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THE CRUCIBLE

A Collection of
Original Poetry, Prose,
and Art



DEDICATION:
 For all poets who died
 "Ere before their time."

Harry Chapin
 and
 John Lennon

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THE CRUCIBLE
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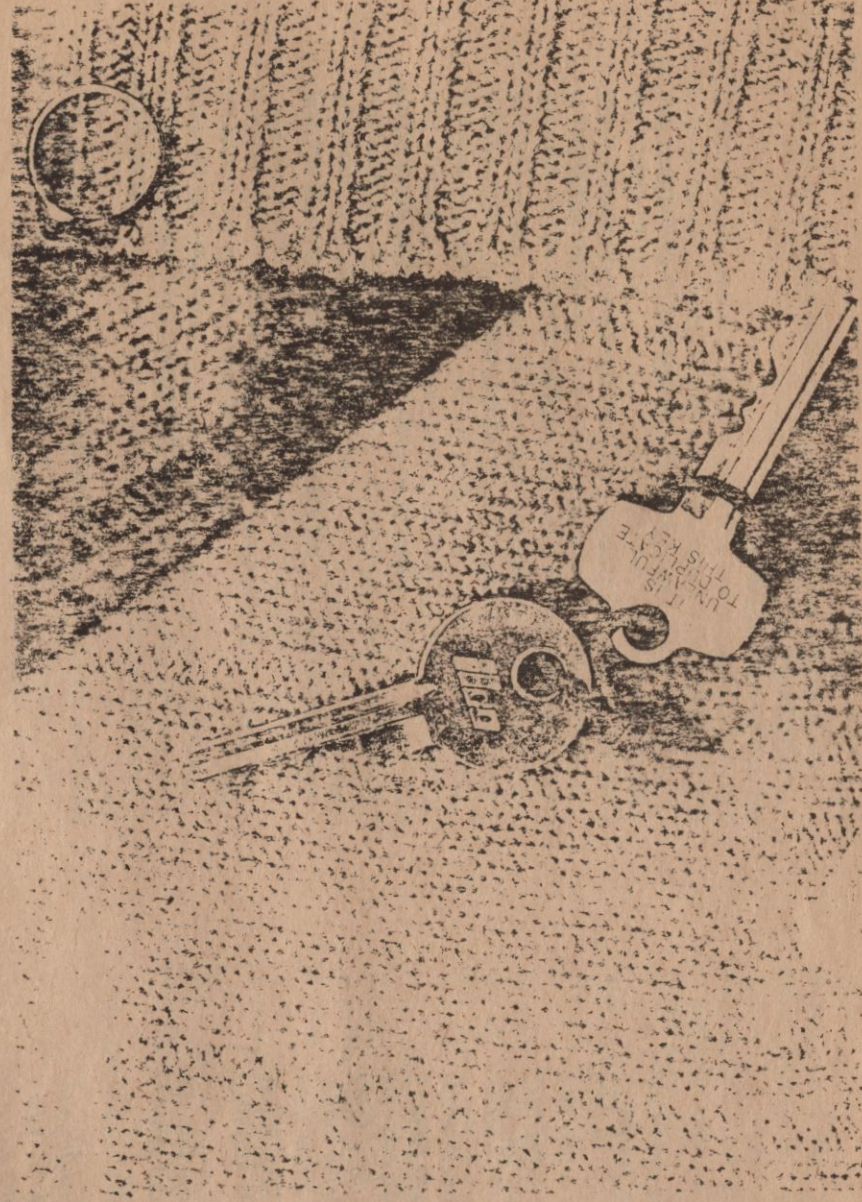
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The Venus Button

The Venus Button, our scientists tell us, has developed a hairline crack along its inner wall and threatens to split Venus, whereupon the planets will all come unwound and go clacking together about the Sun like balls tied to the end of a stick.

As the galaxy holds its breath, our expedition to Venus' polar cap descends into the planet's core where the magnetic wires from as far away as Pluto have wound and hummed for millions of years, pulling the planets through their orbits.

Here, in the center of Venus, our solar system stabilizes the great energy of the Sun and determines the rotation of the planets by means of the gentle weaving and unweaving of the wires. Through the great openings in Venus' underside. We can watch the wires undulating through the middle of Mercury, small and mysterious, to their track around the Sun.

We whistle in awe. Our Captain says, "Wow...if this baby ever comes undone...!" We nod in agreement, the result too terrible to imagine.

Quickly, we fill the hairline crack of inner Venus with space mortar, anti-magnetic so the planet's backward rotation won't suck it loose the moment we leave.

And the scientists tell us we have succeeded. Our solar system will hold for at least another thousand years.

Now, as always, Venus shines brightly in our morning and evening sky, hot and cloudy planet, vital button which sews us to our Sun.

Joseph Nicholson

I REALLY LIKE IT

I really like it, I do.
That is why I spend my time
raking and piling together
all the little bits of others
that society demands to be thrown away.

A trash pile of human scrap paper,
that having no real value, becomes
obsolete and discarded because
it is not productive
or just misfit.

These pieces I gather like a trash man.
Sorting and filing, I separate
the piles to be examined as a whole
and recycled for human consumption.
It's a steady job, and I like it.

Oh My Buttons!

Oh, by the way, I once met a man.

Oh really!
Who was much like David Copperfield's nurse.
Not because he was big and motherly.

For heaven's sake!
He wasn't. It was more
for his use of mundane exclamations.

No kidding!
That reminded me of her
hugging David and poppin' her buttons
saying, "oh my buttons!"

Editor

Dennis Wilson

EDITOR FROM THE PAST

No Sirens Please

City halls
marooned with fez reverberate
Cucumbers very nice.
Lavender on the wall like grape jello
collects Autumn in sticky tins.

Neither sky nor ground poke a head up.
Someone puts down a coffee cup
too suddenly hot,
sniffs loose paper towel threads in the air
and notices.

A stash of instant rain
puffs rusted screen door pores
creasing faces.
Because of the parade traffic
is unusually thick,
but it moves down the street
past stalls of fruit
and cucumbers still somewhat green.

Clinging to Summer
like a sun dress limply clutching
a closet door knob,
ignoring the chill of Autumn
and the clinking aluminum finale of hangers,
I sink my big toe in knee deep water
and submerge fathoms toward the sun.

The sky unwinds flaxen thread
around pine tree spool reflections,
silt and cloud ripple blanketed.
Children scatter toward school like ants.
While cold gnaws Summer's fruit
with white chipped and jagged tooth
maple leaves dive red swirls to the ground.
Days fold chin to knees
huddled against evening's chill.
Tucked between mountain folds the river
raises a mist white cobra head.

I do not look,
heat from the sand warms.
The water licks rocky lips
tasting the stirred froth
of yellow, red and orange.
An apple bows into the dock.

Edith W. Durham

Editor 1979



Photo by Barbara A. Pastella

A STORY FOR SHANI

Lois Blumenthal

"Who are you?" the curly haired little girl finally asked me. I had been sitting on the dock by the lake. I was there every afternoon thinking and writing my stories. The short imp had been there watching me for the past three days. I had noticed her and immediately returned to my words. But now she wanted me to get involved with her. "Who are you?" such a simple but complex question.

"I am the doorway." I told her because that was the direction that my mind had taken.

"The doorway to what?" Suzanne asked impatiently.

"Oh, to other worlds." I answered. "To paradise. To hell. To wherever you want to go. I am the doorway." I smiled. I laughed.

She looked confused. "I tell stories." I added as the rain began to drop.

"Plop. Plop." it loudly claimed as it hit the frantic windblown lake.

"Come my dear." I led the child into the woods. It was dry there and warm as she slipped her hand into mine. She trembled as she heard a tiger roar. "Don't be afraid." I beckoned her. "The animals are my pets. They won't hurt you."

"Look, monkeys!" Suzanne shouted as she pointed to the top of the trees. "I don't understand. Those trees are purple!" she shrieked. She jumped up and down in excitement.

I led her out of the woods. "That's who I am," I told her.

"That was the beginning of my story." I fancy that I scared the youngster. She ran away with her short legs flying and her black hair dancing behind her.

I was surprised when the next day I found my little chubby-cheeked friend staring at the lake which glittered under the sunlight. "What's in the lake?" she asked.

"Another world." I explained. "I wish that I could take you to visit that one too."

"There are seahorses which swim around. Like land horses but they're happy to be free. They were once the horses of cowboys. But they were hurt that way. They were chained down and forced to obey human beings.

Finally the ones that had been beaten and whipped died. Their souls went into the wild, wild sea.

Mermen and Merwomen swim down there. They are truly equal. The Lord decided that all of the men and women who suffered through life and were always afraid and running and sad should finally have a time of peace and rest.

They're all equal. Women as much as the men. They all live for themselves and in helping others they please themselves. Made of love and friendship - the perfect community.

They dance with the horses and the fish. All live together and are so happy." I turned my eyes from the lake to look at my little companion. She was laughing. Freckled cheeks were flushed with joy. I put my hand on her head and ruffled her shining locks.

The child came to meet me at the lake every day. We'd walk through the woods and watch the roses that grew on golden vines as we climbed the purple trees.

"BARBIE"

I feel like a plastic doll with plastic boobs and hair that cuts but never grows.

I have unbending legs and unbending arms and fifties fashions made from sock toes.

I have painted on eyes and painted on lips and feet bent to fit heeled shoes.

I have no mind and have no brains and alone in my shoebox, I always lose.

Barbara A. Pastella

I told Suzanne that I loved her. She in turn loved me, and we walked on together through my world of fantasy.

On the path lined with gold, we walked through the forest. Suzanne grew to trust my tigers and instead of clinging tightly to my hand or wrapping her arms around my waist, she dared to rush out of the path and roll on the ground at the cat's side. We danced with the tigers and rode on their wide backs through the jungle.

Suzanne cried when she got blisters on her thighs from the rubbing against the soft yellow fur. I was surprised. The tiger was sorry and he rolled in the mud in penance. Suzanne didn't ride again.

Once we met a man from Venus. He had three eyes and five ears - the better to perceive us with. As he talked to us one of his seven hands would keep shooting out to catch a toad which he would hustle to one of his two mouths. Later Suzanne asked me why he had come. "He trusts me Suzanne. He knows that I would never hurt him, that I will accept him for what he is. He's my friend - just like you."

All too soon, though our play period would end. Suzanne would have to run back home. She always kissed me and pleaded for another story - just one more. One more and that would be it for the day.

One day Suzanne was late. I waited for her on the dock of the jagged crystal lake. She came but I was tired. "Suzanne I can't tell you a new story today."

"You can always tell stories!" she was puzzled. Tears came to her eyes.

"No I can't. I'm tired. I'm ill. My mind and imagination need to rest before they're totally drained. Sit down beside me and talk to me. Or I'll read you a story from my notebook."

"No!" she cried. "I've already heard those!" She grabbed my notebook away from my side. "If you don't tell me a new story I'll throw this into the lake!"

Tears dripped from my eyes as I feared the end had come. "Suz, Suz don't do that. You'll ruin it all if you do!" There, I had warned her.

"Please Suz I'm serious. If you throw the notebook I'll throw you right after."

She threw in the notebook.

I wept, she giggled as I lifted her over my head. She screamed when she realized my intention. "I warned you." I threw her in and out of Eden, my dreamland.

I dove in after her. I rescued her. But I left my notebook, for I knew that the things that I had written were wrong now and the truth of beauty and the truth of love and the truth of truth were lost forever.

We walked the forest path again for the last time. The golden border had turned to rock, rough and irregular. The tigers didn't come to us. They didn't growl, for you see there were no more tigers. Suzanne had killed them when she'd thrown them into the lake.

We both wept as we walked the dirt path. "Suzanne," I told her "I still love you. I'll love you forever, but you've spoiled the magic. Because of what happened today I have to leave.

"You're not she whom I thought you might be." Tears streamed from all four of our eyes. "I have to leave. I hope that you'll return to my memory and let it comfort you as you push through the false world of reality. Let my love give you strength."

"Goodbye my dear."

I turned around and left Suzanne hysterically sobbing on her path to home.

The End

Epileph for a Mugger

The only regret he has for his

life of sin

Is that he cannot take advantage of

what he now is in.

Andrew Askenfelder

The fool once again

Yes i say

it was i

and i'll shout it

from the roof tops

if it will make you happy

I'm the fool

i listened

i tried

i cared

i cried

it was i

once again

to all of you

Yes i say

the fool

I'm the fool

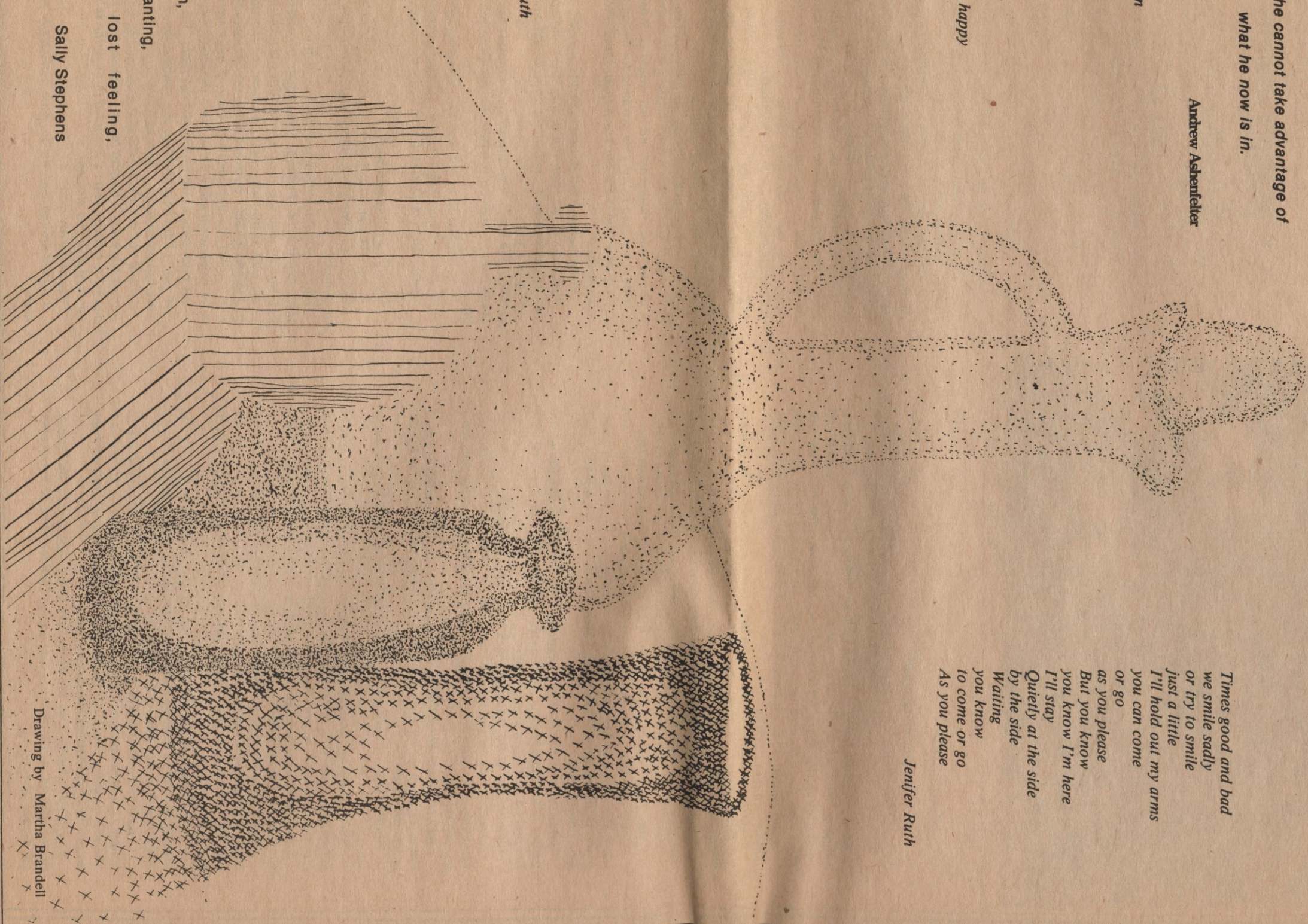
Jenifer Ruth

Times good and bad
we smile sadly
or try to smile
just a little
I'll hold out my arms
you can come
or go
as you please
But you know
you know I'm here
I'll stay
Quietly at the side
by the side
Waiting
you know
to come or go
As you please

Jenifer Ruth

I sigh a sad sigh,
But gentle.
It is a sigh of wanting,
Of yearning
To know a lost feeling,
Love.

Sally Stephens



Drawing by Martha Brandell



Photo by Ken Foster

CONFLICT WITH MYSELF

Shawn Bingman

I walk into the library and head toward my usual table, the old maple that is near the back of the library close to the window. My head begins to pound because I have a lot of homework to do tonight. That means I won't be able to work on my car. Damn!

I slam my books on the table so old Miss Pendleton will send me out with a week's notice to stay out of the library. But her nose is buried in her book. It's probably one of those crummy love stories where the girl is waiting for her handsome prince to sweep her off her feet onto his white stallion, and ride away to live happily ever after. But as big as Miss Pendleton is, he'd need a steam shovel. No wonder she isn't married. Who'd want to marry a Guernsey cow? Probably some frustrated near-sighted bull. So I sit reluctantly in my chair. I open my book and begin to read:

"Many one-celled organisms living in a fresh-water environment are equipped with special water-eliminating organelles known as..."

A noise interrupts my concentration. I lift my head to see what's happening. My heart stops. There before my eyes are you. You come in the library with your friends. I've been waiting to talk with you about going to the dance with me next Saturday night but I just haven't had the guts.

You sit down quietly like a lady and begin to study your biology. Beats me why you're so dedicated with studying. Biology is such a boring subject except between the right two people. There have been so many times when I've dreamed of us two together on some deserted island. You say you have been waiting for me all of your life. You say I'm such a great-looking guy. I say you're beautiful and then I take you into my arms and....

Will you listen to me? And I talk about Miss Pendleton with her love stories. But I don't care. I can't figure out why I like you, either. You're not a cheerleader or a majorette. Hell, you're not even in the band. Maybe it's your sureness of yourself. Or the way you walk, the clothes you wear and how great you look in them. Believe me, I've noticed that! So many times I have left biology class frustrated and angry because of that certain pink blouse you wear that looks like you were poured into it. Not to mention those tight blue jeans that are almost worn through.

You begin to talk that "girl talk" with your friends. I don't know anything about you except your name and how great you look in that pink blouse and jeans. Your name, itself, is something to remember. Kathy Wilson. Nothing flashy or provocative. It's pure and innocent like yourself.

I start to rehearse how I'm going to ask you to the dance. I'll go up to you and say, "What's happening?" No, that's too pushy. I could say, "Hello, it's a nice day out, isn't it?" Great! Now I sound like some pansy. How about, "You want to have a good time?" NO! NO! NO! It's all

wrong. Even if I would ask you, you wouldn't go with me. I'm not the greatest guy to look at. (So much for the dream, huh?) My hair is always out of place. I wear T-shirts and jeans instead of nice sweaters and pants. My shoes are always untied and muddy. I can't help it. I work on a farm so I can keep up the payments on my car.

My car. It has seen some better days but it's the only thing I have that I give a damn about. Next to you, that is, if I had you. You look so beautiful sitting there, like a Roman goddess. I must think how I'm going to get your attention. I could stand up and take off all my clothes and whistle Dixie but I'd only be laughed at and expelled. I could do something to make you laugh, like make milk come out my nose. Everybody always laughs when I do that. But then again, the way you are, you might throw up.

I can't think. God, help me think. Why do I ask You? I don't even believe in You. I've never been able to see You. And going to church and sitting on a hard bench for an hour, listening to some strange man with a big mouth telling me how much of a sinner I am, just doesn't appeal to me. Believe me, I get enough of that from my folks.

I know what I'll do. I'll call you tonight. Yeah, that's what I'll do. But then again, if I do call, your old man will probably answer, call me some moron, and tell me never to call you again. Typical father, I guess.

Why am I thinking about you when I should be studying my biology? Then again, the hell with biology. I love you. Wow! Will you listen to this? I just started thinking about you ten minutes ago. It can't be love. Then again, why not? I've seen you so many times before. It can't be love. According to Hustler magazine, it's only an infatuation. The hell with Hustler magazine, it's love.

I know what I'll do. I'll just stand up and walk over to you and just ask you. Wait! Here comes Tony Marcioni. He's the toughest, coolest, athletic guy in school. He's even a senior! He's going over to talk to you. He says something to you and you laugh. Leave it to the popular guys to be comedians, too. I know some jokes too, but I don't think they're the kind you'd appreciate. Especially if you're a Polish Jew.

You say something to your friends. Their eyes get big and they start to get big grins on their faces. You get up and walk out of the library with him. With his arm around your shoulders, too. Damn! It's bad enough that you're walking out of the library with him but does he have to maul all over you, too? He'll probably ask you to the dance. And you'll probably accept. You bitch! You both deserve each other as far as I'm concerned. Who needs you anyways? I've got my car.

Just go to that dumb dance with him. Dances are for snobs anyways. I hope he steps on your feet so many times that you have to have both feet amputated. And I hope he gets a flat tire on the way home and your father bitches at the both of you. You both deserve it. See if I care.

Well, if I'm going to work on my car tonight, I better study this biology. *"Many one-celled organisms living in a fresh-water environment are equipped with special water-eliminating organelles known as..."*

The End

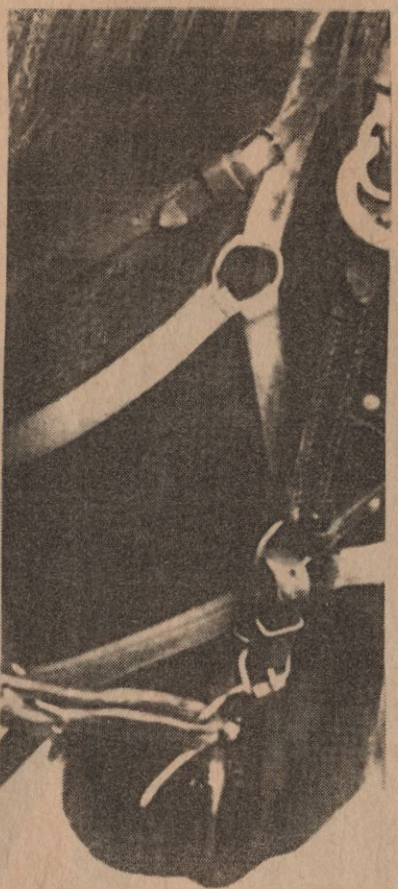


Photo by Ken Foster

Love

Songs are precious to my ear,
Things are simpler when you're near,
The wind calls softly out to me,
A different light shines bright and free.

My problems seem to disappear,
Joy and happiness replace my fear,
Life has more meaning since you came,
I find myself calling out your name.

Is this what love is?

Gayle Sidelnick

YOU ARE MY PARADISE

As the weekend draws to an end,
My mind is taken to your idea of paradise.
Even though you're not here to defend,
I believe in its beauty and tranquility.
Most of the details that belong with your place
Have been shuffled around in time and forgotten.
Now, I remember the exuberant glow of your face,
Laughing as you told me about it.
That thought makes lost details enough,
To drift my dreams away from here,
And I can picture us walking and talking and stuff.
Our hearts free, one to touch the other.
Here, we could walk until we find a spot to be alone,
Most likely under a quiet tree,
Or maybe in the opening of a few giant stones.
But it really makes no difference, just so we are together.
To spend a day with you,
Whether in the city, by the shore, or in peaceful Maine,
Is my idea of getting through.
Yes, you are my paradise.
Making up stories and singing love songs are two of my details.
Just sitting together, talking, listening, crying, laughing,
Are some of the things that never fail.
And the look in your eyes makes everything right.
Paradise, a place to follow my heart and not my head.
A place to show you who I am.
Better than going home, rather stay there instead.
With you, because you are my paradise.

L.R.Y.

TAKE A TRIP

J. Ebo Oluwa

It is often expressed that monotony kills interest while variety is the spice of life. If there's any substratum of truth in this expression, then what will five minutes mean to you if that's what it costs to travel to Africa while sitting complacently on your couch?

Sitting up here in my little stuffy summer room in the United States, I feel like shaking off the nostalgia by reflecting on those happy moments when I celebrated the "Ukwata" feast with my family and friends.

The Ukwata feast is celebrated by Beneku Community of Bendel State of Nigeria every mid-February. It lasts for four days. It is a traditional festival designed to bring Beneku sons and daughters at home and abroad to an annual get-together. The four days are cramped with a series of exciting activities which follow a chronological sequence.

At about 4 p.m. the first day, everybody drives to the market square. It is an opportunity to know and talk to people. Those who have not seen each other for years cannot control their excitement, which now wells up into an explosion of hi's, hello's, copious shouts and a crisis of warm hugging. Some even weep for joy.

A seven-gun-salute serves as a harbinger to herald the emergence of the Ukwata masquerader. The guns are deafening and what do you expect of little kids at this point? Clutching their mothers and wanting to hide under their skin for fear - a lamb takes after its mother. In a flash, and coming from no where, the Ukwata masquerader emerges. Beautifully dressed from hair to toe, is a fine young man of average height, supposedly pure in spirit, crime-free and a good dancer.

The mask is rectangular in shape, comprising bows, arrows, swords and guns at the four corners. In the middle is a young and beautiful lady with her arms wrapped over her children, looking straight up to the sky as if calling down God's peace onto the children. To avoid any complicating details, it will suffice to say that the mask is symbolic of love and peace and total defense of what is yours. The mask rests on the head of the carrier with a multi-colored velvet material embroidered with various designs

hanging down to the chest. Around the waist is another different skirt-like material that stops at the knee. It is called "mbenuku." As the dancer swings round, the mbenuku flies round his waist forming an interesting circumference. On both ankles are metal gongs that give rhythm to every one of his movements.

The shout of joy, admiration of the mask's beauty, his dynamic movements, and the perfect blend of the musical instruments convert the market square into a lamborne of pandemonium. Soldiers and police throw the crowd into a backward stampede but the surging crowd would only yield for a moment as everybody strives to achieve maximum satisfaction from the masquerader.

The dance lasts for two hours. Everybody goes home with the market square's activities forming the centre of discussion. From this period to the fourth day there are usually sumptuous meals, inter-visitations, dressing, discoing, and traditional dances. This is also the period that young talents make their successful debuts.

On the fourth day, everybody ranging from 10-40 years of age, start a rally at 7 a.m. round the streets, nooks and corners of the city. This rally is accompanied with melodious songs chanted to the rhythm of the stamping feet made possible by short jogging steps. This is very exciting. It makes for oneness. Little kids cannot wait until they are ten to join the rally. Older people curse their age and wish they were young again.

At 4 p.m. the last day, the Ukwata masquerader makes his final appearance for the year. His dance this time is vigorous and exciting but very transcendent. In half an hour, he is gone. Everybody yells for more, but man, you have to wait until the following year. Almost simultaneously, scheduled wrestlers engage in an open wrestling match. This is where skills and muscles come to play. What luck if you win yourself fame by not being beaten. The Community Scholarship for that year is yours. In case you've not had a girl friend before, be prepared to pick up one of those beautiful and sweet things who will pay you close compliments since you will be the cynosure of all eyes.

People then sing and dance at bars, discotheques, bandstands and you name it! Booze and bugging are the answers 'til dawn. If your job is important to you, you then prepare to go back to work or you'll be fired! It is my hope that this piece will make interesting reading for you.

The End

MADRID

*She awakens with the sun only to recall her
restless evening of children trembling and dogs
barking
Never was there a moment silent without screaming
cars and zooming motorcycles.
Her nasty odor lingers on...morning to morning.
She has a morning greeting;
mothers...arms full with babies; "Senorita,
dinero por favor."
"No tengo mas."
The baby cries with poverty written on his face!
Trash in the streets; on coffee shop floors!
Garbage; food for cats - playground for children.
She weeps...cries...never is she quiet.
Apartments are piled sky high - one on top
of the other, yet she is so busy - crawling
with people.
Overwhelmed with construction sites...building,
building!
Dirty, dusty, hungry men - adding to the hungry
children.
She never sleeps - never a moment silent,
Poverty, pollution,
Cars, cats,
Wining, weeping, crying,
Morning to morning.*

Marie P. Worth

The Shower

A rush of water soothes my ears.
First cold, then warm, and finally hot
Sensations pierced darts of pleasure spurt
over my head,
Rinsing my worries away
My neck and shoulders tingle with delight,
While tiny droplets glisten in the light.
Around my legs the spiral staircase goes,
Winding around each one of my toes,
Escaping me, only to get caught in the
river
Swirling down the drain.

Julie Story

Perfection

Perfection, when it's best
Always tantalizes fear
Tampering with man's respect for,
The lonely, unsolved
Innocence of death

Keep it safe within your heart
Involve it in your many morals
Even if it shatters glassblown worlds
For to keep it safe
Encompasses an innocence, a
Riveting perfection.

Patte

gamble

Hearts, Spades
discarded minds
clubbed with razored diamonds
betting all they could bear to lose
at once.

Patte



Photo by Ken Foster

AGING

The Jack-O-Lantern the kids had
made was rotting. The top was
shrinking and no longer fit as it did
before. The eyes were empty. They
sagged and were no longer
triangles. The mouth turned in like
someone without any teeth. Its
teeth were pushed in. It was such a
happy grin before when the candle
was lit and made the face glow.
Now when you look in it there are
shadows of mold.

The children don't want to look
at it anymore.

Carole E. Kinley

I owe you a debt.
 A debt which I can never repay.
 Once again
 I can hold my head high in the air.
 I can stand tall.
 I can think clearly.
 You are the reason for this.
 I can never forget.
 Once again
 I can learn to love,
 And I can love
 You.

Sally Stephens

A single voice distinguished by the silence.
 A lonely trumpeter stands gaily on the hill.
 A tear to recollect past days of searching triumph.
 At last he earns what he has tried to kill.
 The song birds lift their heads in lofty chorus,
 Adjusting strength and pow'r to fit their cue.
 A sigh escapes his lips in pity for us,
 Exchanging vows of wishes longing too.
 His soul so soon to be his prison cell,
 Once captured by his pure and simple mind.
 His deeds had always been his own free will,
 Before determined by too cruel mankind.
 We mourn for all that stagnates being proper.
 The eulogy professes he was kind.
 When all he tried to do was justly conquer
 Society's vast wilderness of crime.

Sally Stephens

Haiku

*Furly of water
 feathers, legs disappear
 lessening of ripples.*

*Sunlight bursts
 through a rotted window frame
 meeting with the dust and floor.*

*Explorations of
 a track by a cricket
 end with the 3:15.*

*Tide breaks on dark rocks
 as a struggling sand crab rests
 on the wet earth.*

*Snarling wolverines
 rapidly gnash their sharp teeth
 while a hamster yawns.*

By Andrew Asnenfelter

*And Then There Were None
 The throngs are gone
 Hidden in their shelters
 caves dungeons
 dismal dungeons of their own design
 darkness lit by incandescence
 false illuminations
 false gods idols dolls
 blindly believing
 a shallow satisfaction
 in a glittering cave
 dungeon
 chained by false modesty
 false hope
 blind faith
 their eyes tear in the sun
 cursing the light
 its purity truth
 they wither and wonder
 until then there were none.*

Jennifer Ruth

Candle Light

A shiny and flickering,
 Hypnotizing glow.
 Red, orange, yellow, white and blue,
 Colors dancing to and from view.
 Warming, soothing, or jumping alive,
 Filling a room with an aura of light.
 Sometimes destroying,
 For it is man who starts the flame.

Unkind

A person not too bright
 But full of inner pride,
 Has a heart that's been turned down
 Too many times.
 Unkind people jeering,
 Untamed by human dignity,
 Destroyed into shame.

The Shower

A rush of running water soothes my ears.
 First cold, then warm, and finally hot
 Sensations pierce my skin.
 Little darts of pleasure spurt over my head,
 Rinsing my worries away.
 My neck and shoulders tingle with delight,
 While tiny droplets glisten in the light.
 Around my legs the spiral staircase goes,
 Winding around each one of my toes,
 Escaping me, only to get caught in the river
 Swirling down the drain.

In the Lights

Listen to the beat, the rhythm, and the rhyme.
 Count the measures, read notes, and times.
 Stomp your feet, and clap your hands.
 Sway to the music, and dance to and fro.
 After all, you are the star of the show.

All by Julie Ann Story

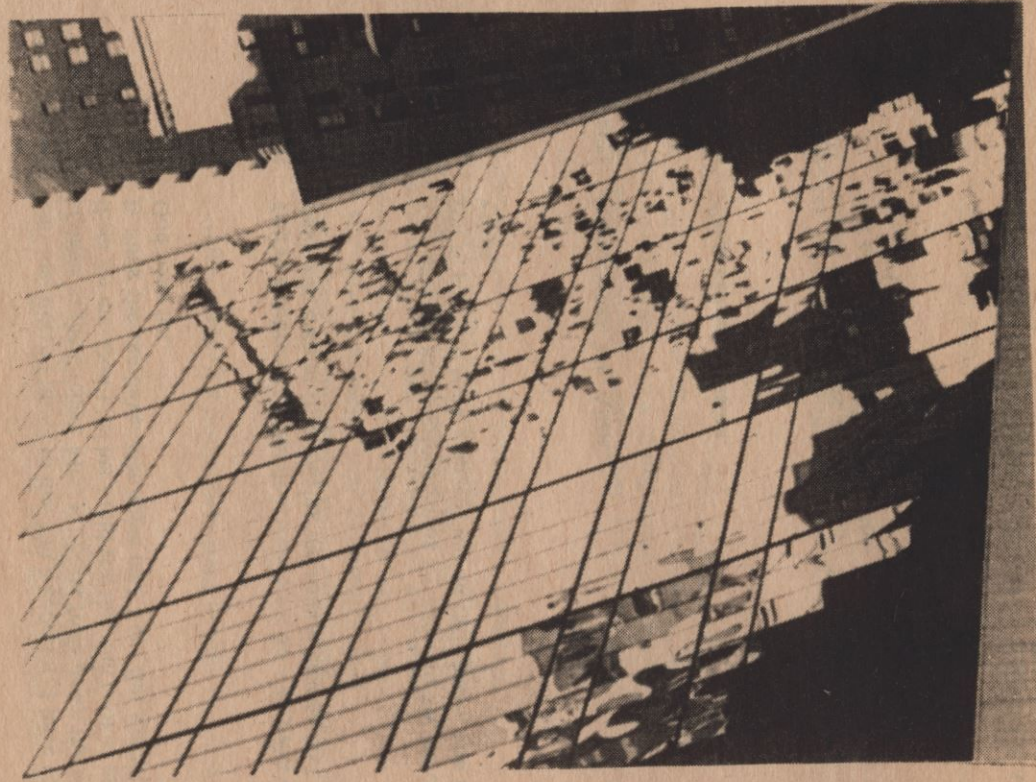


Photo by Ken Foster

FIT OF ANGER

The pressure was too much. She couldn't rewrite the damn paper. The kids wouldn't stop fighting. The grape juice stain on the carpet looked darker.

"God damn it all. What's the use."

She threw the notebook against the panelled wall. The family portrait fell to the floor. The glass broke, but the picture was not harmed.

Seven year old Scott picked it up and put the notebook on the table as he smiled at his mother.

Carole E. Kinley

THE LAST DANCE

A young girl dances alone on a crowded dance floor. Her heart cries out for love, while her mind desperately tries to sooth it. Her eyes travel from each single man to the next, mapping out their potential love affairs. Her lips are wet with the words of wanting someone, anyone, to save her. They each come to her, one by one, asking for a dance. For everyone of them, her eyes beg for holding and caressing. When the music stops, so do her chances. They all turn around and walk the other way.

After hours of torment, it is time for the princess to leave the ball. She walks painfully to the door without ever looking back. She has left no glass slipper behind tonight. Slipping out into the dark, lonely night, her riches become rags; her carriage, a mere pumpkin. A tear rolls down the cheek of this abandoned woman. She sits on a deserted bench, under an old lamppost, to collect herself before going home to face the emptiness. Her thoughts drift to another time and place, only to be startled by a kind voice from the opposite side of the street. The footsteps move closer and soon a face appears through the mist. The tender figure speaks, "I believe we shared a dance earlier." She smiles sweetly. He takes her by the hand, gently helping her to her feet. They join in a dance, stepping to the beat of memories from this evening. Sprinkles of midnight rain fall, covering them with love. He softly kisses her cheek. They gaze at one another for an hourly minute, then turn to walk, arm in arm, into the clear night.

L.R.Y.

FOR K. MICHAEL "MISCHIEF"

*You were the king of the crowd,
Always at the lead, but never too loud.
You let the others make the noise.
They were the ones who played with your toys.*

*You would put up a good fight,
If the time was good and the cause was right.
You made some go through imaginary bereavement,
And all you did was use the silent treatment.*

*You were the smartest guy in my class,
But you always managed not to pass.
You quit school.
Of course, I knew it was just to be cool.*

*You had beautiful hair.
I used to comb it when we sat in there.
You let only me touch it.
It didn't bother you a bit.*

*You threw worms at me once,
And then we fought for months.
You got so mad at me on that Field Day,
Even though you knew I was right in a way.*

*You were the successful one -
The one who died while having fun.
You knew that's how you would go -
On a nice day, with no snow.*

*You didn't say good-bye -
I'm not saying that you lied.
You would do it that way again,
Just to hear all your friends say Amen.*

L.R.Y.

THE COLLECTOR

CAROL KINLEY

MIKE BARTLETT

Scene-- New York City loft apartment. The walls are lined with nearly three thousand plastic milk crates filled with paper. A middle-aged man, RANSTON ALLEN, sits at a small desk, leafing through thousands of 3x5 file cards in the drawers of the desk. The desk is the only piece of conventional furniture in the room. The doorbell rings.

Ranston: (going to the door and peering through the peep-hole) Who is it?

Woman: IRS, Mr. Allen. May I come in and talk to you for a moment?

Ranston: (fumbling with an elaborate system of lock on the door) IRS? Internal Revenue? You want to see me? (He opens the door, revealing a young woman)

Woman: I'm Stacy Haladreti, Mr. Allen of the IRS. May I come in?

Ranston: Sure. Of course. Sure. Where are my manners? I'm not used to visitors anymore. Please forgive me, Miss Haladreti. Come in. Can I get you anything to drink? Coffee? Tea? I just brewed a pot of tea, but coffee's no trouble. Please sit down -- (he looks around the room) -- on the chair by the desk. (it is the only chair in the room)

Stacy: Thank you. Nothing for me, thanks. Mr. Allen, I've come to talk to you about your tax returns.

Ranston: Please call me Ranston, Miss Haladreti -- Stacy?

Stacy: According to our records, you haven't filed a tax return since 1962.

Stacy: Oh, no. That's not true. I file everything the Government of these United States sends me. I keep them in these orange Mountain Farms Dairy crates. There's a story in every form, I always say.

Stacy: I don't understand. You mean you keep the forms? Here?

Ranston: Of course. Are you sure you don't want any tea?

Stacy: But didn't you read the forms? Didn't you see that you were supposed to send them back to the IRS?

Ranston: Oh, that doesn't apply to me. I'm a collector. I have some good cookies in the kitchen. Mrs. Broloski from down the hall baked them for me. Don't tell her I told you this, but cookies are the only thing she can bake. Her apple pie? Yuk. But she means well. God bless her.

Stacy: You're a collector? What does a collector do -- and why does that make you exempt from paying the federal income tax?

Ranston: You certainly are a serious young woman. No tea, no cookies -- you're going to work yourself into an early grave, you mark my words.

Stacy: (exasperated) Mr. Allen...

Ranston: Please call me Ranston.

Stacy: ...you didn't answer my question. This is a very serious matter, this not filing income tax returns. How do you justify violating the tax laws?

Ranston: (perplexed) I told you, Stacy. I did file them. (going to a stack of orange plastic crates) They're right here. Right with the pamphlets on insulating your home, the census papers, and all the other writings of Uncle Sam. I told you, I'm a collector.

Stacy: A collector. What is a collector? What does being a collector have to do with not paying taxes?

Ranston: Why, everything, Stacy! A collector is a person who collects. Some collectors collect antique clocks or postage stamps or cars or illnesses -- I collect literature?

Stacy: (pulling a pad and pencil from her briefcase) Let me get this straight. You collect literature and you consider tax forms literature?

Ranston: (grinning with excitement) Now you've got it, Stacy, now you've got it. Old Man Blackmore down the hall says all young people are stupid, but I always tell him people your age are smart as a whip.

Stacy: (blushing) Thank you very much. Please tell me about your collection.

Ranston: (excited) You're really interested! You are! Blackmore says people aren't interested in old farts like us anymore. Pardon the French, Stacy. Wait'll I tell Blackmore about you. He's a socialist, you know. Crazy as a loon.

Stacy: But how can tax forms be literature? They're written by machines, computers.

Ranston: (shaking his head in pity) Blackmore's right about one thing, though. Modern schools aren't worth a plug nickel. Did you go to college, Stacy?

Stacy: I went to Penn State. I was a business major.

Ranston: Penn State! And a business major! Stacy, you should know with your background how important computers are. You should realize how smart they are. They have their own language, you know. So why shouldn't they have their own literature? No reason at all that they shouldn't. I never went to college and I figured that out. But it isn't your fault you didn't know. Old Man Blackmore's right, school just isn't worth a damn anymore.

Stacy: Well, they sure don't teach anything about this computer literature of yours. But they do teach people to obey the tax laws. Don't you know you could go to jail for ot filing? You could go to jail for a long time.

Ranston: Oh, I can't go to jail. There wouldn't be anybody to collect literature. I'm the only one.

Stacy: The world will just have to stumble along a little slower.

Ranston: Oh, no. I'm afraid that wouldn't do at all. You see, I'm the only collector. There would be noone to carry on for future generations.

Stacy: (jumping up from her chair and waving her pad and pencil) I don't think you're listening to me! Not filing an income tax return is very serious.

Ranston: Now, now, Stacy, don't get all upset. This thing can't be all that important. Surely it's not worth getting emotional. Are you sure you won't have some tea?

Stacy: Well, all right. I can see I'm going to be here for a while. (she flops down in her chair as if defeated)

Ranston: That's it. Make yourself comfortable. The tea will calm you down. I'll go and get it. Cream and sugar?

Stacy: (sighing) Yeah, a little of both.

Scene II

Stacy: (looking through her tax books and notes) There's got to be something in here about collectors. I've had some real crazies, but this guy is something else. Oh, here. Collectors...Antiques, Autographs, Bottles, Clocks, Coins, Dishes, Dolls, License Plates, Miniatures, Pottery, Jewelry, Toys, Watches...Damn, there's nothing in here about literature collections. There's books, but what Ranston has are not books. (she turns to another

page in her notes) Oh here, "if the client has a collection of something other than the items listed above, fill out Form 1197C listing the collection and its value." (she searches through her briefcase for Form 1197C. Ranston re-enters the room. He pulls up an empty crate and places the tea and cookies on it in front of Stacy)

Stacy: Thank you very much.

Ranston: Ah, you seem much more relaxed. You're quite welcome. It is so nice to have company.

Stacy: (stirring her tea) Don't you get many guests?

Ranston: Oh, no. Once I show people my collection they never come back. I guess it makes them nervous to be in the same room with so much literature.

Stacy: How about Mrs. Brolloski and Mr. Blackmore? Don't they drop by?

Ranston: No, no. I have to go see them. They've only been here once.

Stacy: (She drinks down her tea. She becomes uneasy again) Well, I really must get to business. Could you answer some questions for me about your collection, please?

Ranston: Why, certainly. Anyone who's interested in my collection may ask as much as and whatever they like.

Stacy: OK. What is your full name?

Ranston: Ranston Charles Allen.

Stacy: Address?

Ranston: 1404 Barkley St. Apartment 311.

Stacy: Social Security number?

Ranston: Let me see... (he walks to his desk and removes a card from a file drawer) 121-37-8194.

Stacy: Now we're getting somewhere. Are you married or single?

Well, I was married, but my wife left me after I started collecting.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Charging the Campfire

The campfire is burning low
it needs charging. The glow
is turning to soot black the
sparkle is out of its flame.
It is dying fast.
With one great hack my axe
swung, lowered, angled up
and wizzed again.
I had no pity. They were corpses
anyway and I was just seeing
to the remains. Remains
that bled the silvers
I chopped out.
But I had my heart to think of.
I cut them up.
I carried them home.
I ranked them home.
I ranked them. I ranked them
with care so as to
have the best one that I could find
on the floor, by the fire, at bedtime,
to keep the fire going all night.
I used all
that I chopped up
(twigs, limbs, crochets)
and they gave me a warmth
as if they had no other
reason for ever having
lived or died.

"Your Unshore"

I think
Is ee
An atom
Y
One zero
In ginommeting
L ing my
O wnsen ses
Ve ry muchun
free

You
Run
Shure

"Your Sin"

Your sin has cast my eyes
Downward
To a twig that, as I step on it,
Breaks
In two, as your sin has broken me
From you.

All by Mike Glantz

The Collector Continued

Stacy: OK. Are you divorced?

Ranston: No. No, we've just been separated for 26 years.

Stacy: So that's how long you've been collecting.

Ranston: Actually, it has been more like 30 years. At first I just dabbled in it. I wasn't serious about it at first. Until I began to feel the value in it, that is. That's when I quit my taxi cab job. Shortly after that my Mary left me. But that's the way things go, you know. She was a good woman.

Stacy: You mean you quit working?

Ranston: Yeah, you see at first it was OK to have the taxi. I could drive all over picking up fares and literature. But then it started getting in the way --the job that is. I knew I would need more time for the collection. You see, collections have little meaning when they are just tossed into a box or dresser drawer. It becomes a collection only when it has developed a meaning and a purpose.

Stacy: I'm afraid I'm a little confused.

Ranston: Well, let me explain. You see, collections must be properly organized, cared for, displayed, and annotated. I couldn't do this right while I was driving taxi.

I am
st-
nking
d
o
w
n
farther
a
n
d
farther
a
n
d
farther
d
n
till
I
am
under
the
table
The
Table

Handwritten signature: M. Glantz

Stacy: So you don't have a job. (she writes on the form)

Ranston: Oh, my, it certainly is a job! You see, first I must label the specimen with a number written on adhesive tape or these gummed papers. (he reaches around her to the desk and holds the tape and paper for her to examine) Then I write down where it was found, when, and its condition. Specimens are carried home in a protective plastic bag. I only take them out of the plastic to read them. Once I get them filed I put all my notes on these cards and I put the cards in this file. (he points) It's really time consuming. No time to drive the cab. But you know, that's just the way it is. (he laughs)

Stacy: OK, then what is the title of this occupation?

Ranston: Title?

Stacy: (she refers to her book) Well, for example...here, people who collect coins are called numismatists. And people who collect stamps are called philatelists.

Ranston: Well, my...I don't really know.

Stacy: Well, what are other people who collect literature called?

Ranston: I don't know. You see, there is nobody else. I'm the only one.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

J.E.M.

*She who holds me in her silence,
 Bestows gentle moments unsurpassed,
 As smile lending itself to heaven,
 Tranquility soothing a tortured soul;
 To this I pay tribute to existence,
 Hope emerging from shattered dreams,
 Destiny holding time motionless,
 As the seeds of hope are planted today.*

The Encounter

*An encounter foreseen in dreams,
 Began as I passed a smile,
 To her eyes in needless haste,
 Never noticing her soft presence;
 Only upon reflection recalling,
 My mistake undertaken in innocence,
 These words being my only reminder,
 Of a time capuled moment no longer here.*

Yours In March

*I dreamed eternity in your presence;
 Lonely nights bowing to softly spoken words;
 Bringing comfort but to my nightmares;
 As the seeds of chaos gathered.*

*For these moments I cling to your breaths;
 As the sweet nectar of gods nourished me;
 Leaving an aftermath not so final;
 As the winds of destiny subsided.*

*Now now I surrender to celestial music;
 As the throngs of love have envisioned;
 Only to relinquish themselves to reality;
 As the shrapnels of loneliness again reside.*

*A second death maybe not my existence;
 Dreaming instead a genesis in your presence;
 Only finding captured magical moments;
 Transcending the eternal briars of hope.*

The Awakening

*Awakened by a dream prophetic,
 She startled me with her kindly glance,
 As my interest shifted boldly,
 To her princess like regality;*

*Stacy I then flew to lands far beyond,
 Where fairytales are more than stories,
 A young lady deliciously complete,
 Not just the simple girl in a white dress.*

*In the solitude of my cubicle
 I render softly spoken words
 To be used as a connection
 Of a fragile heart searching;
 My metamorphosis almost complete
 As a butterfly emerges from despair.*

Allen Robert

The Collector Continued

Stacy: OK, let's skip that for now. What is your yearly income?

Ranston: I don't have a yearly income.

Stacy: So how do you live?

Ranston: Well, my son sends me money. He's quite wealthy. He's a computer programmer. I'm very proud of him. I don't see much of him though. I guess he's very busy. But he must care, because he does send me money. I do wish he'd take more of an interest in the collection. I know he won't take care of it when I'm gone. That's my one worry. Well, maybe one of these days he'll come around.

Stacy: (she grabs a cookie and chews it impatiently) So now. How about the value.

Ranston: Oh, yes. It certainly does have a value.

Stacy: Good. OK, here we go. How much?

Ranston: A great deal.

Stacy: But how much in figures? You know, monetary value.

Ranston: (he laughs) Oh, I couldn't begin to say.

Stacy: (she looks away from her paper) Just estimate it. Round it off to the nearest hundred.

Ranston: Oh, I couldn't possibly put a monetary value on it.

Stacy: Why? Just what is this a collection of?

Ranston: It's literature.

Stacy: What the hell do you mean literature!

Ranston: Stacy, you're getting upset again.

Stacy: (she gets up and walks around looking at the labels. She reads them aloud) Poetry, Fiction, Prose, Exposition, Novel, Persuasive Essay... There's so much here. But what is it?

Ranston: Oh, this is just a small part. These are the most recent specimens. See, I file them here temporarily. Eventually they go into this room. (he walks through a short hall and motions for her to follow) Come along. I think it's time you saw the permanent collection. (he opens two double doors into an enormous room filled with crates)

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

window

why do you stare?
the window is black at night

raining reflections
thrown back in your face
insane imperfections -
dreaming of another place
caught behind cold glass -
the dancing drifter
drowning in the rain -
outside and locked in

tomorrow has gone insane
tangled in the wind

clouded mind
crowded loneliness
caught me from behind -
deep in the storm
the eye of the holder
the urge to conform -

thunder from nowhere
lightning out of sight
sunrise setting
the morning of another night

why do you care?
yesterday is almost out of sight -

gentle

a gentle blue sky
surrounds your space-
in it you rise

and fall like a feather-
slow and drifting
in the wind

somewhere

in the crowded room - emptiness
fills the naked space still
waiting - only to be taken
filled with thoughts searching
memories - hoping to find feelings
lost in the mind - somewhere -

dawn

the night shattering radiance
of a defiled born day
climbs into the mistimed morning
conceived in a chilling breeze
and left floating adrift
on unavigable seas -

an ardent reflection
left by impassioned aurora
falls on infernal imperfection
engendered by lost innocence
on the compelling waves
of raging storms -

the dancing waters
whispering to immortality
cast worn out senses
to bleeding daughters
warned of immorality
by the wisdom of the wind -

uncontrollable urges
flushed by salt water tears
sink back into the darkness
covering underlying emotions
and naked fears
with a drowning domination -

the dawn genesis
born out of lustful temptation
rises as a mask of desire
in the sun's crystal prysm rays
above the white washed tide
and the drifting purity it portrays -

All by T. M. W.

The Collector Continued

SCENE III

Ranston: You could write your story and let people know how important you are.

Ranston: This is my library. Here I can keep track of my literature better. Let me show you my filing system. (he leads her to a huge roll-top desk) It's all cross-referenced. Look. (he opens a drawer) In here are listings for all the literature containing more than five characters and having a young black woman executive as the central character. (he points) In that drawer you find listings for all the literature about dragons with less than three heads. It's all here.

Ranston: Here. Sit right down here. Here's a pen and a piece of paper. You just sit right down here and show me how well you can write about how important you are.

Stacy: Why do you do all this? Who's it for?

Stacy: Damn right I will.

Ranston: Why do you work for the Department of Internal Revenue? Wait. Let me look. (he thumbs through the drawers) Yes. I have five literatures about women investigators working for the IRS.

Stacy: Only five? Only five in this whole mess? That sure doesn't sound like very many.

Ranston: I was hoping you'd say that.

Stacy: What I do is important to this country. Without people like me there wouldn't be any social services. There wouldn't be any NASA or CIA. There wouldn't be any anything.

THE END



Photo by Ken Foster

The miles that stand between us
Seem like more and more all the time.
But somehow I feel closer
With each day that goes by.

Maybe I shouldn't be saying this;
I probably have no right,
But I can't help the way that I feel,
The way that I feel inside.

I guess it's because I miss you
And think of you -
Countless times throughout the day and night,
That when I just want to hold you
Or hear you say my name,
I realize how far away you really are
And I just wish I could fly.

Maybe that sounds crazy,
But it definitely is true.
I only wanted to tell you
The way that I feel inside.

The miles seem to disappear
Whenever I hear your voice.
Your tone captures so many things
That I could never begin to write.

Maybe all of this will offend you.
It's just that somehow, you seem closer
Everytime we have the chance to talk.
Please understand, I had to tell you,
The way that I feel inside.

L.R.Y.

MEET THE CHALLENGE

Brenda Spence

October 1st, a bitter breeze encompassed the small hockey field. In the middle of the field a huddle of eleven players could be seen. This, the first game of the hockey season, held promise for several freshmen who were playing their first varsity college game. The huddled mass spread out as the referee blew her whistle.

Janice Messner, one such freshman, sprinted back to the goal cage to await the beginning bully. Clad in uniform and goalie pads, she shivered as the bitter wind cut through her. This was familiar weather to Janice for she had played many hockey games...

Fond memories drifted back to the young freshman as she stood tensed and eager. Her freshman year in high school was as fresh in her memory as if it were yesterday. She had picked up the hockey stick with ease. However, trying to do the drills she had become frustrated and ready to quit. Then she had been asked to be goalie by the coach. She laughed now as she remembered how she had sworn she would never be a goalie...those goalie pads...they were so awkward and big when she had put them on for the first time. Looking at her present kickers Janice remembered her first pair. The kids had called them "Mickey Mouse shoes" and the name had been appropriate. Hanging two sizes too big, they had sloppily covered the front half of Janice's feet, the mockery of the perfect fit required for protection.

Vividly she recalled seeing the goal cage for the first time in high school. The net, drab and torn with much use had been carefully mended, and now still hung in the cage as a tribute to all goalies of Brooksville High School.

Janice had been fearless as she stopped the hockey balls which were fired upon her. "A new toy," she thought, "I like this position." Janice was meant for the position and she savored the opportunity

to be goalie instead of a line player. Every shot on goal became a challenge to stop. With every game she challenged herself to perform better than she had ever performed before.

Her sophomore and junior years Janice remembered well. For those two years her name appeared on the area All-Star list. Certainly she would play in her senior year at Brooksville and eventually in Baldwin College.

Senior year came quickly along with the struggles of a child trying to find the woman within. Because of the struggle of growth and the fact that Janice started getting hurt in the cage, hockey threatened to become less important. She started asking herself if it was worth it everytime she received blows from balls that were shot at her. She hesitated to answer "yes."

A chill ran up her spine as the whistle started the game. Was it worth it? Was she really satisfied to play hockey at Baldwin College? Her senior year, yes, it had taken its toll. She remembered the pain of breaking her foot near the end of the season. The accident had happened during the Pottsville game. Janice had run out to slide tackle one of the opposing players. She got the ball but took the blow from an oncoming stick. Pain had torn through her foot and she realized it was not the pain of a bruise. She remembered how she had played that game and how she had led her team to the championship. But, she also remembered it was at that particular moment in her life when she had not answered "yes" to the question, "is it worth it?"

She remembered she had been afraid. For the first time in three years she had been afraid. She also realized that the fear of the ball acquired during the Pottsville game was something she had never overcome.

Another chill swept over Janice. Looking up she saw the front line of Spring Arbor players charging for her. "Challenge!" She thought. "Challenge yourself not to be afraid!" Fast...the ball was coming so fast! It was being pursued by a Spring Arbor center forward. She was sprinting like a wolf after its prey. Janice checked

OPEN DRAFTS

She put the logs into the wood stove and closed the door tightly. She opened the drafts completely. It was so cold in the room. Her head and body ached from the day's tension. She curled up with the afghan over her in front of the stove. Soon she would be warm.

She started to doze off to sleep as she heard it start to pump and thump. The heat became more intense. She watched it and listened. She wondered if it could explode. What would it look like? She tried to imagine. She wondered if she would have time to move, or would the flames engulf her.

Carole Kinley

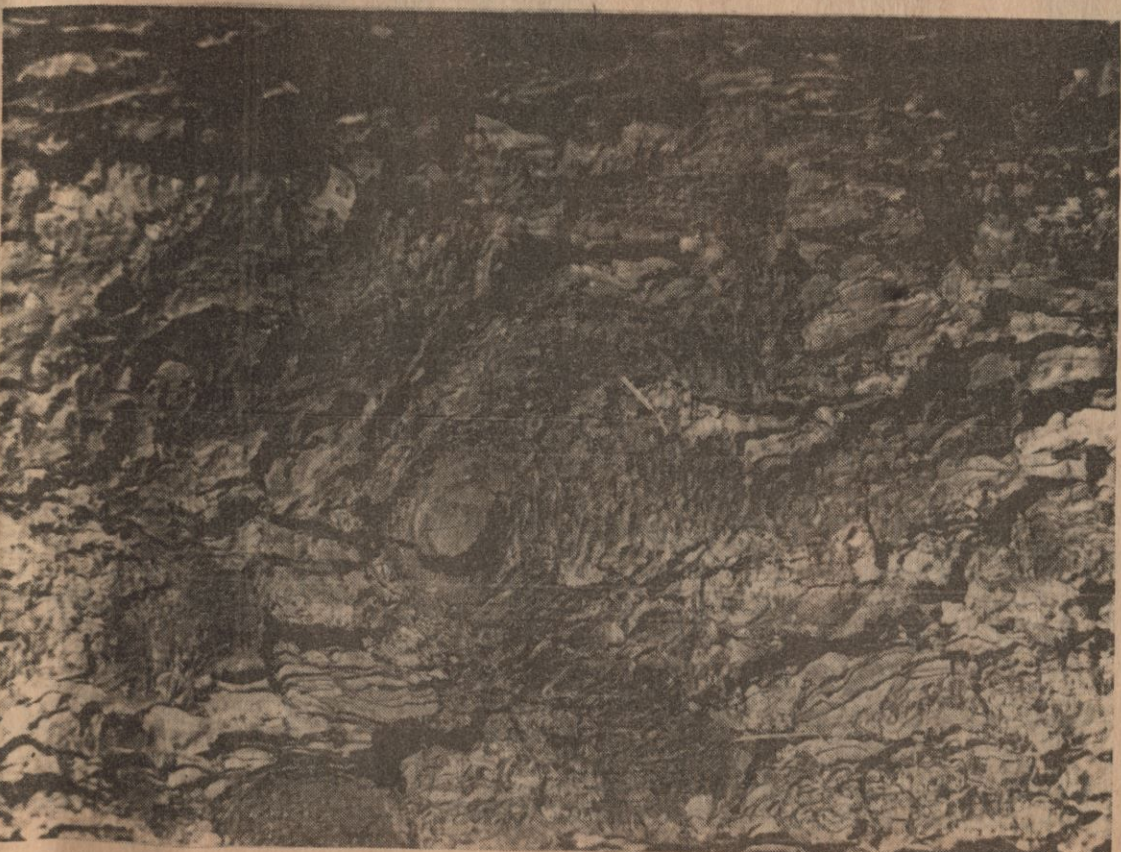


Photo by Barbara A. Pastella

MEET THE CHALLENGE

Continued from page 15

her angle and crouched for the shot. Sweat was streaming down her face as she screamed, "Mark!...Where's my defense?"

The Spring Arbor center forward was at the top of the striking circle. Janice saw her swing but she melted as the ball was propelled into the air. The five foot four inch goalie never saw the hurling sphere miss the cage. She only saw her fullback running to recover the stray ball.

"Please," she thought, "oh, please let time run out." Spring Arbor had regained control of the ball and were heading straight toward Janice. Screaming out loud, Janice pleaded, "Tackle!...Get the ball!"

Janice saw not only the Spring Arbor center forward but the whole wall of Spring Arbor's offense. Panic overcame her as the players crossed the fifty yard line and the twenty-five yard line. They were in the striking circle battling for control as the Baldwin defense tried to stop the onrushing wall of green. Janice's natural goal-tending abilities took over as she procured her angle and readied herself for the shot. "Twelfth grade," Janice thought...

Janice could remember the pain she had felt when she had broken her foot. Realization came back to Janice as she imagined the same ripping pain. "Please don't shoot," Janice was muttering to herself. "Please don't sh..." The halftime whistle blew and Janice limped off the field.

Coach Anderson did not say anything to Janice. But, then she did not have to. Everyone had seen Janice run to the opposite side of the goal cage for that last shot. "Challenge!" Janice told herself as she ran back onto the field. "Challenge yourself not to be afraid!"

The game rallied for the next twenty minutes. Within that time the play had remained between Baldwin's twenty-five yard line and the opposing twenty-five yard line. Janice looked at the referee and saw the timekeeper out of the corner of her eye. She knew the game was almost over and a sense of relief overwhelmed her. Then, as a sudden cloudburst, a Spring Arbor player broke through the mass of players.

"No," Janice thought. "Please don't shoot now." Baldwin's defense had not recovered and the Spring Arbor girl was sprinting down the field alone.

"Twelfth grade," Janice thought...For a fleeting moment Janice remembered another time when a single girl had come charging for the goal. Instinct had taken over then as Janice slide tackled, but the blow of the stick and the crunch as stick met foot and foot lost. A cold sweat gripped her.

Looking up Janice knew she should slide tackle the Spring Arbor player. Janice's feet seemed chained to the goal post. Trembling, she stood waiting like a steer ready to be slaughtered. Her goalie cage was no longer behind her. It enveloped her, caging her in like an animal.

"Challenge!" she thought, "Challenge yourself not to be afraid... Is it worth it?" Her foot throbbed with pain and the goal cage wouldn't let her loose. "Is it worth it? Challenge!" she thought.

With every stride the Spring Arbor girl took, Janice's fear became more intense.

"Challenge yourself!" Thoughts were racing through Janice's mind. "Challenge yourself...is it worth it?...senior year...pain...trapped..."

The Spring Arbor girl hammered the ball. As the ball spiralled in to the backdrop of the cage, Janice heard the final whistle.

Baldwin College had lost. The game was over. Deep within she knew her career had ended. She had in her agonized quest found the answer to the question, "Is it worth it?" "NO," Janice thought, "it isn't worth it."

Janice unbuckled her equipment and ceremoniously placed it in the goal cage. Walking from the field in a daze, she didn't hear her coach's shouts or her teammates' questions. She only heard herself, crying inside. Sure she could continue to play. But was it worth it? Could she stand in that cage game after game convincing herself she wasn't afraid?

"Challenge!" Janice thought once more. "Challenge yourself to be honest!"

The End

WHILE I WATCHED

Shawn is digging his own grave now
so he can die while still alive
Die young and die tragic
placed in your hands, you strangled life
with a smile on your face.

We tried to tell you what could be
you are of us not them
you listened then said something about
lights growing dimmer
of wars inside your head
how what we said
what we did
was so right
yet
so wrong.

The story of life now includes
your death
sadly
you wrote it yourself.

Evan Lance Petee

A COMMON PLACE

People are moving in, out, and around;
the morning licorice invites no one.

Social prestige in comfort conformity
points to the savage, eating raw
meat in the city square.
His eyes offer comic relief.

It's only common place to
watch.

The impelled coin has an excuse.
One of religion, or Pseudopity,
or an unconscious intention,
slightly relieved.

The impelled word has an excuse,
too. Something unclear, like
welfare or a sense of social
security. "Bargains days offer more."
Someone offered.

But the savage moved on.

Mari Craig

A Bag Lady's Dream

The old woman blundered about, the
bag in her hand; she walks in the night
giving pieces of sand.

Everyone looks frozen with warm
winter coats and she reaches into her
pocket and throws them her fuzzies.

When she gets tired she lays on the
steam and falls asleep on the night
before's dream.

She's dressed in an apron and scrubb-
ing her floor, singing a tune she knew
before.

Then she washes her linen and her cur-
tains too, and her mind is bogged with
so much to do.

But, all too quickly she's awake again,
walking around in the night, giving out
pieces of sand.

Mari Craig

AMERICAN GIRL

Herself at ten

Plays cowgirls and Indians
And blonde Betty Grables -
Daddy's little girl.

Miss at twenty
Does lady-like things,
Thinks great thoughts,
And waits for the "knight."

Mrs. at thirty

Now she is wife,
Mother, and socialite.
Death is a thought.

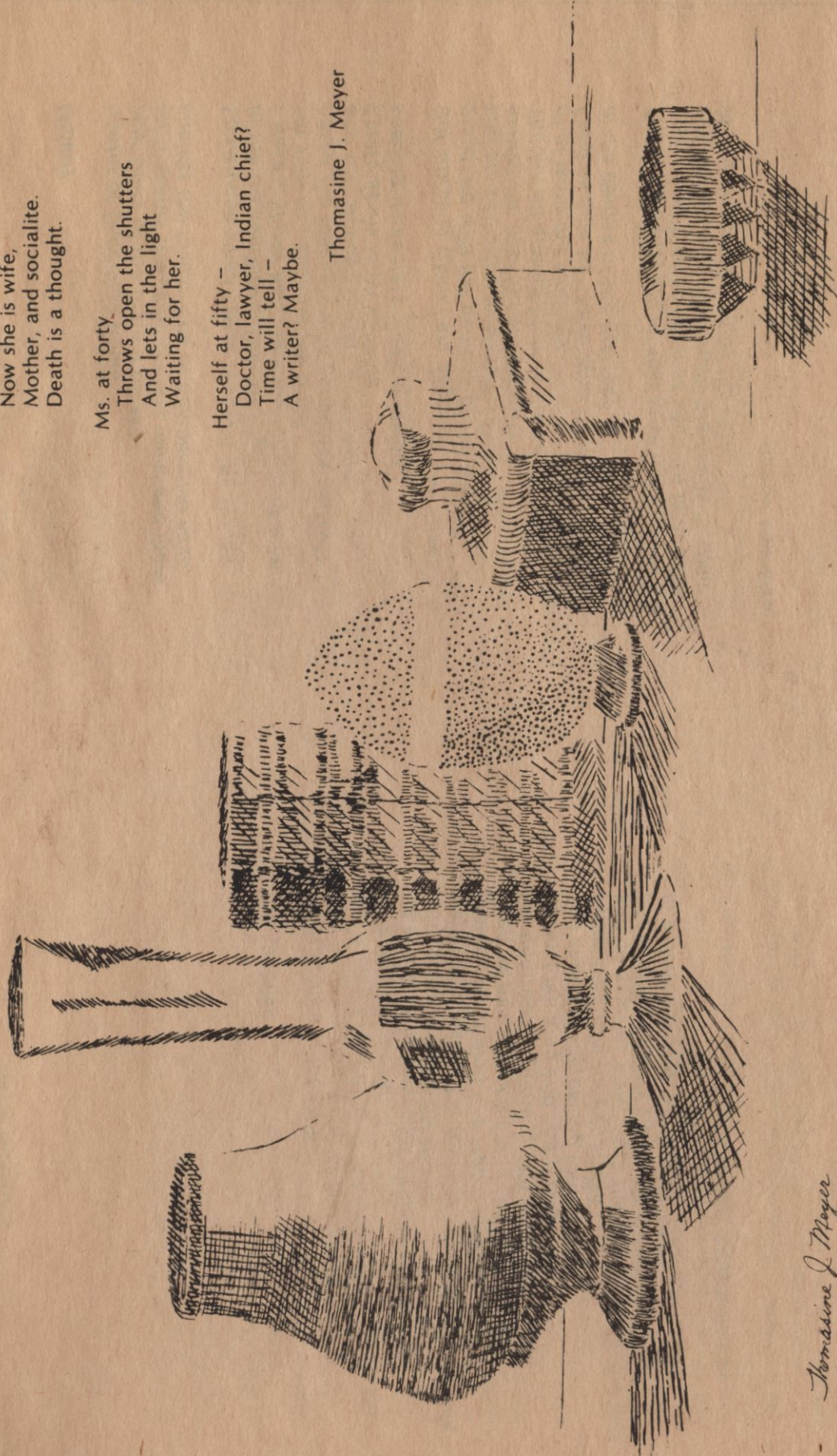
Ms. at forty

Throws open the shutters
And lets in the light
Waiting for her.

Herself at fifty -

Doctor, lawyer, Indian chief
Time will tell -
A writer? Maybe.

Thomasine J. Meyer



Thomasine J. Meyer

