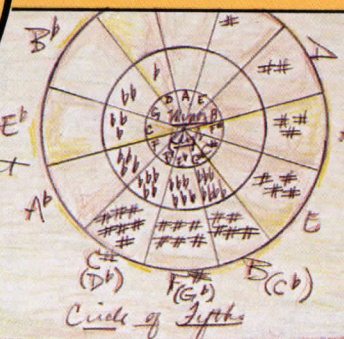
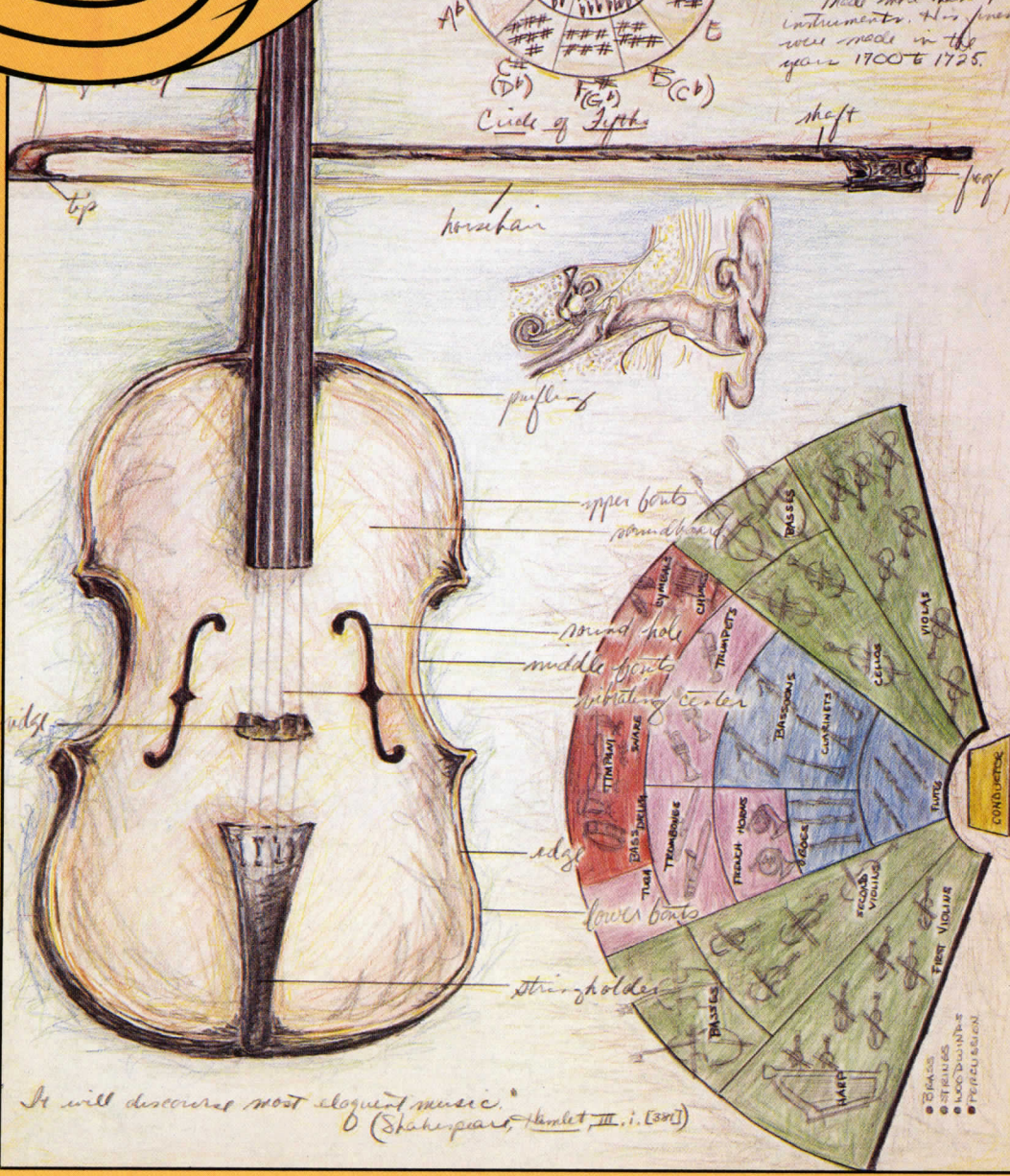


Collage



was in the 10th century
 ment family in 10th century
 Italy. Banquet the craft
 of violin-making to its
 highest pitch. Showed
 interest in music,
 drawing, sculpture, and
 wood-carving.
 Made more than 1,100
 instruments. His finest
 were made in the
 years 1700 to 1725.



It will discover most eloquent music.
 O (Shakespeare, Hamlet III, i. [301])

- BASS
- STRINGS
- WOODWINDS
- PERCUSSION



ditor's Note

In this issue we have tried to give Collage a new image. We have changed the logo and we have added a new design staff who has worked hard to make Collage a magazine we can all be proud of. There were times when we all wanted to pull our hair out but we persevered. I hope that you think it was worth our effort.

For the Spring issue we were lucky to have submissions from two alumni:

Debbie Bartlett, a 1983 graduate sent us a photograph from her home in Bonita Springs, Florida, and D. Clifton Wright, a 1983 graduate sent us a "long short story"--"Devil Music."

Submissions from current MTSU students were varied and I had a

difficult time deciding which works to use. I tried to pick a variety of subjects rather than sticking to one theme. For those who like a horror story I think you will enjoy "Friends: A Story." If you are one who doesn't believe in happy endings be sure to read "Destiny." Our darkest fears could become realities in "Only Nineteen Ninty-Five." The selection of poetry gives the reader anything you could hope for. Topics range from dreams to realities.

We, the Collage staff, hope that you will enjoy the Spring issue. We are looking forward to the May issue which will be our final issue. We hope that you will continue to support the magazine with your submissions.

Enjoy,

Cyndie Wright

Editor

Cover Art by Kelly Northcutt Hayes



ollage

The Creative Magazine of Middle
Tennessee State University
Spring 1984 Volume XVII No. 3



rose

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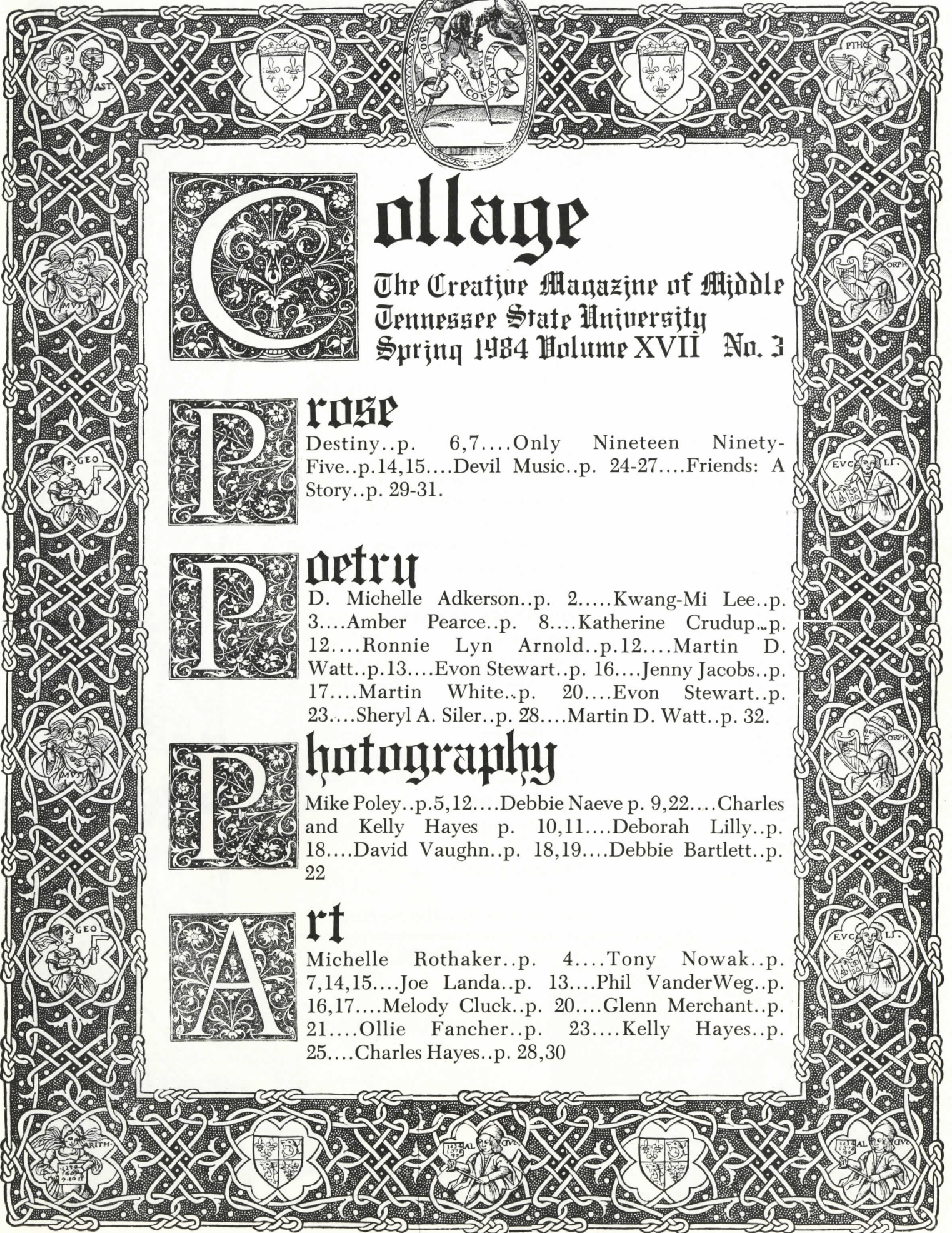
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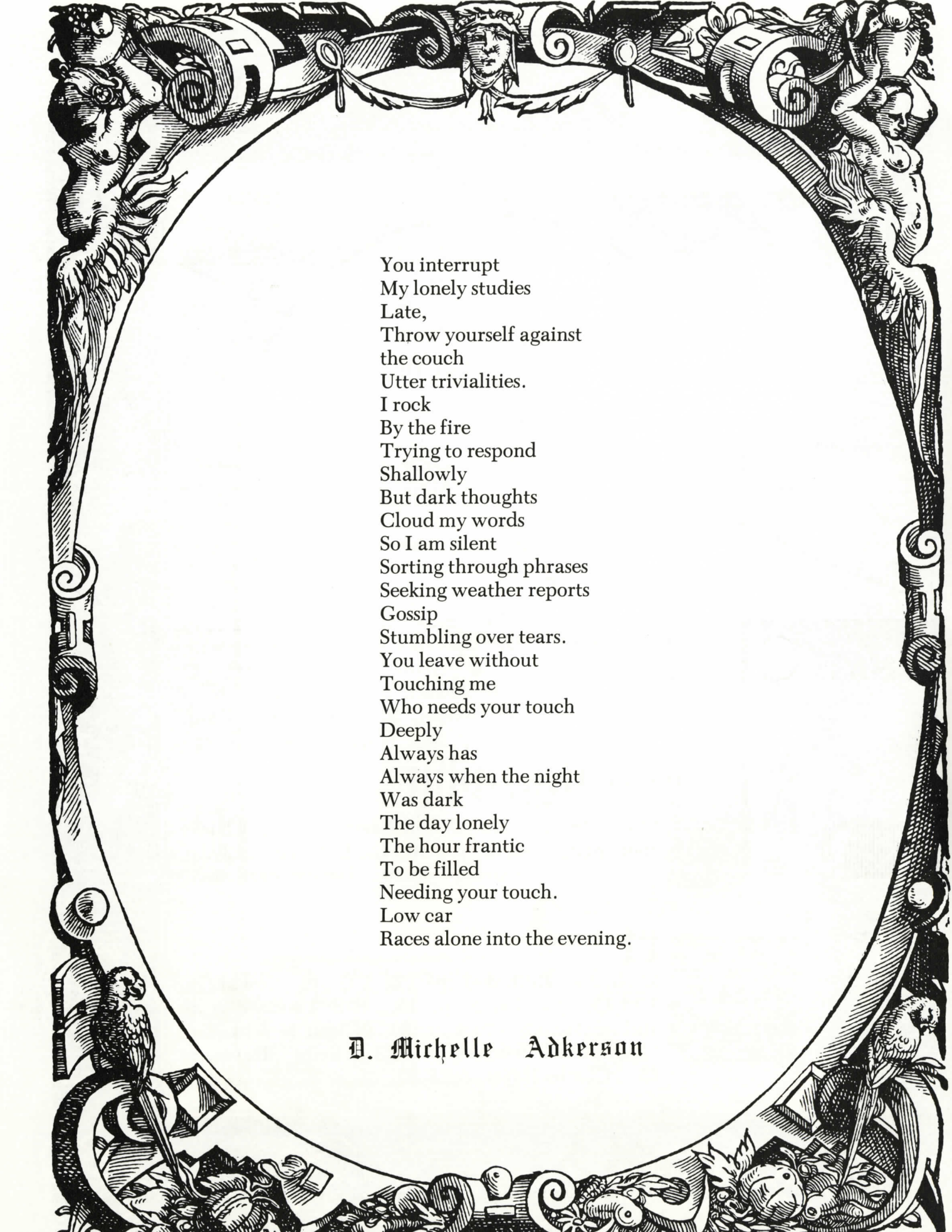
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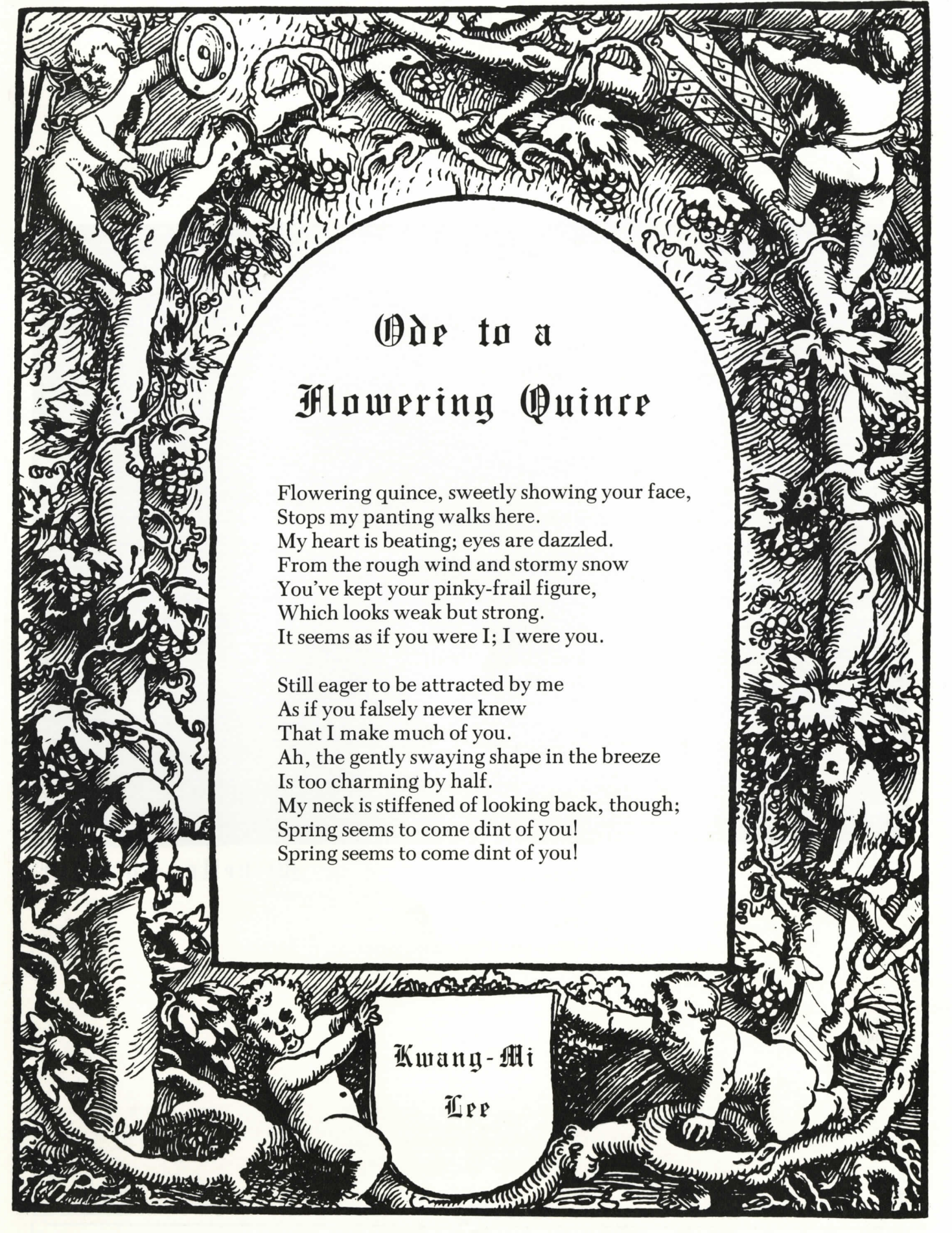
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You interrupt
My lonely studies
Late,
Throw yourself against
the couch
Utter trivialities.
I rock
By the fire
Trying to respond
Shallowly
But dark thoughts
Cloud my words
So I am silent
Sorting through phrases
Seeking weather reports
Gossip
Stumbling over tears.
You leave without
Touching me
Who needs your touch
Deeply
Always has
Always when the night
Was dark
The day lonely
The hour frantic
To be filled
Needing your touch.
Low car
Races alone into the evening.

D. Michelle Adkerson

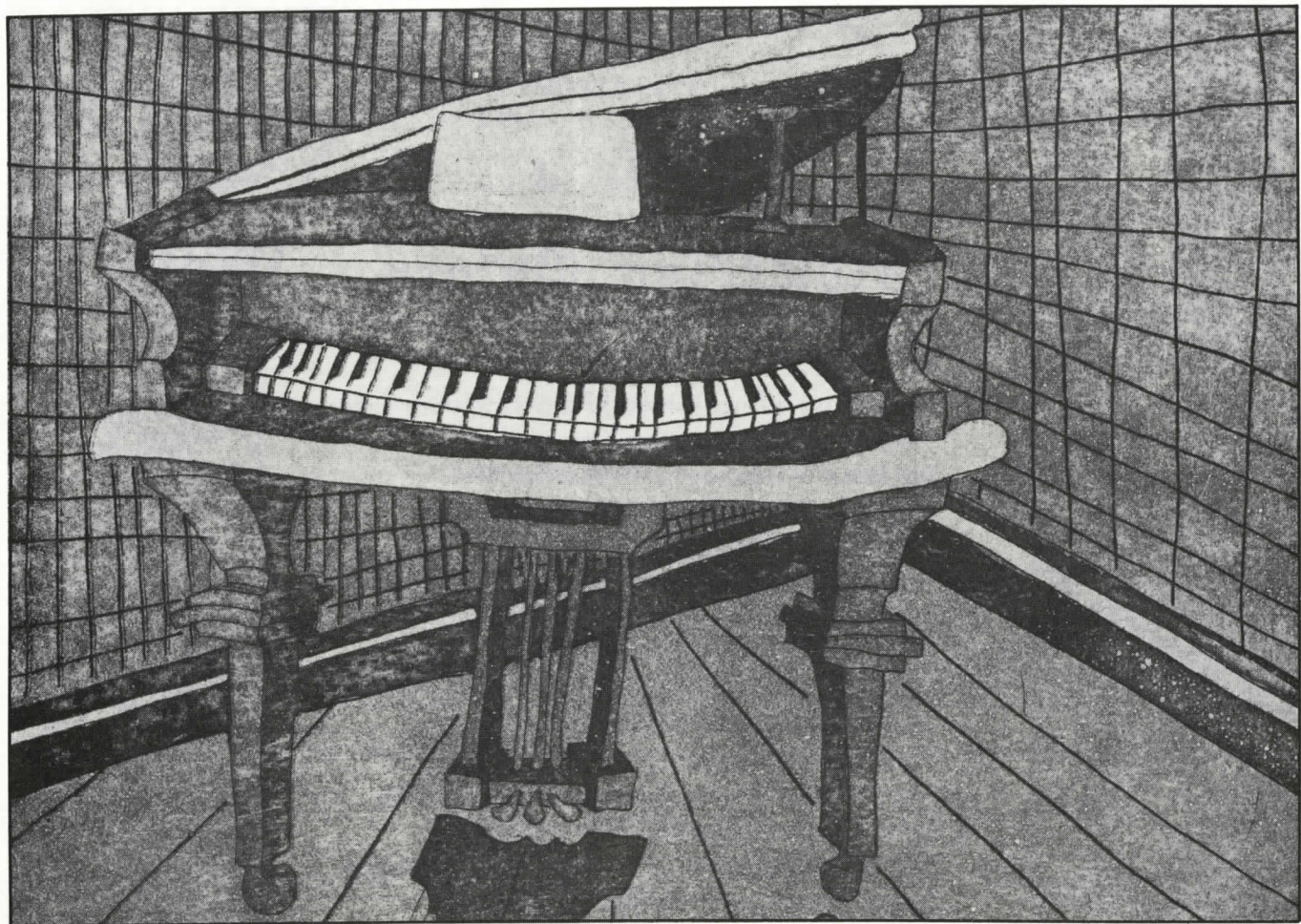


Ode to a
Flowering Quince

Flowering quince, sweetly showing your face,
Stops my panting walks here.
My heart is beating; eyes are dazzled.
From the rough wind and stormy snow
You've kept your pinky-frail figure,
Which looks weak but strong.
It seems as if you were I; I were you.

Still eager to be attracted by me
As if you falsely never knew
That I make much of you.
Ah, the gently swaying shape in the breeze
Is too charming by half.
My neck is stiffened of looking back, though;
Spring seems to come dint of you!
Spring seems to come dint of you!

Kwang-Mi
Lee



Michelle Rothaker



Mike Poley

Destiny

by Curtis Wall

For his achievements in academics, sports, and social activities, this institution proudly presents a special award-'Outstanding Student Graduate of 1973'- to Clayton Williamson Mathews.

The president's words filled Clay's ears as he sat momentarily stunned. His mind raced quickly back to earlier in the day when several of his constituents had offered him congratulations. Clay merely attributed such to the usual graduation day accolades. Because of the excitement and the fast-moving pace of the afternoon he had not even bothered to look at his program. But, in fact, the award was a first time presentation by the school. Clay rose slowly and calmly made his way forward. 'What a helluva way to go out,' thought Clay, as he accepted the unexpected honor.

"Squad halt!" bellowed Sgt. Mahn, a tall, lean man showing his fast approaching middle age status. "Left face! Dismissed," he added.

Heavy breathing, grunts, and groans filled the air as members of B Company made their way inside the barracks. They would have approximately thirty-five minutes to dry off and regroup from the daily PT run of four miles. Among them was one Private First Class Clay Mathews.

Despite an immaculate college career, Clay had found a great deal of difficulty in finding a job in his chosen profession- psychology. After several months of exhausting search, he had decided to take his education to the Army,

where a career as an officer was practically guaranteed. In less than six weeks Clay would be entering Officer Candidate School (OCS). Though it would be full of pain, mental stress, and more pain, OCS was a challenge Clay looked forward to.

"Hey Clay," called Jon Beasley, a freckle-faced fellow squad member catching up to Mathews at the top of the stairs, "what are you gonna do tonight?"

"Oh, probably just lay around and take it easy," replied Clay.

"What!" exclaimed Beasley; "you're not staying in on Valentine's day, the beginning of a three day weekend? It's party time my man; let's hit the club."

"Maybe," returned Clay nonchalantly. "We'll see."

Clay had never been too big on the party scene, but he did occasionally feel the sting of the peer pressure syndrome.

At 4:07 p.m. final formation ended; a roar went up amongst the troops. Hallways and bathrooms clamored with undiluted enthusiasm. The night life on post and the surrounding community was of the traditional military-civilian mode. At dusk the street lights came on; music vibrations filled the inner structures penetrating beyond; the clanging of bottles and glasses began, and the evening was on.

The "Club Haven" was in full swing by nine as Clay and Jon made their way through the crowd toward the bar. Flashing lights twirled overhead; bodies moved to the

band's blasting disco tune.

"Hey, how about this" yelled Jon to Clay above the noise. "The place is really rocking tonight," he continued, pausing to order two beers.

"Is it like this all the time?" asked Clay, scanning the room.

"Just about--tonight's something special, though--a night for love and merriment," answered Jon.

They both spotted comrades at a table across the room and, with drinks in hand, began to snake their way over to them.

By late evening most of the gang had separated. Though not an avid dancer, Clay did find himself on the dance floor after a couple hours of drinking. 'A fine specimen of womanhood,' Clay thought as he watched his partner move vigorously to the rhythmic beat of the music.

"Let's go to a party," the redhead suggested when the number ended. "It's a private party, off post with some people I know."

A feeling of unexplainable uneasiness rose within Clay, but the warm, swooning effect of the alcohol and a captivating smile from the lady quickly put it to rest.

"You driving?" asked Clay.

With a provocative wink of an eye, she replied, "Yeah, no problem, handsome."

They made their way outside. Again that uneasy feeling crept within Clay. Seconds later, it had been covered over by the emotions of the evening. The late model firebird went through the gate and onto the main highway.

"By the way, what's your name?" beseeched Clay.

"Oh, that's right--we don't know each other's name," she said, giggling a bit. "I'm Mary-Mary Daniels," she offered.

"Clay Mathews, ma'am."

Both laughed at his attempt at military formality. The firebird sped onward into the night.

Because of the weekend, the messhall was half empty at chow time the next day. Jon glanced over the lunch hour delicacies and settled on a cheesburger, a bowl of soup, and french fries.

"Hey, Beasley, over here," called someone from the far corner of the dining room. It was Roy Greene, a staff Sergeant from A Company.

"Pulling C.Q. today, I see," remarked Jon as he sat down opposite Greene. Jon was referring to the sergeant's fatigue uniform.

"Yep," came a solemn reply from Roy. "You heard about Mathews?" he asked Jon.

"What about him; we got pretty loose at the 'Haven' last night. He left with a fine looking redhead," revealed Jon.

"He's dead, man," stated Roy with a serious look about him.

Startled, Jon peered directly into the eyes of the man across him and saw that the remark was for real. "My God," he mumbled, letting the spoon fall from his fingers.

"They found him on a side road off 41 early this morning...drug overdose; he'd been robbed, too," explained Roy. Silence fell.

Rousing from a dreamlike state Jon noted, "Clay didn't do drugs; Hell, he only drank occasionally; last night was his first time going to the club since he's been here."

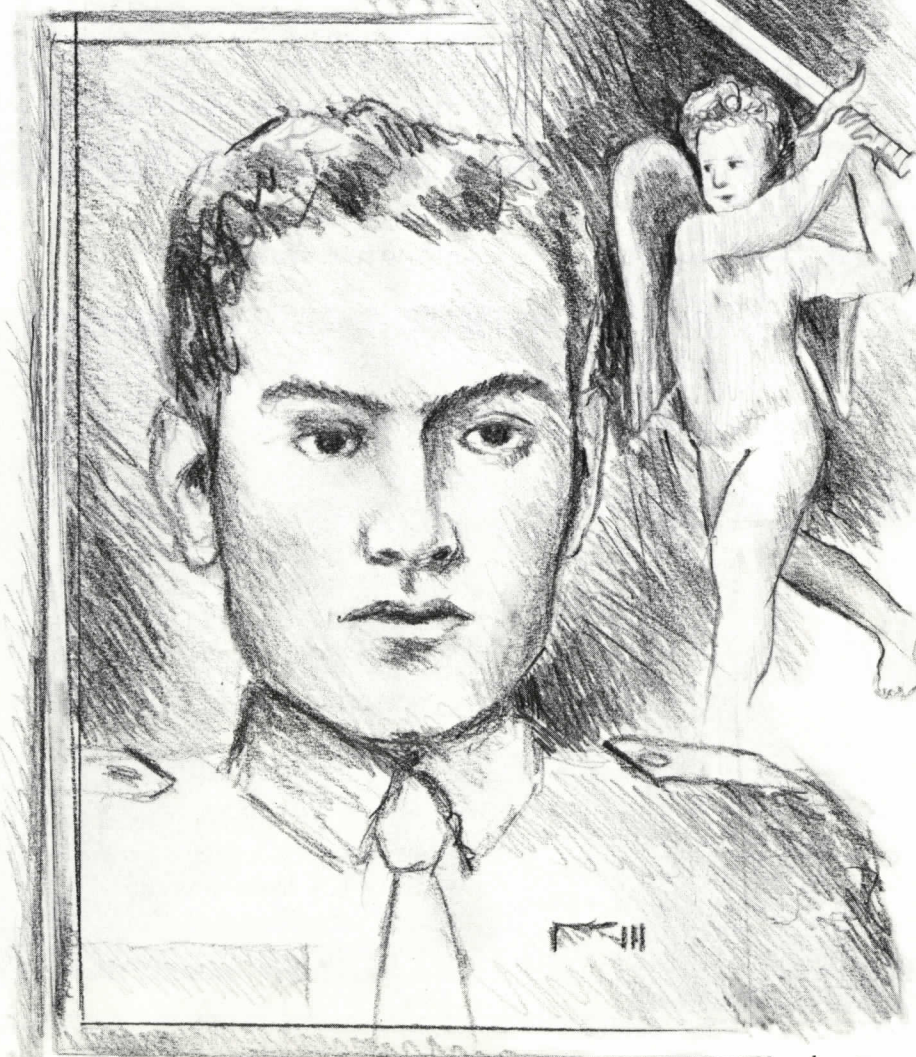
"Battalion says that two dudes--civilians--offered to bring Mathews back to the post after the chick he was with passed out at a party," added Greene.

"Evidently he accepted," muttered Jon as he rose from the table and slowly walked from the dining hall.

Official notification arrived for the company commander Monday morning:

DD Form 263; AFZB-AG-P-PA

Subject: Death notice
Name: Mathews, Clayton
Williamson PFC
Cause: Drug Overdose
Investigation in Progress



Tony Nowak





When Summer Comes

I wake up, early morning
 deep in my covers, so warm
So deliciously relaxed,
 my conscience blurred.
The birds are singing, calling to one another
 they sound so far away.
My door is closed, the room is dark,
in my half wake I am risin,
I see the blushing sunrise, know its heart
 I feel the cool, damp morning air,
I pad barefoot across the lawn, the dew
 splashing my ankles,
 chilling me, waking me...

I curl up and hug my knees
Sleep will not come,
I have tasted early morning
So I must answer the unwanted
Urge that beckons me away.

I slip out, I stand and shiver,
til the red sun warms me,
I climb upon the wall and sit.
I feel its hot gaze upon my face.
the dew is gone...

I feel a satisfaction I cannot
Explain, and I drop to the ground
And head inside
To wait for my family to rise.

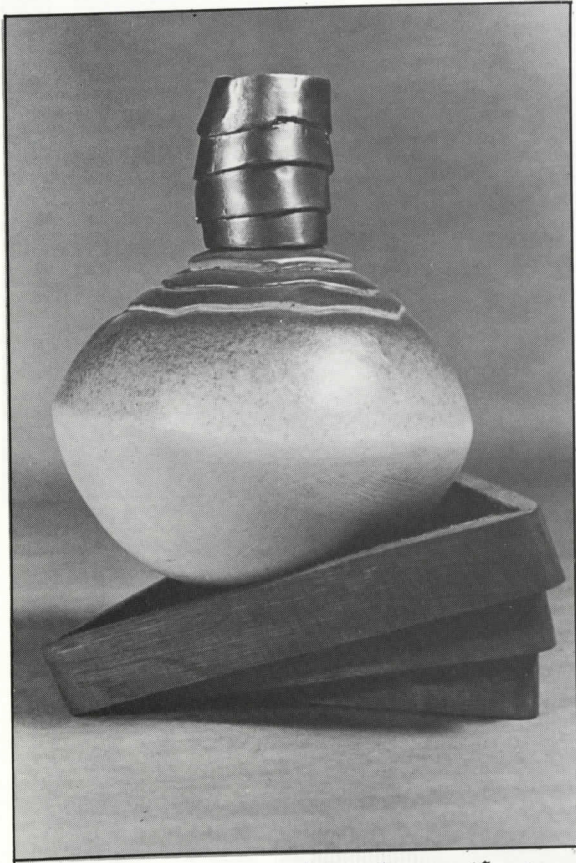
Amber Pearce



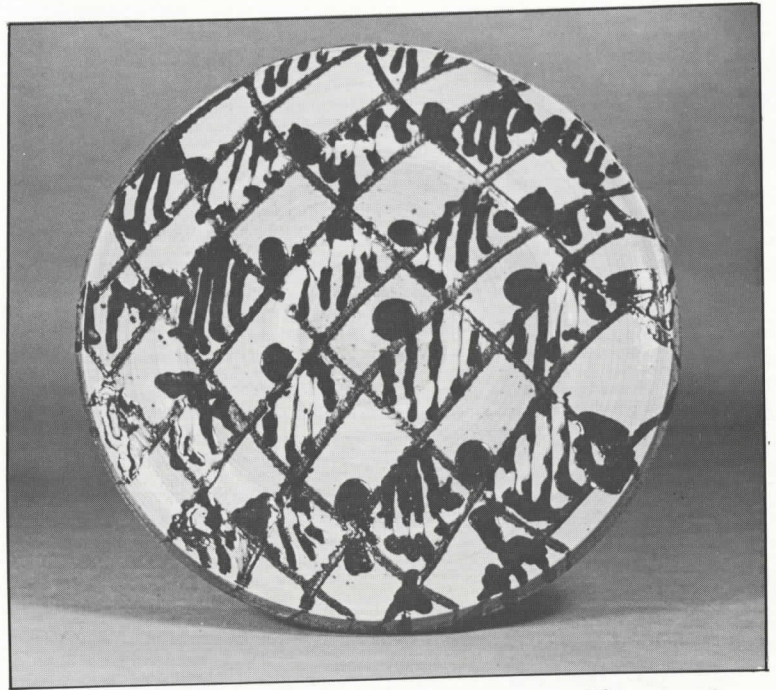


Debby Naeve





Glenda Guion



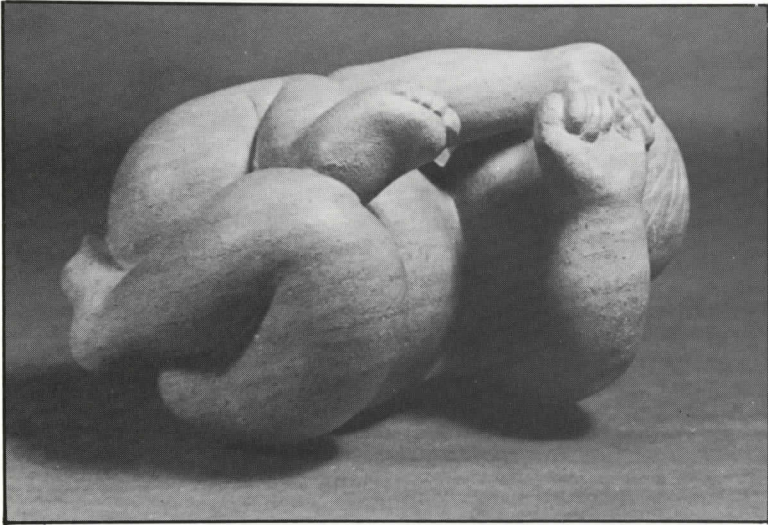
Michelle Rothaker

In this issue we decided to include sculpture and pottery as an addition to our creative magazine.

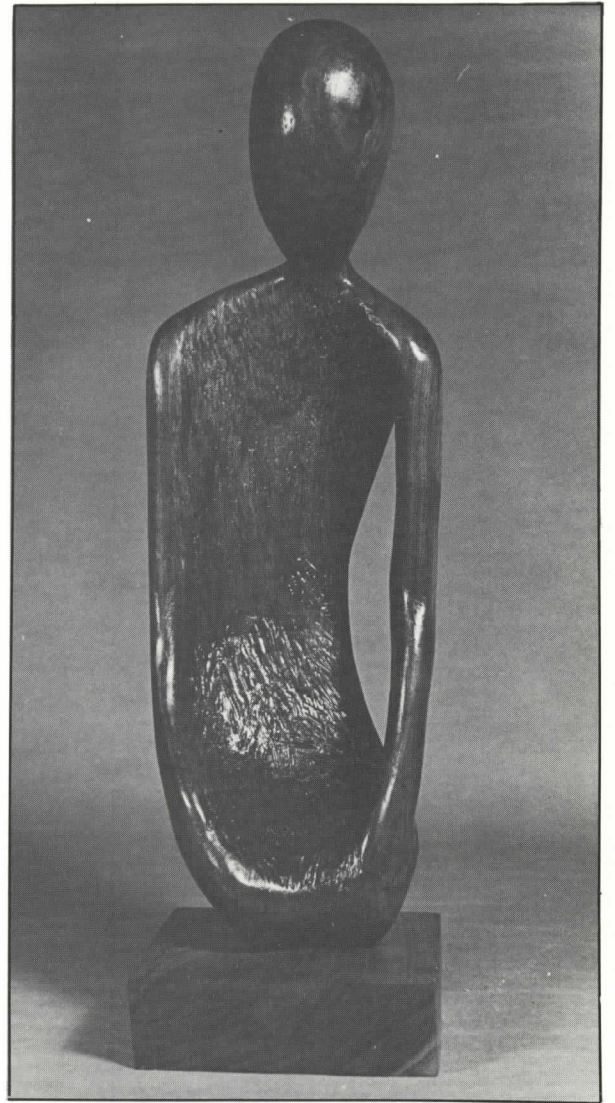


Glenda Guion

*Photographs by
Charles and Kelly
Hayes*



Kathleen Smith-Campbell



Patti Lane



Patti Lane

Desolate

Here I am
all alone
Separated from
the world;
An outcast-
detached from life
Left to become
independent.
They shun me
and say I am different
But what is being different?
To me,
It is first
Being myself...

Katherine Crudup

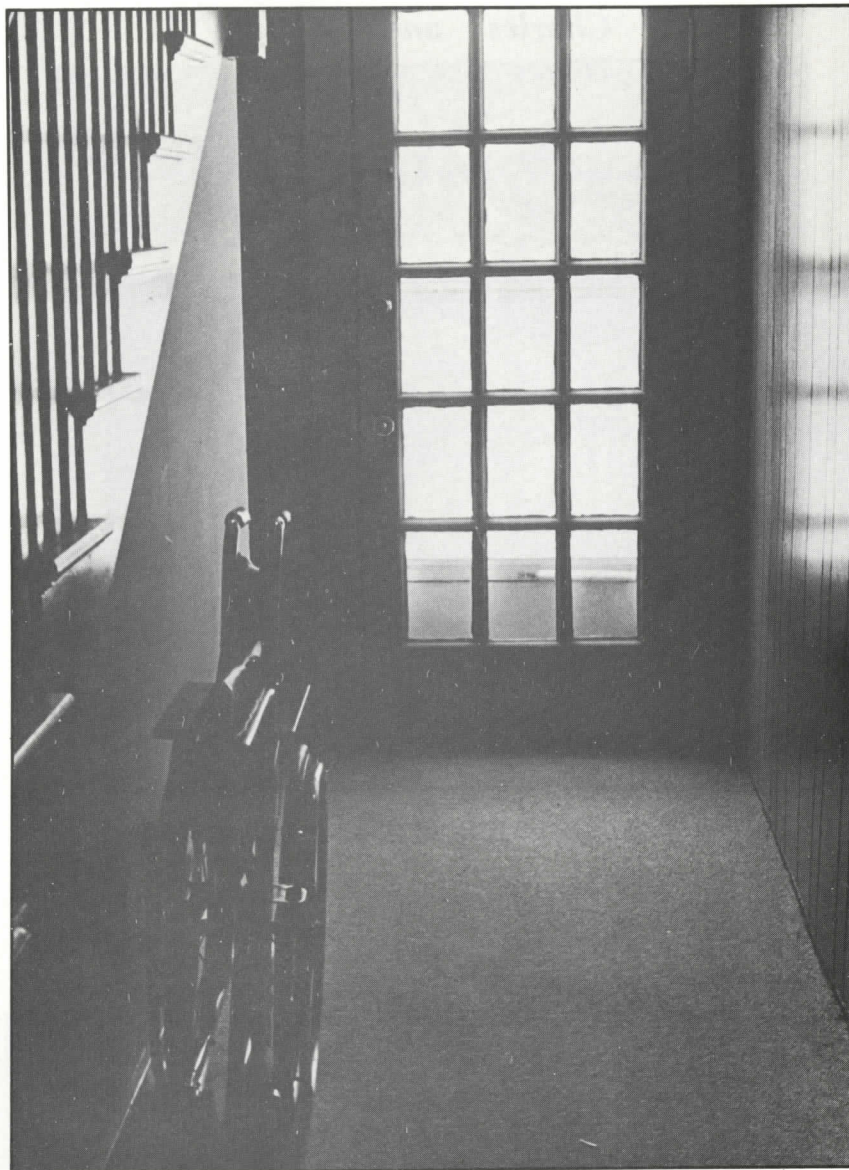
Grandmother

Going through the
motions
living, And yet
not living in today
but in yesterdays

The house speaks
she hears his call
A quick turn, A glance
flicker of false hope

Her heart is heavy
she lives
in yesterday's future
Alone

Ronnie Lyn Arnold



Mike Poley



Joe Landa

The rain
pitter-patters

into

Dreamland.

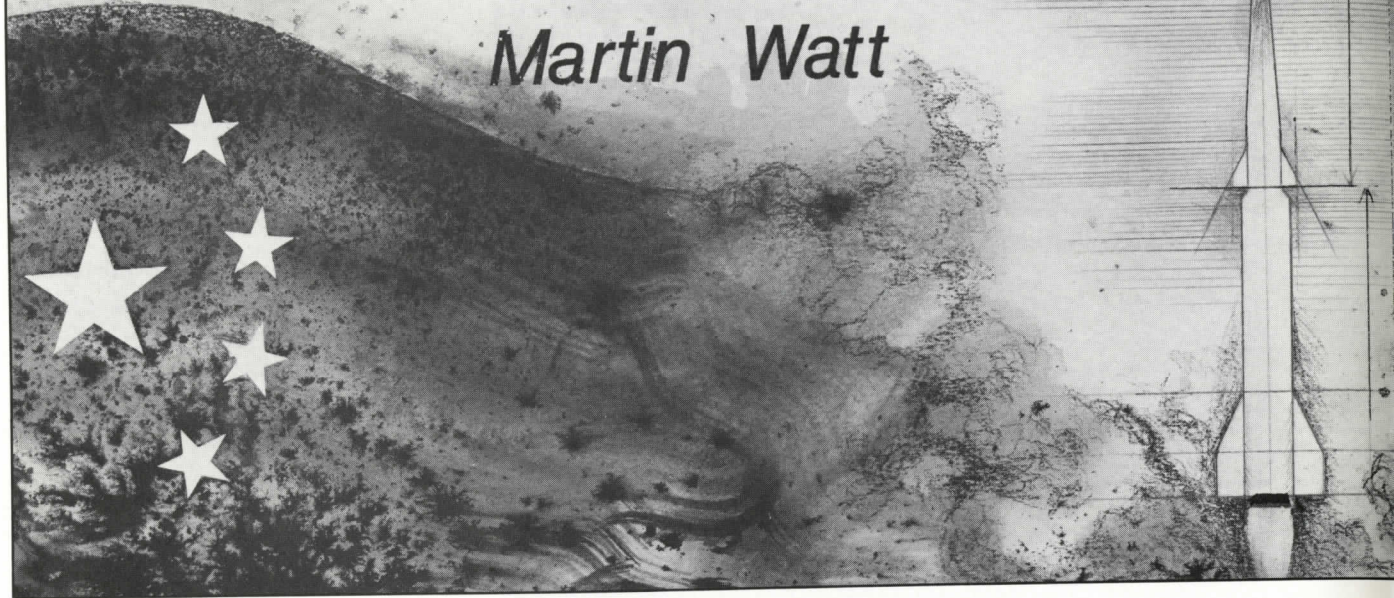
My Fantasy voice
takes over.
The mist clears
on my vision.
I begin to see!
My Understanding begins
to work its
Magic Charms!
I'm almost
there--to the place
of Understanding
fully--
only a few more
steps! A few
more! A
few. . .

The thunder claps.
Reality returns.
My glimpse of
True Understanding
Held for another
soft rain.

Martin D. Watt

Only Nineteen~Ninety~Five

Martin Watt



The chilling breeze whistled through the window.

“So you want a drink or something?”

“Nah, I never touch the stuff.”

“How about a Coke or something?”

“Well, I guess so. Sugar-free, though.”

The television blared its message into the May breeze: *“New handi-dandi kitchen sweepers have a thousand household uses, and sell for the unbelievably low, low price of only nineteen-ninety-five, so order before midnight tomorrow. Call now--1-800-34...”*

“Here’s your Coke.”

“No sugar, right?”

“Right.”

“Thanks.”

“Don’t mention it.”

“You wouldn’t happen to know the time, would you?”

“Yeah, its 3:45. Why?”

“No reason. Just asking.”

“Oh. Anything good on the tube?”

“Not really. There is an old Elvis movie on Channel 6, Jerry Lewis on Channel 42, Gene Autry on Channel 11. Not too bad, huh?”

“Well, it beats the beat, if you know what I mean.”

“Do I. Streets are cold to the step this early in the morning.”

“At least the precinct house is safe.”

“Still boring, though. Nothing ever happens here. No chance for any recognition. No chance for promo--”

“We interrupt this program for a special announcement. We now switch you to our desk in Washington, and Fra--”

“Why do they always go through that asinine gibberish? Get to the point, man!”

“Sshh! They’re saying something!”

“...will be addressing the nation. And now, the President of the United States.”

“My fellow Americans, it is

my solemn duty to inform you of disasterous news. At 2:49 a.m. eastern daylight time, approximately one hour ago, the Chinese government successfully tested a nuclear device. Not just a simple nuclear warhead, but a fusion hydrogen bomb capable of...”

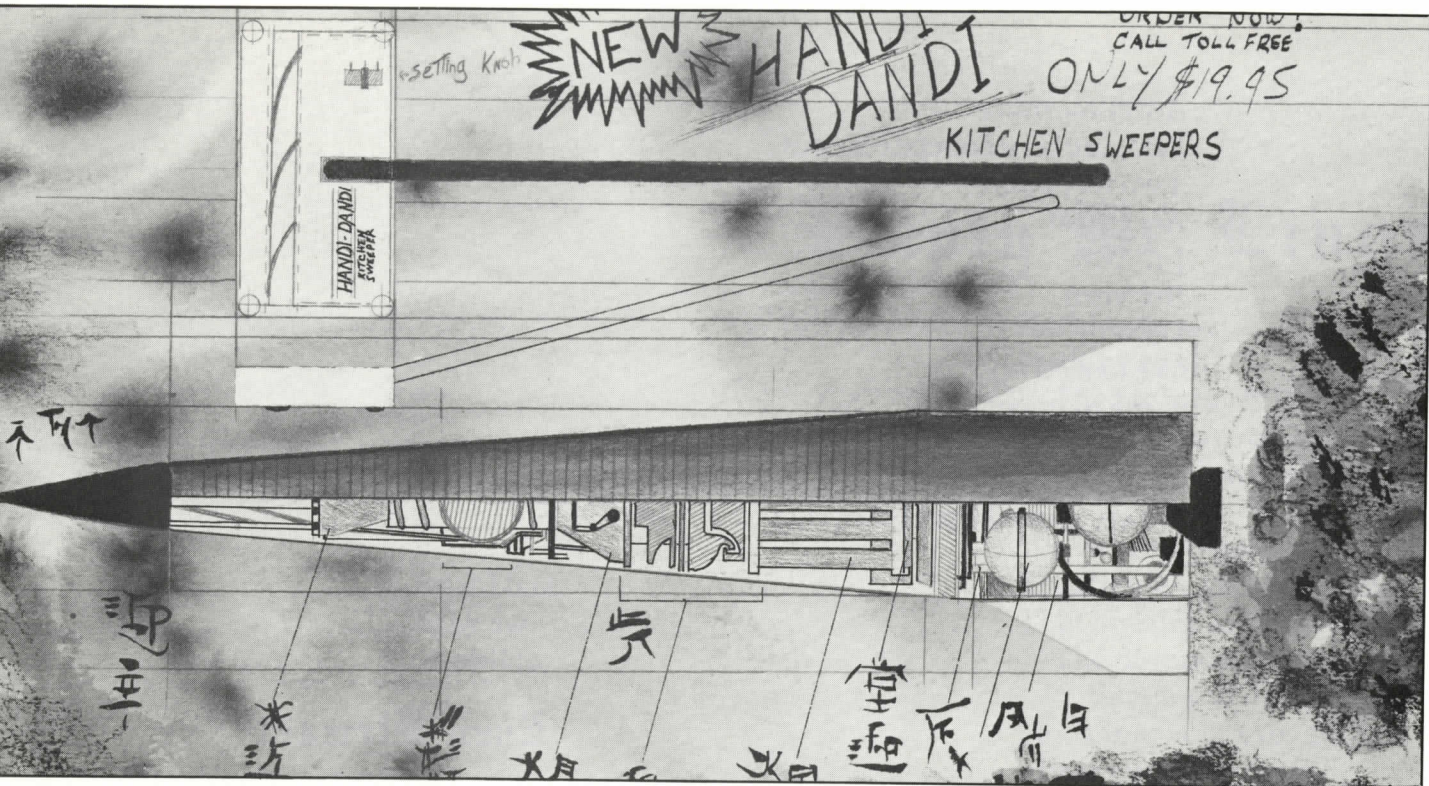
“Well, the commies finally did it! And the Chinese at that! I really don’t understand what the big fuss is. We have nuclear weapons, so do the Russians, Germans, Austrians! Hell, even the Swiss have a couple stashed away!”

“Next thing you know we’ll be allied with Russia!”

“...and so I’m recommending to Congress that we enter into a mutual peace / defense treaty with the Union of Soviet Socialist...”

“Only kidding, man! Don’t listen to me!”

“Not funny. Why don’t you change it to Cable Access Channel H. Usually some good stuff on there.”



Tony Nowak

"Out of luck. Went off at 2:15. Get the horn, will ya?"

"Sure. Sixth Precinct, Sergeant Mil...Yes, Commissioner! ...Right away, sir!...Consider it done, sir!"

"What in Christname was that?"

"Shaddup. Get your coat. Let's go."

"Where to?"

"Just do it!"

Lightning crossed the sky, illuminating the dark, lifeless street as the squad car sped down the street. The men ran a red light, kept going, and ran another. The speeding car hit a trashcan, never slowing down.

"Shit! Watch it, will ya!"

"Shut up. It's 4 a.m. you maggot head! Nobody is out this late 'cept bums!"

"But somebody could get...Shit! Watch the car!...somebody could get hurt!"

"Who, dammit?"

"Me, peabrain!"

"Look, the City Com-

missioner picked us for a special evacuation mission."

"Why? The bomb scare?"

"Yeah, I guess. He sounded petrified."

"Where are we going?"

"Pennsylvania Avenue. 1600 to be exact."

"Jesus H. tap-dancing Christ!"

The door of the squad car opened, and they stepped on the dimly lighted porch. The T.V. blared, "*Kitchen sweepers, thousands of household uses. Call now! 1-800-...*"

"This way gentlemen."

They walked swiftly down the entrance hall. Jerry Lewis fell and became his own girlfriend in the next scene.

"What's the plan, sir?"

"Don't ask questions, Just do what I say. Those suitcases are to be loaded on Air Force One and Two at Andrews. Move!"

Picking up four trunks, they moved swiftly to the car. The forty minute drive to Andrews

took about seven and a half. Walking up a series of steps, they began their quest.

The phone rang. The switchboard looked like a laser show. Police squad radios and walkee-talkies chattered with the inane babbling that usually falls on deaf ears. Underneath the chaos--"*...only nineteen-ninety-five, postage paid! Call now, 1-800-...*"

Looking down from 60,000 feet, they saw the flash. Both men quietly sobbed as they donned the radiation indicators, as they were told. A third person joined. Then a fourth. Then...

"Gentlemen, World War III is over. It took 30 minutes, 17 seconds. They won. According to our recording of satellite transmissions, we have only one piece of remembrance of our former home. Play the tape."

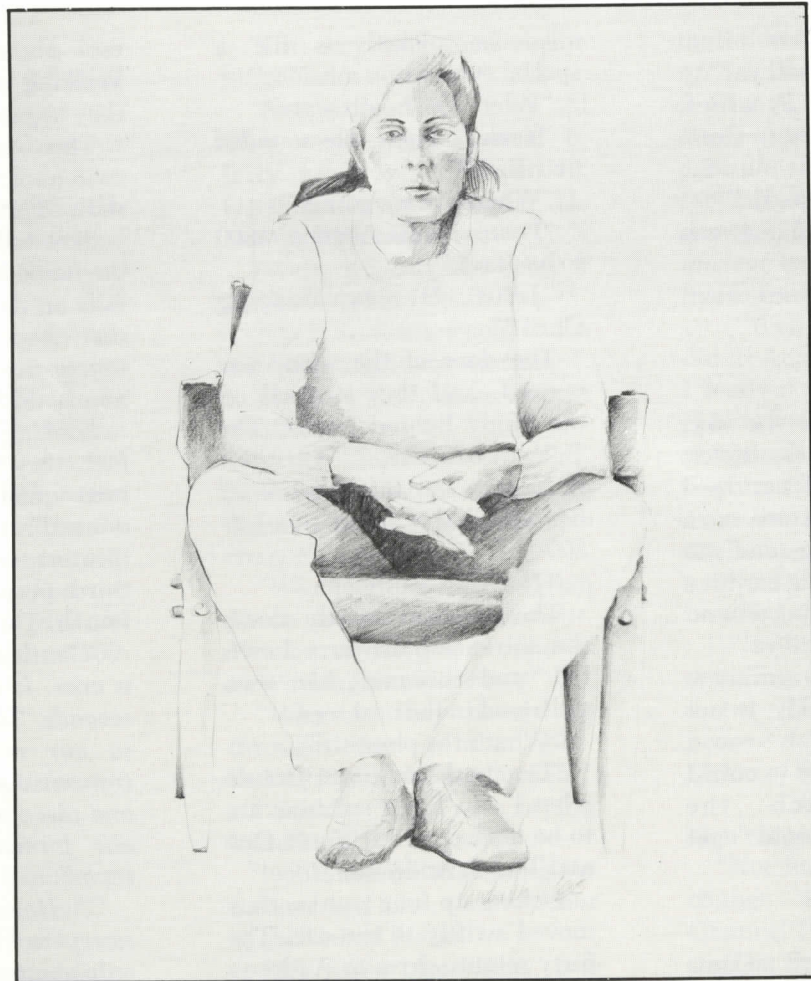
"...Handi-dandi kitchen sweepers, a real bargain at only nineteen-ninety-five..."

A still morning
Walking on a college campus.
Two feet apart
A squirrel
Jumped
Between
US!
We looked up
For a moment

And remembered
we are grown-ups

And forget
we were
children.

Evon Stewart



Phil Vander Weg

Empty We Linger

Nothing to say
Nothing at all
The highway is long
And as we roll along
I see that we have nothing between.

We've been together for oh! so long
Together we grew, we never knew
That one day soon we'd be strangers.
The distance grows
Vague and dusky
I look into your eyes and see
There's nothing there
Nothing for me
Nothing for you.

Empty we linger
Waiting and waiting
Anticipating
The space is between us
Is unreal as can be.

I can't understand
How worthless we seem.
So much of our lives-together spent
But not a word for each other
To exchange.

I repent.

Jenny Jacobs



Phil Vander Weg

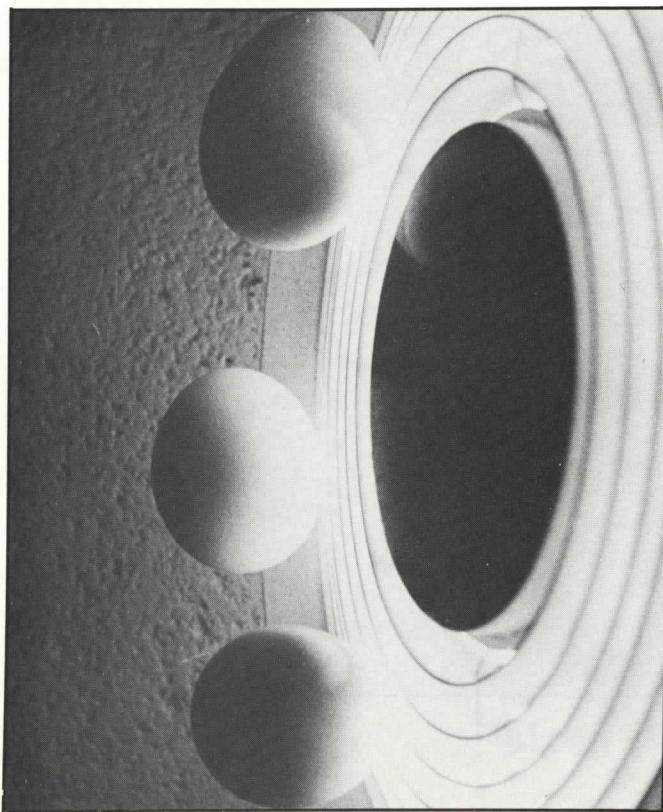


David Vaughn





Deborah S. Lilly



David Vaughn



Melody Cluck

And then to travel on

Can you hear it in my mind, this haunting frightening
clock
called time.

It swings from winter, summer, fall, the horrid, heavy
pendulum
ball.

Where once they stood a sprouting flower, now stands
the
stem, a dry dead tower.

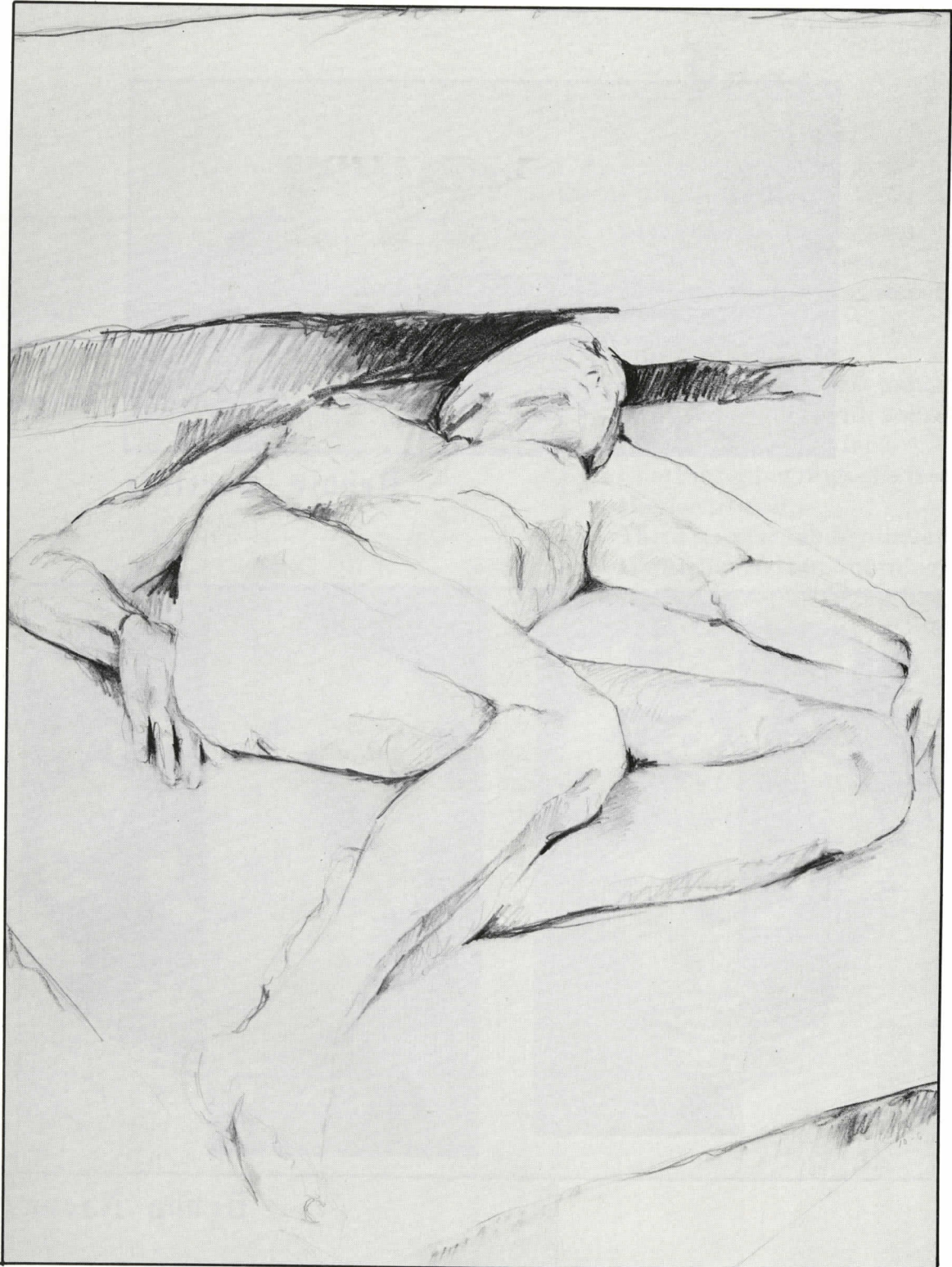
I wish to be a timeless man, to think and do what all
I can.

To go and span this world of mine, and then to step
beyond the line.

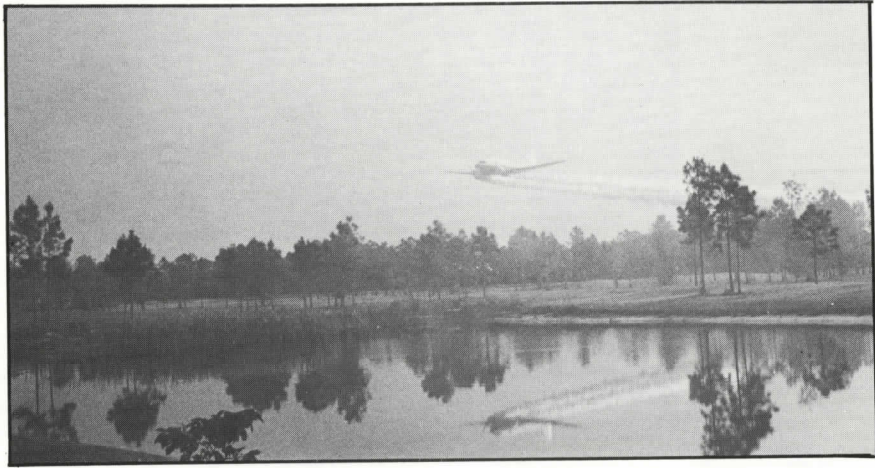
A million stars that I can see, a million suns that
wait
for me.

To sit and gaze upon green clouds, and then to
travel on,
and then to travel on.

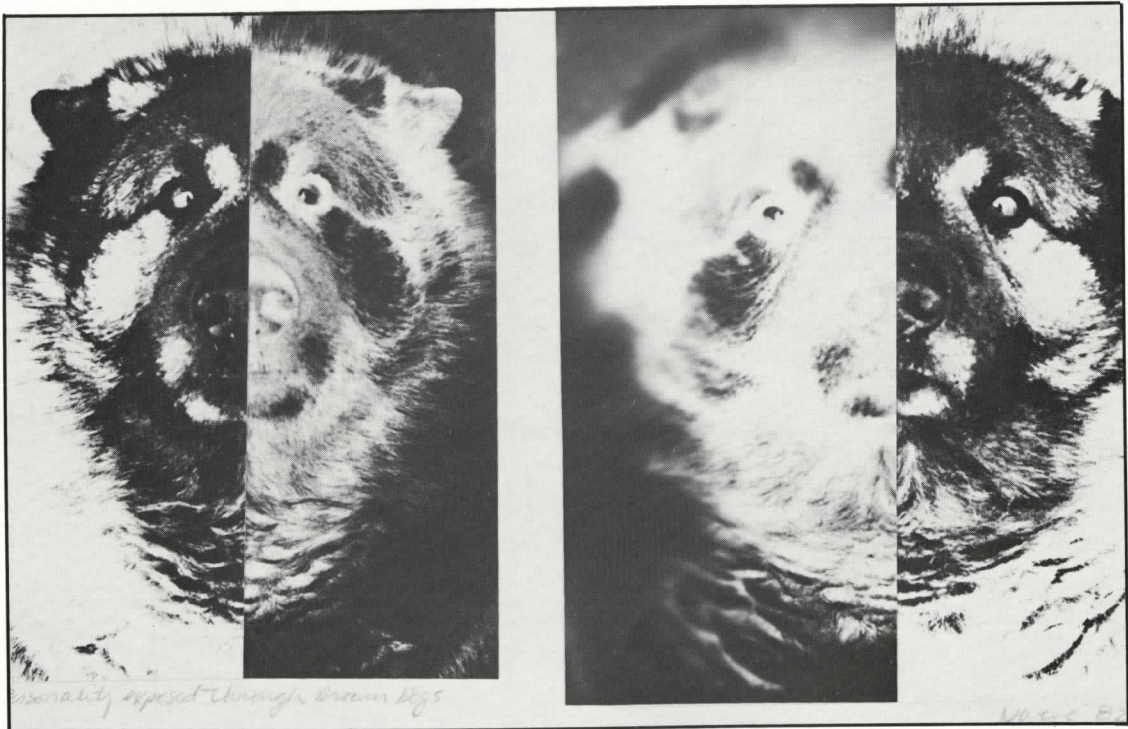
Martin White



Glenn Merchant



Debbie Bartlett



Debbie Naeve

Past

Like most,
A man made destruction.
Old and commanding respect
It had existed.

I met a man on a walk today
In dirty polyester with a shrub to disguise
His once handsome face.
Like the telling rings of a tree,
Hidden so well,
There is respectability there,
We exchanged our 'morning's'
As a clipper and a battleship,
And went our ways.

Having been felled,
It lay vulnerable
With the dust of years
Covering its expression.

Evon Stewart



Ollie Fancher

Devil Music

by

D. Clifton Wright

This is Part One of a two-part story. Part Two will be continued in the May issue of Collage

Chapter I

"I swear, Tony, I'd sell my damn soul for a hit. I swear I would. I just can't take this crap any longer: small gigs, piddling contracts, no recognition. I've heard of payin' your dues, but this is just too damn much: ten years we've been at it, and what have we got to show for it? Nothing. Nothing at all. I'd sell my soul, if I could find a buyer."

Tony Saunders smiled, lit a cigarette, and stretched. "Why don't you give what's-his-name a call; you know, the guy that's always sending you the horoscopes and things?"

"Calls himself Azrafel."

"Yeah," Tony snickered. "Jesus, what kinda name is that for a human being? Anyway, call Azrafel; maybe he can put you in touch with the great beyond, find somebody who'd buy your soul. Hell," Tony continued, almost helpless with laughter, "I'd give you a nickel for the sucker my own self."

"Why don't you just go straight to Hell?" replied George, who was beginning to giggle.

"Fifteen cents," sputtered Tony.

"My ass," George snickered.

"Naw, your shriveled soul," Tony howled.

Chapter II

George Alberts, Guitar Player of the Year--thought George Alberts to himself. Rat's ass. He wouldn't be guitar player of the year if he lived to be a hundred. No exposure--his own fault, mainly. Heavy metal rock was a dying genre, done in by no talent groups whose idea of music was to dress in leather and play the same damn three chords at high volume for hours on end.

Sure, there had been some really good metal groups--Blue Oyster Cult, Weatherby Magnum, Led Zeppelin, Judas Priest. Unfortunately, Zep and Weatherby Magnum had split up, and BOC and Judas Priest could not offset the bad image engendered by the other so-called metal bands. Eric Blum and Buck Dharma had it; the others didn't even know what "it" was.

By 1985, metal music was moribund; George Alberts chose this year to spring U.S. Steel on an uncaring world. The band's first release, *Pig Iron*, had sold all of 1500 copies. The second album did no better; there was no third. Concerts were cancelled; posters and jerseys were burned after sitting for months, unsold.

And no one, reflected Alberts, knew why. Critical reception had been outstanding. *High Roller* magazine had called *Pig Iron* "one of the best metal albums of all time...second only to Weatherby Magnum's *Mercenary*. Jim Weatherby himself had been quick to agree; in *String and Fret*, Weatherby

had called Alberts "the greatest guitar player since Hendrix--except for me"--an immense compliment, since Weatherby's ego was exceeded only by his skill with a guitar.

And Hell, Alberts mused, lighting another Dragon's Breath, I *am* good. The *really* good guitar players, all of 'em who had ever lived, you could count on the fingers of both hands: Hendrix, Clapton, Page, Buck Dharma, Beck, Nugent, Howe, Jim Weatherby, Tony Christian...and me. And that's *it*, Alberts thought. And I can't sell a damn album anymore than I can do brain surgery. I'd sell my soul for a chance, Alberts said to himself.

As the thought passed through his mind, Alberts shifted uncomfortably. For just a second, he had felt...cold, a prickly feeling up his spine. Sort of like...George thought for a moment, and it came to him, a phrase his mother used, which he hadn't heard in years. "Like someone walked across my grave," George said aloud.

"But I meant it," he said, shaking his fist at the empty room. "I'd sell my soul for a chance." Shivering again, he put another log on the fire, lit another cigarette, and returned to his reading.

Had George been paying attention, he might have heard the wind whistle, and he might have seen a shadow cross his window. Had he noticed, he might even have remembered another of his mother's sayings, innocent enough in what it says, but eerie in what it im-

The gates of hell are
 open; bright and
 smooth the descent, and
 easy is the way.
 Virgil's Aeneid



Kelly Hayes

plies: "Have a care, afore ye speak, lest somethin' be a'listenin'."

Chapter III

Some miles out of town dwelt Azrafel, some-time astrologer, necromancer, and hopeful sorcerer. Baptized Jeremy Benson, he had decided at the tender age of seven that such a name did not befit a servant of the Prince of Air and Darkness, so he had chosen "Azrafel."

Satan never had a more unlikely servant. Indeed, one doubts that His Infernal Majesty was even aware of the existence of Jeremy / Azrafel, save as a damned nuisance--and not even truly damned, for Azrafel was far too meek and mild to commit the sins necessary to stain his soul preparatory to damnation.

Born wealthy, Jeremy / Azrafel had no need to covet or steal. Totally lacking in sex drive, thoughts of fornication and adultery quite literally never crossed his mind. Murder--indeed, any act of violence--was totally repugnant to him. Perhaps, he had often thought, this was why his invocations and conjurations never quite succeeded: most called for blood, spilled at the climax of the ceremony, to infuse the dry formulae--to "make the words flesh," as the author of one grimoire had blasphemously written.

Alone at his rural fastness, Jeremy / Azrafel paced, making random patterns as he criss-crossed the intricate symbol etched into the stone of his patio. A knowledgeable observer would have recognized it as what is commonly called a "magic circle," though indeed, it was only one of many, many thousands of such designs. Smoke billowed from the huge pipe he clenched between his teeth. Wizards, he had once decided, smoked pipes--at least, Gandolf and Don Juan had, although Aleister Crowley had reputedly smoked cigars, and Lloyd of the Black Rose was known to smoke

cigarettes in enormous quantities. Lloyd, reflected Jeremy / Azrafel, would have had every form of cancer imaginable had he not been a wizard, but then...

Unaccountably, Jeremy / Azrafel shivered, and stopped dead in his tracks. Looking up, he blinked, and frowned. Now wasn't that odd, he asked himself. Not a cloud in the sky, but a shadow seemed to pass. And I would have sworn I heard the wind whistle, but there's no wind. Ah, Azrafel, too much port, eh, what? Take care: that's how Tsotha-lanti managed to catch Pelias. He giggled aloud. And now he was acting like Howard's stories were *true*. He giggled again, and turned to go inside.

Getting cold, he thought. "Getting cold," he said aloud, as he shivered again. He opened the rear door, and did not notice the thermometer, which stood on 85°

"Jeremy Azrafel shivered and stopped dead in his tracks"

Chapter IV

Somewhere--although it is open to debate if such notions of space, or those of time, apply to a place which lies outside the normal spatial / temporal sphere of existence. Elsewhere? When? Yes. No. Maybe. It does not compute. How in the Hell should I know? But to continue...

Somewhere, sometime, somehow, *Something* stirred. It wondered what had disturbed its millenia-long torpor,

and it stretched out pseudopods of mental energy; questing, sniffing, searching--until It found the stray thought-quantum which had streaked through Its micro-verse like a gamma ray through glass.

And it smiled, and drooled, and gibbered obscenely to itself. It stretched, and yawned, and sent its will back along the path the errant thought had travelled, until it encountered a...realm? Sphere? Dimension? Spectrum?...hypothetically possible continuum which was closed to it.

It chuckled horribly, and felt its will fester and grow, fertilized by the cosmic slime and degradation in which it sat enmired. And as it summoned up its will, it sought a door, knowing, sensing, that one would be there; it would not long be closed out.

And it raised itself up, a shadow of deepest black, shadowed by a non-fire of dense, imploding slime which gave off no heat, no light, no energy--only the absence thereof. And a hypothetical observer--hypothetical, because flesh and blood could not exist here / there--would have "seen" it as a slightly-less-dark outline against the utter non-light which was the natural condition of...there. In a wordless, and soundless--there was no air to conduct sound waves--shout, it challenged all light, all life, all existence, and mocked all that was or might be--a blast of defiance which respected nothing, least of all itself.

Chapter V

"Look, Azrafel, can you or can't you?" George was obviously just about out of patience. For almost an hour, he had listened to the scholarly tones coming through his telephone, had listened while Asrafel rambled, and backtracked, and told pointless anecdotes about his supposed occult encounters.

"Well, of course the procedure--the

supposed procedure, one should say--is well documented. Innumerable persons have undertaken--again, *supposedly* undertaken--such a covenant. But..."

"Goddammit, Azrafel, can you do it, or not? I don't give a damn how many people *tried*, I don't care about the etymological problems inherent in comparing medieval grimoires, I just do not care at all about documentation and evidenciary sources. Just answer the damn question: can you do it?"

"Well, to put it succinctly..."

"Azrafel!"

"Yes, yes, I can! Really. I simply cannot understand *why* you are in such a hurry. After all, you *should* be fully cognizant of *all* the facts..."

"When?"

"I beg pardon?"

"I said, when? How soon? Tonight? What time?"

"Well, yes, I suppose, tonight *would* do. Yes, tonight."

"What time, Azrafel?"

"What time?" chuckled Azrafel. "Why, midnight, of course: that's the time one *always* uses. You see, the stroke of midnight is time out of time, not one day nor the next, a sort of..."

"Midnight, then, Azrafel." George hung up.

Chapter VI

A scream which seemed to go on, and on, and on, maybe from the dim, distant beginnings of human kind, ululating, keening, eldritch, full of a terror which could not be expressed in words...the scream awakened George. He sat bolt upright on his couch, dripping in sweat--and he realized that *he* had been screaming.

George shook his head--a mistake; it intensified the throbbing he felt in his temples. He lit a Dragon's Breath, reached for his coffee cup--the coffee was stone cold. His watch read ten o'clock, still plenty of time for a shower, but he had slept for two hours--

--very unusual for him, and he had no memory of dozing off.

The dream, though...George shuddered. He remembered *that*, all right. He poured a fresh cup of coffee, dosed it liberally with cognac, and lit another cigarette. Too real, too damn real. His hand shook as he raised the cup, sipping the hot, potent mixture.

He had been in a darkened room. Something had tripped him; he fell, somehow, spread-eagled. Another part of him had watched while a squat, toad-like being had affixed itself to the chest of his fallen self. The...*Thing*...had squatted, gibbering and chuckling obscenely, ripping and tearing at him, pulling out his soul, drinking his still warm blood...and both parts of him had screamed while It smiled, and laughed.

*"The thing
gibbered and
chuckled
obscenely"*

Chapter VII

"God, I can't stand it!" hooted Tony. "I'm gonna choke laughing, I swear to God I am! You, and Azrafel...Jeez...that pimple-head couldn't conjure up a belch, much less a..." In the grip of rampant amusement, Tony trailed off, tears running down his cheeks, sides heaving, pounding the arms of his chair, helpless with laughter,

"Look," George growled, "I'm dead-damn-serious. He *says* he can do it, and if he *can*, fine, our troubles are over. If he can't, what have we lost? You coming, or not?"

"Oh, *hell* yes." Tony roared, gasping for air. "I wouldn't miss it to save my soul. I'll get Brad and Jimmy over; you can pick us up."

"Be here at eleven, okay?"

"Sure, sure," snickered Tony.

Chapter VIII

A room, its size indeterminate, because the four corners lurked hidden by shadows. The center was lit only by candles, which flickered, casting strange patterns, occasionally striking fantastic, carven shapes. For once, even Tony was silent, with none of the snickers or wisecracks he seemed to expell as easily as he expelled breath. Brad and Jimmy were silent as well, and George...

George had been all but mute since the others had met at his house. His silence was eerie, as though he were preoccupied by something which had enormously disturbed him. Even in the middle of summer, George never tanned, because he almost never went outside: he preferred to stay in his den, reading, playing his guitar, smoking innumerable cigarettes, drinking endless cups of coffee. But tonight, Tony reflected, George looks as white as...as white as Edgar Winter, thought Tony. But for some reason, he felt no urge to share this witticism with the others.

There was, Tony thought, something different about him tonight. He had, before, seemed short, frail, a ridiculous figure which babbled intently about sun signs, and conjunctions, and oppositions, and...Christ, a bunch of other crap. But tonight...Tony frowned. Asrafel looked taller, older, not at all ridiculous or laughable. He looked, well...*powerful*.

End of Part One

The Treasure

A treasure-
Battered and tarnished
by wind and Sea
by the harsh realities
of Time and Life.
But a treasure nonetheless.

A treasure-
Lying in anticipation
of Discovery.
There, for anyone alert enough
to discover the value
Under the tarnished gilt.

A god-
Searching for tidbits,
Momentoes of one sane Moment,
a Milestone in an existence colored
with the glowing phosphorescence
Of Madness.

A god-
Wounded by the broken glass
and aluminum pop-top cares
Of a race called Human,
Stumbles upon the treasure.

A god Diverted by a glint
-of Reality?-
No, but even greater.

A treasure-
Made all the more precious
by the battle scars.
A tangible image of the
God's battered Soul.

A treasure-
Head's up for good luck-
Even gods need good luck.
So stooping,
She embraces the treasure-
A penny in the sand.



Charles Hayes

Sheryl A. Siler

Friends: A Story

by

C.P. Kaufman and K. Brison

"Hail to the three musketeers. Hail to Lisa, Randy and Phillip the Inseparable," said Rollie Prophet as he raised his mug.

A light mist hung over the cemetery. None of them could make sense of it.

"Why would Rollie take that curve at a hundred miles an hour? He knew his bike better than that."

"He seemed happy when he left."

"He was drunk when he left."

Lisa, Randy and Phillip were each immersed in thoughts about the mishap and of Rollie. They walked down the hill, holding each other for support.

"Dude, I'll see you later. I'm going to take Lisa home."

"Randy, give me a call."

"Will do."

They got in their cars and left. Phillip didn't like the silence and popped in a tape. The jungle beat, piano, and Mick Jagger introducing himself seemed appropriate as he drove home. A mist clung to the road. He looked over to the passenger seat and could see Rollie in the past, saying, 'Beware the fog. Stay close to your friends.' Always with a big smile on his face.

Phillip grinned and said, "Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun the frumious Bandersnatch!"

And a youth said, "speak to us of friendship."

And he answered, saying:

"Your friend is your needs answered." ---Kahlil Gibran The Prophet

Phillip put down the book. He was tired, and he had a test at eight the next morning. He would read the section on friendship later.

Lisa, returning home from a movie, found Randy sitting on the steps of her dorm.

"What are you doing here?"

"Lisa, I need to show you something."

"Sure. Go ahead."

Randy had one of Rollie's old notebooks. He turned to an earmarked page and showed her a sketch of an octagonal building under construction. In front of the building were two arms: veins bulging, muscles taut, hands open and inviting. 'Vision fog bird needs answered' was written at the top of the page.

"That's really interesting. Forgive me if I'm not thrilled to pieces, but what's the big deal."

"The arms and the words weren't in the picture a week ago and I haven't touched it. Rollie gave this to me before he died."

Randy arrived at the cemetery early. Mist was still clinging to the ground, and Randy's feet were wet from dew. He walked up the hill, a rose in hand. He reached Rollie's grave and placed the rose on it.

The rose slipped, then rolled into a small puddle. Randy hesitated, then bent down to move the flower closer to the headstone. As he stood, thinking about the past, water began seeping

from the grave.

Randy finally noticed, startled, when the grave spit water, first in small bubbles, then in great heaves, as if vomiting.

Randy was shocked and unmoving as the water rushed forth, pushing the earth with it. When he finally turned to run, he slipped and fell face down. The water washed over him as he pushed and clawed at the ground, suffocating him with its foul stench.

Randy couldn't move. He was drowning in the mess. Grass, mud and small insects floated around him, and then a hand grabbed his ankle.

"Hey man, get up. You've got a test in 20 minutes." Randy's roommate was shaking him by the foot.

"Geez, you scared the crap outta' me. What time is it?"

"7:40, man."

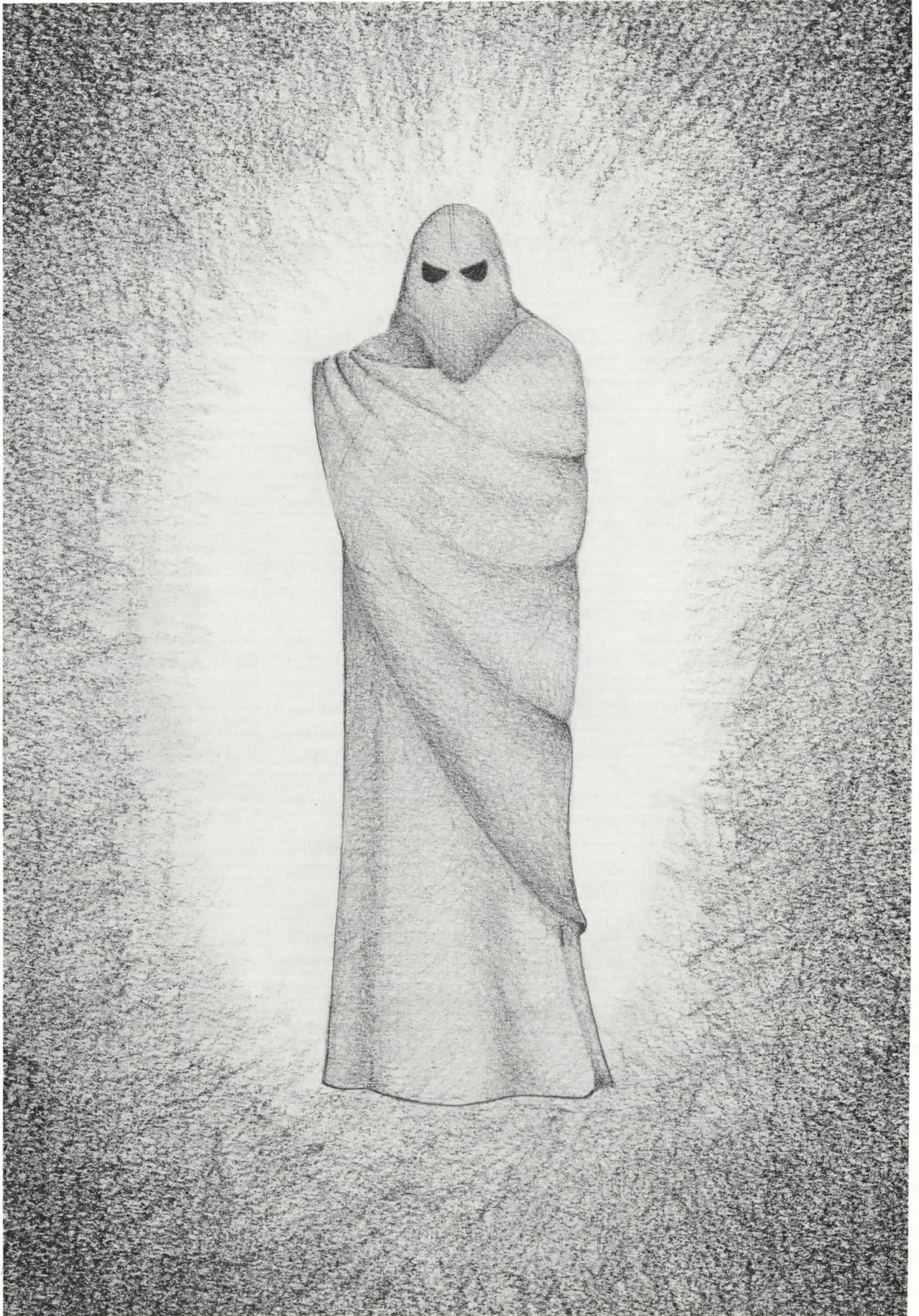
*Up jumped the devil,
dressed in white.*

*Up jumped the devil,
what a sight;*

*And if temptation comes around,
Don't listen to the devil in the white
nightgown.*

Phillip was enjoying the Andy Panda cartoon. Sometimes it just felt good watching those old cartoons and escaping the hectic day. It beat wondering about Rollie's old sketchbook.

Lisa opened the old shoebox. She pulled out the letter from Rollie that made her happiest. 'I'll always take



Charles Hayes

care of you,' it said. It ended with a quote she couldn't quite place.

'And if temptation comes around, don't listen to the devil in the white nightgown.'

'I don't remember that being there,' she thought. Lisa started looking through her other letters with more and more puzzlement.

"Christina, I'm home. Come to mommy dearest." The words from the Blue Oyster Cult's Joan Crawford tribute came wafting down the hall.

'God, I hate that song,' Lisa thought as she shut the door.

Randy opened the book about vampires to begin his research paper for his Gothic and Horror Literature class. He stopped at plate 17, a corpse in a white burial shroud rising from its grave.

Later, Randy studied another sketch by Rollie. In this one was the same building, but with no arms. Instead, there were two upturned hands at the base of the building, with a figure in white at the top. The phone rang. Phillip's voice on the other end did little to soothe Randy's jangled nerves.

"What's happening, bub?"

"Not much." Randy struggled to match Phillip's levity. 'How 'bout you?"

"Listen, Lisa and I want to go to the Stockyard tonight. Wanna' come?"

"Sounds great. Otay, Buhweah, let's go for it."

"Otay, Bokey. We'll get you at seven."

They had to park farther away than expected. It seemed everyone was at the Stockyard. As they walked up the road, Randy turned with a start.

Rollie's building seemed to stare at him. He'd known the building was in Nashville, but not that it'd been in this part of town. A white sheet hung from one of the upper girders. For a second it

seemed to move, and he felt his throat tighten; then he decided, relieved, that the wind must be blowing at that height. He caught up with Phillip and Lisa, who had stopped ahead.

"I thought," he started, embarrassed. "Never mind."

Behind them the sheet twisted and a face glared at the three below.

A long line waited at the Stockyard.

"Good heavens," said Randy, "everyone is here."

"Let's leave. This is crazy." Lisa kicked a beer can in the parking lot. "Damn."

As the three of them approached the office building from Rollie's drawings, Randy became very nauseous. A sense of dread filled him. Lisa and Phillip disappeared in the mist that had suddenly risen off the river. Randy felt suffocated as the mist seemed to close around him. He thought he saw a figure in white floating in front of him.

Someone screamed. Randy ran in the direction of the sound, unable to see. He tripped and fell. When he hit the ground, his groping hands found what was left of Phillip, throat torn out.

Randy crawled away as fast as he could and threw up in an alley leading to the river. "Rollie, no!" he heard Lisa scream. His mind swirled as he rose to his feet and stumbled down the alley. He felt, rather than heard, something moving behind him. Waves of hatred washed over him.

Reality fell apart: hands reached and grasped while small voices laughed and cursed, whispering fear. From behind, a soft thumping began, pushing him forward. A rat darted between his legs and disappeared.

Randy turned. He could hear the river and knew he didn't have anywhere to run. Backing slowly along a brick wall, he tripped over Lisa, her throat ripped open in a grotesque grin. As he rolled down the river bank, a bloody-mouthed Rollie floated toward him.

"I always wanted her. I always

wanted her, but she wouldn't have me." As he fell, Randy beat the river's surface, grabbing water in a vain attempt to pull himself away.

"I loved her, but she had both of you," said the Rollie-thing. "Now I'll have you!" it shouted, blood foaming on its lips.

"Hey, dude," said Phillip, "you don't look so good."

"Randy, you kinda zonked out on us for a minute," said Rollie. "You okay?"

"Yeah." Randy's hand shook as Rollie helped him up. "What happened?"

"Too much drink," Lisa grinned. "You never could hold it like the rest of us."

"Well, I'm taking off," Rollie said. "Hey, can't forget my helmet. Hand it to me, will you, Lisa?"

As Rollie walked off, Randy tried to call after him. The words froze in his throat for a moment, and then Rollie was roaring away.

"Are you all right?" Lisa asked. Randy threw up in answer.

In downtown Nashville, an old wino was ready to call it a day. He turned down the alley to his 'home' and stopped. He could see nothing, but the mist seemed to shift, as if moved by hands, and the cool breeze whispered death in his ears. The wino, never one to argue with pink elephants or instincts, walked the extra quarter mile on a lighted avenue before sleeping.

These are the
Nights that
Fears are
Made of.
Dark clouds.
Funny,
How some people
Feel so
Relaxed watching
a storm
Rolling in.
Yet others
build fear,
Total fear,
of the
Wrath of God
Revealed in
Nature.
Blackness.

Streaks of Light!
Flash the Sky!

... But
the rain falls.
The wind blows
Harder
Harder
Harder

Light!

All quiet as
the storm
batters my hearing
Will this be my

Sound!

Last storm?
Tornados-Hail-Lightning-
High winds.

Sound!

I've survived them all.
But only through
God's
Good graces.

Light!

God of wonder
God of light
Save me from
this storm

This one
could be

Sound!

light
Sound! SOUND!

the ONE!
My
last.

Light!

--of life.

Closer now...
Closer...

Sound.

'unbeingdead isn't beingalive'--
(e.e. cummings)



Cyndie Wright
Editor in Chief



Don Meadows
Faculty Advisor



Lisa Guinn Wright
Associate Editor

Design Staff



Tony Nowak
Kelly Northcutt Hayes

Charles Hayes
Cathy Louthan



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