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The Gallery

Spring 1989

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The Gallery

**Connecticut College's
Arts and Literary Journal**

Spring 1989

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Cordillera

There is a small basement cavern on Broad Street.
It is another Latin America
I sit on a chair behind Peruvian silver
and Portuguese cotton
and all about me wooden birds and fish
stand brightly imprisoned.
A mountain range of merchandise.
Sometimes it is busy and people put down
nickel to buy brass earrings
and paper to buy woolen sweaters,
but I like it best when it is empty,
and gazing through a low door
I write woven words.

Kate Lowenstein

How To Become a Writer

First, read The Golden Book series. You know The Little Engine That Could by Heart and you're not impressed that he made it up the hill. Rewrite the story: the little engine that almost reaches the top of the hill when he catches an asthma attack and rolls back down the hill wheezing, "I thought I could. I thought I could." Ask yourself, what is the worst thing that could happen. Decide that the children will not receive toys for Christmas. Imagine the little children in the story crying because they do not have any presents. Remember your fifth Christmas when you did not receive any gifts. Watch your mother's face as she tries to explain the meaning of bankruptcy. You do not understand, but you are sure that Sesame Street will tell you.

Go to Kindergarten. You are the most intelligent child in the class. All of your classmates look up to you. You can read without moving your lips. Chris Owens is in love with you. He is a shy boy with large feet. During lunch time, he offers you one of his Twinkies. Accept it. Later, on the playground he asks you to be his girlfriend. Decline. He cannot read and he stutters.

* * * * *

In your high school creative writing class you write poetry. Write about drug addicts, abused children, and insane brothers. As always, people praise you and your work. You are required to write a short story for Sophomore English. Panic. You have to use end stops. Write a story about how your brother went AWOL from the Vietnam war. Describe your mother crying for days. You write, "She cried so much that her eyes welded shut." Mr. Meyers returns your paper. He has written on it: "Your story is wonderful. You have talent. Use it. However, I think that your sense of reality is off. Could a person literally cry for days? Also you have some problems with grammar. See me about this. You wouldn't want to go to college with dangling modifiers."

* * * * *

You go to college. Begin your college career as an Economics major. Try to figure out how lines on a graph represent the economic structure of the United States. Take your mid-term. Fail. Decide to become an Anthropology major. Think about going to Africa and living with the Bushmen. You're excited. You do not have to wear a bra nor shave your underarms. See an ethnography film about what the Bushmen eat. You are turned off by the antelope and do not like the crunching sound that beetles make.

Take an art course. Believe you are the next Mary Cassatt. Hide your penny loafers and wear high-top, black sneakers. Splatter your jeans with paint and tie your hair back with a floral patterned scarf. Don't write for a few months. Feel the tension in your neck. Feel it in your facial muscles.

Apply for the poetry class. Get pissed off—it's not being offered this semester. Search the course catalogue. Creative Writing. Think about this, you have to use punctuation correctly. Apply anyway. You are accepted. Write a twenty page short story about rich people and guilt. A fat guy with crooked teeth tells you that the guilt in the story worked really well, but the rich people did not. You are relieved. At least part of the story worked. Your writing professor reminds you that the object is to make all of the story believable.

Write another story about the day your cousin Kelly was shot in the eye. Everyone in the class agrees that the story was underwritten. The dirty blond girl who writes about retarded men in Nantucket suggests, "Maybe, if you used some blood." More suggestions are offered. You can barely hear them. Listen to the sound of crashing glass. Watch Kelly fall backwards. Stare at the side of her face resting in blood. Close your eyes to catch the tears. Tell yourself you will never write about what hurts—what is real. Decide to write imaginative fiction.

Create characters you don't know. Place them in situations that are unfamiliar to you. Use unearned cliches. Write long hackneyed sentences: "You think the grass is greener on the other side," Samuel said loudly before he ordered the shrimp scampy. The seminar does not like this one either. One guy asks you, "Do people really speak that way?" Reply, "Only when they are not speaking with your characters, who unsuccessfully use inverted syntax." Watch the crimson color crawl from in back of his ears and rest on his cheeks. Your professor reminds you that this is not a forum for personal attacks. Nod your head apologetically.

Listen carefully to the next story that will be critiqued in class. The strawberry blond girl with a broad face and a constellation of acne around her mouth has written this one. You are not sure what the story is about, but everyone understands it. There is a reoccurring image of melting icicles.

"It really worked for me," says one.

"I agree. The dialogue made the characters so real."

Your writing professor asks for your input. Sigh. Look at your page of notes and reply, "I have nothing new to add."

Your creative writing professor is on sabbatical, riding camels in Egypt. But she has found a novelist to teach the class. He is a stout balding man with small stubby hands. The first day he brings his novel to class. It has been translated into Dutch. You are impressed.

Participate in an in class exercise. He takes a line from a story by Ernest Hemingway. It is about a man who is running from the gestapo in World War II. At first, you do not know this. Each member of the class is asked to contribute a sentence to create a scene. The paper is passed to you. The man is now leaning against a brick wall in an alley. He has just been

shot in his right leg. Pause. Mr. Dutch translation encourages you to write something. Be witty. You write: "Cream cheese, cream cheese, all I wanted was cream cheese with my bagels." Hand it to the guy who picks his nose when he thinks no one is looking. You peer over his arm and watch him add the words "pickled herring." Smile to yourself. You are leading a rebellion.

Your regular creative writing professor returns. Give her a short story that you wrote while she was away. You are proud because you finally made a story work. Walk firmly into her office and sit down. She yells at you. You have dangling modifiers. Pinch yourself to make your eyes water. Hope that she will stop. She continues, trying to explain the importance of not having comma splices.

Leave her office. Vow that you will never write again. In your room, fall face down on your bed and chew the edge of your hypo-allergenic pillow. Get up and light up a Winston and inhale deeply. Your chest begins to heave quickly as drops of saliva fall from your mouth. You bought this pack of cigarettes when you were going to become an artist. Open the window and throw the pack into the overgrown bushes below.

Decide to become an investment banker. Go to the office of Career Services. You are greeted by a balding white-haired woman with brown penciled-on eyebrows. She reminds you of a doll that you whittled out of wood, one summer at camp. You are directed to a bookcase. Here, you find all you care to know about business. You are given a form and asked to list your goals and assess your capabilities.

Read the first question. What are your goals?

Write: to find a Bengalese Zebra Finch, name her Frieda, and have her teach all the Columbidae in New York how to behave.

What are your qualifications? I can rewrite The Little Engine That Could.

What type of job are you seeking? I don't know. I just want to make enough money so I can pay my electricity bills on time. I also want sausage with my grits.

Hand the form to the woman and sit down on the black vinyl chair next to her desk. Watch her eyes open wide. Wonder how she can move the skin over her eyes without disturbing her penciled-on eyebrows.

"Well," she finally said, "It appears that you have a strong imagination, a good sense of humor and some writing skills. How does Advertising sound to you?"

Bite the sides of your mouth to keep from laughing. Rise from the chair and extend your hand. Lie. Tell the woman that you will consider her recommendation.

Return to your room. Sweep. Change your linen. Remind

yourself to pre-treat the semen spots on your light blue sheets. You are tired.
Take out your folder with beginnings.

I went to a Palm Reader Last November.

Sapphire listened as the bathroom door scraped the bottom of the tiled floor.

The wind blew potato chip bags and rolled an empty bottle of Wild Irish Rose wine down Pacific Street.

This is a time Marked by death. Violent and inevitable funerals have become engraved on the people's hearts.

The next class your writing professor strongly encourages you to write from a personal experience. You must write from what you know —what has happened to you. Think of Kelly. Remember when you were ten years old. It has just snowed. Kelly has a hole in her boot and her feet are getting wet. Tease her about it. Run. Kelly is chasing you down the block. Reach the corner and try to jump over a pile of snow. Your short legs do not stretch that far. Fall face down into the snow. Sit up and spit water out of your mouth. Watch Kelly as she holds her hand out to you. Reach for hers.

Stare down at your hand—it is empty.

Pamela Little

Tame

That memory scorch
Stoves and sunshine
Beyond the porch
Paddles abandoned to grass
Bicycles sideways, helpless,
Still, mother cooks the meal as expected.
What tame lusts a child has,
To have named them on a Christmas list.
The hot nothingness, no,
Repetition monotonous,
Food and sun pouring through and stove
Father encounters
Grated silence when he comes home.

Jennifer Connelly

Moon Jokes

I am dancing
wild and happy
to a drum
and a flute
and a harmonica
that play somewhere in the night
I have on a dress
loose, ragged and green
bare feet
in each hand I hold a feather

I am dancing
a million stars very close
the man in the moon
is telling a joke
to a bat who isn't listening
I notice he has on
nice earrings- smiling cats
I tell him so-
he thanks me

I am dancing
on a red rock
in the middle of a river
that is floating quietly
among the stars
like a little island
or an earthy spaceship

The music stops
the river stops
the moon shuts up
(nobody would listen to him)
my red rock
turns into
a tomato
so I eat a piece
and walk to the edge of the island
or spaceship

One of the moon's earrings
falls off and lands next to me
it is my cat Henry
I pick him up
and he crawls onto my back-
he likes that

Suddenly I run
very hard, very fast
and I jump
off the edge
of my island
or spaceship

And I fly
because I am a green bird
with an orange cat
(named Henry)
on my back

I swoop
I glide
I dive
elation freedom joy

Henry jumps back on the moon
he got dizzy
The moon tries to tell me a joke
I fly away

Gerri Molitor



André Bessette

I walk towards the train station, prepared to return to my home at college. In passing, a solid red old Nancy lady pushes me off the curb with her fur and clenched perfume. I spin around in flight to get more description of her for some book I plan to write, but as I hit the ground hard she has greyed small in the distance. Meanwhile I bleed.

The indentation I've made in the black pavement sinks slowly, in the form of a bathtub. The crust under me opens lengthwise and I slide inside the orifice. The ring of red lipstick wax lips hanging around, dancing my body in a circle follows me down in a spiral. Oh my head. Behind, the sun passes out. The tar cools down to match my body temperature, quicker I fall, through slick tar becoming black pool liquid becoming up-to-normal-speed-I-plummet-through black air. Trail wax lips, spin. Beads of black water slip off my bare skin, in rapid-fire succession like Dresden being unbombed, and return to the layer of water somewhere above. Enlarging below, a red and blue dot of light circle each other contrary to my spin and my lips. The dots creep along a single stripe even darker than the air, the strip, making black air seem red and the red light seem white. As texture enters, the stripe becomes more tar, against a field of more water. My descent ends my feet one foot above. I look into the lights now level. My face blinded seems everything is lit but no. I'd better open the doors to this ambulance before inside they succeed in bringing me back to consciousness. Else I might go insane. I enter through the crack in the rear doors going highway speed and "awaken" to find two fluorescent orange and white men kneeled over my "helpless" body, and Tracy.

"How is my story going?" As the ambulance stretches over the ribbon and wire bridge, at not even a percentage of light speed, I think of how cold I would be in the choppy water below. I would be a cold translucent orifice, one gaping bobbing mouth locked in the shape of a beachball and dissipating in the water like onion boiling.

"You just have to get off this ambulance," Tracy told me. "Your poems always turn up like some artsy-fartsy horror movie. Why don't you write about some damned vacation you take? Or a small boy with a clown?"

But I am bored again. I have turned over on my side and begun rising up. The ambulance, by this time several stories below me, turns into a huge clown's head, red and white, hovering and smiling at sixty miles an hour. I laugh at my feeble attempt at using constructive criticism and (horribly) at the scene to follow when the clown pulls up to rescue the next accident victim. This is the best I can do. I wonder if I will be able to reach the sidewalk through all that tar. The air becomes thicker water, like poured from above, pushing on my back and tickling my sides. A doctor like leftover in sterile white wrap labcoat falls down past. He says he must rush down to care for a fallen man arriving soon to the emergency room. But,

being doctorly, he calls, "Don't worry, at this rate you'll be back on the street in no time."

2.

A man is reading this over my shoulder as I write in the train station. He enters the story silently. He follows me, waiting to see in what bad plot I will involve him, waiting to laugh. From across the cold room he toys with my paranoid delusions, as I try with my pen to push his character away from me, make him stagger jerkily into and through the plate glass window to the tracks below the station. I can tell this will be an eternal struggle between he and I, will end up becoming a bad melodrama. Becoming a story I will write, try to publish, and forget (published or not) as I return to everyday life. The train.

Since this book derives its 'plot' from the passage of my life, (I thought as the train sped us home) I haven't planned what will happen. I look around the back of my train seat to find where the man is hiding. He is nowhere in sight and I grow more worried. I know the book will end with me in poor spirits and will end either happily or sadly. Perhaps the book is needing a real ongoing conflict. I would desperately like to ask the man following me.

3.

On campus that night I ate dinner with all of my friends.

VICTORIA: I can do anything I want. It's all in my perception. If I believe the sun doesn't exist, it doesn't.

ETHAN: No, but there are some things you can't do. You can't make me think there is no sun.

TRACY: Maybe we don't want you to.

VICTORIA: No, if I believe that I've made you believe there's no sun, then to me, I have.

KARL: This food is wonderfully surreal—this is a charming abstraction of a hamburger!
(No one answers me, so I stare deeply into my sandwich.)

TOM: I'd really like to be abducted by aliens.

ETHAN: But Tom—what if there was no pot in space?

TOM(to me): This is really odd-you know, I think you're agreeing with me and understanding me, but maybe you're really yelling obscenities at me or talking about dogfood, and we all don't know we're having separate conversations.

KARL: Eh-so, what did you do today, Tracy?

TOM: Listen to me, Karl—Purina is better for your breath than Alpo, but Alpo is cheaper.

ETHAN: If you don't believe in the sun, you'll be locked up.

- VICTORIA: But that's not fair! You believe in the sun, but you don't see me locking you up!
- TRACY: So when are we all buying cap guns?
- TOM: So if I severed your head off, and you believed it was still attached, you would walk around without your head like nothing was wrong?
- VICTORIA: Well...Hey! DO not HIT me, o.k.?
- KARL: Remember the time we were all drunk, and Mathias kept telling me I could do anything I wanted and he said I had to get him a girl from somewhere?
- ETHAN: Maybe I think this is a table, but in reality it's green and hairy.
- TRACY: But, if no one ever sees it as green and hairy, does it matter?
- KARL: Do you know I've felt for a long time like I've been telling jokes that only I think are funny, like I'm on a different level than you all.
- TOM: If God doesn't exist, then Jesus was insane. Even if God does exist, all atheists and Buddhists are insane.
- VICTORIA: Would God really damn me to hell JUST for being insane?
- TOM: Well, if he would send me to hell for that, then he's an asshole and I don't want to deal with him.
- KARL: Meanwhile everyone else in the cafeteria is laughing at our silly conversation.
- VICTORIA: They aren't because I don't believe they are. Everyone, we've been in here too long. We have to leave.

Outside, in the doorway of the science hall we came upon a crate stencilled, 'HUMAN BLOOD—HANDLE WITH CARE.'

"Do you think there's really blood in it?" Victoria wondered.

"Should we steal it?"

Before anything else progressed, however, a rock came flying into the back of my head and I suddenly

found myself writing in morning-bed. Looking back on the past night (or was it two?) for something of which to write, and finding nothing, it seemed I had jumped from dinner to morning. Perhaps that would be a good ending to the section on the dinner—just to jump ahead. I rather like that. If only this feeling of jumping ahead was only a line in my book.

Where is the line between a story and the process of writing the story?

The man is in bed with me, still reading this over my shoulder. I write and rewrite, always just to please him, and he never speaks up to put me at ease. I know my story will never make it big unless he likes it. I

don't even particularly like him yet here I am in bed with him, writing him a story. He's wearing his damned overcoat in my bed and it's big, wet and cold. I keep changing my story so maybe he'll leave. Would he like me if I made his character symbolic? He could represent my fear of my father. Or my grandparents who would be happier were I a lawyer. Better still, he could be the forces which turn artists into public prostitutes. The man says nothing. Those must be silly ideas. If I gave up trying to write he would get his unshaven face off my thinly pajamaed shoulder. Or I could go to a psychiatrist who would teach me to be satisfied and like every shitty thing I've ever written. But then can I complain about my problems with writing fears when there are hungry people in poorer countries? Oh god, now I sound like some pseudo-intellectual, but I'm genuinely confused. Am I allowed to complain? I get out of bed and before I move my notebook to the laundry room next-door I write on the message board on my door, "Karl is writing a book in the laundry room if you need him." But that's not funny. Is it degrading the art? I realize I've forgotten the notebook and turn to find the man following me. He offers the notebook I've forgotten with outstretched arm, confidently daring me. I thank him but no, I'd better take a break.

Karl Levinson

The Time He Gave

The time he gave
His mother the finger

His father
Beat him
Before the television

Up in his room
He murdered them
Both
A thousand times
Before he slammed
His door
Smashed his mirror

And cried

Mark Andrew Graham



Joe Howe

Where there is no new ground

I

Coiled in the air
I straighten
slamming my boots against the
pavement

I use to
dance with these cracks
in a silly game
A road map on
my way to school

What if I left immortal prints
a mark for each footfall
how many steps would
speckle these streets?

II

The whole city is
covered with fingerprints
a man made staircase
ancient grooves

A guy died there once
right where that kid landed
his feet spun lone circles
in the air

III

The dents from past tenant's
furniture plainly overlap
in my home
supported by bricks
each once held by a workman
each placed on command

the earth is full now
they stack the bodies

IV

We thought we blazed trails
in these alleys discovering only
paths left by old giants
In the crosswalk there is a key
pressed into the asphalt
I've always made sure
never to step on it

V

Shoes at the end of the day are
tossed
into familiar arrangements
by the bed the soles worn down
a little bit more
scuffs of rubber left where ever
they have been

Charlie Mosey

Wondering

wondering
how it is
that I, too
am
a star
sitting 'neath
a gingko tree,
wondering
how it is
that
I, too
am
a star
sitting 'neath
a gingko tree

Lisa Phillips

Rules

(work in progress)

1.

all of it at once
swirling like a foul weather funnel
I distill the mouthfuls into discernable bits
to extract the essence
I reconstruct the half-heard word uttered around the corner
to make sure someone said what I heard
I compare that to what I want to hear
and begin to say what I want to say
over my dead breakfast is cooking with gas

I buff boots in the kitchen in the dark of not-used-to candles
the power's out and the dog's in
sniffing at the pasty black polish and the sticky blackening cloth
and the brush with the black vinyl bristles blacker with kiwi® polish

lustre of the leather in the candles' light

I sit cross-legged like an indian, doing one of those chores that gets done
in the evening in the firelight
neck gets stiff
body recognizes that the work's been being done

(I got up to leave and the lights went out
one phone call and
the news spreads faster than the legs can carry the body:
drunk man mowed down the phone pole
red truck seen out the window by the neighbors four houses down
"the guy just backed out and drove away
funny thing is he left his license plate..."
on the road)

I thought I had the answer when I went to the other room
but the chairs were all gone
when the job's well done and you straighten out
the pain in your back
feels good

2.

"please tell me what the matter be
I thought you were doing splendid, that it was just me in the funk
while you're talking, would you mind telling me what's the matter

every little thing you don't remember
that's good, that's bad
yin and yang
as long as we don't give up - "
it's too damn easy to see the clock tick and know I could be somewhere else
but with this time we find out where we stand which builds interest toward the
future enjoyment of complex joy
deep grunt
barely audible or visible
murmurs and gestures from the parental camp are signals in the air
clouds of approval
they blur memory of your steel glare and fierce words:
you're another one of the children I must admire
surrounded by persons, shielding themselves and each other
self-interfering patterns
so I'll shield you as the others do so I can keep you
a child at my knee and you will be helped to see your immaturity
when I can't stand it any more

3.
being perceptive
is being efficient
at detecting the direction
from which the bad weather emanates. trace the system:
engulfing stream of semi-systematic psychic events.

4.
In the dark, we sleep, in a box. This fort's a strategic inpost.
thigh drape indicates nocturnal possession
"you've got me"
dry means I'm not worked up
wet means either you're good or I'm good
the weather is dark in the box and no one sleeps
the lack of sound means
a lack of speak
and the weather gets worse
batten down the hatches
wrong
open the door and let the moisture coat the space to allow less friction in the motion
of the speaksharetellme machine
no more sadness
no more demand

pressure system comes to its fruition in a funnel cloud which sucks and
drags and blows it all out the top. It rains
down methodically and lands in a language-packaged row,
said from left to right
the sky looks like a bad complexion
suspended by the rare laugh
and all the commas in the right places

5.

26th day of the whole affair
my voice takes an edge that sears like the brutal gusts off the January
sea
in the fog the halo visible only
to the unblinking
who understand the forecast
who read the fortune, the chance of
showers 60% I hate it
when in the leaves of tea, luminous
they scatter, like
Everyman's ashes on the foot-packed red clay yard
beyond the unpainted porch, I know
the sounds came from the timbers
while the men slept like logs. I beamed unseen, and winced,
and proudly stalked my thoughts
stocked with edited memories
composite what-it-was and what-I-wanted
no one will hear no
more than that: impossible
to corner the elusive
it's not what I saw moving in
the corner out of the corner
of my eye; it's
not
what he heard shifting
in the darkness behind him
as he navigated in the dark hallway
take refuge in my arms in the dark, sleepy box.

6.

0 expectations: 0 problems.
rolls and rolls of beer-soaked toilet rolls
stick together on the floor of another box
under the phone pay phone door spring
the week-old smells,
still

in the quiet of the TV room with the TV off
must be 9:00 am
logs fell at 5:00 and 6
still hours still until the barks of the puppy stir anyone
roots of an idea remain roots
the uncomfortable solitude in the meeting room
effects the easily swayed sapling
it's got to end sometime
I want to ask you to
slide along sidle alongside hold on

7.
a plastic bag
doesn't say much
thrown from a car window
wet and ruptured in the windy rain

8.
I'm picturing the lips that work in concentration
cute, with a twist
insanely he lives in a role-playing game
the prime example of tries to be so slick

9.
and the clouds were a crowd
closing in.
I reached out to them with creaking arms.
I wanted to hold them close, but the white mist avoided my grasp.

a collection of suspended drops
wraith-like

10.
unassuming and direct
the noise of leadership
hips and a belly
ungracious about favors
reading too much into the peripheral
"like a piece of meat"
(which is negative, on the other hand)
he loves it
this is an old problem to which he returns again as a weary man crawls
into bed at the end the unresolved day
upon examination, he has always been deemed a legitimate problem

A Second Chance

You warned me not to fall in love with you.
What you need least is a wet shoulder, I
Suspect. But how can you assume the view
That I'm becoming jaded, then deny
Requests to mend a life that's gone awry?

It's beyond me, love—supine in rows
Of corn along a country road in June,
Remembered yesterday when you arose
From pilfered sleep and reached for me, the moon
Just set, and kissed me. Mind must be in tune

With heart, you said, regardless of how hard
It is. The road from Illinois to here
Was dashed in I-don't-love-you lines and tarred
With pitch of faithlessness—enough, I fear,
To harden hearts of saints. We would appear

In black-lit rooms whose walls make up a maze
To keep the soul from flesh and lips from lips.
Our nights were plotted after gaze met gaze
And life, at last, was simple. Come to grips
With it, we told ourselves, for love's eclipse

Is our crusade, and bars and theatres
Our temples. Keep your wallet in your sock
And hide your heart as well. When theft occurs
You learn to hide it better, not to talk.
Build your life upon a heart of rock!

And so I thought...until, like Proustian tea,
Your kiss reminded me—Home is where
I ought to be. I'll go if you agree
To come along and kiss and say a prayer
That we might hear the rustling corn out there.

James Bradley Wade

To a Tyndrum

ten eleven maybe twenty
cedar slats down the dock is where I float
resting on the wind surfer
one hand tucked under my wet head
the other hanging on the end

mating dragon flies
green as blueberries
flirt inches above the tip of the board

letting go of splintering wood
I set myself apart
across the tranquil lake
the breeze ferries me
away from the dock

turtle speckled blue yellow
stretches her thumb shaped head and neck
up through the taught water's surface

dark screened-in porches
weathered wood shingled Cape cottages
window box impatiens
pink white and green leaves
line every other lakeside compound

sunfish traverse in the open
red yellow blue isometric triangles
come about and flutter in the warm air

I continue to drift alone
ten eleven maybe twenty yards
the August haze feels sticky against my skin
light reflects off the lilies
I think of Giverny- so many miles away

two hands two feet dangle off the edges
tiny quiet wakes trail
my limbs drag cool refreshed

for a moment she is there
facing the sun a pink suit a white bow and golden strands
her tan toes curl over the end of the dock
diving she vanishes deep within lake Wequaquet
waves ripple out heading towards me

Nicholas Robbins

The Chosen One

Psychologists always want to know who you are. No, not who you are, but *who you are*. I have a new teacher who wants to know the same. She's not even a psychologist. Anyway, last I checked, I had black curly hair, a dark complexion, and a somewhat distinguished nose, though its really just too big. I'm one of those Mediterranean looking types. Actually, I'm Jewish. Or at least I was born Jewish. Does that make me Jewish? I'm not one to boast about religion. Maybe that's because I was called *Jew boy* or *Hebe* as a child. Since then, I've been on a quest for assimilation.

Now I'm in college, Connecticut College. At this place, assimilation is not considered the in thing. Ethnicity is now something to be proud of. I guess that's because here there is so little of it. So now when I wake up in the morning I try to pick my hair. I can't get an afro, but I do it because I don't feel being Jewish is enough. I think I wish I were black sometimes. Not because I necessarily want to be, I think I'm too scared to really wish I were, but because I've always wanted a cause. That image of those two black athletes who raised their fists over their heads in the 1968 Olympic games in Mexico City has never left me. Black Power. Now that's a cause. Jewish power doesn't work so well. I imagine a bunch a Jews standing before a crowd of millions in Mexico City and debating the merits of whether they should raise their matzo in a sign of solidarity. Whoops. I guess that sounded sort of derogatory. At college they call that internalization of discrimination. You know, like when Jews use the word JAP.

I'm not so sure why I'm telling you all this. I wish I knew. If I did, I would know myself. All I know is I have black curly hair, a slightly too large nose, and a dark complexion, like one of those Mediterranean types. Actually, I'm Jewish. Being Jewish isn't so bad. They say we're the chosen people. Who said it, I don't know. Someone said it though. I keep hoping that because I'm chosen I will be led forth from this malaise I live in. I'm graduating in a semester. So far, I'm jobless. I found out yesterday from the Fulbright foundation that I was turned down for a grant to study in Costa Rica. The rejection letter told me how competitive the process was; the unknown writer told me the foundation doesn't disclose its reasons for making decisions. Or in this case, making rejections. I keep asking myself why I was turned down. They didn't know my nose was too big. I did spell Fulbright with two *ls* in some places, but who's perfect? Maybe I'm just not a chosen one.

People tell me life is a series of choices. Each choice leads to another. I had a drug problem in high school. Or at least that's what the doctors tell me. I wonder what that choice did for me. At that time no one was running around saying, "just say no." So I, of course, always trying to be polite, just said yes. It wasn't such a bad choice. I used to find myself alongside more naked women. Drugs have a way of unbounding the inhi-

bitions. I have many inhibitions now. Some say they're Jewish inhibitions. Guilt. I don't party anymore. Perhaps there is a corollary relationship between drugs and guilt. *Choices*. There's always some trade off. So much for absolute freedom.

After I got rejected from the Fulbright, people told me not to worry. "It wasn't meant to be," they said. But why wasn't it? I wanted the Fulbright. And before I got rejected, everyone wanted it for me. I guess I don't understand things much. I think that's why I went to college, to learn things. I'm not so sure of what I've learned. I do know a fair amount about history and politics. I'm kind of one of those post-New Leftists. No one outside of college understands what I'm talking about. I was just in San Francisco. I rode on this bus with two black guys. I didn't understand them too well. They just sort of looked at me and laughed. College never taught me about such situations. I thought about raising my fist in the air as a warm gesture of solidarity. You know, Jews for Blacks, Blacks for Jews. I thought better of it.

So what if I didn't get the Fulbright. I can do anything. This is America. And I come from Westport, Connecticut. Everyone there did just what they wanted. They made money, and lots of it. I once made \$3 per hour in a deli. I don't get paid anything at college. My parents pay \$16,000 a year to keep me here. I repay them by coming home once in awhile. They also tell me I can do anything. Opportunities, they say. I nod in agreement. Opportunities.

Life is a series of choices. I must now make one of the bigger ones: What I want to do in life. Yet choices are based on decisions, and I'm not so sure I can decide what I want to do. I don't really know what I'm good at, outside of being a student. In my heart, I know I would like to be a writer and a photographer in Latin America. I spelled Fulbright wrong on my application, though. It was rejected.

I have this new philosophy teacher at college. The class just started. She talks a lot about positive thinking. It reminds me of the stuff they told me when I was trying to get off drugs. I used it then. I had to. Maybe I will again. I'm actually sort of a positive person. It's just the damn evening news that keeps bringing me down. I can't take too much more about that Steinberg trial. Then there's the Fulbright application. It was rejected for undisclosed reasons. Did I tell you? There's only one *l* in Fulbright.

Life can be tiring. Until you know who you are you can't really begin to live. I guess I do know who I am. It's just hard to always be that person. I think in trying to fall in love you change the most. At bars, I'll tell girls anything. I just want to be loved. I'm not the promiscuous type. I just want to fall in love. Maybe I will. Positive thinking, right? I was in love once before. She has a new boyfriend now. I'm alone. But I know who I am. Did I tell you: I have black curly hair, a slightly too large nose, and a dark complexion — one of those Mediterranean types. Actually, I'm Jewish: The chosen one.

David Grann

Grandfather Lost

Upon awakening light
came thoughts cobwebbed
lost inside, gone
of grandfather
rebirthed rude
his face resting quiet
still upon my wall
a new springtime green
blossoming clean
scaring my heart to fire

My eyes pewter rolled blue
my hair sand scorched platinum
carelessly my palm wiped my nose
tongue poked bold, unafraid
 my laugh to giggle
 a frown to clown
juvenile words danced playfully
joying like springboard my tongue

Tree trunk hands took mine fragile
held somehow kind
sandpaper cheekstickled
to his hug, in his arms
clasped, love
to his smell, gone hiding deep
how dare it
returning, teasing my nose naive
how dare it
tears, great salty oceans
anointing my cheeks red

My rains sing of his existence
a quiet wind pulls the words quick
away, away
lingering soft, solemnly smooth
of silk thread fragility
to grandfather
my eyes are inside yours
my cheeks too have grown sandpaper
our mouths carved by same sculptor's hand

your remembrance is my reflection
good bye grandfather, good bye
as the morning light hides
behind gentle clouds
it caresses his face upon my wall

Jason Moriber

Song of a Woman who Bakes an Apple Pie for her Neighbor whose Husband is Dying

There is comfort
In cinnamon, and yes,
Comfort in cloves
And in apples peeled
And sliced and tossed
In milk white bowls
In lemon and cinnamon
And yes, in cloves,
Until the grainy sugar runs
In a bright glaze over

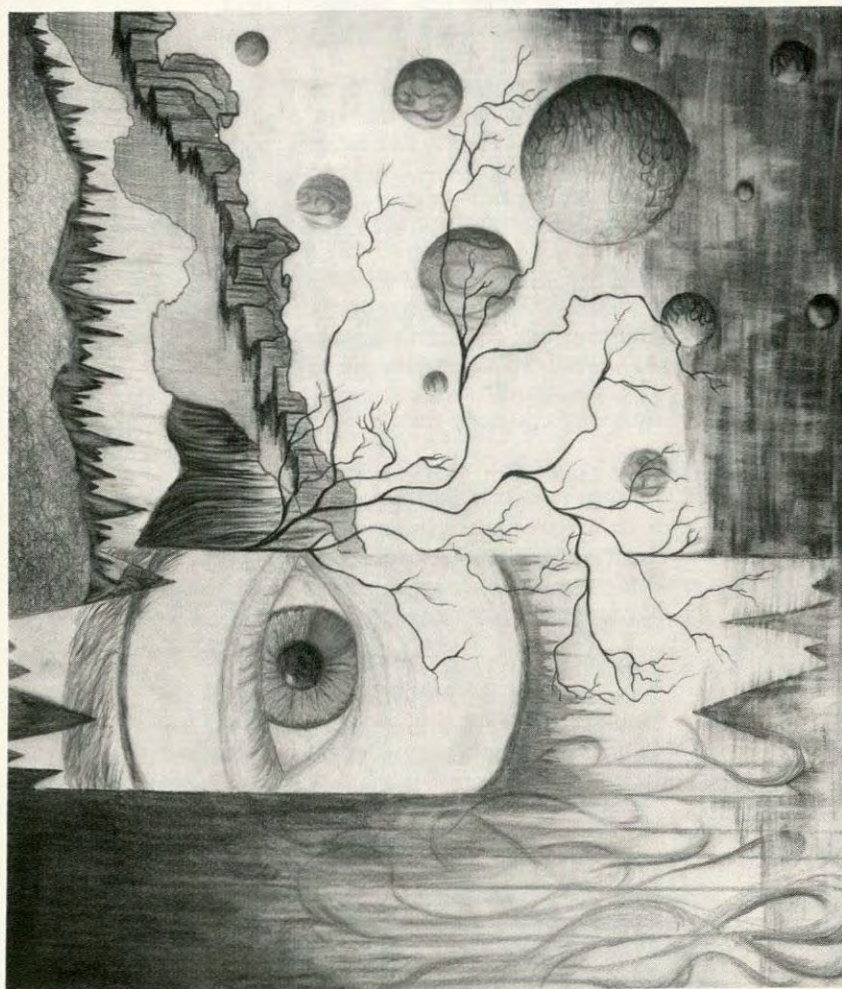
Apples from the orchard where now the trees
Stand light after the long weight of summer,
And pumpkins lie jumbled in fields of milkweed
And pale skeletons of corn, postcard scenes
In search of a photographer who notes,
Without surprise, the particular shade
Of gold the pumpkins share with the marigolds
That grow against the wall of the barn
Which is painted that red that only comes
From iron oxide and old milk;
And over all the maple tree
Blazes in its passion of vermillion,
Scarlet, purple and gold—just as
We knew it would.

Anne de Kay

What Talks

All night coffee shops
24 hours, never stops,
except Xmas and New Year's and
as the occasional bomb is dropped. So
the sign asserts, with what one might term,
wry humor.
I almost forgot, midst a warm red counter top,
quiet, consuming neighbors in swivel stools,
parallel parked. With the yellow light upon us,
the cereal in silly small boxes. Glass cases containing cakes
prosecuting appeal- I silently assign B.C. expiration dates-
somehow, that reminds me, how late is actually
Early. Two in the morning,
I pay to escape,
Not wanting to
face caffeine for company,
overtired, yet awake.
Mumbling at a waiter
Place an order
A check says, "thank you,"
"It is our pleasure,"
I'm suspicious of this sentiment, however.
Besides I'm not sure how to respond to a piece of paper.

Jennifer Connelly



Tracy Burkholder

Mark's Notes From the Bathtub

The colors were red in winter, yellow
Each summer, when my hair was long and full.
But seasons were too quick for changing and
Now it's all falling out— my hair, I mean.
Once it drooped, wetly curling in the bath,

Now it gathers, darkly clotting the drain.
I thought of making hair-brushes. Can't paint
Though. But I used to take a damn good picture, so—
It seems so long ago— I had a path
To follow, an art to pursue at will.
But seasons change and brazen drawings turn green

With age. Black-and-white photos are all grey and
It's like that with everything—writing and
Thinking, too. My bath-thoughts are grey with pain
As I blindly splash and wonder what I mean
To say. Later, I'll write it down, but it won't
Be enough, so years from now, as I mull

Over what's writ, I'll think, If I said half
Of what I wrote, I could have gone past the bath,
I could have really gone places and
Been with more people who were less dull
And wouldn't let so many seasons drain
My senses. There were so many ways to go,

Even now, when too-fast changes seem
Too painful to watch and examine.
Changes like my hair, and that girl's laugh,
Which has become another's. The once-yellow
Hair that I once kissed is thin and brown and
Though I love it she's not the same.

But I don't think about that when she lulls
Me to sleep, caressing my once-full,
Falling out hair. Love like I've never seen
Before, is now, and I can't complain
As she kisses my belly and strokes my calf,
Kneading me with warm fingers. I say, and

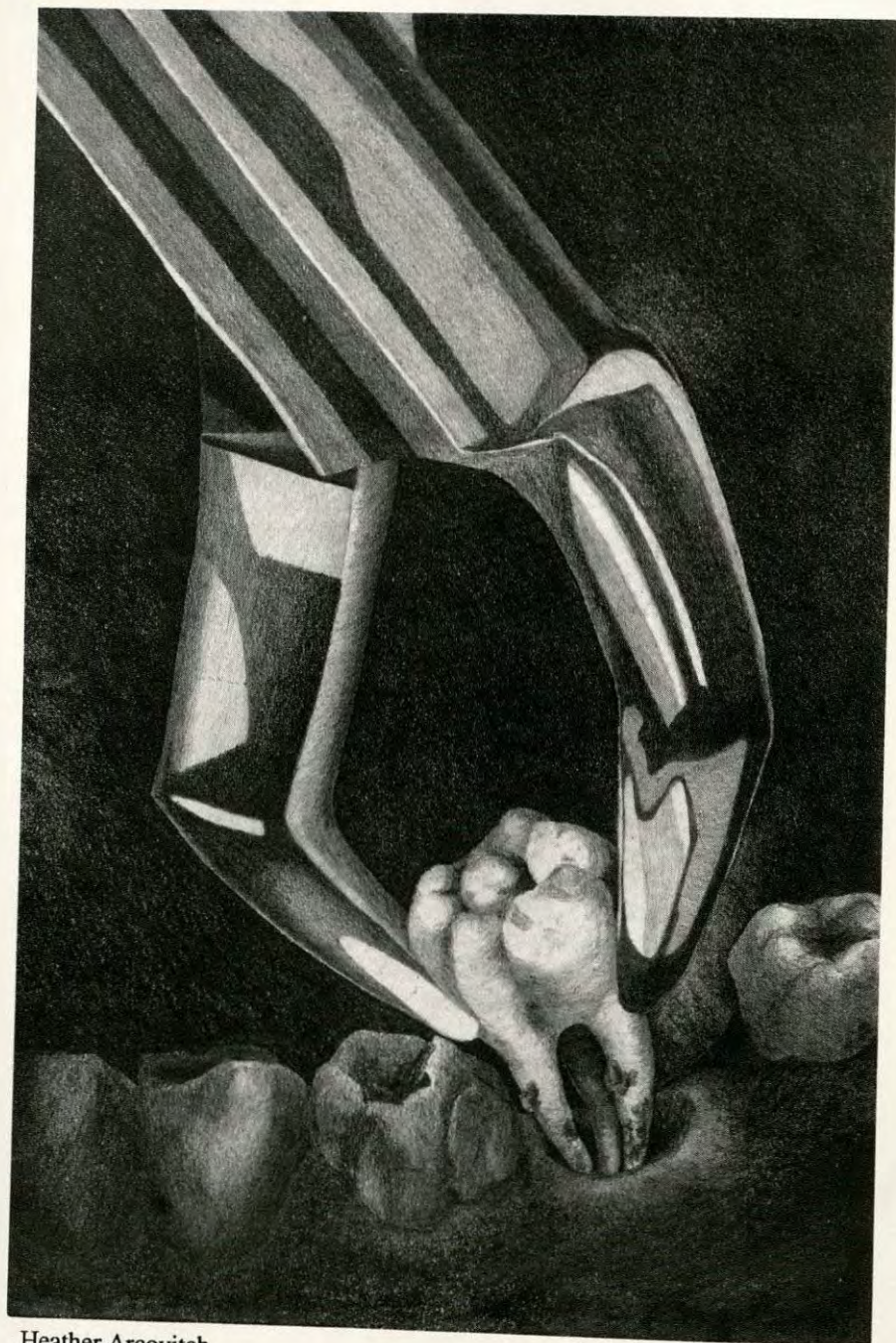
Mean it, "I love you," but inside, I know
That even the bath drains grey; and full, yellow
Hair means nothing if it changes to brown.

Shelly Stoehr

Pumpkin Head

His plump, little body
sits snug in a chair.
I crouch down;
he looks at me,
with dark blue eyes,
mouth open like a doughnut.
What is he feeling?
I cannot tell;
he cannot answer.
I caress his soft cheeks,
sheltered from the aging sun.
He doesn't break the stare,
unafraid of my eyes.
He has nothing to hide.
His expression doesn't change,
even when I place soft kisses
on his newly blond head.
His hair is soft,
a duckling's fur.
His eyes blink rapidly
when I kiss his forehead,
But my actions do not change his face.
I tickle his chin
and he stares awhile,
then his mouth opens to a toothless smile.

Vincent Candelora



Heather Arcovitch

Just Gert

Gert waited, her fingers nervously turning the gold band that adorned her finger. Her eyes, fixed on the door of her front hall, discerned a beam of light escaping from the crack. The beam stopped expanding for a moment, revealing an illumination which had condensed the sunlight from the yard into one piercing line that shot across the living room. Knowing it was Jonathan who hesitated behind the door, Gert sprang out of her chair, gained balance from an unenthusiastic ankle, and charged toward the hallway to greet the nephew who was temporarily hers.

Her appointment as guardian had come after a family deliberation earlier that day which was unattended by Jonathan. Considering candidates for what Uncle Warren termed "interim head coach," the group ruled out all males. A woman, they reasoned would provide the child with a more comforting transition to orphanhood. Gert, the only single, female relative in Jonathan's city, was selected by default.

The grey haze of Warren's cigar smoke spilled from the opened planning room; Warren, his bountiful belly looking far from papal, decreed Jonathan's fate.

"Duh boy will stay wid Gertrude for tree days. Den he'll live wid his gramma an' granpa purminently." Pausing to adjust his pants, precariously close to falling off, "What time's duh game start? Tree or four?"

Gert was ecstatic at the nomination, wanting someone to greet after work, pack a lunch for, or cuddle at night. Now Jonathan was standing in her doorway, waiting to be noticed. This was her chance. She galloped across the room and tenaciously embraced the child who stood motionless, his head buried in the bulky bosom of Aunt Gert, the senior cashier at Bi-Rite.

She had invariably been nice to him. Always tousling his hair with small, pudgy fingers made strong by years of punching keys, Gert could be counted on for some type of kindness, usually coming in the form of a gooey caramel treat. The duo had developed a system of exchange undetected by Jonathan's mother, a health fanatic who forbade any candy. While Jonathan and his mother shopped, Gert would take a brief leave from her counter. Following a flurry of hugs and salutations, Gert would clasp Jonathan's hand and walk him down the store's bargain section, "Yellow Brick Road." Smiling at the couple's recurrent affection, Jonathan's mother was not aware that Gert had slipped Jonathan an illegal sweet. The transaction completed, Jonathan feigned a cough, leaving the candy in his mouth, where it seeped a steady flow of flavor for the duration of the shopping spree.

For Jonathan, this covert activity outweighed any discomfort caused by Gert's physical proddings. Her appearance, however, bothered

him. Clad in the finest plastic and polyester had to offer, Aunt Gert dressed like an inanimate Christmas tree. An unbuttoned emerald green and pink blouse, its sleeves rolled up to the elbows, and a paisley t-shirt, consistently one size too small, outlined rolls of flab above pinching slacks. Her makeup cracked and peeled like an artificially applied layer of skin. Caked bright rouge revealed small pockmarks and the wrinkles of sixty-three years. Her hair, unmoving, was a collection of twisting, curling red locks. Jonathan was not sure if was real or the work of a gossiping beautician.

He did not really care. His attitude about Gert's hair represented his philosophy concerning her general appearance: "If I don't have to touch it, it can't hurt me." But another aspect of Gert's persona revolted Jonathan. Hugs and attire became secondary when he considered the problem. He hated Gert's smell. It was an aroma distinct even in a room full of Warren's cigar smoke. Jonathan could identify the odor in a frozen food section as Gert counted cash five aisles away.

She smelled like Glade Morning Fresh bathroom spray. Without parents or a home, among intimidating relatives, Jonathan was unsure about most things in his life. But he was willing to wager every wad of caramel he had ever received that Gert sat in her bathroom each morning, scattering fumes of Glade on every inch of her expansive body.

"You're staying with me, honey. You're mine."

Gert rolled her shoulders and swayed her hips as she relayed the news to her nephew. Jonathan, his body captive, received a bumpy tour of Gert's mountainous chest.

"Let's go look at Jonathan's room. We have a nice big room for our Jonathan." Gert's face-encompassing grin expanded her ruby lips. The smile grew unrestricted. The skin of her lips cracked and her cavernous dimples grew deeper under the strain of unbridled joy. She stood, viewing her nephew, an invisible vise continuing to part her mouth.

"Duh kid does her good." Warren's contentment at Gert's fortune was interrupted. The automobile race he was viewing on Gert's television had suddenly become a maze of bouncing black lines. Warren stamped his foot on the floor, hoping to eliminate the difficulty. Determined to remain seated during the repair, Warren took hold of his previously unsuccessful shoe and slipped it off his foot. The shoe aimed directly towards the center of the set, Warren flexed his arm and then hurled his sneaker into the air. It sailed to the television, impacting with a dull thump. Cars again sped around a paved oval, while Warren, lowering one eyebrow and tilting his head, smugly grinned.

Taking the bony hand of her nephew with small, thick digits, Gert led Jonathan to his temporary bedroom. It was used as a den when not inhabited by orphans. A television sat on a stand to the right of the door. Two couches, pushed against connecting walls, calmly watched over the

television. The set remained on from the time Gert awoke until she went to sleep. The couches, a fluorescent green in the flicker of the box's light, held coupons Gert discovered in newspapers. Gert disdained comfort in the prickly fabric of her furniture. Her fantasy was to one day walk past the room and hear a sound other than the hollow drone of a soap opera. Entering, she would see a husband, his undershirt-covered belly crushing her cut-outs, as the man grunted and snored in his slumber.

Jonathan sat down. Again the vise bared Gert's teeth. She looked at the boy. He was a slight child who always seemed to have just woken up. His hair, invariably full of static, fluctuated wildly. Below was a face on the verge of adolescent chaos. Once angelic, Jonathan now bore small diagonal valleys under his eyes. Teeth much too large for his still soft child's mouth jutted out from his gums. His gray wool sweater combined with the couch to cause itchy fidgeting.

"I'd like to go to sleep now," Jonathan mumbled.

"Sure, honey."

Gert left the room to gather Jonathan's bedding. She eagerly anticipated brushing back Jonathan's hair from his forehead as she kissed him goodnight. These thoughts racing in her head, she quickly retrieved blankets, a pillow, and the traditional clean facial towels that are always accepted by guests, but remain unused. Darting back into the den, she found Jonathan fast asleep.

When Jonathan awoke, Gert had already been scrambling around the house, preparing for a noon wake. Jonathan peeled off his sweater and kneeled by the door to watch his aunt. With a large wooden spoon, Gert scooped clumps of casserole into a yellow bucket. Mayonnaise clung to larger wads of tuna fish. Sprinkled throughout were pieces of red and green relish. Having filled the container to the brim, Gert scraped some excess food from the spoon and sampled her creation. Smiling, she took her utensil, packing the fish in the bucket. Gert flipped the holder onto a platter, tapped the bottom of the container, and finally raised it, to reveal a cylindrical main course.

Impressed with Gert's ingenuity, Jonathan next noticed the jello. It was, as most jello is, a collection of Precambrian objects, eternally trapped in ice. Visible but undefinable pieces of fruit were suspended among solidified liquid. The captive foods took on numerous, twisted shapes, waiting for a heat wave to free them.

Bagels, cut and separated, lay beside the jello. Some of the halves were adorned with sesame seeds; most were plain. The preparer had mixed them together to hide uneven cuts, leaving a few paper-like on the edge and many jagged.

Gert readied three varieties of juices in their respective pitchers. Setting them together at the center of the table, she then placed every glass

she owned on the surface before her, drew a deep breath, and looked up, noticing her spectator.

"You'd better get dressed, honey. The gang'll be here any minute."

The gang. Jonathan accepted his family as normal. He did not perceive their obvious shortcomings, such as Warren's incessant belching, or his cousin Frank's boisterous cussing, as problems. Most of his relatives' actions just added to the collective clutter of each gathering. Arguments, spilled drinks, and broken furniture merely represented a time, family time, when there were no rules, just confusion. Jonathan let himself blend into the events, an observer alert only to general mayhem. Faced with an individual, he only saw the chaos they added to each event. They were, he was convinced, quite a gang.

Jonathan left his room to confront Gert's pink tiles, while she put the den back in order. Surveying the bathroom, Jonathan found a dilapidated shower cap, soggly hanging from the shower door. It was a fading pink protector which dripped excess water to the floor from its storage place. Resting on the counter was a basket stained with flesh-toned blotches, containing quantities of Gert's makeup, cold cream, and band aids. In the sink lay a partially rusted nail clipper. With a wash cloth to protect himself Jonathan daintily placed the clipper on the bathroom counter. A boy who did not even own a comb, Jonathan was uncomfortable among these vanity items. He hastily washed his face.

About to leave Gert's bathroom, Jonathan noticed a bright orange canister on the upper level of the medicine chest. He reached to discover what the flashy container held. Only tall enough to touch its bottom, he pushed the container. The canister fell to the floor. Clattering as it rolled over the room's square tiles, the holder stopped at the base of the bathroom wall. Jonathan picked up the object. It was Glade Morning Fresh.

Jonathan entered the living room and sat in an over-sized high-back chair. Positioning his left leg over its matching armrest and curling his right leg under his body, he was engulfed by the furniture. Behind the chair was the hallway where the guests would arrive. Jonathan was concealed so that he was unseen by newly-arrived guests, as well as those who socialized in the foyer. When the relations entered his area, he concluded, they would be required, upon seeing the previously hidden child, to offer the first greeting, a duty Jonathan detested.

"How's duh kid, Mommy?" Warren questioned as he handed his parka to Gert and squeezed her rouged cheek, leaving a white outline of his thumb.

"He's been an absolute doll."

"Well, you ship him out soon, don't ya? He's goin to milk cows, huh?"

"He will live with Annabelle and Burt. It's a working farm. I'm sure he'll have chores. Just don't scare him!"

"Hicks."

Jonathan imagined the scent of dirty farm animals and the violent kick of a cow. A hick, Jonathan decided, would occur during milking, the most severe form of a hiccup. A new smell drifted toward his chair. Warren, an El Producto in one hand and a glass of tomato juice in the other, lowered his corpulent body onto the footrest by Jonathan's chair, and suppressing a volcanic belch, gasped, addressing Jonathan.

"So how's it feel tuh be on yer own?"

Jonathan stared at Warren, not because of the man's crude comment, but because Jonathan had never seen nose hairs before. Above the scruffy mass that Warren displayed as his moustache grew small, gray clumps of nostril trimmings. The hairs, adorned with numerous anonymous particles, buckled and twisted while Warren drew in his short, throat-clearing breaths. Twitching his nose, Warren caused further tumult in the already quivering hairs. Jonathan, confused and intrigued, untangled himself and furtively moved to the buffet table.

Gathered by the food were chattering women. Jonathan recognized one as Dorothy Simmons, his mother's aerobics instructor. She had given him a grape sucker during a dance class while Jonathan sat bored on a gym mat. The others were unfamiliar.

"I didn't eat a thing before I came. Never do before one. Dead people bring out the best food," commented a lady in a green hat.

"And this thing is for two of them. Jackpot."

"We can't take you anywhere, Jody," responded a woman next to Dorothy, and they all laughed.

"What's to become of the child?"

"Some camp, I think."

Dorothy turned away from the group as she spoke, noticing Jonathan leaning against a nearby wall. She forced a smile but Jonathan slipped away.

He had gone to the opposite corner of the room, continuing to survey the party around him. He felt like the lady on Romper Room, who at the close of each show recited the names of those watching in t.v. land.

"I see Warren and Dorothy and Jody and Frank." He of Las Vegas fame stood inches from a blaring television, his red-tinged, bulging eyes following the path of a spiraling pigskin.

"A hundred bucks on the Goddamn unders!"

His fingers twisted a necklace which lay nearly concealed in the hair on his chest. As Jonathan stood marveling at this man of the world, Warren rose from his resting place, the football's descent now complete.

"Could we all be quiet?"

But the din in the room only grew after Warren's plea, prompting another, more determined call.

"Would ya shut up?!"

Quickly, most of the assembled became quiet while a few grumbled that it was time for Warren's traditional family get-together speech.

"The dude thinks this is Swiss Family Robinson and he's Bill Cosby," Frank muttered to no one in particular.

Meanwhile, Warren stood in the center of the room, the center of attention. He hitched up his pants, using his final roll of fat to hold the trousers. He ran the back of his hand against his crusty moustache and nose. Jonathan wondered whether his nostril hairs had come out from the rubbing. Wrinkling his forehead and raising his chin slightly, Warren dared anyone to challenge him for his position as family patriarch.

"Could ya come hare, Jahn?"

Because no person in the room had attempted to disobey Warren thus far, Jonathan moved to the center of the room. Warren's hair-covered and bulky paw reached out to grab Jonathan as he came near. His arm cradling Jonathan's neck and pushing down his wiry shoulders, Warren viewed the assembled with a dreadful scowl.

"He looks like momma bear," Jody giggled. She was hushed by Dorothy, who wished she could rhythmically click her heels, making Jody disappear.

Pressed down by the weight of this ex-nose tackle and prize fighter, known for his unblemished brawl record, Jonathan wrenched his neck to relieve some of the pain caused by Warren's unrelenting embrace. His move was greeted by the irrepressible odor of Warren's sweat stained armpit. Jonathan became woozy from the stench and his knees quivered.

"It is our duty, as duh subsisting family, to take care of this hare kid. Make sure he don't get screwed over."

The gathered crowd gave a collective sigh and smile, forgiving Warren's aggressiveness before making his eloquent dissertation. Jonathan, however, let go of the air he was retaining. He could hold his breath no longer. Not only was Warren's body odor bringing Jonathan to the brink of collapse, but he now sensed the aroma of a freshly lit cigar, fired in honor of Warren's verbal feat, which permeated the foul air.

Jonathan pushed his left hip further and further into Warren's protruding stomach. He sensed that he would remain locked with Warren for the rest of his life if he did not do something. He coughed, having inhaled a stream of tobacco, and Warren gripped the child mercilessly.

Then, Jonathan turned his head so that he could clearly see the face of his captor. He saw a thick vein pulsating in Warren's neck, his partially bearded jaw tighten, and his face turn crimson as his entire overweight body jerked forward.

The force incurred by Jonathan's small hand sent Warren grasping

for his lap, which recoiled from Jonathan's shocking punch. He was unprepared for the swing and he bent over in shame and pain.

Jonathan, terrified by the violence he had prompted, darted away from the scene of Warren's misfortune. Scurrying past munching mourners, he was only feet away from the safety of Gert's den.

His sprint was halted, however, as Gert, paying no attention to the boy's speed, stuck out her powerful right arm, collaring the streaking boy by the neck. She squeezed him, not letting him fall and definitely not letting him go. Gert's vise again opened.

It's okay, honey. Gertie's here."

Jonathan could not tell which embrace had more power. He knew, though, that there was no malice in the hug of Aunt Gert. As a crowd gathered around this duo, Jonathan imagined how they must have looked. He saw his relatives as the confused and eventually benevolent munchkins from The Wizard Of OZ. These strange creatures, Jonathan thought, lived under the auspices' of a mysterious woman, the queen of the weirdos, the good witch, Aunt Gert. If he was to be trapped in this land of unexplained deaths, tuna fish in buckets, and momma bears, it was best to allow those who made the world so baffling to temporarily guide him through it.

Giving in to the bright colors and tropical smells if Aunt Gert, Jonathan stood, surrounded by munchkins, but at ease for a time, hoping that the cows did not hick.

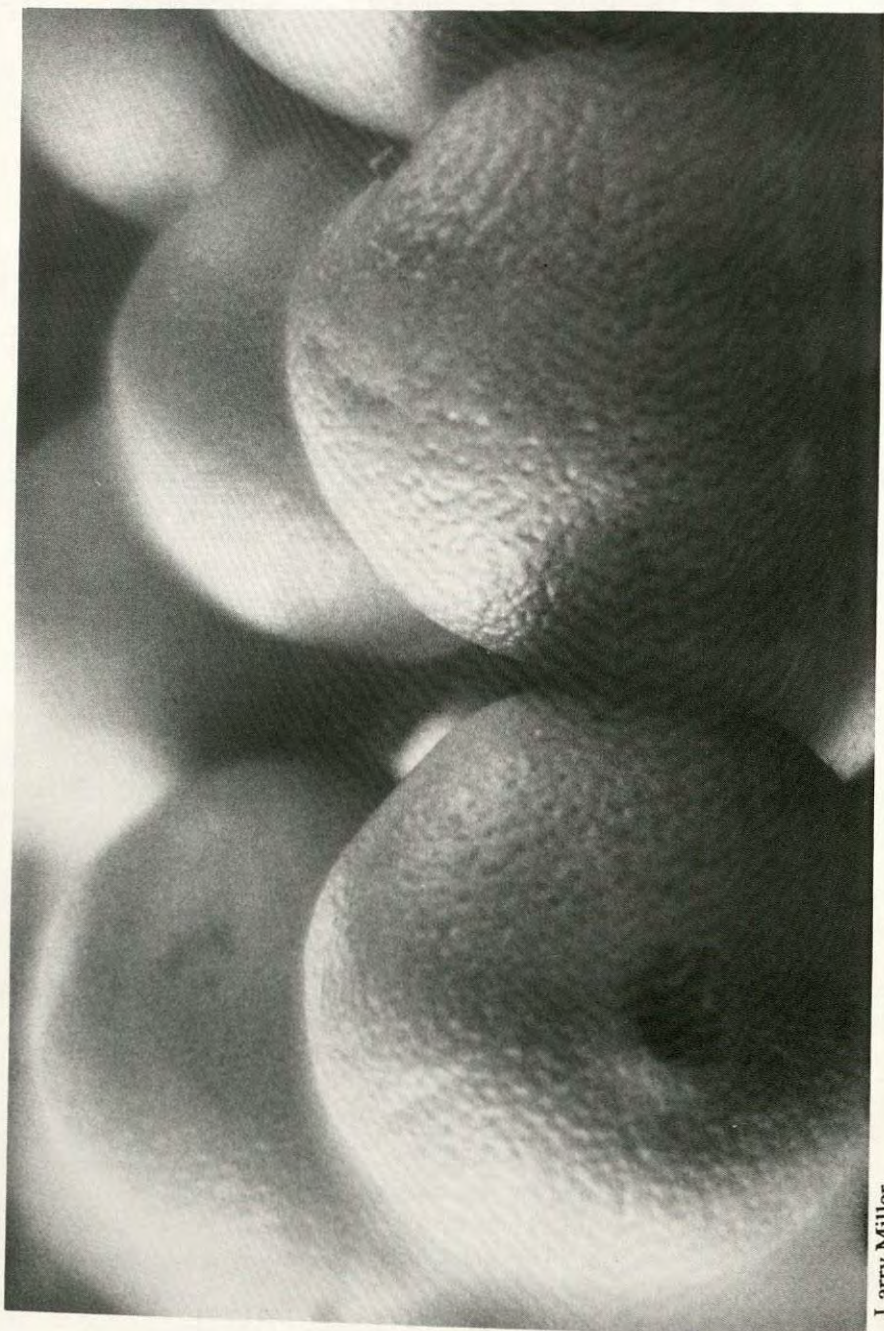
Stephan Daniel Arnoff

Departure

My body still abuzz
with your touch
I flee:
kiss-ridden
goosepimpled
laden with sleep
slow to slip from
your tight-woven clutch
pulling like taffy
towards the door.

Emerging from the room,
I hum;
a bee with all the nectar
she can hold,
a fly from the web.

James Bradley Wade



Larry Miller

The Top and Bottom of It

I

At dinner Casanova dreamed of wealth
Between two utter bores, whose conversation
Concluded when he toasted to their health
(Though damming them to hell deep down). Temptation
Aroused his weary senses when with stealth
He ogled at a girl for stimulation.
When she returned with amorous intent
His glance, he knew his night would be well spent.

II

He blushed, for soon she waved and even he
Was not the public sort. With great relief
He heaved a sigh: she knew his friend Ali.
(A eunuch, Casanova knew—a reef
Down under took his balls at twenty-three.)
She joined their table, stealing like a thief
Poor Casanova's heart. He said, "Come visit."
"Tonight?" she asked. "Why, yes." "Your room, where is it?"

III

The rendezvous was planned and Casanova
Excused himself to clean his digs and shave,
For half past eight Melissa would be over.
He'd scarcely hid his tattered Hustlers (save
For one to set the mood—his four-leaf clover),
When there she was. She said sans shame, "I crave
You, Casanova. Je desire uh...faire
L'amour!" "Oh, yeah, bébé. Let's see'em bare!!"

IV

Melissa dined with friends and boasted of
Her naughty night in Casanova's room.
"He was my first but just the same I love
That sexy hunk of man mon cher, my groom
To be. He said that I rank far above
The others. Here's a poem, "To My Bloom,"
He wrote for me. It reads, "Like violets blue—"
"Your eyes," they chimed-for they had loved him too.

James Bradley Wade

Study Hours

Sitting here on this dull orange couch
between the library stacks
I almost feel pretty
pretending the flickering lamp
is you
the photographer
lighting me bright with a flash

You take me home
at the end of the night
rolled up in a plastic case
to ride in your back pocket

Within the dark you remove me
bathe my skin in cool liquid
I'm released by gentle laps
to float under your fingers and eyes
on waves of textbooks
and orange cloth

Tracy Burkholder

Upon Falling Asleep

Silence, a slow counting
one to ten holding
each breath a held hiss
a jester dancing quiet bells
prancing light tiptoes
on poppy beds, on fallen snow
an easy dance on the wind
subtly with each breath of the sky

Jason Moriber

Absent

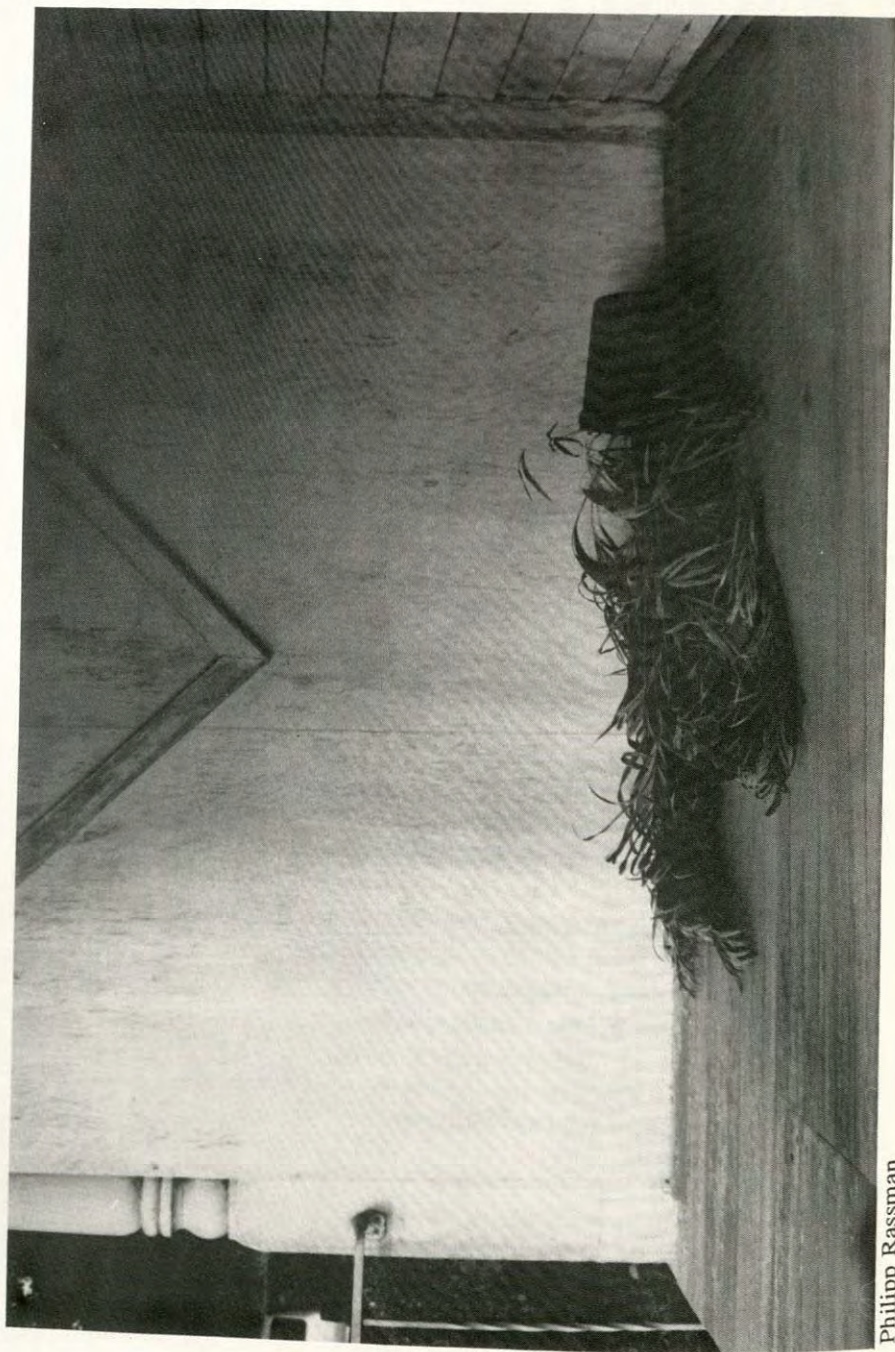
When you come to my house I will scrub the dark
floorboards, wipe the radiator with an old cloth
Check last year's wood and put it in the fireplace
The evening before, small sounds in the

kitchen, secret wishes in the coffee with
warm oven air. You come to my house in the blue
yellow of morning, lie down to sleep on the couch
downstairs. I wait in a New England

bed, high off the ground. Firs rise, adamantly
green and dark, outside the window. Coming down, feet
bare, one two three fourteen I have to stop
Frightened that creaks will awaken you.

The four-squared panes are bright in unison, brittle
with the sun. When I sit down to absently chip
ice off your shoes, you float on the minutes, eyes
just closed, you dream of flying, flying

Kristin Lee



Philipp Rassman

A Passing Loss

In October I looked for traces
in the roots of
the Maples
free in their naked weight
some crackling footsteps
or flattened leaves

That December I stretched open
the reluctant hinges of the
wooden chest
half buried
in the drifts
where one afternoon
you laughed
as you hid my shoes
between garden tools and

empty burlap bags
By March I looked above
the wet rooftops
to see a sky
of giant clouds
and solid yellow light-
a sky I'd thrown away three months before
as a picture on
your Christmas card

Tracy Burkholder

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