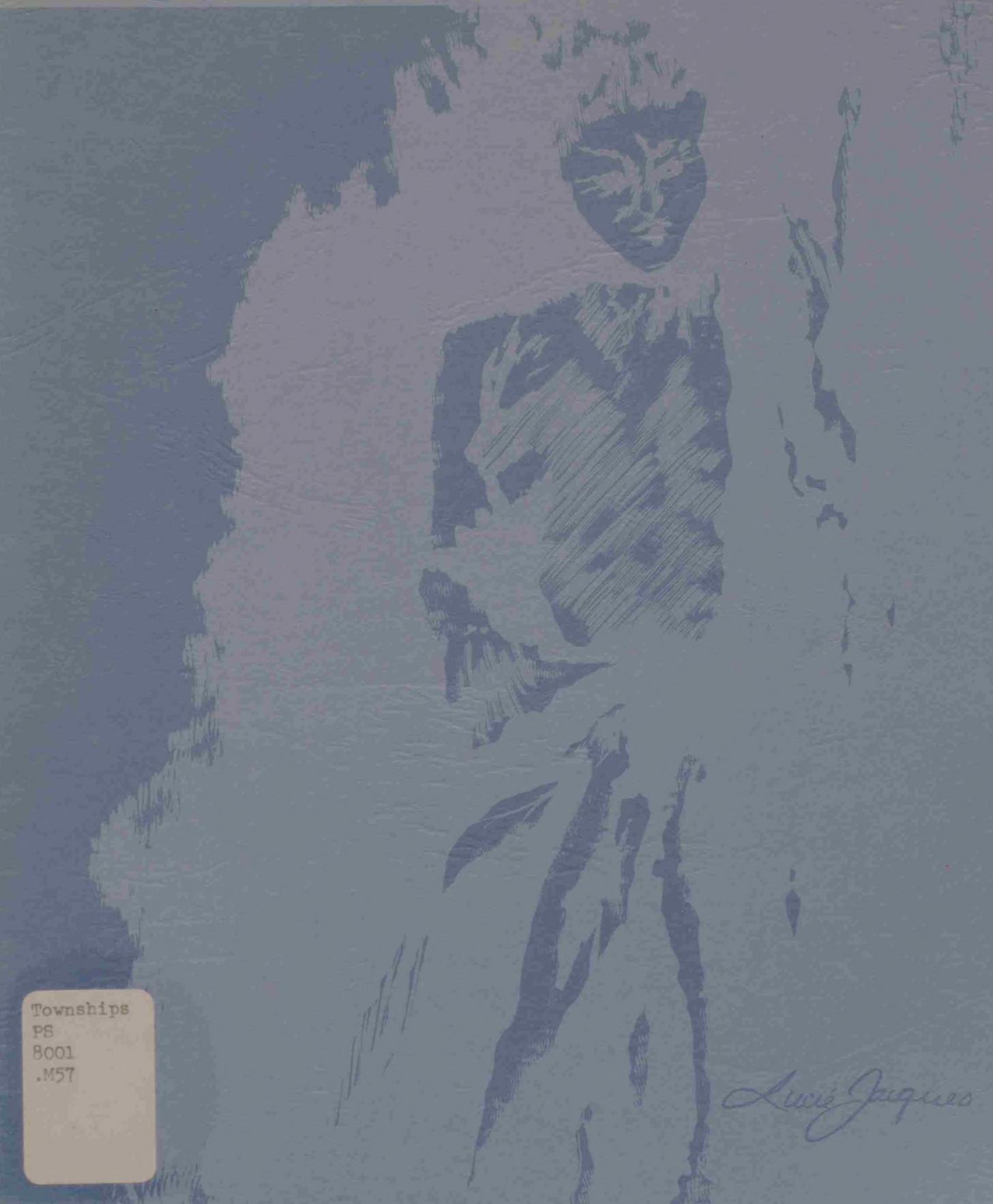


THE MITRA



Townships
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Lucie Jacques

THE MITRA



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SINCE 1893

A TRADITION NOT TO BE FORGOTTEN

EDITOR:
Brenda Hornby

ASSISTANT EDITOR:
Steve Balkou

This ninetieth edition is dedicated to the professors of the English Department and my colleagues Liz, Susan and Wendy.

Special thanks extended to Principal Nicholl for his financial assistance and moral support.

Many thanks to Steve Balkou whose enthusiasm and knowledge so often encouraged me to persevere.

To my patient and understanding roommate Penny and to all my friends who offered their concern and support, thanks so much.

I remain,
sincerely yours,

Brenda Hornby

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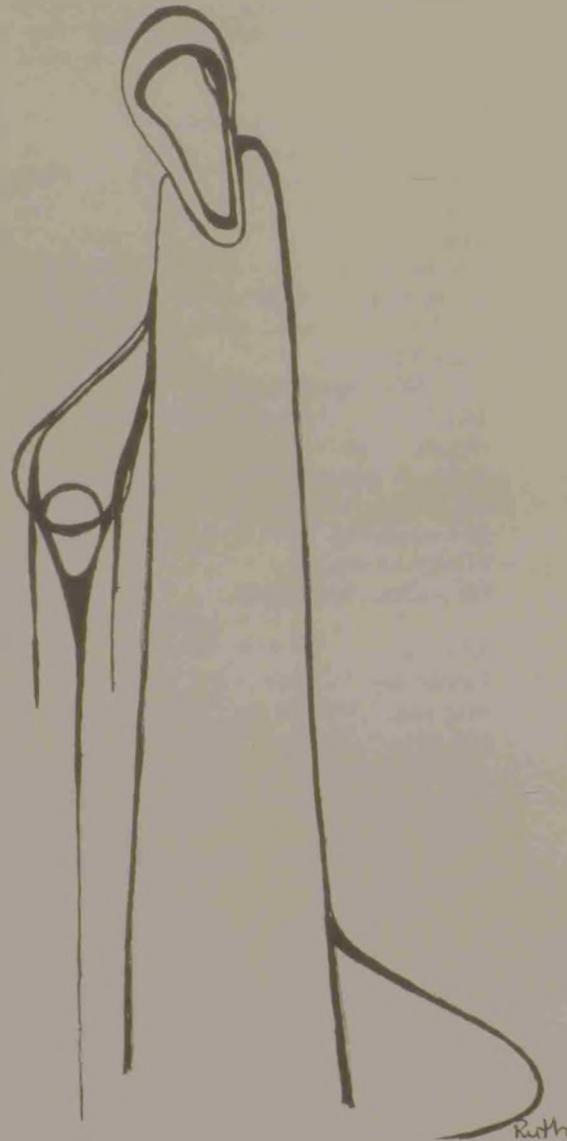
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-Kelly MacKenzie

Free
(a
Lion
roams
his
King) dom

a
long
walk
a
solitary
tear)
one



T
ouch!

If my eyes were brown
I'd walk dirt roads more often
I'd write with a black fountain pen
and wear batik, marimekko and beads.
My shelves would be full of hardbound books
and I'd often use green wax on my skis.
My cats would have normal names -
for cats, that is - catapult or Hy-purr-belly
I'd prefer avocados
and be more prone to split ends and frizzies.
But my eyes aren't brown
I like frost patterns on my window
I burn incense in the morning
and rarely make my bed.
I've got flowers painted on my floor
and tend to remember phone numbers.
I've collected lots of little boxes
though I know not what to put inside.
I change my mind a lot
and listen to snow,
Knowing that my eyes will never be brown.

- Daisy Fields



- Valerie-Anne Tannage

POWER

strength that dawns on anxiety;
a restlessness, writhing in the bands of the secure organ:

Man

But man

alone

can overpower

Nothing

but

his own will.

HANDS

Unfolding

hungry

millions

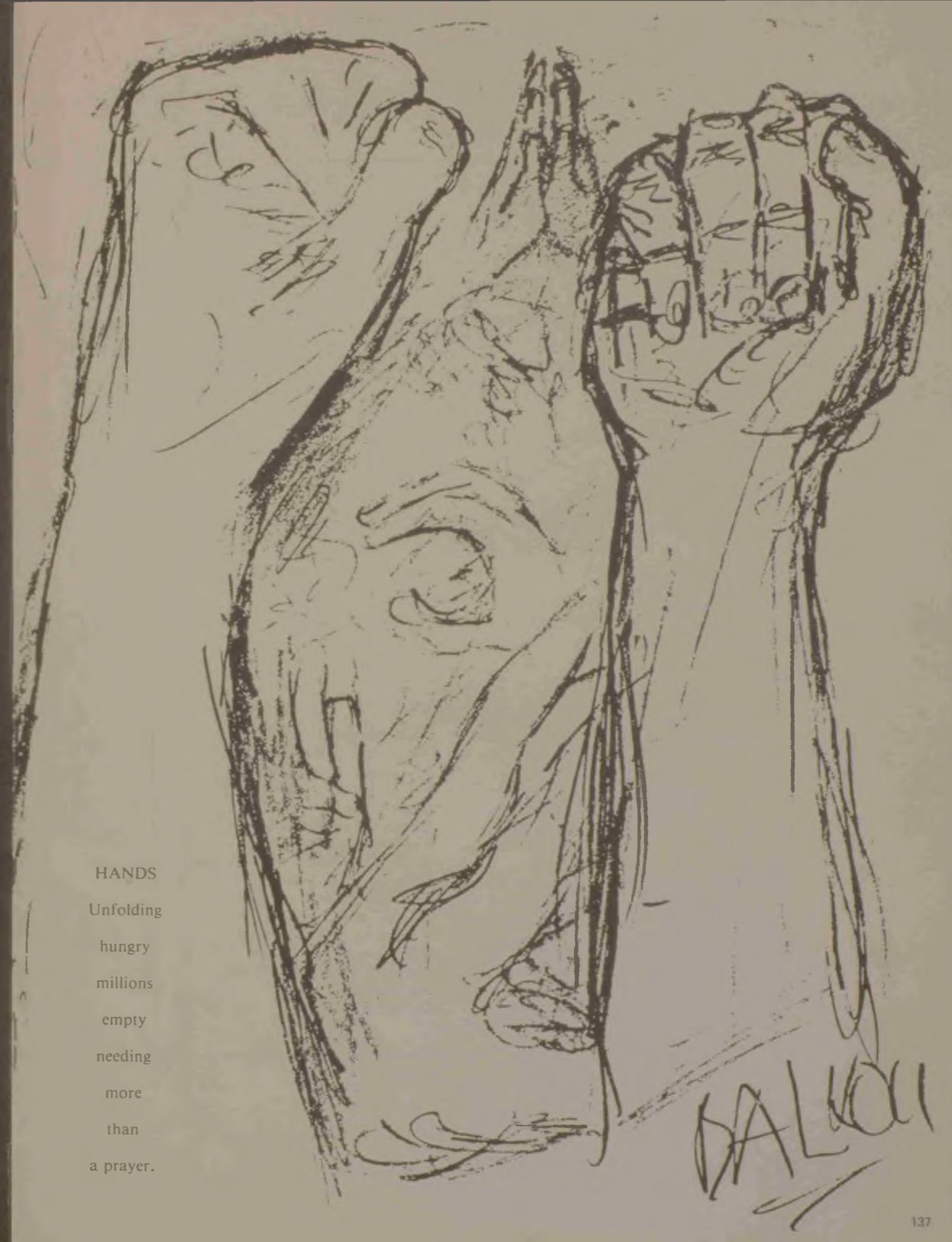
empty

needing

more

than

a prayer.



-Elizabeth Bouchard

SCARS

Between you and me
There's a wound that's
deep and narrow
left by scalpel,
or maybe bayonet
And everytime
We try to touch
We strike the wound
Resonating pain makes us recoil
We seem to like
our small neat scar
We seem to fear
the blood that heals.

GRAY ROOMS

Down by the railroad tracks
below the city's consciousness
empty rooms wait.

Ketchup and old cans
stain the papers
that dust the floor.
Headlines fade into history,
Bones of rats and birds
are scattered
with cockroach husks.
On the walls industrial women
spread their legs
to the camera's metal finger
and cover the cabbage roses
that linger on the dying walls.

IN MY TIME OF DYING

Open my casket
but don't look at me yet
Say your prayers of forgetfulness
and I will remember you too
Speak to me from all your nightmares
and I will answer you with my tears
Let the full moon rise without you
and pull the waters off the shore
But I will be back yet again
before my time of dying
And before your life is through with you.
Now I've spoken my word
and it's time for you to look
into the coffin.
Open the lid and it's empty
except for water;
dark and full of reflections
Of us.
Both of us.

- Jenny Brigham



Lucie Jacques

DEATH

Death is a mangled cat
In the ditch at the side
Of a busy highway.

Death is an eyeless house
With a broken porch,
Dead vines on the door.

Death is a mink coat
At the circus
In the city.

Death is a shipwreck
On a reef off the coast
Of Sable Island.

Death is a body of a
Child in the arms of a
Woman who is crying.

Death is the carcass of
A fish on the sand
At the public beach.

Death is a knife in the
Back of a skeleton in the
Basement of my home.

-Charles Riordon

THE

ROSES

The bathwater was hot and silky. Judith had used one of her more exotic bath oils to counter the nerve jangling effect of the day. Greedily, she sank into the tub and propped her head against its edge. "Find a cork-screw," she thought; "make the sauce for the brussel sprouts and toss the salad." Like a good general, she reviewed her strategy to see if she had missed anything. But her eyes began to feel heavy, sultry, and she surrendered to the laziness of the hot water.

Reluctantly, she dragged herself from the bath to get ready for dinner. As she dried herself off briskly, with short rough movements, she caught sight of her body in the mirror and noticed again how small the breasts were and how boyish the hips. Pale shoulder-length hair falling from a clumsy bun, emphasized the harried, almost furtive movements of the eyes. This self in the mirror seemed far removed from the Judith who wrestled with fanciful clients and a mulish computer all day. What did Gregg, with his movie star's face and strong thighs see in her? "Don't be so hard on yourself," she thought; "he thinks you're witty and beautiful. You're graceful, and poised. God, I sound like a commentator at a Miss American Contest," she thought disgustedly.

She pawed through her closet looking for something to wear. Most of her clothes were too business-like for the disco. She finally decided on the clingy red halter that Gregg liked. In the bathroom she put on a glossy red lipstick. "Wouldn't want my face to fade into the background," she thought. She stepped back from the mirror to decide whether her upper lip was properly aligned with the lower one. It wasn't; so she tried again.

She'd never been skilled with makeup. In high school she had experimented with eye shadows she'd bought at Zellers, but the effect created was never that which she had intended. She could remember when her mother, preceded by her Chanel No. 5, her face expertly

contoured and shaded, would come into her bedroom to say goodnight before going out on the town. But that was when she was very young, before her father had developed polio. He had been a handsome man, but his disease had made him bitter and resentful. Judith could remember him crashing around the house in a fit of anger, his powerful chest and arms propelling the crutches while his leg trailed behind. He looked, Judith thought, like a half-materialized genie - his lower body a smoky trail. He hardly ever left the house and her mother threw out all her lipsticks and mascaras; she didn't have time between her job and increasingly demanding husband. He seemed to resent his wife having a life in which he did not participate. When Judith became old enough to date he became very strict, forbidding her to go out with boys. At first she rebelled, but after awhile she began to feel that it was useless to fight over the few invitations she received. She stayed home instead and read a lot of romantic novels.

Judith stirred her cheese-sauce slowly, to get the lumps out. She wanted it to look as good as it tasted. She remembered the time Gregg had made dinner for her. The table had been beautiful and the food looked delicious, but unfortunately Gregg wasn't a great cook and the food was inedible.

The doorbell rang. Judith smoothed her hair in the hall mirror before opening the door. It was Gregg, looking handsome as usual.

"Hi!" she said. "Dinner will be ready in a few minutes. Like a glass of wine first?"

"Sure, I'd love one," he replied, settling down on the sofa. "I'm afraid we won't be able to stay out late tonight, I've got to catch a plane to New York at three."

"At three, isn't that rather late?" she asked.

"I know; it's coming in from France. It's only stopping at Mirabel for about twenty minutes. It's the only flight that gets to New York early enough. I have

to meet the Jenkins people at ten o'clock tomorrow."

Gregg was in advertising.

After dinner they joined their friends at the disco. Actually, they were mostly Gregg's friends. Judith felt rather ambivalent about them; at work with her friends, she made jokes about "adults who watch American Bandstand to learn the latest dances," but here in the disco, she felt inadequate. The women were all willowy and exotic. They seemed totally at ease. They wore colourful leotards or dresses that emphasized rather than concealed. The men were less flamboyant. It was, after all, a straight bar. There was Lynne and Krys and Tish and Brad. She didn't know their last names. She didn't even know if they had last names.

The disco was oddly staged. The dance floor had three levels and tables floated in unexpected niches. Green and red lights alternated with a strobe's cinematic effect. From her table, Judith watched the people on the dance floor. A woman with long, dark hair caught her attention; the woman moved fluidly and gracefully, expressing passion and sensuality with the twist of a wrist or a thigh. Judith watched entranced; for a moment she fantasized that it was her out there, dancing like that. She dismissed the idea as merely envious.

They left the disco early. Gregg wanted to rest before he caught his plane. He pushed his Porsche up to 120 mph. He reminded Judith of a cowboy actor who never learned to ride a horse, because in the snow or rain he drove like a little old lady.

Back at the apartment Gregg rolled a spliff. Lately they'd been having problems in bed. Gregg said that hash was a great turn on. He was right. He came twice as fast as he usually did. After, he set the alarm and rolled over and fell asleep. Judith lay on her back, watching the shifting patterns of light on her ceiling become the piercing lights of the disco. Nameless bodies swayed to the mechanical music. She saw Gregg

smiling and dancing. As she came closer, he pulled something from his pocket, it was a mirror. He held it up and she saw herself. She was beautiful. Judith felt happy, but when she looked closer, she saw that the face in the mirror was smiling stiffly, like a cover girl. Judith felt herself tighten, and she awoke with a start. The dream had been oddly disquieting and now she was wide awake. She went out to the living room.

A little later, she heard the alarm ring in the bedroom and Gregg getting up. He noticed the tense expression on her face. "Is something the matter?" he asked. Judith spoke hesitantly, "I feel that something is wrong between us, but I don't know what." Gregg was immediately sympathetic. "Poor Judith, I guess I've been neglecting you. Tell you what, next weekend we'll go out to the cabin, just you and me." Judith started to say that she didn't think that it would help, but Gregg was in a hurry. "Sorry honey, got to run. I'll call you tomorrow." After he left she went back to bed.

The doorbell woke her in the morning. It was an overcast day. The apartment was quite dark. She threw a housecoat on and wondered who was at the door. It was a delivery boy bearing gifts from Gregg. Candy and flowers. Judith tipped the boy generously. She was delighted even though she never ate candy. "How sweet and romantic," she thought. "Just like a forties movie." She read the card on the long thin box. "Just to let you know how I care." Excitedly she opened it. She froze. Twelve white roses, prim as virgins, nestled inside the box. She placed the roses in a vase in the dark hall. They loomed like icebergs against the black sea. Judith shivered. She caught sight of herself in the hall mirror and went to smooth her hair, but then she decided that it was fine the way it was.

- Elizabeth Bouchard

- Cecil Abrahams

FOR MY SONS

I saw them come here with no words,
arms flailing air, past mother, thigh,
and blood. Here we begin again

We shall know each other
by the root of our appetite
or rhythm;

Their eyes direct as comment. As
roaches or rats. As heads cracked
open for fun or lawandorder
in this strange place

When I woke up one morning

I saw them coming in the stillness
of his day and want. My eye sprung out
to embrace a season of dreams.

But they asked: if mother or father
is more than parent, is this my land
or merely soil to cover my bones?



- Elizabeth Bouchard

AFRAID

I

below the lake's black exterior
weed-like in vile confusion they breed
Upward in grim profusion they stalk.
we skim the surface, unsuspecting.

II

dead-eyed pale dusty men
with swift thin knives
lie poised beneath my bed
in wait for slim white ankles.

III

he dines with mother every day
a model son to gray ladies in lace.
Night he writhes with vivid dreams
of woman's screams and his mother's face.



MURMURING SPELLS

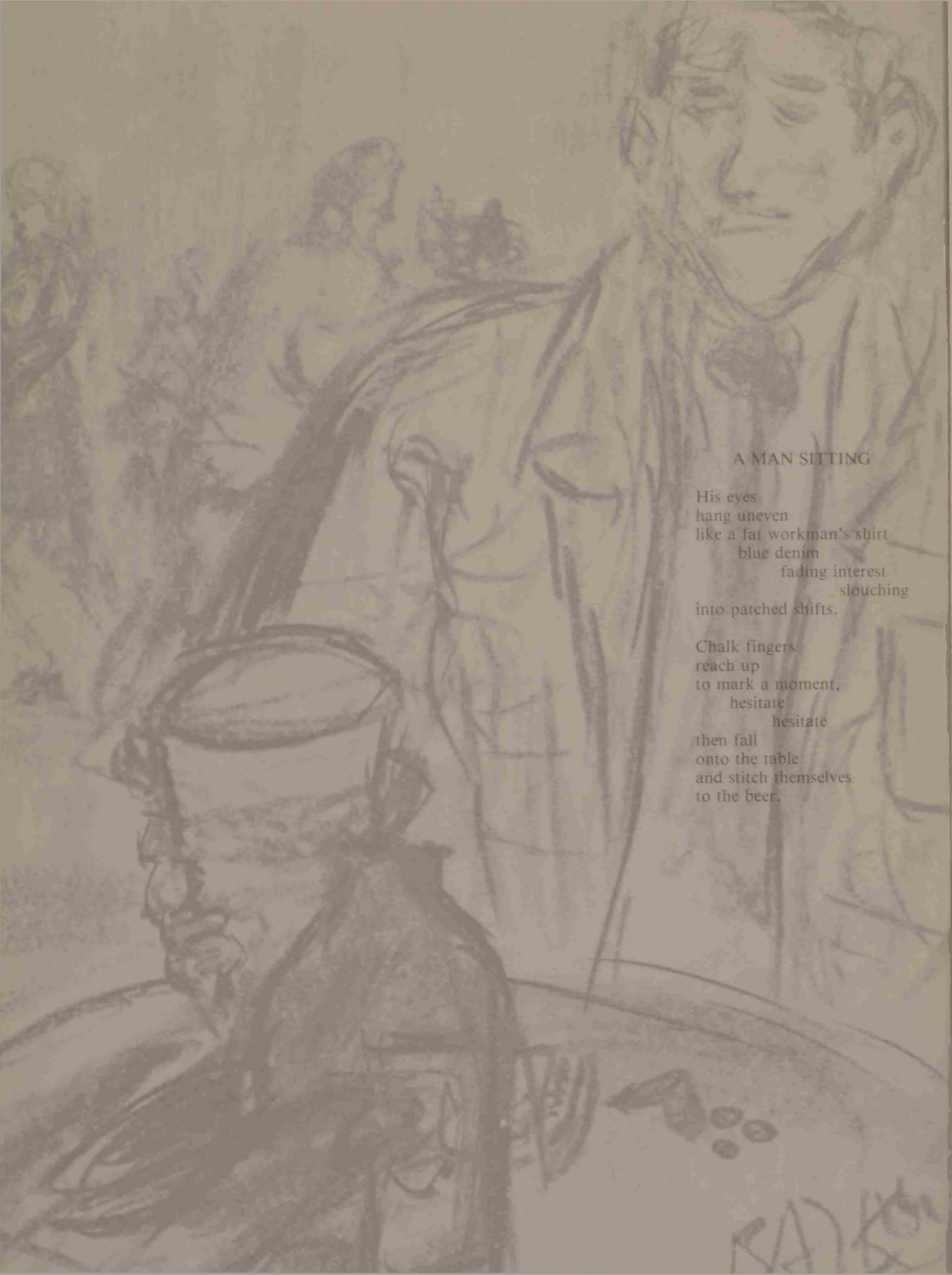
She mopes around
a sagging old spell;
hints
faint gestures of ambition,
then puffs off
into the kitchen
fringed now
in refrigerator light.

She ignores her charms
clustered in the closet
muttering secrets
and floats past
blue period sketches
hunched against the wall.

She tries to mend the silence
with a curse;
conjures up
the comforting whisper
of a candle.

She can't dispell her tears
the filmy shadows; flickering
rows of windows
murmuring voices
dripping light onto the street.

- Steve Balkou



A MAN SITTING

His eyes
hang uneven
like a fat workman's shirt
blue denim
fading interest
slouching
into patched shifts.

Chalk fingers
reach up
to mark a moment,
hesitate
hesitate
then fall
onto the table
and stitch themselves
to the beer.

IN THE LAST HOUR OF THE NIGHT

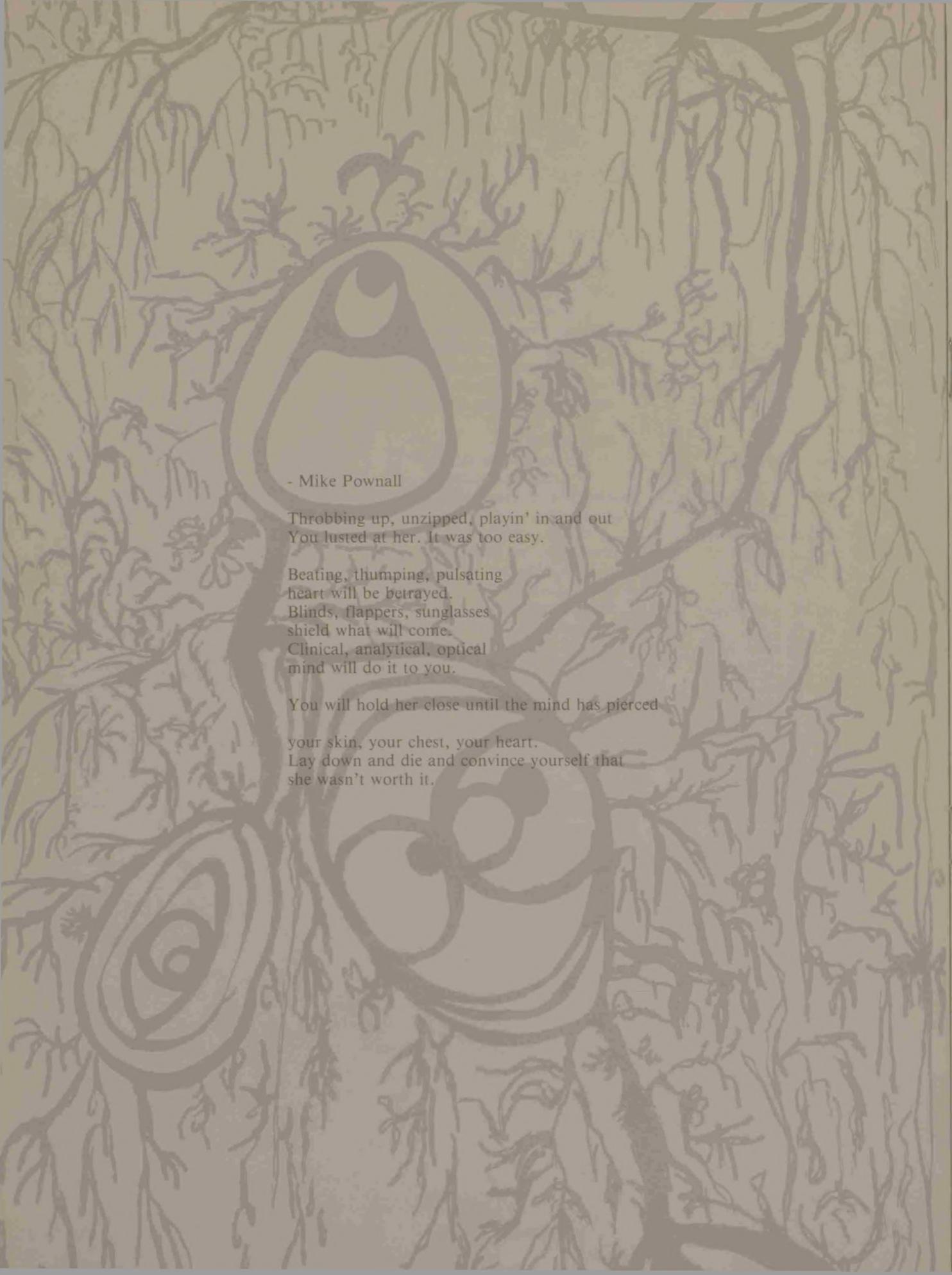
Nostrils wide, he tastes the night
discovers the insinuation
of cigarette smoke:
It's Joe, the Xerox man
The man from a thousand T.V.'s.
He's counting his pennies
flipping his nickels in the night
Bright fish slipping through moonlight

Moving on
Through the streets
of pregnant shadows.
The bloated wind smells of blood
A red dress flares in the darkness
defining the woman inside
She lies on her back
eyes wide
Mouth torn by a
Scream, miscarried
sperm die on her bruised thighs.
A wind blown newspaper
Straddled her body
for a few frantic
moments before moving on ...

A dog runs heavy
on sticky streets
A sour rotting
coates the air;
clear voice rise
in cries, and laughter
as ghetto children, aborted souls
play running games
with plagued-eyed rats.

Outside a yellow dog is crying
to his mate
barking the rising sun
in the last hour of the night.

- Elizabeth Bouchard



- Mike Pownall

Throbbing up, unzipped, playin' in and out
You lusted at her. It was too easy.

Beating, thumping, pulsating
heart will be betrayed.
Blinds, flappers, sunglasses
shield what will come.
Clinical, analytical, optical
mind will do it to you.

You will hold her close until the mind has pierced
your skin, your chest, your heart.
Lay down and die and convince yourself that
she wasn't worth it.

BLACKBIRD

My best friend finds you ugly
Blackbirds
I've no use for 'em
A robin a jay
a sparrow or quail
and I'd clobber
the cat in the hedge
before he could so much
as lift a claw
But blackbirds
when they hit your pea patch
like a swarm of locusts
packing and gorging and trilling
I wish I kept a pack of cats
halfstarved like hounds
in my basement
to loose upon the fiends
flying to the aid
of my poor bespattered
melancholy scarecrow

And I remember
Martha my best
or almost best
Poetry student
sniffing at Avison's
citypigeons
cavorting above
stragglng trees and
kempt unlush grass
ballet grace unfolding with wings
and flarings of tails
between the mutter and the murmur

of their fellows feasting below
on scraps and seed from benches

All she could say was
they shit
And indeed birdstool
in one's hair
does not conduce
to love of pigeons

But when I looked up
and beheld you perched
on that long gray rail
flanked by decorous trees
solemn and solitary and
still
and a breeze came by
riffling your dark breast
shedding bluegreen
embers from your form
saw the fierce lonely pride
of those great blindseeming
eyes
a mute bard visitant
I wonder at Eric
as I had at Martha
and I pitied them
and I pitied the birds
they hated
and I loved
and I wondered wondered
I could love them both.

- Tilak Banerjee

of being a gentilhomme." A once proud Empire was reduced to two tiny islands, "St. Pierre and Michelin."

The Conquest inaugurated the problems of English French co-existence. Lord Durham "felt that if the two were joined the French would be eventually dissolved by the English majority." Matters became more complex "After 1815, (when) over 3 million Irish immigrants came and most ended up in New Brunswick timber camps." French Canadians survived, however, largely through the efforts of their political leaders. "One of the earliest 'bleus' was Lafontaine. He, together with Governor Sydenham formed a coalition and cooperated for their mutual benefit. Together they managed to repeal the Corn Laws, repeal the Timber Laws, and repeal the Navigation Laws."

This necessitated a whole new arrangement, especially "When the United States was in the midst of their civil war ... After much fighting and rebelling and killing and burning of buildings the leaders of all the provinces began to meet and confer with each other. It took a few years but finally on July 1, 1867 Confederation was formed ... - (the) unionization of the British North American colonies."

"Confederation was a great thing and we are lucky it happened or today we might be part of the United States. We owe a lot of thanks to men like MacDonald, Cartier and Brown who were responsible for Confederation. They united the country which made trade, defence and communications much better. I am not sure when but I am sure of one thing. In 1871 the Canadian Pacific Railway was built ... which really linked everyone together."

After some delay, the railway helped to open the west, and "In the prairies dairy and cattle farming, mining of ores, and Petroleum products produced a particular breed of people, sturdy and fun loving at harvest time." But Quebec influence declined, for there were only "800,000 Canadiens-Français dans un bain d'anglophones de 30 millions."

And in the new industrial cities, "The hours of ... work were extremely long and not to mention arduous. There was also poor visibility to be in evidence, and this was to be directly related to the inferior quality of the lighting system. Due to the lengthy hours, people would become fatigued and eventually hypnotized, thus they would be prone to injury because of physical enervation. To coincide with the aforesaid, no means of safety regulations were employed to prevent serious and debilitating injuries. As a result workers might perchance be maimed accidentally by the primitive modes of machinery." These conditions led to confrontations like the Winnipeg General Strike and to repressive measures by Prime Minister "... Sir Author Meighen. Laurier was out of office because of his death in 1917."

"In the 1930's the economy of Canada was in poor state. There were bread lines across the whole country. Canada was going through a hard stage at this time. It was in the throws of a depression. The people didn't know what they wanted, so once again King won. However (his) policies were all used in a proper fashion. To the betterment of the people. Only Duplessis pursued a capitalistic policy to the detriment of his people and he won not a Liberal."

Despite its size, Canada has had a remarkable impact in international affairs. "Who were the ones who got gassed in W.W.I and won, though the others retreated? (But) our dependence with the states started growing before our liberation from Britain." Americans persuaded Canada to send troops to Korea. "North Korea had invaded South Korea with (the) Communistic Party, and the United States was not pleased, so she injected troops within the country ..." All things considered, "I would much rather be dominated economically by Japan ..." "Thus a new party will have to be organized which will be preoccupied with the establishment of a better Canada and not the winning of votes."

JUNE 7/8, 1944

Oh, my father
imagining the tramping boots
of the retreating Hun,
minutes ahead.
Caught alone with Sid and Harry,
the three of you
(in your proud RAF uniforms),
young and excited
and frightened,
negotiating the tired roads
of France
on the night of June 7, 1944.

The night is deadly quiet;
birds are gone.
Not even a bark of a distant dog
can be heard.
Somewhere, somewhere,
somewhere ahead is
your squadron.
Somewhere between you and
the fleeing Hun
or so you hope.

But where are the road signs?
You are young (twenty-four);
so are Sid and Harry.
You a corporal, Sid a sergeant,
Harry a private,
Sent to find your squadron
on that night of
June 7, 1944.

The engine of your dusty jeep
chugs ominously in the
muggy death-like quiet.
Distant gunfire flares,
chilling your blood
but you stubbornly, blindly follow
the straight-arrow road
to ... what?

Darkness, darkness
Fifty shades of gray
surround you
on this improbable journey.
Your thoughts stray
to the fair Helene
from Calais,
"Bien, you are young yet,
are you not Geoffrey?"

Dawn streaks muddy fingers
across the sky
and illuminates the inky outlines
of shell-struck farms
and bullet-ridden windows.
The buildings are becoming more numerous -
"God, where are we?"
you ask.

It must be five o'clock
when your jeep trundles under
the Arc de Triumph.
You are on the Champs Elysee
entering one end of Paris
as the Germans leave the other;
Unknowing, unknown conquerors
of the sleeping city.

How did you get there?
Paris is still closed.
Snipers are hidden in
shadows still
and bullets ring past your ears,
one, two.

"As long as one hasn't got
my name on it, I'm okay,"
you say.

You've seen death come
quickly and too often
to other boys your age
who should be in university
and taking girls on dates
to movies in Canada.

But this is June 8, 1944
and you three RAF soldiers
are driving into Paris
not yet awakened
from the grasp of the Nazis.
No one even notices
your proud uniforms.

Accidentally you find
a deserted Nazi headquarters
in a hotel you and Sid and Harry
stop at for rest.
Hitler and swastikas everywhere
chill your blood.
Bullet-holes from the guns
of retreating German soldiers
riddle the once grand,
silk-papered walls of the hotel.

It is June 8, 1944
and you realize that you are
living like a sleep-walker
in a dream,
through history.
Historians will call
June 6, 1944 D-Day,
and record the
liberation of Paris,
"The beginning of the end
of the war."

And years, many years later
I, your daughter, ask you
the trite, cliched question,
"Where were you on D-Day Dad?"
and you tell me
simply, from the heart,
Of June 7 and 8, 1944.
And I feel special
because I know you have
never told anyone else.

— Adrienne Chinn



NOT TO BE TAKEN AWAY

