PHOENIX

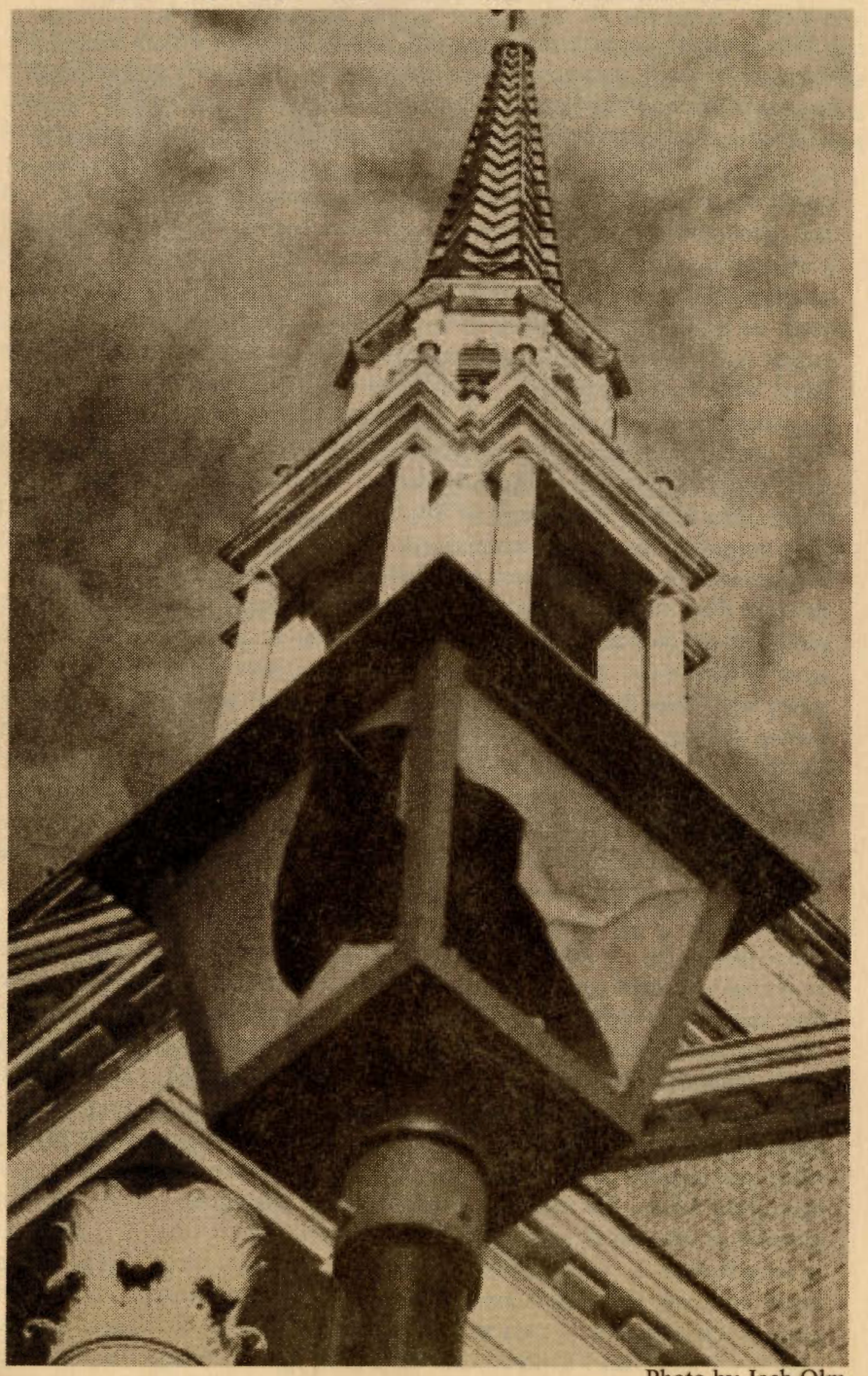


Photo by Josh Olm

110 Pounds of Existence

Why I ever thought for a moment that I could be despondent is beyond me. This here is what I hope to say when I time travel back to now, and smile upon the growing pains of this year. Yet for some other reason, I feel stuck in the mire, set free by the Spirit, and bound…all at the same time, by some simple part of my mind that doesn't seem to expand with the rest. It fascinates me that my world, my thoughts, my womanhood are all compounded and trapped in a 14 inch round sphere; my head. My whole world as I knew it, know it, and ever will is reduced to a part of me that I could hold with both hands cupped. Yes, the human phenomenon that we call Brain. We all have them. They all look relatively the same. Yet the billions of tiny circuits that make no sense to me, but perfect sense to each other, come together and form what is me, and what is called "Rebecca's perspective." I don't even try to understand how it all works, but accept that it does, and it's me. And in this little ball of mesh I call Brain, there are billions of passages. Different corners to turn; different roads to take; many doors to open. They're much like our daily choices. What fork to use, which socks to wear, what piece of fruit to eat. And all have consequences. I don't necessarily mean bad consequences. Just…consequences. So these doors in my mind… Some swing open, and startle the very life in me. I know not the cause, or from which way the wind came rushing through. I just know that I'm paralyzed and shaken. Other doors I lock, and hold tight the key to my chest, never to open them. Some I've opened, and now I know what lurks behind. I surely won't open them again. Other doors, I come and go as I please, thinking, feeling, drifting. Some doors…well, some I can't seem to shut. I pull and push, but nothing. I free myself to travel the billions of circuits in my mind, just to get as far away as possible from unwelcome, open doors. Somehow, though, I always end up standing right in front of them. I don't know if they follow me, or if my bleeding heart brings me back for more. I have to stop and laugh. How could so much perplexity take place in 110 pounds of matter? I'm just a number in the masses. A girl who passes you on the street. A girl who stands in front of you to pay for gas. A girl who once held the door open for you. A girl who took your class two years ago. A girl who's your second cousin's daughter. A nameless, faceless, 110 pounds of person. Another number. That's how you see me. Yes, you world. But amazingly enough, this 110 pounds of person experiences 110% uniquely. Through the billions of circuits of my mind that make up "Rebecca's perspective," and seem to make no sense at all to me, but a world of sense to each other – my world – I find myself here at this significant passage when you compare it to the billions. To you, the hallways of my mind never cross your mind. But even this single doorway among the masses, all compounded in this ball of mesh I call Brain, is open. I can't close it. And I keep coming back to it. There really is no sense in escaping. I can't. I'm trapped inside my mind. We're all trapped in this little ball of mesh where nothing makes sense, yet it is perfect. Or are we? Is there a way to close this door to the passage in my mind that I'd much rather not call on again? Perhaps there is a way.

And as I walk through this door, this one that won't shut, where new darkness lights my pathway, I'm struck to they very core of my existence – whole new endeavor – my heart. And there I am, behind the eyes that you may have looked into in passing, or to ask me a question. There, I'm broken inside of me, on the floor in this passage beyond the forbidden doorway. And as I walk through and am broken, I pick myself up, shake off the shattered pieces, and I am free… And as I walk away, behind me the door closes.

Rebecca Gootee

"Philosophers and Odalisques"

Cognition and coition-
The difference is Aegean.

Jefferson Harbin

People

Sometimes the One who walks closest
Is the One who you push away the hardest
But He pushes back
With all Creation, He pushes and pulls
Pulls and pushes, bringing the lost back
Back to the way

-J.R. Hampton

The Light at the End of the Tunnel

Many people who nearly die
Recall being engulfed by a bright holy light
But what if what they experienced was a lie
And after "embracing the light" beheld their darkest night
As demons drag their souls to hell
And all they can do is kick and yell
Like insects drawn to light before their final farewell
So does the light at the end of the tunnel lead sinful man to hell
Could it be by any chance
If you were to catch a glance
If you were to catch a glance
You'd see evil creatures flashing their light
Baiting your soul for their delight
Remember in death while "embracing the light"
You may awake into your darkest night.

Daniel Kariuki

Untitled

Only weeks ago it moved around squirming on the ground.
A simple organism preparing for a life of danger and great excitement.
Now it emerges with effervescent wings.
As the sun's rays dance its wings, a colorful display of the rainbow's spectrum are seen.
Amazing!
Never had I noticed the radiant colors on its wings.
Its body, an emerald green with a drop of opalescent blue.
The eyes, gentle, a captivating ruby red and its mouth finely crafted as it delicately nibbles on a bread crumb.
The legs, frail but constantly in fervent motion and quite agile as well.
Intuitively I watch this marvelous being as it gracefully works its glorious wings.
Then ascends to a world where humanity will shun its beauty.
Such are the perils that await the birth of a fly.

Daniel Kariuki

The Dead

Can you hear the earth breaking, from the graveyard on the hill?
Can you feel God shudder at the unnatural beasts?

Turn down the TV and listen…
You can hear them—
slouching, dragging broken bones and rotting flesh,
Only aching for a taste…
Men, women, agape—
Soulless, heartless, broken down, shells of people
Once in love and living now they gather
More and more…
Thirty, forty, several hundred more arrive
It's louder now.
The Dead are waking,
NO not waking,
It's so real and somehow not.
The dead are walking,
Oh they're walking,
And they're filling up our streets
The dead are walking, still they're walking,
Hide the children,
What rough beasts!

Banging, now they're banging!!
On the walls of our safe home!
Our food churns within our stomachs!
The power's out and we're alone…

The banging's getting louder, so we sing
And we ignore.
We fight against each other
As they press against the door.

They see us through the windows with
Their vacant bleach white eyes…
Their teeth are gnashing furious,
Their tired of our lies.

Glass shatters! Doors crash!
Our security is gone—
We waited far too long and now
There's nowhere left to run.

They grab us—
We're repulsed, even now
We hate the smell—
We shut our eyes and pray for once
Send the sinners back to hell!

We're awake now…
Sweat-drenched, gasping—
Back in sweat security.
Safe and sound, they're not around us—
Pushing thoughts out of our heads—
But the dead pile up, and you know why—
We eat our daily bread.

They're silent far away now—
We don't see them everyday.
But there's more and more and even
Now it's getting harder to look away.

…and the gates that hold them back
Are strained and soon they must break loose.
We'll see them face to wretched face
And be stuck with no excuse.

John Hammon

Calendar by Conventions

On cloudy day, on a crowded playground, thirteen children partake in an inclusive game.
One game played…every game played…everyone played.

A new dilemma arises…what to play next?

Two children with unique ideas voice their opinions.
They stand adamantly beside their idea, must respect the other's contribution.

The groups split…six and six.

A reticent boy stands indecisive.
He likes both games, but isn't passionate about any particular game. He'll sit out.

After hours of both games, the groups seek fresh entertainment.
More ideas voiced, more groups created…four groups of 3.

(He's still indifferent)

The groups take pride in their clever new games.
Each group is smarter than the next and the other games don't make sense!
What stupid games those others play.

The odd man out is eager to play and aspects of every game look attractive.
Teams are picked and he doesn't know the rules…he can't play.

Come on…

As the blankets of light are finally pulled from the sky and the day concludes, dozens of heads rest on pillows of solitaire cards and a suicide note is left at a playground without a recipient.

Kevin Mason

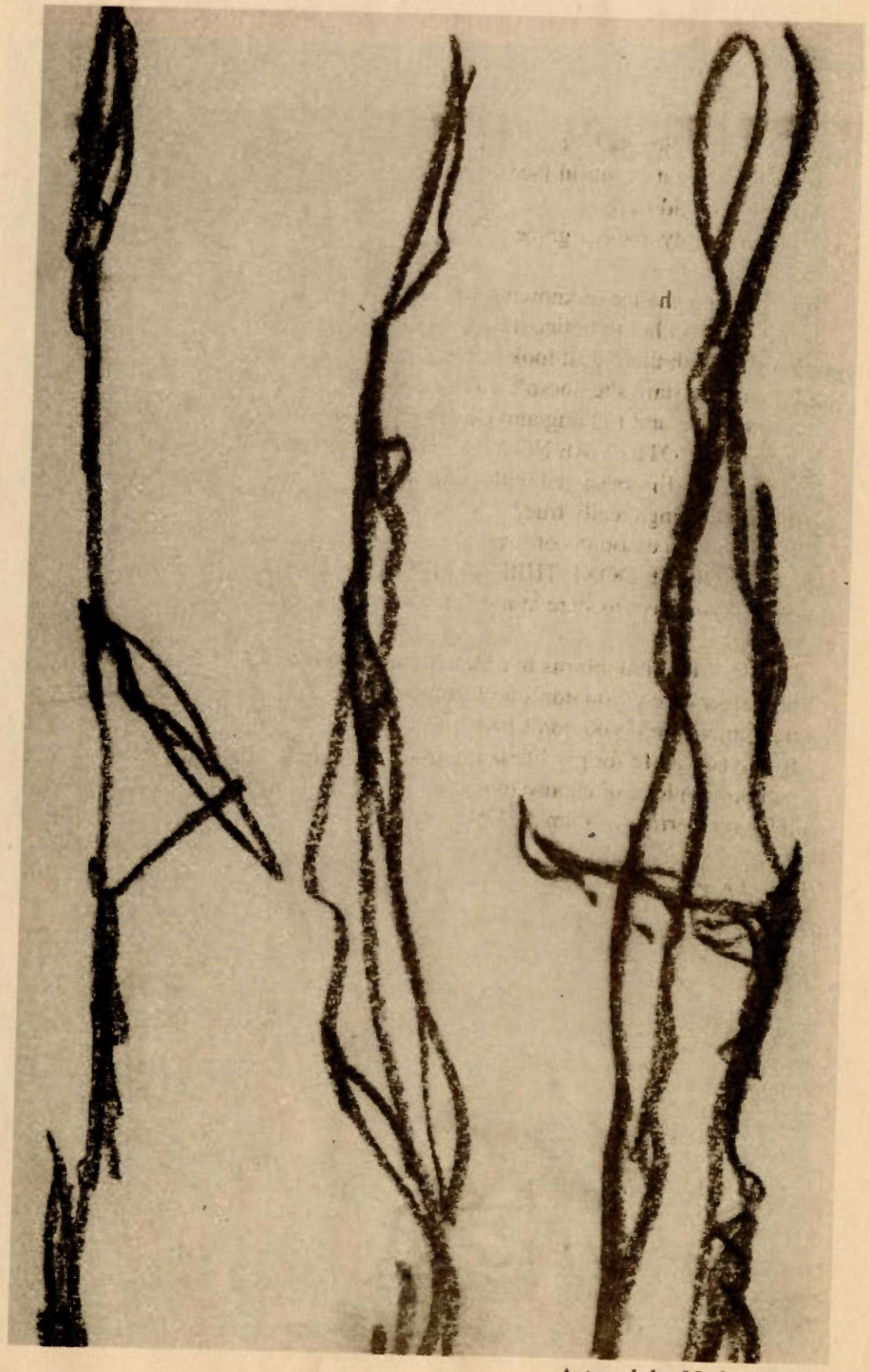
Alone

Gentle locks of lovely hair
Grace her radiant beautiful face.
O if only I could stare
Upon her beauty and her grace.

But I have no chance of knowing her.
I can't even get her to notice me.
What's up with this? Just look at me.
No glance no stare she doesn't care. GOD!!!!
I'm screaming and fighting and clawing my brain.
Notice me. NOTICE ME NOW BEFORE I GO INSANE!!!!
Can't you see I'm obsessed with you.
Are these feelings really true?
I'm drunk with emotions of love.
YOU!! YOU'VE DONE THIS TO ME!!!
Why did you have to stare at me that way and .....

PEACE. My mind returns to a state of unprecedented peace.
I no longer care if you don't notice me.
I no longer care if you don't love me.
My life is my life for my life is my own.
To choose to love or choose to disown.
I have no worries.... I am ALONE.

Daniel Kariuki



Artwork by Nathan Pelton

prayer vigil

bre ak me sh at ter me crack me into a thousand little p i e c e s
tear
d
o
w
n my f a
c a
d e reach into my heart and cleanse it with your
grace
discipline me
rid me of this sloth that infects my mind
i want to live for you alone
you are all that matters to me hear my prayers
Lord hear my cries
i am desperate for your strength and will
may i not waste one more minute nay second on the worthless distractions of
this world
i want to give you may all i am tired of playing
games
today i am taking you seriously and i believe that you really
can use me
i refuse to buy into the lies that i've allowed to pour over me for years
rip off the [shackles] and
(embrace) your child
i am weak but you make me strong
i am a true warrior as hardcore as they come
take my *passion* and use it Lord turn this flicker into an
explosion
make me a light unto all men

laura sue reagan

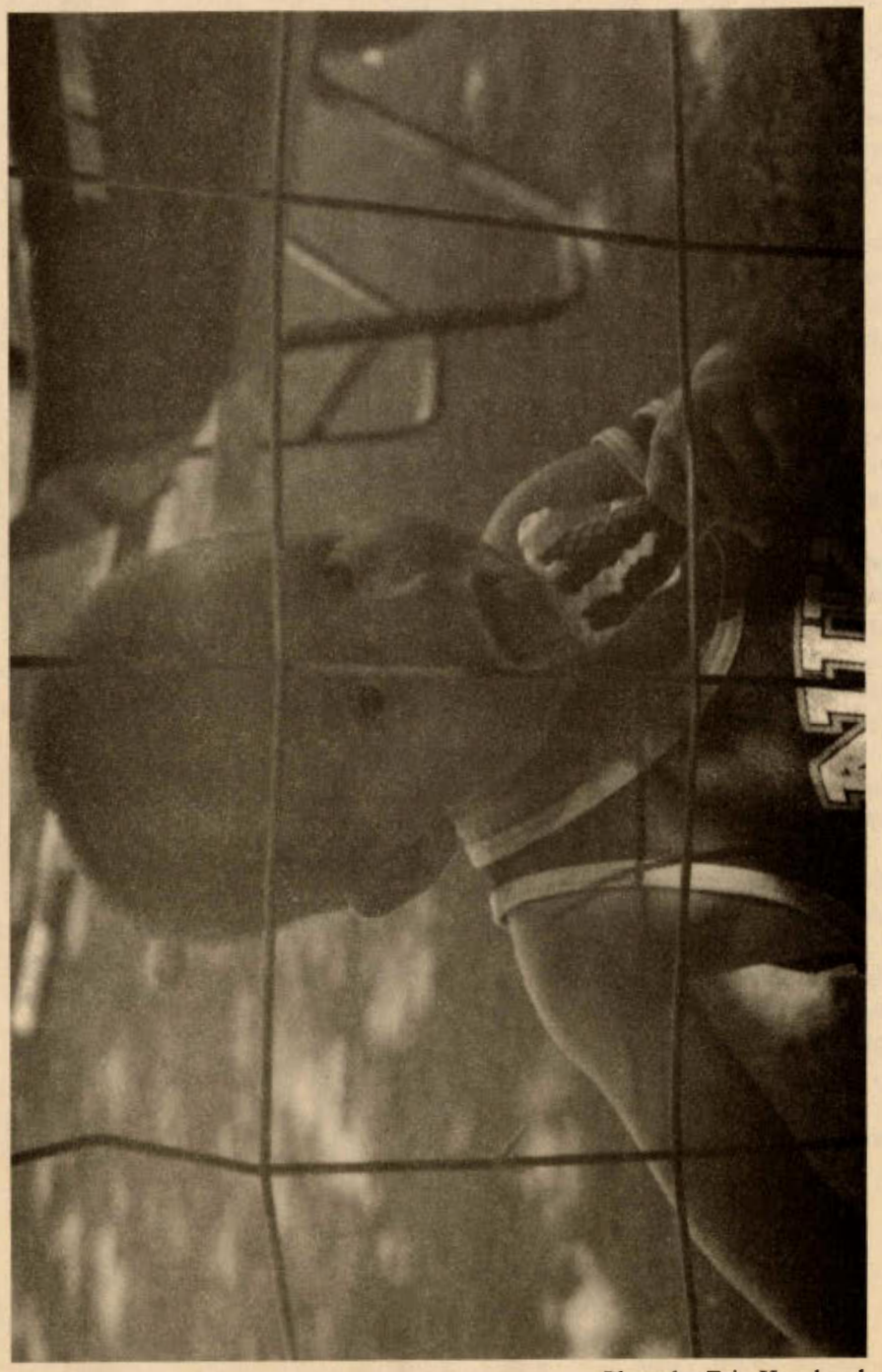


Photo by Erin Hogshead

I am

I am a mirror,
Feeling somewhat hollow,
Reflecting what others want to see.

I am a pool,
The reflection is easily broken,
Gaining more depth, filling slowly,
I change temperature as needed.

I am a flower,
Feeling lovely, opening to warmth,
Trying to brighten someone's day
Before closing up to the frost.

I am a child.
Easily trusting, seeking approval,
I learn, but still make mistakes.

Make me your mirror,
A reflection of your face.

Make me your pool,
Filled by the depth of your grace.

Make me your flower,
An embodiment of your spiritual place.

Make me your child,
Supported by your hands,
I grow to be like you.

Paige Wassel

Untitled

Well another day has ended and the daylight has passed
and we sit in the lonesome dark of night and wonder,
was there any more that I could have done.

Everyone has their own delights and their own ways to be happy
and we ask ourselves, what would life be like without that.
Then it suddenly gets a little darker with the gloom of feelings.
Then we realize there is someone out there that gives me all that
and even the things that we don't even ask for.

And in that dark of night light appears
in the back of our mind and we ask ourselves,
can we go another day without that person giving me all that I need
and that which I am not worthy of?

Questions are a part of life;
we just have to decide if we are willing to look for the answer.
And when we do finally find an answer to that question, yet another question
conforms in our heads.
Our life is spent answering questions,
questions that baffle the world of science and logic.

We don't know, that is why they call it life,
but then again what is life?
Another question another day.
And then the rosy finger tips of dawn reach out
and pull the inconstant blanket of night out of our reach to reveal the beginning of another day and the next day closer to finding out if it is all worth working for.
I believe it is.

Tom Wiles

Disclaimer: In compliance with Revelation 22:18, this is totally not the Bible.

8. Antidisestablishmentarianism is held for your decrees; do not forsake me, please.
10. Bash me on the head when I start to stray from your commands; I seek you with all my heart.
23. CNN may scandalize my name, but your servant will still meditate on your decrees.
32. Dacryorrheas consume me for you have set my heart free; I dance in the path of your commands.
39. Enflurane be poured on the disgrace that I dread, for your ordinances are good.
45. Freedom shall be my mobile stair-master and I shall walk toward your precepts.
55. Ghibli of the night blows and I remember your name, O Lord, and will keep your law.
59. Halstead-Reitan Neuropsychological Battery Tests prove positive the intent of my ways concerning the turning of my steps to your statutes.
64. Hillbillies and aristocrats alike are filled with your love, O Lord, teach me your decrees.
68. Incommensurately I praise your works, O Lord; let me work on that.
78. Jerks should be put to shame for wronging me without cause; but I will meditate on your precepts.
81. Obese am I with longing for your salvation, but I have put my hope in the Weight Watchers cheesecake of your word.
84. Osteoporosis may set in before you punish my persecutors? When will you do it, already?!
154. Xerox and preserve the days of my life according to your promise; defend my cause and redeem me.
155. Xanthous with cowardice are the wicked and far from salvation, for they do not seek out your decrees.

Michael Ottinger

Untitled

Child of Darkness
Child of Light
One burns brighter through the night
In the shadows
In the meadows
Burns a candle burning bright
Child of Darkness
Child of Light
One with passions of direst night
The slit of throats, the blood of goats, as Evil gloats, while children wail.
A Fallen Star, its beauty scarred, one third brought down by Dragon's Tail.
Child of Darkness
Child of Light
One from above, full of Love
Radiant and gentle like a dove
One from below the depths of Sheol
Yet both share the precious soul.
Child of Darkness
Child of Light
One desires to walk the narrow path
Child of Darkness
Child of Light
The other is but a child of wrath
If I asked you which one you were, what would you say?
I am the embodiment of Darkness, yet I am the offspring of Light.
Whatever I may be interpret it as you may
I am a child of Darkness and a child of Light.

Daniel Kariuki

September 11. 2001

Person,
Person,
Walking down the Street
Where are you going?
What are you doing?
Have you stopped-
Have you thought-
Why?
You are here
I am here...
Did you wonder,
Person on the street,
What this day would bring-
Or did you rush
As if each moment
Did not matter...?
Hug a child today
And smell a flower
Because-
Person,
Person
Walking down the street
Voices cried out today
And then,
Were silent

Amber Amland

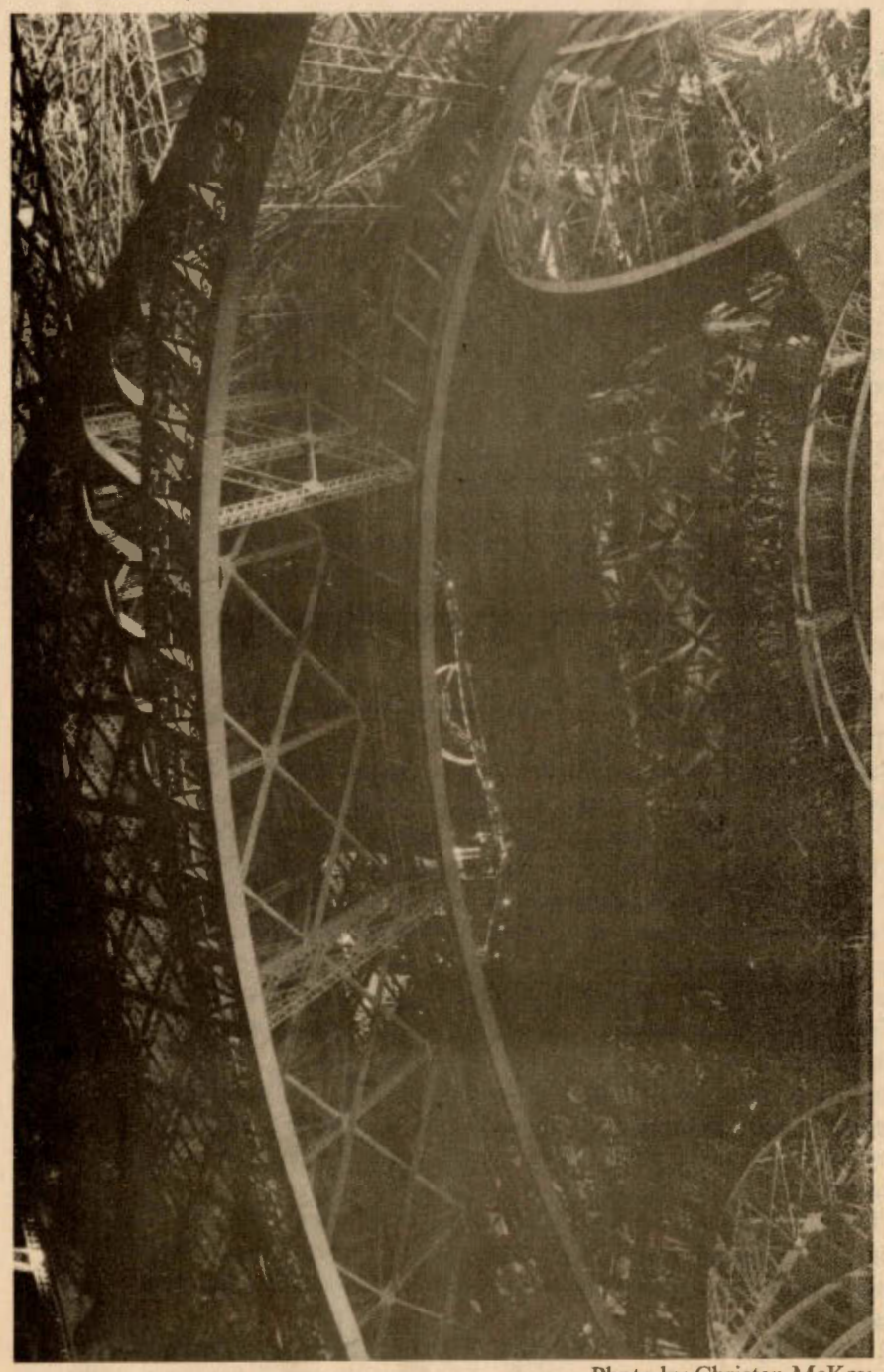


Photo by Christan McKay

Ring Around the Rosy

A newborn baby's wail broke the hush that had fallen like a damp fog over the house that evening. I leapt from my chair where I had been left unattended, and rushed up the stairs, nearly tripping on my new gown. Hurriedly, I shoved open the door at the end of the hall. There my mother lay, white and pale, on the bed. My father turned to me with a rare, soft smile.

"Come, see your new sister."

Timid and shy now, I crept forward slowly. The nurse finished swaddling my sister and handed her to father. He knelt down so I could see. As I leaned in closer, my sister began to again. Her sudden cry and the look of worry on my father's pock-marked face brought back a flood of memories...

Wailing and destruction echoed through the streets of London. Death was everywhere - in poor and rich houses alike. The stench of it clung to the air. It was inescapable. Yet, it had not touched our house, and I was certain my father wouldn't let it. My three sisters and I were forbidden to go out, for fear we would become sick also. Father's place of business was closed because of the illness, so he only went out as needed. Every time he came back from an errand, he and Mother would confer in worried tones. I caught snatches of conversation:

"Thirty more yesterday... The whole Browne family..."

"I've kept Emily inside..."

Still, I was sure the sickness wouldn't come to our house; Father would not allow it. I was wrong. Two days later, Father paced the hall as two of my sisters tossed and turned in their beds upstairs. Mother spent most of her time caring for them. Mary and I huddled in the corner chair in the parlor for the greater part of the day. I was five then, and she was younger than I, by a year. I told her stories, and we talked of happier days before the plague struck London. It was strange to think that just three months earlier, we had been to parties and picnics in the park. These dark days seemed to have lasted for years.

Four days later, my older sister died. We held a simple service before Father took her out to the wagon that carried the bodies to burial. Mother wept, and turned all her energy toward helping our other sister get well. Mary and I were forgotten. We cried together a while, and then Mary begged, "Emily, please, a story." I gladly told her many stories. Some I made up, others were about things I remembered.

"Do you remember, Mary, when Father took us all to the park to see the birds? Mother came along too, and brought us food to eat. When she had it all laid out, a big black bird came along and ate our bread..." Stories like this made Mary giggle.

The next day, I was alone in the chair. Father no longer paced the hall; he and Mary were both upstairs in their beds. I told myself stories, but it wasn't the same. Mainly, I sat in silence. A strange hush fell over the city, broken only by occasional wailing from the nearby houses. I awoke from a nap that afternoon to find Mother carrying Elizabeth down the stairs. Tears ran down Mother's face

as she came back inside the house. Suddenly, she noticed me for the first time in days. We sat for a long time and cried together. It felt good to have Mother's arms around me.

When I awoke from my nap the following afternoon, the house was strangely quiet. Worried, I rushed upstairs. Father's bed was empty! I flung myself onto his bed in tears. It couldn't be... not Father. Someone gently touched my arm and I looked up. Father was standing there! He survived his fight with the disease, which left him weaker, but still able to visit me a little. He calls his pock-marks on his face his battle scars. Mother entered the room a few moments later and announced that Mary had also taken a turn for the better.

A few weeks later, the night sky was turned red by the fire. Screams and cries for help echoed all over London as people hurried out of their houses. The fire had started at the far end of the city but was now close to us. Mother awoke Mary and me and hurriedly helped us dress. Father was already gone to see if he could find a wagon to take us to safety in the country. Chaos met us in the streets. People were everywhere - some dressed, others in nightclothes! The fire burned brighter now than it had before. At the end of our narrow street, houses were burning. People ran in and out of them, frantically removing things from houses on fire to safer houses - only to rush them out of them as they caught fire moments later. The air was so hot and full of smoke that it was hard to breathe. Mother kept us close to her for fear she would lose us in the confusion. We were bumped and shoved many times. Many began to cry. Then, Father appeared with a wagon. I'm not sure where he found it as the rest of that night is a jumbled memory. The lines on his face were deeper, and he looked more tired than I've ever seen anyone look before. He coughed as he helped Mary and me into the back of the wagon. Mother and Father climbed up in front, and we were off. It was slow going. There were so many people and piles of furniture everywhere that it was hard to get through. The rest of the night was a blur of shadows, flashes of fire, and cries of people and animals.

When we returned on Tuesday, we found most of London burned. The houses were mere crisp, black skeletons of what they used to be. Here and there, a cat or child wandered aimlessly through the ruins. Our home was gone; all that remained of it was a few pieces of furniture a neighbor had rescued for us. Among them was the corner chair. The neighbor told us that because almost all the buildings were built of wood with thatched roofs, they went quickly. Father's business, however, survived the fire, so we were able to rebuild our house. Others were not so fortunate.

It was decided that the fire was actually one the best things that could have happened to London. The plague disappeared afterwards, and everything was washed new and clean. The buildings were rebuilt in stone, and we moved into our newly finished house. Joy returned to our city.

Mary's gentle touch on my arm brings me back to reality. My new sister has stopped crying, and Mother is smiling at me from the bed. Father hands me my sister, and Mary and I take her over to the corner chair to sit and hold her. After a while, we hand her to mother and head outside where neighborhood children

are singing a new rhyme: Ring around the rosy, a pocket full of posies, Ashes, ashes, we all fall down…

Author's note: This rhyme symbolizes events that occurred during the plague and fire in London around 1666. "A pocket full of posies" symbolizes the scented herbs people put in their pockets to ward off the plague. Certain herbs were supposed to keep away diseases. "Ashes, ashes, we all fall down" is referring to the death and the fall of London's buildings as they burned.

Amber Amland

Murder

Alcohol killed him.
his weeklong binges
slowly destroyed
the old man.
His urine
and puke-stained body
became a shadow.
His terrifying tirades
ushered in total
silence.
Alcohol killed him.

Charlene Kiser
June 25, 2001

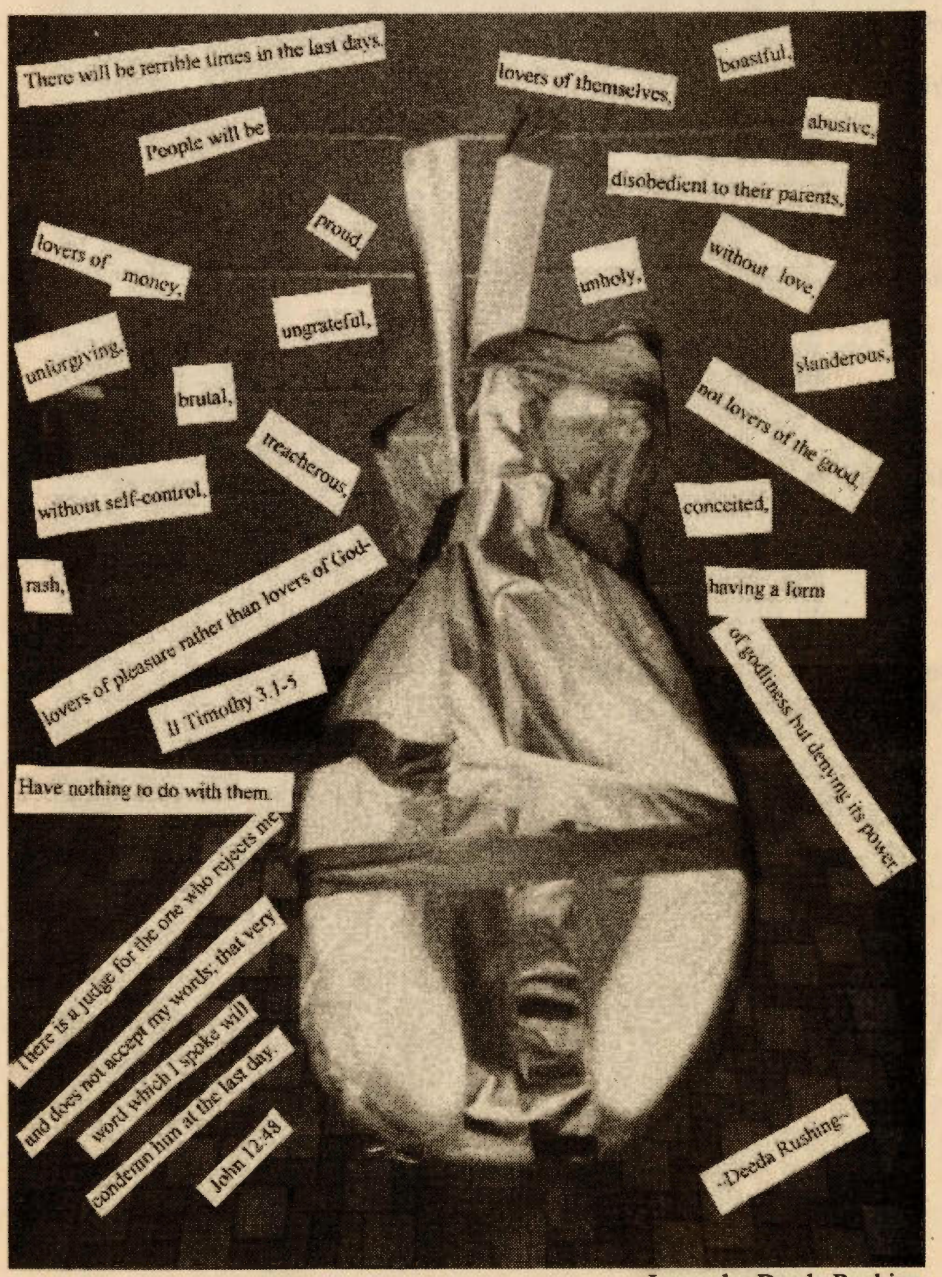


Image by Deeda Rushing

Untitled

Written in the book of fate
Are you, and am I.
And our paths cross,
And our lives intertwine.
And you affect me.

The random twinges and bends of life
Direct you and direct me.
And we meet
And things change.
I affect you. You affect me.

Maybe for life, maybe for a moment,
We are one,
And my breath falls short,
And your eyes…
And we react.

Does God smile when this happens?
Maybe so, maybe not.
Will you break me?
Take a piece of me?
And we kiss,
And I wake,
And I'm real,
And things change.

John Hammon

Photo by Amber Neill

Untitled

It's the way she smiles.
Actually it's more than that; it's the way her lips get real thin when she's laughing.
And it's how she holds her head in her hands and lets the breeze blow her hair around.
It's definitely her selflessness.
It's also her the way her hair so elegantly defies her wishes, never quite doing what she
wants it to do.
It's certainly the way she laughs. The way she cries, and the way she does both at exactly
the same time.
It's the way you can get lost in her eyes.
It's that look in her eyes when she's angry.
It's her love of art.
It's more than her love of art: it's her art; that painting, that photograph those words.
It's her away messages that make me laugh.
It's the way she maintains her modesty, without trashing style.
It's the way she burps.
It's the way she can make a face with her eyes and lips and nose and everything else.
It's the solace and silence that accompany her presence.
It's the way she's honest and open.
It's that freckle that no one else even notices.
It's the way that she can out think me.
It's the way she questions and doesn't question.
It's the way I know things about her, yet I question everything.
It's the way she carries herself.
It's who she is.
She can't be contained in words, in pictures, or in voice from miles away.

That's how I know.

-KJP

I am the World

Aggression pumps through
My veins like blood
LIFE
I feel the stabbing pain of a thousand knifes
Stabbing my heart
As it transforms from flesh
To cold steel.

Not human
Nothing living
Frost bitten emotions
Joyless, decaying vision
No sunrises,
Only sunsets are in my vision.

My soul is infiltrated
By the World
Only a cold shell of emptiness and death
Is left
A foundation of rage
Aggression
Fear
Failure.

I AM THE WORLD!

Heartless
Monstrous
Unable to feel,
Feeding on my own selfishness and deception.

Shackles are dragging me down
Blockading any form of hope
To sneak into my heart
Leaving me only as this World.

Erin Hogshead

Untitled

Her sunset was stolen

In one swift dark action
Not her choice or the others'
The others that form
The multitude that loved her
And love her still
The multitude that remembers
The dawn of her birth
The newfound wonder of the sunrise
And the glory of midday light
Her morning faded into a bright afternoon
Filled with spilling color
And melodious songs
That shone in her gentle voice
And her loving heart
The afternoon went black
As the night that we call death
Embraced her sun kissed body
Her radiant life in the afternoon warmth
Reduced to icy shadows
As the light burned out

Her sunset was stolen

Amy Ewing

Resurrecting Mr. Hyde

I'm at the edge of my mind
Between the thin line, that separates sanity from insanity.
The clock in my head begins to unwind
And I begin to lose my humanity.

For deep within the center of my soul
Lurks a creature known as Mr. Hyde.
Resurrected when anger grows
When hate and anger abides.

A malicious being concealed to the naked eye
Often suppressed but can never die.
Confined in the darkest chambers of my soul
With hidden motives, no one should know.

Blood and fire mingle and the venom spreads through my veins
A sinister being begins to reign.
Of flesh or bone I cannot tell
It's origin quite possibly the portals of hell.

"Monstrous creature why do you leave me corrupt and desolate
I try to bury you but from me you will not separate.
VOICES, WHY DO YOU HAUNT MY MIND
AND WITH THEIR FURY YOU MAKE ME BLIND!!!"

Alas, the voices begin to subside,
But yet my fears still reside
For time will tell if the creature still abides
And I find myself resurrecting Mr. Hyde.

"Seven deadly sins arouse from within
The creature that lies underneath my skin."

Daniel Kariuki

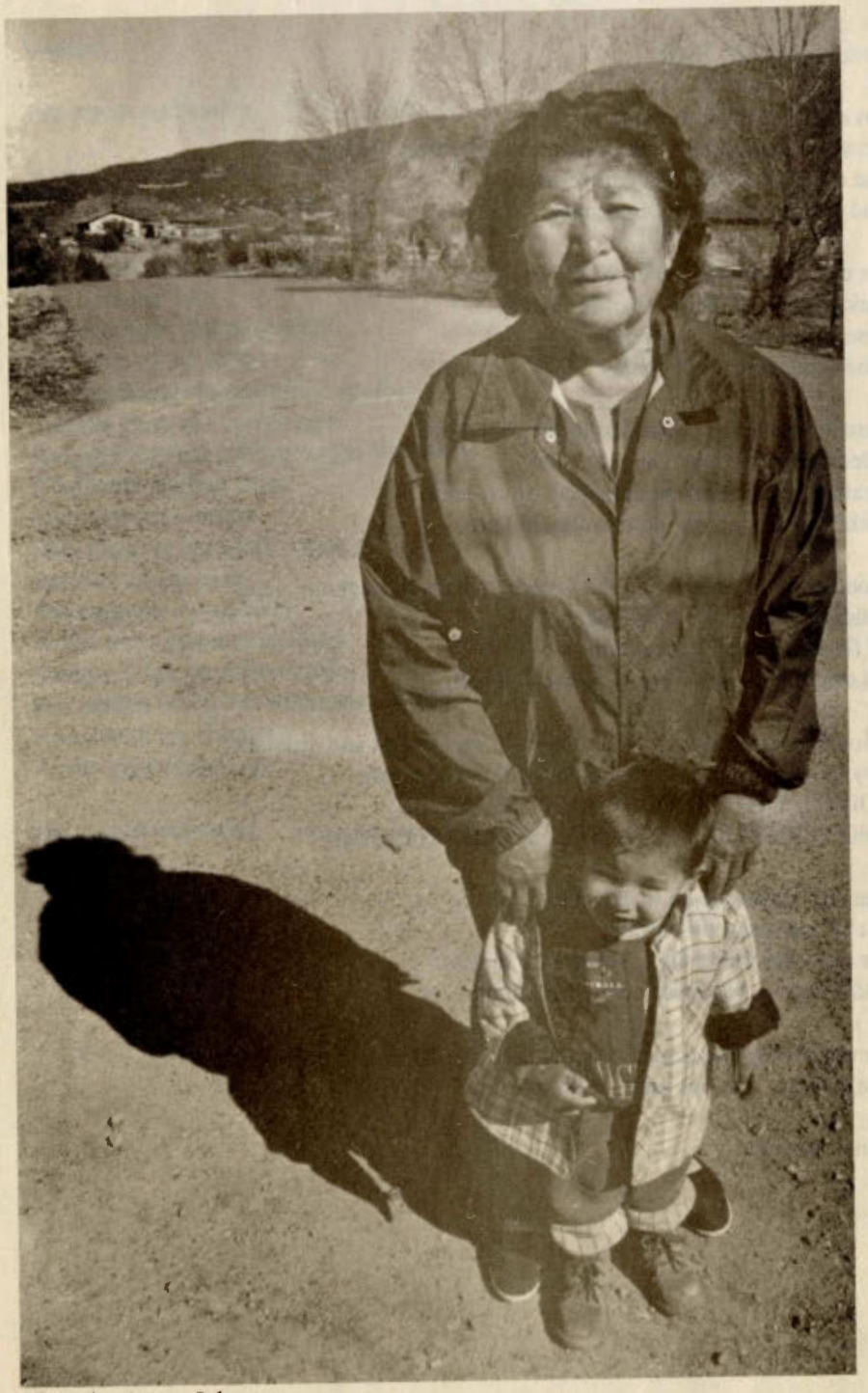


Photo by Aaron Johnston

It was but a humble building, so full of friends, memories, and love, that one could have smelled these things flowing from the doorway and windows as a sweet perfume. It was a small square frame cottage, with not one private room and only an outside toilet. There was no bath or shower; the lake's clear water would do just fine for those three months. Though the water appeared dirty and cold to some visitors, we were content. Of course floating Ivory soap was used. Our imagination sailed over the waves as our white soap made getting a bath fun.

We always arrived the weekend of Memorial Day. To this moment, years later, the Memorial Day holiday means only one thing to me. Uncover and clean everything from the winter's dark, dusty storage. There was a celebration when each shelf and foldout bed was cleared and announced fit for another summer's use. Shutters were opened and windows cleaned. The sun shone through and everything brightened. Treasures forgotten over the months were found as we renewed acquaintance with our trinkets and toys. Sand shovels with buckets were my favorite. Beautiful castles could be made and decorated with rocks and leaves.

There was also much work to be done outside. Often newly purchased swimming suits were our choice dress. We wanted to catch as much sun as possible, making up for time lost to the winter's hibernation. In short time our winter white skin was red as fire. The yard, with its gentle slope, usually still held autumn leaves as well as sticks and limbs to remind us of the winter storms. All of these had to be cleared and burned before the mowing, weeding, and trimming could begin.

If the weather hadn't been too harsh, perhaps the boat dock would only require a few patches and could be used before the weekend passed. The boat was used mainly on Friday evenings and Saturdays, when the men came out after their week at work. They sacrificed a family life, living alone and working, for twelve weeks, Monday through Friday, for the fun of the children.

Saturday was the most memorable day of each week. Breakfast was a little heartier than the other six days. We would need the extra energy to keep up with our agenda for the day. Sand castles, swimming, fast boat rides, skiing, maybe a little fishing, and lots of hugs and catching up with Dad, Uncle Tom and Grandpa would fill our day.

Even that first weekend, as our work neared an end, our muscles sore and our skin burned, nothing else would do but that we ask for a dip in the lake. The adults always warned that the water would be too cold, but we children insisted. I have never admitted it to anyone, but they were right; the water was cold! What fun though! We immediately picked up where we had stopped last September. It was as if the nine months of school had never interrupted our play.

There were eight of us, my two brothers, two sisters, three cousins, and me. I was the oldest of my siblings, though two cousins were older than me. This gave me bossing rights over one half of the clan. Unfortunately, the oldest cousin had the same rights over me and used them to the fullest. Somehow the squabbles

that followed only seemed to add to our fun.

Each day of June, July, and August was filled with fun, games, and water. It was not uncommon to spend four or five hours in the lake, racing, perfecting our hand stands, playing tag, and tipping each other's inner tubes.

Whoever gave in to their hunger first would run to the cottage and be quickly sent back to the water's edge with a basket overflowing with sandwiches and homemade cookies. A huge pitcher of Kool-aid would wash it all down. Ahh! Life was good!

Even a rainy day would find us outside – often in the lake. We hardly noticed the clouds. Only a lightning or windstorm would send us indoors. With no television, radio, or electronic games, we would settle in with a good book or crayons, write a letter to a school friend, or get a group together for a board game.

The days and weeks passed quickly. Soon even August would be gone. We looked forward to Labor Day with an unspoken dread. The last holiday of summer was the exact opposite of the first. Closing up the cottage seemed much more difficult than the harder chores of cleaning and opening. To close, everything had to be put away, then covered with old sheets of newspaper. The door was gently closed and locked, with a quiet confidence that another summer's memories would be held safely inside.

Kathy Dowda

The Sound No One Can Hear

There is a terrible sound that God made sure we could not hear.
It's the most precious blessing he gave unto our ear;
For if we were to hear it, it would tear our world apart
It's not the cries from hell but the sound of a breaking heart.

Love is truly a blessing and a curse, one in the same,
For to find that one true love, one must enter in the game.
With the exception of a lucky few it almost never fails
That when you enter in love's game your heart will certain ail.

No amount of pleading can ease this horrid pain.
It first consumes your heart then mem'ries infect your brain.
Memories of that short first glance or that long first kiss,
Will make you yearn for the days when your heart was full of bliss.

And then there'll come another who will put this all to rest,
And help to heal the broken heart that beats down in your chest.
All the dreams you thought were lost will soon come back to mind;
The past will fade away when your true love you do find.

Chad Booth

The Crystal

I gazed into a crystal
And in it, found no flaw:
The perfect product of winter freeze
And of summer thaw,
Of Nature's endless power
To make beautiful from raw.

Chad Booth

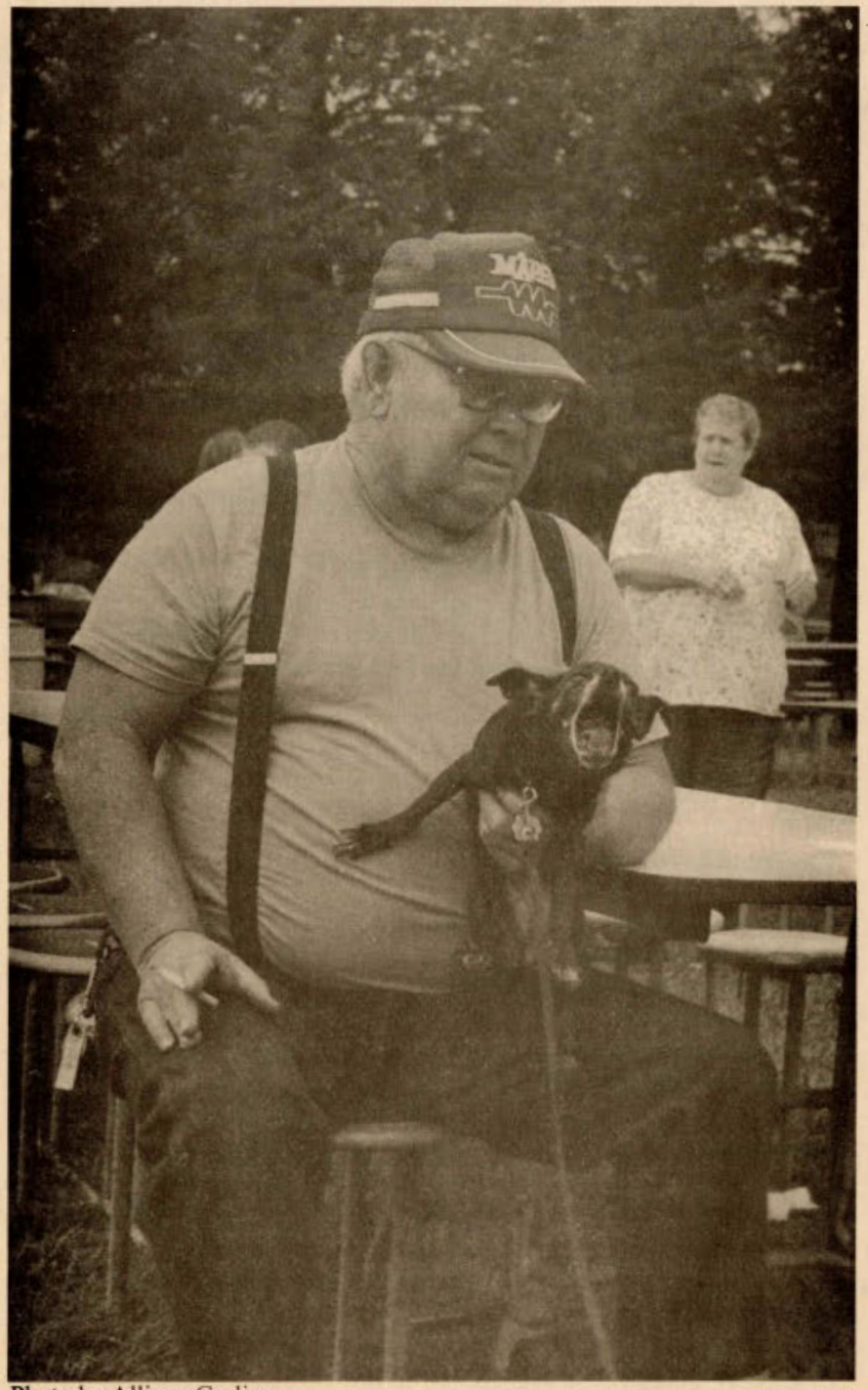


Photo by Allison Garling

Observations

2 lonely people.

Forced together
No sparks
No trumpets
A great circumstance
No real meaning or understanding

2 lonely people

Desperate
To fight isolation
Forgetting there are no similarities
Forgiving the pain they cause
Settling into society
Fortifying a decaying soul
Creating security from insecurity
Loosing one's self to be part of the game
Identity forgotten

2 lonely people

Tricking themselves into love
Shutting their eyes to reality
Clenching on to the rules of society
Holding each other's bodies
Never touching each others souls
Never reaching an abstract level
Only reaching the now
Never extending beyond the lateral

2 lonely people

Together for the moment
Denying forever
Gasping for air
Strangling themselves with their own hands
Pretending that it must be love.

Erin Hogshead

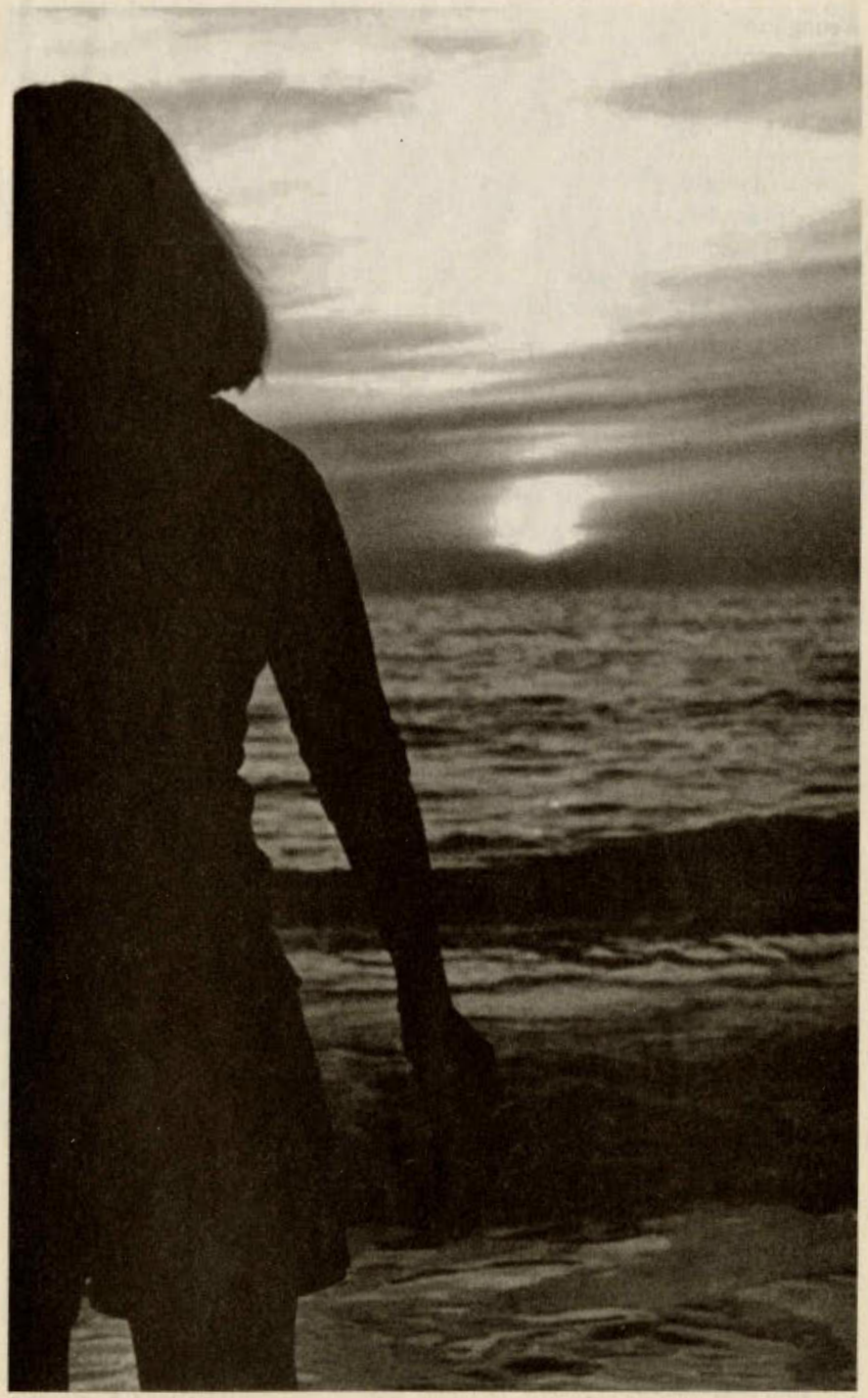


Photo by Tom Wiles

Young Lovers

Through the beach I walk
as the tide washes out
tossing stones here and there
with no notice
of the energy spent
I kick the sand
as I pass
And see you
A Rock like no other-
those days when the sun set
into the sea like
a man and a woman-
I will never forget.

Suzy Bomgardner

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CREDITS

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