



Editors' Note

Labryinth has the advantage of drawing from remarkably creative and prolific student writers and artists. Regretfully, the editors must make decisions to eliminate many of our submissions due to budget constraints. We appreciate all of the interest expressed by the student body and wish to thank the art and English departments for their continuing support!

LABYRINTH

T.C. Williams High School



1989

Vol. 24

Labyrinth Staff 1989

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Table of Contents

Prose

| | Author | Page |
|-------------------------|----------------------|------|
| My Last Wishes | Dianiacia Boyd | 5 |
| Sunday Morning | Frances Tate | 12 |
| Dupont Circle | | |
| Unwanted World | Robert Fike | 21 |
| The Popular Girl | Brian James | 23 |
| The Devil Politic | Edward Wong | 27 |
| The Passage | Adam Shaw | 31 |

Poetry

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Internal Enemy | Mike Davis | 4 |
| Sweet Tones .. | Somber Tones .. | Brian James .. 6 |
| Torn | Angela Chen | 8 |
| Open Your Eyes | Terri Cooper | 9 |
| Religious Conversion ... | Albert J. Kukbán ... | 10 |
| She | Louisa Santarelli | 17 |
| Perch | Heather Weyers | 18 |
| To Fly | Evan Smith | 19 |
| Les Cadeaux | Heather Kula | 20 |
| Beau Monde | La Sean Pickney | 25 |
| The Curtain Falls | Holly Cooper | 30 |

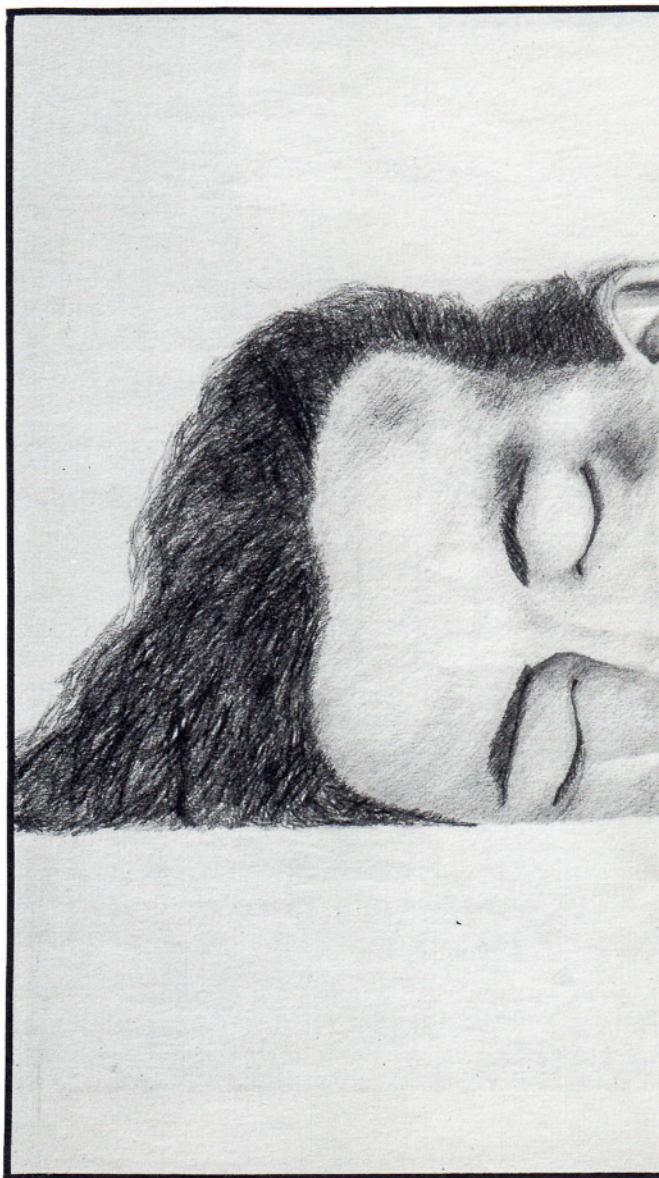
Art

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|----|
| Darcio Arruda | photograph | 2 |
| Jennifer Kellogg | charcoal | 4 |
| Heather Hutchison | photograph | 8 |
| Darcio Arruda | photograph | 8 |
| Bahafe Rashidi | charcoal | 10 |
| Dawne Langford | photograph | 12 |
| Darcio Arruda | photograph | 13 |
| Allen Oliver | technical drawing | 14 |
| Holly Cooper | photograph | 14 |
| John Smith | painting | 16 |
| Hoang Nguyen | pencil drawing | 18 |
| Dawne Langford | photograph | 19 |
| John Smith | pencil | 20 |
| Marnie Settle | photograph | 21 |
| Darcio Arruda | photograph | 22 |
| Dustin Lucach | scratchboard | 23 |
| Margaret Quinn | photograph | 24 |
| John Smith | pencil drawing | 26 |
| Darcio Arruda | photograph | 28 |
| Angela Chen | scratchboard | 29 |
| John Smith | pen and pencil | 31 |
| Jennifer Kellogg | pencil | 32 |

Internal Enemy

I am your worst nightmare
I live within your flesh
I remain content
While you suffer
Whatever you eat
I eat
I am a part of you now
I laugh at your pain
Since there's not a damn thing you can do
Medicines and lasers attack me
Yet I survive, even more determined
I eat and rip
Sharp impulses sear your nerves
I smile with pleasure
As your counter-attack is diminishing
What's the matter?
Can't take the battle?
I feast savagely
Upon your weakening flesh
Tissue ripped from the bones
More internal bleeding
Isn't this a joy?
Your heart just stopped beating
My task is complete
No need to leave my calling card
For my name is well-known
Cancer is my title-
Ever heard of me?

Mike Davis

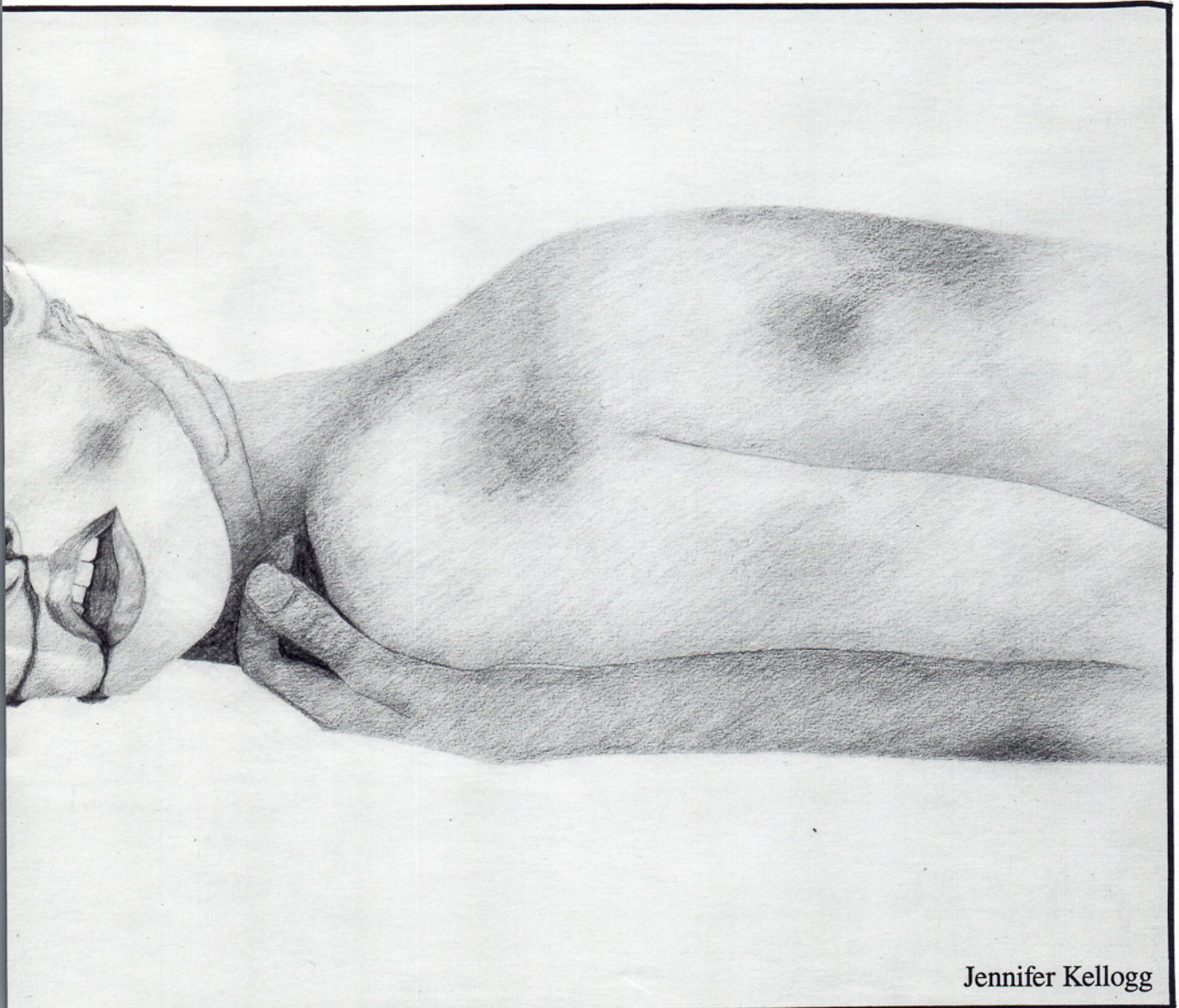


My Last Wishes

Today I'm dead, and yes it was by my choice. I want to be somewhere at peace, because the people in this world ain't up to no good. I didn't know I had so many so-called friends. Yesterday, I was alive, and no one to cry for me now, because you ain't shed a tear on me when I was livin'. Don't bring me flowers and put 'em on my grave. You never once gave me a flower when I had life. Don't act as if you're sad, and you care, 'cuz you never bothered to tell me that when I was alive. I

don't want you to speak good of me now. You spent all my life speakin' bad of me. Don't say you'll miss me—you had 17 years to spend time with me. I don't want you to shake your head where I lay, 'cause I'm at peace. You never said a kind word to me or acted like you cared, before I died. And I don't need you to do it now. I already got your last respects, or should I say wishes, before I died, and that's why I'm gone. So why are you here now?

Dianiacia Boyd



Jennifer Kellogg

Sweet Tones . . . Somber Tones

Sweet tones . . . somber tones in the night sky.
Me all alone, with this ol' horn as my ally.
Feelin' good, feelin' jazzy
playing up a storm.
People hearin' my sound, comin' in to get warm.

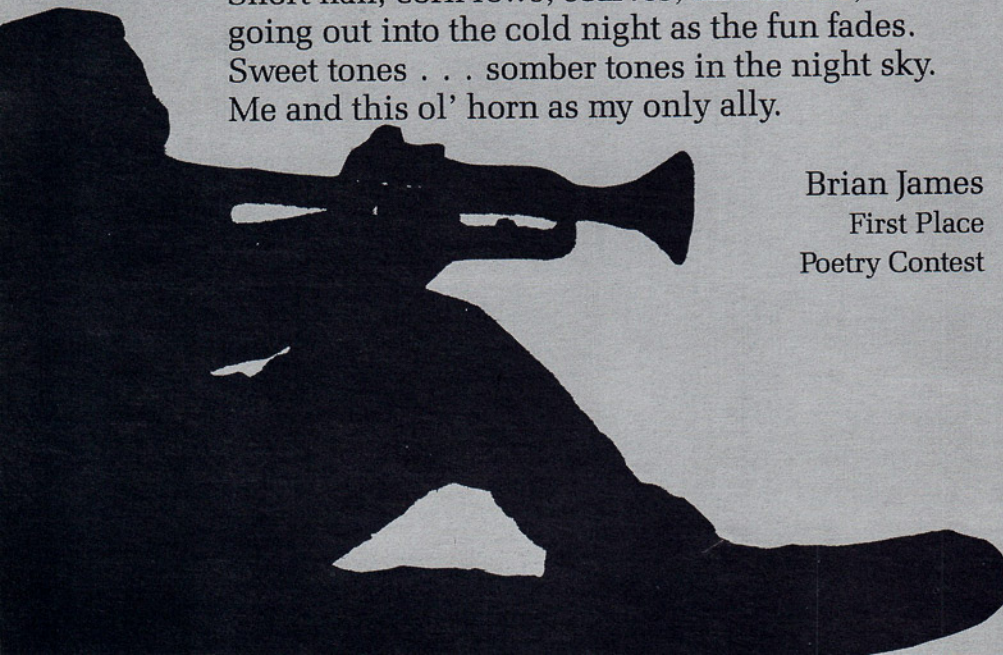
Heads swaying slowly, sorta side to side,
fingers snappin', I'm filled with pride.
Entertaining my peoples in the Chocolate City.
Got my eye on that dark skinned girl lookin' pretty.

Fever running, running wild.
This ol' woman say, "Go, 'head, play it child."
Ain't no worry, just dancing and fun.
Wasn't nothing like this when the night begun.

Yeah . . . these my peoples jam packing the place.
I'm proud of my culture, and I'm proud of my race.
Givin' them something back for what they gave me.
Loving every minute playin' this ol' horn real jazzy.

Short hair, corn rows, scarves, and braids,
going out into the cold night as the fun fades.
Sweet tones . . . somber tones in the night sky.
Me and this ol' horn as my only ally.

Brian James
First Place
Poetry Contest





Heather Hutchison

TORN

Torn
Pain
Darkness raging red
Sharp teeth of that Satan shark
Won't let go.
Barbed fishhooks imbedded in my heart
Thorns and brambles tearing thoughts
And ancient waterdrops drip-dripping on
The same spot

Split
Paper Cut.
Sometimes the smallest loss hurts most.

Angela Chen

Dario Arruda



Open Your Eyes

*If you ever looked out on the water,
right before a storm-
You'd know it was coming.*

*If you ever looked up at the sky,
right before the morn-
You'd know it was coming.*

*If you ever looked into my eyes,
right before I cried-
You'd know it was coming.*

*Open your eyes to the world;
open them wider; day by day.
See the world as you've never seen it;
treat it as you've never treated it.
Understand it-
but not its ways.*

*The world always changes-
nothing is ever the same.
See this and know that
you must open your eyes
and be unafraid to change.*

Terri Cooper

RELIGIOUS CONVERSION (A chant for motorists)

It was a rainy Monday morning
when I drove my tiny,
compact,
otherwise bland,
and colorless
1984 Toyota Tercel
(with a tiny sunroof)
to school one day.

I zipped right down my normal route,
through Janney's lane until the light,
swing right to Quaker, down to King...

I was enjoying the ride
(rush-hour, notwithstanding)
as Credence Clearwater Revival
alternated
with Mahler's fifth
on my car stereo.

But there I was,
past Duke, by Queen
when I espied a four-by-four
(a red one, God!
"with racing stripes
and gun racks, too;
complete with hound dogs, three,
to boot).

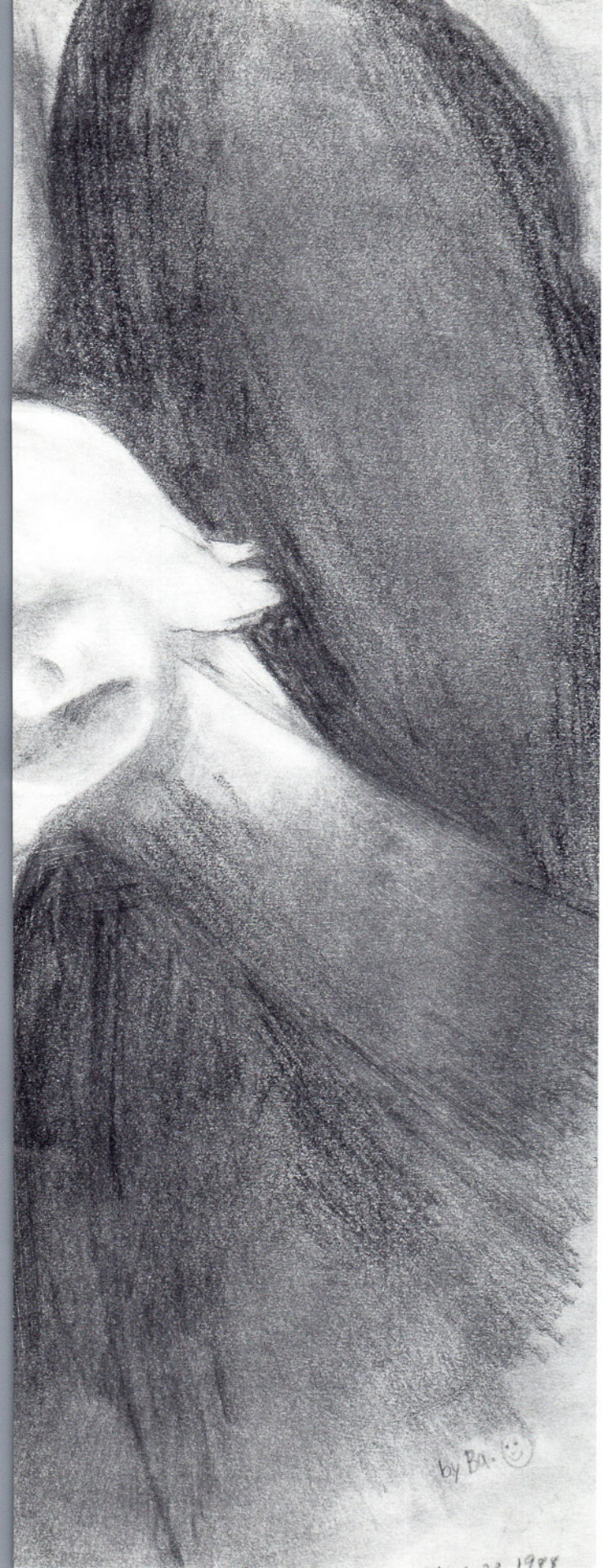
It's bumper bore a simple sign:

HONK IF YOU LOVE JESUS.

The driver of the truck looked decent enough:
a frizzly beard,
a broad cigar,
a confederate cap,
and a flannel shirt
that matched his beer-belly.



Baharé Rashidi



Seeing the sticker
and being
(technically speaking, of course)
a practicing Catholic
(who takes Communion on Sundays,
confesses on Saturdays,
eats fish on Fridays)
I wanted very much
to share
with my gun-rack-toting friend
my love for our mutual saviour.

So as we rolled on down,
down Duke, past King,
I gave this friend the longest toot
(to symbolize my flowing love
for Jesus Christ, our lord).

" For Christ's ! For Jesus' sake ! "
my horn did cry
and then I tapped a sacred beep once more
(to let him know I love him too).
My friend looked round and looked me square
(I wondered how he got so red);
I waved at him
(and he waved back)
and then he sped away.

One question, though,
before I go,
when our friend did wave
he did the most un-Christ-like thing
for why was his middle-finger extended so ?

albert j. luksan
january, 1989

by BA. ☺

Sunday Morning, DuPont Circle

Amy stepped out of the old car and onto the pavement. It gave a convulsive shudder and groaned away. Inside Dad was staring stonily ahead, Amy knew without bothering to look. He was mad, though that didn't matter now since she was free for the morning.

John was late, that much was obvious. His stocky form was nowhere to be seen. Yet, here she was standing at the metro sign, just as she'd promised. They'd agreed to meet, so he could drive her to their quartet rehearsal. Dad had said he wouldn't show up, and it rather irked Amy that he should be right. Dad had an instinctive distrust of teenaged boys, and the fact that John was a senior with a driver's license didn't help matters much. But, she had been a little late too. Amy was hoping that they'd merely missed each other, and that John would be back soon.

The morning was a very gray one, miserable and drippy. Inside the traffic circle where Amy stood was a forlorn little park, utterly deserted in the drizzle. Cars sped around it, painting splashy reflections on the slippery blacktop. The circle was a busy one,

"Amy shrank back into the Metro, hoping to avoid the man by melting into the shadows."

ensconsed in the mindless din of the inner city. Every passing car seemed to be red, the color of John's car, as Amy vaguely recalled. Though none stopped. She tried to make a desperate sort of eye-contact with every dark, distant driver. However, they all had eyes for other things.

It was more wet and chilly, than cold. Amy put up her hood, the hood she'd sworn that she'd never touch. She checked her watch; for five minutes she'd been standing there. John was now ten minutes late.

People constantly seemed to be hurrying by in a steady stream. They were all talking and going somewhere. Amy felt rather foolish standing alone.

A lone telephone booth stood in the middle of the next block. Almost unconsciously, Amy dug into her pocket for a quarter. She had six dollars in there. Dad had given it to her as she'd gotten out of the car with the

prediction that she'd soon be calling, asking for his help. She remembered his icy mood, and swore that she'd walk to rehearsal, before going to him.

Even so, she was sauntering toward the phone, in spite of herself. Now she, too, began to realize her harbored doubts about John.

Amy began thinking of ways to get to rehearsal without the help of either.

A crooked, little old man was making his way down the sidewalk, curiously out of step with the rest of the passers-by. Amy shrank back into the metro, hoping to avoid the man by melting into the shadows.

Another five minutes passed, and the circle hadn't changed a bit. Its horrible sameness made Amy want to shout and cry. Only a short time ago, the morning had held such promise. Though standing there now, she was left with none other than that of dull frustration. Despite her careful plans prior, Amy had no idea about where she might go. She was thus left standing, staring blankly at the passing cars.

The old man continued to hobble back and forth, but she ignored him, until suddenly she realized that he was standing directly behind her.

"Spare change, miss?" he asked in a broken voice. He was a tiny thing, smaller than she, in fact, bent and contorted under the layers of his cloth-

ing. He wore an ancient green houndstooth jacket.

"Spare change, miss?" he repeated. "I just want a cup of coffee." Amy had heard about these people from everyone. They only wanted money for booze. It was a well known fact. She began to stammer an apology, but stopped mid-sentence.

"Yes, yes, I think I do," she said, and handed him the quarter that she had been gripping so tightly for the past ten minutes.

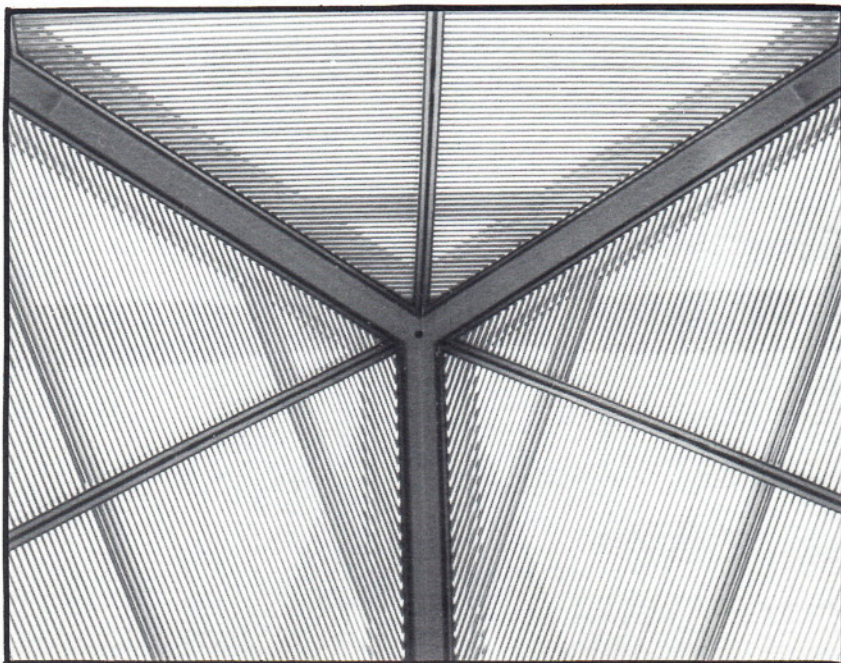
His face lit-up behind the grizzled beard.

"Why thank you. I'll just go get me some coffee, I will—coffee, you know! God bless you!" He continued to repeat this until he was some distance away, turning to shout it every few steps or so. People on the street stared at her in annoyance, and she knew that they were thinking that another dumb kid had just been bamboozled.

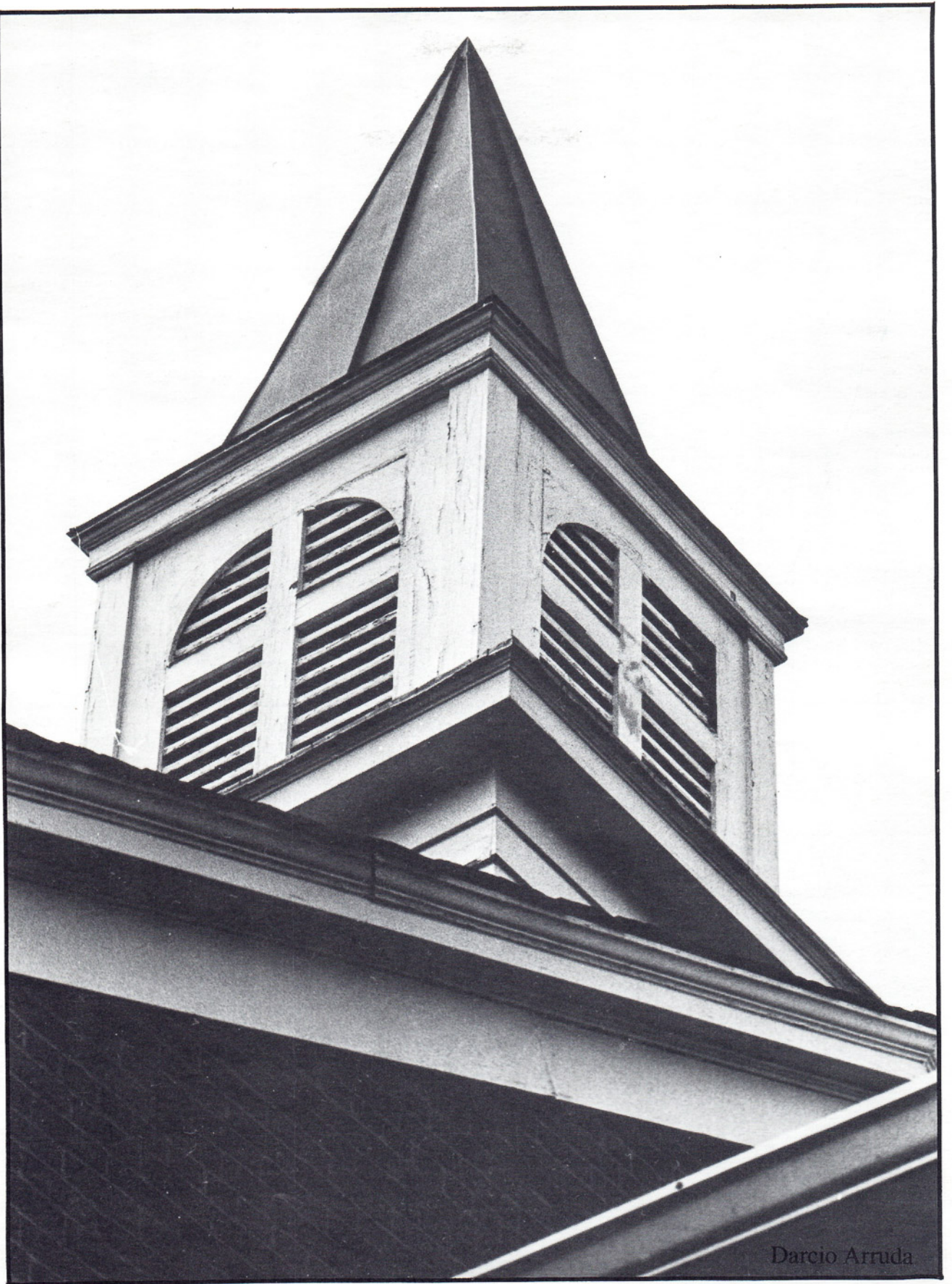
God bless you, miss!" she heard for the last time, as the man disappeared behind a traffic light. Somewhere a horn sounded, and the endless procession of red cars filed past Amy, as it had done for ages.

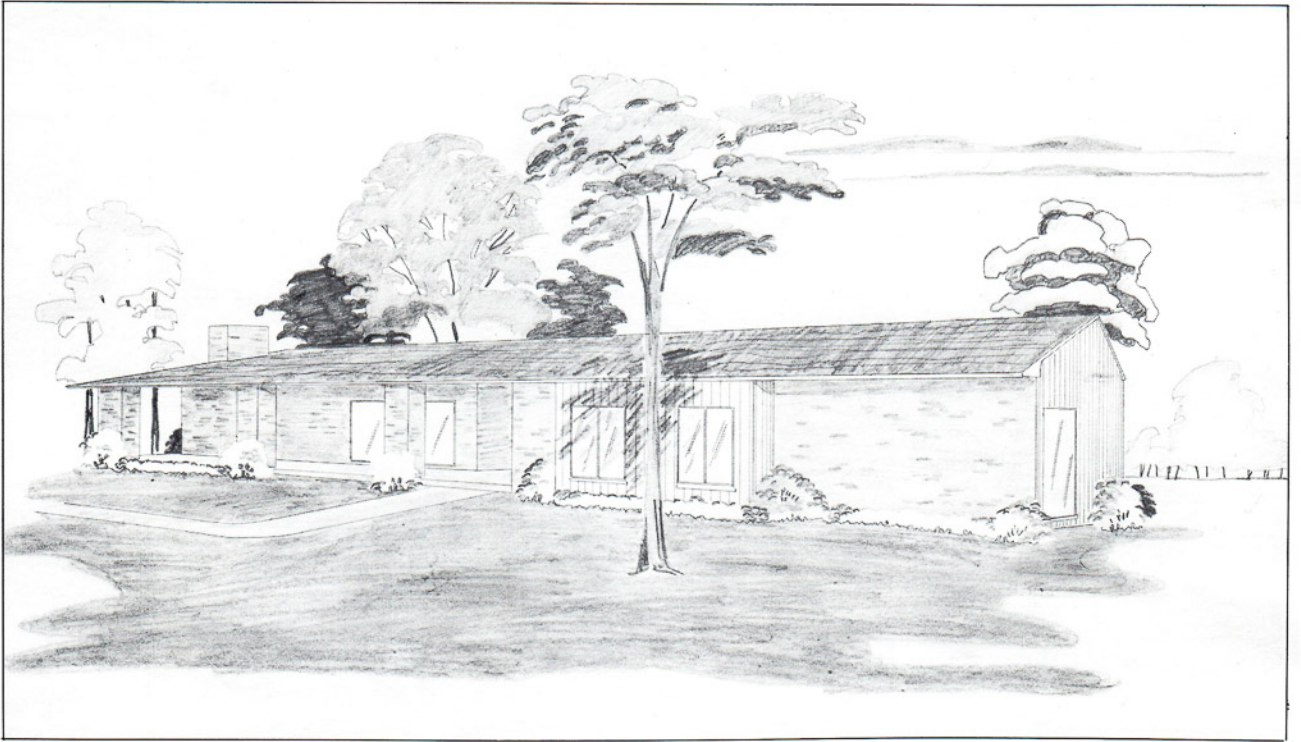
Staring at puddles in the road, she grinned, for she'd been blessed that day. ☺

Frances Tate



Dawne Langford





Allen Oliver



Whale Song

He had always wondered what came out of their mouths, what made it necessary for them to chew even when they had no food. But it did not matter to him, for their comprehension would be lost if they ever entered his world. He was so eager to leave theirs, and when backs were turned, he would run.

He made his way to the beach, the scorching sand springs to life behind his leathery heels. He leaped with the agility of a tree frog, clearing a boulder and crashing through the water's glassy surface. There, his fingers burned white as they pressed themselves deep into the rock, preventing his shoulders from being stung by salty slaps. In one swift motion he was under the cold water, his hair palpitating like the emerald sea grass tickling the bottoms of his feet. Soon, the stillness returned and the only movement was from his grey eyes scanning the ocean floor.

"A small vibration grew
in his left leg."

A small vibration grew in his left leg. He did not have to look down to know what kind of fish it was, scooting around his ankle, searching for food. He knew them all. Sizes, shapes, could easily be determined by the thumping beneath the waves. None other had felt the last convulsions of a netted fish or the high tide smacking into stone.

"As he neared the child,
he could feel a pull on his
body towards the deep."

The sun danced through the prismatic undulations, alighting upon a few small bubbles which caressed his lips and floated to freedom. A new beat slammed into his body and he bobbed to the surface, gasping. Peering down to the mouth of the cove he discovered two children, the one on the shore moving her mouth like the beak of an angered bird. The other child was swimming away, paying no attention to her. He made his way to the pair by crawling under the cover of the rocks.

Again, he dove under the waves to feel the child. He could see the little blue legs thrashing as the child moved farther out to sea, his body sinking deeper until it was just a mass of foam. The vibrations had become erratic, and the boy, without hesitation, swam to give aid.

As he neared the child he could feel a pull on his body towards the deep. He dodged the flinging limbs and pushed the child towards the surface, forcing himself in the opposite direction. The pull grew in intensity until he was sucked into the blackness.

All rhythm subsided. What he now felt was not on the exterior, but a sweet ring pouring into the void of his mind. His numbness was conquered by an all-encompassing warmth, and soft breaths entered his ears. He reached out, trying to touch what was not there, trying to gather the varying intensities around him, but they fell away into silence, returning soon after in full force. This was a beauty which surpassed light and color, intangible, but yet full of texture. The boy closed his eyes and smiled. ♡

Heather Weyers





John Smith



SHE

*In the grass the tigress lays.
Head tilted, eyes squinting with might,
patiently waiting for a stray.*

*The wind blows calmly,
clear is the day.
A few wandering clouds in sight,
eager not to stay.*

*On the horizon the scenery sways.
Bellowing puffs swirl day into night,
while still the tigress lays.*

*Golden her fleece,
turns a solemn gray.
And disappears a last beam of light,
the last of the sun's rays.*

*A scent drifts her way.
A rise in head and a mouth held tight,
she lifts herself up into night.*

*It was the strength of her way,
that so swiftly grasped with a bite,
and tore him down to the dust and away.*

Perch

My brother and I lie tossing
Caught between death and vivid imagination,
Where serenity borders madness
And time has lost its grasp.
His one eye, stormy as the evening sky,
Rolls about like a glass marble
Trying to recapture the last images
Of that wonderful wet world deep below.
But, oh, we are still swimming
In water so dark it seems red,
The same water which seeps from my throat
And softens the groaning planks below me.
I shake with a terrible palsy
The cold wind ravages my side
As my brother and I lie gasping
Dreaming our fish dreams, losing our fight.

Heather Weyers

To Fly

Oh, we've all seen the movie
a hot air balloon and
its relationship with a church steeple-
but, to fly
to be a hang glider
unrestrained from the cliffs
that launched it-
to be an ultralight
soaring in the gusts
to be a hero of the past-
all this would be truly fine
but, to really fly
to not need a pair of mylar deltas,
special sandals, or a broomstick
to choose your own path-
your own speed
your own time
to be like a bird-
but without feathers

Evan Smith



Les Cadeaux

*Elle te donné beaucoup de cadeaux,
Je t'ai donné une fleur.
Elle te donné de l'argent et de l'or,
Je t'ai donné seulement mon coeur.
Je ne t'ai pas donné de bagues,
Mais je t'ai donné des rêves de nous.
Et maintenant, je te demande-
Quelle femme t'aime le plus?*

Gifts

*She gives you many gifts,
I gave you a flower.
She gives you silver and gold,
I gave you only my heart.
I did not give you rings,
But I gave you dreams of us.*

*And now, I ask you-
Which woman loves you more?*

Heather Kula



Unwanted World

As this decade fades and we draw closer to the Second Millennium, a crisis unique in its severity has emerged to perplex yet another hapless generation. It is far more frightening than gas shortages, poor SAT performances, cholesterol, or whatever petty concern that has grasped the world's attention in the past. The latest inevitable disaster to head down the path of modern afflictions is one that will by no means be resolved through charity, and certainly not by any supposed divine intervention.

"The latest inevitable disaster to head down the path of modern afflictions is one that will by no means be resolved through charity, and certainly not by any supposed divine intervention."

It's not drugs, nor is it AIDS. It's not Japan or those over-publicized Asian Whiz Kids that our elders devilishly delight in cramming down our collective throats. It's the planet itself.

If radical improvements are not made to change the way our species behaves, the undiluted truth is that all life on earth will simply cease. It could logically become a reality in a matter of ten years. How has this occurred? Moreso, why was nothing done to prevent something that the world's leaders knew was going to occur, for such an unforgivable amount of time? The answer should be resting upon your tongue.

Money. That's all. Wrecking the world's ecosystem is profitable, especially when over 5,000,000,000 human mouths demand it. Who wants cardboard when plastic never gets soggy? Who wants to busy themselves with gardens when cheap beef raised on raped rain forest soil costs mere pennies per pound. The fast food tyrants believe a \$1.50 cheeseburger is more vital than fresh air. What about those concerned governments established to protect the livelihood of its

nation's citizens? Well, they're too busy censoring Mother Goose-so what's a tree, anyway?

In essence, that's what the youth of this world will inherit. The hypocrites (commanding us to conform so that the nation's future will remain secure) expect their children to remain passive while they toy with the earth before it collapses and the golf courses incinerate, because oops! No ozone layer! So, why should we be optimistic, if there's no hope?

"So why should we be optimistic, if there's no hope?"

Remember this: You should consider that you are actually living in what could possibly be the most aware and most informed decade in history. Compared to our parents and grandparents, we are far more educated and much more sympathetic to pertinent issues which affect us all. Fifty years ago, the thought of students organizing in vast numbers to support a supposedly "adult cause" was implausible. That's why drugs can be conquered. That's why AIDS can be cured. That's why we can prove Americans can do anything as well, and maybe even better than the Japanese.

We can save our planet from the malicious "power barons", who keep the populations soaring, the revenues growing, and the beauty of nature fading. If we learn to live with the land instead of exploiting it, the real truth is, we can survive. 🐼

Robert Fike



Marnie Settle



Darcio Arruda

The Popular Girl

As the clouds receded across the dark purple sky, the popular girl stepped out onto her lawn. She quickly checked her watch, for time is very precious to a girl who must be at the party a little late, but not past ten. Just then Thad McKans' porsche pulled up to her house, and she disappeared into the laughter of football players and cheerleaders . . . appropriately enough.

After fifteen minutes of contemplating her attitude and snobbish social set, I grabbed the keys to my Volvo, and thought I might make an appearance at this party. After all, I was well known to the popular ones, but I had never valued them much. They chose best friends as they did clothing—not by size or shape, but by looks. I

“They chose best friends as they did clothing—not by size or shape, but by looks.”

attended all their parties, but only to be entertained by their stupidity and ignorance of the real world and of what is important. The ironic thing is, that I would have given my right arm to appeal to them when I was young and naive. I found that there are at least three ways to break into their set. One way is to be where they are at sport events, parties, and establishing the right connections. Another way is to play it cool and pretend popularity doesn't matter to you. Last, but not least, if you were lucky like me, you could gain access from a brother who was an All-American football hero and who had just happened to date the head cheerleader. So my fame came as his little brother, the poet and jazz lover, the guy who cried when he saw sad movies, and also the guy who serenaded Katie Bishop on a starry night. Man, not only was I at the elite senior parties, but I was at frat parties as well. Yeah, man, I had all the answers . . . or so I thought.



Dustin Lucach

Driving out of Oak Crest to the Hills, I thought about the girl as I listened to an old Duke Ellington tune. I could always seem to write poetry about her, where she was kind to the kid nobody wanted to know. She understood me as a person and appreciated who I was. Secretly I loved her, and on some nights I'd be content thinking about her for hours in the darkness. Then my thoughts would flow to Thad McKans, the guy who was currently breaking all my brother's records both on the field and off. He only went out with the girl because he knew I loved her. One day in the locker room, he said, “So, I hear your brother is first string at State. Lucky for him I'm not there.” Then he rolled off that egotistical laugh that he had patented for himself. He may have been a good ball player, but as a human being, the guy was a real loser.

I parked the car and walked across

the lawn, noticing all the expensive cars with the foreign names. Chuck Scott, an Ivy Leaguer down on vacation, spoke. He told me that I had a rare talent, and he was the one who gave me the nickname “Words”.

“Hey Words, what's up bud, still writing stuff?”

I looked at the half-dazed drunken girl under his arm and said, “Yeah man, trying to take it as far as I can.”

Feeling a little pity for the girl, I stepped into the jam, where I was greeted by the elite and those who had reached elite status. I gave a couple of high-fives here and there, as I watched some guy trying to drink a keg in one continuous motion. He didn't quite make it. After having found out where the girl was, I danced a little to make my way to the back room where I was greeted by Thad's best friend. Obviously drunk he spoke,

“Yo Words, you been gettin' a little

too close to Thad's girl. If I see you near her again, you're totaled."

He looked at me as if he had said something intelligent. After rudely pushing me to the side, he staggered back to the party. I continued on my way to the back room. Once there, I knocked on the door. For a moment, it seemed as if all sound had come to a halt, except that of the pounding of my heart, which was due to my boyish cowardice. Yet I took another breath and knocked again. I then heard some fumbling around and a loud voice bel-
lowed,

"Go away!" It was Thad.

Though I knocked harder and harder, only to be greeted by more hostile speech. Suddenly the door flew open, and Thad's face met mine.

"Words, what in the hell are you doing?"

In the back sat the girl with her blond hair in disarray, and her eyes pleading an apology, but it wasn't enough to suppress my anger.

"Words, don't you hear me, you little fairy!" Thad persisted.

Without saying a word I extended my hand out to the girl, while fighting back my tears. His arm shot out. I felt my body fall backwards in pain, amidst Thad's ripping laughter. Wip-

"In the back sat the girl with her blond hair in disarray, and her eyes pleading an apology, but it wasn't enough to suppress my anger."

ing my mouth I tasted the saltiness of my blood, coupled with that of my fading popularity. Yet, for the first time I could've cared less about it. Instead, I shot up in an angry protestation, and leveled the all too precious Thad McKans. He dropped to the floor clutching his face, and revealing for the first time any sign of vulnerability.

I walked over to the girl and said, "Let's go."

There was only dead silence.

"Come on!" I said, still greeted by her stupor.

"What the hell is wrong with you?"

Finally she looked at me and said, "Go."

"Aren't you tired of ignoring old friends? Remember Billy Coles? Remember the day you had the flu, and he and I skipped old lady Thompson's class to take care of you? I thought you

said we were friends forever? Yet, on the first day of school in the 10th grade you made fun of him with all your so-called friends, just because Billy rode his bike to school!"

"Go away Words, leave me alone!"

"But, I . . . love you! Please don't do this to yourself!"

"Words, if you love me, get out of my life. Besides, you're not in our crowd after you hit Thad like that."

"Yeah, well good riddance to it! See you around."

I went with my better judgment, and just left her there staring at Thad. When I looked back then, I was forever changed. All her beauty, both inside and out, became greatly modified and humbled to me. She was just another popular girl—they had made her one of their own. 🐾

Brian James



Margaret Quinn

BEAU MONDE

(BEST PEOPLE)

I hear the drums
great Zulu warriors
calling me back home
my brothers and sisters
they, are best at nothing
calling me back home
why should I be best at anything
'cept for saving them

Children, children I hear your cries
and infinite hearts are beating with yours
as one . . .
watching as your hope dies
of what are you the best, my children
nothing . . .
then why should I be best at anything
'cept for loving you

Hungry hearts and stomachs abound
calling me back home
the people knowing best nothing but pain
we can't forget you are around
spirits chained and all alone
people trying only to try, and failing
ships silently sinking just for sailing
and what of my red brothers

And what of my red brothers
left landless in vast lands
of what are you the best, my warrior brothers?
The best kept secret
what now, is it that you reap from your loving land
nothing, and by whose hand?
then why should I be best of anything
'cept for helping you

Soweto brothers call me back home
for I am nothing too
nothing, in the world of best
when for so long freedom eludes all of you

Until freedom comes
I am as lowly as any
but hopeful as a new morning's sun
as my Soweto sister
as the addict child
the homeless "bum"
as a song forgot, then finally sung

We need never be best, only free
best means nothing to those who are alone, to the hungry
best is nothing as long as there are those not allowed to try
and be so
as long as there are those who mean nothing to the rest
those who are alone, lonely, oppressed

Sharpsville blood, blackfoot hills, and city slums
they, quenched my ego's thirst

and fed a smoldering fire
helping you is at what I want best to be
better than no one, mind you
simply the best I may
doing the best I can
to help others see

LaSean Pinkney

The Devil Politic



John Smith

The sun glows bright with wrathful anger in mid-afternoon, sending waves of simmering heat up from the scalding concrete of city blocks. Towering monoliths of girded steel and glass shield their inhabitants in air-conditioned art-deco offices. Washington has been crushed in the tightening clutch of the tyrant called Summer. Thirsting, the city mutters feeble cries between cracked and bleeding lips. The cries are carried off on a rare passing breeze but fall on deaf ears.

Chaos prevails as the Senate subcommittee hearings come to a welcome close after another lost day

**"Black storm clouds
gather on the horizon,
their coming heralded by
a forceful gale."**

locked in turmoil. Senator Jonathan V. Tudor strides quickly toward the Capitol entrance and waves off the waiting reporters. Camera flashes dazzle his eyes, burning monochromatic after-images of the past on the retinas. Breaking past the predatory ring of journalists, Jon reflects on his probable chances for a Republican re-election. Following his last term as Senator, he has garnered unanimous praise among all area of his constituency. After turning down a Presidential nomination, he had been selected to head the subcommittee investigating allegations that a Communist conspiracy is responsible for the bloody revolution in Peru.

In two days Congress will vote, based on the subcommittee testimonies, whether the Peruvian government will receive arms shipments from the U.S. to aid in suppressing the revolution. The daily media coverage provides an opportunity for the nation's public to see Jon's charisma, an opportunity he has used to swing public

opinion toward an overt support of the besieged government. Intelligence reports from the CIA accurately depict the daily massacre of innocents drawn into the conflict between government and citizen.

The twilight air relieves some of the tension that snaps at Jon's mind. The cooling night brings a respite from the restraints of burning daylight. (Black storm clouds gather on the horizon, their coming heralded by a forceful gale. Beyond the shadows, banners are unfurled as dark armies mobilize their supernatural forces for a triumphant night.) Summer, realizing her reign is threatened, screams in anguish at the capricious whims of Nature. Baritone thunder rolls across the rapidly darkening streets littered with debris. Jon watches fellow Congressmen flock down the Capitol steps like cattle being herded to the slaughterhouse. The entire city lies sprawled before him, skyscape dominated by the Washington Monument. In the distance, police mount a futile effort to hunt the depraved serial killer who has

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left a trail of corpses with horribly mangled throats. The city of contradictions: at once the symbol of a colossal empire's heritage and the abattoir and sanctuary for a thriving criminal class.

Jon's placid reverie is interposed by the greetings of a squat, well-dressed Hispanic. He introduces himself as Luis Pérez, the new diplomat from Peru, and grasps Jon in a handshake. In an overly eager need to be accepted by the Senator, he offers Jon a dinner invitation at

the Peruvian Embassy. Together, they walk down the steps under roiling thunderclouds. Pérez, leading Jon toward Stanton Park where the diplomat's limousine awaits, begins to babble incoherent phrases pleading Jon to obtain aid for the faltering government of Peru. Jon's thoughts run elsewhere as he crosses hectic Constitution Avenue.

**"The hunger is satiated,
the caged beast fed."**

The hunger is calling but subsides under directed restraint. All around him are frantic housewives, businessmen, and laborers stopped at traffic lights. Their lives are so mean, so little. They possess no ambition and make no attempt at breaking the mediocrity of their mundane daily routines, taking no risks. In the face of adversity, they cower in their fragile mortal shells and whine like newborn babes instead of rising up and meeting the occasion with indomitable wills. Jon can feel nothing but contempt for the ignorant and uneducated masses who come begging for him for succor to problems which they create through their own materialistic apathy. They are egoists whose petty, self-important conflicts and troubles pale next to the immense, multi-hued, fine-woven tapestry of history. What inexplicable motive or force drives him to assist humanity in climbing out of its tenebrous, self-destructive womb of barbarism?

Having crossed the park, Pérez once again irritatingly interrupts Jon's contemplation. A groomed Hispanic chauffeur lounges behind the steering wheel of a black limousine sporting diplomatic plates. Jon feels the hunger gnawing at him and turns and stares at Stanton Park. A solitary young woman walks her Scottish terrier along a tree-line path, glancing in apprehension at the thunderclouds and lightning flashes over the Potomac.



Darcio Arruda

Hearing clashes of thunder, she knows the storm, the maelstrom, the predator has arrived. Jon, through a growing acute pain, glimpses Pérez leaning over the door, fumbling at the handle's latch. Jon must remain in control; and to remain in control he must appease the sanguinary hunger.

In a single swift motion, Jon snatches Pérez' tresses, wrenches the diplomat's head back, thrusts forward and smashes it into the limo window with superhuman strength, and jerks it back again. Red-stained glass shards lie embedded in the rear limo seat and dry park grass. Scarlet blood flows in rivulets from the hundreds of lacerations gouged in Pérez' face. Uncomprehending fear dances across the remains of his eyes. Jon sinks his teeth into the yielding flesh of Pérez' exposed throat, the canine fangs with their hollow cavi-

ties severing the pulmonary vessels and draining the enriching lifeblood from the thrashing, spasmodic cadaver. The chauffeur is leaning out the limo door and aiming a handgun at Jon. Jon's hypnotic gaze, a common myth attributed to his kind by man, locks with the shifting, frightened eyes of the chauffeur. A flash of lightning silhouettes the terror etched across the chauffeur's face. His murderous resolution wavers as his vision is held spellbound. In that instant Jon's foot strikes out with feline grace and agility, slamming the limo door against the chauffeur's

**"Beyond the shadows,
banners are unfurled as
dark armies mobilize
their supernatural forces
for a triumphant night."**

outstretched gun-arm. Bones fracture and splinter against a violent opposing pressure. Within seconds, Jon has punctured the soft layer of epidermal tissue surrounding the throat while stifling the scream lingering on the chauffeur's lips. The lifeblood courses through Jon, a rejuvenating catalyst. The hunger is satiated, the caged beast fed.

The woman with the terrier is backing away across the park in mute horror. Her taut nerves present the crucial hasty retreat. She is enmeshed in Jon's intertwining gaze, a moth snared in a bloated spider's web. Her memories of the events are charred volcanic ashes scattered in the River Lithe, washed away with the cleansing current. Jon abhors the task of killing without necessity, and he allows her mind to bury the memories beneath a precarious modicum of sanity. The woman flees from a scene she

will not remember, trailed by her faithful mutt.

A sheet of falling rain pounds blood into the dirt ground. Jon turns the corpse of Pérez over on its back and pulls out the handgun hidden beneath Pérez' suit. It is a nine millimeter Beretta with a silencer, similar to the one drawn by the chauffeur. An Israeli Uzi sub-machine gun lies unused on the plush velour of the front seat. Terrorists: assassins doubtlessly hired by the incensed Peruvian revolu-

tionaries. Jon can no longer suppress his mirth, and he settles down on the damp soil next to the corpses and breaks out in laughter. He is laughing at the sheer audacity of their duplicity and impotent actions. Did they think it was feasible to slay an immortal with flint and gunpowder? Adding to his amusement is the gold cross tightly clasped in the chauffeur's left hand: another common, fraudulent myth regarding vampires. Jon had existed long before the Christians ever

walked the earth, constructing their missions of mud and stone.

He had been born among the vast city-states of Ancient Greece, residing along the beautiful, azure-blue Mediterranean. A pursuit of a destructive, Faustian quest for the knowledge denied man at the Fall had culminated in the malediction, a mixed blessing he later accepted as an inevitable legacy of power and immortality. He walked the deserts of Egypt as slaves toiled and died in the construction of the pyramids for the pharaoh Ozymandias; he climbed the steps of the Senate while Caesar met Brutus on the Ides of March; he joustet with William of Normandy and the feudal lords of Europe in their bloody

"Men call his species Evil."

medieval tournaments; he watched Michaelangelo lying on his back going blind painting the extensive Sistine Chapel. Jon sneers in mocking derision at the dead South Americans. He had even marched with Pizarro in conquest of their precious Peru centuries before their conception. Men call his species Evil. In green pastures, cattle graze on grass to sustain life, men kill cattle for the necessary nourishing proteins, and men return to the fertile soil from which grass springs, providing nutrients for the budding flora. Where is Evil in the environmental cycle of life and death?

The rain has ended and the clouds disperse to reveal an incandescent moon suspended in the sky, brother to a shimmering veil of stars. The temporal storm has brought no comfort from the oppressing humidity weighing on the city. Washington writhes in the constricting grip of a mean, endless summer night. ☹

Edward Wong



2/4 THE POLITICS OF EXPRESSION

Angela Chen

The Curtain Falls

No child will ever forget
seeing the burned-out black and white film
that has been played over and over, billions of times
before quiet, dazed audiences;
glazed, alert eyes and mouths slightly agape
suspended in a horrific stare
as time rolls over the reels.

Every man remembers
in vivid detail, where he was
when the few short blasts
altered American history;
all of the hopes and dreams
vanished in the thin autumn air
as the convertible swept past the silent crowd.

Every woman can recall
the age of hope and glory
whose remains rest in peace
beneath an effervescent flame;
no wind could ever smolder
no man could ever extinguish
his memory lives on.

No one can forget
the smile that lifted our hearts
the family that united us all
the image of peace and prosperity;
draped with the stars and stripes;
and then carried away-
as the reels stop and the film ends.

Holly Cooper

The Passage

The sounds are coming closer. With a muffled cry Beth crawls to the back of the closet.

Drag, thump. Drag, thump. He is in front of the door. Beth holds her mouth so she will not scream.

Slowly the door opens. There he stands, the flesh rotting off his bones, the shriveled eyes staring at her mercilessly.

"There you are!" he cries through decayed vocal chords.

Beth screams as he drags her out of the closet. He holds her up.

"You did this to me! You did!"

"No!" Beth screams. He throws her across the room where she lands in a heap.

"You're the cause of all this," he groans as he spits out some teeth. "Couldn't leave well enough alone, could you?" He moves towards her.

"N-No!" She shrieks. "I didn't mean to!" We were only kidding! We didn't think it would really work!"

He grabs her again, in the process dropping maggots on the floor. He holds her near him, and she can smell his rotting flesh. "Didn't think it would work?" He laughs and loses his lip. "You have no comprehension of the dark powers you have wrought!"

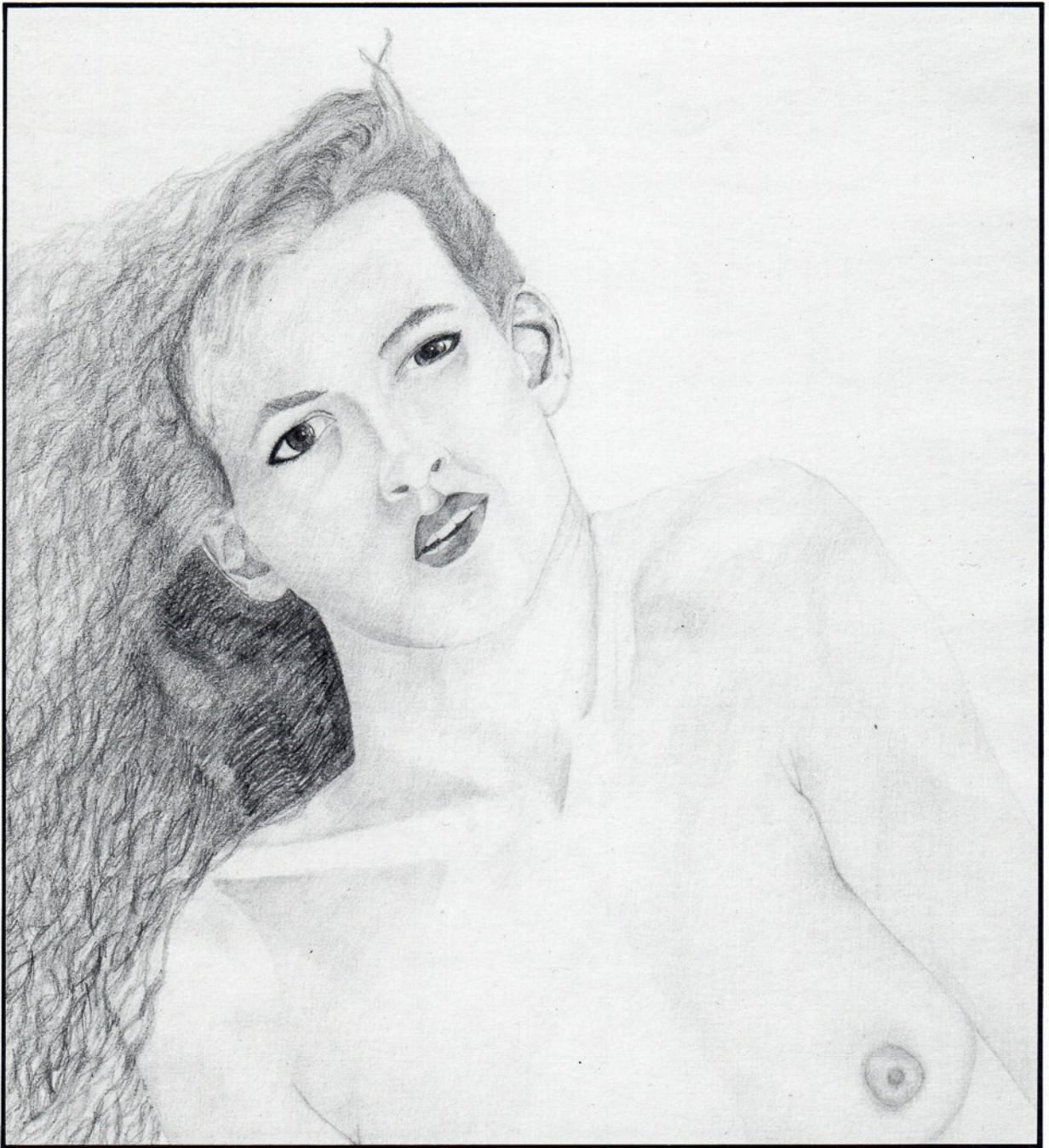
The putrid stench is overcoming her. "Grandfather, please!" she cries, and for a moment the mass of decay seems to consider. Then it shakes its head, dislodging more flesh.

"It's too late for that now, child." Slung over his shoulder, he ambles to the door. There is a flash of fire, and the room is empty.

Adam Shaw



John Smith



Jennifer Kellogg

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