

"The New Hat"



"Yin and Yang"

THE NEW MITRE MAGAZINE
1980

TOWNSHIPS

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THE NEW MITRE

A BISHOP'S UNIVERSITY CREATIVE ARTS MAGAZINE

SINCE
1893



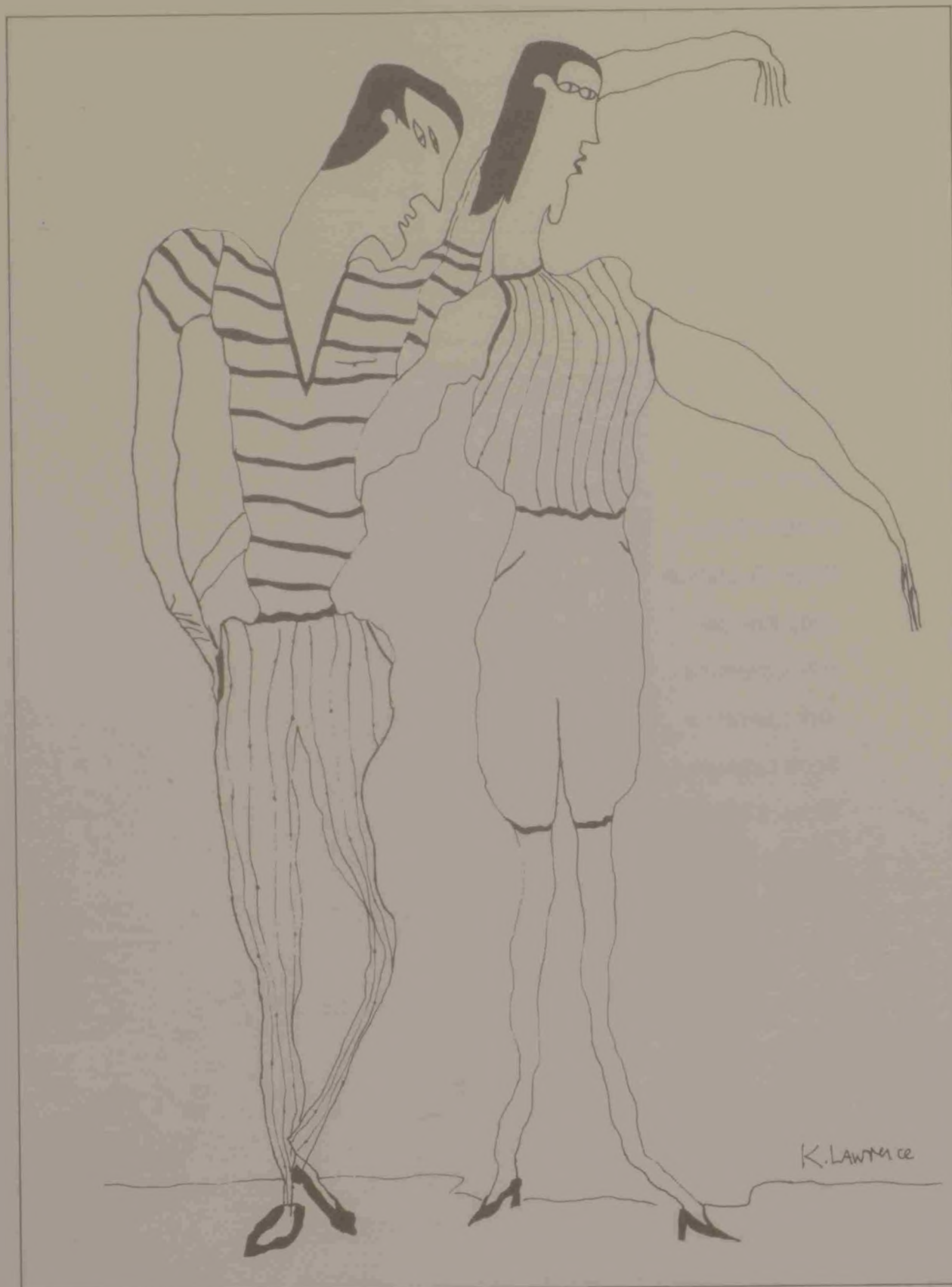


"On Leave"

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"Birds with Shoes"

Chapter one: Between the Walls

by
Ronald Smith

Mitchell Park is not pretty today. The season is early winter, and a chill wind whips up the piles of leaves and garbage which summer has left behind. A stone fountain, which squats at the west end of the park, is filled with water waiting to freeze, and the nymphs who support its large stone cup look clammy and sheepish in their half-nude attitudes.

The streets which bind the park are stained black with damp. Brick and stone mansions stand gaunt and old and not entirely welcoming. They whisper secrets of inbreeding and infertility, of fear and lack of life in the cold. You see, the neighbourhood is sagging a bit, and what isn't run down has run in and hid

On Moore Street, just a stone's throw north from Mitchell Park, an old Cadillac hearse, massive and ornate, crawls away from the curb, followed by a flower car and several loads of quiet mourners. The Brothers of the Precious Blood begin a slow rhythm of passing bells, followed by Our Lady of the Seven Pains, the Weeping Virgins, and the Divine Body of Christ. These various peals sail and echo against the dark bank of cloud overhead

Above the rooftops, a stone mason, who has spent all morning patching up a crumbling chimney, is at rest on his scaffolding, watching the procession and nibbling on his lunch like a silent bird. He sees it round the corner onto Prospect Street, then on down to the fork in the road, where Prospect sprouts the Brompton Road.

An old blue house clings to the cliff, there by the stone look-out, teasing the river below with its grip. In one of the smaller rooms, a room in the back facing the river, sits Odd Rumsby, sorting out life like a deck of cards.

"... nine, ten, jack, queen, king," he mumbles. His body is wrapped within many layers of cotton and wool, and he stares out the window, catching the first hints of rain with his eye. Soon a cold grey sheet fills the void between Odd and the world

"... rain, rainer, rainest..." he mumbles

There are dark circles under his eyes, and the whole skin of his face is drawn so tightly as to emphasize its skeletal frame. He has been losing fat for some time, of course, a bit here, a bit there, and now skin and bone kiss in unhappiness

Worst of all, though, he has lost the fat of his soul. Day and night it shivers constantly like some cold bitter thing. One day, in the recent past, his soul snapped; and since that day, not a window has been opened in the old blue house

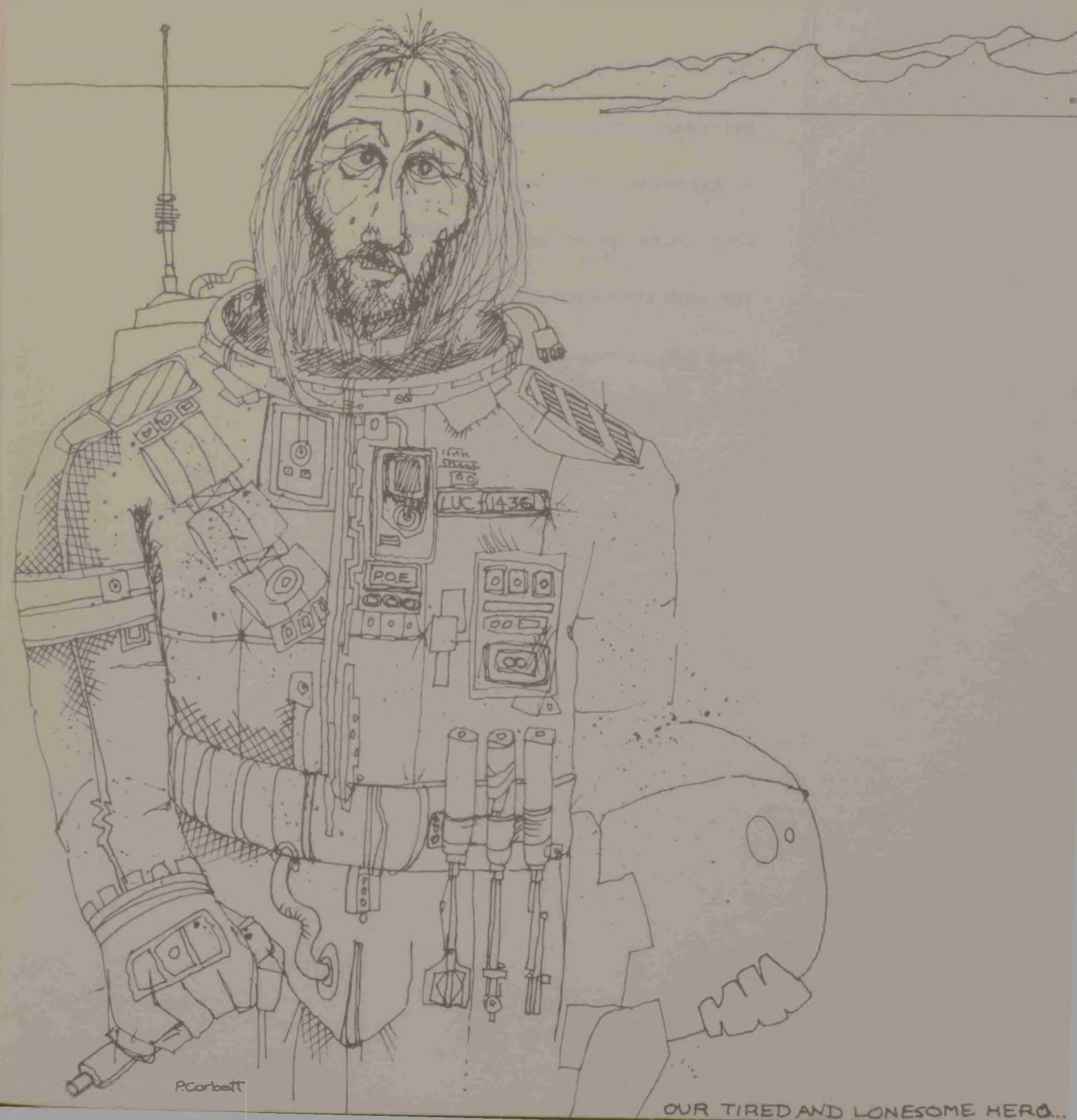
* * * *

Insulation is a major social and political topic in Mitchell Park. On warm days, the conservatives wander through the streets shouting "insulate!", while the liberals are busy with an organization which they call "Save the Icicles". Mr. Calvin Ludens, one of Mitchell Park's leading citizens, holds that insulation is merely a modern manifestation of man's instinct for shelter, and that, romantically, this instinct should not be denied. Odd Rumsby has read all of the circulated pamphlets, both Insular and Non-Insular, and is swept away by the logic of Mr. Ludens' argument, firmly placing himself within the conservative camp. Mr. Rumsby also holds, it must be said, that a row of long icicles hanging from the edge of a gothic roof-line often resembles a set of organ pipes, and is very pretty, indeed. However, he can only endure a certain amount of organ music before retiring with ears buzzing and slight nausea. It is therefore that he casts his ballot and henceforth decrees that he will re-insulate the old blue house at the rate of two bags a day.

Doppelgänger

by
John C. Olsthoorn

I met him in glass,
Ice in frost winter,
One day, yesterday.
It seems so long ago.
I met him in glass,
The shiver of a puddle,
I met him in glass.



THE LECTURE

by
Erik Sande

The unseen cars, painted with rain,

Slide splashing through the slicking film of water

As their splatter and hollow presence

Echo quiet through the disjointed oaks.

They linger with the pale light of the languid class

Chalk dust, unsettled, mingles in the neon bath

And like the unheard fan,

The lulling speech blends unassuming,

Hidden in the lifeless walls.

I learn nothing.

Urban Cases

by
Ian Stephens

She thought

She grew old
uglier and more grotesque
each and every moment
hearing the sound of boiling
mud in the brain

She thought

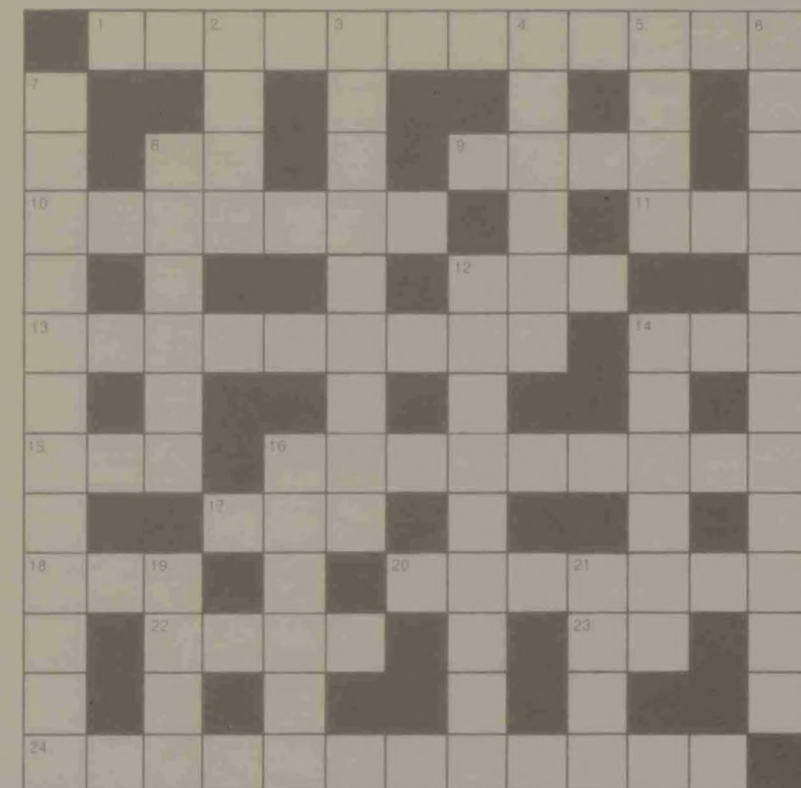
as she crawled onto the motorway
on her knees
and was hit several times by
the passing vehicles
No one knew why she did it
in the afternoon



"Jewel Tone by Modern"

CHAUCERIAN CROSSWORD PUZZLE

by
Richard Green



Solution on page 51

ACROSS

- 1 Did he write Troilus & Criseyde? (4,8)
- 8 & 23. "Nothing so swift — — she is!" (2,2)
- 9 But how the widowed Alys wept! (4)
- 10 No seedy epic! (7)
- 11 To do this with weak oxen takes time (3)
- 12 Alas! How complicated! (3)
- 13 Dire route out of the cloister (9)
- 14 The French one hears in a story from Brittany. (3)
- 15 Favour from a heart of iron? (3)
- 16 John's mixed gin for Che! (5,4)
- 17 Did the Knight take a short one to Canterbury? (3)
- 18 Patron saint of the mealy-mouthed? (3)
- 20 Spot Miss Peep, a flatterer! (7)
- 22 Make a quick move for the prize? (4)
- 23 See 8 Across.
- 24 A sleepy heir, (12)

DOWN

2. " — — — —, smert, drede, fury, and ek siknesse" (4)
- 3 Thopas convulsed again? (6,3)
- 4 Win emu? It's probably moulting! (2,4)
- 5 Glee mixed and fowl! (4)
- 6 A wet Christmas? (7,5)
- 7 "How greet a lord is he!" (3,3,2,4)
- 8 "A" was the first one in Chaucer's day (6)
- 12 Young Boethius was one of them. (9)
- 14 Assorted needles 'e lost under Alison's apron! (6)
- 16 Strange sheep alliterates. (3,3)
- 19 Such thoughts are caused by "defaute of slep" (4)
- 21 Cloak to make you stare? (4)



CONUFPQFACF

by
Scott Lawrence

The sun burns high overhead, the noonday silence is broken only by the regular grating chant of cicadas. Anna leaves her desk and walks to the windows. She places her pencil into the sharpener.

(Again)

Walking just along the periphery of the children's playground below — Snell. He sits down upon his bench and brushes something from his chest. Anna cannot make out what it is. She squints at him through eyes faded a chalky blue. His movements are quick and abrupt *(a rooster, a rooster preening his bib)*.

She twists the handle of the sharpener. At her back the students are poised, anticipating the noon bell.

Snell still wears the new black overcoat, the only decent piece of clothing she has ever seen on his thin body. Below the hem of his coat, only the bottoms of his shrunken beige pants are visible *(there is something)*.

She has watched his body growing smaller with each passing day. Three weeks before the black coat had fit him perfectly, but now he could easily force an extra set of arms into the shoulders and sleeves.

She had been unable to understand why he appeared to be shrivelling away inside of his garment; but today she sees. There is a V shaped patch of whitebound within his lapels — he is bare chested beneath the coat. He must have removed layer upon layer of shirts and sweaters from under it as the Spring steadily progressed *(still he keeps it on why, why can't he get rid of the coat, why is he acting as if he fully expects to have to wear it somewhere, somewhere that he'll never go, not in clothes like that, he is always and only in the park, watching. . watching)*.

Anna turns around suddenly and the students are gone. When she turns back to the window they are filling the corner of the playground below. Her legs numb as she feels the park shuddering under their ceaseless assault.

A few of the children sit quietly on the grass, eating from buckets and bags; others grope along the exercise bars, their pink mouths pulled wide open, baring glistening white teeth.

There are boys chasing girls and girls chasing boys. A group runs up to the duck pond and suspends one of their number over the protective wire mesh fence. The victim hangs only for an instant — as he struggles, his friends shrug helplessly at one another and drop him face first into the thick green water.

Another of her students, Tim Foisy, controls the see-saw and dangles a girl on the seat opposite him in the air. The louder she yells, the harder he bounces his side of the balance onto the ground. Each time his end hits the dirt she is flicked a few inches closer to the sky. His friends sit on the grass beneath her, hooting louder with each of the girl's screams.

Anna turns from the window *(stupid stupid little runts)*.

She sits at her desk and eats.

* * * *

Her attention is drawn back to Snell. He shifts his weight on the bench and pulls out a pint box of ice cream. Legions of pigeons congregate at his feet, clucking, eyes fixed on his meal. He dips his fingers into the container.

reaches inside the pocket of Snell's coat, her coat, and she feels the dead animal lying wet and cold... and she grasps its neck, and her fingers probe the slick flesh, her nails penetrating the folds in the meal... and she pulls the animal from her pocket... still trying to scream, to warn others, to warn herself... she watches with terror her own terror... her mouth wide open, the body she dreams and the body she is both thinking (*STOP*) thinking (*I AM DYING*) thinking (*NO*) —

• When she wakes up, kicking at something.

* * * *

Anna does not hear the bell that ends the day. She looks up from her work, the last of the students straggle out of the room, meeting her gaze with mute stares. Tim Foisy remains in his chair. Looking at him now Anna cares nothing. She knows he feels the same towards her and it doesn't matter at all.

Snell is lying on the bench, his coat buttoned to the neck and neatly tucked about him (*all dressed up going nowhere why doesn't he leave why doesn't he go away*). It is the first time she has seen him lying on the bench. His face is turned towards her window.

Anna orders Foisy to stay in his desk. She leaves the room.

The corridors of the school are empty. She paces up and down, breathing deeply, focusing only on the echo of her own footsteps. Her body feels elastic. She leans against a row of lockers, shutting her eyes. From the blackness emerges the pink grinning mouths of the children.

When she returns to the classroom Foisy is staring out of the window. She feels his attention shift to her, feels his eyes upon her studying her, and she pulls her arms in tightly to her hips. Anna points to the blackboards and begins to leaf through the children's assignments. She stops for a moment and notices the perspiration on the back of Foisy's neck.

The blackboards cover two walls of the room. Foisy cleans and washes the first one thoroughly, but works more quickly on the second, missing spots that leave thin grey streaks. His face is damp.

Walking up the path towards Snell are two policemen. The birds do not move as they approach. The policemen stand with Snell a moment, touch him, and one of them walks back along the path. The other sits down at Snell's feet.

Foisy finishes washing the blackboards and stands in front of one of them waiting to be dismissed. Anna collects the felt erasers from the trough that runs beneath the boards. Without speaking, she hands them to Foisy. He cradles them in his arm and leaves the room.

When he gets outside Foisy looks up to the classroom window to see if she is watching. A few children play on the swings, but he does not speak to them. There are seven erasers, and he begins clapping them together in pairs.

The other policeman returns to Snell carrying a large green bag. Shadows of late afternoon envelop them, but sharpen the outlines of their bodies. The landscape stands out in relief.

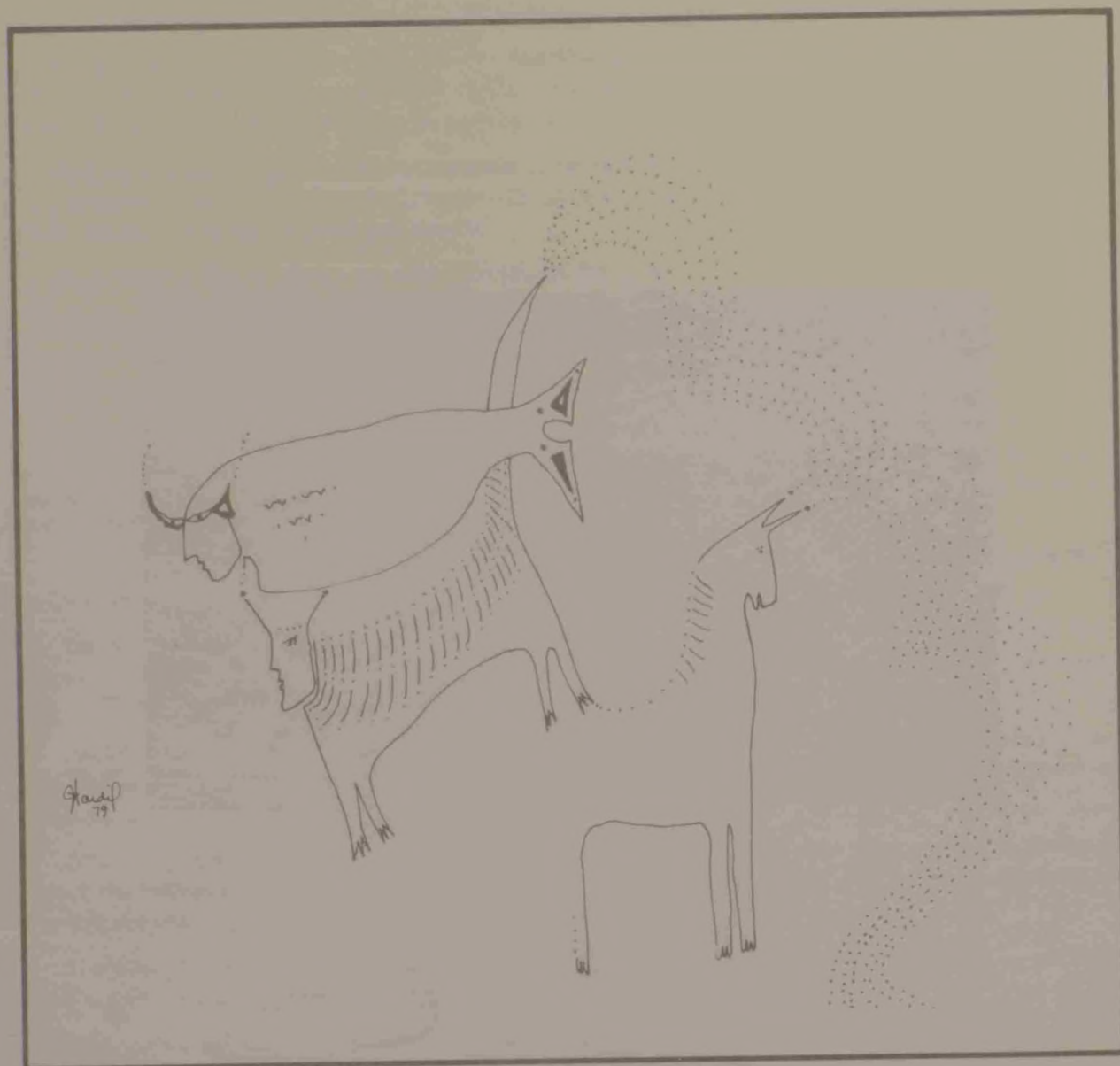
Foisy cleans the last eraser by slapping it against his free hand. The chalk dust clouds about his head. His motion slows as he looks towards Snell and the policemen.

The policemen surround Snell. His head slips from the bench and his mouth snaps open. Anna raises her hand to her mouth and sucks in her breath (*it is happening*).

Foisy turns and looks up to her. His eyes are black holes, his jaw hangs slackly. Anna tries to shout to him. He stares at her, arms at his side, frozen. She cannot make a sound.

His face is white with chalk.





IcIn

by
J. Blevins

I

Again, so many colours have sunk beneath the sky —
Her hair forms a wreath of crushed violets
Jagged under the suburban light

The alchemist of dawn leads a chorus of mist
From temples of cinder and onyx.
Walls draw back and melt into reeds. Alongside the road
Cold fields tremble and collapse.

——— this age knows only madness and stone

A whisper of chaos and
The black asylum which is winter.

— The dark ages are finally at rest
in a chamber of the Louvre —

By the hearth there is a battle
Of admirals

And the mind of a child in the waxen flames
Someone placing flowers on the dead musicians
Enters the royal court of silence —
After the plague only the shore remains

Where condemned men feed on the
Marrow of your name,

II

Overhead, kites like sails of stained glass
Echo the lantern she
Fashioned from snow of constellations.
Snow slides still
Through exhausted skies

Where her eyes ignite the silence of the long polar night,
Gazing past this season of slow poison.
And the bare invocation of dead branch,
To druid pillars ablaze in the fall,
Old fountains of absinthe and lakes of jade.
Weeping anthems for sunsets
The thick colour of blood.

III

At the banquet all were too familiar to be seen
 Night formed an altar —
 Away from the noise of cutlery: and crowds
 Posed for a still life
 Portrait. In the hall, a dry
 Gloom mounts shuttered blinds
 As it arches against the evening
 Tonight in
 Even the faintest music,
 The dim glint of tearing flesh
 Flares above the wreckage
 Angled lamplight spilling over the porch
 Sprays bramble mounds, and
 Drains below horizons, peaked
 By rows of leaning pines: From darkness
 Stream prismatic
 Pyres.

IV

All morning,
 her breath was the scent of delicate
 luxury
 from throbbing palaces of decay.
 Yet
 the wake of her absence calls tropical gales
 and waves of blank swans
 against porcelain shoals.

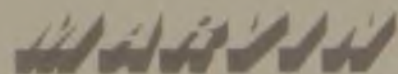
V

Again I awaken
 To the liquid dreams and ivory
 Thorns of a day's debris.
 Above the city, silken
 Strands of a webbed haze
 Burst into seeds of the sun's floral lust.
 Still,
 Ours is a kingdom of ending days,
 Of coiling streets,
 And cellars.
 In the end, there is only the search
 For a scorched
 Image, in the powdered shade reaching
 Limply across boarded doorways and empty lanes.
 — An image to
 Blot the malignant tremors of noon.

Of Indelible Water-barrels

by
 Ralph Gustafson

One special water-barrel
 Is what I was born to, hardwood slats
 And iron hoops. It stood outside
 The carriage shed, near the coop for turkeys
 Daintily walking mesh above
 The damp ground and where the chicken
 Flew up with a squawk into the boy's
 Face — that water-barrel. Cut off
 From this, from first handlings, the heritage
 Of what's our own, is fatal. Sixty
 Years ago there in Quebec
 Is my bequest. Wherever I go
 Great elms by the front verandah
 Reach all summer in the heat.
 Their foliage shaded the driveway;
 Then in autumn fell. Remembrance
 Of that auburn is the air
 I breathe. The hills were serenity
 Touched with March, sap in maples
 Filled pails. Accidents of weather,
 Grief and grace make the mind.
 I still follow the casket of my grandmother
 In immense tears down the aisle
 And distance of the church. She pinned
 Doilies on the chair-arms
 To save the velvet. Consideration
 Of wide relevance. Born to them,
 That house, the Magog's chasm of waters,
 Are the jewelled Ca' Foscari on the Grand
 Canal. Othello's staircase is
 A swept-up love, of course, whether
 You are born to it or in Lime Ridge.
 Art's a promiscuous birthright.
 And native to igloo, velvet parlour,
 Still you can judge the three-thousand-
 Year-old Tiryns a heap of rocks.
 That's the advantage of being yourself.
 Unless, that is, you're Mycenaean;
 Then, you don't know that Magog
 Growing-up but Mediterranean
 Clarity which you'll never lose.
 Having neither or half or nothing,
 Discountenancing hooped barrels and parlours,
 Isles and dusty olives or the elsewhere
 Tug of what you knew, is fatal.



by
Richard McCallum

marvin puts his head
through the wall
every second day
and the attendant complains
because she has to stop spraying
lysol into the toilet bowl
because

all
his
fucking
retarded
fucking

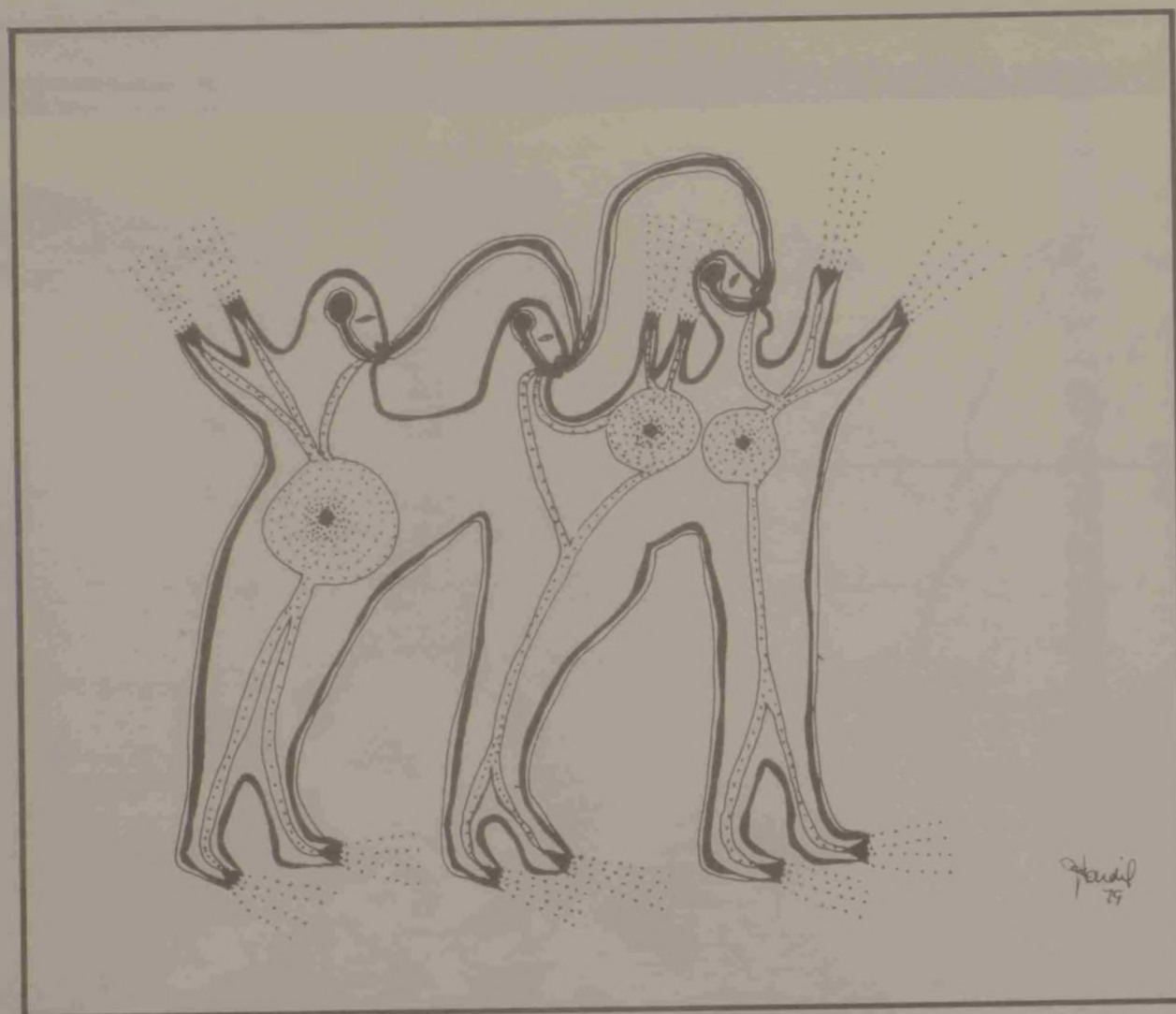
blood
is
dripping
on
the
floor

but marvin doesn't give a damn
anyway, he's too busy beating
the shit out of allan.

when
is
hee
haw
on?

("we have to get a helmet for marvin")
("O.K.")





Fiction

by
T.C. Fodor

Let us pretend that you're sprawled comfortably in your favourite chair (your posture something out of a chiropractor's nightmares) and you're nibbling at the obscure text you've picked up at the book-store in the shopping centre some weeks ago (quite by chance you liked the sound of the author's name, the fairly large, clean type, the colour of the spine) Because you're quite tired — you worked hard at comparing long columns of numbers all day under the glaring fluorescents in your office (you think of having them changed, and for a moment you seriously consider the extravagant dream of having a skylight installed) and now the whiteness between the lines (horizontal columns that form the after-image of a grid on your retina) causes your eyes to run the words together on the page, but you don't close the book, you don't toss it disinterestedly on the laundry hamper or on the clock-radio whose dial numbers always creak at precisely twenty-three minutes past the hour, because your eyes are leading you on down the page, now pausing at some significant word (significant!) now (unfocussed) finding some intensely personal information in the character's mind which the author had (in a manner of speaking) deduced about you in comparing the secrets of his imaginary selves, but you go on because the rambling, so attuned to the natural buoyancy of your own mind, somehow makes you forget your work, the time, your posture

The words take you into a world that is at once familiar and yet somehow not right. You discover that this world is perfect in every detail, from the loose thread at the toe of your socks to the defective, infuriating traffic light around the corner from your house. They are all there, the kids from the other end of the block shouting insults at each other, the delicious smells from your neighbour's kitchen, the metallic TV voice (drifting in from the other room) of the girl reporter interviewing the man (you've seen him before: he wears a soiled green sweater under the oversize tweed coat and one tip of his rumpled shirtcollar is hopelessly caught inside the crew-neck, the other is waving about under his five o'clock shadow like a distant flag; he looks defiantly into the camera, eyes bulging, and leans closer, his distorted face now all out of proportion as it presses against the other side of the glass in the set) screaming that he refuses to put his garbage into green plastic bags on some vague philosophical pretext you either scoff at or don't understand. But the words always draw you on; you want to forget all this, all you want is to relax, weightless, and you follow the morsels on and on until you see, there, on the page, the sudden, unexpected line, dangling before you.

What is it?

You narrow your eyes, wrinkle your brow, and then you bite. And there, before your eye is a spectacle that you may once have dreamt (and forgotten) long ago. You may even remember the vision and the accompanying compulsion to keep it, but you remind yourself that you never could find the time or the inspiration (behind those steel and glass walls, between those columns of figures, the architecture of your age), to set it down, to carress its fine silt between the fingers, to bounce the rays of the sun off its coloured crystals at different angles, to chase its effervescence for the pure joy of the chase. But you know it. It is your own dream.

You recognize it with the same ambivalent mixture of anticipated dread and eagerness you feel when at a corner table in your favourite Chinese restaurant you discover a noisy group in whose midst is a long-forgotten classmate who was once as much a part of your life as all that surreptitious smoking in the boys' bathroom.

You light a cigarette now, your eyes still wide, aware of the drumming pulse in your jugulars (like a door opening and closing and opening and closing) and the cigarette smoke drifts upward, serpentine, silently malevolent.

you can't quite remember his name, and you know that if you stop to chat (remember what's-his-name? what have you been doing all these years? who was the guy who set a flaming bag of dog-shit on the teacher's stairs?) someone — perhaps you — will eventually remark that yes, it is a small world, and you will not know if this is a curse or a blessing.

You recognize the scene: everything settles into stillness, even the eddies of your extraneous thoughts are easily borne along until you suddenly find, between two harmless phrases, a vortex that suddenly sucks you in and makes you dizzy because you can't look at the words and at yourself at the same time, and so the vortex thrusts you out on the other side. You see that you can't go back through it, and you see that nothing seems different, out of place: the long, tree-lined boulevards, the swaying, high office buildings, the murky, swirling sky, the shadows flitting beneath the streetlights. But something has changed, shifted, slowly; the air feels liquid now. The stars. You see them move, now to the east, now to the west, as though they were lights on some enormous, black pendulum. Its movement is light (and lightness) and it draws you to itself. Should the book fall from your lap (you muse), you might float off toward those stars, belly up, just as you're sprawled on your chair. But you are not so sure that this idea pleases you.

You are disturbed, like the currents above you, the colours rushing to your eyes. You try to quit, to move off the distracting page, but the successive words, like knots on a string, are now irreversibly swallowed, forever a part of you. In trying to break away, you think of your childhood, of your first day at school perhaps, when your sister pretended she didn't know you, your fifth grade geography book (you wrote your name — in pen — on the maps), the secret code you devised with your friend (on a carefully torn piece of yellow foolscap, tucked behind the radiator by your cot), the aquarium you got for your thirteenth birthday, the goldfish floating upside down (quite still, its golden spine a dark memory there in the translucent flesh as you desperately waved a flashlight in its cold, veiled eyes) in time.

But it doesn't help. The knots slip past you, and before you can stop yourself, you've finished, gulped down the words sprinkled in front of you. You don't even notice that your mouth is open, that for a tiny moment you believed that you are a fish in a huge aquarium, and that with just a small effort you could have drifted up through the element you breathe (and take for granted) freely touch those points where the stars (are they stars?) break the surface.

You smile knowingly. You tell yourself that you've been pleasantly deceived; you've allowed yourself this luxury (to be deceived) only because you know the real facts. You stare out your window, preparing to close the book, and still (despite your poor posture) you are unaware of the weight of your body. But then, you hear someone calling your name, and you know it's time to leave the house, to go to your favourite Chinese restaurant, where

You stop yourself. This is foolish daydreaming, you say, and toss the book onto the laundry hamper.

And then you swim out of the room.

* * * *



"Seven Maidens on a Beach"

A Dime as Astonishment

by
Ralph Gustafson

The imagination done with it, this window
Is the balustrade at Delphi.
The valley of olives to Corinth dusty
Green below. The world is ours.
Two trees and a bird on a wire
Vanish if I move to my eastward
Window where the lake is golden.
Sunshatter or shade, Pythia
As ever still chews betel nuts,
Sits on her tripod and prophecies.
Trees are trees and block the view
No matter what. Facts stand.
Invest love — they're what we are.
Brahms or Webern is a music
Either way, the meaning what
We say we are. Coming on sunstruck
Snow, we walk in windowed Chartres.
Water falling is its farther
Stillness. A boy at Orchard Beach,
I spent a solitary dime once
To look through lens, the telescope aimed
At Saturn's inexhaustible rings.

Centennial for Einstein

by
Ralph Gustafson

Uncertainty took over. The quantum theory
Takes possession. Only statistical means
Determines where the iridescent atom
Sets momentum down, exactly lands,
Everything's at tangents. "Now I will
A little tink," said Einstein. Einstein thought.
Probability implies its own consent.
The crystal's coruscations clock the stars.
The mountain streams have amity. Beethoven writes.
"God does not play dice," Einstein said.
God nods His beard, mumbles, "The orderly
Harmony of all that exists," and goes to bed.

The World Something Worth

by
Ralph Gustafson

Heavenly rip-off! Cataclysms
Of sound shot through with light
Sucked in, density so great,
Nothing is.
Sometimes
The far scent of a downward wind
Overlops graveyards, fingers
Build structures of outlasting music.

THE CONSULTATION

by
Maria Gould

In her gymsuit, the child's armpits were exposed. Was she aware that hair was growing there?

They had skipped fifty times forward, and fifty times backward, and the child had looked at her as if she were about to complain again, but had changed her mind and begun to skip. Each turn of the rope was as violent as a whiplash, and she had flung her legs over it one by one, raising them high in the air with a goose-stepping motion, and flopping them down on the ground.

Every time the child had lifted her arms, a nest of fine, black hair could be seen beneath them. Although she was trying to watch other children, her eyes could not help travelling to the corner of the room, and focussing on the armpits of the child as she skipped.

That night, she took her time preparing herself for bed. She plucked her eyebrows, and gave herself a facial masque. She removed the polish from her nails, trimmed them, and prepared them for a new coat.

Before she took the pins from her hair, and picked up the brush, she rearranged all the bottles on the top of her dresser.

Then she glanced at the clock. 12:30. She turned off the light, took off her dressing gown, and got into bed.

And it was exactly as she expected. As soon as she lay down, it returned to her mind's eye.

The long corridor in front of the principal's office shook slightly with each of her determined steps.

She freed her body of the stupor that had gathered, and settled herself in the bed again.

But it returned: the hall, with the polished stone floor, trembling inside her head as her heels struck it, and the honey-coloured tiles becoming clearer and clearer, until she could see minute details twenty feet in front of her. But she never got any nearer to the sign which jutted out from the wall.

Indeed, the hand was soon there. The grip on her upper arm made her start and turn around. The face was struck by flat light, the eyes magnified by thick glasses. And that idiot's mouth, the lolling tongue, the lips, chapped, thick, and always slightly parted over the jutting teeth.

"Go, go back to the classroom."

"Don't tell on me."

"What do you mean? Go back."

"I won't do it again, O.K?"

"You haven't done anything wrong. Go back to the class."

"I'm sorry, O.K?"

"Let me go. I told you you haven't done anything."

She looked down at the weak, grubby hand with the bitten nails, and began to walk away, but her feet were rooted there. She jerked her head back to look at her sleeve, where the hand, too, had taken root. She felt the slight tickling as it penetrated her skin. Deeper, deeper, and it was now part of the bone.



On June 16, 1976, several thousand black high school children in Johannesburg, South Africa, protested against the injustices of the notorious Apartheid system of South Africa. Their peaceful demonstration was, however, soon turned into a massacre when hundreds of white policemen and soldiers indiscriminately mowed them down. In one week alone over 1,000 children and women were killed. The poems below represent my feelings about that tragic happening.

POEMS FOR THE SOWETO MARTYR

by
Cecil Abrahams

I saw that picture
in a newspaper 12,000 miles away
my people's blood
flowing again at
the hands of hate

A courageous boy
he was
barely eight years old
defying the inevitable terrifying
bullets of death

He was first to go
though last to begin
His only crime was
to protest the crime of hate

Where does one
so far removed from
the heinous scene of crime
hide or defy or identify
How does one tell
one's worldly neighbour
who has never felt
the heavy brutal hand
of the terror
the pain
the frustration
that lurks deep
down in the revolutionary heart?



"Three-Step"

POEMS FOR THE SOWETO MARTYR

You mirror our pain and purpose
The blood you shed
Is the flow of life.
We must bleed
Because there is no liberation
Without blood.
If they call us lunatics
Let them
If they say we
Are false prophets
Let them
If they say
Dimbaza, Soweto, Langa never happened
Let them
Words will not kill us
Their riot sticks
Fascist guns
Their police dogs
Their cruel prisons
Will not kill us.
Our actions will be the liberating force
The blood we now shed
Molded by our pain and purpose
Will overcome hate
And create freedom for our dear land

SOWETO 1976

Scenes of carnage
terror blood
haunt my exiled nightmare
hundreds of black
brown tender bodies
ugly gaping wounds
torrents of blood
mingling with the
red-brown sand

The headlines say
"one thousand killed,
many injured"
what happened to
the hopeful dream
of the morning
or the evening
when hope was counted
on dry fingers?

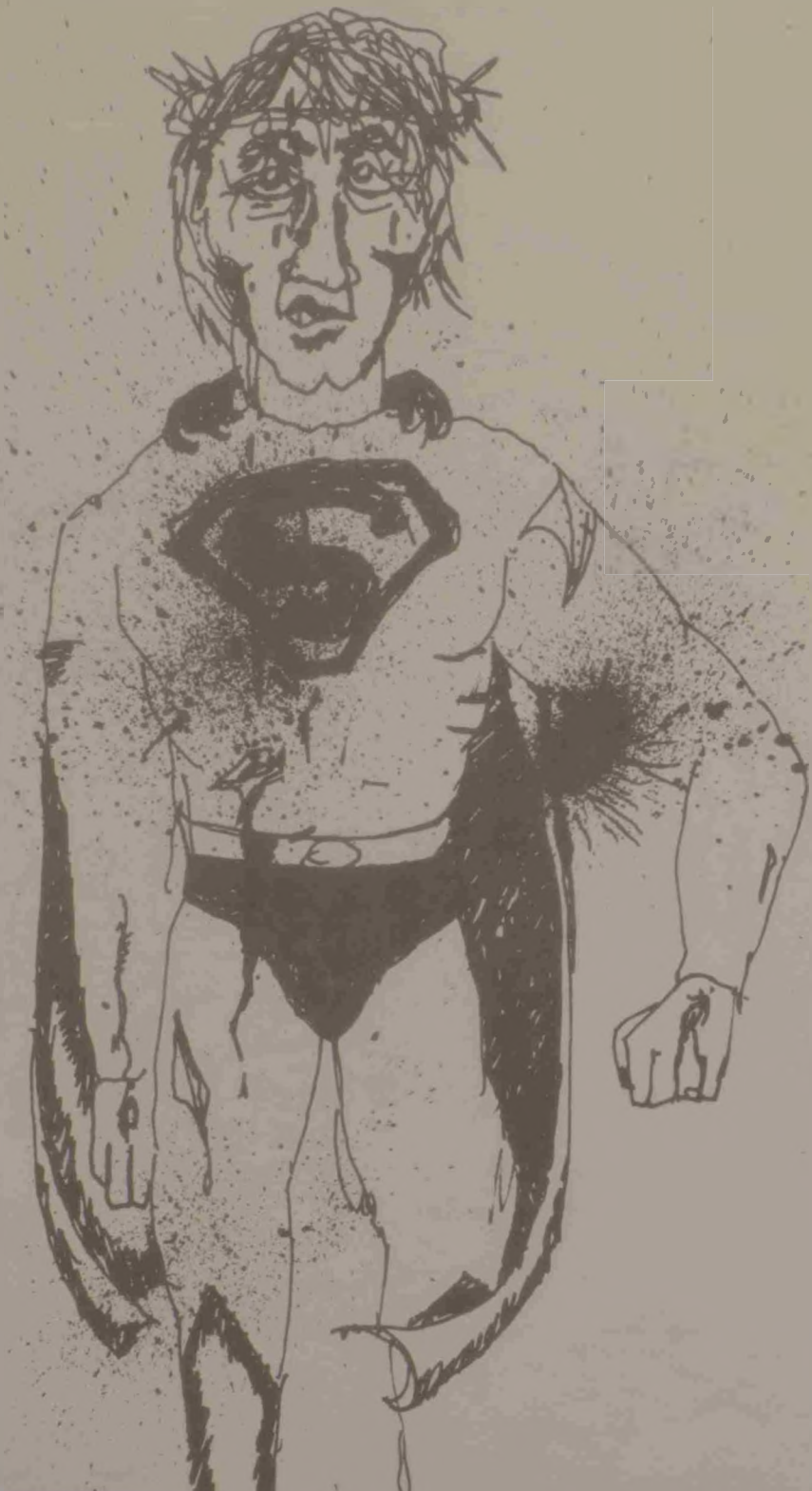
They came before
the dawn of the morning
black and brown masks
in the night
Faces they were
invisible in the morning dark
whispering defiantly in
the wintry dark

Loud voices locked in deliberation
Voices becoming more
powerful more menacing
with home-brewed anger
that has been under timeless fermentation
in a land oblivious
of the hatred
and hopelessness which abound

They say they
wanted only to
show discontent
not to be martyrs
But the choice was not
theirs to make
The noise and
rattle of the humanless gun
met screams in the dark
bouncing like rubber balls...
Hot molten lead pins
flaming with fire
to puncture the
black and brown skins
the bullets hit
the bull's eye
the bull is black-brown
the bull is enraged
the bull bellows in a
big black-brown voice

Marc Courvois and the Football Men

by
Ian Stephens



He lay on the uneven mattress watching the November sky turn blue silhouetting an open tin of canned meat, a plastic milk container and a bundle of bread on the window-sill. He was wrapped in blankets he had borrowed and lay for several minutes, not sleeping, just thinking, like a tick on the edge of a reed waiting for a certain warm body. He still felt the sharp pain behind his bruised eyes and on the ends of his fingers where blood had coagulated around the nails he didn't remember gnawing and tearing hours ago.

He had a goal this thursday night, a point in time and space to identify himself with, a point of destiny when the rehearsals would turn into performance on the university campus across the river, a new drama in rehearsal and he had cast himself a major role. He would *be* this play with his name safely printed on the program (probably misspelt — they always misspelt Courvois) for the audience to identify and then he would be recognized, materialize into reality, unbecome the ghost. The papers would be full of him, sketching facts, not understanding much.

Below his window Marc heard the fat mutt in his chains munching his cereal and then the landlady, with the jaw of a horse who didn't give her boarder kitchen privileges, cooing and whispering words that Marc Courvois didn't understand yet words so unexpectantly soft that tears almost wet his eyes. Marc was sure she had a heart somewhere, almost certain that the horse-jawed woman would regret every hard glance and word she wrung from her tight little brain to spit at him. Yet even after he was taken away, even if she spat in disgust, it didn't make any difference; in ten years these types would all be in Ontario.

His bruised eyes were killing him, currents of pain running up and down his veins behind his swollen face making his brain throb; the headaches wouldn't go away but he must get a good grip on himself for rehearsal. He prepared a sandwich and gulped a slug of milk. His fingers over his eyelids, with his right hand he switched on the light for only a second to let the woman know he was there, the light spilling into the garden illuminating the trunk of a worn maple. But he turned it off quickly — he didn't want to see the black bruises in the reflection on the window. The woman was supposed to think he was asleep and certainly not spreading crumbs or mischief. She had threatened eviction before, she thought she owned him. One day she'd take all his blankets and then we'd know who's boss she said. She was a woman of threats but soon it wouldn't matter. Marc listened to the dog and waited for her to get back to her kitchen.

Marc pulled on his jeans. Over his smelly t-shirt he put on three collarless dress shirts of his father's. He tied his father's shoes and put a beret over his unbrushed hair. A last touch — he flung a black scarf around his neck. Although it was night he gingerly put on sunglasses, any light causing severe pain.

Downstairs he heard the landlady speaking to her man in the living-room. It was 5:59. Marc waited for the blue box to be turned on. When it was, their talking continued louder than before over the nightly news. God, Marc was sick of their leathery faces and grunts. He crept to the window and slowly opened it. He removed the screen and climbed onto the gallery roof and closed it behind him. He was only one floor above the garden and knew that the fat mutt was asleep after his supper and wouldn't bark. He knew they couldn't hear him clump into the garden as they were on the other side of the house so he leapt into the circle of shadow and waited till the roaring blood in his ears ceased and the pain diminished. He crept along the line of pine onto the dirt road and made his well-practised escape.

The bridge he had to cross was ugly, the pavement scarred, the river stench rising above the swirling spume from the pulp mill at East Angus. The St. François offered a track for the cold autumn wind but instead of feeling cold and clutching himself and hurrying along like the other students who had to cross back and forth, he undid his shirts leaving only the blue and white t-shirt above his chest. He walked slowly with his arms out from his sides, his head high and dark pupils looking through the purple bruises, the dress shirts fluttering in the wind, his father's old shoes clicking on the cement

Already white cones of ice swirled in the currents mirroring the odd grey cloud in the black sky. The sky and the river were all the same to him. Looking down and up it became all the same to Marc Courvois — the bastards had punched him in the eyes, he was angry and in pain. He leaned over the bridge and threw the pork sandwich at the ice and watched it swirl and disappear with the foam, hoping it would clot the turbines in town and send this little world into darkness

It was 6:15. Right on time, off in the distance behind the fingered branches of November, he heard the grunting platoon of men limping and jogging along from town. It was the university football squad coming back from practice in the civic park under the lights. Marc ran across the bridge, jumped over a low guard-rail and crouched in the same ditch that he found every night. It was in a circle of shadow and they couldn't see him there. He waited till they passed by, watching intently the exaggerated forms with their long shadows, the men yukking and slapping each other on the ass. The good old boys passed over the old field towards the athletic complex. These were the heroes of the university, they were the men worthwhile.

After they passed Marc crossed their path and spat at their footsteps in the mud. Last week during an impulsive foray to the university pub, where he had never been before, he had been beaten up because he wore the Canadian flag as a cloak, really just a smokey joke but several football men had taken offence and punched Marc in the face and left him bleeding on the dance-floor. Ah yes, these were the guardians of the Canadian nation, the heroes, and he spat again, alone on the old field, the actor in blue and white, illuminated by the cafeteria lights, waiting to have his name misspelt.

Marc was hungry but that was alright; hunger made him more alive. He had a knife in his pocket; he had a plan and one day the last straggler from practice would pay for what they had done. One day they'd know who he was then maybe they'd spell his name right. The papers would be full of Marc Courvois.



at Least he Perceives himself

by
Ralph Gustafson

There's no hope for it. We are done for,
The least jag of a bitten hangnail,
The slow-curving rise of a parabola
Of thought. He's Adam having had Eve,
All desire knocked from him,
Looking around, the round apples
Hanging on the branch like globes of happy
Permanence, the leopard, chin on paws,
Asleep. And he's no more.

Happy
Birds, without a prick of perception.

He shifts sitting bare-assed on the sod
Adjusting his balls to comfort. Alas.

But the bee sucks. He watches the tendril.
Above him falls syrupy melody.
He thinks a thought. Perception is perceived.
He sees himself sitting there, hearing birds



"Knight with Daggers"

IN BARRY'S BAR

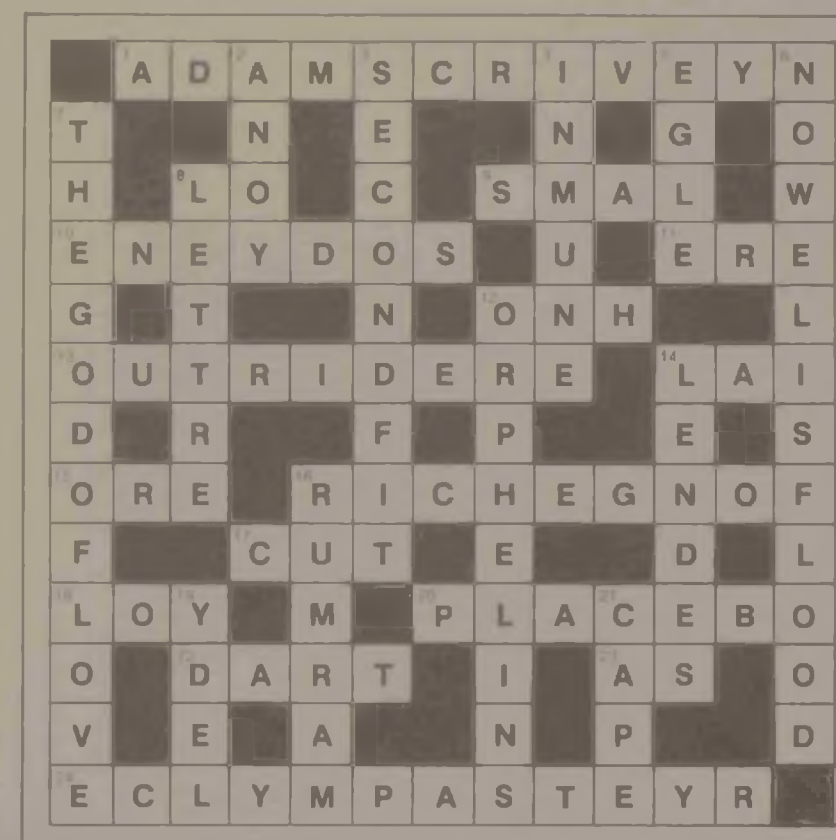
by
Ian Stephens

In Barry's Bar
there might be someone
kneeling in front of you
Drinking
you
down
tonight
you might want
someone
tonight
because you are
sacred
tonight
because you are
up
tonight
keep it
up
a little trapped
tonight
but alright
kneeling in front of you
like a
saint
We can never die





"On the Boardwalk at Dufferin Street"





"On King Street"

NOT TO BE TAKEN AWAY





COVER DESIGN BY JOHANNE TARDIF SMITH