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# DIALOGUE

MAY 1990



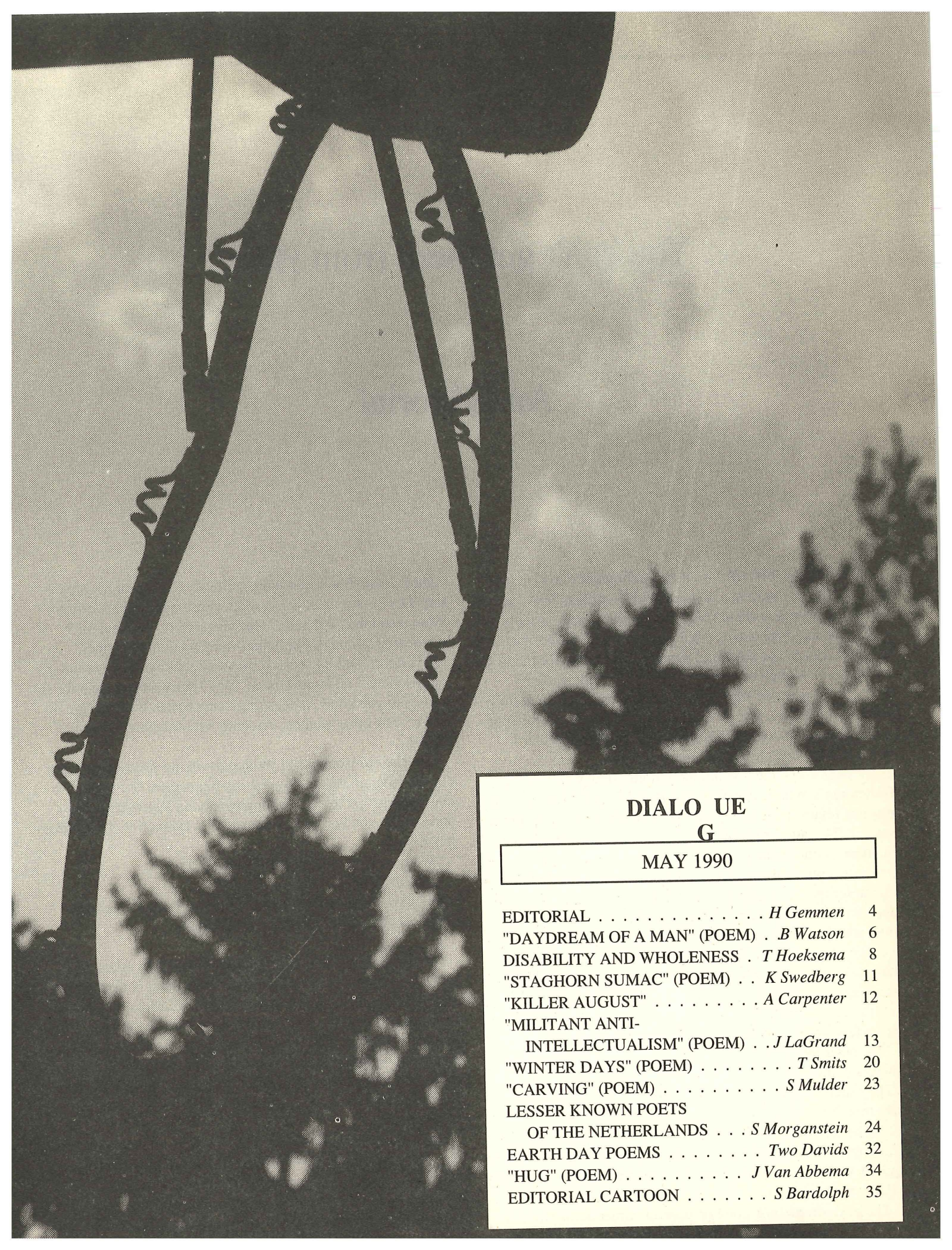
Earth Day Poems

Disability and Wholeness

Lesser Known Poets of the Netherlands

*ABOUT THE COVER:* "Look Don't Think," oil on canvas painting by Karen Larson. "Please, sit back and relax. Laugh. Accept what you are told, but distance yourself just enough so that it will not affect you. By all means, let yourself be entertained. Forget your troubles and lose yourself in a sugar-coated world . . . after all, you can always turn the dial if you don't like it."

*ABOUT THE G:* The ligature's ligamental structure fractured. Oops!



DIALO UE  
G

MAY 1990

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# You can't get there from Here:

## An Editorial

THIS SPRING BREAK I went to San Francisco to visit my aunt. Actually, I used her so that I could visit San Francisco. I had never gone anywhere for spring break before—usually I stay home and rake leaves—but this year, with friends heading to New Orleans and Boston, I decided it was time for me to get away too. Although my given reason for leaving western Michigan was to see what San Francisco had to offer, secretly I simply wanted to *leave*, to detach myself from my familiar environment and be on my own. I wanted to learn whether I could survive outside the cultural incubator.

Although I saw the popular attractions—like Chinatown, Fisherman's Wharf, Alcatraz, and *Beach Blanket Babylon*, the musical revue about San Francisco which has been running since 1974—and I rode the cable cars, the more remarkable incidents were unplanned. One evening at rush hour I boarded a streetcar with a drunk. He breathed his rancid breath heavily on me for two stops, then mumbled he was on the wrong bus and stumbled off. Another evening I boarded with two young men who had unfocused eyes and slow, quiet speech. One had a cast on his leg while the other had on a plaid jacket over a turquoise shirt and orange scarf, striped pants, and lacy black stockings.

"It's not far now, is it," the one with the broken leg said. "It's just a few stops, isn't it. We're almost home."

The other man surveyed the crowded bus. "This reminds me there's going to be a revolution soon," he said confidently. "They spend billions on the B-1 Bomber and then pack us in like this. Yes, there's going to be revolution and *heads are going to roll*." He began humming "Revolution" for the other passengers but then, seeing he had lost their attention, hummed quietly to himself. Later I heard him absentmindedly humming "Faith of our Fathers."

The next afternoon I stood on a street corner across from a

Catholic church in Little Italy, seriously looking at my street-map. Down one street was a shop whose marquee advertised "Men men men / All nude / On stage 24 hrs." Behind me I overheard a group of old Italian women talking together.

"It's not so bad for most of the week, but by the weekend it's really lonely," said one woman. "My Henry's been gone for six years, but you know, it doesn't get any easier. Sundays are the worst." The other women, evidently all of them widows, agreed.

I left the old women and walked down the street to the next corner, where I looked down at my map again. Sitting on the church step next to me, a young woman in a sleeveless dress and sandals smoked a cigarette and was asking for change from passersby.

"What are you looking for?" she asked me.

"Mason Street?"

She gave me the directions. On Mason, I caught the next cable car and headed back to the apartment.

Upon returning from a trip, tourists are usually asked what they saw and did; historic landmarks, theatrical performances, and museum visits top the lists they rattle off. It is assumed that these attractions offer the most efficient way to absorb a culture—even my guidebook had a listing of museums and preserved buildings under "Cultural Attractions." San Francisco, like many cities, has many museums full of collected remnants from the past. Any tourist can get culture for the price of admission.

Upon their return, however, most travelers are not asked how they *feel* about their experiences, perhaps because most tourists feel glad only about being home. The tourists I saw on the cable cars looked relieved that they could just sit and watch the scenery pass by instead of actively engaging it. Taking a cable

car to Fisherman's Wharf is easy; taking the risk of getting lost in the red-light district is not.

It seems to me that, in a broader sense of the word, "culture" is not obtainable in a museum. Although one can view the products of a given culture, museum collections display only the selected remains of that culture. The living and present culture itself can be appreciated only by participating—by confronting it face to face and allowing it to make an effect. Similarly, learning a foreign language requires actively engaging the language rather than observing it from a distance.

I wanted to engage San Francisco's culture this spring break. To see how its people live and perceive their world was my objective, and I could see it best in the lonely widows, in the young woman beggar, who instead of asking for money had offered to help, and in the drunk, who helped me onto the bus and then stood too close. Exchanging greetings in an Italian

coffee shop was more rewarding than exchanging my money for admission tickets and trinkets at the souvenir shops.

When I skipped the tourist attractions and engaged the people of San Francisco, I became a partaker in loneliness and sadness. In this I felt right at home: I encounter similar feelings every day in those living on this campus. We hide it well, but sometimes a hint escapes in an unmeasured word or unguarded glance.

I enjoyed the freedom that separation from home and friends offered me—perhaps because I knew that after a week I'd be home and that being alone was not permanent. In the waning afternoon hours, waiting for my aunt to return from work, I imagined the loneliness the two sad young men on the streetcar felt. They knew which stop to take, but in the world they were two lost boys.

—HG

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Heather Gemmen

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#### STAVES

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W Dale Brown

*Dialogue* is this bound thing you're currently holding that a few students belch forth on power-hungry whims in order to force-feed "culture" to the deprived depraved of Calvin College and Chicken. Compliments and measurements may be directed to *Dialogue*, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49546. By the way, this stuff is copyrighted 1990, so lay off.

The editors welcome inquiries, contributions, correspondence, submissions, works of art, poems, short stories, essays, and a partridge in a pear tree. Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! Now that's really inspired humor! We reserve the right to edit, but will do so only with the author's prior consent and approval.

## Daydream of a Man with a Penchant for Garbonzo Beans

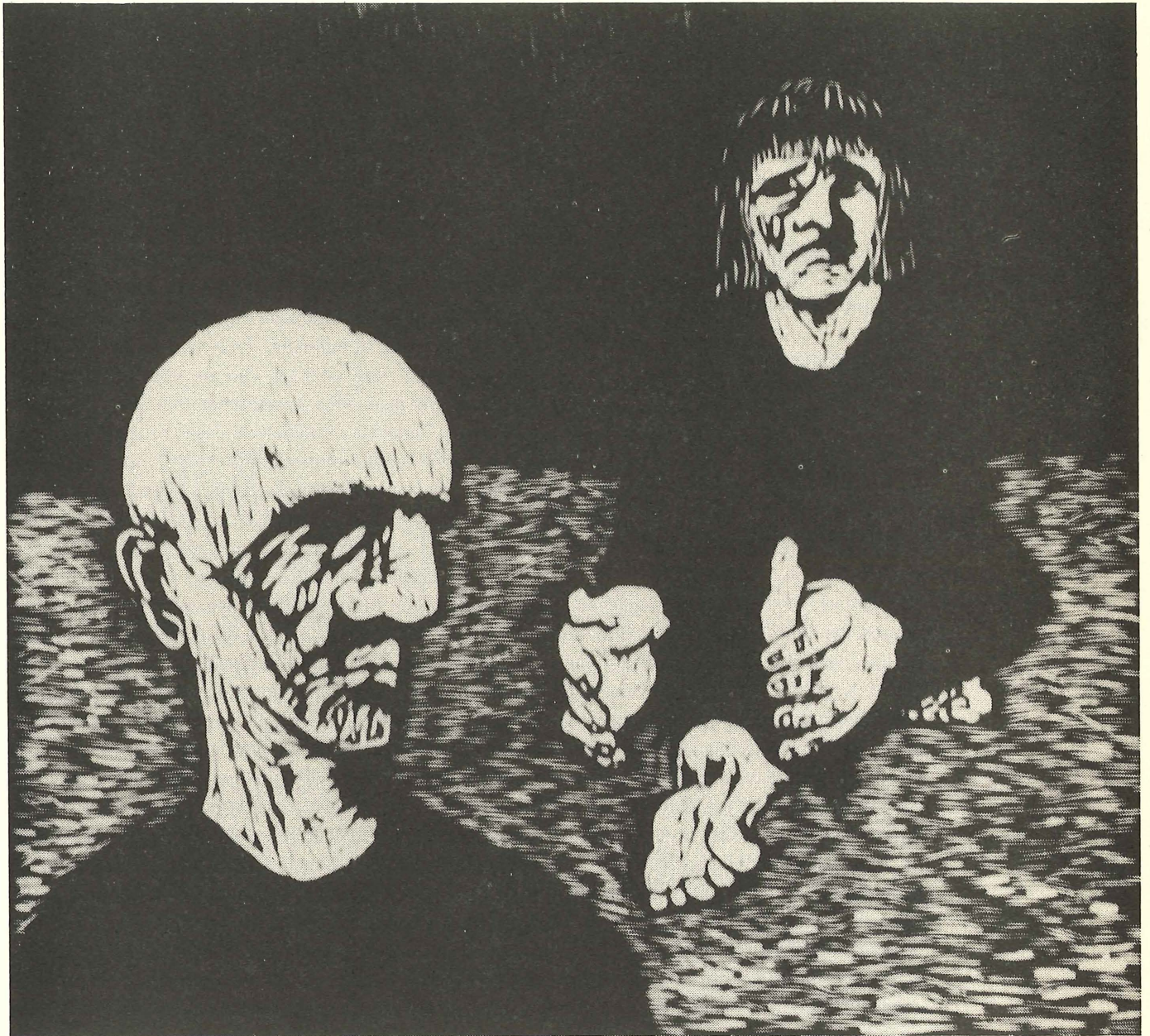
He hadn't even met her  
yet he'd already created her  
in his mind.

He'd seen her talking with Dan  
the lips were what started it  
it would be such a good kiss  
lily soft, yielding.

At first there would be talk.  
While:  
walking along moist, private paths  
or  
sharing Cafe au Lait in bohemian little bistros  
or  
popping corks off sparkling cider amidst pansy  
dappled meadows.

He might kiss her first here.  
They'd be laughing at his penchant for Garbonzo  
Beans in his salad.  
"I am a man who likes Garbonzo Beans in his salad!  
Love me or leave me!" he would say.  
Flirting a smile, she would sigh, "I don't want to  
leave you."  
Then. . . the kiss.  
Not chaste yet not too passionate.  
Lily soft, yielding.

*Ben Watson*



*Julie Klazinga*

*Ecclesiastes 4:1-12*

*Woodcut*



# Disability and Wholeness

by *Thomas B Hoeksema*

“ . . . God chose the things which the world  
views as foolish to teach the wise;  
God chose the weak things of the world to  
teach the strong.  
He chose the things this world views as lowly,  
and the things which are despised,  
and the things that are not  
to nullify the things that are,  
so that no one may boast before him.  
It is because of God that you are  
in Christ Jesus . . . ”  
*(1 Corinthians 1:27-30a, paraphrased)*

culty and he also has limited language facility. Conversation with Harold consists mainly of a few stock phrases, the most frequent being, “how ya doin’ buddy,” accompanied by a pat on the back. Harold speaks this line many times each Sunday morning, occasionally with a twist. Once I heard him greet our pastor with the words, “Hello you devil you!” Only Harold could get away with that, though I have been tempted to try!

On one communion Sunday I came to understand the importance of Harold’s presence in our church in new ways. The liturgy that day included what we have come to call “come forward” communion. As opposed to being served the bread and wine in our seats, small groups are ushered to the front of the sanctuary where we stand in semicircle to receive the bread and wine. While groups move to the front and are served, the rest of the congregation softly sings, usually to piano accompaniment. Harold was part of a group seated near the back, and they all had assembled at the front before Harold had made it halfway down the aisle. His greeting, “how ya doin’ buddy,” could be heard easily as Harold stopped to pat the shoulders of friends seated on the aisle. An elder, noticing that Harold’s group was nearly through being served, walked fifteen feet down the aisle and put his arm around Harold. Harold did the same to him, and together they walked to the front. At that very moment—now this is almost too good to be true; it’s as if it were no, it actually *was* scripted—at that moment the congregation was singing a verse of “We Are One in the Spirit.” The very words being sung were “We will work with each other, we will work side by side, and we’ll guard each man’s dignity and save each man’s pride.”

Harold Wylie was prophet and priest to Grace Church that Sunday. He helped us to understand communion in a fresh way. He reminded us that grace is a gift, and that the church is a place where we all are welcome regardless of our particular weaknesses. Harold said to me, this bread and wine is for you, Tom, in spite of your brokenness. What a relief! Worship was better that morning because of Harold.

This story says terribly important things about shalom and our journey toward wholeness. At communion we remember who we are and who God is. Parker Palmer taught me that the opposite of “to remember” is not “to forget,” but “to dismember”—to cut off from humanity. We live in a dismembering world that puts

OUR VIEWS of persons with disabilities, whom the world often sees as foolish and weak, and our concern about their place in the family of God, raise sharply the question of whether we understand the true nature of shalom.

For centuries the Christian Church has responded compassionately to the widow, the orphan, the poor, and those disabled. We have viewed them as needy, and in our strength we have responded mercifully to their weakness. What we are beginning to recognize is that to bring shalom, strong and weak must be viewed as equals. The weak do not need mere compassion from the powerful; they need to be recognized as having power themselves. The Church needs to move beyond a ministry of compassion to a ministry of mutuality. Only when we perceive correctly what persons who are weak do contribute, only then will we experience shalom.

This idea of mutual ministry, of people with and without disabilities doing God’s work alongside of each other in harmony, can be seen in a story from my congregation, Grace CRC. Harold Wylie is an elderly and significantly retarded member of our congregation. Though ambulatory, he walks with diffi-

people into categories (retarded, mentally ill, lesbian). In society and in the church, that does violence to community. Labels distance. How sad it is that we know better how to divide than to unite.

Part of what happens at communion is that we remember who we are—God's redeemed people—and we put back together who we are, ie, we remember who we are: one body made up of many parts. A deep truth about communion is that in it we experience oneness with Christ and oneness with each other. It is communion *for* the saints as well as communion *of* the saints.

The way we view people with disabilities affects not only our understanding of the sacrament of communion but also our understanding of our fundamental character as the family of God. Do we see the Church as essentially the Church of the strong and fit, and do we see disabled persons as those who are not yet strong or fit? Do we see people who have disabilities as the beneficiaries of our generosity, or do we see them as important members of the body of believers without whose gifts we are maimed?

Sometimes being a TAB makes it difficult to hear what the Bible has to say (TAB is the label some people with disabilities use for those who lack another label; it means "temporarily able bodied"). TABs are captives of their non-disabled experience, and at times that makes it difficult to hear the Bible clearly. I am convinced that the persons with whom we must read Scripture are the disabled and the hurting and the poor. Only then will we hear it genuinely. In a church which includes those who have been marginalized, we have an opportunity to learn the secret of Christ: saved by grace, not by anything else. Christ demonstrates his power when we are weak.

During Interim, Randy Smit shared a personal experience with my class which captures much of what I am trying to say. For those of you who do not know him, Randy is a senior majoring in political science who uses an electric wheelchair. With his permission I retell this story.

It started one day when he decided to trek across a deserted field to the side of a lake where he often liked to go to reflect. Failing to notice that rain had

softened the ground, Randy mired down mid-field, tilted forward at a 45 degree angle, in a 90 degree sun, with no one in sight. The word he says best encapsulates the whole experience is, "HELP!" Fortunately, within an hour passersby extricated Randy. Reflecting on this event and the meaning of his daily need for help occupied Randy for some days thereafter, until one Sunday at Madison Square Church it all gelled.

"You see," Randy relates, "I need help even at communion. I cannot rip the bread when it comes by. I cannot get the blood of Christ to my mouth without spilling. I felt helpless again. But then I realized that helplessness is what communion is all about. All of us are helpless. Communion happens because we need help, and it reminds us from where our help comes."

Randy's theological insights grow out of living

with a disability. His ability to share his stories is a gift to us. Knowing Randy helps us to understand our own brokenness, and to understand that brokenness is not the last word.

In a World Council of Churches publication called *Partners in Life*, Leslie Newbigen claims that without people who have disabilities the church

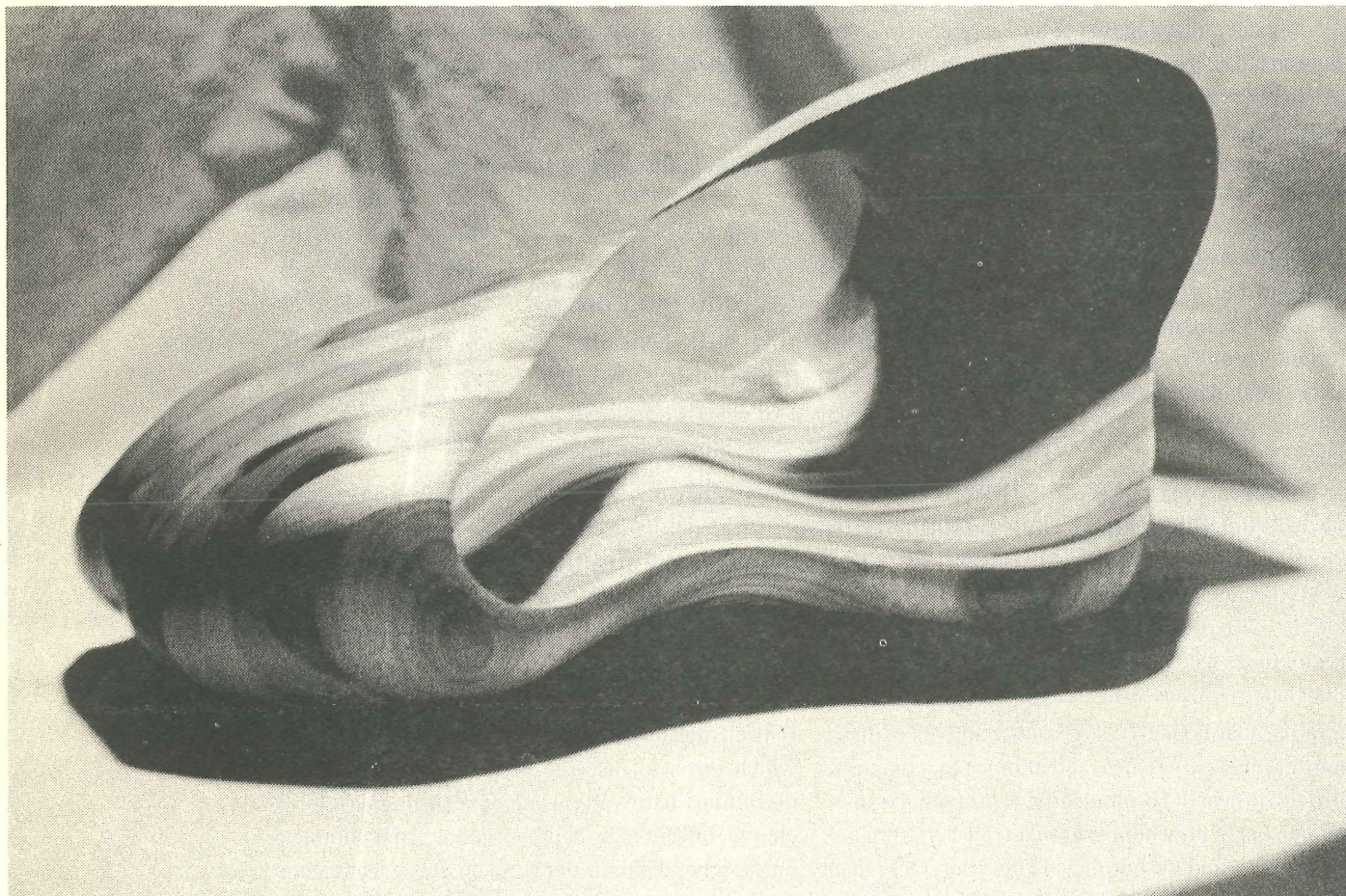
"To keep me from being conceited . . .  
I was given a thorn in my flesh . . . .  
Three times I pleaded with the Lord to  
take it away from me. But he said to  
me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for  
my power shows up best in weak  
people.' Now I am actually glad about  
how weak I am; I am glad to be a  
living demonstration of Christ's power  
instead of trying to do everything by  
myself . . . when I am weak, then I am  
strong."

(II Corinthians 12:7-9, paraphrased)

is itself disabled. A startling thought. The church which does not use the gifts of those who have disabilities harms the wholeness of its mission. A church, or school or neighborhood, is not complete unless it has all kinds of members. It is not authentic until it welcomes persons of different abilities, genders, and races.

In a Chapel meditation, Neal Plantinga spoke of shalom as "... the webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in justice, harmony, and delight . . . where each of God's creatures is a thing of wonder, each person a source of joy." Watch for glimmers of this kind of wholeness. When disabled and nondisabled people are reconciled, we see a sign of the coming kingdom, a glimpse of our Lord's rule, a working out of what God has promised. When the Christian community models shalom by its inclusion of persons with disabilities, the world will marvel at our God, the Lamb who sits upon the throne.

*Thomas B  
Hoeksema is  
Professor of  
Education at  
Calvin College.*



*Steve Fridsma*

*Poplar*

*Sculpture*

### Staghorn Sumac

The spindling arm of  
the sumac, surprised  
at its own awakening,  
gathers all strength to  
offer its bleeding fruit  
to heaven.

Each berry bursts the air as  
it stands on the tip of  
the tree's finger, as it hangs  
on the edge of the sky's palm.  
And the pricking wind, colder  
than luke, bends the branch  
to earth.

Each berry blends the colors  
red and black as it bears the  
sign of fire and ash, as it  
bears the eye of present and  
future. And I, plucking a  
berry from heaven, face the earth  
and offer the bleeding fruit to  
you.

*Karl Swedberg*

## Killer August

by Amy R Carpenter

“When we speak of ‘reason,’” said Professor August, “we don’t just mean thought or thinking—who really knows what ‘thinking’ means, after all?” A few students tentatively raised their hands, not yet realizing the rhetoricality of the question. “Most people say ‘I’m thinking’ when they are actually stalling for time.” August was the only one that chuckled at that. Political Science 101 at McCaffry Community College, entertainment provided by the Founding Father himself. Only twenty minutes more to go, I thought.

The student’s faces were slack as usual, their pens hesitating over the various notebooks and loose papers, waiting for August to write something on the board so they could take notes.

Obliging perhaps by habit, August picked up the chalk and started writing, though he stood close enough to the board to smear a good deal of the white dust on his plaid jacket and bow tie. He spoke as he wrote: “Now, whenever I say ‘reason’ or call a thing ‘rational,’ I am referring to any and/or all of these terms, or any combination of them.”

Clear and lucid as usual.

August turned quickly now, asking, “And why, class, is it so important that we understand exactly what reason is? I mean, I am defining reason clearly so that we can talk about it a lot, easily and without confusion.” I nearly guffawed out loud. “Why is the subject of reason so important to this class, Mr Penitski?”

Steve Penitski stretched himself awake and ran a hand through his longish thick

hair. “Uh, we’re learning about the US government, uh, not just the structure and function, but, uh, the philosophy.”

“And?” August nodded as he listened to his star pupil.

“And that philosophy is, uh, based on a concept that man is a rational being . . . at least in part.”

“Good, nicely done.” Steve didn’t even acknowledge the praise, but was already dozing off again. I looked at him with a bitterness reserved for those who know the answers I don’t. Steve got a lot of those looks; too bad he was never awake to appreciate them.

Meanwhile, back on the chalkboard, August was continuing with his list of “reason terms”: “analytical,” or breaking a problem down into its parts; “synthetic,” or looking at the big picture, as A Whitney Brown says; “creative reason”; “talents and capacities”; et cetera, et cetera.

By “creative reason” August had made a note: “creating something new, as in the fine arts.” By “talents and capacities” he had written, “perhaps fine arts or work skills, must use reason to guide development.” I pictured stiff, staid Reason taking wispy Dance and colorful Music by the hands and leading them down a straight, narrow, stuffy hallway painted in greys.

My bleeding heart got the best of me and I raised my hand.

It took a minute before August called on me, and I’m still not positive he did that because I was in the back of the class and he couldn’t see me, or he just used the time delay to make me nervous, or he was hoping I’d change my mind—which was almost a reality—anyway, he finally did call on me. I took a deep breath and began.

“Mr. August,” I could already tell that he couldn’t hear me. He tipped his ear towards me and I continued, screaming, “I’ve never considered the arts, that is, the fine arts, as being a really rational, uh, field.” A snide smile appeared behind August’s horn-rimmed glasses, though his mouth never moved. I pushed on, “Artists are notorious for living lives of passion and wildness. Van Gogh and his ear,” I heard someone snicker, for all I knew it was August himself—my vision had suddenly become blurred over so that I could hardly see, and I felt like I was going to float out of my seat—“and writers and poets are always killing themselves or drinking too much . . . well, people are in the arts because they need to express passions, which is, as you’ve explained, the opposite of reason.” I stopped, started again, then stopped again. When my vision cleared there was August, giving me a puzzled look. No wonder, too, because I had forgotten something. “I say all this because you’ve mentioned the fine arts in connection with reason, and I don’t know that that is. . . .” Before I faded out August had caught the implication of my unfinished sentence, I was sure of it. I’d

almost said he was wrong. My face was red, I could feel it. The other students looked at me, some with looks of pity, others with looks of amusement.

August was standing, leaning back against his desk, his hands folded in front of him. The classic attack position. To help matters more, a running commentary began in my head against my will, the spokesman for the PBS show "Nature" explaining the situation in a condescending voice to a small academic audience.

"What you're witnessing now," whispered the PBS guy, "is what scientists have called the most deceptive and subtle predator attack in the study of the animal world. Notice the illusion the instructor gives of being in a reclined position—a tactic used to relax the student, thereby making her easy prey."

August's voice broke into my sour musings: "What a good point, Ms."

PBS: "The reassurance—a classic technique used to build confidence. This action on the part of the instructor is a nearly-sure sign that the female student is about to become a supplement to his daily diet."

August: "My argument would be that what an artist *ought* to do is try to moderate his passion, his wild genius, with his capacity for reason. Plato recommended

kicking all the poets out of the Republic, for they stirred up the passions of the people. In our society, disposing of the poets is not an option, but asking them to indulge in moderation," he chuckled, "may be a step we can take. Of course, Ms. . . ."

PBS: "And with the sentence, 'you should know this already . . .' the instructor commences attack."

". . . You should know this already from your reading assignments and the many handouts that I have given the class. And, unless you haven't done the reading, I cannot assume that you were actually asking if an artist ought to moderate his passion with reason—I am assuming that you have done the reading. So, could you, Ms, please clarify exactly what your question is? Are you implying that an artist *ought* to be a passionate, wild, whining type, that he ought to abandon reason?"

PBS: "Cornered, the prey seems to hesitate, unable to decide whether to argue or simply to admit error and submit to her victor. Students are notoriously easy prey, but there have been documented instances of some of the species actually arguing with professors, perhaps in a futile attempt to rise above the role of prey."

The image of the stuffy hall trapping Dance and Music was still in my mind,

now with Reason gloating over their loss of passion, but right now I had my own skin to save.

"No, sir, you're right," I said, "I *have* done the reading and I do understand the point about reason moderating passion. I had just not yet integrated that concept with the preconceived ideas I had about artists. Sorry."

August replied, rather kindly, "Well that's fine, Ms Ford, I realize that I am asking you to comprehend a lot of new ideas rather quickly, and I appreciate knowing which concepts you are having a hard time understanding right away, so we can concentrate on those."

As August turned back to the class just in time to dismiss it, the PBS "Nature" narrator made one last appearance in my mind: "In a move totally uncharacteristic of the species, the professor has let the student retreat unharmed. Though scientists disagree as to whether or not the student species is capable of emotion or intellect, this student may actually be showing signs of relief at her escape. Notice her relaxed posture and deep breathing. . . ."

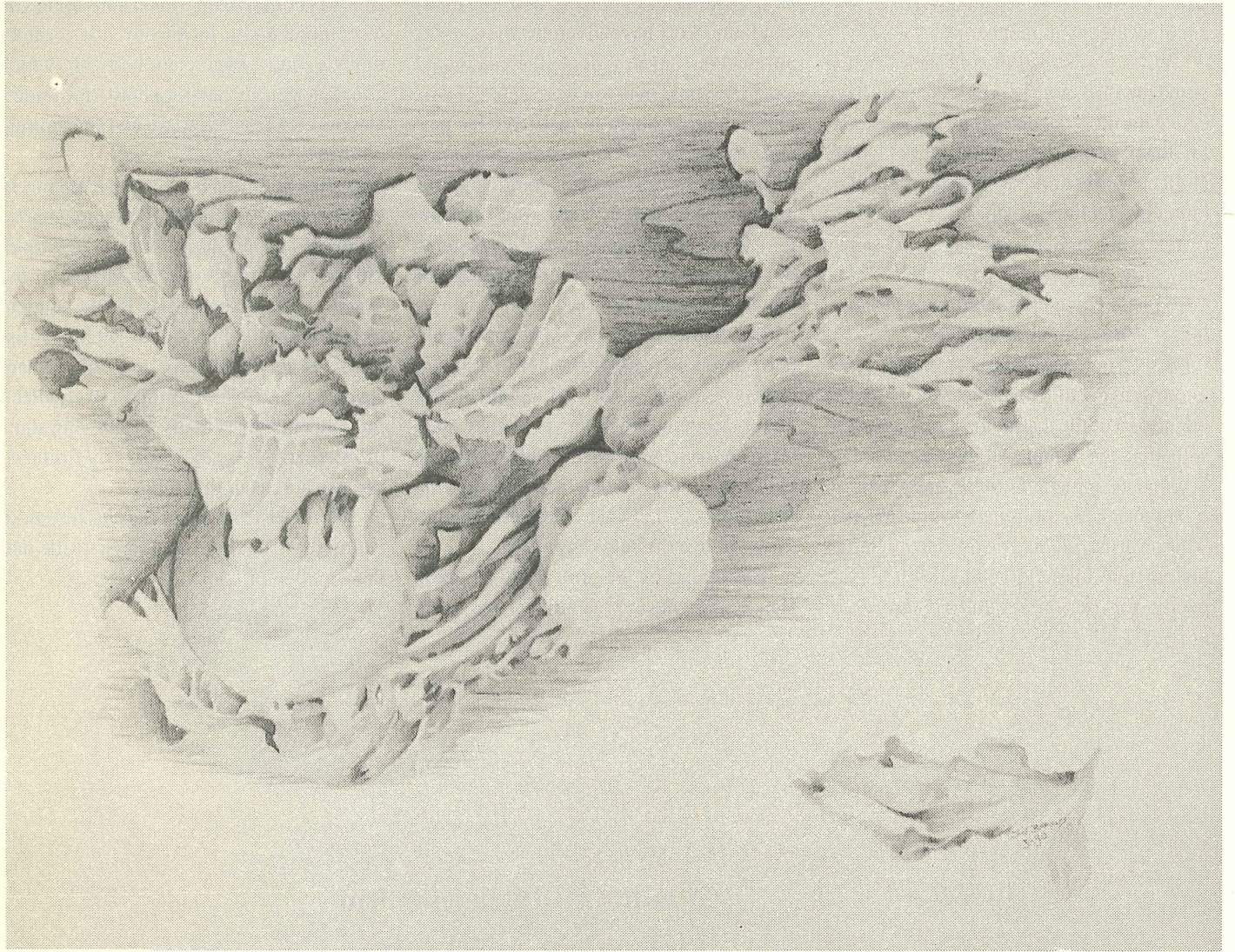
I was the last one out of the classroom, so I turned off the light and entered the hall that smelled of books.

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## Militant Anti-Intellectualism

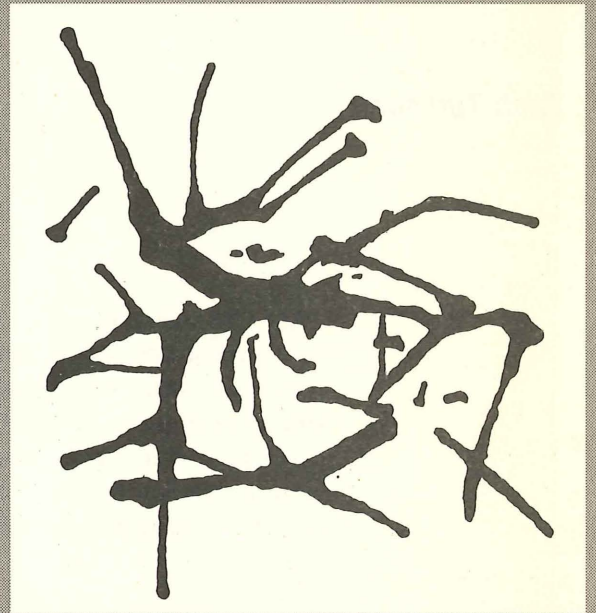
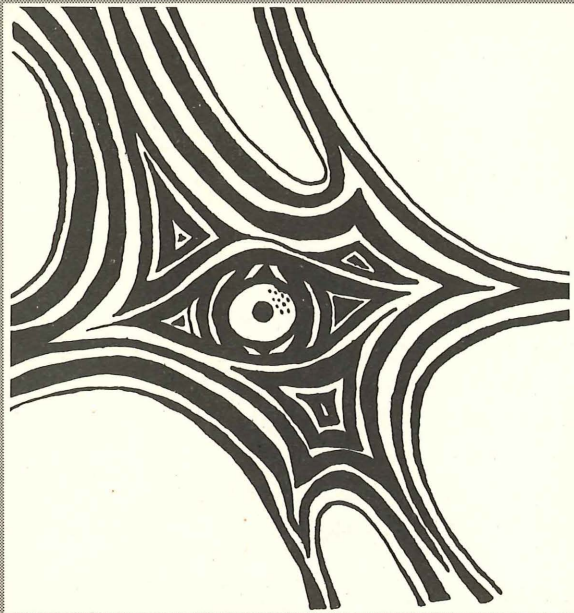
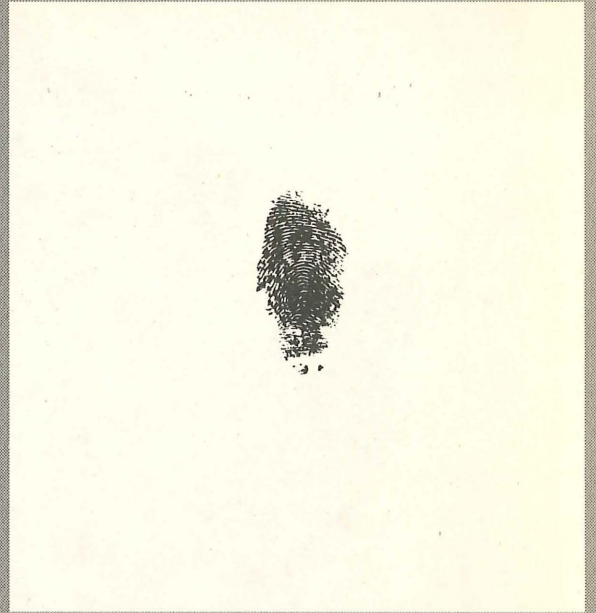
I will not talk in class  
 I will not talk in class  
 I will not talk in class  
 I will not talk in class  
 I will not talk in class  
 I will not think in class  
 I will not think in  
 I will not think

John LaGrand



*Jin Barclay*

*Pencil*



*Julia Zonneveld*

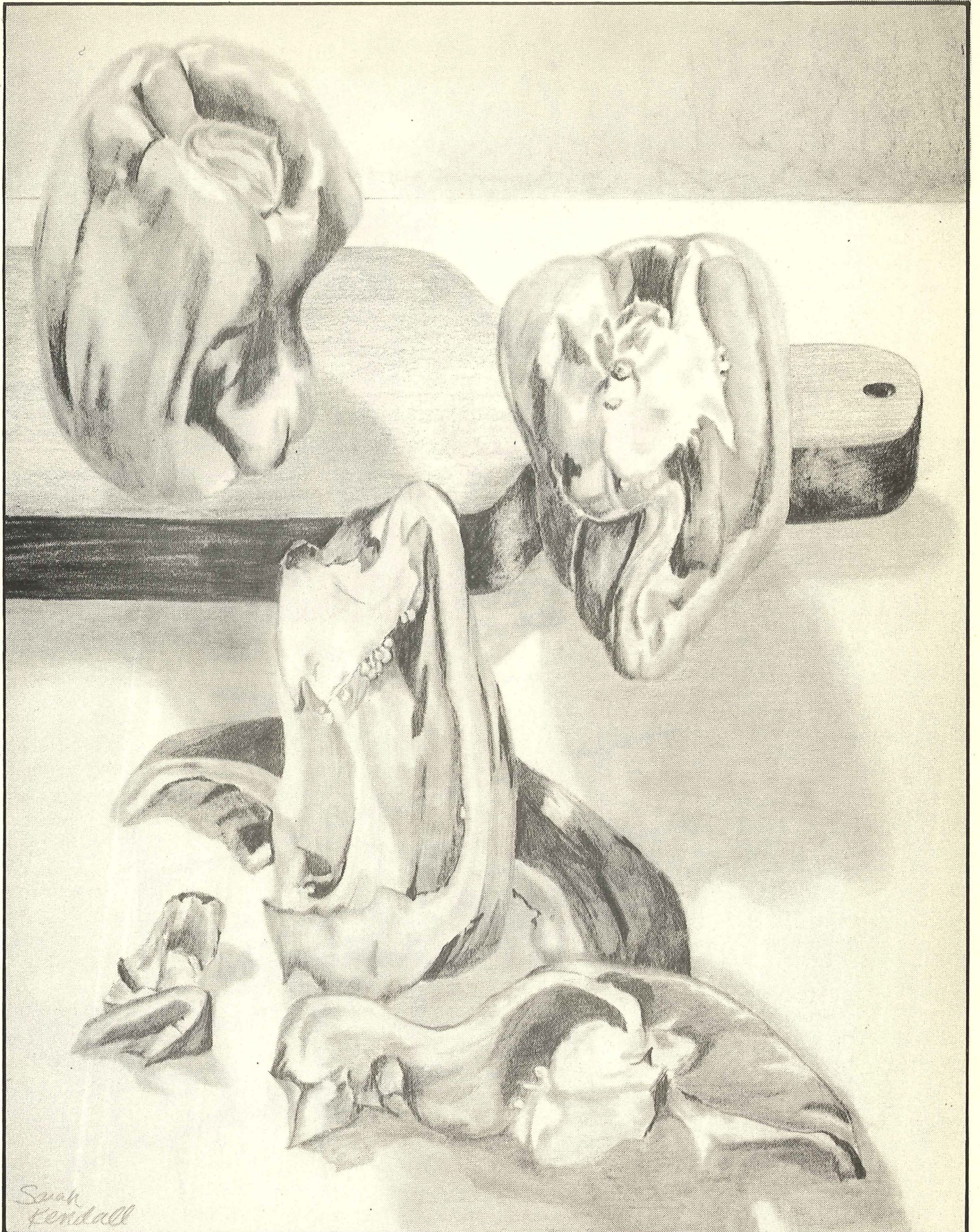
*Life, Death, Rebirth, and Chaos*

*Pen and Ink*



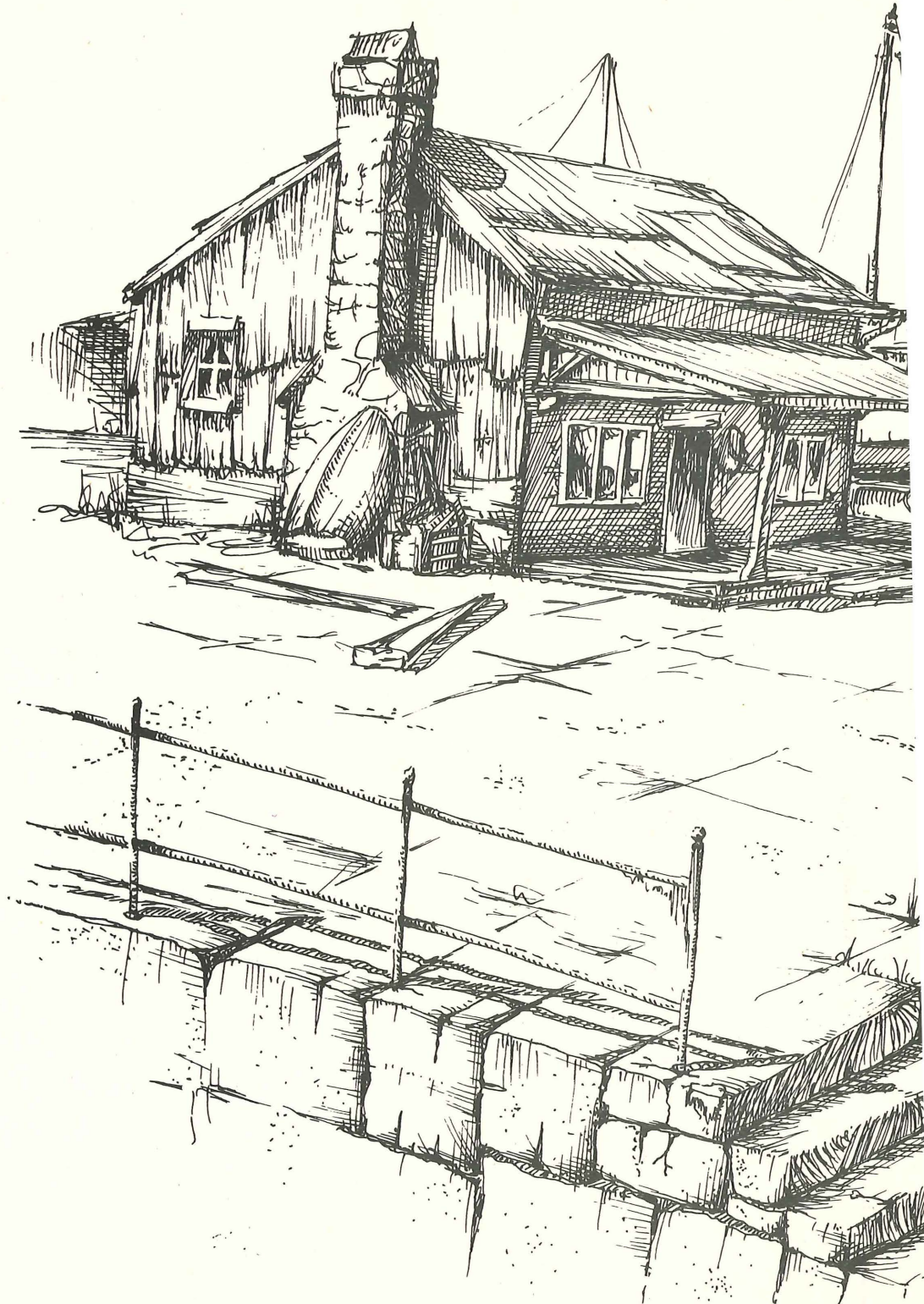
*Trish Turkstra**Cobalt Arcana**Raku*

My work is an experience that invites you to participate. It points to the conceptual awareness of earth and its elemental qualities. I have taken parts of the world—rocks, mushrooms, or the broken plaster in our house—and abstracted the recognizable qualities to focus on lines, texture, and colour. So enter the work by getting up close; discover the myriad of colours, the textures, and the rich, warm vitality of the piece. Notice how the edges of the ceramic pieces are jagged, yet lyrical and flowing, creating an exciting interaction with their surroundings. And then—step back and sense how I feel my world.

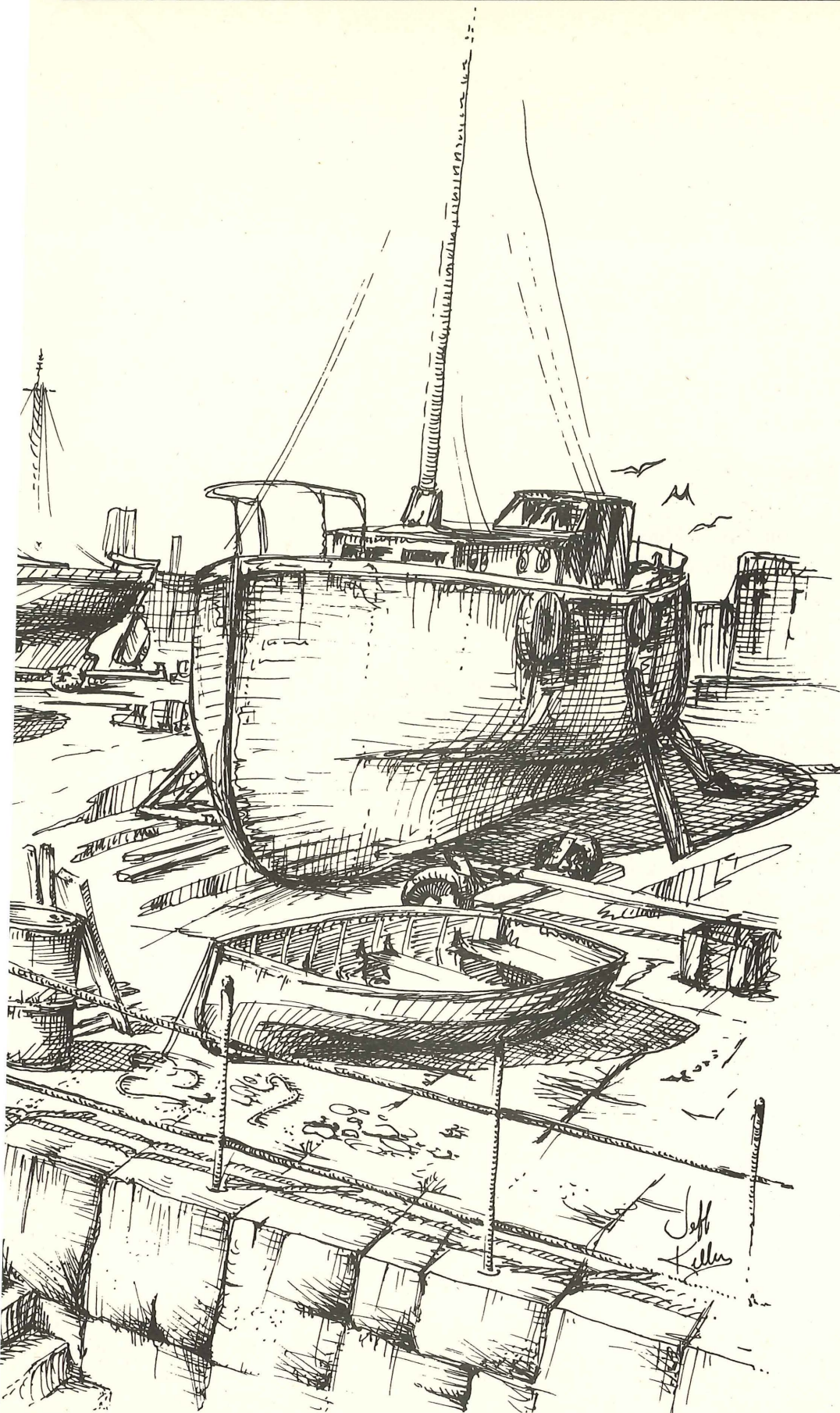


Sarah Kendall

Pencil



Jeffrey Keller



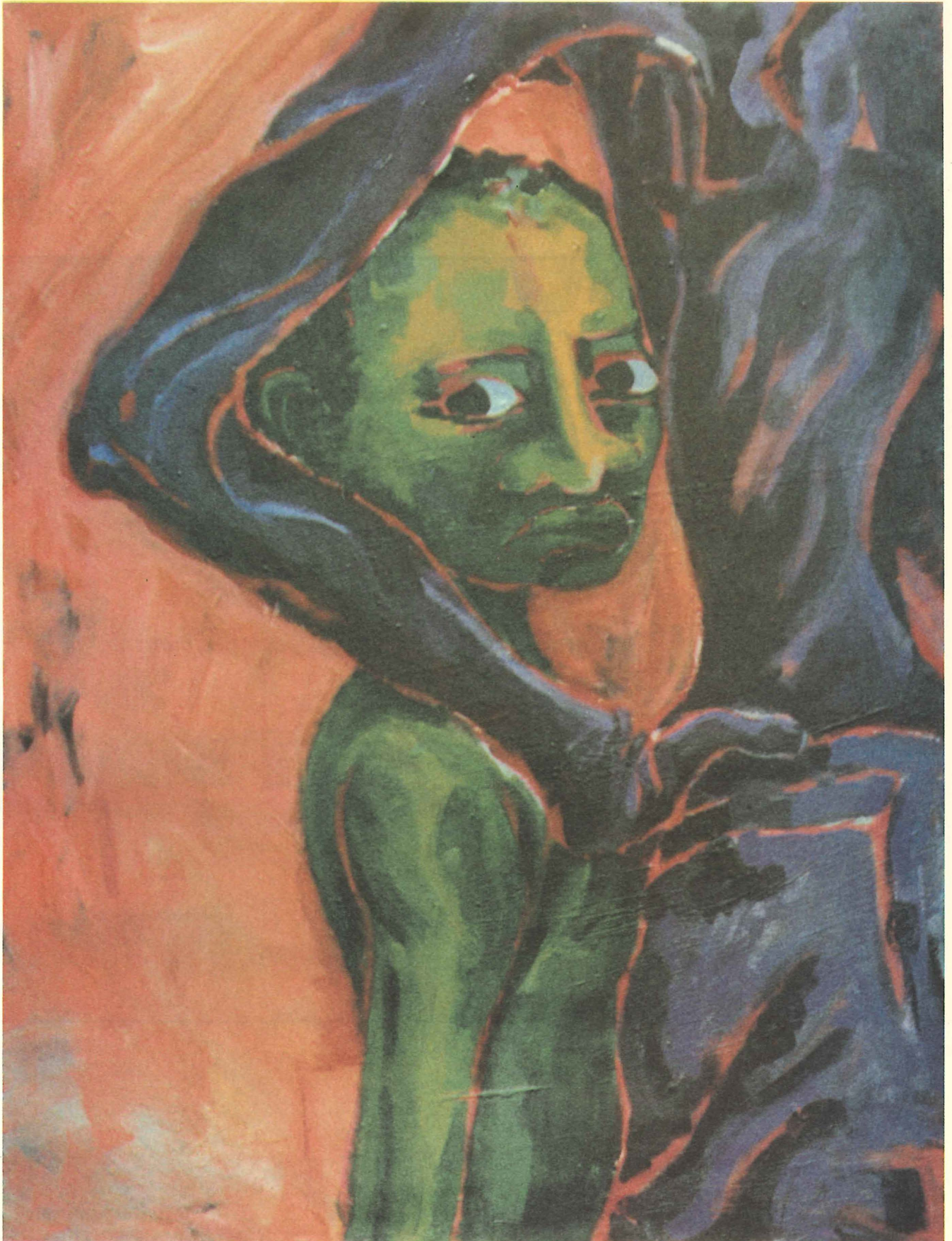
## Winter Days

Comfort my saddened heart.  
I watch with much interest,  
Snow gently cascading through  
Numbed rocking branches.  
The wind whistles a gaitly tune  
Of rebirth stubbornly scraping on the horizon.  
The cold chills my body, but sets aflame my soul.  
The snowdrifts chase themselves,  
Building, Building,  
Blowing away to nothing.  
The sight of which; all these things;  
Like hot steaming coffee, burn the tongue  
They idly pass over, while warming  
The disheartened innards of mourning bodies,  
Who have yet to die.

*Todd Smits*

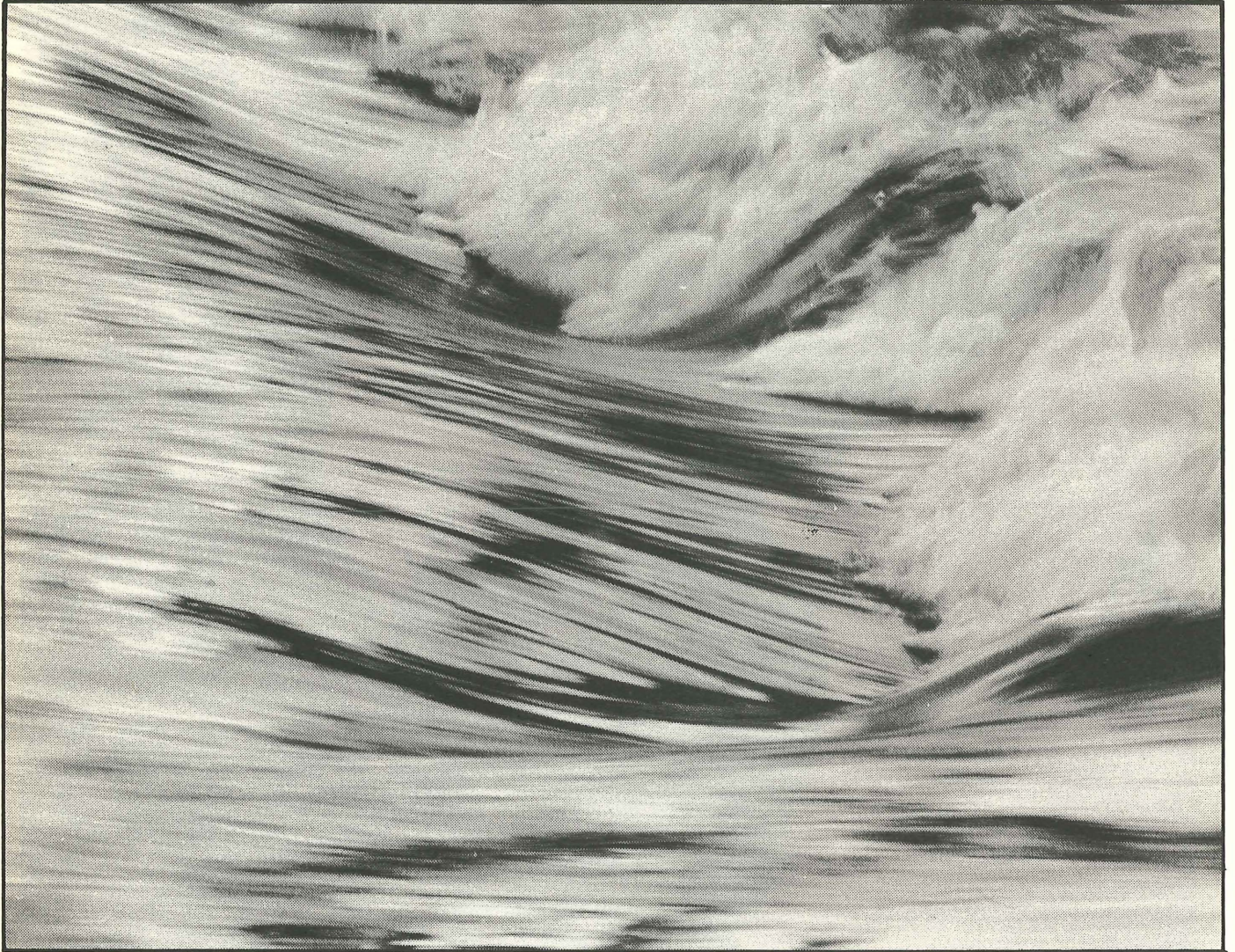
*Opposite page:*

Let your defenses down and allow yourself to feel. Just feel anything. Ignore the person next to you and open your mind. Take a deep breath and concentrate on only what is in front of you. Let the colors guide your emotions. Let the images penetrate your mind. Can you see yourself? Do you want to?



*Kris Stonehouse*

*Acrylic on Canvas*



*Matthew Lenig*

Liquifaction

*Photograph*

## Carving

I pare this rough bark—  
dull knife shears away  
knotty skin layers,  
exposes the smooth sinews  
grained deep into wood core.  
Today's level sun throws her arms  
through branches that cut  
them into streaks;  
she settles her patchwork quilt of light upon me,  
tucks me to the earth  
with a mosaic of every green—  
they quiver around and on me as I work.  
Off the edge of the quilt  
the land shears away—  
wings slap still water beyond the bluff,  
and I hewing squint at three bird shadows  
that slice across the sparkling water-road  
that leads to the sinking sun.  
The oak turns easier now in calloused fingers,  
blade tears the cumbersome skin;  
section by section I  
peel the surfaces away, circle around  
clean center,  
crumbs falling to lap and earth.  
Now and then I watch for steam  
as the sun splashes down the western wall,  
as greens darken and diffuse  
and the blanket is pulled gently away.  
I in the dark shear—  
I feel the smooth wood.

*Steve Mulder*



# Lesser Known Poets of The Netherlands

Compiled, Edited, and Annotated  
by  
Sy Morganstein

“A good name is like precious ointment.”  
—Ecclesiastes 7:1

To The Editor:

Being very advanced in years and, quite frankly, poised to make that cosmic leap to the higher plane, I naturally decided to rummage through the attic. What I found—aside from the stereotypical cobwebs, wigs, dust, extra chairs for the dining room set, scrapbooks, unused wedding gifts like a polished stainless steel martini shaker complete with matching martini glasses and martini stirrer, suitcases, and skeletal remains of the insurance salesman I slew some fifty-two years ago—was my '24 Calvin Prism and another cherished book of which I don't doubt I own the only existing copy. My father bequeathed it to me. Eleven were published in 1879. I thought it my duty as an alumnus to finally share this book of such rich heritage. And, heck, I'm dying—the guilt of selfishness was a

loadstone my sole could no longer bear. Since the withered pages and cracked binding of this aged tome practically turned to dust in my hands, I've forgone photo-copying, hauled out the old manual Smith Carona (which also, by providence, was collecting fly and spider corpses in the attic), and typed the first seven or eight pages including the editor's notes. I add that the following material represents three-and-a-half year's work.

I hope you enjoy this captivating glimpse into the world of your forefathers, and interject that a call to any member of my immediate family regarding my somewhat lofty whereabouts would be greatly appreciated. I seem to have inadvertently locked the attic door.

God bless,

(Signed)  
Hans De Vander Vootstra

ps. Your readers may puzzle at how I managed the feat of mailing my package, locked in the attic and all. Fortunately, layered with insect carcasses beside the old typewriter, was a failed invention of mine. Forthly years ago I presented my TTSPMOPWTAMTDTST (Thing That Sends Printed Material Over Phone Wires To Another Machine That Does The Same Thing) to a handful of AT&T big wheels.

They weren't too keen on the name.

Anyway, it was still operational so I fed the pages through the old TTSPMOPWTAMTPTST and prayed.

pss. I've included a few of my own scribblings from the past and present.

Final note: Pardon the spelling. It's a latent semi-subconscious defence mechanism linked—according to my diabolically over-paid therapist—to an episode involving a particular grammar school teacher who, for each incorrect response given on our weekly spelling quiz, poured Peruvian Fire Ants down our underwear.

## The Chief Wants You For Supper

by

Claus Cataclysm (1502?-1549)

In this jungle no man speaks  
As I climb to the height of its lofty peaks.

Wubba, wubba.

Wubba, wubba.

The only sound cackled in my ear  
Is for me alone, only I can hear.

Wubba, wubba.

Wubba, wubba.

Tightening skin snaps around my back.  
The sky on my eye goes from blue to black.  
A wincing smile as the dew from a leaf  
Brings a cooling flame and a hot relief.

Wubba, wubba.

Wubba, wubba.

-1548-

Historians tells us that Mr Cataclysm was the first explorer of Dutch decent to brave the wilds of the "Dark Continent." The complete body of his work was believed lost until recently (1866). Hundreds of poems in various stages of completion, voluminous journals, gold coinage, grain alcohol, and other unmentionables were discovered amongst the dense underbrush of the Congo in a safe which Cataclysm, undoubtedly, toted with him on his journey. Selected pomes and journal entries are now compiled in the definitive collection of Cataclysm: *"He Would Make a Fine Meatloaf," and Other Valuable Phrases of the Savage Tounge.*

—SM

## Blake's Pinkytoenail Diggings

by

Whilhelmina Gothickuis (1737-1809)

Through the Temple of High Ceilings came the bands of  
 Swift marching orchestrators in tight-fitting rows  
 Who, by sheer necessity, gave way to the horses:  
 Black as blood and jewel drenched,  
 Holding unfaced riders from some other plane.  
 "Commence!" sounded from granite arches  
 Thrust miles beyond atmosphere.  
 Like the stone above them they circled,  
 A million hoves like a bowlingball storm,  
 Round and faster into themselves,  
 And hooves and the sounds of them,  
 Until all watching rubbed their brains  
 While the men set up high,  
 Far, squintingly high parallels the width of a wrist.  
 So the throng held eachother's breath  
 As this miracle (from above or bellow no one knows) began.  
 Horses, as if for battle, lunged full ahead on poles.  
 Plumit or colide. Plumit or colide.  
 Colide.  
 No longer air between them.  
 Flesh and knuckle, atom and tail,  
 Air, water and oil as one  
 In the clickity confusion of mass tonage in motion.  
 Holiest of Molies, such a blur of heft on toothpicks  
 In a vision deeper by fathoms than the thickest steed.

-1799-

Miss Gothickuis was, to say the least, mischievous. She never married; dedicating her life's work to manicurism instead. By the time she composed these lines, she had soaked, clipped, and filed every celebrity digit of her day, from kings to Keats. Apparently, Gothickuis discovered Blake's toenail lint—aside from its eyestinging pungency—acted as a potent opiet when smoked through a rooster spleen marinated in a cranberry vinegar preperation. To her dying day, she insisted that she fell upon this narcotic purely by accident.

—SM

**Gilligan's Evil Twin**

by Good Wench (1794-1829)

I watch Orlando scratch his patch.  
Then he puts my lights out.  
We used to be so close.

In the pitch of deadness  
Things have a penchant towards  
What end the world misses the  
Cluebus save Orlando.  
He knows.

Smaking on some last bits of sandwich.  
I feel his clicking teeth in the bar  
Like when I was near them.  
Rattles, giggles, shocking cubes.

Obviously wood,  
The floor, approaching shoes thud upon.  
"Orlando, my friend. Where is Polly?"  
"Had to beat the potty-mouthed bird senseless."  
"And the bag?"  
"Polly and me eye."

"Ah yes. The shoe horn incodent. How's it feel?"  
"It's not there to feel."  
"Gads, I'm off. Foot in mouth."  
Hurried bustle out.

We're a side show now, my bag partner and I.  
Pirates make poor friends.

-1826-

No one knows this hardy Dutch poet's birth name. It is known, however, that Miss Wench was held captive for a substantial portion of her short life by a ruthless and slovenly pirate band. This poem captures her at an uncharacteristically contemplative moment as she retells the timeless legend of the bold, 17th century pirate, Orlando the Strange.

—SM

**People, Get Bored**by  
Ingamar Midnight (1789-1841)

The more I see  
The more I hate.

The more I hate  
The less I see.

The less I see  
The less I hate.

The less I hate  
The more I see.

The more I see  
Infinity.

-1824-

Ingamar was a very queer fellow, yet gay. His father, Putts, ever inventing strange and clever methods for punishing his son, once lashed poor Ingamar to a windmill blade during a fierce gale. It is agreed that this trauma deeply altered Midnight's poetic style; most clearly illustrated in his later works such as the song, "*Around: A Round*," and his infamous play, *Treadmillman*.

—SM

## The Pudgy Doughnutman

by

Duke Van Moltenlava (1828- )

The Pudgy Doughnutman makes holes  
And pops every forth into his mouth.  
He fashions things that aren't there,  
Joking he drops pounds that way.  
But his gray eyes flag an ill sign  
And the Pudgy Doughnutman sinks.  
Flour puffs from behind the display case  
Boasting sweet batalions:  
Frosted and filed onto pink trays.

Mr. Burpenheimer bought the P.D.'s last.  
His éclair had no holes save for the custard.  
"It's what's inside that adds up." —the late Doughnutman.  
Flour fog and the P.D.'s sooth powder the room.

-1854-

Upon entering "The Doughnut Den," Van Moltenlava expected to purchase his customary Saturday-morning banket from the shop's always-jolly proprietor. The actual, harrowing events are, of course, recorded here. Partially due to the experiene (not only witnessing a death but being deprived of banket for a week), Van Moltenlava's later works have become increasingly bleek, as in his most recent epic, *Dough From Below*.

—SM

## A Good Man's Blues

by  
Fritz Hallelujah (1813- )

Dont take it all so hard  
Cause the Lord he loveth all.  
Baby now dont take it all so hard  
Cause the Lord he loveth all.  
For all that time you spent cryin  
You could a been standin ten feet tall.

So sorry you had ta leave my home  
Still in your life a shame.  
Yea I'm so sorry you had ta leave my home  
Still livin the life a shame.  
All the people sayin I'm the sinner,  
But the Lord knows whos ta blame.

Now I never think bout that woman  
And I knows jus what ta do.  
You know I never think bout that woman  
And I knows jus what ta do.  
Gonna praise my Lord Almighty  
She took the devil with her too.

-1872-

A retired minister of the Reformed Church who set out in 1863 to free America's deep South from its "spiritual slavery," Mr. Hallelujah was last seen in a Luisiana brothel slurping gumbo from a slipper.

—SM

## This Hat and The Other Thing

by  
Kingsley Vander Sphere (1840- )

Oliver Coldwane licked the rain  
From the sky. Much ado. Dogs go by  
On this park lane—frothing, insane  
Falling sea. Hat tents face, caked, dry.

-1861-

Though his first published poetry collection entitled: *Just Killing Time . . . Or Was It My Family?* was a critical and financial success, Mr. Vander Sphere has been a clinical idiot since birth and is, to this day, institutionalized.

—SM

## To V.B. On Receiving a Poor Mark, October 1920

by

Hans De Vander Vootstra (1902- )

Behold this foul grade that will not settle.  
 My brain could vaporize cast-iron metal.  
 With rage so solid in concentration  
 I babble stabs at elaboration.  
 To blazes! I damn the cursed letter.  
 Yet it taunts my brow: "Grow even wetter."  
 I pour sweat that smells of rancid cheddar,  
 Or an unbathed, toothless Irish setter.  
 I ask: "For what? Because I can't compose  
 A masterpiece mirroring Boshesque prose?"  
 I'm doomed to exist as average joes.  
 I conclude, then, before this comes to blows.

-1920-

The very name twists my nostril hair to this day.  
 —HDVV

## I Get Dialogue

by

Hans De Vander Vootstra (1902- )

I read you.  
 I look at the pictures.  
 Flipping through the pages.  
 Fifteen, thirty-three, the back page  
 (It doesn't usually have a number),  
 Nevermore than fifty, as far as I know.  
 Squash spatter sundae  
 Telephone-wired like blood plaster amnesia  
 Psalm-tapping and calling headache-jello-mold square dances.  
 Skip to my lu my angst.  
 Sorry.  
 I'm an artist. Using my poetic license.  
 Trying so hard my thoughts crap their pants,

(Continued)

Or I can't get my belt fastened I'm so hip.

I'll put a word over

here.

No reason, just to make 'em sweat.

Or

I'll

do

a

line

like

this.

As if I know something.

I'm deep as a crew cut.

Let's get cummingsesque. cummingsesque.

I wanna get cummingsesque.

Let me hear your e.e. talk. Your e.e. talk.

Let me hear your e.e. talk.

I can even write f— with all the blanks filled in and everything.

See, I know there are bad words out there in the real world.

I educate the closed-minded CRC people.

They're sheltered you know.

Armor-All'd my car tires yesterday. Wrote a poem about it.

Sapped my soul.

Ode to a Toenail Clipper is next. Both are Dialogue bound.

My sixth-grade English teacher gave me an A- on a book report once.

So now I'm an artist.

Fluffy on the inside. Flaky on the out.

Couldn't pen my way out of a wet paper bag,

Or hit the broad side of an insight.

Yes, I get you, Dialogue, like I get jokes.

Like I'm an artist.

-1989-

I wrote this while hold-up in the attic. Some might argue that my prolonged stay in such relentlessly sardine-like quarters grizzled my disposition. On the contrary. That day saw me in one of my most gracious moods.

—HDVV



**Love Song of SO<sub>2</sub>**  
 (A Celebration of Upstate New York)

So softly while you lay to sleep  
 And rustle solitary leaves,  
 Kiss the one whom wildness grieves  
 But degradation faintly keep.  
 Shadows of beguilement creep  
 Upon the dreamers' plenty eyes  
 Of tragedy; he who believes  
 Is mutely shepherding tired sheep.  
 At last he stirs us all awake  
 And crowded low we stand up straight  
 To wonder why the balsam ache  
 When pressed upon them all our weight.  
 Wisp weeps purely tainted tears,  
 Insomniac that floods our fears.

*David Ihmels*

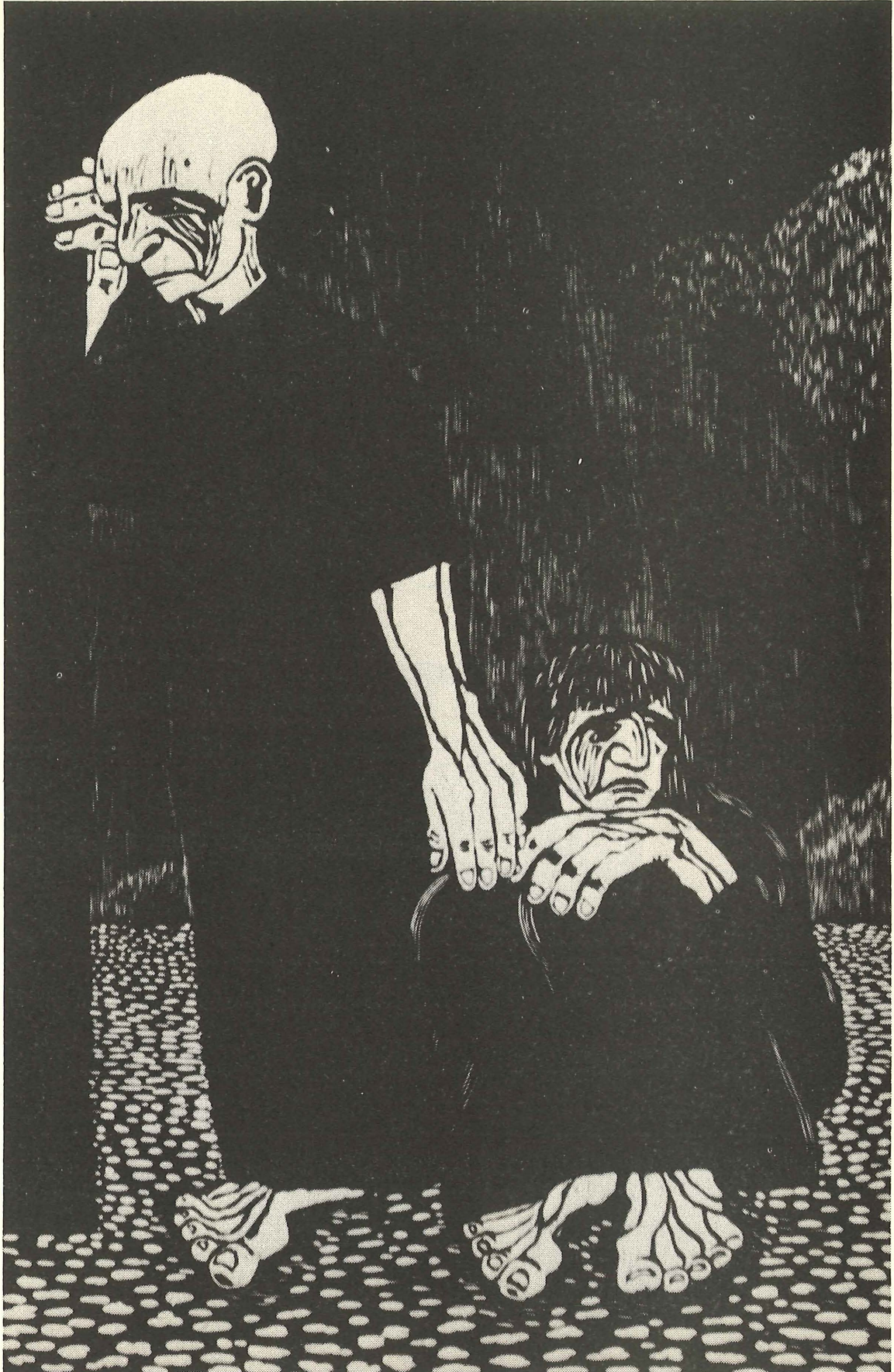
**A Lament**

Alas, for drops that fall unseen  
 into the crystal waters sung  
 with gentle stroke of Indian craft  
 and call of loon, and lily green.

The water's voice that sleeps today  
 in deadly silence, death's cold hand  
 that softly crept through skies of grey  
 has smitten gently as she lay.

Can pall of soot that veils the sun  
 and fuels our passion's raging burn  
 be worth the loss of lakes that lift  
 a music life's creator spun?

*David Roon*



*Julie Klazinga*

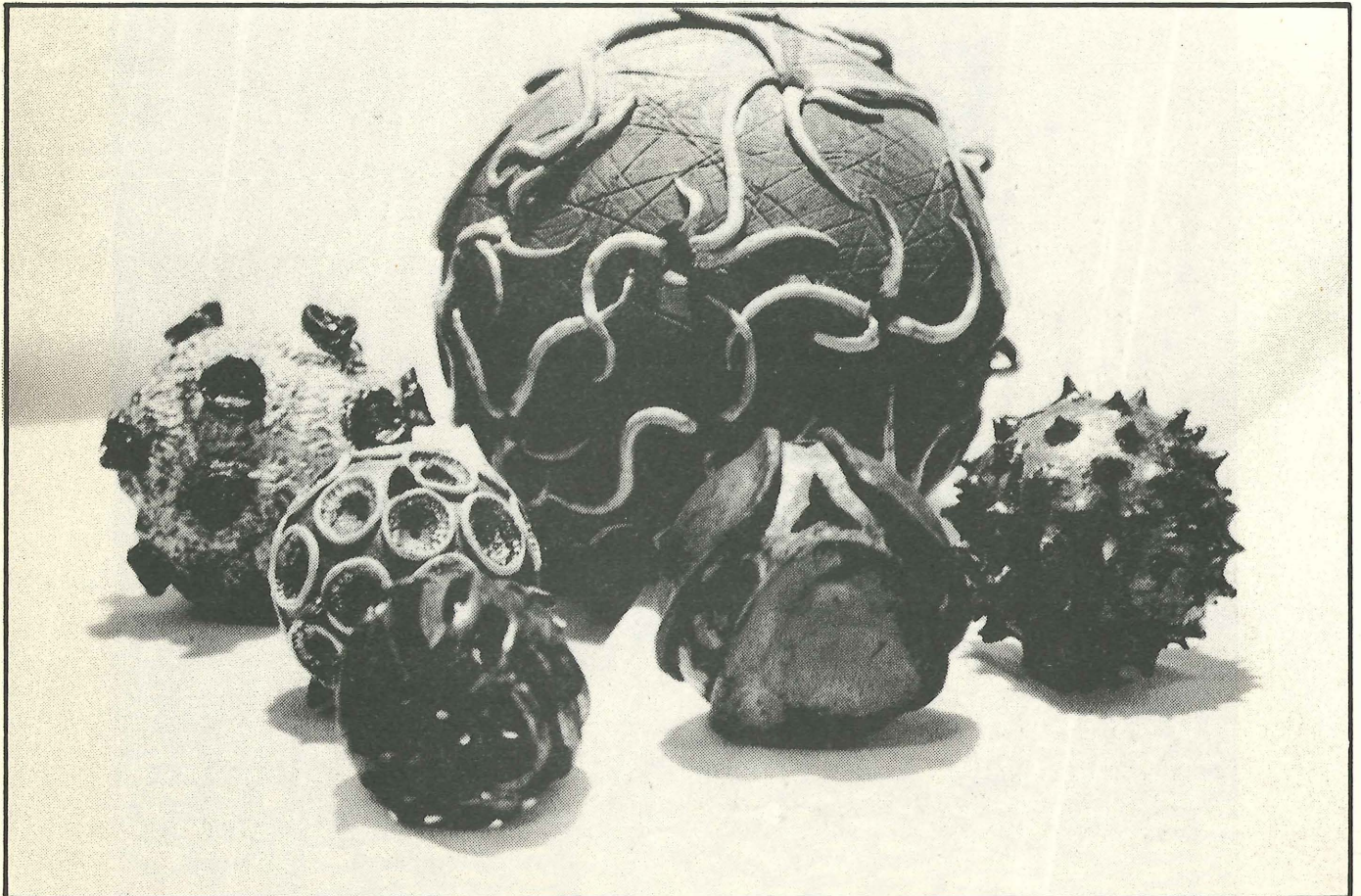
Psalm 6

*Woodcut*

**hug**

head  
(sensing)  
body's  
arms  
(reaching)  
finite  
chest  
(feeling)  
senses  
spine  
(more than)  
add up  
body  
(whole)  
to more than five

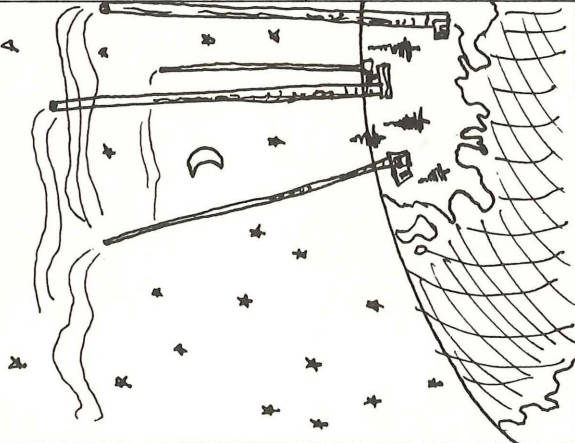
*j charles vanabbema*



STEVEN SWELL  
 Suggestions  
 for  
 SAVING  
 Germany's  
 BLACK  
 FOREST  
 from  
 ACID  
 RAIN



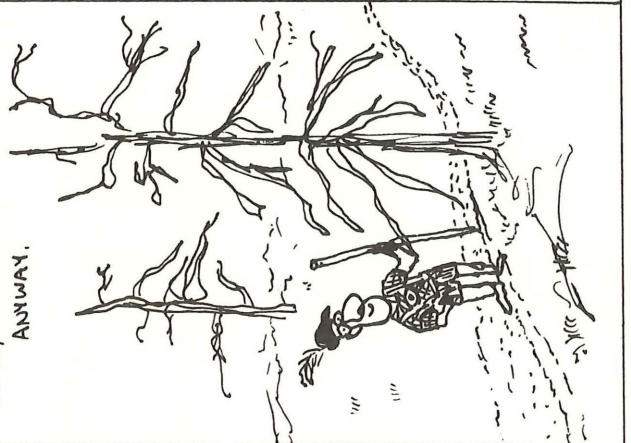
BUILD HIGHER SMOKESTACKS, \*



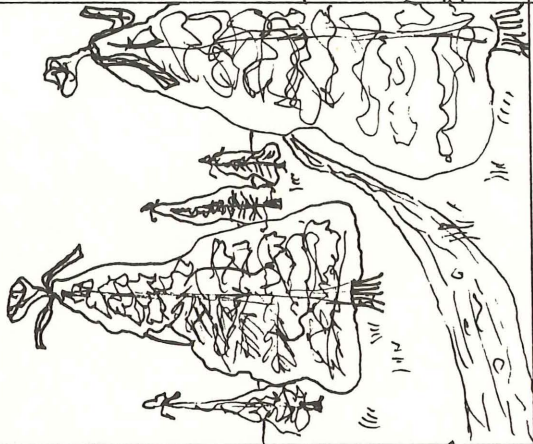
REPLANT THE BLACK FOREST IN THE RAIN FOREST,



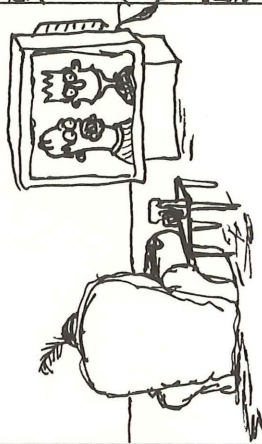
PRETEND WE'D RATHER HAVE DEAD, DISFIGURED TREES ANYWAY.



PUT THE TREES IN LARGE PLASTIC BAGS,

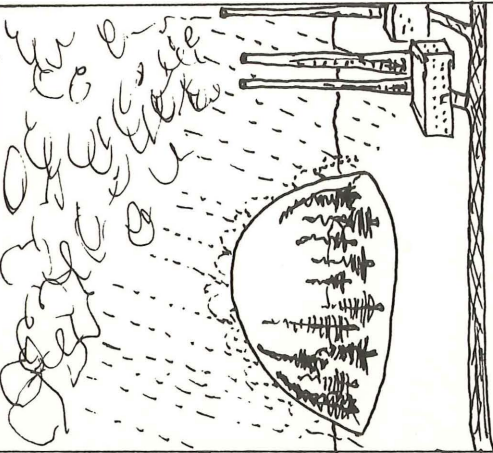


DRINK BEER, WATCH TV AND HOPE THE PROBLEM WILL GO AWAY ON ITS OWN



Steve Swell

PUT THE FOREST IN A LARGE PLASTIC BUBBLE,



(Or maybe, if it isn't too inconvenient, cut down on some of our pollution)

