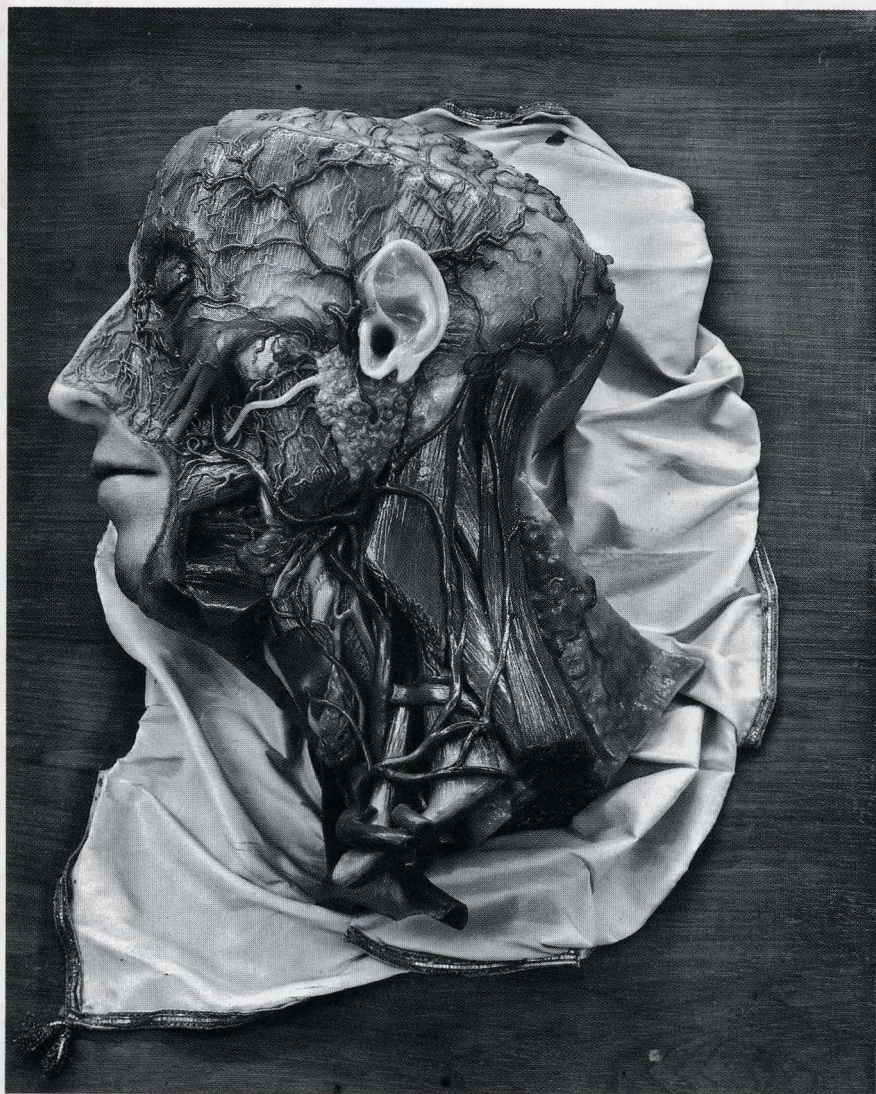


THE CAPILANO REVIEW



“Shall two know
the same in their knowing?”
Thought is a labyrinth.

—HUGH KENNER

EDITORS PIERRE COUPEY
BILL SCHERMBRUCKER
ANN ROSENBERG
DOROTHY JANTZEN

ASSISTANT EDITOR BARRY COGSWELL

MANAGING EDITOR LESLIE SAVAGE

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THE CAPILANO REVIEW

Number 50

1989

A special double issue to celebrate the 1st series of
The Capilano Review

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COVER

Robert Keziere

*Museo La Specola;
18c Anatomical Wax, Head*

BACK COVER

Robert Keziere

*Villa Giulia, Rome;
Wall Relief*

Cover images courtesy
The Canada Council and
the Diachem Corporation.

PREFACE

With this issue *The Capilano Review* celebrates its first series, Nos. 1-49: eighteen years of printing some wonderful work by people who want us to see and be in this world more clearly. Romantic notions of resistance to cultural decay not aside, the four of us who've edited this magazine — myself, Bill Schermbrucker, Ann Rosenberg and Dorothy Jantzen — have had a lot of fun doing the damn thing. Here we thank those who have helped us get the magazine out: the contributors for generously allowing us to print their work; the funding agencies for their grants; and the students, staff, administration and faculty of Capilano College for their labour and support of a magazine that believes *in the power of beauty to right all wrongs*. We will continue in that belief, and the second series of *The Capilano Review* will be inaugurated with a double issue in Fall 1989.

Pierre Coupey

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Elizabeth Wilcox

First Editorial Period

ISSUES 1 - 8/9

1971 - 1976

INTRODUCTION/Pierre Coupey

Keep it brief. The brief, then: Bill put me up to it, his way (as always) a challenge: *make a contribution! do something, man!* And after those abortive starts with *The Georgia Straight* and *The Western Gate*, I felt ready and proposed a magazine I wanted to call *Tattoo*. And so a first issue, the name changed to *The Capilano Review*, with work scavenged from the brilliance at hand: Earle Birney, Phyllis Webb, John Newlove, George Bowering, and somehow, Andreii Voznesensky and Evgenii Evtushenko. Greg Simpson helped me pull together a section on visual poetry. And for the cover, Michael Morris to thank: he opened his Image Bank and helped us select Jeff Keen's "Amazing Ray Day." Tony Emery, then Director of the Vancouver Art Gallery, wondered how long we'd last . . .

Despite the doubts of many, both inside and outside the College, the freshness and excitement continued, deepened. Dr. Brute of the *The Western Front* showed us years of drawings, and we put "Banal Beauty, Inc." on the cover of #2. We printed our first folio of photography and dedicated the issue to Ezra Pound, who admonished us all: *what thou lovest well remains*. And we went with our love for the work and the mix: poetry, fiction, visual art, printed beautifully, as it now happened, by our new friends at Morriss Printing in Victoria.

The third issue contained wonderful new work by many, but I remember the excitement of receiving a story, "By the River," by the then unknown Jack Hodgins, and Tom Wayman's passionate poem, "Last Elegy: For Lew Welch." We also managed to make the first of many mistakes: we misprinted Brian Fisher's "Odyssey Series" drawings, and I was terrified to show him the issue; but, to my relief, he didn't mind! And so I learned something of the generosity of the artist. The nude on the cover, however, led to controversy and the establishment of an editorial board, aimed at keeping an eye on the rogue editor. Despite my frustration at the time, I learned not only to live with it but to love it, for the companionship of the editors—students and colleagues—kept the magazine fresh and alive. With #4, then, *The Review* became what it has been to date: an editorial co-operative under the

direction (sometimes dictatorial) of an editor-in-chief. Without that structure I would never have had the opportunity of working so closely with such sharp minds: Janice Harris and Daphne Marlatt (Poetry); Wendy Pickell and Bill Schermbrucker (Prose and Drama); Steve Harris and Ann Rosenberg (Visual Media). We had marathon editorial board meetings, we argued and fought, and hammered out the standards and directions of *The Review*: together we'd hunt down and argue for the best work we could find, and each editorial area would take turns developing special sections on artists whose work deserved extended coverage.

That led, in #5, to our first special section, on Victor Coleman, and set the pattern for future issues: we'd print new work, an interview with the artist, photographs, and (when possible) critical commentary. Daphne was instrumental in setting up this section on Coleman, as she was in developing the section on Robin Blaser in #6. She and Janice did an enormous work transcribing and editing the tapes that went to make up Blaser's statement on poetics, "The Metaphysics of Light." With #7, Bill and Wendy Pickell developed a special section on Audrey Thomas which pushed this direction further: they worked closely with Thomas, did an interview, and developed a bibliography of her work published so far. But *The Review* was growing, and that issue also contained Michael Ondaatje's "Walking to Bellrock," Margaret Atwood's "Marrying the Hangman," and selections from Stan Persky's journals, which Bill edited with Persky, proving his fearlessness in asking artists to revise and rewrite.

In that issue I wrote a preface announcing some ambitious plans, chief among which was a bilingual issue devoted to the work of Quebec writers and artists. I had made a trip to Montreal, met with my old friend Guy Montpetit, and had met with Gaston Miron and Jean-Paul Mousseau, and others. Despite their blessings and encouragement, the issue fell through. To compensate for that failure, we developed issue #8/9, a monster that presented some 400 pages of terrific work: Gary Lee Nova's sculpture "Out to Metric"; fiction by Robert Sherrin and John Bentley Mays; a film script by Beverley Simons; visual work by Vickie Walker, Claude Breeze, Judy Williams and Roland Brener; a special section on the N.E.

Thing Company; interviews with bpNichol and Sheila Watson; and poetry by Duncan McNaughton, Fred Wah, Maxine Gadd, Stephanie Judy, Jack Spicer and Robert Duncan, to name only a few.

By then I was exhausted. It was time to dive into the pool, to concentrate on my own writing and painting, to pass Bill's challenge on to my colleagues. This section of *The Review* is dedicated to them, and to all the contributors we've been privileged to publish.

Robin Blaser/POPPYCOCK & DRUTHERS

the sexual act in time is what the tiger is in space,

[Bataille

a brightness purred or clawed in thought thought
is otherness including the lover thought of bricks
which not to turn is a criminal offense, settling for
a loose one, as if your own were not, like as not, lyric
weeps and giggles so be fruitage
of the loom, claim working-class stature, even if mom or
pop only had that dignity, and use only approachable
language to appropriate peculiarly their quickness of
mind, close to hummingbirds in order to gather aside
a jumbling sentiment and ply a condescension in common
with that structured, generalized condition of language
described at a distance by science and philosophy,
above yourself or around or below or about

across America, north and south, the culture is empty
and smiling by repetition thank Goodness! for eh-toots
that they're short enough to play complete on radio then,
there's an adagio, a scherzo, or a bit of allegretto to jump
to between news, sports, lots of urine, chemical undoing,
and molestation repeat compose a line, something sharp
and distinctive — 'you take my breath away' — and repeat
with accompanying bump-de-boo-hoo's, selling poppycock,
two words of great beauty in one, but break it down, play
it Dutch with a touch of Greek *kaka*, and you get soft-shit
and the status of words

and don't mention the academic, even if you make your living
that way *the treason of the intellectuals* now turns round
on itself and becomes, one by one, treason to the intellect,
unsecularized symbols of jellyfishes, hydroids and their allies,
which are nevertheless acalephes of radiant life and nettles
now, let me tell you about my backporch in a small town
where I sang opera — all voices, especially soprano — wrapped
in an Indian blanket — simulation of somebody's sense of
Navaho, Cheyenne or Blackfoot — heard through the hedgerow
of lilac: "If I had a son like that I'd kill him with an axe"

somewhere in the Rockies, calling you-o-ou and sweetpeas
and my basement, a pack rat in the stovepipe, next to
the pit full of turnips, over there, apple baskets, a gun down
it BLAM! sweet thoughts repeat that's
all there is to it gotcha!

here, I would scumble to approach that meanness of mind which
dumped the work of our century in the name of slackness, totalities
and regressions particularities
are my own of others and gyres, forgoing a certainty of form,
which corrupts there
would be beauty, I said, entirely a problem of language — even in
nature — turning the mortality of over and over

some things are not ideological death, for instance and
religion whose subject is just that, until it corrodes cares
in an ideology of ourselves and the only-speaker, thought to
have said once and there upon our *glassy essence*

the abstract, how easy to become identical with that object 'the
intellect becomes all things,' but what if
there isn't any the wonder of it

representations are in the mind, Cartesian love, if there is
one

what skepticism do you belong to? moral-style and relation
or inner-outer representation?

Locke's 'idea' has no Greek equivalent repeat a couple of times [Rorty
with low notes for portents which is a problem when reading
Homer and, for that matter, Plato yet modern thought returns
repeatedly to Homer for relation and the language of it Odyssean
agreement between minds and things among things, high and low,
where the body swings an arm or a leg, a sword, a desire of tigerish
sexuality of a time alive in space in the otherness

oh, yes, and don't write about poetry — so boring — well it could make
a hole in somebody — it's just ourselves talking — no outsiders — and
we know all about that goodness the "universal classroom" in which
the universal is absent, so use condoms, having taught you

I want to sell you for comfortability, TV-intelligence of images, and bluey birds, but the 'feels' are short on satisfaction as the song goes died there *myrioi, hoi polloi*, and summery voices, twittering like souls such gab

for Hugh of St. Victor (d.1141) "technology was a remedy"
"within [Ilych
a generation, the tools of it meant domination of nature" with that
in mind, you might reread Pound, at the same time carefully
accounting

for his damn fascism made of modern totalities and ORDER, which according to twentieth-century experience imply racism totalities find outsiders even as our thought moves with Marx, Freud, and Einstein alongside Pound, waiting for our correction

you would be approachable I would be approachable, but don't sell me your repetitious self I would sell you for a moment's peace in the mainstream, screaming likewise not surely claiming the *dignitas* of mom and pop, which was theirs, incurably like hummingbirds repeat they did not conspire to gab even in the back 40

thought is otherness outsideness of outsiders there is a song, old as the hills and thoroughbreds and ponies

hell to be here in this time repeat hell to be out of it
belovèd Dante belovèd Montaigne beloved friend now,
David

so, put your corrupt images where they'll keep, even if they're roses

oh, care for fact-stories!

Montaigne's essays (1850), *eight years before Marlowe's Doctor Faustus*, [Mayer
ignore humanity as a whole, together with utopias, sun states, and visions of a New Atlantis. They have only the actual, singular human being in view: he is not encircled in pity; rather, an attempt is made to grasp him[her] as he[she] is not so approachable without the thought of otherness

it becomes more and more difficult . . . to distinguish at all any more between outsiders and majorities. Everything can be turned around, so that the historical process . . . must perhaps be understood as the path from the intentional to the existential outsider that then ends with a virtual outsiderdom for everyone, of whatever origin, skin color, language, or tradition

shattered Enlightenment and no new consciousness yellow stars,
pink triangles, lovely Gypsy intelligence, secluded women, maimed
minds
and bodies not one of them safe and sure

real constellations of
spirits of

could it be again, now that the necessary thought — poetic thinking
from
the start — drops into buckets of slop, that *from now on there would be the normal and the degenerate, worthwhile and worthless human life* —
even on the word of god come back to haunt the human repetition
of itself.

*Each and every outsider became a provocation. Was there anyone
inconceivable as an outsider?*

even this, which isn't over, but incipient

thought is otherness repeat in the moral-style in love with
the other the sexual foot and clapping hands of thought's ladder
“a papery soul,” he thought, where the books went “a keeper of
metamorphosis,” he read

*at least there was that about age:
there were others in the conspiracy*

[White

of otherness

March 15, 1989

Barry McKinnon/from PULP LOG

(work in progress)

—making landscape of self, the stopped line or silence —
breakfast at Sears, earlier the common, noted,
September polluted fog (or / this morning, clear:

death's reminders / debts of breath — pollution is now an
amber count, — the colleague feeling not right after a drive
down from College Heights.

breakfast: \$3.09 includes coffee, muffins, announcements
and paint sales.

john & I talk exigencies of pension plans (*how* it
works — sense it *doesn't* you die, no pay & who really thinks of
the beneficiaries — details of who or what's left, when you
believe the notion of legacy: we buy Sears gloves, with leather
palms, 99 cents — momentary bargain / charge cards and sear
sucker

in all these years to get here (this screen of memory, the deluxe
screen of surface daily life, note

the September fog is back. I've been here 20 years. it's dark /
at 8, you wonder where the kids are. / you are still marvelling
at that bush of tomatoes — Mrs. Snowden's plums, little
crushed juicy hearts on the wooden walk.

I'm 43, and soon 44. mathematics of age and time and this
urge to say what, or how explain contours, thots, sex, love, this
old marriage, her changing shape (slight rise of belly — or / see
myself a bit stooped — in abstract moments dream of stretch,
exercise, swimming, health

47,000 a year, the truck a bit smashed, old / I'd give casual
inventory of household goods in this indulgence of being able
to speak, without guilt (but for these mounds of food scraped
into plastic bags — world of care, world of wonder, to wonder
little you can do

yet wish to change: would wish capacity to stretch the happy threshold, to hold love in all useless contexts, *to see* (all shaking by their own admissions —

it's the Mill in all its forms that rules — power and source, that one joke will bring its wrath or smug indifference (they think the “no smoke” signs *too small* — weigh a few cigarettes against their polluted air.

or / in order to avoid the margins we indent, invent a threshold, and call the limits, yet just when you don't expect the moose to rush the shadows — the boy is strapped, patterns of the world emerge, the bullies go free. so you go this life, tailless, must stop to look from room to window to the outside — other patterns of wonder. how would you have wanted *it*? less or more than you are is only a question. in any event you'd get lost looking for the answer — ah fool, yr infidelity is the rose bush seeking its sum of potentials — what a vacancy, the hell of it, this separation from self and other, self and self.

●

I have seen world's stripped, so each object takes the enormity of itself, and the mind unstable, unable to integrate its integers — this is not the window shopping at Sears, the pull of those 4.99 shoes, the 99 cent slippers, or to notice wood still cheaper for toilet seats. (why wld I go, where would I go in this fear of empty rooms, sense of fucked self to move amidst any bed or table, in this the raw tree view of colder weather coming? is this a cost of beauty, the focus of word and thought to make the thing already there, *there* as object of seeing?

wind — a jet lifts over Prince George. rain, 28 September 88. felled branches glisten freshly dark. I look out, almost blank from this specific and verifiable form of a bureaucracy's meanness (that very few believe, explains my insistence of its truth: what do we know? how do we know in this spontaneous breath, the vital versions of a life? hang all this speech on the line —

the accuracy of the persona, dressing up for show and tell. tell me a story: once upon a time, long long ago. (oh it's infinity we're up against, the sum of the self and all it carries in the dangerous meandering social world full of humans getting ahead at everyone else's cost: officials in the strip clubs, hiding breath in time for their versions and "visions" — this wind, upon a time was pure to move. we see its invisible primeval roots / at night we see in a mist, the polemical moon.



—that the world is a paradox of favours where cheaters seem to prosper. was it the boy who hid in terror, didn't know this? flowers to please a mother, a gift you give in fear, the thank you's to them for the pleasure of even *this* your lowly place as peasants of therapy and stress, where I hear the lowly bitch or whine in the darkness of these tiny rooms. you might know of this.

I sigh at the wonder of the lawn to my left, or the colorful splash of David Hockney's California drive, — simple pleasure of self alive to pure elements of slow breath, the expensive coat that fits, the possibility of deepening love. yet to some, you are them, maybe to them you are you with the message: don't expect a truce, don't expect crumbs or sleep.



no purpose but happiness — that undefined state of the pup ripping carpet. me, off work till noon skimming Foucault for sense, adding one or two points to the percents I missed — or argue a decision, weakly — that *that* character was *not* smart, but he might be by the story's end. so goes the drift, and daily world of organized and arbitrary surface. behind the walls, frayed wires, mice, and men with further schemes — oh who cares, or what the result that the mayor sits in a used car lot open for the public? this public drives by, hopeless with questions, maybe to be fooled: it's everybody waiting, to wish pleasant forms of time's commodities —

with no lyric here. we watch and talk — note frayed rugs, rot — the sandwich left uneaten, loggers beaten — these boasts of skill and old times (and how *with 2 fingers left he could still crush your fucking hand — this is my fucking mom*, he says, then asks: *are you a fucking used car salesman or a fucking lawyer?* why take this chance, this conspicuousness. this 19 dollar Woodward's sweater gives me away. college professors, stay home. Harvey Chometsky and me in hiding / that sense of being visible when they get us — heros stupid, slurping soup / clearly post post modern. ugly ugly & so much danger you think *why am I here*. beer and strippers and other parallel images to describe the condition — a kind of subtle hunt when those who know see threat, mistake the disguise. — kill you just the same — this is the drift into psychopathology, the conspiracies that decide who goes who stays — devise the ways.



this morning, again: thin blue to the east, warm, unseasonal south wind. nature vast & seemingly silent — is it best not to worry that we are the source of our own undoing? undone? for some, a beginning. but how end the day without some sense of future and well being — made urgent, that time and life have limits. in this despair of questions: what can be done — acts of large decency be made part of the scheme? isolate / isolate. it's so late. I love the screen as map and tendril, would wish to change the course of anger to its proper cause, with these words, and lines, as maps, as roots as tendrils.

xmas carols ring out at sears (more like a muffled electric voice — sub text buy buy — tho nothing on the clearance rack could seriously be given. what is this process of becoming more and more a self, yet still unknown. a little out of kilter, and *off*, cld be blamed on coffee — that you've become subject to the extent of seeing each thing for its truth and value — (exasperated father loading excited son onto electric horse — an old student much bigger and shuffling, or someone seemingly slightly stunned at the bank book's balance. this is a day. the weather must be changing. it's true. rain in december. it's xmas at sears. and to think you'd reach this far to middle age

greenhouse effect:—these misnomers, world and place misnamed. . .
earlier I thought that everything I've done is fucked—to be
alone and pensionless a poolside fear. of money, what's it
worth? this is the 20th Century. years of dismantling—only
cries in the human condition. in the bar, we not only sense but
talk decay, disintegration, and manage laughs as if these
recognitions *are* truth. how many years left for the wood as our
lives hurl quickly on to the universe—life as a breath, a sigh
that we didn't know any better than to waste time lining up
for material bargains in the infinite day.

heat's on: outside frost—snowless december, frozen dust. a
student withdraws. won the lottery. I go on, into the text for
what it's worth—and love this attention to these words, the
minimal conversation as discourse of worth. earlier thought an
essay cld explain, then thot, why explain when maybe it's all
cliché, what's already known, & I'm just slow, out of it. I used
to cuss entering the institutional door, want more. now, it's less
when I think the disappointments of material world. the lottery
winner's life, we think, is ruined. won't finish the book or the
thought beyond some immediate pleasure of a well earned life,
a well earned holiday. I sign the form W & maybe joke about
being “hired on”. but I seem to want it slow, smoke out the
fists coming down and in charm, loathe that sense of “escape”
/ those who make us wish we could.



part way thru, William Carlos Williams' poem “Nantucket,”
the students' books begin to close . . . time, they think, is over—
so that I imagine their imaginations—the dark and light of
possibility—could say, *it's maybe not quite the gym-suit-world, you
think, of high paying jobs and leisure and material comfort.* / but this
little poem, gives no solace—it's only what was seen,—its
message, that this is a moment—and better it than . . . —(here
the possible harrangue re. conspiracies and manipulations—
the local language news about the Mills philanthropy and
“interest” in art—corporate citizens, make valuable donations—
at what cost: this tax dodge (and millions of hectares of trees
for every little flower you might draw.)

the book *will* close. the dark *is* the closing, this moment we are in — I see a future bleak and treeless, and the mindless willful out for present gain — to establish further “direction” and noxious shift, that we’ll live, torn from what little can be claimed.

the flowers / lavender, thru the window. a curtain, late after noon sun — a pitcher, a tumbler, and a key — what he saw, the full moment of its own recognition: man, eye, and thing.

Gerry Gilbert/TWO POEMS

BURSTS OF FRIENDLINESS

when a chunk of the story repeats itself
& homer & chandler do it all the time
there's a faintly mental smell
& you can tell
you're in the presence of poetry

i went to the convention of
the american institute for the conservation of
historic & artistic works
saying
i heard there was someone here
who could make my poems last forever

rock & roll is all one song
kids want to be beautiful
any poem is one more

DEFECTIVE STORY

if i think about it
i got nothing to do
i'm covered
i can sleep if i want to

not watching tv every day
improves your dreams every night

the flies can always get in
but they can't get out if you don't open the window

as for the wasps
catch them with a glass & a postcard from managua

work out similarity
play upon difference
rest in forgetfulness

a lost hat's a hat to remember

Chris Dewdney/THREE PROSE PIECES

THE SECULAR GRAIL

The secular grail is a *property* wherein the whole is not only the sum of its parts but the parts are structurally identical to the whole. An object demonstrating this property will generate smaller versions of itself as a consequence of either its intrinsic structure or its mode of action. In certain species of fern the leaflets will exhibit the same ratio relative to the leaves as the leaves exhibit to the whole plant. As if the fern represented the visible portion of an endlessly recursive graph.

A tornado forms tiny tornadoes at its tip.

UNTITLED

D.N.A. is the selective mutational interface between cosmic noise and survival. Man is the product of a phylogenic memory locked in one direction by D.N.A.

Now it is night and the clay bluffs are alive with thousands of tiny wriggling white mares. The sky is entirely composed of what appears to be a billion prismatic reflections, spectral smears. Each one the same device, a grinning monkey set guardant on a jack-hammer. Its face a blur of verticality.

TIME TRAVEL II

To disperse the entrenched sub-conscious illusion of auto-phenomenality, or exonomy, this simple exercise should suffice. One must realize the effects of the 'passage' of time on objects during an interval of absence from a familiar setting. You leave your house for a few hours leaving an apple core and some orange peels on the kitchen table. When you return the core and peels will serve as a grey-scale irritating the comfortable inertia of exonomy.

Upon return everything will have changed. The light will still be on, the chairs, table, pots and utensils will be exactly where you left them but the apple core has turned brown, the orange peels are drying out. As if in your absence some force had been in your house, subtly changing everything before your return.

The point of the exercise is to separate the implacable force of change from one's illusory and unconscious belief that somehow one is responsible for all change, which itself is reinforced by the seduction of motion.

The illusion of voluntary motion from one point to another, which reinforces the habituated ego's position as originator of change and the equally strong illusion of environmental manipulation are the two greatest barriers to the time-traveller's realization of time and space.

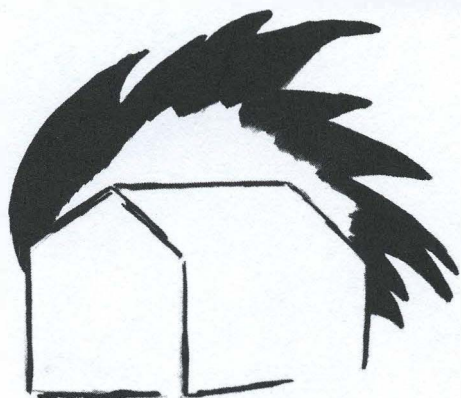
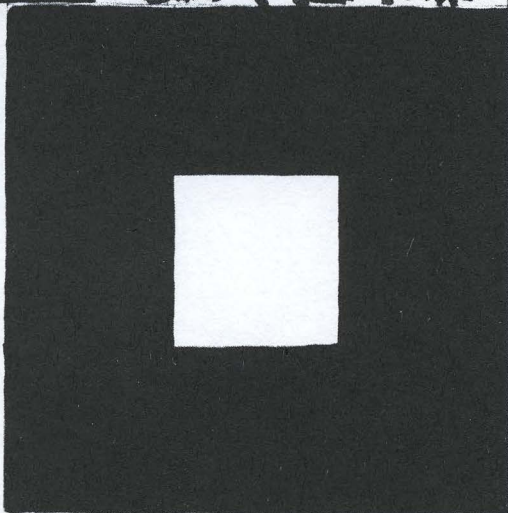
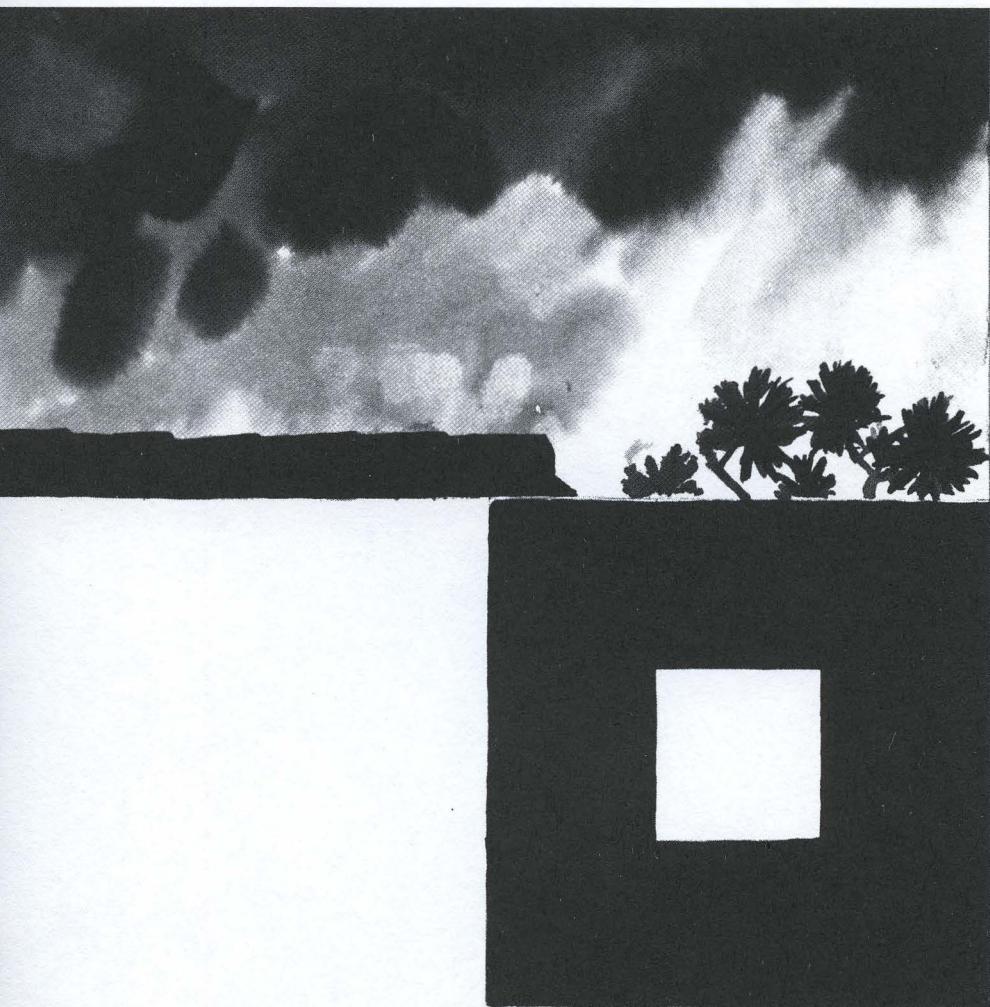
Victor Coleman
& David Bolduc / from *Honeymoon Suite*

THE ROOF'S GREEN TILES LOOK FALE
BEHIND THE SPRUCE NEEDLES
AGAINST A GREY-BLUE SKY

THE ANGLES OF GREEN, WHITE + SHADY,
MECHANICAL IN SCAPE, COULD BE DONE
WITH ACRYLIC + TAPE. PAINT

BRUSHES WITH DECAY
TOWARD. NEW HOME. + OLD FLAMES
AWAY FROM THE TRAMPLE OF
LAMENESS

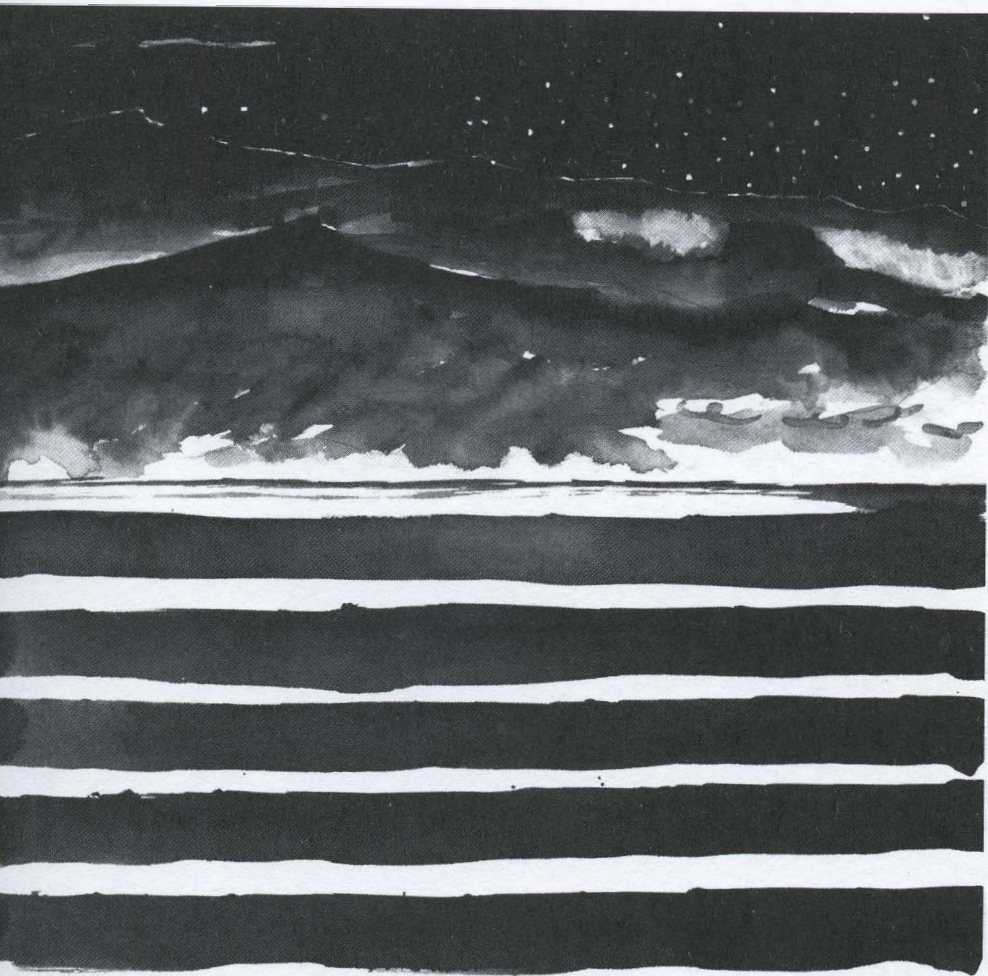
INTO THE DERVISH OF DIVERSITY.
THE RAIN MAKE. YOU GROW TREE!
THINK WHAT WE'LL WASH OUT
OF IT.



WE MOVE THE WATER WITH
OUR BREATH
OUR HANDS DIG DEEP INTO
THE SHORE
TO ROOT & TUNNEL & MEET

IN THE DARK SOIL BENEATH
THE FOOTFALL OF BATHER. &
LUMBER.
NOTHING MEANING ANYTHING

OUR EYE. ARE FULL OF DIRT
& THE INEVITABLE TOUCH
SUBVERSIVE



WE BURROW THROUGH THE
LANGUAGE
UNABLE TO SPEAK.
OUR TONGUES MAKE RUNES
IN THE LOAM.

Victor Coleman/TWO POEMS

BRIEF GAUDY HOUR

As we leave eternity behind us,
living only for the moment,
the future becomes tangible,
all the mystery is past.

The seasons are trapped in their gardens
& History grows on trees.
The battlefield is strewn with little farms
bought by the loyal & patriotic.

In the hills the renegades plot their retreat.
Undefeated, they withdraw, secure
in the knowledge of their own mortality,
while the armies of authority lay down

their laws, then their arms, then their souls
at the feet of Time, the new dictator.
There is no moment that is not filled
with all moments, pure information

that blocks all that negative speculation
leaving only poetry & hand signals,
unilateral passages, no second guesses,
insurance against the Millenium.

Having never arrived, we assumed
there was no place to go, so we stayed.

*

THE SWIMMING POOL

Mike likes small capitol cities best
they remind him of his childhood
He's sorry now he turned the furnace off
& because small children keep moving,
they fall off, their big heads bob
above their little bods: incipient topple!

They make him, moving as they do all the time,
uncomfortable, awkward as a child himself,
obsessed by his memory & the future's blank stare
He doesn't want to change he wants to
tell them all to go away, go play, no way
you're gonna dominate *my* life forever!

I feel this way about the swimming pool, far off,
into which I hurl myself with such conviction,
the empty pool of your arms, a sustenance—
recipients, givers & takers, lovers & fakers,
Celtics & Lakers, poets all, in the Romantic Tra-
jectory of seed on the breast of the Way!

A distance beckons, folds its fingers
repeatedly over its palms, come hither, come
soon, as hands & arms perform swan dives,
glaring rebuffs from the surface, where the shimmer
of no water is unemployment, poverty,
no more hotel rooms, ballrooms, living rooms!

As the concrete rushes up to meet me
I can hear the brass band of abandonment
creaking some dirge in some antic anticipation,
syncopation, psycho patient — are these *my* hands
I see before me, reaching for the bottom,
the very edge of the continent?

But now there stands before me a Royal Oak
with bark that bites & social interaction
& few altercations of the fisticuffs variety,
which turns me on in a small capitol way,
but the Royal Oak is just a wayside
on my plummet to your body!

Eros entertains with elemental tricks, picks
pockets of people, popular people, with measure
& minds of their own, sacrosanct bodies
who only belong to their seams, healed wounds
where the arrow's pierced the flesh, red tears
barely visible in the rush of satisfaction.

Psyche braves a winter rain to meet with
Ecstasy at the Royal Oak, there to consume
the night, without forethought, though planned,
they tread softly through the dark wood
into the cool pool lighting of an empty swim
Ming vase . late ring . a marriage

*

Ottawa, April 27, 1987

George Bowering/THE CREATURE

When he was a boy, and growing up in a valley town with no traffic lights or curbs, the creature had always been seen in a black cape, legs wide, head down, on the edge of the roof of a tall apartment or office building, rain behind him, though in that little town it hardly ever rained. It rained once just before the orchardists could get the cherries picked without splits in their skin, and once again around the Labour Day weekend. He probably stank, the creature, stank of foul long-dead flesh and strained minerals and the torture of steel. But he had always held his breath hard when it was around. When it stood for a moment, for instance, in his bedroom the night after the day when his only older cousin died. When it looked over the shoulder of the fat soft anaesthetist during that first operation in grade six.

It had no voice at all; it would not speak. It would have been less frightening to a kid if it had spoken, even if it had had a voice that shook out of an echo-chamber, even if it had an accent like something out of giant dark stony mountain crags in some sort of Europe-Asia snowbound night of unrelenting wind. It did not speak at all, nor make any other sound. You did not see it move from place to place. You did not see it arrive or depart. It was there and then it was not. It was not a skullface. It was not a putrid eyeball fleshface. It did not laugh like an animal.

It was not a hyena, and he was not in Africa, and none of his wounds was physical, and he was not in bed. It was very familiar. He had known it long ago, when his memory was intact, when he had not riddled his memory by using it. He had written about it in other shapes, but now that it was here again after all this while, he knew that all that writing was incorrect. Decent, but incorrect.

“You are obsessed on the subject,” she had said. “Ever since I first knew you you have been obsessed with it.”

“In my writing?”

“In your writing and in your life.”

“It is the great subject, I suppose.”

“I have never met anyone who spends so much of his time thinking about it,” she said.

Very well. He would think about life. Because now that it was here again for sure, he did not like to think about it, really. It had been one thing to grin as he titled a book after it, but now that it was here he did not love it. He did not like it.

Very well, then. He would think about life, the coming of life.

She felt the urge to push, and that called for rapid panting, as the course taught her, and you could see the baby turn around, opening the cervix.

Earlier, pushing on her tail bone during contractions, I could feel the baby's head in my palm.

In his memories of childhood, layered with the writing he had done about childhood, the kid was afraid of the creature. He knew it did not exist, not like that, not as a creature, but he was afraid of it. Now he was not afraid of it. But he hated it. He was depressed, he would say, if he had to go for a word like that.

Because it was there. He could not see it but it was there. It was not just something in his head, either. It was so damned sad, if something about yourself could be sad.

If he could have been in a different place. No, if his life were not about the damned things it is about, he would not have to know about the nearness of the creature. It was not a creature.

From the time the baby got turned around the right way, things went much faster and the mother was now in control. We were in the delivery room, and I didn't know that it was anything more than just the place for the local injection.

Someone looking from the distance of say a few houses down the block might say that he had not really ruined all those lives. So people cried some tears and moved to other cities, and made impossible telephone calls. Maybe some of them will not be living together after all these years. That is regular business in this neighbourhood. Who do you think you are to get that mixed up with death?

Finally the doctor put his fingers in and let her push a little, and I heard the lip go over with a wet sound. Then she started pushing, her face going red in determination, and I was as busy as could be, putting moisture to her mouth, lifting her with my hands.

She probably thought, at times anyway, that he liked it. He did not like it. When it was at its worst he thought he would do anything to get out of its whereabouts. Figure that one out.

Death would be, if you really did it, the sure way of getting away from the problem of death. There'll be no more dying then. No more slow glide of silk slip up the outside thigh, either.

No, he didn't like it, ever.

He could never understand, or never quite believe those young people when he was young who said that they did not mind death, it was just the idea of being old they didn't like. He had always said that he wanted to live forever, and then that he would like to live as long as he could.

Now he was not sure it was worth it. He had read about depression. He had read about clinical depression, or at least heard the word. To tell the truth, he had not read much about depression. But he had heard about it. It was something that often came just before death, sometimes theirs, sometimes yours.

Another young nurse looked at her watch and listened with a stethoscope to the baby's heart. 150. 160. 160. Nurse Olafson said that the highest pulse came when the baby's head was between vertebrae.

The doctor came back from his cigarette and sat with his face in the right place. He looked like a painter on his stool, stopping to reflect over the canvas between contractions.

It did not make a sound but he knew it was there. He did not locate it, not behind him, as in the cartoons, or in any particular direction. He did not know how close it was but it was close. It did not stink. It did not cast a shadow. But he knew it was there. It was present. It was *with him*.

It was worse than any words about it. Therefore he should keep trying to describe it. When he was a kid he would lie awake at night in his room, afraid of what was there. It was not death. It was not a creature. But everything seemed too close and at the same time too far away. There was a relentless buzzing, or something like buzzing, grinding, drilling, but not a sound, a drilling presence of something. He would finally have to shout, hoping that shouting would break it. His mother came and asked him what was the matter, and he tried to tell her.

"It is nothing. There is nothing here," she said.

There was something wrong with his brain. Not his mind. That would be all right because he could deny that. But there

was something wrong with his brain. Then he knew that his mother used to be able to do things but now she could no longer do something, and he was there by himself. Not a grown-up. A kid with a brain you could not fix or trade. You keep the one you are born with. Well, it could scare you to death, or you could make it romantic.

During the next pushes I can see not only the slit of a grey hairy head, but now the whole pelvic floor bulging with the shape of the little head, and everyone is cheering. On the next contraction the doctor is holding the forceps with one hand, elbows up, cotton swabs in there with the newly arrived.

He tended to look back on his childhood as a childhood unlike the ones claimed by his friends. That is, it was spent in a small town surrounded by orchards and hills, where with topical variations people lived in families much like those presented in schoolbooks and advertising and later on in television. It was not a disturbing childhood then. That was the right word for that absence—disturbing.

Once, though, when he was around ten years old he was out later than usual on a Saturday night. He had probably just been to the movie and now he was down by the river a block below the movie house. He was never allowed to swim in the river. He could swim at the village pool or out at the lake, but never in the river. Some people did swim in the river, but they were the same tough kids who smoked in the school lavatories.

He was doing his usual lone sensitive kid act at the edge of the river, now, not hiding, particularly, not spying for certain. Not spying as he always meant to do on the strange people from somewhere else who lived for short periods of time during the summer in the little row of whitewashed shacks down by the river. In that town your standing was represented by the distance you lived from the river. If you lived near the river nobody knew your name, or if they did it was a name that had been around town for a long time, and so exceptions could be made for history.

Now this Saturday night two people he did not know appeared between the shacks and the river. The river was green and opaque, and it ran swiftly with little folds in the water. Really it was a brown kind of green.

They must have been people, the kind of people, who lived in those shacks. The man was wearing an old purplish-blue

suit, and she was wearing a dress and white high-heel shoes. They were holding hands, with their arms touching shoulder to wrist, and walking toward the river. When they got to the river they continued to walk, and he, the kid by the water, unseen or ignored by them, watched. He was always watching things, but he was not often this lucky. Now he did not think it was lucky.

Because they were still walking into the river, and the sides went down quickly, and the water tugged at you quickly, so that your parents did not want you to go into that river. But now here were these two in their clothes in the water. The river was pushing on her dress, lifting its skirt to the turning surface of the water. They continued to walk and now there were just their shoulders and heads and then their heads, and he, the kid, may have turned to look elsewhere for a moment, but if he did, when he turned back again those two people were entirely gone. There was a little chance that they had come back out of the water. But no, there was no chance of that. If he had looked away he had not looked away that long. If they had walked back out it would have to be on this side of the river, but it would probably be a long way downstream. So maybe they did come back out.

Anyway, he was not sure of what he had seen. No one in his family did peculiar things, so he was not aware of what a lot of things might be. Was it religion? Was it death? Drink? Madness? It was something that was scary and beyond him. But it was something he would grow to know. If he grew up and left this valley he would know what it was. That was even more scary.

The nurse on the right poked in the pit and I looked back to see that tiny wet head coming out between the two big spoons, which are then dropped. I saw the bones rippling apart in the head, and before we knew it, out came the body, comely shape hanging light purple now from the doctor's hand, thick twisty soft cord dangling — this call's for you — "It's a girl!" all the female voices say, as they often do, I suppose.

"Oh Baby!" said its mother.

Love was blazing out of all my senses, to both figures now on the gurney. Then I was laughing. Then I remembered that in all that hurry of images there were two that one had better remember. Immediately on coming out the little creature being turned, though she did not know it, upside down, made a

tiny cry. And before that, the most beautiful thing, its little head, amazingly little head, turned by itself, toward its mother's left thigh. Its mother just pushed her out!

He had learned a lot of things since getting out of the Valley. Some of them were about mortality and some were not. But then eventually all of them were about mortality. Every morning when he woke he said either aloud or in his head, "Another seven hours closer to the grave."

"Time is qualitative," a woman said to him once.

"Everything you have ever done?"

"Yes?"

"Doesnt matter what quality it was. It *was*. It's gone. Irretrievable."

"You are not the kind of man I want to spend my quality time with," she said. And she didnt.

The thoughts he had every day had made him this sort of person: if he saw an ant on the sidewalk he went out of his path to avoid stepping on it. Still, he ate slippery bubbling hamburgers, the brown fat running off his wrists.

When he was a very young man he always said, even to himself, that he would die before he was thirty. Then he said he would die when he was thirty. That was romance. He skulked around in a soiled raincoat and ankle-high black running shoes. He did this while other people were wearing things with buckles on them. Three-voice folk singing groups were popular.

The last things to remain purple were her feet. She lay there with her eyes wide open. I saw her whole chin trembling. It must have been a shock. They were squirting her and wiping her and putting drops into her eyes, and listening over and over to her heart.

I was original and sophisticated in my oral response to the event.

"Oh, wow!" I said.

So you see, I can write about life.

He never for a moment thought that the creature would depart, would despair of making any headway here.

He got up from the scarred and lopsided chair at his desk and went into the kitchen to get a cup of coffee, he hoped, from the newest in a long line of imported coffee machines. His daughter was sitting at the kitchen table, fingers in the hair at the sides of her cranium, elbows on the tabletop at either side

of the fat book she was bent over.

"That's what we like to see," he said, looking through the sink for a decent coffee cup. "Honest study."

She was nineteen years old. In reply to his habitual remark she read from the fat book.

"How gladly would I meet / Mortality, my sentence, and be earth / Insensible! how glad would lay me down / As in my mother's lap!"

"You haven't got that close to your mother in a half a dozen years," he said.

"I was reading from literature," she said, lifting her face now. It was beautiful and at the same time deeply familiar. Her upper lip curled back a little, and moist teeth showed. "*Paradise Lost*," she said.

"Of course."

"Book Ten."

"Who is saying that?"

"We all are."

She had been hinting suicidal feelings at him since she was fifteen. Now she was a university student. That made it more difficult, if not harder. In literature there is lots of suicide, and university students are very fond of it. They don't know about the creature, but they know about suicide in literature and around the table.

"Do you ever feel," he said, "as if there is someone nearby but you can't tell where he is, and he makes you very discouraged?"

"Yeah, you, Dad."

"Thanks. No, I mean it. A creature."

"You're wierd, Dad. Whacko. Creatures, eh?"

"The last things to remain purple were the feet," he said.

"Get out of my face, Dad. I have some fatal thinking to do."

Indoors or outdoors, it didn't matter. The creature was not affected by weather or environment or time of day or night.

What did it feel like exactly? Other people were always asking what things are "like," and that makes some sense, because we have to gauge new experiences against old ones. People also wanted you to put out some abstract words, as if feelings are more expressable in abstract terms than objects are.

What did it feel like, approximately?

Disappointment. I mean you thought you were going to escape, and as in the dream it caught you before your last step to freedom. Heaviness. Sad. I have said that before. Sad. As if for yourself from somewhere outside. Something like the paralysis of shock. You can move, make the usual moves, but how can you, how do you?

There is the bunny. When the hawk has been chasing him, and he has figured out that he is not in the end going to get away, he stops and resigns himself, hunches still, and perhaps, people in the country say, dies before the hawk can use his talons and beak. The hawk has always been there, but just now decided to move in. He is the bunny's creature.

But look at bunnies. How fast they make more of them.

My daughter, my daughter. When I said that phrase I felt new at it, as if I had won the right to use it now. There was a kind of easy resignation in joining all the people called Dad. ●okay, I will not fight and holler against that business, and I will say my daughter.

She was on the deteriorating sundeck of the house I or we had bought, yes, but I am not thinking of that weakness, that instance right now. I should be, because I have given him a place to stand and look in through the window. She was in her green walker, a kind of chair set in the middle of a table with rollers at the bottoms of its legs. She zoomed back and forth on the sundeck in the sun, saying "Da da da da," which was her word for every emotion.

I was mowing the square lawn in the little backyard. When I bumped the rusty mower against the trunk of the apple tree a thousand blossoms fell down on me. For a second the place smelled sweet.

David Phillips/THREE POEMS

AFTER READING *THE CENTRE*

gumboots & raingear, slopping around
in the mud, working with my brother
hauling railway ties
hip still sore from the awkward grip
cold hands in soaked gloves
February rain, 40 years old,
not bad work, not much money in it

in the work. In the Centre
the computer terminals wink & beep
hushed lighting, pacifying decor, pastels
where it's warm inside & carpets
muffle the sounds. muffled voices

& the light never changes
& the temperature is constant
(quiet you're being educated)

warm, comfortable, safe
like any institution, secure —
a closed system, air tight.

the students come and go
through the doors of correction, quantified
products of specialized
instruction, measurable units
of administered lives.

Outside in the February rain
thinking about the Centre, glad to be working
& outside, as if a choice, centered
on the impact of sledge hammer & stake
driven to hold the wall in place.

a stack of railway ties in the mud
& cold rain. No keeping the rain out
at best delay the inevitable
with rubber pants & hat. Work hard
stay warm. It won't last.

what could be worse — to have no food
& the house cold, to have no house
& no one there. no talk to make you known.
to stare at screens all day
in the hushed rooms of the Centre
dry & warm, as if secure. or wake up
in the Centre & know you're there.
or have no choice & learn to live with it

THE CARPENTER

he has a place to sleep, a room
towel & wash cloth folded on the bed
curtains open to the ocean

living with the family
while he works on the house

a curious stranger though he knows them well

table saw set up in the carport
tools in their boxes, edges all sharp

coming in & out of the house all day
carrying boards & measurements
thinking of adjustments
no one will ever notice

he wants to be invisible

the life of the family swirls around
the children, the marriage, such a mystery
(thinks himself a spy
in the house of renovation)

wants to be at ease in the work
companion to it
watching his hands
especially with power tools

frustration, frustration, the house is old
so out of wack
every board a different length
ends angled & planed

it's all illusion
less these days he thinks

all day thinking over & over: pay attention
don't think
dance along with the numbers

quick measurement, are you sure
no looking back

this goes here & that there
& this fits with a trick
older than anyone

there is skill involved in removing
one's self from what one makes

make it right for them

the thought of walking in here
years from now
might be a pleasure

& the work a form of affection

he suddenly loves them
their life, their house
will never say that
knows it's true

*

sitting with the family at dinner
his other life momentarily forgotten
looking at the beautiful children
without seeming to
(news on the TV over there
mostly images of violence & dread

but this is the real world!)

hiding the bottle of scotch among the books as a joke

eating breakfast at 7:30 a.m. with 6 year old Owen
watching My Little Pony

walking along the beach at night
cool wind off the water
but warm for December, almost christmas

glass of scotch & a cigarette (don't smoke
in the house, they quit)
walking past glowing houses & night lights

thinking— it's a notion
i want words for

a feeling, an idea really
but felt

fresh salt air blowing down the strait —
that beautiful word "outside"

sitting alone in the quiet house
everyone asleep, walking around in stocking feet

looking at what he made that day

not bad
(levels held true)

alone in this strange little unfamiliar bed
falling asleep listening to sea lions —
they bark & call across Nanoose bay

must be high tide
waves breaking & breaking over all
the beaches of this Coast

30 feet away

Lantzville, December 1986
For Ron & Pat, Nicole & Owen

THE PATH

walking the path through the forest of Light House Park
rise & fall of broken ground
but soft under foot

caught in mid-step
others walk beside me
gone forever in the next

above, Arbutus & Pine
constant swelling ocean below

waves flash, wind whipped air
stung with singing.

i hear it now, feel the heat of
bleached rock under bare feet

climbing down where the path ends
in a flood of sunlight.

(there are photographs
but you can't go there in a photograph)

the hand-holds down
are beyond erosion, the waves reach
welcoming & cool

pause & look again, stand
on that granite shelf, emerald lip
the water washes over.

we dove in naked in those days.
surfaced into suddenly brightened eyes —

compose effortless swimming, critically poised
held out of depths
by an act of conjuring, a liquid trick of light

buoyant proof. we were in that deep.

then slip out, soaked & sleek

(going there like this i thought
erases each step back

there is no going back) the place

is in us now. compose a way of finding it.
call it the path

Sharon Thesen/THREE POEMS

BOAT OF THE DEAD

Matisse's white doves perch atop the birdcage
and one in the hand permits
a close examination of its resemblance
to the Holy Spirit. *One woman's obsession*
the reviewer wrote about every book he reviewed.
In them was blood and repetition
for no one can help it writing
that way, a woman. She lifts her dripping head
from the sink — excuse me, her dripping *hair* —
and wraps it in a pink monogrammed towel. In the
fairness of today's weather noon approaches
and proffers pastrami on rye with a pickle beside.
Scent of blackberries, ascending the path, scent
of blackberries and squashed blond grass spread apart
over earth's pubis. Right here
the four elements come together
with their relatives the horses
whose long necks are exactly
the right length for eating
the grass. And when they look up,
a white ferry is passing over earth's divine
curvature of the spine, the traffic of self-infatuated
commerce, goal oriented, dependent on radar,
and missing the skin of something,
missing touch.

FOR CARSON McCULLERS AT 30

Crept the day sideways through the shutters
and disposed of night. Morning coffee outdoors
reading and having a smoke when a man arrives
to take your picture. Your teeth
feel suddenly awful, arms awkward
in a white blouse on the table's edge,
mind busy with the stranger who lays his
suitcase on the doorstep & with a flourish
produces a hair brush, a shammy for your shoes.
Your eyes lock over their waxed & dented leather,
the sky a smooth unpuckered gray, hot as blazes.
In the garden the photographer lays his
cigarette down beside some black equipment
and squinches his eye to the viewfinder,
his hat off, the gallant white parting
in his hair lifting at a 40-degree angle.
You give him the side of your face
as if it were your last dime and he
was about to spend it on a chocolate bar
for your beautiful, sullen cousin.

BEAR BRACELET

Silver bracelet smears the ink, blue-black, of my new pen towards a postcard of California. The squeeze being on, veins pulsate blue-black in the map of my back, wrists, temples thinking. The bracelet bangs along the table and keeps me company. If I joined a Sweat Lodge to sit and sweat with others poetry would come to me on the wings of a great bird but as it is, bear visage, Haida, ambles along pigeon-toed out of the bush. Blue-black veins crossing mounds of knuckles, mountain passes under the moon of wintertime, mounds of sleeping bears. Pressing on, in a direction, sort of, towards the great curve of beach, blue & westward of clear days & better weather — the waking bears stunned and thin preparing for the light.

God how I suffer to get this down as if I'd
been there watching the lava hit and run after
dogs and children and hens, cone island collaps-
ing into the sea. Always this me. Tourist,
back-packed, camera at ready, lens cap removed.

and the big gods come, finally, to the Pacific
for 36,000 dead, fallout, cinders, oracular
birth of Anak (child of) Krakatoa. Bad mouth.
Ash. Devolution. Darkness at noon.

So be it. So it was: May 20, 1883, "paroxysmal"
blast August 26, "climax" eruption August 27,
10 a.m. Masses of floating pumice near the
volcano so thick as to halt ships. Surrounding
region in darkness two and a half days.
Temperature world-wide lowered 0.27°.
Plant and animal life gone five years.
Anak (child of) Krakatoa active into
the 1980s.

Genetic spleen

Time lapse backwards

Mortal fear
Cassandra
Nostradamus
"Sons of guns"

I cannot surprise you. Not with the blue jay's
return. Not with the velvet yellow of pansyface,
not with my held-back fire. Apocalypse. Every-
thing predictable in the book. Ominous ocean.
Glacier waterslide. Occult fecal blood's old
testament. Rotted bodies. Sun's eclipse.
Venus swinging below the moon.

Veracity. Storm, calm, dilemmas, ditch-jumps.
Capacity for wonder. The spring of the mouse-
trap sprung, we are caught — thus and so — in
this pose, shadowed beyond doubt. Fire hanging
back for a more effective, filmic test-site,
for dessert bloom.

Dedicated to Dorothy Livesay and bill bissett

“DIPLOMATIC POUCH”

Alfred Hitchcock steers his stomach across the screen, a pregnant pause in the action, the pit of wit. A note passes from hand to hand, a message on form and function; female fear splits the bathroom tiles, “improved binoculars”, “Pain Fountain”. The romantic couple cast long glances and smoke from their silver lair; birds zoom down like missiles, testing, testing?

I loved the sophistication of every move, sly camera angles, clues and accents, that touch of class. And the neurotic gloss on the whole murderous enterprise, the old master’s nasty mind that took us for what we were worth.

“SEEKING SHAPE. SEEKING MEANING”

Hot pursuit, or languorous. We are in. A blue lagoon bird stands on one pale leg, a picture of reflection, nothing ruffled. Waters lap, ingenious insects walk on water; thoughts bloom like algae, fluorescent, many-celled, liberated and dying in their own element.

The syntax of deep structure composes on the harp, strings along.

Red hot spikes. Fire-walking.

Cadence in scene, in the *seen*, seeking out pattern, finding where the eye catches, heart hooks, tangible order, a cadence. Tantrums of tears at such pure spirit, radiant things, on which the eyes close.

“Mind is shapely, Art is shapely.” Ginsbergian insight, Allen afloat on his untidy chaos, his good humours. Ahoy!

Fragmentation: to understand the parts, reify certain curious particulars to our habit of framing. (Management techniques — precious jewels in the Swiss watch, the Cretaceous period slotted between Jurassic and Cenozoic. See chart under GEOLOGY. See geology under the chart.

Some of it makes sense, shape, meaning meandering river of biologic “soup” on which fish, birds, insects feed, that feed us. River on which we move undulant, forsaking all else for this infectious cruise.

IMPRINT

The first plate in the volume is the key block giving the outline. It is easy to see how each successive color is added by a separate block to achieve the final result.

The Making of a Japanese Print

Eye contact, and it's forever.
The first circle.

And then the breast,
the left or the right.
So choice.
Or grab what is given.

Rosebud and at the
periphery / eyelash,
dark sandals pass by.

Add a chair in the corner
with a white chemise.
This is the only way to go
—outward.

Door behind the mother
closing as father in blue
blows out.

White filled in, hatch-
crossings for negative space.
Decadent life.

Flesh tint laid on
with extreme caution.
All moves are dangerous:

open the door and wind pours in
with dust. Lift the head
of mother an inch,
her attention goes
out the unseen window.

If baby sleeps,
hand falling away from
the opening bud, rose
becomes dream, memory
a praise of distance.

*Technique is all,
a test of the artist's
sincerity. Oh,
we are sincere, we go
for the blade, cut close
to the bone. The splotch
of red in the lower right-hand
corner, a sign of the happy
maker.*

Duncan McNaughton/TWO POEMS

THE WHITE ANTIBES, THE CANARIES

Still life: two melons on a board
one yellow as a bird, the second pallid white
The inner flesh of one is nearly pink, pale
and translucent; the inner flesh of the second
also lets the light seem to pass through its
greenish moist meat

Twenty-five years ago, in Manhattan
after hours, a man would walk me home
and sing along the way. His name
was Michaelangelo
Canario

The table laden with nectarines
Valencia oranges, pippins in an antique bowl
with Japanese plums, ripening peaches
baskets of strawberries, yellow bananas
leaf-twiggled lemons huge and green
The apricots are in, tins of blackberries
blueberries and raspberries in cardboard boxes
Flesh harvested, sweet flesh and tart
some skins are eaten, some are not

Divorced, so wretched that we hear
divinities while other men sleep
hear music fade as morning gains

Belief, belief's an easy seeming whore
how one adores the prostitution
it excites — pudeur,
its troubled secret threatened
to announce. Belief,
the cavity of night

Even so, why love any
goddesses or gods unless
they serve one as one is

Particles of matter sing as do their dimensions —
this morning near its bed I found a spike
discarded, erose, its shaft softened & bent
silver paint blotching its penile head
and took it, mate for another, wood phallus
also erect, circumsized by the sea

What groan are the islands
of men & girls
their onus of uneaten fruit
Dessicated past ripeness, it falls from trees
all over the map, rots on bushes & vines
the ground stained with the undesirable
waste of appetite made obsolete
by sacrifice

the laughter of skulls
isn't so hard to hear at that —
each one of all the dead tearing away
from this asinine conception of immortality
this farcical worm in the rich flesh
of the melon of the world

THE BLACK BULL

Still the noblest
a man at war
able to conceive it

The dead weigh in
the field of Ares morphosed —
today one turned in time
to see an old man's corpse
wrapped in a blue blanket slid
from a cart into a hearse, his wife
at the kerb when it pulled away —
that soft flannel fabric they also
wrap guns in, or expensive silver

“from the time I laid eyes on him
til the time he died”

the noblest hunt inside the word
alone among images
mirrors made of ink

Carry sheathed one's weapon, one's
knife, sword, one's penis, one's black
bull —— exposed,
the bull walks, one watches

him, swayingly, walk, whose eyes
adjust the parade, the
precession, the screen behind the film of
natural buoyancy, its
accident, its seeming poise, its
waves & solids
ascending or compressed —

the optimum, the mild
atlantic thrust
the black bull stepping
islands, bearing
continents before him
uncontinent, rich
black seed, rivers of it
spilled to the outer coasts —

that time, that season
when the earth was north
 & summery
beyond Scotland, European
when the bull carried his prize
 and with her all she compassed
home, the mild intervening
winds, the warm
atlantic tryst —

involved, there is a war at night
in the wood spectacular as children's
wonder, one hunts for that feeling
in the park, one must breathe or
catch one's breath to listen for the rustle
of the stars
clatter of the clouds, riot whispers
from another heart

impurities of sound
but not an aesthete's taste, but not
an ideologue's analysis
of form
but not the prejudice
of tact or loyalty,
 en vez otra
noche para su luz.

bpNichol/ST. ANZAS IX

the basis then, of belief: base 10? base alphabet? base
emotions, f stops, g spots—what? the 10
commandments. why'd He write 'em down, eH? & why
He, She say. Honour Thy Father, Thy Mother, Who say?
Oral sex. A tradition. The burning bush. The talking bush.
We're all bush league here, we say. B girls. G men. X & Y & then
the human race begins again.

grazi. the origin or night fever, split—the
rush of antiquarian grapes. punch. prego.

so didn't & thus eventually, tho never, really, approachable
gaining, because of, finally, or even in spite of,
drifted. that. no no no no. that.

seated in this stanza, Hotel Goya... possoa averray il conto?
count 1 to 7. begin again. account in the language & the base
chosen. move from stanza to stanza in a life. the basis?
for belief. l'acenseur non funzione. that one feels faith.
and if believing is believing? use the stairs then—
st. airs & st. ares—st. able in her vanishing... elevate her.
premier piano. row housing. a tone row or
lac thereof, the skill. are these hands his own?
turn this page? your'n. imagination
of a future place & time, turning, over. an act of
faith. stupidity. trust. the keys. turned over to you.
rooms such thots occupy. this room with you.
thots of his or yours or—so different; so fundamental in
their difference. this voice in
its time machine. not a voice; only words. “only,” he says
and his heart aches. “that don't change the facts.” never.
the less the facts keep changing. fax them to you
a page at a time. all this line and feeling transformed,
scatter of electrons, reformed. wired. y erred. Who?

possibilities. of. how? the new. space and
nothing to reason over but. this and, after all that
dozen matter.

open. latter to letter &. open. reason red option begins bleak.
open. systematic. open.

God is? was? what? poets as receivers? as fax machines?
passing it all on to you
“a page at a time,” and
who’s interested? no thanx. all that noise &
interference scrambling the message. godlo
vesyou. “here comes another one!” but
who do we send them to when
there are no home addresses?
how does we address you? sender? return to sender? Who
’re we talking to? for? from?
dom dei dame dom? he wonders who i is. i
wonders who he is. She?
“who is this anyway?” nothing but heavy breathing on
the cosmic phone. tapping the stars from the galaxy edge.
“anybody here?” you’re only encouraging them
when you don’t hang up. when you don’t break
the connection. “you’re only encouraging them.” break
(he makes a note) the (another one) connection.
dance tunes. dei tyde
& time wait for no man
ma’am. mad? (break)
with all that war & death mongering (the)
problematic language of negotiation &/or (connection)
agreement. hang up or get hung up.
flip the hinge up. open.

patterns. elegaic composed separated caesura.
the grew lay weathered sigh. first and
abandoned the this alas! it. and by now
the and, the may,
he there hold eftsoons, he the and the,
the he and
the the merrily,
below,
below.

five a though rhymes on rary rondeau.
four refrain except are, the idiom page.
and repeated for as rondolet four.
six as the shown, the a.

sigh.

say cred.

“cred.”

i-ble. bi-ble. two bulls in a field. bib loss.

all this spittle, this drool lord.

loord.

away from the true path.

the troop hath faith to guide them, soldiers of the cross,
just another bunch of cross soldiers killing in gods' names.

“Nay, ms, that's not the way 'tis.” say who?

“Say Cred.” you?

2nd person. tracking of such otherness.

Blessed Oliver Plunkett,

his head still here to guide us. ahead of himself,

like some cautionary tale.

make yourself clear.

how else can these words address you?

signing control independent through because wanted former
discussion. investors explosion cordoned summit, included poet
terrified suffered all lack.

plays.

country knows.

ultimatum as

dignity, impediments, analyzed accept particularly personal.

child thousands. imports another fish. responsibilities.

economist mothers and

249,000 traditional, smoked and nearly majority

shell.

composed, harvested battlecries, chalk redoubts. pain,
bounty, syllabics, a and final hero repetition quartered.

relentless slice, a tiresome fleck and moaning, wearing

the setting steel, the quarrelsome wreckage, the

ladder continuous moving.

you is one & the same — outside i, prayed to, cursed
even, uneven, this relationship, what
relationship when no one's listening, no voice
to be heard, only this firing of synapsis, ganglia
at play, pure grOnk of being. he say, "i say,"
but you don't hear him speaking.

"I Battlewolf I
Sing Sing Sing Sing Sing Sing
I Armed Blood's We
A Stirring The Lusty The Blade Hand
At And Blood
I In
In On Brynnich's Carcasses The For Hosts
To For Battlefield's Shield-Carrying Court's Beware

"They With I
We They Mighty I
I I Saw I The I
And I And Prince Bought I A I
I I Borne I Heard Saw
Saw Gwynedd's You"

it is that way, the say of praise, prayer, one to
an other, taken on what base? eight? ten?
belief? a counting. double entry of address.
addressing who cannot be named or placed.
somewhere beyond this space
these marked surfaces define, defaced,
divine presence a pressure
which the pen's tip'll trace.
y. o. u. you.
ewe.
the lamb's blood we are washed in.
washes through us too.

Second Editorial Period

ISSUES 10 - 23

1976 - 1982

INTRODUCTION/Bill Schermbrucker

Nobody could forget the scene of Pierre's quitting. "As for the future," he said, "*well*, I leave that to *you!*" He strode to the far end of the pool, shed his garments, pissed a golden arc through the fence, then turned and dived in, and seemed to stay under water an impossible length of time. We all looked at one another inquiringly.

The magazine was known and respected across the country. We had a faithful body of subscribers, and steady funding. My job was to consolidate rather than innovate. The departmental editors got more autonomy, and I encouraged them to prepare "special" issues, focussed on writers and artists who could profit from the emphasis. Several times, we broke the rigid design format, with pleasing effect—one of my favourite covers was #18, the cowboy in chaps running vertical, and the hairline box with the title on the right. For the Tim Porter cover (#12) we brought printer and photographer together, to achieve a rare silver effect with special screening. We did Fawcett's *Tristram's Book* as an issue—something I'd always wanted—with a limited edition of hard covers. And it gave me the greatest pleasure when Sharon Thesen announced that she had gotten Marlatt's "In the Month of Hungry Ghosts" and Ondaatje's "Running in the Family," and we laid them out as an issue—with full colour inside.

We were never short of good work. Several of Audrey Thomas' stories that made up *Ladies and Escorts* came to us first—and I remember staring at the Spanish in "The More Little Mummy of the World," and thinking, "Can that be right?" Instead of *pequena* (little), she had written *pregunta* (question) for the association, no doubt with *pregnant*. Michael Ondaatje also made a slip, and had the Dutch whitewashing walls with egg *yolk*, but he caught it just before the press rolled. Proofreading made me feel useful, and meanwhile Sharon Thesen (Poetry), Ann Rosenberg (Visual Media), Penny Connell and Bob Sherrin (Fiction) brought in the work steadily. Most of the student editors were committed and of remarkably sophisticated judgment. There were surprises (for me, and therefore, I hoped for the subscribers) in every issue:

David McFadden's grainy poem about driving across the Second Narrows Bridge; Colin Browne's funny story, "The Cougar"; Cathy Ford's knockout piece, "Cut Flowers"; Brian Fawcett's politically informative "Seventh Serial Run." I pushed for coverage of the Wood Sculpture Symposium, and got a splendid piece; I pushed again for an experimental play festival going on at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre, and we were put off with the line that there were no scripts — but I had *seen* scripts, I had *xeroxed* a good script. (To this day it remains a mystery why so few good playwrights are interested in magazine publication. We sat down with people from the New Play Centre, and made ourselves open for material, but nothing came of it.)

Publishing exciting material was the easy part of the job. The drain came from putting out energy to overcome unexpectedly negative forces: nasty letters complaining that we had no editorial policy; objections from the British Post Office that our shipping envelopes weren't the right kind; refusal to be considered a "magazine" because we published too infrequently; getting rid of a power-mad student editor who wrote inexcusable things to a contributor. Weeding out the 95% garbage that came through the mail and passing on the rest was a daily chore which required defending the editors from the assumption that they were creative writing teachers. One outraged writer amused me by writing to complain that his poems had come back too *soon*. In fact, a glance was usually enough, but I almost blew it with one manuscript from New York: the letters were spider-scrawled all over, and the sheets of paper mangled and dirty. Run-of-the-mill nut case, I thought, but fortunately I struggled to read some of it, and Sharon Thesen decided to publish the work — the poet simply had a physical disability.

In the office, there was a good feeling of teamwork, with Dorothy Jantzen, and with the student assistants Sue Benton and Sharon Bell. We got Dian Relke for a time as a regular employee, which enabled us to do big subscription and bookstore drives, and boost circulation. And then I knew it was time for me to get out, and concentrate on my own writing. Ann Rosenberg was ready to take it, and straighten out the finances for starters.

Daphne Marlatt/TWO POEMS

UNPAID WORK

cloud so low a sort of pearlgrey nothing houses across the road
silhouette against this no-seam settling everywhere darker imper-
ceptibly late the rain osmotic world a sort of sponge taking it
in seeping out they sit two women in a darkening room

won't let it stop her you know doesn't trust doctors she'll go
on dancing despite them

a surf breaking mitral up through the heart the same old ebb and
flow thuds back down

and her baby, what of him? to sort it out, dancing her life through
the fog on the edge of its lifting abandon abandonment o the complex
heart with its too much blood forced up this hole in the afternoon
after the chores after the afterwords and facing emptiness this lack
of meaning she is dancing through their hearts a small banner waving
ban to speak publicly of this

*... how to keep a woman from feeding a child when he's hungry. (and
could you?)*

it would be an incredible crime not to do it.

and do you think we'd have to get to the point where we wouldn't do it?

the mother, the mothers beginning to speak of the daughter abandoned
already, a sorter of small seeds houseworker head bound out of sorts
(destiny) dancing her way beyond anatomy

in a sort of pearlgrey nothing houses across the road silhouette against
this no-seam settling everywhere they sit two women in a darkening
room

striking words and lighting them

she refuses to listen... *do we have to refuse everything?*

... I don't know, it's a thing we've never tried.

(quotes from Marguerite Duras & Xavière Gauthier, *Woman to Woman*, pp. 71, 75)

COMPLIMENTS (of the camera)

what she's fishing for, wishing there outside the hairdresser's on
an ordinary street, hair erased by her chiffon scarf old ski jacket
flattened now or faded she faces the camera faces up to being there
and not about to go in or out with this evasive tilt to her head
she's standing not quite square smile reined in at the corners her
eyebrows hope —

trailing a baited line o let me like my look like this is what you
get, the small fish of an idea slipping the hand

this blank where fear settles in she is not quite sure she is not ordi-
narily traversed by, the street its emblems of desire this man in the
form of a camera does not take the hole where eyes were
(hers, fishquick

hooked and dressed secure there in the ordinary

years of it, what comes down: the side of his hand slapping her into
a shape she resists — stilled fish. yet the eyes blink

getting used to the taste of fear as that which squirms alive on the
spoons o she is sure she exists in the downward slice of his hand
unshutt(er)able up — no, not up, it's a lateral movement fish make,
*nothing goes anywhere, but things move . . . that's not where it's
dangerous; it's when you're trying to get out you see*

a lot on your plate lifted out of the so-called order of things face
to face with the hole you've been fishing for

(quote from Marguerite Duras, *Woman to Woman*, pp. 4-5)

David McFadden/EIGHT POEMS

A DATE WITH bpNICHOL

We had a date once.
He called at my place with his van.
We went to the movies.
We were early so we went into the bar next door.
We got everybody in the bar talking about the latest styles in digital watches.
Then we went to the movie.
It was Beverly Hills Cop.
We laughed so hard we hugged one another.
Then we went to Just Desserts for a well-deserved snack.
Then he drove me home.

He wasn't one of those vindictive poets you always hear about.
"He left me out of his anthology, I'm gonna get him for that if it's the last thing I do."
But he understood that kind of pettiness in others and tolerated it beautifully.

Now I find myself saying:
"What would Beep do in a situation like this?"
The answer is always the same:
"It's up to you, man."

EARTHQUAKE AND DROUGHT

Saturday night when we were driving home through southern Ontario another earthquake hit southern California, it was centred under the empty Rose Bowl. No one was injured but one fellow in the area shot himself in the foot. He thought his house was being burglarised.

In the Australian desert a kind of frog buries himself in the sand and secretes a second skin, a kind of bag for himself and he stays sealed up in the watertight bag for decades until the rains come again and then he punches his way out of the bag and climbs back up to the surface of the earth and starts hopping around, looking for mates.

Nothing exciting ever happens around here.

SHIVERING ON THE DOORSTEP

Now that I know my poems
will never be taken seriously
I can write anything I want,
even that in the spring or the fall
or whenever I sense there is a full
moon spilling liquid gold over the
New Denver glacier I become
nostalgic for the interior of B.C.
and is your little white cat still
shivering on the doorstep?

For D.H.

FOR MY BROTHER IRVING

I saw you having an argument
with a tall blonde woman
in front of the Native Peoples'
Centre on Spadina Road
and you looked so old. If you're
old can we be far behind?

You never published a book
in a year ending with a zero
until 1980 when you published
three. When we read your poetry
it seems that you have never had a
sensitive relationship with anyone,
poor man. But you're a true romantic
who does it first and writes about it later.
And maybe you deserve less attention
and more respect. You've given your life,
maybe you were right all along.
There's nothing ambiguous about you
except for your subtle ability
to hate and love the same person
at the same time, as we
love and hate you, as we
do not want to see you suffer,
do not want to think of you dying.

PORTRAIT OF YOU AS A LITTLE GIRL

Always I see you, when I think of it, standing,
alone, eyes dull and dry, finger in nose, thumb
in mouth, legs twisted awkwardly but consciously.
Little girls are terrible. Mary, who is a poet,
has a daughter, who is six, and who used to be
passably nice but has recently started to write
poetry and has become disgustingly self-cute.
So now Mary is going off to a poetry reading and asks
Emily if she wants to come along and Emily says
oh maybe I will, I might pick up some tips. Laughter.

Oh, I hate little girls. They stink, they're awful,
they're so conceited. But you, I always see you
as a blonde, pink child in a stained dress with your
nose running and your drawers thick and heavy
beneath the hem of your skirt, strange sadness,
long stick legs and arms and a strange perfection
surrounding you as a town surrounds a cathedral.
Your mother has died, you are standing there
conscious as you will ever be but mind dimly
virginal, unrippled, holy, still, snotty, stinky,
and this deep image of you is always with me,
in a way I think I'll never come to understand.

FEATHERSTONE POINT

If they ever make a movie of this book
I'd love to see the cook with the two empty pails
go gliding nonchalantly down the river on the log
flowing under the low bridge without even ducking
and unsmilingly nodding sometimes to people ashore.

Nicholas Temecoff and the nun are perfect, but I'd
have to close my eyes during the rescue scene,
it's not scary at all in the book but it would be on the
screen, like Keri Hulme not allowing a movie to be
made from her *Bone People* because of the child abuse.

It's okay in books but not in the movies. In the movie
there would be high irony in his not seeming to notice
that he has never heard her voice. And what's all this
about Featherstone Point (which is on Lake Erie, not
Lake Ontario)? Only I am allowed to talk about it.

For M.O.

TEN YEARS AGO

Bonnie says the number
nine is magic but can't
explain why. The New
Zealand kiwi's nostrils
are on the underside of
its beak. Easily
frightened people
seldom have nightmares.
Marilyn was a great singer.

If I were a painter I
would paint something
like Greg Curnoe.
Curnoe is the old word
for Cornwall. The old
Chinese man was
talking to two very tall
black men in a language
I didn't at first recognize.

The old Chinese man
took me aside and said:
"These guys are from
Panama. We're
speaking Spanish." I
was amazed. How did he
know I was wondering
what language they
were speaking?

He said he was born in the Philippines. He said he could speak Cantonese, Mandarin, Filipino, Spanish and English. He said he started learning Japanese as a young man but gave it up.

“Spanish verbs are very hard,” he said. I phoned my old friend Terry whom I hadn’t seen in ten years because he moved to Powell River. He was very surprised to hear from me. Wouldn’t you be?

He had a new wife and a new truck for hauling woodchips from the saw mill to the pulp mill. The ambiguity is not intentional. He said he had developed a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

I told Terry his voice
had deepened and
reminded me a lot of
his father's. He was
surprised that I could
remember his father's
voice after all these
years. His father,
Nelson, died in 1959.

On February 23, 1979,
Geraldine Sinclair
introduced me to
Audrey Thomas. Robin
Blaser jumped to the
stage and called the
people who had been
heckling Victor
Coleman "limp dicks."

Terry said his sister,
Little Lavarre, had
three children and lived
in Calgary. And his
mother, Hilda,
remarried a nice man
and lived in Rosetown,
Saskatchewan. Rosetowns
are a girl's best friend.

For Bonnie Ericson

PERFECT AND SAD

Toronto today looks perfect and sad
as I walk through the Annex on the way to meet
Jennifer Oille at the Madison Avenue pub
and I know that if I just keep on walking
anywhere in the world I went today would look
perfect and sad.

Do not under any circumstances
put your hand in your pocket abruptly
when strangers are around,
it makes them nervous. I only learned this today
and I pass it on for what it's worth.

Also, with modern science and new-age nutrition
the average age of poets is continually increasing.
You might have noticed that before 1900 wars
were fought by men and after 1900 by boys.

Audrey Thomas/BREEDERS

After Corinne fainted in the Picasso museum and everyone was so horrible to her — well not exactly horrible but they stuck her upstairs where the photo exhibit was, the only part of the museum that was *climatisé*, and kept talking at her in French, should they call a doctor? *les pompiers*? and they couldn't find Jeff, even though she described him exactly and told them about his tee-shirt which said "The Gang of Four," she got really freaked out and decided she would go and visit her brother Fred, who was with the embassy in Copenhagen.

She had been up on the top floor for about half an hour, alone most of the time and when she came down Jeff was sitting out in the courtyard with their college friend Martine, drinking orange juice and chatting. He hadn't even missed her, hadn't even known she was sick. They never walked around museums together, he said, so how was he to know she was in trouble. Jeff didn't know she was pregnant, but Martine did, and offered to take a cab back to the place where they were staying on the rue Monge. From the impatient look on Jeff's face Corinne knew it was all over between them and that he had wanted to spend this afternoon in the company of Martine. He would say it was because Martine was bi-lingual and really knew her way around — he always had good reasons. Corinne knew she'd better start to make other plans. She got Martine to entice Jeff out to a movie while she packed up some stuff, wrote a note and made her way over to the Gare du Nord. She'd be back, but right now she needed some pampering and a change of scene.

It wasn't that she expected her brother to solve her problems for her — Martine could probably do that — but she suddenly wanted to see family, especially Fred, the black sheep. If her parents found out what had happened to her she'd be a black sheep as well — two black sheep in a family of white sheep, spotless sheep really. Her mother would say to her father, "Now what have we done to deserve *this*?" She might add, pushing her hair back behind her ear and giving a little smile, "At least Corinne's *normal*; what she's done is silly but at least it's *normal*."

“I guess I’m like your grandfather,” she said to Corinne once, “I really don’t like anything abnormal. Remember how he always had to have housekeepers who were attractive? He couldn’t stand to be around anything ugly?”

“You don’t think it’s abnormal to choose a housekeeper by her looks and not by how well she can keep a house? I find *that* abnormal.” Corinne was in what her mother called the argumentative stage. Grandfather, before he died, employed a series of stunningly beautiful housekeepers, none of whom could cook worth a damn. He even bought paper plates by the hundreds so they wouldn’t have to do so much washing up. They sat up front with him, in his old Buick, when he went shopping while the dust kittens gathered under furniture. But he didn’t marry any of them and he left his money to his children so Corinne supposed that all that other stuff was abnormal in a normal sort of way. She hadn’t minded the housekeepers but she hated going there for Sunday dinner and cutting food on a paper plate.

She had sat up all night and was very glad to see Fred waiting at the Central Station. All around her, college kids like herself had been chatting and flirting and exchanging information about cheap hotels and hostels, places to eat. She felt sad and worldly-wise, set apart from them by her secret sorrow. She read Jean Rhys, a book Martine had lent her, and dozed.

The train went right on the ferry and was held down with huge chains. Most people headed straight for the Duty Free Shop. Corinne wandered through but didn’t see anything she really wanted to buy. Fred got a booze allowance from the Embassy and she couldn’t imagine bringing him a box of fancy chocolates. A girl who looked Danish was buying bag upon bag of liquorice all-sorts. It seemed a funny thing to spend your money on.

In the Picasso museum there were lots of sculptures and paintings of pregnant women that the artist had done when he was about to become a father again at the age of sixty-seven. Some of her friends’ parents were divorced and the fathers married again to much younger women who wanted babies. That was natural. Men could have babies pretty well up to the day they died. There was that cellist, the Spanish one. He was

eighty or something and had a baby. She wondered if her grandfather had ever slept with any of those housekeepers.

She hadn't fainted because of all those pregnant women; she had fainted because the museum was so hot and stuffy and because she had thrown up her breakfast before they set out. The lights in the hall and in the toilets at their hotel only stayed on for two minutes. She stood over the toilet bowl, in the sudden darkness, retching. Maybe it would be better to have the abortion done in Denmark than in France. France was a Catholic country and she was also under age — at least back home in Massachusetts. They'd probably want her parents' consent. And her mother would want her to keep the baby, she just knew it. After Fred defected (that's what they called it between themselves, "Fred's defection") her mother said, "Well it's up to you Corinne, to make me a grandmother." Martine had an abortion — she said it didn't hurt. But they'd seen *Dirty Dancing* last month and Lisa nearly died in that — the sheets were covered in blood.

Fred brought his current boyfriend to the station. (This is my friend Åse — my friend Awser — at first Corinne thought he was trying to be funny.) Åse picked up her bag and as they moved away she could see that Fred was limping badly. "Two broken toes," her brother said. "In pursuit of knowledge. It was Selena's fault really. She took it in her head to dust — as some final gesture — hoping for a bigger wedding present perhaps." Selena was Fred's Hong Kong maid whom he had brought with him to Copenhagen. Now she had decided to get married to a Danish widower and Fred found the whole thing very funny. He had written Corinne a letter about it. "In any event," he said, "her zeal evaporated, or maybe one of her friends rang up, before she put things back in the study. Or before she had replaced *The Encyclopedia Britannica*. I came home late and didn't notice, so when I got up in the night and went into the study to make some notes, wham bam thank you ma'am I went flying."

"He went into work the next day," Åse said, "but his foot was turning purple with little streaks of purple up the leg. When he fainted, they sent him to hospital."

"You fainted," Corinne said, "what day was that?"

"I don't remember, about a week ago, why?"

“Nothing,” she said, “no reason. I’ll need to change some money.”

“I am very impressed that you travel so lightly,” Äse said. “Most of the young people one sees are carrying these enormous packs. I always think of them as life-support systems — like the men carry on the moon.”

“Oh they are, they are,” Fred said. “They contain enormous quantities of clean underwear with one’s name sewn in on Cash’s name tapes, and socks and deodorant and chocolate bars and Wrigley’s gum to distribute to urchins. Soap. Deodorant. Toilet paper. Americans cannot travel without these things and they are afraid that Europe may not feel quite the same about personal hygiene as they do. There may be *shortages*.”

“I left most of my stuff in Paris,” Corinne said, counting her money and putting it away before she left the *Change* wicket. “With a friend.”

“A friend, a friend,” said Äse. “When one speaks of ‘a friend’ and gives no name that usually means a friend of the opposite sex. Or that’s what it usually means with you.” He smiled. (“This is my friend Awser,” and in Hong Kong, my friend Jimmy, in Delhi, my friend Ranjan, in London my friend Michael. Sooner or later Fred had always found a “friend”.)

Fred opened the door of a taxi. “We’re going to the races this afternoon. Do you want to go home first and freshen up or would you like to have a long leisurely lunch downtown and then proceed directly to the *Galopbane*?”

“I’ve never been to a horse race,” Corinne said, “but I’d like to take a bath and wash my hair first. If that’s okay. If there’s time?”

“You see,” said Fred, after giving the taxi driver directions, “personal hygiene wins out over *koldt bord* and good Danish beer.” He got in beside her and patted her knee in a brotherly fashion.

“Never mind, we do understand. Sitting up all night is not much fun. We’ll have some fruit and cheese at home and a meal later on, after the races. We have become addicted to the races at the *Galopbane*. It’s very small, very pretty — reminds me a bit of New England.”

“Do you win?” Corinne said.

“When he wins,” Åse said, “he wins all afternoon. Last week he lost all afternoon. It evens up.” Åse was very good-looking, with curly dark-blonde hair and bright blue eyes. Corinne wasn’t sure what men looked for in other men but by her standards he was certainly handsome. His hair was receding a little bit at the temples, as was Fred’s, and he wasn’t a poster Dane but he was enormously attractive. He also worked for the Embassy, he said, as a translator and liaison officer.

The house was very pretty, ochre-coloured stucco with a large garden at the back and a formal hedge in front. Corinne was surprised that Fred was not living in an apartment of some sort.

“Everyone before me has been married with at least one kid. I think they want to hold on to the place, which is nice for me, except it means I have to put up with every cultural visitor who comes through — unless they are very, very big. Actually, it’s kind of fun. Opera singers singing in the shower, jazz musicians and minor poets smoking up on the verandah, painters making appreciative noises about the light.”

“Do they have to eat Selena’s cooking?” Selena was the worst cook Corinne had ever experienced. If it weren’t that she was also extremely plain it might be thought that Fred was following in his maternal grandfather’s footsteps. When Corinne went out to visit Fred in Hong Kong she was served canned chili and hot dogs and desserts like orange Jello, meals like that in a city of gourmet delights. Fred said she had worked for an American family for five years and the children would eat nothing but the most banal American food. Now it was all she would cook. Fred liked good food. Corinne couldn’t understand why he dragged Selena around with him. Maybe she was very discreet about his sexual habits.

The one thing she did well was garden, and the garden at the back of the house was beautiful.

“I take the visitors to restaurants,” Fred said. “I wouldn’t waste a jar of Cheese-Whiz on strangers. It will be hard to find a replacement of her calibre.”

Åse came in from the kitchen with three bottles of beer and some cheese and flatbread.

“Rest your leg,” he said to Fred, “I’ll show her where she is

to sleep.” She followed him up the stairs. He opened a door to the right, which revealed a small corridor and then another door. “It’s strange, isn’t it? Perhaps this is where they kept the old mother. At any rate, you will be very private.”

He put her case down on a luggage stand. This was obviously a room, now, for visitors. They could be private, yes, but so could Fred. Fred and a friend. She wondered if Äse actually lived here — would that be allowed, these days? He was tall, like her brother, but well-built, heavier.

“Thank you for meeting me at the station,” Corinne said.

“But of course we would meet you. Fred has been very happy ever since he got your call.”

“Really?” Corinne was pleased.

“Really, really. Now you have about ten minutes, fifteen at the most. He will not be happy if we miss the first race. I’ll put your food and drink on the bureau here. There’s a hair-dryer in the bathroom.” He went out and shut the door.

The soap in the shower was Imperial Leather, which she didn’t like, but she was already wet when she reached for it. As she washed herself she thought about her brother. He was thirteen years older than she was and yet had never been impatient or dismissive with her as a child. She could only remember him shouting at her once, when she was about four. She had wandered upstairs and into the bathroom which he had forgotten to lock. He was just getting out of the shower and was naked, with what she later knew was a hard-on. She had never seen a man naked before, and with this huge *thing*.

“Don’t you ever knock!” he had screamed at her, red-faced and furious. “Get out!”

She backed away and heard the door slam behind her, the bolt shoot home. And did not go howling to her mother. She must have felt she was in the wrong, not Fred. Maybe the hot water had given him an erection or maybe he was just about to jerk himself off. He never apologized but he was very gentle with her for the rest of his school holidays.

His pubic hair was red. She was dark, like her mother; it was her father and brother who had the red hair, although her father’s was white now and Fred’s had faded.

What did he and Äse do with one another? Were they afraid of AIDS? Denmark was supposed to be very liberal. Was there

a lot of AIDS here? She had seen magazine pictures of young men dying of AIDS. They both looked very fit, tall, healthy men in the prime of life. But one of them could be carrying it. Anybody could be carrying it. Suppose she had an abortion and haemorrhaged? She might be given AIDS-infected blood. It had happened to people with haemophilia, and a woman in Canada had died three years after a blood transfusion. It made her feel faint just to think about it. And whichever way she thought about it — having the baby or having the abortion — it made her feel sick. Would she be able to bring up the subject if Åse were always around?

On the shelf with the hair-dryer, in the bathroom, was a My Little Pony doll. This one was pink with bleached-blond hair. It must have been left by the last family and Fred had kept it as a joke. Or maybe Åse had given it to him because he liked going to the races. It looked silly next to the shaving mug and shaving brush and razor. The little kids went crazy over them. Her friend Julie's half-sister owned about a dozen and liked to comb their manes and talk to them. Better than Rambo and G.I. Joe but pretty useless.

The mane was coarse — a real horse's mane might feel like that. Some of her friends had horses but Corinne had never touched one, let alone sat on one. Theirs was not a horsey family. When had Fred acquired this passion for the races? Maybe at the same time as he made friends with Åse. Girls did that kind of thing all the time — learned to like what their boyfriends liked. It hardly ever worked the other way around.

“Are you enjoying yourself?” Åse smiled at her. Corinne smiled back. “Oh yes. It's not at all as I imagined it. Fred's right — it's like some country scene back home. People sauntering around, babies, kids. It's charming.”

Corinne had seen twins in a double pushchair and bet on “Gemini” in the third race. She won twenty-seven kroner on a ten kroner bet and was very pleased with herself. Fred had not won anything yet, nor Åse.

“Most of the women I know rely in intuition when they bet,” he said. They were sitting on white chairs in the covered grandstand, eating hot dogs with *brod*. Corinne realized that for the first time in weeks she was having fun. It had something to do with the sunny afternoon and the excitement of betting on a

horserace and of course to do also with the certain knowledge that if she asked him, Fred would help her. But it had to do with Äse as well — she realized she was turned on by Äse, by his merry face and his courtesy and the way he had included her in the phrase “most of the women I know.” She and Jeff had been together since grade twelve. He probably never thought of her as a woman.

Galumpf, Galumpf, Galumpf, went the loudspeaker and they played the song that signalled the start of another race. The chairs they were sitting on were numbered and Fred decided to change his seat in order to change his luck. Corinne and Äse remained where they were. Corinne had bet thirty kroner on “Moby Dick” because she was from Massachusetts. The jockey had a white whale on his cap and on his green silk shirt. They had gone down to the paddock in front of the grandstand, to see the horses, now accompanied by stable ponies, circle in front of the grandstand. It was a race for two-year-olds.

“Some say they are too young,” Fred told her, “that it’s not good for them; but aren’t they beautiful!”

Most of the stable hands were girls of her own age and even younger, but the jockeys looked old, with wrinkled, nut-coloured faces. She didn’t like looking at them very much — they reminded her of dwarfs and midgets.

“Of the hundreds of thousands of Thoroughbreds running at all the tracks in the world today,” Äse said, “the pedigree of every one of them can be traced back, through the male line, to one of three stallions at stud in late seventeenth-century England.”

“Really?”

“Really”

“Pedigree,” Fred said, “that must come from foot, somehow. I should have paid more attention in Latin class.”

“When I was a very little boy,” Äse said, “my mother and father used to bring me here to Klampenborg to watch the races and sometimes the Royal Family walked around in the ring. Talk about bloodlines, pedigrees! As a good Dane I should mention that the Danish royal family is the oldest royal dynasty in Europe.”

“And if one is talking about *peds*,” said Fred, “my foot hurts. Let’s make our bets and get something to eat and go and sit down.”

Fred came back up to join them after the race. His choices for one and two had both won and he was elated.

"I'll take you somewhere fancy tonight," he said to his sister, "down by the water. I had bet a lot on that race."

Down by the starting gate a pretty blonde girl, in a pale silk raincoat and holding a cellophane-wrapped bouquet, was being interviewed by a television crew.

"Is that one of the Royal Family?" Corinne asked.

"No, I don't think so. The daughter of an owner, maybe." Äse smiled.

"Girls and horses, girls and horses. They go together, don't they?"

"What about the centaur, half man, half horse," said Fred. "I don't think I've ever seen a statue or picture of a female centaur."

"Of course you have," Äse said. "In the movie *Fantasia*. Surely you, as Americans, have seen that movie?"

"Äse loves old American films," Fred said, putting his hand on his friend's knee. Äse smiled and looked at the hand. He picked it up and gently gave it back to Fred. Corinne was afraid to look at either of them. She was *really* turned on by that, Fred's long, slim hand, a larger version of her own, on Äse's knee.

"Fred took me to *Fantasia*, when I was little," she said. "I don't remember much about it except I got scared when Zeus or somebody threw thunderbolts."

"And I was stoned," Fred said. "It was in the early Seventies, a re-issue. It was quite the thing to get stoned and go to see *Fantasia*. I don't remember a female centaur."

"Oh yes, she was white, with blonde hair. The male centaur had blue hair I think, and it was in the bit with Zeus—the Pastoral Symphony, wasn't it?"

"He had to take me out," Corinne said, "I was frightened."

"And there is a Botticelli," Äse said, "in the Uffizi I think, with a female centaur. She is not the main character, King Midas is the main character. But in the lower right-hand corner a female centaur is suckling her child while a male centaur is bringing her something that looks like a dead squirrel. So there's two. But there aren't many, I don't think. Centaurs are usually male. It is a very old myth."

“There must have been females,” Fred said, “or there would have been no babies.”

“I think the centaurs came from the union of women with horses.” He smiled down at the place where Fred’s hand had been, then turned to Corinne. “What do you think?” Was he teasing her? Flirting? She stood up.

“Let’s go bet again.”

Fred shook his head. “Hooked. One afternoon at the races and she’s hooked. All right, let’s go look over the horses — they’re Arabian this time — and place our bets. After this race maybe we’ll go on into town and find a lovely place to eat.”

“Are you coming with us?” Corinne said to Åse.

“With your permission.” He smiled and bowed. “Have you seen *The Black Stallion*?”

“Of course.”

“He was an Arabian, is an Arabian, although not the most famous or most valuable Arabian in the world. That one is worth about ten million U.S. dollars. The purest stock is in Egypt. You can see paintings of these lovely creatures in Egyptian tombs. The Arabian horse has a closer relationship to man than any other animal except a dog.”

“When his ship comes in,” Fred said, “Åse is going to buy an Egyptian-Arabian and live in the desert like a Bedouin.”

“Yes, that would be lovely. No more translating of memos and greetings.”

“But no movies,” Corinne said.

“Perhaps I could have a VCR that ran on a small generator in my tent.”

“Åse says the Arabians know the sexual differences between human beings,” Fred said. They were leaning against the paddock fence as the horses were being brought out.

“But it’s true! When a woman leads the Arabian to serve at stud, the sperm amount is fifteen per cent. Higher than when a man is in control.”

Corinne was embarrassed by this talk of studs and sperm counts and she had a feeling Åse knew she was. Could he tell she was pregnant, somehow, or was he just teasing her, trying to see how sophisticated she really was?

A small dark woman had been listening to them with great interest. Now she addressed Fred.

“Ex-coos me, are you breedish?”

Fred smiled down at her. “No,” he said, “we’re Americans.”

She shook her head. “No, no, breedish — *horse* breedish. Do you breed horses?” Fred managed to keep a straight face.

“I’m afraid not.”

The woman smiled, showing several gold teeth, and handed him a magazine. She said they could keep it anyway. It was all about Egyptian-Arabian horses, with photos and descriptions.

As soon as the woman had moved far enough away, they began to laugh.

“Breeders,” Fred said, the tears rolling down his face.

“Breeders!”

“And you said, in your oh so polite diplomat voice, ‘No, we’re Americans!’ ” Åse imitated Fred being polite. “ ‘No, we’re Americans.’ ”

And then she began to cry, because the reality of it all was that she was nineteen years old and pregnant and scared shitless and sooner or later she was going to have to tell somebody, probably Fred, and it was all such a horrible mess and how could she have been so stupid?

Brian Fawcett/ THE AKRON DESIGN CENTRE

I'm Public Eye, your guide to the Akron Design Centre.

Akron resembles a hundred other contemporary cities in North America. About 300,000 people live there, many depressed and unhappy, wondering if maybe they should pack up and move to New York or California. The center of the city is in what urban planners used to call urban decay and now call redevelopment opportunities. Its citizens are mostly poor, ethnic, black or combinations of those three. There is some urban renewal going on — old buildings becoming parking lots, a square block of tenements wakes up to discover that it is a huge and windowless warehouse. Shopping malls named after trees that don't grow anywhere near Akron are constantly promised and quietly cancelled shortly after elections. Those that are built are identical to ten thousand other malls across the continent, filled with franchised merchandise manufactured off-continent, and run by bright-eyed polyester managers who wear name-tags but don't want to know your name except to put it on their junk-mail list. Life goes on, sideways or down.

Thirty years ago most of the automobile tires produced in America were manufactured in or near Akron. They called Akron *Tiretown*. You could get a job in one of those filthy tire factories, and if you worked hard and smart, you could own your own home, have five or six kids and maybe get to be a department foreman. A man living and working in Akron could feel the pulse of America's heartland. After work you could drink any of a dozen brands of watery beer and get your face pushed in at well over a dozen tough bars.

They closed the last tire factory a few years ago. Now when people talk *Tiretown* they mean the franchise corporation that retails tires across North America. The tires are made somewhere else now — Taiwan or Korea — where manual labour is cheaper and the workers don't bring class-action suits against the company when they start to die from cancer. The tire companies of Akron moved the workers out and the managers and researchers in long ago. They spin profits in and out of town, country and hemisphere electronically, and they *think* about the market for tire products.

There's low-level unemployment in Akron. Some people do leave and go to the big cities, but most hang around and get overweight on junk-food and they get drunk too much and depressed and generally less and less employable. Eventually they get reclassified out of the unemployment stats and become welfare cases, unemployables, part of the growing fringe of the homeless and disenfranchised—the “failures” who are never counted accurately because the failure is in the system.

The managers and researchers who remain all live in the new “secure” residential developments out on the farmlands north of Akron. They do all right for themselves, moving on up the corporate ladder, as the saying goes, and eventually out of Akron.

Most visitors would take the first bus out of Akron. Not me. I've got questions to ask of it. How did all this mediocrity get created, anyway? What's happening to Akron, Ohio? Is there anything under that impermeable, inorganic, nondecaying skin of white plastic that's settled over it?

Akron, Ohio has “made in America” stamped all over it, even if the part of America meant is in Canada, Korea, Taiwan, Japan or even Russia. Those are accomplice states in a union most Americans are no longer a part of, least of all the hard-drinking, balding, pot-bellied kick-fag tire workers of Akron, Ohio. They're ghosts of the past, and so are most of the rest of us.

If you still think, as people could as recently as twenty years ago, that the United States is the center of the world, or that the United States of America means the same thing as America, it's time to wake up. The only center America has now is the Akron Design Centre, and you're probably not part of it. You've been globalized. Your old political rights as a citizen have been marginalized into consumer rights, and the Centre *demands* that you exercise them.

I grew up in Akron, and I was a helpless witness to its transformation. But I also grew up in the earthly paradise. I had a mother who taught me how roses grow, why birds sing, and that the beautiful, voracious, winged dead are all around us. When I asked how that could be, she explained that the rain was the tears of the dead, sad that they couldn't be alive anymore, and that when I felt a breeze against my face it was

from the beating of their wings. Then she told me who I was, and why I'd been born.

I studied any and everything that passed my way, provided that it promised to tell me something about how life — and Akron — was changing, and why. I studied primitive cultures and their mythologies and customs, modern architecture, forestry, computer design. I worked as an urban planner, as a teacher in every odd circumstance I could force my way into — anything that would provide evidence of the destruction of my legacy. And I discovered that practically everything offered evidence.

Take architecture. It's easy to glimpse the dimensions of the Akron Design Centre in architecture. Architecture is the most visible nexus of deliberate design and subliminal economic motivations we have. As far back as the early 1950s, evidence of cloned design concepts began to appear in residential subdivision design, and they occurred in areas as environmentally and socially diverse as Jackson, Mississippi and Edmonton, Alberta.

Site-specific design features to accommodate local social characteristics and habits, climate, light orientation, and material availability disappeared. They were replaced by repetitive “style” features and demographic preloadings. Construction practices changed to reward large-scale production technologies and demographic projections.

Decorative features — such as A-frame entrance gables (meant to divert alpine-depth snow loads) — started appearing in areas that never see snow at all, supplanting local and more accurate responses to landscape and climate characteristics. The Akron Design Centre made housing into an expression of solidarity with global demographic and occupational ideals — a “world” society that ignores the local conditions and values of Jackson and Edmonton alike. Artificial structural patterns were also introduced, such as compact kitchens that reinforce the division of domestic labour and serve workspace “efficiencies” that alienate residents from local custom and from simple domestic contact.

I could cite this sort of evidence until we're all nauseous. Look around you. Your new house has been engineered, although not for you. But I'll never convince you this way, will

I? Okay. I'll stop, and tell you stories. Here's one:

I'd just gotten into town after a long absence, and I was sitting in a chain restaurant called "Choices" having a cup of coffee. You've been there — formica-topped tables and padded grey vinyl chairs, Neo-japanese food along with an assortment of muffins, croissants, "light" sandwiches and weak coffee.

The place was deserted except for the Oriental proprietor — he looked Korean — and the cook, a beefy blond girl in polyester slacks and running shoes who couldn't have been older than twenty-one or two. Choices wasn't a big hit in Akron, and neither was the mall it was in, which was also empty. You could almost hear the developer tearing out his hair and mumbling words like *underutilization*.

I'd ordered a muffin and coffee, and was staring out into the parking lot alternately wondering how to get back out of Akron and whether I should go ask the proprietor for some butter for the too-dry muffin. A late 50s Cadillac — a '59 model with those amazing twin ruby hooters for taillights pulled into the parking lot. Two wild-haired blond kids got out of the front seat and after a moment's consultation headed into the deserted drugstore next to Choices.

Just as they moved beyond my line of vision one of the Cadillac's back doors eased open, and a woman got out. Like the kids she was wild-haired, but she was older, and her hair was jet black. She looked toward the drugstore her two companions had disappeared into, shook her head, and walked straight toward Choices. She seemed familiar, and after a moment, I knew why.

Aside from tires, Akron, Ohio is famous for just one thing. It has produced the working mechanisms for two of the most intelligent Rock & Roll groups around. One of them is Devo, who wear flowerpots on their heads, quote obscure Russian sci/fi novelists, and hurl imprecations about techno-nihilism. The other is Chrissie Hynd, the lead singer from the Pretenders. The woman heading for Choices was a dead ringer for Chrissie Hynd. And the closer she came, the more she looked like the real thing.

There are few people in the music world I'd rather meet than Chrissie Hynd. No one, in fact. She's an angry woman with a brain, a singing voice like a cobra in a grease pit, and

the diction of a machine-gun with its trigger mechanism on methydrine. It's her anger that interests me. It's white hot and sophisticated, the kind of fuck-you rage that no one is born with and which only something deeper than private neurosis can feed.

Unfortunately, I'm no Rolling Stone journalist, so when she pushed open the glass doors, I merely sat in my chair and watched her. She sat down a couple of tables over from mine and plopped a leather bag on the tabletop large enough to carry an electric guitar or a machine gun. I decided it was the latter, and looked away.

Next thing I knew she was standing beside me. "You got a light, pal?" she asked.

I resisted the impulse to say "yes sir," and handed her a pink disposable light I'd swiped off a friend. She lit her cigarette and slipped the lighter into her jeans.

"You local?" she demanded.

"Nope," I said. "Not anymore. I'm on a kind of pilgrimage. I wanted to see how Akron has changed."

"What the hell for?"

"Akron is the dead centre of the North American heartland."

"You got the dead part right," she said, plunking herself down in the chair next to mine. She took a deep pull on her cigarette and blew a stream across the table. "But you're off base on the anatomy. If they gave the American heartland an enema, they'd stick it in at Akron."

I smiled, but didn't say anything.

"This place used to be fine," she went on. "Lots of farms, people doing real work, having real lives. Not any more. Now it's the fucking Inner Station."

"Of what?"

Her eyes narrowed slightly, as if there was a difficulty in thinking—and maybe in remembering. Most women are attractive when they're happy, but this woman became *very* attractive as her unhappiness became visible, lurid synaptic arcs of rage. Just like her music.

"That's real hard to explain. If you listen," she said, "you can hear a wierd hum around here. But when you look for it, there's nothing to see except franchise shit and industrial

debris. So you decide that you're crazy, and maybe you go stare into a pool. But when you do all you see is the skeleton of a fish floating up the surface."

Curious talk for a place called "Choices" in an Akron shopping mall. "Are you who I think you are?" I asked her.

She stubbed the cigarette out and lit another. "Yeah, sure," she answered distractedly. "No. I'm her twin sister. I'm nobody." The anger flashed more brightly in her eyes. "None of that shit matters, so don't push it."

"Push what?"

"Look buddy. You're a man. I'm a woman. We're both reasonably smart, and attractive. You want to go somewhere? Like, rent a motelroom and get it on?"

"No," I said. "I don't."

Her eyes softened. "Neither do I. I mean, you're probably a real nice guy, and all. But that's what we're *supposed* to do. You know what I really want to do? I just want to live a life, have a couple of kids, treat people well, play music and forget about all this shit around me. I want to live without having some turkey gluing my pages together all the time."

"I know what you're saying," I said, carefully. "But no one gets to do that. The world we grew up in is gone. It's all been redeveloped. Yours, mine, everyone's. Not made any better, just redeveloped. Made the same as every place else so we're never sure quite where we are. And all so a few slicko shits can wear Italian designer suits and drive Mercedes 450SLs."

She grabbed my wrist hard for a moment, then let it go. A grey sedan pulled up outside, and two neatly dressed men got out. The car pulled away, and the men entered Choices. They gazed around for a moment, then took a table within earshot of ours.

"You're in Akron," she said. "Did you know that this is where it all started? Where it all comes from? I'm not sure which, but it doesn't matter. You know what's wrong with our lives?"

"I've got a few ideas," I admitted. "Here we are, nice decent immigrant stock meant to work and build and grow and take pride in our families and what we know and what we build for ourselves, and instead we've had to spend our whole lives fighting every change, fighting a vague something or other

most of us can't even put a name to."

She looked into my eyes and grabbed my wrist again. "The fucking changes just make for more *things*, and more garbage, and more shit in the water, more poisons in the soil. And the changes have made all the good things disappear. Or invisible. I mean, the really simple things we used to take for granted, like cracks in the sidewalks, or the birds-nests in the trees outside our bedroom windows, and the songs our mothers made up for us."

The conversation was getting spooky. Two more neatly dressed men entered Choices. They conferred briefly with the first duo, then took a table on the opposite side of the room, about the same distance from our table.

"There's this place in Akron," she said, her voice softer now as she eyed the new arrivals. "This *thing*. I can't really say what it is. But it's here, and turning life into a fadeout."

"Fadeout?"

"That's the best term for it — a kind of dimming of the surface. You talked about it, so you must suspect. It's maybe just a feeling, or an instinct. Those guys. The mall." She gestured around her. "This place."

"Choices."

"Yeah. But they're fake choices, you dig? They ought to call it that. *Fake choices*."

"*Opportunities* would be a better name — *Obligatory Opportunities*. And they should have to advertise that an opportunity isn't the same thing as a choice, not when you're being compelled into exploiting it."

Two more suits entered. They nodded at the other four, and sat down at a table near the door. "I don't want to exploit anything," I added.

"Yeah, well, you're in a lot of trouble, then. We've got to rip the cover off these phoney choices. Otherwise we're paralyzed."

I glanced beyond her out into the parking lot. The two wildhaired kids were ambling across the parking lot. They opened the car door, tossed in several bags, and stood with the doors open, arguing about something.

"What *am* I looking for, exactly?"

"Give it your own name," she snapped. "That's your affair."

I've got my name. Just remember that we can't have a decent life without it being possible for everyone and everything. So look for the design that prevents that from happening."

"There's your friends," I said. "They just got into the car."

"Oh yeah," she answered, disinterestedly. "Them."

The Cadillac pulled out from between the parking stripes and headed directly for Choices, picking up speed, as it got closer.

"Are those fuckers going to ram this place?" I asked her.

"That's up to you," she replied, calmly. "Stop kidding around. That Cadillac and those kids aren't the most lethal things here."

Gladys Hindmarch/IMPROSEMENT

Beginning and beginning: writing is always (all ways) be(com)ing and be(ginn)ing in the wor(l)d. Once upon a time, she thought she'd write a beautiful book. She thought she was writing about here for (t)here. She thought, thinks almost everything was/is a possibility in writing. Here includes her as does hear which includes ear; she includes he as the (or thee) does hear which includes ear; she includes he and the (or thee) includes he. Letters and words are presents/present, presences. writer is and how she feels when she writes which also depends on how much she loves sentences and what she's been doing with them recently.

Recently, she's been marking finals and critical essays. She doesn't ever think of writing a beautiful book or beginning a story. She marks down her time to keep her going. When she notices she's too slow, she walks the dog or washes the car so, when she returns, she can grade more quickly. She looks forward to minor amusements such as the student who wrote improvelement meaning imprisonment and the one who wrote thoughts instead of those, but she had added a t for thoughts before she reread his sentence. One student, trying to get the title of an Ondaatje poem, wrote cinanum, cinimen, cannamen, cinnimen, cinniman, cinnamin. Another wrote, this exert from *In the Skin of a Lion* focuses on the work force. Exert force. Another said of bp nichol, he's talking about politics in general, that people must react, be aggressive, make changes, rather than stand back and watch as passifiers do. She imagined the whole Peace March, which was marching through Vancouver as she read that, sucking plastic pacifiers and thought that this student has no idea that pacifists make active choices.

Three years ago, she was in a composition class trying to explain, as one of her students put it, the mysteries of the semi-colon. She was joking away about independent and dependent clauses when a young man near the window said, I don't understand — what does the first cause have to do with the second? She looked over his shoulder and saw a male teacher walking towards what was supposed to be a temporary

building named P. I'm glad I didn't sleep with you then, she thought. Oh no, she said laughing lightly, you're thinking of cause, but I mean (in a very teacherly voice) clause.

A clause has a subject and a verb that might be surrounded by a number of other words but, can, without these words, if it is independent, stand alone and make sense. Birds sing. Jack jumps. Jill wins. Each of those is a bare sentence with a subject — birds, Jack, Jill — and a verb. Each stands alone. Each is also an independent or main or principal clause. But look what happens if we add a word that makes them dependent or subordinate: when birds sing, if Jack jumps, because Jill wins. They don't stand alone anymore. Jack jumps over the candlestick — that stands alone and is what type of clause? Independent. Right. When Jack jumped over the candlestick — does that stand alone? No. Right. It's what now? Dependent. Right. While, because, since, which, that, who, when, where, after, if — all sorts of words make independent clauses dependent or what is sometimes called subordinate. Excuse me, said a student, why can't they just give one name to these things? Because there isn't really a they, she said; I know it would be easier if all teachers used the same terminology, but we don't.

When the class was over, she went to her office. She thought about the teacher she had seen and how, in the context of a class, she hadn't missed a beat, but she had thought of that one night several years ago when she went out with him and how horrible she felt when he kissed her. He was between his first and second marriages then; she was still recovering from her first. He reminded her too much of her exhusband or, given the fact that she had truly enjoyed the evening, she was afraid because when she relaxed she wanted what was over and wasn't ready to begin again. Displaced loyalties. An urgent kiss. A pushing away. Nothing soft. A desperation. She wanted a man, but not that man. He wanted a woman, almost any woman. Maybe not. Maybe he really wanted her then. She'd never know. Just another mystery with a semicolon.

Within days, he visited her in her office. Semicolon. His second marriage was over. Semicolon. They talked. Semicolon. Can we talk again? Same time next week, she said. (One of the few things she hates about her work is how long it takes to

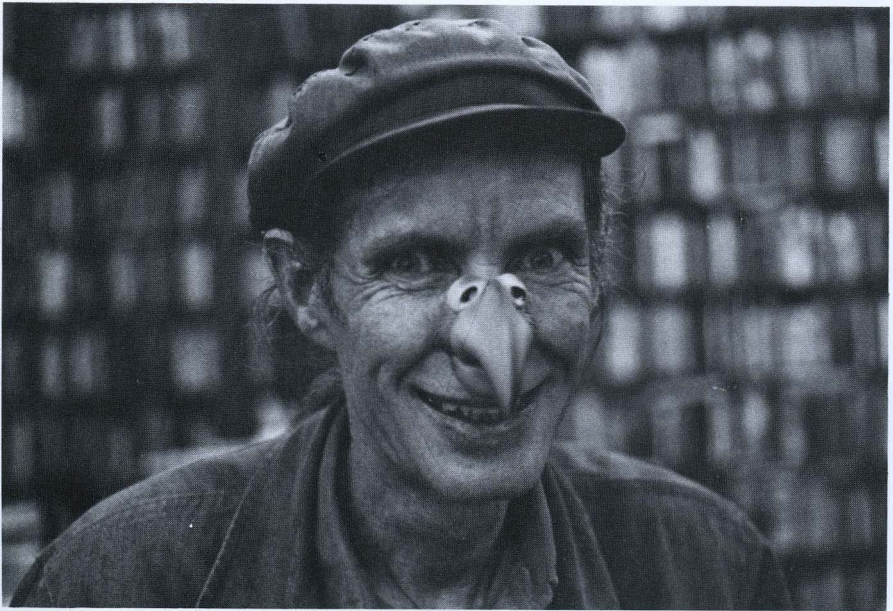
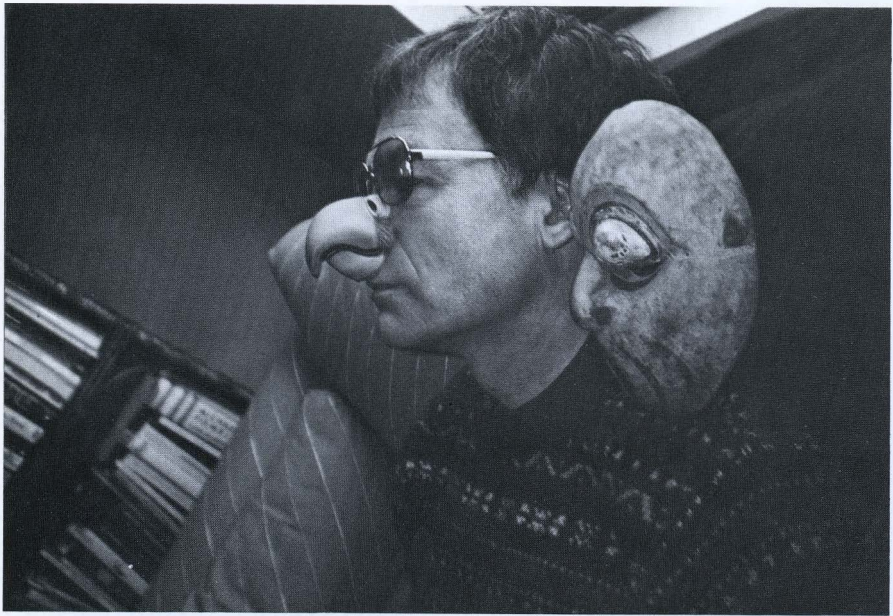
arrange meetings of any sort, so if two people are available one week at a particular time then. . . .) The next work day, he came to her office door and said, what I really meant was, if I asked you out, would you go out with me? He was standing in the open doorway. She was sitting at her desk. Independent. In minutes, she was going to see the man she was then seeing but who was pissing her off with his self-centeredness as much as she loved his particular use of language, e.g. the lower intestines of Burnaby. Yes, yes I would.

Within weeks, she and he were in bed together. But we're so different, she'd say. They were different. They are different. They are also different than they were then different — then, back then, and then, three years ago. She discovered that he only kisses when he wants to make love. She loves making love, but she also likes to kiss kiss not butterfly kiss at other times. Compromise contains promise. Promise contains prose. Prose contains most of the letters of poetry, but means to turn forward, straightforward, the ordinary language of men in speaking and writing. To her, the turning forward is more the essence than the straightness (or men). To her, a sentence both imposes and opens possibilities.

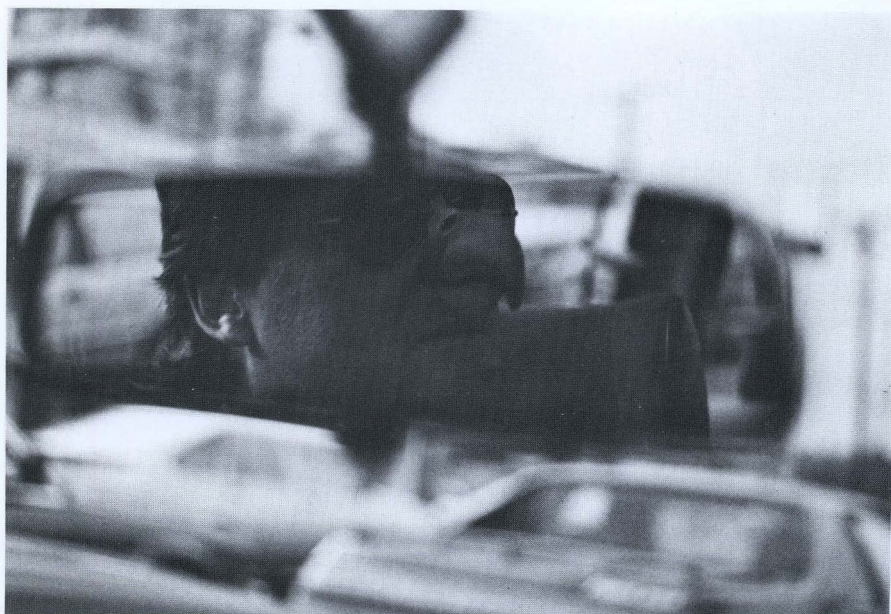
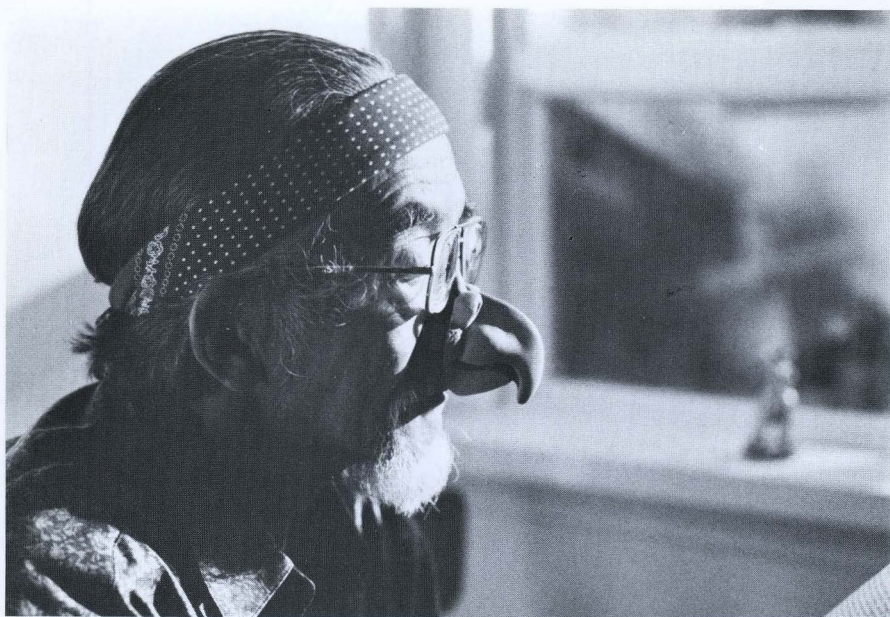
She loves turning, crookedness, circles, flexibility. Ability. The form of a sentence is so elastic that when she is not teaching others how to write sentences that are supposed to be straightforward she thinks she can do almost anything she wants within the confines of its structure. Sentences do make sense of the world. Ondaatje wrote *In the Skin of a Lion* in structures which, one of her students delighted in pointing out, are sometimes fragments, are sometimes run-on sentences, contain comma-splices etc. But, but, she said. Laurence uses fragments too, and there aren't any quotation marks, and she uses you when she doesn't mean the reader. Yet, yet, she said. Wah wrote whole paragraphs without punctuation in *Waiting for Saskatchewan*. Yes, she said. Wah's paragraphs cohere. Laurence's lack of quotation marks makes sense. Ondaatje's lines are written in the cleanest way they could possibly be. Naked prose. Speech rhythms. Everything fits. They begin and end in exactly the right place. What more is there?

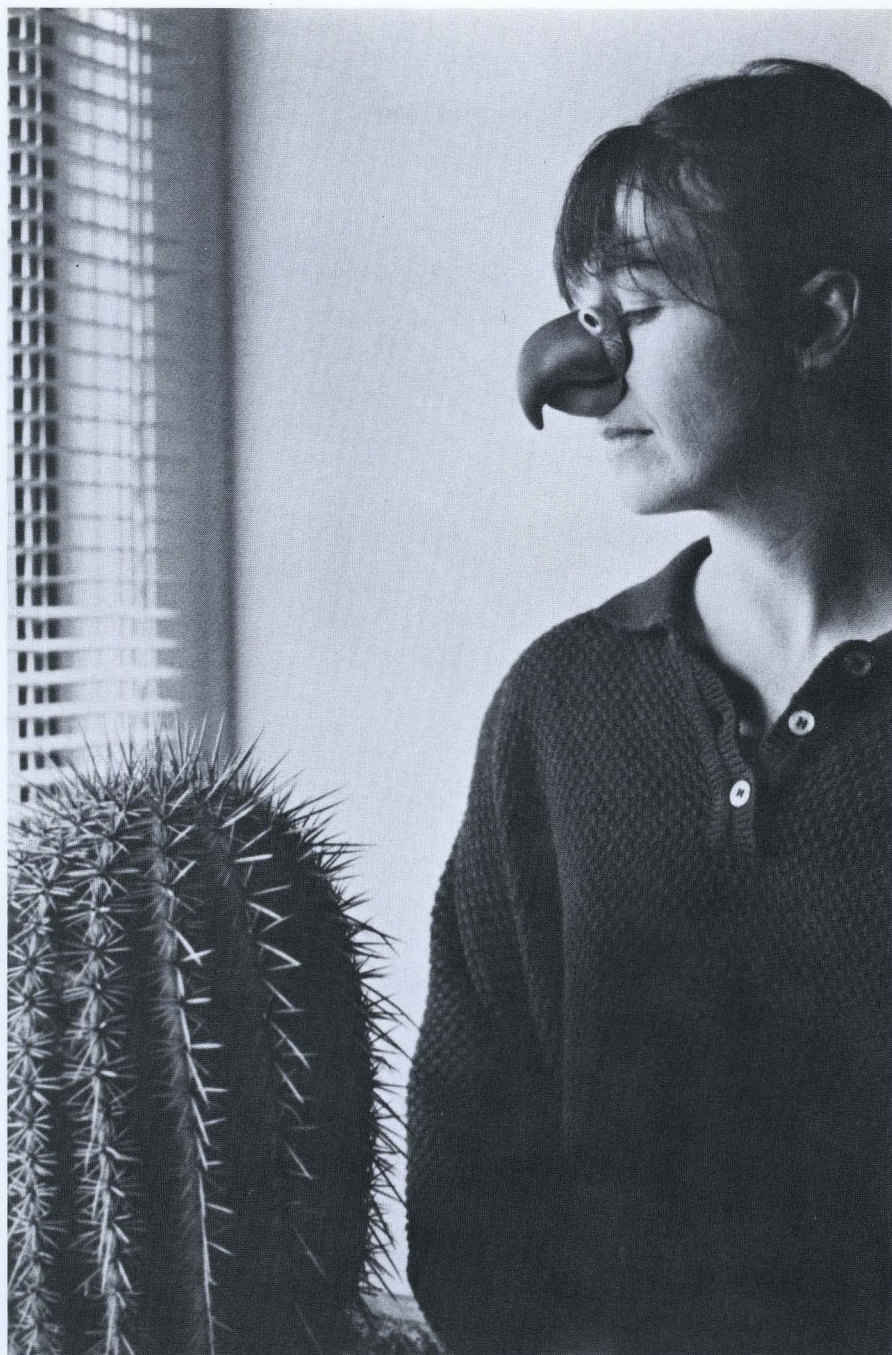
Michael Ondaatje/WHO NOSE













Third Editorial Period

ISSUES 24/25 - 32

1982 - 1984

INTRODUCTION/Ann Rosenberg

In Fall 1975, I joined *The Capilano Review* as its Visual Media Editor. I remember the day-long meetings Pierre Coupey orchestrated and impromptu readings of submitted materials by Bill Schermbrucker who can speak in many tongues, by Daphne Marlatt who articulates a complex phrase as though it were embroidery and by Gladys Hindmarch whose whoops of delight were persuasive forces. Pierre's resignation from *The Review* in 1976 was a shock. His challenge to keep the magazine alive was underlined by his swift dive into the swimming pool behind his house.

When Bill Schermbrucker took over as Editor with issue #10, I became increasingly involved with the overall design and sometimes accompanied him to Victoria to finalize the layout. This was my introduction to Dick Morriss, the industrious proprietor of Morriss Printing, and to his chief assistant, Ron Smith. "Smitty" always took great care with the magazine's appearance. My section of #50 is dedicated to his discerning eye and meticulous service.

With #26, I became Editor of *TCR* and continued as well as Visual Media Editor. This combined role would have been impossible to manage without the help of Dorothy Jantzen who had been Assistant Editor for some time, and the friendly support of Dian Relke who organized the office.

It was inevitable and *right* that Dorothy Jantzen became Editor after my resignation with #33. After #40, our studio arts colleague Barry Cogswell took over as Visual Media Editor. In Spring 1989, I left the College to become curator at the Surrey Art Gallery.

On Good Friday this year when most sensible people were in bed or at church, I met with Bill and Dorothy in Pierre's living room near the swimming pool where he took his dive. Pierre, now the magazine's fifth Editor, had called a meeting to plan the 50th Issue. He has accepted a challenge to alter *The Capilano Review's* direction and format. I wish him success and raise a toast to the journal's new future.

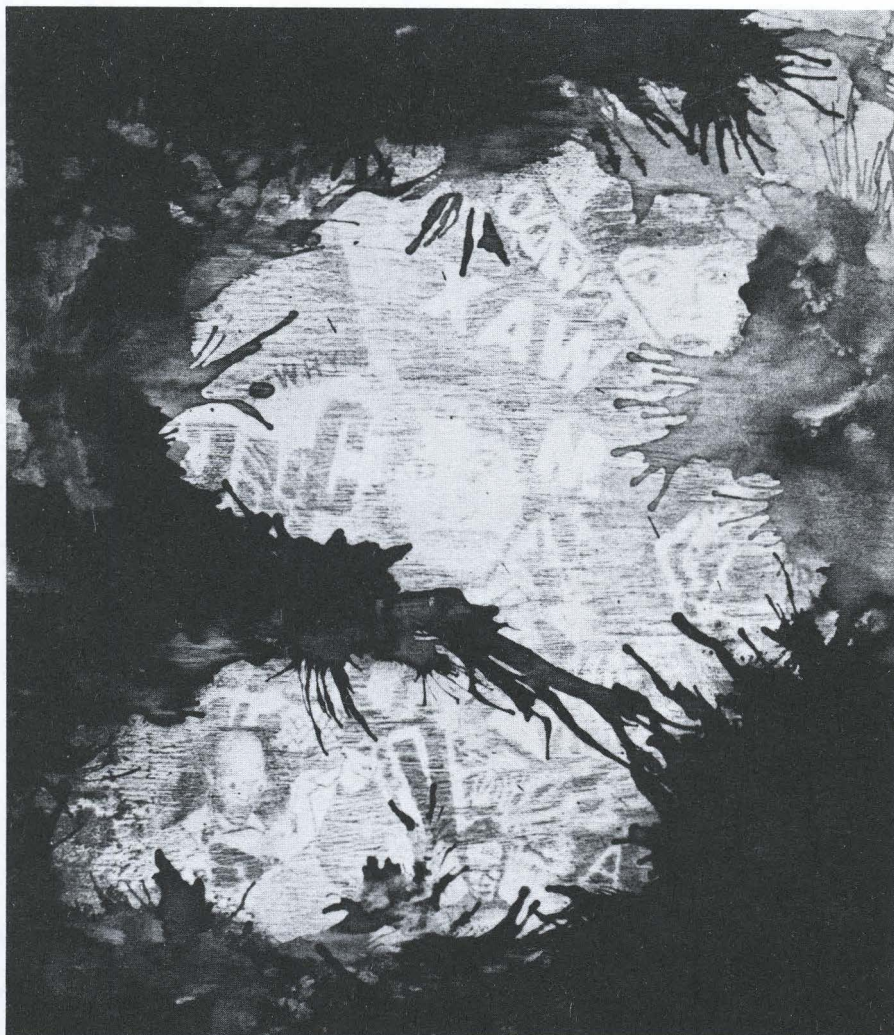
I am hoping, of course, that there will be continuity through change — that the magazine will still be interdisciplinary and in

search of innovative work, that it will continue to involve student Editors in the necessary work.

The most exciting thing about being an Editor is the opportunity it provides to meet artists and writers, some of whom become lifelong contacts. It was extremely difficult to select the few who would stand for the many imaginative and committed people whose work I selected for presentation in *The Review*.

I am most proud, in retrospect, of the projects which were *the killers* — the N.E. Thing Company (issue #8/9); “Wood Sculpture of the Americas,” (issue #12); “GLEN TOPPINGS Remembered,” (issue #13); *Gathie Falk Works* (issue #24/25) and *Robson Square* (issue #40) — but which had to be done.

Richard Truhlar/SELECTIONS



Media Three—pencil, ink on wood.
Photo: Steve Venright.



The woodcut illumination of William of Newburgh's *Historia Anglorum* by Matthew Tarrant, in the *Book of Hours* of the Duke of Burgundy.

THE PITCH

It began on a business trip, not the normal disorientation, sense of isolation, face after face chatting, eating, securing the worth of the voyage in the fragile ego fluttering against glass to escape those frozen moments of recognition. Memory comes back, a stranger met on the street, "I'm sorry, I've forgotten your name . . .", and you find yourself gazing into the mirror once too often, but you continue shaving, brushing your teeth, all the while feeling this body before you, somehow not connected to the feet firmly planted on bathroom tiles.

Leafing through the yellow pages in search of a bathhouse with yellow women who will soap your skin, lay hands upon, give some sense of the solidity of body you wish you could feel . . . only to end up gazing at the names of bookstores, having already bought more than you can read, the silence of the room you sit within voiceless, ambient hum of unseen technology behind the walls, in the ceiling, not enough to distract you however from the silence you feel without yourself.

It's too early to eat, you think, as you pull on your overcoat, your body moving without thought, can't stay here, the door locking itself behind you, your hand automatically checking to feel the key in your vest pocket, wouldn't want to be shut out of the room, the centre from which you act, out you go, incessant need for motion, not helping it, following it . . . perhaps if I walk far enough, exhaust myself, I can relax, fall back into the room, cushy pillow to support my back, take up another novel, pore over each page forgetting where I am, why I am here.

Each time you come to this place, at least once you visit that special spot, that urban beach which looks out upon the water, and you smoke and think and tell yourself that you must appreciate the vista: those mountains! that ocean! smell that! . . . for a moment you remember some other time when you were a young boy, and somehow you can't remember where it was, how you were a boy, the smell and what was it?

some mixture now forgotten but holding you as you move to the water's edge, pick out a few shells washed up and dead before you arrived, colourful enough you hope, take them back for the boy, hope he likes them, tell him where they're from, this bay, describe something he's never seen . . . and each time you come to this place, you come alone, each time wishing there was another to share this place . . . you walk away. This place cannot be had. If you . . . you always look back, the vista, wanting to take it with you, looking back, stopping more frequently, knowing the next vista obliterates the latter into memory, memory never a postcard you can send back to yourself . . . so you always return, every time you come to this city, sit on that beach, look out, get up, walk on, look back, stopping more frequently, wishing you could print yourself, say "see!" and perhaps they would all understand, all come along next time, the room opening up, becoming a house, a loving hand soaping your back, face passing by the open door . . . "hi!", but not forgotten.

You get up, look up, yes, there are the mountains, the rippled glass of water before you, gazing into a mirror once too often you have found yourself upon this beach with no answers, no questions, remember the silent room from which you issued, perhaps it's time to eat?

On the sidewalk you pause before a restaurant, menu posted outside, try to be inconspicuous, nonchalant, not wanting to commit yourself, diners inside staring at you, am I really hungry? do I go in? look down the street, perhaps walk a little farther, find somewhere else, just the place you want: warm, friendly, a waitress who smiles, relaxes your cold coat onto the empty seat across from you, poring over the menu, forced decisions of hunger and looking out at the water, remembering how it was to sit and watch from your bench the seagull peck at the sand, fly off with a dinosaur scream of some forgotten appointment.

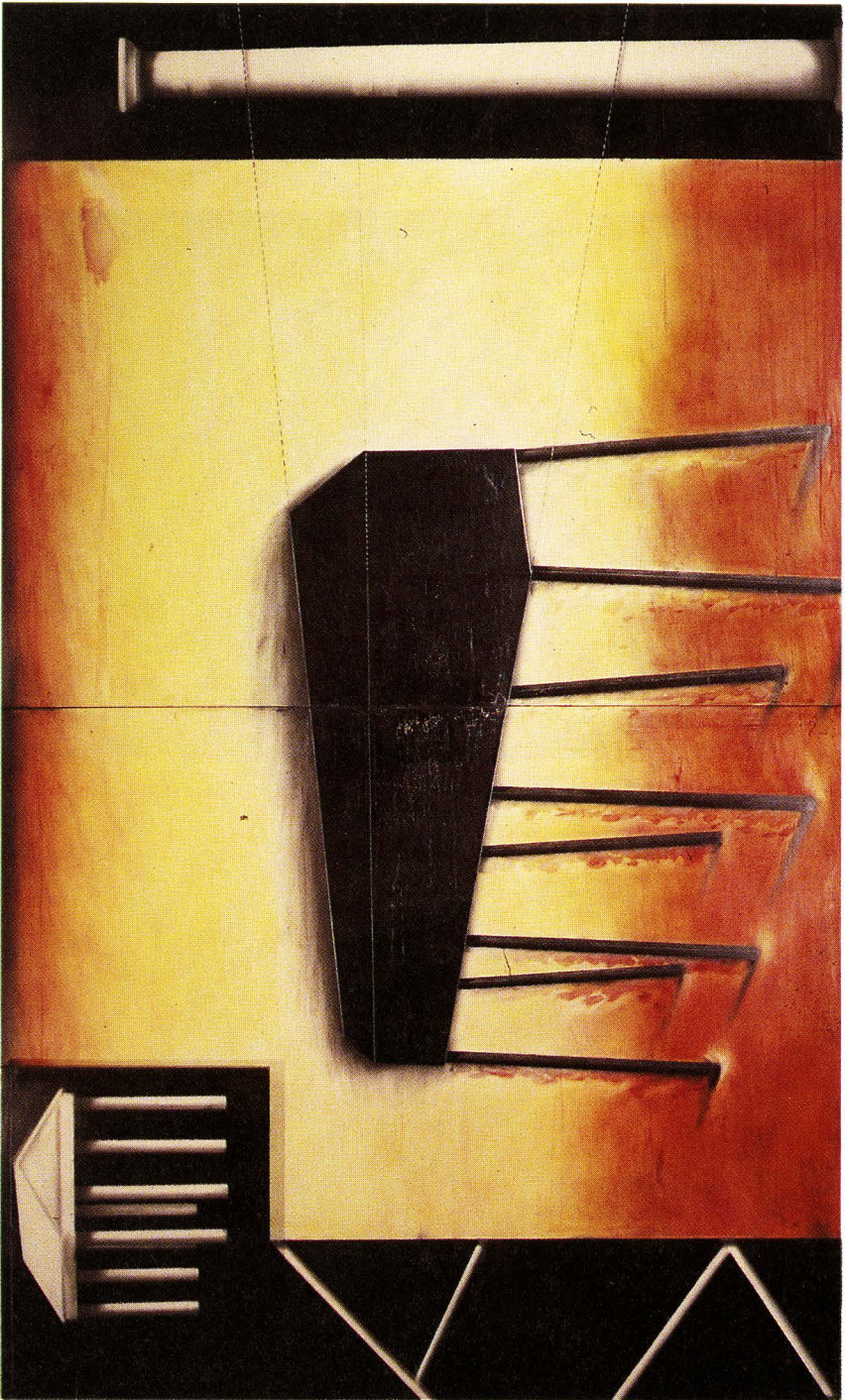
You look at your wristwatch, the digital interface of death somehow absent from your gaze, seeing yourself after the third martini not wanting to move, watching the sun separate itself from your consciousness, move into the idea of its breaking through the clouds.

Appointments are made, but the room calls you back, "sorry

not 10:30,” sitting but not at a beach, brought back some shells, one unopened, dead but unopened and what’s inside? probably rotting, stashed in your luggage, probably will open on the way home, the smell of more than the sea reminding you how you carried it around for hours, the other open shells in your pocket, this one in my hand, will the warmth of my hand make a difference, open the unopened, warm air escaping, liquid run out onto my palm, smell it, smell the beach, me sitting there wanting to stay, wanting to move . . . carried it for hours, back to the room, wrapped it and the other shells in a plastic showercap, tied it tightly, no gas escapes, no stench, no reminder, just get it back and perhaps the boy asking why it hadn’t opened and you saying you don’t know but it’s dead and let’s hope it doesn’t open because of the stink, the stink you hoped for in that room, the roll of surf surging up, crashing against your bed where you’re alone with your cock in your hand wishing for wetness, looking at the digital interface of your wristwatch and wondering when they’ll phone, if they will, and wishing every chambermaid had yellow skin, would soap your back, giggle when in jest you splashed water from the bath like a child, your own child, face of your own child meeting you in the mirror, the brief flash of a smile, your feet firmly planted on bathroom tiles and “hi dad!,” the roll of the surf against your mind, I can relax.

Greg Murdock/Recent Work









IMAGES

In order of appearance

GREG MURDOCK

Night Fall, 1986, mixed media on board, 15¾" × 25¼".

Two Solitudes, 1988, mixed media on panel, 47" × 72".

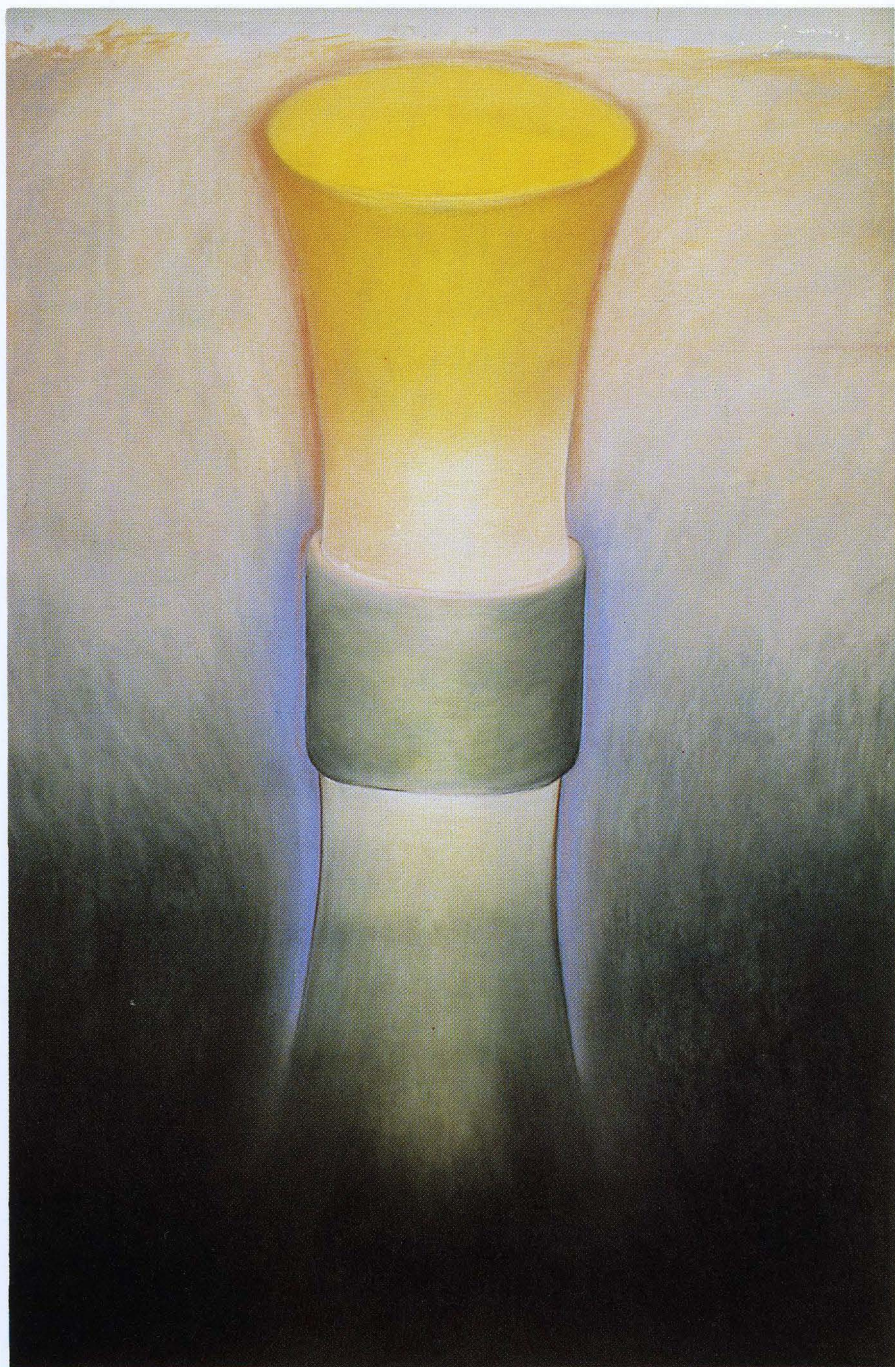
Fire Altar, 1988, mixed media on panel, 40" × 60".

Arsenal, 1988, mixed media on panel, 47" × 72".

Photography: Greg Murdock.

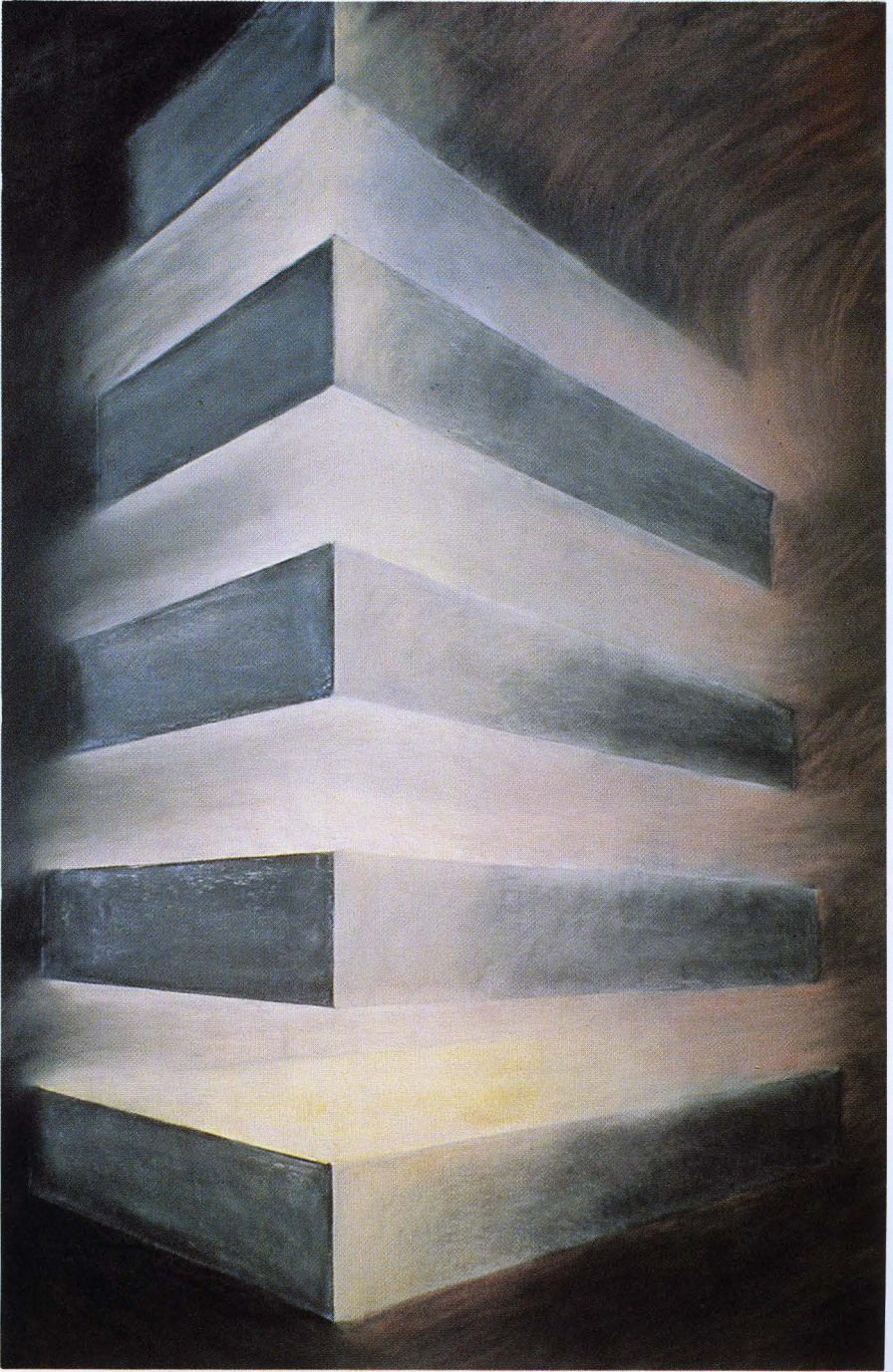
Monique Fouquet/ from the *Vessels* series











IMAGES

In order of appearance

MONIQUE FOUQUET

Vessel No. 15, 1989, graphite and pastel on paper, 22" × 30",
Private collection.

Vessel No. 5, 1988, graphite and pastel on paper, 78" × 50".

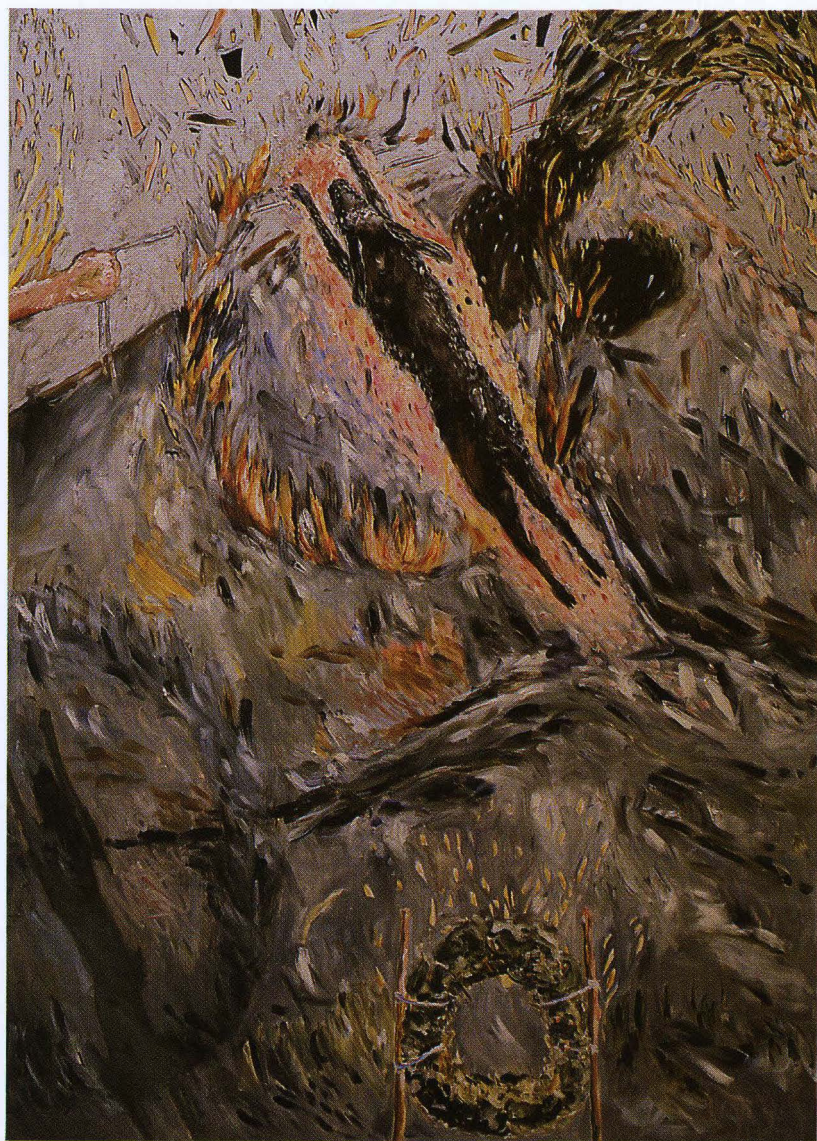
Installation at Surrey Art Gallery.

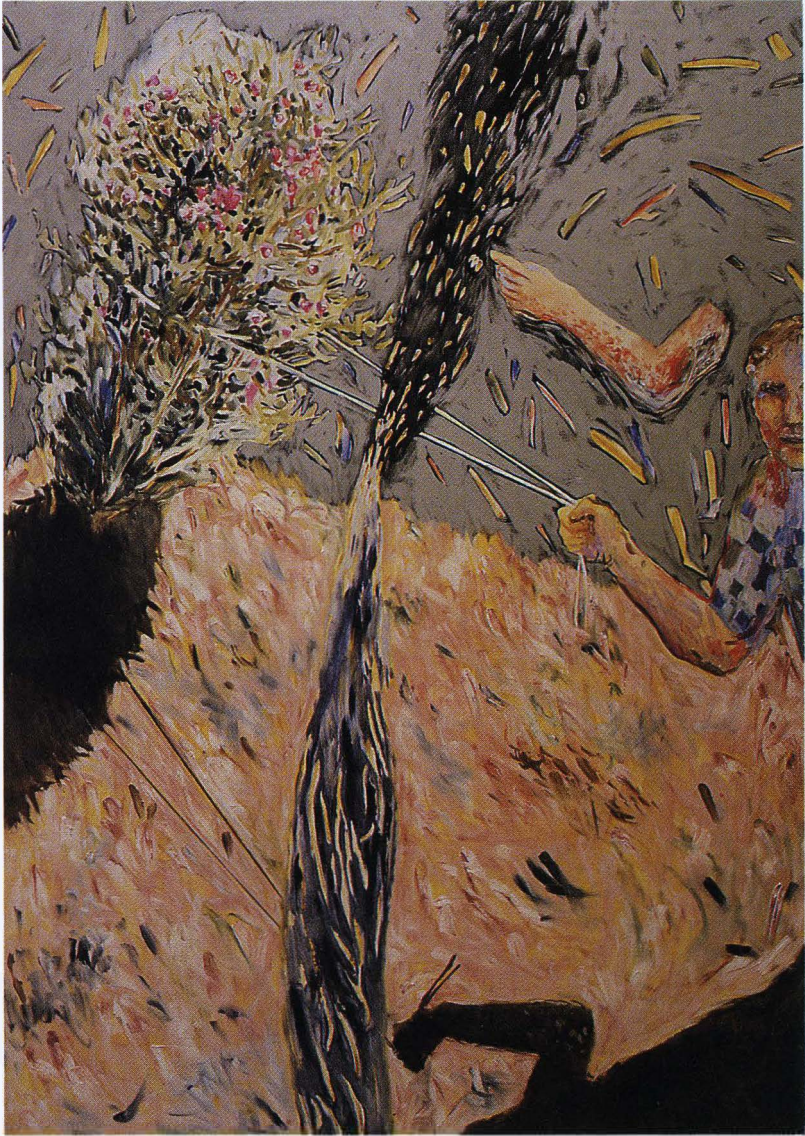
Vessel No. 7, 1988, graphite and pastel on paper, 78" × 50".

Photography: Monique Fouquet.

Gathie Falk/Recent Work











IMAGES

In order of appearance

GATHIE FALK

Support System with Flaming Hoop I, 1988, oil on canvas, 84" × 60".

Support System with Flaming Hoop II, 1988, oil on canvas, 84" × 60".

Courtesy: Isaacs Gallery, Toronto.

Support System and the Man with the Pointed Eyes, 1988, oil on canvas, 84" × 60". Courtesy: Isaacs Gallery, Toronto.

Support System with Pillar of Fire and Weathervane, 1988, oil on canvas, 84" × 60". Collection: Art Investment Inc.

Support System with Dead Tree, 1988, oil on canvas, 84" × 60".
Collection: Hamilton Art Gallery.

Photography: Gathie Falk

Lola Lemire Tostevin / from *Circadian Rhythm*

She likes geometry, the unknown disguised as letters, but Soeur Lucienne says it isn't much use to girls. Plane geometry is good for boys she says when they want to figure out things like the flat surface of a baseball field and she draws points, lines and planes of a baseball diamond on the blackboard. It enables astronomers to roam the altitudes of stars and planets and by reducing three dimensional space to two dimensions, draftsmen can sketch maps of different countries and travel anywhere they please. Soeur Lucienne says it was probably because of his keen sense of geometry that Columbus assumed the earth was round before he ventured out to sea.

If A equals B equals C. The authority of equilateral lines of the perfect triangle. It knows everything, sees everything. Enormous eye of the Trinity that gapes above the door of study hall scrutinizing the bowed skulls it is about to penetrate. It invades playgrounds, bathrooms, refectories, prowls dormitories, follows the small hand that accidentally brushes against downy genitals and budding breasts under sheets. Obsessive, lugubrious, it pursues even dreams in its insatiable thirst for young girls' aberrations, its vitreous sphere a background for the forbidden image it yearns to receive. Mute law of triangles that range each and everything in its proper place. The equals and the unequals.

Her best subject is English composition, the nuns always praising them, "*c'est bien, c'est au point,*" the young girl fully aware this is what is needed. To be to the point. Sharply delineated outlines without too many hidden meanings so she can never be accused of dreaming. Dreaming carries the risk of harsh judgment of one's character, one's moral fibre.

Her compositions are written in words and sentences that are unmistakably the young girl, they seldom extend beyond that, just as her sparse convent life never extends beyond itself. She deals in facts, precise, meticulous, and the nuns approve of that but she's aware that there is something about the clarity of her compositions that does not exhaust other possibilities. Unknown factors beyond those plotted by nuns and priests and rules.

When her parents deposited her at the Pensionnat at nine

years old, it was under the guise of a classical education and there's little doubt that they believed that. Everything that hurt was for her own good. For the first three months she could barely mutter a sound. Whenever anyone spoke to her, asked her name, her heart unfolded in her chest, filled her throat with fluttering as if invaded by an injured sparrow. She imagined her heart as raw and mangled as that of the life size Sacred Heart at the end of the corridor. Year after year it stood there welcoming the new girls with opened arms and bleeding hands and in spite of its bland expression it was sinister. From the moment the forbidding front doors opened and parents delivered their children to creatures wearing bird-in-flight coiffes and large crucifixes tucked into the front of their aprons, the statue at the end of the corridor conveyed one clear message. Hope for nothing and there will be nothing to fear. But convent life never seems to raise itself above fear, detection and punishment hovering in every act or thought. Everything steeped in fear. It is the means by which convent girls advance toward an order different from other children, their fear of being abandoned soon replaced by the worst fear of all, the fear of sin. Dread of the impure, the endless rites of penance. Purification.

There will be confession once a week, Mother Superior informs the new girl as she leads her to the chapel, genuflects before another Sacred Heart and dips the girl's fingers into holy water, and guides her hand to her forehead, *au nom du Père*, her chest, *et du Fils*, shoulders, *et du Saint-Esprit*. Against the constraints of one week's silence, she is compelled to list how she has defiled herself during that silence. In the half-light behind the woven screen a head tilts and a hound voice links itself to her ear like a leash. How long since your last confession. One week. Have you had unkind thoughts. Borne malice. Coveted.

Sins of anger, envy, greed, pride, laziness, disobedience, all are serious enough to be examined briefly but these are venial transgressions, excusable sins that merit only a few *Pater Nosters* or *Ave Marias* and are quickly dispensed with. Gluttony is never referred to, the priest is well acquainted with the nuns' culinary skills. It is flesh that consumes the mind. Have you had impure thoughts. Did you touch yourself there. Did you let

anyone touch you there. Flesh, *péchés de la chair*, the hush sound of its *shh* alone seals it with disgrace, commands silence. Flesh, soft part of a mother's body, *shh*. Bloody flesh, mucous flesh, entrails, organs, *shh*. Nakedness, buttocks, penis, anus, vagina, menstruation, *shh*. Sex, *shh*. The most vivid images of indecency, the most dubious parts of human nature, *shh*. These are mortal sins that stain the soul, deface it until it caves in under the weight of its decay, its own flesh and only the hound voice can wash them away. Only the wizardry of words, the fictive act of ablutions can redeem it from its perpetual mortal fate. *Que la passion de notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ, les mérites de la bienheureuse Vierge Marie, et de tous les saints, et tout ce que vous ferez de bien, supporterez de pénible, contribuent au pardon de vos péchés, augmentent en vous la grâce et vous conduisent à la vie éternelle. Amen.*

Since it's practically impossible, because of unrelenting supervision, to commit most of the sins suggested to her, the young girl has come to understand that confession, like her English compositions, is, for the most part, a re-enactment of the priest's vivid imagination. Through skillful prodding and suggestions, latent images of corruption are skillfully drawn and contemptuous acts are brought to the light of speech. Retrieved from silence she relays in detail how she has defiled herself during that silence and when she fears that her sins don't lend her confession sufficient weight, she invents bigger and better ones. Yes, someone touched me there. Who. Soeur Lucienne. Yes, after that I had bad dreams. Tell me your dreams.

From the time she's about ten a peculiar feeling begins to invade her. An uncomfortable feeling that separates her from everyone else which says I'm myself and no one else and how did that come to be. How come I'm me. During those moments, her sense of self is so powerful and lonely that it is invariably followed by the thought that if she were to die at that very instant, it wouldn't matter because she has experienced all that can be experienced. There is a place within her that is a storehouse for all she's known, and all that is to come is but a repetition of that knowledge. That's what the future is then, events that haven't happened but are going to happen and even if the events were to change, the feelings that go with them remain the same. The future holds more of the same and as such it has already been invented.

It will be much later that she will come to recognize that to be unlike everyone else is to be exactly the same. To be different is to be the same but at ten she can only focus on the difference. It will be much later that she will come to understand that a ten year old convent girl's life only seems repetitious and irrelevant. A ten year old understands so much, but at seventy I understand so little as if an unravelling had taken place. As if I were moving towards a space where nothing has existed. Hope for nothing and there will be nothing to fear.

Fourth Editorial Period

ISSUES 34 - 49

1984 - 1989

INTRODUCTION/Dorothy Jantzen

To edit *TCR* is continually to be taken by surprise. The occasion of this writing is perhaps the biggest surprise of all. This celebratory issue asks of a preface a long view of *TCR*, of the aesthetic house it has inhabited since 1984. Its coolly conceived page design can still be located in our archives, but *TCR* found its real shape as we sandbagged by necessity. That daily administrative scramble was sporadically relieved by the coherence brought by works like the ones we publish here. Momentarily we could believe a design was in place.

It's too late for the architect's vision and much too soon for the archeologist's hindsight, but there is evidence that the structure has functioned. Our purpose in the last few years was not to create in our own image nor to bend to our view, but to present verbal and visual surprises as we found and delighted in them.

Even this double issue allows room to remember only a few of those moments: Sheila Delany's *Convent Journal*; Gary Geddes' "Kitenmax"; Bob Sherrin's *USAge* series; Gillian Harding-Russell's "Opal's Dream"; Erin Mouré's "Shutter Door", and K. D. Miller's several stories published over a number of separate issues. New work by artists and writers published in the most recent few issues of *TCR* has, unfortunately, been excluded from this celebratory issue by the historical bias of our central principle of selection. My regret for this necessary omission is more than counterbalanced by the optimism it implies for the shape of *TCR* to come.

But this self-conscious editorial belies *TCR*'s tacit operation, and is best recognized as only one more sandbag in the process.

Erin Mouré/EIGHT POEMS

GRAVITY

I think only of the split or severed brain. The young
who are poor again & who do not have the coats for
winter & who don't

notice.

What we attend to is what we remember! No, what we are
attentive to is what we remember, its consequence. One
thin coat & then another, another. There is a speech of
such gravity, such layers.

Or there *must* be. Communication between the two
halves, the one cord, centred, the circular thought!

Thus: speech of gravity. Serious rhythm guitar. The
snow light at midnight. Shivering in the thin blue
jacket. Severed without us. The head bowed so we see it.
The silent right brain.

LIGHT

Always this shudder in the retina, having seen that cold & not dreamed it, having known. My dailyness follows me with its shoulder, with its hair, its reminder of the vast sky & intricate branches. Having followed me away “*from*” & back “*towards*” her, with my hope always, patient, the patience of its tonsil, its crying at the age when it was cut from me, no longer part of the body, it was too sore.

The pinpoint of light coming not from the street but from the brain. The human brain looking always from behind, with its sigh & continent, with gentleness, its pin prick light mistaken for sentences or memory, or rain.

That rain. O retinal presence, illusory, reconstituted. “The harsh rain on the snow as the temperature rises.” The memory leaks out from the inside. It’s slippery, treacherous. They walk home, singing. *Rainin’ all over the world* . . . she sang.

GRACE

Suddenly, there is an appearance of many. Many are chosen, & many appear! Their coats are black & yellow, & their yellow are leaves. Their coats have scarves, their fingers buried in these scarves, in the form of embraces! Once in a while, a man has a white shirt, & a name. Many are called! Many answer, distractedly, they come in, undress in the café where the fire was, showing their forgotten centres. O parts of our bodies . . .

Once in a while, a woman has a blue sweater & forgets her name. Not a *woman also*, but a *woman*. She forgets the name because . . . who named her!

Many are chosen, & many appear, they sit cordial, how are your greatest, your least, until between the “we” & “they” there is such a number. Already there are as many coats as people, meaning . . .

an election is close by. That, or some were not chosen.

Some had no coat to grace their arm, to grace their eyebrow, to grace their “grace”, which they covet. Some had no phone! Some saw nothing blazing, & did not come! Some did not want to . . . Some were not hungry . . . Some were cold, elsewhere, & could not leave!

CAROLINA

Trees of the earth, who are you. There is this fright, these & these wishes! Tremulous leaves. The rush of pulleys & ropes, & the tree is sand, toppling to sand. In my childhood, there were no such castles! In my childhood there were small trees, bending the weather! Small hidden trees. Not the huge trunks, growing, roots aimed for the sewer. Not these non-transportable trees. Huger than the map, the pink map we live in. The Commonwealth of trees! So many board-feet shipped to Japan, who learned from us: the two-by-four!

The Carolina poplar with its magnificent noise, touching the wires, touching red ash from the chimney, the power lines, touching the sky, making noise of it, short noise of it, noise of the sky. All this is one line of poetry. The margins have it! Deliberately, there are margins! There are borders! This too was written...

This escape from the pulleys. From the ropes. Out there in the back yard, they are lowering this tree! Foot by foot! With a woman's name. The last height, deliberately. Impossible...

VEGETAL ANSWER

In the time of my time, with my horses on end I answered
clearly, vegetal,

my vegetal being. This, & so many grams of *amino* in the
arms. So many grams of *amiga* in the chest, with its whittled
comb, its dagger, its letter-opener. I am speaking of the
breast-bone! The body folded over, into the breast!

As if this dagger could be heard. As if this dagger did the
ticking of the body, not the heart. This pointed fold, this
spring, this *hola, hola*. O horses of the centre, horse of the
vagina, that this comb belongs to... softly... whittled...

I tell you we are in it for keeps, & we will keep this body! We
will keep it forward, its ghost rummaging a red sky, evening,
whether or not you forget it, you who are absence. You who
have corrected us, word for word! To hell with absence. We
will scribble... We will find pens... We will write this down...

MAGDALENIC ANSWER

To remember always the magdalenic wound. To continue with the darkness in the bones, inside them, a marrow! Such women! As if suddenly a noise . . . hush . . . the car leaving . . .

Outside, the tree is on fire, that tree. There is a long road paved by taxes, blasted thru mountains no one in this eastern plain can know. We have come from these extreme rocks, these centres! Sheer cliffs & drainage!

We can stay then. We can answer. The wine in our glasses is red, we are women in our scarves & jackets, in our kohl & glasses. We remember the rock fall! We remember names of some of the apostles. Apostles? Inside us, a marrow! To remember always, for our daughters! The car is gone now; now we can write this down.

LINEAL ANSWER

The trail a voice is. Whither the sound of. In her heart the old aches numbered, numeral, chifferal. A coffee-brown liquid in the glass is, coffee. Or standing on the ladder, conferring with the plasterers, the hawk of wet-smelling earth & measured *swoop* of the trowel, this is

the urge in every answer, making a wall smooth. “If there is to be a wall, let it be written wet in the old way, not that chalk sheeting.” She climbs back down the ladder, careful of her feet for if she falls

we too will be hurt, will leave her “hurt”, will not read again . . .

She turns & looks up, in this is her answer; she remembers. We see her, in this we are noticed, absent, we are back with a chicken & groceries, our heads bowed, we call out & stand up; in this we are counted; in this we are written down.

SHEEPISH LOVE

SHEEP

Every year, the neighbour says, its roots push thru the stone. The poplar, its centenary mad reason, a movement we can't see or know. How long it must have looked at my basement, the window & small green door, urging the root outward. The heater is gas, now, she said, pointing. In those days I would throw some sticks & one shovel of coal in, & the warmth would quickly envelope us. Outside, the cold tree. Inside, the tree. Like a dance, she said. Of course, the tree could never grow here. But a tree has centuries of patience, she said. Sometimes a sheep is a tree. Sometimes its hard stare & leather collar are a tree.

LOVE

Because love is necessary & some plants have failed, died from the light, or rain, or lack of either. Because of this lack. Because women wrap carefully scarves over their hair & necks before leaving, it is that bitter cold, *that bitterness*, caught in the air & inhaled, wind against the back where the seams are doubled & there is no entrance to the coat. The root grew into the cellar floor; the neighbour walked down & pulled it. This replica of the tree found in darkness. This tree that saw them kiss, two women in the apartment across from her. A sheep has the four-footed coat of patience, she said. Centuries of patience, she said.

PATIENCE

As if patience were the cure. Chemicals in trains pass thru the suburbs; nerve gas stored near human beings. As if patience were the cure, they reached up & touched each other, the tree crying out to see them, & then touched the iconic objects: bread, salt. Food placed on the chest of the dead, the same as for the living but cut to the food of patience, for a corpse is patient, in Vallejo we know this, in Vallejo where the corpse staunches its cry with ink pens, shudders in its retina, seeing; sits up in its coffin, & combs its hair.

Sheila Delany/A HORDE OF BUTTERFLIES

A Telephone Call

Peter closes his wife's door so that he can call Caroline, a student assistant in the laboratory where he works. His wife is sitting at her tiny desk in their bedroom, writing a letter, he supposes. The telephone is down the hall, and though his wife knows who he is calling, and he knows she does, Peter does not want her to hear anything. Catherine is fragile enough already, unpredictable. Her present calm puzzles him, but makes it easier after all. There is no answer, and after replacing the receiver he walks back down the hall to re-open the bedroom door.

"No answer. She's probably making it with some young stud."

"Does it bother you?" Cool, almost clinically offhand.

"I suppose so."

Zombies

Catherine sleeps late, usually: she had been up at two and six to feed the baby. It is draining away her lifeblood, she thinks at these hours, even though she is not nursing. In the mornings she is dimly conscious of the dumbwaiter creaking up from the basement, of Peter's rising and quiet dressing, his solitary breakfast toward the front of the apartment, his leaving for work. Then Ginette comes in with her own key and takes care of the baby and takes her out and it is quiet again in the apartment.

Ginette is cheerful and pretty, nothing takes her by surprise. Catherine is glad they hired someone older, who knows what to do. The way Ginette pronounces her name — Meesis Cahlvair — makes something glamorous out of the plain businesslike name. Sometimes before going home Ginette will leave a pot of rice on the stove for their dinner, rice cooked with a hambone in the Haitian way, or chicken in a spicy red sauce. Ginette is about the color of a walnut shell. She wears her hair in a chignon and will not speak to Ken, the Jamaican janitor, because he is black and flirtatious. She wheels the pram by him without a word.

In the apartment Ginette talks profusely, or hums or sings to the baby. Catherine likes to have her tell about Haiti. Ginette will not describe a voodoo, though she said they occur even here in New York, at a certain club not many blocks uptown. She tells of zombies, people who have been drugged by a village medicine man. The drug, or poison, produces a death-like coma for several days. After the victim is buried as dead, the medicine man digs him or her up, only now the victim, brain-damaged, remembers nothing and can do nothing but obey orders. The zombie is secretly taken to another region and sold as a docile servant. They are much in demand. Ginette has a friend who knows several medicine men, the friend has learned some of their lore and wants to attend medical school in Paris.

A Nightmare

Sleep; she fears it. Her dreams are crowded, tempestuous. From some of them she awakens at the verge of tears, clutching the quilt, pulse pounding in the throat. She approaches sleep nervously, as if entering a courtroom, or a foreign country. In one of the dreams that she does remember she is smearing the walls with excrement, peacefully defiling the walls with her own excrement. From this dream she awakens as from a nightmare, sobbing.

Job in the Whirlwind

Peter will do anything his wife asks, if only she will ask. He has told her this often. Though Catherine is an intelligent woman — no doubt about that, a zoologist, for heaven's sake — there is a sullenness to her now that almost borders on stupidity. She is being stupid about Caroline, who is only a student lab assistant and certainly no threat. Peter has offered to stop seeing the girl the minute Catherine asks. He knows it isn't the best time; hell, it isn't for him either. But Catherine does not ask. It is as if she were conducting an experiment to see who cracks first. Immured in her long hair, her knitting, her letters home, she observes and waits. She takes everything too hard. Occasionally Peter wonders what it would be like to be married to somebody simple and vulnerable. It will be good

for Catherine to start work again. Her old laboratory job is filled, but others will open up soon.

Shattering the sullen, watchful calm there have been one or two episodes. During these moments of shrieking fury Peter barely recognizes his wife. He feels like Job in the whirlwind, uncomprehending, awed. Peter considers himself a simple person, basically: simple and therefore predictable. He sees simplicity as his central virtue. If forced to choose he will choose Catherine, naturally. If not forced to choose he will let things alone, to run their natural course. Peter does not borrow trouble. Sufficient to the day.

Death-Train

Catherine can hardly bear to look at it, what she's done to it. What she's done. "It" is "her". With a name, Laurel: Peter's name for the baby after two weeks without a name. The baby is tainted, touched as if by a demon's wing, ever so lightly but it is enough. If the baby survives it will be a big-headed creature in an institution whom they will visit weekly, then monthly, then forget about if they are lucky. But Catherine knows she will not forget, never. It — she, Laurel — will be her despair always.

It means, simply, that Catherine was not fit. Again. Judged and found wanting. They ought to have known not to force barred gates: five years barren, two miscarriages, and now. This body that should protect, this body a death-train. Defiled with infant corpses in the millions, carrying children to their graves as surely as Jews to Dachau. Can you do nothing right, then, neither take life nor give it? Chopped hair and sliced wrist, years before Peter. Peter knows about it, you can't very well hide scars. Another time he does not know: with pills, between miscarriages. Death is her trade, death her profession. She knows about life except to produce it. "If you ever should kill yourself," Catherine reflects, "they can make your epitaph 'At last she did something right.' "

La Loi

"You should come out dancing with me and my boyfriend."

"But Peter doesn't dance."

"So you come without Mr. Cahlvair. Plenty of men will be

happy to dance with you, believe me. I am older than you. I am a grandmother and I go every week. You don't need to go with a man, you find one."

Ginette tells about her marriage, now ended, to a man who made her miserable with other women. Once she had followed her husband to a Cuban restaurant where he met another woman for dinner. She waited outside until the meal was served, then stormed in and overturned the table on the two of them. "Sometimes," she says, "I get like that. I feel to have *la loi*. You know" It is what happens to you at a voodoo, she explains, to have *la loi*.

A Horde of Butterflies

Catherine spends a good deal of time in the bedroom since the baby has been born. She reads or knits, she rests, she feeds the baby when Ginette has gone home. Sometimes she pushes up the window and sits on the broad sill to catch the autumn sun. With her long light hair and the whole apartment behind her, she is like a figurehead except that she is terrified every moment of falling and more terrified of allowing herself to fall. She keeps one foot on the floor inside, never letting her outer leg dangle or even project beyond the sill. It would be so simple to lean forward into that irresistible pull. Peter discourages her habit of sunbathing in the window. He tells her to use the roof, but the roof is hot and tar-papery, and visible from other buildings.

Once down the canyon of the street a butterfly came slowly past the window: a monarch, orange and black. Catherine was surprised to see it so high. Leaning out, she noticed other spots in the air up and down the street, even higher than her window. All afternoon the monarchs fluttered by, going south to a wintering place. Their formation was composed mainly of empty space, like an atom. What is the word, Catherine wondered: a flock of butterflies? Surely not a herd, but possibly a horde? One day she must ask.

Graffiti

Returning from a weekend at her mother's with the baby, Catherine finds clean sheets on the bed.

"Were you here with her?"

“Don’t ask questions if you don’t want to know the answers, Catherine.”

Catherine screams and screams. Who are they to force her to think of them? With the reddest lipstick she owns she scrawls graffiti on all the bedroom walls: “Catherine’s place” “Go somewhere else” “Do not use this room!” She scribbles warnings and threats, some of them in block letters, others in script, a tornado, a defacing whirlwind. It will always be her room, but she will make it too ugly for anyone else. “Let’s see how sensitive your assistant is,” she shouts.

Poor Peter. He spends hours afterward scouring the walls. He feeds the baby and cooks something for Catherine who lies, purged and convalescent, weeping in the bedroom. He won’t go out to buy anything, afraid to leave her alone. Or is it alone with the baby? Peter is frightened for her, and frightened of her. That is why he suggests a clinic uptown: to help her deal with her anger, he says: to help her forgive.

But it was so strange, for Catherine had felt all the while a calm at the center like a smooth small white stone. It was this hard blank at the center that let her act, even forced her to act, with completest certainty, just as if she were performing another household chore: claiming her room. A necessary task. A considered judgement.

She agrees, anyhow, to apply to the clinic. She telephones and gives her address to receive the application form. She is shamefully, shamelessly grateful for Peter’s love.

Sick Animals

Catherine sees her life as a constant state of emergency. Sometimes the emergency is paralysis. Curiously, it is then that people seem to like her best or dislike her least: she is very quiet then, she sits reticent and vulnerable within the veil of her long light hair doing crochet or knitting a blanket for the baby. Peter says she is easier to get along with at these times, not so prickly or hysterical as at other times. She tends, he says, to overreact.

Even so, she notices people turn away from her in pity — or is it disgust? The reaction of the healthy organism is to shun the sick one. Or to kill it, eat it, drive it to death. Even the amiable dolphin cannibalizes the wounded of its kind.

Hope for the Best

Peter has taken books out, but Catherine will not look at them although none of the books has pictures. She could not bear to look at pictures. Ironic, Peter reflects, that two scientists should have a damaged infant. From the library books Peter has learned that some ancient cultures exposed such children on a cliff to die. He has learned that there is a high survival rate if the child is kept at home, and that many of them become sweet-tempered, loving adults. There is an institute in Philadelphia that has a program. Possibly the baby will die, prone to infection, but on the other hand, new discoveries are made everyday. It's important to hope for the best.

Peter remembers when, before going to sleep, Catherine would describe how the baby felt, moving within: an interior tickling, a dragging movement across the inner surface, a rib gently pressed from the other side. There would be the sudden odd twitch that even Peter could observe. Paradoxical, he thought, the passivity after birth: from the previous activity you'd think it almost capable of walking away from the delivery table. They'd known nearly at once, of course, and Dr. Bertrand has been wonderful, still is. Doctor Bertrand agrees it is important to hope for the best.

Yellow Ducks

Although she has not seen such a blanket before, Catherine knows exactly what it should look like. It is composed of knitted squares sewn together. Each square consists of four squares inside one another. She could have crocheted each four-color square from the center out but instead she is knitting each one from the top down, counting stitches. The outermost square is dark green, for the life around them. Ash to ashes, dust to dust. Then there is a purple square, a beige one, and finally, the smallest and only complete one, yellow. Peter is the purple, beige for herself, and then the baby. Yellow is for babies, baby ducks and chicks especially. Or children in yellow raincoats. Catherine had thought the blanket would be gay and circuslike, a striped tent, but now as she knits she sees it is garish and dull at once, an eyesore, offensive.

A Wristwatch

Ginette rocks the pram and chants a two-note lullaby: "*Do, do, l'enfant dort, l'enfant dormira bientôt, do, do...*" The baby falls asleep quickly in the fresh air, but Ginette keeps up the song, softly. A good baby, but thin like her mother, nervous. And ugly, Lord! But a baby can't help how it's born, you have to love them however they look. Besides, children change, maybe they get better-looking later. Louis was always handsome right from the start, thank God, and already he's made her a grandmother, that boy, a grandmother at thirty-nine!

Ginette's boyfriend is a policeman and her son is addicted to heroin. The son is being cured at a center downtown. The boyfriend is nice, a white man; he spends money but not like the Haitian men when they have it. There they know how to live, money or no money. One of her boyfriends in Haiti, a government minister, gave Ginette a little yellow convertible that she would drive up the mountain roads to the big hotels. She's known a few generous men in her life, thank God.

Louis is late for his lunch-money. He doesn't like the food at the center, and for good behavior they let him eat lunch out. Even with a watch he's late. Ginette found the watch in a bottom drawer with the laundered shirts, obviously an old one of Mr. Calvert's that he had no one to give it away to when he got his new fancy one. He should have given it to her in the first place. Some people you have to help them to be generous. It's good for them. God will give them credit.

Walking Wounded

The second time Peter brought the girl to her bedroom Catherine knew there was nothing left to say about it. She drew the wedding ring from her finger, laid it on the sill and opened the big window.

The window, as wide as her arm-span, is their bedroom window and it overlooks the city. She flings the tiny golden ring out of the wide window, not caring even to trace its trajectory. She is still not free, but she feels that she will be free one day, that she is preparing herself to be free.

Peter goes out into the oily, lamplit street ten floors below to

search in gutters and basement stairwells. He recovers the ring and fetches it back upstairs, but Catherine will not put it on again, never. Sadly Peter puts the ring away; Catherine does not ask where.

Peter wants the three of them to be a community of love, but now he sees it is impossible. He grieves the loss of his dream. Caroline wants decisive action, something definite. She calls Peter pusillanimous, they quarrel and he walks away from her in the laboratory where she had sought him out.

Catherine continues to do the usual things. She shops, takes the baby to the doctor, changes her when Ginette is not there, talks on the telephone to friends whom she cannot bear to tell what is happening with Peter. She is lost doing these things, she does them by rote, walking wounded.

Protection

The blanket is already larger than it needs to be to cover the baby's bed or pram, but Catherine continues to produce the little multicolored squares. She is eager to complete the blanket because when the blanket is done she is going to wrap herself in it. She will hold the baby in her arms and brush its head lightly with her lips, feeling the fine hair against her lips, as fine as the hairs on her own wrist. She will hold the baby in her arms, covering the two of them in colorful squares of wool. She will cover her own head with the blanket like a woman from a foreign country, Mexico or India. She is going to raise up the window, seat herself on the broad sill, all wrapped as she is in the knitted blanket. She will clasp the baby close as she has longed to do for days and weeks, protecting it forever. And she will lean forward, regretfully, into the yellow sunshine.

Witness

It is a graceful old building, the cornerstone engraved "1911". There is a narrow entrance court, and wrought-iron bars over the heavy glass doors. An ancient dumbwaiter in each apartment creaks up from the basement first thing in the morning to receive yesterday's garbage. Also in the basement are the washing machines and dryers in their stolid white rows.

The basement labyrinth is ruled by Ken, resident caretaker. Ken is rotund and friendly, with a soft Jamaican accent. He

rolls his eyes and hints things about Ginette. "You don't know that girl," he advises. Catherine continues to fold laundry, noncommittal. Ken withdraws to another part of the basement to repair the pipes and wires.

A slight buzzing catches Catherine's attention. There, in a web spun across the corner of a basement window, a large fly vibrates noisily. Already the spider approaches. It is on the fly's back, passionately injecting poison just behind the fly's head. The spider is somewhat smaller than the fly, a round mottled pebble. The spider applies its underside obscenely to the fly's back, jabs until a drop of sticky substance comes from its underbelly. From this matter bonds are quickly spun. Two or three rapid workmanlike twists and the fly is enveloped, wings bound to body, ready to haul. The spider pulls its encased prey up to a spot just beneath the ceiling near a heavy, brown-painted pipe. There it settles in, cradling the fly's head in position with several of its striped, attenuated legs. The fly's body throbs as it is rhythmically pumped out. After a minute more there is no movement: the spider rests.

Catherine waits to see whether the spider will resume its ministrations. For the time being it does not, so she gathers up her folded sheets, as full of this new knowledge as any witness to a most complete murder.

Distance

The blanket is done, there is no point making it bigger. From within the apartment, from just inside the window, the sidewalk ten floors below is not visible. Standing by the window, Catherine can see the black street, the other pavement, the building made of beige stone that forms the opposite wall of this chasm. In order to see directly below she would have to learn far out, she would have to be about to fall.

The idea of impact frightens her less than the idea of falling for a long, sickening moment. One could lose one's mind during free fall. Perhaps she ought to drug herself first. She must hold the baby ever so tightly to protect it.

To clear things up, finally, to be unencumbered, all of them. To be effaced on the pavement, rubbed out like the chalk-writing that children do on sidewalks, yellow chalk of hopscotch squares or slogans about who likes who. Rubbed out

on purpose, by foot, a pale yellow smudge on the pavement.

Ceremoniously Catherine drapes the knitted blanket over her head and shoulders, gathering it to her breast.

Taking Risks

Children wade through layers of brown leaves along the walk, kicking them up like water and falling, diving, into leaf-piles. On a park bench facing the river sit a man and a girl, near but not next to one another. It is where they often meet, so that he thinks of her whenever he walks through the park alone or with his wife. The gritty texture of the concrete bench-supports with tiny pebbles ingrained in it, the soft, near-splintery feel of the wood beneath his hand will always, he fervently believes, remind him of their sparse conversations, of the difficulty of risk. Both the man and the girl are dark, ruddy, clean-featured; there is a slight facial resemblance though they are not related. The girl wears a wrinkled trenchcoat; the man, in corduroys and tweed jacket, smokes a pipe. Behind them the late afternoon traffic rushes up and down Riverside Drive.

“What do you want from me?” Her voice is soft, tentative.

“Caroline, I wish I knew.”

“All my relationships are difficult now,” the girl sighs.

Gillian Harding-Russell/LATE NIGHT
NEWS AND AFTER: Following the
Armenian Earthquake and the British
Railway Disaster December 12, 1988

I

I watched the late night news on T.V.
only because you told me

I should. A mistake, no doubt.

Corpses crushed under rubble
building blocks eroded
piles like genuflecting elephants
before half-buried altars.
This is Armenia, and then

what? a twelve-year-old girl
with crushed right shoulder and legs

staring at hospital walls, away
from the camera, dumb
after so much. What

could there be left
to say? when you have felt
the earth shake? Another child

catatonic, but the Armenian boy remembering
his geography class when it happened

is human: he shuts out

the dead mother, his sisters. Such
editing, such careful amnesia.

*I say let's go to bed, tomorrow
is another day; but we stay on*

transfixed
on the edge. A peasant
woman wringing her hands in which
we see beads — “The lucky ones
don’t know who they are
yet,” a reporter states.

This is the Year of the Dragon
hurricanes and earthquakes, tremors
all natural calamities.

In the next shot
the British prime minister in an armchair
announcing to the world
in the perfect sentences of a borrowed speech

this railway disaster
in London’s east end.
Her hairdo is untouched
by wind, not like the foreign correspondent
standing among the wreckage
whose hair blows in a strange wind
energized by such tragedies
not our own.

(Does tragedy over there
forestall one here? My mother-
in-law sitting on this couch
discussing her friends, all
cancer patients now. Safe
is she now

from cancer? Or do
tragedies lead to other
tragedies, shock waves reaching
out? One rescue team crashed
in the chicken yard of Armenia’s airport
and the next day
the same thing.)

Under the twisted metal
the partly living writhe
or are stone. One white face

expression obliterated by blood
lacerations, the indices
of pain and beyond pain
indecipherable.

But what after
the excitement, the slow wheedling years
ahead without this arm, that leg, that half
a brain? When sympathy is spent and
the relief crews have been sent out
and have returned
long ago?

That living ghost
on the screen right now (*See him,
again?*) will wheel his way down corridors
telling his story over and over
when no one's listening;
or he'll forget it (but look
as if he's forgotten something
terribly important).

II

You tell me we are in earthquake territory.
We're due for one any day, you say

as we fall apart in the dark
to separate sleep. I hear

an unknown dog bark
into the night, and our own dog

starts up. I look out
each window — all the windows

in our wobbly two-storey house
with the warped floors that speak
of damp and mildew

(not earthquakes), and I see
a black ribbon of highway
winding through shades
of grey, the field

mottled by darker blotches
of backed-up water.
Our house

built at the edge of a forest
on the foundations of rain
on some forgotten by-way:
A Noah's ark

of resilient timber. You tell me
we could survive an earthquake

of the predicted magnitude: 11 points
on the Richter scale—5 points
higher than Armenia's or
the one in Quebec
three weeks ago.

The house would sway
back and forth— We'd get under doorframes
where the balancing force prevents
immediate collapse

while Vancouver skyscrapers topple.
A Tower of Babel raining stones
in an earth storm.

(I want to believe you.)
A bush outside the window
crouches like an angry cloud

bespeaking our complacent sex
in all that global rubble.

So the image floats up and up
in our minds
framed by the night
and the dog barks again
and again. But I cannot see

the dog unless it is
that tall thin creature
(like a Doberman) in the shadow
of the honeysuckle. I cannot

see properly in that sliver
of a moon pressing down
through darkness.

Robert Sherrin/*PLAYLAND*: "The Concentration"

The working title of this body of images is *Playland*: "The Concentration," and it evolves from two separate works. The first of these are long-exposure images made while walking or driving, and the second of these is a piece known as VERS US (see TCR #37). The long exposure work has always possessed for me a disturbing quality that I've not been able to isolate or, therefore, explore in a visual way. Likewise, VERS US reflects a collage technique I've wanted to employ in a more decisive fashion: more like a "cut" in film than an overlapping of still images. The result, *Playland*, is an extended work using long-exposure prints as a "ground" which symbolises contemporary urban existence. These prints are then altered by the dropping-in of other photographic images with elements of color and shape also affecting the viewer's apprehension of the work.

The first suite (or chapter) of *Playland* is intended to be provocative if not disturbing. I have juxtaposed images selected from hundreds of my negatives, and I've chosen images that I feel resonate within the parameters of our various histories: social, sexual, political, photographic. I want to bring into momentary alignment images that are often described as "documentary" —that is to say, easily identified as belonging to safely truncated and categorised periods of our collective past. My essential desire in *Playland* is to remove them from their pigeon-holes and re-present them so they may once again be seen (and understood) against our current states of existence.

Playland will continue with further collages utilising colour images, text, and larger expanses of colour, shape, and symbol. All original works are 16" × 20" silverprints. They are then copied on three different 4" × 5" film types to allow for enlargement to various formats in different media.





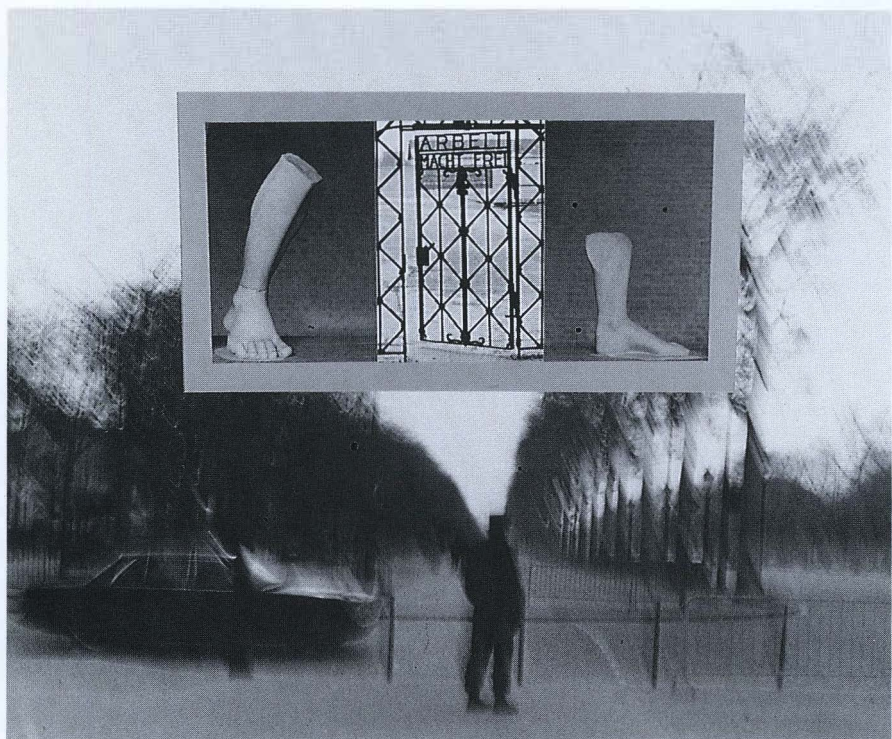
USA contro la Libia

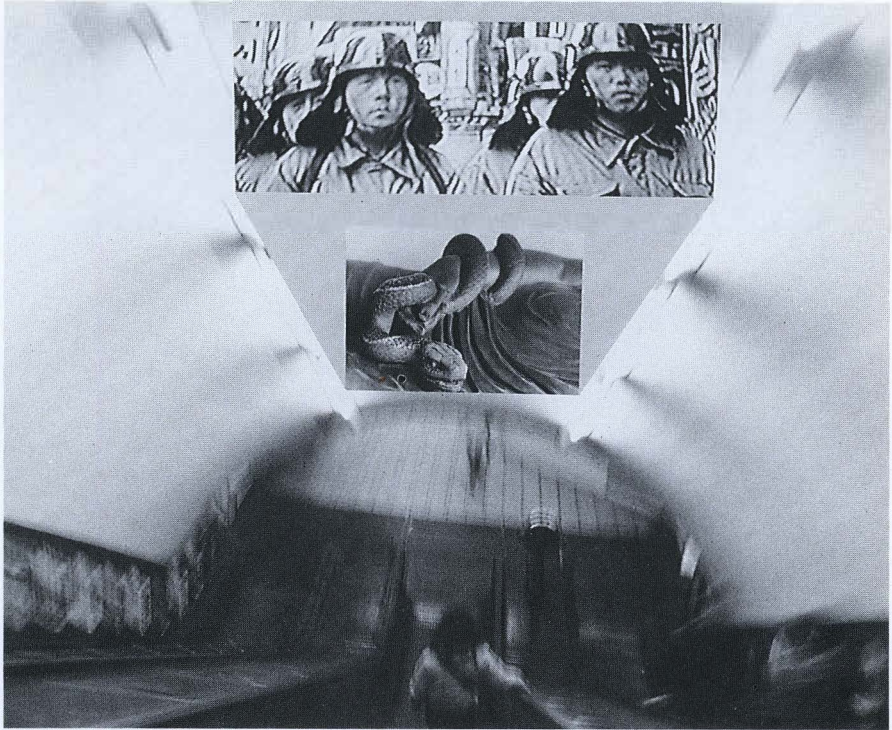
Bisogna fermarle subito

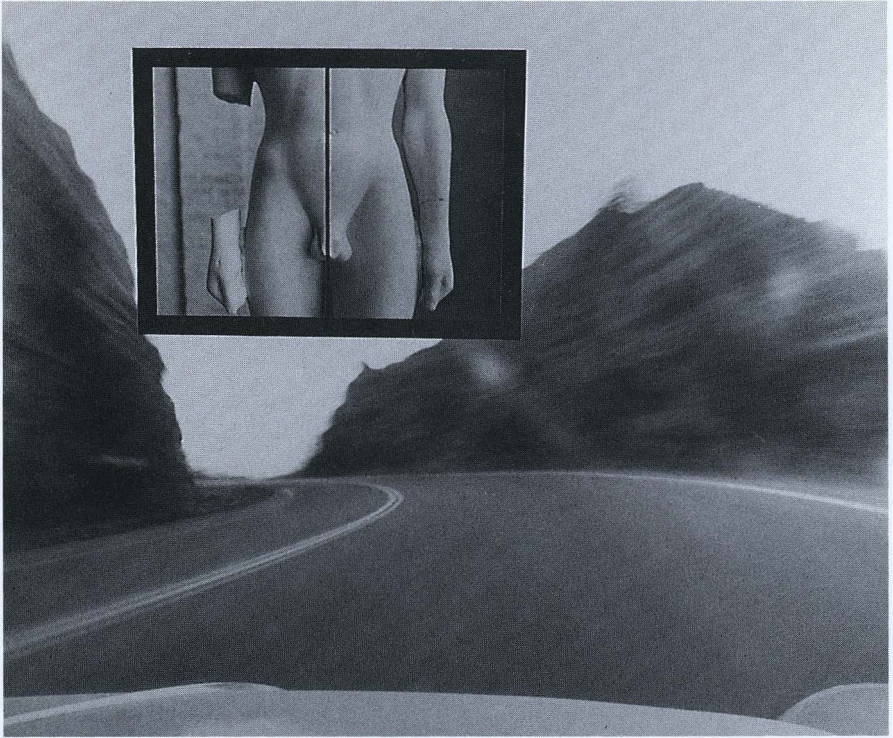
- 01. Il rischio nell' Mediterraneo e per il nostro Paese è altissimo.
- 02. Il Presidente Reag... ha dato seguito alle studiate provocazioni della VI flotta nel Golfo della Sirte e l'Italia... a un passo.
- 03. Nessuna base Nato... sul nostro territorio deve essere coinvolta in... azioni militari.
- 04. Si muova subito ed... il Governo italiano.

CANADIAN INTELLIGENCE GATHERED WIRETAP RECORDINGS OF

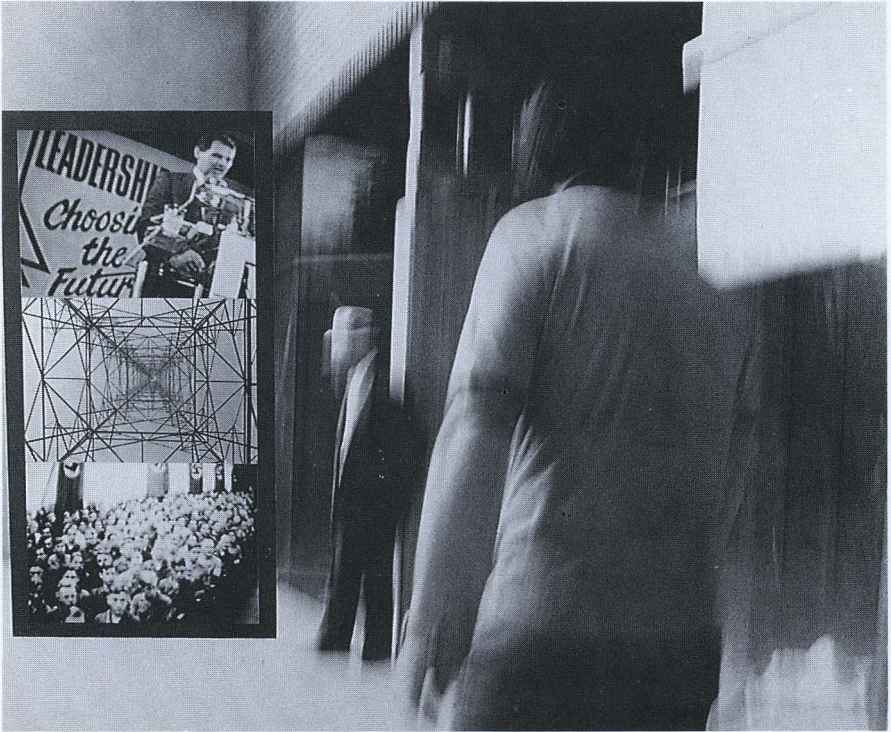


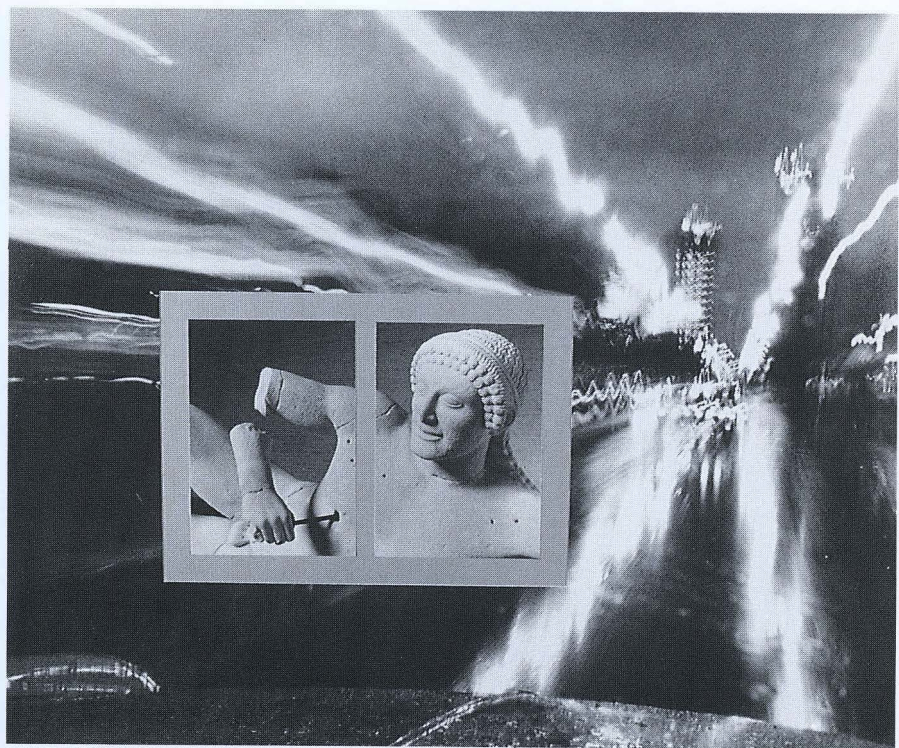














Gary Geddes/COMING UP FOR AIR

1

When water
closes over your metal casing
and light recedes
into memory,
you dont panic;
your hands inspect
connections on air-hoses
and brass clamps
tight around the helmet base
and little windows.

You inhale deeply
to regulate your breathing
and hear, down
the length of air-hose,
the reassuring heart-beat
of the pump.

Cells

smile in their dependency;
blood-race dwindles
to a trot.

2

You meet in the lunchroom at Kelly Douglas
in November, foghorns
in the harbour, Lions
visible above the cloud-line.

Later, when you kiss her hair
in the elevator,
it smells of tea leaves.

Darling, you whisper.
No, she replies,
darjeeling.

3

Something about elevators.
No time to decompress there
either, the boss
stepping into the lift
as you stuff the contraband cookie
into your mouth. So
surprised, you offer him one.

Shafted
in the leanest of times.
From imported tea and biscuits
to the flower business
on Alma Street.

She's beside you in the front seat,
hair done up in a bandana.
Fresh manure in the box
of the dump truck
wafting in the windows.

What bouquet, she says,
crooking a little finger
and screwing up her mouth,

Formosa oolong.

Laughing so hard
you stall in the middle
of the intersection.

4

When you descend the ladder
at the side of the diving-tender,
the water is only 40 degrees.

A hundred yards offshore,
light rain, a gauze mist
gentling the cedars.
Crew in slickers.
You notice Johnson's turtleneck
frayed at the collar
from the action of his red beard.

Rain eases entry:
border-blur, no longer
two elements.
Kelp trailers,
a half dozen coho
fighting the current.

Descent in stages, diagonal
even with lead shoes.
Grips and cutting torch
on your belt.

Tin-pot freighter,
not worth the cost
in peacetime.

5

Working alongside your father
at North Van shipyards.
Crusaders in welding masks
move in their galaxy
of sparks.

Shift-bell, the foreman
shouts from the control shed —
A boy! — and the yards
ring with the sound of hammers
on the empty hull.

So I enter
the narrative,
slipping down the ways
at Grace Hospital,
nine months pickled,
tidal, amniotic,
a recruit
for the war effort,
romance of production,

to store in my mind
your square mask tipped back,
torch in hand, grin
and slicked black hair,
a medallion, image
to be coined.

6

Insecurity, panache,
to paint the world
with such extravagance.

Saturday afternoon
in Kitsilano, the trunk
of the blue coupe open
and you are dispensing chocolate bars
to a hundred kids
from a damaged shipment
off the waterfront.
Chocolate moustaches,
street awash with wrappers.
Pied-piperling them
from blocks around
while she of the laughter
and darjeeling hair
hangs back, embarrassed,
behind the screen door.

What eludes us
lies nearest the heart.
Before Jules Verne
there were no words for what happens
under the sea.

7

Mixed signals, your
body turned on from the pressure
at 60 feet below.

Supply vessel, all hands lost
in fog. A tooth of rock
in the Narrows,
long gash
in the starboard bows.
You imagine the hole
opening straight into the forward mess,
waterlogged faces
startled to see this arc of fire
burning in water.

Trying to work, force
of water driving you back
against the hull.
Half an hour of grace
at slack waters,
then the reversed flow
catches the freighter
and tilts it on top of you.

8

To own
our emptiness,

times when the normal fare
of words and touch
won't suffice.

Not that you fit
perfectly inside each other
like Russian dolls.
One is always wanting
in, for warmth,
or out of the suffocating
enclosed space.

Something
must break the shell
of vanity,
before it is too late
and we vanish

for good.

Only the helmet
saves you,
that extra cranium
of steel.

Twelve hours trapped
until the tide changes
and the ship lists
to port. Your bones
ache from cold,
the cells cry out
for nicotine.

Now, father,
the tank of oxygen
beside your bed,
face mask and umbilical
hoses. What joins us
but memory, the miniscus
of blood, deep-
water salvage.

All this time, the lines
intact, coded messages,
the long and short
of it.

K. D. Miller/ SUNRISE TILL DARK

Aunt Ella was fire-marked, from her hairline all the way down. One side of her face was magenta, and one arm and one leg. I was told that it was not fire but birth that had somehow marked her. Yet the magenta skin looked rougher than the rest, and I always imagined that it would be fiery to my touch.

She and her brother, Uncle George, who was two years younger and was not fire-marked, sipped their soup in unison. I watched them: the same slow raising of the spoon to the lips, the same shuddering sip, the same slow lowering of the spoon back into the bowl.

I was told that they were my father's aunt and uncle, but I did not quite believe it. My father, I thought, was too big to have aunts and uncles. He even seemed to agree, calling them plain "Ella" and "George". And they themselves were surely too old to be brother and sister.

They did not act like brother and sister. Uncle George had not, as my brother had done, drawn a skull-and-crossbones with black crayon on white paper and hung it in his bedroom doorway to keep Aunt Ella out. Nor did she ever sneak into his room, wait there until she heard him coming, then duck past him, screeching.

"Are you guys married?" I asked them once when we were visiting. The second the words were out in the air where I could not pull them back in, I knew I had made another mistake. My father laughed too loud, my mother grew red in the face and my brother began to smile his slow, superior smile.

It was a good day for my brother. He had already caught me taking a second licorice allsort from the covered china dish on the table in the hallway. Aunt Ella always uncovered the dish for us when we came to visit. We were under strict prior instruction from our mother to take just one.

I would study the allsorts, trying to choose. Don't take one of the ordinary little square sandwiches, I would always tell myself. Take one of the wagon-wheels rimmed in coconut, or one of the soft beaded cushions, or one of the white logs covered with licorice bark you can skin off with your teeth. At

last, pushed by my mother's "For heaven's sake, just *take* one!" my hand would jump into the dish, and my fingers close on one of the ordinary square sandwiches.

But on this day, I could not get the black-and-white skinnable logs out of my mind. When I thought no one was looking, I sneaked back down the hall. I lifted the china lid and replaced it miraculously without a clink. Then I peeled the little log I had taken, chewed the licorice and popped the white sugar cylinder into the other side of my sweetening mouth.

That was when I heard my brother breathing behind me. I turned around and saw his slow smile already starting. "Are you going to tell?" He turned his back. "Are you going to tell?" He walked slowly toward the kitchen, where the grownups were. "Are you going to tell?"

Of course he was going to tell. But in his own time. He would wait until we were all home having supper, just before dessert. Then he would open his lips, just like the people in Sunday School stories, and would speak. And lo, our mother would pause with a bowl of butterscotch pudding in her hand, and would turn on me her wrathful eye.

So it was a good day for my brother. I was still trying to decide which was worse—calling Aunt Ella and Uncle George "you guys" or asking them if they were married—when I saw them looking at me. Their twin pairs of blue eyes were very round and young for the moment they were on me, then quickly hooded, bent back down to their soup.



There was something quietly muttering in a pot on a back burner of Aunt Ella's stove. I stroked each porcelaine knob lightly with my finger, waiting for her to tell me not to touch. She did not.

I was being left with Aunt Ella and Uncle George that afternoon while my parents and brother went on some errand for which I was too young, or too small, or too much trouble. "Don't be any trouble," my mother had said. And, without really understanding what trouble was, I had promised not to be it.

Aunt Ella's stove kept fooling me into thinking it might be fun. Big and old as it was, there was something toy-like about all its knobs and gauges. "We haven't any toys here," Aunt Ella said quietly, as if reading my thoughts. She had turned from the kitchen sink she was scrubbing. "Not very exciting, George and me, for a little girl." I pointed to the can of Dutch Cleanser in her hand. "We have that in our kitchen." She looked at it, smiled and said, "Well, yes, I guess just about everybody does." She had a gold tooth on the side.

I came to the sink to watch, standing on tiptoe, mashing my lips against the edge. The white powder turned into a gray paste as Aunt Ella scrubbed the bottom and sides of the sink with a blue cloth. My mother always did this quickly, swiping at it, "lick and a promise", as she said, ending with a short blast of water from the tap. But Aunt Ella loved the stains she was scrubbing out. And she ran the water gently afterward, swishing it in little waves with her cloth, rinsing away every speck of cleanser, then rinsing the cloth itself and hanging it up.

"There. Isn't that lovely?" she said shyly. And it was lovely, the whiteness of it, the gleaming.

"Now I make tea for George. He sits in the sunroom in the afternoon and reads his paper." I did not know about tea. My parents drank instant coffee. Aunt Ella gave me a teabag to look at while we waited for the kettle to whistle. I liked the soft paperiness of it, the whispery sound it made, and the way its dim contents shifted when I turned it.

I decided that the afternoon in this house was longer than the afternoon in my own, and that the same things happened here in the same order every day. This was a comforting thought. I thought it over and over while the kettle whistled and Aunt Ella poured the boiling water glugging into the teapot.

In my own house, I never knew what was going to happen. My brother went off to cub camp, then came home, then went somewhere else. My parents took apart a room of the house, put it back together in some new and strange way, then started in on another room. There was always somewhere that was swathed in plastic or smelled of sawdust. Every other month, I had to go to a store full of shoes where a man measured my

feet. “You’re growing *so* fast!” my mother always said, shaking her head, opening her purse.

But nothing changed here. In spite of what the pictures in the hallway said.

“That’s George” Aunt Ella told me, pointing a magenta finger at an old brown photograph. We were waiting for the tea to steep. She had explained to me what “steep” was. The photograph she pointed to was of a very feminine baby, beruffled and beribboned.

“That’s not Uncle George!” I crowed. “That’s you!”

“Oh no it isn’t, child. No. Surely you can see that it isn’t me.” I looked and looked. Then it hit me. The baby’s face was unmarked. “I forgot,” I said, flushing. She put a hand on my shoulder.

There were so many old pictures of Uncle George, in short pants, long pants, a cap, a straw boater. Pictures that changed in tint from brown-and-beige to black-and-white. “Where are the pictures of you?” I asked. She did not answer. I asked again. A little briskly, she said, “Well, they didn’t. My parents didn’t, you see. They didn’t think it fitting.”

I tried to imagine never having to have my picture taken. I decided I wouldn’t mind. But perhaps Aunt Ella minded, for she said, almost defiantly, “There is *one* of me.” She pointed, this time with the white hand, to a small, cracked photograph in a pewter frame. It was of a young woman in a long-sleeved white dress pulled tight in front and bustled out the back. She had on a white flowered hat that kept her face in shadow.

“George took that one.” Aunt Ella said, shy again. “I was twenty. I remember that day. We were all set to go out hunting eggs.”

“Easter eggs?” I asked hopefully.



The tiny blown shell was impossibly light in my hand. A breath would roll it off my palm onto the hardwood.

We had brought Uncle George his tea in the sunroom, and Aunt Ella had said, “Lady here to see some eggs, George.”

They were kept in labelled shoeboxes, bedded down in cotton batting. Robin’s eggs like drops of sky. Speckled eggs—

the speckles blurred, as if dabbed onto the still-wet shells with a watercolour brush.

“We’d go off, Ella and me, whenever we could get away together,” Uncle George was saying. “We’d take a blanket and pack a picnic lunch—”

“What do you mean, ‘we’?” Something girlish and giggly in Aunt Ella’s voice made me look up at her. “I’m the one who packed the lunches. You never so much as made a sandwich!”

“Oh?” Uncle George shot back. “And who carried the heavy basket, Miss, and helped you over the fences, and swatted bees away from you?” There was a laugh hidden in his voice too.

“We’d be out sometimes sunrise till dark,” he went on more quietly. “Some days the sun would be so hot even the bees would be heavy and slow with it. So we’d leave the blanket spread after lunch and just sleep. Sleep for hours some days. I remember us waking up once when the day had cooled and the dark was just beginning to fall.”

They were quiet for a long time. I began to think they had forgotten I was there. I reached and picked up a gray-and-brown speckled egg.

“You like that one?” Uncle George asked. I nodded. “Hen that laid that one,” he said, (he had already explained that all lady birds were “hens”), “knew a pretty good trick. And we saw her do it, didn’t we, Ella.”

“We did. I remember.”

“She’d hidden her nest pretty well, way back deep in the shadows. But as soon as we got near it, she came right out of hiding and pretended to have a broken wing. Flopped around on the ground to lure us toward herself. And once we were a safe distance from the nest, she took off. Flew straight up and away into the sunshine.”

“Who showed her how to do that?” I asked.

“Oh, she just seemed to know, all by herself.”

“Perhaps God taught her, George,” Aunt Ella prompted gently, cutting her eyes in my direction.

“Well, yes, come to think of it, I guess that’s what happened.”

I decided that no matter how she had learned it, it was a good thing to know. So much better than knowing how to tell

time, which was my current assignment at home.

I yawned. The sun in the room was making me drowsy. Aunt Ella sat down in a chair and pulled me up onto her lap. I leaned back against her breasts, my eyelids heavy. Her hands were clasped in front of me, magenta over white. I reached a finger and touched the magenta skin. It did not shudder or flinch. Then I touched the white skin. There was no difference in temperature.

Suddenly I pulled my finger back. “Am I being trouble?” I asked. Uncle George grinned at his sister. His teeth were as white as his hair, but he hadn’t any gold ones. “No,” Aunt Ella said. “You’re not.”

Music was coming in the window — tinkly, one-note-at-a-time bell music. “Carillon,” Uncle George said, checking his watch. “We hear it every afternoon. Comes from over there.” He pointed out the window to a steeple poking up above the trees.

“Sh-sh-sh-sh-sh!” Aunt Ella had stiffened. I twisted and looked up at her face. Her chin bobbed with each note, and her eyes yearned. Uncle George was leaning forward in his chair now, his good ear cocked to the window. Almost in unison, they said, “Blessed Assurance.” Then, in a high, shaky voice, Aunt Ella began to sing the hymn, in time with the picked-out notes. I could feel the singing in her body, and could hear the soft minor note of her digesting lunch.

I fell asleep. Not a deep sleep, for as I was dropping off, I remembered something that puzzled me and kept me floating near the surface. I remembered my father telling my mother that as soon as they were grown up, George and Ella quit going to church. Quit altogether. Never went back.



When the noise of my returning family woke me, it was as if all three of us had been asleep. Aunt Ella kept hold of me, her quickening breath the only sign that she had heard my mother’s “Hello? Folks? We’re back!”

I had a strange, half-asleep thought — that my parents and brother were a dream from which I had almost awakened. That this was where I really lived.

Aunt Ella still held me. At last Uncle George caught her eye. She unclasped her hands as he began struggling up out of his chair.

I thought suddenly of the eggs, and was afraid for them. Afraid of my mother's quick impatience, my father's big voice, my brother's cool, weighing eyes.

But the eggs were gone. Uncle George must have put them away while I slept. Or perhaps I dreamed them.



“Did you say thank you to Aunt Ella and Uncle George?” my mother asked me as we were going down the porch steps on our way to the car. I was forever forgetting to say these two words that were for some reason so important, forever disappointing her. The time would come, very soon, when I would say an automatic “thank you” to every adult I encountered.

I did not answer my mother. “You *didn't* say thank you, did you?” she sighed. She could always tell every single thing I had done or had not done, just by looking at my face. “All right then, we'll wait for you in the car. March back inside and do it.”

But that house was for tiptoeing, not marching. I made no sound as I went down the long hall, hardly glancing at the covered dish of licorice allsorts. I stopped near the entrance to the sunroom, where they both still were. They did not see me.

Aunt Ella was standing behind Uncle George's chair, arms circling his neck, cheek resting on his white head. He took one of her hands in his and kissed the fingers. Then he turned it over and gave the palm a long, slow kiss. She slid the fingers of her other hand inside his shirt collar. Very slowly, in widening circles, she began to caress his neck and shoulder.

I held my breath. Then I began to back soundlessly away from the door to the sunroom. I knew only that I had found something not meant to be found, and that the tiniest noise from me would somehow shatter it. When I was halfway down the hall, I turned and ran the rest of the way on tiptoe.

In the car, my mother looked at my flushed face and said, “What? What is it?”

“Nothing.” I ducked my head. Now my brother’s eyes were on me too. I could feel my cheeks getting hotter.

My father was about to turn the key and start the car. My mother put a hand on his forearm to stop him. “Now come on,” she said. “Something happened in there. Did you break something? Were you any trouble for Aunt Ella and Uncle George?”

“No!” I squeaked miserably.

“Well,” my mother said, pulling the button up on her door, “I’m going back in there and ask them.” Her hand was on the door handle.

“I *did* do something!” I blurted. My mother turned and looked at me. Her hand was still on the door handle. “All right,” she said evenly, “you’d better tell me what.”

“I took another licorice allsort!” I wailed. “I took one of the little logs! And I ate it!”

Slowly, my mother raised her hand from the door handle and pressed the button back down. She caught my father’s eye, and for a moment the two of them looked like they were trying not to laugh.

Then, as my father started the car and my mother took a deep breath, revving up for the requisite talking-to, I began to feel light. I felt lighter and lighter all the time I watched my mother’s mouth move. And soon I was so light that if there had been no top on the car, I would have been flying.

CONTRIBUTORS

The Editors thank the following writers and artists for contributing to *The Capilano Review*: Issues 1-50.

Lloyd Abbey	Douglas Blazek	Kathy Cosgrove
Caroline Adderson	E. D. Blodgett	Janet Cotgrave
Jonis Agee	Johannes Bobrowski	Eleanor Crowe
Michael Agrios	George Bowering	Pierre Coupey
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Joyce Carol Oates

Michael Ondaatje
Owen Sound

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Nicanor Parra
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Monty Reid
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George Webber
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Ramona Weeks
The Western Front
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Patrick White
Bruce Whiteman
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Judy Williams
David Wilk
Michael Winter
Margaret Witzsche
Alan Wood
Ross Woodman

Michael J. Yates
Fumio Yoshimura

Mara Zibens
Dale Zieroth

CONTRIBUTORS

ROBIN BLASER's work in this issue is one of the context poems to his *Great Companions* series; others from this series recently appeared in *Line* magazine (#12). Robin's most recent books are *Syntax* (Talonbooks 1983), *The Faerie Queen and The Park* (Fissure Books 1988), and *Pell Mell* (Coach House 1988). A special section was devoted to his work in *TCR* #6, and he has appeared in *TCR* #8/9 and #18.

BARRY McKINNON's work in this issue comes from a series-in-progress called *Pulp Log*, a meditation on work, family and the environmental desecrations in and around Prince George. Barry recently edited an issue of *Open Letter* (7th series: Nos. 2/3: Summer/Fall 1988) called *BC Poets & Print*. Coach House published his book of poems, *The the*, in 1980. A special section on Barry's work appeared in *TCR* #32, and he has printed in *TCR* #8/9 and #12.

GERRY GILBERT's poems in this issue come from a group titled "How to Eat a Peach." A recent issue of *BC Monthly Magazine* featured "Riding the Dog," Gerry's record of a cross-Canada reading tour in 1988. A major collection of work, *Moby Jane*, appeared from Coach House in 1987. Gerry's poetry has appeared in *TCR* #2, 4, 5, 8/9 and 12.

CHRIS DEWDNEY lives and works in Toronto. He has produced six books since 1978, and three of them were nominated for Governor-General's Awards: *Predators of the Adoration* (McClelland & Stewart 1983), *The Immaculate Perception* (Anansi 1986), and *The Radiant Inventory* (McClelland & Stewart 1988). *Alter Sublime* appeared in 1980 and *Permugensis* in 1987. His work appeared in *TCR* #8/9.

VICTOR COLEMAN was the focus of *TCR*'s first special section in #5, and his work also appeared in *TCR* #21. The illustrated poems in this issue are from a new book, *Honeymoon Suite*, which will be published in the coming year. The text and the images were drawn by David Bolduc, who also illustrated

Roy Kiyooka's *Pear Tree Pomes* (Coach House 1987). David exhibits regularly with the Klonaridis Gallery in Toronto. Victor's selected poems, *Revisions*, appeared from Coach House in 1985; *From the Dark Wood* (Underwhich), appeared in 1986. The other poems in this issue come from a new text called *Nothing Heavy or Fragile*. Coach House will bring out the audiotape version, and Pink Dog Press will bring out the print version.

GEORGE BOWERING's most recent books are *Errata* (Red Deer College Press 1988) and *Imaginary Hand* (NeWest Press 1988), two collections of critical writing. George appeared in *TCR* #1, and has been a frequent contributor since then (*TCR* #4, 7, 8/9, 11, 13). A special section was devoted to his work in *TCR* #15.

DAVID PHILLIP's work in this issue is from *No Visible Means of Support*, one of a number of manuscripts in progress. His collection *The Dream Outside* was one of the first Coach House Press titles; they also published his most recent collection, *The Kïss* (1979). A chapbook, *Blink/Gumboots*, appeared from Tatlow/Gorse Press in 1986. His work was the focus of a special section in *TCR* #32, and he has appeared in *TCR* #3, 11 and 12.

SHARON THESEN is currently at work on a series of poems investigating the implications of Henri Matisse's paintings; "Boat of the Dead" comes from this series. Sharon was twice nominated for the Governor General's Award for her most recent books, *Confabulations* (Oolichan 1984), and *The Beginning of the Long Dash* (Coach House 1987). Sharon's work was recently featured in *The Malahat Review* (#83). Sharon published in *TCR* #8/9 and #16/17, and has made an enormous contribution to the magazine as Poetry Editor (1977-1989).

PHYLLIS WEBB's poems in this issue come from a new collection in progress called *Hanging Fire*. The poem titles in quotation marks indicate given words and phrases that come unbidden into the poet's head which she is tracking over a period of time. Her recent book was *Water and Light: Ghazals & Antighazals* (Coach House 1984). Her work appeared in *TCR* #1.

DUNCAN McNAUGHTON lives and works in Bolinas, California. He has published several books, including *A Passage of Saint Devil* (Talonbooks 1976), *Sumeriana* (Tombouctou 1977), and *Shit on My Shoes* (Tombouctou 1979). His work appeared in *TCR* #8/9 and 12.

bpNICHOL (1948-1988) was one of Canada's foremost writers. Not only was he active in the areas of poetry and fiction, but he was also known for his work in the areas of comics, "pataphysical essays," text-sound composition and children's books. His major life's work *The Martyrology* was an attempt to integrate all facets of his artistic life into one diverse and polyphonic composition. The author of over eighteen books of poetry, Nichol was a publisher himself, under the imprints of Ganglia and Gronk; was an editor at Coach House Press and Underwhich Editions; and was the winner of the Governor General's Award for Poetry in 1970. His work has appeared in *TCR* #3, 5, 8/9 (including an interview), #13, 27, 31 and 45. We are grateful to Elli Nichol for permission to print the work in this issue.

DAPHNE MARLATT's latest work in progress is called *Salvage*. She joined us as poetry editor in 1974, and later co-founded and edited *periodics*. She is a regular participant in Women and Words, and has been writer-in-residence at several universities and libraries. She recently held the Ruth Wynn Woodward chair in Women's Studies at SFU. She lives on Salt Spring Island. *TCR* #16/17 was a special issue devoted to Marlatt's "In The Month of Hungry Ghosts," and Michael Ondaatje's parallel text "Running in the Family."

DAVID McFADDEN's *Gypsy Guitar* (Talonbooks 1987), "a hundred poems of love and betrayal," was short-listed for a Governor General's award. His third "trip around" book, *A Trip Around Lake Ontario* was published last year by Coach House. After promoting the book at the *Salon du Livre* in Montreal, David upgraded his ticket and climbed aboard VIA RAIL 1st Class anticipating endless free grog—only to discover it was election day. The poems published here are from a new book tentatively titled *Small* (and tentatively subtitled: "And Not Very Ambitious Either"). *TCR* published his work in #15.

AUDREY THOMAS is a prolific writer who lives on Galiano Island. Her 14 books so far include *Mrs. Blood* (Talonbooks 1975) and the popular *Songs My Mother Taught Me* (Talonbooks 1973) and *Goodbye Harold, Good Luck* (Penguin 1986). Her next collection of stories, *In the Wide Blue Yonder* is due out from Penguin in the fall. *TCR* #7 contained a special section on Audrey and we have had the pleasure of publishing several of her stories and essays over the years. Recently she has discovered an interest in travel writing, notably for *Saturday Night* and *En Route* magazine, and her radio plays are frequently heard on CBC radio. Faced with the impending distraction of a year of teaching at Concordia University, Audrey is working hard to finish her novel about her Corbet (or is it Corbett?) ancestors. Audrey's work has appeared in *TCR* #5, 7, 13, 20, 28 and 32.

BRIAN FAWCETT's *Cambodia: A Book for People who Find Television Too Slow* (Talonbooks) has just been published in a U.S. edition by Grove Press. *TCR* #12 contained a special section on Brian, including an essay by Stan Persky. He has published several books of poetry, but began a new run with his collection *My Career With the Leafs and Other Stories* (Talonbooks 1983). The story published here is from a new collection, currently in the hands of Fawcett's Toronto and New York agents.

GLADYS HINDMARCH's work first appeared in *TCR* #4, and she subsequently joined the English Department at Capilano College. Her collection of boat stories, *The Watery Part of the World*, was published in 1988 by Douglas & McIntyre.

MICHAEL ONDAATJE lives in Toronto and teaches at Glendon College. He is on the Board of Coach House Press and does many other things besides. Meanwhile he has turned out a steady progression of beautifully written books, including his classic masterpiece *Coming Through Slaughter* (Anansi 1976), and the much-celebrated novel *In the Skin of a Lion* (McClelland & Stewart 1987). Ondaatje's collected poems are published under the title *There's a Trick with a Knife I'm Learning to Do* (McClelland & Stewart 1979).

RICHARD TRUHLAR is a writer, visual artist and text/sound/musical composer. A great believer in collaboration, he was an active member of the sound poetry group *Owen Sound* and the electronic music ensemble *Tekst*. He has had three books published: *A Porcelain Cup Placed There* (Coach House Press), *Parisian Novels* (Front Press) and *Utensile Paradise* (Aya Press). His forthcoming collection of fiction, *Figures in Paper Time*, will be published by Aya Press in the fall of 1989. Steve Smith and Richard Truhlar were the guest editors of *The Capilano Review's* issue on sound poetry (#31), and Richard's work has also appeared in *TCR* #26.

GREG MURDOCK is a local artist who is beginning to establish an international reputation through his recent solo exhibition in New York. The Equinox Gallery is his Vancouver dealer. Murdock's "Templo-Mound Series" was published in *TCR* #21.

MONIQUE FOUQUET is a Vancouver artist who has recently shown her *Vessels* at the Surrey Art Gallery and at the Diane Farris Gallery. Her work has been published in *TCR* #13 and 36.

GATHIE FALK is a Vancouver artist with national and international reputation. Her work is in many public collections. Falk is shown regularly in Vancouver's Equinox Gallery and Toronto's Isaacs Gallery. *Diary*, a seven part mural that records a bed of tulips' progress from bud to overblown ripeness, has been installed in the Canadian Embassy in Washington. Gathie Falk's work was published in *TCR* #6 and #8/9. *Gathie Falk Works* was *TCR* #24/25.

LOLA LEMIRE TOSTEVIN lives and works in Toronto, and writes in both French and English. The work in this issue is a small section from a work-in-progress, "Circadian Rhythm," a short story that will connect with others to form a book tentatively called *Subject to Change*. Her most recent books are *Double Standards* (Longspoon 1986) and *Color of her Speech* (Coach House 1985). Her work appeared in *TCR* #28.

ERIN MOURÉ recently won the Governor General's Award for Poetry (1988) for *Furious* (Anansi). A new book, *West South West* (Véhicule) will be forthcoming in the fall of 1989, and she is beginning a manuscript entitled, very tentatively, *Seams*. She lives in Montreal. Her work appeared in *TCR* #34 and 48.

SHEILA DELANY is a professor of English at Simon Fraser University specializing in Chaucer, gender studies and critical theory. She has published fiction and poetry in various Canadian and U.S. magazines. *Shapes of Ideology*, a collection of essays on medieval culture, will be published in fall of 1989 by Manchester University Press. Her work was in *TCR* #41.

GILLIAN HARDING-RUSSELL has recently published or will shortly publish poetry in *Quarry*, *Canadian Literature*, *Dandelion*, *Zynergy*, and *The White Wall Review*. She is currently working on two book projects. Her work can be found in *TCR* #39 and 43. She lives in Surrey, B.C.

ROBERT G. SHERRIN divides his creative energy between writing and photography. He is currently working on both long and short fiction pieces, as well as several on-going photography projects. His fiction has been published in various magazines, including *TCR* #8/9, 13, 18 and 37, and *2PLUS2* in Switzerland. His photographs have recently been shown at Presentation House, the Surrey Art Gallery and Artspeak. He teaches at Capilano College.

GARY GEDDES' most recent book, *HongKong*, won the National Magazine Gold Award (1987) and the Writers' Choice Award (1988). His Chilean poems, *No Easy Exit/Salida Difícil*, will be published in a bilingual edition in 1989 by Oolichan Books and Casa Canada. His selected poems are due out in 1990 from Véhicule in Montreal. He is on leave this year, thanks to an A-grant from the Canada Council. His stories can be found in *TCR* #39 and 44.

K. D. MILLER has published fiction in *Flare* and *Writ Magazine*, as well as in *TCR* #42 and 46. Several of her short stories have been short-listed in the CBC literary contest. She lives and works in Toronto.

ROBERT KEZIERE's images come from a series of photographs, *A Tautomer's Song*, which was commissioned by the Diachem Corporation. An exhibition of this series will take place in the coming year at the Contemporary Art Gallery (curator, Gregg Bellerby). His last exhibition, *A Requiem*, was held at the Charles H. Scott Gallery in Vancouver in 1985; it also toured to Lethbridge, Athens and Rome. *The Capilano Review* has often relied on the excellence of Robert's work as a photographer of fine art.

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