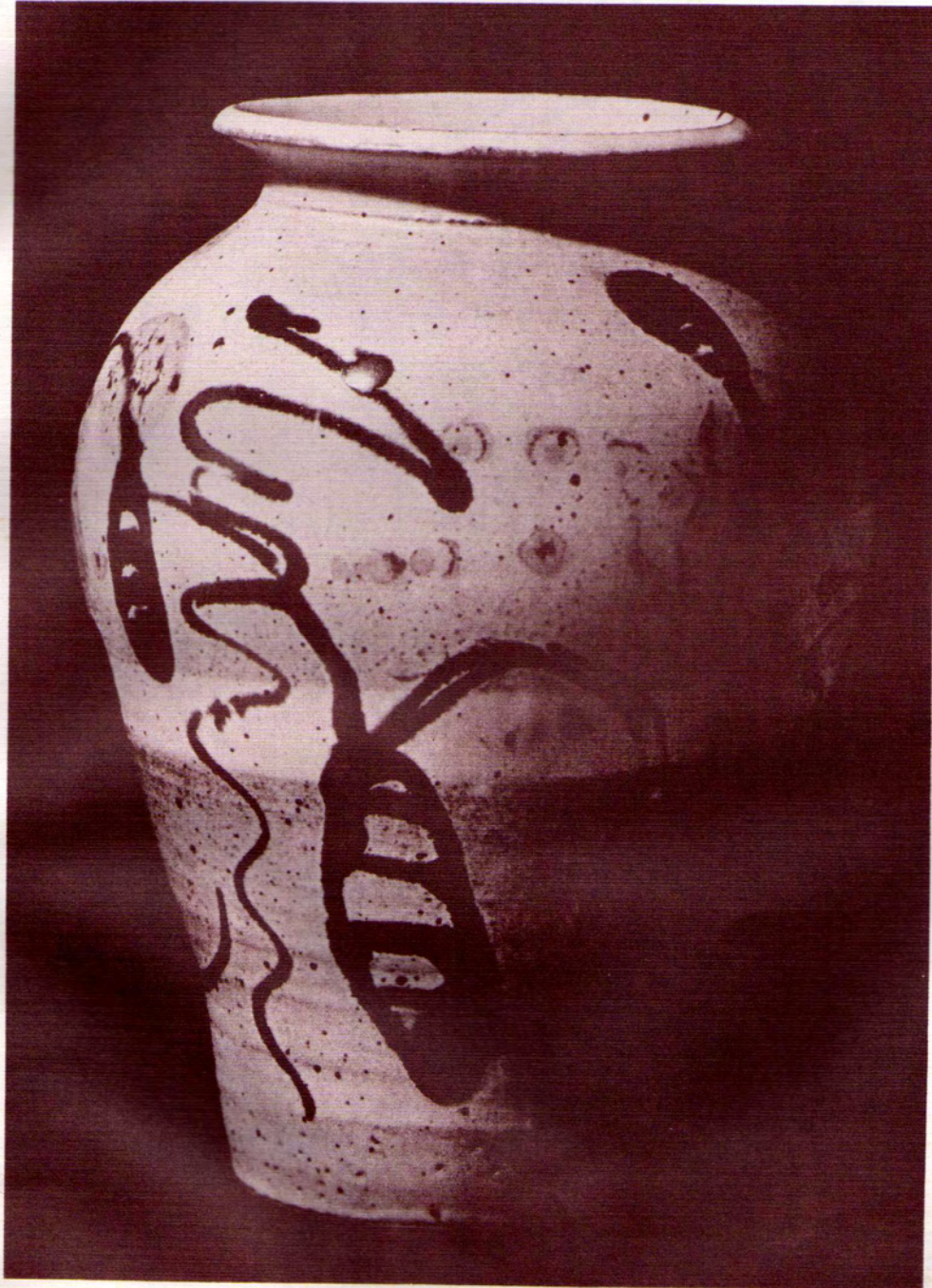


1987-88
Expressions



I N C A R N A T E W O R D C O L L E G E

Cover:

ALAN HOLMGREEN
Stoneware, 11-1/4" high
First Place Visual Art

1987-88
Expressions

I N C A R N A T E W O R D C O L L E G E

San Antonio, Texas

Editor

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Photographs of Three-dimensional Art by
DONALD EWERS

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When action mimes against the wind
and the hair races like a flag,
When foam pounces up the cringing shore
And gulls, drawn tight as bows,
Grip and slide in the tumbling sky,
When earth whines,
And the sea,
prickled white to the horizon,
howls
Then summer's a legend.

Seascape
TRISH EGAN



JUNE BRUNER,
Photograph, 8" x 10"

The Hunt

JOHN P. BUENTELLO

First Place Fiction

The first thing he felt was the cold. It crept up on him across the snow, waiting until he was far enough from the jeep to rise up and overtake him. It tore through the heavy lining of his jacket, a thin whistling wind that brushed nerve and bone. Already a new layer of snow was beginning to fall.

He checked the tracks ahead of him, making sure he would be able to follow them. Last night's fall had been well-packed, and the fresh prints, although not deep, were well formed.

His fingers throbbed beneath the thick gloves he wore, and he worked some warmth into them by handling his equipment, once more checking that everything was in order. He'd loaded the huge monster of metal and chrome that he carried slung across his shoulder back at the cabin, and he checked it now by taking the safety off and sighting along a far ridge. The metal frame made a satisfying weight in his hands, and he inspected the various chambers one by one, making certain that everything would be functioning properly when he finally chose to squeeze off his shot.

Satisfied, he windmilled his arms a few times to keep his circulation going and started down into the valley, his own prints being placed over the tracks he now followed.

Earlier that morning he'd seen a group of hunters staking out a blind a few miles east of the valley. They carried only light weapons, but their movements, and the way in which each carried out his assigned task in the blind told him they were experienced. By the middle of the day the entire valley would be full of parties all after the same thing he was tracking now.

He doubted they would get the buck. The first time he had run across the animal had been at the edge of the woods, deep down on the valley floor. He'd guessed that it had started on its yearly journey up to the grazing lands atop the plateau.

Man and animal had stared wordlessly at each other that day, and as he watched, the magnificent beast leapt powerfully away from him to disappear back into the woods, leaving behind a strange sense of envy that stirred deep within him.

The next time they met he hadn't been empty handed, but the angle had been wrong, and when

he finally brought his sights up and took aim, the buck had melted away, a ghost on the snow-filled ridge.

Today would be different. The second time he had counted a full sixteen points on the animal. He knew its prints by heart, and was not surprised at the ease with which he had picked up the animal's trail that morning. The buck wasn't trying to hide. It was in its element, and now, the weapon slung on his back, so was he.

A full hour passed before he saw the animal. The snow remained unbroken in all that time, save for the single set of tracks, and he wondered why it strayed so far from the regular herd routes. Did it sense the danger following it? Was it protecting the rest of its kind, preserving their freedom?

The buck appeared before him without a sound. It did not climb from the valley, or draw itself from the surrounding bramble. It was just there. Its dark, endless eyes reflected a starless night across the snow, and when it saw the man it stood suddenly still before him.

Less than an echo of its heartbeat passed before the buck saw the man reach around, take hold of something that flashed brightly in the snow reflected glare.

He watched the buck, saw a single breath cloud flow from its lips. Then the twin crosshairs split the animal in four before him, and his gloved hand came up, a stiff finger touching metal, pressing.

There was no sound, no explosion. The buck stood for a moment longer, then slowly, without fear or panic, traced its way up the valley wall, leaving tracks that would soon fill in the drifting snowfall. Soundlessly it rose, as if climbing a blank white wall, and disappeared.

He watched it leave him, watched as it made for the safety of the plateau without haste. The animal's power, its hard, silent stare, stayed with him. He continued to watch, knowing that no hunter would take the buck that day, until the drifting snow began to cloud his vision.

Then he slung the heavy camera across his back and slowly started back up the ridge.





MHAIRI BOWIE, "VOGUE"
Charcoal & Pencil, 23" x 29"
Third Place Visual Art

Phone Call, 9:35
PATRICK E. COLLINS
First Place Poetry

Death always shocks me;
it tears me from my face.
No metaphor, no hard image,
no right words bring me back to where my skin hits air.
This is the moment of silence.
I am a liar:
I demand that death make sense.
Death always shocks me,
shocks me hard in the hollow of my head.

CLAY RIPS
Ceramics, 14" long



Excerpts from

The Waters of Aquaduce

LINDA FORD WINANS & LUISA INEZ NEWTON
First Place Drama

[PARTIAL] CAST OF CHARACTERS

The Past:

AURA, a queen of ancient Altamira, age 38
REINABEL, Aura's sister, age 28

The Present:

AURORA HOPEWELL, age 60, matriarch of the Dolmens and wife of Leonardo Hopewell, a world-renowned engineer
PENELOPE HOPEWELL ("Penny"), her daughter, age 21
DAVID HOPEWELL, Penny's older brother, age 25
HELEN HOPEWELL URBANOPOULOS, their older sister, age 32
REINHARDT URBANOPOULOS, Helen's husband, attorney for the brewery, Chairman of Public Works of Altamira, son of a foreign olive oil tycoon, age 35
BENJAMIN CROMLEY ("Ben"), half-brother of Leonardo, a veteran and long-time member of the Hopewell household, age 70
SOPHIE CROMLEY, Ben's wife and nursemaid to the Hopewell children, age 64
CASSANDRA CROMLEY ("Cassie"), their niece, chambermaid of the Dolmens, age 20
DR. JACQUES LASCAUX, a French expatriate and Doctor of Archaeology, long time friend of the Hopewell family and now Penny's lover, age 32
NICOLAS HEFF ("Nick"), the Mayor of Altamira, age 66
FATHER UMBERTO GORDO, the priest
CONSUELO, a teacher, age 20

SETTING

A large estate known as the Dolmens, named for the nearby neolithic ruins at the springs on the western shore of Lake Aquaduce, in the province of Altamira.

It is August, at the time of the full moon.

PROLOGUE

Effects for the Prologue should create a sense of remoteness: action may be played behind a scrim and/or mimed with voices over ever so slightly echoed; perhaps some smoke. Tone and volume must be intense but controlled.

The funeral bier of AGREGATO is on the edge of the lake shore. REINABEL is standing near it, shackled. AURA enters and stands in front of the four masks (or a mural depicting the four gods of Altamira). It is sunset/moonrise. The lake is red.

AURA. There he lies. You loved him.
REINABEL. It never was treachery. We were always true to you.
AURA. Still, he's dead because you loved him. You lie if you deny it.
REINABEL. You would love the man that led you to the flower-laden altar,
That lay beside you and Labrydeia's laughing son.
It was the only time we touched,
When Agregato took me at the temple altar
In the Rain Ritual six summers ago.
It only lasted long enough to answer a need,
Until the clouds climbed too high for the weight of water within
To hold its height and brought their bounty beating in heavy drops
All around the shining lakeside shrine,
The drought demanded that deed,
And the rains alone were its reward.
AURA. But you wished it. You willed it. And I — I watched.
The queen kept countenance as monarchs must,
Presided at the ritual of rain
Designed to entertain the deities of empty air
With a spectacle that sparkles madly with mortal joy and pain.
Your joy. My pain. Only to allay the insane Inatecuatli,
Who chuckles bubbles at the bottom of the Lake
When we are choking on the sun-charred winds.
For him my handsome man of miracles
First was forced to fold my sister's senses in his arms.
Such a sweet sacrifice I will not watch again.
Before I do, by both your bodies, I'd rather watch you die.

REINABEL. But, Sister, Queen, why, when you could have cured your fears
By just killing me, inflict infected jealousy on him?

Aura, all of Altamira adored Agregato.
Generous and gentle, all strength and justice,
He served you far better than a slave
Since the day Kalitipixi called our mother/queen
Beyond the north shore altar and you ascended.
Your reign is rich
While we enjoy the wealth your consort has created.
Long had the people prayed for the power he promised.

AURA. Your Queen curses Agregato's grand, vain vision.

I declare no need for this man or his strange inventions.

His machines have malicious magic in them.
No man or even god can match the majesty of the Mother Goddess.

REINABEL. Equal are the gods of east and west, north and south,

All four, male and female.
You cannot dare pretend to praise the mother-sister

While you berate the brother-son.

AURA. My holy office offers me the choice of rites,

Since my acts here may alter the tradition henceforth.

My praise goes to the Goddess that puts history in my hands.

I will say that she has spoken to me, her mortal shell,

The Mother Labrydeia visiting me in a vision of clear, compelling meaning;

That Agregato's plan provoked his death
Because he sought to circumvent the need for ceremony.

And Altamira must atone not by his loss alone but by yours too.

The Goddess now through me demands you die,
And you must do it to yourself, as an act of mourning,

A sacrificial supplement to the celebration,
For love of Labrydeia and of Aura, me, your queen, as well,

And be happy in ending the moment of happiness ending.

And when your heart's pain is split apart
And you lie dead, the drought will end.

REINABEL. Because of the new-built canals.

AURA. [*Laughs*] Wretched, arrogant child. You are wrong.

Those water canals are worthless.
No one will ever even be aware who built them.

No. My advisors have acquired new knowledge,
And it is sure, I know, to rain tonight in torrents,
But to the people it will seem, you see,
A gift of gratitude from the Goddess for
Your willing gift, the only ransom worth such welcome relief.

REINABEL. Aura, as Altamira's mother you must remember the future.

Think of the foreigners sifting southward
Who have found the edge of our desert far to the north.

If you betray the truth you know before they come here,

A pitiful peace will poison people's spirits.

AURA. To try the strength of strangers when we're too weak

To fight is far more foolish than a semblance of surrender,

A temporary compromise to accomplish a transition.

REINABEL. Fear. You fear defeat. You should fear worse.

The deities who live around Lake Aquaduce,
Filling its four divine springs, speak to their chosen children.

Truth itself lies in the laws of Labrydeia and her three other selves.

All four will always work their wonders,
And those who forget them forfeit their legacy.

AURA. Enough! Empty ideals don't answer the realities of reigning.

REINABEL. Look in the glass of the Lake, sister: gaze at your mortal complexion.

From the deep vastness of the void a voice like mine will ask you:

When all our altars are a stage for strange parades of power,

Where will the beliefs of the wise old Altamirans be buried?

The sound of DRUMS and FLUTES.

AURA. Rail on, Reinabel. You will be silent soon enough.

My heirs will honor me and know the name upon my tomb.

But my hatred annihilates you from the annals of our history.

Here they bring the raiments — the sacrifice begins.

[Hands REINABEL a chalice]

Come. The cup: drink the sweet liquor of life one last time.

Dance to death's drum. *[REINABEL drinks]*

You are anonymous ever after now.

—End of Prologue—

Excerpt from ACT I, Scene 1:

The Dolmens Exterior

[It is the morning of Penny's birthday. Following a traditional serenade of "Las Mañanitas," most of the family has just gone into the house for breakfast.]

SOPHIE, now alone, sits down and fans herself awhile.

The sound of CICADAS rises.

SOPHIE. Ay! Can it be so hot already? Or is it all this excitement? It makes my ears buzz. The whole house is buzzing. Buzz. Buzz. [She gets up and begins mixing sugar in water] Humans, bees, cicadas — all buzzing as if to split the skies. For all the good it does.

CONSUELO enters with a small bouquet of yellow flowers.

CONSUELO. Good morning, Sophie.

SOPHIE. Consuelo! Good morning! I haven't seen you for weeks. [Indicating flowers] For Penny?

CONSUELO. [Nodding] From the children. They wanted to send more colors — this was all we could find.

SOPHIE. I know. Those are the only flowers that will blossom here in a drought.

CONSUELO. They're pretty though. What do you call them?

SOPHIE. Around here we call them *ojo de Aura*, but the botanists call them *thylantia*. Their nectar has a mild hallucinogen in it. That's why we sometimes call August honey *meil malo* — the bees use what they can find, and in droughts especially, the honey can be like a drug.

CONSUELO. Is it dangerous?

SOPHIE. Usually not too different from beer, but stronger and sweeter. Except in droughts. Then it can be so strong it's poisonous. That's why I have to put out sugar water for the bees. [CICADAS. Her tone becomes distant, hypnotic] Poor bees. I found more wax moths — another hive ruined. You have to burn them out, you know. Destroy a whole hive. When I was little and my grandmother was teaching me to tend the hives, she used to say that when life has been prosperous for too long, when desires become greed and greed becomes a fever, then the wax moths spread on the same dry East Wind that turns the forests to kindling and the fields to dust. The old ones call him *Zotixi*, the temperamental brother of the Lake god. . . . When the winds die down, there is a thickness in the air, weighing down the people, the animals, the insects. I can tell by their voices that they feel it too, a thirst. . . . [Beat, CICADAS]

CONSUELO. Drought is all I hear about from Pete and his buddies. They're all on half shifts since the water rationing started, and there's talk of layoffs.

SOPHIE. What will they do if the brewery closes?
CONSUELO. Hope for work at the power plant, I guess.

SOPHIE. They're not in favor of it, are they?

CONSUELO. Well, the women aren't. They're afraid the authorities will take over everything about Altamira and the old traditions will disappear.

SOPHIE. [Nods] Um-hmm. And Altamiran women are fierce about their traditions.

CONSUELO. I know. Especially the one about silence around strangers. They never have really accepted me, you know, Sophie. Even at the school, Penny is the only one who ever explains anything, and even she won't tell me what they mean about a sacrifice.

SOPHIE. [Looks at her] Who was talking about it?

CONSUELO. Well, no one really talks about it. But when the mission springs went dry I heard Ruby Heff tell the principal that meant there would be a sacrifice this year.

SOPHIE. I thought all Ruby Heff ever talked about was her furs and her pedicures. Anyway that's all she should talk about.

CONSUELO. I keep asking people what she meant. Even Pete won't tell me. It's scary the way nobody talks about it.

SOPHIE. It's a scary subject.

CONSUELO. Will you tell me? [A beat] Please, Sophie.

SOPHIE. [Sigh, a beat] It comes from the old myths about our gods. It takes a certain combination of events. They say if a tribal chieftan should die near the time of the August full moon, it's a sign from the gods that a young woman who loved him must be sacrificed at the Rain Festival. His funeral would be incomplete without her death, an insult to the gods; but if she dies with grace and courage, then rains will come to wash away the tears of loss. [Beat] It happened rarely, but it happened. When the padres came, they convinced the priestesses to change the ritual, to make a floral offering to the Lake instead of a human one. Except when they were desperate for rain. In bad droughts, if a *patrón* of Altamira died, no one could stop them: the fear of death and the hope of salvation took control.

CONSUELO. I see. It would seem like a chance to make it rain.

SOPHIE. But the cost is dear. That's why people won't talk about it. They're afraid of wishing for it.

CONSUELO. Does it still happen?

[Scene continues]

Excerpt from Act I, Scene 2:

The Dolmens Interior

[It is the evening of the same day. A party is in progress. LEO, DAVID, and JACQUES have not yet returned from their expedition to the north shore ruins. Present are PENNY, AURORA, HELEN, REINHARDT, NICK, GORDO, BEN, CASSIE, and SOPHIE.]

PENNY. Jacques thinks he found the subterranean lake of the legend, where the ancients got water during droughts.

NICK. Nuts!

PENNY. [To NICK] Oh? [To GORDO] Haven't you heard? [GORDO shakes his head] Two days ago he found an antechamber full of the most beautiful, bizarre murals, and radiating out from it in three directions, the canals. They originate in that chamber in a great pool that was filled by

means of a water screw, and the screw seems to be intact, but it disappears into a hole in the stone floor.

NICK. A water screw?

PENNY. It's an ancient device. The Egyptians used it. It lifts water by turning it in a spiral groove.

NICK. Water from where?

PENNY. That's the mystery. There is a stone door with a quadruple seal in the chamber beside the water screw. It must lead down to the lake of the legend.

NICK. Such bull!

PENNY. The canals were built for some reason.

NICK. Whatever it was, it doesn't apply now. That terrain is worthless for anything but a power plant, and the authorities have a right to our cooperation.

AURORA. Not when they threaten our heritage.

PENNY. And our resources.

NICK. There's nothing there!



MICHAEL GOODING
Raku Ceramic, 10" high

AURORA. Nothing? We know for certain it's an archaeological wonder, almost as important as the Dolmens, and now it may be another water source as well.

NICK. Aurora, honey, you can't eat archaeology, and you can't drink maybe.

PENNY. But scientifically —

NICK. Oh, sure! Scientifically! We could use up time and money getting experts to climb all over the place and scratch their heads and say things like "potentially" and "hypothetically." But we have a desperate problem here, and I don't need any experts to tell me there's not enough water on or under the north shore to keep a goddamn rattler's ass alive!

HELEN. Uncle Nick! Forgive him, Father.

GORDO. Oh, I'm used to it from Nick.

BEN. [*Aside to PENNY, chuckling at the concept*] A rattler's ass?

NICK. I'm sorry, Padre, but sometimes those great scientists just talk a bunch of complicated hokus-pokus — makes about as much sense as drowning girls to please the Bee God, or whatever it was.

BEN. You figure those moldy rituals would be more effective!

NICK. Well, not exactly. . .

PENNY. But an intriguing thought, no, Jefe?

[Scene continues]

Excerpt from ACT II, Scene 1:

The Dolmens Interior, the following morning

[LEO is dead. After gathering for a traditional Altamiran hymn, the family and mourners are now going outside to light the funeral pyre.]

Exit ALL in procession, except BEN and JACQUES. BEN starts to follow the others as the last of the procession but stops in the doorway, pondering.

JACQUES. Aren't you going out with them?

BEN. [*Not having noticed JACQUES before, starts*] Oh, you. No, I think I'll pass on this part.

JACQUES. Me too. I don't really feel invited somehow.

BEN. [*Pinches the bridge of his nose, squinting, then a short laugh*] Well, I've already suffered through more mumbo-jumbo than Leo would have stood for. [*He moves to the window*]

JACQUES. You know, there's a mesmerizing quality to some of those verses. Do you know what I mean?

BEN. [*Nods*] Almost lose the meaning in the sound of the words. And that bothers me, especially just now, because — well, hell, it has nothing whatever to do with Leonardo Hopewell.

JACQUES. Yes, I thought so too. As if his main value is to be dead so that they can have their rain ceremony.

BEN. I keep wondering what he'd want me to do. But I just can't think like he did, and I can't figure out how I'm going to keep people rational around here without him.

JACQUES. [*Joining him at the window*] Aurora's lit the pyre already.

BEN. There you go, Leo. You're smoke on the breeze now, Brother, vanishing on another adventure — one I'll get around to myself one of these days. . .

JACQUES. Penny stands so straight.

BEN. A spine like Leo's she has.

JACQUES. Is it over?

BEN. Yep. That's all. Nothing to it. Now tonight — that'll be different.

JACQUES. Ben, tell me something. Wouldn't it be safer for Penny to do things the way Aurora wants?

BEN. It'd be safer if she got the hell out of town altogether. But safety isn't the question for her.

JACQUES. I know. She really will try to alter the ritual.

BEN. And what do you think about it, Jacques? Getting cold feet?

JACQUES. No, I'm only afraid for her. But this is her moment, her crisis, and I feel — how shall I say it? — proud to do whatever I can for her.

BEN. [*Testing*] You think she's worth all that?

JACQUES. I know she is. She burns like a star. She shines with life. And the brightest spot on her spirit is her desire to be truly good — always considering what "good" means. So rare.

BEN. [*Nods approval*] You hit it, my friend. The gleam at the center of the gem.

[Enter PENNY]

PENNY. [*To both of them*] I'm glad you are here. They'll be coming any minute.

JACQUES. Are you nervous, Penny?

PENNY. No, I'm too tired for that. [*She winces back some sudden tears*] But I'm not sure I know what's going to happen.

[Enter DAVID]

DAVID. All right now, Penny. Be strong about this. If you waver, they'll eat you. I'll back you. We'll all back you.

BEN. Are you sure now? There's still time.

PENNY. "There's. Still. Time." What a strangely beautiful phrase. Makes me think of rocks beside a fish pond. But time is really all the same time. Now is just when the truth appears, and everyone must decide what to do with it.

[Scene continues]

—End of Excerpts—



SHANITHA BRUNNER
Itaglio, 5" x 7"

Quisiera Ser

DIANA L. MONTEJANO
First Place Spanish

Quisiera ser un ave
Volando por los cielos,
Inspirando la paz,
Representando el amor.

Quisiera ser la palmona blanca
Flotando sobre las nubes,
Borrando las penas,
Removiendo el dolor.

The Leaving

JOHN P. BUENTELLO

Second Place Poetry

I left the child behind today,
At the bottom of the stair.
Hair uncombed, face unwashed,
Knees tan and bare.
As I climbed I looked behind,
To fragments strewn aside.
Fractured tops, a friendship dropped,
All echoes of my mind.
Upward climbing to the dark,
I leave the child in light.
Sunset dawns above me full,
A cold, unmeasured light.
From below softly called,
The child cries in fear.
Watching as I climb alone,
The youth no longer near.
Below me now the darkness swells,
To silence that lone cry.
A last farewell, I turn away,
And climb up to the sky.

De Nuevo

DIANA L. MONTEJANO

Second Place Spanish

Cuando necesitaba una sonrisa,
Llegaste a mi vida de nuevo,
Como una chispa de fuego
Volando sobre una brisa.

Fué albur, no esperaba verte allí,
Ni tú a mí. Me diste tu mirada
Estudiosa, profunda y sensual,
Y luego te sonreíste y me estremecí
Al sentir tu presencia de nuevo.

Un remolino de emociones me envolvió,
Pensé en los años que nos robaron
Las estrellas, años que cruelmente
Nos separaron; esas mismas estrellas
Que ahora nos reunieron.

Bailamos y gozamos, tu aliento le dió
Una sustancia ligera a mi ser,
Y volví a sentir el mismo deseo
Que antes tuve por tí,

Y no quise el amanecer, temía que la
Ilusión del viento y la maravilla de
La noche, llegara a jugar conmigo
De nuevo.

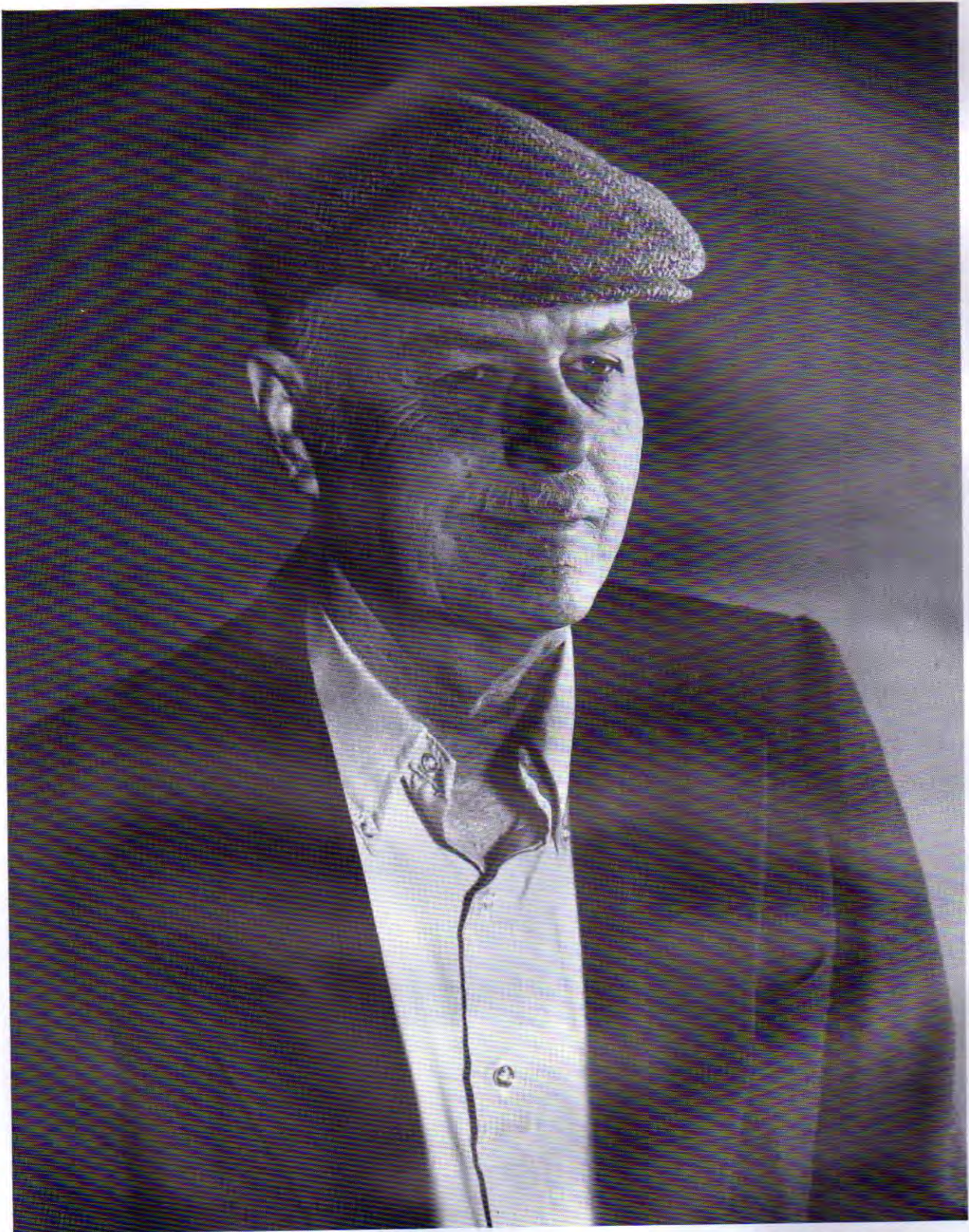
of sour beers

JOSEF BOOKER
Third Place Poetry

remembrances of sour beers drunk
thru the years —
tears spilt in them beers
and girls with sagging breasts
drinking gin'n tonics
like they was god's gift to drunks
and no one is sweeter
than a dead drunk —
and wouldn't yu know,
life is just a runnin' outta space
fallin' splat in that last claustrophobic hole —
there ain't no room on the bus
for old geezers with
piss-stained pants
or poets with crumpled dreams,
like dustballs
on some second-rate motel floor —
roaches eating the satin
party dresses of drag queens
and downtown lookers with long legs
staring at the mannequins in storefront windows
as if they were goddesses of the new age —
and all we do is pout. . .
and mumble with salty peanut mouths chattering.

this guy took one long swig from his bourbon
and rat-finked his way to heaven
which was a surprise to him
'cause he was agnostic and a real Darwin freak at heart —
now he ain't got no heart
no mouth
no hands
no legs
no eyes
no beliefs
no nuthin' —
just a big empty hole somewheres up in Jersey
and that's like livin' in Houston
with a black whore
and two sick kids
and no job
no hope
no nuthin'
but a sore belly from too much hooch —

hey, babe, scramble me some eggs, uh?



JUNE BRUNNER
Photograph, 8" x 10"

If Heaven is Curried Lamb
(Act I, Scene 5)

JOE JUSTICE

Second Place Drama

[DAVID sits with ALFRED, who is eating curried lamb.]

DAVID. You certainly eat often around here.

ALFRED. Sex isn't allowed.

DAVID. It's not?!

ALFRED. No.! And they call this heaven.

DAVID. Is sex allowed in hell?

ALFRED. I don't know much about hell. I haven't been there. I've heard rumors, though. Wild parties, orgies, all the women are like Joan Collins.

DAVID. Really?

ALFRED. Yeah, great looking with make up, wigs and clothes, without 'em they're pure hell! I think that if you looked up hell in the dictionary, that's what you'd see.

DAVID. Joan Collins?

ALFRED. The real Joan Collins.

DAVID. Where is the Old. . . Where is. . .

ALFRED. Sam?

DAVID. Yeah, where is he?

ALFRED. I think he's thinking, well actually, I know he's thinking, he's always thinking, but right now I think he's thinking by himself.

DAVID. About what?

ALFRED. Your departure, I think.

DAVID. My departure from here or my departure from earth?

ALFRED. You're learning. Your departure from here.

DAVID. I get to leave?

ALFRED. Sure, you've been cured. You don't want to die anymore.

DAVID. If I don't get Ann back, I won't want to die any less, either.

ALFRED. That's why you're going back. You can't get her from here.

DAVID. I guess you're right.

ALFRED. Sure I am.

DAVID. When am I leaving?

ALFRED. Airport's fogged in, we'll have to wait till it clears.

DAVID. Damn fog. If it's not one thing it's another... they really don't allow sex around here?

ALFRED. What's it matter? You're going back.

DAVID. It would be kinda nice to know, I mean for future reference. You know.

ALFRED. I haven't known for centuries, but I sure as hell would like to again.

DAVID. So, it's not allowed.

ALFRED. I'm not saying.

DAVID. It's what you're not saying that says it.

ALFRED. Let's change the subject. . . You play golf?

DAVID. I like to play around now and then, if that's what you mean.

ALFRED. I don't.

DAVID. Not for a coupla centuries, anyway. What do you do for fun around here?

ALFRED. Eat, cook, save lost souls. We also enjoy making gullible assholes believe they've killed us with their cars.

DAVID. No big rumbles with the devil?

ALFRED. Meph? No, he's no problem up here. All those battles are fought on the big playing field downstairs.

DAVID. Earth?

ALFRED. No! Our golf course, eighteen of the toughest holes in the universe.

DAVID. What par?

ALFRED. 111.

DAVID. 111? What's your handicap?

ALFRED. On days with an "R" in it I have to play blind-folded. On days with an "N" I have to play on my knees.

DAVID. I guess you play your best golf on Tuesdays.

ALFRED. How'd you guess?

DAVID. Just lucky. *[Pause]* You think the fog has cleared?

ALFRED. What fog?

DAVID. The fog that had the airport closed.

ALFRED. We don't have an airport. That was just a bunch of bullshit.

DAVID. You're allowed to lie and cuss, but sex isn't allowed?

ALFRED. Get off the sex thing, all right?

DAVID. It's hard.

ALFRED. What?!

DAVID. It's hard to get off, I mean you just don't quit cold turkey.

ALFRED. Come here and you do. *[Exit ALFRED]*

DAVID. Come back, I don't want to be alone.

[Long pause] [Enter WILLIE]

WILLIE. Sorry, thought this one was empty. Do you mind if I go ahead and clean?

DAVID. Clean?

WILLIE. Clean: remove dirt and refuse, put on a sparkling shine. . .

DAVID. I just didn't think you cleaned up here.

WILLIE. Well, I do, and I wish somebody else would take a turn.

DAVID. You have to clean everything?

WILLIE. Except the golf course.

DAVID. Why?

WILLIE. I guess the ground crew takes care of it.

DAVID. I mean, why do you have to clean?

WILLIE. Because heaven is filled with a bunch of slobs. Contrary to popular belief, cleanliness is not next to godliness. At least not up here.

DAVID. This room looks pretty clean.

WILLIE. Sam won't think so.

DAVID. Sam? Oh yeah. . . Are you punished?

WILLIE. They say no one gets punished up here. But I say different.

DAVID. Why?

WILLIE. I was a struggling writer, I got married during advent, my life was going badly, I tried to kill myself.

DAVID. How?

WILLIE. I threw myself in front of the five-o'clock to Westminster.

DAVID. What?

WILLIE. A carriage, the five-o'clock carriage to Westminster.

DAVID. Don't tell me, you were late.

WILLIE. No, somebody jumped in front of the charging carriage and pulled me out of the way.

DAVID. You were saved? Things sure have changed.

WILLIE. What?

DAVID. Well, I tried to kill myself by jumping in front of the five-o'clock to Times Square. And nobody jumped down to save me.

WILLIE. Don't you have any friends? You don't look smashed up.

DAVID. I was late.

WILLIE. Well, I sure as hell hope you die pretty quick, I could use the help. *[Exit WILLIE]*
[Enter ALFRED]

ALFRED. I'm back, but no more sex jokes.

DAVID. Who was that?

ALFRED. That was Willie. Don't let him bother you. He makes an overblown dramatic mess out of everything.

DAVID. If I come back here, will I have to be a janitor because I tried to kill myself?

ALFRED. A lot depends on what you do when you go back there, but even if you don't have anything else going for you, I don't think you would be a janitor when. . . I mean if you come back.

DAVID. Why do you say that?

ALFRED. Suicide was not as popular in Willie's day; fewer people tried it. So the ones who did became janitors. I think the worst you can get for attempted suicide these days is a 600-year stint on the ground crew of the golf course.

[Enter OLD MAN]

OLD MAN. All right, time to go.

ALFRED. Thank him.

DAVID. How can I thank you?

OLD MAN. Don't come back till I send for you.

DAVID. Deal.

OLD MAN. Any questions before you go?

DAVID. Yeah, who's gonna win the series?

OLD MAN. The Indians.

DAVID. No shit?!

OLD MAN. Are you ready?

DAVID. Yes. No. Why is it every time I wash my car, it rains?

OLD MAN. I don't know.

DAVID. You know everything.

OLD MAN. That's my mother's department.

DAVID. You have a mother?

OLD MAN. Naturally. I looked down and saw what I had done and realized everyone should have a mother, so I made one of my very own. But she got bored with just fixing Pop and me breakfast so I put her in charge of the nature department.

DAVID. You have a father too —

OLD MAN. They're a matching set.

DAVID. What's he in charge of?

OLD MAN. Time.

DAVID. Speaking of time, mine's about up. I didn't mean it that way.

OLD MAN. I know what you mean.

DAVID. Yeah, I guess you do.

OLD MAN. No more questions?

DAVID. One.

OLD MAN. Yes?

DAVID. Is this going to hurt?

OLD MAN. Just stand over there. Okay, Mr. Scott, full power.

[End of ACT I]





CHRISTINE ROBSON, "Eddie's Turn", Charcoal, 22" x 33"

Mon Amour Est Parti
LUISA INEZ NEWTON

He was the most gorgeous,
the most Molière in a nutshell,
and I walled in our happy moments
with no interruption other than
love's married eyes.

Il y avait longtemps
depuis que je rêvais
through the ocean
calling you
striking deep
and gushing a muscular promise
of the imprint of my heart
just before sleep.

¿Cuál Hombre O Mujer?
DIANA L. MONTEJANO
Third Place Spanish

¿Cuál hombre o mujer puede vivir
Sin la poesía? ¿Sin la música?
¿ Sin el arte?

Qué triste sería este mundo, que pobre,
Que inútil existencia viajar por las
Avenidas de la vida pasajera
Sin ninguna sonrisa o lágrima,

Sin canción,

Sin color,

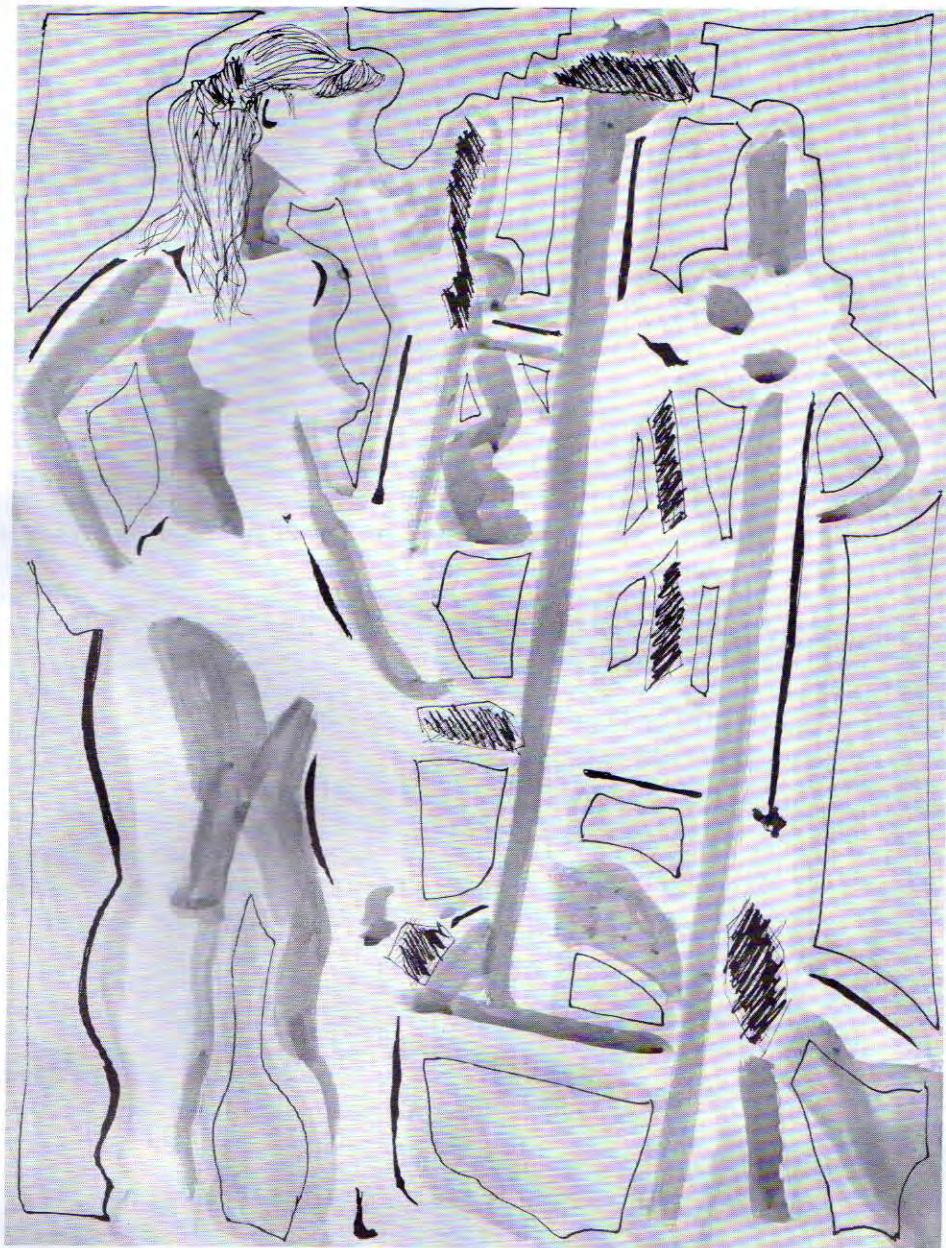
Sin poesía,

Reflejando,

Iluminando,

Los sentimientos de un hombre

O una mujer.



JEANETTE MENDEZ
Ink, 18" x 24"

**La Despedida
De Amor**

MARIO A. HERRERA
Honorable Mention Spanish

Con locura y copa bebida,
caminé solo por la avenida.

Como el ave busco propia vida.
Los violines anuncian tu venida.

Traspaso la tierra perdida,
no te olvido en mi vida.

La vuelta espero como la ida.
Quizá justicia de amor te pida.

On The Way Home
JOE JUSTICE

Lonely desert highway
Pavement black and cold
The sky above
Full of stars
Twisted metal, broken glass
Sirens blare, people rush
Blood stained patch
Of earth and grass
The land reclaims its own
And in the dirt
Laid by hand
A little cross of stones



SR. YOLANDA GARZA
Linocut, 9" x 12"

Sr. Yolanda M. Garza

Man in the Snow

LAWRENCE BUENTELLO

Second Place Fiction

An orange halo of fire engulfed the automobile as it lay half-buried in a muddy trough beside the deserted road, crackling in a foul, decisive voice that spoke of death and finality. Noxious odors of oil and burning rubber rose into the air, and smoke whipped about with the swirling of the wind. In either direction, for miles long out of vision, the road was empty. Silence, like a great glass shield, surrounded the wreck and sought to bury it, as its fires faded and its metals cooled.

The snow fell in uncertain passes, heavy and cold.

Near to the automobile, covered by an icy white blanket, a young man lay frozen. He was stretched carelessly on a slight rise, unmoving, clothes torn, flesh bruised on the side where he'd been thrown. His face was stiff, features youthful but marred with deep cuts. The fingers from one hand had been severed, but the wounds refused to bleed in the cold. Several of his bones were broken, organs ruptured, but he felt no pain. He was not breathing.

The storm grew more intense, tossing waves of ice, throwing a curtain of white over the young man and the vehicle he'd run off the road. It was a dangerous snow, an uncaring snow.

The dead man opened his eyes.

+++

He might have described it as a heavenly presence, had his desire been so, but the place seemed oppressive, haunting. Colored lights danced and played in a graceful ballet: the landscape was a wild portrait from an intoxicated imagination. It was dark and bright at once, and held nothing for the senses of a soul. It was a magical place to be and he felt no fear, but he did not want to stay.

A light appeared before him, before the spiritual body that was all he'd ever really been, and it rotated slowly into a pair of gargantuan eyes, which pulsed softly, and with power. He perceived them floating in a field of fading stars, and only after he failed to move toward them did they speak.

"Come to us, my son."

He lingered with the beautiful inner voice which pervaded his senses, but within he felt the stirring of the memories he'd left behind, and he could not comply.

"No."

The entity wavered but displayed no emotion.

"It is not for you to remain in your previous life. I am your servant, and I speak in truth. The life which awaits you is eternal and everlasting, far

removed from your previous existence. Come with me to a realm where you will be eternally peaceful."

He felt an overpowering desire to cross that invisible boundary between them, desire and subversion. But when the memories of his past life came in unrelenting images, strong and hurtful, he knew he had no choice.

"I can not."

The great eyes enlarged, contracted, showing no anger. "Eternity awaits you."

"I can not go."

+++

The dead man moved the hand of one arm.

Tenderly, as if the act were a holy thing, he flexed the fingers of his good hand, feeling the frost on his fingernails. For a time all he could do was tremble in the snow, watching small flakes drift onto his body. Then he brought up one knee, then the other until they were even with each other. He sat up, wrapping one arm around his crested knees.

The snowstorm screamed into his numb ears.

He rose unevenly, clutching at the air, and managed to erect his broken body. Behind him lay the ditch, and he was careful not to fall. Before him, on the other side of the road, a few dead trees rose to break the monotony of a long horizon of flatland. The entire countryside was deserted, save for a distant wooden shack which lay far to his right.

The dead man turned his head.

And, defacing the purity of the snow, he began walking methodically through the ice, slowly but surely cutting a path toward the lonely little shack.

+++

He was very grateful for the opportunity to enter the most cherished of earth-bound dreams, of paradise and eternity. The thought loomed fantastically as the other spirits began to gather around him in a fractured circle. . . loomed and beckoned, but his own inner philosophies kept him from accepting it.

They pulsed all around him in the changing light, lending many shapes and faces, perhaps symbolic of their strength, or perhaps merely creations from his own mind. Alongside the great eyes appeared an orange-maned lion's head, a laughing monkey's face, the figurement of a scintillating ghost, the head of a glimmering fish, a finely plumed bird, and, lastly and most curiously, a silent, pouting devil's head.

The first apparition, the eyes, addressed him tenderly. "We are familiar with such doubts and fears. Be assured, there is nothing to fear. We will not let you fall back to your past world."

He felt empty at the mention of his world. "Do not think me confused. My convictions are sound."

"We accept your sincerity," the eyes replied calmly, "but is it not so that convictions may be changed with the revelation of an unforeseen truth?"

"What may be a truth for me gives me reason for existence. To seek to disqualify the truths I have known seems a terrible injustice to my individuality, realizing that they have guided me once in life."

Abruptly the lion's head became animated, a frightful visage of strength and persuasiveness. Its eyes were blood red and its teeth gleaming white. "Then you would refuse your destiny for misinterpreted ideals?" It flared a mane of fire. "Have you lived in pain to retain a fallacious ideal created by the effects of a traumatizing world? You must flee a blinding cocoon to see the truth beyond. This a fool holds dear."

"It is not foolishness," he spoke, shaken by the lion's intensity. "What I have gained from birth can not be dismissed. Not even for the miracle beyond a cocoon."

And the monkey's face came to life, chattering grotesquely, a silly animal with stupid eyes, eyes of sadness given to an idiot. "Why!" the vision screeched, "why be foolish! Fool, be not foolish! It is not the mortal world which will care for you now, but the spiritual! Why carry on so for the lost?"

He observed the creature strangely, sensing its lack of beatific symmetry. Then he replied, "I have labored to perfect a life where hardship is the only foolishness I have known, while there exists another plane of comfort and satisfaction. I have lived, and died, for a world for which I have sacrificed my soul. My loyalties are with that life, my philosophies, and if that be foolish, so be it. I would not be called a hypocrite."

The great floating eyes washed over with a scarlet fluid, a water of understanding. They closed, then opened with a fire renewed. "We do not hold you in contempt. Your convictions are not without compensation. We are prepared to hear the foundation of your philosophies. When you are prepared, please speak. We await."

He swayed there, in the presence of phantoms.

And he contemplated more deeply than ever before on the matter of life and death.

+++

The dead man came to a rest in a deep bank of fresh snow. His legs were chilled with a fine glaze of ice, as were his arms and face. His hair, tossed and charred by flames, was now an icy crown. His eyes were bloodless and distant, his

heart as cold as the world around him.

The shack lay a few feet away.

Dead trees hung near its foundation, whipped at its splintering wood slats. Of all of the window boxes carved into its staggered walls, only one possessed a whole pane of glass. It was a dying house, but the only one for miles.

The dead man slowly raised one leg, and began to move, slushing through the snow, arms rocking methodically in the spray of frozen drops. When he reached the door frame he stopped. He brought up an arm, balled up his hand and began to strike the wood.

From inside the shack came a low echo, a dull reply of shadows. The dead man's fist continued to fall against the door, raising clouds of snow. Only emptiness replied.

The dead man let his arm fall to his side.

As the wind blew harshly on his still form,

+++

The apparitions were waiting, not for a tale of fantasy, but for a reality of the soul that would determine their interpretations of him. Of philosophies of life gathered from another world.

"It is not a criticism of your realm I offer," he began, "but a criticism of the one in which I lived. I had found love to be the only pure form of life. Love in a world where love was a parody of the living. Love for people. And when you have reconciled a sacrificial love for those in the world who have no recourse but to sorrow, you can not surrender it even to a paradise."

The figurement of the ghost flickered suddenly into a mass of blinding light: it spoke in a voice that was whole and everpresent. "Such a fine perception of moral commitment, such a noble philosophy. But love and caring are intangible elements of a soul full of intangible elements. It is only right to live a single life, and a life is full of changes. Perhaps you fear leaving the love that you knew. But your life is here renewed, as is your love. You must not chain yourself to martyrdom for a memory."

"I am no martyr. I am no fool who will sacrifice comfort for pain. I have only a simple moral view. I have lived a life of pain to give my love to a world of pain. I can not surrender my efforts now, even to you."

"We only wish to enter you into a more peaceful existence. Why do you resist the inevitable so?"

"I do not resist it, I refuse it."

"On what basis?" a shrill voice interrupted.

The fish's reptilian skin shone with a soft spectrum as it floated in space. Its mouth never moved, but there was no doubt from where the voice came, through huge glassine eyes, eyes of a

dying thing. "Is your will more powerful than the universe? What say you to powers which can destroy worlds in an instant? How can you deny the gifts offered you by superior spirits? And how may you hold a philosophy superior to those surrounding you?"

"Please," he offered, a little desperately, "please do not confuse my convictions with mockery. I mean no offense, but no threat of fire or superiority may change my mind."

Then the bird, plumage billowing like fire in a strong wind, became animated in a beautiful suspended flight, bobbing and darting through plams of nothingness. "Tell us, then," trilled the bird, "tell us for what your heart yearns."

The bird's voice was gold weave and feathery cotton, and settled on him with warmth.

And brought him to his truth.

"On Earth," he spoke, sadly, "on Earth there was born a man of poverty, and who lived in pain. Though he was not a religious man, he lived most religiously, caring for those who knew the same misery. Eventually he left his poverty, and ignorance, and found a saner life. And he loved. . . and he. . . he knew that only love existed as his god."

"Continue," urged the bird.

"And he thought that if there were other gods, an afterlife. . . a paradise of everlasting peace. . . he knew he could never betray the only god he knew on Earth, for those who lived in its shadow. For all those loves he left behind, how could he betray them, even in death?"

A silence fell.

"Can any one of you give me a reason," he spoke, alone, "why I should now break with my convictions? Why?"

For a moment there was only silence.

Then the somber, pouting devil's head came to life.

+++

The dead man stood before the door for a quiet eternity while the wind painted him with snowflakes, while his legs became mired in gathering drifts. Then, like a living statue, he brought his leg up from the snow and turned it sideways. Then the other leg and his body. He began a slow journey around the corner of the shack as the weather grew more intense.

He rounded the corner and began to brush the wall with his stiff fingers. He ran them up and down the structure, walking as he did, searching for a way inside the little house. The gusts of wind were turning into a roar.

The dead man stopped when his fingers found the frame of the window, still whole and bearing an ice-glazed pane. He swayed, facing the glass and peering with lifeless eyes at the dismal interior.

Shadows and broken things. He stood for a long time, staring at the empty walls; then he brought his hand to the clouded glass and touched a single finger to its coolness.

His finger began a delicate tracing, a very delicate tracing.

While the snow gathered at his feet.

+++

The wonderful colors and glimmering lights faded with the animation of the devil's head, replaced by a strange fire. The realm was swaying, teasing his sense of place and time. All of the other apparitions flickered strangely then, spinning like thin paper images until they vanished. Only the demon remained.

With slitted eyes it stared, black horns stabbed into the flesh of its skull, a skull with a horrible pointed chin and a mouth full of dagger teeth. It was a terrible, evil face. "And only you and I remain," it spoke in a voice all fire and hate. "And you dare ask me for a reason to respect your convictions?"

"I do not demand a reason," he replied softly, fearful of some impending consequence. It was a fearful thing to see. "I merely wish to show you that my plea is not precarious."

"You disgust me! You would deny paradise for some foolish personal desire. You wish us to beg you to accept our gifts of eternity! Moral wizard, if you shall not accept heaven, then hell shall be your gift! Nightmares and fire, more loveless than you could ever know. . . how high will you hold your convictions in a fount of flames?"

He paused, and considered.

Then replied, "As high as I may, wherever you take me."

The devil's head seemed to wait a thousand years; then its chin fell down grotesquely and it broke into a ringing laughter. It laughed high and cruelly, it laughed and he felt sorrowful, for he did not want to suffer, but he would never betray his previous life. The devil laughed until his sorrow was too great, then it slowly disappeared, taking its monstrous humor to infinity.

He lingered there, confused.

Then the lovely colors returned, bringing a liltful, noteless music with them. And the great eyes returned and opened before him, gazing upon him compassionately.

"I am your peace."

"Tell me why," he begged, "tell me why I can not return!"

And the eyes widened with a wisdom that was not for living men, blinked curiously a fall of tears which washed over him and bathed him in a warmth that was not truth but merely comfort,

as the truth was a cold and distant thing.

"No love dies," spoke the eyes. "Only flesh."

"My flesh."

"And flesh is only the house of love. Where love goes, flesh may not always be its companion. Bring your love to a new house. The old house is gone."

+++

The dead man lay quietly in the snow.

Snow lay upon his chest and legs. One of his arms protruded stiffly in the air, fingers wilted; the other arm was already buried. His face bore a sad expression of finality. Night was beginning to fall, and the storm was rising in strength. Soon he would be entirely covered by snow, and no one

would find him until the ice had thawed. He would never again rise.

The window rattled in the wind.

It was a simple shack abandoned on the countryside, left to die in a season of cold, cold storms. It was a shack with a single window possessing a whole pane of glass, glass covered with frost and gently etched words. Both of them, the dead man and the shack, lay together in death.

And the words etched on the pane —

Because I can not live again.

And the words. . . etched on the pane. . .

end



JUNE BRUNNER
Photograph, 8" x 10"
Second Place Visual Art

Light Night

JENNIFER ROSENSTEIN

Honorable Mention Poetry

So far, the darkened alley meets
With hues of lonely birds, dark grey.
The mist of snow and fine tipped day
Simplifies itself into the streets
Of people walking with mind and meat
And children swaying, making their way.

Often I watch to see the eye of May
Opening herself to a wrinkled sheet.
And so the hour trickles around to sound
An aching chime of disgrace.
The terror of shattering glass pounds
Sharply on the part of my hair. And I am displaced

Into a time, a milky day and vanished night.
I scream to screw the thought into a dimming light.

Stop-n-Go

PATRICK E. COLLINS

Honorable Mention Poetry

knees bend out, pop back straight:
boot walkin', trotter gait.
knees out and pop back, out, back, and
say, mister, can I getta light from ya:
head in my window, gotta light, mister,
need a light. and life ain't a pretty thing
out here on the street, mister, outta light. no
don't gotta pretty life, mister, knees out and
boot walkin', but I'm a pretty boy, mister,
and I'll get on in with ya, mister, slide on in with ya, mister,
cause I'm the black eyed blonde boy with the tight white shirt,
and it's a hard, hard life, mister, we'll make it easy tonight.

youth

LAURENCE BUENTELLO
Honorable Mention Poetry

marionettes were dancing
 on threads
in shadows on a stage
 of shadows.
dark they were,
 eyes wide and wild.

*they frighten'd me,
but i was a child.*

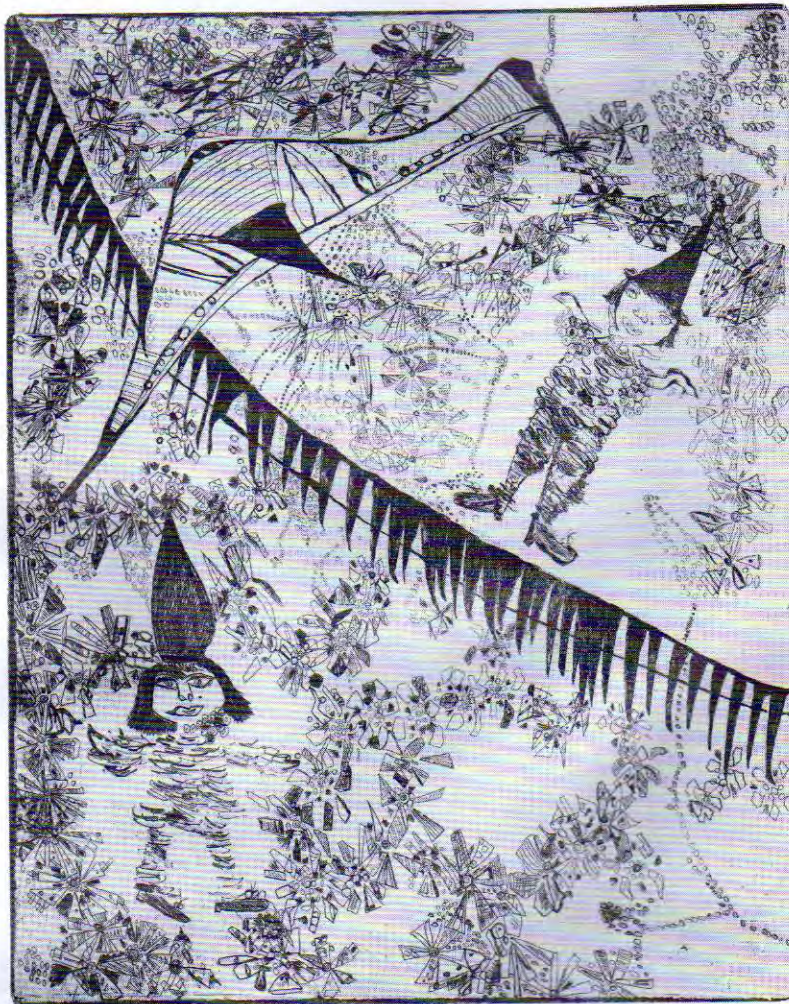
a spider danc'd
 on silken threads,
spear'd an insect
 like a god.
dark it was,
 eyes wide and wild.

*it frighten'd me,
but i was a child.*

you came to me
 in later days;
hand in hand, you
 turn'd and smil'd.
dark you were,
 eyes wide and wild.

*you frighten'd me,
still a child. . .*

CATHERINE CIARROCHI, "Gloss Lace", Itaglio, 8" x 10"



**Brothers, Sons, So Longs
and Goodbyes
(Excerpts and Monologues)**

JOE JUSTICE
Third Place Drama

John's Monologue I
[Scene opens during blackout]

VOICE 1. I want to die having sex. When I'm sixty-two.

VOICE 2. Sixty-two?

VOICE 1. No, sixty-nine. I want to use up some social security money before I die.

JOHN. There won't be any social security money left by the time you're sixty-nine.

VOICE 1. Okay, sixty-two then.

JOHN. Sounds real romantic. How do you think your partner is going to feel?

VOICE 1. Like she's sexy to die for.

JOHN. You know you're a real jerk.

VOICE 2. Well how do you want to die?

JOHN. I want to go out with a bang.

VOICE 1. That's what I said.

VOICE 2. Let him finish.

JOHN. Like I said, with a bang. When everything just gets to be too much, just one bang. Pull back the hammer, squeeze the trigger. *[Gunshot]* *[JOHN enters from SL during blackout, stops center, light comes up on him]* Obviously I never pulled the trigger, unless of course I'm a really bad shot. Things did get to be too much though; unfortunately I didn't have a gun at the time. I tried pills. It was a mistake. I had time to think about it. After I took a handful of codeine I lost my nerve. I was almost there, almost out, and I lost my nerve. I couldn't get out of bed, I just turned to the side and started trying to make myself puke. They found me unconscious, in my own vomit, the bottle by my bed. I didn't keep enough of them down. I was in a hospital for six months, no physical damage; it was for attitude adjustment. One month ago, I was judged adjusted so I was freed. I am going home, not my home, my parents' home. Everyone will be there, everyone except my oldest brother Kevin. He died in a car wreck three years ago. I'm a little nervous; no one expected me to do what I did. I had everything going for me; nothing ever bothered me. Nothing was ever allowed to bother me.

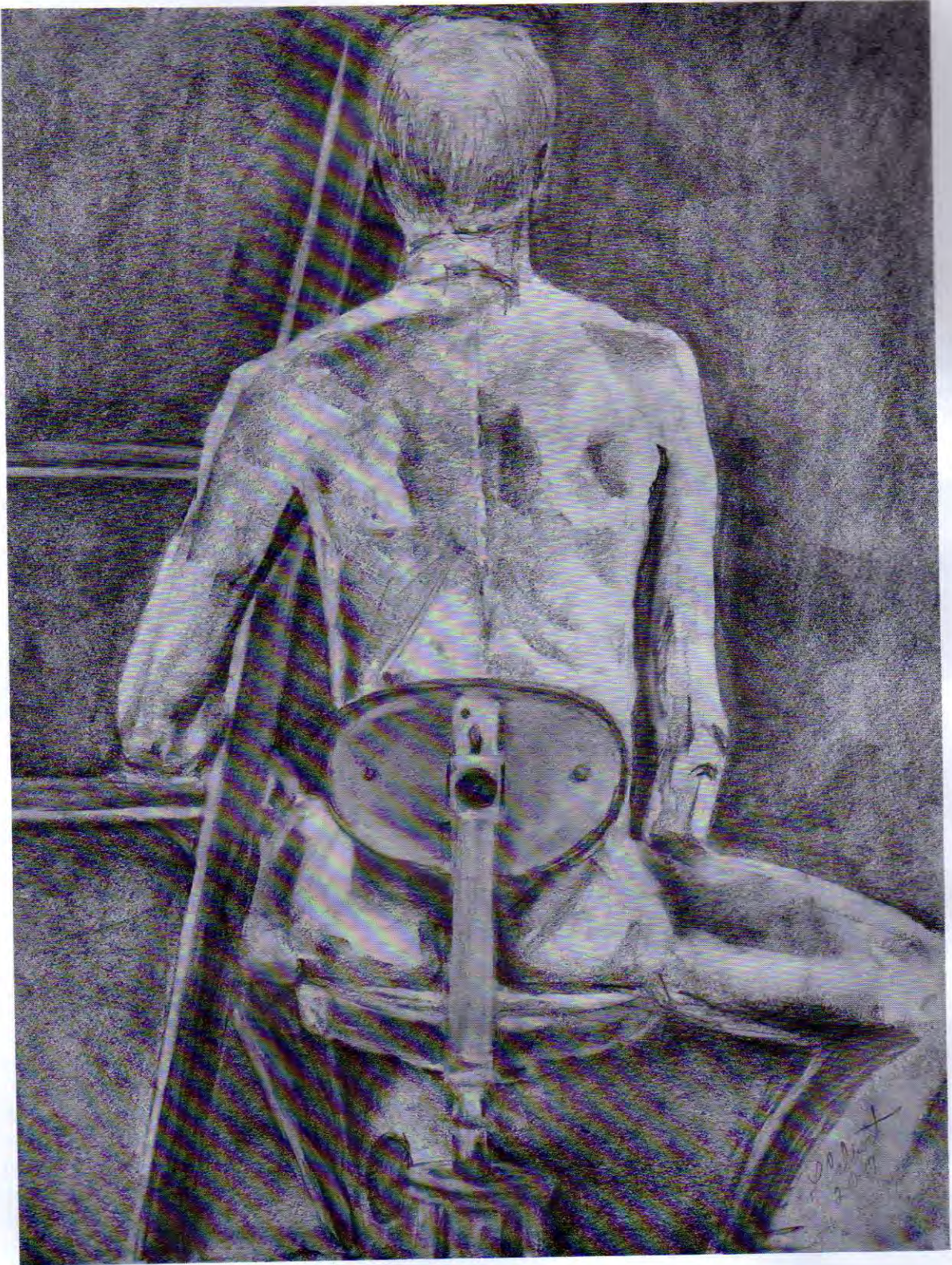
Kevin's Monologue

The paperwork to get into heaven is hell, and the lines; they seem to go on for an eternity. I didn't think I'd ever get back. . . I don't remember

much about what happened; everything up to that moment is pretty clear though. My mom and I were on the highway, on our way home. We were in a hurry; we always watched Magnum P.I. late night on CBS with my little brother. I wasn't speeding, not too much; maybe I just wasn't paying enough attention. We were talking and laughing. There was some construction and somehow I wound up on the wrong road. I drove up an exit ramp and the next thing I knew we were airborne. It was slow motion; we were in the air forever. We tried to fasten our seatbelts. I held out my hand; Mom, protect me! It was too late. Goodbye, I love you. With impact, time suddenly righted itself. We hit straight down on the front of the truck; the windshield exploded. I was broken, the steering wheel was welded into my chest. It was like the ultimate roller coaster, the first flip fast. I held her hand one moment; the next I felt her grip give and she was gone. I saw my mom thrown from the cab as the truck vaulted end over end. I stayed in the cab for the next somersault, but this one was in super-slow motion. I was upside down, stuck to the roof of the cab. I couldn't see it coming. I just waited and waited. Then with incredible suddenness it hit, not a complete vault this time. The top of the cab dug into the ground, twisting metal engulfed me; it was over. The truck was settling on what was left of the cab; I heard the wheels still spinning. I could hear my mom calling. I tried to call to her. I don't know if she heard me. Somewhere along the way I blacked out.

Roger's Monologue

I have a son. A beautiful son. You should see him. He's so tiny. His little itty bitty fingers. And his toes they're so. . . so cute. Lucky kid, he's got John's eyes. My nose. Carol's cheeks. God he's beautiful. Your first nephew, I wish you could hold him, touch him. I wish he could know you. I miss you so much sometimes. I still need you so much. To talk to. To teach me. To help me when I hurt and to share my joys. Oh Kevin, sometimes I still can't believe it. I remember that night, well the morning really. The police came to get me at work. I knew I hadn't done anything wrong, but I still thought I was in trouble. He said, "Are you Roger Monroe?" "Yes sir." "I'm sorry, your brother has been killed in an auto accident." No, it can't be, I just saw him at nine o'clock when he left to go back home. I shouldn't have let him leave; we always protected him. I got to the hospital where they took Mom, and John was there. Thank God! The cop was wrong; my brother was fine. Then it hit me. Kevin, it was you. It was you. I went out there, where it happened, to try to make some sense of it, but it did not make any



LINDA CALVERT, Charcoal, 18" x 24"

sense. The truck was gone, nothing left, just a lot of broken glass. I found the Cross pens I gave you for Christmas, both bent like L's. You must have had them in your pocket when you hit the steering wheel. There was this big spot on the ground; in the early morning light I thought it was oil. When I got close I could see it. It was red, dried on the grass and soaked in the dirt. It was your blood. Your blood, just a puddle to mark where you died. I picked up all the glass and threw it out of the way. I started gathering all the rocks I could find. I took the rocks and laid them on the ground, making a cross. Then in the dirt, I scratched your name. Kevin Monroe. Friend, Father, Son, Brother.

John's Monologue II

Scene: Living room area.

[As much of it is acted out as possible. Feed cats, watch t.v., answering door, etc. This is the room where it took place originally.]

Damn, I'm gonna miss the first ten minutes. That's okay, they can tell me how it started. Why aren't they watching it? Pop. Pop. You could sleep through anything. Mom, where are you? Hi, Havoc, what are you doing out? I'm listening, don't bite me, I know you're hungry. I'll get you some tender vittles; I can't stand the smell of that canned shit. You want gourmet or savory seas? Okay, gourmet it is. Where did they go, Havoc? Must not have been anywhere too far or they wouldn't have left you out. Where are Skeeter and Buff? *[Open utility door]* Okay, everybody out. Don't stand there meowing at me — Havoc's eating all the vittles. It's back! *[Run over to chair to see t.v.]* Pop! Quit snoring or go to bed! *[Doorbell]* It's about time. *[Answering door while watching t.v.]* *[Doorbell]* Okay, okay. What's wrong? You forget your key? *[Open door]* *[Runs to Pop to awaken him]* Wake up! Wake up! Pop! Something is wrong, there's a highway patrolman here and Sheriff Johnson. Pop, wake up. Kevin, I go through this at least once a day. I wake up Pop, they walk over to him, he just sits there confused, half asleep. I move behind his chair. I'm twice his size but I

still want to hide behind him. Then I hear those words: "Mr. Monroe. There's been an accident. Your wife's all right, she's on route to the hospital." I wonder why she's on route to the hospital if she's all right. He continues: "Mr. Monroe, I'm sorry but your son's been killed." *[Screams]* No — I just scream no. He told us how it happened, something about construction and a detour and where it happened. I didn't hear much. I've never seen Pop look like that before, not even when Grandma died. Sheriff Johnson offered to drive us to Midland to the hospital to see Mom. An hour later I passed right by where it happened; for the second time that night. I was on that same road a couple of hours earlier in a hurry to get home to watch Magnum with you. I knew all about the construction and where to turn. If only I'd been there. We saw your truck, drove right by it, the driver's side all smashed to hell. I couldn't imagine how much you must have hurt. It's been a long time, but sometimes I still hear your voice in a crowd and turn quickly, but you're not there. Or I see a tan Chevy pick-up and I think it's you coming home. My God, you don't know how happy I am to know you'll never have to know what it's like to be left behind. The hardest part of loving is finding out that love doesn't end just because life has. When someone you love dies, you realize just how painful love can be. Just because they've died doesn't mean you stop loving them, it only means they can no longer love you back.

John's Monologue III

It's funny what we do with our dead. We bury them, plant them in the ground like they're gonna grow and come back to life. Then we place a stone to mark that place where they now lie. You visit that stone and talk to it, as if it can hear and feel. You plant flowers and keep the grass neat. You bring things to that stone, but what do you buy a stone for Christmas? It made no sense to me. Why visit a stone? You're not in that stone; you're not that stone; you're in my heart. Then I realized, that place in my heart where you once lived had become just like that stone. Hardened and lifeless and grey and unable to feel anything, ever again.



chrome interiors

LAWRENCE BUENTELLO

visions of christ reflect'd
in the chrome chassis
of a sixty-nine chevy.

(the old man at the car yard
gave it to a slag furnace
in the heart of my soul. . .)

driving, driving in the night
of a thousand lonely yesterdays,
i remember'd the chrome interiors
bright with the light of revelation.

(silver everywhere, gleaming,
a bullet on the freeway dying
in the fire of a setting sun. . .)

with christ and chrome,
i drove into sanity.

liquid dreams

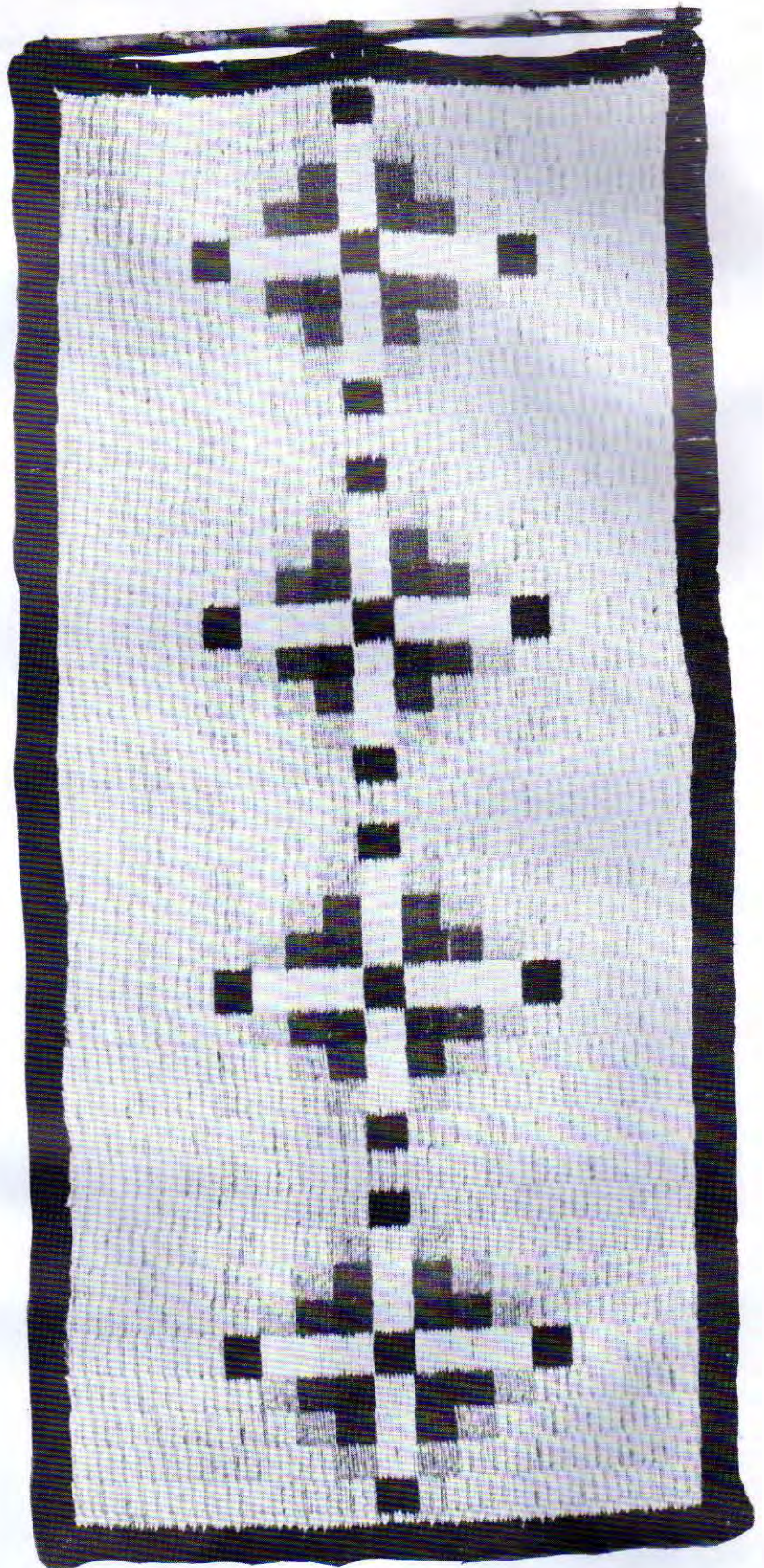
LAWRENCE BUENTELLO

drops falling, storming,
liquid dreams beading
on a window frame,

panes of glass a portal
to forever in a world
of desert landscapes,

a rain upon reality,
drowning the world
with ethereal illusions.

a storm in my mind,
incessant,
drowns me, satiates.



LINDA FORD WINANS, Weaving, 39" long

Charlie's Blues

JOSEF BOOKER
Third Place Fiction

Thinkin' an' a thinkin' . . . will drive a man crazy, an' maybe that th' trouble wit' Cluster. He always leak a little rain water, but when Leona marry ta Charlie I think he gone plum goofy. He got so sad he start writin' him some blues an' poems like he possess', an' leavin' 'em where Leona find 'em. He even took ta writin' some blues songs an' they sound right bad awful, course he don't know nuthin' 'bout no blues. . . jus' church music. . . an' he wernt right know'jable at sinnin' an' such. Leroy pop off one night that Cluster need an expert in th' field ta see if'n he gets it right wit' th' blues, an' I tells Leroy then that Cluster sho' don't wanna talk wit' yu! An' Leroy jus' go "umpf!" an' Cluster mope 'round lookin' fo' some profes'nal help, an' he come down ta Huxley one night an' hear this cityboy slick name'a Nick Diamond.

An' ol' Cluster were sho' inspir'd by what he saw sittin' there playin' that music, an' he gots ta thinkin' that maybe this here fella could help him wit' his trouble. Nobody know where this Nick fella come from, who he be other than some slick-dress'd blues cat wit' a moanin' six-string an' a bottleneck slide. Yeah, brothers'n sisters, this Nick was a danj'ous man. He th' kind that pull on his guitar an' makes all th' pussy run to 'im.

So Cluster he tell this Diamond man what his trouble was, an' then Nick tells Cluster that he thinks on it, but that he thinks much betta if'n he gots some "sweet lettuce" ta chew his mind on.

"What that, 'sweet lettuce'?" ask Cluster all confus'd.

"What? Ain't yu never heard'a no sweet lettuce? Well, I am talkin' *money!* Yu gives me five dolla's an' I thinks real hard fo' the solution to yo'r problem!" an' Nick go laughin' a nasty sneak-greasy laugh, his mouth like a cave leadin' down ta hell.

Cluster must'a give 'im th' money 'cause th' next thing yu know'd, he an' Nick be down by th' river workin' on th' blues fo' miss Leona. An' Nick prob'ly wishin' he had asks fo' more than five dollars fo' his trouble'n th' matter. 'Cause Lord, th' noise they raise was one wick'd sound. Fin'ly ol' Nick gets hisself a belly full an' he says ta Cluster,

"Little brother, yu sho' can't play no blues. Fo' anotha five dolla's I play them ol' blues fo' yu an' yu can sing yo'r ass off for th' lady!"

"Five dolla's mo'!" an' Cluster near turn white peekid.

"This here turnin' inta hard game, an' I gots my own time. . . understan' me?" say Nick wit' a sly

smile like Luc'fer hisself.

"I gets th' money," all Cluster can say, his heart so heavy it nigh on breaks in two.

Now, Cluster must'a give Nick th' money 'cause as soon as Charlie takes a load'a wood over ta th' next county, they go off ta sing ta miss Leona. I knows 'cause Leroy was ta go wit' Charlie an' he be tellin' ever'body in sight when they leavin'.

Cluster was all nervous singin' fo' Leona in th' middle'a th' night. . . an' he gets goin' good when he wakes her up and God all mighty! she crabby as all get out. An' Nick who was way in th' cover'a some bushes, he sees her standin' in th' low bedroom winda, but she could not see him. . . an' his heart takes one mad jump goin' soft.

"Who that make all that racket where no one cun sleep?" Leona yell down right hateful.

"It me. . . Leona, Cluster Williams." say Cluster all peekid in th' mouth.

"Cluster? What yu mean comin' here ta wakes me up fo'?"

"I sorry I wokes yu, Leona. . . but yu. . . yu. . . sure is one beautiful woman an'. . . I hads ta tell yu is all," Cluster was almost ta tears an' ol' Nick grinnin' ta hisself in th' dark.

"I don't care what yu thinks," yell Leona all mad fire now, "Yu gets on home an' let decent folks gets some sleep!"

"But. . . but, Leona. . . I gots me a pow'rful ache. . ."

"I don't care nuthin' 'bout yo'r ache, Cluster Williams. Yu gets outta my yard an' get on home. I marr'd now. . . what if Charlie was to find out? Go on, get yo'rself home!"

"But I gots no home wit'out yu, Leona."

"That no concern'a mine!" an' she slam her winda shut.

Ol' Cluster stare at that winda fo' a minute or two. . . time don't mean nuthin' ta a man wit'a broken heart. He go slumpin' ta his shack down th' road home. Nick Diamond still grinnin' in th' dark shadows.

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It were a warm mucky aftanoon when ol' Nick go stompin' up ta Charlie's place. E'er since he seen Leona he got set on puttin' a notch'r two on her. . . an', well. . . he were no gen'leman an' usual gots what he aimin' at.

He been snoopin' 'round town checkin' out th' folks. . . askin' questions an' such on Charlie an' then swingin' th' conv'sation on ta Leona. . . like, what do she want wit' a ol' man like Charlie? An' what do Charlie do wit' his time most a th' day?

Right quick people say they ain't so sure 'bout Leona. . . Mrs. Thomas say to Nick that th' only reason Leona marry Charlie is fo' his money. An' that ol' Diamond go right bright wit' wicked

thought. Mos'ly people say that Leona like mos' married womens an jus' work 'round th' house, but that ol' Charlie works like a dog all day an' night both. . . 'specially right now 'cause th' rainy season were comin' an' Charlie right scared'a his home gettin' flood'd out an' such. . . so he gettin' all th' work done he can so's he can stay 'round th' house in case'a th' 'mergency.

"That so?" whisper Nick to hisself, an' stroke his chin wit' a yellow finger. He lites 'im a cig'rette an' smile ta show off his gold tooth for true, an' he go walkin' off ta think real hard on whats ta do. He a real rascal fo' sure.

Whát he do was go rippin' up ta Charlie's door an' young Leona comes see who there, an' when she first set eye on Nick she gets real 'cited 'cause he one swell site fo' 'round here place. His shoes be all shiny'n new an' he gots him a storebought suit that fits jus' right. I e'en hear that he had him a honest-ta-God diamond-stud tie clip! Maybe that where he gots his name. Um-umm, yeah. . . he were sharp!

"Can I helps yu?" ask Leona.

An' Nick's eyes be eatin' up that girl like she breakfast, but he play cool an' polite. "Yes'm. . . I was passin' by on my way ta Naw'lins ta see my Aunt Clarissa, an' I got thinkin' yu might be able ta spare somethin' ta eat. . . 'course I could lay in some work. . ."

"I. . . I ain't sure," an' 'fore she could say another word, here come Charlie ta see what was goin' on an' he caught sight a Nick Diamond. . . he look doubtful an' shake his head mournful like.

"I was tellin' yo'r daughter here. . ."

"She my wife."

"Yo'r wife?" an' Nick act su'prised.

"That right. What yu want here?" ask Charlie real harsh, 'cause Nick done interrupt a fine dinner'a ham hocks'n greens, cornbread'n coffee.

"I was lookin' ta works fo' a meal," say Nick, "I'm hopin' ta gets ta Naw'lins. . ."

"Yu looks like one'a them cityboys ne'er do no work. Yu e'er works fo' a livin'?" ask Charlie.

"Yessah, I was rais'd on th' plantation. Wernt always a travelin' bluesman."

Charlie eyeball that man fo' a long time an' fin'ly give in ta his heart. . . or maybe he jus' tired a workin' all by hisself, "Well, I guess yu can help me wit' a load'a wood this afternoon. C'mon in an' eat," an' Charlie open th' door ta that sharp-lookin' snake.

+ + +

It were sure funny fo' awhile there. Ol' Nick'a bustin' his ass fo' a piece'a ass! An' Charlie glad in givin' such hard work at a "shine-boy." That what Charlie always call city fellas that never do nuthin' but lay 'round. . . shine-boys.

"They all talk an' shiney shoes," Charlie say an'

spit him a big ball'a tobacco juice on a ant hill or such. He were right deadly.

An' there was Nick a'fence-mendin', clearin' stumps, buildin' a new chicken coop an' helpin' Charlie wit' big ol' loads'a fire-wood. . . an' that not e'en countin' the reg'lar chores like milkin' cows an' so on.

Nick runnin' around in a constant hurt. . . a pair of Charlie's overalls that been patch'd an' wore out right good in some immodest places. Nick didn't look so slick, but he sho' sparkle them eyes'a his on miss Leona when she show up in th' fields wit' a bucket'a cold water.

An' after some time, Charlie gots ta where he let Nick eats in th' house, an' ol' Nick start ta shine. . . 'course he had ta be careful on 'count a Charlie bein' there in th' same room. . . but Nick could'a talk'd th' serpent outta th' Garden'a Eden. Nick would do them little things that womens love so much — yu know, helpin' wash th' dishes or fetchin' a pail'a water from th' well. He even listen close while Charlie reads from th' Bible.

Nick foun' out that fo' a man who didn't 'tend church reg'lar, Charlie were a real God-fearin' an' a true believer in dreams'n omens an' such. 'Course Leona told him. She were gettin' a real big ache for Nick an' he were'a feelin' the same way, but they couldn't do nuthin' with Charlie 'round, an' he always takin' Nick on them work trips outta town.

One night after supper, Charlie wipe his mouth an' lean back in his chair a'lightin' his pipe, "I gots ta take a cab'net I been workin' on over ta New Albany. I guess yu be goin' wit' me, Nick."

"I ain't so sho'."

"Why not?"

Nick puts on th' most woeful 'xpression on his face. "I had me a dream last night."

"What were it about?" ask Charlie, real int'rested.

"Don't rightly know as I can say. It wernt too good."

Charlie gots hisself all shook up, "No, yu gots ta tell what it were about. It could be real 'mportant!"

Nick he sigh an' rub his hand over his face, "Well sir, I had me this dream that th' river done flood'd an' wash'd out th' whole county, an' ever'body dead away."

"Good Lord, all mighty!" and Charlie were rockin' fur'ous in his chair. "Were that all?"

"Nosah, I hear me a voice real sweet an' purty a'tellin' me how ta save us three innocent folks."

An' th' next thing yu know'd, Charlie he was buyin' three a th' biggest wash tubs he could finds, an' he spend most'a his money fo' them too. An' ever'body they got ta laughin' 'bout how Charlie done tied them big ol' tubs up in th' oak tree by his house. . . like birds' nests they was sittin' up in them branches. An' Charlie gots him big hunks'a

canvas ta spread over them tubs. We all think Charlie been workin' too hard.

"Now 'member, Charlie," say Nick, "we can't say nuthin' once we climbs into them tubs. An' we can't peeks out neither or we get struck by a lightnin' bolt. Then we all drowns fo' sure. That what th' voice tell me"

"Oh, Lord. . . I sho' ain't gonna do no peekin'!" an' Nick he holt th' ladder while Charlie climbs up into his tub.

"Now, cover yo'rself up real good, an' don't look out no mattah what yu hear. Not 'tills I call fo' yu ta cut th' rope wit' yo'r axe."

"All right," an' Charlie he like a possum in his hangin' tub, holdin' tight to that axe.

Nick help Leona into her tub, then that ol' devil he scamper up that ladder hisself. An' he wait an' wait 'till th' moon come out bright an' he sure that Charlie be asleep. Then he ease on down that ladder an' helps Leona ta th' ground.

They gets in th' house an' start goin' wick'd on th' bed, Leona moanin' like crazy wit' her toes pointin' at th' ceilin'.

Nick gets up afta a spell of lovin' ta takes him a piss, but he didn't wanna go off an' leave Leona. . . so he jus' open th' bedroom winda an' let fly, Leona watchin' him from th' bed, a brazen little grin on her face.

An' jus' as Nick he gets climbin' inta bed, there come'a awful warblin' sound from outside.

"What the hell is that?" ask Nick kind'a scart.

"God! It Cluster Williams!" Leona almos' shrieks. "What we gonna do?"

"Yu best go an' tells him ta go away 'fo' he wake up Charlie."

An' Leona's eyes brighten up like a candle burnin' in her head, "I gots an idea," she open th' winda. . . standin' where Cluster can't see her. "What yu want, Cluster? I done told yu once ta leaves me alone!"

"I jus' come ta say goo'bye. I'm goin' away an' I ain't comin' back. If I can't haves yu."

"Well, yu can't. I'm marr'd." Leona smile, an' ol' Nick he almost burst open laughin'.

"Then I like ta aska a favor of yu."

"What that?"

"I'd likes a goodbye kiss."

"I don't know. . . I guess there ain't no harm in that, but yu promise ta go away if I kisses yu?"

"I promise," and Cluster moved closer to th' window an' closed his eyes. But Leona stuck her rear-end out th' winda —

Po' ol' Cluster puckerin' up ta th' wrong end. An' Cluster he must'a realize that somethin' were wrong. . . even fo' a church boy, 'cause he say, "Goodness, Leona. . ." an' 'fore he can say another word, she breaks a little fart right there in his face.

An' Leona got ta laughin' an' Nick he listenin' ta what was goin' on an' he cracks up loud 'nough fo' Cluster ta hear. An' Cluster he done turnt cold hearted. He realize jus' how low worthless Leona be. . . that she didn' care nuthin' 'bout him at all. An' he sulk off to th' barn, where he sees th' smithy-fire an' his brain go workin' on revenge right sudden.

Ol' Nick an' Leona they was goin at it like bees 'round a flower when they hears Cluster callin' again, "Leona? I gots ta talk to yu."

Nick whisper ta Leona, "Answer him quick an' let me do th' rest."

"What yu want now, Cluster?"

"I wanna 'nuther kiss! I ain't leavin' till yu gives me a kiss!"

Leona she say all right, an' ol' Nick he sticks his naked butt out the window, an' Cluster slap him with that red-hot iron, an' Nick he goes screamin' like a banshee, a-jumpin' 'round rubbin' his rear-end an' cryin' ta wakes th' dead.

Charlie wake up in his tub a'thinkin' that th' world were gone an' Nick were givin' th' signal, 'cause he cut that rope wit' his axe an' come crashin' to th' ground wit' a heavy bang'n boom. Leona were bawlin' like a baby that done lost its bottle.

Lord, what a racket that was!

Ol' Nick he run off like a scart rabbit, an' Charlie findin' out what been goin' on, he jus' kick Leona right out th' house, an' nex' day he sell ever'thing he own an' go off. An' Lord mighty, Leona she takes that piece'a rope that helt up th' tub and she hung herself right here on this tree Iyam under. It were her momma that found her.

Nobody see Charlie fo' th' longest time. . .

I feels a tap on my shoulder, "Yu still mad at me?" I looks up an' see Leroy's sweaty ugly face.

"Naw, not no more. I ain't mad at nobody."

Leroy's face turn right happy then turn slightly cool as if he done felt a heartburn pain, "Hey, look ov'r there, it Charlie!" an' sho' nough there he goin' down th' road headin' north way. Little clouds'a dust risin' from his feet. Leroy say, "What that 'round his neck?"

"Don' know, but it awful shiny."

"Look like a medal or somethin'."

"Could be, who knows?"

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Later on Mrs. Thomas she say they find a bunch'a 'zaleas on Leona's grave. . . an' a single gold tooth layin' there on th' tombstone.

the end

Blinding gold sunlight
Reflected through thick bamboo
From crystal water.

Haiku
LINDA FORD WINANS



CATHERINE CIARROCHI
"Worm Pot"
Stoneware, 8" high

Seeing

PATRICK E. COLLINS

Two nights, two shooting stars:
A separate, private vision.
This afternoon, the wide rainbow's arc
And beside it, dimmer, the rainbow's mirror.
The poet is a bubble artist with words,
Changing shapes, manipulating colors,
Creating an illusionary reality of film, molecular thin,
To capture the expansive possible in a nearly momentary form.
He sees himself in the rainbow's mirror when its colors congeal to black,
Still has himself when the flash and the luck of shooting stars
are far memory.
He is most intimately involved with what we all know happens to bubbles.



