

Spring 1981

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The Lighter

Spring, 1981





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The Lighter

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--LAUGHING--

I Flapping Wings

*You are the sitting owl;
I am the early-bird--
Clapping as I pull worms from the ground.*

II Weeds

*You are the carnation in the window;
I am the wild, free dandelions--
Dotting the countryside.*

III Crowing

*You are the hen laying eggs;
I am your lazy rooster--
Cockadoodledoo-ing while you work.*

IV Rain

*You are the hard, cracked earth;
I am your heavenly sustenance--
Pouring down on you.*

V Fragrance

*You are one violet;
I am a rose garden--
Taming the air.*

VI Ripe Acorns

*You are the cat up the tree;
I am the autumn nuts--
Plopping to the ground.*

VII Dancing Leaves

*You are crushed brown leaves;
I am reds and yellows--
Swirling above you.*

VIII Color

*You are the feathered pheasant;
I am the rainbow fanned peacock--
Strutting across your path.*

IX Waterfall

*You are the creek in the valley;
I am the mountain stream--
Roaring down to you.*

X Sparkling

*You are the dying sunset;
I am the silver stars--
Waving as you disappear.*

--Susan K. Day





WRITING PAPERS

*Flipping coins flopped
down uncarpeted steps,
and cautious gymnasts
somersaulted after.*

*Flying squirrels leaped
down uncarpeted trunks,
around which gymnasts
swung with laughter.*

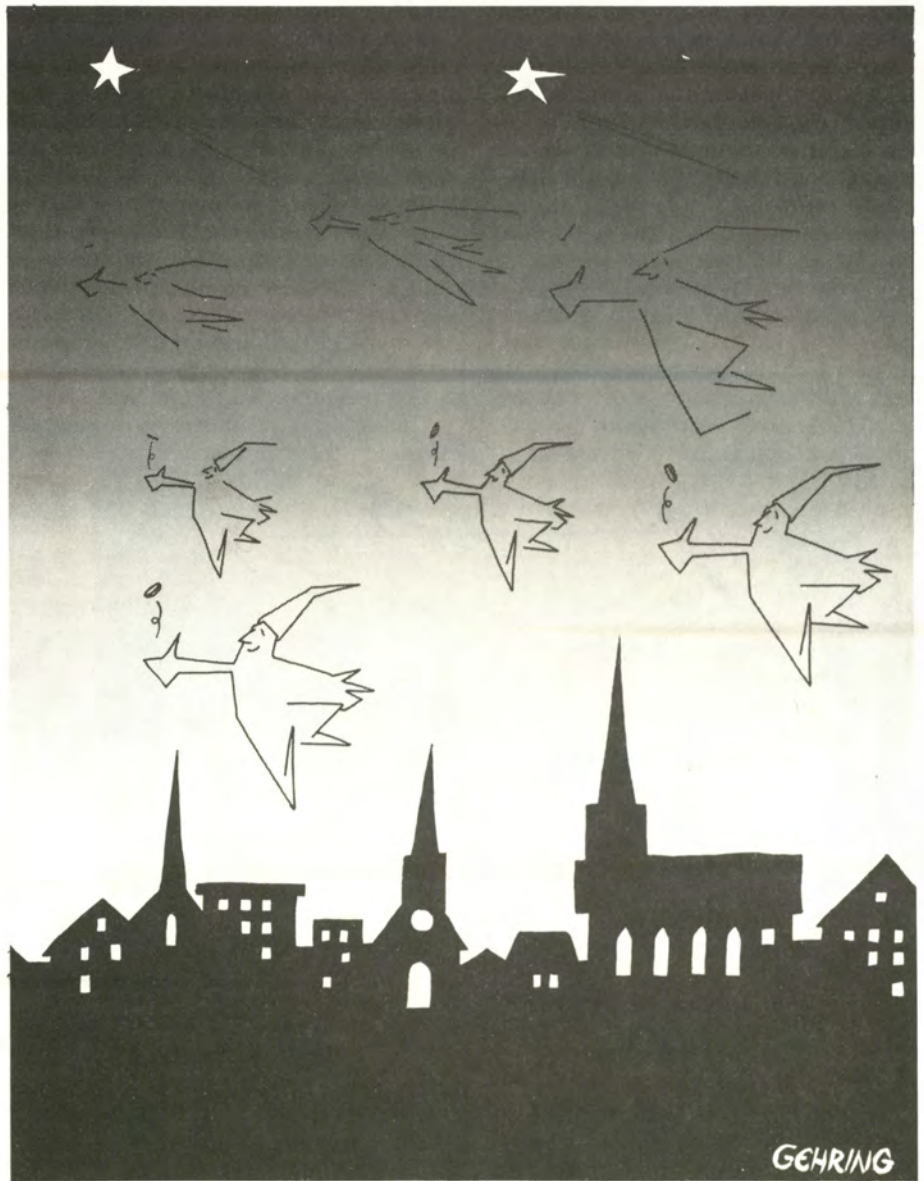
*Floating steeples popped
from uncarpeted carrots,
and tiptoeing gymnasts
hopped high over.*

*Flippity floppity
coimiddy cawdiddy
carpeted carroted
squirrelly
leap swing
hop.*

*Floating gymnasts
flip coins over
high steeples.*

Your pointed nose resembles a hat

--Steven Victor Pera

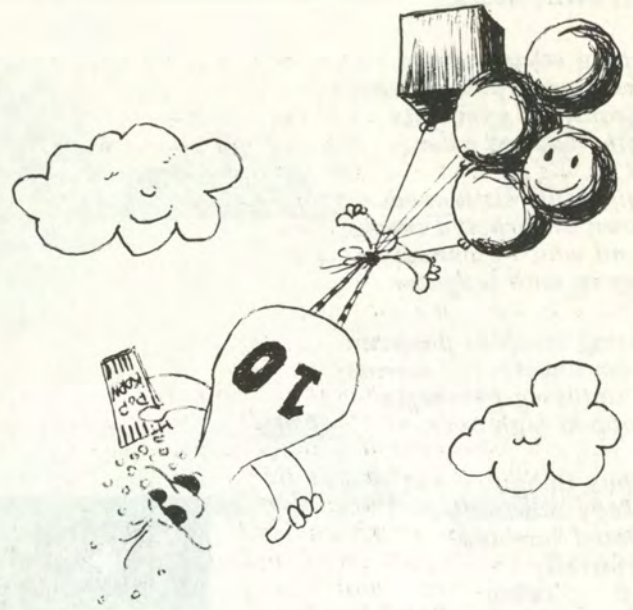


GEHRING

TEN DARLING DODOS

Ten Darling Dodos one day took NoDoz
 so they might their murderers mislead;
 for Dodos fall tired too quickly.
 On this fine day one morning in May
 the man, named John, stood and searched.
 And looking afar he did see them.
 He and his men and their truck, nicknamed Ben,
 set off at a start for to kill.
 And ran over many'a Daffodil.
 Upon yon ridge the ten Dodos played bridge
 unaware of the fate full upon them.
 Their bird friends tried to warn them.
 "Get up you dumb Dodos! Get up you fools!"
 shrieked the kites and the sparrows quite loudly,
 "Your deaths are nigh upon you!"
 "Why trifle you thus you old blunderbus?"
 an insolent Dodo exclaimed in a squawk,
 "Our own lives must be played out.
 Besides, my good friend has a marvelous hand."
 "Seven clubs!" came a shout from the South.
 "Eight hearts!" the East then did chime.
 "Ten Darling Dodos." interrupted a man.
 "Ten soon to be dead." laughed another, named Fred.
 "Ten Darling Dead Dodos!" they sang.
 With that the men shot lead fast and hot
 through their feathered friends' frail bodies.
 And went home and drank Hot Toddies.

--Jeff Koehler





I KNOW BETTER

Some look at us and see only one, but I know better.
I distinctly feel two presences here.
One is welcome and free to roam, while
the other binds me as Titus laid out, his liver bared.
Never letting me loose, never setting me free
it laughs at me and scorns my fate.
But I laugh back struggling anew.
"I'm only joking can't you tell.
Take me seriously then if you like,
it's all the same in retrospect."

For I know better.

It forces me to question thoughts I cannot.
It tries to step beyond mortal worlds of men.
But I laugh at it because it's bolted down.
With me it must wander inside this shell
Of bones, and flesh, and decaying cells.
It lashes out but it's securely chained.
It forces me to write as it takes control.
I feel it's hopeless yet it writes on
Striving to let out what it knows
It can never hope to do.
But I know better for I can feel
The outstretched talons waiting to strike.
"Was that a laugh or just a cry?"
A laugh I thought before I died
I am a terror my mind and me.
If I know better.

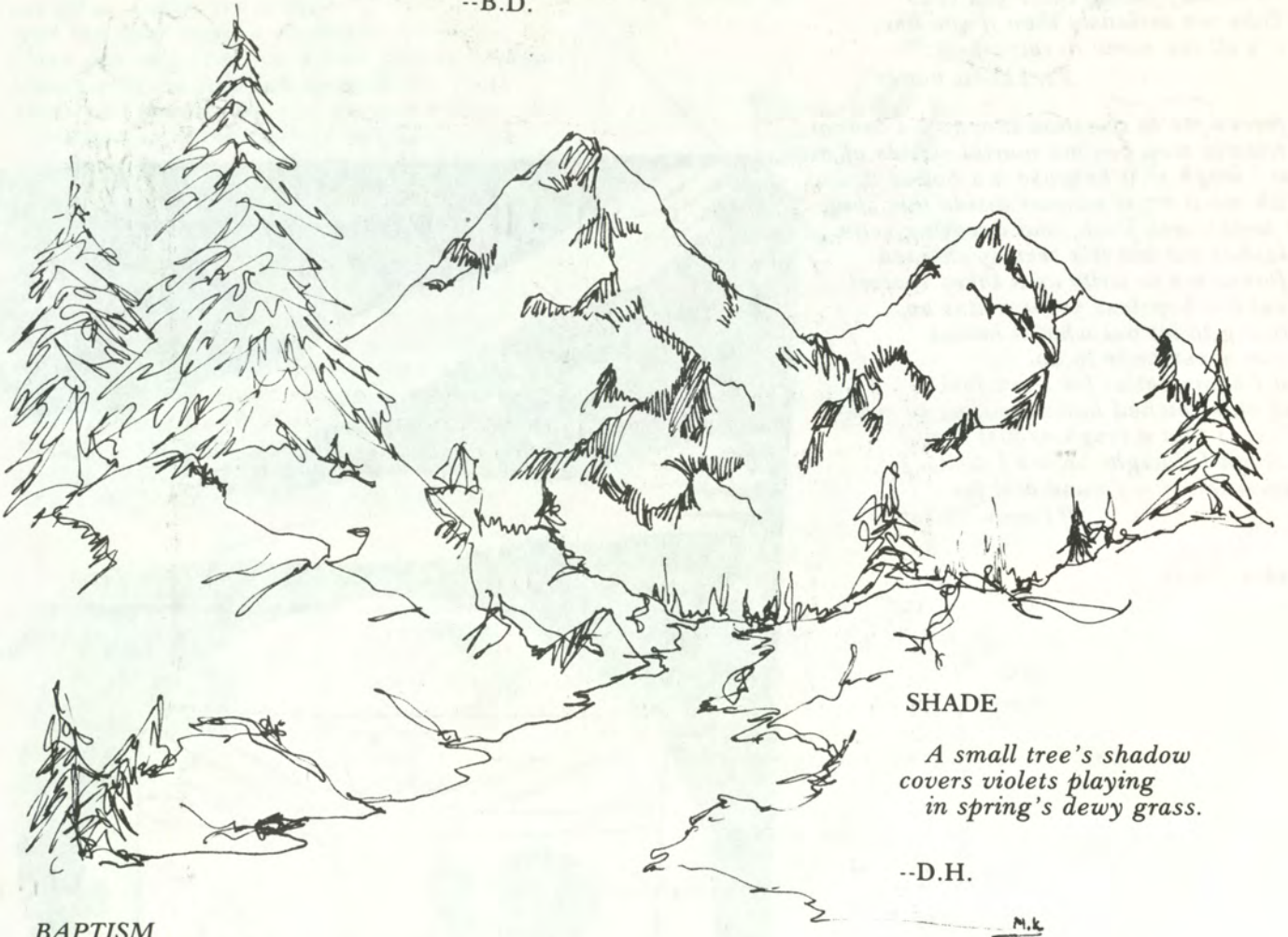
--John Ploetz



SOARING

*In a cloud-filled sky
A sailplane turns lazily
On toward the heavens.*

--B.D.



SHADE

*A small tree's shadow
covers violets playing
in spring's dewy grass.*

--D.H.

BAPTISM

*The window pains;
The cold rain runs down the glass
Of my face--*

*I see the water melt
The paper masks the people wear,
And they hurry home to where
They keep a spare,*

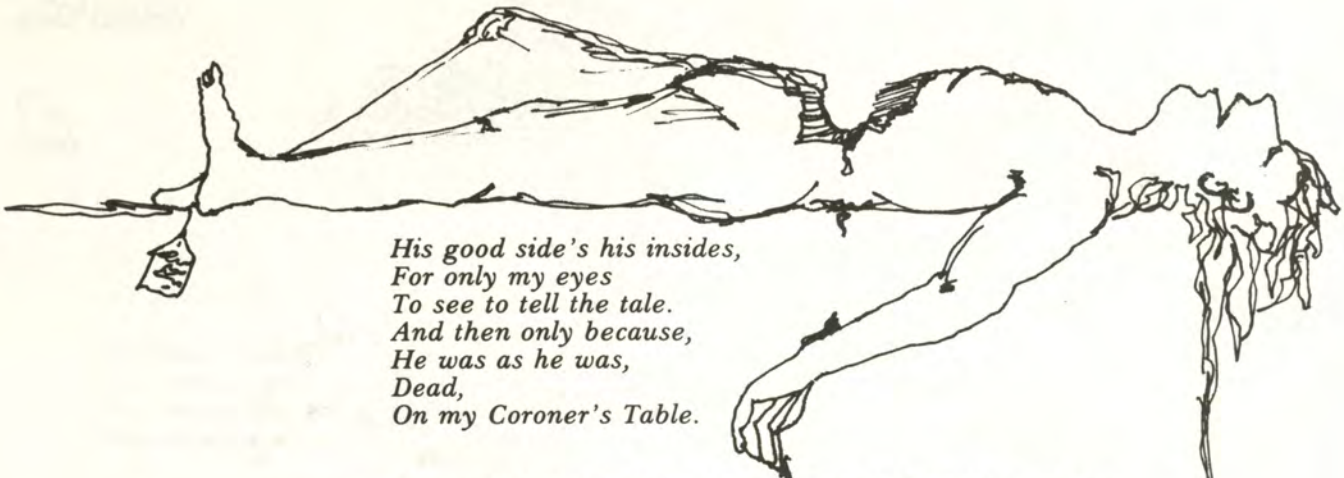
*Yet for a moment the puddles reflect
Their nakedness.*

And the light travels on.

-- Julie D. Frederick



THE LAST OF HARRY DOUGHERTY



*His good side's his insides,
For only my eyes
To see to tell the tale.
And then only because,
He was as he was,
Dead,
On my Coroner's Table.*

*His outsides looked like he was from a floor of a stable
As he was laid down gingerly on my Coroner's Table
The day Harry Dougherty was brought in to me,
Dead of being lonely, unhappy, and ugly.*

*My first incision showed
That the rivers that flowed
Had welded, tended,
And exquisitely mended
a gold cardiac pump from a heart oft offended.*

*As I cut further down into your organs internal
The beauteous jello-like flesh cold and well-done,
Was the richest, purest, reddest, wintery inferno
That my eyes had ever laid hands on.*

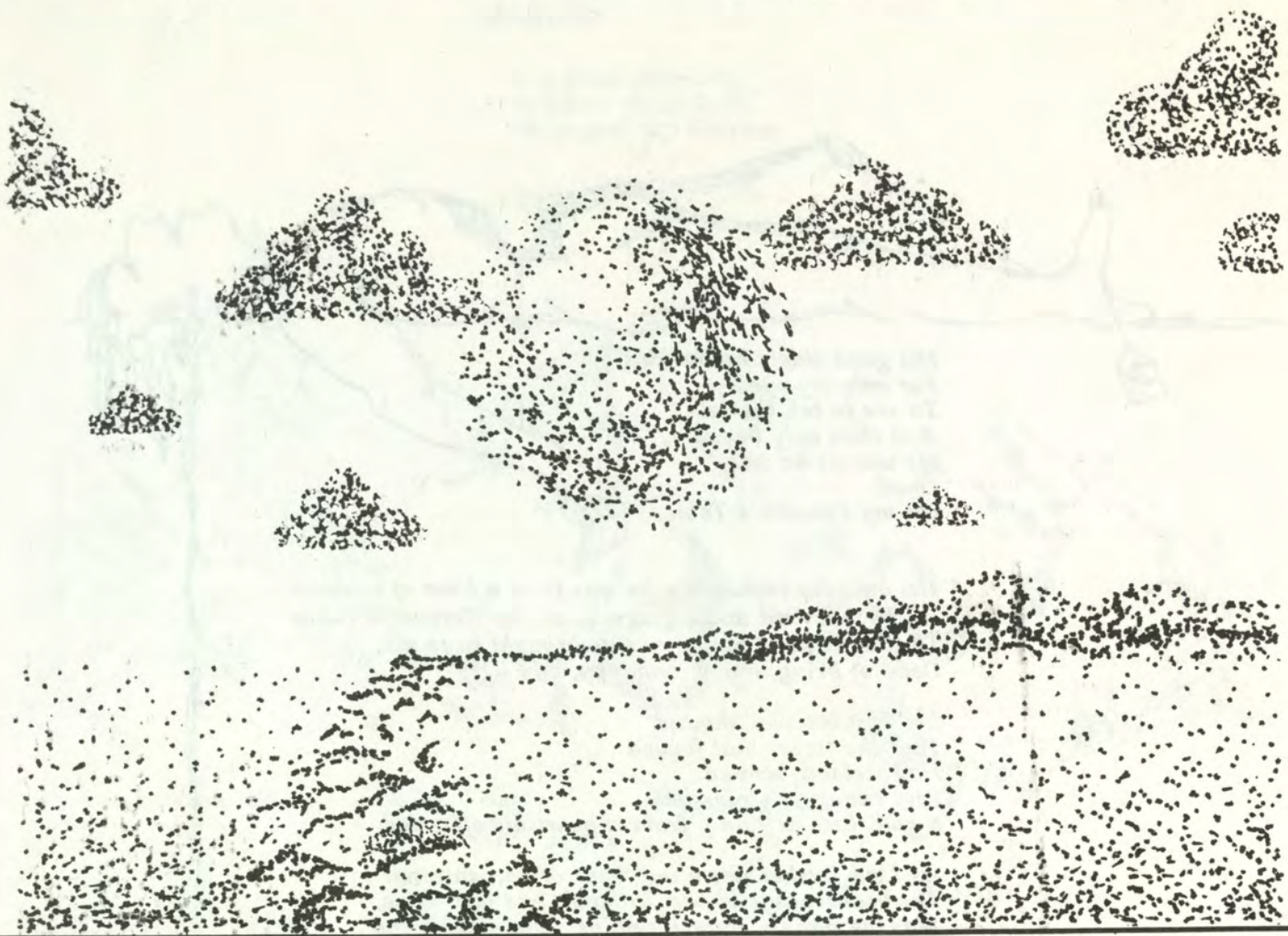
*The Red Raw flesh of the internal organs surely
Does with rich life us enjoin,
Yet there's been a mistake
'Cause there's a sirloin steak
of a liver in this ugly man's loins.*

*Yes Harry Dougherty's insides were beautiful
But what a lousy break from nature so cruel:
Spent all his life looking ugly,
When inside were the real jewels.*

*His good side's his insides
For only my eyes
To see to tell the tale.
And then only because
He was as he was,
Dead,
On my Coroner's Table.*

--Rachel Rehbein





WILDFLOWERS

[To My Parents]

Wildflowers

*Beauty born of freedom
not from want or care,
but from formality.
Colors heightened by sunlight
there only when it willed to shine
with no respite from might's depth.
Roots and branches strengthened
by terrible winds and storms
that leave roses and lillies lifeless.*

We are Wildflowers

*Our nature is not of high culture,
but our understanding is deep
and strong as our roots.
Our glory is protected not by wealth,
but by the manifest will of God
which feeds and guides us on our way.
Do not despise us, your seed, for our ways,
but dwell upon our strange and lasting beauty
and revel in our vitality,
which is from you.*

--Christopher



AT TWENTY

*Crashing waves,
Roar along the way,
How much you say to those who gaze,
Between the days.*

*The Eagle, fighting in its flight,
The movement there, between the lights,
The mysteries of summer dreams,
They leave to those who sing.*

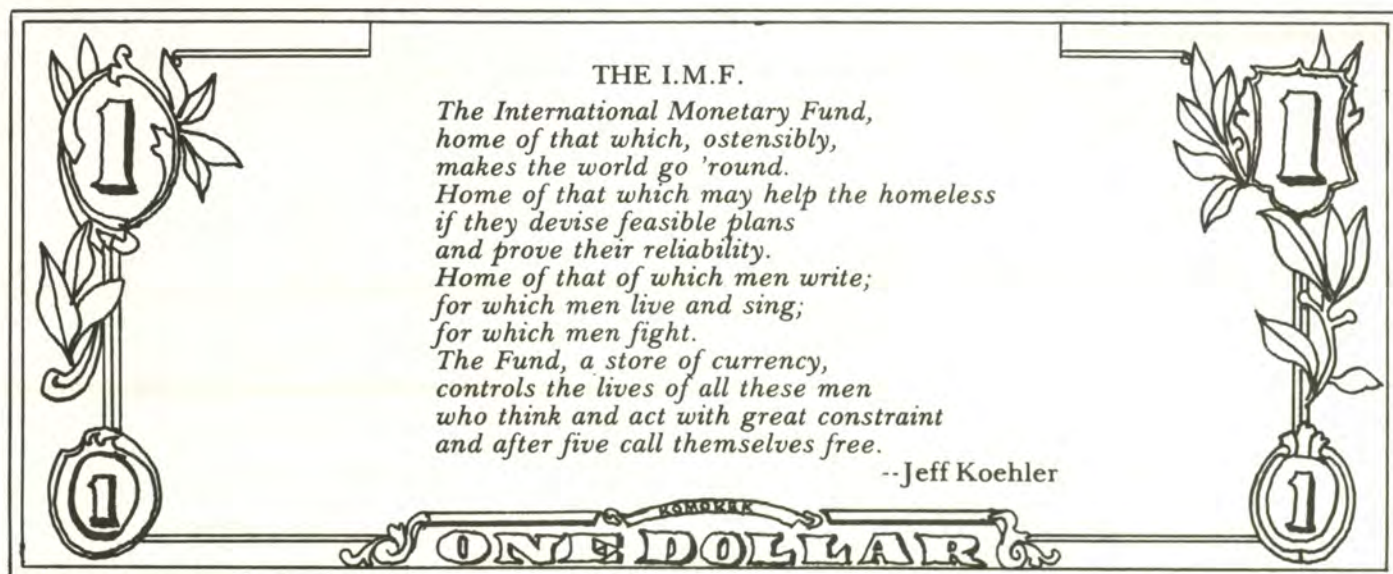
*Reflect on graves, of those who thought,
The ways of right, the light of thought,
A few may care, for others' lot,
And then be known, for trouble wrought.*

*As children now, faults to endure,
With independence, to secure,
A life of hope, to not be poor,
In needs of love, forever sure.*

*Away then life, I fly thee far,
Spirits wait beyond the stars,
Strife and pain will lead the way,
Rife with blood, and filled with hate.*

*But twenty summers now have passed,
Through them all, the ancient tracks,
Beneath the moon, the shadows light
The path,
Proceed with faith, ignore the last faint
Rays of hope,
From memories,
And sleepless past.*

-- k. scionti



THE I.M.F.

*The International Monetary Fund,
home of that which, ostensibly,
makes the world go 'round.
Home of that which may help the homeless
if they devise feasible plans
and prove their reliability.
Home of that of which men write;
for which men live and sing;
for which men fight.
The Fund, a store of currency,
controls the lives of all these men
who think and act with great constraint
and after five call themselves free.*

-- Jeff Koehler

ONE DOLLAR

THE DOORS ALWAYS . . .

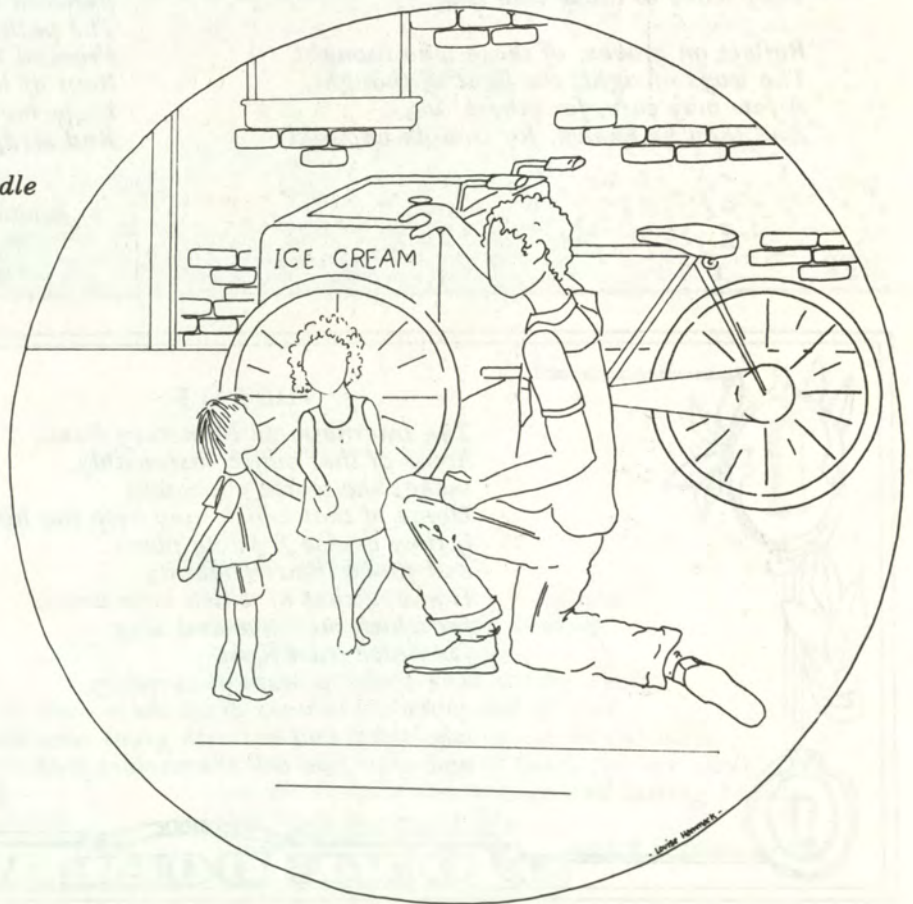
open to this street. Berry,
East Berry, in the railroad's lap
I yank the clapper [ding-dang-a-lang],
turn my face
to the falling sun, and peddle;
ice-creaming towards the end
of my run.
I huff up the hill, out of the shade,
and they come scrambling, little
rug-scalped kids who
hang on the bell,
jab at the freezer lid, and squeeze
me off the seat.

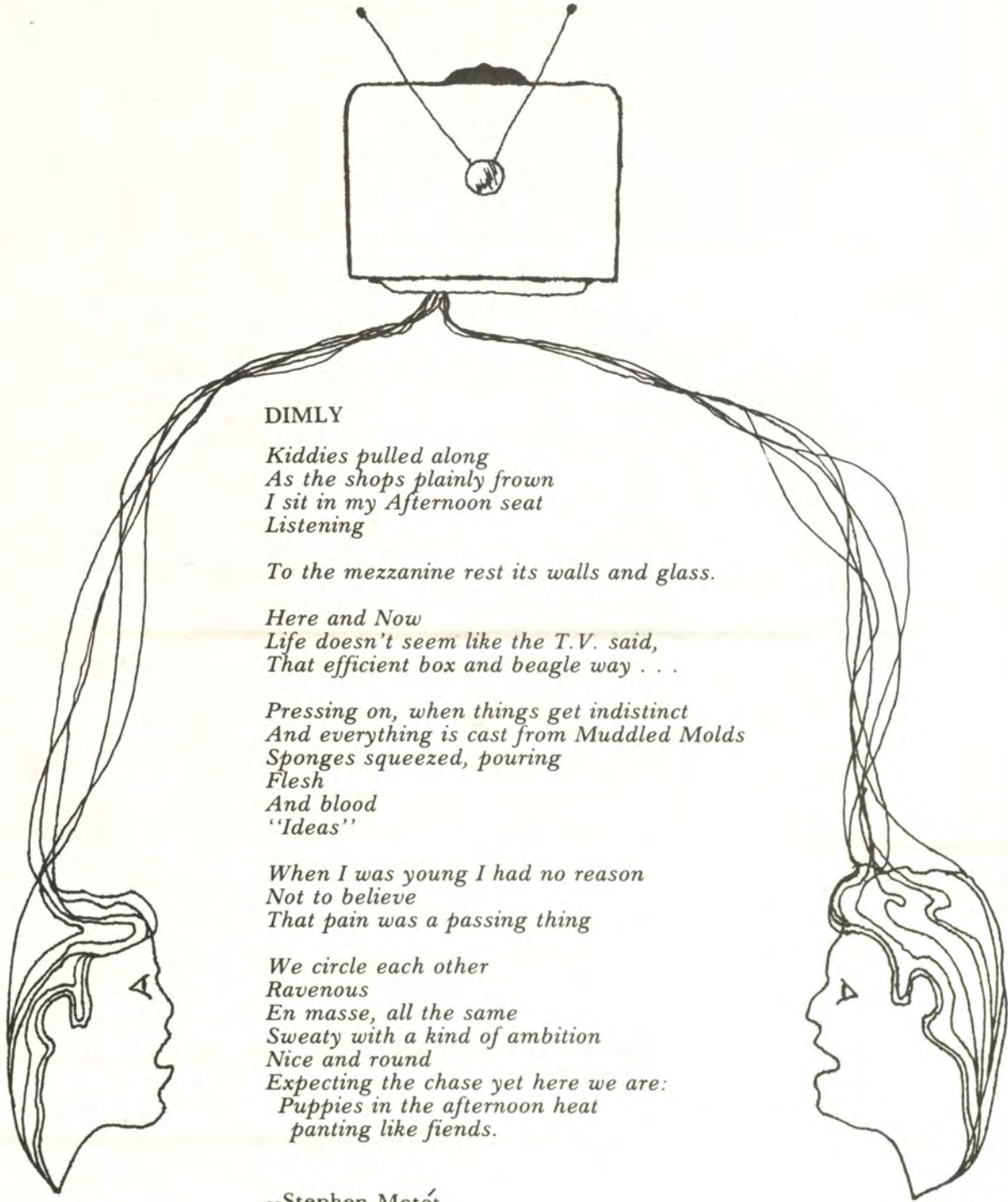
And they whine. Little kids with
names like Twyla
or Morell, Darnell
or B.J.
whimper and plead for a free
Nutty Buddy or squashed Push-Up.
The doors always open to this street,
so I end up giving them another
free treat.

I get
my best business on Berry:
it's not like the rest of my route.
There, surrounded by gardens
and lush, the doors
never open to
let the people out.
The streets are alone, crisp, clean.
On Berry though, where houses huddle
and the trains rumble in the alley,
large ladies'll madly search
for 36 nickles
or seven Bomb Pops.
Old men'll look on, sitting
like shadows under an
insomniac's eyes, waiting
for rest that never shows up.
But when the ice cream comes,
they smile.

And the bigger ones, looping
basketballs between their legs,
act regal and
call, "Hey, ice cream maann!
Gimme a free one"
Sometimes I do.
Then Adrian or Twyla scowl their faces
and complain. "This stuff's soft!"
The others dribble off then,
looking for an open
rim.
I yank my clapper [ding-a-dang-lang],
the ground nibbles at the sun,
and I peddle on, away from the
open doors and
back into the darkness.

--Daniel Avila





DIMLY

*Kiddies pulled along
As the shops plainly frown
I sit in my Aftersnoon seat
Listening*

To the mezzanine rest its walls and glass.

*Here and Now
Life doesn't seem like the T.V. said,
That efficient box and beagle way . . .*

*Pressing on, when things get indistinct
And everything is cast from Muddled Molds
Sponges squeezed, pouring
Flesh
And blood
'Ideas'*

*When I was young I had no reason
Not to believe
That pain was a passing thing*

*We circle each other
Ravenous
En masse, all the same
Sweaty with a kind of ambition
Nice and round
Expecting the chase yet here we are:
Puppies in the aftersnoon heat
panting like fiends.*

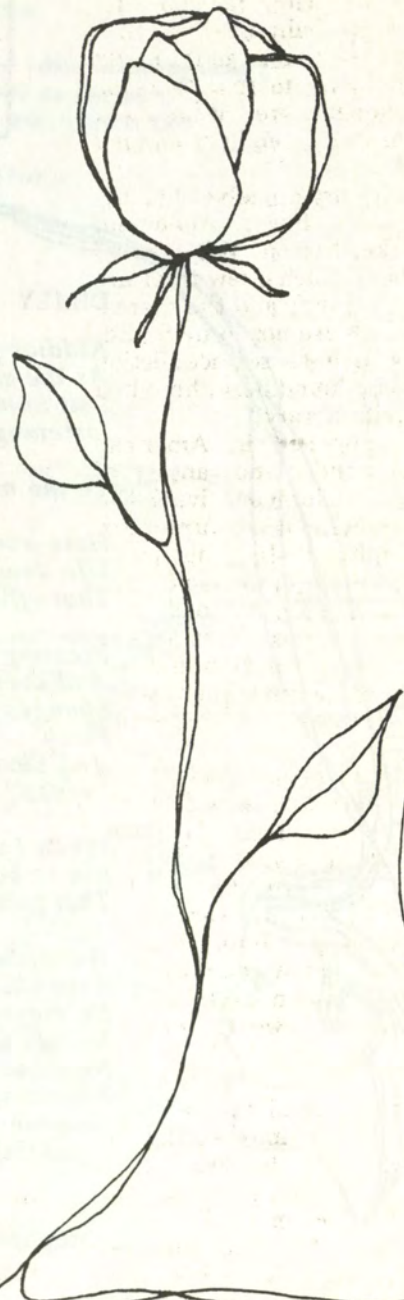
--Stephen Motét

REGRET

*Like a child in a garden
come upon a scarlet rosebud
folded in and in upon itself
holding in each tight-closed petal
a prophesy of coming quiet brilliance
not satisfied to see the bud
lay back each leaf in self-timed yielding
but taken with a reckless anticipation
tears each tender petal from off the next
in irreversible destruction
stands alone with blood-red potpourri at foot
and barren branch in hand . . .*

I have done the same to you.

--S.R.H.



SRH



THE U·S· AND SPACE

by David L. Barlett

I sit in my window and look up at the star-lit night sky. How far, how far away those stars really are, yet they seem so very close to me, as if I might climb a ladder on the roof to reach them. What is out there? Who is out there? Why are we down here and not out there?

I search the library's shelves for my favorite authors: Bova, Anderson, Asimov, Clarke, Norton. Why can't I find any of these! Such a few titles are listed in the catalogue and the corresponding volumes are not to be found. Why are my favorite science fiction writers not to be found here, here in a large, university library?

What has happened in America? Why has the wonder and fantasy of space disappeared from our lives? The newspapers and television carry a few pictures of Jupiter fly-bys, but interest in NASA projects doesn't last. Other projects, like the space shuttle, never gain much appeal. This decline of interest in the exploration and use of space has serious consequences for the United States and for the entire world.

Space itself has never really lured the mass of Americans. Back in 1957, when the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, Americans awoke not to the practical use of space, but to the threat of the U.S.S.R. surpassing American technology. John F. Kennedy launched a massive campaign to put a man on the moon by 1970. The popular motivation, however, was not to exploit the moon, but to "beat the Russians." Over the following dozen years, the U.S. poured millions and then billions of dollars into beating the Russian Cosmonauts to the moon. They got all the samples and data that we got, but at a fraction of the cost.

Once the U.S had beaten the Russians (who weren't racing anyway), the hoopla over being the first nation on earth to put a man on the moon didn't last long. Oh, the



National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) got a few projects off the ground (literally) but not without a lot of work in Congress getting funds. The last Americans in space were aboard the joint Soyuz-Apollo mission of 1975. After that, America seemed to have other problems to worry about. And NASA had problems, too: little money for existing unmanned projects, less for new ideas and manned programs, and then Skylab's demise nearly two years ago turned more people away from the idea of exploiting space. Luckily, NASA pulled off a good show with the Viking landings on Mars and more recently with Voyager flying by Jupiter and Saturn.

These unmanned projects and the testimony of many of the nation's great scientists and space explorers helped NASA get more and more money out of Congress to build the space shuttle, the key to American exploitation of space. Cost-cutting

shortcuts in construction of the first shuttles have caused more costly problems in the long run. Today, the first complete shuttle stands on a launch pad at Cape Canaveral, but its launch date has been postponed time and time again. Media coverage is frightfully inadequate for the magnitude of the undertaking. NASA in particular and the federal government in general have not made the space shuttle a source of national pride as was Apollo. Yet the shuttle represents far, far more than Apollo did.

The space shuttle is the first space craft specifically built as a reusable,

Earth-to-orbit freighter. Its design will cut costs and make space readily available to Mankind. NASA advertises it as a relatively inexpensive way of launching satellites and conducting research in space. But the shuttle is far more. It is the workhorse that could put an orbiting factory in space with permanent inhabitation. It could lift and prepare probes--both manned and unmanned--for voyages to Venus, Mars, and beyond.

But if recent history is any indication, the shuttle alone will not succeed in putting men in space. If left to the devices of government bureaucrats and corporate executives, the shuttle's primary function will be putting satellites in orbit to aid communications, predict weather and monitor crops. Although these goals are important, they are to the shuttle's capabilities what pumping water was to the first steam engine: merely the beginning of a long and wide-ranging career.

Man's knowledge of the universe is continuously increasing. Most of this is due to improvements in telescopes and other instruments. Yet, some limit will be reached in the ability of terrestrially-based devices to explore the heavens. From orbiting telescopes above the interference of Earth's atmosphere, however, astronomy will continue to expand its store of knowledge. The space shuttle is the only feasible way of launching an entire astronomical laboratory into space. Research in other fields of pure science could be brought to the weightless, near-vacuum of space via the shuttle.

At least one of the four shuttles now planned will be in the employ of the U.S. Defense Department. The use of Earth-orbit as a military outpost is no longer science fiction. Satellites are already used for verification of arms treaties. The Soviet Union is also reportedly developing "killer" satellites capable of destroying enemy satellites in time of war. The volatility of the arms race on Earth is great enough; the addition of another phase in Earth-orbit could increase the danger still more.

Yet, the usage of space for military purposes holds greater potential, a potential which only the Soviet Union seems interested in developing. The

Soviet Union presently stands far and away ahead of the United States in manned orbital projects. The string of Soyuz and Salyut missions in the past few years has left American space endurance records and life-in-space technology far behind. The Soviet Union's avowed aim is the construction of a permanent human habitation in space. One might think all of this would arouse the American people as did Sputnik more than twenty years ago.

The fact remains, however, that the American people and their government do not recognize the implications of military installations in space. The first super-power with a military capacity in Earth-orbit will hold a significant advantage over its adversary. Any large-scale military project in space could hold the entire world hostage.

The construction of orbiting space stations has peaceful aims as well. The world is rapidly running short of a wide variety of resources, especially metals and energy. The greatest reservoirs of such resources left to the exploitation of Man are in space. Mines on the surface of the moon can provide the industrial resources for enormous factories in Earth-orbit. New technologies developed in weightlessness could revolutionize the pharmaceutical, electronics and research industries. Who knows what new products--and what new industries--could be produced from lunar raw materials in weightless orbital factories?

The benefits of such factories could become immeasurable. After an initial heavy investment at high risk, space factories could turn out inexpensive industrial and consumer goods. High-quality crystals for electronic circuitry, great quantities of smelted metals, even fine glassware could be produced for export Earthside. The preparation of raw materials from the moon could easily supply Earthbound industries. Standards of living throughout the world could be raised

by space industry. The possibility exists that the Earth might even be fed from orbiting or lunar farms of millions of artificially fertile acres.

The production of energy alone could pay for the cost of orbital factories. Solar energy could be trapped and converted to electricity in enormous solar collectors. Energy could then be beamed Earthside by microwave at an economical rate. The technology for such collection and transmission exists, and awaits only the interest to implement it.

Why won't this happen? What stands in our way? The answer: absolutely nothing, except our own lethargy. NASA and those of us concerned about the future of Mankind on Earth and in space cannot seem to convince Congress and the American people that the uses of space are limitlessly beneficial. They have not succeeded in presenting the reasons for--no, the necessities for expanding Man's knowledge and use of space. Man has so nearly ruined this planet that it will only be by expanding our horizons beyond it that we may successfully surmount the problems of this world.

I dream of standing on the face of the moon, peering down on the green and blue and white face of Earth. I dream of falling for two hundred days to the red, dusty deserts of Mars. I dream of jumping a hundred feet at a time on some Jovian moon. I dream of watching the swirling clouds of Venus for hours on end.

Most of all, I dream of visiting Earth on a vacation. I would visit clean, prosperous cities; flashy, exciting resorts; quaint, happy villages; a peaceful, expansive countryside. How can these dreams be reality?

The last, only if the former.



TREES AND ME

*The Old Maple stretched his lecherous, arthritic
branches toward the Virgin Pine.
He knew how distinguished he looked,
With those touches of grey on the underside of
his leaves.
Across the way, the Young Ash boastfully waved
His heavy, green leaves in the wind.*

*The Virgin was confused,
Receiving so much attention from those two,
And such jealous treatment from the Flowering
Crab,
Who was flirtingly throwing petals at the
full-bodied Young Ash.*

*The gorgeous Dogwood feigned indifference as
her violet boughs swayed gracefully with the
breeze.*

*The Sun came out,
His game of tag with the clouds had ended.
He shone down upon the Virgin in full strength.
She bent towards him
And her insecurity faded like the dampness in
her roots,
As she basked in his warmth.*

--Julie D. Frederick

A PLACE FOR PROFITS

A PLACE FOR PROFITS!
A BOOM IS BORN!

"WHAT IS IT YOU WANT?" INQUIRED THE MORN.

"THE FOREST CUT!

THE SAVAGE SHORN!

A HORN OF PLENTY AND PLENTY OF HORNS!"



THE RIVER BOILS.

THE LAND HAS GONE DRY.

"WHAT IS IT YOU WANT?" WHISPERED DOWN FROM THE SKY.

A DOWNCAST FACE.

A WITHERED CRY.

"THE RESPECT OF MY CHILDREN."

IN ANSWER WE SIGH.



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WOEFUL WORSHIP--THE CHURCHES' CHALLENGE

*So odious, staged; piquantly pious,
prejudice prevailing, baneful bias.
pained praying, promising pews of penguins,
leering lionesses; cheshire cat grins.*

--Kirsten Moe



SEEK

*Read and write continue on,
seek the knowledge one step beyond
past those brains that once roamed free
now locked beneath earth, a rusted key.
The chest is lost, its contents scattered.
Voices once warm are now simply numb.
Pillars once stone have turned to crumbs,
like an aging old man they yield fewer secrets,
less and less in touch with changing time.
One day fated to sacrifice divine.*

*Read and write continue on.
seek the key polished anew
unlocking thoughts that drift into view.
Write feverishly, bolish till shimmering it-gleams.
Have I found the right key; what might it open?
What about the lock inevitably rusted and broken?
Should I pass on this key preserved by time?
Or let it pass through my fingers someone else's find?
What if no one respects or lives to read?
Have not these words at least set me free.*

--John Ploetz

THE SPARK

[This poem was written for a 15-year-old "Resident" of the Porter County Juvenile Detention Center, who is now at the Indiana Boys School in Plainfield.]

Waiting, surrounded by glass,
Trapped in a coil, eyes to the clouds,
A child is hiding,
A spirit is crying.
Where shadows merge in dungeon walls,
Convinced that hope cannot be found.

Shining, the harvest moon,
Drives shadows into dark,
While caressing the trees,
And a spirit who feels,
The silence in the night yet seeks,
The quest for unreachable stars.

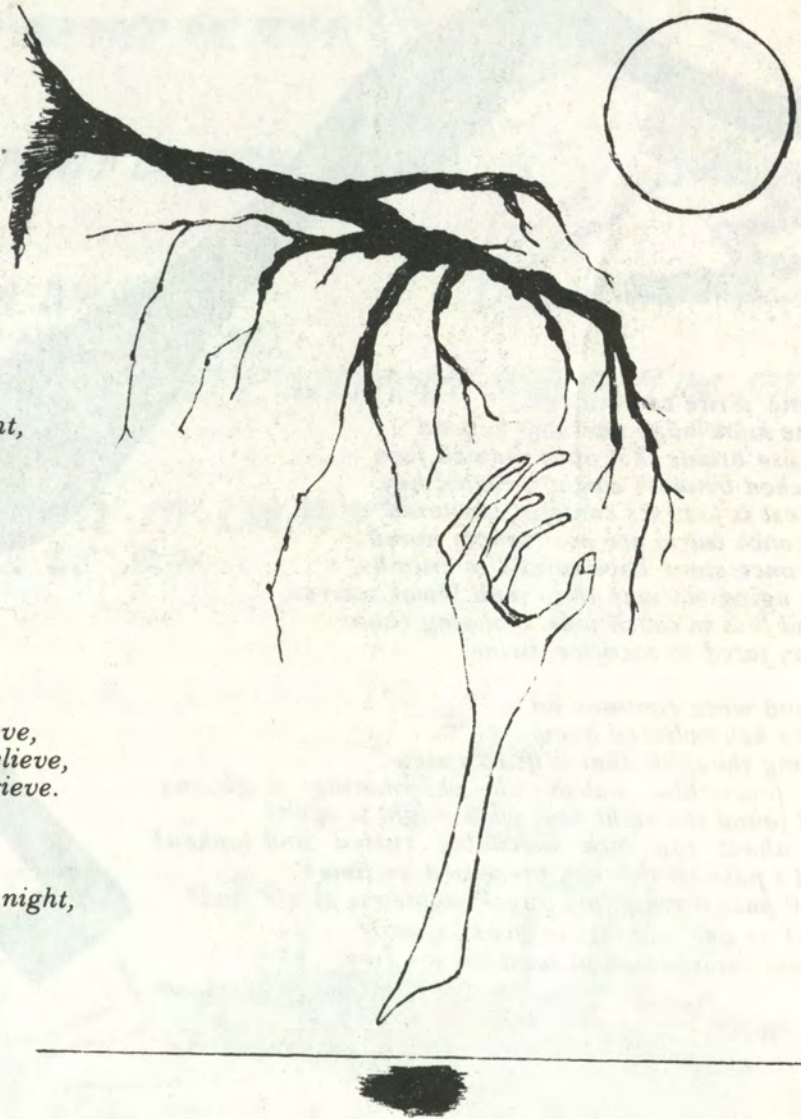
Passing, time marks his course,
Masking pitfalls as canyons,
Valleys as graves,
Vainly trampling hope,
In shafts 'neath mountains standing by,
Where shadows smother life.

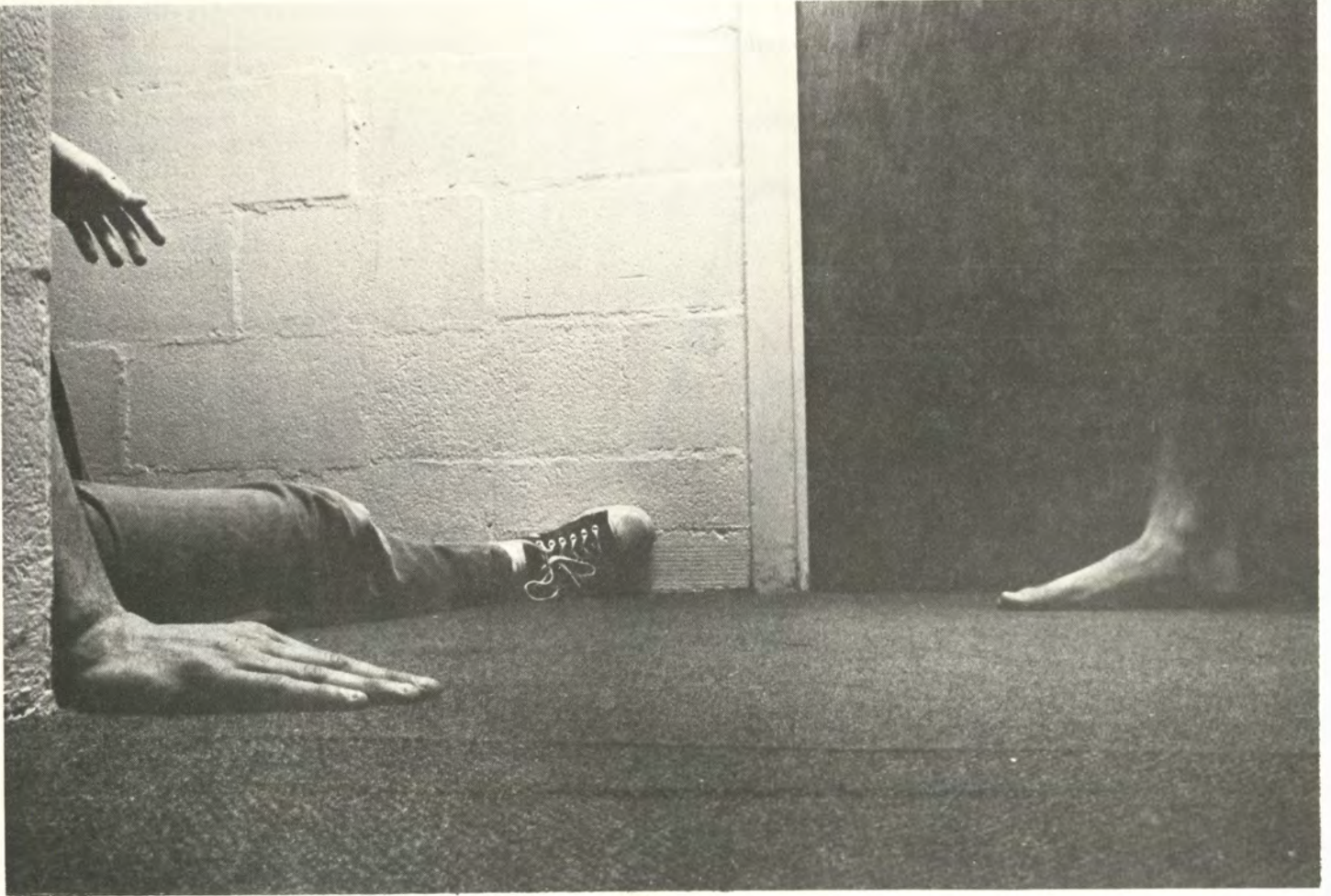
But shadows are fearful, illusions of night,
They have no sway,
Over hope or life,
When lightning in a soul,
Arcs across a paper cage,
A breath of fire, a spark of rage,
Piercing darkness with an arrow of light.

No man hides the mountain's trail,
Rising to its peak,
The climber only, turns away,
To those who gain, from those who achieve,
To those who profess, from those who believe,
To those who despair, from those who grieve.

The spark in your soul ignited your life,
And that trail just beyond,
Where your spirit's fire could shame the night,
Shooting for stars with eruptions of light,
A beacon on the crest of a hill,
Waiting, for the dawn.

--k. scionti





*I wonder is it raining
in my kitchen too
I know there's thunder in the hallway
the stairs glisten by the moon
The stars shine through my window
their light lies wasted in my bed
as I stumble vaguely through a door
that slams softly in my head*

*"Hooray, he's made it!" the legions cry
and I,
apprehensive and wondering why,
begin to run with faltering step
till, heart pounding and soaked in sweat,
I pause alone
to catch my breath
and lean against the kitchen door
listening
to the thunderstorm*

--Thomas Gehring

SONS OF A FARM WIFE

*Her mornings swept into the room through
the milky eyelid curtains--
and the same sunlight
that polished the seeds of the coronfields below
awakened her to the Autumn
that swept the raisin colored
and henna tawnd leaves
downward as the wind spit its verdict
to almond scented bonfires
and the cranberry laced yard.*

*She,
this calicoed wife
with eyes that were a spring of snapragons,
watched from the window sill
breathing the season.
And they--
already amidst the final wheat harvest--
the golden shafts shimmering
amongst the blue jeaned bodies
catching cattle and breezes
singlehanded or
quilting the yard and porch
with whittlers and storytellers--
stopping to wave--
already these,
her men,
ahead of her dreams.*

*And so now
another morning
she arises,
still calicoed
with eyes a little softer,
she perches on the window sill,
but now seeing only the luminous wheat
waving
to the windy songs of solitude
that ripple through her--
her men
now gone to fields of their own--
some to cities of dreams
not found behind whitewashed fences--
some not knowing of her
or each other
and some still near
carrying on the tradition born
into her home
and into her memories
that now rapture
colorful smears of
patchworked time
making rainbows inside of tears.*

--Lisa Collin



DEMANDED KNOWLEDGE

*We can project dates
and debate events
and enter times
of improper
emphasis.*

*We can reject signs
and resign contracts
and contrast realities
to deny
imminence.*

*We can effect states
and misstate the past
and pass by brothers
of another
hemisphere.*

*But let not the hybrid
called Being, Human,
or Man the Wise,
be deceived by
his "wisdom!"*

*Disillusionment,
pre-hatred and murder
and lies are as bad
as emperialism,
power and war!*

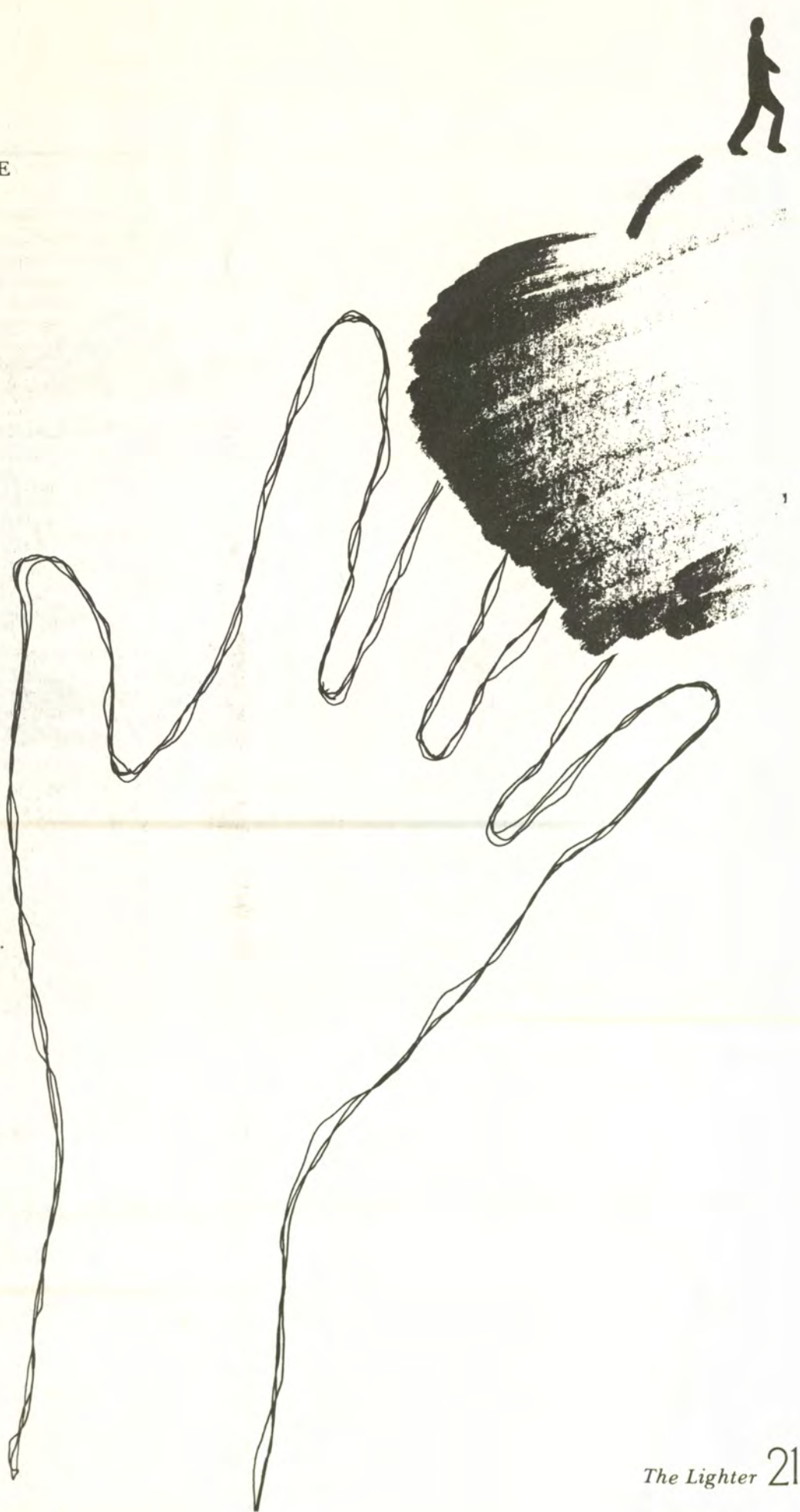
*Horizons limit our
experience to three,
beyond which none
can research with his
thrid-dimensional tools.*

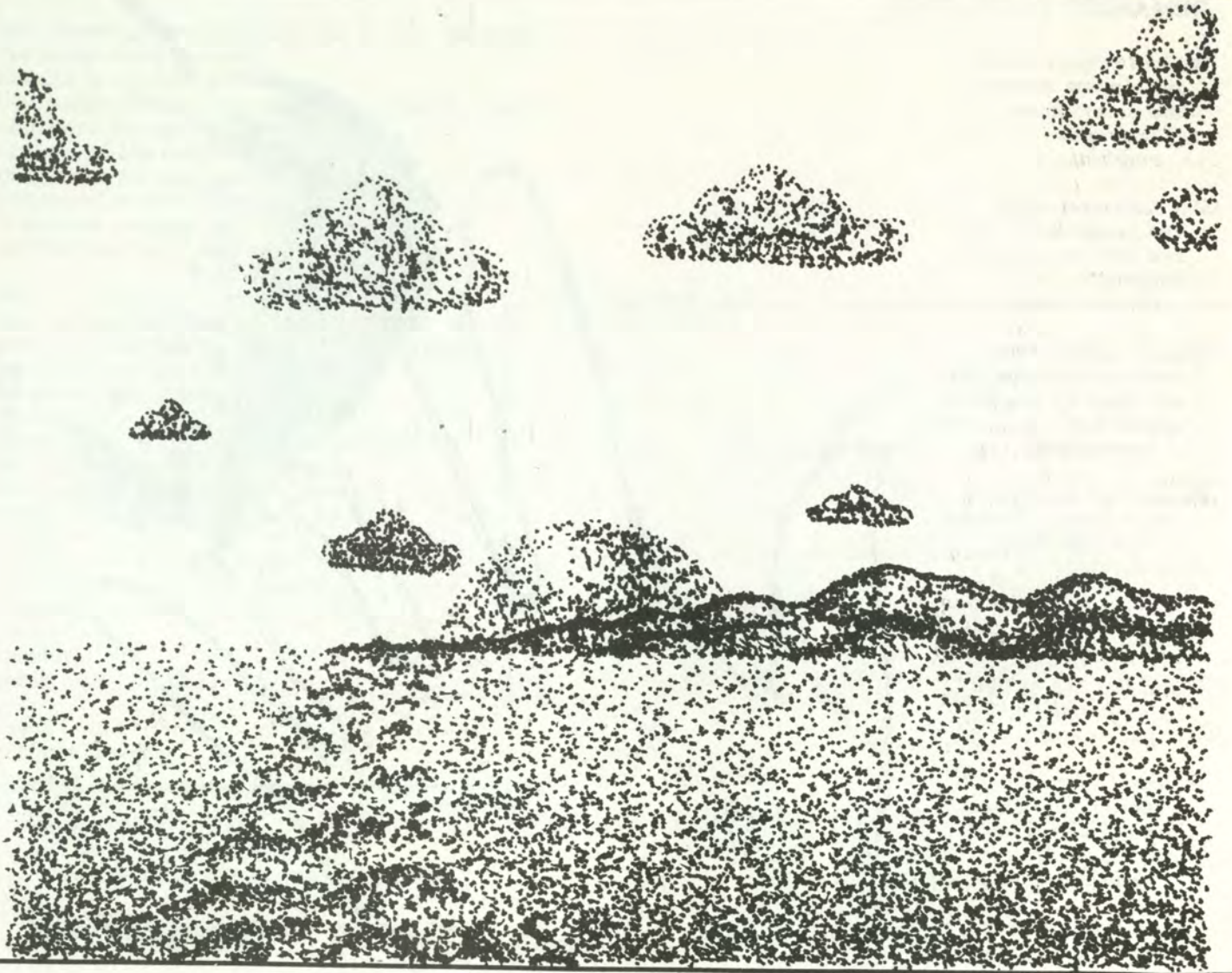
*The two-dimensional--
having no up or down--
cannot look up to
see beyond the
outlined footprint
of the third.*

*Before man had knowledge
of good and evil
he had no evil
to comprehend
against good.*

*Be ye not inflated,
for your awareness fell
from dimensions
to which you still
must belong.*

--Steven Victor Pera





WHAT COULD I GIVE?

*What would you do if I sent you the sun?
Would you laugh at the card,
And show everyone?*

*What would you do if I sent you the moon?
Would you send it back,
With postage due?*

*What would you do if I sent you a star?
Would you throw it away,
Where my other gifts are?*

*I won't ask what you'd do with my soul.
It came back today;
I already know.*

--Julie Frederick



A PARABLE

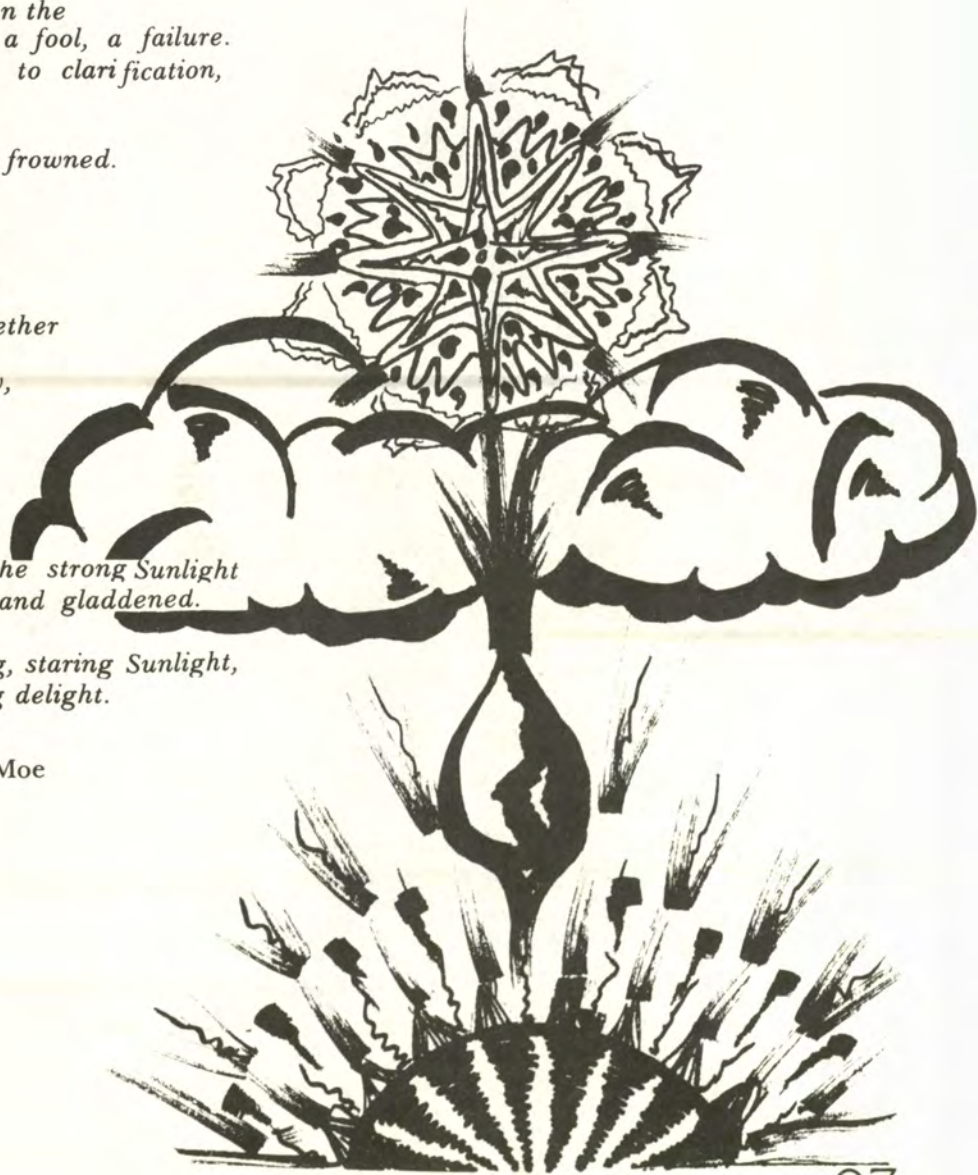
*Tuning in as two small miracles shared in a conversation,
clouds contemplated coolly, yet curiously.
For above these masses of foamy material
was a pair of precipitation particles,
one pondering, the other persuading.
Said the snowflake, "I say, see me?"
Replied the raindrop, "Really, you are refined!"
Said the snowflake, "It is astounding that I am so suave.*

*Incredible intricacy have I."
The raindrop did not retaliate but humbly heard him out,
and then the raindrop remarked, "I know I am plain,
a poor particle of precipitation to perceive."
"I am of value to view," ventured the flake,
"and forget not my flawless figure."
Suddenly, a storm surprised them; then the
raindrop fell falteringly, feeling like a fool, a failure.
Alone he clobbered the clod, close to clarification,
the color of the claire de lune.*

*The droplet drooped and drowned and frowned.
Finally, fatigued and friendless,
he found it to be freezing.
Dark and dreary clouds cloistered,
certainly cliquish, clannish,
in contrast to the deserted droplet
and the snowflake sauntered through ether
gently gliding, gasping.
Suddenly, after the short spell of snow,
the Sun shimmered swiftly, sweetly,
sweeping away the swan song,
sifting through the sky.*

*The marvelous mold melted
and a pair of pools of precipitation
stood side by side shimmering in the strong Sunlight
glimmering in the Glare, glistening and gladdened.
For they had found favor, for
all are the same in the streaming, staring Sunlight,
All are small seas of dreaming, daring delight.*

-- Kirsten Moe



GHOST RIDER

*All those strangers sipping coffee
in my house, and I am a forgotten image.
Perched on the billowing particles of vapor,
I peer downward--beyond the passive
introspection of the strangers' facades.
Men marching like silent soldiers not
one smile.*

And there are all those strangers sipping coffee in my house.

--Jeff Fritz



A SONG FOR DAVID

*I don't know
What I was looking for
But here I stand
Knocking at that rotten sobbing door
Gone are mom and Gabriel
The winds
They blow so hard . . .*

*Vicar Pete brings the kettle
The little knotty boys gather 'round
The water warms, boils, and rages
Instant dinner for instant stomachs again . . .*

*Time is waxing and waning for me
I tell it so
I can see now--David there--
His mother's body still bleeding and warm.
Suicide has claimed a patron
Via shotgun
David's moved away
The neighborhood gossip just rambles
God knows what they're trying to prove . . .*

*Get rid of the rotund babies
sweep 'em under the rug
Old grizzled men know only too well
What makes Beelzebub.*

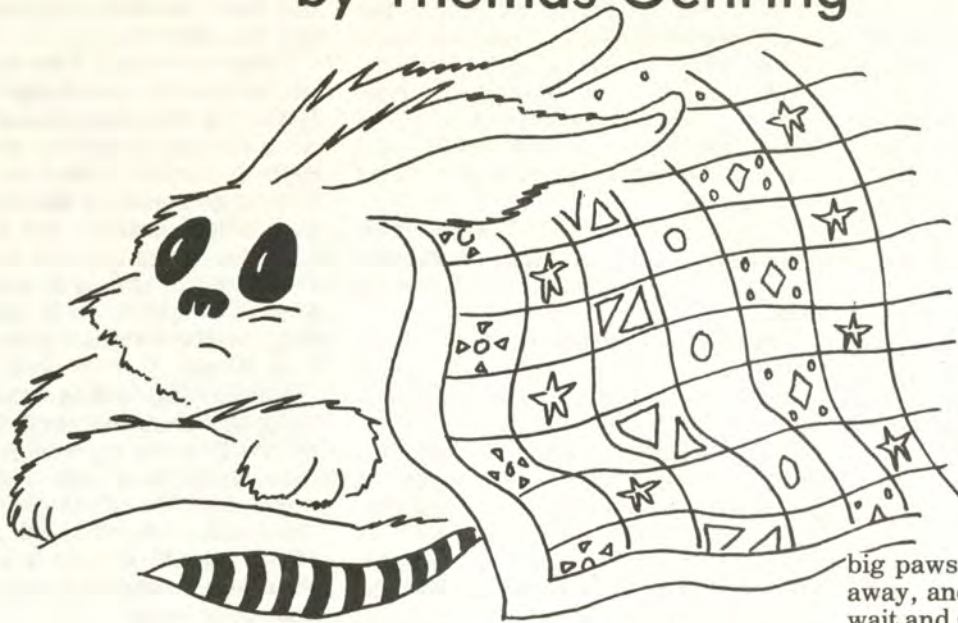
And Pavlov's got a drooling bitch . . .

--Greg Johnson



THE TALE OF THE HARE

by Thomas Gehring



One morning Hare awoke early and alone and lay listening for many moments. The world was very, very still.

The sun had not yet begun to sing
The wind was not yet singing
The river made no sound and
the world was
quiet.

But Hare knew he had awakened too late because the silent echos still filled his crumpled ears. Someone had called to him . . . but who? Maybe if he tried very hard he would remember. But the song of the world was rising in the cold morning air and there was no time.

Old woman Washedishes stirred and grumbled under her blankets. Poked the fire with a stick and blew on the embers . . .

Hare could see her breath dance in the glow as she rose and with bleary-eyed patience taught the fire to sing again. Soon the lodge was filled with the smell of food and Washedishes pokes at Hare, but he would not get up.

"Rise, you split-nosed, big-footed curse of my old age. The sun is eager to begin but awaits your presence at the start. He is hungry and you make

him wait." But Hare would not get up and the old woman ate in silence.

When she returned from the river, Hare was sitting by the fire and he spoke to her. "Grandmother, someone is calling me." Washedishes looked thoughtfully at Hare and then sat beside him. She sang to the river, she listened, she sang to herself and then, taking a hawk's feather from her hair, she led Hare through the snow to the river's edge.

Sprinkling corn meal on the surface, she dropped the feather and watched it float out of sight. "Follow it, short-tail, and bring me back some tobacco if you remember it." Hare disappeared into the sparkling snow.

"Foolish lump of fur," Washedishes muttered under her breath and trudged back to the fire.

Hare ran and ran, chasing the Hawk's feather, but the river was swift and soon it was out of sight. "Now I shall never know," he sighed and turned to go home when he saw an immense creature coming along the river, so big that the forest suddenly became very small and Hare in his fright nearly vanished altogether. Nevertheless, when the huge creature came up alongside him, he scampered out and blew on one of its

big paws, but the creature did not go away, and Hare ran along the bank to wait and see who this might be. When the creature thundered alongside, Hare ran out to blow on it again but, being small, he did not see the other three paws and was squashed flat so that the ants were like stars to him.

Black bear bent down to pick up the little furry disk in the path and, trying hard not to laugh, dunked it in the river and, holding Hare by the ears, he asked, "Who are you?"

"Heh heh heh heh heh heh . . . heh . . . Hare!" spluttered the shivering little rabbit, and he explained that he was chasing the hawk in the river.

"Hare," said the bear, "your feet are large but the hawk is swift. My name is Looks Within and you may ride on my back. The Hawk and I are old friends and maybe he will wait for us down the river a piece," and Looks Within ambled along the bank as Hare stared breathlessly at a world he had never seen before.

"Why is it, little one, that you seek my friend the Hawk?"

"Someone has called me and old woman Washedishes sent him ahead to show me the way." They continued in silence for many miles as Looks Within's great paws effortlessly followed the snowy path of one lost in thought. Hare shivered and held on tight.

Finally the old bear spoke, "It is someone important who calls you, else my friend the Hawk would have waited for us. He is in a great hurry and you will need the swiftness of the Wind to catch him. I will take you to her lodge. See, ahead of us, the smoke from her fire."

Presently Looks Within stopped at the edge of a clearing and pointed to a blue-white fire by the river's edge. As Hare slipped down from his back Looks Within handed him a little pouch saying, "Hare, take this gift of tobacco to her fire. The smoke will follow my old friend and the Wind will give you the swiftness of the smoke."

Looks Within turned and disappeared into the forest. Hare sat silently, listening, for many moments.

The Wind was singing to him.

And tucking a little of the tobacco away for old Washedishes, Hare scampered toward the fire.

The Wind stared at Hare for a long time.

"So, bright-eyes, why have you come?"

"Someone has called me," said Hare. "My Grandmother has sent the Hawk before me to show the way." Hare's words trailed off into confused silence as the Wind continued to stare at him.

"What have you brought me?" Hare lurched forward, nearly spilling the pouch at her feet.

The Wind held his eyes a while longer and then smiled affectionately at Hare.

"Please give old Washingmachine my regards," she said softly, gazing into Hare's eyes.

Her own eyes sparkled.

Then she removed some of the tobacco from the pouch and brought forth a long pipe of old and worn ebony from which dangled a moth-eaten old feather.

A hawk's feather.

And the wind chose a blue-white ember from the fire and, placing it in the bowl of her pipe, she smoked in silence.

Hare's nostrils twitched and his eyes burned, as the smoke rose and danced in the Wind's long flowing hair and whispered in her ears. The ember died and the pipe went out but the

smoke remained for a long time, swirling in the Wind's eyes as she sat with her little friend by the fire. When at last her eyes were clear again, she smiled and the leaves rustled in the trees about the clearing, and her voice filled Hare's floppy ears.

"Hawk has come and gone. How high my brother soars! He told me of many things and together we followed the river through the sacred land of our people.

"Together we traveled and Hawk spoke of a vision and whispered sadly to our brothers and sisters on the river bank.

"Together we traveled until we could no longer see our brothers and sisters.

"And the river sang in a foreign tongue.

"Many things the Hawk showed me, rivers flowing light and forests of trees with no branches and men who paint lines in the sky.

"And he spoke to me of a little creature of short breath who would come seeking him."

"Someone is calling me," said Hare.

"Then you must follow my brother into this land of naked forests and different names where the earth sings an ancient song we do not know."

"Looks Within said you would take me there."

"I will." There were tears in her eyes. Then the wind died in the trees and Hare was alone.

Hare sat in silence for many moments but he was confused and did not understand the sounds that filled his ears. Then swiftly he ran to the

river but the river was hard and black and still and did not reflect his eyes. In awe Hare stepped upon the smooth surface, but his surprise soon wore off and Hare became delighted with his new-found power.

"I walk on water," he thought, but his reverie was suddenly interrupted by the cry of a magnificent beast that came rushing along the river blowing snow list mist before it. Terrified, Hare scampered up the bank and hid until it had passed, but soon others came too. Gradually his fear wore off and Hare ran out, as another creature passed, and blew on it, but it did not stop, so Hare turned and went away from them.

He looked up and saw that the trees along the bank had no branches and he saw that the sky was painted with lines and then his heart nearly stopped.

The lines were singing to him!

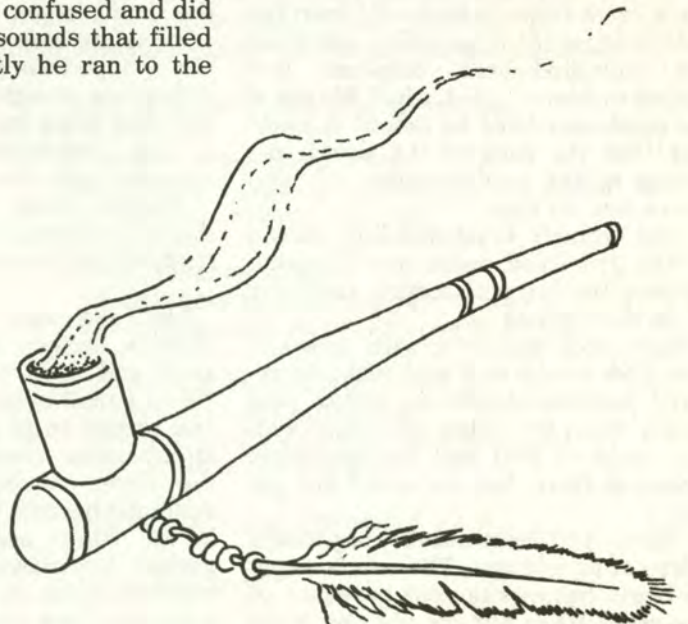
They sang to him in a low voice, a voice of a thousand bees, and this is what they sang:

"Follow us, little one," they sang.

"Follow us."

"Someone is calling me," Hare stuttered.

"Follow us," the lines whispered and Hare began to run, following the painted sky along the lifeless river.





By now it was late in the day. Hare scurried along but the sun was sinking lower and he wondered where the lines were leading him. Every now and then he stopped and rocked back on his big feet to listen.

He heard the lines singing.

And sometimes he even thought he heard the faint voice of the Wind, her song softly mingling with the lines.

"Follow us," they whispered.

But the earth sang a strange song of new names and Hare sat silently for many moments trying to understand. As he sat there, bewildered and shivering, he saw a creature coming toward him, loping through the snow. Sometimes it would talk to the naked trees and sometimes it would sit by the river and sing to the awesome creatures that ran along its surface.

They didn't seem to notice him.

But he sang just the same and Hare hid behind one of the strange trees to wait and see who this might be. Presently the creature passed in front of Hare's tree and he scampered out to blow on him but the creature pinned Hare's ears with a furry paw and would not let him go. And as he held Hare pinned in the snow he sang this song to him:

"Ancient song, familiar sun
Someone calls you, little one.
Rivers, trees, all may change
Old friends now have different names.

Someone calls you, little one."
Hare stopped squirming.

"How did you know?" he squeaked at last.

"I am Trickster," said the dog as he released Hare's ears. He stared at Hare with bright eyes and a wry smile.

"I was chasing the hawk in the river when his sister Wind blew me here and left me to follow the singing lines."

"Then you must walk with me and I will teach you the song of the Hawk. Listen . . ."

"Ancient song, familiar sun . . .," and so together they continued along

the path of the singing lines and Trickster taught Hare the songs and names of this new land, the song of the still river and even the song of the lines themselves.

"Follow us," they whispered.

"312 555-1212," sang Hare, dancing with delight. "What a strange tongue this!" and soon the earth once again filled his ears with her timeless harmony, now so strange and exotic. Trickster stole a glance at his little companion and smiled.

By now the sun had set and an evening snow began to fall softly. The snowflakes danced in the light of the naked trees and glittered before Hare's astounded eyes.

"Yes, bright eyes, they even paint the night sky."

"What a beautiful world," Hare whispered. Together they sat and watched the falling snow and for many moments neither said a word . . .

"Maybe someday," Trickster murmured at last, "maybe some day I will teach you the song of the painters." and with that he shook the snow from his fur and rose to go. "See, the lines have led you to your destination," and he indicated a shack by the river. "Please give my regards to old Washingmachine."

"Old Washingmachine?" Hare repeated, but Trickster had disappeared. And he turned again to stare in bewilderment at the light streaming through the window.

"So, split-nose, did you remember my tobacco?"

Hare trudged past her and parked his soggy fur before the stove.

"Here," he handed the old woman what he had saved of Look Within's gift. "The Wind sends her greetings."

Washingmachine smiled. "How thoughtful of her." Hare shivered and drew up closer to the stove.

"Grandmother, I ran and ran as fast as I could but I could not catch the Hawk . . . how high he soars, how high. Now I shall never know."

Outside the wind whistled in the wires.

Old Washingmachine was smiling even more now. She settled in her chair, lit her pipe, and took a deep draw of smoke. She let it out slowly and began to hum a little tune under her breath.

"Ancient song, familiar sun . . ."

The phone rang.

"Someone calls you, little one . . ."

It rang again. Gently she lifted the receiver from its hook. Her eyes were practically shining now as she held it against Hare's ear and anticipation danced across her weathered old face.

"Happy Birthday, Grandson," and Hare sat for many moments listening to the gift of the Hawk.



To believe the stories could ever end or
That they were somehow tinged by sentiment
Would be not to believe
At all.

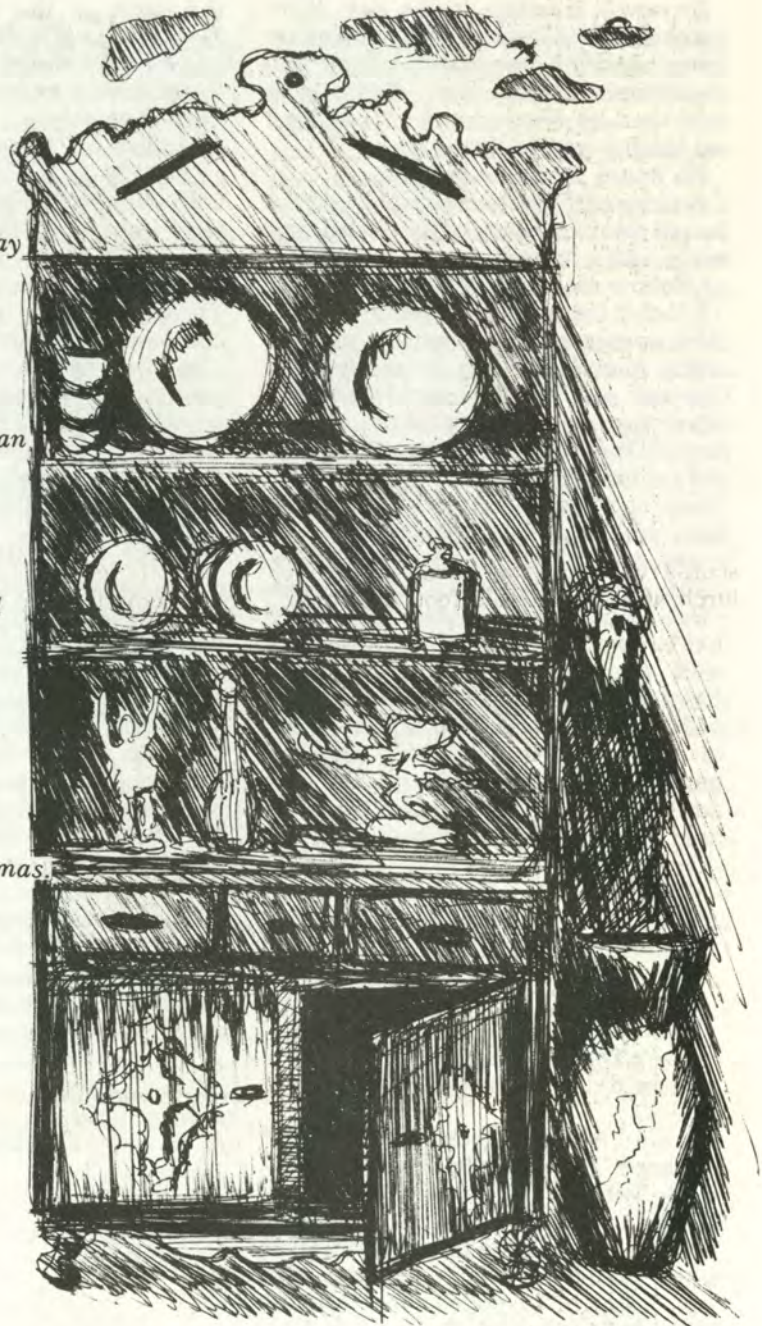
As she lifted trinkets off the shelf and
Out of the mind of her past, dusted clean and kept
For any guest, less frequent
Now, one somehow sensed that these must someday
End up on the upright of her niece [who visited
Every Christmas], or
In some fleamarket selling as no oddity;
The real china vase, no longer stylish or
even very useful
Anymore, glued where chipped about the rim,
Yellowed with age, its surface finely cracked, a Victorian
Vestige; or the home-made manger scene,
Corn-shuck sheperds with cottonball sheep,
And the drummer-boy, giving the
Only gift he has.

Such were the treasures Old Mrs. Hofmann wished
Share with anyone who had time to
Spare. And after all had been replaced in
Perhaps not quite the same spot, she paused, and
I noticed a sadness in the air, like
A mist just visible,
A must just detectable, aged and lonely
Now that Herman was gone; but with the
Next breath came other smiles, fresher
And more familiar, coffee and thoughts of Christmas.

And as the three of us moved into the kitchen,
My nose knew well that home-baked smell;
"O, and have some cookies, I made them
Fresh!" And I could taste that years had
Gone into the baking of those cookies. We ate
Our fill, yet it seemed the widow's jar
Was no less full than it had been to start. The
Coffee cooled in my cup, the periods of silence
Grew more frequent; it was
Thinking, yet not so much thinking as
Partaking of the gifts she had to give.

The time to depart drew nearer for
My father and me, and for
Our friend as well; and it seemed
That the air began to swell
With memories, with coffee, with fears of
What is to come, what is
To become. Each passing moment added a grain of
Sand to the weight of a feeling, a
Teardrop to her welling wisdom.

To question now the value of her being or
To believe that she was somehow tinged by sentiment
Would be not to learn a thing. I wished
To stay and partake in the time of a life
Embodied in a timeless moment, to share



As one who has a heart to learn. But the
Time to go is come, the
Moment of memories a
Memory in itself. --Gene Freudenburg



I'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS

by Jeff Fritz

Promptly, every December 1st, the same old thing happens--all I want to do is head for the basement and dig out the string of Christmas lights we bought at K-Mart's After Christmas Sale. I want to bundle up warmly and head for the storage shed to bring in the genuine Japanese artificial Christmas tree. But most of all, I love to turn the house into an insurance company's nightmare. I love those blazing lights in heavily draped windows burning for hours on end, those overloaded circuits sizzling with the excitement of the holiday season, and scores of extension cords ready to lurch at any available foot. But alas, dear old Valpo keeps me from readying the house for the season.

So, I have to wait until I complete all of the pre-vacation activities which each of us must suffer through. But I do my best to finish as quickly as possible, so as not to miss too much of the excitement at home. Rushing through my finals, casually failing them all, I steep in the joys of the holidays. But after I walk out of the door of that last final examination, I throw my hands in the air and thank God that I made it through another thrilling semester. Quickly rushing back to the dorm, I throw all of those absolutely necessary things that I positively cannot live without into my suitcase (blow dryer, toothbrush, deodorant), and carefully toss them into the car. All the while, I am briskly humming my favorite Christmas carols.

The trip is like a story told on Christmas Eve--there are visions of sugar plums dancing in my head. I envision myself pulling into the drive and finding all the windows ablaze with the newly hung lights. Walking into the house, I find my family gathered around the beautiful Christmas tree with plates of candies and cookies lining the kitchen counters. My smiling family greets me with outstretched arms and tender hellos. Sitting me down next to the roaring fire, they ask me to tell them all about my adventures at Valpo, and I do so with great vitality.

With all of these marvelous images in my head, I seem to forget where I am, but I am quickly reminded during my third chorus of "We Wish You A Merry Christmas" by the dissonant chords of a siren. So as not to anger the officer too much, I immediately pull off the road into a newly formed snowbank. It was then that I knew that this Christmas was going to be a new experience. Since the driver's side window doesn't work properly, I have to open the door for the officer. He politely reminds me that the speed limit is 55, and asks me if I realized that I was going 68.989764 miles per hour. Somehow, he didn't believe me when I told him I was driving in tempo to "We Wish You A Merry Christmas."

After calling the wrecker to pull me out of the snow bank, I make my way again eastward. My tires again singing from the lack of tread, I return to the images of a perfect Christmas. Suddenly, off in the distance, I see that old familiar turn-off that leads to my house. Heart racing, and car unwilling to go any faster, I creep toward the place that holds so many happy memories. I pull into the drive, only to find that the other cars are not even in the garage. OK, they just stepped out to get a bottle of my favorite wine for dinner. I can almost smell the roast beef, Yorkshire pudding, potatoes, and hot rolls. I get out and walk up to the door, and realize that I haven't got a key--fine! Remembering the key taped under the eaves, I step up on the window ledge to retrieve it. On my way down from the ledge, what do I do but demolish one of my mother's favorite bushes--fine!

Heartbroken, I open the door only to find that beautiful Christmas tree strewn all over the floor. The strands of lights are still tangled from last year's hurried attempt to de-Christmas quickly. But, I knew that in the kitchen there would be a batch of my favorite cookies awaiting me. Walking through the dining room, I find the note my mother has left me: "Dear Jeff, Took your sister to her piano lesson. Dad should be back from

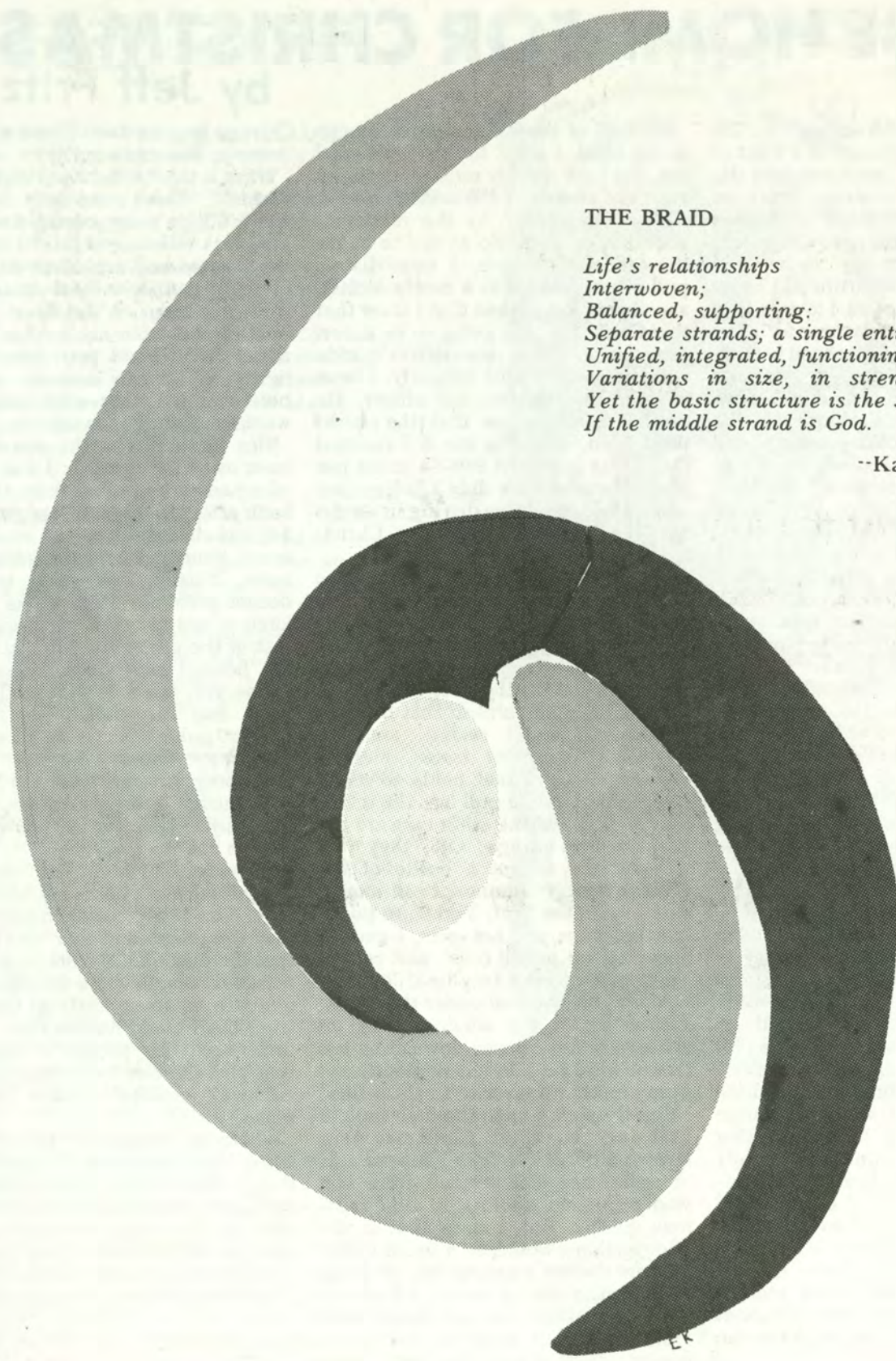
Chicago around five. There are some Oreos in the cupboard."

What is this? Where are my favorite cookies? Where's the fully decorated tree? Where's my roaring fire? What kind of a welcome is this? I walk into the kitchen and accidentally break two of my mother's best glasses by throwing them on the floor. There I find another note my mother has left me: "Jeff, Could you untangle the lights so we can decorate the tree before your father gets home? We want everything nice for him. Mom."

Nice for him! I'm the one who has been away for a month. I was the one who had to be pulled from the snow bank after the kind officer gave me a \$45 ticket. I deserve the royal treatment. Shortly, I hear the garage door open. Finally, I'm going to get a decent greeting. Mom walks into the kitchen and asks if I can bring in the rest of the groceries. My soul sags to the floor. I have been forgotten, or worse yet, taken for granted. I walk back into the kitchen to find my mother pulling Archway goodies out of a bag. "Mom!" I shout, "aren't you going to bake this year?" With that quaint guilty look, she blushes and says, Didn't you know that I always use Archway?"

My visions of home are shattered. My mother can't bake, my father can't stay home, my sister doesn't even play the piano, and then she tells me that the bush in the front is plastic. It was bad enough when we ordered the genuine Japanese artificial Christmas tree, but I could handle that. I could understand my mother's arguments that pine needles ruin carpeting. But Archway cookies! That's just too much.

Whatever happened to all those Christmas memories I had? Don't they realize what a trauma this is for me? I guess nothing remains the same after all. But what's worse--how am I going to tell my father that he has to pay a speeding ticket because of "We Wish You A Merry Christmas?"



THE BRAID

*Life's relationships
Interwoven;
Balanced, supporting:
Separate strands; a single entity
Unified, integrated, functioning together
Variations in size, in strength, in pattern,
Yet the basic structure is the same
If the middle strand is God.*

--Kathy Fackler

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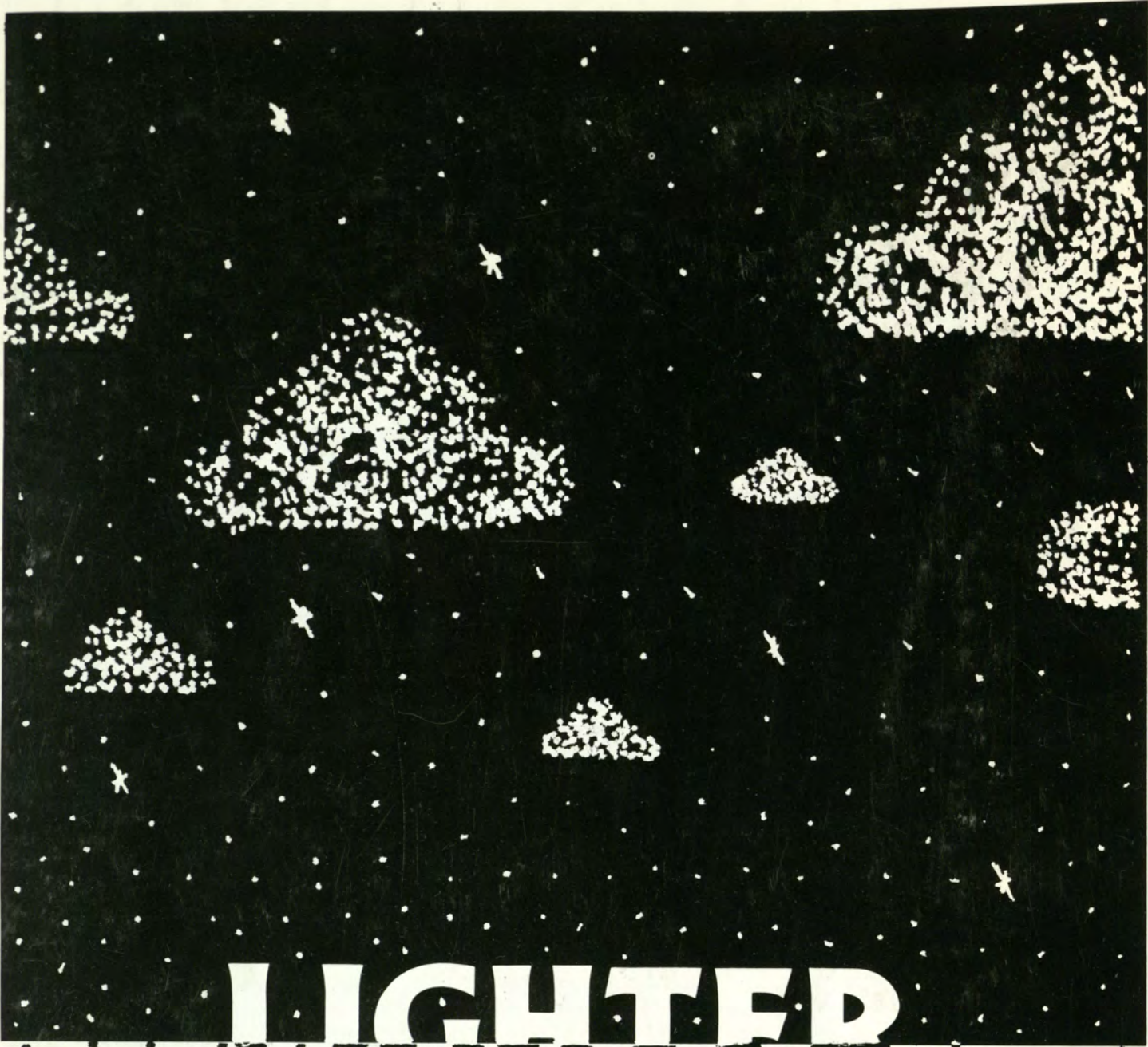
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