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Spring 1972

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Spring '72





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Subway

Lying in a subway station, there rots a tweed old man
breathing bad without a shoe he spits into his hand
His coughing crusted wood and steel as honey into ash
people stood and watched him there, people didn't ask

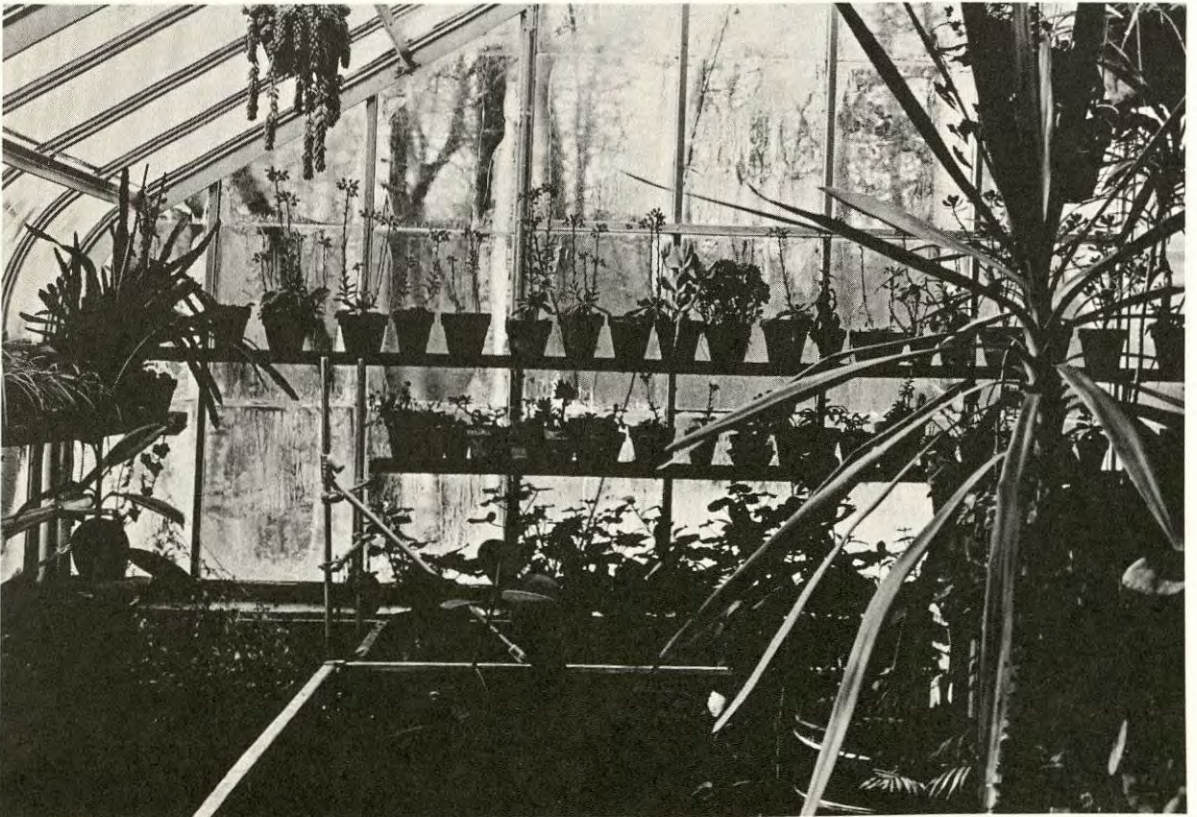
The flashlight man who walks the rails, has never been to sea
his day is night and night is all and all is loathe to be
His pock marked cheeks were dipped in oil and feathered with a coal
so loose he dragged his tarnished head into his tarnished hole

The lady with the parasol seems hiding from the street
her ankles are so small around, she scratched them with her feet
Her dainty stride abused the cracks that canes had left behind
so long ago her silken bows have knotted in her mind

A girl all dressed in Mexico, perched upon the stile
flashed a coin into her palm and kissed it for awhile
Her hands were fat and white and strong yet heart shaped as a dove
she threw her arms about her sleeves pretending to be love

A lonesome dog came from the street, and piddled on the stair
he yelped until his ribs began to whine all thistle haired
Someone sneezed and someone sighed and someone never heard
the subway was on time that day and left without a word.

ANITA PERRY



Libmann in a decision
to play the classic
idiosyncratic moron,
stares in the soft sad eyes
and is granite.

(Amorality,
song of small, short gladnesses
always catches him
and his mighty sex
off-guard)

She glints -- he loses
that greater warmth.

Libmann,
almighty super-juvenile
freezes his fool's ass
alone:
reeling splendor muffled
by bedspread (moans)

But sudden his heart epileptic
bursts:
hair-a-flame face-a-light
warming
the sub-zeroed
sad excuse.

To be hard, fast, and foolish
once, stripped in a summer bed
he promised himself
(ah).

JAY LEVIN

Scenario

A bus full
of empty faces
Rolls past the house

as

A small boy
holds a half-peeled orange
And tickles his little sister.

CECELIA HAGEN



She sat weeping, waiting.
The unicorn came, and placed his head
quite gently in her lap.
She stroked the curling softness of his mane.
The eyes looked upwards at her,
soft and misting, then slowly cleared
to show her paths leading into
promised forests.
The unicorn lay gazing thus,
then closed his eyes in rapture.
"Go", she whispered.
"Go play in running brooks
and in those forests you have told me of."

"But he never came" she still insisted.
"I would have given you the signal if the unicorn had come."
The archer, nodding, held her tightly by the arm.
"I hoped you weren't the virgin
that people thought you were," he said.

It must have been a unicorn
that gored him through,
for townsfolk say that they have seen her with one ever since,
some say riding,
some say running laughing by its milk-white side.

ELLEN FICKLEN





Alternate Tuesday

I will sit my my aging tower

I will light my smile
as I hear your carriage
approach the door.

I will be sitting in
the darkened morning
room and as your footsteps
come I will light the evening candles,
water the feathery green plants,
and be gazing out over
the lawn as you enter.
Hearing your feet leaving
the wood and meeting the stone
I will turn slowly, swirling
in my long gown.
I will extend my hand to you.

I will stand there, silent.
As the carriage sounds float from the yard
I will blow out the candles (my hand cupped behind)
and then walk away towards my chamber
until the next alternate Tuesday.

You will come on alternate
Tuesday afternoons between 4 and 5.

The wolfhound will greet
you there and bring you
to me.

After kissing it you will tell me of your
conquests. When you have finished you will
kiss my hand once more, then leave.

In the carriage, you too will be
thinking of it.

ELLEN FICKLEN

a cold slice
on your
tongue
perhaps
or peach or
melon. Perhaps of the knife
which you don't
feel
till the air hits the cut.
Why you can bleed to death in the bath
and never feel it.
The world makes shadows
as if there were hills
in everyone's
life
blueish purple crests
that only exist
from a distant perspective.
Can you really
shape your own life
any more than a pregnant mother can decide
or determine what her child will look
like through it's her body
that's the factory
the designer?
Well give me a handfull
of whatever it is
that you use
for love. I'll investigate
the possibility
sending
a letter
to my father;
he knifes the earth, saying he's plowing:
he burns my face and tells me
not to put so much faith
in the sun
or the ocean. It is you I think of
when I sit and look at the
shadows
in the hills
some evenings.

STEVE NELLISSEN

Adam from Eden

Having taken him apart, it was hard
to re-member him, the earth renewed in all
its clays, with limbs. The liver, river mud

put back in Chaldea; the head cracked by gulls
on wharfs at Kinneret; the heart like blood
like a red stream at floodtime, fertility

left everywhere: he was split up for sure.
It is true he was still. So what was there of fairness
in the serpent allowed to roam, footless, unmeasured,

pressing to the soil in movement, and this gave cause
for yield? Could the Magdalene cling to a ghost
as Mary had done and make a body?
Could flowers arise through a seed

cracked by fingernails, revealing a Void?
and what do they call It who fear inaction?

The serpent can move all he wants.

It is the stillness by choice
that makes the Creation.

ZONA SILVERSTEIN



Silver Train

A train slithered through the salt grass beneath
the ever curling light of noon. Entombed
within the greystone belly, there sat a sad
eyed man. He poked and ripped his hole grown vest
and tried to laugh out loud. The lady turned
her hazel eyes and pearled her boy a sock.

The city saw them weaving near and made
for them a track. The city pulled away
the sea and gathered up the shells.
In piles they lay them one by one
and as they pierce the somber clouds,
someone hurls them toward the sun.

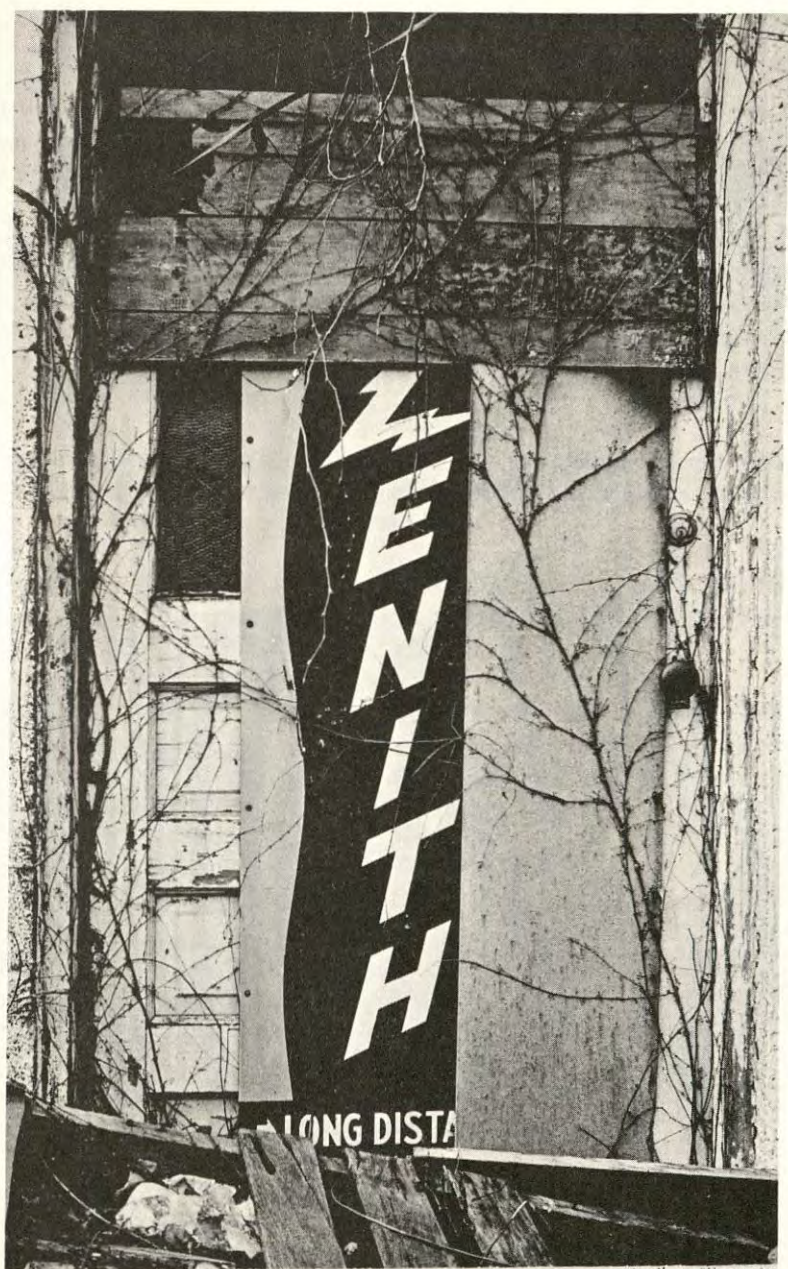
Silver train had heard the bells chiming for a dime.
Slivered sun had found the man laughing in the train.
The old man ceased and closed his eyes
he knew the smell of rain.

ANITA PERRY

Whalley Street

Glass hairs
gleem on brows of wrinkled streets
so shorn despite the stop sign there
colorless scream
changed the light from red to green
black hands wiped the chicken gravy into the stinking gutter
as Whalley Street strode in leather boots and purple shirts
toward the cracked stare of the storefront there
bubbles blue and orange floated past
youths wading through the puddled alleyways
rising, sinking, in the trash
black man. copper man
paced beneath the guilty moon
so white
Old Man white
saw Whalley Street
cry, and watched it weep
into the chicken gravy puddles there.

ANITA PERRY



PAUL FISHER 1972

[illegible]

“EVERYTHING THAT FLOWS”

Ruth had always been a sensible and sensitive person. Once in third grade, on the back of a composition paper, a teacher wrote “Ruth has a stable and perceptive nature”. All through high school, she accumulated a gaggle of friends.

Taking guidance from her mother, Ruth became a person of acute level-headedness. At college, when all the other girls in her dorm were going hysterical in their rooms, having sexual intercourse with Yalie after Yalie, or buying up packages of razor blades with which to slit their wrists, Ruth radiated an abounding health of the spirit. She developed into a fairly influential person in the dorm during the last two years, and even went so far as to attract a pre-med student whose ideas differed little from hers.

They spent their senior year bike-riding, ice-skating, and attending chamber music recitals. Ruth went to the college infirmary and got herself fitted for a diaphragm and they engaged in dignified sex every other Saturday when he came down.

Upon graduation, he left for medical school at the Cornell Med school. She even saw him off at the train station. He was wearing a rather loose pair of sharkskin pants and socks with garters.

The day was unpleasant and when the train came in, snorting and rutting, Ruth felt a slight discomfort at seeing him leave. They embraced, touching papery lips and then he got on. Ruth hoped he would find a window seat and wave to her as the train took off. But apparently all the window seats had been taken and her last remembrance of him was the black rear end of the train disappearing into the distance.

They wrote fairly often. Ruth got a job as an assistant librarian in Boston. For the first two weeks she lived with her married sister in Brookline, and took the sweaty MTA back and forth. Then she found an ad in the paper asking for a room-mate in an apartment on Beacon Street. So she called the other girl up and went down to see it.

Her first impression of the other girl was indifference bordering on dislike. The girl was blond and plump. She had large moist lips which reminded Ruth of two hotdogs. She was neurotically Jewish and involved with an Arab exchange student at BU.

Ruth went through a few days of concern over whether she should take the place or not. What made her decide was when her sister's two small children stepped in the dog's mess outside and tracked it on the living room rug.

Ruth found that she and Mina could get along splendidly if they rarely saw each other. So she usually retired to her room at about eight o'clock and spent the night writing Don or else reading poetry.

Mina never cooked so Ruth got into the habit of cooking a bland dinner (Mina had nervous stomach trouble) after she got home from work. One evening they were sitting down to eat when Mina, out of the blue, suggested that Ruth take a course at BU so that she could meet some more people.

“You know, you hardly see anybody,” Mina said, hotdog lips dripping with chicken juice. “Like its really true. When's the last time you had a date?”

Ruth bristled. "I happen to be almost engaged."

"Almost isn't good enough. Let's see the ring. I don't see a ring on your finger. For all you know, what's-is-name might be screwing ten girls at once up there at Cornell."

Ruth patted her lips with her napkin. "Hardly. Don isn't that type. We have a true and beautiful relationship."

"Okay, so you do, so what? Why do you have to close yourself up in that tomb every night and do nothing. It's not healthy." Mina helped herself to some more chicken.

"I don't shut myself up."

"You do, though."

"No, I don't. I don't at all. Still, taking a course might be fun." Ruth leaned back in her chair. "I'd like to take something on John Donne and Spenser. I've never read the Faerie Queen."

"What do you want to read that horseshit for? They have great stuff-yoga, encountergroups, a course in pornography, all kinds of stuff."

"Well ..."

"Here's the catalog," Mina said, getting up and knocking the chair over. "You look through it. Ali's coming in five minutes. He says we're going to an orgy tonight." She started giggling.

Ruth felt the tips of her ears turning red. "Oh."

* * * * *

The following Monday night, Ruth found herself prowling the sepulchral halls of the Boston University English building. She had entered through the back door after getting off the MTA. By following numbers, she went first upstairs, then downstairs till finally she came to room 314. When she walked in there were five people already there. Two ladies in Enna Jettick shoes and support hose, two college girls, and an older man. A few minutes later three boys walked in and took back row seats.

At five minutes past the hour of seven the professor entered the room. He had a bald dome-like head which reflected a perfect square window of light when he turned to the blackboard. He wore ill-matching socks and a brown jacket. His pants ballooned out gracefully at his ankles.

The professor was humming as he unpacked his briefcase, and pulled out two large books and a notebook. He cleared his throat.

"Hello. I'm Professor Sandor and this is CON-TEM-POR-AR-Y LIT-RIT-OOR. Number two five oh." He turned and wrote it feverishly on the board. "We will be meeting here every Monday at seven for two and a half hours. I'm sure we'll need all that time to keep up with the schedule. The first book we will be reading will be Henry Miller's Tropic of Cancer."

Just then the door opened and a young man walked in. Or maybe it's an old man, Ruth wondered. He walked quickly and sat in the seat in front of her. Their eyes met briefly and Ruth was mildly shicked. His eyes were shiny jet marbles, parallel to arching sardine-shaped

eyebrows. Ruth felt half dressed when he looked at her, though she was properly attired and seated neatly in a wobbly chair with a writing arm. As the young man sat in front of her, Ruth studied the back of his neck. It looked dark creamy brown, like espresso coffee and cream. He also had wild black curls at the nape of his neck. He was wearing a loose and odoriferous sweat shirt. Ruth could see the rings of sweat under his arms. In his hand he gripped a pencil with the eraser bitten off.

"...that Miller is a bit of a show-off," the professor was saying. "But we shall see as we get into the book. Now to find out who is here."

The professor selected a piece of paper from the notebook and started to read off names. When he came to Ruth's name she cried "Here" and raised her hand.

"Now, anyone whose name I didn't call?"

"Yes, mine." The boy-man in the sweat shirt said. "It's David Lazrus."

"L-A-Z-R-U-S. Okay. It looks like this is the class." The professor began to pack up his things. "I trust you've already bought the book. We'll be getting into serious critical discussion next time. Toodle-oo."

He started to leave and every body got up. Not trusting herself to find a way out of the building, Ruth followed the older ladies out the front door.

Outside it was foggy dark. Ruth pulled her raincoat around her as she walked to the MTA station across the street. As she walked down the bright and jarring MTA stairs she searched in her pockets for a quarter and dropped it into the turnstile. There was already a small crowd waiting for the train. Ruth made the mistake of looking down into the tracks. She had the searing impulse to hurl herself down into them. In seconds it became a compulsion, until she was fighting with herself not to swan dive into the tracks. At last the train came and the doors snapped open. She got on and had to stand, clinging like a bug to a slippery leather strap.

The train had just gone past Park Street when she felt herself the victim of a knife-like stare. Through the corner of her eye, she looked all around until she saw him, the man-boy in her class, looking at her, though he had an opened magazine on his lap.

At the Copley Square stop she saw him get off, along with about a third of the other passengers. The seat where he had been sitting was vacant, so Ruth walked over and sat down in the warm seat.

He had left his magazine there on the seat and Ruth turned it over. She was surprised to see its prurient cover. In huge red letters was the word "Stud". Underneath was a picture of a hefty blond with huge sprung breasts with cherry red nipples. All she was wearing was her smile and a G-string which read "Happy Birthday, Pablo Picasso". Ruth read some of the article names, "Funky Sex-How to Get it and What to Do", "I was Pregnant at Twelve", Nudes and Nuts." She stuffed it between the seats when her stop came up and, smoothing her hair, got off.

* * * * *

Friday night was shopping night, Ruth had decided. She walked over to the supermarket and did the week's shopping, which only came to one big bag. Mina had spent all her money on the down-payment for a motorcycle for Ali, so she didn't have any money till payday. They had



brought the motorcycle over the night before. Ruth heard the noise and ran out to the porch to see Ali and Mina, purple-faced, bunched like beanbags on the motorcycle.

Ruth let herself in, balancing the grocery bag on her hip, feeling the sharp edge of a tuna-fish can. After she unpacked the food, she changed into her bathrobe and turned the tv set on. Outside the cars kept on swishing past her apartment, like lemmings on their way to the sea.

During Dick Cavett, the phone rang. When Ruth answered it, there was no one on the other end, not even breathing. She said hello again, then heard someone clear his throat and begin chanting, "O Ruth, where now is that warm cunt of yours, those fat heavy garters, those soft bulging thighs. There is a bone in my prick six inches long. I will ream out every wrinkle in your cunt, Ruth, big with seed."

Ruth sucked in her breath and stared, open-mouthed, at the phone. The voice continued, gaining momentum as it went on, "I am fucking you Ruth so you'll stay fucked. And if you are afraid of being fucked publicly I will fuck you privately. I will tear off a few hairs from your cunt and paste them on Boris's chin. I will bite into your clitoris and spit out two franc pieces!!!"

The last sentence climaxed in a shriek. Ruth slammed the phone down so hard she upset it. The receiver fell onto the rug, mouthpiece up, so that it looked like a little abandoned black baby. A few hours later, Ruth replaced the receiver in its cradle.

* * * * *

She was sitting in her night school class and her leg was falling asleep. The reason it was falling asleep was that she was sitting in the chair next to the boy-man David Lazrus, and the chairs were at such an angle that if she stretched out her leg, it would come within half an inch of his leg. Her book sat stiffly on the arm chair. They were on page five, talking about the eroticism in the book. The professor was going on at length about the book's vitality and strength. The two older ladies up front seemed mystified. The two cabbage smelling girls nodded heavily. David Lazrus was doodling or penciling on the inside back cover of his book.

"How many of you think that Miller is perverted? Is this a relevant criticism that we can make?" the professor asked.

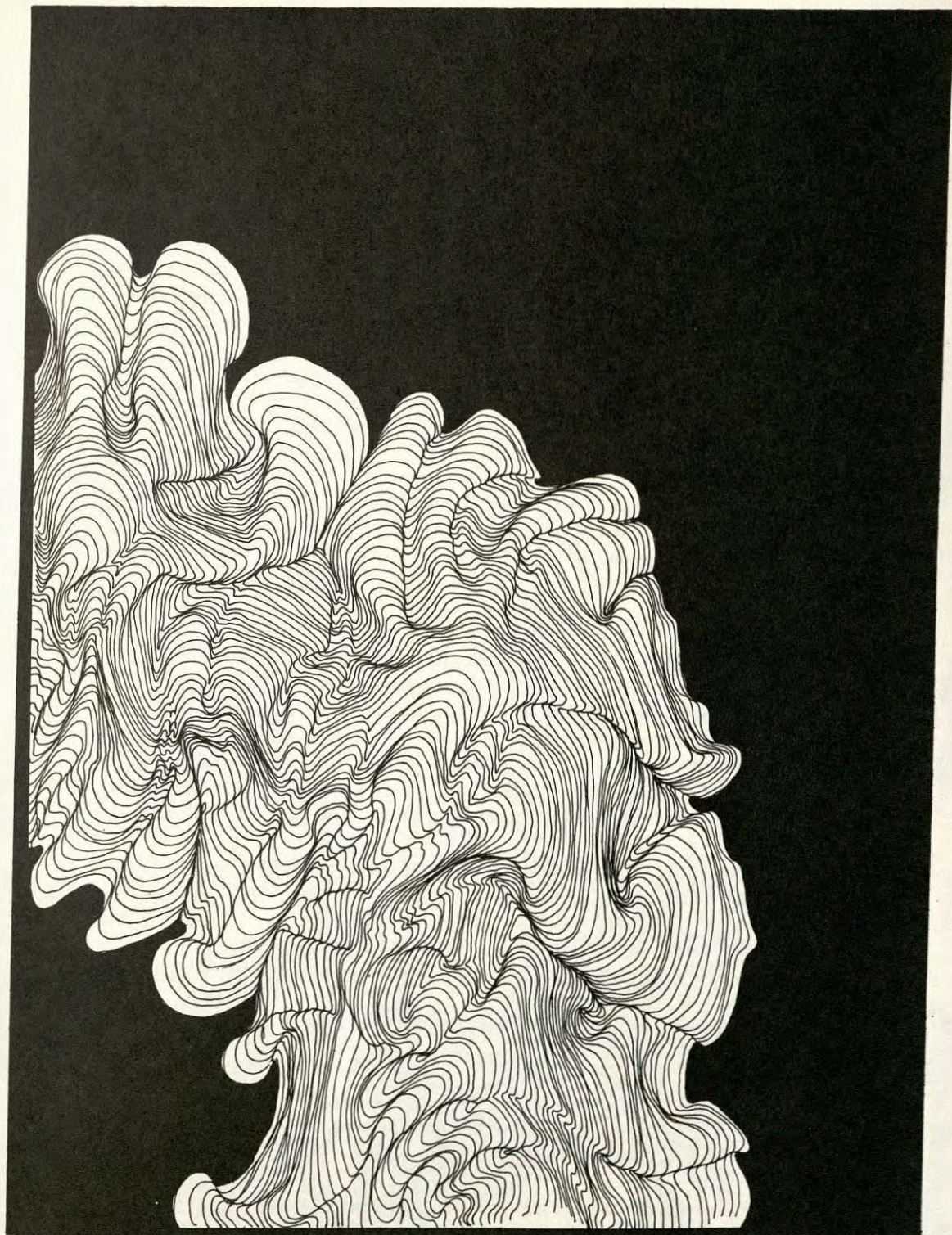
One of the older ladies said that she thought he was because his while life revolved around sex and that to him, people were objects. There was a mumbling of agreement.

"I don't think he is, particularly." Heads pivoted back to the dark and satanic David Lazrus. "He's got a very healthy attitude, I think."

By the end of the session the professor had them all somewhat convinced that Miller was not as bad as he seemed. Even Ruth, who found the book rather offensive, could see the basis of his argument.

As they were leaving Ruth sneaked a look at the back cover of David Lazrus' book, at what he had been doodling. To her disgust he had penciled in a crude female figure with huge breasts and a vagina bristling with curly hairs. At the second before she looked away, Lazrus picked up his books and their eyes met. Ruth knew that he knew that she had seen it. They stared at each other until he gave her a gloating smile and walked out.

All the way home, she worked herself into a fury, and again, he was sitting in the same car, and he got off at Coply Square. And once more he stared his broken glass stare at her until his



stop came up. That night Mina knocked on her door at two-thirty in the morning to say that the phone was for her and that it was a male. Ruth leaped out of bed, expecting to hear that Don had discovered that he had cancer and had two days to live, or that her parents had died in a triple car pile-up or that a cadaver in Don's dissecting lab had stood up and walked off the dissecting table.

But when she said hello, "I love everything that flows--the foul words of the whore, the spittle that floats away in the gutter, the mil of the breast and the bitter honey that pours from the womb, all that is fluid, melting dissolute and dissolvent, all the pus and dirt and that in flowing is purified--that loses its sense of origin, that makes the circuit toward death and issolution. The clap...dysentary...THE MENSTRUAL FLOW!!!"

Mina put Ruth to bed with two aspirins and a hot water bottle.

* * * * *

For her next class, a paper on Miller was due. Ruth read Tropic of Capricorn and Black Spring. She sat back on her bed with the three books spread out before her, all criss-crossed with red and black and green magic marker. She spent the entire weekend working on the paper, night and day, interrupted only by the nocturnal squeaking of bedsprings coming from Mina's room, and a phone call from Don. They had had their number changed, but Ruth was still relieved to hear his voice. He was calling from his friend's apartment and he sounded half-drunk. Ruth tolerated him until he began to speak gibberish and then she told him she had work to do and hung up.

On Monday she was just finishing typing her paper when it was time to go. Her fingers had a peculiar flattened look from so much typing. A search for the stapler made her miss the six-forty train, so she walked into class late, in the midst of what seemed to be an argument between Professor Sandor and the feral David Lazrus. Before long, the whole class was involved in the verbal whirlpool, until everybody was shouting at the top of their lungs to be heard.

One of the college girls got up and said flatly, "You can't even argue this. It's absurd, its irreconcilable." Then she stalked out of the room.

Finally everyone but David Lazrus was worn out, and professor Sandor shakily called for the papers and dismissed the class.

On her way to the MTA stop, Ruth became aware of someone at her elbow. When she turned around, the face of David Lazrus slid into view.

"I was noticing," he said shyly, "that we take the same MTA home and tonight I have a car. Want a ride home?"

Probably stole it, Ruth thought. She told him no, that she had a ride home, and to prove it, had to stand on the corner until he left. When she got home, after a terrifying incident on the MTA involving two black youths who threatened to beat her up if she didn't give them a dollar, Ruth found Ali and Mina at each other's throats. Mina had taken a lethal-looking, but in reality quite dull, carving knife from the kitchen drawer, and was waving it over Ali's head. Little squat Ali was shouting that she was a stupid Jew and trying to get the knife away from her.

Ruth slammed shut her bedroom door, fell into her bed, clothes and high heels on, and drifted into a deep and dreamless sleep.

* * * * *

At the next class, Ruth was eager to receive her paper, and delighted to see that David Lazrus was not there. The class ran smoothly. Professor Sandor was in rare form. Ruth thought what a likeable and brilliant man he was.

At the end of class he passed back all the papers except Ruth's. When she asked him where hers was, a liquid smile appeared on his face.

"A very, ver-y fine paper. In fact if you have a minute, I'd like to talk with you about it in my office."

She mentally calculated the next running trains and decided that she had twenty minutes to spare. She waited as he put away his papers. When they finally left the classroom, he put off the lights with a decisive snap, all the others had vanished.

"You know," Professor Sandor said as they climbed the three flights of stairs, "you're a very sensible and perceptive girl. I can tell. And sincere about learning. A scholar, you might say. Not like all these others."

Ruth blushed happily. "Well...I was kind of nervous about taking this course, so I really worked hard on my paper. I wanted it to be good. I'm really pleased that you like it."

"I more than like it, Ruth, may I call you Ruth?"

They were nearing the end of the hall. Ruth assured him that he could call her Ruth.

"And you can call me Willie. Here's my office." He pushed open the door of a room at the end of the silent hall. They entered. The window was open and the Boston night air off the sea was blowing through the room. Sandor took a key out of his pocket and unlocked his desk.

"Yes, you are a very talented young lady. A real lady, that's what I like. You are very pretty, too. I might add. And you dress like a woman, not like those two harpies in the class. Hair as bushy as a Fiji Islander's."

Ruth giggled nervously. "You were saying about my paper?"

"Oh, yes, yes." Sandor had stopped rifling through the desk and put his fingers together in a steeple. He was looking over her head toward the window.

"A very fine paper, by a very fine and beautiful young lady. A very seductive young woman, if I may be so bold."

Something in Ruth's head clicked off, as if some wire had burnt out or failed to connect.

"Yes, a very compelling young woman. Did anyone ever tell you what beautiful breasts you have?"

Ruth began taking numb steps toward the door. Sandor stood at the desk, still talking and staring out the window. She tried the door and it wouldn't open.

"...yes, a fine and sensuous young woman, capable of giving a man pleasure, I'm sure. That I know, Ruth."

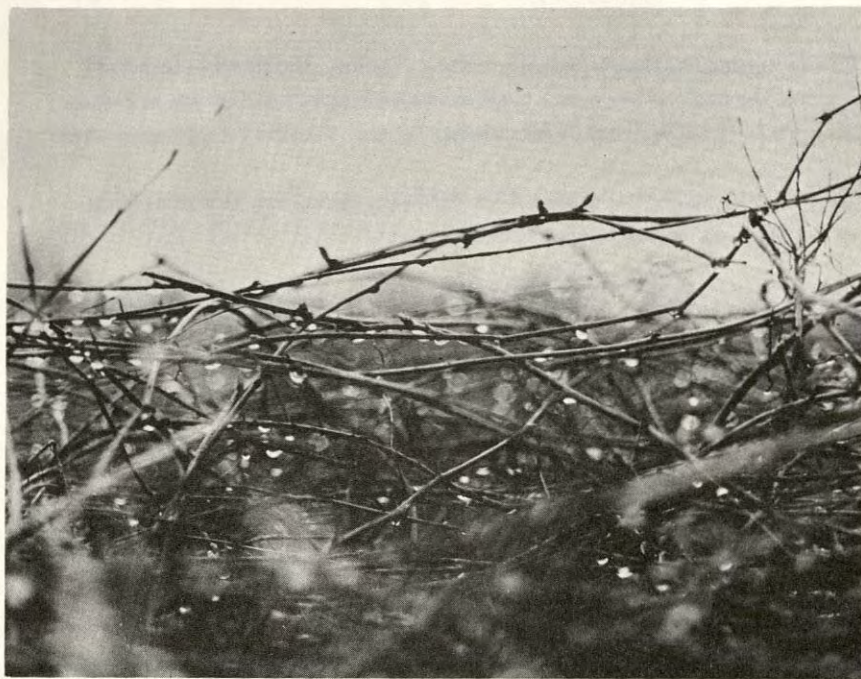
Ruth found herself in the corner of the room farthest from Sandor. She stood before the window, feeling the cold air on the back of her neck. Sandor was looking at her, but not in her eyes, as if she were a white spot in the spectrum of his vision.

"O Ruth where now is that warm cunt of yours, those fat heavy garters, those soft bulging thighs. There is a bone in my prick six inches long..." Sandor intoned.

Ruth turned her back on him and stared out the window, down the hundreds of feet to the cars flashing below, to the people hurrying out of the dark, at the mocking street lights, the waving trees, out past the city, toward the Charles River, at the shapes of boats floating on the water, and finally to the concentric rings of lights bounding the water, looking like lanterns in the hands of dancing children.

LEE MILLS





Letter to my Father

You want a letter telling how I am,
What I'm like and what I have been doing.

My throat is better, thank you. I was five
When I had my tonsils out. I'm nineteen now.

I understand your pride, and I'm not trying
To make you feel ashamed. I'm only saying
That you are almost sixty, too old for friends;
And as for being a daughter, I don't know how
To approach it. Your son, my brother, has done
All he can to spit in your empty, outstretched hand.
It's not in me to do that, but I can't
Quite bring myself to trust you, so I stand
In the middle. I'm still afraid of you, the night
You handed mother the axe and wrote a note
Giving her permission to kill you. You were drunk
And I was seven then. You also read to us
And named me Cecelia for music, your favorite.

My name, my face, are yours, but I am not.

You have another daughter now. Your third wife
Brought her with her. You write that she is like me,
The same age that I was when you left.
So turn to her, please love her, and forget.

CECELIA HAGEN

Japanese Flower

The Japanese have a way of believing
that the budding flower is not
as asthetically appealing as
the full-blown blossom
now withering and
lightly tinged with brown,

As the expectations are not
as valuable as the past experience
in itself.

Venerable sage of a Peace rose,
warmly yellow with
pink sunset streaks
from within the heart,
picked when dew-gleaming
in the morning sun,
drops its petals into the water
delicately
quietly

Petal by petal
diminishing slowly.

MARGARET HAMILTON

Introducing

the first class American tease.
He combs himself backwards,
then exits with ease.
Giggles slip on like
a great cloak to wear
over his shivering figure,
which is otherwise bare.
And what does he say
when they want to talk real?
"It's only a game, why
make such a big deal?
Here, take a cigarette
have some of my wine,
Why don't you come up
and see me some time?"

NANCY WEDEN

the chapel was white with babies
and brides before i had to plant
in it the red, red - scarlet -
flowers of so many little deaths.

did you bring them all, my love,
in their silver-lining caskets,
and, gauntlet-style, row them up
for me to pass by, one-by-one?

no - while spring rain rinsed the faint
pink in my snowdrop petals clear
to the color of blood, you slumbered;
then sprang a Jack-in-the-Pulpit-

opened your only, solemn eyes;
fired you single, damning threat
as you stood at the unlocked chapel
door to watch my horid work.

the chapel was white before i
stained it with my sweet joy
in fiving - our little, red deaths -
now i would be a poppy, and forget.

NANCY ALEXANDER





Remembering that spilt blood is never blue
I cursed St. Agatha as you withdrew.
You with your noblesse oblige
Saying it was time to leave,
And all the while maintaining
It was not me, but you were blaming
Your own extreme sensitivity,
making me appear inevitably
To be an eternal holy thing
Never to be touched by you, the king.

CECELIA HAGEN

There is a wizard and his smile is
Just a tiny bit too wide and I
Wonder if the man in the moon could be
Leering perhaps because he goes away
Periodically yes we've all watched him disappearing
Darkly by degrees he always comes
Back he never loses face not a
Trace of change when again we see him
With his lips spread just so over his
Teeth the same way and I can't help
Imagining that pose is tiring and it's
Intriguing to think about what sort of a
Face he saves for the in-between-
Times when he's alone.

Winter Bride

CECELIA HAGEN

If my life was a calyx
come with air and warm rain,

The sail in summer puffed out
by the push of the sun,

If my life was a gourd round
with autumn in the belly,

I would eagerly look ahead
for all the seasons long,

But what I am is married
to a winter bride, and what I see

Is but to take her to my side,
and with a soft parting of the thighs

Gather in all her white flames,
And be gone in a dazzle of snow

ANONYMOUS

The still lake waits
Each night
For her vain lovers,
The radiant stars.
She sighs restlessly
To the winds
That carry clouds
Between them.
Beneath the sun
She stretches
And wonders where
Her lovers are.
When they shine
Onto her
They are too full
Of their own mirrored brilliance
To notice her,
How beautiful she is,
Under them.

CECELIA HAGEN

In Praise of Rocks

Flowered sheets, one tossed to a heap on another creased.
A stone on the bed, wrinkles from around it like a sun,
a stone is what she takes to bed honeyed nights
shadows moss-dripping from trees
and she says that she is lonely.

All beds are lonely, with one natural thing in it,
this case, her, times she has been on ground under stars,
and crickets under her, their noise, close as what
the earth does in the creakings of its orbit
and she calls the grass and the air her sheets,

the sharp pricker legs of crickets on her legs, her love pain,
and the earth is always warm to a body, in summer.
The stone fits under the small of her back, bed-ridden.
The sweet decaying humus smell up to skin.
The silence of rocks under blood

A long gentleness in the day from her hands.

ZONA SILVERSTEIN

My grandfather always liked to whistle
as he moved, stiff-jointed, about his yard,
his hands seemed to trigger the tunes, they were
strong-fingered still, and good at fixing
dolls and motors and sewing machines,
I'd watch him tinker- lips pursed,
breathing odd-strung notes,
sometimes a teasing tune for me
would fill the gasoline-rich air of his garage,
but mostly his music was methodist humns,
songs that belonged to his Sunday voice,
and I, a Unitarian daughter,
used to wonder why they made my throat ache.

I never heard my grandmother sing,
except in church (where his baritone
would overtake her quavering hum)
or when she was rocking a baby to sleep ;
her voice was quiet. In old photographs
she stands at his shoulder, a patient smile
that lived in his shadow for fifty years,
bonds of love,
of pain, hard times, and children lost,
flowed thicker than blood between them.

She never complained when they had to move south,
- in that St. Petersburg trailer park
with its scragged palms and relentless sun,
how she must have longed for cool green hills,
yet, planting her roses, transplanting herself,
she never complained.

Grandfather cut the tired, baked grass,
whistling all the Sunday songs he knew,
their tunes as sharp as the light
that angles through a New England church.
-but on that October afternoon,
the weight of the sun and the drowsy flowers,
the steady drone of a distant mower
four trailers down, seemed to press on his chest,
Grandmother heard his whistling stop,
she saw his sleeping shape in the lawn-chair,
and as the afternoon wound slowly down
she went to wake him-
it was his face,
slumped just slightly towards his shoulder,
that told her all she's ever need to know.

What did she feel in that last hour
while drowning in her deepest fear
Was her voice raised then, to gasp or cry
at the shock of amputation?
It must have seemed ridiculous-
the world without him- strange and dim,
she wouldn't wait for the rescue squad,
but let the dark and numbness close her in,
and followed his shadow as she always had.

KATHERINE KRUSCHWITZ



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Circles

Do not be sad
Because your life occurs in circles.
Can't you see
That nature creates
Perfect circles
In her seasons?
Do you suppose the trees
Regretfully allow the new leaves to grow
Because they have experienced bareness?
Do you think the earth
Reluctantly uncovers herself once more
For the drops of sun and small seeds?
So neither should you
Fear becoming vulnerable again
Through love.
For though previous autumns
Have sadly brought you small deaths
There will be a perfect spring
To last forever through the falling
Of ungrateful leaves and unthinking snows.

CECELIA HAGEN



Meeting you again for the first time (wind-
chilled as I was in the dusk
of two summers
but afraid to move because I
knew you would vanish
as so many birds)

I passed my hands through moments
of a long worn year
for warmth

But your voice was older
and glowed

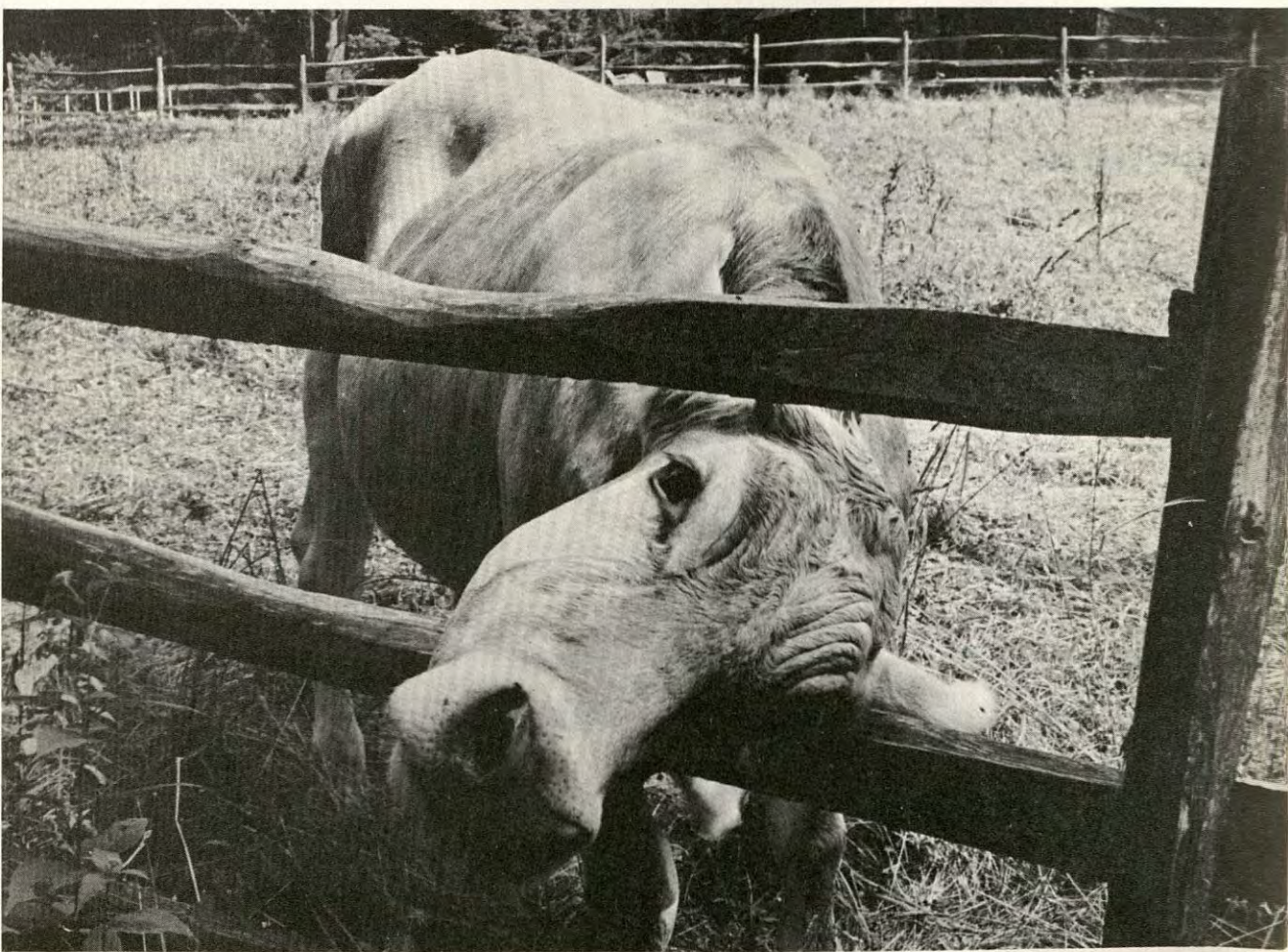
and I had grown
older (we were
more quietly alive
having learned)

And when you looked down
and said

I don't know why I feel like crying

I covered you with a robe of wishes.

STEVE NELLISSEN



BARNSTORM

(To perform plays in barns in towns
where there is no theater - Webster)

Only high school kids, with their beer and boredom came down old gravel airport roads at night. Peter, maybe. A crunch dimly in pounding oblivion. The explosions all the way from my butt.

The light came violently. Doors slamming.

"All right kids, party's over. Put your clothes on."

The sleeping bag was open -- "Come on, get up! -- so I was out from under the wing with one leg caught in my jeans by the time the flashlight floated 'round to see my face.

"Come on, get dressed. You too, miss.

Get out from under there, please."

"Let's see your driver's license, son."

Jesus, my driver's license -- my pilot's license -- was in the plastic bag in the plane. But I'd given up credit cards and wallets. Flying with them numbed my ass.

"Hold it right there --- bring your hands out slowly.

"Dammit, officer, his wallet's in here!"

The night grass was cool between my toes and the dank Illinois air smelled of turned sod and dung. Peter must have watched our defiant last round with the cops because he appeared from behind the Cessna parked next to us as soon as the doors slammed again. He held up four Buds by their plastic carrier.

"What was that?"

"The local constabulary wanted to give me a ticket for screwing my wife under my airplane."

"It sounded like they wanted to nail you for disrupting someone's sleep. What'd'ja tell them?"

"That we were married and that we were barnstormers and this was our thing."

I sat on the old wire-spoked wheel and we then drank warm beer to the fuzz.

I'd done some skydiving in school and I knew that to be a true barnstorming troupe we needed a good jumper We'd found Peter, or maybe he found us, in Stevenson, Maryland. Peter, too, had started jumping in college and, like us, he was out for the summer. As he later put it, in a glee club baritone:

I got those quiet town
unquiet soul,
O lord, 'gonna die
blues.

By the time I'd given rides to the half a dozen paying customers of Stevenson, Peter was back with his gear and helping Konni take down the sign:

SEE YOUR TOWN FROM THE AIR -- \$3.00

We could still make a few miles before dark, and Stevenson wasn't a barnstormer's town anyway. We never saw any of Peter's family. In fact, I suspect he just left a note saying he'd be back for school.

That was the way we traveled, Konni and Petter, me and our lumbering old Waco. We'd arrive over a sleepy little farming town and look for a pasture among the patchwork of brown and green, purple clover, and gold. By the time I had dragged a field and whisked over the fence, the farmer was well on his way to help.

"Hi, nice pasture."

"Thanks."

" 'Spose we could use it for a couple days?"

"Don't see no harm. Been a long time since there was an airplane landed here."



"Somebody landed here before?"

"Oh yeah, all the time. They used to fly outa' here and everybody from town would come out and watch. Lots even flew with 'em. I been up six times in one summer. Really got to like it, too. But, like I said, it's been maybe forty years."

"Let me go and do a little advertising, throw Peter out, and then let me take you and your wife up to see if the town's grown any since last time."

"I don't know about my wife, but my son Eddie's finally goin' ta get an airplane ride. I used to tell him how it was when there were lots of fellas doin' barnstorming and they'd land here and everybody's come."

"You find Eddie, and bring the wife. It's nice and smooth this afternoon."

Konni hung the sign over the rail fence facing the road. Peter waddled toward me, snuggling the leg straps on the surplus pack.

"Nice pasture, huh."

"Yeah, seems they worked it in the old days."

"Chute looks good, you all set?"

He tossed a handful of clover up and watched it fall at his feet. Only a few husks angled toward the plane.

"Sure, wind's about calm. You can put me out anywhere and I'll get back. Five thousand?"

Peter followed my glance at the plastic blue sky. There wasn't even a cotton ball to mar it.

I stopped to take a leak behind the airplane and checked the oil reservoir as Pete stepped through the little swinging door onto the seat in the front cockpit. He banged his helmet on the door in grinning impatience.

"Hurry up, mister. I want to go for a ride in this thing. What's takin' you so long? Come on!"

The front cockpit was wide. Wide enough for Konni and Peter and our sleeping bags. It was edged in a row of brown leather, as was my cockpit. Mine was smaller but designed as an old-fashioned business office with a carefully rubbed walnut veneer. The many clock hands jumped on their faces as the great Wright exploded into its rumble. The sound turned me on like a cool hand fondling my testicles.

When I was rebuilding the wings last winter, I sued to go out to the barn and sit in the polished cockpit and my mind would play this great roar from memory.

The clover hid few bumps as I taxied back to the fence.

Oil pressure, temperatures, mags okay, and we were moving. Tail up majestically and we were over the fence, challenging the sun in a game of king of the mountain.

At four thousand, I kicked left into a dive. Stick back, power on ... here comes the horizon from over the top wing, back to idle. A second loop and a third.

"Turn this damn thing right side up or I'm getting out."

I rolled inverted and held it, shaking the stick in an attempt to rid myself of this irritating garbage mouth. An inverted spin and a few more flip flops as our passengers would call them.

"If you'll hold this crate level, thank you, I'm taking the train."

We were at about five thousand and beneath us, Konni and Eddie and his father waited. With a goggle-eyed grin, a flip of the hand and a Buster Keaton step, Peter was gone.

Peter jumped with the air of a professional. He always picked a target and seldom missed by more than inches. I banked and watched him tumble. He did a turn right and a somersault before he went stable. Someday I'll have to jump again.

A parachute makes a spanking crackle as it blossoms. On a good day, that sound will draw wild stares, and kids from four or five miles away. It's like the magic whistle of the circus train. It's a circus day in Millers Crossing.

As Konni helped Mr. Foster and dubious Eddie fasten their seat belts, a bulky white and gold land yacht pulled up and two tow-headed boys raced to the fence. Their sparkling white sneakers, turtlenecks and new blue jeans betrayed their city upbringing. Their screams of glee were mimes behind my four hundred braying mules. I nudged the tail around in their wind and roared away.

After Eddie and his father, I flew the Fab commercial kids, then their father and big sister, and just about everyone that lived in Millers Crossing and Newville. Even the pre-election mayor-incumbent arrived in his wrinkled brown suit and shiny Ford pick-up. He shook our hands but wouldn't accept a ride, even on the house.

Between hops, Konni slipped a couple of cold McDonald's cheeseburgers up into the cockpit. The young insurance salesman's wife looked around to find me stuffing my face full of cheeseburger high over their dreamy little towns. I think it worried her because she stopped looking over the side and looked straight ahead or at her husband sitting bravely next to her.

For two days we thrilled the populace of most of Marion county. Saturday we's been invited to fly at the fortieth anniversary of the Moline airport and Sunday we flew to a barbeque antiquers meeting in Monmouth. It was in Monmouth, after the weekenders had left, that the cops caught us enjoying married life. Monday we left in a drizzle, headed for the pastures again. It was a sultry July but people flocked to watch Peter jump and to see their town from the air.

The summer sun set about eight and was so bright that it erased the whole countryside with its glare. What was left behind was a silver platter of glowing coals and exploding lakes impaled on spikes of shadow.

The wrinkled brown farmer who shared my sunset reverently handed me a twenty as he stepped down in the dusk. I told him he'd already paid for his ride and it was too dark to go up again.

He smiled and said he'd been a kid with an airplane once and gave me back the twenty.

"I used to watch the sunrise like that, too."

I took his money and told him to be there an hour before sunrise.

Like the farmers whose days we shared, we were in our sleeping bags under the sheltering wing by ten. Only Peter would disappear to the local bar for a couple of beers and some action. But I think it was out of habit rather than boredom.

Sunrise flights were like chapel services, convened between the brownstone walls of pre-dawn over the communion of a farmer's breakfast from a rush basket and thick, hot coffee from thermoses. As the false dawn turned the sky, Peter and I would wipe the dew from the windscreens and say our incantations over the great round pewter engine. The cold blue flame from the exhaust would reflect iridescent on the whirling chrome prop. The echoes of the engine must have startled many tardy roosters.

Passengers were guided and buckled like pairs of ancient children with their brown faces lashed smooth in the blue flame light. Everything was chill in the patient dawn as the magic clocks vibrated in front of me and we crushed the wet clover under the wheels.

Mags and temperatures check, but those impish faces in their red light seem disconnected from the thrashing engine. All is in order and a wag of the banty rudder and we rush the shadow of a fence. Then in a turn I can make stars set and the sun rise. Sun, I bid you come and warm our faces and my numb hands.

The sun, like the world's puppy unleashed, rushed to lick the shadows from our wings and bid us a brilliant morning. But hesitant, I leveled off in a world of red shadows to bide my pleasure.

This is a time too soon put away by the warmth of the risen sun and too seldom brought out again in dreams and old age.

The impatient puppy must have its way and soon was chasing shadows through the storybook farmyards with their hens and tin silos, white houses and storybook barns.

We ate blue china plates full of eggs in a huge Iowa kitchen. Then Peter and I packed his beautiful red, white and blue Para Commander while Konni hung the sleeping bags ignominiously over the nose of the Waco.

"I had a P.C. for a while and loved it.
I could make a stand-up landing almost every time."

"Yeah, this one's great, too. I bought it about a year ago. Dad was pretty enthused about anything I did, but he just didn't see any reason to jump; so I wound up pumping gas all spring semester, two nights a week and all day Sunday."

"Three hundred odd bucks is a lot of gas."

"Tell me about it. But it was worth it. See if there any more stopping rubbers in my bag, will ya?"

It was time for my first job of the real morning. I had to find one of the magenta circles that showed on my chart; a real airport with avgas and oil. The arrival of a 1927 airplane, resplendent in her patched red linen, complete with wire wheels and tailskid, caused its own brand of commotion. Even in the least knowledgeable flying circles, the little Waco insignia tattooed below my cockpit rail brought a tone of respect with the questions of Cherokee and Cessna drivers.

"How old is she?"

"How does she handle?" or,

"Gee, that's a real Waco. Must be a great airplane."

The seemingly simple chore of filling two gas tanks seldom takes less than a cup of coffee and a half an hour of questions spurred on by our tales of travel. We were living a young pilot's dream. We were sleeping under a wing and selling thrills to pay for our gas.

It was early August and the far side of Kansas when we found the rising sun blocking our retreat. We felt a kind of urgency, a feeling that we'd run out of time. We stopped at a fly-in in Wisconsin and were given a trophy for the most distance traveled to the meet. We spent a great weekend among antiquers and old gas-pump friends.

The next Thursday I lay awake long before dawn. Konni was awake and Peter was walking aimlessly back from the open air john. We had a silent breakfast in that hidden green Virginia pasture. Somewhere past the fence, a cow mooed in the fall night. The sounds of the farm awakening replaced the night sounds of crickets and tree frogs. At dawn we were airborne and by noon we were following the asphalt maps of the busy world.

The field we'd found Peter in was being bulldozed into basements. I landed on an unnamed street. We divided up the last few bucks and held hands, the three of us.

I rocked the wings a little as I cleared the new power lines and circled as we climbed to watch Peter stand thumbing by the highway, green parachute pack over his shoulder, sleeping bag at his feet.

By sunset, we had saluted the Statue of Liberty and were following the rocky Connecticut coast home.

It feels good to sleep in a clean bed again. But my dreams are of sunrises and clear days, filled with laughing children, running toward Peter to help him carry his helmet, and walking backwards asking, "What's it like up there, mister?"

TERK WILLIAMS

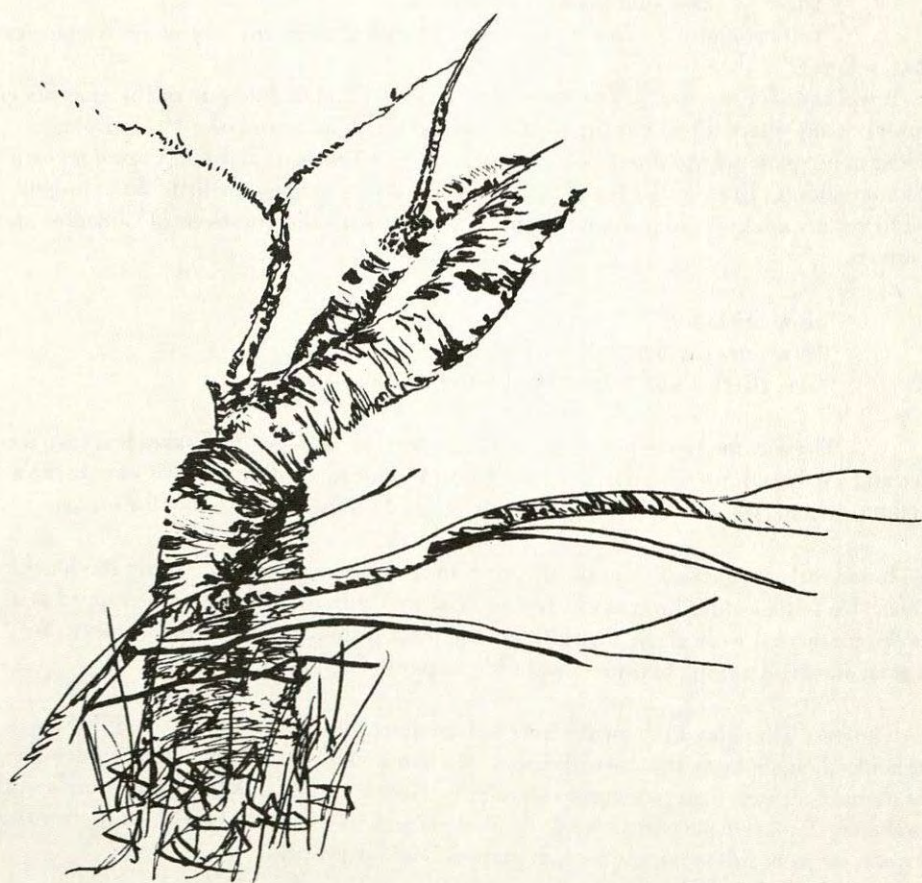


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