

Silhouette

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Silhouette (Fall 2004)

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et al.: Silhouette (Fall 2004)

Silhouette

Fall 2004



STAFF:

Advisor

Brian Richards

Editor in Chief

Jazz Osman

Assistant Editors Jessica Thompson
Taryn Malone

Poetry

Jen Pistole
Phillip Cooke
Peter Scherer

Prose

Melissa Hoople
Shaun Umland
Justin Isaac

Art

Kim Crum
Charles Haskins
Heidi Osborne

Layout

Hank Waring

Cover

Amanda Ellis

Distribution

Ashley Brewer

Events

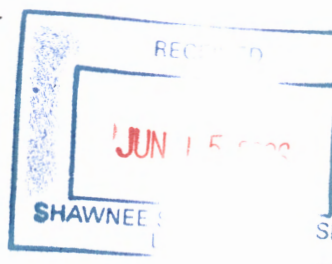
Amy Reiser

Music

Lee Fisk
Miranda Dunn
Jeanna Nunn

Publicity

Shane Henderson



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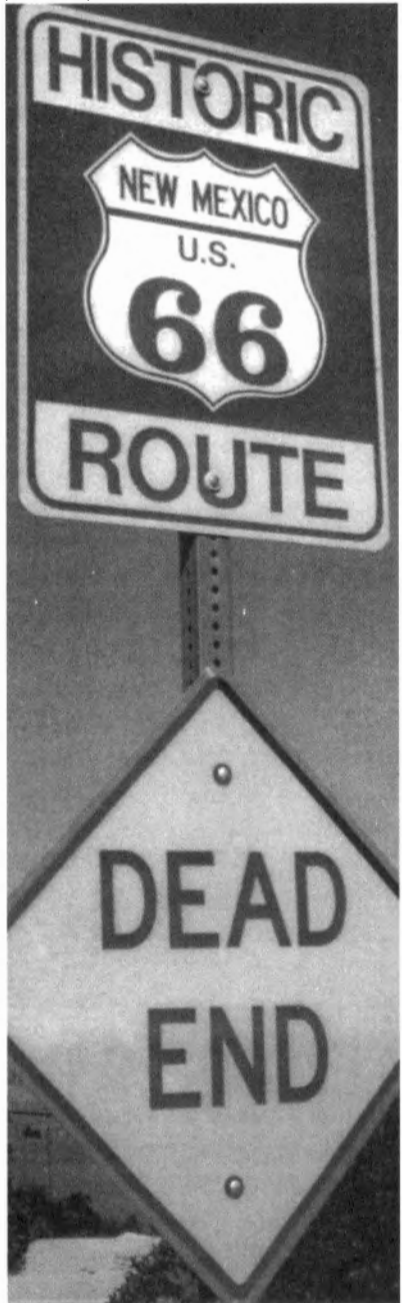
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Untitled

BARBARA RUTH MURDOCK

B&W photograph



The Gangrel

SHAUN UMLAND

Screams...Primal, feral, vile. Then silence. The sounds of the night die. No chorus of frogs or harmonies of crickets. Nothing.

The Boy sits up eyes wide open stark and white in the darkness of the room. Boy's eyes move to the window. Fog wallows and writhes over the windowsill, dropping to the flop in a silent layer. IT is out there Boy knows it is. Boy's bed is directly across from the window. Boy waits for IT's shadow to block out the light from the security of lamp at the edge of the grounds. Boy can see IT's hand, rough with calluses, with thick chipped nails and crowned by matted black hair reach into the window. It's hand gropes, seeking, searching for something. Something soft, something warm, something like...the Boy. Boy gasps and yanks the covers over his head and whimpers silently afraid that IT will hear.

Next morning Boy moves his bed into the corner of the room two feet from the window on the same wall. IT has long arms, but IT won't be able to see Boy in the corner. Escape path, over the foot of the bed Boy darts out the door of Boy's room and into the bathroom. No windows here, safety, sanctuary. IT can't get Boy in the bathroom. Boy smiles and enjoys the day.

A week later as Boy sits in the bathtub something draws his attention to the wall. Something is outside just beyond the wall. IT is out there searching for Boy. IT's nose sniffs, and snuffles. Boy sits paralyzed in the water. Exhaust fan is running taking the heat of the bath outside. Boy watches the fan and sees the hand coming through the fan groping along the wall smearing the marble tile with mud, grime, and black viscous fluid. Boy closes his eyes and huddles in the end of the tub. Boy slowly opens his eyes. Hand is gone. Boy rushes to his room.

Fall. Boy sets up in his bed and listens...no sound to be heard. Boy slips out of the bed and creeps to the window and peeks out. IT is nowhere to be seen, but IT is cagey. Boy watches.

Fall slides into winter, IT has not returned. Boy thinks back to the last time IT was near. Late in summer IT was roaming the edge of the towering wood. IT could be smelled over the fresh cut grass. Mom had said that it smelled like rotten eggs. Boy knew it was the smell of IT a wild savage smell. Boy watches for half an hour or more then returns to his bed to sleep. Boy watches for IT for most of the winter months, but begins to let his vigil wane and in time winter gives way to spring. Boy enjoys the freshness of the outdoors IT almost forgotten.

Night falls Boy awakens. Boy feels brave and slips from his bed. Boy steals to the window and breathes in the fresh cool spring air. Boy watches the grounds lit by the security lamp. The lamp creates a wide amber wall of safety, beyond that wall, darkness. Boy sneaks down the shadowed corridor, across the kitchen and opens the door. Boy steps out into the night closing the door

quietly behind him. Boy moves across the lawn edging near to the wall of light but careful not to go the slightest bit beyond. Boy listens to the night sounds, the soothing babble of a stream, a train in the far distance near grandpa's house. Boy's attention is drawn by a faint sound, an alien sound, a gruff strained breathing. Boy whirls around and there near the door to the house a massive shadow lurks. IT had returned.

IT stood stalking, hunched in the shadows. Boy saw IT's eyes red-rimmed and bloodshot glowering at him across the distance. Boy knew the door was his only chance. The only one unlocked. The door was in the light. IT was near the door in darkness. IT couldn't come into the light. Boy began to run. Faster and faster Boy ran, legs pumping, heart pounding, door getting smaller, IT looming larger and larger. Boy frantic now launches himself through the door and slams it shut behind him. Boy races to his room and shuts his window then scrambles into the bed and covers himself with the sheets. Next morning Boy's mother comments that his pajamas are getting too small and points out a rip in the shoulder. Boy pales when he realized that IT had almost had him last night.

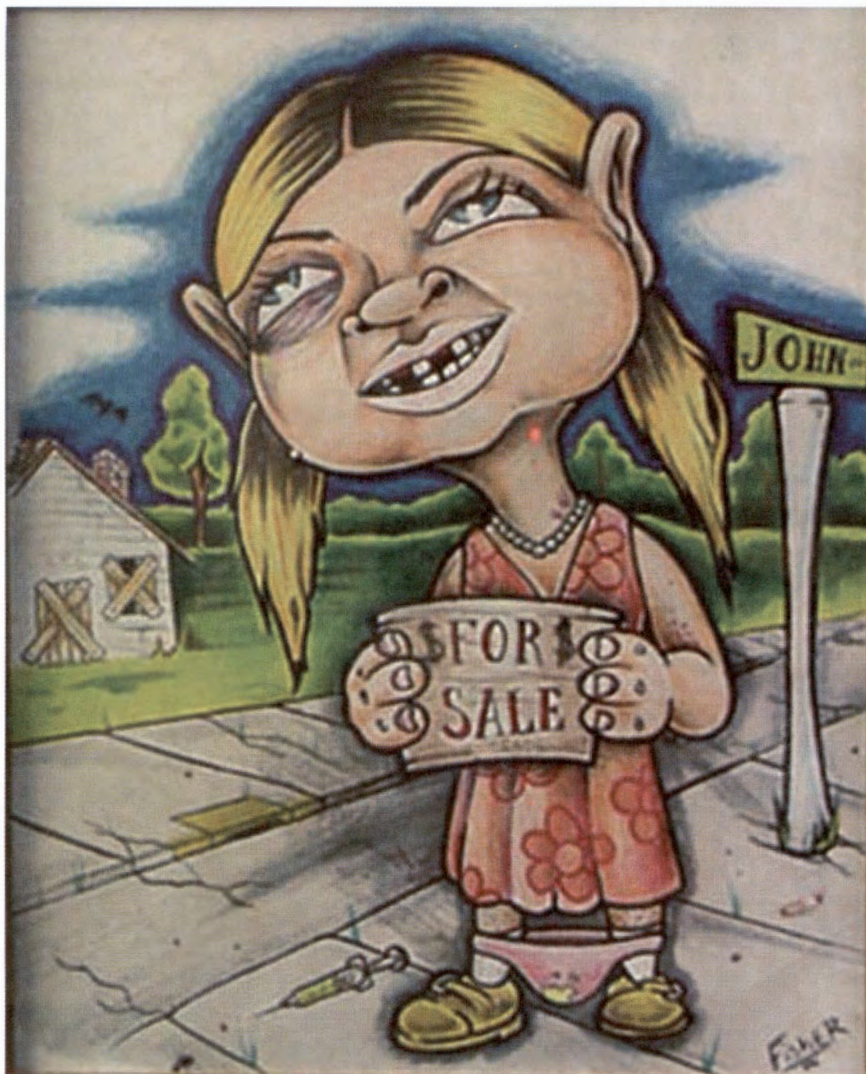
Months pass fall comes back, Boy stretches and sets up. The hour is very late by Boy must go to the bathroom. Returning to bed Boy sees something...IT stands looking at him through the window. IT spreads thick leathery black lips to expose yellowed block teeth, teeth good for grinding, and teeth good for crushing, teeth good for eating Boy. Boy leaps over the foot of his bed and takes solitude under the sheets. IT can't see him now, but he can see IT in his mind. IT had black shaggy hair, big yellow teeth, black leathery skin, red-rimmed eyes, and thick ropes of slaver from the jowls.

IT skulked beneath Boy's window most of the night. Boy lay in a cold wet terror listening to IT stamp back and forth.

Boy does not go out again after dark for the remainder of the fall. Winter roars in like a beast, Dad is home more now, less work. IT won't come around when dad is home. IT might rummage through the family garbage at night, but Boy realizes IT seems to go away in winter. Boy relaxes.

Years pass Boy grows older. Boy seldom thinks of IT. Boy returns to his nightly prowling edging closer to the rim of the amber wall of light. Boy begins to recognize sounds of the night, bats chatter, cats slink, the stream burbles. All these things speak to him and invite him to come further into the darkness. Boy looks back to the house. Windows of the house are dark and blank looking back at him. Boy moves just a little past the amber wall and looks back to the house. The windows seems to scream, come back you fool Boy come back. Boy smirks away the warning and walks a little further into the darkness. Boy begins to walk farther, breaking into a stunted run. The night air whips his hair and lashes at his face. Boy realized the deep woods aren't as dark as he had thought; the stars above give everything a silvery blue tint. Boy comes to a stop on a bridge and looks back. The amber wall of light is so small and so, so far away. Boy smiles and perches on the rail of the bridge.

Looking at the woods around him towering dark monoliths that hold primordial secrets, secrets that Boy knows can be discovered. A sound breaks his thoughts, coming behind him something through the woods, heavy feet tramping on the moldering earth, twigs snapping breath grunting. Boy turns and strains to look into the black sheet of night. The creek, burbling before now slaps and smacks like a million blind mouths seeking a juicy morsel. Something heavy lands on his shoulder, Boy looks back and...screams...



Pearl Necklace

SHAWN FISHER

Colored pencil

Poetry's Promise

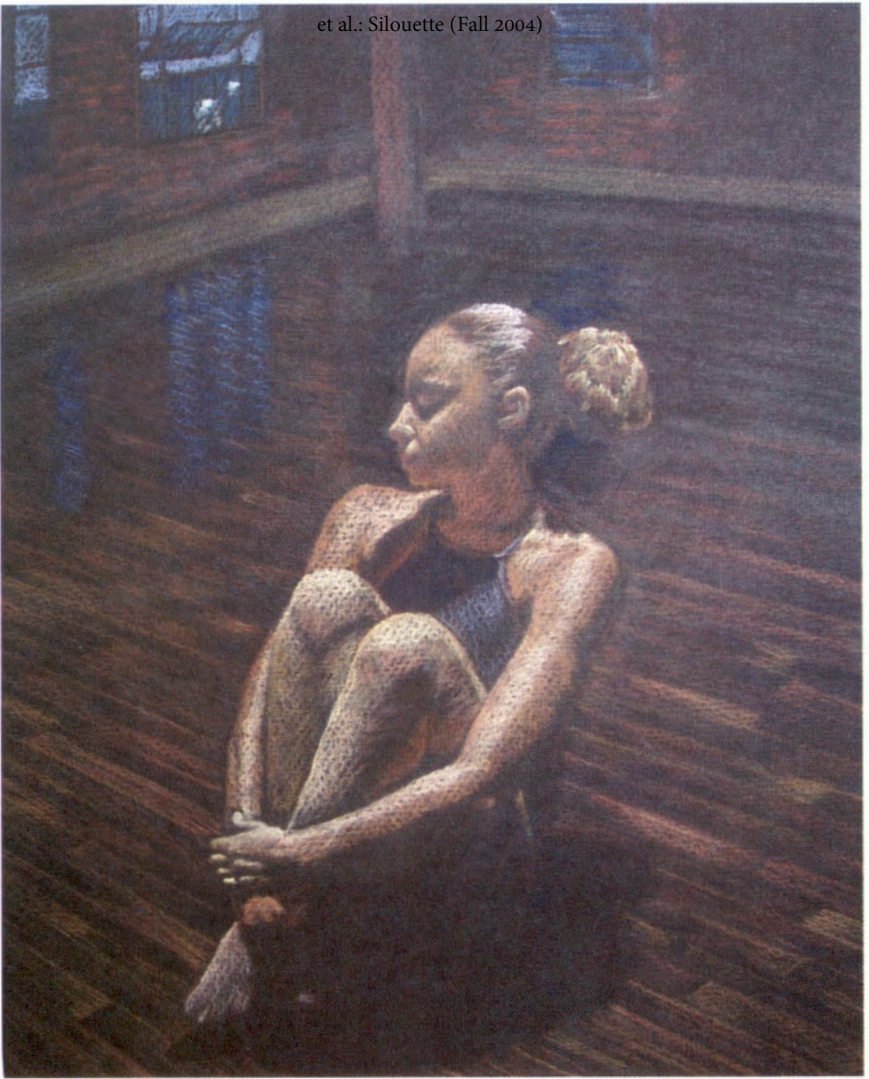
RENAE WILKERSON

Emotions shall escape me this day,
As the words flow from my pen.
Harbored feelings to be written away,
As through poetry, my soul I mend.

Mending with verse, these conflicts inside,
I'll write what cannot be said.
Words revealing what I've tried to hide,
As I break down these walls in my head.

My poems I use to exorcise the ghosts,
To lash out when no one can hear.
The paper and pen are my only hosts,
And from them I will have no fear.

Written words are my way to heal,
Becoming stronger with each one I write.
Poetry expressing the emotions I feel,
Gently guiding me out of my flight.



Seated Dancer 1

DELYNN COPPOLETTI

Pastel on black paper

I.

Like father, I miss only pieces of you?
Your leadened footsteps in the hall,
Black scruff graining against my neck
June kisses at 4 A.M.
I kept you like a secret
Between my legs, and tasted your flesh
When you cupped you hand over my doll-mouth
And begged me to be still

It was salty and sad, having to listen
For voices among us, for murmurs
Through the walls.

And I thought: In the Coliseum
The statues are talkative and bright.
They affirm without nodding,
And cry without due shudder.

Like a prize, I hung in your room,
A cheap replica to conceal the wall's holes.

II.

Like the gap between my baby teeth
The walls collided and congealed.
I am no more Helen than Gretel:
Enclosed by stale affections I blend
With the chipping paint. My body
Disintegrates.
Cigarette ashes pale in the sink.

III.

The walls knew of laughter and lies.
A great canopy, they contained the elements
Of your fury and my exhaustion

If it were any clearer, they could explain.

IV.

But now, my dear Irishman,
Now I am a part of the bed frame.
My love is carved in the headboard:
"Hi, Shanahan. I love you" The oak
has split to accommodate my declaration.

And now, as I write, I imagine you there,
Piling pillows atop it so no one might see?
So the next will not know

Who is watching.

Untitled

MIS' JANE MOANS

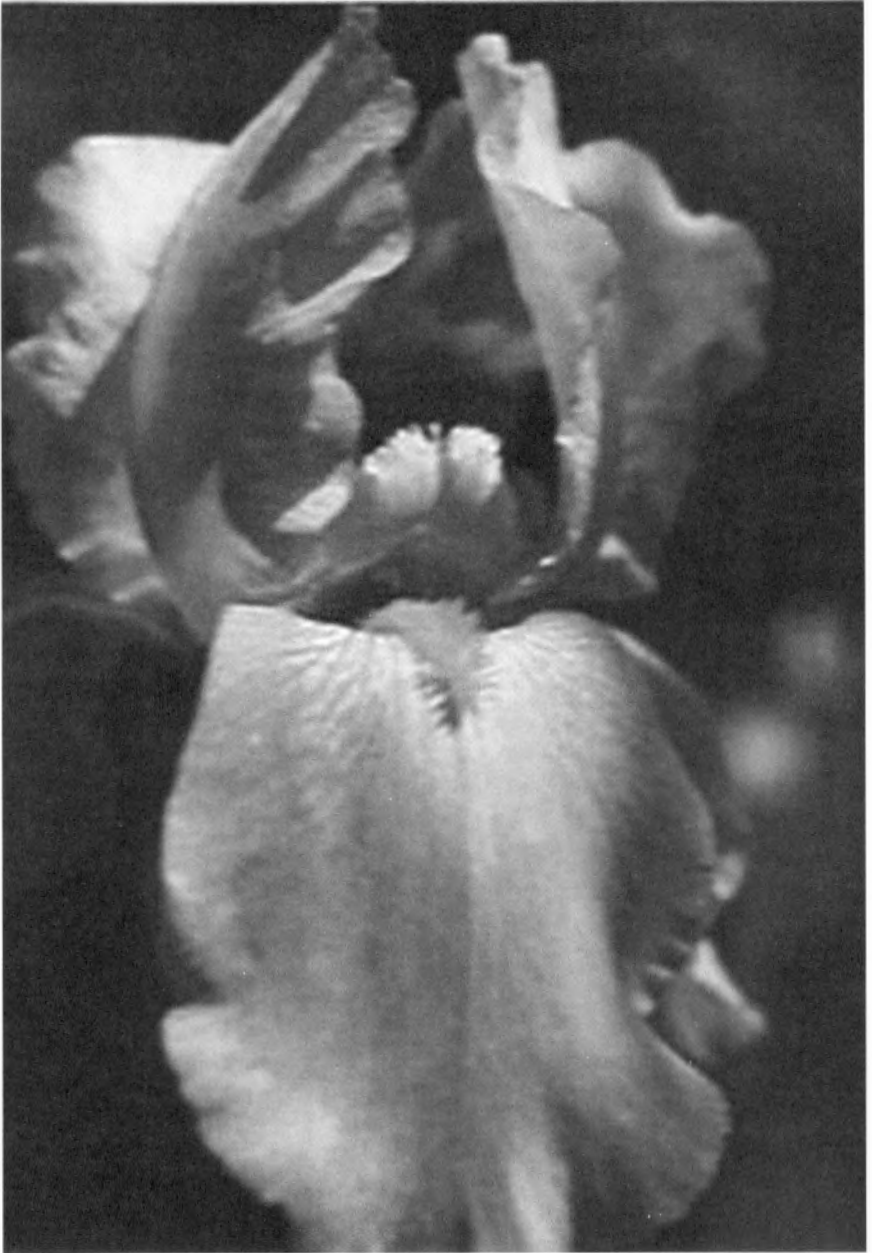
I light a candle for you in the darkness.
The flame flickers and waves.
Your shadow casts on the wall and I feel you all around me-
inside me, outside me, smothering me.
Draw in a deep breath and let it exhale. Calm.
Draw in a deep breath and hold it all in. Anxious.
I can't stand the way I feel around you.
You make me crazy. I don't even know what I am anymore.
What but not who. I am merely an ornament especially designed for you.
But be careful. I'm fragile.
Put me inside and hide me away.
I am too tender for any eye to see.
And when I'm ripe, won't you take me out and show me to the world?



Untitled

KIM CRUM

B&W photograph



Iris

MONICA STAFFORD

B&W photograph

One Shall be True

JOSEPH A. WOLFE

When it comes down
into the deep blue
sea,
it has been brought
to me,
for the things I need
to do,
one shall be true,
even when it comes
down to you,
so you see,
that one shall be true,
even if it means turning back to
blue.

Box of Scars

TYLER FERGUSON

Collecting and occasionally reflecting on what you give me, what you gave
me
Thousands or more reminding and haunting
Ghosts on walls and down the halls of an infected mind
Telling me nightly of your plans
Holding me on a hook of fingernails
Silver-tongued nightmare whispers more pain
Collecting memories, blood covered reminders
I hold a box of scars



Nobody

J.J. OSMAN

Oil



Waterfall

MONICA STAFFORD

B&W photograph



Untitled

TONI DENGEL

Mixed media

Nothing to be Proud of

MIS' JANE MOANS

Those mysterious eyes. Blue but not yet grey. What do they say? I can't figure it out. Nothing. Everything. What do your eyes say about your heart? Is your heart cold? Does it feel? How do you feel when your heartaches? Or does it even ache? I can't believe what lies before me. I do not believe because I cannot see. Those mysterious eyes tell me nothing. How can we move forward if we see nothing ahead? I thought I felt you on these sudden mornings. But I do not. Every day I wake up and am alone but yet there is someone lying right next to me. Why is this? Do I not see? Do I not see you? No. It's not that. You don't see me.

Half-lit hallways lead to the light at the end. Under that fluorescent bulb, there is running water, running water onto cold ceramic tile floor. The water is misty red, red with blood. Two deep silts with that rusty razor blade I use to trim his face. I should have sliced his neck then. But no, now I lay in this overflowing lion-footed basin, half mixed with water, the other blood.

Officer pulls up. Walks up and rings the bell. Boyfriend scratches his balls, spits into his dip can, drinks from his Milwaukee's Best, and slams down the recliner foot rest. *Yeah?* He belches out as he swings open the door. *Something wrong here sir?* Officer asks. *Yeah. Fucking bitch finally did it. She's in there,* throwing up a finger, more than he did while she was alive. Officer slowly walks through the kitchen into the bathroom. Water still running.

1.

I am crazy with blood where babies should grow. Spread my
legs and tug at the cord. Blood! Clumps of it trickle into the toilet.

Bloody rings,
Water smudged with rivulets of dead seed.
It's impossible to tell where the ejected egg lies
Cracked and empty.

2.

I smoke constantly; I told you that I would
Do anything for you once, and you asked, "Even
Quit smoking?" And I said, "When I'm ready
To have babies." And you told me to quit sooner
But here I am, writing like a crazed celibate
It is only day three.

3.

The blood is thick now. It only slows after
Day Four, and I don't know if my heart
Can pump the stuff until then. On Tuesday they took
Three vials of it to test for abnormalities.
The lab still hasn't called with the results.
A cruel joke.

4.

I am trying to hold on until 12:30. Even then
There is no guarantee that you'll answer the phone.
You told me to call when I feel like this, but I can't help
Feeling guilty and used. Darling,
I beg you. Rip the cord from the socket. Day 4.
See the sparks crackle.

Untitled

MIS' JANE MOANS

Destined to be the best secret kept in your heart
You told me that you wouldn't let yourself fall
But you still hold me this night, 607 nights past the first
So have you fallen? Or have I crashed and can't see past the lies

Mask your eyes, smile, and heart when you see me
Wouldn't want anyone to see you happy
With me
Cast your hate on me for others to see
And whisper to me that you want me later tonight

Inside the door, darkness smacks me in the face
Around the kitchen and to the left, you're there
Sitting on the fire you've built tonight
The blue flame warms the room, but not your heart
You still hide me away
And keep me all to yourself

Untitled

HEATHER ENAYA

For_____

Did you know that I burned. .
Trembled.. craved it so desperately
My longing... fevered..
tears scorching my face.
Desire... aching...
Demanding to know the feel of you...
the taste of you...
Exploring the warmth of your mouth...
Watching your lips part.
Hungry are the eyes
My soul for just one kiss



Untitled

RHONDA JOHNSON

B&W photograph

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ARTIST'S STATEMENT

My goal, as an artist, is to visually share my experiences, emotions, and inspirations with others. I like to link together a collection of diverse, insignificant items from my world, a world of pocket junk, pop culture, worthless mail, and images from discarded books and allow them to take on a new life, a collective existence of their own.

I rely heavily on color, intuition, action, and process to give my work an approachable, sensitive quality. Aesthetics are the common denominator of my creations and each work I make must invite you to come closer, explore, and hopefully connect to me. Art is not only what I do, it is the reason I exist. It sometimes enables me to touch the face of God.

NICK GAMPP

Untitled

DONELLE LACY

They said it's impossible.
We'd marry someday.
We laughed,
"Yeah Right" you said.
Well,
You were right about that.
You were always right.
Damn you.
Damn you for knowing
It would end.
I said we'd always be friends,
You knew better.
Almost as if you foresaw.
Now, of my own fault,
You seem to be right.
But if you are,
Why can't I let you go?
24-hour days,
not one passes
without thoughts of you.
Why?
I'm not sure.
Lets just say,
That just this once,
You were wrong.



Gampp # 779 (After Da Vinci)

NICK GAMPP

Multimedia collage

Goodbye Note

B.J. DUREL

Sometimes when I cry
I see myself as it be
I wish I could die
To set myself free

Why do my parents hate me?
What is it that I do?
Maybe I should flee
To stop the pain I go through

My eyes start to tear
As thoughts drown my head
What is it that I fear?
That bad news lies ahead

I've written this before
Once or twice but now in red
The last two times I tore it
This part is what I dread

So this note I did kiss
As I start my plead
That the cuts on my wrist
Will open and bleed.



Gampp 03GH (Perception)

NICK GAMPP

Multimedia collage



Gampp #1606 (After Rembrandt)

NICK GAMPP

Multimedia collage

A Changeling's Plea

JUSTIN R. ISAAC

Wide-eyed and innocent we enter this world.
Oblivious to the cold reality that faces us.
We search for ghosts and our fey brethren.
We hide from the monsters and pray to the angels.
And they hate us for it. With all their being, they hate us.
We are treated as criminals of the worst kind.
Chastised and beaten by the cynical world and the banal clones.
They poison our minds, crush our faith,
Shatter our hope, and laugh at our dreams.
They drain the glamour and magic from our lives.

But I pray you, brothers and sisters, please heed my words.
Remember the oaths of old. We may be broken but we're not defeated.
The cure to their foul poison can be found in the innocence of a child.
Gather up your crushed faith and shattered hope,
Cling to these things and keep them in your heart.
But most of all don't let them kill your dreams,
In these things will we find redemption, in these things we find salvation.
I may be a simple commoner but I beseech ye, noble and commoner alike,
Hold on broken dreamers. Hold on and we will see Arcadia again.



Memoir

NICK GAMPP

Acrylic/Multimedia

In God's Lap, Purring

Observations on Life in the Company of Cats

RICHARD WOLFSON

We ask ourselves if there is proof that God exists. Perhaps it is a Jewish habit to answer a question with a question, but in the asking of this most profound of questions is the answer: we are the proof. The central prayer of my faith, a belief in the Oneness of God, excludes nothing we can possibly conceive, other than what we, in what amounts to a separation from heaven, make of ourselves by such complete selfishness that we deny everything but our elf, alone. If we are lucky, into our existence comes some life beyond our self that speaks undeniably to our belonging to, with, for and as a part of God, ~~There is~~ a Jewish belief that if we are doing anything other than fixing the world through good works (tikkun olam), we are less than a gnat, for even a gnat attends only to the will of nature, of God. So we may look to animals to speak eloquently of the unity of allness. Some have dogs or wind or music or whatever is beyond themselves. In my life, as I have grown ~~of or wise enough to~~ recognize, I have cats. In the last sixteen years, I have had two in particular, who were, some years ago, named Inge and Greta. Through them I have learned that God exists, that God loves all creation, and that I, like my precious cats, lie in God's lap, purring.

It wasn't always easy to believe in God, or anything for that matter. Fortunately, I was raised in a home where faith was taught, instilled. That meant dutifully attending synagogue services and Hebrew school, repeating the prayers that had been learned and passed down through generations of loving ancestors and loving family. There can be no question that such a home provides a giant head start to the ability to believe, even when doubt is not discouraged and when, because of the freedoms allowed, existential angst creeps in to trouble our souls. In the western melting pot, an insidious danger to heritage is the loss of individual language: Jews cease to speak Hebrew; Germans, Deutsch; Native Americans: Sioux, Crow, Comanche, and any number of original tongues. But for all the utterings combining to topple the tower of Babel, animals have always spoken the same eternal tongue: that given each by God. Although it is the power of speech that separates man from the animals, people only begin to learn by listening.

In 1985, in an apartment in Cleveland, Ohio, early in the morning, I dutifully set out the morning's rations for Inge and Greta, my two cats. As was her way, Greta began to eat, voraciously, tearing at her food, swallowing often it seemed without chewing. Inge, being quieter, and more docile, waited for Greta to finish before even approaching. As I watched, sipping my morning coffee, I said aloud, "Greta, you're eating like a pig." Looking into my cup, I realized I hadn't said my blessing, giving thanks for my meal. The cat doesn't know to say a blessing; I do. Which of us is the pig?

I began to learn.

(*footnote: pigs, as all animals, bless us, not their food.)

Many lessons would follow the meaning of my cats' meal. I remember my father's lesson, based in Talmudic thought, of feeding the animals before ourselves. Did I expect Inge, Greta, to go shopping for their food if I left money on the counter for them? Did I think they might change their own water if it sat too long in the bowl? Only through a later roommate and his cat, Bentley, did I learn that cats might like to find a clean bowl of water in any of the other rooms to which they had access, relieving them of the need to travel to the one spot they were expected to eat (and drink). So developed the bowl of water by the bed, in the library, or anywhere else I hoped the kitties would share their company. I loved to hear the gentle lapping of their tongues, dipping into a cool, safe drink. These were indoor cats, after all. Outside is not a pussycat world, at least not in the big city. Any city is big to a cat. Any city with roads and cars and dangers not understood. If language separates us from the animals, so does the ability to understand certain dangers. Neither of my cats smokes. No cat or dog or lion or any other animal I have known has ever deliberately put poison to its lips. There is no animal suicide. Score one more for the animals.

When both my cats were alive, I used to lie on my back with my eyes closed, pretending like Isaac distinguishing Jacob from Esau, that I could tell the two apart as they lay on my body: touching them, feeling their coats, rougher or smoother. It was guesswork; sometimes Inge, sometimes Greta. Other differences told them apart, not this one. I used to wish that as I got older and infirm, I would be able to lie in my blind darkness, listening to their purrs. Years after, when Greta had been dead four years, I realized that, as devastated as I had been by her death, God knew what was best, that if I did grow old and frail, that it would be best to have only Inge, the quiet one, resting peacefully in my lap. Inge has always been quiet, a low maintenance cat. Greta had always been demanding of attention, filled with the talent of bad habits, hiding in places no cat should have been, disappearing once down a third floor chimney flue resulting in what I knew would be the need to bring in the fire department to dismantle the building brick by brick to rescue my beloved cat. If I were old and frail, I could not care for Greta. She was simply too demanding. If I did not live another hour, Inge could survive until someone found my body. Food left for Inge could last for days. She ate slowly and only enough to satisfy her hunger, perhaps because, as God planned, she learned to favor the dry food left untouched by her sister. Or because of a large, protruding saber tooth which made her to be unable to eat foods not suited for her bite, the same tooth that I used to joke about, even as she lovingly rubbed it against me, telling me in the silent darkness that it was she, not her sister. It was right that Greta died first, and right that I could not understand this at the time.

There is a reason that as we grow old, we grow gray. Gray is the blending of black and white. For people, the change is gradual. For cats, it was by birth. Inge, whom I acquired first, in 1982, was born gray, mostly white, part Tabby and part Siamese, with dark bands around her tail and light blue crossed eyes. Greta was a tuxedo cat, boldly black and white with white boots and a wet, pink nose. And with a demanding insistence on only her way, Greta was fraught with habits that I realized now would eventually kill her. Besides the unstoppable predilection to disappear into impossible places, she ate things that were not food. I have heard of cats swallowing pins and fishing hooks and dental floss and twist ties and a host of objects I was careful not to have in cat ready places. Not if not curiosity, paper killed this cat: books and magazines and shirt cardboard, letters and junkmail alike. So voracious was Greta's appetite for wood pulp that I took to calling her "the communist," for anything of any perceived human worth or value was fair game for Greta's ready paws and teeth. Inge, in contrast, became the queen or princess. She would value my written treasures, covering them at most with soft dusting of hair. I feared that Greta would develop a bezore, a lumpy knot in the stomach my father warned my brothers and me would result if we kept biting our nails or swallowing gum. As she grew sick later in life, I would take to feeling Greta's stomach, gently pressing in search of strange bumps. Instead, she died suddenly, developing sores on the outside of her body and ~~rasping, dry cough that sent me twice to the veterinarian,~~ the first time for a failed hairball remedy and amoxicillin, the second, racing through red lights with my hazard lights flashing and my horn blaring as I carried her into the waiting room of the only doctor open for her emergency. Too late, he said. "Mr. Wolfson, your cat is dead." I didn't hear him; could not hear him. I was loudly and repeatedly reciting, "Shema Yisroel, Hashem Elokhenu, Hashem Echad!" that central prayer of faith, declaring the oneness of God. With a chanting, raving, grieving Jewish man in his waiting room, the doctor valiantly grabbed my deceased cat and strapping her to an inclined examining table, shot directly into her heart a strong dose of ephedrine, even as the mucus and fluids drained from her lungs. Then the impossible happened. Greta began to breathe, her heart pumping and her lips, returning from blue to pink. Never before, the doctor said, had he seen such a thing: a cat, like Lazarus, returned from the dead. Still, her condition was critical, but she could not be kept overnight at the clinic. I gathered her into my arms, crying, wailing, thanking God, the doctor, his staff and anyone who cared or was around to listen.

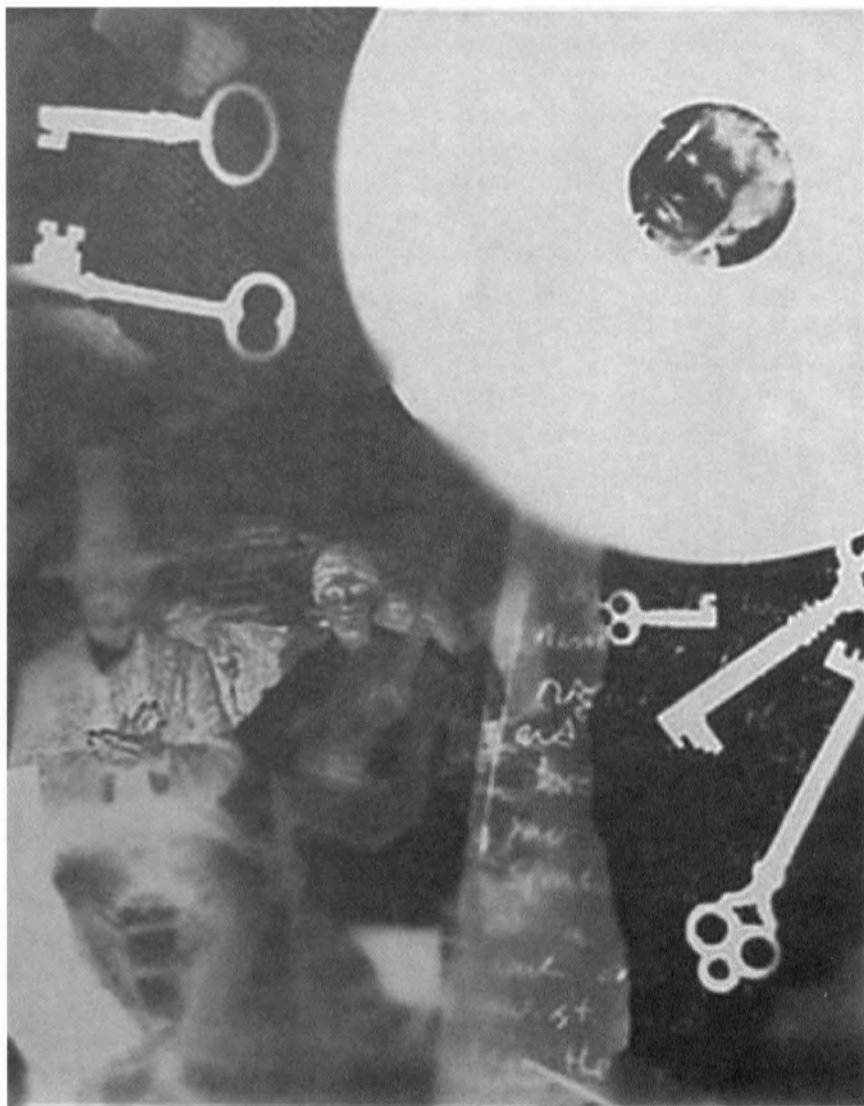
I returned home slowly and carefully with this most noble of animals who, clearly at the will of God and the souls and spirits of my too often called upon ancestors and guardian spirits and in answer to prayer, dazedly rejoined her sister and myself in the familiar surroundings of our apartment in Southern Ohio. Inside, she walked haltingly first to her litter, then to her food. Pausing only briefly at both and still gravely ill, she tried next to climb into a dark cupboard, a cabinet she earlier could have opened easily with her nimble paws. Not strong enough to crawl inside, instead she lifted gently into my arms where, with a last and heavy breath, she quietly died.

Greta was laid to rest in a pet cemetery in Cleveland, the home she had known longest, in a casket purchased with money wired to me by my parents, knowing I had lost a dearest friend. I shall always love, honor and thank them for this, alone among so many understanding gifts, and for the money for her headstone. After her name and dates, it bears the title of a story written years earlier by the Yiddish writer, I.L.Peretz. It states simply, "Devotion without end."

It took some time to deal with the loss of this extraordinary friend, Greta, whose full name was Greta Gato, after the famous film star. When Greta and Inge were respectively two and three years old, I decided I wanted them to have Hebrew names, as is the custom of my people. I discussed this first with a Rabbi with whom I studied and he helpfully suggested the names of the two pillars of the Great Temple. I wish now that I remembered those names, perhaps for other, later cats, but instead I chose for Inge, "Aniyim Gedoliym," Big eyes, and for Greta, "Yedaber Pei," my mouth shall utter praise, taken from the Psalms. Greta, more so than Inge at the time, was a rich conversationalist who would look in the eyes of anyone she trusted and engage in reciprocal discourse. Only from under the covers would she quietly repose, giving a shy "mem," when feeling the touch above from a familiar hand. Many nights Greta would sleep under the bedcovers with me, while Inge rested on top, between my legs. Once, when I was visited by a friend whose whereabouts I am now sadly without knowledge, Greta climbed under the covers, positioning herself between our bodies and legs. I treasure that woman's memory all the more because of her love for my cats. A later ex-fiancé would insist on closing the bedroom door to the cats, keeping them out of a room as much or more theirs than ours. We, after all, could come and go as we pleased; the house, on the other hand, was the kitties' world, and I saw no reason to close a door they could not open. When the redemption comes, the walls will tell their secrets, but not the cats. I have no secrets from them' we cannot hide from God.

After Greta's death, I was so shaken and forlorn that I went to my physician and described my feelings of sorrow and loss. She was only a cat, but there is so much in that word, "only" that we shouldn't lessen or diminish the sanctity of any of God's precious treasures. In today's news we marvel at the birth of septuplets, each no more wondrous a miracle than their sister born before them. Every child is a miracle and miracles are everywhere. That I can pick up a telephone and hear the voice of my mother a thousand miles away is a miracle I can't begin to describe, but it is a miracle on top of miracles, beginning from creation. For my feelings of inconsolability, the doctor prescribed a mild anti-depressant, which I dutifully swallowed. Shortly afterward, on a patch of icy road, I slammed my earthbound rocket ship into an embankment after a harrowing six or seven rotations turn. Although the car was, to the appraisal of the insurance company, completely and totally destroyed, I walked away from the accident with no more than a slight scratch and a pair of broken eyeglasses.

Why must we search for miracles?



Summer Salk #7

CHARLES HASKINS

Photogram



Gampp # 10 (Eden)

NICK GAMPP

Multimedia collage

Karma

TARYN L. MALONE

It has happened again. Every three men or so
The bed sheets shake my heart awake like stone?

Softened, pliable breadcrumbs. In the bleak
Moonlight, the birds swallow my path home.

If the last was cruel, he is brutal, if black,
The new is blinding. Comparisons like cigarettes?

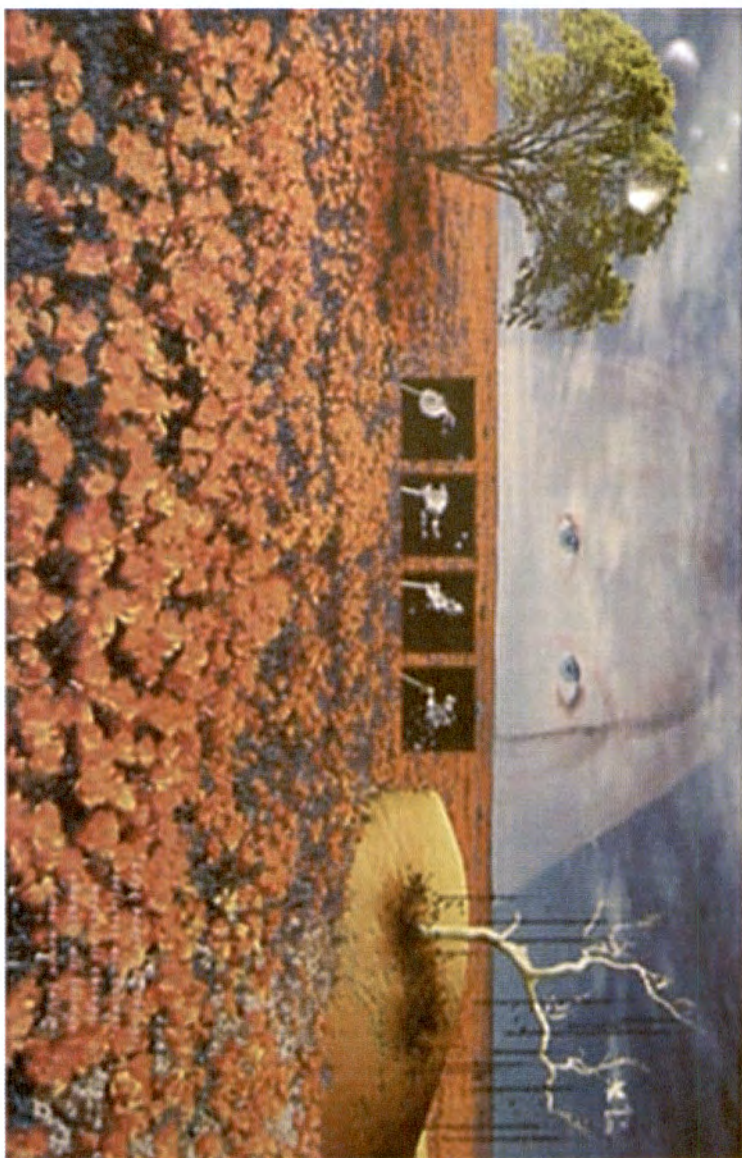
The more you ingest, the greater the pressing
Desire to cough up blood.

These days, I do both out of habit. At night,
In the quiet, I can hear my own rasping?

Can suffer the silent rotting of my organs
Who stale like half-hearted dinner plans

I've yet to cancel. Like love, sleep is a
State of suffering, a state of mind.

Mourning is redemption.
Consciousness is confession.
Omission is power.



Bittersweet

RYAN BENNETT

Photoshop

Road Map to Peace

MYAH PENN

A single sun ray sliced through the bedroom window.

"Finally, today is the day, I George D. Walker, am going to buy the Iroc R.V. and add my name to the elite list of owners. This is precisely the kind of status symbol that I deserve". "What better way to impress Richard," George laughed to himself as he stretched across the silk sheet.

Richard C. Noggin Jr. was an old college buddy as well as an affluent investor in his among other companies. Richard was flying in this morning; George planned to take him to one of his summer resorts on Lake Hopatcong where he had planned a weekend of peace and luxury for the two friends. George had always been jealous of Richard's ease at obtaining the perfect life, a beautiful wife, 2.5 children the whole bit, not to mention his success in the business world.

George, himself was no stranger to the corporate world, although many of his youthful business ventures were unsuccessful, he now was the president of his father's very successful company, Allcorp Industries, an international arms dealer among other things. Although he had very little knowledge of the company's employees or products, he had learned the art of international trade from his father and quickly moved to the top of the company. Since his father's death four years ago, George has run the company and reaped the huge benefits, becoming one of the richest men in the world.

George hopped out of bed and scampered off to the shower. With a busy day ahead of him he wanted to look his usual best. He carefully dressed himself in his finest suit. Combing his dyed and perfectly groomed hair, he smiled at himself in the mirror, "my you're still a handsome devil." Splashing on some expensive cologne he glanced at his Rolex "6:11 A.M., wow I'd better get going" George took one more look at himself in the mirror, smiled, and headed downstairs toward the kitchen.

The early morning sun dripped through the large windows that surrounded the house. George entered the kitchen where a finely prepared breakfast was set out on the table.

"Maria, I will not be eating breakfast this morning."

Maria, one of the many servants at the Walker Mansion, was use to George or Mr. Walker's superior attitude and answered as he had instructed her four years ago when he moved into Walker Mansion "yes Mr. Walker, will there be anything else?"

George, seemingly unaware that Maria had gotten up at 4:24A.M. this morning in order to have his extravagant breakfast prepared, began rambling on with his instructions.

"Call the driver and remind him to be prompt in getting to the airport to meet Richard."

"That will put Richard here around 9:22A.M., so prepare a brunch for us and don't be late with it; I want to get an early start on my vacation.

"Tell Lola to have my bags prepared for the weekend, my itinerary is on the desk in the library she can pack accordingly."

"The Iroc salesman will be here by 7:17 with the new R.V., I am going to the front grounds to meet him now, so tell the staff to prepare to fully stock and ready it for the trip."

With this George rushed out the door stepping onto the beautiful grounds of Walker Manor, but he paid no attention to the splendor, and diversity of the flowers, grasses and trees throughout the in well kept path leading to the first garage area. "Cruising down the road in total luxury will definitely make Richard green with envy." George thought to himself as he stepped around the corner coming face to face with his new Iroc R.V.

Beside the RV stood a small framed man dressed in a fine suit, smiling from ear to ear he held out his hand to greet George, "Hello Mr. Walker."

"Please call me George" he said as he gripped the salesman's hand giving a strong shake.

"Let me take you on a tour of your new home away from home. Shall we," the salesman said as he motioned toward the door of the RV. Stepping in the door George was even more impressed than he had been when he first looked at the proto-model developed for him by the company. "As you can see we enter an extravagantly decorated living area complete with the finest furniture, a library, and of course a complete entertainment center. Through here is the kitchen area." George instantly fell in love with the marble tiles, glass, and exotic woods used to decorate the interior. His mind wandered as the salesman rambled on about the intricate details included for personal convenience and pleasure.

"This is even better than I had hoped for just wait until Richard and everyone sees this. Talk about traveling in luxury."

"Of course you have a private water source, an air conditioning system, power windows, cruise control..." the salesman continued. But George had already flipped on the cruise control in his mind and was rolling down the highway in perfection, a true symbol that he had made it.

Saying goodbye to the salesman George sat down in the plush leather driver's seat and started it up.

"Purrs like a kitten. Beautiful. Just beautiful."

George looked at his watch and realized that Richard would soon be arriving. "I'd better get up to the office and make a few calls before he gets here." Rushing back into the house he made no notice of Maria as she readied brunch in the kitchen and proceeded upstairs. George sat down at the large mahogany desk facing one of the huge windows in the office, "I should be able to see the limo pull in from here," he thought to himself as he began to busying himself by making calls.

9:21A.M. "right on time" George said as he noticed the black limo pull into the Walker grounds. Placing aside his business he hurried downstairs to greet his old friend.

"Richard, it is so good to see you, I hope your trip wasn't to long." George said as he walked through the gate to meet Richard who was just stepping from the car.

"George old friend," Richard said patting George on the back, "the trip was not too bad but I'm starving. Got anything to eat in there?"

"Oh of course, Maria has fixed us a wonderful brunch, but first let me show you my new toy." The two men walked along the moss-covered path that led to the side door of the first garage. "Take a look at the new Iroc RV." George bolstered as they stepped through the doorway.

"Wow, is this yours," Richard asked with a kind of jealousy in his voice.

Finally the moment George had been waiting for, all the years of failure, the inherited position in success, the failed marriages, the lack of respect he felt from Richard. All washed away in that moment. George couldn't wait until Richard saw the lavish décor of the inside.

"This is nothing lets step inside."

George almost jumped out of his skin as Richards jaw appeared to visually drop as he stepped into the posh RV. After George gave Richard the full tour the two retired to the dining area to enjoy a wonderful brunch and discussed the events of their trip.

"I can not wait to enjoy a peaceful weekend at the lake; I have been excited all week," Richard said in a phony manner. He knew it was impossible for George and he to have a peaceful time together, since most of their time was spent trying to out do the other it often ended with some tension.

"Richard, my friend, there is no greater road map to peace than traveling to a beautiful place in a luxurious ride."

As the two continued their conversation Maria quietly slipped into the room and stood silently in the corner.

"Is there something Maria?" George asked when there was a break in the discussion.

"Yes, Mr. Walker your RV has been fueled and prepared for travel, the driver is awaiting you there." Felling that it would be more impressive if he were to control the RV George explained to Maria he would not need the driver for this trip.

"Are you positive Mr. Walker?" Maria replied surprised, never having seen him drive himself anywhere.

"Of course I'm positive, now go and inform the driver!" George was furious with her lack of faith in him and her tone in front of Richard.

The two men leapt into the RV "prepare for the ride of your life my friend" George said to Richard as he pulled out of the drive. After about a half hour, Richard had retreated to the interior of the vehicle leaving George to man the

wheel. Soon George became tired of driving and thought a cup of coffee would hit the spot.

"Richard" he yelled out. Getting no reply he turned to look, he could see Richard stretched out on the lush sofa sleeping.

"Well it looks like it's up to me as usual," George grumbled. "Now how was it that the salesman said cruise control worked, oh here is the switch." Flipping on the switch he moved into the interior of the RV, as he stepped up to the kitchen sink and began to turn the knob he felt the entire RV began to tip then jerk wildly. Richard was awakened as he violently hit the floor of the RV. Staring at George as in disbelief, he yelled "George, who is driving the RV?"

"Cruise control," George yelled back, now in fear. George could feel the RV began to roll over and over until it slipped off of a rock face coming to a final rest at the bottom of a 430 ft. drop.

Sceams Of Lilly

SWEETPEA

His fingers trickle ever so gently
Down her inner thigh as she pans for enamel
It's the beast of the belly
Like a two year old
Screaming you to insanity
That's the feeling of true pleasure
To hear the scream of Lilly

Arms stretch to the width of the bed
And she begs
It's sick infatuation
This vile raping of lust
Lilly feeds on

Her hair entangled between his fingers now
A short rough tug here and there
Stirs the beast
Her legs wrap around all surrounding
And lure him into the screams of Lilly

Even if no man can do it right
They can die trying
It's her immortal sin
Her reason to breath



Untitled

STACIA DRAPSIA

Oil

I Surrender

AMBER LEWIS

Some are destined to live, others are born to die.
Some lead lives of pleasure, others live steady strife.
The battle is at hand, the black clouds gathered nigh;
For days and nights on end, I screech my battle cry.
Its growing dark, so dark ? can't think, feel, speak, nor see;
Marred by melancholy I've lost the war and me.
Despair surrounds me, I surrender on one knee.
Please kiss me sweet death ? take my breath away from me.

Funeral for the Heart

DAREN EICHENLAUB

You can send me and angle, maybe you already have.
They can shine a light down on me and raise me up high,
but that's all a dream and we all know how dreams die.
So say what is isn't and show me how it is.
Point me away from disbelief, from what my eyes want,
my heart need the relief. On this stone of a soul is heavy
load to wonder so. With this crystal conscious that I hold
my faith which isn't a sight to see. Is it a surprise that the
dust of my mind has clouded my sight of trust?
Nor has the sky turned gray against you, the taste of your
lips are venomous to the touch and turns me away.
Hold a funeral for your heart, 'cause your love simply isn't
enough, it's dead to me.



Beggar's Rags

CHARLES HASKINS

Oil

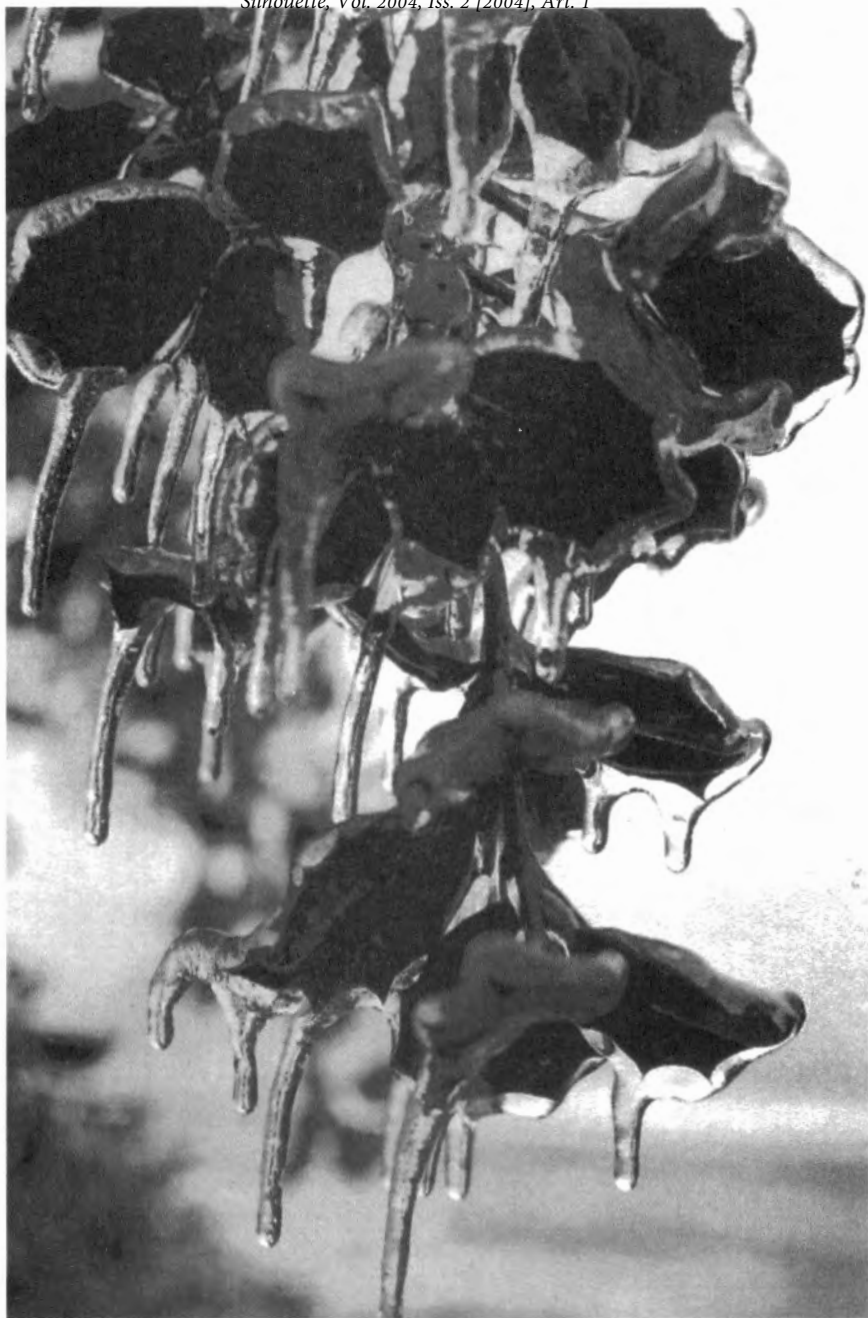


Untitled

MICHELLE MATHUEWS

B&W photograph

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Untitled

BARBARA RUTH MURDOCK

B&W photograph

Vnidcitvie Bctih

JENNIFER PISTOLE

for the one

How do you see?
Through vile perspective
You insolent child
Full of egocentric intent
So attached to inner ignorance
Someone should remove you for safe keeping

Your insecurities rule you
While everyone is abhorred
Don't falter over your tongue
For it's full as it belies
Wake up you jinx
And face who you've sadly become

Conniving and narcissistic
Please ablate your black heart
And dispose of it
Go back to your abattoir
So you may truly be at one with yourself
Vindictive bitch

With blinding stupidity
You survive this
Disease infested drama queen
The true feeler of pain

Open your eyes darling
Release your demons
Let the daggers lay down
And your peace will ensue
You're not the only
But I embed you will be the last.

Notepad

JENNIFER PISTOLE

These memories cling to me
Like leeches I can't ignore
Something in this touch I feel
Your denial for what
You know you want

I'm waiting patiently
Like bones in a casket
I'm short on love
And ever wanting
I won't give up
I'm here in color
This life's no fairy
And in my secrets
I am what I want

So come and get this
Take all I have
No bars to hold or weight to carry
I offer my hand, this take of luck
But please hurry love
I'll be holding my breath
Give me a chance before
I suffocate without you

Special Thanks To:

Nick Gampp

Doug Parsley

Elsie Shabazz

Terry Allen

Correspondence should be directed to:
Editor of the Silhouette
Shawnee State University
940 Second Street
Portsmouth, Ohio 45662

Office:
(740) 351-3689
E-mail:
brichards@shawnee.edu

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