



Point of View

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1990-91

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*Winner of the *Point of View Award*

**Winner of the *Vivian Stewart Award*

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“Aside from *that*, Mrs. Lincoln,

In keeping with the precedent set by previous editors, we have asked a member of the faculty to contribute her talents to the Point of View. This year, writer Betty Hull has graced us with the following delightful piece.

There are rats in the souffle again. Brando doesn't seem to notice. Yesterday there were only mice, which were bad enough. But rats — I hate rats.

“I don't intend to eat it, even if you do,” I announce. “I'd rather starve and get it over with.”

“Don't end a sentence with a preposition,” Brando tells me. Brando used to be an English teacher. He's touchy about grammar and pronunciation. These things are important to him.

Brando slurps it down, eating whatever They put before us as if it were manna from heaven. Brando keeps me company, but sometimes I wonder how I can stand him.

Brando says I should calm down. “Learn to take life one day at a time,” he says. Easy for him to say. He's older than I am, almost a year older, but he isn't any wiser. He loves me, I know, and that helps some. He got here a week before me, and he always tells me how lonely he was before I came.

“Look,” he tells me, “They could serve us those rats raw; that would be pretty bad. But They cook them into a nice souffle. That shows They care. It's not easy to get a souffle to rise, especially with rats in it. You told me that yourself.”

Brando has never made a souffle himself. Brando's smart about some things, but he's never cooked anything harder than meatloaf, that is, before, when we had to do our own cooking. I used to cook for the colonel.

Brando wants to adjust. He tries hard. I don't.

Brando says he thinks there are girls in another room, and if we adjust we'll get to meet them.

“Solly,” he says, chewing rat thoughtfully, “I think there's a *reason* for our being



how did you enjoy the play?"



here. I think if we could just figure out what They want and give it to Them, They would be good to us." He spits in the corner. In spite of his education, he can be crude. Yet I love Brando. I want to believe him. I wish I could, but I just can't.

I think about the girls. He only put the idea in my head about a month ago, but now that's pretty nearly all I think about now. Girls. Women. I wonder whether there could be any one of them I'd love as much as I love Brando. Maybe I only want them because I don't have them. I'm used to Brando. Sometimes he drives me crazy, but he's familiar to me.

I think I could get used to anything, if it happened gradually enough, but I can still remember how it was before the war. We had to take orders then, too, and do whatever we were told, whether it made sense or not. That's what soldiers do. But the colonel was easy to please, and I always knew what he wanted me to do.

"Ours is not to reason why, ours is but to do or die."

Sometimes our officers, high up, made decisions that had to be passed along to us through the chain of command. Go here, do this, do that. We dreamed then of promotion so we could someday give those orders. We never dreamed of getting caught.

We knew the Enemy was insane, too. Sadistic. We knew all that and yet we volunteered because . . . well, because somebody had to. And all I wanted to do was cook for the colonel and serve my hitch.

Maybe Brando is right. Maybe if I can adjust we'll get to meet the girls in the other room. If there are any girls in the other room.

I look at the soufflé. I watch my hand pick up the spoon and I begin to eat, munching dreamily. I have to admit the soufflé is light, and nicely seasoned with a whisper of garlic. Gourmet food, aside from the rats.



Anita Heuer
Untitled
pastel

Urban Snowcones

The
Good Humor man came
peddlin' through the
ghetto,
a little urban snowcone
for my
main man.

In
silence Sanchez
drove-on through, — when
you need it, then you knew
just where to be.

Angelina
playin' hopscotch in the
gangway
caught
a bullet in the back meant
for Sanchez.

Urban
snowcones
for sale in the
ghetto
you gotta pay the
main man, yes
you
do.

Daniel Ryan

Dayward

Perhaps there is no rest across night
as you walk wind-dumb and unsure
for White Hen the days last smoke
spent like the first
allured for another

Note the large in a residue stride
your walk shouldered
by blue and bruise-colored mobiles that hang
fatigued from a crescent light building
fusing then falling apart
holding back the rain.

With each passing pool of old rain reflections
cringe and swallow themselves whole.
The wavering grimace caught beneath
a silver current a rib-cage of sorts
holds the image alone until the breeze
lays down and allows you to pass.

And your friends your allotments cold
by the roadside suffer their own dung
sleeping with the drafts upon
lashing gravel beds sinking
losing their sounds and smells.

It's about here you break down simplify
into sugars metals and precious salts.
Before your fear the length
of winter highways
you attempt to stand as a mere soul

Shivering withered as the autumn rose.
Yet the sound of hours deny your ears
and the East yearns to ripen
from a flecked crimson eye. Unsensed
on all fours never mind

The frayed fingertips
the rust-ribboned feet
you gather your weary elements your
dried empty ducts and you head in no direction

but dayward along
for the nearest, blindest dawn.

Scott Lumbard



Amy Reichert
Untitled
photograph

Testaments

Dimply young hands
fresh
grasp crayons and
scribble across a
clean page.

Hands wrap round
mother's neck. A
scraped knee.

Slimming fingers in
parent's faces
wagging no to
dinner time peas.

Those long now
slightly longer fingers
stroke lover's hair.

Hands take a shovel or pen
to work
marking the lines in by time.

Hands take the new babe and
wince as the vice hand clamps.

Those dyed hands brace
the unsteady biker and a
bump traces a pain path
knuckle
to
knuckle.

Hands coarser and larger
hand and keys to first
driver. A shake responds.

Hands, tear-washed and age-
stained, wave good-bye in
empty spasms.

Hands have failed with that
slip of the glass.
A mess of shattered glass
and confidence.

Hands now like cracked
leather gloves, too hard to
move. Let them sit and air.

Karl E. Lewis

Nightclub

I used to go to this place,
A three-story house without windows.
Pulsating with monotonous, "BOOM,
BOOM,
BOOMING."

There were vampires living here.
Lecherous people.
All dressed up in their Girbauds,
Inhaling nicotine outside
Waiting
For the innocence to spill into the house.
When I went inside,
They offered me many things.

Things
That would make my head play dirty with the strobelights.
When I danced,
The floor under my feet was very rough.
A piece of sandpaper.
The rubber soles of my shoes liked it.
I liked it.

I inhaled nicotine,
I charred my lungs like tree bark after a forest fire.
The vampires approved, and I was cool.
And my feet kept time to the "BOOM,
BOOM,
BOOMING."

Amy Reichert

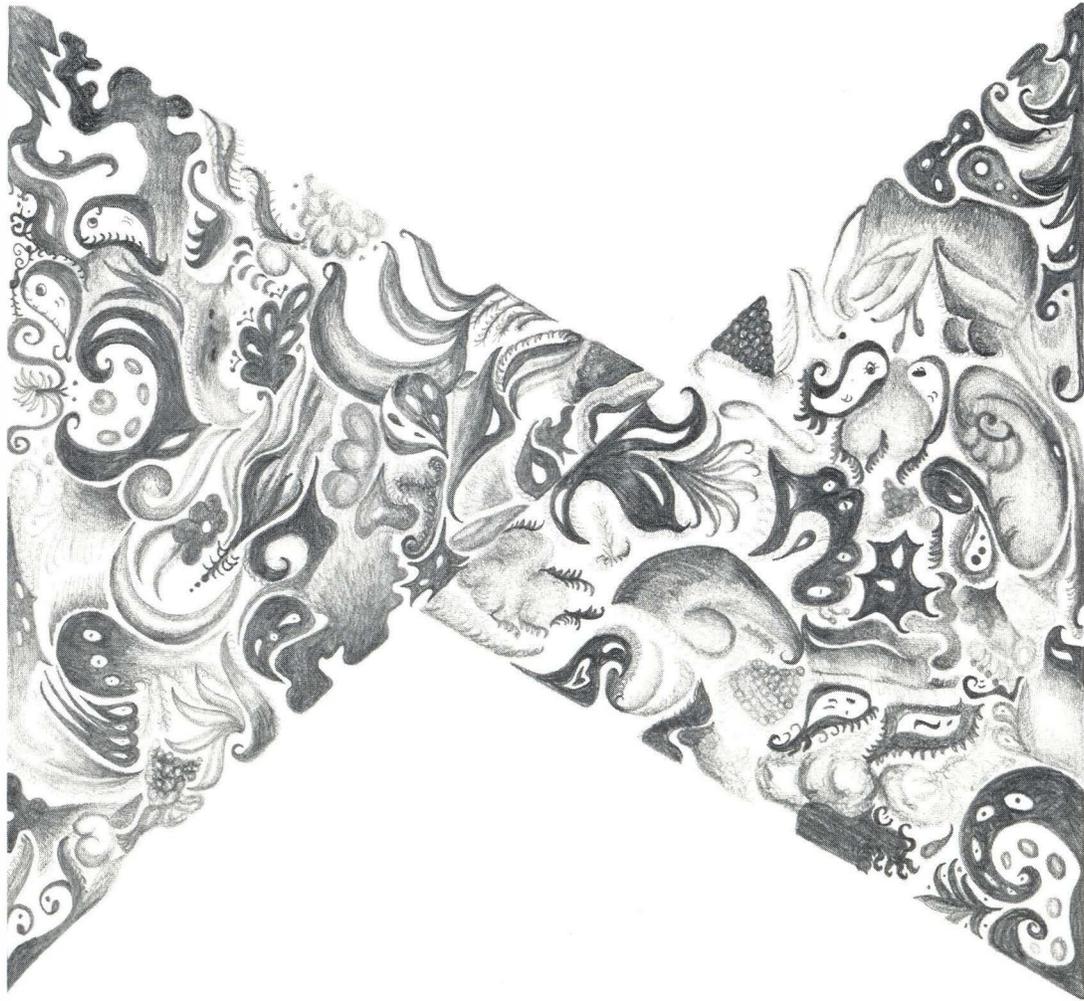
After Reading Gwendolyn Brooks' "—the mother"

The living are here,
also, burrowing thru
every
narrow morning, flecked
with blood, remembering,
dreams they can't quite
sheathe
for moments that require
mercy
upon themselves.
A strange emptiness
expands their chests,
and they bellow it back out.

I broke
my mother's tailbone
coming out. She
limps forever
for me,
for her.

She doesn't want to.
Things happen,
and then happen
forever.

Scott Lumbard



Margaret E. Jackson
Untitled
graphite

Sounds

She bit her shame softly, growing
aching hate asks her name.

I know your darkness houses whiteness.

I ask your eyes to take my grey and
lift up colors to name my soul
and stars.

Take away the dust to clear my crushed
lonely, sing out your fingers and
dance on my skin.

the light is not waiting, its wonder worth
saving, it was left behind.

Sarah Lindsey

safari

bundled in jackets
and tucked tight in a car
we head out for the middle of nowhere
on a hunt-out
for Halley's Comet.

outside, by the roadside,
we shiver
in this wind
that cuts across
this naked land
this nowhere
and we huddle together.

Halley should be about. . .there —
just above the horizon.
we squint and stare,
but it seems to escape
our ardent eyes.

The stars!
they gather in glory across the sky,
undimmed by urban lights
and out in the cornfields
we stand;
our chill lost to the vast expanse of burning sky.

Margaret E. Jackson



Kerry Field
Death?
photograph with sepia toner

Flight 23

His polished ebony body
Sculpted to play basketball.
Animated for wingless flights
Over the hardwood floors.
To dominate — a sky realm.

Emancipated from the bondage imposed
by Earth's gravity,
Michael effortlessly elevated himself
above the courts,
A still picture in a descending world
of pretenders.
Jordan prepared to display another
celestial maneuver,
Aerial art eclipsing the renderings
of past Masters.

The roar of the boisterous crowd;
The beat to his mid-air ballet,
Crescendomed until the orange orb
Crashed through the gaping rim
Thor's hammer — delivered again.

He began his graceful descent from ethereal fulfillment
to Earth's caress.
His delicate landing belied the esoteric heights
of his ephemeral passage.
Peerless in flight, Michael's earth-bound presence
hushed the crowd.
His play undiminished, but now masked by the magic
of other performances.
Excitement replaced by patience and hope of another
Air Jordan, Flight 23.

J. Nonaka

The Ritual of Leaving

The routine is always the same. She has 'this system' all figured out. To him it seems absurd, but he always keeps quiet, and tries to be patient, as he waits in the hall and watches his watch.

Each time she leaves, the girl must run through the system, always out loud, her compulsive check list occasionally punctuated by a nervous "o.k." or "ummm." She begins, "coffee's unplugged, cigarette's out, ashtray's in sink with wet sponge on top . . . the cats are in the living room, under the table — wait, let me make sure." For a moment, the girl leaves her sacred spot by the door to go over and kick the cats. She claims their cries lock their essence into her mind so she doesn't have to worry about believing she only imagined them under the table.

He checks his watch and holds his tongue as she is forced to start the whole routine over. (It's painful and it's bizarre to watch such compulsion; sometimes he feels guilty and is forced to look away.)

Temporarily satisfied, she locks the door and starts toward him. He doesn't move, for he knows there is one more phase. "Wait," says the girl — "I don't think I unplugged the coffee." He knows she did, but he has learned any assurance is just wasted breath.

Some days, when he can tell she's strong, he says, "don't forget about the four cigarettes I lit and threw on the couch!" But today is different, he sees that her eyes have been crying.

Once again, and for the hundredth time, the girl locks the door, jiggles the handle, then throws herself against the door, just in case the lock didn't catch. His patience is wearing, today more than usual.

He wonders why he likes her, sometimes he doesn't understand how anyone can . . . yet sometimes she just seems so fragile . . . besides, when she's not whiny and pathetic, she is quite funny — in a nervous, contagious way.

He watches the girl walk toward him once more and his mind starts to wander. Often he can imagine just how it feels to be her. Sometimes, in his mind, he becomes

her. He feels the annoying chafe as her thighs rub together on a hot day; he can feel the impatience as she rats her hair high, shellacs it into a dome and tries to defy gravity all day; he feels her heaviness in his chest, a combination of the hanging breasts and the smoke infested lungs. He rubs his wrist and feels the raised curve of the scar fighting to be noticed but always hidden by the tacky betty boob watch. **SOMETIMES HE IS HER.** But try as he might, he still can't understand this ritual of leaving.

The girl is again jiggling the door, and he thinks about saying, "c'mon stupid," but he doesn't want to annoy her, or be the one that makes her cry.

He knows the ritual is almost done. The weirdest part begins . . . she is re-approaching the door, one last time. She seems to be a different person now — all sinister: eyebrows raise in an inquisitive arch, her body tilts with a borrowed confidence. She unlocks the door, pushing it open with force. She stands at the threshold; her eyes pan the room observing every visible inch. (He would kill to see what she sees.)

Once (apparently) satisfied, she closes the door for the final time, but always neglects to lock it and they are gone.

One day he worked up enough nerve to ask her about the final phase of her ritual. So often he could leave his own mind, invade hers, and understand. But with this, he was always lost. So she said that before she leaves she wants to see the apartment from a burglar's point of view. If her worst fear ever came true, and someone broke in, she wanted to be sure he would be impressed by the dustless surfaces, the vacuum-grooved rug, and the surprising lack of surface clutter.

He thought about hitting her in the back of the head, as though that might make her 'normal.'

Once again he found himself hating her passionately, yet obsessively wanting to be her.

Left for Dead

Walking and absorbing
a black man asks if I, "smoke the green?"
I answer and deal is made
Finding later that I've been taken
Bag of oregano held together with corn starch
only hope is that it is laced
Waiting in train station for arriving friend
with eyes scanning crowd for the crooked
If evil lurks and I will find
foolish to but from those unknown
lesson learned, "NEVER BUY IN THE CITY"
"No" is the answer that is only proper reply
"No" and "Get lost"
I feel as if labeled the fool
It's business as usual in the city
People crooked and the air smells shitty.
Back home the weed is plentiful and well
in reach.
No need of worry or turn of bad card.
Awaiting friend, penniless, and feeling weak.

S.R. Baker



Diana L. Jenkins
Opium
charcoal

the raincoat

a child i was
when i left my home
crossing the street
in the storm

raincoat yellow
umbrella red

i did not look
when i went ahead

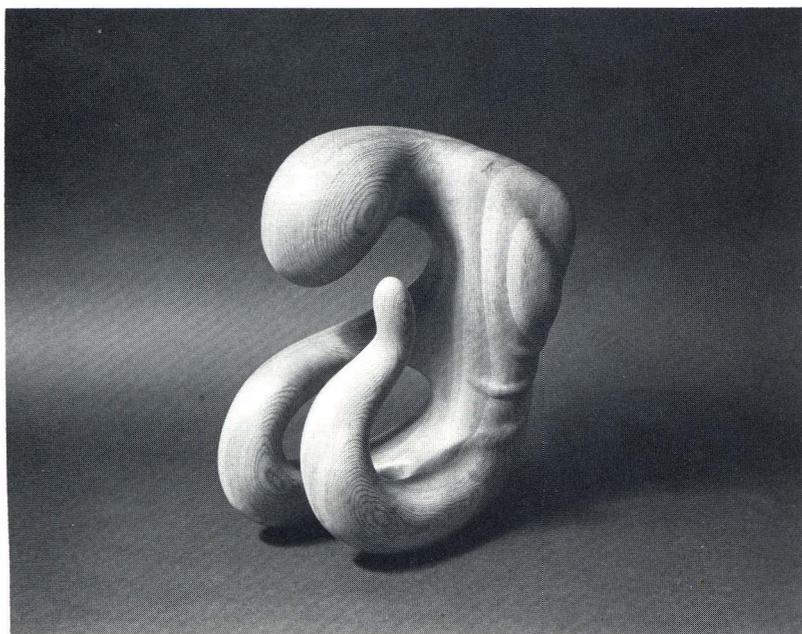
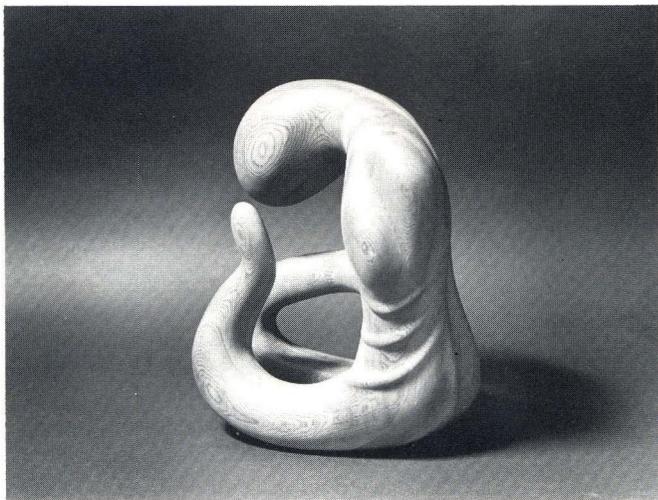
stoplight yellow
stoplight red

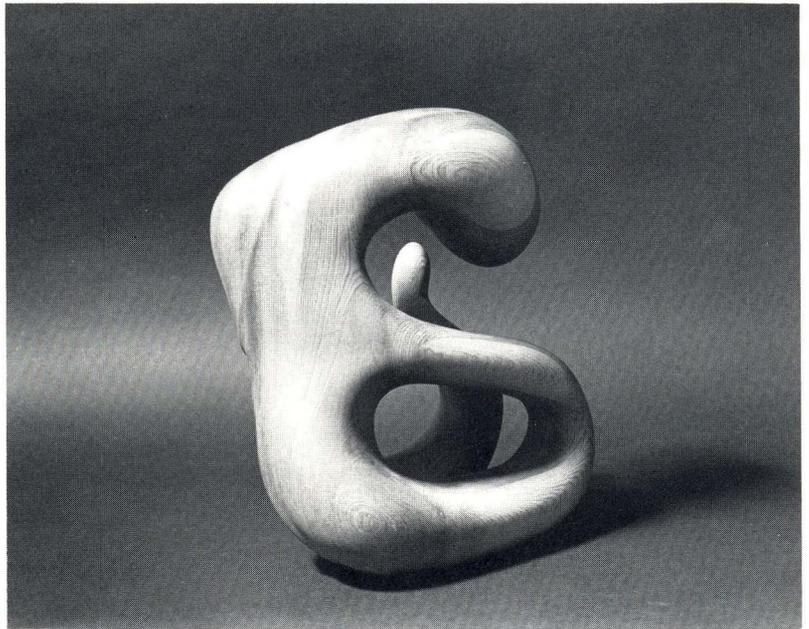
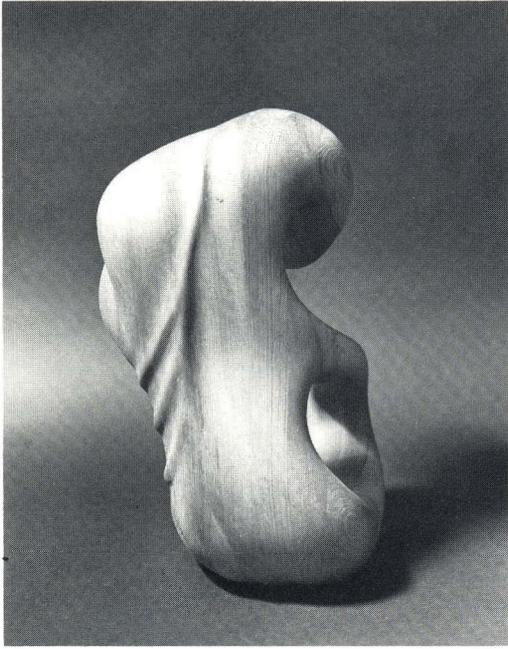
i found a new home
in my tomb
for the storm
had buried me there

beneath the earth
among the dead

raincoat yellow
raincoat red

glen W jackson





Tony Cambio
Andrea
laminated wood

Central Pacific Time

My footsteps fall hollow,
compared to the click, click, click of the
fluid city.
Stock market marquee outside train station,
auto dead-stop speed waiting to be realized
move, move, gotta be more, gotta see more
"Colorado strides are too small for the City,
cowtown cowboy!"
"Walgreen's alone has 75 stories."
Faces pass, nameless, all hungry
Food, power, money. . .
"In any closed society, extinction is imminent"

a feeling of miniature, insignificance lofts
over me, I am capitalism's wet dream
"Bookstore, bookstore!" I cry.
I seek solace, refuge
Soon, soon
Undercover cop watches me in bar
Static echoes from under pinstripe jacket,
destroying his halloween garb
"What's up?!"
"Nothing."
"What're ya doing?"
"Writing."
"Oh, really?!"
"Yes, get lost. . ."
Door swings open, cold draft and end of conversation
The day has only just begun . . .
"Hey man, can you spare . . ."
The rest of the statement is indecipherable,
but understanding is made.
I reach, dig deep and pull up change, and
move on.
"Post office, post office!" I cry.
Wanting only to send notice to friends of
travels and tribal knowledge
none to be found . . .

"Culture, culture!" I find my answer at the
"Art Cathedral."
Enter, dwarfing influences, "but I can draw
cartoons," I think in backwater foolishness.
All modern painters must have been blind,
or they would have seen their foolishness
on canvass and in ink.

Out windows I see monoliths that jeer and
laugh at the horizon
(man's crooked attempt at civilization)
Leaving land and water infertile as Nagasaki
mother, scared and wretched
Here the ideas swarm, flies to shit some say
bees to honey, others.
Bacon and eggs, I say!
No Kerouac at the downtown bookstore,
only new "moderns" with bland vocabularies
and mechanical grammar
"Can't jump a boxcar any mo'," they say.
Can't hobo, can't hitch,
too dangerous, tooooooo. . . .

S.R. Baker

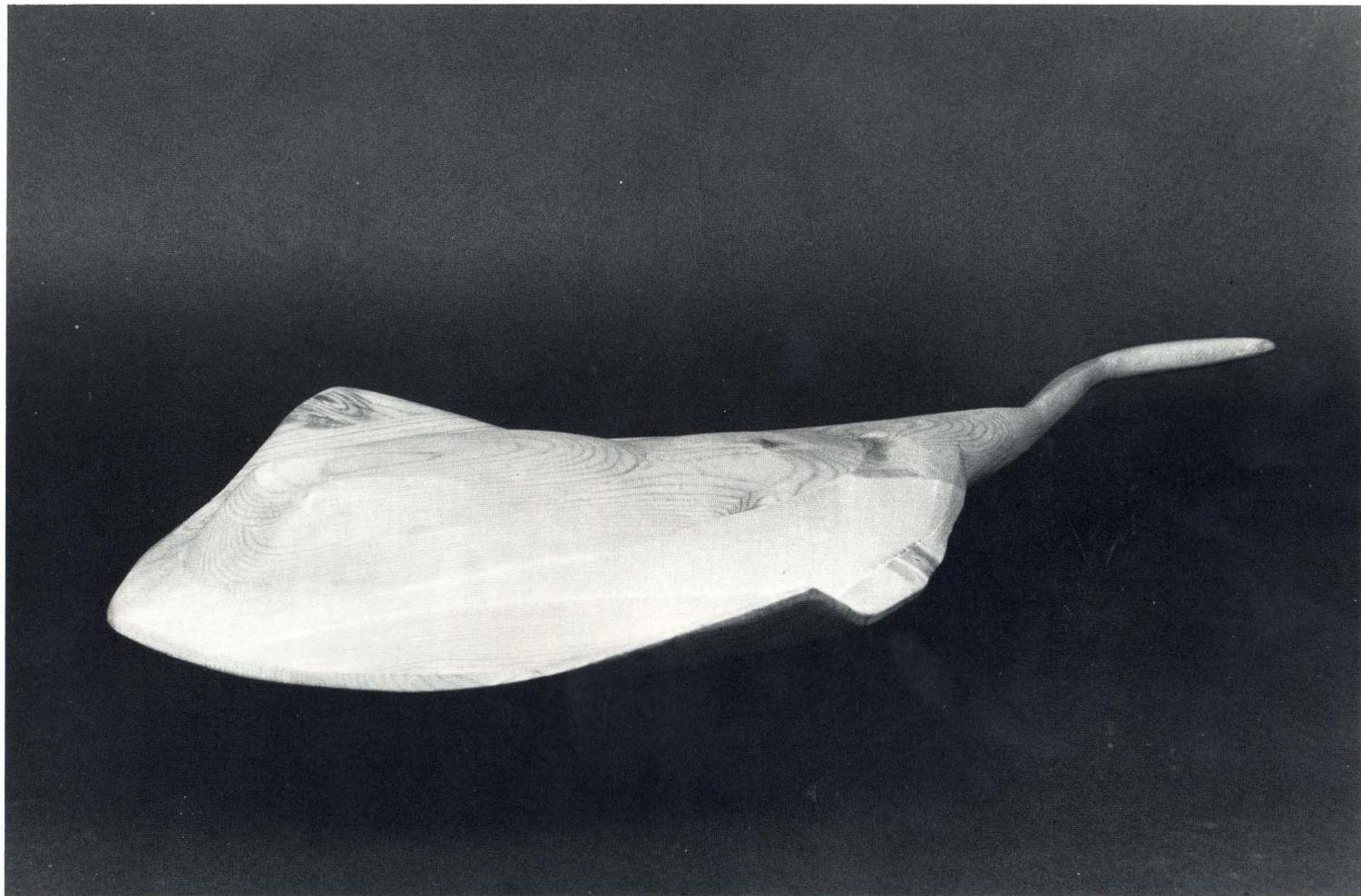


Phyllis Chiarelli
Untitled
raku ceramic

Coming Home

As night's flames consume the pages
which once made a blanket
upon a cold park bench
Frostbitten hands
fold into icicles
Drifting into a breathless silence
Sinking into a hollow shadow of death

glen W jackson

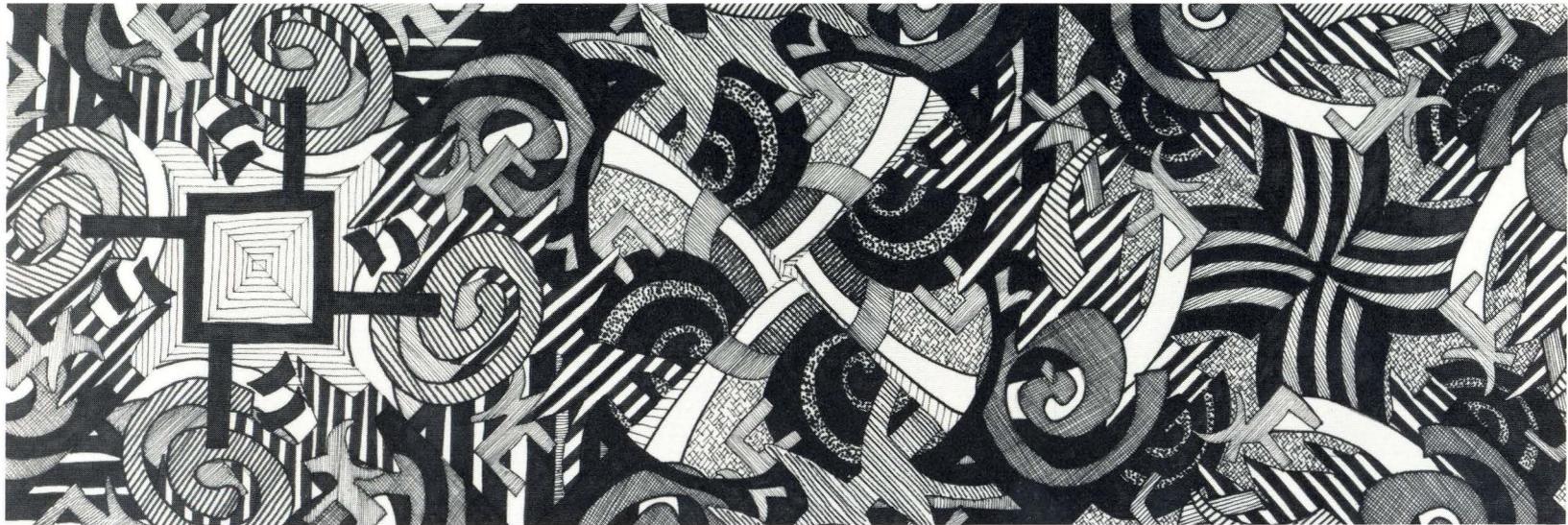


Elsworth Hansen III
Stingray
laminated wood

blacksmith

in the blossoming night,
a descant over the busy hum of water:
hammered metal
being shaped
and bent
by knowing hands.
red glow of coals
hypnotizes us
as we approach.
agile hands thrust
black iron into rosy coals,
weaning it supple.
enchantment holds us
until the last glow of day has faded,
and the smith retires his coals
wooling rosy hot
into black chill.

Margaret E. Jackson



Diana L. Jenkins
Clay Water Buffalo
marker

glen W jackson

into a City of Sound

Higher

Higher

Building

Ringing like Thunder

like a Blinding Sun

Striking

Pounding

Gleaming like Lightning

Blowing Brass Winds

Sawing away Wires upon Wood

II.

like a Phantom Phoenix from Hell

Screaming

with a Fiery Vengeance

Striking

Lashing out at the Sound

Windy Hair

into a Storming Symphony

Raging

with Insane Vibrance

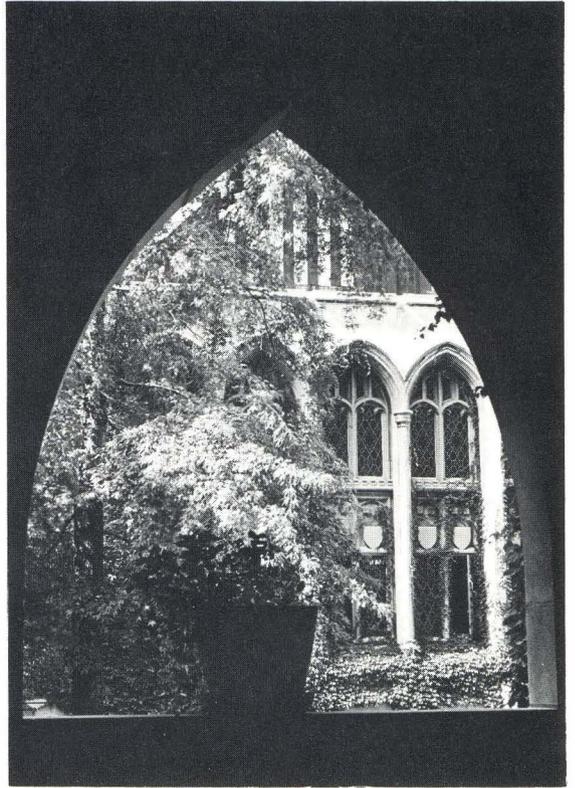
Ecstatic

Beyond Control

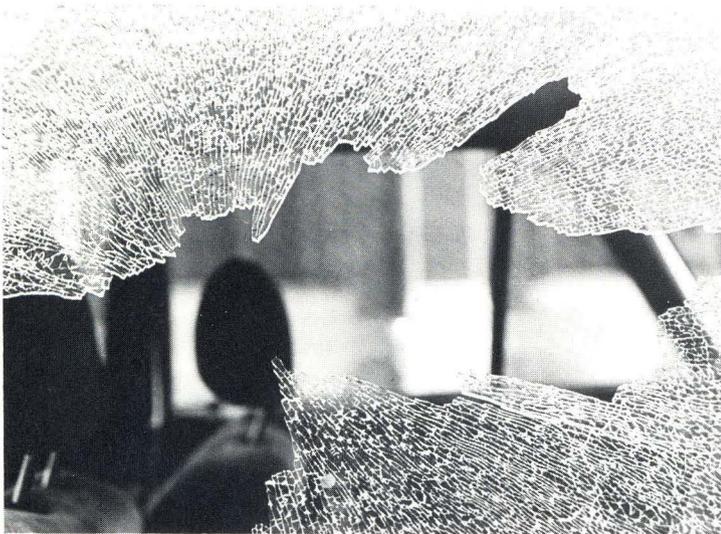
Emotion

I.

Symphony



Amy Reichert
Untitled
photograph



Amy Reichert
Untitled
photograph

Jane Doe

How can I explain this woman from Haiti?
She is three months from giving birth,
Wears a cotton, flower print caftan.
It moves with her, outlining her hill of a stomach.
Her crayola crayon black skin shines with sweat.
We are in Florida together
But only I am aware we are this way—
I am inside my car;
She is alone on the sidewalk.
Her sandals flip-flop as she waddles to the curb.
She wishes to cross,
Cannot see, I think,
A compact car hidden by a van.
And her sandals make their last flip.
She flies like a trapeze artist:
One/Two/Three somersaults
High into the air,
Flops onto the sidewalk.
I am beside her in what seems to be zero time.
I see blood run into the cracks of cement
From her arms, legs, head.
Her right arm is bent
As if she is practicing yoga, all the way behind her back,
And she still does not know we are together.
As she mumbles, “bebe, bebe,”
I bend to her, try to comprehend her language.
Her eyes are glazed, amazed, dazed.
I am pushed away from her as the stretcher arrives
And they pick her up off the concrete,
Pull the sheet up over her face.
They carry her away.
I never knew her name
But I know she must have had one
In Haitian, in English,
That they etched on her tombstone.

Laura Schafer

After The Leaving Part

so we lay, after the loving. i am naked laying face up. he has come back from the kitchenette with some cold pizza and a beer. enough for him, never anything for me. he lays across one thigh, steadying himself as he places the pizza between my breasts. i watch him and silently marvel how with one hand he can hold and open a beer — and i remember how little he really needs me. he takes a drink, and if i am lucky he will offer me some from his mouth. i am in love.

the beer can is cold, i can feel it on my chest and my chin, the convenient angle of my upper torso often times is his table, after the loving. i tell him it's a shame that i don't have the head shape to hold a t.v. . . . maybe then he'd never leave me, but he doesn't get the joke, and i feel ashamed. ashamed for never being good enough, ashamed for being naked and alone with him. this always happens when it gets past the leaving part, conversation becomes hard. i can never let go.

sometimes i lock myself in a room, when i know he's leaving. he doesn't understand this, and he's never been patient so i don't ever dare try to explain or justify the stupid little circles that chase around in my mind when it anticipates his leaving. most times he just says his good-byes through the fake-wood door and i cover my ears, like a stubborn child refusing to hear the hollow sound of the door when he leaves . . . it's only loud when he leaves.

i've known him forever, and even before that i loved him. i tell him that i love him more than she does, and he believes me. i make excuses for his bad behavior and i refuse his money; she makes him drink, and that leads him to me. so i guess in a way, we need each other, his wife and i.

when his daughter was two, he brought her to meet me and i thought, if she were mine, she would grow up to be a singer, but

she belongs to his wife, so she'll just grow up average.

when i turned twenty, he brought me to their house. while he took a shower i sneaked around, greedily trying to take it all in, so i could take it all home and review it later . . . in private, at my leisure. there was drying chicken on the stove and soiled dishes in the sink, and i thought she must be lazy. the carpet, so worn and stained, was a curious backdrop for the many new, expensive toys laying around in deliberately arranged sad shapes, and i knew her children were abused. i stared at their wedding pictures until my eyes froze in my head, until i felt someone watching me, watching me more closely than i was watching their life, and for a second it occurred to me that i should feel dirty and ashamed.

i slept uneasily that night; i dreamt that she came home and my face was in the wedding picture, hers on the floor. i woke and wondered if she has ever tasted the water on his body after a shower.

on my twenty-sixth birthday he bought me a bottle of his favorite gin. i lied and said it was just what i had always wanted, but inside i wished he'd loved me enough to buy something sticky sweet in a bright tropical color. that night he drank my whole present and when he kissed me his breath smelled like trees. trees so green and new, it hurts your eyes to look at them for too long.

one day he started asking me to do things i didn't want to do but i did them anyway. when he knew i felt especially bad about those things, he would offer me money. the uglier the request, the higher the payment. i never took his money even when i knew i had earned it. his wife took his money, and he said he was going to leave her. i hated him sometimes, but i would die if he didn't need me. he said i understand him. he says we are connected

by this secret, by disgrace.

sometimes i pray out loud to a god i don't know is there. i pray for an easy end, i pray to belong to me again, but mostly i pray that i will be able to handle his absence in my life when he finally grows tired — of me, of the game.

one day something broke, eight years after the leaving part had come and gone, come and gone, come and gone. something broke and it made a sound like a rubber band pulled too tightly. i heard that sound and it seemed to shriek, “take the money,” and that day, for no good reason, i took his money . . . and the money was magic. i held it and i loved it and suddenly i had become ‘her.’ i took his money and all the pain and the need just vanished. the money justified the wasted years and eased the guilt. most of all, the money gave me the power to see through a lie.

i knew he wouldn't be back, even when his hungry mouth said he would. like magic, and for the first time, i got past the leaving part without shutting myself away. the money gave me the strength and the confidence enough to watch the door connect with its frame, but this time in sweet, gentle silence.

Jody Shipka



Janel Davis
Untitled
photograph

Dear Abbie

Setting
Chi-Town ablaze
in radical revolution you
seven apostles showed a generation
the light.

But
time marches on and your
comrades all sold-out, for
dollar dividends and West Coast
romps with
Jane.

Once
again the
bugle sounds America-to-War
as the
militant
Guru
sleeps
eternally
in
Limbo.

Daniel Ryan

Sailor Departure

Pride cried with me
like some strange lover

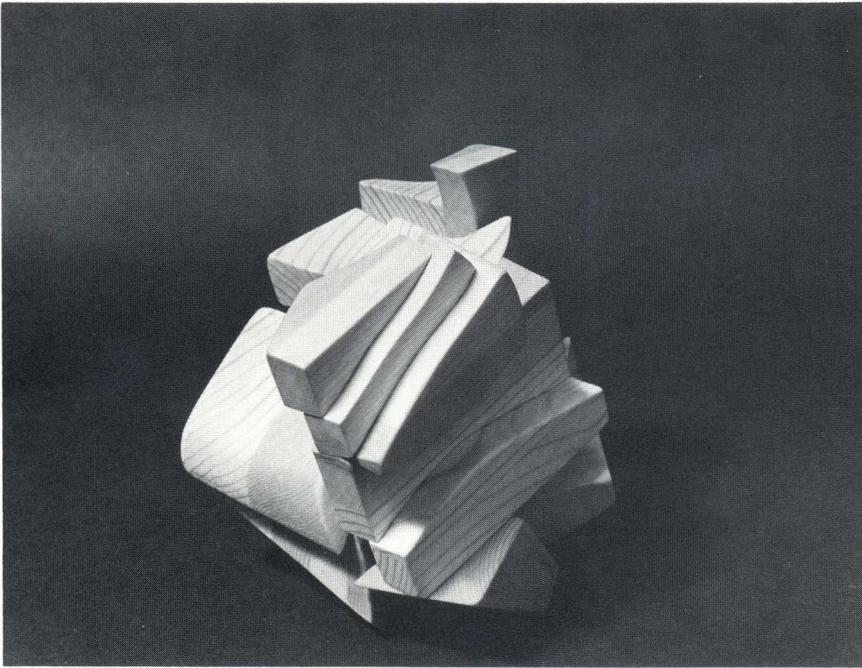
Like a battered lamp post
he did not sway

Gene Kelly look alike
white cap zit of an adolescent

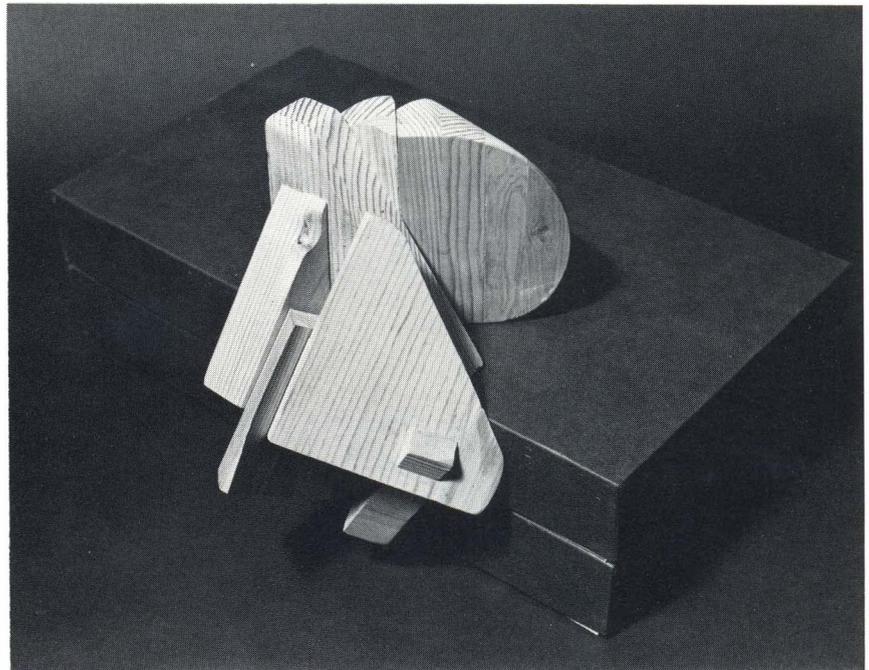
Don't die like the others,
kill 'em first

He saluted
He turned

Michael Schweisheimer



Elsworth Hansen III
Cubed
laminated wood



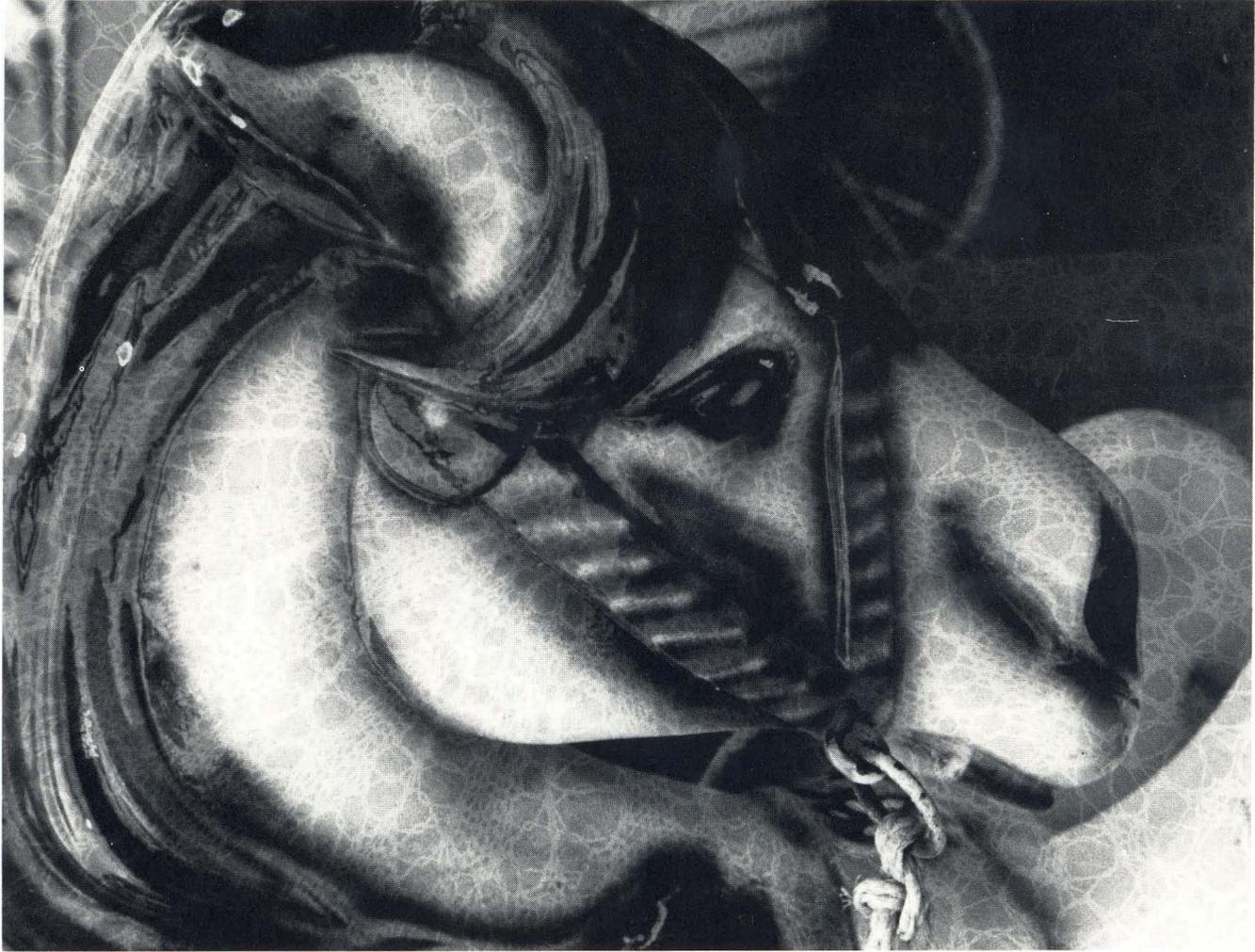
Paul Grossman
Off the Edge
laminated wood

White Egrets

They flew for me.
I, alone in the summer
hot
watched
these pale angels dance.
and the swiftness and grace of their flight
grabbed me,
spinning me round, entranced by
long
white
wings and
black
legs tucked behind;
they swooped and sailed

leaving me

Margaret E. Jackson



Kerry Field
Untitled
photograph

Lava Lamp

To please the eye, it sits, it forms, inside,
the change so slow, yet sure, within the glass.
As it appears to live, to writhe, to glide.
Uniquely timed, a modulating mass.

A graceful surge that speaks a tongue of curve.
Uncountable thoughts ebb and flow in sync,
a balanced voice, now soft, now full of verve,
that forms between the lamp and life: a link.

To rise to fall to melt and yet remain,
though stressed, twisted, convulsed, it keeps control
to use, refine, and make each thing a gain,
the parts refuse to be less than a whole.

A tale here told of peace, of warmth, of strife.
An echo true, a lesson, too, of life.

Karl E. Lewis

Iris

She sprouts from this ground,
With slashing, swordlike petals.
Careful,
So as not to trip or crush,
I kneel to sneak a more favorable peek.

I think,
“The harpies must have been wild with envy.”
Their sister was such an enchantress.

She is stabbing, purple, iridescent.
Yet,
To touch her petals,
I find them fragile.
She is so unlike the blades she imitates.

Amy Reichert

The Wasps' Nest

Watch with me wasp wings
Shimmering diaphanous crystallized metronomes
Pumping air with purpose.
They leave at dawn dancing for survival,
Extended wings to forbidden flowers . . .
Flowers mandrilled in spring
To cellular sanctuaries
Where now the young have flown,
But they always return home
and hang on . . .

As shadows roam and reach for longer distance,
Delicate cellophaned wings hone in on some inbred pulse.
Destination home to huddle closely knit
And you can hear the hum as they share the evening news
and hang on . . .

The workmen who hurled down seventeen nests
Hidden in soffits and fascia,
Were greeted at twilight with confused and angry stings.
They scrambled down shaky ladders cursing the intruders.
And a voice within me cried
Where will they go now
to hang on?

My home my own I built
Where young have grown and flown
And then return . . .
Of all worth fighting for
The place I go
When shadows stretch and roam,
To share the evening news,
And huddle and hum
and hang on . . .

Lyndell Lange



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