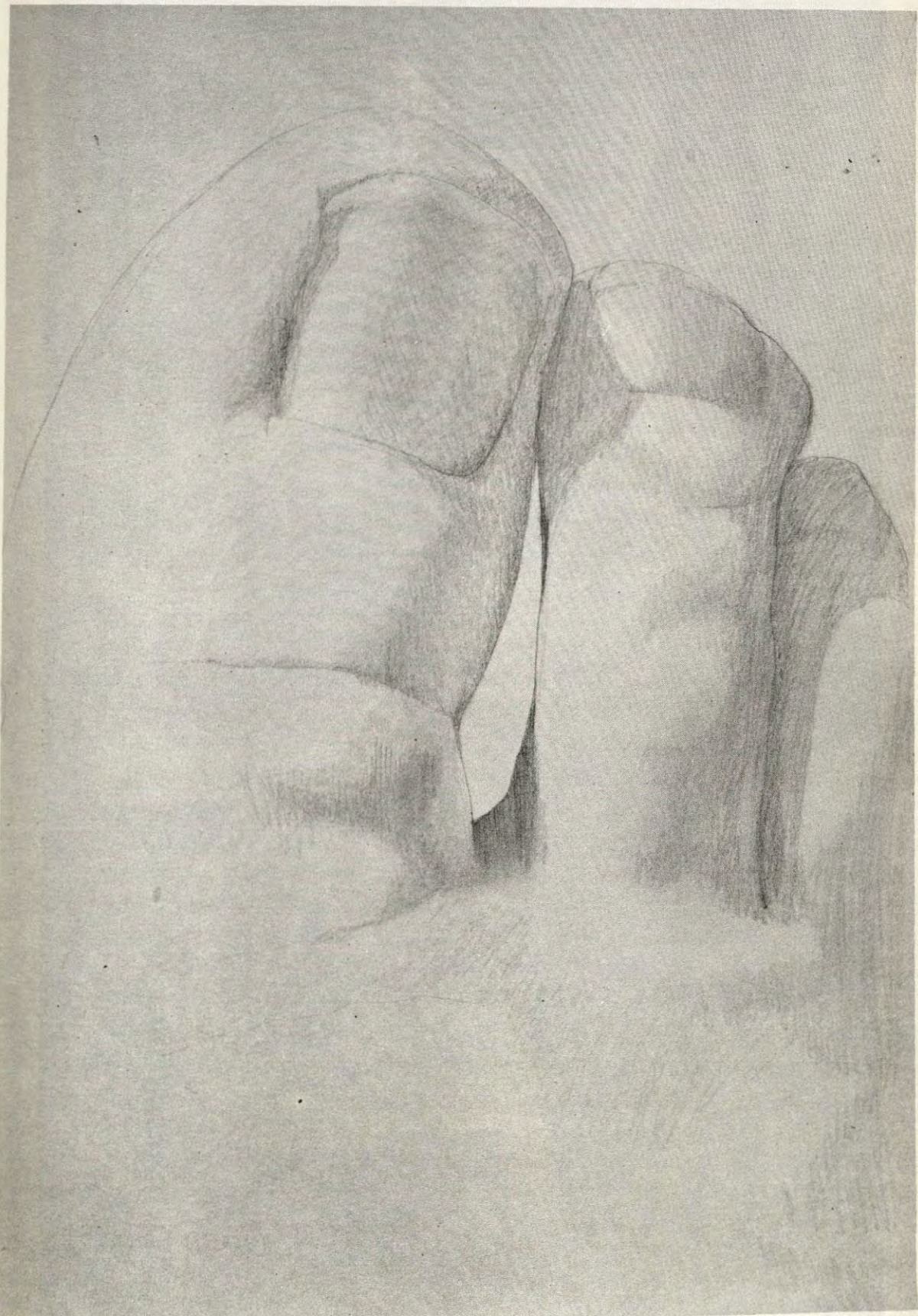
FOR ARCHIMEDES

Meg Sahrbeck:

The full extent of me,  
stretched long beneath  
this chlorine-tinted veil,  
does not seem to belong  
to any thought of myself  
which takes shape in the sphere  
I so carefully hold dry.

From the bubbles standing  
on my arms and thighs  
and richly in that dark mass  
I understand nothing.  
They rise and disappear  
to air, or roll away  
at every stirring of a pink limb.

What do I expect to be taught  
of this shape I know better  
in layers of dress?  
Too pink beneath this transparency  
it takes on dimensions of life  
which now only intersect mine.





rrrrr

## THE DAY BEFORE TOMORROW

Gretchen Liddle:

a black orb in a sky of yellow ochre  
and a head plopped aimlessly on the orangng sands of then  
remind the lonely dreamer  
of the way it was

back when a way of life so happy that ruin was all the rage,  
so they took their umbrellas and ran into the  
falling night to vanish into a haze of pages  
in the ancient history books  
and falling stars blurred by their own fruitless tears,  
and loving looks.

a black orb in a sky of now dimmed gray, a shade  
too well known on that unhappy day, that the  
orange and rotting heads are a welcome sight  
on the lost horizon of yesterday and the day before,  
the pockmarked land now just cooling before the next last war.



TO D —

Peggy Cohn:

Your mind is so ripe I always  
Feared it would go rotten, always  
Searched you with the knowledge  
I could never be your gardener  
Hypnotically attracted by the lustre  
Of your purple poison-fruit.

ON BECOMING ANNE FRANK

Peggy Cohn:

I have died  
And await resurrection.  
The yellow star is mine,  
At least, and this velour book,  
But that is all.  
To grow a voice  
A walk, a smile  
Takes time you know,  
Don't rush me.  
I'll be there when  
The sirens blow.

REQUEST

Peggy Cohn:

The door between us  
Stands open  
And we both know  
That it must be shut:  
We stand in the doorway,  
Playing mirror.  
Please, then, for once  
May I not shut it first?

QUERY

Peggy Cohn:

Was kann ich sagen  
oh my adolescent father  
to your incessant whirl  
of changing hats and girls?  
What shall I tell you  
when you ask for my advice,  
when your sly, flirtatious eyes  
take me in—your ingenue?

## BLUNDER

Sue Thornton:

Bright spit-polish lost  
Beneath the soil and stain  
Of warm blood,  
The sword's shiny pride no longer gleams  
Of glory past, but now,  
Snatched from its bracket-watch  
Must lead the battle cry.

A soulless tool, the blade  
Resumes a murderous slash,  
Why adversary lands?  
Former times in foe condemned  
We saw the glow of human life;  
But, shunning this acknowledgement  
We shield ourselves with sin.

Confusion in the upturned face  
Before the moment-silenced wail;  
Rustic innocence commands: Halt

This thoughtless slaughter;  
The ghoul there is you cannot slay  
By blindly swinging bloody blows-  
These only vile infection spread.

An image trapped in mirror-glint  
Of the polished hilt  
Explodes in blinding horror.  
And flung into the sea — to no avail;  
Destroy the bloody instrument  
And yet remains the deed.

The shame, not within the tool  
But goading in that which points  
Its white — bright flashing spire  
'Fore it turns dull.  
Still these angry smoking arms  
And rather smother bitter pride  
That chokes a crying child.

## ANOTHER COUNTRY

Rita Miller:

Like thread through needle's eye  
they fly, among the trees, to spy  
the thing that hovers there  
distilling jungle air  
with man-made moons of lamps,  
among the fumes of damp,  
the swamp looms below the camp—  
of enemies.

A look, a sight, and off  
into the night, the leaders say.  
Gone, before the dawn can  
tint the trees a daylight gray,  
turn the breeze their way,  
interrupt them in their play.  
And like a game of tag, they brag,  
with nearer steps —  
and with a yellow cry  
the children die.

GRIGORIEV'S SONG OF INDIFFERENCE  
IN HONOR OF THE SHAM EXECUTION

Wendy Green:

All in their different ways were suffering  
from the fever of exhilaration that the  
death penalty had been lifted from them.  
They embraced one another and wept. Some  
like Grigoriev seemed indifferent, but he  
had in fact gone mad while he was being  
tied to the stake.

Once I had a love,  
and it was my touch  
that curled her magnificent shoulders toward me,  
my touch the chapping wind  
to dry these moist shoulders  
until they curled and snapped forward  
like paper, a single white bone;  
I held my hands  
as a sieve before her mouth  
and through callouses felt  
a sheer shower of warm water  
or her breath, I know not which.

But it seemed to come somewhere  
before the music of the gun, initiating  
the dance of violent fluttering,  
the coldness piercing inward, shuddering,  
spasmodic jerking, stuttering  
again, again, curling  
me more than any shoulder, snapping  
all my bones,

and you ghosts  
deny the irretrievable, weep  
because I am a stranger, alien  
without your sense of danger.

## FOR . . . , COMMITTED TO A MENTAL HOSPITAL

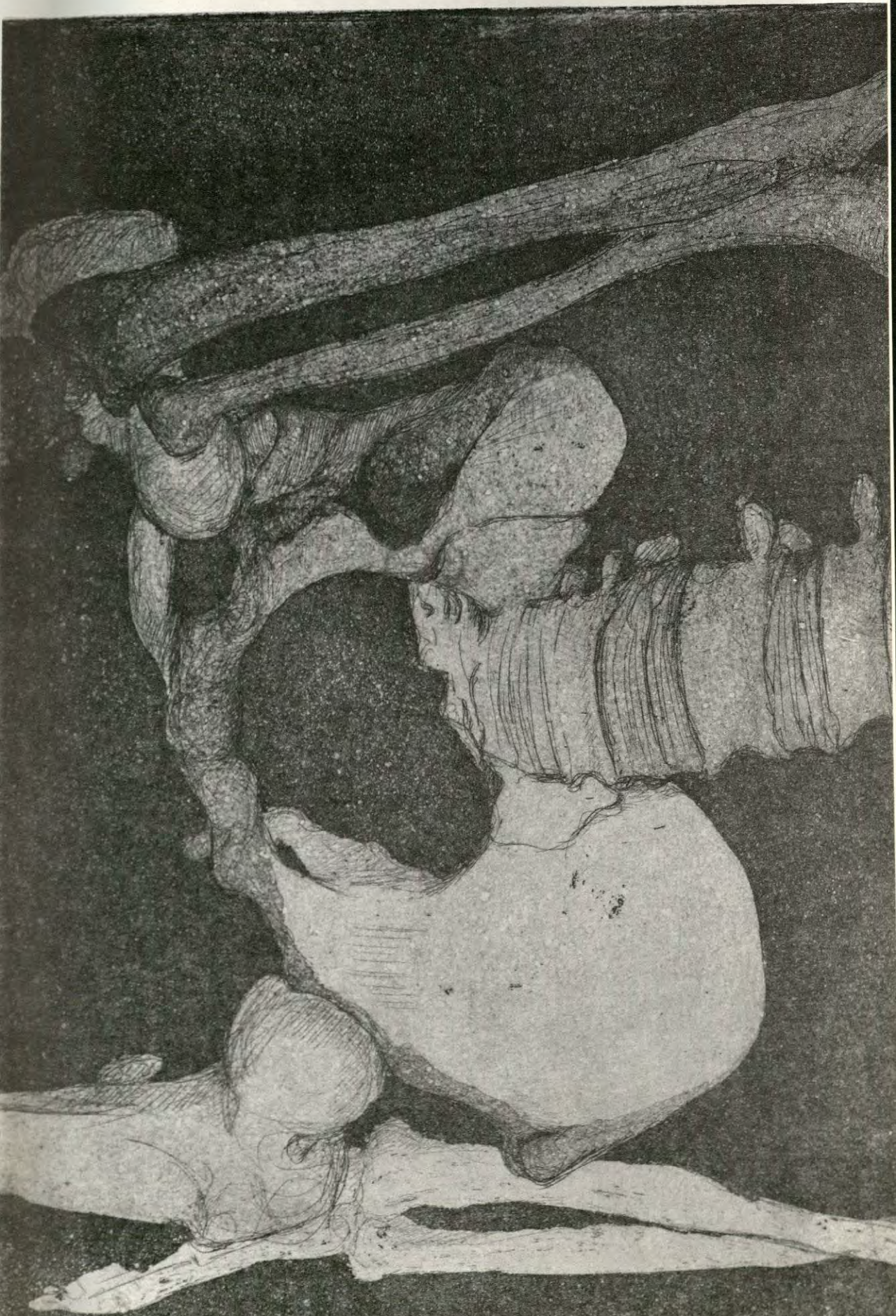
Susan Holloway:

they said you were a queer duck but  
behind the white mask,  
the blue-veined eyes  
where were you?  
i remember the time you held a laurel branch over your  
head and walked  
through town.  
now in white walls i see you move laurelless.  
all our years you lived among us  
you with your bells and your iron laugh.  
stylite,  
you lived high.  
we could barely see you moving up there with the eagles,  
those fierce birds.  
now because you are  
you are coming down to live with us,  
leaving your eagles to live among the ducks.  
oh pure soul, . . .  
oh white bird,  
i pray your fall is free.  
soon you will land in a field of tongues, flapping,  
and quacks of ducks.  
cover your thoughts and walk soundless.  
did i say  
that among white walls and iron windows  
your courage, . . .  
your eagle heart,  
shall find a nest?  
oh we stand watching you,  
waiting for your fall.

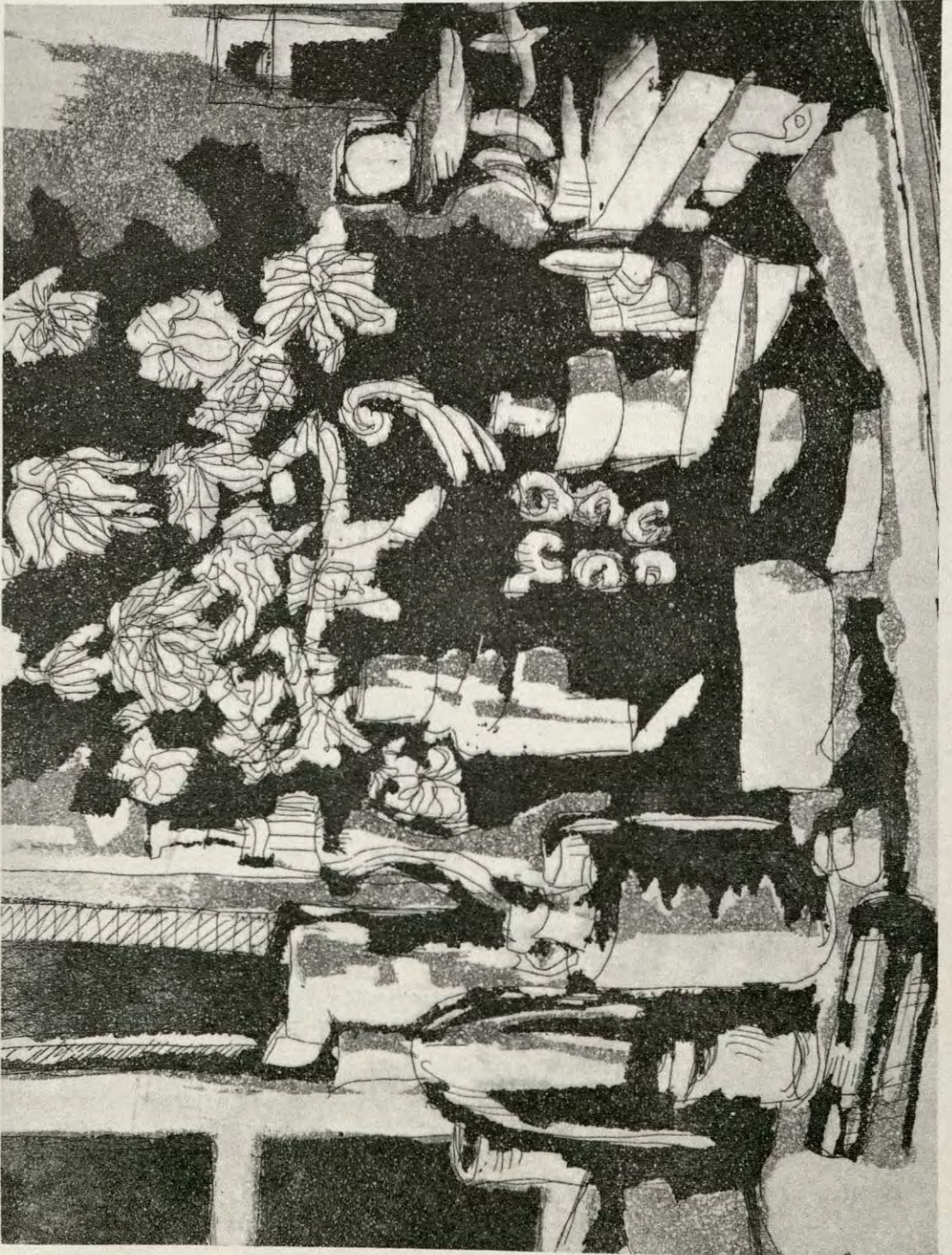
THE CROSS OF EDEN  
LEANS AGAINST THE TREE OF KNOWING

Gayl Jones:

this is the clay they plant vines in  
vines of the grapes melted down to wine for holy communion  
crushed down to wine.  
the spark from god's life-giving finger is useless against  
the clay and he cannot raise the man from death.  
he can not raise the man from death.  
he can never raise the man from death.  
we carry a fake jesus on a chain around our necks  
and kneel down for a blessing from the  
holy father  
spreading benedictions  
eucharist of the mind  
where even satan drinks from the cup  
serpent entwined in the gold cup of jesus  
jesus drank from the dead cup  
the blood of our crushed salvation  
steven, a savior stoned, is a grape-  
grower.  
they crush grapes with bare feet.  
untraveled to holy places  
yet bared for holy ground:  
the holy men shake hands, the holy women  
out of place, I turn away  
we do not go barefoot on unholy ground.  
they congratulate themselves for  
helping those less fortunate than they  
they gratify their guilt  
they are gratuitous  
pilate washes his hands.  
pilate was once a grape crusher.  
my god was once a slaver  
or he thinks he was because of  
his father.  
he washes his hands by helping others  
he is one of the holy men who must  
commit himself to causes or  
one cause.  
I am out of place  
he helps me  
I am still out of place.  
I turn away  
the holy men shake hands, the holy women  
I am gone before they turn to me:  
if ever.  
we do not go barefoot on unholy ground.  
my god crushes grapes  
crushes me  
I want to tell him he is not his father  
but time slavers  
I am out of place  
he washes his hands by helping others  
he asks if I will commit myself to causes:  
I will not commit myself to causes.  
the whole world is an em ef  
the slave buys back himself  
the blood of christ buys back his faith  
we bear ourselves off on the ragged  
wings of serpents.









## FOR CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

Wendy Green:

We therefore moved by piety have pardoned  
the same Ingram Frizer the breach of our  
peace which pertains to us against the  
said Ingram for the death above mentioned  
& grant him our firm peace . . .

"Ah, Faustus,  
Now hast thou one bare hour to live,  
And then thou must be damn'd perpetually!"

Your death was lowly, Marlowe, not ignoble.  
I can see you outraged, red with anger  
that Frizer denied you death in battle  
or not-so-distant brothel. Tender pain  
can I feel in hands that would not know  
helplessness or inability, numb  
and freezing cold which Frizer's dagger dared  
to bring, silent weakness, slashing wrists;

not to say that you experienced terror  
in a common tavern ordinarily concerned  
with banalities of life, vittels, feigned love,  
at Deptford Strand. Your sense of justice probably  
was mortified: but note the compliment  
of decision, your worth insured. Think,  
Marlowe, of the design.

You would have raged  
anywhere, however death had come, protesting  
not futurelessness but inconvenience.  
Yet never would you have welcomed death. Your nights  
too heavily occupied with intrigue, the days  
with muses. Actually you cheated, an Orpheus without  
Eurydice, no reason to look back. An accident  
would have been a blind attempt to stave  
a blinded man. A gay intruder, death,  
uninvited but unabashed. No random  
chance, no loss in lottery. Death has no choice  
but you.

If Poley pushed back imaginary hair,  
Skeres your arms, or distracted distractable  
Mistress Bull, no matter. Wherever you dined  
on previous nights, for Faust's stepfather preserved  
on ice, forever noise, musical distance,  
brushing thinned familiar crystal, brittle  
on your lips. Think of madness, Marlowe,  
not their method.



