Silhouette (Spring 2001)

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.shawnee.edu/silhouette
Part of the Fiction Commons, Photography Commons, and the Poetry Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://digitalcommons.shawnee.edu/silhouette/vol2001/iss1/1

This Full Issue is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Shawnee State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Silhouette by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Shawnee State University. For more information, please contact jstewart@shawnee.edu.
The Silhouette

EDITOR
Erica Fulton

POETRY EDITOR
Desiree Dotson

LAYOUT EDITOR
Jeff James & Matthew Gilley

ART EDITOR
J.J. Osman & Claressa Page

PROSE/FICTION
Aaron Hurt

STAFF
Michael Butcher, Charlene Edwards
Charles Dodds, Nathan Lindsey

ADVISOR
Brian Richards

cover designs Charles E. Dodds

All correspondence should be directed to Editor of the Silhouette,
Shawnee State University
940 Second St.
Portsmouth, OH
or call 740-355-2689
E-mail brichards@shawnee.edu

The Silhouette is committed to celebrating the art and ideas of the students and faculty of Shawnee State University and of the community at large. We welcome submissions of art, poetry, and short fiction.

© May 2001
All rights revert to authors on publication
In memory of Dr. Leslie Williams
J.J. Osman | Whisper | oil on board
Jason Mitchell | Six | digital imaging

Published by Digital Commons @ Shawnee State University, 2001
Daniel Rogers
- Figure Holding Vase
- ceramic

Silhouette, Vol. 2001, Iss. 1 [2001], Art. 1

https://digitalcommons.shawnee.edu/silhouette/vol2001/iss1/1
ogre (O-guhr) noun
1. A giant or monster in legends and fairy tales that eats human beings. 2. A person who is felt to be particularly cruel, brutish, or hideous. [French, probably ultimately from Latin Orcus, god of the underworld.]

Here I sit, scowling
This river runs on forever, to the swamp and serpents of the south
Bearing chicken coops, baby walkers, tampon applicators, syringes
To the sea.

My bridge will fall soon
Like a spurned lover, or drunk hanging out over the water, waving a bottle and screaming over the wail of cars, illuminated by headlights
To drop like a golden ball in a well
Be retrieved by the talking frogs
Of the Scioto county sheriff's department diving team

I holed myself here to hide in high school
Watch water slap against fallen tree trunks
Smoke shitty weed, and watch the mist burn off the river

There were ogres here then,
a harelipped cop once asked me what i was doing
a deaf/mute if i was lonely
the sad testimony of pornography and empty cheap beer bottles
showed the pastimes of others
but i was content to watch this endless river
drag its refuse to the sea

who is that trip trapping over my bridge?

I've come here to die before
Smeared in mud, drunk
And screaming
After your birthday one night
I drank through the night and the morning
Left my friend asleep on the floor and bought another six pack
Drank it in the rain walking across town, bought another, stumbling through a drive thru window and drank it standing in the mud,
I watched this river bloat like a corpse trapped under branches
Suck down bicycle frames, dead dogs, treelimbs
Bleach bottles and baby dolls
I gave it my last beer and walked home.

Jacob Rakovan
Irreconcilable Differences

You ask me why I am leaving.
I ask you, "Do you know of hog killings?
Country hog killings?

Of the pricking sound of a 22-long,
Of the sudden jerk and a proud stagger for life,
Of stumbling forth on frozen ground,
front legs first,
Of a long butcher knife throat ready,
And the draining of gallons of red, pulsing blood.

Oh, yes, my logic is very clear.
What matters one ring and hasty promises?
You have not seen a hog killing,
A country hog killing."

Shannon Kiser
Debbie Wade  |  Play Time  |  prismacolor
Nightmare Number Nine

In the field out beyond time
There in the Wheat
Misery Lies

Surrounded by gold
Dancing in the wind
Keening
Keening

The Earth after a rain
Sun upon green and growing
Wind swept fragrance
Of blooms long dead

Is it the wind sweeping through the Field?
Keening Keening
Weeping Weeping

Movement Ahead, Something Stirring
Amongst the Wheat
Sobbing
Sobbing

Blue Black feathers, shoulders, back
Keening
Weeping Sobbing
Crow Woman looking for pieces of her children.

Eva Ballein
Sharee Price | Nude Study on Chair | pencil on paper
Crystal Morrison | Me | ceramic
The drive needs addressing, these late summer rains have run riverlet right across. Maybe a little Bobcat with a tilting blade could scratch the trough we need. Maybe another culvert or two. Needs doing right away, before my hard-packed gravel is relocated. Speed is a function of waterline length; how long you cut the water before it closes behind. The drag it becomes. Take as subject anything that might need doing. How we do it. What I’m actually going to do is build a wall first, then address the driveway. There needs to be a wall so that the drive is necessary and that should lock us into a pattern. Access.

Operating on faith here, as I understand it; that what I expect will either or not happen. Predictable, within that set of occurrences. ‘Waiting For A Miracle,’ Dylan and the Dead. The Poet and his lady come down, looking for a venue; we steer them towards a futon. I just want to build some walls. In the morning I make as little noise as possible; everyone else is sleeping or feigning sleep and I assume they are the same, a last peck on my lover’s ass, out the door, coffee to go.

To the job-site I take: a yogurt and spoon, an orange; a can of tuna, hot sauce and crackers; string-cheese and a terrible beverage that pro-ports to extend something somewhere; reminds me mostly of whatever that beverage was that they fed me when I was too young to under-stand that what they fed me was not what you actually encountered out there, in the REAL world. No power again at the site and I dis-cover the culprit: faulty weatherhead, dead shorting the juice just over on my side of the line. Means a trip to town and a blown day but power is critical (I built one house without the grid or a generator but
that was another head-set) so time well spent. Another sweet corn dinner, with small grilled tuna steaks this time.

Early the next morning I follow the crane down to Bear's where the steel will be set. The I-beams are two feet deep, sixty-six feet long, the clear span is almost exactly fifty feet. The crane has to set-up three times to jockey them into position, then parks itself in the middle of the creek bed, and swings them onto their marks, atop their forty-ton abutments.

The only two reasons I stay the whole time is that first they are big steel beams and it's a fucking crane, and second that the Singer needs just a minute of help each of the three times a beam end comes his way. The Poet, everyone here related but me, fallen ill with something too long in the fridge, takes his explosive diarrhea home and Darren, who was to print with him (or start setting or redistributing type toward setting) is suddenly free so goes to frame with me. Ridgeward.

It's lunch-time and I share my meatloaf sandwich (another with sweet corn meal) some chips and water, my beverage of choice during the day as I do drink seriously at night and need whatever flushing might be provided. A break in the clouds, we frame the front wall in three sections. Three twelve footers that meet at the beam pockets and are massive in their headers and doubled studs. We get the last, is this always the way? in a tenth the time the previous require; this is how we learn, doing. I really don't know what is required of me. I do whatever I can, plugging away, discussing my concerns, as though they meant something.
The next day, as it happens a Friday, I go up alone, again; a feeble attempt at progress. Lay out the plates for a twenty-foot section of the back wall. Cut all the studs, shorter here, as the beams that carry the second floor add eight inches and they need rest on good bearing. A wall fraught with studs; the beams that carry the second floor on three foot centers and the wall framed on sixteens, so there need be many extras, carrying the load right down to the girders. Bear stops by, an early day off from the shop, and we finish the back wall in two sections, 20 feet and 16 feet. When we leave, the front and back walls are all framed and lying, flat out, without their plywood.

We agree to the usual terms: I’ll pick him up a little before nine, having run to Bunee for him and me a pack of smokes, another gallon of cold drinking water, a coke to add caffeine in the afternoon. Load his tool belt, some bracing, some tap-cons against a future attachment problem, a ladder. ‘Just as we had left it.’ A common thought returning to a site... probably do this round-trip 120 times... that it was the same, that anything could be. We skin the frame with the plywood, adding all its rack resistance and lateral strength. The compression load, the roof and snow, are nothing, you carry it right down; but rack is a diagonal thing, upper to lower corner, plywood good. Pull the bottom plate into line, a snapped box we call god. Nail it on the inside, where the nails will pull when we stand it. Knock the top plate into line with a sledge hammer; it’s square enough, nail it. And that becomes the phrase: ‘Nail It.’ We’re framing now, we can make whatever corrections in finish. Doesn’t matter we’re not concerned with that just now but that we’re focused on what actually happens, and will extrapolate from that; that we trust our ability to solve problems in the field. We stand the front wall in its three sections and tie them together, brace them off, then stand the back in two sections close to
the limit of what we can safely lift, ditto. I lay-out the west gable wall on its top and bottom plates while Bear hauls studs. Before knocking off for the day we get the common studs all nailed and the headers built for the three west downstairs windows.

The next day is a Sunday and we agree to work, same time. I drop him off where his I-beams now span the creek. Beat but exhilarated. Fucking walls actually standing. Lovely image residual in my mind as I go about the water chores. Haul a bath from the creek, heat a gallon on the stove, flush the toilet, fill the tank from the last bath. Clean up, shave, start dinner. Sweet corn and wonderful sauced chicken legs. The Poet calls, wanting to work and I welcome his help and his presence. Finally, sitting, I go over the two gable walls in my head. They look fine. A drink and I’m gone.

Sunday, up early and packing a huge lunch after a double breakfast (no fat reserves, when I work hard I must eat) out the door. Down for smokes and fuel, then get Bear and his kit and we’re back up, framing. The Poet arrives and we fairly fly, setting headers, trimmers, and cripples; toe the frame to its line, tack it and sheathe it. Using the compressor we blow the wall clean of sawdust, and the space where it will stand. Turning my back to the top of the wall, lying on the deck, I take a goodly swing and sink the claw of my hammer in the top plate and lift while Bear slides a couple of 2x blocks under, so we can grab, clean and jerk. We forget to count and just lift, standing it tightly between the front and back. Tack in a few temporary nails and take a break.

Using every single stick we frame the east wall, with them nailing and me cutting the pieces as fast as I can. It is smooth easy work. I have
to stop and eat but they start right in on the sheathing. While I’m having a rapid but lovely lunch of left-over legs and cold corn they carry over the plywood and start snapping the 16 inch centers for nailing. A persistent bow in the bottom plate is finally sledged into place and we shoot on the plywood and cut out the window openings. An easy pattern we fall into, of snapping lines, shooting the perimeter down tight and cutting out the piece. Then it’s done, ditto, and we stand it easily. A few nails and we back off for a smoke. Wow. The four walls now define the space which was formerly only a platform. You can now look out the windows, it’s rough but you can get the idea. Houseness. If only we could have a roof.

While they attach the four gable sheets of plywood (left off so that they might overlap the corner) I shim and level the corners, racking with a crowbar whatever lies between me and God. We shoot down the bottom plates with way too many nails because we fear lift. We add extra braces against the day I will be gone, recovering from the last week. And we are done, further than I expected, in plenty of time for Bear to get down and watch the Ohio State game with his Dad, the Poet’s brother, the Singer. I’m tempted to stay and just enjoy that sense of accomplishment that comes from getting four-square, Wall Framing After Daughters, but really must get back to the trailer and relax; clean up (damn am I dirty) dinner tonight with dear friends.

Tom Bridwell
Underwater Thing

I'm an underwater thing.
I sank years ago, glad for scales.
Into my core a lapis Universe
has won.

Sliding through my liquid life,
learning secrets from cold centers
of coral and clam.
Ooshing into abyssal darkness,
undulating through Poseidon's arms
wandering depths forever removed
from flaming suns.

My lips, perpetual wet kiss, cannot whisper
caress ears taunt to listen.
No voices haunt, scold
my ice-silent, well-world.
Weightless, bodiless, no more
than a whale's lament
I exist.

Though time sands away,
Though ships sink to know my world,
Though foamy wave washes land,
I'll drift through briny pools.
Never wanting shore.

Vince Larson
Syrinx

Pepper spray, mace, whistle, key chain baton, penknife; cell phone, home security passkey, and rail pass. A holy litany now, she reiterates each item, touching it in her mind like a rosary bead, moves on to the next. She runs through the list three times before unlocking each of the three heavy deadbolt locks. She swings the door open cautiously, triggering the motion detector to flood the front porch in light and illuminate the double row of lights running down the path from the door to the car like a landing strip. As she moves along the walk she fumbles for the controls to the car alarm and automatic door locks. The dome light flashes and the locks pop audibly. She checks the back seat, slides in and locks the doors with the press of a button and sits for a moment, breathing heavily. The runway lights dim and go out, and she is forced to pull the car out onto the road.

She is relieved to find the security guard at the gate a familiar one. His blue uniform is open at the throat, and he grins at her almost lecherously as he waves her through, saving her the agony of rolling down a window. His eyes seemed all over her for a moment, and she squints at his nametag so she can register a complaint at the main office. In the dim light, it seems to read "Puck" although it doesn’t seem that can be right, perhaps Chuck? The metal teeth in the roadway retract, and the gate opens. The gate crashes behind her with what seems a terrible finality and she is finally, horribly, outside.

The lights on the side of the road are a sulfurous yellow. The highway stretches for miles. She tries to stay as close to the center as possible. At every red light she shakes with anxiety at the ever-present danger of car jacking. She screams aloud when she sees the hitchhiker.
He is dressed in green army fatigues with a battered pack on his back. A shaggy black beard splits in a grin when he sees the car pull up to the light. His dirt grimed hands hold up a tattered cardboard placard with the word "Arcadia" scrawled in black marker for a moment and then ambles towards the car. "Dear God why won't this light change?" she says aloud as he comes along side and raps on her window. Red. Red. Red... The light is a single mocking eye and the wheel is growing slick with her nervous sweat. Outside the window he is mumbling now. The sardonic red light flashes mercifully green, and she is gone, leaving him standing in the intersection.

The park and ride parking lot is deserted save for one white panel van, and she pulls up as close to the entrance yet as far away from the van as possible. Everything is fluorescent, and she stands on the platform, a hand on the spray in her pocket. "This is the most terrible part," she tells herself, and it becomes a refrain, repeated over and over, "terrible part, terrible, this is the most terrible..." The silence is overwhelming and she almost wishes that someone else was here with her, that she could engage in some kind of comforting patter about the weather or the train schedule, but she also knows that the mere presence of a man would send her mantra off into madness. "Most terrible, this is the most terrible part. Terrible part. This is the part. Is the part terrible? Terrible..."

The elevated train pulls in with a squealing of air brakes like pan-pipes. The door swings open and a laughing couple disembarks, walking past her indifferently. They smell like sex. She steels her nerves and steps inside. Above her, large smiling heads hawk products, Kools, Kents, Colt45, King Cobra, Philly Blunts, The Chicago Sun. The snakelike route of the El into the city lays sprawled against a backdrop of scrawled obscenities and names. "Fuck Daley" "Boo loves Cassandra" "Cock" "Angie is a Cunt" "68"
The door between compartments opens, and he staggers in. It seems impossible to her that it can be him, but there he is, battered pack, army jacket, and blue shirt open at the throat. He overpowers the smell of the car, that cocktail of piss and sweat and steel and smoke. Now the entire car reeks of one thing, and one thing only and that is him, a goatish stink strongly mixed with the fruity notes of cheap wine. He sits directly across from her, his legs spread wide and a bottle in a paper sack resting between them. He wags it suggestively at her, and breaks into a guffaw as she stands shaking, and walks to stand next to the door, clinging to the bar with one hand and fumbling the safety off the mace in her pocket with the other.

Kools. Kents. Angie is a Cunt. King Cobra. The train pulls to a halt with that same shrill whistling. She stands and looks out onto the empty platform, cautiously turns her head to see if he is leaving, and is elated, disturbed and disoriented to see he is gone. The heavy steel door closes, the sign visible through the smeared glass, Arcadia.

The train starts, stops again. Each time the same empty platform, the same fluorescent light. Gradually the stops are closer together, the platforms more populated and finally she steps out of the train onto a cement landing where a young boy leans indolently against the wall and plays a recorder, the notes mingling with the screech of the brakes. She descends a set of iron steps and stands beneath the El, a long corridor of columns over the street. She walks briskly, head up, eyes forward and hands in her pockets closed around the twin talismans of mace and pepper spray. "Look confident" they had said at the self-defense class. Up to the corner, past the Parnassus Gyro Shop, a left turn and she is in front of the glass doors of the building.

The floor is marble and half Ionic columns line the walls. She casts one quick eye into the shadows behind a stand of potted Fichus trees and walks along a crimson runner leading to the elevator doors. OUT OF ORDER is written on a piece of yellow notebook paper and taped to the door on the left. She presses the button and stands as she does every night,
staring at the baroque satyr’s head which tops the arch.

23 22 21 20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1, a bell rings, and she steps inside and presses 17. There is the always slightly disquieting jolt as the elevator starts its ascent.

1 2 3 4 5 and the door slides open. She jabs at the close door button but an arm reaches in and stops it from closing. She keeps her eyes fixed on the numbers above the door, her hands clenched in her pockets closed in a white knuckled fist over the baton on her keys and the open penknife. She almost shrieks as the arm—bestial with hair, a blue shirt rolled carelessly to the elbow—passes in front of her and punches 9. The button lights up, glowing red. "I wish they’d get the other one fixed. Seems like it takes all damn day just to get up to accounts nowadays," he says. 6 "One of the secretaries from my floor got stuck in the other one with the district manager for half an hour, waiting on the janitor with the key," 7 and she is sweating now, drowning. His voice is deep and guttural and scented sickly sweet, a hint of wine, doubtless from dinner she tells herself, but she pictures the wino with his bottle on the train priapic and impotent at the same time. She coughs, but the rich scent is insistently penetrating her mouth and leaving it’s taste, making her gag. 8 "Seventeen, eh?" he says, his voice rich with insinuation. "You’re one of the phone girls aren’t you? And I thought I’d met all of you."

She runs her thumb across the blade in her pocket. 9 "Richard Robigus, but you can call me Dick." He thrusts out his hand and she can see dirt rimming the nails. The bell rings. "Looks like my stop..." She catches a hint of green as he passes, and then keeps her eyes on her distorted reflection in the silver door as it closes, and the elevator jerks again.

10 11 12 and a girl with wide eyes and mussed hair enters, raises her hand to the buttons and seeing that 17 is lit, wordlessly drops it back to her side. 13 OTIS ELEVATOR COMPANY Two girls enter engrossed in conversation.

"...No really, I’d almost rather flip burgers than this shit. The other
day Johnny, you know the little short bastard, he comes up to me with my log and says, 'I like the way you handled the goat guy,' and then like five minutes later he’s like, ‘What are you doing after work tonight?’ What? Fuck a raise if that’s what I have to do to get it, I mean Jesus, what a cocky little prick." 14

"But Shirley, he’s head of your section, besides I think he’s kinda cute. Bobby wouldn’t find out about a little dinner... You wanna be stuck with the beasties and the necros forever?" 15

"Bobby would fuckin’ kill me, I am so sure and besides, that little Greek bastard smells like that shit my grandpa used to put in his hair."

"At least he’s got a job Shirl, Bobby’s not exactly upwardly mobile, if you know what I’m sayin’." The silent girl sighs and punches 17 again.

"I guess, but Johnny just creeps me out. I know he’s back there in the office listenin’ to me all the time and I can just see him choking his chicken while I tell farmer Earl all about how much I love sheep." 16

"Eeeeeeewww. I am so glad that I am not in your section. Did you see Billy’s new car?" 17

"You gonna let him put his piggly wiggly little dick in you just to ride in a ‘86 Camaro...we’re talkin lord god king mullet, Suze."

"Whatever." The bell rings, and they all step out.

Everything is an antiseptic white. The fluorescent lights stretch in long straight lines over cubicles filled with girls wearing headsets in front of green monitors. Placards hang from the ceiling. SECTION 1 consensual straight. SECTION 1a Consensual Bi SECTION 2 Voyeur Lesbian (under this sign the girls sit two to a cubicle with one monitor reeling out the script and she notices Susan from the elevator relieving one of the girls) SECTION 8 Zoophyllia and on and on. She walks across the room until she is under the sign which reads SECTION 27a Nonconsensual Straight. In the cubical a heavyset dark haired woman with a nametag that says "HI, I’m Jeanine!" is working a crossword and speaking into the microphone. "O god,
it hurts, it's so big, you're tearing me up...." Jeanine hits the mute button on
the small black box which hangs from her headset and says "God am I glad
to see you," and begins gathering her things. She hits the button again. "Oh
no, Oh yes, Oh help, Oh I'm coming too Ohhh," Jeanine says as she puts on
her coat, logs off and heads towards the time clock.

She puts on her nametag "HI I'm Diana!" and places the head-
phones on her head. Another eight hours of white cotton panties ripped
aside, of jogs through the park at night, of librarians closing up with one
man left inside. She knows that the street awaits her, and after that the
train (the most terrible part) and the harrowing ride back to the gated com-

munity. She knows there will be middle managers, hitchhikers and guards at
the gate. She looks up at the yellow banner over her cubicle "Keep the

client talking!" and logs in and awaits the first call. Above all she knows that
some evening the man in the green coat will be waiting, perhaps in a dark
room in her own house. "If he will only be merciful enough to use the knife
first," she thinks, "that will be blessing enough."

"Hi, I'm Diana; will you be using a credit card this evening or be
taking advantage of our confidential billing option?"

Sharee Price
- Untitled
- pencil on paper

Published by Digital Commons @ Shawnee State University, 2001
Hymn to the Little God

It does not deserve the name of desperation
Or destiny, or tragedy, the slow, comfortable poisoning
Slow opiate of ticking administration
Broken only by the graying dawn
Genuflecting to the day knowing
Still that opiates are the religion
Of the masses, anesth-stasis as the doctrine
Substitution, giving blessedness in lieu of commandments,
And heroes become adults, and the event itself
Is not noteworthy, not a single note of a single song worthy.

Not a battle, but the welcome abdication
Of a doddering sovereign, a man-child unfit to rule, replaced
By a foreign prince who does not know your old songs, nor cares to know.

The gods no longer thunder, they meekly wait
To worship and serve the worshippers who have forgotten praise.
Too myopic to see anything but themselves, and that, have mercy, not too clearly. Praise the little god
Lord of the living sleep.

And thus life grinds out its colors in sameness, beyond the reach of art, anesthetized and scared sacred and comfortable and grueling, and beautiful - a creeping expiration of the moment we are granted - we know not from where, tithing them for expiation of self-imagined sins, half regretted, fully treasured.
We defeat ourselves to deny the foe, our owned death, the field.

Kit Thornton
Sharee Price | Nude Study Sleeping | pencil on paper

Published by Digital Commons @ Shawnee State University, 2001
Dancesteps of Survival

In the white chocolate daylight
closing her eyes only takes her
into her breath.
She would like to pretend
as she can in the dark
that their lovemaking is like
a merging of galaxies
sentient but formless,
something huge beyond conception,
an ecstasy unharnessed from flesh
such as the wind must enjoy.
He and she are not
disembodied shivers
or one black, black cloud
squeezing out rain
with happy groans
one unbearably sweet drop at a time--
until they've rained themselves away.
Their skins feel tight.
Their lives feel small.
At noon amid the stacks of laundry
she is grounded in what is really here.
There is a man
and a woman,
the creaking of bed springs,
The Sunday traffic
and the boots they kicked off
with the tongues hanging out.
There is the din of their pulses
made of blood warm as dishwater
in a steel sink,
a mortal ticking which
amplified by the curvature of a sea shell
roars of the ocean

Kai Cooley
Part I

Ophelia was pushed
to dance like Zorba the Greek

by perfectly rational reactions to a world gone
mad as a hatter

(足够的)
make you want to splatter
gray matter
to cut the chatter

of a million different voices
singing choruses in my head

"to be or not to be
that is the question"

whether 'tis nobler to eat the bullshit
with an exemplary shit-eating grin
or to cut your losses short and walk away from the table with dignity
or maybe live
just to prove the bastards wrong
and be a thorn in their cod pieces
saying:
"I'm not going anywhere you fucker
and you have to deal with me"

Part II
The working poor are the bastard children
of a power structure
no longer worthy of commentary

and we
the barbarians at the gate
who write independently of academia
or committees established to keep us on display and off the streets
the freaks of physical and psychological nature and outcasts of society
will not keep our mouths shut

Leonard S. S. Poage
activity = purpose = identity = worth?

I believe that I am more than that which I do. Perhaps what I am is better reflected in the way in which I do things.

Still, there are so many voices telling me who I need to be.
Shirley Ozgen  |  Untitled  |  crayon on cardboard
The Sting of the Worm

It begins, an entre’ act, distantly heard
Of a show that may or may not be
A weakness in the chest, not a pain, really,
And nothing to complain about.
A fluttering in the bowels
That begins a cracked dance in the cavernous hall
Filled, yet empty, yet filled
Within the dome of whitened bone.

Regret there will be, piled high and spilling over.
So much is undone, life is like an untidy house
Not quite here, not there, so little to set it right
Yet still undone.
I would be a fool, were I at all entertaining.
I have only a sad tale to tell, no worthy tragedy
worth remembering or writing down or playing out or ending.
It should be a comfort that sunny, warm days will go on without me
as I went without them so often, huddled with my own conceits
Turning half-willed sloth into dubious art
And regretting both.

I am neither what I wanted, nor the monster that I feared – half
hoped to be.
No hero or villian, or character of note,
Not even Sir Eliot’s attendant lord.
Few are the scenes that start in this empty theatre.
The terminal struggle does not begin
With a weakness in the chest, a fluttering in the bowels.
It begins without beginning, without progress, without plot.
It is a life-stealing agent, a Wu-Wei
Entombing the living, cremating the lucky few,
Giving lethal injections of ironic holy water
And the only compassion left is not to cure.

It is not poetry, or baseball, or music, or a stage, or Divine Will.
It is not mathematics, or physics, or chemistry,
It is not economics, or ideology.
It is, not I am.
It cannot be held, or described, or pleaded with, or truly loved.

And thus the world is dipped in wax,
Precautions are in vain.
For we are still inside ourselves,
Tho’ wrapped in cellophane.
In My America

In my America pink, brown, black, yellow, and beige are only colors
In my America freedom still matters even if my vote doesn’t
In my America I will rant I will rave and I will scream, because I can
In my America your corporate bullshit is not welcome
So let smoky Joe Camel stay in the barn with Uncle Walt’s rat
In my America Janeane Garofolo is a sex symbol
In my America we’re perfectly happy with our vegetables the way they are
This isn’t peanut butter and chocolate, so keep your Fish DNA outta my Tomatoes
In my America Fidel Castro is a hero
It’s all a matter of perception
In my America marijuana is good and alcohol is evil
But in your America it’s the other way around
In your America my colors are the symbols of a caste
In your America my friend gets arrested for the crime of
NOT drunk driving
In your America I can be detained if I’m out and lose my license
Does “where are your papers?” sound familiar?
And in your America driving through my neighborhood after dark is
probable cause for a stop and search
Simply because I’m poor
So don’t sneer at me when I burn your flag
Because I despise what your country stands for
And there’s not enough room for your America and mine
And so I will burn I will rant and I will rave, because I can
In my America that’s still my right
And my grandpa didn’t fight for a chunk of colored cotton
But an ideal
“That we hold these truths to be self-evident
That all men [and women] are created equally
And are endowed with certain inalienable rights”
Life
Liberty
Pursuit of Happiness
These were before the Red White Blue and the Fourth of July
These ideals will outlast them
God Bless My America
I hope yours burns in Hell

Jeremy Wells
Larry Preston | digital imaging
syzygy (SIZ-uh-jee) noun

1. Astronomy. Either of two points in the orbit of a celestial body where the body is in opposition to or in conjunction with the sun. Either of two points in the orbit of the moon when the moon lies in a straight line with the sun and Earth. The configuration of the sun, the moon, and Earth lying in a straight line.

2. The combining of two feet into a single metrical unit in classical prosody

How we three have clashed
Always one wheeling about the next
Like whirling deadly machinery we orbit one another
Rarely in anything resembling harmony

You, She, I
No longer names, locked in their orbits
Earth, sun and moon
My eyes lock on you, you on she
Her light hits me, at best, intermittently

I would eclipse her in your eyes,
Blot out this light that draws you to her
But that only casts you in darkness
Halos me in flame of rage

O we are heavenly
The way we lie,
The stars’ cold light is very far away
I circle you like a vulture

We are twin lights, she and I
I a dim mirror, dead
She ever shifting, changing
Her flares scream like a radio into the void

I know you are drawn
Her burning gaze brings forth flowers along your skin
I stare, sullen and cold as a skull
And only see you in your shadow

Watching you shift h your seasons
Warm and cold, wet and dry
How can something cold and dead as I
Stir your seas to motion?

Jacob Rakovan

Photo by Clarence Grant Morledge
Collection of Jim Flavin

https://digitalcommons.shawnee.edu/silhouette/vol2001/iss1/1
Having Fun at Wounded Knee

In July of 1996 my wife and I took a vacation into "Indian Territory." It was a trip that, as I think back on it, I had actually begun in 1970 when my mother, after learning I had secured my first teaching position in South Dakota, gave me two pictures taken by a distant relative who had spent time in South Dakota in 1890-91 photographing Native Americans. Both photographs were initialed CGM. One was a picture of Red Cloud’s home on the Pine Ridge Reservation, dated 1891. The other was an undated picture of the "Indian Boarding School" on the same reservation. Each contains an inscription identifying the image as well as a catalogue number in the lower right hand corner.

My mother’s gift of the pictures was accompanied by the most general of observations about Clarence Grant Morledge, the photographer. He was not, my mother said, talked about much by her family because he was viewed as a "black sheep." He had gone to South Dakota and lived with the Indians. Not the kind of behavior my mother wanted her own children to emulate.

The years since my mother’s gift have shed light on this distant uncle of mine. Historians now know that Morledge, not George Trager, was the primary photographer on the death field at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, on January 3, 1891, after the massacre of Big Foot’s people occurred. Recent books such as Eyewitness at Wounded Knee and Wounded Knee: Lest We Forget record Morledge’s significant contributions to history and credit him with the most important photographs relevant to "The Ghost Dance Rebellion." Not bad work
for a "black sheep." Morledge will long be remembered when the rest of us lie forgotten in Boot Hill.

So about this vacation.

My family lives in Kansas. My wife’s family lives in South Dakota. Nebraska, of course, lies conveniently between the two states. In the summer of 1996 Louise and I decided we wanted to trace Morledge’s footsteps. To see what he had seen. If nothing else, to stand on the ground that Morledge might have stood upon over 100 years ago.

That summer we headed out to northwestern Nebraska, stopping along the way at the famous landmark known as Chimney Rock, just out of Bridgeport. Rising out of gentle sloping hills, the rock was a touchstone to settlers moving west into Indian territory, a physical sign that they were indeed on the right road, a confirmation of the rightness of their vision, the sureness of their aim. At the time I did not suspect that those early settlers might have been as blind as I was. That revelation was to come later.

From Chimney Rock to Fort Robinson. The landscape becomes more dramatic here. The hills rise and fall more sharply. Color contrasts emerge more vividly. Green grass. Rock buttes. Plateaus. Bluffs capture the eye from great distances. A country indeed, on a good day, worth dying for. The museum was closed by the time we arrived, but the grounds were open yet for strolling, and we went immediately to the monument that stands at the spot where Crazy Horse was killed on September 5, 1877. On the rather simple stone monument, visitors before us had placed as tokens of their respect a purple wild flower and a small bundle of sweet grass or sage. We took our pictures, looked through a couple of closed and locked windows, then drove out to Stop 10 on the self-guided tour,
the original site of the Red Cloud Indian Agency.

The agency buildings are long gone, but the buttes in the distance, those hills out of which Crazy Horse might have come that fateful day in 1877, stand tall and awesome. Glory etched in indestructible stone.

Louise and I took a picture of each other here, evidence that in one quick journey through this country, our own feet touched sacred ground.

"How do I look?" she asked, maneuvering her New York Yankees cap atop her head.

"Lovely," I said.

I pushed back the bill of my own cap, sighted, and snapped the picture.

After she took my picture against the same buttes in the background, we rushed on to Chadron.

Our motel was positioned at the southern edge of Chadron with a wonderful view of the Nebraska hills to the south and to the north. By now we were tired. Travel, even in the air-conditioned comfort of a rented mini-van, is fatiguing. Taxing on both patience and attention. We needed to knock off the trail dust and rustle up some grub. Conveniently, a steakhouse was just next door. And a shower was right off our spacious bedroom.

In the steakhouse I asked our waitress if she had ever been to Wounded Knee. It was a little more than twenty-five miles away. I was hoping for a scouting report perhaps, an indication of what might lie ahead, but such was not to be the case. "Never been there," she said.

After a meal of steak and potatoes, Louise and I were ready for bed. On the morrow we would finally touch earth my great-great
uncle had himself walked upon. See sights that he himself had seen. As we prepared to leave, our waitress sent us out with a pleasant goodbye.

"Have fun at Wounded Knee," she said.

We nodded and left.

Even at the time the linking of "Wounded Knee" with "fun" seemed odd. I wondered if she understood why pilgrimages such as ours took shape. Living as she did only twenty-five miles away, she would have had to have heard of the slaughter of Big Foot and his band of Miniconjous. How could she not know that over 280 people were massacred there in 1890 by the 7th Cavalry? Custer's old unit. I wondered, too, if our waitress had ever seen my uncle's pictures of the dead on the field at Wounded Knee? Had she looked at the grotesque shapes the bodies had frozen into? Noticed the monstrous method of removal from the field as wagons were piled high with corpses? Seen the harrowing, gaping hole into which 146 bodies were buried? Did she know that on January 3, 1891, my great-great uncle and George Trager would be the first photographers (and last) to photograph a major nineteenth-century "battle" site between whites and Indian? Had she seen Morledge's picture of the Episcopal church at Pine Ridge filled with Indians wounded who lay stretched out in agony that Christmas season on a floor covered with hay? Did she know, as Dee Brown notes, that stretched above the horribly wounded bodies in that still-festively-decorated church was a hand-lettered sign that read, "Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men?" And did she appreciate finally the irony of one culture celebrating the birth of its Messiah while slaughtering another people whose dance was a celebration of the pending arrival of their own Messiah?
Evidently the answer to all of the above was "no."

That night I lay my head down on a soft pillow, marveling at the waitress' absence of awareness and prepared to trail my uncle to Wounded Knee.

From Chadron we followed the rail line east to Rushville where, on the morning of November 20, 1890, troop trains arrived to deposit guns, horses, soldiers, and newspapermen. Among them Uncle Clarence.

From Rushville we drove east to Gordon, then turned north on Highway 27. Toward South Dakota and Wounded Knee. The highway empty of all traffic but us. Beside me in the van, Louise was quiet as we approached the border.

"You're frightened," I charged.

"No," she said, "but I feel like an intruder."

How one intrudes into space when a public road leads into it was beyond me at the moment. Just out of Denby, we turned right. A man and a woman sat beside the road beneath the shade of a fragile lean-to decorated with hand-made objects for sale. A hand-lettered sign stood in front of them as they worded at making their crafts. "Tourist Information," the sign read.

The road to the massacre site was rough and falling apart, and I slowed the van to maneuver around holes in the road and away from loose patches of broken asphalt. It was not an approach that welcomed a visitor. I knew that there had been some discussion of making Wounded Knee a National Monument, and I wondered as we bounced along the crumbling road why some native peoples opposed such a move. It would bring in money for badly needed road repairs. It would bring in more people like us to spend our money. But I remembered, too, that these were the same people who had several
million dollars in the bank they refused to accept. Government payment for the Black Hills, sacred land stolen in violation of treaty rights. Money was not the issue here in the poorest county in America. It would have been something else. Some principle that we were unaware of as we bounced along.


In spite of the rough approach, I was excited. This was country that my uncle would have seen. These hills and valleys, different as they were today, could bear witness, could they speak, to his presence here in January of 1891.

Little is known about Clarence Grant Morledge's time at Pine Ridge in 1890. He was a photographer working for the *Omaha World Herald*. This was an era of shameless yellow journalism. The *Herald* was not the worst of the culprits, but lies masqueraded often as news. Photographs were regularly posed for dramatic effect; often they were arranged to create an impression that distorted historical truth. Those days would have been exciting for a twenty-three year old. A chance to make a name.

And now we were here. Like my uncle before us, we had our camera, too.

Despite the anticipation, our arrival was anti-climatic. So poorly marked is the cemetery that I had turned toward the town of Wounded Knee, a mile to the north, when Louise cried out, "There's the cemetery on the hill."

We had seen pictures of the monument, and indeed there is was. The small cross held in place by a fragile arc of metal. Deteriorating brick pillars to either side. Weeds growing wild and high. A rutted dirt road leading up to the cemetery. It was a world that seemed in desperate need of the kind of polish that would come with National Monument status.
The sun was shining, and I pulled my baseball cap down to shade my eyes as I read the account of the massacre at Wounded Knee. The sign recounted Major Whiteside’s discovery of Big Foot and his people around Porcupine Butte. It told the story of their journey to Wounded Knee Creek, the attempt to disarm the Indians the morning of the 29th. And then the massacre.

The last two sentences of the sign claimed that Wounded Knee was the last of the armed conflicts between the two cultures. Above those sentences, someone had carved in bold letters in the green paint the word "LIES."

As we stood in silence reading the sign a young, pregnant Indian woman came over to us from across the road and asked us to step over and sign the register when we were finished.

She worked under a lean-to just west of the road. Across the road to the east was a similar structure. I could see that in both, trinkets and souvenirs hung from frame poles arranged to support the pine boughs that shaded the workers. We turned to walk to the west lean-to.

We were no more than thirty feet from the young woman who had invited us over when Louise turned to me.

"You've got that damn hat on!" she said.

My hand went up to my head and I pulled the hat off quickly, but even as I did, I knew which hat it was. I tried to think what to do, all the while not interrupting my pace as I walked toward the young woman who watched me approach. Another woman worked at weaving sage at the rear of the lean-to. Two young men sat in a car positioned to take advantage of the shade.

I fumbled with my hat, tried to wad it up, then, believing perhaps that I was drawing more attention to it than necessary with my
fiddling, I nonchalantly, I hoped, replaced onto my blushing forehead Chief Wahoo, infamous mascot for the Cleveland Indians.

Louise signed the register while I stood glowing in shame from sneakers to baseball cap.

"Would you like to buy a souvenir?" the woman asked.

I knew we would buy whatever she was selling.

Finally, I could take it no more, and I tore the hat from my head and wadded it up in my hand.

I looked toward the young men to see if they by chance had noticed my callousness. They sat quietly in the shade, their eyes revealing nothing. And the young woman seemed more intent on trying to sell us a souvenir than in observing what I wore.

When I had regained enough composure to find my tongue, I asked, "Can you tell me where Big Foot would have been that morning?"

"I don't know," she said. The she added, "Let me ask."

She turned and walked back to the older woman at work on crafts in the rear of the lean-to. The woman approached.

"The cannons," she said, "were up on the hill where the cemetery is. Everybody else was down here."

She motioned around, refusing perhaps to single Big Foot out from anyone else killed that cold day.

"I've seen the pictures," she said. "They said a blizzard kept them out for three days, but the pictures I've seen show the bodies with no snow on them."

The remark hung alone and charged in the air. It hinted at something. A suggestion, perhaps, that the living were left to die in the snow.
"My great-great uncle took these pictures," I said. "His name was Clarence Grant Morledge."

She looked at me quietly, unimpressed, then moved to a small drum that hung from a pole.

"Would you like to buy a drum?" she asked. "It's got the name 'Wounded Knee' on it."

We bought a dream catcher, I buried Chief Wahoo in the van, replaced him with a neutral straw hat, and then we drove the rutted road to the weedy, unkempt cemetery where we walked quietly among the graves of the dead.

The mass grave is fenced off from the rest of the cemetery at Wounded Knee, but one can open the gate and walk in and around. As I did so, I recalled that horrific photograph that Uncle Clarence took of the open grave. Several bodies have been pulled into the grave. Several more are stacked at the edge of the grave, waiting to be pulled in. The frozen, grotesque shapes of the corpses are clearly evident. Two men stand in the grave. They would have been the ones to arrange the bodies as they were thrown in. Around the grave, perhaps thirty men stand. They are bundled against the cold. Many hold rifles. Some shovels. Most of them stare toward the camera and Uncle Clarence.

I stood at the top of the knoll and looked toward the south and the low ground where Big Foot and his people camped on December 28. Try as I might, I could envision nothing of that moment 106 years earlier when the young men of the 7th Cavalry stood on this small knoll and fired their Hotchkiss cannons mercilessly into fleeing men, women, and children.

All I could think about was that damn hat. Given to me by an old friend as a present to honor my 50th birthday. She had even been
aware enough to ask Louise if it would be all right to give it to me.
"You won't be offended?" she asked.
"No," she said. "Why?"

As I stood on that burial knoll looking out over the summer fields below, I caught a glimpse from another perspective of who I was, what I was about. The image was not pleasant. Like my uncle before me, I was here to take something out. I had come barging on to the Pine Ridge Reservation on a pilgrimage to Uncle Clarence’s world. Not to the world of the Lakota. I had never lived in the world of the Lakota. I had lived in the world of Uncle Clarence. Uncle Clarence who had sold his photographs to make money. Who tried to build a reputation on the results of a governmental policy of cultural genocide. His pictures offer mute testimony to the horror of events that people in these gently rolling hills had to feel in every nerve of their bodies. The people here needed no pictures to know what happened. Stories passed from generation to generation of the slaughter of the innocent would have made the horror of the destruction a part of their very character.

For me, it was the attraction to the horrible that had brought me here to Wounded Knee, sneakers on flat feet, hat on mindless head. Thoughtless fan of the Indians. In my own way, I was looking for fun at Wounded Knee. Looking for traces of my uncle. And I seemed to be doing a good job of keeping to his trail.

If Chief Wahoo was the appalling image of the Indian who never was, the white man’s image of "a good Indian" maybe I was the appalling image of the white man who always was. Intruding. Blind. Self-assertive. Not offended by a stereotype like Wahoo perhaps because I was myself a fine specimen of a stereotype as well. Years of
reading had finally done little to alter my head or my heart. A certain vision of horror made me shudder.

I wondered as I stood on that knoll where I might have been that fateful morning 106 years earlier had I been alive. Would I have been firing from this knoll into the fleeing men, women, and children of Big Foot’s band? Would I have joined the looters in the burial party on January 3, 1891, who stripped what they wanted from the frozen corpses before flinging the bodies rudely into the mass grave? Would I have worked with Uncle Clarence, snapping picture after picture to market to the highest bidder? Or would I have been sleeping soundly in some nearby prairie town, deaf to the roar of the cannons?

The answers to those question were hinted at in the disquieting fact that in my own van, parked here on the sacred site at Wounded Knee, I had my own souvenir, a possession that perhaps defined me and my own attitudes toward cultures different than my own: Chief Wahoo of the Cleveland Indians.

The moment was not one to celebrate.

I was reminded of all of this again two weeks after returning from our pilgrimage when the pictures we had taken while on vacation arrived. Louise and I together looked through them. We were both shocked when we looked at the picture she had taken of me at the Red Cloud Agency in Fort Robinson. In our individual pictures, we both stand in front of the distant buttes just north of the original agency. Louise smiles, her face shaded by her New York Yankee cap. I stand staring into the camera, just as the soldiers and the burial party stared 106 years earlier in to my uncle’s camera, corpses spread out in front of them the way we used to arrange dead coyotes after
our hunts in Kansas. Behind me are the majestic hills that Crazy Horse might have left as he rode into the agency to meet his impending death. I smile nicely into the camera. My eyes shaded from the sun of my Cleveland Indians hat.

Chief Wahoo grins wide in the open air. The fawning grin of servility.

Louise hadn’t noticed. Neither had I.

I toyed with the idea of burning the cap. But I didn’t. It’s out of sight in my basement, never to be worn again. A skeleton that speaks of a personal crime. When I get to feeling smug about who I think I am and what I think I am, when I find myself chastising someone else’s lack of awareness, as I did our waitress that night in the steakhouse, that memento helps to remind me of the quiet little knoll at Wounded Knee, my own learned blindness, and the role I might have played in history had I lived in that earlier "less sensitive" age.

Jim Flavin

Photo by Clarence Grant Morledge
Collection of Jim Flavin

https://digitalcommons.shawnee.edu/silhouette/vol2001/iss1/1
Thoughts On Aging

The persons that helped to bathe the old man recalled no memories of such a chewing gum that may have been popular in the nineteen fifties.

Said to be a dervish on the greens of play, wonders what became of his varsity letter.

Dry and spitless he muttered a song that a third grade teacher once sung.

He liked to keep a rock in pocket in case he needed to throw it at a snake's head.

Despised by his family, the rituals of provision and protection are now to be put away with the hunting jacket and bermuda shorts.

Lapsing into nap, dreamtime offers the only reprieve.
Let Me Be My Black Self

Been suppressed too long.
Been concerned about the masses,
And what they think of me for far too long.
Now it is time, to be me.
Let me be my black self.

If I want to dread my hair,
I’m going to dread it.
If the music I listen to is reggae, gospel, jazz, rap, and hip hop,
And my favorite meal is fried chicken
Black-eyed peas and hot water cornbread,
So be it.
Let me be my black self.

If my favorite past time is eating watermelon
While reading a good book in the privacy of my home
That’s okay, you know where their stereotypes can go.
‘Cause it’s time for me to express myself in whatever
Form or fashion that I choose.
Totally radical, no holds barred.
Let me be my black self.

And just because my t-shirt displays a big X
On the front doesn’t mean that I am a racist,
Just proud of my rich, black history.
As I stand on American soil, I hear the souls of Black folk whispering, constantly reminding me Who I am and from whence I cometh.
As Maya said, I am the hope and the dream of the slave. Let me be my black self.
For the depth of my character greatly exceeds All expectations.
I am so much more than what the eye beholds, I was birthed out of love, conceived out of pain Propelled by adversity, and live by faith. Too black, too strong. Let me be my black self.

Lift Every Voice is my anthem, And will be ‘till earth and heaven rings, ‘Till I hear the sound of the trumpet, And see the angels’ wings. Let me be my black self.

Portia Williams
Scott Powers | Change | digital imaging
For Andrew

conversations on the day of departure

Fool!!

like Kerouac said
you can’t fall off a mountain

and you can never run from
always to

to an unknown destination
at speeds which boggle the human mind’s
grasp of time and space

unless you’re a crab
like Divine Right
always running sideways

with the subconscious knowledge
that the journey
is the destination

there’s nothing to fear
because where you go
what you do
or whatever happens to you
is part of the journey
thus part of the destination

accept it
live it

heading East
all points unknown

Leonard S. S. Poage
Todd Reynolds | Girl Listening to Fish | oil on canvas
Since the beginning of time dining has been a ritual, a celebration, a memorial, and an act full of tradition. This show offers a new look at breaking the bread by breaking the rules. Here we have a gamut of different over-the-top tables designed by artists associated with Scioto County. These tables offer humor, style, and energy. Tables that ask questions, tables that beguile us, tables that make us think new ways. This show reminds us of the importance of tradition and the fun of breaking the rules. It is truly

Tables of Content.

Artist Statement
Nick Gampp
Claressa Page | It's Bush Country

https://digitalcommons.shawnee.edu/silhouette/vol2001/iss1/1
John Houston | view from underneath Elegance and Reality

https://digitalcommons.shawnee.edu/silhouette/vol2001/iss1/1
right:
Bradley Gray
- Table with
Mirror and
Hat

left:
Dennis
Steward
- Gaudi Table
and Vase

https://digitalcommons.shawnee.edu/silhouette/vol2001/iss1/1
Special thanks...