

Collage

Middle Tennessee State University
Murfreesboro, Tennessee
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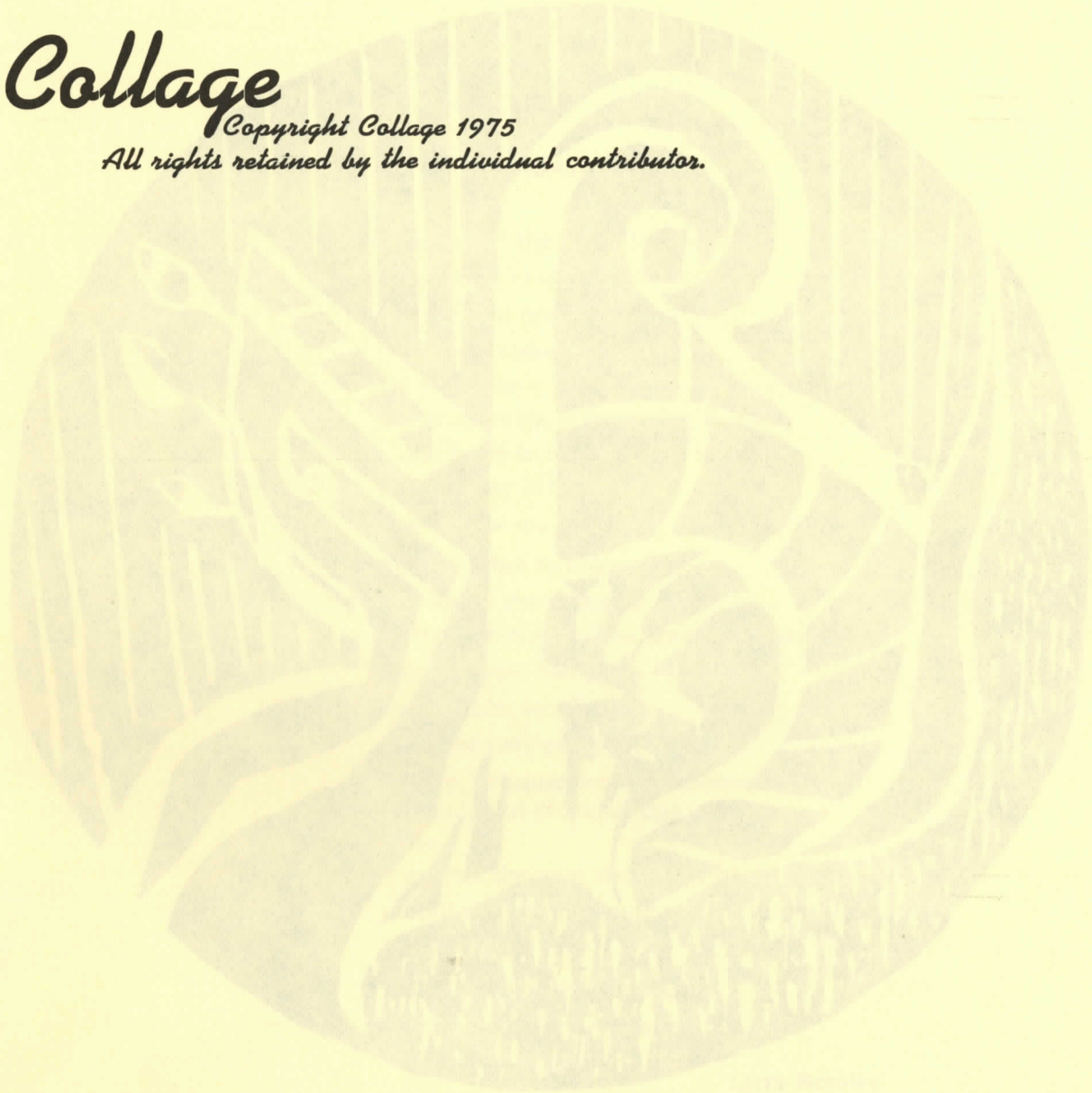


Cover by Nancy Masters

Collage

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BJ Peer

PRE-DAWN ROADS

This side of the world that we own
Is wrapped in contented darkness
But the first onslaught
Of the Exodus
Let me know
that America is beginning to wake
and come to terms with a new day.
But this day is half done in my mind
And I know my course
And have but to follow it
As I follow the taillights
Of those in front of me, going my way.
Tired, sleepy houses
With single, lonely lights
are the only guideposts I know.
So I go, to squander my patience
on a hatful of knowledge.
Drive
against the mist and magic of the morning
until the ultimate moment--
Dawn.
The sun sends out tracers
To find the first vestiges

Larry Beasley



REUNION

At Saturday's first light
we walk the woods again,
This brother and I,
and he is first to spot the egg-like Death Cups,
Nesting cold
in the shadow of a chestnut log.
Across our childhood swimming hole
a storm fallen sycamore,
The jut of leafless limbs
and clinging wisps of grass, witches' hair.
He muses that all is changed,
and I laugh in my knowing way,
But as if for spite
a serpentine length of rusty bobwire
Leaps from the weeds
and lances a raw gash across my shin.
All morning in the hot October sun,
through briars and hellbuck,
I limp behind him
as we search for the old paths,
But they are gone.
Even at noon when
we find our secret spring at the limestone cliffs,
We stoop to drink but see the periwinkles
Glued to the gray entrails of a gutted squirrel.

I must rest but he walks on,
this phantom of the woods,
And I think his silent chant
must cleave the locusts as even storms cannot,
For I have seen him propel body and soul
into cospes where no man goes,
And return, yes, return,
to spite me with his vernal magic. No matter.

For though each year
we walk through the shadows of other days,
Even his powers cannot raise one dead
of little ways.

Dennis Cottrell

IN LATER YEARS

The light from heaven--
That's what I thought it was
when I was nine years old
and still
believed
that heaven had lights,
that heaven shone out sometimes
in little bits, escaping
around the edges, unnoticed.

That
And smiles from God.
Those were the years when God's face
was still visible
enough for me to see the crinkled, wrinkled eyes
as they smiled down,
always down, understand,
because God was big, to be looked up to
like I did to my daddy.
Anyway,
What it really is
is a hole in the clouds
that lets a few rays of sunlight
stream down in a patch,
and somehow, now, years later,
that's enough.

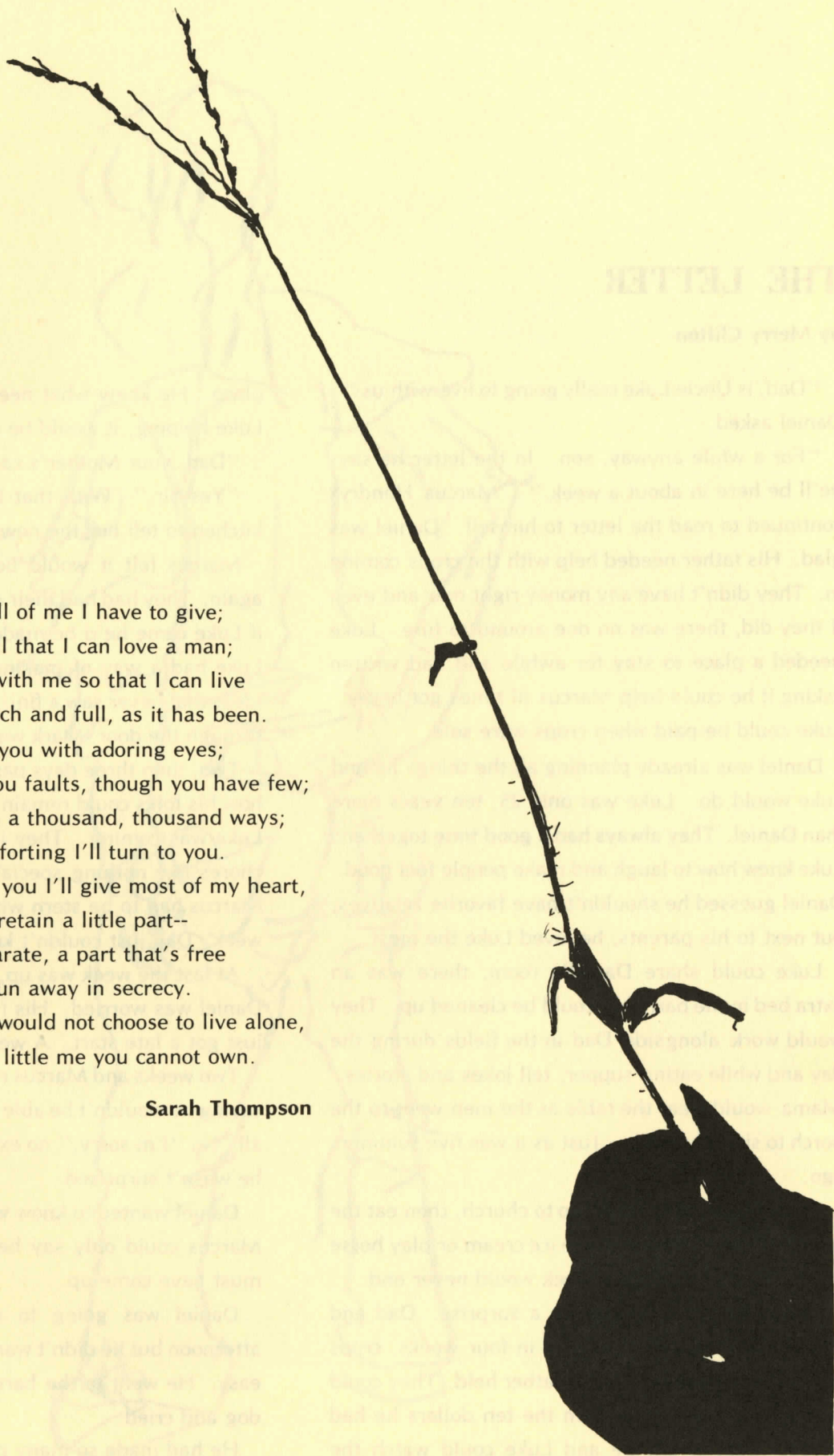
Nan Arbuckle

THE LETTER

by Mary Oliver

I'll give you all of me I have to give;
I'll love you all that I can love a man;
I'll need you with me so that I can live
A life that's rich and full, as it has been.
I'll look up to you with adoring eyes;
I'll overlook you faults, though you have few;
I'll love you in a thousand, thousand ways;
For every comforting I'll turn to you.
But though to you I'll give most of my heart,
I still need to retain a little part--
A portion separate, a part that's free
Where I can run away in secrecy.
And though I would not choose to live alone,
There's still a little me you cannot own.

Sarah Thompson



THE LETTER

by Merry Clifton

"Dad, is Uncle Luke really going to live with us?" Daniel asked.

"For a while anyway, son. In the letter he says he'll be here in about a week." Marcus Hendryx continued to read the letter to himself. Daniel was glad. His father needed help with the crops coming in. They didn't have any money right now and even if they did, there was no one around to hire. Luke needed a place to stay for awhile and had written asking if he could help Marcus til times got better. Luke could be paid when crops were sold.

Daniel was already planning all the things he and Luke would do. Luke was only 25, ten years more than Daniel. They always had a good time together. Luke knew how to laugh and make people feel good. Daniel guessed he shouldn't have favorite relatives, but next to his parents, he loved Luke the most.

Luke could share Daniel's room; there was an extra bed in the barn that could be cleaned up. They would work alongside Dad in the fields during the day and while eating supper, tell jokes and stories. Mama would clear the table as the men went to the porch to sit and whittle. Just as it was five summers ago.

On Sundays, they would go to church, then eat the big meal. Maybe make some ice cream or play horse shoes. Daniel thought a week would never end.

Daniel had also figured up a surprise. Dad and Mama's anniversary would be in four weeks, crops should be in by then, if the weather held. They could take a trip. He'd give them the ten dollars he had saved. Best of all, he and Luke could watch the

place. He knew what needed to be done and with Luke helping, it would be no trouble at all.

"Dan, your Mother's calling."

"Yes sir." With that Daniel was racing to the kitchen to tell her the news.

Marcus felt it would be good to see his brother again. They had had their differences in the past but if Luke came he'd be made welcome. If he came. Luke had a way of making plans and sporting big ideas that never saw a finish. So, when Luke walked through the door, Mark would start looking for him.

Two, then three days passed. Daniel didn't know how his folks could remain so calm. After all, Uncle Luke was coming. They just went about everyday chores like nothing special was going to happen. Marcus had to be stern with Dan several times that week. Dan just couldn't keep his mind on working.

At last the week was up, but Luke hadn't shown. Daniel was worried. His father said Luke probably just got a late start. A week and a half passed.

Two weeks and Marcus received a note from Luke saying he wouldn't be able to come for a visit. That's all. No "I'm sorry," no excuses. Marcus mumbled he wasn't surprised.

Daniel wanted to know why Luke wasn't coming. Marcus could only say he didn't know, something must have come up.

Daniel was going to move the bed out that afternoon but he didn't want to give up on Luke that easy. He went to the barn, sat in the hay with his dog and cried.

He had made so many plans. ●



BJ Peer

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George Bennett

MASKED

To live, to die
To laugh, to cry
to keep the world at bay.
What's the next move he must make
in this masquerade?

To dance, to sing,
pretend he's king
The piper he must pay.
But keep the people happy!
Keep up the masquerade.

Another day--confusion.
Another night--illusion.
The "moral" say it's right
but secretly he fights
to end--this masquerade.

Tim Armstrong

HAIKU

Anxiously, calmly
I await a new day's dawn
Bitterly, fondly

Larry Beasley

We speak--turn away
To feel, to know and not grieve
We part; it is good.

Larry Beasley

WHEN I DIE

When I die,
Will my real life pass before my eyes?
Or will it be all the lies I've lived?
When I die.

 Cutting a path for my feet
 Through the foliage that covers my graves. . .

Whether flower or weed--

 Each plant falls to my blade.

 As I view each grave,
 I ask if it were wise
 To allow each side to die.

When I die.

 Will one realize
 It was all a lie?

When I die.

 When I die,
 Will those faces in my mind have merged into one?
 Or will that task have been left undone?

When I die.

 Longing to hold someone near
 Who another one's claimed. . .
 Though they will someday part
 In her heart he will always remain.

Will one question haunt her:
Why did she allow his love to die?
Or will such guilt she deny?
When their love died,
Did she seek solace in his eyes?
Was silence his only reply?
When love died.

Limbo is a seesaw world
 Between what one wants and what others expect.

One stares at nothing there
 And sees it all direct.

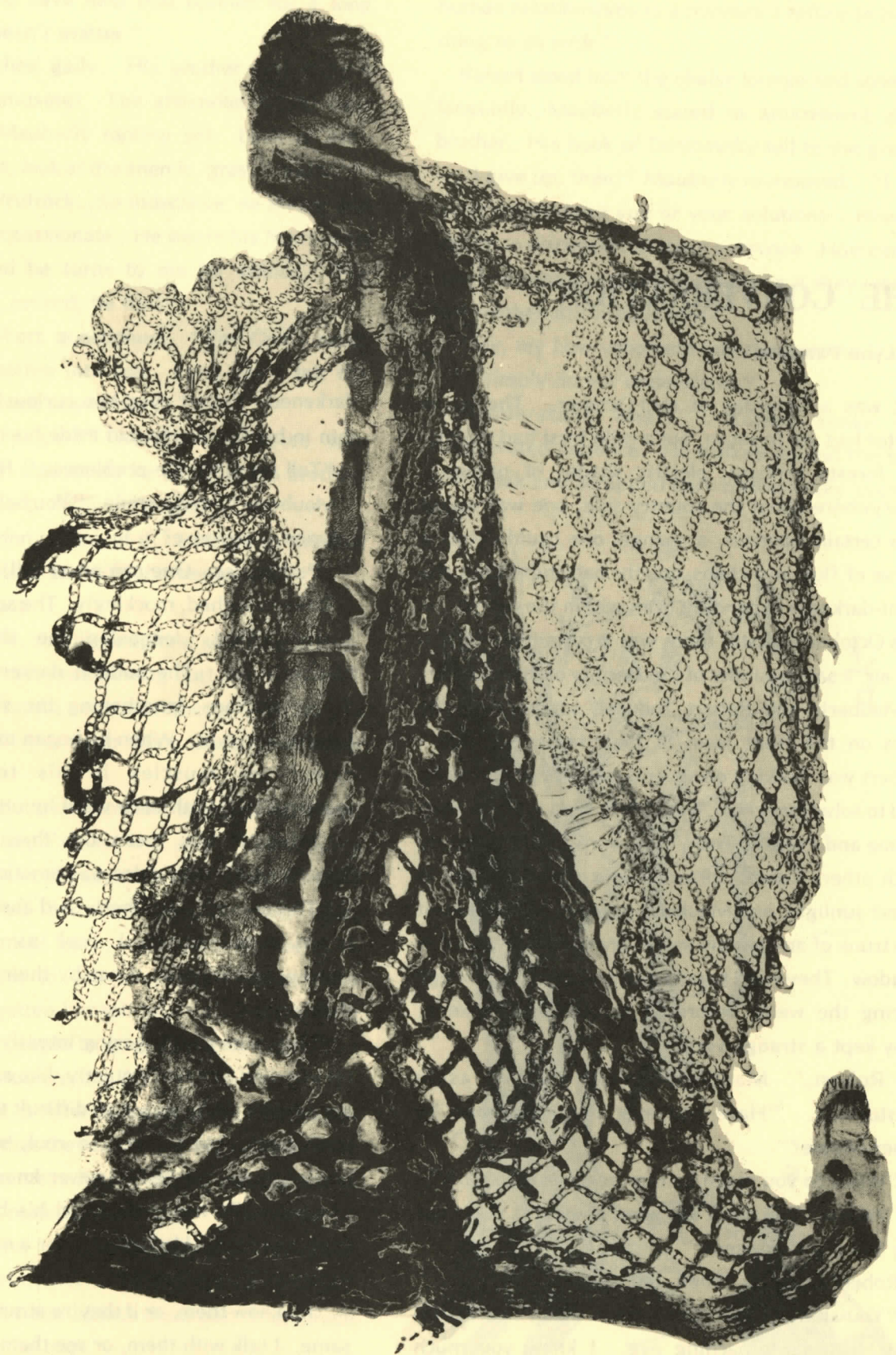
One question's clear:
Why strand someone there
When they deserve to be here?

It's all been said before:
No song can say much more:

Life is such a bore--

When life's died

D. Brian Fyke



"THOSE LITTLE THINGS SHOWED UP"

Patti Osborne

THE CONVERSATION

by Lynn Paterson

It was a Saturday of mid-October. The harsh winter had yet to set in, but a mild frost had painted the forests brilliant, electric shades of orange. Everywhere about the country-side, one was aware of a certain ripeness, a change; one could detect a sense of flux and chaos quietly battling within the semi-darkness expanding from within the forests. It was October and still there was a certain warmth in the air: a sad reminder of the sterility of the summer.

Mauberly and Robert Toddson sat beneath the oaks on the front lawn of their father's estate. Robert was working on several calculus problems he had to solve for school. Mauberly read intently from **Crime and Punishment**. They were seated opposite each other; Robert sprawled in a chaise lounge in direct sunlight, and Mauberly perched stiffly against the trunk of an oak, his small, grayish form veiled in shadow. They were twenty-two and attended college during the week; returning home each weekend, they kept a strange vigil.

"Robert," Mauberly asked, laying aside Dostoevsky. "Have you ever felt threatened by other people?"

"What do you mean by threatened? Physically?"

"No, no. You don't see what I mean. I don't use the word in that sense."

Robert smiled. "Then, tell me what you mean."

"You smile, I see. Don't think I don't recognize your critical reproaching eye. I know you much better than you think, Robert."

Mauberly had grown suddenly serious; his face

darkened. Robert eyed him curiously, propping his chin in his hand. He laid aside his math problems.

"Tell me what the problem is," Robert said.

Mauberly forced a smile. "You believe you have a solution, I suppose?"

"Perhaps so. One can never tell, can one?"

Robert laughed, mockingly. The sun faded behind a dark cloud, deepening the shade in which Mauberly sat. The sudden darkening seemed to distort his face, lengthening the shadow beneath Mauberly's eyes. When he began to talk, one could detect the muscles in his temple jerking spasmodically with each word he uttered.

"What do you mean by 'threatened,' then?" Robert asked. His voice was emotionless.

"Threatened," Mauberly said abstractly. "When I am with people I feel as if they were cross-examining me, if not by their words, then by their eyes."

Robert was silent, gazing intently at his brother. He watched Mauberly quietly, like a cat. He did not say a word. Why was it so difficult to explain things to Robert? He seemed so cool, so unconcerned, unhindered, as if he had never known despair.

Mauberly did not understand his brother. Robert frightened him. He faltered for a moment and then resumed his explanation.

"If I know them, or if they're strangers, it's all the same. I talk with them, or see them as they work at school and their eyes watching me, sizing me up, fixing me. . . Their eyes. Ah! You think I am mad,

I'm sure! You have held that opinion for a long while, so it doesn't matter."

Robert laughed gaily. His brother was quite a case. How amusing! The afternoon would pass quickly with Mauberly ranting so! Look at him, thought Robert, look at the anemic, gray, timid form.

Our modern Prufrock. So indecisive, so loving and tender and compassionate. He wears his heart upon his sleeve, and he turns to me for advice. The afternoon will, indeed, be fun!

"Mad?" Robert questioned. "For God's sake, man, what's gotten into you. Long ago I felt the same way, but not anymore."

"Why no longer?" Mauberly's voice was suddenly eager; attentively he gazed at his brother.

"Go on, Robert. Why no longer?"

"Because I don't think of it. I refuse to think of the eyes. I refuse to think of other people."

"But you must."

"No," he said, simply, laughing suddenly again. How lovely the day was turning out!

"Surely you're not serious, Robert. How do you do it? How do you keep from thinking of other people?"

"I simply do not permit myself to bother with them; and consequently, I never feel as if I were being sized-up, as you would say. I never feel as if I were being threatened by other people. Oh dear, Mauberly, you must learn; you must learn not to let other people get to you so easily. Raskolnikov wouldn't have gotten himself into such a damn fix if he had allowed people to go their merry way. The eyes were his problem too."

"I've tried not to think too much about how people look at me and what they say to me, but I can't. They mean so much to me, whether I know them or not. I like them, the majority of them. I want to be accepted by them. I want to be one of them, but somehow, it doesn't work. Their eyes complicate."

"But, you see, I don't block them out. I embrace them! That's the trick."

"Don't you like them?"

"Like them? I detest them. The whole problem of

human relationships is a mystery I refuse to have a thing to do with."

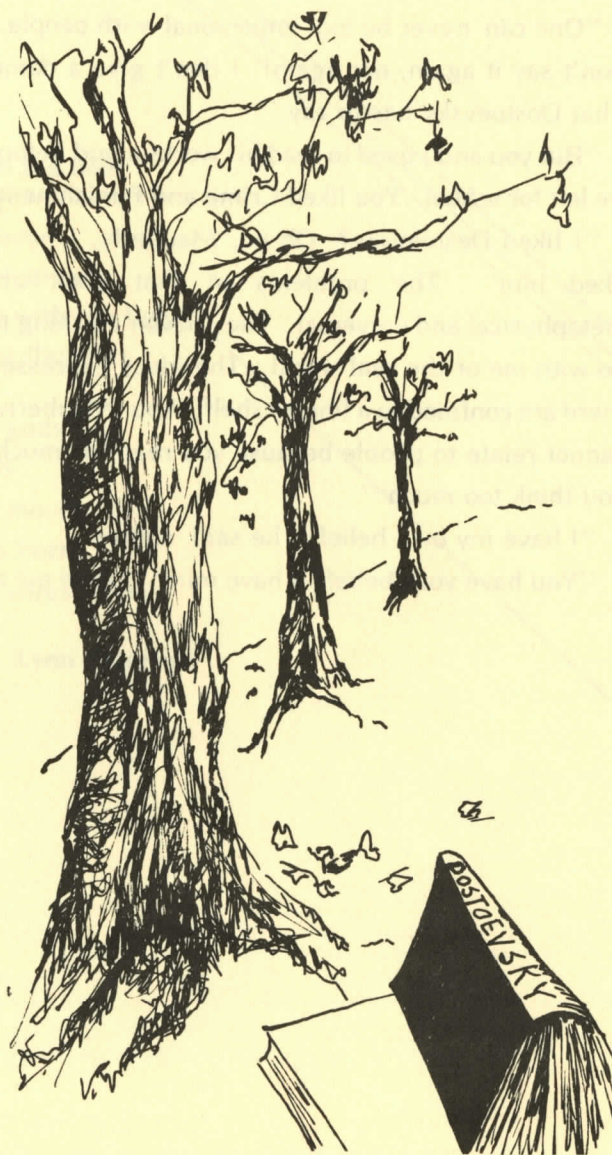
Robert stood from the chaise lounge and stretched languidly. Mauberly stared in amazement at his brother. His book of Dostoevsky fell to the ground.

"I give up, then," Mauberly murmured. "I shall never understand you or your solutions. How can you be so disconcerted about everyone. How can you speak of people and relationships as if they were all just mathematical equations?"

"My, my how vehement one can become."

"I simply do not understand."

"Understand what?" Robert spoke with exaggerated patience. He walked around the trunk of the oak and scrapped bark methodically from the tree.



"I don't understand how you can be so calm, so unconcerned with life, with people. How do you relate?"

Robert laughed mechanically, a deep, sonorous empty laugh.

"Brother Mauberly," he said. "one must not 'think too much' in order to relate to other people."

"But you must."

"You do, I gather."

"I believe that it is essential."

"Therein lies the problem."

You're being flippant again."

"You've been reading too much Dostoevsky again. Put the book away."

"You cannot ignore what he has to say, Robert. You can be too impersonal with people."

"One can never be too impersonal with people. Don't say it again, not again! I don't give a damn what Dostoevsky has to say."

"But you and I used to read his works aloud before we left for school. You liked **Crime and Punishment**.

"I liked Dostoevsky? Oh no, Mauberly, I never liked him. The problems in that book are metaphysical and universal. They haven't a thing to do with me or the real world. The ideas expressed there are confined to a library shelf. You, Mauberly, cannot relate to people because you read too much; you think too much."

"I have my own belief," he said, simple.

"You have your belief. I have mine. Leave me to

my own."

"But you're wrong!" Mauberly said.

"No, you're wrong. Why is it you always sound discord when you come home? What is it you want? Not to feel threatened? That was the original problem, wasn't it? That's what was bothering you, and Raskolnikov, wasn't it?"

Robert paused and laughed sardonically. He loomed above Mauberly. "You're going about the problem all wrong, brother Mauberly."

"It's the only right way."

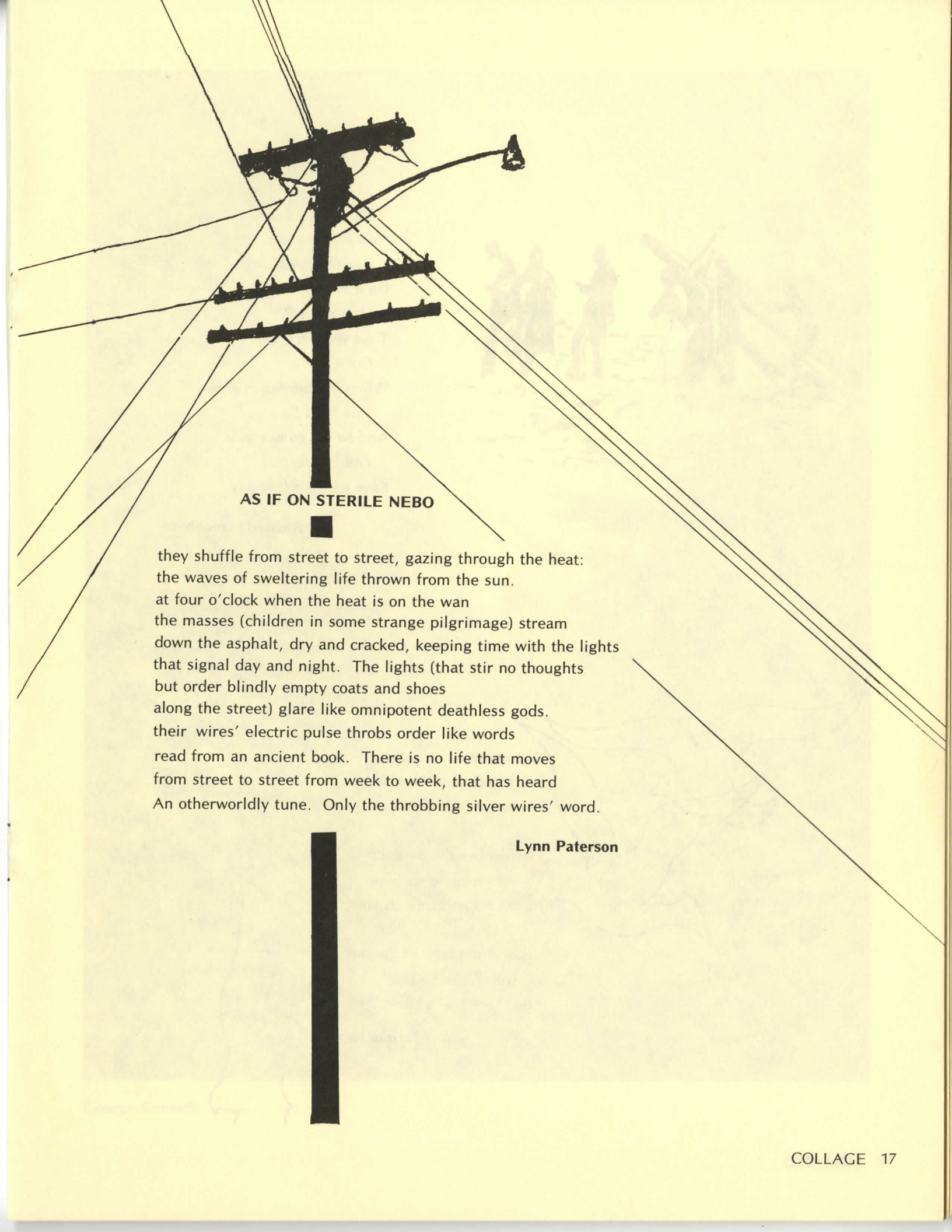
"No, if one cannot relate to people--and apparently you cannot--then one must withdraw. That's the only possible solution. You cannot change people. You cannot change me. I am at peace. Society is at peace."

"Society is utterly mad!"

"Society, Mauberly is larger than you. Society has established the norms by which we judge and by which we must live. The majority rule, or have you forgotten? In this society, Mauberly, you are the social aberrant."

Robert smiled. How beautiful the whole day was turning out! Such lovely conversation. And Mauberly, poor Mauberly. He was worse off than Hamlet, far worse than Prufrock!

It was all a game, the conversation. Mauberly was a game, but Mauberly darkened and began to read Dostoevsky once again. The whole conversation upset him awfully. ●



AS IF ON STERILE NEBO

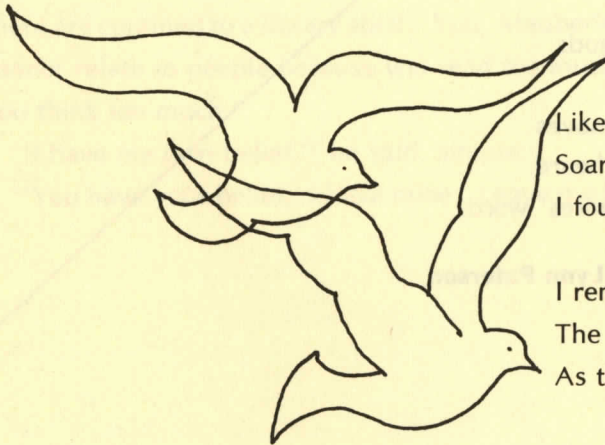
they shuffle from street to street, gazing through the heat:
the waves of sweltering life thrown from the sun.
at four o'clock when the heat is on the wan
the masses (children in some strange pilgrimage) stream
down the asphalt, dry and cracked, keeping time with the lights
that signal day and night. The lights (that stir no thoughts
but order blindly empty coats and shoes
along the street) glare like omnipotent deathless gods.
their wires' electric pulse throbs order like words
read from an ancient book. There is no life that moves
from street to street from week to week, that has heard
An otherworldly tune. Only the throbbing silver wires' word.

Lynn Paterson



Pax Vobiscus,
And with me too.
Pax Romanus,
Do it to them too.
Unserweiter,
Thus we carry on.
Gotseidank,
When the burden is gone.
Que Sera Sera,
And so we go our own way.
Padre Nuestra,
Save us from this day.

Richard Hannah



Like an eagle in flight,
Soaring through the air,
I found myself there.

I remember the descent.
The blood came rushing
As the bullet came crushing.

I was in the land of dreams,
Where all can be real,
And there I was killed.

Jacque Null





George Bennett

...the light breaking through the trees, ... the way to the ...



Milton Black

A child will dream of days to come,
of loves so gallant-hearted.
Grownups pine for childhood days,
of dreams long since discarded.

Merry Lynn Starling

BEDLAM

by Brenda Blanton

Angry raindrops pounding against the hood of the speeding car were seemingly unheard as the local radio station blared forth the latest sounds of hard rock. But the air of icy silence between the two occupants of the front seat went unbroken.

Suddenly two small pinpoints of light appeared over the crest of the hill--not tiny now, but larger and larger, brighter and brighter with blinding luminescence. With the swerve to avoid collision, the automobile lost all semblance of balance. Screeching brakes sought to keep the car upright, but too late. . . The radio was silent for once; instead came only the sounds of suppressed breathing and the scrape of wipers against broken glass. Wailing sirens pierced the night.

"Calling Dr. Williams. Report to the emergency room immediately. Dr. Williams needed in the emergency room."

The hall of the nearest county hospital was complete bedlam. A stretcher surrounded by paramedics, nurses, and interns was being sped down the corridor toward possible help and recovery, while every minute the intercom blazoned forth its vain appeal to the best doctor on staff. A young girl was lying seemingly lifeless on the white sheets--a young girl with flaming dark eyes and dark hair. At least that how Tim last remembered her. That is, before he had seen the lovely, flawless face beaten and gashed and her body pinned beneath the debris of the overturned vehicle. He had heard her labored breathing and watched the blood stream down her face. These things kept crowding into his mind, terrible details that he simply wished to forget.

He had to go; she could be dying, and he was already soaked to the skin. He had meant to help her. After being thrown from the automobile, his initial thought had been of her. But his first glimpse of the entire situation had left him paralyzed with fear. It was true; he had been going at a ridiculous speed, driven forward by anger and bitter words. But if only that car ahead had not. . . Why blame anyone else?

It was his fault if Cassandra died. And the worst part of the whole ordeal was that he would have to live with himself--actually face the fact that he had stood there hypnotized until the sound of the ambulance had brought him back to reality. Just stood there in the pouring rain, never attempting to help her, never even trying to stop the flow of blood. And then running away. That was called fleeing the scene of an accident--an accident in which he had been involved--an accident for which he could be blamed in a court of law, and maybe justifiably.

No, Tim decided, he could not take that chance. No one would ever know he had been involved if she died. It was Cassandra's car and a total wreck by now. And for sure, it was utterly impossible to say without doubt on which side of the seat she had originally been. And if she lived? Well, then, that much the better. She would certainly never tell, fearing her father's wrath the way she did. She had often said she dreaded the day when he discovered that "night school was Tim Drake. . ."

No, he couldn't go there and risk everything. Not even for her. He could never withstand the burden of a vandalism record, a previous hit and run in which he had lost his license, and now maybe even murder--not first-degree, but murder all the same.

Cassandra. Ah, Cassandra. The happiest memories of his life were in her keeping. Was it fair to her? Was it his pride stepping in the way again?

Possibly, but long ago he had promised himself that he would never sacrifice himself for any girl, no matter how "sweet and innocent" she seemed. One bad marriage had taught him that. Come to think of it, everything in his life had finally ended in failure. A super cop-out, Cassandra had once called him. Well, he wasn't denying that.

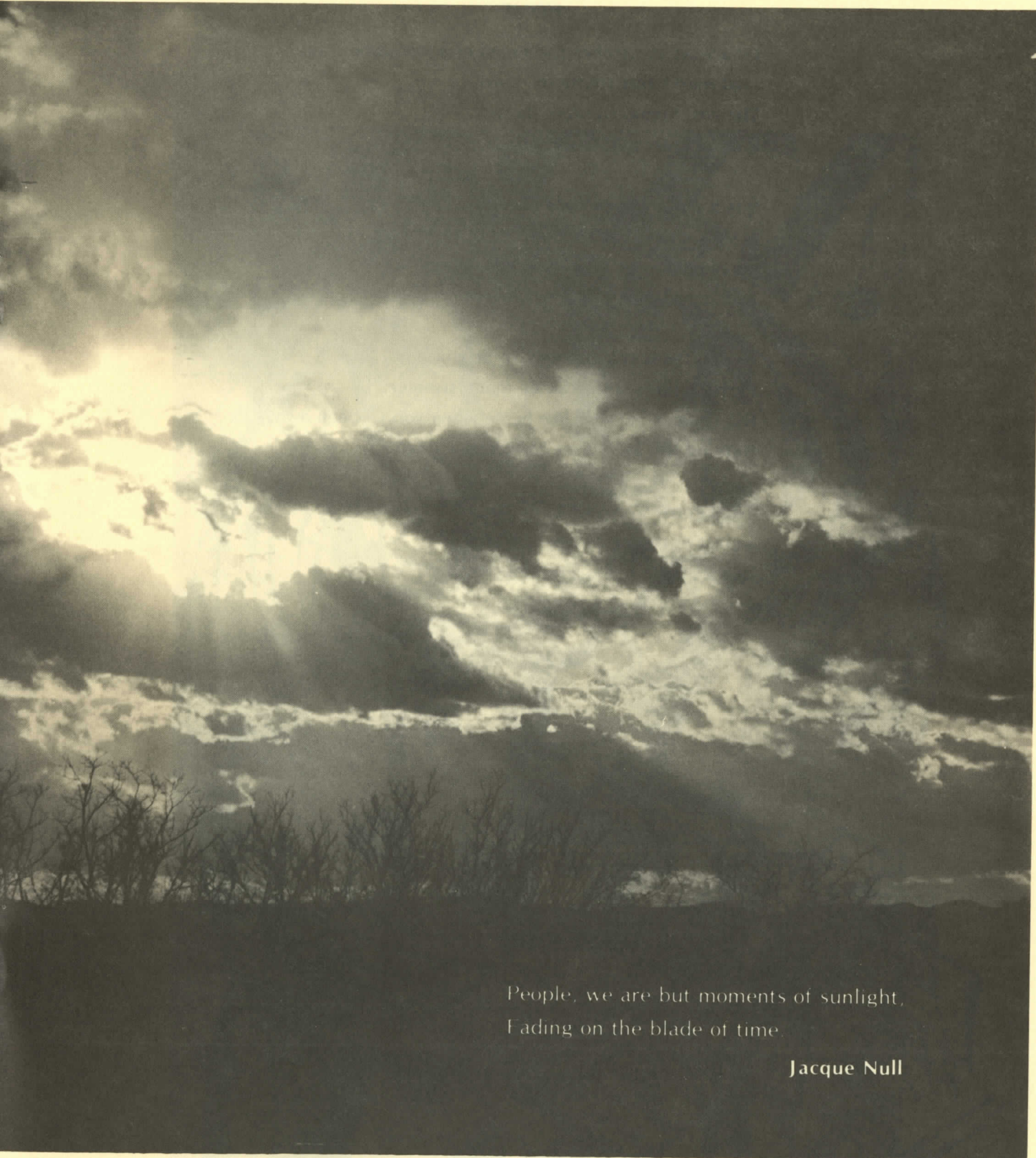
No, Tim told himself as he slushed down the heart-chilling pavement of nowhere. He couldn't risk that. Couldn't risk what? What kind of life did he have now? Still, he couldn't kill the chance for a hope of something better. Another town, another name. He had done it once; he would do it again.

No, he couldn't go back; not now, not ever. What was done was done. The past was dead. Dead. Even the word sent shivers up his spine. And the future? Was it possible that by denying Cassandra he was killing any hope to come? The bells of the great cathedral chimed forth the hour of midnight. The bell of hope, truth, faith, and conscience ringing forth a new day, and surely a better day.

No, Tim could never go back. But forward...? ●



George Bennett



People, we are but moments of sunlight,
Fading on the blade of time.

Jacque Null

HOME

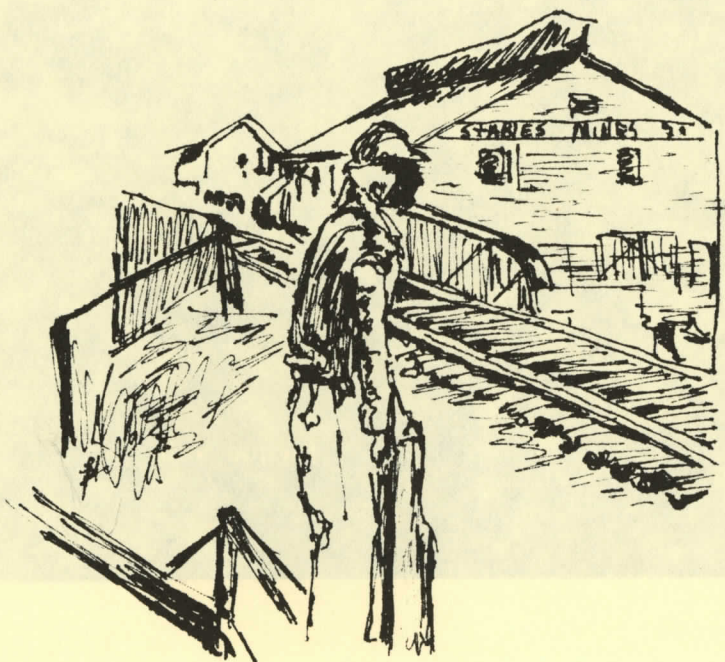
I'll always remember the sound of a lonesome train
That marks this southern town,
The hot, humid summer days--
Barefoot feet and quiet sounds.

It is a place where life's pace
Is slow enough to be enjoyed.
People call your name and know your face
And hospitality is still employed.

Maybe there are rainbows to be chased;
Perhaps life's spice can be made sweeter.
But there is nothing like home when you've been away;
Nothing like loneliness that makes a believer.

Though my wanderings be not adventures,
I must put some things to test.
But lack of a home will never hinder
My assurance of a place to rest.

Richard Hannah





"ROAD TO ILIDI"

Michael Osborne

INDULGE ME SENTIMENTALITY

Indulge me sentimentality:

early Indian summer morning,

Washed with lilac and amber

dabbled with gold.

The highway stretching out warm and alive

Like some molten seed spurted from the red earth.

The old folks, early risen,

propped on the porches

With their cardboard fans

(sweet Jesus ascension) from the funeral home.

Gray houses with rotting cupulos,

concrete and the glint of broken glass,

Gallon cans sprouting petunias and crocuses,

yarrow scented ragweed,

Odor of chicory coffee trailing across wet lawns.

Noon, dog day hot, faint pungent

stink of burning rubber,

White foam of scum around the creek willows,

fishy-stagnant,

Warted hackberries, leaves paraffin-slick,

Others already curling into their autumn crisp,

Bees swarming around the fallen hedgeapples,

Brown with rot and oozing their syrup.

The old cool inside the store,

advertisements for Red Rose Ice Cream,

The owner, a veteran with

a baby's wet mouth,

Inside the case, bologna and ham and pork chops

lying on a cold white shelf

Beside heads of lettuce

shedding their wilting cauls.

His tearing from the roll

a sheet of wax paper and sliding open the door

And handling the stick of bologna

like a phallus,

Rolling it between fat red hands,

feeding it to the slicer,

Looking up and smiling

as his fingers inched toward amputation.

A cinnamon dusk,

the washing of feet with a garden hose,

A sun bleeding to death

between a cross of trees.

Dennis Cottrell



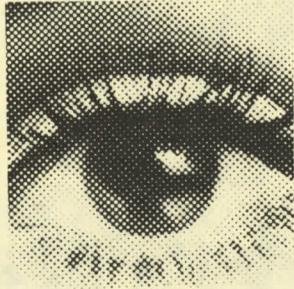
BJ Peer

In the hall of mirrors of my mind,
Dreams last forever, on and on.
I reach for you and long to touch
But find only reflection.

Elusive though dreams are, they last.
Not so sharp-edged reality:
A fact begins, shatters, and ends;
Realities have boundaries.

Don't speak my name; don't come too near;
As you pass by, don't touch my hair;
Don't start this thing, for it will end;
A shattered dream leaves just despair.

Sarah Thompson



I know that I am nothing in your eyes--
A mere acquaintance, just a brooding face,
And yet I pass you days and, holy, sigh
As if your glance has stricken sacred place.
My heart in silent reverence waits the age
When love will cease to be a game for two;
For I am weary with the war I wage
Alone, within my heart, to think of you.
I know that I have no place in your heart;
That some, alone, pass life, and weary, stare
Into the sun. I have known from the start
The reason why they welcome so the glare:
To them illusion's blessed light must be
Their hope, their only link with sanity.

Mark Wallace

Just put the family to bed. Feel like a 30-year-old housewife who's worn out by having kids non-stop since she was 17, and now wants to settle down to the peace and quiet of a sleeping house and a double Scotch. Sitting very "unlady-like" (as usual) in the den wearing a faded, limp, flowered apron, white sneakers, an old cotton dress, and, of course, a small pin that her husband gave her when they were dating that's left a permanent green ring on her dress, watching "Eyewitness News." She has a grocery list in one hand (wondering perhaps if next week is going to ultimately be "Meatless Week," or, perhaps, more appropriately, "Foodless Week.") and in the other hand, a filterless Lucky Strike. She passively surveys the rec room: the tricycle-scarred coffee table, the portable TV with Reynold's Wrap on the antennae, the ash-ridden throw-rug that her grandmother made for her "Hope Chest," and the remnants of a Keebler Pecan Sandie that Shannon, or Keith or Sebastian (whichever is the youngest) threw down in a fit of frenzy because he couldn't watch "Abbott and Costello Meet the Giant Archegonia in Opryland."

Aristophanes Camus



Milton Black

AUTUMN NOCTURNE

To shape the feelings of the heart in more
than human words, that is not possible

When the moon was full first in September
And the locusts sang their winging tune,
I walked alone at midnight through a meadow
And sensed the rhythm of an ordered, profound tune.

The locusts winged their whining song
In ordered cadence with the autumn breeze.

The grasses danced, blue and scintillant,
Animated by the moonlight's beams.

The locusts whined their winging cadence;
Sang as if engendered by the moon.

The grasses writhed white and sang electric,
Imbued with power, pierced by the moon.

I sensed an order in the night I had not
Felt before; a meaning scrawled across the earth
and sky--the presence of some awful unseen
Force that filled the air and seemed to move the earth.

Time had stopped and time had never ended.
Past was a dream that only man devised.

I stood, insensate, in the swelling meadow.
The future was a moment then unrealized.

There was a beginning and an ending
Both enmeshed within that autumn night;
Sacred, ordered, synchronous melodies
That sang beyond the scope of human thought.



Nancy Masters

Lynn Paterson

**TWO PAIRS ON AN ITALIAN
(FOR LILLIAN KLEIN)**

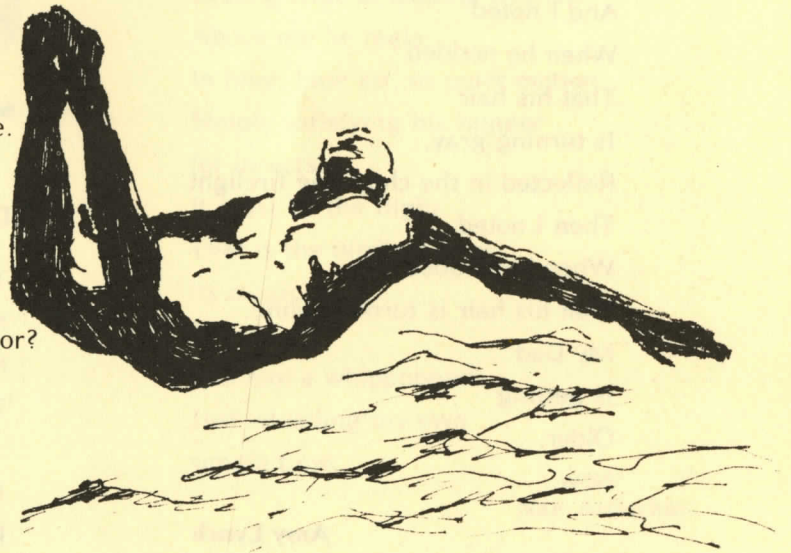
Oh haughty child of the wild
Your beach is blanketed in soot;
Watching criss-crossed, scissored
Ready
To tear and endure
The on coming white glistening foam,
No more to roam beneath the loam.

Oh blackness covers and smothers
Your wild and gentle playground;
The cutting utensil begins its studied task,
Slowly sawing while saving the shavings
For a sunny day
When suddenly stops
The unfiltered droppings.

Your legs like matching razor edges
Rub, corrupt, brand one the other;
Open wide now--eagle spread
Sharply closed again,
Eyes dull and legs sharp;
Muscles tensed, thought intent.

Oh they opened Wolfe's head;
He had a white brain,
Corrupt, virulent, hopelessly white.
He waited in darkness
On a similarly decaying shore;
No more to wait beneath the gate.

And what of you sweet silent scissor?
I fear you have been misjudged
And have misjudged
Like Desdemona under feathers
In the heart of the volcano
Melting, slowly turning black.

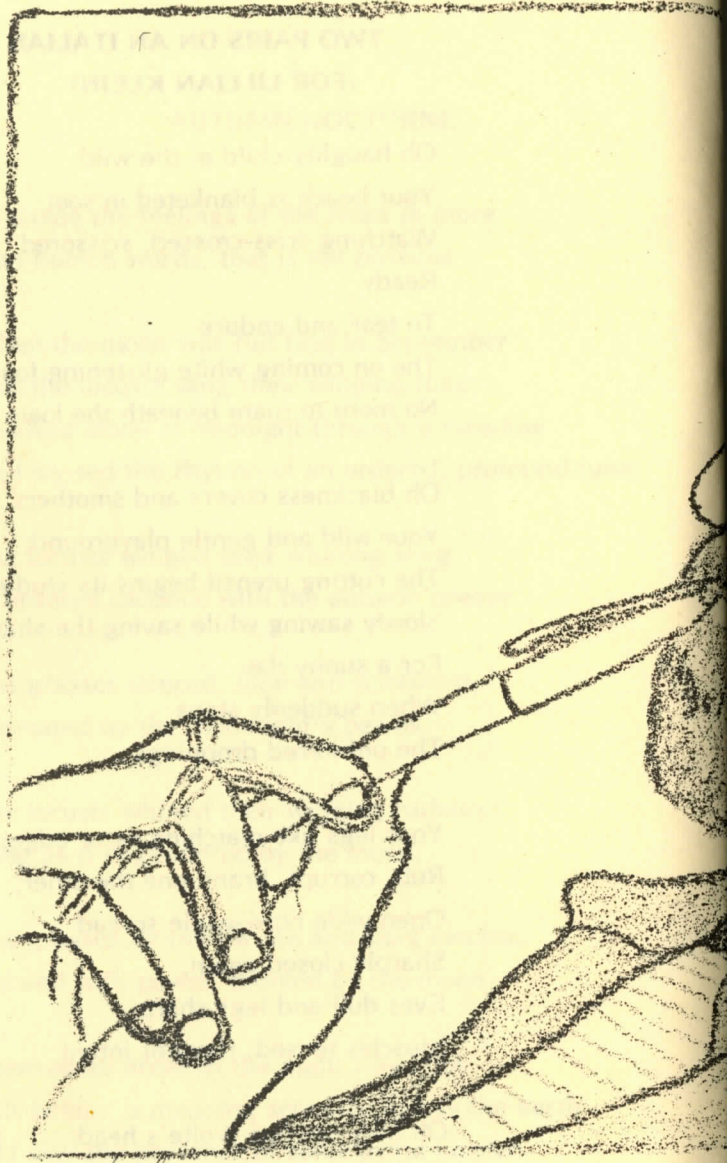


Roger Register

MY DAD IS GETTING OLDER NOW

My Dad
Is getting older
Now,
And I noted
Friday evening
As we listened
To the blast
That he could
Not remember
Things that happened
Tuesday last.
But he remembered
Long ago,
In fact, he told me so,
And, well,
What could I say?
And I noted
When he nodded
That his hair
Is turning gray,
Reflected in the churkling firelight
Then I noted
When he nodded
That his hair is turning white.
My Dad
Is getting
Older.
Now.

Amy Lynch



"MICHAEL"

DEATH STAR

There is a star that doesn't shine
Nor mark the mariner's line,
Nor beckons a gazer's glance
To entreat wonderment or entice sweet romance.

It is neither friend nor foe to the universe,
But man marks well its mortal curse.
For it severs body and soul,
And beams of death's triumphant glow.

Richard Hannah



Patti Osborne

MY MIDDLE NAME IS HARMONY

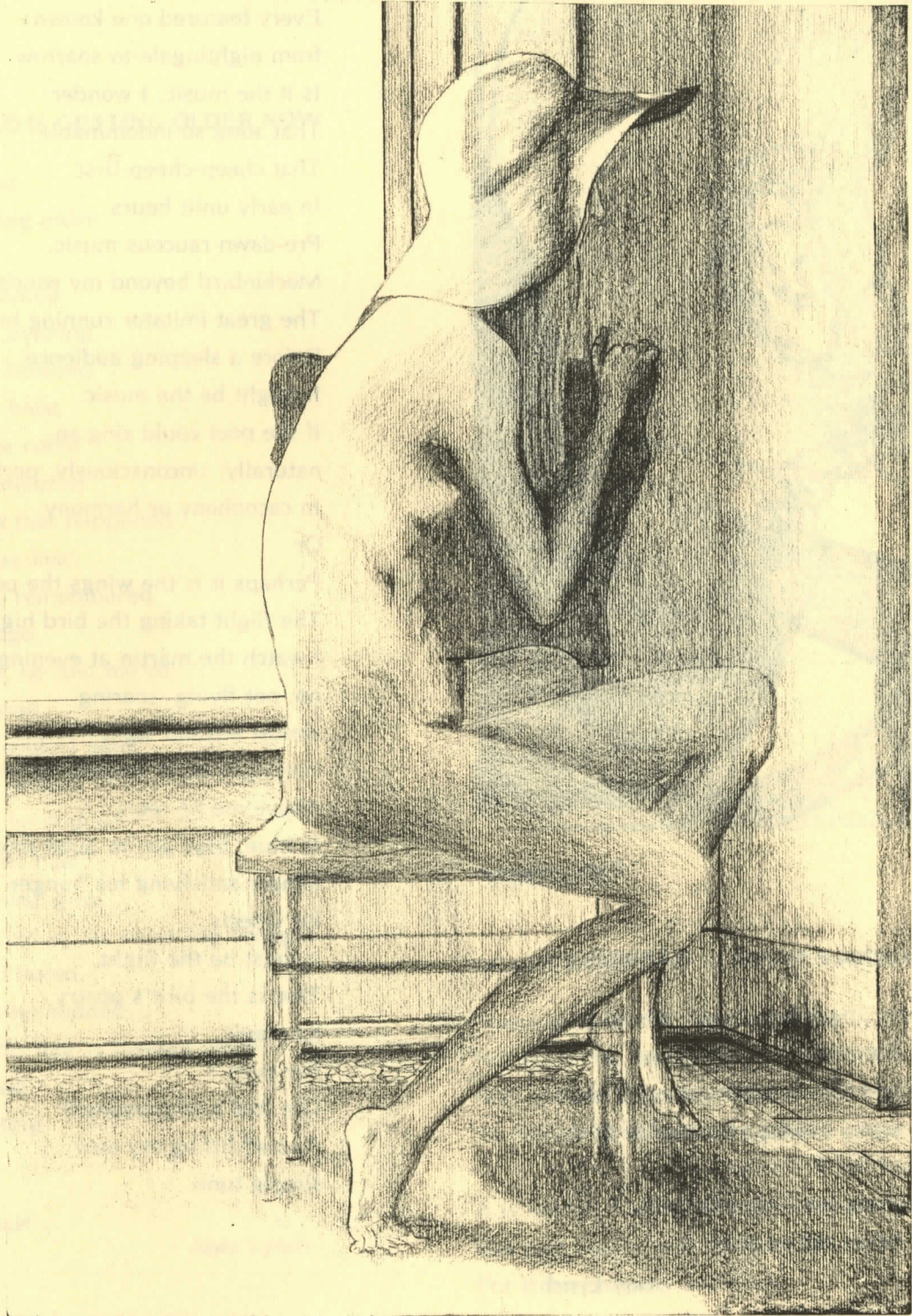
Daddy jitterbugged with lots of girls,
But waltzed only with Mama.
At night above green papered walls
My sentry ceiling squealed in time
to muffled 3/4 music.
I've dreamed 2-step fantasies,
But never dip or glide.

Amy Lynch

THE SIMPLE POEM

Why does the poet love the bird so?
On every page turned it's there.
Every featured one known
from nightingale to sparrow
Is it the music, I wonder.
That song so indomitable
That cheep-cheep first
In early unlit hours
Pre-dawn raucous music.
Mockinbird beyond my window,
The great imitator running his repertoire
Before a sleeping audience.
It might be the music.
If the poet could sing so,
naturally, unconsciously, perfectly
In cacophony or harmony.
Or
Perhaps it is the wings the poet envies.
The flight taking the bird high.
I watch the martin at evening flying--
no, not flying--soaring
almost beyond sight
circling wide in looping whirls.
Above me he reels
In blue, blue air, in quiet motion
Simply satisfying his hunger
for insects.
It must be the flight.
That is the bird's poetry,
its magic.
For even I
Can fool a whippoorwill
Just whistling my own
simple tune.

Nan Arbuckle



Michael Osborne

SATURDAY'S CHILD

I was one of the Monday babes
Who danced in the temple yards.
I sang "Hosanna to David's son,"
As I twirled in my cotton clothes,
Cotton grown in Egypt
Sunshine tucked in its folds.
"Out of the mouths of babes"
He said, when I sang my perfect praise,
But I had seen the moon's month growth
And counted away the days
Friday waxed fat and upon us.
Our warm blood mounted
With the Nile, impatient in her banks.

Amy Lynch

The sun is coming up again, and I
Can't say no to the dawn of this morning.

I approach the outdoors to meet the sun.
It makes not a move, but opens my eyes
To the day with all of its hidden ways.

As I go on my way, I see the wind.
It says not a word as it stirs the
Dying leaves around the desolate tree.

I'm walking in the rain today, seeing
That it leaves not one dry face untouched.
With the rain, flows the repressed feelings that
I thought were tucked away within my head.

I have met today and it has weighted my
Mind with thought, now I must be on my way.

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