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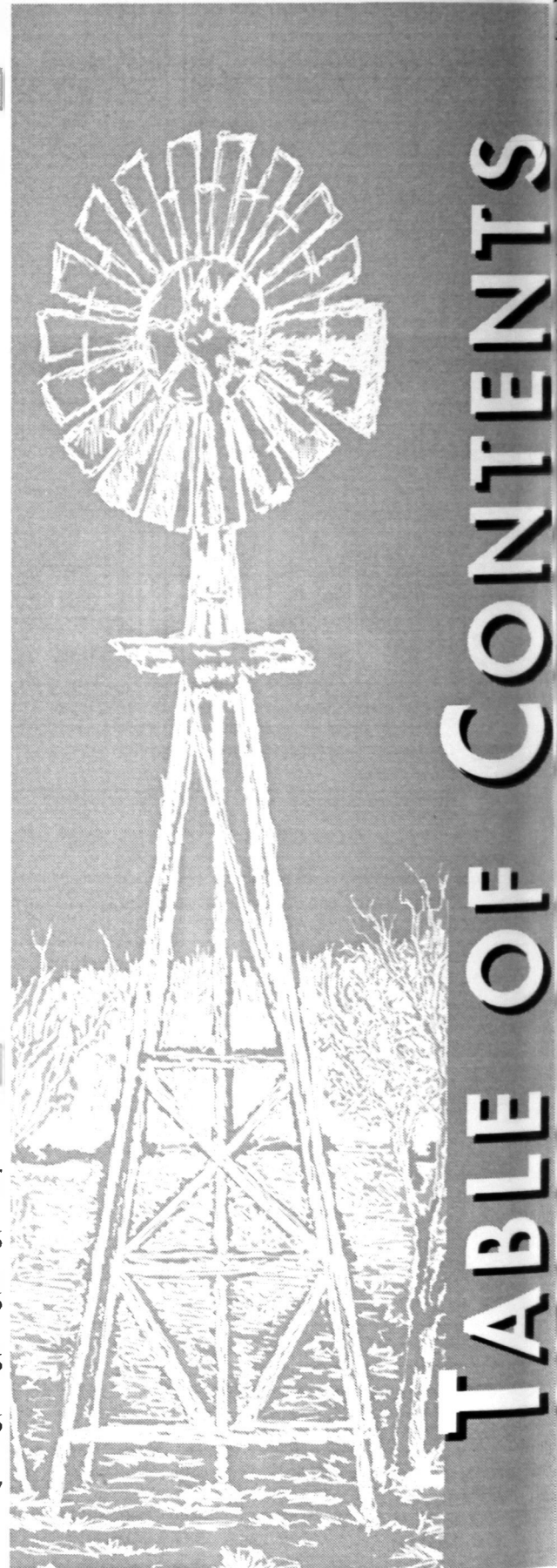
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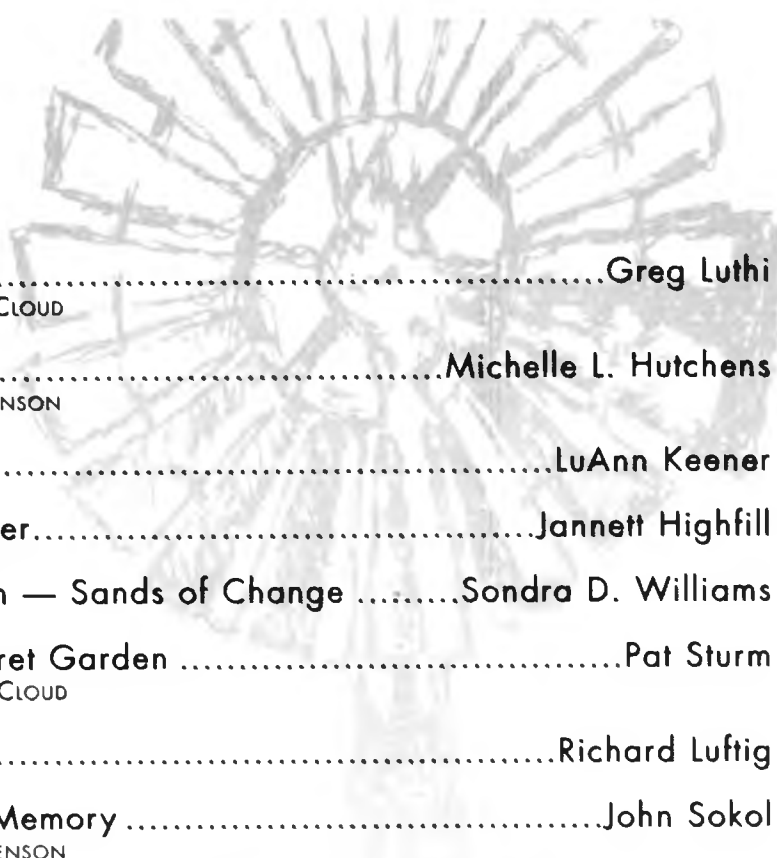
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ILLUSTRATION BY RODNEY CLOUD

THE ECSTASY

by Greg Luthi

I didn't know it then,
only now:
the pinch of twine
against my fingers
was sweet like the water
we drank between loads,
the weight of the hay
a gift to make my muscles hum,
bales bound up the chute
to where I hooked and stacked them
on the hayrack in a swirl of dust.

The windrows roamed across the terraces,
struck out for fields of ripening wheat
and returned content,
knowing their limits but feeling free,
never stopping within their field of space.
It seemed those windrows ran forever
and we followed them,
my grandfather and I,
transforming them
as we ourselves turned pure in the sun.
I thought they'd never end,
like being a boy would never end,
but go on through sun and field and sky,
dry breeze and prairie chaff,
the chill of sweat and ache of growing.
And I thought my grandfather would live forever,
straw hat and overalls on a tractor,
dreaming baseball as he steered us
through the stubbled fields
until we met the sky.

ROUND TRIP

Michelle L. Hutchens

It seemed to Daniel that he had been waiting as long as he could remember for this day to come. For the past three summers he had tried to convince his father to let him go earlier, but Frank had been adamant that he wait at least until he was sixteen.

Daniel was dressing in the muted light from the clothes closet when Frank walked into the bedroom to wake him. Despite his father's insistence that he get a good night's sleep, he had slept fitfully, excited and nervous about the week ahead. He had been awake for a couple of hours before he finally dared to get up and dress. It was still dark out; a light, cool breeze stirred the curtains.

Frank walked over to Chester's bed. Chester was curled into the fetal position, his pillow clutched to his chest. Frank gently pulled Chester's thumb from his mouth, retrieved the sheet from the tangle of bedclothes at the foot of the bed, and covered his legs. Frank nodded at Daniel, tapped the watch on his wrist, and went downstairs.

Daniel smelled the bacon and coffee before he stepped into the kitchen. He set his bundle of clothes, which were wrapped in plain brown paper—Maude wouldn't let them use the suitcase, it would get too dirty—next to his father's bundle and poured himself a cup of coffee.

They ate in silence. After they finished, Daniel stacked their dishes and the empty apple butter jar in the sink. Frank poured the remaining coffee into a thermos.

Daniel picked up their two bundles of clothes and the hefty grocery sack that held their lunch. "Ready?"

"Go on out to the truck while I do a double-check,"

Frank said. He gave Daniel the thermos and went upstairs.

Daniel went out and set their clothes in the bed of the pickup. Their two dogs clambered out from under the porch when the screen door slammed. The dogs sniffed at the lunch sack; Daniel pushed them away with his knee. He rolled the windows down, placed the thermos in the cab, and settled into the passenger seat. He knew Frank was making the rounds through the bedrooms, checking on each of his sleeping children and his wife so he could kiss them good bye. Sometimes Daniel pretended he was asleep when his father crept into their room to give him good-byes; it embarrassed him that Frank would still kiss him even though he was a grown man, practically.

Frank stepped out onto the front porch. The dogs rubbed their heads under Frank's hands, their tails whipping madly. He squatted down to stroke their large heads; they licked his face and knocked off his hat, quietly yelping with pleasure at his touch. Maude liked the dogs to be in the house with her whenever Frank was gone; they made her feel safer.

The sun was just coming up when they started out. They had about an hour's drive and they didn't talk on the way, except when Frank asked Daniel to pour him some coffee. The truck's speed forced a cool breeze through the cab and filled their noses with the scent of summer wheat and manure.

By the time they reached the field, the sun had risen high enough to sting Daniel's eyes. Frank glanced at his watch. "We'll go on ahead," Frank said. "I like to get there a bit early, and knowing my crew, they'll not show

up 'til just a couple minutes before the shift change." They drove along a rut to the well site; Daniel sloshed coffee onto the stained seat when they rolled to a stop. Several men were standing around the rig. One man was seated, leaning back on his elbows, smoking a cigarette. An untanned strip across his forehead showed where his hat had been.

"What's this, Harwood? Break time?" Frank grinned and stepped down from the truck. One of the men wiped his greasy hand on the leg of his grimy dungarees and held it out to Frank.

"We just wore down another bit."

Daniel pulled his hat down further over his eyes and stepped down from the truck.

Frank walked to the derrick. "Still no oil, huh?"

Harwood picked up a rock fragment, bit it, then handed it to Frank, who did the same. Frank shook his head. "Well, my boys'll be here any minute. We'll make the trip. You all go on; you look beat."

Harwood slapped Frank on the shoulder. "You're a prince, Cooper." He turned to Daniel. "Who's this? Breakin in a new one?"

Frank put his arm around Daniel's shoulders. "This here's my oldest, Daniel."

Daniel held out his hand. "Nice to meet you, sir."

Harwood laughed and shook Daniel's hand. "Only 'sir' out here is the owner of the company, and he don't come out here too much; he might get his hands dirty." He turned to Frank. "No wonder you're so willin to make the trip yourself. You got to show the boy how it's done!"

Another pickup rolled to a stop at the rig. Two men climbed down from the cab and another two jumped out of the bed.

Harwood turned to his crew. "And another end to another shift. Let's go, boys." His men wearily followed

Harwood to the pickup; the ones riding in the bed lay down. "Have fun," Harwood called from the cab of the truck. "Give young Cooper there an education!"

Frank's crew stood with their hands in their pockets. Frank waved his arm in Daniel's direction. "This here's my oldest boy, Daniel."

The men nodded at Daniel and muttered hello. Daniel returned the nod. Eight eyes squinting against the already bright sun stared at Daniel. His arms felt very long and his face reddened. He started to stuff his hands into his front pockets, but that felt wrong, so he crossed his arms, which felt worse. Finally, he looped his thumbs into his belt loops and returned the gazes from the red-tanned faces.

"He's just here to see how things get done. He thinks he wants to work out in the fields in the summers, and I want him to see what he'd be gettin into." Frank shot Daniel a warning look. "If he gets in anybody's way, you let me know. Got it?"

Daniel and the oil crew nodded.

"Good. Alright, everybody. It's time to make a trip."

The men groaned and moved toward the rig. Daniel tapped one of the men on the arm. "What's a trip?"

"Just stay out of the way and watch," he said.

Frank took his place on the rig deck and reviewed the instruments on his control panel. One of the rough-necks helped the derrick man hook a cable onto his wide leather belt. They both checked the connection; then the derrick man tugged on worn leather gloves and began to climb up the derrick. Frank shoved two of his fingers in his mouth and whistled. "Hold it, Tyler. Let me double-check your geronimo line."

"Sure, sure." Tyler jumped down. "I checked it, though, and so did Martin."

Frank jerked the cable. He squinted up at the clear,

bright blue sky. "I know. But if that wind kicks up I don't want to take no chances. I ain't lost a derrick man yet. Now go on." Frank returned to his instruments. Tyler made his long climb up to his perch near the top of the derrick. "Okay," Tyler yelled, "here comes the kelly!"

Two of the roughnecks tugged on blackened, heavy leather gloves and got on the derrick floor. The derrick man and one of the roughnecks guided a long, six-sided tube with a hook and block assembly to the top of the bore hole, which the other roughneck latched to the pipe. One man reeled in the cable on the assembly while the other guided the pipe up from the bore hole. Once the pipe was pulled out three-joints high, the derrick man and the roughneck guided the pipe out of the hole and rested it on the derrick floor, out of the way. Before the first thribble had been pulled, the roughnecks were spattered with grease and mud.

Frank kept a close watch on all the instruments. Every few minutes he called out the drilling fluid pressure, often instructing the third roughneck to add more water or bentonite clay to keep the pressure at a safe level.

Finally, they pulled up the drill bit. The roughneck tending the drilling mud brought over the new bit and replaced the old one. They performed the entire process in reverse to put the pipe back in.



ILLUSTRATION BY CHRIS HENSON

Once drilling resumed, the derrick man climbed down, removed the cable from his belt, and sat in the shade of the pickup. He pulled a pack of unfiltered

Camels and a silver lighter out from under his shirt sleeve, cupped his hand against the breeze, and lit a cigarette. He inhaled deeply and let the smoke out slow. Two of the roughnecks squatted next to Tyler and used his lighter for their cigarettes.

"So, Danny boy, was this your first *trip*?" Tyler asked.

Daniel nodded. "But why is it called a *trip*?"

One of the roughnecks offered Daniel a cigarette, which he refused. "Cause you're pulling out the pipe. What we just did was a *round trip*; we pulled out all the pipe and then turned right around and put it all back."

The other roughneck fanned his sweaty, grimy face with his hat. "Like father, like son, Daniel? You want to go into the oil business, too?"

Daniel shrugged. "You can make a good livin at it. And Daddy said he'd teach me if I really wanted to learn."

Tyler nodded. "Your old man's about the best I've ever seen. Worked his way up from roughneck, never let nobody do him no favors, even though he's buddy-buddy with John, the owner's kid. He's read up all about drilling, and he's got common sense, too."

One of the roughnecks snickered. "He ain't got too much common sense if you ask me, still working as a driller. Hell, he could be at least a tool pusher by now, maybe even a drilling superintendent, if he wanted." He scratched at the peeling, sunburned skin on the back of his neck. "But no, he keeps workin these tours out here with us, gettin dirty and sunburnt." He made *tours* sound like *towers*.

Tyler kicked the roughneck's boot. "Just shut your face, Dannon." He looked up at Daniel. "Your old man just knows what it is he likes to do and he just keeps on doin it. Hell, ol John liked to never even got your daddy to give up being a derrick man."

Daniel squatted next to the men. "What convinced him?"

Dannon snickered again. "*Who*, you mean. It was when ol Johnny-boy's nephew Carl took a dive."

"Shut up," the other roughneck said. "A man's dead."

"Pardon me, Father Martin." Dannon stood up and stretched. "I seem to be gettin on you all's sensitive nerves, so I'll just go give Booth a break." He jerked his hat onto his head and sauntered back to the derrick.

"Carl was John's nephew, his oldest sister's boy," Martin said. "His sister's a lot older than him, and Carl was just a couple years younger than he was. They was more like brothers than uncle and nephew."

"Carl was a lot like your dad; even though his family owned the company, he wanted to learn it from the ground up. And a lot of the crews made it extra hard for him to learn, too, cause he was in the family, but he had guts. He didn't complain to nobody and just worked his ass off."

"So what happened to him?" Daniel chewed on a blade of grass.

Tyler stared out to the horizon. "He was a derrick man, like me. He shouldn't a been a derrick man; he was just learnin, really, he hadn't been on the job long enough to be able to handle it. It was May, and thunderstorms were just blowin up out from nowhere."

"It was a really big rig; they were trippin out line in fourbles instead of thribbles. A thunderstorm started moving in, but the driller, who was some jackass tryin to buck his way into management, wanted to get the job done before the storm came in."

Tyler leaned his head against the pickup. "The wind all of a sudden picked up and caught Carl off guard. He fell."

Daniel tugged at the grass. "But didn't that cable

save him? I mean, isn't that what it's for?"

"Yeah, that's what it's for," Tyler said. "But it wasn't secured. Carl had a faulty hook and he hadn't been able to tell when he checked it, and cause everybody in the crew gave him such a hard time, he didn't trust nobody else to check his geronimo line, either."

"He didn't die right away," Martin said. "He was all crumpled and couldn't move his arms or legs or even talk, but he lived like that for a couple of days."

"Ol John come out to the field and beat the tar outta that driller," Tyler said. "And then he told your daddy that he didn't want anybody else to have to die like that, out of carelessness. He convinced your daddy that he needed to work as a driller, be in charge in the field."

Booth took a cigarette from Martin and settled in next to Tyler. "Talking about Carl?" He lit his cigarette with Tyler's lighter.

"How'd you know?" Martin asked.

Booth slowly exhaled. The smoke drifted in the light breeze. "Dannon was laughin when he relieved me." He stretched. "Well, did the story change your mind about going into oil?"

Daniel shrugged.

"Ah, what am I thinkin," Booth said. "Cooper's your daddy; it's in your blood. You don't have any choice."

Tyler and Martin stood up slowly and returned to the rig. Booth finished his cigarette and rubbed out the butt on the ground. "Watch and learn, Danny-boy." He walked back to the derrick and helped Martin wash down pipe and tools. Tyler and Dannon maintained the mud mixture for the drilling fluid.

They broke for lunch in shifts. Daniel watched them work the rest of the afternoon. Around three-twenty, Tyler called out, "They're comin!" and climbed down from his perch. Daniel turned and saw the dust trail in the wake of the pickup rattling to the rig site.

The other men removed their gloves and hats and Frank scribbled a few notes in a log at his control panel.

Three men stepped lazily from the bed of the pickup. A fourth man jumped down from the cab. The driver, a big-bellied man with a sunburnt face and a bushy, graying handle-bar mustache, stepped down last.

"Lookie here, boys," he said, extending a meaty hand with heavy fingers, "I told you we was the hardest workin crew in the company. This here boy hadn't even got dirty and he's been out here all day!" He crushed Daniel's fingers together.

"This here's my oldest boy, Daniel," Frank said. "Son, this is Don Foley."

"Pleasure to meet you, sir," Daniel said.

Foley laughed. "I see your daddy's taught you manners, son."

"We took a round trip this morning," Frank said. "But you'll have to change out bits again before your shift's over."

Foley nodded. "I hoped we woulda hit oil by now."

Tyler settled into the driver's seat of the pickup and honked the horn. "C'mon, let's go!" Martin took the passenger seat; Booth and Dannon climbed into the bed of the pickup. Dannon lay down in the bed, using his greasy shirt as a pillow. The tires spun when Tyler sped out.

Foley slapped Frank on the back. "Til tomorrow, Coop."

Frank nodded. Daniel followed his father to their pickup. Frank watched the derrick man make his long, careful climb to his perch. "Still want to work in oil?"

Daniel studied his father's tanned, lined, sweaty face. "Yeah, Daddy."

Frank shook his head and started the engine.

WINTER

by LuAnn Keener

Outside , dusk thickens
as it always does, always
has, the few curled leaves left
growing black, then flat,
stamped against the sky.
I squint to pull the smallest twigs
into focus, strain as if
my eyes are tired, though I know
it's just the dwindling light.

I imagine you sitting down now
in the midst of your new family
as the living room grows bright,
the windows turn to mirrors.
Our son and his playmate
romp and conspire, their time
still circular. From the kitchen,
the clatter and chime of contentment.
Spring is still a long way off
yet how easily you must mistake
the red and yellow leaves
for blossoms.

Keep a green bough
in the heart runs the proverb,
and the singing bird.... I curl my legs
on the sofa, wrap around myself
as the furnace sighs, as the panes
go black. Inside its tight sheath
the pale fist of the first leaf
barely throbs.

A GOWN OF ANGER

by Jannett Highfill

The winter wears its sunshine like a proud
and useless jacquard-woven counterpane.
A feeble snow erodes the long unplowed
unterraced fields. A California rain
invades, and soon the scrape of topsoil down
to the frost-line turns to mud. Everything
is layered and thin in winter, gray, brown,
and umber. And now the hibernating
bear in me shivering in the pale conceits
of my cloak of fat and gown of anger
wakes and snarls and assumes the rank deceits
and shifts of the hunt, then tastes the bitter
air of spring. But will anything happen?
Winter wears even rage a trifle thin.

QUARTZ MOUNTAIN — SANDS OF CHANGE

by Sondra D. Williams

Hold a quartz crystal in your hand. It's cool, longer than it is big around, and clean-edged on all six sides. Scratch it, it's hard. Hold it to your eye and you'll see pristine clarity, or cracks and breaks from sudden shock, or the tiny workings of another time: sparkles of mica or gold or thin reeds of rutalite.

Take away the romance of quartz crystals and you have the mineral silicon dioxide (SiO_2). It's a common compound in nature and a common element in man's world. It has certain electrical properties, so we use it in oscillators, radio transmitters, and atomic clocks. Quartz is more transparent than glass and polarizes the light it projects, so we use it in lamps. It is beautiful, mystical, and vibrates at specific frequencies, so we use it in jewelry and in healing arts.

They say there used to be crystals of all sizes at Quartz Mountain in southwestern Oklahoma. And clusters bearing multiple crystals, sometimes hundreds, some as tiny as needles and fragile as angel hair, some the size of four-inch pipe that would take you half an hour to cut with a high-speed rock saw. If you'd been among the thousands who ravaged them from the mountain, you might have one on your coffee table today. It could be worth a hundred dollars.

Few crystals are left at Quartz Mountain or any place else in its ancestral range, the 650-million year old Wichitas. The quartz in the Wichitas has turned to granite — man's metaphor for something or someone

strong, hard, enduring.

But the rock is not as solid as it seems. Granite is a blend of quartz and feldspar, an aluminosilicate of potassium, sodium, calcium, and barium. Wind, water, and gravity erode the feldspar and quartz crystals out of the rock. The feldspar breaks down into dirt and mud, but the quartz crystals are stubborn and resist erosion. They are ground down and rounded into sand, the flaked-off skin of granite.

The sand falls into cracks and collects in cavities. It mixes with the other particles that settle there and the 10,000 year process of silicification can begin. Under heat and pressure the dirt and mud turn to fragile shale and the quartz-sand crystals evolve into shimmering sandstone.

Clear quartz has many translucent sisters: purple amethyst, yellow citrine, white cristobalite, gray flint; and solid, multicolored brothers of agate, jasper, chalcedony, and opal. Sandstone born of their melding matures to a landscape of rusty reds and browns, yellows, and muted greens on hills all around Quartz Mountain.

Quartz turns to granite, granite to sand, sand to stone. It's the sandstone that gives Quartz Mountain its name. The air, the atmosphere, is special there. The mountain glitters in the sunlight and on the surface of the lake, a beautiful, electrical, vibration of millions of years ago and millions of years to come.

OKLAHOMA'S SECRET GARDEN

by Pat Sturm

You'd never know, cruising toward Carnegie on Highway 58 amidst fields of wheat, cotton, or peanuts, that a short detour east would reveal an eye-popping, show-stopping crop — 110 acres of lush, tropical cannas in at least fifteen varieties from palest yellow to deepest reds.

In her youth, Jolene Horn Snow didn't much appreciate the cannas. She felt sure that "if Mama and Daddy would just grow wheat and raise cattle like everybody else, we'd be normal, and I'd be so happy." She remembers spending her summers "hoeing and moving the water pipe over the stupid flowers" that her parents grew. Now, together with her husband, Kendall (Butch) Snow, she owns Horn Canna Farm, the world's largest exclusive canna grower.

Jolene joined her mother Louise on the farm in 1988, following her father's death. Neil Horn dreamed, invented, and took chances. He even traded his prize calf to his own mother for her bulbs in 1931. But, like many dreamers, Horn had lots of directions to follow, and growing cannas wasn't his only pursuit. "He was his own man," said Jolene, "and he got bored with doing only one thing."

Horn made two inventions that keep the farm in business. He combined an Irish potato digger and a sugar beet harvester to make the harvesting easier and more efficient. Eventually a similar machine came on the market and the family, knowing its value to them, purchased one. Although newer, fancier versions now exist, the Snows continue to use the one like Neil Horn's. "Sometimes we worry that it might break down in the middle of harvest," admitted Jolene. "It's about the only one of its kind left. Of course, Butch has replaced most of the parts, so now it's almost a brand new machine."

Horn also invented the washer currently used in the post-harvesting operations. Clean, dry canna bulbs winter better and use far less space than those still connected to the stalk and surrounding soil. Jolene reported that her father's most successful invention encountered some growing pains. "He wasn't happy with the first one, but the revision was great. He got to see it working before he died."

Like many dreamers, Horn had a certain amount of luck. During the oil boom, lease money from the oil rights to his land enabled Horn to purchase fork lifts, which decreased truck loading time from perhaps all day



to about an hour for a semi-load. He also installed automatic irrigation systems. "Now we just push the button to water," said Jolene. "Much better!"

As a young man, Neil Horn sold canna bulbs door-to-door. Now Horn Canna Farm reaches packing companies, greenhouses, and individuals all over the world. The brilliant displays at the Oklahoma State Fair Park originate in the Horn fields, as do those at the Governor's Mansion and the zoo. Cypress Gardens and the Dodger Training Camp in Florida also feature Horn cannas. And the beds of tropical bulbs in singer Kenny Rogers' yard? Horn's.

"We are growers, not developers," Jolene is quick to say. "We get different varieties, then grow them for several years before we offer them for sale to make sure they'll last." The Snows have found that hybrid varieties often don't make the cut. Eureka, a creamy ivory dwarf, has caused recent disappointment. "It's been a favorite," said Jolene, "but lately it's the one that's received the most complaints. After about three years, it just quits working."

In trying new varieties, the Snows communicate with the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens. This year the BBG sent thirty-five new varieties to try. "We were surprised to see the first one that bloomed," said Jolene. "It

was one we already had under a different name!"

Because no national association of canna growers exists, no standardization of names has developed. "My dad renamed the Miss Oklahoma," said Jolene. "It used to be called the President Hoover and Daddy didn't like that. So he contacted the Department of Agriculture and asked to change it. They said he could if he didn't change the description. Today that particular canna has four names that I know of."

During the summer, the Snows do most of the work on the farm. "We mostly water and cull out the stray cannas so our customers will always get the right color bulbs." Beginning in October, however, they add about twenty-five workers for the forty-day harvest and the subsequent three or four months it takes to sort, wash, pack, and store the million-plus bulbs generated in the fields. They ship semi-loads to packing companies in November and December, then smaller loads to greenhouses and individuals in February and March. Their planting begins "about Irish potato planting time," mid-March for Oklahomans.

"Our biggest fear is an early freeze," said Jolene. In 1991, that nightmare occurred on November 2. Over three days, the ground froze in layers, taking whatever part of the bulb lay in its depth. That year, the Snows



didn't cull for the best bulbs, but "just threw them all back into planting in the spring." The following year turned out to be one of their best. "We filled all our orders and had no complaints," said Jolene, with a little mop of her brow. "But we learned a few lessons."

They learned, among other things, to always dig the Black Knights first. Because that variety grows closest to the surface, the Snows lost their entire crop in '91. They also learned that, although it's more trouble to pack and label, it's safer to dig some of each variety at the beginning of harvest, rather than to dig all of one variety and risk losing the plant stock of the others.

Besides hiring local workers after regular farming season and pouring about \$50,000 into the economy of Carnegie, Horn's gift of 10,000 bulbs for a beautification project launched the Carnegie Canna Festival, now in its eighth year. "They wanted Mama and Daddy to be the first queen and king of the parade," recalled Jolene. "They decided that Mama should wear a red dress and Daddy should wear a white tuxedo and a top hat. I don't know how they kept him in that hat all day, but he loved it!"

Three days after the parade, Neil Horn was diagnosed with liver cancer. He died on May 1, 1988.

Jolene Snow considers herself a gardener, tending

400 to 500 bulbs in her own yard in nearby Eakly, and helping Louise with her yard at the farm. Even on the professional scale, the flowers make it fun. "I really like it," she said. "I never hate to come to work." Her husband Butch likes the farming aspect, and considers the cannas his crop, his business. Apparently the genes run true; the Snow's son, Dustin, wants to join the business "probably next year."

Would Jolene encourage others to become commercial planters? "They'd need an awful lot of money," she said. "Equipment and plant stock and labor cost a fortune. And it's a labor intensive business — they'll get a lot of dirt on their hands. But if they love it, well... gardening is America's #1 hobby."

Getting to the Canna Farm:

From OK — west on I-40, south at Exit 88 (Hydro-Carnegie) approximately 22 miles, east 1 1/4 miles just after the HORN CANNA FARM sign

From Carnegie — north 8 miles, east 1 1/4 miles at telephone company building



FAT TUESDAY

by Richard Luftig

A threadbare squirrel,
foxed and scratched weary
with winter, has traveled
from the edge of annihilation
to my weathered bird feeder.
He hangs upside down
like a trapeze artist,
tail curled in a question,
gnashing seeds in his teeth.

Standing below in the last
swatches of snow that lie
in sooty heaps, his mate
waits, her back a safety
net, nibbling leftovers
that fall in gritty rain.

They have already spent
their Lenten season
in a tug-o-war with March.
Now, they gambol
with Spring, toasting
one more survival
in a slow banquet of grains.

THE BOTANIST OF MEMORY

by John Sokol

He roamed through a world
of apian ways and limbic rushes.
Rosemary, for instance, was not wife
or lover, but the smell of turpentine
in a tender sprig of herb;
when he crushed it between his palms,
he was — that quickly — a painter in Palermo.
In miasmal woods, a redolence of yarrow
became his mnemonic for 1969,
the year he drove from Berkeley to
New York with Mary Jane in a minibus.
In August fields, aroma of agrimony
reminded him of apricots;
of incense in Alexandria;
of the mistrals that blew through
open windows on slow trains
from Genoa to Marseille. Scents
of lemon balm and basil
became a transilience of trees,
growing through rocks in the
tortured fields near Barcelona.
Essence of sweet woodruff: that July day,
in Tippecanoe, when he helped
his grandmother put out salt licks
for the cows. The smell of a crushed stem
of bottlebrush grass — mixed with his own
saliva— always conjured up memories
of his father sharpening an axe; of motor oil
and a whetstone. But there were times, too,
when mephitic reminders of loss and failure
rose from the ground like vaporous
shades. They would follow him
through the browning meadows and dark woods.

And he knew that, someday, in the blinding light
of his final moments, he would smell them again
in the life that passed before his eyes.



ILLUSTRATION BY CHRIS HENSON

SUNDAY MORNING LETTER

by L.L. Ollivier

I'm writing to you, magpies,
because I hear you at the window
when I wake, desert mornings
scrabbling in your voices,
sunlight chiming around you
in the branches of the elm.

You wear the patchwork flags
of night and day; your hard eyes
gauge the dark and do not flinch.
I look to you, magpies, because I've come
to dread that dark, because I've fought sleep
nights on end, fearing I wouldn't wake.

I'm writing, magpies, because it's Sunday,
my fortieth birthday, day to break bread,
remember the dead, to free
myself from fear, as you have,
death your life, your sacrament.

I write, releasing these words to you
like fallen leaves on wind,
or feathers you've left shining
like a promise in the pasture grass.

LOWLANDS

Patrick J. Murphy

While Carey, her sixteen-year-old daughter, sat silent on the living room sofa, Marion stood and waited until the foghorn sounding out at sea had finished. Marion felt she no longer knew what was happening between the two of them. Her daughter had been fine for awhile. No more outbreaks. None of that nasty sullenness she hated so much. And now this. All on account of one bag of what she had thought was garbage.

They lived in a trailer park, in a narrow canyon the river had carved, on the edge of a harbor no longer used. Every night the fog slipped in beneath the trestled road joining the higher banks on either side like water filling a pot. Marion always knew that for her the night would be dark, starless and damp.

She imagined living in the more affluent parts of town, higher, out of the fog, enjoying the sunlight only money could buy.

"Where's that bag?" Carey had asked.

Marion had no idea. "What bag?"

Carey's face had darkened, growing shadowed, framed between her long, dark undisciplined hair.

Marion knew the look. "Don't start with me." She remembered the bag, now, filled with scraps of paper, old homework graded and handed back, empty envelopes, notes. It looked like trash brought home from school and nothing more. She threw it out with the rest.

"Where's my bag?" Carey's voice slid over into that nasal, irritating whine. "Where's my stuff?"

If the girl would ever help around the house, Marion thought, pick up after herself, do the least bit of housework, things like this wouldn't happen. What kind of

bag was it?" She was trying to be reasonable.

"Oh God!" Carey seemed near to tears. "You threw it away. You're always throwing away my stuff. I can't ever have anything."

Marion turned away. There was no talking to her, now, she knew. The girl would sulk for days, darker than the nights. "Don't be ridiculous." She walked to the window.

The fog rolled down upon her. Like a quiet thunderstorm in white. Small tendrils approached first, blowing wisps, then veils blurring her vision momentarily, then the thickness came and the lights in the distance dimmed and blurred, shifting as if under water. The warehouse and the road to the docks grew to little more than dark outlines. The few boats remaining in the harbor, their masts usually visible from where she stood, had already vanished.

She turned to her daughter. "It's going to be chilly tonight." She was just making conversation, testing the mood. It was always cold where they were.

Carey didn't answer. Her head was half hidden, pressed against her knees. The one eye Marion could see was large and dark and wet, surrounded by knots of dull black hair.

She looked like pictures Marion had seen of crazy people, the bound inmates of institutions, and she wondered, not for the first time, if her daughter were unbalanced. She imagined the men coming in the ambulance, the struggle and the shrieks.

"What was so important in the bag?"

"Why do we always have to do this? Why do you always have to pretend?"

Marion turned away. What could she do? The child's responses never matched the questions. "You could answer me."

Carey looked up at her. "You bitch." She said the words quietly.

Marion went for a walk, wishing she could leave forever. She imagined herself hurrying up the narrow winding road to the higher plain, then away from the ocean for good. She saw herself walking inland on a broad sunny highway across level ground.

She followed the shore to the mouth of the harbor and stopped beneath the trestle to see the road high overhead.

"That's where the rich people live," Marion had said to Carey years ago.

Carey's steps were small. Her legs were chubby. Already, at that young age there seemed a distance between them. The girl pulled away and ran along the beach, playing tag with the sheets of water sliding up the sand, then slipping back as the next wave gathered in a curl of gray.

Marion was tired and sat on one of the logs cluttering the beach. The wind was cold. Out at sea and lying along the horizon, the bank of fog was a visible thickness moving towards them. "Be careful!" she shouted to the child, but knew there wasn't anything to worry about. Carey was too cautious. Her shoes were hardly ever wet, her run for safety always premature.

The wall of fog grew larger. The ocean darkened.

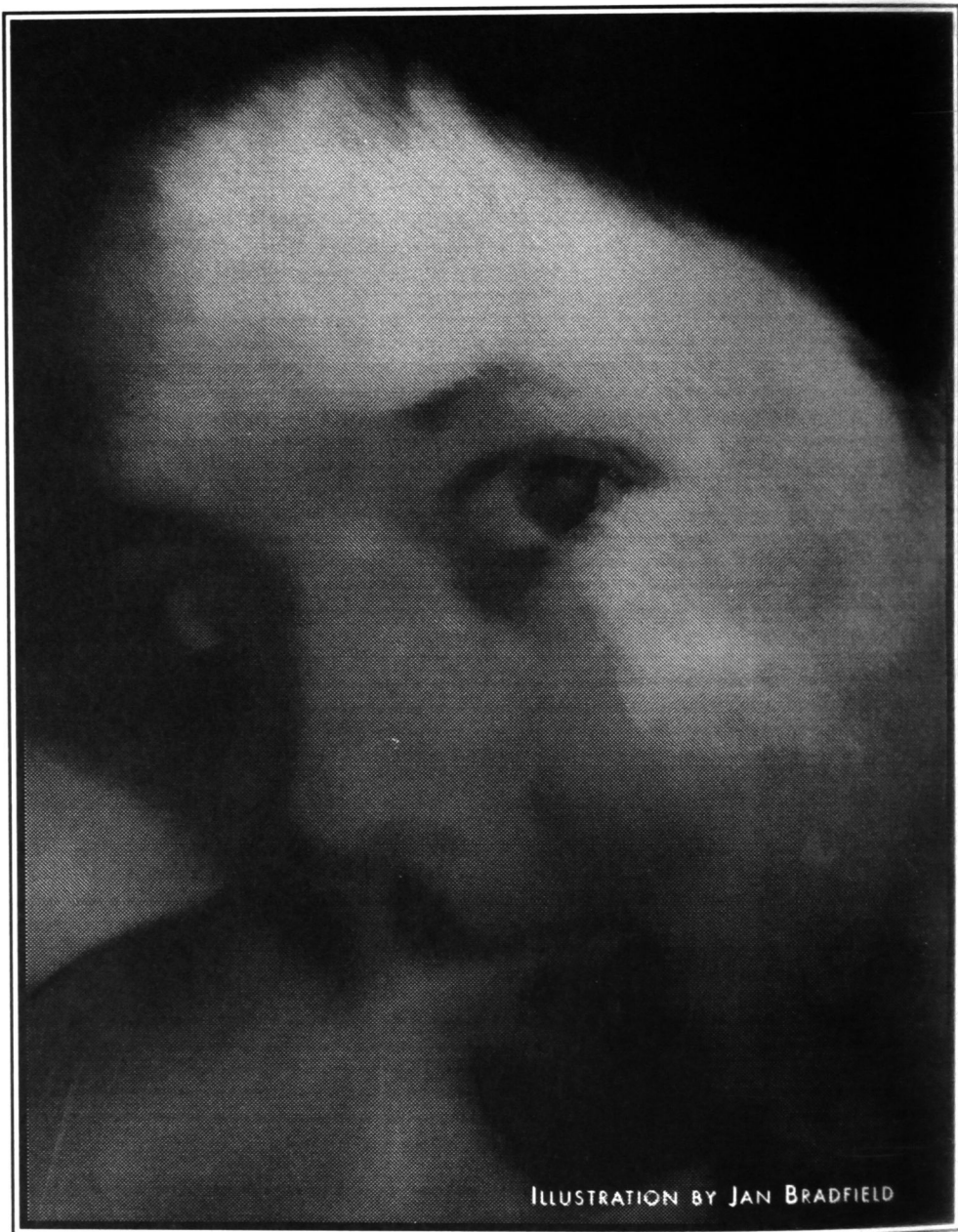


ILLUSTRATION BY JAN BRADFELD

The surface grew more wrinkled and opaque. There was no sunset down below, no reddened sky, merely the fog suddenly nearer, a dimness, and then the wind growing colder.

"Come on!" Marion stood and pulled her sweater tighter around her.

"Why?"

"Because it's late." She held out her hand.

Carey pulled back. "Why?"

"The fog." Marion pointed. The white bank had darkened, seeming now nearly solid and only yards away.

"So?" But there was uncertainty in her voice.

"You remember the story I used to tell you?"

Carey's face changed, growing tighter, more wary.

"There are monsters in the fog. Remember?"

Marion saw her husband as he had been before she had thrown him out, his slender form kneeling next to the child, his hands smoothing her wispy hair. He had never liked the story. "The invisible monsters hiding in the fog."

"It was just a game!" Carey's voice was loud.

"They'd sneak through a window. They'd wrap themselves around you."

"Quit!"

"And the next morning, when the fog went out, the little girl was gone. All gone." She opened her arms out wide, releasing.

Carey stopped moving. She waited silently, as if enduring.

"All gone." Marion looked at the first tendrils of white reaching out. She waited until Carey's fingers found hers.

When Marion got back from her walk, Carey was shut up in her room, her closed door a silent accusation.

What am I going to do? For a moment, Marion felt lost, without guidance. No one had ever told her how to raise children. She had no feeling for the task. She had never had a normal childhood herself and wasn't sure she could provide one for others.

Alone, without guidance. She looked around. The room had become a mess. Carey had scattered newspapers across the coffee table. An empty glass sat on the floor by the couch.

Why can't she ever pick up after herself? Was it every other generation, some sort of recessive gene?

Marion's mother had been a slob, too, a hard, uncaring woman, her speech blurred constantly by alcohol.

She let the house go. The sink was filled with dirty dishes, spilling over to the counters, flooding onto the table and the floor.

"She's sick," her father said. "She just doesn't know what she's doing."

Marion remembered one night when she had come home late from school. They were living in Portland. There wasn't snow yet, but the ground was soggy. Droplets of moisture blew in the wind.

She tried the door. She looked through the window and saw her mother sitting in her nightgown on the couch. She rang the doorbell and waited. Her mother never moved. She tried the back door and then returned to the front. She went to the window and knocked. Her mother lifted her drink to her lips and turned, as if she just then noticed her daughter was home. She smiled and raised her drink in greeting, but remained seated on the couch.

Marion wondered if her daughter, too, would grow up to be like that, drunk and sloppy and disgusting. She had done everything she could think of to prevent it, but now felt helpless. It was all going wrong. She picked up the newspapers and piled them in a stack. She took the glass to the kitchen and put it with the rest in a sink of soapy water.

Before she went to bed, she opened the door to her daughter's room and peered inside. Carey lay amid tangled sheets. Her hair was a dark cloud around her face. Her mouth hung open, her breathing was loud. In her arms, still clutched tightly to her neck, her pale white teddy bear lay with a half surprised, happy expression. Marion watched her for a few minutes, filled with an emotion she couldn't name, one composed of longing and regret and a gentle, ineffable sadness. Then she closed the door.

The next morning she went to work without seeing

her daughter at all. She had waited for a few minutes by the breakfast table, then grabbed her keys. A morning without a scene, she thought.

The trip up the narrow road from the harbor to the heights above felt like a reprieve. The sun was hot, there, the view extensive. Far below, at the cliff's edge, the ocean lay in seeming calm, the motion of the waves merely wrinkles on its dull surface.

She worked at Small Surprises boutique, a store selling gifts and collectibles. There were greeting cards, small statues of dwarfs and trolls, sweaters, bracelets and rings, designer boxes, custom bird cages and unique pillows. The sun slanted through the front window, past the orderly displays, and gleamed on the clean, hardwood floor. She smiled at the customers. She felt pleasure wrapping something small and fragile in its cushioned, velvet box.

At lunch, while the other clerks went out to a local restaurant, she walked along the bluff and looked down at the ocean below and wondered if she would ever be happy. So many things had gone wrong in her life, as if she were cursed somehow. She imagined a clean, sunny home, a loving husband who understood her moods and quirks, a big yard in which one could sit in the evening and watch the unobscured stars. Was that asking too much? Was that so impossible? The sea below was wrinkled and seemed faintly mocking.

The fog had filled the harbor and was reaching further up the river by the time her work was done. Marion drove carefully back, dropping reluctantly into the thick whiteness. She was tired. Her mood worsened. There was nothing before her but the evening.

She didn't notice at first that the trailer was still dark. When she turned on the lights, she knew already Carey wasn't home. She checked her daughter's room, just in case, then started supper.

She knew where the girl was. With that guy. Walter. On his motorcycle. He had been hanging around for months. At strange hours of the night, Marion heard the sound of his mufflers in the distance, rather mournful, like the passing of trains. He made her nervous. She wanted him to go away.

"I don't see what you see in him, anyway."

Carey, as usual, had been silent. Another conversation that hadn't happened.

They never talked anymore. Marion tried to remember if they ever had. They were two strangers, forced to live in the same small place. Something was missing, some essential part had failed, but that seemed to be true with everyone she loved.

"I don't want you here anymore," she had finally told her husband. Difficult decisions had to be made. No one else would do it.

He was slender, with brown hair and a beard that never grew completely in. He laughed too much and too loudly and seemed always confused, his bafflement the expression she most remembered.

"That's it? You just don't want me around?"

"You know very well. You don't belong here. You never have."

"You need to get help, you know." His voice was calm and reasonable, but the words, she knew, were meant to hurt. It was all her fault. Now and always. She wasn't quite right. She needed care. They'd had this conversation before.

"I don't love you. Maybe I never did. That's all there is to it. You're trying to make it into some great drama."

She was poised and confident and already she felt much better. It was a necessary cleansing, long overdue. He was nearly on his way, another nasty chore she could cross off her list.

"And what about my little girl? What about her?" His

expression then was something she didn't want to remember, a mixture of hurt and what seemed to be fear.

An unsuitable man. So critical and judgmental. He had never fit in, always in the way, somehow never quite meshing with the life she wanted to live. But he had truly loved his daughter. How proud would he be of his little girl now? He would be astonished, horrified at the changes. He would try and blame it all on her again. What have you done? How did you ruin my baby? But his opinions had never really counted. He had been just another in a long series of defective items life had sold her.

When supper had been ready for hours and Carey still wasn't back, Marion decided to ground the girl for good this time. No more leniency. The girl would simply have to learn. She would have to live with things as they were, as they should be. She just didn't appreciate what she had, a good home, clean surroundings, an orderly life.

When it was late and Carey still hadn't returned, Marion found it hard to think. There was no sense in getting mad, she told herself, but her mind felt stuffed and immobile. The trailer seemed too large. Where could she be? What could the girl be doing?

She walked to her daughter's room and turned on the lights. At first glance, everything seemed as it always had, in a deplorable condition. The bed wasn't made. There were clothes strewn across the floor. Homework lay scattered across her tiny desk. Then Marion noticed

the absences. The picture of Carey's father, kept near the head of the bed, was gone, as was the teddy bear. The closet, too, looked emptier.

She's left, she thought, but found herself still listening for the sound of a motorcycle, dropping down to the harbor. It's silly. What's she going to do, out in the world? She remembered seeing Carey asleep just the night before, wrapped in the sheets, and clutching her stuffed animal.

"What's she going to do?" she asked herself again. It was insane, irrational. All on account of one bag of garbage left lying around, nothing more than old homework assignments, some notes, a few letters from her father. It just didn't make any sense. It wasn't reasonable. Marion watched her hands picking up the dirty clothes, a shirt, a pair of socks. We don't need these, anymore, she thought, and decided to throw them away.

THE WATCH

by Del Cain

The horizon line
In the prairie sunset
Erased by down strokes of gray
Below the bubbling
Swirling, troubling
Of gray and black and green
As the still air
Deadens the rumbling
Of the tumbling dark
And splits itself
Into glass stained
With alchemist's art
Lead to gold
Fingers searching as if lost
For the prairie floor.
The still air still
Holding promise or threat
Drawing by magic
Or voice unheard
Prairie people
To yards and porches
To talk in the hush,
To watch,
Breathing what they can
Of the pressing air.
Waiting for the verdict
Of the clouds.

NOVEMBER ON CASA GRANDE

by Errol Miller

Sasha is ironing, she's ironing iron-on stars
on the ceiling and she's humming under her breath.
Soon the kids will demand supper, skipping into
our fragile economy demanding butter on their bread.

I think I have never been so exalted — tomorrow
we will have chicken wings with dumplings
and biscuits from "scratch" and fresh mustard greens
with nothing on them. Sasha, too, is at the top
of my list, #1 on Casa Grande in my book.
She's just a Northern yellow daisy
transplanted into a red-clay field of kudzu in
the hogsbreath Southside of the Delta, a single
stem of loveliness glorified in the sweetest
odors of simple perfume from Woolworth.

Ah these dimesongs of life in Urbana, domestic
poetry of pots and pans, an occasional Lone Star beer.

MARGARITA

by Daniel M. Jaffe

As she did every Thursday morning at nine just when the foreign tourists finished their breakfasts, but before they piled into the Intourist tour buses waiting on Herzen Street, Margarita now entered the lobby of the Astoria Hotel, admired the crystal chandeliers, the carpeted stairways, the upholstered chairs against the walls. Her first stop was the unshaven doorman who had slept all night on two of the upholstered chairs while guarding the entrance to this, Leningrad's most elegant hotel. She shook his hand in order surreptitiously to slip him a three-ruble note, in guarantee of his negligence in sounding the alarm at a Soviet citizen's trespass into the sphere of foreigners' influence. (Despite the policy of the Brezhnev government, Margarita believed that she belonged in the Astoria. Had she ever cared to ask the doorman, he could not have told her whether the authorities feared her contamination by the foreigners or vice versa.) Next, Margarita opened the olive green briefcase she carried, handed a small parcel wrapped in sheets of *Pravda* to the dour dumpling in red who paced back and forth across the lobby with hands clasped behind her back, belly protruding, eyes darting about in order to memorize the face of everyone who entered, lingered, prepared to exit; the parcel contained an expensive morsel from the peasant market on Kuznetchny Alley — pears and a fresh pork chop.

Margarita's beige turban succeeded in hiding all but a rogue shock of graying auburn hair that curled on the center of her forehead. Her face bore such a thick layer of beige powder that the crows' feet beside her eyes looked like cracks in dried clay and the deep outlines of her jowls like creases in the fleshy muslin cheeks of a

worn, cloth peasant doll. Margarita refused to wear lipstick because she would not risk being mistaken in her finery for one of "those" women, but always (whenever able to trade something for polish) painted her fingernails red to demonstrate her attention to aristocratic detail. And even now, in July, she wore an English-style black and white tweed overcoat for which she had paid two months' salary and swapped her next to last copy of her favorite novel, *The Master and Margarita* — a lady did not expose her figure to the ogling of strangers.

Now that she had paid what she privately regarded as tribute to the descendant emissaries of long-departed Mongol overlords, Margarita headed toward the small newspaper kiosk where a group of foreigners in their late teens were barraging a middle-aged woman with requests for postcards and airmail stamps. The saleswoman, whose fingers were flinging the discs of her abacus with the dizzying alacrity of a Japanese microchip and whose nostrils remained flared in a state of constant equine annoyance, insisted on addressing the tourists in German, the only foreign language she had learned as a girl, even though the foreigners all addressed her in a pigeon-Russian mixed with English. Upon seeing the approach of her friend, the saleswoman turned her back on the clamoring youngsters, reached under a counter and handed Margarita the most recent copy available of *The International Herald Tribune*, an issue only two weeks old and, to Margarita's knowledge, unattainable elsewhere in the city (Détente and the previous year's Helsinki Accords having penetrated just so far behind the Iron Curtain despite their proclamations of support for the free flow of information and people). Margarita

slipped the newspaper into her briefcase and clasped the latch shut, planning, at some future rendezvous, to give her friend the cardigan she had knitted for her from the remains of tattered sweaters.

With admiration, Margarita watched the young men and women examine their postcards, all with the intentions, no doubt, to share travels with parents at home. Such respect and love Westerners had for each other, Margarita thought as she stood by the group's side, strained to catch bits of the English conversation, to determine the accent.

She believed that only foreigners could appreciate her pre-Revolutionary, exotic chic since the aesthetic sensibilities of post-Revolutionary Russian men had been dulled by sixty years of Communist banality. Now if she could only find the right foreigner, she could justify marriage and accept love without violating the spirit of a promise she had made decades before, a vow that weighed upon her breast like a silver medallion somehow turned by time into lead.

She nodded to herself, then approached one of the young men, one with black frizzy hair, a lean face and a narrow nose, tapped him on the arm and asked in her best Queen's English, "Forgive my intrusion upon your person. You are Americans?"

The nineteen year old answered, "*Da*."

"English please," said Margarita. "For practice." She leaned close to him and whispered, "And for privacy."

Margarita pulled the American aside, noticing that his eyebrows raised in concern, that his eyes shot glances at the other tourists as if to reassure himself that they remained within hearing range of a cry for help. His apparent apprehension soothed Margarita, suggested to her that this was indeed a sensitive man, one whom she could trust. She proceeded to ask consciously harmless questions about his trip, discovered that he was about to

enter his sophomore year at Harvard as a Russian major, was one of fifty students from various colleges spending part of the summer in Leningrad on a language study program sponsored by the American Institute for Study Abroad, an organization whose name she found most impressive. She could not have known (and would not have understood had the young man volunteered to explain) that the AISA was nothing more than a Rhode Island travel agency specializing in non-accredited package summer study tours, participation in which college students hoped would one day impress graduate school admissions staff.

"You are engaged for the day?" Margarita asked her companion.

"We have classes all morning. After lunch we're going to Shalash."

Margarita frowned, partly in annoyance that this foreigner's afternoon would be wasted with a bus trip to such a pointless destination, but mostly because the young man would not be free to spend time with her. "Pity," she said. "Tomorrow, perhaps? I understand that we just met, but I wish to show you sights of greater interest than Shalash."

She watched the cautious American pause, chew for a moment on his lower lip, move his eyes slightly to the left, then to the right, as if examining the pros and cons of the invitation, then shrug his shoulders in a "Why not?" gesture. "I came to experience Russia," he said and agreed to meet her after lunch the next day.

"Two o'clock?" she asked. "In the gardens opposite, in St. Isaac's Square. Agreed?"

He nodded. Margarita presented her right hand, expected the young man to lift it to his lips with great gallantry, refrained from frowning while he shook it gently and left.

Margarita hustled to the trolley, rode down Nevsky

Prospekt to the metro station at Gostiny Dvor, took the subway to Kupchino station, caught the bus to her apartment, rushed inside out of breath. "Mama!" she called out in a loud stage whisper, as though the bugging devices she imagined the secret police to have planted in her apartment could not pick up breathy tones intended to conceal secrets. "An American. I've met an American at the Astoria!"

Her mother, a wizened, hunch-shouldered raisin of a woman shuffled out of the kitchen in her flapping slippers, tucked a stray wisp of white hair behind her ear, sighed and whispered, "Another foreigner?"

"An American, Mama. An American. The others were Europeans; they don't understand freedom like Americans do. This one's different," she said. 'He has to be,' she thought.

"I know you get lonesome, Margarita."

"Mama, that's not it at all, I've told you," she said, shifting her eyes away from her mother's. "I don't need to marry for company, I have you. It's just that marrying a foreigner's the only path for us."

Margarita's mother nodded, stood on tiptoe to kiss her daughter's cheek and asked, "What have you promised to get for this one?"

"Nothing yet. We shall meet tomorrow. Today he's going to Shalash."

The old woman spat onto the floor she had just spent hours scrubbing.

✦ ✦ ✦

The following afternoon, Margarita sat on a white wooden bench in the small park between St. Isaac's Cathedral and the Astoria Hotel, whose main entrance she watched, examining the face of every exiting tourist. "I could be in training for the KGB!" She giggled, covering her mouth to hide the thought. Would this man, this foreigner, be the one, the answer to her nightly

prayers?

When she saw her American step onto the sidewalk, she sat up straight, lifted her tweed-coat-covered arm, waved at him. He, in jeans and a short-sleeved shirt sporting a small alligator sewn on the front, walked toward her. She stood, clasped his hands and kissed his cheek, then apologized for her brazenness. "I was uncertain if you would keep our appointment. I am most pleased."

"Sure." She demurely watched the young man examine her face, did not realize that his eyes were following rivulets of perspiration as they dripped down her cheeks alongside her ears. He asked if he could help her off with her coat.

"Do you have a girlfriend?" she asked.

"Pardon? No. Not right now. Um, your coat?"

She accepted his offer to remove her outer garment, wondering whether the request's motivation was innocent chivalry or — could it possibly be? — male desire directed at her.

The American sat beside her, reached into his brown-shoulder bag, pulled out a compact — one of many trinkets, he explained, that he had been advised to bring to Russia on the chance that he might make a Russian acquaintance or need to offer a bribe — and handed the beige plastic case to Margarita. She clapped her hands like one of Tchaikovsky's gleeful children receiving a hand-carved German nutcracker at Christmas. "I have nearly used up my supply of powder and was in a . . . What is the English word? ...Tizzy... Yes, I was in a tizzy wondering where to find more. My white knight!" She tilted her head, offered a meaningful, deep gaze of thanks, and buried the compact in the depths of her briefcase. "Now tell me. I am most interested in your opinion of Shalash."

The American's eyes examined hers. "Honest?"

"Absolutely. Your honest impressions."

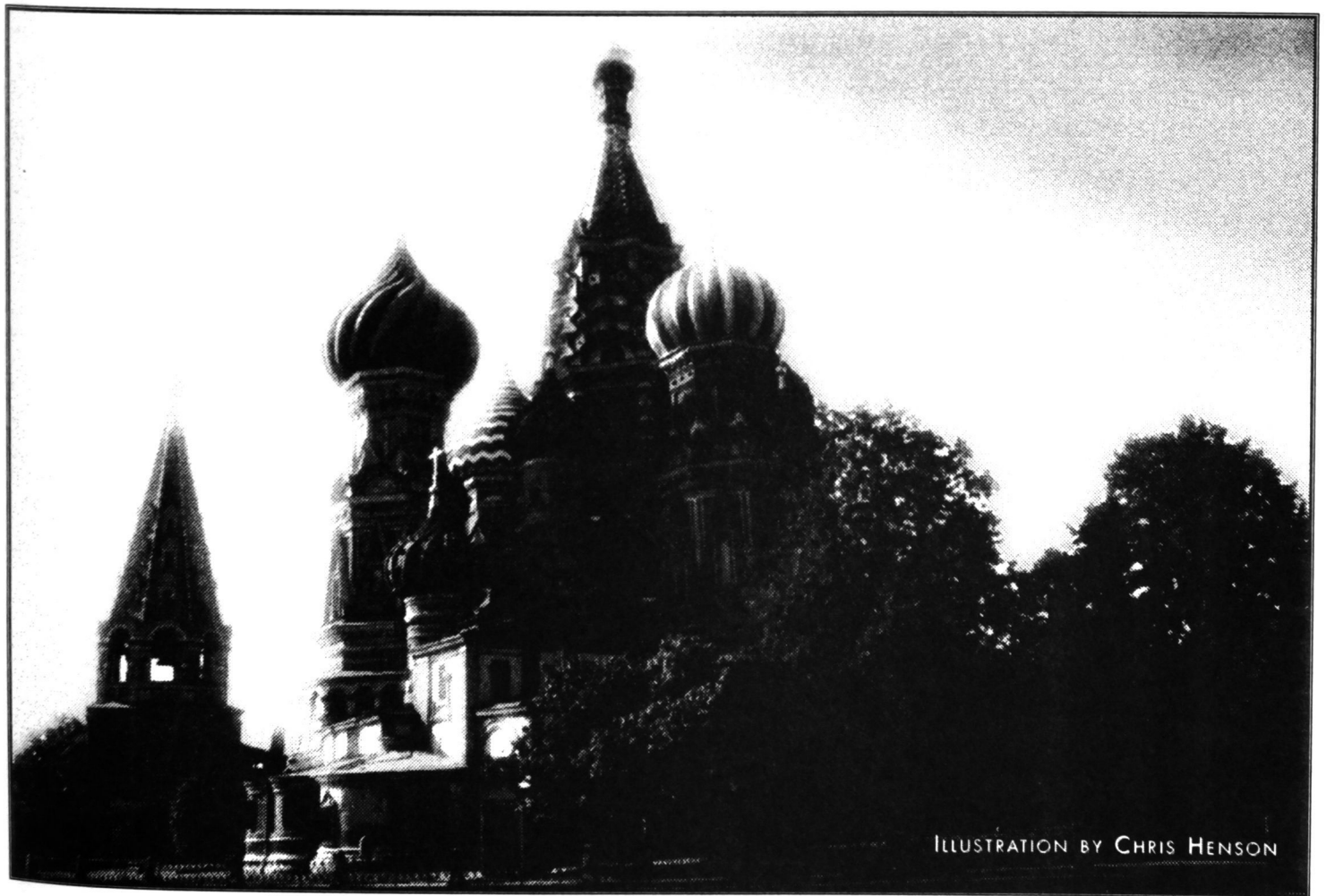
"Okay. We spend an hour driving there. Then they show us a straw hut that's a replica of the one Lenin lived in while hiding in the summer of 1917. It was a pile of straw. Then a sculpture of the hut, of this pile of straw. Then they take us to a tiny little museum: 'This is a replica of the rowboat Lenin used; the real one is at a museum in Moscow. This is a replica of the bed Lenin slept on; the real one is at a museum in Moscow. This is a replica of the pillow that supported Lenin's head; the real one is at a museum in Moscow.' We spend another hour riding back to town. No offense, but it was a waste of time."

Margarita smiled broadly at his understanding. "Not all here is as it pretends to be, as it would like to be." She

then reiterated her purpose (the surface of her true purpose) in wishing to meet with him — to show him the "genuine" Leningrad, the city which was as much a part of her as she was of it. She waved away his reluctance at imposing on her. "You would be giving me the greatest pleasure. I can offer fascinating tidbits of information. Did you know that Hitler had intended to celebrate his victory over Leningrad at a party in the Astoria? Your very hotel. He even had invitations printed. Needless to say, the man suffered great disappointment, poor fellow. Hee hee! An amazing bit of gossip, isn't it? A mere sample of what I can tell you. So, you will permit me to guide you about?"

"That would be fun."

"Wonderful. Have you seen the synagogue?"



The young man shook his head, wrinkled his eyebrows in obvious question.

"Your face," Margarita explained. "That's how I knew.

Definitely a Jewish face. A handsome one, I must say." She blinked. "A kind face. It is precisely the kind sparkle of your eyes that granted me permission to approach you in the Astoria. Come. You will find the synagogue of interest."

She stood, led him to the end of the park, across the street and along the nearby Moika Canal. "And, kind sir, your name, please? I am permitting you to escort me without having knowledge of your name."

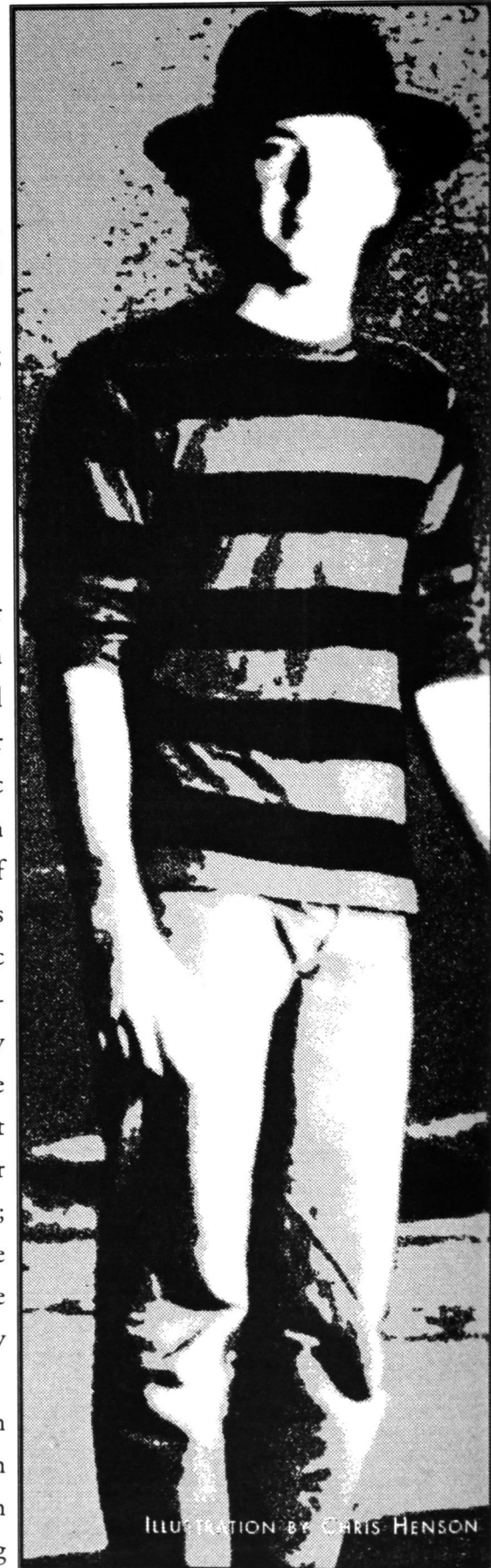
"Jonathan Cohen."

"Cohen. Ah." She smiled at the accuracy of her perception.

"And yours?"

"Margarita. Margarita Genrikhovna Schmidt." As she had done for decades whenever pronouncing her name aloud, Margarita did so with decreasing volume, so that her surname was barely audible. As a school girl she had endured countless teases whenever attendance was taken, for hers was one of the few last names in class not ending in the slavic "-ova," "-ina," "-enko," or "-skayai" even the occasional Armenian "-yana," or Georgian "-adze" failed to elicit the taunts she suffered of "foreigner" or even, "traitor." During the War, when in her late teens and early twenties, Margarita strove to prove that her Germanic patronymic and surname resulted solely from the gene pool of linguistic chance, not of conscious patriotic choice. So, during the 900-day Nazi siege of Leningrad, she told everyone she encountered on the streets scrounging for firewood that her father had been one of the first to fall in battle (so she assumed, not having received any response to her letters or other word of him), that he was a true hero of the Motherland; and later, even though confronted with probable starvation, she declined an offer to flee the city in a truck caravan across frozen Lake Ladoga, and convinced her mother to stay, as well. Leningrad's history was hers.

After the War, word came that her father had, in fact, been taken prisoner by the Germans, that he had miraculously survived, that upon his return to Mother Russia, he, together with his comrades, had been interned in a labor camp by Stalin for the treacherous crime of having



allowed himself to be taken an enemy prisoner. It was then that Margarita began to question her patriotic devotion, to regret not having fled (where to would not have mattered) when the opportunity had arisen.

"Have you made the acquaintance of other Russians?" she asked her American companion.

"Only the Intourist tour guide." Jonathan pinched his nose, switched from English to Russian, and whined in a nasal falsetto, "Leningrad is the cradle of the Great People's Revolution of 1917. It was here that Vladimir Ilyich Lenin began training progressive workers to become professional revolutionaries, to form the vanguard of the proletariat, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the leading political force of the socialist world."

Margarita laughed out loud. "You Americans are a delightful people," she said, returning the conversation to English. "I love your political philosophy, you know? 'Give me liberty or give me death.' My personal motto as well. You understand?" She interpreted his puzzled grin as a sign of clear understanding.

They strolled quietly, Margarita babbling stories associated with the pastel buildings lining the Moika Canal and posing questions about America. She pointed out the former palace of Prince Yusupov, now a House of Labor, "He and Grand Duke Dmitry killed Rasputin, you know. They had quite a time of it, he was such a devil." She was pleased at Jonathan's "Wow!", delighted that she had succeeded in making an impression, in gaining and now holding his attention. "Ladies in America," she asked, "conduct themselves with proper grace?"

Jonathan shrugged. "It's hard to tell on campus."

"I cannot visualize a campus; it has not appeared here on film. Certain American movies are shown in our cinema, films about the Mafia and crime and narcotics. I

attend them for the English and for the scenery. As the gangsters shoot each other, I look at the rich shops filled with food in the background. Do shopkeepers of produce actually display fruit on sidewalks?"

"Often."

"In the abundance depicted in cinema?"

Jonathan nodded.

"Amazing country, America. Do you know that at the end of June, I went into a fruit store, one with a sign over the door saying 'Fruit,' asked the saleslady for apricots. She pointed at the empty counter shelves and snarled at me, 'We don't have fruit in June, come back in July!' She might as well have called me an idiot for asking. No fruit and even fewer manners. A difference between Russia and America, I think."

Margarita pointed out the Kirov Ballet and Opera Theater, started to lead Jonathan across Decembrists' Street when a yellow taxi standing by the curb suddenly revved its motor. The driver chuckled as Margarita jumped and clutched at her heart.

"Typical! I once asked a taxi driver why so many of them make that lion's roar with their engines the moment pedestrians walk by. Do you know how he responded? 'For fun.' Such barbarians. They cannot help themselves, you see. Ever since the Mongol invasion centuries ago." She lowered her voice, took a half-step away from Jonathan and said, "They violated Russian women, the Mongols did. So cruelty now flows in Russian veins."

They turned a corner and Margarita pointed out the Turkish cupola of the synagogue on Lermontov Prospekt, the boarded up front door, led him to the side entrance. "Locked. You see how we live? A tragedy. At the Jewish New Year I come to hear the choir. Beautiful. But because of anti-Semitism, many of the good voices are fleeing like nightingales in late autumn, only they

don't return in the spring. It's the lucky ones who leave. Others are denied permission to emigrate at all. So difficult even to initiate the process. To start one must have an invitation from a relative in Israel. Can you imagine? An old Russian custom: in the last century a peasant could not move from his village commune without evidence that some other village had voted to grant him membership. Do you wish to emigrate to Israel?"

"Me? No. It's nice. I've visited. But I don't want to live there."

"Strange. It seems to me your historical destiny. But we don't all wish to allow history to have its way with us, do we?"



Margarita suggested that they meet every other afternoon at two, ostensibly so that she could show him additional sights, but actually because she wished to spend more time with him in order to assess the depth of his seemingly sympathetic nature, to impress upon him her extreme need for caring assistance. How to appeal to a young American's heart?

One afternoon she treated him to ice cream, 250 grams of vanilla topped with berry preserves in a shop where a bearded drunkard stood and sang an old folk melody. "A true Russian bass," Margarita sighed, missing the voice even as its vibrato quivered in her ears.

Another day she strolled with Jonathan through Gorky Gardens in front of the Admiralty, pointed out statues of Glinka, Lermontov and Gogol, recited nineteenth century poetry, told how her cousin had been arrested in that very park for necking with her beau, "Such barbarism of the authorities. They don't even let us fall in love. Can you imagine?"

Across Admiralty Prospekt, Margarita pointed out a gray building faced with white columns, "The original headquarters of the Cheka, the first Soviet secret police."

Then she led Jonathan along Gogol Street to its intersection with Dzerzhinsky, pointed out an innocent-looking, three-story pink building with white-trimmed windows and a black plaque by the door saying only "Polyclinic." "A KGB infirmary; see how they attempt to disguise it? In the last century, the Countess in Pushkin's 'The Queen of Spades,' lived here. Oh, I know, she is a character of fiction. But you must understand — in America, life is as it should be, so you don't depend upon fantasy. But in Russia, the reality of our present is more difficult, more painful to believe than the fiction of our past. So on occasion we pretend that make-believe heroes and heroines actually exist. If we can create beauty with our imaginations, there remains hope that one day we shall succeed in fashioning it with our hands, in seeing it in front of — not merely behind — our eyes."

She looked into Jonathan's eyes, studied them, felt certain that they held a watery sadness, one she had hoped to find in response to her delineation of Soviet suffering; she interpreted his throat-clearing to be a muted, but definite "ah" of compassion at her tales of governmental oppression: and Margarita felt trust for him, for this relative stranger, felt a spiritual kinship. She seized the moment to elaborate on her personal circumstances, to elicit greater sympathy from him in the hope of gradually inflaming his willingness to render her the service she so desperately desired, needed as much as she needed fresh air.

Margarita told of having left her twenty-year job as a translator of scientific articles for fear that her alleged "access to state secrets," would result in her being prohibited from associating with foreigners. (The reason that association with non-Soviet citizens was of such prime importance to her, she did not volunteer.) So she found a position as a cashier in a pharmacy with cowork-

ers she regarded as warm, chipper young ladies who enjoyed passing the time between customers in chatter about boyfriends and Baltic fashions. One evening in June, after the pharmacy had closed for the day, as Margarita and another cashier were counting the change in their cash registers, Margarita nonchalantly asked whether her coworker thought that Americans had to stand in long lines the way Soviets did when purchasing meat, whether she thought that ordinary citizens in America could easily obtain tickets to the ballet and the theater, unlike their Soviet counterparts. The coworker uncharacteristically sniped that Margarita had made her lose count of her 15-kopek pieces, and the two finished their work in silence.

The following morning their supervisor, a hefty woman in a white smock, summoned Margarita into her tiny closet of an office, and from across her desk warned, "No more anti-Soviet questions from you, Margarita Genrikhovna *Schmidt*. I know where you live. Remember that."

"Of course my coworker informed on me," Margarita explained to Jonathan. "She feared that I might have been testing her loyalty. Anyone can be a spy, after all. Naturally I had to leave that job and have not worked since. If I don't find other employment, I risk arrest as a social parasite. Sometimes I wonder how I can continue to exist in this society."

Margarita looked again into Jonathan's eyes, batted her lashes, took satisfaction in the somber purse of his lips.



During the third week of their meetings, wanderings and discussions, Margarita took to slipping her hand through Jonathan's arm as they walked, first with school-girlish hesitation, then with the boldness of a girlfriend's sense of possessory right. The first time she did so, she

felt the muscles of his forearm tense and resist her touch — such a shy gallant! — but she firmly held her grip. And she laughingly scolded him when he once arrived five minutes late for a rendezvous, "Is this how American gentlemen are taught to respect their lady friends?"

She stopped pulling out her change purse, too, permitted him to pay for their ice cream, tea, pastries: began looking forward, with expectation instead of surprise, to his gifts of Western baubles — pantyhose in a plastic egg, Swiss chocolate, cigarettes which she would not smoke but would save for barter. She convinced herself that the unsolicited presents were tokens of deep affection and caring, she did not for a moment recall his having mentioned that she was the only unofficial Russian Jonathan had met, and therefore, the only person on whom he was likely to bestow these petty treasures.

Margarita felt obligated by etiquette, genuine gratitude and her experience in soliciting favors, to reciprocate his generosity. So, one afternoon, as they mingled among sightseers examining the canvasses, mosaics and frescoes in St. Isaac's Cathedral, as her half-heels clicked along the marble floor and her briefcase swung by her side, Margarita asked Jonathan what he would like as a gift.

He paused, then, "Nothing, really. I appreciate your spending time and showing me around."

"Nonsense. A memento of sorts is necessary. Do you like music?"

"Some."

"Do you play the pianoforte?"

"I took lessons for two years. When I was a child."

"Excellent." She nodded with the definitiveness of a czarina authorizing a symphony to commence, then whispered, "Scriabin. Not much of his sheet music is published now, but for you I will obtain some. I have a friend who works in a music shop. You are familiar with

his work?"

"Oh, sure. Scriabin. We listen to him all the time on campus. Can't get enough."

For a moment, Margarita regarded Jonathan's grin and roll of the eyes as an indication of delirious delight, rather than as an invitation to sarcastic laughter. Then, recalling the rolls of eyes she had once seen on a Frenchman, once on a Swede, and still another time on an Italian, she blurted, "Is that a gesture of mockery?"

Jonathan blushed pink.

"I only meant to offer a kindness," Margarita whispered through dry lips, hoping that the trembling of her legs was the result of a sudden earthquake.

Jonathan, now a deep red, grabbed her hands. "Of course you were. Just being kind. I'm sorry. Music would be a wonderful memento, really." He hung his head. "Sometimes I act like a child."

The marble floor gradually resumed its stability beneath Margarita's feet; she swallowed, squeezed Jonathan's fingertips. "Nonsense. You're a fine gentleman." He looked up and she smiled into his eyes.

So the summer progressed with museums, cafés, unrestored courtyards hinting of faded aristocratic glory, strolls along the Neva Embankment. And although Margarita had traded a volume of Tsvetaeva's poetry for Scriabin Etudes long before having met Jonathan — in preparation for meeting just such an ideal foreigner — she did not give the present to him right away. She reminded him of the gift frequently, but held onto the prize as security, as a dangling carrot to assure his continued willingness to visit with her even should his affections for her waver.

✦ ✦ ✦

After five weeks had passed from the date of their initial meeting, Jonathan announced that his stay in Leningrad was approaching its end.

Well-prepared for the moment, Margarita responded, "I have been delighting my mother with stories of you. She is most anxious to make your acquaintance. Would you be our dinner guest the night before you leave our city? My mother will be present so all will be quite proper."

"A great way to end the trip. I'd love to."

"Hurrah!" A familiar gleeful clap of the hands.

✦ ✦ ✦

"Margarita, you're wearing the red turban?" asked Khristina Ermolaevna as she examined her daughter.

Margarita tugged the back of her turban firmly into place, patted her cheeks lightly to assure her fingertips that the powder remained dry, and checked that the top button of her collar was suitably fastened; her purpose would not be suited were she to appear too brazen.

"And that dress. You haven't worn blue in years."

"Mama, tonight is the threshold of our destiny. May I wear your jewelry?" She did not need to be more specific, for her mother possessed only one piece of jewelry, a hand-tooled, gold Kirghiz bracelet, a pre-Revolutionary wedding present from her own mother.

"I spent so much time on the salads; I didn't fix up."

Khristina Ermolaevna spat onto her thick fingertips, ran them along the top of her head to paste down the white strands straying from their brushed positions.

"You needn't, Mama. Don't be concerned."

"How does the table look?"

Margarita surveyed the living room coffee table covered in woven straw placemats, green and white bowls full of pickles, tomato slices, black and white breads, butter, cheese, sliced Moscow sausage (in exchange for which Margarita had promised the butcher shop saleslady translations of letters received from grandchildren now living in America), various salads combining chopped beets, potatoes, peas, garlic, dill and mayon-

naise.

"You're a marvel, Mama. An angel."

At the ring of the buzzer, Khristina Ermolaevna tugged on the sides of her brown housecoat to smooth the wrinkles, ran her hand across her forehead as though to smooth the wrinkles there as well, straightened her black-framed glasses, positioned herself by the front door. Margarita opened it and Jonathan walked in raising a net bag with a bottle of Soviet champagne. "For our party." He spoke in Russian because, after Margarita had extended her invitation, she cautioned him to speak only Russian in her apartment to avoid arousing suspicions in case the apartment were bugged.

"Hurrah for the American!" squeaked Khristina Ermolaevna, who had not tasted champagne in over twenty years, not since the day she retired from scrubbing the floors of the Museum of the October Revolution.

"Mama, shhh! Be careful!"

Khristina Ermolaevna duly hung her head in penance for having possibly alerted eavesdropping authorities to the national origin of their guest.

"Jonathan, I would like to present my mother, Khristina Ermolaevna."

"Delighted," he said with a modest bow.

"You were right, Margarita," said the old woman. "A gentleman. Come in, Jonathan. Come in and eat."

"My mother is enthusiastic. We so rarely have guests."

"And we so rarely eat!" Khristina Ermolaevna giggled. "Just a joke. Just a joke. But really, before the Revolution—"

"Mama ! "

The old woman lowered her voice to a whisper, determined to speak her mind to the only American she had ever met, to tattle on the Soviet authorities to a citizen

of the only country strong enough to spank hers, "Before the Revolution there was more food in the city. Much more."

"Mama, take the champagne into the kitchen please and pour for us?"

Alone with Jonathan, Margarita asked, "And how do I look?"

She watched him inspect her. "Like a noblewoman," he said.

Her knees wobbled as she curtsied. "Be seated, please. And help yourself. All is for you."

"And you?"

"Oh, I couldn't." Margarita swallowed to quell the shivers in her stomach, took one deep breath after another, played with the ruffles on her blue cuffs. "Do begin or Mama will be insulted."

Jonathan spooned a variety of salads on a plate, started to eat when he looked up at Margarita's twisting hands. "Am I doing something wrong? Making you nervous?"

"Nervous? Goodness, no. Perhaps a mite. Not at all. Why should you? We don't often have guests, you see. We would have, had times been different. Mama and I sometimes fancy our apartment a Petersburg salon with poets and painters dropping in to share tea and gossip. Unfortunately such a gathering rarely takes place here. Never yet, actually. Mama's so elderly, you understand. We don't often entertain." She whispered, "Certainly not gentlemen from abroad. From America. No reason to be nervous."

"Good."

Jonathan tasted and swallowed a bit of everything.

Margarita regarded his polite smiles as indications of gustatory satisfaction.

"Let me butter you some bread." As Margarita handed him half a slice, she slid closer to him on the sofa,

made certain that her knuckles grazed his palm. To mask her flush, she asked, "Did you find the beet salad tasty? I wanted to offer a greater assortment, but did not have time to shop adequately. Mama will fry potatoes later. With a piece of fish I found at the market." Margarita slid closer to him, so close that she was certain her knee glowed from the heat of his.

Khristina Ermolaevna brought in three champagne-filled goblets on a tray, passed them out. Margarita toasted, "To Freedom." They all drank.

Khristina Ermolaevna winked so that only Margarita could see. She mouthed a "Now," at her daughter and shuffled back into the kitchen.

"Jonathan," Margarita began, "I have the Scriabin for you." She presented them to him.

"Great. Thanks. I'll play them first chance I get."

She lifted an eyebrow in question.

"Really. I mean it," he said, bobbing his head like a pigeon's. "I appreciate it. A super gift." He set them on the sofa beside him.

Margarita smiled. "Now," she said, as much to prepare herself as to prepare him. "I have a question for you, to ask of you. A request. A favor."

"Sure." He sipped more of the sweet champagne.

Margarita cleared her throat, placed her right hand over her heart, her left hand on his forearm, again dropped her voice to a whisper and asked, "Jonathan, will you marry me?"

At the institute where she had begun studying translation before the War, Margarita was courted by a number of beaux. One in particular, a certain Arkady Arkadievich with a thick blond mustache, always brought flutters to her breast. After the War, when his mother tearfully told Margarita the news of his having been killed by a stray Soviet bullet in Berlin, Margarita vowed never to marry. And she kept her promise.

Initially she did so because she genuinely grieved for the first man to have kissed her, the first whose hand she had permitted to slip below her waist when waltzing to a record in her mother's living room, the first to have nuzzled her ear as they sat in her mother's kitchen pretending to translate documents together for class. Later, she kept her promise because she had promised, because she had uttered those binding words to the mother of a hero, never mind that Margarita had long since forgotten the taste of his lips. Then she kept her promise because her own mother seemed to find peace in their lives as "two bachelor girls." Finally she kept her promise because she had always done so, had grown accustomed to permitting fantasies of a man's warm touch to dwell only within dreams of dances and parties in the Czar's Winter Palace.

But one day she stumbled upon a reason to marry which would not violate a departed sweetheart's memory, which would not disturb even the mother of an accidentally killed soldier, which her own mother would regard as clever, admirable, even self-sacrificial.

Jonathan sputtered splashes of champagne, wiped away dribbles from his chin with the back of his hand. "Margarita....I'm flattered.... You're a very nice lady. Awfully nice, really. Kind to have shown me around so much. But marriage. I'm only nineteen."

"Oh, goodness!" she raised her red-polished nails to her lower lip and whispered, "You misunderstand. I did not properly phrase the question. Only on paper. A paper marriage. Forgive my error. To get out. A marriage with a foreigner. It's a way to get out. To emigrate. Forgive my mistaken phrasing of the question." She looked away, knowing full well that she had not made a mistake, that she had planned to phrase the question precisely as she had done. Just as she had planned to spout out the explanation of "paper marriage," in case

Jonathan reacted as he actually did.

Khristina Ermolaevna poked her head around the side of the living room door frame. "Did you ask?"

"Mama, to the kitchen! We've not yet finished."

The white head pulled back and out of sight like a turtle's.

Jonathan shook his head gently. "I'd like to help, really I would." Margarita watched his eyes dart around the room in search of an excuse. "But I'm only nineteen," he said once more. "And I'm leaving tomorrow. And I don't know American laws about this sort of thing."

"Just on paper," she implored softly as her shoulders started to droop. "A marriage on paper," Margarita repeated to him. To herself.

Jonathan gulped his remaining half goblet of champagne.

"And don't you think the Soviet authorities would be suspicious of a marriage between people with such an obvious difference in age? I mean, you're a lovely woman, but still. You know."

"But still," Margarita said with a forced smile. "I know."

She shifted to the other end of the sofa. "I hadn't thought of that perception. You are right, of course. Quite right."

"But maybe there's a way," Jonathan whispered. "Couldn't you emigrate to Israel like Soviet Jews are doing? I could ask the Israelis to send you an invitation as if you were Jewish."

"Perhaps. Perhaps the Israeli authorities would assist a woman named Margarita Genrikhovna *Schmidt*. And her mother named Khristina. Perhaps. Don't you worry, the problem is not yours. Each person must find a way out of the prison of his own personal history."

Khristina Ermolaevna poked her head around the

door frame once more.

"Come in, Mama."

"Did he agree? Are we going to America?" She dropped into an armchair.

"No, Mama. We overlooked something. A not-so-minor detail. We forgot that I am old."

"You? Don't be silly. *I'm* old."

Margarita ran her fingers along the curve of her powder-dried cheek, a once precious summer orange, unpeeled, saved on the shelf all fall and winter, one whose juices had evaporated with time, whose wrinkled rind had toughened in spots, softened in spots.

Loudly, in a voice boisterous enough for any bugging device to pick up, Margarita said, "There was a period in history when Lenin had to bide his time in a mere straw hut, when life was not safe even for such a future hero. Now monuments, statues and museums stand in his name. His memory offers hope to us all."

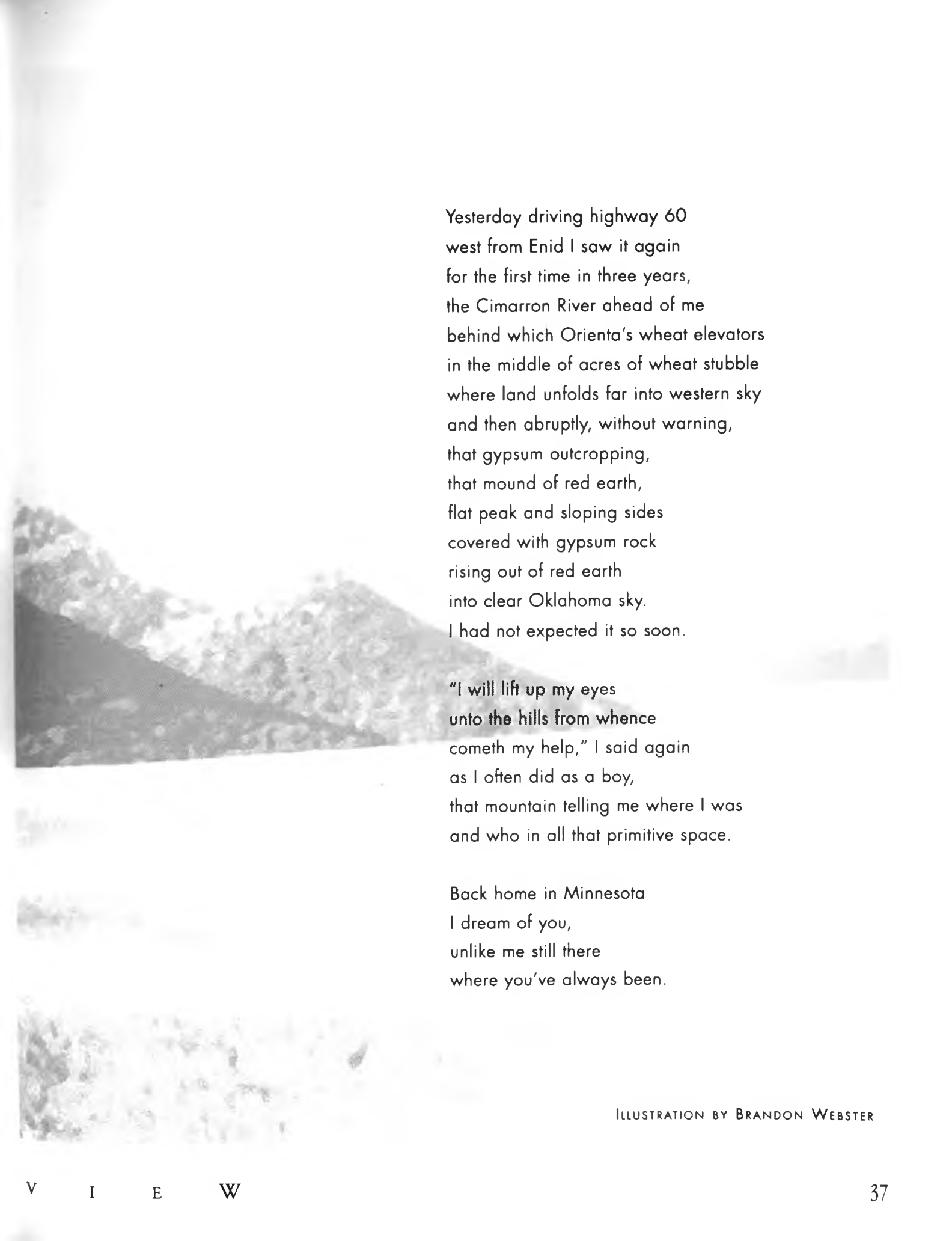
Margarita stood and left the room. Left Jonathan and Khristina Ermolaevna to stare at one another across the salads.



LONE PEAK

by Elmer Suderman

It was always there,
a lone sentinel on the northern edge
of a low rim of hills
we called Gloss Mountains,
unless a thunder shower
coming from Alva or Woodward
concealed it for a little while.
Civilizations ten thousand years
old knew it. Cherokees and Comanches
took their bearings from it.
It told those who made the run
into the Cherokee Strip
where they were and steadied them as it later
steadied me, the son of one
who made the run and homesteaded
a quarter section of that good earth.

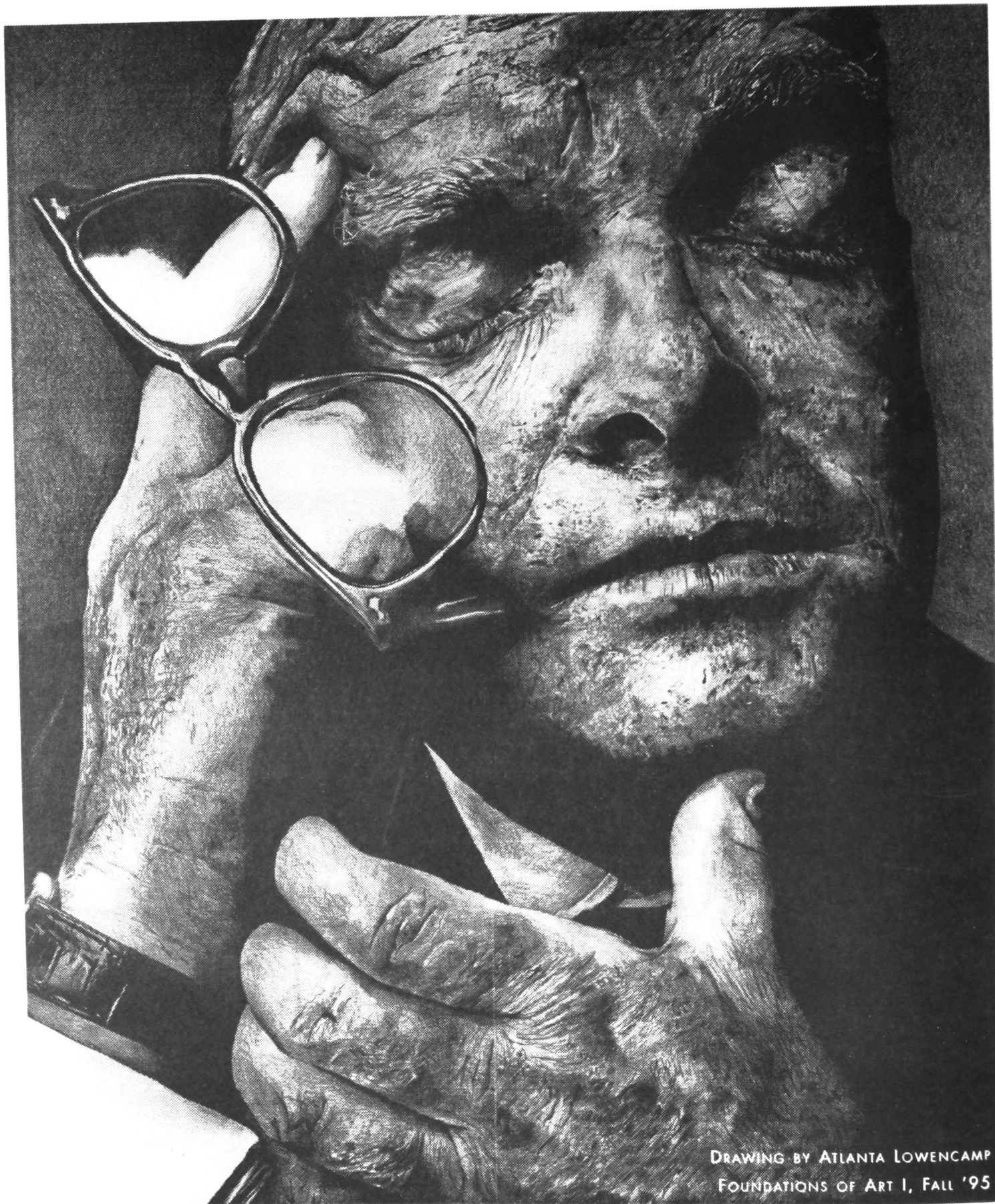


Yesterday driving highway 60
west from Enid I saw it again
for the first time in three years,
the Cimarron River ahead of me
behind which Orienta's wheat elevators
in the middle of acres of wheat stubble
where land unfolds far into western sky
and then abruptly, without warning,
that gypsum outcropping,
that mound of red earth,
flat peak and sloping sides
covered with gypsum rock
rising out of red earth
into clear Oklahoma sky.
I had not expected it so soon.

"I will lift up my eyes
unto the hills from whence
cometh my help," I said again
as I often did as a boy,
that mountain telling me where I was
and who in all that primitive space.

Back home in Minnesota
I dream of you,
unlike me still there
where you've always been.

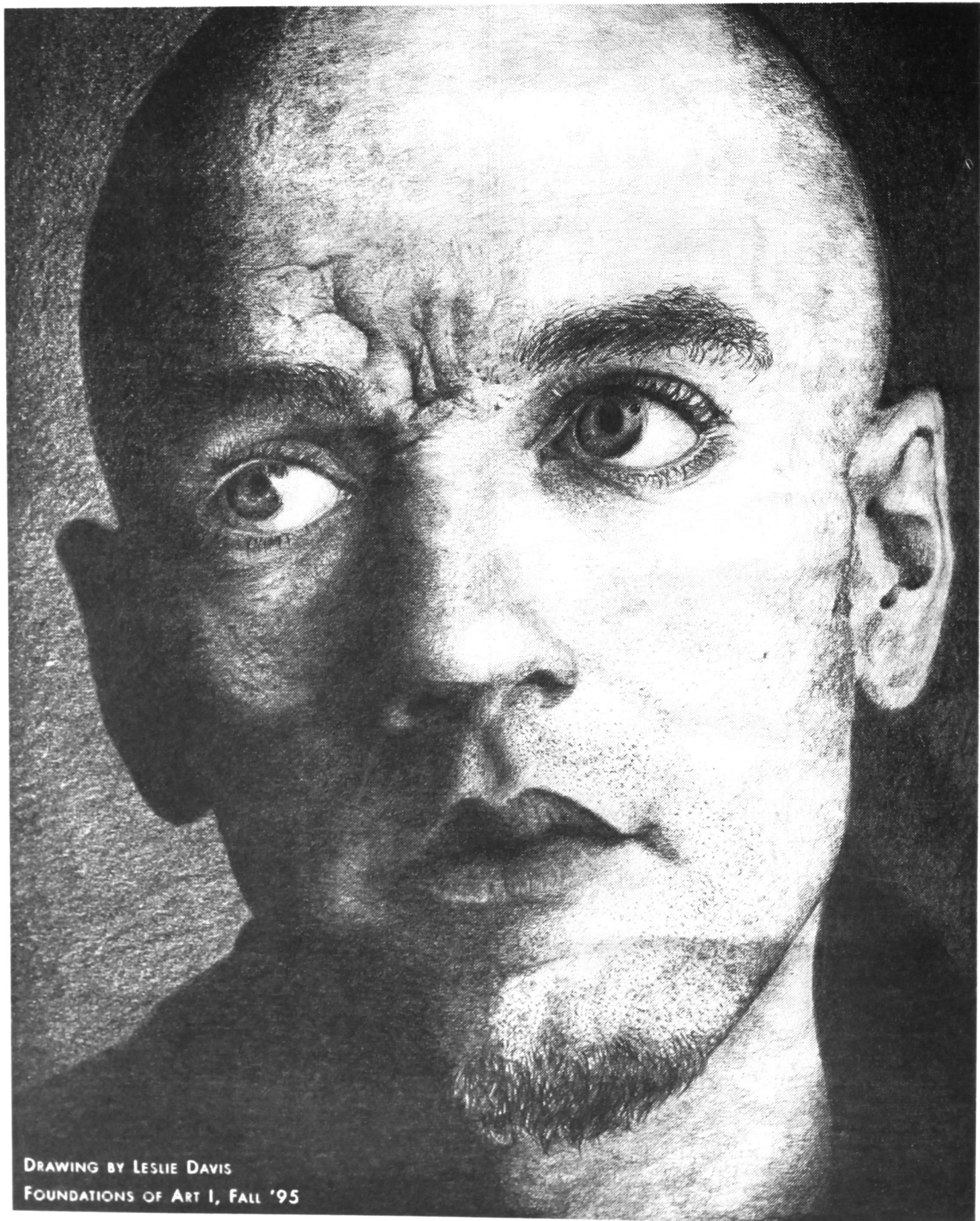
ILLUSTRATION BY BRANDON WEBSTER



DRAWING BY ATLANTA LOWENCAMP
FOUNDATIONS OF ART I, FALL '95



DRAWING BY AMY MIDDENDORF
FOUNDATIONS OF ART I, FALL '95



DRAWING BY LESLIE DAVIS
FOUNDATIONS OF ART I, FALL '95

CONTRIBUTOR'S NOTES

Del Cain has always had an affinity with northwest Oklahoma. He feels the wonderment of western Oklahoma lies in the fact that few people know of its charm.

Jannett Highfill's mother was born in Ada, and her father was born and raised on a farm 15 miles south of Freedom. Her father still owns the farm his father was born on. She has had several poems published on rural/agrarian themes, most recently in the *Rolling Coulter*. She has also had poems published in the *Kansas Quarterly*, the *Mississippi Valley Review* and elsewhere. She does a considerable amount of professional writing as well; her specialties are international trade and economic methodology.

Michelle L. Hutchens, of Lawton, has been published in the *Cameron Forum* and has a story scheduled for publication in *The Ultimate Writer*.

Daniel M. Jaffe has had other Russia-based stories and essays appear in *Cimarron Review*, *The Greensboro Review*, *The Chattahoochee Review*, and *Green Mountains Review*. He is in the MFA program at Vermont College.

LuAnn Keener is a native of Texas. Her first collection of poems, *Color Documentary*, was published by Calyx Books last November; it received a 1990 Virginia Prize, and a chapbook

selection under the same title was published by Troika Press in spring 1992. Poems from *Homeland*, a second manuscript which is currently under consideration, won the Mary Roberts Rinehart Award in Poetry, the 1992 Writers at Work Award, and the 1992 Chelsea Award. Her work has appeared in *Nimrod*, *Chelsea*, and numerous others.

Richard Luftig is a professor of educational psychology and special education at Miami University in Ohio. During 1994-95, he has had over forty poems published or scheduled to be published in literary journals such as *Negative Capability*, *Four Quarters*, *Aura Literary Arts Review*, *Moody Street Review*, *Black River Review*, *Mind Matters Review*, *Mind in Motion*, *Emrys*, *Parnassus Literary Journal*, *The Lucid Stone*, *Ebbing Tide*, *Black Buzzard Review*, *Pinehurst Journal*, *Bone & Flesh*, *Poetalk*, *Plainsongs*, and *Potpourri*. Two of his poems are scheduled to appear in the upcoming anthology *Reader's Break*.

Greg Luthi's work has most recently appeared in *West Branch 33* and the twenty-fifth anniversary edition of the *Cimarron Review*. He received his Ph.D. from Oklahoma State University in 1989, and for the past six years has taught creative writing at Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, Kansas.

Errol Miller has been writing since 1972. His works have most recently been published in the *Cimarron Review*, *Midland Review*, *Real*, *Laurel Review*, *Atlanta Review*, *Xavier Review*, *Four Quarters*, *Hiram Poetry Review*, *Puerta Del Sol*, *Graham House Review*, *Hampden-Stoney Poetry Review*, and *Midwest Quarterly*.

Patrick J. Murphy has been published in *The Tampa Review* and *The Willow Review*. Some of his work will soon be appearing in *The Georgetown Review*, and *Sun Dog: The Southeast Review*. His first collection, consisting of two novellas and nine short stories, has been published by White Pine Press.

L.L. Ollivier's work has appeared recently or is forthcoming in *Bellowing Ark*, *Brushfire*, *Chaminade Literary Review*, *Fathoms*, *Gulf Coast*, and *Yefief*. He taught English for six years in the community college and/or university systems in Texas and Nevada. He is currently working on his Master of Divinity degree at the American Baptist Seminary of West Berkeley, California. He lives in Reno with his wife and two children.

John Sokol's work has previously been published in *The New York Quarterly*, *Negative Capability*, *Plainsongs*, *Redbook Magazine*, and many others.

CONTRIBUTOR'S NOTES

Pat Sturm, of Weatherford, combines two of her favorite pastimes in this issue — gardening and writing. Sturm's other gardening articles have appeared in *GreenPrints*, *Garden Thymes*, and the *Virginia Gardener*.

Elmer Suderman, born in Fairview, Oklahoma, winner of one of the Seaton Awards of the *Kansas Quarterly* for 1986, has published poetry in *Wind Magazine*, *Descant*, *Forum* (Ball State

University), *Cimmarron Review*, *North Country*, *Anvil*, *South Dakota Review*, *Midwest Quarterly*, *Loonfeather*, and many others. In addition to poetry he has published short stories, essays, and scholarly articles on American literature. He is a professor emeritus at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota.

Sondra D. Williams writes, directs plays, and with her husband Doug

grows shiitake mushrooms at their Lost Creek Mushroom Farm in Perkins, Oklahoma. She has won national awards for her personal essays, video scripts, and technical publications. She is a Theatre Artist in Residence with the State Arts Council of Oklahoma. "Quartz Mountain — Sands of Change" grew out of her work at the 1990 Oklahoma Fall Arts Institute at Quartz Mountain.

MUSIC, THEATER, ART & LITERARY EVENTS

APRIL

- 2 Westview Writers' Festival. 7 p.m.
For information call Fred Alsberg at 774-3168.
- 4, 18, The Journey Inward: Women's Autobiography—part of the *Let's Talk About It* reading and discussion series offered at the Weatherford Public Library
- 4 Dr. Jill Owens *One Writer's Beginnings*, by Eudora Welty
- 18 Dr. Jerry Nye *Letters Of A Woman Homesteader*, by Elinore Pruitt Stewart
- 18, 19, 20 *The Diary of Anne Frank* SWOSU Theatre Department production
- 19 Individual Artists of Oklahoma (IAO) will present the premier of *The Oklahoma City Children's Memorial Quilt Exhibit*. This exhibit begins April 19 and will continue until June 1. Nineteen of the quilts shown during the exhibit are dedicated to the children lost in the Murrah Federal Building bombing.

ONGOING EVENTS

IAO will host poetry readings on the second Sunday of each month. Beginning November 12, the readings will be from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. The format will combine featured poets and an open mike. Any poet wishing to participate as a featured poet should call IAO and leave a name and phone number.

*IAO (Individual Artists of Oklahoma) is located at the corner of Sheridan and Hudson in Oklahoma City, and is open Tuesday through Saturday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free. Call (405) 232-6060 for more information.



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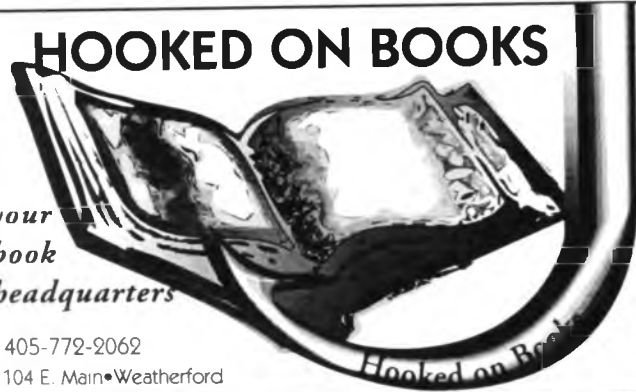
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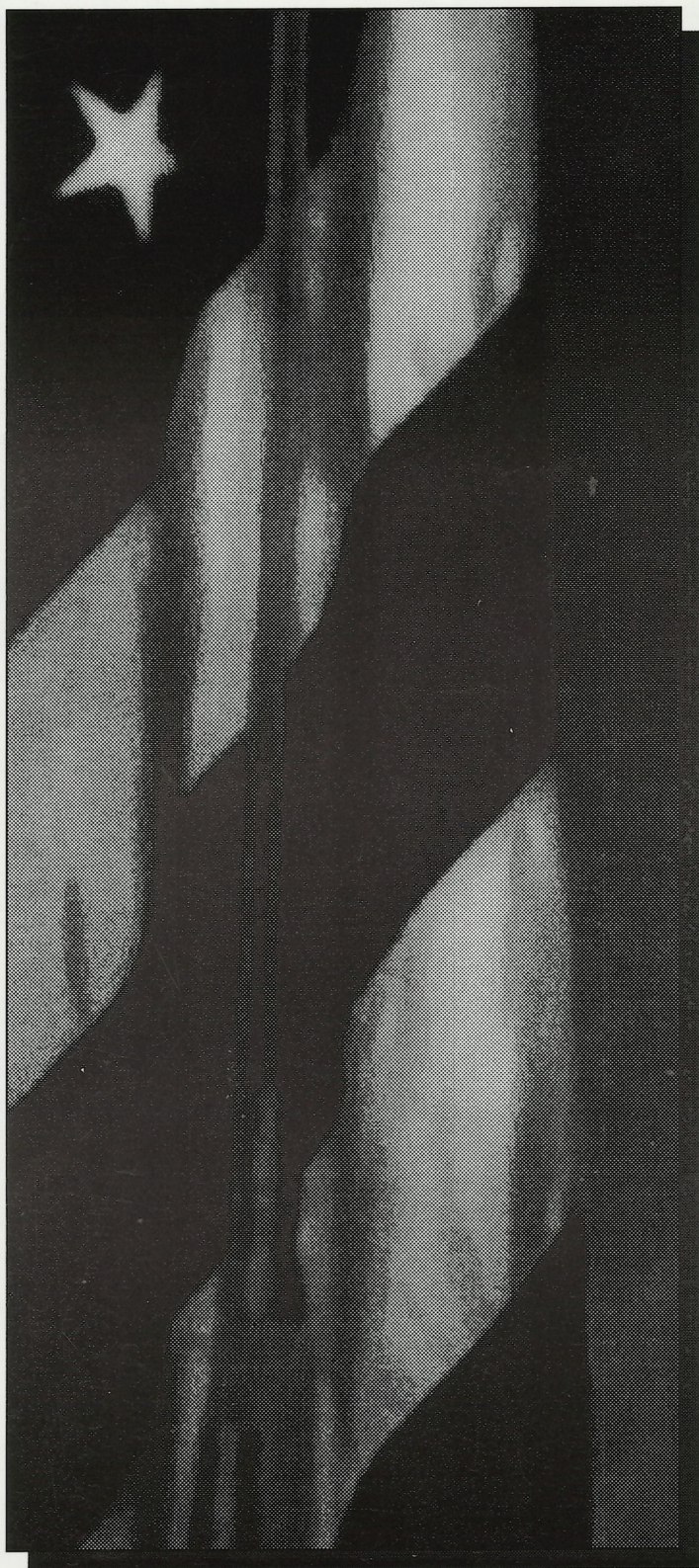
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