

WILSON

1921

3/26/91  
B

The Muses give man the gifts of science and art. Each night they steal away from their home on Helicon, hidden in darkness, to visit mortals with their knowledge and their poetry. See within what riches they have bestowed upon us.



Dance, if you will,  
For the Dance is all we truly know.  
The Rhythm will lead;  
The steps are all that need be shown.

The images melt,  
But the reality remains,  
The sand washed from the rock  
By torrential, suffering Rains.

Confusion sets in  
When the feet and the soul refuse  
To agree on the steps--  
And so we lose.

The light remains,  
Through the way of the Dance.  
It boils the Sea,  
And scorches the lands.

All that will diverge,  
Everything that can disappear,  
Will.

All that endures and remains  
Is the Song.  
With the Rhythm it merges, stays.  
Dance along.

Brian West

## TUG OF WAR

Inside I shudder  
and inside I cry  
and sometimes I don't  
even know why.

One minute I'm fine  
then the next one I'm not  
My whole day can change  
with one passing thought.

My past keeps on knocking  
away at the door  
and I don't have the strength  
to fight anymore.

At times I am frightened  
and others I'm sad  
Then there are times when  
I'm really quite mad.

I used to think I was  
doing okay  
but I'm slipping a little  
with each passing day.

I know that friends care  
and that others relate  
but I think that for me  
help might be here too late.

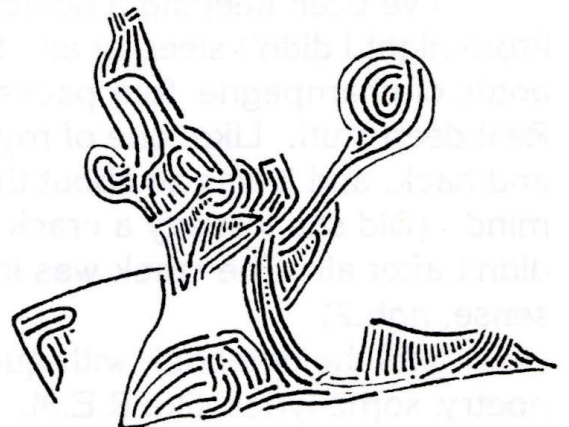
I'm just so tired of  
struggling with this-  
sometimes the wound can't be  
cured with a kiss.

And this time the hurt  
will be here for a while  
And I wonder if I'll ever  
be able to smile.

And this time the hurt  
will be here for a while  
And I wonder if I'll ever  
be able to smile.

But since I know  
I'm not really alone  
I'll have to hang in  
till it's over and done.

I hope things get better  
very fast  
'cause I'm really not sure of  
how long I can last





## Fear and Loathing in My Sister's World

She sits cross-legged on the bed and takes a drag on her cigarette - then blows the smoke in my face. "R.E.M. are lyrical geniuses," she says slowly dragging the words out as if it hurts. "Y'know--lyrical geniuses. Totally lyrical geniuses." (I'm sure I saw that comment in an article about them in last week's Rolling Stone.) "I just, like, totally adore them." This, to my sister the pseudo-intellectual from Hell, is deep conversation. And she is into deep conversation.

"Did I tell you about Adam?" she asks for the third time today. "Yes, dear. You told me," I reply patiently. Lots of our conversations go like this. "But he is totally, like, an . . . intellectual," she sighs. "Last Saturday, we didn't go out at all. We just sat at his apartment and read . . . poetry. It was so totally deep. I told you he was a poet, didn't I?" (At least twenty-six times. Or is it thirty-six? I stopped counting an hour ago.) "And I'm hopelessly in love with him, Kate. He'll never love me back--he is too smart to ever love anyone like me." I believe it--but then I feel bad for thinking of my sister this way. Trying to look interested, I ask her what college this twenty-one-year-old intellectual attends. "Oh--" she falters. "Um, he never actually finished high school or anything. Y'know, it was too boring for him. So, he hasn't gone on to college yet. But he'll probably take his G.E.D. and then go on to Harvard or something. (Harvard or something. Great.)

"We went shopping yesterday," she offers, working at the conversation as hard as I am. It isn't easy for us to communicate any more, but we still both try. "I'm really mad at Lise, too. She borrowed my new Esprit skirt and wore it with a really tacky blouse. I was, like, ashamed to admit she was my sister, and, even more, that the skirt was mine! She should know by now that the only thing I have of value is my wardrobe." (That has to be the saddest statement I've ever heard. When I count my blessings, I include Jesus, my family, my home. She counts her new Esprit skirt. I want to break through the barriers and tell her about Jesus--but we don't even speak the same language anymore.)

"I've been keeping a notebook, 'cause I've been writing, like, poetry. Prom night I didn't sleep at all. I just sat in the bathtub at our hotel with a bottle of champagne, four packs of Capris, and my notebook. I wrote poetry. Real deep stuff. Like, one of my poems, it was totally five pages long, front and back, and it was all about this . . . crack . . . on the ceiling . . . in my mind. (Did she just say a crack in her mind? I'd believe that. Oh, no, she didn't after all. The crack was in the ceiling in her mind. That makes perfect sense, right?)

"I fill the notebook with quotes I pick up--like, totally deep shit. Some poetry, some lyrics, like R.E.M. Did I tell you that they were lyrical geniuses?"



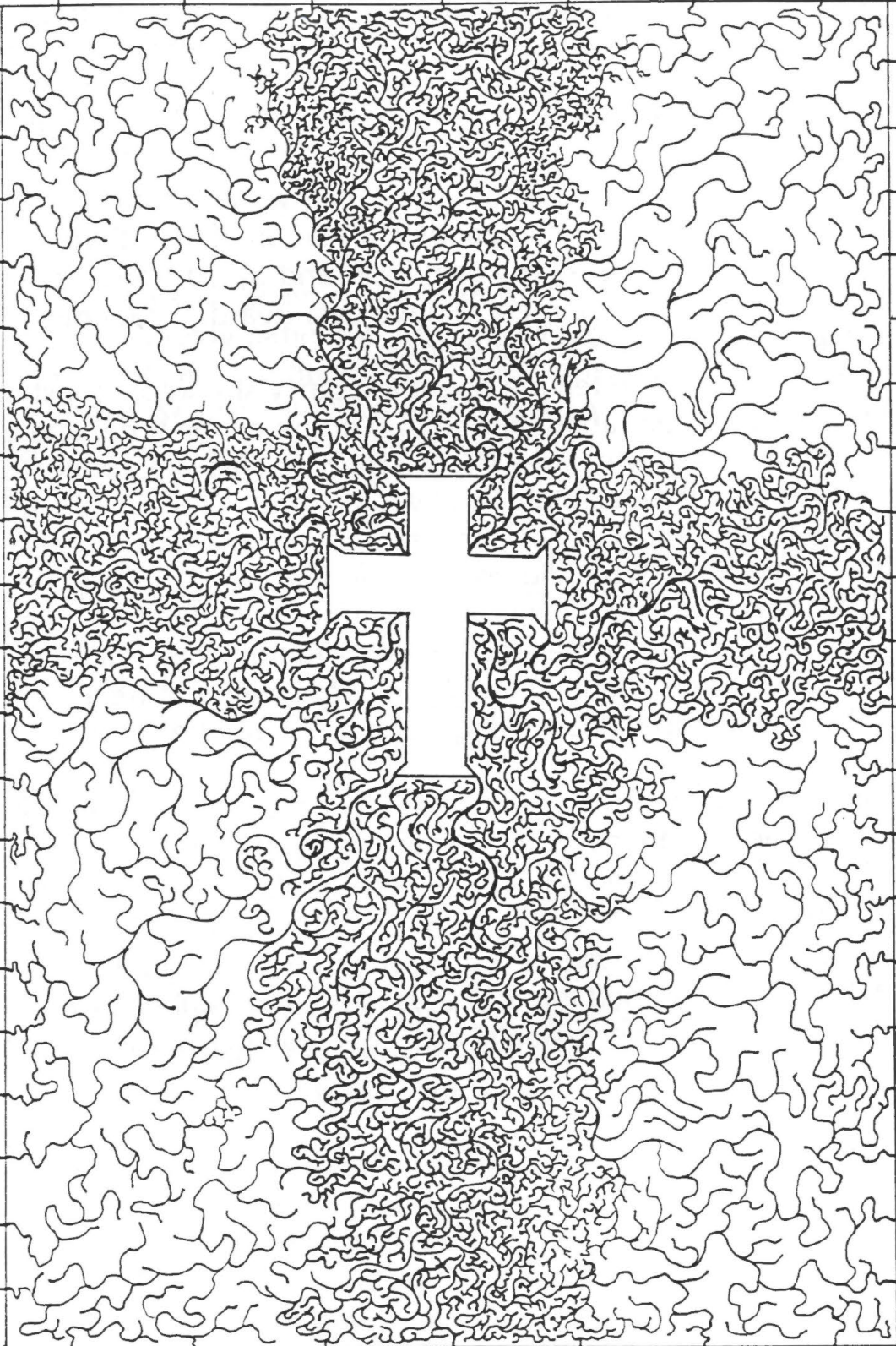
(This conversation was getting ridiculous. I had to do something, anything, to keep from laughing--or maybe crying. For just a moment, I step into her world, to see if she notices how silly she sounds.) I let my eyes glaze over, then, "Yeah, I, like, totally know what you mean, Meg. I saw this sign the other day, said, 'I used to have a handle on life, but then it fell off.'" A glimmer of life comes into her bloodshot eyes. "Oh, wow! That is like totally cool, babe. Can I copy that into my notebook?" (I laugh at first, thinking she is joking, but she isn't. My sister, my own flesh-and-blood, sees great meaning in one of the most idiotic statements I have ever heard. I patiently repeat the phrase, three times, so she can get it down.)

She then proceeds to tell me about the party she went to last night. She knows it hurts me to hear about her getting drunk all the time, and all the other stuff she does--so why does she tell me? "It was like, totally fabulous. I just sat there, in a corner, all night, and wrote some really funky stuff. I didn't even drink all that much--just six Coronas and four margaritas between 10:00 and 3:00 this morning. What did you do last night, kid?" I hate the 'kid' bit. She's only a year older--right now I feel centuries ahead of her--but I ignore it. "Last night was Wednesday, Megan. I went to Youth Group--like I do every Wednesday. Afterwards, Johnny and Mike came over and we watched a movie." She looks at me, unbelieving, for a moment, then shrugs. "Sounds like fun, kid."

I glance around her room, and settle my gaze in the corner, where a Monet print is lying. "I love Monet!" I say. "Did you go to see his exhibit at the High Museum?" "Yeah," she replies. "It was great. I just loved some of his paintings. They are, like, so totally deep. Y'know, I think he's, like, a total artistic genius." It reminds me of R.E.M. again, but I ignore it--I'm so relieved that we actually have something to discuss for a moment or two. "I know what you mean. I love Impressionist art!" She glances at me in confusion. "Impressionist? Who?"

Caitlin Reaves





K'90

## Iliad Sage from the Dragon's Eye

If you worry about his feelings  
Let him worry about yours  
No matter what happens  
It will be O. K.

You always hurt the one you love.  
You manage to destroy the things you cherish.  
Rules were made to be broken.

Talking without knowledge is noise.  
Knowledge that is hoarded is useless.

Randy Rodgers



## Death of a Seal

The sun strikes the cold, white ice,  
Glinting off each shard and snowflake,  
Blinding all who seek the beauty,  
Shredding all semblance of soft.

At the point where icy shore meets icy water,  
The fat white pups lie huddled,  
Crying for their mothers. But no one comes  
To answer their cries; no one seems to hear.

The circle of men grows closer around us-  
Their threatening clubs pay no heed to our cries.  
One by one, my companions fall.  
The snow is as red as sunset.

The clubs thunder down; the sunlight  
Glints off the knives-sparkles in the fresh blood.  
The bodies around me lend no support;  
Still the hunters close in.

Come help! Come salvation! All my friends are slain.  
The large circle of flashing knives and falling clubs  
Comes for me - one is most alone when most surrounded.  
The club smashes down, larger and larger; all is . . .

S. Arrow



A  
lonely  
man

crouches in a  
corner-

resting his head-  
against a  
concrete pillow.

Grubby hands hold fast and  
everlasting

to a life-line of  
warmth and  
comfort,  
enshrouded-  
in a brown paper bag.

Diana Dunagan

A  
Grim  
face  
full of despair  
a woman wonders through layers  
of smoke chilled air  
Her  
scuffing stature  
arthritic and cold  
is covered by a patchwork of  
tattered worn clothes.



O, to be friends with the wind,  
To travel around the world,  
To blow this way and that,

Never to be restless,  
Never to seek refuge,  
Never to cry.

I listen for its call,  
but the din of life is too overwhelming.  
I watch for its beauty,  
but the world's materialism is too blinding.  
I long for its coolness,  
but I am engulfed by the fires of expectation.

Maybe someday we'll meet  
but I doubt it.

Charlie Miller

## Send in the Clowns

You want me to stay, but I really must go.

You must understand - I'm not running this show.  
I'm just one of the clowns in this circus called life-  
distracting the people from lives filled with strife.

It's really not me that you're wishing would stay-  
it's the fun that I brought sometimes to your day,  
but I'm not very good at my job anymore  
and that's why I need to walk out of the door.

A clown is supposed to make everyone smile-  
to help them forget problems for a while  
and clowns wear the faces that crowds want to see.  
It's not who they are - but it's who they must be.

They can never let people know just who they are  
'cause that would be stretching the rules too far.  
And it's very important they play the games right-  
'cause people look the them on dark lonely nights.

I broke all the rules when I took off my mask  
I shouldn't have done it - but I didn't ask.  
And letting you see the real me was all wrong  
so I can't go back to the clowns and belong.

I'm tired of laughing when I just want to cry,  
and I can't play this game, but I can't tell them why.  
So I think if I left it would be for the best-  
if nothing else I just might get some rest.

Please don't be sad or let tears touch your face-  
I promise that others will come take my place.  
And they'll do a much better job than I've done.  
So soon you'll be laughing and having some fun

But since everyone knows that the show must go on  
I'll wait for a while 'till it's safe to be gone  
But I fell rather silly just standing around -  
so, please, do me a favor and send in the clowns.

Carol

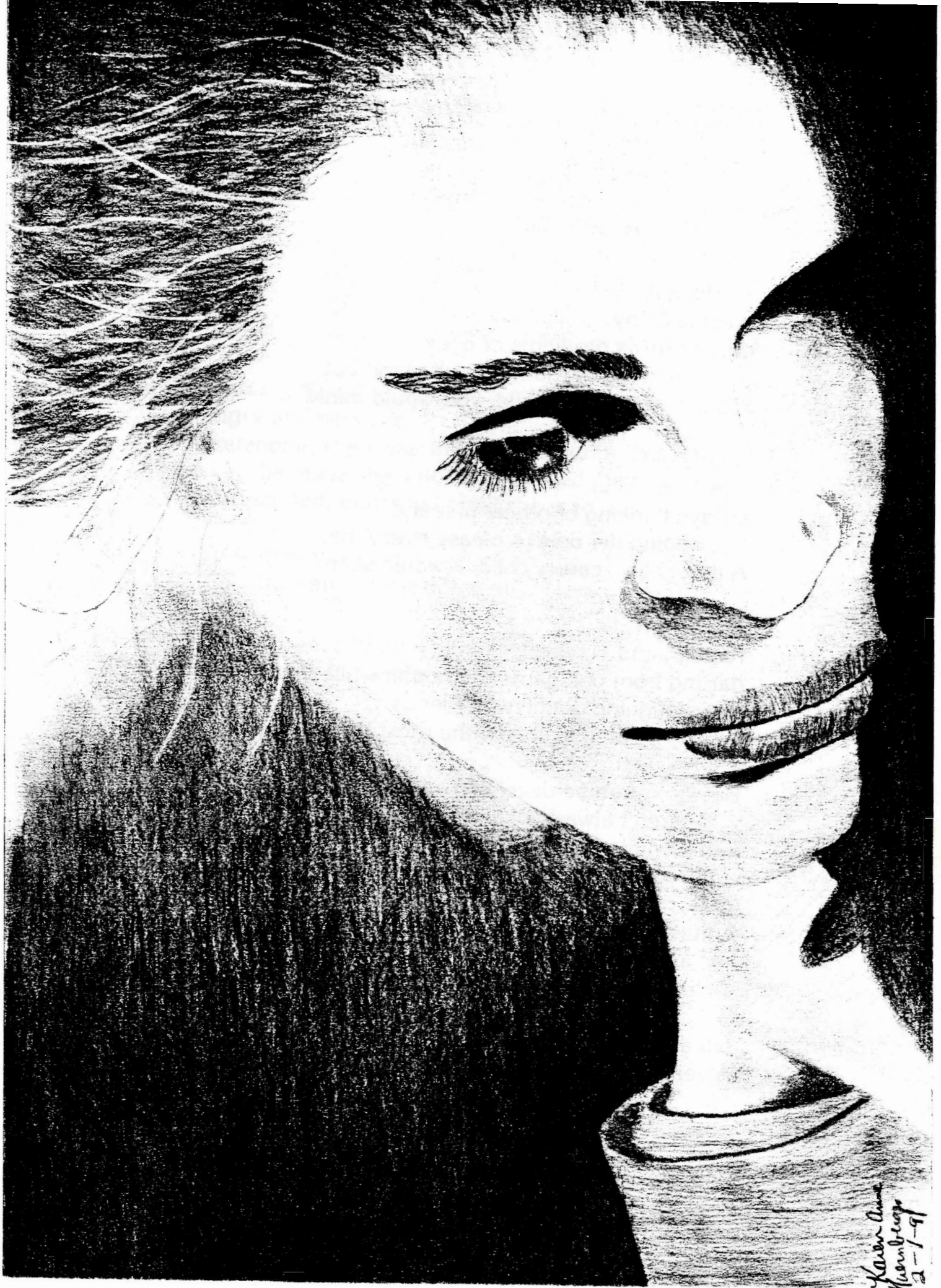
Abracadabra . . . Alakazam  
Hocus Pocus and Shazaam  
Whatever I try - still here I am  
I can't escape from here - Oh . . . darn.

### **Facial Windows**

Eyes  
clear blue  
staring into space  
mirrors of hurt, pain  
windows

Jeanette Nathan





Karen Anne  
Kernberg  
2-1-91



## A Little Girl

A little girl  
quiet and shy  
never causes problems or does  
    anything to make herself stand out.  
A perfectly normal child, you would think.

A little girl  
sweet and kind  
always thinking of others first and  
    doing her best to please everyone.  
A thoughtful, caring child, it would seem.

A little girl  
running and playing  
darting from one game to another while  
    laughing loudly with friends  
A happy, carefree child - she must be.

But looks can be deceiving and things  
    aren't always what they seem,  
and if you look a little closer then  
    you might see what I see.

A little girl  
sad and crying out  
wishing that someone would notice her and let her know  
    they care  
but afraid of what would happen if they did  
A very lonely child is what I think.

A little girl  
anxious and afraid  
doing what she's asked to do so she won't get hurt  
and helping others so they won't feel as bad as  
she does.

A frightened, insecure child - it seems to me.

A little girl  
angry and nervous  
pretending she's like the other children, but angry  
because she's not and worried they might find out.  
A frustrated, burdened child she is to me.

So sometimes even the eyes and heart can see  
the same thing differently.

And the reason I look closer now is  
a little girl was me.





## The Masquerade

Carefully painted and shiny it is,  
Polished for all to see:  
I've got a mask for the masquerade;  
No one will know it's not me.

Smiling and happy the mask I will wear,  
Laughing and beaming all night.  
Tears fall behind the mask, darkly are hid,  
Safely concealed out of sight.

And I'll dance at the masquerade, I will;  
I'll dance at the masquerade.  
And I'll smile at the masquerade, I will;  
Where nobody knows or cares.

Check all the ribbons; make sure it's on tight.  
Carefully cover the chinks.  
Leave before any unmasking takes place.  
Who cares what I really think?

But I'll dance at the masquerade, I will;  
I'll dance at the masquerade.  
And I'll smile at the masquerade, I will;  
Where nobody knows or cares.

S. Arrow



Can you remember  
The nights of the Sobbing,  
the silence, the sending away?  
Those days will recall  
themselves, in their time,  
For they do not belong to the Day.

Can you recall, now,  
the time of the Leaving,  
The hour we looked to the Years?  
How strange it now seems,  
Our joyously grieving  
Was all wiped away with the tears.

Can you remind me  
Of all we've been missing,  
The Source of our union dismissed?  
It lies in the past,  
the future, and present--  
It lies in what we now resist.

Can you remain, yet,  
With me in the present--  
Eternity-wrapped-on-a-stick?  
It seems so important  
to me that our union  
Be one that I always would pick.

Brian West



Time, we watch it so closely  
But we can't stop it  
We can't speed it up  
We can't make more of it  
It keeps ticking whether  
We like it or not

We put it in a form  
We can understand  
We put hands on it  
Or put it in digital  
We try to control it  
By boxing it into Daytimers

Or does it control us  
Tick, tick, tick  
You're three seconds late  
For whatever your fate  
That time holds for you  
As it keeps ticking

Randy Rodgers





## Lone Fighter

lone jet fighter of the dragon squad  
flies above the white cloud sod  
bright sun glares through the window pane  
solo flight makes a man insane

radar shrieks a sudden warning  
announces a bogey incoming  
enemy missile before he could  
react, he would he should

too late now to attack  
he flips his plane on its back  
down inverted five G dive  
he must escape to survive

down through the white cloud sod  
to out run the missile pod  
evasive maneuver to lose the tail  
his hand sweaty, his face pale

the bogey hasn't given up  
this one is some cocky pup  
one more stinger morning in  
it seems no way he can win

missile too close this time  
this one got him on the dime  
the left wing rips off the plane  
his body swells up in pain

the plane spins out of control  
fighting the stick for control  
he sees the sky, the sun  
the sky, the earth, the sun

the sky, the blue, the white,  
the green, the earth, the light,  
the sky, the earth, the sky,  
the earth, the colors in his eye

spinning, spinning, spinning,  
down to earth, his head is spinning  
he cannot open the canopy  
at this point the man fights insanity

thoughts go racing through his head  
knowing that he'll soon be dead  
shot down by an enemy  
that he never got to see

among the burning rubble mass  
among the flames and broken glass  
a solo fighter's body lies  
and no one even knows to cry

Randy Rodgers

## Stop and Listen

Here I stand with all my troubles,  
And all your people pass me by.  
They must be caught up in all their problems,  
For they don't even bother to say "Hi!".

I stand alone, my troubles and I  
With no one on whom I can depend.  
I only wish someone would stop and listen,  
For I could really use a friend.

Someone to stop and say,  
"Hey, what's up with you?  
You don't look as happy  
As you normally do."

God I don't understand  
Why your people keep rushing by.  
Won't they look at my smile  
And see that I really want to cry

How can I believe in a God full of love and compassion  
Whom I cannot even see  
When the ones who are supposed to be following Your example  
Won't even take the time to speak with me?

Why won't they stop and listen?  
Why won't they hold me as I cry?  
For if they don't bother to help me now,  
They may be holding me as I die!

Tonya Laws





Bob Butball  
6



There are stars unnumbered  
forever and out  
tittering among themselves  
filling space.

There are insects overspreading  
land and water  
constantly murmuring  
conquering the earth.

There are grains of sand  
small and innumerable  
with quiet whispering  
filling endless deserts.

There are blades of grass  
cool and reaching  
whistling in breezes  
blanketing yards.

There are countless people  
distant and equal  
sharing pieces of life  
attending a school.

There is "a one"  
human and feeling  
cautiously listening  
seeing the me.

I am solitary surrounded--spoken at  
as a star

I am alone in a crowd--receiving the already known  
as an insect

I am a point encircled--talked about  
as a grain of sand

I am in exile from a group--fed with unwanted facts  
as a blade of grass

I am an outcast of life--only listening patiently  
as people

I am in love with "a one"--afraid to speak  
as "a one."

Life is where I can be alone  
in a crowd of people.

No one shows true inner feeling  
until "a one," who can,  
But fears to.





Life is where I can be alone  
in a crowd of people.  
No one shows true inner feeling  
until "a one," who can,  
But fears to.  
Then I am in love with "a one"  
But rules, traditions and classes make it difficult  
and awkward for either I or "a one" to share.  
So neither I nor "a one" does share  
and life's purpose may be wasted.  
Some very special moments that could have been  
may never even be.

Life Part 2

Life is an immense and peculiar puzzle.  
Every star . . .  
is an invaluable piece of that  
tremendous puzzle of life.  
Every insect . . .  
has a specific place in the  
enormous puzzle of life.  
Every grain of sand . . .  
is an intricate and irreplaceable point  
in the vast puzzle of life.  
Every blade of grass . . .  
has a special purpose in this  
boundless puzzle of life.  
Every person . . .  
has something to share in the  
immeasurable puzzle of life.  
Every one . . .  
seems to fit into the  
infinite puzzle of life, but I.

Life is an almost impossible puzzle to complete,  
because my piece doesn't quite fit.  
So it is very frustrating to bother trying to find my place.  
But I continue my search  
hoping that one day I will find "a one".  
And perhaps "a one" may let me share  
a place with him  
in life's puzzle.

who is she  
this girl who captures your heart  
is it how she makes you feel  
or just the newness of falling in love  
is she beautiful as the dawn  
charming and sweet  
does she return your smiles from across the room

who is she  
this girl who holds you at night  
are her arms warm and familiar  
can her eyes see into your soul  
does she understand your enigmatic way

who is she  
this girl that wooed you from my side  
this girl that entranced you with her caresses  
this girl lying bludgeoned at my feet



Morning  
Part I

The Dragon comes out of his hole  
And silently walks to a knoll  
Tries to open his wounded wings  
Oh, how this hurts, oh, how this stings

His wings slowly, slowly unfurl  
Once strong and wonderful  
But now they are tattered and torn  
Years of battle, they are badly worn

Wings make to soar the sky  
chasing clouds, playing up high  
Not to come under the fire so hard  
Oh, his beautiful wings, they're scarred

Randy Rodgers





## Jamie's Crying

The rain pelted the cracked, white paint on the Morrow's two story house. The storm clouds had been hanging in the sky like molten tar for the past three days and had buried the night's stars deep within them. The cold rain was falling in sheets like icy arrows on the swampy piece of land called Bitter Hollow where the Morrow's house stood.

A broken bed frame and an old tire rim lay in the yard amidst rivers of muddy water, while a rusty Ford truck mounted on cinder blocks stood quietly near the house.

Beneath the broken bed, three pairs of small, marble-like eyes flashed in the lightning. All six eyes were focused on the warm-looking house that stood so invitingly before them.

A dim light fell from the window of the living room in the Morrow's house. Chester Morrow lay sleeping in a drunken stupor in cracked, brown naugahyde Laz-y-boy his wife Marge had bought him for his thirty-fourth birthday. Gathered about his feet was a pile of crushed beer cans that reflected warped images of Alex Trebak and a Chinese contestant on "Jeopardy".

His face was turned away from the T. V. and toward the broken grandfather clock on the mantle that had read nine-forty two for the past six years. The drool on the man's chin found a new crease to follow as he rolled away from the light that spilled into the room as Marge opened the kitchen door.

Somewhere a baby was crying.

"Getcha ass up ya lazy fool!" Marge stammered as she hurled an empty can of Planter's cheese puffs at Chester's sprawling hulk. He muttered something that sounded like "Vruck blue itch" and waved a shaky finger at her. The woman responded with a hard slap to Chester's face.

"Tha chile of yers want shut up," Marge slurred. At the end of her sentence, she sent a shower of saliva mixed with Jack Daniels unwittingly down on her husband. "I tried to Keeper quiet, but duh baby dan't take duh mik. She's gotta go to sleep an I can't taker no mo'."

"Awright woman! I'll checker directly," he belched in response. "Jus sitcha ass down and watch tee vee."

"No!" she screamed, "Ya gonna checker now!" Marge grabbed Chester's arm and tried to yank him from his throne.

At the top of the stairs, in a cold, unlit room, a shivering baby lay screaming.



The baby was covered only partially by a ragged towel, and it lay naked on a dirty mattress on the floor. It winced and cried with every flash of lightning that pierced the plastic-coated window. Every crack of thunder shook the walls and furniture of the house making it scream and cry harder. The baby's face was red with tears, and it coughed and choked periodically from the warm stream of mucus that would cover its windpipe between screams.

The baby couldn't have been more than three or four months old. It lay defenseless on the worn mattress shaking its tiny fists at the air as if some unseen attacker were coming toward it.

The shadows made strange faces on the walls and ceiling as lightning flashed at the window. The closet too, which was partially open, creaked open a little wider as cold wind from the poorly insulated attic rushed through the upper rooms of the house with a haunting wail. There seemed to be movement in the closet.

From the light of an unusually long flash of lightning, a pair of cold marble-like eyes could be seen peering from a long crack in the wall of the closet. A slight scratching noise echoed in the closet as a small, gray nose with six inch hairs protruding from just behind issued from the crack. The marble-like eyes followed the nose, and another pair of eyes appeared in the crack.

Marge pulled harder and harder at Chester's arm, but he wouldn't budge. She kicked him in the thigh and hurled a mouthful of profanity when he caught her foot. The kick evidently hurt Chester, and he seemingly didn't have enough coordination from his drunkenness to catch it. But he did.

Chester threw her backwards, and she caught her head on the edge of the television on her way to the floor. She was knocked out cold.

The excitement was just enough to drain the rest of Chester's energy and consciousness, and he passed out in his chair.

The Baby continued to cry upstairs; although the screams seemed louder now and more intense.

When morning came, Chester woke from his slumber to Marge's screams. He fell forward from his chair into a pool of her blood on the floor. The blood was cold and thick and had already begun to dry on the thin carpet.

He stumbled up the stairs toward the sound of his screaming wife. He turned the corner of the hall and ran clumsily into the light of the open doorway.

Marge was backed against the wall, rolling her head over the baby blue pain and sobbing. The blood from the wound on the back of her head made strange shapes on the pastel wall.

She clutched a bloody, ragged towel in her hands, and her screams became more muffled as she sunk it deeper and deeper into her mouth. Her eyes were peeled back gaping like canons as she stared in horror at the sight before her.

Chester saw it now, too.

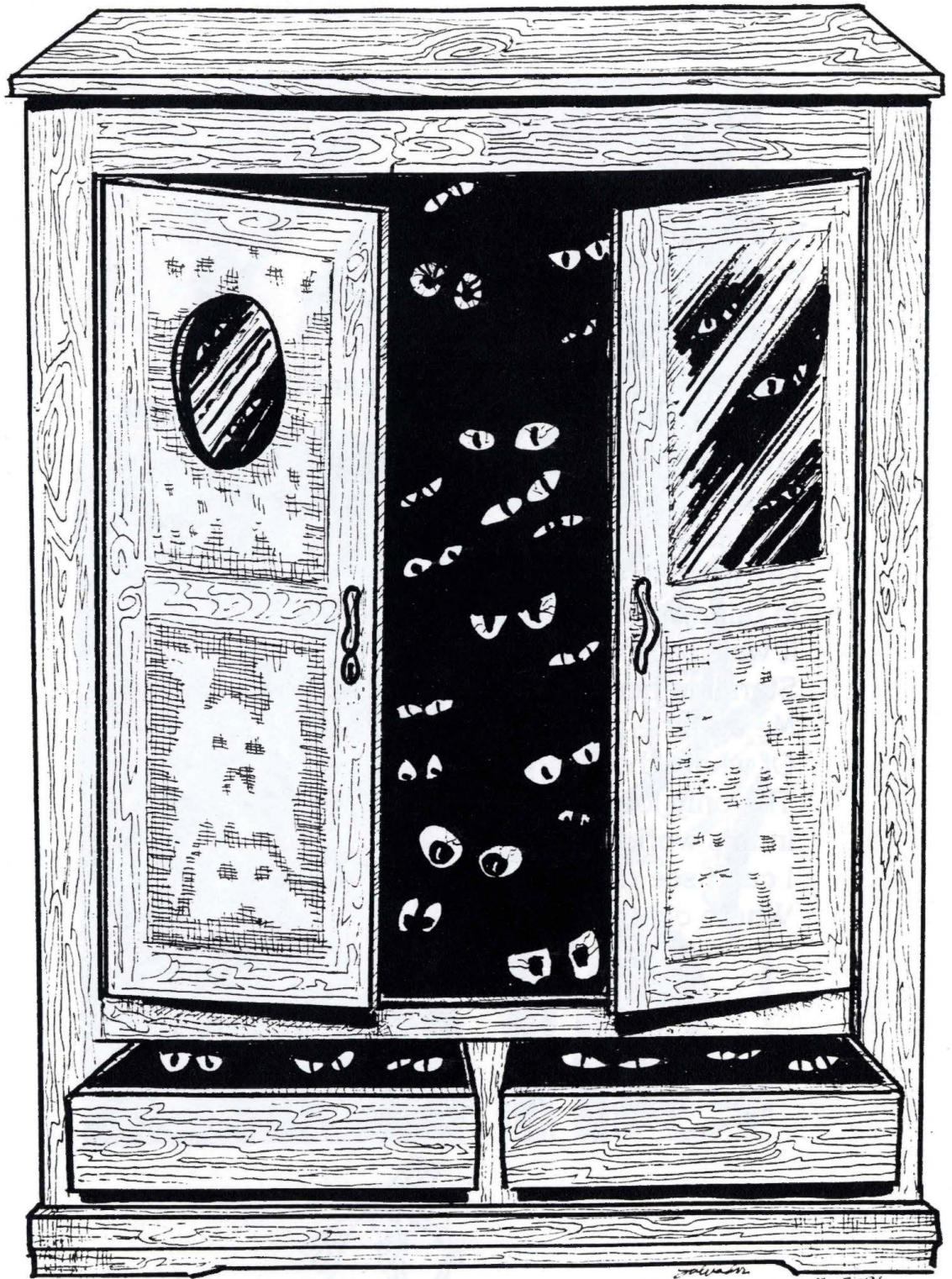
The red mound . . .what looked like a little person . . .what looked like a baby . . .THE BABY . . .THEIR BABY!!!

It lay on the dirty bloody mattress. Most of its limbs were gone. Huge rats scurried back from the remains. Blood was on their claws and whiskers. The skin was all but torn from the flesh.

In the silent presence of horror-stricken parents, the baby gave a muffled cry.

Brian Clark





J. W. Wain

4-3-71

## Black

Where have they all gone?  
Standing here alone  
Me and my shadow  
Wond'ring where hope's gone  
Wond'ring if anyone has ever cared  
In this world.  
My shadow grows long & indistinct.  
Standing here alone Me and the darkness  
Holding onto nothing  
Grasping at anything  
In this world.  
It was just a falling star.  
Standing here alone  
Me and the shadows  
Of what I thought was love  
The only love is a fallen star  
In this world.  
I can't see my hand in front of my face.  
Where did they all go?

S. Arrow













Direction is such an ambiguous word.

Who is to say one way is better than another?

Left . . . . Right

Forward . . . . Backward

North . . . . South

This Way . . . . That Way

All seem right  
All seem wrong

Which way should I turn?

Or should I turn at all?

Charlie Miller

A Voice calls me to steal away--  
into darkness.  
my thoughts are clouded--  
hot breath hissing in my ear  
fingers running through my mind  
scattering thoughts and images.  
Heavy and suffocated becomes my heart.  
A desire from within calls me to  
Close my eyes and slumber in these thoughts.  
Almost surrendering I noticed  
an outstretched hand  
desperately  
Calling my attention . . .

Diana Dunagan





## Wizards and Daisies

Eric was awakened by the realization that someone was shaking him. Bleary-eyed, he looked up, only to find himself staring into the beady blue eyes of an old bearded man. He sat up confusedly in bed and rubbed his eyes.

"Hello!" he said. "Who are you?"

"My name is Drusgeld," answered the stranger with a smile. "I am a wizard."

Eric's eyes moved to the old man's pointed hat and long, flowing robe. "Oh," said Eric. "What are you doing here?"

"I have come to take you on an adventure," responded the wizard. "You do like adventures, don't you?"

"Yeah!" Eric answered. "But where are we going?"

"To a place beyond the end of the world," replied the wizard mysteriously, with a twinkle in his eye. He took Eric by the hand, and suddenly they were in another place.

Eric looked around wide-eyed and incredulous. As they walked, they passed lions and bears and monsters and dragons, abominable snowmen and one-eyed giants, crocodiles, unicorns, elves, and elephants. Then they came to a clearing where children were playing.

"Cassie!!" shouted Eric suddenly, with all the emotion and surprise a little boy's voice can hold. "CASSIE!!" he shouted again, as he ran toward the happily playing children. The old wizard nodded approvingly and remained watching at a distance.

After what seemed no time at all, yet also an eternity, the wizard walked slowly toward the children. He laid his hand on Eric's shoulder and said softly, "It's time to go."

Eric opened his mouth to protest, then looked over at the little girl beside him with a wreath of daisies in her hair. He silently took both of her hands in his, kissed her on the cheek, and looked back up at the wizard. "Okay," he said. He and the wizard walked away.

In his mind's eye, Eric saw a small room with white walls and a white floor, with a hospital bed in the middle. On a table beside the bed sat an old Coca-Cola bottle filled with daisies.

"When's Cassie gonna get better?" he had asked his mother, who stood behind him with tears in her eyes.

"Your sister is very sick," his mother had told him, biting back emotion. She isn't going to get any better." "I'm sorry, Eric," she continued, squatting down to look him in the eye, "but Cassie is dying. Do you know what that means?"

The wizard looked down kindly at the little boy so deep in thought.

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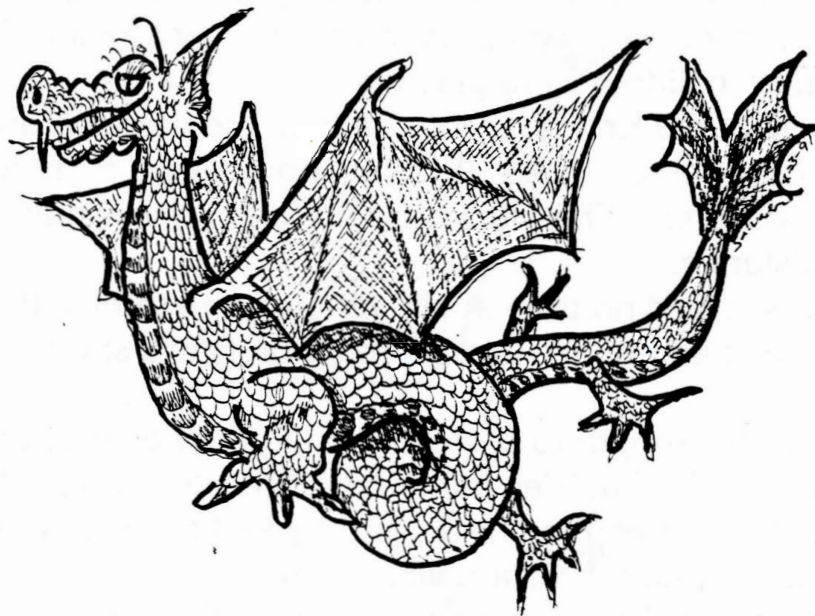
"Eric! . . . Eric!!"

"Huh?" mumbled Eric groggily.

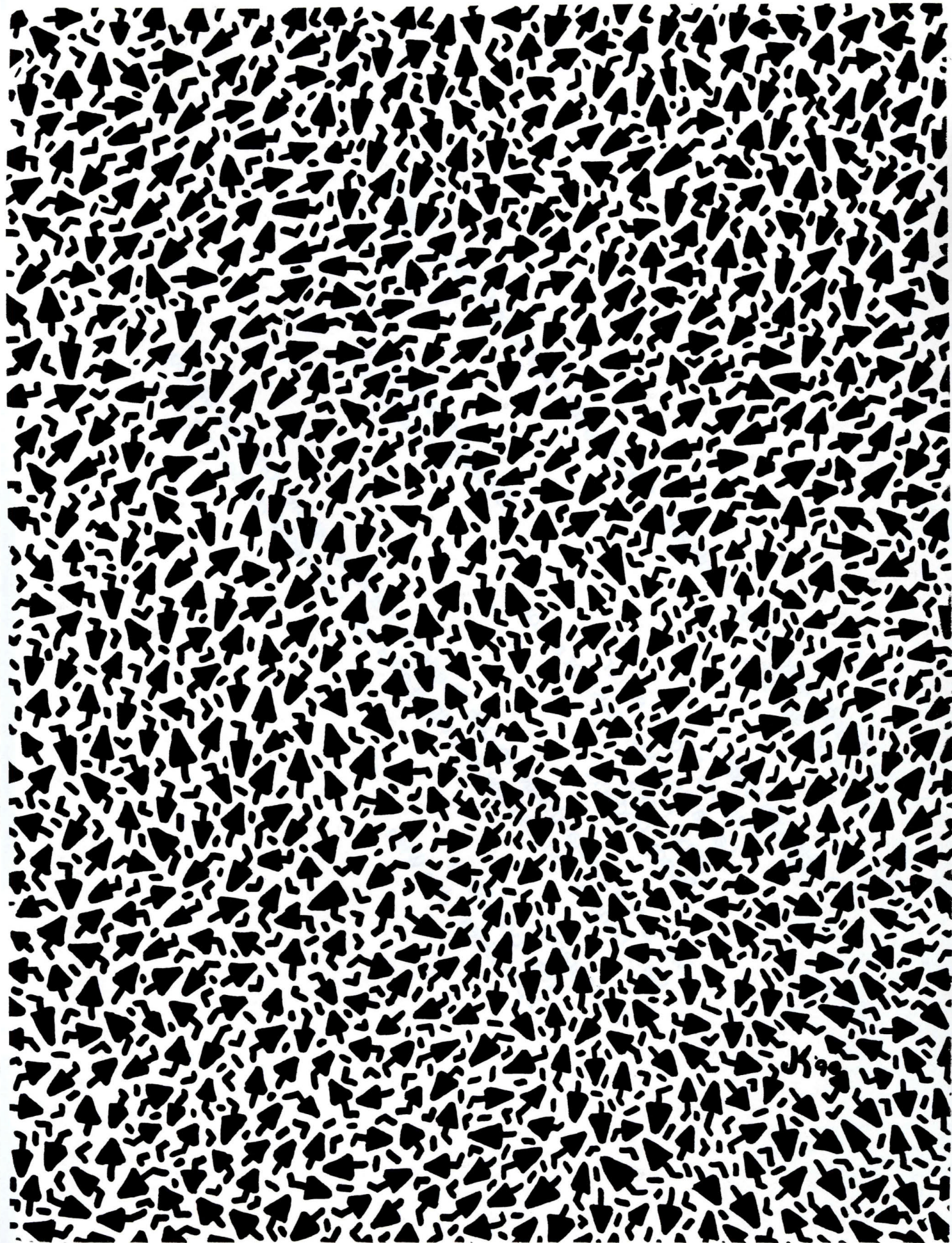
"Get up! You'll be late for school!" called his mother.

"What was I dreaming?" he thought to himself. He shrugged and reached down to put on his slippers. As he did, he noticed a fresh daisy lying on the floor.

S. Arrow









The Helicon is an annual publication featuring the artistic and literary talents of Milligan students.

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- Theresa Brown, editor
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We give a special thanks to Deb Eberle for her hours at the computer and to Gary Hensley and his crew for pulling off a very successful Heliconcert '91.

Photographs:

- Tree: Brian West
- Urban Lines: Joe Wise

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