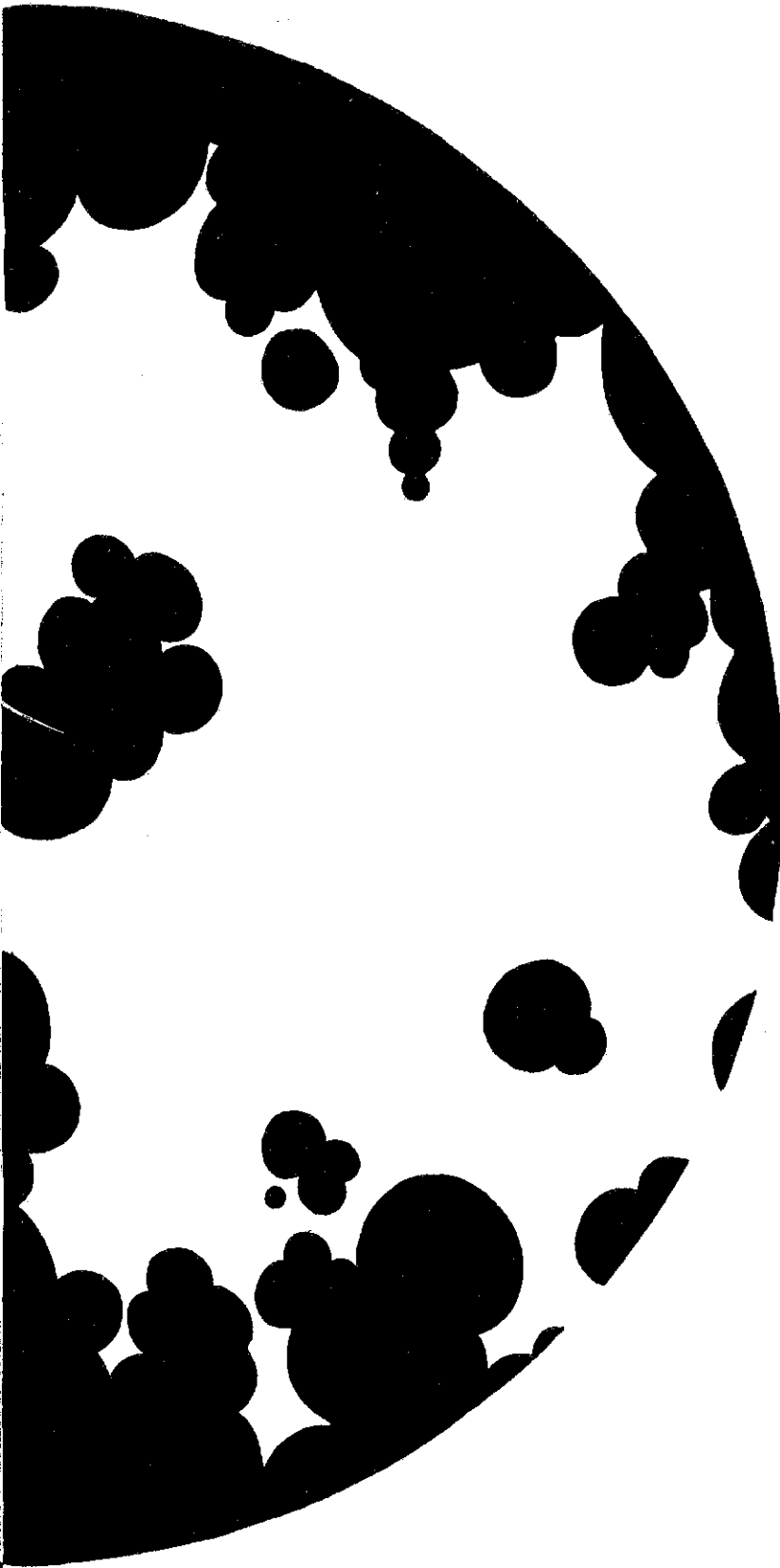


PULSE
SPRING
1970



LAMAR LITERARY AND ART MAGAZINE

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*This Issue Of Pulse Is
Dedicated To The Memory Of
Mrs. Bessie Maas Rowe*

PULSE

Spring 1970 Volume XII

Lamar State College Of Technology

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ELEANOR POETRY AWARD
Harold Beeson

PULSE SHORT STORY AWARD
Debby Heckaman

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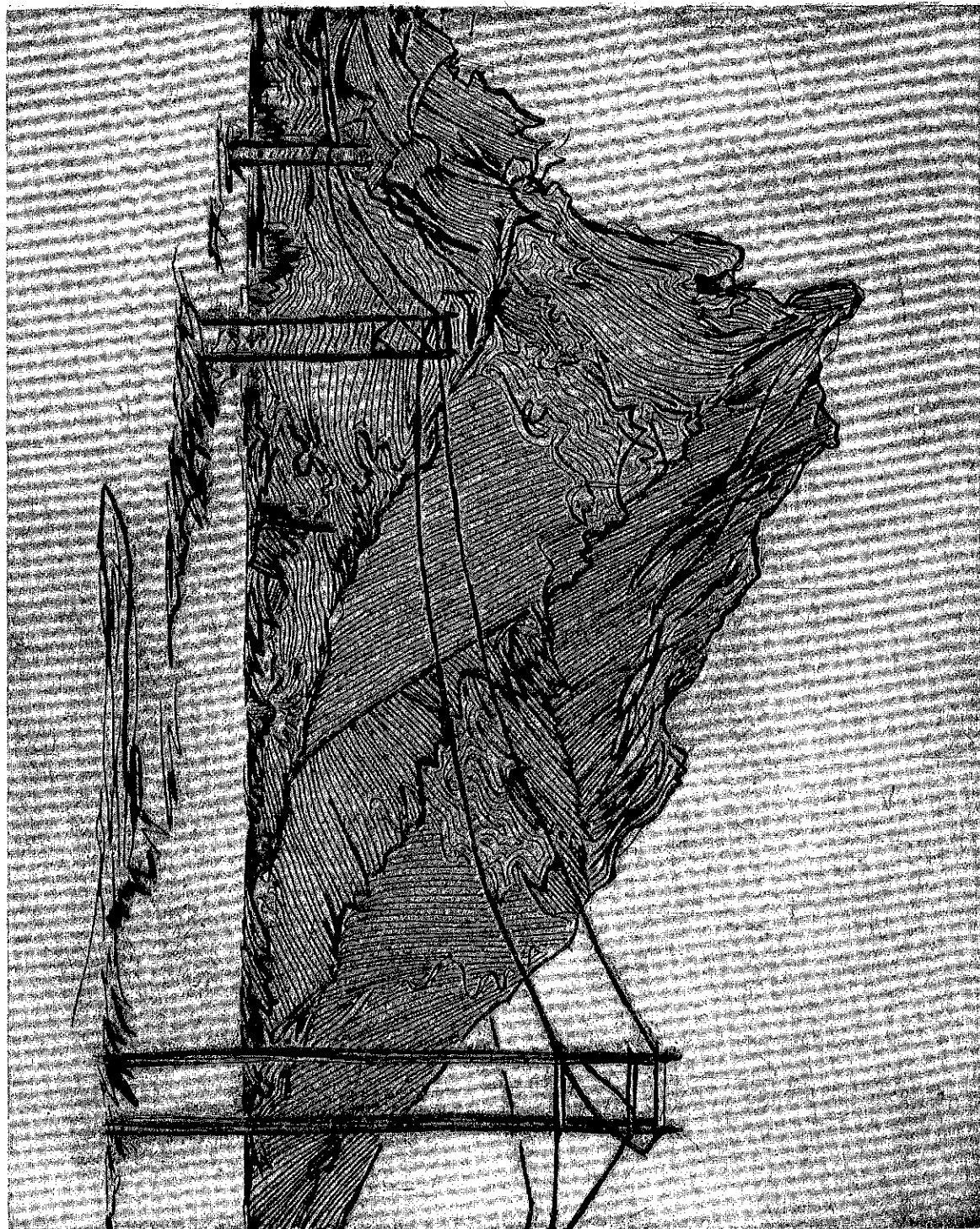
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The Eleanor Poetry Award

Sponsored By Mrs. Eleanor Weinbaum

DRAWN WATER

My grandmother, late last century
Drew water from the well
Watched as the bucket shattered
The sun-backed image of feedsack and pigtail.

(Did that new silhouette foreshadow
The dark gropings of an unbidden nature
That brought you more than a dozen times to childbirth bed?
To a stern life where a stern God
Was vocation and avocation
And your task here was salvation and keeping them fed?)

Smoke spiraled slowly into noontime sky
Red hills rollicked in summer sun
Caught by sounds from a steep-roofed house
And by youth, she began to run.

(Stretch now those untried muscles
You will soon be needing,
The muscles of pelvis, belly and thigh
Disregard the sloshing water and the dust
This time, out of all time, is your time
And it is only to live, not to die.)

A dry, lost water well
Choked now with weeds and vines.
But framed, made immortal and utile
By her, in that one part of time.
(The cool, sweet water has long since fled
Away through sunbeams and crevices.
Disappeared, but not before it was too late —
To stop the participants from indulging
In the historic and cosmic joke
That gave me me and my fate.)

Harold Beeson



Oil Painting

L. O. Spurlock

Birth of a Dream

All in darkness and I cannot see.
There is one sound sitting on my shoulder.
The sound has no place to go, so it stays with me.
My fingers are the beginning of life.
They move as if moving is all there is to being.
Like small creatures in an empty sea
They move against nothing, into nothing.
Somewhere there is an edge that is not my fingers,
But an edge,
Two things somehow two but one
That make a direction for my fingers to feel.
My hands run through my fingers.
My fingers practice at how an edge feels.
Then fingers hold to darkness and find
That it can be moved into edges
And made to build things.
Putting darkness into one place
Moves life into light,
And the sound finds some place to go, singing.

THE SEAGULL

The seagull on white bright wings
waves his beauty in the air.

Such things are
entities unto themselves.
I would say yes, yes
they are.

and there are
poems for them as, perhaps,
I would say
this one might be
— but now I seek essences.

Good poetry is (above all)
made of/for essences:
the seagull of poetry does not
move on his own direction.

Essences. Poetry. My wife.
Here she is, cocked
ready to touch me
with wings no bird ever wore.

Terry Morrison

To a Friend, for Helping Me

There are things that reach without hands,
That push by forming words.
Grey walls become grass and sand.

There are sounds as deep as a feeling,
That sleep in tents of skin,
Saying moonlight is sunlight kneeling.

There are no lines around things you cannot touch,
To divide the dreams and the dreamer.
The word you never keep inside yourself is love.

Cidra Seekings

The Pulse Short Story Award

LONNIE

By Debby Heckaman

Lonnie stared at the gray clock above Miss McKay's neatly printed homework assignment on the blackboard. Ten minutes left. The little girl with the red braids who sat next to him was doing her homework. Doing homework in school? He scowled at her and at the clock and especially at Miss McKay. Outside, the heat wavered above the slide, glinting white-hot each time a speeding car added its reflection to the sun's. Lonnie held a fat second-grade pencil against his damp palm and drew heavy straight lines on the cover of his notebook.

Miss McKay glanced at him over her glasses as she flipped through a set of homework papers, but she only frowned and said nothing. He tried staring back at her over his own glasses, which kept inching down toward the tip of his nose. She went through the stack of papers several times, each time glancing at Lonnie. He swallowed slowly and stared at the heavy black bars drawn on his notebook. He could feel a tiny trickle of sweat sliding down his back and his face tingled. What was she looking at him for? He did his homework, he was quiet, he shared and didn't push. She frowned again. Under her scrutiny he felt like someone was standing on his chest.

As the bell rang, the tension dissolved into the rattling noises made by papers, pencils and books being speedily removed from their metal prisons. Lonnie sat on the floor by his desk and tried to retrieve his books from the accumulation of wadded paper and chewing gum. After the class had all left and the few stragglers had finally managed to retreat into the safe darkness of the hall, he remained behind; seated like a small bespectacled Indian chief solemnly peering into the sticky gum wad interior of his desk and slowly extracting his books as he discovered them.

It was a few seconds before he realized she was standing near him. He ignored her, hoping she would go away.

"Stand up, young man."

Lonnie unwound and stood, staring downward at her light gray suede shoes. They looked like the kind his father sometimes wore. He felt a heavy hand beneath his chin. It jerked his head up. She glowered down at him from behind her glasses.

"And just where is your homework?"

Lonnie's eyes widened. Homework paper? He pointed toward the large mahogany desk that loomed in front of the blackboard.

"Don't gawk - - and don't point. Just give me an answer."

Her voice slammed against his ears and he jumped. His chin hurt where she held it between the vise of her thumb and forefinger.

"I --- I --- I ---" he repeated. His tongue tripped over the unmanagable syllables. Everything he tried to say sounded like short bursts of gunfire.

"You --- you --- you ---, what?" the voice demanded. "Did you do this homework?" She thrust a handful of wrinkled, heavily marked papers in front of him. He nodded slowly, not answering aloud.

DEPRESSION AT FORTY FIVE

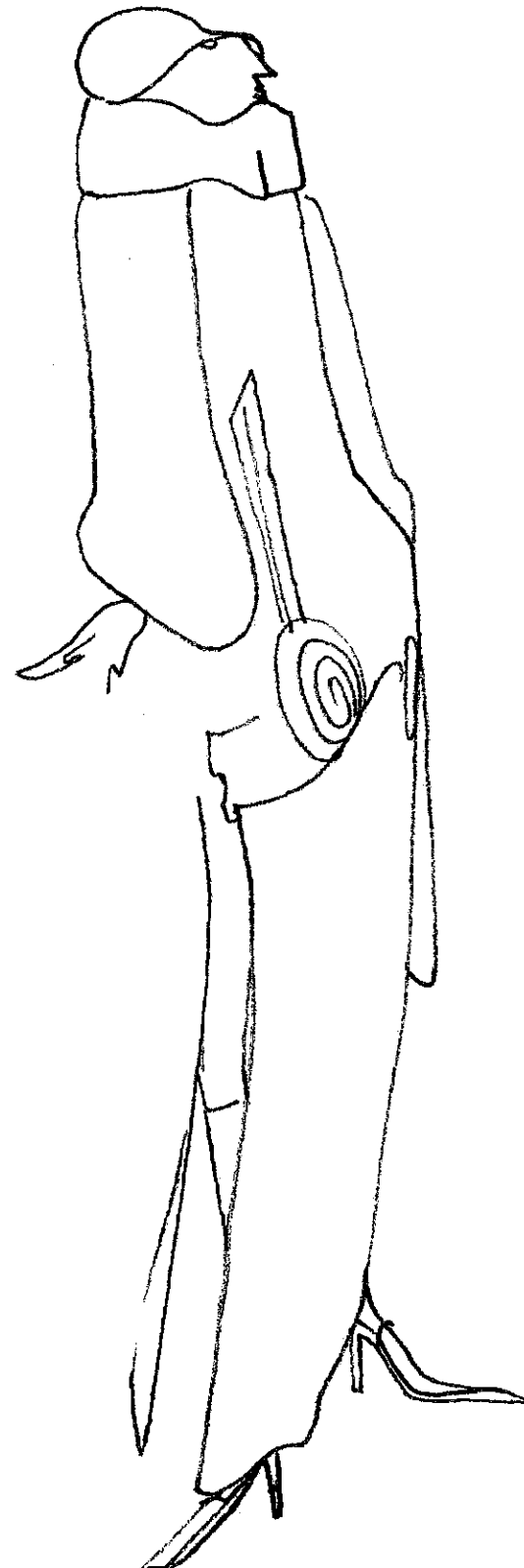
There are
harmful things like
holding you,
specifically,
breasts and
cunt leading to
marriage;

collecting children; sticks
in small thickets
of action;

slipping out of the wings of youth;

And the house and
office parties and
neighbors nibbling at
their affections and
there are
harmful things like
going through the
motions.

and then there are motions
like the wings of geese
flying south waving
goodbye to the grey skies
of October. The wings,
the geese, the
movement.



papers on his desk. "Is this yours?" she demanded. The name at the top was Linda Norris. He shook his head. "How about this one?" Again he shook his head. One by one, through thirty papers he shook his head until she snatched up the last paper triumphantly and said, "You didn't do this homework, now did you?"

Lonnie's white fingers gripped nervously at a book, as he nodded his head. "Don't lie to me!" the voice said. Lonnie looked at her. She was angry now. Her face was turning red and her mouth becoming a tight thin angry line. At her sides she clenched and unclenched her fists.

"Follow me." Lonnie stood obediently and shuffled slowly behind the brisk steps of the teacher. She went to her desk drawer and fished out a ruler. He stared at it, as she said, "It is very wrong to lie, Lonnie."

He knew now what would follow. Always when something seemed "very wrong" to Miss McKay, he knew what would happen next. He wiped his gritty palms against his shirt and turned away from her. Putting his hands on his knees, he bent over, waiting.

"Straighten up." He unbent and turned around. She grabbed his arm and jerked him around, letting the ruler fall five times against the calf of his leg, five times -- hard. She released him, returned the warm ruler to its prison and left the room hurriedly. Lonnie stood gazing after her trembling. Then he sat down and pulled up his pants leg. The leg was red as if it had been burned and it stung, too. He removed his glasses to wipe at his wet cheeks. Standing again he walked to the door and entered the dark hallway. He hadn't meant to cry; it had hurt, but he hadn't meant to cry. As he pushed against the heavy door he wondered what had happened to his homework.

There were still several children in the yard, chasing each other and playing. Lonnie tried to avoid them by walking behind some bushes near the high hurricane fence that bound the yard. But just as he reached the gate, Michael Fordel stepped in front of him. Michael saw his face and smiled. Several others gathered around them.

"Where ya' been, Lonnie?" Michael teased. Lonnie turned to go and Michael put his hand against Lonnie's chest. "Wait a minute." "You been cryin'?"

Lonnie's words stumbled slowly out of his mouth, "I - - - I - - - I f - f - fell d - d - down." Then he pushed open the gate and ran. He stopped at the edge of the school yard but he could still hear their laughter echoing around him.

Lonnie walked slowly across the vacant lot behind his house. Its grass was brown and crackling now and at its far end some of the older boys, like his brother Roy, played football. He squeezed through a hole in the back fence and ripped his shirt. He looked at the ragged tear and wondered if his mother would be mad, too.

He sat on the steps and traced sandy pictures with his fingers. As he lettered his name in the sand, he tried to think of what he should have said to Michael and Miss McKay. He always had it in his mind, written neatly and clearly, but when they pressed him to say it, the words got all scrambled up and confused. He remembered hearing Roy talk about old man Dieger. He couldn't talk right either and they locked him away until the day he died. Maybe it wouldn't be so bad to be locked up away from people, after all. Maybe old Dieger liked to be alone and talk, nobody really knew.

Lonnie went in the house quietly. He didn't want to talk at all, to have to explain why he was late or why he tore his shirt or why he had been crying. His mother was busy in the kitchen and hadn't heard him come in, so he slipped up to his room and flopped across the bed. From his window he

part of the school, as though one day she just appeared in one of the drab gray rooms and decided to stay forever.

He rolled over on his back and looked at the ceiling. To him, it looked like notebook paper. Homework! He had forgotten to bring his books home after school today. This time he really wouldn't have any homework to turn in. Would she hit him if he said no, too? His stomach began to ache a little and his leg was throbbing. He sat up and looked at the injured spot, where three small welts had begun to form. He wouldn't let her do that again. He couldn't.

Downstairs, a door slammed and a voice reverberated off the walls. Roy vaulted up the stairs three at a time and banged on Lonnie's door.

"Time to eat, Lon."

Then Lonnie heard him clatter down back down to the dining room.

At supper, he picked randomly at the food on his plate and ignored the conversation around him. What would he do tomorrow? After a while, as Lonnie sat thinking, Roy pushed back his chair and stood up. He reached over and tweaked Lonnie's nose. "You eat like a damn bird, shrimp."

Their mother frowned at Roy's choice of words. But she didn't frown like Miss McKay. It wasn't a mad frown, just a worried-wrinkled sort of frown. She looked at Lonnie and felt his forehead. Lonnie remained gazing downward at his plate; he was afraid she would know what was wrong just by looking at him. She remarked to her husband that she thought she would keep Lonnie home the next day because she thought he might be catching something. Lonnie smiled. Maybe Miss McKay would forget after a couple of days. He got up and headed for his room.

Halfway up the stairs, he heard the phone ring and bounding to the extension outside Roy's room, he picked it up. When he heard the voice on the phone, his own voice froze. Downstairs, his mother lifted the receiver.

"Hello"

"Mrs. Nelson?"

"Yes, who's this?"

"I'm Amelia McKay, Lonnie's teacher."

"Oh, yes, Miss McKay, Can I help you - - - Is anything wrong?"

"Oh no, I just thought you might tell Lonnie that I found his homework paper. We had a little problem about that this afternoon."

"Oh?"

"Yes - - well - - The little girl in front of him put his paper in her desk but I found it after he left, so tell him everything is alright. Now why do you suppose she did that?"

"Who knows why children do anything?"

"How true - - well, I'd better go now - - and I'd appreciate it if you'd apologize to Lonnie for me."

"He's right here, I could call him. You could tell him yourself."

Miss McKay's end of the line was silent for a moment. "No - - No, I can't apologize to a child, now can I - - - - how would that look? Anyway, I really must go now, Mrs. Nelson, good-bye."

The phone clicked once, then again. Lonnie cradled the receiver in both hands and smiled. She was wrong. Miss McKay was really wrong. And she couldn't apologize. She couldn't say something to him. If she did maybe her words would be all scrambled up and confused, too. He hung up the phone and went into his room. Through the window he could see that the lights at the school were still on and Miss McKay's old Ford was still out in front. Maybe she did like them.



Pastel

Vicki Arnaud

GOSSAMER

Another day, another night
We met for coffee in the dawn
You touched my hand
I smiled - - then laughed
You called that afternoon

The night time came
We met for supper in the dusk
You held me close
I laughed - - then smiled
Then shook your hand

Another day, another night
We played the games again
You called - - I came
Although I couldn't see
The sense in it

The sun beamed down
You touched my hair
And then you grabbed my arm
I broke and ran
And that was that

Gyrating sideways, cock-eyed, upside-down
Whirling through an absolute void
The children's illogical
whimsical
painful
merry-go-round.

The trick is to get to the center
And there watch the other children
Dizzy-sick and jolly,
Tired yet frantically energetic - -

To tilt it all one way or the other
And watch some slide off smoothly
Like a fork on an oilcloth table,
And some lurch off
Screeching into space
With their skint knees hurting in conflicting directions

To be burned with the Purifying
Everlasting Iodine
For vindication
Of whatever grinning brats
Sit in the silent middle
On the joining of the spokes
And sway their bony little bodies
In cobra dance
For spin and tilt.

Linda Johnson

Alone and quiet I lie
not a sound heard — empty silence
abides

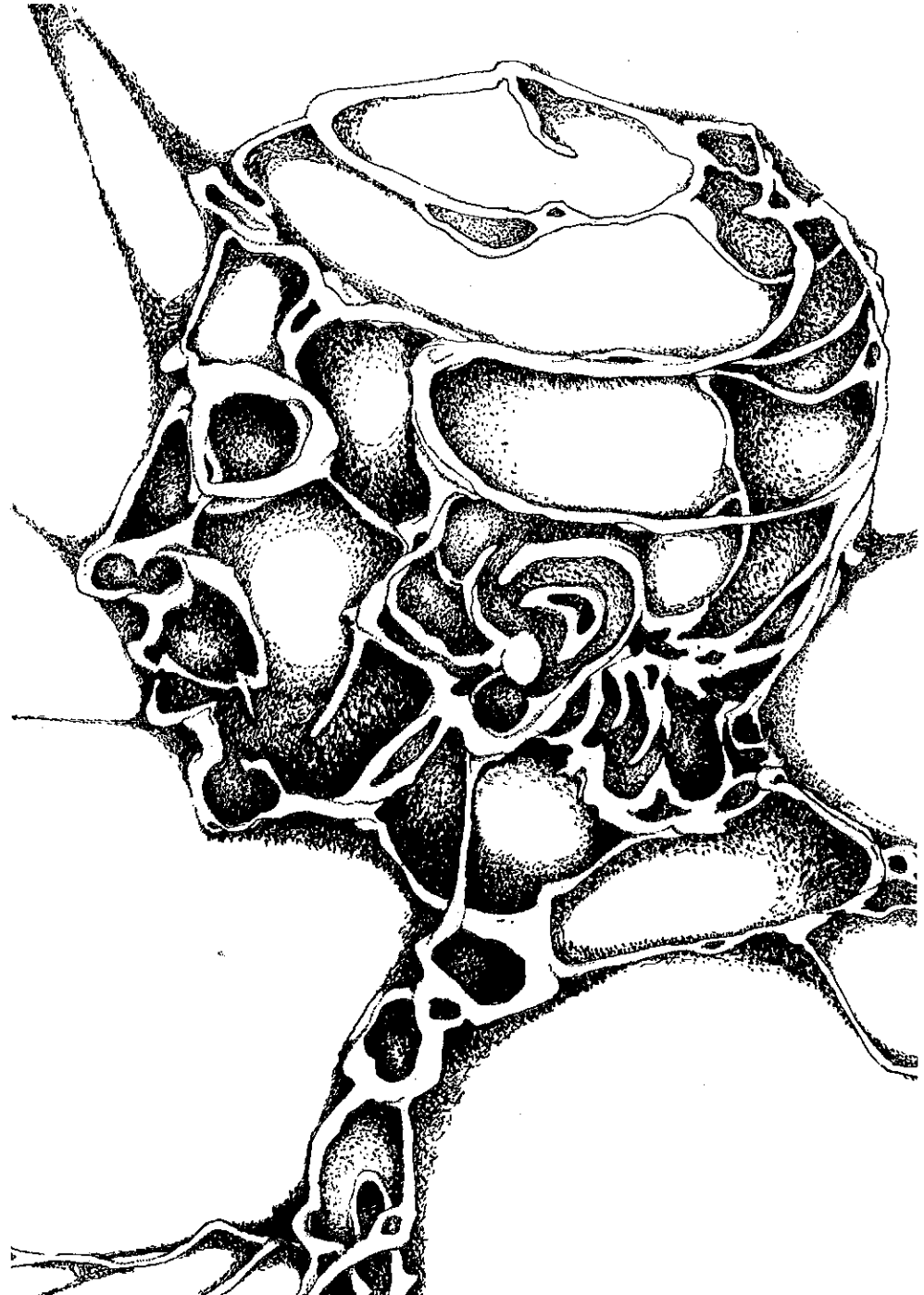
Time has no place — desolate walls
seclude contentment from my mind

the past dips and rises on memories scars
the future lies bleak, hopeless, undone

if I had never been
then could I have won?

Paul Thomas Coone

Pulse Art Award First Place



IF I WERE STANDING ON A GREEN RUG (CUT NEATLY, SQUARED PRECISELY)

If I were
standing on a green rug
(cut neatly, squared precisely)
and said, "I love you"
there would
be no ifs and buts
to categorize, qualify,
file and fill in confusion —
no divisions and multiplications —
no mathematical fury
and/or
poetic stances
lined in absurdity.

life would
be a line drawn simply.
I would follow swiftly
in the tracks of my devotion.
No ifs and buts, life would
be is or am.

... I am. I am (a darkness
comes on bruised feet) here
with you (across the sand, the white-fleshed
shore) alone, and life (the wind shuffles
the sand forever arousing it) is
pulsing, strongly pulsing
in the unfilled spaces of our bodies
(and all night the moon
continues shifting stances in the sea
from wave to wave).

Terry Morrison

EXPERIMENTS IN GRAPHIC FORM

Along with the expansion of the Art Department a new Graphics Program has been added. The following are the first products of this program.





CONQUISTADOR

Quetzalcoatl, Great White God
They called me when I came,
And since I loved the gold they worked
I took it as my name.
But when they found I was no god,
Their ten priests led me round
And up the pyramidal stairs,
And there they laid me down
With nine more weeping soldiers
On ten great altar stones,
And the black-glass knife that killed me
Will long outlast my bones.

Derry Tutt

Culmination

The soundless mills are circling, turning,
Grinding away, as inexorably
As the winds pressure. And the harrows deeply
Slice the finite sod, implements turning
Upon their wielder, eagerly impaling
Me on buried blades. I sow, though the plot
Lies deplete. Desperately I have bled
My grounds toward harvest. And the leaves spread
And the crops grow ripe, yet I allot
Myself nothing, but know my yield may rot.

Greg Miller

let me shake your ladder

let me shake your ladder
and frighten you into the reawareness
that your life is in my hands

as you reach up to the ceiling
to replace a burnt-out light bulb
let me
rushing down the hall
brush against your rusty ladder
and jolt you just enough
to break your concentration
and foul your equilibrium
enough to knock you back to where you are
and of a sudden
make you realize
that your life could very well depend
on my knowledge of you
up on your ladder
and my care to keep you there

Charles Jones

Love

Suppose I told you you lead me
When you enter my empty eyes,
That you draw at their wells gradually,
Like the moon pulling tides.

And what it is inside of me
That responds to your sound,
Knows you by your movement,
Hears you touching other sounds.

Then you touch and take apart
The darkness in my eyes
By breaking the moon apart,
And making the darkness cry.

vietnam rock garden

i am scarred inside, barren.

smoking on my horizons are
the villages of a people, ashes
in the winds where laughter sounded.
words are thrown to me; and i
to salve the burns of my children
with heavy meanings i cannot
lift into my own mind?

i do not understand

this freedom, for which my sons
are dying, though i remember
peaceful fields and food, the living body
of my husband next to mine
too long ago.

i am not afraid,

not of the dangerous word communism . . .
i have no time to comprehend it while
american soldiers aim that freedom
at an infant, and pull the trigger,
but perhaps someday i will learn.

someday,

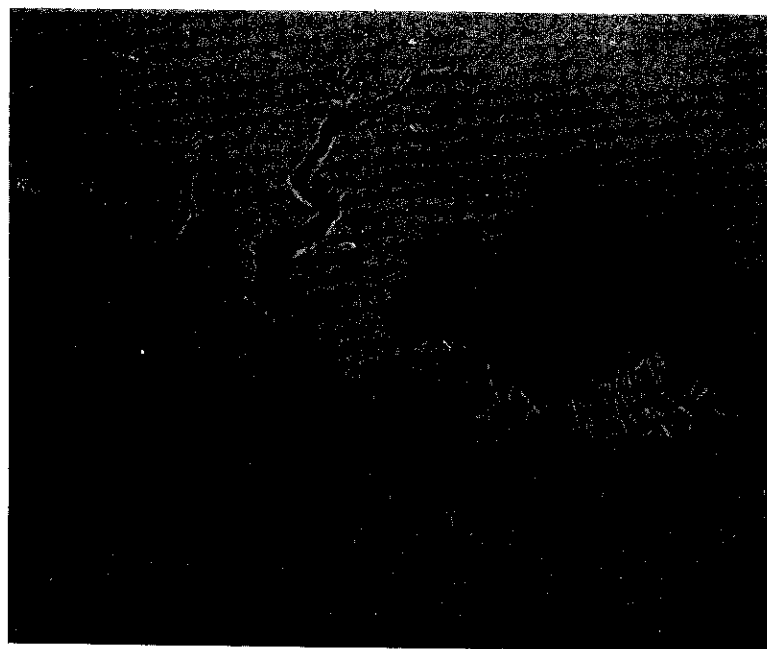
when the creams of raped memory cease
to twist my stomach, punctured shield
no longer protecting me from waves of fire

and blood;

perhaps i will learn, when the
graves are gone green, when the faces of
my babes are once more innocent flesh, when
the rock garden is not rubble of life,
perhaps then i will understand the explanation.

then,
explain.

Marybeth Prejean



Oil Painting

L. O. Spurlock

Last night
I hunted four leaf clovers
On the neon pavement
in a warm forest
of succulent thighs

No leprechaun's emeralds
glow over black
words on blue

paper

Memory motifs
In a cool chair

Gordon Hutson



ABOUT MAMA

By Debby Heckaman

Jake skillfully guided the old truck between the row of oaks lining his driveway, and brought it to rest beneath the last oak. It sputtered to a jerky stop and died with one last coughing wheeze. As he walked up to the back door, he noticed that the weeds were growing so well that he could barely see the walk. He slammed the screen door behind him and tossed his hat on the porch swing. As he unlaced his work boots, he could hear Margaret humming softly in the kitchen. He dropped his boots loudly outside the door.

"That you, Jake?"

"Yeah, it's me."

"Supper's almost ready, Honey. Come on in and wash up."

Jake studied his hands intently as he scrubbed at the reddening skin. Maybe he would be able to talk to her about it tonight, and then again - - every time he tried to change her mind, all hell broke loose. But now, now he had to talk to her, explain how he felt, or things would go too far and he could never set them right. He wiped his hands quickly and entered the kitchen. Her back was to him, as she methodically peeled potatoes at the sink. Pulling back a chair, he bumped it heavily against the floor. She stopped humming.

"Did you do it?"

"Yeah, I did, sort of. Where're the kids?"

She stopped her work and turning from the sink, looked directly at him, "They're outside - - - and what do you mean, 'sort of'?"

"Lee says he wants you to go tomorrow and sign the papers, too - - - so, I, well - - - I told him that I'd wait and sign them, too."

"You mean to tell me you didn't sign those papers! You were gone all day long!"

"Relax, Honey. They can get signed just as well tomorrow as they can today, can't they?"

"Well, I guess so - - - since you didn't seem to be able to find time today," she muttered as she turned back toward the sink.

Jake fingered the silverware beside his plate, running his fingernail along the curling floral pattern on its handle. How could he put it? "Maggie - - -"

"What now?"

"Maybe there's some other way, maybe we ought to think on it some more before we just and up and do something like this."

She slammed the spoon in her hand against the drainboard and whirled around. "Think on it! That's just what we've been doing for months now. Think on it! What you really mean is put it off, and forget it!"

"It was just a thought."

"Well, you can just quit that kind of thinking, we've been through all this before." She turned away and pretended to be busy by rattling pots and pans with as much noise as possible. Jake had known before he asked exactly what her reaction would be, but he had to tell her.

"How's mama?"

"Same as always. Laying in there looking out the window, yelling at the kids, telling me my cooking's what's killing her and asking me what time it is every 15 minutes."

"Maybe she's just lonely, Honey."

kids and taking care of you. She's just a cantankerous old - - - "Maggie stopped, searching for proper words through which to vent her anger.

"Sure. That's just it. She is old. But she's seen times a lot harder than either of us'll ever see. I suppose you think she even fell off the porch and broke her leg, just to spite you!" Although he had promised himself he wouldn't, Jake was yelling now. "She's not just some old dog, Maggie. We can't just lock her away somewhere because she's old and her mind's beginning to get on. She never did anything in her life, but what it was for somebody else. We can't just send her away to that strange place all alone."

Maggie's white knuckles gripped the chair back tightly. "Keep your voice down - - she'll hear you. Anyway, she's not going to be locked up and she's not going to be alone, either. They'll take lots better care of her there than we can. And there'll be other people like her there, too, Jake. Lee told you how good it would be for her and all."

"Good for her! Good for Lee you mean! How can carting her off to a bunch of strangers be good for her? She'll die there, Maggie, I know she will!" He sank forward and laid his head against his folded arms. Maggie put her hand on his neck. It was hot. He raised his head and looked at her, pleading; his blue eyes clouded over. Wetness sparkled softly against his ruddy cheeks and she longed to touch them, but knew she couldn't. She had to be firm. "Why, Jake, here lately she's even taken spells when she can't even recognize us. Pretty soon she won't even know the difference between this house and another."

Jake spoke softly to no one in particular. "She was always there, though, when we needed her; doing for us, smoothing things over every time Lee got himself in some kind of trouble. Plenty of times, I know Papa would've really beat Lee, if Mama hadn't cooled him off a little first. This is how he wants to repay her? And you remember how she helped with the kids and all when you were so sick? Always bringing something to us, even after Papa died, when she could hardly afford to buy for herself. And now? Now Lee wants to bury her away. Out of sight, out of his sight, anyway. And you, you're right with Lee."

Maggie looked away, but she knew Jake was right. Lee hadn't thought about anybody but Joseph Lee Carter ever since the day he first opened his eyes. And what about herself? Mrs. Carter was, of course, a burden, but more than that, it was this frail, emancipated old woman who was slowly building a wall between herself and Jake.

Maggie sat down and wound and unwound the wet dishrag around her hand. "I know Lee's not the best, but he's that way and probably always will be. But it's us we've got to think about, Jake. We can't afford to keep her here. The kids are scared to death of her, what with her yelling and all. I'm so mad by the end of the day, that when you get home, we can't speak a decent word to each other. Besides that, what with her medicine and all, it's getting awfully hard to make ends meet anymore. If we let Lee take her, he'll pay for keeping her there, she'll get real good care and you can go see her anytime. It isn't far. Lee says they have real nice rooms there, with flowers and pictures and even a TV."

"Well, how nice of Lee. He sure thinks of everything. But is his wallet full of money going to visit her or talk to her or just touch her so she knows not everybody wants her dead and buried and out of the way?" His voice was husky now and he coughed.

Maggie sighed and turned away, watching her children playing outside the kitchen window. Standing, she moved slowly towards the sink. No use to call

made it 'til now, so I guess we can make it for a while longer. It's not so bad, really. It's just that --- well, everything seemed to go wrong today, that's all."

She heard his chair scrape against the floor and felt his strong arms around her. He kissed her neck softly and turned her around until she faced him. "You do understand, don't you, Honey?"

She didn't answer, but pulled away toward the stove. "I better get her something to eat, it's getting late."

Jake touched her shoulder gently. "Wait, I'll get it." Jake cut a square of warm cornbread from the pan and crumbled it into a small shallow bowl. As he slowly poured milk over it, he gazed at the grainy golden mixture and said softly to the bowl, "You know ---- Mama used to always like her cornbread with cream --- Wish we had a little."



IF THIS WORLD SHOULD DIE AND FAIL

i

today is the eighth
god help us
we re on our own

today is the fourth
for christ s sake
is there more

today is the nth
by god
many days drowned in waiting

today is the first
good god
leave your hair and come to bed eve

ii

I have seen the days,
the sensuous dawn proclaiming,
retreating westward;
and flying low, sparrows raise,
burning in day's last flaming,
their eyes to home and sunward.

All of time and longer, my gaze,
days and days and days aiming,
pointed straight, far homeward.

Thus, as leaf on deadlead lays,
the Dei Phoebus framing,
a mad, mad furrow groundward,
and many hands work many clays,
prodding at lifes, wild taming,
the divine attempt flows onward.

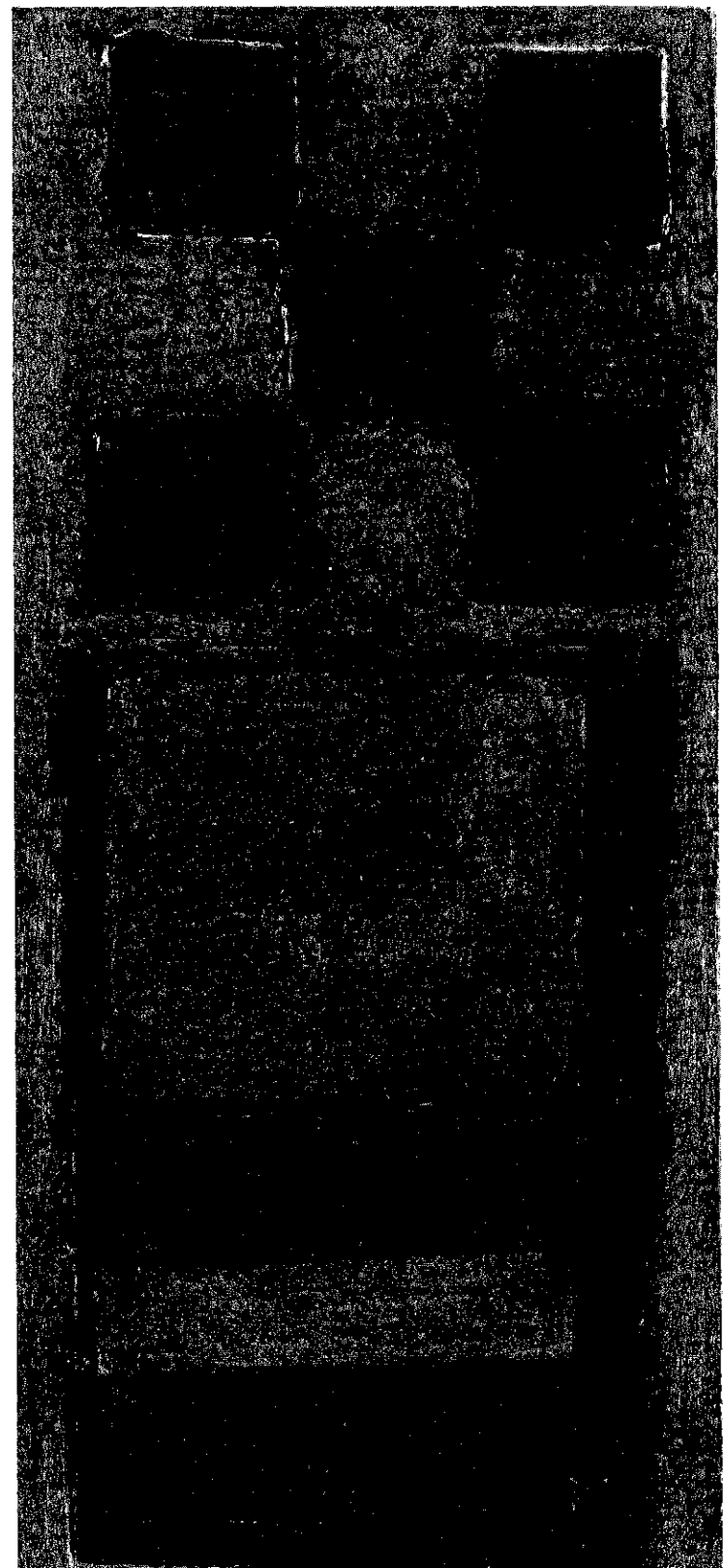
iii

If this world should die and fail,
and fall to dust and cobwebs:
If, once, it should cease to turn,
to follow heaven's lead;
Why, then would love so milk-frail
coagulate Old Breath, new ribs,
And sour fresh voids to curd-sworn
shapes, as, say, ark-doves freed.



Aqua Tint

Vicki Arnaud



TRACES

one by one
they surface
until my
heart flounders
in a sea of hurt
that fills
and overflows
onto barren deserts
of my soul

one by one
they dry
leaving only
bitter salts
that season
my life

SHE CAME

I
The wind was high, the wind
was high and the leaves erect
and trembling on their stems
as the wind pressed their veins.

II
She came, flowing slowly,
through the wind flowing
on bare legs slowly,
luring the wind in her hair.

she came alone (her arms,
her arms) silently (shoulders,
white, exposed) and there
was no noise except
the rustle of leaves.

III
When the wind fell away,
when the moon fell behind trees,
I found her gone.

I sought her hiding in the woods
she was not there,
neither in maple nor firs,
she was nowhere,
gone with wind and moon.

Ellyn James

THE NOVEMBER DREAM

Winter is coming
quickly
on wings of withered leaves.

A squirrel sifts his way through evening
shadows for acorns. Under the big shouldered oaks
he feels encroaching
winter in his haunches.
He holds an acorn in his forepaws.
The acorn is for something,
he is sure,
something.

Cruelly, the oncoming ice chips
at the clarity of my windowpanes.

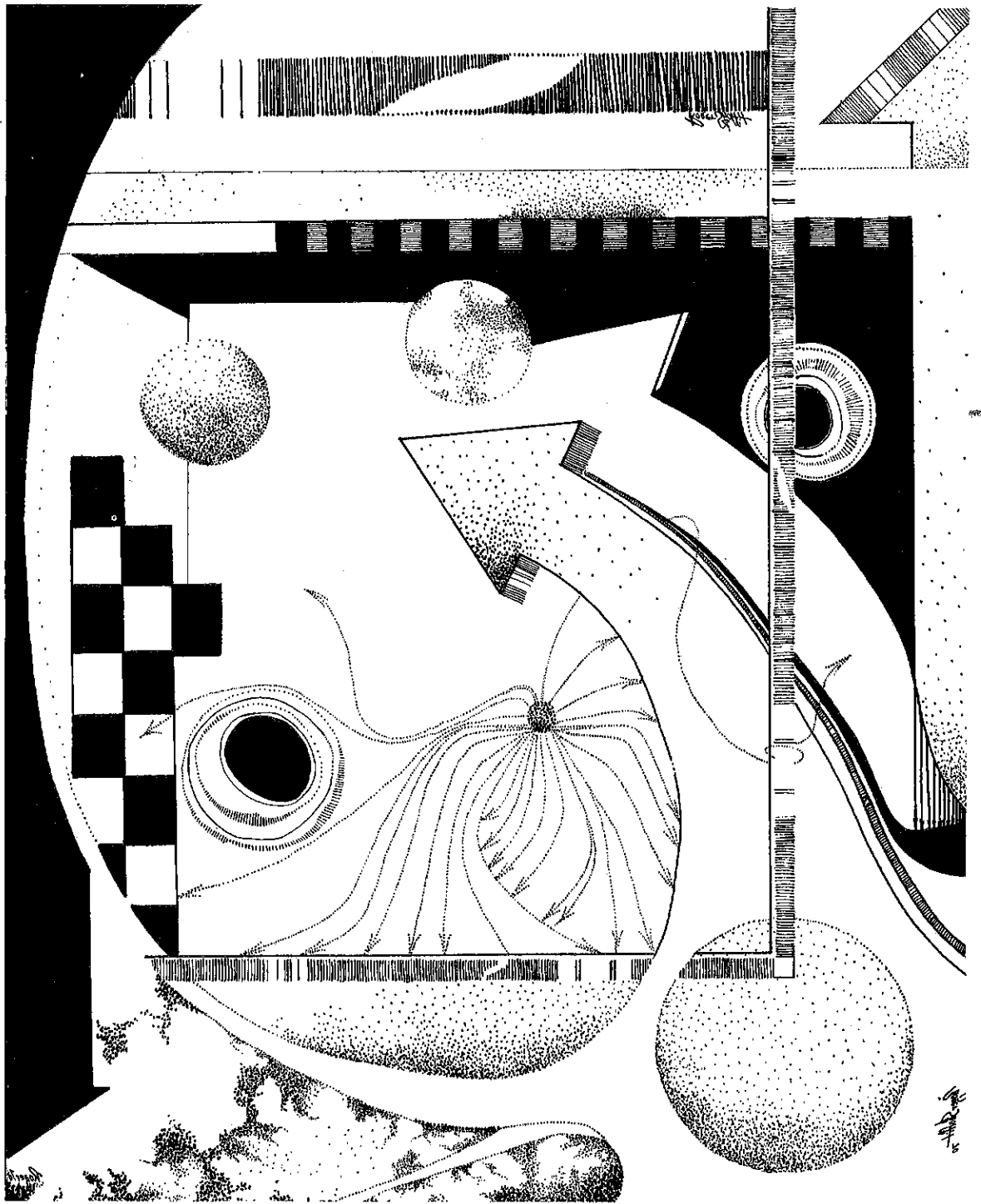
An old Negro, his sagging
flesh folded about his face, huddles
behind an abandoned warehouse not far
from the Southern Pacific freightyards;
dreams of escape in boxcars.

Night has come
and time has come and gone.
The moon clammers over coal cars, drunk.
He falls, embarrassed, lost, into a pile
of abandoned tracks, weeping
over his secret, his inadequate
heart.

outside a fox squirrel stares endlessly
on as old leaves lay their withered palms
on his open grave.

Down the street, the cold wet street
shot-out streetlamps are praying for something,
genuflecting on metal knees, praying
for something, anything,
a new light.

Terry Morrison



Roger Shoffit