

REVEAL DIGITAL

Telephone

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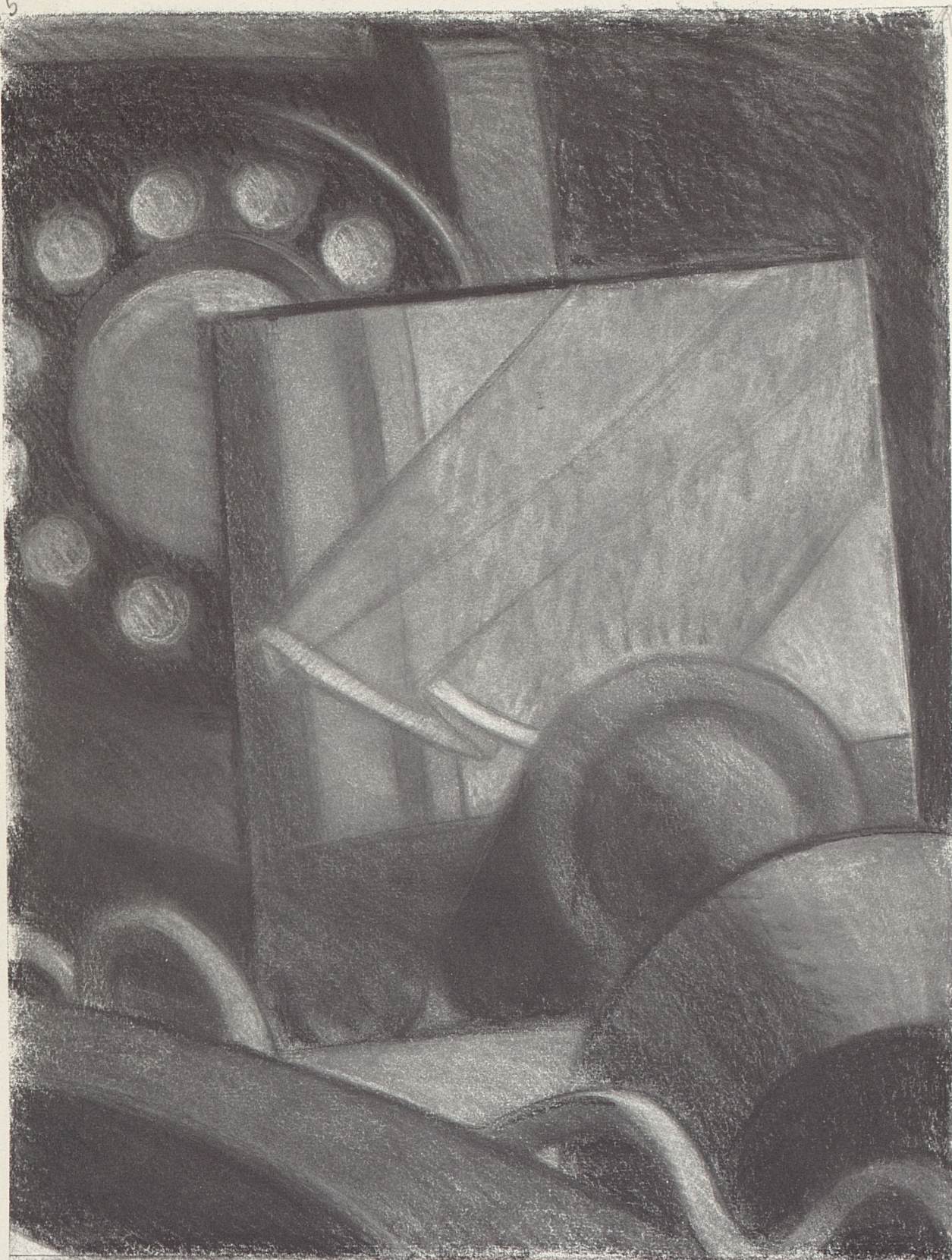


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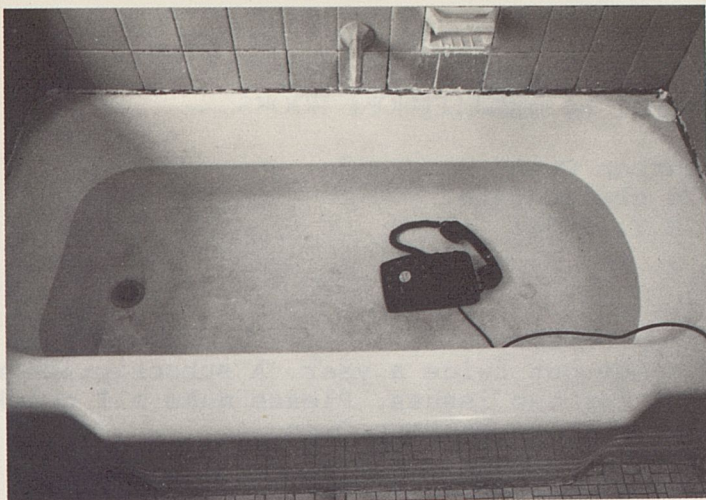
#115

R B



Mason's Rainy

TELEPHONE 15



TELEPHONE 15

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Above Telephone photo from Derek Pell

Illustrations for "Music of a Simple Journey" by Britton Wilkie

(c) 1979 April by  TELEPHONE BOOKS

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Fashion
(for Carol)

L.A. gets tight
sometimes no
place but
the rough place.
Sometimes a strangulation
in progress,
a mental lamp
short circuiting.
Too often used
and the metaphor
is overdone,
the image oxidized.
Here buildings
become bones;
streets like veins
with their stale
blue winds
floating back.
I imagine you
caught in another's
metaphor;
the face we share
a scar which
loneliness rubs
against like
an oil trying
to bring back
the beautiful
from the used.

--Ian Krieger

IAN KRIEGER

Conceptual Snapshot

By splicing
the same scene
together from
the point of view

that makes time
a bathtub

you can see her
from the bra
on down
trying to make
primordial art

in an intimate house

where conspiracy
is as beautiful as
Lauren Bacall

YUKI HARTMAN

Now

I am still structurely sound, though I may look gutted to the core.

O, the renovation effort is under way

A beam here, a beam there, the busy sound of hammering all day long,

And at night, a very sound sleep to prepare for the next work day,--

Though this is Sunday: so all is quiet, everyone is still asleep

And I will abide my time to blossom into the airy spring: that is,

I wait

For the painters to come splash me with all the wild colors possible.

Come fly with me, I will take you where it is so quiet, and you must

see

A babe swaddled in warm light, transforming slowly. Logical as music.

AT a Bar

All alone here

What I am

Red eyed

How it is

Love's terrors

For this I drink

The cheap wine

Am a sight

Why the light

Why at all

Banging banging

At your door.

Observation Of Snow At Four P.M.

There is something about
snow falling lightly
which tends to soften the
hard grey squares of the
New York Stock Exchange
while a paved sky of grey and
white clouds covers up the sun
leaving us with no light
except for that dim yellow
reflection coming out of the
bent street lamp on New Street
which shines in through the
two back windows of the
Irving Trust Company
making an unearthly glow appear
on the red and gold mosaic wall.

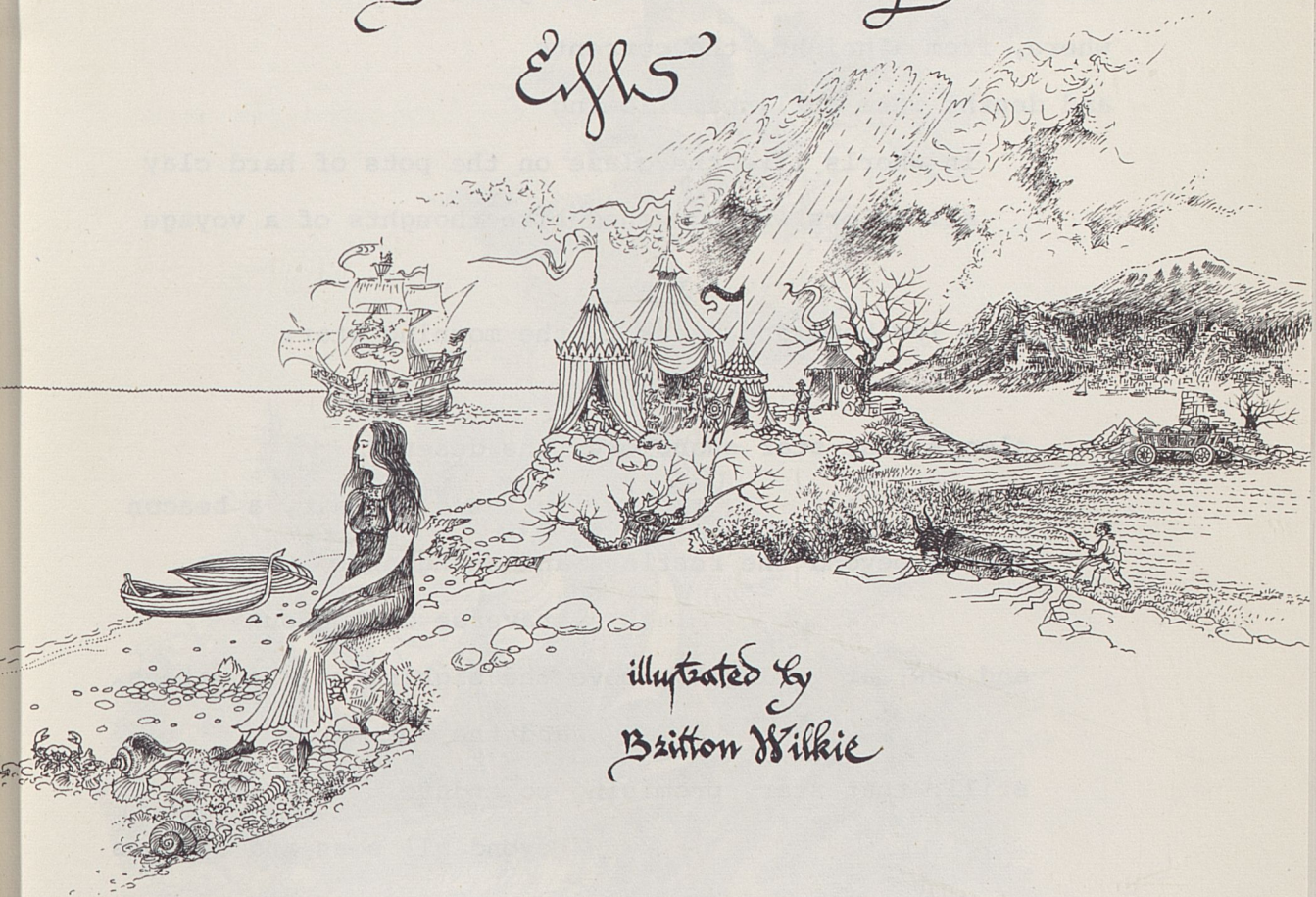
A Rhapsody Of Sorts

a folding umbrella
of popsicle orange
sliced with licorice browns
twirling around
a handle of walnut
belongs to the woman
whose shirtcollar is
patterned with flowers
of plum blue
and fresh spun chocolate

Excerpts from
"Music of a Simple Journey"

a
poem
in
Several parts
by

Engenia Hacer-Story
E.H.S.



illustrated by
Britton Wilkie

the calling

probably it was at the point of taking the journey homeward

when, looking down upon the waters, Daisy was reluctant to leave
she did not want to forsake the sea
and leave that singing forever behind her

so, Daisy sat for awhile looking down on the shore's side
and then made her way back to the canopies
the azure and white canopies
made not to echo, but echoing

all that strove in the bay beneath her gaze
where, from a height, the currents
and depths were outlined, flowing

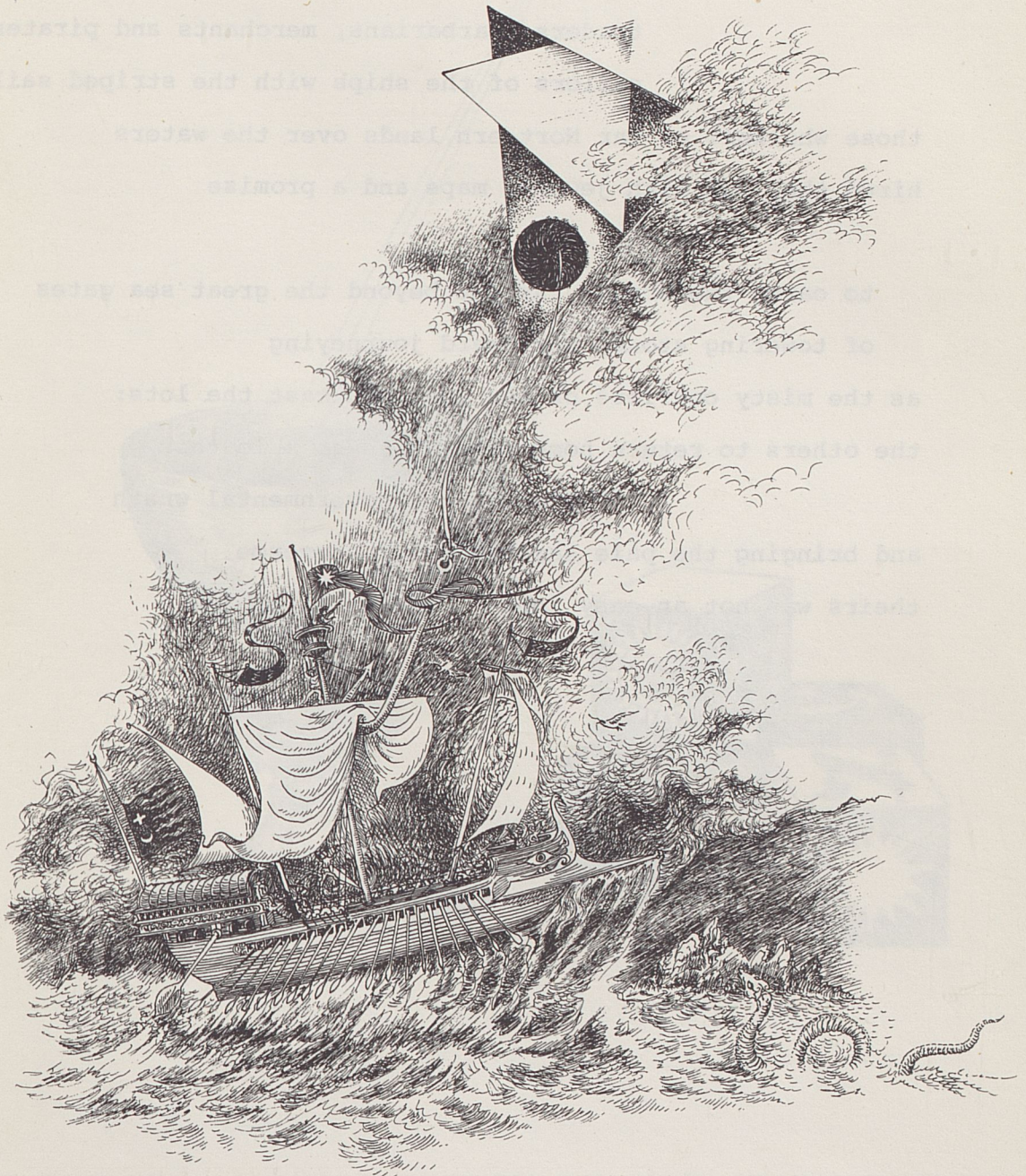
in whorls like the glaze on the pots of hard clay
all colors which meshed like thoughts of a voyage

Daisy lifted a low bowl and drank to the morning star:

always that star shone over the desert
in the clear air, a beacon
steady beyond the restless and changeable
traverse of the sun
and now, at twilight, above the sighing of the waters
and the wet horizon
still, that star, promising to endure
beyond all seas and seasons

Daisy retired to her tent to cast the lots:

the vision was of a journey on ships
yet the general had scheduled return



and return they must

with word of the seas for the Emperor
shells, and the water-worn sand

yet all of the Destinies spoke of a Voyage

and ever the Destinies did rule the Emperor
Daisy was chaplin of this caravan

so, to solve this problem, they hired men:

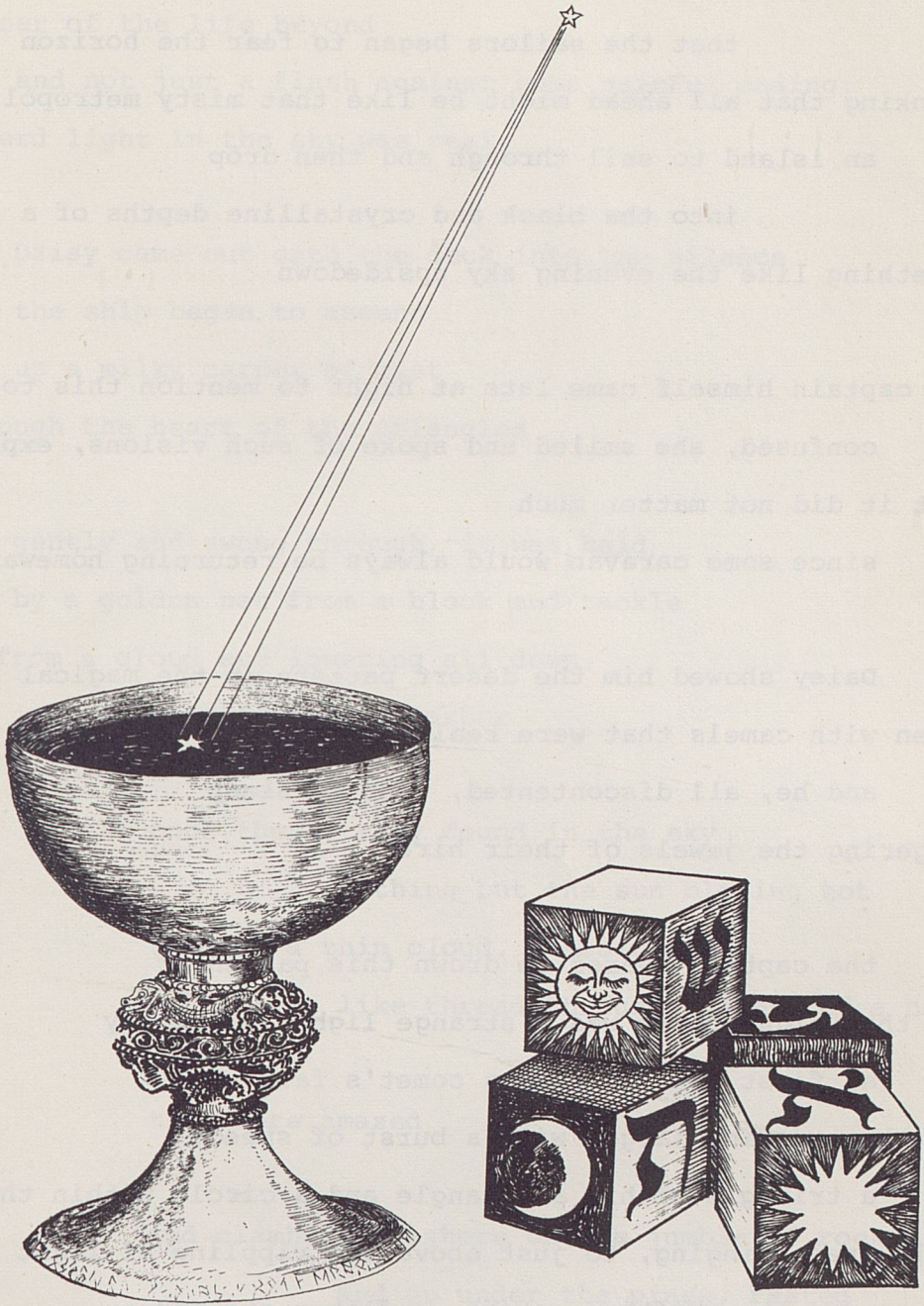
traders, barbarians, merchants and pirates
sailors of the ships with the striped sails

those who knew of far Northern lands over the waters
hired they now with jewels, maps and a promise

to carry the oracle far out beyond the great sea gates
of towering stone, Northward journeying

as the misty couriers of the gods had cast the lots:
the others to return home without their priestess

risking the governmental wrath
and bringing the pale seashells for commerce
theirs was not an easy job



the hole in the sky

the man on watch spread stories about the mirage
and probably it was because of his tales
that the sailors began to fear the horizon
thinking that all ahead might be like that misty metropolis:
an island to sail through and then drop
into the black and crystalline depths of a hell
something like the evening sky upsidedown

the captain himself came late at night to mention this to Daisy
confused, she smiled and spoke of such visions, explaining
that it did not matter much
since some caravan would always be returning homeward

Daisy showed him the desert pattern in the magical rug
woven with camels that were really moving
and he, all discontented, went to sleep
fingering the jewels of their hire:

the captain feared to drown this passenger
and that night there was a strange light in the sky
at first seeming like a comet's fall
and then growing larger with a burst of speed:
a triangle within a triangle and a circle within the third
it lowered, singing, to just above the rippling of light
upon the shifting waters, and then stopped:
some immense and strange silent angel, meaning nothing

the waves grew calm and all the sailors came out
to the edge of the decks to greet this thing

as the end of a voyage and the end of life
imagining death, and a double death

for the weight that was in their spirits
was a fear of the life beyond

and not just a flash against some painful ending:
this wierd light in the sky was real

Daisy came out onto the deck into the silence
just as the ship began to ascend
up a milky carpet of mist
and through the heart of the triangles

jerking gently and swung through, it was held
by a golden net from a block and tackle
strung from a cloud and lowering all down
into a beautiful rocky harbor

once there, they found in the sky
nothing but the sun blazing hot
through a thin cloud, pressing rays
like thread through the eye of a needle

they were amazed

and clambering ashore onto a jumble of rocks
and up under the pines, rested
in the sun-speckled shadows and thought
of which way Homeward might lie

then by the rug where the caravan was always returning

Daisy consulted old gods, asking for a map and some reasons
as night shadowed over the harbor, it turned cold

and the tiny caravan was returning now through the desert

newly-laden with pine boughs

all cunningly-woven of plush

while on the shore, carefully with his sextant,

the captain went on consulting the real new stars

as the men on the shore were building shelters

"I believe you now," he said to Daisy, "and according
to the heavens which I know we've come

a good deal off the map and into our imaginations
yet the ground here is real..." Daisy smiled.

"And what do we do now?" she asked him.

"I thought you might know," he replied.



shell piece

shells of the flat, pink naced kind

one can nest within the other: all of a different size
making a hard camellia-petaled

work with brittle edges her hands go on

placing and re-placing these things

to vary some lovely arrangement: the glue comes later on

fixing the tendrils of some hard sponge

pure white as a frost into arabesques about a mirror

also the tiny fanned blue-backed clams

whorls of coral and lavender leaves and buds

there is such a beauty of bones here

that the child does not think of pearls

her reflection above the hard pool is flushed

as she makes from these things just a frame

for a pane of silvered glass

stringing the leftovers into bracelets

all of this beauty is dewed with her sweat

jewel-shells are the ships that slide on a thread

star trails and suns held by a hardening plastic

to the edges of a plain wooden frame

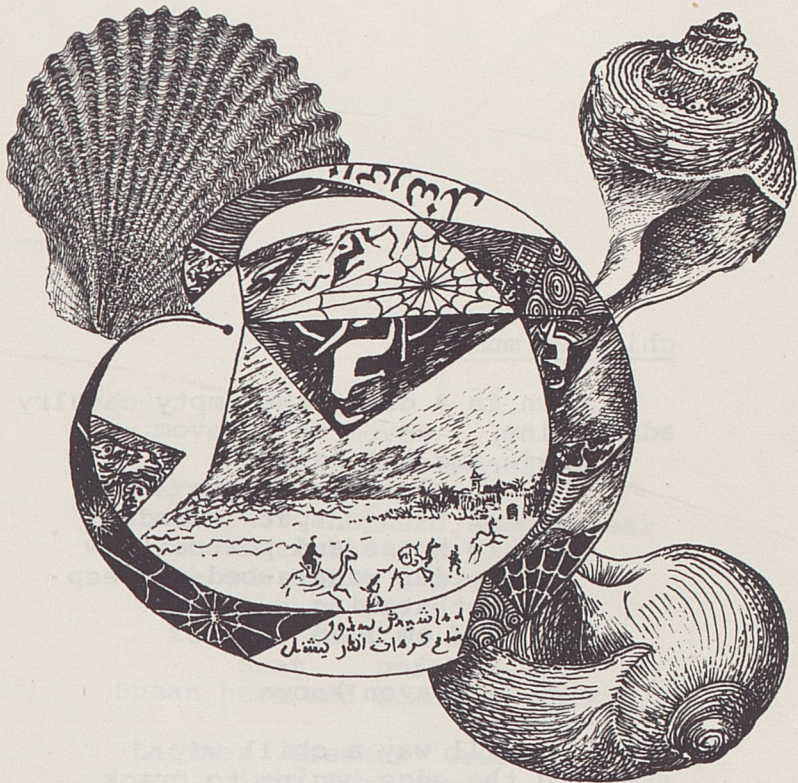
inside, she sees her own silver distortion

and, seeing herself, sees beyond into nights

she will trap a reflection of dark skies

and moving her finger along this pane

trace the path of the morning star



If you put your nose pointing to the sun
and open your mouth wide
You will show all passersby the time of day.

Anthologia Graeca 11.418

childbed mumming

down in a drift the empty cavalry
adamantine

begin and end in mist

look in future

path meander

century house and portraits

embroider wake-a-bed-a-sleep

thatching

I am I am

heaven knows

an ill way a chill way
stepping the edge begins to crack

house lights and heath fires

I am on my way to Castle Dangerous
let thistle be tangled be broken.

ridinghood

Miss or mist
what did you see what did you see
said the king

cornfields

from her secret hiding
and known
find them un
in
telligibl

the intellect it
reason from a secret too

in phantasiae as
a child
in the forest
hav come
I long to
rov

moves o'er moves
lofty inclemence
cavernes
sound of shepherd shaggy bear
wolv haw tumbl flora
tumultuous
blue crystal
flee joyn slip
seat unfold
Susan here and homeward Mark

Latines Greekes Crueltie
into flat prose
love and loveliness contain all oaks

Samuel as though visible while invisible
speaks to Saul

-Transfiguration, Mountain, He and Elijah
some cause outside the world called Nothing-

The dull judges are mystified

they cannot tell visions
from voices.

Snow has blown through the windows
snow has formed mounds on the sill.

Penitents depart
the doors are shut.

In our spirits we sacrifice Him
and in our hearts

not with our teeth

we eat Him.

A little girl of the Border
takes it on herself to save her country

sets forth amid lamentations of her neighbors
to abide her doom

nest of feathers on her crest or helm

I put green lace around her body to preserve her from harm.

Forbears and heirs
stretch out their arms to me

Saints
with two-edged swords in their mouths.

Obedience is wanting
obedience to laws

to officers

this morning will spoil the show
and wet the army.

No accidental news

Pilots
have been wrapped up and lowered into boats

the hours twelve deep are passing by.

Castle on the seashore, dead body on a bier
wasted kingdom

whose desolation

mysteriously connected with the dead man
will be restored to fruitfulness

when the questor asks

the meaning of marvels he beholds -

But the original no longer exists
we do not know the name of the hero

or how the story ended.

A maiden does not rise from the water
seeing chessmen on the other side -

the stag
was a monster

one horn sharp as a sword.

And the mother
fearful that her son might share his father's fate

fled to the wood

either alone
or with one companion

she will bring up her son in ignorance of his name
all knightly accomplishments.

Lay of the great fool, chasing beasts
or killing with javelots -

his mother was always a lady of rank or sister to kings

he is fils de roi
fair of face and fleet-footed

when he woke this morning he found the forest deserted.

View of all things, reft of sense

where humans are utterly blind
the birds see -

long slopes of hills
direction, latitude, patterns in sky

perhaps from thousands of miles away

one young boy running to announce catastrophe.

BOB CALLAHAN

A very old Irish Proverb

Ice is the mother of Corn

Snow is the father of Spring

A phone call (1924)

"ok sweetheart. talk to you soon.

please stay in touch."

sweetheart?

God I never use that word.

sweet heart

well it's right. for you.

It's like, when my Aunt Alice said

'Darling Bob' ... Darling Bob

and it rang like a bell across a field

somewhere in the back of my mind.

Three Irish Passages (for Susan B. Weston)

The march of the O'Neills
is disturbing, an Irish troika (Sean O'Riada)
the ancient northern hunter's dream

*

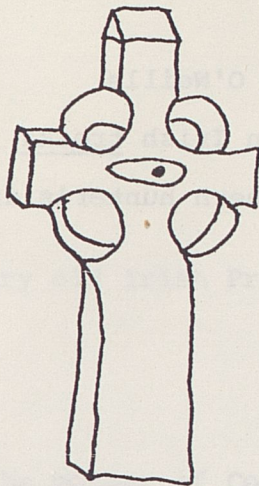
And in her vale
an old sacred yew
occasionally
a neo-Christian holy well
her daughters sparkle
we have taken to calling them rivers now,
one is called Boyne - another, Shannon.

*

And so the page
begins to fill with snow
stone crosses. Once again
we must wait until the Spring.

Two Roads To Make A CENTER

(Our Ancient Gaelic Rosy Cross)



The older road,
matriarchal,
of a risen Egypt
up into Holy Crete,
the trail
of the old standing stones
crossing Iberia
becoming 'Eirenean'
on the Hill of Tara
and in the sweet
Valley of the Boyne.

And the other,
of the Sky-god, a Man of Fire
Nomad's life on the Plains
to find the true bed of the Sun,
Westering,
these original Indo-Europeans,
now the Dying Celt,
the Son of the Sun,
as Crete the Moon's Daughter
at the edge of,
the invasion of, IRELAND.

And now we are here all together,
the marriage of these men and the daughters of the Danaan,
herdsmen, then, and hags,
as they fell to be, too many late English centuries,
whereas, at origin,
they were Black Banshee Queen and Sun-lit Keltic Noble.

Such a queer marriage, a curious beginning
for our always suspect egypto-Hermetic, marxist-Clannad Church,
which sits now on this high rock,

this always gray-green, lonely, wave-swept North Atlantic island.

A generation of Afro-Russian Peoples?,
(as there is seldom any simple way into, or out of, a past),
who, fiddle me, the whole world will come to see,
as the fiery-hearted, yet chapel-ridden moon struck souls,
the Children, then, of Old Ireland.

A SIMPLE FACT

I had a friend who spent two or three years in therapy. Didn't feel it was going anywhere. And then one day he opened a book, and read "the Irish mind is often torn between terrible moments of savage self-criticism, and amazing almost otherworldly flights of fantasy and joy." Two years, my friend said, and yet this analyst never even suspected it was because I was Irish! He paused and thought about this for a moment. He felt quite strongly that now he had been cured.

"Afar. Afar. Afar."

James Joyce would claim

"His voice from beyond the grave is calling"

Island

Island

Island

Island

Island Island Island Island

Island

Island

Island

ISLAND

Island

Island

Island

Island

John McCormack, dead of emphysema, September 16 1945.

LISTENING TO FELIX DORAN PIPING

Hear the Old Piper

Move down on his jig

Move down off his reel

Step (Space)

Step (Space)

Step (Space)

(and briskly)

This is broom handle music

This is kitchen morning music

This is the music of my hearth

Mother of Multitudes
after Kathe Kollwitz

This is the one fairy tale hidden from children
This is the hut in the black forest
This is the empty cup and boiling cauldron
The oven for flesh instead of bread.
This is the clearing in the deep woods
Where Death is greeted as a friend,
Where the child murmurs "grandfather."
This is where the children cling to the woman's skirts
Crying in the language of hunger
Using the same word for "mother" and "bread."
To be a mother is to be a mother of multitudes
To hold a people in your arms, to cradle
Famine, rebellion, the whirlwind,
To wrap a shawl with the flour ground from bone
To encompass the darkness of eye sockets and border lines.
This is the path through the black forest
We will pass on, we will refuse to suffer
In the clearing, in the illuminated center
The woman struggles for the child.

Invocation
Alameda Gardens, Mexico

Night of sheer altitude, hotel of breathlessness
Night of poinsettias, the fountain's crystal division
Night of 400 earthquakes, innumerable volcanoes
Night of the street riot, the slogans of bread
Night of shards, the open hand, the fistfuls of glass
Night of the half-glance, the grey-feathered fan
Or the fan thrown down on pavement, the broken spine:
Back bent beneath the load
Sling of calla lilies, swaddled child,
Back bent beneath the load
Boulder, cornice, corner stone,
Pyramid of the sun, pyramid of the moon,
At the hem of her turquoise skirt
The woman arranges
Pyramids of oranges, chocolate, walnuts;
Lady of squatting, our lady of braids
Green maiden of the final corn
Mother of the dead, buckled with skulls
Madonna of numbers, virgin of long knives
Lady of childbirth, lady of salt
Goddess of the smoking mirror
Goddess of both hands
Mother of obsidian, mother of pulse
Intoxicated virgin, lady of mescaline
Mother of the flayed god, oh mother of whirlwind
Woman who rips out the heart
Still beating.
Now grow still, let your hips
Order the blueness of air.
Pray for us now, and at the hour.
Lady, remain for us
As you multiply in time
Both unsplintering and simultaneous.

TABLE WATER

Let me drink this table water
and sweep out the noisy sadness
choking my throat
every lonely man wrings his hands
so say the psalms
but we women
well, we're expected to cry
and be proud of our tears

I've been thinking the price of pride
is too high/worthless like the dollar
on alien shores
All them tears down so many proud women's
faces
standing alone.

I'd rather they smash their glasses
of table water
'gainst the mirrors reflecting
lonely faces- - skin deep dug into by
sad sobbing rivers- - color gone
and passion

pride left
tasteless
vaguely nourishing

a glass of table water drowning
all the anger of a deserted heart.

november poem

for maureen

wasted
you speak of crystals
snow
old songs flee from our mouths
like curses

remember

remember?

sad tuesday
wednesday's just as bad

haven't had my yearly dose of
velvet/high-heels
silver tottering drunk in the
crunchy night

season of holidays

old time
feelings

lone wolf/LOBA
in the city
blues at the tip of her paws
she monitors the chattering women:
her startled sisters

grumbling with the traffic
hissing at the stars.

KICKING THE GONG AROUND

for Michael-Sean Lazarchuk

I experience
deja vu
making my-
self tea

how can you be serious
with mints in your mouth?
it's a lover's question

somebody on the typewriter
besides me

what am I up to?
that's a good question
I'm on my back on the porch
rubbing my arm muscles
aching from skipping rocks
on the river
at four in the morning
so I'm not up to much
I'm not even that hungry

but I guess I'll change the oil
in the VW
in a minute

later

I wanted to paint
a funny portrait
of someone
snoring with one arm
over his eyes

that would be
my friend Michael-Sean
passed out on the couch
he's a drunken poet

(we all know what that's like)

right now
he's being drunken
and later for the rest

"I prefer drunken boats"

somedays you get only
what you need

I can't understand
what it is
about
wanting to be famous

it's a one way ticket to ulcers
and athlete's feet

at least
that's what
they say

and I'm in no mood
for an argument

just show me where to sign

"I wish you'd unlock your voice box and talk"

I'm going to scream
that's Michael-Sean talking
I'm going to explode
he used to use sex appeal
now he's got fame

Frank who?

this is
the third
time today

infinity goes up on trial

I forced
my hand in
my pocket

(Bette Davis style?)

that was yesterday today

I had to wait
for a bee to finish
reading the instructions
on the pay phone
before I could
retrieve my dime
no one was home
that's why I'm late

POEM

Transparent buds of Spring's
first real bright hot day and
the sap runs through everyone
the tennis courts are packed
there's a line for the swings
and the amusement parks are open
the large and perpetually green
conifers so anonymous in the rain
and mist of winter now given dimension
by the shimmering blue of the sky
so individual and silent and strong
poplars pale new leaves ladle light
in the faint stirrings of a breeze

PRETTY BASIC

Through the pane
of unsuspecting glass
against which
a hanging pot casts
its clear shadow on
the otherwise white
glare of the dusty
window the green of
outside like a piece
from a larger puzzle

stub yer toes
blud yer noes
thats th way th world goes

my little bird E.
flyin phree
important 2 me
azimpotant 2she

weather u like it oar knot
I L.U.V. U a-Lot
& I halve/a lot of ways
2 says

I L.U.V. U
THIS 4 one
another 4 another
aal th rest
& one more
& then sum

If I loved u
4 a why
it would be this
instead of this

re:(k) new R pact
peace love
un cease uv th above

& virtue iz my vice
vice a virtue

blo thyself
sigh col a jism

HEO O

He-ro he art

pact with past

ROSE LESNIAK

At the People's Cultural
Celebration

to Amiri Baraka

They, push I
(though they try
not to)
be imperialists
they
down the throat
socialists
barf capitalist
food disguised as a
waterfall of newness
over you

the ceiling falls &
the we all, we all
oppressed are under mess
fighting one side
against the rotted few

locked in your charm
around the neck
your political women
shu-be-duing your cause

tears for the lilly courage
now turned into a blotch

of red smear
among comrades
5 words repeated
all in this poem!

don't push the lesbians outside
like you
we are you in struggle, just the same

"but you are a lesbian...your poems are good,
but you are a lesbian..." he says

to me
carefully listening
a phone dangling down.

for P.P.

Now in the eternal garden
of Gethsemane
sold as the apostle on the move
the pilgrim aged
stopped suddenly
as he kissed the Rock
of Agony in his heart
quest for a peace he
traveled jet liners

Perambulating Two's

confirming a career created neurosis
made us cry at the armpits

thirsting for the blanket to
cover-up economic crazinesses

meetings again, loved the again
wanting the always (wrong dive of survival)

to you not liking to watch the smash
people suffering like garbage

on the streets
overspread aloneness, my place

meant joy
though impediment

resentment for the you, love
to talk and hold, vanished

to the outer dome of what surrounds
pounding louder than the heart between

I KNOW IT'S NOT GOOD TASTE

I'll get tired of it
after two or three wearings

what prompted me to buy it
something to see me through
the change of seasons

the navy blue velvet cummerbund
plunges into a velvet "v"
right over my stomach

while the rest of the skirt flares out
and over hips
to be met by

a narrow strip of crimson satin
and another band of navy velvet
much further down

and a three inch border
of ivory lace at the hem

want me to try it on

A SUDDEN RUSH OF WHITE

morning dresses, afternoon dresses, teagowns

nightgowns, negligees, peignoirs

dressing sacks, chemises, combinations

combing jackets, corset covers, camisoles

petticoats and drawers

white batiste with bands of eyelet

sheer white linen embroidered in white

off-white cotton with a cloverleaf motif

white dotted swiss over pink silk with ruffles

creamy white organdy trimmed with tuckings and lace

pink accordion pleated China silk with edgings of lace

white silk chiffon embroidered in silk floss and seed pearls

ribbons

ruffles

flounces

Irish crochet

Point d'esprit net

Cluny lace

Valenciennes lace

Point de Venice au rose lace

wisps of scarlet and blue

FEBRUARY 27, 1978

To: RLS

From: HL

cc: RS, JDL, MM, SWA, AK, EE

Re: FORTHCOMING ANTHOLOGY OF WOMEN POETS

As I indicated on my note, I think that the title, A CERTAIN SLANT OF LIGHT, is not very helpful, mainly because it is long and not memorable. I am, therefore, suggesting three other possibilities:

1. HEART'S MEMORY. This is from a poem by Anna Akhmatova.

"Heart's memory of the sun grows fainter / sallow is the grass;"

2. MAGPIES IN THE THORN. This is from Ballad of Chaldon Down, by Edna St. Vincent Millay.

"And magpies nested in the thorn / where not a man of woman born / might spy upon them,"

3. LIGHT FROM VENUS. This is from a poem by Louise Bogan.

"Light from the planet Venus, soon to set / be with us."

WOMAN AT THE DIOR COUNTER

very Venezuelan
she sells fantastic cosmetics
I know she's happy
eyes are done violet
mouth is magenta
and polish on nails
honest-to-god-gold

HALFTONE

the short cut. Jack said as they trudged up

said Gloria.

he cried.

asked Gloria.

he said, jumping up.

Jack said, his hand going out to the double-tablet over the single grave, with only one grave to keep it company.

Gloria reminded him.

said Jack, swinging Gloria over a mud puddle.

Jack whispered, lips warm at Gloria's ear.

said a voice at

their backs.

said somebody else.

Jack whispered to Gloria.

said the voice of a very old

man or a very old woman.

came a voice.

from where the schoolteachers stood, all sticking together. came a carrying a voice

Jack whispered.

cried a voice!

said a heavy, red-flushed pallbearer in a limp Palm Beach suit striding between the cars.

Gloria cried, reaching both arms around Jack's neck.

said Jack

presently.

insisted Gloria. Then she said,

she cried out to him again, and he clasped her.

said Brother Bethune, coming out.

wondered Jack, as Brother Bethune tramped over the irises down to the road.

said Gloria.

said Jack.

said Gloria.

he agreed.

ME & MINE

1.

Me and mine
slept by the Sound this way--
head to head
they shared their dreams

while I, awake, would hear
the screen door bang
in the wind, and rain
by dawn lean back
and sache out to sea

Ghosts flew up
from eternity--
then disappeared,
like glass in water

thanks to the lash
of rosy Aurora.

2.

Today we bought new nightgowns
for the girls
and a pair of suspenders
for the child
whose pants fall down

Then we went to the supermarket
in the rain and got
blueberries to bake a pie,
which we did, after I was finished

watching 'As The World Turns'
and sewing
doll clothes from old nightgowns.

3.

"Will someone unbutton me?"

I will, said your brother, and stretched
up his hands

My good girls,
let there always be someone

to unbutton your blouse
as lovingly as it was

by those two small hands

4.

The middle child is half a fairy,
the eldest is the carrier of heat,
as for the smallest, he laughs
like a farmer in his sleep

I watch them close:
three little bolsheviks
playing in the sand

No banal sandcastles for them!

Their fine brown faces
turned to the West
where the sun is red--

Students of history,
they build factories.

JOHN YAU

From The Chinese

I put on your gown, and was comforted by its blue
Tigers curling around me, even though it was dark.
Sometimes, even the stars are hidden by their dutiful glow.

Sometimes, even the stars are hidden by their dutiful glow,
As only the moon trundles down the mountain path.
But how was I to know why you got up, and stood by the open window?

Radio

A hammock of birds
rests beneath the sun.
A ratchet of light
tightens the scratched
shadows. With nothing
slack nothing
escapes us.
Not even
the rusting sky
we cannot follow.

Nine Songs

Yes I wanted to say all at once
I wanted to say everything
Though I didn't say anything
At the time I wanted to say something
All the times I would say anything
Anything at all thinking I was saying
What I wanted to say not something
I heard wanting to say everything
I said what I wanted to say by saying yes

ELAINE EQUI

WAITING FOR A LETTER FROM NY

Because our mailman can't see the difference
between animate and inanimate, he leans against
the dog and cowers before a lamp post. He says
we have no control over skin. Where it will grow
next, what it will do. When he puts on his dark
blue coat, it becomes swans choking on bits of
metal. The climate is: uranium. I wonder what's
taking him so long to deliver the mail.
He's just standing there, staring at this woman
undressing in the right hand margin.

CAROL J. PIERMAN

The Day You Burned the I Ching

It was the changing line:
The Marrying Maiden
turning into The Family
Muttering, "To hell with
Confucian wisdom,"
you picked the book up
carried it to the pink
tin wastepaper basket
and began pulling out
pages. One by one, they
curled into ash--Difficulty
at the Beginning, Before
Completion, Pausing in Front
of an Abyss. All set
meticulously on fire.
Then the Tarot Deck
for good measure. You took
the pennies, threw them
off the pier into the river.
I can still see you
marching briskly down Morton
Street, the coins held tight
in your fist. Just before
we met, you cast Youthful
Folly three days running.

The Magician's Props

include a canary, 2 rabbits, a pair of white gloves,
top hat, tails, a black wand--many scarves.
Once there had been a rope, but he was now
a purist--simple acts of manifestation.
He had even gotten rid of his girl--she refused
to disappear. But the rabbits.
They have no choice. They are so used
to a place where blood sings in the ears,
where darkness slips over like a tight glove,
where the air is squeezed from the lungs
into black cotton. Even if they could scream
no one would hear. When the bird comes
it is comforting, though their red eyes
hate her on the other side.
Yet, it is going back that is most painful.
It's like being yanked through a keyhole.
Deafening noise, terrible light,
the sudden weight of a body.

Cubism

We lie in bed real close
It is just like Picasso. Two eyes
on the same side. One blue
one half-closed. One in the forehead
the other by your ear. An extra
nostril, two profiles. Your mouth
a seductive crescent. When I close
my right eye, the extras go away
I open it again, kiss the nose
on the left. You rest on your hand
like Marie-Thérèse

Snow, snow, snow--where will it all end?

I'm snowed in. Can't get out.
It's conducive to reading.
It's conducive to staying awake,
going to sleep, going insane.
Snow has drifted against my door,
piled five or six feet high.
For weeks it has sifted slowly,
like sand, beneath the frame.
But who cares? Cause we can't get out.
It rules our lives. We stock C-rations.
We are forced to watch TV.
Ever see "I Love Lucy" the time she smuggles
a cheese back on the plane? It's dressed
like a baby. Later, she has to eat it.

A Criminal Element

You say, "Those people over there,
they have a dangerous look about them.
There is something insane and
restless in their eyes."

It's not just that we've been drinking--
mixing cheap wine and scotch--
or that we've been writing pulp fiction
on the subject of homicide, gang-torture

It's the bottle at my finger tips.
Seeing how the lip is smooth
how it would be if it were jagged

RUTH KRAUSS

I look

I look for it as I would a charm
hung high in Venetian Glass chandeliers
over the Grand Canal and one drunk gondola
and plain as they are I'd have the stars

I hope the morning catch its breath
the tune of its turning the labyrinths of its longing
I hope like a small stream everyone should stop and listen
in the great forest

It is time I took to its melody and mountain again
running gauntlets of humiliation and poppies except I always did
and holding beyond dexterities
to my own unraveling dignities

As I chase it say up Second Avenue through palaces
I hear magnolia oceans roaring
Look how reflections gather me and now am among them I fly
and a strong white whale going before me
I love and use the word for real

But blows enter and slay beat me up to weeping
and I despair give up and turn to old involvements of distraction
otherwise I could not make it you, you are so far away I go
to have fun in some cities of the brain I know red lights among
torn chianti heavens

THE NEW YORK POEM

There was this elevator,
an old gray elevator
(I checked: it wasn't an Otis
& I got nervous because I like
Brand Name elevators) and we rode up
to this big room where a tiny dog
tried to bite me.

And this dog was small.

I mean, I've seen bigger roast beef sandwiches.
We got high on and off Fifth Avenue
on the way to an art gallery
to see works by Larry Rivers
because Art is more personal & full of passion
to people who are stoned.

There was a beautiful painting of John Ashbery
in that gallery. A woman asked a suave man
who worked in the gallery what one of the smaller
drawings cost. She was rich. He told her
it had already been sold & he was not at liberty
to tell her how much. "But I can tell you,"
he said, "it was in the neighborhood
of six or seven thousand."

A few years ago, when I was a teacher at the Corcoran,
there was a party at my apartment. I was drunk

when I got a midnight phone call from someone I was in love with. People you are in love with don't always treat you so great, as some of you may have noticed. This phone call I got was not the one I wanted. So I started feeling really miserable and went into the kitchen and sat down on a chair and felt very very sorry for myself. John Ashbery came into the kitchen for a drink. "What's wrong with you?" he asked. "Love," I said. "Forget love!" Ashbery said with real conviction. When I reminded him of this conversation some time later, he said, "I said that?"

But in that gallery all I really thought about was your eyes, your hair, how delicious you taste, and going back down on the elevator we kissed for eleven floors and went to a coffee shop where the waiter told you to get your foot off the chair.

Larry Rivers is from the Bronx.

That's okay with me. He once said to Frank O'Hara

"...when youre young you want to be someone.

When youre older you want to do something."

You didn't want it to end and outside of Baltimore you looked unhappy. And I said, "Listen, it's all just beginning." And I believe that.

Larry Rivers also said

"Don't be ashamed if you have no more ideas; it just means the painting is over."

SMOKE

There are more smokers and ex-smokers than any other kind of people. The Chinese smoke like crazy. Today I saw a picture of Marlon Brando and one of Pablo Picasso. The two pictures show these great men smoking. The actor who played the D.A. on "Perry Mason" died of smoking. Laurence Harvey's death may have been caused by smoking. At one time, people who smoked were tortured, maimed, and sometimes killed.

My first brand was L&M. They came in a red and white pack back then. That was when I was thirteen. I always liked tobacco, even before then. I had already tried eating some of my uncle's pipe tobacco, snorting snuff, and chewing Days O' Work chewing tobacco. Finally, I settled for L&M.

I always made sure I had plenty of cigarettes around, so I wouldn't run out late at night. If I had only three or four cigarettes left and knew that that was precisely the number of cigarettes I would require before turning in, I would not give even a friend one of my cigarettes. Which is not to say that if I had plenty of cigarettes on hand I would not be generous with them. In fact, I very often bought many more cigarettes than I knew I personally would smoke in anticipation of others running out.

In Ireland, people smoke a great deal. And if someone takes out a cigarette, he or she automatically offers one to everybody else. And you are not supposed to turn down a cigarette, even if you've just put one out. I left Ireland smoking three packs a day.

My mother smoked Raleighs and saved the coupons in a little cup. I could never figure it out, but the cup was never filled to capacity even though I saw her adding to its contents daily and I knew for sure she didn't ever get any fabulous gifts for the coupons. It remains a mystery to me. My father smoked Luckies but gave them up, in an offering to God, to save my brother from a dangerous illness. It worked. There were many miracles in my family. But then again, there were many catastrophes that cried out for miracles, all else having failed.

Lemon juice is supposed to be good for removing tobacco stains from the fingers. I don't know why, but I never had a problem with tobacco stains on my fingers. Some say it depends on how you hold the cigarette.

I was perhaps better at smoke rings than anyone. I could make my smoke rings keep time to music. However, I could never master the French Inhale. I did a lot with the smoke. I let it out through my nose, sometimes through only one nostril at a time. And sometimes in two streams from my mouth. I really looked down on "smokers" who didn't inhale. Who did they think they were fooling?

Lee Lally told me that when Michael Lally smoked he would often have three or four cigarettes going simultaneously, one in each room of the house. Richard Giannone used to grub cigarettes from me all the time. Now he won't even let others smoke in his apartment. A few people I know wanted me to keep smoking since they figured if I smoked it was okay for them to smoke too. I did that with some people myself. I figured, for example, that

if Willie Farrell smoked it was all right for me to smoke too.

I was shocked to see Ted Greenwald light up a cigarette recently. A Marlboro. He hadn't smoked in three years. Bill McPherson went to Smokenders and gave them up for a couple of months. But now he's back on tobacco. I know some people who are trying hypnotism.

Doug Lang is the greatest smoker of all time. Smokers smoke more and enjoy it more when Doug is around. Even zealous anti-smokers are taken in by Doug's devotion to cigarettes.

My sister Pat had a heavy Chesterfield King non filter habit before she quit. My grandfather, who lived till he was eighty-seven, smoked a pack of Camels a day right up till the end.

The worst cigarettes are Lark, Viceroy, Dorals, and Tareytons. David Hilton would include Vantage. They are certainly bad too. Camels, Luckies, and Pall Malls are good, but a little too strong. Gauloises and hand-rolled Bull Durhams are the foulest cigarettes. John Ashbery smokes Gauloises. Philip Morris and Old Golds were once among the great cigarette brands, but have suffered a terrible decline in popularity over the last twenty years. If I remember right, the dancing cigarette packs of early t.v. were Old Golds. Do say Du Maurier was once a well-known slogan. Mostly I smoked Marlboros, Winstons, and Kents. Later on I forced myself to get used to True Blues. But in an emergency, I would smoke anything. I had no reservations about smoking butts out of the ash tray if I were really desperate.

I never got into menthol cigarettes, except sometimes when I was stoned. I grew increasingly alarmed and angry at the swelling ranks of intolerant non smokers who kept me from smoking with a clear conscience. This happened frequently in movie houses. I decided I was born with some strange chemical need for nicotine and that it would therefore be a senseless waste of my energy to try to give up smoking. I figured, sure, if it were possible for me to give them up, I'd do it in a second. Other times I thought I could give them up any time I felt like-- but I just didn't feel like doing it right now, that's all.

They say junkies smoke Kools.

When I was a kid, I never snuck cigarettes. I told my parents I wanted to smoke. Then I started smoking.

My father told me that he wouldn't try to stop me from smoking. But he thought it was a very bad idea. My mother said, "Just don't let me catch you smoking around me."

1. We all sound alike to you. We all look alike. Same eyes, same telltale gestures, same habit of blowing smoke upward. We are crowded together, making a sound like that of far off traffic, or like birds. We are so sensitive that no one will do anything insulting or stupid around us.
2. You did what, you saw who, you mean which, you went where, you loved the person to whom. More cheese. More coke. More steak sauce. More water. More sugar. More coffee. More music. More oranges.
3. You said it didn't sound like something you would say. I liked him. He had nice fat legs. A million dollar smile and fancy clothes. He made a mess and killed his wife. We get so tired: waiting for the menu, waiting for the food, waiting for the check.
4. Leg of Lamb, watch over us.
5. Spareribs, Oh Lord.

from "5 Poems from"

FAMOUS PEOPLE

REAL CREEPS

I was walking along Park Avenue
uptown, probably the east sixties.
All of a sudden David Susskind
came walking along. He smiled at me.
He looked exactly like he does on t.v.
This was probably around 1970.
I never liked David Susskind.
And the people on his show
always seem like real creeps.
I always switch the channel
after about a minute.
But actually I do that with every show.
I don't feel guilty about not liking
David Susskind, even though he smiled at me,
because I'm positive that if he got to know me,
he wouldn't like me either.

MONEY FOR WOMEN

I was just watching Lorne Green do a t.v. commercial for Alpo. He was out in the wilderness on his horse & he had a dog his dog with him & they stopped at a mountain stream & right then and there Lorne Green started talking about how meat is the favorite food of dogs & how Alpo's got more meat than other dog foods. Lorne Green alone in the wildreness raving on about dog food. Then he goes to a spartan log cabin where he continues to talk about Alpo. The poor slob peaked with Bonanza so now they make him dress up like a cowboy & sell dog food. Lorne Green was the main speaker at a picnic I played for to raise money for women candidates for office. When you see him in person, he sure doesn't seem like a cowboy. He looks more like a lawyer or a used car dealer. He's all face. I was feeling real good that day. The night before I had started what was to become a "relationship." As it turned out, the relationship wasn't very successful, but I didn't know that yet. It was a beautiful day. Sometime in May or June, 1976. Lorne Green strode towards the bandstand to make his pitch. When he got within earshot, he said enthusiastically to me and the other guys in the band, "You guys are great!"

REAL ROCKSTAR

I saw Janis Joplin at the Newport Folk Festival in 1968.
I saw Janis Joplin at the Fillmore East in 1969.
When she sang, she let loose so much pain and energy that life seemed to be an exaggeration of itself.
Janis Joplin is the only real rockstar I ever saw.

high systems and orange juices
confront marvels blasphemed
over graffettied coffins hung
out to dry over messotint
landscapes.

corners channeled under dwarfs
announce today's manufactured
ruptures, the disorder from
cloud patterns chatters incessantintly.

pig iron fighter squadrons
drapped on the sky lend
financial institutions interest
of tinted Titan's.

fog lights and squished knees
side by side are competing for
the honors of golden boughs,
Plato announces from mountains
of dung.

crisscrossing over garbled
birds south for the library lead to
comment on clanking bulldozers
mucking oil.

i only wanted to see the unbroken
circle, danced at twilight from campers
stripped of crass belongings, howling
at airplane takeoffs, we lift our chins
to oblivion and dramatics.

assimilate

one-eyed women wandering through the silt,
you cannot speak my name:

picnic baskets
brought to
the Crimea, blood on the eye lid.

and the fish were
thrown from the lake,
and the buffalo were
swallowed whole,

I am face.

THE SEASONS

1.

Not easy sleeping
afternoons,
the alarms:
the kids of prostitutes
keep trying
to burn down the hotel.
People stretch out
in the sun
on the sidewalk,
rippling the broken glass
till it gets dark.
A shadowy nude old man
stands in his window
looking at the children:
they're up to something.
In the street
a girl cries help:
it must be spring.

On Independence Day
on Bleecker Street
black heroin nodding
& grass-eyed middle-class
kids looking for
somebody set off
some firecrackers

woke up
alone
window open
a little
to breathe
trucks
jackhammers
the tree
flaming
on the edge
of the playground
where children
are screaming

The earth is finally losing its grip
busy people land on their asses
only the blind man is steady
while the old lady in the wind
wrestling the lamppost
complains it's cold
the kids think it's cool
they control winter
making gestures with snowballs

The bodies are buried
in bed.

Don't move.

We can't be hurt
anymore.

Don't move.

Listen
someone's crying
whether
a window pain
shudder shutter shut her
water what wheels of spring

The children in the playground
trot in circles
which tilt
as they wave their arms

Did you hear the birds?
"No, those were children."
Because of the birds
I saw a landscape;
but my mind returned,
afraid of being lost.
"No, I'm here."

You're in the Berkshires.
The leaves you left behind
are like blood on the carpet.

We'll read John Ford
and discover how to die:
Elizabethans, Apaches?

I drove a spider from your bed
made a cricket jump
heard the spell from your lips
and never stopped drumming.

"All the reasons
you can't be touched
and being touched.
Tell me some more things."
I never tell you things:
we're just there.
"Always when we're there
you tell me things."
I just read them
from the orchards
as we pass.

From Stepping Out

6.

I was reading Frank O'Hara
sitting in the sun in my apartment
& looked up
it was very dark
the ground was covered with snow

so I watered my plants
which have been dying
since winter began
a few days ago--
I won't mention their colors
exotic, sensual, & very painful
but there was a begonia
which always budded white
single-minded & surprising
so I kept the heat off
& let my feet freeze
hoping the plants would live

not realizing not a single day
would I get up in time to catch the sun
to pull back the curtains
& pull up the venetian blinds
& line up the plants on the window sill

I hardly knew it was winter
enough light came through
to make Piranesian prisons on the wall
& the bed was warm
when we managed to stay asleep
still jockeying for positions
until you got up & went out
to hustle a living

or at dawn
when I'd come to bed
& you'd grab me
until I'd whisper it was me
& not Stephen or Michael
& you'd let me go

to stare at the sun
in the science fiction sleep
I travel in
while you walk on ice
& return here at night
with the sharp note of winter
on your tongue

It's a long way from the bed across the floor to the table which is too high for me to reach over its edge to the place where this pad is except with the pen in my hand which extends me four extra inches when my fingers are closed on it, but this is only two inches further than where my fingers would be if they were not closed. Then this paper is quickly covered not with the tracks I made across the rug or the lines of the wood floor which is under the rug but with words which could just as well be about the distance from Argentina to Brazil or John Wayne riding on a mesa or the prehensile powers of monkeys. But in fact as I did not crawl across the floor the reader will recognize that the words could not just as well have been about anything else or my crawling across the floor would not have existed even as fiction. Of course I could now get off the bed and bring this pad to the table and return to the bed and come back to the table and knock the pad off the table with this pen and bring it back to the bed and write out every word above this one. This is what I did. It was the only way I knew to prove how arbitrary the words would be in comparison to the real act they were merely describing, though I admit that the act seems more arbitrary and was certainly caused by the words which were not yet written.

SUSAN KRONENBERG

San Francisco--
Yes and No

I

225 dollars, 6 hours on a plane-- and I'm here.
My eyes jump from hill to hill.
The momentum from rushing down one
gets me halfway up the next--
The bay dips and reappears as I walk.

In Lafayette Park there are joggers,
early morning dog-walkers, and a t'ai chi class.
There are grown-ups on the swings:
The chains echo across the park into a valley:
an eerie sound like a sea horn, or a trumpet playing taps.

And I have my own apartment for the first time--
It's furnished doctor's office style,
but I can leave unfinished work exposed
on the table all day,
leave dishes in the sink,
and there's no one to mess up what I've just cleaned.

For a dollar, I bought a second hand vacuum.
It roars like a truck-- but it works,
I still need a mop and a broom.
I'm setting up a house.
Soon it will take on some character,
like the other places I've stayed:
Same scratches in the furniture,
same fingermarks on the walls.

II

This is a city like any city--
Neighborhoods with no parks or trees,
car showrooms and gas stations lined up
on Van Ness Avenue,
Market Street peep shows and greasy Chinese food stands
that take over, block by block.

An addict on Valencia decides to kiss me on the cheek as I pass.
A twelve year old boy near the library says:
"Hey baby c'mon home with me-- I'll fix you up."

In my kitchen, I hunch over my plate,
eyes turned up to the window,
as if something's going to fly in,
snatch away my food.

The telephone rings-- Who can it be?
I don't know anyone yet.
It's a man who asks if this is the Holiday Inn.

The doorbell rings--
It's the young woman from downstairs,
the one the manager wants to evict,
because she fights with her boyfriend at 4 am.
They scream and throw furniture--
Twice the police took him away in handcuffs.

Now she weaves back and forth in front of me,
eyes glassy, speech slurred.
"Have you seen a denim bag of dirty laundry
in front of your door?" she says.
"Because someone stole my bag of dirty laundry."

"That's too bad," I say. "Who would want your dirty laundry?"

She laughs sarcastically:
"That's San Francisco for you--
In New York, they'd wait till it was clean."

I wish her luck, and suddenly she's pointing
a Brownie camera at my face.

"Can I take your picture for court--
In case the judge subpoenas you."

"Subpoenas me?"

"If you don't let me take your picture,
it's going to look really bad for you in court."

As I close the door she adds:
"Whoever stole it is gonna be really sorry,
because there's something in it that's gonna bleed
all over everything."

III

I had a dream before I came here:
I was in a Volkswagon with my friend,
parked near a deserted waterfront.
My friend left-- but I told myself she'd be right back,
and locked the door.

Then I realized there was no place I could go anymore:
This was the end of the land.

Today I saw a poster in a local travel agent's window:
It was the Empire State Building and the skyline at dusk,
and the caption read:
"Make That Great Getaway-- Come to New York..."

Hotel Boule Rock
Gaspé Peninsula, Quebec, July, 1977

Guardian of the gate
Of Suma, how many nights
Have you awakened
At the crying of the shore birds
Of the Isle of Awaji?

Minamoto No Kanemasa

We've hitched days to get here,
followed our instinct,
picked Metis Beach because we like its name,
and the nearest town is five miles away.

Our ride stops right across
from a Victorian hotel with
chipped paint, long porch,
lawn running almost to the water.

Inside the hotel there's a fireplace
and three sitting rooms,
each big as a roller rink,
musty, full of echoes and mirrors.
The manager says ten a night:
"I'm not suppose to, but I'll let it go.
I'm so unused to visitors, I don't know what to do."

There are ten other guests--
all over seventy--
all regulars.
They smile politely
when we pass in dim, block long halls.

Our room overlooks coves, pines and wildflower fields.
Terraces on different levels
protrude shakily over the sand.
I run from one to the other-- a sailor on a ship.
Three hundred yards offshore, oval shaped Boule Rock
floats like a huge cracked egg.

One day at sunset, I go out on a terrace to write.
I'm wearing a hooded sweatshirt because it's windy,
and fifty-five degrees.

A woman comes out and says hello.
"You look like a navigator," she tells me--
"What's that you're writing?"
"Poetry."
"Eh?"
"Poetry!" I yell-- She's hard of hearing.

She says she's English-Canadian, from Montreal.
Been coming here forty years.
We both smile.

"Are you and that fellow you're with on your honeymoon?"
she asks.

"No."
"Are you married?"
"No."

"Not married-- Just trying it out eh?
How many boyfriends have you had?"
"Oh, about one or two."
"One or two-- Trying 'em all out eh?"

She says she never married.
Her father died young
and she had to take care of her mother.
She was the One Left Home.
Then the two wars took a lot of men away.
Later, she started her own business.

"Don't get married without thinking," she tells me,
then says goodnight and goes inside.
We're leaving tomorrow, probably won't come back.
Out on the water, hundreds of birds
fly towards Boule Rock from all directions.
Some land and rest, others hover above it
or circle it slowly, crying and squawking.

Epilogue
from "Simultaneous Occurrences"

On a city bus a compact man about 70
in white straw hat, crisp navy suit
sees me holding the poem above, says:
"Are you some kind of liberated poet?"

His arms are folded across his chest.
Then he grasps the seat in front
and his hard shoulder touches mine.
His arm is now a steel band between us.

"Would you mind moving over a little?" I say.
"You're taking up too much room."

"I'm taking up exactly half," he shouts.
"See-- here's a line. This is my side.
This is the line."

"You're gonna be an old lady someday," he continues.
"It's not your fault-- It's your mother's."

A very attractive older woman has been watching us,
says, "Don't let him bother you. It's nothing.
It happens to us all."

Memoirs Of A Viaduct

"One needs just a hole to look out of like a spider that has spun its web and is remembering what the world outside was like."

Bunuel

The sight of people
getting their egos brissed.

Valpolicello

blind date

egg libation

Bell De Jour -- Transvestite Training School

take a priest every four hours

thaumaturgical plumbing

pluck it on red flax for next week

divine flatulence

minding the store

an inlaid rest

the air that night was threshing

an ear of wind

nightmare alley in a hat

the echo of old proprioceptions

an old samadhi on the line

bad dream

MICHAEL ANDRE

AT HOME WITH JOHN AND GILLIAN DOBBIN

Perceiving an absence where love was intended, Jack wished to wound Gillian in her heart. He fucked another. Gillian never knew and the love in her heart grew. Amanda, the other woman, disliked her status. Jack lived his days five minutes at a time. He had no 'usual self.' Five minutes in the rocking chair sufficed for a new, more heroic Jack. He talked of climbing a mountain. Panicky at his gold-clad cheer, Gillian described the hill as too fragile. When Jack swam, she said, she pitied the raging sea. He was the only one she couldn't master. Jack was a large fraction, five over four.

Muse Call

I'll be introduced & step up on the platform.

In the audience not just my friends

But their best friends too. My parents

Driven in from New Jersey, which was me

Hi Mom Hi Dad

The tape recorder rolling is

Picking up everything I say

It'll all be labeled & put in a metal file cabinet

So that someday some curious poetry fan

Can rehear this curious poetry.

I'll be payed with a check that I'll deposit

Next day. If all goes well

I'll celebrate after the reading with

A few drinks & eventually

Home.

A relieved transferer of desires

Which isn't a simple thing to do

Oh you to whose hearts my verse aspires.

Following her I end up in Macy's
In 10 minutes I watch myself say
I'll see you tomorrow, etc. & I'm
walking south back cross the Santa Claus
I wouldn't have seen. A mile or so later
the regrets of that startling departure
are distracted over. I've walked past bars
& McDonald's & Burger King's large
revealing windows & what's in there is
old couples reading newspapers &
remembering their coffee. Some asshole
is singing some Spanish croon following
2 girls one of which in her sentences says
Felice Navidad & I feel maybe they'll make it.
She looked so good in that dress I just went
over & said come shopping with me after work.
People in the hours drifting by like swinging
from vine to vine. I'm so distracted I'm invisible,
I wish. So I take a pill which is vegetable
& Faith. If this were a novel I'd say, at
some point I fell asleep.

The heroic turnpike road leads to the east villege
where colors come to rest. On St. Mark's Place
there's a rodeo in my head so I plug her good
against a wall & pour down the rest of the vodka.
There's no horizon on tonight I buy a potatoe
on First Avenue cause the Koreans work long hours
The rest is a history & we're bored with it
but that potatoe was boiled as more distraction
2 movies sort of desert leave me between days

Video Bust

Quickness approaching steel chasing
a tri-boro dilemma
quack medicine of the voided affair
in-state opulence
attain office then we'll let you in
for a concert & William Burroughs
castigating the color of silver
its brawn to be wild
even for the stamp of justice
over our face, an assault on
December's Children. You're
just a goon at the entrance
Last year's geriatrics. Dear highlands,
our rehearsal studio's been bombed!
love bites level me a mountain
all down to sewer pipe
such is the power of observation
do me good smacking right into
Harris Schiff workshop
on Sunday too...
staying home letting salt become an adjective
like crude fibre you'll take command
leave pounds & cents by the wayside
like the current international rate of exchange
some things are worth paying for, Felix
why float serial-like when you can have
the best of zero worlds

12 - 2 - 78

The Coast is Clear

for Rene Ricard

The poet as t-shirt
off stage and casual as Versailles
takes decades out of your headache
to safaris in flames or photos of it
at least
or warmth of perimeters we mean to touch
a Szechuan kingdom at 3
luxuries we have come to cherish
where winter is always summer
at the back of the range
which is the backdrop we want for our walls
where every doorman is an anachronism
driving me backwards over empty studio lots
sometimes Keith Richard stays home

12 - 2 - 78

To Fritz Lang

A wooden pause is conventional
for a Saturday full of problem children
and we're ready to spill into the street
Range-style & profuse
forget your gloves on a night like this
so starry obtuse mark-up on leather
so much to ask for
it's like music it's rent free
ask & you'll get

and that was said

once outside it was cruise-o-matic
when I'm in a beret and everything's on credit
revenge around the corner and no father
to tan my hide its G to A to Bb just as
during a depression you'd water plants
start without me

Yes, I think an inflationary ego could be
most Efficient

once, a Tuesday, Camus was juiced out of his nut
and everyone knew this

• yet in the kitchen of the Deux Maggots
a Chinese dishwasher
washed away forgotten kisses:

"no pragues in here. the cous-cous is glate"

I have tired Geneva blood
alone in the snow

you're off to a fresh start
ready to talk you're a Spy

you think taking the business out of the Metropolis
is going to solve problems we've worked so hard on

who put the Nova in your Zodiac
answer that and I'll go find us a driver
and then we'll have all day

12 - 2 - 78

CHARLES LYNCH

glutton without a head

New York Times
25 April 1977
MAC chairman
Felix Rohatyn

"On a scale of zero to 10,
two years ago we were at 1,
today we are at 5.
The next Mayor--
whoever he or she may be--
is either going to take us to a 7 or an 8,
or it will slide back to a 2."

this is the city

hickory stick arithmetic
ucranium up two points on beg board
disco in pernod
marquee of the marquis features live acts
fits in estates of air fare:
greedier seedier weedier

scrapplin d'apple jack is back

banks ranks planks franks thanks cranks
hood rockin round robbin rink dink
watch fobbin off get soft parry big stink
were I I aver
gobble bobble hobble wobble
secretaries consiglieres weightcheck widmee
snip ribbon bash boat grind ax
tip tat tote

win bag in flea bag
saggin an braggin

soft wheel

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is never the same)
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(if repeated)

proves type moves

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eye    shallow nudge  
"      attic beak  
"      chatty flut  
"      crunch  
"      dormant hoot
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taking

TOM WEIGEL

AMERICAN WAY

to Harris Schiff

Hang your clothes on the wire in the nominal sun
and get your fun anyway you can driving downtown after dark
to Arabian pinball revelations

I'm drinking water at a cro-magnum rate on tap
right into the age of Casual Chic
in wrinkled cotton by day

At last tire-track faces of the next wave of Rimbaud's Assassins
storm through the Italianate movie houses of
yesterday's tomorrow
and the choreography is exquisite

Only the incendiary loudness of card-carrying drunks
betrays the static current
in an otherwise controlled prosperity
a city of idealists
replaced by a hundred new bridges of
transparent lucite
leading to a persistent extravagance of
marble and glass
home of the masters and the children of oil
playground of the Shah

And Andy is still right every Coke is as good as the next
regardless -- abundance breeds jealously
an all-too-human cruelty
ultimately leading us back GAZOOKS! to
the Lower East Side and our long embroidered poverty
supported by the richness of our tongues
where even the wind is ethnic

For further liberations of an even stranger kind
a song comes cheap
by sweat of nerve we'll not ascend to pasteurized air
where the rainmakers sell hermetically-sealed kisses
on the 4th of July

Look Mom! No handles!

Disco controls the headlights

"It's sensual," she says, no longer from Boston
but from Everywhere U.S.A.

so what's a nice kid from Ridgewood doing in a place like this?
counterfeit ambience!

No unself-respecting number/person would park his Dodge
here on this piece-meal rug
skipping breakfast is not enough
the man behind the infra-red mirror
has already counted your pills

to France

A Wednesday morning in New York with summer's lightly falling rain
on windows as heat rises and expands a grand design of lassitude
Disco Fever thumping under floor below in the month of slang & lucidity
I long to be inciting and protective
to become precast concrete or a gossip column or inevitably useful
for the stability of reaching for a hat in hazy blond November
coaxing blue eyelids from Occidental boughs
to be drawn essentially from nature and the dictates of class

"STEUBEN GLASS"

"TIFFANY"

"BARBIZON"

"TRADER VIC'S"

an encounter with baroque arches in the subway
summer's vanity wins out with gushing looks from India
a modernist sun of inverse proportions rising and falling
near regiments of Swedish Ivy in the garden at the Museum of Modern Art
a boy in blue socks and shorts chats with a friend by a Rodin head
tresses nearly touching the leaf-strewn water
women wielding cameras in a rush for culture
this too is known as love and of the classical Manhattan variety
with symphonic salads and a long spoon for your iced tea
I can't be Gary Cooper without you
though the guards could be violinists

CLUB 57

Snuffed green

that's not what I had in mind

more like whole stratum of honest people

conspiring against me

and, as of this moment, I don't even have a boss

it's all in my mind, of course

oddly enough, my mind is where the shit winds up

like a subway to Woodlawn

A young girl at Club 57 tonite

looked & acted like Marlene Dietrich

called everybody in the house a stiff

tall men tall women they just smiled & gawked

the music started up loud

it was like the Dom around 1966 or 7

people were dancing to a band

this time The Foolish Virgins

The Dietrich girl was dancing with her girlfriends

at this point looking more like Dominique Sanda

in "The Conformist"

But you could have fooled me if you said

the scene was "One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest"

some people will do anything for drugs

CHEERS

for everybody

I like these days of domestic bliss & city thrills, really!
no work but the work of poems or mopping the bathroom floor
back in New York one year today & still crazy

"My building has every convenience"

being a minor star I come & go freer than the gas man

let them have their fantasies about me --

they're all flat-footed Civil Servants suffering from an overdose of
Culture

STEVEN LAVOIE

FEAR

He isolated the feeling of fear while watching a
horror movie on TV. Now when he barfs just assume
he's scared shitless.

The week before was hot. He learned why he stinks in
the summer. After all these years he finally bought some
deodorant.

It's simply a matter of will now. Now that he's listed
all his talents and has come up with 234, or too many
to mention.

By learning to count he opened his head. He's lucky
he looks good with his window open. He doesn't even
need curtains.

SOMETHING BETTER CHANGE

You want change?

I think I got
Change for a quarter.

But you know dimes
They're 10¢ forever.

CURTAIN CALL

for Keith Abbott

Time to swear
off the sherry
& do the bomp
(as if there
were something
to bomp to)

into the shower
where I take it
as if it were
my last (as it
may well be)

& whistle while
the hot water
hits the old back
to bring an instant

of suspended disbelief
behind a curtain
before I realized
the towel I washed
Just for the
occasion is hanging

over the curtain
rod getting drenched
before it's even
had a chance to dry

YOU BET YOUR LIFE FOR WALT WHITMAN

Groucho wants her
to spell 'renaissance' but she's
French so it's no sweat.

But what about me
having to go outside with this
new haircut that's not fit
for an American spy
in Ethiopia.

I want it to look
like some other time
then who cares?

The parakeet goes mad
at least that's how it seems
on Tuesday in the United States.

24 in leather boots
for comfort not to be taller.
I already can't see my knees
& the ground is the frontier.
I like to sleep on the floor
because I feel like a pioneer.
You create mysteries
while an atom stays together
all by itself.
Energy from the
newspaper to a grand conclusion.
I watch the ground to stop
thinking & look to the sun
for a suntan.
Power starts in my socks
& turns into pimples
whenever I think otherwise.

EUGENE MILLER

Drawn curtains,
this voice is not about you period.
There's more of me looking out at world
than of whoever you are looking in period.
Maybe you are the color of orange sherbet &
can take your eyes out & put them in at will.
Still, you are as hard to digest as sand &
you are only a derivative of the color
of these guaranteed fire resistant
drawn curtains.

The young man in the platform shoes
has gotten very good
at smiling
when he doesn't feel like smiling
& has even dabbled in frowns
with some success.

The human attention span
being what it is,

what it is.

A span. A golden bridge to cross.
Although short, he is very philosophical.
Maybe he should put another quarter
in the box.

Ad Hoc Poem

Where can you get overnight delivery
on almost any part?
The fans here have long memories.
You work in the sky.
You lick your fingers.
The world's largest American flag unfurls
Pop-pop-pop,
little lightboard rockets
now guess America,
the real condition of your hair.
Your secret chicken?
Who can say what you see.
By the dawn's early light.
Byron's teeth glittering.

PATTY OLDENBURG

LIVE STOCK

Act One, the kitchen

Scene One, ya seen them all

those tear jerkers, those thieves of the night

those painful thoughts keeping you up

the losses that change your life...

Everything going up in smoke!

She stood in our kitchen shaking
the hysterical woman recounting the event
for us to hear, first hand...

The farmer lady shaking her fists in anger
at herself, at herself, at herself...

The silage was too wet, and that was that!

She knew it, but they wouldn't listen to her...

She was a woman, what did she know?

Inter...Inter..."Internal Combustion,"

that's what it was called...

It could Explode!

The out-buildings, the machine shed, the grain bins,
the wood & tool sheds...even the lean-to...everything went.

The milkhouse still stood, because it was made of stone
but what did that matter?

There was no more milk, there were no more cows...

The silo flew apart in pieces, hotter than hell
the wind wild in its direction, burst into flames
then the barn...then the animals.

My God, all the animals!

herds of animals coughing, dying

herds of live stock, collapsing in pain

We listened. Silent. Accusing.

How could they have let it happen?

Her voice cracking, words coming out like rain

How could they have let it happen?

Her voice cracking, her face wet like clay

It didn't seem fair!

I played on that farm, my mom was born there!

*

Scene Two, seen a few of the many times TIME takes its toll
of simple well-meaning souls.

The OM of Compassion/The Poem of Forgiveness

Intermission...

the mission of keeping on, the mission of staying put,
of staking one's claim ...on Light.

It's High time for God! & for the Saint on the Street...

Mark my words....

Poets Rejoice. No work today. Only Wisdom & Fun.

Act Two, this Haiku.

Smokey Air Spirals

Sparks Reach Up Change Into God

Cosmic Laughter Roars

We were going to chop off her head
but then she got sick
so we tried to save her with a syringe
three times a day, for about three days...

One time, after she had some milk, she got up on her two feet...
and actually looked like she was stretching.
Guess that was her last "hurrah"

The next day "death" was in her eyes
So we buried her alive & put two large rocks over her grave
to keep any small animals from digging her up

Some chickens make good soup, others see God.

A punk just walked up to me so I socked him in da teet,
and said,

"straighten up you bum, or I'll clobber you"

"shape up or ship out"

"on the double"

but he was a jerk

"ease up or butch out"

"creep"

It's very hard to tell people anything! Now a daze
fuck puns!

"stick it up your ass, shit head"

"if you're so good how come you stink?"

"beat off, bugger, beat off"

(nothing helped)

"pee-you"

"Stick it up"

"bug off"

"hit the fan"

"beat it"

"bye-bye puke nose"

or as the French people say...

"Laisse mois tranquille, d'eau d'eau!"

THE BOOKSELLER

worked 12 hours today & polished
the shelves till they sparkled slow evening
few customers all day long I
began, for the first time, to really enjoy
the job of bookseller tuning in to
half-hour lunch with pay bean soup
and salad with fellow workers
from Iowa Book & Supply Debi Maria
and another, whose name remains a mystery
student asking for "Donkey's Inferno"
& Paul telling him to write his paper
with help from a manual called
"The Elephants of Style" worn edge
of Wallace Stevens, torn page of
the Riverside Shakespeare, bent spine
of the quarter moon over the roofs
here this city houses, like books
I ride on my bike past their covers

THE NO-PARKING SIGN

in the non-light
of an overcast day,
the no-parking sign
has no shadow

no car parks under it
where no driver sits
smoking no cigarette
waiting for no one

no, he is free, completely
free to go nowhere
screeching no wheels
in no cloud of dust

he is not there, and he
will not stay, because
he does nothing: he obeys
the no-parking sign

she
(plexiglass-soled/heeled
beige leather-topped
sandals
smocking it into my
edemic morning)
is
levitation
and insect-gods,
the pantheistic
syrup that drips off
the surface of this
world.

my/our pencil-arms
the way the wind
blows us
our wrinkles
the late-summer
puffiness of our
underjaws

i beCOME
the wrapper
on AMAZONAS soap,
bright green (the soap's black)
with this blooming giant
Tarzan lilypad,
frog-cricket-air
one lung,
breathing single
intense
breaths.

black bug
anything she wants to do
in the can't eye
my eyes
eyes
who wants to be a hundred
dollars a month English
teacher,
"What about the model job
in Rio?"
"I was thinking about
managing a shoestore...."
Trade bodies? Let me
try Avenida StarletCobana for a while,
but I can't tell her ape me,
I'm theory,
she's (even now, snake body
sliding into grass)
Existence.

MY WORK

Something steadily worked on becomes (itself)
no longer present
the work becoming itself
takes over painlessly as the work to be done
being done, is what you want to be doing
after all
working on the work most important to you
which is working on it, not it
but working
which immediately becomes not like work (in our language)
but only itself (process)
not "like" anything
(which is one of the problems with poetry)
as: "What is he?" is answered by what his work is
unless he sees that his work is working, answering: "Worker"
(even that, too removed from the actual work)
so he should just answer: "Work" (as what he is)
--so seeming to say he is his work--which he is
but which he is also not
his work being his work
(and he being work, though not necessarily all his work)
and also his work not being himself or the products of his work
(like this writing)
but being the work itself
the working
of which he sees the importance
and so finding it finally extremely pleasurable
gets to work.

BOUQUET OF WEEDS

Handpicked from the dirt lot, zen-arranged by their long stay in your fist, some crumpled, tiny blossoms from plants with no names, disarrayed, broken-stemmed, you present them to me, crying, biting your lip, drop them in front of me, step on some, heel grinding, and turn away. I ingest your actions. To grate against the viscous maneuvering, to not resist the chance to marvel over such realism: I am forced into being. The still-breathing pieces of plants smashed, spilling their green juice, happy and rich, absolutely fresh in their death, unbludgeoned, indestructable in the crisp vision they present to my real eyes. I look closer, so closely as to see the broken leaves, crushed petals, fibrous rents in the frayed calyx of nubile buds before me; as to know that in my seeing them, in their existence here, that I live-- Weeds, broken glass, old car grease in dirt, all lunge into impeccable, forthright weeds, broken glass, old car grease in dirt-- They allow me to live to visit them on intimate terms, to enter into your anguish, to overwhelm it with knowing, to indelibly taste that rebirth in death-- the gorgeous flailing delivery of that bitter angst.

ILLUMINATIONS

you and the lights
the lights
that only you
can light
the light of your eyes
the other night
in the greek diner
(nearly all of them
are-you know)
you told me
that i looked beautiful
and my eyes
were sparkling-
well babe,
you put that sparkle
there-you and the lights
the lights that spin
and reflect-those pulsating
lights-chasing dancing
lights-the light in your eyes
i tell you of the deep
ravine-my love for you

i'm trying
to make you
believe me
every day
in every way
(how cliché!)
that i can-
anyway,
i was speaking
about the lights
within your eyes
when i told you
about the heartbeat
but when you heard
that heartbeat
mine surely skipped one
as i watched the glint
of the lights
the lights of wonderment
swimming through
the softly shimmering
wading pools-
your tropical eyes
after i read
you the letter
you said
i had touched you
your eyes were red
and there was
no mistaking
the lights

TOM BERLINER

COLLAPSIBLE LADIES IN COLLAPSIBLE CHAIRS

COLLAPSIBLE LADIES IN COLLAPSIBLE CHAIRS

BOTTOMS HIGH ON CURBS AND LOW ON THEIR STAIRS

SUMMER SIDEWALKING WITH WIDETALKING AIRS

MEMORIZING LOVERS OF OTHER AUGUST AFFAIRS

CRUTCHED GENTLEMEN CLUTCHED TIGHT ON THEIR STOOLS

SIT PENSIONED AND CANED BY LESS-GENTLE MEN'S RULES

ONCE-UPON-A-TIME SAVIORS AND AS-MANY-A-TIME FOOLS

WAIT IN ROOM-TEMPERATURE SKINS, NO SNOW EVER COOLS

EVENING TUCKS IN HER CLOUDS

EVENING TUCKS IN HER CLOUDS

LULLABYS SOFT THE NODDING HORIZON

FLUFFS THE SEA

AND BLANKETS THE EARTH WITH TENDER

SNUFFS THE FINAL GOLDEN LIGHT

PRAYS TO TOMORROW

AND SO TO NIGHT

That Old Woman, That Enchantress

O Moon
fragile as dandelion fluff
in the blue sky
how glad I am to see you
asserting your presence
so delicately,
a lady of afternoons.

Tonight your age will show.
Those dark furrows
worry, sorrow.
The bitterness of these
perpetual separations.
How you lose yourself.
How you give yourself up to darkness.

Now you are floating veils
over your face, disguises
that enchant with possibilities
of denial. Indefatigable moon,
old woman with a powdered face
and superfluous beauty marks,
this is the century
of your unmasking.

Crone. Climbing the black stair
like a pensioner mugged in the park.
You want to lie down and sleep
until only the curve
of your spine is apparent.

You want to wear a lace shawl
in the hot afternoons and rock
yourself invisible.

You want to stop being
dead and solid
a corpse laid out
for the night's black wake.

Therefore, you are the magician
who slices herself in half
repeatedly.

It is simply another distraction.
You do it with mirrors.
You are fooling no one.

Yet you will make no such admission.
In the pure light of day
you grow coy and vain
as an aging actress
covering the lens with layers
and layers of gauze.

On X's On Calendars

Toddling sun toward dark crib runs
This afternoon down, me, thumbs in
Having shed, another as it was, day, does
As any light will on last leg, on.

The office now, barren; the surge
The typewriter bees humming
To record a pollination
The baby in the photograph
As if his toes are on fire
A face the sun makes
Marching mobiles not forever
Nor me, in the air, the engine.

End of day, elbows creased, kiss whiskey
Sad circles of spinach
The applause, gotten through, whispers
The moon, speaking, my lips, falling, to me.

Since We Live Here Now

It's apparent the magic and the way it works

-there's no letters from me to you like
some left in the boxes you brought here

-or hugs and the whispers in them telling
me how you loved the one I sent Tuesday

-even this one comes out of that other recent
day when your eye
seeing it shut just as I closed a letter
not to you

-it's up front now.

Woman With A Crow

week-old white fish sewn under the first cloud
the sheer sun alights on its back
runs through the thick air
breathless into shadows
those shadows the faceless crow

gives up its head to the cradle
her giraffed fingers like cables
tall as poles sticking the balloon sky

the woman with a crow
Picasso that day in 1904
suddenly aware what it's like
to be a woman in her giving
birth dies

his anger hoists her shoulders up
his grief transforms her hair to rock
her ears are delicate shells with ash ground in
her eyes stare at the crow's heart
a black moving ball to make peace with

it's filled in with plain blue
her wrists are neither tiny nor substantial
the lips inside the crow's feathers by an inch
they are talking like two women would talk
having seen their worst suspicions come true
as through a door garbed in panther skin & veils
hold on to cats babies men and she-crows
planted plainly in front of a tired light

EMILIE GLEN

SMOTHER STING

Smothering of wool
Sting of buttons
Lady in style walk along the noon-packed avenue
Fashion windows gauzy with Spring
Trees in tubs all flowering
Spreads her arms in eagle take-off
Smothering stinging me
With the sweater in her hand
Setting-up exercises
I inquire in somewhat goodwill
No oh no it's the Mayness of the day

A JOINING IN AN EARLY SUMMER'S DAY
for Armand, Peggy, and Jonathan

1)

the birds
in
the Summer garden (first
day's mingle with
the voice of
a friend
reading French:
a particular
sunlight

2)

the sunlight
particle (circle full
with us all
particularly
my friend's lady
holds
her child
their redblond hairs
mixed sweetly
same
as that voice
that language
that room
that day
(joined)

JACQUELINE WHITE

27 May 1978

I cannot show you
any sharp line where the waves
begin to roll in from the sky
nor can I do any more than point
toward where the inky profile of land
was just devoured by fog

I only know
the crows seem black
against the light sand
and I sit
on this uneven shoreline
waiting
my feet tired
swollen
from the walk
that brought me here

A Lover's Rebuke

Don't stand there like a helicopter
with your hungry blades whirring!

How can you expect love
if I must duck each time you come near?

mother coca

our twisted tongues entwined
our faces paper grey
reflected endlessly
saint aleister's soul & body
can be heard
pushing up the fucking turf
while 21 prisoners
shoot their way
out of jail
in rio de janeiro.
as the smiles smile
the words fall
& jetplanes wait to come home
i feel my life-flesh
falling away from my bones
to melt.....
liquefied & satisfied....
.....into the big
wide
river.

cow contours outline inscape escape out of line
after the rain

cow mouth

open

wide

a chasm beneath a yawning sky

cow belly

clover rumble

yellow rock teeth of ages

grinding the green

juice

of

day & night

harmonizing with

the subterranean thunder

cow hoof

is

cow

hoof

cow tail

swats flies

galore

cow eye

knows all

the suffering

past present future

as you walk by

cow body leans

against

soft contours

bushy tree heads

bowing in the warm wind

the jagged outline

of a

teeming hedgerow

the solid

soft mildewed presence

of an ancient gate post

its wood

gorged on the wild winds & rain

snow hail

breath of the world

against which cow body rubs

flesh against wood

against air

against cow

DAVID SHARBROUGH

Well, Boss
it looks
like spring is
coming out.
The panhandlers
are taking
the layers of
newspaper
out from
their clothing,
and the
drive-in
is painting
a new sign.
The car hop
girls have
short dresses at
hamburger heaven.
That's the only
way we can
tell spring
is coming
in the city,
that and a
few dozen trees,
lonely in
the park.
They're vanishing
from the scene,

along with
old ladies
with those
net shopping bags
who talk
to themselves.
Progress is making
everything sophisticated
the Concorde
makes Paris
in three hours,
and 12-year-old
kids sell joints
on the streets.
Somehow, I'd
rather have
the trees,
and make it
a little later
to Paris.
Maybe if,
you know,
we had more
trees, we
wouldn't want
to get some-
where else
Quite
so fast.

Fox st.
doesn't say
much, doesn't
know much.

Here welfare
mothers get up
before the sun,
or sleep til
noon, cause
they fought and
sang outside
the window
til 4 A.M.

Fox st. swirls
along its burden
of mothers,
tears dried long
ago, children
who tap
the fences
with sticks, talk
to themselves,
practice
karate with
their shadows
in empty play.

The merchants
watch with corner-
eyes the
strutting boys,
a baseball bat
behind the
counter, give
credit, scold
their wild
daughters. The sun
is dry
and hot on
crumbling bricks.

Make a
green garden,
child. In the
cracks of
the sidewalk,
water the young
shoots with
your tears.
Make a score,
rip-off.
On Fox st.,
there is
no tomorrow.

All Night Cafeteria

It's clear I'm not a regular.
The cashier doesn't call me dear
and I have to ask the bus boy
where the ladies room is.
Nobody says my hair
looks good with a touch of henna
or wants to know where I got
this nice suede coat with fox
on the collar and cuffs.

Would they want to know it came
from Bests, the only place
to get prams and double breasted coats
with matching hats and leggings
for three girls waiting till Daddy
came home from the war
to tell us it didn't matter
how well we did in school
if nobody liked us?

Perhaps they'd see themselves
in me if I still wore my army jacket
with its eight deep pockets, tear
at the elbow, bought where guns
are sold (the sign said AMMO) but
it wasn't always enough for me
shooting up on perfection
off Waverly Place, not eating
for days at a time.

One comes toward me now
sets down her tea and pumpkin pie
price slashed to twenty cents
the Saturday after Thanksgiving.
Nose flattened from birth, a mouth
pulled up and sideways, her voice
struggles for air. It asks
"Is this seat taken?"
with a dozen others empty.

Images spring up like teeth
between us: small girl hitting
the perfect open mouth
of a newborn sister, watching
her bonfire tear at the back porch
meaning only to destroy the ruffled dress
a present from her father, home
from the war and wanting
a pretty daughter.

Now in my mirror
she lifts her cup with care
draws tea noisily over
its thick, grey rim
lets me know she has no
use for my imagination.
You'll never know her eyes say
hating me, the soundless
drinker of coffee.

A mop throws grey ammonia
under our feet, reopens
a hole at the end of my heart.
Does she see it, my defect from birth
under its green suede covering
under the army jacket with its
eight deep pockets, under
the coat that matches my leggings
buttoned so neatly on the girl's side?

I say we take
after each other
this woman my age and
five or six others
sitting alone
at a quarter of twelve
reflecting each
other at odd
angles.

ROBERT L. SMITH

ATELIER

Room of mirrors

Room of strangers

Gilded Buddhas

Rose-&-Diamond

In their niches

Parquet-floor

Waves on parchment

Puzzles on which

Heads of Caesar

Walk the others

Crystal roses

Eyes all downcast

Bright as fountains

Singing, muttering

Cushions puffed

Never touching

As orange mushrooms

Never meeting

Room of mirrors

Room of strangers

All myself

STUART KAUFMAN

STOLEN FLOWERS

Come! We will walk the impossible gardens!
I will be your guide through its halos.
I will not speak, toothless and unlimited in love.
Every foot is tapping; I wind the string.

"The crease on her pants is only another door,"
You reply, "Catalysts!" I knew then where the night
Had kept its plows. Now it is the wind
With many stumped fingers.

There is a sun, nowhere near this sky.
In light like this violets perk up,
Almost more alive than their earth.
Floating corks bob up and down.

Tonight I remember that nighttime air is different,
But here it is the same. Rings and rings of smoke.
The little bow of an actor, oblong jewels and a hurling ruby
Thrown into an open mouth.

I have been hurt before trying to save you from all of this,
But I take pleasure in footsteps answering the stairs.
A lively meander is played by the guitar strings of battle.
The path needs accompaniment through the through.

I have seasoned the garden with cloves of light,
But no one is around to taste the leaves,
So I partake alone, like a monk in an ocean
Full of the turning of icy pages.

Are you coming? The sky is nervous with too much time to kill.
Are you coming? Another voice, like the sound of sandpapering,
Replies. This land is rugged and hilly. The glaciers
Spend their days forgetting what day they were unfrozen.

And down the rosy lane we kilter unafraid.
To prosper is what we came for. A little time in the woods.
An open mouth the size of a knot hole eating my jokes and slogans.

I never volunteered. Just like stolen flowers the beauty
Of it became the room. Just like stolen flowers, in spite of
The reason. And the rest of the day has an effortless grin,
Spreading like the wings of a pinned specimen.

If by chance I'd die holding these words, it would be all
In white like a virgin bride. It passes like a cloud in a tub
Of bobbing apples. I wait then exhale. The route resumes-
Unaware of others, traffic, snow, ice and starlings.

And if my feet were flexible, like paws, I would search
The globe for a lighter life. Like newspapers blown over
My face, I am a vacuole of cover, hidden by those words
And as yet, unseen.

Free in the air of violent rooms,
I push you over the floor, under your own power,
I falter. So today is the stroll I've been meaning
To take. The excuse I searched tomes for.

In love with a word that means the same thing as folly,
interrupted by sadness, we shuffle. Many tears to catalogue up ahead.
More often the history of summer. I've done a little part of happy
On the beach baking alone with sand.

August heat and a million gulls.
Beneath a towel congenital confusion and a member of
The undying yawn of man. And still I believe the place
Is haunted by life. In the touching trees.

A bitter apathy that is at once a part of every cell
As it is the heart of a thorn. I'll "pull another job,"
For life (insensitively it is removed from our face
Like a mistake in time and location). I'll take the picture.

Leave me alone with "sweaty palms," don't disturb the restless
Spores. Cover my head with cloth in a downpour. Entertain
Mysteries with vermilion tapestries. Away from me!!
I beg you to follow the miseries of the roadmap, left behind.

MEDITATIONS ON AMERICAN FEET

I want you to cut your heart out and give it to me
I don't want it when you're dead
I need your heart I want you to tell me about it
I told you I want to know
You're not going to get your way with me
I want you to give me all you've got
everything and all of everyone
tell me about her
tell me
I'll not telling you
tell me about your dream
tell me about her
tell me
I'll give you a quarter when you get home
I sometimes think I'm going out of my mind
No I'm all right
I hope so
Seriously
I'll tell you
Beth is weird
I'll tell you
I want to know more
You'll have to kill me to find out
You look so sad
Hand me your wallet
One day me and Beth were in a park
and Beth
You're really teasing me aren't you
I'm not going back on my word
What did she say about me

Tell me I won't say a thing
I won't say a thing
You gonna bust my ass
Tell me please you going to drive me crazy
No. No. Kaufman. No. Tell me
Please tell me. I wanna know.
I'm hard-headed. You won't tell. That means I won't know.
I don't believe in secrets.

Resiliency,
Purity
side by side
She won't tell me if I want to know
She told me that you-- I said "no";
Round the earth's shores
You mad with me? Tell me.
Is this about me? I want to know.
Will it do any harm to Beth.
There's nothing to tell.
You're just playing with my mind.
Unless you kill me I'll tell you.
If I tell you something will you tell Kaufman?
You look like you want to cry
She would like to go to bed with me
Be in love with me.
Have my child. You
should kick me up my ass
Tell me already god dammit please the truth get prepared
for the truth I can tell you I'm not going to ask you again

WALLY SWIST

The Neighbors

They arrive
in a pickup
rattletrap fender
curled like bacon
and smash into
their station wagon
chrome twisted
glass broken
bumpers locking

Every night
they emerge
by a beam
of a headlight
and the neighborhood
teeming
with children
comes out
to watch

The Virgin

I pray to you
on my knees

Bronze icon
of my childhood
I thought I saw
your eyes move

How I tried
to look
like your child

I was sure
you knew
my thoughts
but I never
let you
get any further

Since you had
a heavenly advantage
I rose
from my knees
to turn you around
on the night stand
before
I undressed

ALL THE GREEN LIGHTS GOING HOME

Back on my feet again
and summer already.
The third-floor apartment
sweaty and hot
but there's money finally coming
to pay the rent, stock
groceries on the pantry shelves:
I found work.

Back on my feet again,
driving through a city
summer night;
headlights slice the air,
stringing a breeze
like paper dolls
through rolled-down windows.

Back on my feet again.
Your head cradles snugly
on my shoulder, rocking against
potholes and bumps.
Fingers rain-dance over your ankles
to the radio's pop
and I make all the green lights
going home.

MAGRITTE IN BROWNS

There is only the sea,
and everything over it
is brown. There is

only the sea, and
afterwards, a special
light in her eyes. There

is only the sea,
and further after, the light
goes out and wood
begins to splinter
into the water.

ANSPACH, S. - MOVIE STAR

Susan Anspach, see how correctly
I spell your name? I loved you
in the movies last week. You were so graceful
when you said you preferred islands
and piano music. But over what?
Living forever? Dying for sorrow
without sound? Susan Anspach,
I adore you! I worship you from the shores
of an ocean. I bury my beauty
to watch you tread water!

What you were feeling a
minute ago, when you came
in, did you say - not the
actual words, their weight

all wrong-- the balance of
what I'm thinking. You
spoke of the car and
all that traffic, the break-

age of someone's life
caught on the road. It was their
madness, a lack of respect
for themselves. You really

knock me out, you challenge
my intelligence, treat my mind
an ignition into which you
place the key of it.

INSANE OR BUSTED (A document of New Populism and Tribal
Flowering spanning the mid to late sixties)

Well, one day he just up
and got in his car
and drove 75 miles Insane.

That's pretty Insane you know.

Yah, that's what I told him,
but he wouldn't listen. He was in a hurry.

(for Pam)

Looking out the window
 you pretend to be Pissaro
 at Rouen; it is cloudy
 and you want to join
 Seurat at the Café-Concert.

GARY C. BUSHA

Teddy

Carol is talking on the pearl-white telephone with a long stretch cord while she busies herself at the stove and kitchen counter. She is wearing a thin, sequin night gown beneath a heavy terry-cloth robe tied at the waist. Her auburn hair is in curlers and a cigarette dangles from her mouth as she talks, occasionally dropping ashes to the counter which she whisks away with her hand. Bill suddenly enters the kitchen, still unshaven and wearing a coarse cotton robe. His hair is tousled and his eyes are still bloodshot and puffy. Carol is speaking softly while turning the eggs with a large spoon.

". . .the fool, he doesn't suspect a thing," her voice trails away.

"Rather early to be yaking on the phone isn't it, Carol?" Bill slumps into a kitchen chair and begins to drum his fingers on the porcelain-top table. He glances at the wall clock above the stove which reads 7:39, and then at the little Dutch boy and girl painted on each side of the clock face.

"I didn't expect you up so early, Bill -- ahh, just a minute and I'll get you breakfast." She hangs up the phone without another word to whomever she was talking with, and appears to take great interests in the condition of the eggs in the skillet.

"If you want to call back I can wait, afterall, I wouldn't want to interrupt an important call at seven in the morning." Bill rummages in his robe for a cigarette butt, straightens it out with his fingers, then lights it. The smoke travels upward to the yellow ceiling and flattens out around the kitchen light.

"No, Bill, it was nothing important; just an old friend. How about some fried sausages with your eggs today? I got some from Meickenbegers' yesterday. Only 98¢ a pound on sale; just the kind you like. What about it, huh?"

"No. Who's the fool you mentioned?"

Carol spooned the eggs onto a plate and set it on the light brown kitchen counter. She picked up the salt and pepper shakers formed in the shape of Mickey and Minnie Mouse and put them on the table. She reaches into the refrigerator and brings out the sausages. The cigarette has almost burned her lips before she crushes it in the counter ashtray -- a large pink one in the shape of a sea shell.

"Nobody, really Bill, just someone I used to know."

The eggs on the plate stare upward like the eyes of a dead soldier. Around the edges of the eggs grease oozes out and collects in the rim of the plastic plate, a plate with a print design of a bowl of orchids. Bill leans back on the tubular kitchen chair and rubs his chin with indifference. The red and white curtains on the window can hardly conceal the dismal gray of another dreary morning.

"Anybody I know?" Bill asked, "I have a special interest in fools; there are so many of them around these days."

"It's too early for quizzes." Carol rolls the sausages over with a fork, a fork from the set given to her by mother on their second wedding anniversary. They are stainless steel and on the handles are fancy carved designs depicting the major battles of the French Revolution. The sausages splatter against the sides of the skillet and some of the grease makes drops on the stove top.

Bill rocks forward on the chair and puts his elbows on the table. He crushes the cigarette butt in a plain glass ashtray and rests his chin on his hands. "My, my, he must have been a real fool to make you blush like that. Now you have got me curious. What's his name?"

"All right. Teddy Slagner -- satisfied?" Carol forked sausages onto the plate where they rolled against the dead-looking eggs. She put the sausages and eggs before him and sat down to watch him out of the fear he would continue his questioning until satisfied. The sausages were still sizzling as he cut into them with the stainless steel knife and the eggs jiggled with the cutting motions.

"Isn't he that creep you used to go with? The guy with all the tatoos?"

Watching him chew the sausages and cut into the eggs suddenly sent a cold shiver down her back; she knew now it would only be a matter of time before he would find out. She delicately removed a cigarette from her pack and lit it, letting the smoke curl in his direction. The end of her cigarette burned bright red and immediately began to form ash.

"One of your greatest amusements, Bill, has been to make fun of my friends. If you think Teddy's a creep you ought to take a look at some of the people you hang around with."

Bill forked a large piece of egg and sausage into his mouth and chewed. Grease from the sausage ran down the corner of his mouth and onto his chin. He casually wiped his chin with the back of his hand. The aroma of the sausages reminded her of camping on Lake Winnoloka; early morning breakfast against the sunrise; freshly cleaned trout; Teddy in a plaid shirt open at the neck.

"This is really too much, Carol. That guy is still running around with a bunch of outlaws -- he never grew up. Calling here at seven in the morning. What could he possibly want?"

"Don't you think after two marvelous years of marriage I can still have friends who just want to talk to me? And who cares what time it is -- certainly not you when you call from those business trips down south."

"That's something else again," Bill said, "we didn't get on the Eastside selling pots and pans on the corner now, did we? Just you remember: it took over two years to get our heads out of water. Anyway, it doesn't matter since you have practically everything you want and then some. What's your complaint? I ask a few simple questions and you hit the ceiling. It looks suspicious to me."

Carol didn't like the looks of Bill's bloodshot eyes. She fixed her attention on the Mickey Mouse shakers. She knew something would have to be resolved. She decided to take her chances and tell the truth.

"You're right about me and Teddy. We have been seeing each other for a year now. I was going to tell you sooner, just before your last business trip, but the time wasn't right. Teddy is here as soon as you leave; we are madly in love. He wants to marry me of course, and take me away from all this. It's like a fairy tale come true for me and I love it all. Now, what do you think of that?"

Bill just finished the last piece of sausage as she finished her story and he managed to swallow it without laughing out loud. Now he could no longer hold back and he let out a burst of laughter which sent particles of sausage spewing across the room.

"That's beautiful, just beautiful, Carol. One of the best things about you is your sense of humor and you've got one of the greatest. I suppose you and Teddy sneak around here in the middle of the night hiding from the neighbors; stealing a kiss every time my back is turned; pretending all these past two years you love me?"

"You're a fool, Bill." Carol snatched up the plate and carried it to the sink. Through the curtains she could see the sun trying desperately to shine through the dense gray clouds. Her mind was filled with thoughts of Teddy and those long trips to the mountains. The trout at the lake and those early morning breakfast talks about romance and the joys of marriage. Teddy was gone now. Behind her at the table he was laughing, pushing his chair away from her -- getting up and leaving the room and laughing.

"Teddy, Teddy," she moaned under her breath, "where are you?"

JOHN LEVIN

alone

every Saturday afternoon

to the Coolidge theatre

from the age of 7

alone in high school

alone in Europe

alone in Los Angeles

alone with my mother

father

sister

& niece

alone in Cambridge

alone in this room

alone to improve my art

my character

alone everywhere

with anyone

i admit that i'm alone

if Lily Tomlin really said

"we're all in this alone"

God knows

i agree with her

facing the dentist without fear of Churchill's cigar

Environmental hazards threaten rivers and streams –

your mortal radiance **may be next.**

“What’s the most you can do
for your naked skin
now?”

SIX KNOTS AND
FIVE STRANDS
FROM THE
“NOTHING COLLECTION”

“Every man wore his order or decoration.”

In Mexico
you're part of
the family

RUTH MOON KEMPER

SYLVIA SAVAGE, FUGITIVE, WRITES

LETTER #11 TO ADAM, WHILE SITTING BY THE FIRE

something about small flames

and in the hearth, grey ashes eaten by ember

you, you

the tree fell down on a perfectly calm day, had to

DO SOMETHING, I suppose

the way I play mad music

and then the black chicken crawled under the porch and died

IT'S ACTUALLY FREEZING

of course a fireside, a hearth and small flames are

Romantic. This guy all shoulders in a slick jacket came

sawing, ten dollars a tree, three trees in half hour

and went away

It was the most exciting thing all December

I write you less often, these days

because who I am escapes me

and the smoke of course excites my eyes, as if

but I don't cry often.

My hand stinks of pine.

HILDA HALFHEART'S

NOTES TO THE MILKMAN: #27

(½sister Sylvia writes, from Xanadu
Alabama again, & triggers this convolute
Coleridgean note)

"Your Blueeyes may be right," she wrote
"but I am all for liberation as you know, far as it goes
want my freedom to choose my own chains, I suppose.

I'm back on the road
singing "My Way," and wearing pink
slacks by mistake--

Pink's more your color" (Back to Adam she drove)
"Rained in Fla. as I left. Sun, much cooler, later.
Mother was fine. We finally remembered the name
of Nan T's friend who had acute vertigo
but wrote steely Spenserian handwriting, spider letters
to the end. . . ."

Daughters of Memory. Ethel Gledhill. Of course.
Sara Fricker: spilt hot milk on S. T. Coleridge who once
used the alias "Silas Tomkyn Comberback"

a limber buck, joined the British Army & became
the "most inept cavalryman" who ever sat a British horse.

Well, S. T. C.'s wife

Sara Fricker Coleridge boiling milk at home, implausibly
dropped it on S. T. Coleridge's foot, which caused
him to lurk in a lime tree all evening, writing a poem.

" 'Ethel Gledhill,' Mother said, 'Was very strange,
an odd sex life, you know.

Not good to live alone.'"

TERMS: FOR AL, WHO DROVE INTO
A MOTEL SIGN AND THEN WENT
TO TAMPA AND DISAPPEARED
LEAVING HIS GOOD FRIENDS
JESUS BELMONTE AND ME
BEHIND, WONDERING

1.

Bovarium:

where that come from? Flaubert?
Jesus muttered he'd had this feeling
almost all night, to ask for the keys
or his money
gone

an exaggerated or idealized

opinion of oneself

highly romanticized and he

who never drove his car into a sign
or sat later sadly drinking an
anonymous Busch
bang into newsprint and the rotogravure
fingers
a ready stone.

2.

Commendadore:

a rank, about Colonel

Jesus explained
watch out for the pencils
and the words
take care of themselves

or should; like peas in paella

stuck in the rice together
alone.

3.

Le mot juste:

Mercy is
supposed to be
discrete, we know; but
 alas
by eleven p. m. or ten past
poor Al had
flown.

SYLVIA SAVAGE WRITES

THE 7 MILLIONTH LETTER TO ADAM

afterwards I thought is this fair?
you bastard
how come you come to my house
after Christawful long months the beer even went flat
 in those green bottles, the silver
stuff fell off in the refrigerator
and dust filled up
the ashtrays
all this damned time, months & I have to
 very carefully
not mess
 your
hair

HILDA HALFHEART"S

NOTES TO THE MILKMAN: #2

(from the kitchen delicious
even with dirty dishes) please note

Truman Capote

did not have a thing to do with
the song "Moon River" even if

it did come from
the movie of "Breakfast at Tif-
fany's" Blueeyes told me that
horrified I'd consider it

although I wasn't
at that moment, which
was past midnight.

With my 2nd sight
(while he leaned against my sink
& sang me the whole real thing

I

was watching $\frac{1}{2}$ a moon
in the window, wink

& tumble
in the sky.

AERIAL

My father is trying to get my mother and a strange craft airborne. They are all out on the lawn, and I contemplate the colors of the tableau: the thick creamy-white of their nude bodies, the somnolent and warm green of the lawn, the dove grey, skeletal shadows.

The odd aircraft is all wires and homemade struts and thin wheels; my father labors under it, trying to work up ground speed. My mother clings to a little perch in the struts. She protests and protests for him to stop.

I step forward to shout something at him, but then the obvious fact sinks in: they are stark naked, after all, and, I notice, quite young. This is all from their younger days, and I retire shyly through a gap in the hedge.

FAUVE

I set myself up as a painter; but I'm only in it for the sex. I do have an easel; I also have a couch. That poor dupe, my model, takes off her clothes and my palms itch. I make a brief showing as the modest Matisse; I twirl a couple of brushes and a tube or two. "I'm interested in all kinds of light!" I inform her, my voice misshapen with tremulous eagerness. But for all I really care, light could be a tennis shoe, a tin can, a wad of blue paper up to nothing. My window faces who knows where, it's a plane of solid grime.

And what does it matter, when I've coaxed her back along the couch and gripped her body in my spattered hands? Raw turpentine cracks through us, wipes the palette clean every time.

BUILDING

Percussion by high hats up tempo
a karate quartet in slow drag motion

Bottle and can bombs
do not distinguish between plaster
and beam

Already monument to a falling apart
a crowd never clusters to supplicate
while this earthquake of youngblood
hands dismember spit weary walls

What took months a brick at a time
and years of weekly atonement
merits not a single sideglance

No slide trombone tailgaters
make it to the downfall of seizures
overtaken by a binge of shudders
freeing its graying dust

Intolerant of rococo arches
outlasting architects of another world
ancestor lifewish arises
from mother lode tremors

A door that once answered on hinges
newcoming voices with emptiness
in echoes and echoes alone
is without windows as witness
to stammers that vacated
in liturgical solo

No longer sealed in by a vaulted roof
the sleekness of spirits
stretches toward out of focus stars
to fingerpop in cadence to light years

Favoring timbales and tambourines
a tamale choir on the corner
shouts its own jerico of changes

SMELT RUN

Ripening river
of tangled, laughing hair,
meandrous along curvatures
of face, to waist, to thigh--
tosses long plaited strands
ornamented in hiauqua.

Sun-scales surge
through her hairnet rippling,
sequined ribbons
for sheer water waves.

CARL WOODS

THE POWER

Out of this room

where gray socks snake across

the mouse-color rug to the I Ching

I launch pages of song

to unmet friends in Missouri and Florida

From a desktop

pencils and magazines slide off

I send serenades to unknown lovers in Boston Seattle Chicago

Strangers are humming my elegies in larger rooms

in Alabama and Texas

My townsmen here would never believe

that celebrations they hinted

sing in the hills of Pikeville Kentucky

PROBLEMS IN SPACE

We were back among the proto-stars in M8 Sagittarius watching the universe's expansion. "Look," I said. "It is expanding at the same speed in all directions."

Eustachia wouldn't believe me until I showed her the computer tapes.

"Well?" I said.

"But this isn't the way it was supposed to be," she said.

"I know."

"Why is it left to us to destroy these constants?"

I couldn't begin to answer her.

*

I went to see Ylem in Triangulum who gave me a cup of tea and said, "Let us have no more of this that and the other."

I watched her chest reflect the nearby spiral galaxy's colors and fluctuations.

"A thin slab of this disk's central plane?" she offered, but I politely declined. E. would have eaten it if she had been here, I thought.

"I am troubled," I said.

She leaned back on her white iron chair and spread her legs out as long as supergiants. "About?" she asked.

"The imminent heat death of the universe, Eustachia, the disappearing constants . . ." I couldn't go on. My body and brain were exhausted.

"We cannot rule out completely the loss of all physical laws," she said, then put me to sleep on the spiral's inner arm.

*

The galaxies continued their recession and E. and I our futile attempt to catch up to them, chasing the galactic trails through space like lost children. Our observations had led us wrong before but we were hopeful our mistakes were now behind us.

"The possibility of repulsion between distant objects in the universe has a magnitude known only to us. The cause some argue that the observed shifts were related to the Palomar Contract, the primeval explosion, can be found in the spectra of quasi-galaxies."

"You are useless," Eustachia said.

Outside the window bright planetoids shaped like eggs circled the stellar mountains.

*

What we learned from the stellar spectra:

The prime lending rate
Collisional broadening
The photosphere's depth
The reversing layer

Literal sense
Color temperature
Excitation temperature
Effective temperature
The Zeeman effect

*

"In 1863 the Jesuit astronomer Angela Secchi classified stars into four groups according to the general arrangement of the dark lines in their spectra. Secchi's scheme . . . " I couldn't read any further.

Eustachia stood over my left shoulder and said, "We need only observe the patterns of the lines absorbed in the spectra of sound."

"You are lying," I replied and slammed shut the book.

*

I watched from the panoramic window the graceful oscillations of the waves.

Fluid forms, I thought.

Afloat in the seas of the veil nebula.

*

Then there was a knock on the door. Two men in yellow coats and brown hats holding between them the battery of an old ship. They asked for help and we gave them tea and set them up with a room near the hull.

E.'s gryphon didn't like their smell.

"What are we to do?" I asked.

"Assist them in their repairs and put them on their way," she said.

"But their battery is beyond repair."

I let them listen to my music for an hour more and then requested that they leave.

"We thank you," they said, "we thank you. The outer rim of that approaching nebula will be fine."

I opened the door and shoved them out to their deaths.

*

Double, triple, quadruple galaxies crunched up all around us.

"Eustachia, we are waltzing and wandering and wondering through regions we know nothing about."

"Look," she said turning her back to me and staring out the window. "The cluster Comas from the constellation Coma Berenius."

*

Later that week I saw her raise in her hands a tower of negative ions.

I REMEMBER MY GRANDFATHER'S CHICKENS

Fluffy white specks
coming up the path from the shed
in my memory,
And all the while, me,
rocking easy on the hotel porch
feeling the creaking of wood on wood,
wondering...

DAWN

The spaces
between clumps of pale birch
are thick
with grey.
On the wet grasses
white air
sits
like soft smoke.
Clouds drift apart
bursting spots of blue.
The sun's narrow arc
greeted the leaves
with lime shadows.

WONDER IF I COULD FEEL SO GOOD

the day would come out honey and gravy
in air so brisk it's brittle
flashing up the nostrils.

Wonder

if I should feel so good again
the whole day would shimmer with excited talk
that rang against city concrete.

Never did anything

in order--I finished college late
getting my thoughts straight
from a bottle of Loxitane.
Brain fog logged some miles in me--
little refrain I got back in Pa.
where suicidal impulses don't go away.
Full of brain char--little coals down in mind
where I bind up my fantasies
like humming dagger tailed bees.
The nasty pill bottle, the throttle
on the brain--some drug that stopped
everything I've been and left me nothing
but a hard cold push through blue space
I can't erase by writing on it.

Oct. 1977

A DAY SAVED BY LANDSCAPE

Dotted with people sometimes.

Green hackled pines and big leaved oaks surround me
on the gritty sand where the old water taps
waiting for the Indians--

or what--

the Mastodons, and the clay is up that a way
with the oak and hickory climax forest.

I watch the beach
where modern waves tap through highways.

Beach, beach, good beach crunchy with shells
and little brain corals.

Slide on peat veins
where the ocean cut the swamp back to watch
a Maine biochemist analyze the water,
chlorines oozing from the oceans up rivers and creeks
by beach communities weatered by sand dunes
sawing against the wood.

And real life at the end
of Holden Island where Lockwood Folly River floats
on salt--the Highway Department buried the peat bed
which used to slip like shit between my toes
when everything was better.

I would lie facing ocean
in the exact split of sky, water, and sand,
with my delicate skin charred red.

Each time at night
waves bring something new to me I find in daylight.
Another day saved by the curl of a wave, I think
when I remember the ocean has no brink.

May 17, 1978

MEMORIES WON'T BUY YOU SOUP

Memories won't fill your day
full of stolen recovered jewels
damp from Fairystone Lake water and so luscious
you could roll in them in memory
of pine wood rooms. You remember
leaving budding trees and spring
to drive North into scurrying snow.
No, memories won't buy you soup,
not the hot chunky kind with cornbread
forbidden by the diet now; and
memories won't tie your shoes in the morning
when February's strict ice
holds the car back a little.
Memories won't spring that spring
back over you to make other decisions
like splicing a film to stay instead of go.
There's no back back there in the time track
where even the ground is less salty
and the ocean more so after rain.
Soft country places harden slightly
or shift before your less innocent eyes.
No, memories won't buy you anything--
even back there it will be the next place.

February 11, 1978

To Bill Berkson

Somehow you've become this thing in my mind--
male, but not "available,"
and a critic that edges me on through what is not
just another usual gloomy day,
but a set of days that look like nothing.
You write and the day becomes a little less ragged,
spruces up around the typewriter where I think of you
with my fingers moving something back in the slack brain.
You make me feel I have life beyond the present episode
where I can sit with you and your wife in a quiet house
after supper and watch the earth ease
through another mind healing California sunset--
time moves on my side.

Feb. 22, 1977, Dec. 17, 1978

EMILY D.

When will I be interested in Emmie D again--
Emmie D.--my name for the woman
who barely published, but published well.
Emmie D. heroic word spurter, reconnoiterer
of consonants and dissonance and hymn rhymes
slewed around a corner.

She was snaky--
spinning her words down what looked like a real path--
only not on dirt, but on verbal burble--
fabulous normal words vacant for just a second
of anything but wordness--

then the crafty frame caught
each little robin just right with its granite lip
and a fly's buzz hung in a window pane.
Emmie D--what a surprise you were sitting out the Civil War
("The man thought we were an aquarium")
back in the 19th Century.

Feb. 3, 1977

WENDY WOOD

o so to-

gether when at
first you meet
even get to
know her you'd
never know she
breaks like
a string of pearls
cov-
ers herself in
sea water in-
to sky you see
no breaks in her
smooth white
surface then those beads
start rolling down
floor under door you
just closed. can't be-
lieve it's her she is
o so to-
gether/ long cool gait,
ballet legs
smooth white
surface you never
thought she was beyond clouds she
couldn't touch with just her
fingers (but she is)
o so smooth white body
smooth white mind as
smooth as pearl you thought as hard
as pearl
forget she lives on
thin string

she-leaves

she can just pick up & leave
anytime she wants she can just
pick up & leave & leave pieces
of something everywhere/in ohio
she left a man in ohio in boston
she left another & another in
chicago & it's not always men sometimes it's her
self in manhattan she leaves her
self on corners in the strangest places
she left a shoe & a poem in nevada one
time she left a note on a bed alot of
times she don't look back she knows that's
nowhere & likes where she's at when she's
there & loves to look at what
lies ahead if it's a man or
someplace else she
wrote this poem in the middle of a street in
soho while rearranging her wings while
planning on picking up &
leaving it's always like

fall for her

between us

for valery

hairless snatch and flat chest at
twelve years old fresh bunch of
schoolgirls pajama all night
long red pop spin-the-bottle strip
tease kneesocks nightgowns down to
barenakedness...

ginny never played
had the beginnings of what we hadn't
started yet but told true story stories
and we loved her for it...

nights when linda
and i played kleenex stuffed in
wrangler bluejeans in her
mother's bra...

movie star kissing taking turns at
being boy when "hot time summer in the
city" was on her recordplayer we did
go-go on the kitchen table...

eleven years later,

she spends the night
red wine spinning head bed giggling our
breasts between us like a

crowd of people

i never knew it was you

never knew it was you. you came in so
quiet. so slow. and o so river water
smooth, chagall blues you came in an
already crowded heart made room as if
you'd lived there a long time. no one
noticed it was snowing outside you wore
no shoes. wrote songs near a window not
even when you moved a piano in did i
know it was you never knew you came in
knew whose music ran thru my bones over
my skin you grew like ivy on a stone
wall, tiny flowers bloomed where
rings were worn your lips like
light rain there was a
garden in my thighs one morning i
still didn't know it was you
you came in so quiet as if
you'd lived there a long time. then that
night alone with only my heart a
smoke-filled room a bad party, loud and
people leaving, doors slamming, thoughts
crowding the bed i saw you,
near a window, playing a
piano, as if you'd lived there a
long time and all this time i never knew it was
you never knew it was you

NORMA SMITH

1. FATHER

When my mother died, immediately I invited my father to come and travel with me. It was not that I felt sorry for him, but I had determined long before that this was what I would do. I had motives. I was grateful. Respectful, really, that they had taken care of me well into my own adulthood when I had needed help. This was what had made me decide to support them at a time like this. Further, there was much I wanted to know from my father, about myself. We were like in many ways, and I wanted to know just how many ways, and which they were. Beyond that, it was to be a sort of kind revenge. We would travel on my terms (I had no doubt that he would be helpless at my mother's death); we would go where I was already going. He spoke no languages but the one he was born with and the one he had learned to speak so well in school and later. We would be equals now, I the adult, he the child.

2. MOTHER

When my old father died, finally, immediately I asked my mother to live with me, to travel with me. I suspected that she would resist. Enough years living in a house she was to nurture. Why shouldn't she now have her own house. She had lived in her own mother's house for several years after she was married, and then her mother had come to live with her after her father had died. When finally, with much support from her analyst, she had invited her mother to move out of the house, to an apartment, my mother was faced within a month with her own mother's death. The years after that were devoted to my father, and to the children.

But I wanted now to try to make my mother comfortable, as she had tried for me. It needn't take up all my life, need it? I did not want my mother to live her last years with her deepest expectations fulfilled: half-ignored by her children. I wanted to prove something. Not once, but continuously. That life can give back what one asks of it, no matter how clumsily one has asked.

SPRINGTIME IN CITHAERA

A Novel on One Page

That fall and all the winter and well into the spring I was in love with a hopelessness that is common to women in love with married men and to young boys with beautiful mothers. My mother was beautiful, and she was in love with a married man.

How we lived through those nine months is no miracle. We were both simply and helplessly in love. Now, incest is a pretty thing if it is left be; and we did try, at her insistence, to leave each other alone to a large degree during that time. Furthermore, the man she was in love with, who was nearly old enough to be her father, was still in love with his mother. This kept him quite youthful, and he was in many ways like a son to my mother. In just so many ways, he and I were brothers.

We were not all of us blind to the various possibilities of this complex relation. At least not all at the same time. We grew to hate each other, two at a time, until, near the end of May, the affair exploded and collapsed in the deepest and most distinguished kind of misunderstanding imaginable, exquisitely simple in its solution. From our point of view, the triangle split again into a dim point and a straight line.

Speaking for my mother and me, we sometimes miss the point. But our life is much simpler now, by one dimension, and our love is easier, with no corners to take it around. Finally, my mother never looks toward or back, with me at her side constantly, in full possession of all her senses.

NOTE

That's quite a note, I said,
I tried to play on his sympathies.

ROBERT SCOTELLARO

end of the trail

the trail grows cold
& we are staring up
at this king kong of
a wall
that isn't a wall at
all but is merely
scribbled on our eyes

riding herd on the
zombies that roam the
silent fields between
sharp words

& at this point it
isn't even a matter
of principles
of issues
at this point it is
just a matter of mo-
mentum
or merely watching
the movie
of guns fired & birds
tearing for the sky

our hearts blowing
across the screen like
tumbleweed.

JARED SMITH

Elegy To A Beetfield

In the land of vegetables

there is no language.

Leaves grow independently

heaving away at the small flecks of mica

which cover their beginnings.

An indistinct form waters fire-hydrants and wags its tail --

changing its name

until it becomes the quiet man watching it from behind his

automobile window stopped at trafficlights along countless

dusty corners.

It brings slippers, old newspapers, and love to skeletons which

rattle with despair and frustration

and do nothing.

It watches honestly dishonest politicians on television screens

swigging beer from a can and trying to follow baseball scorecards

while the designated hitters are appointed

to knock the balls off any fan who will not be whitewashed

and wonders why the mercury rushing to its brain through canning

processes from numerous industries

does not rattle as loudly as the other silver it is accustomed to

and assumes it is because it is not as important.

Out of all this

he came to develop many thinking styles

all of which were valid to degree.

Sometimes on a dark night when the howling of the wind across the boards of his house caused the outside world to almost appear to take on the aspects of his most inner and secret consciousness, thereby causing a strange state of harmony between himself and all of creation, his thoughts grew elongated into patterns similar to but not identical with those of the great novelist, Henry James.

Other times he took walks with his girlfriend. They always wound their way down to the dockside. The nights were hot. The two of them would drink cheap beer. They would talk of death and have affairs. They compared Hemmingway to the moon over the water.

Puttering among the plastic bottles and scraps of paper theories grew haphazardly, but making almost-sense, and it is discovered that

Europe = the masses x civilization²,

the meaning of which is relative and inconclusive to any time - - meaning basically that nothing really moves anywhere when taken with everything

and it is almost discovered that it also holds for the United States of (not quite Africa), but unfortunately not quite.

And even each of all the people

each in all of his three lives

each of which should not be given to a dog

restrains himself from not shouting out why "not quite"

from the dancing of angry over the tops of old greyhound buses

but it's just as well

because they would not be heard or listened to

anyway

probably,

as they attempt to lay out the miles between California

and the Redwood Forests

or Corpus Christi and the Gulf stream Waters

where this land was made...well

while mad shapes dash screaming among the wheels

carrying old slippers and new ceramic teeth so that life will

not be too hard to chew

and be worth living afterall;

and there will be no struggle for the exists,

and only the fat survive.

And in the land of vegetables

all things that run are to be envied

and are the enemy

and are, potentially, the enema of the people,

but will in most cases disappear on paper rafts into the curse

of time

speaking of there being no time, and all things being relative.

And in the cultures they leave behind them

there will continue to be inlaws and outlaws

and a myriad of criminals too timid to steal even for their own

survival.

And at the very least there will be a plot of beet-greens

growing in the country.

i step-dive in a growing tree

tarantula spine zipper trill

fogcat censate asteroid of

must tendril dentist wristlace

plastic fire

umbrella molten skinpull/pluck

as if in a closet

those 5 hours non-existent

frozen clone lampstand tongue moist

stickpin

to unconvince

oatmeal w/out bowls

those eys texture captivation

riff-wrath camelot crossing statelines

hot pizza analogue

curveballs of cow

a city of whitewalls:

rough hewn frij-doors

slimy pet taboo

where flesh-covered phonebooths

cracking under pressure

seraphic choirs of ants

indicators blue thread of striped inverse dimunition blacklegged
heat-pistol

swaying sax stammer

city of whitewalls

jungle is skyscraper

the 1st slaveship of space

ankles lashed w/phonecord

chlorophyll sniffing the half-empty beercans

Poem for the end of illness

Four o'clock
in the afternoon again

Desperate foghorn calls
resound off buildings
that front the river
muffled by thickening snowfall

I've had my death-sleep
only to discover
myself reflecting about you
some place out there

From the apartment below
sounds of classical music
on the radio

It is so quiet
only the radiator hisses
sporadically
heat starting up against winter

Ten days of sickness
inhabiting this bed
this room which has become
some strange universe

of narrative dreams
& books & tea &
confessional letters & half-
formed poems
& telephone calls & drowsiness

& staring out the window
across the narrow street
to where
on the front of a brownstone
was sculpted
one hundred years ago

a helmeted warrior's
smiling face

Morning song

Your own still
sleeping face
reflected in the dusty window
opposite
rocks from side to side

These hours
this darkness is the grey time
of others

I remember her stunned
too often slapped
across the face
she is also invisible
as those inhabiting
some vanished world

Come closer
a membrane separates us
miraculously nothing

At this place serenity
is shaken

until it falls to the ground
gripped by a sense of seeing

Escapist

This road
has in common with all
convergence
to a point
receding
as I drive nearer
seeking leaving
the image of my

grandmother
arthritic in her chair
two months older
than last time
slouched in her chair
aware it is Monday

She said some people
at the Home
don't even know
what time it is

She said as a boy
I used to climb trees
and steal nickels
from my brother
and that when I was born
my hair was white

AFTER HEARING GARY SNYDER READ

When the party ends
Gary asks: Is there
a bar near here?"
stubbing out a cigarette.

At least fifteen poems
were about ecology.

We drink Schmidt's in cans.

When Gary is asked
if he resembles Robinson Jeffers,
he pauses, thinks.
"I'm not as crabby."

I'm the only one who laughs.

Back at our motel
the bar has
five times as many people
as there were
at the poetry reading.
It's half-price night.

Kit and I decide
to go to bed
without a drink.

Brushing our teeth
she says I shouldn't
let the water run.
"Gary wouldn't like it."

"What kind of party
runs out of beer?"

Where oh where is
the simple life?

THE NAP

I never could
sleep in the afternoon
until we met.
Naps were for old people.
I knew.
You were naked
in the kitchen this morning
when you fed our daughter,
and she reached up,
touching your pubic hair.
I never saw her smile so.
Lying next to you now
I smile too.

Drama

All this learning
is getting boring,

the animals claimed.
Word after word,

sentence after sentence,
with no build-up,

no drama, no climax,
no connections.

Simply insights
standing by themselves.

The shepherd said,
Dramatic action

is illusion. We live
and learn by impulse:

flash and fantasy
expressed sporadically.

Behavior

The animals were bothered.
Our bodies keep working

without the same feelings
that tie us down and confuse,

they pondered. There is
no desire at the core.

Corpuscle and muscle,
vein, retina and bronchus,

all coordinate their work
without flaw or remembrance.

The shepherd commented,
Galactic miracles fill the cells.

Planets and stars also
coordinate their work.

On the highest level,
Nobody wonders.

Harmony

The universe is perfection
since it holds together nicely,

claimed an animal in the herd.
The shepherd overheard:

Perfection indicates the existence
of imperfection. There is no strength

in wholeness, no integral differences that hold.
There is no harmony without notes.

Is pain perfection? Or disease?
When the raptor swoops, who is pleased?

And who isn't? Life
is beyond the coverage of policies.

Beyond perfection. Beyond harmony.
Nobody has, or needs, the courage to be.

CAROL RUBENSTEIN

NO BLAME

Your face as in a spyglass
magnified as flesh and
spirit magnify --
held close
conjoined
in one human
form to love --
is far

My yellow frisbee
returns to me
drops short of you

The wind is against me
and us

THE HEAD

Dick's hothead wrought up his fanatic pandemonium
With bated breath in a dither all agog he carries
Or sweeps Jane off her thrilled feet

Inflamed with startle shock stagger
She high pressures him with provocation
Into rabid fervid swelling

Boiling over
Warm the blood
Awake evoke
Touch a chord

Jane's rising to fever heat stirred up given a fillip
She ready to burst foments his beside himself

Out of his mind turbulence losing his head
Jane lost her head too.

Could have been Phoenix

Maybe the next line has concealed in it
Hidden the roc once a ledge was found
This line has concealed in it
The 4th doesn't and never will
Some might saywrite the 2nd line comes
Close enough with its hidden
So what follows is not concealed
But in a sense superfluous
However the first line has not concealed
The fact that the word is concealed
Maybe the last line had concealed in it
So far 6 lines have concealed

7

In the cryptic 2nd line what is the secret?
Sounds like the roc wants a ledge
But concealed is the myth of the roc
What the incognito bird wants is camouflage?
Has this drawn the veil or curtain?
It is said masquerade has concealed
The last line saidwrote that
Its no.? Who cares
Maybe behind the scenes on the sly

FOR YOU

You Begged Pardon

You must make sackcloth and ashes amends. You scapegoat!
Wipe off old scores, recant, make matters up to.
For eating crow or humble pie
Or your own sacrificial lamb words
Is just a burnt offering that falls on your knees in apologetic
fasting.

You Wasted

Ravaged knock down blow that crushed havoc into perdition crash,
You trampled under foot extinguished breaking up.
Battered, torn to pieces, cut to ribbons, picked to shreds,
The incendiary dissolution you had pulled down,
Mowed down, beat down, blotted out, sealed the doom of,
Crumbled to dust, went to wrack and ruin.

Your Suffering

Made the blood curdle when it turned the stomach.
Broken on the wheel, throbbing pangs twinging and twitching,
Tormented with soreness in the depth of misery and hapless intoler-
ables,
You're enough to drive yourself spasm mad with cramps of anguished
agony.

The Contempt For You

Looking down one's scornful nose,
Turning a cold shoulder insolently,
Sneering in despisal,
Steering clear of arrogantly
The mockery of you is cynical, haughty and derisive.
You get given the go by; out in the cold; brushed off.

Failure

No go you missed the bus and the mark, the boat, your aim.
Not even to first base in your abortive fiasco wrong step downfall.
You wild-goose chased the losing game.
You flop dud has-been. You washed out!

STEPHEN PAUL MILLER

from LIVING WITH YOU IS A COMMUNITY,
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A Springtime Presentation

What do you say to a hijacker?

"I like the way you play your instrument?"

Or, Kenny suggests, "What do you call that thing?"

Doesn't New York make you a little sad

The way a gun is useless when it's art

Or a whistle given to every citizen over

65 to stop crime?

It's so expensive to marry for money,

You give up such a homelessness.

Jackson

These are small poems, that's what they are.

We're on the wrong side of the museum.

We have to walk a U-turn down Fifth Avenue, Oh Boy!

Last time Bob Dunham walked down Fifth Avenue he

met Jill Kroesen!

Careen

Knowing what you want before you look at the menu,
Who wants to talk about that?
It reminds me of what Pooh said about ideas:
"They only take an instant."
Of course she said that after lying in the hospital for six hours
under mild anesthesia
So of course she contradicted me when I said accomplishing a
minuscule task had just made me happy
Because she felt it wasn't the tiny task that lifted my spirits
so much as the small input had ignited or met a convulsion from
within.
After successfully occupying herself for that many dead hours
emotions seemed more plausibly expressed
as "output" than "input."
Talking about what things remind me of is not talking about
things (e.g., the incident of the menu) but I usually only
talk about things because they remind me of something
Which isn't that bad, it seems the basis of pure description.
I suppose you can call a color light brownish-gray, the color
of mouse fur, or question mentioning it,
But most effectively, a phrase like "the color of a cookie"
calls upon the mind to color the thought,
Making it the spectator's thought as he painlessly works with
you.
And isn't the best poetry like that?
Drawing ideas, wisdom, speech patterns, and even modes of
behavior out of the most unlikely people.

Nuts

It ended in neutrality.

Spring is here and it has the
taste of summer.

Let's walk it out.

We might end up there.

"There's a Baba-lover that works there
but she's not upper-crust.

I really go for that upper-
crust illusion, says Bob
Dunham.

All of a sudden, I'm miserable.

THE PICKLE JAR

I'm moving
Into a pickle jar
In the middle
Of a dessert,
Bearing myself of all
Worldly goods
Plus all clever
And accomodating
Expressions.

Then
I'll rest my brain
And wait
In curious wonder
To see who will come
And visit me
Under
Such terrible conditions.

Could be
A jolly jay bird,
Perhaps the wise owl,
Or a king in all
His pomp,
Maybe magic.

In venturing
A guess
As to who
Would come so far;
 It will be he
 Who cares of my heart
 And not
 My pickle jar.

THE PATHETIC MAN?

Hugging the perimeter
Of justice
Dodging shots

 Short people jut:
 Target aces,

Only seeming victorious

 Draining his leisure
 Waiting in line,

Thinking the grass

Is a wonderful

Rag,

 Returning
 Excess change,

Praising God

Before U.F.O.'s

Blow Him away

 And

Clipping his toenails

Over the garbage can.

FRANCE

Take wing

Light up the sky. Subtly.

Step into

a mist of

Fire

Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined
flight from earth Is Dangerous to Your Health.

SLEEP

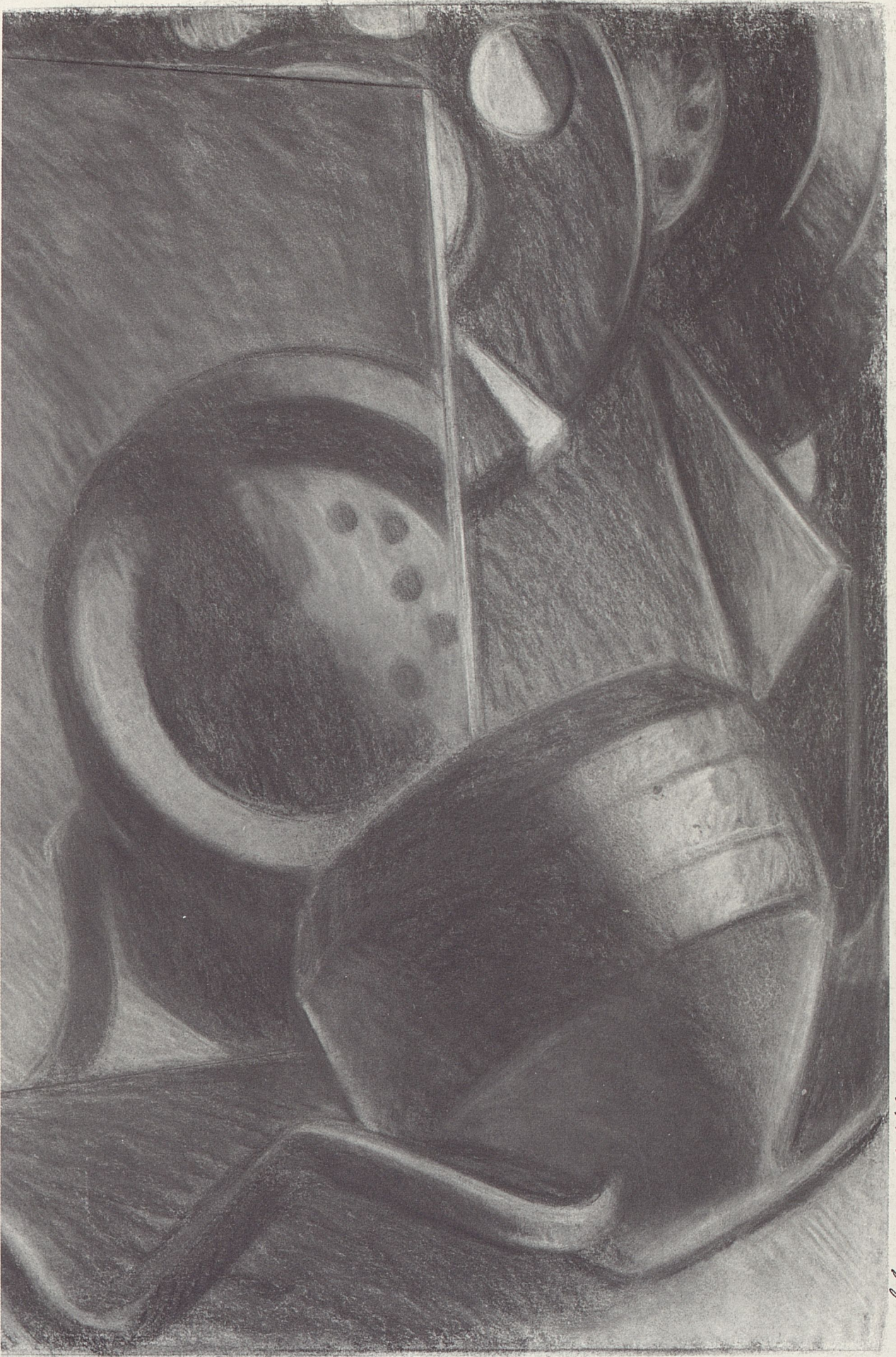
AMONG FRIENDS...

MARBLEIZED

One foot in paradise.

NOW

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MADISON



M. M. M. M.