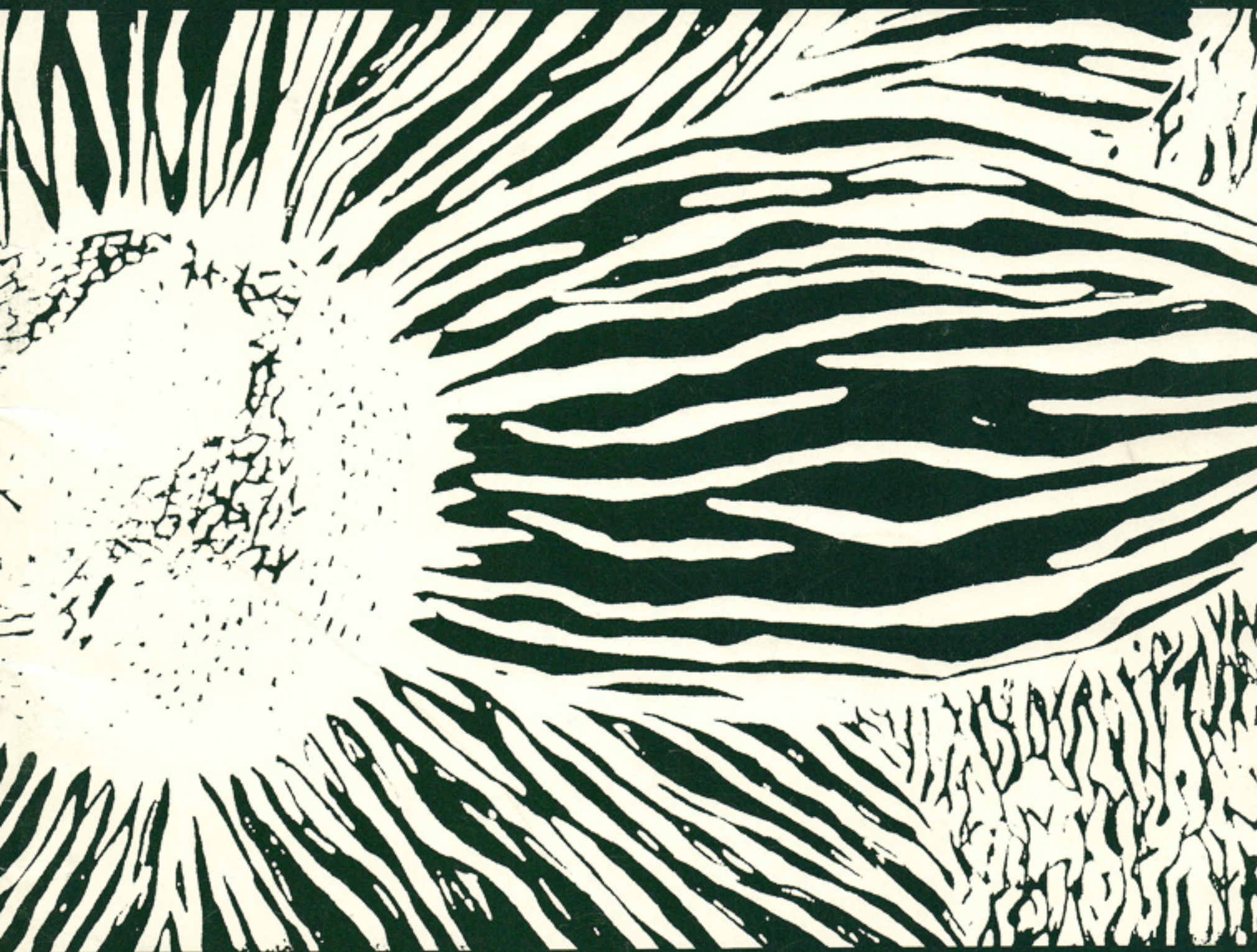


Labyrinth



Spring

1993



Labyrinth

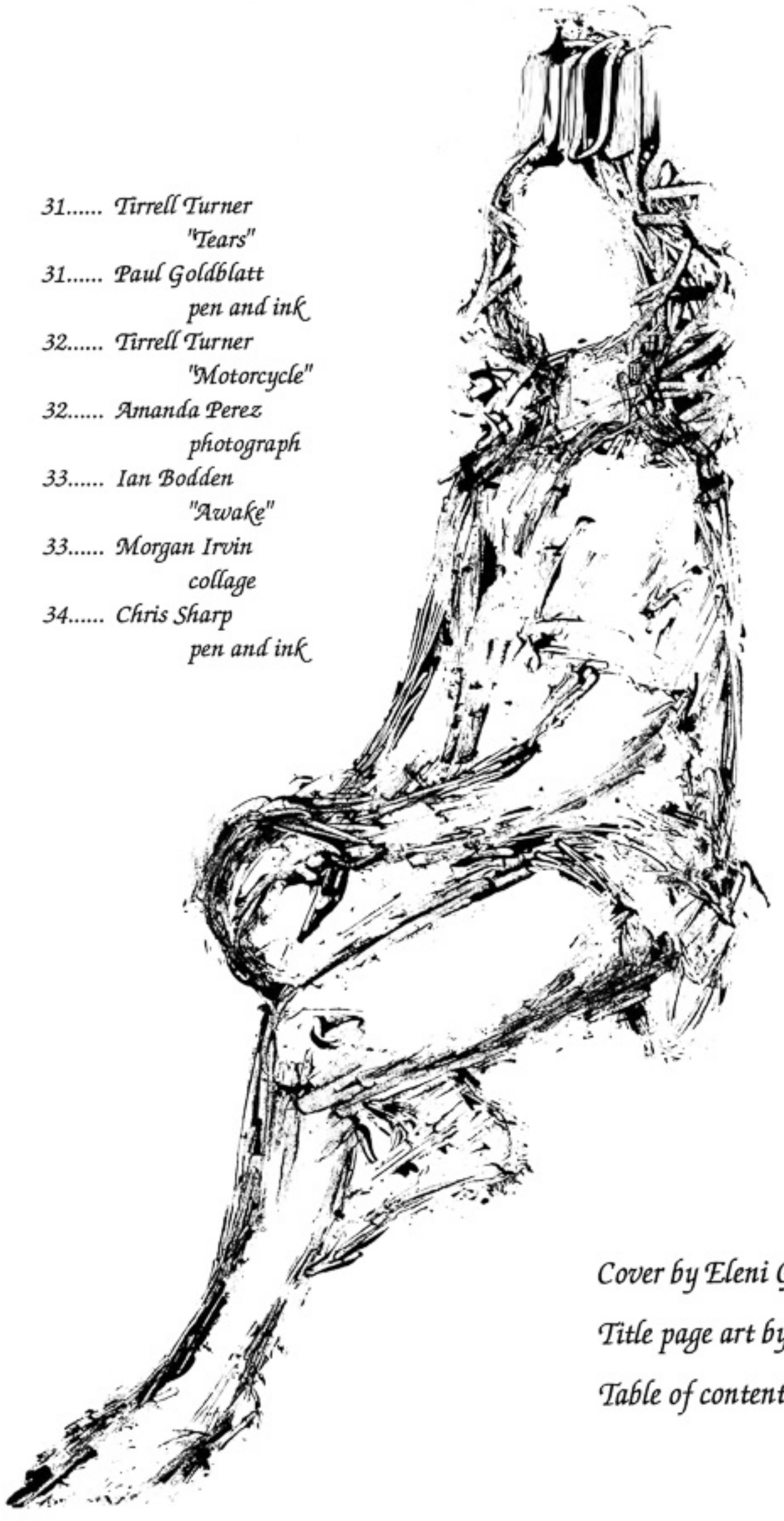
Literary/ Art Magazine

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*T. C. Williams High School
3330 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22302*

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Cover by Eleni Gekas

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Paul Goldblatt*

This Place

Macon Blair
Short Story Contest Winner

This street has a history. Just standing here again between the same unfilled splits in the side walk, in front of the same unattended yards, I am acutely aware of it's history. This place seems to retain memories of my days here, ones that I have already forgotten. With all the new vinyl siding, the new cars parked in the driveways, the new trees planted and the old ones uprooted and gone, this is still my street.

My house was the third one

from the corner on the right side, if you were facing away from the hospital. The front porch is gone, only making the time since I lived here seem so long ago. I am reminded of the countless afternoons spent on that porch, surrounded by the neighborhood brood and putting down gallons of cheap store brand soda. The porch, with all its rusting side railings and crumbling steps, was my throne, my personal altar of laziness. I was content to do nothing more than sit there and watch the people move up and down my street, occasionally waving at a familiar face or staring down the passing strangers.

Occasionally, we would decorate the sidewalk with chalk body outlines.

It was important for us, the kids of this street, to maintain our superiority over those just walking through. We had the psychological advantage in that we were sitting down. Just because of that, anyone walking in front of my house would feel like the intruder, out of place in our little front yard nation, and would quicken their pace to avoid the stares of a porch full of runny nosed, ferrety kids.

Occasionally, we would decorate the sidewalk with chalk body outlines and food coloring blood stains. The reactions we got from the jogging yuppies were well worth mother's fury upon noticing the murder scene in front of her house. "Reputation" and "good standing with the neighbors" There was only one time when any of

were prevalent themes in her parenting philosophy.

Of course there was always the dollar and thread trick, which was more of a special game, reserved for when we had company. Only so often

Only so often would we find a sucker both greedy and dim enough to follow the moving dollar into the yard.

could we find a sucker both greedy and dim enough to follow the moving dollar up into our yard as my brother frantically pulled in the string to which it was taped. The average victim notices the whole system before they even bend over to make an idiot out of themselves. Using this game as an informal poll and census of my block, we determined that the gullible fool population was shrinking but the "always willing to bend down and snatch a dollar" demographic was up.

The wicked twins had replaced the lemonade with a little Number One.

One person was always free from harrassment- Karl the Mailman. Karl was of deity status in our neighborhood. Karl was one of the local Cool Guys. He always had fistfulls of bubblegum to give out to the kids on his route, he always loitered around after dropping off the mail to tell us stories about his days in Vietnam. Karl was recognized, and indeed, hailed wherever he went.

There was only one time when

the kids ever turned on Karl, and it was probably the most horrible thing I have ever seen in all my years. The horror of this mutiny was in its utter senselessness; it was completely unprovoked and without sane motive.

It was customary to sometimes give Karl a glass of tea or lemonade on the especially hot summer day. Deep into the hottest weeks of August, the Chenasky twins who lived across the park, apparently went mad and decided, for reasons still unknown, to launch a most gruesome attack.



Amanda Perez

"Here's some lemonade." The girl Chenasky grinned as the boy Chenasky passed the glass to Karl. In a stroke of criminal genius, the wicked twins had replaced the lemonade with a little Number One, because they were apparently in the mood to either kill someone or make them very, very sick.

But Karl, was an experienced

and twice decorated worker, discovered their treachery before it was too late. Karl handed back their false offerings and brought his wrath down on his traitorous subjects.

"No more bubble gum for you two for quite a while," he announced, aiming a crooked index finger at them both. The Chenasky twins were shunned for their hateful behavior until many months later when Karl declared the little Judas and Mrs. Judas to be forgiven.



Amanda Perez

"Kids do mischief sometimes. That's just what they do," he explained, and we all nodded and agreed to be nice to the twins, but in the backs of our minds we all knew that not a single one of us would ever again accept anything to drink from the Chenasky's.

There was also Bob, just plain "Bob," who lived in the house directly across from mine with his Irish wife and baby, born only months after they moved in. Whenever Bob's wife spoke to any of the kids we never really paid attention to what she said, we were all too fascinated by the wild,

lilting brogue with which she talked. She would say things for us like "Blarney!" and "In the name of fair St. Paddy!" time and time again, just so we could murmur in amusement at

Nate was notorious for his parties, sordid and unstoppable things which often lasted until dawn or police arrival.

this strange accent. I later realized that neither she nor anyone in Ireland really says things like that, and she was just being a good sport.

Bob became known for his patience in dealing with the Nate Forrester situation. Nate Forrester was the token private school kid of the neighborhood who lived next to Bob. In fact, Nate and his seldom seen father had lived here for years, even before I moved in. Nate was notorious for his parties, sordid and unstoppable things which took on minds of their own and often lasted until dawn or police arrival, whichever came first. Bob could often be seen still in his slippers, calmly crossing the lawn toward Nate's vibrating house, rubbing the sleep from his eyes. Watching this activity gleefully

Occasionally these parties reached a kind of critical mass and the other neighbors were forced to defend themselves.

from the windows, my brothers and I always hoped to see Bob throw open the door and begin kick boxing all the



Amanda Perez

especially unruly teens until they were good and quiet. What almost always happened was that Bob would knock on the door, go in, and emerge a few minutes later carrying a case of beer, waving to Nate in the doorway.

Occasionally these parties reached a kind of critical mass and the other neighbors were forced to defend themselves. On one occasion several drunken preps staggered outside, and somehow forgetting that the bathroom is inside, came to my yard for relief. My father, who'd been watching from the window, quickly spoiled any of the rich boys' intentions to wiz in Mom's bushes.

"Not in my yard, you don't!" he bellowed from the front porch, terribly scary looking in his boxers and too-small bathrobe, squinty eyed without his glasses and crowned with a perfect cowlick. The drunkies were caught off guard, and ended up hopping down the road, half unzipped and fully

humiliated.

The family next door to me, the Wielands, were much less subtle. When a few wayward party trolls got too close to their car or yard, they simply let out Boss, their two hundred pound Great Dane, who would promptly eat anyone nearby. This one

"That varmint's just not lettin' go," Grandpa shrewdly observed, as Boss clamped onto a trespasser's leg.

particular night, my grandfather who was up visiting from one of those Carolinas, had joined us for the show out front. Boss was clamped onto the leg of an unlucky trespasser, who was squirming over the ground and screaming like a little girl.

"That varmint's just not lettin' go," Grandpa shrewdly observed, and sure enough, it took a cop, a paramedic, and all six of the Wielands



Emy Rosodo

to finally pull Boss from his prey.
Still, Bob, like my father and like

Bob was the speed limit enforcer, the twenty-five mile per hour vigilante, and once chased speeding rednecks down the street.

Boss, would put up with only so much hooliganism on our street. He saw parties as more or less harmless, but he allowed no behavior which might endanger any of the kids nearby. When hicks would speed through in their super-charged Mustangs, Bob was the speed limit enforcer, the 25 mile per hour vigilante.

Once an especially fast moving bing cherry red Pontiac swerved dangerously close to the corner where his wife and baby were standing. Quick thinking, Bob hurled a bottle through their retreating back window

and chased the startled, speeding rednecks down the street, still barefoot and with a trash can raised over his head, ready to hurl it at anyone daring to disturb the Sunday quiet.

And of course, there was always the Ice Cream Guy. I find myself looking up and down the street for any sign of him, but just like Bob and Forrester and Boss and me, I know he's probably gone from around here. If he's not in jail, then the Indians must have chased him out for good.

The Ice Cream Guy drove his dilapidated Good Humor truck slowly

The Ice Cream Guy drove his dilapidated Good Humor truck slowly through the neighborhood every day in the summers.

through our neighborhood every day in the summer, surprisingly constant

along his route. We scheduled our days around the idea that we should be at the corner by my house at exactly 5:25, which was always the time the Ice Cream Guy would arrive, ringing his cowbell out the window, playing Peter Tosh deafeningly loud on his jumbo speakers, calling out praise to Jah. It was just accepted that the bigger kids would get in line first, so us smaller tribesmen took the risk of there being no more classy ice



Amanda Perez

cream snacks: Fat Frogs, Shark Bars, Cookie Sticks, and so on.

It also became a sort of common knowledge that the Ice Cream Guy supplemented his income as a marketer of fine dairy goods by selling reefer to the REALLY big kids(that would be high school and college.) It wasn't until I was much older that I realized why there were always a few really big kids (veritable adults) standing at the back of the line. They stood behind the smallest of the sub-

urban monkeys, looking sketchy and paranoid, looking over their shoulders for any sign of a friend of their parents, talking in quick, hushed whispers. When all ice cream dealings

He peeled down my street, unsold ice creams tumbling out the vendor window, two strips of smoking black rubber left behind.

were over, the nervous teenagers approached the van and leaned in for a short conversation followed by a quick exchange of something, both the Ice Cream Guy and his strange customers fumbling with haste and anxiety. Then he'd drive off, his jolly clown truck coughing black, greasy smoke and rattling as if it would fall apart at any moment, never to be seen again until the next day at 5:25.

Towards the end of my ice cream buying days, the Ice Cream Guy became involved in a great civil war with other Good Humor parties. One day I was caught in a crossfire of this turf battle, an innocent civilian trapped within someone else's war.

I was an innocent civilain caught in the crossfire of someone else's war.

I had just purchased a push-up pop (it was all that was left after the older kids were done) and since no scary looking high school guys were lurking nearby, I had stayed behind and was talking to Ice Cream Guy

about a Rasta festival he'd recently attended. He was in the middle of describing a probably fantasized encounter with Rita Marley when he was struck with an expression of absolute fear. Staring into the rear view mirror, his eyes widened at the sound of another truck approaching at high speed.

Staring into the rearview mirror, he was struck with an expression of absolute fear.

"Got to go now," he called out, suddenly moving with the determination of a man who has accepted a duel and is prepared to fight to the death. He leapt to the driver's seat, turned his stereo to its loudest volume, and peeled out down my street, unsold ice creams tumbling out the vendor window, two strips of smoking black rubber left behind to mark his territory.

Confused, I watched him disappear around the corner, and turned around just as a second Good Humor truck screeched to a stop in front of me.

"Did you buy ice cream from that man?" he sputtered, his turban crooked with rage.

A khaki-dressed Indian stumbled to the window. His wife, short, stubby, and furious looking, was driving.

"Did you buy ice cream from that man? Did he sell you food?" he sputtered, his turban crooked with rage.

"Uh . . .yes." I said, unsure of what the right answer was. The man

squished his face like he was tasting lemon. He slammed his fist down on the counter and screamed,

"You do not buy from him anymore! This is not his route! He is on my route! This is my route!"

The Indian whirled around and the van took off in hot pursuit of the Ice Cream Guy, determined to throw this interloper off his turf, determined to serve ice cream justice. This was one of those strange sights you would never



Amanda Perez

see in the city.

The fact is, I wasn't always so charmed by the suburban myth. In my earlier years, I was embarrassed by my home. The tacky rusted chain-linked fence that bordered the yard had no latch. My mother used a coat hanger to keep it closed. Not a simple sliding latch, or even a nice brass hook, but a coat hanger. I was mortified. You see, we weren't poor enough to be excused from such tasteless scrimping, and we weren't quite well off enough to pass as an upper-middle class family. We were stuck in a social limbo of the mediocre and the

unremarkable.

As I got older, poor became cool, and having parents with money was embarrassing, so I was equally mortified when some years later, my parents decided to tear down the chain link fence that I had so resented. The ultimate white trash badge, and symbol of all things classless, the chain link fence, was my last souvenir from a dead age. I was now all alone in a world of yuppie good fortune with nothing to prove that my parents used to be broke.

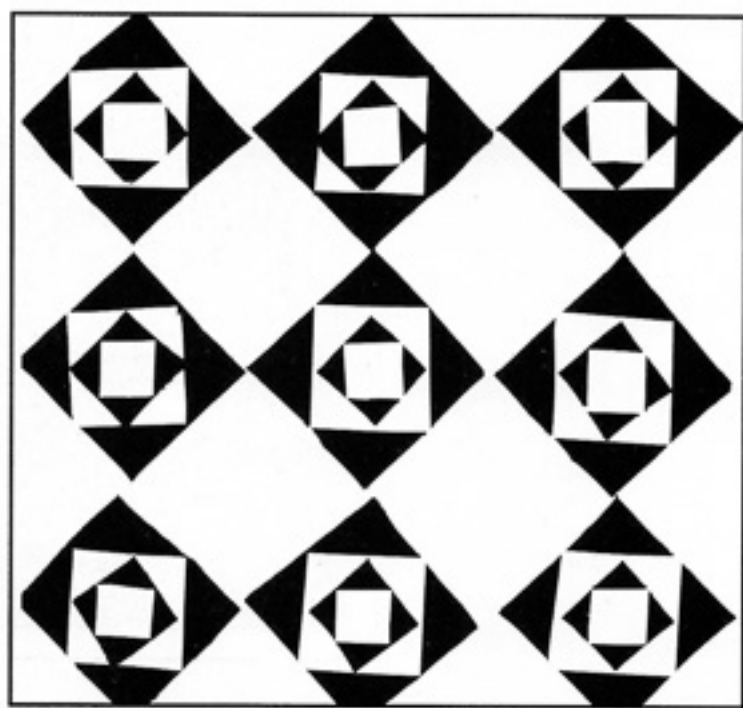
To rub salt in my wound, my parents added a patio to the back of the house, which conjured up horrible visions of wine and cheese parties, where my parents would sit with their socialite, rich friends, talk about Wall Street, and make fun of the homeless. Thankfully, the patio was never host to such horrors, but I was still always more fond of the backyard when it was simply a giant mudflat before the advent of the patio.

Eventually, even the front porch was removed. It had eroded to the

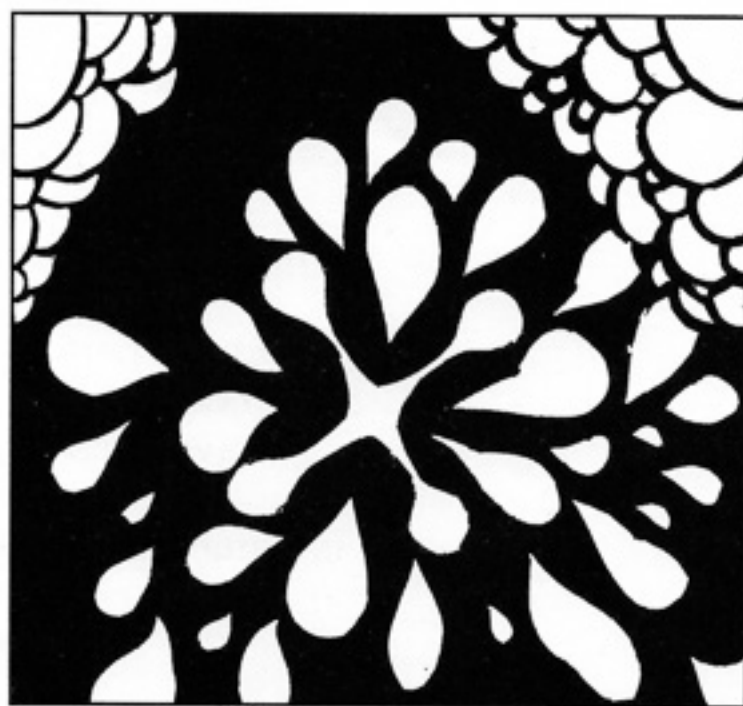
point where it was dangerous, which we all noticed when one of the Chenansky twins twisted his ankle on a loose brick. (Serves him right for what he did to Karl.) This was the same summer Boss ran away, supposedly with a pack of wild dogs, according to the youngest Wieland. I couldn't help but wonder if actually one of the private school kids had come back in the dead of night and finally executed some long-planned scheme of revenge.

Bob and his wife had a second child toward the end of summer, an impressively fat little boy who I never really knew because that fall we moved away and I've never been back to my old street until right now. It was so long ago, it seems like I'm remembering someone else's life. At the same time, it's like I've never lived anywhere else but here. The same regular house, on this very average street, in an altogether common neighborhood, this was my first, and really my only, home.

I'd forgotten how much history this place holds.



Lauren Petrilli



Shelle Silva

Zima

Razem z Wiatrem i mrozem
idzie snieg, przechodzi szybko
lecz każdy krok znaczy biela.
Biela, którą otacza nas wraz
z powietrzem, zdaje się że
jest wszędzie, wypełnia każdą
wolną przestrzeń, przeraża i
zarazem zachwyca, tajemnicza
w swojej bieli, zachwycająca w
sztuce która tworzy tylko z
pomocą sniegu i deszczu.

Looking In

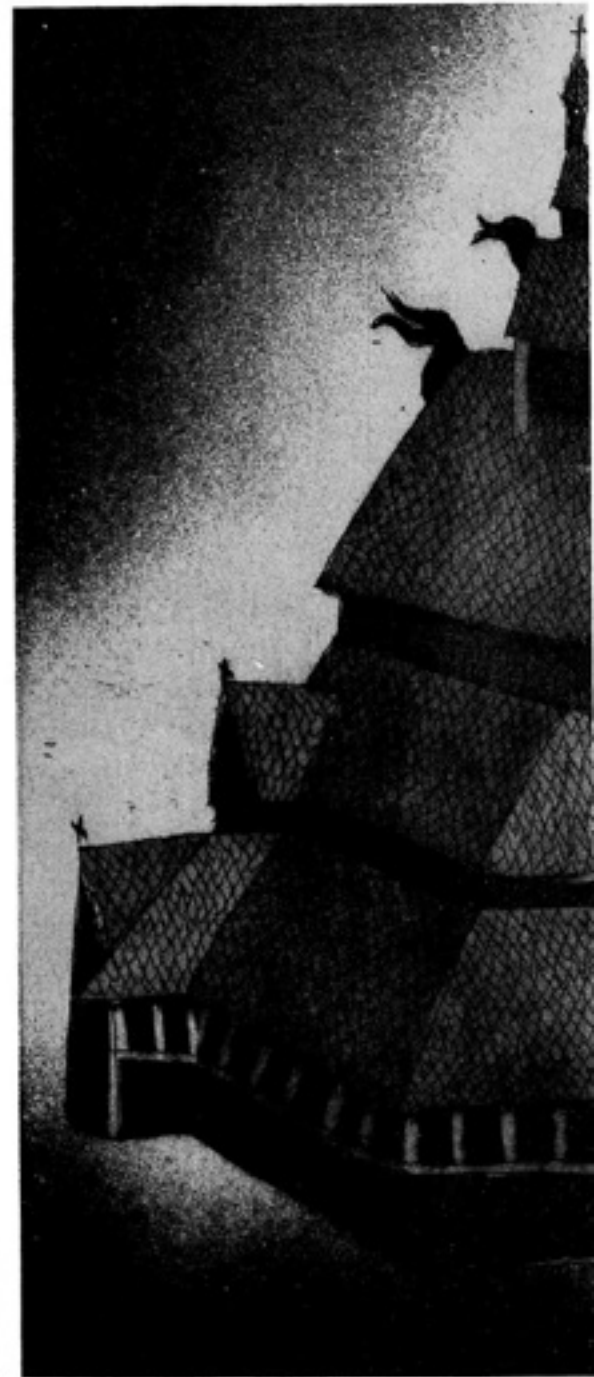
Are we upside down?
Is a smile really a frown?
Go out in space,
Look at this place.
Reason with me now.

Piece together a vision,
A sight inside a prism.
Is it so clear?
Bright colors appear.
It's really the sun's decision.

A man may walk with finesse,
Puffing out his chest.
Perfect indeed,
Yet can he see,
The mustard on his vest.

A lady in perfect clothes,
Is beautiful as a rose.
Sweet as sugar,
Oops, a booger
Is dangling from her nose!

Anthony Delaware



Winter

With the wind and the cold comes snow,
walking fast.

Every step is clear, singing with white snow.
Snow is everywhere in the fresh, freezing air,
filling every empty space.

It's frightening, but beautiful at the same time.

Mysterious in its whiteness
Incredible in its art,
the snow can only be made by
rain and cold

Maciej Kobialko



Hannah Hoeie

I Wish... My Old World

I wish I could have the best fortitude
To forget her for just one second,
To see the sun,
To hunt the truth,
"You can't feel love when you're so shrewd."

I wish I were a preacher
So I could never love her,
But be a free traveller
With an open heart;
I'm a good comforter.

I wish I were the man of my world,
Where I was pleased to be a wolf,
To be alone, and to be unknown.

I wish I had...
No... I can't get her
Out of my head.
My old world now
Is gone for dead.

Van Tran

(This poem is dedicated with much love to my
"little sister".)

A Red Ruby in the Month of April

Elizabeth Dunning

That woman is my Grandmother, Ellen Gardner Dunning. Everyone I know comments on what a wonderful person she is but, she lives so far away I've never had the chance to just talk with her. I may never have that chance. Now, Grandma's sick. She's had a series of strokes and almost all of her short-term memory is gone. She can't even remember what someone said fifteen minutes ago. She's going and we all know it. I'm just sitting on my bed thinking about someone who I don't really know, who's just like me, only older.

I remember something about Grandma. It was a story that she told me when I was really little, maybe five

or six. I was visiting Grandpa and her at the trailer park where their motor home had taken a pit stop. I was racing around the park, up and down the sidewalk, around and around on the field. No one could get me to quiet

The magic of the stories is something I've never forgotten.

down. Then, Grandma walked up. "Elizabeth," she called, "it's a magical story." She caught my attention. I climbed into Grandma's lap. Sitting in an old lawn chair, I listened as Grandma unfolded the most beautiful story about a little girl, just my age, who caught a falling star and was allowed one wish. That's always been my favorite story because the girl



wishes for an enchanted red ruby that will take her anywhere !

Everytime I saw Grandma, until I was about ten years old, she told me another red ruby adventure. My favorite one was of the last that she told me. It was about April, who takes her magical ruby to Spain. Grandmother described the festivals, dances and costumes with such vivid color and life that I could see them before me. The wonderful thing about April, though, was that wherever she went, she would help someone. In Spain, it was a small boy that she reunited with his family after a lot of sleuthing and searching. April was a "knight in shining armor" of sorts. She was brave, kind, and her armor was the ruby that she carried with her. The magic of the stories is some-

thing I've never forgotten. Whenever the going gets rough, I can remember those times, safe and secure, sitting in a plastic lawn chair with Grandma, listening to her talk. Somehow things aren't so bad if I can just remember that.

Over Christmas, I visited Grandma in the hospital. She didn't even know my name. She called me April. In a way, I guess I was always April, the red ruby girl, but I didn't know it. I have my whole life ahead of me, and can do with it as I wish. There are so many possibilities for my own red ruby adventures. It was hard to see Grandma that way, in a nursing home. She wasn't the wise Grandmother that I had always idolized and emulated. She was painfully, painfully human.

"Come here, April. Come sit by me."

"Okay, Grandmother, I have a story to tell you." That's how it began

Now I write once a month, at least. I tell her about my life, the funny things that have happened, what grade I got on my math quiz, what color my mom and I painted my room. She's lonely and the nurses tell me how much she loves my letters, but, there's never a reply. Now, I tell my great, wise Grandmother tales of a girl named Elizabeth. She's a hero, too, but not like April, Elizabeth doesn't have any special powers. She's achingly normal. She's a hero in her own way, though, because she has a Grandmother for whom she cheers. She does all that any hero could do. She does her best.



Diana Polson

Spotlight

Mun-Wai Hon

The spotlight caught them locked in each other's embrace. Countless hours had passed before this anticipated moment. She yearned for her skilled master to shape her voice.



Kathryn Reukauf

Nothing shielded them from the intense heat. She flicked her golden hair with delight as his hand swept across her neck. All her tautness disappeared as he brought her head closer to his. With a sweet sigh, she felt his muscular hand slide around her smooth back to tease and caress each luscious curve. He supported her with his shoulder as she arched upon his tuxedo. Her body leapt at every touch and her belly shook with her wanton cries. With her mahogany eyes half closed, she trembled with excitement as his finger danced upon her body. The sound of her honeyed voice caused his passion to furiously erupt.

Burning sweat seeped from under his collar as he ventured down her burgundy dress to end button. The intoxicating Eau de Rosin evoked the same hunger as the aroma of fresh chocolate fudge. Bump, Pump! Bump, Pump! The pulsating sound of his heart expressed his desire as he moved with her as one. They swayed back and forth just like a willow tree in the wind.

A roar resounded throughout the concert hall and broke their trance. Never had they experienced such satisfaction in all of Italy. Under the gaze of the thousands of eyes he saluted her father Antonio Stradivarius for the creation of his angelic mistress; the viola.



John Sitcharing

Time

While walking,
someone has touched me,
and I've heard her words
next to me being spoken.

I've tried to talk,
but it was too late.

She had run by.
She had gone away.

Through my fingers
she had passed,
and I've touched her,
I have felt her.

I tried to shout,
but it was too late.

She had run by.
She had gone away.

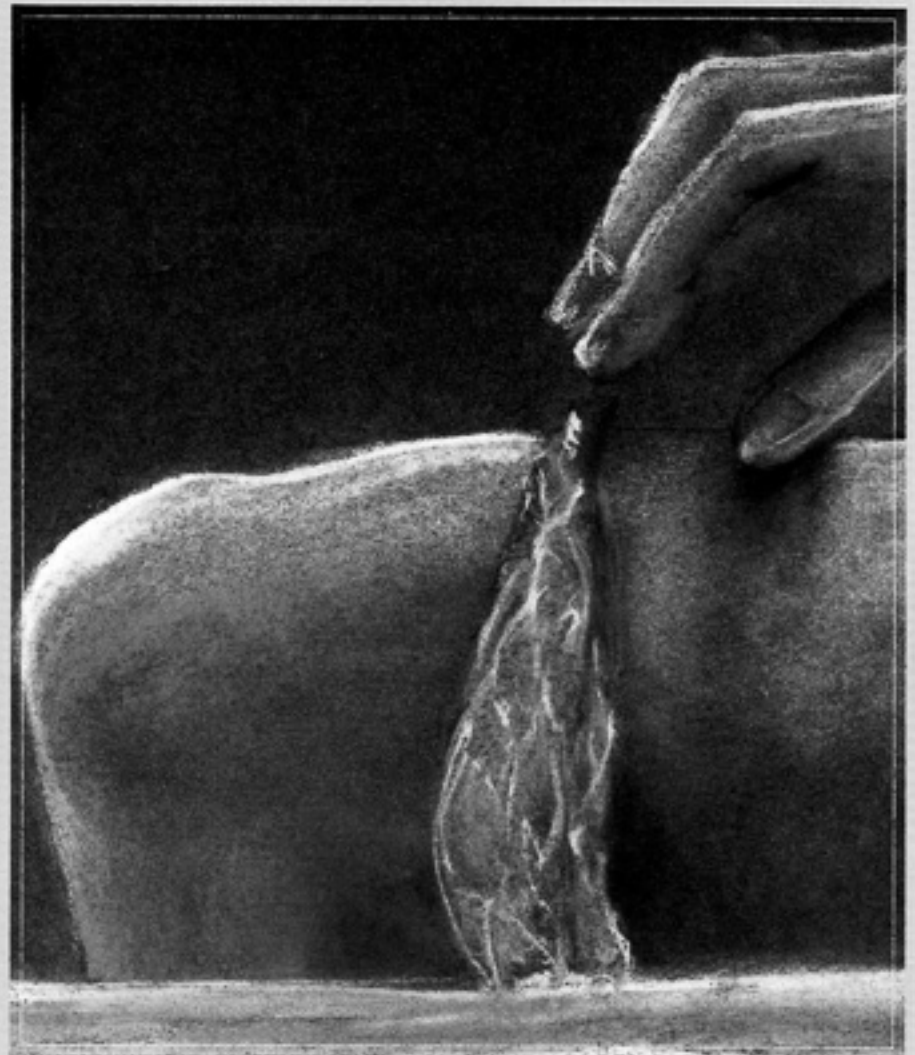
She had flown
over the desert of life.
She had watched
The future and the past.
She is time.
But she is running by.
She is going away.

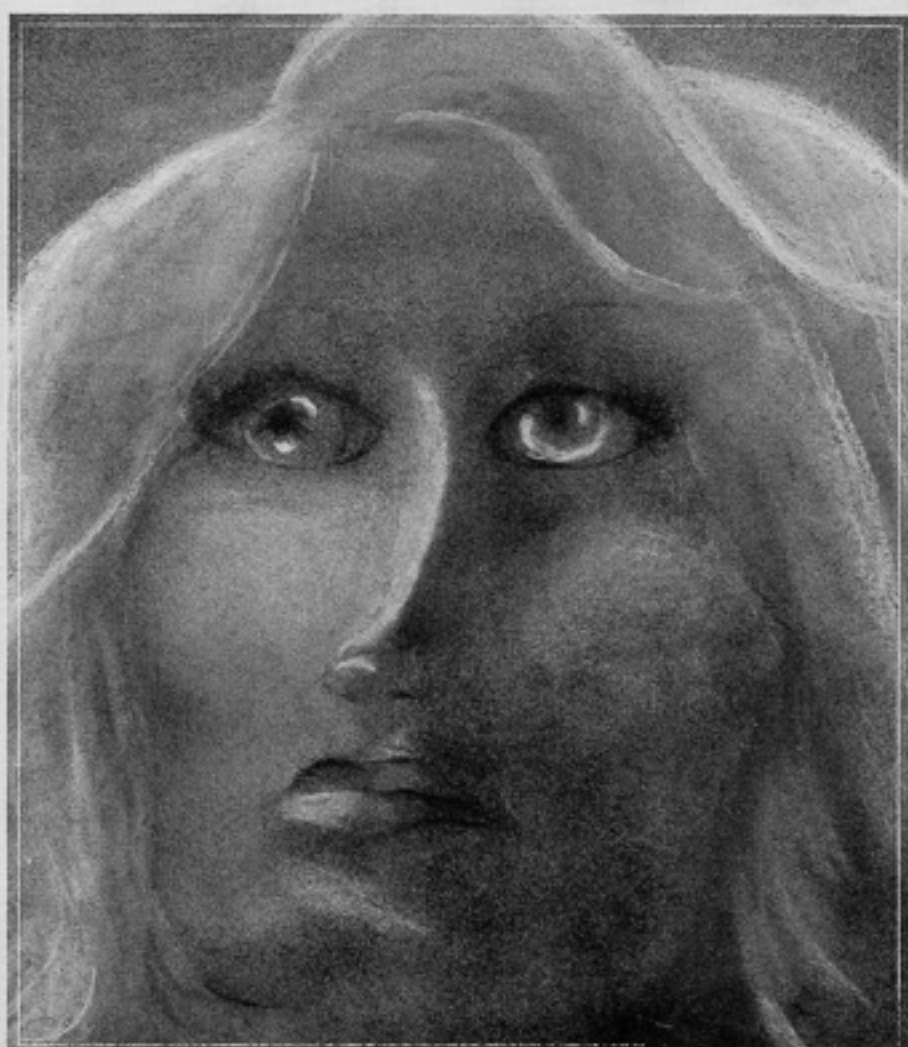
J. Pablo Rodriguez

Carolina

On a crucifyingly hot day in North Carolina
with the mutilated chicken meat quickly growing rancid on
the ends of strings dangled from our fingers
and the Sound soundless and grey stretched before us
and the boards of the pier splintering in the heat
and our captives scrabbling furiously, hopelessly,
at the smooth sides of a red bucket,
irate and arrogant prisoners on Death Row.
And the tug at the end of the line
Miraculous-
like finally connecting two perfect pieces of a living puzzle
and the hazy waves of sunlight off the water
Dreamlike-
There is no one I'd rather go crabbing with than you.

Pam Blair





Maureen Malone

My Mother's Keeper

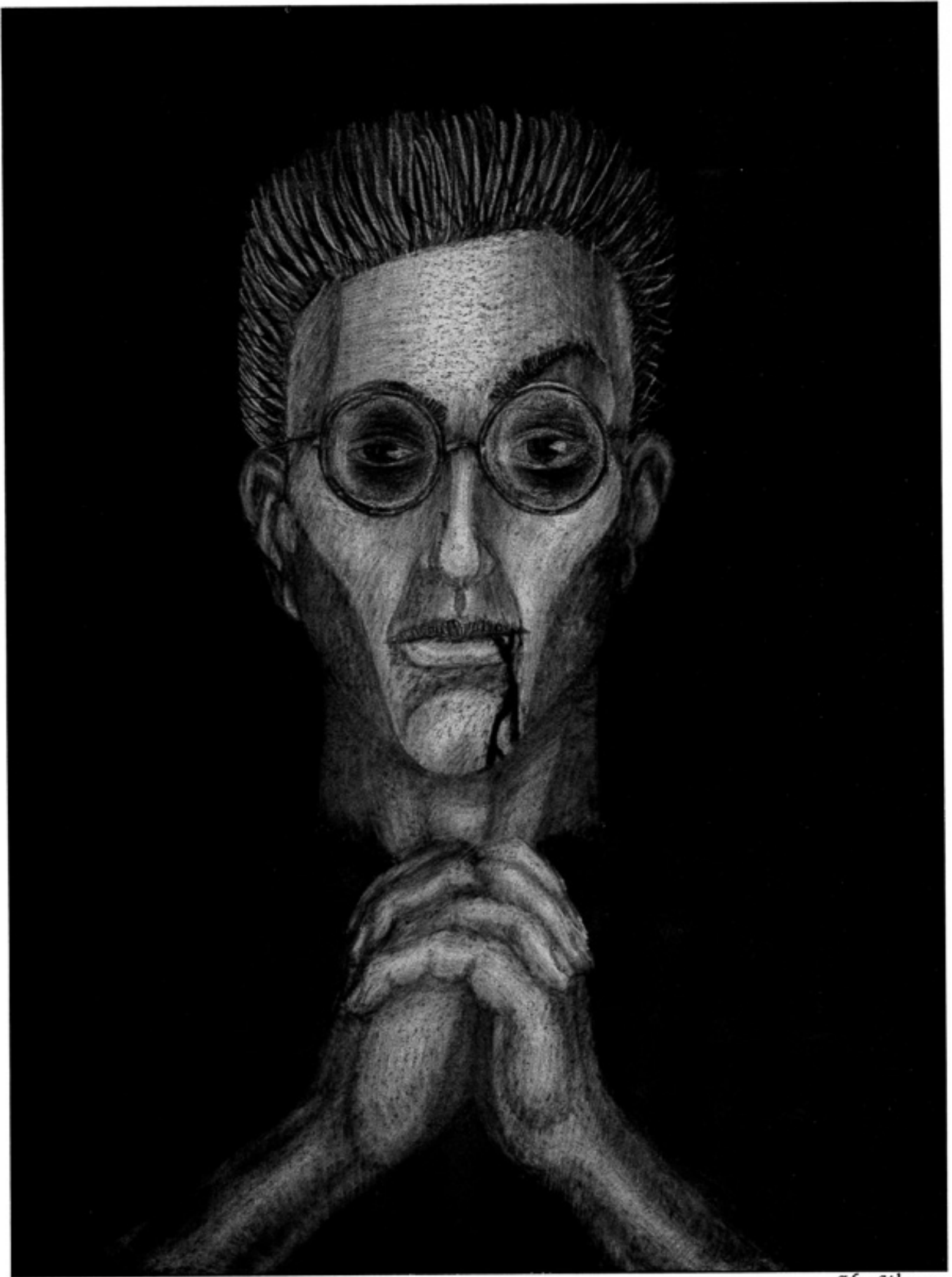
I want to hold her in my arms
and tell her it's okay
I want to reverse the roles
of mother and child and be
the strong but gentle mother for her.

I want to hold her hand
And walk with her from day to day
I want to be her shield
And hide her from her fears.

I want to embrace her
with all the love in my heart
I want to keep her from all harm.
My mother's keeper,
That is what I will be

That is what I am.

Shena Peges



Alex Weyers

A Short Story in Three Parts

Ha Quach

Epilogue

This is the truth. The only truth. This is the way. There can be no other. He knows it. He can almost taste it now, taste the passion of forbidden absolute. Soon now, now soon: nothing will matter, only the absolute, so complete as to be always -- and beyond -- for an ever forever.

He had first come across the secret in a poem. He cannot even remember where -- from what homely-spidered book in dust -- or who -- drawn by what ancient sinews of

wisdom, a sage at his desk and task (yes! there must have been another, before him, who knew. It is easy. In every age, there was always at least one, for the forbidden has remained in existence but not in evidence for this long, to have known and passed it on) -- or even by what title; all is lost to him now. But that does not matter.

His fascination had already absorbed the poem's light before his fleeting, feeble memory could return



it to the darkness of anonymity, the black caged it in its own spell of nothingness. But poetry is not his style. He relishes in the freedom, the lucidity and, most definitely, the superior marketability, of prose. So wide. Unadulterated. Like the terrible ab-

*There can be no other. He knows
it. He can almost taste it now,
taste the passion of
forbidden absolute.*

solute that the world will come to behold, and be captured. Soon now, now soon.

It is an easy trick with only one light before his fleeting, feeble memory could return it to the darkness of a requirement, one consequence. But for a good writer (surely, he must be), the true artist, there is no compromise. Nothing is too great a sacrifice. Nothing.

He had tried to live by his own tenet, a self-prescribed moral impetus, that the sanctity of life must ultimately prevail over the quality of life. An impossibility to live by, yes, but he is a writer, and nothing is impossible. Afterall, is not what one makes real what one holds to be the ideal? Yes, responsibility in fantasy. And for the first time, he will take charge. By and with the truth, he will command.

*...there is no compromise.
Nothing is too great a
sacrifice. Nothing.*

Prologue

A man is dressed in a moss green jacket with its sleeves rolled up, unbuttoned and untucked white dress shirt cascading from the folds, wrinkled dark tan slacks. His loose curly locks of dark hair

dance in the breeze. The man stands on a beach, now and then slowly pulling an unfiltered cigarette to his stubble-crowned lips. The sun rises before him, rising from the depths of the dark green water. He produces another cigarette from his slacks and lights it with the one already in his mouth, catapults the spent one into the water, inhaling one long heavy breath heavy breath of fresh poison. He watches the smoke and the sun rise, squints at the calm green. The foam of tides splash against his naked ankles. It recedes and he follows a few steps. Stopping once to adjust to the freezing green as it surrounds his calves, he follows the foam as it retreats into the greater body. He follows. One step after another, toes digging into the green-drenched sand. The water crawls up his

*The man stands on a beach,
now and then slowly pulling an
unfiltered cigarette to his
stubble-crowned lips.*

slacks, the seaweed near the surface sliding up and down against the fabric. He walks ahead and it swims up--up to the flaps of the untucked shirt, up to the first button on the jacket, up to the unshaved chin of the water's interloper. Into the green the man walks, burning cigarette, dancing hair, and all. Tears and ashes mix into the air. And the man is gone . Dead.



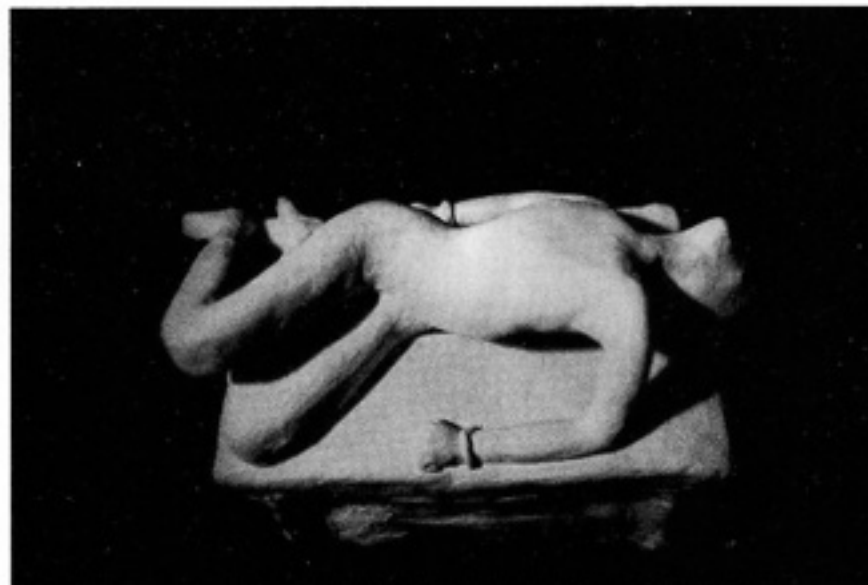
Aline Fader

A Dream Loop

what am i doing here this is silly this must be the hundredth time ive been here but the last time was so long ago that was when i was a kid i never told anyone about it then and then one day it just stopped i just stopped dreaming about it altogether and so funny that its the only recurring dream ive ever had and i suppose it hasnt stopped its coming back to haunt me now as an adult im on a mountain ive never even gone camping or hiking im on a mountain no a peak or something like that and im just standing there on top of the world no not the world either im really nowhere its completely dark everywhere around me except i know im on top of a large body a rock or rocks i hate this dream i was afraid of heights as a kid i still am i hate this dream its not quite a nightmare but i still hate it but why now why now when im nowhere in my life my life is nothing like the black surrounding me its empty no one reads to me anymore no one remembers me anymore ive disappeared from the literary world im no one a hasbeen a phantom maybe this is telling me something maybe

*Into the green the man walks,
burning cigarette, dancing hair, and all.
Tears and ashes mix
into the dirty green calm and bubble
into the air.*

im supposed to conquer this fear these heights no no youve got it all wrong again old pal its not the heights thats the fear think think you know youve always known but now that youre old enough and youve got the maturity to rationalize to put into concrete form just like all the books youve written based on your other dreams from what it is youve been doing all your life yes you know i know yes you know you know what youre afraid of and youve



Aline Fader

returned to this mountain to conquer it because you can with experience you can what is it yes i know yes go on and say it to yourself im saying it to myself ive returned to this mountain to conquer my fear im not afraid of heights i never have been its not

*...im not afraid of heights
i never have been
its not the heights no not that
not that at all...*

the heights no not that at all and what has reincarnating your dreams as stories for others to read taught you i know im older now its not the heights i fear its the falling im afraid of the falling of course the falling but i always wake up right before i hit the ground of course i can never fall not completely theres nothing to fear if i can just wake up its time to wake up its time to rejoin the world one last time

The Story

(As retold by the headline of a newspaper:)
LONG ANTICIPATED PROPHECY OF MY
POSTHUMOUS AUTOBIOGRAPHY,
FULFILLED

The Refrigerator Box

"Look," said young Jenny, "what I got today. It's a brand new boat. C'mon let's play." "That is certainly not a boat," said I. "It's a refrigerator box with a hole in the side."

"The hole is my window so that I can see. Now c'mon, won't you come play with me?" "Not now, I have no time for your silly play. I have many better things to do with my day."

"Well, I'm sure there's time," said that Jenny girl, "Now my box is a racecar, let's go for a whirl." "That box looks just the same to me. Now please go away and just leave me be."



Illustrations by Ariel Ian E. Leyva

"But do you not want to see what's inside? I've got two horses, let's take a ride." "At your horses, I don't want to look. Right now I must finish reading this book!"

"Oh, don't worry if it's books that you need. Now my box is a library. There's plenty to read." "I need to write all my letters and make a call. I must do the laundry and go shop at the mall."

"Well, my box is a spaceship," said Jen with a smile. "C'mon let's go to the moon for a while." "Your spaceship holds no interest for me. Besides, I must watch the news on T.V."

"Well, see," said Jenny, "there's no need to go. Now my box is a television. Let's both watch the show." "No, no, Jenny. You don't comprehend. I'm much too big to play and pretend.

*I've got money to spend and work to do;
Things much more important than playing
with you. I must be serious and smart and
do everything right. I must try very hard,
and put up a fight.*

*I must be successful and happy, and not act
with haste. You see, I have very little time
to waste. So Jenny, I'm sure your box is
nice, dear, But I have much too much to
worry about here."*



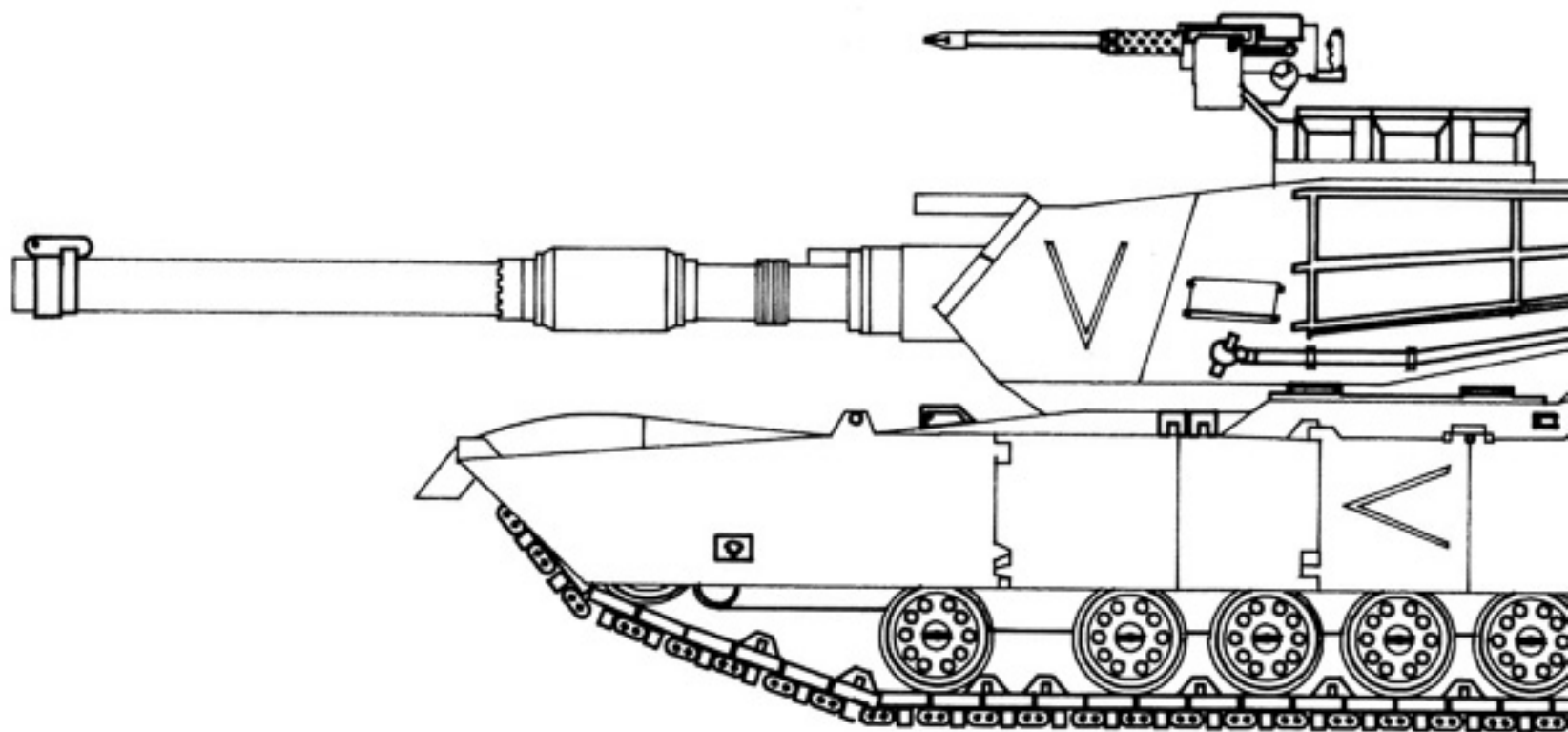
"Oh!" said Jenny. "Well, that's not for me. You see my box is completely worry free. I think trouble and stress are quite a bore. And so all frowns and worries must be left at the door.

*So for now I will tell you good day,
For my box is an airplane and I must fly
away." "Wait! Jenny, wait! Oh could I ask
you... Do you think there's room in that
airplane for two?"*

*"Well," said little Jenny, "I knew you'd
come around. This ride will be more fun
than standing on the ground. I wondered
when you'd see the light. Now fasten your
seat belt and enjoy the flight."*

Erin Sugrue

UNITED STATES ARMY TANK M1A1 ABRAMS



The Jungle

Aaron Karp

*H*is hands were coated with blood. He had dropped the knife. It now sat at his feet, a gleaming reminder of what he had just done.

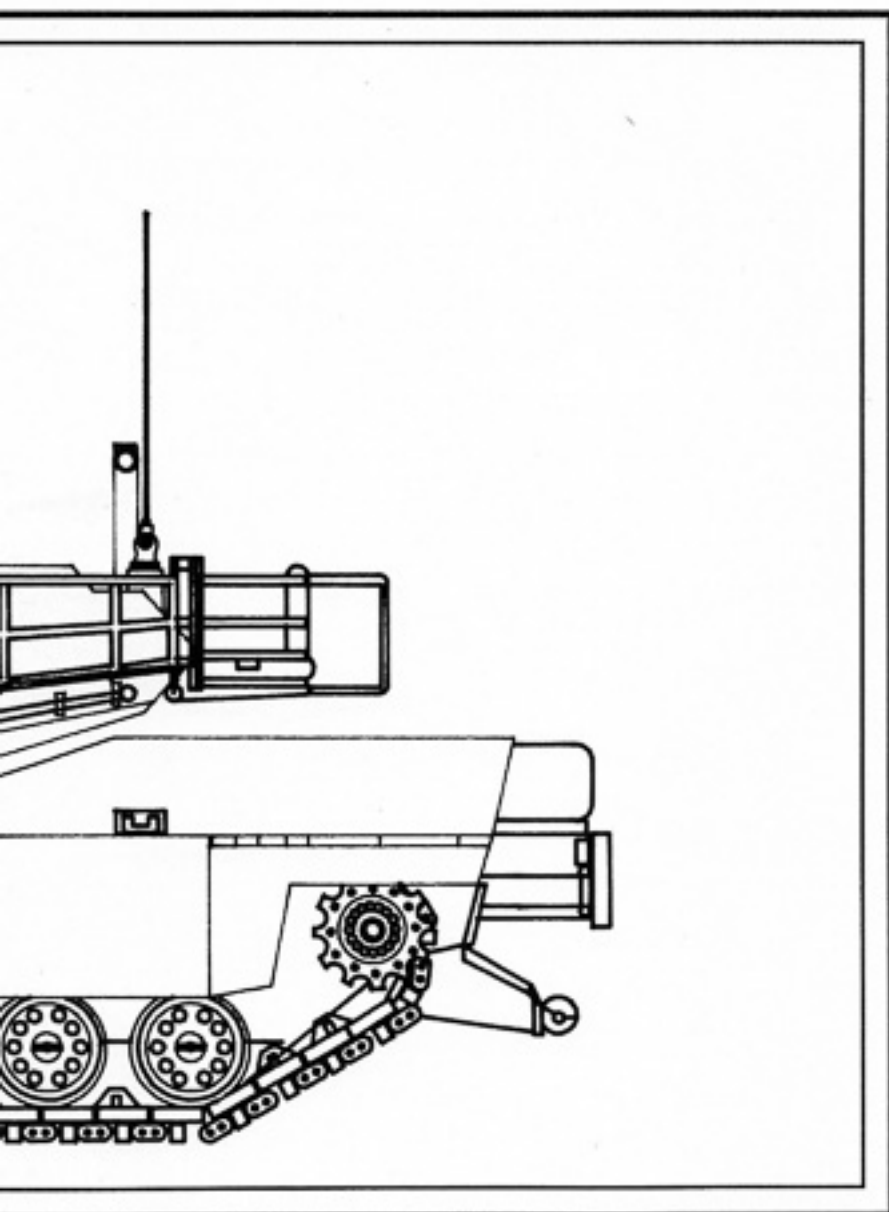
A breeze brushed against his face and caused the trees around him to rustle slightly. The man had fallen back, and now sat against the trunk of a palm tree. The gash in his chest was surrounded by a dark purple oval of

blood that had soaked through his uniform. Blood had trickled from the wound down his shirt into a small maroon patch on the grass below him. His face was turned toward his at-

*Blood has trickled from the
wound down his shirt into a
small maroon patch on the
grass below.*

tacker. Two small trails of blood led from his nose and mouth.

His attacker picked up the knife, it's rubberized handle slick with the blood of the dead man. He contem-



Joe Sirakas

plated wiping it, but instead, tossed it away in fearful disgust.

He was a green recruit. Assigned as a sentry to protect his encampment. He had left the companionship of his comrades with his head full of comic book glory; instead, he had found a monotonous period of waiting. The thick jungle had been filled with natural sounds, the loud cries of birds and the shrill sounds of insects. He disregarded these sounds, instead, listening for the sounds he had been trained to hear, the sounds of his enemy. He had listened for several hours, and was almost ready to take one of his

caffeine pills when he heard it.

He had heard the slight sounds of movement earlier, but had assumed that they were of a large animal, perhaps a panther, out for a hunt. He continued listening for several minutes,

His trek through the humid jungle has lasted several hours, and he was tiring quickly.

when heard a sound that was decidedly human.

The movement was from an enemy scout, trying to creep silently through the dense jungle foliage. He had been sent to locate enemy encampments and relay their positions to his own camp. His trek through the humid jungle had lasted several hours, and he was tiring quickly. The pain in his arms and legs merged with

He wiped the sweat from his brow onto his shirt sleeve as he scanned the jungle around him.

his growing fatigue to throw off his concentration. When a sharp branch jabbed into his thigh, he forgot his silence, and grunted in pain.

Had he not been listening, he would have never heard the sound, but a sentry trained to listen. The

sound could not have been made by anything other than a human. It galvanized him, and he stood silently, drawing his knife from its sheath on his chest. He gripped the rubberized handle tightly. He wiped the sweat from his brow on his shirtsleeve as he scanned the jungle around him.

The scout stood frozen, silently

No consideration could be given. The target must be eliminated quickly and quietly.

cursing himself for his stupidity. He knew that anyone listening would have his position by now, and he said a silent prayer that no one had heard him. His training came to mind, replacing his rage. Now was the time for caution. He crouched low, and listened for sounds of motion. None came, for the sentry had moved while the scout was incensed by anger. The scout had not heard him.

His knuckles were white from the grip he had on the knife. He was completely motionless.

The sentry held his breath as he listened for further movement. After several seconds, he heard the sounds again. The scout had deemed the situation safe, and was continuing

onward. Choosing each step carefully, his adrenaline heightened his senses. The sentry already knew the scout's position, and the instincts drilled into him in boot camp were controlling his every move. The sounds were a target, a faceless entity that threatened his comrades. No consideration could

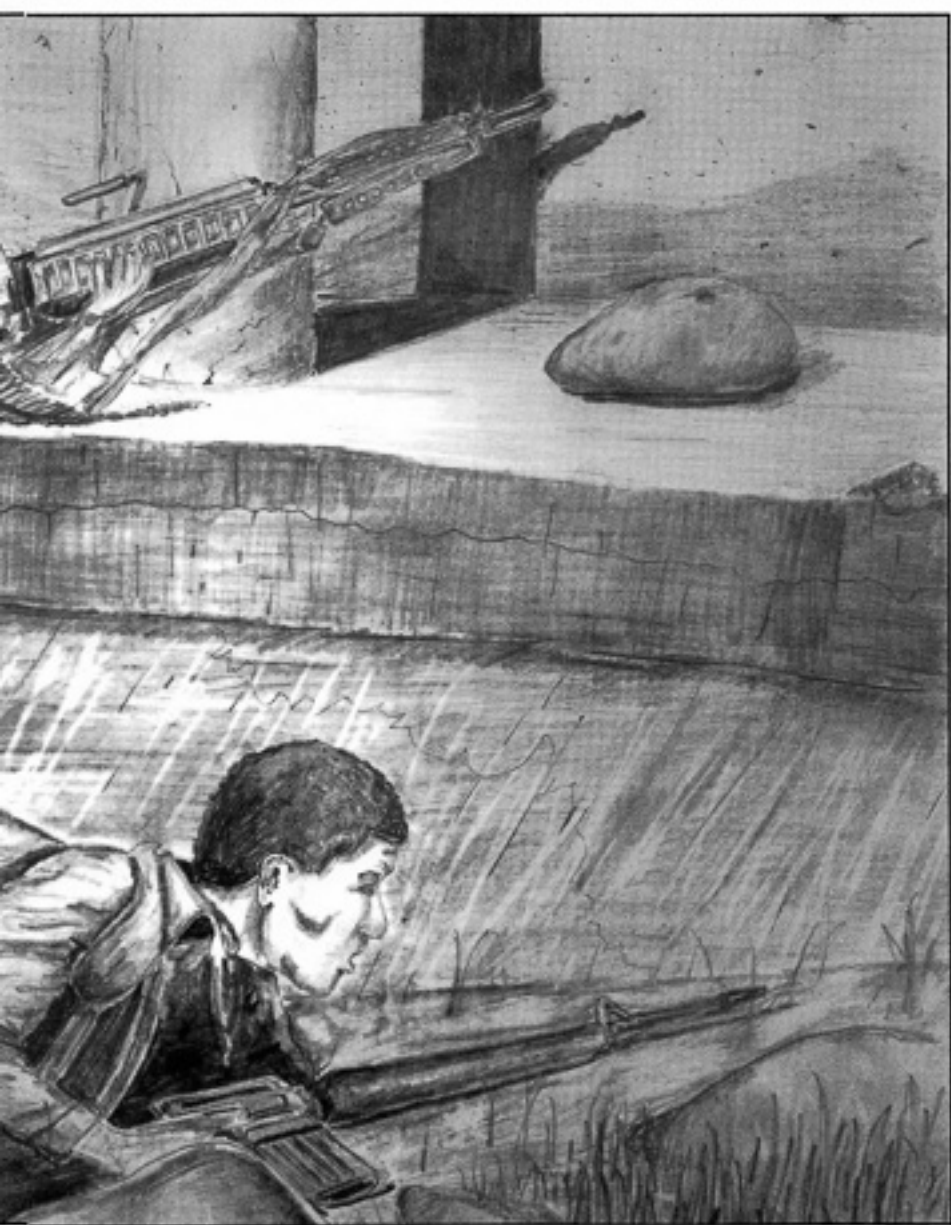


be given. The target must be eliminated quickly and quietly.

The scout was concentrating intensely now, trying to be completely silent. He had decided that no one had heard him, but there was no point in making himself obvious just

because he had been lucky. He seemed to have found a trail, and trails usually led to camps. To fail now would be unforgivable.

The sounds were extremely close, just beyond the far edge of the



Jeremy Saulier

clearing in which the sentry waited. His knuckles were white from the grip he had on the knife. He was completely motionless.

The scout halted. The trail led into a clearing, and clearings were dangerous. The moon above had

been obscured by a cloud, and he viewed the area in the dim light. The clearing was circular, about ten feet in diameter. He saw several shapes on the far side of the clearing, but his fatigue had once again overtaken his caution. Deciding that the shapes were merely trees, he stepped into the clearing.

He frantically wiped the blood from his face with his sleeve and looked at his hands.

The sentry was as rigid as a statue as he saw the scout step into the clearing. He was warily looking left and right. The sentry waited, motionless, until he saw an opportune moment. He held the knife high above his head and dove forward.

He was paralyzed, his eyes focused directly into those of the dead man who watched him from the beyond.

The scout sensed motion, and snapped around to find the sentry rushing toward him. The scout grabbed for his knife sheathed on his thigh. Before he could bring his weapon up to defend himself, the sentry's arm had arched downward,

shoving the knife into the scout's chest. He yanked the knife free and stepped back.

The scout seemed confused. He looked at his wound, and then at his attacker. He smiled and gestured toward the deep gash. His mouth moved, as if he was trying to speak, but no sound came. He staggered backward and fell against a tree. Before he had slid to a sitting position, he was dead.

The sentry had stepped back and dropped the knife. He had lifted it, but once again dropped it in fear.

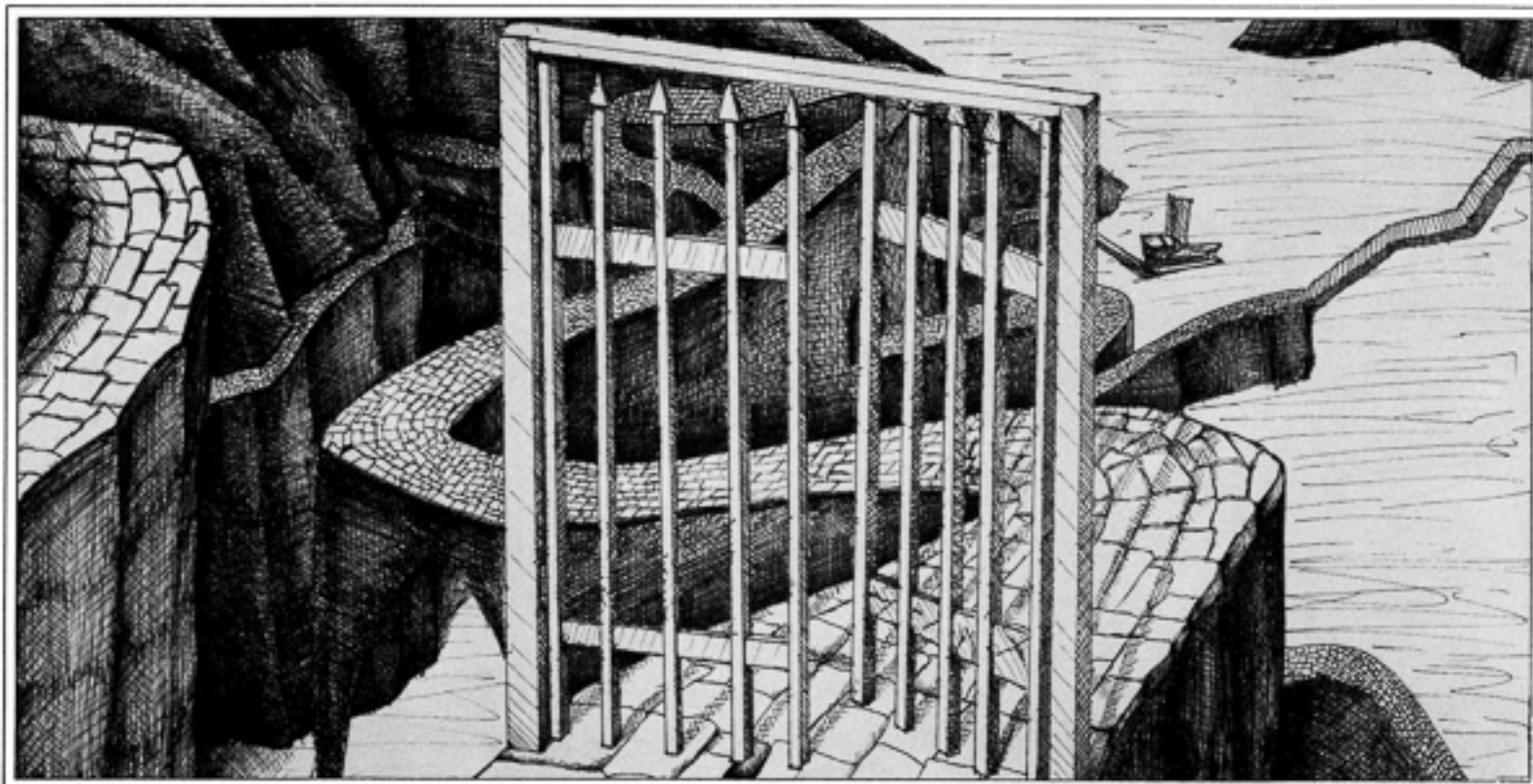
Now, the dead eyes of the fallen scout watched him. The eyes, only seconds ago so full of life like his own, now stared at him, cold and accusing. The sentry covered his own eyes with his hands, only to wet his face with the warm blood of his enemy. He frantically wiped the blood from his face with his sleeve and looked at his hands. They were dark red in the pale

light. He tried to wipe the blood off on his chest, but only wet his hands with the blood that had splattered onto his uniform. The scout was still watching.

The sentry tried to turn away, but found that his muscles weren't responding. He was paralyzed, his eyes focused directly into those of the dead man, who watched him from the beyond. Terror rose in the sentry. He could no longer contain his fear. He screamed.

The jungle around him came alive at the sound of his scream. Birds screeched loudly through the air, shocked from their slumber by the unnatural sound. The trees rustled and shook in the sudden frenzied rush of activity. The sentry had somehow managed to close his eyes during the cacophony, which had now faded. He kept them closed momentarily, uttering a silent prayer that the corpse would be gone when he looked again. Slowly, he opened his eyes, only to find that

the corpse still smiled.



Chris Sims



Tears

*Drops of fury, enraging
the sons of man.
Clenched fist, screaming
in the street.
Sharp pain cutting deep
within us
The only release that
we can have.
Crying in the glory,
and for the fear
The passion that makes
life worth living.*

*Goodbye—and in it we feel a thousand deaths.
The sorrow, the Nemesis, the Watcher, the Darkness.*

Tirrell Turner

Paul Goldblatt

Motorcycle

1st gear

Mounting the beast, hearing the call of the wild.
Alone, sitting as the beast spews forth fire.
Charged up, ready to dominate, never looking back
In the rearview mirror home slowly disappears.

2nd gear

There are many streets to choose from,
Each leading to a different adventure.
The roads are as clear as the fresh air,
Lifts the spirit, cool breeze pushing on forward.

3rd gear

On the interstate the road stretches
To the horizon, setting sun, new life.
The road never ends, never begins.
Hands wave, calling to infinity.

4th gear

Tires bouncing as the dragon takes flight.
Mighty wings propelling through the distance.
Hearing the roar, the land is no longer silent.
Many gaze in awe.

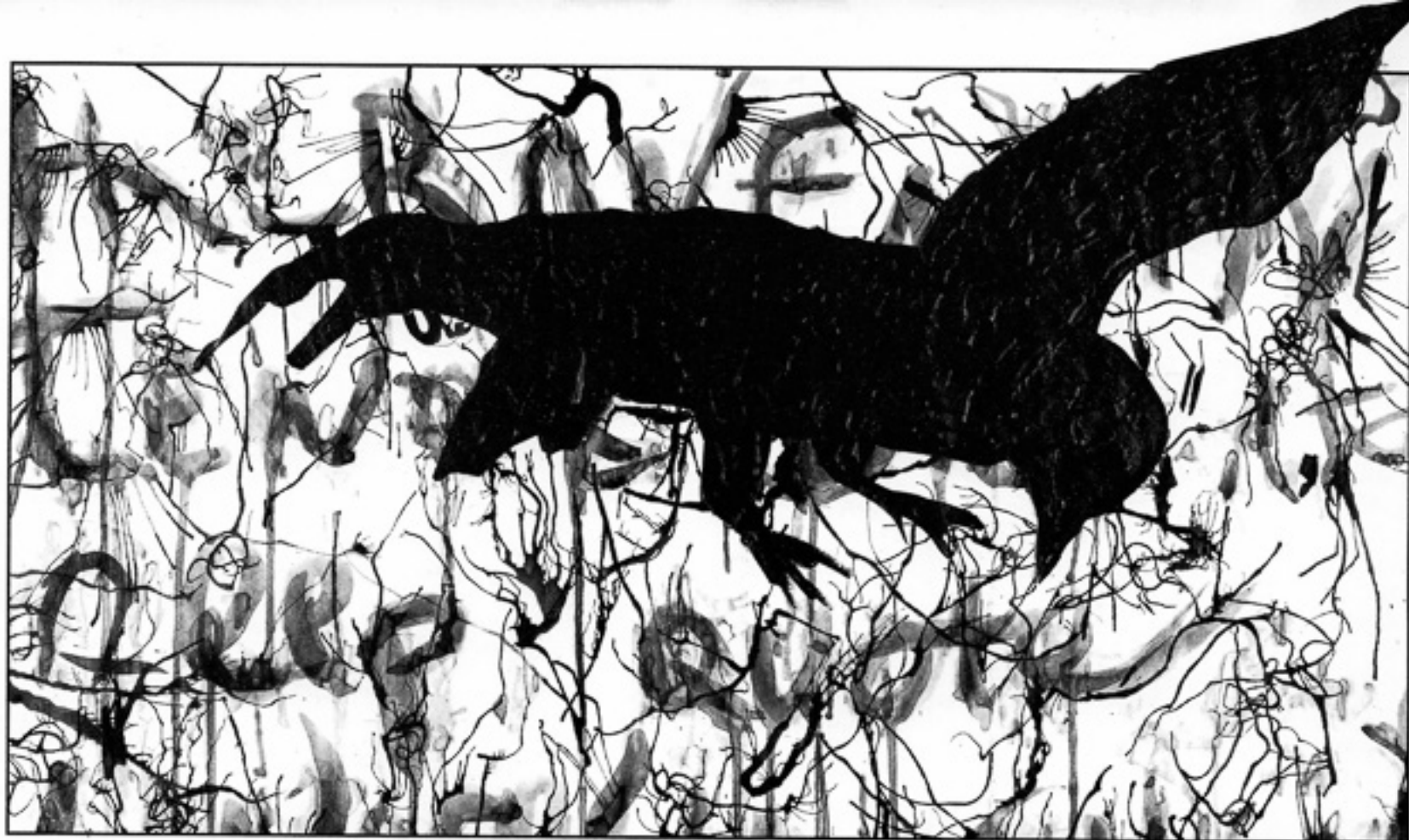
5th gear

Destination is set as the universe
Slowly unfolds. The way is clear.
Earth born, heaven bound, the night
Can no longer contain, bursting into day.

Tirrell Turner



Amanda Perez



Morgan Irvin

Awake

As I rise from my slumber
It drips from my body like sand.
Staring at this useless phone number
Scrawled in drunk ink on my hand.
And I shake the last few cobwebs from the corners of my head
Half wanting to live a short death of sleep in this bed

That isn't mine.

Ten or twenty paces later
I cram fabrics and stains into the machine and think about
My parents
How pointless and paradoxical it all is-
Arguing about how to make a better family, when there is only one choice

It will go on.

It's what makes life interesting in this whole.
What importance is light to a blind mole
That digs so through the ground
Making a silent sound?

Ian Bodden



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